PEBBLES IN MY BOOTS Vol. 2

A SELECTION OF
MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS INCLUDING:
"Special Forces at Khe Sanh,"
"The 1967 Hill Battles,"
"Khe Sanh Glossary,"
Selected letters and miscellaneous writings,
"The Wounded Healer"



BY
CHAPLAIN RAY WILLIAM STUBBE

WAUWATOSA, WISCONSIN
01 October 2011

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FOREWORD TO VOLUME 2 OF *PEBBLES IN MY BOOTS*

The first volume of *Pebbles in My Boots*, published earlier this year, contained mainly personal documents–poems, prayers, some reports and letters, talks and presentations, chronologies and a few essays. This volume contains some major articles (The Special Forces at Khe Sanh, the 1967 Hill Battles); a glossary (of terms, places, equipment, and operations); additional talks, prayers, essays, and some maps and diagrams.

This volume will help explain just why were at Khe Sanh, why Khe Sanh had strategic significance. It will explain just why we occupied Hills 861 and 881-South but not 881-North, and how Hill 950 happened to be occupied. It portrays heroism and bravery and the agony and ugliness of war. This volume includes many little-reported aspects of Khe Sanh, perhaps too classified at the time for most to know, including intelligence activities, some operations in Laos launched from Khe Sanh, signals intelligence, and certainly the under-reported 1967 Battle of the Hills. Also included are maps and diagrams indicating positions manned and locations. An essay indicating how veterans may have gained positive abilities to be healing agents to other vets and all of society concludes this volume.

Hopefully, these may be of some value to you.

Ray William Stubbe
01 October 2011
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

ARMY SPECIAL FORCES AT KHE SANH [Originally printed as "The Army at Khe Sanh" in Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue No. 41 (Spring, 1998). Revised article with new information.

WHY WE WERE AT KHE SANH

Khe Sanh, perched in the mountainous, jungle-covered area near the border with Laos and just under the DMZ, far from the populated areas to the east, sat on Route 9,[1] provided one of the very few passages through the mountains, an ancient invasion route, and one that needed to be plugged to prevent large forces from invading South Vietnam and also an afrea through which recon units could be dispatched to determine forces moviong south from North Vietnam. Later, Khe Sanh became a launch site from which operations were launched into Laos.

Following World War II, the Potsdam Conference made the 16th Parallel (runs just south of DaNang) the dividing line for occupation troops: the Chinese were to administer the area to the north and the British the area to the south. The 1954 Geneva Accords, however, signed by the DRVN, made the 17th parallel, not the 16th, the dividing line, probably because the USSR in 1954 was attempting to induce France not to join the European Defense Community.[2] The area of land between the 16th and 17th Parallels, basically, I Corps Tactical Zone (ICTZ), became an area of intense dispute, and Khe Sanh, the only inhabited area in the entire western half of it was to become the deadliest battle of the Vietnam War.

The situation in contiguous Laos had rapidly deteriorated following the coup on 09 August 1960 led by Kong Le who overthrew the Laotian government of Prince Tiao Somsanith.[3] The city of Tchepone on Route 9 in Laos was overrun 01 May 1961,[4] and, being concerned over a "porous border,"[5] the Americans paced a Special Force "A" team in Khe Sanh ville on 8 July 1962.[6]

The Khe Sanh area reflected Communist strategy developed in the 1950s and 1960s which involved capturing the periphery and working back towards the center of power: exploit situations existing in outlying villages and move towards the centers of power.[7] National Route 9 (QL-9), the principle east-west road extending from Dong Ha in the east to the Thai border, naturally became one of the major infiltration routes intensively employed since the end of 1958 by Communist forces.[8] As early as 1959, Route 9 was considered too insecure to be included in a request for general road improvements in SVN.[9] William Colby (later, director of the CIA), travelled from Saigon to Hue, picked up a vehicle, and drove with his son and a friend to visit the prison ruins at Lao Bao in 1960, around July.[10] The enemy situation in the summer of 1961 indicated North

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[1] Constructed between 1904 and 1910 by Khas, Lao, and Phouthai workers under the supervision of a French engineer. [Ref: Letter from Soulang Phetsomphou, 09 Sep 1997. Phetsomphou was CO of BV-33 at Ban Houei Sane]

[2] Bernard B. Fall, "Indochina (1946-1954)," Dept. of Military Art & Engineering, U.S. Military Academy, *HM381, Revolutionary Warfare.*

[3] U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961 - 1963*, Vol. 1, *Vietnam, 1961*,Wshington, D.C.: Gvernmanet Printing Office, 1988, p. 126.

[4] U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, Vol. 1, *Vietnam, 1961*, pp. 126, 232, 311; CIA: *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 4 May 1961, p. 1 [MORI 207619]. South Vietnam took emergency measures, moving a battalion to the border and a 150-man special forces unit in civilian clothes penetrated 6 mi. into Laos [CIA, *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 11 May 1961, p. 1, MORI 207620]. A 120-man South Vietnamese Army special forces unit penetrated into Laos and assumed effective control of Laotian Army garrison which abandoned Tchepone 01 May and was guarding 9 bridges west of the Lao/S. Viet. border. [CIA: *current Intelligence Weekly Summary, Weekly Review: Laos*, 18 May 1961, p. 1, MORI 207661] The Lao Army unit, BV-33 subsequently located at the Ban Houei Sane airfield.

[5] "Porous border:" Telegram from the Ambassador in Vietnam to Dept. of State, 08 Dec 1960 in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960*, Vol. 1, Vietnam, 1961, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986, p. 719.

[6] Stanton, Shelby L., *Green Berets at War*, Novato, Ca.: Presidio, 1985, p. 46. Comments of Jacques Standing, 20 Mar 1989 and 27 Mar 1989; Comments of Gerald J. Howland, 20 Mar 1989; Comments of Frank Fowler, 21 May 1989.

[7] "The revolutionary apparatus would find its bases far from the capital and gradually work inward against the government in the hope that after a number of years it would be strong enough either to assault the capitol itself or bring the government to its knees in a protracted struggle." [George K. Tanham and Dennis J. Duncanson, "Some Dilemmas of Counterinsurgency," *Foreign Affairs 48:1 (Oct, 1969) p. 166.]*

[8] "Memorandum From the President's Military Representative (Taylor) to the President (Kennedy)," 18 Sept 1961, U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963*, Vol. 1, Vietnam, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1988, p. 304.

[9] "Memorandum of a Conversation," 21 Nov 1959, U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1958-60*, Vol. 1, *Vietnam*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986, p. 260.

[10] Conversation with William Colby, 28 April 1990. Colby, William, *Lost Victory, Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen-Year Involvement in Vietnam*, with James McCargar, Chicago and New York: Contemporary Books, 1989, p. 42.

Vietnamese forces pushing eastward along Route 9 toward Hue.[11] Over 700 Communists were infiltrating into SVN per month. "The fall of Laos has placed Route #9 in Communist hands .. and gives the RVNF [Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces] commander the task of delaying from both North and West."[12] The focus became plugging a "porous border:" The Chief of the MAAG, Vietnam[13] was "..convinced that this guerrilla war cannot be won by free world unless effective steps taken to plug up porous border."[14]

In late 1961, an international force to guard against infiltration from Laos into South Vietnam was considered.[15] The Chief of Naval Operations reported that since the fall of Tchepone, "Communist forces have had free access to the Vietnam border by this secure and well concealed route [Route 9]."[16]

The Taylor Mission Report proposed a "Frontier Force, Vietnam," to deny the northwest frontier bordering Laos to Communist infiltration as well as penetrate Communist-dominated areas outside South Vietnam to disrupt Communist lines of communication[17] The Report indicated that as of the summer of 1961, the 325th North Vietnamese Army Division was just north of the 17th Parallel and the 304th and 324th NVA Divisions were in the vicinity of Route 9. The concept of the Frontier Force included securing the willing assistance of the Montagnards initially in intelligence and later securing their own area to make Communist infiltration along the 103-mile "hot" area of the border impossible.[18]

A U.S. Army Special Forces "A" Team arrived at Khe Sanh and established a permanent camp in Khe Sanh Village on 08 July 1962[19] to check infiltration along Route 9 by North Vietnamese Army units. They located on top of a hill just to the east of Khe Sanh Village, an old French fortified stronghold (XD 859387) on a plateau that was neither secure nor easily defended; it was later referred to as "the old French Fort," or "Fort Dix." by the SOG unit that later located there in the summer of 1967.

The initial "A" Team, led by Capt Weaver, was on a 6-month rotation, most of which had already been near DaNang to train Bru Montagnards. The team included Lieutenant Hancock (XO), Jacques Standing (Team Leader), Sgt Jerry Howland (Medic), Westbrook (Medic), George Grooms, Frank Quinn, and Hugh Sharon (Weapons). Grooms and Quinn had been captured by the VC at DaNang, but were turned loose to return! A possible explanation, "One of the guys who we still consider an awful good friend, was a chronic complainer. We always told him the VC turned him loose because they got tired of hearing of his bitchin'."[20] Eventually, the team was able to depart DaNang and travel to Khe Sanh via an old WW II 2-1/2 GMC truck. "When we left DaNang, the Vietnamese government and everybody else said, 'Oh, you'll never make it up there. The VC will get you for sure,'" but the trip proceeded and we arrived uneventfully.

Upon arrival, the team occupied the abandoned Old French Fort position. All that remained was one crushed-in, small bunker, which they called "the Alamo." The position contained only hulks of former buildings, and the Americans were informed there had been a bitter battle at this site involving a besieging of the French. The French force was eventually defeated, the wounded killed, and they, together with their dead, dumped into the well out of spite from the ferocity of the

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[11] "Memorandum from Edwin F. Black of the office of the Secretary of Defense to the president's Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Rostow)," 27 July 1961, U.S. Dept,. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963*, Vol. 1, *Vietnam*, 1961, Washington, D.C.: 1988, p. 245.

[12] "Memorandum from the Secretary of Defense's Assistant for Special Operations (Lansdale) to the President's Military Representative (Taylor)," U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963*, Vol. 1, *Vietnam*, 1961, Washington, D.C.: 1988, p. 239.

[13] Military Assistance and Advisory Group.

[14] Telegram from the Ambassador to Vietnam to the Dept. of State, 08 Dec 1960, U.S. Dept of State, *Foreign Relations, 1958-1960*, p. 719. At a meeting of President Kennedy's Task Force on Vietnam, both General Bonesteel [JCS representative] and Mr. Colby [CIA representative] stated their doubts that the 1500 mile border could be sealed. Ambassador Young [Ambassador to Thailand from 22 June 1961] said that this raised the question of why we should pour hundreds of millions into Vietnam if we can't choke off the problem. Gen. Bonesteel noted this to be the central point: "..How seriously are we to take the objective .. preventing Communist domination of Viet-Nam," noting that this would require a sizeable force commitment. ["Draft Memorandum on the Conversation of the Second Meeting of the Presidential Task Force on Vietnam," at the Pentagon, 4 May 1961, U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963*, Vol. 1, *Vietnam*, 1961, Washington, D.C.: 1988, p. 118.

[15] Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, p. 145.

[16] Memorandum from the Chief of Naval Operations (Anderson) to the Secretary of Defense *(McNamara)," 9 Oct 1961, U.S. Dept of State, *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963*, Vol. 1, *Vietnam*, 1961, Washington, D.C.: 1988, p. 329.

[17] The Ho Chi Minh Trail network, and, closer to Khe Sanh, the "Santa Fe Trail System."

[18] "Letter from the President's Military Representative (Taylor) to the President," Washington, 3 November 1961, App. F, Paper Prepared by the Members of the Taylor Mission, U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1961-1963*, pp. 520-521.

[19] Shelby L. Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, Novato, Ca.": Presideo, 1985, p. 46.

[20] Comments on the initial SF team at Khe Sanh are based upon: Conversation with Jacques Standing, 20 March 1989 and 27 March 1989; Gerald J. Howland, 20 March 1989; and Frank Fowler, 21 March 1989.

battle.[21]

The mission of the first SF team was to build a campsite and train the Bru. Under control of a CIA Case officer, they were prohibited from venturing into the surrounding area: "..every time we would try to do something, we would meet with objection. "Stay within your close proximity to necessary security patrols, and that's it; don't wander the area."[22] We were told when we went in there to stay away from everybody. We were told: "Just build your camp, protect yourself, and we'll give you orders down the line."[23] The team medic, Sgt Gerald J. Howland recalls: "We were camp-bound. We weren't allowed to go out. And we done very little patrolling action. So when the guys–any kind of security patrol or listening or anything, we listed it as a 'tiger hunt,' and we went, just me and the Frenchman."[24]

There was no reserve force to fortify or relieve them, if necessary. Support for the extremely tenuous life at Khe Sanh was almost non-existent, other than a small Caribou aircraft from Thailand that landed at the Lao Bao Penitentiary airstrip. Once, the plane slid off the runway[25] and suddenly 30 - 40 armed Laotians in camouflaged utilities appeared–to assist! "It was crazy! The whole situation up there was crazy!"[26] The border was as ambiguous as it was artificial: "..neither the Vietnamese nor Laotians knew where the border was, and they didn't care. We saw Laotian troops in Khe Sanh routinely then. They came in force."[27] The Caribou, having skidded off the runway, remained that way for several days. "We'd sit down there at night guarding the stupid thing. The Bru would leave us if the tigers came. That was every night! They didn't believe you could kill a tiger, so they wouldn't mess with them. They attributed a lot of religious power to a tiger."[28]

Prohibited by the CIA from patrolling only increased the apprehension by the Americans that enemy forces could have seized their position any time they wished. Vehicle food runs to Quang Tri City involved an uncertain venture along the hazardous, sinuous Route 9, wending through cliffs, over rickety bridges, and passing through dozens of ideal ambush sites. Only two Americans were permitted to travel on these runs, and any Bru standing along the road were picked-up; it was felt this would diminish the possibility of ambush.

The team eventually completed construction of a team house for the team that would relieve them. It was never occupied by that team, however: a typhoon blew it away better than an artillery attack might have. Ironically, communication with Saigon, which had always been difficult, was suddenly rectified by the typhoon. It knocked down their 15-ft. high antenna into the surrounding protective barbed wire alongside the eastern side of their perimeter, and suddenly, comm was "5 by 5."

Another source of apprehension was the position itself:

> One of the stories that we got a hold of real early–and it really alarmed us–was the fact that there was a tunnel in our camp, and it came out in the well–which had collapsed on us where they had filled it in. But we could see where the well was. And they said there was a tunnel from that well, down across that field and it came out the back slope near the jungle. And when the last elements escaped from that fort, that's the way they got out of there. We even went down to see if there was any places down along the embankment going down. They didn't need to charge us, just send us sky-high! That was a very uncomfortable feeling; but the more people you talked to you didn't know whether it was old wives' tale.[29]

The second SF team, A-131, to arrive at Khe Sanh (around September, 1962), the first one to spend its entire 6-month tour at Khe Sanh, was led by Capt Chuck Korchek. At the end of 1962, a Vietnamese engineer unit built the Khe Sanh airstrip using PSP;[30] prior to this time, it was merely a dirt plateau. With the exception of the local French priest who was an intelligence source, contact with others in the area was prohibited. They were even prohibited from going near Lao Bao by the CIA case officer, who also took away their .50 caliber machinegun to the discouragement of the team's light weapons specialist, Frank Fowler.[31] The rat infestation was considerable: "I remember one time we went into the village and bought

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[21] Conversation with James Whitenack, 06 Oct 1988, and COL Bruce B.G. Clarke, 07 October 1988. Both were District Advisors, Huong Hoa District in 1967.

[22] Conversation with Jacques Standing, 20 March 1989.

[23] Conversation with Jacques Standing, 27 March 1989.

[24] Conversation with Gerald J. Howland, 20 March 1989.

[25] The Lao Bao runway was 1,100 x 65 feet, capable of landing C-7a aircraft. [Collins, John M., *Military Geography for Professionals and the Public.* Washington, D.C.: Defense University Press, 1998, p. 373.

[26] Conversation with Jacques Standing, 20 March 1989.

[27] Conversation with Gerald Howland, 20 March 1989.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Conversation with Jacques Standing, 27 March 1989.

[30] Pierced Steel Plate.

[31] Conversation with Frank Fowler, 21 March 1989. Fowler comments:" We had a .50 caliber machinegun when we first established it. And they came and took it away from us because they said there's too much of a chance of it falling into the hands of the north Vietnamese if we got overrun, and they didn't want to jeopardize aircraft in our area. It really makes you

some metal rat traps because it was so bad. We were using mosquito nets on our bunks to keep the rats out. I remember one night there was a big metal rat trap with teeth on it. And I remember the first rat we got. When it snapped, it woke me up. And then the rat started dragging the thing off!"[32]



Second U.S. Army Special Forces team to occupy Khe Sanh, October, 1962, at "Old French Fort" position east of Khe Sanh Village (A-131). Left to right, standing: Interpreter, Ray Norton (Operations Sergeant), Tom Whitley (Demolitions Specialist), Dick Dalton (Intelligence Specialist), Paul Harvey (Heavy Weapons), and Sgt. Burnett (radio operator on lean from DaNang). Left to right, kneeling: Robert Korchek (Detachment Commander), Frank Fowler (Light Weapons), John Hardman (Radio Operator), and Ethel Duffield (Demolitions Specialist). Missing from photo: Roger Kluckman (radio operator), Tom Ross (Medic), and Ken Patterson (Detachment Executive Officer). Photograph from collection of Frank Fowler

The tempo of USMC helicopter sorties in late 1962 and early 1963 was significant. On 13 December 1962, 12 helicopters of HMM-163 made 92 sorties, transporting 304 troops of the First ARVN Division from Hiep Khan Air Strip (YD 635275) into a landing zones at XD 960330 and XD 783356, the latter to become the site of the Lang Vei camp that was overrun by tanks during the 1968 Siege at Khe Sanh. On 31 March 1963, ARVN paratroopers made 70 jumps from H-34D helicopters into the Khe Sanh jump area (XD 859361, the Ft. Dix position), and on 06 April 1963, 6 UH-34D helicopters lifted 130 ARVN troops from the Khe Sanh heliport, "Fort Dix" (XD 859381) into a LZ located in the extreme northwest corner of South Vietnam, just under the DMZ and about two clicks from Laos (at XD 682505), encountering negative opposition. On 11 April 1963, two 0-1Bs encountered small arms fire while flying in the area between Hills 861 and 881S (at XD 784445). The Marine helicopters also conducted various evacuations of POWs, WIAs, and KIAs from the Khe Sanh area.[33]

In June, 1963, Capt Schwar arrived at Khe Sanh with half of an "A" team; the other half was at Kam Duc, led by the XO, 1/Lt Wayne Long who visited Khe Sanh twice a month. During this time, the situation at Khe Sanh "..was pretty good: you could come in by air or you could drive down the road from Dong Ha. you'd get shot at from time to time. in fact, the joke was, 'How do you get to Khe Sanh? You drive down Route 9 and a sniper takes a shot at you and you take the next right!' We had one incident where the team took some fire on that little road between the French Fort and the airstrip [the access road], but that was ordinary."[34]

During this time, Army Special Forces companies switched from control by the CIA to control by what was then "Special Forces Group, Provisional, Vietnam" and later, "Fifth Special Forces Group.[35] The French coffee planter, Felix Poilane, became one of Captain Schwar's primary intelligence sources; Schwar spoke fluent French.[36]

A Royal Lao artillery unit pursued by Pathet Lao forces took refuge at Lao Bao in January, 1964. Capt. Francis X. Harrison, who had just reported to Quang Tri as an advisor to the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Regiment of the 1st ARVN Division (the maneuvering regiment), recalls BV33 as a sort of fortified city:

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feel good!"

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] TE 79.3.3.6 Command Diary, 6 Nov 1962 - 28 June 1963, pp. 1, 3; TE 79.3.3.6 Command Diary, 29 Jan 1963, pp. 18,. 19, 20-22. Task Element 79.3.3.6 was part of MAG-16, commanded by LtCol A. W. McCully, USMC.

[34] Conversation with Wayne Long, 06 Sep 1991.

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] *Ibid.*

..they had their families with them. They had kids. They had supplies all over the place. I mean the whole area was just one big ammo dump. There were open boxes of grenades, open boxes of mortar shells, and machine gun ammunition. They had more ammunition. They must have kept pulling their ammunition with them as they withdrew.[37]

The Commanding officer of the "A" Team at Khe Sanh in early 1964, Capt. Floyd Thompson, became the longest-held American POW of the Vietnam War. Thompson had accompanied an 0-1 "Bird Dog" plane piloted by Capt. Richard Whitesides. It was shot down 26 March 1964. When Thompson regained consciousness, he was surrounded by a group of enemy guerrillas, one of which was attempting to cut off his finger to obtain a ruby ring he wore. His back had been broken and there was no sign of Whitesides, who was later presumed KIA.[38]

Capt Allen B. Imes, Commanding Officer of USSF Team A-728, operating from 7th Special Forces, Ft. Bragg, was sent to Khe Sanh with his team with the mission to determine the whereabouts of Capt. Floyd Thompson. He questioned numerous Bru Montagnards who recalled the plane going down, but little else. When Capt Imes returned in November, 1964, his report concluded was that Floyd Thompson was dead.[39]

While Capt Imes was at the Old French Fort position, he turned one cement block building into a combination mess-hall, operations center, and Comm Office, while a medical dispensary was established down from the hill along Route 9. His men were housed in wood and thatch huts. His unit consisted of the normal 12-man "A" team as well as an Australian Captain and two Australian Sergeants-Major. Although Captain. Reginald Pollard, son of the Chief of Staff of the Australian Army, was actually senior in rank to Capt. Imes, he subordinated himself in order to work with A-728. The Aussies became part of the team, accompanied the Americans on patrols, sometimes in charge of the patrols. In addition, Capt imes hired some 35 to 40 Nung soldiers as personal body guards to the Americans. The Americans, Australians, and Nungs occupied an inner perimeter of the camp; the Vietnamese were placed in an outer perimeter.

A special Scout Platoon of Bru tribesmen was organized and trained. Two of the Bru scouts were particularly trusted and established the intelligence network of agents. The Bru of the Scout Platoon had contacts with Bru in the villages and occasionally ventured into Laos to gather information. BV-33 became another source of information; its Commander occasionally travelled eastward along Route 9 with his family, escorted by Capt Imes' soldiers to the Khe Sanh position. Once every month or two, Imes travelled to visit the Commander of BV-33. The Commander of BV-33 was killed in 1964 (as was Eugene Poilane) when his vehicle struck a land mine while travelling Route 9 east of the Khe Sanh area.

During April, 1964, Major Alfred M. Gray, Jr., arrived and established SESU (Signal Engineering Survey Unit) on Tiger Tooth Mountain (XD 835540), perhaps in connection with the introduction of guerrilla teams into Laos during Operation LEAPING LENA.[40] The presence of the first U.S. Marine infantry forces in Vietnam (which was at Khe Sanh, a 76-man infantry detachment from Co G, 2/3, reinforced with an 81mm mortar section commanded by 1/Lt Raymond J. Otlowski) was a great relief to Capt Imes who was convinced that because that platoon was present he avoided attack. Abruptly, one day, Capt Imes received a message that General John K. Waters was coming to Khe Sanh. Waters was USARPAC (U.S. Army Forces, Pacific), a 4-star General and General Patton's son-in-law. Capt Imes gave a briefing, and then General Waters said, "OK, now it's my turn," and proceeded to explain the presence of 15,000 North Vietnamese Army soldiers massed on the DMZ which the American command expected to attack and seize northern I Corps, cut it off, declare a neutral country and receive the recognition of Russia, China, and North Vietnam.. The General continued: the mission of Special Forces would then involved going underground as a "stay-behind" force to wage guerrilla warfare. Imes recalls: "It scared me to death! Our mission from the mouth of USARPAC Commander was to let the Vietnamese and Montagnards fend for themselves, take our Nungs and the Scout Platoon, and become our own guerrilla force."[41]

During 1964, the A Team also made the decision to abandon the Old French Fort position and establish a base on the airstrip, a decision based on a meeting of Capt. Imes at the "B" Detachment in DaNang, commanded by Maj Nantz. The Executive officer of the "B" Detachment, Maj David Watts (who later became a General) was the real brains behind the idea

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[37] Conversation with Francis X. Harrison, 26 February 1989.
[38] John G. Hubbell, *P.O.W.*, New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976, pp. 383-384.
[39] Conversation with Allan B. Imes, 14 October 1988.
[40] Major Gray and his unit occupied Tiger Tooth Mt. on 13 May, and during Operation LEAPING LENA, 8-man reconnaissance teams with 2 Americans per team parachuted into Tchepone, Laos, 24 June. Only 5 survived. SESU departed Tiger Tooth Mt. 16-19 July. [Asst CoS Memo AO1a (JCSO-kh 001A32564, 13 Nov 1964, to CMC, Subj: USMC participation in Vietnam, Encl (1), p. 2; Capt Robert H. Whitlow, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, the Advisory and Combat Assistance Era, 1954-1964*, Washington, D.C.: HQMC, 1977, p. 139. Maj Gray later became General Gray, Commandant of the Marine Corps.
[41] Conversation with Allan B. Imes, 14 October 1988.

and engineered the entire operation.[42]

By November, 1964, Capt. Chuck Allen's team had already arrived together with several months of food supplies. At this point, Special Forces teams rotated in and out of Khe Sanh on 6-month tours. Due to socked-in weather, conditions became difficult with two different teams occupying the same area, each with different ways of doing things. Finally, a Caribou aircraft suddenly appeared, Imes and his team left behind all their crossbows and other souvenirs, even official records, and hopped on the aircraft with only their fatigues and rifles.[43] Chuck Allen's team from First Special Forces, Okinawa, made the move to the Khe Sanh airstrip and spent its 6-month tour building a central command bunker, bunkers in the four corners, and about 15 additional buildings,[44] all later assumed by Marines to have been constructed by the French.

Capt Allen established a civilian council that included Felix Poilane, Father Poncet, the Millers, and a number of other French residents of the area, to promote a civic action program with the Bru tribes people. He also established various agent nets to gather intelligence and maintained liaison with BV-33.

The next "A" Team, arriving at Khe Sanh in March, 1965, had trained at Ft.Bragg, NC; they were led by Capt Bostick and consisted of Pete Morakon (Team Leader), Claude Rule (Intelligence Sergeant), later relieved by Charlie Biddle, O'Leary and Sgt Cobb (Medic), SSGT McFadden (radio operator), SGT Louis Wells (junior radio operator, Higgins, Charles Black, and Al Keating (weapons).[45] When they arrived at Khe Sanh, construction of the concrete bunkers begun by Chuck Allen was not yet completed. The team continued to patrol its AO, roughly 40 kilometers north to south and 20 kilometers east to west with patrols lasting 3 - 15 days and consisting of two Americans and a varied number of indigenous,. Once or twice a month, a patrol crossed the border to visit BV33, a unit 200 to 300 strong "..with all their families, chickens, and everything else." A C-47 airplane frequently landed at the Khe Sanh airstrip with supplies to be transported along Route 9 to BV33.[46]

The camp at Khe Sanh consisted of concrete bunkers in the corners on which were placed some makeshift rocket launchers firing numerous 2.75-inch rockets left behind by Marine H-34 helicopters during a previous operation. They made a terrific noise upon being fired; General Walt, during one of his visits, was puzzled over the apparent new weapon until he was informed of what they were. He thought it was a grand idea.[47] The airstrip, constructed of PSP, was C-130 capable. When the large birds landed on the east end of the runway and taxied uphill towards the western end past the camp, they made a terrific racket as the PSP rolled in front of the aircraft on each landing.[48]

When Captain John D. Waghelstein (Callsign "BRONCO ONE") reported as Commanding Officer on 9 October 1965, the camp consisted to two companies of Montagnards, a company of Vietnamese LLDB,[49] plus 30 Nungs. The Khe Sanh camp was the only one of the seven camps in I Corps that had Chinese mercenaries. As he glanced out of his window the very day he arrived, Captain Waghelstein spotted one of the Nungs laying a machinegun pointed at the LLDB team house. There was no love lost between the Vietnamese and the Montagnards and the Nungs; while the Nungs and Montagnards got along fairly well, both being oppressed minorities in Viet Nam, neither group got along well with the Vietnamese, and the hatred and suspicion were mutual. The Nungs worked directly with the twelve American advisors but were constantly being given orders by the LLDB who resented that special relationship. The Nungs were highly valued by Americans as good soldiers more than earning their pay in every engagement. The Vietnamese company, on the other hand, was assumed to be infiltrated with enemy agents. The Bru Montagnards were especially well-liked by the Green Berets as a "..very simple people who were patient, steadfast, loyal.[50]

By October, 1965, recon patrols reported enemy moving into the Khe Sanh area. "We knew it would only be a matter of time and we would get hit because we started to be a thorn in their side. We were hitting them on the trail networks."[51] Miss Nancy Costello, one of the Wycliffe Bible Translators who arrived in September, 1965, and lived in Rev. Loc's[52] "guest house," recalls that the situation was always tense, the local people continuously reporting they saw the enemy and their friends in

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[42] Conversation with Allan B. Imes, 23 October 1988.
[43] Conversation with Allan B. Imes, 14 and 23 October 1988.
[44] Conversation with Church Allen, 19 June 1986.
[45] Conversation with Pete Morakon, 26 May 1986.
[46] Conversation with Peter Morakon, 21 July 1985.
[47] *Ibid.*
[48] Taped comments of COL John D. Waghelstein, 9 May 1986.
[49] LLDB = Luc Dong Dac Viet" (Vietnamese Special Forces), a group conducting unconventional and covert operations. They wore red berets.
[50] Taped comments of COL John D. Waghelstein, 9 May 1986.
[51] Conversation with Mr. Peter Morakon, 24 September 1985.
[52] Rev. Loc was a Vietnamese pastor who built a church structure in Khe Sanh village, ministering to Bru.

Laos reported the enemy moving into the Khe Sanh area.[53]

During November, cross-border reports warned that NVA units were no longer moving south; they had halted and were stockpiling large quantities supplies. November monsoon rains socked the camp in for 28 consecutive days, finally breaking around December 1st. Patrols were doubled, and there was an increase in agent reports and increased reliance on information provided by local inhabitants. Reports from the local Bru were considered trustworthy. They were completely loyal to the District Chief who had made a Bru, Mr. Onya, his number two man.[54]

Similar reports were received during December such as one on 6 December 1965 that reported four enemy battalions had crossed into South Vietnam at XD 6655. All indications pointed to a buildup of a rather considerable enemy force.[55]

During this monsoon fog that the better part of a NVA regiment became lost and took a wrong fork when they crossed the border. Blundering into a small border village protected by Popular Forces, they overran it and established antiaircraft positions in the adjacent hills. These positions, visible when the fog temporarily lifted the next day, were struck by U.S. Air Force fixed wing, but the weather again deteriorated, shrouding their position. One of the Montagnards from the village managed to report to the USSF camp that he had seen many dead enemy soldiers from the air strikes and that the enemy force was now moving northeast.[56]

The enemy movement was confirmed by agent reports which indicated two regiments of NVA crossed the border. Capt. Waghelstein dispatched a 65-man patrol to screen the western flank of the district along the Laotian border, attempting to locate the enemy unit. By the night of 22 December, the friendly patrol was ten kilometers northwest of the camp. Foggy conditions restricted visibility to less than 40 meters.[57] The patrol was able to monitor Chinese voice transmissions on their radio.[58]

The USSF patrol engaged the North Vietnamese unit for about two hours of battle. The patrol leader kept moving his men despite the growing volume of enemy fire. As the weather improved, artillery was called to strike the enemy's rear supporting elements. USAF FACs directed artillery and fighter aircraft, annihilating the scattered and rapidly retreating enemy force. The friendly force returned, suffering only minor casualties. One of the enemy KIA was obviously a Chinese advisor, and the abandoned equipment was brand new, some still packed in cosmolene. The enemy KIA were green; all had fresh haircuts.[59]

Victory was temporary. Reports were then received of NVA returning to the area, this time with 120mm mortars carried by elephants. Miss Nancy Costello, who was to have Christmas dinner at the Poilane's at 1000 that day, was told to come instead to the Special Forces camp for her protection. The situation had become very grave. A platoon of Marine engineers arrived in December, 1965, to assist improvement of the camp's bunker defenses.[60]

On 3 January 1966, a company of Nungs arrived to augment the camp's strength. Also arriving that date were two U.S. Air Force Bird Dog observation planes to begin Operation TIGERHOUND. General Westmoreland had given it this name, "Tiger" for aggressiveness and "hound" for smelling out the enemy. Their mission was to conduct aerial reconnaissance inside Laos to a depth of 12 miles "..to interdict enemy supply routes in northern Laos through air strikes, support U.S. Army Special Forces operations, and to conduct visual air reconnaissance of the area for intelligence purposes." If the acquired target were especially significant, B-52 strikes were conducted after clearance had been first obtained from the American Ambassador in Laos.[61]

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[53] Comments of Miss Nancy Costello to Stubbe at Khe Sanh, 10 December 1968.

[54] Letter of Mr. John Miller, 09 Oct 1969: Due to his education and prominence, he was appointed by the government as Assistant District Chief of Huong Hoa. "Among the Bru people, however, he would not have been in a position of authority since such positions were hereditary."

[55] Waghelstein, CPT John D., "A Vital Link," *Infantry Magazine*, Ft. Benning, Ga: Infantry Magazine, p. 286; 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Quarterly Command Report for Period Ending 31 December 1965, dated 15 January 1966, Incl (1), Khe Sanh Operations, 29 Nov 1965, dated 1 January 1966.

[56] Waghelstein, "A Vital Link," p. 286; Taped comments from COL John D. Waghelstein, 9 May 1986.

[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 286ff.

[58] Incl (1), Subj: Khe Sanh operations, 29 Nov 1965 in 5th Special Forces (ABN), 1st Special Forces, Quarterly Command Report for Period Ending 31 December 1965, dated 15 January 1986.

[59] Waghelstein, taped comments, 9 May 1986.

[60] Comments of Miss Costello, 23 July 1987; Taped comments of COL Waghelstein, 9 May 1986; Comments of Miss Costello to Navy Chaplains at Camp Tien Sha, DaNang, Vietnam, 10 December 1968. [Philippians 4:6-7: "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the pece of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." The original Greek word for "guard" is a Greek military term; Paul's metaphor implies that the peace of God is like a military guard over a believer's heart.

[61] Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, pp. 196, 198; CPL Mick Taylor, "Tigerhound O1E's 'Hunt' for Marines," III MF: *sea*

The evening formation was "enjoying" the usual evening harangue right before supper at dusk on January 3rd over which Capt. Waghelstein had become increasingly apprehensive. (It must be noted and emphasized that the Special Forces camp at Khe Sanh, as also later the camp at Lang Vei, was a Vietnamese camp with American advisors, not an American installation with Vietnamese; the Vietnamese had the final word).

Suddenly, three rounds of 120 mm mortars exploded in the midst of the formation, causing almost all of the casualties that were to be sustained during the ensuing battle.[62] Khe Sanh was to be the place where the enemy introduced 120 mm mortars, the heaviest ordnance in Vietnam to this point.[63] The newly-arrived Bird Dog aircraft had not yet been placed in large underground revetments that were to be dug by the engineers and were severely damaged before they were put in operation.

The defenders scrambled to underground shelters; once underground, they took no further casualties. The enemy shifted fires attempting to hit the bunkers, striking the team house where, because it was the coldest time of the year, there was always a fire. Fires from the burning team house provided all the necessary illumination in the darkness of the night. Although antennas began collapsing, the Communications Sergeant, McFadden, continued to maintain communications until he was eventually pulled out of the burning rubble and taken to the bunker in the center of the camp

A large underground bunker in the center of the camp which had been used to store ammunition had earlier been cleared for use as an operations center and now, as a medical bunker. (This was later the 26th Marines COC before and during the Siege battle). Since Doc Cobb, the senior medic of the team, was unfortunately in DaNang at the time, Doc Robinson, the junior medic, the missionaries (Nancy Costello and Eugenia Johnson), and four Bru girls the Army had been training as nurses, attended and saved the wounded. Their work was well done: of the 12 or 14 that were medevaced as critical, only one was lost.[64] Miss Nancy Costello recalls that during the attack, the words of Philippians 4.6-7 kept coming to her mind and, that during the attack, she lost her translation notes–and her purse![65]

Counter-mortar fire was impossible. The 120s were fired just outside the range of the camp's 81s, although within the range of 105s, but there were no recoil pits to allow high angle fire. The enemy had positioned their tubes within this "dead space" and fired unmolested, a tactic that was to be repeated during the 1968 siege battle when the enemy moved into an area they considered to be safe from B52 strikes but sufficiently distant from the perimeter to avoid fire from within the camp.

About midnight, the "Ridge Runners," Marine Corps medevac helicopters, landed inside the camp without assistance other than the light from the burning camp, and the critically wounded were lifted out as the enemy continued pounding the camp until about 0300.

There had been a rather strange CRUMP explosion, maybe one round out of ten, nowhere as loud as the other 120 rounds; it was first assumed these were 81s. They were actually 120s with a delayed fuse, a round that could cut through twelve feet of the laterite soil and detonate. Those that landed on the PSP sheets only penetrated six feet. The enemy was obviously aiming for the bunkers, attempting to annihilate the camp. Fortunately, none ever hit the medical bunker in the center of the camp.

Clear skies the next morning enabled evacuation of the remainder of the wounded and a continuation of airstrikes that had started during the night. The NVA forces had already departed from their revenge mission. Another company of Nungs arrived, giving the camp commander a total of five companies: two Bru Montagnard, one Vietnamese, and two MIKE forces of Nungs in addition to the Nungs already assigned to the camp.

The combined effects of this operation and B-52 strikes in the Khe Sanh area during the first two weeks of January, 1966, resulted in a report of a NVA unit moving some 200 wounded from a point six miles south of the DMZ to a tunneled area containing a hospital about six miles to the west.[66]

After rebuilding the camp, life returned to the normal pattern of continuous patrolling of the area. Every major operation

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Tiger 3:28 (14 July 1967); History of 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron, Jan-Mar 1968, Tab T, 20th TASS, in Vol. II, Quarterly History, 504th Tactical Air Support Group, Jan-Mar 1968, App. 6, Subordinate Unit Histories.

[62] There were 11 friendly KIA and 30 WIA. Two 0-1 aircraft were destroyed. {"Chronology, 1 Jan - 30 Jun 1966," in LBJ Library, Papers of Wm. C. Westmoreland, Box 8, History Backup File #7 (24 May - 16 Jul 1966), Doc #72.]

[63] Sharp and Westmoreland, *Report on the War in Vietnam*, p. 123. The 120 mm Soviet mortar can fire 12-15 rounds per minute, each round weighing 75.4 KG, max range is 5,700 meters; minimum range is 460 meters. Weight of the weapon in traveling position is 500 KG (1100 pounds); it has a crew of 6 men. [Weeks, COL John, ed., *Jane's Infantry Weapons*, 7th ed., London & New York: Janes, 1981, pp. 495-496].

[64] Taped comments of COL John Waghelstein, 09 May 1986.

[65] Comments of Nancy Costello to Navy chaplains at Camp Tien Sha, DaNang, Vietnam, 10 December 1968.

[66] DIA, Intelligence Summary #13-66, 17 Jan 1966, p. F-1. Note: This is the location occupied by B5-T8, the Khe Sanh Front Headquarters that supervised the 1968 Khe Sanh siege battle.

from the camp contained at least two Americans of the dozen assigned, plus six Nungs and a variety of other indigenous.[67]

Meanwhile, in Laos to the west, the North Vietnamese were moving up to 600 tons of supplies per day in the dry season and 125 tons per day in the rainy season, using Route 9 as part of their effort to supply forces operating in South Vietnam.[68] The magnitude of such traffic occupied the efforts of TIGERHOUND and SOG who attempted to locate caches and supply routes branching off the major Ho Chi Minh and Santa Fe Trail systems, intercept radio and land-line communications, as the enemy meticulously and relentlessly prepared the Khe Sanh battlefield. The NVA forces, dependent on foot travel for the most part upon entering the rugged mountains and thick vegetation, developed a communication system that was also their greatest vulnerability. They were forced to remain within one night's march of supporting bases which provided storage, troop concealment, hospital, communications centers, training areas for new cadres for personnel which had been kidnapped or recruited from the villages. Lacking maps, they were dependent on the use of guides or carefully marked trails for movement.[69] The requirement for trail guides became their Achilles' Heel: SOG patrols were dressed and armed to appear as enemy guides and thus obtained information on the quantity and quality of troops, type and quantity of weapons and supplies being introduced into South Vietnam, unit identification.

Some consideration for using Khe Sanh as a jumping-off base to launch an operation to sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail had been considered in 1964. A Memorandum to the Secretary of State, concluded: (1) Route 9 "..should be considered .. to block, limit, or detect infiltration into South Vietnam." (2) This route "should be improved in the course of the long range peace-time development of the region as a component of a regional highway system .. and as an access to land-locked Laos." (3) "Route 9 runs through territory held by the Pathet Lao and used by North Vietnam,ese in support of the campaign in the south." (4) "Introduction of foreign military forces is prohibited by the I962 Geneva Agreement without exception. Therefore, any operations in the PL-held positions of the road would entail either a basic United States policy change to permit open violation of the Agreement, or elaborate diplomatic preparation to reconcile the action with the Agreement and establish an acceptable non-military rationals."[70] Although the plan initially aroused interest, officials in Washington quickly abandoned the idea.[71] In a later memo, Bundy wrote Rusk: "This sealing-off project which would require overt introduction of foreign forces in vi9olation of the Geneva Accords, might serve to seal off the Ho Chi Minh Trail ... However, we would immediately be trading that gain for the outbreak of a new war in Laos at least as intense as the war we were unwilling to fight in 1961. Can we not assume that North Viet Nam would throw itself into that fight as least as hard as the one in the south ..? It seems likely also that Communist China would feel more threatened and .. favor intervention."[72] The idea was not abandoned, however, and detailed plans were developed in 1966 after American Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge returned to Saigon in 1965 and his successor, Ellsworth Bunker also enthusiastically endorsed Westmoreland's proposal. The plan involved the Third Marine Division moving along Route 9 to seize Tchepone.[73] The decision not to sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail network was made in Washington in April, 1967, much to Dr. Walt Rostow's chagrin.[74]

By late 1966, General Westmoreland firmly believed North Vietnamese forces were about to descend in large numbers into the Khe Sanh area.[75] General Walt, CG of III MAF, did not concur and noted: "I believe far too much emphasis is being

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[67] Conversation with COL John D. Waghelstein, 14 May 1986.

[68] CIA Memorandum, "The Vietnamese Communists' Will to Persist," SC No. 09624/66, "An Analysis of the Vietnamese Communist's Strengths, Capabilities, and Will to Persist in Their Present Strategy in Vietnam," 26 Aug 1966, Fig 1-4.

[69] Davis, LtGen Raymond E., USMC, "Military Operations in Counter-Insurgency," Presentation for CIRADS-4, 15-17 Sep 1970, Ft. Bliss, Texas.

[70] Information Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Bundy) to Secretary of State Rusk, 30 Nov 1964 in U.S. Dept. of State, *foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, Vol. XXVIII, *Laos*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1998, pp. 294-296.

[71] Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, p. 145.

[72] Information Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs (Bundy) to Secretary of State Rusk, 3 Dec 1965, in U.S. Dept. of State, F*oreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, Vol. XXVIII, *Laos*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1998, pp. 418-420.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 366.

[74] Transcript of video interview of Dr. Walt Rostow by Mr. John Wright, 31 January 1989. General Westmoreland had convened a small joint staff during November, 1967 - March, 1968, to prepare a plan to conduct a corps-size operation into Tchepone to sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail at Tchepone known as Operation Plan EL PASO. It was to be launched from Khe Sanh Combat Base. [Collins, John M., *Military Geography for Professionals and the Public*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1998, pp. 367-385, provides a summary of this operation]. Due to the eruption of the siege battle, this was abandoned, but later became the basis of Operation LAM SON 719 launched 8 February 1971.

[75] FMFPAC, *Trip Summary, Visit to Western Pacific by Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, 29 August - 7*

placed on the importance of the infiltration threat."[76] The Defense Intelligence Agency on 22 September 1966 reported "..possible elements of the 324B Division or some other unidentified units were .. reorganizing near the Khe Sanh Special Forces Camp on 16 September and about 14 elephants were said to be transporting supplies.[77]

Despite their dissenting evaluation, CG, III MAF, acquiesced to MACV's concerns. CG, FMFPAC, noted: "Intelligence reports of heavy NVA infiltration south across the DMZ into northern Quang Tri Province have been received regularly during the month [of September, 1966]. They have been in the form of agent reports of units on the move using the mountains of western Quang Tri to screen them, of aerial observers who have sighted recently well-used trails and river crossing sitexs, bivouac areas, etc.; of aerial photography (including SLAR)[78] in the DMZ and along roads leading south from North Vietnam showing heavy night trime motor traffic; and of enemy POWs claiming membership in NVA regular units. Results of the analysis of these reports present the possibility that two NVA divisions (341 and 324B) or significant elements of them may be in or near the objective area of Operations PRAIRIE, with the capability now or in the near future of initiating a major offensive operation near the DMZ. To capitalize on this information in the hope of reducing the enemy concentration before the enemy can launch an attack, CG, III MAF has directed .. Reinforcement of the Khe Sanh Special Forces Camp (XD 8438) with one battalion.."[79]

The staff of CG, 3d Marine Division, immediately began research to compare Khe Sanh with Dien Bien Phu, the French outpost that fell, preparing, "Khe Sanh Area Report,"[80] and concluding that Khe Sanh was indeed very similar to Dien Bien Phu; no essential differences were noted–from a geographical perspective.

The G-2 of 3d Marine Division, Colonel Thomas M. Horne, reported to Khe Sanh as "SOP Khe Sanh/III MAF Rep" and found only a small Special Forces camp. "I've never seen anything like it. It was remote and it had been inhabitated by Montagnards for so long that iet was full of rats. My memory of that place is waking up with 15 or 20 rats on the bed with me."[81] A detachment of 65 Navy Seabees from U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion TEN operating out of DaNang arrived 10 September 1966 to upgrade the airstrip. The project involved removal of some 3300 feet of heavy World War II type pierced steel matting, construction of a parking apron and two 300-ft. extensions, and laying some 3900 feet of the new aluminum matting, AM-2[82] delivered in over 300 sorties and emplaced in deteriorating weather.[83] Marine baqttalion 1/3 deployed to the Khe Sanh Special Forces camp on 29/30 September, 1966 "..in response to an expected major offensive by NVA to attempt to overrun Khe Sanh."[84]

The USSF detachment at Khe Sanh maintained outposts at Co Put (XD 788383), Lang Vei (XD 791365), a site that later became the new Lang Vei camp in late 1967 (XD 787356), and at XD 800356,[85] and established a permanent OP on Hill 950 (XD 844455 manned by 30 CIDG and 3 USSF personnel.[86]

The original mission of 1/3 "..was that we were going up there to be the protective cordon around the Special Forces camp," to protect the vital intelligence-gathering activities and protect the airfield comlex during its repair.[87] Officially, the mission of 1/3 was "Conduct recon in force operations, coordinate activities of USMC forces assigned, advisors to Project DELTA, LLDB/CIDG, ARVN, RF/PF forces in the Khe Sanh TAOR, to provide security for the Khe Sanh CIDG Camp/Airfield and detect VC/NVA movement into RVN from sanctuaries in laos and DMZ; conduct offensive operations against enemy forces located, within capability."[88] COL Thomas M. Horne, the "Senior Officer Present, 3dMarDiv/III MAF Representative, Khe Sanh," was assigned the mission: "assume authority as III MAF executive agent in the exercise of CG III MAF authority relative to SOG operations emanating from the Khe Sanh TAOR," and operate under the direct supervision of CG, 3d Marine Division and

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September 1966, 8 September 1966, p. 5.

[76] LtGen L.W. Walt, ltr to LtGen H.W. Buse, Jr., Ser 000200966, TOP SECRET, of 29 December 1966, appended to III MAF OPLAN 121-66, PRACTICE NINE.

[77] DIA Intelligence Summary, 22 September IDAS 222-66, p. A-3.

[78] SLAR = Side Looking Airborne Radar, used to detect moving vehicles.

[79] FMFPAC 300316Z/Sep66, SITREP #549.

[80] Appended to 3dMarDiv Command Chronology, January, 1967.

[81] Conversation with COL Thomas M. Horne, 11 January 1987.

[82] AM2 sheets are 12-ft. long, 2-ft. wide, and weigh 144 pounds each.

[83] NMCB10 *News Release*, "Seabee Detachment Upgrades Vital Airstrip Khe Sanh Special Forces Camp, Khe Sanh, RVN, November, 1966.

[84] G-2, 3dMarDiv ltr 2/PAW/cis, 22 Aug 1967, BSM file on Maj Anthony Lukeman. Maj Lukeman was the S-3, 1/3, who planned the move.

[85] G2, 1st Infantry Division Hue 240300Z/Oct66 in III MAF COXC Journal and File 28-29 Oct 1966 #83.

[86] III MAF COC 281837Z/Oct66 to MACV COC J-234 in III MAF COC Journal and File 28-29 Oct 1966 #131.

[87] Conversation with G. W. O'Dell, 11 May 1986

[88] 3dMarDiv FragO 427-66 in 3dMarDiv Command Chronology, November, 1966.

exercise operational control of Detachment A-101, Fifth SFGA, and Third Marine Division forces operating within the Khe Sanh TAOR.[89]

During 19-25 December 1966, the USSF camp at Khe Sanh relocated to the ARVN camp at Lang Vei, replacing ARVN battalion 3/2 (which then located at the old French Fort on 24 December.) The move was assumed to be temporary, and the Marines were directed not to destroy the permanent structures of the camp "..in the event future repositioning of the Khe Sanh USMC BN requires relocation of the CIDG camp back to Khe Sanh." These structures by this time included: underground concrete living qurters, underground concrete Tigerhound quarters, underground III MAF CIC [Combined intelligence Center], underground concrete communications bunker, mortar pits in inner perimeter, three underground timber CIDG corner living barracks (diagonal in the corners of the camp), underground concrete dispensary, USASF underground mess, above ground timber CIDG cookhouse, and the portion of CIDG supply byuilding that has concrete floor.[90]

III MAF requested SOG for in-country reconnaissance, sn extension of SHINING BRASS to the area bounded by the DMZ on the north, Laos on the west, Grid Line (GL) 50 on the south, and GL 90 on the east, 17 September through 15 October 1966.[91] This area was suspected to be a major infiltration zone and an Arc Light (B-52) strike was requested in the extreme northwest corner of South Vietnam due to numerous SPAR[92] reports.[93] On 18 September 1966, just under the DMZ and in this area, a pilot of VMFA-323 observed a heavy-travelled road and trench line adjacent the road, together with numerous gun positions.[94] One of the SOG patrols uncovered an enemy base camp on 27 September at XD 837653 with 150 to 200 enemy eating; three tunnels, and numerous enemy soldiers.[95]

In addition to the increased AO of SHINING BRASS *in* South Vietnam, a temporary extension of the SHINING BRASS AO in Laos was approved by the Department of State to include an area that subsequently became the NVA Front Headquarters controlling the Khe Sanh Siege battle in 1968, given the secret designation, B5-T8, "..a heavily infested area north of Route 9 and to a depth approaching 20 kilometers from the Vietnam border."[96]

In mid-October, 1966, III MAF reported JTAD bilateral collection capability,[97] and soon thereafter a JTAD Station was located at Khe Sanh.

JTAD [Joint Technical Advisory Detachment]

Americans walking the jungles of the Khe Sanh area and neighboring Laos in civilian clothes, former NVA now loyal to us reporting on NVA units operating in the area, reports of NVA regiments and battalions and of Russian advisors–which made the Khe Sanh area—seemingly so serene, even a Garden of Eden—to be the playground of lurking demons of destruction which suddenly devoured life: this was the world of JTAD, the Joint Technical Advisory Detachment.

By the time of the Hill Battles of 1967,[98] reports from JTAD began pouring into the command at Khe Sanh. For example, on 13 May, JTAD reported a long established NVA bivouac area at Co Roc (XD 741317) into which two battalions of the 95C Regiment had moved.[99] On 27 May, capitalizing on agent reports from JTAD of 15 May, an afternoon of air strikes against a trail complex, harbor site and supply area, produced a virtual 4th of July fireworks display when, at 1305, jet strikes in an area 8 - 9 clicks directly south of Khe Sanh village produced one large secondary explosion and five secondary fires. Subsequent air strikes during the next two hours produced several additional large secondary explosions and fires.[100] JTAD reported

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[89] MACV ltr J3 00539 of 12 Apr 1966; 3d MarDiv FragO 427-66 in 3d MarDiv Command Chronology, November, 1966.
[90] CO CO C 5th SFGA DaNang 180900Z/Dec66, Movement of Khe Sanh CIDG Camp to Lang Vei, and III MAF COC 250251Z/Decv66, in III MAF COC Journal and File #J35 and 39.
[91] CG III MAF 140935Z/Sep 66 to COMUSMACV in III MAF COC Journal and File 14-15 Sep 1966, #J-92.
[92] Special Agent Report, *i.e.*, detections by signals intelligence, SIGINT.
[93] III MAF COC 121303Z/Sep66 to COMUSMACV in III MAF COC Journal and File 12-13 Sep 1966, #152.
[94] I MAW telephone call to III MAF COC 181453H/Sep66 in III MAF COC Journal and File 18-19 Sep 1966, #J48; Cf. #J56.
[95] III MAF COC 280341Z/Sep66 to MACV COC, Immediate Arc Light, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 28-29 Sep 1966, #30.
[96] Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Ungar) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs (Donnelly), 3 Oct 1966, in U.S. Dept. of State: *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, Vol. XXVIII, *Laos*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1998, p. 500.
[97] III MAF COC 201311Z/Oct66, in III MAF Journal and File, 20/21 Oct 1966, #123.
[98] 24 April - 10 May 1967.
[99] 26 MAR 190430Z/May67, in Operation CROCKETT INTSUM #6.
[100] 26 MAR Operation CROCKETT INTSUM #15 The target area was 8 - 9 clicks directly south of Khe Sanh village. At 1345H, jets striking XD 844296 produced one large secondary explosion and 5 secondary fires from what appeared to be small arms ammo burning, resulting in one automatic weapons position destroyed. At 1440H, an airstrike on the trail complex resulted in 2 secondary fires. At 1515H, a strike on the supply point and harbor site at XD 796282 produced 2 secondary fires. At 1515H, a strike on the supply point and harbor site at XD 796282 produced 2 secondary fires. Shortly thereafter (at

Russian advisors entering the Khe Sanh area accompanying NVA units.[101] JTAD continued to report caves, 130mm mortars on rails, large troop concentrations, and logistic activity on the Co Roc area throughout the summer and fall of 1967.[102]

III MAF's G-2, MGEN Kenneth J. Houghton, was cautious, however: "They were a funny outfit," he noted, "When I inspected them and took over as G-2, they were wearing civilian clothes! I said, 'Why are you wearing civilian clothes?' They said, 'Well, we're under cover!' Well, you know anybody who wore civilian clothes stood out like a sore thumb!"[103]

Although located in the small Huong Hoa District Headquarters in Khe Sanh Village, the MACV Advisor to the District Chief, Capt. James Whitenack, recalls: "I never talked with them that much. They were off by themselves. They had a radio there. I never saw them do much of anything. They'd come and go."[104]

Nagging concerns by those in the "2" shops who received their reports varied from "Are they saying this because this is what they think we want to hear?" (which is a typical Oriental propensity) to "Is their loyalty still to North Vietnam, and they're feeding us information to divert our resources or disregard a major enemy activity." The Army Advisor to the District Chief in late 1967, Capt Bruce Clarke, when asked, "Did they just say what they thought we wanted to hear?" reponded, "Hard to tell. I don't remember any strategic intelligence being gained, but conversely, I do remember there being some accuracy in a few small, almost peripheral matters."[105] Furthermore, the information was usually many days old by the time it was received, and then, there was no way to evaluate the information since the track record of individual sources was unknown. Their reports were always reported as "F-6" by the 26th Marines Regimental S-2, Harper Bohr, Jr., at briefings.[106]

1550H), a jet strike at a supply point at XD 821305 resulted in one large secondary explosion and 3 secondary fires. At 1610H, airstrikes on XD 778286, a harbor site and storage area, produced one large secondary fire. Ten minutes later, a strike at XD 821240, a harbor site and storage area, resulted in a small secondary fire of powder explosives. Finally, at 1645H, an airstrike at a harbor site and supply point at XD 821286 produced two small fires which appeared to be in caves or holes and a third hole which was burning intensely with little smoke and red flames. [26 MAR Operation CROCKETT INSTUM #15].

[101] JTAD report of 14 May indicated 2 Russian and 3 Chinese acted as Signal advisors of a NVA regiment located at XD 716256. [26 MAR Operation CROCKETT INTSUM #2]. On 5 September 1967, JTAD reported 2 NVA battalions moved from XD 675248 to XD 781245 (Pe Louang 1), 1600-men strong and including 6 very tall men believed to be Russians acting as advisers (JTAD Report #074]. The 26th Marines S-2, Maj Harper L. Bohr, Jr., noted this was the second report of NVA units in the Khe Sanh area with Caucasian/Russian advisers, but this was the first report of these advisers accompanying units into South Vietnam [26 MAR 090400Z/Sep67, Operation ARDMORE INTSUM #54].

[102] JTAD Report of 15 June 1967 noted that on 13 June a large NVA unit was located in a triangular area formed by coordinates XD 700308, XD 740317, and XD 709328, an area containing a large tunnel with entrances at XD 700308, XD 740317, XD 709328m and XD 704314 containing large quantities of food, about 1800 men armed with many heavy weapons, anti-aircraft weapons, machine-guns, and individual rifles. It was believed to be a staging area for North Vietnamese Army units infiltrating to the south from which they are broken into smaller units to continue their infiltration. [26 MAR 160730Z/Jun67, Operation CROCEKTT INTSUM #34]. During the first three days of August, 1967, agent reports from JTAD and reports from Special Forces and District identified enemy forces from a battalion to a regiment within a 3-kilometer radius of XD 7530, some 2000 meters south of Co Roc, all with the mission of attacking the Army Special forces camp at Lang Vei. [26 MAR 030545Z/Aug67, Operation ARDMORE INTSUM #17]. JTAD Report #072 of 25 August 1967, reported a NVA company camped in stone caves in the vicinity of Lang Vuc Tonc (XD 775324), the foot of Co Roc Mountain Massif. The unit consisted of approx. 150 men and was armed with 2 81mm mortars, 4 60mm mortars, 3 machineguns, 6 automatic rifles and individual weapons. [26 MAR 030625Z/Sep67, Operation ARDMORE INTSUM #48]. A JTAD report of 30 Sep 1967 placed a NVA battalion just east of Co Roc, on the Laotian bank of the Xe Pone River of 600 men and an additional 600-man battalion further to the south. [26 Mar 041110Z/Oct 67 Operation ARDMORE INTSUM #79]. Another JTAD report placed a 800-man NVA battalion just inside the Laotian border 16 clicks north of Route 9 (XD 687547 - the location of what was to become the Headquarters of B5-T8, the NVA Front Headquarters controlling the siege of Khe Sanh) [*Ibid.*] According to JTAD Report #103 of 05 October 1967, on 02 October a NVA battalion was camped at XD 689547 (about 3 clicks inside South Vietnam from the Laotian border), consisting of 550 men armed with 3 82mm mortars, 4 60mm mortars, 2 anti-aircraft weapons mounted on two wheels, and 2 .30 caliber machineguns. [26 MAR 061001Z/Oct67, Operation ARDMORE INSUM #81].

[103] Conversation with Major General Kenneth Houghton, 25 Sep 1988. When 1Lt Jaimie Taronju was the senior Military Advisor of JTAD (arrived in the Fall of 1967 and departed a few days after the District HQ was attacked and the Americans evacuated to KSCB), he wore a uniform, but his assistant, Sgt. Amos, did not [Conversation with Jaime Taronju, 06 Feb 2004 and letter from Jaime Taronji, Jr., 4 Nov 2004].

[104] Conversation with James Whitenack, 06 Oct 1988.

[105] Conversation with COL Bruce Clarke, 07 Oct 1988.

[106] "F-6" refers to an evaluation by an intelligence officer designating reliability of the source (A=Completely reliable, B=Usually reliable, C=Fairly reliable, D=not usually reliable or unreliable, F=reliability cannot be judged), and according to accuracy of the information (1=confirmed by other sources; 2=Probably true, 3=Possibly true, 4=Doubtful, 6=Truth cannot be judged).

Col Daniel Lord Baldwin, III (the SOG OP-35 desk at CCN, DaNang) when asked once if one could really turn the loyalty of a North Vietnamese or if they simply reported what we wanted to hear, said, "They brought back ears. They brought back some fantastic photos too."[107]

Capt. Wayne Long provided another long-range reconnaissance asset. Long flew in from Laos to brief Col. Lownds and his S-2, Maj Jerry Hudson, during the Siege during the last week of Feb '68 and the second week of March on what had been coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos and what targets he could utilize, felt that the JTAD was quite successful: "I think that by the time the Siege started, the Regiment had a pretty fair intelligence picture that we updated and kept fairly accurate. I don't think there were any surprises in terms of forces." Col Lownds, nevertheless, would ask him, "Was this seen by a round eye" [an American]? (1Lt Wayne Long (later Col) operated out of Pakse, Laos,[108] in a unit headed by Ray Gonzales which consisted of Road Watch teams observing the Ho Chi Minh Trail. "We were primarily working in the 'denied areas' with some indigenous assets. We'd set up a little base camp, sit beside the road for about 20 days, sometimes with an American, more often without one, and then we had a thing called a 'HARK' radio which had counters—a different frequency for each counter—for people, trucks, motorcycles, weapons of various sizes, and even for armor. Then, there was a "1", a "10" and a "50" counter. "We trained these guys how to use them and all they had to do was push one every time they saw something of that type or size. The radio's signals wee picked-up by C-130s that orbited 24 hours a day.)[109] NVA headquarters (Division, Regiment, etc.) were very mobile, sometimes occupying some of the numerous caves that filled the area. "We'd pinpoint the comms, go after the comms with airstrikes or raids–mostly airstrikes–and not find them there, and then try to trace the comms to where they might be and find them or not. They were both underground and mobile."[110]



JAMES H. TURNER, III, IN KHE SANH VILLAGE, SUMMER, 1967

JTAD was actually part of Company C, 519th Military Intelligence Battalion (and previously SMIAT, Special Military Intelligence Activities Team), which was part of the 500th MI in Japan. The Vietnamese counterpart was the 924th Support Group.[111] The Combined Action Company OSCAR at Khe Sanh was tasked with the responsibility of

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[107] Conversation with Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, 14 Jan 1990.
[108] WB 846728 in MR IV.
[109] Conversation with COL Wayne Long, 12 Sep 1991. Long was in Vietnam 1963-1964, then in Laos 1967-1968, leaving in Dec, 1968, and returned to Vietnam 1970-1971.
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] 519th MI BN Association: *The Sphinx*, Issue No. 36 (June, 1999), p. 4. The 149th Group assumed the cover of "Joint Technical Advisory Detachment' (JTAD)." [Khe Sanh microfilm archives, p. 100693] Letter from James H. Turner, III, 19 March 1998: "Through one of our old Admin Colonels, I've been told that JTAD was also described as the 149 MI Group, a part of the 525 MI Grp. The structure is as follows: 525 MI Group, [and] under the 525 there was the 519th MI Bn, 149th MI Grp, 45th MI Grp. At one time or the other, my records floated through the 519th and 149th. My assignment never changed, but administratively, I guess they juggled our records around. Spooks are a weird group anyway. When I was in Khe Sanh, I am sure I was assigned to the 519th MI Bn, Company C. As the war progressed, I think the structure changed. The 519th MI Bn had 3 companies, A, B, C. A Company was the intelligence analyst, B Company was the counter-intelligence operation, and C Company was the collection unit. C Company handled most of the human intelligence gathering. B Company handled prisoner of War interrogations. A company would analyze it and send it to the combat field units. Because of the fast changing situation in Khe Sanh, many times, raw intelligence data was given directly from our field office in Khe Sanh to the Marine commanders. This can be detrimental sometimes, due to the fact that many field commanders do not understand the complexities of intelligence gathering and fail to properly analyze the data given them. Because intelligence is a process of collecting data from many sources it should be analyzed, combined and then given to the field commanders. Even high ranking officers didn't understand." See also: *Deposition of James H. Turner, III*, Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, United States Senate, Mon., 23 Nov 1992. in which Turner states he arrived in Vietnam 19 Nov 1965 and departed 27 Jun 1967 and was assigned to the 519th Military intelligence Group, Company C [p. 10], assigned to a 2-man unit at Khe Sanh; the other man was Edward H. Bowman (who died in the 1970s from cancer) [p. 12]. He never wore a uniform in Vietnam. [p. 13]. They were documented as "geographical specialists" and issued non-combatant cards [p. 13]. They were at the District Headquarters in Khe Sanh village [p. 15]. They briefed the American Marines on the base, "But they never really believed what we told them.. After a while we got tired of talking to them because they were kind of hard headed." [p. 16] He persuaded the French coffee planter, Llinares, to work for them. Also, a NVA Captain in Laos became one of their sources [p. 20] The JTAD at Khe Sanh paid about 10 informants per month. [p. 22] [See Khe Sanh microfilm archives, pp. 78114-78178].

feeding and housing the Americans of JTAD Station co-located in the MACV District HQ compound in Khe Sanh village.[112]

From late 1966 to mid 1967, JTAD at Khe Sanh included a Sergeant James Turner and Sergeant Ed Bowman (known to the Vietnamese as "Mr. Ed"); but both wore civilian clothes, had civilian ID indicating a GS 7 (equivalent to a Captain), and their cover story was that they were drawing maps of the area for *National Geographic*. They used a light blue truck at Khe Sanh with a STP sticker on the side door.[113] Cover names for all personnel began to be used in 1966. James Turner's name at Khe Sanh was "Jim Thomas."[114]

One of their informants was the Vietnamese official in Khe Sanh ville from the National Police, a powerful person once seen by Corporal Kelley (of the Marine CAC OSCAR unit) torturing Bru with electric generators.[115] When Cpl Kelley reported it, he

was promoted to Sergeant, but transferred from the CAP in Khe Sanh village to the CAP just outside the main gate of the Combat Base (Ta Cong). The National Police representative was known to be feeding information to the North Vietnamese and became a channel to feed false information to them.

Another contact was a coffee planter, not the Poilanes, but the Basque named Llinares who lived southeast of Khe Sanh village near Lang Kat (1) and (2). It had been rumored that he had killed a Bru woman with an ax, and was regarded by the Bru as "really mean."[116] James H. Turner (JTAD) recalls him as "a pretty evil looking fellow"[117] and suspected him to be a double agent, feeding information to the North Vietnamese, and thus was given misleading information.[118] He perhaps was connected with the death of Eugene Poilane in the 1964 ambush on Route 9. Llinares had been with Eugene when the Citroen car they were driving came under rifle fire,[119] mortally wounding Eugene (who had arrived at Khe Sanh in 1918 following his WW I service in Vietnam and planted the coffee trees). Poilane's coffee plantation is responsible for the origin and development of Khe Sanh village. Llinares had been very wealthy in North Vietnam, lost everything, and settled at Khe Sanh at the former plantation owned by M. Rome.[120] During WW II, the Llinares plantation was occupied by the French planter, Monsieur Rome who lived here with his Japanese wife and a Japanese gardner. When the Japanese arrived at the end of WW II, they lived "pretty high," but then mysterious disappeared. According to Madame Madeleine Poilane, the wife spied both for the Japanese and the Viet Minh on French positions and was killed—some say by the Viet Minh, others say by the French. Her body was never found and the property reverted to the government.[121] It was here that Llinares had contacts with the Viet Cong; a network of VC was discovered in the village at the bottom of the Llinares plantation. Following this, the Bru were resettled,[122] and any pro-VC Bru departed into the hills. Following a double assassination of two workers of Llinares in his house, his wife departed, demanded protection from the Province Chief of Quang Tri, and never returned.[123]

James Turner recalls the Marine Force Recon detachment at KSCB in early 1967, and the LtCol at the Combat Base who, when informed of NVA units operating in the area, responded, "O, these numbers—they can't be right. I don't know where you guys are making all this up!" Turner replied, "Well, I tell you this much, Colonel: they're up there, and they're dug-in, and they're digging in pretty big up there, and the longer you wait–They're up there, believe me!." The information was disregarded. In fact, the Colonel told the Marine Lieutenant, "Don't ever bring that guy down here again, because he's down there in that village, he get captured or something and knows.[124]- The Special Forces also disregarded their reports "until they were nearly overrun one time [04 May 67] and we had given them the coordinates where the mortars were set up before they

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[112] The structure of the 525th Military Intelligence Group: under the 525, there was the 519th MI Bn, 149th MI Bn, 45th MI Grpoup. While at Khe Sanh, Turner was assigned to the 519th MI Bn, Company C, but the structure was always changing. 519 had three companies: A Company was the intelligence analyst, B Co was the counter-intelligence operation, and C Company was the collection unit. C Co. handled most of the human intelligence gathering, B Co. handled prisoner of war interrogations, and A Co. analyzed and sent information to combat field units. [Letter from James Turner, 1`9 March 1998]/

[113] Photograph included in letter from James H. Turner, III, 18 February 1995.

[114] Letter from James Turner, 19 March 1998.

[115] Conversation with Daniel Kelley, 23 May 1988.

[116] Conversation with James H. Turner, III, 17 February 1995

[117] Conversation with James H. Turner, III, 24 February 1995.

[118] Conversation with James H. Turner, III, 17 February 1995.

[119] See discussion in Stubbe: *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd Ed, 2008, p. 13. The incident, on Monday, 20 April 1964, involved both Eugene Poilane and Llinares. Eugene was killed by three shots, one of which near the heart was fatal. The chauffer was told to leave the Citroen car and was shot in the foot. Llinares was unharmed.

[120] Conversation with Mrs. Carolyn Miller, 27 May 1986.

[121] Comments of Madeleine Poilane during a personal visit, Wednesday, 19 July 1967. Stubbe: *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, p. 32.

[122] The Bru were resettled in the Strategic Hamlet program by 1954.

[123] Letter from Madaleine Poilane, 07 May 1971.

[124] Conversation with James H. Turner, III, 17 Feb 1995.

even started shooting. After that, they listened to us pretty well."[125]

Ed Brown and James Turner frequently ventured out for a week or so, no radios, perhaps deep into Laos. "We carried United Nations Non-Combatant cards. Supposedly you had two of them, duplicates, and if you got captured, you gave one to the enemy, kept the other, and they'd let you go!" Yeah! Sure![126]

"We'd just go out, and there were a couple of times we went out to learn the territory. We went around with the Montagnard troops that were stationed there in the village. We had one guy that went with us all the time who knew the area really well. We'd tell him where we wanted to go, and he'd take us there.. He knew where the North Vietnamese walked and he just took us. Sometimes we'd set up in the hills there and watch a battalion go by—it would be just tons of equipment. But it was kind of a crazy operation because we had no radios, they didn't know where we were, they didn't even know where we were going. If we turned up missing, they wouldn't have any idea what happened to us."[127]

When James H. Turner, III, departed 27 June 1967, he was replaced by Jaime Taronji, Jr., as Station Chief of JTAD, Khe Sanh with the other American, Sgt. Amos. Major Whitenack and Captain Bruce B.G. Clarke were at the District when he reported aboard as a member of the 525th MI Group with the primary mission of supporting the primary mission of supporting the South Vietnamese military intelligence unit at Khe Sanh Village.[128] He remained through the attack on the District Headquarters, 21 January, displaced by Marine helicopter when the CAC "O" was evacuated, and subsequently served from the Dona Ha Combat Base. When he reported, he was a Second Lieutenant, and Amos, a Sgt., but since the Vietnamese they were advising were both First Lieutenants, he was directed by his seniors to wear 1Lt bars and Sgt. Amos, to wear a Warrant Officer rank. First Lieutenant Taronji wore a uniform while at Khe Sanh, and worked with two Vietnamese ARVN First Lieutenants who lived in the village and managed a net of Bru Montagnards who were sent to observe the Ho Chi Minh trail network in Laos to determine troop movement, kind of equipment, etc The Vietnamese counterparts, who lived in Khe Sanh Village, not in the District compound, managed to escape during the attack on the Huong Hoa District Headquarters on 21 Jan and arrive at Dong Ha.[129]

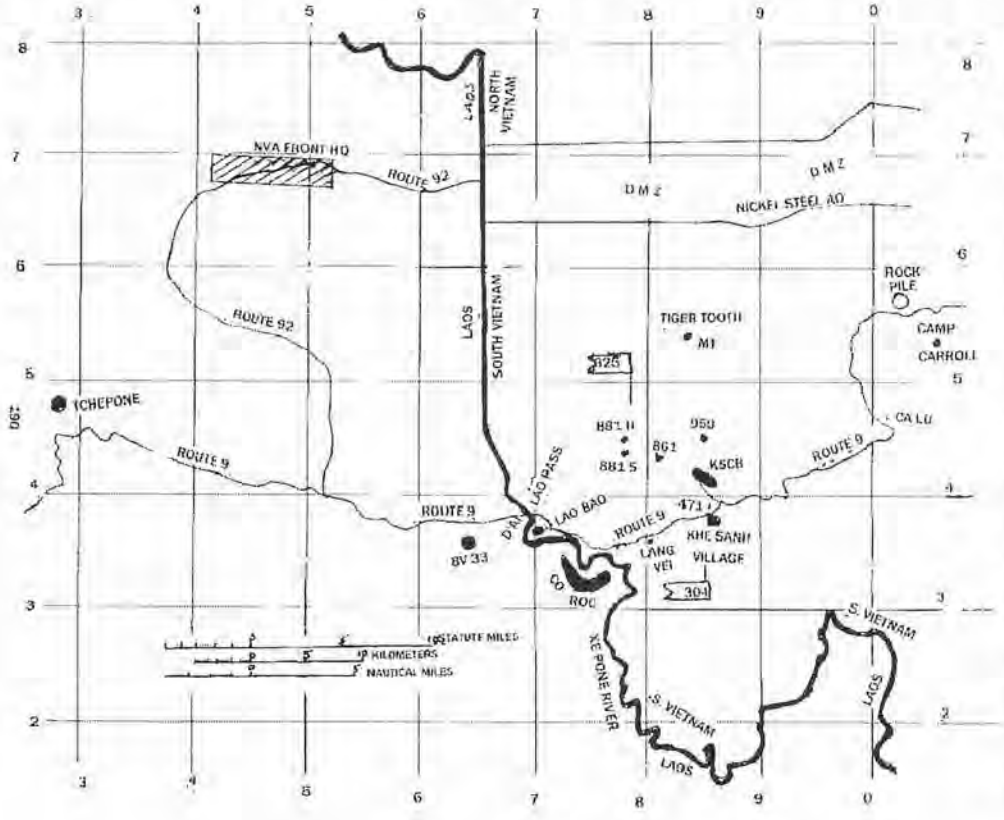

KHE SANH AREA

A JTAD report of 23 January 1968 perhaps explains why Col Lownds recalled Co D/1/26 which was moving towards Khe

[125] *Ibid.*
[126] *Ibid.*
[127] *Ibid.*
[128] Conversation with Jaimie Taronji, 06 February 2004. After graduating from the Army Intelligence School at Fort Hollibird, Baltimore, Maryland, his first assignment took him to Vietnam. He went to Saigon where the 525th Group was headquartered and assigned to the section that dealt with Military Advisors to the South Vietnamese military intelligence group. He then went to Hue and then to Khe Sanh. The headquarters to which he submitted his reports was at Hue. [Conversation with Jaimie Taronji, 06 February 2004].
[129] Letter from Jaime Taronji, Jr., 4 Nov 2004. Taronji's unit was the 525 Military Intelligence Group. Conversation with Jaime Taronji, 06 Feb 2004.

Sanh Village to reinforce it:[130] Three North Vietnasmese regiments, which had infiltrated into South Vietnam from Laos on 20 December 1967, had established ambush positions and emplaced three anti-aircraft guns around the hill south of the Huong Hoa District Headquarters and at Cu Bac (XD 873405). An undetermined number of Chinese troops accompanied the regiments. Only a battalion attacked the District headquarters while three regiments assumed ambush positions around the area.[131]

SPECIAL PROJECTS

1. ELEPHANT

"Where are they?" They could only feel the reality of what was to unfold: we know they're everywhere, but we do not see them. In the eerie, silent, depopulated jungles of eastern Laos near the Co Roc Massif, the three Americans with their Bru soldiers of FOB-3 team PENNSYLVANIA waited, watched, wondered. They knew the NVA were there—and in large force. Patrolling this area was like moving on the surface of an enlarged, great hornet's nest: suddenly, without warning, they could violently be lethally stung. Vietnam was that way: you could enjoy peace and tranquility and then, like throwing a light switch, suddenly be in the clutches of terror.

They had visited the nearby camp of a Royal Lao volunteer battalion, BV-33,[132] located (at XD 625379) astride Route 9 at the Ban Houei Sane airstrip,[133] some 22 clicks due west of Khe Sanh village—roughly 13 miles, which may seem far except for the fact that the assigned mission for Operation SCOTLAND included artillery support for BV33.[134]

BV-33 (or "ELEPHANT" as Americans referred to it), was a CIA-supported unit with drug-trafficing as a "cover"; North Vietnamese Army units supposed it to be simply a Lao group running drugs which obviously would have no connection to the Americans, and passed it by—until 25 January 1968 when they overran it with tanks. Billy Waugh, at Khe Sanh from June, 1966, to January, 1968, as the senior person at the FOB-1 Khe Sanh Launch Site,[135] recalls, "That battalion knew how to get along with the North Vietnamese. if the North Vietnamese came through there and wanted some chow, they gave it to them."[136] The BV-33 CO in late 1967, Col Soulang Phetsomphou, states, "My principle mission there was to maintain liaison with US troops operating in this area, to provide information about NVA activities on the Ho Chi Minh Trail and prevent any attack from Laotian border (Lao Bao)."[137]

The 500 soldiers of BV-33 were a sort of home guard or militia and lived at this location with some 2300 dependents, chickens and pigs, in an austere area offering no food other than fish and frogs from the nearby Xe Pone River, wild vegetation such as bamboo root, and an occasional deer or wild buffalo. COL Soulang Phetsomphou notes, "It is impossible to find food locally because this zone is very poor. For water, we have no problem."[138] The camp was resupplied by CIA's Air America flights, originally from Savannakhet, Laos. On 05 Sep 1963, a CIA C-47 flight using Chinese National registry, made three resupply flights to BV-33, some 200 kilometers east of Savannakhet but less than eight from South Vietnam. The aircraft was piloted by Americans Capt Joseph C. Cheney and Co-pilot Charles G. Herrick. The radioman was To Yick Chin, a citizen of Hong Kong, and the "kickers" (who threw out the supplies) were Eugene Henry DeBruin (a former smoke jumper for

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[130] About 1100, 21 January 1968, Col Lownds dispatched Co D/1/26 to rescue those trapped in Khe Sanh Village. Captain Stamper (CO, CAC OSCAR) radioed BLACKBUD DELTA (D/1/26) to use extreme caution since every house in the village seemed occupied by NVA, but that when they arrived, the CAC Marines would guide them into the District Headquarters perimeter. After awhile, INTRIGUE (the 26th Marines' radio callsign) advised Stamper that BLACKBUD DELTA could not pursue its rescue at that time. LtCol James B. Wilkinson (CO, 1/26) had recalled the company, under the leadership of Lt Walt Chapman (the USMC Commandant's son) which had arrived on the summit of Hill 471. Wilkinson feared they were entering a trap. One of the Marines in the patrol, Sid Patricio, recalls passing through Hill 471 and into the Bru ville [of Breh], and just before entering the District compound, were told "to get the hell out of there--fast!" [Conversation with Sid Patricio, 13 July 1989].

[131] JTAD Intelligence Report IR/UA/D/68/53, III MF COC 251511Z/Jan68 to MACV COC, in III MAF COC Journal and File 26/27Jan68 #31.

[132] BV-33 was the 3d battalion in MR III, thus, "BV-33." "BV" is the abbreviation of the French term, *Battalion Volontaire.*

[133] Airstrip was 3,500 x 90 ft., capable of handling C-130 aircraft. [Collins, John M., *Military Geography for Professionals and the Public*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1998, p. 373.]

[134] CO, 26th Marines, Ser 0023-67, 9 Aug 1967, Subj: Command Chronology for July, 1967, Pt. 2, Narrative Summary, Para. A (2), p. 2, indicates as one of the missions assigned: "...to provide artillery support for BV 33 Bn..".

[135] Letter from Billy Waugh, 22 October 1988.

[136] Conversation with Billy Waugh, 18 March 1989.

[137] Letter from Soulang Phetsomphou, 18 May 1997.

[138] Letter from Soulang Phetsomphou, 09 September 1997.

the US Forestry Service), and three Thai nationals: Pisidhi Indradat, Prasit Promsuwan, and Prasit Dhanee. On their third trip, while passing over the major NVA logistics center at Tchepone at 4,000 feet, the C-47 was struck by 37mm antiaircraft and crashed at XD2748. DeBruin is still MIA.[139] As a result of this incident, the CIA Air America flights to resupply BV-33 were subsequently launched from Khe Sanh, and then, mainly DaNang, though using Khe Sanh occasionally.

The CO of BV-33 in 1967-68, Col Phetsomphou Soulang,[140] had briefed team PENNSYLVANIA of NVA positions near the Lao/S Vietnam border, including the newly-developed road, Route 92 that wended through some karst limestone spire-like formations full of caves some ten miles west of the DMZ, which American signal intelligence had indicated to be a suspected Front Headquarters[141] controlling two NVA Divisions that were encircling Khe Sanh, not moving through the area, but remaining. The S-2 of 26th Marines, Maj Harper Bohr, Jr., referred to this trail and its associated network going into S. Vietnam as the "Santa Fe Trail." Col John Roberts ("Col Jack") of the USAF 20th TASS detachment at Khe Sanh (operation TIGERHOUND), was a good friend of Soulang and had flown over this developing route on numerous occasions, spotting "pink elephants" colored because of the red clay, along with numerous NVA. On one occasion, he had obtained the assistance of "Doc" Secor [MSGT Gilbert A. Secor] from Team PENNSYLVANIA to administer shots to the children of ELEPHANT during an outbreak of a disease. Wearing the uniform of a USAF officer provided by Col. Jack, he was flown by him to give the shots. A few days later, Col. Jack was called "on the carpet" to DaNang to appear before half a dozen Colonels to explain why he violated orders from Ambassador Sullivan by having an American Air Force "flight surgeon" in Laos! They asked who the Flight Surgeon was (since they had contacted all USAF flight surgeons in all of WESTPAC and could account for all of them).[142]

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[139] Eugene DeBruin was a former USAF man who attended college in Missoula, MT, and subsequently served as a smoke jumper in Alaska before joining Air America. After his capture, he was moved 13 different times to various POW camps, and escaped in 1964, but it was the dry season and the Pathet Lao surrounded all the water holes, and caught the escapees. Eugene and six other prisoners again escaped on 28 Jan 1966. The group broke up to lessen chances of being detected and Eugene went with the Chinese navigator who was "badly infected--big balls, couldn't walk, fairly near death." [Conversation with Dr. Jerry DeBruin, 15 August 1996. Jerry is Eugene's brother]. Dieter Dengler was successfully rescued 20 July 1966. [Director, CIA, Memo for BGen Alexander Haig, 16 Feb 1972 [CIA MORI Doc. ID 108494]. The pilot and co-pilot were killed in the crash after the plane veered off course and was shot down by Pathet Lao (PL) and crashed 2 kilometers west of Tchepone [XD 2748]. [CIA Report TDCS-3/561,478, Subj: Status of Survivors of CH-46 crash and Pathet Lao Plans for them. {CIA Memo Doc. ID 22156]. See also, Dr. Jerry DeBruin, "Personality: In 1963, Gene DeBruin's C-46 was shot down, His brother, 32 years later, continues to search for him," *Vietnam* (June, 1993), pp. 8, 54-57.

[140] Phetsomphou was born in the vicinity of Savannakhet, at Bakut, near Dong Heme, in 1924. [Ref: Conversation with Soulang Phetsomphou, 04 Feb 1996].

[141] The NVA Front Headquarters was located approx. 9 miles west of the DMZ in Laos. [Map of "Communist Military Positions" in CIA, Directorate of intelligence, Memorandum, 13 March 1968]. A JTAD Report in the 26th Marines 041110Z/Oct67, Operation ARDMORE INTSUM #79, placed an 800-man NVA battalion just inside Laos, 16 clicks north of Route 9 (at XD 687547).. The official NVA designation for the Front Headquarters was "B5-T8" [*Cong Tac Hau Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968 (Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign)*, Published by the Tong Cuc Hau Can (General Directorate for Rear Services under direction of Major General Tran Chi Cuong, Senior Colonel and first Level Professor Ngo Vi Thien. Hanoi, June 1988, p. 207 footnote: B5-T8 is the cover name for the 1968 Highway 8 Khe Sanh Campaign)]. The NVA Front Headquarters was reported in the National Security Agency's Daily SIGINT reports, *e.g.*, "Traffic-passing communications serving the new major PAVN headquarters northwest of Khe Sanh have been isolated in SIGINT. Since at least 18 January, this headquarters--last located on 27 January at 16-53N 106-24E (XD 498674)--has been noted in traffic passing communications with three unidentified subordinates. One of the subordinates, located at 16-40N 106-36E (XD 714422) on 28 January, also communicates with the DMZ Front." [DIRNSA 292135Z/Jan68, TOP SECRET TRINE, Ser: 3/0/.../R25-68, pp. 49-50 of microfiche, forwarded to CPT Ronnie E. Ford, USA, by NSA on 16 June 1998 (Ser: MDR 95-0059].

[142] Conversation with COL Jack Roberts, 19 August 1997. When the children at BV-33 became sick, COL Jack Roberts (of 20th TASS) had flown Doc Secore to DaNang to obtain the medicine, and then flown him to BV-33. Then, the US Ambassador to Laos, Sullivan, informed Maj Quamo, "No more trips to Laos. Get outta there. This is my territory." Quamo told Col Roberts that the inoculations could be completed in one more trip. So Col Roberts said, "With your permission, ask Secore to work for me, bring the medications." Col Roberts then told Doc Secore, "You're Air Force; you dress like Air Force." He was called to DaNang and seated before five Colonels bent on trapping him, wanting to know who the Flight Surgeon was. "We went round and round and they said, 'Are you denying that you go into Laos?' And I said, 'I go in there practically three times a week; sure I go into Laos.' And they said, 'Well, look in your records.' I said, 'I don't keep records.' And we went round and round. I said, 'If you want me to keep records, send me a clerk.' They kept insisting. They wanted to know who it was. They said they checked all the bases: Taiwan, Thailand, and there was no Air Force Flight Surgeon missing at the time. Finally, they said that was all for that day." [Conversation with Col Jack Roberts, 19 August 1997].

2. WARNINGS

The information PENNSYLVANIA obtained only confirmed what had already been reported. On 25 Aug 67 the Khe Sanh Station of the JTAD had reported[143] a NVA company camped in stone caves at the foot of Co Roc. Another JTAD report—this one dated 30 Sept[144]—placed a 800-man NVA unit just inside the Laotian border, 16 clicks south of Route 9 (at XD687547), the eastern part of the NVA Front HQ (noted in a CIA report as 9 miles directly west of the DMZ).

A document captured 06 Nov 67 providing the NVA plans for the Winter-Spring Offensive, listed as its first objective: "the annihilation of a major U.S. troop unit and inflicting heavy casualties, to draw U.S. troops away from populated areas." By Dec., a CIA report warned "..the VC/NVA are undertaking something very much like an all-out punch.."[145] FMFPAC's estimate of enemy capabilities (written in Dec 67) noted: "That the enemy would plan a major offensive in the western DMZ region was logical.. and the Marine combat base at Khe Sanh would appear, to him, to offer some hope of military advantage."[146]

Col Lownds, speaking to a group of Marines of B/1/26 in the chilling fog enveloping Hill 881-South on Marine Corps Birthday of 1967 said: "We here at Khe Sanh are going to be remembered in our American history books!" making the scene even more chilling.[147] Lt Don Jacques, Platoon Commander of Third Platoon, B/1/26, had volunteered his platoon that day to do the patrol; he and his men were slipping through the muddy, slippery slopes and slushing in treacherous streams, bamboo thickets and razor-cutting elephant grass while Col Lownds spoke to the rest of their Company. Three months later (25 Feb 1968), 2/Lt Jacques and his platoon would find themselves trapped in a NVA ambush and decimated.

The day before, Gen Starbird visited the hill.[148] Gen. Starbird, head of Defense Communications Program Group (DCPG), a CIA-front research agency at the Pentagon, was in charge of developing the electronic sensor program. Gen. Starbird and Maj Bruce Greene, CO of B/1/26, walked apart from everyone else and sauntered to the north side of the hill where the General pointed north, an omnious visual signal portending conflict.

During August and September, the rumor among the troops was a prophecy by Jeanne Dixon of "1200 American dead at Khe Sanh."[149]

Capt Jerry Crews, S-2 of FOB-3, who arrived in August, 1967, reported to his CO, Maj Lucius Campbell, that the local Wycliffe Bible missionaries, John and Carolyn Miller, mentioned many people moving through the trees and bushes at night. He notes: "I was telling everybody, but nobody was listening. And then when Khe Sanh proper [the village] got overrun, Major Campbell remembered that I'd said all this stuff asnd wrote all that in my Efficiency Report.."[150]

During November and December, 1967, signals intelligence pattern analysis revealed two North Vietnamese Divisions (the 304th and 325C Divs) were moving toward South Vietnam. Components of these divisions began to arrive in December, each division had a strength of at least 8,000 men.[151]

Reports from "People Sniffer" missions disclosed hundreds of indications during October, 1967, when they first started flying these missions in the immediate area around Khe Sanh. The acetate overlay covering the tactical map, a red dot for each sighting, appeared to be solid red to those sitting in chairs for the briefing. For example, during the evening regimental brief on 15 December 1967, the 1:50,000 tactical TAOR map indicating groups of 45 or more people indicated several hundred dots. They literally covered the entire northern portion of his briefing map at about five dots per grid square like a face with small pox or chicken pox.. "The reports of the sniffers are jolting everyone here into the reality of the enemy presence around us. They are indeed out there–uin numbers, and they are close."[152] The Airborne Personnel Detector (APD)

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[143] JTAD report #072 in 26 Marines 030625Z/Sep67 in Operation ARDMORE INTSUM #48.

[144] 26 Marines 041110Z?Oct67, Operation ARDMORE INTSUM #79.

[145] CIA, Vietnam Station Report No. 65/67 (3-9 Dec 1967), 100700Z/Dec67, Saigon #5624, in CIA's Westmoreland *v.* CBS, Vol. II, pp. 1394-1404.

[146] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, January, 1968, p. 8.

[147] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 April 1970, p. 375.

[148] CG. 3d MarDiv 061337Z/Nov67, Subj: Visit by LtGen Starbird, USA (Defense Communication Planning Group), indicates his itinerary at Khe Sanh 1510-1530.

[149] During the period Jan 1967 - 11 July 1968, official records indicate 1232 Americans KIA at Khe Sanh.

[150] Conversation with COL Jerry Crews, 12 February 1996, and his letter of 21 February 1996. Following his service in FOB-3 at Khe Sanh, Capt Crews was at CCN, DaNang, preparing to rotate to the States when it was attacked Wednesday, 21 August 1968. Upon return to the States, he attended flight school and returned to the Hue/Phu Bai area with the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and participated in Operation LAM SOM 719 in early 1971, which launched out of Khe Sanh. He was shot down over Laos, but was rescued.

[151] Carver, George A., Jr., Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs (SAVA), CIA, SC No. 05497-68, p. 2, in CIA's Westmoreland *v.* CBS documents, Vol. VI, pp. 304-378.

[152] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, 06 June 1989, p. 281.

"people sniffer" had over 80 detections on 30 October 1967.[153] Of course, each intelligence source had its short-comings and needed to be compared and integrated into information from other sources. On 06 January 1968, in an area the same distance west of Hill 881S as Khe Sanh is east of it, an APD mission conducted 1350H - 1530H on 06 January 1968 recorded 27 significant detections in the area between Hill 918 and the Laotian border north of Route 9.[154] An APD mission conducted the afternoon of 18 January 1968 recorded several medium strength detections in the area just north of Route 9 and west of Lang Vei, and the District Advisor reported a large size enemy force in the vicinity of XD 736402 at 181015H.[155]

"There was a new hootch–very small and oddly-shaped–near the LZ atop Hill 881S when I landed there on Thursday, 09 November 1967. During all the noise made by the helicopters, I briefly went inside and saw a man peering at a manual which had spots like bars of music over the pages here and there–probably because Vietnamese is a tonal language. There was a large metal box with the compass directions indicated on top and a revolvable, diamond-shaped antenna. The Marine, from First Radio Company of III MAF, shouted that the area was restricted. He seemed shocked to see a chaplain standing thee, looking in. In later conversation with these men who are building a living bunker on 881S, I mentioned what everybody else talks about: that the enemy could sneak up the hill during daily fog and overrun us. 'One of the reasons we're here is to stop that from happening,' he said."[156] Signals intelligence can easily be flawned by a transmitter placed here or there, broadcasting to resemble a regimental or Bn headquarters, even coordinated by having one transmitter respond to another, to reflect a "chain of command;" people sniffers (a device mounted on UH-1E choppers which fly 50 feet above ground level to detect ammonia smells given off by people) can detect the urine smell of families of passing monkeys or other animals; electronic sensors might detect noises from our own exploding rounds. USAF numbers on NVA casualties, based on secondary explosions from most close air suipport strikes, are erroneous since, unknown to them, artillery at Khe Sanh fired into their boxes. Lt Tom O'Toole, a 3d Marine Division AO who flew missions at Khe Sanh, was present at a briefing of Major General Rathvon McClure Tompkins, the CG, when he happened to look down at his knee pad board and noted the coordinates mentioned by the sensor officer. "I put up my hand and said, "Exeuse me, General, we have a problem here." "What's the problem?" "Well, these people are saying enemy rockets were fired at such and such a time, and I assume that's from their sensors. But in point of fact, what they were, was friendly bombs landing." "General Tompkins jumped up and said, "I've had it up to here with 'mental midgets." You mean no one's cross-referencing where supposedly the enemy's shooting from and where we're dropping bombs?"[157] It is only when all intelligence sources (sensors, signal, patrols, agent reports, overflights, ralliers) are integrated that the emerging picture of an enemy presence unfolds–and, at Khe Sanh, it was unfolding on a grand scale during the last few months of 1967!

Those in command could only reflect on what was happening, waiting orders to withdraw or be reinforced. The decision "on the top" (actually, all the way to the White House), was to reinforce Khe Sanh, make all of us there into a lucrative target, a bulls-eye, or fly-paper, to take advantage of the approaching large NVA force, engage and fix them and, like a wrestler, use their strength against them, destroying them.

3. "SKIP" MINNICKS

Charles ("Skip") Minnicks, a Master Sergeant, was known as "an absolutely fearless recon man."[158] He was known as tough, perhaps a bit wild. He once drove a truck along Route 9 to BV-33 so drunk, he couldn't see straight. On his return, he ran intio a ditch and blew a tire. COL Harold K. Rose (CO, CCN) wanted to ground him. Six months later, after having performed so well on missions, Col Rose asked him to come to DaNang. There, he again was "well into the cups" and told Col. Rose he needed to go back to "House 22," a safe house downtown. Col Harold K. Rose lent him his own vehicle, and the first thing he did was have a wreck! The Colonel grounded him for life![159]

PENNSYLVANIA observed units of NVA in khaki and units of NVA in olive drab. "We knew that there was a huge, strong force."[160] Part of the NVA plans included preparation of Co Roc, that massive dark theater-curtain-like sight one could see from Hill 861 that made one wonder when the curtain would be pulled back and the tragic play commence.

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[153] 26 Mar 301235Z/Oct67 to CG, 3d MarDiv in III MAF COC Journal and File, 01/02 Nov 1967 #38. Largest concentrations were at XD 859265, XD 949413, and XD 832295.
[154] III MAF COC 140823Z/Jan68 in III MAF COC Journal and File 13/14 Jan68 #188. Stubbe: *Khe Sanh*, 06 June 1989, pp. 305f.
[155] 26 Mar 180915Z/Jan68 in III MAF COC Journal and File 18/19 Jan 68 #119.
[156] Stubbe: Diary entry for 09 November 1967.
[157] Conversation with Tom O'Toole, 08 August 1990.
[158] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 25 November 1990.
[159] Letter from Billy Waugh, 22 October 1988.
[160] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 December 1991.

Co Roc was shrouded in an eerie silence. It was mid-January, 1968, and no NVA were here! (Actually, as signal intercepts later confirmed, they had already moved most of their units into positions to attack Khe Sanh).[161] Earlier, Major George Quamo arrived at Colonel Soulang's BV-33 location and was now on the western slopes of Co Roc, about a day's patrolling away from Minnicks, and had not made any contact.[162]

Among those standing atop Co Roc was Master Sergeant Charles "Skip" Minnicks and Maj George Quamo.[163] At 38, Skip was the oldest SOG team leader; Maj George Quamo was probably the youngest SOG Major. Both were members of "Special Projects," an effort to develop a guerrilla force to operate in Laos in the area from the Mu Gia Pass to Tchepone, the first leg of the Trail in Laos.[164]

Overhead, a Birddog aircraft circled with its passenger, Col Harold K. Rose,[165] whom Skip recalls as "a wonderful, wonderful man."[166] Col Rose radioed to Quamo: "I want you out of there. I want you out of there now!" Quamo, in his black uniform—he had all his team dress in black—simply responded, "To my knowledge, I am in command at this location. Out."[167]

Skip Minnicks stood in awe of this man—as did everyone who came in contact with him, a sort of "Lawrence of Arabia" of Vietnam: handsome, brilliant, forceful, charismatic.

It hadn't always been that way. The arrival of George Quamo to the small (one-half of an A-team) unit which was then located at the Old French Fort on the eastern edge of Khe Sanh ville (also called "Fort Dix") was not a happy event. Skip Minnicks recalls, "Here comes this new Captain. He looked like a kid I resented him! And I made it apparent."[168] As deeply as he resented him, however, his admiration for this new officer would eventually know no limits, and Minnicks was not alone. Robert Cavanaugh recalls: "We received a message that they were sending an officer to command our little group.. Needless to say, we were quite upset and couldn't understand why the Army was fixing something that wasn't broken. Quamo arrived on site about three days later, and you can believe that he was not on friendly ground. Before the year was finished [the 3 months remaining in 1967] I truly believe that every American on those teams would have followed him to hell to put out the fire if he asked."[169]

When Minnicks reported to the Sergeant-Major of CCN [Command and Control North, the SOG Hq in the northern part of S. Vietnam], he was told to report to FOB-1 (at Phu Bai) to become the temporary Sergeant-Major there since the SgtMaj was rotating back to the States. "I said, 'No, let's talk. This is my fourth trip. I didn't have to make any trips. The only reason I came here was because I was allowed to volunteer for this outfit. I want a team.' He said, 'You're too old. You can't keep up.' I said, 'Give me a shot. If I can't keep up, I'll be the first one to come to you.' So he begrudgingly gave it to me. I had team PENNSYLVANIA.'"[170]

When he first arrived and took over a small detachment, there were three or four teams of Bru in the beginning of their training phase; the officer in charge, Maj Patton, had already departed. Under the supervision of Skip Minnicks, the guerrilla unit trained, conducted missions, and a very close rapport developed between him, the other Americans in the Special Projects unit and the Bru. "Once I got very ill while I was at Khe Sanh. I had black water fever. I wouldn't eat. I'd quit eating. And they brought me their food, knowing that I could not honorably refuse it. Twice a day they brought it, and then they would stand there. They brought me out of my illness."[171]

4. FRED PATTON

Maj Fred Patton had preceeded Skip Minnicks, arriving just before the 1967 Hill Battles.[172] The Special Projects effort was first launched by himself, and later together with E-7 Charles Berg (26 years old) and SFC James Hetrick. Patton, at SOG headquarters, had devised the concept, and the three Americans, together with eight Bru Montagnards, commenced the

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[161] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 14 Oct 1994.
[162] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.
[163] Quamo was promoted to Major on 01 October 1967.
[164] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.
[165] COL Rose died suddenly on 11 May 1990 from an aneurysm.
[166] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 December 1991.
[167] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 December 1991.
[168] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 04 November 1990.
[169] Letter from Robert Cavanaugh to Ernie Spencer, postmarked 01 March 1996. Printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *The Khe Sanh Veteran* 2:2 (Spring, 1996) [Khe Sanh Red Clay No. 35], p. 8.
[170] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 04 November 1990.
[171] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 December 1991.
[172] Conversation with Fred Patton, 09 September 1997. Patton remained at Khe Sanh approx. 6 months. [Conversation with Fred Patton, 26 March 1994].

planning phase for a guerrilla force that would use the BV-33 Lao Battalion as a base of operations extending north of Route 9, along the Lao/Vietnam border up to the border of China.[173] Laotians aren't fighters–their religion and non-violence culture obviate that. Although North Vietnamese Army units travelled through BV 33's area, they regarded it as a drug-running outfit, a good cover story that implied no American involvement–"Obviously this is a drug-running Lieutenant Colonel; he would have nothing to do with the Americans whatsoever."[174] Additionally, BV-33 provided water to NVA as they travelled through its area.– David F. Donahue, at Khe Sanh January - March, 1967, recalls Lao Bao as "..in another world, almost like being on another planet. Being there made me believe I had zipped back in time a hundred years or more. I thought the area was beautiful. I enjoyed being with the people."[175] Donahue recalls a visit to BV-33:[176] He travelled there:

> ..with Major Jim Van Sickle, FOB-1 Commander, Major Su, the Vietnamese SF liaison to C&C Det, and a Vietnamese SF officer we called 'Dai Uy Frankie.' We flew out of DaNang on a Vietnamese Air Force single engine Cessna-type aircraft.. After about an hour or so, we landed at this dirt airstrip just across the border in Laos, west of Khe Sanh.
>
> We were met by Colonel Sisivath and the village chief. The Colonel was wearing fatigues with a pistol strapped to his waist. The village chief was dressed out in his finest; a blue serge suit coat, a yellowed shirt and rumpled brown trousers. He was very proud of his 'French' suit. he was equally proud of showing us around his village. We toured through a couple of living quarters, the village weaving center, and ended up at the 'long house.' We would return to the 'long huse' later after we had our meeting with the Colonel.
>
> Colonel Sisivath personally conducted a tactical situation briefing, in French, in an open air hut. My French was abysmal, but I caught the drift of what he was saying with the help of a rather detailed operations map.
>
> After the colonel's briefing, Major Van Sickle gave his pitch. Major Su acted as interpreter and translated everything into French. Basically, as best as I can remember, we wanted the Colonel's cooperation and help in what was to become 'Operation Nickel Steel' which was the recruitment and Bru tribesmen for reconnaissance and intelligence gathering teams. We also wanted to get up to date intelligence from the colonel's forces and we wanted to establish a radio link between his headquarters and ours. We, of course, would supply the radio set up and training for his troops. After about an hour of back and forth dickering and social discourse, we adjourned to the 'long house' for a feast in our honor.
>
> Food and drinks were set up on woven mats that lay the width of the stilted building. The village chief, village elders, Colonel Sisivath and his staff, and the rest of us sat all around the mats. The rest of the village people were all gathered behind us in the length of the one huge room.
>
> Many toasts were made. We drank from small, wooden bowls that were continuously being refilled with a rather potent rice wine. After we were sufficiently mellowed, we started on the main course of the meal. Mostly, it was roast duck in a tangy sauce that smelled and tasted a little like teriyaki. There were plates of all sorts of vegetables and fruits and all I kept thinking was the host of bacteria that I was probably picking up from this mélange of food.
>
> 'Desert' ended by being very special. Brown tubers about the size of a banana were passed out to everyone. you had to peel it open with a fingernail or knife and eat the fibrous insides. The taste was somewhat like a sweet potato, but that wasn't all. All the Laotian natives got plain tubers, but when we 'guests' opened ours, we discovered that each of our tubers had a little white worm inside. Major Van Sickle used a very strong expletive when he asked Major Su how come we had got the worm. Major Su related the question to Colonel Sisivath who explained that to receive the worm was a very great honor and we were supposed to eat it with relish and nod our approval to the village chief. The Laotians seemed to be enjoying our culinary problem. We watched Colonel Sisivath and his staff pop the worm in their mouths, then take generous gulps of wine-laced coconut milk. Major Su made a remark about 'barbarous customs,' but he, Captain 'Frankie' and the pilot took their worms with grimaced expressions. We Americans all looked at each other at the same time with 'what the hell' looks on our face.
>
> I deftly picked up the wiggling body with my right hand and, with my left, got a good hold onto the coconut milk container. With a swift swing of my arm I tossed the little bugger inside my mouth. Before it even landed on my tongue, I was washing it down with huge draughts of coconut mi9lk. I kept drinking until I felt I

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[173] Conversation with Charles Berg, 13 November 1994.
[174] *Ibid.*
[175] Letter from David F. Donahue, 24 September 1990. Donahue was the Signal Officer for C&C at the time |Conversation with David F. Donahue, 26 June 1990.
[176] Donahue, David F., "Lao Bao," included in letter of 24 September 1990.

had drowned it down in the inner recesses of my stomach. I immediately got a refill of the liquid while the Laotians continued with, what I was sure was, joking comments about the pansy Americans. I had to eat a sheep's eye once in Mali, but at least it wasn't alive.

After the repast and a lot more rice wine, the party broke up and we went outside to take pictures. Major Van Sickle was an instant hit as he had a Polaroid and the villagers were astonished with the instant photos. As we headed out towards the aircraft, the village chief stopped Major Van Sickle and myself and jabbered something that sounded real sincere. A quick double translation from Colonel Sisivath to Major Su told us that we were 'courageous and honorable men' and he remembered that the last time French officers had been in the village none of them would eat the worm. That made us feel better–I think."

The three Americans in Special Projects and their Bru located across from the Huong Hoa District Headquarters. Patton told Berg and Hetrick: "You're by yourself. The people across the street can't help you."[177] They were told to have nothing to do with the "advisory people," who couldn't be informed of their activities, and where classified information was not secure.[178]

Patton's arrival had been the result of a meeting in early October, 1966, attended by Secretary McNamara, accompanied by Nicholas Katzenbach (Attorney General of the US), Robert Komer (CORDS), Gen Wheeler (Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff), General Westmoreland (COMUSMACV), and Ambassador Lodge with Premier Nguyen Cao Ky. During the course of the meeting, Ky emphasized "his belief that a secret base of non-Communist Vietnamese should be established in the mountains along the Laos border in the southern part of North Vietnam; specially trained teams operating from such a base could do a great deal through sabotage and other methods to work against infiltration."



SOG team with Maj Fred Patton (in tiger stripes), summer, 1967, Khe Sanh Village. Photo by Maj James Whitenack, District Advisor, Huong Hoa District

The problem of the "porous border" had been recognized and identified by the American Ambassador as early as Dec 1960,[179] with the warning that if the border could not be closed, all our efforts would be in vain. In 1963—and, we may assume, years earlier—Vietnamese patrolled into the eastern Laotian area up to 15 KM.

The borders near Khe Sanh, both the DMZ and with Laos, were highly in dispute—not simply "porous;" they may have prompted subsequent conflict.[180] Concerning the DMZ: The Potsdam Conferences of 1945, discussing arrangements for the Japanese surrender, divided Indochina at the 16th parallel, having the Japanese surrender to the Chinese (Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek) north of that parallel and surrender to the Brittish (Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten) south of that parallel which runs just south of DaNang.

At the Geneva Conference, however, the Demarcation Line (DMZ) was placed at the 17th parallel. The Vietnamese representative, Dong, insisted it be at the 16th parallel; Mendez-France insisted it be at the 18th, and Molotov said, "Then we agree that the split should be at the 17th parallel." Bernard Fall (in a very difficult to locate printed study)[181] explains the 17th parallel as the result of "the conciliatory role played at Geneva by the USSR which in 1954 was trying to induce France not to join the European Defense Community." Events in Europe were casting long, dark shadows as far away as Vietnam. The Khe Sanh area, as with all of Northern I Corps Tactical Zone, was thus an area of contention even before hostilities erupted.

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[177] Conversation with Charles Berg, 18 April 1994.

[178] Conversation with Charles Berg, 09 July 1994.

[179] Telegram from the Ambassador in Vietnam to the Dept. of State, 08 Dec 1960, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-60, p. 719. See discussion of border in Stubbe: *Battalion of Kings*, 2d Ed., 2008, pp. 9-10.

[180] For references concerning the borders and a full discussion, see: Stubbe: *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd Ed., 2008, p. 6.

[181] Fall, Bernard B., "Indochina (1946-1956)," part of the 3-volume series, *Challenge and Response in Internal Conflict*, Dept. of the Army: The Center for Research in Social Studies (CRESS) of the American university, p. 26. [Copy in archives of the United States Military Academy, W#est Point, New York].

Frances FitzGerald, writing in 1967, noted that when the French departed from Saigon in 1955-56, they left behind a "regroupment zone" just beneath the 17th Parallel, "..a political jungle of sects, local warlords, Viet Minh, partisan troops, and Saigon politicians, all of them rooted in provincial issues and family feuds." He writes that this Parallel, by including the southern half of the ancient empire of Annam, exposed the South to the larger political passions of such Central Vietnamese as Ho Chi Minh. During the 300 days of regroupment ("Passage to Freedom") nearly a million Northerners, mainly Catholics, moved south, but the former Viet Minh cadres waited to begin hostilities. Concerning the Lao/Vietnam border, a survey team investigating MIA sites discovered on 31 Oct 1992 that the border had been moved from just west of the 66 North/South line to the 63 line. Moving in the opposite direction, many Laotians regard Lao Bao as Laotian territory.[182]

On 2 March 1964, the Joint Chiefs of Staff forwarded a strong recommendation to the Secretary of Defense to lift restrictions on military operations into Laos, stating that while there was no hard intelligence on exact dimensions of infiltration of men and material into South Vietnam from the North, "there was mounting evidence that these were of such proportions to constitute an increasingly important factor in the war. The JCS cited increasing firepower of the Viet Cong which could only have been achieved through introduction of modern infantry weapons from outside the country."[183] On 24 Jan 1964, MACSOG was organized. Consideration of cross-border operations into Laos had been considered in the spring of 1964, but "the fragile condition of the Royal Laotian Government and the US policy of maintaining the façade of Laotian neutrality had prevented Washington approval of any cross-border operations into Laos."[184] In May of 1964, JCS (along with the Dept of State and SecDef) authorized COMUSMACV to begin planning for limited patrols "..for the purpose of gathering information on VC logistic activities in the area of Laos between Route 9 and the 17th Parallel adjacent to the border," but no Americans were initially authorized to accompany these patrols.

As a result, Operation LEAPING LENA was conducted 24 Jun - 1 Jul 64.[185] Five teams were inserted by parachute into Laos along Route 9 east of Tchepone. It was a dismal failure: only five survivors returned to Vietnam.[186] They did detect, however, a NVA battalion crossing into Vietnam west of Khe Sanh. Planning for cross-border operations was suspended due to the failure, as well as "recent problems with Vietnamese Special Forces, CIDG Program and general disruption of high command [making] it unlikely that effective crossborder operations on ground can be mounted before November [1964]."[187]

In March, 1965, COMUSMACV submitted to CINCPAC and JCS a concept for cross-border operations developed by his Studies and Observations Group (MACSOG): "The concept was designed to gain better intelligence on the infiltration routes and to interdict them more effectively. The concept provided for an expansion of operations in three phases, beginning with 'short-stay,' tactical intelligence missiosn, progressing to 'longer-stay' intelligence/sabotage missions, and cul;minating in long-duration missions to develop resistance cadres, utilizing secure base areas in Laos and SVN."[188] Operations would be staged from secure bases in Laos and South Vietnam, and infiltration/exfiltration would be conducted via overland routes and

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[182] COL Soulang Phetsomphou, Commander of BV-33, writes: "Lao Bao Village was and is at the present time considered to be part of Lao territory. 'Lao Bao' means 'Lao people. 'Ai-Lao' means 'Lao Brother." [Letter of Soulang Phetsomphou, 30 June 1997]. "This area belonged to Laos." [Conversation with Soulang Phetsomphou, 04 February 1996]. During the French administration, Lao Bao was held by the 7th Commando Company. [Letter from Soulang Phetsomphou, 30 June 1997].

[183] JCSM-168-64 to SecDef, 2 Mar 64, Encl A to JCS 2343/330, 25 Feb 64, JMF 9155.3/3100 of 5 Feb 64, in Historical Division, The joint Secretariat, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1960-1968*, Part 1, pp. 9-8 and 9-9].

[184] *Ibid.*, p. 24-25.

[185] National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 288, approved by the President 17 March 1964, resulted inCINCPAC OPLAN 37-64, CINCPAC OPLAN 98-64 and CINCPAC OPLAN 98A-64, the former prepared as a direct result of the NSAM, the latter prepared by COMUSMACV to support 37-64.. [JCS memo DJSM-1069-64, 25 June 1964 [LBJ Library, NSF NSAMs, Container #3]. The mission of OPLAN 98-64: "This plan provides for expanding RVN covert cross-border operations into Laos south of the 17th Parallel. The operations are designed to obtain positive evidence of communist use of Laos and an infiltration route into RVN and to disrupt such infiltration. The operations are covert to the extent that no SVN or US uniforms will be worn and equipment will be sanitized to allow plausible denial of responsibility by RVN and the US. No US Military personnel will participate outside the limits of RVN." [*Ibid.*]

[186] *Ibid.*, pp. D-7 and D-8. "The survivors reported that they had encountered company size VC troops and that the bridges on Route 9 were guarded by soldiers appearing to be Pathet Lao." Conboy, Ken, and Morrison, James, "Project Delta Disaster," *Vietnam* (Oct, 2000), pp. 46-52.

[187] JCS 090805Z/Oct 1964 in LBJ Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, Vol. 19, cables, Box 9]. MACV 221115Z/Oct64 noted "It was originally anticipated that operations could be conducted soon after 1 November. This date now appears too early to tell whether the necessary preconditions will be met and when political crises not resolved, Montagnard problem not yet settled, and changes in GVNAF high command continue. It now seems unlikely that we can contemplate significant cross border ground operations prior to 1 Jan 65."

[188] JCS, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1960-1968*, Part I, p. 24-25.

by air employing US, VNAF, and MACSOG aircraft."[189]

The three phases were further clarified: Phase 1: 10-man teams penetrate Laos for up to 10 days to collect intelligence and acquire targets; Phase 2: duration is extended to 3 weeks and the quantity of missions increase; Phase 3: deep penetration for periods up to 12 months and "in specific areas, mission includes organizing indigenous into resistance and intelligence nets, physical destruction, sabotage."[190]

The cross-border operations were given the nick-name SHINING BRASS and were approved on 20 Sep 1965 and inaugurated 17 Oct as limited, covert operations by small ten-man (later eleven) teams including not more than three Americans to a maximum depth of 20 kilometers west of the border for intelligence/reconnaissance patrols in the southern Laos panhandle, a rugged, sparsely settled area. The teams were to conduct their operations so that they would be undetectable, i.e., avoid contact with the enemy and/or villagers and not engage in sabotage or harassment."[191]. The memo went on to state the political sensitivity of the operation: "The Prime Minister of Laos [Souvanna Phouma] has on various occasions specifically told senior US officials, including Ambassador Sullivan, that he could not and would not approve of U.S. ground operations in Laos. in view of this stance, no attempt has been made to inform him of Shining Brass and to obtain his concurrence. These armed incursions, unauthorized by the Lao Government, are thus territorial violations of the sovereignty of laos, and of course, violations of the 1962 Geneva Agreements. The involvement of U.S. personnel is the element in this program which creates greatest difficulty for us."[192] The first mission was 2 Nov 65.[193]

By Apr 66, use of helicopters for insertion was approved. SOG teams were authorized to patrol up to 5 KM inside Laos and, in Jun 1966, up to 10 KM with teams having no more than 3 American advisors.

It was during June 1966 that Col Charles Norton arrived at the Special Forces Camp, Khe Sanh (later KSCB) and developed a launch site for FOB-1 (campsite located at Phu Bai). (It was important that the Launch Site be different than the camp site to have a minimum number of people at the launch site and, for security, to prevent conversations with Special Forces, natives talking with natives, etc). Billy Waugh, who worked at the Khe Sanh Launch Site at Khe Sanh from June, 1966, to January, 1968, joined the Army in 1948 and was first assigned to SVN from the 1st Special Forces in Okinawa in 1962 following a stint with the WHITE STAR operation in Laos. His initial impressions of Khe Sanh when he arrived in 1966 (before the Marines of 1/3): "Khe Sanh was cold, terrible. For combat operations, it was pitiful; it was terrible. You could not depend on decent weather. You couldn't get any further away from the flag pole." His last tour in Vietnam ended in Jan, 1972 where he was the Sergeant-Major of the Special Operations Reconnaissance Company. He spent seven years in Vietnam.[194]

On 1 Mar 67 the nickname SHINING BRASS was replaced with PRAIRIE FIRE,[195] and the main mission was: "to conduct special operations to counter enemy infiltration through Laos and into South Vietnam." "We used the phrase, 'SHINING BRASS UP YOUR ASS.' We were trying to come up with a phrase with NICKEL STEEL[196] and PRAIRIE FIRE and nothing would

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[189] JCS Memo J3M-1242-70, 16 July 1970, Subj: Draft MACSOG Documentation Study, Appendix D, Cross-Border Operations in Laos," p. D-1.

[190] *Ibid.*, p. D-11.

[191] "Memorandum from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Ungar) to the Under Secretary of State (Katzenbach), Washington, Dec 2, 1966, Subj: Expansion of Shining Brass Operations ion Laos," in US Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, Vol. XXVIII, *Laos*, Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing office, 1998, p. 534].

[192] *Ibid.*, pp. 534-535.

[193] Some of the targets included: GOLF-4 (XD 628586), HOTEL-4 (XD 563564), INDIA-4 (XD 553513), and JULIETTe-4 (XD 645659), each target being on an infiltration route used by NVN and VC supporting Communist troops in RVN, and each target suspected of enemy troop concentration and logistical support. [COMUSMACV 040430Z/Aug66, TOP SECRET]. Other target code-names included: ALPHA-1 (YB 834937), KILO-1 (YC 703034), INDIA-1 (YC 666104), CHARLIE-1 (YB 673344), HOTEL-1 (YB 693290), TANGO-3 (YC 729083). [JCS Memo J3M-1242-70, 16 July 1970, Subj: Draft MACSOG Documentation Study, Appendix D, Cross-Border Operations in Laos," p. D-15-D16].

[194] Conversations with Billy Waugh, 22 October 1988 and 30 March 1989.

[195] HQ, MACV, *Command History 1967*, Annex G, Studies and observations Group, Appendix IV, Cross-Border Ground Operations p. G-IV-1. JCS Memo J3M-1242-70, 16 July 1970, Subj: Draft MACSOG Documentation Study, Appendix D, Cross-Border Operations in Laos," p. D-30.

[196] NICKEL STEEL was a FOB-3 operation in the western half of the DMZ [Conversation with Harve Saal, 16 June 1990 and 09 Feb 1991], designated in JCS message #6319, 142123Z/Jan67. [Saal, Harve, *SOG MACV Studies and Observations Group (Behind Enemy Lines)*, Vol. I, *Historical Evolution*, Milwaukee, WI,: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1990, p.xi.]. NICKEL STEEL, an operation of MACSOG-35, was "a recruitment effort to employ Bru Montagnards as intelligence gathering and reconnaissance teams for operations in the western end of the Demilitarized Zone and adjoining Laos SOG had used Vietnamese-led agent teams from MACSOG-34 in the area with very limited success and wanted positive results which could lonely be obtained by using the local Bru Montagnard tribesmen in combination with American-led reconnaissance teams.."

come out of it."[197]

To implement Phase 3, MACV in Mar 1967 proposed that a guerrilla force be organized from the hill tribes of the Annamite mountain region. Training in South Vietnam, the force would then establish contacts with village leaders in Laos. PRAIRIE FIRE teams, accompanied by these trained personnel, would enter an area, establish contact and proceed in the classical role of developing a guerrilla force and conduct guerrilla warfare. SOG OPLAN 37b-67 (Phase III, PRAIRIE FIRE) provided for a 3,000 man guerrilla force, responsive to U.S. direction, to conduc t operations against the NVA/VC/PL in Laos adjacent to the RVN border."[198]

Major Patton first located at a structure immediately across the road from the huong Hoa District Headquarters, referred to as the "Howard Johnson's" by the Marines, a building with barbed wire security and perhaps 15, 20 men, according to the US Army District Advisor, James Whitenack. They used Whitenack's helo pad for launches, and from there, relocated to the old French fort position just east of Khe Sanh village (a position that had been overrun in 1953 in which the wounded were killed and thrown down the well to contaminate it and the position burned). Aluminum sheeting was delivered, and the position was developed.[199]

Maj Patton's mission was to determine whether or not the Bru could be organized and trained for border security, and had started training them.[200] The Bru tri bal area covered both eastern Laos and northwestern South Vietnam; they freely travelled back and forth as though the artificial national boundary didn't exist. The force being dedveloped was to operate in the area between Mu Gia Pass and Tchepone, but, as James W. Moore notes, "That was day-dreaming if there ever was!"[201]

Maj Patton determined the Bru were especially good in the jungle, detecting the presence of others—almost magically attune to scents, noises, and visual signs that they knew whenever someone was nearby. Also, they had a mechanical ability: "They learned how to drive and take care of weapons faster than any group I've ever worked with."[202]

The local missionary family at Khe Sanh who were involved with developing a written Bru language, making the Bru literate for the first time in their tribal history, and translating the Bible into Bru, provided a Bru boy to assist Patton.[203] Patton reciprocated by providing building materials to refurbish an old, abandoned French house in Khe Sanh Village to be their home.[204] Mr. John Miller recalls that Patton claimed he was writing a history of the Bru tribe. Gradually, more and more Amereicans arrived for the "history" project, notes Mr. Miller, "but just how many people do you need to write a history?" The American group then gathered a dozen Bru to work with, then 20, then 40, and located at the Old French Fort.[205]

Fred Patton temporarily ruined the local economy, paying an extravagant rent of 20,000 to 24,000 P [Piastres] per month! The Bru were very disturbed; it wasn't "right." When Mr. Miller informed the SOG officials that this was gross inflation, they replied that this was what they were required to pay. Some Bru received more pay than their village chiefs, the salaries ranging from 8,000 to 18,000 "P"[206] per month. In addition, some Bru received "hazardous" pay for going on patrols, and could not understand why some should be paid more for doing that.

Skip Minnicks remembers the basic honesty of the Bru: "They didn't even have a word in their language for 'theft' or 'steal' or 'rob'. Here we come. The first thing we did—because we thought we were being generous—we gave them three uniforms, two pair of boots. Well, they found out immediately that they could trade, barter for food and necessities, and so they became capitalists like us. They began to steal from each other, and I thought, O my God!"[207] He also can never forget how they cared for him when he caught black water fever: "They would have done anything. Once I got very ill and they brought me their food. I wouldn't eat; I'd quit eating. They brought me their food, knowing that I could not honorably refuse it.

[Capt David Donahue, "Coordination of the Nickle/Nickel Steel Operation," in Saal, Harve, *SOG MACV Studies and Observations Group (Behind Enemy Lines)*, Vol. III, *Legends*, Milwaukee, WI,: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1990, p 110]. To establish this effort, Maj James Van Sickle, Commander of FOB-1 operating out of Khe Sanh, visited and made liaison with COL Sisivath, Commander of BV-33 at the time. Major Su translated Maj VanSickle's conversation into French for COL Sisivath in which he solicited "assistance with Bru recruiting and up-to-date intelligence reporting from the Colonel's men. We also wanted to establish a communications link, using radios, between Lao Bao and the C&C Det in DaNang." [*Ibid.*]

[197] Conversation with David Donahue, 28 June 1990.

[198] USMACV, Studies and Observations Group, *Command History 1967*, Annex G, p. G-VII-2.

[199] Conversation with James Whitenack, 06 October 1988.

[200] Conversation with Fred Patton, 26 March 1994.

[201] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.

[202] Conversation with Fred Patton, 26 March 1994.

[203] Conversation with Fred Patton, 26 March 1995.

[204] Comments of John and Carolyn Miller during a visit, 16 December 1967. [Stubbe: *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, p. 459].

[205] Comments of John and Carolyn Miller at Khe Sanh, Fall of 1967.

[206] Piastres.

[207] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 07 July 1990.

Twice a day. They fed themselves twice a day. They would stand there: they knew that I couldn't honorably not eat that food. They were wonderful people."[208]

Maj Patton sought a location for his proposed Bru guerrilla force. It was important to keep isolated from Vietnamese units, such as District and Lang Vei, as the Operations Chief of FOB-3, James Moore, later commented: "..if you let MACV know what you're doing, you're letting the Vietnamese Army know, and that's a sure way to get yourself killed."[209] and focused on the abandoned prison site at Lao Bao where Route 9 passes through the Lao/Vietnam border. Located on flat terrain mostly surrounded by a loop in the Xe Pone River, the area afforded fields of fire of at least 1500 feet and contained an abandoned airstrip, 1100 x 65 ft. capable of handling C-7a aircraft.[210]. Walls of the abandoned prison/fort were mostly intact except for one corner, and the interior walls were concrete several feet thick.

A Bru named "Onya" [pronounced "on" "yah"], while not a "chief" in the Bru tribe (which was hereditary) was nevertheless a spokesman and representative for the Bru.[211] Onya had been educated in Hue with Felix Poilane, the son of the original French coffee planter, Eugene, who had established his plantation here in 1918. It was said by some that Onya was actually Eugene's son by a Bru woman.[212] (Eugene Poilane did father ten children, five born after he was 60).[213] Onya said he had been a guard at Lao Bao while Giap was imprisoned there.[214] (There were many legends about Onya, who was a man shrouded in mystery. During the Siege, Dan Kelley of CAC OSCAR noted that he would disappear for several days at a time, and then reappear in the FOB-3 compound).[215]



LAO BAO area in isthmus formed by Xe Pone River dividing Laos and Vietnam. USAF photo mission AM4389, 28 Jan 1968, flown by 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing



LAO BAO PRISON. Photo by Maj Fred Patton, Summer, 1967

Onya enthusiastically advised Major Patton to locate at Lao Bao. He showed Patton the cell in which Ho Chi Minh had been a prisoner.[216] Walls of the old fort "..were pretty well intact except on one corner, and they had all kinds of heavy walls still standing inside. It would have taken a minimal amount of materiel and effort to make one hellacious fort out there. And Onya was just beside himself. He said, I'll put 1500, 2000 people sout here in nothing flat. He was really looking forward to

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[208] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 December 1991.
[209] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.
[210] Collins, John M., *Military Geography for Professionals and the Public*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1998, p. 373.
[211] Letter of Mr. John Miller, 09 Oct 1969. Mr. Miller notes that because of his education and prominence with the French, his literacy and knowledge, he was appointed Assistant District Chief of Huong Hoa. Although Bru Chiefs are hereditary, Onya thus became their spokesman. [*Ibid.*] He was appointed Assistant District Chief in December, 1965, and became the link between American intelligence nets gaining information on the NVA through the Bru. [Taped comments of Mr. John Waghelstein, 09 May 1986].
[212] Conversation with Daniel Kelley, 23 May 1988.
[213] *Obit.*, Eugene Poilane.
[214] Conversation with Fred Patton, 09 September 1997.
[215] Letter of SGT Daniel Kelley, 28 March 1970.
[216] *Ibid.*

it."[217] The plan was shot down, however, by the SOG HQ who noted it "was within mortar range of surrounding territory!" One might ask: what area in Vietnam wasn't? Around the 4th or 5th of August, 1967, Capt Lee Dunlap's team was training Bru at the Old French Fort; he soon realized the Old French Fort location did not provide a good launch site and had no suport facilities[218]. Capt Lee Dunlap recalls visiting the Lao Bao site because his superiors had said, "We're going to put FOB-3 there."[219] It is interesting to speculate what may have happened during the Siege with the force occupying massive bunkers that they had at FOB-3 if they had, instead, been situated at Lao Bao on the border. Patton notes that had they been there, they might have delayed the NVA's progress: "..we would have had a vast array of weaponry for level ground fighting like that. They could of taken the area, sure, but boy would it have cost them!"[220] He always regretted not having had the chance to locatre at Lao Bao.[221]

Although much of the initial training was conducted in the Khe Sanh area itself, many of their initial efforts involved contact with BV-33 in Laos. On one "visit," Berg and Hetrick, together with about four "yards" drove from Khe Sanh to Ban Houei Sane in a jeep.[222] Patton had ordered them, "Do not take any weapons." It was a direct order from Ambassador William H. Sullivan.

"Do you have a weapon," asked Berg.

"Yeah, I got two 9mm in my belt, grenades in the pocket," responded Hetrick.

Berg looked over to Hetrick, "Why are we doing this? O God, I don't believe all of this is happening! It's amazing how many grenades and how many magazines you can get for a 9mm underneath the top jacket or in baggy clothing–the baggiest ones you can find!"

One of their first missions involved working with a Special Forces A-Team on the Vietnamese side while the Special Projects team went over into Laos as a blocking force for their flank.[223] A young Special Forces Captain who asked to accompany them as a "strap-hanger," started up a hill by himself during a break, triggering a battle which seemed like "the world opened up." Charles Berg was hit in both legs; he couldn't walk.

"Roll me down in the ditch here and cover me up in this gully with enough stuff and give me a weapon and ammunition and come back tomorrow," Berg told his Bru. "They'll just pass over it."

"Nah, I'm going to take you with me," said the short Bru soldier, who carried Berg on his back. Berg carried the weapon.

The two men got to the middle of the river. "Stay here!" yelled Berg.

Hetrick, on the other side, looked incredulous. "What the —— you doing?"

"The cold water feels so good in these bullet holes in my leg!"

"Get outta that water! Git!"

Berg was medevaced 14 Feb 1967.

During the Battle of the Hills, Patton attempted on several occasions to inform the Marine staff where his training patrols in country had discovered NVA positions. In one case, a patrol near 881-S had located a cave in which the NVA force was staging. At one point, six Bru "dragged" Patton to a hill to show him. But the Marines wouldn't "buy it." "What cave?" Patton reported the North Vieetnamese soldiers were staging right behind Hill 881-South. "I came back in and told the Marines where they were staging. They had a cage back there that they were putting prisoners in. Nobody would buy it at the time. ... I grew so disgusted with the old full bird Colonel because of his inability to face up to the fact that there were other people around and there was other information to be had. There were about six of my Yards come to me and almost dragged me back to that hill.



OLD FRENCH FORT SUMMER 1967
Photo by Maj James Whitenack



AERIAL PHOTO OF OLD FRENCH FORT
Photo by Maj James Whitenack

[217] *Ibid.*
[218] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 13 September 1997.
[219] Conversations with Lee Dunlap, 11 July 1990 and 10 September 1988..
[220] *Ibid.*
[221] *Ibid.*
[222] Following information from conversation with Charles Berg, 05 June 1994.
[223] Following information from conversation with Charles Berg, 18 April 1994.

They were excited about what they had seen. We went back there and stayed for darn near a full day because we couldn't get out of there once we went in. I went up and talked to the marine Commander. He was intent on shoving those platoons up that hill in that enfilade fire one right after the other."[224]

Fred Patton had been at Khe Sanh some six months when he departed to take over FOB-1, and Skip Minnicks arrived. Skip moved the cadre to the Old French Fort position (from the house directly across from the MACV District compound, referred to as the "Howard Johnson's"), an abandoned French military position on the eastern edge of Khe Sanh village. Frequent visits were made to BV-33 and from them, much was learned of the NVA activity in the area. Skip Minnicks was able to run 19 missions until the Siege abruptly stopped the development of their guerrilla force.

On one mission, he found his team being chased by a large NVA force. "I didn't know how large; I just knew it was large. We got too close and couldn't get out. They were actually looking for us with flashlights; that's how confident they were that they were strong enough. The next day, help came and I completely disregarded the KAK code—everything. I said, 'Birddog, this is me.' He said, 'You go ahead, me!'"[225]

There were several expedient KAK or Shackle Codes, of course, to encrypt the location in grid coordinate numbers. The code involves a word with ten non-repeating letters to replace the numbers. For example, using "CHAPEL FUND", C=1, H=2, A=3. Shackling the numbers of a grid coordinate is simply a matter of giving the right letters.[226] One shackle code used by SOG teams operating out of Khe Sanh was "TIGERHOUND," the name of the USAF operation of 20th TASS flying the Bird Dog aircraft.[227] Another was "the famous word." If the shackle code was lost, the team would be asked to remember "the famous word," and give their location by shackling the coordinates using it. The "famous word" is "MOTHERFF**K," "if a guy was in trouble on the ground, we'd say, 'OK, what's the famous word? You can tell me your grid coordinates using the famous word.' We used that as a shackle code."[228]

6. MAJ GEORGE QUAMO



GEORGE QUAMO

Captain George Quamo arrived around August/September, 1967, and was promoted to Major 01 Oct 1967.[229] He was 27.[230]. His mission was to move the "Special Projects" effort from the initial planning, conceptual phase, to an operational phase (training and then conducting a long-range UW role in the Mu Gia/Tchepone area). Strikingly handsome, brilliant and fluent in several languages, including Vietnamese (he even was an instructor in Vietnamese at the school in Monterey, California), charismatic, Gunny George Bailey (of the Marine 1st Radio Bn Det at Khe Sanh) referred to him as "the cat;"[231] others thought he was the kind of person who might disappear and ten years later reappear having led a guerrilla force in some remote region of the world.[232] He was a kind of "Lawrence of Arabia" of Vietnam. Capt Jerry Hudson, S-2 of 26th Marines during the Siege, remembers George sharing information he probably was not authorized to divulge, and yet it was the right thing to do under the circumstances. He notes:

"He was one super man. He and I spoke from the same 'Bible.' He had so much

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[224] Conversation with Fred Patton, 09 September 1997.

[225] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 Dec 1991.

[226] Examples of shackle codes: QUIET WORLD, WALT DISNEY, CHAIN SMOKE, BLUE SHADOW, BRICK HOUSE,BLUE SHADOW, QUIET WORLD, VIOLET RAYS, TWO NUMBERS, PHONY FEAST, DOG WHISTLE, FLY QUICKER PEARL S BUCK, CHARLESTON, WASHINGTON, COUP DE GRAS, SQUAD FORCES, TEN OF CLUBS, CRIMSON TAP, BALTIMORES, TURKEY LOAF, THE COMPANY, STOMPED BUG, TWO QUAKERS, VOLKSWAGEN, WHITE VODKA, JOURNALIST, AFORESIGHT, BLACKSTONE, FIVE CLOCKS, BLUE MONDAY, REPUBLICAN, BLACK SHIRT, QUALIFY NOW, LONG SQUEAK, FRUIT CAKES, BASILONE RD, DIRTYWOMAN, WRONG BLAST, BEAUFORT SC, BROWN CHIEF, SHACKELING, ENGLISH BOY, HEAVY DRINK, SQUARE MIND, QUADRICEPS, BRIGHT POLE, HYDRAULICS.

[227] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 10 September 1988.

[228] Conversation with Harve Saal, 29 June 1990.

[229] DA Form 66, Officer Qualification Record, Service Record of George Quamo.

[230] George Quamo, SSN 155 32 8806, was born 20 June 1940 in Lynn, MA. [DD-214 of George Quamo in his Service Record].

[231] Conversation with George Bailey, 19 Oct 1989.

[232] Conversations with Jerry E. Hudson, 23 June 1994 and James Quamo, 04 June 1995. Hudson was S-2 of 26th Marines during the siege battle.

credibility; if he said it, I didn't care what somebody else said. Quamo was Special Forces to the heart. When Special Forces started I was a recon instructor at [Naval Amphibious Base], Little Creek, Virginia, and we got a message one weekend: we'd like you to train 50 Special Forces in submarine lock-in/lock-out. [Note: a technique for moving in and out of submerged submarines near a shoreline, day and night, to enter or depart for recon, involving use of special light signal devices, use of tanks, etc.] It was difficult to obtain a submarine—on a weekend—but I replied, 'Submarine will be available. Create curriculum. Be prepared to go.' This was in 1950 or so. We put 300 of them through there, 50 a week. And so we had very close ties with those people, and Quamo respected me because I knew alot of people he knew from back when that 'club' [of Unconventional Warfare types] was very small."[233] He continues:

"Quamo wasn't directed by Lownds to come over; he came over on his own initiative. Quamo really saved us during the first few days of the attack by giving us all sorts of significant information—instead of simply forwarding it on to Saigon and then receiving, via Saigon, digested abstractions much later"[234] when the NVA units had long ago moved and the information had become "history.". Headquarters and units of the NVA were exceedingly mobile—even mortar positions. A Battalion or Regimental or Divisional Headquarters could be fixed in a specific location only to relocate very soon thereafter. There were so many NVA positions (sometimes manned, sometimes not), in fact, that the Target Information Officer in the FSCC, Mirza Baig, had over 3,000 targets within a 15 KM radius of KSCB[235] (positions of anti-aircraft, automatic weapons, mortars, artillery, bunkers, fortified areas, trenches, logistic dumps, camp assembly areas, truck and track vehicle parking, rocket launchint sites, headquarters).

Quamo "..would sometimes talk in riddles:[236] 'If you're looking for H&I fire, I would suggest this area here might be one super great area to concentrate on,' or 'If you're just not sure where to put your sensors and your other assets, this area over here seems to me to be alot of activity and you'll probably get some good target information if you concentrate in that area,' and that type of thing."

George Quamo was the oldest son of Alexander and Kaliroi Quamo, who emigrated with their daughter, Yllka, from Albania to the United States in the 1930s when that country became Communist.[237] Three other daughters (Tefta, Andronika, and Marietta), and two sons (George and James) were born after they arrived in America.[238] His parents were hard workers and family values were important. His elderly father worked for GE until he died when George was 12 and his brother James was 10. Albania had been an austere life, and the family, living in the "Brickyard" section of Lynn, Massachusetts, was difficult. His mother knew five languages, none of which was English. Upon the death of his father, the family moved to Averill Park, just outside of Albany, New York. James notes, "My father worked until midnight. We were kids–eight, nine, and ten years old, and there was always love in the house and there was discipline. We sold newspapers and got home around eleven thirty at night."[239] The neighborhood's difficult conditions molded its residents into survivors and achievers.[240]

George Quamo had been an exceptional athlete in Averill Park, NY, high-school: he was either MVP or Captain of football, basketball, and baseball teams.[241] He was Class President as a Junior, and the students wanted him as President the next year, but he declined in order to let someone else have the limelight. Colleges attempted to recruit him, but he enlisted in the Army on 23 Oct 1958, and trained at Ft. Benning, GA, and later attended the Officers Candidate School where he graduated as a 2Lt. (He subsequently attended Jump School, Ranger School, and Vietnamese Language School.[242] In Dec, 1959, he

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[233] Conversation with Jerry Hudson, 04 July 1991.
[234] Conversation with Jerry Hudson, 23 June 1994.
[235] Letter of MAJ Mirza M. Baig, 23 Dec 1968, to HQMC, Historical Division, in Khe Sanh Monograph Cpomments file.
[236] Conversation with Jerry E. Hudson, 23 June 1994.
[237] Conversation with James Quamo, 02 January 2003.
[238] His father, Alexander Gregor Quamo, was born 17 April 1895 in Albania. His mother, Kaliroi Kaye Quamo was born 15 April 1905 in Albania. His sister, Yllka was born 17 April 1925 in Albania. His sister, Tefta, was born 3 Dec 1937 in Lynn, MA. His sister, Andronika, was born 28 May 1939 in Lynn, MA. His brother, James, was born 25 May 1942 in Lynn, MA. His sister, Marietta, was born 9 Oct 1945 in Lynn, MA. [DD form 398, Statement of Personal History, 27 Jan 1964, in Service Record, George Quamo].
[239] Conversation with James Quamo, 15 January 2003.
[240] James Quamo notes that one became head of an insurance company in California, one became a high school principal, James became an educator. One became an Orthodox priest who teaches in college, and one led the nation in scoring in football in 1961, Pete Pako from West Texas State. [Conversation with James Quamo, 02 Jan 2003].
[241] Conversation with James Quamo, 04 June 1995." "George was a year and eleven months older than me. When he was in high-school, he was a very good athlete, exceptional athlete--in football, basketball, and base\ball. In all three sports he was either Captain or MVP or both. He was a Class president, and then the next year they wanted him as Class President and he just turned it down." [*Ibid.*] James Quamo is George's brother.
[242] Quamo's Service Record notes completion of Vietnam Language School (6 weeks) in 1962, Thai Language (at DLIWC, 41

was assigned to Ft. Riley, KS, where he served as a Platoon Leader, XO, and Company Commander of infantry units on the post. Bob Stevens, his first commander, later wrote of George:

> George and I met for the first time in Fort Riley, Kansas, back in 1960 and I was his first commander. I rode him hard and put him up wet every night. He spent a great deal of time at my house. I was a First Lieutenant and not making very much money but we enjoyed many a bologna sandwich together and he would fall asleep on our couch while watching TV. He became close to my son Jim and called him Timmy for some reason. My wife taught him to dance and one night he was embarrassed when my daughter kicked him as my wife was pregnant at the time. We both ended up in Special Forces with me joining first. After his return from Vietnam as an Advisor, we spent Christmas together at my home here in Mississippi. George was really surprised because the area is a big tourist resort with all types of night spots and activity. He was out every night until the wee hours and my children would wake him up for a late breakfast. He always wore an old pair of black VC pajamas and they had a large hole in the pants. .. We had a great time as George enjoyed the area and the people. He even spoke of the possibility that we would retire in the area.
>
> We were assigned together almost continually. We were together at language scholol with George studying Thai and I had Korean. We met each other coming and going in Okinawa. it seemed that either one or the other was always off on mission. I had my car shipped over so he was never without transportation as my wife did not drive at that time. He took my wife, Jean, wherever she needed to go. He also used the car to cat around and it was funny to Jean as she was starting to get the reputation of a big playgirl as people began to see the car parked in front of all the lively night spots. Oddly enough, our Group Commander and I had the only two white Falcon station wagons on the island so George and I blamed it all on him. We had taken SCUBA together in California and dove several times in Okinawa.
>
> When I was in Korea on a mission, George received orders for Vietnam. He bummed a flight over and we spent one hell of a week together. When I arrived in Vietnam we got together in Da Nang for a weekend. George spoke fluent Vietnamese and was quite an operator. ... At that time we talked about his joining me in Nha Trang as my Executive officer and he was due to visit me at the time he came up missing. We had talked about going into some type import/export business together after service.
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> The last time I saw George, he appeared concerned that he was predestined to die on that tour. He told me that he expected to go out in a big way and specifically mentioned an airplane crash. It worried me but both of us were doing a great deal of flying over enemy controlled territory and such a worry would only be a bit natural. He was not afraid in the sense of fear but was definitely concerned.
>
> We were close enough to embrace each other at departure and greeting times and did not give a damn who saw us or what they might think. Once we were walking in Carmel, California, when we approached a group of hippie looking characters. I started to move aside when George said, 'Steve, this is our damn sidewalk and if it wasn't for guys like you and I these hippies wouldn't have a sidewalk to be on.' They moved aside very quietly. We were much closer than my brothers are to me. He was the only true friend that I have ever had and I am afraid that many men will go through life never knowing that kind of friendship and camaraderie. For that, I am truly sorry. ... God, do I ever miss him.[243]

Quamo was awarded a Silver Star for gallantry in action on 27 Mar 1963 while moving through heavy enemy fire to put a friendly machinegun back in action and rallying the Vietnamese troops he was advising.[244]

Then, when George Quamo reported as Team Commander of a SOG team in Mar 1964, Don Koch recalls that Les Mason, the XO of the team, was several years older and a West Point graduate. George "..was absolsutely fantastic! He said, 'You guys all know what your job is; I don't have to tell you what your job is; let's go do it!' I mean, he didn't command that thing; he led it... He was brilliant. If they would have sent him to college, he would of got through college in a year and a half. The people around him were just magnetized by him, and if you didn't have the magnetism, he somehow transferred it to you."[245]

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wks) in 1965 [3AA Form, DA, 2-Year College Equivalency Evaluation Worksheet, 14 Feb 1966], completed Special Forces officer training 23 May 1964 [DA Form 66, Officer Qualification Record], Parachutist (4 weeks, on 10 Jan 1960), Ranger school (8 weeks) on 6 Apr 1960, and Pathfinder training 5 Feb 1966. [DA Form 66, Officer Qualification Record].

[243] Letter from Bob Stevens to James Quamo, 6 Nov 1974, sent in letter from James Quamo, 21 Feb 1996.

[244] hq, Dept. of the Army, General order No. 36, 14 Sep 1967, in Service Record of George Quamo. This replaced an earlier award of the Bronze Star Medal (announced in General Orders No. 122, HQ, Military Assistance Advisory Group, vietnam, 16 Apr 1964.

[245] Conversation with Don Koch, 02 May 1995.

Quamo received a 2-year college equivalency in 1966,[246] completed Advanced Officer's Infantry Course the same year, and returned to Vietnam, arriving at Khe Sanh a few weeks prior to his promotion to Major 6 Oct 1967.

7. ON THE PRECIPICE

George Quamo, Skip Minnicks, and Doc Secor, of the Special Projects unit, having made contact with Col Soulang at BV33 now moved east to scour the Co Roc Massif.[247] Formed when the Kontum Massif collided into the Southeast Asia mainland, lifting up an ancient sea bed of what is now Laos (like shoving a hand under a stack of newspapers), this sheer cliff of the limestone sediment from that sea bed, doused with monsoon rains over many millenia, had formed numerous caves where the water trickled into cracks. Caves, in ancient myths, are openings to the realm of demons of the deep, an entrance to the underworld; evil beings bent on destruction dwell here.

Special Projects had developed to include three teams: PENNSYLVANIA, OKLAHOMA, and WISCONSIN. The Americans in Special Projects had puchased an engraved Randall knife for Maj Quamo with the team names engraved as the Bru pronounced them: ST WISSICON, ST OKLAHOME, and ST PENNSYLVANE. (The knife was never presented, however, due to what subsequently happened to Quamo.) Each team had three Americans and about seven Bru,[248] although this varied with the mission since, the largest being ten indiginous, but larger teams made the mission of intelligence gathering more difficult.[249]

During their reconnaissance on top of Co Roc, the soldiers of FOB-3 were to be fogged-in.[250]

SFC Robert CAVANAUGH, Team Leader of Spike Team OKLAHOMA, had enlisted in 1953 at age 17, just missing his opportunity to serve in Korea (which upset him at the time), and become a communicator. He reenlisted to become a CW operator, trained at Ft. Gordon and, upon graduation, was "drafted" into Special Forces at a time when they lacked qualified CW radio operators.[251] He had served in Laos in 1961 during Operation WHITE STAR with Bull Simon and then transferred to 1st Special Forces Group on Okinawa from where he served in Vietnam part of every year from 1963 to 1968. He always volunteered for these missions, was never ordered. He also served in Project Delta with Col Beckwith. After arriving in Vietnam in 1962, he served part of every following year in Vietnam up to 1969. Cavanaugh was involved in some unusually dangerous missions. "I never refused to go on any mission. I never refused to go on any patrol." Yet, he was only wounded once: "I always did mofre than my share.I always say to myself, "Why? Why am I still here?".[252] After reporting at DaNang, Cavanaugh was uncomforable in the comfortable setting while others were out in the field, and requested duty in a forward unit. The Sergeant-Major sent him to Special Projects at Khe Sanh, then located at "Fort Dix"[253] which at the time was led by Charles Minnicks. There were no officers at the time.[254]

Then, Captain George Quamo arrived. Master Sergeant Charles Minnicks was the oldest team leader of SOG in Vietnam, in his late 30s. When he arrived in Vietnam, the Sergeant Major said, "You're too old!" and was about to be sent to FOB-1 to take over as temporary Sergeant-Major. Minnicks objected: "This is my fourth trip [to Vietnam]. I didn't have to make any trip. The only reason I came here was because I was allowed to volunteer for this outfit. I want a team!" He said, "You're too old; you can't keep up." Minnicks replied, "Give me a shot. If I can't keep up, I'll be the first one to come to you." So the Sergeant Major begrudgingly sent Minnicks to take over team PENNSYLVANIA at Khe Sanh. Minnicks recalls: "I had that group. I was in charge of that group. So when he [Quamo] came–. He looked like a kid! Here comes this new Captain. I resented him! And I made it apparent. And he called me into his tent, and he just sat me down, and we just talked. And he made me aware of my

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[246] DA Form 66, Service Record, George Quamo.

[247] Co Roc, 14.8 KM southwest of KSCB, just inside the Lao border, "..is a granite ridge that runs along the border from XD 725348 southeast to XD 768321 and then south to XD 753270. Varying in height from 850 meters to 515 meters above sea level, Co Roc is more than 300 meters higher than the Khe Sanh plain and the crest of the ridge is only one to three kilometers inside Laos." [HQ, 1st Inf Brig, 5th Inv Div (Mech): Combat AAR, Operation TASK FORCE REMAGEN, 16 Mar - 29 Apr 1969, 4 Jun 1969, Para 8.c. Tab E to 3d MarDiv Command Chronology, May, 1969]. Co Roc's precipitous eastern face and south slopes are a sheer cliff (facing KSCB) and the entire area is covered by forest and laced with trails and streams. [MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 9 July 1968, p. 2.]

[248] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993. The knife was retained by SFC Charles Minnicks "ST" refers to "Strike Team."

[249] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 05 May 1990.

[250] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 27 Oct 1993.

[251] Those who are qualified in Morse code; "CW"=Continuous Wave.

[252] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.

[253] The Old French Fort position just east of Khe Sanh village.

[254] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.

short-comings! He really did."[255] When "Skip" Minnicks became upset, Cavanaugh reminded him that sooner or later an officer would be sent there and they didn't yet know anything about Quamo. "I can't understand why we're fighting this man; we don't even know him."[256] Cavanaugh deeply respected Skip "because the man had absolutely no fear. in fact, I named my youngest son after him."[257] In short order, Minnicks and Quamo were the best of friends.[258]

Operating 07-17 January, the Special Projects unit, led by Maj Quamo and SFC Minnicks, discovered extensive NVA positions in Co Roc. On 11 Jan, a team found a 50-man foxhole complex right on the top of Co Roc. Two days later, a patrol observed 75 NVA soldiers and sighted heavy ground fire, including .50 cal machineguns, firing at an airplane. On 15 Jan, a team observed long wire antenna adjacent a hut with indications of heavy foot traffic in the immediate vicinity.[259]

Then, on the 14th, SFC Robert Cavanaugh, the ONE ZERO of Spike Team OKLAHOMA, along with 1/Lt Harlan "Rip" Van Winkle, leading a Hatchett Force of 8 Americans and about 30 Bru, was about to touch down on the south end of Co Roc, on a finger coming off the ridgeline off the backside, when a command detonated (Claymore type) mine was detonated. Van Winkle recalls: "It just shredded the left side. My platoon commander was in a bad way. The Platoon Commander was LUA, who had given three or four parrots to Fusco and Tredennick. It totally destroyed the helicopter. When I got off, I hit the ground and started to get up, and something just told me to get down again. I started to duck, an d as I ducked, the blade of the helicopter flopped around and knocked my hat off! It did a complete 180. And I said, 'God, if I'd of just stood there, well, it would have taken my head right along with it."[260] SFC Cavanaugh's trousers were "just about blown off. Another chopper came in to evacuate the pilot and door gunner and then another chopper came, tied a pair of pants to a sandbag, flew over, and dropped it to me."[261]

From the top of Co Roc, one could view KSCB and Lang Vei, but not Khe Sanh ville which was in a valley.[262] Cavanaugh said "What are we going to do with this thing?" and "Rip" replied, "Go ahead and burn it." Cavanaugh reponsed, "I hate to tell you this, but it's going to take more than an O-2 to tell me to burn this chopper," and called Maj Campbell at the FOB who gave permission to destroy the bird after the wounded were extracted. It was burnt by thermite grenades.[263] "It didn't take long for that helicopter to go up in smoke. We picked up and married up with Cavanaugh, and I think Minnicks, and we set up a perimeter. Three or four hours later, Quamo with another team came in. I guess Baker was up there. There was a bunch of us and we started running patrols out of there,"[264] fanning in different directions.



Sgt Fusco had been carrying an American flag for five-and-a-half months, looking for the proper place to put it. The top of Co Roc Mountain seemed appropriate to him, and there it was planted.[265]

Some soldiers of Special Projects and FOB-3 Khe Sanh, 1968. Left to right: SFC Cavanaugh, MSGT Minnicks, SFC Sherron, SFC Secore, SP5 Harris, SFC Baker, SSGT McCabee.[266] [In Christmas card to members of Congress, governors, the President]

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[255] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 04 November 1990.
[256] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.
[257] *Ibid.*
[258] *Ibid.*
[259] Warren A. Trest, *Khe Sanh (Operation NIAGARA), 22 January - 31 March 1968*, HQ PACAF, Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, Project CHECO [Contemporary Historical Evaluation of Combat Operations], 13 Sept 1968, p. 18.
[260] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 23 October 1994.
[261] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 27 October 1993.
[262] Conversation with Harlan Van Winkle, 23 October 1994.
[263] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.
[264] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 23 October 1994.
[265] *Ibid.*
[266] Photo originally appeared in Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: The Khe Sanh *Veteran* 2:2 (Spring, 1996), p. 36. [*Red Clay #35]*

On the 16th, SFC Cavanaugh happened to peer over the edge of the cliff and spotted a peculiar object sticking out of the face of the sheer cliff. It was man-made, not natural. "I hit one of my Bru and pointed down there. O they got excited! Then we found a little trail—you could hardly see it—a little trail that went down this cliff face right there, and that's when we found the first of the big caves."[267] Searching the caves, Robert Cavanaugh remembers: "They were so dark, and there were so many of them, and I was only a small team."[268] The large caves contained bunks and walls full of things.[269]

One cave contained two tons of rice. Three enclosed structures were located nearby which could house 30 men each. Approximately 900 meters southeast of the caves, an extensive bunker complex was discovered. The team counted 500 bunkiers and reported that many were of 10-man capacity. One large bunker was estimated to be a regimental command post.[270]

Cavanaugh's team proceeded to burn everything. No NVA were encountered, but everyone knew they were there—somewhere. Donald Rumph later recalled: "That mountain top was unbelievable—the positions they had up there. It was just amazing. There weren't any troops there; they had gone some place else—didn't hurt my feelings at all!" The "missing NVA," however, did concern them: "..we talked about it afterwards; all of us knew that had there been anybody at all there, they would have eaten our lunches. I mean, there was just no way that we could of done anything other than just get blown away up there."[271]

The three Special Projects team leaders (SFCs Skip Minnicks, Bob Cavanaugh, and Bob Baker) were reconning the area, came to a clearing near a river, and still hadn't made any contact. Cavanaugh said, "I'm going to check over the top of this rise—see if there's anyting over the top. You guys wait here." Skip and Bob Baker said, "No, we're going to go with you." "OK."[272]

SFC Robert Baker was on SFC Cavanaugh's left; SFC Minnicks was on his right. The scene of what happened next is branded upon Cavanaugh's memory:

"We had maybe ten yards between us as we're walking up there, and to this day, I can still hear `click click,' which is Bob and Skip taking their weapons off `safe' and putting them on `full automatic.' I can hear that to this day. So we're going up there. As soon as we got to the hill, this guy jumped up out of a hole to shoot me, and when he did that, Bob was no more than three to four feet away from me, and the NVA swung his weapon away from me, and hit Bob."[273]

SFC Baker took three very serious shots to his gut. Doc Secor went right to Baker and miraculously—considering the wounds—kept him alive. "I remember Bob kept hollering, `I gotta take a crap! I gotta take a crap!' and Doc was saying, `Don't do that! Don't do that! Just be good! Stay in there!' Doc told me later he didn't want Bob to take—it was something that was keeping him alive, giving him something to think about, keep his mind on something else."[274]

SFC James W. Moore, at the FOB-3, heard Maj Quamo request the evacuation aircraft. "We were supposed to have our standard mission complement: 3 slick Hueys and 2 Cobras, and they pulled that off. So we had to ask the Marines—purely in asking, because their mission does not entail crossing that mythical border. When Maj `Bulldog' Smith asked Col Lownds, Col Lownds said, 'I can't do that without permission from III MAF, even if I wanted to.' So, Maj Quamo, when he heard the answer: `there will be no air extraction with the Marine helicopters at Khe Sanh—' he lost his temper and he became very profane; he came up on the Marine command frequency and he called some people a series of very bad names. Now some Marine pilot—a very large guy—in those H-34s—heard this, and he went up and got in his H-34 ... and he took off in a full fog. "[275]

A 200-ft. overcast and ground fog completely obscured forward visibility. The H-34 (Maj Charles R. Upshaw, Capt Bradford Jealous, Sgt. J.E. Johnston, Cpl Jesus L. Mena, Cpl Santiago Villarreal, and Cpl C.D. Chester), and a UH-1E (of VMO-3: Maj Charles R. Upshaw, Capt James H. Knox) proceeded at extremely low altitude, in and out of clouds, dodging mountains and hill masses, while also fully exposed to possible enemy ground fire.[276]

Captain James Hargrove Knox recalls:

> The situation was: I was up there, and my Plane Commander was Horace Lowrey, 'Hoss Lowrey,' kind of a legendary, gutsy aviator, mustang officer. I'm his co-pilot, and we've got another plane as a Number Two

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[267] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.
[268] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 11 July 1993.
[269] *Ibid.*
[270] FMFPAC 280335Z/Jan68, FMFPAC WESTPAC SITREP #1034; Trest, *Khe Sanh*, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
[271] Conversation with Donald Rumph, 07 October 1994.
[272] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 27 October 1993.
[273] *Ibid.*
[274] *Ibid.*
[275] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.
[276] Letter of Maj Ira Snell, Jr., Commander of FOB-1, in Air Medal file of Capt. James Hargrove Knox.

plane... Once the Army figured that all of us were instrument qualified, and also most of us were TACA–we could control fixed-wing airstrikes, then the Army's SOG people.. wanted to use us on all their missions because we were relatively flexible. We could do a lot of different stuff. So we're up there on one of these little set-to's, and things really could not have been much worse at Khe Sanh and the general area.

There was a patrol out on Co Roc. The Army SOG people had a team down there [and] one of their guys got very seriously wounded, and it was morning, and the weather was absolutely horrendous! And a decision was made to try to get the whole team out. So we attempted to launch with either two or four gunships and a number of transport helicopters, and didn't even make it to the end of the runway. We almost ran into one another. It was just an impossible weather sityuation to control that number of aircraft in. So we all got back down on the ground, fortunately without a midair collision, and there was a debriefing.

The Army people were screaming at us that we had to get this wounded guy out of there. We were swaying that we would do what we could And an extremely gutsy guy named Charlie Upshaw, a Major, said that he would take a H-34 and go out and try to hoist this guy out if we would send one gunship to at least give him a little cover. So 'Hoss' and I volunteered and jumped in the gunship and decided it was safer with two planes than with six or eight, and decided to just give it a go. We got out there, and Charlie led the flight. We just stayed behind him with the gun switches hot and headed south from Khe Sanh, and basically went over the treetops the entire way; we didn't dare go up in the goo because it was so damn mountainous up there we were afraid we would crash, and no way also to get down into the zone of the other end reliably. So Charlie just went over the treetops, and we followed him, up and down and in and out of fog. In at least one point, I saw a guy run out of a hut, stand there in front of the hut, and opened up on us with a submachinegun. All I did was give him 'the finger' as I went by. There was absolutely nothing we could do, OK? Because you didn't dare turn around and go after the guy 'cause you'd lose the H-34.

We got into the zone, a little depression, like a little valley in the top of Co Roc. Charlie found the team and we kept orbiting around low, ready to shoot. He lowered his hoist in that H-34, and he hovered motionlessw over this jungle cliff-type sityuation, had to have been there for 15 minutes, in this absolutely steady hover. They got the kid up in the plane... The wounded guy was shot in the stomach, and we made it back to Khe Sanh–and all changed our underwear!"[277]

SFC James W. Moore recalls the Marine command at KSCB was extremely angry with the Marine pilots for the Co Roc rescue. "But we told the Colonel—because we record everything that happens on the radio; we put it on tape: 'I don't know what you're going to do with the men, court-martial them or whatever, but we're going to put them in for a DFC for flying that kind of condition and making a rescue of a man under that circumstance.'"[278]

The evening before the extraction, Maj Quamo had an early version of a "smart bomb" strike from Navy aircraft, and the morning of the extract, he fired a "mad moment,"[279] and the force departed with a bang by helicopter to Lang Vei (to brief them) from where they were trucked back to FOB-3 to brief both the Marines and FOB-3. SFC Cavanaugh's truck broke down shortly after departing Lang Vei, however.

"It's a funny feeling. When you run missions over into Laos, you always think when your plane picks you up and brings you to South Vietnam that you're safe. Our truck breaks down. I set out security. My guys were out dancing in the road. They had the booty that we got out of the caves. I'm sitting on top of my truck, and about an hour later, another truck comes down there. It's almost dusk. The only thing that I can think of that might of saved my butt out there from that stupidity was that

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[277] Conversation with James Hargrove Knox, 04 October 1994. Knox reported that Maj. Horace Lowery had subsequently died. The wounded, evacuated man, SFC Robert Nelson Baker, subsequently died of wounds on 24 Feb 1968.

[278] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995. MAJ Ira Snell, Jr., CO of FOB-1 wrote CO of HMM-362, MAG-36 [Letter dated 16 Feb 1968, Subj: Letter of Commendation, appended to in Air Medal file of Capt James Hargrove Knox]: "On 16 January 1968 an emergency medical evacuation of a seriously wounded team member was requested at about 1500 hours. Due to the adverse weather conditions at that time all aircraft were grounded. Fearlessly and with complete disregard for their own safety, Major Lowery, Major Upshaw and their crews decided to attempt the evacuation. Since there was no suitable landing zone near the wounded man, Major Upshaw was required to exert maximum power to remain stable while the wounded man was being extracted by winch. Without their support during extremely hazardous weather conditions the wounded man would have died. It is with the deepest gratitude that I extend my appreciation and the appreciation of all my men to Major Upshaw, Major Lowery and their crews for their heroic and outstanding effort on behalf of the team."

[279] Conversation with Harlan "Rip" Van Winkle, 23 October 1994. "Mad moment" refers to everyone firing their weapons simultaneously, corresponding to an artillery "TOT ("Timed on Target") when all guns in a battery (or several batteries) plus mortars, etc., fire simultaneously on a specific target.

the next night Khe Sanh was attacked."[280]

DENVER

Captain Lee Dunlap had grown up in Wyoming: "I was just a little, skinny kid born and raised in Wyoming."[281] He attended Jump School at Ft. Campbell in 1959, and then had been an instructor in Jungle Warfare School in Panama. He served three tours in Vietnam starting in 1962-1963 when, as a buck Sergeant, his mission (operating in III Corps) was "to go to the hamlets and villages wherever there was a Regional or Popular Force unit stationed. They were still equipped with French weapons, and we'd reequip them with American equipment, remain with them a couple of weeks to train them to do basic maintenance, clean rifles, fire mortars, do ambushes."[282]

Upon his return, he attended Officer Candidate School at Ft. Benning, and then returned to Ft. Bragg where he was Officer in Charge of the HALO Committee[283] and Skyhook Committee,[284] and then attended language school at Monterey for Thai for a year before arriving in Okinawa. Lee Dunlap notes: "All members drew TDY pay as part of their cover because they really weren't supposed to be there."[285] Although TDY pay was lucrative,[286] those drawing it later discovered they were ordered to Vietnam since their TDY tour didn't count as "in-country."

First Special Forces Group on Okinawa was assisting the effort in Vietnam along with 7th Special Forces Group at Ft. Bragg by sending TDY[287] units which were mainly border surveillance efforts to deny enemy infiltration.[288] The augmentation effort was known as SNAKEBITE.[289]

Capt. Lee Dunlap led Operational Detachment A-221 [ODA-221], 1st Special Forces Group, to Vietnam in July, 1967, reporting to Col Harold K. Rose in DaNang[290] who gave him orders to support the effort of FOB-1 at Phu Bai. The other team leaders, John Corley and John McClasky, were to report to FOB-2 at Kontum, and Joe Bain to FOB-3 at Khe Sanh.[291] Although FOB-1 had conducted operations into Laos from a Launch Site at Khe Sanh since the summer of 1966, Dunlap was delighted, as were his men, for "already the word was out that Khe Sanh was not the best place in the world to go if you really valued

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[280] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993. The NVA obviously did not want to show their hand by prematurely triggering their attack.

[281] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 27 August 1988.

[282] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 22 August 1988.

[283] HALO=High Altitude Low Opening, or free-fall parachute jumping.

[284] The Sky Hook was originally tested by the U.S. Navy (for the CIA) in 1954 for long-range air-to-sea rescue work beyond the range of helicopters. It was tested in the arctic and tropics, and since 1961 has been operationally employed on scientific research projects in inaccessible areas of the world. [Task ID 141812XXX02 TRECOM Technical Report 64-17, Feb 1964, prepared by Robert Fulton Co., Newtown, Ct., for the U.S. Army Transportation Research Command, Ft. Eustis, Va.] The aircraft is equipped with a "yoke" on its nose. At an altitude of approximately 500 feet, it flies straight and level into a nylon line suspended below a balloon. Upon contact, the balloon tears loose and the line locks to the nose of the plane. The man, affixed to the end of the line into a harness, is lifted about 200 feet vertically before he travels 80 feet horizontally, thereby enabling retrieval in an area containing high obstacles. The Skyhook was tested by Marines of Second Force Reconnaissance Company, Camp Le Jeune, N C, in 1958. The CO of 2nd Force Recon Co., Capt Joe Z. Taylor (later Commandant of the Marine Corps and then Inspector General of the US State Dept.) had attended some CIA schools and R&D conferences in which this method was presented. When Pax (Patuxant) River Air Facility notified Taylor the system was ready for testing, he was away in the 1958 Lebanon Crisis and his equipment NCO, Levi Woods made the test. On the first pass of the recovery aircraft, the propeller severed the balloon and it, together with the lines, came tumbling down on Wood's head. The second attempt was satisfactory and Woods was later awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for the accomplishment. [Stubbe, Ray W., *Paddles, Parachutes, and Patrols*, unpublished manuscript, pp. 164 and 413; interview of Mr. Joe Z. Taylor at US State Dept., 22 May 1975.

[285] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 08 April 1989.

[286] TDY pay includes pay for housing and subsistence, and is therefore not taxable income. It was approximately $50.00/mo.

[287] TDY=Temporary Additional Duty.

[288] Rather than the true mission of a Special Forces "A" Team in which the 12 men develop an indigenous division-sized unit of 10,000 people. [Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 27 August 1988].

[289] Conversation with Harlan Van Winkle, 23 Oct 1994. Conversation with Lee Dunlap,. 08 April 1989.

[290] "We arrived in DaNang where the headquarters for the effort to interdict the border or enhance the border interdiction through this intelligence collection effort that was being made in Laos was located. It was clandestine and of course it was TOP SECRET. We were told, 'If you get caught, you're on your own. We're going to deny your presence.' A lot of times we went 'sterile' which is, we did not have any U.S. weapons; it was all foreign weapons and indigenous clothing.
The teams were called SPIKE teams, normally made up of three Americans and nine indigenous, sometimes three Americans and six indigenous." [Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 27 August 1988].

[291] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 08 April 1989.

your life. I went back and briefed the team we were going to Phu Bai and everyone went, 'O whew! Thank the Lord!'."[292]

About two hours later, Col Rose sent for Capt Dunlap.

"On second thought–and after discussing this with Capt. Bain, I've decided to send you're a-team to Khe Sanh and Capt. Bain's team to Phu Bai."

"Well, Sir, would you explain to me the reasoning behind that?"

"Well," said the Colonel, "Captain Bain has a pretty good argument. He just graduated from the Defense Language institute in Chinese and the majority of the recon team and Hatchett force at Phu Bai are Cholon Chinese [They were not Nung]. And so we feel because of his language ability, he'd be much more–"

"Sir, you know that's a bunch of crap! That's just a bunch of bull. He's just trying–this is not fair."

"Well, I've made the decision."[293]

Dunlap returned to his team who probably now felt, "This is some Captain we got as a team leader!"

Operational Detachment A-221 was issued weapons–but no ammo–and departed for Khe Sanh to become one of the three basic components of FOB-3, (the other being the nucleus of MACSOG, CCN, soldiers, and secondly, George Quamo's Special projects group). In addition to Capt Lee Dunlap and 1/Lt Harlan VanWinkle (known as "Rip"), other members of DENVER (oda-221) included James Fusco[294] (light weapons man), Craig Lansing, Donald Rumph, and John Frescura.[295]

The nucleus group included Charles Berg who had been medevaced on 14 Feb 1967, and four months later, the FOB-3 Sergeant-Major, Richard Pegram, saw him in DaNang and said, "Come on up with me to 'Camp Yuk!'"[296] Camp Yuk referred to Khe Sanh). SOG was one of those clandestine units that reminds one of the "Mission Impossible" TV series where "the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of you." They were told, "If you get caught, you're on your own. We're going to deny your presence."[297]

Arrival at Khe Sanh would have made anyone feel unwelcome. The XO of Det A-221, Harlan "Rip" Van Winkle, recalls: "We hadn't even spent the night in DaNang when we flew in from Okinawa. We flew into Phu Bai on a Caribou and spent the night there. The weather was so bad, we couldn't get up to Khe Sanh until late the next afternoon. A big Marine helicopter brought us there about three o'clock, 3:30, in the afternoon. There wasn't anybody there at first to meet us. We called up the old French Fort, and Sergeant First Class Walt Hetzler, who had been my Squad Leader back when I was in the 503rd Airborne Combat Team in Okinawa back in 1962, showed up with a sawed-off M2 Carbine and two 20-round magazines taped back to back in an old, beat-up deuce-and-a-half."[298]

"You got any ammo?" asked Rip.[299]

"Nah, we don't need no ammo," replied Hetzler.

Thoughts raced through Rip's head like bullets from a sprung ambush he anticipated: five of the new team members had previously served in Vietnam and the other seven Americans had read enough After Action Reports to make them true believers of evils lurking in old French plantations. The monsoon season was pouring its misery and it was four days before the national elections (when one would expect enemy activity, attempting to disrupt elections). The area surrounding Khe Sanh was by no means pacified. And there were no damn bullets! We had three people who had been in country before: Lee Dunlap, Chuck Treddenick, and James Fusco; nobody else had been there. It makes no difference how much training you've got, the first time you're in enemy territory and you haven't got any ammo, the 'pucker factor' goes up!"

"We loaded all of our gear, mounted the truck, and departed for the old French Fort. At about the half way point of a road that had been totally washed out and never designed for much more than wagons and bicycles, the left front wheel slid off on a mud hole that probably could have concealed a submarine. No amount of work on our part could extract us from our dilemma. The radio that Hetzler had with him was wet and refused to cooperate. We didn't have batteries for ours as that was another item that would be issued upon our arrival. Hetzler decides he will have to walk the remaining distance to get

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[292] *Ibid.*

[293] *Ibid.*

[294] Harve Saal recalls Master Sergeant Fusco: "He was the guy who used to sit around and pull the pins on a hand grenade--the safety pin, and let the spoon fly and untwist the top before it exploded. You'd be walking and you'd see people diving out of this tent, you knew exactly what it was: Fusco was doing a hand-grenade again! And you'd hear 'pop,' and that was it. He was so strong in his hands. He was taking off the tops of hand grenades that were put on by wrenches. His nick name was "Fuzzy." [Conversation with Harve Saal, 23 June 1993].

[295] Harlan E. Van Winkle, email to Dennis Tredinnick, 10 July 2005 (included in letter from Dennis Tredinnick, 23 Oct 2006).

[296] Conversation with Charles Berg, 18 April 1994.

[297] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 27 August 1988.

[298] Conversation with Harlan Van Winkle, 22 October 1994; Van Winkle, "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Van Winkle, postmarked 31 Dec 1996.

[299] This incident was related in conversation with Harlan Van Winkle, 23 October 1994.

help. Now we have a choice. We can either stay with the truck and all of our equipment or we can load up what we can carry on our backs and accompany Hetzler and the only weapon that would shoot. Some choice! Lee decided that security of our equipment was more important, so ten of us stayed with the truck and two accompanied Hetzler on the hike to the old French fort. They were met on the way by the 'search party' in another truck. We managed to get out of the ditch a few minutes after total darkness set in. Without doubt, that two hour stretch was the most terrifying time I spent throughout two tours in Vietnam. Absolutely nothing happened, but the lesson it instilled in me never left and never again was I caught without enough ammunition to hold off a battalion by myself."[300]

Eventually, the truck started up and all drove to the Old French Fort which also was unwelcoming. "The main building–the kitchen/operations room was best, and the rooms for Capt. Wayne Snow and Lt Cripes and Tony Di Bello were decent, but as for the rest–we ended up building hooches outside."[301]

They were soon briefed by Skip Minnicks, Bob Cavanaugh, Capt Wayne Snow, and Tony Di Bello. "It was just solid 'red' around us.[302] Well, I think we put the Marines in 'blue,' but other than that, I think there were five or six NVA Divisions that were damn near shouting distance, identified. That had a tendency to get your attention in a hurry."

DENVER (or ODA-221) began recruiting and training Bru, mainly from the village just to the north of Khe Sanh Village and south of Hill 471 called "Breh." "We went over there and met the village chief and all the village elders and got invited to a big party. Shortly thereafter, a couple people came in that evidently we felt pretty good about. Next thing you knew, we had a pretty good recruiting program going on."[303].

Not all Bru were non-Communist.[304] Rip Van Winkle feels: "We really thought that we were probably getting bout one [Communist] out of four [recruits]. Certainly they weren't hard-core Communist, but they leaned that way. We ended up with what we thought was a pretty good nucleus. We never got as large a unit as we were supposed to get, however. The mission was to develop a kind of 'haymaker' force, a battalion of 250 Bru broken down into companies led by American NCOs. They would exploit targets detected by a Spike Team or a small 'hornet' team, such as a motor park.."[305]

Marine recon teams occasionally stopped by the SOG unit at the Old French Fort. "Sir, if we find ourselves in a hum, can we count on you?" The very seasoned soldiers looked at the 19 year-old recon team members: "You got that, partner. By the way, it looks like you're a little over-loaded. Want to leave a little bit of that crap here? We got a four-deuce mortar here, a couple of helicopters, and here's our radio frequency. If you get in trouble let us know."[306]

The SOG team continued to improve their Old French Fort positions, and Bru and American soldiers filled sand bags. One morning after Capt. Dunlap awoke, he lifted his tent flap "..and there, squatting down on their haunches, were about a hundred Bru Montagnard wives!" "Hey, what's this?" he said. One of the Bru replied, "They here fill sandbag." Dunlap replied, "OK, we can pay them." "So every morning they'd show up and I'd put them to work and at the end of the day, they'd show up at the supply tent, and for filling sandbags all day they got paid a canteen cup and a half of rice, and I was all set. You know we got a lot of money. I had a footlocker full of money, for intelligence or whatever, to use. I didn't have to go through a ton of paperwork. I wanted to pay these ladies some hard cash. 'O, no! You gonna screw up this whole economy!' Got all kind of flak from 'downtown.' 'Well, how about giving them three cups [of rice]?' 'No, give them a cup and a half.' They'd laugh. They didn't understand me. They giggled, and gave me bracelets, and every day somebody would bring me something, a piece of fruit or something."[307]

Harve Saal, Team Leader of Recon team BEAR at FOB-3, notes that indigenous were paid either in money or rice. "Bru

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[300] Harlan E. Van Winkle, "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Van Winkle postmarked 31 Dec 1996.
[301] *Ibid.*
[302] Red on tactical maps indicates enemy positions, while blue indicates friendly positions.
[303] Conversation with Harlan Van Winkle, 23 October 1994.
[304] A considerable number of Bru, in fact, were Communist and had fled to the hills in 1962 when the Strategic Hamlet Program resettled most of the Bru near Route 9 and Khe Sanh Village to provide them with security. Following the Siege battle of 1968, the Bru were resettled at a refugee camp at Mai Loc just south of Cam Lo, and a considerable number of the Bru refugees were "now-former" Communists that had previously fled to the hills and now fled to safety. Thus, the population census of the Bru at Khe Sanh before the siege minus the census number of the Bru at the refugee village does not equate to the number of Bru KIA at Khe Sanh. The KIA figure is even larger since the census of Bru at Mai Loc included many Bru which were not at Khe Sanh before the Siege.
[305] Conversation with Harlan Van Winkle, 23 October 1994. A "hornet" team was a platoon of 35-40; a "Hatchett" force was company-size, 80 up to a whole battalion of 250. Spike teams were permanent party.
[306] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 10 September 1988. I recall a conversation with a soldier at the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei who mentioned it was a good idea to carry a belt with nothing but a knife on it. "If you have to run, shed everything except the belt with the knife so you can move faster and maneuver better," he said.
[307] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 27 August 1988.

chose rice. Interpreters wanted money and rice. An interpreter was paid $400.00 a month."[308] Although they liked it, indigenous troops were never given American food: it was too rich for them and they got sick.[309]

While at the Old French Fort position, hunting missions from helicopters sometimes brought food for the Bru. "The Bru liked their meat on the hoof, freshly killed. You couldn't interest them in a case of T-bone. They wanted that blood! So we hunted pigs and deer and great big, monitor-type lizards along the banks of that river. We killed some deer up there, the biggest I've seen in my life. We killed a doe that weighed 250 pounds."[310] The new FOB-3 camp included a pig pen for fresh meat. "One time, during the Siege, they brought in a cow. They couldn't land with it, so they cut it loose from the helicopter and it came slamming into the camp. So we had a cow free-fall into our camp."[311]

In November, 1967, shortly after the training phase began,

> ..we decided it was time to see how our unit could perform as a platoon-sized organization ... We selected our area of operation with great care to assure that a contact of major consequence would not take place. To assist us we had our own helicopter organization which consisted of four UH1H "slicks" and two UH1C "Gunships. ... All went well on the insertion and after assuring all were present and prepared, we moved off the LZ. ... We had been moving for perhaps a half-hour when all hell broke loose on the next ridge line north of us. SGT Craig Lansing had our radio and was trying to find out the nature of the 'enemy' contact. ... Craig was unable to get a response from either of the pilots and handed the receiver to me. I was just in time to hear the transmission, 'There he goes! Shoot him! Shoot him! Get him with the rockets!' The two gunships had just brought down an elephant! I was more than a little unhappy! Our pilots had expended nearly an entire basic load of ammunition. ... I felt that our operation had been compromised and called for an extraction. We arrived back at the FOB shortly after noon.[312]

SP5 John Frescura, the team's demolitions expert, noted that it was a waste of food which was very important to the Bru soldiers. "He stated that it would endear us even more to the Bru if we could help them recover such items as the hair from the tail end trunk, the tongue and I don't remember what all. John said it might be nice to have an elephant footstool with which to grace his 'living quarters.' Craig [Lansing] said that an elephant hide wallet would be a memento that would last a lifetime. A short time later, SGT Don Rumph, one of our team medics, came to me with A Den, Lao, and Lua, the three most influential leaders of my Bru soldiers [and] all agreed that it would be a marvelous gesture to recover the important parts of the elephant that could later be used in some type of ceremony."[313]

They departed for the elephant, armed with personal weapons, machetes, a very dull ax, two hand saws, and 120' of climbing rope. and recovered the parts of the elephant.

> The FOB commander had never been overly impressed with the somewhat over exuberance of the younger members of our detachment. He had been unaware of our 'mission' but did witness our homecoming in all of its swinging glory. To say that he was incensed would be a gross understatement of the facts. Only the intervention of our team leader, CPT Lee Dunlap, saved us from the wild vindictive forms of punishment being vocalized by the FOB commander. [And concerning any NVA that might have witnessed the expedition to retrieve the elephant parts] they must have been laughing so hard they didn't have the heart to bother with us. There is probably some ex-NVA soldier telling his grandchildren what he saw that day.[314]

The Old French Fort position just east of Khe Sanh village didn't afford room for training and was too "public" with security issues becoming more evident. The decision was made to move to the Marine base.[315]

> When Snow's team was getting ready to go we said, 'Hey, this is getting too tenuous up here'. We told the folks at DaNang we ought to make provisions to build a pretty decadent FOB and we ought to do it down on the Marine base. We were really exposed up there [at the French Fort] and if they had got artillery on that hilltop like they did later on, nobody could have survived that.

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[308] Conversation with Harve Saal, 30 July 1989.
[309] *Ibid.*
[310] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 10 September 1988. The "deer" was probably a kouprey.
[311] Conversation with Harve Saal, 30 July 1989.
[312] Harlan E. Van Winkle, "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Van Winkle postmarked 31 Dec 1996.
[313] *Ibid.*
[314] *Ibid.*
[315] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 05 May 1990, and Lee Dunlap, 08 August 1989, who stated: "Wayne Snow's detachment and my detachment were at the Olf French Fort, which some people called Fort Dix. We moved out of there when it got too hot, and that's why we went down to the Marine base and built there. My A Detachment built that along with some engineers from DaNang and the Seabees. We got in all the wire, all the defensive positions, and then the Seabees came in. Wayne Snow's team had departed by that time."

So we moved down to the Marine base. We were recruiting Bru and training at the same time. We were getting replacements from the main pipeline. We did use the FOB-1 launch site which was over next to the Marine command bunker. We still had to train and we built and trained and went on little local operations for training.

Major Campbell was the commander of the FOB. He was my boss. A Major White was there for awhile as XO and then later went down and took over FOB-4.

My mission, in addition to commanding the team there, was to develop what we might call a 'HAYMAKER' force, a battalion of 250 Bru broken down into companies led by my NCOs, responsible to react to any of the SPIKE team or small unit HORNET team that might go in to exploit something that the SPIKE team found. We had an incremental force that responded to certain contingencies.[316]

FOB-3

Before FOB-3 became operational on 01 November 1967, a detail of 65 Navy Seabees of Detail JULIETT, US Naval Construction Battalion TEN (NMCB-10) had arrived on 11 October from Gia Le to construct their base. That this was to be a major installation is reflected in the description of their work order: 54 underground bunkers, 16' x 36', eight standard 16' x 32' tin-roofed huts; six underground bunkers, 32' x 36'; 10 standard burn-out heads (4-hole); one Strad building, wood 40' x 100'; 3 lounges, wood frame 20' x 60'; one wood frame vehicle repair 20' x 40'; 3 standard 250-man mess-halls; 3 standard 400-man showers, 16' x 32'; one wood frame dispensary, 20' x 72'; one wood water tower; 3 electrical and water distribution systems, and 16 helo pads with revetments and matting. All material is to be provided by the Special Forces. Of course, the proposed cost of $370,000. is only material and does not include labor! Phase I ended 28 Dec 1967 when 11% of the project had been completed.[317]





FOR-3 UNDER CONSTRUCTION [Photos from Jerry Cfrews]

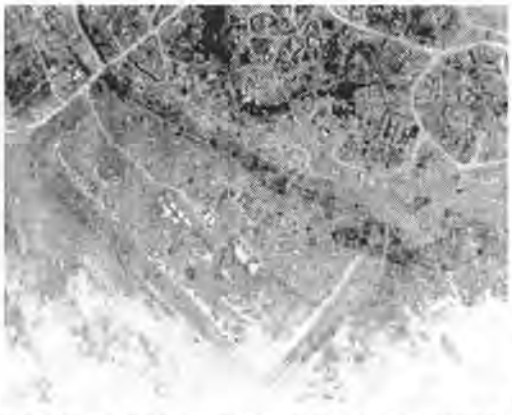

FOB-3 AREA [USAF aerial photo, 28 January 1968]

Major Lucius Campbell, CO of FOB-3, ensured the construction effort proceeded despite the monsoon rains of Biblical proportions from the days of Noah. "If it hadn't been for Campbell, that place probably wouldn't of got built. He was dead on anybody who took one piece of material to build a creature-comfort thing. He understood that if we're going to get this place built, we need all these materials; we didn't need guys building their own personal hooches. The other thing he was death on–he said: we only have so many trucks up here, and if I find you guys didn't pull maintenance on those trucks! Campbell was a super-duper manager."[318] The troops regarded Major Campbell as "..a country boy. We called him 'country.' He chewed and he was slow-going. He was slow talking. He didn't seem to get things done, but he DID get things done!"[319]

When the FOB-3 camp was occupied adjacent KSCB, that portion of the KSCB perimeter shared with FOB-3 did not disappear. Much to the vexation of American soldiers and Marines inside FOB-3, who daily saw Marine bunker positions, machineguns, and even tanks pointed into the FOB-3 camp, this common, shared portion of both perimeters reminded one of

[316] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 27 August 1988.
[317] CO, US Naval Mobile Construction Battalion TEN letter NMCB10/30:ajg, 5213/1, of 15 July 1968, Subj: End of Deployment Completion Report; forwarding of, pp. 3 and F-IV-57. [Khe Sanh microfilm archives pp. 28468-28476].
[318] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 02 Aug 1990.
[319] Conversation with Harve Saal, 23 June 1990.

Frost's poem, "Something there is that doesn't like a wall."[320] Originally, Marines even had claymore mines pointed into FOB-3, but the FOB-3 Sergeant-Major, Richard E. Pegram, told the Marines, "This is not acceptable! We don't care what you say that you're concerned about, claymore mines is not acceptable." They were removed.[321]

From the Marine's understanding, the memory of what had happened not only at Lang Vei on 4 May 1967 (when NVA, posing as PF recruits, had killed perimeter guards and led sapper squads inside who then killed both the CO and XO as well as wreaking general havoc), but countless other experiences of Special Forces units where indigenous troops had so many turn-coats and spies among them that turned on Americans in the middle of a battle, dictated extreme caution, if not a barbed wire barrier!

Lt Thomas Simcox, S3 of FOB-3, "talked to Col Lownds about it a couple of times and after he explained, I could understand their reasoning. To be really honest, I don't think we really knew what we had either."[322]

The American soldiers of FOB-3 and the Marines of CAC OSCAR (who had moved into the FOB-3 camp after the Siege began since they had indigenous soldiers and could therefore not be let on the KSCB itself[323] and also because there wasn't sufficient turf to house them and since FOB-3 needed bodies to man the trench positions) this was folly, nonsense, rejection and abandonment of those loyal to us. They reasoned that these indigenous troops have fought valiantly by our side, and in numerous instances, saved our butts, sometimes at the loss of their own. How does this square with "winning hearts and minds of local people, and aren't we here to protect them?" But the barrier remained, and while it may have been easier–and certainly less dangerous because of incoming–to have had an opening to the fence to permit water trucks from FOB-3 to get water at the water-point on KSCB instead of moving the extra half mile around the perimeter, the fence remained–with no openings.

Gradually, the recon teams filled. Harve Saal, the Team Leader of Recon Team BEAR, recalls his Point Man, MAT, was captured while working for the VC.

> He was working out of Laos and we got him over there, brought him back as a prisoner. We interrogated him and found out that he had never seen an American. He was very curious. We played volleyball with him. We left him out of confinement, but he didn't run. He had no idea that there were other people in the world other than the VC. We won him over to our side. I used him as a Point Man. He was devastating! He could see in the dark! One night we were out. It was pitch black and it was so dark we were holding on to each other's packs. That's how we moved. We held on to the guy's pack in front of us. All of a sudden you felt these packs dropping in front of you. I was the third guy back. (The Team Leader was always the third guy back). I went down and as we were going down the machinegun fired. It was him [Mat] in front. he told me then that there was VC. They called all the bad guys VC. We went up and it was a trench line, and he had shot a NVA who was obviously waiting for us. He shot him in the head! And the guy was in a foxhole! I asked him the next day, 'Did you see the guy or did you smell the guy or did you hear the guy?' He said, 'Yes.' That's all he said was 'Yes'."[324]

Another indigenous man on Saal's team was ACAT, the M-79 man. "He didn't know how to aim it, so he fired it from the hip. His accuracy was ten times better than an American's using the sights. It was unbelievable. There was a jeep at the Old French Fort that was totally destroyed. We walked back about 150 meters and he fired and hit the engine. he did nothing but lay that thing on his hip. I figured it was a mistake and told him to do it again. He hit that engine block every time. I started winning five bucks from the Americans. Another [team member] was LAT. Lat had been at Dien Bien Phu and escaped. LA

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[320] Frost, Robert, *Collected Poems, Prose, and Plays, New York: The Library of America, 1995, p. 39.*

[321] Conversation with Russ Mann and Charles Berg, 08 July 1994.

[322] Conversation with Thomas Simcox, 02 November 1994. Simcox arrived at FOB-3 for duty on 18 January 1968. [Conversation with Thomas Simcox, 02 November 1994].

[323] James W. Moore, Operations Sergeant of FOB-3 who arrived at FOB-3 in September, 1967, [Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995] recalls: "They came up to the wire. They came back intact! A Lance Corporal that was in charge of one of those teams kept his team together, organized, and withdrew as a tactical combat unit. When he got up there, Colonel Lownds told him, 'Disarm your Bru and bring the marines inside the wire and send the Bru overland to Ca Lu, down Highway 9.' And the Corporal lost his temper and said, 'The hell with you, sir; I ain't doing that shit!' So Bulldog Smith [then CO of FOB-3] told him, 'Bring your people inside our wire.' I was out at the gate when that happened. Major Quamo, Major Smith, and I had a little three-way conversation there. Hey, look, these guys got 98 Bru. We got two companies of Bru and we've got a large perimeter to defend. We don't know their Bru. We know we've got some NVA infiltrators in our Bru. He's probably got some NVA infiltrators that he don't know about in his Bru. So we brought those in and let them keep their weapons, and put them at two different places on our perimeter wire." [Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995].

[324] Conversation with Harve Saal, 30 July 1989.

HOI was the tail gunner. He once offered Saal "two water buffalo for my [Saal's] daughter who right now lives in West Allis [Wisconsin]. he was mad when I wouldn't take them! He knew that she lived more than a village away [laughs]. they had no comprehension that there was an ocean!"[325]

Just before Christmas, 1967, the soldiers at the new FOB-3 had a Christmas card made with a photo of several "scruffy-looking guys from FOB3. It was sent to all of the Congressmen. It was sent to every Governor. It was sent to President Johnson. It said PEACE ON EARTH and then, in small letters in parenthesis underneath, AND WE AIM TO KEEP IT THAT WAY. It was taken of guys who were standing in front of a fallen tree. We got a letter back from [President] Johnson. The letter ended up basically saying: YOUR NAMES WILL BE REMEMBERED IN BLOOD, NOT IN MEDALS. It was a beautiful letter. We put it on the bulletin board outside. And January 21st, it was gone. I mean, it was wiped out. It got hit. It took shrapnel, and of course, nobody really went out of their way to get it. If I'd of used my head, I'd of gone and gotten what was left of it."[326]

Although still attempting to fill the teams and train them, commanders and their staffs in DaNang needed information on the rapidly evolving enemy encroachment and encirclement of Khe Sanh. Operational requirements were not lessened.

The first mission of the new FOB-3 met with disaster, not because of unqualified or untrained men, but simply due to the overwhelming presence of NVA in the target area.

> On the 5th of January [1968] we were supposed to go in for a wire-tap [mission]. We got briefed and got loaded on the helicopters and were going off. We were riding in American Hueys and as we were on our way in, at least 15 minutes or maybe even half an hour out of the landing zone of the area we were going to infiltrate, all of a sudden there was a lot of conversation [in the aircraft]. I couldn't figure exactly what was going on. People were talking and shouting at each other–big eyed. Then the Crew Chief came in and said, 'Mission's aborted; we're going back.' And I said, 'Why?' And he said, 'They shot down the other chopper.' We were at 3,000, 3,500 feet above ground level, and they apparently shot him with a 37mm or 57mm anti-aircraft gun, and the whole helicopter went down. It was spinning down. [The NVA] shot the tail rotor off. It hit the ground and exploded. There was no fire on the way down, and nobody that I talked to saw any bodies fall out, although spinning end around end there should have been one or two bodies come out of the thing. It hit the ground and just exploded in a fire ball.[327]

PATROLS TO KHE SANH VILLAGE

The District Headquarters of Huong Hoa District, led by Captain Nhi, and MACV Advisory Team #4, led by Captain Bruce B.G. Clarke, together with the CAC OSCAR headquarters and two platoons of that unit, abandoned their position in the village the afternoon of 22 January following a ferocious battle leaving some 200-300 NVA KIA an enormous amount of weapons on their wires.

Colonel Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, the Chief of SOG Op35 (Ground Studies Division) in DaNang in charge of the four FOBs in I Corps, learned of the weapons and was determined that the NVA would not regain possession of them to use against us.

The bearing, voice, and actions of Colonel Baldwin might easily remind one of General Patton of World War II[328] audacious, bold, and very direct. He had been in Vietnam two-and-a-half years, attended Army Staff College as a Captain in 1960 from where he worked in the Pentagon as a junior member of the Army Chief of Staff office. Promoted to Major, he volunteered to go to Vietnam in 1962 and served as an advisor in a Vietnamese Ranger unit and then a Vietnamese Airborne unit until he was shot and received his seventh Purple Heart (he had three from Korea). He then started to work for the Agency.[329] Now we was at FOB-3 at Khe Sanh. "I happened to be there at the time, so I made the decision to go in there [in Khe Sanh ville]. [General] Singlaub and people down at Saigon were at my neck telling me I should get out of there, and I quoted a thing from the Manual: A Commanding Officer should be where he can best influence actions of his command."[330] "I called up Lownds and said, 'make it a "no Fire Zone".' I was going to go on the ground, but they said, 'Sir, we need you in the air. Can you fly as Gunner?' I said, 'Asshole, let me tell you, I qualified as Gunner in 1964'."[331] And off he went into the wild blue yonder.

Lt Thomas Simcox, an OCS classmate of George Quamo,[332] led SFC Bruce R. Pross' team as the ground element into Khe

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[325] *Ibid.*
[326] Conversation with Harve Saal, 25 January 1992.
[327] Conversation with William S. Wood, 18 November 1997. A full account of this incident is found in Stubbe, Ray W., *Battalion of Kings*, 2d ed., 2008, pp. 107-108.
[328] Conversation with Grenville Sutcliffe, 06 April 1990.
[329] conversation with Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, 25 Sep 1989.
[330] Conversation with Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, 14 Jan 1990.
[331] Conversation with Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, 31 May 1992.
[332] Conversation with Thomas Simcox, 06 Aug 1991.

Sanh village.[333] "I took the raiding party back into there to destroy the rice and the ammo dump [the NVA weapons]. We loaded all those on the helicopters and brought them back because we only took a limited amount of C-4 with us. We really didn't get the detonation we wanted in the ammo bunker. We ended up bringing a lot of the weapons back. I was in charge. I took the raiding party in. [Captain Bruce B.G.] Clarke went with me because he knew the area. he knew exactly where everything was. I took about 10 or 11 Americans. Colonel Baldwin didn't go on the ground but stayed in the helicopter above

us, flying air cover over us. There were dead all over the place! There was no combat activity. In fact, we received no resistance at all. But there was dead lying all around there. [Clarke] concentrated on going back into their office and into their safe, and I think he got most of the documents he felt was necessary. I think we were on the ground probably only about an hour, maybe not that long. They brought one chopper in, picked up part of us, and I had to stay. We had already set the charges and time fuses, and so consequently we had to sit there until the charge went off because they didn't want to bring the chopper back in because they were afraid the chopper would get too close. So we had to wait until the ammo dump blew up before they would bring the chopper in to pick me up and the last group. I thought we were going to have to walk out. We just held tight. The ammo dump went off, and they brought the chopper in and picked the rest of us up."[334] Captain Bruce B.G. Clarke accompanied them.[335] Colonel Daniel Lord Baldwin, II[336], in a helicopter overhead, notes: "We caught them with their pants down, continually hosed down the area, and brought in some fire all around the area, and we were in and out of there in about an hour. We brought back hundreds of weapons."[337] "We captured over 150 weapons that we had collected that



morning off of the wire and the bodies laying around the wire, and we had then stacked. Plus, we had our own ammunition and stuff. So what we did was: we went back in, rigged everything to blow and carried all the weapons out, all the NVA weapons. That was the first time that a RPG-7 had been seen in country. There were NVA coming in the front gate as we were lifting off from the helipad in the back."[338] The captured NVA weapons were loaded aboard helicopters because they had not brought enough C-4 to destroy them in place. GySgt Max Friedlander[339] upon seeing the vast amount of captured weapons was in awe: "They had a whole row of captured weapons out and I remember how awe-struck I was by those weapons that I saw–how modern. I couldn't believe that they had that kind of weapons, some pretty potent stuff in there."[340]

CAPTURED NVA WEAPONS FROM KHE SANH VILLAGE PATROL [Jerry Crews]

In addition to the vast quantity of weapons captured, the patrol also found a ChiCom radio that "was a self-contained

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[333] This patrol went to Khe Sanh village the day the Americans abandoned the District Headquarters, 22 January 1968. [Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 15 July 1993].

[334] *Ibid.*

[335] Conversation with Bruce B.G. Clarke, 7 August 1994.

[336] COL Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, commanded all the FOBs in I Corps. He had commanded five companies, two battalions, a Group, and a Brigade He received eight Purple Hearets and performed seven combat jumps. He was in Vietnam two and a half years. Went to Staff College as a Captain in 1960, and upon graduation in 1961, went to the Pntagon as a junior member of the Army Chief of Staff. He made Major and volunteered to go to Vietnam in 1962 where he served as an advisor to a Vietnamese Ranger battalion about three months and then with the Vietnamese airborne. He received three Purple Hearts while in Korea, went to work for the Agency, and then reported to SOG headquarters, OP-35, in Saigon. [Conversation with Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, 25 September 1989].

[337] Conversation with Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, 14 January 1990.

[338] Conversation with Bruce B.G. Clarke, 02 August 1994.

[339] 17th ITT (Interrogator Translator Team) on KSCB.

[340] Conversation with Max Friedlander, 06 March 1990.

radio station. It was like a drafting desk, about four to five feet high, like a secretary's desk. It opened up and there was a board that came down like a drafting desk. it had drawers and doors in it, and a stool was attached underneath it, and it rolled out. The whole thing was on wheels. That's when the code book was captured; it was left in that station, in that piece of equipment. And they brought that out. It was Chinese. The indications we had was they were moving forward with it, and they used wire, field wire. As they moved forward, this guy would drag the wire with him. This is what the North Vietnamese did in all their assaults; they used landline communications. That's all they used. But they abandoned that particular station in such a hurry that they left the wire intact, but they took the hand telephone. It was still stretched out to the position where the hand telephone was, and it was the gray wire."[341]

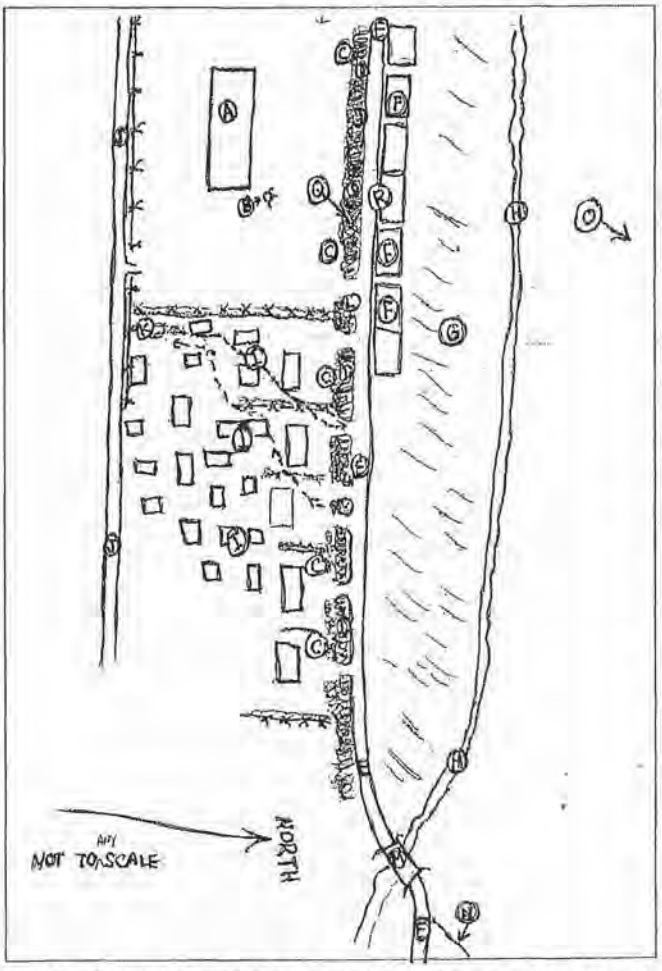

PATROL TO KHE SANH VILLE 26 JAN 1968 [drawn by Wm Wood]

KHE SANH VILLAGE ACTION [Diagram by William Wood]

A District HQ. Large, hip-roofed stucco or cement bldg. one and one-half stories with all fire coming from ground-floor windows which were maybe one foot from ground. Surrounded by clear yard, 75-100 meters wide on all sides. A few tall trees, no brush or low cover.

B Bunker, 10-15 meters from corner of bldg.

C Wire 3 or 4 strand cattle fence about 3-4 ft. tall with hedge growing in it. Cut by driveways.

D Shallow ditch, 1-1/2 to 2 ft. deep, cut by driveways running over culverts maybe 1 ft. in diameter.

E Route 9

F Row of buildings. All shops closed, all people gone.

G Steep slope

H Small stream, maybe 3-4 ft. wide

I Bldgs, flimsy

J Lane or alley behind HQ

K Where my Spike Team moved to initially put flanking fire (routes to and from indicated)

L After being recalled so gunships could fire, I took psn here with Crone standing above me. Most of Bru spread down the ditch to my rear,.

M Railless cement bridge; a good chopper pad for medevacs

N Path to access road to KSCB

O Hill 471 and pimple

P Bunker 500-600 meters to westfrom which fire was taken

Q Approx. location of those stuck west of the driveway

R Appros;. psn of Rip and party behind 4x4 posts

Once the Siege battle was triggered and General Tompkins[342] laid the restriction that no Marines could venture outside the wire other than local wire-checks,[343] Colonel Lownds asked FOB-3, in effect, "Do you think that some of your folks would

[341] Conversation with Harve Saal, 16 February 1991.

[342] Major General Rathvon McClure Tompkins, Commanding General, Third Marine Division.

[343] Major General Tompkins had planned a "set piece" battle. "..my whole plan for a defense of Khe Sanh was to make the enemy come to us. Now General Westmoreland has been criticized .. and other people have been criticized in Saigon for tying the marines at Khe Sanh to their perimeter. It wasn't Westmoreland; it was me. I told them 500 meters was the absolute max in any position, 500 meters, no more." [Interview of MajGen Rathvon McClure Tompkins, 13 April 1973, HQMC, Historical Division, transcript, p. 3. General Tompkins feared that patrols would become sucked into ambushes. [*Ibid.*] Furthermore, there was no need to send patrols: our intelligence was such that we knew where enemy forces were and there was no need to risk the piecemeal ambush of small, exposed Marine patrols. [HQMC, HistDiv (Oral History), Memorandum for the Record HDH/JS/srp, 15 Sep 1976, Subj: Conversation with Major General Rathvon McC Tmpkins, USMC (ret), 07 Sep 1976]. Tompkins testified before a Senate committee: "I planned.. a set-piece type of defense that would require the enemy to come to us." [Comments of Gen Tompkins in U.S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Electronic Battlefield Subcommittee on the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, *Investigation into Electronic Battlefield Program. Hearings*, 91st Congress, 2nd Session, Nov. 18, 19, and 24, 1970, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, p.

be willing to do some of the local patrolling?" "It was not a tasking, simply a suggestion–for everyone's benefit, including FOB-3! The response was, 'I don't see why not. Right now we're in a pickle and we'd like to see what's out there too!'"[344]

As a result, on 26 January, Major Lucius Campbell, the FOB-3 Commander, at the request of Col Lownds, tasked Hatchet Force (HF) DENVER to dispatch a patrol to determine the status of Khe Sanh ville, whether it were occupied by NVA forces.

One of the Marines from Combined Action Company (CAC) OSCAR, Lacey Lahren, heard that SFC Fusco (nicknamed "Fuzzy") was going on a patrol to Khe Sanh village to gather intelligence. "Fuzzy was a burly individual, over 30 years old, and to my juvenile eye he looked like he had ridden with Genghis Kahn and had taught the old gook some bad habits. Fuzzy looked
like the Next Great Adventure. I asked him if I could go along."[345]

Lahren got up the next morning at 0600.

Captain "Rip" Van Winkle led the patrol (which consisted of six other Americans and 24 Bru) through the east gate of KSCB, through the garbage dump, and proceeded southeast along the ridge line through Poilane's coffee plantation to Route 9. At that point, the patrol followed the "highway" into Khe Sanh ville,[346] entering it from the east on the south side of Route 9, and slowly proceeded to a point just east of the District Headquarters compound.[347]

A recon team, Spike Team TIGER, led by MSGT William S. Wood, was in the process of training Bru replacements for the five Bru lost, including his ONE-ONE (second in command) in when Gallagher's helicopter crashed.[348] TIGER departed the FOB3 compound separately but married up with Van Winkle's patrol to avoid a "collision" in which friendly patrols fired on each
other, not realizing who they were. The team consisted of three Americans and an unknown number of Montagnards, probably six or seven, and would break away from the Hatchet Force and proceed on a separate reconnaissance mission.[349] Spike Team TIGER had recently been filled with new Bru following losses in the Gallagher recovery attempts, decided that he needed to train his team as well as find out what was in Khe Sanh ville, and proceeded out of FOB-3, past the house of the Millers, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, to warn them of the NVA, only to discover they had already departed.[350] TIGER soon joined with DENVER: "I know we were tagging onto the tail of your column before we reached the small cement bridge.."[351]

Lahren relates the movement from KSCB:

> We zigzagged single file on the six inch wide maze through the land mines and tangle-foot and concertina wire that formed the barrier between us and the jungle outside. ... Fuzzy leaned into his job, head swiveling side to side, shoulders bunched, walking down the middle of the dirt road to Route 9. Three Montagnards in a staggered column on his left, me with two Montagnards on the right. Behind us the main force split into two columns that slipped into the trees to our right and left. Except for an occasional flicker of camouflage there was no evidence of the flanking columns pacing us. ... the hatchet force floated through the jungle. ... We converged on a farm house about a kilometer south of FOB3 [the residence of Felix and Madeleine Poilane and their two children: Jean-Marie and his sister, Francoise. Madeleine named the plantation, Le Petite Fleur] ... Stone buildings with sunlight dappling tile roofs, wooden farm implements sitting in the yard, curtains fluttering in the windows, a French farm had been plucked from the Ardennes and dropped in the jungle. ... The kitchen table was still set for a meal for four. ... Today the place was silent and foreboding.[352]

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[344] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 27 August 1988.

[345] Lacey Lahren, "The Gunfight at Khe Sanh Ville," p. 4, in Letter from Lacey Lahren, 18 March 2001.

[346] Harlan E. Van Winkle, "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter postmarked 31 Dec 1996, p. 6.

[347] Harlan E. Van Winkle, Letter of 16 Sep 1994, Subj: Last Minute Thoughts on Our Reunion.

[348] Conversation with William S. Wood, 18 November 1997.

[349] Harlan E. Van Winkle, Letter of 16 Sep 1994, Subj: Last Minute Thoughts on Our Reunion. Wood, William, "Episode in Khe Sanh Town," 4 January 1997, in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 6 May 1997.

[350] Wood, William, "Episode in Khe Sanh Town," 4 January 1997, in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 6 May 1997. On Fri, 05 Jan, Col. Lownds had "strongly suggested" to John and Carolyn Miller that they depart the Khe Sanh area with their children for their safety, but to do it in such a way to avert panic. Since there was a scheduled Bible conference, there was a legitimate reason for them to leave, and they did. Amazingly, on 20 January 1968, John Miller suddenly reappeared at KSCB, much to the chagrin of the regimental command. It was a day in which Lt Tonc had surrendered and INDIA Company, 3/26, made extensive contact while attempting to patrol to Hill 881-North. The MACV J-2, LtGen Philip Davidson was visiting the base. Mr. Miller returned in order to rescue his Bru helper, and both safely departed before the Siege battle erupted the next day.

[351] *Ibid.*

[352] Lacey Lahren, "The Gunfight at Khe Sanh Ville," pp. 5-6, in Letter from Lacey Lahren, 18 March 2001.

After arriving at a bridge on the eastern edge of the village, approximately 150 meters east of the District Headquarters compound, the point element waded across the river, took up a defensive position and covered the rest of the patrol's advance.[353] SFC Fusco, leading the point element, signaled Van Winkle forward and the decision was made to send the point element to the MACV compound while Van Winkle moved with the first squad through the houses on the north side of Route 9 and the other squads through the houses on the south side of the highway.

As the point proceeded approx. 50 meters ahead of the flanking elements led by a Bru soldier with Fusco number two, Fusco yelled, "Recon by fire!" Lahren "damned near jumped through his web gear. 'Do what?' 'Fire into the buildings, make the bastards fire back!' He fired a three round burst into a tin roofed shack and grinned. The yards went white. I whipped my M-16 around in my right hand and used it like a pistol, firing single shots into door jams and window sills. ... I saw blood bubble from a knuckle on my right hand. I felt a punch in my right shoulder. I saw a Yard jerked upright by the impact of a bullet and





KHE SANH VILLAGE
Left: USAF aerial photo taken 28 Jan 1968, showing Khe Sanh village (bottom) and bombed-out area of Hill 471 (top) with Bru village of Breh in top center
Right: Key to locations

then made a second lunge for the ditch on our left. I saw Fuzzy hunkered down in the ditch. I saw muzzle flashes dancing in front of the dark holes of a bunker firing slits, and I was doing a Calaveras County Championship leap. I landed in the ditch on my side. Fuzzy was five feet to my right and the yards were lined up on my left."[354] Lahren was hit again, this time in his left thigh. Fusco was explaining what he intended to do when he got inside the compound: "..he gave me intimate details of the conjugal visit he had planned for the survivors."

Recon team TIGER, meanwhile, had positioned itself on the southeast corner of the District compound and fired on the doors and windows in the back (south side), about a magazine apiece, but received no return fire. MSGT Wood then received a radio message calling TIGER back to Route 9 since air support was enroute, and TIGER "got into the ditch along with everyone else. ... the gunships arrived and made some runs about this time, which caused me to get much lower.."[355] Wood moved to the head of the column and found half a dozen men trapped on the west side of the road at the driveway into the

[353] *Ibid.*, p. 4
[354] *Ibid.*, p. 7
[355] Wood, William, "Episode in Khe Sanh Town," 4 January 1997, in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 6 May 1997.

district compound.[356]

Heavy fire from two machineguns inside the compound pinned the point in a shallow ditch between the road and the compound.[357] The NVA had policed the area, and none of the 200-300 NVA KIA were to be seen.[358] Van Winkle, with about four Bru, was able to move to a point directly across the road from Fusco.

Suddenly, Fusco shuddered, his head recoiled forward into the ditch, and he exclaimed, "I been shot in the neck. Hope they didn't get that big artery." Lahren reassured him the wound wasn't spurting like a carotid artery had been hit. Lahren heard a message on his radio that air support was on its way. He shouted this to Fusco, "but he ignored me. He was firing again but he seemed oblivious to everything but the compound. For the first but not the last time that day I underestimated the man. He was probably going into shock but he concentrated all the attention he could muster on the job in front of him."[359]

Van Winkle took a M-79 frenade launcher, but realized it was too close to the Fusco and his men: "I couldn't go through the fence because I was afraid I'd hit the wire and it would blow up and hurt Fusco. Fusco finally said, 'Dai Uy, you're going to have to knock this guy out; he's bothering us!' I said, 'Well, the only way I can do it is perhaps go through the fence,' and that's what I tried to do."[360]

Van Winkle stood up in the middle of the road with a 40mm M-79 grenade launcher and fired a low shot, splattering Fusco with debris who responded with curses at the Captain.[361] Wood recalls: "loud, outraged yells of accusation from those across the driveway."[362] Van Winkle, unaware that Fusco had already been wounded by the NVA, thought he had wounded Fusco

Then occurred a humorous albeit black humor incident.. The only weapons available were four M-16s and one M-79. The M-16s were not making much of an impression so we decided to try the M-79. The problem was the high fence running past the compound and less than twenty feet from Fusco. I was about 20 yards from the fence .. [and] told Fusco to get his butt down and attempted to fire directly through the fence. The round didn't make it through, detonating in the wire. The next thing, Fusco is cursing and saying, 'Damn it! Captain, you shot me!' The next round made it through the fence and took out the enemy bunker. Within a minute, SP5 John Frescura had commandeered a M-60 machine gun and charged up the middle of the highway laying down a solid base of fire.[363]

It was obvious that the wound that Fusco sustained was from an AK: ""When we got him back, what we found out was that an AK round that was a ricochet and was almost spent, had hit him in the neck, went completely around his neck, and lodged up under his chin. It was the luckiest neck wound you'll ever get in your life."[364]

Wood grabbed a M60 machinegun from a Bru and got into a ditch across from those trapped at the wire of the district compound. "I called across to the guys on the other side. I'd fire a burst and as I was firing, one of them was to dash across the gap. Crone came up with Xon (my 01) and Tu. The 2 Bru got inside the fence along the highway into the yard just east of the district compound and Crone either straddled or stood up next to the fence. I shouted, we all fired, and those west of the driveway came across, one at a time. Most of the Bru were strung out down the ditch behind me where they couldn't bring fire to bear on the district compound."[365] Wood recalls "another American" shooting at the district headquarters, noting "I was glad to see him because I was running low on ammo. While he was shooting, several more of the group stuck on the other side of the driveway scrambled back across."[366]

It was shortly after noon when SP5 John Frescura, seeing that the Point element was pinned down under intense fire, immediately directed his men to fighting positions along the road. Braving the fire himself, he repeatedly exposed himself to draw the enemy fire and pinpoint their locations. He stood up and dashed through the murderous fusillade and shielded Fusco with his own body and laid down a heavy base of fire on the enemy to cover the evacuation of the wounded.[367]

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[356] *Ibid.*

[357] Harlan E. Van Winkle, "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter postmarked 31 Dec 1996, p. 7. Harlan E. Van Winkle, Letter of 16 Sep 1994, Subj: Last Minute Thoughts on Our Reunion.

[358] Conversation with John Frescura, 13 September 1994.

[359] Lacey Lahren, "The Gunfight at Khe Sanh Ville," p. 9, in Letter from Lacey Lahren, 18 March 2001.

[360] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 15 July 1993.

[361] *Ibid.*

[362] Wood, William, "Episode in Khe Sanh Town," 4 January 1997, in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 6 May 1997.

[363] Harlan E. Van Winkle, Letter of 16 Sep 1994, Subj: Last Minute Thoughts on Our Reunion. Harlan E. Van Winkle, "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter postmarked 31 Dec 1996, pp. 7-8.

[364] Conversation with Donald Rumph, 14 October 1994.

[365] Wood, William, "Episode in Khe Sanh Town," 4 January 1997, in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 6 May 1997

[366] Wood, William, "Further Notes," 28 Feb 1997, in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 6 May 1997

[367] Headquarters, United States Army Vietnam, General orders No. 2263, 15 May 1968, Silver Star Medal award to John

SP5 John Frescura "claimed ownership of Route 9 and was tearing up [the road]. Under Frescura's covering fire SOG medic [Gary] Crone skidded into the ditch next to me. he cut away my shirt and put a field dressing on my shoulder. Then he crawled over to Fusco and dressed his neck wound. Frescura kept laying on the machine gun fire. ... Lansing was shouting at us to get out, the jets were on the way in."[368]

Back at KSCB, Capt Lee Dunlap went to the 26th Marines COC to request air support and met the S-3, Major Wills who said, "I can't fire any artillery in there so your guys can get back; there might be friendlies in the town." Astonished, Dunlap responded, "There are no friendlies; my people are under fire. A stream of fire is coming out of the District Headquarters and the compound onto my people." Major Wills was adamant: "I'm not going to help." Dunlap then went to the large Air Force bunkers just a few yards from the COC, to TIGERHOUND. The Air Force LtCol said, "What do you need?" "Within about two minutes I had more jets than I could handle from the PRAIRIE FIRE[369] alert, and they went down there and just blew the hell out of the place. A Marine FAC reported that all this was going on to Wills. And so I'm to report to the regimental commander immediately. I go over there and I thought it was Colonel Lownds and I was going to get ripped and I was going to say, 'Well, Sir, I had to use my best judgment as a commander.' I get over there and Major Wills–. First thing I found out was Colonel Lownds didn't know anything about it. Second, Major Wills asked me to explain. I did. Then he said, 'That was dereliction of duty' and I should consider myself under arrest! I said, 'Well, sir, fine, but we will sort this out later; I got lots of stuff to do. My team is coming out. He told the guard, 'Marine, restrain that person!' Anyway, his voice level is coming up and a little heated, and Colonel Lownds comes walking out of his little hootch and said, 'what's going on here?' So I explained. And he said, 'Captain, why don't you go on over and check on your men and I'll take care of this.'"[370]

> When the rockets went off Fuzzy went apeshit and started firing again. He wouldn't respond to Lansing's calls and a running gunfight had started as the team was moving back towards the bridge. I ran back in the ditch and grabbed Fusco by the web gear, his eyes were wild and I thought this will never work. He took off on the run, dragging me with him and reached down and grabbed the PRC-25 radio on the way. Amazing.[371]

F4s flew overhead, dropping cluster bombs. Sutcliffe recalls: "There's nothing like a F4 screaming over you at 200 feet or so. They dropped the canisters [cluster bombs], and they hit the ground, and skipped up into the air, and then the bomblets all flew out. The little bomblets or grenades or whatever they were, coming down on us. And I rolled behind one of those buildings because they just blew up all over us."[372] "My CAR-15 submachine gun jammed. I grabbed Sergeant Fusco's M16."[373]

Lahren recalls backing up from the village towards the bridge, firing from his hip. With three Bru, he made it to the river taking fire from the west (the village) as they hit high grass, "wheeled on line and slid our asses down the river bank, rolling to face the village and I sent the three lead Bru across." The Bru fanned out and covered the river crossing. He slipped into the right-foot deep river, weighed down by the magazines in his pockets and a weakening right arm. He dropped is rifle, jackknifed down and grabbed it but found he was unable to kick back to the surface and stuck the barrel out of the river. A Montagnard soldier grabbed it and pulled him out. He saw the fast-movers blast the village. "Fireballs rolled through the village fifty yards in front of us and we sighted down our rifles looking for targets, payback, payback. ... A CH-34 helicopter whop-whopped us back up to FOB 3 and in minutes we were in the command bunker. SF medics fished a slug out of my thigh and probed my shoulder wound. They couldn't get at the round in my shoulder and said I would be medevaced to DaNang."[374]

SFC Robert L. Scully,[375] a medic on the evacuation helicopter, "ignored his own welfare as he leaped fifteen feet to the ground as the pilot hovered over the evacuation zone. He immediately moved to the wounded and began to aid them. At times, he shielded the casualties with his own body. Working quickly and skillfully, he treated all of the wounded, moved them to a nearby building and returned to the landing zone to guide in the helicopter. Again, the aircraft was prevented from landing by intense enemy fire. Sergeant Scully deployed the able-bodied friendly forces in a tight defensive perimeter around

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Frescura.

[368] Lacey Lahren, "The Gunfight at Khe Sanh Ville," p. 9, in Letter from Lacey Lahren, 18 March 2001.

[369] PRAIRIE FIRE ALERT refers to SOG operations in Laos, which penetrated up to 30 KM from the border. "If we sent a team and it got in trouble you had this little radio that you turned on, a survival radio, and it started emitting a signal on a particular frequency that means PRAIRIE FIRE ALERT. That had Number One priority in Southeast Asia [for air support]." [Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 25 August 1988].

[370] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 27 August 1988. The term PRAIRIE FIRE ALERT, referring to the SOG operation in Laos, gives a number one priority for air support,.

[371] Lacey Lahren, "The Gunfight at Khe Sanh Ville," p. 10, in Letter from Lacey Lahren, 18 March 2001.

[372] Conversation with Grenville Sutcliffe, 05 Feb 1994.

[373] Grenville Sutcliff, memoirs of the ville fight and 471, Sep, 1994, included in note from F. James Taylor, 18 Oct 1994.

[374] *Ibid.*

[375] Scully later became the first Physicians Assistant in the U.S. Army. He died at the age of 45 from cancer.

an area suitable for a pickup site and directed their fire on the insurgents. He then successfully guided the helicopter to a landing, and, despite the continuing enemy fusillade, carried the casualties to the waiting aircraft. His heroic actions in the heat of battle were responsible for the rapid and successful evacuation of six badly wounded soldiers."[376]

Fusco survived, only to die of a heart attack shortly after his retirement.[377]

After the casualties had been medevaced via a Marine H-34, DENVER moved down Highway 9 toward the old French fort.

> We were being shot heavenly, green tracers ripping in on us at one point and I returned a lot of fire. I'll never forget this green tracer coming straight at me. I kind of rolled to my right and that tracer ripped just above my shoulder and to the left of my head as I rolled down. It was really strange because everything was in slow motion. ... We continued to work our way back toward Khe Sanh. Just as we approached the outer perimeter next to the drop zone the NVA started dropping artillery on us. I was still pretty green and dove into a drainage ditch that was filled full of mud, which jammed my submachine gun. Everyone had a big laugh at the new Lieutenant. As the artillery barrage continued, a Sergeant and I started joking with each other. I got out of my ditch, ran over to his crater, and jumped in. Artillery was blowing off all around us. Not to be outdone by a Lieutenant he walked over to another crater holding his hands up as if it were raining. We should have both been killed.[378]

MSGT William Wood gathered his Spike Team, TIGER, and took a path just east of the bridge to the road to the camp. Wood recalls:

> We turned onto the road to camp and got a radio call from the FOB: was that us coming onto the road. Seems that the FOB CO had dispatched a support force to back us up. That force had met or seen you [Van Winkle] turning from Hwy #9 onto the road to camp and had turned back. They saw my Spike entering the road and wanted to know were we friend or enemy? I popped a panel at them, which seemed to be reassuring. Without further adventures we walked in the camp gate and down to our part of the perimeter on the west side, close to the southwest corner. Later that evening, a delegation of Bru approached me (they had all been in Khe sanh town that day) wanting to know if I would get the camp truck and take them to their village, which was west of Lang Vei. They hadn't been home in 2 or 3 days. Sometimes I wasn't sure the Bru were real.[379]

When DENVER reached the FOB-3 gate, they were met by a heavy NVA rocket barrage. Once inside the compound, Majors Campbell and Quamo said that FOB-3 radio operators had intercepted NVA radio traffic; the NVA leaders were concerned about still holding Khe Sanh village and were sending in a larger force to reinforce it. Van Winkle commented, "They're welcome to it. My mission had been to confirm they were there. They were."[380]

The special unit monitoring NVA radios, deep inside the FOB-3 command bunker, reported that the NVA assumed they had lost the village during the 45-minute heavy battle.[381]

When asked "Why did you go back in there, to the ville–to destroy rice or something?" 1Lt Grenville Sutcliffe noted, "Well, it was really critical. The Marine CAC teams had pulled back in,I but one of the Marines was a kind of Scotch fanatic and had this big Scottish flag and he played the bagpipes. That's how I got shot! I was going in to liberate his damn bagpipes!"[382] The marine, a 20 year-old PFC Freeman James Taylor even had the nickname "Bagpipes," had conteracted malaria and was medevaced several weeks before the Siege began, leaving his bagpipes in the CAC O-2 compound while he was hospitalized for four weeks at the NSA Hospital in DaNang. An Afro-American Marine who was the driver for the platoon, Tyson, had managed to save his Scottish flag during the very desperate attack on O-2 on the western edge of the ville, but the bagpipes remained.[383] While at O-2, Taylor had frequently played his bagpipes, entertaining the local Bru tribes-people who referred to it as *blang kong tour* or "something like that, which meant 'big reed flute'. I learned a few of their tunes would go out there and jam and sing songs. Sometimes I would play their tunes and they loved that."[384] Due to the intensity of the battle, 1 Lt Sutcliffe wasn't able to retrieve his bagpipes which are now perhaps a war sourvenir in some North Vietnamesde soldier's home.

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[376] HQ, United States Army Vietnam, General Orders No. 2453, 24 May 1968, Award of Silver Star Medal to SFC Robert L. Scully.
[377] Harlan E. Van Winkle, Letter of 16 Sep 1994, Subj: Last Minute Thoughts on Our Reunion.
[378] Grenville Sutcliffe, Memoirs of the ville fight and 471," Sep., 1994, appended to letter from F. James Taylor, 18 Oct 1994.
[379] Wood, William, "Episode in Khe Sanh Town," 4 January 1997, in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 6 May 1997.
[380] Harlan E. Van Winkle, "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter postmarked 31 Dec 1996, p. 9.
[381] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 15 July 1993.
[382] Conversation with Grenville Stucliffe, 06 April 1990.
[383] Conversation with Freeman James Taylor, 08 April 1993.
[384] *Ibid.*

HILL 471 - 29 JANUARY 1968
(Part 1: The Contact)

Master Sergeant William S. Wood, Patrol Leader of Spike Team TIGER, relates the patrol:[385]

On 29 January 1968, we left the camp later than I would like to have, later than I'd planned. As I recall, there was no one big delay, but several small, annoying ones. Among other things we had to turn in all our emergency radios: they were in short supply and another team was to launch that day. It must have been 0830 or later, and I was irritated when we walked out of the gate: me, Don Voorhees, Gary Crone, Xon,[386] To, Tu,[387] and seven other Bru whose names I can't remember, and Mike Mahoney as a straphanger. Mahoney was new to the FOB and wanted to gain experience. I think he and Crone had known one another somewhere before, because I remember Gary asking if his coming along would be all right. Voorhees and 6 of the 7 Bru were new on the team. This would be their first patrol out of the FOB.

There was a heavy fog that morning, which was one of the reasons I was hurrying. The fog at Khe Sanh usually lifted between 0900 and 0930 and I wanted to be close up under the hill mass before it did. We were going to the 'pimple' southeast of hill 471 to look down into Khe Sanh town and, if necessary, up onto Hill 471...



Vietnam Special Use 1:12,500, Series L803, Sheet 6342 III H] HILL 471 AND KHE SANH COMBAT BASE Army Map Service [Location of FOB-3 and names of Bru villes added

We moved directly toward the hill across the shallow valley that extended west and southwest from our perimeter. To, the point man, chose a path where the weeds were shorter, avoiding the taller weeds where some others and I had spread gasoline the day before, and we moved right along. Still, we were too slow. The fog lifted while we were in the middle of that open area, still 900 meters or more from the foot of 471. We continued to the hill and mounted it diagonally, up across hill 471 to the saddle. I noted the grass, which was about 2-1/2 - 3 ft. high, had been mowed in a swath 300 or more meters wide on the east slope of 471 itself. ... There was plenty of evidence that the AF [Air Force] had bombed the hell out of the general area in the last couple of days. Those bomb craters hadn't been there two days before.

Upon reaching the saddle between Hill 471 and the 'pimple' .. the Bru stopped. The Bru could best be described as agitated, saying 'No! No! Beaucoup VC! They were all huddled together. After some minutes of talk I said, 'Well, come on, let's go.' and started toward the pimple. The grass was two-and-a-half feet to three foot tall. The crest of the pimple was only six or eight feet higher than where we were, but that ridge got higher to my right front. I was walking on a path, not a bare-earth path but a trace where the grass had been worn down and beaten off by passing feet. At that time I never thought anything of it. It was not my

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[385] Wood, William S., "Fiasco on Hill 471 or How not to Manage a Reconnaissance," 28 February 1997, in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 6 May 1987.

[386] "Xon was the 01 and had been (so I was told) the 1st Sgt of the Bru Company when the Bru were formed in a company." [Wood, William, "Episode in Khe Sanh Town," 4 January 1997, in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 6 May 1997]

[387] "Tu was carried as the interpreter and had been through some training to qualify him for that position, but I used Xon as my interpreter. Tu had that title to give him more money." [Wood, William, "Episode in Khe Sanh Town," 4 January 1997, in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 6 May 1997]

most perspicacious day.

As stepped aside, we took fire from directly ahead of us, from a range of about five meters. I returned two magazines full auto but don't think I hit anyone, as the 5.56 bullet was notorious for its poor penetration in grass or weeds. About the time I finished firing three or four M-79 rounds on the top of the pimple, I looked back to find that I was again alone. Crone lay face-up some 3-4 meters behind me and I could hear a lot of firing back about where we had stopped to talk. I scrambled back to Crone[388] to find he'd been shot in the right cheek, the right eye, and the right forearm, which was broken. He may have had other wounds, too. As I tried to find signs of life I noticed that his head was intact: the bullets hadn't exited although there was a large pool of blood under the back of his head. It causes me some embarrassment to admit that what distressed me the most at that moment was not Crone's death (we were good friends) nor the manner of it, but the fact that the cord to the PRC-25 handset had been shot in two, and we had NO other radios.

While trying to get Crone up into a fireman's carry his .45 fell out onto the ground. I picked it up, finding I couldn't carry him: he was a big man, 6'1" or 2" and 200 lb. or more. Movement caught my eye from the grass on the near slope of the pimple. It was a soft snap. I fired 3 or 4 shots from the .45 at it and it disappeared, and when there was no more movement there, I fired the rest of the clip into the radio. (NOTE: I am not that good of a pistol shot. Maybe I scared him or maybe what I saw was a waving tuft of grass. If I hit him with a .45 at a range of 10 meters, it would have been a miracle as great as any sanctified by the Church). Firing from the pimple stopped.

I started to drag Crone back to the rest of the team, but a grenade came in and knocked me loose. I scuttled back to where the rest of the team was to find Xon wounded in the ankle, one Bru dead (the M-79 gunner) and only Voorhees and 3 Bru firing at the top of 471. Voorhees greeted me by asking, 'Did you see that wire?' I had not. It ran in the grass beside the trail and led to the pimple. It looked like the heavy WD-1, not WD-110. Now we were taking fire from the pimple, too. I counted 2 MGs and a couple of AKs there. I told Voorhees that Crone was dead and asked after Mahoney and the rest of the Bru. He replied, while changing magazines, that he didn't know. They had disappeared when the shooting started, presumably downhill, back to the east or northeast. He sounded a bit upset about it. Then (he was on the other side of a grass clump from me) he announced that Xon was killed. I remarked that in my opinion it was about time we left, and suddenly I was alone again. Not for long, though. After a hurried scan of the area (during which I spotted not less than 4 auto weapons on the military crest of 471) without sign of Mahoney or the other Bru. I was gone too.

Caught up with Voorhees and crew in a bomb crater 20 or 25 meters from the crest of the saddle. We may have been in defilade again as the NVA had stopped firing. I mentioned that a bomb crater, unless you could see out, was a poor position. They scrambled out and we ran the roughly 50 or 60 meters to the foot of the hill, across the small dry stream bed there, and continued across the flat for 75-80 meters to a thin hedgerow at the foot of a fallow field. Voorhees and 2 Bru, in the lead, got through this hedgerow but Tu, apparently beat out, slowed to a walk just before reaching it. I slowed, too, put my hand on his shoulder (he was on my right) and was saying something like: 'Let's go, Tu,' when more than one auto weapon opened fire behind us. I think we had come out of defilade, and one weapon was aimed directly at Tu and me. I could see the bullets striking just ahead of us. I think one of the rounds went between my legs and a couple between Tu and me. One went through my knee (it felt like someone slapped me with a ruler) and several hit Tu in the abdomen and chest. I pushed Tu through the hedgerow while screaming the oldest cliché in war movies, 'I'm hit!' and dived through myself. The firing stopped again. The burst that hit Tu and me was an almost classic example of what they used to teach in MG or BAR classes of what happens if you fire a bi-podded weapon with your shoulder high. The bullet stream travels from lower left to upper right, where there is a cluster of holes.

After ascertaining I couldn't help Tu I took out my KAK pad from the last mission (the only paper I had) and printed on the back of it: 'In deep trouble. Team split. Some wounded. Need out. Wood.' This I gave to the Bru and in my best pidgin Bru, mangled English and hand and arm signals, told them to take it to camp and

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[388] SSGT Gary L. Crone was posthumously awarded the Silver Star. His Citation reads (in part): "Sergeant Crone, after ordering the remainder of the team to withdraw to a safer position a few meters away, willfully exposed himself to intense enemy fire to deliver suppressive fire on the enemy, allowing the remainder of the team to withdraw. ... Sergeant Crone was mortally wounded as, with complete disregard for his own safety, he attempted to assist the team." [Dept. of the Army, HQ, United States Army Vietnam, General orders No. 2805, 11 June 1968].

give it to an American. They left, moving carefully along the hedgerows and not hurrying.

At that time I was wearing tiger stripe trousers and carried 3 field dressings and 2 cravats in my right hip pocket. I pulled up my trouser leg and checked the wound. It wasn't bkeeding very much but from the position of the exit hole, square in the middle of my kneecap, I didn't think I wanted to try any marathon runs. I dug in my hip pocket for a dressing and in 5 tries produced 5 cravats. On the 6th try I gave up and tied a cravat around it.

Turned out sending the message was unnecessary, as someone in the FOB had heard the firing and launched a gunship to see what was going on. By the time Voorhees had cached Tu's body under the hedgerow and I had bandaged myself (and given me a shot of morphine: I anticipated some strenuous activity) the gunship found us. We both frantically popped panels and tried a mirror flash, but there wasn't enough sun. Neither of us was willing to give away our position with smoke. The gunship overflew us and dropped a smoke grenade, which unfortunately landed about 500 meters south of us,. Not being sure what he was doing, both Voorhees and I expended a couple magazines in that direction then fled.

We moved generally north under cover of the hedgerow, eventually arriving in a field of elephant grass north of a chain of the small triangular rice paddies that the Bru built in the ravines in that country. I don't know how we got there: we must have gone around them. For sure, I wasn't wading any rice paddies.

We weren't long in the elephant grass when Lt. Thieu appeared overhead in his raggedy old H-34. I scooted up to the edge of the rice paddy and popped a panel. Voorhees was popping another from the middle of the elephant grass and shouting, 'Why doesn't he come down?' with profane embellishments. Being more familiar with the way Viet pilots operated, I said, 'He's looking us over. He'll be down in a minute!' Sure enough, in about that time he 'dropped it on a wing' (if you can do that in a helicopter) and down he came, like those Viet pilots did, like a rock! Just before he hit the ground he pulled pitch and RPM. the airframe



VIEW FROM TOP OF 471 TO KHE SANH VILLAGE (bright metal roofs) and Bru villae of Breh
Photo taken 26 Sep 1967 by Ray W. Stubbe

shuddered, the engine screamed, the rotor blades groaned, and he hovered 3 ft. above the rice paddy. From some part of 471 someone shot out the left windshield (so I was told) and the rest of the bird began to grow

holes. I pointed at my knee and motioned him toward me. He came, sideways across the paddy. Scully jumped off. Voorhees came up. They threw me onto the chopper and scrambled on behind me. Scully asked about the rest of the team and I told him, 'We're it,' meanwhile shouting for Lt. Thieu to Go! Go! Go! He looked down between his seat and the driveshaft housing and grinned at us, and flew away. I think at least one gunship was making runs on Hill 471 at this time, but I was busy with my own affairs. Also, I don't remember anyone on the chopper except Scully and the crew chief.

Scully had a PRC-25 with which he talked to the FOB, so on our landing (very close to the aid station bunker) there were people there with a stretcher. Someone helped me shift my butt from the chopper to the stretcher and someone else grabbed my shoulders and laid me down. I bounced back up to a sitting position. He laid me down. I bounced back up, screaming, 'Wait a goddamn minute!' and took off my belt. One cannot lie comfortably on loaded canteen covers. Besides, they should have been grateful. Without the belt I was 75-80 pounds lighter.

They carried me down into the aid station (TOC?) bunker, and God knows how they managed the corners. After bouncing me up and down and flopping me from side to side to see if I had any more holes (they did me almost as much damage as the bullet had) Scully slit up my trouser leg, cut off my cravat and said, 'You're going out,' and put a new dressing on the wound. Then he took off my boot and sock, but my pants leg off, slit up my trouser into my pocket, took my lighter and put it into his own pocket. I protested. He said, 'You're gonna be evacuated and can get another one. I lost mine day before yesterday.' He gave me 2 books of matches and some kind soul brought me my billfold, my checkbook, and 2 packs of cigarettes..

After Master Sergeant William Stanley Wood retired, he enrolled at the University of Missouri where he earned a doctorate in history. He applied for a teaching job with the University of Maryland Extension Program and was sent to the Far East Division in Korea. While there, he suffered his first heart attack and was diagnosed with congestive heart disease. He then retired and moved to New Mexico.[389]

HILL 471 - 29 JANUARY 1968

(Part 2: The Follow-up)

ODA-221, DENVER, was preparing to rotate back to Okinawa from its TDY status and was, at this time, short-handed.[390] SP5 John E. Frescura recalls what happened next: "Just after inspection, a H-34 helicopter came in and Sgt Lansing and Lt Sutcliff went out to it, and I stayed in the area of our positions of defense. The H-34 contained two wounded Americans and they were taken up to the disp. Lansing and Sutcliffe helped to carry them. As this was being done, a Sgt Coward came down to my position and notified me that we would be going out. I told our force to get their gear and equipment and to get into formation. At this time I left and went up to where the rest of the American members were to see if they knew. They had got the word up by the command bunker. Cpt. Van Winkle at this time notified us that he would be going with us. I asked him if SFC Tredinnick was going and he said yes. I then went down to his position to see if he was ready to go. He was and he and I tested our weapons and moved back to the command bunker. Sgt Lansing and Sgt Rumph in the meantime had moved our force up to the Command bunker. We were notified at this time that we would be going in with a force of 24 men. The mission was to try and recover the bodies of one known KIA American, two KIA indig. and try to find one American MIA."[391]

After the helicopter that rescued MSGT William S. Wood at about 1000 landed at FOB 3, it was decided that Hatchet Force DENVER would be dispatched to Hill 471 (about 2500 meters from the FOB) to retrieve the two missing Americans. Captain Harlan E. Van Winkle, the XO of A-221, DENVER, was unable to speak with Wood prior to his medical evacuation, leaving a void in vital information. The decision was made to insert with eight Americans and sixteen Bru. The force included:[392]

CPT H.E. "Rip" Van Winkle	XO, A-221
1LT Granville Sutcliffe	FOB-3 Assistant S-3
SFC Robert Scully	Senior Medic, FOB-3
SFC Charles N. Tredinnick	Senior Combat Engineer, A-221
SGT Dennis C. Lansing	Junior Communications NCO, A-221

[389] Harlan E. Van Winkle, letter of 3 January 1997 to Members and Friends of ODA-221,
[390] Harlan E. Van Winkle, email to Dennis Tredinnick, 10 July 2005, in letter from Dennis Tredinnick, 23 Oct 2006.
[391] Statement of SP5 John E. Frescura, 8 February 1968, contained in documents mailed by Mr. Lee Dunlap on 13 September 1988.
[392] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Van Winkle, 31 December 1996.

SGT Donald R. Rumph	Junior Medic, A-221
SP5 John L. Frescura	Junior Combat Engineer, A-221
PFC James Taylor	from CAC OSCAR

Capt Van Winkle was due to leave FOB3 on 30 January. SP5 Frescura and Sgt Lansing suggested to the Captain that SFC Tredinnick be added "as we were under-manned American wise."[393]

PFC James Taylor was a Marine from the Second Platoon of Combined Action Company (CAC) OSCAR that had relocated to the FOB-3 when Khe Sanh village was overrun and the CAP O-3 position just across the road from FOB-3 had been abandoned. Taylor had been medevaced to the NSA hospital in DaNang for malaria and pneumonia about three weeks before the siege battle erupted, and had left his prized bagpipes at the CAP O-2 position. He eventually was sent to the hospital at Cam Ranh Bay for recuperation, "And I was damned if I would be down there filling sandbags and line the General's walk. So I told the doctor checking me in–I was still 'weak as a kitten'–but I told him, 'I'm fine. I need to go back to my unit. They need me. If I'm going to be filling sandbags, it'll be for my own ass and not for the General's sidewalks.' He laughed and filled out a slip. He said, 'You don't look good, but I'm going to send you back anyway. Your attitude is certainly good enough to make-up for it.' He tried to talk me out of it, but I wasn't having any. It took me three days. I caught a ride back, got in before they closed he airstrip."[394] Taylor had come from a family with a Marine heritage. His father fought in World War II, from Guadalcanal and almost to Iwo Jima but got wounded a third time just before the Iwo landing. His uncle (father's sister's husband) was an old China Marine with 4th Marines in Shanghai before the war, captured in Corregidor and survived four hears as a POW of the Japanese in Burma, only 95 pounds when freed. Taylor's brother was a Marine, as was his ex-wife.[395]

PFC Taylor was in the area where DENVER was preparing for its Hill 471 patrol and noticed Captain Van Winkle moving through the FOB-3 area. "He was a very impressive soldier, especially to this young PFC. I looked up at this big guy, and 'Call me Rip, son!' He didn't want me calling him 'Sir' and all that sort of thing. He was a big, easy-going fellow with a [Southern] draw and a ready laugh."[396] The 20 year-old Taylor, still "weak as a kitten,"[397] was eager for action, asked if he could come along. "I had been growing edgy with the forced inactivity. The term 'Siege Mentality' took on a new dimension for us at Khe Sanh. I had numerous requests in for any mission going outside the wires."[398] Van Winkle simply asked, "Can you operate a radio?" and when he replied he could, "that was all I needed to hear."[399]

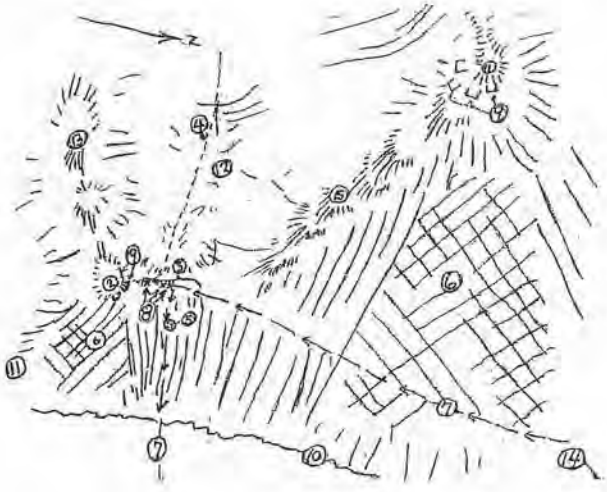

HILL 471 ACTION [Diagram by Wm Wood

1 Hill 471
2 The "pimple"
3 The Saddle
4 Line of path & telephone wire
5 Bomb crater
6 Approx. areas where grass was mowed
7 Our route onto & away from the saddle, directions indicated
8 Positions of the bodies. Crone furtherst south. The M-79 gunner in the middle and Xon to the north
9 NVA positions from which we took fire.
10 Small dry streambed
11 Khe Sanh town, about 500-600 meters
12 Fairly wide, gentle valley
13 Smaller, lower ridge
14 FOB-3, about 1-1/2 miles
15 Finger from 471 to saddle

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[393] Statement of SP5 John E. Frescura, 8 February 1968, contained in documents mailed by Mr. Lee Dunlap on 13 September 1988.
[394] Conversation with Freeman James Taylor, 08 April 1993.
[395] *Ibid.*
[396] Conversation with F. James Taylor, 06 Sep 1993.
[397] Conversation with Freeman James Taylor, 08 April 1993.
[398] Taylor, James, "Up Hill 471 with the Green Berets" *c.* 1980, in letter from Taylor postmarked 19 July 1993.
[399] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 31 Dec 1996, p. 11. Letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 16 September 1994, Subj: Last Minute Thoughts on Our Reunion."

The assault force, led by Captain Van Winkle, lifted off from the FOB-3 camp at 1135 for the short ride to the southeastern most point of the Hill 471 area[400] in four helicopters, three flown by Vietnamese and one by an American crew. "The first chopper load was broken down with Captain Van Winkle and PFC Taylor, U.S.M.C., accompanied by four indigenous personnel. the second chopper load consisted of 1st Lieutenant Sutcliff and SFC Scully, along with four indigenous personnel. The third chopper contained SFC Tredennick and SP5 Frescura, accompanied by four indigenous. The fourth and final chopper load consisted of Sgt Rumph and Sgt Lansing, accompanied by four indigenous personnel. The numbered strength of our element was sixteen indigenous soldiers and eight Americans, a total strength of 24 men. We were told that we were going up
against a reinforced squad, possibly two squads."[401]

The insertion met no resistance. Cover and concealment was non-existent with elephant grass that averaged less than three feet and a few scraggly bushes. The FOB area was easily seen; they could see soldiers moving about in the FOB. "There was certainly nothing to indicate imminent trouble. We set up a hasty defensive perimeter with SFC Tredinnick, SP5 Frescura and four Bru focusing basically east. Sgt Lansing, Sgt Rumph and four Bru were covering to the north. 1LT Sutcliffe, SFC Scully and four Bru covered west, while PFC Taylor and I with the remaining four Bru covered to the south. The saddle where the bodies were supposedly located was directly to the front of Tredinnick and Frescura."[402]

SFC Tredinnick then took three Bru and moved to the location where the bodies were reported to be,[403] advancing down into the saddle and to the top of the small peak on the other side of the saddle, about 150-175 meters, never out of Van Winkle's sight and not making any enemy contact. He noticed a large force of enemy troops moving to encircle the entire friendly force from the east. Not wanting the patrol to become separated,[404] Van Winkle instructed him to return to the ridge line and reestablish his perimeter. No evidence of Crone's body was seen.[405]

Van Winkle recalls: "Upon his return he moved to my position and we were discussing our next move when we both heard and spotted movement in a small bush directly to our front, probably less than six feet away. Tredinnick had just enough time to ask 'What was that?' before we were fired upon by an enemy rifleman from a well-concealed fighting position. I had the distinct impression the rounds passed between us and how they missed hitting at least one of us I'll never know. We both returned fire and I dropped a M-26 fragmentation grenade into the hole. To my recollection that action initiated the fight. I have been told since that our entire perimeter had been receiving sporadic small arms fire for several minutes prior to mine and Tredinnick's up-close and personal encounter."[406]



VIEW FROM HILL 471 TO KSCB LOOKING TOWARDS 950 (just off center) and 1015
Areng (right foreground) and Lang Kat (left foreground). Photo taken by Ray Stubbe 26 Sep 1967

A few minutes later, 1Lt Sutcliffe received a wound in his throat. He recalls:

> There were three little hill tops, and I was setting up my perimeter. They were coming up the hillside after us. We were raking them with our sub-machineguns. We were throwing grenades back and forth, laying on our backs, throwing them up in the air. Then they got a .50 up on one of the other hilltops, and they pinned us down. One of my sergeants came running back–the guy that was listed as KIA on that day [Tredinnick]. 'We gotta get out,' and I looked at him: 'Where would you suggest we go?' After that he just disappeared in a cloud of smoke. It was a

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[400] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 31 Dec 1996, p. 11.
[401] Letter from Sgt Dennis Lansing, 8 February 1968, contained in documents sent by Mr. Lee Dunlap on 13 September 1988.
[402] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 31 Dec 1996, p. 11.
[403] Van Winkle, Harlan E., email to Dennis Tredinnick, 10 July 2005, in letter from Dennis Tredinnick, 23 Oct 2006.
[404] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 15 July 1993.
[405] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 31 Dec 1996, p. 12.
[406] *Ibid.* Van Winkle, Harlan E., Conversation of 15 July 1993.

grenade. Everything went in slow motion. I got up on one knee–which was real smart! I wanted to knock out that .51 and was shooting a compass azimuth on the hillock trying to get the gunships to blow it out. All this time I was setting my perimeter. I kept contact with Campbell back there, telling him what was happening. I presented a rather good target, unfortunately, and they hit me with a grenade. I remember a big flash of light to my left, this tremendous impact–it went through my throat and shoulder, and I thought, 'No, Sutcliff, you're not going to do it' As I was falling down, I said, 'Help, Medic!' I stuck my leg up in the air and wiggled it around in the elephant grass so they could see where I'd fallen.

One of the medics came over. I opened my eyes and all I could see was this bloody hand in my face. He rolled me over, whips out his knife and says, 'Can you breathe, sir?' I looked up at him. He and I had just 'trached' a guy two nights before, and I informed him I could breathe quite well, thank you![407]

Tredinnick and Van Winkle rushed to Sutcliffe, and Van Winkle recalls, "He was such a mess that I sensed it was a mortal wound."[408] At that time, the patrol began to receive fire from every point except the north, with the heaviest from the west and southeast, in "what could only be called a thunderstorm of enemy hand grenades being thrown into our position."[409] Taylor, carrying the PRC-25 for Capt Van Winkle, "..happened to glance up and saw what appeared to be a black snowstorm. I then realized I was seeing a great number of ChiCom grenades, and yelled to the Capt, 'Down, Sir!' and pushed him down. I reflected that it wasn't every day one got to knock an officer on his ass. ... They were bursting among us. Rip caught a piece in his leg and cursed softly. I glanced down at my hands, and saw the blood welling up from a few tiny pieces of iron, like splinters, in the knuckles and joints. I pulled a few out with my teeth and checked Rip, who said he'd make it, and then we became too busy to sweat a few pieces of shrapnel."[410] PFC Taylor was surprised by the lack of fire discipline of the enemy force: "they'd always open up too soon, which is probably why I'm still here."[411] The attack was furious. "It would be safe to say the crescendo of enemy fire was such that I felt we were in danger of being overrun at any point," recalls Van Wionkle. "During one of the gunship runs, the door gunner, firing a M-60 MG, missed Taylor and I by less than six inches and shot Lao, the Bru platoon leader, in both legs, shattering both of them. I don't fault the gunner. He was doing his best to provide needed support under very trying circumstances."[412]

About this time, a Marine airborne FAC, AMERICAN BEAUTY DELTA, estimated the enemy force to be at least a reinforced company, moving around to the southeast, and then, on his second pass, changed the estimate to a battalion on the move.[413] "The manner in which he was able to coordinate all of the various air support into that very small area was nothing short of phenomenal."[414] "Not only did he have to worry about our immediate situation, he was also having to deal with two battalion size enemy units that were trying to get between us and the FOB."[415]

Tredennick started back to his position.

Van Winkle recalls that for all the quantity of ChiCom grenades tossed at them, most seemed to be duds and that those that did explode lacked the force of US grenades. One of the weaker ones exploded between his legs giving him with a dozen or so very painful, but not disabling wounds. "It was at that point when I heard the distinctive sound of a bullet strike someone behind me. I turned and saw Tredennick lying still on the ground. Sgt Rumph, PFC Taylor, and I converged on Tredinnick. He had been wounded low down on the left side of his chest. The entrance wound was very small but the exit wound was massive. His last words to me were, 'It hurts real bad sir.' Rumph and Taylor were performing immediate first aid and I put all of my effort to moving us some place reasonably safe to call for a medevac,."[416] The young PFC Taylor saw Tredinnick and thought: "He didn't even have to be out on this mission as he had a rotate to CONUS in about 18 hours. But the team had been together for almost three years and he went out of unit pride and duty. Rip was taking it hard, and I heard him talking to Chuck who was by now mercifully unconscious: 'Don't die, Chuckie, Don't die on me, Chuckie boy,.' It didn't sound as maudlin and sentimental as it appears in print. It was one brave man pleading for the life of another, his comrade-

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[407] Conversations with Grenville Sutcliffe, 06 April 1990 and 05 February 1994.
[408] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 31 Dec 1996, p. 12.
[409] *Ibid.*
[410] Taylor, James, "Up Hill 471 with the Green Berets" *c.* 1980, in letter from Taylor postmarked 19 July 1993.
[411] Conversation with James Taylor, 08 April 1993.
[412] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 31 Dec 1996, p. 13.
[413] Van Winkle, Harlan E., Conversation of 15 July 1993.
[414] Van Winkle, letter of 16 September 1994, Last Minute Thoughts on Our Reunion, p. 4.
[415] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 31 Dec 1996, p. 14.
[416] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 31 Dec 1996, pp. 12-13..

in-arms."[417]

Sgt Donald Rumph recalls: "Lt Sutcliffe yelled 'I'm hit' and fell over on his back. I moved to him, being the closest, to treat his neck wound,. Just after I reached him, SFC Scully came up and I went on to SFC Tredinnick. When I reached him, Capt. Van Winkle and PFC Taylor were applying a dressing to the wound. SFC Tredinnick was unconscious at this time and breathing very irregularly. I cut off his web gear and shirt and finished applying the dressing. His pulse was very weak, and 4 of 5 times [he] stopped breathing. Capt. Van Winkle called for a MedEvac for Lt Sutcliffe and SFC Tredinnick, which arrived about 15 minutes later, and napalm air attacks."[418]

Sutcliffe remembers the medic working on Tredinnick shouted, "We got to get the medevacs in or we're going to lose this one" and then, "my medic yells, 'Yeah, we're going to lose this one too!' Well, I knew he was wrong. There wasn't a chance in the world that I was going to die on that hill! The first slick came in. They threw Tredinnick on it and they tried to get me on it, but it was taking heavy fire. I must have been going in and out of consciousness by that time because Taylor said he carried me down to a hillock [and] I don't remember that. The second ship came in, an old H-34, regular Vietnamese pilot. They threw me into that. They lifted off. As we started, I remember the machinegun bullets popping through the floor of the chopper around me"[419] A Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) H-34 King Bee assigned to SOG was riddled with fire, killing the co-pilot and one door gunner; the pilot managed to get it airborne with the wounded and crash-landed at FOB-3.[420] The senior medic of A-221, SSG Sweezy, arrived on one of the medevac choppers and later said he couldn't understand why there was difficulty loading the wounded. "When the medevac ship in which he was riding had to crash-land at the FOB it had over two hundred bullet holes in it. Sweezy was oblivious to it all."[421]

Sutcliffe recalls that he was taken to the FOB and then to C Med on Khe Sanh base. "Put me on the operating table and started to cut my clothes off and hand grenades started falling out of my pockets, my pistol out of my top pocket. Well, the Marine doctors weren't quite used to that thing, so they started cutting off my uniform and a grenade falls out of one pocket, a pistol out of another, so they ran out of the tent!."[422]

That higher headquarters had no inkling of what was happening is reflected in a message from Third Marine Division COC to III MAF: "FOB3 is still in contact with enemy in village of Khe Sanh."[423] Van Winkle requested permission to return to the base. Permission was denied: he was to stay there and continue to observe. Taylor notes: "Observe what? All the Indians in the world riding down on you?"[424]

The Marine on the patrol, PFC Taylor, hauled Lt Sutcliffe to one medevac chopper as others put Tredinnick on another. After the two were medevaced, the patrol continued to receive enemy fire and Captain Van Winkle told the patrol to start pulling back. SP5 John L. Frescura moved his men to the right, closer to the rest of the patrol while Sgt Lansing turned his attention and that of his men to the threat from the south and west, focusing on a small gully that led from the south slope directly into the friendly position. While positioning his men, his machine gunner, Pa Lang, was shot dead and the entire element was pinned down.[425] Lau, another Bru, was hit in the right leg at the boot top by a round from a Marine gunship. The bones were shattered.[426] Lansing was having some trouble keeping them in position:

> I had a lot of trouble trying to get my men to this area because we were receiving heavy small arms fire. I ended up exposing myself to the fire because I had to bodily drag most of my men up. After getting settled and setting up my perimeter, I had to go from man to man to get them to fire their weapons in the manner of which I desired. At this time we were receiving support from our gunships. One of our gunships made a gun run and came in so close with automatic 40mm fire that I thought maybe he mistook myself and my men for VC. I immediately pulled back to Cpt. Van Winkle's location leaving my men in position. I wanted to find out what the problem was.. I had just turned around to return to my own position when my men broke from the top of the hill. I reached them in time to keep them from running away completely. One of the men who spoke a little bit of English told me that the V.C. started storming up the draw I was covering. I immediately regrouped my troop, and attempted to get them back into position, but they were determined not to go. I grabbed one of my machine gunners and

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[417] Taylor, James, "Up Hill 471 with the Green Berets," postmarked 19 July 1993.
[418] Sgt Donald A. Rumph, "Report on Operation, 29 Jan 68 in RVN," in letter from Rumph of 9 Oct 1994.
[419] Conversation with Grenville Sutcliffe, 05 Feb 1994.
[420] Van Winkle, Harlan E., email to Dennis Tredinnick, 10 July 2005, in letter from Dennis Tredinnick, 23 Oct 2006.
[421] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 31 Dec 1996, p. 15.
[422] *Ibid.*
[423] 3dMarDiv 291127Z/Jan68, 26th SITREP for 291600H in IIIMAF COC Journal and File, 29/30 Jan 1968 #216. Underscoring provided.
[424] Conversation with Freeman James Taylor, 08 April 1993.
[425] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Van Winkle, 31 December 1996.
[426] Sgt Donald A. Rumph, "Re[port on Operation 29 Jan 68 in RVN," in letter from Rumph, 9 Oct 1994.

proceeded to march him up the hill. We were receiving terrific small arms and sparse rocket fire at this time. I had just about got my gunner in position when a muzzle flash appeared about ten feet to my front. My gunner was hit in the abdomen. I immediately returned fire. At this time the main body was in the process of pulling back down the hill to the east. I picked up the man who was shot and began to gather my men to pull back also. I gathered several men on my way down who had evidently pulled back before and proceeded to make it down a narrow draw to the bottom of the hill. . I waited about 30 to 46 minutes at the bottom.. I couldn't hear very well because there were jets flying over making strikes on the area we were in. I then proceeded with my men to walk back to camp.[427]

Frescura had started to move to help Lansing when Van Winkle said they were pulling back. During this time a Marine gunship made a pass and hit one of Frescura's men in the calf, shattering both bones. Frescura ran to apply first aid along with Sgt Rumph and placed a splint on the leg.[428]

While moving down the hill, Sgt. Lansing lost sight of Sgt Rumph's group while in the brush. Sgt Rumph pulled down the knoll 3/4ths of the way to the bottom of the hill and called a Medevac for the two wounded Bru. Following an airstrike, the first medevac was shot off the LZ by heavy automatic fire. The second bird arrived ten minutes later and the two wounded Bru and, as Sgt Rumph departed, he spotted Sgt Lansing's group about 300 meters away moving toward the camp.[429]

Taylor

went back up the hill and carried the little Montagnard radioman down, piggy-back, as I was too beat to do anything else. I had recently been hospitalized with malaria, and was down to 150 lbs. Returning once more to the top, I brought down the gunner, aided by the medic. By this time the enemy had intensified their fire and we were forced to drag him along. he died on the way down. Finally, we received permission to withdraw and started out on foot. The enemy fire made it impossible to bring us out by air. I volunteered for the tail-end. We withdrew, fighting a bitter rear-guard action all the way down the slopes. Before we were off the hill, the jets (the fog having burned off) came in fast and bombed, strafed, and CBUed the top of that hill. We walked back home, though I, being on the ragged side of exhaustion, was trucked in part way. Captain Van Winkle had mentioned putting me in for a Silver Star, but the citation got lost in the shuffle. In fact, I wasn't even eligible for a Purple Heart, as my wounds were considered minor (the regs at that time had been changed to require 48 hours under care and a MD's exam). I did receive a promotion to Lance Corporal.[430]

As Van Winkle was about two-thirds down the hill, moving to FOB-3, when he remembered he had left the radio on the hill. Unknown to him, PFC Taylor had already destroyed it. "I was so disgusted with myself for leaving the radio, never realizing that it had been destroyed."[431] 25 years later, when they reconnected, Taylor "..laughed when I explained I had never mentioned that radio to anyone and said I shouldn't have worried about it all these years. He said that before he came off of the hill the last time he placed a thermite grenade on the radio as well as a M-60 MG that had taken a round through the receiver group when its operator was KIA. I was remiss hat I didn't follow through on putting him in for an award for valor. He deserved it. I know he made at least two and maybe three trips up and down that hill assisting with wounded while under fire."[432]

The unit was met about 600 meters from the FOB-3 gate by a rescue unit led by SFC Robert Cavanaugh who informed Van Winkle that Tredennick had died. The MIA, Crone, had not been recovered due to the intense enemy contact and SP5 Robert T. Mahoney and several Montagnards of the patrol were all listed as MIA.[433] After reaching FOB-3, the patrol was informed to pack up their gear and get ready to move to DaNang[434]. DENVER left on 30 January to DaNang o debrief and return to Okinawa.[435] Fusco and Tredinnick had become very good friends with some of the Bru, and Lua, the platoon leader that was hit on the Co Roc insertion, had given Fusco and Tredinnick two or three parrots.[436] The two soldiers had become

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[427] Statement of Sgt Dennis Lansing, 8 February 1968, in documents sent by Lee Dunlap, 13 September 1988.
[428] Statement of SP5 John L. Frescura, 8 February 1968, in documents sent by Lee Dunlap, 13 September 1988.
[429] Sgt. Donald A. Rumph, "Report on Operation 29 Jan 68 in RVN," in letter from Rumph, 9 Oct 1994.
[430] Taylor, F. James, "Up Hill 471 With the Green Berets," mailed postmarked 19 July 1993.
[431] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 15 July 1993. In 1993, when the two reconnected, Van Winkle learned that Taylor had destroyed the radio.
[432] Van Winkle, letter of 16 September 1994, Subj: Last Minute Thoughts on Our Reunion.
[433] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 31 Dec 1996, p. 15.
[434] Statement of SP5 John L. Frescura, 8 February 1968, in documents sent by Lee Dunlap, 13 September 1988.
[435] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 23 October 1994.
[436] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 23 October 1994.

inseparable and when Tredinnick was killed "it just sort of ruined Fusco for the rest of his life."[437]

In retrospect, Van Winkle felt his unit had been the victim of a classic NVA ambush "designed to take advantage of our desire to recover the bodies of Americans killed in action."[438] However, he wondered why they waited until the unit was on the ground before springing the ambush. "The most logical time would have been as we were getting off the helicopters. With the firepower that they had they could have easily destroyed at least two of the insert ships and mopped up the survivors without much problem."[439]

In early April, 1968, after battalion 1/9 had taken Hill 471, FOB-3 was notified of several bodies believed to be FOB-3 members found on the hill. LtCol Roy Bahr, the CO of FOB-3, sent Hammond M. Salley [440] and one of the Medics, Denis Chericone, to retrieve them. Chericone, who had arrived Christmas Eve, 1967, had been Crone's bunk-mate in the medical tent before it got blown up at the beginning of the siege and everyone moved underground.[441] Five or six Marines met then and escorted them to two bodies, one American and one Bru Montagnard but wouldn't come near the bodies. The stench was terrible.[442] "We walked over and we turned one guy over. And I remember turning him over, and he was a friend of mine. And the flies all flew in my face, and the smell got on me, and I puked really quick."[443] The bodies had been virtually untouched by the NVA; personal effects and most of their military gear was still in place. A radio with several bullet holes in it was still on the American's back. There was a sheath knife that Denis recognized as belonging to Sgt Crone; the knife had Crone's name on it. There was no evidence of molestation.[444] As Salley and Chericone picked up Crone's body, his body was so deteriorated that his head fell off and rolled down the slope. Salley retrieved it and placed it back in the body bag.[445]

Upon return to FOB-3, Salley recalls, "We stank so much that Chericone burned his clothes. I had to take a shower and change clothes before I was allowed back into our TOC."[446] After burning his clothes in the trash burner, Chericone "went down in the medical bunker and drank. I drank a half a bottle of whisky straight down–Bourbon. It didn't even touch me. Stone sober. I remember one of the Sergeants standing there and going, 'Wow, kid, what happened to you?' He was amazed a 21 year-old kid poured this bottle of liquor straight down."[447] Chericone was the youngest soldier in FO B-3, sometimes called "the kid," and "they all kinda took me under their wing."[448]

Capt. Lee Dunlap departed Khe Sanh and returned to Okinawa where he was part of a staff that developed special projects developing capabilities to deliver nuclear demolitions by free fall. He returned to the States and took a career course at Fort Benning, went to a Baptist liberal arts college in Hattysburg, Mississippi, and then went to Hawaii with the 25th Infantry Division and, upon being promoted to Major, worked in the staff of US Army, Pacific. He retired in 1977. He was later hired by the Army as a civilian to modernize firing ranges in 1980. In late 1987, he received a call from Special Operations Command where he was hired as a GS-13 in the Current Operations Division working on training exercises in the Pacific.[449]

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

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[437] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.
[438] Van Winkle, Harlan E., "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 31 Dec 1996, p. 15.
[439] *Ibid*
[440] Hammond Salley arrived at FOB-3 6 March 1968 from USARV to work for Major Quamo in Special Projects, but as the siege continued, the CO at the time, Major David C. ("Bulldog") Smith assigned him to be the FOB-3 S-2. LtCol Bahr was the CO when Salley was sent to Hill 471 to retrieve the remains of Crone. [Hammond Salley, "Ambush Epilogue #2," 6 Nov 1996, in letter from Salley to H.E. Van Winkle, 6 Nov 1996, both documents in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 2 Jan 1997.]
[441] Conversation with Denis Chericone, 25 July 1993.
[442] Hammond Salley, letter of 6 September 1993; Hammond Salley, "Ambush Epilogue #2," 6 November 1996.
[443] Conversation with Denis Chericone, 21 August 1993.
[444] Hammond Salley, "Ambush Epilogue #2," 6 Nov 1996, in letter from Salley to H.E. Van Winkle, 6 Nov 1996, both documents in letter from Harlan E. Van Winkle, 2 Jan 1997.
[445] Chericone had been haunted many decades, blocking out the fact that Crone's head had been retrieved. It was only in the 1990s, in conversation with Salley, that he was informed that the head had been retrieved. "For years I never knew it. I picked up one body and the head rolled off down the hill. I can see myself standing there, staring, watching it bounce down the hill. I couldn't remember if I'd gone down and got it. Then he told me that he was there and said, 'Yeah, we went and got it.'" [Conversation with Denis Chericone, 25 July 1993].
[446] Hammond Salley, letter of 6 September 1993.
[447] Conversation with Denis Chericone, 25 July 1993.
[448] *Ibid.*
[449] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 07 November 1997.

Capt James H. Knox, one of the pilots involved in the Co Roc operation who subsequently found himself inside the FOB-3 command bunker on numerous occasions, recalls a briefing for a mission in the spires of a karst[450] cave area just west of the DMZ where the NVA Headquarters[451] controlling the Khe Sanh Siege battle was located:

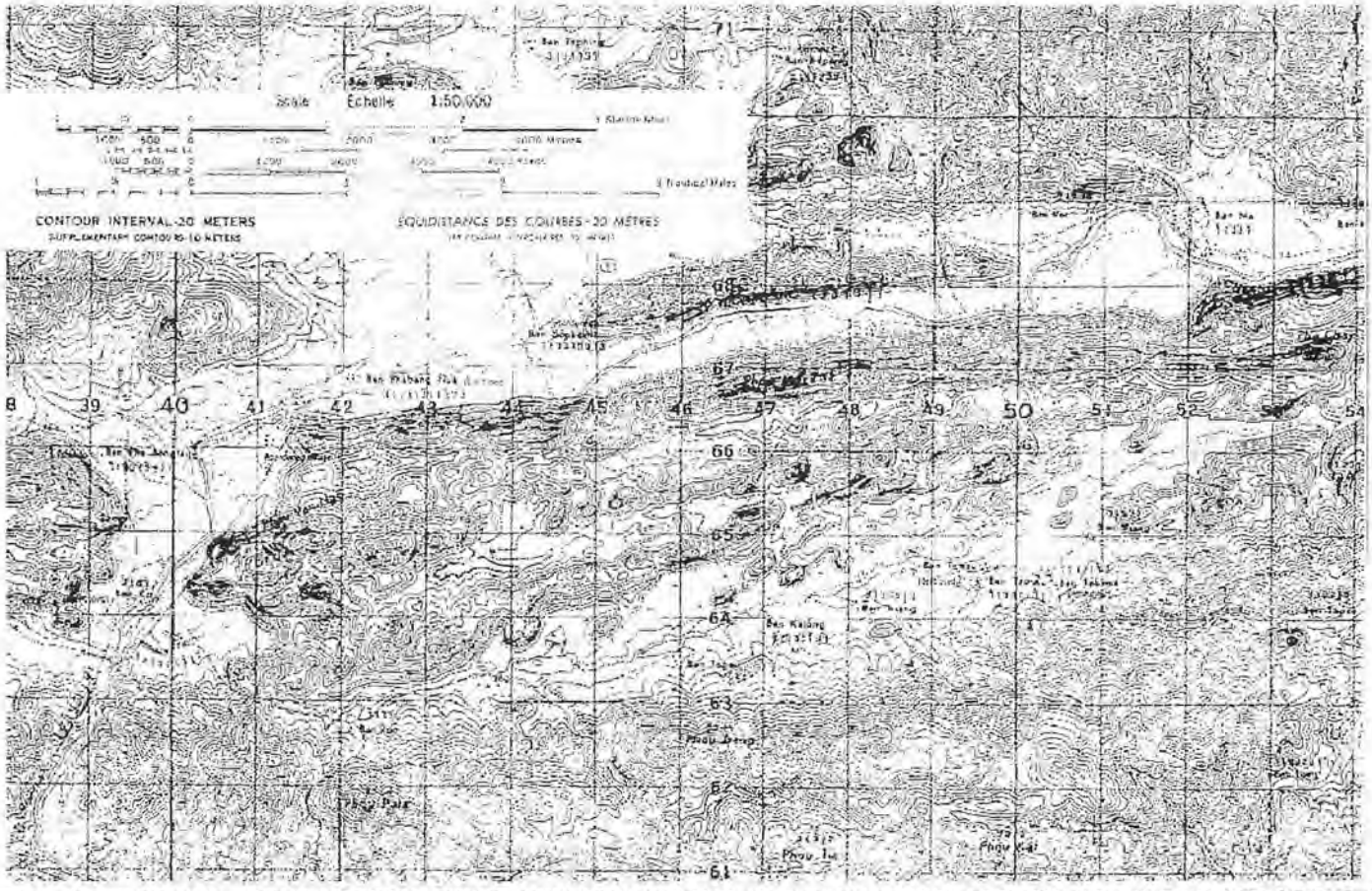

SITE OF B5-T8 NVA FRONT HEADQUARTERS CONTROLLING THE KHE SANH SIEGE, APPROX. 10 MILES WEST OF THE DMZ [Near XD405605, left side, and showing Route 92] [U.S. Army Topographic Command, Series L7015, Laos, Sheet 6241 I, BAN NATHON. Note: each contour line indicates 20 more meters elevation (approx. 60 ft.)]

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[450] Karst refers to an irregular drainage pattern, where streams abruptly disappear into the ground, reappearing elsewhere as large springs, similar to the Karst region of Yugoslavia. It is defined as "an assemblage of topographic forms, consisting primarily of closely spaced sinks," and may be seen in areas of Kentucky, Tennessee, southern Indiana and northern Florida. [Longwell, Chester R., and Flint, Richard F., *Introduction to Physical Geology*, 2nd ed., New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1962, pp. 210-211.

[451] The Headquarters, with the secret designation, "B5-T8," had been established 6 December 1967, commanded by Major General Tran Quy Hai, Assistant Chief of Staff, PAVN General Staff, and Political Commissar Comrade Le Quang Dao, Deputy Director of the General Political Directorate for the PAVN. [Vien Lich Su Quan Su Vietnam [Vietnamese Institute for Military History], Chien dich Tien cong Duong so 9—Khe Sanh, Xuan He 1968 [Highway 9—Khe Sanh Offensive, Spring and Summer 1968], Hanoi, 1987, p. 16. *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968. [Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Rute 9 Campaign]* Published by the Tong Cuc Hau Can [General Directorate for Rear services] under direction of Major General Tran Chi Cuong. Hanoi, June, 1988, p. 07, footnote.] The presence of NVA in this area had been reported by JTAD in October, 1967, placing a 800-man NVA battalion at XD 687547, armed with two 122mm rocket launchers, 1 82mm mortars, 3 60mm mortars, and other armament. [26MAR 041110Z/Oct67, Operation ARDMORE INTSUM #79]. The NVA Front Headquarters is indicated on a map in CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, Memorandum, "The Continuing Communist Military Threat in Northern South Vietnam," 13 March 1968, indicating the HQ 7 miles west of the DMZ. U.S. tactical maps indicate numerous fortified hill positions in karst formation in the general area from N/S grid line 37 to 58 and E/W grid line 63 to 67 [U.S. Army Topographic Command, Series L7015, Sheet 6241 I, Ban Nathon, 1970. The official North Vietnamese military history of Khe Sanh indicates the Front Headquarters at Sap Lit (XD6266). [*Chien Dich Tiehn Cong Duong 9--Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968 [The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh--Route 9 Offensive Campaign*], Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, 1987, p. 24].

> We were engaged in an absolutely insane mission that was fortunately finally aborted. We were going to try to kidnap General Giap! It led to a really ugly scene during the briefing. The guys from the CIA or wherever were there in their short-sleeved white shirts looking like IBM execs, and they had the briefing. An Army Special Forces LtCol was there. We were going to put a team up in that very severe geological karst formation. There was a discussion on how big the team would be—I can't remember all the details, but I think it was a fairly good-sized team. A decision was made—not by us, but basically by the Army—that we would not try to extract them at night: due to the terrain there would be no possible way but to make a bad situation worse if we tried to go in there with a bunch of helicopters at night and get this team out. The team wasn't hot about going anyway. At that point, an Army Lieutenant, who was going on the team, said, 'You mean, if I'm in there at night, nobody's going to come and get me?' And we said, 'Look, we'll do whatever we're told to do; we'll try to get you'—and the Colonel is saying, 'Don't do it.' And I said, 'We'll come up there if you want and try and get an airstrike' and that kind of thing. And around and around we went. Finally, this Lieutenant told the Colonel he wasn't going, whereupon the Colonel arrested him on the spot, put him on a helicopter, and said that he was going to be court-martialed! Right on the spot! Right in front of me![452]

It was a mission to go to the middle of the ocean and not getting wet.

Deep in the bowels of the specially reinforced command bunker of FOB-3 (the TOC), in the communications area, four North Vietnamese Chieu Hois were monitoring radios and provided direct translations of enemy messages that they intercepted. "They had one that there was going to be a very, very top secret high-level meeting. It gave the coordinates, and then we figured out it was to be General Giap.[453] "We set up five or six Arc Lights to come in across from Thailand. We really bombarded that area where this was supposed to take place. We had reason to believe that the 'biggy' had come down from Hanoi, but we just didn't get him. I'm sure we left some turmoil in there. But we couldn't get into that area for a Bomb Damage Assessment afterwards."[454]

This particular B-52 strike did not escape White House scrutiny. In a memo by Walt W. Rostow to the President of 7:50am, 30 Jan 1968, he reports: "Herewith Westy reports an extremely successful use of intelligence to identify and attack with B-52s the new, recently established senior headquarters west of the DMZ. (Some of our best analysts suspect Gen. Giap may have taken personal command at this installation). Westy believes the attack may 'at least delay' the major offensive in Northern I Corps."[455]

The strike, however, went unknown to the American public. Gen. Westmoreland sent the following to General Wheeler (CJCS) on 01 Feb:

> Any public statement about successful B-52 attack on the major enemy headquarters would certainly compromise the source of the information, enemy corrective action could diminish our intelligence effort country-wide. No valid cover story can be developed. We have no ground reconnaissance resources which could be admitted to be in that area. While photographic interpretation could confirm a possible logistic complex, it could not support identification of a major headquarters.. It should also be pointed out that any such statement would be an admission of our [here two lines are not declassified]. Additionally, approval for the strike was granted by American Ambassador, Vientiane upon condition that no publicity would be given to the strike.[456]

During an interview with BGen George J. Keegan, Jr., Director of Intelligence, 7th Air Force, on 14 Jul 68, the General noted: "On 21 Jan 1968, MACV had become so overextended in the ground war, that General Westmoreland assigned General Momyer [Commander, 7th Air Force] a principal role in the defense of Khe Sanh... The Air Force thoroughly reconnoitered I Corps using special sensors plus ARDF [Aerial Radio Direction Finders, in EC-47 aircraft].. The reconnaissance effort produced 2000 targets around Khe Sanh."[457]

A USAF report later noted: "On 30 January, the largest B-52 strike of the war to that date was flown against a command

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[452] Conversation with James Hargrove Knox, 04 October 1994.

[453] Conversations with James W. Moore, 26 Feb 1996. Moore, who arrived at FOB-3 in September, 1967 and had been twice wounded in Korea, was the Operations Sergeant of FOB-3. [Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 Dec 1995].

[454] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.

[455] W.W. Rostow, Memorandum to the President, Tue., 30 Jan 1968, 7:50 a.m., MAC 01430, LBJ Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, 2A(1) I Corps and DMZ 1/66 - 1/69, Document #40.

[456] Westmoreland, message to Gen. Wheeler, 010010Z/Feb68, in LJB Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, Container #42, 5EE(1) LAOS 10/67 - 12?68, Document #52.

[457] Hurley, Alfred F., "Interview with Brigadier General George J. Keegan, Director of Intelligence, 7AF, on 14 July 1968," Exhibit #7 of Supporting Documents to CHECO Report #74, *The EC-47 in Southeast Asia*, 20 Sep 1968.

and control center in Eastern Laos, 36 sorties in the morning and 9 at night. There were 85 secondary explosions and numerous cave-ins. These attacks greatly disrupted the enemy's plans."[458] Bruce E. Jones of the MACV Intelligence Section known as CICV (Combined Intelligence Center Vietnam) notes this strike was based on signals intelligence, SPARS (Special Aerial and Radio Surces), striking a honeycombed cave area of a major NVA headquarters.[459]

However, General Giap was not killed and, Gen Westmoreland reported "..some elements of the headquarters is back in communication with Hanoi after 38 hours of silence."[460]

Charles Berg of FOB-3 was scheduled to launch into this area following the B-52 strike (probably for a BDA—Bomb Damage Assessment), and had done a VR, got back with SgtMaj Pegram, and exclaimed, "Whew! That's a bummer!" He had been scheduled to launch the day before, but had insisted on his VR 24 hours before an insert, and the VR was approved. He recalls:[461]

> We were just north of ELEPHANT, and I'm in an O-2 with an Air Force guy. I turned over and looked, and right in front of me, 300 yards away, was a 4-prop wing transport aircraft, brown color. I looked at him [the pilot] and I punched him and said, 'Look!' He banked and looked at it. It was a Russian plane! And I said, 'Go in on him!' I had a CAR-15. I had a bunch of rounds. I said, 'Go on top of him; I can shoot him down.' The guy went, 'No!' He flipped the bird on the other side and he started talking. He forgot he had his intercom on. He's talking to one of the C&C[462] ships up there.[463] He started making a SITREP, and he said, 'Yes, again in the same area,' and I said, 'What?' He said, 'O shit!' and got me off the comm.
>
> When we got back, I said, 'Why didn't you come up on top of him? I could of shot him down! I could of dropped that airplane.' And he said, 'Well, it really wasn't what you thought it was.' I said, 'Yes it was! It was a Russian transport plane. I think I even know the kind if I see the images again.' And he said, 'Well, we see them quite a few times up here. We just report them.' So when I came back and I was supposed to insert the next day, they gave a delay on it, and that day is when they put the B-52 strike in. I went back down and got the folder—the area studies folder, and that was the Headquarters area. And I asked, 'You're going to put me in there—in the Headquarters area!' And they said, 'Well, we'll get you in and get you out.' I said, 'Yeah!' You gotta realize: those people up there are not the home guard or the 'fourth line;' they're the real crack troops, like the same people that are running around with Westmoreland.

On 28 March, SOG team ASP was inserted just south of this Front Headquarters on a CIRCUS ACT (wire-tap) mission, came under fire, requested extraction from XD434574. A H-3 helicopter attempted a ladder extraction,but it broke, and the three Americans of the team are still listed as MIA (SFC Alan L. Boyer, SGM George R. Brown, and SFC Charles G. Huston).[464]

LANG VEI
BACKGROUND

Lang Vei (XD 795361), a Vietnamese military outpost with American Advisors of Team A-101, had been overrun during the Battle of the Hills on 04 May 1967. NVA posing as PF recruits had killed several sentries in the camp and then guided in the outside force which subsequently killed both the CO and XO.[465] From that time, a new camp site was developed (at XD 78443573) in which no indigenous troops would be in the inner perimeter of the American advisors (other than Vietnamese Special Forces, LLDB), to preclude that from being repeated.

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[458] Maj. James B. Pralle, *Arc Light June 1967 - December 1968*, HQ, PACAF, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Division, p. 28.
[459] Jones, Bruce E., *War Without Windows*, New York: The Vanguard Press, 1988, pp. 136, 168.
[460] Westmoreland 010010Z/Feb68 to Gen Wheeler, CJCS, in LBJ Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, Container #92, #52.
[461] Conversation with Charles Berg, 13 Nov 1994.
[462] Command and Control.
[463] USAF C-130 Airborne Command and Control Center (ABCCC), callsign: HILLSBORO.
[464] This action is described in Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed., 2008, p. 266.
[465] For complete discussion of details, see Stubbe: *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed (2008), pp. 54-55.

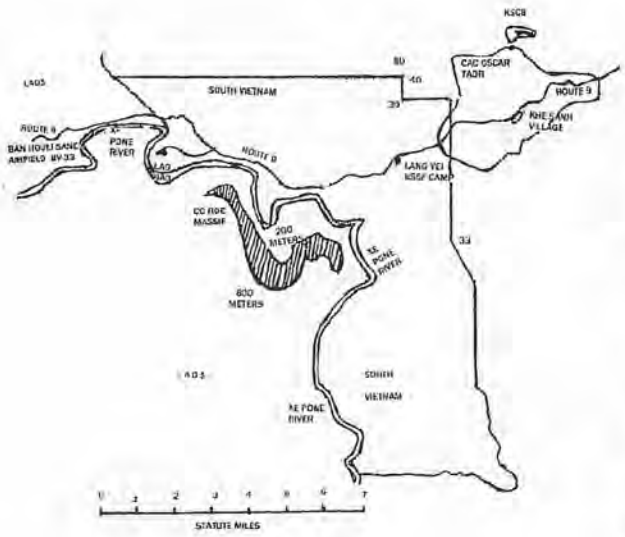

LANG VEI TAOR LATE 1967



CHAPLAIN RAY WILLIAM STUBBE LEADS WORSHIP FOR SEABEES OF MCB-11 ON TOP OF FUTURE TOC 23 AUGUST 1967

A detail from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) ELEVEN arrived in early July to begin the work on the new site. Work progressed rapidly. By 25 July 1967, ground clearing for the new site was 75% compolete and two of three unmarked old French mine fields wre cleared. By 25 August 1967, foundations for nine primary and secondary bunkers had been poured and the foundations and walls for the TOC[466]. The new camp was occupied 21 Sep 1967 with minor construction work still in progress. On 31 October 1967, Captain Frank Willoughby, the CO (and former Marine Sergeant)[467], menioned the new camp site had received 142,000 tons of air dropped materials to build the new camp in 2.5 days on the smallest ZD in Vietnam, setting a US Air Force record.[468]

The precarious position of the Lang Vei Special Forces camp, so close to the Laotian border, prompted the 26th Marines to issue Operatinos Plan 5-67 on 18 September 1967 stating: "Lang Vei Special Forces Camp is located in a position that renders it very accessible to attack .. with little warning. Experience indicates that attacks are normally conducted during periods of darkness and low visibility, and it should be assumed that HLZ's and land routes into the area will be ambushed." The mission was stated: "To conduct spoiling attacks within capabilities in coordination with Lang Vei defense forces when the threat of enemy attack is detected or significant troop movements are detected."[469] To execute the mission, a ground force of a reinforced rifle company would be committed with additional rifle companies and a battalion command group committed as necessary. Enemy forces during July and August, 1967, were estimated to be at least one enemy battalion operating southwest of Lang Vei in the vicinity of Co Roc (XD 742318).

With the fall of BV-33 in Laos on 25 January, Lang Vei was isolated. William Craig, Team Sergeant of A-101, concluded that the abandonment of Khe Sanh village "..killed us. We were cut off. We were finished."[470] On 14 January, MACV requested a review of the contingency plan to reinforce Lang Vei in view of the rapidly developing NVA threat,[471] 3rd Marine Division responded that the plan written in September, 1967, providing for the initial support by one reinforced rifle company and command group to be deployed on a 2-hour alert remained valid with no additional assistance or support required (as of 20 Jan).[472] Of course, what military unit will acknowledge to its superiors it cannot execute its assigned mission?

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[466] TOC, Tactical Operations Center, corresponds to the USMC designation of COC, Combat Operations Center

[467] Conversation with Miles Wilkins, 22 March 1994. Wilkins was XO of A-101.

[468] Stubbe: *Khe Sanh Chaplain* (unpublished manuscript), 01 April 1970, entry for 31 Oct 1967, p. 348

[469] Tab F to CO, 26th Marines 3/WMW/clr, Ser 0050-67, 8 Oct 1967, Subj: Command Chronology for Period 1 September to 30 September 1967.

[470] Conversation with William Craig, 04 October 1988.

[471] COMUSMACV 140801Z/Jan68, Lang Vei Special Forces Camp, in 3rd MrDiv Msgs, Etc., file, Jan 1968, Encl (34). The message stated: "Maximum effort will be made to insure the defense posture of the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei leaves nothing to be desired ... Any assistance required to accomplish contingency reinforcement of Lang Vei which is beyond your tactical support capability should be reported to this headquarters without delay."

[472] 3rd MarDiv 200808Z/Jan68, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs, Etc., file, Jan 1968, Encl (53). The message stated: "Fire support procedures are adequate. No additional assistance/support required at this time from contingency reinforcement of Lang Vei other than additional helo support for Khe Sanh area which will be addressed separately."

Everything dramatically and suddenly changed. The threat involved far more than one battalion as 40,000 NVA suddenly saturated the area immediately around KSCB. On 20 Jan 68, the SOG teams that had been on Co Roc reported their findings to Lang Vei, and on the same day, Colonel Lownds sent GySgt Max Friedlander (of the 17th Interrogator Translator Team (ITT)) from KSCB to Lang Vei to brief them on what Lt Tonc, the NVA rallier, had disclosed. He returned to KSCB about a half-hour before darkness. "They thanked me for the information [but] I honestly don't remember them being totally, overly interested."[473] When the District Headquarters in Khe Sanh village was abandoned, it had become the CP HQ for a NVA regiment, if not a division. The BV-33 position, nearby in Laos, had fallen to NVA tanks on 25 Jan, and refugees from that position flocked to occupy the former Lang Vei campsite,[474] assuredly disclosing the attack by tanks they had experienced Photo intelligence of 25 January and 06 February disclosed numerous foxholes and positions in the immediate area,[475] On 05 February, aerial recon detected an ambush point at XD 81603872 where Route 9 was piano-cut at several places.[476].

In addition, not all the NVA tanks attacked Lang Vei; some apparently took positions to ambush any relieving forces that might arrive by helicopter. In his FMFPAC Debrief, Colonel Lownds commented:

> ..if the intelligence reprots were indeed correct, it would appear that the enemy had well anticipated that we might possibly reinforce the garrison at Lang Vei. He had troops positiioned along the edges of Route 9, and it's interesting to note that after the tanks had finished their mission ast Lang Vei, and as a matter of fact in one case a couple of tanks actually never did get into Lang Vei, but they went north and northeast of Lang Vei's position, and were actually as near as we can determine in a position that we had planned as our helicopter landing zones, so that he had in fact anticipated a relief force and had positioned himself where he could intercept not only ground relief force, but also a helicopter relief force.[477]

The refugees from BV-33 that had migrated to Lang Vei after they had been overrun by tanks on 25 January, were placed at the old Lang Vei camp. George Quamo and William Craig were close friends, and when Quamo visited Lang Vei, "he always took me in a helicopter ride. We'd talk and talk and talk."[478] When George Quamo and William Craig overflew their area at Ban Houei Sane, Craig stated: "I know where they're not going to stay, and that's with us! I'll just put them over in the other camp." Quamo agreed, "That's a good idea." Craig notes they "..were orphans of the Laotian Army. That's why I us3ed to feel sorry for them. They were always stuck up there, always getting hit. We used to airdrop them stuff when I was over there in civilian clothes, flying with Air America. I was in Savannakhet in 1961 and 1962 [as part of Operation WHITE STAR]."[479]

Despite the raging battle of incoming on KSCB, conditions at the USSF camp at Lang Vei were rather tranquil. The XO, Miles Wilkins, comments: "We actually had very little contact, even when Khe Sanh was having a hard time leaving their perimeter. I was still driving up and down Highway 9, taking out mamasans back. We had vry little enemy contact. They basically just let us alone. We could go out on patrols and never see anybody."[480] Col Jonalthan Ladd (Commander, 5th Special Forces Group) had visited the Lang Vei camp on 6 Feb (along with Col Dan Baldwin and Sergeant-Major Hodge of

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[473] Conversation with Max Friedlander, 15 February 1990.

[474] CINCPAC 270202Z/JAN68, original message from American Embassy, Saigon, to Secretary of State, Washington DC, 260811Z/Jan68, notes that the refugees from BV-33 included 510 military and 2270 civilians, all joining the local Bru civilian refugees at the village of Lang Vei and supported with essential items from Lang Vei USSF. The return of Lao military and civilians of BV-33 to Savannakhet was completed on 150750Z/Feb 68 and included 2 females, 1 child, 111 officers and men, including the Battalion Commander (Soulang Phetsomphou), total: 114. 3 qualified officers remained at KSCB to screen future arrivals. [III MAF 181350Z/Feb68 to COMUSMACV, Subj: Lao refugees in Khe Sanh area.

[475] 25 foxholes and 2 antiaircraft positions (XD 809378), 25 foxholes (XD 844361), 94 foxholes (XD 847376), and 24 foxholes (XD 845377), and on 06 Feb 1968: a fortified area with bunkers and heavy trail activity (XD 793393), bunkers above ground (XD 800395), a hut with heavy trail activity (XD 805395), an underground bunker and heavy trail activity (XD 804394), an above-ground bunker with heavy trail activity (XD 803395), an open bunker with well-used trails (XD 803394), a supply area with heavy trail activity (XD 810398), a hut with heavy rail activity, bunkers and 3 underground entrances (XD 809393), 2 foxholes near a well-used trail (XD 84395), 2 bunkers above ground and open,, and well-used trails (XD 819389), and bunkers and possible storage in village (XD 830386). [MACV J2 CICV 090045Z/Feb68, SUPIR #0416-68 (Supplementary Photographic Intelligence Report) on Mission #4673].

[476] III MAF COC 080621Z/Feb68, Project NIAGARA Photo IPIR, (Initial Photographic Intelligence Report), in III MAF COC Journal and File 08/09Feb68 #340].

[477] Comments of COL David E. Lownds, HQMC Oral History Tape #2621.

[478] Conversation with William Craig, 16 July 1990.

[479] Conversation with William Craig, 17 July 1991. Craig states: "Khe Sanh [*i.e.*, Col Lownds] wouldn't let them in. Well, I wouldn't let them in either, quite frankly."

[480] Conversation with Miles Wilkens, 08 April 1995.

CCN[481] and LTC Schungel) in connection with attempts to obtain anti-tank mines for them. Sounds from moving tanks could even be heard while he was visiting them! He then departed, leaving LTC Schungel ("CROSSBOW") to remain there. His efforts had been most frustrating: "I went to DaNang to see the Marine General, General Cushmen. He was all for helping me but the people down in Saigon wouldn't believe that there were tanks up there; they said we didn't need them [the mines]. Besides, they couldn't give them to the Special Forces. They went through all kinds of reasons why we couldn't have them... I was furious that they wouldn't give us any damn antitank mines. The Marines were perfectly willing to give them to us."[482]

While Col Jonathan Ladd may not have experienced the heat of battle while at Lang Vei, his observations in the eye of the hurricane might be unaware of the swirling malestorm wreaking annihilation surrounding it, with destructive consequences for those who would penetrate that intervening terrain to arrive at Lang Vei. Not only were there plentiful enemy forces and positions, but other factors (as are noted in the following Chronology of Events, *infra*) of the situation precluded implementation of the relief protocol. These included the deteriorsted weather[483] as well as an abnormally vicious incoming at KSCB commencing at 070045H.[484] probably to discourage artillery support for Lang Vei. By 0140H, the Combat Base was receiving six rounds per minute,[485] the heaviest NVA bombardment of the Vietnam War up to that point.[486] At 070121H, the CO of 26th Marines set RED ALERT,[487] and between 070045H and 070800H, KSCB received 100 rounds of rocket fire and approximately 450 rounds of mortar fire.[488] The majority of the incoming impactted in the area of 1/26 (at XD 849417) and 3/26 (at XD 837417) perhaps to preclude an assembly for reinforcement. A check at first light disclosed that the KSCB runway had been so damaged that only light aircraft could land on it.[489]

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS[490]

05 Feb- Co E/2/26 on Hill 861-Alfa received a very heavy NVA ground attack which temporarily penetrates part of the defensive position before the Marines regain control. Results: 7 USMC KIA; 109 NVA KIA.

06 Feb 68:

2255 - Light ground attack on E/2/26 on 861-A, evaluated as a diversion (which it turned out to be). KSCB receives incoming 82mm mortars and 122mm rockets and a light ground probe against ARVN lines. Lang Vei receives incoming (type and number of rounds unknown). ARVN at Lang Vei report "many, many VC in the area, NVA also."

2325 - Attack on E/2/26 ceases; KSCB still receiving ground probe.

2355 - FSCC of 3dMarDiv reports 175mm batteries at Camp Carroll and Rock Pile are firing one gun, 4 rounds, every 4

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[481] Conversation with Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, 25 Sep 1989.

[482] Ladd, COL Jonathan, *Interview by Col James P. Bergen and LtCol Willard M.Burleson*, 26 Feb 1971, Dept. of the Army, U.S. Army Military History Institute,, Carlisle Barracks, PA, for "The Creighton Abrams Story." [Khe Sanh archives 67961-67970].

[483] From 1200-2000H on 06 Feb, the weather presented generally good flying conditions with ceilings of 2500-4000 ft. and good visibility. From 2000H, 06 Feb, to 0400H, 07 Feb, weather was marginal with clouds at 1000 ft. Flying conditions became poor at 0400H and continued through 1200H with visibility one and one-half miles or less. The forecast was for marginal to poor conditions in the afternoon of 07 Feb with ceilings at 1500 ft. (the height of KSCB!) and visibility for one to five miles in light rain and fog. Flying conditions were predicted to become poor to 1800H, 08 Feb. [Gen Westmoreland back channel 071026Z/Feb68 to Gen Wheeler, CJCS].

[484] III MAF COC 070743Z/Feb68.

[485] "Log of Events Lang Vei Attack, 7 Feb 68," in III MAF COC Journal and File, 08/09 Feb 1968 #7.

[486] *Time* magazine, 16 Feb 1968.

[487] 26 MAR 062309Z/Feb68, Operation SCOTLAND SITREP #393.

[488] CG III MAF 080423Z/Feb68, Special Report to FMFPAC, in III MAF COC Journal and File, #174.

[489] 26MAR Operation SCOTLAND SITREPs #393 and 396.

[490] Based on: HQ, 21st Military History Detachment, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, report, Subj: Combat Action Interview Report, Battle of Lang Vei Special Forces Camp, 7 February 1968, dated 22 March 1968, Incl (7), Company C, 5th SFGA Journal Entries (7 February 1968) and Incl (8) Monitored Radio Transmissions 6-7 February 1968. Interviews of MajGen Rathvon McClure Tompkins, LtCol Harvey M. Harper, Jr., BrigGen Carl W. Hoffman, 1/Lt John T. Williamson, and Capt William J. O'Connor, "Role of 3d MarDiv units in defense of Special Forces Camp Lang Vei," HQMC Oral History Tape #2535 (interviews conducted 10-24 Feb 1968 at Dong Ha Combat Base). "Log of Events Lang Vei Attack 7 Feb 1968," in III MAF COC Journal and File 08/09Feb68 #7. 3d MarDiv 071209Z/Feb68, Spot Report #78, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 07/08Feb68 #258.

minutes in support of Khe Sanh.[491]

07 Feb 68:

0045 - Weather report for Khe Sanh: From 1200-2000 on 06Feb, the weather presented generally good flying conditions with ceilings of 2500-4000 ft. and good visibility. From 2000, 06 Feb to 0100, 07 Feb, it was marginal with clouds at 1000 ft. Flying conditions became poor at 0100 and continued through 1200 with visibility one and one-half miles or less. The forecast was for marginal to poor conditions in the afternoon of 07 Feb with ceilings at 1500 ft. and visibility for one to five miles in light rain and fog. Flying conditions were predicted to become poor to 1800, 08 Feb.

0045 - Lang Vei received heavy ground attack, some enemy are inside wire, and enemy supported by tanks. KSCB at this point is firing all available supporting fires in support of Lang Vei, all batteries of 1st Battalion, 13th Marines.

KSCB is receiving heavy incoming.

0054 - S-2, 26th Marines, reports interception of NVA radio transmission that indicated NVA artillery would increase shelling of KSCB. (Throughout the attack, this proved to be true).

0105 - III MAF reports 7 tanks in wire at Lang Vei. 26th Marines receiving SPOOKY to support Lang Vei. Heavy incoming at KSCB.

G-2, 3dMarDiv, reports that a Command and Control element, presumably controlling the attack on Lang Vei was located fairly precisely and passed this information to 26th Marines who immediately targetted the installation.

0121 - CO, 26Mar sets RED ALERT

0130 - SPUNKY HANSON [Lang Vei] requests VICTOR TANGO [VT fuse arty] at XD785359.

0135 - KSCB is averaging 6 rounds incoming per minute. Capt Edwards of 5th Special Forces Group reported to III MAF COC a call from Col. Schungel: "We need air right away of there will be nothing left."[492]

SPUNKY HANSON reports the VICTOR TANGO arty fire is impacting in his position.

0140 - III MAF reports 9 tanks in wire at Lang Vei (1 tank knocked out; 7 inside position on hill, 2 in wire).

0148 - SPUNKY HANSON requests VICTOR TANGO fire and flares all over his area.

0150 - MGen Tompkins directs CO, 26Mar, to use COFRAM against enemy tanks at Lang Vei.[493]

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[491] The 175s at Camp Carroll, with a range of 32,800 meters, reached just short of Lang Vei, and those at Camp Rock Pile just short of the Laotian border. 90mm ranks could fire eleven miles, and therefore all the way to Co Roc. Range probable error for 175mm guns average range of 20,000 meters to 65 meters and deflection probable error is 10 meters. Assuming four probable errors in relation to point of impact, the projectile could land 260 meters over or 260 meters short of computed point of impact and 40 meters right or left of the gun target line.

[492] "Log of Events," cited. While those at Lang Vei requested air, Marines at Khe Sanh were anxious to fire artillery according to Col Kent O.W. Steen, the Fire Support Coordinator in the Khe Sanh FSCC. Due to SAV-A-PLANE doctrine, no artillery could be fired from the time of launch of aircraft. This left Lang Vei without any supporting fire.

[493] COFRAM was a TOP SECRET class of munitions—Col Lownds had to receive a special clearance for this—which had been kept in reserve as a way of stopping large masses of troops, "the great hordes." Also referred to as M444, or "Improved Conventional Munitions," or "Firecracker," this munition (if delivered in aerial bombs or artillery) exploded by sending out numerous ping-pong ball sized mini-grenades whose inner surface was pressed in such a way to cause the surface to break into many thousands of tiny bits of metal. Clearance for bringing COFRAM into Vietnam was requested by Gen Westmoreland on 12 Jan to the JCS for use in unpopulated areas of I Corps, and was controlled on the highest levels—CINCPAC. Once used it lost its security classification, and there was some discussion whether or not Tompkins had the authority to direct its use; he undoubtedly wanted to give the best he could to support Lang Vei in this unusual and desperate situation, whether he had the authority to do so or not. Col Lownds, in the flurry of leading the situation, inquired concerning what little he knew about COFRAM at the time, that in order for it to work, the little mini-grenades inside the round need to bounce into the air. He wrote HQMC, "They came to me and said, What's your clearance? And I said, I worked for the atomic weapons business, so I probably have the highest clearance you probably have. And they said, Well, we're going to have to give you another clearance so we can talk to you about COFRAM. I said, What the hell do you mean you're going to have to give me another clearance? Here I am, the goddam Commander and you're telling me you can't talk to me about it unless—I told them to take the damn stuff and go home! They said, OK, fill out this form. I said, I'm not going to fill out a damn form; I just finished a tour in the armed forces special weapons project working in the atomic weapons with a clearance that would include anything, and if you don't want to believe it—I couldn't fill it out because my mind wouldn't let me concentrate enough to know where I was ten years ago. The war was going on." [Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 13 July 1997]. In his FMFPAC Debrief, Col Lownds stated: "The time came that they said 'You're going to use this, now make good use of it; it's something special." I had never been privy to what COFRAM was, and I'm a full Colonel in the Marine Corps. ... I finally got a Brigadier General from Fort Sill; he's the guy that came in and briefed me and my staff on how to use it ... There was nobody at Khe Sanh who knew how it should be used, how it should be fired, what the limitations are, the advantages, what was a good target, what wasn't a good target." [Col. Lownds, HQMC Oral History Tape #3139, Debrief of 29 July 1968 at FMFPAC,

MGen Tompkins asks 3dMarDiv DASC if any air is over Lang Vei. It is determined a flareship, SPOOKYI, and fixed wing are now working targets in and near Lang Vei.[494]

0154 - SPUNKY HANSON requests a Check Fire on VICTOR TANGO.

0200 - III MAF Air Officer asks how much air is on station. 26MAR reports 2 flights there now running TPQ-10 attacks every 15 minutes.

0210 - The amount of air increases to 4 flights, directed by COVEY.

0215 - 5thSF reports 5 tanks knocked.

0220 - SPUNKY HANSON reports troops hitting both ends of his compound.

0225 - AO over Lang Vei requests flights armed with ZUNI rockets (which are more effective on tanks); present flights are out of rocket ordnance. Flights will be scrambled in DaNang.

0240 - 26MAR reports troops inside wire at Lang Vei. At the request of CO, Lang Vei, firecrackers are not used because "he wants to use air on them" and if Firecrackers are used, air will be called off.[495]

0243 - 26MAR expects KSCB will be attacked at any minute with these circumstances occuring so close. MGEN Tompkins is concerned Firecrackers are not being used, and speaks with Capt Mirza Baig, 26MAR Target Officer, asking him to pass the message: "suggest CO Lang Vei check air bring in Firecracker then air be brought in again." Shortly after this, and before any decision on what was to be done about Firecrackers, at 0245, Tompkins receives word from III MAF that everything above ground at Lang Vei is enemy. So, with this news, Gen Tompkins says, "Let's use Firecrackers, then HE, then air."

0250 - 5 tanks reported destroyed.

0255 - Two large secondary explosions at XD770418 [6 clicks due north of Lang Vei, 7.5 clicks due west of KSCB] and 2 additional large secondary explosions at XD753412 [approx. 6 clicks NW of Lang Vei].

0257 - 13th Marines fired 28 rounds of Firecracker ordnance at XD786357. [THIS IS THE FIRST USE OF FIRECRACKER IN BATTLE]. The cycle of fire in support of Lang Vei is: 5 minutes of Firecracker, 5 minutes of mixed HE and VT, followed by 10 minutes air strikes on the perimeter.

0300 - KSCB still received heavy incoming mortars and rockets, mostly rockets.

0315 - 26MAR reports loss of comm with Lang Vei. 26 rounds of 105mm firecracker are fired followed by VT HE and airstrikes.

0320 - Gen Tompkins asks Lang Vei via III MAF relay "if they at Lang Vei have gas masks, do they want CS on position?" Response: "Do not want CS on position." No explanation is given.

0325 - III MAF reports tank on top of comm bunker. Special Forces have deliberately destroyed primary means of communication and are using secondary freq. Air strikes resume.

0335 III MAF confirmed a C-130 to arrive at Khe Sanh with passengers, about 100 paratroopers of Special Forces personnel. At 0400H, a conference was called consisting of Col Smith of III MAF, Capt Edwards of USSF, and Maj Saimon. The Special Forces requested a relief force be dispatched to Lang Vei at first light. Gen. Tompkins, after due consideration of the situation , replied, "Negative." The condition of the runway at KSCB made landing of relief troops who might be dispatched to Lang Vei ill-advised. Furthermore, there were tanks running betsween KSCB and Lang Vei as well as large amounts of infantry (as detected by electronic sensors), and KSCB was receiving considerable incoming. At 0350H, Gen Thompkins and Col Smith, the G-3 Watch officer at III MAF, registered a complaint about the proposed employment of troops moving into the area since it would inhibit our supporting arms, and further, Gen Tompkins inquired, "How would the forces make their way to Lang Vei?" Gen Tompkins also registered a complaint with LtGen Cushman, CG of III MAF, who said he knew nothing of the C-130 plane load of USSF but would check. Tompkins felt the enemy was planning precisely for an attempted rescue and would ambush the route from Khe Sanh to Lang Vei. "General Tompkins had long planned a 'set piece defense,' not venturing out too far and falling into traps that the enemy may have set in the area, but force the enemy to come to us. His opinion was that it would be extremely un wise to mount any sort of move toward Lang Vei. General Cushman concurred that such a move would be exceedingly unwise, in fact, stupid."[496]

Hawaii].

[494] SPOOKY "wasn't satisfied with the weather, targets or conditions (he had all sorts of reasons why he couldn't) and so he did not fire—however, he did drop flares for the camp." The OinC of the Khe Sanh DASC relates, "I got the impression that SPUNKY HANSON did not or was not able to really adjust the air strikes very effectively. The COVEY spent much of his time trying to determine location of friendlies."

[495] Due to the SAV-A-PLANE doctrine.

[496] Comments of BGen Carl W. Hoffman, HQMC Oral History Tape #2535, 3dMarDiv COC 071209Z/Feb68, Spot Rpt #78 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 07/08Feb68 #258. Gen Tompkins later defended his decision: "Why wasn't any column sent? (A) There were no troops and the base was under attack at the same time, and I(B) had the base not been under attack, I still

0343 - S-3, 26MAR, reports incoming C-130 with approx. 100 men aboard.

0350 - AO spots flame throwers. USSF has no flame throwers.

0400 - KSCB taking heavy rockets and mortars.

0405 - CG, III MAF, radios that C-130 will not proceed to KSCB. Tompkins tells Cushman that his G-3 is requesting a ground relief column to go to Lang Vei at first light. "I told CG that we had no troops to send to Lang Vei and he agreed that no troops should go, and said to tell G-3 that he said no. I said I had no intention of sending troops unless he (Gen. Cushman) so ordered me." Gen Tompkins felt that this was precisely what the enemy was expecting us to do and that they would ambush the route from KSCB to Lang Vei, convinced that we would dispatch a relief column down there.[497]

Col Jonathan Ladd, meanwhile, asked Col Lownds to execute the contingency plan to get his people out, and reported that Col Lownds responded, "No, it would be a suicide mission." Ladd, however, who had just visited Lang Vei the day before, felt that because he had been there, it would not be a suicide mission. Ladd: "apparently nobody in any strength was around there." Col Ladd flew from KSCB to DaNang and contacted GEN Westmoreland who was there in connection with a Marine Civic Action matter. Col Ladd's frustration is reflected in his memoir of that meeting (which occurred shortly after noon and was attended by Gen Chaisson [Chief COC, MACV], Gen Cushman, Gen Tompkins, Gen Anderson [CG, I MAW], and several other officers, including LGTC Hassinger [DCO, Special Ops], and Col Baldwin. "When I finally got his attention long enough, I told him, `We have to do one of three things. We either stay there and just hold Lang Vei; we "DD" out and abandon the place; or the Marines execute their contingency plan. We can hold for probably another 3 or 4 days."[498] Col Ladd recounts: "Well, he couldn't make up his mind. Meanwhile I kept getting these radio calls from out there, telling me 'the Goddamn people are dropping charges down our air holes.' So I called Gen. Abrams on the phone and told him what was happening and I said, 'I just can't get Westmoreland's attention long enough to do anything. He is putting it off.' So, he called a General Anderson.. and told him that he was telling me to go ahead and evacuate the camp at the earliest opportunity and for the Marines to help us, which they did. Now in Westmoreland's book, he said that he did all that, but he didn't. Abrams did it, because he, Westmoreland, kept going back to those civic action meetings. Anderson was a great help; they dropped these CBUs all over the top of the camp and the people got out."[499]

Although the Contingency Plan, "Relief of Lang Vei Special Forces Camp," OpOrder 5-67 of 18 Sep 67, called for a reinforced rifle company from 1/26 against an estimated enemy attack by a NVA force of a battalion of troops, the situation had rapidly become significantly worse: there were tanks, the entire area contained two divisions of NVA, and it was an all-out attack. A patrol from A-101 moving east toward Khe Sanh village was ambushed on 31 Jan and Sgt John A. Young was captured.[500]

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wouldn't have sent a battalion to Lang Vei. Route 9 was completely held by the enemy--complete from Khe Sanh Village to the Laotian border. That was enemy territory. The hills to the north of Route 9 were completely held by the enemy." [Interview of MajGen Rathvon McC Tompkins, HQMC HistDiv, 13 April 1973, transcript p. 30. COL John J. Padley, the previous CO of 26th Marines at Khe Sanh [relieved by COL Davie E. Lownds at 0900, 12 August 1967] in his Debrief, noted: "..if we were to reinforce Lang Vei, naturally we'd reinforce it with troops/. But we have to be very leery because the enemy knows we're going to defend that place and if they attack, their attack may be for us to come down the road so they can ambush us. We know that and are very aware of it. In fact, when they attacked that one night [04 May 1967], we did shoot artillery and there was no problem stopping it with artillery. The next day the word came through the grapevine: where were the Marines? Why didn't they reinforce? Most likely they wanted us to come down that route to ambush us. Maybe that's why they attacked Lang Vei, to try to have us come down that road. We'll think three times before we go and we got a lot of other alternate plans on how we'll go." [Comments of Col. J.J. Padley, HQMC Oral History Tape #1504].

[497] This was a typical NVA tactic used on small and large scale: wound a man and kill off all those that come to rescue him; disable a recon team and ambush all infantry coming to rescue them; fix an outpost and lay in ambush to engage all who would rescue. In the attack on Khe Sanh village, one battalion attacked the District Headquarters, but two regiments were in ambush positions to destroy those who would come to rescue or reinforce them.

[498] The official AAR for the Battle of Lang Vei notes: "There was considerable argument against implementing the plan because of the possibility of losing more men as well as the helicopters."

[499] Ladd, COL Jonathan, *Interview by Col James P. Bergen and LtCol Willard M.Burleson*, 26 Feb 1971, Dept. of the Army, U.S. Army Military History Institute,, Carlisle Barracks, PA, for "The Creighton Abrams Story." [Khe Sanh archives 67961-67970].

[500] The man was Sgt John A. Young. At 1100H, a 17-man Lao recon element was ambushed by an estimated enemy force of two NVA companies at XD 815370 resulting in one friendly WIA and 1 USSF and 1 Lao MIA. [CO COC 5th SFGA 311530Z/Jan68, SITREP #30-68, in III MAF COC Journal and File 31Jan/01Feb68 #315]. The area was on Route 9, half-way between Khe Sanh village and Lang Vei. Later, the Special Forces attacked the enemy unit, resulting in 54 NVA KIA, 40 NVA WIA, and eight weapons captured [CO CO C 5th SFGA 011050Z/Feb68, Subj: 21 Message, in III MAF COC Journal File, Operation SCOTLAND, Pt. 3]. The Team Leader at Lang Vei, Bill Craig, notes: "He [Young] should be in jail. I didn't want

No company size USMC infantry units were available for deployment due to what had unfolded since mid-January. (LtCol Mitchell, CO, 1/9, upon arrival at KSCB, was assigned the mission of reinforcing Lang Vei with a company if it were attacked.[501] One might speculate on the consequences of his weakened defensive posture were that to have been implemented in view of the attack on his Hill 64 outpost the next day!

Overland movement to reinforce Lang Vei was impossible. In November, 1967, Col Lownds directed 1/26 to determine an overland route between KSCB and Lang Vei with the time/space factor for moving a rifle company on a tactical mission. Capt John W. Raymond (A/1/26—an experienced officer who later formed E Co, 3d Recon) "determined that a rifle company, avoiding well-used trails to preclude ambush, could move by foot from KSCB to Lang Vei in approximately 19 hours."[502]

Maj Matthew P. Caulfield, S-3, 3/26, (and later Commandant of the Marine Corps), noted that MIKE Company, 3/26, was regimental reserve when it arrived in mid-Dec '67, and that he, together with the Battalion Commander, conducted a reconnaissance down the road (Route 9) to determine an approach route to the camp, and determined that the only way it could be reinforced was by air since the road presented numerous ambush sites. He concluded: "It would have been, in my opinion, and I say this without the slightest equivocation, suicidal to send any force, particularly at night time down that highway into Lang Vei. It would no doubt have been ambushed, and in fact, I feel it would have been completely decimated. The terrain on Highway 9 from the Khe Sanh Combat Base to lang Vei is a North Vietnamese dream of an ambush. It is just e very step of the way very high elephant grass. To the right the terrain is precipitous and high; to the left it's the same way. It would have been hacking with machetes all along the way, and if we went the fastest way on the ground which would have been down the highway, they would have been the saga of the lost company or the lost battalion."[503]

Helicopter Landing Zones had tanks in them, according to Col Lownds

0410 - KSCB has gone for 45 minutes without incoming.

0412 - Gen Tompkins orders Firecrackers to be fired ASAP on Lang Vei and kept up.

0415 - Gen Tompkins instructs S3, 26Mar, to fire two more 28-round Firecracker packages as fast as possible. One package of 36 rounds was shot out at 0421. Tompkins orders a schedule of: 5 min. Firecrackers, 5 min. HE/VT mixed, then direct air support from 2 aircraft, then repeat the cycle.

0421 - Shot out second package.

0423 - Lang Vei is apparently impressed with the effect of Firecrackers and radios: "Firecrackers right on target. Keep it coming."

0428 - COC, 3dMarDiv, obtains secondary freqs of Lang Vei and passes them to 26Mar so they can communicate directly with Lang Vei and not depend on relaying through III MAF to 3dMarDiv to 26Mar.

0432 - Air on station: 2 F8, 2 F4, 2 A4

0440 - Incoming rockets at Khe Sanh CP. 26Mar told to keep continous packages on Lang Vei. When low on Firecrackers switch to VT. Save some Firecrackers for our own hill positions. Report received of intense activity north of Hill 881-South, 861, and 950 (probably by electronic sensors).

0443 - KSCB begins taking rockets again.

0449 - S3, 26Mar reports that extra air strikes are being run on Lang Vei. Tanks are off Lang Vei and have moved to a position east of Lang Vei moving towards Khe Sanh. AO to determine enemy tank strength and disposition.

0500 - 1/26: KSCB reports receiving 38 rounds of rocket.

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that kid. I told the Sergeant-Major I don't need no SPEC-4s up here. He said, 'I don't have anybody else as a weapons man.' I said, 'Well, I'll do without.' He'd already sent him up there. Ashley called me and said that Young wanted to go out on patrol. I said, 'I don't want that kid going anywhere ... And you know what he did? He talked those stupid Laotians into going into Khe Sanh city! That's why I say, if I had my way, I'd of put him in jail because of that." [Conversation with Bill Craig, 04 Oct 1988]. For Young's story, see Ch. 11 of Zalin Grant, *Survivors, American POWs in Vietnam*, New York: Berkeley Books, 1985, pp. 189-199. According to Young, Capt Frank Willoughby, having just returned from a 30-day leave in the States, ordered him to patrol out to Lang Bu ville, some 2000 meters northeast of Lang Vei, where Route 9 bends. Young departed just after sunrise on the 31st, proceeded along Route 9, and after some 45 minutes, cut north toward the jungle towards Lang Bu when enemy fire suddenly erupted, killing the point man with a shot to the head. The Laotians suddenly evaporated, leaving Young alone. He was then shot in his lower leg, fell, and shot twice more. His trouser leg was soaked in blood; pieces of bone protruded. After rapidly firing two magazines, he felt two bayonets stick in his back. He had been captured, not released until 1973. [Stubbe: *Khe Sanh*, 06 June 1989 (unpublished manuscript), p. 453.

[501] Conversation with John F. Mitchell, 08 Jan 1998. Mitchell had planned to dispatch Co D/1/9 led by Capt Shafer.

[502] Letter of LtCol James B. Wilkinson to Capt. Moyers S. Shore, USMC, 19 December 1968, in Khe Sanh Comments File (comments of Capt Shore's original Khe Sanh manuscript), HQMC, Historical Division.

[503] Comments of Matthew P. Caulfield, HQMC Oral History Tape No. 2535. "Role of 3d MarDiv units in defense of Special Forces Camp Lang Vei," HQMC Oral History Tape #2535 (interviews conducted 10-24 Feb 1968 at Dong Ha Combat Base).

0520 - Aircraft attacking tanks remaining in Lang Vei camp.

0533 - 26Mar reports 1 tank burning on road, 1 vehicle burning in Lang Vei compound, tanks no longer in sight of road.

0540 - S3, 26Mar, reports aircraft are striking tanks. Marine aircraft have hard ordnance—500-pound and larger bombs. One flight every 20 minutes. USAF B-57s (YELLOWBIRD), armed with napalm and snake-eyes, are striking camp. 26Mar have been asking for half and half: half napalm and snakes, half delay and quick fuse 500-lb bombs and larger. AO feels that BV-33 (at XD794357, near old Lang Vei camp) are apparently the target of approaching enemy infantry.

0600 - Gen Cushman asks if the artillery is still working on Lang Vei. 26Mar reports that they are presently running air on Lang Vei, to be followed by artillery. KSCB is still taking heavy incoming.

0615 - KSCB still taking incoming. SPUNKY HANSON ONE FIVE ALFA (SFC Ashley at the old Lang Vei site) reports a great deal of movement to his front. Air is still working Lang Vei.

0630 - 15A reports that all above ground at Lang Vei is totally destroyed.

0700 - KSCB continues to support Lang Vei with air and arty.

0740 - 15A is in contact with Lang Vei TOC and reports about 15 Americans still in compound alive. He intends to move to rescue them using SPOOKY for cover.

0835 - 15A still has comm with Lang Vei.

0900 - 15A trying to get closer. SITREP at KSCB: runway is expectecd to be closed to fixed wing until 1030. AO on station reports 2 stationary tanks 500 meters south of Lang Vei.

0930 - KSCB still receiving incoming. Incoming was the heaviest NVA bombardment of the Vietnam War up to this time. Between 0045 and 0800, KSCB received 100 rounds of rocket fire and approximately 450 rounds mortar fire. The majority of the incoming impacted in the 1/26 area (at XD849417) and 3/26 (at XD837417), perhaps to preclude assembly for possible reinforcement.

1000 - (about). 15A radios PIEDMONT (FOB-3) that he was with some 200-300 Lao soldiers 2-3 miles east of the overrun camp and was attempting to come to the aid of the Americans trapped there.

Maj Goddard (DASC) recalls that during the morning, PIEDMONT had requested an emergency medevac from ELEPHANT. 2 gunships and 2 46s attempted to insert in ELEPHANT's position "but the ground fire was too intense and the helos couldn't get in."

Maj George Quamo went to 26Mar COC and, in a conversation that lasted about four minutes, is told by a Major there, "We won't lose an American for those people." Quamo had been up all night, listening to the radio traffic, talking with Skip Minnicks, and had talked to Maj Campbell, the CO of FOB-3, who told him "Don't me get involved." Maj Quamo told the Marine Major, "I need to talk to Col Lownds," and the Major said, "He's not available; what can I do for you?" Quamo said: It's your responsibility to go in there and get these guys and we want to know what you're going to do." The response from the Major was, "We're not going to do it."[504]

Quamo became livid. Returning to FOB-3, he was yelling, "We're going to do something. We're going to get something done! Whether this guy likes it or not, we're going to do something!" He said that he was going to tell the pilots to get ready to fly "on the order of Col Lownds." Soon thereafter, the helicopters appeared at FOB-3, and Quamo's driver, Harve Saal, believes "George had just simply 'scalliwaged' those guys and told them: You have to do it because your boss said so."[505]

[Note: While a large force of a company of Marines might not be available or optimal, perhaps a small, highly-trained force accustomed to this kind of operation, would be better able to accomplish the mission]

Skip Minnicks recalls: "Maj Quamo came back, asked me if I'd go in. I said 'Sure.' He said, 'You know we probably won't come out of there.' I said, 'Yeah, I'm aware of that.' He said, 'Ask for volunteers.' I asked for volunteers. The Sergeant-Major [Pegram] volunteered. At the time I was a Master Sergeant. I said, 'Look, Sergeant-Major, by your very presence, you would be in charge. 'Hey, Skip, I'll go as a rifleman. I'm going with you. You're running this operation. All I am is one of your grunts.' And we went in and got those people out. Honest to God, I thought that Quamo should of got a Medal of Honor for what he did at Lang Vei. He coordinated all of it."[506] "We really didn't think we were coming out of there; when we went in, we didn't think we was coming back."[507]

1100 - (about) Maj C.D. Goddard (DASC) is informed by a Col Palmer "that a Mission 87 was being prepared which

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[504] Conversation with Harve Saal, 13 September 1994. Saal was present during this interchange.

[505] *Ibid.*

[506] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 April 1990.

[507] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 December 1991. Harve Saal, another FOB-3 soldier in the rescue team recalls, "We didn't think we were coming back. We really didn't, but we didn't care, because we were mad, and we didn't caqre how many people died to get our point across, to get back one American that was alive." [Conversation with Harve Saal, 16 June 1990].

would involve 4 Hueys and 4 46s along with a 'HATCHETT' force of 50 to rescue the people remaining in the Lang Vei TOC bunker." Maj Goddard passed this to the FSCC, but they were unaware of it. Maj Goddard then went to INTRIGUE-14 (26Mar Air Officer) who was in the process of briefing the pilots of the resupply to the hill outposts and asked him if he were aware of "Mission 87." He replied that until he received further word, he would proceed with the resupply mission. Further discussion with the FSCC indicated that Gen Tompkins had said that no force could depart the Khe Sanh perimeter for any reason. Col Palmer gave Maj Goddard the final details of Mission 87. Col. Daniel L. Baldwin was arriving in a U-21 to lead the rescue operation and give the rescue brief. In addition to the 8 choppers already committed, there was to be a flight of A-4s armed with DELTA-9s[508] to hit the old Lang Vei camp immediately prior to the assault. Maj Goddard found INTRIGUE-14 and convinced him Mission 87 was a "go" and he agreed to suspend resupply at 1530 and assemble the pilots for a mission brief by Col Baldwin.

1200 - SITREP at KSCB of friendly casualties from the shelling: 2 KIA, 11 WIA (evac) and 6 WIA (minor). Evaluation by 3dMarDiv (to III MAF): possibility exists that enemy may now be ready to follow through with significant attack on the Khe Sanh complex Present poor weather conditions favor enemy operations and hamper friendly air support. Information from various sources [namely, signal intercepts] indicate hill outposts west and northeast of Khe Sanh may be initial objectives in attack, followed by main attack on KSCB proper. If enemy recon is complete and his forces have had opportunity to prepare and occupy satisfactory attack positions, he may launch attack at any time."

2476 rounds of arty fire had been fired in support of Lang Vei. USMC aircraft fixed wing flew 67 sorties in support of Lang Vei.

1300 - An over-flight by Lt Davis: There are 4 other Americans with 15A (Ashley) along with 100 unknown friendly; there are people inside the TOC; 1 tank is on top of TOC and 2 on road south of camp are disabled; there is still fighting inside the camp.

1430 - KSCB receiving sporadic incoming mortars. KSCB has 1000 refugees outside west end of perimeter. (This increased throughout the day to approx. 6,000. They moved to XD825422 for the night. Refugees included BV33, CIDG, PF and their dependents. CG, 3dMarDiv requests instructions from CG, III MAF, on handling of refugees. CO, 26Mar decided not to integrate refugees into perimeter defense.

1505 - KSCB receives 122mm rockets.

1530 - 15A reports that survivors from the TOC had broken out and linked up with 15A. The COVEY laid a couple of napes right on them before someone in the group identified themselves as friendlies.

1600 - KSCB still receiving rockiets. TPQs are being run in Lang Vei area with numerous secondary explosions.

1600 - The following are located at Lang Vei: 3 companies of CIDG (324); 1 company MIKE Force (130); Regional Forces (17); Vietnamese Special Forces (12); US Special Forces (20).

1600 - A monitored NVA radio message stated that a field grade Special Forces officer was CIA[509] and LTC Schungel was the only field grade officer known to be in the area. He was in Lang Vei since there was a Lao field grade officer, LTC Soulang, present. This created quite a turmoil back at the C Co in DaNang since LTC Schungel had a SI clearance and was not supposed to be in a situation where he could be captured. Max Cottrell, Assistant S3 of Co C, recalls "we got a message from III MAF early in the morning and I had to take our S2, which was Capt Stevenson (if I remember right) over to III MAF because he was the only other person in the unit that had a SI clearance."[510] LTC Schungel had abandoned Lt Miles Wilkins, the XO of the Camp (who had a piece of shrapnel in his hip when he was shot by a tank): "..he twice left me for dead, and he was awarded a bunch of medals, but he just walked off and left me behind. I got out of there on my own—on two occasions actually. I was with him when we got shot by the tank, and he was about to leave me. Then the two of us spent the night on the floor of our medical building while the NVA were walking around above us. In the morning we headed for the old camp, and he just walked off and left me. Then we got strafed by our own aircraft. Then somebody came out and got me. He got back to the camp and—one of the guys later told me—said that I was dead."[511]

1625 - An A-6 made 5 or 6 passes, using his rockets since the ceiling was too low to use his DELTA-2s.[512] As soon as the A-6 completed delivery of its ordnance, the transport choppers arrived.

1630 - A 50-man C&C Det (14 Americans, rest Bru) launched rescue operation on Lang Vei. The intent was to join with and rally BV-33 into attack.[513] WIA were to be medevaced by the C&C Det; remaining personnel to move to old Lang Vei

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[508] DELTA 9 is a MARK 77, 500-lb. napalm bomb.
[509] Captured In Action.
[510] Actually, Col. Schungel had not been captured.
[511] Conversation with Miles Wilkins, 27 March 1994.
[512] DELTA 2 is a MK 82 500-lb. general purpose bomb.
[513] CO CO C 5th SFGADaNang 070830Z/Feb68, in III MAF COC Journal and File 07/08Feb68 #157.

(XD794361). First Marine Air Wing fired suppressive fire on the TOC of the camp in preparation of the raid. Under cover of this fire, the friendly soldiers on site took escape and evasion action. The relief force put down near the old Lang Vei, at XD 794357, and moved to the new Lang Vei site, XD 786356. Enroute, the relief force encountered 13 of the 20 US personnel who were in the camp at the time of the initial attack. One additional man was subsequently recovered, making a total of 14. 6 remained unaccounted. Also, 80 CIDG and MIKE force were evacuated out of 500 indigenous personnel. A Vietnamese Special Forces officer captured who later escaped stated most of the indigenous troops who made it out of the camp were captured.

The C&C Det determined that SFC Ashley led 4 assaults on enemy dug in and around the Lang Vei TOC and was KIA on his 5th attempt. (He was subsequently posthumously decorated with the Medal of Honor, the only erson to receive this award during the Siege battle).

One UH-1E and 2 CH-46s received fire in extraction resulting in one co-pilot and 2 crewmembers WIA. (The Co-pilot, 1/Lt G. E. Rosental is presently 100% disabled from wounds received during this rescue operation; other pilots participating include the following Marines: Tyler Alexander, Ed Kufeldt, J.J. Hanley).

1645 - A4s arrived on station.

1730 - A station came up on the FOX MIKE which identified himself as 'ELEPHANT' and requested extraction helicopters. He said he had 15 men with him. COVEY, overhead, spotted about 50 people gathering at the old campsite. Maj Goddard expressed reservations, feeling that there were Lao who had abandoned their own wounded but, having seen the successful extraction, were now trying to get out themselves. However, 2 46s and the sole remaining Huey launched and extracted about a hundred in 2 loads apiece. As the 46s returned, it was apparent that one American was still at the helo strip. The Huey made several passes in an attempt to retrieve him while COVEY ran some ADs [slow movers] with napalm on either side of the airstrip. However, the ground fire was so intense that the Huey took several hits and was barely able to return to Khe Sanh.

The helo pilots told Maj Goddard "that the last extraction was a mob scene in which the Laotians tried to mob the choppers in an effort to get aboard. He also said the majority of their hits were from the Laotians who realized that they were being left behind. He also said that the only reason the choppers had launched was that they were given the word that fifteen Americans were left at the strip."

Ed Kufeldt, piloting the Huey gunship, notes the pandemonium: "The 46s landed at the far end of the landing strip because they knew they were going to be rushed with the people, and they, in fact, were: people were trying to get on the airplane, falling off of the airplane as it was taking off because the airplane was obviously overloaded and couldn't take any more—people hanging on wheels, falling off."[514]

Skip Minnicks recalls that the Lao officers were evacuated, as were the Lao NCOs. The others had thrown down their weapons. "They had quit. They had surrendered, but the North Vietnamese had not come into the camp. So we got everyone out except the Laotian enlisted. The chopper came in and asked, 'Is the LZ cleared?' And I said, 'Yeah," and he told me later that his idea of a cleared LZ and my idea were different when the first round went through his windshield! ... When we got to Khe Sanh, the Colonel from the 33d ran up—actually, he was crying, hugging, and kissing us, telling us we saved his life. Then later, a message came down [from the Ambassador]. The message said [long pause]: 'No American officer would be embarassed over this action.' We didn't know what the hell they were talking about. It wasn't long after that that Major Quamo got killed."[515]

1850 - KSCB continues to receive sporadic incoming; BV33 survivors made it to KSCB by foot.

1900 2 USSSF from Lang Vei arrived in DaNang by helicopter and reported several USSF made successful E&E to the BV-33 area in the old Lang Vei camp and participated in counter attack. One USSF was left in bunker with severe head wound which caused screams when moved. "Others may be in bunkers or in process of E&E. One VNSF LT turned himself in and was promptly executed. VNSF S-3 was CIA but escaped and linked up with BV-33 and USASF. Successful E&E was executed to north and then east. The C&C Det reaction force did not reach camp site to check bunkers but were able to effect medevac."[516]

2020 5th Special Forces reports to III MAF that 50-70 MSF evacuated, 12 USA Special Forces evacuated, all WIA.[517]

2130 - Gen Tompkins, following much discussion regarding NVA use of the 6,000 refugees as a possible human shield, pushed in front of their human wave attack on KSCB, sent his direction in the event this happened, to be executed in three steps: (1) Fire CS; (2) Fire over their heads if they kept advancing after the CS; (3) fire on the crowd.

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[514] Conversation with Ed Kufeldt, 20 Jan 1992.
[515] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 April 1990.
[516] CO CO C 5th SFGA DaNang 071240Z/Feb68 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 07/08Feb68 #231.
[517] 5th Special Forces, Resume of Telephone Call, 072020H/Feb68, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 07/08Feb68 #199.

COL Baldwin was given the order to evacuate the Lao to DaNang, and "to move them out without anybody seeing them." This was at Khe Sanh at a time when there were literally many dozen reporters and photojournalists present!] "I laughed and said, 'General, what do you think I am? a magician? In the first place, the Marines won't even let them in! How do you evacuate 500 soldiers and their families without anybody knowing about it?" But it was accomplished and the Lao of BV-33, after flying to DaNang, then were flown to Savannakhet.[518]

[Note: Det A-101 relocated and officially opened a new camp at Mai Loc (YD 089512) on 24 Jun 68].

08 Feb:

0520 - A/1/9, at XD 831419, started to receive RPG and 60mm mortar fire followed by a ground attack (which continued to 0645). Enemy troops penetrated wire but were repulsed by the defenders of the platoon from A/1/9 manning the hill. Enemy broke contact by 0730, and at 0900, a USMC element moved into position of the outpost.

0845 Update on extraction from Lang Vei: 14 US S;pecial Forces, 6 Vietnamese Special Forces, 80 CIDG and Mike force, and 400 CIDG and Mike Force still MIA, 6 Vietnamese Special Forces still MIA.[519]

LIFE AND DEATH AT FOB 3

The same date Lang Vei was attacked and KSCB received the large amount of incoming, 07 February 1968, an artillery round exploded near the entrance to the medical bunker at FOB-3. The medics were hauling stretchers of wounded and Charlie Berg was at the entrance when the round exploded on the arch of the stairway leading down into the bunker. Half an hour earlier, the young medic, Denis Chericone, and Charlie Berg had been talking about the possibilities of getting wounded, as those at Khe Sanh frequently did: we all knew the possibilities, and most feared THE WOUND, the injury to their male parts, and some would say things such as "If I ever get wounded there, I'll just rush out and kill as many of them as I can. I know I'll die, but why live after that?" Chericone asked Berg about losing an arm or a leg, and Beg replied, "Ah, kid, I couldn't live with it. I'd probably commit suicide. I wouldn't want to live without a leg."[520] Berg, who had only a few days before rotating back to the States, recalls:

> I was coming out of the bunker with a young Medic to go get some people that were wounded. A bird came in with some C&C people on it. There were some wounded, so I was working down in the bunker helping BOBBY at the time. He said, Give me a hand. I grabbed the back end of a stretcher and we stepped out of the bunker, the Command bunker there, FOB-3. I took about ten steps forward, I heard that magic round. I pushed that stretcher and the young Medic up in front of me, a young E5, DENIS CHERICONE–pushed him down with the stretcher. And I turned. And it went off about 25, 30 feet away from me, a 152. ... Everybody thought I was going to die. My left leg came off at the hip. I had a Medic named BOB SCULLY–the first consultant to the Army Surgeon General for the Physicians' Assistant program–just a great guy–BOBBY's the one that kept me alive..[521]

Berg had just made E-7,[522] was tired of the war and had been outspoken to his CO. "I used to voice my opinion to Lucius Campbell whenever he'd tell something to me. 'I don't know, Sir. I think it sucks! I think it's a stupid idea!' He'd say, 'What do you think' I'd say, 'I think it's a stupid idea. I think we're going to die if we do that.' But I always said 'Sir'; I was totally respectful. Lee Dunlap was a very stiff, ramrod young Lieutenant. He took me aside and said, 'You're the most disrespectful NCO I've ever–' And I said, 'Well, Captain, I may be, but I'm here for my third one-year tour and I really don't care much about this..'"[523]

Denis Chericone, one of the medics at FOB-3, was wounded in his shoulder while one of the other medics, Bud Ellis, was hit in the arm. Both remained at Khe Sanh for three or four days, unable to get a flight out.[524] Chericone had arrived Christmas Eve, 1967, and was occasionally given candy by the new CO, Major Smith "because I was the 'kid.' I was the youngest guy in the FOB, so they all kinda took me under their wing."[525] The young medic took care of the soldiers. Three of four days after the siege battle began and the mess tent was destroyed, he rummaged through the rubble, hooked up one of the stoves and cooked a spaghetti dinner for the troops. He recalled a pallet of Coke being delivered in a cargo sling under a

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[518] Conversation with Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, 25 Sep 1989.
[519] Resume of Telephone Call, 080845H/Feb68, III MAF COC Journal and File, 08/09Feb68 #18.
[520] Conversation with Denis Chericone, 25 July 1993.
[521] Conversation with Charles Berg, 18 April 1994.
[522] Conversations with Charles Berg, 18 April 1994, 13 Nov 1994.
[523] Conversation with Charles Berg, 13 November 1994.
[524] Conversation with Denis Chericone, 25 July 1993.
[525] *Ibid.*

helicopter. The line broke and everyone watched the pallet crash into the earth with an explosion of Coke fizz. Chericone rummaged through the pallet and out of 144 cases, found one can undamaged. "I looked at it, and there was like a crowd of guys standing around me. As I looked at it these guys said, 'You drink that and you're a dead man!' I got a pistol, and I shot it." It was taboo, something that if touched involved death. On a more humorous note, he recalls six or seven men playing poker on a stretcher in the bunker. There was about $500.00 in the pot when a round came in, hitting the bunker. But the medical bunker was sturdy, and without anyone taking their eye off the pot, all reached down for their helmet. One day, he won about $300.00 and took it over to the Postal Clerk on KSCB. "He says, 'How much do you want?' I said, 'Three hundred bucks.' He says, 'O, how would you like nine hundred?' I said, 'I only got three hundred.' He says, 'Nah, nah, I'll make you out one for nine hundred.' I said, 'But I only have $300.00.' He said, 'Give me the money.' So he took the three hundred bucks, put it in his pocket and wrote me out three $300.00 money orders. He said, 'O, a couple of days, we'll put a grenade into this machine and say a round came in and blew it up!' I put my mom through college while I was in Vietnam!"[526]

While he was in DaNang for his wounds, Chericone traded some of the captured weapons from the patrol into Khe Sanh village for "whisky, steaks, and anything else I could get my hands on,"[527] while wearing a borrowed Sergeant's shirt. Major Quamo, driving by in a jeep, spotted him in the shirt with Sergeant's stripes. "I thought, boy, you're finished! So when I got back up to the FOB, he saw me and came up and said, 'Chericone, do you have a brother?' And I said, 'No, Sir.' And he goes, 'Well, I saw a guy down in DaNang, SF, and he looked exactly like you, but of course he was a Sergeant and you're not. You're a PFC."[528]

Medics are responsible for field sanitation, and one of Chericone's duties involved picking up the deposits from the "Phantom shitter" who put his feces in a C-ration box outside the bunker.[529] Have Saal recalls a conversation with Charles Berg who said, "Harve, is that you?" Harve replied, "Charlie, is that you?" It was actually a radio operator from Texas who was scared to death and worked in the main bunker. He had placed a Texas state flag on the main bunker, but the NVA forward observers used it as an aiming target, and when Sergeant-Major Pegram caught it one day and went wild, the flag came down! He was the "Phantom Shitter!"[530]

Lawrence T. Cooper arrived in Vietnam in March, 1967, and was assigned to A-101 at Lang Vei when it was overrun on 4 May 1967 and both the XO and XO were killed. He contracted malaria in November, 1967, and after hospitalization was assigned to the C Company Headquarters in DaNang. His roommate was SP5 William C. McMurray, who had also been at Lang Vei on 4 May 1967 and survived with minor wounds by hiding beneath a pile of rubble. When the new Lang Vei camp needed a radio operator, he volunteered and had been at the new camp as a radio operator a week or ten days when it was overrun. Cooper and McMurray kept in contact with each other, both being radio operators.

> Their call sign was SPUNKY HANSON or 5NNP. We were INDIA CHARLIE ZERO CHARLIE, BOLO BOB CAT. We were taking a helicopter up there the next day because Colonel [LtCol Daniel F.] Schungel, our Company Commander, had gone up there a couple, three days before that. I'd gone to bed 11:30, a quarter to twelve, and about two o'clock in the morning hey got me up because the shit had hit the fan. That afternoon, Sergeant-Major Harvin D. Hodge, our Company Sergeant-Major at DaNang flew us from DaNang to Khe Sanh. I still had the one-time pads in my rucksack, loaded for bear. Within minutes we came under rocket or mortar attack. The first bunker that we fan to was the med bunker, and there was Colonel Schungel and these guys that had been wounded at Lang Vei and gotten out. Colonel Schungel was on a stretcher still wearing his starched jungle fatigues that I'd seen him wear three days before, and they were all bloodied.[531]

Cooper remained at FOB-3 to augment the lines, but had no flak jacket. About 12 February, he received multiple shrapnel wounds in his back, but was protected by the PRC-25 radio. The shrapnel totally destroyed his radio but "the flash of it blew my pants off–the back of my legs, the backs of my arms, blew the helmet down over my fact, and burned all the hair

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[526] Conversation with Denis Chericone, 21 August 1993.
[527] *Ibid.*
[528] *Ibid.*
[529] *I bid.*
[530] Conversation with Harve Saal, 26 April 1995.
[531] Conversation with Lawrence T. Cooper, 02 April 1993. LtCol Schungel had been enlisted in the Philippines and was highly decorated and died of cancer about 1990. SgtMaj Hodge received a Silver Star for service in Korea while with the 187th Airborne and made a night jump in the Pusan Peninsula to relieve the 1st Cavalry division that had been surrounded by the Chinese. the Division was overrun, they were bayoneted, and left for dead and Hodge had crawled to an aid station, got in an ambulance, and was taking them to the rear area as the Chinese again overran their position. They were shooting Chinese and North Koreans out of the back door of the ambulance with IVs in their arms. SP5 William C. McMurray, captured at Lang Vei, was a POW until March, 1973, and then worked for the Defense Intelligence Agency at Fort Huachua, Arizona.

off the back of my neck and all the hair off my butt too. All that was left was the shreds of material to my pants in the front of my pants. I was a helluva-looking mess!"[532] Fortunately, he was facing as he was!

Upon evacuation, he soon discovered his wounds were to be the least of his problems! "The Lieutenant Communications officer there at DaNang came over to see me after I got off the USS REPOSE (AH-16) and there was some big damn investigation on what happened to those one-time pads. I said I was at Khe Sanh. They cared less about the fact that I was wounded; it was those one-time pads! I thought they were going to court-martial me. I had stitches in my back and everything and they're worried about those damn one-time pads!"[533] Cooper had an earlier encounter with one-time pads; while at Lang Vei in early 1967, the camp came under mortar attack, but he slept through the noisy violence as he dreamed the "Calypso-Crypto System" of the combinations of letters for the one-time pad.[534]

The one-time pad, first developed and used by the German diplomatic service in the early 1920s,[535] is the only code that is unbreakable. there are two–and only two–identical pads of pages of letters on easily-destroyed paper. Each page contains random letters, for example: Q D T E G T J C M J A X U V B D O Z C.

Above these letters, the plain text of the message to be encrpted is written::

T H E E N E M Y I S A T T A C K I N G
Q D T E G T J C M J A X U V B D O Z C

Then, using the TRIGRAPH, the third letter is determined. T + Q = Q, H + D =P, E + T = C. etc.

To decrypt, Q + Q = T, and so on. The trigraph is based on the table devised by Blaise de Vigenère in 1586[536]

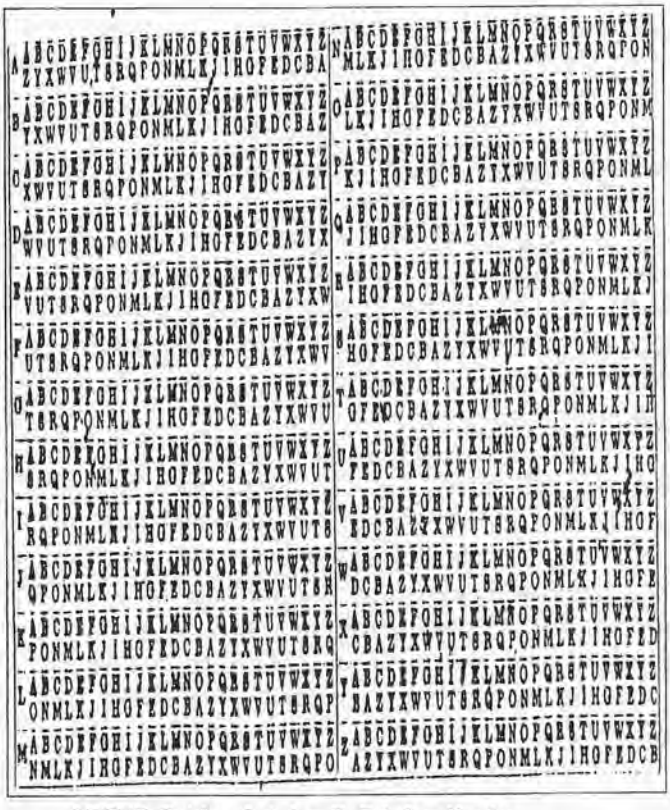

ABOVE: Table. A + A = Z, F + A = U, etc.



MEMORIZE THESE

Five minutes daily spent studying these combinations will pay dividends in the time saved in encoding and decoding.

AIB	POG	SOT
BAT	HAS	SUN
GUD	HOE	TAG
ELK	MAN	WAD
EBE	OUR	YON
EVA	PEG	
AFU	JOC	QUP
AZA	JUW	SZD
CAX	KAP	SIZ
ENI	XOB	TUM
GIL	KUV	UBZ
OUZ	MIF	ULU
HIK	MOZ	WEZ
IDO	OLA	WIV
IJI	OXO	YEX
JEM	PIC	YIT
		YUH
BHX	KKY	QRS
BVD	LLD	RFD
CCV	MMB	RPT
DDT	NNZ	RRR
ETC	PHD	TNT
FPF	POW	VVJ
GGN	PPV	WWH
HHL	PBS	XXF
JJH	QQT	ZZB
BCW	FHN	KWT
BFT	FJL	LCM
BGS	FVZ	LYQ
BHR	GHM	MQX
BIQ	GJK	MRW
BJP	GWX	MSV
BLN	OYV	NQW
CFS	HTZ	NRV
CGR	HVX	PLZ
CHQ	IUX	PXN
CKN	JAQ	PYM
CYZ	JBZ	QKF
DGQ	JTX	SLW
DJN	JYS	VLT
DKM	KQZ	VOQ
DXZ	KBY	WYF
DYY	KSX	XLR

RIGHT: All radio operators memorized these three-letter combinations which include all possible combinations from the above table

Major David C. Smith, called "Bulldog," who arrived at Khe Sanh shortly after the fall of Lang Vei[537] from FOB-2 at Kontum where he was the XO, had joined the Army in 1949. "I was just going to serve my tour and get out, and I got caught up in the Korean War and Truman gave me a year. So I showed him! I turned around and reenlisted. ... I was 'Trooper of the Year' for

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[532] *Ibid.*
[533] *Ibid.*
[534] *Ibid.*
[535] Developed by three cryptographers: Rudolf Schauffler, Adolf Paschke, and Erich Langlotz. [Kahn, David, *The Code-Breakers: The Story of Secret Writing*, abridged ed. New York: New American library, 1973, p. 216]
[536] Cf. Kahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.
[537] Conversation with David C. Smith, 15 September 1990.

the 82nd Airborne and I made Master Sergeant when you couldn't make it. We didn't have E-8s and E-9s [then]. The General asked me ,'Why aren't you in OCS?' 30 days later I was down in Fort Benning, Georgia"[538] While in Korea he had served in a Ranger Company. His father was General Wayne C. Smith, CG of the 11th Airborne Division at Fort Campbell in 1953, "the most feared General of any General I've ever known in my life," according to Robert Cavanaugh.[539] Like Patton? "O, he was worse! This man was terrible–the 'old Army!'"[540]

Several weeks before he reported as CO of FOB-3, Major Smith had been in Saigon with Major Quamo and Col Dan Baldwin, planning landing zones, drop zones, and other logistics for a mission when Col Baldwin came by with a fifth of Johnny Walker Red. It was ten o'clock in the morning before they were finished, Baldwin said, "Have you wished General Westmoreland Merry Christmas yet? No? Come on!" We got the staff car and drove through the General's secret entrance, the MPs watching us because we're in field gear. We walked right up to the General's secretary and old Dan said, 'We want to see General Westmoreland! We're from SOG!' just like that. We went in and we started to sing, 'We Wish you a Merry Christmas.' Well the General listened to us and we saluted and moved on out. We got back in the car and went back to where we were supposed to be, and by the time we got there, the word had gotten back: 'Get those three hoodlums out of Saigon before another sunset!'"[541] Baldwin and Quamo were able to catch a flight to DaNang, but Bulldog was stranded since he was flying to Kontum. He called Colonel Johnson and said, "I can't get a flight out of here, so I'm going back to the hotel." The Colonel responded, "Wait a minute. Don't you move! I'll call you right back!" "He called back in about five minutes and said a C-130 was on the way. "He had diverted a C-130 from Hue, down to Saigon to pick me up, drop me off at Kontum, and then let them land in Hue! They wanted us out by sundown!"[542]

FOB-3, as part of the KSCB, took its share of casualties from the large amount of incoming, including heavy artillery. One day, Major Smith had summoned his S-4, 1Lt Terry Garrett, and said, "You're out of uniform! Why are you wearing First Lieutenant bars? You're a Captain!" He promptly and proudly pinned on his new rank. Then, just as Capt Garrett left the bunker, an incoming round struck him,[543] "It just peeled back the steel helmet, head and all. It scalped him. A young kid."[544] The soldiers of FOB-3 put the helmet on a pole as an example of how a steel pot doesn't always work, especially one with over 30 holes in it from the large, 152mm artillery![545] While the medics were working on Lt Garrett, a wounded Bru stood behind Bob Scully, the medic, "that I think literally bled to death just standing there–never said a word–never uttered anything–while he's working on this Lieutenant."[546]

Robert Cavanaugh recalls a time when the soft sound of artillery being fired drove everyone to seek shelter. One Bru soldier didn't make it before the round exploded, and it took off a side of his head. "We're putting him in a body bag, and he moaned. So we took him out of the body bag and put him on a stretcher. I actually picked up his brains with a shovel and threw them into the wire, but he was still alive. I'm sure he must of died."[547]

Staff Sergeant Melvin M. Douglas stood up one day and took off his flak vest off while washing off and a round came in and killed him. He'd been in the Army previously and, after spending some time in Mississippi, came back into the Army, went to demo school and got orders to Vietnam. He was one of those non-SF-trained soldiers sent to FOB-3 to augment the lines, and while sitting in the trench one night told Charlie Berg. "'You know why I'm in the Army?' I said, 'No, why, Paul?' He said, 'I belong to the Ku Klux Klan.'" I said, 'What!' He said, 'Yeah, I was told to come back in the Army to get demolition training. I didn't think I was going to be sent to Vietnam.' I looked at him, and said, 'Paul, you can't tell me that! This is a Top Secret organization. How did you get a clearance?' He said, 'Everybody where I live belongs to the Ku Klux Klan and when some guy comes by to validate your clearance,–wonderful person!' ... There was a lull. he came up out of the trench and was just washing off, under his flak vest. I was just so surprised."[548]

It was pitch dark outside one night as Major Smith and his Operations Sergeant, James W. Moore, checked the lines, so dark they didn't even know to whom they were talking. Not wanting indigenous personnel to man the lines since Special Forces had had tragic experience with "so many turncoats and spies among them that they turned on us in the middle of a

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[538] *Ibid.*
[539] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.
[540] *Ibid.*
[541] *Ibid.*
[542] Conversation with David C. Smith, 06 July 1990.
[543] Conversation with David C. Smith, 27 July 1995.
[544] Conversation with David C. Smith, 26 August 1990.
[545] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.
[546] *Ibid.*
[547] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.
[548] Conversation with Charles Berg, 05 June 1994.

battle,"[549] Numerous soldiers had suddenly reinforced their lines, in addition to the Marines from CAC OSCAR who manned the northwest corner facing battalion 1/9. Nha Trang had sent up 22 extra personnel, all Special Forces, but lacking Special Forces training. These wore a "candy stripe," a yellow cloth bar on their beret. These included soldiers in supply or those in personnel, where soldiers with Special Forces training were insufficient to meet manning levels. Specialist-5 Daniel F. Sandoval, one of those now at FOB-3, asked MSGT James Moore if he could go to see his buddies SP5 Charles M. Corry and Sgt Dennis R. Thorpe. Moore, who was 45 and had three tours in Korea told him: "Son, I'm going to tell you right now, you'd better stay here in this bunker where you got twelve-by-twelve's between you and the rounds coming in. "O, I want to go and see my buddies." Moore said, "OK, but if you get out of the trench line, if you don't have on your helmet, or if you take off your flak jacket, I'm going to fine you a hundred dollars if I catch you." Sandoval took off and the three of them jumped on the side of the trench line, sitting side by side: Sandoval in the middle, and an incoming round hit Sandoval, blowing out a 20-foot chunk of the trench line. "We had smoking legs and boots, pieces of torso, and hamburger meat, and all three of them were just annihilated. they're listed as being from FOB-3, and they weren't really; they were highly misplaced people stuck in a position that they shouldn't of been allowed to be in. I look back on it now and I wish that we'd never asked for them. We could have handled it with our combat troops."[550] Harve Saal recalls that Sandoval was killed within three days of his arrival and the sad story about him was that he had been in a serious parachuting accident at Fort Bragg where he went through some high tension lines that caught him across his shoulder. He was electrocuted and they thought he had died, so they sent him to Vietnam, and he got killed."[551]

Lacking a direct entrance into the main KSCB and having to leave by their main gate and go around a long distance in order to get on the main base made for some harrowing trips. One was the daily water run. Sgt Russ Mann had arrived the day before Lang Vei fell[552] and recalls the daily water run:

> This duty was shared on a rotating basis by the junior NCOs and was equally dreaded by all. The water truck was a 5-ton tanker that .. had been wounded many times in the course of its duties and was a patchwork of welded sheet-metal and odd parts. Only the steadfast devotion and ingenuity of our mechanic kept it running and moderately watertight. The seats had blood stains and the windows were long gone. The truck growled and rattled so loudly while underway that it was impossible for the driver to hear the muted thump that announced incoming rounds. The best strategy was to closely observe anyone above ground along the route. if they suddenly broke into a run or dove for cover you slammed on the brakes ... People that lived and worked along the route gradually became aware that the water truck had a tendency to attract unfriendly fire and began seeking cover as it approached. This caused some confusion on the part of the drives and resulted in a somewhat jerky drive as the truck stopped and started in multiple repetitions over the course of its appointed rounds.[553]

Transporting wounded to CHARLIE MED on KSCB was also harrowing, especially for the young medic, Denis Chericone:

> A couple of times Major Quamo and I loaded the wounded up on the jeep. Then we'd put two guys on the hood and two guys in the back on stretchers and we'd drive that mile or so to CHARLIE MED. One time we were driving, and I was scared. I was petrified. It was quiet. Then all of a sudden the rounds started coming in. But we had critically wounded, so Major Quamo reached over and said, 'Take it easy! and in a soft-spoken, slow voice, said, 'We'll do OK.' We're driving like three miles an hour and all of a sudden a bomb landed and I saw this big tire bouncing across the road in front of us, the only clue that the rounds are coming in. Then I looked and saw the marines running for cover. But we got there. We went through a barrage a couple of times..[554]

On one occasion,[555] General Rossen arrived in a jeep also carrying Major General Tompkins and Colonel David Lownds hanging onto the spare tire as Major Smith drove from the command bunker on KSCB to the FOB-3 camp. Smith made the 3-star put on a helmet and flak jacket since he arrived without them. Major Smith recalls: "We went into our area and one of my indig stood up, saluted, and yelled, 'Airborne!' as we came through the gate. The General turns to Tompkins and said, 'Ah, we're in Army territory now!'" As they entered the FOB-3 command bunker, the General's Aide asked if he could give

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[549] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.
[550] *Ibid.*
[551] Conversation with Harve Saal, 14 August 1989.
[552] Lang Vei fell 07 Feb 1968.
[553] Conversation with Russ Mann, 26 Feb 1990.
[554] Conversation with Denis Chericone, 25 July 1993.
[555] This incident was related in a conversation with David C. Smith, 15 September 1990.

something for the General to eat since he hadn't eaten that morning. Smith nodded to the Sergeant-Major, and after Smith's briefing, two Sergeants dressed in whites appeared with some freshly-baked bread and turkey with mayonnaise. The General took one, and then gave sandwiches to General Tompkins and Colonel Lownds. Then they came in with some milk, and it was cold. They asked the General if he'd like some milk. 'Yes!' And he asked Tompkins, and Tompkins said, 'Damn milk's for babies!' Just like that. The General turned around, grabbed his milk and said, 'Well, I'm the biggest baby in this outfit!' We went up, going to look at the troops on the line. I heard Tompkins say, 'I'm going to court-martial that Smith!'"

On another occasion,[556] General Irby, the ADC[557] of the First Air Cavalry Division, landed in the FOB-3 compound and told Major Smith, wearing his steel pot, "OK, you can put your little 'Girl Scout hat on.' Major Smith promptly put on his Green Beret and just as General Irby lifted off in his helicopter, a round landed, sending a piece of shrapnel right into the top of his scalp.

LtCol Roy Bahr arrived as the new CO of FOB-3 in mid-March, effective 25 March.[558] At the time, FOB-3 consisted of one 102 Marines (Note: the first figure is officer, the second figure enlisted), 0-3 USN, 20-105 USA, and 2-455 ARVN and CAC O (inside the FROB-3 perimeter), 0-31 Marines.[559]He remained at FOB-3 until it was evacuated.[560] Although a Lieutenant Colonel, it was his first combat experience. Bahr's Adjutant was Charles Almy who had previously arrived at Khe Sanh with a briefcase containing some $10,000.00 payroll for the troops. The C-123 on which he arrived was hit by incoming. Major George Quamo picked him up at C Med, his uniform bloodied from a head wound that required some 35 stitches, and later realized he'd left all the money on the aircraft. He returned, retrieved the payroll, and then returned to DaNang, walking into the rear offices as a great hush quieted twenty-some typewriters upon seeing the specter of a war survivor. He then returned to FOB-3 about 20 March to be the S-1.[561]

Bahr and Almy continuously engaged in humorous banter. Bahr would say, "Hey, Almy, look over here. I think I want the 9-hole golf course here." Almy would say, "No, sir, we can't do that," "Why not?" "Well, Sir, that's where the tennis courts and swimming pool are going!"

At 1500, 5 April, General Westmoreland arrived at FOB-3 and Bahr had Almy drive the General from FOB-3 to meet with Colonel Lownds on the main base. "And so I said to Almy, 'You tell Westmoreland I want to talk to him when he gets back'–as a joke.[562] Almy took Westmoreland to the main base and pointed out where his plane had crashed. "He seemed unimpressed. His boots were polished and he had a very clean uniform. He was wearing white stars on his uniform, a symbol of garrison life. A very white T-shirt appeared at the V in his uniform near his neck. It began to annoy me that he would never know what it was like to be under constant discomfort of shelling and dirt. He just did not seem interested in what was going on at Khe Sanh, but rather it seemed as if he was amazed that he was at Khe Sanh. ... I was beginning to understand why the troops at Khe Sanh disliked outsiders. ... We averaged to stars (rank) every day for the next week and they all were outsiders, asking stupid questions and going back to those hot showers and nice officers clubs."[563]

When the jeep containing General Westmoreland returned, "Westmoreland steps out of the jeep and says, 'What did you want to see me about, Bahr?' I almost died! A Lieutenant Colonel doesn't tell a four-star General 'I want to see you.' So I started, 'Sir, I just wanted to let you know we have these Montagnards over here.' I'm trying to save my fanny. The helicopter returns, picks him up and gets him out. I get back to Almy, 'What are you doing?' He said, 'Well, Sir, you said you wanted to talk to Westmoreland.'"[564]

Major George Quamo was standing next to LtCol Bahr when the jeep carrying General Westmoreland returned to FOB-3. It was very obvious to LtCol Bahr that Quamo and Westmoreland knew each other; there was an intense, palpable animosity

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[556] This incident was related in conversation with David C. Smith, 26 August 1990.

[557] Assistant Division Commander.

[558] HQ, 5th Special Forces (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Special Orders Number 07 dated 27 March 1968, sent in letter from Roy Bahr, 22 April 1993.

[559] 3d MarDiv 161420Z/Mar68, in 3d MarDiv Msgs Etc Mar 68, Pt. 1, Encl (165. The three Navy Corpsmen had evidently been transferred to FOB-3.

[560] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 28 February 1993. After leaving FOB-3 at Khe Sanh, he took over FOB-2 at Kontum, and then became the first commander of Command and Control Central (CCC) at Ban Me Thuout. [*Ibid.*]

[561] Almy, Charles, *Recollections of the Defense of Khe Sanh, Vietnam*, a Paper submitted to Professor Coffman, Military History of the U.S., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 14 June 1971, pp. 23-14. Conversation with Charles Almy, 20 December 2002.

[562] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 28 February 1993.

[563] Almy, Charles, *Recollections, op. cit.*, pp. 37-39, *passim.*

[564] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 28 February 1993.

from General Westmoreland towards Major Quamo[565] which puzzled Bahr who had, in just a matter of a few weeks, come to admire George Quamo. Major Quamo was only 26 or 27; Lieutenant Colonel Bahr was 37. Bahr later wrote: "I consider Major Quamo to be one of the most outstanding officers with whom I have served in my military career. ... Major Quamo was highly respected by seniors and subordinates alike and devoted his utmost attention to the welfare of the US and indigenous troops alike. His interest in learning the language and customs of the Bru, his concern for the care and evacuation of the Bru refugees, and the patience, kindness and understanding displayed by him at all times are worthy of emulation by all."[566]

Days before the siege battle erupted, Major George Quamo personally had soldiers from FOB-3 drag a landline to the Marine COC bunker on KSCB to the S-2, Major Jerry Hudson. When his intelligence sources learned something, he passed on the information directly to Hudson instead of the usual route of sending the information to Saigon, having it analyzed, and then having Saigon report it through the chain of command to the Marines–several days later, in which case, it was "history, not intelligence." "George took good care of us."[567] During the siege, whenever the landline was severed by incoming (or by E-tools of those digging deeper trenches and bunkers!), it was spliced by soldiers from FOB-3.[568] Charles Berg notes: "He probably broke regulations on it, but he probably saved a lot of people's lives. It was the appropriate thing to do. That's the kind of person he was. He overcame the natural bureaucracies and inter-service rivalries, and the petty jealousies, personal petty jealousies that happen between organizations."[569]

Another example is his dealing with Gunnery Sergeant George Bailey, NCOIC of the 32 Marines of the III MAF Radio Company Detachment at Khe Sanh.[570] When NVA communications from Khe Sanh village abruptly ceased, George Bailey went to George Quamo "and we flew into Khe Sanh ville. This was right after Lang Vei fell, early February."[571] Radio silence on the part of the NVA was particularly ominous: it usually was followed by a massive attack. "We felt that when something like that went down, when you have a communications stand-down, the hair on the back of your head just stood right up because you said, 'O, oh! Soemthing's going to take place!'"[572] Quamo said, "Well, we'll go in and we'll take a look and see what we can find." Bailey said, "Well, I want to go." Quamo said, "No!" But Bailey insisted. "I wanted to know, first-hand, why I lost radio communications. We discovered all those damn landlines. I had a Bru sitting on my side because Major Quamo said,. 'He will not be captured; you will kill him' if there's any chance of him getting captured. We were in the ville about 15 minutes, examining the school house just on the outskirts of the Khe Sanh village.[573] GySgt Bailey had visited Major Quamo and said, "I don't know whether I should be telling you these things," and Quamo replied: "George, we're in this together; we're in here to save lives, to win a war, and get this thing over with." "Major Quamo seemed to be on my level. He seemed the likely man to give my stuff to because I knew he'd take action on it. We figured, if we can't share information up here, we're

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[565] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 05 March 1993.

[566] LTC Roy W. Bahr, "Eye-Witness Statement," 4 May 1968, in letter from Roy Bahr, 22 April 1993.

[567] Conversation with Jerry Hudson, 04 May 1996.

[568] Conversation with Jerry Hudson, 28 June 1996.

[569] Conversation with Charles Berg, 09 July 1994.

[570] The Radio Company Det was led by Lt Gornic and Lt Nikell, a Mormon "who wore the special shirt with holes and never took that sucker off." [Conversation with George Bailey, 05 Sep 1999]. "Here are. We're hot. We're sweaty, cold and wet and damp, and he wouldn't take them things off. I don't think he even washed them. He wore them the whole time." [Conversation with George Bailey, 28 Feb 1990]. Bailey arrived the day after Christmas, 1967 [Conversation with George Bailey, 08 Sep 1999] and relieved GySgt Vincenters and had charge of the platoon until Lt Nickel arrived. He had four teams in various locations, each with their PRD (Portable Radio Direction Finder], so that NVA radio signals could be triangulated and plotted. "If one of them picked up a signal, we'd have to tell the others to go to such and such a frequency and get that signal and then they would have to take their line bearings." [Conversation with George Bailey, 28 Feb 1990]. Originally, one was on Hill 881-South, one on the main base and one the other side of the ammo dump. GySgt Bailey had to check periodically to ensure they had working batteries and hear any problems. The detachment listened to radio traffic, either voice or CW [Morse code, Continuous Wave], attempted to identify it, and built a network (who reports to whom, how frequently, etc.) and develop a "pattern analysis" to determine chain of command and location of divisions, regiments, etc. George Bailey died on 22 December 2004. LT Nickell and Lt Gornic are pictured on p. 62 of Lukacs, Theodore, *Focus on Khe Sanh (Cryptologic History Series Southeast Asia),* Washington, D.C.: National Security Agency, 1969, originally classified TOP SECRET; GySgt Bailey is pictured on p.; 63.

[571] Conversations with George Bailey, 04 Dec 1991 and 05 September 1999.

[572] Conversation with George Bailey, 04 November 1989.

[573] XD 84453876, the former home of John and Carolyn Miller, the Wycliffe Bible Translators where aerial recon had disclosed 13 grass-covered shelters, 2 possible communications antennas and approx. 10 underground bunkers. [7647 Recon Tech Sq Tan Son Nhut AB 310925Z/Jan68, IPIR MSN AM 4436, in III MAF COC Journal and File 01/02 Feb 68 #3]. ("IPIR": Initial Photographic Intelligence Report)

the ones that's going to be dying."[574] He had originally visited the FOB-3 area to seek a location for one of his PRD detachments: "I wanted to put a PRD site in his Special Forces area. I had to have my Direction Finders so many meters apart, and I wanted one in his area. That's when I met Quamo, and from that point on, he and I developed a rapport."[575] As the battle unfolded, Bailey attempted to verify his own signals intelligence conclusions with those at the FOB-3.[576] Eventually, Bailey slept directly below Quamo at the FOB. Bailey recalls, "He would lie down and say, 'I will wake up at three o'clock in the morning,' and I would lie there, and no one would wake him up. Suddenly, at three o'clock in the morning, he was wide awake and on his feet. He was a cat!"[577]

As Operation PEGASUS commenced on 01 April, the "word" at KSCB was that it was to be abandoned, but LtCol Bahr had not received any indication to relocate.[578] Uneasy with the consequences of remaining at Khe Sanh if all Marines were to depart, LtCol Bahr summoned his S-2, Hammond Salley, to type a Top Secret report.

Hammond Salley reported to FOB-3 around 01 March 1968.[579] He previously served as S-3 of 4th Psychological Operations Group in Saigon before the Tet Offensive. One of his buddies from the 7th PSYOP Group on Okinawa had served with MACSOG, helping George Quamo and accompanied him in the Co Roc operation. The CO of the 4th PSYOP Group, Col. Beck, was seeking volunteers to work on a classified mission and Salley volunteered, reported to Col. Johnson (Chief of OP-35 at MACSOG in Saigon) and then went to CCN (at the time located at Monkey Mountain but later moved to Marble Mt., DaNang), and then by Huey to Khe Sanh. When he arrived, LtCol David Smith appointed him as S-2 with Lt Gerald Crews and MSG Frazier working in the 2 shop. His duties included custodian of all Top Secret documents, debrief of patrols, preparation of electronic reports to CCN and Saigon, preparation and forwarding of captured intelligence materials, custodian and insertion of ELDEST SON (AK-47 and mortar rounds filled with petin rigged to explode and destroy reliance on NVA cached ammunition supplies for troops traveling the Ho Chi Minh Trail), custodian of CIRCUS ACT devices (for wire-tap of NVA land lines), determine locations for FRANTIC GOAT (leaflet drops on the Ho Chi Minh Trail network), and, when FOB-3 was later dismantled and moved to Cam Lo, he was placed in charge of dismantling the FOB-3 compound.[580]

LtCol Bahr knew the information, so highly-classified and so urgent, required the unusual step of having an officer type it: "You don't ask Captains to type, normally. ... This was not 'Mickey Mouse' It was serious. I am absolutely in a period of real hurt, and I'm trying to take care of my guys. I said, 'You type it, make a carbon and give me the carbon.' that was it."[581] This historic letter dated 13 April and an accompanying letter to LtCol John S. Warren dated 14 April, are quoted:

> 1. Lack of significant enemy contact; discovery of cache sites with abundant weapons and ammunition; failure of enemy to employ AA against friendly forces; non-identification of 'hard-core' troops; continued enemy rocket and artillery capability; and continued high utilization of FM radio communications; all tend to indicate that the enemy has been merely 'pushed-out' of the AO or has faded into unoccupied areas in small groups which can be reformed into fighting forces within a short period of time.
>
> 2. It is believed that once the enemy becomes aware of the evacuation of the Khe-Sanh area by the 1st Air Cav Div, the enemy will, once again, close on the Khe-Sanh Combat Base with the intentions and capability of denying the use of the airfield and attempting to defeat friendly forces found here. This belief is based upon the indications stated in paragraph 1 above.
>
> 3. There are numerous advantages which could accrue to the enemy if he were to once again concentrate and attack Khe-Sanh. These are as follows:
>
> a. The enemy could 'prove' that Operation Pegasus did not really hurt him.
>
> b. The enemy would have an opportunity to destroy the force which prevented earlier victory (i.e., the 26th Marines and FOB #3). This would 'save face.'
>
> c. The enemy realizes that the name of Khe-Sanh still holds considerable world attention which gives it a psychological and political value, even though its military value is negligible.
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> d. An attack on Khe-Sanh could relieve military pressure on other forces presently engaged in other AO's or planned for in future offensive operations.

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[574] Conversation with George Bailey, 14 Jan 1990.
[575] Conversation with George Bailey, 28 Feb 1990.
[576] Conversation with George Bailey, 04 November 1989.
[577] Conversation with George Bailey, 05 September 1999.
[578] Conversation with Hammond Salley, 20 June 2002.
[579] Conversation with Hammond Salley, 03 September 1997.
[580] Letter from Hammond Salley, 20 June 2002.
[581] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 09 December 1993.

e. The provincial area in which Khe-Sanh is located can serve as a future guerrilla base area south of the 17th parallel.

f. Khe-Sanh Combat Base will provide him with equipment, spare parts, demolitions (explosives) material and other 'raw' materials which can be effectively utilized in future operations.

g. The realization that maintaining sizeable forces at Khe Sanh are extremely costly for allied forces due to dependence on air resupply.

4. These advantages could prove to be of significant value to be worth an inexpensive gamble which would be of high overall value if successful.

5. The area occupied by FOB 3 is considered untenable unless: (a) Friendly forces occupy flank positions and (b) sufficient artillery fire support is readily available and responsive. Minimum forces required are judged as: (a) One reinforced regiment and (b) one artillery battalion consisting of two (2) 105MM batteries and one (1) 155 battery. In addition, engineer, quartermaster and medical units would be required to support the troops in Khe-Sanh Combat Base."

[Letter to LTC John S. Warren, 14 April 1968, from LTC Roy W. Bahr]

Dear Colonel Warren:

I am sending Maj. Quamo as my personal representative in this matter. The subject is important enough to warrant my personal appearance, but I feel my place is here, no matter what decision is reached.

Major Quamo can brief you on both the friendly and enemy situation on a first hand basis that may be more descriptive than my messages or the 'Study of Khe Sanh situation,' which he has hand-carried to you.

Believe me Col. Warren, no one is pushing the panic button here. However, I do not feel that you, Col. Johnson, Col. Singlaub nor any others within our channels has fully grasped the situation here. I write this statement with the knowledge of the facts presented and available to me and I do admit that there may be other facts or plans of which I am not aware. If the latter is the case, I respectfully request that you give me the benefit of your knowledge.

As you know, I have no assigned mission at this time in support of other forces (1st Air Cav Div of 26th Marines) nor do I have the assets to carry out missions assigned by our higher headquarters. It is extremely doubtful that this area will be capable of launching air supported missions within one week.

If my mission is to defend in the khe Sanh area with the forces available to me and in conjunction with any small, air transportable 'stay-behind' unit, I will be forced to change the physical location of FOB 3 to more defensible terrain, i.e.: the area previously occupied by 1/9 Marines. I have asked Co, 26 Marines not to destroy those positions, as I will use them.

There are many questions that must be answered if we stay: (a) What are my orders in reference to destruction of material? (b) For how long do I defend the terrain I shall occupy? (c) When will be authorized to make a decision to begin an overland withdrawal? (d) What support can I expect from air and artillery? (e) When do the RF/PF forces leave? the CAC Marines? (f) How can a force of 80 US and possibly 200 Bru defend in an area that previously required a reinforced Marine regiment? (h) What is my mission?

This paper may appear to be overly dramatic and pessimistic, but I assure you that this is a most serious matter and events may overtake us which preclude slow and deliberate planning and decisions by higher headquarters. I am merely attempting to make you completely aware of the situation on the ground, so that you may see the possibilities (and, in my judgment, probabilities) that could occur. It is quite possible that the decision for FOB 3 to remain at KHE SANH may become a 'decision by indecision' if delayed much longer.

If the decision is reached that FOB 3 wills stay, then the withdrawal presently planned by the 1st Air Cav Div and the 26th Marine Brigade may place this organization in the position of another 'Lang Vei.'

In any event, we will do our best."

THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE

Roy Bahr gave George Quamo these documents and accompanied him to the airstrip on KSCB[582] with Thomas Simcox[583] driving. Major Quamo boarded a U-17 at 1535, 14 April 1968 enroute to the DaNang airfield.[584] Although the aircraft had a

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[582] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 09 December 1993.

[583] Thomas Simcox was the FOB-3 S-3, arrived about 18 January 1968, and was a classmate of George Quamo in OCS. [Conversations with Thomas Simcox, 06 August 1991 and 02 November 1994

flat tire, the two Vietnamese-pilots[585] were able to take off "and then we didn't hear anymore from him."[586] Charles Almy had asked to go along as part of the briefing team, and George Quamo said OK, but at the last minute he was cut since the plane's capacity was filled. "I was that close to dying.".[587] Quamo not only was carrying the TOP SECRET documents, he also carried LtCol Bahr's dirty laundry![588] Also, he was carrying with him a mysterious piece of NVA ordnance. Lee Dunlap recalls a "strange-looking cylinder" fell into the FOB perimeter with Chinese markings Some of the soldiers put a rope on it, jerked it, but it didn't explode and Quamo said, "I'm going to have this assessed," and took it with him on his flight to DaNang.[589] Herb Marshall recalls the round landing about ten feet in front of him, sticking out of the ground. "It looked like Roman Candles going off. The damn thing turned cherry-red and because it was already dark, I first ducked down in the hole and thought, well, hell, if it went off, I'm dead anyhow because they make about a 20-foot crater, and I couldn't jump out and move. So I sat there and watched that thing burn out. It turned bright cherry red. It didn't go off."[590] One might speculate that the round exploded as the aircraft approached its landing.

Soon after take-off, the U-17 pilot made contact with PANAMA air control (on Monkey Mountain, DaNang), but contact with the aircraft was lost at 1645H when it was in the vicinity of AT 9887.[591] The area was extensively searched by air.[592] Since DaNang is on the ocean coast, it was presumed that the aircraft may have plunged into the sea without trace.[593]

When contact was lost, speculations began to erupt. Some thought that George Quamo was going to DaNang to answer the accusations of Col Soulang Phetsomphou, CO of BV-33, who apparently complained to the American Ambassadors in Saigon and Vientiane, Laos, claiming that Quamo was personally responsible for not ensuring the safety of those of BV-33 who had taken refuge at Lang Vei.[594] Some zealous CIA analysts actually considered George a spy who had flown to North Vietnam and sent investigators to interview Skip Minnicks and others who had worked with him. "We were just so mad! It was just such nonsense!"[595] Harve Saal recalls: "I can remember Skip [Charles Minnicks] being so mad, irate and frothing. I'd never seen Skip lose his temper until then. He lost his temper. He was so mad about what they were saying about George. There was a kid named Bill Harris who also worked with him. Bill came over to me and said, 'Harve, I got to get away from Skip. Skip is really having a tantrum!' I went over there and Skip was really m ad! He was ranting and raving and just carrying on a blue streak. He just couldn't believe what they had said. It was done by one of their [CIA's] analysts who was a 'genius'. The accusation came over the radio. It said they wanted all of his belongings searched."[596]

Major Bulldog Smith was chagrined, claiming that both he and Quamo had plans to go into Laos and remain under deep cover while organizing an insurgent force. "When I heard that he went down and when they couldn't find him, I said, 'That son-of-a-gun left without me!" He expected to hear of Quamo suddenly reappearing.[597] Major Jerry Hudson, S-2 of 26th Marines during the Siege, "thought he may have just established a deep cover and was somewhere doing something. That guy could

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[584] MCJ2 Form 34, US Personnel Missing/Captured in Southeast Asia, Biographical Data, in MIA file, George Quamo, Statement of LTC Roy W. Bahr, 18 April 1968, in MIA Board Proceedings, 22 April 1968, C&C Det, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, LTC Ira Snell, Jr., President, in MIA file, George Quamo, MSGT Billy Waugh notes that the U-17 was a fixed-wing aircraft with immense wings enabling it to fly very slowly--even at about 5 miles per hour!--from which one could almost rappel down, and belonged to "the Agency" (*i.e.*, CIA). [Conversation with Billy Waugh, 3 September 1989].

[585] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 28 February 1993.

[586] Conversation with Thomas Simcox, 08 August 1991.

[587] Conversation with Charles Almy, 20 December 2002.

[588] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 28 February 1993.

[589] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 27 August 1988.

[590] Conversation with Herbert Marshall, 03 January 1996.

[591] Refugee Report and Evaluation, 19 Apr 1982, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #123, Folder #283, Case #01201.

[592] The route of the aircraft was searched in the area roughly bounded by YD700100, YD700400, BU000000, and BT000800 by a total of 25 VNAF fixed wing sorties and 16 helicopter sorties on 19 April. Each aircraft had 2 observers, and the air search effort totalled some 80 hours. |Statement of Capt. Donald T. Ward, 21 April 1968, in MIA Board Proceedings, cited].

[593] Mather, Paul D., *M.I.A. Accounting for the Missing in Southeast Asia*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1994, p. 32, note 12.

[594] Conversations with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995, and Charles Minnicks, 26 December 1991. In a conversation with Soulang Phetsomphou, 04 Feb 1996, the Colonel remembered George Quamo and recalled he had been very helpful: "Yeah, he helped me. He brought me the supply. He helped me. You know, he intended to organize the special team with me."

[595] Conversations with Harve Saal, 08 and 14 August 1989.

[596] Conversation with Harve Saal, 14 July 1991.

[597] Conversations with David C. Smith, 06 July 1990 and 27 July 1995.

speak about five different languages. He could live out of his pack. He was just so multifaceted. I believed he was on one of those long-term missions where he'd surface later."[598] Gunnery Sergeant George Bailey said, "I wonder if that man is actually dead. There was just such a mysterious atmosphere about that whole individual."[599]

Quamo's remains were discovered commingled with two Asians on 28 June 1974[600] by a Vietnamese woodcutter clearing an area in the mountains.[601] The Quamo family was notified on 15 August 1974 and the remains of George Quamo were released the next day for transport to the United States.[602] He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on 21 October 1974 "as his family and several Army officers and soldiers looked on. There were no bands, no Generals, and no parades. He died at the age of 27."[603]

His brother, James Quamo, was puzzled over a box of some tapes and a little book with some handwriting that the family received. "This information we got wasn't George's. I listened to one of the tapes and said, 'This isn't George." It is possible, of course, that George Quamo was carrying cassettes to be mailed and the small book of handwriting for someone else since mailing things out of Khe Sanh, with all the incoming, was so uncertain. When the skeletal remains were returned, Quamo's older sister, Yilka, viewed them: "She said they showed-he had a football injury and a calcium deposit on one of his legs, and they could see it on the skeletal remains. But there was also some doubt in my mind."[604]

The FOB-3 S-2, Thomas Simcox, when told the remains of George Quamo had been discovered by two Vietnamese woodcutters, responded: ""Yeah, that's what they say. I've always been skeptical of that. It seems odd that the Vietnamese found him and we didn't. I didn't understand it."[605]

The Averill Park Post Office, Averill Park, New York, dedicated its post office in honor of Major George Quamo on Saturday, 14 April 2007.[606]



Saal notes: "FOB-4 closed out FOB-3. These guys were a bunch of thieves! They were awful! They were just terrible! We had a fund in FOB-3, a slush fund, for buying presents for guys who were leaving. Well, these guys who came in from FOB-4 found out we had it and they grabbed it, snatched the fund for themselves, and they had plaques made for themselves. They're not telling anybody this! One day in August [1968], I was down at the mail room in CCN and saw this stack of plaques and said, 'What are those?' The guy showed it to me and said it was 'FOB3.' I said, 'Wow! Can I see one of those?' and he handed it to me. It had somebody's name who I had never heard of. I said, 'Hey, these are my friends.' It was, like, ten plaques. I said, 'Let me sign for these and I'll deliver them.' I took those plaques and I tore the name plates off of them and I got a hold of the guys who were at FOB-3 and I either mailed them to them–it took me like five years, but I got guys plaques, guys who were there. There was only ten of us left alive of the original 35 when the Siege hit." [Conversation with Harve Saal, 14 July 1991].

: FOB 3 PLAQUE FOR SSG HARVEY W. SAAL

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[598] Conversations with Jerry Hudson, 04 July 1991 and 23 June 1994.
[599] Conversation with George Bailey, 04 November 1989.
[600] Hand-written note on"Report of Casualty," 2 March 1971, in MIA file, George Quamo.
[601] Sally Buckley, "Medal to family of a hero," Rochester, N.Y. *Democrat and Chronicle*, Mon., 11 Aug 1975, p. 3B.
[602] Conversation with LtCol James G. Cole, 20 September 1991. LtCol Cole was Chief of POW/MIA Affairs in the Pentagon.
[603] Tom Haggerty, "The Perfumed Prince." Printed 11 November 2001. In letter from Haggerty, 13 November 2001.
[604] Conversation with James Quamo, 04 June 1995.
[605] Conversation with Thomas Simcox, 02 November 1994.
[606] Dedication brochure issued by the Averill Park Post Office, Averill Park, New York.

"The 1967 Hill Battles," printed in *Khe Sanh Veteran*, Issue #39 (May, 1997) 7-44 (the printed article was without footnotes).[607]



Marines of Company G, 2/3, move through bomb crater on Hill 861 on 30 April 1967. USMC photo A188633 by Sgt. D.E. Walmer. "We peer from the pits and scars of violence. What has been may temporarily shield us but we must move on, ever watchful for what caused the pit crater we know so well."

The following account of the Hill Battles is only an abbreviated summary of a greater story. The emphasis is on individuals rather than units or tactics

BACKGROUND

The importance of Khe Sanh relates to an opening in the rugged mountain chain that forms a natural boundary between Laos and South Vietnam known as the D'Ai Lao. Two other passes to the north, Mu Gia (WE 8153) and Ban Karai (XE 262117) provided access to NVA units moving south relatively unimpeded along what came to be known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The D'Ai Lao (the pass through which Route 9 passes to and from Laos) had been an ancient invasion route, used in 1282 when the Mongol General Sogatu moved westward.[608] The Annam kings, Vo Vuong (1738-65) and Gia Long (1802-20) extended Vietnamese influence into Savannakhet Province by moving through the D'Ai Lao Pass,[609] while in 1827, the Thai (Siamese) moved through the pass and forced the Vietnamese to retreat to Cam Lo.[610]. The French stopped the advance of the Siamese and in November, 1890, Captain de Malglaive reoccupied the D'Ai Lao Pass.[611] Road construction beginning in 1904 under Messrs. Rourard, Assistant Public Works Engineer, and Capt Odend'Hall, Civil Services Administrator. made it into Route 9[612].

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[607] The original article, as printed in the Khe Sanh *Veteran* did not have footnotes. For this publication, footnotes have been added after consulting what records I still retained after donating almost all my records to the Veterans Museum of the State of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin. Sources of information have been located and are cited in the present article. Since the article was written, additional information was obtained, some of which is included in the discussion of the Battle of the Hills on pages 36-63 of *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed., 2008. A few photographs and diagrams, not in the original article, have been added.

[608] Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Sons of the Mountains*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982, p. 85. Reference is made to Henri Maspero, "Histoire d'Annam," pp. 35-36.

[609] *Ibid.*, pp. 159-60.

[610] *Ibid., p. 179.*

[611] Bourotte, Bernard, "Essai d'historie des populations Montagnards du Sud Indochinoise Jusqu' a 19456," *Bulletin de la Societie des Studes Indochinoies*, n.s., Vol. 30, No. 1 (1`955), p. 83.

[612] "Les provinces d'Annam: Quang Tri," *Revue Indo-Chinoise*, n.s. 2, Vol. 1, Issue #69 (15 Nov 1907) pp. 1588-1589;

As development of the Ho Chi Minh trail progressed, the Laotian town of Tchepone on Route 9 was overrun 01 May 1961,[613] and, being concerned over a "porous border,"[614] the Americans paced a Special Force "A" team in Khe Sanh ville on 8 July 1962,[615] lest penetrating NVA troops and supplies have free access into Vietnam. The Bru tribe, covering both sides of the border,[616] became a natural source of information for Americans[617] on what was happening on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, as did the local French coffee plantation owners who travelled westward on Route 9 to Savannakhet in Laos. An airstrip (later KSCB) was developed by ARVN engineers in Nov-Dec of 1962.[618]

Then came 1964. On 26 Mar, Capt Floyd Thompson (CO of the Khe Sanh "A" team) was captured and became the longest-held POW of the war.[619] On 20 Apr, Eugene Poilane, who had established a coffee plantation at Khe Sanh in 1918 and fathered 10 children, 5 of whom were born after he was 60, was assassinated on Route 9.[620] In late 1964, the USSF relocated to the airstrip and began construction of several bunkers (what Marines later assumed were "old French bunkers").

On 22 Dec 1965, the Special Forces at Khe Sanh made a chance contact in a dense fog with a large NVA patrol and annihilated them.[621] The NVA retaliated on 03 Jan 1966 by shelling the new camp with 120 mm mortars, the first use of these large caliber weapons in the war.[622]

By now, Khe Sanh was important not as a plug in a hole to stop NVA from moving into South Vietnam, but rather as a launch site for American intelligence-gathering operations into Laos.[623] The pass made it possible to move in and out clandestinely by foot. A whole host of such activities soon flourished in 1964. Signal Engineer Survey Unit (SESU) commanded by Maj. Alfred M. Gray, Jr., conducted operations from Tiger Tooth Mt. (Hill 1739, XD 832453).[624] Special Forces

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Odendhal, "Les routes de L'Annam au Mekong," *Revue Indochinoise*, 1st Series, Vol. 4, No. 12 (Jul., 1894) pp. 131-161 and Vol. 5, No. 13 (Aug., 1894), pp. 1-50. Capt Odend'Hal was assassinated 07 Apr 1904 by Jarai warriors of the "King of Fire." [Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Sons of the Mountains, Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands to 1954*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982, p. 284]. Khe Sanh village began with a single houuse, that of the engineer who built National Route 9. [Fisher, Charles A., *South-East Asia, A Social, Economic and Political Geography*, London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1964, p. 552.]. When Eugene Poilane settled in the area in the 1920s and developed a coffee plantation, he imported Vietnamese workers (The Bru being too savage at the time), and thus Khe Sanh Village was born. {Letters from Madeleine Poilane, 02 Jan 1971, 07 Jan 1976, and *obit* of Eugene Poilane and conversation with Felix Poilane, 19 July 1967].

[613] U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, Vol. 1, *Vietnam, 1961*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1988, pp. 126, 232, 311; CIA: *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 4 May 1961, p. 1 [MORI 207619]. South Vietnam took emergency measures, moving a battalion to the border and a 150-man special forces unit in civilian clothes penetrated 6 mi. into Laos [CIA, *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 11 May 1961, p. 1, MORI 207620]. A 120-man South Vietnamese Army special forces unit penetrated into Laos and assumed effective control of Laotian Army garrison which abandoned Tchepone 01 May and was guarding 9 bridges west of the Lao/S. Viet. border. [CIA: *current Intelligence Weekly Summary, Weekly Review: Laos*, 18 May 1961, p. 1, MORI 207661] The Lao Army unit, BV-33 subsequently located at the Ban Houei Sane airfield.

[614] "Porous border:" Telegram from the Ambassador in Vietnam to Dept. of State, 08 Dec 1960 in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960*, Vol. 1, Vietnam, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986, p. 719.

[615] Stanton, Shelby L., *Green Berets at War*, Novato, Ca.: Presidio, 1985, p. 46. Comments of Jacques Standing, 20 Mar 1989 and 27 Mar 1989; Comments of Gerald J. Howland, 20 Mar 1989; Comments of Frank Fowler, 21 May 1989.

[616] Schrock, Joann L., Stockton, William, Jr., Murphy, Elaine M., and Fromme, Marilou: *Ethnographic Study Series: Minority Groups in the Republic of Vietnam*, U.S. Dept. of the Army *Pamphlet No. 550-105*, HQ, Dept. of the Army, Feb., 1966, pp. 54-55. Mole, CDR Robert H., CHC, USN, *Peoples of the Tribes of South Vietnam*, Vol. 1, *The Tribes of I Corps, South Vietnam*, Saigon, COMNAVSUPPACT, Summer, 1968, pp. 39-42.

[617] The USSF team at Khe Sanh organized a special scout platoon of Bru tribesmen and two scouts, particularly trusted and extremely good soldiers, helped establish an intelligence network of agents with contacts in the Bru villages and ventured into Laos. [Conversation with Mr. James Whitenack, 06 Oct 1988, and Allan B. Imes, 14 Oct 1988]. Another source of information was COL Soulang Phetsomphou, Commander of BV-33 at Ban Houei Sane.

[618] Conversation with Frank Fowler, 21 Mar 1989. Fowler was a member of the second USSF team at Khe Sanh, A-131, commanded by CAPT Chuck Korchek.

[619] Hubbell, John G., *P.O.W.*, New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976, pp. 303-304.

[620] Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed., 2008, p. 13.

[621] Waghelstein, CPT John D., "A Vital Link," in *Infantry Magazine*: Ft. Benning, Ga., p. 286. 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, *Quarterly Command Report for Period Ending 31 Dec 1965*, 15 Jan 1966, Incl (1), Khe Sanh Operations, 29 Nov 1965, dated 1 Jan 1966. Comments of COL John Waghelstein, 9 May 1986.

[622] ADM Sharp and GEN Westmoreland, *Report on the War in Vietnam*, p. 123. 120 mm M38 Soviet mortars can fire 12-15 rounds per minute, each sound weighs 15.4 KG.

[623] CIA, "The Enemy Threat to Khe Sanh," 10 Jan 1968, SC No,. 0137/68

[624] Asst C of S Memo AO1A (JCSO-kh-001A32564, 13 Nov 1964 to CMC, Subj: USMC participation in Vietnam, Encl (1), p. 2. Whitlow, Capt. Robert H., *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, The Advisory and Combat Assistance Era, 1954-1`964*, Washington, D.C.:

established agent nets, as did the National Police in Khe Sanh ville. The Air Force started TIGERHOUND–small prop aircraft to do VR [Visual Reconnaissance].[625] JTAD (Joint Technical Advisory Detachment) station #14 was established at Khe Sanh,[626] for deep, unsupervised patrols. The SOG's FOB-1 at Phu Bai used Khe Sanh as a lunch Site by 1966.

Results of these activities prompted Gen Westmoreland to coax III MAF to upgrade the Khe Sanh airstrip and emplace BN 1/3 there in Oct '66.[627] Project DELTA, operating just under the DMZ and east of the border, sustained 3 MIA in Dec. '66.[628] The USSF relocated to Lang Vei 19-25 Dec 1966.[629]

NVA presence in the Khe Sanh area increased; Khe Sanh was the nest from which the hornets stung them in Laos. (Gen. Giap was always interested in the area. He had been imprisoned at the prison at the D'Ai Lao, known as Lao Bao, 1930-1932, along with his brother, Vo Thuan Nho and several other influential Viet Minh,[630] a period of his life he always passes over in silence. Even Ho Chi Minh himself was imprisoned at Lao Bao in the 1930s.[631] The prison had been constructed in 1896 to hold 250 convicts.[632])

Contacts became more frequent. On 18 Jan '67, Cpl Michael John Scanlon of the Third Force Recon Co. Det. became the first USMC KIA at khe Sanh.[633] As a result of a contact 26-27 Jan, 4 USMC helicopters were lost. BN 1/9 arrived at Khe Sanh on 6 Feb 1967[634] and made contact 25 Feb just 1500 meters west of the airstrip.[635] Force Recon patrols reported significant NVA presence.[636] On 16 Mar. the newly-arrived E/2/9 made contact in which 18 Marines were KIA.[637] USAF pilots of TIGERHOUND reported: "an alarming buildup of fortifications and NVA activity on the hills overlooking the base."[638]

Yet, the base commander[639] was convinced there was little or no NVA presence or activity.[640] Of interest, the base commander, Colonel John Reeder, had just completed a tour of several years with the CIA (and had a platoon in WW II on Okinawa, a company in Korea, and before coming to Khe Sanh, was XO of 4th Marine Regiment.[641]

Herbert Marshall, one of the SOG team leaders training indigenous for patrols into Laos conducted training patrols for his indigenous at Khe Sanh, including Hills 881-North and South and 861. The SOG Captain asked Herbert Marshall to do the

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HQMC, 1977, p. 139.

[625] Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, pp. 196, 198. CPL Nick Taylor, "Tigerhound O1E's 'Hunt' for Marines," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:28 (14 Jul 1967). *History of 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron, Jan-Mar 1968*, Tab T, 20th TASS, in Vol. II of *Quarterly History*, 504th Tactical Air Support Group, Jan-Mar 68, App. 6, Subordinate Unit Histories.

[626] III MAF COC 20-1311Z/Oct66 in III MAF COC Journal and File 20-21 Oct 1966 #123.

[627] HQMC, Oral History Transcript of LtGen John A. Chaisson, 1975, pp. 370-374. Westmoreland comments on draft MSS dtd 27 May 1978, in HQMC, Hist Div., Vietnam Comments File. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, pp. 258-259. III MAF 291012Z/Sep 66 in III MAF misc. msgs. Jan-Dec 1966.

[628] Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed., 2008, pp. 20-22.

[629] Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed., 2008, p. 22. CO CoC 5th SFGA, DaNang, 180900Z/Dec66, Movement of Khe Sanh CIDG Camp to Lang Vei and III MAF COC 250251Z/Dec66 in III MAF COC Journal and File, #J35 and J39.

[630] Currey, Cecil B., *Victory at Any Cost, the Genius of Viet Nam's Gen Vo Nguyen Giap*, Washington: Brassey's Inc., 1997, p. 25.

[631] Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Shattered World, Adaptation and Survival Among vietnam's Highland Peoples during the vietnam War*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, p. 142.

[632] Zinoman, Peter, *The Colonial Bastille, A History of Imprisonment in Vietnam, 1862-1940*, Berkeley: Uniersity of California Press, 2001, p. 62.

[633] Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd Ed, 2008, pp. 23-24. 1/3 Command Chronology, Jan 1967, p. 3. Silver Star Medal (post.) file on CPL Michael John Scanlon.

[634] SOP Khe Sanh 021415Z/Feb67, SITREP #2. SOP Khe Sanh 061414Z/Feb67, SITREP #6.

[635] Led by SGT Donald E. Harper, 1st squad of 2nd platoon of B/1/9: 3d MarDiv COC 260205Z/Feb 67, SITREP #25; Comments by 2/Lt John M. Kramer and SGT Donald E. Harper, HQMC HistDiv Oral History Tape #567; Comments by Capt Michael W. Sayers on HQMC Oral History Tape #566.

[636] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 06 June 1989, pp. 60-61.

[637] Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed., 2008, pp. 32-34.

[638] "Historical Report (Khe Sanh)," in *History, 504th Tactical Air Support Group, 1 Apr 67 -30 Jun 67*, Ch. 3., Attachment #6.

[639] LtCol James M. Reeder, designated "SOP 3d MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh," relieved his predecessor, LtCol McGee in Feb, 1967. He had previously served several years with the CIA and earlier, as XO of 4th Marines. [Conversation with James M. Reeder, 07 May 1`989] The first "SOP 3d MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh,," Col Thomas M. Horne, arrived in September, 1966, having served as G-2, 3d MarDiv and departed Feb 1967 [Conversation with COL Horne, 11 Jan 1987]. Col Reeder was relieved by COL Gary Wilder, CO, 3d Marine Regiment, on 20 April 1967.

[640] Conversation with GySgt Lawrence Keen, 04 Dec 1975. Conversation with Mr. James Capers, 24 May 1986. Comments of CAPT Michael W. Sayers to HQMC Hist Div, 28 May 1981 in Comments File on 1967 Vietnam volume.

[641] Conversations with James Reeder, 30 April 1989 and 07 May 1989. After Khe Sanh, Col Reeder taught at the Staff College in Norfolk, Va., and retired in 1977 on 30 years' service.

briefing, and during a brief of Colonel Reeder, the Khe Sanh commander, Marshall reported numerous bunkers, lots of enemy, and recommended the hills be subject to "..many, many hours of prepping with airstrikes. Then I would form my artillery and I would lay a barrage and walk my troops up with a barrage of artillery in front of us. This Marine officer looked around and said, 'Bullshit!' And the Captain looked at me and said, 'Well, Sergeant, our briefing is completed.' We turned around and walked out of there. And it was about a week, the Marines sent a Company up on that hill."[642]

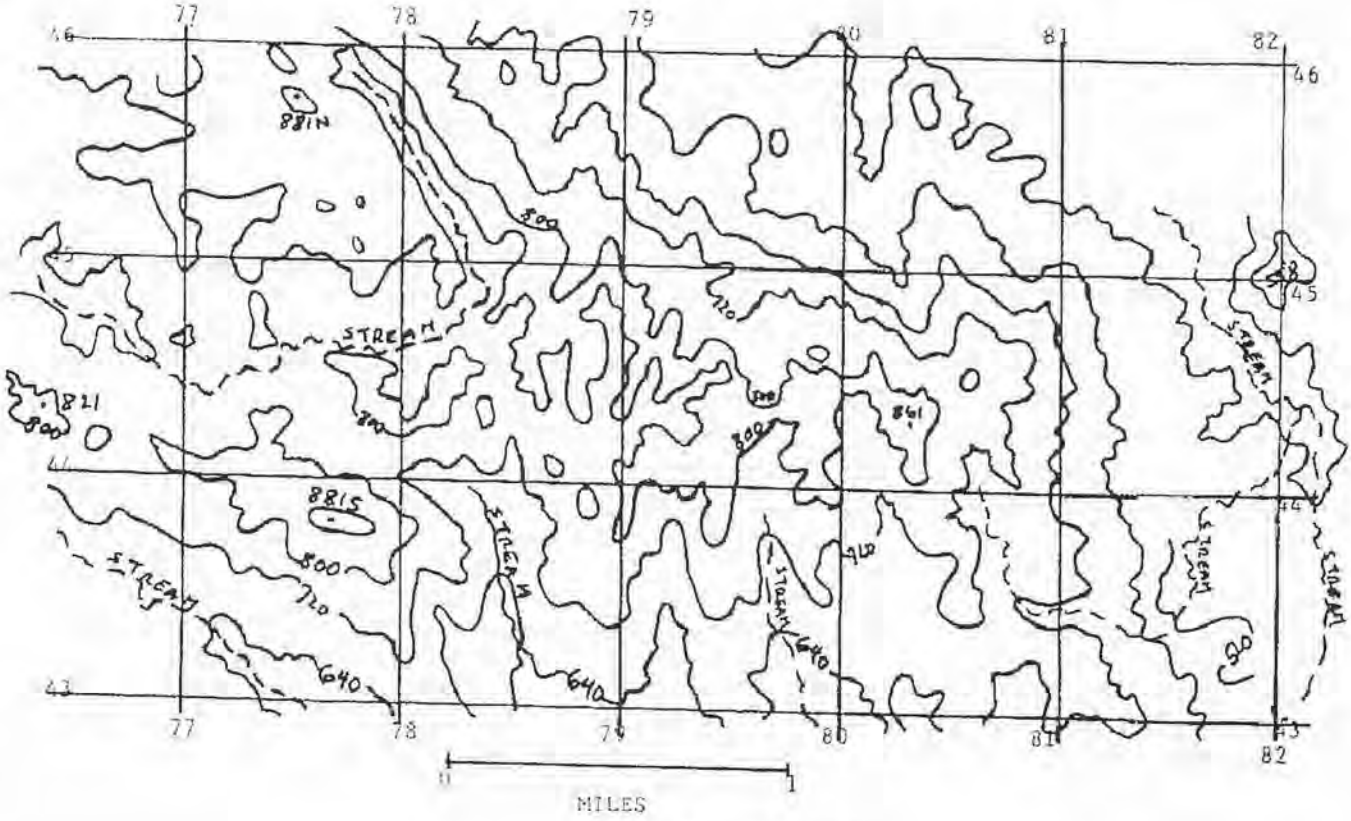

1967 HILL BATTLE AREA

24 April 1967: THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH BEGINS[643]

[642] Conversation with Herbert Marshall, 03 Jan 1996. Marshall was a Staff Sergeant at the time, the Intelligence Chief. Marshall was also an ex-Marine. "I joined the Marines in 1957, turned 16 at MCRD, San Diego, assigned to 11th FMF at Camp Pendleton, transferred to 2nd 105 Howitzer Battery at 29 Palms as a cannon-cocker, honorably discharged under minority conditions after they found out how old I was when doing a security clearance check. I was 17 when discharged but had no guardian as I was raised an orphan and there was no one to sign my papers and my grandmother refused. I enlisted in the Army when I turned 18 and selected the Army because I could enlist directly into the paratroops ... I volunteered for the 5th Group in RVN and was assigned to Det A-312 near Phouc Vinh VN (northwest of Saigon) ... After returning to Ft. Bragg in 1966, I was assigned as assistant instructor of Operational intelligence at Special Warfare Center for two months when I got word of a special Project being put together... [He then retired] After 14 years in law enforcement, I enlisted into the Navy as an E-6 Investigator. I served on USS KITTY HAWK, Naval Air Station Adak, Alaska, Naval Submarine Base Bangor, Wash. and USS PRINCETON in the Persian Gulf War... I retired from the Navy in July 1993 and returned to Alaska." [Letter from Herbert Marshall 9 January 1996].

[643] Material on the events of 24 April 1967 is based on the following: Comments of LCPLDonald A. Clark, Tape #959; Comments of Cpl Michael A. Brown, Tape #960; Comments of Sgt Milton G. Norwood, Tape #992; Ltr of Maj Michael W. Sayers, 18 May 1981 to Marine Corps HistCen with enclosures; Tefler, Rogers, and Fleming, *1967*, pp. 35-37; Comments of SSGT Leon R. Burns, Tape #993; Comments of 2/Lt Thomas E. King, Tape #994; Comments of SSGT Dennis W. Ritchie, Tape #995; Navy Cross file on LCPL Dana Cornell Darnell; 3MAR AAR, THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH, SEARCH AND DESTROY, 09 Jun 1967; BSM file on LCPL John Wayne Skelton, Jr.; BSM file on LCPL Eric G. Wilk; SSM file on LCPL Daniel Douglas Dulude; Sgt Robert Ynostroza, "Hill 861 Cave Complex Shields NVA Battalion," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:19 (12 May 1967) 12; Sgt Roger Ynostroza, "New Lieutenant Plays Major Role in the Battle for Hill 861," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:20 (19 May 1967) 11; Comments of Cpl Frank D. Thompson, Tape #1677.

First and Third Platoons of B/1/9 were operating from PPBs [Platoon Patrol Bases] at XD 798443 and XD 790455, one just west of hill 861, the other a click northwest. The Second Platoon provided defense of the KSCB.

Like a descent into monsters within a nightmare, the mission was to check out some caves that had been spotted by B-1 about 1630H on 23 Apr. Tom Ryan, Point man of B-3, later reflected, "The Colonel on the base had said, 'We'll just send up two platoons, one on each side, and we're going to clean them up once and for all.' It was crazy!"[644] The two platoons joined together about 1800H and set in for the night at XD 810460. It was not restful; Cpl Michael A. Brown, a MG team leader of B-3 recalls: "We set in our perimeter. We weren't too sure. We were kinda nervous then. We knew we were moving into a VC area. Anyway, we set up our PPB there, out there in the open with First Platoon."

On the morning of the 24th, the two platoons moved out at 0530H in two columns about 300 meters apart following a path they had used on previous patrols in this area, moving towards Hill 516 (XD 799459). It was raining, and some Marines in the patrol were able to eat some Cs as they moved.



The area was pretty open. We moved out. There was no contact. The trail was kinda rough but we made it. We kept on humping. Then we moved up the hill. I'm not sure which hill it was. I guess it was around 861 and finally we were moving into this area with the grass pretty thick, and we weren't sure we were going to make any contact or not. A couple of guys were saying, 'Well, there probably won't be anything there when we get there.' I knew myself that if there was anything there, it wouldn't be anything they wanted.

As B-1 moved towards the caves, one of the men in 3d Squad of B-1 spotted 4 or 5 NVA in khaki uniforms moving towards the Marines. The platoon commander, 2/Lt James D. Carter, Jr., passed the word they were advancing towards them. The enemy force moved up to within 50 meters, spotted one of the Marines, and began to fire. The Marines opened fire. After the exchange of bullets, Lt Carter took 8 men with him to investigate. He found an enemy soldier on a stretcher, killed him and one other enemy trooper down the hill. The First Squad leader, Cpl James Gerald Pomerleau, was perhaps too anxious to get to the enemy, and was hit by a WP grenade and killed.

B-1 brought the body of Cpl Pomerleau back up the hill and proceeded some 300 meters towards Hill 861 when they began receiving heavy fire, pinning them down.

In order to cover their movement out of the enemy's direct fire, LCPL Eric G. Wilk of B-3 moved his 60mm mortar directly into a position exposed to enemy MG fire and began firing. His mortar effectively silenced the murderous fire on B-1 and they were able to pull across the ridge to a position of defilade from enemy fire.

Immediately, the numerically superior enemy force shifted its vicious fire toward the advancing B-3 and specifically at LCPL Wilk's mortar position which was causing them so much damage with repeated accurate fire.

Without a moment of hesitation, LCPL Wilk boldly moved his weapon to a more effective position and again directed accurate counter-fire, enabling his platoon to regroup into defensive positions. LCPL John Wayne Skelton, Jr., began running through the intense fire to obtain vital mortars after the ammunition carriers were unable to deliver ammunition due to the heavy volume of small arms fire and mortar fire. Repeatedly exposing himself to the enemy fire, he moved one man to another, collecting ammunition and delivering it to LCPL Wilk. Despite the heavy MG fire directed on him, LCPL Wilk continued to fire and only stopped with a MG round shattered his right forearm making him unable to continue. LCPL Skelton then continued to fire the mortar until he was seriously wounded by the heavy volume of enemy fire.

Meanwhile, in B-1, LCPL Dana Cornell Darnell, a mortar ammunition carrier, saw his mortar gunner fall unconscious when the ambush was sprung. With extraordinary calmness in the face of the intense enemy fire , LCPL Darnell retrieved the mortar.

LCPL Darnell had yelled for the ammunition which had been distributed among the platoon's members to be delivered to his position. Due to the intense enemy fire the other members of the platoon were unable to reach his position with the necessary ammunition. LCPL Darnell immediately stood up and raced through the enemy fire to retrieve the ammunition, with complete disregard for his own safety,.

Due to the urgency of the situation he was unable to set up the mortar properly. Holding the mortar between his legs and steadying it with his hands and using his helmet as a base plate, LCPL Darnell began firing the mortar from a position exposed to the enemy fire and delivered accurate fire into the enemy positions. His A-gunner urinated on Darnell's hands and the tube to keep it cool.

When he had exhausted all of the mortar rounds of the mortar squad, LCPL Darnell informed the rest of the platoon to standby; he was coming around to collect more ammunition. He stood up and again raced up and down the lines collecting mortar ammunition and then returned to his mortar, all the while being subject to hostile fire. This was repeated several times until the enemy fire was silenced.

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[644] Conversation with Mr. Tom Ryan, 24 Aug 1985. Ryan was Point Man in 3d Platoon.

At this time, the First Platoon was ordered to withdraw from the clearing. While withdrawing, two Marines in close proximity to LCPL Darnell were hit by MG fire. He quickly moved through the fire to render first aid and was dragging wounded Marines from the clearing when he was temporarily blinded by dirt and rock fragments which embedded in his eyes. He refused to be evacuated and within an hour was again caring for the wounded. When the radioman for the Third Squad was killed, LCPL Darnell took over the radio as the platoon withdrew.[645]

The chaos of the battle momentarily settled, but not the disorienting confusion. Corporal Brown, a MG team leader of B-3 recalls, "We didn't know which place we were supposed to be in, where we were going to set down at. We just moved in as clumsy as we could. We tried to figure out where the fire was coming from."

B-1 was then ordered to leave the KIA with B-3 and join up with BRAVO-6, Capt Sayers. Two men at the time started moving to where they could find some cover; no one had any real cover at this time. The mission was to assist B-2, which had lost four men.

Early on the morning of the 24th, 2Lt Thomas G. King had led 30 men from B-2 plus a 81 mm mortar section with approximately 120 founds of mortar ammo and 1/Lt Philip H. Sauer, commander of the ONTOS section at Khe Sanh, to Hill 700, about a click south of 861, to provide security for the sweeping B-1 and B-3.

Upon reaching XD 805435, Lt King set up his 81 and at about 0930H, began to fire into the cave area. About an hour later, he dispatched a 5-man OP to proceed up the trail to the top of Hill 861 for a better advantage so they could call fire missions and possibly air support for the two platoons. The OP advanced until it reached a bamboo thicket about 300 meters from the top of the hill, at 1100H, and was ambushed by dug-in 20-30 NVA. The point man went down yelling, "I'm hit!" and just lay on the trail.

Lt Sauer and PFC William Marks made it to a foxhole; the radioman and security took cover about 15 feet behind them. The NVA soldiers began plastering them with fire. Lt Sauer was armed with only a pistol. A NVA round had burst the muzzle of the security man's rifle; it was worthless.

Marks and the Lt decided to make a run for it. Sauer said he'd cover Marks and follow him back to the others.

> I made off and it was the last I ever saw of him. When I got to the other two I said, 'Come on, let's get out of here,' and we ran down as far as we could and went down again, the fire was so heavy. But we got up and began running again. We saw the gooks shadowing us downhill on our right side and I thought they had us surrounded. I thought we were all going to die right there. We were running scarred.[646]

The radioman was hit in the chest and went down. The security man disappeared. Marks found himself alone, running blindly, stumbling and falling along the narrow and slick mud path as bullets hit all around him.

The squad security for the 81 moved forward to investigate, and Marks stumbled into them. Breathless, exhausted, and caked with mud, he blurted, "They're all dead. The other four. All dead."

When he made it to his unit, he was given some aspirins and told to lie down and rest. He couldn't. "I kept seeing those poor guy's faces."

Lt King immediately dispatched one of his squads to retrieve the 4 bodies. They arrived at the ambush site and had their hands on two of the bodies; they did not see the other two. Due to the very heavy fire, the squad was forced to withdraw, and Lt King proceeded to call an artillery mission on Hill 861 where it was assumed the NVA were dug-in.

At this point, Capt Sayers radioed Lt King and said he was on his way by helicopter. The approach of his helicopter was met with .50 caliber MG fire, but managed to land with Capt Sayers and his radioman and take-off.

Lt King immediately turned the 81 tube around and fired on the .50. One enemy body flew into the air. A squad dispatched to investigate could locate nothing. When the squad returned, Lt King and nine Marines went to the ambush site on 861, took no fire, and managed to get to the two bodies and drag them back. One body had been stripped of everything but boots, utility trousers, and utility jacket. The other body was stripped and had nothing but a cartridge belt, a couple of canteens, and flak jacket.

For about 20 minutes, the squad combed through the immediate area searching for the two others, without success. Perhaps they had crawled away, they thought. Lt King then requested permission from Capt Sayers to pull back.

> I did not like this area. It was too very quiet. There was no bugs making any kind of noise, no noises whatsoever, and I figured the enemy was still up in that area.

Upon reaching a suitable area, he called in a helicopter to evacuate the two bodies.

> I came up on the helicopter's frequency, and he instructed me to pop a smoke. I popped one smoke. The helicopter circled high overhead. He instructed me to pop another smoke, which I did. The helicopter, which

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[645] On 26 April 1967, LCPL Darnell was killed trying to drag a wounded Marine from a heavily mortared position.
[646] UPI release, "When Your Buddies Are Dead, Run Like Hell," *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, 1 May 1967.

was a 34, proceeded to land. His wheels had no more than touched the ground when the whole tree line on top of 861 opened up on us with heavy automatic weapons fire. The helicopter took 35 hits. None of my people were hit; we all got down.

The firing slowed down somewhat as Lt King returned to Capt Sayers and the 81 tubes which continued to support the sweeping B-1 and B-3. The FO of B-1 radioed that the rounds were landing directly on top of a NVA company, and to keep firing.

B-1 had been moving towards 861, as ordered, but was ambushed with heavy automatic MG fire; there was another man killed, another wounded. The platoon disengaged, moved to a LZ, and was able to medevac two or three of their wounded by helicopter. Receiving additional heavy fire, the platoon moved to another LZ. Another chopper arrived, but so did heavy enemy fire; another man was killed, three more wounded. The chopper could not land. So B-1 set in for the night, dug in with their wounded and dead. GySgt Al Koppel, the Weapons Platoon Commander, reported:

> It was raining. It was miserable. It was cold. I was in Korea too, and I wonder to this day which one was worse.

B-3, the other sweeping platoon, fared no better. After B-1 left them with the body of Cpl Pomerleau, Cpl Brown recalled, "We stood around there. We couldn't figure out whether we were supposed to set in or not." Three or four minutes passed. All at once they started receiving fire–small arms, mortars, .30 and .50–from the ridge line opposite them, and everyone jumped down. The Marines of B-3 moved to the tree line at the crest of their hill and tried to return fire.

> Nobody knew exactly how we were doing it. We must moved up into the brush, sat down, and started firing. We were firing, and I could see a couple of muzzle flashes from the bushes up ahead, but it was hard to pinpoint the fire. It seemed maybe they were dug in. We were firing back and forth for awhile and the rounds were coming close. We didn't have any trouble. We had concealment, but once we fired, our concealment was literally no good because they could see where [the bullets] were coming from. I didn't know what was going on We heard a couple of guys got hit, and they were screaming and it kinda shook us up. We didn't know what the hell happened. We kept on firing. Finally they told us to pull back and just leve half our gear up there. We tried to bring it with us but it was almost impossible to keep moving and pick up everything you had and keep our packs on our backs. We found out who the casualties wee and the corpsman was working with them, and we were trying to figure out what we were going to do with the gear, and it was the mortar section that got hit. A couple of the guys–. One of them seemed to be all right at first. he was on his feet. He was running. Then the next thing I knew he was laying down. He was unconscious. The other guy got hit. He was hit twice in the leg and in the arm. It tore up his arm pretty bad, but he never let down his spirits. He kept his morale up. He was still conscious and he felt every bit of the pain it seemed.[647]

They started to move off the hill but were having trouble transporting the wounded in makeshift stretchers. One of the machine-gunners give up his MG and started to carry a wounded man on his back, a man from the rockets squad who had been hit in his legs. They continued down the path trying to locate a LZ.

The NVA attempted to mortar the Marines, but their aim was fortunately inaccurate. Nevertheless, as Cpl Brown recalls, Most of us were scarred. We were just glad to get away from there. But we weren't running to anything. We weren't actually getting away from anything. We were still in it." The Marines moved down a trail, but paused since the corpsman was having trouble with casualties to the rear. Friendly aircraft began dropping bombs on the hill–very close to B-3.

> We got bombed by our jets up there. My squad got 6 people killed. They were blowing up the whole top of the hill with mortars. They were just telling me to move quick–running down there, more or less falling, and the jets bombed us, blew my whole fire team away. I think they thought we were the enemy the way we were coming off that hill.[648]

Two more bombs came too late.

> We lost radio contact with the platoon commander, and the word was passed back to me–I was about in the middle of the formation–that some people had been injured by the bombs and they needed a corpsman up there badly. So we passed the word back for a corpsman. The corpsman came up, and we moved back to this area that had been bombed, and around this area we saw various gear scattered all over the area, and parts of bodies all over the area, and we were told to move past that area so that the platoon sergeant could

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[647] Comments of Michael A. Brown, Tape #960.
[648] Conversation with Mr. Tom Ryan, 24 Aug 1986.

move up and stay with this man who was dying. And the man wouldn't die right off, so we got the word to pick him up with all–most–of the gear we could carry and the wounded, and move down to this LZ area.[649]

It was about 1700H when Capt J. A. House of HMM-265, who had been piloting a routine resupply for some 4 hours, was alerted for an emergency medical evacuation. Capt House and his co-pilot, Capt J. J. Dalton, proceeded along with his wingman, Capt Nick, to B-1 and B-3 for the medevac.

Capt Nick approached the LZ occupied by B-1 on the very top of Hill 861. As soon as the helicopter landed in the zone, the enemy opened fire.

> We got three of them aboard. We got every window in the cockpit shot-out right there. We also had an armor-piercing round in our forward transmission. As we landed [at KSCB] the transmission froze. Neither one of us were hit. My Gunner got hit in the knee–took a 12.7 in the knee. I think we got one wounded and two bodies out before we got out of there. My job as the co-pilot was to watch the fire and get the ramp down. I started to call in the fire. We were facing the horseshoe ridge on 861, and the fire started on the left and went all the way around.

Capt House then proceeded to B-3's position (XD 804453) which was supposed to be in defilade from the enemy. However, as they landed in the zone, they began receiving intense enemy fire from the ridge line to their right. The zone was also obstructed by trees and stumps.

Immediately upon setting down, the aircraft came under fire from an automatic weapon at the three o'clock position and the Crew Chief, LCPL Daniel Douglas Dulude, returned fire with the .50. Upon observing that there was no fire from the 9 o'clock position and that the side of the hill made it improbable that fire would come from that side, the Gunner, SSgt G. L. Logan, began loading for the Crew Chief and the first medevac crawled into the aircraft on his hands and knees.

LCPL Dulude motioned for SSgt Logan to take over the gun while he assisted the wounded man aboard the chopper.[650] He then learned that there was no one to help the wounded to the aircraft except other wounded, and that the casualties were on a small hill about 25 meters from the chopper.

With automatic weapons fire striking around the aircraft and without regard for his own personal safety, LCPL Duluder departed the aircraft and dashed into 12 - 14 foot high elephant grass to aid the wounded. The height of the grass made it impossible for him to see the aircraft after moving about 15 meters.

He returned with one of the wounded men and courageously set out to help the next man. Returning again he turned around and once again left the aircraft to return to the wounded. At this point, during his second trip to help the wounded, the enemy began to mortar the zone. At least 6 mortars fell in close to the aircraft and the area in which LCPL Dulude was working. Although the enemy small arms fire and AW fire was intense, LCPL Dulude continued his efforts, disregarding his own personal safety.

He returned to the aircraft a third time and once more ran back into the zone. Finding the last man, LCPL Dulude again returned to the aircraft. Then he made certain there were no other casualties remaining in the zone. Only when he ws certain all the wounded were aboard did he reenter the aircraft and inform the pilot that they were clear to lift-out.

Although exhausted, he refused rest and immediately began administering first aid to the wounded enroute to the medical facility.

That night, B-1 and B-3 dug in as best they could. They had no E-tools and dug their foxholes using canteen cups and bayonets. They had been traveling light–no packs, only cartridge belts. One Sergeant in B-3, shot in his legs, kept telling everyone, "We are all going to die!" Surprisingly they were not assaulted that night. Airstrikes and artillery pounded the areas around them and 861 for most of the night.

At B-2's position, having exhausted the 81 ammo, Capt Sayers pulled back to Khe Sanh with the mortar team and squad security just prior to darkness.

Casualties for 24 Apr were: 14 USMC KIA, 18 WIA, and 2 MIA. 5 NVA KIA (confirmed) and 100 KIA (probable).[651] Support for 24 Apr: 660 rounds of 105 mm and 8 fixed wing SORTIEs dropping 6500 pounds of ordnance.

25 APRIL 1967: DECIMATION IN THE FOG[652]

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[649] Comments of LCPL Donald A. Clark, Tape #959.

[650] Materials on LCPL Dulude are based on his Silver Star Medal file for actions on 24 April 1967.

[651] SOP 261900Z/Apr67, SITREP #84.

[652] Sources for this section: 3MAR AAR BATTLE OF KHE SANH; Comments of LCPL Clark, Tape #959; Comments of Cpl Brown, Tape #960; comments of Sgt Norwood, Tape #992; Comments of SSGT Ritchie, Tape #995; Maj Sayers ltr and comments of 18 May 1981; Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *1967*, pp. 37-39; SOP 251600Z/Apr67, SITREP #83; SOP 261900Z/Apr67, SITREP #84; SSM file on LCPL Daniel Douglas Dulude; Comments of Capt C.L. Spivey, Tape #950; SSM

Raymond Madonna of H/2/3 recalls that 2/3, commanded by LtCol Earl R. DeLong ("Pappy") was finishing a sweeping operation code-named BO DIDDLEY on the coast (but later renamed BEACON STAR) when he was notified to cease operations immediately and prepare for helicopter extraction. The destination was Phu Bai Airfield. "After arranging cold soft drinks and sandwiches for us, he told me we were going to a place called Khe Sanh. 2/3, a part of the Special Landing Force of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade was to be assigned to the Third Marines under command of Colonel John P. Lanigan. Lt Bruce Griesmer, the Second Platoon Commander relates the story of Colonel Hammerbeck giving one of his Marines a pair of his twill utility trousers to replace the torn pair he saw the man wearing. Shortly thereafter we were loaded aboard C-130 aircraft bound for Khe Sanh airfield."[653]

Battalion 2/3 arrived at Khe Sanh in the early afternoon and received the welcome order to heave their flak jackets before moving out towards the battle zone. "It was a tradeoff of protection against shell fragments, but the added mobility would prove a blessing. We set in for the night after a long, hot and uneventful march."[654]

The plan for 25 Apr was to move K/3/3 and the 3/3 Command Group to Khe Sanh to conduct a battalion-minus operation with B/1/9. K/3/3 had been scheduled to relieve B/1/9 on 29 Apr, and liaison personnel of 3/3 were already at Khe Sanh on the 24th. Intentions were for B/1/9 to evacuate their casualties during the morning and sweep toward Hill 861 from the northwest.

Fog was to determine much of the day's activity rather than plans.

At 0815H, B-3 was preparing their ammunition and gear when suddenly someone shouted, "Look back! Look back! Hey, come here!" A NVA soldier had walked right up to Tom Ryan, the Point Man of the platoon, to surrender, saying he wanted to quit; he was going home.

> I couldn't believe it; they were actually talking to a Gook! So I wanted to run for my life because I thought we were surrounded. We tied him up good, put a blindfold on him, stuck stuff into his mouth. We just sat there and waited and wondered. Maybe we were spotted; we didn't know. We just sat there.[655]

The captured NVA soldier, Vu Van Tich, later stated that he was a member of 4th Battalion, 32nd Regiment, and that he had left his unit 4 days prior to his surrender.[656]

A medevac of the casualties was attempted. As the first chopper landed in the zone, it encountered a hail of small arms fire. The chopper lifted off immediately, but not before Capt Sayers had debarked and several evacuees embarked, including the POW. This was the only helicopter able to reach B/1/9 on 25 Apr due to the fog. Thereafter B/1/9 commenced movement along the trail south and east to Hill 861 (XD 803443).

B-3 was moving to link up with their "6." Sgt Rios began leading the men down a gully and up to the ridge line to Capt Sayers, avoiding the path where they had been hit the previous day. But the vegetation was so thick that after half an hour, they had only moved less than ten meters. The Sgt then decided the only possible route was the trail, to take the chance of getting ambushed, but to be very alert.

As they moved, they discovered a lot of gear plus about 3 bodies. The progress was halted as the bodies and the gear was retrieved. The humping, the anxiety of battle and always-possible death, and the lack of water they themselves had, made all of the Marines dangerously desiccated and weaker by the moment. The dead bodies, however, still had some canteens of precious water which they could swallow. Even in death, the Marines at Khe Sanh shared what they had with each other. It was now about 1730 or 1800 and the fog was so thick that visibility was restricted to about 5 meters.

> We got up on top of the hill. We set up stretchers for these dead people, and we started to move off. We got down the trail approximately 50 meters. There was a dead man laying there. So they passed the word back to the formation that the last three men were to pick up this dead man and carry him along. They were supposed to pass the word up when it was time to move out, but we were trying to get the man arranged, to get a litter for him and word was passed to move out. We passed the word up that he wasn't ready. Word

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file on HM3 Michael G. Gibbs; BSM file on LCPL Harold Allan Croft; SSM file on LCPL Raymond Lee Huckins; BSM file on CPL Stoney Jackson; BSM file on Floyd Allen Gregory; BSM file on PFC Brenton Wilford Allaire; BSM file on LCPL Barry Lee Duncan; BSM file on 2/Lt Curtis L. Frisbie; BSM file on LCPL Lester Larry Menke; BSM file on LtCol Gary Wilder; BSM file on PFC Floyd Allen Gregory.

[653] Raymond Madonna, "Hotel 2/3 in the Hill Battles of Khe Sanh," 1 October 1997, in letter from Madonna, 02 March 1998.

[654] *Ibid.*

[655] Comments of Cpl Michael Brown, Tape #960.

[656] FMFPAC280301Z/Apr67, SITREP #759. The 32nd Regt. is subordinate to the 341 Div, which had been reported with its three regiments on 22 April to be in the A Shau Valley with the mission of attacking Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces.

was passed, 'We're moving out anyway,' so we moved out. We got about 75 meters on the other side of this dead person and the word was passed that we were supposed to go back and get this man.[657]

The fog was, by now, very, very thick, and it was also dark. "We told them the fog was so thick we couldn't even find the path to get back there, and so we decided that we would move on. We had about 3 KIAs with us already."[658]

B-3 moved about 30 more meters, dropped their KIAs, and set up a perimeter for the evening.

B-1, still separated from B-3 during the 25th, had been able to evacuate their wounded on the medevac helicopter, but not their dead, and also moved all day until about 2100H with their dead–through the extremely torturous and muddy terrain, although completely exhausted, with no food and little water.

Fog delayed movement of the 3/3 Command Group under command of LtCol Gary Wilder and Co K/3/3, commanded by Capt Bayliss L. Spivey, from Thon Son Lam to Khe Sanh until noon on the 25th, at which time 3/3 assumed OPCON of B/1/9. Capt Sayers has managed to depart KSCB just minutes earlier.

LtCol Wilder later noted: "So I got another company up that was attached to me, and by the time the Company got up there, late in the evening, I was able to brief the Company Commander. I had the unpleasant task of telling him that he had to march in, using stealth, and join-up with the remnants of those two platoons in the middle of those three hills, probably heavily-occupied."[659]

LtCol Gary Wilder had commanded 3d Recon Bn (reinforced with 1st and 3rd Force Recon Cos) whose patrols had detected the influx of the NVA 324B Division north and west of Dong Ha. Operation HASTINGS was launched as a result and 1995 NVA were confirmed KIA. Now, LtCol Wilder was CO of 3/3. Col John Lanigan, CO of Third Marines, had decided to replace B/1/9 with 3/3 since Khe Sanh was very active as a base for launching intelligence-gathering units into Laos to monitor the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and especially the portion of it that stemmed north from Route 9, just east of BV33, parallel to the border, and then crossed into the DMZ, known as the "Santa Fe Trail."

Numerous patrols of Marine Force Recon and B/1/9 infantry had disclosed the presence of major NVA units in the Khe Sanh area, but the base commander at the time refused to believe these reports. Wilder noted: "When the base commander briefed me when I went up initially for the coordination on the change, he said, 'There are only 30'–and I remember these things even though it's a long time ago. He said, 'There are 30 VCs operating in our area. They have 2 82mm mortars, but they only have one base plate.' When he finished, I said, 'Do you really believe yourself what you just told me?' He said, 'what do you mean? Of course! We have good intelligence.' I said, 'You're talking to the former Division Reconnaissance Officer, Stop that!' But he honestly believed it. During the operation I got ahold of one of my recon Sergeants who had been up there for some time, and I said, 'Sergeant, what the hell's going on up there?' And his words were, 'Sir, I've been trying to tell that *** for two months that we got North Vietnamese crawling all over these hills, and he wouldn't believe me.'"[660]

Capt Bayliss Larkin Spivey, CO of K/3/3 since 02 Apr 67, received the mission from LtCol Wilder to take Hill 861 and be prepared to continue to the northwest to aid B/1/9 and exploit their contact.

K/3/3 jumped off in the attack from KSCB by foot at noon and commenced artillery prep of Hill 861. At 1410H the hill at XD 813430 was reached and the company, now about 3/4^{ths} of the 5,000 meters from KSCB to 861, deployed for the final attack: two platoons separated to go up the two ridge lines approaching the hill from the south. K-3 was to continue north to XD 806445 (a hill later called '861-A' during the Siege) and be prepared to assist K-1 and the Co Hq which moved northwest directly on to 861. K-2, along with the 60 mm mortar section, remained as security for the Bn CP to cover the company's approach to the objective. K-2 was at XD 811431.

By 1445H, K-1 and the Co Hq had reached a position at XD 804438. The advance was checked at this point to permit K-3 to progress to a supporting distance along the ridge to the east. Also, a final artillery prep was requested. At 1525H, K-3 was at the desired position at XD 808439. Artillery check fire was in effect throughout this time. Up to this time, K/3/3 had received no contact, and at 1615H, Capt Spivey requested to continue the attack without further prep fires. Permission was granted. By 1630H, K-3 had reached its objective at XD 806445 and was ordered to establish a blocking position to the southwest.

K-1 and K-3 were not physically tied-in due to the very small width of the hill approaches and extremely steep sides.

K-1 moved up the ridgeline directly south of the summit of 861 while K-3 moved on a ridge line moving into the objective from the east to support K-1's advance.

At precisely 1705H–Capt Spivey recalls the exact time–lead elements of K-1, then some 300 meters from the summit, began to receive fire from enemy bunkers on top of the hill as well as mortars from a reverse slope defense. Due to the

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[657] Comments of LCPL Clark, Tape #959.
[658] Comments of CPL Brown, Tape #960.
[659] Conversation with COL Gary Wilder, 28 Sep 1994.
[660] *Ibid.*

nature of the concave slope and the brush, the Marines never had good observation of the enemy position, but poured a large volume of M-79, LAW, and small arms into the general area.

Although they advanced to about 100 meters of the crest by 1730H, they had run out of troops. Only en " effecives" remained in K-1; there were fifteen Marines killed and another fifteen WIA. The number of dead and wounded made disengagement impossible.

When the First Squad leader was mortally wounded, LCPL Raymond Lee Huckins immediately assumed command, reorganized the squad and aggressively continued the assault. When the enemy fire increased and temporarily halted the unit's advance, LCPL Huckins, discovering a critical shortage of ammo, fearlessly exposed himself to the enemy fire to distribute ammo and assist in rendering first aid to the casualties.

As he moved among his men, encouraging them, an enemy grenade landed within a few feet of him and two other Marines. Disregarding his own safety and with outstanding presence of mind, he picked up the grenade and hurled it away a few seconds before it exploded.[661]

Cpl Stoney Jackson received painful leg wounds but refused medical evacuation and continued to lead his men.[662]

The corpsman of K-1, HM3 Michael G. Gibbs, immediately moved to the forefront, into the heat of the battle, and began to treat a Marine with a sucking chest wound and then moved him 15 meters to a safer location. He then exposed himself again to the intense fire to assist a second Marine. While administering first aid, he was wounded in his back, but continued to help the wounded Marine. Having completed treatment for the second Marine, he moved to a third, but received a wound that broke his leg. He was then pinned down under fire where he quietly remained until darkness, when he and the others were moved to a more secure area.[663]

Capt Spivey requested that LtCol Wilder release the reserve platoon, K-2, which was then in the vicinity of the Bn CP group. As K-2 advanced towards the decimated K-1, K-3 was ordered forward on the crest from the east but reported slow progress in the saddle northeast of Hill 861; they reached XD 804444 and were held up for the night. B/1/9 was moving towards K-1 from the west slope of 861.

The sun was setting along with their hopes. Darkness was setting in, along with the darkness of the unknown, the fear and the terror. The Marines were just under the enemy positions, and Capt Spivey was unable to extract K-1 from the immediate contact with the enemy. All of the wounded of K-1, however, were recovered into its lines along with all but 4 of those killed.

By 1830H, K-2 had arrived at K-1's position and began to recover the 4 KIA, but two additional casualties were taken in the process, and the attempt was discontinued. During this time there were numerous acts of heroism as the very young Marines were about, in the face of heavy enemy fire, dragging the wounded and dead to safer positions.

LCPL Harold Allan Croft, for example, without hesitation, moved through the exploding mortars and automatic weapons fire to assist HM3 Gibbs. he then began crawling around the hillside giving medical aid to the wounded. At times he appeared to be everywhere, administering aid, giving encouragement, and serving as an inspiration to all present. In one instance, during a pause in the enemy mortar attack, PFC Croft exposed himself to heavy MG fire to administer first aid to LCPL Oliver, a victim of mortar shrapnel. PFC Croft applied battle dressings to the head and leg of LCPL Oliver and then dragged him to safety. Every time someone yelled "Corpsman!" PFC Croft ran out of his hole, knowing the corpsman was already busy, to apply battle dressings and drag the wounded to safety.

Since the first contact at 1705, incoming mortars were received in volleys of 3 to 5, falling at first to the south, but were walked up the ridge. Most of the rounds continued to fall a little behind the position, but several were on target, producing additional casualties. Counter-mortar and artillery seemed to have little effect. Apparently the enemy mortars were dug in on the reverse slope making artillery fire ineffective.

The command group withdrew a short distance, but PFC Floyd Allen Gregory, the Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) rep, remained forward to assist communications personnel maintain vital contact with subordinate and higher echelons.

During the night, K/3/3 maintained its positions under sporadic fire as all dug in, in place. About 0200H, they spotted rockets and mortars being fired from GS 7943, a position to their west, being fired on KSCB. Artillery was fired accurately on target, and C-47 SPOOKY later arrived on station to spew its venom of fire.

LtCol Gary Wilder notes:

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[661] SSM file on LCPL Raymond Lee Huckins.

[662] BSM file on CPL Stoney Jackson.

[663] SSM file (post.) on HM3 Michael G. Gibbs. HM3 Gibbs was KIA the following morning during a mortar attack. On 07 Jul 1967, a Marine of W/1/13 on Hill 861 was digging a position near the LZ and uncovered a wallet containing personal effects and ID of HM3 Michael G. Gibbs, 795-99-92. [S-2/S-3 Journal, 070001H July to 072400H July 1967, Ser. No. 27, entry for 1605, in 1/26 ComdC, July, 1967.

..this is the most interesting aspect of all: during that night, they rocketed Khe Sanh–or tried to. Now we saw the rockets going up and going over. I remember talking on the phone like I'm talking to you–I'm talking to the Khe Sanh base as the rockets are going over my head, saying, 'Pull your head in; they're coming in!' Now fortunately I programmed a flare plane to be on station that night, which was one of the old C-47s equipped with mini-guns. The minute the rockets started going up, I vectored him and he started hosing down with the mini-guns. The thing was quieted-down very quickly. but the interesting thing was–I found out the next day–there had been a coordinated attack that took place on every northern base in the I Corps area at the same time, right to the minute. So we subsequently pieced-together–the intelligencer people–that we believe that they had planned that night to take Khe Sanh. And it makes a lot of sense, because there was but an infantry platoon and some reinforcements. And it was only by the accident of those Marines walking up Hill 861 that triggered all of this action prematurely.[664]

COL Wilder continues:

They moved in a whole Division into Laos, and subsequently moved a Regiment of that Division in to occupy those three hills. I think the plan was that that Regiment was going to hold the three hills and they were going to pass another one or two Regiments through them and take Khe Sanh. The intelligence that came back said that the first regiment that had occupied those hills had been virtually annihilated. The second regiment was involved in the counter-attack, and they were written-off. So it's two of the three regiments were wiped-out for all intensive purposes. (But this is getting at the end of the story!)

During the afternoon of the 25th, recon team 3A1, HAWK, made contact with 10-15 NVA west of their position (XD 762505), a ridgeline beside a dead tree about 30 meters from a tree line which ran across the ridge.

Around one o'clock, we started hearing the noise coming up this hill. We were in a well-camouflaged little jungle area on a knoll. It as a flank movement coming up that hill. They were all helmeted, geared and combat ready. They had elephant grass over them for camouflage. Closer and closer the enemy came. They got within 50 ft. We were well concealed on higher ground. Cpl Robert Wacker, the Squad Leader, squeezed the trigger. It was a misfire! It sounded almost like a firecracker. Our adrenalin was really going. The next guy, Rudy, opened up and we got those guys, no problem.

The problem was what was behind those guys. It must have been a company, and they started to open up–small arms, MG fire. They had us pinned down real bad. Then something happened.

I don't know if was a 82mm mortar or hand grenade. It hit right above us; it got every one of us. Terry Burton, who was right next to me, was completely unconscious–looked like someone took an ice-pick to him.

Another guy came crawling up to me and said, 'Baker, we got to get out.' This was after about 15, 20 minutes of fire-fighting. We were getting low on ammo. We had placed our K-bars in front of us, and were fixin' to hand-to-hand. He said, 'The Assistant Squad leader, Rudy, told me to tell you to get out.'

Well, I didn't want to go! I knew there'd be a MG because we were getting fire from three sides. in my haste in going out I tripped the M-21, and I started a fire. I mean it was burning, and I tried to put it out with my hands. So I knew I was going to die, and being a religious man I told God, 'God, if you give me one more chance, I will stop my evil ways.' I knew I was going to die. Well, fortunately for me, there was nothing out that way at the time.[665]

Two choppers of HMM-265 landed to extract the team. The first, piloted by Capt Petteys, made his pass too fast and his guns jammed; he waved off. His wingman, Capt J. A. House, II, rolled in behind him and slid in along the ridgeline. His helicopter, EP-173, immediately drew automatic weapons fire, but he was about 75 meters from the recon team. LCPL Daniel D. Dulude, the Crew Chief, knelt on the open rear ramp of the aircraft where he was exposed to the direct enemy fire only 75 meters away and calmly directed Capt House through a difficult back-taxi maneuver towards the team.

Fred Baker, a member of HAWK, along with another man, Pete, dashed back and forth carrying everyone. Six men of HAWK were badly wounded or unconscious; 2 were still able to move.

Also assisting the wounded recon team members to the chopper under the heavy enemy fire, was the Crew Chief, Daniel D. Dulude,.

The enemy were in the tree-line and were firing AKs and throwing hand grenades at the team. It seemed as if we had misjudged our chances of retrieving them. The point is rather vivid in my mind because the transmission on the helicopter had been leaking transmission fluid on the ramp and made it extremely

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[664] Conversation with COL Gary Wilder, 28 September 1994.

[665] Cpl Fred Baker, "Eyewitness report of recon patrol in action in Vietnam," Piedmont, Alabama *Journal* 60:26 (29 Jun 19670; Conversation with Mr. Fred Baker, 24 Sep 1988.

difficult for one person to crawl up. I remember the two of us [Dulude and Baker] pushing the medevac up on the ramp in what seemed like an eternity. We then left to help two others. Our paths led us to different wounded and we made our way back to the helo on our own. At this point a count of Marines on board indicated that there were three missing. Two were wounded and the third was Baker, who had already started back for one of them. I again left the plane to gather the last wounded man. We took another count, raised the rear ramp, and left the zone.[666]

The entire team was medevaced to DaNang. After HAWK was extracted, Huey gunships strafed the suspected enemy positions in the tree-line causing one secondary explosion.

Due to the action at Khe Sanh, Co K/3/9, commanded by Capt Jerald E. Giles, was flown into Khe Sanh from Camp Carroll.

Like so many troopers who came to Khe Sanh, LCPL Henry Rose, Jr., a squad leader in Weapons Platoon, K/3/9, recalls: "..at first nobody knew where we were going. We knew we were going somewhere because my company was the reactionary company for anything that came up."[667] Marines were jostled from one place to another during their tours in Viet Nam until all the places and events and days merged into a very confused and tangled web of experience as impenetrable as a bamboo thicket, out of which it was impossible to make any sense, only nightmares from images seared on the soul.

Third Marines at Khe Sanh assumed OPCON of K/3/9 at 250830H. The Marines were now sending companies to Khe Sanh piecemeal into the meat grinder of battle. K/2/9, B/1/9, K/3/3, and now K/3/9. The opinion held by the higher echelons of the Marine command that there really was no enemy at Khe Sanh, had become the perception that precipitated death. Capt Spivey on the Combat Base the 24th as B/1/9 was experiencing its contact, remarked: "No one suspected more than probably a NVA company in the area at that time."[668] Of course, the extremely rugged terrain precluded any large mass movement of troop formations. The hills of Khe Sanh dictated how we would maneuver.

Reconstruction of the NVA plan by FMFPAC[669] reflected isolation of the battlefield by mortar attacks on Dong Ha, Gio Linh, Con Thien, and Camp Carroll, all designed to upset Marine fire support and logistic arrangements. A mortar attack on Phu Bai would endanger helicopter support, while blowing away bridges and key stretches of Route 9 would sever overland logistic supply. In addition, a diversionary attack on the Lang Vei Special Forces camp, four miles west of Khe Sanh near the Laotian border, would make the enemy threat appear to be focused there. As LtGen Krulak's summary put it: "All this was to be ancillary to the main effort, a strong ground attack on Khe Sanh, coming southward from the mountainous region near the Laos-RVN-DMZ corner."

Later analysis through contacts, prisoner interrogation, and captured documents, reflected that the 18th Regiment of the 325C Division, had moved into the operational area from Laos early in April under cover of fog and heavy cloud conditions. The mission was to attack Khe Sanh. The regiment occupied the triangle-shaped key terrain in the area bounded by hill 861 (XD 803443), Hill 881-South (XD 777437), and hill 881-North (XD 774457). A prisoner reported that the regiment was supported by the 2d Artillery Battalion armed with ten 120 mm mortars and ten 75 mm recoilless rifles.

26 APRIL 1967: AGONY

26 April began with the 3/3 CP (at XD 805434) receiving approx. 200 rounds of 82 at 0500H,. Simultaneously, KSCB received 55 rounds of 82 and 55 rounds of 75RR fire, most of which landed outside the perimeter. A flareship with miniguns was called on station, delivering a massive volume of fire on suspected enemy positions and movements. There were no casualties as a result of this action.[670] B/1/9 was close enough to the NVA RRs to see and hear their back blast in the fog. Located on the eastern slope of 881-S, Capt Sayers silenced them by directing artillery on them by sound. By 105 mm artillery illumination and holes in the fog, destruction of the recoilless rifles was confirmed. The fog was in layers at the time; the hill masses were covered and the valleys were clear.[671] The sun arose on the Marines of K/3/3 still in place on 861, pinned down by the NVA. Capt Spivey noticed, however, that by 0615H, K-3's presence in close proximity to the enemy's northeast was apparently still undetected. Shortly before first light, K-3 was ordered forward in an attempt to take the enemy position from that direction. K-1 and K-2 were alerted to move out on order, pending developments on K-3's advance.

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[666] Notarized letter from Daniel D. Dulude, 5 Jan 1989, to Mr. Fred J. Baker. [Khe Sanh microfilms 4040-4042].
[667] Comments on Tape #1131.
[668] Comments on Tape #950.
[669] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam, April, 1967*, pp. 27-30.
[670] 3MAR AAR BATTLE OF KHE SANH, p. 15
[671] Ltr of Maj Michael W. Sayers, 18 May 1981 to Marine Corps HistCen with enclosures; Tefler, Rogers, and Fleming, *1967*, pp. 35-37

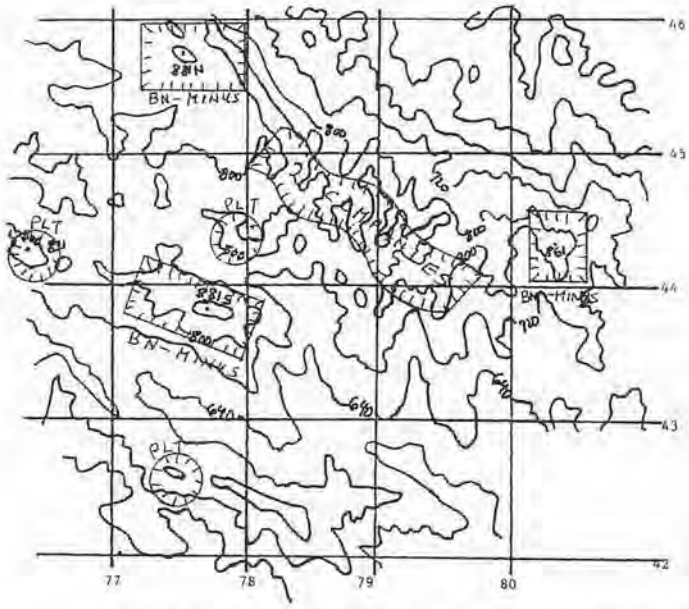

NVA POSITIONS DURING 1967 KHE SANH BATTLE OF THE HILLS[672]

2/Lt Curtis L. Frisbie led his K-3 Marines forward, exercising stealth, until the enemy positions could be observed and voices heard. By 0815H, preparations for the assault were being made when the platoon came under an intense volume of automatic weapons fire and grenades. The platoon immediately sustained casualties; Lt Frisbie was seriously wounded and subsequently medevaced.[673]

By this time it had also become apparent that B/1/9's platoons were a considerable distance to the west and could not influence the action. It was also apparent to Capt Spivey that he just did not have the horsepower to overcome the extensive and well-organized defense on Hill 861. Due to the close-in fighting, no supporting arms could effectively contribute to the action.

Capt Spivey asked LtCol Wilder for permission to disengage K-3 who was not hit too bad at that time. Wilder agreed, and K-3 pulled back to a secure LZ to extract their wounded.

The only access to the area secured for helicopter evacuation was across an open, grassy finger ridgeline exposed to enemy sniper fire from Hill 861 for over 100 meters. The fire was well-placed and frequently heavy.

LCPL Miller was one of those wounded in the initial attack, and he had been left behind. PFC Brenton Wilford Allaire, without being told to do so, along with Cpl Contreras, returned to Hill 861 and helped him to safety. As the MGs and snipers opened up on the 100 meters of exposed area, PFC Allaire along with LCPL Barry Lee Duncan continued five more trips across the fire-swept area, dragging wounded comrades to safety as well as gather up all the rockets deposited along the trail while pulling the wounded to safety. Each time they drew fire, but kept returning. On one occasion, LCPL Duncan aided a Marine to safety who was unable to walk.[674]

PFC Thomas M. Barrow, Jr. and LCPL Lester Larry Menke also assisted the wounded to safety. On two separate occasions, LCPL Menke successfully braved the concentrated fire to move his fellow Marines to safety. As he maneuvered through the fire-swept area a third time, he was painfully wounded in his leg. Despite his wound, LCPL Menke continued trying to get the man across to safety. After about 10 meters he was again wounded. Another Marine relieved him of his burden, and LCPL Menke began crawling with all his gear and without assistance to the LZ where he was evacuated.[675]

Meanwhile, Capt Spivey requested Huey gunship support to assist him in disengaging K-1 and K-2 and evacuate their dead and wounded. Gunships arrived about 1030H and provided outstanding support in close proximity to the front lines, and the platoons were able to disengage, moving about 25 meters at a time down the hill. Moving down all the dead, wounded, and all the gear was difficult, but by leap-frogging short distances and displacing the security, he was able to gather all the wounded and all the dead except 4 which had been ahead of their lines.

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[672] Intelligence Section AAR, appended to letter of B. L. Spivey to BGen E.H. Simmons, 18 June 1981.
[673] BSM file on 2/Lt Curtis L. Frisbie.
[674] BSM files on LCPL Barry Lee Duncan and Brenton Wilford Allaire.
[675] BSM file on LCPL Lester Larry Menke.

At 0800H, K/3/9 moved out from KSCB and at 261315H, a platoon of K/3/9 linked up with K-3-3(-) at XD 805437, down from the crest of the hill.

LCPL Larry W. Umstead, grenadier with 1st Squad, Third Platoon of K/3/9, noted: "Just as we reached to base of Hill 861 we noticed that there was a lot of gear laying around–there were signs there was plenty heavy fight8ing all up and down the side of the hill. As we approached, we could see them bringing down some of the wounded and dead. And a lot of the men, as they were coming down, were telling us not to go up, how bad it was up there–there's no water, no nothing, and how well the VC were dug in."[676]

From there it was fairly easy going back on into the command group position, south of Hill 861. By 1600H, all elements of First and Second Platoons were within the 3/3 Command Group's positions and medevacs completed. At about 1900H, Third Platoon linked up with the remainder of the company at XD 806444.

The company, with elements of K/3/9, established a perimeter defense on the night of 26/27 April and returned to Khe Sanh the morning of 27 April, arriving by 1100H. After collecting all their gear and equipment, what remained of K/3/3 boarded aircraft and returned to Dong Ha. there had been 19 men killed from K/3/3, including two corpsmen and one who later died of wounds, two who were MIA, 36 wounded (evacuated) and 6 wounded (not evacuated). One of those medevaced, Daniel A. Wisley, a squad leader, was greeted with the news: "Your wife just gave birth to twins and she's doing fine."[677]

The remaining Marines of B/1/9 did not fare well during the 26th.

B-3 dispatched a fire team of five Marines to retrieve the body they had passed the previous afternoon. They were only gone about 5 minutes when they became involved in a fire-fight. The rest of the platoon gathered their fighting gear and quickly moved to where they were, a path on top of a slope. As the platoon moved, they located one dead man and another wounded in his foot. They attempted to fire a few LAWs, but they misfired. Sgt Rios passed the word to return to where they left their gear. While moving, another man was hit in the leg, breaking it.

In about thirty seconds they had on all their gear and began to move up, carrying and dragging whatever they could, fired at by an enemy machine-gunner. They moved from about 0800H until they met up with their "6" and parts of B-1 and B-2 at about 2030H.

The rest of B/1/9 had begun the day at 0700H attempting to move east along the trail leading to 861 and immediately encountered enemy resistance (at XD 795449); B-1 and B-3 linked up at 0840H at XD 802443. Enemy small arms fire coupled with sporadic mortar fire succeeded in limiting B/1/9's advance to a bitterly contested struggle for each foot of terrain.[678]

Capt Glen Golden's F/2/12 artillery battery found Capt Sayers in the fog by walking artillery rounds to him, and then put a "ring of steel" around the company that was so right he was taking dirt from the impact. "It was the most professional and accurate piece of artillery work that I have ever seen. No doubt it saved our lives," noted Capt Sayers.[679]

SSGT Leon R. Burns, Platoon Sgt of B-2, described the progress of the day in an interview conducted 8 May 1967, while all was fresh in his mind:

> ..at dawn we moved out. We were still heading for Hill 861. We got to a small hill approximately 500 meters to the west of it. We got to the top of it. We took a few sniper rounds. We started down the far side, and then the stuff really hit the fan. The Third Platoon had managed to link up with the First, and my people were in the middle with the CP group. As they started down off this hill, getting right up to the very base of 861, they came under heavy automatic fire. At this time the First Platoon leader was wounded and about four or five other men. I lost one of my squad leaders and the M79 man. Also, one of my machine-gunners, LCPL Puleo, he spotted an enemy machinegun. He fired on it with his rifle, and I'm told that he knocked out at least three NVA. In doing so, he exposed himself to quite a bit of fire. He lost his left thumb and was wounded in the left side in two or three places. One of the machine-gunners, PFC DeKaney–we got some incoming mortars, and he was hit in the face. Sergeant Olson, my squad leader, he was up front. He was cut in half by a burst from a machinegun, and his M79 man, PFC Hare, was hit by an automatic weapon and a mortar. About that time, one of my men, PFC Blitz, was down there. He was anywhere and everywhere, doing anything that had to be done. Weighs about 150 pounds; he's a big man. He got down there, started putting dressings on people. My corpsman come up, and about this time my corpsman was shot pretty hard in the leg and in the cheek of his ass. This made him a casualty. We got some people down there to get him out. The CP group was right in the middle. And at one time the company commander was down there with a

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[676] Comments of LCPL Larry W. Umstead, Oral History Tape #1126.
[677] "Twins Pose Name Problem for Marine," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:20 (9 May 1967) 5.
[678] 3MAR AAR KHE SANH, p. 15.
[679] Letter of Capt Michael W. Sayers, 18 May 1981, to Marine Corps Historical Center, with enclosures..

couple of his radiomen getting these people up almost a sheer cliff. They were wounded or were dead. At about the time they got two men up, we had an Air Force OE come over, who were doing an outstanding job for us, and he fired one of his snake rockets, just missing the company commander, Capt Sayers, and just by a couple of feet. We managed to tell him that we were friendly, and he started looking for other targets.[680]

The Marines of B/1/9 began receiving close air support as napalm (DELTA-9s) and 250-pound bombs (DELTA-1s) blasted the back side of 861.

It was becoming apparent that some of the wounded would have to be medevaced or die. Cpl Payne and Cpl Brown were sent back off the hill to a little ridgeline to set up a perimeter for a LZ to evacuate the 5 dead and 15 wounded (at XD 803444).

A helicopter came in. SSgt Burns tossed a smoke grenade, walked off, and started waving the chopper into the zone. He had already arranged 3 men to each wounded and warned them to move quickly because incoming was certain; ther LZ was in full view from 861. Each of the groups picked up a wounded man and raced to the chopper. The chopper just sat down. One wounded man got aboard, and an incoming mortar round exploded. SSgt Burns had to wave the chopper off.

> This was the only time we had a chopper around us that could possibly handle us. We had many wounded, but we just couldn't get a chopper in to get them out. The chopper left. Things started getting worse. We started catching mortar rounds coming in again near our LZ.[681]

The Company now moved like a mob, everyone just grabbing a wounded man, and headed for the edge of the hill. After the first 10 men moved over the ridgeline, the Marines were b lasted by enemy mortars. "Everyone just hit the deck where they were and hoped they didn't get hit. And in this thing some wounded men got killed."

One of those was Cpl Troy David Payne, Jr. Cpl Payne had not been with B/1/9 when it left KSCB. He had a cold and was on light duty. A Marine Corps General landed at Khe Sanh to receive instructions on how to get to the scene of the battle once B/1/9 made contact. in a characteristic Marine move, Cpl Payne boldly climbed aboard he General's helicopter and accompanied him to the scene, where he joined his unit.

Upon reaching the battlefield, Cpl Payne carried wounded to the LZ and fought off repeated enemy attacks with the weapons he picked up from his injured comrades. Now, at this point, Cpl Payne moved right to the center of the impact areas to aid the stricken men to safe positions. He even used his own body to shield other wounded Marines from mortar fragments. He was hit. He died that others might live. He was awarded a Bronze Star Medal.[682]

Some of the wounded, such as LCPL Puerlo and PFC DeKaney, were again wounded,.

The situation seemed impossible. Capt Sayers reported at 1445H to LtCol Wilder's S-3 that he had so many casualties that he couldn't move. The S-3 said Capt Sayers should abandon the dead and just bring out his wounded. Capt Sayers replied that he couldn't even move with his wounded and that he would assume a defensive posture, move into the fog, and fight until it was all over.

Carrying the casualties, now for three days, had been an onerous agony. Capt Sayers later wrote:

> We were carrying KIAs and WIAs in ponchos four men to a litter. The heat deteriorated the bodies rapidly and they bloated fast. Almost impossible to carry in the dark, the mud and the rain. Many times we stopped our march to retrieve a body that had fallen out of a poncho and rolled down a hill. Identification was difficult. KIA tags were lost. It was not until we arrived back at Khe Sanh and matched our company roster with the evacuation list was I convinced that we had not left a fellow Marine in the hills.[683]

Cpl Frank D. Thompson of B-1 reflected the emotion in his silence during an interview conducted 10 October 1967 by by official USMC Oral History personnel:

Thompson:	All this time–three days, carrying KIAs and WIAs with us.
Interviewer:	What did you think about that?
Thompson:	It was bad, but we had to do it.
Interviewer:	It was a bad situation, then. What did you feel about it and what did the other people feel about it? What did they think?
Thompson:	[*Very long silence. No response!*]
Interviewer:	Did they think it was a hopeless situation?
Thompson:	I was–
Interviewer:	Were the people scarred? Were the Marines scarred?

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[680] Comments of SSGT Leon R. Burns, Marine Corps Oral History Tape #993.
[681] *Ibid.*
[682] BSM file on Cpl Troy D. Payne, Jr.
[683] Letter of Michael W. Sayers, 18 May 1981, cited.

Thompson: You're always scarred when you're getting shot at.[684]

Night was fast approaching, and SSgt Burns suggested making some stretchers. Some of the men cut poles for stretchers, and about this time, 1800H, reached B/1/9. "About this time we had some visitors, some very nice people from K/3/9. The Company Commander was with one of his platoons. We were all overjoyed to see them. They had water; we had none. We gave the water to our wounded, and we prepared to leave the area."[685]



26 April 1967, Marines of B/1/9 carrying KIA/WIA in stretchers. Photo from Michael E. Sayers

The 7-man recon unit of K/3/9 gave all the water they had, and their corpsmen began attending their wounded. After all the wounded and dead were staged in one area, litters were made, and the Marines moved out.[686]





26 April 1967, Marines of B/1/9 carrying KIA/MIA. Above: Capt Michael E.Sayers. Photos from Michael E. Sayers

[684] Comments on HQMC Oral History Tape #1677.
[685] Comments of SSgt Burns, HMC Oral History Tape #993.
[686] Comments of LCPL Umstead, HQMC Oral History Tape #1126.

We had so many wounded and dead and extra gear to carry that everyone was carrying something except for the point and rear guard. As we moved out it started to rain and a very large amount of fog. The fog locked us in. Maybe it was a God-send because the NVA couldn't see us. They fired a few spasmodic mortar rounds, but they really didn't do anything. We moved out. I was bringing u the rear,. I had one machine-gunner with his gun, the assistant machine-gunners, and my company commander, bringing up the rear. the Company Commander of K/3/9 was there also a good portion of the time. Everybody carried his load; we carried as much gear as we possibly could. The radiomen, even though they were carrying a PRC-25, still carried people on stretchers. The going was very slow. It was muddy. At one time it rained extremely hard. Maybe this was good in one sense because we did manage to get some water for both us and the wounded. We left a very well-beaten trail. Why the NVA didn't follow us I don't know.[687]

The Marines humped all through the night, in all the hard-falling rain, through all the slippery and cling-to-boots mud, slipping and sliding with their makeshift stretchers, carrying our sorrows, into all the enemy-infested area, carrying all their dead–weary, in chock, and finally about 0500H, arrived at the 3/3 CP (at XD 805428). They were told they could have one hour to sleep and get water for the wounded and the other men that didn't have any.

Choppers arrived at dawn to evacuate wounded, dead, and gear.

SSgt Burns had bone out with 22 men; he returned with 8. On the other hand, the newly-arrived Marines were in such great quantity, like a mass of ants, that Tom Ryan, point man with B-3, looked out and "I remember coming down off that hill; as far as I could see there was Marines, I mean they were coming in and landing all over the sides of the hills and stuff. As far as I could see! Looked like everybody in the world! Looked like thousands of them!"[688]

Those remaining in B/1/9 walked back into Khe Sanh. Trucks were available for the move, but the remnants of B/1/9 chose to walk. It was a matter of pride after four days of constant enemy contact.

2Lt James D. Carter, Jr., wounded with shrapnel in his upper arm and cheek on the hospital ship, USS SANCTUARY later wrote Capt Sayers: "..those young men, their tremendous will to live,, and their ability and courage under fire would be hard to match. I's surprising any of us got out of there alive considering the odds–that's hard-charging Marines for you, though."[689]

As a result of the Khe Sanh battle, Gen Bruno A. Hochmuth CHOPed the SLF, BLT 2/3, commanded by LtCol E. R. DeLong, then conducting Operation BEACON STAR, back to its parent regiment. Picked up in the middle of ope4rations the morning of 26 Apr, 2/3 was transported by helicopter and fixed wing to Khe Sanh. The lead elements (E/2/3) arrived at noon, the same time that CO, 3rd Marines, was designated "SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh". G/2/3 and the CP group arrived at 1320H.[690]

The Command Group and two companies commenced movement by foot march to the objective area at 1445H. H/2/3, the third and last company to be moved to Khe Sanh on 26 Apr, arrived at 1600H and commenced movement in trace of 2/3 at 1620H. All 2/3 units arrived in the objective area and set in for the night at 2020H to the east of 3/3 (near XD 812431). F/2/3 was scheduled to arrive at Khe Sanh on 27 Apr.[691]

Supporting arms for 26 Apr consisted of 1076 rounds of artillery and 20 air SORTIEs delivering 58,000 pounds ordnance.

Casualties for 26 Apr: from B/1/9: 6 KIA and 14 WIA, and from 3/3: 5 KIA and 24 WIA.

27 April 1967: POSTURING

An AO flying overhead early in the morning of 27 Apr sighted 15-20 NVA manning an OP outside a bunker at XD 782448 at 0815H; two hours later he spotted a large gun approx. 6-ft. long on wheels approximately 3-ft. in diameter, at XD 785450.[692]

All units of 3/3 moved into close proximity shortly after first light on the 27th and medevac of casualties was completed by 270727H. Thereafter, 3/3 commenced overland movement to the KSCB perimeter, arriving at 1130H.

At 1400H, 3d Mar CHOPed M/3/3 and M/3/9 to SOP KHE SANH. M/3/3 arrived at 1610H to replace K/3/3 which departed at 1500H to Thon Son Lam (the "Rock Pile"); M/3/9 arrived at 1730H to replace B/1/9 which departed at 1630H.

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[687] Comments of SSgt Burns, HMC Oral History Tape #993.
[688] Conversation with Thomas Ryan, 24 August 1986 [Khe Sanh microfilm archives pp. 111296-111298].
[689] Letter from 2/Lt James D. Carter to Capt Sayers, appended to letter of Michael E. Sayers to USMC Historical Center, 18 May 1981.
[690] SOP261900Z/Apr67, SITREP #84; 3dMAR AAR KHE SANH, p. 16.
[691] 3MAR AAR KHE SANH, p. 16.
[692] SOP270615Z/Apr67, INTSUM #86.

What remained of B/1/9 flew out of KSCB on one C-130 to Dong Ha and then trucked out to Camp Carroll that night. Several days later, they were listening on their radios to the action at Khe Sanh, how all the thousands they'd seen were running into trouble: "We couldn't believe it. We were all looking at each other and saying, 'What the hell did we run in to!?"[693]

In addition, the remaining company of the SLF, F/2/3, arrived at Khe Sanh and assumed the mission of reserve. B/1/12, the SLF battery, arrived at 1900H and was laid and ready to fire by 2150H.

2/3 realigned itself during 27 Apr while assisting in the neutralization of Hill 861 by supporting arms. 2/3 remained to the south of the hill (at XD 812432) with the companies oriented to the4 west of the command group.

Two recon inserts were attempted on 27 Apr to provide surveillance to the west and north of the battle area

At 1245H, Capt Don McPheron, pilot of a section of aircraft (EP-171) and his wingman, 1Lt Thomas P. Berry, took off from Khe Sanh to insert a recon team. After completing this, they again took off from Khe Sanh at 1315H for a second recon team insertion. They were to insert team BREAKER at XD 723443. Two KLONDIKE gunships from VMO-6 located the zone, reported it appeared to be satisfactory, and made some low passes. Capt McPheron entered the zone while Lt Thomas Barry remained in a 2000-ft. orbit overhead. On touchdown, Capt McPheron's aircraft received heavy automatic weapons fire from a tree-line only 10 yards from his aircraft. Although Capt McPheron attempted to depart, his aircraft became uncontrollable and crashed into the 2800-ft. high zone.

Since Lt Berry was carrying 4 recon troops he was unable to make an immediate pick-up of the 9 survivors of the crash. he proceeded directly to KSCB, offloaded the passengers, and returned to the zone.

Meanwhile, the 9 survivors were taking fire from two tree-lines while the gunships made low passes attempting to suppress the enemy fire. The 9–5 were wounded–began to move down the slope, off the ridge, as their aircraft began to burn, attempting to escape the enemy's automatic weapons fire.

Lt Berry returned and commenced his approach, orienting his helicopter sideways to allow the gunner to fire the .50. He still did not know where the survivors were as he proceeded below the ridgeline and moved his helicopter up the slope, hugging the terrain. This made it possible for him to bring his aircraft as close as possible while avoiding some of the automatic weapons fire from one of the tree-lines. Even late in the approach, he still was unable to locate the survivors until Capt McPheron's co-pilot, 1Lt T. R. Llewellyn, stood up in a bomb crater where they were located and waved by crossing his arms.

The mountainside was extremely steep. Lt Berry was unable to land, and hovered with the right main wheels on the mountainside as the downed crew and the recon team, under the direction of the recon company's First Sergeant, J. L. Medvecky, crawled down the hill and were pulled into the aircraft by the gunner, LCPL Sanders. Cpl Wilson, the Crew Chief, fired from the door window because the .50 would not elevate sufficiently up the hill. Lt Berry's co-pilot, 1Lt Andrew Parker, was concerned that the rotor blades would strike the ground at any time due to the steep gradient of the mountain. Bullets impacted into the ground around the helicopter, particularly the area around the cockpit, but Lt Berry remained calm and held his position.

After a very uncomfortable length of time in the zone, it appeared that all were aboard. Lt Parker raised the ramp, and Lt Berry took off, dropping down the mountainside to gain airspeed.

20 minutes after EP-171 had been shot down, the wounded were receiving medical treatment.[694]

The second recon team was successfully inserted at 1420H at XD 745541, but extracted two hours later due to contact and numerous sightings in the area.

By the end of the day, artillery support, which fired 632 rounds on the 27th, was reorganized into an artillery group with two batteries: one in support of each battalion, and a detachment of two 155 mm howitzers and three 4.2" mortars in general support.

Air support for 27 April consisted of 136,000 pounds of ordnance, delivered primarily on Hill 861. The bombs consisted of 250 and 500-pound mixtures along with 18,000 pounds of napalm.

28 April 1967: HILL 861 TAKEN

"They bombed the hill all night and continued the air strikes this morning."[695]

Plans for 28 April were to attack the area commanded by three key terrain features. Objective #1 was hill 861 (XD 803443), Objective #2 was Hill 881-South (XD 778438), and Objective #3 was Hill 881-North (XD 775458). Battalion 2/3 south of Hill 861 was to seize Objective #1 after supporting arms had blasted it on 28 Apr. Battalion 3/3 was to follow in the

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[693] Conversation with Thomas Ryan, 24 August 1986 [Khe Sanh microfilm archives pp. 111296-111298].
[694] DFC file on 1/Lt Thomas Paige Berry.
[695] SSGT Ed Crawford, Diary entry for Friday (28 April 1967). Crawford was an acting platoon commander in G/2/3.

trace of 2/3 and then wheel to the west in an arcing movement, securing the key terrain between objectives #1 and #2 and attack and seize Objective #2 from a northeasterly direction. After objective #1 was secured by 2/3 and thoroughly searched for enemy documents, weapons, and equipment, and after Objective #2 had been secured, 2/3 was to attack and seize Objective #3 from the east. Duration of the operation was contingent on enemy resistance encountered.

On 28 Apr, 2/3 assaulted Objective #1, Hill 861 (XD 803443) with two companies abreast (Co E and G) and secured it at 281630H encountering no enemy.

Between 1930H and 1840H, E/2/3 received sporadic mortar fire for a total of 19 incoming 60 mm mortars, but suffered no casualties. 2/3 set in for the night with the two assaulting companies remaining in the vicinity of the objective and the command group and the remaining company to the south.

3/3, composed of a command group and three companies (M/3/3, K/3/9, and M/3/9), moved overland from KSCB to occupy night positions on the southwestern flank of 2/3, with the command group and a company at XD 803427 and the remaining two companies deployed to the west.

During the 28th, air dropped 382,700 pounds of ordnance, including 74,250 pounds of ordnance and twelve 2,000-pound bombs (DELTA-4, M-84), while artillery fired 968 rounds in observed missions and 107 rounds as H&Is. in addition, two Arc light strikes were conducted, centered at XD 955455 and XD 780530.

The Battle of the Hills had little to do with the local situation at Khe Sanh; it was as though two enemy forces entered a virgin area and fought it out, without regard to the local inhabitants.

Col Corson related that some distance from all the action, several local populace[696] were standing beside a Marine radio jeep watching the fire-power rained upon 861. The day was finally clear; the action was clearly visible. One of the locals asked a Marine Major in the jeep why the assault forces continued to attack up a hill in the fact of enemy fire, and the Major, annoyed and yet jolted by a primitive person speaking English, sarcastically responded that that is where the enemy was! Then the local citizen asked why the Marines did not use the tunnel running through the mountain, attacking the enemy from the rear. The Major now became interested! But Hill 861 was already taken, and the Major angrily looked at the local man and asked why he didn't mention the tunnel earlier. the man responded that he had not been asked. He walked away. The real reason was that the local leader, Mr. Anya, a local Bru who had been educated at Hue University with Felix Poilane the coffee plantation owner, had attempted to speak with the Marines for 5 days, but the marines, preoccupied with the tactical situation, did not wish to speak with him.[697]

Hill 861 contained, in fact, five natural caves.

29 APRIL 1967: CARING FOR EACH OTHER

SSGT Ed Crawford wrote his diary entry for the 29th: "Rained again. Was awake all night. Moved out again at 8 o'clock to take another hill.... We are sweeping the whole area. We will get resupplied with water at the next hill. 2/3 ran into hard core. We are watching the battle. They are taking heavy casualties. 1400 battle is still going on. Our water won't get here till this evening. Everyone out of water. No streams available. 2/3 pulled back and is calling in air strikes to clear the NVA out."[698]

The attack began on 29 Apr as 3/3 moved toward Battalion Intermediate Objective "A" (XD 782445). The lead element, M/3/9, became engaged in a draw at XD 792448 with an estimated enemy platoon[699] 1120H to 1300H resulting in 2 Marines killed, 10 wounded, 2 NVA killed (confirmed) and 19 killed (probable).

Cpl Robert L. Allen, a squad leader with First Platoon, M/3/9, had just set his squad in a defensive position when they began to receive heavy enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire from entrenched enemy fortifications.

Two men were caught in the open and seriously wounded during the initial exchange of fire. When he observed that they were unable to move, Cpl Allen, with complete disregard for his own safety, dashed through the heavy enemy fire to the wounded men and immediately carried one of them to safety.

Undaunted by the continuing hostile fire, he quickly returned to the remaining Marines. Although he received a painful wound as he re-crossed the open area, he ignored his own injury to carry his companion to safety.

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[696] He calls "Vietnamese" but were probably Bru tribesmen.

[697] Corson, William R, *The Betrayal*, New York: W.W. Norton, Inc., 1968, pp. 72-74.

[698] Edward Crawford, Diary entry for Saturday |29 April 1967|.

[699] Sizes of North Vietnamese Army units differed greatly from the USMC: A NVA Division contained approximately 5,000 or more men (USMC is about 20,000); a NVA regiment numbered approximately 1,500 men (USMC is about 3,500); a NVA battalion had approximately 400 men (USMC is approx. 1,200); a NVA company contained approx. 100 men (USMC is approx. 250); a NVA platoon is approx. 30 men |HQ, USMCV, MACV J-2 PERINTREP 20 April 1967|.

Refusing medical attention for himself, he skillfully directed accurate fire into the North Vietnamese position while administering first aid to his wounded companions.

During this same action, Cpl Vincent M. Kowalewski and Cpl Wayne Kretler both observed a wounded Marine in an open area, and unhesitatingly exposed themselves to the heavy enemy fire to lift a wounded comrade to their shoulders and each move one of their wounded comrades to a position of safety.[700]

LCPL Jerry M. Vanderhoff, observing his wounded companions lying exposed to hostile fire immediately moved through the heavy volume of enemy fire to a position from which he could deliver effective 3.5" rocket fire at the enemy positions. With complete disregard for his own safety, he repeatedly exposed himself to the hostile fire as he fired white phosphorus rocket rounds into the North Vietnamese positions, providing a smoke screen that enabled the Marine casualties to be evacuated. Although painfully wounded, he refused medical attention or evacuation until he had expended all his ammunition.[701]

Directing the efforts of LCPL Vanderhoof was 2Lt Edward J. Kresty, a platoon commander in M/3/9 who saw that the lead elements of M-2, the point platoon, had become detached from the rest of M-2. Several Marines had been seriously wounded during the initial burst of fire

> It was then that I saw 2nd Lt Kresty furiously move through this heavy fire to an exposed position forward of his platoon. On the way up he moved from position to position. He must have immediately realized what the situation was, because just as he reached the exposed high ground, he began to give instructions to the cut off squad by radio and because he could see from his exposed position, he calmly directed the cut-off squad back to the platoon's position by another route and consolidated their position. After this was accomplished, and although he could have then returned to a safe position, he remained to draw fire while he directed the successful evacuation of the wounded. After this was completed, he still remained under this heavy automatic fire to mark the enemy position with WP from a 3.5 rocket launcher for supporting arms. During this time the artillery FO was seriously wounded and unable to render any assistance, so Lieutenant Kresty called in the artillery fire mission on the enemy positions which was as close as 75 meters to his own position. Lieutenant Kresty showed no concern at all for his own safety. I am sure that if he did not react the way he did his platoon and the company would have suffered heavy losses. 2d Lieutenant Kresty's knowledge and devotion to duty saved the lives of many Marines that day, without any regard for his own safety.[702]

During this contact, the second element, M/3/3, passed to the south of the fire fight and continued the attack toward the battalion objective, and secured Objective "A" at 1915H, remaining in this position, about 600 - 700 meters northeast of Hill 881-South, for the evening.

At 1900H, M/3/3 sighted 20 NVA soldiers on Objective 2 moving in a western direction across the top of the hill. In addition, two enemy mortar teams we sighted setting on Objective #2 and just to the west of M/3/3's position at XD 780444.

Capt David G. Rogers of C Battery, 1/12, recalls the Commanding Officer of Co M, Capt Bennett "..called me over. I was standing about 15 meters from him–and he told me what he was doing and he said, 'Look, Dave, there's a North Vietnamese up on top of that hill up there. Get some arty up there real fast.' So I think that was about the fastest fire mission I eve fired in my life. I think we got rounds up there within a matter of two minutes or less. And I can still remember real vividly the sound of these rounds coming over our heads. You could really hear them whistling.. The Company Commander was constantly calling for more and more artillery on top of the hill."[703]

Counter-mortar fire was brought to bear immediately, permitting the enemy to fire only four rounds of 82mm before being dispersed.

At 2015H, M/3/3 sighted an estimated NVA company advancing towards its position. Artillery with VT fuse was called in on noise and lights resulting in screams of pain among the enemy.

M/3/3 remained on the intermediate objective during the night with no further contact. The remainder of 3/3 was to the east, near XD 792442, within support and reinforcement range of the lead company.

2/3 encountered no contact and only one sighting during the day. The search of objective #1, Hill 861, yielded two enemy bodies with ID cards, numerous items of enemy equipment, and two AK-47 assault rifles, along with the bodies of 4 previously unrecovered Marine KIAs. 2/3's nighttime positions ranged from the top of Objective #1 to the west.[704]

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[700] BSM files on Cpl Vincent M. Kowalewski and Cpl Wayne Kretler
[701] BSM file on LCPL Jerry M. Vanderhoof.
[702] Statement of SSgt Harold E. Huddleston in BSM file of 1/Lt Edward J. Kresty.
[703] Comments of Capt David G. Rogers, HQMC Oral History Tape #3533.
[704] 3MAR AAR p. 19.

Ed Crawford's diary entry: "1400. Our water won't get here till this evening. Everyone out of water. No streams available. 2/3 pulled back and is calling in air strikes to clear the NVA out. 1600: battle with 2/3 over. They are taking out their wounded and dead. Our water should arrive soon. Sun boiling hot, out in open no shade. We still have to move on to next objective. 1600: moved down the hill on our left about 100 meters past where 2/3 had their battle. We found weapons and gear and also dead Marines. This battle took place 5 days ago. We then turned around and went back up on the hill we were on and dug in for the night. Tomorrow we have an objective about 300 meters past where 2/3 got hit."[705]

Hill 861 was found to be well-fortified with bunkers constructed from bamboo, dirt and grass. Some of the bunkers were as much as six feet thick and were capable of receiving direct artillery fire without suffering internal damage. Approximately 25 bunkers and 65 fighting holes were found on top of Hill 861, all mutually supporting and very well camouflaged. A total of 400 fighting holes were counted on Hill 861 and the ridges to the north and west. Defenses were primarily oriented toward the finger running up the hill from the south. Mortar positions were found on the reverse slope (northwest) laid in the direction of KSCB. If all the positions had been occupied at one time, Hill 861 could have held two NVA companies plus supporting arms. The battle area was extremely well policed by the enemy; virtually no equipment or information of intelligence value remained. Due to the large amount of ordnance expended on Hill 861, many of the positions were destroyed or buried. The odor of dead and decaying bodies was strong.[706]

As a result of the massive supporting arms brought to bear on Hill 861, the 18th NVA Regiment was severely mauled and was relieved by the 95th Regiment of the 325C Division, which defended Hills 881-South and 881-North during the remainder of the battle. The remaining regiment of the 325C Division, the 101st, remained in reserve near Highway 9 in Laos.[707]

The 18th NVA Regiment had been a well-disciplined force, well entrenched in bunkers and caves. Their camouflage was such that attacking Marines were within their position before realizing it. They survived artillery and air strikes and were not routed until 1000 and 2000 pound bombs with delayed fuses were used against them. Enemy fire discipline and marksmanship were excellent. Many Marine casualties were shot through the head and upper body. The enemy force on 861 had been supported by snipers, .50 and .30 caliber MGs, 60 mm and 82 mm mortars on 861 and from XD 798446, XD 806446, and XD 778444. When 2/3 secured the hill, the Marine KIAs which had been left during the fighting were found stripped of all equipment.

Supporting arms for 29 Apr included 195,000 pounds of air-delivered ordnance including 40,000 pounds of napalm and a mixture of 250 to 2000 pound bombs. Artillery fired 2040 rounds during the day, primarily in support of M/3/9's morning contact and M/3/3's evening contact. Air recon of the area to the west of Hill 881-South and 881-North disclosed a large number of previously undiscovered enemy positions, including 12 .50 cal. positions.

30 APRIL 1967: CONFLICT, CARNAGE, CONQUEST

Capt David Rogers of M/3/3, recalls the day:

> The weather on the morning of April 30, 1967, was beautiful, not a cloud in the sky and one could see for miles. There was no fog, smog, or air pollution that far away from civilization. Only North Vietnamese soldiers, Bru Montagnards, US Marines, and wild animals roamed those picturesque mountains, even tigers. The only things visible were Marines as the NVA had expertly camouflaged themselves on Hill 881-South under the protection of intermittent fog. ... I should have figured that everything was going to go to hell after calling in a fire mission just prior to starting up the hill. I called for white phosphorus marking rounds before calling for high explosive. I was lucky I did as the first round whistled by real close and nearly hit a couple of Marines in front of us. I told the command group that I felt the battery at KSCB had made an error in azimuth computations. The battery was alerted and told to recheck their data. They admitted a human error had been made and said the error would be corrected by battery personnel. For the remainder of the day, subsequent rounds would land where called for."[708]

At 0600, Sgt Ed Crawford, got up and accompanied Third Platoon, G/2/3, as acting Platoon Commander. A war correspondent named "Andy" joined the unit and by 0800 they reached their objective and proceeded up the slopes.

> All of a sudden we got hit by machinegun and rifle fire. Our men started returning fire almost instantly and all of a sudden we gained fire superiority. The machineguns and snipers were in dense jungle. We fired M79 and

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[705] Edward Crawford, Diary entry for Saturday [29 April 1967].

[706] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[707] Intelligence AAR, attached to ltr of LtCol B.L. Spivey, Jr., to BGen E.H. Simmons, 18 June 1981.

[708] Ltr from David Rogers to Dr. Albert Castle, 23 Aug 1987. [Khe Sanh microfilm archives, pp. 51170-51185. Quotation is on p. 51197].

rocket towards this position. They were going off before they could really penetrate the jungle. The battle raged for nearly 20 minutes and I don't think we had a man wounded yet. We were steadily going forward when much to my amazement I heard the order to withdraw. As we withdrew back down the hill, we lost our fire superiority and then the snipers became deadly. By the time the men had reached the safety of the next hill, the arty and mortar rounds started landing on the enemy positions. Handy[709] and myself were stuck in the draw and couldn't get out. We jumped in a gook hole and sat out the first round of the barrage. At times we thought we would be killed from our own fire. When the fire lifted the snipers started firing again. Two of them came up about 40 ft. from where we were out of spider holes. He took one and I got the other. The bombardment started again, and again we got farther down in the hole. After it lifted this time we made a break for the top of the hill during this run I had my pack shot off my back. Upon reaching the top I found many wounded. I called for a stop of the barrage for some of the rounds were starting to fall short. It was now around 1130. We organized the men and got the wounded carried to a safer place so the choppers could pick them up. It was during this time that I got shot in the leg. 24 of us were evaced along with 9 KIA and 10 other men had minor wounds so they stayed.[710]

On the morning of 30 Apr, shortly after first light, H/2/3 moved into an area of M/3/9's contact of 29 Apr (XD 791449). The enemy allowed Co H to move to within 100 meters of their bunkers and then opened up with .50s as well as sniper rifles with high powered scopes.

The Second Platoon, under Lt Griesmer was on the left and the Third Platoon, led by Lt Tom Givven, on the right. We ran into an ambush crossfire that pinned down both platoons and my command group following in trace of the third platoon. Lt Griesmer was hit early in the assault but stayed in command until he passed out later. The company command group, consisting of First Sergeant Kenneth R. Jones, two radio operators and myself [Raymond Madonna], were pinned down, shoulder to shoulder, in a bomb crater. With us, but in another hole, wee the artillery Forward Observer and his radio operator. At that point my battalion tactical net radio operator was killed and his radio destroyed. in addition to the loss of a fine young man, my contact with higher headquarters was broken. With one radio left, I had to switch between the battalion and company nets. First Lieutenant Dave Hackett and Gunnery Sergeant W. Catalon were behind us with the base of fire consisting of the First and Weapons Platoons. We called for artillery and mortars but, because we were so close to the NVA, these weapons were denied. The intense enemy fire was highly accurate on both the platoons and the command group. We later recovered many sniper scope-equipped rifles.[711]

There were an estimated 50 NVA soldiers dug in bunkers to their front and 15 on their left flank at XD 791447. The company immediately began taking heavy casualties from the intense crossfire or an estimated two enemy platoons at XD 793446. Second and Third Platoons of H/2/3 were immediately pinned down and took heavy casualties. H-2 had set up a base of fire on a small ridge less than 100 meters from the enemy emplacements while H-3 had moved over the forward slope of the ridge into a draw where the North Vietnamese opened up from well concealed and highly fortified positions.[712]

1Lt David Spencer Hackett, the Co XO, in a depression from where he could observe the source of the enemy fire, sent his radioman to the Company Commander, Capt Raymond C. Madonna, since his radioman had been killed. Without means to communicate with the base of fire established by H-2, he rose from his position of safety despite the heavy enemy fire hitting around him, to direct fire from the base of fire and move closer to the wounded Lt Griesmer, charging through 30 meters of murderous fire to direct the fire of a M-60 MG team near him against the enemy bunker firing on them.. While moving, he was killed by an enemy rifleman.[713]

Although 2Lt Bruce Edwin Griesmer, the Platoon Commander of Second Platoon, was seriously wounded in the initial burst of fire, he continued to command the situation by skillfully maneuvering his men to more advantageous positions and directing the delivery of a heavy volume of fire on the hostile force,. Continuously refusing medical evacuation, he continued commanding the situation, providing covering fire for the evacuation of the wounded and dead until, overcome with pain and loss of blood, he lost consciousness.[714]

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[709] Bob Handy, a CIA civilian, was present at this time and was also one of two Americans (the other being CPL Daniel Kelley, at the Bru Refugee village at Cam Lo following the Khe Sanh siege battle. Handy was later assassinated).
[710] Edward Crawford, Diary entry for Saturday [30 April 1967].

[711] Raymond Madonna, "Hotel 2/3 in the Hill Battles of Khe Sanh," 1 October 1997, in letter from Madonna, 02 March 1998.
[712] SOP 301245Z/Apr67, SPECIAL SITREP #3.
[713] SSM file on 1/Lt David Spencer Hackett. Raymond Madonna, "Hotel 2/3 in the Hill Battles of Khe Sanh," 1 October 1997, in letter from Madonna, 02 March 1998.
[714] BSM file on 2/Lt Bruce Edwin Griesmer

SSGT Ridenour took command of the platoon when Griesmer passed out.

> I will always remember the long look at First Sergeant Jones, a rock of a man, as we prepared to leave the safety of the hole. He nodded his readiness to me and suggested I retrieve the radio operator's rifle lying useless next to me. Someone had told me early in my tour that if the company commander, normally armed with a .45 caliber pistol, needed a rifle there would be plenty around. that person was right that day. The three of us fired and maneuvered our way back to safer ground as Givvin's platoon came in behind us. First Sergeant Jones, a legend among our troops for his courage, toughness and tenacity in taking care of his men, seemed to be everywhere checking on casualties. Once we were out of the engagement area,I Colonel DeLong called in air and blasted the enemy positions.[715]

LCPL Gary Eugene Mettler, a machine-gunner attached to H-2, ignored the heavy volume of enemy fire and moved his MG to a vantage point to provide optimal fire support for his platoon. While moving across the fire-swept terrain, he was painfully wounded. He refused medical evacuation and succeeded in emplacing his weapon and delivering accurate suppressive fire against the hostile positions. Despite his painful injury, he continued to fire his weapon until he was out of ammunition. Still under fire, he ran to a wounded Marine, retrieved the ammunition he was carrying, and continued to bring fire on the enemy. Only after friendly artillery had silenced the enemy position did LCPL Mettler consent to have his wound treated.[716]

One of the Navy Corpsmen, HN Richard L. Kinney, rushed forward through the intense enemy crossfire, moving from one injured Marine to another to attend their wounds. While thus serving his fellowmen, he was killed by the enemy.[717]

With the other corpsmen also wounded, Cpl Mark Leroy Black moved to the side of one of the corpsmen, retrieved his Unit One, and began rendering medical aid to the casualties. Disregarding his own safety, he fearlessly exposed himself to the hostile fire as he moved from one casualty to another, administering aid and comforting the wounded. Subsequently, he organized several stretcher teams and helped carry the wounded to safety. Several Marines lived because of Cpl Black's actions.[718]

Cpl Thomas Lance Brewer, a squad leader of H/2/3, noticed that one of his men had a serious wound and moved through the heavy hostile fire to assist him. While attempting to move the casualty, Cpl Brewer was himself wounded in his arm, but ignoring his painful injury, remained with the Marine to provide protective fire until further assistance arrived and the man was moved to a position of relative safety.[719]

PFC Eugene Wall noticed a Marine trapped at the point, seriously wounded, and unhesitatingly moved through the heavy volume of fire to render aid to his comrade and carry him to a place of relative safety. Throughout the fire-fight, PFC Wall repeatedly moved across the fire-swept terrain to assist his wounded companions and move them to covered positions.[720]

PVT Michael Makovec of 3.5" rockets, disregarded his own safety and moved through a heavy volume of fire to a vantage point to deliver accurate rocket fire against an enemy MG which was inflicting numerous casualties. Repeatedly exposing himself to hostile fire, he continued to fire his weapon until the MG was destroyed.[721]

H/2/3 pulled back with its casualties and cleared the area for close air support strikes. Results of the fire-fight were: 9 Marines KIA, 43 WIA (29 evacuated), 14 NVA KIA (confirmed) and another 25 KIA (probable).

E/2/3, meanwhile, moved on the left flank of H/2/3, receiving several rounds of sniper fire during Company H's contact. E/2/3 continued its advance unhindered to the southern approaches of Objective #3, Hill 881-North. The company spotted enemy troop movement (at XD 780451) at 1140H and at 1610H took the enemy under fire while calling in gunships and air. At 1700H, E/2/3 (at XD 778452) received small arms fire from XD 782449 wounding five Marines.[722]

The Third Platoon of E/2/3 had the mission of seizing the high ground on the right flank of the company objective when it suddenly came under intense small arms and automatic weapons fire and was pinned down.

When he observed the wounded separated from the rest of the platoon and exposed to continuing hostile fire, Hospitalman John Charles Burke, Jr., completely disregarded his own safety as he dashed through the heavy volume of fire to aid the fallen Marines. Despite the concentrated enemy fire, he moved from one man to another, skillfully administering first aid and evacuating them to the safety of covered positions during the three-hour battle.

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[715] Raymond Madonna, "Hotel 2/3 in the Hill Battles of Khe Sanh," 1 October 1997, in letter from Madonna, 02 March 1998.
[716] BSM file on LCPL Gary Eugene Mettler.
[717] BSM file on HN Richard L. Kinney.
[718] BSM file on Cpl Mark Leroy Black.
[719] BSM file on Cpl Thomas Lance Brewer.
[720] BSM file on PFC David Eugene Wall.
[721] BSM file on PVT Michael Makovec.
[722] SP 301245Z/Apr67, SPECIAL SITREP #3.

On one occasion, he was unable to move a Marine who had lost a considerable amount of blood. He fearlessly lay in a prone position, shielding the Marine while he gave him medical aid, undoubtedly saving the man's life.[723]

Simultaneously, Third Platoon's Right Guide, Cpl Robert Paul Foreit, began to maneuver to the wounded, using his own body as a shield to protect the wounded and a corpsman, HN Ronald E. McIntyre. When rounds from the enemy fire landed only inches away, Cpl Foreit remained very calm and joked and talked to the wounded Marines to bolster their morale. When he located other casualties time and time again he gave cover to HN McIntyre so he could reach and treat the wounded. He then carried some of the casualties to a safer location.[724]

Gunships were called to neutralize the enemy, and the casualties were successfully extracted. At 1927H, E/2/3 reported receiving sporadic small arms fire from XD 774453, to their northwest and reported its troops heard a warning device making a "beep" sound every time an aircraft passed over the area bounded by Hill 861, 881-South, and 881-North.[725] As a result of their contacts, E/2/3 drew in tight within their perimeter at XD 778452 for the night as H&Is were fired into the area.

At mid-afternoon, after traveling one and half hours through extremely dense foliage, G/2/3 arrived at the area where H/2/3 had had contact in the morning and withdrew in order to blast the area with supporting arms. The attack position was a small ridge line about 300 meters from the top of a very steep but nearly barren hill which lay in front of them, about one click northwest of hill 861.

At this point, the First Platoon, G/2/3, moved two squads down to the base of the incline and got on line to assault the hill. One squad, Second, remained on the ridge line to be used as a base of fire in order to provide close support as the remainder moved into an extremely precarious situation, half crawling, half walking up the bomb-riddled slope.

The move was without incident until they came to the crest, at which time the assaulting elements came under intense fire from automatic weapons and extremely accurate sniper fire from the top of the hill, about 75 meters to their front. Despite heavy supporting arms, the enemy was still in the area.

It was frighteningly eerie: "The ammo had no noise to them. We couldn't hear the rounds go off–we–just bodies falling down, making it hard to distinguish where these rounds were being fired from. The best way we thought to assault the position was throwing a lot of hand grenades."[726]

Immediately, there were casualties. LCPL Rodin spotted an enemy bunker, but had trouble with his weapon and crouched in a kneeling position too long while attempting to clear it. An enemy sniper shot him in the left lung and left shoulder.[727]

Another casualty, PFC Yizzerea, was shot through the neck and bled profusely. SSgt Ruben Santos came to his aid, placing his finger inside the bullet hole and greatly reduced the flow of blood. The platoon corpsman, HN David L. Boucher, later declared that this immediate action undoubtedly saved PC Yizzerea's life. When the corpsmen arrived, SSgt Santos resumed his duties as platoon sergeant as the attacking squads sought what little protection the crest of the hill afforded.

HN Vernon Ralph Wike, assigned to G/2/3, had spotted a Marine infantryman caught in a crossfire and rushed to his side. Wike knew the man, but did not know he was mortally wounded. A Lt pulled the wounded man down the hill a bit, and Wike cradled the Marine's head in his arms, looking up in anguish after he saw him die.[728]

Wike's friend, "Doc" Jerry March, later noted: "That was Vern's first casualty, and he saw two weeks of combat. He was so 'characteristic.' He's about 5-foot-8, looked like a Marine, Red. He was like a fire-plug. Vern and I–we had a lot of fun. There were about four of us that hung out together. He came out of a typical, middle-class, grew up in Phoenix, never had any insult in his life–typical corpsman. Corpsmen got picked in Boot Camp–they give you the big, long battery of tests to decide what kind of thing–where is he intellectually? They take the top intellectual guys and people with a philosophical bent, and make these guys the healers. Well, given that, it was totally dichotomous that he should end up with the Marines."[729] Wike's nickname was "Killer Gorilla,"[730] and everyone in G/2/3 called him a "Marine."[731]

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[723] BSM file on HN John Charles Burke, Jr.

[724] A few days later, on 3 May, while rushing to the aid of a wounded Marine, Foreit was painfully wounded and evacuated. {BSM file on Sgt Robert Paul Foreit].

[725] SOP 301845Z/Apr67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #4.

[726] Comments of SSGT Ruben Santos, HQMC Oral History Tape #949.

[727] Comments of Cpl John P. Hays, HQMC Oral History Tape #949.

[728] The scene was captured on film by Catherine LeRoy in photos printed in the 19 May 1967 issue of *Life*, and is also on the cover and pp. 76-77 of the book, *Images of War* in the *Vietnam Experience* series, and p. 88 of Catherine LeRoy, ed., *Under Fire. Foreword Senator john McCain, New York: Random House, 2005.*

[729] Conversation with Gerry "Doc" March, 08 July 1994.

[730] Conversation with Robert J. Maras, 22 January 2000.

[731] AP news release, "Sailor's a Real Marine, Buddies Say," *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, 15 May 1967.

Wike was Peter Hesser's corpsman, First Platoon, GOLF, 2/3, and Hesser was with him at the time of the photo: "I was standing right next to him when all this happened. A Marine named Roldan[732] was killed instantly, shot right in front of me. When we were moving up that hill, maybe 6 or 8 dug-in NVA spotted us as we came up over the military crest. Andy McFarlane (Weapons Plt) was the base of fire with the MGs, and when they ceased fire, these guys popped up out of their holes and started dinging us, and hilled him right there. The photographer, Kathy LeRoy had the only photos that came out of Khe Sanh at that time. She'd been with us throughout that operation off and on, but she was right with the platoon when we went up there."[733]

It was noted at this time that approximately a squad of the enemy was dug-in on top of the hill in bunkers and spider holes which had withstood a continuous barrage of heavy bombs and artillery that early morning. They were armed with automatic weapons, including a MG and sniper rifle. It was evident that these enemy remained behind to delay the advance, a suicidal attempt to kill as many Marines as possible, thereby covering their retreating main force.

It was about 1830H and darkness was fast approaching as the two assault squads lay pinned down just beneath the crest of the hill.

At this time, 2Lt Peter M. Hesser decided to use the squad on his right as a base of fire and move the left squad further left and higher on the hill so they could assault across the front of the enemy. The squad on the right threw grenades and on command the squad on the left assaulted across the front, killing several of the enemy in their holes and bunkers.

The enemy were entrenched, having a wide field of fire. SSgt Santos, unconcerned for his own life, went from bunker to bunker, spraying the area with rounds and throwing grenades. At one time he caught a live grenade and dropped it into an enemy bunker, one which was facing the Marines advancing up the hill, saving many Marines' lives.[734]

PFC Michael T. Mills, also maneuvering through the enemy fire, threw a hand grenade inside an enemy bunker, killing the enemy soldier and enabling his unit to continue to the top of the hill. When he spotted an enemy MG, he and LCPL Robert G. Cameron aggressively attacked the bunker and destroyed it with a hand grenade. Cpl David M. Coleman also was attacking the enemy bunkers and spider holes, exposing himself to enemy fire while throwing hand grenades into the occupied holes.[735]

Due to twilight, several of the spider traps were passed unnoticed as the hilltop was seized and the platoon established a 360° perimeter

At this point, Cpl Coleman saw Cpl Richard Travis Schmitz being pulled into an enemy bunker. Cpl Coleman, without delay, jumped in front of the bunker, grabbed a hold of Cpl Schmitz and attempted to pull his body free. The NVA inside, shooting through Cpl Schmitz's body, wounded Cpl Coleman in 5 different places, knocking him to the ground,. Although shot in his legs, Cpl Coleman again crawled back trying to aid Cpl Schmitz, whom he thought was still alive. At this time, SSgt Santos arrived and Coleman was brought back to be treated by the platoon corpsman.[736]

SSgt Santos, disregarding his own safety, fearlessly advanced and tied a line to the man's legs. As he attempted to pull the Marine from the hole, the enemy soldiers fired through the casualty's body, inflicting flash burns on SSgt Santos' face and hands. Realizing that Schmitz had succumbed to his wounds and that further attempts to clear the bunker in the darkness would cause additional casualties, he ordered his men to cover the bunker with logs and block all exits.[737]

On the following morning, investigation of the bunker revealed two dead enemy soldiers, one still alive–alive because he sat on a grenade; it blew off his ass, but he was still alive.[738]

G/2/3 had sustained two killed and nine wounded in this action, and set in for the night at XD 789449.

On the morning of 30 April, M/3/3, prior to its assault on Objective #2, Hill 881-South, commenced a search of the adjacent draw in which the enemy troops had been massing on the preceding night prior to the artillery saturation with VT fuse (at XD 778446). While in the area, elements of the company located 5 NVA bodies and 2 NVA wounded. One of the wounded NVA attempted to escape and was killed; the second was captured but later died from previously inflicted wounds.[739]

Prior to M/3/3's search of the draw, K/3/9 at 0615H had commenced movement from its nighttime position to link up with M/3/3. The company linked up with the rear elements of M/3/3 at 0815H, while the lead elements of M/3/3 attacked Objective #2 at 0800H.

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[732] LCPL William Junior Roldan, G/2/3, KIA 30 Apr 1967.
[733] Conversation with Peter Hesser, 05 June 1997.
[734] SSM file on SSgt Ruben Santos.
[735] SSM file on PC Michael T. Mills.
[736] SSM file on Cpl David M. Coleman.
[737] SSM file on SSGT Ruben Santos.
[738] Comments by SSGT Santos, HQMC Oral History Tape #949.
[739] SOP 300630Z/Apr67, KHE SANH SPECDIAL SITREP #2; 3MAR AAR KHE SANH CONTACT, p. 20.

The assault by M/3/3 was led by Capt Raymond H. Bennett of Columbus, Ohio, Commanding Officer of a Marine detachment on USS ENTERPRISE who had requested TAD[740] assignment in order to participate in the Khe Sanh operation.[741] The CO of M/3/3, Capt Griggs, was on R&R.

The attack plan called for First Platoon, led by Lt Billy D. Crews, to move to the top of the hill, turn right along the ridgeline, while Third Platoon, led by Lt Joseph Robert Mitchell, Jr., would follow in trace and turn left. Lt Douglas Houser's trailing Second Platoon would provide the base of fire and reserve reinforcement to the lead platoons.

Hill 881-South consists of two high knolls with a saddle between, and several fingers sloping downward from the hill. The NVA occupied the hill with a battalion minus. Both peaks were defensive strong points employing perimeter defenses, while a lineal defense was employed between the knolls. Defensive positions also extended down the fingers to the northeast, north, and west. Both strong points had a CP but the main CP was on the western peak. Communications wire ran from the CP to three mortar pits on the hill at XD 778444 and to three mortar pits on the western side of the hill. An estimated platoon occupied each of the knolls at XD 778444, XD 764443, and XD 778423.[742]

For the Marines of M/3/3, the threat was anything but obvious. Artillery had fired on it all night. But what was up there?

Capt David G. Rogers, an artillery officer of C Battery, 1/12, was with Capt. Raymond H. Bennett, the Company Commander, 1Lt Joseph A. Cialone, the XO, and assigned radio operators.

> ..we didn't know exactly what was up on Hill 881 [south]. It was a real deceiving place to be in. If somebody were to have told me that there was an entire battalion of North Vietnamese up on top of that hill, I think I would have looked at him and told him he was crazy. First of all, you couldn't really see any signs of North Vietnamese up there. We know there was people up there because we had seen them the night before. However, like I say, a larger unit, a battalion-sized unit, up on top of that hill–I just couldn't imagine it. We could see some bunkers, I'd say at the very most I saw probably five bunkers. The rest were so well camouflaged, expertly camouflaged, that the average Marine couldn't see them unless we actually walked up on the position itself.[743]

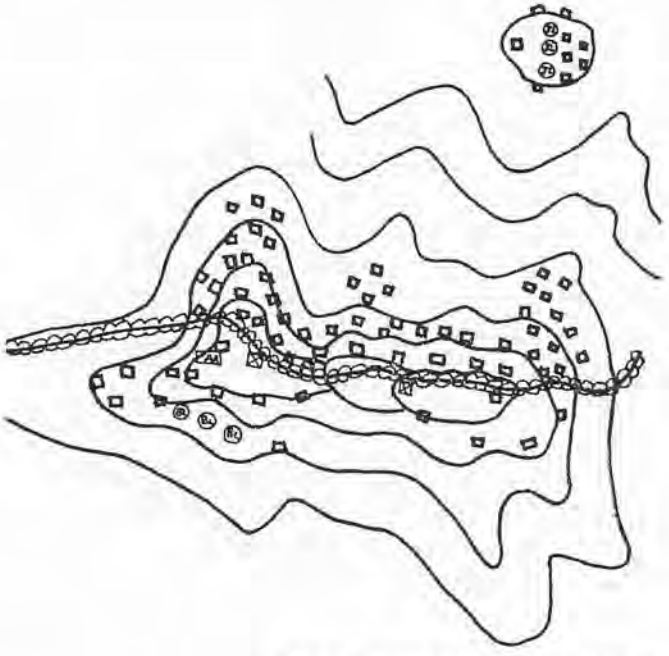

ENEMY BUNKERS ON HILL 881-South[744]

At 0830, M/3/3 sighted 4 NVA soldiers on Objective #2 and called in artillery with unknown results. By 1025H, the leading platoon of M/3/3, led by Lt Billy D. Crews, had reached the top of Objective #2, Hill 881-South, on the western end (XD 778438) and began moving east on top of the hill, receiving sporadic small arms fire. Lt Crews reported it was nothing he couldn't handle, and Capt Bennett ordered him to keep pressing eastward. At this time, Lt Crews ran into heavy opposition, and another platoon, led by Lt Houser, was dispatched to reinforce. With the second platoon joining them, the company closed on the enemy and was hit by heavy fire from a well dug-in enemy in heavily camouflaged positions and by sniper fire from individual riflemen located in trees. The two platoons also received 30 rounds of 82. The platoons were trapped, unable to advance or withdraw. The North Vietnamese had permitted the Marines to advance past their bunkers while going up the hill. They had excellent fire discipline. When the Marines attempted to come down the hill the same way they advanced, the North Vietnamese opened up on them. They could not move.[745] The battle was to last some six hours.

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[740] Temporary Additional Duty.
[741] BSM file on Capt Raymond H. Bennett.
[742] Intelligence AAR appended to ltr of LtCol B.L. Spivey, Jr., to BGen E.H. Simmons, 18 June 1981.
[743] Comments of Capt Rogers, HQMC Oral History Tape #3533.
[744] Enclosure to Ltr of LtCol B.L. Spivey, Jr., to BGen Simmons, HQMC Historical Division, 18 Jun 1981.
[745] *Ibid.*

A special problem with Hill 881-South was the use of artillery. The only friendly artillery that could support Marines on 881-South were 155 howitzers. These, at KSCB, were the old towed-type howitzers requiring a considerable amount of time to shift action, especially in the very muddy conditions then prevailing, usually about half an hour.[746]

Capt David Rogers "..was with the command group which consisted of the company commander, executive officer, their radio operators, and my radio operator. The CO maintained radio contact with the platoon leaders as their platoons began the ascent. The firing of weapons was sporadic at first as the Marines of Mike Company advanced forward. A few explosions would be heard (grenades) and first reports via radio indicated only light resistance was being encountered and that the situation could be handled. I don't know how far up the hill the Marines had advanced before everything just seemed to explode on the north side of the hill. They got pinned down and couldn't be seen by the command group. The noise level increased sharply and reports started coming in via radio that resistance was extremely heavy. It was soon apparent that MIKE Company had walked into a death trap. A perfect ambush had been executed and for those on the hill there was no way back down safely as they had become surrounded and victims of murderous crossfire. The hunters had suddenly become the hunted. Reports of Marine casualties came in including the death of a platoon leader, a friend of mine.[747] Finally, only one radio was transmitting from the top of the hill to the command group. It appeared nearly impossible to coordinate the assault with the number of casualties being suffered.[748]

At the same time the command group had clustered together in a bomb crater located at the edge of a ring of death which had began to fill with dead and wounded Marines and NVA soldiers. The crater provided some protection except for the mortar rounds which had begun to drop around the Marines. One landed in front and about a minute or so later, one landed behind. To an artilleryman, that's called "bracketing"–the next round lands in the middle of where the first two landed, which was where the Marines were. Fortunately, it never came, but the Marines expected it, like the next shoe to drop. If it landed in the bomb crater, all would be killed.

> I remember seeing from the command position one black Marine came to us charging up the slope of the hill when suddenly a mortar round went off behind him. He buckled at the knees, remained stationary with both knees planted on the ground for about 10 seconds, and then suddenly got up and kept moving forward. I thought for sure he had been seriously injured, but apparently the shrapnel had blown away from him and only the concussion from the explosion had momentarily stunned him.

Disregarding his own personal safety, 2Lt Billy Derrell Crews, Platoon Commander of First Platoon, M/3/3, the point element, led his men up the hill, becoming wounded from a mortar in the assault. Despite his wounds and the continuous mortar attack, Lt Crews repeatedly moved up and down the hill to assist in carrying his wounded Marines to safety, exposing himself to enemy fire each time.[749]

During this time, Cpl Bernard G. Elkins, Right Guide of First Platoon, M/3/3, repeatedly went from position to position to provide battle dressings to his men. When the supply of battle dressings was exhausted, Cpl Elkins ran from position to position under heavy fire, gathering all extra battle dressings and then returned to use them on the wounded. In the process he himself was wounded in the chest and arm. He was moved to the LZ for evacuation, but insisted on gathering extra ammunition as he moved along and then carrying it back to his platoon and distributing it among the troops. He was instrumental in calming the wounded by talking with each man. He refused to be medically evacuated until all the other casualties had been loaded aboard.[750]

The thick vegetation and intense enemy fire had resulted in the various squads of Lt Crews' First Platoon to become separated. One squad was forced to seek cover several meters in advance of the remainder of the platoon where it remained some 5 hours. The increasing intensity of the bitterly contested engagement saw several enemy assaults quickly deplete the remaining ammunition supply of this advance squad. The squad, like the platoon, could neither move forward nor withdraw without producing many casualties. In addition, they had taken several casualties which made it even more difficult to move.

Realizing the necessity of rendering assistance and supplying the advance squad with critically needed ammunition, PFC Dorsey Burwin Williams unhesitatingly exposed himself to the enemy fire by crawling forward with ammunition. Advancing only a few meters, PFC Williams sustained a painful shoulder wound, but refused to return to safety despite being urged to do so, and continued forward. Approximately ten meters from the advance squad, PFC Williams threw several magazines of ammunition to them, while at the same time, enemy soldiers rushed from the thick foliage. Reacting quickly, PC Williams

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[746] Comments by Maj G. Golden, HQMC Oral History Tape #2584.
[747] Lt "Buzzy" Mitchell.
[748] Ltr from David Rogers to Dr. Albert Castle, 23 Aug 1987. [Khe Sanh microfilm archives, pp. 51170-51185. Quotation is on p. 51178].
[749] BSM file on 2/Lt Billey Darrell Crews.
[750] BSM file on Cpl Bernard G. Elkins.

wounded the enemy soldiers, but before he could again fire, the enemy soldier fired a burst of automatic weapons fire into his head, killing him.[751]

The Second Platoon, M/3/3, was assigned the mission of moving up Hill 881-South and securing the left flank. Fire from one particular enemy bunker was inflicting heavy casualties and halted the advance of M-2.

PFC Randy McPhee (2nd Fire Team, 2nd Plt, M/3/3) was on the point and got off the first shot, which triggered an ambush, killing him and the next three Marines within seconds. "Randy McPhee, our point man–that was his second tour of duty there. Just before we went into this particular battle–he was considered a 'Marine's Marine' kind of thing–but he fell down before the Sergeant there and cried and begged him not to go to this particular fight because, he said, 'If I go, I'm going to die.' And it kinda shook us all up because we knew he was no coward. But he went, took two rounds in the chest."[752] Due to intense hostile fire, his unit was forced to withdraw, leaving his body behind (at XD 776438).[753]

Realizing the necessity to eliminate the position, LCPL James H. Whisenhunt, a rocket squad leader with M/3/3, on his own initiative, advanced into an exposed area, a clear field of fire, and commenced to deliver accurate and effective M-79 rounds on the enemy.

Scoring a direct hit, he then advanced across an open, exposed area to secure and destroy the bunker completely. In the process, enemy MG fire inflicted fatal wounds on LCPL Whisenhunt.[754]



Hill 861 as occupied by Marines on 28 July 1967.
Photo by Stubbe. Official USMC photo A800186



Hill 881-South as occupied by Marines on 09 November 1967
Photo by Stubbe. Official USMC photo A800221
Hills 950 and 1015 are visible in upper right

SSGT Karol R. Bauer was approaching the crest of the hill when he began warning his comrades to remain back and take cover as he heard mortars pop from their tubes. His warning was responsible for saving many lives as moments later an enemy mortar barrage saturated the Marine advance. After the barrage, SSgt Bauer rushed to assist the casualties to points of safety. While assisting one Marine, an enemy sniper mortally wounded him.[755]

The numerous casualties kept the attached Navy Corpsmen frenetically moving from one to another in the area of bullets and mortars. Petty officer Henry Cornell Steward's actions were typical. Fearlessly and repeatedly exposing himself to the hostile fire, he rushed through an open area on three different occasions to assist movement of wounded Marines to places of relative safety, administering first aid and speaking words of encouragement. His professional ability and quick thinking helped to save the lives of ten Marines that were seriously wounded and who would otherwise have died.[756]

Although pinned down, the Marines were not by any means cowering. Typical of all was PFC Thomas Burrlan Knapp who moved his mortar to a dangerously exposed vantage point and, holding the weapon in position with his bare hands, began delivering accurate fire against the NVA. When his assistant gunner was killed, PFC Knapp continued to deliver effective fire

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[751] BSM file on PFC Dorsey Burwin Williams.
[752] Conversation with John P. Colvis, 5 May 1992.
[753] During the next two days, after the hill had been subjected to intense artillery fire and aerial bombing, when the Marines returned to recover remains of those killed on 30 Apr., none of the remains recovered were identified as those of PFC McPhee. He is listed as MIA. {See statements of SSgt T. L. Meier and LCPL Lester R. Calhoun, Jr,., in Library of Congress MIA file on McPhee, Reel #428, Folder #119].
[754] SSM file on Cpl James Henry Whisenhunt.
[755] BSM file on SSGT Karol R. Bauer.
[756] BSM file on HM3 Henry Cornell Steward.

unassisted until he sustained a painful head wound. Despite his wound, he refused medical evacuation and administered first aid to the other casualties.[757]

Cpl Robert J. Schley, a MG team leader attached to First Platoon, moved his team to an advantageous firing position on his own initiative by moving across an open clearing and was able to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy.

After several hours of fighting, the gun was low on ammunition and Cpl Schley dashed from hole to hole, again under heavy fire, trying to locate additional ammunition. Although successful, he was painfully wounded in his shoulder. Refusing medical evacuation, he returned to his gun position as the only remaining member of his team able to fire. he continued to fire effectively on the enemy and then received a serious neck wound. Although profusely bleeding, he continued to fire, halting numerous enemy assaults until he died from loss of blood and his wounds.[758]

Third Platoon was sent to assist Second Platoon and secure the eastern half of the hill. They, too, came under heavy fire and took numerous casualties, including the platoon commander. Don Hossack, radioman for the fallen Platoon Commander, 2Lt Joseph Robert Mitchell, laid the Lt across his legs, holding him up and listening for the gunships. the scene became the basis for a sculpture for a Vietnam Memorial in San Antonio, Texas, by Austin Deuel. The Lt had only a tiny piece of shrapnel in his left cheek bone which evidently deflected right up into his brain.

Reacting instantly, 2Lt Douglas Hauser organized the remainder of both platoons into an effective fighting force and, rallying his men, directed and encouraged them to continue the assault.

During the ensuing 6-hour battle, he repeatedly exposed himself to the intense hostile fire to coordinate the advance of his men, while he simultaneously supervised the medical evacuation of all casualties and assisted in their evacuation.[759]

While Lt Houser organized both platoons, SSgt Terrance Leo Meier immediately assumed command of the platoon upon the death of the platoon commander. Subsequently, becoming separated from his platoon, he remained with six seriously wounded companions and provided protective fire for them until he was able to move the men to a captured enemy bunker. From here, despite continuous incoming enemy fire, he called in artillery fire on the enemy force. Then he called in 81mm WP rounds to cover their movement.[760]

During this time, Cpl Larry M. Smith led his squad from the Third Platoon, M/3/3, to assist the point elements. Dangerously exposing himself to the intense enemy fire, he led his squad and maneuvered them into positions whereby the lead elements could be effectively supported by fire, until he was fatally wounded by incoming mortar fire.[761]

HM3 Charles Allen Halstead, a Navy Corpsman of the Third Platoon, quickly moved to the position where most of the casualties were located and, under heavy fire, moved from man to man o treat their wounds. Evacuation of the wounded was undertaken under heavy enemy fire, but despite the mortar and enemy sniper fire, HM3 Halstead refused to leave until all of his patients had been evacuated first.[762]

The battle was, after all, a matter of the people. Capt Raymond H. Bennett, commanding M/3/3, observed:

> The most important thing I saw in the actions of the American youngster. The same long haired kid that loves rock and roll music and sometimes appears to the public to be a weak generation, comes through with flying colors when the chips are down.
>
> At one point I came across a couple of men badly shot up. It was obvious to me–and to them–that they were dying. Yet there was no screaming or crying or moaning. They only gave good information to newly arriving troops on the locations of enemy targets such as machine guns.[763]

The overwhelming volume of enemy fire made it apparent that M/3/3 must disengage in order to permit supporting arms, particularly air, to reduce the objective. Although the hill had been heavily bombarded, many of the bunkers remained intact or only lightly damaged. Additional heavy bombardment was essential prior to continuation of the attack.

Cat David Rogers with the M/3/3 CP in the bomb crater saw the survivors: "The Marines started trickling back off the hill slowly. Some were visible to the command group as they approached us carrying the wounded. I recall seeing one Marine whose breasts appeared to have been almost shot off, apparently shot at and hit from a 90° angle. Another half of an inch and surely he, too, would have been among the dead. I remember seeing one Staff Sergeant,[764] an outstanding NCO and

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[757] BSM file on PFC Thomas Burrlan Knapp.
[758] Navy Cross file on Cpl Robert J. Schley.
[759] BSM file on 2/Lt Norman Douglas Hauser.
[760] SSM file on SSGT Terrance Leo Meier.
[761] BSM file on Cpl Larry Michael Smith.
[762] BSM file on HM3 Charles Allen Halstead.
[763] JOSN Nick Dunten, "The Initiation of an Officer on Hill 881," *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Sunday Magazine 10:30 (23 July 1967) A-8, A-9.
[764] SSGT Terrance Leo Meier.

leader, carrying one of his wounded men piggyback along with two rifles. He was cursing as he stomped back off the hill. His bitterness about what had happened was very apparent. he was later nominated for the Medal of Honor. He never did freceive it, and died a few months later of meningitis in a Naval hospital in DaNang."

First Platoon, M/3/9, was sent to assist in the evacuation of casualties and came under heavy fire; the enemy attempted to prevent the link-up by pouring heavy blocking fire between the two Marine units.

Cpl Milton P. Vasquez, knowing it was too dangerous to lead his squad across without covering fire, dashed across the open, fire-swept area, and singlehandedly laid a base of fire which enabled his men to cover the distance with relative safety.[765]

The reinforcing unit nevertheless took many casualties. Numerous acets of heroism were involved in cafring for and rescuing them.

Hospitalman Michael A. House continuously maneuvered across the fire-swept area to the side of his wounded comfrades. Realizing that the casualties urgently required medical treatment prior to being moved, he couragenously remained exposed to the enemy fire and skillfully administered first aid. Repeatedly, he placed himself in the most dangerous positions to care for the wounded.[766]

PFC Vernon W. Metcalf fearlessly moved through the heavy volume of enemy fire to carry a casualty to a place of relative safety, himself becoming wounded as he did so. Ignoring his painful injury, he refused to be medevaced, and throughout the attack repeatedly exposed himself to the intense hostile fire to assist evacuation of other wounded Marines and their gear.[767]

LCPL Karl G. Gimple repeatedly crawled through an open field which was under heavy MG and mortar fire to retrieve several dead and wounded Marines as well as their gear. While carrying an injured Marine in the medical collection point, Cpl Gimple was wounded in the neck and shoulder. Ignoring his painful injuries, he resolutely completed carrying the wounded Marine to safety. Upon reaching the collection point, he refused medical aid and continued to assist in the evacuation of casualties.[768]

Spotting a wounded Marine lying in an exposed position, LCPL David Robert Barnard, withy complete disregard for his own safety, moved through the heavy volume of enemy fire to carry the casualty to a place of relative safety. Throughout the attack, he repeatedly moved across the fire-swept terrain to carry the wounded or assist in their evacuation, saving the lives of numerous Marines.[769]

PFC Leslie C. Wyeth, knowing fully the consequences, ran through an enemy barrage to a fallen Marine, picked him up, and ran back hrough the enemy's killing zone, sustaining a painful leg wound as he went. Ignoring his wound, PC Syeth refused medical aid and remained with his unit assisting in administering first aid and evacuating casualties.[770]

Observing several wounded Marines lying in an open area exposed to enemy fire, LCPL Joseph F. O'Neill unhesitatingly ran across the fire-swept terrain to assist his wounded comrades. As he carried one of the casualties through the hazardous area, LCPL O'Neill sustained a serious neck wound. Ignoring his painful injury, he steadfastly continued to assist the wounded to a place of relative safety.

KIIO Company, 3/9, moved towards the base of Hill 881-South and formed a defensive 360. The squad leaders were summoned; K/3/9 was to stand-by to assist of there were any trouble. And trouble there was!

> About an hour later was when all hell broke loose up on the top of the hill. You couldn't hardly hear yourself think where we were–so much small arms fire and mortar fire going on.[771]

K/3/9 advanced to assist M/3/3 and M/3/9 to disengage. About noon, K/3/9 proceeded up 881-South, company on line, platoon column. Second and Third Platoons went up the left side; First Platoon went up the right.

Reaching a small knoll about half-way up the hill, First Platoon became pinned down by a sniper who seriously wounded the rockets man. The corpsman immediately began attending to his wounds when the Lt got hit in the leg and someone called "Corpsman Up!" The corpsman jumped up and started to run across the hill the hill, but was shot through his head. One enemy dashed across an opening, attempting to climb a tree for a better shot at the Marines. He was shot and knocked out of the tree. Anther N VA soldier ran across the opening; he was tore apart by Marine fire.

Still pinned down, another Marine began to carry out the corpsman, but was shot in the shoulder and fell. The marines began to fire 3.5" rockets, and the platoon began to withdraw. The Marine who had been shot in the shoulder was again shot,

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[765] BSM file on Cpl Milton P. Vasquez.
[766] SSM file on HN Michael A. House.
[767] BSM file on PFC Vernon William Metcalf.
[768] BSM file on LCPL Karl G. Gimpel.
[769] BSM file on LCPL David Robert Barnard.
[770] BSM file on PFC Leslie C. Wyeth.
[771] Comments of LCPL Larry W. Umstead, HQMC Oral History Tape #1127.

this time in his leg. The enemy began pouring mortars. The Marines took cover in some North Vietnamese bunkers as the mortars exploded around them. Then the Lt gave the order to withdraw. Everyone ran off the hill–fast!

> We went bacdk and sat in, and they waited that night for whoever was going to come back to come back. They brought the wounded and the dead back in, and it wasn't very pretty. They–quite a few of my friends were dead or wounded pretty badly.[772]

Leading the point squad of Second Platoon, K/3/9, Sgt Dale E. Partee observed an enemy MG bunker and immediately directed his unit in a vicious assault which resulted in the destruction of the emplacement[773]

LCPL Orie O. Linn quickly located the enemy MG emplacement and, completely disregarding his own safety, moved forward through the hostile fire and without assistance, courageously assaulted the enemy fortification. Armed only with a .45 caliber pistol, he killed the occupants and seized their crew-served weapon.[774]

Second Platoon encountered devastating sniper rounds both on their way up, once up the hill, running across a little open space.

> We lost quite a few men. I know I lost quite a few buddies. And those of us that made it got in the tree-line up there which we knocked out a gook bunker and stayed up there. It was a hillside, which we couldn't see too far over it. We kept getting fire.[775]

Quickly and alertly assessing the situation and, realizing that prompt action was required to rescue those already wounded and without regard for his own safety, Cpl Edward J. Bohannon ran to a bomb crater forward of the wounded Marines. He deliberately exposed himself to the enemy to draw the enemy snipers' fire to himself. He continued to draw their fire while simultaneously returning fire on the enemy. He remained in this dangerous position until all the wounded were safely evacuated.[776]

The Second Platoon now began to receive heavy small arms and automatic rifle fire from 3 enemy bunkers located across a 50-meter-wide clearing in a tree-line.

Quickly assessing the situation and disregarding his own safety, Sgt Stanley Charles Butterworth formed up his squad and charged across the clearing through intense enemy fire and successfully silenced all 3 enemy bunkers.

When the enemy attempted to organize a counterattack using a reverse slope defense, Sgts Partee and Butterworth organized their squads to deliver a high volume of accurate and suppressive fire, inflicting heavy enemy casualties and forcing them to flee. Their actions saved the lives of many Marines.[777]

The platoon began recovering their wounded and dashed off the hill amid a shower of exploding mortars. During this, Sgt Partee and another Marine were wounded by an exploding mortar round. Ignoring his own painful wounds, Sgt Partee carried his wounded comrade to a place of relative safety.[778]

Third Platoon, K/3/9, moved up Hill 881-South through a ravine. The vegetation was thick, but moveable, and began thinning out towards the top of the hill. The Marines of Third Platoon could see that the other platoons were pinned down by enemy fire, "..but we weren't receiving any fire of any kind from our movement up the hill. So we continued moving up on the hill, thinking that the VC hadn't spotted us yet and we might be able to get in behind them. That's when we underestimated them."[779]

The NVA force was prepared and lulled the unsuspecting Third Platoon into a trap.

First Squad veered off to the left with the Platoon Commander, 1Lt John Braxton Woodall, and immediately found itself in the midst of an interlocking enemy bunker system.

The initial burst of enemy fire felled the two point men who were closest to one of the hidden bunkers. Several attempts to reach the two critically wounded Marines were thwarted by a hail of deadly fire from the enemy positions.

Immediate medical attention was necessary to save their lives. With a total disregard for his own personal safety, 1Lt Woodall grabbed a rifle and placed accurate fire into the bunker. He then charged the bunker and killed both of its enemy occupants. From this position, he laid down covering fire enabling the two Marines to be carried to safety. As he covered their withdrawal, Lt Woodall was fatally wounded by an enemy sniper.[780]

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[772] Comments of LCPL Terrence Walsh, HQMC Oral History Tape #1125.
[773] BSM file on Sgt Dale E. Partee.
[774] SSM file on LCPL Orie O. Linn.
[775] Comments of PFC Ronald E. Hines, HQMC Oral History Tape #1128.
[776] BSM file on Cpl Edward J. Bohannon. Cpl Bohannon was killed 21 May 1967 on a subsequent operation.
[777] BSM files on Sgt Stanley Charles Butterworth and Sgt Dale E. Partee.
[778] BSM file on Sgt Dale E. Partee.
[779] Comments of LCPL Larry W. Umstead, HQMC Oral History Tape #1127.
[780] SSM file on 1/Lt John Braxton Woodall. Note: Lt Woodall's platoon is not indicated on the award citation, but his action

There was a yell, "Corpsman Up!" A corpsman ran up to treat a wounded machine-gunner. He said the machine-gunner would be alright. But the wound was greater than at first apparent; the machine-gunner died. Then the corpsman was killed, and the whole squad wiped out.[781]

Then came the yell, "Get the other squad up there!" First Squad proceeded up the hill, but could not locate the point squad. Six Marines of First Squad made it to the top, but were pinned down as soon as they arrived.

> The VC had U-shaped bunkers in this one corner that we moved up on. And as soon as we reached it, they started throwing grenades and heavy volume of small arms fire in to us. They would come up out of the bunkers and just throw a grenade, duck back down, and as you were concentrating on the one bunker that the grenade came through, there would be another one come up from behind you, and throw another grenade. At the same time–we don't know what kind of machineguns it was, but it had to be pretty heavy caliber–it was coming in, just tearing up trees and anything that was in front of us.[782]

The Marines of First Squad attempted to retrieve the casualties of the point squad after they were finally located. "..when we finally found them, we noticed they were all dead–over in the left-hand corner. They walked right into the enemy bunkers that were almost in a 360, right on top of the hill."[783]

The remnants of Third Platoon managed to reach the bottom of Hill 881-South, regrouped, and about an hour later, charged back up the hill to recover their dead and wounded.[784]

LCPL Henry Rose, Jr., was checking the dog tags of the wounded and dead when a machine-gunner, McQuillan, said, "Rose, Rose, the VC got a mortar over there. I can see it. I can see it! Can you hit it with a LAW?"

Due to the large amount of canopy, Rose knew he could not. McQuillan fired at the enemy position with his machinegun, left-handed, from the off-hand. Then more mortars came and McQuillan was wounded in his back. "The mortar hit about ten feet in front of me and I did not get a wound, not a scratch on my body, but people behind me, all around me, got hit by this mortar. I didn't hear it when it came in. It was 60 mortars. They were–I never heard it at all."[785]

Third Platoon finally reached the bomb craters and a heavy tree-line where most of the dead and wounded were, and managed to move most of the wounded.

> But the dead we couldn't hardly even move to get at em–snipers and machineguns set up.[786]

Cpl Kenneth W. Shields, a Squad leader of First Squad, Third Platoon, K/3/9, repeatedly expos3ed himself to fire from enemy bunkers to determine their exact location. After alertly pinpointing the exact location of sev3eral fortified bunkers. Cpl Shields effectively directed his squad's fire and assisted in the destruction of the enemy emplacements. Observing several wounded Marines lying in an area exposed to hostile fire, he disregarded his own safety and maneuvered through concentrated enemy fire barely escaping death from accurate snipers to carry them to safety.[787]

Simultaneously, Cpl Walter Junior Washut spotted several dead and wounded Marines in an open area covered by heavy MG and rifle fire. With complete disregard for his own life, Cpl Washut maneuvered through the intense fire, making repeated trips until all the casualties were moved to safety.[788]

Cpl Washut was not alone in rescuing casualties. He observed LCPL Roland F. Wing leave his position of relative safety and carry a wounded Marine through the hostile enemy fire to a covered position. Then he returned and brought another wounded Marine to safety. While attempting a third rescue, he was felled, wounded by mortar fragments. But two Marines owe their lives to LCPL Wing.[789]

The rocket men fired their 3.5" and the machine-gunners fired for about 5 minutes without let-up. WP was called for a smoke screen. Third Platoon was able to withdraw.

37 dead Marine bodies had been abandoned on top of the hill; trying to retrieve them would have meant the loss of much additional life. "..from what I saw I didn't think it was really feasible to go up there and sacrifice other Marines to get

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appears to belong with the 3d Platoon.

[781] Comments of LCPL Henry Rose, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #1131.

[782] Comments of LCPL Larry W. Umstead, HQMC Oral History Tape #1127.

[783] *Ibid.*

[784] Comments of Cpl Kenneth W. Shields, HQMC Oral History Tape #1130.

[785] Comments of LCPL Henry Rose, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #1131.

[786] Comments of LCPL Larry W. Umstead, HQMC Oral History Tape #1127.

[787] BSM file on Cpl Kenneth W. Shields.

[788] SSM file on Cpl Walter Junior Washut. Cpl Washut was later killed by a burst of enemy fire on 20 May 1967 near Cam Lo while giving first aid.

[789] BSM file on LCPL Roland F. Wing.

dead Marines down off the hill, even though you are taught in basic training to never leave a dead Marine out in the field if at all possible."[790]

The battalion (M/3/3, M/3/9, and K/3/9) now disengaged from the area of heavy enemy contact, moved to XD 782445, and set up for the night. Evacuation of casualties was completed by 302155H. Final casualty figures for the 881-South battle of 30 Apr were 43 Marines killed–the highest number killed in a single day in all the years Americans were at Khe Sanh, 109 wounded (90 of which were medevaced). 125 NVA killed (confirmed) and another 85 (probable). Most of the casualties were suffered by M/3/3, the initially engaged unit. 33 Marine bodies, along with body parts, were left on Hill 881-South, recovered 022100H by 3/3 who evacuated the body parts in one bag.[791]

Capt David Rogers, an artillery officer accompanying Capt Bennett, CO of the M/3/3 CP, clustered together for a staff meeting "Some comments were made by those who had been on the hill during the battle. Staff Sergeant Meier described how Second Lieutenant Mitchell had been killed. "'He got his face shot off.' It was very upsetting. My feelings were so intense, I could barely sleep that night. Instead, I composed a poem in my mind. The next day, I wrote down the poem, either in a small green diary I had or on a sheet of paper–I cannot remember for sure. I dedicated it to the men who had died during the battle for Hill 881-South"[792]:

DEATH AT MY DOOR

Day is over as danger hastens
Young Marines at their battle stations
Instruments of war outline the sky
Means of death are standing by.

Can it be true on this high hill
Forces will clash only to kill?
Silence fills the near moonless night
Restless thoughts of a bloody fight.

Endless memories for those awake
Meaningful discussions experiences would make
Though silent world in which we live
Permits only God's comfort to give.

Somewhere through the darkness creeping
A date with death is in the keeping
Alone I sit and question why
Life itself, to be born to merely die?

01 MAY 1967: PREPARATION

Enemy forces retreated from Hill 881-South during the evening of 30 Apr/1 May, and Hill 881-South was blasted all day. "The planes just started from one end; they just went clear to the other end. And after they got done there, I just couldn't imagine that anything was alive up on top of that hill/"[793] There were over 130 2,000-pound bombs dropped as well as other assorted ordnance.[794]

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[790] Comments of Capt David G. Rogers, HQMC Oral History Tape #3533. Leaving dead Marine bodies on the battlefield at Khe Sanh was something that was to occur in several subsequent battles there.
[791] SOP 021610Z/May67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #12.
[792] Castle, Albert and Rogers, David, " 'Death at My Door': A Story of Hill 881-South and the Poem it Inspired, in letter from David Rogers, 31 March 1997. [Khe Sanh microfilm archives pp. 97059-97063]. The article is also printed in US Dept. of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, Public Affairs Office, *Southwest* Intercom, Nov. 1, 1989, pp. 1, 8-9 [Khe Sanh microfilm archives, pp. 51122-51125]. This poem is inscribed in the base of the Vietnam Memorial statue by Austin Deuel in San Antonio, Texas, dedicated 9 November 1986, a 15-foot bronze sculpture depicting Don Hossack, a radioman, treating a wounded Marine on the battlefield of Hill 881-South during the Battle of the Hills, Khe Sanh.
[793] Comments of Capt David G. Rogers, HQMC Oral History Tape #3533.
[794] FMFPAC 030336Z/May67, SITREP #764.

M/3/3 was relieved by F/2/3 which was lifted-in by helicopter to replace the casualty-depleted M/3/3. CG, 3dMarDiv CHOPd E/2/9 to 3/3 with advance elements beginning to arrive at 011400H and completing its movement by 1900H. One platoon had been taken from the company and heli-lifted to Hill 861 to preclude enemy reoccupation of or infiltration through that objective. M/3/3 departed at 1715H for Dong Ha by fixed wing.[795]

Early in the morning of 01 May, at 0745H, E/2/3 on the southern slope of Hill 881-North (at XD 782452) received 18-20 incoming mortar rounds from XD 799453 and XD 767454 resulting in 3 Marines killed, 16 wounded.

1stSgt Charles Patrinos, although wounded three times during the initial attack–in the leg, chest, and arm–refused evacuation. Disregarding his painful injuries, he organized evacuation of the wounded, moving around the area to locate them and direct medical assistance and evacuation. Refusing medical assistance himself, he continuously exposed himself to the intensive mortar barrage until all others were treated and evacuated.[796]

PFC John R. Meuse, a radio operator of the First Squad, Second Platoon, E/2/3, exposed himself to the enemy fire as he chased down, gave aid, and evacuated a wounded comrade who had been hit in the back and gone into shock, saving him from further injury and probably saving his life.[797]

HM3 Danny P. Williams, serving in Second Platoon, E/2/3, continuously exposed himself to the danger of incoming mortars with complete disregard for his own safety by moving about the company perimeter, giving aid to wounded Marines. Together with the senior corpsman, HM2 Kenneth F. Kleinschmidt, he attended the Forward Air Control Officer who was near death with chest wounds. They undoubtedly saved the officer's life since his lungs were full of blood.[798]

Because of this contact, plans to move E/2/3 to Objective #3, Hill 881-North, on 01 May were postponed, and further neutralization of the objective was planned.

H/2/3 was the battalion reserve as E/2/3 and G/2/3 continued movement towards Hill 881-North in very dense terrain with progress further slowed by pockets of enemy resistance. During this time, LtCol DeLong, frustrated that higher headquarters denied artillery and close air support as needed, "..adopted a direct fire solution. Captain Joe O'Brien, the assistant S-3, had been a 106 mm Recoilless Rifle Platoon Commander and was put in charge of two 106 RRs brought up from the base camp. In Joe's words:

> The high muzzle velocity, short time of flight, good accuracy, especially with the 50 cal spotting rifle, and mostly, the flat trajectory, was pleasing to the aviation community. There was no longer any argument about shooting and running air, not necessarily exactly together, but immediately before and after a run. ... This way we could mark a target for air and before the smoke dissipated the run was made. Further, after the air pulled out of a run, the NVA came out of their holes and went right back in or kept their heads down because of the HEP-T's (high explosive armor penetrating) we kept throwing at them."[799]

Meanwhile, G/2/3 fought the terrain between 881-South and 881-North, discovering an extensive bunker complex,[800] and then consolidated for the night. During the day, both battalions requested and received their "Mule" mounted 106 mm RR to be used against enemy bunkers and fortifications by direct fire. During 01 May, 1445 rounds of 105 mm and 155 mm were expended in support of the two battalions and 166 SORTIES were flown delivering 650,000 pounds of ordnance, including 130 2,000-pound bombs to ensure destruction of enemy bunkers.[801] This air support was the highest number of SORTIEs flown in support of one battalion in a single day since Operation STARLIGHT in August, 1965.[802]

02 MAY 1967: 881-SOUTH SEIZED

During the morning, F/2/3 moved up to 3/3's position at XD 782445 and, at 1120H, after a final heavy prep, MIKE and KILO Companies, 3/9, launched the assault of Hill 881S. Everything had changed. "It just didn't look the same anymore. There were no NVA, no trees, no nothing." [803]

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[795] 3MAR AAR OPERATION KHE SANHi, p. 22.
[796] SSM file on 1/Sgt Charles Patrinos
[797] Navy Cross file on PC John R. Meuse.
[798] BSM file on HM3 Danny Paul Williams.
[799] Quoted in Madonna, Raymond, "Hotel 2/3 in the Hill Battles of Khe Sanh" (Draft 01 Oct 1997) in his letter of 02 March 1998.
[800] SOP 011145Z/Apr67, SITREP #5.
[801] 3MAR AAR KHE SANH, p. 23.
[802] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, April, 1967, p. 31.
[803] Comments of LCPL William A. Culbreath, in Sgt Wisniewski, Dan, "Marines Find Hill 881 South Well Fortified," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:21 (26 May 1967) 8.

There was just bare ground up there. It took us about ten minutes to reach the summit of the hill, and as soon as we reached the top there was nothing but the smell of dead. We commenced to blow the bunkers and cache in the gear that was laying around and started getting our dead out.

At this time we noticed how well the NVA had set up the hill. there was no way that I would say that was humanly possible to get on that hill. They had every avenue of approach that was thinkable, covered. And their bunkers were constructed so well that even after that three days of air strikes and artillery, the bunkers were still standing.[804]

The bunkers utilized a roof made of at least five layers of logs and at least two feet of dirt. Most had two exits from which to fight, although the fighting was accomplished from spider holes near each bunker. There were over 200 bunkers on Hill 881S and, although 1000 and 2000-pound bombs with delayed fuses had good effect, bunkers ten meters from a 1000-pound crater were still intact. After two days of air strikes, 75 bunkers still remained.[805]

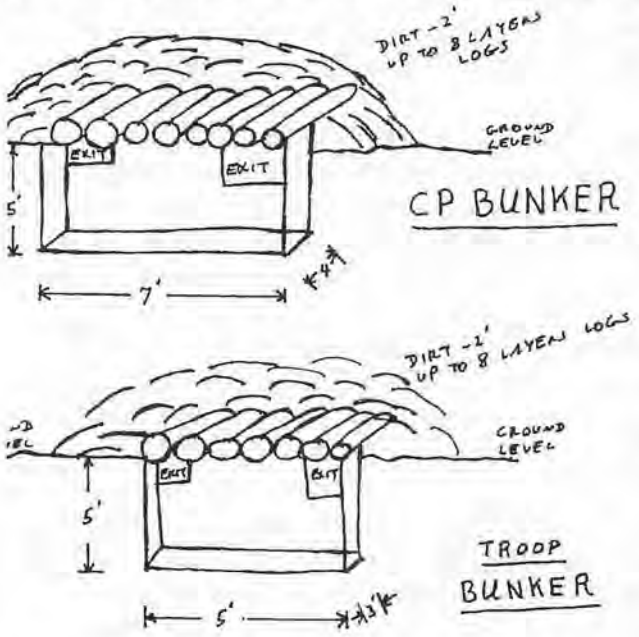

NVA BUNKERS ON HILL 881-SOUTH[809]

The battalion commander stepped in one bunker, and there was a big bomb crater right beside it, and inside the bunker you could tell it hadn't been dented.[806]

The enemy positions were well camouflaged, most of them located in the wood line. Most bunker logs were sawed and the scarcity of tree stumps in the area suggests that logs were transported in.

Hill 881-S was secured at 1420H and by 1500H, 27 Marine bodies killed there had been recovered.[807] One of the Marine KIAs brought aboard USS PRINCETON was booby-trapped with a grenade inserted into an open head wound and a string leading out of the wound. The device was discovered and disarmed before it could explode.[808]

After MIKE Company called over and said the entire objective had been secured, the battalion CP moved on over [at 1800] and this is one thing I know I'll never forget in my life seeing only one North Vietnamese body lying on the hill. One North Vietnamese body! And the rest of them were Marines. It was fairly obvious that the North Vietnamese had done a real good job just policing up the area–policing up their dead bodies and taking them on back towards Laos. No weapons, no ammunition, no bodies, just Marines.[810]

K/3/9 and M/3/9 established a defensive position on 881S and remained there a few more days, running local patrols with no contact. After Hill 881S was secured, FOXTROT Battery, 2/12, displaced three of their 105 mm howitzers to the top to provide added range should the battle move to the Laotian border, which at the time seemed likely. The only problem with this was that all the ammunition supply had to arrive by helicopter and if a major battle had developed o the west of Hill 881S, F Battery would have been hard-pressed to render required support.[811]

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[804] Comments of LCPLO Larry W. Umstead, HQMC Oral History Tape #1127.
[805] Intelligence Section, AAR, appended to ltr of LtCol B.L. Spivey, Jr., to BGen E.H. Simmons, 18 June 1981.
[806] Comments of Capt David G. Rogers, HMC Oral History Tape #3533.
[807] SOP 021200Z/May67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #11.
[808] SOP 041751Z/May67. Booby trap was reported 031800H.
[809] Intelligence Section AAR, appended to ltr of LtCol B.L. Spivey, Jr., to BGen E.H. Simmons, 18 June 1981.
[810] Comments of Capt David G. Rogers, HQMC Oral History Tape #3533.
[811] Comments of MAJ Glenn Golden, HQMC Oral History Tape #2584.

03 MAY 1967: 881-NORTH

At 021015H, G/2/3 and E/2/3, from separate positions, commenced their movement toward Hill 881-North after heavy preparation–over 1400 rounds of artillery prep for G/2/3 alone. The enemy force in the Khe Sanh area was now estimated to be a regiment.[812]

At 1455H, 2Lt Andrew B. McFarlane's First Platoon, G/2/3, advanced up the narrow ridgeline which approached Hill 881-North from the northeast. The First Squad, led by Cpl Robert E. Torter, was assigned as assault squad, and moved on line to sweep through a wooded portion directly on top of this knoll.

(2Lt McFarlane enlisted in Nov, 1948 and was a PFC on 15 Sep 1950 with F/2/1 in the Inchon Harbor, Korea, landing. He went through Seoul, Pusan, and the Chosin Reservoir. By 1966, he was a First Sergeant. "I got commissioned–or demoted'–as I used to kid about, in May, 1966." He was now 37.[813] Lt Peter Hesser, along with Sam Marrone (2nd Plt Cdr) and Bruce Grismer (in Madonna's Company) were all Naval Academy graduates. McFarlane was the Weapons Plt Cdr. Hesser noted: "We worshipped the ground that guy walked on!"[814])

Cpl Torter organized his squad and maneuvered his squad toward a tree line (at XD 778460) and took no enemy fire, but spotted 2 NVA getting up and running. Cpl Torter led his squad in an aggressive attack on the fleeing enemy, pinpointing hidden weapons and destroying them. As they continued, they were suddenly taken under fire by heavy automatic weapons from their left front. The assault was temporarily halted and Cpl Torter told his men to reload their magazines. At this time, 2 more Marines were wounded, the First Team Leader and Torter's radioman,.

After reloading, they stood up to assault the position a second time, but the newly-issued M-16s malfunctioned. The squad took 5 KIA and 5 WIA and only had three functioning rifles.

Unable to communicate, Lt McFarlane moved his Second Squad forward to aid Cpl Torter pull back.

As the Second Squad advanced, Cpl Torter fearlessly left his covered position and with complete disregard for his own safety, moved to retrieve his wounded. Driven back time and again by the intense fire, Cpl Torter nevertheless managed to retrieve some of the wounded, but not all. Cpl Torter returned to the tree line where the other casualties were located, called out their names, but received no answer. He ceased his valiant efforts only after being directed to do so by the Company Commander.[815]

Following artillery and air strikes on the high ground where the MIAs were located, and augmented by Marines led by Sgt Harry W. Steere, Jr., he again advanced towards the knoll. Two Huey gunships arrived and placed fire around the knoll and adjoining high ground, taking sniper fire.[816]

Additional air support was not possible, however. Between 1600H and 1645H, extremely heavy rain squalls with 40 MPH winds, and three NBC[817] medevacs from 3/3 due to lightning, precluded further air support.

A Marine in a foxhole with Austin Deuel said, "Even God's against us!" which became the title of Deuel's art-work illustrated book on the Hill Battles.[818]

Due to the inclement weather and the late hour with darkness approaching, the Marines advanced with 13 men (including the Lt, the Platoon Sergeant, two squad leaders, and a radioman) to assault the knoll and attempt to retrieve the MIAs. The rain was very heavy, and there was a fog rolling off 881-North–forever a most mysterious and ominous place, shrouding the Marines as they advanced. Nor was there any artillery support: "There was a problem bringing in arty because of a discrepancy between the battery and the FO. The battery did not believe the FO could see what he saw, so arty wasn't called in on it either."[819]

Two of the MIAs were spotted in a small grassy clearing just out of the heavy grass going towards the tree line. As the Marines attempted to recover them, they took heavy automatic fire from the tree line from foxholes, ground-level, resulting in another Marine killed, the squad leader, and one wounded.

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[812] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, April, 1967, p. 31.
[813] Conversation with Andrew McFarlane, 05 Feb 1994.
[814] Conversation with Peter Hesser, 05 June 1994.
[815] BSM file on Cpl Robert Edward Torter; Comments by Cpl Torter on HQMC Oral History Tape #949; SOP 021200Z/May67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #11.
[816] Comments of Sgt Harry W. Steere, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #949.
[817] Non Battle Casualties.
[818] Deuel;, Austin. *Vietnam: Even God is Against Us,* Escondido, Ca.: Impressions West, 1988, pp. 32-64.
[819] Comments by Sgt Harry W. Steere, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #949; SOP 021200Z/May67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #11.

We found that any movement at all towards these MIA was a hazardous risk because they had the ground so well covered in that area. We began to try to take our wounded back and in doing this we took two more WIAs from fragmentation ChiCom grenades which were being thrown at us.[820]

One of the favorite tactics of the NVA was to wound and then kill all those who came to rescue. At this time, the sky cleared some and the captain advised that we should withdraw and try to hit the area with arty and dislodge the enemy before we moved in. We withdrew, leaving the four MIAs.[821]

Due to the contacts and the violent story weather, it was deemed advisable to pull the 2/3 forward units back to more defensive terrain for the night. Artillery support for 02 May reached its peak for the operation at 2193 rounds fired in support of the two battalions. Air support was again heavy with 106 SORTIEs delivering 415,000 pounds of ordnance. In addition, three Arc Light strikes were dropped to the west of the battle area in support of the operation.[822]

After Hill 881-North was seized by E/2/3 under Captain Al Lyons and G/2/3 under Captain Jim Sheehan, "it was determined that the place was not good defensive terrain."[823]

03 MAY 1967: ATTACK ON ECHO

E/2/3 returned to its position. 2Lt James R. Cannon, Plt Cdr of E-2, recalls the unfolding terror:

> It became increasingly dark during our movement back to our previous position, and by the time we arrived, it was night. It was still raining. Everyone was tired and miserable and bone-chilling rain didn't help. We searched out the inner perimeter and, after doing so, each platoon took up their old positions. It was still raining hard. We put out our trip flares and claymore mines, put out our security, and established 50% security for the night: in each 2-man fighting hole, one man would be awake while one man slept.
>
> In my bunker were: Me, my platoon sergeant (SSgt Morningstar), and my radioman (LCPL Hovietz). It was 0400 in the morning. The rain had stopped and there was an eerie mist hovering over the hill. I had taken my boots off, wrung the water from my socks, and turned my boots upside down to allow them to drain. Everything was quiet.[824]

Sgt Billy Joe Like, a squad leader in E-2, walking the lines of the perimeter on the hill checking his squad positions, heard a noise to his front and yelled, "Who's out there?"

The answer was a burst of automatic fire that seriously wounded Sgt Like in his stomach. Though seriously and painfully wounded, Sgt Like remained standing and shouted, "We're being attacked!" By his action, he undoubtedly alerted his company ahead of time of a heavy enemy assault which if not triggered prematurely would without question have cost many more[825] Marines dead and wounded during the ensuing seven-hour battle.

Cannon continues:

> With that challenge, the entire northern half of the hill exploded. We were hit. I shouted to Morningstar, 'Let's go!' and sprang for the bunker entrance. As I did so, one of my Marines was blown in on top of me. He was badly wounded. I told Morningstar to take care of him, and told my radioman to come on. From my right front at about 2 o'clock, enemy machineguns were raking my section of the perimeter. At the same time, enemy mortars were falling over the entire hill. I could hear the machinegun near the first squad chattering in long bursts, and I knew this was not a probe.[826]

HM2 Clarence Walter Young, immediately left the safety of his position and raced about the lines giving aid to wounded Marines. His first patient was Sgt Like. The enemy had already penetrated his position. Disregarding the intense small arms fire and grenades, HM2 Young went to the aid of Sgt Like and treated him even though the enemy was within yards. While so

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[820] Comments by Sgt Harry W. Steere, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #949.

[821] *Ibid.* The 4 MIA were recovered on 05 May at 1450H. "One Marine had his weapon between his legs with a rifle cleaning rod down his weapon. Also he had a pen knife in his hand. As we looked over he weapon, a M-16, we found that there was a cartridge in the chamber. After speaking to his squad leaders, this man had definitely been cleaning his weapon earlier and was always cleaning his weapon. It was due to a malfunction. All the Marines found there were shot through the head." [Comments by Cpl John P. Hays, HQMC Oral History Tape #949].

[822] 3MAR AAR OPERATION KHE SANH, p. 24.

[823] Madonna, Raymond, "Hotel 2/3 in the Hill Battles of Khe Sanh" (Draft 01 Oct 1997) in his letter of 02 March 1998.

[824] James Cannon, "The Khe Sanh Hill fights," p. 6, sent with his letter of 14 Dec 1990.

[825] BSM file on Sgt Billy Joe Like.

[826] Cannon, "The Khe Sanh Hill Fights," p. 6.

doing, HM2 Young was wounded in both arms, but continued to treat the man and subsequently moved him to a place of relative safety. He then ran back into the darkness to help others until the pain of his wounds caused him to be evacuated.[827]

HM3 Danny P. Williams, who had helped save the FAC in the attack on 01 May, repeatedly exposed himself to the hostile fire to render medical aid to the seriously wounded Marines despite wounds in both of his arms.[828]

PFC John R. Meuse, radio operator of the First Squad, E-2, who had chased down a wounded man on May 1st, was seriously wounded during the initial burst of fire. When asked by Lt Cannon of his situation, he informed him he had been hit and gave the impression he was dying. He also said that his squad had been penetrated and their positions heavily overrun. Though mortally wounded, he refused to abandon his position and seek the medical help that could have saved his life. He instead remained on the radio for over an hour to inform his Company Commander, Capt Al Lyons, and his Platoon Commander, Lt Cannon, of the situation. This accurate information on the disposition and nature of the enemy force enabled them to make essential decisions on the employment of maneuvering elements and coordination of supporting arms necessary to repulse the enemy assault.[829]

Although painfully wounded in the initial moments of the assault, Sgt Ronald Edward Kolodziej, a squad leader of a MG team, quickly deployed his MG section into effective firing positions in front of the perimeter areas where he could do the most good. When his MG became inoperable, Sgt Kolodziej fearlessly exposed himself to heavy enemy fire to reach an adjacent infantry squad's position where he remained throughout the ensuing battle. Only after the enemy was repulsed and the company position consolidated, 6 hours later, did he accept to be medevaced.

LCPL James G. Hawley, a machine-gunner, was in a foxhole when he noticed SSgt Noakes wounded in a nearby foxhole. Cpl Hawley left his position to bring SSgt Noakes into his own foxhole and then began to move throughout the fire-swept area to retrieve other wounded and carry them to the CP.

When Sgt Powell was hit, LCPL Hawley went to get him, knowing that the enemy was waiting on him. Obtaining an operable MG, he courageously moved forward and began to deliver a heavy volume of fire on the NVA, successfully repelling the enemy assault.[830]

An engineer attached to E/2/3, LCPL William Thomas Womble, unhesitatingly rushed from his position, retrieved ammunition from the overrun positions, and proceeded to redistribute badly needed MG and 60 mm mortar ammo. With complete disregard for his own life, he continued to move through extreme automatic weapons fire until positions in critical need of ammo were resupplied.

Then, observing several Marines pinned down in the Second Platoon command bunker, he opened fire with his M-14 and single-handedly engaged the enemy, drawing fire upon himself so that the Marines in the bunker could gain fire superiority. As he daringly delivered a large volume of well-aimed, accurate fire into the enemy, he was instantly killed by heavy automatic weapons fire,.[831]

All during the battle, the Second Platoon commander, 2Lt James Cannon, repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire as he moved from position to position, and skillfully directed the defense of his critical position. As he moved, he occasionally engaged in hand-to-hand combat killing enemy who had penetrated the perimeter. At one point, he was cut off from his CP. Cannon relates:

> Casualties were mounting. The situation was extremely bad. I called the command post and told the company commander[832] that I needed help, that we were under assault by a large force, and that all of my crew-served weapons had been knocked out. I also asked for my preplanned artillery concentrations to be fired and called for a flare ship. I was informed that I couldn't have both. I was somewhat pissed. I knew that the flare ships could fly above the maximum ordinance of artillery and I needed both. I asked for arty and waited. No arty. I screamed into my radio, 'Damn the arty, give me some light.' Another casualty. I told Hovietz to get him in the bunker with Morningstar.
>
> Capt Lyons told me he was sending a squad from the 1st Platoon up to help me. They never arrived. Another squad was dispatched to me. They too failed to arrive. I learned later that both squads were badly hit as they tried to reach my platoon.

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[827] BSM file on HM2 Clarence Walter Young.
[828] BSM file on HM3 Danny Paul Williams.
[829] Navy Cross file on PFC John R. Meuse. PC Meuse was found about noon, still in his position, his radio hit but still working, his hand-set still in his hand, and 5 dead NVA in front of his position.
[830] BSM file on LCPL James Gordon Hawley.
[831] SSM file on LCPL William Thomas Womble.
[832] Capt. Al Lyons.

I made my way toward the company CP. I stopped at the XO's bunker.[833] He was gone. I thought, 'God, I hope he hasn't been captured.' I again radioed the Skipper. I asked him to send me a 3.5 rocket launcher team to knock out the enemy machinegun to my right front. I met the team near the XO's position and took them up just behind my second squad. From there, I had a good field of fire and a safe back-blast area. I was in the process of directing their fire when an explosion went off just in front of us. My rocket team was knocked out. I was still standing. For some ungodly reason, I thought nothing could touch me. I had put my radioman in the bunker with Morningstar to help with the wounded. As far as I knew, I was the only one alive up there except those that were in my bunker.

The enemy machinegun was still spitting out deadly fire. Trip flares were going off to my right front. I found no one alive in my first or second squads, yet there was movement all around me. My platoon was in trouble. I needed help.

I was able to reach the command post and inform my company commander of the situation. There I found my XO. I was glad he was alive. He would soon take over the company.

I informed my company commander that my entire first and second squads were wiped out, that there was only one friendly position up there, that of my bunker where Morningstar, Hovietz, and two wounded were. My third squad, although lightly engaged, was still intact and had suffered no casualties. They were my extreme right defensive squad.

Capt Lyons informed me that a platoon of FOXTROT Company was moving up from the rear to help block the penetration. I passed the word to keep my bunker protected, that it was occupied by friendly troops. Sometime, from somewhere, I grabbed a M-16 rifle, firing it until it jammed. I threw it down and picked up a M-14. I overheard reports that the NVA were wearing flak gear and Marine helmets and some were in trees shouting, 'Marine, you die.' They were hard to stop. Even point blank firing into their chests would not ensure they would be stopped. Some had to be beaten with entrenching tools or anything one could get his hands on. Consequently, there was much hand-to-hand combat that morning. We found later that several Marines had died trying to clear jams from their M-16s.

The Company Commander of E/2/3, Captain Lyons, was medevaced in bad shape, and Capt Raymond Madonna(H/2/3) was on the radio with the battalion commander (callsign PYGMALION SIX) and the new Echo Company Commander who was using his old call sign 'ECHO-5.' Madonna picked up the handset and said, 'Jack, you are now ECHO 6.' As I recall, Colonel DeLong told us that we had been counter-attacked by a NVA regiment."[834]

Cannon continues:

It wasn't long before 2nd Lt Carroll's platoon from FOXTROT Company arrived. I briefed him on the situation and cautioned him that my platoon sergeant and radioman, along with two wounded, were still in my bunker. I then moved forward with Carroll's platoon and, taking up a position beside a machine-gunner, began to direct his fire into the position of the enemy machinegun. He started firing but soon stopped. 'Damn jam,' I thought as I turned toward him. I then saw why he had stopped firing. Blood was running down the side of his face. I rolled him over toward me so the assistant gunner could take over.[835]

During the dark early morning hours of 0430 - 0630H when Second Platoon's positions were overrun, LCPL Frederick Gregory Monahan, a Bn S-2 Scout, constantly exposed himself as he fired and threw hand grenades. 1Lt Adinolfi later wrote: "His output of fire was that of ten men; his energy and downright stubbornness that of fifty of the enemy." This despite being wounded. With complete disregard for his own safety, he skillfully drew the enemy in towards him and then fearlessly locked with and destroyed them in hand-to-hand combat. His fire stopped the NVA advance, holding them at bay for the two hours before daybreak, when reinforcements of Co F arrived.[836]

Another Marine instrumental in helping to contain the enemy was Cpl William K. Downing, a member of a composite squad organized by the Company Commander and headed by 2Lt John L. Eller (3d Plt Cdr) to repel the advancing enemy force. Cpl Downing, second in command of this squad, moved his fire team in the direction of the enemy penetration and was wounded in the leg. The squad was able to halt the advance of the enemy. Someone yelled. Someone asked if he needed medical attention, and Cpl Downing shouted, "Don't come down here and help me; take care of the rest of the men first." He remained, courageously delivering continuous and effective fire on the enemy forces as the casualties were removed under

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[833] 1Lt Jack Adinolfi.
[834] Madonna, Raymond, "Hotel 2/3 in the Hill Battles of Khe Sanh" (Draft 01 Oct 1997) in his letter of 02 March 1998.
[835] James Cannon, "The Khe Sanh Hill fights," pp. 7-8.
[836] Navy Cross file on LCPL Frederick Gregory Monahan.

his covering fire. Having ensured that the last wounded Marine was evacuated, he remained firing from his position. His body was found later with six dead N VA around his position.[837]

After a period of bitter fighting, the penetration was contained and means were sought to eliminate it.

Cannon: "It was now light. I heard the Hueys behind us. Relief was just a few rockets away. Smoke was thrown to mark our positions and to direct the Hueys' rockets north of us. One of the first rockets fired hit our Command Post, wounding our company commander and killing or wounding several other key personnel including our Forward Air Controller, Arty FO, and senior corpsman, Doc Kleinschmidt. Doc, knowing that I always carried a plastic tube with me, asked me to perform a tracheotomy should he stop breathing. I promised I would. He had been hit in the side of his left jaw."[838]

First Platoon of F/2/3 under the command of Lt John R. Schworm, was lifted in to counterattack the penetration. Arriving on the scene at 0745H, F-1 counterattacked the penetration at the point where it had penetrated the perimeter.

First Squad of Lt Schworm's F-1, led by Cpl Jerry K. Fite, was given the mission of holding the right flank and, if possible, to push the enemy back. Although suffering casualties, he continued to direct his men forward as they regained many bunkers then held by NVA soldiers. The fight continued well into the morning; progress was slow.

About 1100H, Cpl Fite had moved his men into a position where they were now drawing fire from a series of bunkers that covered both the front and the right flank. Every means possible was attempted to reduce these bunkers–rockets and LAWs were ineffective due to the thickness of vegetation. During repeated attempts, the squad sustained 2 casualties.

Automatic weapons fire spewed out of two mutually supporting bunkers. Realizing the seriousness of the situation and disregarding his own safety, LCPL Larry Hayden Weaver crawled forward and hurled several grenades into the nearest bunker. He was driven off by heavy fire from the MG in the other bunker, wounded in his shoulder and head, and returned to a nearby fighting hole. While he was in the fighting hole, the NVA threw several grenades into his position, but he advanced and assaulted the enemy bunker with his M-16, killing the 4 NVA inside.[839]

Cpl Fite also crawled forward and threw WP grenades into the lead bunker which was halting the advance. Although he killed 5 NVA in these daring attacks, they had little effect.

At this time, they learned that First Platoon of H/2/3 was approaching on the extreme right, moving northwest along the ridgeline XD 785450 - XD 778460, placing them at the rear of the troublesome bunkers. They requested that the bunkers be marked. Again Cpl Fite volunteered to crawl forward and successfully marked the target with smoke grenades. They were eventually destroyed.[840]

H/2/3 moved northwest to cut off the penetration from the rear between the positions held and Hill 881-North, flanking Hill 881-North to the right, hook around, and come in on the NVA from the north. Capt Madonna relates:

> Our cover fire was indirect fire from supporting artillery and direct 106 RR fire from the battalion CP directed by Capt O'Brien. The direct fire was over the heads of E Company but to the west of where H Co. was to come in on the NVA. We made this long, hot march in column of platoons with Elliott's First Platoon in the lead and the company command group behind them. As we were leaving the perimeter, the supporting 105 battery fired short and we took some casualties in the lead platoon. We stooped to medevac the wounded and continued the attack after a long delay. At this point we were well behind schedule and facing formidable jungle. I told Lt Elliott, point platoon commander, to move Indian-style as fast as they could but maintaining silence.
>
> With the command group in trace of Elliot's platoon, the march route took us through very dense jungle. Many times I had to resort to my bowie knife (not an issue item) to cut my way through the thick jungle. For long periods we lost sight of the sky in the stifling hot steam bath, grateful for the decision to abandon the heavy flak jackets. Though we were hot and thirsty, these seasoned Marines did not have to be told to conserve their water. There were no landing zones for resupply in this part of the jungle.
>
> As we moved around to the right under cover of the 106 RRs, other unit commanders asked that the fire be lifted as it was getting very close to friendly lines. Knowing that I needed that cover fire to move in unobserved on the NVA, I asked the Battalion S-3, Major Wayne Lemon, for operational control of Echo Company. He knew that I didn't know their full situation so it was denied. I wanted them to duck until Od Elliott's platoon took out the NVA but that would have made Echo vulnerable to an attack. The problem was that I couldn't see the NVA position clearly enough to warn Echo if they moved while Elliott's men were sneaking in.
>
> At this point, both Echo and Hotel were taking light shrapnel. I saw a knoll to the west from where I thought I could see both the NVA and the Echo lines. I moved my CP group to the high ground at the west of my company.

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[837] SSM file on Cpl William K. Downing.
[838] James Cannon, "The Khe Sanh Hill fights," pp. 8-9..
[839] SSM file on LCPL Larry Hayden Weaver.
[840] BSM file on Cpl Jerry Keith Fite; SOP 030605Z/May67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #14.

From here I could see E Co's northern liens–where my men were headed–in addition to the NVA positions. My CP group and I were exposed not far from the impact of the 106 rounds but it was the only place from which I could see to control the attack. I asked Jack Adinolfi (Echo 6) to button up in their holes as I could see both them and the NVA. I answered several calls to lift our 106 RR cover fire (from both my men and E Company) by pointing and that the CP group was the closest to the impact zone.

I recall Elliott's men going in with fixed bayonets, maybe a sign of the lack of trust we placed in the rifles but also a psychological move. The fighting was mean and dirty when the NVA discovered us at their back doors. Our attack was successful with Sgt Ransbottom of Lt Elliott's platoon taking out an NVA bunker line that had E Co pinned down. Sgt Ransbottom was subsequently awarded the Bronze Star for this effort. My troops took about six prisoners for which the Battalion Commander offered ten days in Bangkok to the lads. As I recall there were also about 25 enemy KIA. The key to the attack was stealth we were able to maintain helped by the 106 RR fire keeping everyone's head down. At 1500 we declared the bunker line secure and began to sweep the area. We reestablished E Company's perimeter but Hill 881-North was again unoccupied by our forces.[841]

Observing the assault of F/2/3 momentarily stopped, LCpl Daniel L. Critten, Jr., quickly and aggressively moved forward delivering effective fire on the enemy. His quick maneuver inspired the platoon to move onward while providing cover for evacuation of the casualties. In the ensuing action, he continued to deliver effective fire on the enemy until he fell seriously wounded in his chest and spine. His quick action saved the lives of many of his comrades and inspired his platoon to continue the assault.[842]

With complete disregard for his own safety, PFC Roy William Demille advanced through the hostile fire, crawled into one of the enemy bunkers and, armed only with a .45 pistol, killed 2 NVA. Observing that his unit's advance was still halted by the intense fire from another bunker twenty meters away, PFC Demille again exposed himself to enemy fire, jumped into the enemy-held bunker, and killed the NVA with his pistol..[843]

As a result of the F/2/3 counterattack, the enemy penetration was sealed. The enemy, however, had reoccupied some old bunkers in the area which had not yet been destroyed and fought tenaciously to the end, employing automatic weapons and hand grenades with deadly effect. So well emplaced was the enemy that initial attempts to destroy his positions were unsuccessful though heavy supporting arms fire had been brought to bear.[844]

Cannon:

> Until now, there had been no prisoners taken. It didn't surprise anyone. With the anger built up in our Marines and the tenacity with which the NVA fought, I didn't expect any. From somewhere–word came that "Pappy" Delong would give 20 days' R&R to the man that got him a prisoner. Within minutes, we had three. From these three, it was learned that another NVA division was on their way south to retake the hill complex.[845]

Two of the NVA POWs, Pvt Le Van Lan and Pvt La Huu Chau, reported they were members of the 325C Division and had entered South Vietnam on 13 March and arrived at Khe Sanh on 20 March. Pvt Lan stated that half the members of his regiment were only 16 years old. The third POW, Pvt Mai Thanh Tan, was unable to answer questions coherently because of his wounds.[846]

> I was on pins and needles. I wanted to reach my two squads that were still up there. I prayed that some were still alive but everyone knew there was no hope. Still, I wanted to pull them out. Firing was still going on. We continued to wait.
>
> Finally, I pulled my third squad leader back and inf0ormed him on what I was about to do. I told him to get the third squad on their bellies, that we were going to crawl back over the crest of the hill and take up the first and second squad's positions. I told him that upon reaching those positions we would watch ou for HOTEL and, should they approach, mark their positions with air panels. We would kill everything that wasn't Marine. We did just that.
>
> The fighting continued and at about 1130 that morning, 3 May 1967, we reached our forward-most positions. The look on Morningstar's face as he crawled out of his bunker was one of disbelief. After all, he

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[841] Madonna, Raymond, "Hotel 2/3 in the Hill Battles of Khe Sanh" (Draft 01 Oct 1997) in his letter of 02 March 1998.
[842] BSM file on LCPL Daniel Lutallus Critten, Jr.
[843] SSM file on PFC Roy William Demille.
[844] 3MAR AAR KHE SANH, p. 25.
[845] James Cannon, "The Khe Sanh Hill fights," p. 9.
[846] FMFPAC050245Z/May67, SITREP #766; FMFPAC 060345Z/May67, SITREP #767.

had been in the midst of hell for well over 7 hours and survived. He would die 2 months later by a single shot from a sniper's rifle.

I surveyed the first and second squad's positions. Only then did I realize the strength with which the enemy had attacked. There were bodies everywhere, mostly NVA. In front of my first and second squads lay about 80 NVA bodies. The remainder of the hill was literally strewn with bodies. There was no telling how many had been dragged off or died later from this fight. I could not tell black Marines from white Marines, they were all black.

I should have cried but I didn't. I didn't have time. I would cry later, and when I did, the tears would never completely stop. The memory of these Marines–so young, so brave–would stay with me forever.

The official body count of the dead NVA was 137, but we stacked 236 weapons. On top of the hill, just behind my bunker, I found a dead NVA. Strapped around his neck was a rectangular metal box. Half of the box contained a radio and radio equipment. The other half contained cooked rice. They had come to stay.

After we heli-lifted our dead and wounded out, I sat down with our First Sergeant, 'Top' Patrinos, who was sitting on a log near the XO's old position. It was then that I learned several of the men I thought were dead had been medevaced with wounds. In my platoon alone, I had 11 KIA and 17 WIA.[847]

04 MAY 1967: ATTACKED FROM WITHIN

At 040330H, Lang Vei Special Forces Camp (XD 795360) came under mortar attack that lasted 10 - 15 minutes followed by a ground attack through the village by an estimated enemy battalion[848] in a coordinated ground and mortar attack "characterized by swiftness, coordination, firepower, and a knowledge of the camp."[849] The attack was aided by several VC infiltrators who had posed as recruits. After killing the guards, the enemy force which had broken through the wire by bangalore torpedoes under the leadership of the VC infiltrators inside the camp[850] proceeded systematically to destroy the comm center, the command bunker and to eliminate the key personnel, including the CO and XO. Within minutes after breaching the wire, the command bunker in which Captain Crenshaw was sleeping was hit with an estimated anti-tank rocket. Inside the bunker at the time it was hit were the commander, Captain Crenshaw (the XO), the team Sgt (MSG Steptoe), and Captain Ledee. On trying to exit the bunker, Captain Crenshaw was killed by small arms fire, Captain Ledee was wounded with a concussion grenade, and MSG Steptoe was wounded in the left arm by two rounds small arms fire."[851] While the command bunker was being attacked or just before, 1/Lt Stallings (the XO) was on guard duty approximately twenty meters from the command bunker and killed by small arms fire at his guard post.[852]

The insider enemy agent, Dinh Nhon, a CIDG recruit, joined the force at Lang Vei and recruited Sam Boi. A third insider, A Loi, made a sketch of the camp, and a fourth, Sang Dinh, reported on supplies brought into the camp.

On the night of the attack, Nhon and Sam Boi killed the CIDG guards on the northwest positions of the camp, and then Nhon led the NVA force through the wire and remaining mine fields into the camp perimeter.[853]

The team leader of the Special Forces "A" Camp, Bill Steptoe, had just returned from a 30-man patrol north of the DMZ.

> We had been cut off a couple of times. We had a terrific fire-fight and almost got trapped. I made contact with the enemy outside of 881 and when I reported it to the Marine Colonel at Khe Sanh–we called him 'CYNTHIA'–I had already been in a running fight a week or better with the leading forces of the enemy. When I told him that there were division-size units there, he said, 'No,' that was full of it.[854]

Upon his return, there was a new CO, Capt William Anderson Crenshaw, an Afro-American, who had been in country 2 weeks. "I told him we were being followed. I'd been in contact all the way back."[855]

> I heard the first rounds come in. They came in at three o'clock. I was in the team house asleep on the lower bunk with Stallings in the team house. I ran down the team house steps, and mortars were coming in and rockets.

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[847] James Cannon, "The Khe Sanh Hill fights," pp. 9-10.
[848] COC 3dMarDiv 041751Z/May67, SITREP #18. The US Army After Action Report (appended to the Monthly Operational Summary (MOPSUM) for May, 1967, dated 26 May 1967, indicates the attack at 0315H
[849] A-101 MOPSUM, May, 1967, After Action Report.
[850] Shelby L. Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, Novato, Ca.: Presideo, 1985, p. 148.
[851] A-101 MOPSUM, May, 1967, After Action Report.
[852] *Ibid.*
[853] FMFPAC 300255Z/May67, SITREP #791. Nhon was subsequently captured 23 May 1967 and provided the information.
[854] Conversation with William Steptoe, 06 October 1988. The CO was Col James Reeder.
[855] *Ibid.*

As I went down the steps in my underwear, a man jumped up and fired at me and I dodged, and the bullets hit Stallings. He fell, hit in the chest. I shot at this man. I don't know whether I hit him. I kept going. Stallings was sprawled upside down. By that time there were skirmishes going on the fence line. Our own CIDG were responding. I went directly to the main bunker to make sure that the CO had notified our 'C' Detachment and Khe Sanh as to what was going on.

As I hit the main bunker, a mortar hit me, blew off a finger, and got me as I dove through the door. And once I was in there, I talked to Crenshaw who was standing up against the wall. I had my back to the bunker, and I told him that people were in the camp. At this time, a burst from a AK-47 got me in the left arm and shoulder. The same bullets that got me killed Crenshaw. He was a black man; so was Stallings [the XO].[856]

Initial requests for fire support by Khe Sanh were made about 0330H. However, the Comm Chief Sgt had no map available to him and no knowledge of pre-planned artillery concentrations. In addition, he had the only radio that was operational and frequently changed channels to talk with the two patrols still in the field. There was one patrol 2000 meters west of the camp. The concentration list had been destroyed in the command bunker and the Comm Chief could not observe or adjust any of the fires. The comm difficulties were resolved by employing a nearby SOG unit to relay, but there was never a clear picture of what was happening nor the locations or status of friendly troops in the area.

Up until first light, when Capt James Whitenack, the MACV District Advisor, raced down to Lang Vei from Khe Sanh Village in a jeep with his relief force of four men followed by Lt Nhe (the District Chief) and the remainder of the relief force. Bill Steptoe assumed he was the only American alive in the camp. When Capt Whitenack arrived, the enemy–"..were running around the perimeter throwing satchel charges in the bunkers. One of the sentries that was on the west machinegun position had been killed, so he couldn't give any warning. We found him; he had a knife in him."

The communications building had a straw roof and was set on fire. There were two guys in there. The operations Sergeant [Steptoe], when he said he was the only one left alive, what he saw was: all of a sudden the roof of the communications bunker collapse into the building, and he knew two guys were in there. That was it. But just before this happened, these two guys who were in there had crawled out of a ventilation air hole and laid in the trench. At that point the NVA/VC had overrun the camp and they were withdrawing and taking their dead with them.[857]

Bill Steptoe's wounds were such that he spent the next year hospitalized in Valley Forge, and was medically retired.[858]

Results of the attack were 2 USA KIA (the CO and XO), 2 WIA, 20 CIDG KIA, 34 CIDG WIA, 2 NVA KIA (conf).[859]

During the Lang Vei attack, the absence of unified command was painfully apparent. When Maj Golden arrived at Khe Sanh: "..there were several different groups within the KSCB. There were some super-secret personnel whose exact mission I never found out who kept wandering in and out of the base and in the hills. This Marine LtCol had no command authority over anyone except the Marines. This presented quite a problem to the Marrine LtCol. He couldn't control the movements of these people; they moved pretty much as they pleased. We never knew what they were doing. The answer to this problem is very simple, is a unified command when you have various services working together."[860]

During 4 May, 3/3 searched Hill 881-S and 2/3 oriented its companies for the final assault of Hill 881-N

Cpl Thomas Murl Jaggers was a "short-timer" in G/2/3, a southern-accept speaking Marine from Mississippi, and given the option of remaining aboard ship (2/3 was the SLF)[861] or to go on the operation. He chose to be in the field with his friends. "We had just gotten a resupply of food and Jaggers had been transferred out of a line company to Supply and took charge of all of the food from the helicopter. He filled his hole with cases of C-rations. I remember we were all sitting around his hole, and while we were talking and he was giving us our individual food some artillery rounds started falling in. They were our own rounds, and some of them landed short. Jaggers was killed and another guy lost his leg. Jaggers tried to get into his hole, but his hole was all filled-up with all these cases he'd put inside. So he laid on top of them as best he could, and he was decapitated.[862]

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[856] *Ibid.*

[857] Conversation with James Whitenack, 06 Oct 1988.

[858] He died 7 Feb 1993 of a heart attack.

[859] 3MAR AAR KHE SANH, pp. 26-27. The Army After Action report appended to the May, 1967, MOPSUM, indicates 2 USSF KIA and 5 WIA, 22 CIDG KIA and 345 CIDG WIA with 39 CIDG MIA. The Lang Vei village chief, Houng Loc was also KIA. The manning of A-101 included 2 US Army officers and 11 enlisted, one VN SF officer (Ca|t Hai Van Tu) and ten enlisted VNSF, and 357 CIDG (30 of whom were recruits). The new CO of Det A-101 at Lang Vei was Capt Frank Willoughby, a former USMC non-commissioned officer. [Comments of Col. J.J. Padley, HMC Oral History Tape #1504].

[860] Comments of Maj G. Golden, HQMC Oral History Tape #2584.

[861] Special Landing Force.

[862] Interview of Robert Maras (G/2/3) by Dr. Peter C,. Rollins, undated.

At 1530H, F/2/3 and E/2/3 commenced an assault of Hill 881-North. Movement, however, was slow and methodical and only the southern edge of the objective was secured by nightfall.[863]

During the day, Co C/1/26 began arriving at 2350H by fixed wing from Phu Bai, completing its movement by 1610H,[864] as the first element of the 26th Marine Regiment arrived at Khe Sanh.

05 MAY 1967: HILL 881-NORTH CAPTURED

1Lt Adinolfi, acting CO of E/2/3, gathered his platoon commanders to issue the order to attack Hill 881N. The plan was for two companies, Echo and the relatively unscathed F Co (over 250 strong) to attack two companies abreast, F on the left, E on the right, following arty and air prep. F would pass through E's position and move to the designated assault position. E would follow in trace, tie in with the right side of F at the assault position and on order, seize, secure, and defend the right half of the objective. E-2, Lt Jim Cannon's platoon of 17 Marines, would be the point.

All went as planned, with arty dropped within 50 meters and moved as the assault continued. Jim Cannon recalls the assault:

> My platoon moved out as rapidly as possible, keeping generally abreast of the platoon on my right. Echo company was guide company and Foxtrot was to guide on us. Foxtrot company fell behind on my left and was slow maneuvering even though we met minimal resistance. To prevent any decrease in our momentum, Echo Company pushed forward up the ridgeline and over the crest and into a hasty defense when Foxtrot company arrived. My platoon set in from 11 to about 2 where we tied-in with the 1st or 3rd platoon. As Foxtrot arrived I showed the company commander where to tie in with the most leftward position, 881N was ours.[865]

2Lt Charles Paul Chritton led the Second Platoon, E/2/3, taking small arms fire as they assaulted. Lt Chritton immediately rushed to where his men were taking fire. The NVA were firing from a series of ten strongly constructed and mutually supported bunkers. Upon taking several casualties out of Third Squad, Lt Chritton maneuvered the platoon back down the slope and called and directed artillery and air strikes.

He then led his men back up the hill in a determined assault, exposing himself numerous times to enemy who were sometimes only 10 meters from him. While riflemen were crawling forward, Lt Chritton ran upright back and forth laterally, giving commands and words of encouragement. He took time to give the wounded some encouraging words. At one point, it seemed that he was pinned down, and then a grenade landed at his side. Somehow he managed to spring out of the casualty radius of the grenade, avoid being struck by automatic fire, and move on to where he was needed. The bunkers were cleared; the position occupied.[866] Results of the contact were five Marines wounded and three NVA probably killed.

At 1445H, Hill 881-North was secured. Lt Jack Adinolfi observed the results of the heavy bombardment: "It stunk. The smell of death was everywhere. There is no doubt those 1,000 and 2,000-pound bombs took a terrible toll of them. We found shreds of clothing, bits and pieces, but nothing you could put together."[867]

At 052050H, E/2/3 at XD 777546 and F/2/3 at XD 773459 received 92 rounds incoming 82mm mortars equally divided between the two companies and also sighted 5 lights approx. 800 meters northwest. Counter-mortar fire was fired on the target with 4.2" mortars and artillery; the lights were extinguished and the mortars ceased. One Marine was killed and six wounded.[868]

Both battalions used 6-9 May to conduct platoon-sized patrols with particular emphasis on covering the area to the west of Hills 881S and 881N. Numerous enemy positions were located.

The determination of the individual Marine is reflected in the actions of 1st Sergeant Charles Patrinos of E/2/3. Wounded in his leg, chest, and arm on 1 May, the Top refused medical evacuation, was active during the contact on 03 May, and still refused evacuation even though his wounds were now becoming infected. He remained with the company until May 5 when he was finally ordered to be evacuated.[869]

Capt Raymond Madonna recalls sweeping the area west of the Echo position:

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[863] 3MAR AAR KHE SANH, p. 27

[864] SOP 041045Z/May67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #19; 3dMarDiv 041702Z/May67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #19.

[865] James Cannon, "The Khe Sanh Hill fights," pp. 12, 13.

[866] BSM file on 2/Lt Charles Paul Chritton.

[867] Reuters News Release, 6 MaY 1967.

[868] SOP 051715Z/May67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #24.

[869] SSM file on 1/Sgt Charles Patrinos.

The stench was terrible and we found many dead NVA. Our progress was very slow due to the need to gather intelligence and look for booby traps. One of the Marines brought me a NVA 'star' belt buckle signifying an officer of NCO. He had collected several of them but this one had writing on the back. I told him I would get it back to him but he told me keep it as a souvenir. Marines are great. Seeing the buckle was stamped with the words '309-1965' in English, I notified the Battalion Intelligence Officer, Captain Vince Smith. He was more interested in the homemade inscriptions 'MANH,; 'G3,' and 'K4.' He asked me to send it back to him on the next helicopter. Knowing we would never see the buckle again, I offered to draw a picture of it instead. He said to hold it. Later in the day, I was startled to hear of someone moving in the no-man's land between our position and the battalion perimeter. We went to full alert. To my surprise, it was Captain Vince Smith and his radio operator, all alone, strolling out to see this wondrous piece of intelligence. After he examined it, I insisted he ride a helo back."[870]

THE BATTLE WON

LTGEN Victor H. Krulak, CG, FMFPAC, saw Khe Sanh as another Dien Bien Phu: "Because of its critical nature, the destruction of the base and forces at Khe Sanh probably has been an enemy objective of long standing. Enemy determination to destroy Khe Sanh or to attack it as a means of attracting US/ARVN forces into a Dien Bien Phu type situation has been whetted by the fact that Khe Sanh is isolated in an area that favors the enemy in terms of terrain and weather."[871]

The key terrain occupied and the enemy routed, the battle had been won, won by the determination and heroism of the individual Marine trooper. Capt Rogers noted:

> As far as the individual Marine goes, I think I learned to respect the individual Marine–the 18, 19 year old, 20 year old, more in this one particular battle than any other time that I've been in the Marine Corps. He was given a job; he went up in the face of danger, in the face of just being blown away, more or less, and he went up and did his job. To see the faces of the marines dragging back their dead buddies, their wounded buddies, you could see how close the Marines really were with each other. It was true brotherhood, and I was really proud at the conduct of the Marines.[872]

09 MAY 1967: LURKING DEATH

Major battles may be won and decisive victories achieved, but there nevertheless remain the "mopping-up" operations that are just as deadly as the encounter with death in the decisive battles. The Angel of Death continued to lurk at Khe Sanh

On 09 May 1967, E/2/3 patrolled to the west of Hill 881-N (near XD 747473). Two platoons were moving along a trail hat was fairly well-used along a stream and then pulled off the trail to proceed up the slope of Hill 778.

F-3, running point, ran into what was at first assumed to be the point of a squad. Then F/2/3 began to receive automatic weapons fire from three or four directions. Since it was fairly light, they continued to maneuver, one squad on line. The fire rapidly grew in intensity and the Marines pulled off onto higher ground, taking heavy casualties. Cpl James H. Ward had a tail fin of one of his 3.5" rockets hit that he was holding in his hand. He threw the 3.5 launcher to the ground, grabbed a rifle, and shot at some NVA he spotted coming up over a ridgeline. He shot one who "spun in the air," and then picked off enemy one by one.[873]

Six feet from Cpl Ward lay the wounded FAC, Lt Harris, with a badly shattered leg. Four feet away, behind a rock, LCPL Simpson received a ricocheted round in his arm and leg. A couple of enemy bullets landed between Cpl Ward's legs, three inches from him. Cpl Ward began to drag Lt Harris to a safe place behind a rock where he applied a battle dressing.[874]

The Platoon Commander, Lt Carroll, had been hit in both legs and an arm. SSgt Watts was hit in his shoulder and mouth. Cpl McKeen was hit in his chest and both lungs. There was only one Corpsman remaining to provide medical help.[875]

Cannon: "They first started off with messages such as 'PIGMALLION 6 this is FOXTROT 6, we have encountered snipers. We have 1 Kangaroo (KIA) and 3 Wolves (WIA).' In no time, it became: 'We have 3 Kangaroos and 9 Wolves.' Their problems were becoming larger with every passing moment."[876]

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[870] Madonna, Raymond, "Hotel 2/3 in the Hill Battles of Khe Sanh" (Draft 01 Oct 1997) in his letter of 02 March 1998.
[871] FMFPAC 070105Z/May67, SITREP #768.
[872] Comments of Capt Rogers, HQMC Oral History Tape #3533.
[873] Comments of Cpl James H. Ward, HQMC Oral History Tape #997.
[874] *Ibid.*
[875] *Ibid.*
[876] James Cannon, "The Khe Sanh Hill fights," p. 14.

LtCol Earl R. DeLong, CO of 2/3, immediately ordered E/2/3 to reinforce Co F. 1Lt John F. Adinolfi, acting XO of E/2/3, called in arty behind the enemy and then personally led his company with a platoon attached from Co H down into the ravine to evacuate the dead and wounded of Co F.

Cannon:

As we came to the base of the hill to our front, I deployed my platoon for the assault and up the hill we went. Upon reaching the top, the platoon went into a hasty defense. I dropped to my belly and took out my field glasses to see if I could determine what was going on with Foxtrot Company.

What I saw horrified me. The North Vietnamese were crawling over men of Foxtrot Company and stabbing what appeared to me as being wounded Marines. Foxtrot Company had been drawn into a saddle along a small ridgeline and couldn't move. I saw the NVA attempt to drag off what looked like a wounded Marine.

I grabbed a M-60 machinegun and determined that a clump of bushes, which appeared to me to be the closest the NVA had got to Foxtrot Company, would be my reference point. I determined that all left of those bushes were dead Marines and NVA. I opened up with a long burst of fire, raking the ridgeline from the bushes to the tree line at the left end of the finger. The range was about 1100 meters. I turned and told the weapons platoon sergeant to take the other gun, watch my tracers, and rake the finger from the bushes to the left. Our fire was right on target.

Meanwhile, my company commander had come up behind me. He shouted, 'Get off the gun, Cannon!' 'Go to hell,' I replied and kept firing. I meant no disrespect. He had not seen what I had. I knew what I was doing.

After driving the NVA off, I turned the gun over to the gunner with instructions to keep the NVA off that finger. 1Lt Adinolfi was on the radio with battalion. As soon as the radio conversation was over, Adinolfi turned to me and said, 'Jim, you're a leader, go pull them out.' I answered, 'You're a commander, give me some support.'

1Lt Adinolfi informed me that Foxtrot 6 was hit and that the entire company was pinned down and couldn't move. He said that LtCol Delong had told him, 'Send Cannon down there.'

I turned to Frank Izenour, the 1st Platoon Commander, and asked him to guide me to the base of the finger where the bushes I used as a reference point were. I always carried a pen flare in my helmet cover band. I would pop one of these every few minutes and Frank could adjust me.

We moved out. We knew it would be rough going and that time was of the essence. Somewhere along the line we had inherited a combat photographer, a Corporal, and before we had moved out, he asked if he could go with us. I could use all the help I could get. He grabbed a rifle from somewhere and left his camera behind.

Suddenly, shots rang out to my front. My point had made enemy contact. I saw my point man as I moved forward. He had two additional rifles slung over his shoulder. They were enemy rifles. We didn't have time to chat about what had taken place but apparently he had run into two un-alert NVA and had killed them both. He pointed to his right. There, as far as I could see, were freshly dug graves [and] bloody web gear lay all about.[877]

I informed Frank [Izenour] that I would be securing the high ground to Foxtrot's rear. At the top, I found 2Lt Carroll and three other Marines. Of the four, two had been wounded and two had not. It was payback time. I was glad that I could help him and Foxtrot Company. He had helped me so much just six days earlier.

Meanwhile, back on Hill 803, where I had just been, the battalion commander had flown in by chopper with a skeleton staff, a 106 RR section, and another 81 mm mortar section. They, too, were under fire from a hill to the north of them. I again asked for support but was denied at the time because they were under fire.

It was time to act. One fire team and one machine-gun, along with the combat photographer, would lay down a base of fire over the heads of us and Foxtrot. Two fire teams would assault through Foxtrot. As the assaulting fire teams passed through Foxtrot, the base of fire would shift their fire from the finger to the edge of the tree-line. They would cease fire on a red smoke and join us by hand and arm signal. I would be with the assaulting fire teams.

We moved out and the base of fire opened up over our heads. As we passed through Foxtrot, I overheard a big black Marine ask, 'Who was that — on the machine-gun?' I asked as I passed him, 'Why?' He replied, 'He saved our asses.' I felt relieved. I believe he was a gunnery sergeant.

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[877] 203 enemy graves were discovered at XD 750463.

We passed through Foxtrot Company and opened up with our assault fire. My Marines began to run, firing and screaming across the northern finger... [The position was secured]. We were all to be heli-lifted back to Hill 881N.[878]

Co F had 24 KIA and 19 WIA.[879]

A MYSTERY

The official Joint Casualty Resolution Center report[880] states that on 09 May 1967, PVT Robert J. Todd of F/2/3 was "..struck in the head and back by small arms fire while near Huong Hoa Village in the vicinity of coordinates XD 8602375. The tactical situation prevented other members of his unit from reaching him." An attached map correctly identifies these coordinates as approx. 1000 meters ESE of KS ville. Was he at this location–in Khe Sanh Village? Obviously, he was more probably involved with the action of F/2/3 as reflected in the message to his parents: "He sustained missile wounds to the head and back from rifle fire while on an operation ... On 9 May 1967, Robert's unit became engaged in heavy contact with hostile forces. His unit broke contact and due to the tactical situation was forced to leave the area." Subsequent attempts by MIA investigators to determine graves near Khe Sanh Village in an attempt to locate Todd's remains might possibly be "misdirected!"

MESSAGE FROM COLONEL LANIGAN[881]

P 120310Z MAY 67
FM CO THIRD MARINES
TO SOP THIRD MARDIV/III MAF REP
ZEN;SECOND BN THIRD MARINES
ZEN/THIRD BN THIRD MARINES
ZEN/B CO FIRST BN NINTH MARINES
ZEN/E CO SECOND BN NINTH MARINES
ZEN/M CO THIRD BN NINTH MARINES
ZEN/K CO TIRD BN NINTH MARINES
ZEN/C CO FIRST BN TWENTY SIXTH MARINES
ZEN/KHE SANH TIGERHOUND SITE 23RD TASS APO 96337
ZEN/DET 13 15TH AERIAL PORT SQDN
BT
UNCLAS
BATTLE OF KHE SANH

1. THE BATTLE OF THE KHE SANH WILL CERTAINLY GO DOWN IN ANNALS AS ONE OF THER MOST FIERCE IN MARINE HISTORY. OVER THE PAST SIXTEEN DAYS I HAVE MARVELLED AT AND ADMIRED THE COURAGE OF OUR INDIVIDUAL MARINES AND THE TEAM WORK AND DETERMINATION OF OUR UNITS FROM FIRE TEAMS TO BATTALIONS.

2. A VERY DETERMINED AND WELL DISCIPLINED ENEMY FORCE HAS BEEN DEFEATED BY THE ACTIONS OF EVERY MARINE AND TOHER MEMBERS OF OUR ARMED FORCES WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS ACTION. THIS VICTORY WAS GAINED BY THE TEAM WORK OF ALL THE SERVICES AND THE MOST COMPLETELY INTEGRATED INTER-SERVICE AIR-GROUND CLOSE SUPPORT TEAM I HAVE EVER WITNESSED. WE CAN ALL BE THANKFUL WE ARE MEMBERS OF SUCH A FINE TEAM.

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[878] James Cannon, "The Khe Sanh Hill fights," pp. 14-16, *passim.*
[879] SOP 0911235Z/May67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #39; SOP 091420Z/May67, Plans Summary.
[880] Case No. 0675-0-01. Library of Congress MIA microfilm roll #142, Folder #29, DD Form 1300, 12 Jun 67, on TOTT, Robert Jacy, and misc. documents in the file, including a map showing the location of the loss at Huong Hoa Village. Undoubtedly, the report (prepared at HQMC in Washington, D.C.) was prepared looking at the map sheet titled "Huong Hoa," and subseuent researchers assumed it was the "fictitious" Huong Hoa village rather than the general area. The coordinates refer to the "Old French Fort. (XD 860375, while the action of F/2/3 occurred at XD 747473 and later, at night positions, at XD 750463. [3d MarDiv COC 091853Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #39; 3d Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 31].
[881] Sent in letter from Michael J. Hughes 29 March 1995.

3. IF THERE IS ONE CONSOLATION IN FIGHTING A BATTLE, IT IS KNOWING THAT THE MARINE IN THE FRONT LINES IS BEING PROPERLY LED. NO COMMANDER COULD ASK FOR FINER LEADERSHIP THAN HAS BEEN EXHIBITED BY THE SECOND BN THIRD MARINES AND THE THIRD BN THIRD MARINES.

4. MAY GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU AND MAY HE WATCH OVER OUR COMRADES WHO DIED OR WERE WOUNDED IN GAINING THIS VICTORY. GOD SPEED.

COL. J. F. LANIGAN, COMMANDING OFFICER, THIRD MARINE REGIMENT
BT

THE NUMBERS[882]

Casualties: USMC: 168 KIA, 443 WIA, 2 MIA. NVA: 807 KIA (confirmed), 611 KIA (probable), 6 POW, 1 returnee.

Support: 23,472 artillery rounds, 1915 tons of air-delivered ordnance in 1170 SORTIEs, and 23 Arc Lights in support of the battle. (The aerial ordnance broke down into: 611,500 pounds napalm, 3,218,500 pounds explosives, 1230 250-pound bombs, 3318 500-pound bombs, 380 750-pound bombs, 247 1000-pound bombs, 387 2000-pound bombs).

During the battle, there were 35 planes per day using the airstrip. Approx. 200,000 pounds of supplies were delivered per day, moved by Sgt James T. Yuspa and his two forklift drivers–actually the figure of 200,000 is misleading since the same cargo was handled 4 or 5 times before it was passed to someone else.



"Old Rugged Cross" erected on Hill 861 by the 1/26 Chaplain, David Meschke (departed Khe Sanh in July, 1967), erected in memory of Marines who lost their lives during the Battle of the Hills. Just above the cross is Hill 950, and to its right, Hill 1015. Photo taken by Ray W. Stubbe on 28 July 1967. Official USMC photo A193254.

Marines on Hill 881-South, digging bunkers or deeper trenches during the following months, occasionally unearthed a M-16, AK-47, a human skull, or simply and suddenly were engulfed in a belch from the earth of odor of decayed human bodies. SFC James Perry, the Medic of MACV Advisory Team #4 in Khe Sanh village, noted, "They found later that they [the NVA] had a

[882] 3d Mar, AAR, BATTLE OF KHE SANH, SEARCH AND DESTROY, 09 June 1967., pp. 3, 5, 6, 35, 36; "Khe Sanh Sergeant Has Many Talents," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:23 (9 June 1967)10.

hospital and mess-hall and some other things under both those mountains, and the blasting just caved-in the roof. Most have buried hundreds inside. They estimated that as high as three or four thousand might have been in that complex network of tunnels inside those mountains."[883]

On Wednesday, 02 August 1967, Captain John Raymond, the CO of A/1/26 on Hill 881-South at the time, mentioned a visit by Major General Louis Metzger, CG of Third Marine Division a few days earlier in which he discovered several human skulls the Marines had put on stakes which they had dug-up while digging bunkers and trenches. "The General looked at Colonel Padley; Padley looked at Wilkinson, Wilkinson looked at me. there was no place for me to look but up in the air. I think I lost some points there."[884]

"HOME FROM THE WOODS"

By Bill Stross

Dedicated to the Staff and Men of the Stress Disorder Treatment Unit, North Chicago V.A. Medical Center

[Although a poem, the following is printed as originally handed out during an open house at the SDTU, 29 March 1989. Bill was a Marine with G/2/3 during the Hill Fights of 1967]]

As I stood in the hangar deck with its empty spaces that could of held 5,000 strong men – only a wooden crate stood, full of broken equipment, broken dreams, and blood-stained we b gear, staring out at me.

All that was left of untold numbers of brown haired, sandy haired, bright eyes innocent young – Oh so young warriors.

I felt compelled to touch, and turn over, and hold every piece of metal, every piece of material, trying to feel, trying to bring back, trying to remember the faces, the smiles, the names of the men – the boys, that only a few days before had been my friends, my comrades, my buddies. My point man, my radio man, my tail-end Charlie.

I tried to remember what had brought me to this hollow wooden graveyard so cold, with the sweet smell of death still surrounding it. I was numb, I was going back, almost running into the hills – the hills called Khe Sanh. Somewhere else called the foothills of Ohio, or Kentucky, or Pennsylvania, but remember, come back, you are not home. Remember you are in the mountains, the mountains of Khe Sanh, of the country of Vietnam, of the Province of Quang Tri.

This is the season for walking through the woods, dog at my side, rifle at the ready. Keen eyes, alert senses, await the rabbit or squirrel soon to cross my path.

Remember – remember, this is the season for walking in the woods, but these are not the familiar warm woods of Ohio, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania. These are the woods and trails of the mountains, the mountains called Khe Sanh.

My rifle is at the ready, my senses are keener and sharper than they have ever been. For no squirrel nor rabbit will this day grace my game bag.

For today we are after bigger game, game that is wiser and knows the ways of these woods, the hills called Khe Sanh. they live here, they have lived here for untold thousands of years. these are the men of the woods, the woods called Khe Sanh.

We are the intruder, we are the trespasser, we don't belong, not in these hills, these hills called Khe Sanh.

I stopped by the local grain and feed store to buy my hunting license for a mere fee, for a mere fee – I could be master of the woods I walked.

But remember – remember, these are the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh, and no license has been issued. You are here, but not invited. You are here, but not wanted. You are here and they know, they know, these men, these men of Khe Sanh.

They watch, and they wait, these men – Oh so patiently they wait. They have waited for decades, before I was born, before my father was born. They wait, these men, these men of Khe Sanh.

As I run and hide behind a tree, I lose my breath, in the woods, the woods of Ohio. I can hear my heart pounding, pounding so loud that my friends can hear it, and I will be found, and it will be my turn to find them. But remember – remember, these are not the woods of Ohio, these are the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh.

My heart is still beating, harder, faster. These woods with the silent eyes of the owners – watching, waiting, silently, patiently.

We move, we stop, we look, every head in a different direction, every sense smelling, breathing, a different smell, a different feeling.

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[883] Conversation with James Perry, 28 May 1986.

[884] Stubbe, Ray W., Diary entry for Wednesday, 02 August 1967, *Khe Sanh Chaplain* [unpublished manuscript], 01 April 1970, p. 95.

We are getting close. The woods are quiet now, the only sound is the perspiration as it runs off the tips of the noses, on the forest floor, and splashes like a giant waterfall.

These young men – the prides of their families.

Fresh from the Prom, and remember the smell of her hair and the softness of her cheek, the warmth of her face, the smell that arose from her ivory neck.

Come back, come back, remember – remember, you are in the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh. We are through the field and valley, and into a tree-line. We stop, almost in unison

I feel the tension – should we move on line, should we recon by fire, should we throw grenades?

Oh God! What should I do?

I look to my left and then to my right. Joe and Ray nod, and John and Bill smile. Yes it is my decision –they trust me and why not, I have led them through many valleys, and many tree-lines, through untold streams and hills.

They trust me, they believe in me.

We move closer, the signal is given, the decision has been made, in the time it would take to drop a cigarette to the ground. They were all down, all these fine young men, bloodied and twisted, life being pulled and jerked from their still not grown bodies.

I hear the dog barking and he is excited, a clean shot, he should be running back, through the woods, these warm, pleasant woods of Ohio.

But remember – try to remember, these are the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh.

Their patience and silence had paid off, for the men of the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh.

Twelve young, shiny-faced, unassuming men – boys from the land, the lands of Ohio, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania, and everywhere the Stars and Stripes fly.

I pulled myself up on my elbow, can it be, these men of Khe Sanh, with their shoes made of old tires and hats of straw, have beaten and won over our shiny new rifles, our helmets of steel, and our flak jackets of the bullet-proof type.

I am getting tired now, I feel the life running from my body, nourishing the floor of this forest, these woods, these woods of Khe Sanh.

I call out names, but no one answers.

Ollie, Ollie in free, can't you guys find me? I call out the names but these are not the names of my childhood days.

These are the names of my comrades, lost – never to speak my name again, nor I theirs.

I am drifting now, all is quiet and peaceful. I have done my best. I am due for a rest.

My men and I have come home, home to the woods, the woods of Ohio.

KHE SANH GLOSSARY

A-1	Douglas Skyraider, a propeller-driven, single engine attack plane. Span 50'9", length 38'10", weight empty 10,550 lb. , gross 25,000 lb. Performance: max. speed 318 MPH, cruising speed 188 MPH, range up to 3,000 miles with external tanks. capable of carrying up to 8,000 pounds of external ordnance;
A-1	Strong point at YD 267755
A-2	Strong Point at YD 215742
A-3`	Strong Point at YD 169716
A-4	Strong Point at YD 116701; Douglas Sky Hawk, a single-seat, jet aircraft specially designed to deliver weapons on targets completely obscured by weather or darkness.
A4	Douglas Skyhawk single engine turbo-jet with a single crew member. Max speed 675 MPH. Armament: two 20mm MK 12 cannon each with 200 rounds, two 30mm DEFA 553 each with 150 rounds, pylons under fuselage and wings for a total ordnance load of 5,000 lb.
A6A	Gruman Intruder, a twin-jet, twin-seat, attack aircraft specially designed to deliver weapons on targets completely obscured by weather or darkness. Max speed 625 MPH at height, 599 MPH at sea level. Service ceiling 41,660 ft., ferry range 3,225 miles. Armament: 5 stores locations each rated at 3,600 lb. with max. load of 15,000 lb. Typical load 30 500-lb. bombs
AA	Anti-Aircraft
AAA	Anti-Aircraft Artillery
AAR	After Action Report
AB	Air Base

ABCCC	Air Force Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center
ABLE MABLE	Limited reconnaissance by Air Force RF-101 aircraft. Flew numerous photo missions over Khe Sanh siege
ABN	Airborne
ABORTED	Cessation of a mission (also "scrubbed")
AC-47	Douglas C-47 Skytrain, fixed-wing transport modified with General Electric SUU-11A 7.62mm miniguns and used as a gunship. Also called "Puff the Magic Dragon"
ACD	I Air Cavalry Division
ACTIVATOR	Radio call-sign for CAC OSCAR
ACTUAL	The person, not just his clerk or representative of the office, usually refers to the Commanding Officer ("the 6-Actual") or the operations officer ("the 3 Actual")
ACW	Air Commando Wing (USAF)
AD	Air Division (USAF)
ADC	Assistant Division Commander
ADF	Automatic Direction Finder; automatically and continuously measures the direction of the received signal
ADSID	Air-Delivered Seismic Intrusion Device
AF	Air Force
AFB	Air Force Base
AFRTS	Armed Forces Radio/Television Station (Saigon)
AGL	Above Ground Level
A GUNNER	Assistant gunner
AK-47	Russian-made Kalashnikov gas-operated 7.62mm automatic rifle with an effective range of 400 meters; standard weapon of the NVA; 9.5 lb. 34.25" long, fires 600 rounds per minute, muzzle velocity of 2350 feet per second
AIR AMERICA	Contract airline that flew for the Central Intelligence Agency in Southeast Asia; flew supplies into Khe Sanh to support BV-33 in Laos
AIR MINDED BRAVO	Radio callsign for Co B, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion in 1967
AKA	Also Known As
ALCC	Airlift Control Center (USAF)
ALFA RATS	Perishable food supplies normally requiring refrigeration (milk, steaks, etc.)
ALO	Air Liaison Officer
AM	Air Medal
AM-2	Air Matting, solid metal, 12 ft. long, 2 ft. wide, 144 pounds
ANGLICO	Air/Navy Gunfire Liaison Company
ANNAM	The central part of indo-China (Tonkin to the north, Cochin China to the south)
ANNAMITIC CORDILLERA	The north-south mountain range separating Laos and Vietnam
AN/PRC-25	Radio, FM, line-of-sight, usually limited to 25-30 miles
AO	Aerial Observer; Area of Operations
AP	Anti-Personnel (mine)
APC	Armored Personnel Carrier
APD	Airborne Personnel Detector, also known as "People Sniffer", XM-2, modified E-63 (Description and photo in LtGen John H. Hay, Jr., *Tactical and Materiel Innovations*, Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Army, 1974, pp. 80-81).
APL	Assistant Patrol Leader
ARA	Aerial Rocket Artillery (USA)
ARC LIGHT	B-52 bomb strike. Began 12 December 1965 in Laos
ARDMORE	Operation in Khe Sanh area conducted 170001H/Jul67 - 312359H/Oct 67 by 26th Mar
ARENG	Bru ville at XD 846402
ARLINGTON CANYON	Operation conducted in the Khe Sanh area 3 Jul - 21 Sep 1969 by 4th Marines
ARPA	Advanced Research Project Agency (developed electronic sensors)
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam

ARTY	Artillery
ASAP	As Soon as Possible
ASP	Ammunition Supply Point (dump)
ASRAT	Air Support Radar Team (also referred to as ASRT), a subordinate operational component of a tactical air control system which provides ground controlled precision flight path guidance and weapons release for attack aircraft
AT	Anti-Tank
"A" TEAM	12 USSF soldiers capable to development of an indigenous regimental-size unit
AW	Automatic Weapons
AWF	Automatic Weapons Fire
AWOL	Absent Without Leave
B-41	5-lb. rocket fired from a Soviet RPG-7 rocket launcher
B-5 FRONT	Communist military designation of the two northernmost provinces of South Vietnam
B5-T8	The Secret designation of the North Vietnamese Army Front command controlling the Khe Sanh siege battle. Headquarters located just west of the western edge of the DMZ in Laos
B-52	Boeing Stratofortress, USAF 8-engine, swept-wing, high-speed, high-altitude, heavy jet bomber. Moved by 8 13,750 Pratt & Whitney, J-57-P-19W. Dimensions: span 185 ft., length 156 ft. 6 in.. Weight empty 177,816 lb., combat 293,100 lb. , takeoff 450,000 lb. Performance: max speed at 20,200 ft. 551 kts., combat radius 3,012 nm. Crew of 6. Armament: 4 .50 cal. M3 guns, bomb load of approx. 60,000 lbs. Normal load of 108 bombs but capable of holding 128 500 & 750-lb. bombs dropped in a rectangular pattern, usually 1,000 yds long and 100 yds wide. Most flights consist of 6 aircraft together, covering an area one-half mile wide and three miles long, all within a period of several seconds.
B-57	Strike aircraft developed by Martin Company for night intruder missions nicknamed YELLOWBIRD when loaded with "funny bombs" and operating in Laos
BA	Basic Allowance
BA-30	Radio battery
BALD EAGLE	A company-size reaction force
BANGALORE TORPEDO	Explosive-filled bamboo placed under defensive wire to blast a path through it
BAN HOUEI SANE	CP of BV-33 at XD 625379
BAN KARAI PASS	XE 262117 (17-22 N/106-09E)
BAR	Browning Automatic Rifle
BARKEEP	Radio callsign of 1/1 (SCOTLAND II)
BAS	Battalion Aid Station
BASE AREA	Communist base camp area, usually containing fortifications, supply depots, hospitals and training facilities
BASKETBALL	A flare ship, aircraft that drops illumination flares
BATTLE OF KHE SANH SEARCH AND DESTROY	Operation conducted at Khe Sanh, also known as "Battle of the Hills" conducted 240001H/Apr67 - 131500H/May67 by 3d Marines
BDA	Bomb Damage Assessment
Beaucoup	French word used by Marines in Vietnam for "much" or "many"
BEEHIVE	An ordnance round containing thousands of small darts called "fleshettes"
BERM	A scooped-out section beneath the surface of the ground to store munitions
BIRD DOG	A FAC (Forward Air Controller) usually in a small single-prop airplane
BLACKBIRD	The flat black-painted C-130 supply aircraft for SOG loaded with highly sophisticated secret communications gear, radar-deflection equipment, and terrain-avoidance radar (TAR)
BLACKBUD	Radio callsign of 1/26
BLOOPER	M-79 grenade launcher
BLT	Battalion Landing Team
BLU	Bomb, Live, Unit
BLUE LINE	A river (called because rivers are indicated by a blue line on maps)

BLUE MAX	1st Air CAV helicopters operating in Khe Sanh during Operation PEGASUS that rescued alive Marines from Hill 689, 16 April 1968
BN	Battalion
BNR	Body Not Recovered
BOUNCING BETTY	Anti-personnel mine on ground triggered by stepping on it, shooting up a projectile several feet into the air (usually chest-high) which then explodes
BRACKETT	Box-in with artillery
BROWN LINE	Route 922 (Operation MAINE CRAG, 12969)
BOX	Area of an operation or recon insert (usually refers to grid squares)
BOXED IN	Bracketed with artillery
BRASS BALLS	Refers to a man with unusual daring: "He sure has brass balls"
BRAVO RATS	Canned food supplies used to serve more than an individual
BREH	Bru ville at base of hill 471, at XD 8463889
BRIDGE SITE	Position occupied by C/1/26 where Rt. 9 crosses Rao Quan River, at XD 910400
BRONCO	OV-10 aircraft
BROWN BAR	Marine slang for Second Lieutenant
BRU	The mountain tribe occupying the Khe Sanh area
BSM	Bronze Star Medal
BU	Builder (USN Seabee rating)
BU	Bru ville at XD 820381, about half-way between Khe Sanh an d Lang Vei villages
BUGLE NOTE	A tactic for providing increased B-52 support during the siege of Khe Sanh that used cyclic launches (first 3 bombers every 90 minutes, later 6 bombers every 180 minutes with variations to prevent prediction of arrival time. The bombers flew to pre-designated pre-initial point and were guided to the targets by Combat Skyspot radar. The concept proved to be so efficient at Khe Sanh that it was expanded to cover all areas hit by B52s).
BV-33	Royal Laotian Volunteer Battalion (*Bataillion* Volontaire) operating just west of khe Sanh inside Laos
(C)	Confirmed kill
C-1	Base Area at YD 221681
C-2	Base Area at YD 127666
C-3	Base Area at YD 108603
C-4	Plastic explosive, M5A1, a white-colored putty-like explosive configured in a 2.5-lb. 2" x 2" block called a stick, that can be molded
C-7	de Haviland Caribou, fixed-wing, small carrier with wing span 95'8", length 72'7", height 31'9", operating weight 18,260 lb., max payload 8,740 lb., normal max. takeoff weight 28,500 lb. Performance: max. speed 216 MPH at 6,500 ft. , economical cruising speed 182 MPH at 7,500 ft., max range 1,307 miles' Crew of 3-4, can carry 32 passengers
C-123	Fairchild Provider, medium cargo plane. Dimensions: span 110 ft., length 75'3", height 34'1", weight empty 31,058 lb., max. gross weight 60,000 lb.. Performance: max. speed 245 MPH, cruising speed 190 MPH
C-130	Douglas Hercules, a 4-engine turboprop transport aircraft. Dimensions: span 132'7", length 97'9". Weight empty 63,000 lb. (C130E - 72,892 lb.), max payload (A model 36,600 lb (45,000 lb for E model). Performance: A model max. cruising speed 356 MPH (368 MPH for E model)
CAC	Combined Action Company (CAC OSCAR operated in the Khe Sanh area)
CACKLE BERRIES	Old USMC slang word for "eggs"
CADAVER	Radio callsign for VMO-6 until 01 Feb 68
CAG	Combined Action Group
CALLSIGNS	The following are some of those used at Khe Sanh:

ACTIVATOR	CAC OSCAR	JACKSONFILLE	1/13
BARKEEP	1/1 (SCOTLAND II)	KLONDIKE	VMO-6 ('67)
BLACK BUD	1/26	LANDSHARK BRAVO	DASC
BONNIE SUE	HMM-163	MOLLY PITCHER	1/26
BUFFALO CITY	HMM-165	MOONBEAM	ABCCC night

CADAVER	VMO-6 (/67)	MUTTER	CAC OSCAR
CANDLESTICK	C-123 flareship	NAIL	OV-2, OV-10 FACs
CARSTAIRS BRAVO	ASRAT	NORTHBROOK	HMM-164
CHATTERBOX	HMM-262	OAK GATE	VMO-3
CLIPCLOP	HMM-362	PEST KILLER	HMM-362
COLORADO-19	175s at Carroll	PIEDMONT	FOB-3
DEADLOCK	VMO-2	POWER GLIDE	HMM-364
DUNBAR COUNTY	3/26	PRESS	HMM-164
ELEPHANT	BV-33 in Laos	SANTA ANA BRAVO	Recon Co.
GARDEN VALLEY	1/9	SCARFACE	VMO-3
HASTY FOOT	2/26	SEAWORTHY	VMO-6 ('67-'68)
HIGH BOY	HMM-163	SPACE	HMM-165
HILLSBORO	ABCCC daytime	SPUNKY HANSON	USSF at Lang Vei
HOSTAGE	VMO-2	SWIFT	HMM-164
INTRIGUE	26th Mar Regt	TAIL PIPE MIKE	USAF CCT

CA LU	Base located approx. YD009455, named for the nearby Khe Ca Lu river, tributary of the Quang Tri River
CAMERON FALLS	Operation conducted at Khe Sanh 291000H/May69 - 230600H/Jun69 by 9th Marines
CAM LO	District Headquarters and town at YD 1259; site of Bru resettlement after siege
CAMP J.J. CARROLL	Site of 175mm artillery, YD 063548
CAMP EAGLE	101st Airborne Division CP in 1971, YD 808612
CAMP EVANS	YD 545321
CANDLESTICK	Callsign for C-123 FAC/flare aircraft in Laos
CANISTER	M336 90mm tank r4ound filled with approximately 1,281 stacked steel cylindrical pellets
CANNON COCKER	Marine slang for an artilleryman
CAP	Combined Action Platoon; also a series indicator for outgoing White House telegrams
CAP O-3	CAP compound just outside the KSCB at XD 842409
CAR	Combat Action Ribbon
CARIBOU	C-7 twin-propeller driven, 32-passenger aircraft
CARP	Computed Air Release Point (USAF)
CARSTAIRS BRAVO	Radio callsign for ASRAT team at KSCB during the siege
CAS	Close Air Support; Controlled American Source (covert action branch of the Saigon office of the CIA)
CAV	Cavalry (USA)
CBMU	Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMO Det B operated at KSCB)
CBU	Cluster Bomb Unit. Basically, the CBU consists of a dispenser filled with small spherical bombs containing small steel spheres. When the dispenser was ejected from the aircraft, a timer opened it and the bombs were released. The bombs were fused to detonate and expel the steel spheres against personnel and materiel.
CC	Command Center (Headquarters of FMFPAC in Hawaii)
C & C	Command and Control
CCN	Command and Control North
CCT	Combat Control Team (USAF)
CDEC	Combined Document Exploitation Center, a section of J-2, MACV, responsible for translating and disseminating captured enemy documents
CDR	Commander (USN officer rank, O-5)
CDS	Container Delivery System (for airdrops)
CE	Construction Electrician (USN Seabee rating); Combat Essential (supplies indicated by a red ball with "666" lettering)
CG	Commanding General

CH-46	Boeing Vertol Sea Knight, a twin-engine, tandem-rotor transport helicopter, designed to carry a 4-man crew and 17 combat-loaded troops. Weight empty 12,400 lb. , max. takeoff and landing 23,000 lb. Max speed 166 MPH. Range at max. weight with 6,750 lb. payload with ten per cent reserve 236 miles. Accommodations: 3 crew, 17-25 troops, or 15 litters and two attendants, or 4,000 lbs. cargo
CH-47	Army helicopter (distinguished from CH-46 in that it has 4 wheels). Dimensions: Tandem main 3-blade rotor diameter 60 ft., fuselage length 51 ft., height 18'7". Performance: max speed 180 MPH at 10,200 ft., ave. cruising speed 160 MPH. Mission radius 115 miles. Accommodates 2 pilots, one crew chief, 33-44 troops of 24 litters with two attendants, or vehicles and freight up to 28,000 lbs., can be carried on external cargo hook.
CH-53	Sikorsky Sea Stallion, a single-rotor, heavy transport helicopter powered by two shaft-turbine engines with an average payload of 12,800 pounds. Carries a crew of 3 and 38 combat-loaded troops. Dimensions: main (6-blade) rotor diameter 72'3", fuselage length 67'2". Weight empty 22,444 lb. , max. takeoff 42,000 lb. Armament: Three 7.62mm miniguns. Accommodation: 3 crew, 37 troops or 24 litters and 4 attendants.
CH-54	Tarhe Sky Crane helicopter used to move heavy outsized loads and to recover downed aircraft, originally designed to carry a field hospital. 88'5" length, weighs 20.700 pounds and can carry an external load of 20,760 pounds. Crew of 3, no passengers.
CHARLIE	Marine slang for NVA soldiers, from the phonetic alphabet for "C" in "VC"
CHARLIE	Operation to destroy and dismantle KSCB conducted 17 June - 08 July 1968 by 3/4
CHARLIE PAPA	CP, Command Post
CHARLIE RATS	C-rations, field combat rations (also called MCI: Meal, Combat, Individual)
CHATTERBOX	Radio callsign for HMM-262 (SCOTLAND II)
CHECK POINT	Pre-designated location where unit is to proceed
CHECO	Contemporary Historical Evaluation of Combat Operations (USAF)
CHERRY	A man newly-arrived in country
CHI COM	Chinese Communist grenade
CHIEU HOI	Program to welcome military and civilian VC or NVA soldiers to rally to the side of the rightful government in South Vietnam. Words literally mean "open arms"
CHINOOK	CH-47 twin-engine transport helicopter with rotor blades fore and aft
CHLOROQUIN PRIMAQUIN	Anti-malaria medication (medium-sized orange pill) taken weekly by Marines (on Sundays)
CHOKE POINT	A narrow pass through which movement might be controlled
CHOP	Changed Operational Control to
CIA	Captured in Action; Central Intelligence Agency
CIC	Combined Intelligence Center
CICV	Combined intelligence Center Vietnam (on staff of MACV)
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group (South Vietnamese Army)
CIIB	Current indicators intelligence Branch (MACV)
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief Pacific, The Unified Commander who controlled actions in Vietnam on the ground via MACV and directly controlled air
CJCS	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
CLASS I	Rations
CLASS II	General supply (e.g., 782 gear, clothing)
CLASS III	POL (Petroleum Oil Lubricants)
CLASS IV	Fortification materials
CLASS V	Munitions
CLASS 25 ROAD	25-ton capacity road
CLAYMORE	M18A1 Anti-personnel mine shaped in a curved oblong and shooting thousands of small bee-bee balls by command electric detonator. Stands about 3-in. off ground and is about 5-in. wide, sitting on 2-in. legs. Explodes by sending off some 700 small bee-bee steel balls 60 meters in a 60-degree area from one to six feet at 60 meters, each pellet being less than 2-in. apart at this distance. It has a 90% casualty rate.
CLICK	1,000 meters

CLIPS	Slang for "magazine"
CLONG SAREH	Bru ville at XD 848405
CM	Construction Mechanic (USN Seabee rating)
CMC	Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps
CMH	Congressional Medal of Honor
CN	Constructionman (USN Seabee rating)
CAN	Coordinates Not Available
Co	Company
CO	Commanding Officer
COB	Combat Operating Base
COC	Command Operations Center (USMC)
CODE "H"	Junk; equipment that has removed from the lists as no longer repairable
COFRAM	Controlled Fragmentation munitions (also known as "Firecracker")
COL	Colonel (O-6)
COLLECTIVE	The control linkages on a helicopter that adjust the pitch on all blades equally ("collectively") enabling the helicopter to go up or down
COMBAT SKYSPOT	MSQ-77 and SST-181 radar-controlled bombing.
COMDC	Command Chronology
COMNAVFORV	Commander Naval Forces Vietnam, the senior USN officer in Vietnam
COMUSMACV	Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
CONCERTINA	Rolls of barbed wire that are spread to create an obstacle along defensive lines
CONDITION GREEN	Normal readiness posture
CONDITION RED	Full alert readiness posture
CONEX BOX	Container-Express, a large metal container (6' x 6' or 8' x 8') with corrugated metal sides
CONGRINT	Congressional Interest inquiry
CON THIEN OUTPOST	YD 116701
CONUS	Continental United States
CO PUT	Hilltop and outpost near Lang Vei at XD 789382
COPY	Communications lingo meaning "I understand," as in "I copy that"
CO ROC	Cliff just inside Laos, XD 742318
"CORRECTION"	When speaking (especially on radio), if one makes an error, one says "Correction: and then gives the correct information. Example: "The attack started at 0400 CORRECTION 0415." or "We spotted fifteen CORRECTION sixteen enemy."
COVEY	Callsign for O-2 and OV-10 FACs of 20th Tactical Air Squadron
CP	Command Post
CPL	Corporal (E-4)
CP TENT	A small tent with two sections to house, e.g., a Company Commander and his clerk, in the field, staff offices, house a squad of men, etc.
CRACKERBOX	Ambulance
CRF	Contingency Relief Force
CROCKETT	Operation in Khe Sanh area 131500H/May67 - 162400H/Jul67 conducted by 26th Marines
CROTCH	Marine slang for Marine Corps
CRP	Combat Reconnaissance Platoon; specially-trained CIDG units capable of operating independently
CPT	Captain (USA abbreviation) (O-3 rank)
CRACHIN	Dense fog and moisture condition (literally means "spit" in French)
CS	Tear gas
CSF	Camp Strike Force, a company-size CIDG unit
CSM	Command Sergeant Major (USA)
CSW	Crew-Served Weapon

CY	Calendar Year
CYCLIC	The control linkages on a helicopter that cause the pitch on a blade to change as the blade cycles through its arc of rotation, causing the aircraft to move forward, backward, or laterally.
D-5 OUTPOST	YD 097517, Cua Valley
DELTA-1	MK 81, 250-lb. General Purpose Bomb
DELTA-1A	MK 81, 250-lb. General Purpose Bomb, Snake-eye, low-drag
DELTA-2	MK 82, 500-lb. General Purpose Bomb
DELTA-2B	MK 117, 750-lb. bomb with high speed conical fins
DELTA-3	MK 83, 1000-lb. General Purpose Bomb
DELTA-4	MK 84 2000-lb. General Purpose Bomb
DELTA-5	2.75" rockets (19 rockets to a pod)
DELTA-7	5" ZUNI rocket (10A pod, 4 rockets)
DELTA-9	MK 77, 500-lb. napalm bomb
DELTA-11	CBU-1AA Bomb (anti-personnel)
DELTA-14	CBU-24 bomb
DELTA-15	CBU-21 bomb
DEELTA-20	MK 4, 750-round 20mm gunpod
DELTA-21	Smoke-screen bomb (MK 12 Smoke Tank filled with smoke)
DELTA-24	Gunpod
DELTA-26	M-117 (750-lb. bomb) with a 1-second delay enabling 126-ft. penetration before detonation
DELTA-29	1,000-lb. armor piercing bomb
DELTA-32	CS gas (MK-77) delivered in napalm tank filled with CS powder)
DELTA-70	Rockets
DAGMAR	Radio callsign for 3rd Shore Party Bn
DAI UY	Vietnamese for officer rank of Captain (O-3)
D'AI LAO PASS	XD 699 381, where Route 9 crosses the Lao/Vietnam border
DAISY CUTTER	A 15,000-lb. bomb with length of pipe secured into the fuse well and filled with explosives to act as a fuse extension, used to create a landing zone in thick jungle
DAPSONE	An anti-malaria pill (small, white) used by USSF, taken daily.
DAS	Direct Air Support
DASC	Direct Air Support Center
DAWSON RIVER WEST	Operation conducted at Khe Sanh 020600H/Jan69 - 191600H/Jan69 by 9th Marines
DCPG	Defense Communications Planning Group (developed electronic sensors)
DEAR JOHN LETTER	A letter from a wife or girl-friend breaking off relationship
DEFILADE	Protection from hostile observation or fire using a natural obstacle such as a hill or land depression
DET	Detachment
DFC	Distinguished Flying Cross
DHCB	Dong Ha Combat Base
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DISUM	Daily Intelligence Summary
DIV	Division
DIVISION	2 aircraft: 20,000 infantry troops (approx.)
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
DNG	DaNang
DOD	Department of Defense
DONG HA COMBAT BASE	YD 242598
"DOPE"	Settings on a weapon
DRUMFIRE II	Artillery raid operation directed against Co Roc 30 May - 01 June 1968
DONG	Vietnamese unit of money, more commonly called a Piaster
DONG TRI	hill 1015, XD 854455

DONG LA RU'ONG	Hill 1123, XD 855512
DONG PA THIEN	Hill 1371, XD 814520
DONG SA MUI	Hill 1550, XD 700590
DONG TA BANG	Hill 1476, XD 743573
DONG VOI MEP	Hill 1587, XD 836539
DOW	Died of Wounds
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam)
dtd	Dated
DTG	Date Time Group, a message identification combining date and time.
DUEL BLADE TWO	McNamara Wall
DUNBAR COUNTY	Radio callsign of 3/26 during the siege
DUSTER	U.S. Army tracked vehicle, M-42, with 40mm automatic weapons. Weight 48.000 lbs.. Max range 5 KM, max rate of fire 240 rounds per minute
DZ	Drop Zone
E & E	Escape and Evasion
EA	Engineering Aide (USN Seabee rating)
EC-47	A C-47 with radio direction finding equipment.
EEI	Essential Elements of information, specific items of required information
EFFECTIVES	Personnel capable of doing work or engaging in combat
ELEPHANT	Radio callsign of the BV-33 unit in Laos
ELLIOTT COMBAT BASE	XD 8954 (SCOTLAND II)
ENEMY UNITS	Div — Approx 6,000 or more men Regt — Approx 1,500 men Bn — Approx 400 men Co — Approx 100 men Plt — Approx 30 men [HQ, USMACV, MACV J-2 PERINTREP, 20 April 1967]
ENS	Ensign (USN officer rank, O-1)
EO	Equipment Operator (USN Seabee rating)
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
E-Tool	Entrenching tool, a small collapsible shovel carried as individual combat equipment used to dig, e.g., individual foxholes
"EVIL EYES"	HMM-163. H-34 helicopters had "evil eyes" painted on the front
EXTRACT	Removing troops from a patrol
F-4B	McDonnell Phantom II, a twin-engine, 2-seat, long-range, all-weather jet interceptor and attack bomber, speed 1,400 MPH, range 1000 miles, payload 16,000 lbs.
FAC	Forward Air Controller
FADAC	Field Artillery Digital Analysis Computer (computes artillery settings and powder charge when fed coordinates, etc.)
FAL	Forces d'Armee de Laos (Lao Armed Forces)
FAR	Forces Armees Royales (Laos)
FAST MOVERS	Jet aircraft
FBIS	Foreign Broadcasting Information Service
FDC	Fire Direction Center
FEBA	Forward Edge of the Battle Area
FIELD GRADE	An officer O-4 to O-6. (Those O-1 to O-3 are Company Grade and those -7 and above are "flag officers" (Generals–have their own personal flags with a star)
FIGMO	F**k It, God My Orders
FIRE BASES FOR LAMSON-719	All are XD:

HOTEL	726347	BROWN	500350
HOTEL-2	696216	RANGER N	595515
DELTA-1	553344	RANGER S	581503
DELTA	648301	GRASS	691173
30	588463	GREEN	626195
A LUOI	526399	ALPHA	597378
DON	629268	BRAVO	640382
WHITE	581297	SOPHIA-2	346408
LIZ	383378	SOPHIA E	498348
HOPE	344479	OSCAR	858384
LOLO	431372	KILO	858387

FLAME THROWER M2A1, weight (when full): 68-72 pounds, firing time 8-9 seconds. Range 20 yds. liquid fuel and 45 yds thickened fuel

FLARESHIP Aircraft which drops illumination flares

FLASH Highest priority of message (followed by OP IMMEDIATE, PRIORITY, then ROUTINE)

FLC Force Logistics Command

FLESHETTE Ordnance round containing thousands of small darts. The 90mm tank round is M337, filled with 5,600 fleshettes. The 106mm round contains approx. 9,000 fleshettes.

FLIR Forward-Looking Infrared

FLSG Force Logistics Support Group (a unit of 3d Service Bn, FLC)

FM Radio (FOX MIKE), Frequency Modulation, referring to radios used. Field Manual

FMAW First Marine Aircraft Wing

FMFPAC Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

FO Forward Observer

FOB Forward Operating Base

FORT DIX Old French Fort position on eastern edge of Khe Sanh Village, at XD 859387

FOUGASSE Diesel gasoline mixed in a 55-gallon drum with thickener to make it into napalm

FOUO For Official Use Only (not a security classification, but designates limited use of information)

FOXTROT RIDGE XD 874383 (SCOTLAND II)

FPL Final Protective Line (all arms–small arms, machineguns, artillery, etc., firing "to fire the FPL")

FRAG Fragmentation grenade

FragO Fragmentary Order

FROG Free Rocket Over Ground

FRONT COMMAND A North Vietnamese military command exercising control over main force operations for a specified area, but with the control of political matters and guerrilla and local forces reserved to the region

FSB Fire Support Base

FSB ALPINE	XD 756532	FSB QUANTICO	XD 873426
FSB ARGONNE	XD 678572	FSB RUSSELL	XD 912592
FSB BIG FOOT BROWN	XD 830233	FSB SAIGON	XD 818275
FSB CATAPULT	XD 826616	FSB SARGE	YD 028479
FSB CATES	XD 927437	FSB SHEPHERD	XD 933408
FSB FULLER	YD 0159	FSB SMITH	XD 789383
FSB GEIGER	XD 745441	FSB SPARK	XD 870238
FSB GREENE	XD 758610	FSB TENARU	XD 8250
FSB MACK	XD 9661	FSB TORCH	XD 906279
FSB NEVILLE	XD 824577	FSB WHISMAN	XD 973333
FSB PETE	XD 977585		

FSCC Fire Support Coordination Center

FSN	Federal Stock Number
Ft	Feet
FUBAR	F**ked Up Beyond All Recognition
FUO	Fever Undetermined Origin
(FWD)	Forward
FY	Fiscal Year (01 October - 30 September for the military)
FYI	For Your Information
G	Refers to positions on the staff of a General. (G-1 - personnel, G-2 - intelligence, G-3 -Operations and training, G-4 - logistics, HG-5 - Civil Affairs)
GARDEN VALLEY	Radio callsign of 1/9 during siege
GCA	Ground Controlled Approach
GERMAN TAPE	Concertina containing flat razor-like pieces of metal
GL	Grid Line
GIANT DRAGON	U-2 aircraft flying at 85,000 feet, photographing an area 100,000 square miles. Flew air recon missions at Khe Sanh during the siege
GIO LINH	Artillery outpost at YD 214742
"GOOKS"	Slang for Vietnamese enemy, a term supposedly originating with the British Army in India who placed a sign above the mess for indigenous troops: Gentlemen Of Other Color.
GPES	Ground Proximity Extraction System
GP TENT	General Purpose tent, larger than a CP tent, could house company offices, staff offices, a squad of men, etc.
GRAVEL	Small anti-personnel mines, XM-41 or XM-41E1, consisting of lead azide crystals, RDX, ground glass, stiffener which becomes armed upon defrosting and becomes disarmed by absorption of humidity. Originally used to create a "pop" sound to activate electronic sensors)
"GREEN"	Slang for a new, inexperienced man reporting for duty
GRENADES	MK3A2 concussion grenade, filled with TNT, explodes sending shock waves instead of fragments. M-7 Tear gas grenades, used to clear bomb shelters and tunnels M26 Fragmentation Grenade, smooth lemon-shaped body filled with Composition B and a serrated wire which breaks up into hundreds of fragments in all directions, as far as 185 meters. Effective casualty radius, 15 meters M33 Fragmentation Grenade, hardball shaped, interior scored to break into thousands of fragments. M-18 Smoke Grenade, four colors: red, green, violet, yellow, used for signaling. M-15 Willy Peter (WP) Grenade filled with white phosphorus, sends particles of burning WP over an area of 25 yards in diameter, causing severe burns and dense smoke
GRENADIER	The man who carries and fires the M-79 grenade launcher
GRUNT	Infantryman
GS	Grid Square
GUNSHIP	A helicopter armed with air-to-ground armament
GVN	Government of Vietnam (South Vietnam)
GySgt	Gunnery Sergeant (USMC E-7)
H	Local time in Vietnam (from HOTEL time zone)
H-34	Sikorsky Sea Horse UH-34D single-engine medium transport helicopter, with a crew of 3 and can carry 8-12 combat-equipped soldiers depending on weather conditions and elevation.
H&MS	Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron
H-HOUR	The specific hour an operation commences
H&I	Harassment and Interdiction (artillery fire directed at probable enemy-used sites such as river crossings, trails, assembly-areas, etc.)
H&S	Headquarters and Service Company (of a battalion or regiment) or Battalion (of a Division)
HAC	Helicopter Aircraft Commander
HALO	High Altitude Low Opening (free-fall parachuting)
HALIZONE	Water purification tablets containing tetraclycine hyudroperiodine
HARBORSITE	Semi-defensive night position
HASTY FOOT	Radio callsign of 2/26 during the siege

HATCHETT	A SOG reaction force, usually about 60 men
HAVERSACK	A light pack for personal items carried on patrol, from the German *haber sack* referring to a bag for oats, originally a canvas container in which cavalrymen carried food for their horses
HDC	Helicopter Direction Center
HE	High Explosive
HEAT	high Explosive Anti-Tank
HEAT TABS	Trioxane tablets, purple in color, used to heat water or food
HERCULES	C-130 aircraft
HERKIMER MOUNTAIN	Operation conducted at Khe Sanh 09 May- 16 Jul 1969 by 4th Marines
HF	HATCHETT force (reaction force from SOG)
HIGH DRAG BOMB	A weapon fitted with extra fins to slow its speed and increase the time of fall
HILLSBORO	Radio callsign for C-130 ABCCC in southern Laos, daytime hours

HILLS

412	XD 922377	861A	XD 805445
471	XD 846393	881N	XD 774457
552	XD 822402	881S	XD 777438
558	XD 820451	918	XD 726444
606	XD 883496	950	XD 844456
689	XD 803409	1015	XD 854455
691	XD 927433	1566	XD 724605
861	XD 803443	1587	XD 838538
		1739	XD 830545

HistDiv	Historical Division, HQMC
HLZ	Helicopter Landing Zone
HMH	Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (CH-53s)
HMM	Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (CH-46, H-34)
HN	Hospitalman (Navy corpsman, E-3)
HOBO	Radio callsign for A-1E aircraft
Ho Chi Minh	Born 19 May 1890
HOI CHAN	An individual returnee
HOOTCH	Personnel shelter
HOSPITAL SHIPS`	Operating in DaNang harbor, USS REPOSE (AH-16) and USS SANCTUARY (AH-17)
"HOURS"	A term used by the Army (not by the USN or USMC) after a time designation, e.g., "1300 hours," (Navy and Marine Corps usage is simply to designate "1300" without "hours")
HOUSE MOUSE	(1) a recruit who assists Drill Instructors (DIs); a Vietnamese woman who washes laundry, sweeps out hootch, etc.
HOW	Howitzer
HOWITZERS	M108 105mm How (SP), weight 48,200 lbs., max range 11.5 KM, max rate of fire 10 rounds per minute M101A 105mm How, weight 4,980 lbs., max range 11 KM, max rate of fire 10 rounds per minute M102 105mm How, weight 3,100 lbs., max range 11.5 KM, max rate of fire 10 rounds per minute M109 155mm How (SP), weight 48,000 lbs., max range 14.6 KM, max rate of fire 3 rounds per minute M114A1 155mm How, weight 12,900 lbs., max range 14.6 KM, max rate of fire 4 rounds per minute M110, 8" How (SP), weight 58,500 lbs., max range 16.8 KM, max rate of fire 0.5 rounds per minute M115 8" How, weight 29,700 lbs, max range 16.8 KM, max rate of fire 0.5 rounds per minute
HQ	Headquarters
HQMC	Headquarters, Marine Corps
HST	Helicopter Support Team (Marine Corps Shore Party detachment on LZs to handle supplies)
HUEY GUNSHIP	UH-1E medium helicopter with forward firing guns
"HUMP"	To walk, especially while expending great effort, as wearily patrolling steep hills in extremely dense vegetation for 8 hours in 100=degree weather and 90% humidity while carrying a 81mm mortar base

plate! or a M-60 machinegun. The word is an Australian word for a digger: "to hump one's swag" referred to carrying one's load.

HUONG HOA — District of Quang Tri Province containing Khe Sanh; District HQ at XD 865375

"HUSS" — Slang for a relief, e.g., "Hey, cut me a huss!" ("give me a break"). Originates from the HUS helicopter in Korea used to medevac casualties

IA — Immediate Action (usually initiated by a silent hand signal while on patrol)

ICC — International Control Commission (or ISCC=International Control and Surveillance Commission) consisting of Canada, India, and Poland, created by Great Britain and the Soviet Union to supervise the implementing of the 1954 Geneva Accords. (On 07 Apr 1973, 2 helicopters of the ICCS were shot down by missiles from the NVA base of Khe Sanh killing all eleven aboard, including 2 PRG liaison officers. Those killed included representatives from Canada, Indonesia, Hungary, Poland, as well as Viet Cong and American crewmembers in a helicopter flown under contract with Air America).

ICS — interior Communications System (in an aircraft); Infiltration Surveillance Center (to receive and interpret signals from electronic sensors)]

ICTZ — I Corps Tactical Zone, the northernmost portion of South Vietnam

IDH-10 — Mine

IFR — Instrument Flying Regulations

IGLOO WHITE — Electronic sensor program in Laos and the DMZ

ILLUM — Illumination

IMAW — First Marine Aircraft Wing

IMC — Instrument Meteorological Conditions (USAF)

"IN COUNTRY" — In Vietnam

INDIAN COUNTRY — Slang for enemy territory

INSERT — Placing troops into a patrol area

INTELLIGENCE RATING SYSTEM — A method of indicating usefulness of information by designating Reliability of Source (A-Completely Reliable, B–Usually Reliable, C–Fairly Reliable, D–Not Usually Reliable-Unreliable, F–Reliability Cannot be Judged) and according to Accuracy of Information (1 Confirmed by other sources; 2–Probably true, 3–Possibly true, 4–Doubtfully true, 5–Improbable report, and 6–Truth Cannot be Judged). Intelligence reports at Khe Sanh from JTAD agents operating 20 or so clicks away were always reported as "F-6."

INTRIGUE — Radio callsign for 26th Marine Regiment during siege

INTSUM — Intelligence Summary

Intv — Interview

IP — Insertion Point

IPIR — Initial Photo Interpretation Report

IR — Infra-red

ISC — Infiltration Surveillance Center

ISO — Information Service officer

ITR — Infantry Training Regiment (an advanced infantry training upon graduation from Boot Camp to learn different fire-and-maneuver, types of weapons, immediate action tactics, etc.)

ITT — interrogation Translator Team (17th ITT was at Khe Sanh during the siege)

IWC — Individual Weapons Captured

J2 — Intelligence staff section of MACV (or any other joint-service staff)

J&F — Journal and File (maintained by III MAF COC, containing message traffic such as intelligence reports, operational SITREPs, Spot Reports, etc.)

JACK OFF FLARES — Flares held in the right hand while the palm of the left hand violently pushes the igniter. Approx 1.5" diameter and 10" long. The M125A1 was "Signal, Illumination, Ground Green Star Cluster"

JACKSONVILLE — Radio callsign for 1/13 artillery during siege

JCS — Joint Chiefs of Staff

JGS — Joint General Staff, MACV

JOHN WAYNE — Crackers in C-rations; someone who's acting very "gungy" or heroic–wears bandoleers of ammo across the chest or assaults a hill charging with "let's go, men!" etc.

JOLLY GREEN GIANT	Nickname for Sikorsky HH-3E helicopter modified for rescue operations, flown by the Air Rescue Service of the USAF
JOSN	Journalist at E-3 rank (Navy rating)
JP-4	Aviation fuel
JTAD	Joint Technical Advisory Detachment, a control for civilian agents established in Khe Sanh village in 1967
JUNGLE ROT	A bacterial skin infection, usually of the foot or lower leg
KARST	A limestone region marked by sinks and interspersed with abrupt ridges, irregular rocks, caverns, and underground streams
KBA	Killed by Air; Killed by Artillery
K-BAR	Combat knife with a 6.5" blade
KIA	Killed in Action
KEYHOLE	Deep reconnaissance using 4-man teams well beyond friendly artillery support
KHE SANH VILLAGE	XD 845380
KIA(C)	Killed in Action (Confirmed)
KIA(P)	Killed in Action (Probable)
KLICK	A kilometer
KM	Kilometer
KSCB	Khe Sanh Combat Base (16-57N/106-44E)
KW	Kilowatt
LAAW	M72 Light Anti-Tank Assault Weapon
LAMSON 719	Operation conducted from Khe Sanh, push into Laos, 30 Jan 71 - 21 Sep 71 by XXIV Corps, 101st Airborne Division
LANDSHARK BRAVO	Radio callsign for the Khe Sanh DASC during siege
LANG HO	XD 773566
LANG HOLE	XD 878297 (SCOTLAND II)
LANG VEI SPECIAL FORCES CAMP	Old camp at XD 798371; new camp (Nov67-Feb68) at XD 786357
LANG VEI VILLAGE	XD 794362
LAO BAO	Old French penitentiary and airstrip on Laos border at XD 697368 (16-37N/106-36E)
LAPES	Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System
LAW	M72 Light Anti-tank Assault Weapon
LAW OF SEVEN Ps	Proper Prior Planning Prevents Piss-Poor Performance
LBE	Load Bearing Equipment (web belt, harness, pack, etc., the 782 gear carried by an individual)
LBJL	LBJ Presidential Library
LCPL	Lance Corporal (USMC E-3)
LEAPING LENA	Operation conducted from Khe Sanh into Laos, 24 June - 2 July 1964
LIMA CHARLIE	Loud and Clear (radioman lingo)
LIMA LIMA	Land Line (e.g., "Contact him on the LIMA LIMA")
LIMDIS	limited Distribution, restriction of recipients of message
LLDB	Luc Dong Dac Viet (Vietnamese Special Forces); group to handle unconventional and covert operations, wore red berets
LnO	Liaison Officer
LOC	Line of Communication (route of logistic resupply)
LOD	Line of Departure (for an assault, the position from where the assault commences)
LOI	Letter of instruction (usually a TOP SECRET directive)
LOM	Legion of Merit
LP	Listening Post
LPH-8	USS VALLEY FORGE, an amphibious ship of the U.S. Navy

LR	Lower Right (corner of a patrol area box
LSA	Logistic Support Activity/Area
LSU	Logistic Support Unit
LT	Lieutenant
LtCol	Lieutenant Colonel (O-5)
LtGen	Lieutenant General (3-star, O-9)
LTJG	Lieutenant (Junior Grade) (USN O-2)
Ltr	Letter
LURPS	Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (also refers to special rations)
LZ	Landing Zone. The following LZs were in use in the Khe San h area:

LZ BECKY	XD 858615	LZ PEDRO	YD 002845 (Pegasus)
LZ BELL	XD 685613	LZ PELICAN	XD 919379 (Scotland II)
LZ BETTY	YD 335504 (Pegasus)	LZ PINTAIL	XD 847456 (Scotland II)
LZ BLUE JAY	XD 998478, 825455	LZ ROBIN	XD 960445 (Pegasus) 913334 (Robin North), 915331, 925335
LZ CATALINA	XD 849648	LZ SAIGON	XD 816276, 819275
LZ CATES	XD 927437 (Pegasus)	LZ SCOTCH	XD 9156
LZ COUGAR	XD 853594	LZ SHARON	YD 336492 (Pegasus)
LZ CROW	XD 898348 (Pegasus)	LZ SHOUP	XD 8859
LZ GUNNER	XD 891261, 895260	LZ SIERRA	XD 946623
LZ HAWK	XD 895407 (Scotland II XD 897404 (Pegasus)	LZ SMITTY	XD 902270
		LZ SNAKE	XD 815374 (Scotland II) XD 805376 (Pegasus)
LZ HOUND	XD 818265	LZ SNAPPER	XD 845344 (Scotland II XD 842346 (Pegasus)
LZ JANE	YD 377432 (Pegasus)	LZ SNOOPY	XD 808390
LZ JOHN	XD 986432		
LZ KIWI	XD 966465	LZ STUD	XD 996460
LZ LOON	XD 876334 (Scotland II XD 881335 (Pegasus)	LZ TEMPLE LAKE	XD 872259
LZ MACK	XD 969617	LZ THOR	XD 897404 (Pegasus)
LZ MARILYN	XD 9761	LZ TIMOTHY	XD 880360
LZ MERCURY	XD 8753	LZ TOM	XD 900345
LZ MIKE	XD 937409 (*Pegasus)	KZ TORCH	XD 911278 (Scotland II)
LZ MINK	XD 985356	LZ TURKEY	XD 832419
LZ PARIS	XD 807236	LZ URANUS	XD 8853
LZ PASSPORT	XD 796227	LZ WHARTON	XD 880360 (Pegasus)
LZ PEANUTS	XD 810393, 808395		

M-16	Rifle, gas-operated, magazine-fed, air-cooled, automatic, 5.56mm cal., shoulder weapon which weighs 3.1 lbs. and with a 20-round magazine. Effective rate of fire, 12-15 rounds per minute. Effective range 460 meters.
M-26	Fragmentation hand grenade with a casualty radius of 10 meters
M-33	COFRAM-type fragmentation hand grenade introduced at Khe Sanh during siege
M-60	Machinegun, U.S.-built, belt-fed, gas-operated, air-cooled, 7.62mm automatic weapon, weighs approx. 20 pounds without mount or ammunition. It has a sustained rate of fire of 100 rounds per minute and an effective range of 1,000 meters.
M-72	Light Assault Antitank Weapon (LAAW), fires a 66mm rocket. Weight 4.68 lbs., 24.78" closed and 34.78" opened
M-79	U.S. built, single-shot, breech-loaded shoulder weapon which fires 40mm projectiles and weighs approx. 6.5 lbs. when loaded; it has a sustained rate of aimed fire of 5 to 7 rounds per minute and an effective range of 375 meters.
MAB	Marine Amphibious Brigade
MACTU	Marine Air Traffic Control Unit
MACV	Military Assistance Command Vietnam
MAD MOMENT	All weapons in a defensive position simultaneously firing (machineguns, rifles, pistols, mortars, M-79s, etc.)

MAG	Marine Air Group
MAGAZINE	Holder for ammunition rounds
MAINE CRAG	Operation conducted at Khe Sanh 101601H/Mar69 - 021300H/May 69 by 3rd Marines
MAJ	Major (O-4)
MAKE ONE'S BIRD	Leave or move away rapidly
MAR	Marine
MARK-4	Gun pod, aerial ordnance, shoots approx. 4,000 rounds per minute
MARS	Military Affiliate Radio Station. Used by Marines, soldiers, and sailors to call home by military radio sending to HAM operators in the States who connect the transmissions into the telephone system.
MASS	Marine Air Support Squadron
MAYDAY	Distress signal
MB-5	Large fire-fighting vehicle used to extinguish aircraft fires
MCB	Mobile Construction Battalion (USN Seabees)
MCEO	Marine Corps Eyes Only (message caveat)
MCNAMARA LINE	Electronic barrier consisting of strong points to detect movement south from North Vietnam, also referred to as PRACTICE NINE or SPOS (Strong Point Obstacle System) or the TRACE [According to III MAF 100246Z/JUL67, a 600 M wide trace extending from Con Thien (YD 196733) to YD 153717 to YD 158723 to YD 165721 to Gio Linh (215742) to edge of flood plain (YD 227742), projection is that trace will be extended during next dry season from YD 221742) to sea at YD 286765 and from YD 195733 to YD 067654,
MEDCAP	Medical Civic Action Program
MEDEVAC	Medical Evacuation of casualties (usually refers to a helicopter pickup)
MG	Machinegun
MGEN	Major General (2-star, O-8)
MGySgt	Master Gunnery Sergeant (USMC)
MHE	Material Handling Equipment
MI	Military Intelligence
MIA	Missing in Action
MIKE FORCE	Special Forces Mobile Strike Unit
MIKE MIKE	Millimeter
MILITARY CREST	The edge of the area on top of a hill that has been occupied or cleared, the perimeter atop a hill of an outpost
MILKY	USAF term for SKY SPOT or TPQ-10 equipment
"MILLION DOLLAR WOUND"	The third wound or getting a third Purple Heart, meaning rotation out of Vietnam. (a second Purple Heart meant rotation from battle area to the rear) (From WW II)
MITE	M422A1 jeep vehicle
Mk	Mark. Refers to a specific type of equipment or gear
MM	Millimeter
MOLY PITCHER	Radio callsign for 1/26
MONTAGNARD	French word for "mountain people", pronounced "mountain yard" There were 31 tribes of Montagnards in South Vietnam. The Bru tribe occupied the Khe Sanh area
MOONBEAM	Radio callsign for the C-130 ABCCC in southern Laos operating at night.
MORTARS	60mm Mortar, M19, U.S. built, smooth-bore, muzzle-loaded weapon, which weighs 45.2 lbs. when assembled. It has a max rate of fire of 30 rounds per minute and a sustained rate of fire of 10 rounds per min. Effective range of 2,000 M. Bursting area: 11 yds (HE and WP). 60mm Mortar, North Vietnamese, is a direct copy of the U.S. 60mm mortar making all the parts interchangeable. The difference being two nails under the ChiCom mortar mount, made of brass while those of U.S. mortar mount are made of steel.. Max range: 1500 M/1,566 yds. Overall length: 686mm/27 in., Weight 20.4 KG/44.5 lbs. Rate of fire 15-20 rpm.

	81mm Mortar, M29, U.S. built, smooth bore, muzzle-loaded, weight approx 115 lbs. when assembled, sustained rate of fire of 2 rounds per minute and an effective range of 2,300 - 3,650 M depending on ammo. Bursting area: 30 x 20 yds.
	82mm Mortar, Soviet-built, smooth bore, single-shot, high angle of fire weapon weighs approx 123 lbs.; max rate of fire of 25 rounds per minute, max range of 3,040 M.
	120mm M38 Soviet mortar, can fire 12 - 15 rounds per minute, each round weighs 15.4 KG. Max range: 5,700 M, min range 460 M. Weight of weapon in travelling position 500 KG (1100 lb.). Crew: 6 men.
	4.2" Mortar, M30, U.S. built, rifled, muzzle-loaded, drop-fired weapon, consisting of tube, base plate and standard. Weighs 330 lbs. and has a range max of 4,020 M. Rate of fire: 20 rounds per minute.
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty (in USMC, a 4-digit number. An infantryman was a 0311)
MP	Military Policeman
MPC	Military Payment Certificate or script. Money issued to US troops in Vietnam to minimize black market activity. Called "funny money" by the troops.
MR	Military Region (NVA)
MR-1	South Vietnam's five northernmost provinces
MR V	Military Region V
MSF	Mobile Strike Force, a company-size CIDG force used as a mobile reaction or reserve force and for other special operations. The forces were previously designated as MIKE force companies or Mobile Guerrilla Companies
msg	Message
MSGT	Master Sergeant (USA & USMC E-8)
MSN	Mission
MSR	Military Supply Road
MSS	Manuscript
MT	Motor Transport
MTI	Mobile Target indicator. A radar presentation which shows only targets in motion; signals from stationary targets are subtracted out at the return signal
MUC	Meritorious Unit Commendation
MU GIA PASS	WE 8153 (17-40 N / 105-47 E)
MULE	M274A1 small 4-wheeled platform vehicle
MUONG PHINE	XD 095275
MUSCLE SHOALS	Electronic sensor program
MUSTANG	An officer who was formerly enlisted
MUTTER	Radio callsign for CAC OSCAR
MWHG	Marine Wing Headquarters Group
MWSG	Marine Wing Support Group
NAM	Navy Achievement Medal; Slang for Vietnam
NAM BO	Originally referred to Cochin China (the southern part of Indochina); during the US war in Vietnam, was used by both North and South Vietnam to refer to the entire South Vietnam
NAIL	Callsign for OV-2 and OV-10 FACs of 23rd Tactical Air Squadron
NAVFORV	Naval Forces, Vietnam
NBC	Non Battle Casualty (e.g., a victim of falling, drowning, self-inflicted wound, malaria, traffic accident, etc.)
NCO	Non Commissioned officer
NCR	Naval Construction Regiment
NET	A group of individual radios on the same frequency
NFI	No Further information
NCM	Navy Commendation Medal
N-DAY	NVA term for the commencement of operations (like our D-Day)
NIAGARA	USAF operation over Khe Sanh initiated 05 Jan 1968 by COMUSMACV for a SLAM operation (Seek, Locate, Annihilate, Monitor). Phase I: gathering of intelligence. Phase II: commenced on 22 January 1968 using tactical air and B-52 strikes.
NICKEL STEEL	SOG operation of FOB3 in the DMZ west of the "00" grid line to the western edge

NIMROD	Call sign for A-26s of the 56th Air Commando Wing, Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base operating in Laos
NJP	Non-Judicial Punishment under Article 15 of the uniform Code of Military Conduct (UCMJ), in the Marine Corps it is referred to as "Office hours," in the navy as "Captain's Mast"
NKP	Nakhon Phanom AB, Thailand, site of sensor program headquarters(Task Force ALFA) and readouts during siege of Khe Sanh
NMCB	Naval Mobile Construction Battalion
NMCC	National Military Control Center
N&MCM	Navy & Marine Corps Medal (issued for life-saving actions)
NOD	Night Observation Device; an image intensifier using reflected light from stars or moon to identify targets
NOFORM	Message designation for "Not Releasable to Foreign Nationals"
NOMADS	Nickname for 2/26
NPIC	National Photographic Interpretation Center, an office, part of the CIA's Directorate of intelligence, which analyzes aerial photography by satellites and spy planes. NPIC reports were frequently received by III MAF G-2 during the siege at Khe Sanh
NSA	Naval Support Activity; National Security Agency
NSAM	National Security Action Memorandum
NUC	Naval Unit Commendation
NUMBA ONE	Slang for "very good" or "best"
NUMBA TEN	Slang for "very bad" or "worst"
NUNG	A Vietnamese tribesman of a separate ethnic group and probably of Chinese origin
NVA	North Vietnamese Army (used as slang for an individual soldier of the N VA). The correct term is PAVN, Provisional Army of Vietnam.
NVN	North Vietnam
O-1	Cessna BIRD DOG Propeller-driven plane used for observation, 36' wing span, 25' long, height 7'1", weight empty 1,614 lbs., loaded 2,400-2,430 lbs., max speed 115 MPH, cruising speed at 5,000 ft. 104 MPH, cruising range 530 miles, armed with two marking rockets. Carried one pilot and one passenger
O-2	Cessna "Super Spy Master", FAC aircraft, span 38', length 29'9", height 9'4", weight empty 2,848 lbs., loaded 5,400 lbs.. Max speed 199 MPH at sea level, cruising speed 144 MPH at 1,000 ft., range 1,060 miles,. Armed with marking rockets only, could accommodate a 7.62mm minigun rack.
O&I	Operations and intelligence (USAF team member)
OIC	Officer in Charge
ONTOS	M-50 multiple 106mm recoilless rifle (six 106s), self-propelled, full track
OOB	Order of Battle
OP	Observation Post
OPCON	Under the Operational Control of/to
OPERATIONS	The following were the major infantry operations conducted in the Khe Sanh area, in chronological order:

VIRGINIA	170800H/Apr66 - 011200H/May66	1st Marines
BATTLE OF KHE SANH, SEARCH AND DESTROY		
	240001H/Apr67 - 131500H/May67	3d Marines
CROCKETT	131500H/May67 - 162400H/Jul67	26th Marines
ARDMORE	170001H/Jul67 - 312359H/Oct67	26th Marines
SCOTLAND	010001H/Nov67 - 310800H/Mar68	26th Marines
PEGASUS	310800H/Mar68 - 150800H/Apr68	PVC, 1ACD, 26th Mar
SCOTLAND II	150801H/Apr68 - 28 Feb 69	TF GLICK, TF HOTEL
CHARLIE	- 061800H/Jul68	3/4
ROBIN NORTH	2-14 Jun 68	Ist Marines
ROBIN SOUTH	6-18 Jun 68	4th Marines
DAWSON RIVER WEST	020600H/Jan69 - 191600H/Jan69	9th Marines
PURPLE MARTIN	27 Feb - 08 May 69	4th Marines
MAINE CRAG	101610H/Mar69 - 021300H/May69	3rd Marines
TROJAN HORSE	04-27Aug69, 08Sep-01 Oct69	Proj DELTA
HERKIMER MT	09 May - 16 Jul 69	4th Marines

	CAMERON FALLS 291000H/May69 - 230600H/Jun69	9th Marines
	UTAH MESA	1/9, 3/9, 1-5 Mech
	ARLINGTON CANYON 3Jul - 21Sep69	4th Marines
	LAM SON 719 30Jan71-21Sep71	XXIV Corps, 101 Abn Div, 1-5 Mech Div

OPN	Operation
OpO	Operation Order
OpPlan	Operation Plan
OPTOMS	105mm powder charge
OR	Operating Room
OTTER	M-76 tracked vehicle designed to traverse swampy areas. used at khe Sanh to transport personnel from KSCB to 1/9 and 2/26 and evacuate medical casualties on 30 March1968.
"P"	Piastres (Vietnamese money)
(P)	Probable kill
P-38	C-ration can opener
PADRE	Spanish for "father," referring to the Chaplain
PAL	Parcel Air Lift (mail weighing less than 5 pounds sent as 1st Class and Airmail at reduced postage rate to troops)
PASSES	See BAN KARAI, D'AI LAO, MU GIA
PAVN	Peoples Army of Vietnam, the North Vietnamese army
PC	Personnel Carrier, a small truck
PCS	Permanent Change of Station; reassignment to another command
PCV	Provisional Corps (Vietnam)
PEGASUS	Operation conducted in the Khe Sanh area 310800H/Mar68 - 150800H/Apr68 by I ACD, 1st and 26th Marine Regiments, and Provisional Corps Vietnam
PEOPLE SNIFFER	Airborne personnel detector, XM-2, modified E-63 (description and photo in LtGen John H. Hay, Jr., *Tactical and Materiel Innovations*, Wash D.C.: Dept. of the Army, 1974, pp. 80-81: "This air-transportable electrochemical instrument sensed microscopic particles suspended in the air. Mounted in the utility or light observation helicopters, the detector continuously sampled the atmosphere at the flight altitude of the aircraft for evidence of the enemy. It could also detect the ammonia excretions of men." However, a detection might also disclose a pack of monkeys!)
PERINTREP	Periodic Intelligence Report
PF	Popular Forces. Vietnamese infantry-type platoon-size units with the mission of serving a District, employed primarily as security forces for villages and hamlets to defend against local enemy guerrillas
PFC	Private First Class (E-2)
PHANTOM	F-4 aircraft
PHU BAI COMBAT BASE	YD 880140
PHUGAS	A device in a defensive perimeter to slow down or preclude enemy assault consisting of jellied gasoline (napalm powder added to gasoline) in a metal container (usually a 55-gallon drum), with an explosive command-detonating device (usually made from C-4 plastic explosive)
PI	Point of Impact, Parris Island
PICKLE	Drop from an aircraft (ordnance, pods, fuel, etc.)
PIECE	Weapon
PIEDMONT	Radio callsign of FOB-3 during siege
PIGS	Marine slang for the ONTOS vehicle
PIIU	Photographic Imagery Interpretation Unit (part of G-2)
PINEFOLD	Radio callsign of 1/26
PISS TUBE	Usually a tube container for an 81mm mortar round stuck in the ground at an angle into which a man urinates
PL	Patrol Leader

PLC	Platoon Leaders Course (basic officer training for USMC)
PLT	Platoon
PMDL	Provisional Military Demarcation Line (official term for the DMZ)
PMU	Preventive Medicine Unit
"POGUE"	Marine slang for someone with an easy job
POILANE	Original non-Vietnamese settler at Khe Sanh (Eugene Poilane); coffee plantation managed by his son, Felix; home at XD 858400.
POINT	Forward-most element or person in a moving unit
POL	Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants
POLICE	Clean-up an area, as "police the area," or "police in some areas was not very good"
POS	Position, e.g., "Come to my POS" (said as one word, not "P" "O" "S")
(post)	Posthumous (award)
POW	Prisoner of War
PPB	Platoon Patrol Base. A campsite from which platoons dispatch patrols
PRACTICE NINE	Code name for the barrier project (see McNamara Wall)
PRAIRIE FIRE	SOG operations in Laos, replacing SHINING BRASS on 01 Mar 1967
PRC-25	Portable radio, frequency range 32 - 75, FM, can be mounted on vehicle with external power supply
PRD	Portable Radio Direction finder
PROJECT DELTA	A joint American/Vietnamese (USSF) special force composed of a reconnaissance element and a reaction force, total strength of 600 men.
PROVIDER	C-123 aircraft
PROJO	Artilleryman's slang for projectile
psi	Points per Square inch
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations (dropping propaganda leaflets from aircraft, broadcasting messages directed at enemy troops, booby-trapping enemy ordnance, etc.)
PSP	Pierced Steel Plating used as an expedient runway
PT	Physical Training
PT-76	Russian-manufactured light amphibious tank, armed with a D55T 76.2mm gun with 40 rounds and a 7,.62mm coaxial machinegun. Cruising range 150 miles without refueling; travels at about 25 MPH over good roads and 6.4 MPH in water. Max range of 76mm guns is 12,000 to 13,290 meters.
PUC	Presidential Unit Citation
"PUFF"	Slang for SPOOKY, AC-47 gunship. Full referral: "Puff the Magic Dragon"
PUNJI STAKE	Short stalks of cut bamboo cut on an angle to a sharp point and placed in the ground with spikes sticking up to impale anyone falling on them, frequently covered with feces.
PURPLE FOXES	HMM-364
PURPLE MARTIN	Operation conducted at Khe Sanh 27 Feb - 08 May 1969 by 4th Marines
PUSH	Slang for radio frequency (e.g., "Tell them to come up on my push.")
"PUT THE HURT ON"	Marine slang for causing someone pain or grief (e.g., "We really put the hurt on Charlie that time.")
PVT	Private (E=-1)
PW	Prisoner of War
PX	Post Exchange, place to purchase toilet articles, candy, etc.
PYGMALLION	Radio callsign of 2/3 during Hill Battles, 1967)
QL	*Quoc Lo* (National Route) National highway (QL-9 ran through Khe Sanh village)
QUAD 50	M55, 4-barreled .50 caliber air defense machinegun mounted on a vehicle. 800 lbs. Max range 1.8 KM, Max rate of fire 430-555 rounds per minute
QUANG TRI	Northernmost province of South Vietnam. In Vietnamese the words mean "Great Value"
QUANG TRI COMBAT BASE	YD 310553
R&R	Rest and Relaxation, a 5-day period either out of Vietnam or in Vietnam (in a "secure area such as China Beach, DaNang) away from combat. R&R sites included Bangkok, Australia, Hawaii, Kuala Lampur, Singapore.

RACK	Slang for bed or cot			
RALLIER	An enemy soldier who surrenders voluntarily			
RAP	Rocket Assisted Projectile			
RAS	Regimental Aid Station			
RC-292	Long radio antenna			
Rcn	Reconnaissance			
RCT	Regimental Combat Team			
RECON	Reconnaissance			
RED HAZE	Infra Red			
REGT	Regiment			
REMINGTON RAIDERS	Marine slang for office clerks			
REQUEST MAST	An individual's request to be heard by the Commanding Officer			
REVETMENT	Walled-in protective stalls for aircraft			
RF	Regional Forces (Vietnamese infantry-type company-size units with the mission of serving a Province, employed primarily to support the PF and conduct operations against enemy local forces under control of the sector commander)			
RIDGE RUNNERS	HMM-163			
RIGHT GUIDE	A Marine position within a platoon who carries the guidon at the right of the formation. In boot camp this is usually one of the most "squared away" recruits. In Vietnam, the Right Guide assisted the Platoon Sergeant and Platoon Commander by distributing supplies (food, ammunition) and mail.			
RING OF STEEL	Close-in artillery fired around a perimeter of an outpost or recon team			
RIO	Radar intercept officer			
RLT	Regimental Landing Team			
ROBIN NORTH AND SOUTH	Operation to ferret out NVA forces south of Route 9, Khe Sanh area, NORTH 2-14 Jun 68 by st Marines, SOUTH 6-18 Jun 68 by 4th Marines			
ROCKETS - NVA	122mm - range 12,000 meters	75" long	101 lbs.	5" in diameter
	140mm range 9,000 meters	42" long	63.4 lbs.	5.5" in diameter
ROCKPILE	Artillery position at YD 979558			
ROCK QUARRY	Site of quarry for basalt to provide sub-base under air matting of airstrip at Khe Sanh in late CY67; site of Bn 1/9 during the siege, XD 831419.			
RON	Remain Over Night			
ROUGH PUFF	Army slang for the Regional Forces personnel			
ROUGH RIDER	Armed military convoy			
RN	Remain Over Night			
ROUND	One projectile of ordnance			
ROUND EYES	a Westerner, usually referring to American females			
RPG	Rocket Propelled Grenade			
RPG-7	Soviet 85mm, 18.7-lb. rocket launcher with max. effective range of 500 M, fires a 5-lb. B-41 rocket			
RR	Recoilless Rifle (57mm, 75mm, 106mm)			
Rt	Route			
RT	Recon Team (SOG term)			
RTO	Radio Telegraph Operator			
RUBBER LADY	Inflatable mattress			
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT	Directives issued by competent military authority delineating the circumstances under which U.S. forces will begin and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered			
RVN	Republic of Vietnam			
RZ	Reconnaissance Zone			
S	Refers to staff positions in a unit commanded by O-6 or below. S-1:Personnel; S-3 - Intelligence; S-3-Operations and training; S-4-Logistics; S-5-Civic Action			

SACSA	Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities (JCS office, at one time headed by General Krulak)
"SADDLE UP"	Slang for "put on your gear and get moving"
SALUTE REPORT	An acronym used by reconnaissance teams to report enemy sightings: S=Size of unit sighted; A=Activity (what they are doing); L=Location (grid coordinates); U=Uniforms they are wearing, patches, etc.; T=Time of sighting; E=Equipment they are carrying.
SANITIZED	Deletion of all sensitive,. classified information
SANTA ANA BRAVO	Radio callsign for recon unit at KSCB in fall of 1967.
SANTA FE TRAIL	A series of intertwining trails running southward through the planes and gentle rolling hills of Laos, intersecting Highway 9 near the village of DAN DONG at the intersection of Route 92. From the BEN HAI River south, branch trails off the Santa Fe Train turned eastward leading to the general operating area of Operations HASTINGS and PRAIRIE.Nickname by USAF Khe Sanh FACs. (XD690507 SE to XD 7214893)
SAPPER	Enemy soldiers that penetrated through barbed wire to emplace explosives, assassinate, etc.
SAR	Search and Rescue
SATCHEL CHARGE	A canvas bag filled with explosives used by sappers attacking a defensive perimeter. Its handles facilitate tossing the bag into targets as the team runs through the area.
SAVA	Special Assistant, Vietnamese Affairs (CIA office)
SAV-A-PLANE	Doctrine that prohibited firing of artillery if aircraft were flying overhead or even had been requested, to prevent rounds from hitting the aircraft
SCAMP	Sensor Control and monitoring Platoon
SCHWERPUNKT	German military term used to denote "vital point" for attack or defense
"SCOCHE"	Japanese word used to refer to "few, small, short"
"SCOPE DOPE"	Marine slang for GCA radar controller
SCOTLAND	Operation in Khe Sanh area 010001H/Nov67 - 310800H/Mar68, conducted by 26th Marines (rein), operation before and during the siege.
SCOTLAND II	Operation in Khe Sanh area 150801H/Apr68 - 28 Feb69 conducted by Task Force GLICK, Task Force HOTEL
SCRUBBED	Ceasing an operation (also "aborted")
SCROUNGE	To appropriate, borrow or acquire by doubtful means, derived from "scringe" meaning "to search about, rummage, pilfer"
SCUBA	Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus
SCUTTLEBUTT	Rumor or "the word." Derives from the drinking fountain aboard Navy ships, called the "Scuttlebutt" around which small talk occurred.
SEA	South-East Asia
SEABEES	Navy Construction Battalion personnel
SEA HORSE	H-34 helicopter
SEA KNIGHT	CH-46 helicopter
SEALS	Sea/Air/Land US Navy reconnaissance personnel conducting reconnaissance inland from the littoral; conducting guerrilla-type operations.
SEA STALLION	CH-53 helicopter
SEA TIGER	Newspaper distributed by III MAF.
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SEAWORTHY	Radio callsign for VMO-6 after 01 Feb 1968
SECTION	2 aircraft (USMC)
SESU	Signal Engineer Survey Unit
SF	Special Forces (USA)
SFC	Sergeant First Class (USA E-7)
SGM	Sergeant Major (Army E-9)
SFGA	Special Forces Group (Airborne)
SgtMaj	Sergeant Major (the senior enlistedman ina unit of battalion sixe or larger)

SHACKLE CODE A series of letters used to encrypt numbers one through zero using a 10-letter word with non-repeating letters, e.g., FRENCHLADY in which F=1, R=2, E=3, etc. Other words include: TURKEY LOAF, WALT DISNEY, STOMPED BUG, BASILONE RD, TIGERHOUND

SHINING BRASS SOG operations in Laos beginning 15 Sep 1965; replaced by PRAIRIE FIRE (01 Mar 1967)

SHORT ROUND An artillery round that falls short of its target; a person of short stature

SHORT TIMERS STICK When a man has about two weeks left in country, he might take a stick and make a notch for each remaining day. As that day passes, he cuts off the stick at a notch until on his rotation day he has only a short stick remaining. Some Marines at Khe Sanh took the fuse from a 105 canister, put a .50 cal. shell on one side and the .50 cal bullet on the other, and carried that as a "short-timer's stick" much like the old Field Marshall baton.

SHOTGUN Remington Model 870, pump-action, carried by points on patrol, fires cartridges loaded with buckshot, giving wide spray pattern

SHOVE Radio callsign for 3rd Marine Division

SHRAPNEL Metal fragments from an exploding grenade, mortar round, artillery shell

SI Special intelligence (radio signal intercepts)

SIAF Small Independent Action Force (A study conducted by ARPA of DOD–Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Defense) to study tactics and casualty rates of small specialized military units in Vietnam

SICR Special intelligence Collection Requirement: an identified gap in intelligence holdings that may be satisfied only by collection action and which has been validated by the appropriate requirements control authority.

SID Seismic Intrusion Device

SIS Special Intelligence Study

SITREP Situation Report

SIX BY A large flat-bed truck usually with wooden slats on the sides and sometimes a canvas top covering it used for carrying men or supplies

SKIPPER Slang for the "Captain" (O-3 pay grade), derived from the Scandinavian word *schiffe* meaning captain.

SKY SIX Colloquial designation for God (or the chaplain)

SKYHOOK The "Fulton Skyhook" is a system originated by the Navy and developed by the CIA to retrieve people where landing aircraft, even helicopters, is impossible or impractical, whereby a person on the ground sends up a balloon with an attached rope. A C-130 aircraft equipped with a fork-like device in its nose snatches the rope and reels up the person. Due to the air current, the person is retrieved in the aft ramp of the aircraft.

SKYSPOT MSQ-77 and SST-181 radar-controlled bombing.

SLAM Seek, Locate, Annihilate, Monitor (USAF)

SLAR Side Looking Airborne Radar (detects moving vehicles (MTI)

SLF Special Landing Force (USMC)

SMITTY Radio callsign of 1/4 (SCOTLAND II)

SNUFFY A low-ranking enlistedman (PVT, PFC), one of the troops

SOG Studies and observations Group

SMOKE Usually (not always) the colors are: Red=enemy, Green=friendly, Yello=medevac

SNCO Staff Non-Commissioned Officer

SOP Senior Officer Present; Standard operating Procedure

SORTIE One flight by one aircraft

SP Shore Party (Navy police); Self-Propelled (artillery)

SP4 Specialist 4th class (USA rank)

SP BOX Sundry pack–materials to support a company in the field with items that troops normally could purchase in a PX. Contents:

CONFECTION AND STATIONERY ACCESSORIES BOX

- 20 candy bars
- 24 candy starch bars
- 72 chocolate bars (tropical Hershey)
- 72 candy coated chocolate (like M&Ms)

100 packets chewing gum
2 ball point pens
3 packs of envelopes
3 tablets writing paper

TOILET ARTICLES BOX

2 pressurized cans of shaving cream
1 safety razor
40 razor blades
4 toothpaste
2 tooth brushes
30 soap bars

CIGARETTE BOX

1 carton Camel
1 carton Lucky
1 carton Pall Mall
1 carton Winston
1 carton Salem
1 carton Marlboro
1 carton Kent
2 chewing tobacco
2 pack cigars (5 in each pack)
4 boxes pipe tobacco
100 book matches

SPARROWHAWK	A platoon-size reaction force
SPARS	Special Aerial and Radio Sources
SPECTRE	Radio callsign for AC-130 gunship
SPIDER TRAP	Small hole in ground, usually covered with a trap door of brush and camouflage, holding one enemy soldier. When Americans entered area, the NVA would spring away the camouflage and fire
SPIKE	Small SOG teams of SHINING BRASS assigned 3 Oct 1966
SPIR	Special Photo Interpretation Report
SPOOKY	Modified AC-47 aircraft equipped with three 7.62mm Gatling-type guns that fire 6,000 rounds per minute
SPOS	Strong Point Obstacle System
SPOTLIGHT	Reports from electronic sensors
SPUNKY HANSON	Radio callsign for USSF at Lang Vei, 1967-1968
SQUARED AWAY	In proper form, e.g., "He was a squared away dude," or "get this bunker squared away!"
SQUID	Marine slang for anyone in the Navy, especially corpsmen
SRB	Service Record Book (USMC)
SSG	Staff Sergeant (USA E-6)
SSGT	Staff Sergeant (USMC)
SSM	Silver Star Medal
SSO	Special Signals (intelligence) Officer
STEEL POT	Helmet
SUNRISE	26th Marines regimental air radio callsign
SUU-11A	Mini-gun used on the AC-47 gunship
STARLIGHT SCOPE	AN/PVS-2 image intensifier using light of stars and moon to illumine targets (capable of intensifying 60,000 times)
STRATEGIC HAMLET	Diem government's program to develop system of defended villages. After Diem, became known as New Life Hamlet, and later, the Revolutionary Development program. Bru in the Khe Sanh area were moved

	to new villages close to the Khe Sanh base. Some Bru, however, opted to remain in the hills and only after the siege of Khe Sanh joined Bru from the strategic hamlets in the refugee resettlement at Cua.
STINGRAY	Recon patrols used as FO to locate enemy and call in supporting arms to destroy
SUPERGAGGLE	Resupply tactic to hill outposts commencing 24 Feb 1968 at Khe Sanh involving a coordinated fixed-wing/helicopter package
SUPIR	Supplemental Photo Interpretation Report
SW	Steel Worker (Navy Seabee rating)
TACA	Tactical Air Controller (Airborne)
TAC AIR	Tactical Air
TACAN	Tactical Air Navigation, a system consisting of short-range UHF radio stations; in the form of a readout on the instrument panel the pilot continuously receives accurate distance and bearing information from the station tuned.
TACC	Tactical Air Control Center (USAF)
TAC NET	Tactical Net (radio frequency)
TA CONG	Bru ville at XD 840409; NVA designation of KSCB
TAD	Temporary Additional Duty (temporarily assigned to another command or activity)
TADOK	Bru ville at XD 839409
TAFDS	Tactical Air-Field Dispensing System, the expeditionary storage and dispensing system of aviation fuel at tactical airfields, using 10,000 gal. fabric tanks
TANKS	M-40 U.S. built, 50.7 ton tank with a crew of 4. Primary armament is a turret-mounted 90mm gun with one .30 caliber and one .50 caliber machinegun. Max road speed of 32 MPH and average range of 195 miles
	PT76 Soviet amphibious tank: fully amphibious, propelled by two water jets mounted at the rear of the hull. Armed with D-56T 76.2mm gun with 40 rounds of ammunition and a 7.62mm coaxial machinegun for light backup. Cruising range of 150 miles without refueling, travels about 25 MPH over good roads and 6.4 MPH in water. Max range of 76mm guns is between 12,000 - 13,290 M. Weakness of the PT-76 is its thin armor plating which may easily be penetrated by a .50 cal, 106mm RR, and 3.5" rocket and mortars. When used on the attack on Lang Vei (the first use of tanks by the NVA in Vietnam), the .50 cal was ineffective, LAWs generally misfired, and 106s were effective (as long as they lasted–not too long), and artillery was too late to prevent their crashing into the camp' perimeter).
TAOR	Tactical Area of Responsibility
Tape	Refers to Oral History Tape Collection in HQMC Historical Division
TASK FORCE ALFA (TFA)	A filter point for sensor information received while under the IGLOO WHITE/COMMANDO HUNT concept; organized in 1967 under command of the 7th Air Force and deployed to Nakhon Phanom AB, Thailand
TASS	Tactical Air Support Squadron (USAF)
TAT-101-E	Emerson Electric Tactic al Armament Turret mounted two M-60 machineguns beneath the chin of a Huey, tracked with an optical aiming device held by the copilot
TBS	The Basic School (Marine officer basic training)
TC	Tank Commander
TCHEPONE	XD 325445 in Laos on Route 9
TCK-TKN	*Tong Kong Kich, Tong Khoi Ngha*, "General Attack, General Uprising" - the NVA Battle Plan for Tet 1968
TD-6, TD-15	Tractors, "Caterpillar" type
TE	Task Element
T/E	Table of Equipment (authorized equipment for a unit)
TEE TEE	Slang for "little"
TET	Vietnamese New Year
TEMPLE LAKE	Radio callsign for 3/4 (SCOTLAND II)
TF1AE	Task Force One Advisory Element (the SOG unit operating in Khe Sanh atop Hill 950, June, 1971)
THON SON LAM	Outpost at YD 989550, also known as the Rock Pile (for 175s)
THRUST POINT	An imaginary location on the map designated by some code (e.g., cars, planets, cities, etc.) from which locations are designated (e.g., "One click up, two right from Chicago")

TIGERHOUND	USAF project of aerial observation, flying up to 12 miles inside southeastern Laos, south of the 17th parallel (began 5 Dec 1965, terminated 1968)
TIGER TOOTH MOUNTAIN	XD 832543
TIGER TOOTH HILL LZ	XD 830545
TIGER TOOTH MT LZ	XD 832543
TIME	Add 7 hours to "Z" time to get local Khe Sanh ("H") time
TIGHT	Marine slang for closeness to another person
TIO	Target intelligence Officer
T/O	Table of Organization or Task organization (T/O weapons refers to weapons carried for the unit)
TOC	Tactical Operations Center (USA)
"TOP"	The first Sergeant
TOT	Timed On Target (artillery fired simultaneously on the same target to maximize impact)
TOW	Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wife-guided missile
TOWER FLOWER	Marine slang for the air tower controller
TPQ	AN/TPQ-10 radar-controlled airstrike
TRACE	(see McNamara Line)
TRACERS	A round of ammunition containing a chemical leaving a trail of color, usually every fifth or tenth round, enabling the shooter to see where the bullets are directed. US ammunition used red tracers; NVA tracers were either green or red
TRIAGE	Medical sorting area where casualties are sorted according to severity of wounds. Those who cannot be saved are neglected in order to concentrate on those who might be.
TS	Top Secret; Tough Shit
TRI-THIEN	The Provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien
TRI-THIEN-HUE	The Communist Front consisting of the provinces of Quang Tri, Thua Thien and Hue City
TROJAN HORSE	Operation conducted in Khe Sanh area 04-27Aug69, 08Sep-01Oct69 by Project DELTA
TRW	Tactical Reconnaissance Wing
TSGT	Technical Sergeant (USAF)
TT	Teletype
TTH	Tri-Thien-Hue Front (NVA term)
TULUNGUN	SEATO amphibious operation conducted 02 Mar - 12 Apr 1962 in the Philippines. Word means :mutual assistance." During this operation Marine helicopters were introduced into South Vietnam. The operation focused on the fall of Tchepone (in Laos, just west of Khe Sanh, and how to counter enemy aggression; it was the prelude to US entry into Vietnam)
TUM PLANG	Bru ville at XD 834394
TURN TO	Commence work
UA	Unauthorized Absence
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice (Title 10 of United States Code)
UH-1E	Bell Iroquois ("Huey"), a single-engine, light attack/observation helicopter noted for its maneuverability and firepower. Main rotor (2-blade) diameter 48 ft., fuselage length 48'1". Weight empty 4,667 lb., basic operating (troop carrier mission) 2,557 lb. maximum takeoff and landing 9,500 lb.. Max speed 127 MPH, range 318 miles,. Armament: 4 M-60 machineguns, 7.62mm grenade launcher 40mm, 48 2.75" rockets, M22 guided missile. Carries 2 pilots and 11-14 troops or 6 litters and a medical assistant, or 3,880 lb. freight.
UH-34D	(See H-34)
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
UL	Upper Left (corner of a patrol area box)
UNIT ONE	A corpsman's bag of medical supplies carried on patrol
UNODIR	Unless Otherwise Directed (added to a message to a superior indicating action one anticipates taking)
URS	Usually Reliable Source (information from signals intelligence)

USA	United States Army
USARPAC	U.S. Army, Pacific
USARV	U.S. Army, Vietnam
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USN	United States Navy
USAF	United States Air Force
USS REPOSE	U.S. Navy Hospital ship (AH-16) operating in DaNang harbor
USS SANCTUARY	U.S. Navy Hospital ship (AH-17) operating in DaNang harbor
USSF	United States Special Forces
UT	Utilityman (Navy Seabee rating)
UTAH MESA	Operation conducted in Khe Sanh area by 1/9, 3/9, and 1st of 5th Mechanized Division
UTILITIES	USMC term for field uniform (US Army refers to them as "fatigues")
VC	Viet Cong
VCB	Vandegrift Combat Base
VESPER BELLS	Radio callsign of 1/1 (SCOTLAND II)
VFR	Visual Flying regulations
VIET CONG	Condensed from the term Viet Nam Cong San, meaning Vietnamese Communists, a term generally applied to the supporters and participants in the Communist-controlled subversive insurgency in South Vietnam.
VIRGINIA	First battalion-sized USMC operation in the Khe Sanh area conducted 170800H/Apr66 to 011200H/May66 by 1st Marine regiment
VMA	Marine Attack Squadron. (In Naval aviation, the "V" designates "Heavier than air" as opposed to craft that are "lighter than air")
VMA(AW)	Marine Attack Squadron (All Weather)
VMC	Visual Meteorological Conditions (USAF)
VMCR	Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron
VMF	Marine fighter Squadron
VMFA	Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron
VMGR	Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (C-130s)
VMO	Marine observation Squadron
VNAF	Vietnam Air Force
VCS	Viet Cong Suspect
VT	Variable Timed (fuse set to explode in the air over a target for area coverage, anti-personnel)
VR	Visual Reconnaissance
WAAPM	Wide Area Anti-Personnel Mine. (Sends out numerous hair-like wires that trigger the mine)
WALKING DEAD	Nickname for Battalion 1/9
WATER BUFFALO	Large pack animal used by Vietnamese; large water container that could be towed
WERS	Wing Equipment and Repair Squadron (at KSCB, ran the TAFDS)
WHISKY	The mortar battery was designated WHISKY battery (81s and 4.2")
WIA	Wounded In Action
WIAE	Wounded in Action and Evacuated
WIANE	Wounded in Action, Not-Evacuated (minor wounds, like a compound fracture during the siege)
WILLY PETER	White phosphorus ordnance; Water-proof bag
WO	Warrant Officer'
The "WORLD"	Everyplace other than Vietnam
WP	White Phosphorus; Water-Proof
WUNDER BEACH	YD 565495
YARD	Term for Montagnard
Z	ZULU Time (Greenwich Mean Time), the time zone in England
XEPONE	River separating Vietnam and Laos; also alternate spelling of Tchepone (XD 3244)
XO	Executive Officer
YELLOWBIRD	Callsign for B-57 aircraft. Used when Lang Vei was overrun

ZORO	Callsign for T-28 aircraft
"1"	Adjutant, personnel staff section
"2"	Intelligence Officer and staff section
"3"	Operations Officer and staff section
0311	USMC MOS for an infantryman
3.5"	Rocket launcher M20A181, weighs 13 lbs., max range 900 yds., weight of rocket 9 lbs. Max effective range: moving–200 yds, stationary–300 yds.
"4"	Logistics Officer and staff section
4.2"	Mortar, M30, U.S. built, rifled, muzzle-loaded, drop-fired weapon, consisting of tube, base plate and standard. Weighs 330 lbs. and has a range max of 4,020 M. Rate of fire: 20 rounds per minute.
"5"	The Executive officer of a unit. Civil Affairs Officer and section
"6"	The Commanding Officer of a unit
"06"	An artilleryman (USMC MOS)
7AF	Seventh Air Force
"8"	The Sergeant Major
8-inch	Howitzer, M55, U.S. built, self-propelled, heavy artillery piece with a max range of 16,900 M and a rate of fire of one round every 2 minutes.
"ONE ZERO"	The Communications Officer and section
12.7	12.7mm heavy machinegun, Soviet Model 38/460ShK
"ONE FOUR"	Air officer and staff section
"ONE NINE"	The Chaplain
"TWO FOUR"	Artillery section
"5 by"	Communicator's parlance for "loud and clear" ("I read you '5 by 5")
37mm	37mm AA gun
.50	Machinegun, U.S. built, belt-fed, recoil-operated, air-cooled, automatic weapon, weighs approx 80 lbs. without mount or ammunition. Sustained rate of fire of 100 rounds per minute and an effective range of 1,450 M.
57mm	Recoilless rifle, M18, weight with sight: 44.4 lbs,.; weight of tripod: 53.2 lbs.; length of rifle: 61.6 in. Max range: 4,340 yds. Weapon of WW II vintage, used by indigenous forces and special small recon units.
60mm	Mortar, M19, U.S. built, smooth-bore, muzzle-loaded weapon, which weighs 45.2 lbs. when assembled. It has a max rate of fire of 30 rounds per minute and a sustained rate of fire of 10 rounds per min. Effective range of 2,000 M. Bursting area: 11 yds (HE and WP).
81mm	Mortar, M29, U.S. built, smooth bore, muzzle-loaded, weight approx 115 lbs. when assembled, sustained rate of fire of 2 rounds per minute and an effective range of 2,300 - 3,650 M depending on ammo. Bursting area: 30 x 20 yds.
82mm	Mortar, Soviet-built, smooth bore, single-shot, high angle of fire weapon which weighs approx 123 lbs.; max rate of fire of 25 rounds per minute and a max range of 3,040 M.
105mm	Howitzer, M101A1, U.S. built, towed, general purpose light artillery piece with a max range of 11,000 M and a max rate of fire of 4 rounds per minute
106mm	Recoilless Rifle M401A1, U.S. built, single shot, recoilless breach-loaded weapon, weighs 438 lbs. when assembled and mounted for firing. It has a sustained rate of fire of 6 rounds per min. and an effective range of 1,365 M.
120mm	M38 Soviet mortar, can fire 12 - 15 rounds per minute, each round weighs 15.4 KG. Max range: 5,700 M, min range 460 M. Weight of weapon in travelling position 500 KG (1100 lb.). Crew: 6 men.
122mm	NVA rocket with range of 12,000 M
130mm	NVA field gun, fires a 74-lb. shell. Range 31,000 M. (Perhaps first introduced during the siege battle at Khe Sanh, although first confirmed during LAM SON-719 at Khe Sanh)
140mm	NVA rocket, range 9,000 M
152mm	Soviet artillery gun. Weighs 17,000 lbs. Capable of firing 4 rounds per minute, range 17,260 M (about 10.5 mi,)
155mm	Howitzer M-114A, towed; and M-109 Self-Propelled, U.S. medium artillery with a max range of 15,000 M and a max rate of fire of 3 rounds per minute

155mm	M53, U.S. built, medium Self-Propelled gun with a 23,000 M range and a sustained rate of fire of one round every 2 minutes.
175mm	M107, U.S. built, self-propelled gun which weighs 62,100 lbs. and fires a 147-lb. projectile to a max range of 32.8 KM. Max rate of fire is one round every 2 minutes.
200mm	Rocket (NVN), max range 22,200 yds. (anticipated, but apparently never used at Khe Sanh)
250mm	Rocket (NVN) with a max range of 61,000 yds (anticipated, but apparently never used at Khe Sanh)
292	RC-292 type of radio antenna
360	A circular defense in which men are placed to cover all approaches to a position
5 PARAGRAPH ORDER	A system for issuing an expedient operation to a team, platoon, company: Paragraph 1 - situation (A. Enemy, B. Friendly, C. Attachments) Paragraph 2 - Mission Paragraph 3 - Execution Paragraph 4 - Admin and Logistics Paragraph 5 - Command and Communications
782 gear	individual combat gear belonging to the unit to outfit a combat Marine (canteens, web gear, poncho, mess kit, etc.)
834 AD	834th Air Division (USAF)
999	Designation of Combat Essential Supplies (designated by a red circle with white "999" numbers)
III MAF	Third Marine Amphibious Force, the senior Marine command in Vietnam, headquartered at Camp Horn, DaNang

MARINE UNIT DESIGNATIONS:

A/1/9	Alfa Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment
A-1	First Platoon of company A
1/26	First Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment
26 MAR	Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment

SELECTION OF MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS, MEMORANDUMS, AND REPORTS WRITTEN WHILE IN VIETNAM PERTAINING TO KHE SANH

Memo to Battalion "3", Subj: Chronology for July, 1967; submission of, dated 02 August 1967

The assigned Protestant chaplain[885] departed Khe Sanh the early part of July, 1967; no record of his activities of July is available. The Protestant chaplain assigned to THIRD Shore Party arrived in a TAD status to 1/26 on 18 July 1967. This report reflects the period 18-31 July.

The chaplain remained in the Khe Sanh area 18-31 July, spending about half the days and nights in the CP area; the remainder days and nights were spent (with at least one night in each instance) on Hills 861, 881, "C" Co. at 913404, and the Army Special Forces Detachment A-101 at Lang Vei. Sunday morning and afternoon services were provided in the CP area. Adverse weather precluded more extensive visitation with rifle companies and pastoral calling in the CP area.

A total of 15 Protestant services were conducted with a total attendance of 436. Roman Catholic masses were celebrated for 1/26 personnel by the 3/26 chaplain. Services were also conducted for personnel at the RLT 26 Radio Relay station (Hill 950), and the CAC "O" HQ in the hamlet of Khe Sanh for personnel attached to the three CAC units (CAP O-1, CAP PO-2, and CAP O-3).

Two memorial services were conducted jointly with the 3/26 Roman Catholic chaplain for the LSU unit and MIKE Company (3/26); total attendance was approximately 100 men.

Three orientation lectures were presented to approximately 70 men. Daily visitations to the patients in "C" Med. were made while in the CP area. Approximately 80 Bibles were distributed (the American Bible Society translation), in addition to tracts and other literature. Counseling cases numbered 12.

Visitation involved 12 helicopter flights, 6 rough rider and convoy-type rides, and one 8-hour patrol.

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[885] David Meschke.

Letter to parents, Sunday, 13 August 1967

Dear folks...

...The head officer, a bird Colonel [COL John J. Padley], went quite high (I guess to some General staff) and got me transferred here. I have heard from many different sources that he liked me and wanted me to stay. So my new address is as indicated above....

What's happening in Milwaukee!! Is Frank Zeidler's house OK? I was very shocked to see in our newspaper, the *Stars and Stripes*, about Milwaukee![886]

We are surrounded by mountains–very, very beautiful. We are also surrounded by huge numbers–several thousand–trained North Vietnamese troops, and probably can expect a major attack on our base. Laos and the DMZ are hostile. We're right in the Supply route to the VC in the south, so they'll try to get us out, everyone thinks.

I've never been more busy in my life! Since July 20th (to now, 13 Aug, less than a month), I've conducted 27 services, gone on 2 patrols, made about 20 helicopter flights, and gone all over the country on convoys and special services,.

The men are deeply religious on the whole, not because they're scared, but, I feel, genuinely so. Many read their Bibles daily. Many wear or want to wear crosses (openly, since many don't wear shirts). Some have a cross on their battle helmet. Many come up to me with religious questions - many others with deep problems.

The terrain is extremely rough. I've gone on a patrol up and down streams, sliding, falling, getting caught in vines, being out by the elephant grass (grass as high as the head), been completely exhausted. We have an out-door "head." One time it rained 3 straight days. In order to excrete, one just sat in the rain. I cook many of my own meals. I do my own washing. It's like a continual camping out, and I love it.

There is only one really bad problem here, the rats. They are on all the hills and on the base. They creep out during the night and go through all our hooches. The catholic father spent one night in an underground bunker which had a dirt ledge. A rat lost its footing and landed right on his belly! He excitedly sat up in bed and exclaimed "shit!" If a rat bites, one gets all the 12 rabies shots in the stomach plus plague, typhus, typhoid, tetanus shots. I had one on my feet one night. I fear them more than the base being rocketed and mortared.

The Marines are certainly a very wonderful group. I am very proud to be associated with them. They aren't the rough, toughened gangster-type (except in battle), yet they really work very hard–very, very hard, but don't complain or gripe. Rather, they know what they're doing is what's necessary, and they do it. They are very pleasant, sometimes humorous. They live under horrible conditions, yet express a high morale. (On the hills there isn't enough water, so they only shave every other day. There are no facilities, so they go for maybe 3 months without being able to take a shower! They get all exhausted on long, arduous patrols, get leeches and elephant grass sores. They live underground. They get wet and can't get dry.) Despite all this they have a high morale, attend religious services in great numbers, continually crack jokes, are friendly and manage somehow to keep as clean as possible.

I wish all young men could be Marines!

... Love, Ray

Letter to LCDR David L. Meschke,[887] CHC, USN, 16 August 1967

Dear Chaplain Meschke:

As you probably knew prior to your departure, I would be serving on a temporary basis here in Khe Sanh. Well, after being here two weeks and liking it so well, I requested the Colonel of 1/26 to see if there were any way possible for me to remain here. As things turned out, COL Padley went pretty high up, put in a good word for me, and so here I am, permanently attached.

I have found this to be one of the most meaningful periods in my life, as undoubtedly you did also. The work has taken up much time and more energy, hoping from hill to hill. I have even gone out on patrols–and really discovered the feelings and exertions demanded by our Marines here. I have been very deeply impressed with their high morale despite many very unfavorable circumstances of living.

Things have been quiet around here–nothing new really happening since the last mortar attack on the base in June, except a small ambush incident about three weeks. ago. Although there are many NVA battalions and even regiments in our immediate area, there are no incidents. Perhaps, however, we will need your prayers as the monsoon season begins in

[886] Racial riots in Milwaukee involved numerous houses being burned and the city cordoned-off by police.
[887] My immediate predecessor as Chaplain of 1/26.

October! The Millers[888] have been gone thus far. I believe Mrs. Miller had a baby boy. I will certainly look them up in the immediate future. Clarence Perry[889] left a week ago last Monday, and our new X.O. promises to give me a clerk before this week ends. I have requested Waller.

You may be interested to note that I have heard from dozens of people all over how much they appreciated your ministry here. You have left a very high standard; I only hope that through God's grace I may be equipped to continue reaping where others sowed! May our Lord continue to bless you in your work.

...Letter to Rev. Charles E. Witt, 16 August 1967[890]

Dear Pastor Witt (and others in the upper room):

Please excuse not having written earlier, but I have been in a somewhat unsettled situation, and have finally been given a permanent "roost" here in Khe Sanh, in the extreme upper north and west area of Vietnam. At least here it is perhaps the coolest area in Vietnam, although it is very rainy, and the monsoons will be upon us very soon. We are surrounded by mountains and everything is very beautiful. Many of the men here remark how this area could be one of the most beautiful areas in the world for the vacation–but the war situation. We, of course, live in bunkers, mainly underground, all of which involves living with the infected rats. One rat recently was on my feet! I woke up at about 4, stretched my legs out, and heard a barrage of squeaks–all I could think of were the 12 rabies shots in my stomach! The catholic chaplain had one fall right on his bare chest!

The people here are tops. They are courteous, kind, considerate, one to another. They work very hard, often in the most unfavorable of circumstances, yet do it willingly. The Christians that are here are so openly and provide a tremendous witness to others. Many read their Bibles daily, lead a meaningful prayer life. I have huge attendances at my worship services–often perhaps ALL the Protestants attached. I have had offerings also–and I don't receive 5 cent pieces of military currency, but often receive $1.00 bills, sometimes a $5.00 bill! I conduct about one worship service each day, and four on Sundays–so you can see I am very busy. I hop from one hill to another (each hill is occupied by a company), stay overnight in their war situation, conduct a service, talk with the men, and leave for the next hill. This has involved dozens of helicopter flights over hostile areas. We have the most trying counseling cases–men paralyzed with fear, anxiety; problems concerning those back home. The need is indeed very great!

Things are fairly quiet here right now. The base hasn't been attacked since late June. We are surrounded by thousands of enemy–North Vietnamese troops, and can perhaps expect a massive attack in the next month or so–so please remember us in your prayers!–we certainly need them!

Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Ervin Tallent, 22 August 1967

...

A memorial service for Garry was held Monday, August 21st, attended by his whole company as well as many others on the base.

You may be comforted in knowing that only a couple of hours prior to the tragedy, your son Garry was attending our worship service. He came in a few minutes after we had started with two of his buddies. One of these buddies told me that it was Garry that had suggested to them that they go to church services. His act of Christian witness has left a lasting and indelible mark on his fellow Marines.....

Letter to Vietnam Service Women, 1628 E. 37th, Odessa, Texas, 05 September 1967

Dear Ladies:

Your recent packages of cookies and candies have been distributed among the men here. I have dropped one off at our Battalion Aid Station (where men who are recovering and being treated from various illnesses are), to some of our reconnaissance teams (who go out on long 5-day patrols, enduring hardships that were I to fully describe, you might be tempted to shed a tear), and I will take a couple to some of our men on the hills–(these men occupy strategic hills, and due to

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[888] John and Carolyn Miller were Wycliffe Bible Translators, living in Khe Sanh since 1963, engaged in translating the Bible into the language of the mountain tribe of the area, the Brou, and also developing a written language and teaching the children to be literate for the first time in their cultural history.

[889] The Chaplains Clerk, 1/26.

[890] This letter was printed in: Carroll, Andrew, Ed., *Grace Under Fire, Letters of Faith in Times of War*, Colorado Springs, Co: Water Brook Press, 2007, pp. 96-97.

supply conditions, live there for about two months without being able to take showers, wear the same jungle uniform getting it wet on patrols during the day, and having to sleep in it at night, with rats crawling in their living spaces dug into the earth, etc.

Needless to say, these men deserve everything they can get! They endure physical hardships and pains, anxieties of battle, and many feel alone.

It is due to thoughtful and kind gestures such as yours, that keep us going.

Should you ever desire to send more such packages, they will find very appreciative recipients in this advanced combat base.

Letter to parents, Tuesday, 12 Sep 1967

Dear folks....

First of all, I guess we must all be very thankful. Our base hasn't been hit during all the recent attacks on our bases. Everyone, in fact–every activity–has been hit in connection with the recently passed elections, except ours. We have been graciously sparred. The other bases have been hit horribly, not that there have been so many killed, but the bases have been simply leveled down, and their fuel and ammunition dumps blown up. One of the battalions that had been on our base (a battalion has about 1100 men) was on an operation, and hit very badly.[891] In one battle of an hour or so, 18 of our men were killed and 200 wounded. I was down yesterday at the central hospital area at Phu Bai when they brought some casualties in–horrible! In one 16 hour period, they performed 9 amputations of legs and arms. I watched a man in surgery–one doctor was removing pieces of shrapnel from his leg, another was lifting with a forceps a large jagged piece of shrapnel out of his butt.

Last week I built my bunker. Local Brou were used to fill sand bags, but most of the 7,000 or so sand bags were put in place by me. I got 55 gallon oil drums, chiseled off the tops with a cold chisel and hammer, filled them with dirt. Then we took sand bags around these and on top, building up the walls. The inside is just under 6-foot tall. We used air matting strips (pieces of aluminum 12' long, 2-1/2' wide, and about 1-1/4" thick, each weighing about 150 pounds) for the walls and ceiling. 3 for each wall, held in place by steel stakes, and about 9 strips across the top. The floor is pallets, with pieces of wood from boxes used to transport ammunition, nailed to the pallets. This helps to make it rat-proof and, if it floods, I won't get wet. I also made a screened door! So I've become a carpenter and builder!

Of course, while all that was happening, all my gear was in utter chaos! Also, there were many problems getting supplies and sand bag working parties. Then, sometimes it would rain, and operations ceased! So it was, in a way, a lot of fun and physically exhausting. But at times it was extremely frustrating. Each sandbag weighs about 40 pounds. To be placed, it must be pounded flat by a small shovel. Boy, did I have sore muscles! But at least I'm protected in case the base should be attacked by mortars or rockets. So I can sleep securely.

All your most welcomed packages arrived in good condition–the monsoon gear, the athletic gear, the 2 small boxes of candy and sausage, and books. The letters take about 5 - 7 days to come here. As far as some things to send, cookies can be sent in small coffee cans and packed so they don't jar–the coffee can will help keep it from being crushed. Hard candy, especially things like peppermint sticks or those circular red and white peppermints would be appreciated. Any canned goods–spaghetti and meat balls, etc. are always good to warm up during monsoons. The water is pretty good and it's not too hot here, so cool-aid isn't in much demand, although an occasional cool-aid is good for a diversion now and then, so if you could send a package now and then.

I'll be needing some books to read during monsoons when I can't get out. If you could send the 5 or so books on the Gospel of John that are on the book shelf near the desk in the middle bedroom, one or two at a time, that would be good.

If you could take the trouble to do so, I'd like to get some clippings of newspapers, like the religious pages of the *Sentinel* every Saturday, and the *sentinel* comics (Mandrake, Buz Sawyer, Flash Gordon), and local news events–things that are happening–to be included with letters and packages.

In your letters, tell also what's happening around the city and the country (we don't always hear everything), what's happening down at church (I don't always get the *Tidings*–some, but few, come through).

I've been very busy with my religious services also. In one 3-day period, I conducted 9 different worship services! Practically every day, I take about 2 helicopter rides to get to the men of different units. So there's never a dull moment. In fact, I'm busy from 6 in the morning until about midnight every day, 7 days a week. This afternoon, I took a nap!–the first I've taken since coming here. But had I not, I think I'd of collapsed. So if I don't write more often, it's not that I'm not thinking of all of you every day, but either I'm busy on the base, running all over, or I'm out with the troops in the field, where I sleep over night with them.

Thanks for all the packages. Please greet everyone. Love, Ray

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[891] Battalion 3/26, Operation KINGFISHER.

Letter to parents, Tuesday, 19 September 1967

Dear folks:

Today was a very happy day. I received your two packages and your letter of the 12th. The cookies were so good, I was almost tempted to eat them all - all at one sitting! Thank you.

the weather the past few days has been completely horrible - rain! From noon Saturday to noon Sunday - 7 inches; from noon Sunday to noon Monday - 8-1/2 inches. but the monsoon is yet coming, and when it comes, they say we get about 8 inches every hour, for 3 or 4 months! The basic problem is keeping dry and clean. Rain gear helps a lot, but there's always some wetness. The mud gets about a foot or two deep, a thin, soupy mud. It gets too cold to take a shower, and one just feels miserable.

By now you should have received my letter that we haven't been hit. We still haven't. But there's always some young man dying here–malaria, snipers, drowning. Sunday morning, I was walking to chow when the ambulance came to the medical area in which I live. I helped carry in the stretcher. The man had blood all over his mouth and nose. I helped cut away his shirt. The doctor put a tube in his chest cavity to drain off the internal bleeding, and then operated on his neck and chest to restore breathing. The man was unconscious all the time. They sent him away on a helicopter to our nearest hospital at Phu Bai. He died on the way. Another man was brought in, fully conscious. Since we have no way of putting people "under" here, he remained fully conscious as the doctor cut into his side to insert the tube to drain the blood. He screamed; I cried. I guess he's all right now. Ten others were brought in with broken legs and backs. A bunker they were in collapsed. After looking at it, it's a wonder more didn't die. The men were all " short-timers" - only a week or two yet to do. The man who died was 20 years old and married.

I've been going out on large-sized patrols, "humping" the very steep and muddy mountains here. It's quite exhausting, but I like it, and the men really appreciate seeing the chaplain with them. So if I can't go to the hills because of the rain by chopper, I hike out to them!

... our mail here has been very bad due to the weather. They can't fly it in. There's a lot of mail "in the rear" waiting for us.

Thanks again for the good goodies - they're real good - send more! Love, Ray.

Letter to parents, Sunday, 24 September 1967

Dear folks...We've been experiencing a lot of rain lately as the steady rains of the monsoons approach us. You have no idea how miserable things get–everything's continually wet. It gets too cold to take a shower, but you still have to. The clothing gets dirtier and dirtier because, although you can wash it, it will never dry. So you just let it keep on letting muddy and smelly, and endure it. Like they say here, it makes you "hard corps."

Today is Sunday. We had a larger attendance than usual at our morning worship, despite the rain and the mud. I also used for the first time, a pulpit. The pulpit was made by the men of one of the units here [892] who presented it to me one evening out of appreciation for visiting them and taking a personal interest in them. They said I was the first chaplain who took the time to do that.

... I bought a crossbow. They use it here in this part of the country for hunting. It's more powerful than a lot of rifles. Also purchased a flute made of about 10 small bamboo stalks, arranged like an organ. These items are very hard to come by here. ...

Not too much is happening around here, and that's good, as far as we're all concerned! Everyone else around us is getting bombed, rocketed, and mortared. We're pretty safe here, although the enemy is all around us, all "crack" troops from the north who have infiltrated across the DMZ into the south in violation of the treaty.

I think tomorrow I might be able to go out on a 5-day patrol. Our battalion C.O. is thinking it over, and will let me know today.... Love, Ray

[892] B Co., 3rd Recon Bn.

Letter to District Chaplain, 9ND,[893] 30 September 1967

Dear Chaplain:

I am not quite sure to whom to address this as the office personnel change so frequently. However, the two ladies will probably recall me, and if Chaplain Wetzel is still there he will certainly recall me also. Right now, I am serving in the extreme northwest corner of S. Vietnam at Khe Sanh. Although there is presently only one battalion here, the attachments and everyone else brings the total personnel strength to around 3,000, and I'm the only chaplain for those men. The area is unlike other parts of VN, for it is quite cool here. We are surrounded by beautiful mountains, and the cloud formations at night are the most beautiful I've ever seen. we have two companies out in the hills–Hill 861 and Hill 881–which perhaps you heard about last May. Since 27 June, however, we have been blessed with no attacks, while practically every other base here, including those nearest us–Con Thien, Camp J.J. Carroll, Dong Ha, the Rock Pile, etc., are continually blasted, day and night.

As I suppose all chaplains here report, the men are most receptive to the chaplain, and evidence private prayer life and devotional attention which is certainly gratifying. The work is very heavy; the rewards are felt as one feels he is doing something for personnel in need.

The main reason for which I am writing this letter, however, is a request for some materials I believe you can supply. So far I have conducted six memorial services–malaria, drowning, killed by sniper, etc. I have no appropriate bulletins for this, and neither does our Division office at Phu Bai. All they sent me was a bulletin with the praying hands. I recall that in the basement there were several large boxes of blank bulletins for use by reserve chaplains, as I myself used them. If at all possible, it would be deeply appreciated could you send me two or three boxes of 500 bulletins, which a patriotic theme, especially ones like the enclosed.

The monsoons should strike us in a week or so, and I'll probably be confined in my bunker hooch, at which time I'll write more extensively concerning my experiences and activities here. Please greet the ladies in the office for me. Thank you. Very respectively...

Memo to Battalion "3", Subj: Monthly chronology; report of, dated 30 Sep 1967

1. A total of 26 Protestant worship services were conducted with a total attendance of 485, as follows:

Place	Services	Total attendance
1/26 CP Mess	5	144
1/26 Field Mess	4	48
3/26 CP mess	1	12
1/13 Mess	4	52
CAC units	2	9
Hill 861	2	64
Hill 881	4	110
Hill 950	2	18
Army Det A-101	1	3
B Co, 3d Recon	1	25
TOTAL	26	485

A total offering for the above collected was $168.85 and 200 P's. In addition to the above, three Memorial services were held. Weekly visits to the B.A.S., frequent visits on the hills while remaining overnight at the various positions, and the usual amount of counseling sessions were held.

2. During this month 3/26 departed, cutting the usual number of services. The Roman Catholic Chaplain was transferred out, leaving the base without Roman Catholic Masses, the last half of the month. Rains during the first part of the month precluded more extensive coverage of outlying areas.

[893] Chaplain Craven, District Chaplain, NINTH Naval District, Great Lakes, Illinois.

3. Contact was made with Mr. and Mrs. John Miller and Rev. Loc, resident in Khe Sanh village. The chaplain was present to help arrange possible Med Cap visits to Lang Bu; prepared and distributed an extensive study on the Brou, and visited Ta Cong, Lang Vei, A Rang, Chuua, Lang Kat, and Tum Plang. The chaplain maintained close contact with the troops, participated in 5 patrols, company-size.

Letter to parents, Monday, 2 October 1967

Dear folks:

We're now having rain off and on, and the monsoon approaches. Yesterday, however, we had fairly clear skies for church services. Being the first Sunday in the month, we had communion. I was very surprised because the attendances were so high. At one service we usually have 30; we had 44. And at the second service I usually have 7; we had 29! Last week I had a service practically every day, a total of 5 weekday services, and 2 patrols. On one patrol we went through all the local Brou villages. It was most interesting. The people are very primitive and although they used to wear hardly no clothes, they now wear almost anything. The children wear old T-shirts discarded by the Marines here. on the other patrol we walked up and down steep hills and waded up a river stream waist high. It's been a very interesting week. Not too much has been happening in our immediate area – let's hope it stays that way!

There are a couple of items I can use–some clothespins (not the solid wood ones, but the wooden ones with the spring), about a dozen. Also some Techmatic razor blades: they don't sell that kind in our meagerly stocked PX. I have 2 left - that should last me until some more come. All your packages come through real well. I just sent two packages in the form of tubes[894]. Please unpack very carefully. one contains a large and very sharp knife, the other contains a very fragile bamboo flute....

O yes, on the same shelf as the books on John is a blue colored Greek New Testament. Please send that also. Love, Ray.

Letter to parents, Sunday, 15 October 1967

Dear folks: ... The day I wrote you, Monday the 2nd, I went out to a group near the base known as "CAC" (Combined Action Company). These groups consist of Marines plus local Vietnamese (or Brou) forces. They are very small and live in pretty "indefensible" positions outside the base.

I had a most interesting time. They are located near the local Brou villages. One of the local natives invited me into his house for a meal. The houses are built on stilts (to protect from the rains)[895] and have thatched roofs. They are very small inside. The occasion was a worship ceremony and sacrificial meal. He threw little pieces of bamboo, and talked with his ancestors or sacrificed some rice, depending on how they landed. He rotated a platter of rice 6 times one way and 8 times the other way. He said the 6 times stood for 6 bad dreams he had that the gods would take away from him, and the 8 times stood for 8 good dreams the gods would fulfill for him. The meal consisted of rice prepared several different ways, and the sacrificial pig. The latter, fortunately was cooked. But, all over the pieces of meat was poured some fresh blood. You're expected to eat everything placed in front of you or you deeply insult the people. Fortunately two CAC Marines were with us, and they ate the bloodied pig! He kept referring to me as "HONCHO," and from what the Marines say, was deeply honored that I came. of course the honor goes both ways, for the Brou rarely invite foreigners to eat with them. The pig he sacrified cost him $15.00; he earns $30.00 a month. What a tithe of offering–50%! Yet he said at the end, "gods don't help; doctor's medicine does." (They only sacrifice when there's illness). One of the marines remarked how easy it would be to lead these people from paganism.

I had some very close relations with the CAC personnel. They are in 2 locations. In both I hold services and practically everyone turns out, including Roman Catholics and atheists! Although they are very small units to start with,. I was playing baseball and going on patrol with them. On one patrol, .. I joined in a swim in a rushing river for about an hour or so.

I continue to go to the hills here also.

Thank you for all the letters and packages!... There are some books on the Gospel of John. Hoskyns: The Fourth Gospel, Alf Correl: Consummatum est, C.H. Dodd, Interpreting the 4th Gospel, C.H. Dodd, History and tradition in the 4th Gospel. Please send these also. ... The newspaper clippings are very greatly appreciated. It's amazing how a little bit of home can mean so much.

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[894] Black, cardboard tubes in which 106mm recoilless rifle rounds are packed.
[895] And tigers!

Things are all quite quiet and routine around here. Everyone's getting hit but us. Our Lord is gracious and kind.. Love, Ray.

Memo to Battalion "3", Subj: Command Chronology for period 01-31 Oct 1967; Submission of, dated 01 Nov 1967

1. A total of 35 Protestant worship services with a total attendance of 675 were conducted as follows:

Place	No. of Services	Total Attendance
1/26 CP mess	5	170
Hill 881	5	181
Hill 861	4	92
Hill 950	1	15
1/26 field mess (+ A Bty, 1/13)	5	79
H Bty, 1/13	5	67
CAC units (CAP 0 =1, 2, 3)	8	51
B Co., 3d Recon	1	10
MCB-11 at Lang Vei	1	10

2. One memorial service was conducted for CPL Sink, D Co., 1/26. Four troop indoctrination lectures were held for a total of 158 new Marines and corpsmen.

3. In the area of civic action, the chaplain attended one Brou sacrificial worship ceremony and feast and one funeral feast, both at Ta Cong. The chaplain continued to maintain very close contact with Mr. and Mrs. John Miller of Wycliffe Bible Translators in Khe Sanh, and donated some supplies to Father Poncet, the local French priest.

4. Tract racks, constructed by the SeaBees, were placed in the 1/26 CP mess, Sub Unit 5 officer mess, Sub Unit 5 EM mess, 1/26 field mess, and the 1/26 BAS. Twenty cartons of religious literature from the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A., together with Bibles have been placed in these racks or distributed, totaling several thousand pieces.

5. Roman Catholic coverage was provided the first two weeks by Fr. Jon McElroy of 3/26. Fr. Driscoll arrived the fourth week, attached to Sub Unit 5. L.D.S. services were inaugurated 29 Oct, led by Chief Rees of the CB unit.

Letter to LT David Kirsh, Chaplain, 3rd Marine Amphibious Force, DaNang, RVN, dated 2 Nov 1967

Dear Chaplain Kirsch:

Please send me a few Mezuzahs. I am not sure I spelled that correctly; the person asking for one says it is a small cylinder suspended from a neck chain.. I would like a few extra for future requests. Thank you.

Letter to parents, Sunday, 24 September 1967

Dear folks....

You'll never guess what you son is doing now! Going on patrols was not enough'; eating local Brou dishes wasn't enough. Now he's going through exercises with the reconnaissance unit here. These are small groups of 7 men who blacken & camouflage their faces and go out for a week, living and sleeping in the jungle. Well, today I got all wet, going through river-crossing drills. Tomorrow I will be rappelling from a helicopter. This is going down a rope, like going down a cliff on a mountain, by jumping off the cliff, having a rope tied about your torso through which another rope runs that you go down on. Only, in this case, there is no cliff. The chopper just goes up 100 feet or so, and we fall down on the rope, catching ourselves periodically, to break the rate of descent. When this happens, you bounce up and down 10 feet or so. You're in a laying-down position on the descent. Sounds like a lot of fun, doesn't it! That's tomorrow.

The rains haven't come down as yet; we've been enjoying beautifully sunny and cool days. But, I guess it will soon be upon us.

The rains did come, however, for a couple of days. I was staying overnight on one of the outpost hills. All day Saturday, it was rainy and misty, so the choppers couldn't pick me up. I was getting very worried I wouldn't be able to return to the base for Sunday church services. But Sunday morning it cleared up briefly, just long enough for the choppers to pick me up.

I have had some good times with the Millers, missionaries living here, who had me over for lunch one day.

There was a TV team here from Walter Cronkite's program, taking tapes. If that "Special on Khe Sanh" hasn't been shown yet, you may see me on several of the scenes, as I was with the TV team most of the day.

... I keep very, very busy. Last week we had 8 worship services, and I went on a very long and difficult patrol...

The whole 3rd Marine Division here was just awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, one more ribbon for the uniform–a very highly prized one at that!

Say hello to everyone. Love, Ray.

Letter to La Camus Navy Mother's Club, 11 November 1967

Dear Mrs. Winter:

The box containing the individually wrapped Christmas packages were today distributed to the men of the second platoon of " B" Co., 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion. Some of the men were already out on patrol, and those who were still here were just preparing to leave on an insert. Although their faces were painted with dark camouflage make-up, many expressions of gladness and happiness were quite evident. One Marine remarked how good it was knowing others back home were praying and concerned for them over here.

Your kind and thoughtful gesture I am sure will give the men added confidence and heightened morale as they go out on their long, arduous, and exhausting and perilous patrols...

Letter to parents, Sunday, 21 November 1967

Dear folks:...

...we were socked in by fog for over a week, and then we got something like 15,000 pounds of mail in one day...

Last Thursday, one of my close friends in the recon. group here was drowned. He was one of those people that was always smiling and telling jokes when everyone else was depressed, or mad. He is the first one that has died here that I knew personally. He used to attend my worship services. He only had about 30 days left to do here. he was a non-swimmer. His name was "Meggs," and everyone called him "Muggs."...

Love, Ray

Letter to Rev. and Mrs. Robert Wurtz, 25 November 1967

Dear Bob and Kay:

... Bob, war is hell. Of course, we are very fortunate here at Khe Sanh. The battles for hills 861 and 881 are gone, and things have been quiet, although we have several thousand enemy troops (trained North Vietnamese at that) all around us, and can expect to be hit at any time. The surrounding countryside is very beautiful–mountains and beautiful sunsets. The local people are friendly and quaint. I have been invited to and participated in (as an observer) some spirit worship and feasts (of eating sacrificed pig with fresh blood poured over it–ugh!). But there is the black side to things also, and we could definitely not survive were it not that we pray every night and day Luther's prayer, "We thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast so graciously protected us through the night from all danger and harm ... into Thy hands we commend our bodies and souls and all that is ours..."

I have seen about 10 to 12 men in body bags since I've been here–simply ghastly. (I'll omit any description). The last one was a young boy, with less than 30 days to do here, who attended by church services (he was Baptist), who was always smiling, telling a joke, or making people laugh when they were low, depressed, or angry. Then there was another man who attended my Sunday worship services, with his face all painted with camouflage paint (he was just getting ready to go out into the field on a reconnaissance patrol). They brought him in two hours later, shot in the head. It's gotten now that I have no more tears to shed!

...

The meaning of the incarnation has become ever newly impressed upon my mind, for I share the same discomforts and fears and anxieties with the men, not because I have to, not even because I want to, not because of some religious imperative I feel I must obey, but simply because I just feel myself doing it, and loving these men in the sense of being willing to give totally (John 15, and John 13.1, and 1 John 2.6 and 3.14).

I do and go wherever my men are. I live with them day and night in sorrow and joy in work and recreation. I go out on patrols because that's where they are, and I feel I must be "present" to them, and this gives them courage and confidence.

Bob, I've come to look upon further education as just so much adiaphora, a sort of selfishness or self-fulfillment, when the Christian must be concerned about self-giving. My marks were straight A's–and that at the university of Chicago, which is supposedly the roughest theological graduate school in the nation! But my heart wasn't there. I had a course in the Gospel of John, taught by Dr. Robert M. Grant, a leading authority, perhaps the leading authority on John alive today. Well, we all had to turn in papers. Practically all the papers dealt with some minute detail of the Gospel that was of intellectual curiosity interest only. At the conclusion of all this trivia, the great Doctor remarked, "Why did you choose that? What good does all that do?" Is that the emphasis of the Gospel? and like questions[896]. I hadn't turned in a paper for that course since I audited it, but what he said only convinced me further.

In all, however, that was a deeply enriching experience at Chicago, but it was enriching only in the direction of realizing once again the command, "Go ye therefore into all the world!" I did research on Luther's doctrine of the Two Kingdoms (loyalty to the gospel and loyalty to the "powers that are ordained of God"–the state; being a Christian soldier, etc.); a large paper on the social ethical implications of Kierkegaard's work, with emphasis on his book, *Works of Love* (which has become increasingly influential upon my ideas–you ought to read it someday); and a paper on the Holy Spirit as active in community (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, meekness, etc., being communal activities; the Lord's supper, the participating in the ;holiness of God as the "communion of saints," etc.). I was all set to go, and I went.

Likewise my experiences at Oak Creek were a great expense of personal effort and much reward. That was a horribly anxious experience, not knowing from Sunday to Sunday what would result, *always* praying before each Service (since I never saw who was there until the beginning of the Service, due to architectural arrangements)–"O Lord, let only Your glory shine, let people faithfully gather to Praise your Name, and let not my sinful tarnish cause the diminishing of your glory!") But here again, there was congregational competition, unkind words from other Lutheran pastors whenever one or two of their families wanted to become the nucleus of our new work–downright harsh words that would make me sick within and almost make my tears to come. Then there was the Board which kept pestering (showing their only concern) to be located in money–give more, give more, give more! I couldn't become a party to such sin, so I left.

Of course, I had always wanted to be a chaplain, but the Lord was gracious enough to answer my prayers by giving me some fundamental experiences first.

... Please greet the Sandeens for me when you see them. Faithfully,

Letter to Jim and Ellen Kuehl, 25 November 1967[897]

Dear Ellen and Kim:

Thank you so much for the thoughtful letter and the first season card which I have received. I am not able to reciprocate with a card since we have none of those luxuries here where I am, so a letter will have to suffice.

It was good to hear that Bob Louis was ordained–but Texas?! Should you happen to have his address, I'd like to drop a letter to him, but, of course, from past experiences, I probably cannot expect to receive a reply. It was also good to hear you were able to be back in Waukesha and renew old acquaintances. But most of all, it was good to hear that your thesis is completed and that you would probably be defending it this month. I am anxiously awaiting to hear the results.

It must be very gratifying to work with young minds which are still in the process of forming world views, or, should I say, giving intellectual formulations to some views of life, especially in the area of ethics. Perhaps THE basic questions today lie within that province, both in the social and personal dimensions. ... although one set of actions seems to be "right," there is always the "wrong" side to every "right" side–the fact of original sin, of selfishness, the demonic, always makes an appearance ...

It is imperative not to impose a value system on other people, because we all live together in a society. My value of living in a filthy manner, of free love, of non support of activities beyond my purview, all have social implications–spreading of disease, increase in social disease, the remaining growth of evil. Not to decide to help the brother in need is itself a decision.

I am convinced as I have never been convinced before that the Gospel is the only solution–that is, when people are more concerned with giving than getting, with self-giving than self-fulfillment, with loving than being loved, of understanding rather than being understood, of genuinely being interested in doing good without expecting any returned reward, recognition, and

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[896] For example, "How will what you have written help the faith of some old woman in Iowa?"

[897] Printed in Carroll, Andrew, Ed., *Grace Under Fire, Letters of Faith in Times of War*, Colorado Springs, CO, Water Brook Press, 2007, pp. 98-100.

benefit; when people realize that complete forgiveness and selfless service are the only way–only then will everyone be really living!

Things around here are good and bad, mainly the latter. This week I had a memorial service for a young man, with under 30 days left to do here, who attended my worship services, who was kind, with a smile and made people laugh and lift them from depression, anger, and anxiety. He drowned. Another man attended one of my Sunday worship services, with his face all painted with camouflage make-up for going out on a recon. patrol. I saw him again three hours later, dead, having been shot in the head.

The men live in the most despicable of situations. They carve out holes in the hills in which to live, so that they are always damp and cold. I frankly don't know how they do it. From water shortages, they must go from 6 weeks to two months without a shower. Since they only have one set of utilities (the green uniforms we wear) they go out in patrols, get all wet from rain or river crossings, caked with mud, and must sleep in the same clothes. There are rats all over, and men are continually getting bit, and then have to get the 15 or so shots for rabies in the stomach. There are mail delays when we don't get mail for two weeks at a time, and when it does come in, there are always many "dear Johns"–from married women! (One man came to me, almost in a state of shock. He was married 18 years, 3 children, had less than a month to do here, and no previous marriage problems, and he got a "dear John"). There is always the fear of enemy attack. There is continual awakening at night from artillery suddenly going off at all hours of the night. There is the monotonous diet of C rations. And so on.

Yet, you would be amazed at the faith expressed here. There are evidences of genuine and deep prayer life, of reading and knowing the Bible backwards and forwards, of sacrificial concern for others. The men usually come out in large crowds for religious services. Some, of course, are merely there from fear, and their religious conviction is indeed shallow. Many have come to a religious service of worship for the first time in their life; some have communed for the first time in two years. I usually take an offering–some men put in $10.00 or a $5.00 bill, and many put in a $1.00 bill–amazing isn't it?

I truly believe that it is when people face death, when they face the loss of all the trivia of modern day society and are face to face with the "bare essentials" of what is human, that they are the happiest, with less to gripe over and less to worry about. I think people are people only when they suffer!

Well, we are fairly well blessed where we are. The monsoons that we are supposed to be suffering under haven't materialized, although we do get a week or two of solid rain now and then. The area is very beautiful–mountains, and sunsets, etc. The local tribes are hospitable and interesting. The base hasn't been attacked since 27 June. There are some local Bible translators here from Pennsylvania, and I have established good relations with them, borrowing some of their Greek translation helps, so that by the time I'm finished over here I will have gone through the whole NT in Greek–I hope so, anyway.

Please write whenever you get a chance, about some of your experiences in the classroom, about your dissertation and its ideas, etc.

Faithfully yours, Ray.

Letter to Bernard and Ruth McKevitt,[898] 25 November 1967

Dear Aunt Ruth and Uncle Bernard:

...

I have seen some great people here and I have seen some great expressions of faith that triumphs over all adversities, evidences of deep prayer life, men who know their scriptures backward and forward, men who are kind and just plain good. The area in which we are located is quite cool (unlike the rest of Vietnam), and is very beautiful–the flowers, the mountains, and the sunsets are all wonderful and awesome indeed. Were it not for the war, this would be a perfect vacation spot. I have also had my share of exciting and meaningful experiences; I shall have to talk for hours and hours to unwind once I'm home!...

Memo to Battalion "3", Subj: Command Chronology Report for 19 for November 1967; Submission of, dated 30 Nov 1967

1. A total of 22 Protestant worship Services were conducted with a total attendance of 356. This figure is greatly reduced from the normal since the chaplain was unable to conduct services on Hills 881, 861, and 950, due to weather conditions, from 9 November to 30 November.

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[898] Godparents.

2. The chaplain conducted two adult baptisms, 2 memorial services, gave invocations at 4 Marine Corps birthday celebrations, gave 6 troop indoctrination lectures attended by 246, distributed about 1,000 pieces of religious literature, made extensive visitations about the base, and continued receiving offerings for the express purpose of the use of Mr. Miller in connection with his translation activities.

3. Roman Catholic coverage was provided by Chaplain (LT) Walter DRISCOLL of Sub Unit 5. Latter Day Saints coverage was provided through 4 services attended by 16.

Letter to parents, 3 December 1967

Dear folks...

The weather here has finally entered the monsoon season. I've not been able to get out on the hills with the troops there since the 9th of November because there is always a heavy fog or rain, and the choppers don't take off then. Of course, it occasionally clears up, but this usually takes place on Sundays, or at times when I can't leave, and then it only clears up for a short time, so that I could get stuck on the hills for two or three weeks. Up there, they run out of water and food so easily–live in dug-in holes, so that wouldn't be too good a prospect! Or they have chopper flights when most of the hill people are out on patrol who then don't return until after dark, when the choppers don't fly. So I've been "confined" to the base. Consequently, my spirits are somewhat down, because there isn't that much to do here. I visit with the units on the base, and just outside the base, visit the local missionary, and do some reading. But it's a slow-moving life. I don't go out on patrols anymore, and don't feel in the best of physical health because I don't get enough exercise. But I guess I'll have to adjust to this new set of circumstances, since it is what faces everyone here! The nights get extremely cold (as do also the days), and I have managed to get a Marine Corps sleeping bag–something hard to find around here, and it is very warm! I just wrap up inside the thing, pull shut the zipper, and sleep in comfort! Of course, there are only cold showers available, and occasionally I get up enough courage and take one! - it takes a couple of hours to recuperate. The clothes get very muddy and dirty; we sort of wallow in the mud, but there's no way of washing and getting things dried, so we just put up with it.

Fortunately, there is no enemy contact to speak of.

The people about the base–the men from reconnaissance teams, the CAC people outside the base, and the Army super-secret forces just outside the base, and the local missionaries–are all people that I enjoy very much being with, people that are very warm, friendly, want to see you again type. I sleep overnight occasionally at the CAC unit just outside the base, and will go there again tonight. It's near enough to the base that I can walk off the base and back again to get to it....

Love, Ray

Letter to Chaplain Robert Fenning, Division Chaplain, 3rd Marine Division, 14 December 1967

Dear Chaplain Fenning:

I still have memories of the "wonderful land of Bai" run through my mind! Your kindnesses and those of Chaplain Filmyer are certainly appreciated.

...

The 60 of so RSV whole, bound, Bibles which I picked up, were distributed to all those who desired to have one at our Sunday worship services. Practically everyone took one, with the result that they were all gone in less than a day! I believe I sort of depleted your stock, or at least put a large dent in it. Next time I'm down, in January or February, I'd like to pick up perhaps 10 boxes (240 Bibles), for I know they will go in a couple of days. The men don't want them just to have them. in my visitations in their hooches on the hills and about the base and the outposts of the base, I have discovered them to read them, sometimes cover to cover!

...

As you know, 3/26 arrived here yesterday. I haven't as yet met their chaplain, and I am not aware iof the situation as to whether they or we will remain or depart. I do not know whether I will be transferred (since he is Prot.), or the Father will be transferred to them, or what. But in any event, if at all possible, I'd like to remain where I am. If it is necessary to transfer me, I'd appreciate it if I could be transferred to the "front," e.g., Con Thien, Rock Pile–since I've been ;now almost five months here "in the rear" (activity-wise, the rear, that is)...

Letter to parents, Thursday, 28 December 1967

Dear folks–

... I also received a package from Sandeens in St. Paul, Wurtz' in-laws, containing a musical Swiss music revolving Christmas tree! It was certainly very nice of them to have sent that. It played *Silent Night*, and brought me to tears from being homesick!...

Our Christmas services found me in full swing. I had 4 services Sunday and 4 more Christmas Day. The 4 on Christmas Day totaled over 270 present! I got out to 2 hills and a CAC unit and also another battalion visiting here which didn't have its chaplain. The latter service had about 168, all in one large tent!

The weather the past few days has been outstanding–warm and pleasant.

Your tree was sent to one of the hills; I saw it up on Hill 950 myself.

I know the church has its own clothing drive, but if they could send a few boxers of clothes here, the local Brou which are for the most part unclothed, would be greatly appreciated. When it gets very cold, all they wear–many of them, is loin cloths and discarded T-shirts! Ask the Council what they want to do.

Tomorrow morning early I'm going out on a 3 to 5 day operation. Our whole battalion, 1/26, is going into an area known to be infested with enemy. It's a little scary, but actually, it's the idea of sleeping out in poncho liners and poncho thast revolts me! Well, I feel the chaplain must be with his men, so I volunteered to go out. .. I'll write when I return from the operation. Love, Ray.

Memo to Battalion "3", Subj: Command Chronology for December, 1967; Submission of, dated 01 Jan 1968

1. A total of 27 services of worship were conducted with a total attendance of 734. Occasional services included 1 baptism, 1 memorial service, and 1 confirmation. Three orientation lectures were given to 138 new troopers.

2. A request for a Brou-style chapel was submitted to RLT 26 by this command. New hymnals were obtained from the Division chaplain. Approximately 70 Bibles, and 500 pieces of religious literature were distributed. Christmas packages received by this command were distributed by the Sergeant-Major; other packages were received directly by the Sub Unit 5 chaplain for distribution for the whole base. The chaplain requested athletic literature and supplies from various professional football teams; materials received were given to appropriate offices.

3. Roman Catholic services were provided by the Sub Unit 5 chaplain, LT Walter DRISCOLL; latter Day Saints services were provided under lay leadership.

4. The weather during the first part of the month precluded visitation to Hills 950, 881, and 861. Battalion 3/26 arrived 13 December, and this chaplain provided services for that BN (including Christmas) until their chaplain arrived 26 December.

Very respectfully..

Typical Thank You letter. This one to Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Co., 742 S. Hills St., Room 800, Los Angeles, California 90014, dated 5 January 1968

Dear Sirs:

Your thoughtfulness in sending Christmas gifts to our young men fighting in Viet Nam is a most commendable and worthy gesture of kindness in keeping with the season spirit. You may be interested to know that these were distributed among the men who are indeed most worthy to have been the fortunate recipients. We are in the most remote, northwestern U.S. base in Vietnam, surrounded on three sides by the DMZ and Laos, and faced by the continued tensions that brings. The men go out on daily patrols in the mud and water, getting chilled and cold, full of leach bites, jungle rot, and elephant grass sores that become very large festers. They return to living places called "hooches" dug into the ground, cold, and infested with rats, and many must sleep in the same wet clothes they went out on patrol with. There are no showers for six week periods; the mail sometimes does not come for two or three week periods. The morale could be no higher; the men could be no more spirited; the effort and work expended could be no greater.

You may be assured that your Christmas gift falls into that category of "I was hungry and you fed me," (Matthew 25:34-40).

Thanking you again for your action, I remain..Faithfully yours..

Letter to Rev. Dr. Raymond Wargelin, 5 January 1968

Dear Pastor Wargelin:

...

You may be very interested to know that the Christian church is very active even over here. The men evidence a deep and devout prayer life and thorough knowledge of the scriptures, indicating a good background in some of their home parishes that the seed indeed "fell on good ground." Of course, many are apathetic. But, in general, I must say, I am deeply impressed. We also have missionaries. one is supported by the Christian & Missionary Alliance. he is an Episcopalian missionary to the local tribes here. Today he received a large shipment of goods, among them clothing from LWF.[899] It was good to see the end results of those drives back home. We also have a family from the Wycliffe Bible Translators who are translating the Bible into the local language. The people here are illiterate, so they have actually developed a language, written, and are making the people literate along with their efforts.

The weather is very, very cold. Not as cold as Minneapolis, but I am perhaps colder here than I was back there. on operations, I spend sleepless nights shivering instead of sleeping, along with everyone else. On the other hand, the enemy is increasing activity. We have many contacts with North Vietnamese now–several attempted to penetrate our base perimeter a few nights ago, and we expect the base to be attacked again with mortars any night now. So your prayers are certainly appreciated.

May our Lord's richest blessings be yours during the new year. Faithfully yours...

Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Sandeen, St. Paul, Minnesota, dated 6 January 1968

Dear friends:

You will never quite know how much I appreciated the package containing the Christmas ornaments - especially musical tree. It gets quite lonely here at times, especially at Christmas time. That tree with the music seemed to make life a little more livable here. I gave a lot of the Christmas items I personally received away - but I kept that tree for myself. I am sending it home and will use it in future Christmases, and will always remember your kindness. God bless you.

Faithfully, ..

Letter home, Thursday, 18 January 1968[900]

Dear folks:

Hi. I'm writing this letter on my new typewriter–yes, my own typewriter. There is a church group in California that is giving a free typewriter, small tape recorder, and an AM-FM radio to all the Navy chaplains here .. I just came back from Phu Bai yesterday where I picked it all up at the division chaplain's office. I had a real nice time down there. I sort of celebrated the fact that on the 14th of this month, I celebrated my 6th month in country; less than 6 more to go. It's always good to go down to Phu Bai and rest up a bit. The food is outstanding, and one can sleep at night without hearing artillery blast away or hearing the squeaks of the small pets (rats). In another month or so I will be rotated "to the rear" like in a hospital or something like that. They like to have chaplains spend 6 months forward and six months in the rear, but since there is a shortage of chaplains temporarily over in this area of Vietnam, I won't be rotated until March or so. Also, the 3rd Division is moving from Phu Bai to Dong Ha, so, as the division chaplain says, we'll all be forward in some respect or other. The First Marine Division is moving into Phu Bai right now. I saw Chaplain Auel, a full Commander, Lutheran, who I had met in Washington. he was the one who called up long distance from Washington when they wanted me to fly out there. I had a very nice visit with him. While I was down there I took along the offerings we have collected since the middle of September–about $815.00 and had it changed into the local currency, Piasters, about 96,000 Piasters. We are going to give that to the local missionary who is translating the Bible into Brou. He receives no wages, but depends on private donations. We had

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[899] Lutheran World Federation.

[900] Printed in Stevens, Michael E., Ed., *Voices from Vietnam*, Madison, Wisconsin, Center for Documentary History, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996, pp. 142-144.

quite a time getting back to Khe Sanh. Some of the people down there had been waiting 9 days in the terminal, from 7 in the morning to 5 in the afternoon, on hard benches, day after day. The weather gets so foggy here, that even with instruments the planes do not come in for fear of crashing into the nearby hills. Then, on Tuesday, they brought up another whole battalion up here, another 1200 men! So now we have three battalions here–1/26, 2/26, and 3/26. I think we are the only regiment in the Marines in Vietnam that has all the three battalions together. (We are the 26th Marines regiment). It is the first time the regiment has been together since World War II. The reason they brought up 2/26 was that they think this place is going to be attacked by the 4,000 North Vietnamese or so that are always surrounding us. Well, they've said that for the 6 months I've been here now. One month it was the national elections; they always attack then, and in fact did attack most of the Marine installations, but not us. Then it was the monsoons. Now it is something else. They really get all excited. We now have to wear helmets and body armor (flak vests), and the Marines have to carry rifles–this is on the base itself, during the day. They expect human wave attacks. We also have to keep our gas mask with us all the time. I think it is utterly ridiculous to see the whole base become paranoid. Everyone is digging holes and building bunkers with sandbags. I rest secure in my hooch-bunker that I built back last September. I have my office in it and I sleep in it at night, and they tell me it would take a 122mm rocket. So I'm safe.

I'm not able to do too much during the week. Our battalion no longer has companies on Hills 881 or 861. So I'm pretty much restricted to Sunday services only.

...

I found out that you can send packages air mail to or from here by paying the regular postage and then adding $1.00, sending it "PAL."[901]...

...

My Sunday church attendances have been soaring up in attendance. Whereas I usually only have about 30 at my morning service, I have had 53 and 52 for the past two Sundays, the most I have ever had at those services...

I guess I have to close now. Please greet everyone. O yes, concerning the clothing for the people here–anything of a discarded nature will be able to be used. They are so poor that they can use anything.

Love, Ray

Letter home, Saturday, 20 January 1968[902]

Dear folks:

Last night I received the two packages postmarked 5 Jan., and your letters of 11 and 14 Jan. We hadn't received any mail for about a week due to the weather and troop movements holding up the ;normal mail transportation. But it all eventually gets through, to everybody's delight. Those chocolate pan-type cookies are delicious! You can send those anytime.

...

I know this might sound like madness, but the possibility of extending for six months has been entering my mind for several reasons. One gets 30 days leave to any place in the world, transportation paid. I could therefore go to South America or Europe for about three weeks or so, spend about a week at home, come back here for 6 months, and then get for sure a base job. They tell me that hardly no one wants to go to Great lakes, so I could probably go there if I wanted. Also, I get $65.00 a month combat pay extra and $500.00 of my monthly pay tax free. But I have to think of this for awhile. Six months isn't a long time, but then, maybe 18 months is!

The last two days have been quite terrible as far as casualties to our own men in this area. Yesterday they brought in one killed and about a dozen or so wounded; they also brought in two children about 3 or 4 years old that had gotten some shrapnel. These are all from the outposts, not the base. Today by noon, they had brought in 22 men with various shrapnel wounds in their arms and legs, ankle, hip, etc., and one killed. They were going to Hill 881 North, the site of the bad battle last April and May. Last night, and at about 2 in the afternoon, just as I am writing this letter, there were B52 strikes against two suspected North Vietnamese regiments (about 3,000 or so men) to our south, about 5 miles or so. These strikes are called "arc lights" and consist of 5,000 and 10,000 pound bombs. They drop so many of them that it sounds like a real bad thunder even at this distance. So things are getting a little warmer around here.

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[901] Parcel Air Life.

[902] Summarized and portions quoted in: Carroll, Andrew, ed., *Grace Under Fire, Letters of Faith in Times of War*, Colorado Springs, CO, Water Brook Press, 2007, pp. 100-101, and Stevens, Michael E., Ed, *Voices from Vietnam*, Madison, Wisconsin, Center for Documentary History, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996, pp. 144-145.

Maybe sometime this will all end. If the people back there could see all the suffering that the men go through, the "hawks" would be less "hawkish" and the doves would be more realistic (and focus their attention on the predicament of the fighting man, not on the immorality of war). War is obviously immoral. What so many fail to see is that man is not naturally good, and will not naturally do the right thing, and that the choices before men today are not black and white but of differing shades of gray.

I saw my first childbirth last night. Although miraculous, seeing life suddenly appear; it was simply awful–seeing all that come out, all the torn tissue and blood and horrible suffering of the woman. Then they asked for the placenta or after-birth; they eat it. I think if every young man and young woman saw that they'd never have any children! But, of course, that isn't true. For the only way there is life is through suffering, and the only things that are held of great value in life are the things one struggles for, how much more one's life, if one struggles to keep that.

Well, perhaps that's the way this war is. It's ugly; it's painful, excruciatingly so; but maybe that's the only way new life can come to these people who have lived under terror for 40 years.

I have to go now. Love, Ray.

Letter home, Sunday, 21 January 1968[903]

Dear folks:

First, I'm OK, not even a scratch. The casualties have been comparatively small. So don't worry.

I wrote my last entry in my log beginning Dec. 1st. Since our post office was hit this morning, I gave it to one of the pilots of one of the planes to mail via registered mail. I don't know if it will ever get home, but there's a lot in it; it's very important to me. So I hope it gets home. Please write me if it does. It's a green record book diary, covering the period 1 Dec. to today, plus a lot of personal papers.

We are, as you probably hear on the news, under attack. It's the scariest thing I've ever had to face. I awoke at 5 o'clock to the sound of incoming rockets and mortars exploding just outside my hooch! They hit our ammunition dump, and rounds of ammunition were flying all day long. Practically half the base is in ruins, but the casualties were very few because everyone got in bunkers. The only casualties were from the lines on the perimeter of the base and from Hill 861. I am writing this as the sun is setting today. I don't know if you will ever receive this, but I must write it anyway.

The base is quite safe. The airstrip wasn't harmed, and planes keep coming and going. We still have our artillery for counter-mortar attack. My hootch is well-built, sturdy. We have a lot supporting us. So don't worry.

I feel I'm needed here. I give up every waking moment for these men. They are basically good men, but not particularly religious as such, although I'm quite sure many prayed today! Yet I love them all, and give my daily life for them, and I do it not for personal satisfaction or companionship or a sense of personal accomplishment, but because I feel this is God's will.

You of course know my love for you both and grandma and all–Ray & Jeanne, Jackie, Henry, Perry & Marie–everyone, but especially you and grandma. I have not always been a good son and I know I've caused you grief at times, un-sureness and anxiety at other times. But I've always loved all of you very deeply.

Well, there's really not too much more to say in this situation. I've recorded all the details of everything in my log.

Love, Ray.

Memorandum to "B" Company Top, Subj: SPICER, 23 January 1968

1. If possible we would desire SPICER to help out at "C" Med. for such duties as stretcher bearer, holding IV bottles, and other general work. We can use all this kind of help we can get.

2. I understand and appreciate the peculiar problems and circumstances with the men with whom he now is, and make the above request as a positive solution to alleviate the situation.

Respectfully, R. W. Stubbe

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[903] Printed in Stevens, Michael E., ed., *Voices from Vietnam*, Madison, Wisconsin, Center for Documentary History, State historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996, p. 145. Printed in Carroll, Andrew, ed., *War Letters, Extraordinary Correspondence from American Wars*, Foreword: Douglas Brinkley, New York: Scribner, 2001, pp. 407-408. Printed in Carroll, Andrew, ed., *Grace Under Fire, Letters of Faith in Times of War*, Colorado Springs, Co., Water Brook Press, 2007, pp. 102-103.

Letter home, February 1st, 1968

Dear folks:

Well, the enemy is really creating a lot of turmoil around here for awhile, but soon things will undoubtedly return to normal. A lot has happened to me lately. A week ago, Saturday, I got sick to the stomach and head. The next day I started conducting worship services and fainted. So I spent Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday morning in our battalion sickbay, known as a "battalion aid station." I was discharged with a 100 degree temperature and went back to my bunker. There, a full commander, medical type, up from Phu Bai, said "Chaplain, you're going to Phu Bai!" I objected, but his word was final, and I left. The fever was already broken, and all the trouble was merely just being a little weak. So I got all the treatment–hot vegetables and steaks–instead of all the C rations I've been on. Yesterday, Phu Bai kept getting hit itself and was taking casualties, so they moved 3 large plane loads of patients, about 400-500 all totaled, to DaNang Naval Hospital. This is where I now am. My temperature is now 97.2, but they're running lab tests which will take several days to determine the results. But I'm quite safe and should return to Khe Sanh in a day or so, and that area has considerably quieted down–so, no worry![904]

My experiences there–well, I'll write about those later. I just wanted to write that although I'm in a hospital, it's because of a fever that never got above 101 and is now gone. I got the chocolate rice-crispy cookies–very, very good, and 3 letters in brown envelopes. Yes, still write to me at my regular address.... Love, Ray.

Letter to the Division Chaplain, Third Marine Division, 01 February 1968

Dear Chaplain Fenning:

The reason I am writing this note is to make record of the horrible manner in which the medical personnel have treated me recently in removing me from my men and duties, especially at this time of perhaps their greatest need. The fact that my fever was low and subsiding, that my health was improving, that my battalion doctor (LT FELDMAN), under whose care I had been for three days, discharged me (admittedly weak and with a slight temperature) but with prescriptive medication and rest, and my own feelings of improved health–all that made no difference at all. I was "man-handled" onto a stretcher; I was not even permitted to walk the twenty or so feet back to my hooch to get some of my personal items in order. Involved with this was a great sense of personal guilt and shame. one man on the plane asked, "Chaplain, where'd they get you!" And I had to explain that I really was OK, just had a slight fever. The questioner was receiving an IV, almost in shock, with multiple shrapnel wounds.

But the medical department reigns "let all the earth tremble!" But this only follows in line with what went on at Khe Sanh during the last week. one day, upon returning from the lines, a doctor was attempting to put a cot into my hooch. When he saw me, his exact words were, "I'm moving into your hooch." Well, of course, that was OK with me, but he didn't have the courtesy to ask me. CDR Brown did the same thing in almost taking over my bunker (which I spent over a week of sweat in building personally) instead of having his lazy corpsmen build appropriate bunkers. Again, I would more than gladly have allowed them to use it and I would sleep on the lines, but there was no courtesy of requesting.

Now I am in DaNang. My fever has completely subsided, and I feel like doing a hundred pushups, but I still cannot go, because the results of tests take time–isn't that incommensurate with the situation! I feel so indignant I almost today wrote my congressman, but felt writing you was sufficient. The medical department is determined to keep me from my work of functioning as a chaplain; it's as simple as that. They just probably have to fulfill a psychological need of "lording it over" other people.

My temperature was never over 101.4; yesterday it was 99; today it is 97. Please excuse my taking of your time, but I feel I have been pushed about just a little too much.

Very respectfully, Ray W. Stubbe

Letter home, Monday, 5 February 1968

Dear folks:

Well, your son keeps moving around! This letter is being written from Quang Tri at an air station. I left DaNang yesterday via the large CH-53 chopper. We stopped briefly at Phu Bai, and now I'm here, living with a bunch of pilots, waiting to leave

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[904] Statement on "Narrative Summary", Standard Form 502, Health Record of Stubbe, LT P. S. Vokonas, MC, USNR, wrote: "At his request, the patient was released to duty, to return to the Khe Sanh area. A follow up UA in approximately 1 week should be performed."

for Khe Sanh via a "HU1E" (the real small chopper)–they send these to Khe Sanh every day, except it is already a quarter past one in the afternoon. We haven't left due to the fog and drizzle.

...

Quang Tri consists mainly of an air base–lots of choppers of all types. Eventually, all the offices of the 3rd Marine division at Phu Bai will be moving up here.

The conflict seems to have lessened greatly. The enemy will soon, if he hasn't already, come to the realization that his cause is indeed hopeless. With our air superiority, there's nothing he can do. He might make a massive attack somewhere, but although he'd undoubtedly inflict some degree of harm, would never be able to hold anything for more than a day or so.

Of course, everything is "Khe Sanh." .. but all we hear on the radio here is Saigon! Actually, it's about time those in the rear earned their combat pay and realized they are actually in Vietnam!

Will write again soon. Love, Ray.

Letter home, Monday, 5 February 1968, Khe Sanh Combat Base

Dear folks:

Well, I finally made it back here again. I rode back from Quang Tri by the small "HU1E" gunship, real small chopper, bristling with machine guns and rocket launchers. It is rare to be able to ride these things. I was actually quite fortunate in not having to wait long periods for transportation. There are presently 1800 men in the DaNang Marine terminal waiting for flights to the north–and it's very miserable having to live like that.

I forgot to mention that before I left I had received a package from Les and Bea Roberts containing some canned fruit and life savers. Canned fruit, I have discovered, is about the best thing going here.

Also, I checked with our H&S Company office, and the mail that had been received during my stay at Phu Bai and DaNang was all forwarded to Phu Bai, which means I probably won't see it for a couple of months. But it was only 1 shipment of mail; some more came in tonight. I really don't know what was forwarded–perhaps no letter from you.

Things up here are back to normal. There is occasional activity, but usually affecting the outposts on Hills 861 and 881. The base itself only takes a few incoming rocket and mortar rounds, but that involves little or no damage or injury.

I feel completely recovered, full of "vim, vigor, and vitality." I have to return for some more tests. They're injecting my blood into mice! I know you'll be shocked, but remember I feel good and the Doctor described me on his report as "well developed and nourished thin white male" I now weigh 142. But I feel fine....

Love, Ray

Letter to Chairman, Local Board No. 6, c/o Mr. Jon Geissmann, Tower School, 61 West Shore Drive, Marblehead, Mass., 01947, dated Monday, 05 February 1968 - Khe Sanh Combat Base[905]

Dear Sir:

1. Please excuse this not being typewritten; we are under continuous mortar and rocket attack, and it's quite hazardous moving around to the office, whose typewriters are all busy typing casualty letters or forms anyway.

2. I am an ordained Lutheran minister of the Lutheran Church in America, and am a Navy chaplain on active duty with a Marine battalion here in Khe Sanh.

3. I am acquainted with Mr. Geissman, having been his roommate at the University of Chicago last year, for a period of one year.

4. I am familiar with Mr. Geissman's views, and, although I myself, obviously, do not subscribe to them personally, he is most sincere in them himself. I would feel very sick indeed if all the men I see killed or injured here and in great pain–were it all for naught–because we are denied our right of dissent. We are Americans. We bleed for that right. Therefore, although I do not agree with Mr.I Geissman, I will uphold his right and recognize the sincerity of his beliefs as something for which we are dying.

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[905] Printed in Carroll, Andrew, ed., *Behind the lines, Powerful and Revealing American and Fporeign War Letters--and one Man's Search to Find them*, New York: Scribner, 2005, pp. 193-194.

Very respectfully, Ray W. Stubbe.

Letter to Chief of Naval Personnel (Pers-B1211), 1300, dated 21 February 1968, Subj: Extension of tour of overseas service; request for[906]

1. In accordance with reference (a), it is requested that my tour of overseas service in Vietnam be extended for etwelve (12) months, exclusive of special leave and travel time....

Letter to parents, 5 March 1968

Dear folks:

... Most important, I'm now transferred "to the rear." I'm with third Shore Party–the unit to which I was originally assigned when I first got here back last July. My new address is up above. I also have a coverage of 3d Recon. in this area. We're located at Dong Ha and Quang Tri, in the northeast section of South Vietnam.

Shore Party is the group of men that handles all the incoming and outgoing supplies. It doesn't store them, but is the distribution group. Usually, they are on the beach during amphibious landings. Now we have Shore Party people on every base and outpost, but most are here at Dong Ha. We are the only group in the Marine Corps having special markings on our clothing–red patches on trousers near the knee and a small red patch on the helmet or cap.

Things at Cong Ha are quite different than Khe Sanh–we have hot showers, hot meals, decent places to sleep, PXs, etc.

So many things happened at Khe Sanh - it's good I didn't write earlier - practically anything I might write would either sicken or scare you. But that's all past now. I must say the good Lord was very merciful and gracious. I didn't receive even a cut or bruise. But there for awhile I was having very close calls every day. One noon, while eating lunch in my hooch, an incoming round went into my wall–through four feet of dirt, 3 feet of sandbags and bent my steel walls held up by U-shaped engineering stakes; it was a dud![907]

One evening at midnight, a rocket round–100 pounds–exploded just 2 feet from my hooch entrance.

One day I was walking through an excavated trench about 10 feet deep, a mortar round exploded on the top edge, just above.

I've been pinned down on the perimeter by automatic sniper fire–and so on–

...

Mail was sporadic–incoming and outgoing. I received your care packages and cookies... I gave away all the goodies to the men at Khe Sanh–they deserved it...

Things were very ghastly. I stayed overnight at a hooch on the perimeter. It was a bunker for the men manning a 106 gun. One afternoon they took two incoming rounds. Only one lived; all the rest were killed. one man's head was never found–pieces of finer, hand, flesh, blood, all over. one man came into our medical area. He'll lose both legs, his right arm, and be blind. Our medical area took quite a few hits, but fortunately no one there was hurt.

The slogans the men have on their helmets and flak jackets changed from "KILL, KILL, KILL," and "In many a strife we've lost our life and never lost our nerve," etc., to "Mom and dad forever," and "You and me, God," and "Please, Mr. Cong, I don't want to die," and crosses.

Many times our water supply would get shot up and we'd go several days without water.

There was always the fear of incoming–it might come in anywhere; it might land anywhere. No place, no bunker, was absolutely safe. The screeching rounds of rockets, the blasts–

One man I baptized, only 18, last December was killed.

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[906] First Endorsement, from CO, 1/26, J. B. Wilkinson, 22 Feb 1968, notes: "1. Forwarded recommending approval. Chaplain Stubbe's service to this battalion since July 1967 have been exemplary." In a letter from the Navy Chief of Chaplains, Rear Admiral James W. Kelly [EN4/1300, Pers J12-ddd (141), 29 March 1968]: "Dear Chaplain Stubbe: thank you for your recent letter volunteering for a year's extension in Vietnam. It is such willingness to serve that has made the ministry of our Chaplains in this troubled area of the world most effective. I have approved your extension for six months only. It is my feeling that after eighteen months of duty, a Chaplain should be rotated home. You have been nominated for orders to the Naval Support Activity, Danang as a relief for Chaplain Beasley...."

[907] This paragraph was printed in Carroll, Andrew, Ed., *grace Under Fire, Letters of Faith in Times of War*, Colorado Springs, Co., Water Brook Press, 2007, p. 103.

Several thousand Montagnards–the Brou tribe, wanted to be evacuated. When the Vietnamese were being evacuated the day after the attack (mostly Vietnamese), the Brou were also outside our base gate. 1,200 Vietnamese left. Then the General of 1st ARVN Army, General Lam, the one in control of our I Corps area, a Vietnamese, arrived, and, according to our civic relations officer, our S-5, said "The Vietnamese can leave, but the Brou have to stay!" So the Brou, by thousands, walked by foot, all the way to Cam Lo. 3,000 Brou arrived there, probably many more were killed along the way. The rest of the Brou flocked to a village, Areng, just outside our base, and to the village of Lang Vei. But Lang Vei was overrun and many of our own bombs killed them during air strikes. Same with those at Areng. So the survivors flocked to another village, Lang Con, and were made into slaves for the NVA, to carry their equipment and do their menial tasks.

Then, when it got into the press back home, the Pentagon and General Westmoreland got on AP and UPI. So a new news story came out stating that we would fly out thousands, but they returned to their villages! But the truth is that by the time of the offer, the Brou had (1) migrated, (2) been killed, or (3) are under Communist control!

What's so utterly revolting is that these Brou are the most loyal to us. When Lang Vei, the CAC units and Army District advisors in the village of Khe Sanh were being overrun , the Brou stayed right in there, fighting to the end, whereas the Vietnamese cowardly evaporated from the scene.

The Vietnamese regard these people as savage and dirt. They are primitive, but are kind, loyal, friendly, not offended if you don't obey their local customs, invite you into their homes, and are honest. (The Vietnamese will always appear and express the emotion they think you want them to, not how they really feel–so you never know just how they really do feel. They do this even among their own people. The Brou say that a man's thinking and feeling are localized in the gall bladder, not the brain. Consequently, they say the Vietnamese have two gall bladders!)

This is another tragedy of the war. There are so many.

Men suddenly turn to God in their moment of desperation - but frequently it's too late; there's no background or foundation to give the depth or meaningful religious relationship with God. Like physical abilities or personal acquaintances, our religious faculty and our relationship to God takes time to develop to the rich heights possible.

...

Please send fruit, M&Ms, kisses, etc. Please greet everyone.

Love, Ray

Letter to Mr. Royston L. Jones, dated 8 April 1968

Dear Mr. Jones:

Chaplain Kelly, our Chief of Navy Chaplains, has requested that I write you concerning your son, David R. Jones. According to our battalion records here in Quang Tri, your son was wounded at Khe Sanh on February 29th, but his wounds were classified as "non-serious" and he was immediately returned to duty the same date. He is presently at Khe Sanh. He submitted a request to extend here on April 4th, requesting to take his extension leave at Sidney. He submitted another request yesterday, April 7th, changing the place of his leave from Sidney to Kuala Lumpur. His request was not as yet, or course, been approved by the office of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, but our Adjutant sees no reason why it will not be. His old rotation tour date is 10 July 1968. Our Adjutant also stated that your son desires to re-enlist for six years after his extension, and request State Department duty.

The battalion Adjutant states that your son is a "very good Marine" and that he was promoted to Sergeant on April 1st.

I fully realize your deep concern for the welfare of your son, especially at a place like Khe Sanh. I myself served eight months there, departing February 28th. But since 3d Shore Party has a company up there, I have returned to Khe Sanh seve3ral times, the most recent of which was 2 through 5 April. I must state that it appears like Khe Sanh has quieted down completely.

The morale of Alfa Company [3d Shore Party] is so high that men who are twice wounded and must therefore be transferred out of Khe Sanh and remain in the rear here in Quang Tri, are always most disappointed not to be able to return to Khe Sanh. I know how they feel, for I have the same feelings. The men at Khe Sanh have a feeling of doing something significant; it is a feeling of response to the call of duty. This is especially true of the Shore Party detachment which has continued to work in the open areas of the drop zone, where cargo is dropped by parachute, and there are therefore no bunkers to which to run, and where they have continued to work out in the areas where gear is brought in by helicopter, even when enemy mortars and rockets are screeching in and exploding all about. Their bravery is something those who have not been to Khe Sanh under fire can perhaps never adequately comprehend or appreciate. But, as I indicated before, lest you have anxieties, it appears that the worst is over.

Khe Sanh is the proof of the bravery of our men, and the result of all our armed services working in concert. The Air Force has crippled the enemy through continual B-52 strikes and jet strikes. The Army now is confronting the enemy with a superior for in both numbers and quality of men. But, perhaps the costliest price has been paid by our courageous and dedicated Marines who held fast despite the fear-inspiring "incoming" rockets, mortars, and artillery, and the attempted ground attacks. Every man there is certainly deserving of some sort of decoration.

The decision of your son to apparently make the Marine Corps a career is an indication that our young people will never fail to heed the call of duty, by catching the vision of duty that extends beyond personal advantage.

I am sure that your son did not desire to worry you, and that that is why he has not written earlier. It may well be that he is trying to think through how he will break the news to you.

If we may be of any further assistance, please feel free to write us. Our only purpose here is to serve those who serve.

Faithfully yours, Ray W. Stubbe. Copy to: Chief of Chaplains

Letter to parents, Friday, 19 April 1968

...

I've been back up at Khe Sanh three times since leaving there, to visit the men from Shore Party and Recon. still up there. The last time I went was Easter Sunday afternoon, and I remained up there through Tuesday. There was a brief relaxation while the Army was up there, but the Army accomplished nothing, because the base is now receiving 300-500 rounds of heavy artillery again every day, and the enemy appears to have moved back in ... They come in, in choppers, and leave in choppers, but don't sweep through the intervening territory. I saw some of them come into the medical area from heat exhaustion from climbing just a few of the hills there. One said, "I'm getting too old for this kind of work." "How old are you," I said. he replied that he was 25! I told him I used to go out 5 days at a time, humping those hills every day, and I'm going to be 30. The Army left because they said the enemy had left. But how did they know? They never searched the area thoroughly. Besides, they left so suddenly, that practically all our Marines were out on battalion sweeps, and Sunday night there was only one company of men guarding the perimeter where usually 4 companies guard it.

...

I received orders (after I had requested them), to attend a Lutheran conference in Japan, Toyko, next week. I haven't as yet taken my R&R, and would still be eligible for that. But I've decided not to go to Japan. My place is with the men here ... Everyone has urged me to go–my commanding officer, the division chaplain–but I said that a chaplain's place is with his men, that I'm here to serve, not to be served, etc.

...

Love, Ray

Memorandum to Major Bohr, 02 May 1968[908] Subj: Excess C-rations; suggested disposition of[909]

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[908] Maj Harper L. Bohr, Jr., was the Executive Officer of 3d Reconnaissance Battalion at the time and was formerly the S-2 of 26th Marine Regiment at Khe Sanh. He and I both arrived in DaNang the same date and became good friends.

[909] Maj Bohr mentioned that the request to give food to the Brou couldn't be granted since there were two messages on the boards specifically prohibiting this, but suggested that an exception might be made. [Diary entry, Tue, 07 May 1968]. On Wed, 08 May, I saw Capt Collins, the former S-5 of 26th Marines at Khe Sanh. My diary: "Were it not for him, nothing would have been accomplished. There was another Captain there who was only negative. 'No food can be given out to indigenous personnel." That was his succinct statement I proceeded to explain the situation. He replied that they took out so many bags of corn meal, went out the next day, received many thanks, but were told that the VC had taken 3/4ths of it. "There just isn't any security," he said. I stated that we would then take out just enough that they could eat then and there. He said that there were two messages prohibiting the distribution of food. Capt. Collins remarked that they shouldn't have taken out all those bags of corn meal at once, that the fault was with the S-5 section. Finally I asked to see the G-5 actual. When I asked if I could take out the food, he said, "Of course not, never, under any circumstances." When I stated the situation, he said if they only give out a small quantity and if it's regulated, if it doesn't become publicized so that others use it as an excuse to open whole cases of C-rations, etc., and since it is food that would be destroyed, OK! Capt Collins stated I should contact Mr. Bob Handy who is working with the Brou at the Refugee Center and that I should beware of the S-4 of 4th Marines who might report it on his reports to get credit for it, that if so, others might misunderstand and the program would cease. [*Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 April 1970, pp. 889-890]. Met with Mr. Bob Handy at the Refugee Village on Thursday, 09 May 1968, who had been at Khe Sanh and stated there were about 9,000 Brou at Khe Sanh, that there are approximately 1,500 still missing, about 150 who died soon after arrival at the resettlement village from pneumonia and other diseases, malnutrition and having walked the 40 miles. [*Ibid.*, p. 891]. "There was no fanfare, no photographs, no expressions of gratitude. The food was merely quietly deposited, and I thought that perhaps the uneventful manner might dampen the zeal

1. Some of the men from the S-4 asked me last week if they could give me some of the C-rations left-over from those going on patrols, for some worthy cause–orphanages, etc. I stated I would look into the problem.

2. This date I happened to see CPL KELLEY, from Khe Sanh, who is presently working with the 6,000 Brou refugees currently located in Cam Lo at the intersection of Highway 9 and [route] 558. he stated that there is a tremendous need for food and clothing, that the people are literally starving, not being able to grow food, and the government providing them with only about 1/4th of what they are supposed to receive.

3. I contacted the S-4 Sgt this afternoon, who stated they had just disposed of the C-rations left over, but stated he would save them in the future.

4. It is suggested that the S-4, together with the five letter companies be informed that their left-over C-rations would be used to help food these Montagnard refugees, and that these excess rations be saved rather than thrown away.

5. They would then be collected and taken out to Cam <Lo. The CAC offices adjacent C Co., 3rd Shore Party, at Dong Ha, makes a daily PC run to this area, leaving about 1000.

Very respectfully, Ray W. Stubbe

Letter to Mr. John Miller, dated Monday, 20 May 1968

...

..recon has men that go out "in the bush" on patrols, and they are issued canned C-rations. But they don't eat all of them. Some of the items they leave behind are quite good tasting, but just take up too much space for taking in the field–like crackers and candy, or cookies, etc. So they just pile up. Well, we accumulate about 100 pounds of these unwanted C rations and take them out to the Bru refugees at Cam Lo each Wednesday morning. There is a policy order out against giving out C rations to indigenous personnel since although it is usually given to the children along the road by Marines for the children's use, it usually ends up in the black market or in the enemy's stomach. However, in this particular case, I made an appeal to the G-5 himself, and got permission to take them out, since they were going to be destroyed anyway, and since they would be somewhat regulated. Mr. Handy and Corporal Kelley are also working out there and they sort of take charge. I was so happy that we were able to do this, and the recon. men were also happy to help out. We can't have any publicity, however, since it might be used as an excuse for indiscriminate distribution of C rations by others. I'm just as happy there is no publicity.

My new job is quite different than at Khe Sanh. I do not go out too much, although we do have units at Cua Viet at the mouth of the river from Dong Ha, and we have a unit at Ca Lu. I visit these occasionally. The men here have a "in the rear" attitude, which I find at times somewhat repulsive. They expect everything, and are very dissatisfied over things that are the result of ingratitude. It's like after being in Khe Sanh without ice cream for eight months and then traveling to Da Nang, at one of the military centers down there and hearing someone complain–even to the point of writing his congressman!–because he's been subject to the same flavor of ice cream for five consecutive days! That's an actual happening.

The recon. men are a different story. These men suffer all sorts of hardships. I find myself now conducting a memorial service practically every week for those killed during the week. Last Saturday we had five more killed between Khe Sanh and Ca Lu. Last Thursday and Friday, there were 150 more medically evacuated from one of the hills near Khe Sanh village. The battle there seems to be picking up again.

...

Khe Sanh still holds a fascination for me. I guess there was so much there that I spent so much attention on while I was up there–the hills, the Marines and Army personnel, the beauty, the Poilanes, the CAC personnel, the ville, all the Brou villes, all the Bru people themselves, and, of course, yourselves. When they were doing that TV interview, someone opined that they were going to save it and compare it with another tape made later, when Khe Sanh was under siege. I simply couldn't accept that, at the time. Khe Sanh was too beautiful; there were too many good people there; it was too remote from the war. But it came. Someday I might perhaps write a book in a novel-type style, about Khe Sanh. Even the history was so interesting. I

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of the recon. Marines. I don't know, but this is an expression of Christian love--just giving, at the person's real point of need, with no desire for returned gratitude, dependence, thanks, etc." [*Ibid.*, p. 892].

remember Mr. Poilane telling me about the plantation Con Rome–originally the plantation of a retired French government official, then of another man who had a Japanese wife and gardener who turned out to be agents for the Japanese who later occupied the area. Then it was occupied by Mr. Llinares. And he seemed to fit into the same pattern. He wanted to get out the first part of December, if only he could get out with his money. But like Felix's coffee, space available was prohibited to him. Then they did a full-scale investigation on him, and from what I have been able to gather, it is suspected he collaborated with the NVA!

Everything in that area fascinates me. Even the geology and the volcanic origins: the area born in tremendous heat and violence.

I would be especially interested in the Bru legends...

...

May our Lord continue to look with favor upon your work. Faithfully, Ray

Memorandum for Executive Officer [recon], dated 23 May 1968, Subj: Food for Brou Montagnard Refugees at Cam Lo

1. Excess C-rations, together with clothing, has been taken out to the Khe Sanh Brou refugees at Cam Lo for the past three weeks. Permission was granted by the G-5 actual, and the program seems to be working out well. There are approximately 19 Brou at the dispensary at Cam Lo who are fed, having suffered from malnutrition and others who suffer from diseases due to malnutrition are also given the food,. The security of the food, to insure that it does not filter to the black market or the enemy appears to be quite adequate, the dispensary being located within a military-type contonement area, much like a CAP unit. The giving of the food is a most positive factor that the recon. men can feel they are contributing to persons who are actually in need.

...

Memorandum to Chaplain, 3rd Marine division, 15 June 1968, Subj: John Miller

Mr. and Mrs. John Miller and their three children have been residents of the Viet Nam area since they first moved to Khe Sanh village in December of 1962. It is interesting that they settled there before the Army Special Forces moved in during 1963. Since their arrival, they have been active in formulating a written language for the Brou tribe of the Montagnard tribes people, who, until very recently, were approximately 9,000 people living in villes within the khe Sanh area.

In this connection, they have developed a written language, compiled primers for teaching the children, have taught teachers to go into the villages, and have enabled the people to become literate for the first time. Mrs. Miller (Carolyn) has been mainly active in this phase of their work.

Mr. Miller is associated with the Wycliffe Bible Translators, an organization devoted to translating the Bible into the various native tongues of the various tribes in Viet Nam, Africa, and South America. He has already prepared and mimeographed the books of Mark, Acts, and Galatians, and just a few weeks ago had the 15th chapter of Luke issued in a printed version, bilingual (Brou and Vietnamese).

He is not salaried, and like all the members of the [Wycliffe] Bible Society, is dependent upon personal donations for his work. Until recently, he lived in an old French home in Khe Sanh ville that was remodeled and furnished through the efforts of the Major who was C.O. of FOB-3, and through the marines at Khe Sanh Combat Base, who were his frequent visitors. When he first arrived at Khe Sanh, however, he lived in a rented "hooch" right in one of the Brou villages (Lang Bu).

When it became evident that the situation at Khe Sanh would deteriorate, COL LOWNDS advised the Millers to temporarily vacate the area. They moved to Kontum and were caught in the siege there in which their headquarters was completely demolished. From there they moved to the Army area of Nha Trang, and are currently living the guests of CORDS, Quang Tri City. The Millers lost everything–their books and mimeographed materials, as well as all their personal effects during the recent Battle of Khe Sanh, except for their Roadmaster, which, although it suffered many holes from rocket, mortar, and artillery shrapnel, and the loss of all windows, was nevertheless driven down from Khe Sanh to Quang Tri Combat Base by the motor pool of RLT 26 where Mr. Miller picked it up about a month ago.

The Millers were frequently visited by the officers and men of Khe Sanh Combat Base, the CAC units, and the various Army units of the area. They were frequently on the FOB base when even many Marines couldn't visit the base due to the security sensitivity of the area.

They plan to continue their work, and probably again relocate to live with the Brou people after they relocate.

Very respectfully, Ray W. Stubbe

"WHY VIETNAM POETRY?' Appended to letter to Ms. Karen L. Bye, 11 August 1997, as a foreword to her book collection of Vietnam poetry

The word "symbol" (from the Greek, "to throw together") refers to a joining of two realities. Symbols emerge from deep within the soul to become a window or door that opens to a reality that cannot be explained simply or with analytical precision. Symbols evoke deep passionate and emotional response of revulsion or adulation, loving or loathing. The symbol "tree" can "mean" that which joins the earth and the sky, that which provides shade—or perhaps nourishment, that which endures wintry season. It can "mean" a twisted network that reflects the branches and directions of our life. It may "mean" a refuge of safety to a child who is lifted above and beyond the pains, chores, or concerns of life, perhaps even a place to build a house. Maybe a tree is a nest for birds and squirrels, or maybe it is simply wood and a source of paper. The symbol "child" may "mean" a new beginning, possibility, playfulness, boundless energy, freshness, innocence, and much more. In many ways, symbols are our deepest realities—or the connections to them. Symbols determine how we live and for what we are willing to die.

What of the symbols "war," "Vietnam," "flag," "Memorial Day," "Christmas," or "family?" Or "tree," "water," "fire," earth?"

This collection of poems is an assemblage of symbols. Here are doors and windows through which we may peer or pass into realities which are always present but rarely regarded, always seen but never noticed, studied but never known. For other veterans, these doors and windows permit confronting what has long been hid from view, but which controls actions and emotions. For relatives and friends of veterans, here are doors and windows to a greater appreciation of forming and determining experiences. For our society as a whole, here are doors and windows into our identity, for the one who digs deep within his own soul emerges with the insight that is, paradoxically, most universally human. These poems are mirrors: what we say we see is an indication of who we are; what we say about what they say discloses more about us who are speaking than the mirror itself.

In our science-dominated world, where everything and everyone is "studied," "categorized," "quantified" (as in "body count"), "dissected," or "analyzed," and thereby controlled (for those in power), exploited (for those seeking wealth), and regarded from a distance as an object, a thing, poetry is a foreign domain. In the world of poetry, where everything and everyone is unique, where everything and everyone is known only by passionate involvement in, by union with, by commitment to, all of modern day life is an experience of alienation (of "alien-nation"). The Swiss physician, Paul Tournier, once observed that we tend to use people and value things in our culture instead of using things and valuing persons. An emerging "post-modern" consciousness is the redirection away from a "scientific" context of life to one more human.

The great philosopher, Immanuel Kant, taught that book knowledge (concepts) without experienced life (perceptions) are empty, like unfilled files and folders. On the other hand, lived life without the conceptual tools we learn, is blind—as in walking through a forest and not seeing anything but a blur of trees because we haven't learned to distinguish elms and maples and hickory and ash. How many patrolling through the jungles of Vietnam , while perhaps being aware of bamboo or elephant grass or banana trees, never experienced mahogany or durion, but only "jungle." Concepts (knowledge) help us "make sense," to "notice particulars," to be aware of what is happening in our experience.

The poems in this collection provide some of the "files and folders," the "concepts" to make sense of what is elusive, always irrational, and slipping from our grasp or which engulfs us, like water running through our fingers or being submerged in it and drowning.

Since these are symbols, there is a presence of disparity—a disparity between how most everyone else regards contemporary events or what is encountered in life, and how one who has lived in "another world" experiences the same events or encounters—so differently. Exploding ordnance becomes the music of Christmas carols, the "boy who played his gun" becomes the "little drummer boy," swaddling clothes are a quilt or guilt (note: "swaddling clothes" in the Bible refer to bands of cloth used to wrap a corpse, and the Christian Orthodox icon of Christmas includes a tomb). "Dad," "Memorial Day," "family," "Operation Desert Storm," all become transformed symbols.

Waking up in a closet (as a result of a night terror, not a nightmare) becomes "Oh God, not again." The bed of slumber and love, of peace and security, becomes the extended battlefield of physical violence—a shattering legacy of war, for as someone has aptly put it, "for those who fight in a war, the war never ends." The effect on those surrounding the veteran are like a great whirlpool vortex sucking in others to a destructive web upon which and from which struggles to be free are nugatory: the child longing for a touch—from one emotionally numbed and incapable of intimacy, the succession of wives and families that create an enigma of the symbol "dad" or "father," and generational fracture.

Perhaps more revealing than what is in these poems, is what is not. A Marine LtCol once observed that in WW II everyone sang frequently and there were numerous songs, in Korea, there were few songs or singers, and in Vietnam, there were no singers and no songs to be sung. The inhumanity and dehumanization of the Vietnam War is disclosed when compared with WW I, which was in so many ways, so similar, but the poetry so different.

O, there is still the horror, as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (of Sherlock Holmes fame) penned:

Never a message of hope!
    Never a word of cheer!
Fronting Hill 70's shell-swept slope
    With the dull dead plain in our rear
Always the whisper of the shell
    Always the roar of its burst
Always the torture of hell..

Or in the words of one of the lesser-known poets of WW I, A. G. Prys-Jones:

The tides of Death go swiftly home
    And the nets of Pain are spread
The blood runs warm on the cold, cold loam
    In desolate fields of dead.

There is the anguished, even bitter, critique from First Lieutenant Siegfried Sassoon (who was later placed by the Brittish in a mental hospital because of his "irrational" negative words about the war). Perhaps in our age we should substitute "politician" for "Bishop" and "Communism" for "Anti-Christ" in order to feel the impact of the poem:

The Bishop tells us: 'When the boys come back
They will not be the same; for they'll have fought
In a just cause: they lead the last attack
On Anti-Christ....

'We're none of us the same!' the boys reply.
'For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;
Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die...

Or Sassoon's critique of the "rear" echelons:

'Good-morning; good-morning!' the General said
When we met him last week on our way to the line

Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead,
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.

The experience is the same. Absent, however, from Vietnam poetry (in general) is awareness of surrounding beauty of nature, which is remarkable since Vietnam is such a picturesque country of colorful shores and jungles and mountains and peoples. The Canadian LtCol John McCrae (KIA in France 28 Jan 1918 after four years of service on the western front) was still able to write the famous lines:

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

Sgt Joyce Kilmer of the 165th Infantry, American Expeditionary Force (KIA 30 Jul 1918) saw nature:

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree

Even a morbid consciousness is couched in a beautiful nature, as Alan Seeger, who enlisted in the French Foreign Legion when the war was only three weeks old, and was KIA 4 Jul 1916, could write:

I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade
When Spring comes round with rustling shade
And apple blossoms fill the air.

While on an infantry patrol, I noticed some beautiful flowers one day. Upon return to the outpost, I asked if the patrol leader noticed them. "Flowers, chaplain? No. I can't say I saw them. I was looking for other things." It is so difficult to be aware of the beauty around us when we are only focused on survival or on detecting the enemy. We don't even see the flowers. We trample them underfoot while on patrol. When eyes are glued by epoxy cement they are immobile, and what is seen is never noticed with "eyes that see not."

Secondly, absent is an awareness of the presence of God. (Perhaps a more accurate statement is: an awareness of the absence of our "learned concept" of God, of the "kind of" God we expect—as much as a suffering and rejected Christ who dies in ignominy differed from the conquering hero god those at the time of Jesus expected). The "god" underlying all the heroes of the 40s and 50s, the Lone Ranger, all the radio detective stories, John Wayne, all patterned after the 4th Century St. George slaying the dragon who threatened the populace and was about to devour the maiden sacrifice—this god never rescued, even though it was this god who motivated the action of going to Vietnam after JFK's stirring address: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country," and "We will bear any burden, pay any price." Plato had long ago noted that the god we have determines who we become and how we live.

On the other hand, the God who is present in caring and loving actions—of dashing out in the midst of a hail of rifle fire, exploding ordnance, to rescue one who is wounded, of sharing the last drops of water or food with one who is without, of pushing a man away from an air-dropped pallet to save his life but being killed oneself by the crashing pallet, these and countless others is the presence of God. But it is difficult to know God is in us when we do these things because all we know is our focus on the one who is wounded, in need, or in danger. If the rescued one is dead, tears drown out any realization of the God who was present in our caring action.

In many ways, God is present to those who behold the returning veteran. Behold the Suffering Servant, described by the prophet Isaiah, spat upon and jeered, one from whom others hide their faces (or their concern or their attention) because, as Isaiah describes, there are horrific and ugly "battle wounds." Here is the "wounded healer" whose unhealing wounds (like those of Jeremiah or St. Paul) become the possibility and occasion for healing others. The last line of the poem, "It is a

Beauteous Evening," by William Wordsworth is key: "God being with thee when we know it not." Jacob exclaimed: "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." [Gen. 28.16]

Thirdly, absent is an awareness of a sense of the future. Then is always now. Of course, being in battle and seeing that no one is really invulnerable as many die so suddenly around us, and having so many close calls, the awareness that one is certainly going to die eventually settles in, and thereafter, there is no need for long range plans or goals or commitments. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein observed, "The limits of my language are the limits of my world." While this may refer to vocabulary, it perhaps also refers to grammar. Vietnam poets give us "here" and give us "there;" they give us "now," and they give us "then." Absent is anything that compels or draws us into the future, or any sense of future consequences resulting from what was accomplished. There is an absence of many tenses: future, imperfect, perfect; there is an absence of the subjunctive mood. Absent is a vision of what might be or will be. We are left in Ezekiel's "valley of dry bones" (Ezekiel, chapter 37), a corpse-strewn battlefield of disjointed bones, disjointed wholeness, shattering, and specter of the "great death", and the pressing question: Can these bones—these broken individuals, these broken human relationships, these shattered dreams, live again, be joined together, form again a "great host?"

As the 19th Century Danish Søren Kierkegaard would suggest, one can only "un-know" the searing—even "branded upon the soul"—knowledge of the past by commitment to an ideal, a goal, a purpose (which is perhaps only a seed in the past, something we become aware of because of experiences in the past, something of importance we now realize because of that past), and live a life of commitment to that purpose through daily and hourly decisions by which we gain a history, a self. Here one is pulled into the future instead of being pushed by the past, or stuck in present pains of an enslaving web.

The image of Dante's Inferno is perhaps useful. The entrance to paradise lies in the small trap-door at the very bottom of the pit of hell. Like Dante, perhaps hell is not to be avoided or denied (lest it smolder within, creating great pressures that erupt and spew destructive emotion or action). Perhaps hell is not something to be conquered or even engaged (lest we underestimate the foe, overestimate our own abilities, or are unaware of allies who will ensure the victory). Perhaps hell is to be penetrated with a guide. Perhaps that guide is the poet who allows us to regard the reality and even let it be a mirror of our own inner reality, but not permitting us to become stuck, ensnared, or like one holding on to an electric wire—paralyzed and dying from it, but leads us on to the goal.

We can't know the release until we're aware of our bondage. We can't be healed if we have no dis-ease. We can't receive the grace until we accept the offense. These poems "educate" (i.e., "draw out") the pain and the dis-ease so we can then "let-go," so we no longer need identify ourselves with our disease or pain, so we may be liberated.

In a world and society strewn with "broken symbols," emptied of force, no longer "speaking to us," these poems—and others by Vietnam veterans—provide healing and liberation. The Suffering Servant may be rejected or despised or regarded of no account, but by his gashes and wounds are we healed.

"Where Two or Three are Gathered,"[910] (An essay on a picture taken on Khe Sanh Combat Base during the Siege battle). 19 May 2011. Originally printed as "The Picture."[911]

By Sunday, 28 January 1968, the Khe Sanh siege battle had raged exactly one week. Once a lush area, full of life, Khe Sanh no longer appeared "a thing of beauty, a joy forever."[912] Friends died. Friends were wounded.[913] Suddenly, all was transformed into a moonscape, a wasteland, as all above-ground structures, now piles of rubble, reminded some of World War I trench warfare, [914] Ezekiel's vision of the battlefield valley of dry bones,[915] or one of those ghost towns of the wild West, except that this place teemed with life. Khe Sanh was alive with death, with the force of death which, with a spiritual power of

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[910] Mt. 18.20

[911] Originally printed as "The Picture," in Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #71 (Fall-Winter, 2008) 37-47 and back cover.

[912] John Keats, *Endymion*, Book 1, line 1.

[913] 45 Americans died and 330 casualties were treated at "C" Med during the week of 21=28 January 1968.

[914] SSGT Phil Hartranft, "Khe Sanh Reminiscent of WWI Trench Warfare," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:16 (19 Apr 1968) p. 10.

[915] Ezekiel 37.1-14.

super-human force devouring all life to feed its ravenous, ravaging raptor appetite. "The earth is broken, broken down. The earth crumbled to pieces. The earth trembled and tottered. The earth reeled to and fro like a drunken man."[916]

Everyone, now emotionally numb, faced the jaws of the dragon of death, went through it (like Jonah devoured by the monster),[917] and emerged to live–to live on a different dimension of existence: dashing out to drag a wounded man to safety while mortars and screeching rockets still exploded, oblivious to danger, giving a last drop of precious water, a last morsel of C-ration food to another, thirsty, hungry soul–giving to Jesus Himself,[918] maintaining a sense of humor bravely living free of fear, giving and sharing, affirming humanity in a "courage to be"[919] in the face of the abyss of death and negation, as spectacular plums of yellow napalm's billowing fire balls, as sudden spikes of white phosphorus fireworks exploding right in front of us on the ground, and clumps of earth flung skyward then plunging to the earth to break the arm of a Marine[920] endlessly played symphonic battle music resonating within our soul. An army of rats increased proportionally with an army of reporters and the army of enemy troops surrounding us. Everyone dug, deeper, deeper.

We learned that life is short, precious, and fragile. We learned that life lives as it is connected to other life.[921] We learned we could never again depend on the probability of another day, another moment, as life moves through a minefield. We learned who we were.

Many learned that God is always present, even in hell.[922] Some two dozen who lived through the horrors and terrors and the darkness of the abyss that was Khe Sanh during the siege later became priests and ministers.[923] attributing their calling to experiences of God's presence within this devastation, on the cross, or as James Russell Lowell put it: "truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne / yet that scaffold sways the future / and beyond the dim unknown / standeth God within the shadows, keeping watch above His own."[924]

A wounded man on a stretcher asks for the words of the 91st Psalm,[925] words which resonated our life experience at that time, in that place: "He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler (the one who catches birds in a cage, like the NVA encircling, caging us) and from the deadly pestilence (of ever-present death, illness, rats, wounding) ... You shall not fear the terror of the night (in the form of 40,000 NVA creeping closer, closer, attacking) nor the arrow that flies by day (rockets, artillery, mortars, sniper bullets), nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side (friendly casualties),[926] ten thousand at your right hand ("right hand" referring to our power: the NVA casualties)[927] ... He will command his angels concerning you to guard you ion all your ways ... I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him.."[928]

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[916] Isaiah 24.19-20.
[917] Jonah 1.17.
[918] Matthew 25.35.
[919] *Cf.*, Tillich, Paul, *The Curage to Be*, (Terry Lectures, Yale University), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952.
[920] Identified as Peter J. Mudinich by CPL Gilbert Wall [Conversation of 13 May 19809] who described him as a German national who had attended Northwestern University and regarded his Marine Corps experience as preparatory to his return to Germany to become a German military officer. The explosion, on 21 February 1968, was from a TPQ-10 radar-directed close-in air-strike. He was older, about 22.
[921] Tillich, Paul, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, *Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God.*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963, p. 53: "Life grows by suppressing or removing or consuming other life. Life feeds on life." Only, in this case, one lives only as one is connected to other life, as in John 15.1-6, the metaphor of life as a vine.
[922] Psalm 139.8.
[923] James Carmichael (E/2/26), Timothy Sims (M/3/26, who later became a Navy Chaplain), John T. Wielebski (A/1/26), Paul Longgrear (A-101 Special Forces), Tom Stott (G/2/26), Michael Stuart (2/3), Woodrow T. Schellenberg (1/9 Cav), Alan R. McLean (1/26), James D. Bailey (I/3/26), Gary Trowbridge (B/3d Recon), Charles E. Goodman (H&S/1/9), Keith Kapple (F/2/26), Ernie Elmore (CAC "O"), Donald Denton (1st Radio), Jim Everidge (G/2/26), Harris D. Himes (B/3d Tanks), and Michael C. Loehrer (B/1/13).
[924] Lowell, James Russell, *the Present Crisis*, lines 38-40.
[925] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh Chaplain* (Unpublished manuscript), 01 April 1970, entry for Tue., 16 Apr 1968, p. 862.
[926] Friendly casualties, 20 Jan - 11 Jul were 990 KIA (402 for 20 Jan - 31 Mar, 165 for 01-16 Apr, 43 for 16 Apr, and 380 for 17 Apr - 11 Jul, when the base was abandoned).
[927] NVA casualties were estimated to 10,000 - 20,000 KIA. "Bru villagers south and west of Khe Sanh reported at least 2,000 and possibly 10,000 were killed by bombing. Casualties due to secondary explosions and fires from destruction and damage to guns, bunkers, supply dumps, headquarters, and structures, although not capable of being accurately counted, must have been high. Assuming 2 NVA soldiers per secondary explosion, with over 6,000 secondary explosions and fires, 12,000 may be conservatively estimated. Some of these explosions continued several hours. Approximately 900 bunkers were destroyed, some of which must have been occupied. 300 gun positions were destroyed. Forward Air Controllers (flying O1 and O2

Lt Col Wilkinson, our battalion CO, announced at the morning briefing that NVA forward observers on the ridge line overlooking our base to the north could call in mortars on any such grouping.[929] Worship now became a matter of going from trench to trench, bunker to bunker throughout the combat base, with numerous small congregations and a worship service not more than ten minutes long–a prayer, a Bible reading, a two or three-sentence sermon, distributing Communion, the Lord's Prayer, and blessing, followed by listening, conversation, and perhaps, if the shelling were just too intense, simply a few hugs.

Everything about Saturday, 27 January 1968, and Sunday, 28 January 1968, was to have lasting impact on my life.[930] My diary entries:

> SATURDAY, 27 January 1968: I woke up extremely sick–nausea, headache, diarrhea, etc., and walked over to the COC, providentially in time for the morning briefing. I didn't know whether I could take it, feeling I might vomit at any minute, but managed to remain. LtCol Wilkinson mentioned we have dropped 500-pound bombs with a 3, 6, and 9-hour delay and many "bomblets" to prevent the enemy from coming into our position. The Air Force can give us 1,000 sorties a day. Last night, Co Roc, the mountain range in Laos, was Arc Lighted at midnight, and the fires kept burning until 0300 .. Returned to my bunker about 1000 and slept, exhausted, until 1500! At that time I decided to visit our BAS. Dr. Feldman examined me and said I had some swollen lymph glands in back of my neck and gave me some pills for the nausea and some Orangeade. Hit the pad early.
>
> SUNDAY, 28 January 1968. I got up and walked past the regimental S-4 where two reporters, cameras dangling, asked if I could help them with "some good pictures of the troops." I told them to walk with me as I planned to move about the base. I carried a brass cross from the chaplain's altar kit and a wad of "A Message for the Day." My plan was to have a short opening prayer, read the appointed scripture lesson, distribute Communion, lead the Lord's Prayer, and conclude with a blessing. We started out, walking across the airstrip to arrive at the C Company, 1/26, lines in the Blue Sector on the north side of the base. It's always an emotional challenge to cross this wide-open space of aluminum metal with no place for cover should a barrage of incoming suddenly erupt. The first worship service was attended by five from 2nd squad, 3rd platoon, which was clearing new lines east of the other positions where two ARVN Ranger battalions would set in today. I walked west to the first regular bunker. We had a fairly large gathering that got larger until some mortars came and we all scattered, one landing only about 25 feet away. So we waited and then I held a service for the 81mm mortar people (2nd squad, weapons platoon, C Co.), attended by 3. Half-way through the Lord's Prayer I felt the blood drain out of my head. I was about to faint, but struggled until after the benediction, and then collapsed. After a short rest, I conducted another worship service a few feet away for others (consisting of C and B Co., 1/26 Marines and

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aircraft) counted 1,400 bodies, and approximately 1,000 bodies were killed on the wires of KSCB from three attempted assaults on the combat base in March, 1968. [MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 8 July 1968, p. 13; Gen. Wm. C. Westmoreland, speech of 13 June 1968, to 3d Air Division in *History, 3d Air Division, Jan - Jul 1968*, Vol. 1, Exhibit #180, MACV, *Command History,1968*, Vol. 2, pp. 423-424]. Reference: Stubbe, *battalion of Kings*, 2005, p. 266.

[928] Psalm 91.3, 5-7, 11, 15.

[929] When I spoke with him the day the base was attacked, Sunday, 21 January 1968, and mentioned I had been all over the base and asked him what he wanted me to do--continue moving about the base or remain in my bunker in the medical treatment and evacuation area, C Med, he responded I should probably remain in "C" Med. {Stubbe, *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 April 1970, p. 529]. The next day, at the battalion morning briefing, incoming mortars made all present scatter throughout the bunker,. The CO continued his briefing and said he wanted groupings of no more than ten. He said we had intercepted their radio transmissions in which their FOs were told to call in fire whenever they spotted groups. The ban includes large working parties. It will just draw-in more incoming. [Stubbe, *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, unpublished manuscript, 01 April 1970, p. 536].

[930] Lasting effects included: physical symptoms (blood in urine, fever, etc.) eventually became diagnosed as membranous glomerulonephritis by biopsy. A Navy doctor, Dr. Stan Jurgenson, Naval Hospital, Beaufort, SC, asked me, "Do you want to stay in the Navy? We can give you a medical board. This disease will return within twenty years and kill you." On this basis, knowing that I might die at any time, I made a decision to remain in the Navy Chaplain Corps and avoid a civilian parish as well as avoid marriage and children, for I thought it would be selfish and not loving to enter marriage and fatherhood when, at any time, I might die. Of course, as I write this, I'm still very much alive and give the Lord the glory "who heals all your diseases" [Psalm 103.3b] Another lasting result was Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which caused, among other effects, decreased short-term memory loss due to shrinkage of the hippocampus in the brain, a malady suffered by exposure to intense and sustained combat, and also such debilitating effects as inability to develop intimacy, chronic depression, avoiding large groupings of people, etc., all devastating to being a pastor.

"flashlight" section) attended by 5. We came under sniper automatic fire. After that, the two reporters and I walked to our 1/26 COC. I went in and told LtCol Wilkinson I couldn't continue today. I had hoped to be able to get everyone, holding over a hundred worship services today. I must have looked sick and pale because he rushed me to the 1/26 BAS; he wouldn't let me walk there. My temperature was 101.6. (My "normal" temperature is 97). I was completely exhausted. Reporters of all agencies–UPI, Time, NY Times, Washington Post, Chicago, and even a lady from Germany, were living in the 1/26 BAS and mentioned to me that refugees from the 33rd Laotian Battalion, located just inside Laos, came for refuge to Lang Vei village. They were butchered by NVA units.



REID PHOTOGRAPH



SWANSON PHOTOGRAPH

Left: UNPUBLISHED SWANSON PHOTOGRAPH



The two news photographers, SSGT John A. Reid, USMC, from III MAF of *Sea Tiger* and Richard Swanson of Black Star, took photographs of the worship service on the Blue Sector which eventually appeared in hundreds of publications,[931] perhaps one of the hundred most-printed photographs of the Vietnam War. The official USMC photo by SSGT Reid[932] is black and white, depicting only two Marines,[933] and clearly shows Hill 950 (off my right shoulder, a radio-relay position occupied by Marines during the siege battle) and Hill 1015 (off my left shoulder, a position occupied by NVA forces during the siege battle), the latter an identifying landmark which verifies photos taken at Khe Sanh! The usual morning ground fog forms a background for the cross. The colored photograph by Richard Swanson shows a background of fog and five Marines.

The photo appeared in various publications in subsequent years, jolting me back to those days and those experiences and feelings not then consciously felt but felt now with jarring intensity. It was only about three decades after the photographs were first published that I first "saw" it! The famous author, G. K. Chesterton, once wrote (something like): "Stare at something long enough until it becomes strange; you are seeing it for the first time." Suddenly, a horror bristled hairs at the back of my neck as I noticed I wasn't wearing a helmet, despite orders from Colonel Lownds three weeks earlier to wear one.[934] and despite the obvious danger of which I was oblivious! Even more shocking to me, neither were any of the Marines wearing theirs! They obviously followed my example of remaining uncovered during prayer and worship! Perhaps the words of the apply: "Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle."[935] I had done this unconsciously and by habit, and now, as I saw the photo, with great gratitude, thanked the Lord none of us were wounded! Gunny George Bailey, NCOIC of the small

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[931] Swanson's photograph first appeared in *Life* magazine 69:6 (Feb 7, 1968) p. 27. Reid's photograph first appeared in *Sea Tiger* 4:7 (Feb. 16, 1968) p. 10.

[932] #A190294, promulgated in III MAF Press Release 3M-09-0150-68.

[933] PFC Daniel L. Hobart on the left and PFC Kenneth Pae (with "Chicago Ill The Best Place is Home" on his flak jacket) on the right.

[934] Col Lownds, comments at regimental briefing, Saturday, 13 January 1968. Other orders at the same time: All personnel will have fighting holes where they work and where they live; these holes will be so built one can fight from them and they will be covered with air matting to be brought up from the south; the holes will be supplied with rations and all water cans will be filled at all times since the water point probably will be hit; beginning Monday [15 Jan], all personnel will wear flak jackets and carry a weapon, and wire will be laid for internal security throughout the base.

[935] Psalm 140.7b.

Detachment, 1st Radio Company, III MAF, later remarked to me: "I saw you leading a small group of Marines near C Med. None of you were wearing helmets! I thought to myself, the audacity! I came to see what was going on. {Perhaps ready to chew some *** as a good Marine Gunny!] I joined the group and felt a peace in the midst of the chaos and battle, like being in the eye of a hurricane, while all around destruction raged."[936] The true meaning of peace involves not the absence of conflict, war, noise, or disturbance, but the presence of strength in these conditions.

The worship itself was very brief. Aware of the need to keep gatherings small, it was the first time I actually told people *not* to attend–that I would immediately hold another worship service. The appointed prayers and scripture text seemed so very appropriate to our situation. The opening prayer (the "Collect") was one of those traditional ones that spoke directly to our situation: "Almighty God, You know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, hat by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright [!]: Grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in dangers and carry us through all temptations, through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever. Amen." The appointed scripture lesson also spoke, with an uncanny application, to our situation. It was Jesus calming the troubled sea: "And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves, but he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying, 'Save, Lord: we are perishing.' And he said to them, 'Why are you afraid, O men of little faith?' Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?'"[937] My "sermon" was very, very brief–just a few sentences. I mentioned how God seems "asleep," not actively present in our chaos, in all this horror and terror. The stormy sea is our battle with incoming and running for cover. Yet, God truly IS present, and God truly IS in control. We can have peace IN the battle, in the storm because God is with us. "Wherever two or three are gathered in His Name, He is with us."[938] "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble, therefore we will not fear."[939] Even if we make our bed in the hell of a battlefield, God is here!"[940] With the Lord, we have calm in the storm, peace in the battle. Then I had a short prayer asking for protection from harm, for awareness that God is with us, for comforting our troubled brothers and healing those wounded, and for strength to serve. We had communion: the Body of Christ given for you, the Blood of Christ shed for you. We had a blessing. I remained to talk, to listen, to hug, and then left for another worship service.

Those appearing in the photograph are:[941] LCPL Huey Lee ("Ray") Ishman[942] (KIA 19 November 1969), PFC Daniel L. Hobart,[943] PFC Kenneth Pae[944] (who has "Chicago III The Best Place is Home" on his flak jacket, WIA 02 Feb and 18 March 1968), and LCPL Charles H. Fox.[945] (Next to Ken Pae is a man Dan Hobart identified as PFC James AQ. Loesch[946] but whom Charlie Fox felt to be too small, and identified him as PFC James D. Heath[947] (WIA 02 Apr 1968) but Heath denies being in this picture.[948] According to Charles Fox, Ishman was medevaced shortly after the photo was taken with a "sleeping sickness," and Ken Pae was "a tough street kid from Chicago.'[949]

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[936] According to Biblical witness, peace is not the opposite of war. In fact, one may have peace in the midst of war, for peace is not a negative (absence of war, conflict, noise, etc.) but is the presence of God and blessing in the war.[Pedersen, Johs, *Israel, Its Life and Culture*, London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1926, I-II, p. 311. In Judges 8.7-9, Gideon states that when he comes in peace, he will break the tower, indicating that to have peace means conquering the two chiefs. David returns in peace when Absolom is defeated (2 Sam 19.25, 31) Peace is not the release that comes following victory, for that would infer peace to the vanquished as well; peace is the victory itself. "The great warrior is he who always has 'peace' in his battles." [Pedersen, *op. cit.*, p. 312]. The Israelite may even say he has peace (2 Sam 11.7) if he succeeds and is victorious.

[937] Mt 8.23-27.

[938] Mt. 18.20.

[939] Ps. 46.1-2.

[940] Ps. 8b.

[941] Identification of those photographed was provided by Charlie Fox in his letter of 10 Nov 1996.

[942] Ishman, 2268708.

[943] Hobart, 2309193, of Moravia, NY.

[944] Pae, 2347503, of Chicago, IL.

[945] Fox, 2237662, of Lewisberry, Pa.

[946] Loesch, 23448934, of Brenham, Tx.

[947] Heath, 2358231, of Homer, NY.

[948] Conversation with Richard Heath, 05 July 2008.

[949] Conversation with Charles Fox 01 Nov 1996.

SSGT Reid's photograph first appeared in print in the III MAF newspaper, *Sea Tiger*, 16 February 1968;[950] the Swanson photo first appeared in print in *Life* magazine, 9 Feb 1968.[951] The Reid photo appeared in numerous military newspapers noting the 193rd anniversary of the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps in 1968, and many others.[952]





The Reid photograph, in the form of a line drawing by Sgt Henry Casselli[953] depicting a Marine with a M60 machinegun superimposed on top appeared on the front cover of the December, 1969, issue of *Leatherneck* (with a green background) and the December, 1976, issue of the Marine Corps *Gazette*[954] (in dark blue). The original, titled *Christmas Vietnam*, is an orange-toned tissue paper overlay highlighted with cream acrylic. "He painted it on the scene while serving a regular Vietnam tour as a Marine sergeant and combat artist where he won the Bronze Star with Combat "V".[955]

LEFT: CASSELLI DRAWING

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[950] III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:7 (16 Feb 1968), p. 10.

[951] *Life* magazine 69:6 (Feb 7, 1968) p. 27

[952] *National Register* 44:46 (10 Nov 1968), "Chaplains Observe Birthday," *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, 27 Nov 1968, p. 9, "Navy Chaplains Right in There," Naval Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, Ca.: *Seabee Coverall* 26:23 (22 Nov 1968), p. 6; "Chaplain Corps Celebrates Birthday," Marine Corps Air Facility, El Toro, Ca.,: *Flight Jacket* 25:45 (22 Nov 1968), p. 5; "Navy Chaplain Corps to Celebrate 193rd Year," *The Military Chaplain* 41:6 (Nov/Dec 1968), p. 4; Naval Supply Center, Oakland, Ca.: *Oak Leaf*, 18 Nov 1968; Naval Training Center, Great lakes, Il.:" *Bulletin* 44:47 (23 Nov 1979), p. 3. Miller Brewing Company, Milwaukee, Wi: *Miller Highlights* 15:2 (1969), p. 1. Mothers of Servicemen, South Pasadena, Ca.:" *We Care, A Newspaper for Servicemen* (Jan., 1969), p. 4. American Baptist Board of Education and Publication: *Impact* 4:9 (Sep., 1970) p. 5. Boettcher, Thomas D., *Vietnam, The Valor and the Sorrow, From the Home Front to the Front Lines in Words and Pictures*, Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown, and Co., 1985, p. 272. U.S. Navy, pamphlet, *The Chaplain, Extending Your Reach*, RAD 70291, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing office 880-195. Lutheran Church in America, *Our Life and mission Together*, 1977, p. 11. *New Times* 9:10 (Nov. 11, 1977), p. 66 (in book review (Herr, *Dispatches*) by Geoffrey Wolff, "Oh, What a lovely War book!") Bergsma, Commander Herbert L., *Chaplains with Marines in Vietnam*, 1962-1971, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1985, p. 106. Ewing, Michael, *Khe Sanh (The Illustrated History of the Vietnam War)*, Toronto, New York: Bantam Books, 1987, pp. 106-107. Prados & Stubbe, *Valley of Decision*, Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1991, following pp. 360. (In the edition by New York: Dell Publishing, 1993, following p. 302). 3rd Marine Division Association; *Two Score and Ten*, 1992, p. 231. Dabney, William H., review article on *Valley of Decision*, in U.S. Naval Institute: *Proceedings* 118/9/1,075 (Sep., 1992) p. 112. Richardson, Herb, "With Faith and Devotion," *Leatherneck* 80:4 (April, 1977) p. 16. "What Qualities Father Mulcahy and Chaplain Ray Stubbe Have in Common," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il: *Bulletin* 47:45 (19 Nov. 1982) p. 8. Ewalt, Susan, "Vietnam: The Pain Lingers On," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il.: *Bulletin* 59:19 (11 May 1984) p. 1. Michael E. Stevens, ed., *Voices from Vietnam*, Madison, Wi.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996, p. 143. 3rd Recon Association; *Harborsite* 18:3 (Dec., 2010) p. 1. Larsen, Sarah A. and Miller, Jennife4r M., *Wisconsin Vietnam War Stories, Our Veterans Remember*, Madison, Wi.": Historical Society Press, 2010, p. 1125.

The Swanson photo likewise has appeared in numerous publications, *e.g.*, Leroy, Catherine, ed.: *Under Fire, Great Photographers and Writers in Vietnam*, New York: Random House, 2005, p. 55. Carroll, Andrew, *Grace Under Fire*, New York: Doubleday, 2007, on front book jacket cover. Carroll, Andrew, "Why They Pray," The *Wall Street Journal* 249:56 (9 Mar 2007) p. W11. Bruch, Peter, "Re-counting the Casualties at Khe Sanh," *Vietnam* 20:1 (June, 2007) p. 37. Cover of CD/DVD package, Dr. Sam and the Managed Care Blues Banda; *Before You Go, A Tribute to the Veterans of the Vietnam War*, 2005.

[953] Sgt Casselli was a Staff Artist with the Marine Corps Association, Quantico, Va.

[954] 60:12.

[955] Marine Corps Association: Marine Corps *Gazette* 60:12 (Dec., 1976) p. 17.

Maria Raffaele, an artist living in Oregon, painted a large version of the Swanson photo she noticed in *Life* magazine for the National Cemetery in Willamette, Oregon.[956] She looked with deep sadness as flatbed truck after flatbed truck carried lone caskets up the road to the cemetery with no cars following them, and wanted to do something "for the boys." The large painting, in the small reception room of the cemetery, was painted in 90 days and donated to the cemetery. She altered the sky: "It's all kinds of warm browns and then you can see the sun beams breaking through. I wanted to give a vision of hope."[957] A newspaper article noted: "The Vietnam War trudged past her doorstep, and she felt helpless, until she fought back with her tools: a brush, a canvas and tubes of oil paint. She painted soldiers [*sic*, should be Marines] bowing on their knees with a chaplain leading them in prayer. A shaft of light hovered overhead, illuminating her vision of hope. She gave the 4-by-8 foot painting to the cemetery



RAFFAELE PAINTING

It's a metaphor for what matters to this artist: the needs of others. Making a difference."[958] Vergori had studied in Florence, Italy, and for more than half a century has painted character studies and landscapes.



Among the numerous paintings of "the photo," pone cropped off my head at the nose[959] prompting me to tell close friends, "See, I really did lose my head at Khe Sanh!"

Mr. Ken Burnett, a Marine who served with the reinforcing platoon from Delta Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Co., augmenting the lines of Bravo Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion at Khe Sanh during the siege battle, returned to Vietnam in 2002 and spotted an enlarged version of "the photo" in a Vietnamese War Museum[960] with a caption that read: "Marines pray for their lives at Khe Sanh, but all were eventually killed.[961]

One evening, while leisurely watching a DVD of the last episode, "The Root of all Evil," of the TV series, *Profiler*, second season series, I suddenly was jolted back to the siege at Khe Sanh by the sudden (and totally unexpected) flash of the Swanson photo! It appeared five times in the program which focused on "pictures of pain!"[962]

Then, during an evening drive down one of our local Milwaukee streets one dark December, thoroughly drained of all energy after an intense boxing workout, I suddenly saw an enlarged cut-out reproduction of the Reid photo like a billboard! The property, occupied by Mr. Joel Paplham, although not a veteran himself, devotes much of his time and energy to assist veterans. Mr. Paplham had also erected a "larger-than-life" cut-out depicting the photo on the Veterans Park at the lakeside of Lake Michigan in downtown Milwaukee, but was later forced to remove it. He was also forced to remove it from his front yard display by his alderman, Marty Weigel.[963]



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[956] The Willamette National Cemetery serves as the northwest's largest national cemetery and commands spectacular views of Mount St. Helens, Mount Rainier, Mount Adams and Mount Hood. The cemetery was established in 1950 and dedicated in 1951.

[957] Conversation with Marie Raffaele, 15 Feb 1997.

[958] The *Oregonian*, Wed., 12 Feb 1997.

[959] Ewing, Michael, *Khe Sanh* (*The Illustrated History of the Vietnam War*), Toronto, New York: Bantam Books, 1987, pp. 106-107.

[960] Mr. Burnette couldn't recall which (of the several he visited) museum contained the picture.

[961] Conversation with Ken Burnett, 09 Apr 2002, and photo of the exhibit.

[962] At 0:46:35, 36, 39, and 0:49:12 and 25; date of original airing, July, 1997.



WISCONSIN STATE VETERANS MUSEUM DISPLAY



NATIONAL MARINE CORPS MUSEUM DISPLAY

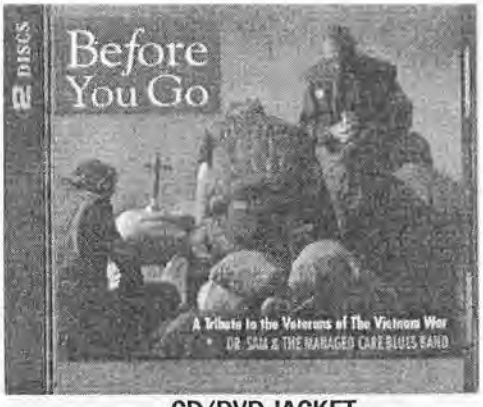

CD/DVD JACKET

Another enlargement based on the Swanson photo of multi-layered cut-outs formed a large portion of a special exhibit in the Wisconsin State Veterans Museum, Madison, Wisconsin, "in the Belly of the Dragon," on display 23 Sep 2006 - 18 Apr 2008. A similar enlargement forms part of the Chaplain Corps display in the National Marine Corps Museum, Quantico, Virginia.

The photo continues to appear unexpectedly. A recent CD and DVD package of music and pictures in tribute to Vietnam Veterans by "Dr. Sam" called *Before You Go* has the photo on the cover of the CD/DVD package and is the initial photo.

"The varied appearances and uses of this particular photograph and its continued use .. continue to remind many veterans and myself of a very special time, of the possibility of peace (in its true, positive sense of the presence of blessing and life) in the midst of the horrors of combat, of compassion in the midst of aggression, of life in the valley of the shadow of death, the Presence of our Lord in all times and places, even hell (Psalm 139.8) and so much more. in a sense, it has become an icon (in the Orthodox understanding of a window through which one enters another reality rather than in the modern sense of a computer sign!)."[964]



Picture in *Vietnam* magazine[965]

[963] Letter from Mr. Joel Paplham, 11 May 2007.
[964] Letter to ADM Alan Baker, CHC, USN, senior Navy Chaplain assigned to the Marine Corps, 04 Dec 2008.
[965] Peter Brush, "Recounting the Casualties," *Vietnam* 20:1 (June, 2007) p. 37.

When the battle began, over 3,000 enemy targets were plotted.[966] Four large crates containing 4,000 body bags used to transport corpses arrived.[967] One brave pilot, in a very daring effort, delivered 8500 pounds of whole blood, morphine, and other essential medical supplies at approximately 11 PM with no lights, all the runway lights having been knocked out by shrapnel.[968] What would become perhaps the bloodiest battle of the entire Vietnam War, in which tens of thousands of people perished[969] in a little over two months had begun at a place called Khe Sanh in Vietnam.

The President had the Joint Chiefs pledge that Khe Sanh would be held.[970] Nuclear weapons were considered for our defense.[971] Khe Sanh occupied 25% of the evening TV news–50% on CBS.[972] When President Obama was inaugurated,[973] he mentioned only four battles in our American history when he said, "For us they fought and died in places like Concord and Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sanh."

When the battle began, we were some 6,000[974] on a base a little under a mile long and a little under a mile wide, plus three outposts manned by Marine companies (about 250 men to a company).[975] We were suddenly surrounded by some 40,000 enemy. Khe Sanh is located near the border with Laos and just under the DMZ,[976] in a mountainous, jungle-covered area.

We were isolated[977] Most of the 31 bridges over the single road that connected us to rear supply bases some 30 miles to the east were destroyed. Fog blanketed our base in the mornings, restricting landing of planes[978] and aerial observation of enemy troop positions and movements. Most of the troops continually said, "Where are our reinforcements?" Slogans on helmets and flak jackets dramatically changed from the obscene and bravado to "Mom and Dad Forever," "Please Mr. Cong I Don't Want to Die," and "God Walks With Me."[979] A nearby Special Forces camp was overrun by tanks, the first time these were used in the war.[980] . Nearby outposts were assaulted and nearly overrun.[981] Attacks on nearby outposts resulted in

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[966] Letter of Maj Mirza M. Baig, 23 Dec 1968, to HQMC Historical Division, in Khe Sanh Monograph Comments File.

[967] "Waiting at Khe Sanh," *National Monitor*, 26 Feb 1968, p. 4 (includes this in its chronological listing of events at Khe Sanh).

[968] DFC file on Capt Frank James Kennedy; "Copter's Blood Run Draws Rocket Fire," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:6 (09 Feb 1968) p. 7.

[969] Although the official KIA for Americans was 205 [AAR SCOTLAND, p. 15; Testimony by MGen Tompkins before the U.S. Senate Electronic Battlefield Subcommittee, p. 95], official counts of subordinate units plus official lists of KIA make the total KIA for Americans at 563. Concerning the local Bru tribe (which was prohibited from leaving the area by the Vietnamese Commander, LtGen Xuan Lam), official census indicated 21,000 in the local area and the population at the Cam Lo Refugee Center following the siege was 6,000. Concerning the NVA, some 20,000 - 25,000 were in the immediate area with another 24,000 immediately available. Based on statistical models, there was an estimated 15,760 NVA KIA.

[970] Earle G. Wheeler ,CJCS Memorandum for the President, CJCS-63-68, 29 Jan 1968.

[971] Code-named FRACTURE JAW, Gen. Westmoreland thought it unlikely they would be needed unless the situation dramatically changed. Admiral Sharp (CINCPAC) reported contingency plans to include nuclear weapons, but did not anticipate their need. President Johnson, upon learning of these plans, ordered further planning be discontinued. CJCS, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1960-1968*, pp. 45-25 and 45-26.

[972] Braestrup, Peter, *Big Story, How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington*, Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1977, Vol. 1, p. 338.

[973] 20 Jan 2009.

[974] On 25 January there were 228 USMC officers and 5,387 USMC enlisted, 10 Navy officers and 251 Navy enlisted. [FMFPAC 250308Z/Jan68, SITREP #1031]. On 16 Feb 1968, the manning levels were USMC: 153/3039, USN 10/188, USA 1/29, USAF 5/24 (first number is officers, second number enlisted). [26Mar 162126H/Feb68 in 26Mar Command Chronology, Feb 1968. This did not include FOB-3 whose figures were classified. The 16 Apr levels included FOB-3 at 20/105 USA and 2/455 ARVN, and 37th ARVN Bn had 2/3 USA and 14/436 ARVN.

[975] Co I/3/26 and two platoons of M/3/26 on Hill 881-S; Co. K/3/26 on Hill 861 later reinforced by a platoon of A/1/26; a platoon of A/1/26 on Hill 950; Bn 2/26 on Hill 558 (3500 M NW of KSCB); Bn 1/9 on the adjacent Rock Quarry area (800 M SW of KSCB).

[976] 6.5 mi. from border with Laos, 14 mi. south of the DMZ.

[977] Dona Ha at 50 MK to the east ("as the crow flies").

[978] The airstrip was closed by the USAF on 12 Feb as being too dangerous. Alternate delivery was by low-flying planes discharging a sled pulled out of the plane by a drog parachute while only a few feet off the airstrip called LAPSE (Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System) and GPES (Ground Proximity Extraction System). Most supplies were dropped on the exceedingly small Drop Zone 530 meters long and 300 meters wide. [26Mar 010430Z/Mar68, in 3d MarDiv Msgs Etc file, Mar68, Pt. 1, Encl (10).]

[979] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, (unpublished manuscript), 06 June 1989, p. 640 (entry for 27 Feb 1968)

[980] In the assault on the Army Special Forces camp at Lang Vei, 07 Feb 1968.

[981] Hill 861 on 21 Jan 1968, Hill 861-A on 05 Feb 1968, and Hill 64 on 08 Feb 1968. Khe Sanh village and the District Headquarters was abandoned the day after the siege began, and the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei was overrun on 07 Feb

were used in the war.[980] . Nearby outposts were assaulted and nearly overrun.[981] Attacks on nearby outposts resulted in hand-to-hand combat in the dark. One Marine recounts:[982]

> At that time, Ray, I had been wounded four times and had caught a grenade between my legs, which caused a hole in my penis the size of a dime and a hole in my left jaw the size silver dollar. I was standing there shaking, crying and scared to death. I had my M16 on auto selector and on my hip position, as I began to want to dream I was seeing a NVA soldier crawling toward me from my left side only about 20 feet away. During this time as the capping sounds were going off, the enemy screaming in foreign tongue, flares going off occasionally, and the feeling of cold tears running down my cheeks, I felt the presence of Jesus Christ so strongly as if he had entered my body. I knew then and there Jesus LIVES! As I watched this NVA soldier slowly reach the position he felt comfortable with which, seemed like it took him forever, he slowly brought his weapon into position with the barrel pointing almost directly at me, I automatically turned my whole body around still with the M16 on my hip. I squeezed the trigger and watched in horror as each round struck the NVA soldier in the chest. The force when each round hit his chest forced him up in mid-air until I had emptied my whole magazine in him.. It was like a dream Ray! It was like something or somebody was making sure I was going through the motions but I felt nothing. After that I seemed to lose the fear of it all and just started trying to defend for our wounded and our position.

For over two months, we received several hundred shells a day on our base a little under half a mile wide and a little under a mile long. On one day, we received over 1300, mainly artillery and rockets. What had been a lush paradise was transformed into a moonscape by more tons of bombs dropped in our immediate vicinity than were dropped in all of the Pacific in all of World War II.[983] One target struck by B52s resulted in over 1,000 secondary explosions and fires.[984] During one close-in air strike a large clump of earth fell on a Marine in the trench resulting in a compound fracture. Although the bone was protruding, this was not sufficiently serious a wound to warrant his evacuation, and he was returned to man the lines.[985] Bombing runs by B52s, called "Arc Lights," had been restricted to no closer than 3 kilometers from friendly lines. Flying at over 500 knots and over 20,000 feet, their payload of up to 128 500 and 750-pound bombs,[986] a cell of three bombers totally destroyed an area 100 by 1,000 yards. So destructive were their bombs, it was deemed too dangerous for them to be brought closer. At Khe Sanh, with the enemy's trenches approaching our wires, they were brought to within 1 kilometer (less than half a mile)[987] The ground continually shook. Men in the trenches, while flat on their stomachs in the trenches, hands over ears and screaming, bounced. Marines witnessed enemy soldiers tossed into the air. The specter of destructive force brought to mind the words of Isaiah: "The earth is broken, broken down / The earth is crumbled in places. The earth trembles and totters. The earth reels to and fro like a drunken man."[988] And the words of Jeremiah: "The earth.. was waste and void.. the mountains .. were quaking. The hills moved to and fro .. All the birds of the air had fled .. the fruitful land was a desert."[989]

Death's forceful nearness was felt each day, sometimes several times in a day. On one particular day, 23 February, we received 1307 incoming rounds[990] and eating a "Ham With Water Added and Eggs Chopped Canned" C-ration (I'm sure a

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[980] In the assault on the Army Special Forces camp at Lang Vei, 07 Feb 1968.

[981] Hill 861 on 21 Jan 1968, Hill 861-A on 05 Feb 1968, and Hill 64 on 08 Feb 1968. Khe Sanh village and the District Headquarters was abandoned the day after the siege began, and the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei was overrun on 07 Feb 1968.

[982] Letter of 17 March 1987.

[983] Gen. William W. Momyer, USAF, "Operation NIAGARA," in Trest, Warren A., *Khe Sanh (Operation NIAGARA) 22 January - 31 March 1968*, CHECO Report, 13 Sep 1968, *Supporting Documents*, No. 12. Total for Pacific Operating Area, WW II: 32,735 tons; total at Khe Sanh (22 Jan - 29 Feb 68): 53, 380 tons.

[984] MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 08 Jul 1968, p. 14.

[985] Incident on 21 Feb 1968 involving PFC Peter J. Mudinich, a German citizen who served with the U.S. Marines which he regarded as training in order to become an officer in the German army. Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 06 June 1989, p. 585.

[986] Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Div., *Khe Sanh (Operation NIAGARA), 22 January - 31 March 1968*, pp. 112-114. Peter Braestrup, "B-52 Biog Weapon in Defense," Washington *Post, 11 Aug 1968. Stubbe,* Khe Sanh, *unpublished manuscript, p. 308.*

[987] Maj James B. Pralle, *Arc Light June 1967 - Dec 1968*, 15 August 1969, p. 29. Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, p. 634.

[988] Isa 24.19-20.

[989] Jer 4.23-26.

[990] 3d MarDiv COC 232155Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #458; 3d MarDiv COC 231641Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #459.

civilian restaurant couldn't possible beat the DOD in creative food descriptions!) while sitting on my rack in my bunker, a large nearby explosion violently shook my bunker. "It sounded like it was stuck in the wall; things were falling, dirt and pieces of wood. I immediately thought of a delayed fuse that would explode the entire bunker."[991] One round struck a nearby bunker housing the crew of a 106mm recoilless rifle. I had slept in that bunker with those Marines a few weeks earlier (07 Feb) and saw one reading from a small prayer book I had earlier distributed. (He didn't see me approaching; his back was to me.) I felt their nervousness as they played a 45 RPM Credence Clearwater version of "I Heard it on the Grapevine," and repeatedly entered and exited the bunker for a cup of coffee during the night. I listened to their dreams and their thoughts.[992] Now I carried out one of my friends over my shoulder, a corpse with no head, only strings of flesh dangling out of a cavity where his neck had been. We searched for the missing head, but were unable to locate it.[993] When I returned to my bunker that evening to sleep, I noticed that the wall of sheets of air matting next to my rack was bent–which must have been the explosion while I was eating my one C-ration for the day (we were all limited to one C-ration a day). When I called EOD, I was told it was safe to sleep; they'd check it out the next day[994] (I'm sure they just didn't want to venture out during at night following a day of record incoming! or, as one Marine observed: "Nothing's too good for the chaplain, and nothing's what he's gonna get!")

A few days after leaving Khe Sanh, on one of my many returns there, I noticed that my bunker was a shambles. I assumed it was being torn apart to retrieve sheets of air matting. Not so. The chaplain who relieved me, Charles ("Chick") Kelly, said that a couple of days after I left, one night, there was a huge explosion. He was sleeping in a bunker only eight feet away, suddenly awakened by the explosion. "That was your bunker," he said[995]

After the horrors and terrors of Khe Sanh, I was assigned to a rear unit but returned to Khe Sanh at least once a week to visit units of troops assigned to my new command–and to visit old friends still there. The Division Chaplain was pissed, saying "We got you out of Khe Sanh to get you out, and you keep returning!" On one of my several returns–it was Easter Sunday, 14 April 1968[996] I remained overnight in the medical area and a wounded man on a stretcher asked me to read to him the 91st Psalm[997] Suddenly, here were words that held together our war experience and gave them meaning within a larger context. "He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler"–traps to catch birds, like ambushes trapping men or nets entangling us. "You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flies by day"–assault waves of charging enemy, rockets and artillery! "A thousand may fall at your side"–our friendly casualties–"and ten thousand at your right hand"–"right hand" referring to our strength and the ten thousand being the enemy killed by our supporting arms!

ECLIPSE

About a year after returning from Vietnam, I was stationed at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, SC, and witnessed a total solar eclipse. It started just past noon and was total about 1:30 in the afternoon. Street lights suddenly came on automatically in the night-like sky. One Marine, caught up in the experience, started running around playfully shouting, "It's the end of the world! It's the end of the world!"[998] Just as our moon, over 250,000 miles away blocked the light and warmth of the sun, so did Vietnam, exactly half-way around the world block life and love and peace. "For those who fight in a war, it never ends." To paraphrase a common expression, "You can take a man out of the battle, but you can't take the battle out of the man." Khe Sanh became the experience of a spectacular solar eclipse.

Life became like the experience of a scotoma. Little things block what's greater. I believe it was Abraham Lincoln who said how we can block out our sight by a little quarter held closely to our eyes. We are literally blinded by the darkness, unable to see the light that discloses a clear path or dangers, unable to feel the warmth of fellowship and love that makes life full and rich. I remember accompanying an infantry patrol at Khe Sanh.[999] After some eight hours of thoroughly-exhausting humping of the terrain, the hill outpost–our home–loomed before us. I wasn't sure I could move ten more feet; spasms shot

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[991] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 April 1970, unpublished manuscript, p. 698.
[992] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, 06 June 1989, unpublished manuscript, p. 535.
[993] *Ibid.*, p. 593.
[994] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 April 1970, unpublished manuscript, pp. 700-701.
[995] Comments of Rev. Charles Kelly, 20 January 1989.
[996] A day at Khe Sanh in which battalion 3/26 assaulted Hill 881-North, sustaining many casualties.
[997] Stubbe, Khe Sanh Chaplain (unpublished manuscript), p. 862, entry for Tue., 16 Apr 1968.
[998] Eclipse was on Saturday, 7 March 1970. Noted in PFC S. D. Grubbs, "Solar Eclipse Due," Parris Island *Boot*, Fri., 6 Mar 1970, p. 1.
[999] Thursday, 20 July 1967 in Stubbe: *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 April 1970, p. 56.

through my legs. The verse of the Psalm came to mind, "I look to the hills. From where is my help to come?"[1000] Somehow, we managed to scale the monstrous hill. Once we reached the summit, I saw the specter of an even greater hill that we still needed to climb. It had been invisible, blocked from sight by the hill we had just climbed. Things get in the way. Troubles, experiences on which we get fixed, issues in which we get stuck, and all we can see is the trouble, the pain, the issue, the experience. Some hold on to a pain or trouble in order to avoid and block out an even greater pain or issue.

Life was narrowing for me in the 1980s. My journey home reminded me of the journey of Odysseus who passed between Scylla and Charybdis (actually the Straits of Messina separating Italy and Sicily). My dear grandmother passed away on 04 July 1982. I was passed-over for promotion and was preparing to retire on 20 years, feeling rejected by the Chaplain Corps. The Vietnam Memorial wall in Washington, D.C., was being dedicated and TV news programs were filled with scenes from Vietnam, activating latent memories of war. Life seemed like moving through a gorge with increasingly narrowing sides, which is precisely the image Plato used to describe the Greek word Ἀνάγκη (anagkay')[1001] from which the German word "angst" is derived.[1002] Thucydides also used the word to describe narrowing options that forced Athens and Sparta to resort to war; it is usually translated "necessity," in his works.[1003] Interestingly, the Hebrew word for trouble, צרר (tsar), literally means "narrowness," hemmed-in by dangers and trials[1004] Life and its future became squeezed, crushed, smothered, suffocated, pressed down, pressured.

As the years progressed, Khe Sanh became an eclipsing, interposing intrusion; everything reminded me of Khe Sanh, something far away and long ago, yet ever-present, ever now. When I visited Joe Lola, a Khe Sanh vet friend who was a patient at the Stress unit at the VA hospital in North Chicago, we went to a snack area to talk. Several dozen Navy corpsmen from the adjacent Corps School at Great Lakes suddenly filled the place, some sitting with Joe and I. Those at our table spoke with excitement about going to Field Medical Service School; they were going to serve with Marines. I looked at their young faces and wondered how many would die. Apparently my face expressed my fears. I had returned to the Khe Sanh battlefield. My friend looked at me and said, "Ray, you gotta get out of this place–now!" And he was the patient!

All I could see was Khe Sanh–in everything. The 20th Century philosopher, Martin Buber, writes of meeting a scholar who lived through the horrors of World War II: "Reality had been brought so close to him that he saw everything with new eyes and had to think in a new way."[1005] The contemporary writer, Paul Auster writes: "Whatever you see has the potential to wound you, to make you less than you are, as if merely by seeing a thing some part of yourself were taken from you."[1006] Like pebbles in boots, an eye lash in the eye, a sliver in the finger, a tooth ache–little things become an astronomically large black hole drawing-in all one's energies and focus of attention. In a very real sense, I felt stuck in the past, like a scratch on a LP record causing the same song snippet to be repeatedly replayed until someone lifts the needle enabling the song of life to resume. MIT professor Alan Lightman's brilliant little book of little vignettes of differing concepts of time comments about those haunted by memories of unresolved guilt, relationships to loved ones no longer alive, musings about what might have

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[1000] Ps 121.1.

[1001] The *Greek-English Lexicon*, compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 9th Ed. with supplement, 1996, p. 101, lists the meanings: force, constraint, necessity, compulsion, bodily pain and anguish.

[1002] Plato, *Cratylus* 421E.: "..the idea is taken from walking through a ravine which is impassable and rugged, and overgrown, and impedes motion.." Coe, David K., *Angst and the Abyss, The Hermeneutics of Nothingness* (American Academy of Religion, Academy Series No. 49), Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1985, p. 22. Coe notes that Plato's dialogue refers to Orphic and Pythagorean mythology where Anake was mated with the great serpent, Chronos with Anake (necessity) and Chronos (time) forming a binding ring encircling the entire Cosmos, limiting the possibilities of our intellect, will, and desires. One cannot exist without the other.

[1003] Ostwald, Martin, *ΑΝΑΓΚΗ in Thucydides*, (American Classical Studies No. 18), Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1988, p. 19. The term is "..compulsion only because those affected by them perceive no viable alternative course of action is open to them, because any alternatives theoretically or objectively available involve unacceptable consequences, such as death, defeat, surrender, or the like... Neither for Athens nor for Sparta would these alternatives have been acceptable or even possible; the war was inevitable, because both Athenians and Spartans realized that it was."

[1004] Brown, Francis, Driver, S.R., and Briggs, Charles A., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old* Testament, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907, pp. 864-866, gives the following meanings of the verb: (1) bind up, tie up, be restricted, narrow, scant, cramped; (2) (in Hiph.) suffer distress; (3) show hostility towards, vex; (4) make a rival–wife; (5) be sharp, sharp-edged stone, flint. H.-J. Fabry, "צר," Botterweck, G. Johannes, Ringgren, Helmer, and Fabry, Heinz-Josef, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Trans. Douglas W. Stott, Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003, Vol. XII, pp. 455-464, notes two Hebrew meanings: (1) wrap up, envelop," and (2) be cramped for space, restricted." The Hiph. form of the verb refers almost exclusively to distress prompted by an enemy. Used in Psalm 138.7, 107.6, 13, 19, 28.

[1005] Buber, Martin, *Eclipse of God, Studies in the Relation Between Religion and Philosophy* (Harper Torchbooks), New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1957, p. 6.

[1006] Auster, Paul, *Country of Last Things*, New York: Viking, 1987, p. 19.

been: "The tragedy of this world is that no one is happy, whether stuck in a time of pain or joy. The tragedy of this world is that everyone is alone. For a life in the past cannot be shared with the present. Each person who gets stuck in time gets stuck alone"[1007]

SHAME AND DEFILEMENT

During the battle,[1008] a corpsman asked me to remove the boots from an injured man on a stretcher, moaning, covered with blood,. His boots were caked with mud and blood. As the mixture coating my hands dried, I had the odd sensation of shrinking. It was as though death were an active, living force. I later wrote a poem about that: "The blood on his hands / so alive / with death / gripped / drying, dying, contracting, squeezing / suffocating, suffusing / penetrating, transforming / So alive, so real, so near/ so always / The brother's cry from his clay in violent shouts / in words what is not said / in feelings what is not felt / in actions what is never accomplished / in passing time what always is / No washing to hands removes / the pain stain interpenetrated / soul / within always / present, always / shedding, always / staining."[1009]

When I left Khe Sanh, I brought with me a large aluminum ("Mount-Out") box and used it as a bath since there were no available showers. I recall how the red mud of Khe Sanh never seemed to wash away; when I wiped myself dry, the towel was always smudged with the red mud like I wiped my ass. I recall feeling at the time that the violence and terrors and horrors of Khe Sanh, its "genius loci," had somehow penetrated my skin and lodged inside of me in my soul[1010] just like this reddish clay; no scrubbings seemed to wash it away. I was defiled, or like lepers had to cry out, "Unclean! Unclean!"[1011]

I extended to serve an additional six months in Vietnam and received a special 30-day leave. We could go anywhere in the world for that special leave, and I chose to go home. Within a few weeks of having been in the thick of battle at Khe Sanh, I visited my bishop.[1012] His opening words to me were not "How relieved I am to see you," or "Our prayers have been answered and you're home," not even "good morning." His words were, "I don't know how you can put up with such immoral people." Still shocked by my battle experiences and feeling shunned and stunned by his remarks, I remained silent.

At the time, Vietnam veterans–even chaplains!–became the visible objects on which angry critics of the Vietnam War spewed their venom and hung their projected hatred. No cleansing rituals like parades a society usually grants to returning warriors welcomed home those who served in Vietnam.[1013] One of my Khe Sanh veteran friends recalls returning to the States from Vietnam. He sat next to the window in a row of three seats. The middle seat was vacant. The man in the aisle seat, a businessman with suit, vest, and tie, after shuffling through some papers in his brief case, asked Dennis where he had been, and Dennis replied, "Vietnam." He asked if he'd seen any action, and nodded when Dennis talked about Khe Sanh. Then, as soon as the plane reached altitude and seat belts could be unfastened, he summoned the stewardess and said, "I want another seat as far away from this guy as you can give me." Dennis rode from Los Angeles to Connecticut alone, painfully aware of rejection.[1014]

In the summer of 1983, while on active duty in the Navy, I entered the Stress Disorder Treatment Unit of the VA hospital at North Chicago, Illinois, adjacent to the Naval Training Center, Great lakes. After retirement from the Navy[1015] my Bishop

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[1007] Lightman, Alan, *Einstein's Dreams*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1993, p. 65.
[1008] 22 Feb 1968.
[1009] The Soul Mate, written 29 April 1996, printed in the Khe Sanh Veteran, Issue #37 (Fall, 1990), p. 5.
[1010] Khe Sanh is a caldera sitting atop an ancient volcano. The place was formed in dramatic violence and heat. On the tactical maps, the airstrip is indicated as "Xom Cham," or "village of Chams." The Chams were pirates and warriors active in the 7th Century in Quang Tri Province until they were defeated by the Vietnamese. Perhaps a remnant of the Chams settled on what became Khe Sanh airstrip. In any event, a palpable presence of violence despite an overwhelming abundance of beauty and life, was readily sensed by anyone at Khe Sanh! Even the earlier "Battle of the Hills" in April-May, 1967, caused Marines digging trenches and bunkers on Hill 881-South to unearth an occasional human skull, rifle, or other indication of past violence.
[1011] Lev. 13.45.
[1012] Actually, the title was "President" of the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod, Lutheran Church in America. Rev. Dr. Theodore E. Matson.
[1013] There was a New York City "Ticker Tape" Parade, 07 May 1985, (organized by a Khe Sanh veteran, James Hebron), a Chicago parade on 13 June 1986, and a gathering of some 30,000 Vietnam veterans with family and friends at Lambeau Field, Green Bay, Wisconsin, on 22 May 2010.
[1014] Conversation with Dennis Mannion, 16 May 2011. Dennis notes that he later attended the University of Connecticut, and students identified veterans by those who went to the veteran's office in connection with their GI Bill benefits, and that no other students would sit next to him in classes or at labs.
[1015] 01 Jan 1985.

strongly suggested I retire from the active ministry. He said there were no churches vacant which I could pastor. I was 47. Nor was I physically sound. During the siege, I was evacuated due to a fever and blood in my urine. A few days later, against the doctor's advice and at my insistence, I returned to Khe Sanh.[1016] A subsequent biopsy at the Naval Hospital, Beaufort, South Carolina, disclosed an auto-immune disease and the doctor[1017] asked if I wanted a medical discharge since I would die within twenty years within which the disease would flare-up. I opted to remain on active duty and decided to avoid marriage since it certainly would not be loving to know I would die at any time and leave a wife and possibly children.

Although guilt, especially "survivor's guilt" has been noted concerning combat veterans, the more fundamental issue is shame. Whereas guilt refers to specific actions and violations of specific prohibitions, shame refers to personal identity, who a person is. Whereas punishment for guilt keeps the offender within a society, abandonment in shame excludes; the shamed person is humiliated, regarded as worthless, of no human value.[1018] As shame is more powerful and painful than guilt, adoption of guilt to distract from and cover over a more fundamental issue of shame seems to be the operating factor. Shame can arise from feelings of helplessness, something all in battle know, and certainly those of us at Khe Sanh knew, and this gives rise to rage.[1019] Shame is much more than acute embarrassment; it is a response to a public rejection of one's claim to honor.[1020] Shame is reflected in Job's lament: "Wherefore I consider myself vile and melt."[1021] Both the "curious fact that many Vietnam veterans describe themselves as unclean" and the reluctance of both Vietnam veterans and American society in general to discuss Vietnam for so many years following the conflict, give a "clear indication of defilement."[1022]

Writing in 1981, Peter Marin was surprised at the unaddressed world of moral pain of returning Vietnam veterans.[1023] He notes absence of adequate clinical models to address this pain and the propensity to "empty the vet's experience of moral content" by such terms as "impacted grief." He writes: "Nowhere in the literature is one allowed to glimpse what is actually occurring: the real horror of the war and its effect on those who fought it."[1024]

During the Middle Ages, Christians imposed penances on returning warriors,[1025] not simply due to any guilt associated with killing in battle. Other factors prompted penance rituals, including the dread of blood (*horror sanguinis*). Any contact with blood was taboo ("taboo" referring to contact with anything possessing power which might "infect" the person with powers that would overwhelm the violator). For the ancient Hebrews, anyone who had killed another human being in battle was required to stay outside the Israelite camp for seven days.[1026] Thus, the 4th Century Christian teacher, Basil the Great (c. 330-79) (following a suggestion by Cyprian, d. 258) had written that those responsible for killing in war should abstain from communion for three years.[1027] Even observing an execution, as in gladiator games, made a person unclean according to the teaching of Athenagoras,[1028] Christian teaching generally internalized the *horror sanguinis*, the dreaded taboo associated with physical contact with blood; the sole consideration being the interior disposition of the individual which made a person clean or unclean.[1029] Christians were required to examine their conscience for sins of cowardice, anger, pride, avarice, sloth, whether the action was taken for personal glory or gain.[1030]

[1016] Narrative Summary, Standard Form 502, 3 Feb 1968, signed by LT P. S. Vokonas, MC, USNR: "At his request, the patient was released to duty, to return to the Khe Sanh area." In Health Record of Stubbe. Admitted 31 Jan, departed 3 Feb 1968.

[1017] Stan Jurgenson.

[1018] Hultberg, Peer, "Shame–A Hidden Emotion," Journal of Analytical Psychology 33 (1988) 116.

[1019] Ibid., pp. 122, 123.

[1020] Muenchow, Charles, "Dust and Dirt in Job 42.6, Journal of Biblical Literature 108:4 (Winter, 1989) 601.

[1021] Job 42.6. The full phrase is "I repent of dust and ashes," indicating Job's abandonment of a role as innocent sufferer (being in "dust and ashes") vis-à-vis God after God's vision of greatness. One commentator notes that Job separated himself from the community by sitting among the ashes (2.8) and that Job is ready to abandon his role as isolated innocent sufferer. Repentance is Job's reversal, his "change of mind" about proceeding in a legal case against God, and he is ready to resume normal life. God's vision has vindicated Job's innocence and revealed the futility of pursuing litigation based on a moral law of reward and retribution. Job's integrity is preserved. [Habel, Norman C., *The Book of Job, A Commentary* (The old Testament Library), Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985, p. 583].

[1022] Mahedy, William P., "It Don't Mean Nothin': The Vietnam Experience," *The Christian Century* (Jan 26, 1983) p. 66.

[1023] Marin, Peter, "Living in Moral Pain," Psychology Today 15:11 (Nov., 1981) 68; Marin, Peter, "What the Vietnam Vets Can Teach Us," *The Nation* (Nov. 27, 1982) 558.

[1024] Marin, "Living in Moral Pain," *op. cit.*, p. 72.

[1025] Verkamp, Bernard J., "Moral Treatment of Returning Warriors in the Early Middle Ages," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 18:2 (Fall, 1988) p. 223.

[1026] Num 31.19.

[1027] Verkamp, *op. cit.*, pp. 226, 227.

[1028] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

[1029] Mt. 5.8, 15.18, 12.334, Mk 7.20, Lk 6.45.

[1030] Verkamp, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

Khe Sanh had been an encounter with the "holy."[1031] We had experienced what was taboo; we had experienced, encountered, touched naked power and therefore were cast from the innocence of the paradise of the Garden of Eden,[1032] and exiled like Oedipus who eventually came to learn he had unwittingly killed his father and married his brother and then subsequently blinded himself.

A few years ago, Dr. Philip Chard, who writes a weekly column in the local Milwaukee newspaper,[1033] was giving a talk to a group of senior citizens at a local church[1034] reassuring us that although we were aging (or, as one of my boxing coaches says, "becoming more mature") our brains continued to grow. To the great shock to teenagers, our brains didn't stop developing after we turned 30. He also said that if one part of our brain were injured, other parts of the brain took-over. During the question and answer period that followed, I said: "I think I read somewhere that the part of the brain[1035] that handles memory actually shrinks for those in combat. Is there any evidence that other parts of the brain will eventually take-over?" Dr. Chard never directly answered my question. Instead, he gave me a very great gift. He said, "for combat vets, reality is often dream-like while dreams may be more vivid than life." Now, I intimately knew all about flashbacks and nightmares. (As one Vietnam vet friend says, "When people ask me when I was in Vietnam, I tell them, 'last night'.") But, as communication is what's heard, not what's said, what I heard in his reply was, "It's OK. You're OK. This is normal." I actually found myself with a few tears! Dr. Chard hadn't given me information; he'd given me something far greater–caring, even if my unhealing wound could not be cured.

Later, I asked myself, "What's going on? What provoked such an emotional response? What are the tears saying?" As I thought about that, I realized that I regarded myself as "damaged goods," and Philip Chard was telling me that I still had value. The nightmares, the bouts with depression, social isolation, inability to remember people's names or the vexing annoyance of constantly forgetting what recently happened–none of this made me a pariah to be tossed away from society. The observation of Viktor Frankl, the World War II concentration camp survivor, suddenly became so real: "An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behavior."[1036]

A FEW THOUGHTS ON HANDLING PTSD

When traveling to Khe Sanh for the first time, high in a helicopter, the terrain below seems covered in a carpet of velvet green. The rivers appear like silver tinsel on a Christmas tree. The view from above is breath-taking, beautiful, serene. A few days later, while on that patrol climbing the hills, the view from the ground became far different: grass taller than a man, grass with sharp edges full of bacteria, cutting exposed skin and causing sores that never seemed to heal. Large boulders in rushing streams that killed several of our men, who drowned in them. Torturous hills with sharp inclines, covered with slippery mud causing numerous, continuous falls. As the philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein once remarked, "The map is not the terrain."[1037]

Sometimes, a different perspective heals. For those on the ground, the larger view from above of the broader landscape, brought beauty. When I began my 6-month in-patient hospitalization at the Stress Disorder Treatment Unit of the North Chicago VA hospital, my good friend from Khe Sanh, Kevin Macaulay, sent me a colored photograph he had taken while on top of a tall hill overlooking Khe Sanh Combat Base. He wrote:

> I enclose a photo taken on Hill 950, the radio relay station outside of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, and offer the following thoughts. Below the hill yet above the base are clouds which indicated another damp dreary day for the Marines on the base. Yet above the clouds the sun shone brightly. Drawing a parallel, you are now below the clouds but soon you will be above them. The troubles you and I presently experience regarding our feelings of Vietnam are like the clouds. The goodness of the Lord will take the clouds away. We soon will

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[1031] Rudolf Otto describes the "holy" as both a *mysterium tremendum*–that which causes trembling, fear, awe, shuddering, speechlessness, and a *mysterium fascinosum*–that which causes attraction, desire, which entrances, captivates, transports. The holy is "..an object of horror and dread, but at the same time it is no less something that allures with a potent charm, and the creature, who trembles before it, utterly cowed and cast down, has a the same time the impulse to turn to it, nay even to make it somehow his own." [Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, Trans. John W. Harvey, New York: Oxford University Press (Galaxy Books), 1958, p. 31.]

[1032] Gen. 3.23.

[1033] "Out of My Mind," appears in the Cue section of the Tuesday Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

[1034] St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, Wed, 22 March 2006, to the SAINTS group.

[1035] The hippocampus.

[1036] Frankl, Viktor E., *Man's Search for Meaning, An Introduction to Logotherapy*, rev. ed., of *From Death-Camp to Existentialism*, Trans. Ilse Lasch, Preface Gordon W. Allport (A Touchstone Book), New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962, p. 18.

[1037] I have not been able to locate the source of this quotation.

bask in His smile, the sunshine. It is hard for you now but in the future the good times will be all you will remember. I thank God for the opportunity He gave me in Vietnam. I served with some of the most loving individuals ever created. Their deaths sadden me to this day but the remembrances of their lives is like the sun above the clouds. Trust in God and stay well. Fondly, Kevin.[1038]

Healing comes through grasping a "wider context," a "bigger picture." This might be a more complete understanding (through sharing with others who saw different aspects or perspectives, or through learning what went before and what happened after). The larger context might be gained by just being with others who understood (other veterans of the same battle). The wider context might be eventually realizing that the painful periods of life are but a segment of a much greater span of life. The wider context might be awareness of God's presence in all the darkness and horrors and terrors. The wider context might be a walk in nature, beholding God's great creation, learning of cycles and patterns, perhaps detecting the hidden wholeness of reality.[1039] Awareness of a greater context acknowledges the painful experience (not burying it) while yet discharging its harmful force. The "greater context" differs from person to person. Reality is obviously greater than our experience of it, and our experience is greater than what we say about it. Others can inform of details we missed and give us a different perspective. We may recall aspects of an experience we had forgotten. Everyone in a battle has parts of the story which, when put together, makes us all more whole.

Interestingly, the Hebrew word for "salvation," יָשַׁע (ya shah) has a root meaning of "to be roomy, broad." "As oppression is viewed as a kind of spatial hemming in or imprisoning, so rescue from it is a moving out into the open."[1040] Thus, Psalm 4.1, "In my distress you have set me at large" (NJB), "..thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress.." (KJV), "You gave me room when I was in distress." (NRS).[1041]

Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen, a psychiatrist treating hospice patients, writes of an angry young man revolting against his diagnosis of diabetes. After being in therapy for half a year, he had a vivid dream in which he sat in an empty room with a small statue of the Buddha. He was not a spiritual young man and was surprised he felt an affinity with the statue of a young Buddha, about his age. He fell silent. Suddenly, a dagger was thrown which buried itself deep in the Buddha's heart. The young man was shocked, overwhelmed with despair and anguish. Then, something amazing happened. The statue began to grow, very slowly, and gradually the wound became just a tiny black speck in the breast of an enormous, smiling Buddha. He awoke with tears, realizing "..he might grow in such a way that the wound of his illness might become a smaller and smaller part of the sum total of his life, that he might yet have a good life, even though it would not be an easy life."[1042]

A recent article[1043] describes a contemporary way of obviating combat stress. A point man had been killed by a land mine. When their squad leader gathers them, no one will grab the metal detector used to clear a path through the mine field for the next patrol. It was a moment in which "the men would either keep fighting or succumb to fear and loss." The squad leader hands the metal detector to the dead man's best friend. The writer comments:

> That moment, and those that followed, epitomize the new approach to combat stress. ... After nearly a decade of war, military commanders have concluded they're in danger of losing the battle against emotional trauma. One in five troops returns home from Afghanistan and Iraq saddled with some form of mental health issue. ... The latest research suggests troops handle battlefield stress better, and avoid post-war problems more often, when they heal among their comrades.[1044]

One of the contributing pathogens of PTSD relates to the destruction of one's idea of God. The old conundrum of theodicy–"God cannot be both all-powerful and all-loving, for if God is all powerful, why doesn't God do something? If God is all loving, how can God permit this to be happening?"–became far from an academic discussion for those on the battlefield! God seemed absent because the IDEA of God no longer contained our experiences in a wrapping of meaning. Our conception of God is not God. Our ideas about God are not God. As when one speaks of another person, what is said discloses more

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[1038] Letter from Kevin Macaulay, 22 July 1983

[1039] Cf. Bohm, David, "Hidden Variables and the Implicate Order" Zygon, Journal of Religion and Science 20:2 (June, 1985) 111-124; Bohm, "Fragmentation and Wholeness in Religion and in Science," Zygon, op. cit., pp. 125-133; Peters, Ted,. David Bohm, Postmodernism, and the Divine," Zygon, op. cit., pp. 193-217; Palmer, Parker J., A Hidden Wholeness, The Journey Toward An Undivided Life, San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass2004.

[1040] Fohrer, Georg, "The Stem ישע in the Old Testament," Friedrich, Gerhard, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971, Vol. VII, pp. 973-974.

[1041] See also, Pss 18.19, 31.8, 118.5, 119.32, 2 Sam 22.20, Deut 12.20 and 33.20, Hos 4.16.

[1042] Remen,Rachel Naomi, M.D.,:*My Grandfather's Blessings, Stories of Strength, Refuge, and Belonging.*, New York: Riverhead Books, 2000, p. 143. Whole story on pp. 141-143.

[1043] Michael M. Phillips, "Rx for Combat Stress: Comradeship," The *Wall Street Journal* 257:76 (Sat/Sun, April 2-3, 2011, pp. A1, A12.

[1044] *Ibid.*, p. 1. Underscoring provided.

about the speaker than the person spoken about. When our ideas of God were etched away in the acid bath of the battlefield, many assumed that God was not real, not present, uncaring. Actually, our idols were smashed. Our understanding of God proved false or inadequate. Kant's famous dictum, "percepts without concepts are blind; concepts without percepts are empty," applies: an inadequate concept will fail to perceive the reality of God's presence. Because we don't experience God, the conclusion that God doesn't exist is logically invalid. Our assumptions of God failed.[1045] Yet, in the "dark night of the soul," we encounter the living God. Faith is born in the desert where all props disappear. For some, our experience was one of disenchantment in which the allure of what previously had captivated, the external reality on which we projected our soul, crumbled; in disenchantment we experience betrayal to the degree that the excessive adulation once accorded now becomes an excessively emotional dismissal. Disenchantment might involve revenge, denial, cynicism, self-betrayal, paranoia, depression, shame.[1046] Yet, a chiseling-away enables what is valuable to emerge. Leonardo da Vinci wrote of liberating the statue hidden in the block of marble. While in grade school art class, we took a bar of Ivory soap and were told to carve out a bas relief.[1047] I had decided to carve a cowboy, and was horrified when the art teacher took my bar to demonstrate to the class, and gashed out large chunks. When she had finished, she handed me the bar to let me complete the task. I was amazed at how much better the form of the cowboy appeared after removing large pieces of the soap. Cluttered basements–like mine!–frustrate when attempting to locate something lost in the morass of accumulated junk! The 14th Century Meister Eckhart taught that one grows spiritually by a process of subtraction, not addition. Our ideas of God might be clutter which needs to be discarded to enable growth and life in a world of new challenges.

The solutions for living with PTSD involve a social context, not simply the fundamental need to be accepted and reintegrated into society, but also having a good friend or loving family, other combat veterans who understand, accept, and provide new ways of looking at the same painful reality, perhaps even the missing details. I recall a telephone conversation with a Khe Sanh vet who anguished over a guilt of not digging fast enough in an attempt to rescue an officer trapped in a bunker collapsed by an incoming round. He was put in touch with another Marine who had also frantically dug out the debris from the explosion and was told he dug as fast as anyone.[1048] He wondered why he remembered that as digging in slow motion and was told that frequently in battle, we perceive things in slow motion. He said, "That was one of the most important phone calls I've ever made in my life! According to Lee, I dug as fast as anybody. The phone call that I made to you, and then you called back–I can't tell you how much that helped!" Combat comrades healing each other! Veterans groups and veterans reunions in which veterans complete the story are especially healing for Vietnam veterans who returned home individually, not as units as in World War II, and frequently retained only a fragmentary account of an action.

The solution to defilement is acceptance and appreciation of one's value. We value people most when we need them, when we give them a responsibility, when we listen to them intently, when we regard them as persons and not symptoms to be cured. The gifts of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control)[1049] are not primarily personal possessions, but descriptions of connections between people.[1050]

The eclipse that blocks an experience of the presence of God and that blocks progress in life diminishes as one attains a vision of what is greater. Not "thinking outside the box," but standing, living outside the box, in a "wider context" brings salvation, life. Suffering Job was healed through the vision of God's greatness.[1051] I once was stranded in an air terminal with a missionary in Vietnam. His name was Hank Blood, and although he was killed by the enemy in Vietnam, his words have lived to bless me many times. One of the things he said was, "Never focus on the greatness of your problems; focus on the

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[1045] Kate DeSmet, "Shallow view of God didn't help Viet vets, priest says," The *Detroit News*, Sat., Oct 11, 1986, p. 13A, reviewing the thought of Father William Mahedy, a former Roman Cathl.lic priest, later an Episcopalian priest who served in the US Army as a Chaplain in Vietnam.

[1046] Andre Papineau, Lecture at C.G. Jung Center, Milwaukee, 19 Oct 1986, "Enchantment and Disenchantment in Human Experience."

[1047] A sculpture on which the figure projects slightly from the background.

[1048] Conversations with Lee Burger and Joseph Murray, both of 06 June 1993.

[1049] Gal. 5.22.

[1050] Joseph Haroutunian, University of Chicago, lecture for course BT122, 14 Feb 1967, commenting on Gal 5.22: "What characterizes the Spirit is a new creation, how people relate themselves to one another. These aren't simply virtues; they are things that characterize transactions of Christians with one another." See also Haroutunian, Joseph, "The Spirit of God and the People of God," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* XII:4 (May, 1957)39-45, especially p. 44: "The *indwelling* of the Spirit among Christians must be understood in the primary sense of his *working among* them. The Spirit so indwells the Christians that by their human relatedness one to others, they become the means one to another of restoration both to God and to neighbor in faithfulness." Also, his book, *God With Us, A Theology of Transpersonal Life*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965.

[1051] Job 38.1-41.26: God's greatness, Job 42.1-6: Job's response; Job's healing: Job 42.10-17.

greatness of your God."[1052] I recall an incident in which I was fuming in anger, about to spew my complaints about another person to my commanding officer. When I entered his bunker, he immediately said, "O, how good it is to see you, Chaplain." His genuine warmth and concern just melted my anger, I didn't bury it to let it fester; it just dissolved in the greater caring attitude my CO exuded.

The greatest context we can have is love. "God is love."[1053] Love, of course, is a verb, not a noun, an action, not a feeling or thing. It's what we do, not how we feel. In love we live because we become part of the greatness of our Lord forever.

The heat of battle and the heat of our rage and anger and the heat of our crushing troubles might just be gifts. Just as soft, dark coal transforms into diamonds, the hardest natural object on earth with dazzling facets under tremendous heat and pressure, just as heat transforms ingredients into bread, so also new, probably overlooked, gifts (i.e., ways of being valuable socially) might be mined from the dark caverns and shafts of the battlefield. Those who have been wounded are precisely those who can heal.[1054] My personal experience with veterans discloses people with an abundance of energy, social sensitivity, and caring attitude, humble (i.e., "down to earth"[1055]) and willing to serve. Transformation of anger and rage into socially-valuable service, drawing out strengths and gifts, probably invisible to the veteran, through a circle of good friends, heals not only the veteran but all of society. Veterans, who are the "living memory of war" have much to say, to contribute to society, not only with regard to the reality of war and all its horrors, but what is truly valuable and important, to the greatness of what people are capable, the triumph of loving actions, and the presence of God. From these broken bodies and angry spirits, disillusioned and stunned, the abrading, painful memories and encounters with spiritual forces and powers, might emerge that which enriches many, just as a grain of sand grinding in the tender inner parts of an oyster produces, over many years, a beautiful pearl, a "pearl of great price!"[1056]

Memorial Day Address, Longfellow Middle School, Wauwatosa, WI, 30 May 2011

When asked why they joined the Marine Corps, many of the (mainly) 19 year-olds I knew in Vietnam said they were motivated by the words of John F. Kennedy when he was inaugurated as President: "Let every nation know .. that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty .. and so .. ask not what your country can do for you: ask what you can do for your country."[1057]

They heard it as impressionable 12 year-olds in 1961. Now, seven years later,[1058] they found themselves at perhaps the bloodiest, most desperate battle of the entire Vietnam War, at a place called Khe Sanh.

Today, I want to focus on the price, the burden, the hardship. Today we pause. Today, we remember and honor. Today, we rededicate ourselves. Today, I want to introduce you to a few of the many who gave their life at Khe Sanh, Vietnam, 44 years ago. We all have specific persons we remember today. The specter of the vast quantity of names on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., stuns us into silence at the sight of 58,000 names engraved on a long, black granite wall. Then we recall there were twice as many killed in World War I, almost seven times as many in WW II, and over ten times as

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[1052] Meeting with Hank Blood was on Friday, 08 Dec 1967. My diary entry reads: "Sat most of the time inside the air terminal. Talked with a missionary from Wycliffe, Henry Blood. He is also going to Khe Sanh, to purchase Miller's Honda. He kept referring to the phenomena of speaking in tongues, of praying for others and himself and subsequently being rescued from danger. He was later captured by the VC along with other missionaries during the 1968 Tet offensive and murdered. He was tall, with a British accent, dignified, somewhat white hair, and continually read from a small copy of the NEB. He said that the secret of prayer is not the greatness of one's problem, but the greatness of the God to whom one is praying." [Stubbe, Khe Sanh Chaplain, 01 Apr 1970, (unpublished manuscript), p. 445; Stubbe, Khe Sanh (unpublished manuscript), entry for 08 Dec 1967, p. 675.

[1053] 1 Jn 4.16.

[1054] The motif of the "wounded healer" appears in the Greek myth of Aesclepius, in the ancient cultural shaman, in Isaiah's portrait of the "suffering servant," in Jesus, and in such contemporary experiences of Alcoholics Anonymous and other support groups.

[1055] "Humble" is related to humus.

[1056] Mt 13.46.

[1057] Kennedy, John F., Inaugural Address, 20 January 1961.

[1058] The Khe Sanh siege battle began on 21 January 1968.

many in the Civil War,[1059] Yet, the German poet Goethe wrote: "I am rent to the core by this simple one's suffering; you pass carefree over the fate of thousands.[1060]

Although Khe Sanh seemed like a lush Garden of Eden paradise, it sat on top of an extinct volcano.[1061] It's birth in heat and extreme violence left a lingering spirit. Many were to die at Khe Sanh, the red clay formed from weathered volcanic rock made more red by their blood.

[*PFC JOHN HINSON, KIA 16 Aug 67*]: One day, some of the very primitive local people, not Vietnamese, but mountain tribesmen of the area, were crossing a river. When the river almost swept a woman away, a young Marine, Robert Hinson, a non-swimmer, jumped in to rescue her. Hinson was a non-swimmer, but like most teenagers, thought he was invincible. He told another Marine, "A bullet is never going to get me." He was also a young man who supported his mother and sent funds to help a student in Greece. Another swell then swept him away, and he drowned. He died saving others.[1062]

[*LCPL GARY TALLENT, KIA 20 Aug 67*]: A recon team was preparing to be inserted one Sunday at Khe Sanh. As they whiled away their time playing cards waiting for the choppers to insert them, their radioman, Gary Tallent, said, "Let's go to church." And so they stacked their rifles outside and entered, their faces camouflaged with variegated dark and light green face paint.

A couple hours later, I peered through the clear plastic liner of a body bag used to transport corpses. It was Gary Tallent. His team had been shot out while inserting, killing him and the helicopter crew chief.

Over a hundred gathered for a memorial service the next day. A floppy cloth cover, the cap worn by recon Marines on patrol, was placed near the cross on the altar. A Marine Private in the formation wiped away a tear.[1063]

The recon company at Khe Sanh had a slogan, "It's a hell of a deal," but the Commanding General of Division said that was too vulgar; it had to go. So they had a contest for a new slogan. One of the suggestions was "Only the good die young, and we are." There were others: "Pain is good," "We may be few, but we've done-in many," "Where the Division goes, we have been," "The kitchen sink? We'll hump it." They were mostly about 19 years old, ready to slay the dragons, the inspiring words of John F. Kennedy reverberating in their heart alls, resonating in their souls.

On Marine Corps Birthday, 10 Nov 1967, the regimental commander told a group of Marines on one of our hill outposts, "You all soon will be in the American history books."[1064] About a month later,[1065] at 3 in the morning, while I was sleeping in a bunker at a small outpost manned by Marines and local primitive mountain people, the tribesmen on the line suddenly started firing. One of the Marines[1066] in the pitch dark bunker jumped out of his sleep and put his trousers on backwards as he rushed out. The tribesmen explained that they saw their evil spirit prowling outside the wires, a spirit that devours people, and they were firing to scar it away.[1067] Two 1200-man infantry battalions arrived, doubling our defense. The battle was about to erupt.

[*PFC JONATHAN NATHANIEL SPICER, DOW 14 Mar of wounds received 8 Mar*]: Nine days before we were attacked, a young Marine, Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer, came to me to apply as a Conscientious Objector. He'd never played sports, never hunted, and was told by his recruiter that he could be a dog handler. He said he wasn't afraid to die, and would like to work for the people here. We talked practically all morning. I concluded he was sincere.[1068]

[1059] WW I, 117,000 KIA, WW II, 405,000 KIA; Civil War, 620,000 KIA; Vietnam, 58,000 KIA. Three years of the Korean War, 37,000 KIA.
[1060] Goethe, *Faust* II, 439f.
[1061] Hoffet, Josue-Heillmann, Étude Géologique sue le Centre de L'Indochine entre Tourane et le Mekong,(Bulletin de Service Geologique de L'Indochine, Vol. XX, Fascicule 2), Hanoi, 1933, p. 131. There are five small candera of extinct volcanoes--Cua Tung, Gio Linh, Cua, Khe Sanh, A Dua Ap, which, along with the hot springs of Huong Hoa, form a curve around Tiger Tooth Mt., created during the Quarternary era.
[1062] Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings*, 2d ed., 2008, pp. 91-92
[1063] *Ibid.*, p. 93.
[1064] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 1971, pp. 601ff.
[1065] 03 Dec 1967.
[1066] Roberts.
[1067] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, *op. cit.*, entry for 03 Dec 1967, p. 670. The evil spirit was "Panoah."
[1068] *Ibid.*, entry for 12 Jan 1968, p. 736.

Suddenly surrounded by some 40,000, our small base began to receive several hundred incoming rounds of artillery and rockets each day. Our situation became so precarious, nuclear weapons were considered for our defense, the President had the Joint Chiefs of Staff guarantee we would hold, and we occupied half of the TV evening news for several months. More tons of bombs were dropped in our immediate area than in all of World War II in the Pacific. Tens of thousands of people were killed in those two months at Khe Sanh, including at least 563 Americans. Over 2500 of our Americans were severely wounded and evacuated.

Spicer supervised those carrying stretchers of the wounded to helicopters. When incoming rounds exploded and everyone else dashed for cover, Spicer remained by the men in stretchers, reassuring them, sometimes covering them with his own body. One day, he took a piece of shrapnel in his heart, and later died. He laid down his life for others.[1069]

[*CPL KENNETH WILLIAMS, KIA 9 Mar*]: Because the base took so much incoming, many supplies were delivered by parachute. The air strip was deemed too unsafe to land planes. Horrified, a Marine saw a pallet of supplies headed to crush a Marine. He yelled. But due to the noise of propellers and incoming, the Marine didn't hear his warning. So he ran, tackled him, pushed him out of the way, and was himself crushed to death by the pallet.[1070]

In those days, in battle, we lived and died for each other. It was a daily occurrence to see Marines dash out into the exploding ordnance to pull a wounded buddy to safety. It was common to see Marines give their last drops of water to their buddy, to share their tiny ration of food with each other, to see Marines hug each other during intense explosions, and to see and hear a humor that indicated a refusal to let the acid of fear eat away their soul. Forced to fill sandbags for a bunker for an obnoxious officer, the men removed the sandbags they had filled, covering his bunker, at night and put them on their own; got up early in the morning and replaced them. When I stumbled about in the night to find the urinal, a plastic 81mm mortar casing set into the ground, one Marine, challenging me in the pitch dark night said, "O, chaplain, don't worry, all the Nam's a piss tube."[1071] There was a caring for each other, a courage that refused to cower, an affirmation of life despite the force of death. These young men, we remember today–how could we forget them? God was present to us through them.

[*LCPLGREGORY POPOWITZ, KIA 24 Jan*]: Four days into the siege battle, one of the bunkers took a direct hit. Several of the survivors sat in my bunker during that night, unable to be evacuated. One took a roll of toilet paper and continuously dabbed blood off his head. The deck of my bunker was filled with the crumpled, blood-soaked pieces. Amazingly, the next day I saw him filling sandbags. I learned that the blood was not his, but that of one of the four men killed in that bunker.[1072] I had just baptized one of those killed a month earlier, Gregory Popowitz.[1073] When Popowitz, whose father had been killed in World War II, decided to enlist in the Marine Corps at the age of 16, his mother vehemently objected. Legal guardianship had been turned over to his grandmother, however, and she signed the papers[1074] allowing him to enlist.

The Marines at Khe Sanh, continued to dig–new bunkers, deeper trenches, recalling images of World War I.[1075] LCPL Kenneth R. Thompas, assisting the regimental S-4, LtCol Fred McEwan, came up with a slogan, posted outside the S-4 bunker, "Home is Where You Dig It."[1076]

[*CHAPLAIN ROBERT BRETT, PFC ALEXANDER CHIN, KIA 22 Feb*]: Father Brett, one of our chaplains, visited Marines of his unit on a hill outpost that, only a few days earlier,[1077] had received a ferocious assault. Although the position was partly overrun, the Marines fought with fierce determination in hand-to-hand combat, and held the position. Father Brett remained overnight with the Marines, baptizing one and bringing peace and blessing to all. He then returned to the main Khe Sanh combat base by helicopter waiting for another helicopter to take him to his battalion position. While waiting, an artillery round exploded in the trench where he took temporary refuge, killing he and his assistant, PFC Alexander Chin. Chin already had three Purple Hearts, was about to return home, and was engaged to be married. His family had prepared a "welcome

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[1069] Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings, op. cit.*, p. 254.
[1070] *Ibid.*, p. 250.
[1071] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh*, 07 Oct 1971, p. 208, entry for Friday, 28 July 1967.
[1072] *Ibid.*, p. 137.
[1073] *Stubbe, Khe Sanh, op. cit.*, entry for Sat., 23 Dec 1967, p. 699.
[1074] Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings, op. cit.*, p. 138.
[1075] Hartranft, SSGT Phil, "Khe Sanh Reminiscent of WW I Trench Warfare," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:16 (19 Apr 1968), p. 10.
[1076] Noted in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #38 (Spring, 1997), p. 3
[1077] 05 Feb 1968, E/2/26.

home, Alex" banner. Alexander had volunteered to go to Vietnam so his younger brother, already in the Army, would not have to go to Vietnam. [1078]

[*CPL ROBERT CALDWELL, KIA 28 Feb 68*]: All of the chaplains assistants–five of them–were killed during the battle at Khe Sanh. Cpl Robert Caldwell, had been a good Marine in the bush, and his officers, to reward him, transferred him to work for the chaplain. He planned to become a minister. Since his flight date was within a few days, the chaplain sent him to DaNang, but those processing the men said he had to serve one more day in the forward position, and so sent him back to Khe Sanh. The plane on which he travelled was shot down as it was landing at Khe Sanh, killing him and 43 others.[1079]

[*PFC JAMES CHISHOLM, LCPL MICHAEL McKEEVER, CPL GARY THORP, KIA 23 Feb 68*]: Our small base, less than half a mile wide and less than a mile long, took some 1307 rounds of incoming tone day, mainly artillery and rockets. One of these struck a bunker housing the crew of a 106mm recoilless rifle. I had spent a night in that bunker a couple of weeks earlier when we were warned that "tonight's going to be the night" for an assault on our base. I got to know the Marines quite well. Now, parts of one man's body hung out as I carried him into the truck–a hand, an arm, a stringy piece of flesh intertwined with cloth and caked with mud. He had no head, only strings of flesh from a cavity where his head would be. We searched for the decapitated head, but were unable to find it.[1080]

[*SGTMAJ JAMES GAYNOR, KIA 15 Feb 68*]. Sergeant Major James Gaynor had been captured as a Marine Corporal on Corregidor and remained a POW with the Japanese most of World War II. He had served in Air Wing units and wanted his "twilight tour" to be with Marine infantry, the Grunts. Thus he was at Khe Sanh, constantly checking on the welfare of the troops even during incoming–which was almost always. One day, he was wounded by incoming and died of his wounds. He had one son, 13 or 14, and two years after the Sergeant Major's death, the son ran away from home and was never found. Like a tsunami following an earthquake, close family members also become casualties of the war.[1081]

[*PVT RANSOM LEE STUCK, KIA 26 Feb 1968*]. On 9 February, one of the Marines[1082] attending worship, mentioned that he was serving "bad time" until the end of March, and that he had two athletic scholarships to attend college.[1083] On 26 February, stopping at the hut where the dead were brought, I saw him in a body bag. An incoming rocket had killed him. His platoon commander later said that Randy got along well with the other men in his platoon, was well-liked, a good Marine, not afraid of combat.[1084] Randy's cousin recalls that he and Randy "were both simple country kids raised in a small town of 1,000 in southern Indiana. Randy was not a coward and as a kid would stand up to any bully."[1085]

[*CPL KENNETH CLAIRE, KIA 25 Feb 68*] Ken was a large, muscular Marine who grew up in the mountains of California. His niece recalls how scarred she was when Ken carried her on his shoulder. He frequently bellowed a Tarzan call,[1086] and played-up being a tough guy. One day when supplies were delivered to the hill outpost where he was, he took a whole loaf of bread and began to chew off hunks like a wild man.[1087] Ken took care of his troops. When Khe Sanh was attacked and the nearby ammo dump exploded, spewing ordnance throughout his area, Cpl Claire ignored the terrifying explosions to move about, checking on the welfare of his Marines and treat casualties. Disregarding his own safety, he tossed out ordnance that might well have exploded in his hands, and carried rounds to positioned where they wouldn't endanger his men. He kept telling his men, "Don't look down; they're probably coming to overrun us!"[1088] Now he was on a platoon-sized patrol just outside our wires. The entire platoon was ambushed, killing almost all, including Cpl Claire who had been standing in the

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[1078] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[1079] *Ibid.*, pp. 238, Letter from Rev. William Hampton, 27 Nov 2004.
[1080] Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings, op. cit.*, p. 211.
[1081] *Ibid.*, p. 195.
[1082] Stuck was with 3rd Squad, 2nd Platoon, C/1/26.
[1083] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 06 Jun 1989, p. 549.
[1084] Nick Romanetz, email of 16 Jan 2001, printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #49 (Spring, 2001), p. 34.
[1085] Terry Stuck, email printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #49 (Spring, 2001), p. 34.
[1086] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh, op. cit.*, entry for Fri., 25 Aug 1967, p. 339.
[1087] *Ibid., p. 337.*
[1088] Bronze Star Medal Citation and file on Cpl Claire; comments of Jeff Culpepper, 23 January 1984. Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 06 June 1989, p. 356.

middle of the field directing the maneuvers of the rifle teams.[1089] One of the two or three survivors whose jaw was shot off and placed in a trench, watched the entire action. He managed to crawl back to the base,[1090] and later visited Cpl Claire's brother and related what happened. Doctors had managed to fasten his face to his shoulder so he could chew food. He later died. One of Ken's brothers took his brothers so bad that he got into drugs and was institutionalized. Again, the battles continued to kill.

[*LCPL "AUTHOR" "C" SMITH, KIA 30 MAR 1968*]. A company-size patrol was sent to recover the bodies of the MIA from that platoon ambush. Accompanying this patrol was LCPL "AUTHOR" SMITH. "C," as he was known in his family, the eldest of 7 children, grew up dirt-poor in a family of share-croppers in Alabama. His father, a WWII vet, was in and out of the VA hospital for alcohol-related issues most of the time, and "C" supervised his brothers and sisters laboring in the field. He dropped out of school where kids poked fun at him since he had little or no lunch, holes in his shoes, and worn clothes.. His sister recalls, "There were no birthday parties, school functions, running water, inside bathrooms, toys on Christmas morning, heat in the winter, doctors when you were sick. There were, however, endless chores and taking care of siblings."[1091]

He joined the Marine Corps. On home on leave from boot camp, he told his sister, "Sis, I won't be coming home." He went off to Vietnam, to Khe Sanh. His sister recalls: "We watched the news every day. The worst fighting was at Khe Sanh. That is where he was. I saw pictures of the Marines and I would pray that one of them would be him. He was nearing the end of his tour.. he did not have much longer to stay."[1092]

His close friend at Khe Sanh recalls "C" as having a dry sense of humor. "He was just one of those people that you meet in your life that stand out in your memory. He'd have a little smile. I don't ever remember him complaining once. He never showed any fear. He wasn't crazy. When something happened, he was rock solid. During the siege, the Lieutenant came down and passed the word that if we had a chance, to capture one of the enemy. So we planned to sneak out, faces camouflaged, maybe two or three Marines, and capture one. Smitty was one of those two or three ready to go on what they regarded a suicide mission."[1093] He, like so many of those youngster Marines had a "hot heart for chilling deeds."[1094]

After the platoon patrol had been ambushed, the rest of the company left the perimeter of Khe Sanh to retrieve the bodies of the 27 MIA left on the battlefield. They ran into another ambush, causing more KIA, including "C" who rushed across open terrain to silence an enemy position. He returned to a trench to consolidate his men and then leaped to assault another enemy position and was killed.[1095]

These are only a very few of the many dozens I personally knew killed at Khe Sanh. Ordinary young men displaying extraordinary humanity and care for each other. Many died as heroes, some were just ensnared in the webs of battle. All were concerned for each other. All were heroes–in the true sense of someone who changes the lives of those around in actions that involve great personal sacrifice. Most, we don't even know. Yet, we live because they gave. We remember them today, along with the many thousands that many of your remember, and the many, many tens of thousands we don't even know for whom we pause, we reflect, we rededicate ourselves, as the motto of our Milwaukee War Memorial states, "to honor the dead by serving the living."

[1089] Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings, op. cit.,* p. 224.
[1090] Ed Rayburn.
[1091] Letter from Mrs. Jo Ann Harrison, 01 Feb 2004
[1092] *Ibid..*
[1093] Conversation with Steven Wiese, 19 Jan 2006.
[1094] Sophocles, *Antigone*, line88.
[1095] Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings, op. cit.,* p. 273, Statement of LCPL Michael H. McCauley and CPL Rickey M. Brunk in Silver Star Medal file of LCPL Author C. Smith.

Flag Day Prayers. Performing Arts Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 14 June 2011

Invocation:

O Lord, our God:

As we consider our nation's flag, we are reminded of Your purpose, Your presence, and Your Power. We are reminded of the words in our Declaration of Independence, that our inalienable rights, our life, liberty, and our pursuit of happiness, all have their source in You, our Creator.

We are thankful to You and praise You, for Your gifts to us of this land, our people, and our government. We pause, we take notice, be behold our flag, its, red. white, and blue.

May its vibrant red bars, top, bottom and within, remind us that freedom is not free,

that what we enjoy comes to us from blood shed, throbbing, passionate, loving life lived by so many others, serving to protect and promote life, Your purpose.

May its white bars gleam in Your power of a spotless purity of unity,

of opportunity for all to develop strengths that enrich and bless all.

May its blue field containing all the stars, none greater, none lesser, remind us that all is contained in Your Presence, greater than the immensity of blue ocean waters and the vast, blue sky.

Red, white, and blue:

our country, Your gift,

our life, Your blessing,,

our place, Your purpose.

Looking to You, O Lord,

the source of every good and perfect gift,

We pray, in Your Holy Name. Amen.

***Benediction*:**

May our Lord bless and keep us now as we return to our daily tasks and lives,

our homes, our work place, our community:

May the Lord bless us with a vision of what might be, not adjustment to what is.

May the Lord bless us with strength equal to our tasks, not tasks equal to our strengths.

May the Lord bless us with commitment to serve one another, promote justice and freedom.

Enfold us into Your wholeness that we might be whole.

Inspire us by Your purpose to make all things new

that we proactively pursue abundant life for all:

Your healing hands to heal hurts,

Your passionate heart to compassionately act,

Your compelling purposes, our source of our courage.

Keep us always in Your protectively strong arms.

In Your Holy Name, we pray. Amen.

LETTER WRITTEN TO GENERAL RON CHRISTMAS, 04 SEPTEMBER 2011, UPON LEARNING OF THE DEATH OF COLONEL LOWNDS, 31 August 2011

Sunday, 04 September 2011

Dear General Christmas:

As I mentioned on the telephone, Colonel David E. Lownds had a profound effect on my life. Although I was assigned to 1/26 and not the regiment, for a long time, 1/26 was the only battalion at Khe Sanh and I came to know Colonel Lownds through informal conversation and the evening regiment briefings. Soon after his arrival at Khe Sanh on 12 August 1967, I noticed his presence at memorial services for a Marine from recon that had been killed while his team attempted an insertion and for a

Marine who drowned in the nearby Rao Quan River. His concern and interest in the welfare of the Marines at Khe Sanh was plainly evident. He cared.

I recall an incident during the monsoon rainfall in which a recon team had completed about eight days of patrolling, had run out of water and food, and due to the weather, the helicopters couldn't extract them. 1/26 had alerted an infantry company to move to them and bring them back. (They were south of us, south of Route 9, as I recall). Knowing all the men in the recon team, I had obtained permission and decided to accompany the patrol. Just as we were about to depart the combat base, the skies cleared and the helicopters were able to extract the team. Colonel Lownds suddenly appeared with our infantry patrol and informed us that the team had been successfully extracted and thanked us for preparing to rescue them. He didn't have to do that, of course. His presence there spoke volumes of his concern for his men.

I recall talking to a recon Marine (Kevin Macaulay) who overheard a conversation in the regimental bunker. It was a conversation between Colonel Lownds and the recon commander who was about to commit another team to replace one that had just been shot out. Obviously, we knew where the enemy was! Colonel Lownds told the recon commander, "Don't you care about your men? Why are you sending them to the place where we already know the enemy is located?"

Colonel Lownds had his humorous moments. At one regimental briefing, he had just returned from a visit to 3d Marine Division at Phu Bai, and he jokingly reported to the staff and officers gathered about his trip "to the wonderful world of 'Bai'." I can still hear him talking about how they "actually had sidewalks of wooden pallets so you don't get your boots muddy!" (laughs). "And then there was hot and cold running water–and flushing toilets!" (more laughs). "They actually had air-conditioning–but I don't think they'll ever get it as cool as we have it here at Khe Sanh!" (by now he was on a roll, and everyone was roaring!)

As I mentioned to you, General, I am firmly convinced that I am here today because of some very difficult, agonizing decisions that Colonel Lownds made during that Khe Sanh siege battle. In fact, had I given a short eulogy for him, I might have been tempted to use the text from John 10.10 ("I am come that they might have life, life in its abundance") and noted that while this may be strange to use for a Marine officer, it certainly reflected what Colonel Lownds accomplished. He made numerous decisions that all turned out right. Probably from his earlier duty as a regimental S-2 (in which he had, by the way, two very junior lieutenants who later served him as Captains during the siege–Jerry Judson, one of his S-2 scouts who was, during the siege b, his S-2, and Capt Earle Breeding, another scout who was the commander of E/2/26. Earle tells me that when 2/26 arrived at Khe Sanh just a few days before the battle erupted, the officers and staff of 2/26 were in the regimental bunker and Colonel Lownds said, "We will hold." And then spotting Earle, continued, "Won't we, Captain Breeding?" to the astonishment of all the officers of 2/26!))

For example, he placed battalion 1/9 at a blocking position to guard the approach to the combat base in an area (we called it the "Rock Quarry" because the Seabees quarried basalt and crushed it for a sub-base for repairing the airstrip in the fall of 1967), rather than on Hill 471 near the junction of the base access road and Route 9 near Khe Sanh village, an area where a recon team had been surrounded the very day the base was attacked. He also placed the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion on the eastern perimeter of the base after learning (from a North Vietnamese rallier) that the NVA attack plan indicated a major assault would come from that direction. He maintained the base perimeter when the Army's SOG unit, FOB-3, formed a large "bubble" on the perimeter. He even had .50 caliber guns and M60 machineguns pointed into the FOB-3 position, much to the consternation of the soldiers there! But they had hundreds of indigenous troops, and who knew how many NVA were among them? (In fact, one of the FOB-3 troops that worked for Special Projects, SFC Charles Minnicks, once told me that his point man was a NVA soldier they had captured on one of their patrols!). He made the agonized decision to abandon Khe Sanh village and withdraw the Marine CAC OSCAR unit as well as the District Headquarters since it was indefensible. He refused to be lured into the trap of dispatching a Marine contingency company to reinforce the Army Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei when it was overrun with tanks since aerial observers and signals intelligence indicated numerous ambush sites. He refused to admit the refugees from the Laotian BV-33 battalion that had been overrun by tanks and taken refuge at Lang Vei which was subsequently overrun by the same tanks. The Laotians had thrown down their arms at Lang Vei, much to the anger of the Special Forces from FOB-3 that went to rescue that position, and who knew how many North Vietnamese were among them?

For all these actions, he was severely criticized by some–by some who were in Khe Sanh village, by the press (for not permitting the Lao refugees on the combat base), by the soldiers of Lang Vei for not coming to their rescue, and so on. Yet, it

was the correct decision and it meant that human life was maximized. That is why I was thinking of John 10.10 as a text for his funeral!

There were many other decisions–a platoon of the Combined Action Company OSCAR (O-2) had been planning to relocate to a position near Lang Vei, but that was stopped by Colonel Lownds. Had they gone ahead with their plans to relocate, they certainly would have been annihilated in the opening days of the battle. When the siege battle began and Khe Sanh village was attacked, an infantry company (D/1/26, led by Walt Chapman, the Commandant's son) had left the combat base and reached Hill 471, just a click away from the village, when Colonel Lownds recalled them. He had received intelligence that only a NVA battalion attacked the district headquarters but a whole NVA regiment was in ambush positions to snare any reinforcements. Again, he was able to save dozens of lives!

He had personally (sometimes, only by himself!) walked through the entire area, becoming totally familiar with all the approaches to the base. SFC Bill Craig, the Team Leader for the Special Forces camp once told me how he was very nervous with Colonel Lownds walking about the area near Lang Vei–by himself! The Colonel also thoroughly scouted the eastern approaches to the base, a flat terrain going north from Route 9, and the location of a regimental assault on the combat base on the night of 29 Feb/01 Mar, and with the expert abilities of Major Mirza Munir Baig, his Target Intelligence Officer and also an expert in artillery, was able to decimate the attaching regiment so none closed on our wires.

On Marine Corps Birthday, 1967, I was on top of Hill 881-South, one of our outposts, a position captured during the 1967 Hill Fights at very great loss of life. It was a very foggy day, rainy, and very cold. Although I grew up in Wisconsin and spent 7 years of college and seminary in Minnesota, I can say that I never *felt* more cold than I did at Khe Sanh. We were at a high elevation, and it rained, perhaps seven inches a day, for several months. We could never get dry. Trenches and bunkers collapsed. Resupply was tenuous. Many of the 31 bridges over the only land access route to logistic bases to the east (Route 9) had washed-away. Aerial observers were unable to detect enemy encroachment. Patrols were wet, muddy, miserable. Bunkers collapsed. One bunker on the combat base being built for the regimental communications section collapsed, killing two short-timers due to crushed chests, while a dozen or so others received broken ankles, arms, legs. On Hill 881-South, being Marine Corps Birthday, two platoons were gathered in a formation; one platoon was out on patrol. We could hear a helicopter attempting to land, but which had no visible approach. Miraculously, it did land, and out came Colonel Lownds along with our 1/26 commander (LtCol James B. Wilkinson) and the artillery commander. They brought a birthday cake. We were all in a formation, and I recall–I even put in my daily diary–the Colonel mentioned something about how he always got together with a couple other Marines for this special day, "but I doubt they'll be coming to Khe Sanh to be with me today.! (The Colonel always had that humorous element). He then said, "You all soon will be in the American history books!" I don't recall any of the troops or officers there subsequently commenting on that. I guess we had been warned so many times earlier to expect an attack–the Vietnamese elections, the monsoons, etc.,, that it was almost like "crying wolf." But I took it seriously!

I remember a regimental briefing in mid-January, about ten days before the battle), in which the Colonel announced that all Marines would have their rifles with them while on the base, would wear helmets, and he wanted internal concertina. He also said "The forward observers can readily see where the command bunker is with all the antennas. Therefore, I want false bunkers built and false antennas erected. During the 1/26 battalion briefing the next morning, LtCol Wilkinson quipped, "The Colonel wants false antennas because his location is prominent. Therefore, instead of the regiment taking 50 rounds, the whole base will take 500 rounds!" How prophetic that all turned out to be!

General, I believe I already sent you a copy of my 2nd edition of *Battalion of Kings*. On pages 148-151, there is an extensive piece about Colonel Lownds, and I am attaching those pages in case you don't have that particular book at hand. There are numerous accounts of Colonel Lownds that reflect his personality and leadership.

Many years ago, while still on active duty, I was doing some research at the Marine Corps Historical Division, and Colonel Lownds picked me up one late afternoon, and drove me through all that horrendous DC traffic to his home. I seem to recall it was in Fairfax. His wife, Jean, prepared a wonderful supper and we had a most enjoyable time. He then drove me back to where I was staying. I think it was Ft. Myers, in a temporary officer quarters. His hospitality, warmth, will never be forgotten.

Over the years, we've maintained connection through letters, birthday and Christmas cards, and he even telephoned me a few times in recent years.

I've always thought that he should have become a General, perhaps even Commandant. Khe Sanh was so controversial–as was the entire Vietnam War, of course. The question of "who won," and who provided the crucial element (the resolve of the Marines, the B52s of the Air Force). Certainly, the politicians didn't! Yet, Khe Sanh was perhaps the bloodiest battle of the war (over 40,000 enemy and locals killed, nuclear weapons were considered, the JCS had to sign-off that we wouldn't fall, etc.). History books speak of Westmoreland and Giap, and yet it was Colonel Lownds and his staff that planned most of the Arc Light strikes (according to Mirza Baig). Colonel Lownds is the real hero (i.e., the one who got us through it all).

Fortunately, I was able to tell him, in writing and phone, how I feel, how I admire him, how I remain so grateful to him for bringing us all out of that horrible hell! Perhaps I've written too much, but even these words can't express the fullness of gratitude and admiration I have for this truly great man.

You can see why I was so honored and yet humbled by your gracious invitation.

Please convey to the rest of the family my sincerest condolences with the assurance you all remain in my prayers.

Semper Fidelis,

Ray W. Stubbe

The Wounded Healer

[Originally titled *Hurt to Heal*, this study was distributed to Chaplains at Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois, 18 December 1984, about two weeks prior to retirement from the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps (01 Jan 1985) and following about half a year of hospitalization at the adjacent Veterans Administration Hospital at North Chicago, Illinois, for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) while still on active duty in the U.S. Navy]

LETTER

10 December 1984

Dear Colleagues:

Long ago I realized there were kinds of knowledge that could not be communicated verbally so that another person, unaware of what I was attempting to describe, could ever possibly grasp the reality. Only a direct experience of the reality by that person would result in the understanding. Such are the religious experiences of God, of love and forgiveness: unless a person has encountered Love or known forgiveness, any attempt to describe what they are is doomed. So also is the realization of "person" reality. Despite Buber's and Tournier's efforts, unless a person "knows" first-hand, all attempts to give knowledge "of" by giving knowledge "about" are doomed. Existence is, indeed, prior to essence as Pico della Mirandola asserted (*i.e.*, the thing itself is and is much richer than anything we might say about it). As life has progressed, more and more of my experiences seem to have fallen into this category. The result is an inability to speak of those very things that are most significant in terms that others will understand, resulting in fragmentation, isolation, and alienation. These are the knowledge of that which is ultimately "good" (*e.g.*, the gifts of God–love, forgiveness, beauty, justice, personhood) and "evil" *e.g.*, the absence of God, *Deus absconditus* as in war and what happens in it). Those of us who "know" reality and attempt to relate it, are in the same danger as the man in Book 7 of Plato's *Republic* who returned to the cave of those who dwell in shadows: unbelief, rejection, and threatened death. Ultimately, one can't speak or write but can only live and act. It is in being and action that these types of knowledge become expressed effectively. "Knowing," but being unable to communicate to "ears that hear not," either because of inexperience or by the busyness and noise commotion of daily life that precludes the possibility of hearing the "still small voice," so that only shepherds in fields and the silent starry skies are able to receive the message of God, is indeed egregiously frustrating!

The attached document is some small, initial attempt to communicate a reality, a lived story, that seems to have been the underlying myth that has guided my life during and after my Vietnam experience, to make sense of life. While somewhat desultory in its structure–(it was written in a matter of a week and during a time in my life of difficulty in concentrating in which I have not been able to function at my usual ability)–it perhaps might be of interest to others for personal study and reflection; for this reason, I am distributing it to you, my colleagues, as I retire from the Navy Chaplain Corps.

It remains now to live and do this knowledge that what I have learned, the really real of life painfully realized in battle experience, is not lost, but communicated.

The structure of the essay begins with the fact of the unhealing wound, which is traced to the account of the Fall in Genesis: the knowledge of good and evil from eating the forbidden fruit. This is developed in terms of the existential meaning of "knowledge," ego inflation as a description of this knowledge, the ἐξουσία (*exousai*, "powers") that infect being that which inflates in this knowledge, the opposite of this knowledge reflected in the "downward" (as opposed to "more") movement, and finally the problem of the "shadow" as an expression of the unhealing wound.

`Next, the example of the Vietnam veteran is described as an expression of the "unhealing psychic wound" which is described, both in terms of the kinds of knowledge that remove one from re-entering Paradise, and in terms of the Oedipus myth. The position of "wounded healer" is suggested as a possible positive significance of the unhealing psychic wound, both in terms of social utility as well as personal meaning. This position is then developed in terms of six related perspectives: the primitive shaman, the Greek myth of Asclepius and his cult, the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah, prophetic existence in general, the Jungian theory and practice of "transference," and finally the *Theologia Crucis* with Bonhoeffer's "conformation ethic."

The conclusion suggests that while we might not be able to return to Paradise on account of our knowledge, we are with God and each other, and are "hurt that we might heal," God transforming what is negative into positive, life itself.

THE UNHEALING WOUND

Paul complained to the Lord of a "thorn in the flesh" that would not go away despite earnest prayer.[1096] Job laments "I am gnawed by wounds that never sleep,"[1097] and a dejected Jeremiah cries: "Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?"[1098]

The basic unhealing wound is the knowledge of good and evil on account of which one may never again return to the Garden of Eden.

> Now the LORD God planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground–trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil... And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.' ... she took some and ate it ... and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened ... And the LORD God said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil ... So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden .. he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth.."[1099]

Knowledge of good and evil is not simply a matter of conceptual schema by which the world around us becomes intelligible; as von Rad notes, the term "knowledge of good and evil" means "..much more than merely a process of the intellect."[1100] The biblical understanding of the term "knowledge" (ידע) refers to that which is crucially determinative for one's total existence. It is not an affair of intelligence. It is an activity of the heart–of one's whole life of thought, desire, and moral decision.

> The verb *yada* does not always mean simply 'to know,' 'to be acquainted with.' In most Semitic languages it signifies sexual union as well as mental and spiritual activity. In Hebrew *yada* means more than the possession of abstract concepts. Knowledge compasses inner appropriation, feeling, a reception into the soul. It involves both an intellectual and an emotional act. An analysis of the usage of the verb in Biblical Hebrew leads to the conclusion that it often, though not always, denotes an act involving concern, inner engagement, dedication, or attachment to a person. It also means to have sympathy, pity, or affection for someone.[1101]

Hosea, for example, uses the words *da'ath Elohim* ("knowledge of God," e.g., "my people perish for lack of knowledge of God"),[1102] to mean an attachment of the whole person, his love as well as his knowledge, ".. an act of involvement, attachment or commitment; to God ... What is desired is an inner identification with God rather than a mere dedication to

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[1096] 2 Cor. 12.7-9.
[1097] Job 30.17b.
[1098] Jer 15.16.
[1099] Gen 2.8-9, 16-17, 3.6, 7a, 22a, 23a, 24.
[1100] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. I, p. 155.
[1101] Heschel, *The Prophets*, p. 57.
[1102] Hos 4.6.

ceremonies."[1103] It does not refer to a knowledge *about* God, but an awareness *of* God, a "..sensitivity for what concerns Him, a concern for the divine person, not only for the divine will; a concern that involves inwardness as well as action."[1104] Undoubtedly the people knew many facts, even true statements, about God. They had God's Word; they had testimony of other's religious experiences; what they lacked was their own experience. They had knowledge "about," but not knowledge "of."

The Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard, helpfully distinguishes between "interested" and subjective knowledge on the one hand, and "objective" or scientific, detached, from-a-distance knowledge on the other. All honor to objective knowledge,[1105] he writes, but it has no relationship to my life except in so far as I falsely lose myself in it. One must *be* the truth, not just know it. "Christainly understood, the truth consists not in knowing the truth but in being the truth;"[1106] ".. no man knows more of the truth than what he is of the truth;"[1107] ".. knowing the truth is something which follows as a matter of course from being the truth.."[1108] It is a matter of finding a way of life which can determine my whole existence,[1109] in a sense, a doctrine or teaching that can become "reduplicated" within me, so that my very life itself expresses the doctrine, not just as something about which to talk and think, but to live. Dupre writes: Christianity is not a higher form of knowledge, but it is a new form of existence.[1110] For example, we have now reconstructed the early history of the people of Israel from archeology so that we know more precisely than did St. Paul all the facts of that history; that does not mean that we are more spiritual because of all our head knowledge than St. Paul!

Christianity is not a doctrine, but a way of life. "Christianity has to do with existence, with the act of existing; but existence and existing constitute precisely the opposite of speculation ... there is a tremendous difference between knowing what Christianity is and being a Christian."[1111] Should one merely speculate or argue the facts of Christianity, they would be completely misunderstood; if one claims to understand them, they are totally misunderstood.[1112] Speculative knowledge involves a certain detachment, distance from, looking upon from afar, examining; this is the necessary stance for scientific, detached, objective knowledge *about* the object of the knowledge. The kind of knowledge that Kierkegaard and the biblical writers understand, on the other hand, is immersion within, passion, commitment to, existence in, total involvement with, passionate concern. One knows Christ by living "in" Him, not by speculation on His life or nature.

Christ *is* the truth ("I am the way, *the truth*.."[1113]), not in the sense of a sum of true statements or propositions, not in the sense of a definition or concept, but in terms of a life: "Truth in its very being is not the duplication I n being in terms of thought, which yields only the thought of being .. No, truth in its very being is the reduplication in me, in thee, in him, so that my, that thy, that his life, approximately, in the striving to attain it, expresses the truth."[1114] I only know the truth when it becomes "a life in me."[1115] "hence one sees what a monstrous error it is, very nearly the greatest possible error, to impart Christianity by lecturing."[1116]

Kierkegaard indicates Job as an example. It is not doctrines that he has bequeathed to us, but a life, a pattern for living. Job's significance is not that he said, "The Lord gave, the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord,"[1117] "..but in the fact that he acted in accordance with it."[1118] Concerning Job, Kierkegaard writes that only the one who has been tried, who tested the word through himself being tested, only he interprets the word correctly, and only such a disciple, only such an interpretation does Job desire."[1119] A teacher can teach *only* through example,[1120] not permitting the doctrine to be the important thing. In a sense, Christianity cannot be taught at all since it is not a doctrine at all. It is caught, not taught.

[1103] Heschel, *The Prophets*, p. 59.
[1104] *Ibid.*
[1105] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, pp. 135-136.
[1106] Kierkegaard, *Training in Christianity*, p. 201.
[1107] *Ibid.*
[1108] *Ibid.*
[1109] Kierkegaard, *Purity of Heart.*
[1110] Dupre, "The Constitution of the Self..", p. 519.
[1111] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 339.
[1112] *Ibid.*
[1113] Jn 14.6.
[1114] Kierkegaard, *Training in Christianity*, pp. 200-201.
[1115] *Ibid.*, p. 202.
[1116] *Ibid.*
[1117] Job 1.20-21.
[1118] Kierkegaard, *Edifying Discourses*, II, p. 7.
[1119] *Ibid., p. 11.*

Christianity is falsely regarded when it is merely a sum of propositions upon which one can lecture as one does Hebrew, philosophy, or any scientific discipline; this is paganism.[1121] The personal relationship to doctrine is the important point: "One may be thoroughly informed about Christianity as a whole, may know how to explain it, to present it and to expound it–but if with all this he thinks that his own relationship to Christ is a matter of indifference, he is a pagan.[1122]

There is a vast difference between knowing a doctrine and believing it. Kierkegaard relates how a man with deep powers of intellect wrote a book on the subject of the love of God: ".. he has pondered upon the nature of God, upon the fact that God is love, upon what follows from this as a consequence, that the world also must be the best, and all things must work together for good."[1123] Then along comes a personal problem, the consequences of which he has not anticipated; he must act in a difficult situation, at a crucial moment, and he is plunged into deep misery. So he consults his parson for help. Finally, after some degree of failure to help the man, the parson gives him the book he had written (the parson being ignorant he was the author): "Read it, study it, if that does not help you, no man can help you." The unknown man replies, "I myself am the author of this book."[1124] What the thinker had not understood *himself*, he had hitherto been living under the delusion that when it proved that God is love, it must follow somehow as a matter of course that we–thou and I–believe it."[1125]

Kierkegaard writes that people today have more than enough information *about* Christianity. "What is lacking is surely something quite different. it is the inward transformation of the whole mind.."[1126] Truth must "transform the entire existence of the individual;"[1127] everything in the existence of the individual must be altered "..in and through his mode of existence, so as to bring it into conformity with this highest good."[1128]

Thus, "knowledge" (as it is used in this paper) refers to a totality of life, not simply mental constructs. What has been said (in a positive manner, in an imperative mood rather than indicative, regarding "being a Christian") also refers to other types of "knowledge" that are also determinative of one's total existence, but in a negative (*i.e.*, life-robbing) way. For example, the knowledge that comes to the victim of rape, incest, continuous battle conditions, or unusually devastating natural or man-made disasters, all of which give a person a "knowledge" so that they are never again able to "see" the same reality the same way or live life the same way.

Knowledge of good and evil is not simply a matter of moral consideration. It refers to the desire to know "everything."[1129] The temptation to become *sicut deus* ("like God") cannot refer to an evil since Adam at that time does not know the possibility of evil; it cannot be understood any other way except as a possibility of being more–" "..a new, deeper kind of creaturely being."[1130] It is an overall expression referring to knowledge in a wide sense, the knowledge of that which is useful or harmful to man.[1131]

The snake, symbol of new life since it seems to renew itself in its skin-shedding, as well as a symbol of energy and power generally,[1132] presents the temptation to become "like God," a "psychic inflation," *i.e.*, to be transformed into something greater than one legitimately is. *This* is the forbidden fruit which everyone, in Adam, eats; the forbidden fruit of power, status, "more." That it is not appropriate is seen in the fact that the "image of God" in which man was created, and which is descriptive of Christ,[1133] is precisely the opposite: "downward" movement through kenosis (self-emptying),[1134] not making a reputation socially or morally, trusting solely in God and not in what one can do to make something of one's self. Spiritual development, as Meister Eckhart continually emphasizes, is by a process of subtraction, not addition; it is a matter of "letting go" (*Abegescheidenheit*) of control, images, suffering, gifts from God, self, etc.

[1120] Kierkegaard, *for Self Examination*, p. 3.
[1121] Kierkegaard, *Christian Discourses*, p. 221.
[1122] *Ibid., pp. 221-222.*
[1123] *Ibid., p. 206.*
[1124] *ibid.*, p. 207.
[1125] *Ibid.*
[1126] Kierkegaard, *Christian Discourses*, p. 249.
[1127] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 347.
[1128] *Ibid.*, pp. 348-349.
[1129] Von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 86. Von Rad supports this interpretation by referring to: "To speak neither good nor evil" (Gen 31.24, 29, 2 Sam 13.22) means to say nothing; to do neither good nor evil (Zeph 1.2) means to do nothing; to know neither good nor evil (said of children and old people--Dt. 1.39, 2 Sam 19.35f.) means to understand nothing (yet or any longer).
[1130] Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, p. 71.
[1131] Westermann, *Creation*, p. 93.
[1132] See *infra* in the discussion of Asclepius.
[1133] Col. 1.15.
[1134] Phil. 2.5-11.

Therefore, in Adam we all die; that is, we become somebody; we want more–knowledge, control, money, children to carry on the name. We are unsatisfied with the other trees in God's good garden which nourish us.

This knowledge is similar to one who would want to know what it would be like to live life without an eye or a hand. One may indeed find out, but then cannot resume the original condition, knowing from a distance as an observer. One can indeed find out what it is like to kill another human being, as did Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* or the young man in Vietnam killing others, but can never "un-know" again what that means for him. One is forever immersed in the knowledge, in the condition itself, always knowing, knowing nothing else.

The result is death. "Every advance in the direction of what is apparently superhuman, whether it be in the field of politics, culture, science, or technology, endangers the truly human, the very fact of being a man."[1135] Thus, when man takes to himself what only belongs to God–becoming independent, angry, judgmental of others, rich and powerful, etc., he dies, or rather, he lives as a dead person, living yet dead:

> Man dies of the knowledge of good and evil ... What does 'to be dead' mean? ... it means no longer being able to live–and yet having to live–in the presence of God. It means to stand before him outlawed, lost and damned, but not non-existing ... 'to be dead' means to have life not as a gift, but as a commandment ... To be dead means to have to live.[1136]

That being alive physically can be a living death is implied in such scriptural passages as Jesus telling a man "Do this and you will live,"[1137] to a man who was obviously quite alive physically and intellectually! and "we know we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers,"[1138] in which the former situation was certainly one of being physically alive.

Their eyes are opened; they can no longer "see" anything in the same way (*e.g.*, they behold nakedness as shameful, nakedness which originally must have been a great grace since man alone is the "naked ape" among all the creatures, created that way by God and proclaimed "very good," is now greatest disgrace).[1139] They now wear clothing; that is, they are now not able to be open; they cannot directly disclose who they are. It is a condition of existence well known by the victim of rape or some Vietnam veterans who cannot disclose their experience, who cover their wounds–literally! They are expelled from the Garden of Eden–the goal of the whole story; the expulsion means that they now experience God as One who is absent or far off.[1140]

> The knowledge of good and evil will not allow Adam to enjoy the simple satisfactions of Paradise. The man is compelled to see all things from a new vantage point, a vantage point which both distinguishes him from the animals and alienates him from himself. Wherever men and women look they must see evil as well as good. They must, accordingly, judge the world, find it wanting, and be perennially discontented,[1141]

He who would be like God has instead, by that desire, become like the devil, expelled.[1142]

The unhealing psychic wound of ego inflation, *i.e.*, a person identifying his self-consciousness with contents of the unconscious, is the source of psychosis; one assumes to oneself powers (in which one experiences himself powerful, a deity) or negatively, as excessive unbounded sense of guilt and suffering.[1143] Ego inflation ("..a state in which something small .. has arrogated to itself the qualities of something larger .. and hence is blown up beyond the limits of its proper size")[1144] is involved when anything is taken that causes a person to transcend proper human limits. "Too much humility as well as too much arrogance, too much love and altruism as well as too much power striving and selfishness, are all symptoms of inflation."[1145] However, one cannot grow as a person without growth in consciousness, awareness, and consequent removal from a condition of original, but unconscious, wholeness. Psychic growth involves a series of inflated, heroic actions which provoke alienation, repentance, restitution, and renewed inflation.[1146] as a movement towards *conscious* wholeness. In this way, a person becomes more and more powerful. The negative side is that one becomes more and more guilty and less and less of what one should be:

[1135] Westermann, *Creation*, pp. 105-106.
[1136] Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, p. 55.
[1137] Lk 10.28f.
[1138] 1 Jn 3.14.
[1139] Luther, *Genesis*, pp. 165, 169
[1140] Westermann, *Creation*, p. 103.
[1141] Williams, Jay G., "Genesis 3," pp. 276-277.
[1142] *Cf.* Luther, *Genesis*, p. 222.
[1143] Edinger, *Ego and Archetype*, pp. 7. 12, 13, and 15.
[1144] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[1145] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[1146] *ibid., p. 42.*

> With man's stepping out of the simplicity of obedience to God, and with the knowledge obtained by disobedience, a movement began in which man pictures himself as growing more and more powerful, more and more titanic.[1147]

The result is the reaction one may feel upon visiting a poor country, walking with an expensive camera perhaps and beholding the hovels of his brothers and sisters with their bloated bellies, begging: guilt at being so wealthy. Alienation from others, from the animals which scatter at the approach of a human being but not from each other, from oneself–rejection and fear, occur:

> On the personal level the act of daring to acquire a new consciousness is experienced as a crime of rebellion against the authorities that exist in one's personal environment, against one's parents, and later, against other outer authorities. Any step in individuation is experienced as a crime against the collective, because it challenges the individual's identification with some representative of the collective, whether it be family, party, church, or nation.[1148]

Paul states that the self-reliant attitude of one who puts trust in one's own strength is really a matter of living "according to the flesh."[1149] All human wisdom, power, and greatness must come to naught in the presence of God.[1150] The Corinthians are warned against delivering themselves into dependence upon human authorities.[1151] It is as though one becomes infected with powers (ἐξουσία) of the principalities and those powers standing behind all earthly authorities,[1152] which results, as with the eating of the forbidden fruit, in sin and death because of inflating earthly greatne4ss and casting out from God's grace. Bultmann summarizes:

> The 'kosmos' although on the one hand, it is God's creation, is, on the other hand, *the domain of demonic powers*: the 'angels,' 'principalities' and 'powers' (Rom 8:38, I Cor 13:24, 'the rulers of this age' (1 Cor 2:6, 8), 'the elemental spirits of the "kosmos"' (Gal. 4:3, 9..). These are 'the enemies of God,' the last of whom is 'death' (I Cor. 15:26). The head of these anti-divine powers is Satan (Rom. 16:20; I Cor. 5:5; 7:5; II Cor. 2:11; 11:14; I Thess. 2:18), the 'god of this age' (II Cor. 4:4)... Paul does not think in .. dualistic manner ... Instead, he considers the spirit powers also to belong to God's creation (Rom. 8:39) ... The 'powers' come upon the Christian in the vicissitudes of his particular lot–*i.e.*, in his 'tribulations' and 'distresses,' etc. (Rom. 8:35; *cf* I Thess. 2:18): 'Satan hindered us') .. They also come upon him in his temptations; Satan is the 'tempter' (I Thess. 3:5) against whom one must be on guard (I Cor. 7:5; II Cor 2:11).[1153]

To be under possession of one of the demonic "powers" is to be captive to death.[1154] Persons exist who define their humanity in terms of loyalty and diligence to the interests and appetites of the principalities and powers, dumb and complacent in their captivity in institutions, traditions, consigned to role-playing; these, notes Stringfellow, are "..human beings who are demonically possessed."[1155] The powers are unrelenting in their manifold, versatile, and ingenious aggression into human life, an all-consuming institutional process which–

> ..assaults, dispirits, defeats, and destroys human life even among, and *primarily* among, those persons in positions of institutional leadership. They are left with titles but without effectual authority ... the most poignant victim of the demonic .. is the so-called leader ... Attended by the trappings of high office, who are enthralled by their own enslavement and consider themselves rewarded for it, and who conceive of their own dehumanization as justification or moral superiority.[1156]

Such assault by the Powers is made upon everyone:

> Men are veritably besieged, on all sides, at every moment simultaneously by these claims and strivings of the various powers, each seeking to dominate, usurp, or take a person's time, attention, abilities, effort; each

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[1147] Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 160.
[1148] Edinger, *Ego and Archetype*, p. 26.
[1149] Phil. 3.3-7; Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol. I, p. 240.
[1150] I Cor 1.26-31.
[1151] Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 244; *cf.* 1 Cor 3.2ff.
[1152] Concerning the view that "angels" and spiritual powers lie behind all earthly powers, *vide* Clinton D. Morrison, *The Powers That Be.*
[1153] Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol. I, pp. 257-258.
[1154] Stringfellow, *Ethic*, p. 32.
[1155] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
[1156] *ibid.*, p. 89.

grasping at life itself; each demanding idolatrous service and loyalty. In such tumult it becomes very difficult for a human being even to identify the idols which would possess him.[1157]

Inflation, empowered by the possessing Powers, is reflected in the pervasive drive towards upward mobility, climbing the ladder of success, "making it." One's very vitality becomes associated with the upward pull and the joys provided by the rewards given on the way up. One almost assumes that success means God is with us and failure means we have sinned.

In a sense, this is true, but not in the way assumed! Success is indeed the prison caused by a "power" which has us in its clutches, but certainly this is not the Lord God! Failure may mean abdication by one of the "powers," but may be a grace–full action of victory by the Lord God over the powers! "Success is a prison; failure is a key" Paul notes that the work of Christ includes the destruction of *every* rule and every authority and every power (I Cor 15.24). The reason is that the divine way is the "downward" way, as Henri Nouwen has so eloquently written:[1158]

> The story of our salvation stands radically over and against the philosophy of upward mobility. The great paradox which Scripture reveals to us is that real and total freedom can only be found through downward mobility. The Word of God came down to us and lived among us as a slave. The divine way is indeed the downward way.
>
> In the center of our faith as Christians stands the mystery that God chose to reveal his divinity to us by submitting himself unreservedly to the downward pull. God not only chose an insignificant people to carry the Word of salvation through the centuries, not only chose a small remnant of those people to fulfill his promises, not only chose a humble girl in an unknown town in Galilee to become the temple of the Word, but God also those to manifest the fullness of divine love in a man whose life led to a humiliating death outside the walls of the city...
>
> He moved from power to powerlessness, from greatness to smallness, from success to failure, from strength to weakness, from glory to ignominy. The whole life of Jesus of Nazareth was a life in which all upward mobility was resisted.
>
> Some people wanted to make him king. They wanted him to show power. They wanted to share in his influence and sit on thrones with him. But he consistently said 'no' to all these desires and pointed to the downward way...

Jesus calls His followers in the same downward way, notes Nouwen, recalling Jesus' statements in Matthew 10.24, 20.26-28, and 10.19.

Unfortunately, the way of Adam is to develop power by a well-developed mask of roles, status, and social function. While such a "persona" is useful, helping others to feel comfortable in knowing whom they are encountering, an insidious danger is that one may become identified with one's persona–a type of ego-inflation by eating the forbidden fruit. While this is true of all–the "man without a shadow" being statistically the commonest human type, the one who imagines he actually *is* only what he cares to know about himself–,[1159] the temptation is especially one faced by professionals:

> A certain kind of behavior is forced on them by the world, and professional people endeavor to come up to these expectations. Only, the danger is that they become identical with their personas–the professor with his text book, the tenor with his voice. Then the danger is done; henceforth he lives exclusively against the background of his own biography ... One could say, with a little exaggeration, that the persona is that which is reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is.[1160]

Fundamentally, Jung writes, the persona is really nothing real: "..it is a compromise between individual and society as to what a man should appear to be. He takes a name, earns a title, exercises a function, he is this or that."[1161] To become identified with one's office or title is very attractive; it is the social clothing given to one by society to cover one's nakedness after the Fall. So trenchantly do some continue to wear the fig leaves of their persona, that, as Jung writes:

> In vain would one look for a personality behind the husk. Underneath all the padding one would find a very pitiable little creature. That is why the office–or whatever this outer husk may be–is so attractive; it offers easy compensation for personal deficiencies.[1162]

[1157] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[1158] Nouwen, "Selfless Way," p. 13.
[1159] Jung, *On the Nature of the Psyche*, Para 409.
[1160] Jung, *Archetypes, Para. 221.*
[1161] Jung, *The Relation Between the Ego and the Unconscious*, Para. 246.
[1162] *Ibid.*, Para 230.

Psychic inflation–taking to oneself something that is not oneself in order to become more powerful–become the "making oneself into a god, knowing good and evil" (or, personal and shadow), by puffing-up, extending the personality beyond individual limits–

> ..by appropriating to himself contents and qualities which properly exist for themselves alone and should therefore remain outside our bounds. What lies outside ourselves belongs either to someone else, or to everyone, or to no one ... A very common instance is the humorless way in which many men identify themselves with their business or their titles.[1163]

The greater the persona, the greater the shadow. It is a law of the psyche: "We add to ourselves a bright and a dark, and the more light means more night."[1164] It would be similar to a pneumatic device: the higher the piston rises, the more dark fluid gushes up into the cylinder! The excellence of the mask is usually compensated by a less than desirable "private life" going on behind it.[1165] "These identifications with a social role are a very fruitful source of neuroses. A man cannot get rid of himself in favor of an artificial personality without punishment.[1166]

The shadow becomes an expression of the unhealing psychic wound. It continues to unfold new depths of painful contents consisting of everything a person refuses to acknowledge about himself,[1167] while at the same time offering obstinate resistance to moral control and almost impossible to influence.[1168]

Everyone is assaulted by a personal "shadow." Jung used this term to describe all those contents in our unconscious which have been repressed as being contrary to the self we wish to show the world (the "personal"). Miller describes the shadow as:

> ..the collection of uncivilized desires and feelings that simply have no place in cultural society. The shadow is everything we don't want to be. Or rather it is perhaps everything we would *like* to be but don't dare. The shadow is everything we don't want others to know about us. It is everything we don't even want to know about ourselves and have thus conveniently 'forgotten' through denial and repression.[1169]

Jung notes that the goal of becoming a whole person involves becoming aware, conscious, of one's shadow:

> Whatever man's wholeness, or the self, may mean *per se*, empirically it is an image of the goal of life spontaneously produced by the unconscious, irrespective of the wishes and fears of the conscious mind. It stands for the goal of the total man .. with or without the consent of his will.[1170]

In order to be a whole person, one must have a story. In order to have a story, one must come up against something. Sanford wisely notes, "If we are to become whole, we will have led a life in which darkness has been faced, and an encounter with evil has been risked."[1171]

Due to the one-sided development of personality demanded by cultural influences, the one-sided product eventually becomes empty; one is renewed by "realization of the shadow."[1172] since it also includes positive, as well as negative, contents, e.g., ".. normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc."[1173]

Such a struggle cannot be accomplished by rational means. When the shadow is willfully repressed, it does not disappear; it merely goes into the unconscious (where we are not aware of it and therefore do not control it, where it becomes mingled with other very primitive contents in the unconscious) and erupts volcanically in unconscious behavior, accidents, dreams, slips of the tongue, sometimes in very dangerous and destructive ways,[1174] especially when we are tired, weak, or under stress:

> The naïve reader may imagine that when the dark aspects disappear they are no longer there in reality. But that is not the case at all, as experience shows. What actually happens is that the conscious mind is then able to free itself from the fascination of evil and is no longer obliged to live it compulsively. The darkness and the evil have not gone up in smoke, they have merely withdrawn into the unconscious owing to loss of energy, where they

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[1163] Jung, The Relation Between.., *Para 227.*
[1164] Jung, *Archetypes*, Para 563.
[1165] Jung, *Relations Between..*, Para 306.
[1166] *Ibid.*, Para 307.
[1167] Jung, *Archetypes*, Para 513.
[1168] Jung, *Aion*, Para. 16.
[1169] Miller, *Make Friends*, p. 23.
[1170] Jung, *Answer to Job*, Para. 743.
[1171] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 19.
[1172] Jung, *On the Nature of the Psyche*, Para 409.
[1173] Jung, *Aion*, Para 423.
[1174] Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Para 514.

> remain unconscious so long as all is well with their conscious. But if the conscious should find itself in a critical or doubtful situation, then it soon becomes apparent that the shadow has not dissolved into nothing but is only waiting for a favorable opportunity to reappear as a projection upon one's neighbor.[1175]

And,

> Nothing is ever lost .. Outwardly it is forgotten, but inwardly not at all.[1176]

And,

> The shadow is a living part of the personality and therefore wants to live with it in some form. It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness.[1177]

The moral effort required to know one's own shadow, then, means facing the dark aspects of one's personality as really a part of one's total self. The effort, notes Jung, meets with considerable resistance.[1178] Usually one is most revolted by what one finds in their shadow. To appreciate this, Miller suggests:

> Imagine drawing your mouth together and gathering a pool of saliva. Now gently spit that pool of saliva into a drinking glass. Then do it again, and continue to do it until you have accumulated, say, half an inch of your saliva in the glass. Now look at it, study it, contemplate it–and then drink it. Most of us have the same type of reaction to our shadow–the very thought of this is repulsive. It is truly my own; it is a part of me. But drink my saliva! Make friends with my shadow! Yech! Get rid of it![1179]

Yet, this is necessary in order to be whole:

> A dim premonition tells us that we cannot be whole without this negative side, that we have a body which, like all bodies, casts a shadow, and that if we deny this body we cease to be three-dimensional and become flat and without substance.[1180]

There is no psychic wholeness without imperfection. Jung continually emphasizes that the goal of life is wholeness, not one-sided perfection. The Greek word in the Biblical imperative to be "perfect" means to be "completed," to become what one is meant to become. Completeness requires "owning" everything a person is: "..and for this the 'thorn in the flesh' is needed, the suffering of defects without which there is no progress and no ascent."[1181] The Christian Jungian writer, John A. Sanford, writes that the verse "you must be perfect"[1182] does not command "perfectionism:"

> It is not a matter of achieving some impossible and inhuman saint-like condition, but of being fulfilled as the person we were created to be. We are to be complete or whole, our lives and personalities brought to the conclusion which God has intended, and not to become perfect in the narrow and one-sided meaning of the word.. [perfection] can be established only in persons whose very faults and failures have contributed to the development within them of their highest potential and greatest capacity for love.[1183]

The movement towards wholeness of being is achieved not only by continual infusion of goodness, righteousness, and morality, but also through acceptance and conscious incorporation of one's dark side. "I am not a complete person until I incorporate into my conscious self that dark side of my person which is every bit as much a part of me as is that bright self which I parade before the world."[1184]

To avoid acknowledgement of one's shadow makes one dangerously vulnerable to it:[1185] it means that one will "see" the contents of one's shadow in other people–a projection in which the other may, indeed, legitimately possess certain qualities–maybe not, however–, but whenever there is an emotional reaction towards someone else, these same qualities are in one's self as well, only not acknowledged. The law of projection is: "you don't see what isn't in you." Projection makes it impossible to "see" the other person for whom they really are and therefore makes realistic inter-personal relationships impossible. Projections evanesce when one acknowledges one's shadow, the beam in one's own eye and doesn't focus upon the speck in

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[1175] Jung, *Archetypes*, Para 477.
[1176] *Ibid.*, Para 481.
[1177] *Ibid.*, Para 44.
[1178] Jung, *Aion*, Para 14; Jung, *Archetypes*, Para 44.
[1179] Miller, *Make Friends*, p. 114.
[1180] Jung, *On the Psychology of the Unconscious*, Para 35.
[1181] Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, Para 208.
[1182] Mt. 5.48.
[1183] Sanford, *The Kingdom Within*, p. 128.
[1184] Miller, *Make Friends*, p. 12.
[1185] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

the brother's eye.[1186]It is such a safe practice to become preoccupied with helping other people, healing others, when we are sick unto death with our own disease, to "..go around offering to pick nits from others' garments when we are clothed in stinking, filthy, infected rags,[1187]–that way, we do not have to face our own issues, pains, hurts, sickness, if one is so ready to "rescue" someone who is crying or hurting, it is probably not the hurting person's hurt that is troubling the rescuer; it is *his own* hurt that he sees in the "hurting" person which he cannot tolerate, so he rushes in to "fix" the person.

Not to be aware of one's own shadow keeps us from the realization that behaviors, characteristics, or manners of other people which annoy us are probably projected material from our own unconscious.[1188]

> ..when you feel a sort of burning in your chest, an awareness in yourself that someone ought to 'pay,' or a sensation that you would like to call a person a 'dirty dog,' a 'brazen hussy,' a 'controlled psychopath,' or some similarly caustic title, you can be rather sure that this is your shadow, and no good will come of it unless you stop and turn the ego around and find it in yourself before you start out after it in others.[1189]

Conversely, "Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves," Jung notes.[1190]

It is important to note that acknowledgment of, becoming conscious of, one's own shadow, does not mean identification with or becoming one's shadow! That is always disastrous. It simply means that one acknowledge: "this is also part of me," to be aware it is in one's self, and to stop seeing in others what is really not admitted about oneself.

EXAMPLE: THE VIETNAM VETERAN "REMEMBERS"

The Biblical understanding of "remember" (זכר) is operative in the unhealing wound experienced by numerous, if not all, Vietnam veterans.

"To remember" does not simply mean to recall something interesting and ponder it, relate it to other events, appreciate or analyze it from a non-involved distance. It is rather a matter of being *in* the event itself. The event remembered controls life.

> When the soul remembers something, it does not mean that it has an objective memory image of some thing or event, but that this image is called forth in the soul and assists in determining its direction, its action .... The Israelite .. cannot at all imagine memory, unless at the same time an effect on the totality and its direction of will is taken for granted.[1191]

When something is remembered, it is "taken to heart," the heart understood to be an expression for the total personality.[1192] "To speak of the past is to make it effectual, authoritative for today."[1193] If God does not remember sins, they are removed; for God to remember the covenant, or His mercy means to put them into practice.[1194]

One of the conditions of many Vietnam veterans is that they continually "remember;" they cannot forget, and their lives and actions are determined thereby. "Try as they do to escape it, the past pursues them."[1195] One Nam vet stated: "I cannot speak of what was without speaking of what is." One replies to "When were you in Vietnam?" by saying, "Last night." To demand that one should be able by willpower to forget the past is as unrealistic as telling a parent to forget a death of their child the day after a loss! With the Vietnam vet, time does not heal all wounds. When so many friends die in such ghastly ways over a prolonged period, at a time in life when one's ways of reacting to the world are being determined, is bound to create certain results. Bruno Bettleheim has written of the long-term effects of the concentration camp experience, how one's life is permanently altered.[1196] It is unlikely that a victim of rape will ever again look at a male the way as before the rape, or that the child of an alcoholic parent will ever not remember the issue of alcohol–if nothing else, as something to be against! This knowledge always remembers.

These are the wounds that never really heal; like diabetes or heart trouble, life is never again the same The "knowledge of good and evil" that came from "becoming like the gods," *i.e.*, controlling the tremendous power over life and death, or

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[1186] Mt. 7.3-5.
[1187] Miller, *Make Friends*, p. 82.
[1188] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[1189] *Ibid.*, p. 91.
[1190] Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 247.
[1191] Pedersen, *Israel*, I-II, pp. 106, 107.
[1192] Rising, " זכר," p. 65.
[1193] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[1194] *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 72.
[1195] Marin, "Living in Moral Pain," p. 74.
[1196] *The Informed Heart.*

having experienced this knowledge passively, is never forgotten. To repress and disregard only forces it to erupt volcanically from the unconscious in episodes of rage or depression, hypersensitivity to noise, inability to become intimate (therefore, divorce, frequent geographical relocations, and job changes), experiencing emotional numbness, all while re-experiencing the event itself in nightmares, flashbacks, or intrusive thoughts.[1197] That much repression occurred was due to the efforts by the government to put Vietnam behind us and by the veteran himself to forget the horrors and terrors he experienced, especially when others would call him a "baby killer," or ask "how does it feel to kill someone?"[1198]

Now that which has been repressed, sown as it were as a seed in the fertile ground of the unconscious, becoming intermingled there with violent and primitive contents, erupts as an unhealing psychic would.

This entire paper has been motivated to examine if there might not be some positive aspect to this tremendous burden of pain and fear, hurt, and rejection, experienced by the Vietnam veteran. Can he be the "suffering servant," a "wounded healer," a "shaman?" Will healing come via transference from within his psyche, a healing for all society? Or, must he forever live expelled from Paradise having experienced what Bill Mahedy calls "..the evils which irrevocably alter consciousness..[1199]

It is difficult to forget the knowledge that one's government does not care about people. Agent Orange has become a symbol that communicates inability to own responsibility (*i.e.*, "able-to-respond") on the part of the government. Not infrequently, a Vietnam veteran will angrily exclaim, "How do you explain the commandment 'thou shalt not kill' and some chaplain saying 'go out there and kill a Commie for Christ?'" Efforts to explain that the Hebrew word does not mean "kill" in a broad, general sense, but the kind of killing that might more appropriately be translated "murder" is to no avail; the guilt remains. A psychiatrist who was at Khe Sanh during the battle there correctly notes ".. subjectively, any killing can be experienced as an atrocity by the killer, even when committed in self-defense."[1200]

It is difficult to forget the fact that one is alive while one's buddies, some of whom were married, or supporting others, or just good people, were killed. "Survival guilt," linked with four predisposing factors, is felt by almost all:

> .. a person who was in a leadership position and strongly felt protective of his men; a soldier who lost a dear friend in battle; an individual who survived unscathed while others were maimed and/or died; and a man who entertained fantasies and expectations of personal heroism.[1201]

It is difficult to forget the realization that actions have consequences–such ghastly consequences, that one is perplexed how now to live. The paradigm is the Final Judgment scene of the separation of sheep and goats wherein judgment of eternal bliss or eternal punishment is based on *unknowingly* having done or not having done very simple actions of human kindness,[1202] of is a matter of not even having "seen" a hungry and needy Lazarus.[1203] The Vietnam veteran knows how little actions, perhaps unknowingly done, have such terrible consequences as much as he knows the ravages of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder *now* based on emotional numbness *then*–or how so many lives were lost by what seemed to be a small error of judgment at the time. He knows how something like Agent orange, which was probably not even noticed or regarded then, has such ravaging consequences now, much like radiation many years previously absorbed causes cancer many years after the exposure. And one becomes almost afraid to live in society lest another small mistake cause untold future grief!

It is difficult to forget what man is capable of, of what each person personally is capable of! Vietnam veterans may not be acquainted with the results of Stanley Migram's experiments concerning "obedience" in which almost anyone would kill anyone else if told to do so by an authority figure,[1204] But, he certainly does know how he and others cheered a napalm strike, or felt a rush at seeing a SPOOKY at work or a B-52 Arc Light strike, not to say those who participated in egregious atrocities themselves!

It is difficult to forget abandonment and rejection–by the government, by society upon return, and even by God while there then and now. Mahedy writes: "The veteran who asked me, 'Where was God, that son-of-a-bitch, when the rounds were coming in at Khe Sanh?' asked the right question. The mystery of iniquity is too profound.."[1205] The experience of God's absence from the world precisely in those situations which seem to demand a providential presence is the experience of evil by the Vietnam veteran as well as of Jesus when He quoted the 22nd Psalm, "My God, my god, why have you forsaken me?"

[1197] American Psychiatric Association, *DSM-III*, p. 238.
[1198] Even I was told by a gasoline station attendant, upon seeing my various ribbons on my uniform, "You get those for killing people, don't you?" and he didn't mean to be antagonistic--and, I am a Chaplain, a non-combatant!
[1199] Mahedy, "It Don't Mean,.,," p. 68.
[1200] Howard, "The Vietnam Warrior..," p. 133.
[1201] Glover, "Survival Guilt," p. 395.
[1202] Mt. 25.31-46
[1203] Lk 16.19-31.
[1204] Milgam, "Behavioral Study of Obedience."
[1205] Mahedy, "It Don't Mean Nothing..," p. 67.

(the exegesis indicates it should be "not left alone," but "left helpless")[1206] Elie Wiesel wrote of the Nazis hanging a small child. Someone asked, "Where is God? Where is He?" as the child hung for more than an hour and a half, dying in slow agony. Then a voice–"Where is He? Here he is. He is hanging here on this gallows.."[1207] The Christian asks, "Where is God?" and answers, "He is on the cross!" One at Khe Sanh could ask "Where is God?" and answer, "Here He is; He is being carried after his bunker was hit; he is this body with no head, only dangling shreds of flesh hanging out of where his neck was!" carried tenderly by his chaplain who "bears our griefs and carries our sorrows."

But for those whose god is the American one of power and majesty, of large numbers of people and impressive programs and buildings, certainly one who is a grand success, no divine meaning is possible. God is absent.

It is difficult to forget that one is defiled, unclean, having come into contact with the culturally defined unclean object of war–spit upon by his fellow countrymen when he answered the call "We will bear any burden, pay any price to guarantee the existence of freedom throughout the world." Like the leper, he cries to those in his society "unclean! unclean!" and withdraws lest he pollute others. Radkolnikov (*Crime and Punishment*) might have attempted to justify his killing of the old woman, Aliona Ivanovna, that she didn't deserve to live eating up other people's lives,[1208]that he is an extraordinary case with a right to break the law.[1209] But the guilt gnaws, and he admits, "Did I kill the old hag? No, not the old hag–I killed myself! I went there, and all at once I did away with myself forever!"[1210] The crime could not be put away. It haunted him until he sought his punishment in suffering.

The Vietnam veteran knows all too well the capacity for error that leads to frightening results–the error of taking a hill without supporting arms, the error of fighting a war with no support, the error of being committed to a conflict that one isn't supposed to win, the error of falling for pious words that rang through the country with such force from the charismatic John F. Kennedy: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask rather what you can do for your country." The Vietnam veteran remains isolated due to a moral sensitivity he has that others do not share. Jung described how knowledge can isolate: "Loneliness does not come from having no people about one, but from being unable to communicate the things that seem important to oneself, or from holding certain views which others find inadmissible ... if a man knows more than others, he becomes lonely."[1211] Plato goes even further: those enslaved in the world of shadows want to *kill* the one who has come to "know" reality and communicate to them what it really is! Yet, the point is that precisely this one is the only one who can inform those who are imprisoned in their mediocrity.[1212]

The Vietnam veteran's knowledge is similar to that of Oedipus. Certain kinds of knowledge are irreversible; one can't "unknow" what one has come to know. Certain actions and perceptions permanently alter an individual's life.

Oedipus was born to King Laius and his queen, Jocasta, but was then abandoned as an infant in the mountains, his ankles pierced and bound with a thong (hence the name "Oedipus" which is literally "swollen foot"). This was because the oracle of Apollo at Delphi had prophesied that if Laius had a son, the son would kill him. Laius and Jocasta were certain their son must have died of hunger and thirst or been torn to pieces by wild beasts.[1213]

However, a shepherd that had been chosen to expose the infant had pity on the innocent boy and handed him over to a fellow herdsman who pastured the sheep of Polybus, king of Corinth. Polybus took the infant to his wife, Merope, who raised him as if he were her own son.

While an adolescent, he was jeered by a jealous child that he wasn't the son of the king and queen of Corinth. Oedipus went to the oracle at Delphi who told him he would kill his father and marry his mother. Horrified, Oedipus, thinking the king and queen of Corinth were his parents, left home to frustrate the oracle's prophecy.

Enroute he met a chariot in a narrow crossroads and, in a senseless rage, killed the old man in the chariot–who happened to be his real father, though not wearing any of the identifying regalia of his office. he was unaware of having done anything more than revenging a common Phocian or Boeotian. He neared the gates of the City of Thebes and met up with a sphinx who had plagued the city with riddles: if a passerby could not solve the riddle, the sphinx tore him to pieces and devoured him.

[1206] Gould, *Mari*, (International Critical Commentary), on Mark 15.34, p. 294.
[1207] Wiesel, *Night*, p. 76.
[1208] Doestovsky, *Crime and Punishment*, p. 73.
[1209] *Ibid.*, p. 256.
[1210] *Ibid.*, p. 407.
[1211] Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 356.
[1212] Plato, *Republic*, Bk. 7.
[1213] *Cf.*, Schwab, *Gods and heroes*, pp. 230-240 for the story of Oedipus.

The King of Thebes, Creon, had decreed that if anyone could free the city of this plague, he could have his sister as a reward. His sister was Jocasta! Odedipus solved the rather famous riddle,[1214] and the sphinx throws himself off the cliff, the city is freed of the threat, and Oedipus marries Jocasta.

Many years pass. Then a plague of economic turmoil hits the city: hills and fields burn with drought; there is bloodshed and destruction. The oracle says the punishment is because the land is harboring an evil one who killed his father and married his mother. Oedipus declared that if anyone knew of the murderer of King Laius, he step forward and report it, and the murderer was cursed.

Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex*, dramatically portrays the scenes as Oedipus gradually leans *he* is the evil one.. Jocasta hangs herself; Oedipus tears the golden clasps off her robe and smacks them into his own eyeballs, blinding himself, and places himself in exile, in social isolation, regarding himself a monster. He returns to the wilderness.

Paul Diehl develops the deeper significance of this myth in terms of titanic rebellion against the spirit.[1215] The "foot" represents the state and destiny of the soul, as when Typhon cuts the tendons of Zeus' feet and in the story of Achilles' vulnerable foot which symbolizes the vulnerability of his soul on account of his anger, the cause of his downfall. Oedipus' cut tendons represent a diminishing of the soul's resources: "Swollen foot" means "swollen soul," *i.e.*, an inflated ego swollen with vanity. He is ambitious to have power over others, and thus tackles the Sphinx (a symbol of the destructive consequences of a rule by a king who is perverse: "Half woman, half lion, the Sphinx symbolizes living and perverse domination."[1216] Oedipus' neurosis is traceable, as are most neuroses, to his parents' actions–in this case, their abandonment of him;. Oedipus' weapon is his trust in his knowledge, by which he conquers the Sphinx.

In the sunken road (symbol of the unconscious) he encounters what he considers "an ordinary person," "just anyone" who orders him to move aside and causes Oedipus to become enraged. Laius represents the mythical father, *i.e.*, spirit. Oedipus killed "spirit" and marries his mother, *i.e.*, an excessive attachment to the earthly, the symbol of desire. He binds himself to exalt his desires. He marries (chooses) banalization. Seduced by power, he releases his desire by reigning as king as he continues to kill his father, the spirit.

The country becomes torn and loses its wholeness and unity, characteristic of neurosis. Oedipus realizes *he* is the guilty one, not only of the external fate. That is only symbolic of the real issue: ".. his destiny is no longer the result of chance, but instead the result of his own fault ... he killed the spirit so as to be able to marry earthly pleasures. he has betrayed what he believed to be the sense of life, the very aspirations of his youth."[1217]

Jocasta dies which means that the allurement of earthly pleasures has ceased: Oedipus can no longer enjoy life's pleasures; he is horrified at them. Then he plucks out his own eyes; he blinds himself in order to cut himself off from the world and its seduction in order to retire into himself and find reconciliation with the spirit he has betrayed.[1218]

> Thus the symbolism stresses that he who is diseased in soul, the neurotic individual, blinded by repression, tortured by guilt, can only be cured by 'blinding himself' to seductions and by recognizing his guilt.[1219]

It is very easy for a Vietnam veteran to see himself mirrored in this myth: he also is the traveler who in adolescence ventures out into the world with the question of self-identify: "Who am I?" which is really always a question of "whose am I?" to do battle with the monsters of life. He it is who kills "just anybody," not aware of doing anything extraordinary, perhaps also quick to rage in battle, attempting to free the land of sphinx monsters that plague the land–Communism, or heroically to challenge danger. He is the one with the swollen ego, inflated by military power of life and death. Then come the many, many years, characteristic of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder until economic disorder and destruction–unemployment, suicide or killing others, substance and alcohol abuse–;plague him. And he is is who lives as an "outcast," a pariah in exile.

The self-awareness of Oedipus is the self-awareness of the Vietnam veteran. He is exiled not only because of what he has done or seen done but because of the questions it raises for him and the unsettling questions it raises for everyone else in society also. The prevailing Civil Religion (*viz.*, our country only does what is right; we are always on God's side–or rather, He is always on our side!; we are always the winners and always the most powerful!) has been smashed by Vietnam. The prevailing

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[1214] The riddle is a play on the underlying theme of the entire story: the *feet*: "In the morning it does on four feet, and at noon on two, and in the evening on three. Of all creatures living, it is the only one that changes the number of its feet, yet just when it walks on the most feet, its speed and strength are at their lowest ebb." The answer: "It is man." (Walks on both feet and hands as an infant--the morning, walks on two when grown up, and walks on three (both feet and a cane) in old age--the evening).

[1215] Diehl, *Symbolism*, pp. 124-137

[1216] *Ibid., p. 129.*

[1217] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[1218] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[1219] *Ibid.*

cultural wisdom, models of human nature, and modes of therapy, are all inadequate to explain the moral pain of the Vietnam veteran or provide ways of dealing with it.[1220] Marin writes: "It may be hat certain acts and certain kinds of guilt set men irrevocably apart from their fellows.."[1221]

> He is an angry man; he is a pariah. he is a non-hero soldier, however brave he has been ... He is a wounded, angry, and estranged man who has no place in the society that sent him to war. And we have done this to him.[1222]

A POSITION: THE WOUNDED HEALER

Only the wounded can heal; only the hurt can help. This doesn't mean that those who now have or who have had wounds or hurts will, *ipso facto*, be helpful to others, that if there is to be any help, it probably will come from them. Even on a global scale, Solzhenitzyn, in his famous Harvard University commencement address of June 8,1978, while sharply critical of Communism, Asked if the West might not be the model for healing:

> But should I be asked, instead, whether I would propose the West, much as it is today, as a model to my country, I would frankly have to answer negatively. No, I could not recommend your society as an ideal for the transformation of ours. Through deep suffering, people in our country have now achieved a spiritual development of such intensity that the Western system in its present state of spiritual exhaustion does not look attractive.[1223]

Sanford truly writes; "..Healing can perhaps only be truly understood by people who have been ill and then have become well."[1224] Only those who are ill seek a physician; those who are self-sufficient will probably remain in their ego-centricity. Sanford truly writes; ".. it is those who have recognized that they have been injured to hurt in some way in life who are most apt to come into the kingdom ... unless a person has recognized h is own need, even his despair, he is not really for the kingdom.."[1225]

Only the empty can be filled with that which may fill another empty person, whether they mourn, are poor in spirit, are dejected, hunger and thirst, etc.[1226] Only those who have shared the same conditions of life can speak the authentic word which is also authoritative. Others may indeed have the truthful message, the correct words, the appropriate ideas and motivation, but they probably will not be heard. Only a recovering alcoholic is perhaps of real assistance to another alcoholic. Those who have been addicted are the most helpful–perhaps the *only* helpful ones–in confronting an addict who denies he has a problem. The one with car trouble on the highway is more probably assisted by someone driving an old pick-up truck, not by the one driving an expensive car. Victims of rape are best helped by other victims of rape, who, if nothing else, encourage and facilitate externalization through verbalizations of the trauma in a place where it is safe to do so and with those who hear with understanding ears. A military officer who has been enlisted is perhaps the one the enlisted persons will appreciate most: he knows. Henri Nouwen writes: "The great illusion of leadership is to think that man can be led out of the desert by someone who has never been there."[1227] Like the Apostle Thomas, we naturally and legitimately ask, "Where are the wounds,"[1228] *i.e.*, "Where is the identification with my condition?" Playing at an appearance of being someone who cares and is concerned never works in the end, and only creates disdainful repugnance; it is only the one who has been actually hurt and really healed that is of any usefulness. The oldest myths of healing emphasize that it is precisely because the healer is wounded that he has the power to heal.[1229]

It is not the professional "helper" who is usually the most helpful; it is rather the peers who have been found to be most helpful. Bruce Larson emphasizes one-on-one encounters, or small group (e.g., four) sharing, and writes: "I am personally convinced that this one-on -one ministry can best be practiced by amateurs. It does not require professional clergy, doctors, or psychologists, though these people can give us all tremendous insight and help."[1230] Elsewhere, he writes, "What is new in our time is the growing awareness that in some cases the paraprofessional or nonprofessional is better able to do the job

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[1220] *Cf.*, Marin, "Living in Moral Pain," p. 68.
[1221] *Ibid.*, p. 77.
[1222] Howard, "The Vietnam Warrior..," p. 130.
[1223] Solzhenitsyn, *A World Split..*, pp. 33-35.
[1224] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 116.
[1225] Sanford, *Kingdom Within*, pp. 68-69.
[1226] *Cf.*, Mt. 5.3-12. Sanford, Healing, p. 116.
[1227] Nouwen, *Wounded Healer*, p. 72. Sanford, *Kingdom* Within, pp. 68-69.
[1228] Jn. 20.25.
[1229] Groesbeck, "The Psychiatrist..," p. 135.
[1230] Larson, *Ask Me to Dance*, p. 24.

than the professional,"[1231] The reason is probably hat it is the friend who will not reject or judge and will therefore allow a person to unburden fully, that performs the most positive therapeutic activity. Obviously, one who has had the same problems is in no position to be judgmental! It is not the one who is "holier-than-thou" the sinless one, who is helpful; it is the one who has been assaulted and wounded–and subsequently healed–that is in a position to understand fully and share the appropriate healing. it is the "one who became sin who knew no sin, that we might be the righteousness of God.[1232] and those who participate in that structure of being, that is of any real help.

A veteran of the Vietnam War once claimed that he had adequately adjusted to civilian life, not troubled by recurring nightmares, flashbacks, stress, episodes of rage, anger, depression, feelings of guilt at having survived when his friends died, jumping into a ditch at the sudden retort of a car, etc., that so many other Vietnam veterans experience in PTSD. Now, some sixteen years later, while watching the dedication of the "unknown" Vietnam veteran in Arlington Cemetery, he was suddenly overcome by tears, and while one of his children wiped them away and tried to comfort him, he felt exceedingly alone, like he was the unknown Vietnam soldier, and that night became plagued by nightmares distinguished by their vibrant vividness of smells, , sights, and sounds,. He thought: "Am I going crazy?" He stated he used to wonder what was wrong with other Vietnam veterans because he never had those problems and assumed they were using Vietnam as a crutch on which to blame their problems. Now he knows. He himself has the pain–or rather, is now aware of the pain he always had but did not know he had (much like one can be depressed or angry and not know it since these conditions are not merely "feelings"). There was a man in his office who was seriously wounded and was struggling to keep his life in order and not always doing too good a job at it. There had been difficulties relating to this man and all his problems. "Now I understand him," he said. "Now I can appreciate his situation."

This same Vietnam veteran also noted how his father-in-law who had been gassed in WW I, never spoke of his painful war experiences to anyone until he began to talk of his Vietnam experiences: then the old man's pain gushed forth. It was safe. Unfortunately Nam vets rarely talk of their experiences for the same reason the WW I veteran didn't.

> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathesize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are–yet without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.[1233]

Viktor Frankl, writing out of his concentration camp experiences, wrote: "Suffering ceases to be suffering in some way at the moment it finds a meaning such as the meaning of a sacrifice."[1234] One can suffer almost anything if a purpose to it is realized. The meaning may be the gift one becomes to others thereby. One can only give what one has; only those who have needed the Physician[1235] can share what that Physician has given them: the Physician. It's never a matter of ideas; it's always a matter of life. Only what has been put right in oneself can one put right in another. The great task of healing a broken, fearful society desperate for hope, will come only from those who have been crushed by its burdens. The one who suffers pain, rejection, fragmentation, is indeed more holy and can reflect God to us because the Scriptures repeatedly indicate God is present to such who are the poor, and holiness is a derivative condition since none are holy but God alone, and those who are in His presence participate in His holiness.[1236] much like objects in a warm room become warm or objects near radioactivity become radioactive. Only that which is in He Who is That He Is, is; in Him we live and move and have our being.[1237] The only authoritative voice today is the voice of the poor.

> ...the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort .. comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.[1238]

Two approaches to healing seem to be current:

There are those who attempt to assist others as they would fix a defective piece of machinery, isolating and focusing on the problem, categorizing the person as an instance of a problem, maintaining a professional stance of scientific, objective, and unemotional distance, becoming analytical, applying a technique or argument or giving advice, referring to something that is written about that kind of problem, preach a word, etc. This stance is adopted to preclude becoming overwhelmed

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[1231] Larson, *Risky Christianity*, p. 110.
[1232] 2 Cor. 5.21.
[1233] Heb. 4.15-16.
[1234] Frrankl, *Man's Search*, p. 113.
[1235] Mt. 9.12.
[1236] *Cf.* Benko, *The Meaning*, p. 70.
[1237] Acts 17.28.
[1238] 2 Cor 1.3-5.

and ineffective. If a surgeon were to attend his own feelings, he might slip his scalpel and injure or kill his patient; if one vomits and cries over a mangled body, it is unlikely that effective first aid will be rendered.

On the other hand are those who are concerned with the person, not the problem, knowing that one problem may very well be resolved but others may arise like so many heads of the Hydra, and that real healing involves the *whole* person. This type of helper becomes intensely present to the person, eyeball-to-eyeball, with empathy and internalizing the other person and providing healing and transformation through active and intense involvement.

Unlike the former, the latter can be silent, need not know all the answers–(in fact, best doesn't, since knowledge of answers may filter seeing the situation so that one doesn't see the situation or the person, but the categories of what one knows), and can avoid creating or nurturing a dependency relationship of sufferer to the "expert." Nouwen writes:

> ..when we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand. The friend who can be *silent* with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not-knowing, not curing, not-healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is the friend who cares.[1239]

Noting that cure without care is dehumanizing (because it focuses on the ailment, not the person), he writes that real cure involves participation in the pain, solidarity in the suffering, and sharing in the experience of brokenness: ".. the temptation is that we use our expertise to keep a safe distance from that which really matters and forget that in the long run cure without care is more harmful than helpful."[1240]

C. G. Jung in his autobiographical comments notes:

> I am often asked about my psychotherapeutic or analytic method .. Therapy is different in every case. When a doctor tells me that he adheres strictly to this or that method, I have my doubts about his therapeutic effect ... the cure ought to grow naturally out of the patient himself ... I treat every patient as individually as possible, because the solution of the problem is always an individual one .. a doctor .. must guard against falling into any specific, routine approach ... We need a different language for every patient ... The crucial point is that I confront the patient as one human being to another."[1241]

Inter-personal activity is an I-Thou relationship rather than an I-It, as Buber so insightfully writes. Reality does not dwell in concepts anymore than the living God dwells in houses made by human hands[1242]–or minds, the products of which seek to contain–and therefore control and manipulate or make idolatrous–people and God, "person-reality" by knowing their name. As Jung writes, "The spirit does not dwell in concepts, but in deeds and in facts. Words butter no parsnips.."[1243]

The gift of wounds, the blessing of psychic pain that is, let it be most strongly asserted, not sought–in fact one which must be addressed as Jesus addressed it: "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will,"[1244]–that which fits a person to help others by being a "wounded healer," has a widely divergent, multi-dimensional tradition reflecting something essentially characteristic of being human that only is fulfilled in the Christ, including shamanism, the myth of Aesclepius, the Suffering Servant model in Isaiah, and prophetic existence generally, the psychological phenomena of transference, and finally, the Theology of the Cross (*Theologia Crucis*). All these seemingly unrelated expressions elucidate a basic expression of a motif of being, the method by which God works to heal and give life.

SIX PERSPECTIVES

THE SHAMAN

The healer in primitive tribal society as well as much of the world's disadvantaged populations is the shaman. Sanford observes that all the major religions of the world, in fact, are shamanistic in their core, teaching the need for a death and rebirth.[1245] The shaman's healing technique mediates and presents power from the forces of reality in order to restore wholeness and harmony in individuals and in the tribe. The shaman is a liminal (*i.e.*, "in-between," in the doorway, the limen)

[1239] Nouwen *Out of Solitude*, p. 34.
[1240] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[1241] Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 131.
[1242] Acts 7.48
[1243] Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 144.
[1244] Mt. 26.39.
[1245] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 63.

person, human, yet more than human.[1246] "Only the shaman is able to behave as both a god and a human. The shaman then is an interspecies being, a channel for the gods."[1247] Eliade defines shamanism as:

> ..all the practices by which supernatural power may be acquired by mortals, the exercise of that power either for good or evil, and all the concepts and beliefs associated with these practices.[1248]

One becomes a shaman by a most excruciatingly painful initiation process which begins by separation from the rest of their community in order to have access to the sacred region,[1249] the realm of chaos and pure energy, the "limen," "..where power exists in a free and untransformed state."[1250] Beginning with the separation from the mundane world, from normal, secular life, the future shaman begins his personal transformation like the formation of the American character by the "frontier experience" (Turner)–struggling alone, as one faces the Unknown, the *mysterium*. "The approach to this infinite mystery is made alone. For only in the solitudes do the spirits that destroy and teach appear."[1251] The shaman must "..renounce the simple human condition and become a more or less pliant instrument for some manifestation of the sacred."[1252] The sham thus becomes one who experiences and reflects the divine; shamans are "..those who experience the sacred with greater intensity than the rest of the community–those who, as it were, incarnate the sacred, because they live it abundantly, or rather 'are lived' by the religious 'form' that has chosen them."[1253] When the shaman dances or sings, it is a passive phenomena: the shaman doesn't dance or sing; he *is* danced or sung by the powerful energies he channels.[1254]

Future shamans are usually chosen because they are sickly, especially if they exhibit psychological disorders.

> ..shamans are called and enter the field under an inner compulsion to do so. They are seized, oppressed, and tormented by 'evil' spirits and there is no way out except to become a shaman.[1255]

Sickness is the doorway to death; there is no rebirth apart from death.

> ...the invitation to the shamanic vocation comes through an illness or severe psychological crisis that is likened to death. This is followed by a rebirth, but as a result of the violent struggle to regain health, the personality of the shaman is greatly enlarged. he becomes a more conscious person because of his woundedness.[1256]

Separation from the mundane world is a journey of the experience of death. Symbolic death is represented in all initiation ceremonies.[1257] The future shaman "..experiences death in order to gain control over the elements of the world of the untamed. The withdrawal into solitude through sickness opens the way for the inner initiation to take place.[1258] "Death furnishes all with life."[1259] Some shamans wear a costume decorated like a skeleton: a personification of death. The neophyte shaman dies to finitude in order to attain knowledge of the immortal.[1260] In psychological terms, the requisite death experience means a deep invasion from the unconscious that takes the ego down to its bare bones.[1261] Usually this is in the form of a deep and severe depression of which the shaman cures himself by going into a trance and making artistic productions (like dancing, painting, or poetry) which he then shares with his community.[1262] The depressions are usually a signal that something is struggling to die within him; positive results occur when one participates in the painful process of allowing these negative parts of one's ego and oneself, to die[1263] by letting-go of old patterns, being open and receptive, and risking the emotionally painful process of change.[1264]

[1246] *Cf.* Frim, Creation Spirituality.., pp. 22-23.
[1247] Halifax, *Shaman*, p. 14.
[1248] Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 298.
[1249] *Ibid*,., pp. 7, 8.
[1250] Halifax, *Shaman*, p. 6.
[1251] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[1252] Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 23.
[1253] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[1254] *Cf.* Halifax, *Shaman*, p. 59; this will be seen to be similar in the Asclepius myth: when healing occurs, it is the manifestation of Aesclepius.
[1255] Rosen, "The Pursuit of One's Own healing," pp. 37-38.
[1256] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 80.
[1257] Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 33.
[1258] Halifax, *Shaman*, p. 20.
[1259] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[1260] *Ibid.*, p. 76.
[1261] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 65.
[1262] Rosen, "The Pursuit..," p. 38.
[1263] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[1264] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

The scheme of the initiation ceremony encompasses suffering, death, and resurrection. Sickness and sufferings are initiatory tortures which may include being cut by knives, being tied in a stretched-out manner on the ground many days, being made delirious by being forced to drink large quantities of tobacco juice, all of which fit the neophyte to become a shaman. One or more of the following form the content of the initiation ceremonies: dismemberment of the body followed by a renewal of the internal organs and viscera; ascent to the sky and dialogue with the gods or spirits; descent to the underworld and conversation with spirits and souls of dead; various revelations, both religious and shamanic (secrets of the profession).[1265] The future shaman must experience death–his own, and then live. Only this will make a shaman.[1266]

The future shaman in the Jivaro tribe is beaten senseless, doesn't eat for many days, and loses consciousness as part of his ritual death.[1267] The candidate of the Aranda of Central Australia submits to an operation performed by two old medicine men: "They rub his body with rock crystals to the point of abrading the skin, press rock crystals into his scalp, pierce a hole under a fingernail of his right hand, and make an incision in his tongue."[1268] The Carib of Dutch Guiana, while *resting* on benches during their excruciating initiation, have their eyes rubbed with red-pepper juice and are intoxicated with the Takini plant which produces a high fever, making the novice shake every limb; it is believed spirits in him are tearing his body.[1269]

During the initiation ceremonies, the ravenous spirits of the Underworld dismember and consume the neophyte, thus releasing him to a higher order of existence.[1270] to achieve shamanic vision, understanding, and power. The neophyte is crushed, dismembered, fragmented, in order to be reconstituted a new and higher order of being. He feasts on the forces of reality; they feast on him. The shaman becomes one who has known the darkness of dismemberment and yet survived, is healed and cured, and therefore able to help others toward victory.. The principle is: "Only those who have passed through darkness successfully can help others through it," not "those who have successfully repressed or avoided darkness." Not mere suffering, hurt, and pain, but one who has been through suffering and conquered, forms the future shaman.

The shaman communicates with the spirits of the underworld or on the earth which are not regarded as necessarily "evil" or "demonic;" they are simply more practically influential and available, at hand.

> Benevolent as the gods and spirits 'above' may be, they are unfortunately passive and hence of almost no help in the drama of human existence. They inhabit 'the upper spheres of the sky, scarcely mingle in human affairs, and have relatively less influence on the course of life than the spirits of the '*bis* below.' who are vindictive, closer to the earth, albeit to men by ties of blood and a much stricter organization into clans.[1271]

It is important to emphasize that the power to heal comes directly from the spirits, not from cognitive knowledge. This, as Sanford writes, is in direct contrast to the contemporary scene in which we assume persons in the healing professions acquire what they need–their credentials–from schools in which they become adept technicians.[1272]

Shamans undergo their frightfully painful initiation process not for their own benefit; their role is social. Failure to shamanize will make the shaman sick: "..the shaman is called to a certain kind of life, and if he does not lead it properly, his power will turn against him and kill him."[1273] Their concern is with the community using sacred action to create order out of chaos. "Knowing intimately and personally the realm of sickness, decrepitude, dying and death readies the shaman for his or her actual mission.[1274] It is because of his knowledge of his own wounds that the shaman is able to heal another person.[1275]

The shaman is the tribal specialist of the soul;[1276] his chief function is healing.[1277] The two are related because illness is regarded as a matter of the soul–either it has strayed away or been stolen and the shaman must find, capture, and oblige it to return to its proper place in the patient's body,[1278] or, in some cases, a foreign substance/spirit has invaded the sick person

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[1265] Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 34.
[1266] *Ibid.*, p. 76.
[1267] *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.
[1268] *Ibid.*, p. 47. Note: rock crystals in Australia are believed to be solidified light and to be of celestial origin. The Kwakiutl shamans receive their power through rock crystals. (*Ibid.*, p. 138).
[1269] *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 130.
[1270] Halifax, *Shaman*, p. 78.
[1271] Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 186.
[1272] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 74.
[1273] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[1274] Halifax, *Shaman*, p. 92.
[1275] Grossbeck& Taylor, "The Psychiatrist," p. 137.
[1276] *Ibid.*, p. 229.
[1277] *Ibid.*, p. 299.
[1278] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

and "..in order to extract the evil spirits from the patient, the shaman is often obliged to take them into his own body; in doing so, he struggles and suffers more than the patient himself."[1279]

The shaman draws people to the world of the spirits on a one-on-one basis. Most people do not know God; they only hear stories *about* Him through the experiences of others. Religious structures that claim to lead people to God my keep people from their own experience of God, but not the shaman. The shaman has his power and authority from direct contact with the numinous inner world. He is an individual and can help people only in an individual way.[1280] This is in marked contrast to healing methods today "in which healing is collectivized, and virtually no effort is made to discover its meaning for the individual. As a result, many people remain ill or have to settle for a mediocre mode of functioning in life."[1281]

What impresses an outsider (e.g., Marin) about Vietnam veterans is how they are instantly able to care for each other; many have become shamanic. They have left the normal society or mundane reality, been exposed to painful initiatory rituals in boot camp and battle, been "torn up" by death of buddies fallen apart, in contact with the primeval. Many Vietnam veterans are quite artistic and become healed in seclusion while also producing art–books, poems, music, painting, sculpture, etc. Many must be engaged in helping other Vietnam veterans, *i.e.*, they must act as a shaman, or they become sick again. They do not achieve their competence via schooling but from their experience, a direct experience with the spiritual dimension of their souls via flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts, and acted-out (unconscious) behavior.

Christian application is likewise obvious. Baptism becomes the symbol of death to new life; the Christian no longer regards one "after the flesh"[1282] and death becomes the occasion for putting on an immortal, incorruptible, glorified body.[1283] In Christianity, all Christians become shamans, those who suffer for the sake of others, by" bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ."[1284] The Christian is one who makes present the power of God in Christ, who has overcome and conquered all the spirits,[1285] and while Christ has already conquered and performed the Atonement–we need not compulsively repeat the atonement but accept it!–the Christian nevertheless completes the wounds of Christ in his own body.[1286] Like his Master, who became sin who knew no sin,[1287] like both Moses and Paul who were willing to be cursed by God if it would mean their people would be spared,[1288] the Christian is almost always the one who will be misinterpreted, slandered, persecuted, jailed, not promoted; as has been said, "there are two kinds of Christians in the world: those who know they are going to heaven and those who know they are going to jail!" For, like the shaman, the Christian does not live unto himself; he lives to bless his society, and his good actions are not his, but the occasions of the Presence of Christ working in and through him or her, of which he is not even aware or conscious of having done anything special.[1289]

It has been written somewhere that "there's only wounded soldiers in God's army," and "only those people who are hurt and admit it, are alive." Contemporary Christian shamans who have undergone the illness/death/resurrection and new life, rebirth process, under the tutelage of Christ and the Spirit, may be fitted to heal others by having suffered, not by their Biblical or doctrinal knowledge:

> Certain people who fall ill in our time, as well as in times past, are being called to a special life of consciousness and spiritual development, and may even be summoned via their illness to function as healers ... like the shamans, persons who are meant to work in the healing field are Wounded Healers. If a person has gone through a crisis, died to an old personality, and fought his or her way back to health and a more conscious life, that person may gain a certain quality that enables him to put others in touch with healing too.[1290]

The contemporary Christian shaman deals, then, with an illness by taking it upon himself ("bearing one another's burdens.."). While this is dangerous, it is a calling expressing love, as Grossbeck and Taylor write (concerning a wounded-healer psychiatrist type): "In the process he risks his own wounds being reactivated, but, he does it for the ultimate purpose of helping the patient transcend his illness by seeing and experiencing it differently."[1291]

[1279] *Ibid.*, p. 229.
[1280] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 72.
[1281] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[1282] 2 Cor 5.16.
[1283] 1 Cor 15.44-49, 53
[1284] Gal 6.2.
[1285] Col 2.15.
[1286] Col 1.24.
[1287] Rom 5.21.
[1288] Rom 9.3, Ex 32.32.
[1289] Mt 25.37-39.
[1290] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 81.
[1291] Grossbeck & Taylor, "The Psychiatrist," p. 138.

Those who are wounded with a wound that is continually opened in order to receive more grace, an influx of the divine strength,[1292] can become a source of healing to others. Some are fated to attend their unconscious continually, seeking the meaning of their dreams, or engaging ini prayer and meditation as a necessary part of their daily life. These are people who ".. cannot function in life the way people do who have not been wounded by the divine forces within them."[1293] Fallure to be so attentive by one who is so called may cause such a person to become ill again. But, notes Sanford, ".. as long as the wound is ministered to , it proves a source of renewal and life. It becomes an opening through which new life enters into and enlarges consciousness. It is the divine wound."[1294]

Ασκλήπιος

The young maiden, Koronis, who lived on the shores of Lake Beobeis in Thessalay, Greece, became pregnant by Apollo, the Greek god of music, harmony, the movement of the sun, and also a sender of both disease and healing. However, she had a secret passion for Ischys the Arcadian, and while Apollo departed on business to Delphi, the pregnant Koronis went to bed with Ischys. Apollo had suspected that Koronis might not remain faithful in his absence, and had a bird, a crow, to watch over her and report an y wrongdoing. When the crow informed Apollo, Apollo became enraged and turned the crow black (crows to this point had been white). He then took revenge on Koronis, complaining to his sister, Artemis, who shot a quiver of arrows into Koronis. Apollo, looking at her corpse, was moved by grief but couldn't restore her to life, so he had Hermes cut the still living child from Koronis' womb on the funeral pyre. Apollo, exemplifying the principle, "he who sent death gave life," named his child Asclepius, and entrusted him to Chiron, the Centaur.[1295] The story of Asclepius begins as a "birth in death."[1296]

Chiron is one of the most enigmatic figures in Greek mythology. he combines the animal and the Apollonian[1297] being a centaur (*i.e.*, half man, half horse). While the other centaurs were powerful and often savage, getting drunk and attempting rape, Chiron, chief of all the centaurs, remains aloof from all such disgraceful events and leads a supremely civilized and exemplary life,[1298] instructing heroes in medicine and music. Under his tutelage were Jason and Achilles as well as Asclepius.

Chiron lives in a cave, an entrance into the subterranean, the underworld, the chthonic–the entrance to the unconscious. Yet is is from here that new life emerges. Christ arose from a tomb. Kerenyi writes: "To be at home in the darkness of suffering and there to find germs of light and recovery, as though by enchantment, [is] to being forth Asclepius, the sun-like hero.."[1299] The Magnesian centaur, Chiron , teaches Asclepius how to heal mortals of painful maladies. One of Pindar's Odes declares:

> And those whosoever came suffering from the sores of nature, or with their limbs wounded either by gray bronze or by far-hurled stone, or with bodies wasting away with summer's heat or winter's cold, he loosed and delivered divers of them from diverse pains, tending some of them with kindly incantations, giving to others a soothing potion, or, haply, swathing their limbs with simples, or restoring others by the knife.[1300]

Heracles, another hero raised by Chiron, enroute to Erymanthus on his fourth labor–to capture the Erymanthian Boar alive–killed a bandit, Saurus, and was entertained by a centaur, Pholus. During the meal;, the centaur opened a jar of wine. But the jar of wine belonged to all the centaurs, who began to attack, outraged. Heracles pursued them as they took refuge in Chiron's cave. Heracles aimed his bow and launched a shaft which bounced off the arm of Elatus and embedded in Chiron's knee. Then Heracles recognized Chiron as the one who had befriended him in childhood, ran to him, drew out the arrow, and applied medications in which Chiron had once instructed him. But the wound was drenched with the Hydra's venom and could not be healed. So the centaur had them carry him to his cave where he wanted to die in the arms of his friend. But, alas, Chiron had forgotten he was immortal, and his agony would last forever. Heracles left him with many tears.[1301] Chiron becomes a "wounded healer:"

[1292] *Cf.*, Paul's "thorn in the flesh," 2 Cor 12.7-9, or Jacob's pain from wrestling with an angel, Gen. 32.24-32.
[1293] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 33.
[1294] *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.
[1295] Pindar, *Third Pythian Ode*, in Nisetich, *Pindar's Victory Songs*, p. 167; Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Para 50; Grossbeck, chetypal Image," p. 125.
[1296] Kerenyi, *Asklepius*, p. xix.
[1297] Grossbeck, "Archetypal Image," p. 125.
[1298] Kirk, *Nature of Greek Myth*, p. 85.
[1299] Kerenyi, *Asklepius, p.* 100.
[1300] Pindar, *Third Pythian Ode.*
[1301] Schwab, *Gods and heroes*, pp. 169-170.

The tragic aspect was that Chiron's wound was incurable. His cure was not to be This paradox, hat he who cures over and over, yet remains eternally ill or wounded himself, appears at the heart of the mystery of healing.[1302]

Asclepius became so proficient, he even raised several dead persons to life, among which were Hippocytus, Capaneus, Orion, Glaucus, and Tyndareus. Eventually, Hades, god of the underworld, complained to Zeus who had the Cyclops send a thunderbolt to kill Asclepius. "Asclepius and his mother, Koronis, are both examples of the human tendency to be unsatisfied with necessary limitations, Koronis could not wait for her wedding day, Asclepius tried to overcome the human condition itself."[1303] As with Adam and Eve, Asclepius eats "forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Asclepius likewise is he "wounded healer," rescued from the burning pyre, killed by Zeus for bringing life, and participating in the wounds of his patients:

> Of Asclepius, the oracle of Apollo said: 'He who wounds also heals.' ... In Asclepian cures there was a paradox that appeared at the heart of the mystery of healing: he who cures and yet remains eternally ill or wounded himself.[1304]

Kerenyi notes the features of the ideal bronze statuary of Asclepius which portray this:

> The eyes seem to look upwards and into the distance without definite aim. This combined with the vivid movement gives us an impression of a great inner emotion, one might almost say of suffering. This god does not stand before us in Olympian calm: he is assailed as it were by the sufferings of men, which it is his vocation to assuage.[1305]

The process of healing did not involve a visit to an expert who simply administered medicine, but with his knife, or applied cautery. The visit was a meeting with divine power, the naked and immediate event of healing itself.[1306] The priests of the temple were certainly not without medical ability, but their role, other than deciding whom to admit, was passive.[1307] They simply determined the fitness of the candidates for healing. The place in the temple where the healing occurred was called the *abaton* ("a place not to be entered into uninvited")' one was ordinarily invited by a dream.[1308] Sanford notes: "There are dangers in contacting the powers of the unconscious without proper preparations and the proper motives.[1309] Only a direct relationship and intervention by god in the soul of the patient can heal. Therefore, it was necessary for the sick person to "journey inward" into the depths of his soul, where god could be found. The important healer is the inner healer:

> The physician cannot act alone; side by side with his outside intervention something inside the patient must lend a helping hand if a cure is to be accomplished. At the crucial moment something is at work that might best be compared to the flow of a spring.[1310]

And,

> In principle the physician was excluded from the individual mystery of recovery: the patient sought out the deity in a much more personal way than in the great mysteries of the archaic or classical period ... the physician remained intentionally in the background.[1311]

What was offered was an environment which was as far as possible removed from the disturbing and unhealthful elements of the outside world. Healing began with separation from the mundane world. The process of healing began with a pilgrimage to the Asclepion, a temple of Asclepius. Archeologists have unearthed over 400 such temples.[1312] No one becomes whole without such a pilgrimage. Today such a pilgrimage may not be physical relocation, but may involve a spiritual journey in which we move from our attitudes in one place to an entirely new psychological place.[1313] After arrival, the ritual was simple:

[1302] Grossbeck, "Archetypal image, p. 127.
[1303] Nisetich, *Pindar's Victory Songs*, p. 167.
[1304] Grossbeck and Taylor, The Psychiatrist," p. 135.
[1305] Kerenyi, *Asclepius*, pp. 22-23.
[1306] *Ibid.*, p. 34.
[1307] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[1308] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 45.
[1309] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[1310] Kerenyi, *Asclepius*, pp. 24-25.
[1311] *Ibid.*,p. 30.
[1312] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 45.
[1313] *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

..relax on the holy grounds, take in the beauty of the surroundings, listen to the hymns, and wait for the night. Then each patient would be required to lie down in the sacred hall .. and wait for the god to appear and give advice in a dream.[1314]

The cure was sought in the dream process to make contact with the healer within. "In sleep the patient withdraws from his fellow men and even from his physician and surrenders to a process at work within him."[1315] Healing comes from god. Every organism is self-healing. The psyche as well as the body contains within itself the "divine spark" (Eckhart). Just as the ancient seeking help at the Asklepion paid attention to dreams, a modern, while likewise so doing, might also do such other activities that place one in contact with the inner self such as journaling, dream group processing, attending to fears and fantasies and intuitions, inspired thoughts, and meditations.

The Asklepion had a spring. The requisite site spring and free-flowing fountains were probably regarded by the Greeks as a kind of communication with the depths of the earth.[1316] Those admitted into the Asklepion had to undergo ritual purifications in water. Water has a feminine significance, being a container of life: life begins in the waters of the ocean.

The importance of water in Asclepius' cult suggests that healing is not possible without some kind of contact with the inner waters of the soul, the water that Jesus says becomes a spring welling up to eternal life (John 4:14).[1317]

In addition to the well was the snake, probably a *colubar longissimus*, a tree snake which in southern climates attains a length of over six feet.[1318] Just as snakes shed their skin in a rejuvenating manner, the patient shed his or her problems, became free from illness, and put on a new man or woman. Serpents were regarded as a symbol of the renewal of life by the ancients. The snake symbol of Asclepius is of a *single* snake entwined about a staff, symbolizing rebirth and transcendence, not the Caduces which is of *two* snakes in sexual union on a winged staff, symbolizing Hermes.[1319] In the Caduces, the source of the healing of the wound caused by the serpent is the serpent.[1320]

Priests at the Asklepion excluded women in labor since pregnancy was not regarded as an ailment in need of a cure. Neither were the dying taken into the sanctuary. he healing process was, therefore, concerned neither with birth nor resurrection, but with the transitional phase between above/below, night/day, death/life.[1321] The snake (and also the dog) "..symbolize life at the threshold of death, a hidden force, dark and cold, but at the same time warm and radiant, that stirs beneath the surface of the waking world and accomplishes the miracle of cure."[1322]

The snake used by Asclepius was a symbol for becoming young after sickness, for putting off old age.[1323] Teilard defines the symbol of the snake as

An animal endowed with magnetic force. Because it sheds its skin, it symbolizes resurrection. Because of its sinuous movement (and also because its coils are capable of strangling) it signifies strength. Because of its viciousness, it represents the evil side of nature.[1324]

In fact, the snake is neither entirely positive (new life, resurrection, life, strength) nor evil (temptation, cunning, chthonic and connected to the darker aspects of reality); its venom both kills and heals. It probably symbolizes energy itself, force pure and simple, and is therefore, ultimately, ambivalent.[1325]

In Biblical times, the snake (שָׂרָף, "Seraph") has been found in archeological digs at Megiddo, Gezer, in the "holy of holies" of the area of the temple at Hazor, and at Shechem from the late Bronze Age. Its association with other symbols suggests it had the cultic significance of "fertility and return of life."[1326] Numbers, chapter 21, recounts the episode of Moses lifting up a bronze serpent to cure those who were punished by being bit by serpents. The "burning snakes" (נְחָשִׁים שְׂרָפִים , so called because their burning bits caused intense inflammation, was symbolized by a bronze serpent probably "..because the color of

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[1314] Manjo, *the Healing Hand*, p. 201.
[1315] Kerenyi, *Asclepius*, p. 35.
[1316] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[1317] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 51.
[1318] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[1319] Grossbeck, "Archetypal Image," p. 125. Note: the symbol is one of equilibrium of forces, good balanced by evil, health by sickness; it is an image of cure effected by what caused the ailment.
[1320] Cirlot, *dictionary*, p. 289.
[1321] Kerenyi, *Asclepius*, pp. 31, 32.
[1322] *Ibid.*, p. 34.
[1323] Rowland, *Animals*, p. 142.
[1324] Cirlot, *Dictionary*, p. 287.
[1325] *Ibid.*, p. 285.
[1326] Jones, "The Bronze Serpent," pp. 245-246.

this metal, when the sun was shining upon it, was most like the appearance of the fiery serpents.."[1327] It became a symbol of divine forgiveness.[1328]

The incident is again an instance of the Delphi Oracle: "He who wounds also heals" (ὁ τρώσας καὶ ἰάσεται) as "serpent-as-serpent-of-punishment" is juxtaposed with "serpent-as-agent-of-life." Of course, it is not the serpent which gives life or killing; it is the Lord.[1329] The book of Wisdom explains the bronze serpent as a σύμβολόν σωτηρίας ("symbol of salvation"): "he that turned towards it was not saved because of that which was beheld, but because of thee, the Savior of all."[1330] Probably because of the temptation to venerate Moses' Bronze Serpent itself, King Hezekiah had it destroyed.[1331] This incident is later used by the Evangelist John[1332] to refer to the healing brought by Jesus being "lifted up" (ὑποῦν), exalted, by being raised on a cross. Bernhard comments: "Those who looked in faith upon the brazen serpent uplifted before them were delivered from death by poison; those who look in faith upon the Crucified, lifted up on the Cross, shall be delivered from the death of sin."[1333] Jesus becomes the new serpent who has vanquished the old.[1334] The point is *communal restoration*: the uplifted Jesus gathers to God those who were His children.[1335]

In addition to the use of the symbol of the snake, other Christian parallels are apparent. Just as every healing event was regarded as an epiphany of Asclepius,[1336] so Jesus' healing miracles are an epiphany of His divinity and a foretaste of His ultimate healing work, that in God's presence, life, not sickness, decay, and death, are operative and normal. Just as the importance of the profession of physicians was a familial relationship to Asclepius who drew them together, rather than on technical skills acquired (personal relationship *vice* technique)–the physicians bound to consider their teacher as their father and the teacher's sons as brothers,[1337] so also the Christian community! A glaring difference is that with Asclepius only man's *wounds* are healed, not man himself.[1338] Fulfillment is only in Christ.

Even today there are those who are destined for illness so that through their illness and recovery they might serve to heal others, both individually and society as a whole. It is only through illness that the archetypal "wounded healer" is activated in a human being.[1339] Many today have "Chironian wounds" (wounds which do not heal), e.g., alcoholics, victims of psychic trauma (e.g., rape, incest, concentration camp, combat, emergency room technicians, policemen, etc.), an awareness that one is a "sinner in need of God's constant mercy, forgiveness, and love" and for these, the constant activation of that which heals can become a well from which one draws and which constantly quenches every thirst. Attempts to cover it over and smother it by medication (as in modern psychiatry) kill the soul of man which is seeking transformation and unfolding and advancement. Kierkegaard prophetically wrote over a hundred years ago:

> ..the wound is kept open in order that the Eternal may heal it. If the wound rows together .. the eternity cannot heal, then temporal existence has in truth bungled the illness.[1340]

SUFFERING SERVANT

How would God heal and restore? That was the question facing Israel in exile in Babylon. Isaiah regarded Cyrus as God's anointed, arising to capture Babylon and build a highway in the desert for the glorious return of Israel. Cyrus did capture Babylon and did allow the Jews to return, but Isaiah's hopes were dashed: instead of honoring the God of Israel, Cyrus honored Marduk, and instead of a magnificent pageant on a highway, only a few Jews trickled back, sporadically. They just barely

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[1327] Keil and Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, p. 139.
[1328] Kjeseth, "Nehushtan," p. 281.
[1329] *Cf.* Job 5.18: "or he who wounds is he who soothes the sore, and the hand that hurts is the hand that heals." (said of Yahweh). He who hurts and he who heals can certainly refer to one's unconscious which wounds us as we are taken over by a figure or content of the unconscious resulting in a darkening of the conscious, being overwhelmed by an invasion from the unconscious. Yet, the unconscious also is a source of healing (the "inner healer") and of creative new possibilities of life.
[1330] Wis. 16. 6, 7.
[1331] 2 Kg 18.1ff.
[1332] Jn 3.14.
[1333] Bernhard, *John* (ICC), p. 113.
[1334] Rowland, *Animals*, p. 145, alluding to the Epistle of Barnabas 12.7 and St. Augustine.
[1335] Barrett, *John*, p. 178.
[1336] Kerenyi, *Asclepius*, p. 26.
[1337] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[1338] *Ibid.*, p. 77.
[1339] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 47.
[1340] Kierkegaard, *Purity of Heart*, p. 149.

made it. Isaiah had misconstrued what would happen, but did not abandon the realization that the Lord had a mission, a destiny for Israel

After some years of puzzlement and disillusionment, he began to understand what God was doing–how God was to execute His healing and restoration: the picture of majesty, pomp, glory, and might of Cyrus was not the way back to Jerusalem (*i.e.*, to the destination of life); the way was to be through the role of being a servant. The image of glory was out of concern for themselves; the image of suffering servant was concern for others–a wider healing and restoration.

It is significant to note that the Servant was *chosen*, elected; the servant did not decide this would be a good action.[1341] Secondly, the work of the Servant is to be a covenant[1342] in which he is sacrificed.[1343] Third, the suffering is not accidental; it doesn't just happen. It is willed by God, part of His plan. Finally, the purpose is universal: what the Servant does is not for himself, but for all people, for their healing. The work of healing is via suffering and death, not glory.[1344]

The suffering of Israel is not over after its own sins have been punished; the punishment continues; they are to pay the penalty for the sins of others.

> The nation will not be done with toil and suffering even when it has atoned for its own grievous sin, but will continue to be afflicted, this time not for its own sake but for the sake of others. Understanding at last of Yahwe's plan for the Gentiles, it will voluntarily take upon itself the punishment which they have merited.[1345]

The woes of Israel are not disciplinary; they are meant to heal the foreign peoples, those who are not the people of God.[1346] The Servant is poignantly portrayed in Isa. 52.13 - 53.12: people were appalled at his appearance. Luther notes: "Many are offended at Him. The Hebrew שָׁמַם means to be startled, disturbed. The word describes the posture of one about to vomit and of one full of revulsion, because His appearance will be so vile that many will be sick and offended."[1347] His disfigurement refers to body as well as the spirit and emotions.[1348] That this is not a momentary situation but rather a condition characterizing most of his life is obvious from 53.2 describing his growth: nothing was attractive, nothing attracted people to him. He was insignificant. Westermann emphasizes that this is descriptive of an entire life span.[1349] In fact, he becomes "despised and rejected" (חָדַל): "one for whom there is no concern whatever, one from whom all turn away,"[1350] or as Delitzsch comments: ".. one in want of men of rank, *i.e.*, finding no sympathy from such men. The chief men of His nation who towered above the multitude, the great men of this world, withdrew their hands from Him, drew back from Him: He had none of the men of any distinction at His side."[1351] He is a man of sorrow (אִשׁ מַכְאֹבוֹת): "..a man of sorrow of heart in all its forms, *i.e.*, a man whose chief distinction was, that His life was one of constant painful endurance."[1352] He is "acquainted with grief." "The servant is pictured as a lonely, broken, helpless creature, so encompassed by misfortunes that he is a horror to his neighbors."[1353]

All of this is on account of sin and for the sake of others: "..he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows."[1354] "He was pierced for our transgressions."[1355] "Pierced" referring to a person mortally wounded but not yet dead,[1356] a heart wounded to death;[1357]the passives here denote a calamity inflicted by violence from without.[1358] He was assigned a grave with the wicked:[1359] "On account of his sufferings he was deemed to be a sinner, and therefore classed with them."[1360]

[1341] Isa 42.1, 49.1.
[1342] Isa 42.6.
[1343] Isa 53.10.
[1344] Lecture by Dr. Philip Hefner, 17 Aug 1982, Naval Training Center, Great lakes, Illinois.
[1345] Torrey, *Second Isaiah*, p. 410.
[1346] *Ibid.*, p. 412.
[1347] Luther, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 216.
[1348] Pieper, *Isaiah*, p. 432.
[1349] Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 261.
[1350] Luther, *Isaiah 40-66*, p. 220.
[1351] Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, p. 314.
[1352] *Ibid.*
[1353] Smart, *Second Isaiah*, p. 208.
[1354] Isa 53.4.
[1355] Isa 53.5.
[1356] Jer 51.52, Ps 69.27.
[1357] Ps 109.22.
[1358] Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, p. 318.
[1359] Isa 53.9.
[1360] Slotki, *Isaiah*, p. 263.

Who is this Suffering Servant? The passages have been applied to Christ, to Israel itself, to a person in Israel, any of which can be said to endure suffering, but not just any suffering; it is suffering in faithfulness to God, suffering at the hands of one's fellowman. James Smart provides an interesting application: it may be Christ, Israel, a contemporary of the prophet, or *anyone*:

> The prophet concentrates into a single portrait the experiences of all who in past, present, and future give themselves to that task. Abraham, Elijah, Jeremiah, and a host of others are included. But there are also servants in the present who remain faithful in the face of scorn and persecution.[1361]

One of the stories to emerge out of WW II was of a young soldier calling home, telling his parents he would soon be with them. However, he said, he also had a friend who was injured, and he wanted to bring him also. His parents, overjoyed to hear his voice said there'd be no problem, to bring his friend along. The young soldier continued, stating his friend was really hurt; he had lost a leg. The parents interrupted and said, "That's OK; we'll be able to adjust to that." Then he said, "But he's also blind and has some very unsightly facial wounds." His parents then said, "Well, don't you think he could be better cared for in places for people like him? He probably wouldn't be happy with us." The parents then heard the phone "click." The "friend" was the son himself.

The Vietnam veteran's return was frequently met with revulsion at his appearance. He was jeered, spat upon, shouted at, beat up, received thrown eggs, even shot at. He is the poor one, the one who bore all the horrors of war, acquainted with grief, and many were aghast at his appearance.

Can all of this be considered in relationship to healing? Perhaps the recognition of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 has opened the door for *appropriate* treatment and diagnosis for others with PTSD such as rape victims, victims of natural and man-made disasters, policemen, emergency-room technicians, etc. Perhaps people may look at the Vietnam veteran and realize that there is a price to war, that war is *very* costly in human terms, that war is not "normal behavior" as so the senior psychiatrist at the Naval Hospital, Great lakes, Il, asserted. Perhaps the Vietnam veteran himself has been the cause of the healing of the division of the American society over the Vietnam War, by now focusing on the persons involved.

A fragment of a prayer:

> We, who have been in continuous, concentrated combat, are indeed those described by your prophet Isaiah.
> He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.
> Like one from whom men hide their faces
> He was despised, and we esteemed him not...
> We considered him stricken by God
> He was pierced for our transgressions,
> He was crushed for our iniquities. (Isa 53)
> Perhaps, *we* may therefore be the reminder to the rest of our society–
> that war may not be waged with impunity;
> that there *is* a cost–to those who still live–
> and thereby help heal our broken society, that by our wounds all may be healed. They will look at us and think again....

HESCHEL AND THE PROPHET

Abraham Heschel's monumental and life-transforming work, *The Prophets*, portrays the Old Testament prophet as a mediator-person who takes the part of the people in the presence of God and the part of God in the presence of the people.[1362] The prophet is the one who has been turned into another man by the spirit of God,[1363] a person who is not blessed with a skill, technique, but a gift of being guided and moved. The prophet's mediation is on the *feeling-level*: his fundamental experience is fellowship with the feelings of God, a sympathy with the divine pathos.[1364] For this reason, the prophet does not speak a reminiscence, a report, an argument, or a proof: he reveals God's feelings to the people: "..in his words, the invisible God becomes audible."[1365] What is conveyed is not an idea of goodness or a theory of God. They do not

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[1361] Smart, *Old Testament in Dialogue*, p. 124.
[1362] Heschel, *The Prophets*, p. 24.
[1363] I Sam 10.6.
[1364] Heschel, *The Prophets*, p. 26.
[1365] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

speak ideas *about* God as though God were distant; they proclaim God's intimate relatedness to people.[1366] Knowledge of God is not a matter of logic or analysis, but of living together.[1367] The emphasis is on God's passionate summons of healing inter-personal relationships.[1368] The prophet, resonating and declaring God's feelings, becomes intensely intolerant of wrongs and injustices done to others since he also internalizes the feelings of the people–their sufferings, their pain. For example, Amos condemns the rich who revel in luxuries for not being pained or grieved over the afflictions of the people.[1369] As Heschel writes, "Biblical religion is not what man does with his solitariness, but rather what man does with God's concern for all men."[1370] The essential message of the prophet, then, is not foreknowledge and the future, but insight into the present care and feelings of God for His people. God is alive in His concern for life, for man, for right-relationships (*i.e.*, "righteousness").[1371]

The prophet is attuned to God, not in a momentary manner, but as a whole life. The prophet is guided not "..by what he feels, but rather by what God feels."[1372] "To be a prophet means to identify one's concern with the concern of God."[1373]

> The prophet is stirred by an intimate concern for the divine concern ... it is no mere listening to, and conveying of, a divine message which distinguishes his personal life. The prophet not only hears and apprehends the divine pathos; he is convulsed by it to the depths of his soul.[1374]

This is a matter of action, not mere feelings. The resultant action of the introjected pathos of God is not a matter of delight or ecstasy, but rather a challenge, a commitment, a state of tension, consternation, and dismay.[1375]

While the prophet is thus torn apart by the passionate concern and care of God for His people on the one hand, he is also crushed by the pains of the people of which he is a part since he regards these, not As an affair outside him, but as something also internalized in his soul:

> The prophet is a person who suffers the harm done to others. Wherever a crime is committed, it is as if the prophet were the victim and the prey ... All prophecy is one great exclamation; God is not indifferent to evil! He is always concerned. he is personally affected by what man does to man. He is a God of pathos.[1376]

The prophets today, and they still =proclaim God's message even if they are unaware of being His instrument!–are those who keep reminding people of what is real, that there are hurts, pains, injustices. There is probably no one more concerned that justice simply *be* than the Vietnam veteran! He may have to have a shoot-out, or do something else very dramatic, as much as a Jeremiah acting out his message. He becomes the instrument whereby people *must* acknowledge there are problems that require healing. The prophet is the one who can now "see" reality in the midst of so much unreality, the one who is always critical of complacency, anguished when those around him become so captivated by the non-essentials when there are those around him with tears or painful souls. The prophet may be the one who is gloomy and depressed: something must die! What? The veteran is saying, "society's falseness must die!"

TRANSFERENCE

C. G. Jung notes that what heals a person is not advice, books, techniques, since not everyone can be placed similarly as an instance of a category; each person is unique and must be approached that way:

> What sets one man free is another man's prison ... there are no universally valid recipes and rules. There are only individual cases with the most heterogeneous needs and demands–as heterogeneous that we can virtually never know in advance what course a given case will take, for which reason it is better for the doctor to abandon all preconceived opinions.[1377]

How then can healing occur? By the *person* of the therapist, Jung answers. it is through mutual influence involving the whole personality of the doctor as well as that of the patient, their conscious and non-conscious encounter, that healing

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[1366] *Ibid.*, pp. 219, 221.
[1367] *Ibid.*, p. 223.
[1368] *Ibid.*, pp. 224, 198.
[1369] Amos 6.6.
[1370] Heschel, *The Prophets*, p. 230.
[1371] *Ibid.*, p. 277.
[1372] *Ibid.*, p. 314.
[1373] *Ibid.*, p. 309.
[1374] *Ibid.*, p. 308.
[1375] *Ibid.*, p. 309.
[1376] *Ibid.*, p. 284.
[1377] Jung, *Problems of Modern Psychotherapy*, Para 163.

occurs. What the doctor says and thinks, while an important factor, is infinitely out-weighed in significance by the personalities of both in the healing process. Healing only occurs within interpersonal relationships:

> A general and merely academic 'insight into one's mistakes' is ineffectual, for then the mistakes are not really seen at all, only the idea of them. But they show up acutely when a human relationship brings them o the fore and when they are noticed by the other person as well as by oneself. Then and then only can they really be felt and their true nature recognized. Similarly, confessions made to one's secret self generally have little or no effect, whereas confessions made to another are much more promising.[1378]

The mechanism by which the healing occurs is "transference," the projection of unconscious contents upon the concrete person of the doctor, who somehow mirrors, to the patient, that which has been repressed into the unconscious: the doctor takes the place of the father, the brother, even the mother: ".. the neurotic maladjustment of the patient is now transferred to him."[1379] The doctor becomes infected by the psyche of the patient:

> The doctor, by voluntarily and consciously taking over the psychic sufferings of the patient, exposes himself to the overpowering contents of the unconscious and hence also to their inductive action. The case begins to 'fascinate' him ... in reality these personal feelings, if they exist at all in any decisive degree, are governed by those same unconscious contents which have become activated. An unconscious tie is established .. The patient, by bringing unconscious content to bear upon the doctor, constellates the corresponding unconscious materiel in him, owing to the inductive effect which always emanates from projections in greater or lesser degree. Doctor and patient thus find themselves in a relationship founded on mutual unconsciousness.[1380]

This is unavoidable, Jung notes; even experienced therapists will discover again and again being caught up in a bond. This makes each new case that requires thorough treatment, "pioneer work," so that every trace of routine is ineffective.[1381]

The variety of therapists and patients is such that not every person is suitable as a therapist; not everyone can absorb the pain or the problem:

> Experience shows that the carrier of the projection is not just *any* object but it always one that proves adequate to the nature of the content projected–that is to say, it must offer the content a 'hook' to hang on.[1382]

If the therapist avoids this painful process, he cannot be said to be a 'wounded healer.'[1383] In order for the healing process to become activated, the therapist must risk psychic infection. Grossbeck mentions a case published by Robert Lindner of an atomic physicist suffering serious delusions:

> Treatment was ineffective until Lindner finally 'entered into' the delusional system of the patient. Lindner himself developed alarming symptoms, which in time freed the patient who was able to stand off from his system and the illness disappeared .. by diverting the effects from the patient to himself.[1384]

The therapist goes all the way–to the cross–bearing the burdens of his brother. V. Weizacker writes:

Only when the doctor has been deeply touched by the illness, infected by it, excited, frightened, shaken, only when it has been transferred to him, continues in him and is referred to himself by his own consciousness–only then and to that extent can he deal with it successfully.[1385]

The encounter by the doctor and patient is like the mixture of two chemical substances, Jung notes; a third substance, a *mixtum compositum*, is formed of the doctor's own mental health and the patient's maladjustment. Both are transformed. In Freudian technique, the doctor attempts to ward off transference as much as possible. Yet, Jung notes, this may be the very key that unlocks healing. It is inevitable that the doctor should be influenced to a certain extent and even that his own health should suffer as he quite literally takes over the sufferings of his patient and shares them with him.[1386] If the therapist does not feel his way into a situation, if he only approaches I from the outside, it is too easy to dismiss it with a light word or to push it to the wrong direction.[1387]

> In any effective psychological treatment the doctor is bound to influence the patient; but this influence can only take place if the patient has a reciprocal influence on the doctor. You can exert no influence if you are not

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[1378] Jung, *Transference*, Para 503.
[1379] *Ibid.*, Para 357.
[1380] *Ibid*, Para 364.
[1381] *Ibid.*, Para 367.
[1382] *Ibid.*, Para 499.
[1383] Grossbeck, "Archetypal Image," p. 133.
[1384] *Ibid.*, pp. 132=133.
[1385] Quoted in Grossbeck, "Archetypal Image," p. 133.
[1386] Jung, *transference*, Para 358.
[1387] *Ibid.*, Para 363.

susceptible to influence. It is futile for the doctor to shield himself from the influence of the patient and to surround himself with a smoke-screen of fatherly and professional authority. By so doing he only denies himself the use of a highly important organ of information.[1388]

And,

..the doctor is as much 'in the analysis' as the patient. He is equally a part of the psychic process of treatment and therefore equally exposed to the transforming influences. indeed, to the extent that the doctor shows himself impervious to this influence, he forfeits influence over the patient.[1389]

The result may be changes in the doctor's unconscious, perhaps even psychic injuries such as depressions, anxiety, schizoid withdrawal, invasions of unconscious figures and impulses. Both doctor and patient resonate psychologically to each other, run on parallel lines.[1390] Jung notes that the effect of this on the doctor can be far-reaching:

I know of cases where, in dealing with borderline schizophrenics, short psychotic intervals were actually 'taken over,' and during these periods it happened that the patients were feeling more than ordinarily well ... certain psychic disturbances can be extremely infectious if the doctor himself has a latent predisposition in that direction.[1391]

Thus, the problem is that if the doctor has not himself been analyzed, he may become "hooked" into a situation that can easily destroy him: "..contents are often activated in the doctor which might normally remain latent."[1392] This can result in possession by the unconscious contents, which "..means being torn apart into many people and things, a *disiunctio*. that is why, according to Origen, the aim of the Christian is to become an inwardly united human being."[1393]

The therapist doctor must have complied with the demands he makes on the patient. It is a matter of *who* one is, not *what* one knows or says. Jung writes:

..be the man through whom you wish to influence others. Mere talk has always been counted hollow, and there is no trick, however artificial, by which this simple truth can be evaded in the long run. The fact of being convinced and not the thing we are convinced of–that is what has always, and at all times, worked.[1394]

Or,

..who can educate others if he is himself uneducated? Who can enlighten others if he is still ini the dark about himself? And who can purify others if himself impure.[1395]

Or,

The doctor can no longer evade his own difficulty by treating the difficulties of others: the man who suffers from a running abscess is not fit to perform a surgical operation.[1396]

Once the transference process occurs, the healing process beings as the doctor's own healing process becomes activated, much like the mobilization of the body's immune system or anti-bodies and white blood cells is activated upon invasion by infection. Grossbeck quotes Adler:

To be wounded means also to have the healing power activated in us; or might we possibly say that without being wounded one would never meet just this healing power? Might we even go as far as to say that the very purpose of the wound is to make us aware of the healing power in us?[1397]

As the illness is taken in and suffered by the doctor, a cure is sought: "..analyzing the inner psychological constellations created by this illness; scrutinizing dreams, associations, and other unconscious material relevant to the suffering; looking for symbols that emerge from the unconscious and represent the healing factor at work; active imagination. The unconscious responds to the healer's suffering, and the analyst applies the curative symbols to the wound, thereby healing the illness. Out of a personal need for healing, then, the analyst has been forced to develop further by dealing with the effects created by the analysand's illness."[1398] If some wounds remain incurable enough to be experienced again and again, they may continually be transcended and counterbalanced by new sources of strength and health. This may be the case with the recovering

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[1388] Jung, *Problems of Modern Psychotherapy*, Para 163.
[1389] *Ibid.*, Para 166.
[1390] Stein, "Power..," p. 77.
[1391] Jung, *Transference*, Para 258 footnote 17.
[1392] *Ibid.*, Para 365.
[1393] *Ibid.*, Para 397.
[1394] Jung, *Problems of Modern Psychotherapy*, Para 167.
[1395] *Ibid.*, Para 169.
[1396] *Ibid.*, Para 169.
[1397] Quoted in Grossbeck, "Archetypal Image," p. 138.
[1398] Stein, "Power," pp. 77-78.

alcoholic who becomes a source of strength to other alcoholics–and all others of similar patterns as well: recovering alcoholics make excellent counselors because of their pain. This may also apply to those who know themselves to be sinners in need of God's grace. Only those in need of God's love and grace experience it; those who have found what they need can then share the riches they have received. Luther is said to have said on his deathbed: "Ultimately, we are all only hungry beggars who feed each other." Newman notes that the creative person is always close to the abyss of sickness where wounds remain open. One's very suffering is the source of a curative process, and for this reason, he writes, "..only a wounded man can be a healer, a physician."[1399] In some instances, the healer *actually may inflict pain*, so that a higher healing may occur. As mixed ingredients only become bread in the oven's heat transformation, so also the therapist "raises the heat," the pain, for transformative healing to occur.

The next step is to give the medicine to the patient.

For Jung, the process of transformation and change is primarily in the unconscious. For any healing to occur, the patient's own "inner healer" must be activated. The curing process is by "influence," a process of transference. The doctor gives not only good advice, healing rituals, or even acutely empathic interpretations; he influences unconsciously, Jung calls this "*participation mystique*:" the analyst's self-healing process triggers a parallel healing process in the patient's psyche.

Guggenbühl-Craig writes of the suggestion process via fantasy. In a manner similar to Don Quixote, the relationship involves something creative:

> The human psyche is always full of new possibilities. It is constantly re-creating itself .. and is perpetually being re-created ... when we meet someone, it is .. uncreative to see him as a snapshot, a fixed image. To encounter a person creatively means to weave fantasies around him ... Such creative fantasies are often quite far removed from so-called reality; they are as unreal, and as true, as fairy tales and myths. They use imaginative images to grasp the nature of the other persons ... Even if they are not expressed, fantasies also influence the other person, awakening new living potential in him.[1400]

This is not transference in which we project images, problems, or possibilities related to *ourselves* on others; this is, rather, *his* life potential. "Such creative fantasies are of the greatest importance in every human relationship. One of the tragedies of orphans is that no one weaves such fantasies around them."[1401]

One of the great dangers of this entire process is that of power: as the bi-polar archetype of the "wounded healer" is activated, the doctor may retreat into a position of power–assuming himself to be always the one who is well, never ill–and the patient into the position of weakness–always ill, never well. Guggenbühl-Craig writes that those in the helping professions can do the greatest damage to those who are ill by their desire to be helpful! To the best of his knowledge and ability, he wants selflessly to help one who suffers. This conscious desire, however, activates the opposite in his unconscious: the doctor then works not for his patients, but for himself.[1402]

The "healer-patient" archetype is bi-polar; the healer and the patient are two aspects of the same process. When a person becomes sick, the healer-patient process if activated: the sick person seeks an external healer because the "inner healer," apart from whom no real cure is possible, is not consciously realized by the patient, but is "seen" or "projected" unto an external healer, the therapist. "It is the physician within the patient himself and its healing action is as great as that of the doctor who appears on the scene externally. Neither wounds nor diseases can heal without the curative action of the inner healer."[1403] ".. no physician can be effective without the inner doctor."[1404]

It is here that the danger arises: some doctors repress their illness. They may feel that weakness, illness, and wounds have nothing to do with them, that he is the strong healer and that his poor patients live in a different world. This is because the same "wounded healer" archetype is also activated in the physician, but the physician is also, like the sick person, unconscious, and projects–"sees"–his (the therapist's) sickness into the sick person! This may include unresolved illnesses both psychic and somatic.[1405] It is all too easy for the doctor to develop "..into a physician without wounds and [who, therefore] can no longer constellate the healing factor in his patients."[1406] Healing only occurs as both the doctor and patient

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[1399] Quoted in Grossbecdk, "Archetypal Image," p. 142., from E. Newmann, *Art and the Creative Unconscious*, Bollingen Series 61.
[1400] Guggenbühl-Craig, *Power*, p. 45.
[1401] *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 47.
[1402] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[1403] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[1404] *Ibid.*, p. 91.
[1405] Grossbeck and Taylor, "The Psychiatrist," p. 135.
[1406] Guggenbühl-Craig, *Power*, p. 92.

experience each other as "same," not "different" or "opposite."[1407] "The image of the wounded healer .. makes of the doctor the patient's brother rather than his master."[1408] The key is empathic identification. Grossbeck writes:

> Hitherto I had believed that, as taught in medical school and psychiatric residency, one must always show forth strength and hide all weaknesses in order to be the best kind of physician. Through many of the experiences, dreams, and work with patients, it became apparent that in analytical work one cannot hide wounds or weaknesses; one in fact must confront and make them conscious if he is ever to have the hope of becoming a genuine wounded healer .. attempts to hide or disavow one's weaknesses may result in disaster and failure.[1409]

Splitting the "wounded healer" archetype is damaging for both patient and doctor. The sick person becomes perennially sick since his inner healing process is not activated. The physician , on the other hand, becomes a self-important, narrow-minded person blind to his own psychological development. Only by sensitivity to his own pain and sickness can the doctor constellate the inner healer in the patient:

> The physician must be in touch again and again with his own wounds, or 'inner patient,' so that the patient can connect with his own healing powers, or 'inner physician,' to effect the cure. *In essence, both participants must experience the health-sickness* polarity if the patient is to be freed.[1410]

And,

> all his knowledge and technique, in the final analysis he must always strive to constellate the healing factor in the patient. Without this he can accomplish nothing.[1411]

Guggenbühl-Craig recommends that the only way the doctor can avoid the power-play of remaining "well" and keeping the patient "sick" is to do what people not schooled in analysis do to develop: intensive inter-personal relations, friends who touch him deeply, repeatedly throw him off balance, stimulate him, and show him time and again who he is, how weak and pompous, vain and narrow. This is not a matter of gathering a circle of disciples and basking in their adulation, nor is it a matter of transforming relationships into analytical relationships.[1412]

Jesus Christ is the "wounded healer," *par excellance*:

> Jesus Christ was wounded and bore the sins of man. He came to heal the world of sin and death, yet he bore all sins and had to die. He refused ever to make use of power, acknowledging only God his father as powerful. Thus he is the wounded healer in the highest sense.[1413]

THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

> In his own person he carried our sins to the gibbet, so that we might cease to live for sin and begin to live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.[1414]

Christ completely identifies with us in the Incarnation, frees us from the "dis-ease" of sin by His suffering and death in the Crucifixion, and guarantees victory and new life in the Resurrection.

His identification is especially emphasized in the book of Hebrews: ".. he had to be made like his brethren in every respect ... for because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted;"[1415] "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are;"[1416] "Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.."[1417] These passages reflect a very human Jesus, one who grows and develops,[1418] one who is perfected through suffering, one who can help those who suffer pains and hurts because He also has gone through them and been victorious.

> In every pang that wrings the heart,

[1407] Stein, "Power," p. 77.
[1408] Guggenbühl-Craig, *Power*, p. 97.
[1409] Grossbeck, "Archetypal Image," p. 143.
[1410] Grossbeck and Taylor, "The Psychiatrist," p. 136.
[1411] Guggenbühl-Craig, *Power*, p. 100.
[1412] *Ibid.*, pp. 135, 136.
[1413] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[1414] 1 Pt. 2.24 NEB.
[1415] Heb 2.17.
[1416] Heb 4.15.
[1417] Heb 5.8.
[1418] *Cf.* Lk 2.52.

The man of sorrows has a part.
He sympathizes with our grief,
And to the sufferer sends relief. [Michael Bruce, "Where High the Heavenly Temple Stands," ca. 1764]

Paul notes that Jesus absorbed our sins: "Christ was innocent of sin, and yet for our sakes God made him one with the sinfulness of man.."[1419] and noting that Christ, by becoming a curse for us, has set us free from the curse that the Law brings.[1420] By His atonement on the Cross, Jesus Christ heals the disease of sin. Death becomes the gateway to life: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."[1421] The new life is possible because He who descended from heaven is "lifted up" (exalted, glorified) by being placed on the Cross. "It is not by 'simple verbal testimony that Jesus will bring the truth home.' He must do it by costly action, the action of holy love."[1422]

Christians are members of Christ's body[1423] and therefore participate in His life as His "followers" (as opposed to mere "admirers")[1424] The implication is that although the atonement has been made and no further sacrifice is necessary to atone for sin, one nevertheless suffers by being a member of the Body of Christ: "..Christ suffered on your behalf, and thereby left you an example; it is for you to follow in his steps;[1425] "persecutions will come to all who want to live a godly life as Christians."[1426] Paul even writes: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church."[1427] This does not mean something is lacking in Christ's work; it simply reflects the pattern of the Christian life which is "Christ in you"–one's life is a living statement, a re-presentation, of the message, therefore, suffering and rejection. It is what one's *life* says. God is found on the Cross, in suffering and rejection. The implication is that if one wants to be near God or in His presence, one must be *where* He is: out seeking the lost, not with the 99 righteous ones, on the Crosses of life, not in comfort. Thus, the writer of Hebrews: "..Jesus also suffered outside the gate, to consecrate the people by his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp, bearing the stigma that he bore."[1428]

The Christian re-presents, *i.e.*, makes present, Christ and His work, not by words, but by actions. One's very life becomes a "living letter" for all to read.[1429] Paul notes that He helps us in all our troubles so that we are able to help those who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God;[1430] we speak as Christ would have us speak;[1431] we declare His forgiveness: "If you forgive any man's sins, they stand forgiven."[1432] Just as Christ did not live for himself, neither do His followers: no one should look out for his own interests, but for the interests of others.[1433] Ultimate judgement is based on faith, which refers to relationship to Christ, so that the life of Christ continues to live as one gives the cup of water to the thirsty, food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, or fellowship and presence to those sick and imprisoned,[1434] and as one becomes sensitive to the needy Lazarus who only has crumbs to eat.[1435] These are social actions in the prophetic tradition proclaiming God's concern that people live with each other in a life-giving manner, not a matter of declaring in words one's faith. None of this is done self-consciously–"Lord, *when* did we.." or "when did we not.." Healing the broken person, reconciling the fragmented society, occurs because the Christian bears the presence of Christ who forgives,

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[1419] 2 Cor 5.21.
[1420] Gal 3.13.
[1421] Jn 12.24.
[1422] Miller, "John 3.1-21," p. 177.
[1423] 1 Cor 12.27.
[1424] *Cf.* Kierkegaard, *training*, pp. 227, 231, 234. "A follower is or strives *to be* what he admires; an admirer holds himself personally aloof, consciously or unconsciously, he does not discern that the object of his admiration makes a claim upon him to be or to strive to be the thing he admires." [p. 234].
[1425] 1 Pt 2.21.
[1426] 2 Tim 3.12.
[1427] Col 1.24.
[1428] Heb 13.12-13.
[1429] 2 Cor 3.2.
[1430] 2 Cor 1.4.
[1431] 2 Cor 12.19.
[1432] Jn 20.23.
[1433] 1 Cor 10.24.
[1434] Mt 25.31-46.
[1435] Lk 16.19-31.

heals, and blesses. Jesus declares, "He who receives you receives me."[1436] Bonhoeffer notes that Christ's fellow-workers are to meet those to whom they are sent "..as if they were Christ himself ... They are bearers of his presence."[1437]

Dietrich Bonhoeffer emphasizes "conformation" ethics, conformation to the image of Christ. Commenting on Romans 8.29, "Whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son..," Bonhoeffer writes:

> Those who follow Christ are destined to bear his image .. Christ's followers always have his image before their eyes.. It penetrates into the depths of their being, fills them, and makes them more and more like their Master.[1438]

Elsewhere he writes that the Scriptures are not concerned with forming a new world by programs and plans. There is only one form which overcomes the world: the form of Christ. The form of Christ is not an application of Christian principles or Christ's teaching; it is a matter of being drawn into Christ's form. This is not an ideal to be worked-at, as we attempt to become "like Christ."

> To be conformed to the image of Christ is not an ideal to be striven after. It is not as though we had to imitate him as well as we could. We cannot transform ourselves into his image; it is rather the form of Christ which seeks to be formed in us (Gal 4.19), and to be manifested in us.[1439]

This is not a matter of cognitive knowledge, but of living, existential reality. The life of Christ continues in the lives of Christians: He is not dead! He lives! Thus Paul writes: "I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ lives in me,"[1440] and, "To me to live is Christ."[1441] Since Christ lives in and through us,

..we too can 'walk as he walked' (1 Jn 2.6), and 'do as he has done' (John 13.15). 'Love as he has loved' (Eph 5.2; John 13.34; 35.12), 'forgive as he forgave' (Col 3.13), 'have this mind which was also in Christ Jesus' (Phil 2.5), and therefore we are able to follow the example he has left us (1 Pet 2.21), lay down our lives for the brethren as he did (1 Jn 3.16).[1442]

Thus, to be transformed into His image[1443] means to be conformed to Him as Incarnate, Crucified, and Resurrected.[1444] Because Christ is incarnate, the world cannot so easily be disregarded: "There is no part of the world, be it ever so forlorn and ever so godless, which is not accepted by God and reconciled with God in Jesus Christ. Whoever sets eyes on the body of Jesus Christ in faith can never again speak of the world as though it were lost."[1445] The Church is not an assembly of believers; it is Christ Himself–His Body–who has taken form among men.[1446]

An application of this, as the Christological Hymn[1447] asserts, is that the form of a Christian's life, "Having the same mind as Christ," is to empty oneself, be humble, go to the cross, be obedient, be a servant. Von Loewenich writes:

> Christians must become like their Master in all things ... The Christian life is one of lowliness.., just as surely as Christ lived here on earth in the state of humiliation .. Christ has preceded us on the way which rejects all human greatness .. Forsakenness, impotence, and despair become our lot in this discipleship .. The Christian's glory consists exclusively in this weakness and lowliness.[1448]

Conformation to Christ implies taking up His Cross and following Him. In other words, the follower of Christ is conformed to His death;[1449] the Christian life is a life of crucifixion.[1450] This means not only suffering and rejection as such, but suffering and rejection for the sake of Christ.[1451] "Suffering and rejection sum up the whole cross of Jesus."[1452] Jesus did not merely suffer; had that been the case He might have had the sympathy of the world. But He is also rejected. Christ, living in His followers, implies that they, too, will share in this:

[1436] Mt 10.40-42.
[1437] Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, p. 245.
[1438] *Ibid.*, p. 337.
[1439] *Ibid.*, p. 341; *Cf.* Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, p. 80.
[1440] Gal 2.20.
[1441] Phil 1.21.
[1442] Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, p. 344.
[1443] 2 Cor 3.18, Phil 3.10, Rom 8.29 & 12.2.
[1444] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, p. 81.
[1445] *Ibid.*, p. 205.
[1446] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[1447] Phil 2.5-11.
[1448] Von Loewenich, *Luther's*, p. 118.
[1449] Phil 3.10, Rom 6.4f.
[1450] Gal 2.19; Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, p. 342.
[1451] *Ibid.*, p. 98.
[1452] *Ibid.*, p. 96.

> Just as Christ is Christ only in virtue of his suffering and rejection, so the disciple is a disciple only in so far as he shares his Lord's suffering and rejection and crucifixion. Discipleship means adherence to the person of Jesus.[1453]

Everyone has their cross and need not seek one! There is no need to pursue suffering deliberately! Suffering is a natural part of life: "The Christian life is a discipleship of suffering .. Christ's suffering is still repeated daily in our lives .. Therefore our sufferings are a work of the Holy Spirit .. God does not want self-chosen sufferings ... Sufferings are a sign of God's grace, proof that we are God's children."[1454]

Therefore Bonhoeffer can make the now-famous, startling statement: "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."[1455] Die to what? Bonhoeffer answers that this varies from person to person. For the early disciples, it was leaving home and work to follow Him; for Luther, it was departing from the monastery. In all cases, it is death to the "old man," leaving the comfortable but slavishly imprisoning Egypt's of life.

While only the sufferings of Christ are a means of atonement, and there is nothing special in bearing our cross,[1456] such cross-bearing suffering simply shows us to be linked together with Christ.

This is primarily because the Christian becomes a "man for others," and bears the burdens of others (*i.e.*, their sins and guilt). Bonhoeffer refers to this as "deputyship," and writes: "Jesus was not the individual, desiring to achieve a perfection of his own, but He lived only as the one who has taken up into Himself and who bears within Himself the selves of all men."[1457] As "Body of Christ" the Christian participates in Christ's life, bearing the sins of others and completing the wounds of Christ.[1458]

> While it is true that only the sufferings of Christ are a means of atonement, yet since he has suffered for and borne the sins of the whole world and shares with his disciples the fruits of his passion, the Christian also has to undergo temptation, he too has to bear the sins of others; he too must bear their shame and be driven like a scapegoat from the gate of the city ... He becomes the bearer of other's men's burdens--'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ' (Gal 6.2). As Christ bears our burdens, so ought we to bear the burdens of our fellow-men ... My brother's burden which I must bear is not only his outward lot, his natural characteristics and gifts, but quite literally his sin.[1459]

Jesus, notes Bonhoeffer, was not involved with promulgating new ethical ideals or even with making Himself good.[1460] His concern is entirely with actions of love for real people and to accomplish this, He enters into the fellowship of guilt, taking the burdens of their guilt upon Himself. He is not the pious one who desires to be perfect at the expense of others, or to look down on mankind as the only guilt-free man while the rest of the world goes to ruin under the weight of its guilt. Writes Bonhoeffer:

> From His selfless love, from His freedom from sin, Jesus enters into the guilt of men and takes this guilt upon Himself.[1461]

This theology has ethical implication for the form of life of His followers:

> In this, Jesus Christ, who is guilty without sin, lies the origin of every action of responsible deputyship. If it is responsible action, if it is action which is concerned solely and entirely with the other man, if it arises from selfless love for the real man who is our brother, then, precisely because this is so, it cannot wish to shun the fellowship of human guilt. Jesus took upon Himself the guilt of all men, and for that reason every man who acts responsibly becomes guilty. If any man tries to escape guilt in responsibility .. he sets his own personal innocence above his responsibility for men, and he is blind to the more irredeemable guilt which he incurs precisely in this; he is blind also to the fact that real innocence shows itself precisely in a man's entering into the fellowship of guilt for the sake of other men.[1462]

What does this mean in practical, concrete life? Bonhoeffer writes that if the world despises someone, the Christian will love and serve him. If the world does violence to someone, the Christian is there to offer comfort. When the world dishonors

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[1453] *Ibid.*
[1454] Von Loewenich, *Luther's*, pp. 118-119.
[1455] Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, p. 99.
[1456] *Cf.*, Von Loewenich, *Luther's*, p. 120.
[1457] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* p. 225.
[1458] Col 1.24.
[1459] Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, p. 100.
[1460] Mt 19.17.
[1461] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, p. 241.
[1462] *Ibid.*, pp. 240-241.

and insults one, the Christian is the one who sacrifices his own honor to cover his brother's shame. Where the world seeks gain, the Christian will renounce it. Where the world oppresses, the Christian is the one to stoop down and raise up the oppressed.[1463] Commenting on the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," Bonhoeffer writes:

> These men without possessions or power, these strangers on earth, these sinners, these followers of Jesus, have in their life with him renounced their own dignity, for they are merciful. As if their own needs and their own distress were not enough, they take upon themselves the distress and humiliation and sin of others. They have an irresistible love for the down-trodden, the sick, the wretched, the wronged, the outcast, and all who are tortured with anxiety. They go out and seek all who are enmeshed in the toils of sin and guilt. No distress is too great, no sin too appalling for their pity. If any man falls into disgrace, the merciful will sacrifice their own honor to shield him, and take his shame upon themselves. They will be found consorting with publicans and sinners, careless of the shame they incur thereby. In order that they may be merciful they cast away .. their personal dignity and honor. For the only honor and dignity they know is their Lord's own mercy, to which alone they owe their very life.[1464]

Only a Christian can afford to give up his life, to sacrifice his own innocence in order to bear the sin and guilt of others. The reason is that holiness is never a personal accomplishment; it is always a matter of being in the presence of the one who alone is holy. While we are on earth, we are *simul iustus et peccator*. God works through people being priests to each other: "..the Christian is the man who no longer seeks his salvation, his deliverance, his justification in himself, but in Jesus Christ alone ... The Christian no longer lives of himself .. he lives wholly by God's Word pronounced upon him."[1465] Unlike the model of psychological transference, this Word can only come *from the outside*; it does not immanently repose in him: "In himself he is destitute and dead. Help must come from the outside, and it has come and comes daily and anew in the Word of Jesus Christ.."[1466] How does this word come to us? Only through others! It comes only through other people. "God has put this Word into the mouth of men in order that it may be communicated to other men. When one person is struck by the Word, he speaks it to others."[1467] This is the meaning of the "universal priesthood of all believers:" "..my brother is God's servant on my behalf, and I am the servant of God in his behalf."[1468] God's people "..have no word of God without the word of their fellowman."[1469]God's people "..receive grace and truth by the service of their brothers whom they serve."[1470]

In a real sense, Christians become "little Christs" to their neighbors; Luther writes: "You must take other man's want and infirmities to heart as if they were your own, and offer your means as if they were theirs, just as Christ does for you."[1471] The Christian becomes "a man for others:" (1) Christ is the measure and standard of our conduct (John 13.15, 34f.; 1 Jn 3.10); and (2) our conduct is that of a member of the Body of Christ in which each becomes a Christ to his neighbor (1 Cor 12.12, Rom 12.4f, Eph 4.4, and 12ff, Col. 3.15).

> Just as Christ was disposed toward us in living, dying, and rising for our salvation, so we must be disposed towards others, our neighbors .. as members of the body we act toward others as Christ acted for us .. As Christians we are to forget the self and take on our neighbor's sins, weaknesses, and foolishnesses as if they were our own, just as Christ took on our infirmities. We are to do this .. because to be a Christian means to be a member of the body of Christ, which is created by God to function in a certain way, *viz.*, according to the pattern of action of its head and thus according to the inner essential meaning of the Gospel.[1472]

The inter-personal relations of Christians are to be marked by usefulness, helpfulness, expending oneself for the good of the other– "..to unthinking, spontaneous service of the other members,, not because they find anything in it for themselves .. but solely because God has determined that the church exist in this fashion.[1473]

The glory of the cross is that this healing activity can continue, that we are privileged to participate in healing activity by bearing one another's burdens, that Christ continues to live. It may be a cross–a cross indeed!–but it is the way of life to

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[1463] Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Ciscipleship*, p. 289.
[1464] *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.
[1465] Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, pp. 21-22.
[1466] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[1467] *Ibid.*
[1468] Haroutunian, *God With Us*, p. 77.
[1469] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[1470] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[1471] Luther, *WA* II, 750, *Sermon von dem Hochwürdigen Sakrament des heiligen wahren Leichnans Christi*, 1519; Quoted in Bonhoeffer, *Communion*, p. 127.
[1472] Ziemke, *Love for the Neighbor*, p. 48.
[1473] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

emerge, even a life itself: a suffering, full of pain and grief, but we are privileged to be a means to guarantee its perpetuation. This is the power of the Cross today, as it lives through the followers of Christ to transform lives, to heal and reconcile and make whole.

Henri Nouwen views both the Christian community in general and the Christian ministry in particular, as a sharing-in, identification-with, and dealing-with, the pains of people so healing may occur when both the Christian community as well as its members become "wounded healers."[1474]

Christian ministry identifies and articulates the hurts and pains of people, because of participation in the same reality. Christian ministry is characterized by compassion, an entering in, availability-to, presence-with, another person. It is authoritative and authentic only insofar as it identifies with people and their sufferings.

Unfortunately, most people are not healed because they do not face their issues. They repress; they do not know how to handle their experiences or even identify and articulate them. Running away from problems frequently occurs when people do not know they have resources with which to handle their issues.

The one who can heal is the one who can "see" the issues, face them, and not be crushed. The Christian leader becomes oine who "..can articulate the difficult, painful parts of experience; show that he is still all right.."[1475] Thus, alcoholics frequently are helpful to other alcoholics because they "see through" all the denials and attempted cover-ups, unmask and identify the issue, label it, and confront it. Nouwen writes of people with problems facing such a leader:

> If you have the courage to listen to us and hear our pain and struggles without having solutions, if you are really willing to feel these things–then we are also free to feel our own struggles and we don't hve to run away from them.[1476]

A Christian community, as a whole, operates under the same principle. It is a setting within which there is sufficient support–a safety net–so that people can be vulnerable enough to touch their pain and own it; it is a "safe place" within which healing transformation occurs:

> ...the church .. is called to create a space where we are free to face the real struggle, where we are free to face our true pain, where we are free .. to realize how sinful we are, and therefore a place where we can discover the need for God's grace and mercy .. a place where we feel a certain trust, a certain safety and a certain protection, but a protection not to help us avoid problems but to face them, to deal with them and to look at them.[1477]

The Christian healer is one who identifies with people, the one who has learned to hear the struggles of his community in his own heart and feel their pain. The healer/leader is the one who is with his people in such a way that they can say, "You are with us." People do not look for answers in sermons or conversations; they become excited when the leader is able to touch their reality.[1478] Nouwen writes:

> ..the minister is called to recognize the sufferings of his time in his own heart and make that recognition the starting point of his service .. his service will not be perceived as authentic unless it comes from a heart wounded by the suffering about which he speaks.[1479]

The opposite is usually, unfortunately, what people encounter:

> If there is any posture that disturbs a suffering man or woman, it is aloofness. The tragedy of Christian ministry is that many who are in great need, many who seek an attentive ear, a word of support, a forgiving embrace, a firm hand, a tender smile, or even a stuttering confession of inability to do more, often find their ministers distant men who do not want to burn their fingers. They are unable or unwilling to express their feelings of affection, anger, hostility or sympathy.[1480]

Christian leadership is accomplished only through service to those enduring the crosses of life. The only proper posture is that of a servant who enters into situations, is vulnerable, and shares. This becomes an availability-to and a participation-in, or, rather, an offering of oneself to God to be His instrument through which He continues to "..so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son.."[1481] Nouwen enunciates the basic principles of leadership:

[1474] Nouwen, "The Parish;" Nouwen, *Wounded Healer.*
[1475] Nouwen, "The Parish," p. 2.
[1476] *Ibid.*
[1477] *Ibid*, p. 4.
[1478] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[1479] Nouwen, *Wounded Healer*, p. xvi.
[1480] *Ibid.*, p. 71.
[1481] Jn 3.16.

..no one can help anyone without becoming involved, without entering with his whole person into the painful situation, without taking the risk of becoming hurt, wounded or even destroyed in the process. The beginning and end of all Christian leadership is to give your life for others.[1482]

He adds–

Who can save a child from a burning house without taking the risk of being hurt by the flames? Who can listen to a story of loneliness and despair without taking the risk of experiencing similar pains in his own heart and even losing his previous peace of mind? In short: 'who can take away suffering without entering it?'[1483]

The key is "..to make his wounds into a major source of his healing power.[1484] This does not mean openly, blatantly engaging in exhibitionism: "..no suffering human being is helped by someone who tells him that he has the same problems .. Open wounds stink and do not heal."[1485] What it *does* mean is that the Christian leader sees his own pain and suffering as rising from the depth of the human condition which all men share.[1486] resulting in care and compassion, understanding and forgiveness, fellowship and community.

Thus, one is able to heal by authoritatively forgiving his brother ".. because forgiveness is only real for him who has discovered the weakness of his friend and the sins of his enemy in his own heart and is willing to call every human being his brother."[1487] Jung writes:

It is presumptuous to think we can always say what is good or bad for the patient. Perhaps he knows something is really bad and does it anyway and then gets a bad conscience. From the therapeutic, that is to say empirical, point of view, this may be very good indeed for him. Perhaps he *has* to experience the power of evil and suffer accordingly, because only in that way can he give up his Pharisaic attitude to other people ... How can anyone find out how much he needs o be saved if he is quite sure that there is nothing he needs saving from?[1488]

Or, the hymn by Frederick William Faber:[1489]

'Tis not all we owe to Jesus;
It is something more than all;
Greater good because of evil
Larger mercy through the fall..

Sanford writes:

Paradoxically .. to become whole certain people may first have to become ill ... we cannot say that a person who never suffers evidence of malfunctioning is whole; such a person may simply have never been touched by the powers within, and so may never reach his maximum possible development. For illness can have the effect of dissolving (dismembering) our conscious personality in such a way that an entirely new state of consciousness is allowed to emerge.[1490]

The Christian leader does not take away pain: that is not his mission, anymore than God removes our problems. He has promised to walk beside us in our sorrow, to be with us in our valleys. Authentic Christian life is a matter of living, not talking (or writing!) It is a matter of being-with and doing; love is always an action, a verb and not a noun, a thing, a feeling. ".. let us not love by word or tongue, but with actions and in truth."[1491]

A PARTING WORD

We may not be able to return to Paradise. Something even greater has happened! God has come out to where we are, and He in us continues to pour out His blood, where we meet him, "outside the camp." "Let us go forth, therefore, unto him outside the camp, bearing his reproach."[1492] Instead of having only pleasure in Paradise, now we have God and each other. There is a positive meaning to our pain of having experienced severe and sustained combat in battle; God transforms the coal

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[1482] Nouwen, *Wounded Healer*, p. 72.
[1483] *Ibid.*
[1484] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[1485] *Ibid.*, p. 88.
[1486] *Ibid.*
[1487] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[1488] Jung, "Good and Evil," *CW* 10, Para 867.
[1489] "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy."
[1490] Sanford, *Healing*, p. 71.
[1491] 1 Jn 3.18.
[1492] Heb 13.13.

into a diamond through the pressure and heat of suffering. Through our wounds, we have been made fit to be the hands, feet, mouth and mind, conveying our Lord's life and love, grace and healing and peace to wounded, hurt souls. Our credentials to serve the Lord's mission are not degrees from institutions but our wounds. Future pastors should be asked, "What are your wounds and how are you dealing with them?"

In his wounds you have been healed
–1 Peter 2:24b

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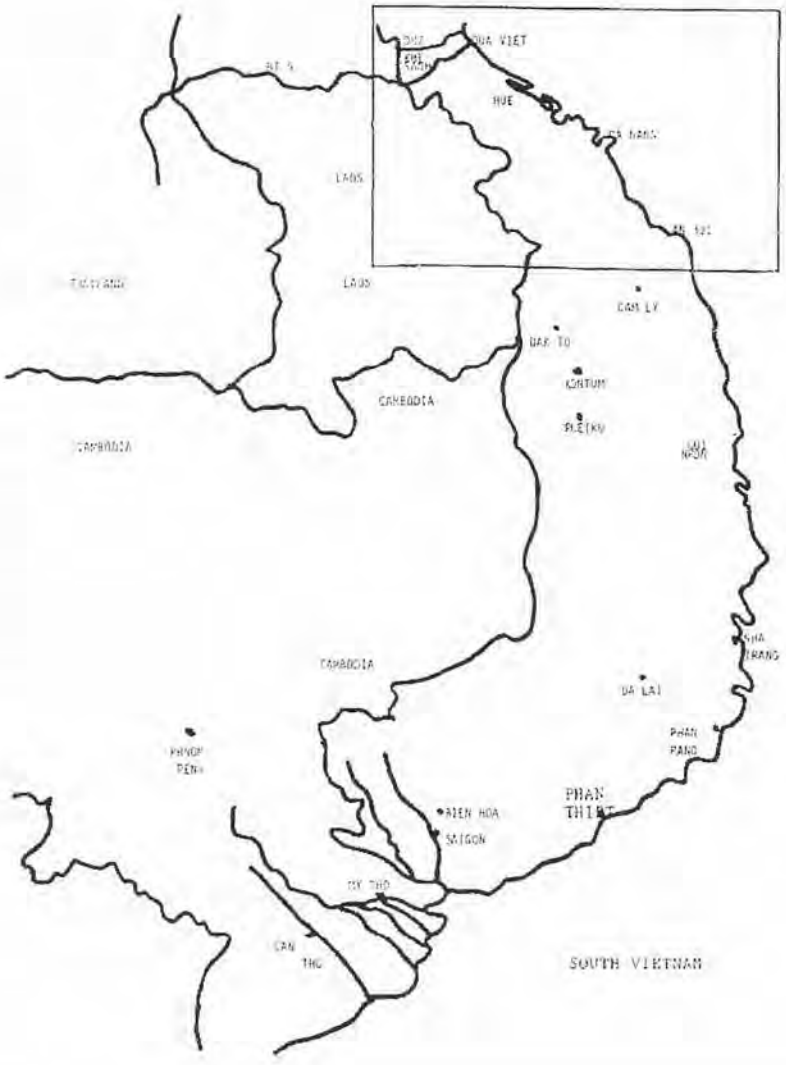

SOUTH VIETNAM

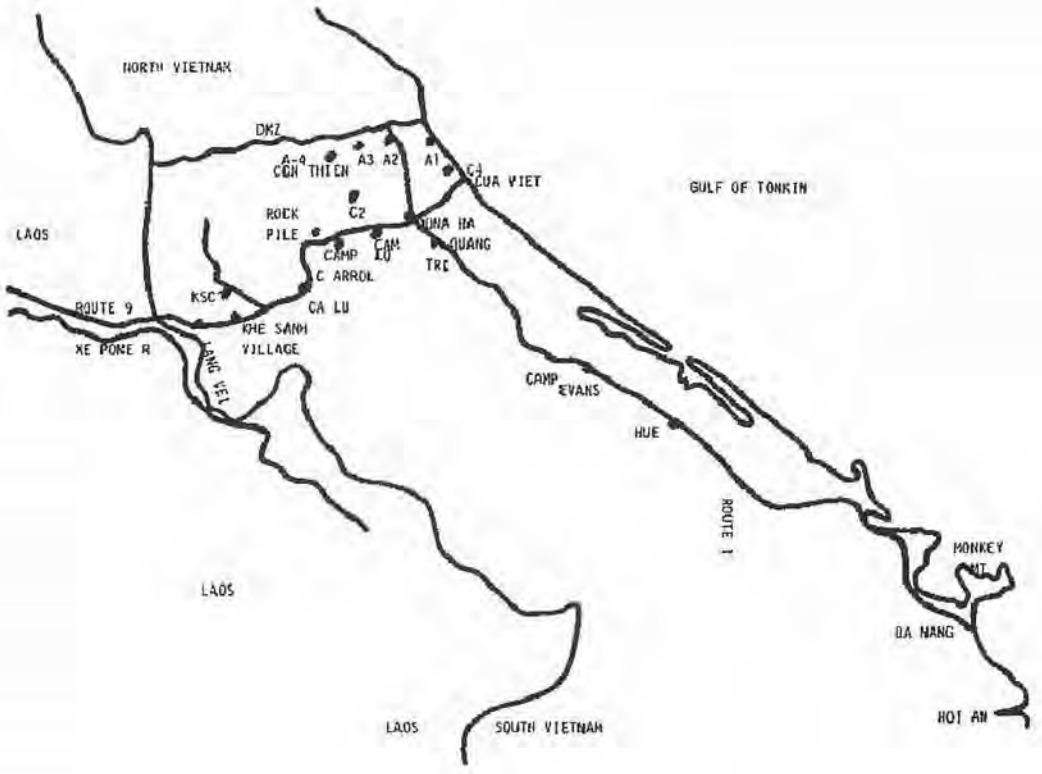

I CORPS TACTICAL ZONE

I CORPS TACTICAL ZONE

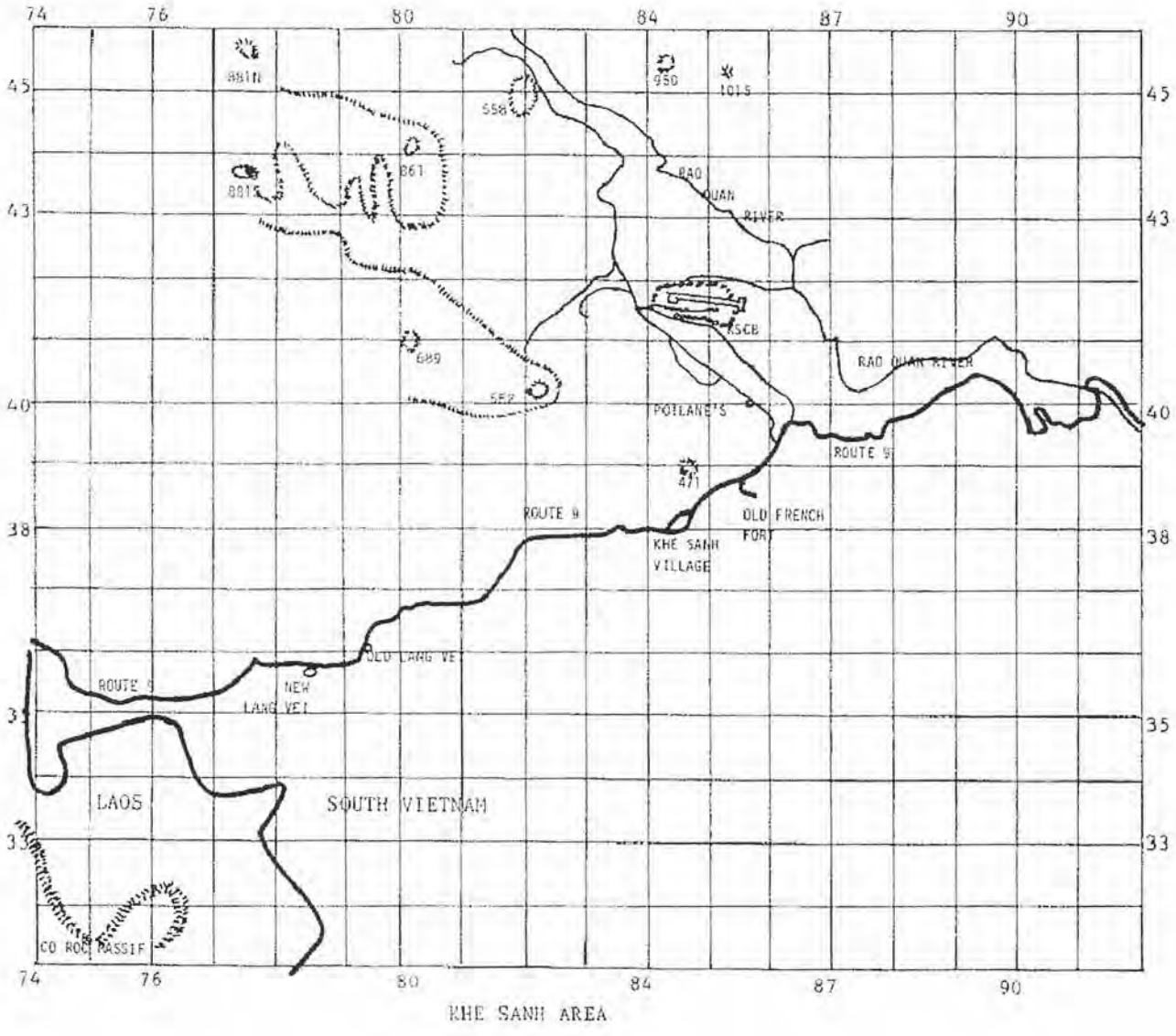

KHE SANH AREA

KHE SANH AREA

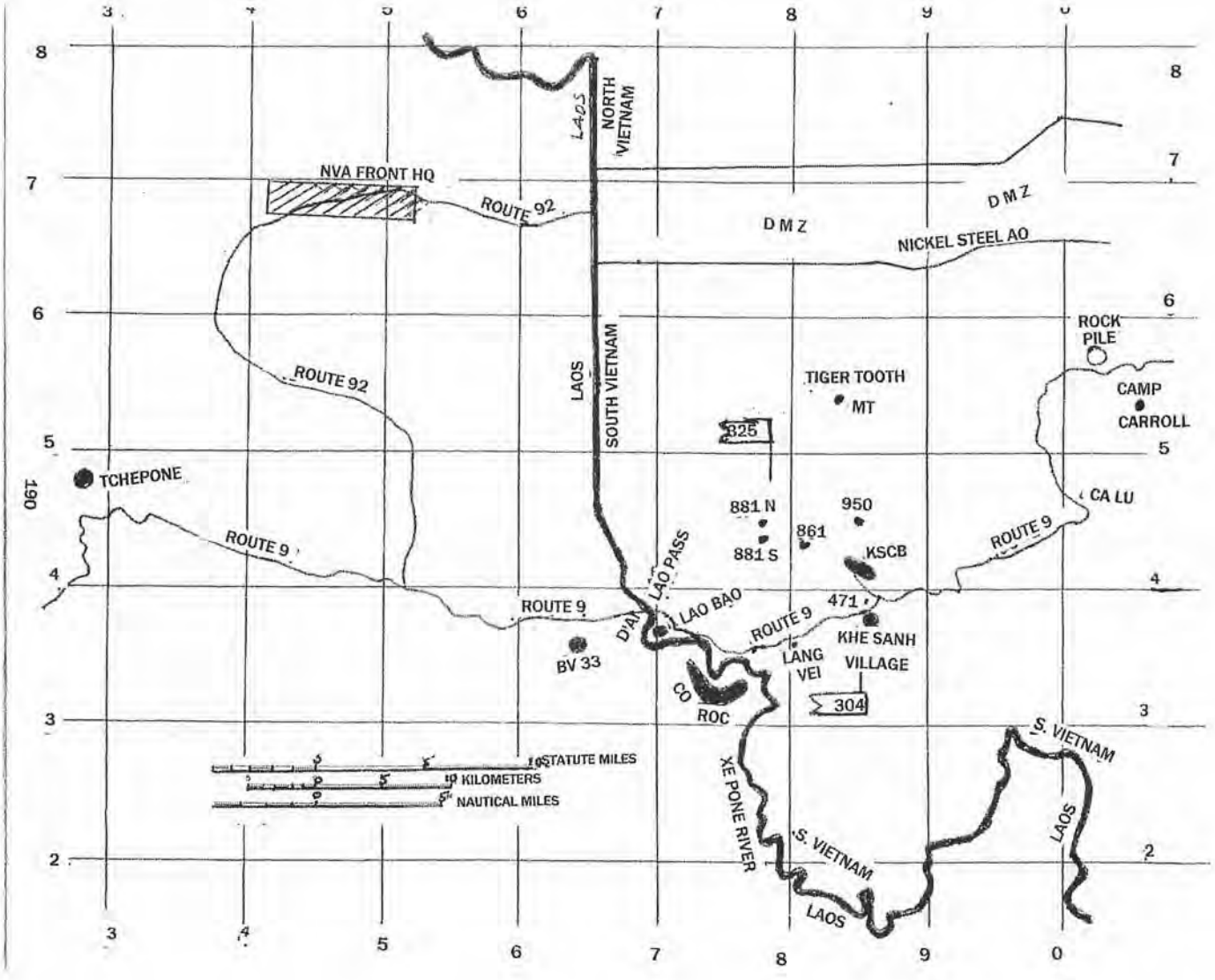

KHE SANH AREA DURING SIEGE

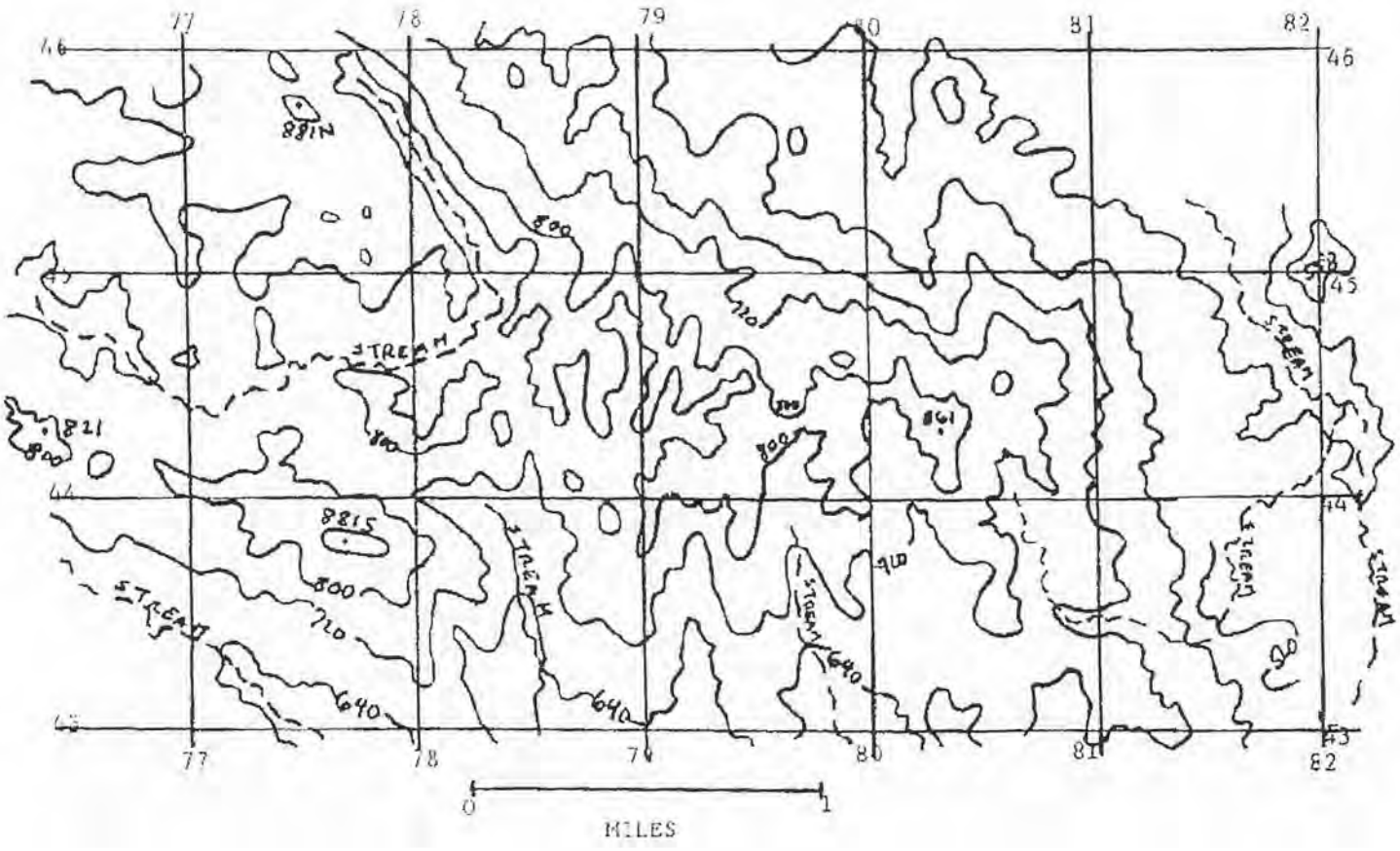

1967 HILL BATTLE AREA

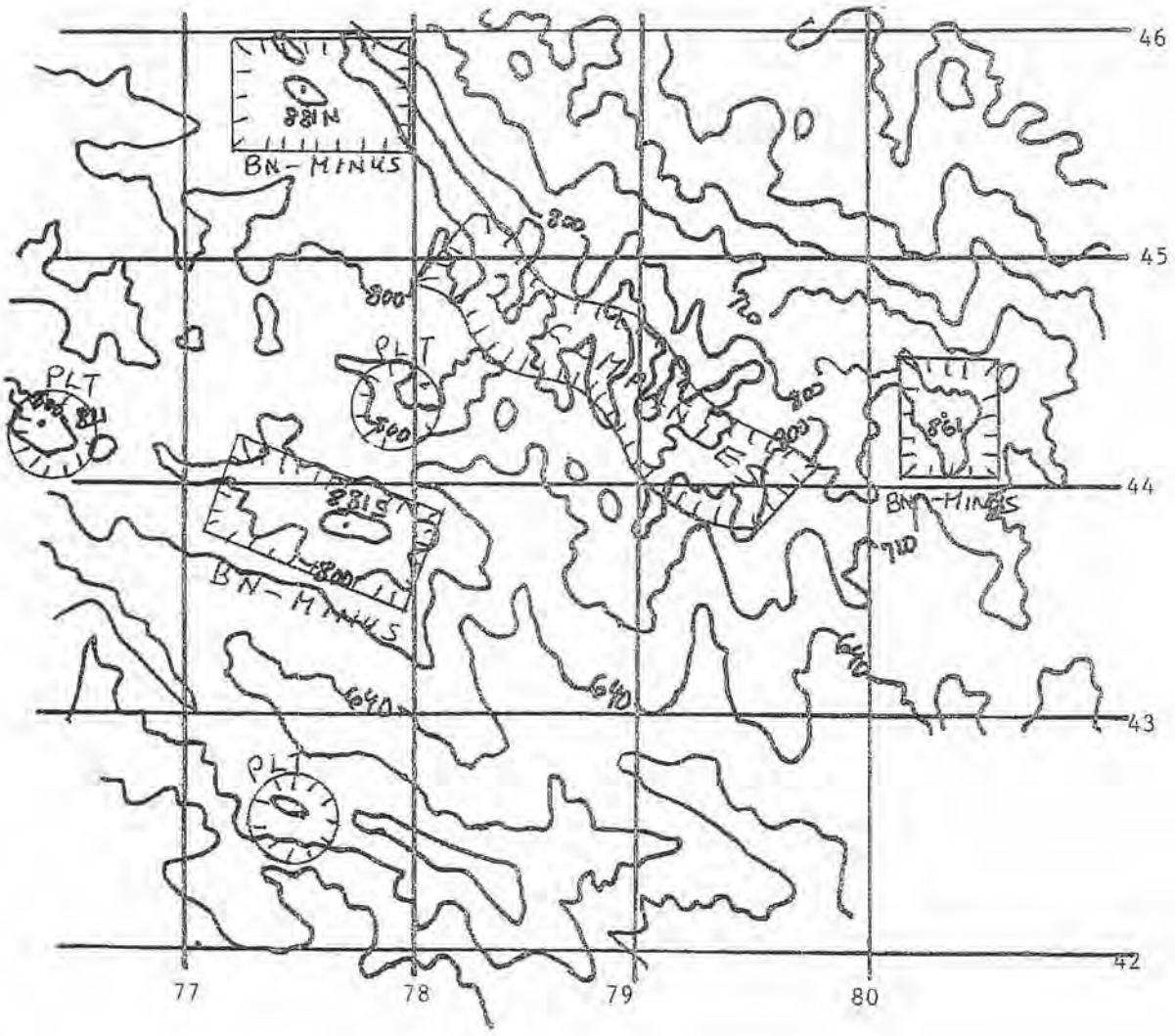

NORTH VIETNAMESE POSITIONS DURING BATTLE OF THE HILLS
[Intelligence Section, AAR, appended to ltr of LtCol B.L. Spivey, Jr., to BGen E. H. Simmons, 18 June 1981]

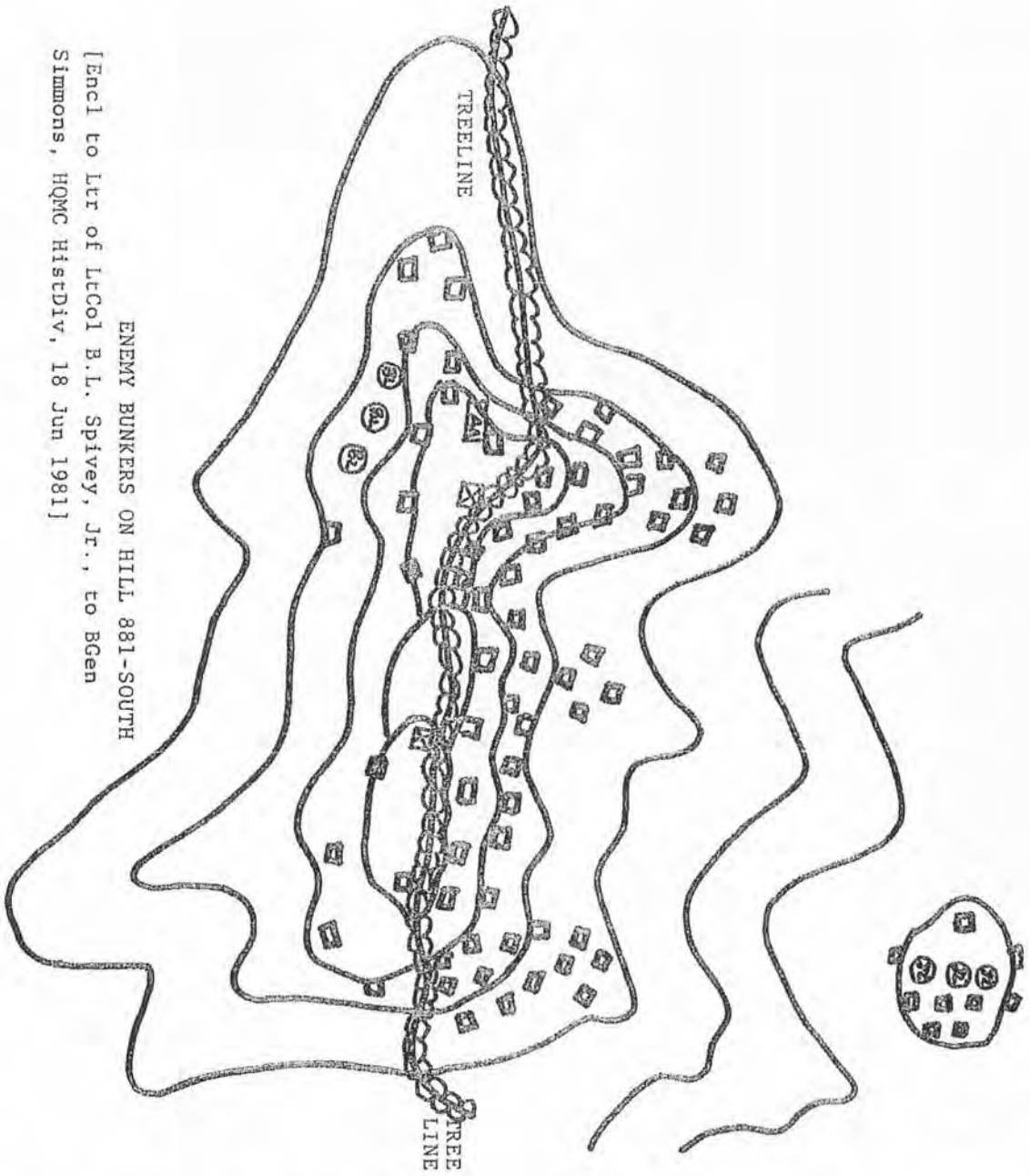

ENEMY BUNKERS ON HILL 881-SOUTH

[Encl to Ltr of LtCol B.L. Spivey, Jr., to BGen Simmons, HQMC HistDiv, 18 Jun 1981]

ENEMY BUNKERS ON HILL 881-SOUTH DURING SIEGE

A new AO was assigned on 5 May: XD 750480 to XD 770480 to XD 770470 to XD 820470 to XD 820440 following trail east to XD 831442 to XD 835444 following river southeast to XD 863420 to XD 750420 to XD 750480. [SOP 051710/May67, FRAG 1-67].

AREA OF OPERATIONS - MAY, 1967 1:100,000

MILES

KHE SANH AO 5 MAY 1967

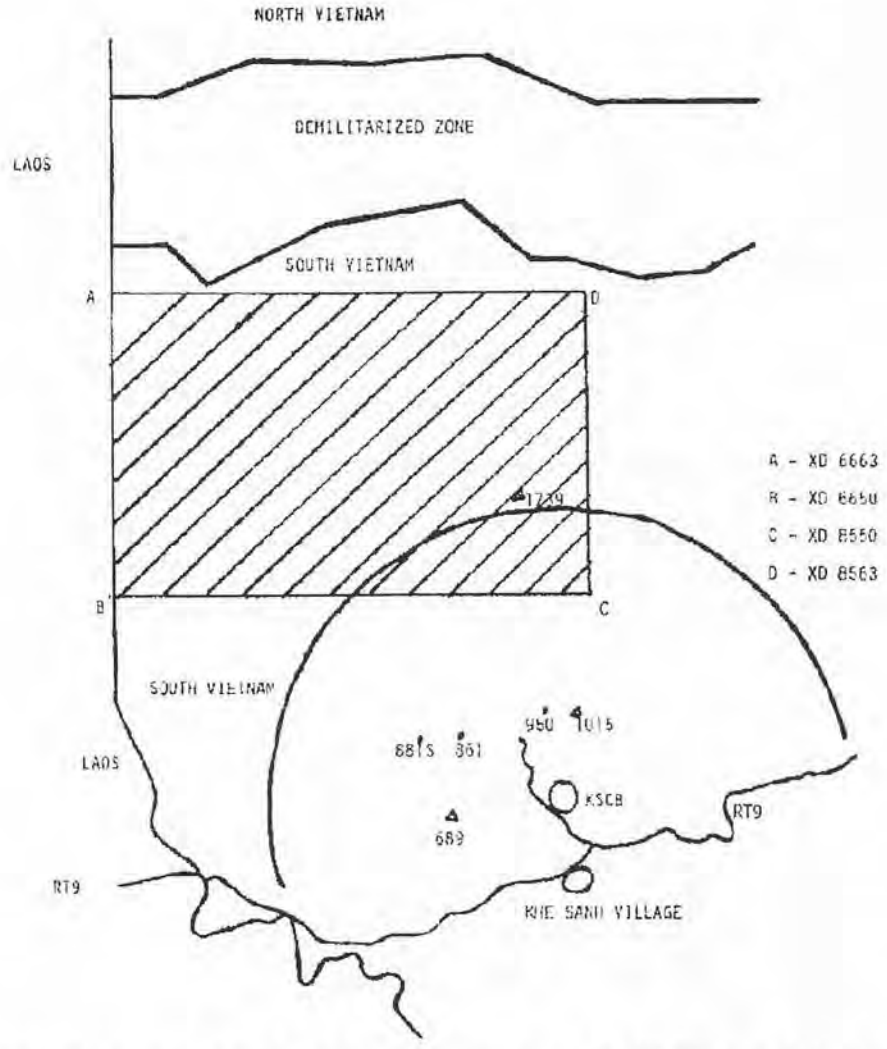

3rd MARDIV OP ORDER 6-67 AO Indicating the 15 KM Arc for infantry and box for force recon patrols (shaded area)

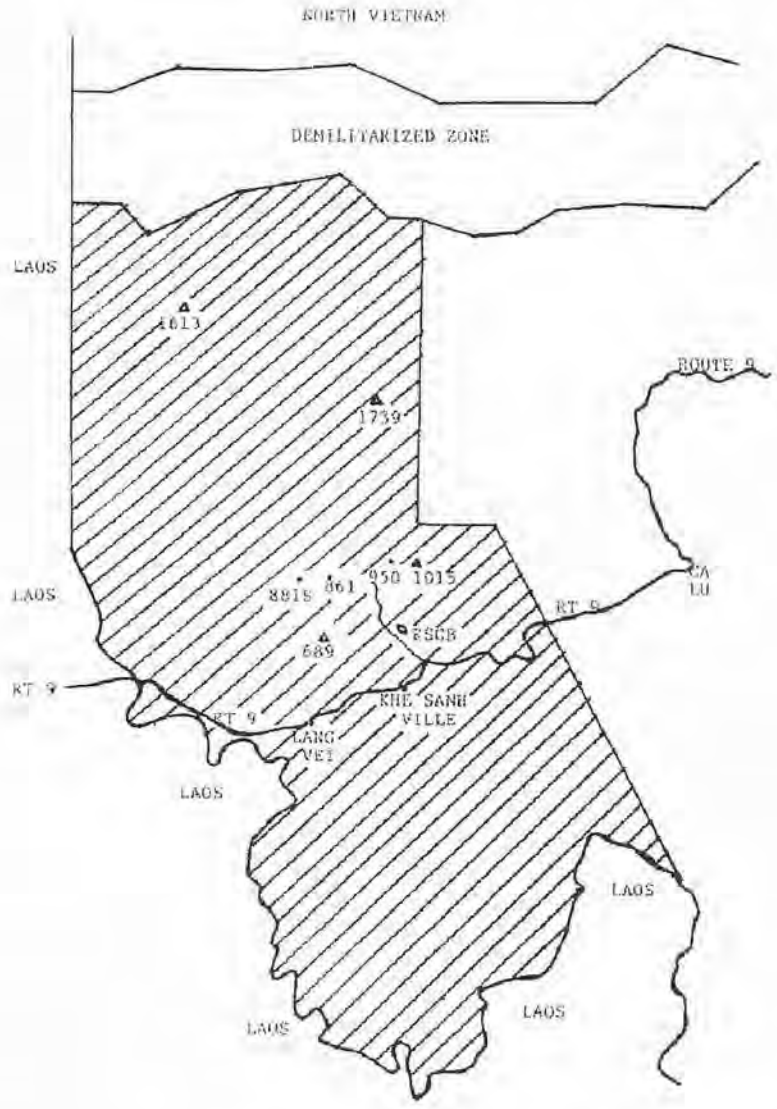

OPERATION CROCKETT AREA OF OPERATIONS

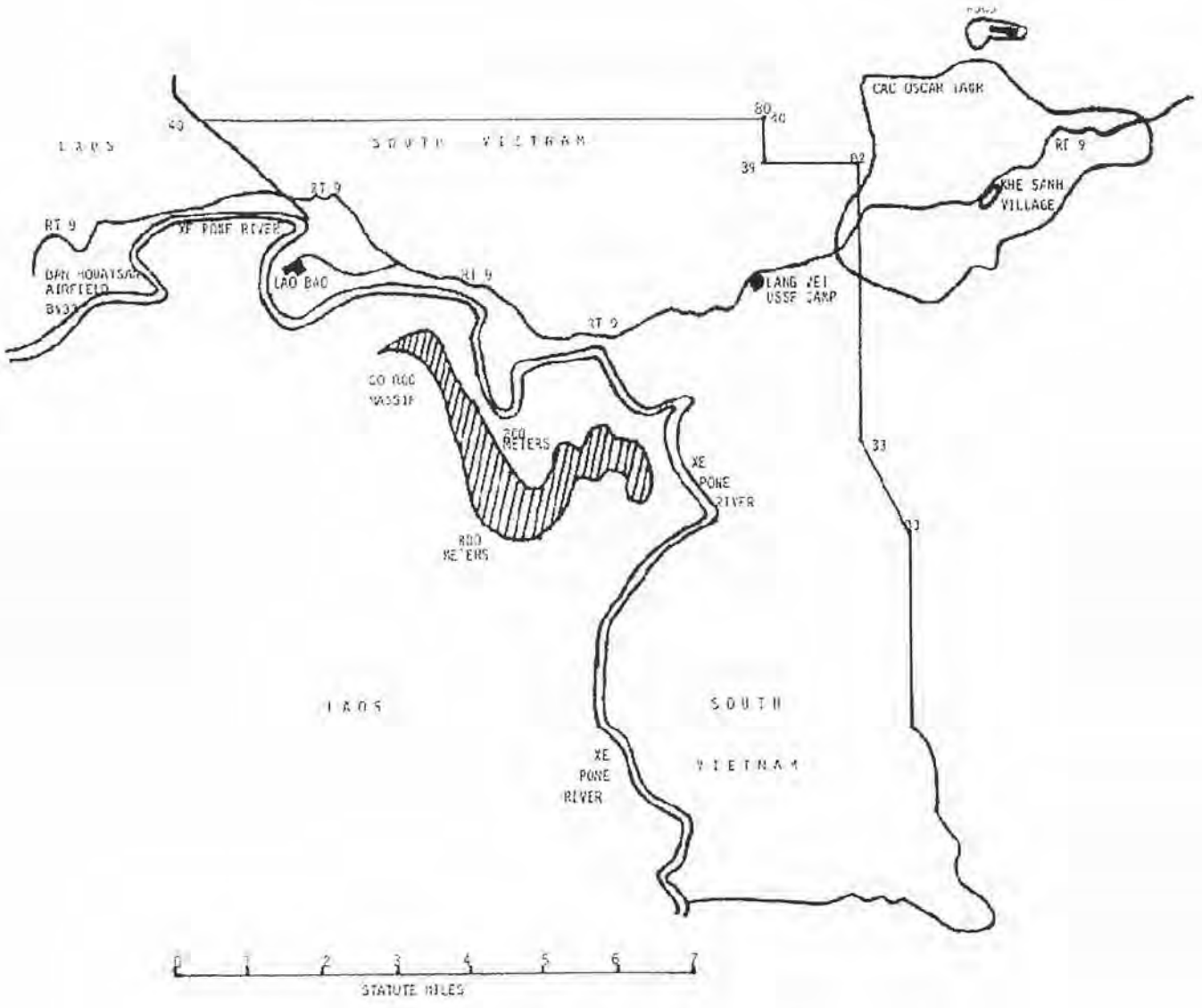

LANG VEI AREA OF OPERATIONS LATE 1967

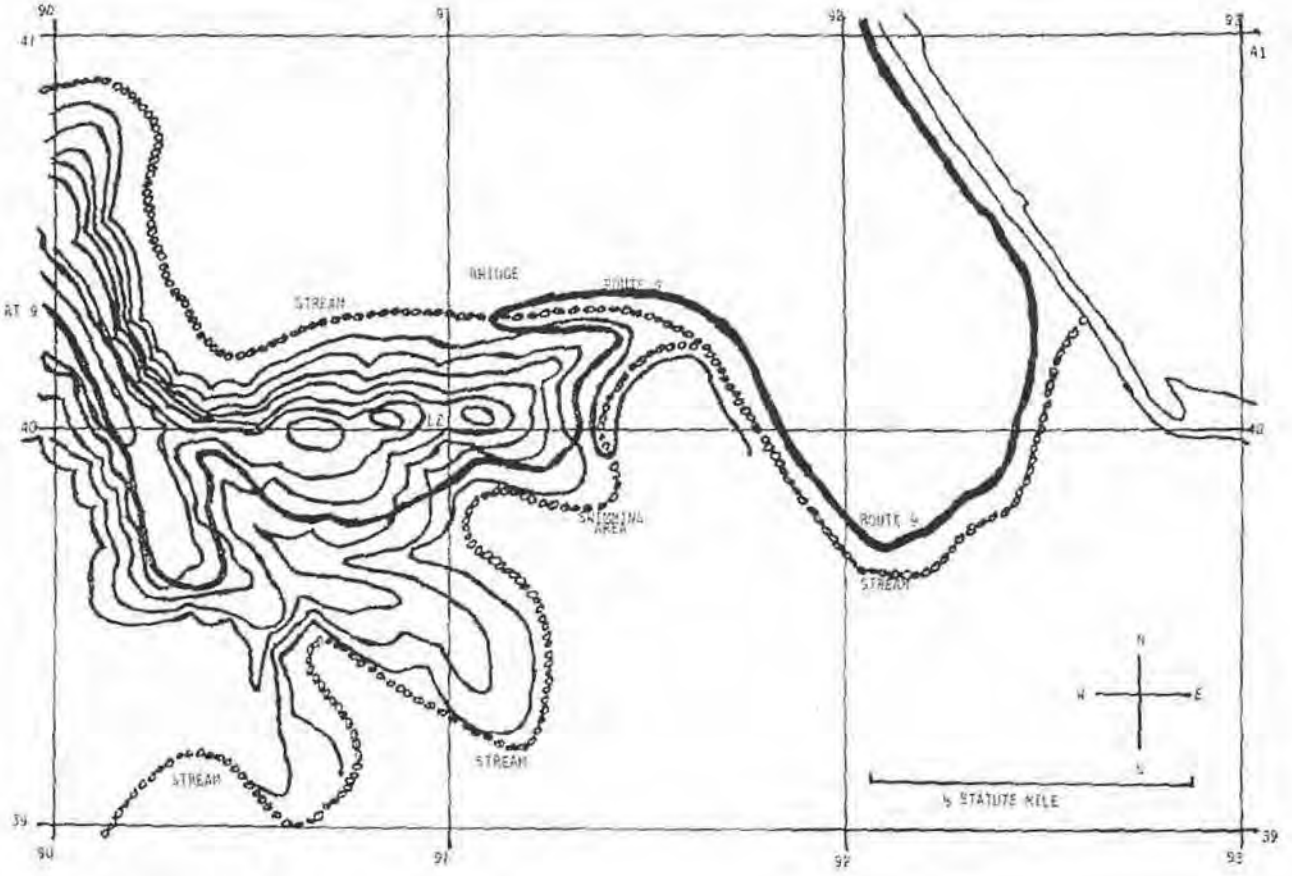

BRIDGE SITE MANNED BY C/1/26

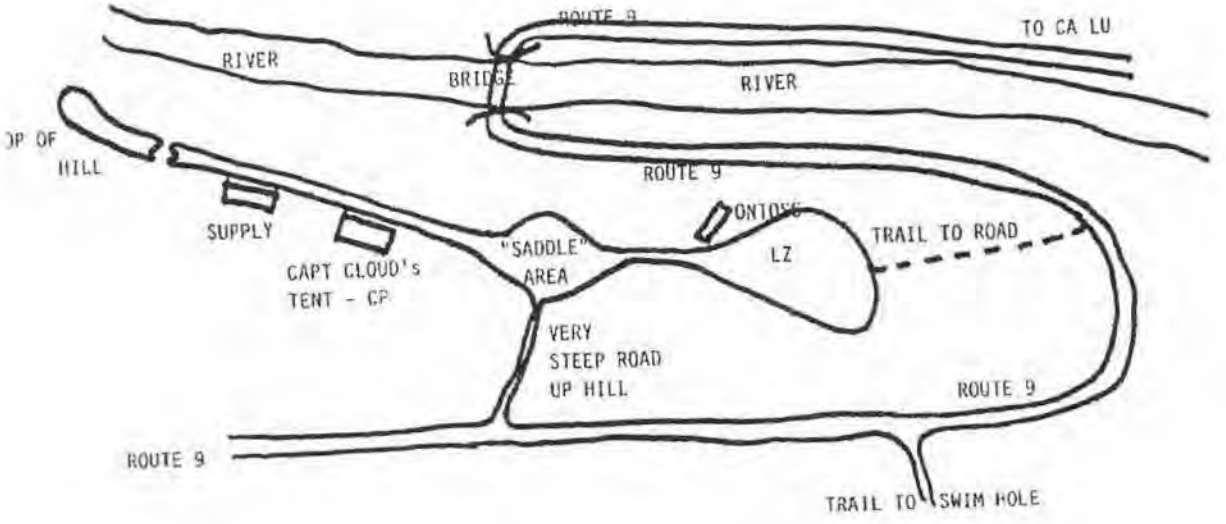

THE BRIDGE SITE

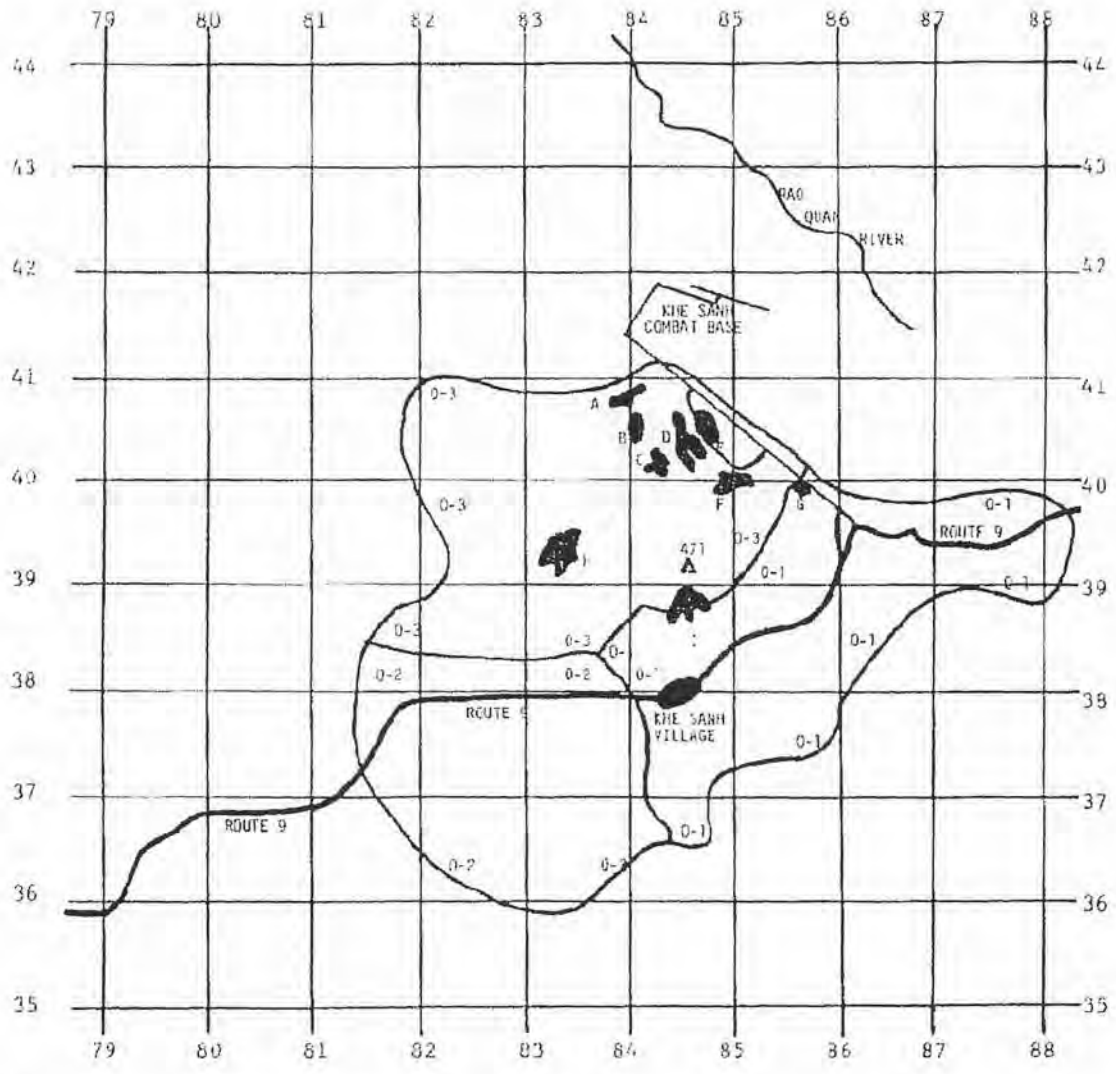

TACTICAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CAPs OF CAC OSCAR AND BRU MONTAGNARD VILLAGES:

- **A** Ta Cong
- **B** Rachac
- **C** Lang Kat (also called Tadoq)
- **D** Areng (includes Lamboiq, Sarbai, and Ruang)
- **E** Clong Sareh
- **F** Chuua and Pacoong
- **G** Home of Felix Poilane
- **H** Tum Plang

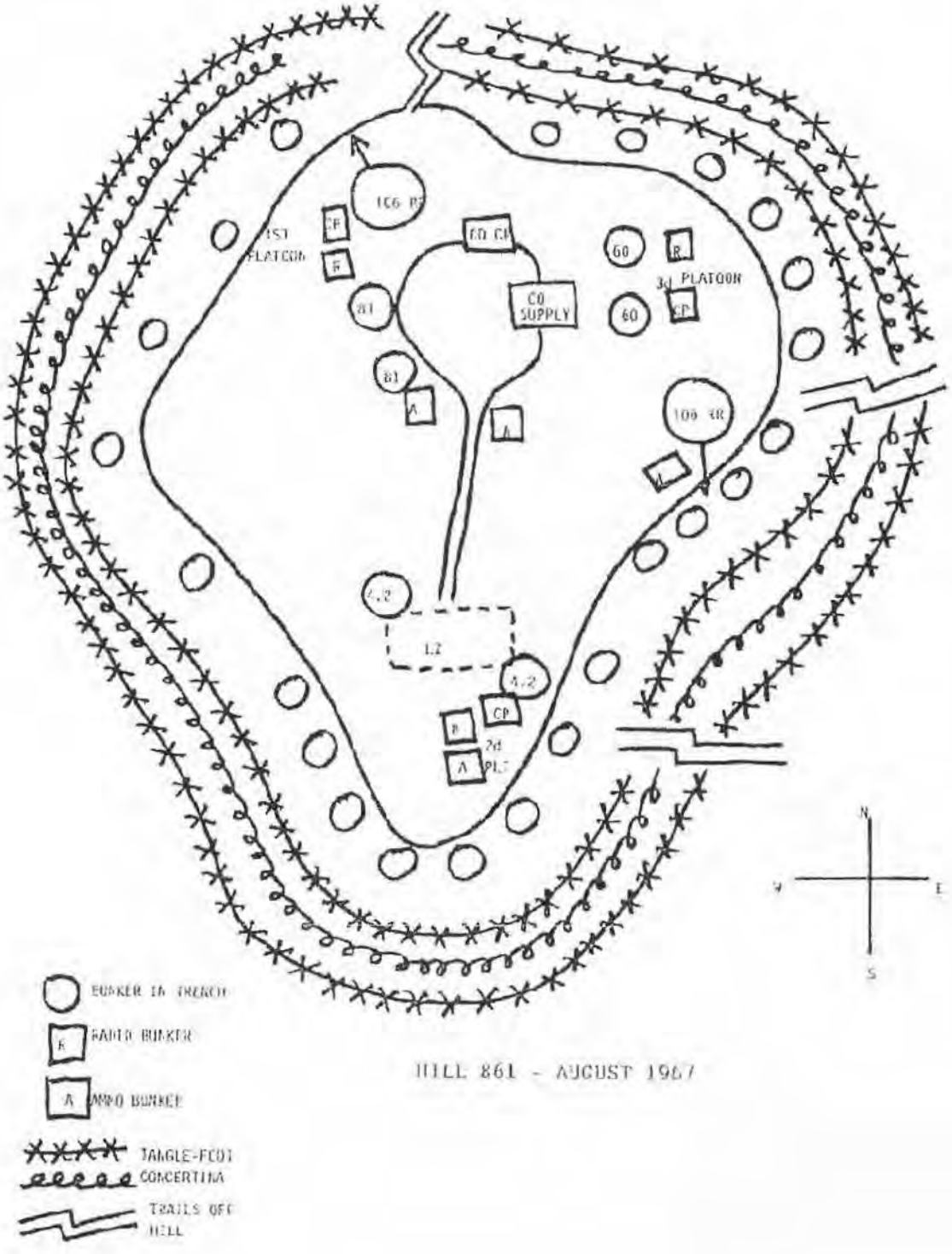

HILL 861 - AUGUST 1967

HILL 861 - AUGUST, 1967

A - Coffee trees, orchard
B - Simard's house
C - CAP O-2
D - Laundry hootches, Vietnamese
E - Buddhist shrine & school
F - Huong Hoa District HQ, CAP OSCAR HQ
G - Jail
H - "Howard Johnsons" Restaurant
I - Graves
J - Grove
K - Black Market
L - Market
M - Bru hamlet, BREN
N - Very steep ascent to Hill 471
O - Hill 471
P - school
Q - Dispensary
R - Home of John & Carolyn Miller
S - Bridge (3 bridges)
T - Rapids & water falls
U - Rev Loc's chapel
V - Rev Loc's compound (home, school)
W - Nun's quarters
X - Fr Poncet's house
Y - Old French Fort ("Fort Dix")-SOG HQ
Z - Home of Felix & Madelein Pollare
AA - Houses owned by Pollone
BB - Route 9

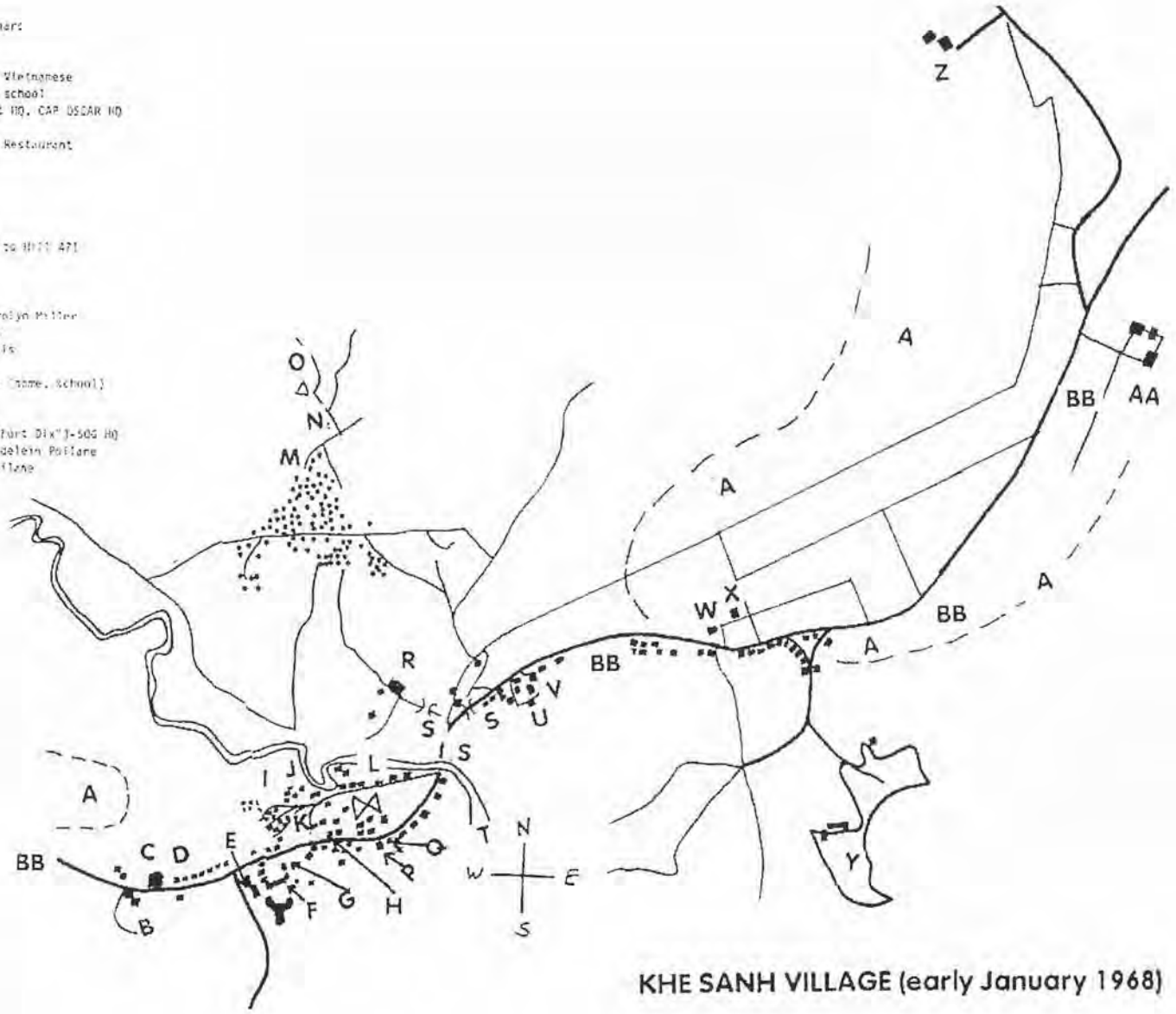

KHE SANH VILLAGE (early January 1968)

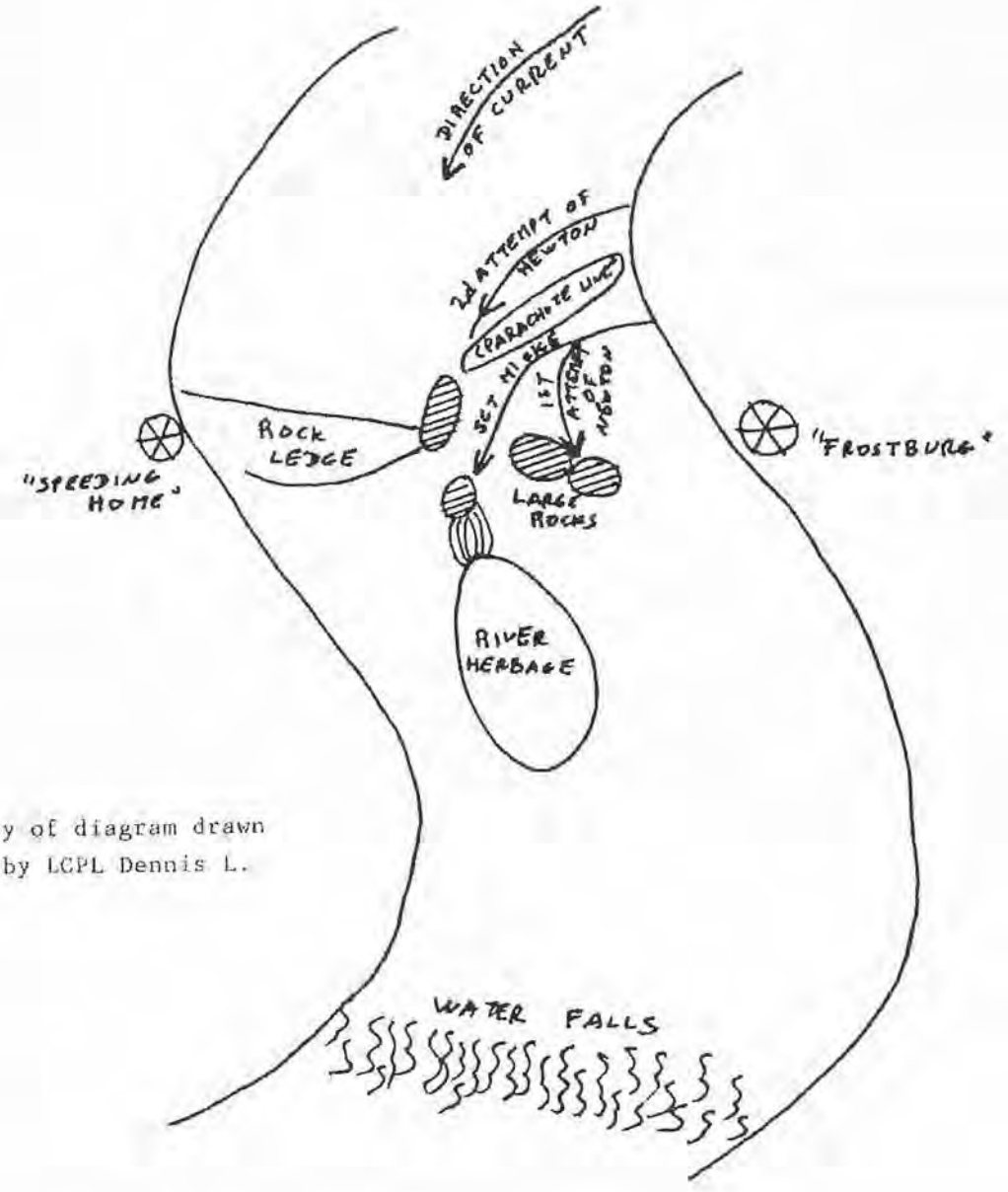

[Exact copy of diagram drawn 17 Nov 67 by LCPL Dennis L. Newton]

SITE OF DROWNING OF MEGGS, RAO QUAN RIVER AT XD 843437

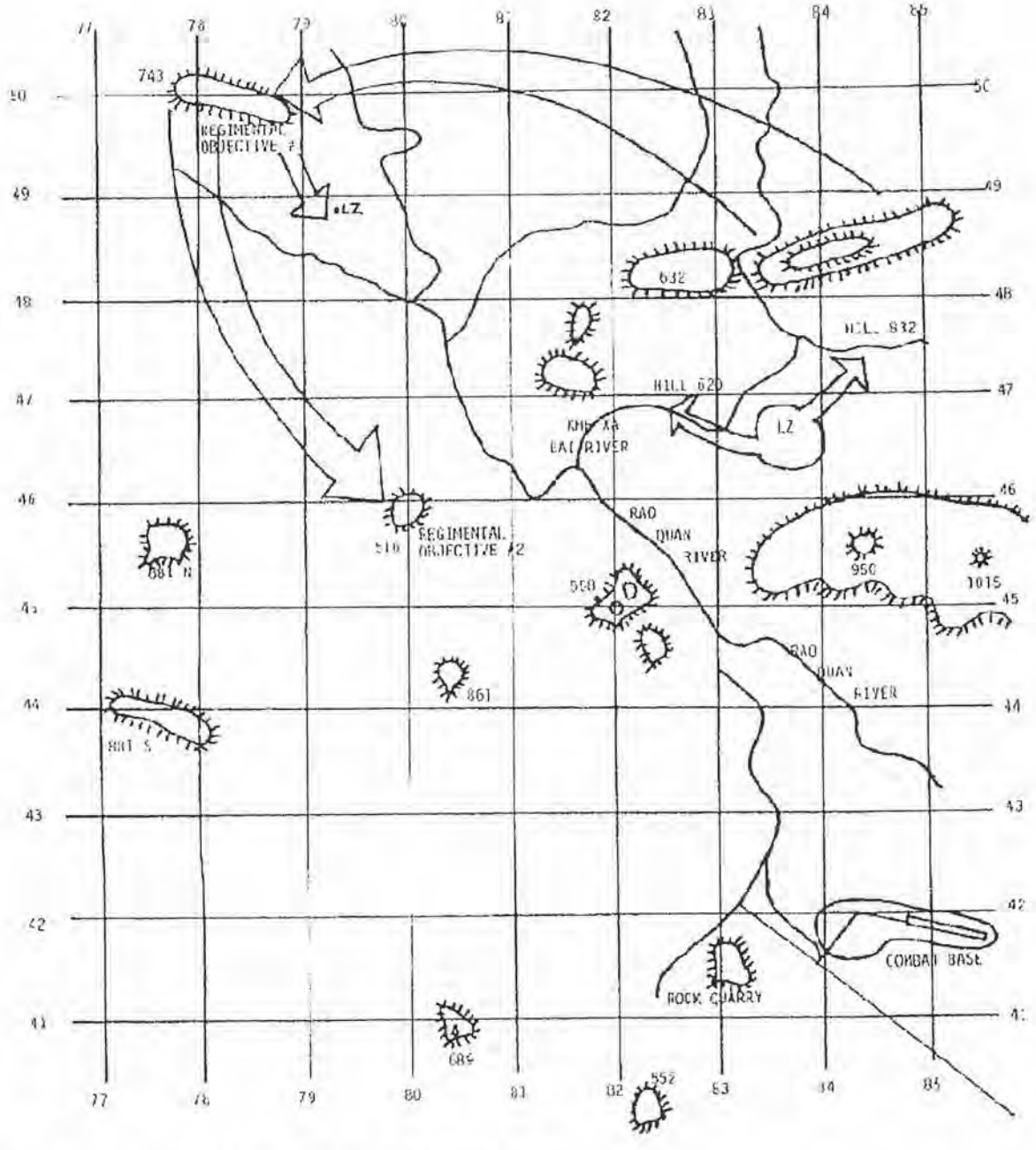

1/26 BATTALION OPERATION 28-30 DEC 1967

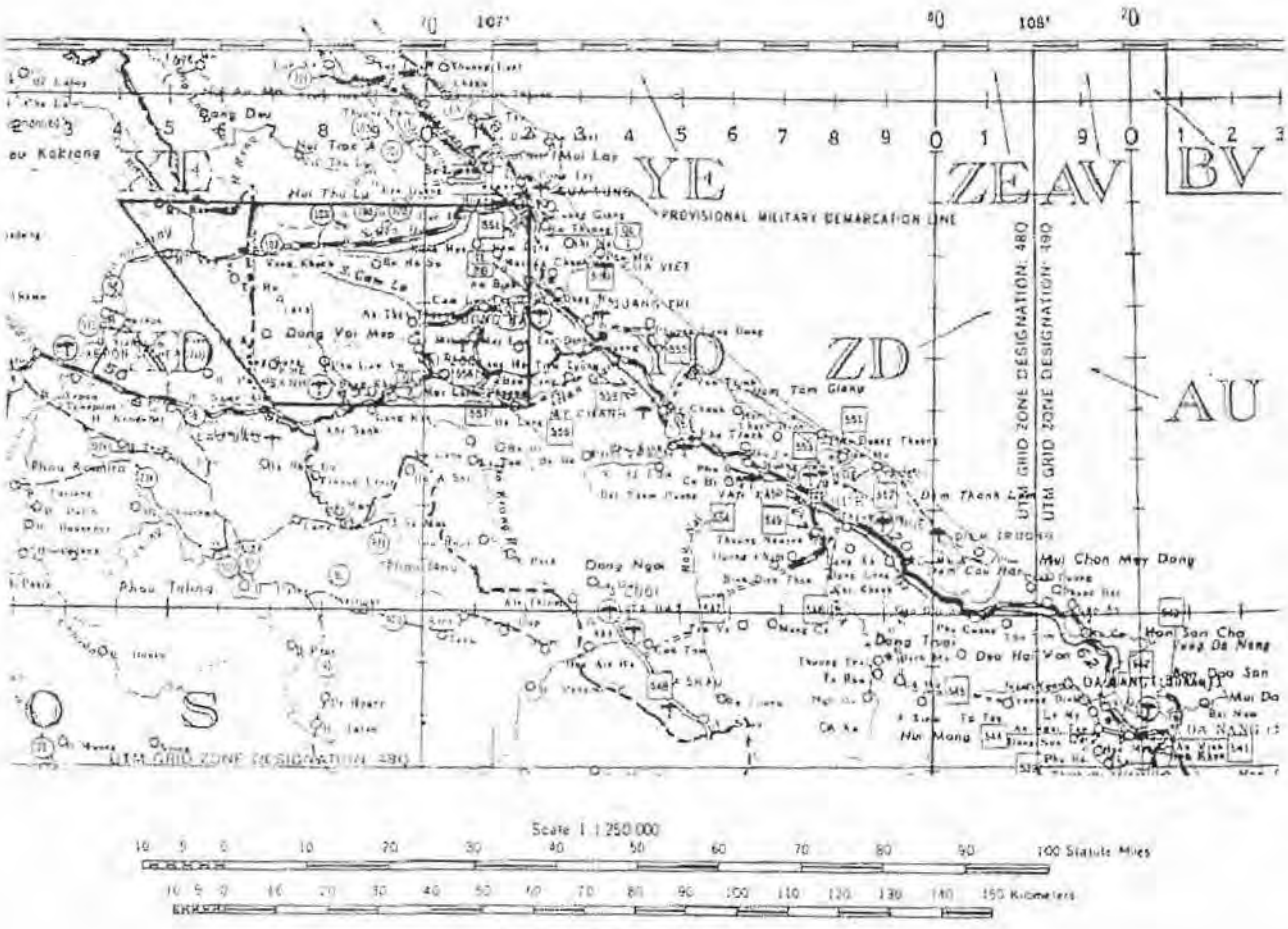

NIAGARA AO

OPERATION NIAGARA AO

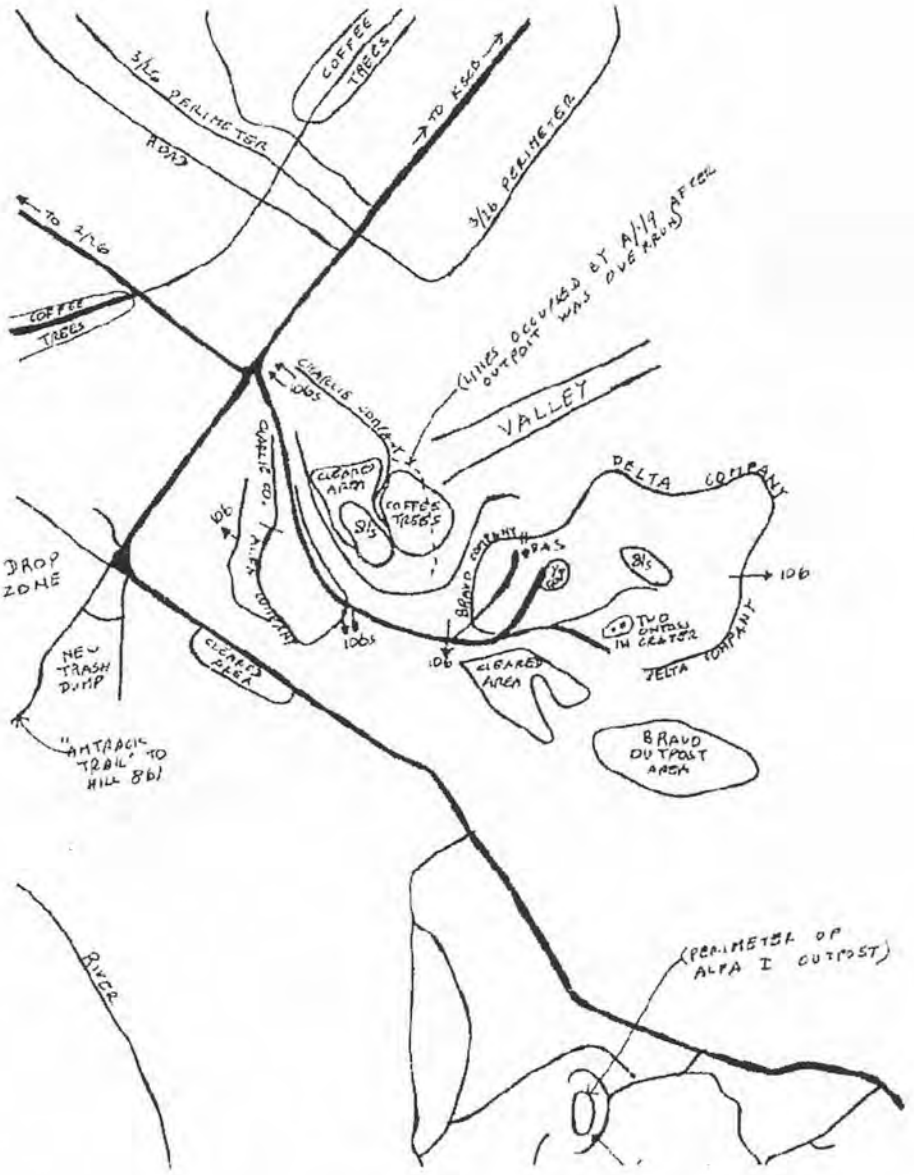

POSITIONS OF BATTALION 1/9 DURING THE SIEGE

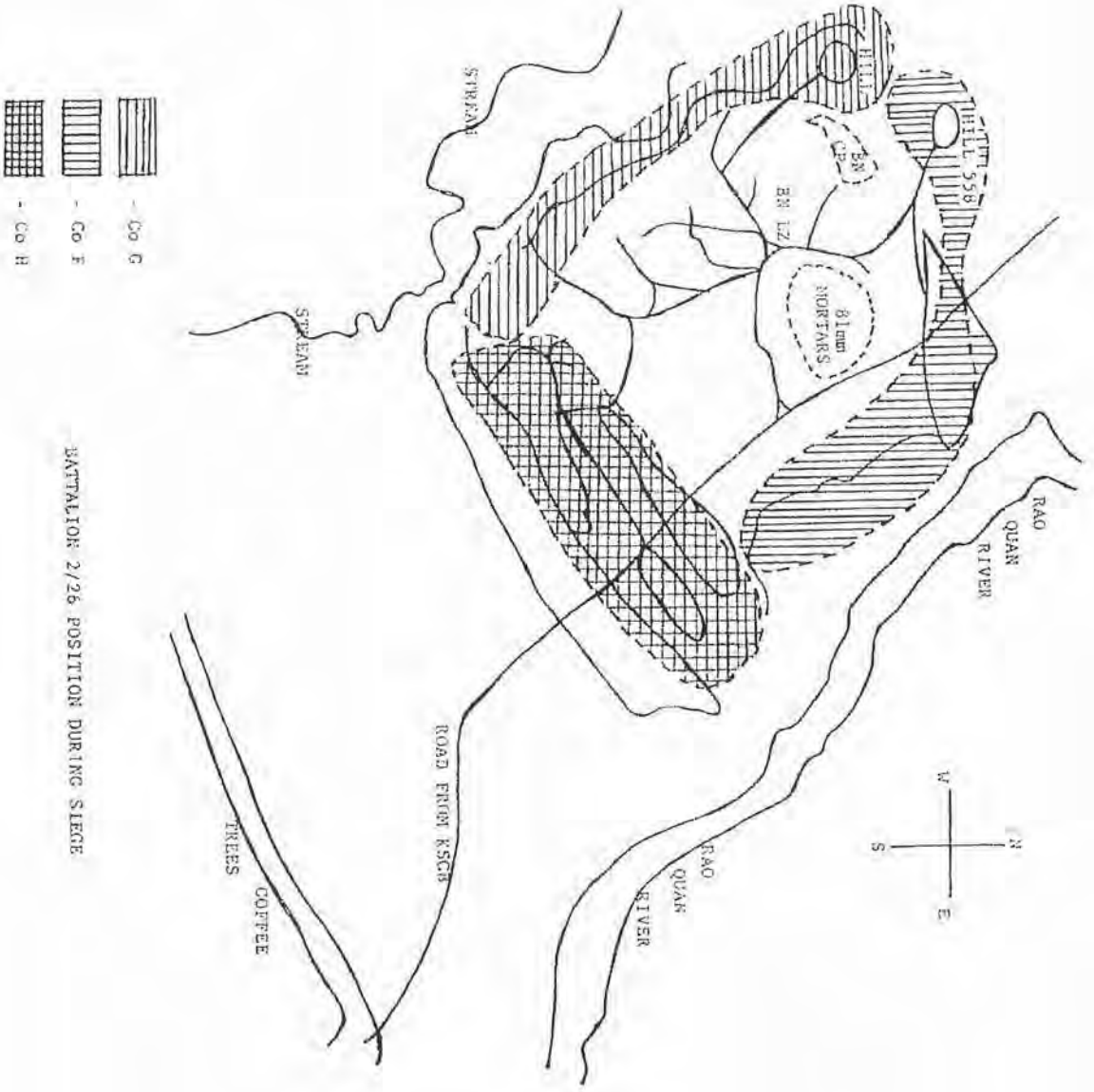

POSITIONS OF 2/26 DURING THE SIEGE

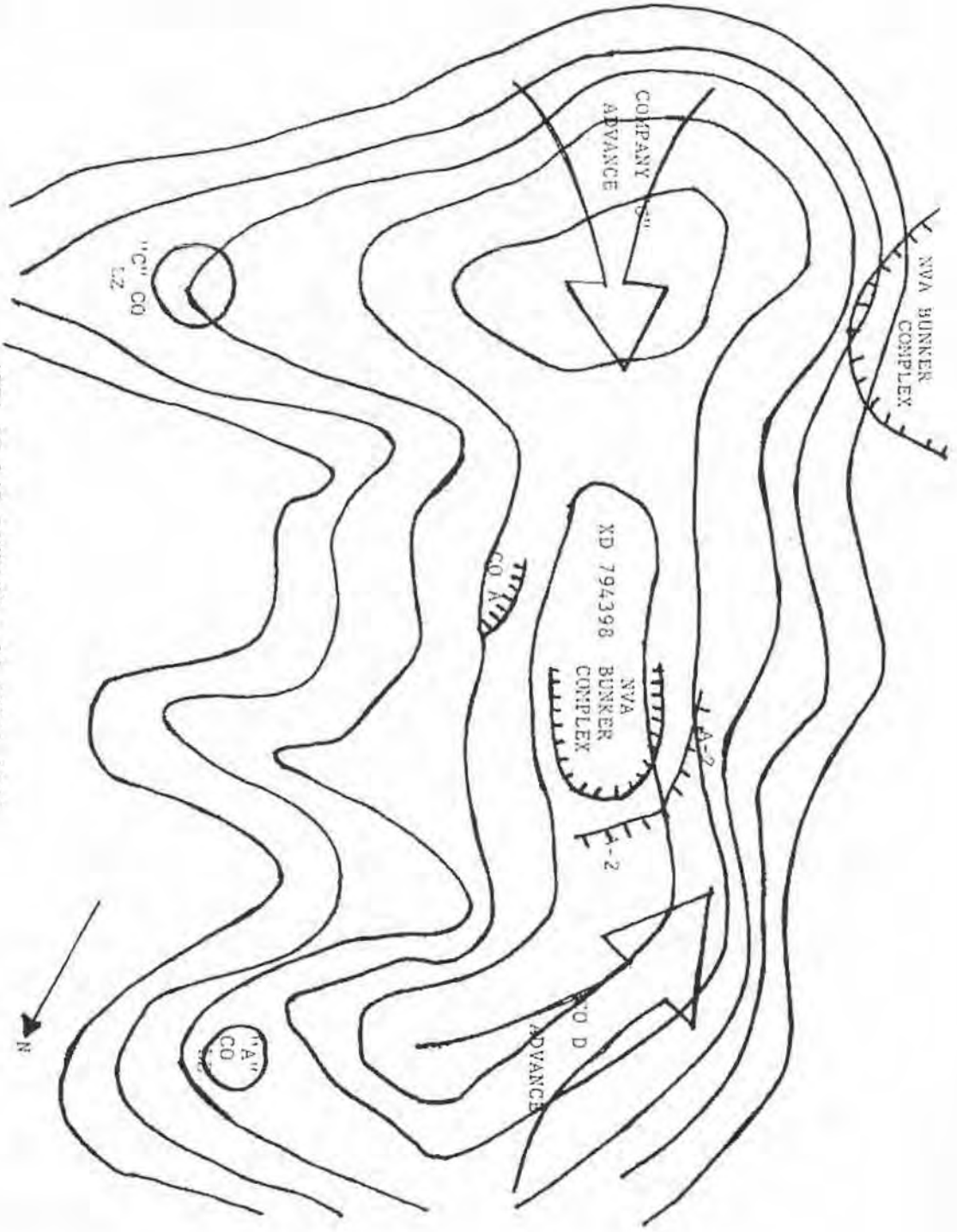

AREA OF 1/9 CONTACT, 16 APRIL 1968

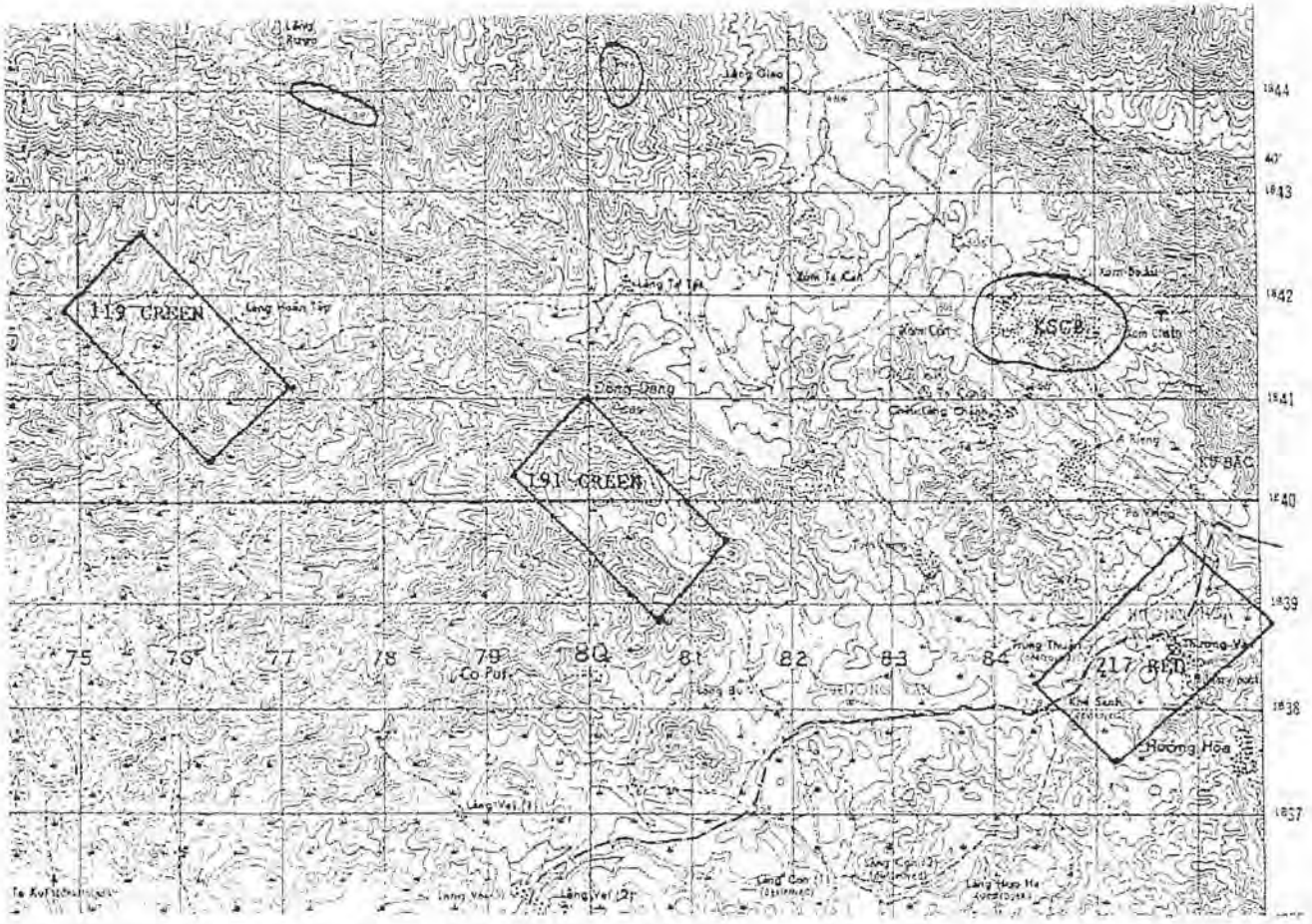

ARC LIGHT STRIKES 27 FEB 1968 INVOLVING THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF KHE SANH VILLAGE

KHE SANH 119 GREEN, located approx 2000 meters southwest of Hill 881S (XD756426 - XD771411 - XD763404) was struck with 6 aircraft and produced 2 hours of secondary explosions [COMUSMACV 261727Z/FEB68 in III MAF COC Journal and File 26-27Feb68 #276; 3rd MarDiv COC 070645Z/Mar68, Arc Light BDA in III MAF Operation SCOTLAND Journal File Pt. 5, #383; III MAF COC 081551Z/Mar68, Arc Light BDA in III MAF COC Journal and File 08-09 Mar 68 #342]. KHE SANH 191 GREEN, some 3,000 meters southwest of KSCB, XD793403 - XD807389 - XD800410 - XD814396]. KHE SANH 217 RED, THE DESTRUCTION OF KHE SANH VILLAGE: XD852375 - XD867389 - XD844383 - XD859390]. [COMUSMACV 261727Z/Feb68, 260643Z/Feb68, and 260641Z/Feb68, Arc Light Strike, in III MAF COC Journal and File 26-27 Feb 68, #276, 278, and 279, respectively].

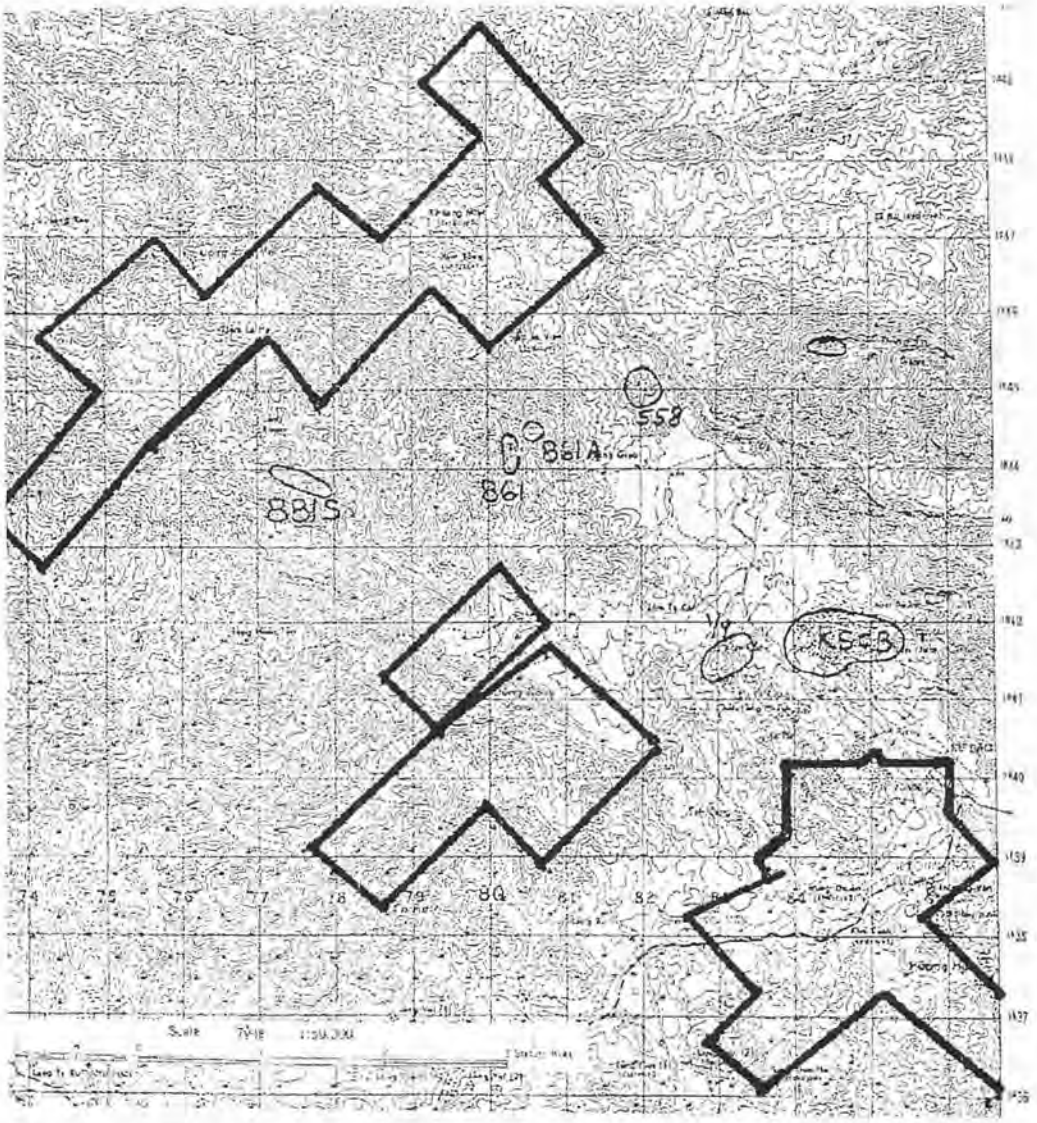

ARC LIGHT STRIKES 01 - 05 MARCH 1968

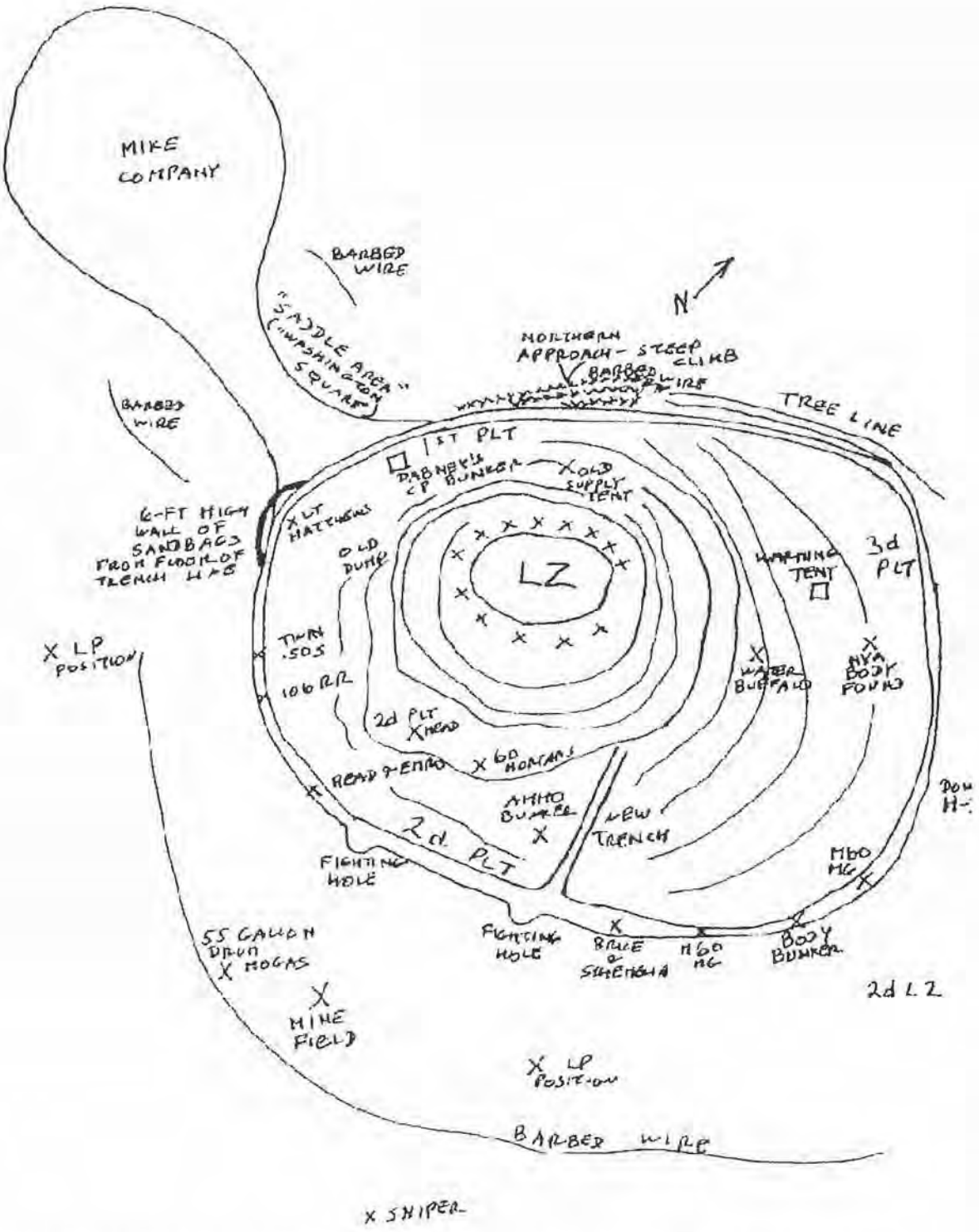

HILL 881-SOUTH DURING SIEGE [Letter from James E. Schemelia, 04 July 1984]

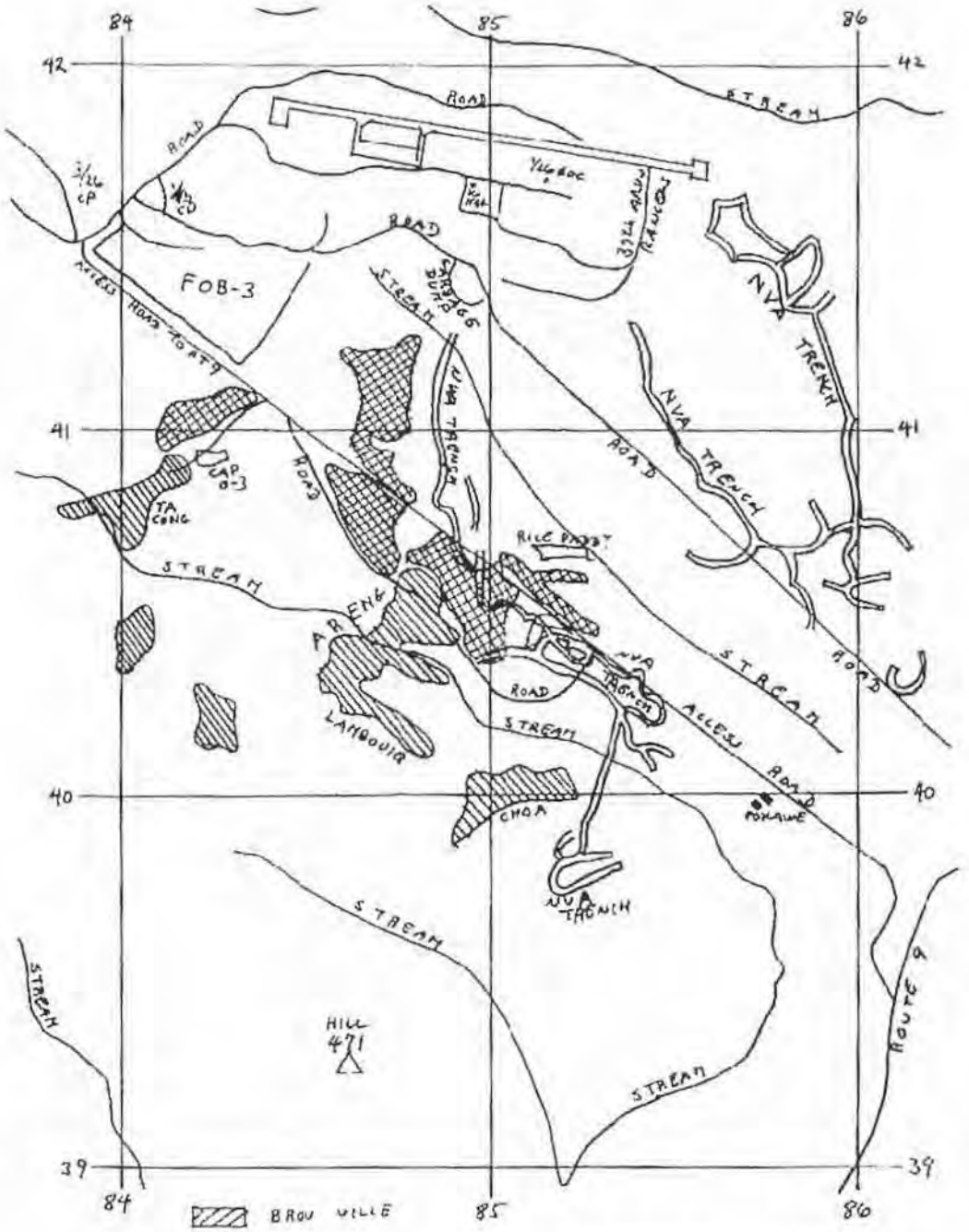

NVA TRENCH SYSTEM (Early March, 1968)
(Copied Mar68 from diagram in COG; trees from photo of Jan68)

NVA TRENCH SYSTEM DURING SIEGE

HOME WAS WHERE THEY "DUG IT", SOMETIMES IT WAS A LONG WALK TO MINISTER MY FLOCK. CHAPLAIN RAY W. STUBBE

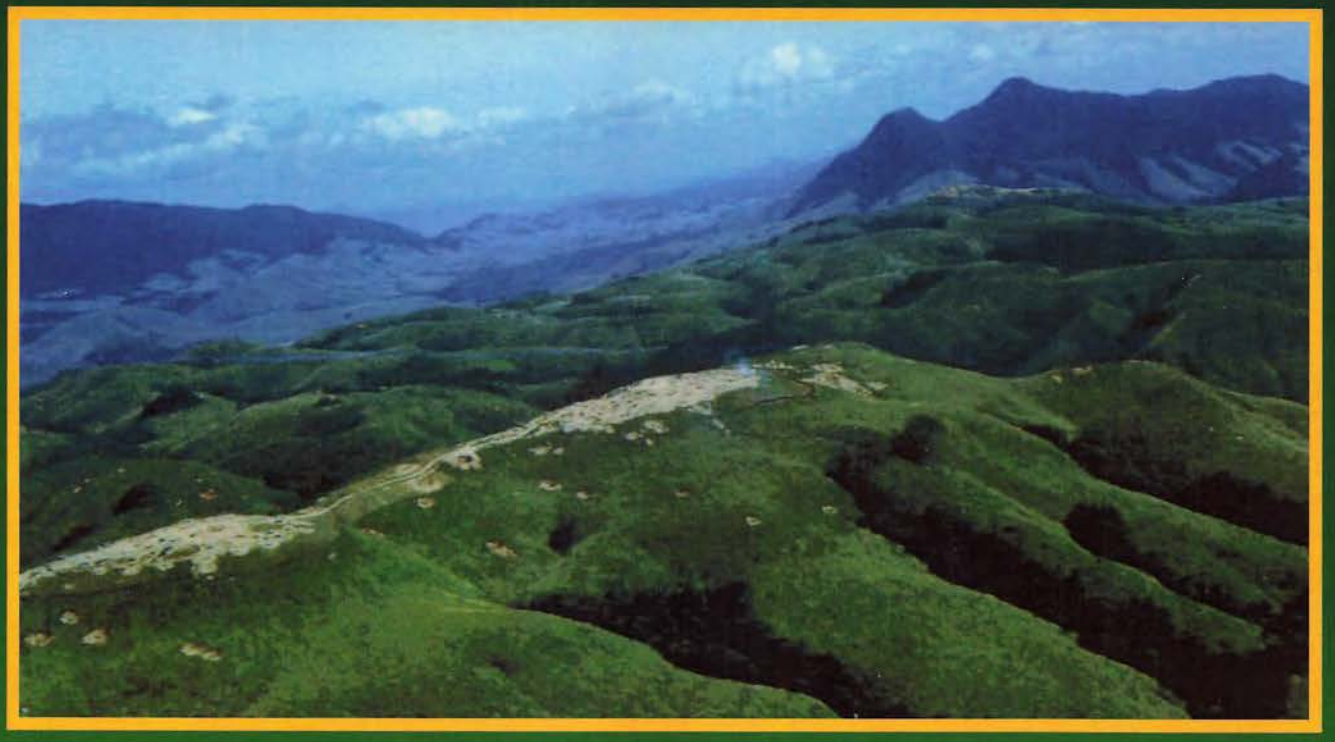

HILLS 950 & 1015 IN BACKROUND, AND HILL 861 BELOW THEM. VIEW LOOKING NORTHWEST. SHOWING MAIN & WESTERN "FINGER PORTION" OF 881 SOUTH



SOUTHERN SLOPE OF HILL 881 SOUTH LOOKING NORTH

PEBBLES IN MY BOOTS Vol. 3

A SELECTION OF
MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS INCLUDING:
"Khe Sanh: The Setting"
"Bunkers: A Personal Reflection on Dealing with PTSD"
Selected prayers, letters, articles, and presentations



BY
CHAPLAIN RAY WILLIAM STUBBE
WAUWATOSA, WISCONSIN
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FOREWORD

The following is the third volume in the series, *Pebbles in My Boots*, collections of various types of documents through the years that concern what may be likened to pebbles in a boot, eyelashes in an eye, slivers in a finger, a nagging headache, a melody that one cannot get out of one's mind, a persistent problem or nagging thought. These are minor things that seek to take the entire stage, like small "black holes" of exceedingly dense matter that attract all energy and emit none, which suck in all our energy, our life's concern. They are what Tillich once described as "demonic": referring to the process in which a part attempts to become the whole. In this particular case, the essays, prayers, talks, notes, sermons, poems, and other items in these volumes are echoes of experiences of intense and prolonged battle at Khe Sanh, Vietnam, in 1967-1968.

Volume 3, very probably the last in the series, begins with an essay, "Khe Sanh: The Setting" which provides the larger context on which the bloodiest battle of Vietnam unfolded. Much more happened here than that battle. This essay helps to provide a better understanding of the contours of the landscape of our experience, shaping what happened. Formed with the collision of large land masses many millions of years in the past and more recently (the past 10,000 or so years) through volcanic action, the subsequent battleground saw two large forces colliding (echoing in the Sates as two energized, almost frenzied factions tore the fabric of American society). The eruption of almost inconceivable violent destruction (perhaps 40,000 or more killed in three months, more tons of bombs dropped in the immediate vicinity that in all of World War II in the Pacific) produced the bloodiest battle of Vietnam.. In recent centuries, invading forces passed through Khe Sanh on what eventually became Route 9.

A major prison in the area, imprisoning both Giap and Ho Chi Minh, may help explain their fixation on Khe Sanh. The fall of a nearby Laotian city, Tchepone, focused American attention on all of Vietnam and may be the reason we eventually sent advisors followed by large numbers of troops. The early French settlers, missionaries, and local Montagnard tribal people are all discussed in this introductory essay.

The second essay, "Bunkers: A Personal Reflection on Dealing with PTSD," describes the initial attack on 21 January 1968 and subsequent horrors of the siege with its resulting, reverberating effects on people in terms of a narrowed life (angst) and broadened life (larger context) as a description of the process of PTSD, an attempt to provide an understanding of "what is" for those who experience prolonged and intense combat

The collection of items in "1983: When I Plunged into the pit of PTSD," reflects attempts to find God and to discern a meaning in the midst of the shambles and wreckage of a time when numerous TV images of Vietnam (in connection with the new Vietnam Memorial Wall in DC) rekindled flames of fireplace logs which had almost cooled into dark, unnoticed ash. The fires of confusion and panic, fanned by contemporary events in my life—not only the TV images (which made me wonder if any were still alive who were with me at Khe Sanh), but also the death of my grandmother and my imminent retirement from the Navy Chaplain Corps (which had become my life), plunged me into PTSD. The experience, upon much later reflection, seemed to resonate the paradigm of baptism—being buried in the waters (which, for the ancient Hebrew symbolized chaos and death) and emerging an entirely new person with new eyes to see reality more clearly. (One is reminded of Plato's tale of the cave in *Republic*, Book VII, not only of seeing reality instead of shadows, but also the propensity of the cave-dwellers to blind him and even put him to death—e.g., isolate him through institutionalization and marginalization). A review of a career as a Navy Chaplain's activities, a mystical meditation printed in the local Navy base newspaper, a funeral meditation for a Marine killed in Beirut, and a prayer at the dedication of the Chicago Vietnam Memorial Fountain, conclude this dark essay.

The following items echo Khe Sanh in subsequent years, beginning with the 1985 New York City Ticker Tape Parade, a logo (symbol) of Khe Sanh, and various talks, letters, essays, prayers, poems, talks, and interviews.

Appendices list nationally broadcast TV programs in which I appear, miscellaneous interviews, my writings that touch on Khe Sanh, public appearances relating to Vietnam, a listing of quotations in books and news articles, and a list of corrections to *Pebbles*, Volumes 1 and 2, conclude this book which hopefully may be helpful to those seeking to make rational sense of what is essentially irrational and to understand what is far from usual human life, to grasp what is ungraspable. Reality is always greater than our awareness of it and our awareness of it is always greater than anything we say about it or remember of it, as evidenced by others from the same experience providing details we didn't notice, and the experience of the great Russian author, Dostoevsky's lament that he couldn't put into words the images in his mind. The attempt becomes like climbing a pole coated with grease, or the ancient Greek myth of Sisyphus rolling the stone up the hill but never reaching the top; the stone always rolls back down the hill as the one rolling it continually attempts to roll it to the top. Perhaps the pain of attempting to unfold the hidden memories and communicate them to others conjures the myth of Prometheus who gives mankind the gift of fire but for his efforts is chained to a rock on Mount Caucasus on which his liver is pecked at eternally by an eagle (or vulture) until he is finally released by Hercules. My own metaphor is of an old LP record which is scratched by violent, damaging action and replays the same song continuously and disturbs one until someone else picks up the playing arm, lifts it and moves it so that the song of life may continue.

For me personally, however dark and chaotic the times (both in warfare and in subsequent times of PTSD), God has always been present, in the shadows, in the pit, on the crosses that kill. "Truly God was in this place and I did not know it." (Gen. 28.16).

–Ray William Stubbe
25 February 2014

KHE SANH: THE SETTING

BORN IN VIOLENCE

When those attempting to resolve mysteries of the Missing in Action in Vietnam returned to the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei, they brought along Captain Frank Willoughby[1] to indicate the position of his command bunker.

> "When Willoughby got up there, he was flabbergasted. We had dug in one place which we thought—we'd used the old imagery—we thought we were digging at the right place, and there was nothing there. Well, when he got up there and looked around—it took him awhile to orient himself—the entire place had changed. It used to be forest all the way you could see to the west. There was hardly a tree out there. There's some sort of brick-making concern or tile-making concern not far away and they'd been excavating the earth there at the old Lang Vei for use for the manufacture of bricks or tile. They had excavated it out to the point where it had changed the terrain. ... They searched and searched and they eventually found the location of part of the bunker. They did excavate the site, but as I recall, they didn't find any remains."[2]

Veterans of the Khe Sanh siege who have returned to the Khe Sanh Combat Base have frequently remarked at their inability to orient themselves and discern the airstrip. They are unaware that the US Army constructed a parallel airstrip to support their operations during LAM SON 719 in January-March, 1971[3], or that the North Vietnamese occupied the base in 1973 during which they installed missiles and greatly lengthened the airstrip.[4] Subsequent developments on that ground had completely altered its landscape in only a few decades!

A thousand periods of a thousand years each is a million years—just a flash in the history of our planet. Geology studies periods of time extending backwards many millions of years, during which major changes to the landscape occur. From radioactive decay, fossils, and other measurements such as magnetism, it is apparent that some land masses were once joined together, like the eastern coast of South America and the western coast of Africa. Continents move atop molten rock on a gradually cooling planet. Occasionally these plates separate and by volcanic action, the molten rock beneath erupts to form new islands in the ocean or earthquakes on land.

About seventy million years ago, such large piece of land we now know as India, moved northwards some 4,000 miles over a period of 30 million years from the eastern coast of Africa and, approximately 40 million years ago, gradually slammed

---

[1] Commanding Officer of A-101, the US Special Forces unit at Lang Vei immediately before the siege and when the unit fell on 07 February 1968. Willoughby died 26 April 2000.

[2] Conversation with Mr. Robert DeStatte, 08 November 1995. Mr. DeStatte was then working with the DOD's POW/MIA Task force.

[3] Arriving 2130, 31 Jan 1971, the 27th Engineer BN joined forces with Task Force 326 to build the runway. While an initial survey of the existing 3500-ft. airstrip indicated it could be quickly repaired, later survey of it indicated extreme damage from artillery and rockets with well over 50 significant holes and significant sub-grade washout. Consequently, a parallel assault airstrip, 60 ft. by 3200 ft. was constructed and used until the permanent strip could be repaired. The new 3200 x 60 ft. airstrip was completed on 4 Feb 1971 and the air facility at Khe Sanh became operational on 14 Feb 1971. [Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed, 2008, p. 422].

[4] North Vietnamese development of Khe Sanh within days of the ceasefire that began on 27 January 1973, was reported in February when the South Vietnamese accused North Vietnam of emplacing three anti-aircraft missile sites near Khe Sanh which were disclosed in aerial photography on 18 Feb. ["Red Missile Sites Reported in South," Milwaukee *Journal*, Monday, 26 Feb 1973, p. 2]. The following month, the missile sites were removed. ["Reds Bow to Ultimatum, Shift Khe Sanh Missiles," *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Tue., 13 March 1973, p. 1]. The following month, two helicopters containing 16 members of the International Commission for Control and Supervision (including representatives from North Vietnam), enroute to Lao Bao were shot down. Lao Bao, with a population then of 350, was one of three ports of entry and the ICCS was preparing to station a team there to monitor supplies moving through the border. ["2 ICCS Copters Lost in Viet, "*Pacific Stars and Stripes*, 27:98 (Monday, 9 Apr 1973), p. 1].. In May, 1973, 4 missile sites were reported at Khe Sanh which also noted the airstrip had been improved. ["SAM Site Spotted," *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Monday, 7 May 1973, p. 6]. In August, 1973, news reports indicated that engineers and labor gangs were extending the airstrip at Khe Sanh to more than a mile in length and covering it with steel matting. [Hoffman, Fred S., "N. Viets Plan to Hold Land?" *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Wednesday, 22 Aug 1973, p. 6]. Another news report of August, 1973 reported Khe Sanh was occupied by 8,000 to 10,000 North Vietnamese and the base now included storage and supply areas equipped with several surface-to-air missiles, anti-aircraft guns and heavy artillery. Photography revealed the runway was now 5,300 ft. long. [Huet, Marc, "Reds Build Khe Sanh into Fortress," *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Thurs., 30 Aug 1977.]

into Tibet in Asia lifting it up some three miles and forming the Himalaya Mountains. Scientists have determined it continues to move north at the rate of two inches per year.[5]

Another such collision of land mass occurred when a chunk off the coast of Australia moved north and collided on the coast of what is now Laos during the Devonian period.[6] A shallow, neritic[7] sea lapped against the edges of this land mass (Indochinese Massif Central).[8] The "Kontum Massif," formed some 120 million years ago,[9] moved beneath an ancient sea bed of deposited shells and sea life which formed limestone over millions of years.[10] Red sandstone, containing the remains of reptiles and silicified wood, covers all of lower Laos.[11]The collision, about 40 million years ago,[12] formed the 1300 mile-long Annamite Cordillera,[13] (also known as the Trung Son Cordillera), an almost impenetrable boundary between Laos and Vietnam, gradually lifting up an ancient sea bed. Results of this collision are visible in steep declivities on the eastern side (facing Vietnam) while more gentle slopes are seen on the western side (facing the interior of Laos).[14] Thus was formed, for example, the Co Roc Massif, the cliff land mass in Laos facing Vietnam. Over millions of years, as the land gradually rose, abundant monsoon rainfalls carved numerous caves in Co Roc as well as the entire area.[15] During the 1968 siege battle at Khe Sanh, NVA emplaced artillery which fired on Khe Sanh Combat Base from these caves. Other caves in the Khe Sanh area

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[5] Time-Life Books, eds., *Voyage Through the Universe, The Third Planet*. Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1989, p. 52.

[6] Of the Paleozoic Era, approximately 380 million years ago.

[7] "neritic": the shallow part of the sea near a coast and overlaying the continental shelf.

[8] Hoffet, J.H., "Notice sur le Feuille de Hue, 1933, and Complements – 1962 par H. Fontaine et E. Saurin,. Dalat: Service Geographique National du Viet Nam, 1962, p. 5. Workman, however, dates gneisses from the Kontum Massif at 520 million years. [Workman, "Geological Structure of the Indochina Peninsula," *Proceedings, Regional Conference on the Geology and Mineral Resources of Southeast Asia*, Jakarta, 4-7 August 1976, ed. S. Siryosujono and A. Sudadjat, p. 206]. Workman also dates its age at 530 million years ago. [Workman, *Geology of Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam and the eastern part of Thailand*. Institute of Geological Sciences, National Environment Research Council, Overseas Geology and Mineral Resources, 1977, p. 5].

[9] Hutchison, Charles S., *Geological Evolution of South-east Asia, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 43.*

[10] J.H. Hoffet, a French geologist, explored the Khe Sanh area during 1920-1930 and was informed by Captain Laval, a colonist at Lao Bao, of the existence along the banks of the XePone River, a few hundred meters from Colonial Route No. 9, of a deposit of very large trunks of *Araucariosylon*, layered and embedded in the sandstone. [J.H. Hoffet, *Etude geologique sur le centre de l'Indochine entre Tourane et le Mekong (Annam Central et Bas-Laos)*, Hanoi, 1933, p. 95.. The Araucariocylon is a tree closely related to living araucarias, a large group of the pine family now confined to the southern hemisphere. [Simpson, George Gaylord, *Fossils and the History of Life. Scientific American library*. New York: Scientific American Books, 1983, p. 21].

[11] Hoffett, *Notice sur.. op. cit.*, P. 6].

[12] Hutchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 50, 126, 150. During the Namurian-Viséan time. (The Viséan is the lower Carboniferous, also referred to as the Mississippi system in the US. The Namurian is referred to as the Pennsylvania System in the US. H. Fontaine notes: "The Kontum Massif is supposed to have collided into South China Block during Middle Paleozoic. On the other hand, limestone is very widespread in Central Indochina (Viet Nam and Laos) and is particularly developed in the Carboniferous and the Permian. Sea went away from Southeast Asia mainland after the Triassic in many places and after the Lower Jurassic in the rest of the region.;" [Fontaine, letter to Ray W. Stubbe, 11 Oct 1990].

[13] A "cordillera" is a chain of mountains, usually the principal system of mountain axis of a large land mass, such as the Andes Mountains in South America. Annam is the middle nation of what became Vietnam. Tonkin was the nation to the north, Cochinchina was the nation to the south. The "impenetrable barrier" of 1300 kilometers is mentioned by Fromaget, Jacques, "Indochine Francaise Sa Structure Geologique, ses Roches, ses Mines et Leurs Relations Possibles avec la Tectonique," *Bulletin de Service Geologique de L'Indochine*, Vol. XXVI, Fascicule 2, Hanoi, 1941, p. 8.

[14] Shrock, Joann L., Stockton, William, Jr., Murphy, Elaine M., and Fromme, Marion: *Minority Groups in the Republic of Vietnam*. Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 550-105, Ethnographic Study Series. Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Dept of the Army, 1966, p. 55.

[15] Madame Madeleine Poilane noted: "All along the Annamese chain [caves existed]. This is the reason, moreover, that the Ho Chi Minh Trail was able to be built and protected. ... It was inconceivable to think that the V.C. might have retreats as secure and protected as these, but that explains why they were very mobile in making use of this route either on foot or bicycles, or bys truck. They were at home..; they wanted victory and these natural hiding places greatly contributed to their success. They took shelter there when the American planes passed overhead. They had the time to take refuge in these shelters or in the forest with all the agility for which they are famous." [Letter of Madame Madeleine Poilane to Ray W. Stubbe, 6 July 1990]. The NVA headquarters controlling the Khe Sanh siege battle, secretly designated "B5-T8" and located in Laos just west of the DMZ, was located in an area "..where massive limestone deposits dissolve in tropical downpours, sculpting needle-shaped pinnacles, sink holes, and culs-de-sac. North Vietnamese Army workshops, apartments, and stockpiles took advantage of giant caverns with cool, dry, blast-proof halls three or four stories high that extended 1,000 feet or more .. into many hillsides." [Collins, John M., *Military Geography for Professionals and the Public*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1998, p. 371].

provided safe and hidden places to cache supplies. Apparently, Hill 881-South contained a submerged field hospital prior to the 1967 Battle of the hills which collapsed during that battle from 10,000-pound bombs which were dropped on it.[16] Subsequently, Marines who dug bunkers opened spaces that belched forth overcoming fumes of decomposing bodies.



TOGER TOOTH MOUNTAIN, Hill 1739 XD930546

The collision of the Kontum Massif into the Indochinese Massif Central also caused eruptions of granitoids which are related to the rift-subduction or collision-related.[17] During the Quaternary (the recent, past million years to the present), Tiger Tooth Mountain[18] to the north of Khe Sanh Combat Base,[19] moved southeast.[20] The pressure from the northwest (like the movement of NVA against the Marines in 1968) eventually resulted in five small volcanoes, Cua Tung, Gia Linh, Cua, Khe Sanh, and A Dua Ap,[21] along with hot springs located between the volcano of Cua and that of Khe Sanh.[22] The first two volcanoes are located on a plain and do not exceed 100 meters. The third, the small plateau of Cua is 265 meters high; Khe Sanh is 400 meters high and A Dua Ap, 700 meters. "If one links, by drawing a line, these 5 basaltic plateaus, one gets a curve which marries perfectly in the contours of the Tiger's Tooth Massif ... This line, linking these 5 basaltic sites corresponds to a circular fault line, the line of least resistance, which was created at the moment of the great pressing."[23]

Thus, Khe Sanh was born in great heat and violence of volcanic eruption. The subsequent siege battle of 1968 might make one ponder whether a spirit of violence shrouded that area from its inception! Indeed, two-thirds of Vietnam is occupied by metamorphic and igneous rocks.[24]

The volcanic basalt, upon weathering, decomposes into red laterite clay[25] which covers the Khe Sanh area, and was the reason Eugene Poilane began cultivation of coffee in the 1920s since the soil is rich and fertile. With the further advantage of a winterless climate, essential for rubber, tea, and coffee cultivation, the red laterite soil of Khe Sanh was especially suitable for Poilane's coffee plantation. Coffee was first introduced in Indochina in 1888, and in 1937, 1,500 tons of coffee were produced.[26] Additionally, since native Bru were, at the time, not civilized, Vietnamese were brought to work the plantation,

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[16] SFC James Perry, Medic on the 4-man MACV Advisory Team #4 in Khe Sanh ville, later noted that the NVA had a hospital and field mess in the caves and tunnels in Hill 881-South, and that as many as three or four thousand NVA may have been killed as these caved-in during the bombardment. [Conversation with James Perry, 28 May 1986]. As the Battle of the Hills erupted, on 24 April, 2/Lt Thomas G King of B/1/9, reported his two platoons swept the cave complex of Hill 861. Sgt. Roger Ynostrom, "Hill 861 Cave Complex Shields NVA Battalion," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:19 (12 May 1967), p. 12. Madame Poilane writes: "The Viet Cong were able to hide in these caves where there was water available, were able to build fire and cook their meals without anyone seeing the smoke. They also slept in them and used them as a site to care for their sick and wounded." [Madame Madeleine Poilane, letter to Ray W. Stubbe, 6 July 1990].

[17] Hutchison, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

[18] XD 832543. The age of Tiger Tooth Mountain is difficult to determine due to the lack of clear contacts and true metamorphic aureoles. [Hoffett, *Notice sur la Feuille, op. cit.*, p.; 9].

[19] The site of the first US Marine operations and infantry unit (76 Marines from G/2/3) at Khe Sanh when Major Alfred M. Gray, Jr.'s Signal Engineering Survey Unit (SESU) occupied it in April-June, 1964

[20] Hoffet, J.H., *Etude geologique sur.., op. cit.*, pp. 119, 129, 134; "Notice sur la Feuille de Hue," *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[21] Approx. locations: Cua Tung (YD280810), Gia Linh (YD210420), Cua (YD100540), Khe Sanh (XD835418), and A Dua Ap (XD693508). The eruption of these basalts occurred over an extended period of time, ceasing some time less than 600,000 years ago. "The lack of alteration observed in certain basalt flows suggests, moreover, a very recent age." [Workman, D.R., *Geology of Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam, op. cit.*, p. 30].

[22] Hoffett, *Etude, op. cit.*, p. 131.

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Thach, Tran kim, "Structural Geology of the Republic of Viet-Nam: a Preliminary Survey," *CCOP Newsletter* 1:4 (June, 1974), p. 22.

[25] Hofett, *Notice sur la Feuille de Hue, op. cit.*, p. 12, 24; Hoffett, *Etude, op. citl.*, p. 117.

[26] Fisher, Charles A., *South-East Asia, A Social, Economic and Political Geography, London: Methuen & Co., 1964, p. 541.*

and thus Khe Sanh village developed. When Poilane arrived, there was only one house on Route 9, the engineer who supervised the construction of Route 9.

The laterite soil became as slippery as ice during the rains and collapsed trenches and bunkers built by Marines in late 1967, some with fatal result.[27]

Gold is found in the streams of the Annamite Cordillera,[28] and arsenic is found in the hot springs of the Huong Hoa River.[29] Hematite (iron ore) is found south of the highway running from Dong Ha to Lao Bao,. "It appears to be of sedimentary origin and perhaps dates from the Upper Permian, also indicating a period of immersion."[30] However, n extensive mineral survey of Southeast Asia reports an absence in the Khe Sanh area of iron ore, cassiterite (tin), wolframite (tungsten), molybednite (molybdenum), chromite, copper minerals, lead and zinc minerals, stibnite (tin), uranium minerals, gold, silver, bauxite (aluminum), manganese minerals, phosphate rock, rock salt and gypsum, potash, graphite, limestone for cement, quartz sand, clay minerals, precious stones, coal, lignite, petroleum, and natural gas.[31]

The rock quarry at Khe Sanh became the source of basalt which was crushed to form a drainage base beneath the metal air matting, making the airstrip useable despite heavy monsoon rains which had washed away much of the laterite base. The "rock quarry" site was examined on 23 August 1967.[32]

The Annamite Cordillera only offered a few mountain passes: Mu Gia (WE 8153 (17-40 N / 105-47E), Ban Karai (WE 262117 (17-22 N / 106-09 E), and the D'Ai Lao Pass where Route 9 passes from Vietnam into Laos along Route 9 near Khe Sanh (XD 697368 (16-37 N / 106-36 E). The latter has been described as linking "up with a barely hillocky basalt plateau covered with grass and groves. The pass, about 150 meters high, is not even marked by a difference in slope that is visible to the naked eye."[33] Because of this pass, Route 9 passed through Khe Sanh and became a strategic entry point for invasions through the centuries between Vietnam and lands to the west.

EARLY HISTORY

THE LAO BAO PASS AND ROUTE 9 (Quoc Luong 9 or "QL-9")

It is this latter mountain pass by which attacking armies moved east into central Vietnam (the country of Annam) and moved attacking westward into Laos. In 1282 the Mongol General, Sogatu, followed the route through Lao Bao moving westward.[34] along the present Route 9 passage to attack the Annamites, forcing them into the mountains. (On American tactical maps, Khe Sanh Combat Base is labeled "Xom Cham"[35] (literally, "village of Chams"), thus denoting the home of warriors. (The Chams established their kingdom in 192 AD with their capitol in what is now Hue City. They continued to move northward, replacing the original aboriginal tribes (like the Bru) which were pushed into the hills, and conducted raids into the area around what is now Hanoi. In the Centuries following there was almost continuous warfare in what is now Quang Tri Province between the Chams and others. The Chams were known for their fierce, war-like quality as pirates, and for their

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[27] The bunker being constructed to house the regimental comm section collapsed on 17 Sep 1967, killing PFCs Omar David WITMER and Ronald Olin McCLUNG.

[28] Hoffett, *Notice sur la Feuille, op. cit.*, p. 21.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

[31] Fontaine, H., and Workman, D.R., "Review of the Geology and Mineral Resources of Kampuchea, Laos and Vietnam," *Third regional Conference on Geology and Mineral Resources of Southeast Asia*, Bangkok, Thailand, 14-18 November 1978, pp. 582-595.

[32] Ireton, John C., Director of Construction, DaNang Area Naval Facilities Engineering command Contracts, Republic of Vietnam, Letter ECJ:eaj, Ser 874, Sep 5, 1967, Subj: Report on the Examination of Quarry Site and Aircraft Landing Facilities at Khe Sanh Outpost, Republic of Vietnam; forwarding of. The base under the M-2 matting required 5 to 8 inches of crushed rock on top of the existing laterlaste subgrade. The basalt knob was located about 2,500 meters directly west of the Khe Sanh COC, one of three small isolated knobs at approx. XD825415, Map Sheet 63423 III N, Series L8020.

[33] Bourret, "La Chaine Annamitique et le Plateau du Bas Laos a Ouest de Hue," ["The Annamitic Chain and the Plateau of Lower Laos to the West of Hue"], *Bulletin du Service Gelogique de l'Indochine*, Vol. XIV, Fascicule V, Hanoi, 1925, p. 20.

[34] Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Sons of the Mountains*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982, p. 85. Reference is made to Henri Maspero, "Histoire d'Annam," pp. 35-36.

[35] U.S. Army, Army Map Service, Series L7014, Vietnam 1:50,000, Edition 3, Sheet 6342 III, *Huong Hoa*, at XD850418; Dept. of Defense, 652 D Engineer Battalion, Series 7014, Vietnam 1:50,000, Sheet 6342 III, Edition 6, *Huong Hoa*, at XD 845417; Dept. of the Army, Army Map Service, 29th Engineer BN, Series L803, *Vietnam Special Use*, 1:12,500, Sheet 6342 III H, "Khe Sanh and Vicinity," at XD850417.

artistic style. During the Vietnam War, there was a Cham Museum in DaNang housing specimens of their art. When the Mongols invaded in 1282, the Chams moved westward into the mountains.[36])

From the mid-18th Century, the Annam kings, Vo Vuong (1738-65) and Gia Long (1802-20), extended Vietnamese authority into the highlands of the present Savannakhet Province of Laos by moving through the D'Al Lao Pass moving into Tchepone.[37] In 1827, Siamese (Thai) forces moved through the D'Al Lao Pass and the Vietnamese abandoned their positions, fleeing to Cam Lo.[38] The occupation of the Annamitic[39] mountain chain by the Siamese was disastrous for the Montagnard tribes involving imposition of tax to be paid in gold and massive transplantations of the population. "Overcome with hopelessness, their fields .. abandoned the tribes fell into terrible poverty."[40]

On 24 July 1877, Dr. Jules Harmand, a Navy doctor, set out from the Mekong for Cam Lo in Annam. After several different attempted routes, he left Tchepone and finally arrived at Al Lao (Lao Bao) in August, 1877.[41] Also called "Dinh," and "D-Al Lao," Lao Bao contained a penitentiary "..which serves as a site for exiles, much like New Caledonia, destined mainly for women, children and those convicted of political crimes by Tong-king. .. The place is extremely unhealthy .. to live in Dinh might seem a disguised death sentence without bloodshed. It appears that few survive more than four or five years under such miserable conditions."[42]

While in the (Khe Sanh) area, he moved through mountain slopes and noted indications of a road in used in times past. He reached the Rao Quan River on 29 July 1877:

> "I discovered a torrential river which flows into the Sea of China. This is the Rao Quan. Though I had yet to cross the great mountain chain, I could perceive their deep-blue summits and the deep valleys which cut through them, yielding passage to this great river. Evening. I have encountered a group of savages who were seized with terror upon seeing me, throwing down their arms and kneeling before me. Their charming village is Mois [Montagnards]... The poor souls, who speak a little Annamite, received me as best they could, without asking me any questions. The ancient chief put his immense house at my disposal! They bring me dry fish and rice. They also roasted for me a squirrel I had killed along the way. ... The next morning, I went hunting in the ravines, which yielded a good harvest of plants. It is beautiful country—if I had provisions, I might be tempted to remain for three or four days longer. ... We had to descend the steepest of inclines to reach narrow valley floor where we discovered the river Rao Quan,. Here the Rao Quan is a true river, hundreds of meters wide, with smoothly flowing waters. Unfortunately, we soon encountered numerous rapids. ...I The natives regarded me curiously—this extraordinary being who seems to have dropped out of the skies—kneeling around me in a circle. They were dressed in sleeveless vests, singular, in that they were made from sheets of bark from the *Anitaris toxicaria*,[43] tree."[44]

On August 1st, "The terrain becomes tortuous, rising and falling again and again. Our guide leads us through a maze of paths that climb and fall without end—followed by rocky ravines. It is impossible to recognize any landmarks, given the dense

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[36] Hickey, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 179.
[39] Annam (capitol, Hue) was the central nation of what later became Vietnam; the country of Tonkin (capitol, Hanoi) was north and Cocinchina (capitol, Saigon) was south
[40] Bourette, Bernard, "Essai d'historie des populations montagnards du Sud Indochinois Jusqu a 1945," *Bulletin de la Societe des Studies Indochinoises*, n.s., Vol. 30, No. 1 (1955), p. 55.
[41] Mission Pavie *Indo-Chine, 1879-1895; Geographie et Voyages.* Vol. IV, *Voyages au Centre de L'Annam et du Laos et dans les Regions Sauvages de L'Est de L'Indo-Chine par le Capitaine de Malglaive et par le Captain Riviere.* Introductions par Auguste Pavie. Paris: Ernest Leroux, Editeur, 1902, p xvii.
[42] Harmand, Jules, *Le Tour du Monde: Le Laos et les Populations Savages de L'Indo-China,I Troisieme Partie: Dusie Bang Hieng a Hue L'Annam,* Chapter 22, p. 303.
[43] Madame Madeleine Poilane noted that when her husband's father, Eugene Poilane,first came to Khe Sanh Bru tribesmen wore clothing made from the bark of a poisonous tree. The bark was soaked in rivers for some time to remove the poisonous sap. [Conversation with Madame Madeleine Poilane, 01 January 1968, mentioned in Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, unpublished manuscript, 01 Apr 1970, p. 242]. Mr. John Miller, upon review of this, clarified: "Just a note on Mrs. Poilane's comments. It is true that the Bru did make clothing from the bark of a certain tree. In fact, we possess a bark shirt made for us by a Bru man from such a tree, and we have observed Bru men wearing such shirts even in our time in the Khe Sanh area. The bark of this tree, however, is not poisonous in itself. The placing of the bark in the water is to soften the bark and condition it for use as wearing apparel. It just so happens that this is the same tree from which the Bru take the sap, boil it down, and thereby produce the poison which they use on the tips of their arrows and spears. After processing, this poison can be fatal if it enters the blood stream. It has no effect at all if swallowed." [Letter of John Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 9 Oct 1969.]
[44] Harmand, *Le Tour du Monde*, cited, p. 309.

foliage. After traversing the final slippery slope, composed primarily of clay, I perceived Annam—all dry, bare, yet cultivated throughout. What a contrast!"[45]

The Annamites are very much afraid of savages, and they could only attribute my presence, having seen me arrive from the west, to magical and supernatural causes."[46] Dr. Jules Harmand's arrival was "the first traversal of the Annamitic Chain by a European."[47]



DR JULES HARMAND EXPEDITION - 1876

He noted Annamites feared to venture into the dark hills inhabited by the Mountain tribes: "The laborer of these lower valleys showed an invincible repugnance to try to go up the mountains, to sleep in the forest, to drink water however clean of rains which (he thought) caused the fever."[48] The fears were well-based; there are instances where Annamites who ventured into the mountains were sold as simple Kha to Laotian slave-traders.[49] The Khmer and Chams, and after the Fifteenth Century, the Laotians advanced into the Montagnard territories, but the Annamites only "furtively ventured west of the frontier sensibly fixed at the mountainous rim,"[50] while seizing lands cultivated by the Montagnards.[51]

During 1888-1889, the Siamese pushed as far east as Cam Lo, until an expedition by two French officers halted their advance. The Siamese established themselves on the outskirts of Ai Lao which had been fortified by the Vietnamese in 1837 but evacuated when the Siamese advanced eastward.

The Siamese were then forced out of Ai Lao and Captain de Malglaive from the Pavie mission arrived in November, 1890, reoccupying Ai Lao.[52] (The Pavie Mission worked to further French influence and arrest Siamese expansion)[53]. When the French arrived at Ai Lao, nothing remained of the Annamite fort occupied only three years earlier by a French post.[54] Only seven enlistedmen remained.[55] On 3 January 1891, the Pavie Mission split and Inspector Odend'hal traveled by canoe to Ai Lao, noting that the people regarded the French as Allies against the Siamese invaders. "We will finish by giving to the Kha [the Montagnards] their liberty as a race and by limiting on the one side the Annamites and the Laotian on the other,

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[45] *Ibid.*, p. 311.
[46] Harmand, Jules, "Rapport sue une mission en Indo-Chine de Bssac a Hue (16 Avril – 14 Aout 1877), *Archives des Missions Scientifiques et Litteraires*, Vol. 5 (1879), p. 279.
[47] R. Bourret, "La Chaine Annamitique et le Plateau du Bas Laos a L'Ouest de Hue," *Bulletin du Service Geologique de l'Indochinoise*, Vol. XIV, Fascicule V, Hanoi, 1925, p. 13.
[48] Mission Pavie, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 108.
[50] Bourrette, "Essai d'historie des populations..," cited, p. 43.
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 83. Pavie notes that Joseph of Malglaive was "..one of the nicest officers that it has ever been my pleasure to know. Above all, the temperament of the soldier, correct and straight character, just and good, and of a great simplicity. His father, from a family in Lorraine complete military background, himself retired from the Army with the most honorable titles, Lieutenant Colonel of engineering. He was in Algeria, in the center of Marango, and played the part of the first efforts of the colonization after 1848." [*Mission Pavie*, cited., pp. ix – x.] The same source notes that Dr. Malglaive entered St. Cyr at 19 [the Napoleonic military school, comparable to the American West Point] and responded to a call in July, 1884, to the Marines and left for the Campaign of Tonkin, Indo-China." [*Ibid.*, p xi.]
[53] Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Sons of the Mountains, Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands to 1954*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, p. 237.
[54] Mission Pavie, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

to the lands which they actively cultivate." [56] The D'Ai Lao Pass (Lao Bao) was seen to be the connecting link that joined Laos and Vietnam:



"The Allao Passage provides access to those regions inhabited by the independent Khas. Allao is the isthmus between Annam and Laos. ... It is the economic key to Indo-China, and can easily be linked to Tourane, the best port on the Annam coast."[57]

In 1904, The French began construction of what was to became Route 9[58] for economic reasons:

"It was felt that Laos could export cattle in large quantities, fine woods, rubber, lacquer, ivory, precious metals, and in return it would seek fabric, clothing, and jewelry, and articles made from iron. Shipping by way of Saigon was too costly and only use of this route was significant. The Governor General, Mr. Beau, faced with this situation, did not hesitate to make, in spite of numerous difficulties, the trip from Laos and to return to Annam along the recommended route in order to verify for himself the value of this project."

KHE SANH AREA – 1876 JULES HARMAND EXPEDITION

"His opinion and that of all the competent men who have traveled through and studied the Annamitic Chain in all directions is that this is the only practical and economical access route. Accordingly, Mr. Beau will request necessary funding to open this route to large cartage beginning with the terminal station of Dong Ha on the Annam side, an d extending as far as the Mekong on the Laotian side. The high-level resident, Monsieur Mahé, after studying for his part all the possible passages did not hesitate with the full weight of the resources at his disposal, to undertake important work projects of this nature. Under his energetic direction, a considerable effort took place; he hopes to be able to reach the Annam border in 1907."[59]

The layout of the future Route 9 was planned by Mssrs. Bourard, Assistant Public Works Engineer and Odend'hal, Civil Service Administrator, both of whom died early during the project. Work continued under the supervision of Mr. Valentin, the Province Administrator.[60] By 1907, Quang Tri Province included 45 Europeans, including 32 men, 6 women and 10 children (among whom are 5 half-breeds). Out of the 32 men, 16 are government employees, 14 are apostolic missionaries. There were about 100,000 Annamites, 35 Chinese, 3 Indians, and 15,000 – 20,000 Khas (Moi from the Annamitic Chain).[61]

IMPORTANCE OF ROUTE 9 IN FOLLOWING YEARS

The crucial significance of Route 9 dramatically unfolded in the second half of the Twentieth Century. QL-9, the principle east-west road extending from Dong Ha to the east of the Thai border, became one of the major infiltration routes intensively

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[56] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[57] "Les provinces d'Annam: Quang Tri," *Revue Indo-Chinoise*, n.s., 2, Vol. 1, issue #69 (15 Nov 1907)," cited, p. 1591.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 1588.

[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 1593-1594.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 1588. Mr. Prosper Odend'hal, one of Pavie's officers, was a recognized scholar and had accumulated considerable information on Cham ruins in the mountains,. On 12 February 1904, Odend'hal wrote to Father Guerlach of the Kontum Mission that he intended to make a tour through the central highlands to learn more of the origins of the highland people. He was particularly interested in some of the ruins that had been discovered in various places and wanted to visit the King of Fire and the King of Water, after which he would return to Kontum,. Guerlach wrote back strongly urging Odend'hal to abandon his plans to visit the Kings of Fire and Water due to unrest. Odend'hal did not heed the warning, and confided that he had additional goals of gaining the King of Fire's submission to French authority and to see the fabled sacred saber. He was not to be hindered. While meeting with the Kings, he refused to eat a chicken and also to drink from the bamboo tubes inserted in rice wine, stating he only drank water. When he returned to the village, it was abandoned and he was set upon by Jarai warriors who attacked him and burnt the hut. Witnesses reported hearing many screams. He died in 1904. [Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Sons of the Mountains, Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands to 1954*. Yale University, 1982, pp. 281-184.

[61] "Les provinces d'Annam..," *op. cit.*, p. 1583.

employed by the end of 1958 by Communist forces.[62] As early as 1959, Route 9 was considered too insecure to be included in a request for general road improvements in SVN.[63] The enemy situation in the summer of 1961 gave indications that North Vietnamese forces would push eastward along Route 9 toward Hue.[64] Over 700 Communists were infiltrating into SVN per month. "The fall of Laos has placed Route #9 in Communist hands .. and gives the RVNF [Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces] commander the task of delaying from both North and West."[65]

During the summer of 1966, the CIA reported that the North Vietnamese were using Route 9 in Laos, just west of Khe Sanh, to move up to 600 tons of supplies per day in dry season and 125 in the rainy season.[66]

In September, 1966, MACV requested the current status of Route 9 from Route 1 at Dong Ha to the Laotian border, its current traffic ability in maximum vehicle size for the entire section, specific route segments passable to non-motorized vehicular and foot traffic, information concerning flooding, coordinates of interdictions (bridges out, road cuts, etc.) that hinder movement, and information bearing on its use as an enemy infiltration route.[67]

The first vehicles to use Route 9 since September, 1964, were a "Rough Rider" convoy on 27 March 1967 of 68 vehicles[68] which departed Dong Ha at 0832H and arrived at Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) at 1115H without incident, bringing with them 3500 pounds of rice, 4320 pounds diesel, 4680 ;pounds Class IV, 6640 pounds Class V.[69] It was hoped that this initial convoy would encourage the use of Route 9 by civilian and government vehicles and relieve the district's dependence on air cargo.[70]

Project #9024, the opening of Route 9 to Class 25 traffic for the 15.2 miles from Ca Lu (YD003542)(to Khe Sanh (XD845380) was the result of successful efforts by 11th Engineer Battalion personnel that had begun 26 February 1967 when Co A moved the 27 miles by road from Dong Ha to Ca Lu with 12 vehicles and 40 men to commence road and bridge construction.[71] On 26 February 1967, a reinforced Engineer Platoon from Co. A, 11th Engineer Battalion, consisting of 3 officers and 56 enlisted Marines together with materials and equipment was deployed to Ca Lu to establish a Command Post and base of operations. On 4 March, another deployment of 2 cooks and 34 combat engineers deployed to Ca Lu. The next day, bridge repairs and a bypass at YD002453 was initiated, consisting of forming and pouring concrete on existing abutments to reinforce the deck slab and strengthen the existing abutments. On 8 March, bridge repairs were begun at XD987441 by replacing as missing concrete stringer with a timber stringer, installing one span of wood decking, and the repair of remaining existing deck and abutments. On 11 March, construction work was begun at XDF994445, completed the next day. During 13-15 March, bypasses were constructed at XD943424, XD 935421, and XD 921419. On 16 March, construction work was begun on approaches to the bridge at XD913403 in preparation for the erection of a fixed span bridge. On 18 March, a detachment from Co B, 11th Engineer Battalion of 3 officers and 70 enlisted Marines plus one Army officer and 18 Army enlisted from the 1st Bn, 44th Artillery Regiment, were deployed to XD913403 on Route 9 to provide adequate security and assist in the maintenance of Route 9. On 19 March, the 1st Bridge Platoon transported and erected 45 feet of fixed-span, Class 35 bridge, thus completing the opening of National Route 9 to Khe Sanh.

General Walt (CG, III MAF) radioed General Westmoreland: "Since Khe Sanh had been isolated to vehicle traffic for over two years, I consider the restoration of National Route 9 to service to be an event of great tactical logistical, and economic

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[62] "Memorandum from the President's Military Representative (Taylor) to the President (Kennedy)," 18 Sep 1961, in US Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1961-62*, p. 304.

[63] "Memorandum of a Conversation," 21 Nov 1959, US Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1958-60*, p. 250.

[64] "Memorandum from Edwin F. Black of the Office of the Secretary of Defense to the President's Deputy Special Assistant for national Security Affairs (Rostow)," 27 Jul 1961, US Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1961-63*, p. 245.

[65] "Memorandum from the Secretary of Defense's Assistant for Special Operations (Lansdale) to the President's Military Representative (Taylor)," US Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations, 1961-63*, p. 239.

[66] CIA Memorandum, "The Vietnamese Communists' Will to Persist," SC No. 097624/66, in "An Analysis of the Vietnamese Communists' Strengths, Capabilities and Will to Persist in Their Present Strategy in Vietnam," 26 Aug 1966, Fig. 1-4.

[67] MACV J-2 281500Z/Sep66 to CG III MF, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 28-29 Sep 1966, #J119.

[68] 1 Mite, 3 M-38 jeeps, 8 radio jeeps, 3 ¾-ton trucks, 15 2-1/2-ton trucks, one M-49 tanker, 13 dump trucks, 17 5-ton trucks, 4 M-55 MG, 2 wreckers, and 2 ONTOS.

[69] Logistic terms: Class I is rations, Class II is general supply (782 combat gear, uniforms, etc.), Class III is POL (petroleum, oil, lubricants), Class I V is fortification materials, and Class V is munitions.

[70] 3rdMarDiv COC 270956Z/Mar67, Cong Ha to Khe Sanh Rough Rider Convoy,; 3rdMarDiv Command Chronology, March, 1967, p. 30; FMFPAC: *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam, March, 1967*, p. 63; III MAF Command Chronology, March, 1967, pp. 7-8.

[71] 3rd MarDiv FWD 2312440Z/Feb67, Route 9 Road Construction; Tab B to Encl (1) of 11th Eng Command Chronology, March 1967.

significance," and added, "It is my intention to continue improvements to Route 9 and run an appropriate number of convoys."[72]

The opening of QL-9 was part of Phase I of PRACTICE NINE, the construction of a barrier consisting of Strong Points and Combat Operations Bases (COB) to halt the influx of North Vietnamese Army soldiers and supplies into South Vietnam.[73] PRACTICE NINE (interestingly involving bases along ROUTE NINE!), also known as the "McNamara Line," or the "trace," envisioned positions along Route 9 to block infiltration into South Vietnam:

> "Operations in the western piedmont/mountainous area will be conducted from a series of battalion combat operating bases. This plan envisions these bases expanding from Camp Carroll westward along Route #09 toward the Laotian border. Logistic support feasibility and weather will probably limit the initial bases to Camp Carroll, Thon Son Lam [the "Rock Pile"], Ca Lu, and Khe Sanh. Subsequently, bases would be established in the vicinity of Lang Ru'on [1000 meters NW of Hill 881S] and Lang Vei, with the positioning of an additional battalion at Khe Sanh. Thus, a reinforced division eventually will be utilized to maintain control and surveillance along Route #9 to the Laotian border."[74]
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> "Strong Points included A-1 (YD267755, A-2 (YD215742), A-3 (YD169716), and A-4 (YD115701), and Base Areas C-1 (YD221681), C-2 (YD127666), and C-3 (YD108603).[75]

Opening Route 9 was important as a means to diminish the burden on aircraft committed to logistic support of Khe Sanh. Upgrading of the Route was to continue until it could permit 60-Ton traffic, enabling tanks and self-propelled artillery to move from Cua Viet to Lao Bao.[76] Aside from such strategic implications, the road meant a supply of rice to pay local PF and Bru Montagnard military personnel of FOB-3, Special Forces at Lang Vei, CAC OSCAR, and Bru workers at the coffee plantations, the only source of their income. Felix Poilane could transport his coffee out of the area.

Early on 21 July 1967, a convoy of the large 175mm guns together with trucks filled with ammunition, C-4 explosives, claymore mines, and other ordnance, was moving west on Route 9, its destination Khe Sanh Combat Base.[77]

(An attempt to determine why they were dispatched to Khe Sanh made by contacting COL Padley and COL Lownds, the two Commanding Officers of 26th Marines near that event determined that neither could state the reason. The Change of Command occurred 0900, 12 August 1967, three weeks after Col Padley departed. Realization of NVA intentions to lay siege to Khe Sanh had obviously not yet been apparent. It is possible that the formation of FOB-3, which became operational in November, might have indicated artillery support for patrols into Laos or support of FOB-1 patrols already operating in Laos might have triggered the move. A more convincing reason for the 175 guns moving to Khe Sanh was pre-positioning prior to the monsoons to support a large-scale operation known as EL PASO which was planned to jump off from Khe Sanh and move along Route 9 into Laos to sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail.[78])

Based on intelligence reports of a heavy weapons company north of Khe Sanh and increased movement along Route 9, MIKE Company, 3/26, was dispatched from Khe Sanh Combat Base in a northwest direction where several base camps had been discovered by reconnaissance patrols.[79] Simultaneously, a patrol from First Platoon of B/1/26 swept east on Route 9. Both Marine units encountered fierce combat resulting in 19 Marines killed. The aggressive Marine patrolling had prematurely sprung a NVA ambush that had been laid from XD943423 to XD967432 along Route 9 consisting of 2000 meters of anti-personnel mines, 82mm mortars, .50 caliber machineguns, and NVA claymore-type mines. Meanwhile, the 175mm guns, which had reached Ca Lu, promptly returned to Camp Carroll. A search of the NVA positions revealed that personnel had no identification: there were no letters or photographs. The NVA force had completed construction of 25 bunkers and was in the process of constructing 75 more. There were five ruck sacks of new equipment, including extended rations. LtCol Wilkinson made the evaluation that the enemy were not there to capture the 175 guns; they probably were unaware they were coming, but rather were preparing positions that during the monsoon would prevent Route 9 being used to resupply Khe Sanh and move battalions against Hills 881S, 861, and the Combat Base itself or conduct small, commando

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[72] III MAF 280346Z/Mar67 to COMUSMACV.
[73] "Briefing Paper, Subj: PRACTICE NINE, Encl (6) to 3rd MarDiv Command Chronology, January, 1967, p. 3.
[74] III MAF OpPlan 12-67, 121800/Sep67.
[75] III MAF OpPlan 11-67, I Corps, ARVN-III MAF Defense of Northern Quang Tri Province, 181630H/Jun67.
[76] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, March, 1967, p. 63.
[77] Comments of LtCol James B. Wilkinson at 1/26 Staff Briefing, 22 July 1967.
[78] For information on EL PASO, see Collins, John M., *Military Geography for Professionals and the Public*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1998, Chapter 12, "Operation Plan *EL PASO*," pp. 367-384. EL PASO was shelved due to the approach of NVA units in December, 1967, to lay siege to Khe Sanh. A later operation, LAM SON 719, was launched in early 1971.
[79] Comments of 1/Lt Thomas A. Bailey, HQMC Oral History Tape #1768.

terror raids with satchel charges. He noted that much 782-type gear, rifles, and ammunition had been hastily abandoned because of SPOOKY striking the area.[80]

During September, 1967, extensive rains struck the Khe Sanh area,. From 16 to 18 September, Khe Sanh Combat Base received 21.24 inches of rain.[81] By the end of the month, several bridges on Route 9 connecting Khe Sanh Combat Base to supply depots at Dong Ha had been washed out.[82]

By early January, 1968, Route 9 from Dong Ha westward to Khe Sanh had been interdicted by both weather and enemy action, with most of its bridges impassable.

In the early days of the siege of Khe Sanh, despite very extensive bombing—more tons of bombs were dropped in the immediate area of Khe Sanh than in the entire Pacific during World War II,[83] and target identification through electronic sensors which had just arrived, NVA trucks continued to use Route 9 to move troops and munitions During an interview of Captain Harry Baig, Target Intelligence Officer of 26th Marines by W.G. McMillan, Science Advisor at MACV (the MACSA), the following interesting exchange occurred:

> BAIG: Trucks were going right by Khe Sanh [village]. Even though we did put up roadblocks [by artillery] they had little effect on the trucks.
>
> MCMILLAN; You mean on Route 9?
>
> BAIG: Yes, sir!
>
> MCMILLAN: Enemy trucks moving on Route 9, right by Khe Sanh?
>
> BAIG: Yes, sir, oh, yes, sir. We couldn't stop them at all. When the enemy trucks heard an aircraft overhead they would stop moving, so we needed a SLAR aircraft then to sense their position. There was no single aircraft that had all of this gear aboard. This means also that the planes are required to fly at a very low level—which is perfectly all right, but it completely incapacitated the artillery [due to SAV-A-PLAN: the planes could not fly where there was danger of colliding with projectiles]. So we are balancing the use of such aircraft on the one hand, against denial of our artillery on the other hand, and frequently we had to tell the aircraft to go home. Even with the artillery firing .. we could not completely block the road traffic.[84]

By March, 1968, an Intelligence Estimate of the Route #9 Area[85] reported that aerial photography as of 28 December 1967 and other available information had disclosed 26 bridges/culverts between Ca Lu and Khe Sanh on Route #9, nine of which were impassable or destroyed. In addition, this segment of Route 9 is impassable in four other locations due to craters and in one instance a landslide.[86] The Intelligence Estimate described the area:

> "The route #9 area from Ca Lu to Khe Sanh rapidly changes from low hills to low mountains intersected by both perennial and intermittently streams. These hills and low mountains are limestone and generally aligned on a West to East axis. The Rao Quan and Da Krong River Valleys bisect Route #9 on a Northwest to Southeast axis. From these valleys, relief rises abruptly to over 800 meters, on the average, to the North, East, and West. In this vicinity mountains are also highly dissected by numerous perennial and intermittent streams. Slopes along Route #9 and in the Da Krong Valley have a general gradient of 40 to 60 percent with some to 100 percent. Virtually the entire area, both low hills and mountains, is covered by dense undergrowth, forests, and continuous 2 to 4 layer canopy. Foot movement is extremely difficult and principally limited to trails, tracks, and along stream valleys where brushwood and clear undergrowth forests are found. Long range observation is poor throughout the area due to dense undergrowth and rugged terrain, however, personnel traversing Route #9 can be observed from many preselected vantage points. Short range observation is generally poor in this area for the same reason. Aerial observation is extremely limited throughout the area. Trees range from 75 to 100 feet in height .. Fields of fire for flat trajectory weapons are seriously curtailed. ...

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[80] Comments of LtCol Wilkinson, Staff brief, 22 July 1967.

[81] 26 Marines command Chronology, September, 1967, Encl (1), p. 2.

[82] The following bridges were washed out: XD755353 (6 mi. southwest of Khe Sanh), XD991492 (1 mi. northeast of Khe Sanh), XD942423 (6 mi. northeast of Khe Sanh), XD925421 (6 mi. northeast of Khe Sanh), and XD914403 (4 mi. northeast of Khe Sanh). [FMFPAC 170446Z/Oct67, SITREP #931.]

[83] Tolson, LTGEN John J., *Airmobility, 1961-1971* (*Vietnam Studies*), Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Army, 1971, p. 167 notes twice as many tons. Gen William W. Momyer, USAF, "Operation NIAGARA," in Trest, Warren A., *Khe Sanh (Operation NIAAGARA), 22 January – 31 March 1968*, CHECO Report, 13 Sep 1968, *Supporting Documents*, No. 12. Total for Pacific Operating Area, WW II: 32,735 tons; total at Khe Sanh (22 Jan – 29 Feb 68): 53,380 tons.

[84] Baig interview by MACSA, MACV, 24 April 1968, pp. 6-7. Interview by W. G. McMillan.

[85] 3rd Marine Division, "Intelligence Estimate of the Route #9 Area," in Messages, Etc. March, 1968, Part II, #183. Document dated 19 March 1968, Ser 02407968.

[86] *Ibid.*, Para 2.a.(2)(b).

all high ground that dominates Route #9 at any given point must be considered key terrain. This is especially true in the area west of NS grid line XD 93 where Route #9 becomes extremely circuitous. Of note, is the location of the last ambush in this area which occurred in the vicinity of XD 9643 on 21 July 1967, and involved an estimated NVA battalion."[87]

Route #9 was simply impassable by this time. The task of opening Route #9 fell to the 11th Engineer Battalion which received a Warning Order on 16 February 1968. On 08 March, Co A, 11th Engineers, moved from Dong Ha to Ca Lu in order to open the stretch of road from Ca Lu to the Rock Pile where one bridge and three culverts had been destroyed, and participate I the building of LZ STUD[88] The main effort began 01 April as the Engineers focused on the final 15-mile Ca Lu to Khe Sanh section containing 27 bridges. By 07 April, the Engineers had made 21 of the 27 bridges passable with 6 other spans undergoing replacement or repair.[89] The bridges along Route 9 were constructed by the French and were steel stringer, wide flange with concrete decking. The concrete decking consisted of segments 18" wide and across the full roadway width. Much of this concrete had deteriorated and dropped out. In addition, the enemy had blown the bridge abutments back 20 feet, making it necessary to construct bridges larger than originally planned.[90]

To accomplish this ask, Co D, 11th Engineers, opened the road to make it passable for tracked vehicles to include tanks and self-propelled artillery. Co D was followed by Co B whose mission was to improve the by-passes, widen the road, clear each side, and generally upgrade the bridges. Co A had the construction responsibilities at LZ STUD until 08 April when it was flown to Bridge #33 (XD918416) to prepare its approach. Co C was at Dong Ha re-fabricating non-standard, steel stringer bridges. 3rd Platoon, 3rd Bridge Company, 7th Engineer Battalion, accompanied Co D, handling the actual construction and placement of the bridges. The Bridge Company's motto was: "Erections are our Business!"[91]

During this operation, CH-54 "Sky Crane" helicopters of the 1st Air Cavalry Division's 470th Flying Crane Co. were used to fly in completed M477 bridges into three sites, speeding completion of the road reopening mission. The CH-54 lifted one 30-ft. bridge, which completely assembled weighs 16,500 pounds, and two 38-ft. bridges, which assembled in a skeleton fashion weigh up to 16,000 pounds.[92] Bridge 9-29 was the first to be emplaced using the Sky Crane.[93] Other bridges included 9 fixed steel-section bridges, one culvert bridge, and one pontoon bridge. Four of the original French bridges left intact were repaired. Three of the fixed steel-section bridges and the pontoon bridge were constructed by a platoon from the 7th Engineers' 3rd Bridge Company before being heli-lifted into the field.[94]

The final bridge was emplaced on 11 April, and the next day, Route #9 was capable of sustaining 60-ton traffic across the width of northern ICTZ [I Corps Tactical Zone]. The task had been completed in 12 days and required the construction of 10 bridges and major repairs to three others.[95] General Westmoreland described the task as "Herculean." In addition to the bridges, numerous sections of the road had to be cleared of landslides and craters.

The first vehicle to drive into Khe Sanh from Ca Lu since the ambush of 21 July 1967 was driven by the Commanding Officer of 11th Engineers, LtCol Victor A. Perry. Major Joseph C. Thorp, the battalion S-3, and Captain Randy Brinkley, Commanding Officer of Co D accompanied the Colonel. Gunnery Sergeant Lonnie Roberts of D Company described the scene:

"It was late in the afternoon. The sky was overcast. And the countryside, beginning about four miles from Khe Sanh, looked as though it has been dead a long, long time. The hills were grassless and pocked with bomb and artillery round craters, and the trees were barren and blackened. There were a few piles of bricks along the roadside. The wooden frames of door and windows jutted out. One of the brick piles had been houses.

"The countryside in those last few miles was totally desolate.. 'like a battlefield after the battle in a World War I movie.'"[96]

Some of the engineers had built signs along Route 9 similar to the old Burma Shave road signs: THANK YOU – ARMY – FOR RESCUING US – BUT THE @UCKING WAR – IS OVER.[97]

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[87] *Ibid*., pp. 1-2.
[88] Later called "LZ CAMEO" since its location on the map was near "Khe Meo" and later, Vandegrift Combat Base, or "VCB." [Comments of LtCol Victor A. Perry, HQMC Oral History Tape #2755. Perry was CO of 11th Engineer Battalion.
[89] FMFPAC, *Operations*, April, 1968, pp. 64-65.
[90] Comments of Major Joseph C. Thorpe, HQMC Oral History Tape #2755.
[91] Comments of Maj Joseph C. Thorpe, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775; diary of Ray W. Stubbe.
[92] Comments of LtCol Perry, HQMC Oral History Tape #2755.
[93] Comments of Capt Randy M. Brinkley, HQMC Oral History Tape #2755.
[94] III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:18)03 May 1968) p. 3.
[95] FMFPAC: *Operations*, April, 1968, p. 65; 11th Engineers, Command Chronology, April, 1968, p. 9.
[96] III MAF News Release No. 1246-68, printed in III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:19 (10 May 1968), p. 3.
[97] Ray W. Stubbe, diary entry for 10 April 1968.

By 1972, with the abandonment of Khe Sanh and defense of the western Quang Tri Province and Route 9 areas, the NVA naturally moved into the area. Major Walter Eugene Boomer, present on Fire Base Sarge (YD028478, Dong Toan Mountain), one of two fire bases[98] perched on the mountains to the east of Route 9 as it wended on a north/south leg overlooking the old Vandegrift Fire Base, was defended by the 4th Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps. Major Boomer and Captain Ray Smith were present at the position as advisors. The positions were ineffective against encroaching NVA units since active patrolling did not occur and Route 9 was not visible from SARGE. It was patently clear to Major Boomer that significant NVA activity was unfolding to the west. He informed General Ghai who visited SARGE, "We would see boxes stacked along the road for a short period of time and then they would disappear." General Ghai did not have the manpower to patrol to the west, a fatal mistake.[99] Route 9, the ancient invasion route, was now the highway for NVA units to move east and the fall of South Vietnam was now certain. For the North Vietnamese, "Highway 9 was the path to victory in northern I Corps."[100]

During the years following the war, what was once South Vietnam greatly increased in population. Khe Sanh village now had multi-storied concrete buildings. During a visit in mid-March, 2003, a visitor to Khe Sanh village could watch TV in Khe Sanh village and, even more amazing, notice a surreal blue glow emitted from a Bru village of Bru watching TV![101] Like the French who first built Route 9 for economic reasons, not for the reasons of east-west invasion that had first made the passage significant, the Vietnamese now needed improvement to Route 9 for commercial development.

> "The highway plays a key role again today, but Highway 9 no longer supports armed conflict—those days are forever in the past. The future for Highway 9 and Quang Tri Province is many times brighter. Today Highway 9 supports economic energy and development, social contact, expanding commerce, international relations with neighboring countries, and communications. It will provide a basis for sustainable development of the region and the country."[102]
>
> "National Highway 9 will be the springboard for development because it will improve access to and from Laos, Da Nang, and the Cua Viet Port.... At present, as was the case in the late 60's and early 70's, National Highway 9 is a two lane road crossing about 45 streams and rivers over reconstructed bridges of varying configurations. The alignment of the road today [2004] exists as it was then. The road is dangerous in places due to narrowness, blind curves.., near proximity of villages, and diverse types of vehicles.... Its rehabilitation and upgrade will clearly reduce travel time and enhance road safety and provide a strong foundation for the economic development that is planned in Quang Tri Province. Further, it will provide improved travel times to Hue and Da Nang for commerce originating in Laos, thereby providing an efficient opening to new market opportunities[for lumber and coffee].[103]

On 16 March 2000, Stanley Consultants of Muscatine, Iowa, was invited by the project Management Unit No. 85 of the Vietnam Ministry of Transport, to submit a proposal for the rehabilitation and upgrade of Highway 9 from Dong Ha to Lao Bao through Khe Sanh and a northerly bypass around Dong Ha from the Cua Viet port to Cam Lo. The contract was awarded 01 December 2000. On 22 December 2002, a ground-breaking ceremony for the start of construction of Highway 9 in Cam Lo occurred, and on 19 March 2003, the segment of Highway 9 from Khe Sanh to Lang Vei was underway. Construction came to a successful close on 24 May 2006.[104] It was just short of a century after the French had completed constructed Route 9 in 1907.

Reconstruction of Highway 9 presented many challenges: "unstable side slopes, rock slides, igneous rock, broken bridges, blind curves, cliffs, dangerous turns and curves, recalcitrant contractors, and schedules and budgets. I fought against a demanding client many of the members of which were ex-NVA, and locals who would sometimes relieve us of car batteries and tools (but not that often). I wrestled with women carrying the Quang Ganh, with the Xe Dap Tho and the Xe Cong Nong. I fought cigarette smugglers and errant cars going off cliffs and lousy or drunk drivers and the occasional flash flood."[105]

When reconstruction and improvement was completed, the highway was two lanes all the way between Dong Ha and Lao Bao and the width was widened (by several meters in some places), curves were straightened, rock faces laid back and short

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[98] The other at YD0348, about 2,000 meters away being near Nui Ba Ho, YD015511.
[99] Comments of Major Walter E. Boomer, 8 March 1983, HQMC Oral History Section, Historical Center, Washington, D.C.
[100] Andrade, Dale, *America's Last Vietnam Battle, Halting Hanoi's 1972 Easter Offensive*, Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2001, p. 40.
[101] Foster, Gary, "The Valley of Blue Light," May 14, 2003.
[102] Gary Foster, "National Highway No. 9," a presentation to Project Management Unit No. 85, Vinh City, Vietnam, June 14, 2004, p. 2.
[103] *Ibid.*
[104] Letter from Gary Foster to Ray W. Stubbe, 19 October 2010.
[105] Letter from Gary Foster to Ray W. Stubbe, 4 November 2013.

re-alignments were made.[106] Much unexploded ordnance was encountered on Route 9 between Khe Sanh and Lao Bao but there were no explosions and no one was harmed.[107]

PRISON

The entrance to the Khe Sanh area was via a place of agony set within the luxuriant jungle, the Lao Bao penitentiary.



LAO BAO PRISON (upper, right of center) and village of Van Phu-ong (lower left) in isthmus formed by Xe Pone River dividing South Vietnam and Laos. USAF mission AM4389 flown 28 January 1968 by 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing

Lao Bao became the site of a prison to which Christians were sent to their death, constructed on order of Minh Mang (1820-41).[108] On 25 May 1834, Father Odorico died of hunger here after no one had been permitted to bring him anything to eat or drink.[109] In his diary entry for 19 July 1877, Dr. Jules Harmand visited the Lao Bao prison describing it as a "..palissaded camp without trench nor ramparts and without any cannons. Dinh serves as a site for exile, much like New Caledonia, destined mainly for women, children and those convicted of political crimes by Tong-king. ... The place is extremely unhealthy. ... to live in Dinh might seem a disguised death sentence without bloodshed. It appears that few survive more than four or five years under such miserable conditions."[110] When one woman confided her misfortunes, Dr. Harmand asked, "Why do you not escape into Laos?" Horrified, she replied that the Laotians would eat her. "I assured her that Laos is populated by extremely gentle peoples. She wanted to believe me, but the idea that the Laotians were cannibals was rooted in the culture."[111]

In 1896, the French established the prison at Lao Bao as one of their two major penitentiaries with a space for 250 prisoners.[112] In 1915, a prison revolt by laborers using sharp tools destroyed the Lao Bao prison.[113]

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[106] *Ibid.*
[107] *Ibid.*
[108] Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Shattered World, Adaptation and Survival among Vietnam's Highland Peoples during the Vietnam War*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, p. 141.
[109] Guy Marie Oury, *Le Vietnam des Martyres et des Saints* [The Viet-Nam of Martyrs and Saints], 1988, mentioned in a letter from Madame Madeleine Poilane to the author, 06 July 1990. On 19 June 1988, 117 Christian martyrs of Vietnam were canonized saints by Pope John Paul II.
[110] Harmand, Jules, "Le Laos et les populations sauvages de L'Indo-Chine, cited, p. 303.
[111] *Ibid.*, p. 304.
[112] Zinoman, Peter, *The Colonial Bastille, A History of Imprisonment in Vietnam, 1862-1940*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, pp. 42, 62.
[113] *Ibid.*, pp. 139, 155. "After stabbing three guards, one of whom they decapitated, the prisoners broke into the barracks of the Garde Indigene, killed the handful of militiamen they found inside, seized several dozen rifles, and pillaged the treasury. After setting fire to the seventeen buildings in the penitentiary complex, forty-two prisoners fled across the border into Laos, leaving behind eight dead guards and the ashes of what had once been the largest penitentiary in Annam." [p. 155].



LAO BAO PRISON (Summer, 1967, photo by Fred Patton)

The American, Harry Hervey,[114] writing of his travels in the area in the 1920s, noted the prison at Lao Bao was as grim as a medieval fortress, housed some hundred or more native criminals, and was administered by a guard of Annamite troops and one white man.[115] He noted that the Moi ("Savages") in eastern Laos between Tchepone and Lao Bao, resulted from intermingling of the aboriginal tribes of the ancient Chiampa [Chams] with Laotians and Annamites. Over the entrance was a plaque commemorating the bravery of the prison guards during the 1915 mutiny. Hervey's description is chilling: "The convicts lay in rows on broad wooden slabs built against the walls, with cangues[116] about their necks and their feet thrust into stocks. Smoky lamps half illuminated the two great wards, casting a soiled reflection upon the many faces... The whole scene swam in a nauseating stench."[117] He noted the prisoners appeared as an irregular line of half-naked prisoners, chained and some wearing the cangue. "When I reached the gate I saw more convicts .. walking with difficulty because of the linked rods joining their ankle-bands. All had their hair closely cropped and wore ragged clothing."[118] Hervey was shown a huge ledger which the officer in charge called his "guest book," containing pictures of each prisoner and a brief description of their crimes and penalties. A few included "executed" and a date.[119] "The convicts lay in rows on broad wooden slabs built against the walls, with cangues about their necks and their feet thrust into stocks. Smoky lamps half illuminated the two great wards, casting a soiled reflection upon the many faces. I caught the gleam of numerous bare, sweaty bodies ... The whole scene swam in a nauseating stench."[120] His departure gave him great relief: ""..the place had oppressed me."[121] In his malaria delirium, Hervey grasped Lao Bao, the penal colony administered by "protectors" to punish delinquent "children" as a symbol: "the tyranny inherent in white men."[122] It "..expressed the inevitable brutality resulting from a civilized temperament brought into contact with a temperament not complicated by a surfeit of acquired knowledge."[123]

Hervey next describes his passage through the Khe Sanh area:

> "Soon after leaving the village of Lao Bao, we were spinning through a cool green forest utterly unlike the humid jungles further inland. ... the people we passed [Bru], like the scenery, were different. These natives were the Moi, aborigines of

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[114] Henry Clay Hervey was born 5 Nov 1900 in Texas and began newspaper writing in 1916. He began traveling when young and visited Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America. For several months, he studied in a Buddhist monastery in Burma. Sun Yat sen was among his friends. He wrote extensively: *Caravans by Night*, 1922, *The Black parrot*, 1923, *Where Strange Gods Call*, 1924, *Ethan Quest*, 1924, *Conga*, 1927, *King Cobra*, 1927, *Red Ending*, 1927, *The Iron Widow*, 1931, *Red hotel*, 1932, *Travels in French Indo-China*, 1933, *The Damned Don't Cry*, 1939, *School for Eternity*, 1941, *The Veiled Fountain*, 1947, *Barracoon*, 1950, as well as a play, several movies and about 70 short stories and novelettes. He died 12 August 1951. [*Who Was Who in America*, Vol. 3 (1951-1960). Chicago, Il.: Marquis Who's Who, Inc., 1963, p. 395. Dustcover of *King Cobra*.

[115] Hervey, Harry, *King Cobra, An Autobiography of Travel in French Indo-China*, New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corp., 1927, p. 278. Hervey was born 05 November 1900 in Beaumont, Texas, served 3 mo. as a 2nd Lt in 1918, wrote 15 books and about 70 short stories on his numerous travels in Asia, Africa, Europe and South America. For some months he studied in a Buddhist monastery in Burma, lived in the homes of natives, and visited Asiatic rulers. The late Dr. Sun Yat-sen was one of his friends. He led an expedition into upper Indo-China in 1925 and discovered additional Khmer ruins. He remained unmarried and died 12 August 1951.

[116] A cangue is a heavy wooden board hung around the neck as a punishment in China.

[117] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

[118] *Ibid.*, p. 278.

[119] *Ibid.*, p. 280. The method of execution was the guillotine

[120] *Ibid.*, p. 281.

[121] *Ibid.*, p. 287.

[122] *Ibid.*, p. 285.

[123] *Ibid.*

the mountains of Annam. They seemed gentle, half-frightened savages, with their wide, guileless eyes and long hair. Some were carrying bales of thatch or long strips of bamboo; one or two had crude bows slung over their shoulders. I had thought it impossible for a people to wear less clothing than the Laotians without being entirely naked, but the Moi achieve this feat. Instead of a loin cloth, their one garment, if it may be called that, is a narrow though adequate strip of cloth passed under the crotch and fastened to a string about the waist."[124] Hervey continues—"Beyond the border defining the end of Laos and the beginning of Annam, the road was cut into the side of a mountain. ... There were stretches of forest tangled in creepers, sudden sheer precipices that dropped into fronded gorges; now and then a waterfall tumbling soundlessly in white fire; and always ahead, seen at intervals above the winding road and the tops of trees far blue mountains that seemed to drink their color from the sky. Suddenly I found the increasing perilousness of that narrow road intruding upon my enthusiastic admiration of the scenery. On one side was a mass of dripping, mossy stone, a veritable cliff; on the other, the mountain lowered its perpendicular side into rapids fully two hundred feet below. We were racing along the ledge at ridiculously high speed."[125]

Beginning in January, 1929, an expedition to the areas of Tonkin, northern Laos, and then down the Mekong River to Savannakhet and then by road over Route 9 to Quang Tri, was conducted by Harold J. Coolidge, Jr., of Harvard University, and Theodore Roosevelt. Coolidge notes his travel by car down Route 9 at dangerously high speeds, often killing chickens and even dogs, and was informed that this was due to the superstitious beliefs of the natives who jumped so that evil spirits following them would be killed by the car![126]

During the 1930s, an increase in anti-colonial political unrest increased the political prison population and, in 1934, a Communist document was confiscated at Lao Bao which enunciated the power and sophistication of communist prison organization; such prisons were routinely described as revolutionary schools.[127] Between 1930 and 1932, Giap along with his brother, Vo Thuan Nho, and several other influential Viet Minh were imprisoned at Lao Bao, a period of his life which he always passes over in silence.[128] One can only wonder whether General Giap's negative familiarity with this area may have informed his subsequent actions during the siege at Khe Sanh! Another inmate of the Lao Bao Prison was Ho Chi Minh himself.[129]

In 1954, a French column going from Laos back into Vietnam was ambushed at Lao Bao by Viet Minh, with much bloodshed.[130] The Vietnamese occupied Lao Bao for a number of years in the late 1950s and early 1960s. During this time, LtCol Nuyen van Thieu, who later became the President of South Vietnam, was its commander.[131] In 1960 (around July), William Colby (later Director of the CIA) picked up an automobile in Hue and drove with his son and a friend from Hue to Lao Bao finding it heavily jungle-covered and abandoned.[132]

After arriving in July, 1963, the American Advisor to the 1st ARVN Division at Khe Sanh, Captain Eugene Hardy, found Lao Bao's ruins to contain rectangular boxes, like ovens into which they put prisoners, closed them, and slowly cooked them.[133] Major James Whitenack, Senior Advisor for Huong Hoa District March-December, 1967, recalls: "They had walls that were 20 or so foot thick. They had cells in one area exposed to the weather and the elements—no roof other than bars on the top. You could walk into a hallway with doors going into these cells completely open to the weather, open to the sun, the rain, the

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[124] *Ibid.*, p. 287.
[125] *Ibid.*, p. 288.
[126] Coolidge, Harold J., Jr., and Roosevelt, Theodore, *Three Kingdoms of Indo-China*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1933, p. 44.
[127] *Ibid.*, p. 218.
[128] Currey, Cecil B., *Victory at Any Cost, the Genius of Viet Nam's Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap*, Washington: Brassey's, Inc., 1997, p. 25.
[129] Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Shattered World, Adaptation and Survival among Vietnam's Highland Peoples during the Vietnam War*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, p. 142.
[130] Conversation with Dr. Gerald Hickey, 21 May 1990.
[131] Conversation with Mr. James Morrison, 09 January 1994.
[132] Colby, William, with James McCargor, *Lost Victory, A Firsthand Account of America's Sixteen Year Involvement in Vietnam*. Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989, p. 43. Conversation with William Colby, 28 April 1990. Due to Mr. Colby's untimely death, it was impossible to ask him whether this may have been connected with contact of agents which were sent into Laos, or if it were simply part of his familiarization with the country. Mr. James Morrison (4 tours in Southeast Asia—one in Laos, one in Cambodia, two in Vietnam, was XO of the "C" Company of SOG in DaNang) states that Colby was probably at Lao Bao in connection with the Vietnamese Strategic Technical Directorate (STD) supporting BV-33 beginning in 1960. [Conversation with James Morrison, 04 January 1994].
[133] Conversation with Eugene Hardy, 21 June 2003.

weather."[134] Major Fred Patton, commanding the element that would eventually become FOB-3, surveyed the Lao Bao site and concluded that it would be a perfect location for the newly formed FOB-3 unit: "The walls of the fort itself were pretty well intact except on one corner and they had all kinds of heavy walls still standing inside. It would have taken a minimal amount of materiel and effort to make one hellacious fort out there."[135] Patton flew to Saigon which disapproved the site, claiming it was within mortar range of surrounding high ground. "It was funny because a few months before that I had been in downtown Saigon waiting on a parade with [General] Westmoreland and we got run off the street by mortar fire!"[136] A Bru named Onya whose parents worked for the Pollanes and who was educated along with the Pollane son, Felix, in Hue University and thereby became a kind of unofficial leader among the Bru (although not really a chief since leadership was hereditary in the Bru tribe), "..was just beside himself [at the disapproval]. He said, 'I'll put 1500, 2000 men out here in nothing flat,' and he really looked forward to it."[137]

As of April, 1990, the Vietnamese had established a prisoner camp at Lao Bao housing 400-450 inmates.[138]

THE BACKYARD

North Vietnam resumed movement of men and materiel into South Vietnam by using trails in Laos, beginning construction of these trails on 19 May 1959, the 69th birthday of Ho Chi Minh and thus the origin of the transportation unit, "Unit 559," the numbers referring to the date of its origin.[139] They crossed the Laotian border on 14 Dec 1958 and annexed a remote piece of land just west of the DMZ[140] which later became the location of the NVA Front Headquarters, with the secret designation of B5-T8 controlling the Khe Sanh Siege.[141] In response, South Vietnamese forces, dressed in Laotian military uniforms, stationed troops along Route 9 at Ban Houei Sane, just inside Laos.[142]

Following the coup of 09 August 1960 led by Kong Le, an obscure Lao paratrooper, overthrew the Laotian government of Prince Tiao Somsanith.[143] The city of Tchepone[144] soon became a target and was reported captured on 01 May 1961,[145] routing the defending Royalist 12th Infantry Battalion, remnants of which displaced to Thakkek On 02 May, South Vietnam took emergency counter-measures due to the overrunning of Tchepone by Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces and moved an infantry battalion to Lao Bao, and on 04 May, a 150-man Special Forces group, in civilian clothes, penetrated about six miles into Laos to aid Laotian government troops withdrawing eastward from Tchepone toward the border.[146] The South Vietnamese forces withdrew to the border on 23-24 May.[147] To fill the vacuum left by the departure of BI-12, they organized *Battalion Voluntaire* 33 (BV-33)[148] which located at a small dirt air-strip at Ban Houei Sane (also known as LIMA SITE 189).[149] South Vietnam also positioned artillery at Lao Bao to provide fire support for BV33.[150] On 05 Sep 1963, Eugene DeBruin,

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134 Comments of Mr. James Whitenack to the author, 06 October 1988.
135 Conversation with Fred Patton, 09 September 1997
136 *Ibid.*
137 *Ibid.*
138 USDAO [US Defense Attaché Office], Bangkok, Thailand 230919ZApr90 in Library of Congress MIA files, reel 355, folder 286. The camp (also known as Camp C-5) consisted of 8 inmate detention buildings, four cadre houses, assembly hall, and a kitchen.
139 Conboy, Kenneth and Morrison, James, *Shadow War*, Boulder, CO; Paladin Press, 1995, p. 115.
140 Conboy, Kenneth and Morrison, James, "Early Covert Action on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, *Vietnam*, August, 2000, p. 31.
141 B5-T8 was located approx. 9 miles west of the western Vietnam/Laos border at the DMZ at a place called Sar Lit (XD6266). [General Directorate for Rear Services, People's Army of Vietnam [Tonc Cuc Hau Can, Quan Doi Nhan Dan Viet Nam], *Van Tai Quan su Chien Luoc Tren Duong Ho Chi Minh Trong Khang Chien Chong My* [*Strategic Military Transport on the Ho Chi Minh Trail During the War Against the United States*], Hanoi, 1988, p. 77, classified "Secret" [*Mat*]].
142 Conboy and Morrison, *Shadow War*, p. 115; Conboy and Morrison, "Early Covert Action..m," p. 31.
143 U.S. Dept of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, Vol. 1, *Vietnam, 1961*, p. 126.
144 48QXD 3244.
145 CIA, *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 04 May 1961, MORI 207619
146 CIA, *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 11 May 1961, MORI 207620
147 CIA, *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 01 June 1961, MORI 207623.
148 Conversation with James Morrison, 09 January 1994.
149 *Ibid.* The BVs, Voluntary Battalions, unlike regular Army units, were not deployable. They remained in an area with their wives, children, and chickens and pigs
150 Conboy and Morrison, "Early Covert Action..," cited, p. 33.

while working on an Air America resupply of that unit, was shot down and became Missing in Action.[151] After that incident, resupply of BV-33 was from Air America flights originating in DaNang (occasionally stopping enroute at Khe Sanh).[152]

The Khe Sanh area now emerged as significant for the Communist strategy developed in the 1950s and 1960s which dictated capture of periphery territories and working backwards towards centers of power. The plan was to "find its bases far from the capital and gradually work inward against the government in hope that after a number of years it would be strong enough either to assault the capital itself or bring the government to its knees in a protracted struggle."[153] QL-9 became the principle east-west infiltration routes, intensively employed since the end of 1958 by Communist forces.[154] The enemy situation during the summer of 1961 gave indications that North Vietnamese forces would push eastward along Route 9 toward Hue.[155] The situation reflected a menace and the Chief of the MAAG [Military Assistance and Advisory Group], Vietnam, was "..convinced that this guerrilla war cannot be won by free world unless effective steps taken to plug up porous border."[156] That the border might be incapable of being sealed almost doomed further American assistance and involvement in Vietnam. In late 1961, planners in Washington, D.C., explored the idea of introducing an international force to guard against infiltration from Laos into South Vietnam.[157] Chief of Naval Operations reported: "Current information from the Chief of the Military Assistance and Advisory Group at Vietnam indicates that Viet Cong infiltration is mainly overland through Laos. Since the fall of Tchepone, Communist forces have had free access to the Vietnam border by this secure and well concealed route."[158]

Exploratory efforts to halt this ingression became the focus of the biennial SEATO exercise,[159] TULUNGUN conducted 26-31 March 1962 with the scenario:

> "After the fall of Tchepone, Laos, to Pathet Lao and Kong Le forces, Aggressor used this route to infiltrate large numbers of guerrilla elements into northern Republic of Vietnam... Unable to cope with the overall deteriorating situation alone, the Republic of Vietnam government requested SEATO assistance in restoring order and government control."[160]

The Taylor Mission Report, proposing a "Frontier Force, Vietnam," indicated that as of the summer of 1961, the 325th North Vietnamese Division was just north of the 17th parallel and the 304th and 324th NVA Divisions were in the vicinity of Route 9. The Frontier Force concept included securing willing assistance of Montagnards to make infiltration along the 103-mile "hot" area impossible.[161]

Accordingly, a Special Forces "A" Team arrived at Khe Sanh Village and established a permanent camp there on 08 July 1962,[162] to check infiltration along Route 9 by North Vietnamese Army forces. It located just to the east of the village in an old French fortified hilltop that was neither secure nor easily defended, referred to as "the old French Fort."[163] The first team

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[151] Eugene Henry DeBruin, in a C-46, was shot down 2 KM west of Tchepone, Laos (XD2748) over the village of Ban Nassong (XD2448) on 05 Sep 1963

[152] *Ibid.*

[153] George K. Tanham and Dennis J. Duncanson, "Some Dilemmas of Counterinsurgency," *Foreign Affairs* 48:1 (Oct, 1969), p. 166.

[154] "Memorandum from the President's Military Representative (Taylor) to the President (Kennedy)," 18 Sept 1961 in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961-63, p. 304.

[155] Memorandum from Edwin F. Black of the Office of the Secretary of Defense to the President's Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Rostow)," 27 July 1961, in U.S. Dept. of State., *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961-63, p. 245.

[156] Telegram from the Ambassador in Vietnam to the Dept. of State, 08 Dec 1960," in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-60, p. 719.

[157] Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, p. 145.

[158] Memorandum from the Chief of Naval Operations (Anderson) to the Secretary of Defense (McNamara)," 09 Oct 1961, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961-63, p. 329.

[159] Exercises were conducted every other year to test new concepts and ensure that armed forces of the SEATO nations could operate effectively with each other. These included STRONBACK (1958), BLUE STAR (1960), TULUNGUN (1962), and BACKPACK (1964). TULUNGUN, conducted 02 March – 12 April 1962 in the Philippines is a Philippine word meaning "mutual assistance."

[160] CG, Philippine Army/Commander SEVENTH Fleet Joint ltr FF/7/LWW:ml, 3500, Ser N32-N00184, 13 Dec 1961, Subj: Letter of Instruction for SEATO Amphibious Exercise 'TULUNGUN'," in USMC archives VE23.2.N121615; COMPHIBGRU OpO 301-62, 130900L/Jan62, USMC archives VE23.2.N.235/1.

[161] Letter from the President's Military Representative (Taylor) to the President," U.S. Dept of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961-63, pp. 520-521.

[162] Shelby Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, Novato, CA.: Presidio, 1985, p. 46.

[163] 48QXD 859387, indicated as Thuong Van on military maps.

that arrived at Khe Sanh had already spent three of its six-month tour at DaNang before arriving at Khe Sanh in 1962.[164] C-123 Caribou aircraft from Thailand arrived and landed on the airstrip at Lao Bao but didn't have a reverse prop and slid off the small airstrip. "All of a sudden about 30, 40 Lao came over in camouflage fatigues with weapons and challenged us. It's one of those international things. They said their border was over on our side and we said it was in the middle of the river. But they had more men than us. Their Captain told us he'd been watching us from across the river knew we were in trouble and so he came over and helped."[165] The Medic from that first Special Forces team, Gerald J. Howland, noted the ambiguous understanding of the border at the time: "Neither Vietnamese nor Laotians knew where the border was nor did they care. We saw Laotian troops in Khe Sanh routinely then. They came in, in force. ... We had an airplane come in and skid off into the river. He couldn't get stopped because of wet grass. We'd sit down there at night guarding the stupid thing. The Bru would leave us if the tigers came, and that was every night."[166] The American anthropologist, Gerald Cannon Hickey, recalls his visit to Lao Bao in May, 1964 as "..a very Lao-looking village. The people wear Lao clothes. They were Lao. They weren't Montagnards. I'd been in Laos in the 50s and [Lao Bao] looked exactly like the Lao villages you'd see in the Mekong River Valley. There were piles of rubble and some half-standing walls, and that's all that was left. The whole place looked very strange. There was a big ambush in there in 1954. There was a French column going from Laos back into Vietnam and the Viet Minh ambushed them and killed a lot of people right in the path there, the D'Ai Lao Pass."[167] The western Lao/Vietnam border continued to be a matter of dispute; a joint U.S./Lao survey team attempting to resolve MIA sites attempted to travel to a particular site on 31 October 1992, but was stopped due to a border change which was now at the 63 north/south grid line.[168] When the French began to explore the area, Captain Luce began to search the archives in Hue for documents that defined the border of Annam and found that following the Siamese invasion of Vientiane between 1825 and 1827, Minh Mang had annexed the western mountainous lands of Quang Tri and the border extended westward to the Mekong river and that since that time, most leaders in these areas had paid tribute to Hue.[169]

The borders of the Khe Sanh area were not only ambiguous with Laos, there had been a smoldering dispute of where the Demilitarized Zone line was located. During the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), at the conclusion of World War II, General Marshall asked Admiral Mountbatten (UK) what he thought of the idea of splitting French Indo-China into two and placing the southern half, south of 16 N, in the Southeast Asia Command. Admiral Mountbatten concurred.[170] (The northern portion would be under control of China). The precedent for portioning Indo-China was established.[171]

During the Geneva Conference, the dividing line became a matter of dispute. While the Vietnamese representative, Dong, was ready to go as far as the 16th parallel running just south of Tourane, (DaNang), the French representative, Mendes-France, insisted on French control of Tourane (DaNang) and Hue as well as control of the road (Route 9) running from Quang Tri to Savannakhet in Laos. Mendes-France insisted on the 18th parallel (Dong Hoi area).[172] According to classified French documents, Chou-En-Lai took the general view that Vietnam should be split. Giap said, "Split at the 16th parallel," and Mendez-France said, "split at the 18th parallel." Molotov said, "Then we agree that the split should be at the 17th

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[164] Conversation with Jacques Standing, 20 March 1989. Standing was a member of the first team at Khe Sanh.

[165] *Ibid.*

[166] Conversation with Gerald J. Howland, 20 March 1989. Lao Bao later became a prisoner of war camp run by the Vietnamese. Also known as "Camp "C-5," it held about 400-450 inmates and was surrounded by a bamboo lattice fence and consisted of 8 inmate detention buildings. All inmates were Vietnamese. [Library of Congress, "Vietnam Era Documentation Collection in Microfilm" (Shelf number (o)92/300 MicRR, Camp Files: Lao Bao, Folder #286.]

[167] Conversation with Dr. Gerald Cannon Hickey, 21 May 1990.

[168] JTF-FA Honolulu HI 101102Z/Dec92. As early as 12964, North Vietnam claimed a border as much as six miles into Laos, assigning to Vietnam the area of the jungle trails of the ho Chi Minh Trail. A CIA document indicates: "In 1954 and again in 1958, North Vietnam followed up its claims by moving troops into the region, cited historical precedents dating from 1428 and termed the disputed area "uninterruptedly part of Vietnamese territory." [CIA, *Current Intelligence weekly Summary*, 11 Dec 1964, p. 6 (MORI 207893).]

[169] Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Sons of the Mountains, Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands to 1954*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, p. 235.

[170] US Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, The Conference of Berlin, 1945*, Vol. 2, Washington: Govt. Printing Office, 1960, p. 377 [meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, 24 July 1945]. President Truman sent a message to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek: "On the advice of the Combined Chiefs of Staff we have reached the conclusion that for operational purposes it is desirable to include that portion of French Indo-China lying south of 16 north latitude in the Southeast Asia Command. This arrangement would leave in the China Theater that part of Indo-China which covers the flank of projected Chinese operations in China.." [*Ibid.*, No. 1273, p. 1321]

[171] *Documents Relating to British Involvement in the Indo-China Conflict, 1945-1965*, Misc No. 25 (1965), London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966, p. 6.

[172] Dept of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, Vol. XVI, The Geneva Conference, Washington: Govt. Print. Office, 1981, p. 1368.

parallel."[173] Bernard Fall indicates that Molotov's suggestion "..has been explained by the conciliatory role played at Geneva by the U.S.S.R., which in 1954 was trying to induce France not to join the European Defense Community."[174] On 20 July 1954, the 17th parallel was adopted.[175]

The second Special Forces team at Khe Sanh arrived about September, 1962, and it was during its 6-month deployment at Khe Sanh that s Vietnamese engineering battalion arrived and constructed the Khe Sanh airstrip.[176]

Americans at Khe Sanh not only "plugged" a hole in a porous border, but also used the location as a means of entering Laos which, although officially "neutral" was being used by North Vietnamese forces as a means to introduce armies and material into South Vietnam via the "Ho Chi Minh" trail network. Not only did Khe Sanh's proximity to the border as well as the pass through the rugged Annamite mountain range at D'Ai Lao (Lao Bao) permit introduction of intelligence-gathering activities (ground teams from SOG, and flights from Project TIGERHOUND observer aircraft), but since the tribal area of the indigenous Bru Montagnards was on both sides of the border. Anthropologist Dr. Gerald Cannon Hickey notes that for the Bru, "There was no border. A lot of the Bru spilled across the border into Laos. They never recognized the borders at all; the borders meant nothing to them."[177] Mr. John Miller of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, having been in Khe Sanh from 1961 and thoroughly learning the Bru language, subsequently found himself in Thailand where he not only discovered Bru living in Thailand, but apparently, there was a loose connection of tribal peoples extending from Khe Sanh through Laos and into Thailand, identifying themselves as "Bru" and having a similar language.[178] Carolyn Miller notes that the Bru in Thailand:

> "have a feeling that at one time they had a king. And one of the Bru men told me, 'Our problem is that we lost our king.' And so they see their sort of subjugated status as related to the fact that they no longer have a uniting kingdom, but feel that at one point they did."[179]

The Millers opine that the Bru probably originated in Laos and spread both ways. Those in Thailand perhaps located there for economic reasons, seeking land to plant food, or perhaps avoid the French demand for forced labor (to built Route 9, for example) or to leave the embattled Laotian area. "The fact that they are here at all has been a revelation to us."[180]

The tantalizing prospect of possible monitoring and control of the Ho Chi Minh Trail utilizing them as a counter-guerrilla force became the mission of "Special Projects" under Major George Quamo in FOB-3 at Khe Sanh. . James Morrison comments:

> "The reason for Khe Sanh's original establishment was to open up a conduit of an in-road with the Bru tribe that had occupied that area traditionally. The Bru, like other Montagnard tribes, didn't respect any lines that the French drew on the map. They had relatives that actually lived in Laos—and in North Vietnam. That was all their territory. They didn't care anything about 'north, south, east, or west.'"[181]

Mr. James Morrison, however, like the boy in the "Emperor's New Clothes" story, dared to disclose the truth of the situation. It simply was doomed; it couldn't possibly work.

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[173] Joyaux, Francois, *La Chine et le reglement du premier conflit d'Indochine*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1979, quoted in a ltr from W.W. Rostow, 17 Aug 1995. B.S.N. Murti [*Vietnam Divided, The Unfinished Struggle*, New York: Asia Publishing House, 1964, p. 20] opines that France insisted on the 18th parallel perhaps to compensate for the evacuation of Hanoi and Haiphong. The 18th parallel is the northern border of ancient Annam, passing through the Porte d'Annam, the entrance to Annam.

[174] Fall, Bernard B., "Indochina (1946-1954)," as part of the 3-vol. series, *Challenge and Response in Internal Conflict*, Dept of the Army, The Center for Research in Social Systems (CRESS) of the American University, p. 26. [Copy in archives of United States Military Academy, West Point, NY].

[175] Raskin, Marcus G., and Fall, Bernard B., eds., *The Viet-Nam Reader*, New York: Vintage Books, p. 84, Gettleman, Marvin E., ed., *Viet Nam*, Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Crest Book, 1965, p. 137. The Provisional Demarcation Line was fixed as follows: from East to West: the mouth of the Song Ben Hat (Cua Tung) River, and the course of that river (known as the Rao Thanh in the mountains) to the village of Bo Ho Su, then the parallel of Bo Ho Su to the Laos-Vietnam frontier. A 5-kilometer demilitarized zone on either side of this line was established. [*Documents Relating to British Involvement...*, p. 16]. The line was approximately 60 kilometers (roughly 37 miles) long.

[176] Conversation with Frank Fowler, 21 March 1989. Fowler was the light weapons specialist at the time.

[177] Comments made by Dr. Gerald Cannon Hickey on a video recording by John Wright, 17 June 1989.

[178] Comments of John and Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 12 November 1992. About 60 to 70 percent of the vocabulary of the Bru in Thailand is the same as that of the Bru at Khe Sanh.

[179] Comments of Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 12 November 1992.

[180] Letter from John and Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 24 March 1993.

[181] Conversation with James Morrison, 09 January 1994. Morrison had two tours in Vietnam, a tour in Laos, and a tour in Cambodia.

"You see, it's virtually impossible to infiltrate anybody with any degree of realism into that area: One, because of the limited Landing Zones because of the geographic features and all the karst and ridges. Secondly, you were compromised as soon as you got off the helicopter because of the noise of the rotary-winged aircraft. That area had one of the heaviest concentrations—not necessarily of AAA, but of *forces*. As soon as a helicopter was heard, there was someone on your trail. If you put them in by parachute, they were too strung out."[182]

Morrison called the effort "Star Wars," and added that the North Vietnamese, like the East Germans, Mongolians, and Chinese were experts at population and resource control, that any undocumented person is immediately spotted, and that teams sent out of Saigon into the area west of Lao Bao along Route 9 were all rolled up to the man, making the effort a total, dismal failure. On the other hand, George Quamo was under pressure from the national level, "to do something!"[183] The impossibility of operating in that area, saturated with North Vietnamese who considered it a strategic area, became apparent in the total disaster of the large LAM SON 719 operation in early 1971. Morrison also noted the impossibility of utilizing BV-33 at Ban Houei Sane: "BV-33 never really amounted to anything. There were a number of attempts to get them involved in on-going activities, but they didn't have the where-with-all;, they didn't have the impetus to try and intercede against a force that was much more organized, more highly trained, capable of running them off the map at their discretion. They [BV-33] were basically consigned to a position of sitting on a hill and eating food. That's all they actually did."[184]

On the other hand, early Army studies of the Brou reflected good possibilities for employing them in a military role:

"..the Brou can become an effective force against the Viet Cong. The tribesmen can serve as informers, trackers and guides, intelligence agents, interpreters, and translators. With intensive training and support, the Brou can be organized to defend their villages ..; with good leadership, they can be organized into an effective counter guerrilla combat unit. U.S. personnel who worked with the Brou reported that the tribesmen were effective and loyal soldiers. ... They defend themselves vigorously when they, their families, or their villages are threatened and when they have adequate resources and chances for success."[185]

"The Brou pride themselves upon their hunting skill and their mastery of traditional weapons; they are equally as proud of their skill and marksmanship with modern weapons. If a Brou can carry and handle a weapon conveniently, he will use it well."[186]

EARLY FRENCH SETTLERS

Monsieur Eugene Poilane, born of peasants 16 March 1888 in Saint Sauveur de Landemont in the department of Maine et Loire, France, left school at the age of 11 or 12 without a diploma and in 1909 and served in the French military as an artillery worker in Indochina at the Naval Arsenal in Saigon.[187] Life was hard on soldiers at that time and, although he smoked, he sold his tobacco (his pay) in order to have a little coffee and something to eat; he thus abandoned smoking.[188]

"Indochina was then a true paradise and to live there at that time must have been very tempting for young men from France and elsewhere. Many of them stayed on after their military service was over. They settled there and led the life of the colonist, a life full of charm and the exotic, of pretty women, all petite and beautiful with their long black hair. Many of them intermarried with the native women."[189]

Following World War I, Monsieur Eugene Poilane met Professor Auguste Chevalier, a French botanist who, impressed with Eugene's courage and insight, arranged for his assignment to the Saigon Botanical Institute which designated him a field botanist in 1919 and an agent of the Services Forestiers d'Indochine (Indochina Forest Service) in 1922.[190] He was promoted to Museum Correspondent in 1928.

In 1921, Eugene returned to France for a population census and met his future wife, Mlle Yvonne Bourdeauducq[191] at a beekeeping exposition.

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[182] Conversation with James Morrison, 21 November 1994.
[183] Conversation with James Morrison, 26 February 1995.
[184] Conversation with James Morrison, 27 M<arch 1994.
[185] Schrock, Stocktonm, Murphym abd Fromme, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
[186] *Ibid.*, p. 79.
[187] *Obit.*, Museum d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris, *Revue Adansonia*, Tome IV (1964), pp. 352-354.
[188] Letter from Madame Madeleine Poilane, 6 July 1990, to Ray W. Stubbe.
[189] *Ibid.*
[190] He was promoted to Museum Correspondent in 1928.
[191] Pronounced "board-a-duke."

"She was just a "girl," 13 years younger, who thought that you got pregnant from kissing on 'the mouth.' She was very naïve and had been raised in a strict family where you don't share 'little secrets' with others. It was a traditional bourgeois family where young girls are not supposed to ask questions. She was neither equipped nor prepared for married life. She still wanted to be a nun, but faced with domineering parents (her mother wrote the letters she sent to her fiancée), she gave in. When the moment came to leave for Indochina .. she told herself: OK well, I'll become a missionary over there.

"His wife adapted to her new way of life and henceforth followed him around in his travels down various trails, always in pursuit of flora, plants. She slept under a tent and shared the life of a coolie. She herself became quite adept at analyzing flora and was able to assist her husband in his work."[192]

In 1922, Madame Bourdeauducq-Poilane gave birth to her first girl, Yvonne, born on 4 August in Saigon. Her second child, Jeanne, was born 19 June 1924 in Hue.[193] Eugene Poilane then embarked on his botanical explorations in Annam, an effort requiring vigor and endurance in the tropical forest environment. There were insects, animals, reptiles, and leeches, along with the ever-present malaria, requiring daily doses of quinine. All water had to be boiled. New trails were cleared in the jungle, meals were prepared on the spot, and the work was very hard.

"..the leeches multiply. They suck your blood and you soon have them all over your body. You have to constantly get rid of the little beasts which quickly transform themselves into living-breathing syringes. A lit cigarette applied to a leech makes it let go and the same is true for wild honey. There are also ticks which bite you and gorge themselves on your blood. There are several types of these, some of which, when they are 'stuffed' resemble little peas and you can knock them off; others look like little crabs which dig into the skin, causing extremely painful bites which hurt for several months. There are also fire ants whose bits causes a very unpleasant burning sensation. There are also other species of ants, some of which are considered a delicacy by the Montagnards who eat them raw. They supposedly have a slightly acid taste."[194]

Additionally, there were tigers and wild boars, civets, panthers, honey-eating bears, pumas, and ocelots, pythons, cobras, and banana snakes which this couple encountered in their wanderings through the jungle area. From 1922 until 1947, specimens were sent by Eugene to the Museum of Natural History in Paris at the rate of 1,500 to 5,000 a year, reaching by the end of 1947 a total of more than 36,000. He found 21 new species for the first and 19 for the second time, traveling by foot up to the Chinese, Burmese, and Siamese borders gathering his specimens in barely known or even unknown areas.[195] Two genera have been named after him: Poilania and Poilaniella.[196]

His travels brought him to what eventually became Khe Sanh where he discovered a plateau of red earth. The village of Khe Sanh (The words "Khe Sanh" mean "green river") did not exist at that time; there was only a straw hut of the French engineer who built Route 9.[197] Eugene requested the French authorities to grant him a concession in this virgin area and he was given five years to develop the area.

By 1926, Eugene Poilane had settled at Cu Bach[198] where he built a straw hut to house his little family and continued his botanical explorations which included a search for precious, beautiful woods. He saw his wife two weeks out of a year.

On 30 April 1931, Mme Bourtdeauducq-Poilane gave birth to Felix Poilane at Khe Sanh alone; her husband was in the jungle collecting botanical specimens. When a doctor finally arrived, he simply declared "all was well." Eugene continued to father children, leaving behind six at the time of his death (20 April 1964).[199] Mme Madeleine Poilane notes that Eugene Poilane"..loved his family a great deal and he wanted to have many children who would surround him and continue his work."[200]

Near the time Felix was born, a Bru Montagnard named Onya was born.[201] Anya's father was the Poilanes' chauffeur and his mother worked in Mme. Boudeauducq's kitchen. Madame Madeleine Poilane recalls her as "very neat, very discrete, and

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[192] Poilane letter, 06 July 1990, cited.
[193] *Ibid.*
[194] A. Camus, in A. chevalier, *Journal d'agriculture tropicale* 1 (1954) p. 385, in letter from Mme Madeleine Poilane, 6 Jul 1990.
[195] Poilane letter of 6 Jul 1990, cited.
[196] *Obit.*, Museum d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris, Revue Adansonia, Tome IV (1964), cited, p. 353..
[197] Poilane letter of 6 Jul 1990, cited. Comments of Felix Poilane to Ray W. Stubbe, 01 Jan 1968.
[198] Located where the Khe Sanh base access road meets Route 9, just east of what became Khe Sanh village, XD860404.
[199] On Monday, 20 April 1964, M. Eugene Poilane was killed in an ambush while traveling on Route 9 to Quang Tri City in his Citroen, accompanied by M. Llinares. He was 76. *Vide,* Stubbe, Ray W., *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed. (2008), p. 13.
[200] Poilane letter, 6 July 1990, cited.
[201] Also referred to as Ahnia and Anya. A letter of 20 Mar 1970 to Dan Kelley from him concludes with "Mr. A- NHA."

very honest."[202] Daniel Kelley, a Marine Corporal with CAC OSCAR in 1967 who became especially close to the Bru, learning their language and speaking it fluently, recalls that Onya's father had relations with Madame Bourdeauducq and on the basis of that Onya and Felix grew up together.[203] Madame Madeleine Poilane notes that Felix and Onya were like little brothers, and Eugene Poilane sent Onya to Hue University along with his son, Felix. Onya spoke fluent French and was even baptized, but when he returned to his Bru village, he readopted Bru customs, taking several wives. He didn't work; his wives did all the work for him. Due to his ability to converse in French and his university education, Vietnamese officials in Khe Sanh used him as a natural mediator between the Vietnamese and the Bru. Positions of leadership in Bru society are hereditary, and thus he was never officially given that status among the Bru.[204]

(In late 1967, Onya, as Assistant District Chief of Huong Hoa, gave an impressive appearance, in sharp contrast to the ill-clad Bru in the area. He was dressed in tiger utilities and had highly polished combat boots, fairly short, very clean in appearance, well poised—almost like a diplomat, the kind of a person with whom one is naturally respectful.[205] His activities and loyalties during and after the siege were, however, uncertain. Cpl Daniel R. Kelley recalls that "prior to and during the first days of the siege, Anya had disappeared for several days at a time which was never explained. Ultimately he did elect to stay at the airbase which means perhaps something in his ever balancing act."[206] Kelly writes, "I myself don't put too much faith in Anya. I was asked many times while I was there [at the Bru Refugee Village at Cua] what I thought of him. for the most part I painted a rosy picture because we needed every bit of help we could get."[207] After the siege, while attending a meeting in Hue, his four wives and children were killed in a VC raid.[208] In the 1972 Offensive, when the Bru were moving from Cua to Hue, fear-struck with crumbling security, Air America planes were lined up to evacuate them, but Onya tried to block it. "He didn't want to lose the funds from the refugees leaving."[209] Dr. Hickey, shocked, recalls, "I was willing to kill Onya. Onya did a divination ritual—The Bru have many—with a chicken and an egg and some rice and said the spirits were advising the people not to move. The Minister of Ethnic Minorities, Nay Lutte, had enough and said to the people, "You really have to move because the North Vietnamese Army is moving on the City of Hue and the defenses have crumbled, and you're going to be caught in heavy fighting." They eventually did move that day as 2300 of them flew to Darlac Province where they could farm and the soil was similar to that of Khe Sanh; it's high and cool. The Rhade built houses for them and they adjusted well.[210])

Eugene's only income was his salary as a Museum correspondent and so he began clearing the land to plant a coffee plantation. He brought back 9 coffee beans from a trip to Tonkin and began a tree nursery with those nine beans which eventually became a coffee plantation.

Eugene was also interested in determining whether or not various fruit trees would grow in the Khe Sanh area and established an experimental orchard[211] where, in addition to growing Charl coffee, he introduced new species to the area from France, Japan and other countries. He noted in his notebooks any change in the plant's behavior, ad diseases contracted. He introduced vines, peach trees, pear trees, chestnut trees, walnut trees, hazelnut trees, and attempted to introduce the date tree. The experimental garden included a large lane of trees which provided nuts used in making paint.[212] Madeleine Poilane described the wide variety in the experimental garden:[213]

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[202] Poilane letter of 6 July 1990, cited.
[203] Conversation with Daniel Kelley, 23 May 1988.
[204] Letter from Mr. John Miller, 9 Oct 1969: "Mr. Anha has come in to his position of prominence among the Bru by virtue of the fact that he was appointed by the government to be assistant district chief. Prior to this he had no special status other than the influence he bore because of his education and background with the French. Actually it is because of this background that he was considered the logical man to take the assistant District Chief position. Traditionally he would not be in a position of authority, since these positions are hereditary in the Bru system. But since he was appointed to his position, he automatically superseded other Bru leaders as far as the government is concerned. And because he is not the go-between for the Bru and the government the people naturally look to him as the authority in the area. His parents worked for the Poilanes for many years. In fact he was pretty much brought up with Felix."
[205] Diary of Ray W. Stubbe, entry for 13 September 1967.
[206] Daniel R. Kelley, letter to Ray W. Stubbe, 28 March 1970.
[207] *Ibid.*
[208] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 10 June 1990.
[209] Conversation with Dr. Gerald Cannon Hickey, 02 June 1990.
[210] *Ibid.*
[211] Located at approx. XD834425, off the road extending to the northwest of Khe Sanh Combat Base.
[212] Poilane letter, 6 July 1990, cited. Probably tung trees.
[213] Letter of Madeleine Poilane, 18 July 1988, to Mr. Ronald Drez, "Memories of Vietnam, 1957-1968." Madeleine Poilane notes that the President of Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem, visited this garden in July, 1959.

"We have many fruit trees: orange trees, mandarin trees of several varieties, banana trees also with different sorts of bananas. There are avocado trees, persimmon trees of several varieties .. Papayas, very juicy lemons, durians, a fruit very much savored by the Chinese [which] smells very bad and one must stop up one's nose .. in order to be able to eat it. I never succeeded in being able to overcome this odor, and because of this I deprived myself of a fruit which, it appears, very tasty. If you have a Durian in the house it's not possible to sleep, so strong is the odor! The Chinese buy this fruit at a huge price. There are kola nuts, very much prized by the Senegalese, the Arecca nut which is used to prepare betel with leaves of the cocoa plant which we also had. We had superb mango trees but which did not bear any fruit, alas. Felix had succeeded in making a pepper bed ... Numerous tea trees serve for our personal use.... We sold oranges and mandarins individually. ... We also had large trees called tung which produced fruit which was sold to make oil for paint. We sold these nuts only a few times. People were not very interested in this fruit which was a pity for us."[214]

In 1953, Felix (now 22 years old) suffered a serious accident on Route 9 while in a 4/4 French army vehicle which overturned on a curve in the road near Cu Bach. He was caught beneath the truck and suffered a fracture at the 12th lumbar of his spine which paralyzed him from the pelvis down. He was unable to move his legs. It was decided to send him to France on a hospital ship for rehabilitation. He was admitted to military hospitals in great pain and required morphine shots. When he was able to walk with the aid of crutches, he took a correspondence course, earning his C.A.P.[215] and found a job as an assistant accountant in Bonneuil, France. On 21 and 22 May 1957, he met his future wife, Madeleine in Voyuvray, Madeleine's birthplace, during communion of Madeleine's godchild, Maurice Balleur. It was Pentecost. Madeleine recalls:

"We made each other's acquaintance in front of the post office. Felix was riding his motor-scooter. That evening, Maurice's parents had a party at their place. The scooter passed by once, twice ... We heard him of course and asked him to stop in. Felix wanted to get to know me a little better than he had on the side of the road... All night long I thought about the name Felix Poilane which sounded so strange to me!

"The next day, the Monday of Pentecost, we decided to make a trip to the banks of the Loire. Felix looked after the kids. We helped him give out the snacks and .. we talked. ... I felt something inside me that drew me towards this young man, and I believe that he too felt a desire to see me again

"The next morning, I came home from Tours on bicycle to get back to work. I had only one thought in mind, and on Wednesday I found a letter from Felix. I wasn't surprised.. ... And that's how the whole adventure began.[216]

Felix and Madeleine were married 3 August 1957. Only a few days earlier, Madeleine had lost her mother who died of cancer of the liver. They booked passage on the steamship, "Laos," and departed Marseille, France 22 November 1957. After stopovers at Port Said, Aden, Bombay, Colombo, and Singapore, they arrived at Saigon on 16 December 1957. Madeleine was sea-sick the entire journey.

When they arrived at Khe Sanh on 21 December 1957 (at the height of the monsoon season), Madeleine was shocked at what she saw. Their large house of 16 rooms—"none of which was habitable"—had not been maintained, and the future of Vietnam was uncertain.[217] The local priests, who had harvested and cleared the land in the absence of Felix. Father Romain, a Benedictine priest told Madeleine, "You will be a queen here." Madeleine held back her tears, seeing only holes in the ceiling and floor, no doors of windows, the cold monsoon winds freely blowing into the house, and the ceiling of their bedroom, on the second floor, was supported by branches of coffee trees. There was no bed. Their luggage had not yet arrived from Saigon and they only had a few things. Eugene Poilane provided two iron beds on which they put mats. Their first meal was bread with salted butter and some bananas. There were only two bowls and a few dishes.

Life for their first year together at Khe Sanh was primitive and harsh:

"We had to go to Quang Tri, a distance of 70 kilometers from Khe Sanh, in order to get provisions and buy the necessary things in order to live. My husband managed the plantation alone for the first time. It was necessary to work for a year in order to see how things were going to come out. Identity papers were necessary in order to travel. To go to Dong Ha there were no fewer than 14 bamboo gates to cross and we had to show our papers. Most of the time the soldiers looked at the papers upside down with a great deal of seriousness. They did not want to show that they did not know how to read and write. We didn't say anything, trying to keep our calm. Afterwards the name of Poilane alone was all that was needed as a passport."[218]

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[214] *Ibid.*

[215] Certificat d'aptitude professionnel, the equivalent of a vocational high school diploma.

[216] Madeleine Poilane, "Memories of Vietnam 1957-1968, in her letter of 6 July 1990, cited.

[217] *Ibid.*

[218] Madeleine Poilane, "Memories of Vietnam 1957-1968," cited.

There were five coffee plantations at Khe Sanh:[219] (1) Eugene Poilane divorced his wife, Madame Bourdeauducq, married a Nung from North Vietnam, and bought out the coffee plantation of his uncle, M. Lecas (who died of cholera and is buried at Khe Sanh). When Eugene was assassinated 20 April 1964, title passed to his second wife. This plantation was located on the area on which Khe Sanh Combat Base was constructed plus the experimental botanical garden to the northwest. The Combat Base access road was really a private road built by Eugene Poilane. This plantation also included a plantation bought from Eugene's sister, (the former Lucas plantation). (2) When Eugene divorced, Felix managed his mother's plantation (Madame Bourdeauducq) from the time he returned from France (Dec 1957) until the siege (22 Jan 1968). This plantation is bounded by Route 9 next to the little bridge on the Cu Bach stream, to the bridge of Ta-Con, to entrance of Khe Sanh, then to the terrain of the combat base bounded by a long row of trees (called Abrasins) separating this plantation from that of Eugene's. (3) The Laval plantation. M. Laval was a retired French officer who established a plantation just west of Khe Sanh village.[220] When he moved to France, M. Raymond Simard, a soldier who had little relatives in France, purchased it following his second marriage to a Eurasian who had a little boy whom he adopted.[221]

(After the siege, he settled in Bourail in New Caledonia). The Simard house was the last house on the western edge of Khe Sanh village, located across Route 9 from the CAP O-2 position. In late 1967, when the Marines occasionally fired 60 mm illum mortars that landed in the Simard orchard, Corporal Daniel Kelley, using his meager French, was able to discover that the wild firing, was brought on by trip flares in the CAP O-2 tripped by an ocelot. Kelley discovered Simard to be very friendly and the conversation was informative. "We would set these flares in the evening and then the next morning the Bru women would come in, disarm the flares so they could start working in his backyard. We thought: if they can do this! If we tried to do the same thing, we'd set them off."[222] Kelley observed the basic honesty of the Bru—primitive but very moral: M. Simard had a fruit orchard in addition to his coffee trees, yet the Bru wouldn't touch his fruit trees to take some; they'd buy bananas in Khe Sanh ville rather than touch his.[223] When the siege began and NVA forces inside Khe Sanh village attacked the two CAC OSCAR compounds, CAP O-2, at the western edge of the village, received rounds from Simard's orchard as well as the Buddhist pagoda across Route 9.[224] Sgt Harper and the CAP O-2 driver, Tyson, said that the NVA were in Simard's house and so the Marines blasted the house with LAWs. They received a considerable number of RPGs in response and knew they could have been overrun, but the NVA were apparently focused on the District Headquarters.[225] Aerial photo recon of 25 January 1968 disclosed 94 foxholes at XD847376, just off Route 9 near Simard's house, opposite the CAP O-2 position (possible an ambush position for forces attempting to reinforce Lang Vei).[226]

A fourth plantation had a history of intrigue. Originally planted by M. Rome, it was located to the east of Khe Sanh village, just north of Route 9, Both the wife of M. Rome and his gardener were Japanese. The wife was suspected of spying for the Japanese and The Rome family enjoyed "high living" until they mysteriously disappeared.[227] The property reverted to the Vietnamese government and was subsequently rented by Monsieur Emmanuel Llinares who was married to a Vietnamese. M. Llinares, originally from Montpellier in the Herant (the northeast Pyrennes of France),[228] had been a wealthy man living in North Vietnam but fled south during the "Passage to Freedom," losing everything; he had no love for the North Vietnamese![229] His wife, however, had contacts with the Viet Cong. A network of VC was discovered in the village at the bottom of the plantation, at the Riviere Rao Quan, leading to a resettlement of all Bru Montagnards in the area, at which time at least 5,000 Bru went over to the VC side.[230] Following a double assassination of two of the Llinares workers in the house, the wife departed and demanded protection of the Quang Tri Province chief and never returned to the plantation and her husband.[231]

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[219] Madeleine Poilane, letter to Ray W. Stubbe, 26 Jan 1971.
[220] Poilane letter to Ray W. Stubbe, 7 May 1971.
[221] Poilane letter, 6 July 1990, cited.
[222] Conversation with Daniel Kelley, 23 May 1988.
[223] *Ibid.*
[224] John R. Roberts ,letter to Ray W. Stubbe, 27 Dec 1972.
[225] Ray W. Stubbe, diary entry, 22 Jan 1968.
[226] 6470 Recon Tactical Squadron 270100Z/Jan68, Initial Photo Intelligence Report, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 27/28 Jan 1968 #120.
[227] Ray W. Stubbe, diary entry for 19 July 1967, conversation with the Poilanes. (Stubbe, *khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 Apr 1970, p. 32.)
[228] Letter of Mrs. Poilane to Ray Stubbe, 6 July 1990, cited.
[229] Comments by Mrs. Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 27 May 1986.
[230] Letter of Mrs. Poilane, 6 July 1990, cited.
[231] Letter of Mrs. Poilane to Ray Stubbe, 7 May 1971, cited. Llinares ended up in a Vietnamese re-education camp, according to his daughter, Madeleine who had married a Vietnamese officer and was awaiting his return to France. (Letter of Madeleine Poilane to Ray W. Stubbe, 6 July 1990).

Captain John D. Wagelstein, CO of the Special Forces Detachment at Khe Sanh, arrived in October, 1965, for his 6-month tour and recalls good relationship with the Poilanes but not with Llinares, a Basque; he regarded that as "..one piece of unfinished business I didn't attend to before I left Vietnam. We had an operation. A recon element out had spotted him on the road about two o'clock in the morning by himself. Shortly after, maybe a minute or two later, a patrol of VC came by following him and my intel handler, named Minh, was convinced that he was—we always had known that the guy had a lot of connections. We always thought that he was involved in supporting the VC .. and Poilane didn't have much to do with him. I thought that strange except if you looked at it from the point of view of whom was supporting whom, I think Poilane was trying to stay neutral and I think this guy, the Basque, was in it up to his ears. Minh wanted me to mount a little cleansing operation against this guy, but it all happened shortly before my departure."[232]

On 09 September, 1967, an officer at Khe Sanh noted that M. Poilane was having difficulty transporting his bags of coffee to be sold and that M. Llinares apparently just wanted to leave the area, abandoning all his many bags of coffee as well as all his money.[233]

(Although the Japanese technically occupied Vietnam in 1940, they did not move further west than the Rock Pile.[234] They were technically "ousted" the following August, but no one came to remove them. The Poilanes lived in Hue from March, 1945, to July, 1947.).[235]

In February, 1954, the VC from Laos and Vietnam joined forces and all the French planters abandoned their homes and the "French Fort" and took refuge in the Lao Bao prison stronghold. At that time, Eugene Poilane took a wound in his leg from a mortar round and Mr. Simard lost his wife (although, Felix stated, she wasn't his wife; they were merely living together. They all remained at Lao Bao about four months.[236]

The final plantation was worked by Benedictine Fathers who arrived at Khe Sanh in 1955 on land given them by Eugene Poilane located just south of the junction of Route 9 and the base access road. It was at this time that Madame Bourdeauducq left Eugene Poilane.[237]

In 1958, Rev. Bui Tan Loc, a Vietnamese Protestant pastor returned to Khe Sanh and built a well-constructed church building and school on the eastern edge of Khe Sanh village. (He had been at Khe Sanh three years earlier, but, without adequate preparations, had gathered no followers). He was a missionary to the Bru and no Vietnamese attended his worship.[238]

One Sunday morning in 1958, as five Bru women were clearing a rice field of weeds, 500 meters from National Route 9 they were attacked by a tiger. The man-eater tiger had been roaming the villages and already had killed a dozen Montagnards. Madame Poilane recalls the incident:

> "One Sunday morning, after we returned from Mass, the Montagnards of the village of Ta Con came to tell us that a woman had just been killed by the tiger. This took place 100 meters from National Route 9. The women—there were five of them—had come into the rice field to pull weeds. The victim's mother was among them. We know her very well. The tiger had lied in wait for them and had jumped on the woman, mortally wounding her with its paw. (They know just where to strike). The mother and the three other women had been screamed and pulled on one side of the woman while the tiger pulled on his side in an attempt to drag off his prey to devour it. They eventually succeeded in driving off the tiger and the latter left the woman lying on the ground. We still didn't have a rifle. Felix's rifle, which we had brought with us from France, had been confiscated by the Vietnamese customs officers. You need a Vietnamese permit and we didn't have one, all of which made things difficult for us. As a result, things got really messed up when it came to the coffee harvest. No one would any longer leave the village. It was as if someone had cast an evil spell, for nothing like this had happened in this village for the past ten years. For three months we had no harvesters and we began to become quite concerned. After a good number of palavers, the entire village finally decided to come out, but the women would pick the coffee beans and the men would set up a guard all around the area where the coffee plants were, armed with their spears and their chop-chops.[239] This lasted quite a while until people's minds settled down, fear

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[232] Taped comments of COL John D. Wagelstein to Ray W. Stubbe, 9 May 1986.
[233] Ray W. Stubbe, diary entry for 09 September 1967.
[234] Comments of LtCol Donnelly at HQMC Historical Division. LtCol Donnelly worked in the G-2 of FMFPAC and 9th MAB and had frequent conversations with the French priests at Khe Sanh.
[235] Ray W. Stubbe, diary entry for 19 July 1967, conversation with the Poilanes. (Stubbe, *khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 Apr 1970, p. 32.).
[236] *Ibid.*
[237] Letter of Mrs. Poilane to Ray Stubbe, 26 Jan 1971, cited.
[238] Poilane, "Memories of Vietnam, 1957-1968," cited.
[239] Probably the large curved knife used in clearing brush, called a *pria* by the Bru.

slowly vanished, and the village returned to its normal life and we returned to our coffee. After this serious incident, the Head of the Province entrusted a carbine to my father-in-law [Eugene Poilane] who gave it to Felix. As a result, knowing that we were now armed, people's confidence was completely restored."[240]

In 1959, this tiger was killed by Megarde, a Vietnamese military hunter, and peace returned."[241] Before the war in Vietnam, Felix Poilane owned a herd of 120 water buffalo, and almost every day lost one to a tiger. A tiger hunt followed in which 47 tigers were killed.[242]

At the end of their first year at Khe Sanh, Felix and Madeleine Poilane had enjoyed a good harvest and could focus on repairing the buildings. Madeleine had lost eleven kilos and went to Gral Hospital in Saigon. She also had a case of malaria, despite taking daily doses of quinine. Madeleine no longer dreamed of returning to France. She was pregnant, expecting her first child, and the joy of this changed everything. Refurbishing the house in order to house a child now became urgent, and Felix, aided by his workers, completely repaired the house beginning with the roof and ten all sixteen rooms, one by one. The plantation returned to a normal rhythm and Madeleine taught school for the Bru as well as provide medical treatment for them.

"I loved these primitive tribes and they loved me in return. This contributed a great deal to my adjustment. There was so much to do for these mountain people, so poor and living in such backward conditions. ... I spoke a great deal with the women.... The principle problems for these women was not to have too many children and also how to take care of them. This was easy for me to explain to them after the birth of my daughter, Francioise [born 01 Oct 1959].. ... I continued to learn the language. ... I had a real attraction for these primitive people who were very near to us. This contributed to my desire to remain on the plantation."

Felix and Madeleine Poilane returned to France for two months in 1961. Francoise was not yet two years old and the plantation was entrusted to the care of Father Corentin. At the beginning of 1962, Madeleine had a miscarriage, and on 16 September of that year, a violent typhoon wreaked extensive damage, felling trees that blocked roads. It was necessary to clear away everything. Eugene Poilane's house lost its roof. Repairs were quickly made and life returned to normal. Madeleine gave birth to "a very large boy of 5 kilos (11 pounds) named Jean-Marie."[243]

During this period, news focused on a supposed attack by the Vietnamese on Buddhists, following false rumors that had been spread. Several Buddhists in Saigon burned themselves in the public square in order to proclaim they were being persecuted by the President of the Republic and his brothers, one of which was Archbishop of Hue. "They concocted the story that the Archbishop had buried Buddhists alive in his garden, and there were people credulous enough to believe these fabrications. This disturbed life in Vietnam for a rather long time. Afterwards, they discovered that there were elements of the Viet Cong among the Buddhist monks who hid themselves under the orange tunic."[244]

Despite political unrest in South Vietnam, life for the Poilanes at Khe Sanh returned to normal. Friends arrived to see Eugene Poilane's experimental orchard,[245]hunt deer, grouse pheasant and wild animals, such as the tiger and wild boar, the latter causing major destruction in the coffee plantation. Felix enjoyed hunting and this put meat into their diet as well as that of their workers. On 19 and 21 December 1961, Felix successfully trapped a tiger (providing meat to eat)[246] as well as a spotted panther which had killed a pig in a neighboring Bru village. The Bru asked Felix to trap it with his big jaw steel trap. Madeleine later sent the skin of the panther back to France; she had also sent the skins of two tigers killed by Felix.[247]

In February, 1964, Monsieur Wolff, a French pharmacist from Dong Ha, arrived to visit Monsieur Llinares who was sick. Upon returning, Wolff was killed, perhaps mistaken for an American. Then, on Monday, 20 April 1964, Eugene Poilane was killed with three bullets, one of which near the heart was fatal. This was at kilometer 51 on Route 9 and Llinares was a passenger, unharmed. The American Special Forces detachment, which had been at the Old French Fort, then asked the Poilanes for permission to use the airstrip at the end of a road of the boundary of the plantation run b Felix and that of his father, Eugene. "We accepted of course and the airbase because of this began its existence. Afterwards the airbase was enlarged. It was about 30 hectares or more of pasture land which was taken over gradually."[248] (This was Khe Sanh Special Forces camp, later, Khe Sanh Combat Base).

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[240] Poilane letter of 6 July 1990, cited.
[241] Letter of Mrs. Poilane to Ray Stubbe, 26 Jan 1971, cited
[242] *Ibid.*
[243] Madeleine Poilane, "Memories of Vietnam, 1957-1968," cited.
[244] *Ibid.*
[245] Poilane letter, 26 Jan 1971, cited.
[246] Madeleine Poilane, "Memories of Vietnam, 1957-1968," cited
[247] *Ibid.*
[248] *Ibid.*

By 1964, after the fall of President Diem, Route 9 was cut off and bridges blown up, and the Poilanes could only move their coffee by American planes that landed on the Khe Sanh airstrip. In addition, manpower became scarce since men were now soldiers, attracted by regular pay.[249]

On 3 March 1964, Father Poncet of the foreign missions of Paris arrived, followed by Father Mauvais who came to assist. In May, 1967, nuns of Saint Paul of Chartes came and moved into a place near the priests to work with the Bru.[250] A Marine from the CAC OSCAR unit in Khe Sanh village once reported that he went to Father Poncet for confession. He didn't speak French; Poncet didn't understand English. No problem. Father Poncet had all the common sins listed in English on one side of a card, and had the Marine point to the sin and indicate how many times. He then flipped the card on which were printed the penances in English. Father Poncet pointed to the penance and indicated how many.

A 4-star General from the United States visited the Poilanes who indicated problems with defoliation sprays in nearby Laos. The winds from Laos carried the spray and destroyed their durian trees which were more than 25 years old and now no longer produced. They lost all their leaves. Madeleine recalls that upon leaving, "the General said Good-bye and tapping Felix on the shoulder he said to his men, 'Be careful when you go to Laos. Check the wind when you drop defoliating chemicals.' Following this defoliation, we filed a claim for damages.. We never received anything in return. We found out that the Americans had given aid but the Vietnamese must have kept these for themselves."[251]



FELIX POILANE 19 July 1967 WITH MARINE PILOTS AND HIS PET DEER. Photo by Ray W. Stubbe

The Marine base continued to enlarge and Felix, who spoke excellent English, established good rapport with them. "The Marines were on our land and they had the kindness to assure us of their help for everything that we might need. ... When it was an absolute necessity the Marines placed at our disposal C-123 and C-130 airplanes to take several tons of coffee either to Dong Ha, Hue, or even DaNang. On the return trip we could also bring up rice and as many provisions as we needed. With our fellow planters we formed a group to avoid asking our neighbors for too much.... I add that the Vietnamese likewise profited from these round-trips for their provisions."[252]

On the other hand, life was far from easy for Felix Poilane. Many Marines assumed that the Poilanes must be paying taxes to the VC in order to survive. However, Bernard B. Fall, the Vietnam expert, notes there are three provinces in South Vietnam where the VC did not collect taxes: Quang Tri Province is one of the three.[253] As the American presence developed and ever changed with new personnel arriving on the scene, Felix was always uncomfortable; the American attitude toward him vacillated as much as any Vietnamese duplicity. Mrs. Carolyn Miller (of the missionary team at Khe Sanh for many years) noted:

> "He knew that he was under suspicion, and he never knew how he was going to be regarded by the Americans. One [Special Forces] team would come in and figure that he was essential to the prosperity of the economy, so they would help him every way they could, would set up these civic committees and he would be on it, and so forth, and the next group would come in and they would decide that he had to be working for the Communists, and so they wouldn't let him near the base and it was total hostility, total suspicion. It was hard."[254]

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[249] Poilane letter, 26 Jan 1971, cited.
[250] Madeleine Poilane, "Memories of Vietnam, 1957-1968," cited.
[251] *Ibid.*
[252] *Ibid.*
[253] Bernard B. Fall, "The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency," Naval War College: *Review* 17:8 (April, 1965).
[254] Comments of Mrs. Carolyn Miller to Ray Stubbe, 27 May 1986.

On 09 October 1967, Felix explained his difficulty to obtain clearance to fly out his coffee saying "they used to fly it out on Air America flights, but they no longer come here to the Khe Sanh airstrip. Then we could fly on 'space available,' but no longer. No consumer goods are arriving. The basis was said to be to cut down the black market."[255] The next day, while conversing with Major Bruce B. G. Clarke, the Army Advisor to the District Headquarters, Clarke simply said, "There's no hope for the Frenchman," in a tone not expressing empathy but rather something that gave him power and authority. He added that Colonel Padley, the Senior Officer Present and CO on the Khe Sanh Combat Base, had allowed some coffee shipments to be flown out, so Major Clarke reported this to the Marine Colonel's superiors. He added that he, Major Clarke, has ultimate authority in this area as MAVC representative and "nothing goes out unless over my signature."[256]

The arduous task of growing coffee was exacerbated by the fortunes of war. Marines regularly bulldozed his coffee trees as just so much obstruction to providing adequate fields of fire, little appreciating the great care expended in the development of coffee trees which require eight to ten years before producing good returns.[257] First, nurseries are made and plants are placed in aerated soil a little before the rainy season, usually in May. Vegetation grows fast in the hot, humid weather creating the necessity to dig up the young sprouts which sap the strength of the plants and cut the plants lest they grow too high. Three kinds of coffee were grown at Khe Sanh. Arabica coffee grows on a very small shrub, no more than two meters high. The plant is very fragile and was decimated on the Poilane plantation by a disease for which the Poilanes had no cure. Before the plants died, Arabica coffee trees produced 25 tons per year, harvested at the height f the monsoon season. With no sun to dry it, it was prepared by the "wet method" in which the beans were placed in large cement tanks filled with water until they swelled and fermented. The seeds were then placed dried in a drying room. A second coffee plant, Robusta, came from a small tree and was harvested the beginning of January and placed in a drying room.[258] Cheri coffee originated in Africa and is a tree with a rather large trunk and long branches with broad leaves with a beautiful dark green color. The tree may reach three or four meters in height and is well adapted to the red earth of Khe Sanh. Harvesting of Cheri coffee is done from the 15th f April to the end of September, and the Poilane plantation produced about 20 tons annually.[259]

Coffee production at Khe Sanh was no small matter for the economy of the area. Over 20 tons were annually produced, involving $250,000 GVN and 20 to 50 Bru workers were employed every day.[260]

Felix built a large straw hut in front of the Poilane house as a school for the Bru children taught by Madeleine. Marines delivered empty ammunition boxes which were transformed into tables and benches. Madeleine taught them their own language (in written form), French, and rudiments of the catechism, and Marines occasionally stopped by to bring "goodies for the children."[261]

On Saturday, 20 January, Mr. John Miller hurriedly stopped by to tell Madame Poilane: "You must leave. Things are going badly." Madeleine remembers crying as her world suddenly collapsed: "My life was so tied up with that plantation that I couldn't imagine leaving it."[262] Felix was absent at the time being with the workers who purchased rice and was surprised at the quantities of rice they bought. Then, on Sunday, 21 January 1968, when the siege of Khe Sanh was triggered, Madeleine and Felix were preparing to attend Mass in Khe Sanh with their two children, but soon decided against it. She recalls extensive bombing, the American relief force landing at the Old French Fort, and encountering a surviving Vietnamese soldier who has succeeded in reaching her house and hiding:

> "I did not quite know—this could have been a Viet Cong. He spoke to me and told me that one of his comrades, who had jumped from the helicopter, was seriously wounded and that he was hidden in the small house behind the house where the coffee was stored. I called my husband because I did not quite understand. Felix scolded me for having gone outside. He went towards the soldier and the latter explained to him what was happening. By hiding himself he followed the boy up to the small house and discovered the wounded man who had a shattered shoulder. He had wrapped his wound with towels and the coagulated blood indicated his condition. He was suffering a great deal. My husband decided then to give him a shot of penicillin and we gave them something to eat and drink. We recommended

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[255] Conversation with Felix Poilane, Monday, 09 October 1967. Diary of Ray W. Stubbe, entry for this date.
[256] Conversation with Major Bruce B.G. Clarke, 10 October 1967. Diary of Ray W. Stubbe, entry for this date.
[257] Madame Poilane, letter of 7 May 1971, cited.
[258] The drying room is large with woven grid work on which the coffee is placed. Long, dug-out passages covered with sheet iron distribute hear from a large wood-burning oven operating day and night. The coffee beans are stirred atwice a day. [Poilane, "Memories of Vietnam, 1957-1968" cited].
[259] Poilane, "Memories of Vietnam, 1957-1968," cited.
[260] Notebook of CPL Frank Iodice recording notes from a brief by Lt Preston, 26th Marines S-5. Stubbe, *Autobiography*, Part VII, Khe Sanh, Vietnam, before the Siege, notes for 17 Oct 1967.
[261] Madeleine Poilane, "Memories of Vietnam, 1957-1968," cited.
[262] Poilane letter of 6 July 1990, cited.

that they not go out from where they were because this was too dangerous. [Aircraft] continued to pass overhead and to drop their bombs. The helicopters went around constantly. We no longer could do anything for this poor, young soldier."[263]

Madeleine and Felix Poilane moved into their cellar and slept on improvised beds. On Monday, the 22nd, fighting continued in Khe Sanh village and the nuns succeeded in reaching the Poilane house, attempting to reassure them. Towards the end of the afternoon, M. Llinares reached the house for refuge while his son, Emmanuel, remained on his plantation. Felix drove on the combat base, turned the Vietnamese soldiers over to the Marines, and then returned. Upon his return, some Vietnamese offered 500 P for him to drive aged or infirm people to the base, and he made numerous trips as Madeleine remained at the house with the children who were screaming in their rooms at the noise from the bombing.

Felix said, "We're leaving." Madeleine recalls: "I couldn't believe it, but it was dangerous to remain there with the children. Everyone left the plantation. We were the last ones to leave, turning loose our dogs as well as our little bambi [deer]. We stopped the oil-operated refrigerator, locked the doors, and left in the Renault 2 CV for the base. Upon arriving there we saw complete disorder. ... Father Mauvais, who did not wish to leave, finally made up his mind to do so and arrived completely exhausted. He had to crawl in areas that were bare in order to arrive at the Marine base."[264]

Due to the confusion on Khe Sanh Combat Base, "Felix asked to return with his family back home to his coffee plantation. Colonel Lownds refused and proposed to bring us to Lang Vei. There we would be safe and protected. Our proposition to go back home was completely of our own because we did not want to stay at the base with these confusing conditions. ... We did not want to go to the Savannakhet area. We knew that if Khe Sanh was abandoned by the American troops it would be the end and the entire area occupied by the NVA. Therefore, it would also be for us the end of any hope of returning back to our plantation. It was absolutely clear for us. There was too much time elapsed since all this was prepared (since the Hills attack [April-May, 1967]. Felix was born in Khe Sanh and had a good knowledge of the Vietnamese people. ... The VC and NVA had to strike very strongly, like in Dien Bien Phu."[265]

In all the confusion on the base, as hundreds from Khe Sanh village arrived to be evacuated, Madeleine sought temporary refuge in a place containing some barrels. "Alas, they were tar barrels! I had tar everywhere on my legs. Fear was everywhere. The children huddled against me. In spite of all the dramatic aspect of the situation, a Belgian female journalist was there and she asked me questions—where I was from, what UI was doing at Khe Sanh, and so forth. She was not concerned about our situation, our suffering at leaving everything behind us. I cursed the profession of journalist!"[266]

The Poilane family then boarded a C-123 which brought them to DaNang. Very fortunately, they did not evacuate to Lang Vei which was subsequently overrun by tanks on 7 February 1968!

"We succeeded in leaving in a C-130 for DaNang, heavy-hgearted at leaving everything behind us we thought and leaving no doubt forever our plantation and everything that was our reason for living. ... At DaNang there was great calm. Nothing had yet happened.... On arriving they washed my legs and removed the tar from my skirt. ... Two days later we left for Hue."[267]

On the night of 31 January/01 February, as Tet commenced, Madeleine and her two children were aware of gunfire on all sides and pushed wardrobes against the windows for protection from shrapnel and put mattresses under the beds for sleeping. The children were very frightened. Gunfire was continuous. Eventually they were able to move safely to the School of the Sciences. Her 4 year-old son, Jean-Marie, cried during the continuous gunfire and shattering of glass. Sister Paul Xavier arrived with consecrated hosts in her large, black apron and gave communion to all, including Jean-Marie—his first communion. On 11 February, they boarded a boat, disembarked in DaNang, and moved into the School of the Sacred Heart where they had their first hot meal in a dozen days. They then learned that Father Poncet had been gunned down in Hue. Apparently a nun had been wounded and Father Poncet, along with Monsieur Llinares, went out to render aid. The priests spoke Vietnamese and were able to explain their presence in that part of the city still under control of the Viet Cong. Monsieur Llinares located a rack of tobacco and the priests were bringing the tabernacle when the Viet Cong fired on them in cold

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[263] Madeleine Poilane, "Memories of Vietnam, 1957-1968," cited.
[264] *Ibid.*
[265] Letter from Madame Poilane to Ray W. Stubbe, 21 June 1995. On quoting Madame Poilane's statement about moving to Lang Vei to Col Lownds, he responded: "No. I never thought it was safe out there. I know definitely that I would never transfer them to Lang Vei. I would never do that." [Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 10 June 1995). Perhaps it was one of his staff who made that suggestion. In all the turmoil of that chaotic situation, Madame Poilane's identification of Col Lownds may be suspect.
[266] Madeleine Poilane, "Memories of Vietnam, 1957-1968," cited.
[267] *Ibid.*

blood, killing Father Poncet and wounding Llinares in his wrist. Llinares was able to take refuge in a ditch along the highway. (This was 13 February 1968).[268]

When Khe Sanh was officially "liberated" in early April, Felix was determined to return to inspect his house. The Americans were very reluctant to grant him permission due to continuing danger. Neither did Madeleine want Felix to return; she even hid his passport. He informed her he would return with another passport, so she returned it to him. His departure was postponed until Holy Saturday, 13 April 1968. He was due to return that night, but didn't, and Madeleine, with a presentiment of his death, could not stop crying. On Easter Sunday evening, one of the sisters, Mother Angel, informed Madeleine that Felix had died at Khe Sanh, the only one out of 15 passengers to die, although an American sustained a skull fracture and died five days later. A funeral was conducted at the Cathedral of DaNang on 18 April with nine priests concelebrating. Felix, born and died at Khe Sanh, was not yet 37. Madeleine and her two children departed Vietnam on 22 June 1968.[269]

Upon her return to France, Madeleine Poilane was sick for a year and a half. A Vietnamese doctor in her area cared for her and she started work as secretary for the Mayor of Creteil, France, on the first of December 1969.[270]

In January, 1971, recalling her life at Khe Sanh, Madeleine Poilane writes: "What I think of Khe Sanh after having lived there ten years is very simple. In time of peace, it is an ideal region, a little paradise where living is good. ...I was very much engaged with the Montagnards, caring for them, helping them in any way and they repaid me a hundredfold. ... My children had their youngsters for playmates and we even had two little Montagnards at the house, a fourteen year old boy and a little eight year-old girl who lived with us continually. We had many enriching human contacts. They told me of their customs. I told them of God, trying to make them understand that we should have only one God who will reunite us. ...It was heart-rending for me to leave. I did not know it then. I thought that we were going to be refugees at the Marine camp. ... We intended to spend our lives there, to raise our children there, who adapted very well, having been born in the country. We had a double reason: the plantation and the development of our beloved Montagnards."[271]

In the summer of 1971, Madeleine Poilane sought reparations for war losses, not of the plantation (which belonged to her mother-in-law) but for possessions in her house, the car and one year of income from coffee sold, all of which remained at the house which was abandoned at the beginning of the siege on 21 January 1968. She noted that Vietnamese received their indemnities and wondered if something might be forthcoming from the American government.[272] Ray W. Stubbe wrote both Senator William Proxmire[273] and the US Department of State.[274] After both sought comments from directly responsible individuals, both responded, citing the Foreign Claims Act of 10 August 1956,[275] (Title 10, US Code, Section 2734) implemented by Chapter 10, Army Regulation 27-20 which excluded claims resulting directly or indirectly from an act of the US Armed Forces in combat, but that she might have a legitimate claim from the government of South Vietnam.[276]

In 1972, Madeleine Poilane wrote that Jean-Marie was nine years old and wanted to be a doctor; Francoise was 13 and in a private school. "Please pray for me. It is difficult to live alone. I don't have friends because Saturday and Sunday I stay at home. I don't like to go out for a walk. ... Jean-Marie is often sad; he thinks of his father and asks him to help."[277]

On 3 February 1990, Madeleine Poilane retired after working 20 years in the Creteil city hall and started work in a parish in southwest France for a priest in charge of two parishes, as well as teach catechism and handle the secretarial work. Her two children were now employed. Francoise was a receptionist at the County Court in Creteil while her husband worked in the Creteil mayor's office. They have a little girl, "Marine." Jean-Marie, now 27, is a computer engineer[278]

Madame Madeleine Poilane died on 6 January 2007. Her son wrote: "It was quite sudden. ...On 26 December, I went to her house to pick her for celebrating Christmas with my wife and her grandchildren, and I found her very weak, almost unable to walk. We took her to the hospital where they found a very advanced cancer. They told us that she had few weeks to live,

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[268] *Ibid.*
[269] *Ibid.*
[270] Madeleine Poilane, letter to Ray W. Stubbe, 18 December 1971.
[271] Madeleine Poilane, letter to Ray W. Stubbe, 26 Jan 1971, cited.
[272] Letter from Madeleine Poilane, 18 August 1971.
[273] Letter from Ray W. Stubbe to Senator William Proxmire, 30 September 1971.
[274] Letter from Ray W. Stubbe to Department of State, Attn: Mr. Fabian A Kwiatek,Assistant Legal Advisor for International Claims, 30 Sep 1971.
[275] Title 10 United States Code, Section 2734.
[276] Letter of LtCol (JAG) William R. Mullins, Chief Foreign Claims Division, 1 Nov 1971, and Letter from Senator William Proxmire, 17 December 1971, with appended letter from COL W. A. Rutledge, Adjutant General, MACV, 10 Dec 1971.
[277] Letter from Madeleine Poilane, 4 October 1972.
[278] Letter from Madeleine Poilane, 6 July 1990.

but her health degraded very fast and she died in the hospital 12 days after. ... One small consolation is that she did not suffer at all. She passed away peacefully. ... Unfortunately, after my father died tragically, everything changed for her and us also. After, life was not the same."[279]

MISSIONARIES

The first Protestant missionaries arrived in Vietnam in 1911 with little support or opposition from French officials. When American involvement in World War I seemed doubtful, all American missionaries in Vietnam were ordered to depart, neutrals being regarded little better than enemies.. When the war was over, they were freely admitted to Cochinchina and Tourane (DaNang) since it was a "foreign concession," but since the remainder of Indo-China was merely under the "protection" of France, a treaty of 1877 between Western countries and the Emperor of Annam, excluded them. The treaty granted Christian missionaries the right to propagate their faith, but noted this only applied to Roman Catholics since they were regarded as the only Christians. Additionally, the Emperor and his ministers were "against the teachings of the Protestant doctrines to their people."[280]

Christian missionaries first arrived at Khe Sanh in 1931, but unable to adapt, departed.[281] From the 1940s, religious services for Roman Catholics were available from priests traveling from Hue.[282] On 3 March 1964, Father Poncet of the Fathers of Foreign Missions from Paris was named rector of Khe Sanh. Frequently seen by Marines in his blue trousers and riding a bicycle,[283] he was killed in the middle of the street by Viet Cong on 13 February 1968 in Hue during the Tet Offensive.

A Protestant Vietnamese missionary to the Bru, Pastor Bui Tan Loc, a graduate of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Bible School, first arrived at Khe Sanh before 1955 but, without adequate preparations, departed and then returned in 1958, building a very nice church building on the eastern edge of Khe Sanh village as well as a school for Bru children. Rev. Loc proudly exhibited his children to visitors, having them sing "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know" in Bru, English, and Vietnamese. Since the latter is a tonal language, the meaning of the words determined by the tone of the voice, the words sung to the Western hymn tune made everything entirely meaningless in Vietnamese. It did sound, however, quaintly and warmly "nice" to visitors who, warmly smiling back to him and the children also did not understand the words or appreciate the confusion the children must have experienced. Pastor Loc's wife had the blackened teeth of a beetle nut user.[284] A little over a year later, following the destruction of Khe Sanh village by massive B-52 strikes[285] destroying all his work there, Pastor Loc asked for a Vietnamese church and was assigned the church at Hoi An. After only a few months there, he experienced emotional issues from the battle and retired in DaNang.[286]

John and Carolyn Miller first met each other at Houghton College in New York where Carolyn's father was President. John arrived in Vietnam in 1959,[287] while Carolyn endured several weeks in a kind of "boot camp" in Ixtapa, Mexico, for missionary translators destined for primitive tribes where they practiced carpentry, workings of engines and appliances, and other "pioneer living such as gardening, butchering, and haircutting ... everything from injections to dentistry, to tropical diseases, and many other subjects." Carolyn planned to meet John, already in Saigon, be married, and then commence their work at Khe Sanh.[288] In April, 1960, eighteen prominent leaders presented President Diem with a manifesto to promote democracy and guarantee civil rights which he refused to sign. The following November, eighteen signers of the manifesto supported an coup, which was unsuccessful. As a result, President Diem's government refused entrance visas due to the unsettled

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[279] Letter from Jean Marie Poilane, 21 February 2007.

[280] Franck, Harry A., *East of Siam, Ramblings in the five divisions of French Indo-China*. New York: The Century Co., 1926, pp. 118-119. Franck notes that Annamese were converted to Catholicism by whole villages, an inducement being that they were permitted to retain their ancestor worship. On the other hand, Protestant missionaries permitted converts to retain all the wives they possessed at conversion provided they didn't add to them. [*Ibid.*, pp. 119-120]. See also: Hefley, James C., *By Life or by Death*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969, p. 18.

[281] Comments of Mr. John Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 26 Aug 1967.

[282] *Ibid.*

[283] Abandoned at Khe Sanh Combat Base and later used by Chaplain Walter Driscoll during the siege.

[284] Diary of Ray W. Stubbe, entry for 21 Sep 1967.

[285] Khe Sanh village was totally destroyed on 27 February 1968 (probably due to the prescience of Captain Harry Baig in view of the regimental-size assault on Khe Sanh Combat Base 19 Feb/01 March), in target box XD852375 – XD867389 – XD 844373 – XD859390. [COMUSMACV 261727Z/Feb68, 260643Z/Feb68, and 260649Z/Feb68, Arc Light Strike, in III MAF COC Journal and File 26/27 Feb 68, #276, 278, and 279, respectively].

[286] Letter of John and Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 27 January 1971.

[287] "Missionary Team Devotes Life to Teaching Montagnard Tribe," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:39 (29 Sep 1967).

[288] Letter of Carolyn Miller to "Dear Praying Friends," March, 1961.

situation. Carolyn's plans were temporarily halted until it was suggested that she enter South Vietnam as a visitor, then be married, and then apply for residence as John's wife. It worked.[289] They were married on Friday, 28 July 1961 in a French reformed church in Saigon, and following a two-week honeymoon at Nha Trang and the mountain resort of Dalat, they returned to Saigon to prepare to begin their translation work.[290] During November, 1961, John and Carolyn were studying in Hue in preparation for their move to Khe Sanh to work with the Bru tribe. Approximately 50,000 Bru lived within a thirty-mile radius of Khe Sanh.[291] An estimated 15,000 Bru lived in the immediate Khe Sanh area..[292] John was fortunate to study "with the only speaker of the Bru language that we know of here in the city of Hue."[293] (Bru referred to the town of Khe Sanh as "Saran.")[294]

In January, 1962, the Millers arrived at Khe Sanh, and first moved into a house in the village of Lang Bu,[295] a Bru village west of Khe Sanh village and east of Lang Vei, along Route 9. Lang Bu was chosen since they were told they were required to be close to the District Headquarters for security reasons and were required to be near Route 9. Also, Pastor Loc had visited several of the villages and there were already some Christian believers in Lang Bu.[296] Vegetables (and occasionally meat) was purchased at the small market in Khe Sanh. Basic supplies like rice, flour, and oil were brought up from Hue. They bathed in a nearby river at the foot of the hill near Bu and dug an out-house "to the great amazement of people in our village who thought that that was a terribly dirty way of taking care of oneself."[297] Although the Bru knew no English and the Millers were unfamiliar with Bru, fortunately a few of the Bru knew a little Vietnamese and they were able to communicate. When they first arrived at Lang Bu, the entire village came out to greet them in typical Bru hospitality and helpfulness, and carry all their wooden barrels of books, furnishings, and clothing. John Miller discussed his needs with the village elders, and one, Khoi No, said he'd sell his house to them for $60.00. John offered $30.00, feeling everyone in this part of the world bargains for prices. "We thought he was trying to bargain with us, so we offered $30.00. He said, 'Well, if that's what you want to pay–.' We later found out he was offering a very fair price." Khoi No then moved temporarily in with his sister and eventually built another house.[298] Fairly soon after they arrived, The Bru suspected strange people in the village one night and sent out a patrol. "The next day they told us it was alright because they had found out what the problem was: it was ghosts! Somehow that wasn't all that reassuring to us!"[299]

Despite the overwhelming beauty and apparent peace, tensions of the war were always present. While the Millers were temporarily away from Khe Sanh, around midnight of 25 March 1964, the Communists arrived and tossed their household goods on the ground and informed the Bru they were about to burn the Millers' house. The Bru persuaded them not to burn the house because it was in their village of straw-thatched roofs, so they departed. The Bru them moved everything back into their house, except for a few things the soldiers kept.[300]

The difficulty of living at Khe Sanh was not only living in the midst of a very primitive culture where the language was totally foreign; dangers from Communists were always present. Like the monsoons of the area, tensions would come and go. One time, the village chief at Bu came to the Millers, drunk. He has been sleeping in various houses, not his own, because as a village official, he was a likely target for threats, torture, or assassination. So he slept one night in one house, another house the next night, and so on. Now, drunk, he blurted out that he was no longer afraid; the Communists, he said, were not after him at all; they were after John Miller! After that, the District Chief in Khe Sanh village asked the Millers not to sleep in Bu. Rev. Loc had a Bru-style house (straw thatched roof) on his church grounds in Khe Sanh village which became the nighttime residence of the Millers. During the day, they were in Bu.

The Millers departed Khe Sanh then and Carolyn gave birth (on 14 May) to their son, Gordon, at Saigon, while John completed a translation of the Gospel of Mark into Bru as well as portions containing the Christmas story and the story of the prodigal son and a series of seventeen reading primers.[301]

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289 Hefley, *op cit.*, p. 40.
290 John and Carolyn Miller, letter of September, 1961.
291 III MAF, Personal Response Project: *Personal Response News and Notes*, 1 June 1967, p. 1.
292 John and Carolyn Miller, *English-Brou Language Familiarization Manual*, March, 1967, p. 1.
293 Letter from John and Carolyn Miller, November, 1961.
294 Conversation with John and Carolyn Miller, 11 May 1990.
295 Conversation with John and Carolyn Miller, 27 May 1986.
296 Comments of John and Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 16 December 1967 and 27 May 1986.
297 Conversation with Carolyn Miller, 28 May 1996.
298 Comments of John and Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 16 Dec 1967 and 28 May 1986.
299 Comments of Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 11 May 1990.
300 Letter from Gene Zimmerman, 15 May 1964. Conversation with John and Carolyn Miller, 27 May 1986.
301 Letter from John and Carolyn Miller, September, 1964.

After being away from Khe Sanh for about six months, they returned and again located on Pastor Loc's property. The District Chief gave them a dozen young men to prepare as teachers, and John continued his work on translation.

Carolyn was preparing for an afternoon session of teaching when an American jeep arrived informing them that the Consulate in Hue was sending up a plane to Khe Sanh to whisk them away in an hour! The U.S. bombed North Vietnam. All Americans were to be taken to Hong Kong. The plane arrived. The Millers gathered with the group of Americans in Hue when somebody from the Christian Missionary Alliance (CMA) told them: "Since you're not government employees, you don't have to go if you don't want to go." After checking with the Wycliffe director in Saigon, they temporarily located at Saigon. It was assumed the North Vietnamese would pour across the DMZ. When they didn't, John returned to Khe Sanh.
Since they were due for a furlough anyway, they travelled to Saigon and from there, to the States.[302]

While away from Khe Sanh, the literacy work was continued by Pat Bonnell, Nancy Costello, and Eugenia Johnston of Wycliffe who also resided in Pastor Loc's "guest house." The "guest house" was enlarged to include a porch and a place for very sick people to remain overnight. Pat Bonnell, a nurse, ran a clinic every day including Sundays, while Eugenia Johnston taught at a little school with a dormitory for the children who then returned home on weekends. Average attendance for the school was 55 Bru children, however a problem was that girls were needed at home to manage other children and do chores.[303] Following a Christmas program, a medic team from the Special Forces on Khe Sanh base, arrived with the news that Khe Sanh village was about to be hit and they couldn't remain at their house. They went to the Khe Sanh Special Forces camp (then on the base), and on 3 January 1966, Communist forces shelled the base during evening formation with 120mm mortars (the first time this large caliber weapon was used by them in Vietnam) causing 13 KIA and 50-60 WIA. Pat Bonnell aided in the medical treatment of many very seriously wounded Special Forces soldiers.[304]

After about a year's absence, the Millers returned to Vietnam, arriving in Saigon on 13 March 1967 to resume their work among the Bru, translating Vietnamese textbooks into Bru, training of Bru teachers to teach in the villages, and continue translation of the Bible. They returned to the house on Rev. Loc's property and made arrangements to move into a new house to serve as their residence and a training center.[305] Their son, Nathan Andrew, was born August first in DaNang, and by November, 1967, they had moved into their new house,[306] an old French-constructed house that had been destroyed by the Viet Minh some 20 years earlier.. As of 01 April 1967, there was no roof, doors, or woodwork and it was a ruin. It was the former home of Felix Poilane's aunt.

> "When the French built, they really built! All the walls were about three feet thick of concrete, even the interior walls. The Viet Minh, who wanted to destroy everything French, probably did not think it worth the effort to destroy all the walls!"[307]

The Commanding Officer of the newly-forming SOG [Studies and Observations Group] unit, Major Fred Patton, took an interest in refurbishing the house for the Millers. Although told it couldn't be done, he persisted, and after much effort, time, and money, the project was gradually completed. After the Marines arrived[308] additional eager hands participated in the effort. The battalion chaplain, David Meschke,[309] conducted a fund drive to provide shutters, drapery, and plumbing and the Millers moved into their new home on 15 May 1967.[310]

> "During the first week of June [1967], the men of 1/26 contributed $635 in a command approved special drive known as 'PROJECT MISSION HOME.'" They gathered 74,930 piaster (converted at rate of 118 piaster per dollar)"for use in renovating, modernizing, and painting their present home."
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> "During the first week in July the men of 1/26 will be contributing to another command approved special drive known as "PROJECT MISSION TYPEWRITER." This fund will be similarly converted into piaster and given to the Millers to be

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[302] Comments of Carolyn Miller to Ray W Stubbe, 28 May 1986.
[303] Comments by Nancy Costello and Pat Bonnell at Camp Tien Sha, DaNang, Vietnam, 10 December 1968.
[304] Conversation with Pat Bonnell, 12 June 1990. For the attack, *vide*: Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, pp. 123, 196, 198; CPO Mick Taylor, "Tigerhound O1E's 'hunt' for Marines," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:28 (14 Jul 67; History of 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron, Jan-Mar 68, Tab T, 20th TASS, in Vol. II of Quarterly History, 504th Tactical Air Support Group, Jan-Mar 68, App 6, Subordinate Unit Histories.
[305] Letter from John and Carolyn Miller, April, 1967.
[306] Letter from John and Carolyn Miller, November, 1967.
[307] Comments by John and Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 17 December 1967 and comments of John Miller, 05 January 1968..
[308] BN 1/3 arrived 29/30 September 1966.
[309] Chaplain of 1/26 until July, 1967. Lead elements of 26th Marines arrived at Khe Sanh 11 May, following the Battle of the Hills.
[310] Comments of Mr. John Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 5 January 1968.

used for the purchase of equipment for the Wycliffe literacy effort, particularly for a specially made typewriter with Bru diacritics added to the keyboard.."[311]

A genuine goodness and truth radiated in the presence of the Millers, one that might be encountered once in a lifetime. Major Harper L. Bohr, Jr., the 26th Marines regimental S-2 in late 1967, once remarked, "If Jesus Christ were to be walking on earth today, I could see Him as John Miller."[312] The Miller home was, in fact, a spiritual oasis, sometimes visited by Marines and Special Forces soldiers. Many became deeply impressed by their presence, commitment, work, and what they reflected.

Their work, like that of the Wycliffe translators generally,[313] was truly amazing, perhaps reflecting in action what Christianity in its truest form is really meant to be. First, they listened before speaking. Wycliffe translators live in a tribal village, listening to the sounds of the language. There are many odd sounds not familiar to American ears—vowels, clicks, guttural grunts, and nasal sounds. Bru is a complex language with 62 sounds that included 40 vowels.[314] Not living in comfort in one place and occasionally "visiting" the people (as was the case in many early missionaries), they shared in the life of the primitive tribal people they were to serve.

After listening, they form a vocabulary and decide on an appropriate written form. As John Miller translated the Bible into their tribal tongue, Carolyn Miller formed classes to teach young Bru to read their language, not merely speak it, making the Bru literate for the first time in their cultural history. To assist in her effort, some Bru primers were prepared for the children, illustrated by Miss Eugenia Johnson.

One Bru man was chosen to test the Bible translation, to determine if it meant what was intended. The message must have meaning in terms of what the reader understands, not simply what one wants to day. (Communication is what is heard, not what is said). These assistants were initially and unfortunately called "informants," a title that created instant suspicion of intrigue and spy nets in a war area! Their first helper was "Paoq" (pronounced "Pa-Ayo" with a guttural stop "Q")[315]. The entire process, painstakingly slow, might require some fifteen years or so of work. After translating, the translator team then moves to another tribe. There is no intention of making people dependent on them or creating an "empire." for their own future security and sense of accomplishment. There is only forward movement. Also, there is no salary, only support rendered by those who catch the vision and are willing to assist and support their work. One Marine, shocked at seeing "round eyes"[316] voluntarily here—especially with their children blurted out: "You actually live here—and with your family!?" Mr. Miller replied, "The love of Christ constraineth us"[317]—probably using a word the Marine didn't understand, but he did understand the communication by the Millers' very presence.

The Bru were always willing to help, tell the Millers things they needed to know, and help them say things in Bru.

> "We had a young fellow that the Vietnamese pastor in Khe Sanh [Loc] had arranged to come and teach us, but he was there only a very short time, I think only a week, and left. And we didn't know until later, but he came from an area south of there, down by the river, and apparently the Communists had sent word to him not to teach us, but to get back home or something would happen to his family. So he took off.
>
> "We didn't know that until much later. But what happened was the man that he was staying with, in the village, apparently felt some responsibility when the kid took off, and so he started coming. And he came each morning for awhile and would help us to learn. We recorded him telling things on the tape recorder and then we would transcribe it and try to learn something of the grammatical patterns.[318]

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[311] Turn-over file of Chaplain David L. Meschke, 4 July 1967.

[312] Comments of 16 Dec 1967.

[313] Wycliffe is named after John Wycliffe who first translated the Bible into English in the 14th Century. John Wycliffe received his bachelor's degree from Oxford University in 1370 and his doctorate in theology two years later. He regarded the Bible as the only authority for an understanding of God. His effort to translate the Bible from Latin into English and make the Bible readable to every Englishman led to an attack by those who viewed this as an effort to diminish their positions of authority and power. He was denounced by the Pope and lost his teaching position at oxford and was forbidden to preach. He reached the height of his national influence in 1376, completed the translation between 1380 and 1382, and died of a stroke in 1384. As a final condemnation, his remains were exhumed in 1428 and thrown into the river that ran through his hometown. [Mark L. Anderson, "The Spirit of 1376," Wycliffe Bible Translators: *In Other Words*, September 1976, pp. 1-2.

[314] Hefley, *By Life or by Death*, cited, p. 58.

[315] Conversation with John and Carolyn Miller, 11 May 1990.

[316] Marine slang in Vietnam for Americans and westerners generally as opposed to "slant eyes," referring to Vietnamese.

[317] 2 Cor. 5.14. "Constrain" is the King James Version word. Modern translations use: "controls" (English Standard Version, Revised Standard Version) and "urge" (New Revised Standard Version). Comment made at dedication of chapel at 3rd Shore Party Battalion, Quang Tri, Vietnam, 16 June 1968..

[318] Comments of Mrs. Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 28 May 1986.



JOHN AND CAROLYN MILLER AND CHILDREN INTERVIEWED
BY SHACKNEY OF CBS AT THEIR HOME IN KHE SANH
23 Oct 1967. Photo by Ray W. Stubbe

In November, 1967, John Miller was working with his Bru helper, Poaq Ayooq, on the book of Acts and a group of Bru young men began Thursday evening Bible studies at the Miller house.[319]

On the bright and sunny Friday, 5 January 1968, Colonel Lownds informed Mr. Miller that he should temporarily leave Khe Sanh for his own safety until the situation is safer, but to do this in such a manner that he doesn't create a panic (and probably so that his departure doesn't indicate to the enemy that we were aware the enemy was about to attack!). Mr. Miller mentioned there was a Bible conference he is supposed to attend, so his departure would not signal any unusual situation.[320] Also on 5 January 1968, an infantry patrol from Company K/3/26 found two caves at XD803452 containing 150 pots, 17 lids, 40 trays of copper and brass and two ceremonial swords.[321] After being informed these belonged to the Bru and that all items must be returned under penalty of court-martial, all disappeared. The Bru, evidently, had temporarily secreted these items during their temporary resettlement as part of the Strategic Hamlet program in the early 1960s in which they moved from the hills to several new villages built along Route 9 near Khe Sanh Combat Base. The Bru "characteristically live in permanent villages where they build their houses by family units,"[322] and regarded their present villages as only temporary and intended to return to their original villages. Before resettlement in the Strategic Hamlet program, "The Bru lived in very closely-knit villages, very close together. The houses were in a small area, and then they would walk to their fields which would be spread quite some distances. Each family had a permanent field in which they planted."[323]

John Miller returned to Khe Sanh Combat Base on Saturday, 20 January, just hours before it was to be attached—much to the chagrin of Colonel Lownds, and picked up his land rover on the base and drove it into Khe Sanh village where he picked up his translation helper, Mando, and also went to the District Headquarters to pick up his mail. "They were quite up-tight there. The bombing runs had already started and the earth was shaking."[324] Moving with haste, John was unable to retrieve any other personal belongings, drove his land rover back to the combat base, and departed with his helper. His land rover was driven from the combat base at the conclusion of the siege when 1/26 moved down Route 9 to Quang Tri, arriving Monday, 22 April 1968. "Although it has a few shrapnel holes, it is apparently still OK. The Marine driving it didn't know it was the Miller's and was going to keep it for himself. They were pretty proud of it. The G-5 staff later rescued it.[325] Carolyn recalls, "All the windows were out and it had shrapnel holes all through the body of it."[326]

While in DaNang in January, 1970, the Millers continued to work on Bru educational materials and also translate some scripture portions. "At the moment Chuop and I are going over the book of Genesis for the last time before typing a final draft."[327] They noted that the Bru continued to suffer. "The people are having a difficult time obtaining enough food and basic necessities. ... They still talk much of returning to their homes in the Khe Sanh area from which they came two years ago, but the prospects for this look rather dim to say the least. And since there are 'no more refugees' (on paper) in Quang Tri

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[319] Letter from John and Carolyn Miller, November, 1967.
[320] Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for Friday, 05 January 1968.
[321] 26 Marines SITREP #263, 051330Z/Jan68.
[322] John and Carolyn Miller, *English – Brou Language Familiarization Manual*, March, 1967, p. 1.
[323] Conversation with Carolyn Miller, 28 May 1986.
[324] Comments of John Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 03 June 1990.
[325] Ray W. Stubbe, diary entry for 22 April 1968.
[326] Comments of Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 03 June 1990.
[327] Letter from John and Carolyn Miller, January, 1970.

Province, there is no help available from the Refugee Service. The only thing that keeps the people going is the fact that there are so many men serving in some sort of military outfit. This is about the only source of income for the Bru."[328]

In early 1972, just a few weeks before the North Vietnamese push through I Corps, John and Carolyn Miller completed translating the New Testament into Bru and travelled to Nha Trang to check it before leaving on furlough. Not only was the New Testament translated, many Bru for the first time began to burn their ancestral fetishes. "Other forms of demon worship had been given up earlier, but the powerful force of the ancestral fetishes still bound many."[329] Dramatic progress had been made during the previous five years:

> "..we have seen the beginning of a government sponsored program to teach the Bru to read and write their own language. We have seen the first Bru to graduate from a government normal school. We have seen the first Bru students attend the Bible School sponsored by the Protestant Church of Viet Nam. We have seen the first Bru serving as pastors among their own people. Now, by the Lord's help, we have seen the completion of the initial translation of the Bru New Testament."[330]

In the summer of 1972, the Millers, now at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, had the book of Romans ready for printing and were anxious to complete it since Miss Eugenia Johnson and Miss Pat Bonnell were due to live with the Bru in their new resettlement area 40 kilometers from Banmethuot. They had not heard anything about the 5000 or more Bru people who were overrun by the North Vietnamese in late March of 1972, all living at the time in Quang Tri Province.[331]

By January, 1975, a "committee check" on the Bru New Testament had been completed, and the Millers were now performing a "concordance check" to note every occurrence of key Greek terms against their translation.[332]

CAPTURE OF THE MILLERS

John and Carolyn Miller and their 5-year-old daughter, Lu Anne, were at an American embassy official's home in Ban Me Thuot, a provincial capital, when captured by North Vietnamese forces along with five Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries.[333] The last contact with them was 10 March 1975. Their other three children, Marjorie, Gordon, and Nathan, were safely in school in Saigon.[334]

They were released 30 October 1975 after seven months of harrowing imprisonment and flown from Hanoi to Bangkok, Thailand aboard a United Nations chartered flight.[335]. It was only after they arrived at Bangkok that they learned that their other three children had been flown out of Vietnam to live with Carolyn's parents, Dr. and Mrs. Stephen Payne.[336] News reports indicated their captivity was far worse than originally reported. "For much of their imprisonment they were kept 'under utterly uncivilized, primitive and bare survival conditions ... strange and contrary to international law.'" They were forced to sleep on wet ground under leaky huts and deprived of privacy much of the time. At one camp, 1,000 prisoners had only one latrine with three holes.[337]

During their imprisonment, Le Anne became so ill, her recovery was uncertain. There was no medicine in the camp. A Vietnamese prisoner in the camp, however, was able to give them some tetracycline tablets and Lu Anne recovered.[338] While in Communist hands, several Vietnamese tribal people visited the prison to see their relatives, and John was able to copy some portions of his translation of the New Testament epistles into Bru and give them to these visitors for those in Bru villages. Carolyn was especially comforted by the book of I Peter, especially 1 Peter 3.13-15.[339] Unfortunately, when released, the manuscripts of their translations into Bru were retained by the Communists.

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328 *Ibid.*

329 "Flee!" Wycliffe Bible Translators: *Translation*, July-September, 1972.

330 Letter from John and Carolyn Miller, April, 1972.

331 Letter from the Millers, 16 July 1972.

332 Letter from John and Carolyn Miller, 8 Jan 1975.

333 "Missionaries Missing After Viet Attacks," North San Diego *Blade Tribune*, 23 March 1975, p. 14. *Letter* of Richard S. Pittman, Director for Asia Wycliffe Bible Translators

334 "Vietnam Work Shifted to Philippines, Millers Reported Alive in Ban Me Thuot, Wycliffe Bible Translators: *Other Words*, June, 1975, p. 1.

335 "Millers Home!!!" Wycliffe Bible Translators: *In Other Words*, December, 1975, p. 1

336 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

337 "Saigon Missionaries Tell of Mistreatment," Los Angeles *Times*, 10 November 1975.

338 "The 232 Days," Wycliffe Bible Translators: *In Other Words*, January, 1976, pp. 1-2.

339 "Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always

SUBSEQUENT YEARS

After living in Houghton, New York,[340] the year of 1976, the Millers departed on 10 July 1977 for the Philippines in order to complete the Bru New Testament. On 20 March 1981 a small parcel arrived in the mail marked "Book" and stamped "NV" (no value). It was the Bru New Testament in print. How ironic, they thought, to be stamped "No Value!"

> "No one could ever total up all that went into the production of it in terms of the human effort and sacrifice of those who gave of themselves to teach us their language, to befriend us, and to struggle with us thru every stage of its preparation despite the heartache and suffering of living in wartime conditions. Nor could such a value be put on the concern, sacrifice, and faithfulness of so many partners from many places in the USA, Canada, and other parts of the world, without whose participation it would have never happened either."[341]

In a letter written from Houghton, New York in December, 1986, the Millers wrote of the spirit of the Bru Christians:

> "In recent news from Bru friends in Laos we learn that one of our closest friends and colleagues among the Bru is very ill. Pa-ayo (i.e., the father of love) was the first Bru to show any serious interest in learning to read and write Bru. He became our first translation helper as we worked together to translate the book of Mark. Pa-ayo had believed in the Lord Jesus before we arrived in Bru country. He was truly a 'child' in the faith, but over the years we could see the Word of God doing its work in his heart. He became a firm believer and a leader among the Christians, though as far as we know he never preached a sermon nor held any official church position. The Lord tested and tried him in many ways. One of the early tests was whether or not he would adhere to the prescribed Bru practice of placating clan spirits. Pa-ayo decided he could no longer do this and still honor the Lord. Yet to go against the established system would result in his being expelled from his clan. But the Lord honored his commitment by later bringing the entire clan to trust in Himself.
>
> "When we were discussing the printing of the Bru New Testament with a group of Bru leaders, Pa-ayo said, 'Print it as small as possible.' Knowing that Pa-ayo already had eye problems and couldn't read small print well, we wondered why he would make such a request. He replied, 'I know it would be hard for me and other older people to read, but I'm thinking of my children. If it's small, it will be easier to hide and easier to carry if we have to flee from place to place.'
>
> "He was also concerned that Bru children learn to read and write Bru. He understood the value of his and other Bru children learning to read and write the national language.. He expressed this in one of the last letters we received from him, in which he asked for Bru literacy materials so he could teach his own grandchildren how to read and write Bru...."[342]

The 1990s brought renewed persecution of Bru Christians:

> "As to myself, in this country they forbid me to do the work of the Lord. With their mouths they say it is all right to believe, but if there are those who truly believe the Lord, certainly they become angry immediately. For example, in my village here, before there were only Bru people who believed. But still they persecuted them. As for me, they summoned me and threatened me repeatedly. More than 100 times they summoned and interrogated me....
>
> "They would take our Bibles and Hymnbooks. Many times I went to ask for their return but they never returned them. When I saw that, thanks to God's suggestion, we would tear out one sheet from the Word of God and one sheet from hymn book and this I would carry in the pocket of my trousers. If I met friends from the group of believers, whatever place we met, we would hold a meeting. If the authorities came on us, they would only get that one sheet ... There were three villages that when the authorities pressured them, they gave up their salvation. ... It was very sad.
>
> "In my village there are both Bru and Raday. In Nov 1990 there were 2 people who were new believers who came to meet in my house. Then the 2 became 3, and the 3 became 5. They were praying to the Lord that He would call more. Then there were 11, then 17, then 20 then 42, then 70. Then despite extreme persecutions there were 90 who believed in the Lord. Then 120, then 140, then 170 until today there are 180. So the authorities are very angry."[343]

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being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, (ESV)

[340] Letter of John and Carolyn Miller, January, 1977.

[341] Letter of John and Carolyn Miller, April, 1981.

[342] Letter of John and Carolyn Miller, 4 December 1986.

[343] Letter from Mpoaq Muai included in letter from John and Carolyn Miller which included several letters received in September, 1991.

By 1993, the Millers could report a growing desire among the Bru to have the Old Testament translated in their language, an "awesome task," and that half a dozen Bru young people are now studying at the university level in Viet Nam.[344] Having transcribed their Bru New Testament into Thai script facilitated local Bru living in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand to compare words and phrases which were the same and which differed in order to produce a translation suitable for them.[345] Persecution of Bru Christians in the area reminds one of the truth of the old adage, "the blood of the martyrs is the birth of the Church." The Millers write:

> "Earlier this month we had the privilege of meeting with a church leader who lives near the Bru and knows them well. He told us of six Bru families who had become believers. When they refused to continue to engage in spirit placation as prescribed by their animistic beliefs, they were reported to provincial authorities for the crime of disrupting the well-being and stability of the village. The men held firm to their faith and as a result were imprisoned. Our friend told us with a smile, 'Six believers went into prison, eight came out.'"[346]

In Vietnam (presumably in the Khe Sanh area):

> "We found that earlier reports of a change of heart on the part of officials from the areas where they live were unfounded. Nine families of believers in one Bru village have had to leave the village and set up homes in a jungle area. Two of our visitors had gone to try to help them. They reported that even while they were there another person expressed the desire to believe and follow the Lord. They cautioned him, 'Don't you know you will be expelled from the village if you take this step?' 'Yes, I know,' he replied, 'but I want to believe anyway.' ... Now the chief of his village wants all eighteen families of believers in t hat village to leave. The national church is being told that they are to have nothing to do with the Bru believers. .. they are told, 'This has nothing to do with you.' Yet seven believers from the national church were also arrested recently for holding an 'unauthorized' meeting at Christmas.[347]

THE BROU

Four days into the siege at Khe Sanh, the base was a shambles, surrounded by tens of thousands of well-trained and experienced North Vietnamese soldiers. Marine reconnaissance teams patrolling the surrounding area, caught off base as the enemy shelling began on 21 January 1968, included team FROSTBURG patrolling near Hill 222 close to the abandoned Brou villages of Lang Kat (1) and (2) south of Route 9 near the former 1/26 bridge site. They were scheduled to return to the base on the 21st of January, but had to remain in the bush until the 24th as they continued to patrol the area north of Route 9, spotting numerous NVA with packs moving on Route 9. During the last days of their patrol, they passed through some Brou villages where the Brou offered them sanctuary until they were finally able to be evacuated.[348] Marines and Special Forces soldiers who came into contact with the Brou regarded them as brothers.



BROU MEN CARVING CROSSBOWS IN TUM PLANG VILLAGE, KHE SANH, 26 SEPTEMBER 1967. OFFICIAL USMC PHOTO A800107 by Ray W. Stubbe

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344 Letter of John and Carolyn Miller, 18 February 1993.
345 Latter from John and Carolyn Miller, November, 1993.
346 Letter from John and Carolyn Miller, 21 October 1997.
347 Letter from John and Carolyn Miller, 21 January 1999.
348 Comments of John M. Tighe on 9 June 1968. Tighe was the one who put out the air panel to guide the helicopters, a risky act wince the NVA could well have spotted him in the open. Then, as the choppers approached, one of the Marines in the patrol fired, an action that usually cases the helicopters to depart or fire back! Daniel F. Velarde hit the Marine and knocked him out. He later claimed he thought he had seen something.

According to a census of 15 July 1967, there were 8,930 Brou living within 8,000 meters along Route 9.[349] According to a census of 31 December 1967, MACV listed the population of the area of Khe Sanh at 10,195 civilians.[350] The Bronze Star Medal file for Capt Henry Lebaron Preston[351] indicates 21,500 indigenous persons in the Huong Hoa District in January, 1968.[352] The Brou, unlike some of the other 31 Montagnard tribes in South Viet Nam had no political aspirations for autonomy or desire for revolt. They had no central political authority or organization.[353]

The approximately 1200 Vietnamese in the Khe Sanh area were centered in Khe Sanh village, about 2 ½ miles directly south of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, along the main east-west road in northern South Vietnam, National Route 9 (QL-9). The district town of Huong Hoa had been abandoned in the early 1960s; Khe Sanh village was also referred after this as Huong Hoa. The Brou were originally scattered throughout an area extending into Laos and North Vietnam, inhabiting various independent villages that did not have much to do with each other except through language or special events like an important wedding. They lived in houses closely clustered together and worked fields distant from their huts. Each family had a permanent field where they planted their fruit trees, coffee trees, or crops. Fields shifted from year to year, but not the villages. They were not nomadic.[354]

Prior to 1897, when they were pacified by the French, Brou lived in isolated villages in the mountains.[355] Madame Madeleine Poilane notes that when her father-in-law, Eugene, first came to Khe Sanh, the Brou were quite savage and when he drove the first vehicle on the road, the Brou were terrified.[356] Another Montagnard tribe, the Katu (near DaNang) remained quite savage, practicing human sacrifice. The Brou, however, had become quite friendly. One missionary attributes the difference to French influence, especially the Poilane's: the Katu aggressively resisted French encroachment into their areas. One finds old French coins among the Brou, but not among the Katu.[357] By 1965, the Brou had, for the most part, been resettled in various newly formed villages located in a 3-mile strip on each side of Route 9[358] for their own security from molestation by the North Vietnamese who impressed them into forced labor. Capt Allen B. Imes, the Commanding Officer of Detachment A-728 at the Special Forces Camp on the Khe Sanh airstrip,[359] recalls:

> "..there were 27/28 (?) villages that were forced to relocate along Highway 9. They were not happy about it nor did they try to reestablish villages comparable to those they left behind. I guess they considered them as temporary villages. I think it was a part of the Strategic Hamlet Program. The Vietnamese gov attempted to convince them that they were doing it to protect them. We went to some but I'm sure only a few out of all of them. .. On one patrol we found the American missionaries [John and Carolyn Miller in the village of Bu] and their child in one of the villages furthest away from Khe Sanh. We gave them all kinds of stuff to help make their life a little easier.. ... I remember some of the Yards would go to their old locations and farm their land but I don't ever remember seeing any of the old villages. I think the attitude was they were biding their time..."[360]

The new Brou villages (along with the meaning of their names):[361]

East of the road leading to Khe Sanh airstrip:

Poong potato

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[349] Briefing by Lt Preston, S-5 of RLT-26, in notes of CPL Frank Iodice, a Marine of CAP O-3

[350] COMUSMACV 230615Z/Jan68, Special Telecon, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 23/24 Jan 68, #144. Area of census: XD760440 – XD 850440 – XD850420 – XD865420 – XD 867360 – XD 760360.

[351] S-5 of 26th Marine Regiment.

[352] Awards route slip dated 17 Jan 1968, Subj: Recommendation for Bronze Star in case of Capt H. L. Preston attached to NAVPERS 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 27 Dec 1967, in FMFPAC Awards Citations files, notes: Board Member LTCOL Clark, in recommending Bronze Star with Combat "V": "The Khe Sanh area covers 9 villages with 21,000 people."

[353] Shrock, Joann L., Stockton, William, Jr., Murphy, Elaine M., and Fromme, Marion: *Minority Groups in the Republic of Vietnam*. Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 550-105, Ethnographic Study Series. Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Dept of the Army, 1966, p. 55.

[354] Comments of Mrs. Carolyn Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 27 May 1986.

[355] Shrock, *et al, Minority Groups*, op cit., p. 60.

[356] Conversation with Madame Madeleine Poilane, Monday, 01 January 1968.

[357] Comments of Miss Nancy Costello, Sunday, 23 July 1967, to Ray W. Stubbe; Remarks of Miss Nancy Costello at Camp Tien Sha, DaNang, Vietnam, 10 December 1968. Miss Costello arrived at Khe Sanh in September, 1965.

[358] Shrock, *et al, Minority Groups, op cit.*, p. 61

[359] 24 May 1964 to 30 Nov 1964.

[360] Allen B. Imes, email to Ted A. Showalter (Executive officer of A-728, 11 Apr 1964 – 30 Nov 1964) in letter from Ted Showalter to Ray W. Stubbe, 30 Nov 2013.

[361] Letter of John Miller to Chaplain Stubbe, 9 Oct 1969.

BROU VILLAGES AT KHE SANH AND TAORs OF COMBINED ACTION COMPANY OSCAR - (From map in 26th Marines COC at Khe Sanh, August, 1967)

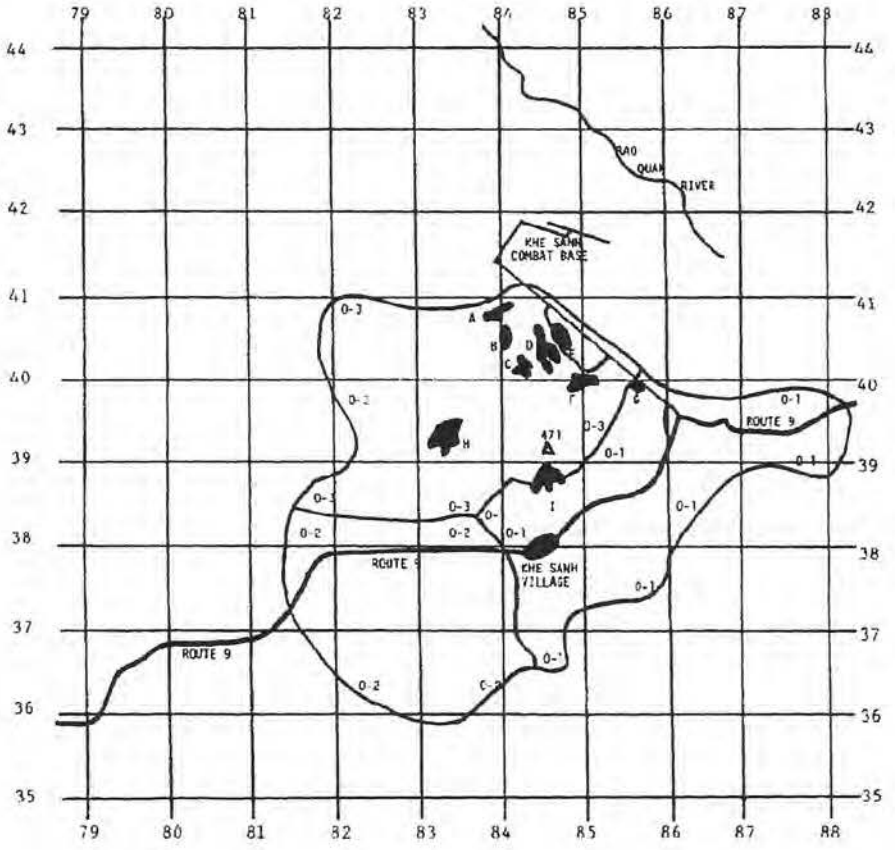

TACTICAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLATOONS OF COMBINED ACTION COMPANY OSCAR AND LOCATION OF BROU VILLAGES

- A Ta Cong
- B Breh
- C Lang Kat (also called Tadoq)
- D Areng (Includes Lamboiq, Sarbai and Ruang)
- E Clong Sareh
- F Chuua and Pacoong
- G Home of Felix Poilane
- H Tum Plang
- I Breh

Chuah	sand
Pong Kho	a metal pot (pong) used for cooking (kho) with water
Partung	
Sanrua	
Eu	direct route, path, way

West of the road leading to Khe Sanh airstrip:

Bu	a tiger bites a person
Tum Plang	Tum means "stream" and "plang" means "thatch"
Breh	Name of a kind of tree
Areng	to make a Brou musical instrument called an "amam"
Tacong	A name of a tree that has thorns approx. 3 in. long
Con	An island
Tadoq	
Clong Sareh	A tree named "sarch" close to a large body of water (maybe a lake)
Mpoai	Name of a large tree
Cheng	Lemon, lime
Truaih	
Sartoong	

In a way that Americans sometimes refer to themselves as "originally from ___" or betray a regional dialect, Mr. Miller adds: "Sometimes when people moved into a village from an outlying area they would refer to themselves as coming from their new village, but often they would retain the name of the old, so the situation became very confused."



BROU MAN MAKING CROSSBOW IN TUM PLANG VILLE
26 September 1967 – Photo by Ray W. Stubbe

Prior to moving in their new villages along Route 9, life in the distant villages in the mountains to the north of Khe Sanh created pockets of Brou culture which developed independent of other Brou villages, much like the peoples in the mountains of the Middle East and Appalachia. Additionally, the center of Brou territory appears to have been in Laos. A Marine of Combined Action Company OSCAR who had a special interest in learning the Brou language and customs, Daniel R. Kelley, observed:

> "There were cultural differences between the Brou of the different villages. Before they were gathered together in Khe Sanh in fortified villages, some had lived near rivers and fished mostly, others were agrarian. Language and customs varied—akin to regional differences among Americans.
>
> "The Brou at Khe Sanh had been regrouped into fortified villages. Before this many had traveled back and forth from Khe Sanh and Laos. Their religious practices (The Brou told me that Yiang Sursei, the name of their God, resided in a holy place in Laos), as well as some of their songs and dances, were influenced by the Laotian language and culture. Some of the Brou spoke Laotian well. I remember listening with Brou to Laotian broadcasts of news and music. They seemed to prefer Laotian songs over the Vietnamese songs, though they listened to both."[362]

For example, men bathed in the nude in Bu while in Areng and Ta Cong they wouldn't do that.[363]

During the resettlement, some Brou opted to remain in scattered, remote villages "in terrain too rugged for ready access by non-Brou and too isolated for frequent contacts with anyone else outside of their own village."[364]

Newly-arriving Marines were always surprised to discover that most of the local people at Khe Sanh were mainly not Vietnamese but Montagnards of the Brou[365] tribe. A Marine Lance Corporal once said: "You mean they're different people?" I always thought they were just Vietnamese who lived in the hills, in the boonies, backwards; I never realized they were different!" The Brou were, in fact, quite different from the Vietnamese in many ways. They were more muscular and stocky,[366] being part of the Mon Khymer ethnic group which is believed to have migrated from the Upper Mekong Valley into Indochina.[367] Their language, like American or French, was non-tonal, while that of the Vietnamese was tonal, spoken on several different levels of voice. In Vietnamese, a single word, like "dau" could mean "head" or "pain" depending on the tone of one's voice. The Vietnamese did not express their emotions, and, in addition, would say things and appear outwardly according to how they assumed the people they were with would want them to feel or think. They also did this among themselves. It was for this reason that the Brou assumed that Vietnamese had two gallbladders; the gallbladder was the source of emotion and mental activity according to the Brou, and therefore, Vietnamese, with their duplicity, obviously had two such organs![368] One could never trust a Vietnamese; one never knew how they really felt. The Brou, on the other hand, were basically honest; they expressed exactly what they felt. A visitor to the "forbidden city" citadel of Hue in December, 1967, would marvel at seven foot-high porcelain vases with intricate designs and a throne covered in gold (which had no ropes as barriers from children who might want to sit on it as parents snapped pictures!).[369] The Brou had no obvious or impressive cultural accomplishments. They were honest, kind, loyal, cheerful, and resilient to adversity or weather, disease and terrain, were hospitable, and did not steal. The Vietnamese looked down upon them as uncultured, regarding them as savages, making one wonder if every "civilized" people don't always require another group of people in their area they

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[362] Daniel Kelley, email to Robert Shippen, 16 Dec 2001, in letter from Daniel Kelley to Ray W. Stubbe, 18 Dec 2001.
[363] Letter of Daniel Kelley to Frank Iodice, 01 April 1985, unsent, forwarded to Ray W. Stubbe, 07 Aug 2006.
[364] Mole, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
[365] Sometimes written as "Brou," two syllables: "BRO" (with a rolling "R" and long "O" and "OU" as in "ooze").
[366] Height varying from 5 feet 2 inches to 5 feet 4 inches and an average weight of 115 pounds; they have high cheek bones, wider noses than the Vietnamese, dark brown eyes light brown skin, and black hair. [Shrock *et al*, *Minority Groups, op. cit.*, P. 62.
[367] Shrock, *et al, Minority Groups, op cit.*, p. 87.
[368] Comments of Mr. John Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 16 December 1967.
[369] Personal visit to Hue, Tuesday, 05 December 1967.

consider racially inferior, and wonder even more at the price of developed culture which erodes the spirit of humanity—creativity, honesty, caring for others, and so much more. Vietnamese were offended when Americans spoke to a Montagnard as an equal. Some Americans who got to know them remarked that if they had to die for anyone, they could see dying for these people but certainly not for the Vietnamese.`

While Vietnamese women wore the colorful and attractive silk *au* dai, most Brou wore only the minimum of clothing (despite the cold climate during monsoons in the high altitude). A cultural custom of the Brou was to file down their long front teeth since long teeth made a person resemble an animal. To emphasize their humanity, teeth were cut off or broken at puberty in order to acquire a suitable mate.[370] Brou men typically wore only a loin cloth, but with the arrival of the French, the missionaries, and American military, by late 1967, most were wearing trousers over their loin cloths as well as a variety of suit coats and other clothing, creating a strange spectacle. Women wore skirts made from a piece of cloth wrapped around their body and tied with a knot at the waist. Children up to puberty wore very little clothing. However, after puberty, girls wore blouses until married and birthing their first child.[371] Two diary entries:

"As we walked through Ta Cong, little Brou children were playing with small, hand-made parachutes with small weights attached that they would throw into the air and watch fall. They had probably watched the many air drops we've been receiving on the combat base and were imitating them. Some had fashioned models of UH1E aircraft that were amazingly accurate, just from having observed them in the air. They now wear clothes, practically all from American Marines or from the Lutheran World Relief clothing distributed through Rev. Loc in Khe Sanh village."[372]

"Will, our cook here at CAP O-3, said that the clothing given to the PFs for further distribution to the Brou children never got to them and that it probably went instead to the black market in town. He said he now gives the clothing he gets to the children directly. The Marines here at this CAP unit—Will, Kaminski, etc., have been receiving large amounts of clothing for this purpose after writing home requesting it. They have done all this on their own initiative."[373]



HM3 DALE W. FAIDLEY OF CAP O-3 WITH BROU CHILDREN
26 SEPTEMBER 1967. Photo by Ray W. Stubbe

Some Brou in the Khe Sanh area were recruited to serve with US Marines in a joint-service unit known as Combined Action Company OSCAR officially organized 6 February 1967.[374] The Combined Action Program continued a traditional US Marine Corps model of Marines teaming with local troops to help them pacify and protect their own villages.[375] A CAC consists of 14 Marines and one Navy corpsman completely integrated into a PF (Popular Forces) platoon of 35 local soldiers.[376] There is a dual chain of command: the USMC and PF platoon commanders do not command or discipline the men of the other platoon in their

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[370] Mole, *op. cit.*, p. 44. Chaplain Mole notes that this custom seems to be dying out and many Brou retain their front teeth.
[371] *Ibid.*, p. 45. Reference for the suit coats and wide variety: personal sightings of Ray W. Stubbe
[372] Ray W. Stubbe, diary entry for Tuesday, 26 September 1967. COL Lownds, in his comments at the Khe Sanh Veterans reunion at St. Louis Mio, in 1997, remarked at the accuracy of these models which even depicted protruding machineguns, and marveled that had they been given the same educational opportunities as Americans, a great artist may have emerged. [Col Lownds' remarks were printed in Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay*, Issue No. 40 (Fall, 1997), p. 15].
[373] Ray W. Stubbe, diary entry for Tuesday, 07 November 1967.
[374] Plans were completed with the Huong Hoa District Chief for the establishment of the three platoons of CAC OSCAR [SOP Khe Sanh 031530Z/Feb67, SITREP #3]. The three platoons arrived the morning of 5 February at 0945H [SOP 051315Z/Feb67] and the CAC at Khe Sanh was officially established at 061530H in Huong Hoa District Headquarters in Khe Sanh village. [SOP Khe Sanh 061414Z/Feb67, SITREP #6]. CAP O-1 and headquarters was located in Khe Sanh village (XD 846380), CAP O-2 at the western edge of Khe Sanh village (XD 843380), and CAP O-3 at Ta Cong village near the main gate of Khe Sanh Combat Base (at XD841408).
[375] The importance of civic action was evident in the Gendarmarie (later Garde D' Haiti) in Haiti and the Guardia National in Nicaragua, and during WW II, the Fita Fita Guard in Samoa. [Houts, MGySgt C.F.X., "Combined Action Program: Reaping the Rewards of New Hope, Dignity," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 5:18 (2 May 1969), pp. 6-7]. In Viet Nam, the first CAC was organized near Phu Bai in August, 1965, shortly after the landing of BLT 3/9 in DaNang 8 March 1965, beginning the arrival of large Marine ground troops in Viet Nam.
[376] III Marine Amphibious force Order 3121.4B of 22 Jun 1968, paragraph 5.

CAP. The Marines are advisors and assistants to the PF soldier and support the PF platoon in integrated operations. The CAP conducts active and aggressive operations in the hamlet area to prevent VC incursions and attacks directed against hamlet residents and officials. The Marines of the CAP live and operate within the local hamlets.

Khe Sanh's CAC OSCAR had the peculiarity of being the only CAC composed of Montagnard tribesmen. Several of the Brou had previously served with French military units. CAC OSCAR included a Brou named Houm who other Brou claimed could not be killed and was known simply as "The Legend." The "Legend" was a 45 year-old man with a bristling black beard and a hard, line-etched face that stood about 5-4, wore a Marine utility cover, and carried an old, beat-up M-1 rifle. Houm loved rice wine and was known to consume an entire 5-gallon blitz can of rice wine during a single week.[377] As of the summer of 1967, CAC OSCAR consisted of 32 Marines and one officer.

Some of the customs of the Brou were strange to Americans. A patrol on 17 October 1967 from CAP O-3 found seven young Brou in the school house at Tum Plang in the act of intercourse. The Lieutenant wanted them brought in so they remained overnight in the brick school house at the compound at Ta Cong. Cpl Daniel Kelley said this was very unfortunate since this is the way Brou mate; there was nothing especially bad about it, but it was very embarrassing to the girls.[378] Kelley's close association with Brou revealed to him that it was common for young boys and girls to sleep together. He writes, "When I first observed this, I was surprised and completely unsure of its meaning."[379] Mr. John Miller notes that a common house in each village where young people sleep at

night is calculated to assist young people to chose a spouse. Each village has at least one, perhaps two or three such houses. Girls occupy one room, boys another, and there is always an older person who owns the house. There is much talking and playing of musical instruments. A young man interested in a girl never approaches her directly, but through a friend. A young man will ask a friend if a certain girl might be interested in him. If so, they go off into the woods, rice field, or other secluded place. He gives the girl about 50 piaster as a token of his good faith in wanting to marry her, and then sexual union is permissible. Once a girl commits herself in this way, she is not free to go out with another fellow until her original partner has definitely broken off relationship with her.[380]

Brou were very loyal, hard-working, and friendly; they would not lie or steal. On 25 September 1967,[381] while accompanying a patrol from the Third Platoon of Marine Combined Action Company OSCAR, we crossed a hill, "Dong Che Rien," (the Marines called it "Michelle"—but could give no reason for that name), we arrived in a Brou village of Tum Plang (called "Bong" by the Marines).[382] There were several goats, a small girl walking around in a blouse made of camouflaged parachute, a man fashioning a crossbow out of some very deep red wood, pigs, multi-colored roosters, and a school teacher getting the children to sing hymns as part of their classes to learn to read their language. The Marines were here to conduct a MEDCAP, our "boxie" (from *bac si* in Vietnamese), HM3 Dale Faidley, treated about forty patients, mainly children. I watched the crossbow-maker using a knife called a Pria as a chisel, making very smooth and accurately carved wood. I asked if he might sell it. He wanted "an hours" pointing to my watch, but added that he wanted "an hours that didn't fall asleep." One of the Marines, Grohman, translated for me. We heard a gong in the distance being played like Morse Code.[383] This was

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[377] "Montagnard A Living Legend," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:38 (22 Sep 1967), p. 12; Comments by SFC James Perry to Ray W. Stubbe, July 1986.

[378] Ray W. Stubbe, diary entry, Tuesday, 17 October 1967.

[379] Letter from Daniel R. Kelley to Ray W. Stubbe, 28 March 1970.

[380] Mr. John Miller's comments on a study by Chaplain Robert L. Mole, 1967.

[381] What follows is based in diary kept by Ray W. Stubbe, entry for Tuesday, 26 September 1967.

[382] Mr. John Miller notes that "Tum" is the Brou word for "stream" and that all Brou villages have several names.

[383] The Brou had various musical instruments, including various flutes made from bamboo (a "tarial" about 6 inches long with several holes and pitched high; a "ken" which was a set of bamboo pipes with varying degrees of length and a round mouthpiece toward the bottom, built on the principle of an organ; a "kahlui" bamboo tube ranging from 2 to 3 ft. in length and an inch in diameter; a "pi" bamboo pipe about the same length as the "kuhlui" but smaller in diameter generally used at sad occasions such as a death of a relative; and a "amam" or small reed about a foot long with very small diameter which can be played by two persons making a very unique sound), a version of the "Jew's Harp" called a "ngcoong" made of bamboo and a "ngcaiq" which was smaller and made of metal; and various stringed instruments, including a "trua which is a 2-stringed instrument played with a bow, a "achung" which is a small bamboo tube about an inch and a half in diameter and a foot long with strings on the outer bark which are plucked; gongs (called "parnoh" and "chuang" which are gongs with a raised center which the Brou refer to with the same word as "navel"), and drums ("sacor"). [Letter from Mr. John Miller to Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, 9 Oct 1969. Mr. Miller adds that there may be other instruments, but these are the major ones].

explained as a personal ritual before eating. People were wearing practically anything: women were not bare-chested as they recently had been, and children wore old T-shirts hanging down to their knees. Men, who wore only loin clothes until recently, now all wear trousers. A woman was chopping wood outside the ville. While watching the wood cutter making a crossbow, I suddenly realized I had placed my camera on a tree stump and then walked over to watch him. I mentioned this to Grohman who said, "Don't be afraid, Chaplain, the people here won't steal anything." I returned to the tree stump, and it was still there. I was beginning to know and deeply respect these Brou people, primitive though they are.

The Brou lived in constant fear since their religion was that of animism: the belief that spirits of departed ancestors and other spirits controlled everything and caused illness and misfortune if they were not appeased through sacrifices.[384]

> "Since the animistic religion of the Brou is predicated on fear and the desire to manipulate the supernatural world, Brou life seems to be an almost continuous round of sacrifices. With a fear motivated base, Brou religion involves a larger share of wealth, time, importance and concern than most non-tribesmen believe possible. But .. it provides the only means by which they can make sense of an otherwise senseless world."[385]

Large portions of the meager bit of food they had was usually tossed in the fields or within their homes to feed and appease these spirits, leaving them half-starved and susceptible to all the many infections and diseases that ravaged the jungle area of Khe Sanh. Seven out of ten infants died. All this, they believed was due to not having sacrificed enough or frantically searching for which spirit, out of the many, was troubling them. Less food made for more disease, and so the circular process fed itself.

During a visit to the Wycliffe Bible Translators home, John and Carolyn Miller were in the States on furlough, but Miss Nancy Costello, who had been at Khe Sanh in 1966, was living in their house. While there, a small boy was brought by his parents. He had been in convulsions for two days as Brou shamans attempted to exorcise the evil spirit from him. Miss Costello gave him two injections in his ass resulting in two large bumps. When I left, the small boy was in a coma, his eyes open with a small ant crawling on his eyeball. He looked dead. The mother slowly moved to the doorway, turned to the closed door, took one glance over her shoulder and began a deep and anguished sob. The threads of poverty, ignorance uncleanness, the boy, the mother, the helplessness, the suffering, the absence of modern society that would have prevented this, the enslavement to a religion based on fear, wove a very dark tapestry.[386]

Belief in spirits made for a dramatic, frenetic moment at CAP O-3 on Sunday, 03 December 1967. It was a very quiet, very foggy night until about 0300 when all the Brou along the perimeter started firing their rifles! Roberts, one of the Marines at the CAP O-3 position, got up so violently he put on his trousers backwards and stumbled out of the team house. Other Marines ran from bunkers, assuming we were under attack. The Brou claimed they had seen their evil god who devours people, known as "Panoah," prowling outside the wire; they fired to scare him away.[387]

One of the Marines of Combined Action Company OSCAR who arrived in mid-1967, Corporal Daniel R. Kelley, has previously served in an infantry company of battalion 2/16 near Phu Bai on blocking and sweeping operations. As with most Marines in Vietnam at the time, the shocking difference from his rather sheltered prior life in the suburbs of Philadelphia was violent. He still wore stateside, leather combat boots and his company was only issued jungle boots after they all developed jungle rot—bloated, sore cracked skin on their feet and hands, and became ineffective. He worried about not being able to shoot his rifle due to cracked skin on his fingers. His Lieutenant once called in artillery which landed among the troops resulting in four WIA due to the Lieutenant's miscalculation.

> "On operations we encountered a sweaty suffocating heat. We were constantly wet and fatigued from having to cut our way through jungle with machetes. We all had skin rashes and infected cuts from the high elephant grass. The leeches covered us all over. I had them even up the crack of my ass and on my prick. We lacked waster. I had dysentery most of the time. ... I was medevaced once for dehydration and another time trucked into the hospital, sick from drinking rice paddy water."[388]

Word went out for volunteers for CAC, and Kelley went to Khe Sanh traumatized (but not really aware of that at the time) from his infantry experiences of the previous months. His initial assignment was to the CAC OSCAR platoon on the western edge of Khe Sanh village, CAP O-2.

> "I tried to be reliable to my fellow Marines there, but unconsciously continued to keep distant socially from them. I spent my time interacting with the Brou and trying to learn the language. ... I became familiar with most of the [Brou]

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[384] Mole, *op. cit.* ,pp. 59-60.
[385] *Ibid.*, p. 63.
[386] Diary, Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, entry for Sunday, 23 July 1967.
[387] Diary, Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, entry for Sunday 03 December 1967.
[388] Daniel R. Kelley, email to Robert Shippen, *12 Dec 2001, forwarded by Kelley to Ray W. Stubbe, 18 Dec 2001*

PFs, their girlfriends and their families. I ended up developing emotional bongs with more military and civilian Brou than most Marines developed with buddies in their units in their military tours."[389] He recalls the Brou in Khe Sanh as "refugees in their own land."[390]

After visiting the Millers, who gave him one of their Brou language manuals,[391] he spent evenings outside of the bunkers, learning Brou and talking with the Brou PFs, becoming like a brother to them. "We would talk of Khe Sanh, the language, the women, their songs. I felt myself insidiously pulled into emotional bonds with tem which pulled me away from my fellow Marines."[392]

After the environment of Phu Bai, Kelley felt no fear at Khe Sanh, and frequently walked down Route 9 with another Marine without a rifle, all the way to ville Bu and back. "I just didn't sense danger."[393] Through his conversations with the Brou PFs, he became aware that Brou PFs had to pay for their uniforms (which should have been issued to them free), that the Vietnamese government was notoriously slow in paying their wages and issuing them ammunition for their patrols. The Brou regarded their uniforms as a sort of status symbol with their girl friends., and were told they had to buy them on the black market at Khe Sanh village.[394]

One day, Kelley walked the short distance to the CAC OSCAR CP in the Khe Sanh District Headquarters where he happened to discover the National Police man torturing an elderly Brou man by electric shock from the hand-held crank generator of a field phone (which generates 35 volts) applied to his nipples and genitals. When asked politely to leave, Kelley shouted "You can't do that!" and stomped out to complain to the District Chief, Captain Nhi (a Chinese Nung), unaware that the Police Chief operated directly out of Saigon and didn't answer to the District Chief.[395]

Shortly thereafter, Kelley was promoted to Sergeant, but transferred from CAP O-2 in Khe Sanh village to CAP O-3 at Ta Cong, just outside the main gate of Khe Sanh Combat Base, so he could be in close contact with Anha who lived at Ta Cong.[396] Kelley remained here until December, 1967, when he returned to the States on the free 30-day extension leave, prior to returning to Vietnam. He wanted to continue his close relationship with the Brou at Khe Sanh.

"Tim," a Brou handyman dish washer at CAP O-3[397] invited some of the Marines to his "worship" at 2000.[398] Tim kept referring to us as his brothers. He was smiling, friendly, and happy. We removed our boots after mounting the small platform outside the door to his house, built like all Brou houses elevated from the ground on high poles. Several blood spatters were on the doorstep, perhaps saliva made red by betel nut. About eight people were gathered inside around a cooking placer in the center, a square of ashes with some burning logs and an iron ring supported by legs holding up kettles. Over all this was a square bamboo frame used in warming and drying rice. The men occasionally spat into this square of ashes, about two and a half feet square.

Tim's wife prepared the rice in woven baskets and large leaves while another person cut up pig into little pieces. They then poured a bowl of blood into the meat and stirred it into a reddish mess.

Two platters, each containing bowls of the red "mess," a few chunks of the cooked pig and several different types of rice in different bowls, were next placed before Tim, who sat in front of a wall of the house on which in the rafters were two small spirit houses constructed of bamboo and held together by what appeared as "comm" wire.[399] Tim lit a small candle and stuck it to the front of a spirit house. He next took some small square pieces of bamboo, about one and a half inches long by one inch wide and resumed his sitting position with legs crossed in front of him. He then began talking very fast and excitedly, looking up at the small spirit house. Also, in front of him, was a circular platter containing about a handful of uncooked rice

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[389] Daniel R. Kelley, email to Robert Shippen, 14 Dec 2001, forwarded by Kelley to Ray W. Stubbe, 18 Sec 2001.
[390] Daniel R. Kelley, Letter to Frank Iodice, 01 April 1985, unsent, forwarded to Ray W. Stubbe, 07 Aug 2000.
[391] Daniel R. Kelley, Letter to John and Carolyn Miller, 30 November 1983.
[392] Daniel R. Kelley, Letter to Frank Iodice, 01 April 1985, unsent, forwarded to Ray W. Stubbe, 07 Aug 2000. So close did Kelley relate to the Brou that as of 1985, he could not recall the names of Marines at either CAP O-2 or O-3. [Letter to Daniel R. Kelley to Frank Iodice, 01 Apr 1985, unsent and forwarded to Ray W. Stubbe, 07 Aug 2006].
[393] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 07 July 1993.
[394] *Ibid.*
[395] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 15 July 1993.
[396] Daniel R. Kelley, email to Robert Shippen, 15 Dec 2001, forwarded by Daniel R. Kelley to Ray W. Stubbe, 18 Dec 2001.
[397] CAP = Combined Action Platoon. There were three platoons of Combined Action Company (CAC) OSCAR: CAP O-1 being the headquarters in the District Headquarters compound in Khe Sanh village; CAP O-2 being on the western edge of Khe Sanh village; and CAP O-3 at Ta Cong, a small Brou village just outside the main gate of Khe Sanh Combat Base.
[398] The following based in diary of Ray W. Stubbe, entry for Wednesday, 04 October 1967.
[399] There are no spirit houses seen in any of the Brou villes outside, as in Khe Sanh ville where the Vietnamese live; it appears as though the Brou place their spirit houses inside their own house. "Comm wire" is the black-coated wire used to connect land-line telephones.

through which he continuously stroked his left hand. He then took the pieces of bamboo in his right hand and tossed them hard against the floor. Sometimes they landed both concave, sometimes both convex. When one was concave and one convex, he became more animated, put both hands together like praying hands, raise them from the deck towards the small house, and always exclaim the same word. Occasionally, he would toss a few grains of the unprepared rice into the platters. Then he tossed some into one corner of his house and into the diagonally opposite corner. He then resumed his sitting position and with the platter of remaining, unprepared rice and rotated the circular woven black platter counter-clockwise and said some words, as though counting, and then rotated it to the right, and repeated the words. When finished, he smiled and asked us to join in the feast.

Since John Grohman (one of the Marines of CAP O-3) is able to speak some Brou, Tim explained to me (through John) what much of all that meant. First , he had paid $15.00 for the pig which was sacrificed. He earns $30.00 a month working at CAP O-3. I thought "if only our religious life meant as much to us!" His religious offering was 50%! He described this not as "15" but as "10 plus 5." When both pieces of bamboo were concave or both convex, he was not able to talk with the gods, so he throws a little pinch of rice to them as food so they will be pleased. When one is convex and the other concave, he is able to speak to them. He thanks them that they are in a better world and he converses with them. The throwing of rice in the house is to appease evil spirits.

The rotation of the platters is connected to his dreams. John says the Brou place great importance on the interpretation of dreams. He rotated the platter to the left six times for his six bad dreams, that the gods might take them away, and eight times to the right for his eight good dreams, that the gods might fulfill them.

He then placed the largest platter in front of us. Of course, the bloody part turned my stomach and I feared trichinosis and so didn't eat it, but did eat the various kinds of rice. One was very sticky and could be rolled into a ball. Another was just loose grains. Still another was in a bowl with pieces of cooked pig and very hot peppers. I only ate the rice portions. Of course, we're expected to eat everything, not to do so is regarded as an insult. I was very relieved the Marines were there to eat the bloodied pig! He also gave us very good, sweet bananas and coffee. We ate with American mess gear spoons and forks the Marines of CAP O-3 have given him.



Brou children in ville. Official USMC photo A193215 by Ray W. Stubbe 13 Sep 1967

Tim asked John to send the *bac si* (HM3 Dale Faidley) since his wife has a stomach pain. He said the gods didn't help much, but bac si's medicine does. John remarked that he probably could lead the whole village away from paganism, but had to be careful for the village chief who is already somewhat alienated from Tim because of all the military items and attention Tim gets from the Marines. However, upon relating this to Mr. John Miller, the Wycliffe Bible translator, Mr. Miller responded: "I think that the Marine who speaks of the ease with which one could change the worship patterns of the Brou is extremely naïve and does not understand the powerful hold that the Brou religious system has on each Brou life. Improved medical technique in itself will never do it, as is evidenced by the fact that the Brou man gave assent to the efficacy of modern medicine but went right ahead with his sacrifice anyway."[400]

On another occasion, I was invited to a funeral feast[401] in the Brou village of Chuah. The day was bright and cheerful. The village chiefs, the Dai Yien, were in the hut together with all the hamlet chiefs. First we were presented with a large vase about one and a half feet high and six inches in diameter filled with roots and herbs out of which protruded two bamboo "straws" about ¼ inch in diameter and four feet long. The vase was then filled with water until it was up to the brim. (I assumed it was "water" but may have been rice wine). Two people drink simultaneously while the host pours in "water" from a cup until it is again at the brim, so that the two have drunk one cup full. It has a sweet, amazingly alcohol-like taste and is called "Blang Kong." According to studies, although water is the ordinary beverage for the Brou, for ceremonial occasions a

[400] John Miller, letter to Ray W. Stubbe, 9 Oct 1989

[401] What follows is based in diary entry for Tuesday, 24 October 1967, Diary of Ray W Stubbe.

fermented rice wine is brewed in large antique jars. During animal sacrifices, all tribesmen present, in order of their importance, take turns drinking rice wine through the long straw. Unless all participants drink, the sacrifice is believed to be ineffectual, the spirits being offended.[402]

We were also served the usual selection of different types of rice, water buffalo, and rice wine (must be 190 proof!)

Corporal Daniel Kelley noted that Brou in the resettled villages are happier than in their former areas because they feel safer. Furthermore, their rice paddy yields have increased more than when they were on the sides of the hills. Kelley noted that many of the Brou seem to have an affinity towards Laos—their customs and language. Some of the "hard core" remained near the Vietnam-Laos border. He noted that the Brou defecate by squatting, even when there is a "seat" in the "out house." The Brou PFs at CAP O-3 used to use the general head for all personnel there until they, instead of sitting on the seat, squatted with their feet planted on the sides of the hole, and defecated, sometimes with a wrong aim. A Marine going there, without looking, sat right in the elimination. It became a real morale problem. "We had to construct a separate head for them," he said.[403]

Then, the Brou proposed a novel solution: they could defecate outside the wire which would be a good deterrent if VC or NVA attempted to breach the wire. Unfortunately, Kelley recalls that while at CAP O-2, it was customary to leave at twilight and settle in the brush outside the wire for night ambush, and then with the cover of darkness, move into the designated ambush site.

> "On one of my first nights, I led the Brou/Marine patrol to a spot outside the wire. After much complaining by the Brou and understanding little Brou at the time, exasperated, I plopped down in the temporary area expecting them to follow suit. Ignoring military protocol, the Brou began to laugh heartily. Chagrined, I felt myself suddenly feel an oozy-wetness in the seat of my pants. I reflexively put my hand down and it also sunk down completely into the swamp-like mud. When I retrieved my hand I realized by the unusually distasteful smell, that I had invaded the area which was reserved for the VC, in the case that they would be so foolhardy as to attempt to assault the compound."[404]

We were offered some betel nut. This consists of a nut the size of a walnut, green and elongated, ellipsoidal in shape, of which a small part is cut. This, together with a piece of leaf coated with some white powder, plus a piece of bark that is placed in the teeth is all placed in the mouth and chewed. Some grains of black bark substance is sometimes added "to enhance the hallucinogenic effect," noted Kelley. The mixture creates blood-red saliva which is periodically expectorated. Over a period of time, the teeth turn black.

SIEGE PERIOD

Although the Vietnamese (and the Frenchman's family) were evacuated from Khe Sanh Combat Base on planes that delivered much needed artillery ammunition, the Brou were forbidden to depart and told to return to their villages.

Diary note for Tuesday, 23 January 1968: "Captain Preston, S-5 of Regiment said that the Quang Tri Province Chief, General Nguyen Am, was here today and said that all the Vietnamese could leave that wanted to, but the Brou Montagnards had to stay here, even though many desired to leave and were at the main gate. All the Brou have to return to their villages."[405] In mid-February: LtGen Xuan Lam, the I Corps Commander, refused to permit any Brou Montagnards from leaving Khe Sanh: VIETNAMESE GOV DID NOT REPEAT NOT DESIRE THE BROU TO BE EVACUATED. IN THE EVENT THIS POLICY HAS BEEN CHANGED IT WILL PRESENT SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM TO THIS COMMAND. REQUEST ADVISE.[406] CG, III MAF, reported: Commanding General, I Corps, General Lam, made decision that 5,000 – 6,000 Brou who desired to be evacuated from Khe Sanh could not be permitted to do so. The official reason given was that there is no place to relocate them or any available foodstuffs to feed them. Unofficially, however, it is felt that the age old animosity between the Montagnards and the Vietnamese was a motivating factor behind General Lam's decision. Approximately 10,000 pounds of rice available at Khe Sanh was distributed to the Brou there to alleviate their hunger.[407]

Cpl Frank Iodice had grown up in the hard-working setting of life in the country, operating earth-moving equipment. While in the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades, he used a frontend loader and bulldozer to clear land, build ponds and dams for farmers in

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[402] Mole, *op cit.*, p. 63.
[403] *Ibid.*
[404] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 07 July 1993.
[405] Stubbe, manuscript, *Khe Sanh*, 07 Oct 1971, pp. 831-832.
[406] 26 Marines 191316Z/Feb68 to CG, 3rd MarDiv.
[407] Trest, Warren A., *Khe Sanh (Operation Niagara) 22 January - 31 March 1968*, HQ PACAF, Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Div., 13 Sep 1968, p. 37.

Georgia. Now he was one of the Marines assigned to Combined Action Company OSCAR, the 3rd Platoon, at Ta Cong village about 350 meters outside the main gate of Khe Sanh Combat Base. In an interview with him by Marine Corps Historical personnel the second week of March, 1968, he noted that Ta Cong, which had between 500 and 650 people before the siege was now "nothing but ashes," and that when the Marines evacuated, they brought with them only their Popular Forces platoon. He then told the story of the Brou that tore up those who, like him, had lived with them:

"FOB came out with the word that the PFs [Popular Forces]—they could stay in the compound and fight with us or we could put them through the wire as civilians,. They'd turn in their rifles, and they could go with their families to Cam Lo, which is about 35 kilometers. The Government of Viet Nam refused to fly them out of here. The Vietnamese personnel at Khe Sanh—I believe there was about 900 of them—they were all flown out. [Actually, there were 1200 Vietnamese evacuated]. As soon as the Marines were evaced out of the Khe Sanh one and Two [CAPs] and the District Headquarters, civilians came next and they evaced them all out to Quang Tri and Cam Lo. Then it came to the Brou . ... Their only source of income except to work I the coffee plantation here .. was $26.00 a month, and then they got a raw deal on buying rice fro the District Chief. That all stemmed from GVN [Government of Vietnam]. Anyway, with the evacuation: They were sending Vietnamese—civilians were all flown out. Then it came to the Brou. They wanted to be flown out too. But GVN said 'No.' I don't know who it was, but a Vietnamese General passed the word that there was no place to place the Brou, so they could stay in the area. Of course, we've declared this now an 'open fire zone,' and the air strikes from the 52s, the Arc Lights, commenced. And so, here we had all our Brou.

They were still out in all the villages and we were to start bombing. We had all our Brou PFs here. The men stayed here I the compound; they were all safe. But the wives and children were out in the villes. And they said, 'No; we can't fly civilians out.' They flew out the honcho Brou [Mr. Onya] and his direct family, and that was it, and some of the village chiefs. And the next thing that happened was: we started sending Brou out to the wire—the ones who'd volunteer—tell the families and all the tribes people that were in the villages to move into the hills and keep away from the villes, that we were going to start bombing. And the Brou didn't know what way–. They survived on nothing almost, a little rice, $26.00 a month, and whatever they made off the land. And they had no place to go—to the mountains, maybe. How could they live? The women and children like I said. The men were here on the base.

"So the next thing that happened was: here was a couple of days of bombing. And all my PFs ran to me, and they expected me to give them an answer. I had one Brou come up, and it looked like my village of Ta Cong had got bombed. It hadn't; it was just over the ridgeline from here it did. That Brou P came up and told me, he said, 'What am I supposed to do now? My mother and father and brothers are dead!' And I myself was interested. This was Chung; he works for FOB. I was interested enough to let it pass my mind of adopting him for a brother. I knew who he was talking about. The little boy's name was 'Bong.' Well, as it turned out, the bombs didn't hit Ta Cong. They was, as I said, about 1000 meters south. And that was the story. PFs coming up and asking me questions I couldn't answer: 'Why is WAH-JKEE [the Americans] bombing Ta Cong?' 'Why are the bombing my village and my buffalo, my wife and my children?' And explain it to them.

At this point in the interview, Cpl Frank Iodice's voice was cracking with emotion. He spoke with soft, broken words as he continued relating the evil he now knew:

"Then we came up with an option. We told—I told my Brou that they could—FOB told their personnel, their Brou personnel, we'd put them out through the wire and they could go with their families to Cam Lo and meet their wives and children and go to Cam Lo. Some of them left. Ah–,. Well, I'll just give you the straight scoop, that's all that's to it—ah—now our District Chief—my PFs and the CAC PFs work for the District Chief and he's responsible to GVN and ah, the District Chief up here, he's the representative for GVN—there was—FOB gave the word: now their personnel, they're hired by FOB and they could go. FOB could give them the word: you could leave, but—now I realize when that word came down there was a mistake made. FOB personnel were free to go—Brou personnel. But I knew our CAC personnel; it wasn't their choice. It had to go from the District Chief, and he was the direct superior of these Brou. And GVN were the only people that could give that word, and from the raw deal they already got, the civilians, I knew what was happening. So there was about a two-hour lapse before somebody realized what had happened. They gave the word that all the Brou could leave if they wanted to. And it was two hours, the word did come down that nom the CAC Brou can't go because they're responsible to this Captain [Nhe] and the GVN. But in those two hours, anywaym, I realiZed that with another man, I told all the Brou—we even got up some money to give anyone who wanted to leave and to make it out of here. But once again, their faith and trust in us, to quote one of the Brou—he told myself this and this other Corporal [Dan Kelley], he said, 'No, all the Brou are going to stay here,' .. they're goig to stay here and fight. And for the faith and trust they're putting in us, they're getting a raw deal.



BROU REFUGEE CHILD. USMC PHOTO A192894
Photographer and date of photo unknown

"Just yesterday, come Brou came in. We dropped anti-personnel mines, evidently that was what it was .. And they said that they saw these anti-personnel mines dropped down from WAUKEE planes, the American planes, and they thought even after the air-strikes we've had here now for maybe three weeks. And they saw them drop these small anti-personnel mines ["Gravel"], the first thing that popped into their heads was:, 'the WAUKEE, they're dropping us chow!" so they picked them up. After about a few hands burned and some arms shrapneled-up, they realized they were anti-personnel mines. And yet they still trust us!"[408]

Approximately 15 February, some 2,000 – 3,000 Brou tribes people attempted to move from Khe Sanh to Ca Lu but were intercepted at XD 852399 (about 300 meters west of the Poilane house) and turned back by the NVA.[409]

Unfortunately for those who remained at Khe Sanh, VC Brou cadres (from those who had not relocated in the hamlets along Route 9 in the early 1960s) set up their own government in the villages of Bu and Areng, forcing the village chiefs to flee for their lives. The VC had lists identifying the village elders and Brou PFs in each village which they obtained after they overran Khe Sanh village.[410] Kelley was ordered to ask the Brou PFs manning a portion of the FOB-3 perimeter if they would fire on their own people who the NVA might push ahead of a massive, "human wave" assault. The Brou PFs answered that they would fire, explaining that they had no place to run and that the NVA would surely kill them anyway for "being soldiers for the Americans."[411] The village elders who came to the FOB-3 perimeter provided good intelligence including convoys running continuously from Laos on Route 9 to different NVA command posts set up in the Brou villes. Bu was apparently the main command headquarters of the NVA. Kelley recalls: "I was told to tell them to spread the word to the villagers to flee the villages and head south. They looked at me in disbelief." Over time, additional Brou arrived at the wire, begging food. "I was saddened that Marines bargained C-rats for Brou jewelry, gold and silver bracelets used in paying for dowries, as well as prized old French coins and handicrafts—baskets and crossbows."[412]

Kelley was notified by a Marine Lieutenant that bombing runs were planned for the Brou villages and he was asked to sign a statement that the villages had been evacuated. "I angrily refused. Brou coming to the wire said the villages were occupied by Brou villagers and Brou VC cadres. They had fled at night at the risk of being shot by the cadres or NVA patrols." He remembers that an Italian news reporter managed to arrive in the FOB-3 compound and talked with Kelley who had studied Spanish and French in high school, and was a great fan of Verdi operas. "I explained to him that they were going to bomb populated villages." Months later, while at the Brou refugee village in Cua, he was told that the Americans did, in fact, bomb the villages, killing some of the friends and family members with whom he had developed friendships while at CAP O-2, including a Brou Sergeant's younger brother due to the collapse of his bunker during the American bombing who died at 18 with his girlfriend. Kelley opined that the bombing was the result of NVA activity in the villages and the possibility of using Brou civilians as a "human shield" ahead of an advancing human wave assault. After the villages were bombed, no more Brou came to the wire bringing intelligence of NVA activity in the immediate area.[413] Kelley recalls that a Marine Captain chewed him out and ordered him not to speak to any more news reporters. "I said, 'Well, I'm not going to tell any lies. if they're bombing the villages and there are people out there, I'm not going to tell them that there's nobody out there. We

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[408]Interview of CPL Frank Iodice, USMC Oral History Tape #2621.
[409] 26 Marines 191316Z/Feb68, Subj: Disposition of Displaced Personnel, in 26th Marines Command Chronology, February, 1968.
[410] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 29 July 1993.
[411] Daniel R. Kelley, email to Robert Shippen, 5 Dec 2001, copy forwarded by Daniel R. Kelley to Ray W. Stubbe, 18 Dec 2001.
[412] *Ibid.*
[413] *Ibid.* Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 07 July 1993.

have village chiefs coming in and reporting that their villages are being bombed, that it wasn't their fault that the NVA were staying in close to the villages so they wouldn't incur casualties.' They said this was confidential information that shouldn't be said to the press. I said I didn't care if it was confidential or not, that there were people out there getting killed basically because they were in the line of fire. They wanted me to sign some type of report saying that the villages were now deserted. I refused to do it."[414]

During the early days of the Khe Sanh siege, Frank Iodice (also from CAP O-3) came to Dan Kelley with a plan to capture a NVA officer for intelligence purposes. "If successful, we would get a R&R, all expenses paid, and I agreed to go."[415] The Special Forces of FOB-3 gave Kelley and Iodice some amphetamines to stay awake and they departed with gas, gas masks into a very foggy day and smoky area with Brou PFs who were especially valued: "The Brou had a very uncanny sense—maybe from living so close to nature, in total darkness they could tell if someone was near them. Their senses were so acute, their smell and hearing, that they could detect things we couldn't. They taught us. It was one of the ironies that I always remember: here we were advisors to the Brou PFs and they were teaching us how to patrol!"[416]

They met an old woman in the village of Ta Cong, just outside the FOB-3/Khe Sanh Combat Base perimeter, across the access road. She was the only person in Ta Cong, fairly old and living in the ashes of the burnt-out village to keep warm. The Brou had evacuated the village and started to trek out and she felt she was too old.[417] The old woman was the grandmother of a young Brou boy the Marines called "Bong," a sort of mascot of the CAP Marines. Bong came up to the Marines and said, "My mother's dead. My father's dead. And now I'm going to go on patrol with Lacey and White."[418] The old woman provided some valuable intelligence to the Marines, telling of NVA activity in the area. She said the NVA came into Ta Cong every night, and based upon that information, Kelley and Iodice set up a night ambush to capture their NVA officer. "We stayed out at least one night. We didn't sleep at all. After we had been out at least one day, we were dead tired. And then the ambush was sprung. Iodice called out the coordinates by memory, and I can remember the mortar rounds coming in behind us. I thought, 'Geez, this guy's amazing! He doesn't have a map on him and he remembers.. He knew where he was. He called in the first mortar round and then just adjusted. We rallied to another point. We went back to look at the ambush site and did see some bandages and some blood and other paraphernalia of the NVA that we picked up and headed back to the wire."[419]

REFUGEE VILLAGE

Many Brou, caught as innocent third party civilians in the clash of NVA/Marines, began to walk east toward Cam Lo where a refugee center was established for them. The Brou population of the refugee center included Brou not only from Khe Sanh but also many of those who had opted not to settle in the Strategic Hamlet villages along Route 9 in the early 1960s. For many, the refugee center became a death camp. Carolyn Miller of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, recalls, "We asked them to write something about their experiences at that time. A couple of them said, 'Please, we don't want to think about it.'"[420]

A CIA civilian who had unexpectedly made an appearance with Marines of the 3rd platoon of G/2/3 fighting in the Battle of the Hills at Khe Sanh on 30 April 1967,[421] Bob Handy, arrived in FOB-3 one morning seeking Dan Kelley and said "You're going to be coming with me." "The next thing I knew, I was on a helicopter with him."[422] "I didn't know him from Adam."[423] "It never occurred to me to ask him what authority or have you cleared this with my superiors. All I knew I was working in the refugee area and had no paperwork. I never saw any paperwork."[424] There he met James Perry, the medic assigned to MACV Advisory Team 4 in Khe Sanh Village, and the three Americans—Handy, Kelley, and Perry—supervised the thousands of Brou refugees. Kelley recalls meeting Onya who felt he had been "sold out" by the Americans and there was no protection from VC in the area.[425] At the Brou refugee center, Kelley recalls sleeping four hours a day and running patrols.[426] He described the

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[414] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 25 June 1989.
[415] Daniel R. Kelley, letter to Frank Iodice, 01 April 1985, unsent, forwarded by Daniel R. Kelley to Ray W. Stubbe, 07 Aug 2006. Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 29 July 1993.
[416] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 29 July 1993.
[417] *Ibid.*
[418] Conversation with Frank Iodice, 18 May 1986. Lacey and White were two Marines assigned to CAP O-3.
[419] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 29 July 1993.
[420] Conversation with Carolyn Miller, 28 May 1986.
[421] Comments of Sgt Ed Crawford in "The 1967 Hill Battles," Stubbe, Ray W., *Pebbles in My Boots*, Vol. 2, p. 105.
[422] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 26 June 2000.
[423] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 15 July 1993.
[424] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 25 June 1989. Kelley was actually assigned to the CIA unit known as CORDS. [3rd Marine Division, *Civil Affairs & PSYOP Newsletter*, 3-69 (15 March 1969 p. 1, notes Kelley was assigned to CORDS for the previous 18 months].
[425] Daniel R. Kelley, letter to Frank Iodice, 01 April 1985, unsent, forwarded by Kelley to Ray W. Stubbe, 07 Aug 2006.

camp: "It was so dry and just dirt. The flies were so bad. People were just dying because there was no water. There wasn't enough food and the weather conditions were just horrid. All we had was just a barbed wire around the refugee camp. In the evenings I would stay out with the Brou. I remember the MACV persons saying, 'You're crazy!'"[427] Eventually, Kelley felt he also had been abandoned with the Brou.[428] Kelley, Perry, and Handy were given MACV teams who did nothing. They were ordered to build a fort north of the camp, and the MACV team departed. Then Perry departed and Kelley was left alone in the camp. Attempts were made on his life, and Onya convinced him not to accompany patrols and even gave Kelley one of his own body guards, a PF NCO.[429]

Some 8 to 10 Brou died daily in the first few months.[430] The situation was desperate. Kelley remembers attempting to insert an IV in one Brou, but he was so dehydrated, it didn't penetrate the vein. "He basically cursed me and said, 'I want to die! Let me die!' And I said, 'You can't die!' And he died. We buried him. I was the only American who stayed 24 hours a day in the Brou compound. Perry would come in during the day but for some reason—I guess he was under direct MACV, so they required that he return to the MACV compound each night. Anya was so fed-up with everything that happened. He felt that he had been abandoned and betrayed."[431]

During this time, Kelley was actually held a prisoner in the Special Forces "A" Camp for two days after he had kicked out a Vietnamese Lieutenant out of the Brou village (which was off-limits to the Vietnamese). When he went to the A Camp to coordinate patrols, a squad of Vietnamese with two machineguns held him prisoner in the outer perimeter. "The A Team convinced them to let me come into the inner perimeter, and then I believe that the only way that I was allowed to leave was that the commander of the A Team threatened to bring in Marine tanks and blow the perimeter. So they helicoptered me out. After that I did all my coordinating through the MACV Captain in the Vietnamese village. The reason for that was not only that I had thrown out the Vietnamese Lieutenant but I had also found out about a scam; they had a deal where if a person was killed in combat, t hey would give an insurance policy to the family. But the Lieutenants were getting a kick back. I found out about it and reported it, and they were more upset over that, although they used the excuse that I had kicked this Lieutenant out of the Brou village. There were attempts on my life; there had already been two attempts to try to get rid of me."[432]

Daniel Kelley maintained a daily log,[433] entries which record his daily life in the refugee center. A few excerpts:

Apr 15, '68:

(1) FOB 3, Khe Sanh delivered: rice—8 bags, salt—4 bags, C-rats—20 cases, blankets—30, cigarettes—7 cartons. Are going to recruit 300 Brou. Maj. Smith very helpful.

(2) RD Team received today from Quang Tri: 4 M-1s – ammo, 500 rds, 3 grease guns – ammo 2000 rds; 12 carbines – ammo 4220 rds, received no carbine magazines; have 25 wpns already; 60 undershirts, 70 socks, 65 canteens, 65 cartridge belts, 85 canteen pouches, 70 berets, 70 boots, 160 black pajamas

(3) Teachers (accord. Mr. miller) will be paid – further training at Pleiku. 4 patients recently arrived.

(4) Spoke to RD leader: told him VN RDs not doing job. Told spoke to Capt RAO. If don't do job, hold pay or see me about getting rid of them. Told him: (1 needed educate Brou in cooking, (2) sanitation – dig shitters; (3) hold med. caps –keep me posted on critical patients

(5) ID cards – 300 P's per person. Was 40 P's – Mr. Anya get rid of them. 25 P's Khe Sanh.

(6) Need shovels and hoes to dig shitter and bury dead

(7).Close to 40 dead now – exact figure tomorrow

(8) RD structure – 14 VN, 66 Brou (81), 3 nurses VN, 1 Brou medic

(9) Lt DAY delivered wood, soap (300 bars), rolled oats, clothes (100 people), 8 bags cam. for wk. detail. Price now for CSM and oats – 400 P's per pack. Wk. detail all previous bags – 147 bags tomorrow have price; 100 Brou Cam Lo – 100 Brou Khe Sanh. Lost 4 bags? Also possible taken. Mr. Anya instructed that police be present to watch future transactions – if irregularity rectify legally!

(10) Mr. Anya would like Brou work on water project too.

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[426] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 07 July 1993.
[427] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 25 June 1989.
[428] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 07 July 1993.
[429] *Ibid.*
[430] Daniel R. Kelley, letter to Frank Iodice, 01 April 1985, unsent, sent to Ray W. Stubbe, 07 Aug 2006.
[431] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 7 July 1993.
[432] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 25 June 1989.
[433] Shown to Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, at visit to Refugee Center, Thursday, 09 May 1968.

(11) Will have Brou medic check VN dispensary daily; No. of Brou and VN present. If need food or medicine. Well treated?

(12) VN village not working with Anya – has not asked Anya for food – commodities – check into supplying VN from Khe Sanh too.

(13) Needs a radio – communicate district

(14) Prices:

bowl – 15 P's; large pot 150 P's, washbowl 80 P's

Sm. pot 80 P's, Salem – 350 P's per pack: 40 P's

chicken 250 P's – 600 P's

chunk of meat 300 P's

Kool-Aid 10 P's per pack

(15) Med. CAP held – 120586 by 3/4 based district. Ran out of diuretics, need soap, skin problems – coughs & pneumonia not equipped to handle

(16) CAC HDQRS held one (treated at least 200 vicinity of 115583 treated at least 100.

(17) Need med CAPs at 1157 – both sides of Rt. 558.

(18) Fr. priest – MEDCAP. Leaving Quang Tri, back 2-3 days, buy medicine, like wood build beds in dispensary, says needs H_2O_2, alcohol, syringes, tetracycline

(19) Can get tweezers, hemostats, and scissors for RD corpsman.

(20) If new MEDCAP teams – see Anya – direct to where needed.

April 16, 1968

(1) Deaths – 71 – 2 hamlets VN - accounted for (5 died today) – combination of hot tents and cold ground

(2) 3/4 "K" held MEDCAP – treated 250; 150 at least diarrhea

(3) Delivered 200 sandbags, 20 boxes brown sugar, 2 cases corned beef, 12 cans dehydrated soup, 4 boxes macaroni

(4) Getting list of families

(5) Got recipes – no ingredients!

(6) Wk detail: 4 days received 54,390 P's for 177 bags

(7) PFs told 3/4 days taken Q. Tri to get paid

(8) 2 Brou taken VN dispensary need food

(9) RD VN (1) helped Americans, 2 teams of 2, cover area

(10)VN gave petition back

(11) Locks – catches 0 Med gear. Wood delivered – taken Cam Lo Brou – sell 1200 P's (used to be 700 P's

(13) Anya will write letters

(14) Held 4th Eng. class – (5 students)

(15) #10 cooking cans – juice cans

(16) Need rifle cleaning gear

(17) Lt Watts promised 5 mid-wife kits, 8 carpenter kits, 6 farm kits, cook utensils: pots, cups, spoon

Apr 17

(1) 35 bags – wk. detail – 10 beans, 25 oats, owe 165 bags. Have in Q Tri – perhaps tomorrow

(2) Gave Brou clothes – 200 people from chaplain

(3) Rice Q. Tri Anya bought – 400 bags 900 P's per bag – 350 for VN, 250 for Brou. Yet to have 30 bags.

(4) Mr. Uhler – paper on supplies from Anya give tomorrow

(5) Delivered 3 rolls concertina to Anya

(6) Sell sandbags – 3 P's per bag

(7) Using ;police vehicle convoy wood to Q. Tri from here

(8) Lt Watts – give 50,000 P's to Brou – Anya wants buy rice; 54,000 can buy 60 bags!

(9) Lt Watts buy utensil gets OK from District

(10) Med Cap 137 people – RD team at Lambouiq

(11) American doctor at market to give medicine – 100 treated

(14) 450 grams per lb.

(15) Getting tools start handicrafts

(16) 15 teachers paid – 4 or 5 months depending where previously on PF roster

(18) Bricks for making bakery and money pay laborers and cement (Lt Watts)

(20) Total Brou 5,668

Families – 1,026

No money - 758 families
92 deaths
(21) VM - total 1225 (population of Khe Sanh in Cam Lo)
Families - 353
8 VN died
Not paid - 35 families
(22) Total have paid - 2940
Total population - 6,893 Brou and VN
Total not paid - 5,953
(23) Roofing in Quang Tri - need trans.
(24) Put Brou along Rt. 558
(25) Lt Watts gave 5 wood shovels, 5 good rakes, 5 good pitch forks, 3 wood handles, 4 hoe heads, 5 hand claw, 6 hand shovel
(28) RDs - won't allow Lampboat ration medicine - says not in charge of them - can sell medicine 15 cents per pill if not supervised, talk to Phieu tomorrow
(29) Delivered 2 cases lunch meat, 72 lbs. meat, 1 box of clothes - 25 people, 1 bundle sandbags
(30 1 woman, 1 child died toda



BOB HANDY AND BROU CHILDREN
MAI LOC REFUGEE CENTER
23 May 1968 photo by Ray W. Stubbe

According to Bob Handy, Mr. Robert Brewer, the Quang Tri Province Senior Advisor (also CIA), referred to Daniel Kelley as "the Lawrence of Arabia for the Brou."[434] Dan Kelley was later awarded a Bronze Star Medal for the period July, 1968 - March, 1969.[435] He also received a personal letter from the President of the United States:

"Dear Mr. Kelley:

"I was particularly pleased to learn that you have returned home to the United States with a special distinction after serving in Vietnam. Certainly the interest which prompted you to master the Brou language at the northern provinces is to be commended. It speaks highly for America's mission in Vietnam and the rapport we seek to establish so that we may effectively help these people who have suffered so long in their fight for freedom.

"With my best wishes as you return to civilian life, Sincerely, Richard M. Nixon."

What the experience did to Dan Kelley, however, remained very dark; what the Brou endured was darker still:

"My Brou experience was unique. Neither history nor the majority of the Vietnam veterans know how 10 thousand Brou were decimated by American bombing and callousness. Optimistic estimate might indicate that 6 thousand survived the trek from Khe Sanh to Cam Lo only to lose perhaps a thousand to sickness, wounds, and starvation. ... While others lost buddies, I lost family. ... My mind's eye sees countless Brou faces, dead or ones left behind. Who can share that memory with me? Jim Perry was an unsung hero. Bob Handy - dead - he saved the Brou nation from extinction. ... So many promises made, and we left them behind, abandoned. ... my solace for all these years has been knowing that our all merciful God would not forsake them who were forsaken by their fellow men. ... My tragedy is having lost an extended family, the Brou. My error in other's eyes was to become too involved. But if they are family, you can't help but feel the pain of losing them."[436]

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[434] Conversation with Daniel R. Kelley, 26 August 1993.
[435] HQ, United States Military Advisory Command, Vietnam, General orders No. 3313, 18 June 1969, Award of the Bronze Star Medal.
[436] Letter from Dan Kelley to Ray W. Stubbe, 8 April 1985.

IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS

The plight of the Brou, especially Brou Christians, continued. By September, 1969, the Brou refugee population at the refugee center increased by some 750 as the village near Ca Lu moved into the center when they learned that the Marines were leaving the area, bringing the Brou population to about 7,000. Finding land to cultivate was impossible; all the "safe" land was being cultivated by the Vietnamese.[437] In 1985, a Brou refugee living in Laos wrote the Millers a 12-page, single-spaced letter:

> "We are like young deer who have lost their mother, like young animals who have lost he forest, wandering around helpless and confused. Whoever they want to capture, they capture. Whoever they want to kill, they just kill. We are only like animals now. We ask you to pray for us about this."[438]

John Miller adds: This letter "represent something of the anguish and despair that can come to a people who have nothing more to live for in this life, who feel there is no one who can or will come to their aid." The Brou letter writer also wrote: "..The authorities imprisoned two men who were believers. They treated them harshly. They accused them falsely of many things and did many other things until finally they agreed to give up their belief in God. Only then they released them from prison. We ask you to pray very much for those who have denied the Lord. ... Since 1975, the authorities took the church building and the believers are no longer allowed to meet together to ray. All of us they treated very harshly. ... Many times Vietnamese people or Brou people reviled me because I believe in the Lord, and because I worked to translate the language of the Brou people with you. ... They say that I am the mouthpiece and the listening ears for you. Many schemed against me and many reported me to the authorities."

Brou refugees at Ban Me Thuot who returned to Khe Sanh in the late 1980s met continued hardship and persecution: "When they got there they were arrested, then spent some time in prison. Two of our teachers that were really committed to the Lord were arrested and they wouldn't release them until they gave up their faith. Finally, they said they would. They left them go, but they'll still be harassed."[439] The Millers wrote of continued growth of the Christian church among the Brou despite horrendous persecutions for following a "foreign" religion, for following the "American religion.." Another Brou wrote the Millers of "continued threats of imprisonment or hard labor for any believers who meet together to worship."[440]

While at a worship service in Savannakhet, Laos, the Millers sat next to a Brou who opened his Brou New Testament. The Millers noticed he had underlined 1 Peter 4.12-16, which reads, in part, "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering as though something strange were happening to you. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name." The Millers commented: "How appropriate, I thought, for these people who have known insult and indignity for their beliefs. Some have been imprisoned. They are not ashamed to suffer as Christians, and it seemed to me that they are not surprised at the things they are going through. Their calm and confident demeanor, as well as their confidence in the Lord, were a great encouragement to us."[441]

Not only did they meet persecution, those who returned to Khe Sanh were forced to live on land that was not productive. "Their traditional land has been taken over by others. They don't have that to hold them together. They don't have their own turf. [Although] they are back in that area, they don't have the good land along the road. They've been pushed back up into the mountains. The Vietnamese have taken over their former areas close to Route 9."[442] Some Brou were successfully engaged, however. One day, the Millers were talking in the hallway where they worked in Thailand and a man from the Ministry of Science and Technology upstairs approached them and, surprisingly, started talking in Brou as he joined in the conversation. Working for the Foreign Service, he had been in the Royal Lao Air Force, sent to the US and then to France to study administration. He was now in charge of the reconstruction of Route 9 in Laos between Savannakhet and Lao Bao![443]

A former US Army Special Forces soldier, Robert Donoghue, organized trips back to Khe Sanh to provide aid for the Brou. Writing in 1995, he mentioned three previous trips to Khe Sanh and was planning on a fourth, leaving 29 April 1995. He wrote: "The Brou are finally realizing that the Americans that left so many years ago have not forgotten them. ... the Brou, living in and around Khe Sanh and Lang Vei desperately require our help. ... A typical Brou community contains about 300 people, with an average family income from selling coffee beans of $80 - $100 a year. They need mosquito nets, medicine,

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[437] John Miller, letter to Ray W. Stubbe, 9 Oct 1969.
[438] In letter from John Miller to Ray W. Stubbe, 17 Oct 1985.
[439] Conversation with John and Carolyn Miller, 11 May 1990.
[440] John and Carolyn Miller, letter to Ray W. Stubbe, May, 1990.
[441] John and Carolyn Miller, letter of 8 June 1991.
[442] Conversation with John and Carolyn Miller, 18 August 1991.
[443] *Ibid.*

water wells, clothing, and agricultural assistance. Medicine is nonexistent in the villages. There is no facility or teacher to provide an education for the Brou children."[444]

The Millers received a letter signed by several Brou Christians living in Khe Sanh [undated, but late 1991]: "Here in the Khe Sanh area there are now believers in many villages–in one village 5 households, in another 6 households. They are still not allowed to visit each other and they are not allowed to meet together to pray. ... There are believers in 50 households. We help each other to have enough food and clothing. We ask you to pray for us. Right now there is much sickness. We ask believers in Jesus Christ to pray for us about the following. First, ask God to allow those in authority to quickly know about His work. Second, that God will open the hearts of the authorities to allow us to meet together. Third, ask God to allow us to be able to teach the Word of God freely. ... The authorities told us this: 'During the war, the Americans devastated this country of Viet Nam. First came the religion of the Good News (a reference to the Protestant church). And if there is another war, they will kill all of us.' But we aren't worried (sad) at all about this thing. We just ask all believers to pray much."[445] [in Letter from John and Carolyn Miller 17 Oct 1991]..

Writing in 1992, the Millers quoted a letter they had received from a young Brou man who wrote: "There was a time when I denied and gave up the Lord. but when I came back to believe again in 1986 many times I encountered difficulties. Many times the authorities came after me and put me in prison. ... People in the area wanted to kill us to stamp out the work of the Lord. But we thank God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord: He really received your prayers and the prayers that others prayed for us. The work of the Lord was not destroyed. Many times difficulties came to test our faith, but we thank God that He helped us to be able to endure and to stand firm. ... God has called 530 people in our area to turn and believe in God. When the authorities saw that people were turning to believe in large numbers they arrested us again. They also imprisoned three of the new believers. These three felt great joy when they turned to believe in God and were healed of sickness. So they went telling the Word of God for others to know also. Now we meet separately, village by village, and we thank God that because of your prayers we are now able to meet together. In the past they said we were not even allowed to believe in God, but since 1991 they have allowed us to believe and to meet together in our separate villages."

In 1994, the Millers wrote:

> " 'This is that happens to people who become Christians,' the guards announced as they marched nine chained Brou men down the main road in town.. who refused to be involved in the traditional spirit worship of the area and were reported to the authorities as undesirables in the community. Six of the nine men are still in prison after one year and are still required to sleep in stocks. But they have not wavered in their commitment to the Lord and are determined to persevere. ... Despite continual harassment and opposition the number of believers continues to grow in significant numbers."[446]

BUNKERS: A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON DEALING WITH PTSD

By Ray William Stubbe

PROLOGUE



CHAPLAIN STUBBE'S BUNKER IN 'C' MED
Photo by Glen Waller *ca.* October, 1967

Just after midnight of Sunday, 21 January 1968, a rat ran down my bed, squeaking, and although we had a total blackout on the base, I had fastened a towel around the center of a camouflaged parachute covering the overhead and bulkheads of my bunker so that light from the single light bulb suspended in the center would not escape the bunker. I did this to discourage further visits by rats. The sermon for worship today was still not completed, and I planned to get up at 0500. Somehow this was communicated to the powers that be, for about 0500, I was awakened, not by an alarm clock, but by loud explosions of incoming mortars and rockets. Our base was under attack. Stunned, I cautiously dressed, knowing my bunker could protect from flying shrapnel and perhaps a direct hit by a mortar, but it could not withstand a rocket. I knew I should dash to the "C"

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[444] Special Forces Association: *The Drop*, Spring, 1995, p. 63.
[445] John and Carolyn Miller, letter, 21 April 1992.
[446] John and Carolyn Miller, letter, 16 March 1994.

Med trench for better protection. Explosions eerily illuminated the dark night. The LSU[447] next to C Med[448] was on fire and the air was filled with the stench of burning sandbags while gasoline in the POL[449] area on the other side of C Med was sending up plumes of orange fire. Flares illuminated the entire sky, and sounds of whizzing, cracking, and explosions punctuated terror into everyone's soul. Incoming arrived in spurts of intensity. I cautiously moved to the door of my bunker, considering whether I should make a dash. My bunker now felt like a prison, isolating me from the company of others which I so desperately now needed.[450] Every time I considered running, another round exploded nearby. I knew from briefings that one should never run in a mortar attack; shrapnel explodes upwards, in a "V" shape, so that one might be flat on the ground almost next to an exploding round and not be hit; while standing, one was sure to receive pieces of shrapnel in one's upper body. On the other hand, rockets and artillery explode and spew shrapnel over the surface of the ground; the only safe place is below ground or in a bunker. Eventually, I disregarded the possibility of being hit and ran; the need to be with others overpowered any fear.

All the corpsmen huddled in the "C" Med trench. Rounds continued to explode until about 0830 (although I later learned that officially the attack ceased at 0630), mainly rounds cooking off in our ammo dump. Then, someone yelled "Gas!" It was from CS[451] powder that had been stored in our main ammo dump which was now exploding. I put on my gas mask and immediately felt claustrophobia and wanted to yank it off my face, but my mind, reminding me I needed to wear it, prevailed. Practically all the men needed to urinate. We forgot that our steel helmets were called "piss pots" for a reason! (Later, we kept some empty IV bottles in the bunker for this purpose). Rockets continued to shriek and explode with flashes of light like from a flash bulb of a camera. The effects of rockets were not only destruction from its blast but their shrieks that reminded one of scraping fingernails on a chalk board.



AFTER ATTACK. Official USMC photo A192619
Date of photo and photographer unknown

Eventually all, by necessity, departed from the trench bunker; there wasn't enough room for doctors, corpsmen, and casualties, and the incoming had stopped. I returned to my bunker and noticed a large part of an 82 mm mortar at my bunker's entrance along with pieces of shrapnel embedded in its sandbag walls. The bunker still stood. Ecclesiastes 9.12 came to my mind: "For man does not know his time. Like fish which are taken in an evil net, and like birds which are caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared at an evil time when it suddenly falls upon them."

After talking with the casualties brought to C Med, I started to walk around the entire combat base, filled with nervous energy. Rounds from our ASP[452] on the east side of the base continued to explode, and I was confused as to what to do. Should I hold worship services? (The reality of what had happened hadn't yet registered.) I carried a large brass altar cross and a metal ammo box with small hymnals and communion wafers along with a bottle of wine. Unexploded and semi-cooked-off rounds were scattered everywhere—twisted pieces of brass, a mess of fleshette darts.[453] In some areas, there

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[447] LSU is Logistic Supply Unit where C-rations and sandbags were stowed.
[448] 3rd Platoon, C Company, 3rd Medical Battalion, the base triage from which those wounded were evacuated by helicopters which landed on a spur of the airstrip nearby. There was also a Regimental Aid Station (RAS) and the 1/26 BAS (battalion aid station) located within the combat base.
[449] POL – Petroleum Oil Lubricants, the area containing drums of tar used in the refurbishing of the airstrip, JP4 fuel, and other petroleum items.
[450] *Cf.* the famous line, "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage." (In the poem by Richard Lovelace, 1618-1658, "To Althea, From Prison"). One might be imprisoned in ignorance, fear, superstition, prejudice, toxic relationships, etc.
[451] CS – tear gas. The powder was for dispensers that might be emplaced against enemy positions or on friendly positions to discourage assault by enemy troops.
[452] Ammunition Supply Point, where rounds of munitions were stowed in berms and bunkers.
[453] Fleshette darts were contained in a special 106 mm recoilless rifle round which might be set on muzzle action and spew 9,000 of these small darts, about an inch long. Some rounds of the 90 mm tank round were also filled with them. I picked up a handful of these and fashioned a cross made from them on my helmet cover. One group of fleshettes was in a circular package about three inches in diameter. I sent this home along with various pieces of twisted pieces of 105 mm artillery, and

wasn't an area six inches square that didn't have a tail fin, a part of a mortar or 105 round, 4.2 round, bits of cylindrical pieces from a 90 mm canister tank round, rings holding bundles of fleshettes from a 106 mm beehive round or some other ordnance. It was scattered all over the ground.[454]. Most of the plywood hardback hooches had collapsed. The regimental mess hooch was burnt and the walls of the PX and Post Office hooches were a shambles. All the recon tents and hardbacks, being in the center of the base and sandwiched between the regimental COC[455] and the airstrip, were demolished, but there were no casualties; all had reached the safety of trenches in time.

As I walked towards our battalion COC on the east side of the base, tears from tear gas powder lingering in the air brought tears, and the words of Isaiah 24.1, 3, 19-20 came to mind: "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty and maketh it waste. And turneth it upside down and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. ... The earth is utterly emptied, and clean despoiled. ... The earth is broken, broken down. The earth is crumbled in pieces. The earth trembles and totters. The earth reels to and fro like a drunken man."

Our 1/26 CP[456] mess building was smoking; it had been hit (I later heard) by three direct hits. At our 1/26 COC, a large log had fallen down in the S-3 section. One Marine attempted to saw a ten-inch diameter log with the very small "bush saw" from a survival kit! A large quantity of C-4 explosives in the blazing ASP had detonated and the shock waves had cracked the timbers. Fortunately, there were no casualties.

Rounds from the ASP adjacent the COC continued to cook off. Some Marines said a Marine was trapped in a collapsed bunker in the middle of the ASP, so I went to help dig him out. We had to hit the deck several times from rounds that continued to cook off and I helped clear away some of the rubble. We all were aware we could be killed at any time, but by now I was also aware that I was numb and on automatic; we just continued.

I continued walking about the entire base. The 1/26 H&S office Marines had sought refuge in a small bunker which had no top, but everyone was OK. A 105 mm round had penetrated through their bunker walls and exploded just outside the bunker, but no one received a scratch. One of the Marines from the company offices had dashed out of his office bare-ass naked with only a flak jacket when the rounds first impacted. Those observing said it was humorous to see his bare ass wiggling to get deeper in a shallow trench as he attempted to get lower and lower.



KHE SANH COMBAT BASE. Official USMC photo A192624
Photographer unknown

I got another whiff of CS but didn't bother donning the gas mask as I aimlessly continued to walk about the base towards the regiment COC. One of the Marines gave me some water to wash out my eyes. The 1/26 BAS[457] had taken a few hits, and 3rd Engineers and "A" Battery is OK. One of the Marines from the "A" Battery said that the "C" Battery on the east side of the base near the ASP had been completely knocked out[458]. "P" ("Provisional") Battery of 155s had just relocated from the "C" Battery area to the western side of the base last week, and was OK.

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the package, when it arrived, had a note from the postal authorities that read "area clearing device removed." The circular "package" of fleshettes had been removed.

[454] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh*, 1971, p. 811.

[455] Command Operations Center, the Command Post of the unit.

[456] Command Post

[457] Battalion Aid Station.

[458] Actually, the three tubes of "C" Battery (the other three tubes being on Hill 881S), continued to fire throughout the attack. Gun #5 developed a failed recoil mechanism. Following the attack, Guns #1 and #2 displaced to "A" Battery on the west side of the combat base and two days later, on 23 January, returned to their original location after it had been cleared of extensive, unexploded ordnance, joined with the newly-arrived "B" Battery.

"D" Company, 1/26, in the middle of the base, (the "Ponderosa" area) was moving out to reinforce Khe Sanh village CAC OSCAR and the District Headquarters. I wanted desperately to accompany them and asked, but 1/Lt Walter F. Chapman, the Company XO (and son of the Commandant of the Marine Corps) smiled at me and simply said, "No."



SHRAPNELDAMAGE AT KHE SANH
Official USMC photo A190181 by Hale 01 Mar 1968

As I continued walking down the lines, all seemed OK except for one Marine I saw on a stretcher. The skin covering his abdomen was missing leaving his intestines in plain sight. I wondered why no one had put a wet cloth over them—something I seemed to recall from Boy Scouts first aid, but didn't move. (I later realized I was frozen in numbness, perhaps shock; to my lasting guilt, I didn't run to comfort him. My life had narrowed). One Marine mentioned he had been on a LP[459] and had returned when the attack started. He forgot to tell those on the line they were returning, and barely avoided being hit by friendly fire.

In an effort to move casualties to a safer place while awaiting helicopter transportation to Phu Bai, eight wounded men were brought into my bunker. One was Captain Norman J. Jaspers, Jr., the CO of K/3/26 on Hill 861 who said that were it not for the "ring of steel" artillery supporting them, they would definitely been overrun. Their Company CP bunker took two direct hits. The 106 mm plus all its ammunition, one of two on the hill, was hit. Enemy snipers were inside the wires and shot several Marines. The Marines rallied and repelled them, retaining control of the hill. The Captain said, "They are all heroes." One of the Marines had WP[460] wounds, his whole face showing a sheen of copper.[461] His hands were bandaged, so I helped him eat some cookies I had received from home, placing them in his mouth like I would place communion wafers in worship, a sacramental eating communicating human caring. One man had a leg wound and passed out. The Captain lay on the deck with shrapnel in his leg. Then they were all medevaced.

By 1400 I was completely exhausted and ate part of a boned turkey C-ration and a can of fruit cocktail sent from home. News reporters began to arrive and HM2 Bernet of C Med expressed anger that helicopters which should have been used to evacuate wounded were being used to transport news reporters.

Seabee bulldozers were turning over dirt on the burning sandbags of LSU. Some of the Marines from CAP OSCAR-3 just outside the base arrived. At the recon area, one of the Lieutenants told me that he had gone to a bunker to check on the welfare of the Marines, but it was empty. It alone, of all the recon bunkers, had taken a direct hit and collapsed.

I walked back to the 1/26 COC bunker to report my activities and observations to our battalion CO, LtCol James B. Wilkinson[462], who suggested I remain at C Med and mentioned that "D" Company spotted a battalion-sized NVA unit in the open just north of Route 9 and east of Khe Sanh village and immediately returned.

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NARROWED LIFE

For those who found themselves at Khe Sanh, Vietnam, experience of the battlefield became one of a gradual narrowing of life. All felt the effects of being hemmed in, cut-off, isolated, and pressured (compressed, narrowed, squeezed, confined, or choked), and helpless (having less options to act).[463]

Situated in a mountainous area, the main combat base and several outlying, detached outposts, Khe Sanh's remote location near the Laotian border and just under the Demilitarized Zone, engendered a sense of isolation and being cut-off. A two-lane, mostly dirt road, Route 9, contained some 31 old bridges and numerous possible ambush sites. Indeed, on 21 July

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[459] Listening Post
[460] White Phosphorus
[461] Copper sulfate ($CuSO_4$) is applied on white phosphorus burns to stop burning due to contact with air.
[462] Commanding Officer of First Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment.
[463] This was also true of Rules of Engagement which restricted actions. For example, if a patrol received sniper fired from a build-up area, they were required to radio this information and request permission to fire. By the time permission was given—hours, perhaps even days later—any enemy would have departed.

1967, aggressive patrolling uncovered one such ambush site as 175 mm guns moved towards Khe Sanh.[464] The ambush site, still in preparation (probably to sever the supply route during the coming monsoon season), was detected, and a costly skirmish resulted. Route 9 was declared impassible.

Biblical amounts of monsoon rain—sometimes six inches a day[465]—washed out many of the bridges of Route 9 along with the foundation of the airstrip requiring placement of a crushed rock base and re-laying of the airstrip, closing the airstrip in the Fall of 1967. On 28 July 1967, Captain Johnson, the Commanding Officer of D/1/26, the unit occupying Hill 861, mentioned that most of the trenches and bunkers on that hill had washed out from the rains..[466] Some collapsed bunkers were deadly. A new bunker was being constructed on the combat base for the communications section, and Marines cut down trees near the base for reinforcing timbers instead of procuring treated timbers which were arriving for the construction of FOB-3. They heaped hundreds of sandbags on the roof, made heavier by the rains. Those constructing it were "short-timers" from A/1/26, Relieved of patrolling in the miserable cold on the muddy and slippery hills, they were due to return home shortly. It was early in the morning on Sunday, 17 September 1967:

> "I put on the new rain gear–coat and trousers, and the wide-brimmed rain cover. It was 0745 and it was raining and had been raining all night.
>
> "Just as I neared the Triage tent of "C" Med, an ambulance pulled up with Doctor DeMaagd, our 1/26 Battalion Surgeon. I helped carry one of the men into the triage [PFC Omar David Witmer, Jr.]. Blood was all over, coming out of his nose and mouth. He was unconscious. I helped cut off his rain gear, shirt and flak jacket. The doctor put a large tube into his chest cavity to drain blood from internal bleeding and permit him to breathe easier. They then inserted a tube into his neck. It all seemed so grotesque. Another Marine in very bad condition but conscious and in much pain, desperately pleading to have his head elevated to he could breathe, was brought into the tent. After they finished with the first man, they cut a hole in his chest cavity and he screamed in intense pain, but it drained the blood. Then they brought in others, not in such critical condition–only broken legs and arms. There were twelve in all, all from "A" Co of 1/26, all short-timers and therefore not on the operation in the bush. They all had eaten breakfast and were sitting in the new regimental communications bunker they had been building near our 1/26 COC. The bunker suddenly collapsed, not giving them time to escape and they became pinned down under the heavy logs loaded down with heavy, rain-soaked sandbags and pierced steel air matting. One of the men was our potential bugler, McClure; another man was the one who had received the shrapnel wound on 881 while watching the air strikes. Other than the two serious casualties, all complained of back pains, spines, and their legs."[467]

Helicopters transferred personnel, brought mail, and evacuated casualties while airdrops delivered heavy timbers and equipment to construct a new Special Forces camp at Lang Vei and a Forward Operations Base for Top Secret operations into nearby Laos.

Meanwhile, Marines at Khe Sanh daily patrolled through elephant grass higher than a man and bamboo thickets like so many rods of steel, up and down sharp slopes of hills muddied from the rains, through raging rivers (in which several Marines drowned),[468] and dense vegetation which shrouded possible lurking enemy soldiers who might be only a few feet away, undetected. Movement of patrols involved a narrowing, harrowing—experience.

Loss of air support due to fog and rain also resulted in weeks without mail and the sense of being cut-off from family and friends, and when mail finally did arrive, some received "Dear John" letters or letters relaying information of situations at home—a father beating a mother or the children, siblings using drugs or having trouble with "the law," desperate financial situations, death of a close relative (and not being able to travel home). Being literally half-way around the world, not receiving mail narrowed life for many.

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[464] Moved from Camp J.J. Carroll, the 175s perhaps were being moved to Khe Sanh before the monsoon season which would have made Route 9 impassible in order to support soldiers from the FOB-3 base which was to be constructed in November, 1967, or perhaps the 175s were being moved to support a much larger force as part of Operation EL PASO which was planned to jump off from Khe Sanh and move along Route 9 into Laos to sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail. (For information on EL PASO, see Collins, John M., *Military Geography for Professionals and the Public*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1998, Chapter 12, "Operation Plan *EL PASO*," pp. 367-384. EL PASO was shelved due to the approach of NVA units in December, 1967, to lay siege to Khe Sanh. A later operation, LAM SON 719, was launched in early 1971.)

[465] The regimental S-2, Major Harper L. Bohr, Jr., reported six inches fell from noon 16 September to noon 17 September 1967. [Stubbe, Ray William, *Autobiography*, Part 7, *Khe Sanh, Vietnam, before the Siege*, p. 155.

[466] Stubbe, Ray William, *Autobiography*, Part 7, *Khe Sanh before the Siege*, p. 66.

[467] Stubbe, Ray William, *Autobiography*, Part 7, *Khe Sanh before the Siege*, pp. 154-155. The collapse occurred at 0745. Witmer was a married, 20 year-old. One other Marine, PFC Ronald Olin McClung, died of wounds from the collapsed bunker. [Stubbe, *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed., 2008, pp. 94-95].

[468] PFC Omar David Witmer, Jr. (A/1/26 on 17 Sep 1967) and ,LCPL Marion Lee Meggs (B/3rd Recon on 16 Nov 1967).



MARINES AT KHE SANH TEMPORARILY TAKING SHELTER DURING SIEGE
Official USMC photo A190640. Date and photographer unknown

When the siege battle began, the approximately 6,000 American defenders[469] suddenly found themselves surrounded by some 40,000 well-trained and battle-experienced troops of the North Vietnamese Army (PAVN), one division of which (the 304th) had fought at Dien Bien Phu. Soon, a strangling network of trenches appeared like a clutching hand grasping to squeeze the combat base, while hundreds of incoming rockets, artillery rounds, mortars and recoilless rifle rounds exploded on the base. Although unintimidated and continuing their daily work in the open, moving supplies, laying communication lines, firing artillery from open parapets, checking on the welfare of the men and bringing them supplies, moving to and from briefings; they temporarily dashed to bunkers, trenches, and road culverts, but quickly re-emerged as soon as incoming ceased. After all, most were about 20 years old and lived as though they were invulnerable! Most were as oblivious of the very real probability of death from incoming as most " back in the world" are when leaving their garages to drive their cars are of possible accidents. Five days into the siege, after the entire base appeared as though a hurricane had destroyed it, and with daily and heavy bombardment, I decided I needed to spice up my C-rations with an onion after noticing some of the Marines of the recon unit had onions and there were beaucoup in a small hooch behind the regimental mess. So I crawled through the barbed wire surrounding the area where there is no trench for cover. It is in the center of the base, across from the regimental COC, the impact zone for most of the incoming. The door of the hooch was locked, but part of the wall was blown away, so I crawled in and grabbed a few onions to season my C-rations. Nobody here thinks, "What if a round were to come in?" If we did, nothing would get done! As it is, we all just do our work as normal, perhaps a bit more cautiously and moving a bit faster.[470]

Bunkers, which became a comforting, warm refuge, a sort of "womb" (even occasionally referred to as such!), sometimes became a tomb, which collapsed and were a target for enemy gunners. Two excerpts from my daily diary tell te story of the 106 mm recoilless rifle bunker on the perimeter near "C" Med.:

Wednesday, 07 February 1968

As I walked out of my bunker this morning, a crater about two feet deep and four feet wide just outside a newly-constructed wall of sandbags guarding the entrance to my bunker from blast silently shouted a reminder that life here was like walking through a mine field: at any moment, I would suddenly die without warning. I had passed two immense craters on the base in which I could stand with my head beneath its circumference. There was no safe place at Khe Sanh. Even the new regimental bunker being constructed took a direct hit just before it was to be occupied, totally destroying it.

Moving a few more feet, I met the Vietnamese interpreter of the Interrogator-Translator Team who told me that the Army Special Forces camp at Lang Vei had just been overrun by tanks. It was the first use of tanks by the enemy in Vietnam. "That place was built to take a whole regiment," he said.–" Perhaps they're on their way here," he added.

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[469] Manning level as the Siege began: 244 USMC officers and 5528 Marine enlisted, 21 Navy officers and 207 Navy enlisted, 2 Army officers and 28 Army enlisted, 1 Air Force Officer and 12 Air Force enlisted, for a total of 5785. [26 Mar 222120H/Jan68 to CG, 3rd MarDiv] This does not include those at the Army FOB-3 appended to the combat base, those in the District Headquarters in Khe Sanh village (including CAC OSCAR) or those at the Special Force Camp at Lang Vei.. Manning as of 16 Feb: USMC (153 off/3039 enl), USN (10 off/188 enl), USA (1 off/19 enl), USAF (5 off/24 enl). Manning as of 16 Apr provides both FOB-3 and 37th ARVN Bn (CAC (1 off/30 enl, FOB-3: USMC 1 off/31 enl), USA (20off/105 enl), ARVN (2 off/455 enl); Stubbe, Ray W., *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed , 2008, p. 196].

[470] Stubbe, Ray William, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 07 Oct 1971, p. 867.

Khe Sanh Combat Base had been on Red Alert since just after midnight and we received an abnormally large amount of incoming. The majority landed in areas of 1/26 and 3/26. This and deteriorating weather, including rain, precluded assembly of reinforcements for Lang Vei. Visibility was less than half a mile. Enemy shelling this morning was so intense that by first light, the condition of the runway indicated that only light aircraft could land.

By afternoon, I decided to stay overnight on the perimeter lines in a nearby bunker that housed a 106 mm recoilless rifle squad. I certainly didn't want to be alone in a desperate situation. I wasn't the only one, of course; frequently I saw Marines here hugging each other during shrieks of rockets and deafening explosions of artillery.

As I walked the short distance from my bunker to the bunker housing the 106 crew, I noticed one Marine from that crew in the trench reading from a small prayer book I'd previously distributed to the troops. Their bunker presented all the warmth, quiet, and security of a womb. Obviously, the safest place was out in the trench-lines where only a direct hit killed. Above-ground bunkers, on the other hand were a large, visible target. A hit could collapse the overhead, crushing its occupants. A round which penetrated and exploded inside instantly killed all.

The base went on Red Alert at 0121 in the morning, meaning 100% manning of the perimeter, not the 50% we had maintained. I awoke at about 0200 as one Marine after another came and went, heating up some coffee or cocoa or eating a C-ration, just to reenter the light and warmth and closeness to human flesh of that womb.. The Marines started playing a small 45 RPM phonograph with the song, "I Heard it on the Grapevine," by Credence Clearwater, a nervous, jumpy song that seemed to resonate in their nervous movement in and out of the bunker and the trench. Maybe the song should have been worded, "I heard it on the PC-25 radio! The tanks are coming!" No one got any sleep. I listened to their dreams, shared their thoughts, and heard their fears.

Gary Thorpe, one of the Marines in this group was on his second Vietnam tour. During his first tour, he fired a 106 recoilless rifle in support of a squad of Marines that had been ambushed and was pinned down. Close to the ambush site on the slope of the hill there was a shallow cave into which the surviving Marines had managed to scramble. From there they desperately radioed for fire support. The enemy soldiers were almost at the mouth of the cave, lobbing grenades and firing almost directly into it when he was given the order to fire. He saw his first round took out the attacking NVA. His second round was aimed at NVA approaching the other side. Instead it went directly into the cave, killing all the Marine defenders. Gary murmured that since then he just wanted to die.

Another Marine in the bunker, Mike McKeever, had played high school football and basketball and was active in his church as an altar boy and sang in the choir. He was an Eagle Scout. His father had served as a Marine in Korea. His dream was to become a Marine Corps combat photographer.

Friday, 23 February 1968

Death's nearness was felt each day, actually many times a day. While sitting on my bed eating my one allotted C-ration for the day, called "Ham with Water Added and Eggs Chopped, Canned"–(I'm sure civilian restaurants couldn't possibly beat the DOD in creative food descriptions!), a sudden barrage of heavy arty struck us and a violent explosion shook my bunker. It sounded as though the round had stuck in the outer wall and I immediately thought of a delayed fuse that would soon explode the entire bunker. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., we received 1307 rounds, breaking the record for one day of incoming in Vietnam. Our base was only about half a square mile in area, and the devastation included 8 men killed, 38 wounded (19 evacuated).

One round struck the nearby 106 mm recoilless rifle bunker where I had slept a couple weeks earlier. The exposed long barrel of the gun was undamaged. Several Corpsmen, Walt Driscoll, the Catholic Chaplain, and I dashed to that bunker, and a "Crackerbox" (ambulance) somehow made it there also. We carried out the four dead Marines that manned that bunker. The one I carried one across my shoulders had no head, only strings of flesh dangling out of a cavity where his neck had been. We searched, but were unable to locate his head.

When I returned to my bunker that evening to sleep, I noticed that the wall of aluminum air-matting sheets held in place with metal engineering stakes was bend inwards, indicating that a round was embedded in the dirt wall. I called EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) and was told it was safe to sleep and that they'd be out in the morning to check it. I'm sure they just didn't want to venture out at night, and of course, no one could use flashlights at night anyway.

I fell asleep on my rack next to the bulging wall with an unexploded round probably embedded in it. Once we accepted the fact there was no safe place at Khe Sanh, paralyzing fears evaporated like the usual morning fog that shrouded us, and we lived for another day, always ready to share and care for each other.



26th MARINES COC BUNKER – 14 April 1968
Photo by Ray W. Stubbe

Earlier on Friday, 23 February, I visited the COC of regiment, located in the center of the combat base. It's an old concrete bunker from the days when this was a small Special Forces camp. Everyone here refers to these concrete bunkers as the "old French bunkers" but they are actually only a few years old.[471] I'd visited the Marine COC earlier (23 July 1967). The concrete opening led to descending stairs which made a few turns with steps varying in length from the normal foot or so to one stair that was over four feet long, and then suddenly dropped down to the next stair, accompanied by a sudden drop in the concrete overhead. If one didn't know it was there and duck, he'd get beamed. To the left was the regimental switchboard. Another turn to the right led to a small room where the switchboard had originally been located followed by a long corridor. To the left of the corridor was a maze ending in a room, the residence of the air officer and to the far right was the main COC with a large map on the wall opposite the entrance and walls filled with counters of telephones and radio operators along the other walls. To the left was a small opening to the adjacent room where the S-3 and regimental CO and XO and others could be briefed and current operations plotted on a large map. Going to the adjacent room, a little more crowded, one came upon the artillery and air sections, and then a small set of stairs to another room, the working space of the regiment S-2 and a very large map showing areas deep into Laos along the wall to the left and with maps directly ahead of the Montagnard tribal boundaries and other maps. The area of the S-2 was "L"-shaped with a room in the center containing an array of new and old maps and other materials. To enter the S-2 hooch, one again must duck or knock one's head on the concrete overhead—something I did several times in late 1967 when visiting the COC.[472].

As I visited with Major Jerry Hudson, the S-2 of regiment in the COC of regiment a Marine brought in a piece of shrapnel. Maj Hudson mentioned he is interested in collecting shrapnel to determine what we are receiving. He said he walks about the area placing a stick in the center of the crater (where the fuse buries itself) to determine the possible azimuth from which it was fired. Incoming for today totaled 1313 rounds.[473] Men no longer desire to leave Khe Sanh on R&R since that would involve going to the airstrip, a place of death.[474] On 23 January, along with ammunition, 4,000 pounds of body bags were flown into Khe Sanh Combat Base.[475] 200,000 pounds of ordnance were flown into Khe Sanh on 23 January. News accounts emphasize that at Khe Sanh, we are now facing "the largest and best-equipped military force that North Vietnam has ever concentrated on a single battleground."[476]

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[471] The Khe Sanh Special Forces Camp was constructed in late 1964 to early 1965. [Stubbe, *Pebbles in My Boots*, Vol. 2, 2011, pp. 6 & 11]. After Marine battalion 1/3 arrived in late 1966, the Special Forces Camp at Khe Sanh was moved 19-25 December 1966 to Lang Vei. The move was assumed to be temporary and the Marines were ordered to maintain the buildings at the Special Forces camp, including underground concrete living quarters, underground concrete Tigerhound quarters, underground III MAF CIC [Combined Intelligence Center], underground concrete communications bunker, mortar pits inside the perimeter, 3 underground timber CIDG corner living bunkers, CIDG cook house, and a CIDG supply bunker with a concrete floor. [CO CO C 5th SFGA DaNang 180900Z/Dec66, Movement of Khe Sanh CIDG Camp to Lang Vei, and III MAF COC 250251Z/Dec66 in III MAF COC Journal and File #135 and 139].

[472] Stubbe, Ray W., *Autobiography*, Part 7, *Khe Sanh Before the Siege*., p. 43, entry for Sunday, 23 July 1967.

[473] 476 of arty, 14 of 60 mm, 372 of 82 mm, 4 of 120, 437 of 122 mm rockets, 5 of recoilless rifle, total: 1313, but LtCol James B. Wilkinson reported (from the regimental briefing) a total of 1407 rounds at the 1/26 staff and officer brief on Sat, 24 Feb 1968. Later in the afternoon, Major David Smith, CO of FOB-3, said we received over 1700 rounds if one also counts the rounds that landed in FOB-3. [Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 Apr 1970, p. 701].

[474] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 Apr 1970, p. 700.

[475] *National Observer*, 26 Feb 68, p. 4, in chronology of Khe Sanh battle.

[476] *Time* magazine 91:5 (02 Feb 1968), pp. 21*f*. (Note: news magazines are dated one week ahead of issue date). [Noted in Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 1971, p. 887].

The words of Psalm 18 provided words to contain our experience: "The cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me."[477] Collapsed bunkers and trenches, an almost daily experience, carried a deeper significance, a profound sense of narrowing life, our "cords" and "snares!" Everything about Khe Sanh implied this reality: the strangling by tens of thousands of surrounding enemy troops, mail delayed due to its lower priority—along with Red Cross routine priority messages of welfare reports and an attempt to limit aircraft from landing on an exposed, deadly airstrip pounded by incoming, daily surrounded by death and danger—sights of grotesque wounds, suffocating tear gas from the cooking-off ammo dump. This, and so much more, became our combat *Sitz-im-Leben*.[478]. In years following, aftershocks of battle continued. For those who fight in a battle, it never ends. It is "endless night."[479] You may take a man from a battlefield, but you cannot take the battlefield out of the man. The experience of battle became like a scratch on a LP record that constantly replays the same snippet of music until someone lifts the needle and playing arm to continue the song of life. Memories, nightmares, and constant flashbacks continue to narrow life. A mood or emotional outburst or sudden action activated by a current experience might involve an awakening of a latent, unexpressed (at the time) emotional reaction to a similar situation experienced during battle. The narrowed life of survivors continues to isolate. Battle is the experience of the narrowed life, a stenosis of the soul. We at Khe Sanh were being strangled, choked like those times breathing ceases as when overcome by intense emotion such as fear or wonder. For the people of the Old Testament, the soul was localized in the throat,[480]

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ANCIENT WORDS PACKAGED OUR EXPERIENCE

NARROWED LIFE

Words and concepts, like boats carrying people, carry and package experiences so they might be contained, named, identified, known, examined, and handled. Dangerously destructive realities become safe to touch and handle, like handling radioactive radium in a lead container, electric wires with lethal current having sufficient insulating cover, and rubber gloves on hands working in hot water. Naming something gives us control over it, as Adam named the creatures[481] or the incident where Jacob wrestled with the angel at the Jabbok.[482]

The Hebrew word for "trouble" (*sar*, צָרַר) derives from an Akkadian word meaning "to wrap," and is related to the Arabic word *sara*, "tie up, bind."[483] The lexicon gives the following meanings of the verb: (1) bind up, tie up, be restricted, narrow, scant, cramped; (2) suffer distress; (3) show hostility towards, vex; (4) make a rival; (5) be sharp, sharp-edged.[484] The term suggests "spatial narrowness," "having no space."[485] As a noun, the Hebrew word is translated as "distress," or "trouble," as in the following examples: "You gave me room when I was in distress."[486] "Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress.[487] "In my distress, I called upon the LORD,; to my God I cried for help."[488] "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand

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[477] Ps 18.5, ESV.

[478] Situation in life, a German term used by Biblical scholars.

[479] From William Blake's poem, "Auguries of Innocence:" "Every; Night and every Morn / Some to Misery are Born / every Morn and Every Night / Some are Born to sweet delight / Some are Born to sweet delight / Some are Born to Endless Night."

[480] The throat is the organ through which nourishment is received [Ps. 107.5, 9]. It "..is the seat of all the tumultuous longing and desire, seeking and yearning of humanity (Ps. 24.4, 35.25, 42.-2) and represents the seat and the process of spiritual feelings and inner conditions." [Kraus, Hans-Joachim, *Theology of the Psalms*. Trans. Keith Crim. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986, p. 145].

[481] Gen 2.19.

[482] Gen. 32.22-31. Jacob wrestled all day. The angel gives Jacob a new name, "Israel." Jacob asks the angel for his name, but instead of giving the name, the angel blesses Jacob. "..ancients did not consider the name as simply sound and smoke. On the contrary, for them the name was closely linked with its bearer .. containing something of the character of the one who bore it." [von Rad, Gerhard, *Genesis, A Commentary* (*Old Testament Library*). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961, p. 316]. In giving his name, Jacob reveals his whole nature, for the name "Jacob" designates him as a cheat; he is now given a new name of honor.

[483] Fabry, H.-J., "צר ," in Botterweck, G. Joahnnes, Ringgren, Helmer, and Fabry, Heinz Josef, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Trans.. Douglas W. Stott. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003, Vol. 12, p. 455.

[484] Brown, Francis, Driver, S.R., and Briggs, Charles A., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix containing the biblical Aramaic based on the Lexicon of William Gesenius*. Trans. Edward Robinson. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1959.], pp. 864-866.

[485] Fabry, *op. cit.*., p. 456.

[486] Ps 4.2[1].

[487] Ps. 107.6, 13, 19, 28.

[488] Ps 18.6.

delivers me."[489] "..you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of distress."[490] As an adjective, the term is translated "narrow": "Surely your waste and your desolate places and your devasted land—surely now you will be too narrow for your inhabitants.."[491] "The children of our bereavement will yet say in your ears: 'The place is too narrow for me, make room for me to dwell in.'"[492] "Now the sons of the prophets complain to Elisha, 'See, the place where we dwell under your charge is too small for us.'"[493] When Balaam was sent to curse the people of Israel, an angel of the Lord stood in the way, blocking his path and Balaam's donkey stopped moving: "Then the angel of the LORD went ahead and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right of to the left."[494]

Motivated by the intensity of incoming rounds which, after a few days, included heavy artillery, Marines of the recon unit located in the center of the combat base dug deeper and deeper at Khe Sanh, but unfortunately in their desperate zeal, they dug in a straight line so that if a round were to land in the trench, the force of blast as well as shrapnel would strike those inside the trench. To minimize casualties, they dug "roll-outs" at the bottom and into the sides of the trench into which they could roll during incoming. With exploding rounds, the friable laterite soil crumbled into little pieces. Those inside were buried alive. Kevin Macaulay, one of the recon Marines, vividly remembers one such event. On 04 March 1968:

> "I ran forward and a section of the trench line wall directly above where these two fellows were improving the roll-outs had collapsed, so about seven feet of dirt four foot wide had fallen over the top of them, and as it had fallen, it had crumbled into small pieces. We had two Marines buried under about five or six feet of crumbled-up dirt. ... I immediately dropped down to my knees and started moving as much dirt as I could with my hands. A crowd formed around us. We dug and we dug, and after about five minutes, I started to tire and a fellow by the name of [PFC Rufus] Daigle took over, and after a couple of minutes, he started to tire, so I relieved him. [Five minutes later] ... we uncovered [PFC Edward L.] Stevens' left shoulder and with the entrenching tool, I finally pulled the dirt off the top of him, and I lifted his head and pulled his head back. He was buried up to his neck at that point, and I could see that he was still breathing. I guess the fact that his head was face-down, he had formed a pocket of air that he was still able to breathe. He was semi-conscious at the time, and as we pulled the dirt off his fact, one of the corpsmen handed me an ambu-bag and I put it over his mouth and gave two quick shoves and it forced air into his lungs and I brought him around. He immediately started to cry and scream and try to extricate himself from the dirt that he was surrounded by, but couldn't because his arms were still bent. And we calmed him down."[495]

Stevens committed suicide 29 June 1976.

The Hebrew word for "distress" and "trouble" with a root meaning of "narrow" or a "small" space" is also reflected in the Greek word for "necessity," "force," "constraint," ἀνάγκη (*a-NAG'-kay*) which conveys a root meaning of "narrowness." Plato explains the meaning:

> " ἀνάγκη (compulsion)..... is likened to walking through ravines (ἄγκη), because they are hard to traverse, rough, and rugged, and retard motion; the word ἀναγκαῖον may, then, originate in a comparison with progress through a ravine."[496]

Plato treats "necessity" as a divine principle in the center of the world, created through the combined work of necessity and mind.[497] In his myth of the hereafter,[498] ἀνάγκη is seated in the heart of the world with his three daughters, the Fates, Clotho, Lacesis, and Atropos.[499]

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[489] Ps 138.7.
[490] Ps 59.16. Also, Pss 10.1, 25.17 & 22, 32.7, 34.17, 37.39, 60.15, 86.7, 90.11-12, 70.20, 107.1, 108.13, 119.143, 120.1, Job 15.23b, Isa 26.16.
[491] Isa. 49.19.
[492] Isa. 49.20.
[493] 2 Kings 6.1.
[494] Num 22.26.
[495] Taped comments of Kevin C. Macaulay to Ray William Stubbe, 22 August 1984 (Khe Sanh microfilm collection, pp. 2448-2450) also mentioned in Kevin C. Macaulay letter to his parents, 05 March 1968 (Khe Sanh microfilm collection pp. 4447-4450).
[496] Plato: *Cratylus* 420E, in Fowler, H.H.: *Plato with an English Translation*, Cambridge, Mass.:" Harvard University Press (Loeb Classical Library, No. 167), 1926, pp. 125-127. (ἀπείκασται δὲ τῇ κατὰ τὰ ἄγκη πορεία ὅτι δύσπορα καὶ τραχέα καὶ λάσια ὄντα ἴσχει τοῦ ἰέναι)
[497] Plato, *Timaeus* 48a). Cf also Plato's myth of the "hereafter" in *Republic* X.616ff.
[498] Plato, *Republic* X.614-619,
[499] In Green myth, Clotho is trhe fate who spins the thread of life, Lachesis determines its length, and Atropos cuts the thread. In Plato's myth, Clotho sings the things that are, Lachesis the things that were, and Atropos the things that are to be.

Aristotle uses the word ἀνάγκη to refer to "all that which ... constricts and opposes life."[500]

Thucydides used ἀνάγκη to explain the causes of the Peloponnesian War,[501] where it is translated "necessity." Thucydides explains that a 30-year truce was broken and war erupted because there were no other alternatives; options had "narrowed." (The unstated implication might be: to avoid war, provide options; think outside boxed-in, narrowing reality.) "The truest explanation, although it has been the least often advanced, I believe to have been the growth of the Athenians to greatness, which brought fear to the Lacedaemonians and forced them to war."[502] "Growth and fear combine to create the necessity of war."[503] War results when there are no viable alternative courses since "..the only alternatives involve unacceptable consequences such as death, defeat, surrender, or the like... To avoid war, the Athenians would have had to relinquish their imperial rule and the Spartans would have had to remain indifferent to Athenian expansion. Neither for Athens nor for Sparta would these alternatives have been acceptable or even possible; the war was inevitable, because both Athenians and Spartans realized that it was"[504] The Athenians developed into a superior naval power only because attacking Persians had compelled them to do so following a great disaster in Sicily.[505] The Athenian argument: "In the case of the divine it is our opinion and in the case of the humans our clear conviction that by a constraint inherent in nature they rule wherever they have the power. This is not a law we enacted or first used once enacted: it was a reality already when we took it over and it will exist forever when we shall leave it behind. We are applying it in the knowledge that you and anyone else who has attained as much power as we have would do the same."[506] Oswald comments: "The drive to dominate others is here described as a necessary outgrowth of a universal order sanctioned by nature, to which all humans certainly (and the gods probably) are subject, whether they like it or not.."[507] While there are various "necessities" in every human situation, only those recognized as such are operative.[508] Education is necessary to show which are assigned the highest priority.[509] The superior person is the one who knows which constraint is operative.[510]

New Testament Biblical writers use the word ἀνάγκη to refer to "..hindrances to the soul. The main pint in ethical and religious life is to control them and to bring them under the dominion of reason."[511] New Testament thought differs from Greek understanding of the term: "..the situation of constraint does not lie in the natural conditions produced by the dualism of spirit and matter, but in the afflictions and oppressions, divinely caused and interpreted as divine visitations, either of the people or of individuals in the form of persecutions, enmity, subjugation, or sickness. The meaning of ἀνάγκη for the individual Israelite is made clear by [Ps. 106.13-15].[512]

Problems and pains narrow life so that one who suffers, *e.g.*, a headache, infected tooth, a financial crisis or marital issue, might be so consumed by the pain or problem as to be unavailable to acknowledge another person's presence, much less love that person. Pains, difficulties, and problems narrow life.

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[500] Grundmann, Walter, " ἀναγκάζω, ἀναγςαῖος, ἀνάγκη," in Kittel, Gerhard, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Trans. & Ed. Geoffrey W. Bromley, Grand Rapids, Mich.": Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. Co., 1964, Vol. I, p. 344. Reference is to Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IV.45.1015ª20 – 1015ᵇ9. (*Vide* in Aristotle: *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Revised Oxford Translation. Ed. Jonathan Barnes. Bollingen Series LXXI.2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, Vol. 2, p. 1603. Aristotle, *Metaphysics I – IX*. Trans. Hugh Treddenick. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1933. [Loeb Classical Library, No. 9. 271], pp. 222-227 (*Metaphysics*, Book V, 1015ª20 – 1015ᵇ15)

[501] Fought between Sparta and Athens, 431-404 BC.

[502] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Book I, chapter 23, sentence 6 Trans: Charles Foster Smith. (*Loeb Classical Library, Thucydides I*, No. 108). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1919, p. 43.

[503] Oswald, Martin, *ANAΓKH in Thucydides*, American Classical Studies No. 18, Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1988, p. 3.

[504] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[505] Thucydides, *op. cit.*, Book VIII, Chapter 2. (Loeb Classical Library, Thucydides IV, Loeb No. 169, p. 193.)

[506] Oswald, *op. cit.*, p. 42. Reference is to Thucydides, Book V, Chapter 105. (*Vide* in Loeb Classical Library No. 110, *Thucydides III*, p. 167).

[507] *Ibid.* (Reference is to Thucydides, Book V, chapter 105, sentence 2 (Loeb Classical Library No. 110, p. 167.)

[508] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[509] *Ibid.*, p. 30

[510] Thucydides, *op. cit.*, Book I, Chapter 84, sentence 4.

[511] Grundmann, op. cit., p. 345.

[512] Ibid., pp. 345-346. ("But they soon forgot h is works; they did not wait for his counsel. But they had a wanton craving in the wilderness, and put God to the test in the desert; he gave them what they asked, but sent a wasting disease among them." ESV).

The German word "angst" is a universal condition of being human and comes from an Indo-European stem meaning "painful, tight, painfully constricted."[513] A commentator notes: "When the special relationship between man and his environment is disrupted or uprooted by the operations of inexplicable .. forces which defy understanding and interpretation, primordial Angst is .. revealed."[514] Angst arises when one can do nothing with overwhelming experiences. Angst is "binding necessity—no way out."[515] Angst arises when it is difficult to move because of constrictions and pressures.

Paul Tillich, a popular and influential theologian in the middle of the last century, like those at Khe Sanh during the siege battle, experienced the loss of natural life destroyed by the ravages of war, life in static positions and trenches, in the mud and dirt with constant shelling, continually seeing friends killed and grotesquely wounded, the suffocating, pressed down, squeezed-out life on the battlefields of World War I. At Khe Sanh, more tons of bombs were dropped in the immediate vicinity than in the Pacific war zone of all of World War II.[516] As suddenly as one flicks a light switch off or on, the surrounding landscape dramatically changed from a lush, "Garden of Eden" paradise, full of vegetation of a thousand shades of green and a playground for wild and exotic animals, into a moonscape. It was as though an army of steam shovels had scraped life from earth's surface; the sight was as painful having one's skin flayed. It made one crazy as spring and summer's explosion of life now became winter's bleakness in an inhospitable, deadly setting.

Tillich, while lecturing as a visiting professor at the University of Chicago was interviewed shortly before his death in 1965 by an Air Force chaplain student at the University of Chicago Divinity School to whom Tillich poured out his memories as a young Prussian chaplain in World War I.[517] Pastor Tillich had volunteered on 1 Oct 1914 at the age of 28 to become an Army chaplain and joined his unit, the 4th Artillery Regiment of the 7th Reserve Division, on 11 Oct 1914. He subsequently participated in the most destructive battles of that war (1914-Soisson, 1916-Verdun, and 1916-Somme). The student Air Force chaplain recalls:

> "One of the things that I especially remember was how he was taken by the stark pictures of denuded trees, dead horses, and the destruction of the land by thousands of shell holes that resulted from the massive bombardment preceding the horrendous frontal attack on military positions. ... Tillich saw the destruction of the trees, horses, and land as an expression of the suffering of innocent nature as a result of humanity's estrangement expressed in the massive self-destructiveness of war."[518]

Soon, he no longer thought of death but realized he was "already in death, gripped by its force."[519] At Verdun, there were over 350,000 French casualties and an equal number of German casualties in the opening months and flame throwers and phosgene gas were first employed. In the Battle of the Somme River, British and French casualties exceeded 650,000 and German losses were about 450,000.[520] During these battles, Tillich lived in the trenches with his men. Tillich was forever changed by the battle experiences. One writer notes:

> "..a young Prussian army chaplain with intense blue eyes stands transfixed in the thundering fire-flashes of the German cannons against the rainy night sky. Numbly he looks down at the blood drenched bodies of his closest friends. Too many lay slowly dying on mud-bespattered stretchers, their screams and death moans weaving a spell of grotesque madness ablaze with cannon fire. Several are already dead, the rain making tiny wet exclamation points on their

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[513] Coe, David C., *Angst and the Abyss, The Hermeneutics of Nothingness*, American Academy of Religion Academy Series, No. 49, Chico, Ca." Scholars Press, 1985, p. 8. Coe refers to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, "Angh."

[514] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[515] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[516] Gen. William W. Momyer, USAF, "Operation NIAGARA," in Trest, Warren A., *Khe Sanh (Operation NIAGARA) 22 January - 31 March 1968*, CHECO Report, 13 Sep 1968, *Supporting Documents*, No. 12. Total for Pacific Operating Area, WW II: 32,735 tons; total at Khe Sanh (22 Jan - 29 Feb 68): 53, 380 tons.

[517] Also, he probably suffered PTSD. He rarely referred to his battle experiences and it is probable that most scholars remain unaware of it. Near his death, his wife mentioned that Tillich regularly woke up during sleep in their Manhattan apartment from disturbing dreams with violent twitching and screams. [Archer, Donald, "Paul Tillich as a Military Chaplain." paper presented at the annual meeting of the North American Pal Tillich Society, Boston, November, 1999, referenced in Peters, David W., "A Pluralist in a Foxhole, Chaplain and Theologian Paul Tillich's Encounter with the SWorld Religions," Military Chaplains Association: *The Military Chaplain*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (Spring, 2013), pp. 22-25.

[518] *Ibid.*

[519] *Ibid.* Reference is made to Wilhelm Pauck and Marion Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought*, New York: Harper & Row, 1976, pp. 40-41. This was also how many felt at Khe Sanh during the siege. In fact, once one has "gone through it" one emerges with a courage that causes one to dash out during incoming to pull in an injured, immobilized man to safety, to continue one's daily work in the open areas, oblivious to possible death—cautious, but not paralyzed in fear. Once one knows death is probable, one is free to live, perhaps characterized by a certain recklessness, oblivious to dangers others might avoid.

[520] *Ibid.*

closed eyelids. One young officer gazes up at the chaplain's insignia, his mangled body broken like a discarded dime store manikin. A wet cigarette dangles from his lips. One hacking, body-heaving cough and the life-light in his eyes goes out. The chaplain digs his fingernails into his palms and gulps down nausea. The dead, the dying, the red rags on the stretchers where legs and arms should be; the fire-flashes, the cannon's roar, the smoke, the rain and endless mud all swirl in together in a magic madness. With a shudder shaking his being to its very foundations, something changes in the chaplain's blue eyes. Many years later Paul Tillich was to confess that this night at the battle of the Marne "..absolutely transformed me. All my friends were among those dying and dead.'"[521]

Tillich uses the term "ontological anxiety" for angst and uses a spatial metaphor to indicate one of its sources:

"Every being strives to provide and to preserve space for itself. This means above all a physical location—the body, a piece of soil, a home, a city, a country, the world. It also means a social 'space'—a vocation, a sphere of influence, a group, a historical period, a place in remembrance and anticipation, a place within a structure of values and meanings. Not to have space is not to be. Thus in all realms of life striving for space is an ontological necessity.. ... But to be spatial also means to be subject to nonbeing. No finite being can rely on space, for not only must it face losing this or that space because it is a 'pilgrim on earth,' but eventually it must face losing every place it has had or might have had. As the powerful symbol used by Job and the psalmist expresses it: 'Its place knoweth it no more.' There is no necessary relationship between any place and the being which has provided this space for itself. Finitude means having no definite place; it means having to lose every place finally and, with it, to lose being itself. This threat of nonbeing cannot be escaped by means of a flight into time without space. Without space there is neither presence nor a present. ... To have no definite and no final space means ultimate insecurity. To be finite is to be insecure. ... Men create systems of security in order to protect their space. ... As long as it lives, it successfully resists the anxiety of not having a place. It courageously faces the occasions when not having a place becomes an actual threat."[522]



KHE SANH TROT. Official USMC photo A190245 by Haging

It is for this reason that the Hebrew mind could not conceive of a disembodied soul, and Paul asserts (contrary to the Greek teaching of the "immortality of the soul") a new, resurrected body;[523] John writes of a new heaven and a new earth.[524] Life needs a space; living beings require containers.

At Khe Sanh during the siege battle, it soon became apparent there was no safe place, no space for life. This resulted in everyone moving fast, a trot that some referred as the "Khe Sanh shuffle." Everyone knew the location of every nearby bunker. It also resulted in vehicles speeding down the main road, perhaps an attempt to outrun incoming, drivers not consider the additional space through they drove, increased the likelihood of receiving shrapnel. Those on the road were aware they might easily become struck by "incoming vehicles" as well as incoming from enemy rounds, but the rush of adrenalin and energy from the situation made everyone move faster as much as increased heat quickens electrons.

The basic need for safety motivated some to steal (or, as most would say, "procure") bunkering materials, especially the prized sheet of large aluminum airstrip matting and the thick aluminum pallets used by the Air Force to crate material arriving at Khe Sanh. So desperate were those who lived at Khe Sanh that an Air Force Mission Commander wrote in his final report: "Pallets make excellent bunker roofs and it proved almost impossible to keep them from being stolen. We had a 24 hour Marine guard but the thick fog made an excellent cover for midnight requisitions of pallets and chutes."[525]

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[521] *Ibid., pp. 129-130.* (Coe references Rollo May, *Paulus, Reminiscences of a Friendship*, New Yorkj: Harper & Row, 1973, p. 18.

[522] Tillich, Paul, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1951, pp. 194-195.

[523] 1 Cor 15, especially verses 35-54.

[524] Rev. 21.1

[525] Pollica, SSGT Bruce W., and Rickey, TSGT Joe R., *Monograph of 834th Air Division Tactical Airlift Support for Khe Sanh, 21 January – 8 April 1968*, Document #25, "Attachment to Mission Commander's Report, Khe Sanh," by "Smith" dated (approx. 21 Feb 1968).

Recalling the early days of February, 1968[526] one Marine Sergeant described the desperation that led to stealing in order to live:

".. we didn't miss a day without getting incoming, and some of the days it was quite healthy barrages, shook up quite a lot of people, and got a lot of wounded out of it, a lot of killed. And the only thing I can really sway is, I can't see the reason we got so many killed because I think something could have been done to get materials in to build better bunkers so he men would actually be a little safer except maybe a direct hit or a delayed fuse round. We built our bunkers first for VT fuses, not for any heavy barrages like we were taking, and it seems like after that, people started getting with it, but you couldn't put more than three or four layers of sand bags on top of a bunker due to the fact that it would cave in on you. We had a case where a bunker did cave in on some men and kill them because they didn't have the reinforcements to hold the sand which weighs quite a bit of weight. So I think something could have been done, got in more runway matting or more materials of some kind, any kind 12 x 12s, anything. As it was, people were stealing from each other so they could live from one day to the next."[527]

Another Marine Sergeant recalls:

" I saw one occasion where a 122 mm rocket went through a bunker which had four layers of sand bags, a row of this portable steel runway matting, and two pallets of this wood-core aluminum pallets that the Air Force uses—the rocket had entirely gone through all this material, and had seriously hurt three of the men inside the bunker. If they had not been wearing their flak jackets, chances they'd all be dead today. Three of them were in serious condition when they were evacuated out of khe Sanh, but they were alive. Materials and the acquisition of them was an extremely thorny problem for a long, long time, and it seems to me, I feel, that we got short-changed in that regard because every time we had tried to get them, it seemed the supply system, for one reason or another, we were unable to get these absolutely necessary materials, and when we finally were getting them, it was almost too late. I'm sure a lot of men lost their lives because they were inadequately protected from shrapnel and the incoming rounds."[528]

On Thursday, 25 January 1968, Chaplain William Hampton arrived at Khe Sanh by helicopter as the new 3/26 battalion chaplain. He and others dashed into my bunker for safety from incoming rounds that always greet landing helicopters. We all sat in silence for some time. We had met at Camp Pendleton, California, when I came on active duty and he reported for a two-week training period. When the incoming paused, we walked towards regiment to pick up his orders. That area of the base had been receiving considerable amounts of incoming and was devoid of life, displaying the words of Jeremiah: "I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void, to the heavens, and they had no light" (The morning fog shrouded us).. " I looked on the mountains, and lo, they were quaking. All the hills moved to and fro .". (Airstrikes on the mountain range just north of us will do that!) .."I looked, and lo, there was no man, all the birds of the air had fled. I looked, and lo the fruitful land was a desert."[529] The Marines in the S-1 shop of Regiment had today put metal airstrip matting over a hole they had dug inside their bunker—a bunker within a bunker. We then arrived at the bunker that was known as "Fort Hester," the large bunker with three stepped walls of sandbags bearing a sign placed there by LCPL Kenneth R. Thompas, with a double entendre:[530] "Home is Where you Dig it." After we picked up his orders, we walked to the western portion of the base, the Red Sector, where the 3/26 CP was located. As we passed the 1/26 BAS, two immense craters on either side of the road which had just missed the 1/26 by no more than ten feet silently shouted to us that there was no safe place at Khe Sanh. We peered at the ominous holes; no one said a word. Nietzsche once wrote something like "If you look into the abyss long enough, the abyss looks into you." When we arrived, the chaplain of 3/26, Roy Swift, told Chaplain Hampton not to return to my bunker to pick up his baggage "that place is too dangerous."[531] I had wondered why Chaplain Swift never visited casualties of his battalion at "C" Med after the base was attacked. Now I knew.

Colonel David E. Lownds, the commander at Khe Sanh, in his debrief[532] at FMFPAC[533] upon leaving Vietnam noted that he had constructed a new bunker to house his command staff. He consulted his engineers for specifications for a bunker that could withstand a 122 mm rocket, and being cautious, doubled the overhead covering . "The day before it was scheduled to

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[526] During an interview on 15 March 1968.
[527] Comments of Sgt. H. E. Stroud, Marine Corps Oral History Tape # 2452.
[528] Comments of Sgt Patrick J. Fitch, Marine Corps Oral History Tape #2498.
[529] Jer 4.23-26.
[530] At the time, the word "dig" had the colloquial meaning if "liking" or "respecting" (as in "I really dig that tune" or "I really dig him.") At the time, of course, we were all digging the earth for our homes.
[531] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 1971, p. 879.
[532] Headquarters, Marine Corps: Oral History Tape #3139.
[533] Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, commanded by a 3-star Lieutenant General (LTGEN Victor Krulak).

be finished, a 152 mm [artillery round] came in and went through both layers and went down in the bunker."[534] There was, indeed, no safe place at Khe Sanh; all of us who were there knew that.

A few excerpts from a diary kept during the siege reflect this experience:

10 February 1968: "I thought of how different things were from when I first arrived at Khe Sanh in July, 1967. I then lived in a tent. Things were bright, warm, dusty, lively. The corpsmen played horse-shoes or shot baskets during the day. I spent most of the time visiting the hills and accompanying platoon-sized infantry patrols throughout the surrounding jungle. I carried a lot of gear then: a large metal box of Bibles and a wooden ammo box with personal gear, and a blanket, cartridge belt, and helmet. All this necessitated a vehicle to carry me to the LSA. I was concerned then for large attendances at worship—the more the better and more glorious. The feeling-tone was freedom like the tent in which I lived: the air, dust, and rats freely moved in and out without hindrance, and I freely moved around the various outposts. There was sunlight in that tent, and I could stand upright. It was a time for feeling buoyant and good



DIGGING TO IMPROVE DEFENSES. Official USMC Photo 190932 by Moore. Date unknown

"Now we live in a bunker, cold and dark, many are subterranean. We withdraw inside because reality outside is lethal.
There are no windows that look within or without. The bunkers become more and more fortified. The atmosphere is foggy fear. Everything in the C Med area is now work on casualties, anxious panic and fearful flight. I carry less and less, only a home visitation private communion set and a few devotional brochures. I am concerned that worship services are small—the smaller the better, the smaller the more intimate. Things now are bleak, deadly, fear-full, frustrating, nauseating, and nervous. Yet, the Presence of God is known, even more powerfully. God's Presence is palpable."[535]

Thursday, 15 February 1968. The recon company at Khe Sanh, about 120 strong, has taken 70 KIA or WIA since 21 January.[536]

Saturday, 17 February 1968. "Convoys of otters from the combat base going to Hill 558 to resupply 2/26 were discontinued due to the enemy situation, and helicopter resupply of our hill outposts is a problem due to enemy antiaircraft fire. A new tactic needs to be developed. C-130s no longer land on the airstrip."[537]

Sunday, 18 February 1968. " Hill 881S took incoming and a Marine is dying. Rain and fog prevented resupply and plans were being made to parachute IV bottles, but abandoned. The man died."[538]

With Hill 881-South taking heavy 120 mm mortar shelling every time helicopters arrived,[539] evacuation of Marines killed proved deadly and the Marines placed the dead in a temporary "body bunker."

> "The body bunker was located between the two machinegun positions on the Second Platoon sector of the hill. It was a bunker that was located between two machinegun bunkers and had been abandoned because of the poor construction. It was narrow and it was too high. The parapet of this bunker just wasn't made properly to house a machinegun. The

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[534] Also mentioned in Shore, Moyers S., *The Battle for Khe Sanh*, Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1969, p. 57.

[535] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 1989, p. 554

[536] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, unpublished manuscript, 01 Apr 1970, p. 669.

[537] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 Apr 1970, p. 679. Not only the Khe Sanh airstrip, but also Hill 881-South's LZ was too unsafe for normal helicopter operations. Hill 881-S took large amounts of 120 mm mortars,. Other outposts (861, 861-A, 558, and 950) had been obscured by fog during which the NVA emplaced automatic weapons on neighboring peaks. A new tactic called "Supergaggle" was first employed on 24 Feb involving a large armada of aircraft to resupply some 32,000 pounds per hill per day by CH-46D helicopters of HMM-262. The package involved delivery of CS powder, close air support by fixed wing, supporting arms, laying smoke, and dropping of bombs with fuses set at varying times. The missions were hazardous with 3,000 – 4,000-pound external loads dangling beneath the helicopter rocking the aircraft side to side, and the ever-present possibility of mid-air collision. In one mission, without any warning, one flight of two resupply helicopters flew through an Arc Light strike, dodging bombs as they fell..

[538] *Ibid.*, p. 680. The KIA was LCPL Homer Taylor, Jr., of I/3/26. [Stubbe, Ray W., *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed., 2008, pp. 197-198].

[539] The M28 Soviet mortar can fire 12 – 15 rounds per minute, each round weighs 15.4 KG. Max range 5,700 M, minimum range 460 M.

parapet was located too close to the roof of the bunker, and for this reason, it was abandoned and not used for a machinegun bunker. We had no other facilities or no other bunkers in the trench line in which we put our mortally wounded. And this is what became known to us on the hill as the body bunker. We would stack them up, in some cases, later on, apparently, it did become full. When the chopper would come in, at the time that they would land, we would try to get one or two out at a time, and this often wasn't the case. We couldn't get any out at all, so we stored them in the body bunker. Later, when the body bunker became full, we started stacking them in the area where the water buffalo was, behind the warming tent. And this was a small, flat area of ground they had placed a cargo net in this area, and we would stack them in the cargo net sort of in the fashion that you would stack logs for building a log cabin. We would run three or four bodies in one direction, and three or four or five in the opposite direction, and a helicopter would come in. They would hook up the hook on the rings of the net to the bottom of the helicopter and the bodies were taken down to Khe Sanh that way."[540]

Wednesday, 21 February 1968. "At 1300, I received a phone call from Chaplain Heino on the landline. He wanted to speak with Father Driscoll. I walked to the Father's new bunker being constructed and there was a loud WHOMP! Corpsmen of "C" Med, in the trench, yelled that I should also jump into the trench with them for cover, but I just continued walking leisurely, assuming that all the noise was a "Final Protective Fire" by our own troops. Then came more WHOMPS and I realized that this was incoming. One round landed just where I would have been had Chaplain Heino not called; his call had saved me! I remained in the triage bunker as casualties arrived and then walked to Graves Registration to say prayers for the newly-arrived dead. An entry in their log for 19 January 1968 was number 12-68. Today, the newly-arrived KIA, E-6 P.M. Douglas, was 141-68, meaning that they have processed 129 dead since the siege began. This does not include those who died of wounds after being evacuated, of course.[541]

"It seems that wherever I go, the rounds come in! I have come to know the location of all the bunkers on the base! Usually it is foggy in the early morning and the men are walking about the base doing their various duties, and usually there's no incoming in the morning since the enemy FOs on the mountain range to our north are unable to see anything. Then the sun burns through the fog, the planes arrive, and so does the enemy incoming. And then there are all the wounded and all the dead. We go to our bunkers for a few minutes and then continue our work as normal, maybe walking a little faster, "the Khe Sanh trot" as it is called. The fog then rolls in again and the incoming diminishes, except around 1700H – 1800H when there is frequently an incoming barrage, evidently an attempt by the enemy to catch some of our people eating chow.[542] There are a lot of explosions at night, but I no longer "hear" them unless they are right outside my bunker; it's just part of the ambience."[543]

Thursday 22 February 1968 "Due to all the incoming we've been receiving, it became apparent to me that worship for even a small group for a short period of seven minutes was too dangerous. So I visited with LtCol Wilkinson and said I'd gladly do whatever he desired, but suggested general visitation of the men and not holding worship services as such, but offering prayer or communion if desired. He agreed. This way I will be covering more territory and not have the danger to others, although I increase the danger to myself. Perhaps the gospel of God's loving care, of God's grace, God's promise not to forsake us no matter where we are—perhaps all this will be communicated, not so much by what I say but through my actions and presence. At least I can be God's hugging, embracing arms.

"As I walked back to "C" Med, there was a barrage of incoming and I ducked into a LSU bunker, very low, narrow, with several feet of protective overhead covering.[544]

"Casualties started pouring into "C" Med from 2/26—seven KIA, one of whom was the 2/26 chaplain, Father Brett. One of the corpsmen asked me to remove the boots of a wounded Marine on a stretcher, moaning and covered with blood. His boots were caked with mud and blood, soon also covering my hands. The mixture started drying and I soon started to feel as though the skin of my hands was shrinking. At the time I thought that the sensation indicated the shrinking of our life itself. ("The life of every creature is its blood; its blood is its life."[545]) I went to my bunker to wash my hands in a small, yellow plastic basin I had purchased at a small stand along the road near Phu Bai from a Vietnamese girl. While washing, there was a large

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[540] Taped comments of James. E. Schemelia to Ray W. Stubbe, 01 Aug 1984. Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh*, 1989, p. 466

[541] *Ibid.*, pp. 684-685.

[542] While we had been briefed many times in the past that this is one of the NVA's favorite times to send incoming, there were, of course, no chow lines any more at Khe Sanh. Indeed, there were no mess halls!

[543] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 1989, pp. 585A-586.

[544] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, unpublished manuscript, 01 Apr 1970, p. 693.

[545] Lev. 17.14.



explosion and large pieces of metal flew into the air. A CH-53 had been hit; the blade slicing through the cockpit killing both pilots."[546]

CH-53 IN WHICH PILOTS WERE KILLED
Official USMC photo A190673. Photographer unknown

THE *GENIUS LOCI*

Past violence blanketed Khe Sanh as an invisible, yet palpably insistent, miasma. Khe Sanh sat atop an extinct volcano; the area had been born in violence and heat. Before the Siege battle, an occasional human skull unearthed from the depths by a Marine digging a trench or bunker on Hill 881-South like some horror emerging from the unconscious in a bad dream, would be placed on a pole until some visiting General ordered it removed,[547] A bomb crater, pock-marking the hill just to the west of Hill 861, never seemed to regain its verdant green, blanketing vegetation. Other craters, occasionally seen while on patrol along with a NVA rocket canister or some other evidence of their presence, constantly reminded everyone of past violence. Old, concrete fortified bunkers, perhaps a single hexagonal concrete bunker in the middle of the jungle, made one wonder if what had been was also now.

The area had been a battlefield for so long that even without such reminders; one could not but feel a spirit of the place, the *genius loci*. Past violence shrouded the entire area. If a new unit were to arrive with no turnover briefings, the apprehensions would remain. Marines and soldiers at Khe Sanh in the early 1960s and those there in 1971 said the same things about Khe Sanh: they felt alone and isolated, abandoned and vulnerable, uncertain of who lurked in the dark, mysterious hills, a feeling of being watched, an awareness that it was not a safe place. There was a lingering atmosphere of uncertainty despite the exceptional beauty and calm serene feeling and the exhilarating pleasure of just breathing it all into one's soul.

A good example was Hill 881-North, one of the three hills in the 1967 Battle of the Hills, but unmanned after that battle. Teams from our reconnaissance company occasionally patrolled the hill to determine if the enemy were using it. One of the recon Marines noted:

> "..the hill .. was so quiet and just like a lost soul would be. Normally you're real quiet and don't make any noise .. but everybody was extra quiet because you just felt like it was a resting place and that if you disturbed the spirit or the mood or whatever it was, you didn't know what would happen, but it would be bad. And it just seemed like a really evil place. It was like a sorrowful place. We only had a couple occasions we had to go through the area, and we'd always move as quickly through the area as possible because it's like you were intruding, and if you stayed too long, something would happen to you. You can talk all you want to about being superstitious and whistle when you go through a graveyard and all that, but unless you've walked through 881-North—and this was in broad daylight with the sun overhead–. I can't imagine going through that area at night ... You kept waiting to hear a sound, and there were no sounds. And the absence of sound was what was so strange. It was like walking through a time warp or something you'd walk to the other side and you were there, and it was like you were in a different dimension. It was just so strange."[548]

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[546] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, unpublished manuscript, 01 Apr 1970, p. 694. KIA were Capt James Thomas Riley and 1/Lt Cary Carson Smith, both of HMH-463. Stubbe, Ray W., *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed., 2008, p. 204.

[547] "The commander on the hill, Captain John Raymond (CO, A/.1/26) mentioned that General Metzger arrived there a few days ago and discovered the human skulls the men had placed on stakes (a remnant from the Battle of the Hills fought here April and May), dug up while digging trenches and bunkers. 'The General looked at Col Padley; Padley looked at Wilkinson; Wilkinson looked at me; there was no place for me to look but up in the air. I think I lost some points there,' he said." [Stubbe, Ray W., *Autobiography*, Part 7, *Khe Sanh before the Siege*, p. 67.

[548] Comments of Ernest Clyde Husted, Jr., to Ray W. Stubbe, 21 August 1984.

Once the siege battle began (Sunday, 21 Jan 1968), pressure from the quantity of incoming and the strangling presence of tens of thousands of enemy troops surrounding us forced the defenders into increasingly narrowing crevasses in the earth—holes, trenches, bunkers, and culverts–for temporary daytime refuge during incoming bombardments and night for sleeping. By 07 March 1968, there were 510 bunkers of various sizes in use by the defenders at Khe Sanh.[549] Mike Scharfman, moving pallets of mortar and artillery munitions, dove for cover in a culvert along the road the afternoon of 7 February 1968 and remained there some three hours, frozen to the spot while the base received an devastating barrage. He emerged half red and half green from head to boot from laying in the red mud.

On a deeper level, we didn't penetrate the earth; the earth penetrated us. The red clay, weathered remains of its volcanic origin, now a fine, powdery dust, so penetrated our skin it seemed as a permanent stain as a tattoo. Weeks after leaving Khe Sanh, whenever I took a bath in a small aluminum mount-out box and toweled off, the towel looked as though I had used it to wipe a bowel movement. The red clay of Khe Sanh penetrated to our soul, where the spirits of Khe Sanh played their frenzied tarantella or Halloween dance macabre and displayed their tragic dramas in our nightmares.

The tactical map for Khe Sanh indicated it as "Xom Cham," or "village of Cham." In 192 AD, the Chams were established a kingdom, the borders of which were almost exactly Thua Thien Province, where Hue City is located. The Chams then moved northward into what is now Quang Tri Province until the 7th Century and conducted raiding parties into the area around what is now Hanoi until they were defeated and replaced by the Vietnamese. Perhaps a remnant of this Cham civilization settled at Xom Cham, the Khe Sanh airstrip. "Xom Cham," village of Chams, was the name of Khe Sanh Combat Base. This, plus its volcanic origins and centuries of invaders who passed through the area, echoed in many souls.

During the siege battle, some 40,000 flesh and blood enemy soldiers were poised to crush us as an avalanche in a human wave attack. Some outposts received attacks involving vicious hand-to-hand combat and deadly barrages of incoming rounds in moments of sheer terror and horror that continue to haunt and reverberate in nightmares many decades later stitched as so many penetrating needles into a fabric of day-to-day life on the battlefield. A war of will, courage, determination, resiliency in which unseen foes hurled rockets and artillery and formed an unseen, smothering cloud encircling us recalled the words of St. Paul, "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood .. but against spiritual forces.[550] (In Biblical thought, the "powers" mediate between God and humanity.[551] They were appointed by God to particular responsibilities in the cosmic order. "Spiritual authorities were generally considered to lie behind the human ones."[552]The foe was greater than exploding rounds or encircling soldiers; these were but the outer, visible specter of an inner motivating spirit or power[553] that narrowed our life into restricting bunkers and trenches, isolating and confining. Patrols to Khe Sanh village, a nearby Hill 471 or even close to our perimeter, were decimated; options and movement were limited.

BROAD PLACE

The LORD places those with trouble in a broad place: " He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me."[554] "you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place."[555] "Out of my distress I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me in a broad place."[556] "Answer me when I call, O God of my right! You gave me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer."[557] " I run the way of your commandments, for you enlarge my understanding."[558] "and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to

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[549] FMFPAC 200327Z/Mar68 to CMC, CONGRINT Fortification Material at Khe Sanh. Cited in Stubbe, Ray William, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 06 June 1989, p. 649.

[550] Eph 6.12.

[551] Forester, Werner, " ἐξουσία ," in Kittel, Gerhard, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964, Vol. II, po. 566.

[552] Morrison, Clinton D., *The Powers That Be*. (*Studies in Biblical Theology*, No. 29). London: SCM Press Ltd., 1960, pp. 102-103.

[553] *Cf.* Walter Wink's analysis of spiritual powers which are not free-floating or ethereal, but are "the inner aspect of material or tangible manifestations of power." [Wink, Walter, *Naming the Powers, The Language of Power in the New Testament*. (Vol. 1 of *The Powers*). Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984, p. 104]. "These 'Powers' do not .. have a separate, spiritual existence. We encounter them primarily in reference to the material or 'earthly' reality of which they are the innermost essence." [*Ibid.*, p. 105].

[554] Ps. 18.19 ESV.

[555] Ps. 31.8 NRS.

[556] Ps. 118.5 NRS.

[557] Ps. 4.1 NRS

[558] Ps. 119.32 NRS.

bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites."[559] "He brought me out into a broad place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me."[560] "He brought me out into a broad place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me."[561] "And of Gad he said: Blessed be the enlargement of Gad! Gad lives like a lion; he tears at arm and scalp."[562] "Like a stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn; can the LORD now feed them like a lamb in a broad pasture?"[563] "He also allured you out of distress into a broad place where there was no constraint, and what was set on your table was full of fatness."[564] "He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."[565]

In its etymology, the Hebrew word used in the Bible for "salvation," יְשַׁע, *ya-sha*, probably has the meaning "to be wide, roomy .. and would in the causative *hiphil* have to be translated with 'to make wide, roomy,' 'to make room for someone' .. the opposite would be צרר, 'to be crowded together, compressed.' Luther: 'As distress is our narrowness that presses in on us and makes us sad, so the help of God is our expanded room that makes us free and happy.' "[566] The Brown, Driver, Briggs *Lexicon* traces the root to the Arabic meaning "be capacious," "make wide," "spacious," "make sufficient," "be or live in abundance."[567]

The New Testament Greek word for "salvation," σωτηρία, (*so-tay-RI'-a*), carries the original meaning of the stem of the verb יָשַׁע as "to be roomy, broad," especially as opposed to oppression, which is properly "narrowness" צר, *cf* צרר "to choke," "to envelope," "to enwrap," hence "to be hemmed in, constricted, oppressed."[568] "As oppression is viewed as a kind of spatial hemming in or imprisonment, so rescue from it is a moving out into the open... Deliverance is imparted to the weak or oppressed in virtue of a relation of protection or dependence in which he stands to someone stronger or mightier who saves him out of his affliction. The thought is neither that of self-help nor of co-operation with the oppressed. The help is such that the oppressed would be lost without it."[569]

Salvation is from God alone; no one nor anything else saves. The root, יְשׁ, occurs 254 times in the Old Testament with the largest concentration being in the Psalms (136 times) and the prophets (100 times). Nearly half the Psalms include this word. in them, the Lord is always the subject; nothing and no one else "saves."[570] Fourteen proper names in the Old Testament are based on this word, including "Isaiah" (the Lord has saved), "Hosea" (Salvation), "Joshua" (The Lord is salvation), "Elisha (God is salvation), "Joshua=Jesus is related.[571] God is my salvation.[572] Commenting on Psalm 51.12 ("restore to me the joy of thy help and endow me with a willing spirit"), Weiser writes: "..the joy in the helpful nearness of God is the actual motive-power of the new way of life which the poet here envisages. Man is not able joyously to affirm in his own strength that he will do the will of God; or, to put it differently, he is not able to create the spirit of willingness by his own efforts .. it is the joy in God as the motivating force of man's actions which alone is able to transform ethical obedience into an obedience based on faith."[573] God saves because people take refuge in Him.[574] Significantly, the term "involves bringing help into a situation of distress and danger, to people where they are and need it, not removing them from it."[575]

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[559] Ex. 3.8 NRS
[560] 2 Sam 22.20 NRS
[561] Dt. 12.20 NRS
[562] Dt. 33.20 NRS
[563] Hos. 4.16 NRS.
[564] Job 36.16 NRS.
[565] Mk. 14.15 NRS.
[566] Kraus, Hans-Joachim, *Psalms 1-59, A Commentary.* Trans. Hilton C. Oswald. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988, p. 139.
[567] Brown, Francis, Driver, S.R., and Briggs, Charles A., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix containing the biblical Aramaic based on the Lexicon of William Gesenius.* Trans. Edward Robinson. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1959.]. p. 446.
[568] Georg Fohrer, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 7:973-978, [Fohrer, Georg, "σώζω and σωτηρία in the Old Testament," in Friedrich, Gerhard, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed.: Gerhard Friedrich. Trans and Ed.: Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971. Vol. VII, p. 973.
[569] *Ibid.*.
[570] Sawyer, J. F. and Fabry, H.-J., "יְשׁ," Botterweck, G. Johannes and Ringgren, Helmer, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Trans. David E. Green. Grand Rapids, Mich: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990, Vol. VI, p. 442 445.
[571] *Ibid.*, p. 443.
[572] Ps. 18.47, 25.5, 27.9.
[573] Weiser, Artur, *The Psalms* (*Old Testament Library*), Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962, , pp. 407-408.

From personal conversations with many dozens of men during the siege battle at Khe Sanh in early 1968, most expressed desired help, not in terms of removal from Khe Sanh, but rather of bringing something into the situation that would help to ensure life, such as new and additional troops, air strikes, and aircraft to evacuate our wounded. They sought an understanding of just what was happening and what might be expected, the presence of leaders which could be trusted.

In the account where Jesus sent His disciples ahead of Him as they traveled by boat at night on a stormy sea, Jesus walks on the water to the boat. They assume it is a ghost. Peter asks if he might come to Him. "But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!'"[576] Apparently, he, too, was walking on the water as long as he was focused on Jesus, but began to sink when he focused on the problems and predicament of his situation. Once, while stranded for several days in a crowded room at Quang Tri, waiting for helicopter transportation, a missionary of Wycliffe Bible Translators remarked, "Never focus on the greatness of your problems; focus on the greatness of your God."[577] Suffering Job is finally restored and at peace once he encounters and is overwhelmed by an understanding and vision of the greatness of God.[578] God's unfolding future, which we might only dimly perceive, pulls us out of the narrowing life of memories which stick to our soul[579] or present turmoil in which we may be ensnared, out of the "box" which may be a prison or a tomb, into the "wideness of God's mercy."[580] Little things near us obscure greater things beyond us; they became irresistible countervailing luminosities. Those at Khe Sanh on the combat base could easily see Hills 950 and 1015 to the north, but those hills blocked the sight of the much larger Tiger Tooth Mountain (XD 832543). Abraham Lincoln once noted that holding a quarter before one's eyes blocked the sight of everything else. When at sea-sick on a ship, a good advice is to stand on the rolling deck and gaze at the fixed, distant horizon; what we see changes who we become.[581] Conversely, who we are determines what we see; our needs, concerns, interests, the way we've been taught to view as threatening or beautiful or important, controls what we see. I recall seeing some beautiful wild flowers while on a patrol off Hill 861 at Khe Sanh and remarked about them to the Company Commander the next day who said, "O, really, chaplain? I don't recall seeing any! I was looking for other things."[582] To focus one's mind on something not in the situation, making it enter the situation and focusing on it, sometimes proves useful in resisting torture or withstanding other pains and difficulties. Many of the men at Khe Sanh frequently talked of their dreams, their focus—a girl friend they planned to marry, a car they planned to purchase, a future they planned to pursue, an image from happy times as a youth, and so on. To know the "end of the story" is to be freed from a imprisoning and painful present. For Christians, the end of the story is not the turmoil of the present nor tribulations

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[574] Ps. 37.40.

[575] Sawyer and Fabry, *op. cit.*, p. 462 and 463.

[576] Matt 14.30.

[577] Meeting with Hank Blood on Friday, 08 December 1967. Hank Blood was travelling to Khe Sanh to purchase Mr. John Miller's Honda and related numerous accounts of how he narrowly escaped capture by VC. He was later captured along with several other missionaries during the 1968 Tet Offensive and murdered by them. He was a dignified, tall, mostly white-haired man with a British accent, continually reading from a small copy of the New English Bible. He said the secret of prayer is not the greatness of one's problem, but the greatness of our God. [Stubbe, Ray William, *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, unpublished manuscript of 01 Apr 1970, p. 445 and *Khe Sanh*, an unpublished manuscript of 07 Oct 1971, p. 675.

[578] Job, chapters 38 *et seq.* Restoration, Job 42.10-17. There are numerous other Biblical accounts of healing, giving confidence and courage, through visions of God: Prov. 29.18 ("where there is no vision, the people perish."), Moses is given confidence at the burning bush (Ex. 3.2); Jesus lifted up, John 3.14 (on the Cross) (referring to the people of Israel looking on the raised bronze serpent which Moses raised in the wilderness to be healed of the bites of the fiery serpents – Num 21.9); the Transfiguration (Matt 17.1-8, Mk 9.2-8, Lk 9.28-36), etc. Note the significant words of Irenaeus: "*gloria enim Dei vivens homo, vita autem hominis visio Dei*" (The glory of God is the living human, and the life of the human is the vision of God", *Against Heresies* 4, 20, 7).

[579] *Cf.* Alan Lightman's writing on one understanding of time: "The tragedy of this world is that no one is happy, whether stuck in a time of pain or of joy. The tragedy of this world is that everyone is alone. .. For a life in the past cannot be shared with the present. Each person who gets stuck in time gets stuck alone." [Alan Lightman, *Einstein's Dreams*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1993, p. 65].

[580] *Cf.*, the hymn by Frederick William Faber (1814-63), "There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea".

[581] Martin Buber writes of visiting a scholar who lived through World War II in which "..reality had been brought so close to him that he saw everything with new eyes and had to think in a new way." [Martin Buber, *Eclipse of God; Studies in the Relation Between Religion and Philosophy*. (Harper Torchbooks). New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1957, p. 6. Paul Auster writes: "Whatever you see has the potential to wound you, to make you less than you are, as if merely by seeing a thing some part of yourself were taken away from you." [Paul Auster, *Country of Last Things*. New York: Viking, 1987, p. 19].

[582] Stubbe, Ray William,, *Autobiography*, Part 7 (*Khe Sanh, Vietnam, before the siege, 11 June 1967 – 17 Jan 1968), unpublished manuscript*, p. 165. *Conversation of 28 Sep 1967.*

preceding the end, but God on the throne with the Lamb in it surrounded by the large company of those worshiping.[583] Placing problems and pains, difficulties and defeats in a wider context makes them as dark clouds in a greater sky: they are still present (one need not deny their existence or cover them over with drugs or activity) but they lose their power. They are depotentiated. Painful war memories, as so many pebbles in our boots, eyelash in our eye, sliver in our finger, like any other intense pain or problem, tends to narrow our life, excluding the possibility to love others or even be aware of them, and cut off enjoyment of the fullness of life that might be ours. The theologian, Paul Tillich, writes, "The claim of anything finite to be final in its own right is."[584]

WIDER CONTEXT

Human problems and pains are best handled by placing them within a wider context. Grasping the greater whole, the troubling, vexing part which drew all our energy (as a black hole in the universe draws all light and energy to itself) loses its power. Dr. Rachel Remen, a doctor specializing in treating terminal patients, wrote of a young teenager who, upon receiving a diagnosis of diabetes, became paralyzed in his anger. He has a dream. In the dream he sees a Buddha. He's not particularly religious, but has grown up in California where statues of Buddha are common. He gazes at the Buddha and feels some peace. Then, suddenly and without warning, an arrow is shot from behind him at the Buddha, and it strikes the Buddha in his chest. The young man is very angry. Then, very slowly, almost imperceptibly, the Buddha does something very surprising. The statue starts to enlarge. It becomes bigger and bigger until the wound is but a small speck. The young man awakens from his dream with confident joy, realizing that his wound of diabetes might become but a small part of his entire life.[585]

The wider context is God Himself who contains all things. This Biblical teaching, called "panentheism" ("God contains all things; all things are *in* God") is the opposite of "pantheism" (all things contain god, or spirits).[586] We live in God as much as birds live in the air and fish live in the sea. We live in the "force field" of God's love, forgiveness, Presence, blessing, love and peace. It is precisely in the darkness, emptiness, our live between the moments, even in injustice and cruelty—"on the Cross!" that God is to be found, or as the Episcopal lawyer, William Stringfellow noted in his small book, popular in the 1960s,

> "A Christian is not distinguished by his political views, or moral decisions, or habitual conduct, or personal piety, or, least of all, by his churchly activities. A Christian is distinguished by his radical esteem for the Incarnation.. by his reverence for the life of God in the whole of Creation, even and, in a sense especially, Creation in the travail of sin. The characteristic place to find a Christian is among his very enemies. The first place to look for Christ is in Hell."[587]

From the time of Solomon's dedication of the temple in Jerusalem to Stephen's speech at his martyrdom and Paul's sermon on the Aeropagus in Athens, Greece, the teaching has always been that "God cannot be contained."[588] God is at the beginning and at the ending of all (or, to use the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, is the Alpha and the Omega),[589] the Creator and the Consummator. An ancient speculation held that the Hebrew word for truth, אֱמֶת (*emeth*) was the seat of God, because it consists of א, the first, מ, the middle, and ת, the last letters of the alphabet [590] Things do not contain God; God contains all things.

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[583] Rev. 22.3.

[584] Tillich, Paul, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 134.

[585] Remen, Dr. Rachel Naomi, M.D.,: *My Grandfather's Blessings*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2000, "The Way Through," pp. 141-143.

[586] Thus, Jer 23.23-24: ""Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? 24 Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD; Eph 4.6: "One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all;" Eph 4.10: ("He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things," Col. 1.17: ("He is before all things, and in him all things hold together," Acts 17.28: ("In him we live and move and have our being..;" Psalm 139.7-9: ("Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea.." [All references are ESV]. One might note the greatness of God whose hem filled the temple in the call of Isaiah (Isa., Chapter 6).

[587] Stringfellow, William, *A Private and Public Faith*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, p. 49.

[588] 1 Kings 8.27 ("Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you.."); Acts 7.48 ("The Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands"); Acts 17.24 ("The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man.").

[589] Rev. 1.17, 21.6, 22.13, Isa 44.6.

[590] Kittel, Gerhard, "A Ω," in Kittel, Gerhard, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.:" Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964, Vol. I, p. 2.

The Christian teaching of Christ's Ascension also includes the omnipresence of Christ. Thielicke writes: "when he walked he earth, he was close to only a few .. his presence was limited by time and space. Only a few heard his word. Since the Ascension, however, He is equally present .. at family prayer in Chicago, in a Siberian peasant's cottage or in a little group of faithful prisoners of war .. He passes through the doors of our homes, through the walls of prisons, and through the barbed wire of their 'isms'."[591] That Christ ascended "to the right hand of God" does not imply Christ's absence from the world; rather, it implies Christ's ascension teaches Christ's Lordship over all, or as Paul wrote, "He who descended is no other than he who ascended far above all heavens, so that he might fill the universe."[592] God is available to us at all times,[593] and in all places.[594] God is as near to us as our breath. Prayer, whatever words we use, when it comes from the heart, places us in the presence of God. Psalm 46, perhaps also written after a battle and also the basis of Martin Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God,"[595] packages in words the awareness felt in a chaos of the siege of Khe Sanh: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of danger. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.." (the "mountains" being our leaders, our nation, our places of strength; the "sea" for the Israelite was a place of chaos, a dwelling place of demons. Ancient Israel, unlike its Phoenician neighbor, did not develop a sea-going trade; they didn't venture into the sea).

On Sunday, 25 February, while a platoon-sized patrol from B/1/26 was being decimated just a short distance from our lines, I had crossed the wide, open airstrip and was in the northern perimeter, the Blue Sector, moving through the trench line and bunkers of C/1/26. A patrol there was just about to depart (perhaps to reinforce B/1/26) but halted. As the Marines returned to their trench and bunkers to dig and fill more sandbags, an enemy sniper was firing, but no one seemed concerned and just continued as though the sniper didn't exist. I, myself continued walking, mainly above ground since there was no continuous trench in the "C" Co. area, but rather a series of interrupted trenches and talked with the Marines along the way. Then came the very soft sound like a large drum pounded, indicating the firing of enemy guns. After counting a few seconds, I fell face down into a trench as incoming rounds began exploding, mainly in the middle of the combat base, the helicopter revetments, and the "C" Co. line. Suddenly there was a very loud boom (as eight pallets of anti-tank land mines, I was to learn the next day) exploded, leveling all of Shore Party that was still left standing above ground and making a crater over ten feet deep and ten feet wide, as I later saw. (It also demolished the 1/26 BAS shitter). I felt something I really hadn't experienced until this point. I found myself mumbling to God in unintelligible words and sounds as rounds continued exploding. I got up several times, but sounds of shrapnel making odd, whistling sounds as they moved through the air made for a symphony of death that continued many minutes after the land mines detonated.. Psalm 18.4-12 came to mind.[596]

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[591] Thielicke, Helmut, *I Believe, The Christian's Creed*. Trans. John W. Doberstein and H. George Anderson. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968, p. 197.

[592] Eph. 4.10.

[593] Matt 28.20b: "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

[594] *Cf.* Gen 28.15-16("Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." "Surely, the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it."); Joshua 1.9 ("Be strong and courageous, do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."); Isaiah 43.1-5 ("Fear not; for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you .. when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned .. Fear not; for I am with you."); Psalm 139.7-10 ("Whither shall I go from your spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall lead me."); Romans 8.38-39 ("I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.").

[595] Perhaps written as Jerusalem was besieged in the days of King Hezekiah. In 732BC, Damascus fell. Ten years later, Ashdod fell, and in 701BC, Jerusalem was besieged by the Assyrian king, Sennacherib (*Vide* 2 Kings 18.3-19.37, Micah 1.10-15, Isa 10.28-32). Then a miracle happened during the night as an angel of the Lord slew 185,000 of the enemy (2 Kings 19.35). A similar situation occurred when Constantinople fell in 1453 and the Islamic Turks then captured Belgrade. With a force of 80,000, they captured Hungary and killed some 15,000, beheading those captured on the Plain of Mohacs. In September of that year, they moved towards Vienna. Then, miraculously, they retreated. The great 46th Psalm came to Luther's mind as he lived through these events and he wrote a paraphrase on it, "A Mighty Fortress is our God.

[596] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 7 October 1972, pp. 1117-1118; Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 01 April 1970, p. 711], Psalm 18.4-12: The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; 5 the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. 6 In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. 7 Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. 8 Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. 9 He bowed the heavens and came down;

However, as most when breathing are unaware of the air, so in living, some remain unaware of God's Presence, of the liberating power to break out of suffocating, narrowing conditions of life into the "wideness of God's mercy" and God's Presence, love and peace. Our failure to realize this, however, does not negate God's purposes, as the quotation that the psychologist, C. G. Jung had written over the door of his house, and later was inscribed on his tombstone (in Latin translation): *Vocatus atque non vocatus, Deus aderit* ("invoked or not invoked, God will be present"). Or, as Jacob declared when he awoke from his dream, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it."[597]

Many others, however, we acutely aware of the Lord's presence, even in all the horror and terror, and even in the darkness. Well over a dozen men living in the siege battle at Khe Sanh later became priests and ministers, In conversations with them they note it was precisely in their battlefield experience they felt the presence and nearness of God, that God is with us in our struggles with forces that would smother and suffocate and do us harm.[598] God, who hides Himself,[599] , reminding one of James Russell Lowell's Civil War poem: "truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne / yet that scaffold sways the future / and beyond the dim unknown / standeth God within the shadows, keeping watch above His own."[600] God is on the Cross, God is present in our desperate need and dark places on life's path, God is present with us in our struggles with forces that smother and suffocate and do battle with us. "God's help is closest when distress is greatest (cf. Job 5.19)."[601]

Like an oasis in the desert, a very small opening might become the entrance to the broad place of peace. The small space may be the space between friends talking or hugging, a bunker or a trench, a small worship service in the midst of battle. We realize we are in a space of peace, a context within which we are blessed with opportunity to live, to be, to grow. Perhaps this is why, during the siege, one frequently saw Marines hugging each other in trenches or bunkers during incoming.

Just as radio, TV, or cell phone waves are all around us and in us and through us, but not evident to us without a receiver (radio, television set, cell phone), so also, God's Presence is made known in certain ways. The wider context of God becomes operative, for example, in a network of understanding friends and family, through grasping a greater understanding and mental grasp, through time's passage in which charged events become but a speck in a larger horizon, in the experience of nature's vastness and wholeness, in the ocean of love (as an action, a verb, and not a feeling or a noun), and in service to others to bring a fuller life (justice, mercy, service).

The "wider context" might be an "aha" realization gained from learning a different perspective from another person in the same situation. On the 20th of January 1968, as numerous casualties arrived at C Med from I/3/26 which was conducting a patrol to Hill 881-N before being recalled, I laid my camera on the ground in order to help carry a stretcher of a dead Marine to Graves Registration. When I returned, the camera was gone; someone had taken it. The loss vexed me for many years. On the undeveloped roll were pictures of the baptism of Gregory Popowitz, a Marine of the recon unit. His patrol had been shot out of its insertion zone three times and he requested baptism. That camera had been given me by my grandfather and has taken some sharp photographs later donated to the Marine Corps Pictorial Division which transferred them to the National Archives. Many years later, a good friend, Ernie Husted, of the recon unit at Khe Sanh, said, "Whoever stole that camera saved your life." At first, I couldn't understand. He explained that since I was always snapping photos, instead of taking cover in a trench or bunker during the shelling of Khe Sanh, I would have stood up to take a picture, and most probably would have been killed or seriously wounded. Suddenly, I realized he was correct. The loss never again vexed me. The words of Joseph to his brothers, who had sold him into slavery, packaged the liberating, healing words of my friend; whoever stole the camera meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.[602]

The "wider context" might be a community of veterans who have lived through the same experience, who can hold the pain, understand and listen without judgment, and who might supply missing parts of the story or a different perspective. The

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thick darkness was under his feet. 10 He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water. 12 Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds. (ESV)

[597] Gen. 28.16.

[598] Those who later became priests and ministers include: James Carmichael (E/2/26), Timothy Sims (M/3/26, who later became a Navy Chaplain), John T. Wielebski (A/1/26), Paul Longgrear (A-101 Special Forces), Tom Stott (G/2/26), Michael Stuart (2/3), Woodrow T. Schellenberg (1/9 Cav), Alan R. McLean (1/26), James D. Bailey (I/3/26), Gary Trowbridge (B/3d Recon), Charles E. Goodman (H&S/1/9), Keith Kapple (F/2/26), Ernie Elmore (CAC "O"), Donald Denton (1st Radio), Jim Everidge (G/2/26), Harris D. Himes (B/3d Tanks), and Michael C. Loehrer (B/1/13).

[599] Isa 45.15.

[600] Lowell, James Russell, *the Present Crisis*, lines 38-40.

[601] Fabry, H.-J., "צרר ," *op. cit.*, p. 460.

[602] Gen. 50.20, :As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.."

New Testament word for community, κοινωνία, (*coin-o-NEE'-a*), means "primarily participation in something, not fellowship (companionship)."[603] It is not community based on everyone joined together by liking each other or accidentally placed together (as a citizen of the same country), but joint participation in the same reality. It is not links in a chain joined as a necklace, but rather spokes in a wheel joined together because all are fixed to a common hub. In this case, men are joined together through having participated in the same battle experience; the heat of the battle welds people together in an especially strong bond. (As with metal welding, the weld is stronger than the pieces welded together.) Destructive memories, like holding onto an electric wire that is killing but cannot be released since it paralyzes, can be handled without destructive consequences through the "wire insulation" of the community.

A typical instance was a Marine who suffered many years with guilt at not digging faster to reach a trapped victim in a bunker which had been struck with an incoming round. On 23 February 1968, when the bunker of the Supply Officer of 1/26, 1/Lt Kim Johnson, was hit by incoming, LCPL Leopold ("lee") R. Burger and Joseph R. Murray, who had just departed the bunker, immediately returned to the bunker to dig and rescue Lt Johnson. "We were digging frantically. I remember as soon as I saw his face, I cleared the dirt from his face and I touched his hand and went for a pulse, but I could already see that the color and everything else was out of him. There was not a mark on him."[604] Murray was given Burger's telephone number, called him, and later said, "That was one of the most important phone calls I've ever made in my life! Perceptions are different, and my perception screwed me up for a long time. It was a real therapeutic phone call. I always thought that I dug in slow motion, and he told me that was not his perception. He was right next to me. I always blamed myself for that guy's [Johnson's] death. I felt if I had dug a little faster–. But according to Lee, I dug as fast as he. That phone call that I made to you, and then you called back, I can't tell you how much that helped!"[605]



WE SHARED EVERYTHING IN OUR TRENCHES AND BUNKERS
Official USMC photo A191072
Photographer unknown. B Co, 3d Recon Bn

The greater context of community (which was really the presence of God) became evident in the many bunkers visited during the siege of Khe Sanh. We were limited to only one C-ration a day (instead of the normal three) and one canteen cup of water per day (because the water point, a large rubber container aloft (like an urban water tower one sees in the States), was frequently punctured by shrapnel from exploding incoming rounds).[606] In the many dozens of bunkers visited during the siege battle, men were observed giving their last drops of water to a thirsty comrade as well as cans of precious food, indicating the presence of Jesus who said, "I was thirsty and you gave me drink, thirsty and you fed me."[607] Marines freely shared everything they had. Marines dashed out of bunkers, trenches, and other protective places to pull a Marine wounded from incoming to safety—while incoming still exploded–a daily, commonly observed event. Unintimidated, Marines dashed out during incoming to splice severed land lines so those in command bunkers to communicate with each other or with artillery tubes, displaying a "courage to be" in the face of death (what Tillich referred to as "non-being")[608] whose ultimate

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[603] Benko, Stephen, *The Meaning of Sanctorum Communio*. (*Studies in Historical Theology*, No. 3). Naperville, Il.: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1964, p. 80.
[604] Conversation with Lee Burger, 06 June 1993.
[605] Conversation with Joseph Murray, 06 July 1993. Note: Many combat veterans, as well as those experiencing great stress, report things happening in slow motion..
[606] Overheard in the 1/26 COC bunker: The battalion S-4 was chewing out a Marine for using potable water. The Marine replied, "I only used a thimble-full, sir!" The S-4 replied: "Do you realize we might not get another drop out of the water point?" [Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, unpublished manuscript, 01 April 1970, p. 701]. On Saturday, 24 February 1968, LtCol Wilkinson, the 1/26 battalion commander, reported that we have only 500 gallons of water left on the base and that the water point had not received water for the last three days.. [*Ibid.*]. In another observed conversation, one corpsman at C Med said to another, "You didn't shave this morning!" The reply, "Well, I drank up all my water allowance last night." [Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, cited, p. 704].
[607] Matt 25.31-43.
[608] *Vide*, Tillich, Paul: *The Courage to Be*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952.

source if God.[609] The ancient Jewish toast, *L'Chaim*, ("to life!") affirms life despite all the persecutions throughout the ages as the gift of God, the source of all life. "No matter what difficulty life brings, no matter how hard or painful or unfair life is, life is holy and worthy of celebration ... It has always seemed remarkable to me that such a toast could be offered for generations by a people for whom life has not been easy."[610]

Conversations in the bunkers frequently were sprinkled with humor. When a rocket exploded nearby, narrowly missing the bunker, someone said, "Those NVA gunners are piss-poor; they couldn't even hit us!" (Disregarding the fact that a 122 mm rocket has a range of 12,000 meters; it might have been fired from a gun over 7 miles away!) Courage to affirm life in the presence of death can only be traced to the source of life. The great variety of bunker styles was evidence of creativity. Some were "L"-shaped to minimize damage from shrapnel or force of blast should a round land in one portion. Likewise, many were built perpendicular to the trench line for the same reason. The great recon trench consisted of one long trench through the recon area on which Marines furiously dug deeper and deeper. The trench was over seven feet deep, but unfortunately in one straight line. They were motivated to dig furiously, and did include some "roll-outs" at the bottom of the trench and even a buried pisser, a submerged 55-gallon drum covered with a screen. During one period of incoming, a Marine jumped into the trench and only at the last second spread his legs planting a foot on either side of the pisser![611] Some, like those of the reinforcing platoon from Co "D" 3rd Recon Bn which arrived to reinforce "B" Co. just before the siege, were zig-zag, also to minimize blast damage. Some, like Shore Party's, had a very long, small diameter shaft opening with a ladder which opened into a small cavern bunker deep beneath the earth, and was able to survive the immense explosion on 25 February 1968 of eight pallets of land mines next to it that left a very large crater. Some bunkers had small openings like windows for shooting ports.



RECON TRENCH –Official USMC photo A193277 BY Ray W. Stubbe 14 Apr 1968

Most built their own bunkers, including officers. A few relied on working parties to build them. When the bunker for the Executive Officer of 1/26 was being constructed, the enlisted Marines were unable to build their own bunkers; during the night, they secretly removed all the air matting from the Executive Officer's new bunker being built and placed it on their own. Then, very early in the morning, they removed the pieces of air matting off their bunker and replaced them on the Executive Officer's bunker. A wounded Marine[612] was moaning and groaning on the stretcher about to be medically evacuated. "I lost everything! I lost everything!" Attempting to console him, I asked if he had lost all his pictures or all his uniforms, burned in the incoming? "O no, Chaplain, you know all those little cans of peanut butter and jelly that come in the C ration? I had been saving them in a wood ammo box, and the incoming destroyed all of them. I lost everything!" While giving his part in the 1/26 battalion staff and officers meeting the morning of Friday, 26 January 1968, Dr. Harvey Demaagd commented on the two immense craters on either side of the road near the 1/26 BAS: "Well, they used to speed down the road, so we called in the NVA arty to make some obstacles for our trucks!"[613]

The "greater context" might be a circle of friends or even one close friend, in an "I-Thou" relationship Friends who accept and challenge, who are honest (a friend is one who will tell you your fly is open), who meet on the patio (instead of relating through roles, talents, positions)[614] pierce through the armor of defenses, through the mud, rust, scratches, and hard outer shell to our soul and enable us to be and to grow. Mr. Turek, Chairman of the Milwaukee County War Memorial, frequently remarked, "The nearest we can get to God is to behold Him in the face of a friend," (probably a reference to Jacob meeting Esau where Jacob said, "Truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God."[615] Friendship frees us from the sin of the *cor*

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[609] *Ibid.*, p. 186.
[610] Remen, Rachel Naomi, *My Grandfather's Blessings*, New York: Riverside Books, 2000, pp. 77-78.
[611] Stubbe, Ray William, diary entry for Thursday, 22 February 1968. [*Khe Sanh Chaplain*, unpublished manuscript, 01 April 1970, p. 695].
[612] LCPL Slaugenhaupt, A Co., 3rd Shore Party Battalion. Incident on 06 Feb 1968 [Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, 1971, pp. 956-957].
[613] Stubbe, Ray William, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 07 Oct 1971, p. 887.
[614] *NB* Olsson, Karl A., *Meet Me on the Patio*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977.
[615] Gen. 33.10.

incurvatum in se (the heart turned in on itself),[616] living a lesser life encumbered with one's own agenda or self-preoccupation[617] or through "crispation" which Gabriel Marcel understands as becoming encrusted, opaque, sealed off from experience, hardening through pride or withdrawal into the self like a "crustacean animal who secretes around himself a shell which hardens with time, locking the world out as it locks itself in."[618] "Friendship, loving but forceful; encounters with one's equals, to attack and be attacked, to insult and be insulted.."[619] –friendship intensely lived and intensely suffered[620] can save a psychotherapist from increasing self-delusion. Friends "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."[621] Marines in the bunkers of Khe Sanh during the siege battle of Khe Sanh saw through any pretense of artificial roles. The wide variety of bunker styles reflected the wide variety in personalities and individual quirks which were tolerated because all were included within the greater umbrella of being another Marine. In subsequent life as a veteran, an attempt to recapture the sense of being inter-related as human beings instead of being related through social roles (found in the civilian world upon return) stifled revealing battle experiences to others, fostered social isolation, and while Vietnam was still raging, a desire to return there, and after Vietnam, being lost in one's past.

The "greater context" might be the sudden grasp by one's mind of an understanding. Chaplain Walt Driscoll, the Roman Catholic chaplain, mentioned he had visited the FSCC (Fire Support Control Center) as a barrage of incoming slammed into the base. Everyone departed the bunker, he said in order to determine from where it was being fired. (They stick a stick into the center of the crater to determine the direction). He said that all his fears disappeared despite the incoming because it was all explained, like we were in control of the situation. Arty doesn't have a lot of bunkers; the Marines go out when incoming arrives![622] To understand what is happening in life eliminates or diminishes its power.[623]

Perhaps it's a greater understanding as we look at our experience through the lens of the words of the Bible. A wounded man on a stretcher asks me to read to him the words of the 91st Psalm,[624] words which resonated our life experience at that time, in that place: "He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler (the one who catches birds in a cage, like the NVA encircling, caging us) and from the deadly pestilence (of ever-present death, illness, rats, wounding) ... You shall not fear the terror of the night (in the form of 40,000 NVA creeping closer, closer, attacking) nor the arrow that flies by day (rockets, artillery, mortars, sniper bullets), nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side (friendly casualties),[625] ten thousand at your right hand ("right hand" referring to our power: the NVA casualties)[626] ... He will command his angels concerning you to guard you ion all your ways ... I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him.."[627] (Who at Khe Sanh would not be comforted and encouraged by these words?)

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[616] Augustine: *Confessions*, uses this term to refer to sin.

[617] One of Gabriel Marcel's teachings on being "unavailable." [McCown, Joe, *Availability: Gabriel Marcel and the Phenomenology of Human Openness*. (American Academy of Religion Studies in Religion Series, No. 14), Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978, p. 11.

[618] *Ibid*., p. 12.

[619] Guggenbühl-Craig, Adolf, *Power in the Helping Professions*. Dallas, Texas: Spring Publications, Inc., 1982, p. 135.

[620] *Ibid*., p. 136.

[621] Gal. 6.2 ESV.

[622] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, entry for Friday, 23 Feb 1968, p. 700.

[623] In 1983, when experiencing much of what later was identified as symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), I felt I was the only one with these problems and that I was definitely losing my mind. When I learned I was experiencing PTSD, that others also experienced this, I felt a freedom from it, even as it continued to be experienced. I could name it, face it, analyze it, and deal with it. Likewise, when facing a needle biopsy of the prostate, a nurse asked if I had any concerns. When I mentioned a previous needle biopsy and the clicking sounds of the device, and knowing in my mind that a small piece of prostate was being collected, the sounds were more disconcerting than any possible physical pain. When the nurse responded by drawing a very thin line on a piece of paper and said that this is the amount of tissue being retrieved, I was freed from all the anxiety when the clicking sounds of the device later occurred. Knowledge of what was happening freed me of worries; they were simply a product of my imagination. Three times in 2009 I suddenly felt that I was about to die, that I couldn't breathe (but then realized that I was breathing but could not get sufficient air). It felt like a plastic bag was over my head, like I was suffocating. I assumed I was having a heart attack and was dying, alleviated only when I yanked my boxing headgear from my head or found a wide open space (Episodes were on 26 Apr and 28 Jun 2008 and 08 Mar 2009). Only later did a Vietnam vet (Tony Longval, April 2009) tell me these were "panic attacks." Once I knew what they were, I never had another one. Knowledge of the situation became a "larger context" into which I could place the trouble or pain.

[624] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh Chaplain* (Unpublished manuscript), 01 April 1970, entry for Tue., 16 Apr 1968, p. 862.

[625] Friendly casualties, 20 Jan - 11 Jul were 990 KIA (402 for 20 Jan - 31 Mar, 165 for 01-16 Apr, 43 for 16 Apr, and 380 for 17 Apr - 11 Jul, when the base was abandoned).

[626] NVA casualties were estimated to 10,000 - 20,000 KIA. "Bru villagers south and west of Khe Sanh reported at least 2,000 and possibly 10,000 were killed by bombing. Casualties due to secondary explosions and fires from destruction and damage

The "greater context" might be Christian fellowship. A common center in Christ enables all people of whatever human category to be brothers and sisters. "At the foot of the Cross is level ground." The Christian Church is the hospital of the sick and wounded, a "safe place"[628] to share our shame, guilt, and sin and be accepted. Christian community creates a "space where we are free to face the real struggle, where we are free to face our true pain .. a place where we can discover grace and mercy."[629] Christian community is a space where people can say, "'I listened to you, and this is what I hear,' then people can say, 'Yes, you really understand it; you really know who we are.' That seems to be a very important task—first of all, to help people dare to recognize their own struggle. ... they say, 'If you have the courage to listen to us and hear our pain and struggle without having solutions, if you are really willing to feel these things, then we are also free to feel our own struggles and we don't have to run away from them.'"[630] The Church is called "..to create a space where we are free to face the real struggle, .. free to face our true pain, .. a place where we feel a certain trust, a certain safety, and a certain protection, but a protection not to help us avoid problems but to face them, to deal with them, and to look at them."[631] The Church is the space within which the Holy Spirit is active in compassion for one another "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."[632] The Spirit works, not primarily *in* individuals but *between and among* individuals, thriving "by the comfort people give one another,"[633] God's "Spirit does not enter anyone for his private benefit. God's business is with his people, and for the sake of their life together as his covenanted people."[634] "We know no love of God without our love for one another, no forgiveness of God without our forgiving one another, no faith or hope from God, except as we have faith toward one another and hope for one another."[635] Focused on the Lord rather than on each other's defects, we are able to understand Edwin Markham's poem, "Outwitted:" "He drew a circle that kept me out / heretic, scoundrel, a thing to flout / but love and I had the wit to win / we drew a circle that took him in."[636]

Worship services were some of those openings in which eternity pierced our situation, where we were aware of peace in the midst of conflict, strength in the midst of helplessness over incoming, and felt hugged by God instead of the surrounding tens of thousands of enemy soldiers.

On Tuesday, 06 February 1968, I led 13 worship services attended by 96 with 42 communing. The first three were in the recon area (three inside bunkers, one outside) attended by 6, 6, 7, and 7. I then led one inside the 1/26 COC bunker attended by 6 with 5 communing, the one for the MPs in a hole near the ISO bunker, attended by 11 with 6 communing, one for a working party from D/1/26 which was cleaning up bad ammo at the ammo dump. This was in an excavated, large trench and attended by 12 with 4 communing. I then led four worship services for A/1/26 Marines attended by 4, 5, 9, and 3, one for 2nd platoon, 1st squad of B/1/26 attended by 4, and one for 81 mortars of B/1/26 in a large, deep hole, a future bunker, attended by 18 with 4 communing.

My opening prayer: "Lord, be present now we pray as we gather together to worship You, pray to You, hear You, and receive Your Holy Word. We know Your promise is that wherever two or three are gathered in Your Name, You are in the midst of them. We also know Your promise to be with us no matter where we might be. Let us be aware of Your Presence, O Lord, in our lives here and now, and let us have the strength and courage such awareness brings, for we ask it in the Name and for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

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to guns, bunkers, supply dumps, headquarters, and structures, although not capable of being accurately counted, must have been high. Assuming 2 NVA soldiers per secondary explosion, with over 6,000 secondary explosions and fires, 12,000 may be conservatively estimated. Some of these explosions continued several hours. Approximately 900 bunkers were destroyed, some of which must have been occupied. 300 gun positions were destroyed. Forward Air Controllers (flying O1 and O2 aircraft) counted 1,400 bodies, and approximately 1,000 bodies were killed on the wires of KSCB from three attempted assaults on the combat base in March, 1968. [MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 8 July 1968, p. 13; Gen. Wm. C. Westmoreland, speech of 13 June 1968, to 3rd Air Division in *History, 3rd Air Division, Jan - Jul 1968*, Vol. 1, Exhibit #180, MACV, *Command History, 1968*, Vol. 2, pp. 423-424]. Reference: Stubbe, *battalion of Kings*, 2005, p. 266.

[627] Psalm 91.3, 5-7, 11, 15.

[628] *Cf.* Nouwen, Henri, "The Parish, a Safe Place to Face our Pain," Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute: Action Information 7:1 (Jan-Feb, 1981).

[629] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[630] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[631] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[632] Phil. 2.4, ESV.

[633] Haroutunian, Joseph, *God with Us, A Theology of Transpersonal Life*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965, p. 60.

[634] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[635] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[636] Alexander, A.L., *Poems That Touch the Heart*. New York: Hanover House, 1956, p. 61.

I then read the Scripture lesson appointed for the week (which seemed particularly applicable, Matthew 8.23-27) and prayed the appointed Collect (for the 4th Sunday in Epiphany, also very applicable to our situation!) The former was Jesus calming the troubled sea. The Latter: "Almighty God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: Grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen."

My very brief sermon pointed to how the Scripture lesson shows: (1) God is really God; He is in control and powerful. (2) He is personally concerned for the individual welfare and feelings of the disciples. I then proceeded immediately to the distribution of Communion followed with the Benediction (Numbers 6.26), and then talked with the men, perhaps giving a few hugs, and then left for the next bunker or trench.

At the second recon worship, the first Marine took the small chalice and swallowed all the contents! I had assumed that all would just wet their lips, but they all, evidently, could not get enough of the Lord's Presence in that desperate situation! Perhaps they intuitively grasped what St. Ignatius had written: that the consecrated bread is the "medicine of immortality, the antidote that we should not die, but live forever in Jesus Christ."[637] It caught me by surprise, and I didn't know if I should consecrate more wine, knowing that the others would probably follow h is example and didn't see the need to say the Words of institution each time, so I just consecrated the whole bottle and merely filled the chalice about half full.[638]

On Friday, 09 February 1968, the ancient Christian church history of Christians worshipping in catacombs in Rome as a safe place in a very deadly setting, continually came to mind. My diary entry for the day:

"Today was a good day to visit the men in the Blue Sector and lead worship for them. The fog shrouded us from snipers who might spot us and call in mortars or rockets as we gathered.

"First there was a small group of four men on the LSA from 2/26. The damp and quiet fog setting made the worship seem particularly intimate. I then proceeded to the point where the Blue and Red Sectors join and began to work eastward. Eleven men attended from the 3rd squad; 4 communed. 21 men attended from the 3rd squad; 5 communed. One Marine said he "wanted assurance." The man reads his Bible, prays, but has not attended worship for a long time and wanted prayer. I invited him to our worship and we later talked about God's love for him.

"One hooch had a squad of Army psychological operations soldiers from the 7th PsyOps, and worship was on a wooden platform in their bunker for four men; one communed.

"Continuing down the trench line, there was a worship service for the C/1/26 snipers: seven attended, one communed. 13 attended from 3rd platoon of C/1/26; one communed.

"The next bunker contained Army soldiers of the Quad .50s, a squad from "G" Battery of the 65th Artillery Group that has been at Khe Sanh since 21 November 1967. Their weapon consists of four .50 caliber machineguns mounted on the back of a 2-½ ton truck and can fire 2,700 rounds per minute.[639] Six soldiers attended the worship service and expressed how appreciative they were that a chaplain visited them in their bunker, just outside, where they worked. A hooch is very important to the men. It is more than a place to sleep. It represents their life—their creativity, their comradeship, sweat, and work, ingenuity, security, the container of their soul. It's here they run for refuge. In a very deep sense, the men want God to enter into their humanity, into their life. Entering all these dozens of bunkers on the combat base at Khe Sanh has a much deeper significance than merely entering places of residence!

"Five Marines attended a worship service from 3rd Squad, 2nd Platoon, C/1/26. One man, PVT Ransom Lee Stuck, spoke with me about possibly getting off active duty early. His enlistment has already expired, but he's now serving 'bad time' until the end of March. He has two athletic scholarships and wants to attend college. The platoon commander told me his case is still pending, but he'll probably be required to serve the extra time. (I saw him a few days later—in a body bag; he was killed 26 Feb.)

"Next was a bunker quite different from the others, fashioned out of the rectangular, slivery metal boxes used to store Navy 40 mm anti-aircraft rounds. It was the squad from "C" Battery, 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery, 108th Artillery Group, U.S. Army. The vehicle weapon they man is the 'Duster,' probably named for its speed—a 49,500-pound vehicle going 45 MPH, churning up a virtual dust storm of camouflage! The two 40 mm clip-fed automatic guns are capable of firing 240 rounds per

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[637] Ignatius, Epistle to the Ephesians, 20:2. St. Ignatius lived c. 35 – c. 107 and was Bishop of Antioch

[638] Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 1971, p. 955.

[639] SSGT Don Willis, "Quad 50s Protest Khe Sanh," in III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:12 (22 Mar 1968) p. 9; III MAF News Release No. 91-68.

minute.[640] It has the distinction of being Navy ammunition fired from an Army weapon on a Marine Corps base. Two soldiers attended worship from this unit.

"I then passed the helicopter revetments and crossed the airstrip, arriving at the Shore Party detachment (2nd Platoon, Co. "A", 3rd Shore Party Bn). It is always a squeamish venture to cross the LSA, loaded as it is with cases of ammunition, as well as the airstrip which has no place to run for cover. They are two good targets where enemy rounds lately have landed with predictable frequency and destructiveness. The Shore Party Marines work out in the open in this dangerous place, all day, day after day. The area is ghostly, with a burnt-down tent and men digging deeper and deeper. They are very warm and friendly and my visit gave them a brief 'Sabbath rest' from their Herculean labors. After I announced worship services, that anyone desiring to worship could do so, more and more gathered at the bunker where I was. I suggested that we hold several smaller-size services as there was a 'grave' danger that a single round might get everyone. But since my worship services are only about seven to ten minutes in duration, everyone gathered in an area where there were plenty of bunkers to dive into if need be. 22 Marines attended; 18 communed. I did feel uneasy at the number gathered; security in worship is better with small-sized congregations.

I then visited our battalion supply area. There was only one Protestant; the rest were Roman Catholic. So I led a worship service, complete with communion and sermon for the one Marine. The men there gave me two shirts, a dozen sox, and a canteen cup, saying they wanted to dispose of all their supplies since they'd probably get hit and would rather have the supplies distributed than destroyed, reminding me that our possessions become encumbrances if we retain them but life-enriching as we give them to others. I said I didn't want anything unless the men had everything they needed, but they assured me they have been sending supplies out to the men of our battalion. Then a second Protestant appeared, and I conducted a second worship service for him also–for the one Marine.

"Returning to C Med for more communion hosts and to clean the small chalice I had been using, now caked with red dust and wine, I found a few seconds to devour a C-ration pecan cake roll for lunch and then decided to hold a worship service for the Navy corpsmen of C Med. This worship service was conducted in their new underground Air Force evacuation team bunker and attended by corpsmen of C Med, the 3rd Medical Battalion Surgical Augmentation Team, some Air Force medics, and one patient lying on a stretcher attached to the wall and receiving an IV. Eleven attended; six communed.

"I then returned to finding the scattered sheep—men in the various pockets within this place of destruction and desolation. I came first upon a dilapidated metal hooch that looked like something out of a concentration camp, ugly and lifeless. It was Graves Registration. The men here were very relieved to have a worship service. They always only see dead bodies and body parts. Their jobs are voluntary; they can 'get out' at any time, but willingly do this service for the bereaved at home and as honor to their fallen brothers. What they do might determine an open or closed casket, they tell me. Perhaps few realize just what they do or remember them. Four attended the worship service, all those there; three communed.

"I then visited our 1/26 BAS. Doctor Demaagd has returned, buoyant and cheerful and as enthusiastic as ever. A worship service was held at the end of the BAS ward bunker. The lights went out half-way through the sermon, and I said a prayer in total darkness. A candle was lit during the Words of institution, and the lights came back on during the distribution, almost symbolically communicating the 'light of the world entering our darkness.' Nine attended; eight communed.

"No one was at 3rd Engineers; they are all out working. Likewise the Marines of Co D/1/26, which were all out on working parties. I held two worship services for Marines that remained in the area, one attended by four, the other by six.

"I then returned to Cpl William Barr of Co C/1/26 who is Roman Catholic but marrying a Lutheran, bringing him a catechism. He invited me for 'supper' in his bunker, and I had 'Ham with Water Added and Eggs, Chopped, Canned.' IO arrived there at 1615H and departed an hour later, walking behind the helicopter revetments where there were three damaged H-34s. One, YL-34, had carried me to the hills on many occasions.

"Just then, there were incoming rockets. The blasts were in rapid succession and kept getting louder and louder, one sounding like it exploded only a short distance behind me. I did what you should not do—run, fast and furious, a tendon in my leg ached badly, and I was panting with hyperventilation from the excitement. Rockets, with their whistling shriek are heard just long enough that you wonder where they are going to land and explode, and the blasts are frighteningly deafening. No description can adequately convey the fear they inspire. So, although today was quiet all day, probably because of the fog and the consequent lack of C-130s landing, I again had a 'near miss.' (I was here because I wanted to return to 3rd Engineers to conduct a worship service for them; otherwise, I would have returned to C Med by a route fairly far from these blasts).

"There was a good turnout at 3rd Engineers, the worship being conducted deep in a submerged bunker hooch of the Officer in Charge, Lt Gay. Due to the confined space, I had to commune the men individually as they were scattered in various

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[640] "All You Can See is Dust," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:12 (22 Mar 1968), p. 5.

places. one man spilled the chalice of consecrated wine all over the foot-locker I was using an an altar. 17 men attended; 11 communed.

"Today, I conducted 19 worship services attended by 165 and 72 communed.

"I then reported to the battalion commander, LtCol Wilkinson, on today's activities. He is always interested in the men and their welfare. Capt Onslow, our S-4, was there. he is very fatherly, warm, and always interested in all my religious services and faithfully attends them. (He was later killed on 10 May, after 1/26 departed Khe Sanh. I also spoke with Sgt Timothy Keady who wants to be confirmed, not having completed his confirmation instruction back home.

"There was barely enough light when I departed the 1/26 COC bunker to return to my bunker in C Med, about 1930H."[641]

A picture was taken during the siege in which I am leading a small group of Marines in worship. It was one week into the battle, 28 January 1968, and the base was a shambles from the high amount of incoming we had been receiving. The base commander, Colonel David Lownds, had issued an order even before the battle erupted that everyone on the base would wear helmets. Oddly, this picture shows me and all the Marines with me without helmets. It was natural to take off head coverings in worship. In fact, during this particular worship, we did receive incoming mortars, we scattered, and reassembled. G.K. Chesterton once wrote: "Look at something long enough until it seems strange; you are seeing it for the first time." Many decades later, upon looking at that photo, I suddenly realized we were not wearing helmets and a realization that had a round wounded or killed one of these men brought a chill. Nor was it just this worship service; it was all my worship services at Khe Sanh during the siege. Only the words of the Psalm brought some comfort: "O God, the Lord,



CHAPLAIN STUBBE LEADING WORSHIP AT KHE SANH FOR MARINES OF C/1/26 – 28 Jan 1968
Official USMC photo by SSGT John A. Reid A190294

the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle."[642] Gunny George Bailey, NCOIC of the small Detachment, 1st Radio Company, III MAF, later remarked to me that one of the days when we were taking a particularly large amount of incoming, he lost half of his Radio Platoon; they were carrying litters and he didn't know where they were. He discovered them as he approached C Med where he also saw me leading a worship service. "And to me it was just a remarkable situation because I said, 'God, we're getting all this shit coming in on us, and here stands this man in total defiance of everything that I've ever known, and I went out there, and I knelt."[643] He said he found peace, like being in the eye of a hurricane that was wreaking destruction all around us. At my ordination, our church choir sang one of J.S. Bach's Motets, "Jesus Priceless Treasure" which included the words: "In thine arms I rest me / foes who would molest me / cannot enter there / Those who love the Father / though the storms may gather / yet have peace.." (Peace, of course, is not the *absence* of battle, but the *presence* of the Lord who grants the space, the context within which life may flourish and come to completion.

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[641] Stubbe, Ray William, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 1989, pp. 549-551.

[642] Ps. 140.7 KJV. What some might consider recklessness, but I consider faith (as living in a relationship with God in total trust and obedience), there was a definite disregard for dangers others knew; it was similar to driving a car in which one could be killed, but who thinks of that when they get into the car? The possibility of being hit by incoming didn't even occur to me. A very similar situation had happened in the summer of 1967. Co C/1/26 was at an outpost following the ambush on 21 July 1967 with the 175s coming to Khe Sanh. Visiting this outpost, I learned that Co B/1/26 was about five miles east on Route 9, and I told the battalion XO, Major Heath "Well, I'll just walk down there to lead worship for them." He was incredulously shocked and said, "But the company is five miles down the road." "I know, Sir, but I don't mind walking that far to hold services for them." "But this is all enemy territory!" He said it was entirely out of the question–too dangerous. [Stubbe, Ray William,, *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 Apr 1970, unpublished manuscript, p. 76]. The possibility of being killed or captured didn't even enter my mind. Likewise, when Major Harper Bohr and I walked to Khe Sanh village from the combat base so he could deliver toys to the Millers, both of us and Mr. John Miller then walked back to the combat base, going over Hill 471. Major Bohr was unarmed—and was the S-2 of regiment. We were in a place of peace; no thought of possible capture or death by NVA intruded. This was 16 December 1967, as NVA were closing in on us and our recon teams were beginning to make significant contact resulting in Marines being killed.

[643] Conversation with George Bailey, 19 Oct 1989. Gunny Bailey died on 22 Dec 2004.

Peace is strength and life. Peace is victory because a person develops towards completion. One Biblical theologian even writes, "The great warrior is he who always has 'peace' in his battles."[644]

The "greater context" might be nature. Experiencing nature's wholeness reorients life into wholeness. Nature reorders, refashions, and realigns. The peace (which is more a matter of the presence of wholeness than the absence of noise) we experience in a walk through a natural area or the majestic beauty that creates awe and wonder, heal the soul. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."[645].

The "greater context" might be service to others, working to bring justice, laying down one's life daily in loving service to others[646] an abiding within love which is an abiding in God, for "God is love."[647] and "if we love one another, God lives in us.."[648] God, the source of all life, the One who forgives and heals, lives within us as we activate that presence through our mutual love of each other. When I was a young pastor and visited elderly shut-ins, I mistakenly assumed it was I who was bringing them the warmth of friendship and, through prayers and sacrament, the Presence of our Lord. Frequently, they would give me great blessings of friendship sacramentally conveyed through cookies or a cup of coffee. Only gradually did I learn that it was neither I nor they who were blessing, but rather it was God, who is always present, who was blessing us, who was activated through our mutual love—love understood, of course, as a verb and action, not a noun or a feeling. We pass from death to life when we love others.[649]

Another description of the "wider context" might be the Hebrew word *Shalom* (שלום), translated as "peace," but having a vastly richer meaning: The Brown, Driver, Briggs *Lexicon* gives the meaning of *shalom* as "completeness, soundness, welfare, tranquility, friendship, peace;"[650] von Rad gives the meaning of "well-being with a strong emphasis on the material side;"[651] and Pedersen. understands the term to refer to that which is whole and complete, fulfilled.[652] Shalom is not the result of human effort; it is the result of God's blessing.[653] Like ripples from a stone tossed on the surface of the water, *shalom* moves outwards from a center, which is God. "May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace."[654] "Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea."[655] Old Testament usage indicates that health and prosperous growth surround the person who has peace. The blessed person "..is peace, his house is peace, everything that belongs to him is peace."[656] Peace expands outwards and describes the expansive place where life is free to develop to its completion.

God in the center of life or a group exerts blessing outwards. This obviously doesn't shield anyone from danger or death, but the Lord is with us in the danger and in death. St. Paul, writing from prison, notes both joy and peace due to the Presence of God in his very difficult situation: "Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made to known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."[657] The verse from First John, "Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world,"[658] brings confidence and courage in the face of pain and problems. A saying from the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, echoes a similar

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[644] Pedersen, Johs., *Israel, Its Life and Culture, I-II.* London: Geoffrey Cumberlege and Copenhagen: Branner og Korch, 1926, p. 312.
[645] Ps. 19.1 KJV.
[646] Jn 15.13.
[647] 1 Jn 4.16.
[648] 1 Jn 4.12.
[649] 1 Jn 3.14. For the natural life being one of death and passing from death into life, *cf.*, Lk 10.28, Jn 5.24, Col. 2.13, Eph 2.5.
[650] Brown, Francis, Driver, S.R., and Briggs, Charles A., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, Based on the Lexicon of William Gesenius.* Trans. Edward Robinson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907, pp. 1022f.
[651] von Rad, Gerhard, "שלום in the Old Testament," in Kittel, Gerhard, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1964, pp. 402-406.
[652] Pedersen, Johs., *Israel, Its Life and Culture, I-II.* London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1926, p. 311.
[653] Durham, John I., and Porter, J.R., *Proclamation and Presence, Old Testament Essays in Honour of Gwynne Henton Davies.* London: SCM Press, 1970, p. 277.
[654] Ps 29.11.
[655] Isa 48.18.
[656] Pedersen, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
[657] Phil 4.4-7. The original Greek word for "keep" is a military term referring to guarding by a sentry.
[658] 1 Jn 4.4.

encouragement: "Jesus said, 'If you bring forth what is within you, what you have will save you. If you do not have that within you, what you do not have within you [will] kill you.'"[659]

Diary entry for Thursday, 25 January 1968 (the fifth day of the Khe Sanh siege): It may seem odd, if not crazy to think of peace achieving fullness of meaning in the middle of fierce battle, but that's just the way it is. There is a palpable calmness present among practically all the Marines here. The screeching Russian-made rockets, causing fear-inspiring uncertainty as to where they will explode, an abrupt, sharp noise as spine-tingling as a fingernail scraped on the blackboard, don't seem to shake anything but the ground. Perhaps it's the hard training Marines receive, perhaps it's their comradeship, but I see in it the Presence of God, a peace based on Presence of God and strength, not on the absence of turmoil While it may seem odd to think of God present in a place like this and at a time like this, all so manifestly evil and a place of daily death, the people of Israel proclaimed God present in war: "Yahweh is a man of wars,"[660] and "mighty in battle."[661] Whether or not we are aware of this doesn't matter; our awareness and our initiatives and demands do not control God's action. We don't manipulate or control God! But, when we are aware of God's presence, we have joy in suffering, peace in turmoil, courage in the midst of enemies, hope in bleakness, light in darkness, faith when all supporting evidence lacks.

Some, of course, do not live in the broad place of God's meadow of peace, which is possible even in the most desperate battlefield or on a hospital bed on which one is dying. They do not find the various "openings" in the fabric of life, like holes on a golf course; they may not even be on a golf course! When I was about to go on active duty in 1956, my pastor said, "The military service is like a great heat: it may melt you into a blob or temper you into the finest steel." The very ancient pre-Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus (c. 540 – c. 470), left us with a fragment: Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξετοὺς δὲ ἀνθπώπους, τοὺς μὲμ δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρουις ("War is the father of all and the king of all; some he has marked out to be gods and some to be men, some he has made slaves and some free.")[662]

MEMORIAL SERVICES

On Saturday, 20 April 1968, a very large formation of about 250 Marines gathered in a formation at Quang Tri Combat Base. All the companies of 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, including a new ECHO Company (commanded by Capt John Raymond who had commanded A/1/26 at Khe Sanh) had located together in this newly-forming combat base out of range of NVA artillery which had been striking the Dong Ha Combat Base. Bravo Company was the only one of the five recon companies to have a large slit trench running the length of their company tents; they knew to dig! They had the adjacent Marines of 3rd Shore Party Battalion and the Engineer Battalion dig it and gave the Marines of those units captured NVA gear they had kept as souvenirs.

It rained during the late morning and was very windy. The Marines formed a large "U"-shaped formation in front of a large, portable aluminum altar on which was placed a cross, open Bible, and eighteen bush hats (held in place by line strung over the top of the altar). Eighteen Marines with helmets stood directly in front of the altar. Father Bernie Filmyer and I stood on the other side of the altar. To one side was the American flag and on the other side were the church pennant and the church flag. (They wanted everything). The "B" Co. Gunny, Gunny Wells, read off each of the names of those killed from the company. As he read a name, one of the eighteen Marines advanced, came to port arms, and cleared his weapon. The

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[659] *Logion* 70, quoted in Meyer, Marvin, trans and notes, *The Gospel of Thomas, The Hidden Sayings of Jesus*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992, p. 53. (Also quoted in Guillaumont, A., *et al*, *:The Gospel According to Thomas*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, and New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959, p. 41.)

[660] Ex 15.3. On the Lord being a war God, *vide* Köhler, Ludwig, *Old Testament Theology*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957, p. 26.

[661] Ps. 24.8. "If God is to meet man in history and act on his behalf, it must be in the world as it is. But the world which is, is a world which is sinful, for God has given to man a certain freedom. Therefore, if God is to work on behalf of man in the world, He must give the appearance to man of using sinful means—He must seem to be unethical in His behaviour. The alternative .. would be for all God's actions with man to be in terms of the miraculous, but this would not be meeting man in the world as it is." [Craigie, Rev. P.C., "Yahweh is a man of Wars," *Scottish Journal of Theology* XXII:2 (June, 1969) 183-188.]

[662] Fragment #44, in Jones, W.H.S., *Hippocrates*, Vol. IV: *Heracleitus, On the Universe*. (*Loeb Classical Library*, No. 150), Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931, p. 484 (for Greek text) and p. 485 (for English translation).. Philip Wheelwright's translation (*Heraclitus*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959, p. 29, lists the Fragment as No. 25. The translation by G.T.W. Patrick, *Heraclitus of Ephesus*, Chicago: Argonaut, Inc., Publishers, 1969, p. 95, lists it as Fragment #44 as does Haxton, Brooks, *fragments, the Collected Wisdom of Heraclitus*, foreword: James Hillman, New York: Viking, 2001, p. 29, who gives a poetic translation: "War, as father / of all things, and king / names few / to serve as gods / and of the rest makes / these slaves / these free."

company "top" then took the weapon with his right hand, sharply grasping the top, and twisting it, pointed it downwards and harshly thrust it into the ground. The Marine then, slowly and, it seemed, sadly, placed the helmet he was wearing on top of the inverted rifle, stepped back, put on a soft cover he had in his utility trouser pocket, and returned to the formation. This was done for all eighteen. It took much time and the reality and tragedy seemed to sink in deeper and deeper as each new rifle was plunged into the earth. After this was done, the rifles and helmets still in place, the formation was dismissed and reformed as a close group about the altar in a more informal manner. The trumpeter from Division Band played Church Call, and the Father and I conducted the religious portion. The firing squad then fired three volleys and the bugler played Taps.

The Marines then walked off, returning to their area in what seemed with deep sadness at having lost their close buddies. I wrote the families of each of these eighteen. This is one of them:

"Dear Mrs. ...

"Thank you for your letter of the 12th. It is indeed with great difficulty that one can ever justify the loss of a person, even when that loss is occasioned by sacrifice to a greater cause. Death and loss of people is indeed meaningless and inexplicable; it is the enemy of man, but conquered through our Lord Jesus Chris's resurrection.

"Aside from all religious or political aspects of the war, one might say that value in life and a sense of meaning is only obtained through sacrifice and devotion to something or someone outside of oneself. In your case, this was to your son. But in his case, it was undoubtedly to service. This might have been an inner compulsion he felt to prove himself, as so many young men feel as part of growing up. I know your son was somewhat firm and when his mind was made up, that was the way it was going to be. ... Perhaps one of the reasons he was here was that he had just made up his mind to be here, and nothing or nobody would shake him away from that.

"He was medevaced to one of the hospital ships in November due to malaria, but returned to B Co. in December. He was part of a reconnaissance team called 'Dock Leaf' that experienced many close calls. In one week they were extracted from their reconnaissance zone of operations in an emergency situation, four times. Sometimes they were surrounded and could hear noises. After awhile some became quite jumpy and shaky. I believe your son was a little high strung and perhaps full of some degree of anxiety, as was the whole team.

"This might have been the occasion of his request for baptism. Although my denomination usually requires a period of instruction prior to adult baptism, being in a combat zone in which people might at any time be killed, has caused me to baptize anyone who desires to be baptized. I do, of course, briefly explain the meaning of baptism, but I have always felt that baptism is what God is doing, not what men are doing, and as one of the early church councils declared, its efficacy is not affected by the baptizer or the person being baptized...

"Mrs... I wish there were more I could write. I always visited the Reconnaissance area, and developed many passing friends there. They were always so friendly to me and seemed to appreciate my coming into their living areas and just listening to them and talking with them. Your son was one of those who always had a smile when I came around. I really didn't come to know him deeply, but I'[m sure he was living a life the way he felt he must. He had determination, courage, and conviction. He was friendly and kind. He suffered the same fears and temptations we all do. He was deeply appreciated as a friend by those close to and around him. In the end, it really isn't the quantity of life we live, but how we live the brief span of years we have. If he felt his life to be meaningful because of what he was doing, and if this gave him satisfaction, then at least we must be thankful for that.

"Please be assured I remember all those men daily in my prayers. I was especially dismayed in that I had taken a picture of the baptism of your son, but my camera was stolen when I laid it down in order to help carry off some dead bodies to graves registration. I would have treasured those photographs so much as I have no photograph of your son. But he does live in my memory and in the memories of those who were close to him...

"Please be assured I will remember you personally in my prayers, that our Lord will comfort you in your grief. Faithfully yours..."

On the back of the bulletin, I had written the following:

"We remember today those who gave their lives while engaged in a life in maintaining Khe Sanh Combat Base. How they died is not as significant perhaps as how they lived. Personal sacrifice is indeed great when one voluntarily lays down his life to serve his brother in one glorious moment, but greater still is the daily sacrifice of living a life in service to others, a continual laying down of one's life, for it is not life itself that is significant, but how one lives. These men were called from us while performing their duties and engaged in the life of our community at Khe Sanh.

"That day-to-day life, concentrated in serving others, involved a daily encounter with all the anxieties and fears struck into our hearts by the enemy, whether on patrol or on the base during "incoming." With firmness and faith, dedication to daily duty, and personal perseverance, we all held fast, refusing to weaken.

"Khe Sanh represents the triumph of all the armed services contributing in concert the greatest they could– perhaps the greatest expenditure of B-52 strike bombs; vast numbers of soldiers. But the greatest single factor was the resolve of courage by our U.S. Marines and corpsmen, living under continual threat of attack, through the screeching rockets, with shocking and fear-inspiring cracks, splats, and whomps of artillery and mortars, day after day after day. We held firm; the base is still ours.

"These men lived such a life of firmness and resolve despite unnerving adversity. The determination of their lives is the factor determining the triumph of freedom over forces of intimidation, the battle we now fight.

"Our Lord, as the Good Shepherd, laid down His life for us that we might have a more abundant life. He has said that we live as branches in His vine, living by participating in His same life of self-giving love. It was in this context He said, 'Greater love has no man than that a man lay down his life for his friend.' The promise of such a life of service: 'Where I am, there shall my servant be also.' Such love never ends: 'Having loved his own who were in the world, He loved them to the end,' and then washes His disciples' feet. 'God so loved the world that He gave..' That is the life these men lived; that is their accomplishment; that is their hope; that is their significance; that is their salvation. –Chaplain Stubbe"

On 06 May 1968, a memorial service was conducted for the Marines of 1/26 at Wunder Beach on the shores of the Suth China Sea, where battalion 1/26 located after departing Khe Sanh. The S-1 staff are in a large tent rather than the cramped, hot, humid bunker they had occupied in Khe Sanh in which it was necessary to make contorted movements in order to move from one place to another, where I/Lt Fitzgerald, the Adjutant looked like a survivor of a Nazi concentration camp.

The memorial service is in a blown-out concrete structure with no roof. At the entrance is a bell tower with the 1/26 bell.



MEMORIAL SERVICE ON KHE SANH AIRSTRIP – 10 Oct 1968
by E/3/4. Official USMC photo A192312 by SSGT Fred Lowe, III

1/Lt Ben Long read the Epistle from Thessalonians and enlisted representatives from the four letter companies read various parts of the liturgy. Chaplain Kelly gave the prayer and a short homily in which he emphasized that the real saints are those who enter the situations in which they sacrifice all, giving to others, sharing with others, giving of themselves, and neglect their own comforts. There were only about men from the entire battalion; all wore flak jackets and helmets. On the altar was a haversack and E-tool. I read the message I had prepared for the back of the recon memorial service bulletin. LtCol Fred McEwan, the new 1/26 CO (formerly the S-4 of 26th Marines regiment) made a brief comment and explained he had to attend a regimental meeting for tactical purposes. His prepared message was read by the 1/26 XO, Major McCartney:

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

"To each of you men who were there, I have this to say. For three months, the eyes of the world looked at you and the enemy, who was unable to claim success. At another outpost and milestone in Vietnam's history, the same enemy claimed success at the battle of Dien Bien Phu and with it fell half of Vietnam. Had Khe Sanh fallen there would have been far reaching effects. But Khe Sanh held. You held Khe Sanh living in the trenches, constantly subjected to heavy bombardment by mortars, rockets, artillery, recoilless rifle and sniper fire. You held because of your fighting spirit and indomitable courage. May God bless you and return you safely home."[663]

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[663] Printed in Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.: *Khe Sanh Veteran* 2:1 (Fall, 1995), p. 8.

1983: WHEN I PLUNGED INTO THE PIT OF PTSD

Talk given to Lutheran Church Women, Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Milwaukee, WI, Armed Forces Day, 21 May 1983.

The attempt at reviewing my experiences as a chaplain reminds me of a story I recently heard from the Jewish chaplain at Great lakes. Herr Goebbels went to a Rabbi and said, "I would like to learn Talmud.": (Talmud is a devotional book of Jewish wisdom). The Rabbi replied, "Herr Goebbels, you couldn't possibly learn Talmud. First you must pass a test of three questions." Goebbels replied, "Well, let me take the test." "OK," said the Rabbi. "Two men fell down a chimney. One emerged clean, the other dirty. Which one washed himself?" Goebbels replied, "The dirty one." "Wrong," said the Rabbi. "The clean one looked at the dirty one and thought he, too, was dirty, so the clean one washed himself." Goebbels said, "Well, give me the second question." The Rabbi went on, "Two men fell down a chimney; one emerged clean, the other dirty. Which one washed himself?" Goebbels said, "The clean one." "Wrong," said the Rabbi. "The dirty one looked at his hand and, seeing it was dirty, assumed his whole body was dirty, and so washed himself. I'm sorry, you just can't learn Talmud." Goebbels said, "Well, give me the final question. The Rabbi paused and then went on, "Two men fell down a chimney. One emerged clean, the other dirty. Which one washed himself?" Goebbels thought for a moment and then said, ":Both." The Rabbi said, "Herr Goebbels, you can never understand Talmud. How can two men fall down a chimney and one emerge clean and the other dirty?"[664]

The task of understanding one's life is almost just as difficult! And yet, the task, the imperative and duty to do so, is a revealing and healing endeavor because the evidences, the traces of, Christ's presence and love are discovered. I can see that my life has been an "Adventure with God." In a real sense, life is a parable reflecting spiritual realities in earthly metaphors and situations and with numerous unexpected turns, twists, and outcomes, like a parable. Although not always apparent at the time, our Lord's promise, attached to His command to go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to all,[665] that He will be with us no matter where we go,[666] can be discerned. His faithfulness never to depart from us and His faithfulness to lead us into life abundant[667] as He leads us from grace to grace,[668] and the reality of Paul's words in Romans 8.28, "All things work together for good to those that love God, who are called according to His purpose"—all this becomes abundantly clear. Some memories are quite painful; there are buried and unresolved griefs and guilts. But even here there is the healing of memories as they are seen through the eyes of Christ, as they are relived as though He were present.

There is, of course, a great danger. Jesus once said, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit to be my disciple."[669] Of course, here the word that is translated "Look back," is in a grammatical tense (Present participle) that should be translated, "forever looking back"—in other words, becoming stuck with the past. "Remember" in the Bible is always for the purpose of an action now.[670]

So, we look to our past because our God works in events, reveals Himself in history—even our own. And we can see that our life has really been an "Adventure with God."

This is how I now feel when I now begin to scratch the surface of all my experiences—when I look into eight completely filled file drawers of diaries, letters, notes and papers, somehow, according to His purpose, that have been kept throughout these past fifteen or so years.

I look back and ask, "Where was God in all of this?" and find that He was in smallness, among the poor and weak, in the ordinary things of life. God is like a little child speaking softly in a convention room crowded with cackling people, whose voice we don't always hear because we aren't listening for that voice. God is like the intricately beautiful snowflakes or the emerging life in a bud on a bush or tree that we see but never see. God is like the stars that shine at night that we never pause to see—or cannot see because of the sea of pollution in which we live. Or, He is like the stars that sine in daytime but

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[664] The Jewish chaplain undoubtedly took this story from an old Jewish story related in Ausubel, Nathan, ed., *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore, Stories, Traditions, Legends, Humor, Wisdom and Folk Songs of the Jewish People*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1948, pp. 3-4, "A Lesson in Talmud." In the story, the man requesting to know what Talmud was is a country peasant, not Herr Goebbels.

[665] Matt 28.19.

[666] Gen 28.15, Josh 1.9, Isa 43.1-5, Ps 139.7-10, Mt 28.20b, etc.

[667] Jn 10.10.

[668] Jn 1.16.

[669] Lk 9.62.

[670] *Cf*. Pedersen, Johs., *Israel, Its Life and Culture, I-II*. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege and Copenhagen: Branner og Korch, 1926, p. 106: "When the soul remembers something, it does not mean that it has an objective memory image of some thing or eventm, but that this image is called forth in the soul and assists in determining its direction, its action. When man remembers God, he lets his being and his actions be determined by him."

are not seen unless we go down into a deep hole in the earth and then gaze upwards. God is like the mushrooms: the presence of life in the midst of darkness and manure of life.

Where has God been in all of these tens of thousands of pieces of paper stuffed into eight file drawers that I am now beginning to look at? He has been active where and when there has been obedience to His Word, when his Word has been a matter of life and being, when there was been love—not as a feeling or a thing, a noun, but as an action, a verb., when people have chosen to let His Word live in them.

For example, there was a young lad[671] whose father had died when he was six and whose mother committed suicide when he was a teenager because she stole from her employer and was caught and was due to go to court and probably prison. She had stolen that she might give things to this young lad. He had no other family and was raised in foster homes after her death. He spoke often of suicide himself. he wore a death's head belt buckle and a black T-shirt with a ghostly-white face. I invited him out for a pizza one summer evening and he came to the lobby of the building where I live—a residence for officers. He appeared in his usual garb and, in addition, had a leather wrist band with spikes radiating outwards. he was, I found out later, into "punk rock." We waited there for a third person who was also going out with us for the pizza, for about half an hour. Although in civilian clothes, everyone passing me said, "Good afternoon, chaplain," and for a moment I thought, "What are they going to think: me with this very questionable person?" And then almost immediately I recalled how Jesus was misunderstood by being with the people He usually was with, and I felt this is doing the same thing—living Him, living His Word, being obedient to the Word—and suddenly didn't care at all what the others thought, only how much I could show this young lad that someone cared for him, might bring him more life, which was what I had intended in the first place.

The life of Jesus really is what life is all about. There is the fact of the incarnation, God becoming flesh and living with us. Really, that's the chaplaincy also, because chaplains live with their people in a most intimate way—at least, they can chose to do so. Chaplains share the same uniform, regulations, the same enemies, the same desperations and exasperations, the same places far away from loved ones and the same enemy shells. It's not a matter of being an outsider who visits them or someone they come to, but actually someone who shares their same life.

I

It all began for me as a chaplain at the recruit area of Great Lakes in the summer of 1966. One day one of the recruits said to me, "Why not visit our barracks tonight?" That thought had never crossed my mind. I felt that my job was simply to stay in an office and have people with problems come to me. I'd listen, attempt to clarify, and perhaps offer some suggestions—plus conduct worship services. But it was a job to do, and my off-duty hours were mine.

Nevertheless, I took him up on his suggestion and visited the barracks that evening. It happened to be the Bluejacket's Choir barracks, and they were so appreciative, they sang several of their songs for me.

What happened to me was revolutionary. I discovered that being a chaplain was not a job to be done but a life to be lived. I discovered that life for me exists in interpersonal encounters, in I-Thou, person-to-person encounters. Having been alone in graduate school or in professional work of pastoral calling and organizing All Saints Lutheran Church in)Oak Creek, I suddenly learned the meaning of those words in First John—which I happened to be studying at the time—"We know we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren." And I felt very alive—alive with God's love living through me.

I was reading Abraham Heschel's book, *The Prophets*,[672] at the time which had so much to say. " Biblical religion is what man does with God's concern for all men."[673] the prophets were people who felt their people's feelings and felt God's passion for justice and mercy for the poor, who brought God's feelings to the people and the people's feelings to God. And I recall how I just wanted to be with, to share, to love and care for—in other words, declare through life God's love and care and acceptance of them.

So I volunteered for more active duty and found myself at Naval Air Station, Alameda, California, in the San Francisco Bay area. There was an air squadron there, VAW-13. I used to be in the hangar when their places returned from practice flights at night, and was invited to many of their parties. Then they took me up in their single-prop A-1 "Skyraider" planes. It was always very scary: the planes were Id WW II vintage and always seemed they'd never get off the ground. Several of the pilots always tried to get me sick over Lake Tahoe by doing aerial maneuvers involving feeling like going up fast in an elevator or going down fast on a roller-coaster. I got very close to those pilots and their families who poured out their lives to me.

When I left, they gave me a card making me an honorary member of their squadron. I was told by one pilot they had only done that for three others in the previous four years.

"Being with," sharing the life of people, who were my parish, became my normal way of doing things.

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[671] Jean Paul Dumerais.

[672] Heschekl, Abraham J., *The Prophets*, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962.

[673] *Ibid.*, p. 230

I must note here who the people a chaplain serves are. Unlike a civilian parish, a chaplain's responsibility is for the spiritual welfare of people of all religious groups, as well as those who are not religious at all—ensuring the Roman Catholics are visited by a Catholic chaplain for Mass, helping get a Mezuzah for a Jewish man. Also, and perhaps most usual, caring for people who have had no religious background. The Constitutional basis of the chaplaincy is to ensure the free exercise of religion, especially in those places and situations where civilian churches or clergymen are not available. The chaplain becomes the "reminder" of the faith dimension of life—remember that the word "remember' means to bring up the past in order to influence the present. The chaplain is the one who fights for God's desires for His people; he becomes the "conscience of the command."

In my notes I found a prayer given on the ship's general announcement system the evening of Saturday, 13 May 1972, which interrupted the movie in the officer's wardroom: "Eternal God, whose will is peace; we cry unto You for the ending of war and of necessity for men's preparations for war.." I later heard that one Marine officer said, "He sounds like he's against war." Another Marine officer replied, "Aren't you?"

The next night, Sunday, 14 May 1972, after working all Sunday on practice amphibious beach landings, with Major General Fred Haynes aboard our ship, I gave the following prayer over the ship's general announcing system: "Dear Lord, Heavenly Father ... Your divine Law says: 'Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is holy. In it, you shall do no work.' When you have thus spoken, who are we to disobey? We ask your mercy that your wrath rest snot heavy upon us ..."

Perhaps it's a matter of preaching on the Advent lesson of Isaiah 40 at Great lakes where it reads, "Tell her that her warfare is ended,"[674] and saying that the problem is the many really don't want warfare ended, and after the sermon heaving a wife complain that that was too gloomy, that she didn't like to hear these kinds of things and that she was angry with me.

Perhaps the ministry to people involves making the command aware that boots with special soles that keep one from sliding down muddy hillsides ought to be available to the men since they are available in the supply system and the men are falling down and breaking their bones. I was then criticized by the senior chaplain that such matters were n one of my concern. But God's concern for the welfare of His children must always be a chaplain's concern also.

The chaplain serves all the people, not just the ones with problems, the ones who are weak, the ones who come to him. The fact of Jesus is the fact that God comes to people, not that people come to God. This involves being part of the scene, being incarnate. Perhaps it's a matter of remaining on a ship while in a dirty and noisy shipyard period, when all the chiefs and officers move off due to the noise, smoke, fumes from welding, clanging hammers that resound throughout the steel hull and decks, and large tubes that clog all the ladders and passageways, and no privacy—remaining on board because all the enlisted men must remain on board, and this is the time for numerous informal conversations, sharing of life, communication of God's concern for them.

People served are all the people. I recall the poor—the very poor—mountain tribesmen in Vietnam who were resettled in a refugee area, after perhaps ten thousand of them were killed in the area in which I served during the big battle there. They were in the refugee area, starving, dying. One of the units I served—a reconnaissance unit that sent many small patrols, had a great abundance of excess C-ration cans of food—thousands of pounds of it. So I went to the di vision General's staff, a Marine Colonel, to propose taking this food to these starving people. he replied, in typical official tone, that that couldn't happen because food couldn't be given to Vietnamese civilians since it either ended up in the black market or was used to feed the enemy forces. And he had a point since that usually did, in fact, happen. I kept arguing for some time with him that there was a Marine unit there, there was a CIA man with them, etc., etc., and that it would be monitored carefully, that these people were literally dying from starvation! Finally, he relented, although nothing that there could be no publicity about it. Who knows how many hundreds of people were spared the pains, even death, from starvation from the food these Marines had in excess?

This is all because of Christ's love for all, due to His model of being present, the fact of His incarnation, the living of His mercy, and had there been no chaplain there, it probably wouldn't have happened.

This business of "being present," "being with," people, has actually saved my life; I am here talking with you today because of it! One morning, while at the Marine Corps boot camp at Parris Island, I was walking around the rifle ranges, away from my office. My enlisted helper later told me that a Sergeant came, asking "Where is the chaplain?" My helper said I was out. He also noticed that the Sergeant's rifle was on semi-automatic, not on "safe." Later, the is same man was apprehended. He didn't know me or I him, but he said he thought that if he shot the chaplain, then certainly he would be able to leave Parris Island!

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[674] Isa 40.2.

It was about that time that I met a recruit, Private Gaskin. His father had been captured by the Japanese in World War II and survived. He was very faithful and would clean up the chapel area and my office without being told to do so. One say he wasn't at work and I called for him. "O, he was found unauthorized smoking." I was told. I told his superiors that he was a wonderful worker, very superior to most. A bout an hour later, he reappeared; there he was, suddenly standing at rigid attention in front of my desk and aid, "Sir! The Private wants to thank the Chaplain, Sir!" I never liked all that formality and told him I just told his Sergeant the truth. he was in a medical platoon recuperating from an operation. he eventually got better, returned to his training, and a couple of weeks later, reappeared suddenly , again at attention, and said, "Sir! The Private would like to invite the Chaplain to his graduation." He then said, slowly and very thoughtfully, "It's all the Private can give the Chaplain to say 'Thank you'." I went to it and met his father

There are many who question this business of a pastor "being present" in the armed forces. While at the University of Chicago graduate school in 1967, I recall a student asking me at lunch one day after I announced I was going on active duty and to Vietnam, "How can you go over to Vietnam as an official representative of the Church and thereby by your presence give tacit endorsement to the corrupt Saigon régime?"

A short while later, when I was in Vietnam, I was talking with a crying young Marine who had just been informed of the death of his uncle with whom he was very close, and he was unable to return home for the funeral. I put it down in my diary, "And this is supporting a corrupt Saigon régime!"

Some might question being <u>there</u> with <u>those</u> people. But is the Church to neglect those who face life and death issues, who are questioning what values to adopt—what is right, what is wrong, what is important, what is valuable in life—especially when they are away from their support systems—their home, their community, their home church? The presence of a chaplain with a unit making was does not imply an endorsement of what they are doing any more than the presence of Jesus of Nazareth implied an endorsement of the fallenness of creation by God!

An interesting footnote is that my roommate at the University of Chicago later wrote me, requesting support for his application for conscientious objector status. The letter arrived in the midst of a big battle in which hundreds were being wounded and killed, many of them my friends. I replied with a very strong endorsement in support of his application.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this adventure with God has caused me to do things and go to places I'd never have anticipated.

One day I noticed some men jogging and I decided it was about time I started doing something physical since my whole life up to that point had been quite sedentary. They happened to be Navy SEALs, the ones who SCUBA and parachute and do James Bond-type work. I started running with them, listen to their lives, and one of them, a Chief Bruhmuller—he had one eye that always looked off in another direction—suggested I accompany some of the SEALs in a training mission at a camp in the hills of northern Virginia for a couple of weeks. I h ad recently completed the Army Jump School and now had my silver wings and couldn't help but realize that when I was on ship that had a UDT detachment, no matter how friendly I tried to be with them, they always remained remote, probably because a Chaplain to them represented someone who dealt with the weak, the suffering, the ones with problems, and they needed to maintain a façade of strength. Only someone who shared their experiences would be let inside their castle, their walls. These SEALS, however, upon seeing I had the Silver Wings of a Paratrooper, allowed me into their conversations, and they readily shared their concerns, what was happening in their life. That small piece of metal on my uniform created instant rapport with UDT, SEALs, the Army Special Forces in Okinawa, the Marine specialized reconnaissance units at Camp Pendleton and so on, people rarely visited by a Chaplain or who rarely visit a Chaplain, but are part of <u>all</u> the people to be served. It was always <u>for them</u>, and in response to their requests, that did these things, not for any particular enjoyment of doing the jumping as such.

It's a matter of responding to a call, a need, a request for a pastor, and "being present," not just as a visitor who comes and goes, but as someone who has gone through the same experienced and shared the same life, and perhaps also been hurt in the process, a sort of "wounded healer." It's like the Marine who once told me in Vietnam how he was at a big battle (at Con Thien) and how a chaplain got off the chopper, went around the place handing out Bibles and saying hello and a few prayers here and there, that God loved them, and then left them, flying away in the helicopter. The Marine said, "He was only doing a job; he really didn't care about us at all, love us, know us; he just was involved in caring about what he was doing." Marines are very perceptive! A person who rings doorbells asking "Are you saved?" is insufficient. That's the point. We communicate by who we are, by what we do, by how we live, by where we are; we communicate very little by what we say.

One day I was sitting next to a Marine Captain,[675] the officer in charge of a training area in northern Okinawa. The instruction was on how to cross a raging river safely. That is very important. I know. I lost two of my friends in Vietnam who crossed a raging river. Basically, the strongest swimmer attempts to swim across with a rope tied around his waist. If he

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[675] Captain MacDonald.

doesn't make it, he can be pulled back. If he does make it, he can tie the rope to a tree or rock and the rest can pull themselves across the river using the rope and safely reach the other side.

One young Marine was paralyzed with fear and wouldn't cross the river by pulling himself on the rope. Others had gone before him; that didn't help. The Marine Captain ordered him; he froze. He reasoned with him; he didn't budge. Finally, although in clean, starched, pressed uniform, the Marine Captain dove into the water and swam next to the young lad who then pulled himself across the river. And then he did it alone. And he had a smile. He was happy, confident, alive, not paralyzed by fear.

There are many interesting incidents—hundreds more—and observations that could be made on what "being present," of communicating God's love, mercy, acceptance, healing, and forgiveness, to all, not just Lutherans or Christians even, but to all, by living with and sharing, but perhaps these few will suffice.

II

I must hastily add that a chaplain does all that a civilian pastor does; a chaplain never ceases being a pastor! In fact, under International Law, a Chaplain is not even a "military person"—if captured in war, he does not become a "prisoner of war." He is merely "attached" to the armed forces and does only religious duties. There are the pastoral acts of baptism, marriage, funerals. There is catechetical instruction for youth and adults. There is pastoral counseling, committee work, writing for newspapers. There is conducting of worship, preaching, private communion. there is visitation to the sick, dying, and the imprisoned.

Perhaps there is some bending, refraction—like the appearance of a pencil bent in a glass of water. The format of the order of worship, while never pleasing or even acceptable to everyone who is a Protestant Christian, is nevertheless conducted so most will be able to worship without compromising one's own theology or liturgical sensitivities. The Chaplain is protected by U.S. Law against doing his way of worship in any way that is contrary to his church's teaching. The Chaplain, on the other hand, may be the only religious leader present, there constitutionally to guarantee the free exercise of religion. I even recall a Baptist chaplain (Bill Asher) who spoke of having a very large aluminum tray of four-ounce paper cups filled with wine for his communion services in Vietnam!

Furthermore, on a ship at sea or in the field of a battle zone, things become so much more simple and real. Necessarily, there is a complete lack of "falseness." Those who are there are there to worship God "in spirit and in truth."[676] There are no sermon notes, no ministerial robes, no false flowers or any flowers for that matter, no organ music, stained glass windows, pews, family or girl friends. There is no effort to communicate only a feeling that will not last; there is agreement between appearance and reality. Here one communicates not himself, not "ecclesiastical trappings;" one only communicates and celebrates God. Everything is transparent, genuine; they can see quite readily into anything that is not "honest."

Here is a Pentecostal group which might offer a song. Here we might sing some "oldie but goodie" Baptist hymns. Free-style prayers, and the message of God's grace, love, forgiveness, acceptance, as well as challenge to grow and change, pointing to the evidences of God's goodness and presence in their lives here and now from having been with them and listening to what they observe and how they live. Here is a Second Class Corpsman, a medic[677] who tells me: "You know, it might sound corny, but after a long day of jumping from foxhole to foxhole as the men get wounded and scream out for help, and somehow managing to avoid getting hit, I sit down and see the beautiful sunset. And I see God in that sunset. And I thank Him for letting me live one more day and ask Him to please let me live another day." Our gracious Lord is always with us, even in the night of death and in what the prophet Joel called "the valley of decision."

III

There are many other facets in the work of being a Chaplain—for example, being close to authority structures and people who make decisions affecting thousands and therefore being in a position to influence those decisions and thereby minister to the spiritual and moral welfare of thousands at once. This may be ensuring there are times for worship or at least rest as well as pointing to things the command would rather not consider. They might never know it—the people who are served. Perhaps it is arguing on behalf of just one such as one lad who went to a hearing (Captain's Mast) for a minor disciplinary infraction and all his chiefs spoke against him as a poor worker, on the basis of which he received a reduction in pay grade which he could not afford, being married. What was really involved was a personality conflict that had gotten out of control: this young lad refused to use bad language and refused to be harsh on those he supervised in the same manner as his chiefs. So, I went to the Captain—sort of meekly since he was a very powerful person—someone everyone on the ship feared. In fact, his name was Pehr Pehrsson, and some pronounced his name "fear fearson." One retiring warrant officer at his retirement party quipped, "We have nothing to fear but "fear" himself!" So, I went to his cabin and in a very polite manner told him I

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[676] Jn 4.23.

[677] HM2 Packard.

thought his decision was wrong. It was already printed in the ship's Plan of the Day and there was something of futility in my being there since I just assumed nothing could be done. But I just had to tell the Captain it was unjust. He replied, "I've been expecting you, Chaplain. I had my doubts, too." He changed his mind, reduced his sentence, and had the man transferred off the ship to another ship about three weeks later.

But the point is the access to the power structure. It would be like the pastor talking with the Mayor or any of the judges personally whenever he wanted to do so.

IV

There is also the facet of meeting many thousands of beautiful people in the time period of a career, as well as the disadvantage of staying with one group of people more than three years: either you or they get transferred. One gets very attached to some of them; it is very painful to see them go.

There is the facet of going to interesting places—where St. Paul preached, where the Christians were thrown to the lions, meeting a Lutheran Bishop in Denmark or Danny Kaye.

There is the large variety of types of settings for ministry—in a chapel setting, in a group counseling setting, in the heat of battle, on an isolated island in the middle of the ocean, on a staff, in a hospital or in a prison, in training situations—camping out at night and staring up into the same magnificent beauty of the firmament which continued to declare the glory of God, or jumping out of an airplane with the others, or being on the same ship at sea that can't make fresh water for showers for a whole week along with everyone else.

But all of these facets of the chaplain's ministry—access to authority and what can be done, encountering a kaleidoscopic variety of places and people and situations—I can only mention these in passing.

CONCLUSION

You will notice I have almost entirely omitted my numerous—and they are numerous!—and significant experiences of war, the terrors and the horrors of it. This is because these experiences are simply just too painful for me right now. They have left me with scars that are just now beginning to emerge into my awareness, at times I don't want them to. vietnam has left many scars, and I'm told that more Vietnam veterans have died since the war by their own hand than were killed in the war itself.

The place where I was, for the most part, Khe Sanh, was actually quite beautiful before the big battle erupted there. I can recall attending staff meetings in which the S-2 (the intelligence officer) admitted that we really didn't know just what the enemy was up to. Battles raged everywhere but where we were. Only small numbers of enemy spotted here and there, no large numbers, no apparent patterns or strategy.

Then all hell broke loose for several months. What we hadn't realized was that those few individuals passing through our area were actually depositing pieces of ordnance here and there, and when the battle erupted, all those stored and buried explosives were in place to be used by the enemy against us.

These are like the unresolved and buried and unconscious griefs and guilts and fears in our souls.

Now I'm facing retirement. I was just passed over again for promotion yesterday. I'm in the second half of my life which always requires a struggle because the solutions which applied to the first half no longer work. I'm in a work where I get close to several people only to see them depart and knowing I'[l never again see them. And all of this—and who knows what else—is causing a lot of my Vietnam war experiences to re-emerge and making me experience panic, jumpiness, anxiety, an intense desire for withdrawal from everyone, and isolation, lack of trust in authority figures and structures. I have realized what's happening, and have taken the action of attending a group of Vietnam veterans at the VA hospital next to my naval base of Great Lakes, for help.

I recall writing in my diary while in Vietnam that the real casualties of war are always to the living, not those who have died. Then, I was thinking of the wounded, the surviving wife or children or parents of a dead man. Now, I myself know this personally.

As this is happening, however, I know hope. I recall the statement of Hank Blood—one of those Bible translator missionaries in Vietnam from the Wycliffe Bible Translators I once met in an airport in which we both were stranded a few days waiting for a plane. He was later killed by the Communist forces there. He said, "Never think of the greatness of your problems; think only of the greatness of your God."

I began this talk with a Jewish story. I want to end it with an old, familiar Jewish story. A man at Crakow once had a dream of a fortune buried under a certain bridge in Prague. So, he left home and went to the bridge and began digging under it. The bridge-keeper stopped him and said, "What are you doing?" He said, "I had this dream of a fortune buried under this bridge and left my home in Crakow to come here and get it." The bridge-keeper replied, "That's most unusual. I also just had a dream last night of a fortune that is hidden inside a certain house in Crakow, just like the house you described you live in!"

The point, I guess, is that we may look elsewhere for our fortunes when all along they were with us, in us. But we need others sometimes to tell us that. I ha ve had my experiences of my "adventure with God" which might be of interest to you, perhaps. But the point is that God is active in your lives also, and your "adventure with God" as you review your own life's history, is that will reward you, not someone else's treasure. For we have a gracious and loving father who gives us all, individually, His gifts, and who loves us all, individually, as exceedingly precious in His sight.

"CHAPLAIN'S CORNER," Naval Station, Great Lakes, Il: Great Lakes Bulletin 58:43 (28 Oct 1983) p. 9.

[Submitted with the title, "With God There is No Defeat" but the title was not printed][678]

In emptiness there is fullness. The empty tomb as much as the empty womb potentiates new life. When all else passes, God, He who has been there all along, remains. To be attracted to anything is to lose everything. To have is to not have. To have all is to be empty of all. To be completely empty is the threshold into the new, the full.

It is only when everything is gone that that which is everything is. A little speck of something—whether it be a personal trait, a fibre of self-will, an intelligent thought to make sense of reality, a confident assurance, a feeling, a proof, a posterity, something tangible—a trace of aught—even a mere speck—and one has nothing but the speck. it is only in total darkness that there is light. The light shines in the darkness.

In awareness of total abandonment, an experience of the absence of God, 'the dark night of the soul,' one is eternally begotten and born again through faith—that is, the absence of any proof, any splendor, anything seen, anything tangible, and any self-worth. Faith is always born in a desert; it is all God wants of us. We look not to the things seen, but the things unseen.

The Man of Sorrows is the Man who removes our sorrows to Himself, the Wounded Healer who can only heal because He is wounded. He becomes what we are so that we might become what He is. So He dwells in the shadows of our life—in the thirsty one, the hungry one, the poor who eat the crumbs that fall from richness that disregards everything but a good time, in the imprisoned and in the sick one. The meek inherit the earth. The race does not go to the swift nor the battle to the strong. There is only one authoritative voice: that of the poor, because then God Himself is speaking. God hears only the prayers of the poor who cannot even look up to heaven. God's Kingdom and salvation and riches are only for those who are despised, rejected, sorrowing, the pained and the hurting who need a Physician. God loves sinners, can heal only those who know they are sick, who have nothing to lose because they have nothing to lose. God rescues when all hope is gone, only then. The presence of suffering reflects the presence of God.

To be poured out until nothing is left is to be filled. In the nothing is everything. Not the Marine slogan 'to really live you must almost die,' but rather, 'To really live, you must really die.' As dead foliage fertilizes new growth, as the seed must die to give new life, so the corruptible is raised incorruptible.

The winters of our sorrows are never so great that they are not succeeded by springtime of nascent newness. In the valley of the shadow of death we encounter God with us. Like Elijah, we hear the voice of God speaking to us not in splendor and thunder, but in a hushed and muted whisper.

Removal of the anything, like sediment settling out of muddy waters, is purification. Wreaked wretchedness and the loneliness of loss frees and liberates us by throwing us into the abyss of the nothing, where God is. Only he who has experienced the nothing of this life has concomitantly experienced the eternal birth of the Son, the new birth from above. only he who suffers the cross inherits the crown. There is no resurrection without a crucifixion.

So we rejoice in our emptiness, our death, our sufferings, our loneliness, our depressions, our crosses. We have confidence when our hearts accuse us, when there is no apparent hope, when we recognize ourselves as wretched and helpless. God is greater. Christ arose! Ray W. Stubbe

FUNERAL MEDITATION FOR LANCE CORPORAL DAVID B. GANDER – 08 November 1983[679]

(Lessons: Psalm 46, 1 Cor 15.19-23, 35-38, 42-44, 52-55, 57-58a, Matt 5.1-9)

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[678] The influence from reading Meister Eckhart is obvious.

[679] LCPL Gander, USMC, a 19 year-old serving in the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, was killed when the four story building in which he slept was blown up by terrorists. He had arrived in Lebanon 27 May and expected to return home in November on Christmas leave. His letters home tell of an incident in which a Marine patrol was hit by snipers, returned fire, and were then reprimanded for firing, disregarding "rules of engagement." In his letters he mentioned how little things back home have come to develop great meaning for him. At the time the two Marines came to his mother's home, they indicated there were 50 MIA, including David. [Bofrsuk, Alan J., "City Marine is presumed among dead," Milwaukee *Journal*, 26 Oct 1983, pp. 1, 8. Borsuk, Alan J., "A victim of Beirut blast, peacekeeper is laid to rest," Milwaukee *Journal*, 9 November 1983, Part 2, p. 3.].

Lance Corporal David G. Gander was born February 26, 1964, and died in the service of his country on October 23, 1983, in Beirut, Lebanon.

A few weeks ago he was wearing Marine green, serving his fellow Marines as one of the battalion's cooks, undoubtedly frustrated, wondering what it all meant, who the enemy really were, restricted by "rules of engagement" so they could carry weapons but not load them or fire back if fired upon, writing to his grandma that he never realized that the little things in life were so important, attending worship services, writing his mom about what the chaplain said, telling her that he was praying for his grandpa in the hospital; and he was 19 years old.

As I read about him in the newspaper, I felt I could have known him so very well. There were so many others only a few years ago, who also could not tell who the enemy were, who questioned, "Why are we here?" and "why do we have these stupid 'rules of engagement'?" Who were concerned and did things for the little children who frequently were the victims. Who would tell me they never knew how important the little things in life were, and would explain that they meant peace and quiet and just how much their mom did for them as they grew up—that's what they would really sway. It all sounded so very familiar. And I thought of the 473 men who died in the battle of Khe Sanh, Vietnam, where I was, many of whom I personally knew, and how I carried them, some missing parts of their bodies. And I thought: does it ever end? is there any hope?

You see, we all need a container for our soul, several containers, to carry us along our journey of life. Something to hold all our pieces together, to carry our dreams and hopes. We become anxious when our containers are broken, smashed, or just not there any longer, that die.

One container is our body. Another is our society and our government, and another may be a marriage or friendship, a company that employs us, our battalion, ship, squad, our church.

In the end, the best we can provide proves insufficient. The plans and policies, the superior technology—nothing prevented that psychotic madman and his load of explosives. I think it's important to realize that it was the best that man could devise that put Christ on the cross—the best in human justice, law, might and orderliness of society—Roman law, and the best and most strict morality and conservative tradition and emphasis on living the right way of the religion of the Hebrews: THESE are what put Christ on the Cross—the best of man is the sin.

Here lies a body, broken, as on the cross hung a body broken. That which was to contain life, to contain our hopes and dreams, the promise of a future, crushed, broken, shattered, torn.

How appropriate our lessons; how comforting is God's Word to us today! The body may indeed be broken, but it will be made whole; the body may indeed be subject to decay and hurt and pain; it will be transformed into what is not subject to decay or hurt or pain.

And we shall all—friends and family—be united together so that the fragmentation we feel of separation will change into an eternal togetherness. God has attached Himself—glued Himself as it were—to us in Christ, so Christ is fully human and fully God. Those who become part of Christ's body, His faithful people, through faithful dependence on Him, looking to Him, praying to Him—as did David, trusting Him, are His. And because, therefore, Christ arose, and He was the same flesh we are, and we are now part of His body, God did that in Him as a first indication of what He plans to do in general, we, too, shall rise to newness of everlasting life, where there shall be no more tears, no more wars, or diseases, or suffering. A container forever!

How can this be? It sounds so impossible. is this our experience?

A few weeks ago I did one of my favorite things: I walked through the newly-fallen colored leaves. I was amazed at the beauty of each leaf, of the extravagance of God's beauty, of His provision—so extravagant, reflecting the abundance of His goodness.

Now I see the trees, and the leaves have mainly fallen. There are only lonely bare branches. it seems as though the trees are dead, lifeless. yet, we know new life will come, that the trees will bloom again, that the winters cannot be so severe that there isn't new life in the Springtime. How do we know that? Can we prove it will happen again? Can anyone prove the future?

Or take the caterpillar in the cocoon, in darkness, in processes not observable, and then a beautiful butterfly,[680] more beautiful than the caterpillar ever was. Or a seed. Both Jesus and Paul point to the seed that dies is the ground,[681] seemingly, but then a big bush or tree emerges, only, however, as the seed is destroyed and dies.

O yes, all around us are numerous evidences of what God intends for us. The Gospel from the Sermon on the Mount[682] is that only when there is apparently no hope is there the possibility of real hope, only when there is emptiness is there the

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[680] Ancient Christian symbol of the resurrection.

[681] Jn 12.24, 1 Cor 15.36-44.

[682] Mat 5.1-9, the Beatitudes. *Cf.* Matt 9.12: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."

possibility of being filled with a filling that lasts, that the only way to the Promised Land lies through the place of deserts as one deserted. How can one be comforted with the comfort that God can alone give unless they mourn? How can anyone be filled with what God wants to give if they are already filled with everything else? How can one drink of the water of life if they are not thirsty, or eat the bread of life unless they are hungry?

Now I have been with Marines in combat long enough to know how we all lose all the comforts—even light at night in which to read or write letters, unless one is lucky enough to have a candle. There is emptiness, abandonment; the rear never comes to understand or care, it seems. Continuous fear—snipers and incoming, shrieking rockets and thunking mortars. And yet one feels the presence of God in this unlikely place of turmoil, or shooting, killing, fear, and desperation, terror and aloneness. This is because everyone is so open, so human, caring towards each other, sharing the few heat tabs so others can have a hot meal, some water out of one's own canteen to a thirsty buddy. Maybe even huddling together during incoming and hugging each other as the rockets and mortars pound—yes, even Marines, desperately hugging each other.

No, I wasn't in Beirut then, but I was in Vietnam 18 months. I was in Parris Island; I was in the training areas of Okinawa. I was I the training areas of 29 Palms. And it is always the same. That's just how Marines are, usually. One feels real because everyone else is real!

No. I wasn't there then in Beirut, God was! That's for sure. And it is very easy for me to hear a voice, of the One who identifies with all our pain, hanging on a cross, and saying to our brother, David, "My son, today you shall be with me in paradise!"[683] For David apparently trusted God, prayed to Him, had faith. yes, there is an end to it all; there is hope; in the arms of a loving God. Amen.

PRAYER, VETERANS DAY CEREMONY, VIETNAM MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN, CHICAGO, IL, 11 November 1983

Father in heaven: we would like to forget, but we cannot.

How can we forget our friends daily dying in such horrible ways?

How can we forget when we wake up in a pool of sweat from nightmares?

How can we forget when memories cling to our soul and will not go away?

How can we forget 2,494 who are still missing, unaccounted for, whose moms and dads, wives and children, still wonder: will they come home?

We would like to be accepted, but we find ourselves withdrawing from a society that didn't care then and doesn't care now. Over 57,000 died there but over 80,000 have died since returning home by their own hand.

We would like to cry and wash away the memories in a baptism of tears that we might rise again to newness of life, but there are no more tears; or, we would like to be able to stop crying, but cannot.

We would like to scream at what we see: there are no ears, just as then, so now, more dead.

We desperately crave peace: there is continual warfare within and without, and more blood flows—detached heads, a dangling jaw—

Our souls bleed!

We cry to You for the healing to begin! for the healing of our memories, for the acceptance we so desperately crave, for the accounting of our MIA.

We, who have been in continuous, concentrated combat, are indeed those described by Your prophet Isaiah:

He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows
and familiar with suffering
Like one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not ...
We considered h im striken by God
He was pierced for our transgressions
He was bruised for our iniquities.[684]

Perhaps, <u>we</u> may therefore be the reminder to the rest of our society:

That war may not be waged with impunity;

that there <u>us</u> a cost—to those who still live—

and thereby help heal our broken society,

that by our wounds all may be healed, they will look at us and think again.

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[683] Lk 23.43.

[684] Isa 53.3-5.

May this memorial remind us always that the war is not over for many
who are still fighting in a hostile and unfamiliar territory;
May this memorial remind us how we have been betrayed in statistics and body counts
May this memorial remind those who have a "hot heart for chilling deeds"[685] to think again
May the flowing waters of this fountain symbolize the flowing life from within
that may again gush forth from healed hearts, healed by You, the God of all life
Amen.

KHE SANH VETS IN THE NEW YORK CITY 'TICKER TAPE' PARADE, 07 MAY 1985

[From those who gave their names and addresses to Ernie Husted while assembling for the parade]



NEW YORK CITY TICKER TAPE PARADE 07 May 1985. Photos by Ernie Husted. Banner made by James Hebron, co-organizer of the parade. About 50 Khe Sanh veterans gathered together, the first time since the siege.





[685] Sophocles, *Antigone*, line 88.

Peter ANDRONACO (I/3/12)
Tony ASTUCCIO (H/2/26)
Ronald BASCOM
"Doc" Dick BLANCHFIELD (B/1/26)
Ed BROWN (F/2/26)
Mark CARRAWAY, Sr. (1/9)
"Doc" John CICALA, Jr. (B/1/26)
Bob COLLIER
George DAVIS
Louis DELUCA (B/3dRecon)
Edwin DIAZ (F/2/26)
Barry FIXLER (E/2/26)
Tom FORD (F/2/26)
Alan GLICK (3/26)
Bob GREER (L/3/26)
Bob HAARMANN
Dennis HALL (H/2/26)
Jim HEBRON (B/1/26)
Leonard HENDERSON (HQ/1/13)
John E. HENNESEY (B/1/26)
Rod HERMANSON (B/3dRecon)
Gene ISAACS
Rick JOHNSON (1/26)
Steve JOHNSON (B/3dRecon)
Jack KILBRIDE (I/3/26)
Dr. LASKER (BAS, 3/26)
Jim LAVERTY (F/2/26)
Albert R. LUMPKIN, Jr. (B/3dRecon)
Kevin C. MACAULAY (B/3dRecon)
Dennis MANNION (K/3/26)
Hector MARRERO (1/4)
Charles S. MARTIN (M/3/26)
Steve McGUIRK (I/3/26)
Bill MESSNER (B/3dRecon)
Kenneth MOODY (F/2/9)
Tom MOREHOUSE (C/3dRecon)
Raul OBLIJAS
Vincent ORTIZ (E/2/26)
Mark A. PAGANELLI (C/1/9)
Richard PAOLINO (F/2/26)
Sid PATRICIO (D/1/26)
Gregory J. PELAND (3/1)
Isidor ROBERTSON (H&S/1/26)
John RODRIGUES
Miguel A. RODRIGUEZ
Horace ROLAND
Chuck RUDD (B/3dRecon)
Benjamin SANCHEZ (D/1/9)
Ray SANSIVIERO (D/1/26)
Larry SEAVY-CIOFFI (A/1/9)
Darrell SCOTT (B/3dRecon)
"Doc" Don SPROEHALE (I CAV)
Ray STUBBE (1/26)
Peter VALENTE (G/2/26)
Howard WHITAKER(W/1/13)

DIARY NOTES while a patient at Stress Disorder Treatment Unit, VA North Chicago, Il

Monday, 08 April 1985: Vietnam is like an exposed photographic plate that gets developed later in life.

Tuesday, 20 August 1985: In the book by Willa Cather, *One of curs*, a WW I youth goes to war and finds himself and then is killed. In the Nam, men found themselves, but are still alive; is this not even worse?

Thursday, 05 Sep 1985: The great battle had defiled. A ritual cleansing was unavoidable. No suitable sacrificial victim for the sacrifice or ritual was available. Therefore, all society became the target in disintegration, and the soldier became the sacrificial victim *for himself in repetitive cycles of self-destruction. While in the "unclean state" and therefore* apart from society, he could only do that which was appropriate to uncleanness since the "passage" by ritual cleansing had not been accomplished – therefore, multiple marriages (couldn't assimilate into the matrimonial, social function), multiple jobs, alcohol and drugs and sex and other violence – violence permeated into his very being. He was infected with violence.

PROPOSED LOGO FOR KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. – 07 August 1996

The "V" stands for: "veteran," "Vietnam," "victory," and the "V" in the Tactical Marks on all supply Mount-out boxes in the 26th Marine Regiment (which had a blue "V"). Twenty-sixth Marine Regiment is historically part of the FIFTH Marine Division.



The "K" and the "S" emphasize sharpness, twisted pain of the terrain: mountains, rivers, valleys, pathways. In some ways, the "S" is in the shape of a snake to emphasize power, danger, and renewal of life. As the snake sheds its skin it becomes a symbol of regeneration and power. Khe Sanh's terrain and experience is sharp, painful, twisting within memories, difficult to discern where one is at any time.

The nine-sided polygon outside represents the multi-faceted nature of our organization, which includes all branches of the armed services, local people, civilians, and the nine or so years in wh ich Americans ser ved at Khe Sanh.

The design is devoid of extraneous details; it is not "busy" (or complex) and is therefore suitable for a lapel pin, letterhead, buttons, or small patches. It is meant to be universal, applicable to all who lived and served in Khe Sanh. The design was completed 7 August 1996 by Ray W. Stubbe.

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM YOUR TEMPORARY EDITOR (Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay*, Issue #41 (Spring, 1998), pp. 43-44. I had been temporary Editor of the Khe Sanh magazine/newsletter, filling in when Ernie Husted, Jr., was abruptly activated to go to Iraq.

This magazine is perhaps the backbone of our organization: the means of keeping us in contact with each other; the vehicle for expressing our feelings, thoughts, hopes and hurts; the forum for exchanging information that may promote healing and resolution of concerns by providing some of the 'missing pieces' in our experience since we all have the pieces of the whole that, together, will make us whole; the opportunity to make a permanent, historical statement for future generations; the unexpected gift of finding a long, lost buddy, and renewing some of the nourishment to our spirit that comes from a connectedness that affirms each other's basic humanity.

Various editors have contributed their 'labor of love' to make this magazine the much appreciated gift it is to so many. Their efforts are, indeed, works of love—love, not as an emotion, but as an action, an action which gives life to another without expecting any reward or recognition on the part of the giver. (What great lovers so many we've known as Khe Sanh were!). Ernie Husted, Jr., first started to add articles, print requests, poems, memoirs, and emphasized the fun, joy, things that would bring a smile. Ed Evans sought to make it more readable and include the 'heart and soul' of those who were at Khe Sanh. Ernie Spencer made it a first-class, professional magazine, and created a forum for exchange of communications, a dialogue, not unlike the campfire groups of warriors who would recount their experiences and feelings. He strove to make it a healing vehicle by being honest with our feelings and hurts which once recognized, can be dealt with. Ernie knew that the emotional and spiritual scars of war are best dealt with by means of artistic expression—such as poetry. I have emphasized the things that hopefully will make us proud to have been at Khe Sanh, as well as recognizing the lesser known people and units so that we will all appreciate our common brotherhood. We have always avoided political or specifically religious statements. My own hand was simply a temporary one, and I had planned to step down as soon as another Editor could be found. At the last reunion, one of the Board members stated that my efforts reflected my own 'agenda' and that this may have caused many of our brothers to drop from our membership. I sincerely hope not, but if I have offended anyone by how I have written the past five issues (No. 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41) I sincerely apologize to you.

Our new editor, Ray Truelove, is a Khe Sanh vet, has served as the Editor of the 3rd Marine Division's *Caltrap* magazine, is currently the Editor of the Florida state Vietnam Veterans of America newspaper (which received VVA's 1997 National Award for the best VVA magazine/newspaper in the country). Ray will be doing all of his work as a donation to our organization. He is professionally competent. He knows in his heart what it means to be a veteran of Khe Sanh. And, he obviously has a great first name!

I will continue to maintain our Khe Sanh archives. We currently have approximately 100,000 pages of letters, diaries, memoirs of Khe Sanh vets, copies of official reports, etc. If you desire to contribute any of this, please consider doing so. This information is very helpful when calls are received wanting to know some detail about some action.

We deal best with the past by taking the energy we have from it—angers, depressions, intensity, and using that to motivate us into serving the living. The motto for our Milwaukee County War Memorial is apt: 'Honor the dead by serving the living.' It is then we are able to be pulled into the future instead of being pushed by the past. Robert Penn Warren's poem 'When the Tooth Cracks—Zing' has these lines which are so appropriate:

> 'Must we totally forget a thing to know it?
> Perhaps redemption is nothing more than the way
> We learn to live with memories that are no longer remembered.'

Khe Sanh will always live with us who were there to experience what happened there, but not only as a place of sheer terror or overwhelming beauty or desperate isolation or feeling abandoned; it is also and more so the place where we looked into our brother's eye and beheld the presence of God.

The Hebrew word 'Adam' refers to red clay used to make pottery. Isaiah 64:8 may be translated: 'We are red clay; you formed us. The work of Your hands all of us are.' Red clay is, of course, the laterite soil of Khe Sanh formed by millennia of rains weathering the volcanic eruptions of the crater on which Khe Sanh sits, a place born in violence, with violence a lingering spirit of the place, a place of lush life because life feeds on life. The red clay penetrated our skin in such a degree that I recall that after departing from there, I would take showers and for several weeks, the white towel would have a brownish red that looked as though I had wiped another place of my anatomy. In some ways, I feel that the physical substance of this red clay carried a spiritual reality that penetrated into my very being, and the spirits of so many who lost their lives there are dwelling within me. (This sort of primitive understanding that touches very ancient religious concepts of 'taboo' and 'defilement' and 'uncleanness' as well as more developed religious concepts of 'sacramentalism.' Perhaps it is more akin to what we actually feel than what the modern mind permits us to 'see' as reality).

So I depart as your Editor, knowing that this magazine will be in very good, competent and caring hands, and that the contents will always be of great significance, for they will come from you, the readers, you, who are veterans of the Khe Sanh experience; the gifts are in all the people, and just need to be drawn out.

The British in India used the term 'So long,' as a farewell. It is an abbreviation of 'Salaam' which is derived from 'Shalom,' a blessing of peace, strength, confidence, the opportunity to live and grow and flourish. SO LONG! – Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe.

TALKING POINTS ON KHE SANH – (for presentation to Milwaukee Chapter of Military officers Association of America, 11 Feb 2007)

TIE-IN [2006 talk] Days and dates are the same now (2007) as in 1968 (until 29 Feb).
10 Feb: C-130 crashed, USAF: no more landings. (with fog, Rt. 9 impassible, DZ small, ammo dump hit, our situation very tenuous)
Humor: C Med: casualty out-runs the corpsman
Recon: scout dog in helicopter
Walk past recon, just prior to siege: "Gentlemen, circumcise your watches!" ["synchronize" not in Marine vocabulary!]
LCPL Wm. Slaugenhaupt: "I lost everything!"

GENERAL: Tchepone fell 01 May 1961
Operation TULUNGUN 02 Mar – 12 Apr 62
USSF at Khe Sanh 08 Jul 1962
Located 6 ½ miles from Lao/Vn border,
14 mi. S of DMZ most remote US base.
Cook – hills – volcano – Bru – isolation – Route 9

10 NOV 1967 On Hill 881-S, 4 ½ mi. from KSCB, Col Lownds: "You will all soon be in the American history books!"

DMZ Potsdam Conf. set at 16° [N-China; S-France]
Geneva Conf: Vietnam (Dong) wanted at 16°, running just S of Tourane (DaNang); France (Mendes France) wanted at 18° so Hue, DaNang, and Rt. 9 would be in its control. Molotov (USSR): "Then we are agreed, the parallel should be at the 17th." Officially divided 20 Jul 1954. Rostow: USSR was attempting to appease France so it wouldn't join NATO.

DONATION, MUSEUM: 27 Jun 2005, visited by Bill Brewster, Gayle Martinson
18 Jul 2005: picked up materials (2 truck loads)
10 Nov 2005: gave presentation at museum
23 Sep 2006: Exhibit opens ("In the Belly of the Dragon").
Give plug to donate materials to the museum!!

PRIOR TO SIEGE: Jeanne Dixon, summer '67, predicted 1200 dead at KS
Garden of Eden – tigers, ocelots, exotic birds, lush vegetation, coffee plantation
1200 Vietnamese civilians & 12,000 Bru civilians

SIEGE:
["The earth is broken, broken down. The earth crumbled in pieces. The earth trembled and tottered. The earth reeled to and fro like a drunken man." Isa 24.19-20.]

Became "blood bath," "killing field," "moonscape," a "Valley of Dry Bones." (A thing of beauty is not a joy forever) [Keats, "To Autumn"]

PERSONAL - 106 bunker, visited 7 Feb/hit 23 Feb, man with no head
- 24 Jan: recon bunker hit, men in my bunker
- Lost 30 pounds (185 pounds when arrived Vietnam, 129 at end of siege)
- worship services 7 min long.
- 10 Feb: week ending, (Sat): 53 services, 435 attended.
- 22 Feb: washing hands/shrinking blood/CH-53 hit.
- 91st Psalm
- effects, "endless night". Dad at talk. Mom's hair
- Dear John letters.

NEWS 25% of all evening TV, Feb-Mar 68
Cover, Newsweek 18 Mar "The Agony of Khe Sanh"
David Douglas Duncan, I Protest
"1,000-yard stare"

RT 9 9 of 26 bridges, Ca Lu-Khe Sanh

AIR Runway closed 12-25 Feb by USAF
Airstrip: 60 ft. wide, 3,900-ft. long
21 Jan – 11 Feb, USAF delivered 3,669 tons in
320 sorties

OMINOUS Tanks – 1st use, Lang Vei. 8 Feb
Pres. J: JCS signed that KS would be held, 29 Jan
nuclear weapons considered
compared to Dien Bien Phu [Note 304 Div].
Isolated, vulnerable, heavy shelling,
Daily fog.

INCOMING up to 1,600/da.
Col Lownds (prior) to erect false antennae,
bunkers. LtCol Wilkinson's rejoinder
Phil Wright in trench, half green, half red
Recon man jumps into trench, avoids pisser.

BASE 0.9 mi long / 0.4 mi. wide, occupied by 2725

NVA B5-T8 Front HQ established 06 Dec

ORDNANCE More tons than all of Pacific, WW II, 1942-1943
NVA area, 564 sq km, we delivered 99,600 tons
we received: 11,114 rounds (arty, rock, mort, RR)
21 Jan – 01 Apr, ave 150/da (ave. of all of
I Corps, VN, in 1967)
we fired: 117,643 rounds arty (including 12,441 175)
B52 128 500-lb. & 750-lb. bombs in area 1000 x 100 yards
B52: 2,602 sorties delivering 75,631 tons (ave. of
35 sorties and 1,022 tons per day).
533 sorties delivered within 3 km KSCB
brought up to 500 meters of our trenches

[Normal load, 108 bombs, but capable of holding 128 500 & 750-lb. bombs dropped in a rectangular pattern, usually 1,000 yards long and 100 yards wide. Sometimes the boxes overlap or criss-cross. Most flights consist of 6 aircraft together,

covering an area one-half mile wide and three miles long, all within a period of several seconds. To obtain a grasp, one need only think of a comparable area within the city. Flew at 10,000 – 30,000 ft. altitude: unheard, unseen. A 750-pound bomb leaves a crater 30 ft. across and 10 ft. deep.]

Plus, 15,217 sorties TACAIR (daily: 184)

DZ
500 x 300 meters
1,000 yards off runway
Air-drops on runway thought might destroy it

LIFE
Clothes rotted off
C rats: 1 per day
water: 1 canteen cup per day (950 out of water 7 da.)
one Marine died on 881-S after being wounded and unable to be evacuated due to fog, 4 days
Marines on 881-S in "body bunker", 5 days of not able to be evacuated. In cargo nets
Bunkers, trenches collapsed suffocating people

KIA
Officially 205 (20 Jan – 31 Mar)
Official records of subordinate units: 274 KIA
Other units: +70, for a total of 344
Add Lang Vei, FOB, District, plus KIA from PEGASUS (1-14 Apr) and 15-16 Apr, 1/9) and 252 more are added, for a total of:
573 Americans, 20 Jan – 16 Apr, the date defenders of KS were there.

WIA
2,541 patients seen in C Med. Of them, 2,037 WIA and 490 NBC.
2,249 evacuated. Only 292 returned

NVA KIA
Over 10,000

Bru KIA
About 10,000

TOTAL:
Over 20,000 who weren't Americans, died on this battlefield, 21 Jan – 31 Mar 1968!

People there:
Capt Frank Kennedy: delivers several pints blood despite ¼-mi. visibility + fog, navigating by dead reckoning in his CH-53 landing by auto-rotation, guided by a hand-held Aldis lamp
Defenders awarded PUC
Gun crews in open during incoming; wire men run out to repair severed land lines during incoming
Dr. removes live mortar round from stomach [Dr. Feldman, Mussari]
DZ and supply movers in open
Officers & NCOs move about their troops
Stretcher-bearers move casualties to medevac choppers during shelling
Col. David E. Lownds & staff targeted and initiated strike request for 95% of B52s and generally conducted entire course of battle is disregarded.
During an ordinary day, his intelligence staff generated targets for 100 TPQ-10 strikes,

16 Arc Lights, 100 flights FW and up to 500 arty missions. Yet, only Westmoreland is in press.

Khe Sanh is not the strategy or tactics, a place to be analyzed or debated. IT IS THE PEOPLE THERE!

Men frequently gave last drops of water, food
Men rushed out during incoming to rescue buddies.
9 Mar: CPL Kenneth Williams killed as he shouted warning to LCPL John T. Reilly.
Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer – CO with Navy Cross

HUMOR Postal clerk and the money orders
Those NVA are piss-poor gunners!

LETTER TO MS. BEVERLY J. WELBOURNE, 20 July 2006

I've been long interested in how something very small, perhaps unnoticed, can have life-long and major consequences. Thus, the "thalodimine babies," or the long-term effects of DDT or radiation or Agent Orange or battle experiences that result in PTSD or the worms that got into the blood of POWs held by the Japanese in WW II that only after 50 years emerge as life-threatening, or the disease known as "shingles" emerging in 50s to 70s due to having had chicken pox as a child. I read in the Bible of how, in the end, the sheep are separated from the goats (eternal life verses eternal punishment) all based on whether or not one "gave food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, friendship and visits to the imprisoned and sick, clothing for the naked," and in both cases, they say "when did we see you hungry, thirsty, naked, in prison, sick, etc." as though it were unnoticed. Yet, eternal destiny is based on these little things of how we treat each other on a life-long basis, according to Matthew 25!

The little things of life! The things that are unnoticed at the time! An example is how Admiral Zumwalt, the senior Naval officer in Vietnam while his son was a young Lieutenant in river boats being fired upon by VC in the jungles around Saigon, attempted to help his son by making things less dangerous and lethal for him, by spraying the river banks with Agent Orange to defoliate and deny sanctuary and cover for the VC. Decades later, the son died from cancer from the Agent Orange, and his father, the retired Admiral, had to bury his son. He attempted to "do good," but only evil resulted. What came from the heart was insufficient. Who could have foreseen that the result would be so deadly? Yet, this little thing had deadly consequences that could not have been anticipated.

How much little things affect life! Like the fulcrum of a level (like a teeter-totter), these things move life decades later to our benefit or to our woe.

LETTER TO JAMES DINGMAN, 06 August 2007

Many years ago—far too many, unfortunately!—I learned in a philosophy class in college a distinction between two kinds of knowledge. In a class focused on Søren Kierkegaard, we learned the difference between objective knowledge and "interested" knowledge. The former is "scientific" (that is, knowledge gained by examination of an object from a distance, dispassionately) resulting in knowledge "about" the object. The latter is knowledge gained by immersion within an experience with an emotional investment, and results in knowledge "of" the object. The former seeks to know something (or somebody) by various descriptions that originate within the observer and have little or nothing to do with the reality of the object, such as when I say a table is of a certain dimension. The latter unfolds from within the object which discloses its reality to us. (The same distinction is found in the Bible. In the Hebrew scriptures (or "Old Testament") the Hebrew word Da'ath is used, for example, in the "knowledge" gained sexually or through commitment, as in the verse, "My people die from lack of the knowledge of the Lord," in which the cause is not ignorance of the details or knowledge "about" the Lord, but from faithful relationship and deep commitment, which refers to knowledge "of" the Lord.)

Most of the things we discussed involve the tension between those who "know" the events of Vietnam and the current plague of wars in the Middle East on the basis of knowing it from a distance, not from personal involvement. There may be passion and there may be an emotional dimension, of course, but it is still predicated upon information gained from a distance. You and I, however, are operating from a knowledge "of" based on immersion within the reality with an emotional investment and commitment. A certain frustration, even an "alienation!" results between those who have knowledge "of" in their dialogue with people who only have knowledge "about!"

Sometimes, the two become conjoined. In fact, I would think that those who have knowledge "of" are always seeking to know more "about" as well as make sense of the reality they have experienced.

Such has been my quest. The blinding exposure to combat leaves those who experience it, in a state similar to the famous parable told by Plato in Republic, Book 7. (The man chained with his fellows in a cave in which they stare at shadows case on a wall in front of them by people carrying various things and a fire which causes the shadows to be cast. The man escapes, sees the reality of the people carrying objects, returns to the cave to inform his fellows that what they see as shadows is not the reality. They regard him as insane or perhaps wounded by exposure to the light and tell him that if he continues to disturb them with his tales of "reality" they will kill him!)

In years past, well-meaning psychologists have asked me why I just don't forget the war. This is an impossible task, of course, since the memories are permanently engraved (or, as modern students of the human brain will teach, through a process of "neuroplasticity" the neurons have been re-wired and the part that processes the short-term memory and dreams, the hippocampus, has been permanently altered, physically, so that dreams are experienced in vivid reality, and much of reality becomes dream-like in "flashbacks."). I once asked the professor who taught my Kierkegaard class, upon meeting him several decades later, "how does one 'unlearn' knowledge gained as knowledge 'of'?" His response was by gaining knowledge "of" something or someone greater within which the experiences of the war might be contained as a part and not the whole. The process of doing this has consumed my years since then. My studies of Jung have added another process: that of transformation, in which the negatives become positives. Many combat veterans already do this when they draw upon the energy from the "black hole" of their experience and transform that into community involvement or other positive endeavors, and transfer the knowledge of caring for others they learned as a means of survival in combat to caring for others in ways that those who have not been exposed to the fragile and tenuous nature of life one "learns" in combat to everyday encounters.

In the meantime, it is up to you and I, and most of the veterans, to be the "living memory" of war, not in terms of simple information "about" but bringing the passionate awareness of danger so that similar mistakes are not so easily made. Elie Wiesel's book, Night, (about his experiences as a teenager in a WW II concentration camp) contains the tragic scene of a villager captured early in the war who returns to the village warning his neighbors to flee for their lives! They regard him as an idiot, mentally deranged, even a sort of clown, the sight of which evokes laughter—and then, all are eventually carted off to the concentration camps.

That story, like the Plato's parable, resonates with insistence today, and prompts you to continue your commitment to communicate the reality of what is, so frequently smothered in everydayness and (as Heidegger would say), "inauthentic" existence.

NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES – 06 September 2008

There are at least a dozen times I should have died. The verse of the hymn, "Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come, 'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far..," really rings true! Then there are the words of many of the Psalms: "I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord." (Ps 118.17); "You have rescued me. I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." (Ps 22.21b-22). "I will thank you in the great congregation: in the mighty throng I will praise you." (Ps 35.18). some of these were so minor; at the time, it was hard to discern that I was rescued, that it wasn't just fate or accident.

I was a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago, in the field of "ethics and society." Following classes the morning of Friday, 27 January 1967, I started driving home despite a snowstorm that had been dropping snow from the previous day. It was only as I entered the Dan Ryan Expressway that I realized I should not have started the weekend journey home, for there were numerous vehicles in the three lanes of traffic stopped here and there in the different lanes and the exits, having an upward incline, were clogged with no possibility of exiting the freeway. In addition, balls of snow began to accumulate on the ends of my windshield wipers so that the wipers were unable to remove accumulating snow on the windshield. Desperately, I wove from lane to lane to avoid stuck vehicles while having my left arm outside the window, attempting to brush away accumulating snow while steering with the right hand! This continued all through the city of Chicago, the extent of the Dan Ryan and Edens Expressway, and the large flakes and large amount of snow continued until just past the Illinois-Wisconsin border, with only light snow falling in Wisconsin. The danger after entering Wisconsin, however, remained. Although there was less snow, it was still slippery, and while traveling on a two-lane stretch of Interstate 94, with no vehicles in front or behind me, my car suddenly skidded 180 degrees, facing in the opposite direction. Just then I noticed two large trucks, one in each lane as one was passing the other, approaching me! I had no time to get out of the car and run for what appeared to be

a certain collision! At the last minute, both trucks miraculously moved to the pass me using the shoulder of the highway, on either side! By the time I arrived home, my nerves were completely shot. Classes at the University [of Chicago] were cancelled for a week.

I landed in DaNang at 1222, 14 July 1967, waiting for further transportation to 3rd Marine Division HQ at Phu Bai. Around 1700, word was passed there would be no further flights. We went to the Air Force officer's mess for supper and that there would be an Air Force C-130 going to Phu Bai at 2100. I met a Captain Harper L. Bohr, Jr., who was going to Khe Sanh to be the Intelligence Officer. He opted to remain at DaNang while I decided to take the USAF plane. It didn't depart DaNang until 2312. When I finally arrived at Khe Sanh several days later, Bohr noted that just after midnight, the DaNang Air Base was raked with rockets creating horrible devastation. The Stars & Stripes for 16 July 1967, reads: "At least 12 Americans were killed.. Witnesses said the Communists fired about 50 rounds of 120 and 140 mm rockets from two directions and with pinpoint accuracy... Destroyed in the attack were three big Air Force C130 transports which cost $2.5 million each.."

On 16 December, 1967, our regimental Intelligence Officer, Captain Harper L. Bohr, Jr., asked me to accompany him to the home of John and Carolyn Miller in Khe Sanh village. He had received 4 boxes of toys and clothing to give to the children there, and was going to give them to these missionaries to distribute. We caught a ride by jeep to the Miller's home. After visiting awhile, we walked back to the. I remember climbing Hill 471 and going through the various Bru villages. Bohr was point, John Miller was in the center, and I was "tail end Charlie." I didn't think anything of it at the time, although some of our recon teams were making deadly contact at the time in the general area, and Bohr later told me that he shudders when he thinks of what we did at that time: that the NVA were in the area and we could have been killed or captured.

On Sunday, 28 January 1968, a photo was taken of me holding worship. The photos (taken by Dick Swanson and SSGT John Reid) appeared in dozens of subsequent publications. I recall that we were interrupted by a mortar attack, took refuge, and then reassembled. Amazingly, none of us are wearing helmets. I apparently removed mine by habit of not wearing anything on the head while worshipping, and the others followed my example. Apparently, I did this during all the dozens of times I conducted worship on the base of Khe Sanh during the siege battle, and "amazingly" was spared getting shrapnel in my head!

Someone stole my camera the day before the siege battle of Khe Sanh began and I laid it down to carry some dead on stretchers to Graves Registration. When I returned, it was gone. It was a camera my grandpa Stubbe had given to me, and it took some very good photos even though it wasn't a single lens reflex. That really bothered me for many years; especially since I had photos on the film in the camera of people that I knew who died within a few days. One of my friends told me that whoever stole the camera saved my life, because during the incoming rockets and mortars, I probably would have been taking photos when I should keep my head down. And that was very true.

I was getting ready to visit all over the combat base which was always taking incoming when someone yelled to me that I had a phone call! (I can't recall the date; I didn't even write this down in my diary at the time, but definitely recalled it later.) It was the Chaplain Jack Heino, chaplain of 1/9. I don't even recall the conversation. As I was talking with him on the land line telephone, a mortar round exploded just where I would have been had I continued walking and not returned to take his phone call. He saved my life and didn't even know it!

I had blood in my urine and was sent to a hospital at DaNang, but returned to the siege battle after a couple of days—only after I promised I'd return for more testing. When I returned to Parris Island after Vietnam, I went to the hospital where they did a kidney biopsy and determined I had "glomerulo-nephritis" which is an auto-immune disease in which the body attacks itself (as in lupus). They said that it would clear up, and then return sometime within 20 years and was fatal—that I had only 20 years left to live at the most. They offered me a medical discharge, but let me remain on active duty when I made a decision, at that time, not to marry or take a civilian congregation. Well, I'm still here!

On Tuesday, 06 February 1968, I was in my bunker for the evening. Diary entry: "Turned in early, about 2030. At 2345 the base began receiving incoming rockets and mortars. At 2415 I heard one whistle in. The hootch shook briefly but violently. Silence. A dud? A delayed fuse? From the shaking of the hootch, did it land on the top or become embedded in the side? Then a tremendous WHOMP! I thought the hootch was going to collapse. I had wondered all along whether I should go out and check. If there were a round on the top or in the side, unexploded, to seek other safety. Yet, that would expose me, and it was total darkness outside. Maybe I should just run anyway to another bunker. Had I done that, I would have been caught in the WHOMP. I shined a flashlight inside, still laying down on my rack. Everything was in a dense fog of dust. All the remainder of the next few hours we kept receiving rounds, many near us. Then our artillery would blast away, and they'd be silent. Then they would begin again. This alternating situation prevailed for some time. But I slept most of the time." In the morning, I saw a crater about three feet from the entrance of my bunker where a rocket had exploded. [Diary, p. 604]

Friday, 23 February 1968. The base took some 1300-incoming rounds today. According to my diary entry, I was in my bunker at noon, eating a "Ham, with water added, and eggs, chopped, canned." "I was eating the cookies and drinking the cocoa from the B-3 unit when arty came in—heavy arty. One whizzed and the whole hootch shook violently. It sounded like it was stuck in the wall. Things were falling—dirt, pieces of wood. I immediately thought of a delayed fuze. If it were embedded in the wall of dirt outside my bunker wall, the whole hootch would explode. Yet, if I dashed out, a new round might come in and then I'd get dinged by shrapnel." Later that evening, I noticed that the wall had crumpled inward, right next to my rack, where I was sitting. It had been draped with a camouflaged parachute, so I didn't notice it previously. My diary entry: "Hit the pad and noticed that the wall was bent. It wasn't merely the top piece caved out, but the whole wall! There was an engineering stake inside, all bent also. This is what came in during my lunch! –while I was sitting with my back only two feet from it, on my rack! I was most uneasy about it all. Called up Major Hudson [the Regimental S-2], who said I should call up the EOD man. I was concerned that a nearby explosion might detonate it, were it a dud. The Major said it might. The EOD man said it was safe to sleep. [He probably didn't want to attend to this at the moment, there being so many other duds strewn about the base from the extraordinarily large amount of shelling today. So I slept all night right next to the "questionable wall." [Diary, pp. 700-701].

On 20 June 1968, I was on the Dong Ha Combat Base in the afternoon to visit a man from "C" Company, 3rd Shore Party Bn, to deliver a death message. My PC vehicle became stuck in the ammo dump there and some Marines from FLSG "B" volunteered to bring a wrecker, but after waiting an hour or so—it was now 1520—I decided to get a truck to take me to 9th Motors where I was able to get in a "bread run" vehicle back to my stalled PC. They managed to fix it, and I returned to Quang Tri Combat Base. At about 1630 some very loud bangs and immense clouds filling the sky alerted us to gaze north to Dong Ha Combat Base where the ammo dump was exploding—where I had just been in my stalled vehicle! Large balls of fire billowed into the sky. (There were, amazingly, no people killed. One tower with 2 Marines in it collapsed. Chaplain Fenning, the Division Chaplain, mentioned later that the explosion destroyed 10 million dollars worth of ammo).

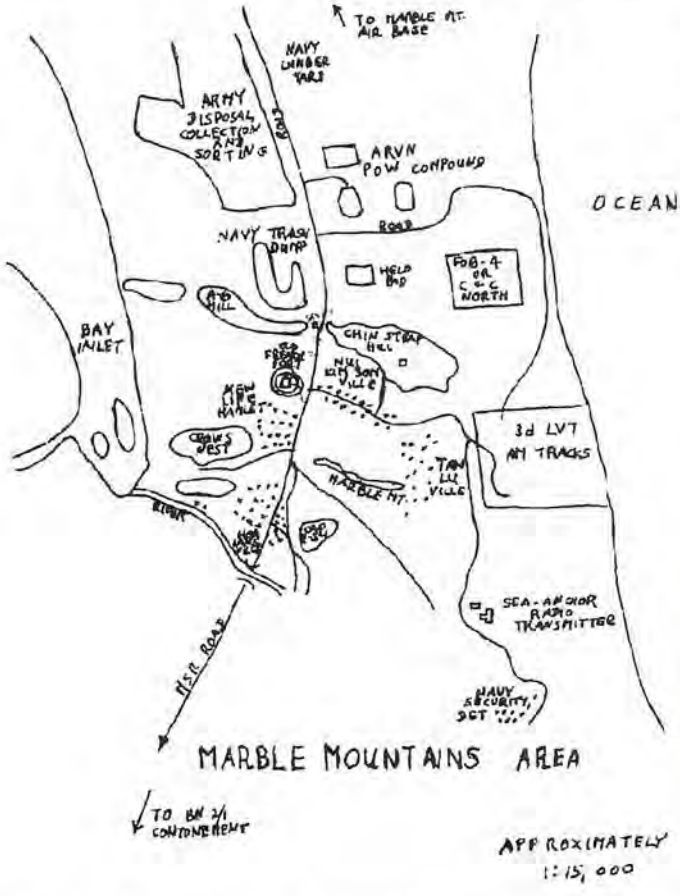

MARBLE MOUNTAIN AREA, DANANG, VIETNAM Dec 1968
Drawn by Ray W. Stubbe from aerial photograph of area



CHAPLAIN STUBBE ON CROW'S NEST, MARBLE MT., DANANG
LEADING CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP – 1968

I was walking in the Marble Mountains of DaNang on the 19 August 1968 with my new clerk who had just come off a Navy ship [Richard Straubel]. He wore his blue Navy dungarees and a white sailor hat. We checked with the S-2 of the amphibious tractor unit there who said it was quiet. I wanted my clerk to see some of the carved Buddha statues I'd heard were there. So we spent most of the day walking in and out of various caves and grottos. A little Vietnamese boy joined us

and was whistling—sometimes noticeably louder and with more agitation than at others. (I was aware of this at the time, but disregarded it). There was one time when I started to go into a cave area, but noticed a lot of tin cans and debris, and it didn't look too interesting, so I walked back out. It was at this point that the boy really whistled loudly and even darted away! After I came out, he rejoined us. My clerk, in the meantime, was photographing some statues. The next day, the Special Forces camp, the headquarters for the SOG units in northern I Corps (CCN, Command and Control North), just at the base of the Marble Mountains, was penetrated and almost overrun. Some of those who had been at Khe Sanh were stationed there and killed including a couple Sergeant Majors. I was told that there were about 70 of the NVA inside the Marble Mountains when I was going through it!

While serving as a Chaplain at the recruit training at Parris Island after Vietnam [1969-1970], I was walking along the rifle range. While I was out, a Sergeant came into my office on the rifle range and in a strange voice (according to my clerk) asked, "Where is the Chaplain?" As it turned out, I had never met the Sergeant. My clerk noticed that he had a M-16 and that the selector was on "semi automatic." I was unaware of all of this. I went to our Chaplains center on the base to get my mail at lunch time, and couldn't get near the building, because it was surrounded by MPs. I later discovered that the Sergeant thought if he shot a Chaplain, that he'd get transferred off Parris Island! So I'm here today because I wasn't in my office, but was among the troops!

A FEW NUMOROUS INCIDENTS Recalled during my Service as a Navy Chaplain – 13 July 2011

While there has been so much that is tragic and horrific that happened during intense and prolonged battle at Khe Sanh, there are also innumerable times when something humorous happened, humor which kept our sanity, maintained our humanity, punctuated horror with humanity, and revealed just how creative young Marines are. There are a few other incidents from tours during a career as a chaplain. I only regret not having kept a small notebook to record others!

A Marine Sergeant at pre-deployment training at Camp Pendleton: "They've made this 'fool proof,' but that doesn't mean they've made it 'Marine proof!'"

The S-4 of Regiment, Fred McEwan, had just made LtCol. Spotting him walking into one of the evening regimental briefings, and somewhat fatigued from the day's activities, I automatically said, "O, good evening, Major." Without a second's delay he responded, "O, good evening, Private!"

Shortly before the opening shots of the siege battle at Khe Sanh, Col Lownds announced at one of the evening regimental briefings that false antennas should be erected so the NVA forward observers on the ridgeline to the north would not target his headquarters. LtCol James Wilkinson, the 1/26 battalion commander, at his staff briefing the next morning quipped, "The regimental commander said we should erect false antennas. Now, instead of the regiment receiving ten rounds, the whole base will get several hundred!" (How prophetic!)

Col Kenny Houghton, G-2 of III MAF was at Khe Sanh ville to inspect the JTAD and found the two Army soldiers in civilian clothes. He asked why they weren't in uniform, and they replied, "Well, we're 'under cover'." Actually, being two young Americans, they stuck out like a sore thumb and were hardly inconspicuous!

While walking down the road towards the 1/26 mess hall weeks before the siege battle, the following was heard from the recon area. A patrol leader was briefing his team. "Gentlemen, circumcise your watches!" ("Synchronize" was just too big a word!)

Sometimes, things are definitely not very funny at the time, but upon telling the incident, they become very funny. The S-2 of regiment accompanied a patrol to Hill 881-S and later reported that a leech had crawled up his penis.

A recon team paused and several sat down. One Marine sat on what he assumed was a log, but when it moved, he realized he had sat down on a large python snake. He immediately fainted and the team called in for a medevac—which was, of course, denied.

I heard this from at least three veterans of the siege battle. Someone would walk up to the Postal Clerk wanting a money order. "Here's $100.00 for a money order." The clerk replied, "I'll take the $100.00 and give you a money order for $200.00." (The amounts varied, of course). The surprised Marine would say, "How can you do that?" The postal clerk replied, "Well, with all this incoming, all the records are destroyed." He kept what the Marines gave him, and the Marines were more than satisfied with the doubling of their money order amounts! (And whoever said that Marines were "jarheads?")

A wounded Marine from Shore Party (LCPL Slaugenhaupt) was moaning and groaning on the stretcher. "I lost everything! I lost everything!" Attempting to console him, I asked if he had lost all his pictures—or a phonograph—or all his uniforms—from the incoming. "O no, Chaplain, you know all those peanut butters and jellies in the C Rations? I had been saving them in a wood ammo box, and the incoming destroyed everything. I lost everything!"

Another wounded Marine on a stretcher was being medevaced. Seeing my concern for him, he blurted out, "O don't worry, Chaplain, they just got me in the ass."

Some Marines used C-4 plastic explosive to brush their teeth.

While on Hill 861 one night, I got up in the middle of the night to urinate, and startled some Marine who challenged me. "I'm just trying to find the piss tube," I said. He responded, "O, don't worry, Chaplain, all the Nam's a piss tube."

Glenn Waller had just reported to me as my new Chaplain's Clerk. I was about to make a phone call on the land line and had him hold down the telephone while I cranked it. Unfortunately, his hand was over the terminals—and got zapped with 35 volts.



Glenn and I were sleeping atop a large stack of C-ration cases in the supply tent on one of the hill outposts (I think it was 881-South), when he had to get up in the middle of the night to make a "call of nature." When he returned, the scout dog had moved onto his warmed poncho liner. "I was not about to chase him away!" said the startled Marine.

SCOUT DOG AND MARINES ON HILL 861 WITH LANDING ZONE IN BACKGROUND
Photo taken 11 Aug 1967 by Ray W. Stubbe

When the siege battle began, several of us were in the C-Med trench. Eventually, casualties began to arrive, and then a CH-46 medevac bird came. One of the corpsmen returned to the trench, heavily panting, blurting out, "My casualty out ran me. I wasn't able to pin the casualty card on him." "What kind of injury did he have?" someone asked. "O, he was wounded in his leg!" (The WIA was definitely motivated!)

During the opening days of the siege battle, the scout dog from recon dashed to a CH-46 waiting to embark the wounded and ran between the pilots and sat there. His handler ran aboard attempting to get the dog off the helo, but the dog was not about to be moved. "That dog was smarter than any of the rest of us," quipped one of the Marines!

During incoming, one Marine (Phil Wright) dove into a culvert that was filled with water. To everyone's amusement, when the incoming ceased and he emerged, he was half green, half red, from head to foot!

Another Marine jumped into the very deep recon trench as incoming began, and noticed to his horror that he was going right into the large 55-gallon drum that had been dug into the bottom of the trench as a pisser. Fortunately, he was able to spread his legs just in time and landed with one boot on either side!

While in a bunker during intense shelling, one of the Marines quipped: "Those NVA gunners are sure piss-poor! They can't even hit us!" Not realizing that the rockets had been fired from several miles away.

The scene of a Marine running from the shitter during incoming with his pants still down!

The Marine at an outpost manned by half Marines and half indigenous Montagnards. During the night, one of the Montagnards on the perimeter fired his rifle. (He later claimed he saw the evil spirit that devours people, Panoach, roaming around the wires.) The Marine in the bunker puts his trousers on backwards.

One Major, an XO of a battalion, had Marines build his bunker, keeping them from building their own bunker. During the night, the crafty Marines removed all the sandbags from the top of the Major's bunker and put them on their own! They replaced them before daybreak. The Major was oblivious–to far more than he realized!

While serving a 6 month extension in Vietnam at the US Naval Support Activity, DaNang, the senior staff at the White Elephant building, HQ of NSA whose offices held Navy Captains, including the senior Supply Officer, ordered soap for the Vietnamese women (the "washy-washy" women) to clean their uniforms and requested 3 "units" of soap. The building is an old French fort-style, rectangular with a very large court in the middle and only one entrance in one of the sides. Into this confined space came three very large trucks of soap. The unit of issue was "truckload!" Undoubtedly, with the large rains of

the monsoons, the large courtyard would soon be transformed into a scene from the movie about Ensign Pulver and Mr. Roberts!

After Khe Sanh, while at MCRD, Parris Island:

A recruit—it was obvious for all he had was a white T shirt and his utility trousers and boots—went from house to house in the Colonel housing area. The wives answered their doors as the young man said, "I'm from the telephone company, and I've lost my way. Can you tell me how to get off this island?"

While standing duty as the Chaplain one night, a man on the telephone asked about the regulations for getting married in the base chapel. I replied that the Marine should come in and make the arrangements. "O no, we're bringing his fiancé. We want it to be a surprise!"

Another man called another night: "Are you the Chaplain there?" I replied, "Well, I'm one of about 20 here." (Pause). "Well, there's a Private____, and my daughter is pregnant! What are you going to do about it?"

A mother wrote an irate letter to one of the chaplains. She had previously written the Chaplain that her son was needed back home on the farm. The Chaplain had written to her that she would be happy because her son was determined to be illiterate and would be returning home. She wrote—the Chaplain showed us the letter at one of our Chaplain meetings—"I will have you know that my son cannot possibly be illiterate! He was born one month after we were married!"

A visiting Congressman (attempting to find something wrong) ran up to a Drill Instructor and squealed in a civilian tone of voice, "Excuse me, Sergeant! Did you just call that man a 'turd'?" In a booming Drill Instructor voice, the DI replied: "Yes, Sir, Congressman! 'Trainee Undergoing Recruit Discipline!'"

Some Recruits sneaked off to the Dempster Dumpster for a smoke one night. In the pitch darkness, one said, "Does someone have a light?" Immediately a match was struck—illuminating the face of the man who lit it: their Drill Instructor!

One recruit had difficulty telling 24-hour "military time," so his DI locked him in a wall locker. When he's rap on the door, the recruit would open the door and shout, "Koo-koo, koo-koo, the time is____." The Series Commander happened to be visiting, brushed up against the wall locker, and immediately the door flung open. "Koo-koo, koo-koo, the time is____."

One recruit was standing with his nose to the bulkhead in the battalion office. His DI told me, "I don't know if I should promote him to meritorious PFC or send him to Motivation." He went on to explain that the recruit was on his "service week" and had the duty of cleaning out the Officers' Club. Seeing all the half-empty glasses of mixed drinks, scotch, gin, whisky, beer, and whatever else lubricates the throats of thirsty Marines and provides anti-freeze in the wintry Parris Island weather, the recruit promptly drained all the glasses—into his own throat! (Marines are so neat, clean up everything so promptly!)

The RTR (Recruit Training Regiment) commander was full-Colonel Parrish who used to attend the small base chapel on a regular basis, sitting in a particular place near the radiators. One of the Chaplains at the staff meeting quipped that we need to turn up the heat in the radiators and "Perish Parrish in the Parish!"

While on Okinawa during another tour:

During inspection, the officer told a Marine standing at attention, "I hear there's a lot of pornography here!" The Marine immediately replied, "Sir, I don't even have a pornograph!"

Preparing for an inspection, the CO of 9th Motors was shocked to see a Marine painting blades of grass that stuck up between the concrete curb. "Why are you painting the grass, Marine?" "Sir, the grass is part of the curb, and the Private was told to paint the curb."

As the CO continued looking over his area, he saw something else that aroused his attention. The 9th Motors Tac Mark (those symbols that are sprayed onto water cans, mount-out boxes, vehicles, etc.) was a red hexagon with a white 9 in the center. He had told the Marine, "Put 9th Motors Tac Mark here"—on the wooden baffles that contained the trash buckets. What he saw were the words, painted on the wooden wall, "PUT NINTH MOTORS TAC MARK HERE!"

I recall jumping with Army Special Forces while on Okinawa into the Central Training Area, spotting trees and immediately going to the "trees" position—putting a hand in the crotch, putting an arm over the face, etc. The trees weren't the problem, however. Suddenly, I found myself deep in water with the canopy covering me which I desperately flailed to remove in order to breathe!

While on USS SHREVEPORT (LPD-12), a brand-new naval amphibious ship being commissioned at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Washington, we received a message from COM-13 (the senior naval command in the area, Commandant, 13th Naval District) that warned everyone. Ships were also being decommissioned during there, and with only a skeleton crew remaining to write out forms for every piece of gear remaining (involving long stock numbers that had to be looked up to be put on a very long form—for each item), sailors were tossing everything into Puget Sound that they could—encyclopedias from the ship's library, cans of paint, hammers, chisels, even navigation tools such as sextants and binoculars that cost hundreds and thousands of dollars, the ship's silver setting for the officer's mess, desks, chairs, carpets, etc. The

message said: "All ships scheduled for decommission will immediately cease dumping gear in Puget Sound. It is becoming dangerous to navigate!"

In early signs of PTSD, I went aboard a Navy CH-46 that had landed on our new ship. It was shiny and spotlessly clean. It was due to take off to go to another ship and, other than the crew, I was the only one aboard. The crew chief told me to sit down and fasten my seat belts. "Seat Belts?!" I exclaimed. "Yes, sir, you need to buckle in." "Well, I've never been in a helicopter that had seat belts!" So I was about to sit down when I noticed there were windows in the ports. "You have windows?" "Yes, sir." (I'm sure he didn't have a clue about this squirrelly chaplain that was in his presence). "Well, in all the helicopters I've been in—in the Nam—all the windows were knocked out. How are you going to fire on the enemy?" I asked. (Now, I'm sure, he was surely uncomfortable with this nut). Then I said, "And I see that this helicopter doesn't have any bullet holes! I don't feel safe in this helicopter." I immediately dashed off—much to my relief—and, I'm sure, his also! It hadn't seen battle, and nothing that was untested in battle seemed safe.

The aviators that come on our ship tend to see all flying objects according to military nomenclature. Thus a "bird" is a B-ONE-R-D, and a "gull" is a G-U-ELEVEN, and a "fly" is a F-ONE-Y.

Our ship goes into the shipyards for several months of repairs, and each department (engineering, gunnery, navigation, operations, deck, supply, etc.) are given a print-out of work that will be done—mainly painting! Everyone is groaning over what they will have to do. One of the items concerns the two large 5-inch iron balls that sit on either side of the magnetic compass on the bridge for navigation that serve to keep the magnetic needles from other magnetic sources. Since there are two of them, the sailors refer to them as "the navigator's balls." Periodically, they need to be placed in an oven to ensure they are demagnetized. So the Navigator says, "You think you have troubles! How would you like to see this item: 'Bake the navigator's balls'!"

Our ship was commissioned, went south, then through the Panama Canal, then stopped at New Orleans and then Mayport, Florida, before arriving at Norfolk, Virginia. Part of the original gear, a large electronic organ for religious services, was not available when we departed Bremerton, but arrived one noon while eating lunch at Norfolk. Over the ship's 1MC (the general announcing system) were the words, "Chaplain, lay down to the quarterdeck. Your organ is on the pier." Several of the officers snickered, so I said, "Yes, and it weighs over 500 pounds—and it's electrified!"

At the farewell party for one of the officers of the USS SHREVEPORT (LPD-12), the officer referred to the CO of USS SHREVEPORT, Captain Pehr H. Pehrsson, when he said, "We have nothing to fear but fear himself!" (He pronounced his name "fear fearson." instead of "pear pearson.")

I go to ServMart, a place on the base where items are immediately available rather than going through the regular supply requisition process. It's a sort of 9-11 corner store for small amounts of consumables like ballpoint pens, pads of paper, etc. I notice that several of the bins have "SIN" on them and remark to the man in charge that they must have known a Chaplain was coming, "There's so much 'sin' around here!" He breaks up laughing. No Chaplain, you aren't looking at the right way. It's not "SIN," but "NIS" or "Not in Stock." You're looking at the labels upside down! (Like the aviators, I was seeing things in terms of my own world-view).

At Camp Pendleton, during another tour:

A Warrant Officer who has been "much into the cups" at the O-Club gives his saying of wisdom to the young Chaplain: "Chaplain! You cannot soooooooar with the eagles in the morning, if you hooooooooooot with the owls in the evening."

One of the Platoon commanders was frustrated that his Marines "blew" all their payday cash and had little remaining for the most important expenditure–haircuts! He therefore made them all enroll in direct deposit into a checking account. Unfortunately, one of the Marines subsequently wrote checks totaling several thousands of dollars. When confronted with his overdraft, the Marine defended his actions by saying that he was given all these blank checks and just "used them all up" for whatever amounts "necessary!" Blank checks turned out to be much better than cold cash for that Marine!

Having successfully completed the Basic Airborne course at Ft. Benning and parachuting with various units on Okinawa and Pendleton, I hear of one unfortunate parachutist. The wind had drifted him so that he was rapidly descending right into—Edson Rifle Range! Desperately he shouted "Cease Fire! Cease Fire!" but the recruits didn't know where this mysterious command came from, and continued. "Cease Fire! Cease Fire!" he continued. Finally, just at the last minute, they did.

During an amphibious exercise over the beaches of Pendleton, one of the chaplains broke his leg as the ramp of the LVT suddenly lowered on it. The Gunny angrily ran to him, "Marine, where's your rifle?" Then, upon seeing who it was, said, "O, you're just the Chaplain," and promptly ran off to chew some other Marine.

"Nothing's too good for the Chaplain, and nothing's what he's going to get!"

During an inspection, the inspecting officer said to a Marine, "I hear there's a lot of pornography in this barracks!" The Marine promptly said, "Sir! I don't even have a pornograph!"

At Great Lakes, during the Admiral's staff meetings:

"We follow the 'Mushroom Principle:' Keep them in the dark, and feed them plenty of shit."

"Remember the Law of the 7 P's: Proper Prior Planning Prevents Piss Poor Performance."

A dependent woman called the Chaplain to arrange for the baptism of her child and after sufficient counseling, it was arranged for the next Sunday. At the worship, the parents and child didn't appear. The Chaplain called the wife to inquire if all was OK. "O, I'm glad you called, chaplain. My baby croaked!" Stunned, the chaplain said nothing, and the woman continued, "But he's OK now, it must have been one of those 24-hour flue things!"

LETTER TO LARKIN SPIVEY, 31 MAY 2011

... I am attaching a small piece which hopefully may be useful as a book jacket comment....

> Numerous Vietnam veterans have asked the question, "Where was God in Vietnam?" If they haven't voiced it in anger, their experience of an absence of God–resonating laments one finds in some of the Psalms–turned them away from connections to God's love and life in years following their war experience. Larkin Spivey's collection of daily meditations reminds us how others, who have experienced the same events, are able to provide a different perspective, shine a different light, enable us to enter a different dimension, and receive healing, life, and peace. His remarkable collection of many dozens of individual stories interwoven with Biblical texts and comments,. may well help many to conclude with Jacob, "Surely the Lord is in this place–and I didn't know it!" {Gen 28.16] Healing of combat pain–indeed all troubles!–comes through placing them in a wider context, where they are acknowledged but lost their power as they become as clouds in a greater sky. Larkin Spivey's collection does just that: the wider contexts of a greater understanding. Spivey's book gives us the testimony of so many–("Seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aide every weight and sin that clings so closely.." [Heb 12.1] –since "sin" is basically separation from God, we might include "painful memories" as "sin" in this scripture). Spivey gives us the greater context of realizing that our war experience is but a part of our whole life. The greater contexts usually include a few good friends who understand and accept, close family members, and fellowship of faith. Mostly, Spivey provides us with the greater context of faith, of our Lord's presence–especially IN the darkness, ON the crosses of life, WITH us always {Mt. 28.20] even when we are half-way around the world, even when we find our bed in the hell of war [Ps. 139.8].

Spivey's inclusion of useful maps and brief monthly explanations, his focus on the Vietnam Memorial in DC, NVA soldiers, PTSD, the full spectrum of emotions of combat vets, numerous combat incidents, and testimonies from chaplains, make this a significant contribution to both a greater grasp of Vietnam and more important, a nurture of faith for anyone. His daily devotion approach, like a "time-release" medication for the soul, enables one to view combat experiences in color and not simply black-and-white–the same things, but seen more fully, richer (because of seeing them with the added spiritual dimension), and liberating.

Random comments while reading text:

PAGE	COMMENT
...	
98	Picture of Catholic chaplain saying Mass. This was Father John McElroy on Hill 950 taken by me on 31 July 1967. (In 1969, I donated several hundred of my slides to the Marine Corps Pictorial Branch, AO3P, Headquarters Marine Corps, during a visit at the navy Yard doing research. The curators were interested since I had numerous photos before the siege of subject matter the III MAF photographers hadn't taken, and they said the photos were of very good quality. I gave them the originals and they made copies for me. In exchange, I was able to look through their collection and get copies of photos taken during the siege. When casualties arrived on 20 January–when India, 3/26, went to Hill 881-North, I laid down my camera near the C- Med triage tent to help carry KIAs to Graves Registration. When I returned, I discovered someone had stolen my camera. It was a gift from my grandfather, and held great sentimental value. So, during the siege, I took no photos! I always felt "bad" over that until a good friend from Khe Sanh, Ernie Husted (called "Preacher" and who was with the recon company) told me, "Whoever stole that camera, saved your life." I didn't, at first, understand, but he continued, "You would have been up, taking pictures, when you should have remained in the trench, culvert, bunker, and shrapnel would have got you." The words of Joseph, "You meant it for evil against me, but God meant it for good." (Gen 50.20) took on added meaning!
...	

243 Quote from 2 Cor 6.4-10 has an interesting rendition in the old JB Philips translation which, as a boxer, I have found most interesting:

> J.B. Phillips translates 2 Cor 4.9 "..we may be knocked down but we are never knocked out!"
> The New Testament in Modern English, Trans. J.B. Phillips, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1958, p. 385. Greek: καταβαλλόμενοι ἀλλο οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι. struck down, but not destroyed; (ESV)

καταβαλλόμενοι literally means "cast down" and ἀπολλύμενοι of course means "destroyed."

297 The "overlay" reminds me of the regimental briefings in which a large 1:50,000 map was covered with various acetate overlays. On one, the "2" would plot detections of enemy (People sniffer, recon patrols, etc.), on one the "3" would plot patrols, on one the "14" (air) would plot resupply, etc. Eventually, the blue and red grease pencil markings, which were removed by rubbing with tissue paper, made the overlays more translucent than transparent, so that the underlying map was discerned with difficulty. I've often thought how our interpretations ("overlays") that we place on scriptural interpretations, on our estimate of other people, etc., become so many that it's hard to experience the reality itself!

342 Another valiant of the slogan that I saw at Camp Pendleton while going through staging: "THE MORE YOU SWEAT HERE, THE LESS YOU BLEED THERE."

PRAYER FOR THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY VEITNAM VETERANS MONUMENT. Veterans Park, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 0930 Saturday, 22 October 2011

LETTER TO PETER W. BRUSH, Sunday, 05 June 2011

...

Concerning the Combat Action Ribbon: I'm attaching a copy of the ALMAR, the promulgating directive, Marine Corps Bulletin 1650 of 19 April 1969. The award was to be an individual award, not a "campaign" (or unit) award, Paragraph 4.A.(1) states that personnel on a fixed installation (e.g., Khe Sanh Combat Base) "are eligible when .. directly endangered by enemy fire or explosives." More germane, paragraph 6 of the original directive specifically includes ALL who were at Khe Sanh during the siege. It reads, "All personnel within an advanced base, e.g., Khe Sanh or Camp Carroll are eligible in event a heavy attack occurs which threatens the entire base,." The official SITREPs report that we were attacked by several hundred rounds a day–one day (23 Feb) by 1307 rounds. We were also assaulted by a regimental-size ground unit 29Feb/01 Mar. Now, I'm sure that the current Marine Corps manual that governs awards had omitted the specific, historical name of "Khe Sanh" and "Camp Carroll," but that does not negate the original directive's specific mention of those places. I'm also sure that current personnel at HQMC Awards have long forgotten this. Also attached is a clipping from the Marine Corps *Gazette*. Unfortunately, I didn't note the specific reference on the clipping–volume, issue number, month and year, and page. I would assume it would be from early 1969, however. Perhaps those who are at the Awards Branch no longer feel we endured a "heavy attack!" WE KNOW DIFFERENT!

LETTER TO LANCE LARSON, Monday, 06 June 2011

...

Your mention of different people seeing something so differently depending on whom they are is something that has interested me for many years. It's the basis of the Rorshak test (looking at ink blots and saying what you "see") which reveals WHO you are, not what the ink blots are! Rather than focusing on the disagreements that result, even leading to marriage breakups, shoot-outs, and war, not to mention polarized politics and paralyzing legislative capabilities, the different ways of seeing the same thing are also beneficial! I recall studying the psychologist C. G. Jung who noted basic, different psychological "types." He also recommended that boards of directors and those making decisions include people who see things differently in order for a more complete, whole picture to emerge, which anticipates all ramifications which might be overlooked if everyone in the discussion sees things the same way. Of course, leaders sometimes opt to gather people who see things as they do around them: it gives them more confidence to push ahead with their particular action, blind to what might happen because of a neglect of considering another way of looking at things. Jung was always interested in development of "wholeness,." completeness, and this might involve fractious debates.

I've also developed my own ideas on this. Sometimes, in a skirmish or battle, one person only "sees" one very small part of the entire action. By necessity, for survival, he needs to focus on that! Then, in the midst, perhaps he's wounded or leaves the battle before it's concluded, and doesn't know "what happened to so-and-so," and is in the dark about why things happened and the final result (the whole context of what went before and after). It's only by talking with others who were in the same skirmish and saw things differently, that healing and peace can come!

LETTER TO WILLIAM BIOLSI, MONDAY 06 JUNE 2011

Your mention of C/1/9 immediately brought back memories of that series of large ambushes at Hill 689 and the death of Capt. Himmer, and the eventual rescue of a Marine named Honeycutt. Indeed, the good Lord was with you to have escaped that! I actually was at Khe Sanh that day, having returned there on Easter Sunday, 14 April. After I was transferred from 1/26 on 29 February *(it was leap year), I returned to Khe Sanh at least weekly to visit A Company of 3rd Shore Party and B Company of 3d Recon (the two battalions I was now assigned to). A significant thing happened to me on 16 April when I was in one of the C Med bunkers. One of the wounded Marines on a stretcher asked me to say the 91st Psalm for him, which I did. Suddenly, here were words that held together our war experience and gave them meaning within a larger context. "He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler"–traps to catch birds, like ambushes trapping men or nets entangling us. "You shall not be afraid .. of the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flies by day"–assault waves of charging enemy, rockets and artillery! "A thousand may fall at your side"–our friendly casualties–"and ten thousand at your right hand"–"right hand" referring to our strength and the ten thousand being the enemy killed by our supporting arms! You, too, escaped the "snare of the fowler!"

LETTER TO ROGER HOWES, WEDNESDAY, 08 JUNE 2011

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The accounts of WW II are good antidotes to annoyances that vex most people today; they encountered situations so vastly more difficult than those that seem to consume people today! It's sort of like being at Khe Sanh during the monsoons of late '67. Bunkers collapsing, trenches collapsing, people getting injured, shivering in the cold and damp weather and never able to get dry, always wondering if the enemy is creeping to attack us since we were so close to Laos and the DMZ and our aerial observers couldn't spot their encroachments, and so on. AND THEN, hearing one of the Marines return, having temporarily spent a couple days "in the rear" and hearing some distraught Marine complain that "they had the same flavor ice-cream two days in a row!" We, at Khe Sanh, hearing this, would obviously laugh! It was so absolutely bizarre! I remember Col Lownds at an evening briefing reporting on a visit to Phu Bai, "the wonderful world of Bai," as he called it. He mentioned how they actually had toilet seats! They had walkways (wooden pallets) so you didn't get your boots muddy! People were laughing. He was on a roll. He said, "They actually have air-conditioning–but I don't think they'll get it as cold as we have it here at Khe Sanh!" Col Lownds could be very funny at times!

LETTER TO ROGER HOWES, Saturday, 13 August 2011

Then, it suddenly came to me–the group of Iraq/Afghanistan vets I had visited only a couple hours earlier. I was so focused on what I was saying and then about getting to the gym from there, that I missed some of the reality of that time with them–until now! Suddenly, their young age came to my consciousness–... and their pain. One of the vets had a plastic helmet and a small shield and said he was "Captain America," and another vet had a small face mask and a green laser pointer and said he was the "Green Lantern." They were just kids, playful, just like the Marines at Khe Sanh before the siege I saw in their tents, playing practical jokes on each other, "grab-assing" and still innocent, not affected by the life-and-death struggle they were soon to know. Here were all these Iraq and Afghanistan vets, so very young and hurting so very much–just like those I knew in Vietnam. I've learned that whenever I have an intense emotional reaction about others, it's really not "about them" but something "in me!" (Projection!) So I was left with that uncomfortable retrospective memory of Vietnam: in fact, I was "there," back there in those tents, overwhelmed by the sadness of it all.

Gradually, however, I realized that (with very few exceptions), all of our Vietnam vets have, through the years, gained a better perspective on things–a greater context of understanding, of friends, of fellow vets, of immersion in social activity and perhaps immersion in the wholeness of nature, and hopefully, and primarily, an awareness of God's presence, or at least of love, which is the greatest context of all (and "God is love"), and are now living with the pains, but the pains have lost almost all of their intensity, forcefulness, and power. Also, most have become more sensitive to others; hurts, more compassionate, and more resilient. So I thought of these vets ... as youth who are embarking on a journey. It's almost like being case out of

the Garden of Eden, but gaining awareness and consciousness and a life, even if it's no longer in the oblivious, pristine, naïve setting of innocence.

PRAYERS FOR THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF THE VIETNAM MONUMENT, Milwaukee, WI, 22 October 2011

PRAYER OF INVOCATION:

When Your people, O Lord, crossed the Jordan River, moving from a place of suffering, misery, and death, to a place of blessing, freedom, and life, they placed on the bank of the new land to be a memorial forever, so that future generations would ask: "What do these stones mean?"[686]

Today, O Lord, we face these stone spires made from extremely hard, durable Wisconsin red granite that should last thousands of years, so that future generations will see them and ask, "What do these stones mean?"[687]

May their red remind us always, as do the red stripes of our flag, of our birth in blood through sacrificial service.

May they remind us that we, too, have crossed over from death to life, of the blessing of each day we could not then have counted on.

Help us to rededicate ourselves to honor and serve each other.

Give us a vision that draws us into the future with confidence, commitment, and courage.[688]

Bless us with strengths equal to our tasks, not tasks equal to our strengths.

Keep, O Lord, those who currently serve in our armed forces, and their families, in Your protective care,.

Look, O Lord, with Your healing will, to those of our comrades in war who still hurt–physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

In the assurance of Your Presence, Your love, Your healing power, and in Your Holy Name we pray. AMEN.

PRAYER OF BENEDICTION:

Now, may the Lord bless you with peace and life.

May the Lord keep you safe and secure, assured of His Presence and peace, live and love for you.

May the Lord motivate you to do justice, love mercy, and live a life of service.[689]

In the strength, love, presence, mercy, and Name of our Lord, we pray. AMEN.

LETTER TO CONSTANCE GIBBONS, 24 October 2011

I see by the Khe Sanh Directory that your husband was in the S-1 section of our battalion, 1/26. I still recall seeing the Adjutant himself in April, I think it was. He was, like all of us, so very gaunt; emaciated, nervous. (Was his name Fitzgerald? Right now, as I write this, I can't be sure of his name.) I recall he had a very large box of Purple Hearts for the Marines and Corpsmen of 1/26, and wondered why Di vision had sent them to Khe Sanh since the battalion would be moving, and now he had to transport all the Purple Hearts. There were hundreds of them! He and that box of Purple Hearts was a sort of icon, image, through which the reality of the siege battle was so apparent. It's a scene that I'[ll never forget.

It would be so easy to write something about how bad it was, and what happened to us, and the tragedy of war, and so on. Some of that might have its place, of course, and writing about it does help the writer–as well as readers who might be prompted to do the same, and thereby get what is buried deep within and place it in the light of day. I recall a very ancient Christian writing, the Gospel of Thomas, in which there is a statement: "If you take out what is inside of you, what is inside of you will heal you, but if you keep what is inside of you inside of you, what is inside of you will kill you." I think that's a very helpful insight.

Hopefully, the attached might be of some use, perhaps not. It's where I am right now in dealing with the lingering legacies of the experiences of prolonged and intense combat, over forty years ago!

A NOTE ON LIVING WITH THE LEGACY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF INTENSE, PROLONGED COMBAT

Perhaps for all of us who were at Khe Sanh during the Siege battle, the story of Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise echoes our own story. Despite the living conditions on Hills 861, 881-South, and other places at Khe Sanh, and despite the misery of monsoons, raging rivers, and torturous terrain, elephant grass and leeches, for the post part, the ravishing beauty

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[686] Josh 4.1-7.

[687] Josh 4.6.

[688] Prov 29.18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (KJV)

[689] Mic 6.8.

we saw at Khe Sanh, cooler temperatures, separation from those in the rear–the Generals and their staffs along with their picky regulations, made our time there almost a Garden of Eden experience.

Then, suddenly, like someone flicking a light switch, all turned into horror, terror, desperation, isolation, living moment to moment with no assurance of another moment. Youthful innocence was lost forever; we could never again return to Paradise, "to the Garden" from which we felt expelled. We emerged completely changed and, for us, everything and everyone else also changed. It was hard to "fit in" and others made it even more difficult by despicable venomous hatred heaped on us as representatives of the war they hated. Just like Adam, we hid, only to hear the voice, "Adam, where you?" as our question. Where, indeed, were we?

Now the challenge became to live with it, to transform negatives into positives, using what we had learned to bring life to others, to make rational sense out of what was really irrational. Perhaps we had become more compassionate, more aware of injustices, more sensitive to what could injure. Perhaps our angers gave us energy to be productive. Perhaps we learned to put our pains and hurts into a wider context of meaning–a wider context of a larger understanding of what happened through talking with others who were with us and who saw things from a different perspective, through a wider context of friendships and a hopefully understanding family, through a wider context of an awareness of God's Presence and love for us, so that our dark pains became like dark clouds within a much greater sky. Perhaps the larger context became realizing that a few months of our life, however intense they were, were only a few months of a much larger life. Life and hopes, which had become narrowed, squeezed, pressed, crushed, needed greater containers, larger space. Everyone needs a container for their soul. Everyone needs their space. Everyone needs a good hug of embracing arms of love within which we feel a peace, like a hurt, crying child running into its mother's arms. The pain remains, but somehow, all is well. Perhaps the great context is our love for others, not as an emotion, but as an action–what we do, not what we feel. For the network of caring for others, that we knew in battle as we shared our last bits of C-ration, drops of water, as we dashed out to drag a wounded man to safety during incoming, all brought us closer together than blood relatives and gave us life. Humor and heroism in battle always emphasize life instead of death, courage that lives with the reality of fear but doesn't let it take control.

In the end, we can all become "wounded healers," as much as alcoholics and victims of abuse helping others with the same issues. We all have pieces of the whole, and when we come together, we become whole. Negatives are transformed into positives. In the end, we learn that God is on the cross of our pain and suffering, in our shadows and in our valleys.

–Ray William Stubbe, 24 October 2011

PRAYER FOR VETERANS DAY, Miller Brewing Co., Milwaukee WI, 11 November 2011

INVOCATION:

On this day and at this hour, O Lord, we remember our veterans – those who no longer walk or talk with us– the empty place at the table, the empty place in our heart – and we remember those veterans who still live among us, especially the homeless we don't see, and those who suffer physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially, and their families.

These men and women, by their actions and their life, reflect Your Words, O Lord: "Greater love has no one than to lay down their life for a friend,"[690] and, "I am among you as one who serves."[691]

As we remember them, now, here, we rededicate ourselves to pursue peace and to serve others. To us they pass the torch of burning light to run the race[692] of life set before us,[693] to achieve the goal[694] of life in its fullness[695] for all.

For that, for You, O Lord, they served.

For that, for You, O Lord, we live–

to Your glory and in Your Holy Name.

AMEN.

BENEDICTION

Now, may the Lord bless you with peace and life.

May the Lord keep you safe and secure, assured of His Presence and peace, life and love for you.

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[690] Jn 15.13.
[691] Lk 22.27.
[692] A metaphor from the Olympic Games.
[693] Heb 12.1.
[694] 1 Cor 9.24.
[695] Jn 10.10.

May the Lord motivate you to do justice, love mercy, and live a life of service.[696]
May the Lord give us eyes to see and strength to do what is needed to care those who have borne the burdens of battle.
In the strength, love, presence, mercy, and Name of our Lord, we pray. AMEN.

VETERANS DAY TALK – Given at Miller Coors Brewing Company's Veterans Monument, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 11 Nov 2011

Upon entering the remarkable National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, a visitor first sees a large map of France set in the floor below his feet. The map is covered with thousands of red poppies. There are so many, it is as futile to attempt to count them as it would be to count the colored leaves of Fall through which we recently walked. A guide quietly whispers that each poppy represents a thousand killed. It is overwhelming. The scene becomes a window through which we peer at another reality. Like standing in the midst of the black granite Vietnam Memorial Wall, we are silenced, overcome by the enormity of the loss.

When America entered World War I in April, 1917,[697] the war had been going on for three years. When it started, most assumed it would be over within months, but like the fly caught in a spider's web, once started, the agony seemed to have no end. New horrors snuffed soul and spirit as machineguns, warplanes, bombing, and poison gas, made the conflict a foretaste of hell. Ten months earlier, on 01 July 1916, 60,000 British soldiers marched in parade formation at the Somme River against German strong points, only to be mowed-down by a new weapon of war, the machine gun. The Battle of the Somme raged for four months, only mercifully stopped by rains. It was as if they were tears from God! There were over a million (1,293, 907) casualties in four months, just one battle of World War I.[698] During World War I, more than 8 million soldiers died, at least 19 million were wounded, and civilian casualties, obviously in the millions, can only be guessed.

That's why so many poppies cover that map of France in the World War I Memorial Museum at Kansas City, Missouri–over 8,000, one for each 1,000 soldiers killed. One is reminded of Lieutenant Colonel John McRae's famous poem written in World War I after four years' service in that war as he mourned the loss of a friend killed in that war and just before he himself was killed on 28 Jan 1918:

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.[699]

Today, we observe Veterans Day, formerly known as Armistice Day. [First observed in 1920, it became a legal holiday by act of Congress on 13 May 1938.] But, because World War I, the "War to End All Wars," only laid the seeds of future wars–World War II and Korea, Congress voted to change Armistice Day to Veterans Day,[700] a day to honor all veterans, living and dead, of all American wars.

[For a brief time, Veterans Day was moved to create a three-day weekend, but the significance of the sacrifice and service of veterans and not a long weekend's personal pursuit of pleasure, soon returned Veterans Day observance to November 11th.[701] This year's celebrations are not only the " the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month," but also the year 2011!]

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[696] Mic 6.8.
[697] On 02 April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson addressed Congress and two days later, Congress declared War on Germany. [Brunn, Erik and Crosby, Jay, Our Nation's Archives, the History of the United States in Documents, New York: Tess Press, 2009, pp. 534-537. Congress declared war two days after the speech.
[698] Horne, Alister, Death of a Generation–Newe Chapelle to Verdun and the Somme, London: American Heritage Press, 1970, p. 85. There were 419,654 British casualties, 204,253 French casualties, and 650,000 German casualties.
[699] Remainder of the poem: "We are the Dead. Short days ago / We lived, felt drawn, saw sunset glow, / Loved and were loved, and now we lie / In Flanders fields. / "Take up our quarrel with the foe: / To you from failing hands we throw / The torch, be yours to hold it high / If ye break faith with us who die / We shall not sleep, though poppies grow / In Flander's fields."
[700] On 01 June 1954.
[701] The Uniform Holiday Act, signed 28 June 1968, made Veterans Day part of a 3-day weekend, along with Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, and Columbus Day. The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed with much confusion on

During a visit with my folks while on active duty, we were sitting quietly at a restaurant. Two ladies were conversing at an adjacent table. One said: "Would you believe, my neighbor served in the military for twenty years, retired, and is now drawing a pension?"

Her comment stunned me, paralyzing a sudden surge of anger. She would never know the six or eight month separations from family while serving overseas on a Navy ship, the regular grind of long watches at night followed by a full day's work, weeks without showers on a ship at sea, separation from growing up with friends over the years, missed job opportunities, not to mention war's horrors, terrors, and ugly scenes seared forever on the soul. You want my pension? Fine! You can also take my nightmares, my wounds, my inability to live a normal life! my lost innocence, my social isolation. You can have these also! Today, in the midst of high unemployment, veterans have an even higher rate. An alarming percentage of the homeless are veterans. Their suicide rate exceeds that of their civilian peers.

As I sat there at that restaurant table, listening to their conversation, my mind raced to a small bunker on a remote hilltop outpost in Vietnam. The Company commander there had taken the stiff cardboard sleeve of a carton of C-rations and written on it:

"God and the soldier we adore,
In time of war and not before;
The battle ended and all things righted,
God's forgotten, the soldier slighted."[702]

(During the early 1950s, while a student at Steuben Junior High School in Milwaukee, we always stood facing east for a moment of silence on the 11th minute of the 11th day of the 11th month. It was Armistice Day, the remembrance marking the end of World War I in a farmhouse on 11 November 1918.)

One of the stories to emerge from World War II tells of a soldier coming home after years of being away in the war. He telephones his parents. "I'm coming home," he tells them. They are ecstatic. He says, "I'm bringing home a friend who was badly wounded." Still overcome with joy, they tell him, "Bring him with you. It will be great to have both of you home!" His voice becomes serious, "But you must know that he has some ugly scars." They say, "That's OK. We know that war does bad things." Softly, he says, "But he also has lost a leg and an arm, and he has difficulty with large groups of people." They say, "Well, son, maybe it might be best if he goes to a hospital for those things where he will be more comfortable. But we are so excited that you're coming home." There's a click. He hung up the phone. He was the "friend," the wounded, damaged man.

[Veterans Day focuses on all veterans, the living and the dead. In a true sense, Veterans Day focuses on our whole society as we remember them and rededicate ourselves to the cause of peace that wars may cease, as we act to welcome home those who served, welcome them with jobs, with acceptance, with love.]

At his inauguration, President Kennedy uttered those words: "Let every nation know .. that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty "[703] Today, we pause to consider that price, that burden:

WAR	KIA	WIA	TOTAL CASUALTIES	MISSING
World War I	116,516	204,002	320,518	3,350
World War II	405,399	670,846	1,036,245	30,313
Korea	33,741	103,284	137,025	5,127
Vietnam	58,209	153,303	211,512	2,489
Gulf War 1990-91	382	849	364	0
Iraq 2001-present	4,404	21,839	26,243	2
Afghanistan	1,135	6,141	7,276	2[704]

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25 Oct 1971. On 20 Sep 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed legislation restoring the annual observance of 11 November, beginning in 1978.

[702] The Company Commander was Capt John Raymond, USMC, commanding A/1/26 on Hill 881-South, Khe Sanh, Vietnam, noted in Stubbe: Khe Sanh Chaplain (unpublished manuscript), 01 April 1970, diary entry for 18 August 1967. Although Capt Raymond attributed the poem to "Lord Marlborough," it was actually written by Frances Quarles (1592-14), and its original form is: "Out God and soldiers we alike adore / E/en at the brink of danger, not before / Our God's forgotten, and our soldiers slighted." [Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 3rd rev. ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 404, No. 9].

[703] Kennedy, John F., Inaugural Address, 20 January 1961.

[704] Data as of September, 2011. Also: COLD WARS-1947, 1956: 92 KIA, 55 WIA, 147 total casualties, 0 missing. GRENADA, 1983: 19 KIA, 119 WIA, 138 total casualties, 0 missing. PANAMA, 1989: 40 KIA, 324 WIA, 364 total casualties, 0 missing.

Many of us will be more focused on a family member–a father or mother, brother or sister, a son, a nephew or niece–or perhaps a boy or girl from the neighborhood or church. [For as the German poet, Goethe, once noted: "I am rent to the core by this simple one's suffering; you pass carefree over the fate of thousands.[705] Only two weeks before the armistice ending World War I, my great uncle, NILS PETER ANDERSON, had been killed in the war.[706]]

Veterans Day focuses not only on the enormity of those lost in war, but on the living veterans who today live lost lives. A recent newspaper article noted there are roughly 107.000 homeless veterans in America[707] and goes on to state: Many of them are chronically condemned to wander our streets because the trauma they suffered serving our country has left them profoundly brain-damaged or disabled with terrible psychiatric conditions like post traumatic stress disorder.. These wounds of war are physically invisible, but they are no less life-threatening."

Following the death of his brother in World War I, the American poet, Archibald MacLeish wrote his poem, "The Young Dead Soldiers:"

> The young dead solders ... who has not heard them?
> They have a silence that speaks for them at night
> and when the clock counts.
> They say: We were young. We have died. Remember us.
> They say: Our deaths are not ours; they are yours;
> they will mean what you make them.
> They say: Whether our lives and our deaths were for peace
> and new hope or for nothing we cannot say;
> it is you who must say this.
> They say: We leave you our deaths. Give them their meaning
> Remember us.

Today, we remember. The word, "remember," as used in the Bible, refers not to mere thoughts in our mind, but bringing something from the past in order to affect present action. In other words, we pause and ponder in order that we might do something now.

Today, we rededicate ourselves to serving others and serving our country

Today, we rededicate ourselves to promote peace and justice.

Today, we rededicate ourselves to care for those who have borne the burden of the battle and their families.

May God bless us all with the vision and the strength to do this. God bless you all!

LETTER TO JAMES TAYLOR, FRIDAY, 02 DECEMBER 2011

I recently read an article .. that soldiers are experiencing an increased amount of casualties from IED's (we called them "booby traps") sending shrapnel into their private parts. they are not forced to wear a kind of bike shorts developed by the British to prevent dirt from getting into wounds and causing infections. I think they ought to wear steel cups! I recall that during the siege of Khe Sanh, I went to the artillery folks and got one of their "diapers." They wore "lower torso body armor" since they were in a static position by their tubes, to protect their privates. (All good Marine leaders need to protect their "Privates!") ☺ I wore this piece of equipment during the entire Siege as I walked throughout the whole base, day after day, bunker to bunker, trench to trench. I was medevaced for a couple of days due to a high fever, and I recall walking into the Officer's Mess at the NSA Hospital in DaNang just as they were eating lunch.

Everyone there was wearing clean, pressed utilities. They ate at tables with white table cloths and silverware! I couldn't believe the sight–after being in the siege for so long! I dreamed I went to heaven! I was wearing the "diapers" and also had a K-bar and gas mask dangling at my side, and my helmet with the cross on the front made from fleshettes! I was extremely grubby–and perhaps stunk as well. In fact, no one sat with me at that table while I ate–like I was literally "unclean" (like the Biblical lepers!). I felt rejected, so very alone, a curiosity, like a creature from another world–and while this was the

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REVOLUTIONARY WAR: 4,000 KIA. WAR OF 1812: 2,000 KIA. MEXICAN WAR 1846-1848: 13,000 KIA. INDIAN WARS 1817-1898: 1,000 KIA. CIVIL WAR: at least 618,000 KIA out of an entire US population of 31 million. SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR 1989-1902: 11,000 KIA.

[705] Goethe, Faust II, 439f.

[706] Nils Peter Anderson, born 21 July 1896, died 25 Oct 1918. He had sailed for France 1 March 1918, was gassed 22 July 1918, and his body returned to the United States in 1921 for burial in Rienzi Cemetery, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

[707] Lawrence Tribe and Bobby Shriver, "Why Wounded Warriors Sleep in Dumpsters," The Wall Street Journal Thursday, 9 June 2011, p. A21.

experience of so many returning Vietnam veterans when they arrived in the States, this was even "in country!" One doctor came up to me with a small camera and asked if he could take a picture of me in all my battle gear and battle dirt. At the time, I felt he was regarding me as a zoo animal! Obviously, I'll never forget that scene. It's now been over 44 years and is still fresh in my memory.

Anyway, my "diapers" were part of his fascination. Maybe it was professional–damage by wounds to that area, an interest of some doctors. ... At the time, I just regarded it as though I were an object of disgust!

Funny how some memories get stuck permanently, like scratches in a LP record that keep replaying the same tune over and over again!

LETTER TO ANTHONY E. SIBLEY, Friday, 23 December 2011

Your very helpful note in the card clarified everything for me and now I recall it all. You were the Platoon Commander in A/1/26 on Thursday, 20 July 1967, on Hill 881-South. Three days earlier, I had arrived at Khe Sanh, and LtCol Jim Wilkinson mentioned that he'd like me to visit the hill outposts. So, off I went to Hill 881-South. I was still in stateside leather combat boots, fresh, green utilities, and very, very "green!" I remember leading a worship service on the LZ. For some reason, the story Jesus gold of the "wasteful" (prodigal) son in Luke 15 seemed to fit–the son "who goes off to a far-off country" and loses so much, but with the opportunity to "return" to his father (Jesus implies, God).

Well, after the worship was finished, I remember Captain John Raymond telling me, "Padre, you shouldn't talk about conditions of life of the men until you know them. There's a patrol leaving and you can go with them." Well, having decided at Camp Pendleton during pre-embarkation orientation in which I actually participated in an infiltration course, a night patrol in which we were caught and placed in a "POW camp" and so on, instead of merely observing these sort of things (which was what was done with chaplains)–so that I could get to know the Marines better—I told Captain Raymond that I would be glad to go.

After moving rapidly down the north slope of Hill 881-S, which is very steep and became more of an exercise in controlled falling than orderly movement. I remember going down a raging river with immense boulders, grass as high as a man in which I was especially careful always to keep in view the man in front and to my rear, but not to get too close. I remember you calling in WP registration rounds (I guess to determine exact location). Mostly, I remember that I was thoroughly exhausted after only half an hour, but knew I had to keep on going. I remember we came up the south slope–a long, gradual incline, and I was out of water. A corpsman gave me a few sips from his canteen. I remember scaling that hill, only to find that it hid another hill we had to climb before arriving at the top of the hill! My legs were cramping, I was a "basket case," but felt so very proud that I made it. Far more important, I now knew an appreciation for these Marines that I would not have known. I knew what they did, cay after day. I think they were up on 881 and 861 for 6-week periods, without showers. During the monsoons of September and October, trenches and bunkers collapsed, men were cold and couldn't get warm and dry. I remember Captain Raymond once giving me a sandbag full of soap bars from the SP pack and said, "Give these to the missionaries, Padre, we have no use for them up here." I wrote home and to others about the living conditions of the Marines on the hills. I will ALWAYS remember them and their conditions of life! I remember Captain Raymond had written slogans on C-ration sleeves. One said:

"God and the soldier we adore
In time of war and not before,
The battle ended and all things righted,
God's forgotten, the soldier slighted."

He had attributed it to Lord Marlboro, but it was actually from Francis Quarles (1592-1644), and the original reads: "Our God and soldiers we alike adore / En'n at the brink of danger, not before / After deliverance both alike requited / Our God's forgotten, and our soldiers slighted."

I had PFC Glen Waller assigned to me as my clerk. I was unaware he was a radioman in the company, and thereafter, Captain Raymond's attitude to me turned a bit sour–for taking one of his radiomen. Being so green, I was unaware of what I had done!

Many years later, someone sent me a clipping of John Raymond's obituary. At the time he was a full Colonel and was the Assistant to the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps. He had retired only a month and then had a heart attack.

LETTER TO MR. STEVEN LOWNDS, 28 January 2012:



FOB 3 PASS FOR COL LOWNDS

Recently, one of the officers of a unit at Khe Sanh called FOB-3 sent me a pass he had in his collection of memorabilia from Khe Sanh, the pass for your father, COL David E. Lownds. Following an inquiry with Lieutenant General Ron Christmas and at his suggestion, I am forwarding that pass to you. Besides its historic value, this pass also has a picture of your father taken while he was at Khe Sanh (probably taken in late 1967; FOB-3 became operational, I believe, in November, 1967).

The officer was the intelligence officer and his name was Lt Gerald Crews. I was one of the Chaplains at Khe Sanh (July, 1967 - March, 1968), arriving there shortly before your father reported as Commanding Officer, and remaining there into the Siege battle. I frequently met your father, and later expressed to him that it is my belief that I and many others are alive today because of his very difficult but wise decisions for which he received criticism by some, but admiration from many. I wrote of much of this in correspondence with Lieutenant General Ron Christmas, and hopefully, some of this might have been shared with you. If not, please let me know, and I can write you of my memories of your father and include comments of some of those who were close to him. The good Colonel was a very highly respected and admired man. In almost all accounts of that particular battle, General Westmoreland is portrayed as the person making all the decisions when, in fact, it was your father and his staff that made all the daily, detailed decisions as to targets and tactics of that battle.

Please also know that I regard his passing and the passing of your mother with profound sorrow. I met both while doing research in Washington, D.C., and they entertained me at their home at that time. I also saw both of them at a Khe Sanh Veterans reunion at St. Louis, the only Khe Sanh reunion they attended. I recall speaking with your mother who related that her daughter was bereted by some of the students at the school she attended since her father was in Vietnam. Your mother related that not only did Vietnam veterans encounter hostility upon return to the States, but family members also received very negative reactions. In addition to great admiration for your father, I also have great admiration for your mother even though I only met her twice.

Please know of my very deepest admiration and sincerest condolences.



Left to right: RAY W. STUBBE, COL DAVID LOWNDS, EARLE BREEDING, JOHN KAHENY – at Glenn Rappold's Memorial – Khe Sanh Vets Reunion – July, 1997

LETTER TO BEN CASCIO, ESQ., 21 May 2012

... Yes! I very much recall the 1967 Christmas at Khe Sanh–the USAF planes overhead broadcasting Christmas carols, the resupply to the hills, and even taking an aluminum Christmas tree that had been sent to me to the newly-arrived unit on Hill

950 via a H-34. (It was always a problem for 34s since the LZ was so very small, the hill so very high for air density, and sometimes choppers actually "fell" off the slope to gain rotor turns!) As I recall, there was a lot of resupply work going on; you guys were really busy! And it was Christmas Day! While I don't remember speaking you, I'm sure that we did since I was in the choppers daily, moving between the hills and various outposts and the main base, and I sometimes ate at the regimental mess with some of the pilots.

As I recall, things were heating up at Khe Sanh by the end of December. Some of our recon teams were shot out and Marines were being killed. The NVA were moving in. We also had another whole battalion move into Khe Sanh in mid-December and another in mid-January and another one a couple days after the siege started. It's truly a miracle that any of us made it out alive!

Although I went through those days of shelling, clothes rotting off, and losing so much weight (went from 175 when I got to Vietnam to about 150 at the beginning of the siege to 129 at the end of the siege!), I've always felt–and told others as well–that those of you who flew the helicopters probably had a more fearful time because we, on the ground, became emotionally numb almost immediately, whereas you were constantly moving from a secure location (or, relatively secure!) at Quang Tri and Dona Ha and DaNang, and freshly exposed every day that you flew into Khe Sanh, totally aware of the dangers that we, on the ground, had pretty much adjusted to!

Also, you in the helicopters brought us vital medical supplies, totally covered our hill outposts (obviously fixed wing couldn't do that!), took out our wounded and brought in our replacements, and did so much more. My personal gratitude to the Wing is deep and lasts forever! We had no roads for overland resupply and fixed wing was actually suspended for awhile since Khe Sanh was regarded by the USAF, at least, as too dangerous to land following several C-130s being hit and burnt. So we totally depended on you of the Wing as our lifeline, like being in a burning building and having a hose connecting us to air, or being adrift in uncertain and dangerous seas and having a lifeline tossed to us in our desperation.

It was a chopper that brought me out of Khe Sanh when I was transferred to a unit at Quang Tri on 01 March. I remember walking down a road there, just after arriving, and some Marine was standing nearby. It was just the two of us. I remember he looked at me and said "It must be Khe Sanh." The Marine was from the Wing, but I didn't stop to talk. I guess I was too stunned. He referred to me as "it" and I must have been quite a spectacle with gas mask and so filthy and gaunt–like a ghost from the battlefield!

FLAG DAY PRAYER – Performing Arts Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 14 June 2012

O Lord, our God:
Today, Flag Day 2012,
as we recall experiences of our flag,
we raise our thankful hearts
in grateful praise to You.
As we see our flag carried in parades:
those carrying the flag and the
thousands of people lining the streets:
we acknowledge this land, its people,
and our government as your gifts.
You are the source of our rights:
life, liberty, and the pursuit of
happiness.
As we see our flag carried in parades:
Our flag stirs a surge of strength,
a confidence of victory,
an abundance of memory
of Your gifts to us
through those who serve
and have served us.
As we see our flag lifted up
on flag poles, on Iwo Jima, on the moon
for Olympic gold medal winners
We sense a surge of victory,



FLAG DAY – PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, Milwaukee, WI
Photo by Milwaukee *Journal Sentinel* photographer

a power of peace–
Your extravagant blessings.
Our flag reminds us we only rest securely
in Your strong arms and caring hands.
However dark the times
or bleak the battles of life,
in the "rocket's red glare,
the bombs bursting in air,"
we behold our flag still there–
as are You, always with us.
With You, we live
buoyantly, confidently, victoriously.
As we see our flag, covering coffins
of those who gave their lives
in loving, self-emptying service.
We acknowledge Your blessing
covers us;
through the many millions
who have protected us,
guided us, and enriched us.
In You we rest confident and comforted.
As we see our flag covering coffins,, You challenge us
to serve others
that all may have life abundant
that our life's meaning
implies service, even sacrifice,
We so: ask Your blessing
upon our land and its people
that we might be stirred to serve
and continue to be a blessing to others
in Your Holy Name.
Amen.

LETTER TO VINCE RIOS, Monday, 02 July 2012

.... I've always thought that the 1967 Battle f the Hills at Khe Sanh is something that has been overlooked and yet was so very important. When I put that together, I was struck by the way the Marines there faced their situation with such dedication and determination. I was also impressed with the conditions of battle–moving up and down those slippery, muddy hill slopes in rain, with no helicopters able to move them, just continuing to walk on and on, carrying their dead and wounded, weak from not only the physical conditions but also the stress of battle and having lost buddies, and yet they continued. This was Bravo Company, 1/9, the "walking dead," as they came to be known. I've often thought of that whenever I hear of women wanting to be in combat situations. I really don't think they know what they are asking for! Perhaps they have an understanding of combat as a matter of pressing buttons to release missiles or typing out things on a computer to send "death rays" on the enemy! But Marines who have lived in the mud and blood and agony of battle know much better. Those who have been in combat KNOW! I really don't think that women–some of whom may, indeed, be physically fit enough to endure the climbing of rough terrain in rain and mud, but most who couldn't–are fit for combat roles. They have their feminine hygiene issues, they have weaker muscle and less physically able bone structures (hips and legs), and might become a cause for others to become injured or killed in a situation like that faced by the survivors of Bravo Company, 1/9, in the Battle of the Hills! So those who want to have women in combat, I would show them the Battle of the Hills and ask: is THIS what you want?

As I get older, I have an increasing sense of pride at having been able to serve with Marines in combat and an increasing sense of admiration for those I knew–so full of life and caring for each other, so dedicated to doing their job, so full of a spirit of everything that is good and great.

LETTER TO WILLUIAM BIOLSI, Tuesday, 03 July 2012

.... I often wonder about what still remains after great historic events, or even in a family! I know that I only faintly remember my grandparents and very faintly a great-grandmother. Although I have names for ancestors further back, I never knew them and they are, actually, complete strangers. I suppose that our grandchildren or great-grandchildren (if we have them) will regard us the same way. We all seem to pass into obscurity, like the light on a stage in a dark room that moves, temporarily lighting the actors.

Someone once told me that when Saigon was about to fall, the men at MACV had assembled all their papers and had them packed in wooden crates on Tan Son Nhut Airport–over a mile long! Events happened so quickly, however, that it became necessary to evacuate the people from the American Embassy, and all those MACV records were left on the airstrip for the Vietnamese. I never heard whether they were destroyed, rescued and stored, or what happened to them, but obviously a very great loss in our historical records happened there. Then there was the fire at the National Records at St. Louis that destroyed millions of records of American servicemen several years ago.

In our electronic age, so much is so very temporary and kept on very fragile means. I'm told that all CDs are destined to self-destruct in less than 50 years, and who knows what computer programs will be available in 30 or more years to read what has been recorded electronically? In many ways, it's very humbling to realize how little of what we think is so important will remain!

I think of this since tomorrow is our Independence Day, the birthday of our nation. Most people will have their cook-outs or picnics or do some traveling to friends and relatives, but, like Memorial Day or Veterans Day, few will pause to remember. Of course, the important thing is that we DO have our freedoms and our wonderful nation, but it does trouble me that we've forgotten our roots to our great loss!

PRAYER FOR VISITING VIETNAM WALL CEREMONY, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 17 August 2012

O Lord, our God,
  As we gaze at the great amount of names on this Wall,
    We pause, we are overwhelmed, we are silenced.
    There are so many:
  Behind each name, so many others:
    Comrades–brothers in battle,
    Parents, brothers, and sisters,
    Wives, sons, and daughters,
    Grandparents, uncles, and aunts
    Friends in school, on the job, and neighbors.
  All us who are lessened by their loss,
    not now enriched by what they may have become:
      Physicians healing tens of thousands
      Teachers molding the lives of our children
      Artists, musicians, and authors to enrich us
      Husbands, fathers, and friends.
Then, O Lord, we remember the vast amount of Your grace,
  Like rains transform parched earth to abundance,
  You change loss to gain,
    Depression to compassion,
    Death to life.
You are always with us:
You bless us with Your Presence
  No matter where we now are,
You transform us from what was and what is to shat shall be;
You bless us with your Power:
  To embrace and help each other,
  To comfort us that we may comfort others,
  To motivate us to bear each other's burdens.
May the amount of Your blessings, so vast and without number
  Keep us

In Your peace, Your love, Your strength, and
In Your Holy Name, we pray. AMEN



MARINES OF C/1/26 AT SWIM HOLE, BRIDGE SITE. 08 Aug 1967
Official USMC photo A193267 by Ray W. Stubbe

LETTER TO REV. WILLIAM R. HAMPTON, Saturday, 18 August 2012

... The picture is a very good reminder that we did, in fact, have some very enjoyable times, even at Khe Sanh–before all the horror and terror ensnared us in its web. It's a picture that also reflects the playfulness and humanity of these young men before they suddenly were changed forever into "old men facing come very serious questions" (of life and its meaning, etc.). The picture also portrays the sheer beauty of the country itself–almost a Garden of Eden Paradise–before it was ravaged by all the explosions that rendered it a moonscape and killing fields. Ever since those days, I've always had an uneasy reaction toward places serene and beautiful, knowing that they can change as suddenly as one flips a light switch, into terror and hell.

You arrived at Khe Sanh after the light switch had been flipped and didn't experience the breath-taking beauty we knew before 21 January. So maybe this picture will help you realize just how opposite the place once was from what your experience!

LETTER TO LANCE LARSON, WEDNESDAY, 31 OCTOBER 2012

... Why anyone would set their heart on getting something that acknowledges what they did is a mystery. Of course, Marines, and even Army Special Forces who worked clandestinely in Laos and Navy SEALS I have known all have a kind of professionalism that doesn't even think of "what others think" or "getting something out of it" other than accomplishing the mission and getting out alive! I don't know if I ever shared a story with you, but it sort of illustrates it. Once, while I was on active duty, I came home on leave and my grandma looked at my ribbons and, pointing a finger at one of them, said, "I like that one the best!" It was the national Defense Servicer medal (the yellow and red one) that everyone who was on active duty was awarded. I told her, "Grandma, everybody gets that; it really doesn't mean anything." She replied, "hat's OK. I like it the best. It's the prettiest!" At that point I really knew that none of these things mean anything–except to those who are in the group. In fact, once one leaves active duty, they aren't even worn.

Recently, I've talked with a Navy SEAL I once knew back in 1973 who was quite angry over some of the books coming out on SEAL Team 6 and the killing of Osama bin Laden since they promote only the author and perhaps disclose classified sources and methods. I was always deeply impressed by the SEALs. I first got to know them while I was temporarily at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek in Norfolk, Va., between duty stations. I had left the ship I had served for two years as it went to the Mediterranean and had orders to 3d MarDi v on Okinawa, but the Navy ran out of transfer funds since it was the end of the fiscal year (as they still do!). The chaplains at Little Creek didn't have anything for me to do, so I went over to the UDT and SEAL building and asked if I could do PT with them. They were happy. I did morning runs on the sandy Atlantic beach with them in the ice and snow of January, 1973, and did exercises. The first time we did exercises, we were in a circle and the leader, who was in the center, said, "We'll start off easy–50 pushups." (Now, that wasn't "easy" for me at the time, but I went along). As we got into a prone position, the man next to me said, "Chaps, should I use right arm or left arm?" I'd never even heard of "one arm pushups" and thought he obviously was joking. So, supposing he was right handed, I said, "Chief, use your left arm." He promptly put his right fist in his lower back and did 50 one-arm pushups with his left arm! He had an odd appearance: one of his eyes looked off to the side. I wondered how he was with the SEALs! His name was Bruhmuller, and he'd just returned from a mission in Bolivia, as I remember. I got to know him in conversations, and he recommended I accompany one of their teams to a camp in the hills of northern Virginia (Camp A.P. Hill), and so for the first eleven days of February, 1973, I was with them as we learned escape and evasion techniques that involves learning how to read fingerprints, use dead drops, and all sorts of "spy stuff." The hootch was not heated, and I remember getting into and out of the sleeping

bad and taking off/putting on my clothes inside the zipped-up bag! The men played practical jokes on everyone else–including me, and took me in as one of their own. I discovered a group that reminded me much of the Marines I knew at Khe Sanh–young, playful, creative, dedicated, supporting each other–just really great men.

Interestingly, although I was with them only a couple months, they, like the Marines at Khe Sanh, made a lasting impression on me. A few years ago, while talking to about a hundred chaplains at Great Lakes, I met a chaplain with gold jump wings and a SCUBA device on his uniform. We got talking about SEALs and I mentioned a SEAL who had "one eye that looked sideways while the other focused straight ahead." "O, that's Bruhmuller," he immediately said. "You know him?" I asked. He did, and he gave me his phone number. Well, Chief Bruhmuller and I reconnected after all these years, and he's sent me SEAL challenge coins, T-shirts, etc., and we've had some very good conversations.

It's much like our Khe Sanh vets reconnecting after all these many years. But it also shows how some of those experiences of many decades ago still connect us!

Anyway, in one of our conversations, he was severely critical of the author of the new book on SEAL Team 6, and I remember telling him, "You guys were all so professional, you just did your job and weren't concerned about getting any recognition for it." That's how I feel about all these kinds of awards. Just accomplishing a mission, just getting out alive and hopefully without injury, should be a great reward in itself. Just learning a bit more about what we're capable of doing–and perhaps also of our fears and things about ourselves that we didn't know–all that is a great gift. Those of us who've been through Khe Sanh and events like that have a much greater appreciation for peace, for the gift of life, for freedom and beauty and the important things of life–much greater, I think, than those who haven't gone through what we went through. And all of that is a very great reward, even if we also have wounds to body, mind, and spirit, and even if there are sleepless nights, emotional outbursts, difficulties in close relationships, and all the rest. That reminds me of someone who once told me that they wish they could get a retirement pension also, and I said, "Fine, you can also have my nightmares, my feelings that every day is my last day, the social isolation I sometimes feel because I remained on active duty and didn't develop high school or neighborhood friendships, and so on!

In a few days, we have Veterans Day and Marine Corps Birthday, and perhaps with that in mind, I have run off on too many tangents!

You might appreciate an experience I had a few weeks ago while going through a dirt bike trail near my home. I suddenly found myself alone, as frequently happens along that trail, but then noticed a young man slowly crouching in a clump of bushes. And HE HAD A RIFLE! Now, I know that most sane people would get out of that place as quickly and quietly as they could, or if they were a combat vet, might "flash back" to being in combat!. I, on the other hand, just walked up to him and, in a soft voice said, "What are you doing?" He explained that there were about half a dozen of them and they were "playing war." I said, "Very interesting." I asked if he were a veteran. No. I asked how old he was. 23. I thought: "You're a bit old to be playing war!" I asked what he was firing. He proudly replied they were biodegradable pellets. I said, "Very interesting," and walked away. One never knows what to expect.

VETERANS DAY PRAYERS – 11 November 2012

(Miller Coors Brewing Company and Veterans Day Banquet in the War Memorial, Milwaukee, Wisconsin)

INVOCATION

O Lord, those we honor today,
  reflect Your Presence with us:
We pause to praise Your life of love
  through their actions
    of service and sacrifice
May this time together:
  motivate, strengthen, and bless us:
  that we, like they, with courage
    fulfill Your purpose
      to bear one another's burdens
  that we, like they, with strength and hope
    reflect Your Presence
      as we serve each other
  and that we, like they, with compassion
    share and care,

affirm life in the midst of death.
What they have done penetrates our soul:
Your gift of love and life living through them–
like fire infusing metal with its heat
creating a glow of bright light
and warmth in a cold night.
May those who serve in today's military
be aware of Your Presence
as strongly as the hug of a comrade
during incoming,
May Your Presence through this fellowship
nourish and strengthen us to serve
in Your Holy Name. AMEN.

BENEDICTION

May the strong arm of the LORD
keep you from all harm.
May the right hand of the LORD
be your guide in serving others
May you see God in the face of your friend.
May the gracious Presence of the Lord
still your troubled waters.
May our Lord's peace provide you
opportunity to be whole,
do justice, help the needy,
be an oasis of peace and life
May the Lord direct you
into paths of nourishment,
strength and peace
in His Holy Name. AMEN.

PRAYER TO REMEMBER A CIVIL WAR VETERAN BURIED IN THE MILWAUKEE COUINTY GROUNDS, WAUWATOSA, WISCONSIN, 11 November 2012

A READING

"Let us now sing the praises of famous men, our ancestors in their generations ... Some of them have left behind a name, so that others declare their praise. But of others there is no memory; they have perished as though they had never existed; they have become as though they had never been born, they and their children after them. But these also were godly men, whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten."[708]

LET US PRAY:

Today, O Lord, we remember our brother, Herman Borghardt,
comrade in arms from the Civil War, who died in 1898,
and, with some 1300 others, without family or means,
was buried here.
Like an ember in the fireplace, our humanity glows with warmth and light
as we remember, reconnect, and respect;
we reflect the value You, O Lord, place on all,
for human life is short, fragile, and valuable,
but with You, human life is neither forgotten nor forsaken.
Fragments of memory, of those we have known

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[708] Sirach [also known as Ecclesiasticus] 44.1, 8-10.

and those hidden in dark shadows of the past,
glow with warmth and light
as we share and we care,
and honor the dead by serving the living, [709]
As we regard and respect the lives of others,
we grow more whole, we are healed,
we are energized to serve others,
We all have parts of the whole;
as we come together, all are made more whole.
Today, we ask Your blessing upon Herman Borghardt
and all buried here.
We ask Your blessing upon our nation.
that we never forget. You, the source of all life, peace, and blessing.
We ask your blessing upon us
who live to serve
in Your Holy Name. We pray. AMEN

LETTER TO REV. JAMES H. RUTHERFORD, Tuesday, 20 November 2012

...

The weekend of Veterans Day involved me in giving prayers at three very different events, the most interesting of which was a small gathering on a hillside near a fairly newly constructed hospital in our Medical College complex. The hospital plans to expand, and the land on which it will be building is an old cemetery, a Potters Field, where indigent were buried back in the 1800s. There are no markers. When the new hospital building was constructed, it was also built on one of these cemeteries. Back in the 1800s, this area housed a Poor Farm, a Poor House, an Insane Asylum, a Hospital, and about five Potters Field cemeteries. When the hospital was built over the cemetery, the bones were dug up and transferred to the anthropology department of Marquette University to study what kind of backgrounds the dead may have had. Then, they were transferred to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where they are now stored in some warehouse. I think they should have been reburied in a mass grave with a suitable marker. Now, the same thing is happening. The hospital plans to build more buildings, and this will be on top of a cemetery of some 1300 graves. While researching the records, it was discovered that one of these was a Civil War veteran. A small group has formed to try to have his remains identified and have him buried in our local VA cemetery.

At the ceremony, a few Civil War re-enactors with their muskets, some medical types, and a few others gathered on a grassy hillside. There was a very strong wind that, at times, muffled any spoken words. I had been asked to give the prayer for the occasion, and preceded it with a quote from the Old Testament Apocrypha book of Sirach (the Catholics call it Ecclesiasticus) which seemed very appropriate. (A copy of my prayer is attached).

Two things interested me: one is that he wasn't forgotten. It seems to me that this is part of our being an "image of God," that we remember, just as our Lord never forgets us. This is over a hundred years later, but we still remember. The second thing is that the veteran had no identifiable descendents, but that a group of people took it upon themselves to do something, again reflecting the Lord's presence.

LETTER TO BOB CAVANAUGH, Thursday, 14 February 2013

...

It's very amazing that any of us made it out of those desperate months at Khe Sanh. We learned that life is precious, fragile, and short. You and those at FOB-3, in fact, had it even worse with your "strolls" into Laos even before the siege battle began. As one of my good friends from those days once told me, every day since then is a plus, a day we couldn't have counted on. Each day in which we can do something good for someone else, forgive, say thank you, and offer serve and help, enriches everyone, and every day that we receive these kind of gifts from others, is really a gift from above, from our Lord that brings life, peace, and blessing. That your son reached out and called me obviously indicates his great love of you, a love you have surely passed on to him as your life lives in him.

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[709] Motto of the Milwaukee County War Memorial.

Although I only made it over to FOB-3 twice during the siege–and a couple of times before it, I don't recall you personally from those visits, but was always deeply impressed by the humanity of those I did meet. I recall a tough-looking soldier with a tiger's tooth on a necklace who told me, "I'm not a religious person, chaplain, but please pray for those people." He was pointing to the Lao refugees who had taken refuge outside FOB3's wires after the fall of Lang Vei. He said he knew many of them. I recall holding a worship service inside the medical bunker and everyone's eyes were fixed on me, almost to an embarrassing extent. When I finished, turned, and was walking out, I happened to notice a Playboy centerfold just above my head, and I'm sure they were gazing at that, not me! There was concern, there was humor. In recent years, I wrote some things, and came to know many others from FOB-3, including you, who gave me additional insights into the humanity of the troops there and some of the amazing exploits of several. All of you were so very human, and God loved all of you,

LETTER TO KEN AND BETTY RODGERS, Friday, 15 February 2013

Please know how pleased I was to receive a complimentary copy of your video, *Bravo!* and to know that these very brave Marines who went through so much are not forgotten and in fact, will be remembered through your efforts. I was on the base at the time and, of course, knew so many of those involved personally. Some remain with me and probably will be in my heart until I die–Ken Pipes, of course, and then another Ken, Ken Claire (or "Tarzan") and just so many! Recently, Ron Ridgeway contacted me and I was able to furnish him with his POW file which the Marine Corps wasn't providing to him (said he could view it if he visited them!) but which I had copied back in the early 1980s and which gave a very detailed account of the Jacques' patrol of 25 February.

Your video presents a first-rate expression of the reality of what happened, of war, of the effects of war. As I have often told others, those at Khe Sanh, as a whole and individually, were the best group of men with whom I have ever been associated. They were so very human–as your documentary so aptly portrays. They were also so very caring (for others), maintained a humor in the midst of horror, affirmed life in the presence of death, and many of them continue to live in my soul where they will, undoubtedly, live forever. Your video is profound in its impact, valuable in its historical documentation, and I'm sure, helpful and healing. You have given a labor of love, a significant insight into what needs to be said and preserved. It is not the tactics or strategy that matters, but the people involved. You caught not only experiences but emotions. I was greatly moved. The way you integrated actual sounds of incoming and footage shot at the time with contemporary shots of those interviewed was done expertly and with impact.

There are only a few comments I might make where I might question, correct, or expand on what was said

- There were probably not 20,000 NVA that surrounded us, but more like 40,000. In fact, there was a whole "Front Headquarters," (with their secret designation of B5-T8) located just west of the western edge of the DMZ under command of a NVA LtGen.
- The tonnage of airstrikes was greater than all ordnance dropped during World War II in the Pacific. [See references in my attachments]
- Perhaps one of the interesting men from Bravo Company, KEN CLAIRE ("Tarzan") should have been mentioned. He was KIA on the 25 Feb patrol and, despite his very gruff manner, kept everyone going when the ammo dump blew. There are other interesting Marines from BRAVO Company, 1/26, like Peter J. Mudinich, the German whose leg was broken by a clump of earth from a close-in airstrike–which shows how close these were run; and also Mussari who had a live 60mm mortar round in his gut taken out by one of the C Med doctors, and some others–see attached documents. These reflect some of the desperation and the reality of the incoming)
- Some mentioned several times the warning sounds of mortars leaving tubes. While this is an accurate memory–I, too, recall this, and counting about seven seconds before I knew an incoming round would explode–but what needs to be said also is that the sounds of all those many aircraft landing in the afternoons (after the usual morning fog burned off), muffled these faint warning sounds. Thus, we were suddenly, at times, subjected to unanticipated incoming. The sounds of the propellers of the aircraft only increased our nervous anticipation of being hit.
- The concussions (at 0:19:50) were probably more from very close-in B-52 strikes which were brought within 500 meters of our trenches to destroy NVA trenching. Men from Bravo Company actually reported seeing NVA bodies tossed into the air.
- Regarding food (at 0:22:15): we were limited to one C-ration per day and one canteen cup of water a day. I, myself, went from 175 when I first got to Khe Sanh, to 129 at the end of the siege!
- The significance of the tunnels might have been brought-out. Why they were so ominous. The 304th NVA Division at Khe Sanh had also fought at Dien Bien Phu and had tunneled in an attempt to blow up the base from underneath. Col. Lownds had a special scientific advisor from MACV, Edison Cesar, come up to Khe Sanh and make some

recommendations regarding equipment to detect the tunneling. Col Lownds didn't believe the NVA was actually tunneling, but didn't dismiss the thought: it gave the troops something they could do to counter the enemy, he thought.

- The note on "slow motion" is so very correct!
- The patrol on 25 Feb didn't encounter 4,000 NVA! But they did come upon one of the NVA Strong points (mentioned in the official NVA histories–see attached in the discussion of the casualties of 25 Feb)
- There was a very angry exchange on whether or not to bomb the contact site–that there might still be survivors, yet the need to "get" the enemy.
- The man's name is "Author," not "Arthur." (See letter from Author Smith's sister in the attached excerpt from *Battalion of Kings*)
- The major point of contention I would have is that there were NOT 204 AMERICANS KILLED! This, the official regimental number, and also the number given in Congressional testimony on the electronic battlefield (sensors), does not reflect the 475+ killed for which I have names and dates, indicated in *Battalion of Kings*, nor does it even reflect the official numbers listed in subordinate battalion records! (I have an explanation that might help: the figures don't indicate the KIA who died after being evacuated, don't include other units (such as the Army FOB-3), don't perhaps include 1/9's 60+ KIA since although 1/9 was "operationally attached" (OPCON) to the 26th Marines, they were "administratively attached" (ADCOM) to 9th Marine Regiment. There is also an artificial ending of the operation at Khe Sanh–doesn't include the casualties after 30 March, even though units who were still at Khe Sanh continued to sustain casualties. For example, on 16 April, 1/9 had several dozen KIA!). Dr. Magilligan, the senior doctor of C Med, wrote in an article shortly after Khe Sanh, that there were 2500 WIA evacuated during the siege. (See attached documentation)
- I really appreciated Mike O'Hara's profound statement at the end of the presentation!

LETTER TO KEN AND BETTY RODGERS, Saturday, 13 April 2013

Your letter of 30 March–(certainly a most significant date–for the history of B/1/26!)–brought special blessings to me. Recent conversations with Mike Preston have reinforced my high regard for what you have accomplished–and, indeed, will accomplish in the future through the showings of your magnificent film that provides a penetrating and lasting image of Bravo Company, 1/26, during the Siege of Khe Sanh. Since I had been at Khe Sanh from July, 1967, many of those in Bravo Company were very familiar, some even good friends, and many who will be in my soul and memory forever. Some have continued as good friends though telephone calls and letters. Thus, your film has a far greater impact on me personally, going beyond simply illuminating a period of several weeks that have had such a great impact on my life–and certainly the lives of all who were there!–but going beyond that to highlight some that I personally know! What a great treasure you have mined and smelted out of the ore of the dirt of Khe Sanh! The metaphor is perhaps appropriate, for you have distilled out the precious metal through the anguish of the heat of dealing with powerful (and what might be destructive) memories and through the even greater anguish of having to edit-down to have the purified result that gives such a great impact as your film does.

Certainly, my criticisms are not meant in any way to detract from that! They are simply just another "input." My own conclusions are that "things were even worse" than what is related by the survivor's memories–there were far more casualties, far more enemy, and life was far more difficult and the heroism far more common and greater, and so on. In many ways, as I review what I experienced and what I've learned in the years following, I truly am in awe that any of us made it out alive. O, I know we had tremendous support (B-52s, closeness to supporting bases in the east, unlike Dien Bien Phu, and even the commitment of the White House and JCS!). And, as an editorial of the time says, "We had Marines!" All that aside, however, I'm totally convinced that it was really the Lord's doing that we had just the right people there–the right officers and non-coms and others with the right professional and human insights and strengths–and this was no accident of the G-1 of Division assigning them!)

President Obama mentioned only four battles out of our entire American military history when he was inaugurated on 20 January 2000 ("or us, they fought in places like Concord and Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sanh"), I personally suspect that that part was written by General James Jones who was then serving as one of his advisors. (General Jones had been Commandant of the Marine Corps and then Supreme Allied Commander of NATO before that–and had also served as a Marine Captain at Khe Sanh in a desperate battle on a hilltop along Route 9 just after the Siege in which he had to call napalm on his own position in order to repel NVA attackers. General Jones was the son of James Jones who was a Major in

WW II who formed and led a special reconnaissance unit that did the preliminary beach surveys of islands in the Pacific that would later be assaulted by Marines).

Certainly, when William Colby (then in Saigon, but later head of CIA) took a jeep and drove up to Khe Sanh with his won in 1961 and went to the border town of Lao Bao, and when, in 1964, Floyd Thompson who was then with the Special Forces detachment at Khe Sanh was captured and became the longest-held POW of the Vietnam War, the place was destined to become a great battlefield. Built on the crater of an extinct volcano, and named on the tactical maps as "Xom Cham" (or "village of Chams"–those fierce pirate warriors that were on the coastlines of South Vietnam many centuries earlier but who had been pushed out of their lands by the Vietnamese moving southward from China and sought refuge in southern parts of South Vietnam–and perhaps also at what became Khe Sanh–thus "village of Chams!"–the place was born in violence which sort of lingered as a sort of spiritual atmosphere that was to shape what eventually erupted in our siege battle.

Interestingly, early French geology reports on the area (from the 1920s and 30s) note the high percentage of arsenic in the rivers at Khe Sanh, and I'm sure that many of the cancers and other health issues that have made many of our Khe Sanh veterans ill and even caused their death–along with the spraying of Agent Orange along Route 9 in April, 1968, are lingering legacies, as are the multiple injuries and deaths of Vietnamese metal scavengers who have unearthed unexploded ordnance of that battlefield.

And, of course, other units at Khe Sanh also suffered great loss. The Recon company, sandwiched between the Regimental COC and the airstrip, certainly the bulls-eye of incoming during the siege, suffered over 70% casualties (KIA and WIA), and 1/9, after breaking out of the Rock Quarry, lost almost all of its CP group on Hill 471 and then lost 40 KIA on a single day, 16 April 1968, when two of their companies were decimated as they patrolled from Hill 689. Then, there were the desperate, hand-to-hand combat experiences of the Marines of K/3/26 on Hill 861 (21 Jan), the Marines and ARVN soldiers in Khe Sanh village (21 Jan) that forced their abandoning of the position and the first loss of a seat of South Vietnamese government in the war, the assault on of E/2/6 on Hill 861-Alfa (5 Feb), the assault–first use of tanks by the NVA–on Lang Vei (7 Feb), and, well, so many other dramatic battles! (It is for some of this, plus my age and weakness, that I've abandoned a life-long project of writing a history of Khe Sanh. I'm in the forest and am lost in the trees!). I'm, a bit surprised by someone like Gregg Jones who is about to complete a history of the Khe Sanh battle! (Of course, there are many other dimensions as well–the B-52s and the aerial resupply, the heroic work of the doctors and corpsmen of C Med, the life on the remote hill outposts, the intelligence collection and evaluation, the NVA tactics and positions and that whole dimension, the White House and MACV and CINCPAC and JCA dimension, the political and press dimension and comparisons with Dien Bien Phu, and so on.). Khe Sanh is really a most complex "animal" (perhaps "monster," "dragon" or even "chimera!")

Khe Sanh was, indeed, perhaps the bloodiest battlefield in the Vietnam War.

Your movie, focusing on Bravo Company, enables us to see the whole through the experiences of the part, or, as William Blake famously put it (*Auguries of Innocence),*

> "To see a World in a Grain of Sand
> And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
> Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
> And eternity in an hour." [Lines 1-4]

Well, excuse my digressions!

Just wanted to thank you for your very kind letter and most of all for your dedicated, generous life-time action in making *Bravo* come to life!

With deep admiration, Ray

LETTER TO ROGER HOWES, Monday, 15 April 2013:

The idea of "community" is assumed, but is actually a matter of quite different approaches. There is the Roman *societas,* in which community is formed because of people who like each other, are bound to each other, like a chain. The symbol of Rome was the *fasces* which was a kind of ax embedded in a group of iron rods. the idea was that a single iron rod could be bent, but that all the rods bound together formed a stiff, unbendable unity. This idea is the source of that saying "united we stand, divided we fall." It's the idea that seems to be current in America–that of mutual understanding and acceptance, where we are united because we are joined to each other.

But there is another way of understanding "community." This is the one common to the New Testament and expressed by the word *koinonia.* This idea of community is that everyone is joined together by being joined to something held in common. It's not the idea of each joined to each other, but all part of the same community because all hold something in common, all are part of the whole. The unifying center may be "suffering"–a "fellowship of suffering," but it is more a matter of all being connected to the Spirit, the Lord, unified through participation in the Eucharist (body and blood). Like a wheel that is formed

because all the spokes are joined to a hub, this community can be a whole of wisely differing members. The Church is such a community: there are rich and poor, educated and uneducated, young and old, wealthy and poor, of different nationalities and different philosophies, yet all kneel at the same alter, pray together, and work together. Human distinctions and differences really don't matter. Paul writes there are "male and female, slave and free," and so on.

In the former idea of community, these differences need to be abolished–although some who are into "integration" maintain that one must not forsake their own heritage but there must be mutual respect and acceptance of the differences. (Obviously, as the Bible puts it, "an Ethiopian can't change the color of his skin, nor a leopard his spots." Therefore, there must be "acceptance," pride in one's own "difference" and yet toleration of all). Nevertheless, there is an attempt to "level down," to have uniformity. In schools, this means to do away with grades and intellectual distinctions. We don't want our child to be "different" (even if that means the child excels!). We don't want people with a lot of wealth–all should share wealth equally.

In the latter view of community, however, human distinctions really don't matter. What matters is what unifies all–God. It is love (which is God), the maximizing of life (which is the gift of God), justice and righteousness (maintaining the community by having laws which keep us from harming ourselves and others–the Commandments). The 19th Century American philosopher, Josiah Royce, wrote that societies are kept together by having a common history/past/heritage, and a common set of expectations/goals/visions for the future. Our modern world outlook, however, is "postmodern," which means there is no center, no organizing principle that holds everything together, no heroes or people who compel our allegiance. We have multiculturalism and the internet in which everyone's opinion is as valid as another's. There are no "experts" or authorities.

Modern community, thus, is even "less" than the Roman *societas*. We have young people in the same room who no longer talk with each other, but text each other–in the same room! We have people on twitter or facebook or whatever, who, while "connected" in a vast network, nevertheless are very lonely. Language has become reduced to abbreviations and a few dozen words rather than a rich, full expression. This is a third idea of community–the electronic. With the invention of the printing press and moveable type came the diffusion of knowledge, the sharing of ideas that pierced through isolated clans and national boundaries. Now, with the invention of the internet, this has been made more instantaneous and widespread, but at the cost of genuine human community, I fear.

You and I both enjoy being in nature. You and I both enjoy musing over historic artifacts that "contain" and proclaim people of past generations. There is a certain warmth and sense of connection that comes from walking through a museum. Tangible objects seem to contain and preserve people and places of the past. And, we are part of the community with them. We see an object and muse over their life condition, their desires and hopes and dreams. I suppose that's why veterans and others become so alarmed when the US flag is burned by protesters, for the flag is not simply cloth, but carries with it all those who have given their lives for others in their society (whether this be military or also policemen, firemen, civic leaders, or just an old mother or father). A wedding ring is not simply a piece of jewelry; it is far more. Pictures of loved ones in our wallet are not simply another photo but seem to re-present (make present again) the person or persons in the photograph.

So, the idea of "society" or "community" has many different understandings, most of which aren't really clear to most.

LETTER TO EDWARD W. WELCHEL, Saturday, 25 May 2013

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I think it was in eating that we had the truly only peaceful times–it was time for our elf or time in which we could share. I still remember people sharing C's and how some actually liked the "Ham and Limas!" I remember how some would take the Pound Cake and then frost it with a mixture of the cocoa and cream and sugar! I remember going through the barbed wire of the place on the base where C ration cartons had been stored (near the regimental mess hall) just to steal an onion in order to spice up the Cs knowing full well that there was no place to run if incoming suddenly came and knowing that I could die–all in order to get an onion! I guess we were all a bit crazy!! I remember that we were down to two C rations a day (when we should have had three) and one canteen cup of water a day. I lost so much weight! I went from 175 when I got to Vietnam to 129 when I left Khe Sanh, and I was not alone–the reduced food, the stress, the running around–all removed the weight. Sometimes, when I give talks to high school students, I say that "people want to do on a diet to remove weight? Well, the 'battlefield diet' really works, but I don't recommend it; there are too many adverse side effects!" The recon group at Khe Sanh (before the siege) had been issued the Long Range Rations–the only ones to get them there at that time. I guess my favorites were the "Beef Stew in Juices" and the "Ham with water added, and eggs chopped, canned" and I could tolerate the "Beans and Wieners"

In the middle of the siege, one man (Jack Corbett from 81s) once gave me a large glass jar (a little over a foot high and about 8 inches in diameter) filled with maraschino cherries! What does one do with several hundred of those cherries? Well, I remember lugging that glass jar with me and giving them out to the Marines I visited as I went from bunker to bunker and

trench to trench. I later saw Jack Corbett in 1988 in Miami at our first Khe Sanh Vet meeting. He said, "Do you remember me?" I said that I didn't. He said, "I'm the 'cherry man' the one who gave you the glass jar of maraschino cherries!" I said, "Why did you do that?" He said, "Well, you looked so haggard and I said that I wanted to do something for the chaplain, so I went through the barbed wire the food area to get that for you!"

I remember how we used to make a "stove" by taking the C-ration opener and making holes in a can, bending the can somewhat, and putting one of the heat tabs in it to heat up the "heavy" of the C-ration or heat up water to make coffee. Sometimes, we'd use a small piece of C-4 and ignite that instead of a heat tab. When on patrols, I remember the engineers (who carried the C-4 to blow up trees blocking our route or whatever) always tried to get everyone to use C-4 for heating, saying that then they didn't have to carry it! I remember how it gave off a very hot flame that had little balls of white (like, an eighth of an inch in diameter).

LETTER TO RON WHEAT, Monday, 27 May 2013

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My own position–at least my present position (which could obviously change with new insights, prayer, inputs from others in the Christian community, etc.) is that PTSD involves a permanent, physical change (namely, of the hippocampus, the part of the brain dealing with processing short-term memory and also involved in dream activity, which actually shrinks after exposure to combat, especially combat that is prolonged and severe). It is much like being blinded by physical damage to the eye, the loss of an arm, or a heart attack. I do not think of it as primarily an emotional response to combat. It is rather a physical alteration, wounding, of the brain. But just as the loss of an arm or leg obviously affects life with necessary adjustments being required, so does exposure to combat. It is also similar to a young child growing up in a dysfunctional family or a disadvantaged setting. Such a child, when grown, can always say, "but that's how I was raised." A more enlightened person will say, "but I have a choice. It's a matter of what I do with it. I don't have to let that control my life." Similarly, with an illness or physical damage to the body, an enlightened person might say, "But I am not my disease. I am not my damaged body," and so something about it, not letting "it" have control, but letting the Lord have control–i.e., heal!

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I've come to realize that it's what we do with our wounds, and also that wounds are best handled by putting them in a larger context. Even non-Christians can do this–the larger context may be a circle of friends, an understanding family, a greater understanding of what's happening (e.g., Frankl's statement that when experiencing abnormal situations, our abnormal reactions are perfectly normal behavior (Frankl, Viktor E., *Man's Search for Meaning, An Introduction to Logotherapy* p. 18.), the realization that a tragic experience is only a small part of the larger span of life, and so on. The Christian, of course, places everything in the hands of our loving Lord.

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The second thing I learned a very long time ago (see the attached part of an essay I wrote back on 10 December 1984!–that's quite a few years ago, and I've obviously since modified much of what I wrote then!) is this: that there are wounds that are unhealing, as experienced by both St. Paul and Jeremiah, as well as Job and many others. They are unhealing because God can use them for His purposes of bringing life to others. We then become "wounded healers." One might say that ONLY those who are wounded are able to be healers, much like Alcoholics Anonymous and other similar support groups, or even the church as viewed as a "hospital of sick sinners, healing each other with God's healing powers." Martin Luther once observed that in the end we are only "hungry beggars feeding each other." Unhealing wounds are a way of putting us in contact with others, much like that ancient Jewish story of the Rabbi who became blind, earnestly prayed to God to gain sight, but the Lord left him blind–so that he might have appreciation for and contact with those who are blind. The 12th Century Meister Eckhart also wrote of a nobleman who married a common woman who was blind. Eventually he blinded himself. Why? she asks! "Now I am like you," he replied. He loved her that much. Much like Paul writes of Jesus that He became sin for us who knew no sin so that we might be the righteousness of God, in what the medieval theologians referred to as "the exchange of attributes." It's always the Giver, not the gift, that Christians must emphasize. The blind person may ask the Lord to see, as did Bartimeaus, but the important aspect is the relationship to the Giver, not the gift, as the story of Jesus cleansing the ten lepers illustrates.

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There's a very old story–(I first heard it about 50 years ago)–of a scene of hell. In it, there is a large banquet table full of delicious food, but everyone seated around the table is starving and miserable–because they have splints on their arms, can't bend their elbows, and thus can't get the food to eat! Then, the visitor is shown a scene of heaven. Paradoxically, it's exactly the same–the large table filled with wonderful food and people with splints on their arms so they can't bend their elbows. But these people are happy and well nourished. The difference: They fed each other.

Another thought comes to mind. I've also learned that reality is obviously much greater than what we experience of it. We are limited in what we can experience, and frequently others supply perspectives that we didn't "see" at the time. But also, our own experience of reality is much greater than anything we might say about it, for we might later remember some aspects we didn't think important at the time or didn't pay attention to, and so on. With our relationship to our Lord, we must always be open to new insights, greater understandings, and growth. I'm still learning! And the more I learn, the more I realize I don't know. But that isn't important. What's important is the personal relationship with my Lord, and that's what the Biblical Hebrew word for "know" means anyway–not head knowledge of facts but relationship. When Hosea laments "My people perish for lack of knowledge of God," he wasn't referring to facts about God, but relationship to God. We obviously have reconstructed the history of Israel so that we know more than did St. Paul of it, but we also obviously are not as spiritual as St. Paul!

LETTER TO JAMES D. ARMBRUST, Wednesday, 29 May 2013

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I remember the CO on 881-South gave me a sandbag full of soap bars from those SP packs they received once a week (These were large boxes that were meant to supply a platoon for a week while they had no access to a PX and had cigarettes, bar soap, candy, writing paper and envelopes, and so on). He gave me that sandbag and said, "Chaplain, here, take this! We have no use for soap up here. Give it to the missionaries." Perhaps he had read Mitchiner's book *Hawaii* in which the missionaries were called "stinkies" by the Hawaiians because they didn't bathe!

LETTER TO JULIE VAN METRE, Thursday, 30 May 2013

Thank you for the photo of the Khe Sanh memorial plaque which is located in Arlington National Cemetery ..I looked up my records on this memorial. It was dedicated during a ceremony in early July with General Mundy, then Commandant of the Marine Corps, giving the main address to 210 in attendance on a rainy day. As I mentioned, the plaque was obtained by Mr. Ken Penn and his wife, Bernice, but I am unaware of where it was manufactured.

The Khe Sanh memorial plaque is located in Arlington in Section 2. Directions to it: From Main Gate, take Eisenhower Drive to McClellan Drive; take McClellan to Roosevelt Drive; go down Roosevelt to the Memorial.

LETTER TO M. DOC PIPER, Sunday, 02 June 2013

... As you are aware, there are so many disputes concerning the Civil War, World War I, and even some of the events in our own times–the JFK assassination, the attack on Pearl Harbor, and so on–even when eye-witnesses are still alive! How much worse will something like Vietnam be for those in the future since Vietnam was so complex, with so many different facets. I always tell those to whom I give talks, that Vietnam was many things to many people and that there's no single image that sticks out, for it all depends on when you were there, where you were, what kind of job you did, and how you interpret that–the impact. All these bring so many different stories, even for those who were in the same events! Perhaps of equal importance to what actually happened is the fact of the impact that had–what it meant or continues to mean.

In fact, most of life is really all about that fact: it's not what happens to us or happened to us or will happen to us, but what we do with it. There are so many who cling on to their upbringing, their social influences, and so on–and all of that IS very crucially important, of course. But really, the character of a person is really a matter of what they do with it. I recall so many examples, but one sticks in my mind right now–1st Sergeant Don Hamblen of 1st Force Recon Company. Don had been part of the force involved in the Bay of Pigs events in Cuba and part of the original group that first developed free fall parachuting from jet aircraft and going in and out of submerged submarines in order to land reconnaissance teams. In one parachuting exercise, he landed in some high tension wires, and had to have one of his legs amputated. There seemed to be no way that he could remain on active duty, but he was determined to do so. He got a prosthetic leg and got angry with others in the hospital who "gave in" to their loss of a leg. Like a good Marine, he yelled at such people! You can imagine the scene! Anyway, he got back to his unit. But then it became a matter of passing the Marine PFT. Could he carry another Marine and meet the time requirement of running? Most thought he would fail. But he persisted, and he passed the PFT.

Sometime later, he did retire from the Marine Corps and opened the Tokyo Bar in Oceanside, just outside Camp Pendleton. He used to bet the Navy corpsmen that visited his bar from Marine units at Camp Pendleton, that he could touch one foot to the ceiling while his other foot was on the deck. Of course, they all thought that was impossible. But he won. He merely detached his artificial leg and touched it to the ceiling while standing on the other leg! Of such are legends made!

It's not really a matter only of what happens to us, but what we do with it.

FLAG DAY 14 June 2013 – Performing Arts Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Please permit me to say a few words before our prayer.

Our National Anthem was written by a young American lawyer, Francis Scott Key, during the Battle of 1812. At "twilight's last gleaming" and some eight miles away, Key and two other Americans detained on a British warship in the harbor of Baltimore, saw the "broad stripes and bright stars" of our American flag. It was an immense flag, sewn by Mary Young Pickerskill. The stars were 26-inches across and, the stripes were two-feet wide. The entire flag was 42 feet wide and 30 feet high.

During the night, Key watched over the edge of the ship–the ramparts–as the British bombarded Fort McHenry for 25 hours with over 1500 bombs, each weighing 200 pounds. The rocket's red glare and bursting bombs illuminated the night sky, giving momentary glimpses our flag.

The next morning, by the "dawn's early light," Key saw that our flag was still there and wrote the words that became our National Anthem.

Our "flag-still-seen" symbolizes resolve and resilience. Our "flag-still-seen" affirms life in the presence of death; it is light shining in the darkness of doubt and despair, and our "valley of the shadow of death." Our "flag-still seen" glows–on debris-ridden land in Oklahoma after the hurricane. Our "flag-still-there" is found in the rubble of the World Trade Center on 9/11. Our "flag-still-there" is raised on horrendous battlefield of Iwo Jima in World War II. I was once in a battle in Vietnam in which for over two months our small base received up to 1200 rounds a day–mainly heavy artillery and rockets. Our courage held. Our men held. Our flag remained.

Our "flag-still-seen" reminds us of the presence and blessings of our Lord in our darkest times through people as channels of our Lord's gift of life and sacrifice for others and hope.

WITH THESE THOUGHTS, LET US PRAY:

Like our "flag-still there" O Lord, You remain with us always: to comfort, guide and bless us when all else fails. In the emptiness, darkness, and uncertainties we may face or perhaps even now know so well, You are with us.

Those of us who have experienced prolonged and intense combat know–after the rocket's red glare, bombs bursting in air, You remain. In the terror and horror of battle, You remain. Through our night of doubt, fear, and sorrow, You remain–to bless us through caring hearts and hands of our brothers and sisters.

As we see our flag still there, our position held after enemy bombardments day after day, week after week, month after month, we know, O Lord, Your remain graciously giving the gift of life–life which we know is short, precious, and fragile.

Our flag, O Lord, reminds us of all our people–people who have served and sacrificed that we might live as free persons / in order that we might serve each other, and not be imprisoned slaves to our own selfish needs, fears, and pains.

May the sight of our flag rekindle in us greater zeal to appreciate Your extravagant gifts to us / and reinvigorate our commitment to each other that all may be blessed / with life in its fullness in the power of Your Holy Name. We pray. Amen.

LETTER TO GARY W. FOSTER, Friday, 21 June 2013

... I do think, however, that far too much prominence is accorded to Gen. Giap. I really haven't seen anything in official NVA histories that indicates his presence or involvement in anything operational at Khe Sanh, despite the news accounts of the day and books written since then. The local commanders were the Division Commanders of the 304 and 325C Divisions, along with the Front Commander of B5-T8 Front which controlled all activities of the NVA in I Corps. Brigadier General Tran Quy Hai, a probationary member of the Party Central Committee and Deputy Minister of Defense, was assigned as the Front Commander. It is he, not Giap, who was in control of the Khe Sanh operation.

Also, the explanation as to why Khe Sanh was not attacked is easy. From the NVA strategy, the effort was to make Khe Sanh a situation where various reinforcements would come to its rescue, and then annihilate all the reinforcements. This is a basic NVA strategy that was employed on all levels. They would wound an individual, not kill him. Then, they would kill all those who came to his rescue. One might see the same thing with the attack on Lang Vei. The point was to annihilate all those who would come to rescue. When Khe Sanh village was attacked on the first day of the siege, the attack was by a battalion while a whole regiment lay in ambush to annihilate any reinforcements that might be sent from Khe Sanh Combat Base. Interestingly, we didn't "fall" for that trap in any of these cases. We didn't send a Marine infantry company out to Lang Vei (which had been the contingency plan). When Khe Sanh Village was attacked, Company ":D" of 1/26 was marching towards the village to reinforce it when they were suddenly recalled–because the ambush had obviously been detected (probably through signals intelligence). The 3rd Marine Division did not send reinforcements to Khe Sanh during the siege, knowing that many ambush positions had been prepared along Route 9 to trap them. In fact, the official histories of the NVA of the Khe Sanh battle go to some length to analyze why they failed at Khe Sanh–their strategy of luring in other units didn't work.

The explanation from the American side is that our B-52s totally annihilated tens of thousands, and the NVA were never able to gather into an assaulting mass. They attempted to do this on 29 February, sending a regimental-size force up from Route 9 to the Combat Base, but our electronic sensors detected their movement, and Mirza Baig fired artillery in some classic artillery tactics. Only two or three out of the entire regiment made it to the wires manned by 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion. (the artillery tactic involved firing three sides of a "box" and then firing artillery in waves up and down the inside of the box, using the 175s from Camp Carroll and Rock Pile. By mid-February, the 325th Division was so decimated that it retreated from the battlefield. Later, the whole 304 Division also.

So there are two very good reasons why Khe Sanh wasn't attacked.

Walt Rostow's daily memos to the President indicate that he had a very good grasp on what was happening. I don't think there was any enigma to him on this matter.

LETTER TO LANCE LARSON, Monday, 29 July 2013

...

The real importance is not the strategy, the details of the battle, and all that–those things ARE important, of course, but not my real concern! The real importance is what it did to us and to our families and our society in general. The "human impact" of what happened is what concerns me–and here there seem to be things that might be crazy to others–did we become "infected" with powerful spirits of violence and power outside of us? How do we handle PTSD and the other psychological and psycho-social effects and what do they all mean (are they simply alterations in our brain structure?) How do we communicate to others what they have absolutely no experience to which they can relate–that means everything to us, but absolutely no reference that they can appreciate what we say? What are the greater contexts into which they can be placed where their power is diminished (like placing something radioactive in lead containers?) (the greater context of a greater understanding, realizing the events are only a small part of life, the context of a group of understanding friends, or of other veterans of the same experiences who might see the same events from a different perspective, into the context of some spiritual relationship, in the context of the greatness and peacefulness of nature, and so on). In other words, what do we do with our experiences? All this gets into very personal, individual solutions that might not have any relevance to others who have the same issues, but which might be helpful to us. It's almost like the early pioneers in the westward movement, going through the situations of forests and attacks by Indians, but doing so individually, some arriving at their destination, others perishing in the movement of life!

REMARKS MADE AT THE MOVING WALL REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY - Pleasant Prairie, WI - 14 Sep 2013

We are overwhelmed by the immensity of this Wall. We are overpowered at the amount of names. And, behind each name, many dozens of others engrave a deeper gash in the black granite wall–a wife, children, parents, other relatives, friends, neighbors, schoolmates, and teammates. We are all interconnected. Several years ago, a Vietnam vet friend mentioned his visit to the Wall, seeking a particular name. Two women stood by the panel bearing his buddy's name. Reverently, his finger touched the name. One of the women asked, "Did you know him?" He said, "O yes, he saved my life." The older woman said, "He was my son," and the younger woman said, "He was my husband." Amid hugs and tears, strangers connected. We are all lessened by their loss.

Yet, however vast the specter of this Wall's black darkness, it would be twice as large if it listed those killed in World War I. The wall would be seven times as large if it listed those who perished in the battles of World War II. And, at a time when America's population was an tenth of what it now is,[710] the wall would be over ten times as larger to list those killed in our Civil War.[711]

Half a century ago, the tiny speck on the map called "Vietnam" ensnared us in its web or war. Those who were 18 in 1967 were born in 1949, just following World War II. They were three during the Korean War and grew up in the fears and uncertainties of Communism. When they were 7 or 8, some watched as their parents, like little children building forts, dug shelters in their backyards to protect against atomic bombs and their fallout. At school, basement hallways, marked as air raid shelters, silently reminded everyone of continual threat.

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[710] US population in 1860: 31,443,321; in 1870: 39,818,449; in 1865 (by interpolation): 35,630,806. US population on 26 August 2013: 316,539,860. For other wars: US population in 1910: 92,228,496; in 1920: 106,021,537; in 1917 (by interpolation): 96,551, 287. US population in 1940: 132,164,569; in 1950: 151,325,798; in 1942 (by interpolation): 135,996,815. US population in 1960: 179,323,175; in 1970: 203,302,031; in 1965 (by interpolation): 1`93,826,630.

[711] 58,000 in Vietnam; 117,000 in WW I, 405,000 in WW II, 620,000 in Civil War.

Then, when they were the impressionable age of 12, they heard those magical, stirring words of a new young and charismatic President, John F. Kennedy, who (in 1961) said in his Inaugural Address: "Let every nation know .. that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to ensure the survival and success of liberty .. and so .. ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." [712]

Now 18, those who heard those words led the charge "to slay the dragon and rescue the maiden" in that far-away place with the strange sounding name, "Vietnam." Most knew someone who fought in WW II. Now, it was time to step up and stop the Communist menace. Off to war they went. This Wall proclaims the burden borne, the price paid, and the hardship endured: the loss to all of a researcher to find a cure for cancer, a loving husband and father, a motivating teacher, a loyal friend, one who enriches lives of many.

The immensity of the burden and cost of the loss overwhelms us. We are reduced to silence, awe, and wonder. We begin to understand[713] its silent shouts to our soul. To those who pass by unknowing, and uncaring, we want to shout with the Old Testament prophet, Jeremiah: "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?"[714]

Most who returned from Vietnam were changed forever. The story is told of a soldier who called home at the end of World War II. The soldier tells his parents he's coming home. They are choked with emotion. He asks them if it's OK to bring a friend, his closest buddy. "O please bring him," they say. "It would be great to see him. O, we can't wait to see you!" they say. He pauses, "Well, he's been badly hurt." "That's OK, son," they say, "We'll make arrangements." "Well," says the son, "the wounds are severe. He's blind. He's lost a leg." There's a pause. They say: "Well, maybe he ought to go to one of the hospitals. He might not be happy with us." There's a click. The telephone goes dead. The son hung up. The "friend" was the "son" himself. "Can I fit back in?"

II

Some come, not knowing a particular person personally, but somehow realize these were real people with dreams, loves, and connections with others, whose sacrifice is not forgotten.[715]

Most come to the Wall seeking a particular name: a son, a father, a battle buddy, a friend, a brother. Some make a "rubbing" of that name and take it with them as a reminder. Some leave an object that carries special meaning. Some shed a tear, say a prayer, and rekindle a precious memory. If we're quiet, perhaps we hear them tell us they don't want us to grieve or be sad; that is not what they'd want for us. Perhaps we gratefully acknowledge that we are better persons for having known them.

The Vietnam Memorial wall differs from other war memorials by listing the names of those who died: war's human cost. Real people perish. Perhaps an even better memorial would not just list names, but would tell us their dreams, their loves, hobbies, personal quirks, and interests, things they said and did, and what made them laugh or get angry, sad, or concerned.

Despite the passage of half a century, through our love they live. These men live in us as long as we live; they circulate in our blood. Since they live in us, they make us want to live and not die.[716]

Engraved in the black granite Wall their names will be proclaimed to the centuries.

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[712] John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, 20 January 1961.

[713] Both Plato and Aristotle claimed awe and wonder to be the starting point for knowledge. [Plato, *Theaetetus* 155D; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 982b13].

[714] Lam 1.12.

[715] *Cf.* Sirach [also known as Ecclesiasticus] 44.1, 8-10: "Let us now sing the praises of famous men, our ancestors in their generations ... Some of them have left behind a name, so that others declare their praise. But of others there is no memory; they have perished as though they had never existed; they have become as though they had never been born, they and their children after them. But these also were godly men, whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten."

[716] Nikos Kazantzakis, *Report to Greco*, Trans. P. A. Bien, New York: Bantam Books, 1965. In writing of the death of his grandfather, Kazantzakis writes: "..he will live inside me as long as I live. We shall die together. This grandfather was the first to make me wish not to die–so that the dead within me should not die. Since then, many departed dear ones have sunk, not into the grave, but into my memory, and I know now that as long as I live they shall live too." [pp. 29-30]. "Both my parents circulate in my blood .. I have carried them all my days; neither has died. As long as I live, they too will live inside me.." [p. 44] On visiting a cemetery, he writes: "Thousands of generations inside me were screeching.. Never have I felt so deeply that our departed ancestors do not die, that at critical moments they cry out, jump to their feet, and take possession of our eyes, hands, and minds." [p. 101]. He writes: "Inside me were terrible ancestors who had not eaten as much meat or drunk as much wine as they craved, nor kissed as many women as they desired, and now they were bounding up fiercely in order to prevent me–and themselves–from dying." [p. 351]. "I was a man struggling and in pain, a man seeking deliverance ... from the terrible bellowing ancestors in me and to turn them into human beings.." [p. 436].

Engrafted our hearts, they live as long as we live, and, through our lives, their life is passed to future generations by how we live.

Included in the heart of God, they live eternally.

III

In an outpost bunker in the hills of Khe Sanh, Vietnam, in late 1967, a Marine wrote on a cardboard sleeve from a C-ration case:

"God and the soldier we adore
In time of war and not before,
The battle ended and all things righted,
God's forgotten, the soldier slighted."[717]

That's always the danger. Those who made this moving Wall's appearance possible, help us avoid that danger of forgetting. That danger of forgetting is avoided by those who observe Memorial Day and Veterans Day. That danger of forgetting is avoided with each singing of our National Anthem and each display of our flag. Mainly, however, that danger of forgetting is avoided by how we live with others as we seize opportunities to serve and make life better for all.

Remembrance gives power and fervor, motivation and direction. We remember; we act. The Milwaukee War Memorial's motto suggests "we honor the dead by serving the living."

This Wall beckons you and I to remember our fallen brothers and all who knew and loved them.

This Wall reminds you and I of the true cost of war–not dollars, but lives.

This Wall joins us to each other. We share the pain. We share our love. We share our life.

This Wall challenges you and I to serve, to give, to live, and to bear one another's burdens.

May God bless the families and friends of our fallen. May God bless our nation with healing and peace. May God bless our people with resolve to care for one another. May God bless us all.

PRAYER for THE MOVING WALL REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY, Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin, 14 September 2013

We thank You, O Lord
for this opportunity
to remember and reflect
and rededicate ourselves;
We thank You, O Lord:
You enable and encourage us to remember
We thank You, O Lord
for those that we now remember.
Today we remember what must never be forgotten
Today we reconnect with what was,
strengthened to face what will be.
Help us to honor the dead we remember
by serving the living we shall encounter.
Keep us always within Your powerful peace
and in Your holy Name.
We pray. Amen.

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[717] The Marine was Capt John Raymond, USMC, commanding A/1/26 on Hill 881-South, Khe Sanh, Vietnam, noted in Stubbe: Khe Sanh Chaplain (unpublished manuscript), 01 April 1970, diary entry for 18 August 1967. Although Capt Raymond attributed the poem to "Lord Marlborough," it was actually written by Frances Quarles (1592-1614), and its original form is: "Out God and soldiers we alike adore / E/en at the brink of danger, not before / Our God's forgotten, and our soldiers slighted." [Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 3rd rev. ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 404, No. 9]. President Kennedy quoted this poem (with changes he made, as did Captain Raymond) Nov 26, 1962 [Platt, Suzy, Respectfully Quoted, Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1989, p. 326].

VETERANS DAY – 11 November 2013 (Miller Coors Brewing Co)

INVOCATION

O Lord, our God:
on this day and at this hour
as we remember our veterans:
We are mindful
of Your presence with us
In dark, desperate, and difficult days,
when fears smother hope
and desperation shrouds Your Presence.
Your Presence—
like the air we breathe
unaware, is always there;
You never abandoned us.
Through service and sacrifice,
You creatively transform, renew,
and bless us with life,
strength, vision, and peace,
even in the midst of turmoil and trouble.
As we honor our veterans, O Lord—
those no longer with us
and those who still stand with us
and especially those hospitalized or homeless—
We rededicate ourselves
and seek Your vision and strength
to serve the needy
to do good as we have opportunity,
to leave our communities and nation better places
than we received them, and
to promote wholeness, prosperity, and peace
in Your Holy Name.
We pray.
AMEN.

BENEDICTION PRAYER – VETERANS DAY – War Memorial Banquet – 11 November 2013

May the strong arm of the LORD
keep you safe and secure
and bless you with peace and life.
May the right hand of the LORD
be your guide and strength in serving others.
May you see God in the face of your friend.
May the Presence of the LORD
be your vision to live as you give.
May the peace of the LORD
guard and keep you
May the LORD direct you
into paths of nourishment.
fullness of life and strength
in His Holy Name.
AMEN

TABLE GRACE – VETERANS DAY – 11 November 2013 – Miller-Coors Brewing Co and Veterans Day Banquet, War Memorial Bldg., Milwaukee, WI

You open Your hand, O Lord,
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.[718]
As we gratefully acknowledge Your gift
of this food for our nourishment, we know
we do not live by bread alone,[719]
but by all Your actions[720] which nourish us.
As we eat this food, our soul feeds
on the strength of friends and family,
Your love, beauty, and peace.
Today, we especially thank You
for those who serve and have served
our nation,
who guard and protect us
that all may have life–life in its fullness.[721]
Bless us, we pray,
that we may be Your food to nourish others
through our presence, words, and actions.
Keep us
in the power of Your Holy Name we pray.
AMEN.

REMARKS TO WORLD WAR II VETERANS, Lutheran Home, Wauwatosa WI, 11 November 2013

Today, we thank our veterans, and especially those from World War II. We thank you for your service and your sacrifices. Most of all, we express our appreciation, which grows deeper the more we understand. O course, we can never fully know the cost and price of your service, but the little that we do know makes us stand in awe and wonder at how much you gave in such terribly difficult and uncertain days that we might be here today in comfort and security.



WITH MY UNCLE RAY DURING WORLD WAR II

My uncle Ray enlisted 28 June 1941 at the age of 22. He planned to serve a year in the Army. A few months later, the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor. It was Sunday, December 7th, 1941, and he was now in the war "for the duration." (He was separated 7 November 1945). I was born in 1938, on his 19th birthday, and named after him. He was my childhood hero. When he came home on furlough, my grandpa– his dad, would meet him at the railroad station. He'd be in his Army uniform. He let me wear his cap. Sometimes I wore his ribbons on my shirt when I went to grade school.

Those of you who served in World War II undoubtedly had some family member—a father, an uncle, maybe a neighbor—who served in the Great War (later known as World War I), and grew up in the aftershocks and shadows of that war. It was a time of excess—flappers, zoot suits, the Palmer Raids, and the rise of Communism. Most of all, your childhood and teen years were lived during the Great Depression. I remember my mom saying that if she received an orange for Christmas, she was very happy. One of my grandparents picked up coal that dropped along the railroad tracks in order to provide some heat in winter.

Those who entered World War II, lived childhoods where their mothers sewed their clothes, where extended families cared for each other—there were no government programs then. People were self-reliant and yet cared for each other. Boys built crystal sets to listen to radio dramas with heroes confronting villains and which spoke of "truth, justice, and the American

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[718] Ps 145.16.
[719] Matt 4.4, Lk 4.4.
[720] Mt 4.4b.
[721] Jn 10.10.

way." Parents scoffed at absurd ideas such as space travel by Flash Gordon or talking into a wrist-watch telephone. How impractical and impossible! What's coming to our youth to imagine such things?

(If they were magically able to be transported into our times and walk our city streets, they'd say "Why are you worshipping idols held in your hands, silently and reverently gazing at them and praying to them?")

Because of the Great Depression, extended family—aunts and uncles and cousins—came together and helped each other. Most entering World War II were in their 20s and close to their families. When you went away into the service, you left that closeness for the great uncertainties of war. You had heard horror stories of gas, mechanized warfare, and airplanes dropping bombs from those who knew the horrors of World War I. World War II was not some little battlefield: it engulfed the entire earth. We didn't enter it with overwhelming military or economic advantage, but with great uncertainty. One of the sections of our National Anthem (which we don't usually sing) has the words: "Fight then we must / when our cause, it is just / And this be our motto: / "In God is our trust." / And the Star Spangled Banner forever will wave / O'er the land of the free / and the home of the brave."

And your hearts stirred with the voice of the powerful Kate Smith singing "God Bless America."

It was also a time in which the American soul remained very isolationist. Horrors of World War I created a revulsion against war. A protest movement called "America First" led by Charles Lindburgh attempted to discourage us from entering war.

As the war progressed, initial years of set-backs only deepened the uncertainty.
Desperation was evident in national rationing of food and gasoline. No new automobiles were built. There were numerous black-out drills in the cities. I remember, as a child, the necessity of closing the drapes at night lest any light seep out of the home that might guide a German airplane to drop bombs on Milwaukee! Our invasion of islands in the Pacific and land battles in Europe resulted in astronomical losses of men killed. Victory was uncertain for years.

Those of you who served in World War II were in for the duration. There was little certainty that you would return home. It was all "beyond grim."

Yet, miraculously here you are today. Through our Lord's great grace you are still here–to enjoy God's presence, beauty, and love, to do good for others, and to praise our Lord by how you live, by what you say and what we pray.

Today, we are here to give you a great hug and tell you how much we appreciate what you gave for us.

God bless you!

SHORT INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW BY MR. MIKE BARTLEY 27 February 1993

[The following was broadcast on Milwaukee Channel 6, WITI, Saturday, 27 February 1993. Interview conducted at h ome in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin]

BARTLEY; Vietnam veterans vividly remember it as the turning point of the war, the Battle of Khe Sanh and the beginning of the Tet offensive 25 years ago. Vietnam veteran and photojournalist DEL CANNON and I visited one man who shares his memories throughout the religious season of Lent. Lutheran pastor RAY STUBBE reflects on the holy season, a holy season which challenged many of his friends' faith, 25 years ago, [*scenes of Khe Sanh*]. the dramatic siege of Khe Sanh in South Vietnam. Some say it was the turning point in the war, the beginning of the Viet Cong Tet Offensive. At the valley of Khe Sanh, 6,000 Marines protecting a tiny air base became encircled by the enemy. the Marines were outnumbered 4:1. As the Viet Cong constantly shelled the Marines, Pastor Ray Stubbe held services anywhere he could, in open areas, in the trenches. While enemy shelling killed and injured Marines often asked Stubbe, Why wasn't God present in Vietnam?

STUBBE: Because of the ghastly horror of it all. A lot were decapitated. We carried headless bodies. The wounds were horrible.

BARTLEY: But Stubbe says the horror became tempered by the sheer caring for each other. US soldiers held each other in the trenches to protect each other, to comfort each other.

STUBBE: God was present through the caring of people for each other.

BARTLEY; And while Marines struggled to stay alive, Khe Sanh turned many Americans back home against the war. *Newsweek*'s cover, 'The Agony of Khe Sanh.' In *Life* magazine, Stubbe is seen praying with Marines. Stubbe saved many

reminders of Khe Sanh, not only to remember those who gave their lives, but to remember those who survived, those who held on in the hills for 77 days, until the Viet Cong retreated. But Stubbe says it should be remembered not just as a military victory.

STUBBE: Mainly the cost, the tragedy of it all, that the good people be not forgotten, and to remember the living. We're not just remembering the dead people but all the veterans and the families.

[*scene in church*:

Stubbe: The blood of Christ, shed for you.

BARTLEY: Stubbe talks about Khe Sanh so that Khe Sanh will never be repeated. He says it's only appropriate to share his memories during the Lenten season.

STUBBE: Lent means Spring—new beginnings. It's life emerging from death.

BARTLEY: Ray Stubbe won the Bronze Star Medal for valor for his religious services. He's also the national director for a group of Khe Sanh veterans. Stubbe also wrote a book called *Valley of Decision, The Siege of Khe Sanh*. Stubbe lives in Wauwatosa. An interesting man. He finds lot of good lessons.

[*other announcer*]: He seems like a true hero who, like most heroes doesn't want any attention.

BARTLEY: Exactly. He speaks softly...

CONVERSATION WITH YVONNE SLUGA, 20 May 1996 [Milwaukee radio station WYMS, 88.9 FM]

SLUGA: This is Yvonne from WYMS radio. Basically we're calling you for Memorial Day. What was your role during the Vietnam War? What were your duties, and were you an officer or enlisted?

STUBBE: OK. I had been enlisted one time, in the Navy—this was earlier. Then, after being ordained, they were asking for Chaplains in the middle of '67, so I thought it was a good idea to—well, I just had an empathy for the service-people, so I went back in as a Chaplain, and immediately arrived in Vietnam to a place called Khe Sanh, which at the time was very pleasant and nice, cooler than the rest of Vietnam, high up in the mountains, right near the Laotian border and also the border with North Vietnam, the Demilitarized Zone. And everything was very peaceful there, almost like a Garden of Eden, very magical, a spiritual kind of place. And I went there as a Chaplain, and I was a Chaplain to a battalion. A battalion is about 1200 men—Marines, Navy Corpsmen. We were the only battalion at Khe Sanh [at the time]. We had attached units—engineers, communications set-ups, people dealing with supplies. And I was the Chaplain for everybody [there] then.

SLUGA: I see. Well, that was quite a job.

STUBBE: Yes. It was very interesting. Khe Sanh was not just a base. We had little outposts. We had hill outposts with company-size units. A Company is about 250 men each. And we had one on 881-South—we always called these hills by how many meters high they are above sea-level. We don't have any romantic names like "Pork Chop Hill"; it's just 881-South, or 861, and we had a high one, 950, which just overlooked the base. That was a communications relay location. Then we had an [Army] Special Forces camp called Lang Vei, which was right on the Laotian border. They got overrun with tanks during our big battle, and it was the first time the North Vietnamese had brought tanks into South Vietnam. Prior to the Siege, I used to stay overnight at these different places.

SLUGA: I have to ask you: What was your experience like, being a Chaplain?
You described, initially coming into this environment, feeling a spiritual–?

STUBBE: Well the place was very pristine. There were some local people there which were not Vietnamese. Oddly, everyone thinks all the people in Vietnam were Vietnamese, but there's these 31 tribes of mountain people that are called

Montagnards, none of which can understand each other; they're all different languages. The tribe in our area were called the Bru, B-R-U. They were just very nice people. They were very friendly, happy, always smiling. During the Siege, they hid some of our Marines from the North Vietnamese. They were so primitive, they hadn't learned how to steal, believe it or not. I could wander around here or there and leave my camera, and they wouldn't even think of taking it. There were some missionaries up there. There was French coffee planter that had first come up there in 1918. So it was a very interesting place. And it was isolated, too. There was a road—if you can call it that—a highway that looked like a dirt driveway in the country. That was the main highway from Savannakhet all the way to the coast. There were 31 bridges from Khe Sanh to the next populated area to our east. So it was very easily ambushed and easily cut and our supply lines. Also, coming by air was not altogether easy because of foggy conditions that seemed to prevail in that area. So we knew we were isolated, and that was good, too, because it kept the Generals away and all those kind of people, although they still came occasionally. If they came from Okinawa, they'd always come the last few days of one month and the first few days of the next month. That way they got two full months of income tax deduction and two months of combat pay.

SLUGA: I was wondering for Memorial Day, what is something, or a message, that you would like to put into people's minds, from your experience?

STUBBE: Well, there's a cost. There is a big cost. I think that most of the people who went over there—I've talked with them over the years, now. In fact, we've organized a Khe Sanh Veteran group in the United States. We have about 3,000 members now. Most of them will all say that they went over because of Kennedy's words in [his Inaugural Address]: "We will bear any burden, pay any price, support any friend, oppose any foe—ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country" kind of thing. But they didn't realize the price and they didn't realize the burden and it did become very heavy after awhile. And I think that people just need to realize that we can get into these kinds of things so easily without really realizing what we're doing to people, both ourselves and the people we're involved with.

SLUGCA: Could you sort of expound on the idea of the cost? What were some of the—maybe some of your own personal costs, things that you had to pay or maybe that some people had to pay, or the church had to pay. Kinda give me some of those costs.

STUBBE: I just finished writing a book-length essay, 210 pages. I completed it last year—for Memorial Day—and it's just come out. It's an accounting of the casualties at Khe Sanh—the incidents and a little bit about the person, so that this is not just statistics or names on the wall. There are just so many—everyone is different. A lot of these people died helping other people. There seems to be a pattern. For example, one man who is a non-swimmer sees a local Mountain tribesman, a woman, crossing a river and getting swept down, jumps in, tries to save her, and does get her to the other side, but he himself is swept in the current and dies. His body is found a few days later. Or, a man—we're dropping supplies—with all the noise—three men are working out there, and two see this coming, the other one doesn't. They shout to each other. One pushes the other aside, but in the process of pushing the other one aside, he is himself crushed.

SLUGA: Things that you gained—of what are the things that you lost, too? With cost, even though you loose something because there's that price that you pay, you have to get something back.

STUBBE: Yes. There is a price. You do get something back. Well, I guess just by being over there, I had this style of being a Chaplain of wanting to be with the troops all the time. So, like I said before, I would stay overnight at these outposts and even go out on their company-size patrols. Things were fairly peaceful. I wasn't placing myself or anyone else in any real danger. But I just wanted to know the life that the men were living, and I did, and I got very close to a lot of these men, and found out what they had to endure—no showers for six weeks, and the clothes rotting off, and all that kind of thing. But I got passed over because of that later on. I found out that the Chaplains in Washington thought that I wasn't acting in a professional manner—staying in my tent and attending staff meetings and maintaining my distance and professional.

SLUGA: You know what I think you did—that was a tremendous gift.

STUBBE: Well I didn't realize—I would do it again obviously. I think we communicate what's important in life by how we live. But there was a cost and it affected my career later on. But I was able to finish my career and I was able to minister to people and help people, talk with people, and bring my religious dimension to people and share that with them. And so no

matter what happened as far as other things are concerned, or professional things, is really immaterial, although it hurts. But that was a cost. And of course, from the battle, there are still all these memories and dreams. And I guess I'm sort of stuck there in a way. I'm the one that organized this Khe Sanh Veteran group, sort of like a shepherd getting all the lost sheep together. It has helped people to get in touch with each other so that they can share their feelings and experiences and so on. So it's had a very positive result, but that came out of my difficulties of not being able to forget some of these things. War—for those that are in a war, it never ends.

SLUGA: Absolutely.

STUBBE: That's another thing. I think that's why servicemen who are always at the cemeteries on Memorial Day know this—these are their family members! And there's always this feeling of everyone else shopping and having fun or whatever and—it's like living in two different worlds at the same time. That one phrase from Lamentations, "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?" is sort of a feeling that we all feel.

SLUGA: What I hear a lot of is that, the simple fact that, yes, we paid a tremendous price, but our payback for that, what we got back, was people bringing a message back to us that war has such a high price and to think more carefully.

STUBBE: Yes, exactly. Veterans have an awful lot to tell in that regard, and also from the experiences of war, there's a real feeling for just being helpful and being involved in community work, especially for those more disadvantaged. I find that a lot of our veterans are

[*change of tape*]

What a valuable resource in our community our veteran group is or can be, in terms of sharing, listening—just like we disregard our elderly in many ways, which is sort of related to Memorial Day now in an expanded way, remembering all who have passed, not just military.

SLUGA: It's great that the vets get out and they speak—not all do—but there's some that are a little bit more eloquent than others. You're speaking out and reminding people of the pros and cons of things and give them a new perspective.

STUBBE: Vets do not like—certain questions are just so grating and so demeaning—like "how many people did you kill?"—that is just so painful. I think we should treat vets like we should treat our elderly: the elderly have the stories. We don't listen to them. Every tribe, every society, every group in civilization, but us, always listened to their elders in camp fires, in their sagas, in their stories, and they would pass on what they experienced and what they learned and it became part of the shaping myth for the people to live by—I use "myth" in the sense of something you live by, a story that you live by.

SLUGA: I think that myth is very important. I think that we all need to have a myth in our culture.

STUBBE: Well we do, but we just aren't always aware of it. But I think that the veterans can also contribute—not just verbally, having them talk or something like that—but getting involved in Little League or whatever. Some do not like to be in crowds, but they can still work with the blind or helping people to learn how to read, one-on-one kind of things, are very good at this, and do this.

SLUGA: Have you noticed whether the war has made people become more sensitive, especially with the veterans?

STUBBE: O yes, very definitely. When you don't have things, you learn how valuable—what you assumed all the time. I had people tell me—even over there—they said they never realized how much their mom did for them, washing all their clothes, and all that kind of stuff, until they were over there. They were mainly 18, maybe 19. But you never forget these things [lessons learned]. You learn how valuable peace is and quiet is and life is and beauty, and all these things that we just assume or—I think you'll find that veterans are keenly sensitive of what people do to each other, whether they share what little they have, how they regard people that are in need—that all comes from—like carrying a buddy while the rounds are still exploding, a wounded buddy through all that, to safety when you yourself might get killed, but it's just done. You didn't even think about it.

SLUGA: A lot of heroes.

STUBBE: Well, it's just commonplace. Yes, exactly. Yeah, the hero is always the one who always transforms the situation.

SLUGA: It's really a heroic journey to there—going to and coming back a heroic mind-set.

STUBBE: Yes, I think so. Of course, the other side of that are the wounds, not only physical, but emotional and spiritual, that people have. However, out of the wounds come the healing. The wounds are the doors and the windows into the spiritual dimension. And again, whether the shaman or whatever, the healer is always one who has been wounded. Even in Christianity, the Cross. But the Greek myth, the Asclepius, the symbol of the snake on a pole—the venom that kills but also heals, the woundedness. Woundedness is a real source of healing, not for the wounded person themselves, but out of the wounded, society is healed. Also in terms of making art. Out of this comes music and poetry and paintings, sculptures. Whether it's the Hopi with their sand drawing, people make art.

SLUGA: I think you said it very beautifully that out of the wounds come—

STUBBE: The healing, yes. So all of our Memorial Day celebrations, which is all of this woundedness.

SLUGA: And I think that people should know that.

STUBBE: Well, we embrace each other, and in a sense we're embracing our society at the same time.

SLUGA: Well, thank you very much, Reverend.

...

CONVERSATION WITH ROBIN HOLZHAUER, 13 November 1996 [For Wauwatosa *News Times* issue of 21 Nov 1996,]

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STUBBE: I was involved in a battle in this place called Khe Sanh, two separate words. It's two Vietnamese words that mean "green river." Not too well known by too many people. Actually it should be pronounced "Khe SCHAN" because the Vietnamese "s" is "x" and "s" has a "sh" sound. But that's very arcane. The veterans who were there, prior to all the Marines coming there, the Special Forces, always call it "Khe SCHAN," and those who don't know, call it "Khe San". I was the chaplain there and I was there for 8 months, from July '67 to March '68, and from January through March '68 we had this very immense battle there, probably the biggest battle of the whole Vietnam War was there. And I was the chaplain on the base there, and kept a diary at the time, which has become of interest to many people, and I had a book come out, published by Houghton Mifflin on that battle.

HOLZHAUER: What's the name of the book?

STUBBE: *Valley of Decision*. The co-author is John Prados.

HOLZHAUER: Was it on your reaction to the battle.

STUBBE: No, actually—well, what happened was that I had written a lot of it and then—I'd written a large manuscript, unwieldy actually—it couldn't be published in its form. The publisher contacted John Prados, who is not a veteran but has done a lot of writing on the National Security Council and other high Washington scenes, and he added the Washington level, President Johnson, and that kind of thing. And then took my more personal observations.

HOLZHAUER: When was that published?

STUBBE:: Fall of 1991. This battle was—we had a little under 6,000 Marines there plus some Army people and Air Force, and a considerable amount of Army Special Forces, probably about 300-400. They had been there to this battle leading patrols into nearby Laos, which was about ten miles to the west of us. That's why they were there. In fact, that's probably why we were there—to protect them. They monitored the Ho Chi Minh Trail, how much traffic was moving, and reported directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and President. Sort of a spy group. They would go in on patrols of 3 Americans and 9 indigenous people to do that. They were there. They were so Top Secret at the time because we weren't supposed to be in Laos.

Anyway, when the battle started, we had about forty thousand (at least) North Vietnamese soldiers surrounding us—all at once. They came in from Laos. The people—as we found out since—on the higher levels—knew this was going to happen. This happened on Sunday, the 21st of January. About a week, ten days later, on 30, 31 January, is when Tet erupted throughout South Vietnam. Ours started about ten days earlier than the regular Tet battles. And some historians don't know whether to include us into the Tet battle or as a separate battle. At the time, some thought we'd be another Dien Bien Phu, and the President had the Joint Chiefs of Staff sign a statement that we would not be overrun. They even considered tactical nuclear weapons for awhile; it got that desperate. The North Vietnamese introduced tanks—for the first time in the war and overran a nearby, small Special Forces camp. And we all thought tanks were coming down the line for us. The end result was that there were 475 Americans killed there and about 2,000 medically evacuated with major wounds. People with broken arms and gashes in their arms and legs were not considered "major wounds;" they would just stay there. And there was more tonnage of bombs dropped in support of us in the immediate area than in all the Pacific in World War II. So it was a very massive undertaking. Some of the local people—they were not Vietnamese, but Mountain Tribesmen—and they were not permitted to leave the area by the Vietnamese. It was a racial thing, just like us with the American Indians or whatever. Every nation seems to have these, unfortunately—every society even. In Vietnam it was the Vietnamese versus the mountain people, the Montagnards. There were about 12,000 Montagnards of the Bru, "B" "R" "U", and they were not permitted to leave because the Vietnamese said there was no place in Vietnam where they could settle. They were sort of caught in between, and later on there was a refugee camp established some 20 miles away, and we figure that at least 6-8,000 Bru were killed during this battle. And probably up to 20,000 North Vietnamese died during those first three months. So it was very bloody battle. And because of that President Johnson didn't run again, and had a lot of political–. Right after the battle, we abandoned the place. So it's always been ambiguous who won.

HOLZHAUER: Why did they abandon it?

STUBBE: Well, it was very close to the Laotian border and there's a very high cliff right on that border, a river called the Xe Pone River, and the cliff, and in the cliff there were caves. The North Vietnamese put artillery pieces in there which could fire at us, but our artillery pieces didn't have enough range to fire back. So we depended on air strikes. International Law probably would have permitted us to go in there because Laos was neutral and like Switzerland and Sweden in World War II, a neutral nation is very well armed because it's supposed to keep out all the belligerents, and they didn't keep out the North Vietnamese, so when a neutral country doesn't keep out one belligerent, then another one can go in. But we didn't do that for diplomatic reasons. The Ambassador at the time, SULLIVAN, didn't want us to, and probably the public wouldn't have permitted it anyway. So for artillery reasons, and then because we had such limited amounts of people there—that is troops on the ground. They wanted us to adopt a more mobile posture, so they didn't have fixed bases. They would just move around here and there with temporary places. And that was very successful. I always heard that in a war, people take on the characteristics of their enemy, and that happened with us. We adopted the ways of the mobile North Vietnamese and used it very successfully.

But the main thing there, as a chaplain, was that I was involved with the day to day life of the troops, and I was part of all that too. I went through the same thing. And what I observed in general was how people cared for each other. There was a day to day usual heroism, and not being intimidated. We were constantly being shelled, by the way. Our base was about one and a half miles long and half a mile wide, which isn't too large for all those people, and we would receive up to 1600 rounds of rockets and artillery a day. These have a radius that people, when they explode, people get killed very easily. But our men—when the incoming came in, they took temporary shelter—fell flat on the ground or in a trench or into a nearby bunker, and just seconds after it was over, they'd be up and around. And some people were even out during this—they had to be, to repair communication wires that got severed or to spot where the rounds were coming from or that kind of thing. And then a lot of people would dash out during this to rescue people who were wounded. This was just always common. I guess what happens in a battle is that people just all realize they're going to die anyway, so in the mean time they might as well take care of each other. It becomes instinctual. And everybody becomes numb towards feelings.

HOLZHAUER: I suppose after three months of it you become [?]

STUBBE: Yeah it becomes that way. Although they used to call it the "ten thousand yard stare." People would see—people coming off of this and their eyes would be looking off ten miles away. And I would say that almost everyone who went through that–.

I organized a group. We started with about 15. We have about 3,000 now, nationally, in our Khe Sanh Veteran group. And everyone had some effects of that, coming out, although I would say that it's not that people are all that damaged. Actually most of our people are very productive, in fact they seem to have a dynamo of energy to do volunteer work. Some are volunteer firemen, or they work for the 4H Club, or they do civic work in one form or another—Little League or something, or may have two jobs, and are very active people. I don't know if that's from that, but it seems that people have a lot of energy—maybe the anger or whatever is somewhat transformed that way. But I would say generally that the people who were there at that time are people that I would like to have as neighbors—people that would maintain a humor and care for each other.

HOLZHAUER: Did you actually do fighting as a Chaplain?

STUBBE: O no, no! We're prohibited from that. What I would do is—during this and prior to, of course—I would just visit all around, wherever the people were. We couldn't gather people in a group of more than 3 or 4 because there was a ridge-line overlooking us with enemy spotters that would call-in rounds. So if they ever saw a group they would do that.

HOLZHAUER: People were targets?

STUBBE:: Yes, exactly, so I would just go around the trenches and the bunkers. I was all over the base all the time. And prior to the battle, we had hill outposts, and I'd be out all over the place. During the Siege I held little—and I mean little—services both in size and in time, any where's from one to up to ten in a bunker, and the service would last about three or four minutes. . In that was a short prayer, a scripture lesson, a one or two sentence sermon, a communion service, and a blessing, all in that time. And then I'd stay around with the men and see how they were doing, and move on. That is basically what I did. And I lived in the medical area, so I was always there with the casualties, the wounded that would come in, and we had a Graves Registration unit nearby where all the dead were. And I was saying prayers there for them.

HOLZHAUER: You remained on active duty to '85; is that right?

STUBBE: Yes, January '85. I stayed mainly with Marine units, although I was also on several amphibious ships—ships that hold Marines. Marines—they call them "naval infantry"—were originally men that were carried on ships to make landings on shores. That's basically what a Marine was, and still is. The Marines are now a separate military service, but that's only been very recent—maybe since 1980. Prior to that time, they were always part of the Navy.

HOLZHAUER: So you weren't actually drafted?

STUBBE: I volunteered. I had been enlisted one time in the Navy, right out of High School—I went to Washington High School and graduated in '56. Then I had a couple of years in the Navy. Then I got out and went to college and seminary. Then I started a church in Oak Creek called All Saints Lutheran Church. It's on Howell. Then I went to the University of Chicago graduate school just for a year. And then I went back on active duty as a chaplain.

HOLZHAUER: So you were older than most people, then?

STUBBE: Yes, I was 29 going on 30. I was born in '38, and this was '68. Most of the guys were 19.

HOLZHAUER: Do you think that made any difference in how either you dealt with the war or how the other people related to you over there?

STUBBE: No, not really. I had been there before the battle began. I arrived there in July. And during that time, we had little hills surrounding us, and we had units of 200 men each on them, and I would go out when they'd scour and check out

the nearby area up and down the hills and the valleys and the rivers. It was very rough terrain. So I was in very good physical shape at the time, very lean. I was down to 130. I wish I were somewhere close to that now! Now I'm 58. But I kept very close to the troops there. I don't think that age was—I don't think they looked at me as being someone older.

HOLZHAUER: I was wondering—I read some of the letters that were in the book that you wrote—

STUBBE: Most of those were before the battle.

HOLZHAUER: One of them was apparently on the date—the 21st. But I was wondering whether some of the things that you wrote about then that you still think as true. There's a couple of things. One of them is in a letter of January 20th, were it says that "war is obviously immoral, what they fail to see is that man is not naturally good and that men will not naturally do what is right, and that the choices before men today are not black and white but of different shades of gray.

STUBBE: I can't say that people are basically bad or good anymore. I don't know. I really don't know. Like Faust, I can say after having lived all these years, "I now do know that I do now nothing know." I tend now to see more of the goodness of people. I would say that people are basically good—in fact, very good. The way that I look at people now is that they are basically good but they're covered over with coatings of mud that other people have splashed on them—or dented or scratched, but underneath they are basically good. But I still do think that we live in a world of grays. There is no absolute right course or wrong course, there's only better or worse courses or decisions. I think that we just deal with some good and some not good in everything. That's really not profound, but that's where I am now. I tend to see the goodness in people, and try to bring it out. And I really think that's what we're all called to do for each other, is to bring out the goodness in each other. That was written just as the battle was starting, and as it continued, I saw, for example, how we would run out of water or food, and people would share their last drops of water or morsels of food not knowing if they would get anymore. Our water all came in from a stream that was outside the base that was pumped into a large rubber vat-like container that kept getting punctured by shrapnel from the explosions. So we never knew about the water, or if the North Vietnamese would poison the stream or something like that. And there were some of our outposts that didn't have water for, like, ten days at a time. And we were down to one C-ration a day. That's one of the reasons people lost so much weight. I mean it was really very desperate; it really was. It was cloudy and all our resupply was by air. We never knew if we would get it.

HOLZHAUER: You were surrounded, like Berlin airlift.

STUBBE: Yeah, and our Drop Zone was extremely small, probably like a quarter of a city block, and we didn't control much area. There were so many enemy around us. We were prohibited from patrolling, from looking around, because they brought these B-52 strikes within a mile of us. And these things are awesome. If you can imagine an area in the city that's one mile wide by three miles long, one B-52 strike has enough bombs to totally annihilate everything that's in that area. And we would get dozens of these a day. And they used to be regulated to about three miles from friendly lines because they're so high you can't see them—for safety reasons, in case they erred just a little bit, a second or two, they'd drop the bombs on friendly troops. The situation became so desperate that they brought these to within half a mile of our lines. And people would be told ahead of time they were coming. They'd be in the trenches and actually bouncing from the shock waves. So it was really a very, very desperate situation. But within that, like I say, people shared what little they had, and it was little. It was right down to their last water and their last food—with each other. And that was just a common thing. Or they'd dash out to help someone. That was usual; it wasn't unusual at all. And so I just saw the basic goodness

[*TAPE RAN OUT*]

INTERVIEW BY S NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS, QUANTICO, VA.

[Interview in home in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, 20 June 2005; copy forwarded by Batwin & Robin letter 11 Jan 2006]. Interviewers used professional gear and were from Illinois] [The interview is spoken at the National Marine Corps Museum, Quantico, VA.]

NARRATOR: Lieutenant Ray William Stubbe, Chaplains' Corps, U.S. Navy, arrived in Khe Sanh in 1967 as the Chaplain of the First Battalion, 26th Marines, and experienced the worst moments of the North Vietnamese siege. he recalls the first massive rocket and mortar attack to hit the base on 21 January 1968, the bombardment that blew up the main ammo dump.

STUBBE: ... When the siege started, I woke up to the sound of rockets whizzing and loud blasts, and suddenly realized we were under a rocket and mortar attack.

I ran to the trench, and the supply dump to the east, to the east of us was on fire, they had sandbags and oil, and everything, that was all in flames. And on the other side of us was the dump for the aviation gas and tar that they were using in the repair of the airstrip, and that was all burning. So it was dark night with plumes of orange, yellow flame and sharp, cracking noises and whumps and whoomps and bombs and cracks.

And they hit pour ammo dump, which contained some drums of tear gas powder, and that spread over the base, and many of our people didn't have gas masks at the time, or if they did, they didn't bring them with them to the trench, they were still in the bunkers or tents, or whatever. And so there we were in this trench, at least where I was, with putting cloth with, soaked with water over our face trying to breathe, choking, coughing, feeling claustrophobic, and this went on for, it seemed like hours.

I helped dig some people out of some rubble, I remember, near the ammo dump, and the tear gas clouds were still sort of lingering, there were tears in my eye, there were pieces of exploded and semi-exploded ordnance all over the place including little darts that had come from these rounds that have these little nail-like things that are like one inch long, they call 'em flechettes.

NARRATOR: Chaplain Stubbe describes the ordeal of daily bombardments and the frustration of being targeted by enemy spotters in the surrounding hills.

STUBBE: We could move around in the morning, then usually the fog burnt off around noon or so, and that's when the aircraft would come, and that's when the shelling would come, basically, because they were tryin' to kill the aircraft.

There was that whole ridge that ran sort of parallel to the airstrip and we knew they had spotters up there that could call in mortars on us. And as far as I was concerned, personally, I was told that I couldn't hold church services that were more than six people because if these spotters saw more than, we figured if they saw more than six or so, that would be a lucrative target and they would call in mortars on us when they had us pretty well pinpointed.

So for some time, and all during February we were getting lots of incoming, that's the day, I mean, that's the month when we took like 1,600 rounds in one day. that's the month when on the 10th of February a C-130 Marine fixed-wing aircraft was hit and burnt up.

Khe Sanh was an exceedingly beautiful place but it was also a place of, of, of much violence and much exertion, and much, it just took out, it took out everything and it, but it drew people together.

We probably only got one ration a day, and sometimes we'd go like three days without water. And I went, when I arrived in Vietnamese, I was 187, and at the end of the siege I think I was 130 something. And all of us, the clothes were rotting off, clothes were, the uniforms were full of blood, and mud, and sweat, and grease, and everything else. In some cases the material had fused in with the skin, we were dirty, a little spacey I guess, but, but, but all thoroughly and completely alive.

INTERVIEW OF RAY WILLIAM STUBBE BY JAMES KURTZ, WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM, MADISON, WISCONSIN, 05 December 2005, 15 February 2006, and 26 April 2006

[Note: Explanatory notes, inserted upon transcribing this tape, were inserted by Ray Stubbe in brackets].

[Interview of 05 December 2005]:

Kurtz: My name is Jim Kurtz, and I'm interviewing Chaplain Ray Stubbe at his home in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, and the bird you hear in the background is Fred, very social and Fred may or may not contradict Ray, but we'll have to see.

Ray, when and where were you born?

Stubbe: I was born the 15th of August 1938 in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin—in fact just about half a block from here, from where I now live.

Kurtz: Did you grow up in Wauwatosa?

Stubbe: No. After that my parents moved out to 112th and North [Avenue], which doesn't exist anymore; it's the entrance to Highway 45 North at Mayfair Road. North Avenue from 92nd out there was at that time a dirt road, and Mayfair Road had only a little school, Fischer School, and everything else was wide-open space. I lived there until I was about 4, and then we

moved to 60th and Meinecke in Milwaukee. My dad worked for a company [located at] about 33rd and North Avenue. He used to walk there. I used to walk to school. I went to Himont, Steuben Junior High, and Washington High School.

Kurtz: Did you graduate from Washington?

Stubbe: I graduated from Washington High School in 1956.

Kurtz: Did you have to walk all the way up and down the hill in the snow?

Stubbe: It wasn't all that hilly, but it was snowy—in fact the snow of '47 I remember: it all came down about three-foot in one night and had great fun. The whole city was paralyzed for a week.

Kurtz: What year did you graduate from high school?

Stubbe: 1956.

Kurtz: 1956, and that was in the middle of the Cold War.

Stubbe: Well things were—I remember [General Douglas] MacArthur being fired when I was in Steuben. He came back here to Milwaukee and they had a big parade.

Kurtz: Do you remember anything about the parade, or just remember it happening?

Stubbe: I just remember it happening. I remember his speech on the radio: "Old soldiers never die; they just fade away." He had a deep—and that kind of oratorical voice that Senator Everett Dirkson and Roosevelt, Churchill—people talked in that kind of grandiose style. I remember the air raid shelters in the hallways for the nuclear–.

Kurtz: Was it a reality that a male graduating in 1956 from high school would be going into the military?

Stubbe: No, not especially from Washington. Washington was a very academic school at the time. The feeling was: from Washington you could almost go to any college in the United States without any problems. I graduated in the upper tenth of the class. Later on, when I went to [St. Olaf] College [in Northfield, Minnesota], I took an entrance exam (which is sort of like the GRE they now have), a Minnesota test, and I was in the 100th percentile of that, so Washington was a good school.

Kurtz: So what did you do after high school, Ray?

Stubbe: Well, the year before my senior year, the summer before, I decided to join the Naval Reserve. Actually it was as my senior year started. It was 28 September 1955, I enlisted in the Navy Reserve, and went to Reserve meetings here in Milwaukee at a brand-new Reserve building (which is still there, but at that time it was brand-new—in fact, they were dedicating it and I looked at these "old" Captains—I was part of that little group where the Captains come in; they "pipe" the Captains aboard—"sideboys" they call them. I was one of the sideboys and I remember these "old, old, old" Navy Captains in their 30s and 40s, how ancient they are. I was 17. So I spent my senior year in high school in the Navy Reserve, which is very unusual for that school—and for me, academically, to be connected with the military.

Kurtz: What was the reason you joined the Navy Reserve?

Stubbe: I'm not really sure. I can't think back [for the reason] at those times. I'm not really sure, because I could have gone to any college after high school.

Kurtz: Were any of your family military members?

Stubbe: No. Well, my uncle whom I'm very close to, was in the China-Burma-India Campaign in World War II, and he and I were very close.

Kurtz: Did that have any influence, do you think?

Stubbe: I don't think so. And I had a great uncle, my grandma's brother, died in World War I, his name was Nels.

Kurtz: What side—with a name like Stubbe?

Stubbe: That was my mother's side—Anderson. He was at Fond du Lac, actually at a place called Hamilton, which was a little rock quarry area there, just south of—doesn't exist anymore. I think it was a time of confusion for me, quite frankly. I was all set to go into the sciences. I had been interviewed by a Case Institute of Technology [person], and I was thinking of the Colorado School of Mines. I was interested in geology and mineralogy and that kind of thing.

Kurtz: Let the record show that around the house [it's evident that] he's still interested in some.

Stubbe: O yes, rocks—I never gave up that interest in the mysteries and wonders of the earth.

Kurtz: Were you committed to go on active duty, Ray, as a result of joining the Reserve?

Stubbe: Yes, I had a two-year active duty [obligation] at that time. I think it was—my minister at the time had also asked me to consider the ministry, and that was so jolting for me—why did he do that? He was a really very powerful minister, well-known nationally, and I suppose to avoid the decisions, I thought, well, I'll get out of the box—we didn't use that term in those days.

Kurtz: What was that minister's name?

Stubbe: Austin Alvin Zinck, A.A. Zinck, Z-I-N-C-K. He was on national boards of our Lutheran group. He was from Nova Scotia. He had been President of a seminary and college up there before becoming our Pastor. He had a very powerful voice, and he was well-known for his scholarship. Not only was he President up there, but he also taught calculus, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, the Bible, and philosophy, and everything else. He was a very powerful person. A humorous aside: I was in Confirmation [classes] one time and—he was a big guy too—he was born in Nova Scotia of sea-faring people, and he said [*speaks in low, loud, serious voice*], "Ray, do you 'air'?" And I thought he meant, did I fart? And I said, "No, Pastor Zinck, No, I don't 'air'!" And he looked at me and said, "Yes, you do!" OK, yes, I do! He meant ":err," but I always pronounced that 'er' [as in "father"]; he pronounced it "air."

Kurtz: So, when you graduated from high school, you reported to the Navy. Where did you go there?

Stubbe: Yes, well actually I was able to do a two-week—I'm not really proud of this, but it's just what happened. I did a two-week Active Duty for Training at [Naval Training Center] Great Lakes [Illinois], went through that and finished that in the summer of '56, and then I got my orders to go on active duty [to report] on the 31st of October of '56, and they said that since you already went through the two-week boot camp and you're already Seaman Apprentice [pay grade E-2], you don't need to go through boot camp again. It was marvelous! So that's how that happened. Then I went to a Receiving Station in Brooklyn [New York], for about two, three weeks, and then I reported aboard the USS NOA, a destroyer, hull number 841, in Norfolk [Virginia] in, I believe it was, the 10th of December of '56, bitter cold, assigned to the deck force, 2nd Division, swabbing decks, chipping paint, and remained on the NOA about two years. After about three months on the Deck Force they were looking for someone for Ship's Office, someone who could type, and I had a very good clerical score, 67 or something like that, and a high GCT score—the Navy ones are lower than the Marines. So they brought me into the Ship's Office and they sent me to a Yeoman "A" School at Bainbridge [Maryland], and I made YN3, Yeoman Third Class, and eventually, before I finished my active duty, I was a Second Class Petty Officer [pay grade], E5.

Kurtz: So when you got out of the Navy, that was 1958

Stubbe: '58, yes. And I was in the middle of the Mediterranean at the time because there was a crisis at Lebanon—even then! In fact, that's where I got my first ribbon, an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, for operations off of Lebanon in '58,

and they wanted me to—but I had already been accepted by St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and they had an "early release program." Normally, I would have stayed in until October of '58, but they let me out in—I can't remember—August or September—it was right before school was to start. And I got right out of the Mediterranean and they sent me back and I got separated, but I still had reserve obligation, and went to St. Olaf College.

Kurtz: So did you graduate from St. Olaf?

Stubbe: Yes, in '62. And while I was at St. Olaf, I continued to go [to Navy Reserve meetings on Navy Island] to Minneapolis on Reserve meetings. I took the bus up there. I graduated with a philosophy major and was all set to go to Seminary at that point.

Kurtz: So you made a decision at St. Olaf to go to Seminary?

Stubbe: And the first year [at St. Olaf] I took courses that normally juniors take: I took Greek. I also took advanced chemistry—they had a normal chemistry course for those that just needed science credits, but I took the advanced one. It was a pretty heavy academic schedule, and I was over my head, but I was over my head. There was one experiment in chemistry where we got an "unknown" and we had to do the research to try to determine—they told us it was about ten different elements that it could be. We had to do the research on what kind of test to do. So they gave me this little test tube of unknown. It happened to be a uranium [compound], and the way to test for that was to put sulphuric acid with it and it would change colors (green and yellow). Stupidly—I mean, very stupidly,(because I had done chemistry when I was in grade school and knew better!), I poured the solution into the sulphuric acid rather than vice versa, and it exploded. Fortunately, I was wearing glasses, but it could have blinded me. And I realized at the time I was being a little lax, and that was probably not my thing to do, so I stopped taking all the chemistry courses.

Kurtz: So what seminary did you go to?

Stubbe: I went to a little seminary called Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary. It was on 100 East 22nd Street, Minneapolis. We were in the old Pillsbury Mansion buildings about a block away from the Minneapolis Art Institute, a very nice location. There were only about a hundred of us, less than a hundred of us for the three years, about thirty to a class. I graduated from there in '65, and about a year after I graduated they merged with Luther Seminary in St. Paul, which is a large seminary, about five, six hundred students on Como Avenue.

Kurtz: So how many were there in your class?

Stubbe: About thirty or so. I graduated second in academic rank in my class, and they were very disturbed that I was going on active duty later on. They thought I should have become a professor or something.

Kurtz: How did you know you were going on active duty?

Stubbe: OK, what happened there was, while I was in seminary, I joined a thing called a Reserve Chaplain Company, commissioned as an Ensign. The Navy had a—maybe still do—but anyway at that time they had a program for those becoming doctors, lawyers, or ministers, that they could become commissioned as an Ensign, but they weren't in their field; they were an unrestricted line officer, but you weren't like an 1105 [designator for Line Officer, Naval Reserve], which was a Line Officer. In my case, I was a 1945. Those numbers refer to codes that the Navy has for officers. So I joined a Chaplain Reserve Company. I think it was 9-6—Ninth Naval District, 6th Chaplain Company [which] met in Minneapolis, and I was the only Ensign. There were, like, four Navy Captains from World War II, and I think there was a Major [should be Lieutenant Commander]. Because of that I was able to go to the Navy Chaplains School at Newport, Rhode Island, one summer for two months.

Kurtz: You did that while you were at seminary?

Stubbe: Yes. At that time—we're talking '65—I graduated in '65. Going on active duty came later on, but I was in this Chaplain Company and remained as an Ensign there. And after I graduated, I became ordained on the 6th of June of '65, went

to start a church in a suburb of Milwaukee called Oak Creek, and I started a church called All Saints Lutheran Church, which was a matter of canvassing a 16 square-mile area, everyone who was in there, saying "We're going to start church services; are you interested?" I have some interesting stories from that, too, but they don't pertain to this story. Anyway, I got it organized on Easter Sunday of '66. I don't know the date of that, but it was in April of '66. At that point I still yearned for the academic interests, so I applied for and was accepted by the graduate school of the University of Chicago, which was at that time—probably still is—a very prestigious—I think it was one of the three top theological graduate schools in the United States, and just to be accepted was quite an honor for me. And I went into a Ph.D. program for "Ethics and Society." I was only there for a year because at that time—this was '66—they were asking for chaplains. Well, there were two reasons: they were asking for chaplains and I thought, well, having been enlisted, I felt a kinship there. I felt a need—I guess you could call it a "calling." I had an inner sense that that's where I should be. I saw articles in *Life* magazine. I saw pictures of POWs, and it really affected me. That was the positive thing. The negative thing was that the University of Chicago—I was on the GI Bill at the time, so financially it was OK, but the Chicago theological school had this thing that they wanted you to be there maybe seven years before you got your Ph.D., and especially in "Ethics and Society" they wanted you to be proficient in economics, political science, sociology. You had to pass at their college level tests in all of those disciplines. So it was matter of: I'd be there maybe ten years or more. It would be forever. Chicago had a good reputation because they demanded a lot before they gave you their credentials. So I was there a year, and then I volunteered to go on active duty.

Kurtz: This would be in 1967?

Stubbe: '67, early. The Navy Chaplain Corps wanted me to come to Washington, which I did, and I was interviewed by the Chief of Chaplains himself and probably one other person in the room, and they said: OK, would you waive your 30 day waiting period to go on active duty? I said: Yes. So within a week I got my orders to go to Camp Pendleton [California] which I did in June of '67. And they had a three-week orientation thing [course] for chaplains. Prior to that they put the Chaplains in with the Field Medical Service School where the Corpsmen and Doctors would pick up things on first aid and how to treat casualties in the field and all that kind of thing. And they figured out that Chaplains did not need to know all the technical medical things, so they devised a course for just Chaplains. And we had an about-to-be retired Sergeant Major. I don't remember his name. He would put us under his wing. At the time, I was the only one [the only Chaplain going through the course at that time]. I was the only one in the "school." So I just went with the Sergeant-Major, and we'd go to the different ranges or places. We had courses on etiquette, customs of Vietnam—like you didn't touch [pat] the head of a child.

Kurtz: Do basically this was a Vietnam orientation?

Stubbe: Exactly, yeah. It was a Staging Battalion, but the chaplain part, I was the only one in. And they'd go to courses like where they'd fire the M79, and you'd get a chance to fire the M79. And they had an infiltration course where the infantry training people would come up from boot camp and they'd go under barbed wire and they'd fire over them. And I figured, well, if I'm going to be with these people, I need to go through that too. So that was the beginning of the end as far as I was concerned for promotion in the Chaplain Corps. They just said that was not a thing they would have liked me to do. But I felt I need to learn what these people are going through. So I did that. And I wasn't an athletic person. In high school I didn't have any sports. I was what they now call a "nerd;" I was an academic person—and going to the University of Chicago and all that kind of stuff. But nevertheless, I still felt that's what I needed to do, so I went through the infiltration course and the night exercises where you'd be captured as a POW and had to escape and had to be recaptured. And I remember one night we were out and there were just three of us, two Marines and myself, and the Marine in charge, a Corporal, said: OK, we got to move, and we didn't want to move because we thought if we move we're going to be spotted and that kind of thing. And he said: Well, if you don't move, you're going to be captured. And that's the kind of thing I was learning: I was learning. I was learning, in a battle situation that they would have to move under fire, under the enemy, and yet feel safe. And there were some cases where it actually happened, where that actually did happen: where the Marines stayed put and another Marine would say, You got to move, and they'd say: No, we're going to be rescued, and they were all killed. So anyway I was going through all that kind of stuff, and then I immediately went to Vietnam.

Kurtz: Before we get you to Vietnam, I got a couple of questions. Obviously you're a kind of person who follows stuff. Were you aware of what was going on in Vietnam? Starting with Dien Bien Phu, did that make any impression on you?

Stubbe: No. I wasn't even aware of the French thing at all. I think the only thing that really gripped me was some pictures of POWs in the *Life* magazine. They were in purplish, reddish or pink uniform. That really got to me. And O, I must say, another summer while I was still in seminary—one summer I spent in the Navy Chaplains School and the other summer I spent on Temporary Active Duty at the Naval Air Station at Alameda, California, and they had a squadron, VAW-13, which flew these A-1 Skyraiders, electronic—with chaff to jam radars. And they used to take me up flying with them. And the legend at the time was all about Dieter Dengler who had been captured in Laos and managed to escape. He was a German fellow and he tried to pass himself off as a German citizen. And these pilots were all—they had a detachment at Cubi Point, Philippines, and so they were talking about Vietnam a lot. Vietnam was a big subject at the time. So that was in my mind at the time.

(Kurtz: I'm going to turn the tape over.)

Stubbe: Included a letter that I wrote on behalf of Jon Geissmann, who was my roommate at the University of Chicago. What happened: as the siege started at Khe Sanh—just to jump ahead for a second here—we were all—I'll get into that later on—but I received a letter from his draft board. He was being drafted. So I wrote in long hand a letter on his behalf to recommend that he be given a deferment or something like that. So anyway, that's how that happened. I remember eating at the refectory—we didn't call it that then; we call it that in the seminary—at Chicago, it was in the Burton-Judson [quadrangle of dormitories] complex just south of the Midway Plaissance road. The dorms are quadrangles. We were eating lunch there one time when I remember I told the people I was eating lunch with, my fellow students, that I was going to Vietnam, and I remember one of them said to me, "How can you even think of doing that? You'll be the church's endorsement of a corrupt Saigon regime! How can you think of doing that?" And I remember at the time—there were so many things going on in my mind, I must say. One of the reasons—this thing about being with Marines, being in their life–. I guess part of that started—I had a two-week active duty for training down at Great Lakes as a Chaplain, and one of the people there said: Well, why don't you come into our recruit barracks some night and just talk with us? So I did. And it just dawned on me—we have a thing in Christianity called "Incarnation," a Latin thing that means "in the flesh;" it refers to God becoming [human] in Jesus. Called an "incarnation:" God becoming human, taking on human flesh. But that whole paradigm, I guess you could call it, really made a very deep impression on me. And then later on, when I saw the pictures of the POWs in the *Life* magazine. And then while I was at Chicago in Ethics and Society so I was reading all these people, even Martin Luther which I hadn't studied that much in seminary, oddly!

Kurtz: That's strange!

Stubbe: Well, I studied him, but not to the degree—and I was studying under a Methodist, Brian Gerrish, a professor, and we were studying what Luther thought about war, about being a Christian in society. He had this, what we call "The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms," where God is over both the secular state and the church. The two are separate, but God pronounces that the state is God's servant too—in a secular way, to maintain order and justice, punish the evil and reward the good. And that kind of interaction—there was a war with the Turk; he wrote a thing called "May Christians Serve in the Military?" And I read these things for the first time in my life. And I was deeply interested, focused in the interface of religion and war. And oddly enough, none of my other Chaplain friends, through the years even, had never seemed interested in that. And for me, "Thou Shalt Not Kill?" What does that mean? Can a Christian be a soldier—or a Marine. So I did a lot of research. And of course I realized that that commandment did not deal with killing; it dealt with murder. The Hebrews were involved in holy wars—obviously it wasn't "war," it was—I got into all this stuff. And I studied the early church history. I really got into it.

Kurtz: Did the Chaplain School have anything like that?

Stubbe: No, no. They were interested—the Chaplains School was mainly a transforming place, a transformative experience, a place where you transformed from one reality to another, like a "boot camp for ministers," so you know the different ranks, you know what a battalion is, you know what a regiment is, you know what's on a ship, we had damage control drills on a mock ship that the Officer Candidate School—a big, steel box that floated on water and you put out fires, it's sort of sinking. Not all Chaplains went with Marines, obviously; some went to the Navy. It was a familiarization with terms, with Code of Military Justice, how to salute, how to march, what the left foot is and what the right foot is—minus all the weaponry kind of things.

Kurtz: Were you at all counseled that being with the men was not good for your career?

Stubbe: No. I think it was sort of assumed. Most Chaplains are academic, like I was, but they didn't have that—I don't know—. I'm not judging because a lot of Chaplains were very close—very, very close to their men, and a lot of them got out of the Service. Maybe some that were close to their men were able to stay in, too. I'm not saying that in a negative way. I'm just saying that after all that education—college and seminary and everything else—most, like doctors and lawyers—I guess they expected more of a "professional [distance]," and I was more, like, a friend. In fact, during the siege [battle at Khe Sanh] I couldn't do [worship] services because we just couldn't, and maybe I'd just hug somebody or I'd just talk with them: "how are things going," that sort of thing. So I was trying to be a friend, and yet, I did maintain my Chaplain [existence]; I wasn't "one of the boys,"—I'll put it that way. Some Chaplains did that: their language became very course; they would drink a lot and that kind of thing, and they became just one of the people, and I think they lost all their authority that way, because you do have to be different, but you have to [also] be the same. Again, the paradigm of the Incarnation—(I don't want to be too religious for this [interview], but the thing of being fully human and fully divine at the same time is a real "mystery," not that I was that, I [certainly] wasn't fully divine; I was fully human—I know I was, but you have to maintain a distance and also a proximity). Being a Chaplain is a very difficult, a very fine edge, but a lot of Chaplains would be so either just paternalistically pronouncing down or maybe they'd be very friendly and have a little Bible study group, or whatever, a religious thing. But I felt you communicate more by your actions and by your life and by your concerns, than by what you say. Those were the things I was learning in graduate school, and so when I went on active duty, that's the shape of how I became a Chaplain. I'm sort of unusual that way, I guess.

Kurtz: Well I've got a question about the difficulty then when you went to Vietnam, and that is: what were you told about dealing with people that came to you and said they were conscientious objectors or cowards, or they said, you know, the command that says "Thou shalt not kill."

Stubbe: I was very liberal—I'll put it that way, but probably with a sort of enlightened self-preservation. See, the situation at Khe Sanh was that we had at least three hill outposts that were manned by Marines. We had a combat base, and sometimes we would have temporary little outposts. We had a Special Forces camp. We had little groups of Marines that lived in the villages with the mountain tribesmen that we had, and half and half would be Montagnards and half Marines. The Marines were to teach them how to defend their villages. We had those things. And my feeling was that if a fellow came in and said that he had any doubts at all if he would fire on the enemy, that that person should not be in that situation where there was any doubt at all. Not only—I mean, sometimes I would be staying overnight at these positions. I didn't want somebody—the lines were pretty thin; there would be somebody maybe every ten feet at night, which was why they could never fall asleep, whatever, but if there was any doubt at all that someone was going to fire on the enemy approaching—because we were isolated. We were very close to Laos and very close to the Demilitarized Zone, in mountains, and the grass was six-foot high and there was a lot of vegetation and it was very rough terrain. So the enemy could creep in very easily and all of a sudden be there—which they did, later on. So my feeling was "get rid of them" [those claiming to be conscientious objectors]. And so I was very supportive of all conscientious objectors. And I still have a file, if you want to get it later on; I kept a file of all these people. But the Marine Corps—[actually the] Department of Defense—made it very difficult for conscientious objectors. They had a long, hard process, almost Herculean in scope.

Kurtz: What was the view of Company Commanders and Battalion Commanders if you told them that this kid shouldn't be there?

Stubbe: Yeah. They were not quite as liberal. They were short of people, basically, and they needed everybody they could [keep]. So, I'm not sure what happened to all of these people, except for one, a very prominent conscientious objector that reported in on the early part of January, 1968. His name is Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer. And Jonathan came—this is maybe the middle of January he reported aboard. The Siege started the 21st of January; so he was there about a week, ten days before. He saw me. He came in—a very "boyish" kind of appearance, demeanor; he looked like he was 12, 13 years old. He told me (and I learned from talking with him) that he was a son of a Methodist minister. He had never hunted. He had never been in sports. He had never been in a fight. His hero was Albert Schweitzer. He told me—I'll never forget; some of the things are engraved in my memory—he said: He didn't care what happened to him; he just didn't want to hurt anybody else. And I thought—well, for sure—I mean the other people that I supported, I supported; I just didn't know. The Chaplain's job was to determine the authenticity of an applicant and also to answer the questions on the religious development, because they had

to have a religious basis. They couldn't just say they were opposed to wars, or to selective war. And in his case there was no doubt in my mind that this fellow was indeed a very genuine conscientious objector. And I said, OK, we'll start the process.

In the meantime, he had to go to his unit, which was the supply—a rear kind of thing. He was in supply of one of our line companies—I think it was BRAVO Company of First Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines. And I said: Well, we'll start this off; you come back and see me and we'll work this out; we'll write this up and we'll take care of it. Then the Siege battle started, and I hadn't seen him after that. The base was attacked. And about a day after that, the "Top," the First Sergeant of (I'm sure it was) Bravo Company came to me and said: "Chaplain, YOU!—You have to do something about Spicer!" He said, "He won't take up his rifle and clean it and the guys are beating him up." And I can understand that. When things get tense, people—especially the Marines—they have to depend on each other, and if there's a "weak link"—it's just like a hen pecking, the birds pecking the weak bird—that was a cause of anxiety, and so they were beating him up. And I said, "Well, I have a solution. I deserve a Chaplain's Clerk, by requirements. Chaplains deserve a Clerk, and I don't have one. My clerk had just rotated back, just prior to the Siege—a good fellow—he ended back up in DESERT STORM because he stayed in the Reserve in the Army. But anyway. It's sort of ironic. He left. So I had no Clerk, and I said I deserve one. I said: I don't really need one; I'll be honest with you, because I was on the base. I don't need a jeep driver. I don't need someone to carry a rifle to protect me. Those are the two main things that the Chaplains Clerk does—he carries supplies, drives the Chaplain, and protects him. So I don't need him. But my bunker is in the C-Med area, and they always need stretcher bearers. So you can assign him to me, and he'll work for 3rd Platoon of Charlie Company, 3rd Med Battalion; we called them "Charlie Med," which is where I was. He can be a stretcher bearer. OK. That's fine, he said, We'll get him out of our hair. So he reported to me. And I have to say to my shame, again, that was the last time I saw him, because I was all over the base all the time, and I didn't want him around me. I didn't want to be responsible for protecting him. Sometimes we just had to dive into a shallow ditch (or whatever) and there was probably only room for one person, or maybe there was no room, and I didn't want to be responsible for him getting killed. And I didn't pursue any more of his conscientious objection thing. And he was there in C Med, and I was all over the base until—and I left, and I still never saw him. And then I learned that he was helping to load casualties aboard a helicopter and a mortar exploded right as they were doing that. He took shrapnel in the sac around his heart, the pericardium, the doctors that were there were basically interns, they were not qualified to do anything [to do open heart surgery, that is], but they knew if they didn't operate, he'd die. They were successful. They got the shrapnel out of his heart, sent him on to Japan. He was there two weeks, and then he died of infection.

Kurtz: O my!

Stubbe: And then—he was written up in an AP release, or UPI, one of—all the papers in the United States, and there was a woman, Jurate Kazickas, who is a well-known writer, and she was wounded up there, grievously, along with the Engineer Officer, Bill Gay, and she was evacuated as a matter of fact, and she left her boots. And the story tells of these boots, which were tiny, small size, and they just fit Spicer, and he asked if he could have them, and he did—until he died. I always felt guilty after that, that if I hadn't intervened, he might have been transferred to the rear or something, but he would still have been alive. And I worked that through, eventually in that I did what I thought was right; he did what he thought was right; and it was just the circumstances.

Kurtz; Well, war is very [?], as you well know.

Stubbe: O yeah. But you can't—but all Vietnam vets seem to have this thing about guilt. It's sort of an ill-defined guilt and just pin it on to whatever they can pin it on to, whether it's deserved or not. And I pinned the guilt on—it's sort of like when a man comes back home from work and he's angry, and he started fighting his wife. It's not that his wife is wrong, it's just that she's there. You have to have some object to put the emotions on, and most Vietnam vets will pin the guilt on something that's really not really not worthy of that guilt, but they still feel guilty.

Kurtz: One last question, and then we have to go to Vietnam, and that is—this Spicer said he didn't want to hurt anybody. The fact that he wasn't doing his job, meant that he was hurting his fellow Marines, which explains why they were beating him up. Now how did you deal with that, where—if you and I are here together and I've got some responsibility to protect you.

Stubbe: Well, he just worked as a stretcher bearer.

Kurtz; But before he came out of the lines—he said he didn't want to hurt anybody, well, if he—

Stubbe: Well, I just tell, when he came to me, he said that he had told the people in boot camp, in ITR [Infantry Training Regiment], in Staging [Battalion]—there were four or five different things; he told them all. He had been told by his Recruiter that he could be a dog handler and that he wouldn't have to go into combat. Well, the recruiters in those days—we know—would do anything to get their quota, and so that's how they got him. And he soon realized that he was going to be a 0311 [MOS, Military Occupation Specialty] , an Infantryman. So he told all these people, all the way through, and he told me that they told him, Wait until you get to your next duty station. They didn't want to have to deal with it. So here he is, at Khe Sanh, about ready to have war—this conscientious objector, who should have been handled before he got over there, but was passed-off; they just didn't want to handle it, or they thought that maybe he'd crack and conform. So there he is. He comes to Khe Sanh. And I must say—people told me later on that I came to know really well, who worked as stretcher bearers, like recon people—recon people, reconnaissance Marines were unable to do their reconnaissance patrols because of the situation, and they would be sent to C Med to act as stretcher bearers, or sent to the lines or sent to move supplies. They told me that Spicer became in charge of them eventually, because he was there all the time. He was the permanent stretcher bearer and these other people came in and out, and he became like a "tiger." And what happened with Spicer was that when we had incoming, all the guys who would be carrying stretchers out to a waiting helicopter and we'd have incoming mortars because the [enemy] spotters on the hill would see the chopper, call in mortars. And all the other guys would run to ditches, trenches, and bunkers, and Spicer would stay out there with the guy—all the time! He'd lay down beside the stretcher and try to comfort the guy or even lay on top of him sometimes to give more assurance. And he did this all the time. So that when he did die, this article that I was mentioning—they were interviewing Colonel Lownds who was the regimental commander, senior officer present, and he said, well, that man deserves a Navy Cross for his bravery, which is one level under a Medal of Honor. And so he did. He received posthumously—his family received the Navy Cross. And I always thought it was very ironic that this conscientious objector, who never fired a shot got the Navy Cross.

Kurtz: Wow!

Stubbe I think that's quite a story.

Kurtz: As we're turning the tape over, Ray has told me that this is not the first time he's done it. Could you just tell me briefly relay a couple of these people who've been here.

Stubbe: There seemed to be a time—it all happened within a year or two. There was a fellow named Ron Steinman who was with the History Channel or ABC. He did a History Channel thing on Vietnam, and I was included in there along with several other Khe Sanh veterans. And then there was a fellow from the Weather Channel called me up and they were concerned with the effects of weather on war, and they did a section on Khe Sanh, and two people came up from Chicago and interviewed me for that. All these things, by the way, had been repeated on History Channel or Weather Channel, so I'd get telephone calls. And then one time, believe it or not, Ollie North himself, for "War Stories" said we want to do a thing on Khe Sanh, and I said, well, I just don't travel that much. In fact, I told all these people—the reason they came here is that—I guess maybe it's an effect of Vietnam or whatever, but I just don't like to travel. In fact, I get kind of panicky with pressure on the chest, sweaty palms, headaches, if I get out of Milwaukee. So they all came to me; they came to this house. And one time Ollie North came. I said: The only way we're going to do this is if you come here. He said: OK, I'll come. I had known Ollie from 1973 when I was on Okinawa with 4th Marine Regiment at Camp Hansen, and he had the Northern Training Area. And just before I'd gone to Okinawa, I had finished Army Jump School—I'm sounding more and more like a gungy Chaplain—really, and I don't think of myself that way. What happened there—I'm kind of scattered here—but it will come together. I was on a Navy ship called the [USS] SHREVEPORT, LPD-12, and I had orders to go to Okinawa, but the Navy ran out—it was one of these budget things where the Navy ran out of PCS money, Permanent Change of Station money because Congress hadn't passed the Continuing Resolution which, because of that, they didn't have money to transfer people, so I ended up at the Naval Amphibious Base at Little Creek in Norfolk [Virginia] where the SHREVEPORT went off to the Med and I was due to go to Okinawa. So while I was there, they didn't have much work for me to do there, so at that time I translated the Greek New Testament into English; I went through the whole Greek New Testament—academic again. But I said: I need to get some physical exercise because I'm going to Okinawa with Marines again because I had been on the ship and was a little out of shape. So there was a SEAL Team there, SEAL Team Two. And I asked them: Can I do training with you, physical training. They said: Sure! So I did morning runs with them. Of course they were in such good shape and I was in such bad shape—the

heights of the mountains and the depths of the ocean we're talking here. I'll never forget we were in a circle to do exercises and the head guy said: We'll start off light; we'll start off with fifty push-ups. And if I could do ten—I don't know! But the fellow who was next to me was a Chief Boatswain's Mate named BRUMULLER. He had one eye that looked off to the side. He had just come back from Bolivia where he had done some nefarious thing that SEALS do, and he looked at me and said, "Padre, which arm should I use? Left arm or right arm?" And I had never even heard of anyone doing one-arm push-ups and so I thought he was pulling my leg, so I said, "OK, use your left arm." He did fifty push-ups with his left arm! Put his right hand behind his back. He said: "You should go to Jump School. You'd really enjoy that. You enjoy working out with us SEALS. You would enjoy going to Fort Benning!" So they got me permissive orders and I went to Fort Benning and I got my Jump Wings. And I must say that at that time I was an academic person, not physical, and it took every bit of effort that I had to get through Jump School. Most of the guys, it was a breeze; it *is* fun for them, but for me it was serious.

So anyway, I had my silver Jump Wings and I went to Okinawa and there I was able to jump. They had a Special Forces group there called SAFASIA, which I think was "Special Action Force, Asia." I guess I can say this now: they had nuclear weapons there at Camp Chinen and they had plans to invade mainland China. This was back in '73. None of this has ever been in the news, I'm sure. Maybe it's still classified. I'm sure it isn't, but anything with nuclear weapons—people get a little anxious. So I jumped with them in a place in the middle of Okinawa called Yomitan Peninsula. And then I also jumped with Marine Air Delivery people, and I got my Gold [Navy-Marine Corps] Wings. And I liked to go to the Northern Training Area because they were teaching rappelling off cliffs and river crossing techniques and all that kind of thing, and that's where I met Ollie North. He was the Officer in Charge, the OIC, of the Northern Training Area. And he really took care of his men. He got the Division Band up there for Marine Corps Birthday. One of his men, a fellow named GOLIGHTLY, wanted to be baptized. [He was] Southern Baptist. I told him: I'm Lutheran, and you'll have to be baptized again. He said: No, I want to be baptized, so we went in Shin Gawa River, I think it is, that ran through the Northern Training Area—very, very cold. And of course he wanted to be baptized by immersion, so we were in this river. And O, it was so very cold.

So that was my remembrance of Ollie North. And I'd taken some pictures of him with a [Marine Corps] Birthday cake—this young Captain. So he called me; he said he's coming over to do an interview. So he came, and I had a room at that time full of memorabilia from Khe Sanh which I've since donated to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, and we were sitting up there surrounded by all these shrapnel and boots and uniforms and all that kind of stuff, and he was asking me various questions. And I remember I was looking off [into space], and all of a sudden I looked at him, and there was a tear coming down his eye. People remember him, I guess, because of the [Congressional] Hearings on Iran-Contra and all that kind of thing, but really Ollie is a very personable–. He is a good Marine. He took care of his men. He was a "person-type" person, officer. I'm sure he was a "mission-type" officer too, but basically he was a very caring—my memory of Ollie is that he was caring, sensitive person who has very deep feelings, and that's the way that I'll always remember him.

Kurtz: Well, it's time to go to Vietnam. We've talked about conscientious objectors and a little bit about a lot of things, but going to Vietnam. How did you go to Vietnam, Ray?

Stubbe: OK. I flew—as most of us did—some of us went by ship—I flew from Camp Pendleton—I don't think we flew from Camp Pendleton—I'm not sure where we took off from. But anyway, I landed in DaNang, and my first impressions there were how hot and smelly and—of course, I'd been in many foreign countries before in the Navy, so it wasn't that much of a shock. But it was hot and smelly. And I remember I wanted to drink a soda, and some of the guys there were saying, well, we can't use money. We had to use "funny money," so they had Military Payment Certificate, MPC, for a nickel or a dime or a quarter, and someone had some, and they bought me a coke. And I remember also there were three Marines there who were from Khe Sanh. And, of course, I didn't know anything about Khe Sanh. I didn't know how it was spelled. I don't think I'd even heard the term, even though the Battle of the Hills had been in the news. It just didn't register. But they were sitting there, and they had just received Silver Stars, I guess it was. They were with the recon unit. And they were talking about how they—I sat with them—and they were talking about Hill 918. Hill 918 is a little closer to the Laotian border; it's between Hill 881 and the Laotian border. They were talking about how they were going up there and clean it out—the North Vietnamese who were creeping in from Laos. So that stuck in my mind—Khe Sanh and Hill 918, and how young and how enthused and how full of life these—and they were so anxious to get back.

The other thing that happened at DaNang was that—I was only there for one day and they were separating us into bunches of people. Some were going to Khe Sanh, and some were going to Phu Bai and some were going to Dong Ha—there were three main groups, and I was in the group that was going to Phu Bai, and they were going to Khe Sanh. They gave us numbers and they would say, All those with numbers 1 through 60 going to Dong Ha, you can go, and they would go on a C-130 or whatever. And my number was such that I couldn't go. They ceased operations and sent us over to the Air Force area

for supper. And then it was getting around midnight. I can't remember the date, but this would be in the middle of July, and they said: OK, there's another plane that's leaving for Phu Bai which you can take, or you can stay overnight and we'll get you out the next morning. Get some sleep. And I was just anxious to go on, to get out of a temporary thing. Little did I know it was so much better in DaNang. The bedding—it was an Air Force compound, and I was going to a Marine compound where there were no showers or anything, even in Phu Bai. So anyway I got on the last C-130 that left that night, and I'll never forget how claustrophobic I felt. I got on this C-130 and there weren't too many of us. And it was so hot, and the air conditioner started, and it looked like steam coming down from the outlets for the air conditioning. It was so humid that it was like steam. And then the ramp came up, and I felt so closed in even though it was a big plane, and landed in Phu Bai.

What I didn't know was that within five minutes after taking off that DaNang Airbase was hit with a very heavy rocket attack. The way I found that out was that there was another fellow that I talked with while I was at DaNang named Harper Bohr, B-O-H-R, who was going to Khe Sanh as the Intelligence Officer, the S-2 of the Regiment. And he and I had a very nice conversation. He was a very nice gentleman who was also a Lutheran, and we were talking about that. I talked with him for awhile, and then I was talking with these three Marines, and then I went to the Air Force compound. Anyway, eventually when I got to Khe Sanh, he told me about this rocket attack. He had stayed behind, because he probably knew better—that the Air Force had better—. But he said it was just terrible. He said they thought they were going to be killed. So I just escaped that by about five minutes.

So I landed at Phu Bai, and there I spent about a week with the Division Chaplain there, and they were deciding where to put me and giving me some orientation on Vietnam. And I remember the first night I arrived there I was so grubby and I said, Can I take a shower? And they said, No; there's no water. I thought: This is odd; this is like being on a Navy ship! So then I went to the "three-holer"—the outdoor facility that they had there, and there was a man sitting on one of the holes there with toilet paper wiping blood from his wounds; he had been hit by shrapnel and he was all bloody, and I thought, What am I getting into?!

So I spent about a week there, at Phu Bai. I could probably look up some more about that, but those are the [lasting] impressions that I remember about Phu Bai.

Kurtz: What did they tell you about what your role was in Vietnam, or job?

Stubbe: They didn't say very much. They told me eventually at the end—a day or so before I left there—that I was going to Khe Sanh, but I was going there on a temporary basis, that I was really assigned to Third Shore Party Battalion, which was at a place called Gia Le [pronounced: JAH-LAY]. Shore Party is a supply-moving unit for the Marine Corps, usually on a beach—traditionally they stage things into categories of petroleum, medical supplies, ammunition, food, water—in different areas, and then they move them out to the different units. It's sort of a half-way thing of organizing supply movement. In Vietnam, Shore Party did the same thing, only they were on inland bases, and they would move supplies. Anyway, they have a different uniform—well, they have the same uniform as everyone else, except that they have red patches on the outer part of their knees, and a little square red patch on their cover, on their hat. The one on the knees is, like, two inches by one inch—to designate—they're the ones that can be there, to get all the people who aren't supposed to be there with the supplies [out]. So anyway I was assigned to them. And the reason they were sending me to Khe Sanh [was] because their chaplain—there was only one chaplain—well, there was a Chaplain of First Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines. We call that "one-twentysix." His name was David Meschke, who had gone over with them, and I met him in Okinawa as a matter of fact. It's interesting that I had all these little contacts with Khe Sanh before I went there. He told me a little bit about Khe Sanh. So anyway, they said: We're sending you to Khe Sanh to fill Dave Meschke's place until we can get a new Chaplain there, but you're Third Shore Party Battalion Chaplain.

And the reason for all that kind of confusion was that 26th Marine Regiment was a unit of a thing called "9th MAB"—Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade, which had its headquarters on Okinawa. MACV had determined that there could be only so many Marines "in country" in Vietnam, so that's why the Marines had quite an establishment on Okinawa, like repair facilities. The Army had these in Vietnam, but the Marines could only have so many people, so they decided to have as many infantry as they could—and air—and they had what they called the "logistic tail," they had only like two or three men for every infantryman, whereas the Army had like eight or nine in their logistic tail or support people for every infantryman because they could have more people in Vietnam.

So anyway, they had a thing called "Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade" and the Marines in Vietnam were under the Third Marine Amphibious Force. They had to change from 3rd MEF to 3rd MAF because they thought the ["Third Marine Expeditionary Force"] was too militaristic or something. And the 26th Marine Regiment was a 9th MAB unit; they were not part of 3rd Marine

Division or 3rd MAF. They were, operationally under them, but administratively they were under 9th MAF. The battalions, however, were considered 3rd Marine Division.

So, technically, I had my orders to Vietnam as a 3rd Marine Division Chaplain, but all the Chaplains that went to the 26th Marines, including the battalions which, even though they were 3rd Marine Division [units], they received their orders directly from the Chief of Naval Personnel to report to the 26th Marines because they were considered 9th MAB, a different unit. And they weren't even ordered to 9th MAB; they were ordered to 26th Marines. See, 26th Marines was part of the old 5th Marine Division. And this was their first year in Vietnam, so there were some technical and historic and administrative things they hadn't ironed out yet. And so I couldn't be the 1/26 Chaplain; I had to be the 3rd Shore Party Chaplain.

So anyway, I got to Khe Sanh, and I was there for about a week or so, and the Battalion Commander, whom I'd met—again, I met him in Staging Battalion [at Camp Pendleton] by the name of Jim Wilkinson, and he was going to Khe Sanh, although I didn't know that at the time. He was my Battalion Commander, and a wonderful gentleman, like Harper Bohr. And he said: We have these company-sized units—a company is about 250 men—we have these company-sized units out in different places, Hill 861 and Hill 881 [South]—they're named for how many meters above sea-level [they are], and he said: We haven't had a Chaplain go out and see them for some time. He said: We'd like to have you go out. So I went out to Hill 881 [South].

I must say that the time I arrived at Khe Sanh we had Third Battalion, 26th Marines, there, and their Chaplain was Bede Wattigny, W-A-T-T-I-G-N-Y. And he had been drafted by his Order—they had a quota—there were so few Catholics [Catholic Chaplains], that the different Catholic orders had to send so many Chaplains—they were ordered to, and he didn't want to be in the Service, and he didn't want to be in Vietnam, and he was very anxious to get out and go home. He told me—the very first words I heard [from him] he said when I got there, "The Marine Corps is the worst thing that ever happened to me in my life!" So he was not about to go out in [outpost] places.

So I went out to Hill 881-South, and the Commanding Officer there at the time [of Alfa Company, 1/26] was John Raymond. John Raymond was a very interesting fellow. He had—I went to his CP [Command Post] bunker there and he had little C-ration case cardboard [sleeves] on his walls where he had put different sayings. I'll never forget one of the sayings was: "God and the soldier we adore/ in time of war and not before/ the battle ended and all things righted/ God's forgotten, the soldier slighted." And I remember that because it became so significant after Vietnam too. And he attributed it to Lord Marlborough, but I looked it up [since then] and I can't remember who said it, but it's in the Library of Congress book of quotations. John Raymond got all his men who were available o the Landing Zone of Hill 881 [South] which is a bald top of the hill, and there was a wall made of cases of empty wooden 105 ammunition that were held in position by engineering stakes. And that's where the helicopters would land and so on. And so he got all the men who were available—who wasn't on patrol—the two platoons—a company has three platoons and a headquarters. There were a lot of people there, and they were all in line against this wall of wooden ammo boxes. And I remember looking at them, and they were all young. I guess the average age of the Vietnam enlisted person was 19. And they looked even younger than that. But they'd been o the hill for awhile. Their clothes were beginning to rot off. I remember one fellow—it really sort of shocked me. I saw him sitting there. They were all sitting. And his crotch was rotten out, and his male parts were hanging out. It's—wow, what have I gotten into?! Because I remember I had been in the University of Chicago, and I suddenly went to Pendleton for three weeks and Phu Bai for a week, and here I was in it. And this wasn't even war yet. But these guys that would be on these hills would be there for six weeks at a time—no showers or bath, no light at night. Some had sent home for candles and they were fortunate to have them. The squads would probably have Coleman lanterns, as did the Company CP [Command Post]. Everyone else, when the sun set, that was it. And of course one platoon a day would go out o sweeping patrols. The other two platoons would remain back to dig trenches and bunkers and move supplies and string the concertina and do that kind of thing.

So eventually—my *modus operandi* here—eventually what would happen was that I would go out to a hill [outpost]—come out on a resupply chopper. And of course while they're moving supplies, I couldn't hold services then because there was so much noise from the chopper and there was so much commotion. So the chopper would go off and I'd stay overnight there. And then at the end of the afternoon when the patrol that was out patrolling—the platoon—would come back and the supplies had all been moved and it was quiet, then I could hold a [worship] service for everybody that wanted to [attend], but I couldn't do it during the day. During the day a platoon would be out patrolling. I mean, I could probably have done it during the day, done a service, got a resupply chopper and take me back to the base or something. And maybe I'd get ten people who were available, but this way I could get, maybe a hundred! So I'd stay overnight, stay in their bunkers, one bunker or another. And by that time they'd moved all the supplies, the platoon that was patrolling was back. And then the next morning I would get the resupply chopper to the next hill [outpost] and do the same thing. That's how I would do that. And that's why, I guess, the senior Chaplains back in Washington—why isn't he going back to the base? Why is he staying in these isolated places that are in danger of attack, and whatever else.

Kurtz: What did the Marines think about this?

Stubbe: O, the Marines, they just loved this. They thought this was the best thing going. And I felt—because the Chaplain is kind of a lonely position. I was very sensitive to the fact that I couldn't become one of the guys kind of thing, and I was older, too. I couldn't of been [one of the guys]; I just wasn't about it. But I could of adopted their language and everything else. So I want to be with people, but I knew I wasn't—. So it's a lonely position, so I wanted to be with—

Kurtz: Watching the tape, which the people transcribing these things know is quite frequent. I was going to ask you the question: I would argue with you from my personal experience of being a Platoon Leader with a bunch of veterans is pretty lonely, too.

Stubbe: Yes, it definitely is. And of course there wasn't a bunch of veterans, but there were some that had second tours. And of course there's the Corporals and the Sergeants, Staff Sergeant—there aren't that many at that point. By that time there were a lot of casualties in Vietnam. There weren't many Staff Sergeants or Gunny Sergeants to go around, so the people that were older, say, the Company Commander on that side, and then maybe a very few on their second tour, and maybe a Staff Sergeant and a Gunnery Sergeant—there weren't many. And furthermore, some of the Second Lieutenants were Naval Academy grads, and some of them were Mustangs.

Kurtz: Tell the people what a "Mustang" is.

Stubbe: A "Mustang" is an officer who has been enlisted. In fact, the Company Commander of DELTA Company—his name was Johnson, when I first arrived there—was a Mustang. And all the troops loved him, because they knew that he knew what they knew. They couldn't put anything over him, but if there were something that was troubling to them—if they had a patrol—in fact we had some patrols that were kind of questionable, where he would stand up for his men and tell the Regiment: This is not possible. So there was, for new officers—I think the Marine troops really respected their officers—at least where I was, at that time. There wasn't this thing of "fragging" and there wasn't a haughty kind of thing. They drove their men pretty hard—the Company Commanders and the Platoon Commanders—but they were with them. I guess that's the thing: they were right with them and they seemed to understand and they were good officers. And I think the men who were there would say the same. In fact, I go to reunions now, and every once and awhile a former officer will come kind of with a cautionary hesitancy—what are my men going to think about me?—and I don't think there's one that I've seen at reunions and hugs and it's just really good to see.

Kurtz: Let's divide our chat here from the summer of '67 at Khe Sanh to the time the Siege started, and I have a series of things—I assume what you were going was going from hill to hill, but did you ever go to the Special Forces Camp?

Stubbe: Yes, I did that too.

Kurtz: Could you describe what that camp was like?

Stubbe: O God. [*laughs*]. Well, first of all, getting to it; it was almost on the Laotian border, and even there the Marines were hesitant to let me go. My Battalion Commander, by the way, was very open about letting me go wherever I wanted to go. He was very supportive, except that some times during this time you're talking about, some of our recon teams ran into trouble, and in fact some of them were shot and killed, and so I was spending a lot of time with the recon unit which was right in the middle of our base—try to comfort some of the guys and try to get to—"how are you doing?"—that kind of thing. And at one time my Battalion Commander told me, "Remember you're the 1/26 Chaplain, not the recon Chaplain." Just a gentle way of reminding me.

Yeah, one time I remember I wanted to go out to the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei, and I remember our intelligence people (I guess), not the Battalion Commander, but other people in the command bunker there said, "What do you have? A death wish?" And of course I didn't know, but during the Hill Battles earlier in '67, in fact, specifically on May 4th—the Hill Battles started the 24th of April when Bravo Company, 1/9, went up Hill 861 and they got shot at, and that precipitated the battle. And then on the 30th of April the two MIKE Companies [3/3 and 3/9] went up Hill 881 [South] and they had about 50 people killed or 60 people killed, and the battle raged on. On the 4th of May, the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei was overrun

and the Commanding Officer and the Executive Officer were both killed—I since learned. I didn't know this at the time. They [the Special Forces] had recruited three Vietnamese for their forces there who were actually North Vietnamese agents. These three knifed the sentries that were no duty, permitting a force to come into the camp and they killed Captain Crenshaw and Captain Stallings who were the CO and XO, both Black, Afro-American. but the rest of the camp withstood the attack. And I interviewed the First Sergeant—his name was Steptoe, and he's since died, and we talked about this. But anyway I didn't know any of that. They knew that that camp had been overrun—or partially overrun—and it was a dangerous place to be. So I went there.

And my impression of the place was that it was just a pig-sty. It was totally "un-Marine!" I mean, the Marine base at Khe Sanh was muddy and dusty and dirty, but at least they picked up the trash and the garbage. But here were all these Vietnamese, and they were eating fish heads and rice and there was food all over the place, on the ground. There were rats. It was just a complete mess. It was just so messy. On the other hand, they had a plywood team house. They had white toilet seats. And they had a doctor—his name was Hunter—he was up there from Nha Trang, and he said, "Yeah, you Marines live with less than what you should; you're all masochists, you all live with less and you try to justify your existence to the Congress and stay in business by using less than the Army," and he went on and on and on. I was getting very angry with him.

Then that night I remember they were showing a movie, and I thought, My God! A movie! I can't believe this! But at the team house they had a white sheet and they were showing this movie.

Kurtz: The movie was inside the team house?

Stubbe: Inside the team house. And I remember: Gee, I'm going to see a movie! I can't believe it! I hadn't seen a movie in months. So I went in there, and the title of the movie came on, and it was: "You Can Never Go Home Again." It was probably from Wolf. And I remember I got so nervous. I walked out. I didn't see the movie. I walked out and sat on the picnic bench that they had there. And I stayed overnight in the same bunker that Crenshaw and Stallings had been killed in. I didn't know that at the time. It was a hexagonal—sort of like an old French kind of bunker there. Lang Vei had been—before the Special Forces went there—it had been an ARVN compound. The 2nd ARVN Division, I think, had a—. So anyway I stayed overnight in that very bunker where they were killed, and I didn't know it at the time. And there were rats squeaking around at night. And I remember I had a poncho liner which was a different kind—a yellowish kind that the Marines didn't have. I hadn't even seen a poncho liner up to that point.

So I had church services. And I came back a couple of times and stayed in the same bunker. I still didn't know anything about the attack that had been there. And the Navy Seabees were building a new Lang Vei camp just a little further west towards Laos. And I remember Captain Willoughby, Frank Willoughby, who was the CO of the Special Forces there—he had been a Marine Staff Sergeant at one time, he told me. And he was taking me around, and he said: O, we got two thousand meters, two clicks, of gentle, sloping fire. He said: We're keeping only Americans in the inner perimeter, and then we have barbed wire, and then the Vietnamese in the outer perimeter. And I still didn't know why—but I heard later on about being overrun—but he didn't tell me why. He said, "We can take a regiment!" And the Seabees were building a several million dollar complex. And I held [worship] services on—the Army calls it the "TOC," a Tactical Operations Center; the Marines call it a "COC," Combat Operations Center—one of those things that are different between the Army and the Marine Corps—like "enclosure:" the Army and Air Force spells it "inclosure," and the Marines, it's "enclosure." And the Army always has "hours," like "Thirteen hundred hours," whereas the Marines and the Navy just have "Thirteen Hundred." There are a lot of funny different little things that are different. So anyway the Seabees are building this TOC and there were these concrete beams that were across the top. And I remember sitting on one—there's a picture of me doing this; I only had Seabees for this [worship service]—were sitting on another one facing me, and I remember telling them: "You'd better not fall asleep during my sermon, or you'll fall back down into the bunker!" They'd be "off the beam!"

But anyway, I remember Willoughby telling me, "We can take a regiment." But it took just three or four tanks when they overran the place. They didn't anticipate tanks.

Kurtz: Did you have any interaction with the Vietnamese in the Special Forces camp?

Stubbe: No, none. But anyway, I got out there, and then I had to try to get a chopper to try to pick me back up because that was not one of their normal resupply things, and there was no road traffic to speak of. There was some, but very rare.

Kurtz: Why was there no road traffic?

Stubbe: Well, it's just that the Marines and the Special Forces didn't have anything to do [with each other]. Sometimes—there was one time I remember where the Marines sent a jeep out to Lang Vei—I guess to give some intelligence information or something. And they had little check points along the way that spelled the name of Colonel LOWNDS. They had check point "L," check point "O," check point "W," and I remember the Marine Captain at the time—we were bouncing along Route 9 which had a lot of pot holes and ruts. They called it a highway, but it was really a very bad dirt road, and this Marine Captain was going out to Lang Vei, and I went out just for the ride. It was late afternoon. And I think he had been drinking; he was "deep into the cups." He kept yelling, "Provincial Days!" "Provincial Days!" He was out of it. Maybe he was covering up his fear of going out to Lang Vei; I don't know. But I was completely oblivious; I had no fear at all. I'd been on patrols off the hills and everything else. So I was going out there. I just took a ride out and back with him. But other times I went out there, I went out by chopper—I think they were bringing things out to the Seabees, and then they'd go. And I was there. And then I had to try to call the next morning. I'd call SUNRISE ONE FOUR; I think that was the Regimental air officer net. The Regiment had a different—they were MORRAY, and later on became INTRIGUE, but for some unknown reason, the "air" was SUNRISE ONE FOUR. But anyway, they got a chopper just to pick me up and take me back.

Kurtz: In your mind, was that a problem with the Marines and the Special Forces didn't have much to do with each other?

Stubbe: O, it definitely was a problem. It was a problem for everybody; it was a problem for the Special Forces and a problem for the Marines. See, what happened was: the Special Forces were on Khe Sanh base in September of '66. Westmoreland thought that the North Vietnamese were really massing around that area and he wanted to beef up the area, so he put the First Battalion, Third Marine Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Peter Wickwire—sent them into Khe Sanh base and upgraded the airstrip. At that time the Special Forces were still—that was a Special Forces camp. And I talked with people who were there at the time and they tell me that there was a terrible friction, that the Special Forces wouldn't let the Marines know when they were doing anything or what they were doing, because they were so "classified." And the Marines would see these indigenous patrols out in front of their lines; they didn't know who they were. And one time there was a fellow, Captain O'Dell, who was one of the Company Commanders there told me—O'Dell was an interesting person—he mentioned at one time there were these Vietnamese in front of the wire and the Marines went to the Special Forces and asked, Is this one of your patrols? And they said: No. And they said: Well, from henceforth, we're going to fire on all Vietnamese patrols that we don't know about. And the Special Forces said: We can't put up with that. So they just wouldn't get along with each other. Also, the Special Forces had concrete bunkers. Later on, the Marines used to call them "the old French bunkers," because they thought they were from the French days—they looked so old and dilapidated, but they were well-build, underground concrete bunkers. But they were built by the Special Forces. I think they occupied the base around 1964. Prior to that, from '62 to '64, they had been in Khe Sanh village at a little place just to the east called "The Old French Fort," [Thuong Van], which was a hilltop. So anyway, when the Marines came, they just couldn't get along with each other, so they said: We're going to move out to this ARVN base at Lang Vei, which they did. In December of '66 they moved out there. However, they sent a message that none of their bunkers could be damaged or destroyed because they fully intended to come back to Khe Sanh base; this was a temporary move for them, a temporary move that became permanent.

So they went out there, and then became very independent. Their AO, Area of Operations, was mainly along the Laotian border, along the Xepone River and then a little bit to the north. They were supposed to patrol that. The Marines thought: Well, they're really not patrolling it. And the Marines got all their reports from the 5th Special Forces at Nha Trang rather than from A-101 which was the detachment at Lang Vei, and there was always like a two, three week time delay there, so they were getting history rather than intelligence. And the Special Forces regarded themselves as "special," and they were Army, and they were just different. And there was also a MACV Detachment in Khe Sanh Village of four Army people, MACV Detachment-4, which were advisors to the District Advisor there, and they also—there was a Captain, B. G. Clarke, C-L-A-R-K-E; he's still around. But the Army and the Marines just didn't get along, at all.

So when these Special Forces built their [new] camp around November, December, '67—it was finished at a cost of well over a million dollars. In the meantime, when the Siege started, Khe Sanh Village fell, so they should have known. In fact, I've talked with people who were there at the time—Sergeant Craig—he's [since] died also. He wrote some books. He was a Sergeant First Class there. I think he was the Team Sergeant of Lang Vei when the siege started. He told me. He said, "We knew when Khe Sanh Village fell, there was no link between the base [and our camp]—five miles of nothing." But the people at Nha Trang and at DaNang, they had what they called their "C Camp," their support camp at DaNang, and they felt apparently that, like Willoughby said, "We can take a regiment." But of course they couldn't patrol or anything because of the enemy being around. They should have—Craig says, "We should have abandoned the place." But they had just spent a million

dollars and the C Camp had no place for them to go. Where would they go? So, for one reason or another—I think it's more of a Special Forces fault than the Marines'—the Marines really didn't control them. That's another thing: the Marines didn't control them; they were controlled by a different agency, by the C Camp. So this wasn't a "unified command" so to speak, and that created a lot of problems when the tanks came. Well, before the tanks came, the Laotian Battalion just inside the other side of Laos, BV-33, at Ban Houei Sane, was overrun by tanks on Highway 9, and the aerial observers told Lang Vei that—that there's tanks in the area. So it shouldn't have been such a surprise that they had tanks. And then the refugees from BV-33 came to Lang Vei instead of going westward to Savannakhet, which is where they should have gone; they came eastward because it's a shorter distance, to Lang Vei. And so the village of Lang Vei became greatly enlarged with all these—. Because BV-33 was not just a military base that *battalion voluntaire* or whatever the French term is, BV anyway; they used the French designation—was sort of like a National Guard [unit]. They had been at Tchepone, and had been displaced when Tchepone was overrun in May of '61, they went to Ban Houei Sane, and they were supplied from the Khe Sanh side by Air America flights. So that's probably why they came to us. But they were not only military, but they had wives and children and chickens and pigs and everything else. The husbands would be in the military, but it was their whole family thing. So all these refugees came at Lang Vei. And because of that there was a Lieutenant Colonel that came up from the C Company from DaNang to be at Lang Vei because the Commander of BV-33, Lieutenant Colonel Soulang [Phetsompho] was there, so they wanted a field grade officer. So that's why when Lang Vei was overrun there was an Army Lieutenant Colonel there. There's a fellow in Wisconsin here who was the XO of Lang Vei; his name is Ken Willcox. I can tell you some stories about that.

Kurtz: Is he still around?

Stubbe: He's still around. [*break in tape*]. What was his name now? His code name was CROSSBOW, but anyway, saw him wounded and just left him. It was "every man for himself" kind of thing. And he [Wilcox] was not too happy about that.

Kurtz: Let's hop to—a typical patrol that you went out with the Marines.

Stubbe: These were all either one platoon or what they called "company-minus," two platoons. And they were really not dangerous. Even though it was a vulnerable area, we knew if there was enemy coming in. We had aerial observers, we had people sniffers, recon patrols further out, and everything else. I mean there was always a danger, obviously. Any place in Vietnam was dangerous. So I would go out with these fairly large patrols. And we would usually leave early in the morning—one platoon or sometimes two platoons, and we would go out and stay out maybe six to eight hours.

Kurtz: What kind of mission—were you in a circle?

Stubbe: They would follow a route. I guess they would look for—if a recon team thought they found grass patted down or evidence like a footprint in a trail.

Kurtz: So the recon teams triggered the patrol's objectives?

Stubbe: Usually, or, there were other things that were happening, like an aerial observer would see something, or the signals intelligence people—well, they didn't become active until around September, October, I think. But there were other intelligence things happening there. Sometimes I think the infantry would go out just to go out. Every day they sent a platoon out. Even if they didn't have a reason to do it, they'd still scour the area. So it was an area search more than a point search.

Kurtz: How did the men feel about going on patrol every day?

Stubbe: Well, they were tired, they were haggard, they were sick a lot of them. It was around September that we started getting one of the two [annual] monsoons, and so there was a huge amount of rain, and it would be always in the 40s, because we were pretty high up, and you could never get dry and even growing up in Wisconsin and going to school in Minnesota for seven years, I can truthfully say I never felt colder than I did at Khe Sanh during that time. In fact, there was one time: I used to have a little plastic-covered Greek New Testament that I had in my shirt pocket. We had these big—the Marines call them "blouses," you didn't tuck them in; they overhang [the belt line]. They had big pockets, and I had it in one of the pockets. And one of the people had am old ammo box that they were burning increments and C-4 to keep warm in their tent. And I was so cold that I got so close to that that the cover of my Greek New Testament melted, and it was all crinkled. I

still have it. So I was very cold. And also the guys would get what they called "immersion foot," only it would be all over their hands. This is like "dishwater hands," if you got water on the skin too long and it never gets dry. So they tried to dry their boots at night. They developed a silicone grease that they could put on their feet to keep them lubricated. Also, the elephant grass which is very tall, was very sharp and full of bacteria. And the guys, for some odd reason—I don't know why—but they would have their sleeves rolled up to their elbows—this was before the monsoons—I'm talking in the July, August, time-frame; they would get these cuts on the elephant grass which would form large, watery blisters. And the Corpsman would give them bacitracin, or we had these little merthyolate glass bottles in a cardboard [sleeve]

Stubbe: Sometimes there'd be elephant grass, which would be about as tall as we were, and the blades would be, O, a good half-inch wide, and they'd be stiff and had a lot of bacteria on the edges so they cut into the arms of the Marines. Around July, August, September, before the monsoons came, the Marines always wore their shirt sleeves rolled up to their elbows. So they'd get these huge, blistery infections—watery—that would never seem to heal, even though the Corpsman would give them bacitracin ointment, and they'd use merthyolate. Sometimes our battalion doctor, the Battalion Surgeon—his name was Harvey DeMaagd—he had been with the battalion from the beginning. They used to have jokes about him, because he seemed to enjoy working with boils, to lance them, and he'd take these knives there, and he had this reputation about being this gruesome doctor. Everyone liked him. But anyway, some guys would get broken limbs because these hills were so steep and there were stream beds with huge, slippery rocks, and people would fall. Sometimes going up a hill—these are some of the things I learned by being with them—how they had to live. They'd use their rifles to pull each other up the hill. Sometimes even the leaders, the Platoon Commanders, the Company Commander if it were a battalion minus—two platoons—would go out and they'd get lost, literally. You couldn't climb trees. There were trees, but they were so high. It was impossible to view hill tops from which you could get a resection by the compass to find out where you were. So they would call in registration rounds from the artillery, which could fire am eight-digit grid coordinate which, I think, puts a round within a one-meter—either a ten meter or a one meter square. I'm not sure, right now. But anyway, they'd fire a white phosphorus, which would be very prominent with its spikes of white, very beautiful, like a Fourth of July fireworks only on the land, and then they could determine from where it landed where they were. They call these registration rounds. The artillery didn't like to fire those things because they were expensive, I guess, and Marines didn't like to spend, waste, the money. But that's what they would do.

So the patrols were very physically exhausting. We'd get dehydrated very fast. Most everyone took two canteens full of water.

Kurtz: Did you ever fill the canteens while out on patrol?

Stubbe: Sometimes some guys would, in the streams, and they'd use the Halozone tablets.

Kurtz: Tasted like iodine?

Stubbe: Yeah. I never did that. The very first time I went to the Battalion Commander said I should go out to the hills—I went out to 881 [South] and I held this church service and was appalled at the clothing of these men. The text I used as the meditation was "The Prodigal Son," Luke 15, because it talks about the young son going off in a far-off country and leading a very miserable life. And I talked about that. And I remember the Company Commander, Captain John Raymond, got me aside after that, and he said, You shouldn't really talk about how life is [for the troops] unless you really know what's it's like. He said: We have a patrol leaving; you can go on it if you want. That's another one of the reasons I went. So I went on that patrol and we went down the north slope of 881-South, the very slope the people assaulted up during the Hill Battles. I found out that moving was not a matter of walking, but falling. I sort of kept falling forward because there were so many vines and it was so slick and so steep, and I just kept falling forward, and my canteens were clanking and becoming detached actually from my web belt. I'd pick them up and put them back on. And they [the patrol] were moving at a pretty good clip. And we got down to a stream, a rushing stream, got all wet, and went up another hill, and then they fired this registration round [actually, called in artillery to fire the registration round] because they didn't know where they were, I guess. And by that time I was thoroughly exhausted; it was about an hour into the patrol. I just felt I couldn't do one more step, but I knew I couldn't go back. There was no going back; there was no way to do that. So the only thing to do was to stay with them. They couldn't evacuate me, either, because they didn't want to bring in a helicopter; that would disclose their position. Furthermore, they just didn't want to have a medevac. So I just kept going, and about seven hours later—eight hours—by that time I was completely numb and completely out of water, and the Corpsman was giving me sips from his canteen. I only took a sip at a

time. I learned the value of water—how precious and how wonderfully tasting water is. And we went through some bamboo thickets, where people had to hack with a machete. And on another patrol, off [Hill] 861, I came across some rather thick bamboo. It came in different sizes; some of it was almost two-inches in diameter. And one of the things I learned in [Camp] Pendleton before I went over, was that if you run out of water, you can always hack off a section of bamboo and there's water in the sections. So I thought, I'm going to try this. I really didn't need it. So I hacked off a section of bamboo above and below the notch so there was one whole section, and I carved a little hole in it and started drinking it. And I thought: Gee, this is evil-tasting water! This is just terrible. And I spit it out, and hacked it [the section] open. And here inside were all these white, maggot-like, like worms. I immediately thought: O, I'm going to die. This must be poison, and I swallowed one of them. Later on, I found out that those were probably the eggs of a bamboo viper snake.

Kurtz: Did you run across any snakes when you were out on patrols?

Stubbe: I never did. But there were cobras in the area. Every once and awhile a cobra would come into a bunker, and there were pythons—large pythons that recon patrols would—. One recon patrol—a fellow told me that they stopped and this one fellow sat on what he thought was a log and it started moving and he realized it was this python and he fainted—a recon Marine, all tough, rough. And they called in a medevac, and of course they denied it.

But that area was just full of wild life. I'm sure there were species that had not been identified yet. People talked about the odd birds. There was a Special Forces fellow [Jon Cavaini] eventually on Hill 950 [in 1971] that told me collected insects. There was such a variety. And there were monkeys, there were rock apes—.

Kurtz: Any tigers?

Stubbe: There were tigers, yes. There were tigers. I never saw one, but a fellow who's in recon [Lionel Guerra] just sent me a picture. On this patrol he snapped a picture of this tiger that was fifty feet away or something. There were elephants. The tigers were eating up some of the children from the Montagnard tribe. Yeah, we had it all there. It was a beautiful, beautiful area. It was like a Garden of Eden before the siege.

But there were these nefarious things: there were the bacteria, the sores, the leeches. These [leeches] were like about one-inch long and they'd attach one end to some herbal material, a vine or a brush or something and then they'd try to get on your skin, usually on your wrists, your neck, or even on—the Marines, unlike the Army, would blouse their trousers above their boots; the Army would usually put their trousers in their boots, I think if I remember right.

Kurtz: Yeah, that's correct.

Stubbe: And—.

Kurtz: That's because we were smarter!

Stubbe: Yeah. Well, the Marines bloused [their trousers], but there were still sox, but sometimes on that bare skin, the leeches would get there. They loved bare skin. In fact, this Harper Bohr I mentioned at the beginning, this real wonderful intelligence officer—one time he was considering getting out and going into the ministry, but he went on a patrol from 861 to 881. Sometimes when they'd change companies, instead of going by helicopter, they would walk out, and I accompanied some of those, walking from the base to 881-South. That was quite a—but by that time I was in pretty good shape. But the young guys weren't. I mean, I was in better shape than the 19 year-olds, even though I was, like 29.

Kurtz: Were you ever—did the North Vietnamese ever bother you when you went out?

Stubbe: No. I was going to say, when this Captain Bohr went out on one of these walking things [from the base to 881-South], he came back and said: Chaplain, I hate to say this but the leech went up the end of my penis. And that happened some times. And that was very dangerous, because they could crawl up. A lot of the Marines, if they got them on their arms, would smash them. And then, the head of the leech, of course, would be under the skin and form another infection, and then Doctor Demaagd would come out with his probes and try to drain the boil, but the only way you were supposed to take off leeches was with a match, a cigarette lighter or with the insect repellant—squirt it on, they'd swell up and drop off.

So it was very difficult living for those who stayed on the hills: they couldn't take showers, their skin—one time—we used to get a thing called a "SP Pack." Because these people were out there, they couldn't go to the PX and so they had these, about two-foot cube box that candy, cigarettes, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, ballpoint pens, writing pads, soap and all this kind of stuff. They'd get a SP pack on the hill maybe every once a week or something to supply the 250 Marines. And one time the Company Commander—in fact, it was John Raymond—came to me with a sandbag full of these little bars of Dial soap. And he said, "Chaplain, take these out to the missionaries in town; we can't use these."

Kurtz: In town?

Stubbe: Khe Sanh village

Kurtz: O, the Khe Sanh village missionaries, OK.

Stubbe: We had what they called the Wycliffe Bible Translators. They were a husband and wife, American, John and Carolyn Miller, M-I-L-L-E-R., of the Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Kurtz: And what were they translating?

Stubbe: They were translating the New Testament. But they were also translating—they were making readers. See, the Bru were illiterate; they had no written language. So what these people would do—and this was global; they'd go to the Philippines, Africa, whatever, they were all over the place. And they would stay with a tribe that had no written language and spend, maybe a good year, just living with them and listening and recording all the sounds because different languages have different sounds that we in English don't have. We know some of the European vowels like the German and the French, but sometimes there's clicking sounds, sometimes there's a guttural stop.

Kurtz: Tonal, like Vietnamese is tonal.

Stubbe: Vietnamese is tonal, yes, but the Montagnards are non-tonal; they're like us. But in any event, they would live in the same conditions [as the tribe people], and they had no salary either; they depended on donations, which always amazed me.

Kurtz; So how did you—this is a good transition from the Marines to
Stubbe: Yes, I'll talk about the indigenous people in a minute. They [the Millers] had arrived there about the same time the Special Forces people did, in '62, the Bible translators. They lived in the Bru village. Bru is the mountain tribe that is in Khe Sanh. They weren't in Khe Sanh village itself at this point; they were in the Bru villages. And then eventually they did get a house in Khe Sanh village.

Khe Sanh village—I have to segue back here a little bit—Khe Sanh village was mainly Vietnamese. There were 1200 Vietnamese living in Khe Sanh village, and there were some 12,000 mountain tribesmen that lived in little villages around here. Now Khe Sanh village was formed originally back around 1918 there was a Frenchman named Poilane, and his first name was Eugene. He was in the First World War, and he was down in Saigon, and he retired without going back to France at what eventually became Khe Sanh; at that time it was nothing. And he was interested in botany, and he started a coffee plantation up there. He also had an experimental garden where he tried to see if different fruit trees would survive in that climate. And he worked for the French government in Saigon to collect botanical specimens. And he would go off by himself, even to what became the border with China and send specimens back down to Saigon. Anyway, to maintain his coffee plantation, the Bru were not suitable workers at the time, he thought, so he started importing Vietnamese from the east, and that's how the Vietnamese got there, and that's how Khe Sanh village started: these were the workers on his coffee plantation. And he, "Papa" Poilane, was killed in 1964, just a little east of Khe Sanh by the VC or whatever. I could go into that if you'd like, but that's not significant [here]. He had many children. In fact he had—here I'm talking off the top of my head, I might not be accurate—but I seem to remember he had something like five children after he was 62 or something like that. He married a French woman, Bordedeque, and one of his sons was named Felix. And Felix was born while he was collecting these botanical specimens; his wife gave birth by herself to Felix. So Felix was born in Khe Sanh—is the significant thing here. He was born there and died there. Felix was the one I knew because Eugene had already been killed. And Felix went back to France and got his wife, brought her back there to Khe Sanh, I think around '64, '65, something like that.

Kurtz: How did they live?

Stubbe: They build a nice, big house. It might have been the old guy that built it; I don't know. In fact, I'm sure it was the old guy that built it. So they had a big concrete house that had red bougainvillea outside. Felix had a little pet deer outside that he had in a barbed wire enclosure. And there was also a Vietnamese Episcopalian minister who was sent up there as a missionary to the Bru and he had a chapel in Khe Sanh village. And there were also some French nuns there who had a little coffee plantation that was originally part of Eugene's coffee plantation.

So there were the Millers and the Poilanes. Her name was Madeleine, and they had two little boys. She moved back to France. She's at Creteil, C-R-E-T-E-I-L, France, right now. She's fully retired now. Her two sons, Jon Marie and the other one—one teaches mathematics, and I don't know what the other one does. But they survived.

Kurtz: Was there any impact on Khe Sanh during the French wars?

Stubbe: Yes, Madeleine tells me that—or wrote me—that—I take that back, they must have arrived in '55, when the French were still there. They took refuge at a place near Lang Vei, at a place called Lao Bao, which is an old French prison. It later on became a Vietnamese prison—or, prior—it was a Vietnamese prison in 1830s and then a French prison later on, in the 1930s it was a French prison because Giap and his brother were prisoners there. But anyway, the French took refuge there at Lao Bao, and when the Viet Minh came through. And apparently—I haven't been able to track it down—but apparently there was a big French battle right around there, at that spot, but I just haven't been able to

Kurtz: During the French?

Stubbe: After Dien Bien Phu, after they were withdrawing, apparently there was a big battle there and they lost a lot of people. So Madeleine and Felix and "papa" Eugene, and who knows what brothers and sisters were still there, up to about '64, and then he was killed, and she stayed, and by that time the Millers were there, and the French nuns were there, and then Father Poncet, P-O-N-C-E-T—he was killed during the battle at Hue City, and Pastor Loc was the Episcopalian missionary. Father Poncet became very haggard [during the monsoon in late '67]. I remember giving him a case of C-rations one time. He had a motorcycle and the Catholic chaplain during the siege, Walt Driscoll—Father Poncet left his motorcycle up there and Walt Driscoll used that motorcycle to get to the outlying battalion areas during the siege. There are pictures of him in the news clippings.

Kurtz: Did—what did these people think about the Americans being there?

Stubbe: Well—how can I say this—the only ones that I know of—Father Poncet—I gave him the C-rations. I never really got to talk with him. He had this thing—he couldn't talk English too well. They had these Americans with the Combined Action Company and the MACV Team, and he had a piece of cardboard; on one side he had all the common sins and on the other side he had all the common penances. So he had these Marines or soldiers come in and they had to point on one side to the sins they had committed and indicate how many times with their fingers, and he would turn it over and point to the penances they had to do and how many times with his fingers. He did come in one time in the bunker [mine] during the monsoon, and he was so weak. I gave him this case of C rations I had in the bunker because I was too lazy sometimes to walk to the mess hall [in all the rain], so sometimes I'd eat a C-ration, and I just gave it all to him because he needed them. He wanted some communion hosts, and when I saw how haggard he was I gave it to him. He put it on his mechanical bike, not the motor bike. He did have the motor bike also. But I did talk one time with the Poilanes. I went and stopped by their house. They gave me a little crème de menthe in water, and they had two German visitors. I don't know who they were or what they were, but they were visiting. I remember talking with them briefly. They were talking about how hard it was to get the coffee beans out at that time. Captain Clarke in the village was not too happy with them. He thought they were VC and said they can't be there unless they're paying to the VC, and they really weren't. I'm convinced in my heart of hearts that they were just as much victims as we were. They had taken out their coffee with the Air America flights at one time that would stop at the base.

Kurtz: How did the Marines feel about the Air America taking?

Stubbe: Well, they didn't see it that much. It wasn't clandestine [but] there were so many things that happened at the airstrip—. Occasionally the "black bird" would come. The "black bird" was the command and control C-130 for the SOG team, and it was painted black, a dull black, with a bullhead [fish] thing off the nose that was the Fulton Sky Hook. It had all this odd communications gear, and you couldn't get near the thing. I remember taking a picture of it one time. And sometimes the whole airstrip would get filled with little planes. One time we had two A-1s who were with the Air Force rescue people, and they had run out of gas. So we had different things that happened on the airstrip, so it was not unusual to—so we'd see and say, "O, it's CIA, a blackbird, or all these Vietnamese planes or helicopters doing some mission, putting in a big force into Laos or something.

Kurtz: Before the siege—this is my last question—before the siege did any big shots like Westmoreland show up there?

Stubbe: Yes. They all came. I never met them. I knew they were coming and I always managed to get away from the base; I didn't want to see them. I remember one time General Krulak came and he got a picture with the other, the Catholic Chaplain there at the time [Chaplain McElroy of 3/26]. I was out at one of the outposts. General Bruno Hochmuth would come up every once and awhile; he was the Third Marine Division Commander. General Walt would come up. These were very rare occasions. There was one time about the 8th, early November, '67, and I was on Hill 881 and we got a notice something like: Three Code 5s and four Code 4s or whatever the hell—I remember it was something with "Codes." And that had to do with Generals and they said they'd be out in 15 minutes—One Five minutes. And indeed, there was a General Alfred Starbird who was from Washington, D.C., a four-star Army General who was from the Defense Communications Planning Group, DCPG, the ones who would be putting in all the sensors. And I remember he went with the Captain at the time, who was Bruce Greene, and they walked over to the north side of the landing zone, and General Starbird was pointing north. And I'll never forget, they were both pointing towards the north, just the two of them. Then they walked back. Of course, with them came General Hochmuth and who else, probably General Metzger, the Brigadier, and maybe some Army General too; I don't know. Right after that was Marine Corps Birthday when Colonel Lownds came up and said "You all will soon be in the American history books." I remember that. So occasionally Generals would come.

Kurtz: Well, let's shut down for today.

[*Interview of 15 February 2006*]

Kurtz: Today is February 15th, 2006. My name is Jim Kurtz and I'm interviewing Ray Stubbe for the second time, not because we didn't [?] the first time but there was so much information. And today, for Ray, we're going to set the scene at Khe Sanh from the geographic and the physical standpoint, geological, talk about the hills which fits into the geography and all of that, and some of the actions that he's familiar with before the siege, then we're going to go through the siege and from there we will get Ray's feelings about it. So Ray, why don't you start and tell us about the physical setting around Khe Sanh.

Stubbe: OK. Khe Sanh: I guess the thing that sticks out in my mind most prominently is its beauty. Many people have described it as almost enchanted, a place of spiritual dimension and impact. And these were not particularly religious people that are saying these things. But you could not help but feel a kind of spirit of the place. It was so beautiful. It was breath-takingly beautiful. The soil was a deep reddish, red-brownish clay, and thousands of shades of green, blue skies with clouds, mountains, not snow-capped of course, but nevertheless sharply rising hills and mountains. There were animals in the area; it was almost like being in a zoo. Most of us didn't see them all the time, but our reconnaissance teams that would go out commonly encountered tigers, python snakes. Even our infantry patrols would encounter large deer-like creatures called "kouprey," which were almost like caribou. There were exotic birds. One fellow back in '71, an Army fellow named Jon Cavalaini, who received a Medal of Honor when his outpost on one of the hills was overrun in June of '71, had spent several months prior to that collecting insects of various types. The area—it was like a primeval forest, undisturbed, and just with sheer beauty. And it was also cooler, because we were above sea level. Khe Sanh Combat Base itself was over 400 meters high and it was sort of a level place, and everything else was higher. So it was a relief for those coming from the more populated areas in the east. Also we had a sense of isolation which, prior to the siege, was a good thing. We were isolated from inspections from Generals and those kinds of people who would come in and pester us. We felt we were sort of off by ourselves. It was really a wonderful place to be.

The area itself was mountainous because geologically it had formed from a large land mass that slammed into what is now Laos and much like India moving fast from South East Africa slammed into South East Asia and formed the Himalaya

Mountains, this mass, the Kontum Massif, slammed into that part of Asia and lifted up mountains which were very rugged. It's called the Annamite Chain. And it was so rugged, in fact, that there's very few passes that allow people to east and west. And one of those just happened to be in the Khe Sanh area. It was called the D'Ai Lao Pass. There were two other major passes to the north, the Mu Gia and one other one [Ban Karai Pass]; they were quite a ways further up north.

It was through this area that in the 1870s, French explorers like Dr. Jules Harmand, a physician in the French Army, had explored this area. And there was a Captain Malglaive who surveyed the area.

Kurtz: Did they survey it like Wisconsin was surveyed in a general survey?

Stubbe: Well, it was surveyed geologically.

Kurtz: But did they have the grid system with townships and stuff.

Stubbe: At that point, I don't think no. Their maps at that point do not show grids. I think that probably came in the World War II era.

Kurtz: OK.

Stubbe: But anyway—in fact one of the books I donated to the [Wisconsin Veterans Museum] library is a thing called Mission Pavie which describes Malglaive's explorations. But what they explored later became Route 9, which connects Savannakhet in western Laos all the way to Dong Ha in [eastern] Vietnam.

Kurtz: Was this road paved?

Stubbe: Well, no. It was more or less a dirt road, two lane. To call it a national highway—it was more like a country road to some private residence. There were ruts and so on. But there were a lot of rivers and sharply precipitous cliffs which came right up to the road, either sharply rising or sharply falling. And there were like 31 bridges between Khe Sanh Combat Base and the nearest support logistic base to the east which would be Ca Lu where Route 9 moves northward rather than its normal east-west. It goes up north for awhile and then it goes east again, past the Rock Pile, Razorback area, to Cam Lo.

It was a very rugged area which our patrols in the area found it very difficult to move through, and also very densely vegetated with grass about six feet tall [and] razor-sharp edges filled with bacteria that caused sores on people's arms, bamboo thickets, raging streams. In fact, a couple of our people that I know of, drowned in [it, the Rao Quan River]. But it was a very pristinely beautiful area. There were local inhabitants called the Bru, B-R-U, sometimes spelled B-R-O-U—spelling is a hard thing because they didn't have a written language. It's pronounced "BRO-U," with a rolling "R" there. These people—there were like 31 tribes in South Vietnam of Mountain tribesmen, each of which had a different language, [all] non-tonal as opposed to the Vietnamese which is tonal. By that, I mean, the meaning of a word depends on the tone of the voice. For example, in Vietnamese, "dau" can mean "head" or it can mean "pain." The Bru were very primitive people of a different racial stock than the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese had migrated from southern China maybe two thousand years prior, but the Bru people and the other tribesmen had come from Polynesia and were muscular, stocky. But the main thing that we remember is that they were so friendly and so naïve. For example I went with the Marine patrol into one of the Bru villages and left my camera—I was so fascinated by a couple of them making crossbows, which is what they used to hunt, and I left my camera on a tree stump, and I mentioned that to one of the Marines, and they said, "O Chaplain, you don't have to worry because these people haven't even learned to steal yet." And that's true. They were just very happy people. The shadow side of all of this was that they lived in deep fear all the time because religiously they were what we call "animists." They believed that the spirits of the departed controlled their lives, and if they didn't sacrifice to them, they would be afflicted with illnesses. So a lot of them, as poor as they were, would throw rice around to feed the spirits when they could have fed their children. And since they were, in fact, always in poor health—I think it was something like 60% or more of their children died because of malaria, which is prevalent in the area or intestinal parasites or whatever, they always felt that their ancestors were not happy with them, and so they sacrificed more. But basically they were very friendly people.

When the siege started on January 21st [1968], we had three or four of our reconnaissance teams were out, and although we were surrounded by North Vietnamese, the Bru people kept them, moving them sort of like through safe houses until they got back to us. They were very loyal to us. And some of our Army people with the Studies and Observation Group, SOG, used

them. The soldiers described how their sense was so uncanny of enemy presence. They could smell, they could detect, from sounds, whatever. They knew when other people were in the area. And they were just very loyal to our Army—.

Kurtz: Do you know what happened to them after we left?

Stubbe: Yes, indeed. Unfortunately—very tragically, like a Greek tragedy, there was a racial antipathy between the Vietnamese and the Mountain tribesmen, and for good reason. Early accounts show how the Vietnamese would avoid venturing into the hills starting at Ca Lu and that area going westward because they thought that the mountain tribesmen would poison them. And of course the Vietnamese had pushed these mountain tribesmen into the hills when they moved down from China, and the mountain tribesmen had a lingering historical, very negative impression, of Vietnamese.

So when the siege started, the man in charge of all of I Corps, General Xuan Lam, X-U-A-N and then capital L-A-M, a Lieutenant General, was the Vietnamese in charge of I Corps and when the siege started, he permitted the evacuation of approximately 1200 Vietnamese who occupied Khe Sanh village in the planes that were bringing us ammunition because our ammo dump was almost without ammunition; instead of flying the planes back empty, they loaded them up with these Vietnamese. But he said that the Bru, the mountain tribesmen, of which were about 12,000 of them could not leave, because, as he explained, there was no place in Vietnam for them. This is not by hearsay; this is by message traffic from the 26th Marines who realized that they had a problem on their hands that they couldn't evacuate the Bru because they were afraid of human shield kind of things—the North Vietnamese pushing them ahead, and since the SOG unit at Khe Sanh, which was part of our Combat Base, had Bru soldiers he didn't think that the Bru would fire on their own people. So they had to devise all sorts of strategies. For example, they would fire tear gas into them, to try to scatter them, if that happened, if the North Vietnamese pushed them ahead of their assault. Or, they would fire over their heads to try to scare them and scatter them. And then as a last resort, would have to fire into them. Fortunately, that never happened. But unfortunately, because they had to remain and because the North Vietnamese adopted the tactic of hugging us, creeping closer and closer through a trench network, a typical siege network, these Bru were caught in cross-fires, and when they finally did get evacuated in late March, the few that did—eventually ended up in a refugee village at a place called Mai Loc which is just south of Cam Lo on Route 558. I visited there a few times. There were approximately four to six thousand there. Now these included not only the Bru that we knew at Khe Sanh and the villages around Khe Sanh, but also Bru that had still been in the hills. So the 6,000 would not have been included in the original 12,000. So well over 6,000 Bru were killed.

And by that time, Khe Sanh, with all the bombardment—I'll get to that later on—had become a moonscape and all the beauty was just erased.

But now getting back to the tribes—this is significant. The setting of the place. I've talked about the mountains and the passes and Route 9. There were some strategic hills, just like at Dien Bien Phu which was surrounded by hill outposts that acted as early warning or observation to detect enemy encroaching, we had some hills, notably three. Just to the north of us there was a high hill range at the western end of which was a hill called Hill 950. Hills were called by numbers because of meters above sea-level, so Hill 950 was 950 meters above sea-level. Actually, it wasn't! We found that out because we tried to fire 105 artillery support to explode on the north slope of Hill 950 and found that it impacted on the [south] slope! It couldn't go over the crest of the hill. So back in September, October of '67, a group of engineers from the 2nd Topographic Company of Camp LeJeune arrived at Khe Sanh to do a survey, however they do that, I guess with radio beams, and they determined that Hill 950 was really Hill 963, so it was a little bit higher than 950! That's just a little humorous aside.

The other hills were Hill 861, which was visible from the combat base, and Hill 881-South which was a little bit further west. These hills, 861 and 881, were prominent in the news back in April, May of '67 when there was a tremendous battle there. At that time we only had one Marine company guarding Khe Sanh Combat Base, Bravo, 1/9, and they had sent out a patrol out to the base of Hill 861 to determine if indeed there were enemy in the area that had been reported by other people, namely Army SOG people training, Marine recon teams, and so on. They ran into an ambush and that triggered off what they called the Battle of the Hills. That was on, I believe, the 24th of April of '67, and they brought in a while regiment, the Third Marine Regiment. The battle raged until about the 10th of May of '67, not all that long, but it was very costly—costly in the sense that we would assault hills and take tremendous casualties, like on the 30th of April we lost, I don't' know, maybe 50, 60 killed—I don't remember the exact number.

Kurtz: It's in that book?

Stubbe: It's in that book, yes

Kurtz: And what was the name of the book?

Stubbe: *Battalion of Kings*, and it's on the 30th of April that the main assault of Hill 881—and so what would happen is that they withdrew and they couldn't retrieve all the men who were killed. That was an anathema for the Marines: to leave dead people on the battlefield. But it became a common thing—maybe half a dozen times it happened at Khe Sanh through the succeeding months where we had to leave dead people—for a while at least. Then they dropped 2,000-pound bombs on H ill 881-South. And apparently there were caves underneath, like a hospital. And in succeeding months, Marines would dig trenches and bunkers and suddenly dig into an opening of a collapsed area where many North Vietnamese bodies were rotting, and the stench was unbearable.

The caves, by the way, had formed because we had so much rain in the area. We had two big monsoons where we had, like, seven inches a day. Having lived in Wisconsin and gone to college and seminary in Minnesota where obviously the temperatures are cold in the winter, nevertheless I'd say I never felt colder than I did at Khe Sanh during the monsoons because you could never get dry and the temperatures would be around in the 40s because of the elevation. Anyway, these rains had formed numerous caves in that area.

Kurtz: Were they like the geological caves in Wisconsin?

Stubbe: Yeah, limestone caves. Because when this land mass crashed into what is now Laos, it lifted up sea beds which formed these limestone caves. And then there was another hill called 881-North which was, maybe 3,000 meters to the north.

After the Battle of the Hills, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, and an abbreviated staff of 26th Marines Regiment occupied Khe Sanh. We put a company of Marines, about 250 [men] on each of 861 and 881 [South] and maintained that all the way until we left Khe Sanh in July of '68.

So these were two major hills, and [hill] 950. We also occasionally had other outposts.

There were some other significant hills. 471 is right at the junction of Route 9 and the road that leads to Khe Sanh Combat Base. And this was significant because this was one of the major objectives of the North Vietnamese who occupied it right from the beginning, because from it you can see Khe Sanh village, Lang Vei, and Khe Sanh Combat Base and 950 and 861, and we didn't occupy it at the beginning of the siege because we had a reconnaissance team out two days before the siege called NURSE, and it was just to the west of 471, and it was surrounded. And Colonel Lownds, who was the senior Commander of the area realized that that was an untenable, indefensible position, and sort of gave it to the enemy, and we just blasted it with air and artillery continuously.

Then there was Khe Sanh village, which was about three miles south of Khe Sanh Combat Base. It was mainly Vietnamese.

Kurtz: Were there any French?

Stubbe: Yes, there were. It was originally developed because there was a French planter, Eugene Poilane, who had gone there around 1918. He had come to Saigon as part of World War I, and when it finished he settled in what became Khe Sanh area, and was a botanical fellow. He started a coffee plantation. He also was a botanical explorer and walked, believe it or not to what was the border with China and collected specimens and sent them back to Saigon. He was an amazing person. He had about nine kids, five of which were born in his 60s, one of which was Felix Poilane, who's mother gave birth to him at Khe Sanh alone because her husband, Eugene, was out collecting botanical specimens. He realized that the Bru weren't reliable or capable of doing the coffee plantation work, so he imported Vietnamese which was very odd that the Vietnamese would come into that area, but they did. And eventually there were about 1200 Vietnamese in Khe Sanh village.

There was also a position about 500 meters to the east which we called "The Old French Fort."

Stubbe: Huong Hoa, which I believe is Vietnamese for "beautiful flower." "Khe Sanh," by the way, is Vietnamese. "Khe" is Vietnamese for "stream," and "san"—it should be pronounced "schan," because it's S-A-N-H, and "san," which would be X-A-N means "green." "Schan"—I'm not sure what that means right now. But the Marines mispronounced it as "Khe San" and everyone else pronounced it as "Khe San;" it should be pronounced as "Khe Schan." But "Khe Sanh" literally means "green stream."

Kurtz: Was there a green stream?

Stubbe: There was a green stream, and it was full of arsenic as a matter of fact. [According to] a geology report of the 1930s indicated it was full of arsenic, probably because of the volcanic [activity]. But it became sort of a metaphor in my mind, anyway of the stream of green uniformed people—both North Vietnamese and Americans wore green uniforms and streamed into the area.

By the way, I think I should mention that Khe Sanh sat on top of an extinct volcano. And that's why the soil was red. It was weathered—what we call "laterite" soil. The highest geographical point, quite a ways to the north, was a mountain called "Tiger Tooth," or "Dong Voi Mep." I think it was, like 1371—I may be wrong. It was part of this geological movement of land masses. It moved southward, and as it moved about 10,000 years ago there's an arc of five volcanoes that formed, one of which was Khe Sanh. Another one is Gio Linh, which people recognize.

Kurtz: Was Tiger Tooth a volcano too?

Stubbe: No, it was a big granite mountain that crashed into this area and caused these eruptions of these five volcanoes. The other one, close to the Lao border is called A Dua Ap. And there were two others with odd names that no one would recognize.

This is sort of interesting because before the siege the Marines realized their water source was outside the combat base at the Rao Quan River to the north of us and that we were very vulnerable to loss of water if the North Vietnamese ever decided to either poison it or restrict our little pipeline that went out there to collect the water. So they thought of drilling wells. They weren't familiar with the fact that we sat on an extinct volcano! Obviously they couldn't of dug a well to find water underneath us; they'd find lava! So that is geologically significant. It was another metaphor—that the place was formed in violence—the clash of these land masses and then the volcano—that the place was born in violence. And I guess despite however beautiful the area was, people would still kind of feel: there's something not right about this place. In fact, the name on the tactical map lists the place as "Xom Cham," "Xom" is the word for "village" and the Chams were violent, sea pirates that lived along the coastline to the east, which developed an artistic phase. There was a Cham Museum in DaNang which had these sculptures like from India, big sculptures. And possibly, when the Vietnamese conquered them, they moved further into the hills. Most of them moved southward. But it's possible there was a village of Chams on what became the Khe Sanh airstrip. At least it's indicated on the map as "Xom Cham," which would also indicate that it was a place of violent people.

Kurtz: Why don't we talk about the Special Forces camp, Lang Vei.

Stubbe: OK. Lang Vei. Originally the Special Forces occupied Khe Sanh in 1962, the summer, because General Taylor from the Kennedy administration, early Johnson administration, had sent a team consisting General Taylor to scope out the situation, and he determined that Vietnam could not be held unless we plugged up what he called the "porous border." By "porous" he meant that although there were these tremendous mountains of the Annamite Chain, there were these passes, such as the one near Khe Sanh, the D'Ai Lao, that unless we could plug those up, the North Vietnamese would just come down Laos, which they did in the Ho Chi Minh Trail network later on—which was formed by a thing called "Group 558," which is designated such because it was started in May of '58, 5/58—just an interesting historical aside, trivia matter here.

Kurtz: But it wasn't in Vietnam in '58?

Stubbe: No, no. But Khe Sanh was one of the first legs that it went into. So, General Maxwell Taylor determined that the porous border had to be plugged or Vietnam could not be held. Because of that they sent Special Forces over, which were then part of the CIA, and the Special Forces arrived in Khe Sanh in the summer of '62 and occupied the Old French Fort position. And around, I believe 1964—I may be wrong about that, but it's in my *Battalion of Kings* book, a Vietnamese engineering outfit upgraded the old Khe Sanh—what eventually became Khe Sanh Combat Base, and placed pierced steel plate, PSP, matting, which is steel with big, maybe 2 ½, 3-inch holes, and then the Special Forces moved to that place and built several concrete bunkers which the Marines later on always referred to as old French bunkers, such as the 26th Marines' operational center, the Command Operations Center they always said was an old French bunker but it really wasn't; it was an old Special Forces bunker. And the Special Forces stayed there until October, November, '66, when General Westmoreland thought that the North Vietnamese were gathering in considerable strength and might have an influx in that area, which they did later in '72, but the Marines thought otherwise and didn't want to go to Khe Sanh. But to comply with General

Westmoreland's wishes, they sent a battalion up to Khe Sanh in the last part of October of '/66, which was battalion 1/3, First Battalion, Third Marine Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Peter Wickwire was the Commander at the time.

The Special Forces and the Marines—it was like "oil and water;" they didn't tell each other what they were doing. It came to a head in December of '66 when the Marines said: Tell us what you're doing, patrols, and they said, No, we can't; we're secret, top secret. And the Marines said, We saw a Vietnamese unit outside our wires and we didn't fire on them because we thought they were yours, and the Special Forces said: No, they weren't ours. And the Marines said: In the future, if we see any indigenous people in the area, we will fire on them. And the Special Forces said: Well, we can't live under those circumstances. So they moved out to an old ARVN base called Lang Vei with the stipulation that the structures they had built on Khe Sanh Camp would be maintained and not be demolished by the Marines, because they fully intended to come back, to return to that area. They thought the Marines would only be there for a short while. But in fact, the Special Forces went out to Lang Vei and the ARVN which were there at the time displaced to the Old French Fort. I think it was the 2nd ARVN Regiment, if I'm not mistaken; it's in *Battalion of Kings* also. The Army built up the place. It was a Detachment A-101 in '66 and starting of '67. And a major thing happened in early '67 in March, the village of Lang Vei was accidentally struck by Air Force planes which bombed and created mass casualties. The explanation—I won't go into—why that happened is explained in the *Battalion of Kings* book in that section on that date.

Several of our Marine recon teams also experienced major contacts in late January and February of '67. The accidental bombing of Lang Vei village became the occasion for the sending of a MACV Advisory Team to Khe Sanh village. A fellow by the name of Major Whitenack arrived with three other Army personnel. There was a Sergeant First Class Perry, a Sergeant First Class Humphrey, and I can't recall the fourth person. Perry was the medic, and they operated in Khe Sanh village at the District Headquarters, there.

Also about that time there was a small American 2-man group called the Joint Technical Advisory Detachment, which was part of some Military Intelligence Group—512 or something like that. They would use "turned-around" North Vietnamese to do very deep, long-range reconnaissance of the area.

Then about the same time also there was a Marine unit called Combined Action Company OSCAR which formed, and their headquarters also was in Khe Sanh village. They consisted of 47 (I guess) Marines arranged into three platoons, CAPs, Combined Action Platoons, two of which were at Khe Sanh village, one at the western edge, one at the District Headquarters, and the Third Platoon was just outside Khe Sanh Combat Base.

The Special Forces at Lang Vei during the Battle of the Hills on the 4th of May were overrun, probably as a diversionary force to draw attention away from the battles in the hills. The Commanding Officer and the Executive Officer [were killed]. What happened was: the North Vietnamese had sent three or four agents posing as Vietnamese recruits for their indigenous force, and on the 4th of May had bayoneted or killed by knife the sentries guarding the perimeter of Lang Vei and then permitted an invasion force to overrun the place. There were several American survivors, including Bill STEPTOE, who survived who since has died, but who described for me the whole scenario, also in the *Battalion of Kings* book. The Special Forces remained at Lang Vei. In fact they upgraded—they realized that area of Lang Vei was probably not as defensible as it should be, and so established a new Camp Lang Vei about 2,000 meters further west. And I remember visiting the place while they were constructing it in November of '67, and the Commanding Officer at the time—his name was Frank Willoughby described for me, proudly, how there was going to be an inner perimeter in which no Vietnamese were allowed, just Americans, to prevent a repetition of that 4th of May incident.

Kurtz: Did you have any thoughts about that: we were there to help the Vietnamese and we couldn't let them in our—.

Stubbe: Yes, we were there to help them, and this became an issue, quite frankly, a big issue later on, too. But no. I think it was just a matter—we just—even the Army people who worked with them. Special Forces, of course, is a 12-man team, typically to develop a regimental-size indigenous force. The camp really belonged to the Vietnamese; it was not am American—Lang Vei was not an American Special Forces camp. Some people mistake it was. It was a Vietnamese camp, and the Americans were there as advisors. So they developed this new camp Lang Vei, and they spent over a million dollars developing this new camp. Captain Willoughby, in addition to the inner perimeter and outer perimeter, had cleared a huge field of fire, sloping over a click—over a thousand meters, and he proudly said, "We can take over a regiment assaulting us." He had no qualms about the fact that it was a completely defensible position. Of course, they didn't think of tanks, which is what happened.

So they developed that place and they kept the old Lang Vei. It was just there. It was further east.

So the area at the opening of the siege: we had Lang Vei, the new Lang Vei, we had an old Lang Vei. They were reinforced with a Mobile Support Group. We had Khe Sanh village. We had Hill 881-South, Hill 861, Hill 950, of course Khe Sanh

Combat Base itself. We had the Marine Combined Action Company OSCAR, which was mainly in Khe Sanh village but had one platoon just outside the main gate of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. As the siege started, we also had not only 26th Marine Regiment—. Now I have to say, 26th Marine Regiment staff was only half of a staff because MACV had a ceiling on how many Marines could be in Vietnam. So we had a unit called 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, 9th MAB, in Okinawa, and 26th Marine Regiment was in Okinawa—at least half of it was. And then 26th Marine Regiment (Forward) was at Khe Sanh. And the Commanding Officer of 26th Marine Regiment was at Khe Sanh with the Executive Officer. But he had no Sergeant Major. The Sergeant Major was on Okinawa. And indeed half of the staff was on Okinawa as the Siege began. We also, as the Siege began, had the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines which had been there since the end of the Battle of the Hills. They arrived in May of '67. And then around early June of '67 there were some major contacts, Hill 950 was almost overrun and there were some other major contacts, so they brought in 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines, which arrived in early June of '67, and were there until about August, maybe September, '67, when they left to go to Con Thien as part of Operation KINGFISHER, leaving only 1st Battalion, 26th Marines. At that time I was the only Chaplain there; the 3/26 Chaplain, John McElroy, had left, and then they brought in a Chaplain to replace him who was there at Khe Sanh, part of Sub Unit 5 of 3rd Marine Division [Walt Driscoll].

So starting in September, when the monsoons came, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, was the only battalion, the only infantry unit, there. And then signals intelligence started to pick up indications that the North Vietnamese were moving in again. And I remember I was on Hill 881-South on Marine Corps Birthday, 10 November of '67 and Colonel Lownds landed and got us all together, and I'll never forget his words; it will stick with me forever. He said, "You all soon will be in the American history books." Not too many people commented on that or caught it, but I certainly did. I wrote it in my diary. And indeed, signals intelligence—he didn't say that, obviously; that was Top Secret—had determined that we would be a target. So it became [a problem of] how do we reinforce without letting the North Vietnamese know we're reinforcing. Colonel Lownds mentioned that in his Debrief at FMFPAC.

So they brought 3/26 back to Khe Sanh in mid-December of '67 and as the Siege opened, 3/26 companies defended Hill 881-South—INDIA Company was up there, and then Hill 861 was defended by KILO Company. These two companies relieved 1/26 companies which then went back to the Combat Base to man the perimeter itself.

Kurtz: So there were two battalions at the start of—?

Stubbe: Well, actually one more battalion arrived about the 16th of January. The siege started on the 21st. On the 16th or 17th of January, 2/26, arrived. So it was the first time since Iwo Jima in World War II that the 26th Marine Regiment was together with all battalions in combat, minus half of its staff.

Kurtz: Was that good or bad, not having the other half of the staff?

Stubbe: Well, it was very bad, actually because we didn't have all the operations people, the intelligence people, logistics people that we should have had. But 3rd Marine Division, General Tompkins—his full name is Rathvon McClure Tompkins—sent up an augmentation of 3rd Marine Division officers to augment the abbreviated 26th Marines staff. In fact, they sent up just the right people. They sent up really top notch people who I can comment on later.

Kurtz: Was that the Third Marine Division?

Stubbe: Third Marine Division, yes. They became known as Sub Unit Three, these people that came up. As a Chaplain I have to say—these are matters of faith, I guess—in other words, I'm seeing things that I cannot prove, but which to me are very evident. The fact that just the right people arrived there, and they were such a small group of people, surrounded by 40,000 North Vietnamese, to me—and the fact that we took so few casualties throughout the siege—I mean, they were significant—more significant than the official amount. Still, we took less than we probably should have.

Kurtz: So there were two Chaplains there?

Stubbe: At that time each battalion had a Chaplain. Now 3/26, the headquarters was—.

Kurtz: When the tape ran out, you were talking about the west side defenses of the combat base.

Stubbe: Yes. I was talking, basically, about the Chaplains and the units. 3/26 Headquarters was—and 2/26 Headquarters, both of them were on the western edge of the perimeter which was known as the "Red Sector." In that area was also the 1st Provisional 155 millimeter howitzers, and I guess that was about it. The rest of 3/26: LIMA Company was also with them, protecting their battalion headquarters, I guess. And INDIA Company, Bill Dabney [Commanding], who is the brother-in-law of "Chesty" Puller, was on Hill 881-South. And Captain Jasper was on H ill 861 with KILO Company. And on the 20th of January, the day before the siege began, Bill Dabney had sent India Company northwards to Hill 881-North, suspecting that there were enemy there and ran into a huge contact there in which he lost two of his platoon commanders, both of which received Navy Crosses for their heroism—Lieutenant Brindley and Lieutenant Thomas, and that's discussed fully in the *Battalion of Kings* book. While this was happening, a North Vietnamese Lieutenant, named Tonc, T-O-N-C, who was with the 14th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Company, surrendered on the base and disclosed the entire battle plan of the North Vietnamese for Khe Sanh Combat Base. And also at the same time, John Miller, the Wycliffe Bible Translator in Khe Sanh Village, who had left in early January because he was told by Colonel Lownds that the North Vietnamese were coming, and he said, "Well, I have a conference to attend in Saigon anyway, so he went with his wife and family—they sent their kids there. But he came back up [to Khe Sanh Combat Base] on the 20th of January to get his Bru helper who helped with the translation, to rescue him, and Colonel Lownds was very angry with him for doing that. But he managed to get back to Saigon with his Bru helper. And Lieutenant Tonc was disclosing what the North Vietnamese planned to do. Basically what they planned to do was hit the western edge of the combat base so that the Marines would focus there, but this was a diversion, and the main force would come up from the Khe Sanh village area, Route 9, and overrun the base. That was their main battle plan. So Colonel Lownds told Captain Dabney to cease his assault of Hill 881-North and couldn't disclose over the radio why, and the Marines were very unhappy because they had gained the momentum, and they felt they could take Hill 881-North. Nevertheless, they came back.

But while they were doing this, Lieutenant Colonel Alderman, who was the Commanding Officer of 3/26, had sent two platoons of MIKE Company to Hill 881-South to man the perimeter while INDIA Company was in the assault. And when INDIA Company returned to 881-South, these two platoons of MIKE Company manned the perimeter of the western portion of Hill 881. Hill 881-South had a main position and then there was a little trail, and then there was a western section. We called it "the finger," but it was more than a finger. It was half as large as the main part, and that's where these two platoons of MIKE Company manned. And the other platoon was with LIMA Company on the Combat Base.

Kurtz: How many MIKE Company personnel were at Khe Sanh? [Kurtz may here be confusing a "MIKE Company" of Special Forces, which is a different organization]

Stubbe: It was the whole company.

Kurtz: OK, and what is a MIKE Company?

Stubbe: Yeah, a battalion is about 1200 Marines, a letter company is about 250 Marines.

Kurtz: This was MIKE Company of Marines?

Stubbe: O, yes, yes. I might say that unlike the Army, the Marines are very simple about how they designate units. Each battalion had four line companies, or infantry companies. And the 1st Battalion was always A, B, C, and D [Companies], ALFA, BRAVO, CHARLIE, and DELTA. The Second Battalion was always E, F, G, and H—ECHO, FOX, GOLF, and HOTEL. The Third battalion was always I, L, K, and M—they skipped JULIETTE—it was too feminine for the Marines. Now the 3rd Division had 3rd Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Regiment, and 9th Marine Regiment. That's where it gets more like the Army—odd numbers they picked out of nowhere. The 1st Marine Division had 1st Marines, 5th Marines, and 7th Marines. We always call them "Marines," and it's Marine Regiment. Each Marine Company is divided into platoons of about 50 or so [men], and then there's a Weapons Platoon of battalion which has 106 recoilless [rifles], 3.5-inch rockets, and .50 caliber machineguns, and these are distributed among the platoons. That's the organizational structure. So MIKE Company is a company of Marines, not like "MIKE FORCE" with Special Forces, which is—

Kurtz: OK, that's what I wanted to clarify, that you were not talking about the Mike Force people.

Stubbe: Correct. And then 2/26: the rear was in the western perimeter, but their main CP and all their companies were at a hill position guarding a valley approach from the northwest of Khe Sanh, and they were at a Hill 552, except for one company, ECHO Company, which moved out towards Hill 861—there was a little knob. From Hill 861 you couldn't look directly at 552, there was an obstruction of a little knob of a hill, and so ECHO Company occupied this little knob and it was designated Hill 861-ALFA, and that was ECHO Company, Captain Breeding was the CO.

So that's sort of the situation at the time.

Kurtz: Were there any aircraft—.

Stubbe: O, I wanted to say also that we had very few underground bunkers and trenches built, and the reason for that is that we were just emerging from the monsoons which had struck us the beginning of September. They were supposed to last into January, but fortunately didn't. The monsoon rains had washed out any underground bunkers on the base and on the hills, and trenches, so everything was built above ground. And so when the siege started and we had another force—we had another company, maybe 250 of reporters that suddenly descended upon us—criticized the Marines for not digging in, and very unjustly, because although we had tried to, we couldn't. And that was one of the situations that we really hadn't hardened our defenses..

Kurtz: Was this perimeter—did it include the whole airfield?

Stubbe: Yes. Well, actually it was even more. The northern part of the perimeter, north of the airstrip, known as the Blue Sector, was not as quite well developed, and there the trench was only, probably, three foot deep. I know, because I was all over the base, and that was one area where there were snipers from that hill range to the north and our water point was out of that area. So running in that area—sometimes in that area there was mortars and snipers and it didn't feel too safe. But they rapidly developed—. Also in that Blue Sector was an Army unit consisting of quad 50s and what we called "Dusters." Dusters were (for me) an odd unit: they fired Naval 40 millimeter ammunition, which were Navy guns which were on Navy ships as anti-aircraft, but it was interesting to me because it was Naval munitions and guns, mounted on Army vehicles, on a Marine Corps base. And they were mainly anti-aircraft because we were afraid the North Vietnamese would fly down MIGs. And they had been there since the Battle of the Hills. I think they arrived in May of '67. And the Quad-50s are four .50 caliber machineguns. They were in what we called the Blue Sector. The western area was LIMA Company, a platoon of MIKE Company, 1st Provisional 155s, and the CP of 3/26 and the rear of 2/26, was known as the Red Sector. Then moving southwards is the main entrance to the Combat Base, outside of which was CAP OSCAR-3, and then moving eastward was what we called FOB-3 perimeter, which was almost like a separate camp, manned by the Army FOB-3 plus the Marine CAC when it evacuated from Khe Sanh village when the battle opened. I say it's a separate perimeter because we had Marine guns pointed into—our perimeter continued, known as the Gray Sector and the Gray Alfa Sector moving eastward, manned by Bravo, 1/26, and then moving northwards around the end of the perimeter towards the end of the airstrip, continued Bravo.

The 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion arrived the end of January, and they had another line just east of our Bravo, our Gray Sector, so we actually had like two perimeters. Again, it was distrust of the indigenous people that we had them separate. In fact, our perimeter could fire at them and could fire into FOB-3 because they had a huge amount—they had the Bru who had been in Khe Sanh Village, they had the Vietnamese CIDG, they had Cambodians and some of the Special Forces were very angry that we had guns pointed into their camp. But Colonel Lownds had determined, from the example of Lang Vei being overrun the 4th of May that you just can't trust local, indigenous people, so we had guns pointed into their camp. And then later on, on the 7th of February, when Lang Vei got overrun, along with their refugees, the Vietnamese, we had a huge amount of Laotians. I must backtrack—it's hard to know where to pick up these things and where to end with them. But on the 25th of January, a position known as Ban Houei Sane, which was just inside of Laos, and which was the site of the Royal Laotian Battalion known as BV-33, [for] which 26th Marines had responsibility to provide artillery support—which we never were able to but we had that responsibility—anyway, they were overrun by tanks on the 25th of January, which should have indicated to Lang Vei that tanks are in the area. The Air Force reported it to them. And when they were overrun—they were not just military; they were sort of like a National Guard: they had their wives and children and pigs and everything else with them. So they moved eastward to Lang Vei—took refuge at Lang Vei. So when Lang Vei was overrun on the 7th of February we had all these Laotians that were suddenly outside our gate at Khe Sanh Combat Base, and the FOB-3 soldiers wanted to let them in to evacuate them, and Ambassador Sullivan, who was in Vientienne, Laos, was like a bird on a hot tin roof: he was just so excited, agitated, that there were Laotians inside South Vietnam, that all these huge amount of news reporters would find that out, because Laos is supposed to be neutral, and having an armed force there [in Vietnam] just was—. So he sent this

message, which was an impossible directive: evacuate all these Laotians without letting the news media know they were there. How do you send in planes, with all these news media, with all these strange people with different uniforms? But they did effect that by evacuating them from FOB-3, which was a Top Secret base that news reporters were not allowed on, and sent them to DaNang and then from DaNang they went to Vietienne. There's some interesting stories about that whole thing, but that's all in *Battalion of Kings*.

So anyway, Colonel Lownds had made the decision not to allow them on the Combat Base, to evacuate them, because he didn't know if there were any assassins, intelligence agents, whatever.

Colonel Lownds made an awful lot of very painful decisions—as I look at it—I mean, he never told me. I talked with him many times—now he can't. I've met with him. I've talked with him, but he's very shy, he's very low key. He was then [during the siege] too. In fact, news reporters said, "This is like Dien Bien Phu," and he said, "Dien Bien Phu? What was that?" And they took it at face value that he was an oaf, that he was stupid, that we had incompetence there, when in fact he had thoroughly studied Dien Bien Phu. He even had a book [on that battle] near his cot in the bunker. But he was that kind of person. He was like Socrates: "Beauty? Well, tell me about beauty. I don't know anything about beauty—or truth." That's the way he was. But anyway, as I look back at it, he had to made some terribly painful decisions. One of which was not to reinforce Khe Sanh Village when it was being attacked and to evacuate the District Headquarters, the seat of government—the first seat of government to fall in South Vietnam, of tremendous propaganda value to the North Vietnamese. One of which was not to reinforce Lang Vei when it fell, which existing plans called for him to send one infantry company to them. He didn't do it. Another was not to admit refugee civilians onto the base for evacuation. Another was probably not to request reinforcements during the siege—which would have fallen right into the North Vietnamese plan of creating a situation in which they wanted reinforcements to come in so that they could kill the reinforcements.

Kurtz: Was that a good decision: not to bring reinforcements in?

Stubbe: O, very good, an excellent decision. In fact, I've had some of the North Vietnamese histories translated and they lament—they criticize themselves as to why their strategy of luring Americans failed. Some of our more liberal historians like my co-author, John Prados, in fact say, "O, we played into their hands: we did reinforce I Corps." Well, we may have reinforced I Corps, but we didn't reinforce Khe Sanh Combat Base. The point was not to reinforce, but to send in reinforcements which would be annihilated, and that was their main plan. That is why they attacked Khe Sanh Village, that is why they attacked Lang Vei, that was why they attacked recon teams—we would send in reinforcements and then they would try to get the people who were reinforcing, kill them off. It was always one of their main strategies, to cripple and then not really kill—like a man is out there shot, they don't kill him, they just let him out wounded, hoping that people would go out there trying to rescue him. They knew our psyche, that we will try to rescue people, whereas they wouldn't. But the main thing was to get the reinforcements. They plainly talk about this in some of their histories, that their plan was to draw-in US forces so that they could annihilate them. And we didn't fall into that trap. And they lament later on, or they try to analyze why that didn't happen.

Kurtz: Was that a positive or a negative morale factor for the people who were at Khe Sanh, that there were not reinforcements coming in?

Stubbe: It was negative. Well, it was negative and it was positive. It was negative in the sense—as I was walking around, a lot of the men—it was a common thing—"when are they going to relieve us? When are they going to send in more people?" We felt so isolated, especially when we knew tanks were—we were against tanks, we were against 40,000 people. We didn't know about electronic sensors. We didn't know about COFRAM munitions. These were all Top Secret. We just didn't know about that. We didn't know about signals intelligence. They didn't tell us. But on the other hand, it was sort of a source of pride. Even some of the reporters would say, "Well, they decided not to reinforce Khe Sanh, but General Giap didn't realize there were Marines there!" That [sort of thing].

Kurtz: Did they get replacements for casualties?

Stubbe: Yes, and they all arrived by helicopter basically.

Kurtz: In your mind was there adequate people there to do the job on the ground?

Stubbe: Well, we held. I think that was the main thing. Our strategy—General Tompkins' strategy—was a "set piece" battle. We would hold. We would adopt the North Vietnamese tactic of drawing in North Vietnamese, hold them, sort of like flies to flypaper—that's my metaphor—and then saturate the area with massive B-52 bombs and annihilate them. Westmoreland said: We will make a stand at Khe Sanh, rather than abandon it when we knew they were coming, because that way, all these forces that were coming wouldn't end up in the populated, eastern areas—Quang Tri, Dong Ha, which would be much more difficult to deal with, but we could put them in a relatively unpopulated area—Westmoreland called it "unpopulated"—he disregards the Bru—and hit them with these bombs. Now, in fact, we on the combat base thought we had it rough, and we did. There were people getting wounded. We evacuated 2500 wounded people, and Marines don't always evacuate people; if you get a broken arm, you don't get evacuated.

Kurtz: Out of how many Marines was there?

Stubbe: Well, there was probably less than 6,000, but that includes the hill outposts. On the base itself, maybe 4500.

Kurtz: So more than half the people there got evacuated?

Stubbe: Yeah, and got replaced. But we received—the base itself, the airstrip, not the hill outposts—was about half a mile wide and a mile and a half long, and we received an average of 300, 400 rounds a day of mainly rockets and artillery, a few mortars, a few recoilless rifles, and a high of 1300 rounds in one day. We were really plastered.

Kurtz: How effective were these rounds? What kind of casualties were you taking?

Stubbe: We evacuated 2500—that's in a statement by the head of the medical detachment [who] wrote an article about that and quoted that number. Officially there were 205 killed. By "officially" I mean in the 26th Marines Regiment After Action Report of the battle. And also in testimony before Congress, Colonel Lownds used that figure when they had a Sub-Committee that was trying to evaluate these sensors in November of 1971, and he quotes 205. However, if you count the official documents of the After Action Reports of the subordinate units. I'm talking about the battalions: 1/26, 2/26, 3/26, the artillery battalion 1/13, which had three batteries, Alfa, Bravo, and Charlie—that's the main units. And then we had all sorts of assorted units: we had a company of engineers, we had a company of recon, a company of Shore Party—who moved supplies, we had logistics people, we had medical people, we had air people, fuel people—we had all sorts of other people. If you count all of these casualties, as I have, by name, I come up with somewhere around 475 killed. Now even the official—getting back to the battalions—if you count all of them, you end up with about 260 or something like that. And the only way that I can explain discrepancy between the regiment and then if you could all the. [subordinate] battalions, is that it's possible they might not have included 1/9—

Kurtz: You were saying they might not have counted the casualties from 1/9. Were they actually at Khe Sanh?

Stubbe: Yes. They were in a position called "The Rock Quarry" which was a few hundred meters from the Red Sector, the western sector of Khe Sanh Combat Base, near FOB-3 in the Red Sector. We called it "the rock quarry" because that's where we blasted rock which was used by the SeaBees to refurbish the airstrip during the monsoons when portions of it washed out and they pulled up the air matting, put down this rock, and covered it with asphalt, and put down the air matting again. The rock acted as a drainage. Anyway, the rock quarry was manned by 1/9—which originally had intended to go to Hill 471, but because of the contact with that recon team NURSE, Colonel Lownds put them at the rock quarry, which was another approach to the base itself, which made good sense. And 1/9 lost sixty or so people killed, and so if you subtract that from the 260 or so, you arrive at about the 205 official. So military—at least in the Marine Corps, there's a thing called ADCON and OPCON: ADCON refers to administrative control and OPCON is operational control, and it may be that although 1/9 was under operational control, they may have considered 1/9 as ADCON to 9th Marine Regiment, rather than 26th Marine Regiment, and therefore the casualties, they thought, would be carried by 9th Marine Regiment rather than 26th Marine Regiment. I don't think—a more jaded or a more liberal historian might say, O, they're trying to cover up, make the casualties less, make it seem like it was less a horrible thing for us than it was. I really don't think so. I think it's simply a matter of accounting. They wouldn't count, for example, Marines that died after being evacuated but who had been wounded. They didn't count, for example, when a plane crashed on the 6th of March and all 47 [aboard] were killed while it was landing. They didn't count all the Army people—FOB-3 people—that got killed. And so on. It's a matter of who they count, and the [date of] the end of an

operation. Officially, SCOTLAND, which was the operation of the siege, ended the 31st of March, then it became Operation PEGASUS for 14 days, the first 14 days of April. For those of us who were still there, the battle was still raging, so for us who were there, to say that the Khe Sanh Siege ends was rather—.

Kurtz: What was your typical duty day like during the siege?

Stubbe: During the siege—the first day of the siege was a Sunday. It seemed like they always attacked on Sundays—several other times they were—.

Kurtz: Didn't they like your sermons, Ray?

Stubbe: They didn't like my sermons at all. They didn't want me to talk. They tried to silence me!

Kurtz: They weren't successful.

Stubbe: They were not successful. But I must say, on that day I just sort of wandered the base. I didn't hold any services that I recall. I helped dig out people. I helped carry dead people. But then after that it got into a thing where because of that ridge line to the north of us which we assumed had numerous spotters, that the word came out at briefings that we couldn't assemble more than six, seven people in a group at any one time for any reason because they would call in mortars. They had the whole base pretty well plotted.

Kurtz: That was anywhere on the base you couldn't have—?

Stubbe: Yes. That involved moving of supplies, it involves moving of casualties, no matter what. I mean, they just didn't want any groupings. Which to some degree affects Vietnam veterans generally, even those who were not at Khe Sanh. I mean, a lot of times, Vietnam veterans do not like crowds, and I think it gets to that point that one mortar round can get so many people, or be attacked. You like to be dispersed.

But anyway, so I couldn't hold normal church services; I'll put it that way. So I adopted this method of just hopping around from bunker to bunker, trench to trench, and sometimes in the open gathering five people, half a dozen, trying to prevent more from adding themselves to our group, saying: If there's more, I'll get to you later on. And I developed a very short worship service—probably the kind that everyone likes; it was probably less than ten minutes. I had an opening prayer of a sentence or two. I had a scripture lesson—if I recall at the time—I used the same one: it was Jesus calming the seas. And then I had a sermon which consisted of maybe one or two sentences, mainly about how we find ourselves in chaotic situations, destructive desperation, and uncertainties like the sea, and how God is nevertheless with us, and within this we can experience peace. That was my sermon. And then I would have a full communion service. I would have the blessing of the wine and wafers. I had a little chalice—a home visitation chalice that I would fill. Oddly enough, one time I would bless it, and I'm of the opinion I got to bless it all the time, and I was hoping they would take just a little sip, and I recall going to a recon unit, and the first one drank the whole thing. So I had to bless the whole bottle and then poured it. And then I had a short prayer and then the blessing. And that was it. And that was all within ten minutes. And then I'd stay with them and see how they were doing and listen to them.

Kurtz: I have a couple of questions about the service and then I want to go to what you were talking about. Did you change your message through the time of the siege?

Stubbe: Basically not, no, because it was all different people. It was so many different places. I had enough to do 15 or more of these a day, and I could do this for several weeks and not go back to the same place. But I would revisit places. Sometimes I would just have a short prayer without communion and without scripture. And sometimes it was just really bad, I would just hug the people or just be there. Sometimes we just wouldn't say anything but we would just be there with each other and then I'd go off to another.

Kurtz: What would the infantrymen say to you?

Stubbe: Well, it was mainly a joking kind of thing. They'd say—we'd have a rocket that would explode 15 feet away, which is pretty close, and they'd say: Gee, those are poor gunners! They don't know how to hit anything! That kind of thing. Or one guy would talk about how they were in a trench and they had buried a 55-gallon drum to act as their urinal and covered it with screen. And they were on top of the trench one time and they had incoming and they all jumped into the trench. And this one was jumping into the trench and at the last minute he realized he was going to jump into that drum of urine, quickly spread his legs and landed with one planted on either end! Things like that. Or they would talk—like a supply fellow talked about how he took refuge in a culvert along the road, and it was wet, full of water, while his friend, driving a forklift took refuge between two pallets of 155 ammunition. They joked about that, and then the one who was in the culvert emerged and he was covered from head to crotch and then one leg—one half of him was all red and the other was all green. And then they were laughing about that. Or they'd talk of acts of heroism, what they did, just sort of matter-of-factly. Like a corpsman at C Med would talk about how he was in a trench with casualties and a helicopter landed, and this one Marine just ran out to the helicopter with the Corpsman with his evacuation tag describing his wounds and date and stuff running after him trying to attach this tag. And then the Corpsman ran back to the trench and he's all out of breath and he'd say, "My casualty out-ran me!" And the casualty had a wounded leg! Or a recon fellow told how the scout dog ran into the helicopter and ran right up the ramp and through the helicopter and right in between the two pilots and was there and his handler went in to try to get him, and the dog snarled and couldn't do anything, and the dog left with the pilots, and the recon Marine said: That dog was smarter than any of us! That kind of thing. It was sort of a—. Or, one would describe a heroism thing, like one Marine told me one time how a pallet was being air-dropped, a heavy pallet, and because of the noise of the plane this Marine couldn't hear the other Marine shouting to get out of the way, and he ran like a football tackle and got him out of the way and he himself got crushed and killed, saving the other fellow. One time I stayed overnight in the trench in the perimeter. We were told: We were definitely going to be overrun, and my bunker was in the medical area, above ground, and it's safer to be underground, so there was a bunker near us in the CHARLIE Med area, which was the bunker that housed the 106 recoilless gun crew. And I stayed there, overnight. And I remember how nervous they all were. They had like two on and two off, manning the trench, and they all wanted to stay in the bunker, which at that time was an above-ground bunker, well, half above and somewhat below, maybe three foot below and the rest was above. But they all seemed like they wanted to be in the bunker all the time. It was like their womb. It was warm. They had a little candle. They were making coffee, I remember, in their little C-ration cups heated with C-4 explosive, which by the way makes very good heating, and even the ones who were on watch would come in and go out, and not realizing—I kept telling them that the trench out there is safer than the bunker because the bunker makes a target, and if we get hit, the whole thing's going to collapse and we're all going to get killed, whereas the trench is much safer. But anyway they were all in there. I stayed overnight there, and they kept coming and going. And one of them had a little 45 record player, and they were playing the Credence Clearwater version of "I Heard it on the Grapevine," which is a real nervous kind of thing. They played it over and over again, and I didn't get any sleep. But what impressed me was how nervous and full of energy. They must have been fearful. They didn't say they were fearful or act like they were fearful, except that they kept coming into the bunker and going out—their actions betrayed their fear.

And the reason I mention all of this is because two or three days later that particular bunker did take a direct hit and I think it was three people I had known there were all killed, one of which I saw in the trench reading a little Lutheran prayer book that I had distributed, literature. I came up from behind; he didn't know I was there. He was reading this prayer book, and I was just so impressed with this Marine reading this prayer book. One of the Marines—I helped—the C Med people and I rushed down there after it was hit, after the incoming let up, and I remember helping carry out one of the men who had no head. It was just strings coming out of where his neck was, and it was—very devastating. I had no feeling then. We were all numb.

The men—The North Vietnamese in their histories talk about how demoralized we were. That was how they thought we were; they had no way of knowing, but they thought that all their incoming was making us very fearful and trembling and all that kind of stuff, which really wasn't [the case]. We're talking about 19, 20 year-olds who had this battlefield "gallows humor" that kept their sanity—that, and the fact—I think that most of us had already accepted the fact that we were going to die. No one said that. No one said that! But, as I look back at it, we acted that way. What I mean by that is that if someone were wounded out there, during incoming it was a common thing—just very common—for someone to run out during the incoming and drag him back to a trench or to a bunker, knowing full well that they could get killed or wounded in the process. But it wasn't even a consideration. I think once you pass this awareness, the conclusion, that you're going to die anyway, then you're free to do.

Kurtz: And almost you feel you might be better off if you died.

Stubbe: Yeah, almost—but we don't even think those things, we just—at that point we were just acting, we weren't thinking, we weren't talking about how we were feeling. But people would do odd things. For example, the area behind the mess hall that had all the food provisions was surrounded by barbed wire, all above ground, of course—no place to run for cover. And one day a fellow named Jack Corbett, who was with 81s of 1/26, weapons group there—as I was walking around suddenly came to me with a jar, a glass jar that was probably 18 inches high, maybe six, seven inches wide, filled with maraschino cherries, clear glass. And he gave me this thing. And I said, What's this? And he said, Well, it's for you. And I said: Well, I can't eat all these cherries! It's ridiculous. And he said, Well, give them out to the troops. Which I did. I saw him in a reunion in 1988, at Tampa, the first time we ever got together. They were honoring Khe Sanh, the 20th anniversary of the siege and General Westmoreland was the speaker, and Jack Corbett came up to me. He had a great big, bushy beard, and said, Do you remember me? I said: No. He said: Well, I'm Jack Corbett. You don't remember the name? I said: No. There were so many thousands! And he said: I'm the one that gave you that jar of maraschino cherries. I said: I know you! He said: I'm the cherry man. I said: I remember the incident perfectly. And he had gone into this area behind the messhall where there was no place for cover and he got this for me. And I said: Why did you do this? And he said: You looked so tired and haggard and I said I need to do something for the Chaplain. He risked his life—but he didn't think of risking his life—but we do strange things. When once you know you're going to die, you just do. And so he did. And I might say [that] I myself did exactly the same thing in the same area, went into the mess hall food supply area one time, to get an onion, because with my C-rations I wanted to have a little flavor with a raw onion. So I risked my life for an onion. I mean, I could have lost my life over an onion. But we did strange things. There's a famous picture of me holding church services in the northern, Blue Sector, of people bowed down [one with] "Chicago, Ill." In fact, I think the [Wisconsin Veterans] Museum is going to do a diorama of that in May or so. And it only struck me about five years ago—I looked at that picture. And there's a fellow named G. K. Chesterton, a Catholic fellow who wrote mysteries and literature about a century or so ago. He made a statement one time: Look at something long enough until it becomes strange to you, and then you're seeing it for the first time. I looked at that picture, and I "saw it for the first time!" I mean I'd seen it—that picture had been in many magazines and publications. It had been in *Life* magazine—Swanson's version of it, and the Marine version had been in many books and newspapers. Anyway, I saw it for the first time. I suddenly saw that I didn't have a helmet, and neither did any of the other guys. And the word—we were into the siege—it was the 28th of January or someplace around there—maybe a week into the siege, and about two weeks before the siege, the word had already gone out that no one could be walking around the combat base without a helmet on and their flak vest. So here I am, even into the siege, with all this incoming and walking around—running around, I should say—and there I am without a helmet. And it suddenly caught me that I was without a helmet, and I said: The only reason I was without a helmet was because in a church you take off your hat.

Kurtz: You had your helmet with you?

Stubbe: O, of course!

Kurtz: OK, so you weren't walking, so you weren't disobeying orders.

Stubbe: Exactly! But I was without my helmet. And then what really got me was: what if an incoming round had got one of those men, who probably took off their helmets because they saw me take off mine—and if they got a head wound or got killed, I mean the guilt that I would have had for the rest of my life over the loss of their life! Because all of them don't have helmets either! Which is—it's a snapshot in time of battle, the reality of battle, but yet it shows us without helmets, which is not the way it should be. There's something wrong there. It's very wrong. But it was the way it was. So we were without helmets. So there's another strange thing. There were many, many strange things that happened during the battle there.

For example, our water point was outside the—.

Kurtz: Was it ever played with by the North Vietnamese?

Stubbe: No, no, and we wonder why—I mean, oral history tapes, debriefs of Colonel Lownds and his operations officer shortly after the siege when they were being debriefed by the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, in Hawaii and other places, would claim that as a great mystery. I sort of think that maybe they didn't do that because (a) they didn't think of it, (b) they might of used the same water because downstream they used the same water, obviously. And I think those are the reasons they probably didn't do it. But in any event, the water point was outside our wires. We did send out a patrol out there to examine it right after the siege began and the patrol lost one man. But, again, there was a pump out there and it was pumped on to the

base into a large rubber, like a silo, tanks. And because it was rubber, it was punctured many times by incoming, and so there were times we would go three, four days without water, which is very critical, because the human body can only go three or four days without water. And on Hill 950 they were without water for over ten days, and sent out a patrol to a little stream between 950 and 1015. Believe it or not, way on top of the mountain there were streams. There's an old geologic statement about Germany: if you want to get water, go up into the mountains. There was a spring up there, and they sent out a patrol, and the terrain there is so steep that you move around there by grabbing the top of one tree, chinny down the trunk, and then hit the top of the next tree, and chinny down that. That's how sharp the slopes are. And they went down there and there's a fellow named Corporal Birch who was killed while they were trying to do that. Fortunately the skies cleared and they were able to bring some water to 950. But we had actually considered mounting a platoon from Khe Sanh Combat Base to climb [to] Hill 950, with all that sharp—with water—just go get them water. But fortunately we didn't—3/26 S-4 had devised a method of using old 155 canisters, filling them with plastic bladders that was used in milk dispensers throughout Vietnam—filling that with water, putting them in 155 canisters and dropping them on the hills. There were all sorts of ingenious—people were really—like I say, We had just the right people. We had so few people. We had a Target Intelligence Officer, Mirza Baig, a Pakistani fellow whose father had established the Pakistani embassies in Canada and America, and whose grandfather—an illustrious family. Mirza himself was educated in Britain at [their] best schools and was a genius, and with the 3rd Marine Division G-2, was sent up there to Khe Sanh to augment our S-2 (because we had that abbreviated staff) and within a week, by observing electronic sensors, signals intelligence, and knowing how the North Vietnamese moved—their tactics—he had studied them. He had also ordered from the CIA all the things about Dien Bien Phu, about the tactics and everything else. He was just an amazing person, Baig was; he was only a Marine Captain. But within 7 to 10 days he had already plotted the artillery headquarters of the North Vietnamese and destroyed them. One place had—I don't know—secondary explosions for many hours later. He knew how they moved and what they did. People like that saved us. He himself by the way—we had just been seeded with these electronic sensors that were supposed to go along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos and they diverted them: we were getting readings from them that would just indicate readings, a contact, a noise, a seismic reading from a truck moving nearby. Then we would get messages from their headquarters, which was in Thailand, at NKP, and we just—

Kurtz: We ran out of tape. We were talking about sensors. So could you continue with that, Ray, please.

Stubbe: These electronic sensors were—it was a very expensive project, I think over a billion dollars. And later on they [the Congress] had hearings on that and Colonel Lownds and some of those people testified about how effective they were at Khe Sanh. They were very effective.

But this fellow, Mirza Baig—we used to call him "Harry Baig"—he had a Boy Scout pack. He was very unconventional. He was a Pakistani Muslim. The Marines used to kid him about eating pork, and he'd say: Allah give special dispensation! And he always talked about "Infidels," and he had an odd accent, British trained. But anyway, without any manuals or anything else, on his own, he figured out how to read these electronic sensor reports, which had been going back to NKP, and then NKP would issue a message many hours later, and by that time, whoever was in the area was long since gone, and it was history. So he had them give us "real time" readings where we could read the sensors—at the bunkers he could get the readings. Now the sensors were of two types. There was a seismic type which would detect vibrations such as trucks moving, even troops moving. And then were the acoustic sensors which could actually pick up conversations. So he at first assumed that the sensors gave the location, like the seismic ones, of the target. In fact, these were the locations of the sensors, not the target. Then, with his knowledge of the North Vietnamese moved, in columns, in squads, he was fully familiar with North Vietnamese tactics of movement, he could determine how groups were moving, where they were moving, where their rear was, and all that kind of thing. So he, on his own, developed the methods of interpreting all the results of these sensor reports. And in fact, there were several times, one of which was the 29th of February—it was leap year that year—we had a regimental-size North Vietnamese unit approaching Khe Sanh Combat Base according to their old plan doing their major assault from the east, from Khe Sanh Village, from Route 9, and that whole regiment was coming up, and our sensors picked that up and we fired COFRAM, Controlled Fragmentation.

Kurtz: That's a type of ammunition.

Stubbe: M444—it's a 105 (also in other forms too). It sends out ping-pong size mini-grenades which in turn explode. It's an area clearing device. And in fact, we decimated that whole regiment, except for maybe ten or twelve North Vietnamese which managed to get to the lines of the 37th ARVN Rangers and then were killed there. So that particular sensor reading saved us. And there were sensors around the hills which also gave advanced warnings at different times for them. At one

time, when 881-South was probably going to be attacked on the 5th of February, 1968, and we sent out massive air-strikes which decimated that force. [*break in tape*] Picked up a large unit, maybe a regiment going to attack Hill 881-South and decimated them. The defenders of 881-South, Captain Dabney and his people were not even aware of this happening. This was on the 5th of February. Mirza Baig, testifying in this Congress Hearing in November of '71, he and Colonel Lownds and our Intelligence Officer, Jerry Hudson, were the three that testified on the effect of the sensors at Khe Sanh. He mentioned this, that to his self-criticism that part of the tactic that the North Vietnamese would also attack Hill 861, and at their jubilation in the command bunker at having gotten the movement sounds stopped coming toward 881-South, he hadn't to continue to think about 861, and in fact, Hill 861-Alfa, Captain Breeding, was attacked by a major assault, penetrating half of his position, almost overrunning it, but the Marines valiantly fought back and recaptured the position.

The conclusion of that Battlefield Sub-Committee—the report of that is in the collection that I donated to the [Wisconsin Veterans] Museum, concluded that these saved us. These were so effective. But it wasn't only the sensors that saved us, it was people like Captain Baig who could read and could interpret and use "real time". People like that—we seemed to have just the right people there. Like I say, as a Chaplain—maybe because of my perspective, I look at the G-1, the Personnel of Division sending people: we had just the right people at Khe Sanh. We had the heroic—people who didn't crack. We had hardly no one cracked up. I did see maybe two or three, which means that there were probably a few others. But there were very few. But we had people who—we had surgeons, who weren't qualified to do open heart surgery, but who did. These were like residents, who did amazing surgical feats. We had four doctors there. We had Mirza Baig. We had Colonel Lownds. We had our battalion commander. We had Earle Breeding, who valiantly fought off that assault on 861-Alfa. We had Bill Dabney—we had all these people—and the troopers in the field—the people who would go out and rescue people who were wounded and who didn't crack up. We had just the right people, and we all made it out of there, and I can't help but feel the hand of God in this. I say that openly, unashamedly. Despite our 475 killed and 2500 wounded, with 40,000 surrounding us, in a sense it's a miracle that any of us made it back alive. That any of us! We very well could have—with tanks against us, with everything else—isolation, fog in the morning, resupply rather tenuous, we were in a very difficult position and yet we emerged from it.

Kurtz: Well, let's just talk about a couple more things, and then I think, as we said before, we want to go into some detail on the air operations, the resupply, living conditions, and all of that. What was your view of how replacements were treated?

Stubbe: OK. We saw quite a few replacements, some of which, very sadly, died as they were arriving. I personally didn't see this, but I heard many instances where Marines would tell me they went to the airstrip when a plane was hit or a position near them was hit or even if their position was hit, and a Marine with stateside utilities, perfectly green, unstained, maybe even stateside boots, not the jungle boots, was killed. And these are people that hadn't been there a day—or less—had just arrived or maybe were just arriving. But for those who did arrive—you talk with veterans now, Vietnam of all services I think, and they will talk about how wary they were of "newbies"—newly arriving people, because they really didn't know how to behave in the field, they weren't aware of booby traps or how to look for enemy. There was always apprehension of new people, that they weren't fully assimilated into the situation.

But in our situation, which was a static battlefield situation, these people, new people, were immediately taken in, and oddly enough, for landing in sheer chaos, which must have been a psychically shocking thing—to land in all this devastation: no buildings, and incoming, and grubby people and smelly people, they fit right in. And basically what we were doing at the time, the daily activity of almost everyone, was filling sandbags, digging deeper trenches, digging bunkers that could not go underground now that the monsoons had let up, moving supplies, moving casualties—that was what most Marines did at this time. Senior Marines, Staff Sergeants and above, would be out, seeing how their people were, bring out all their supplies. We hardly got any mail, in or out. Like I say, water—we'd go without food maybe every three days—water every three days, food maybe one C-ration a day—we're supposed to get three, especially with all the stress and movement, we were burning up calories like you wouldn't believe. I might say I went from about 185 when I arrived and I think I was 137 when I left Khe Sanh.

Kurtz: And what are you today?

Stubbe: I'm back in the 180s.

Kurtz: How was the morale?

Stubbe: O, the morale, yes, OK, the morale was very, very good. As I mentioned before, a lot of the guys just joked around. They shared things. In addition to this heroic thing and joking thing, because we were so low on food and water, if someone were completely out of water, someone in the same bunker would give them their last drops of water. Or, we were so low on C-rations, they would share or give their last bits of C-ration. They would share their love letters from their girl friends. All this sort of thing. That's the kind of way these people were, like one recon Marine told me, one time—recon had lost so many people there during the siege, many more than they did out in the field and the reason was that recon was sandwiched between the airstrip and the regimental command bunker which were the main bulls-eye target, so they took over 70% casualties of their unit, which was a little over a hundred men—about 70% killed or wounded. But I remember Kevin Macaulay, who was a radioman there, telling me that the men he knew there—he says, "We're all richer for having known them, and we're better people." His statement is so true.

Kurtz: What was your experience in dealing with the feelings of people who were wounded before they were evacuated?

Stubbe: Yeah, there again, most of the wounded I saw, like at C-Med, maintained a real humor about that. I remember a fellow named Slaugenhaupt, who was with the Shore Party unit there, and he was on a stretcher moaning and groaning, he kept saying, "O, I lost everything! I lost everything!" I came up to him and said, "O, what did you lose?" Because a lot of the guys, because of incoming mortars hitting bunkers would lose photographs of their girl friend or family, or they'd lose their camera or record player—if they happened to have one—there were very few who did, or they would lose their clothes (which they had very few; what we had usually stayed on and rotted on us). So I thought maybe he'd lost his clothes or pictures or whatever else, and said, "Well, what did you lose?" Trying to talk to him—he didn't look that badly wounded. In fact I think it was him that I asked, "Well, where did they get you?" And he said, "O don't worry, Chaplain, they just got me in the ass!" So I said, "Well, what did you lose?" And he said, "Well, you know all those peanut butters and jellies that we get in our C-rations?" He said, "You know how we always save those things and don't eat them at the time, we put them aside?" He said, "I had a whole wooden ammo box full of C-ration peanut butters and jellies and the incoming round got all my peanut butters and jellies!" I said, "Well, what are you worrying about; you're leaving this place!" "O, I lost everything; I lost everything!" It was so funny; you couldn't help but laugh.

Sometimes it got serious. There was a fellow on a stretcher—I remember he asked me to say the 91st Psalm with him. And this is the first time I said the 91st Psalm that it had this particular meaning for me. The 91st Psalm—some people sing that now at Catholic funerals. It's "On Eagle's Wings." It's very familiar. If you go to a Catholic funeral you'll probably hear it. But it's "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He will cover you with his wings and under his wings you shall find shelter. You shall not fear for the arrow that flies by day and the pestilence that walketh in noon day. A thousand shall fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand." I started reading that—he asked me to read that to him, and it ends with "you shall not fear; I am with you." A very positive statement. But I started to think about the "arrow that flies by day" and I thought wow, those are the rockets. And "A thousand shall fall at thy side:" those are our friendly casualties, and "ten thousand at thy right hand," those are the enemy. And that Psalm took on—. And many years later I learned that that Psalm probably deals with the situation where the Babylonians.... [*note: this is incorrect; the Psalm is number 46*]. But anyway, he asked me to say the Psalm and hold his hand, so it was a very touching moment. There were some very tender times. But generally when people were wounded they had a humor about them.

There was one that a fellow related to me—I didn't see this myself, but I can believe it happened, where the Catholic Chaplain was giving Last Rites to a wounded fellow at C Med, and he sort of woke up, and said [*very loudly*], "Why are you doing this? I'm not going to die! Get away from me!" And with a few choice "f" words and other words, "I'm not dying!" and then he did. He just fell down and was dead. So there was that kind of determination. Determination, humor, youthfulness—those were the kind of things [I remember].

Kurtz: OK. Were there any people that you experienced that said, "Why am I here?"

Stubbe: No, no. I never did get that-p—. That kind of philosophical pondering—what do I want to say?—that human aspect of looking back, looking at yourself in that situation, a transcendent escape, a transcendent self-examination, looking at the situation and looking at oneself—which we all do—one of our human aspects of what we do—was not present. We were so much in the "now". By the way, that can obviously be a very good thing, especially if you're in a bad situation, but it can also be a very dampering thing if you're in a good situation, like if you're dancing with a girlfriend or you're seeing something beautiful and you say, "O, is this beautiful," or "O, is this a wonderful time," you're no longer in the situation; you're looking at

it from a distance. And that's what I'm doing now, what most Vietnam vets do, we can look at things from a distance of time and it's not probably as emotionally destructive or powerful. But at that time, I don't remember people reflecting.

Kurtz: Did you or the people there have any idea about what the rest of the world view of what was happening at Khe Sanh?

Stubbe: No. We really didn't, because like I say, we didn't get too much mail coming in.

Kurtz: Did you get *Stars & Stripes* ever?

Stubbe: Yes, We got that and also a thing called *Sea Tiger* which is a III MAF—III MAF being the senior Marine headquarters, in DaNang. We received their newspaper.

Kurtz: Did you get Armed Forces radio?

Stubbe: Some people did. Some people who had radios. And there were also MARS calls, where people could call home.

Kurtz: MARS is telephone service with ham radios.

Stubbe: Yes, you had to say "over" all the time.

Kurtz: Did the North Vietnamese throw any propaganda at you—with loud speakers?

Stubbe: Yes they did. Oddly enough—not with loud speakers, but with mortar shells with leaflets. And there were two instances of that, both of which happened after I left. They were both in March. They were by mortar shells that exploded and distributed leaflets.

Kurtz: Did they have any impact on anybody.

Stubbe: No. They were a humorous thing. I have some of them—I donated them. One was with Bertram Russell quotations.

Kurtz: What were the living conditions like?

Stubbe: Well—a few people did have showers. I found this out many years later—had buried showers in the trenches. But I would way that 99% of us lived in the same uniform.

Kurtz: For the whole siege?

Stubbe: For the whole siege, yeah. They were torn. They were full of sweat and oily—oils from our foreheads and everything else, crotches rotting out, covered with blood—sometimes I think they made them green because red doesn't show up except as a dark spot. In some cases, men reported after having left that the cloth actually became part of their skin because of the skin growing into the cloth. I didn't experience or see that myself. But I do know that when I left and went to Quang Tri—and I took baths in a little aluminum mount-out box—which I donated to the [Wisconsin Veterans] Museum, and I would say that for at least a month later on, when I would dry myself off with a towel, it looked like I was wiping another area of my body after defecation because the brown—was such a fine pigment that it would actually get inside the skin, and the skin maybe went over it—I don't know—but it kept rubbing off for weeks and weeks later on.

Kurtz: Where did you sleep? And how well did you sleep?

Stubbe: I slept in my bunker, in C Med, which was above ground, except for that one time that I was on the line—O, and there was another time when I slept in a below-ground bunker in C Med, but those were the only two times. And I think I just "zonked out."

Kurtz: And how long were you able to sleep?

Stubbe: It's hard to say. I don't know. I think I slept most of the night. It's hard to say when I went to sleep or when I woke up. I think I slept pretty soundly. The sounds of the incoming—because they kept plastering us at night—didn't really wake me up or anything.

Kurtz: Well, I think we're kind of at the end of the rope right here. I'm assuming we can come back one more time to talk about a few things.

Stubbe: Sure.

Kurtz: We're just going to wind her down right now.

Kurtz: We are continuing with our interview with Chaplain Ray Stubbe. Ray, it's a beautiful day, a lot warmer than the last time, and where we'd like to go today [*Note: Interview was conducted on 26 April 2006*] is to discuss some of the memorable people that were involved in the siege in Vietnam, the Marines or anybody else and also maybe just talk a little bit about the civilians that you met in the village. So why don't you start, and if you say something that's interesting, I'll ask you about it, but I'm sure that everything's going to be interesting. So go ahead.

Stubbe: Well, actually, when I think about Vietnam, it's the people that I think about more than the place. It's for that reason probably, I haven't returned to Vietnam as many have, because the people aren't there. I see them at reunions. I talk with them over the phone, or write letters back and forth, but really the people who were there—. [*interrupted by a telephone call; break in tape*].

We were talking about people. Like I say—the people who were there—when I think of Khe Sanh, the first thing I think of are the people who were there. Obviously the second thing would be the beauty, the coolness, that was the Garden of Eden aspect. And then maybe the third thing are the events and so on. But mainly, it's the people. We didn't have all that many people there, but we had just the right people. I'm talking about doctors, corpsmen, Privates, Lance Corporals, who were courageous—people who would dash out during incoming to drag in a buddy or give their last drops of water or food—was a common thing. I was all over the base and I would see these all the time. Or, leaders who knew what was happening and had a good grasp and who took care of their men. So, we had just the right people. As a Chaplain, I would have to say: This is not an accident. I see that, but everyone else might say: Well, it just happened that way, but for me, we had just the right people there. And then there were certain individuals that just stick out.

Kurtz: Could you share your views on a few of those individuals?

Stubbe: Yes. Well, the good Colonel, David Edward Lownds, for example. I didn't really get to know him all that well because he was one level above my Commanding Officer. My immediate Commanding Officer was Lieutenant Colonel James B. Wilkinson, who had command of the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, or 1/26. But I did see Colonel Lownds quite frequently because I did go to the regimental briefings in the evening when I was on the base. And he was always one of these people that was very unassuming. He was not one that flaunted military orders or control around. He was very soft-spoken, had a good sense of humor about him all the time. I remember at one briefing he mentioned he went down to Phu Bai, which was where the Third Marine Division was at the time. This was probably around August, September of '67. And he would always remark about his time there as "The wonderful land of Buy!" And he went on in his comments: "They even had sidewalks!" They had these wooden pallet board walks. And he said, "They has flushing toilets!" He couldn't get over that. It was just amazing. And he said: "And they have air-conditioning in their hooches, but they'll never get it as cold as we have it at Khe Sanh here." And he always had that sense of humor about him, always. He was interested in the local people, in the local Bru tribe. He dressed up as Santa Claus, I remember, to give out gifts to the kids. He remarked in a debriefing he gave at the end of his tour—I remember listening to that tape—and he'd say how he visited in the Bru villages and came across this young boy that had carved out a wooden replica of a Huey in the sky, and it was amazingly detailed and proportioned, and he made the comment how these kids that are almost in the stone age, if they had had the proper education what marvelous contributions they might have made to society. He had a real heart for people, and he would also be the kind of person that would take walks by himself off the base, all around the surrounding area, much to the dismay of the intelligence officer, the S-2, and

also the Special Forces people who knew that he could have been captured or whatever. But he had been an Intelligence Officer, S-2, earlier in his career of a regiment, I think it was the 4th Marines, back in the 1950s, and so he had a need to know personally the area and how long it would take to get from one place to another and where likely ambushes would be.

Kurtz: When did he stop taking talks?

Stubbe: I guess, maybe the monsoons came in and it became very difficult to get out, around November. I remember him coming up on Hill 881-South on Marine Corps Birthday [10 November 1967]. The hill was socked in with fog. It was a miserable time, a lot of rain. It was cold. And somehow his chopper made it through. But what I remember about it is that our Colonel, our battalion Colonel, Colonel Wilkinson had us at attention in a formation, and then Colonel Lownds came up and had everyone stand at east and form an informal circle around him. And he said—this is November 10th, Marine Corps Birthday—and I remember he said at the time—and I put it in my diary so I know that this is accurate—he said, "You will all soon be in the American history books." And I remember at the time I thought this was very ominous, because people had been warning in the past—we had elections, we had monsoons, we had geographically close to Laos—there were many things. People had warned that we were going to be attacked. And it was sort of like yelling "Wolf!" After awhile we started disregarding these warnings—those of us who had been there for awhile. But when he said that—"You will all soon be in the American history books"—I took that as a real indication that things were not going to be too good in the future.

But he was always very sly. I remember during the initial part of the siege, we became besieged by "incoming" reporters, and they were all over the place. And Colonel Lownds had many things, obviously, on his mind to do, without giving time to talk with reporters. And he was always like Socrates. People would say, "Do you see this like Dien Bien Phu?" And he would say something—this is quoted in the news articles—he would say, "Tell me about that. I don't know much about Dien Bien Phu." And then—if you were to be in his bunker where he slept, you'd see Jules Roy book on Dien Bien Phu and a few other studies—the Third Marine Division had done a study on the similarities between Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu a whole year before, when they first sent up Marines. In September of '66 they sent up battalion 1/3, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines, with Lieutenant Colonel Peter Wickwire, and at that time they did a very detailed study, about 30, 40 pages long on comparison of Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu, long before MACV did their study. But he knew. But he just wouldn't let it on that he knew. He was just very coy about those kind of things.

He was also a kind of person that, prior to coming to Khe Sanh, he had been with some nuclear command in New Mexico, a Defense Nuclear facility or something.

Kurtz: Does that mean anything in your mind, because had been some talk about using nuclear at Khe Sanh.

Stubbe: Right. But what I was going to say was that when he first—just before the siege erupted—he told me this later on—they had stockpiled a kind of munition there called COFRAM, C-O-F-R-A-M. I think I talked about that before, but just briefly, it's controlled fragmentation, or M444, or also known as "Firecracker." And these were classified Top Secret at the time, and were to be used—if they couldn't use nuclear weapons, as sort of a last measure weapon to destroy the hoards of Red Chinese like they had in Korea from overrunning places. It was an ultimate weapon. And what it was is basically bombs or artillery rounds that would send off little bomblets, ping pong size, which were like mini-grenades which would then explode over a larger area. It was an area device that would make a large area full of tens of thousands of pieces of shrapnel. It was first fired when the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei was being overrun by tanks. That was the first time it was ever fired in war. But anyway, Colonel Lownds was appraised of the fact they were stock-piling this COFRAM, and they wanted him to fill out something like 20 pages of documents for a security clearance for COFRAM. He said, Well, I just came from the Defense Nuclear facility and I have all these clearances, and they said, no, you need one for COFRAM also. And he said, I'm not about to fill out all these forms. I'm the Commanding Officer of this base and I will do as I see fit. They needed to stockpile them there and they needed it there, so they did. But he was that kind—he could be obstreperous, is what I'm getting at, with higher commands. And he was, by himself, the sole commander there. So he was a complex personality. He did a lot of things on his own. During the Siege, General Tompkins, the Third Marine Division Commander, came up almost daily, but I talked with Tompkins before he died, and Tompkins said he always let Colonel Lownds—Colonel Lownds was the commander there. He was just there to advise or to help or to bring assets that the Colonel probably couldn't get on his own, like B52s. So the good Colonel—and he had a handlebar moustache—that his wife forced him to shave off when he came home. And he himself—I saw his wife at a reunion, Jeanne—he only attended one of our reunions. That was at St. Louis. And his wife mentioned, while the Colonel was there during the siege that one of their children was at school, and their teacher—I think it was a daughter—this daughter's teacher sharply criticized, "Well, your father's one of these war mongers that kills children." And Jeanne didn't

know about this until many, many years later on. So even the Colonel's family was not exempt from the harassment that a lot of other Marines had as far as family members.

He was the kind of person who would be all over the base, checking on people. One of the Marines told me later on that he came into their area and saw that the Marine was wearing a shirt that had "Lownds" on it. This Marine told me, in fact, that he had gone to the regimental area where the Colonel had put out his laundry to dry, and had taken his shirt, because he needed it. Supplies for the Marines were just so scarce. And all the Colonel said was, "Well, I hope you didn't take my sox as well. Good work, Marine," and walked off. That's just the way he was. He didn't create any problems. He was all in favor of the trooper.

There were times—other Marines told me how he—during incoming come to the rescue of another Marine or help dig out or whatever and he just wouldn't run for cover himself. He was the kind of a person that was just one of the troops, so to speak.

Kurtz: Did he feel that he had enough men and equipment there? Did he ever express the need, the desire, to have more?

Stubbe: During the siege—I must say to my say to my self-criticism that I didn't go into the command bunker during the siege at all. I did go to our battalion command bunker quite frequently. Maybe I might have gone in once. But everything was so busy, and they were so involved in radios and so many things happening, I just didn't feel that I could do anything. It wasn't a time to just chat with people, see how they were doing. That was just impossible to do, so I didn't go there. So I quite frankly don't know how he was during the siege. I'm speaking mainly before the siege or what others have told me.

Kurtz: So now did he have nightly briefings during the siege?

Stubbe: No. I'm sure he must have had briefings as things happened. But before the siege it was always the evening, and then our battalion briefing was in the morning.

O, for example, just before the siege [at] one of the evening briefings, he said: Well, we've built up all our defenses. We have all our concertina out. We have fields of fire. We've got our supplies. He ticked off all the things about preparing our position for a battle. And he said: But now we need to concentrate on camouflage and deception. He said: So what I want you to do—. He had, at these evening briefings he had our battalion CO, but he had all the support companies, like supply, communications, recon, Seabees, medical, and all these different people. That's who attended these briefings, and I was there as the Chaplain—because I covered the whole base, not just my own battalion. And then, of course, his own staff officers. And then sometimes FOB-3, the Army Special Forces, would sent a representative. The Air Force had a representative. At this particular briefing he said we have to concentrate on deception. So he said: "Everyone knows where the regimental bunker is by all the antennas. I want you to set up false antennas throughout the base and build false bunkers"—as if we didn't have enough work to do to build our own bunkers—because we had a ridge line to the north of us where we just knew that there were enemy spotters that could call in mortars and so on. And he said: "Everyone will know where the regiment is, so I want to create more targets." Interestingly, my own Colonel, Colonel Wilkinson, at the morning briefing the morning after—also had a sense of humor—and he said "Well, the good Colonel said"—(we always called him "the good Colonel")—the good Colonel said we should do all these things." He said: "That will mean that instead of the regiment receiving fifty incoming rounds, the whole base will receive a thousand!" And that was to prove very prophetic, not because we erected all these—because we didn't have that much time: this was maybe three or four days before the siege erupted—so we didn't erect a lot of false antennas or false bunkers, but we did get the incoming, nevertheless.

But anyway, the people in charge there had this sense of humor. Colonel Lownds was that way. He was very soft-spoken, humorous, had the trooper in mind, knew all the terrain from having personally—one time the S-4 who was there, [Lieutenant] Colonel Freddie McEwan, (later became the CO of 1/26 after [Lieutenant] Colonel Wilkinson left—told me that just the two of them were out on a walk, down Route 9, and wanted to cross the river, and the two of them just crossed the river, swam across the river.

There was one time at Christmas, I remember, the S-2, Harper Bohr, was a Captain, I believe at the time, alter made Major. He and I walked, just the two of us—we're talking late December, after Christmas, late December of '67, at which time some of our recon teams were making contact close to the base with people getting killed, and also he was the S-2 so he knew from radio intercepts that the enemy was creeping up. I didn't know; he didn't share that, but I learned later on. So he must have known all these things. But his wife had sent him some things to give to the kids in Khe Sanh village—he was

going to give them to the missionary who was down there, John and Carolyn Miller—talk about two interesting people. So Harper Bohr and I walked down. It was a nice, sunny day, like it is now.

Kurtz: How far was this walk?

Stubbe: About three miles.

Kurtz: Three miles, and was it a road that you went?

Stubbe: No, no. We went through the Bru villages and up hill 471 which later became a huge battle scene, and then through another Bru village at the foot of Hill 471, called Brech, which is a Bru word for a thorny vine, and then walked into Khe Sanh village and visited the Millers, gave them the gifts, and then John Miller and the two of us walked back to the base. And Harper tells me to this day that the hairs on the back of his neck and the back of his spine just tingles when he thinks about how we could have been taken as POWs or whatever. He didn't even—he wasn't armed. John Miller was "tail end Charlie;" Harper was point, and I was in the center, and we just walked back through the hills to the base.

Kurtz: I assume you were not armed either?

Stubbe: Of course not, neither was John Miller. We had that sense, though—it was such a beautiful area, deceptively beautiful, like it was the Garden of Eden. And it was so peaceful. Peaceful, not only in the sense of a lack of turmoil and war—we had the sense of peace—our definition of peace is so shallow in the American language: we only think of the lack of war, or maybe lack of sound.

Kurtz: Was there any aircraft above you at all?

Stubbe: No. But what I'm getting at with peace—has a sense in the Hebrew language of "shalom" has a sense of blessing, of the opportunity for life to grow, it's a sense of the presence of God, of blessing. And that's what—when I say that Khe Sanh was "peaceful" that's what I really mean. It's not only the sense of a lack of war, but also a sense of the positive thing of abundance of life, of growth, of everything being so good. So that's what I mean by "peace." Anyway, there was this sense, and because of that we would do things like that.

Anyway, maybe that's enough about Colonel Lownds, but I'll get to Harper Bohr. Harper Bohr and I met when we came in country, the same day. We were at DaNang the same time.

Kurtz: How do you spell his name?

Stubbe: B-O-H-R, Danish fellow. Interestingly enough, he and his successor, a fellow by the name of Jerry Hudson, who was the S-2 during the siege, and also Earle Breeding, who was the Commanding Officer of Company E of 2/26, and he was on Hill 861-Alfa during the siege—those three Captains had been enlisted Sergeants under then Major Lownds when he was the S-2, like I say, I think of 4th Marine Regiment in the early 1950s, and they were now at Khe Sanh with him.

Earle Breeding tells me that when 2/26 arrived, and the officers all gathered in the bunker—they arrived on the 17th of January of '68, which was 4 days before the Siege, which erupted on the 21st. They were all in this bunker and Colonel Lownds was briefing them and the other officers were briefing them and then Colonel Lownds looked out and said, "And we will hold and we will win, won't we Captain Breeding?" And Breeding tells me that all the other officers of his battalion looked at him like "Who are you?" But Lownds had a good memory for that—something about Lownds again.

But anyway, Harper Bohr was one of the S-2 Scouts of Major Lownds at the time. And Harper Bohr had also been with Second Force Recon Company and was really into the recon business. He was one of the few Marines that had the gold jump wings.

Kurtz: What are gold jump wings?

Stubbe: Gold jump wings—you get the silver jump wings for five jumps, like everyone does—all services. And the Marine Corps says that if you do five more jumps, you get the gold wings, and usually only those in Force Recon, as opposed to

battalion recon, were able to go to Jump School to get—to get the extra five jumps later. (Anyway, I can get into Force Recon later on if you want).

Anyway, Harper Bohr—I met him in DaNang. I think I mentioned this in one of my prior tapes, but I'll just briefly say it: it got to be late and I was able to get out on a plane and get to Phu Bai and he decided to stay through the night and get the next Marine plane out—I took an Air Force plane. And then I met him in Khe Sanh about a week or so later when I arrived and I was surprised to see him there. He said that right after I left, within five minutes DaNang had taken this huge rocket attack which destroyed all sorts of planes, and he was telling how terrible it was, how exciting and how terrible and how frightening, and he said: You got out just in time. I endured that. He shared with me that at one time he was thinking of getting out of the Marine Corps and becoming a Lutheran minister. He was a very kind person, like Colonel Lownds and especially like my [Lieutenant] Colonel Wilkinson—just kindly people. Maybe I saw it that way. Maybe they reacted to me that way as a Chaplain; I am sure they were firm as Marines would be, when they needed to be firm. But Harper Bohr was a kindly person. Right before the Siege he left and became the Executive Officer of 3rd Recon Battalion at Quang Tri, and I got to see him down there later on and we had numerous chats.

Kurtz: Do you have an explanation why—obviously these are career Marines that you're describing as having a kind side, but yet Marines are—

Stubbe: We were talking about how Marines were kindly and yet Marines. I have the feeling—I mean I have no way of knowing; I'm just speculating off the top of my head. But I find—I've been boxing lately, and I haven't had much to do with athletic people, athletes in the past, high school, college, I was one of these "nerds," I wasn't a "jock." But I would say that athletes, generally speaking—there are some exceptions—are kind of mild people themselves, especially boxers. I've read this in fiction about boxers, have that tendency to be nice people. Maybe they've had some sense knocked into them; maybe they've had the evil knocked out of them. I don't know. After a good workout—anyone who does a lot of running or bicycling or whatever will know that all these endorphins, the pleasurable chemicals in the brain, and you just feel kind of weak, like a wet blotter, and you take a shower and you're just so relaxed and at peace. And I think Marines, having to go through such tough training and being tough, hand-to-hand combat, exercises and all that kind of thing—because of that also have that milder side of them come out because they don't have to prove themselves anymore. They can just be who they are. And I remember remarking about it at the time, so it's not just a reflection of an old codger who's about to turn 68. But I really felt this at the time that people who have gone through so much have a disposition that is much more tolerant of other people, and certainly of others who have gone through the same thing. So that generally, Marines are characters; they really are. Like recon people: you'd find people that would do things that you would not think they would do—mimic playing a flute or just having a lot of fun. And their comrades, not just simply putting up with it, but they themselves also doing funny antics. So these people were—and mainly enlisted troops were this way, too. And this helped them get through the siege—this sense of humor. I'd be in a bunker during a rocket attack—which is a very frightening thing—it's not only the explosions, but they make this screeching sound as they're flying in past you. It goes so fast and so loud. And these guys in the bunker would say: "Oh! These NVA are sure piss-poor aerial spotters to call in rounds—that one only landed ten feet away!" Which is pretty close! But they would just make jokes about it.

Or they'd tell me about one guy jumping in a trench—and they were digging this trench deeper and deeper because they didn't want to be outside to take a piss, you know. They put a 55-gallon drum out there with screening over it to keep the flies out, and that was what they called their "piss tube" or "pisser." So while they're filling sandbags they have this incoming and everyone jumps in the trench, and this one guy tells me: O, I just jumped in. At the last second I saw that I was going to fall right into this drum of piss and I just spread my legs at the last moment and planted one on either side of it! That kind of thing.

Or the Corpsman, right after the siege began—I think I've mentioned some of these things before, but I'll mention them again because they are so funny. This Corpsman—I'm still in the bunker, and [during the] initial attack, and the ammo dump is still cooking off, and we had this one casualty come in and a chopper had come in to take out casualties. And this one guy who had a wounded leg ran out to the chopper, and this Corpsman is running after him to put this medevac tag on him. And the Corpsman comes running back, panting, and says: "I couldn't get him! I couldn't get him! My casualty outran me!" He'd gotten in the chopper and couldn't put the tag on him and the chopper went off. The Doctor said: That's OK; they'll find out what's wrong with him when he lands. And here's the Marine with the wounded leg outrunning the Corpsman: he was motivated to get out of there!

Or, the Marine on the stretcher coming into C Med moaning and groaning. His name was SLAUGENHAUPT. I'll never forget it.. He's moaning and groaning on the stretcher saying: "I lost everything! I lost everything!" And I said, "What did you

loose?" I thought he'd lost his photographs that got burnt or maybe his clothing, or maybe he was fortunate enough to have a camera, or some of the guys were fortunate enough to have a 45 record players—very few, but some did, or a cassette player—people sent cassettes home—they weren't cassettes, they were reel-to-reel, 3-inch tape things. We called them "taped letters." The Post Office even had a special rate for these things. You could send them back and forth. The people who sent them out could send them free and the people sending them back—I think the rate was six cents. So anyway I said: "Is it any of this stuff?" He said, "No, No, Chaplain." In the C Rations we always had these little peanut butters and jellies, and he said: "I was saving all of these in a wooden ammo box and I had a huge stockpile of these things, and a round came in and it just destroyed all my goodies, all the things I saved up, all my treasures. O, I lost everything! I lost everything!" And he's moaning and groaning. He had sort of a smile on his face.

Another one came in and I said, "What happened to you?" And he said: "Oh, I'm OK, Chaplain, they just got me in the ass!"

Things like that: this is the way they were. This is the way the ordinary Marines were. I'm suddenly moving from Harper Bohr to ordinary Marines.

Kurtz: O, that's fine.

Stubbe: That's the kind of people we had. Getting back to Bohr—one of the briefings we had just before the siege erupted, it was kind of foggy, and I remember him saying, "O, maybe it's tonight, because the conditions are just so good for an attack." So obviously he was thinking of that. Harper had a thing, just like Colonel Lownds did about the local people, the children. He was just a very thoughtful person. He was at every one of my worship services [on the base] that I had.

Kurtz: Did he have to go down for his job into the village? Is that how he got to know the Bru?

Stubbe: Perhaps. During the week, I was normally out on the hill, spend a night and then go out on a patrol with a platoon, then go to the next hill, and in the evening, hold a worship service. I did this with the three hills: 950, 861, 881-South, and then for awhile we had a bridge site to the east of the base from which we sent patrols eastward down Route 9, and then I'd also go down to the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei and stay overnight there. And I'd also stay overnight at the CAP compound just outside the base. CAP is Combined Action Platoon, which is one of the three platoons of CAC, Combined Action Company, OSCAR, which was the only CAC unit in Vietnam that had Montagnards and Marines. A CAP would be maybe 12 or 14 Marines and maybe about 30 local people, and they would live together and train together and form a self-defense unit for that Bru village. All the rest of the Marine CACs were Vietnamese and Marines. But there were three of them at Khe Sanh. One of them was right outside the Combat Base and there was one in the village [of Khe Sanh] itself and then there was one on the western edge of the village.

Kurtz: How big was the village?

Stubbe: The village—well there were about 1200 Vietnamese in the village. In fact, that's what the census showed. It wasn't that large, but it was large enough. I'd say maybe about two to three city blocks long and all the Vietnamese were in that village; they weren't any other place. Whereas the Montagnards were not in the village: they were in little hamlets surrounding. There were probably eight or nine thousand Bru tribesmen.

I'd stay overnight at CAP OSCAR-3 on Sunday night. Normally I'd have church services Sunday three times on the base itself: one at the regimental mess hall, one at our battalion mess hall and one for the artillery people at the artillery headquarters on the western edge of the combat base, and then I'd go out to CAP OSCAR-3 for the evening. I'd hold services for them. There were only like ten, twelve men there. This was my R&R, so to speak, my weekly R&R after trudging the hills during the week. We'd play canasta there. I just enjoyed being out with the guys there. I still correspond with some of them.

Getting back to the people—I've talked about Colonel Lownds, Harper Bohr. I also met [Lieutenant] Colonel Wilkinson—James Bascom Wilkinson—.

Kurtz: Was he related to the guy that was with Aaron Burr, that General Wilkinson that—?

[Interview of 26 April 2006:]

Stubbe: He may be. He was from the South. I don't know. I met him at Camp Pendleton prior to going over, and he and I were in Staging [Battalion] together, although we didn't meet during the day. I think we only met once or twice, because I was separated from everyone else as a Chaplain and escorted around by a Sergeant Major who took me to different firing ranges and different places to learn about customs of the Vietnamese and everything like that.

Kurtz: Why were you segregated?

Stubbe: Well, they used to put Chaplains in with the Corpsmen as part of Field Medical Service School, but then they decided that was really oriented towards medical procedures and Chaplains really didn't need to know all of that. So I was one of the first ones—they were going to have a separate Chaplains Program where we would learn the customs of the Vietnamese and that sort of thing and get a little flavor of what the Marines did. In my particular case, I got more than a "flavor," because they would be doing, like, an exercise of a POW escaping and living on rice and that kind of thing. Or, they'd go through the infiltration course with barbed wire with live ammo going off over the head. And I went through that with them because I decided I needed to know what the Marines—how their life was. I just really knew that I had nothing to say to them unless I knew who they were, what they were facing, their fears, their joys, their whatever. So I decided I needed to do that and did. So anyway I met Colonel Wilkinson there, and he introduced himself, and then I saw him again at Khe Sanh when I arrived. He, again, was a real Southern gentlemen. In fact, some of the other officers now always refer to him as "Gentleman Jim."

He was a kind of—at a particular time I was due to go out to a hill, to Hill 881, I believe—I was going to hold church services. And the Marine choppers were not flying. But someone came to my bunker and said: "Hurry up, hurry up, get out to the other side of the airstrip, because the chopper is going to 881-South." I had this big metal ammo box full of little hymnals, Bibles, wine and wafers and everything else to take out there, plus my own change of sox and that kind of thing, C rations, and I was by myself—I didn't have an enlisted clerk. So I ran out there. It was dusty and hot—not really hot, but hot enough. It was early morning. There were no clouds and the sun was beating down. And I ran across the airstrip, panting, really exhausted at that time. And I sat there for about four hours, and I was just steaming. At the time went on I just became more and more angry. And no one had come, and it came time to eat lunch, and I just went over to eat lunch, and I went over to our little bunker where Colonel Wilkinson was at. It was a very small bunker: only he and the Sergeant Major could fit in there. But he was alone at the time. I walked down there. It was real small. I walked down there, just steaming, and I was about to vent my anger at having been told to be at this place. The Regiment had told me there was going to be an airplane—could he [Wilkinson] do something about getting me out to 881 and that kind of thing. Anyway I walked down the stairwell into there and upon seeing me, he said: "O Chaplain, isn't it a beautiful day! How good to see you!" He was just so full of positive—ebullience, you know—just overflowing with goodness, and he defused all my anger. I've used that as an example at times: it didn't stuff my anger, but it just got absorbed into something greater and positive. And so sure enough, I had my lunch. I didn't get angry. I told him what happened in a matter-of-fact way, and sure enough, after lunch I got out to 881. But that's the kind of person he was. And all during the siege, I know, he would be out with the troops, seeing how people were. He was just a very–. He later became the Executive Officer of Fourth Marine Regiment after the siege and was involved in some operations in the Khe Sanh area called ROBIN SOUTH and ROBIN NORTH in May and June of '68, and then he got out. He had like 18, 19 years' service, and he got out. And he told me at the time it was because his wife was having a series of heart attacks at the stress of him being over there. He got out of the Marine Corps without retiring—I'm sure he stayed in the Marine Reserve and retired. But that's just the kind of person he was. He had real integrity. And the next time I saw him was right after Vietnam I was assigned to the Recruit Depot at Parris Island [South Carolina], and he was at Hilton Head Island working for Merrill Lynch. Just being at Hilton Head Island says enough. He already was making good money. And we met and had a very enjoyable time together at lunch and then I kept track of him only through Christmas cards, basically. But he rose to become a national Vice President in Merrill Lynch, and then that was very stressful, and he eventually took a lesser job to become managing, I think, at Memphis, and then at Savannah. I think he became in charge of the Savannah—he was getting ready to retire. And then he retired back at Hilton Head. And his wife died and he remarried. And he's just a mild, unassuming person. I remember one time one of our Khe Sanh vets who became a millionaire through construction, and a very angry personality—so I won't mention his name—but he became like a burr, a thistle. And at that time our Khe Sanh vet group had—I'm talking about maybe ten years ago—had a fellow who had a mobile PX that went all over the country, a big truck, and sold all sorts of hats and T-shirts and everything else. I think he was just going through PTSD. He just needed to move around. He had a separate account. His books weren't all that good. And he also became involved in helping, assisting our reunions. And of course when you have a reunion, you always get "comp" rooms, and he would give them out to needy vets who really couldn't afford. Well, anyway, this fellow who became a millionaire just became incensed at the sloppy book

work, and who paid for this van, and who paid for the materials, and where was the money going, and who were getting these comp rooms, and why wasn't the organization getting the money? And he was actually going to sue not only this fellow but everyone who was on the Board of Directors and this Colonel Wilkinson was on the Board of Directors at the time along with the City Attorney of San Diego and some other people. And myself, too. For incompetence. And he was going to bring suit in like thirty different states, because we were all in different states, and because he had the money to do it. And he was at one of our reunions and he had these big legal-size folders with everyone's name prominently on them. And he put these all on the table with everyone—really intimidating. Because he had private investigators research everyone's finances and everything else. And just to bring it to the end of the story, nobody got sued. He just sort of disappeared. Things were dropped. But he told me he was going to go after Colonel Wilkinson. We had a break from the Board of Directors, and he showed me this thing. My name was there too, on a folder. And he opened up Wilkinson's and said: "I'm going after him because he's only worth fifty thousand dollars. And I said, "O, you'd better be careful because he was the Vice President of Merrill Lynch and he owns property on Hilton Head." "Well no, he's only worth fifty thousand. That's what his property is worth. He has this huge mortgage." So a few years later I saw the good Colonel and I talked with him and I mentioned this. And he sort of, "Well, you know, I had this mortgage for income tax purposes—and worth?: How about a little over three million." Very quietly, unassumingly. But Wilkinson—he was a man of real integrity, a real Southern gentleman, really cared for his troops, really grieved because he lost his Sergeant Major there, who had been a survivor of Corregidor in World War II, would have served anywhere [for his twilight cruise], Sergeant Major Gaynor, and Gaynor was hit by a round and died enroute while he was being medevaced. Colonel Wilkinson took that very, very hard.

Kurtz: Why don't you tell us about the guy you wrote the little pamphlet about.

Stubbe: Yeah, Major Baig. I never knew him during the siege. I only learned of him afterwards, because of several things. One was that he had written a very detailed, like twelve-page, single-spaced report of his activities during the siege. This report was done in connection with a book that came out by the Marine Corps by Moyers Shore, called *The Battle of Khe Sanh*. It came out in 1969. There was a sense of immediacy at the time to get it out and General Westmoreland was about to become Chief of Staff of the Army, and who knows what else—there were political reasons, I'm sure. Cushman was going to become head of the CIA or something like that. Because that book came out when it did, there were still some things that were classified that couldn't be mentioned, like the electronic sensors, the term "Arc Light" for B-52 strikes, and so on. So none of that is in that book. And it's only about 120 pages. Moyers Shore, by the way, was killed shortly after that in a plane accident off of Hawaii. He was a pilot. And his father had been an intelligence officer during World War II.

In the process of writing that book, they had solicited comments from Westmoreland from General Davidson, his J-2, from General Anderson who was head of Marine Air, from Walt, from Cushman—you name it—all the Generals who were involved, General Tolson, who led Operation PEGASUS, an Army General, a whole bunch of Colonels, Lieutenant Colonels, Majors, and Captain Baig, Major Baig at the time, wrote this report.

He was also mentioned frequently to me by other officers who knew him at the time. And so I decided—

Kurtz: And how did they mention this guy?

Stubbe: Very, very favorably. They mentioned him as—two things that stand out. One was that he was a genius, an absolute genius. His ability to hold many, many facts in his brain at the same time and come to rational conclusions amazed everyone. For example, there's a book that came out by Michael Archer called *A Patch of Ground* which is currently on sale which is based on his experiences as an enlisted communicator with the Regiment at Khe Sanh and also at the Khe Sanh village before the Siege. He knew Baig and he remarks in there how Baig was able, within the first week that he was there, to target and destroy major North Vietnamese ammo dumps and artillery headquarters

Stubbe: Targeting these North Vietnamese positions within a week of his arrival. And this just absolutely amazed this Michael Archer who wrote about this in his book.

Baig was mentioned by other people. For example, we had two different Army Liaison officers there, liaison for the 175 tubes out at Camp Carroll. There was a Doug Meredith and Swearengen: one succeeded the other. And both of them as well as our S-2 at the time, Jerry Hudson, who was a Captain and—at least those three people remember MIRZA MUNIR BAIG vividly and in the highest terms as a brilliant mind, a brilliant tactician. He came to us through Third Marine Division as a way of augmenting the regimental staff. You have to remember the 26th Marine Regimental staff was only half of a regimental staff. For example, Colonel Lownds didn't have a Sergeant Major the whole time he was there. Was a 26th Marines Forward,

which was at Khe Sanh and there was a 26th Marines rear which was at Okinawa, and 26th Marines regiment itself was a unit of 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, 9th MAB—this is a little technical, but it's important. It doesn't get into the history books, but it explains a lot, whereas all the other Marines in Vietnam were part of Third Marine Amphibious Force, or III MAF, there were certain units, like our artillery unit, 1/13, First Battalion, 13th Marines, which was 9th MAB also. Occasionally before the Siege we would get inspectors from Okinawa who would arrive the end of one month and stay through the first of the next month to see how things were and do their inspections, but their timing was such that they could deduct two months on their income tax for "combat exclusion." I think for enlisted it was 100% of their pay; for officers it was up to five hundred a month that they could deduct, and also there were some other benefits, and also they would earn their Vietnam ribbon for having spent one minute in country.

Kurtz: Plus get their Combat Pay, too!

Stubbe: And Combat Pay—that's it. They'd also get Combat Pay. So it was always amazing to me. They did this several times while I was there—the end of one month, the beginning of the next month. It was so obvious, but if they got to be there anyway, why not take advantage of—I don't look at this very negatively; I think they're just using their brains. But anyway, 26th Marines had a reduced staff when the siege began, and that's why Mirza Munir Baig was sent down there to augment the intelligence staff along with a Major Robert Coolidge, who was the Special Intelligence Officer, who dealt with signals intelligence. Major Coolidge was only there a few days and then left, and Major Baig took over everything—well, I can't say took over everything. What he became was the Target Intelligence Officer, TIO, which is not a normal billet for a regiment. He was just such an amazing person. I'm talking from what I learned later. For example, there was a Major George Quamo, who was at FOB-3, doing a thing called "Special Projects." His Project was to develop a guerrilla force in Laos which would operate near the Red Chinese border, independently of everything, sort of an "Independent Regiment" like the British had, but it never got off, never got into its final stages. Major Quamo was frequently in Laos, and supplied Major Baig and Jerry Hudson with information about where different gathering, rally points, storage points, command headquarters, would be. He wouldn't say directly, "This is where it's at," but he'd say, "If you strike this area, you will undoubtedly get productive results." And this was very unusual for him to do because FOB-3 reported to its headquarters at DaNang and then to its headquarters in Saigon, and 26th Marines would then get a message back summarizing all the intelligence, but it would always be several days later which by that time was history, so Major Quamo took it on his own to put in a land line between his bunker to Major Baig so that he could get him all the intelligence that he was gathering. For example, he had translators that were on the North Vietnamese radio net and translated all that was happening on their radio nets, and would send that all to Major Baig. So Baig would find out who was talking to who, how often—do what they call a "pattern intelligence," which is one of the things that signals intelligence people do, so you can determine the command structure and find out from where they are talking so you can get locations, and that kind of thing.

I'm getting diverted here, but Baig had this ability to get all this information from people and encourage them to give him this information. Baig was also a person who had personal quirks. He was a Pakistani. He was kind of short. He had a Boy Scout pack that he had got through Sears & Roebuck. One of his uncles was very high in Sears Roebuck hierarchy. And I learned later on from an Army fellow whose last name was CESAR. He was out of MACV as a Science Consultant. He was at Khe Sanh a few times and he told me. And then there's an Army Major named Ford who contacted me one time. He did a very good book, scholarly book on Tet. He might be out now. He was in DESERT STORM in Iraq. He had contacted me a long time ago. He used to work for the National Security Agency, and managed to get declassified about an inch of documents and mentions in his book, quotes a fellow named George Allen, who worked at the CIA as SAVA, Special Assistant Vietnam Affairs—very high in the CIA. He used to brief the President. And through Ford, I managed to contact this George Allen and had several conversations with him, which are on those tapes which I donated to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (which you might want to look up—very interesting conversations) because George Allen tells of his Navy time on (I think) Tinian, where he had to mop up all these dead Japanese bodies, and he went through a terrible things himself. Normally you hear only of these people in terms of their office and what they do, like at the CIA—you don't get their backgrounds, which are very interesting sometimes, at least worthy of a good footnote. Anyway, he put me in touch with George Allen, and George Allen was the one who told me that Baig afterwards, came to the CIA to brief him and an Army Major—he couldn't remember the Major's name, or maybe he didn't want to remember it—just the three of them. And he said: Here was this Marine Major standing apomb, just in his uniform, without any notes, and for about three or four hours held them enwrapped with his analysis of the Battle of Khe Sanh. And he said: "I'm a briefer. I brief the President. I know what briefings are about. But Baig was just so professional and did things so well. And he said: He's the one who asked me to send him all of what we had on Dien Bien

Phu—the maps and the unit dispositions and how the North Vietnamese tactics were and everything while he was at Khe Sanh.

And immediately it's clicking in my mind: How is this Marine Captain—how does he know who to contact, or how could he contact someone in the CIA with all this chain of command in between? But George Allen thought he was such a terrific young officer who was destined to become a General. So that was my conversation with George Allen, which, like I say, whoever might use this in the future might want to look up those tapes, which are there. And also I transcribed them, so they are written out.

So anyway, Baig was somebody who had connections. His father had been the one to establish the Pakistani embassies in Washington, D.C., and Toronto. His grandfather had worked with Prime Minister Asquith and had gotten some commendations from the King of England, and his great-grandfather, I believe, was in command of a fort at a place called Bijapur in India, which was a hereditary thing, so it was in the family, and then the British, of course, took it over.

Mirza has a brother who later became one of the officers of the World Bank. I talked with him also, and there's a tape of a conversation with him. But the main thing about all this research about him was that I was able to contact his mother, maybe six or several years ago, and she was living in England in her 90s. And he sent me hand-written letters which were just absolutely amazing about their family background and about what she remembered about the young Mirza and the war years in World War II, and they had a friend, DeWeldon, whose the one who did the Marine Corps Monument, the Iwo Jima Monument in D.C. And Mirza had to get special permission to get in the Marine Corps. He wanted to become a Marine. Even though he had already gone through Cambridge. He graduated from Cambridge, and then he went to the school of economics in Toronto, was it McGill? Just a very phenomenal education, very prominent education, academic credentials. But he wanted to get in the Marine Corps. But DeWeldon prevailed on the Presidential staff, or whatever to get him to enlist in the Marine Corps. So he enlisted in the Marine Corps and while was in boot camp they sent him off to OCS.

So he had connections, he had these personal quirks—the Marines would kid him while he was in the bunker that he would be eating pork and beans or something like that. He was a Muslim. They'd say, "Muslims can't eat pork, can they?" And he's say, "Allah give special dispensation—to kill all the infidels!" And then he'd look over and say, "Of course, you're all infidels, too!" That kind of thing. He was just apparently just a jovial, witty, very happy person with a huge brain, mental capacity.

Prior to coming to Khe Sanh, I found some of his papers in the Marine archives—I'm sure they're his papers because they talk about things that he was involved with. He had been at Dong Ha mapping out—he had some agents planted in North Vietnam that were giving him information about the North Vietnamese moving down towards Dong Ha. [*These are in the 3rd Marine Division, Messages, Etc., file*]. So he had a good grasp—I think it was Hudson who told me, or it might have been Swearengen or Meredith—one of those three told me that he had studied North Vietnamese tactics so much that he knew, like their route of march, how long it would take them to move from one point to another, how they would move, what kind of formations they would move in, and how they would place their people and their headquarters and how they would rotate. He had studied that so thoroughly so that when he got to Khe Sanh, with the reports that he got, he could determine where the targets were.

He had one target that had secondary explosions for something—I can't remember off hand—like twenty hours. He also—at this time there were these things called electronic sensors, Project 792 for the Dyemarker positions, and there was an operation MUD RIVER which was going into Laos to lay these sensors. And there was a General Alfred STARBIRD who was with the Defense Communications Program Group, DCPG, with the Department of Defense, who was in charge of that, who came out to Khe Sanh as a matter of fact. I saw him, a 4-star General, just before the Siege. And they diverted these sensors from Laos, from MUD RIVER, to be seeded around Khe Sanh. And unfortunately, the program was so new and so secret that no one knew how to read these things. They would send their readings—the planes that would go overhead and pick up the data—would beam that over to NKP in Thailand. Again, the reports would come back several days later, and of course the people are moving—it's so fluid. So the information was of no use. So Baig demanded that he would get the raw data himself. Well it started coming in, and he was getting this data from the sensors. And at first he assumed that when he got a sensing, that that was where the target was, but then all he was doing was destroying the sensors. But then he realized that, no, the sensors are picking up—there were two kinds of sensors: one that picked up seismic things like trucks, tanks, artillery pieces, trucks, things that would be moving, and then there were sensors that would pick up voice conversations. So he assumed these were the targets. Then he realized these weren't the targets, that they were picking up from some distance. So he had to get patterns. He didn't know how they were seeded. He figured that all out, and then he figured out how he could get the intelligence out of the data, out of the information, how he could get useful information as to where the troops were, where the real targets were. And he figured that all out by himself, on his own, without any other staff people, Air Force people of whatever trying to tell him. He figured that all out himself. And from then on in, he was directing all the attacks. He

was also the one that would—with the others—I don't want to short-change anyone else here—we had the Fire Support Coordination Center, which was also near the Regiment with a Lieutenant Colonel Hennelly, who in charge of that, and Baig was technically attached to that, although they're all part of the Regiment, but anyway they all determined—like Colonel Lownds says: 26th Marines determined over 90 percent of the B52 Arc Light strikes what the targets would be. These were not determined by MACV; the Regiment would send down,I MACV would approve it and then they would send them up.

The reason I mention all these things is that people like Baig, Lownds, Hennelly, and others, are never sometimes mentioned in the history of the Battle of Khe Sanh, and yet they were the ones—and on the other side, too, Lieutenant General Hai, who had the Front Headquarters there—you hear of Giap and you hear of Westmoreland, but you don't hear of Hai and you don't hear of Lownds. You hear of Lownds sometimes, but you certainly don't hear of his staff members, and yet these are the ones who did all the thinking and all the planning and all the strategy and everything else. It really bothers me, quite frankly, that the real heroes aren't mentioned.

Kurtz: Well, let's—.

Stubbe: I can talk about the missionaries.

Kurtz: That's what I wanted to do. I'd like you to talk a little bit about the missionaries and the Frenchman as you said. OK, go ahead.

Stubbe: Well, when I got there, there was a Frenchman. His name was FELIX POILANE. In France, there's a bread, which is very famous, called a "Poilane." The *Smithsonian* did an article about that maybe three or four years ago, no relation to the family, however. This is a slight background. The first one who settled at Khe Sanh was his father. His father's name was EUGENE POILANE. He had been down at Saigon at the end of World War I, came up to what was to become Khe Sanh after 1918, and arrived there as a botanical explorer, and on his own, he would walk all the way up to the Red Chinese border—it wasn't the Red Chinese border then—all over the area and collecting botanical specimens and sending them down to Saigon. There were several species that were named after him. He was assassinated in 1964 while traveling along Route 9 towards Quang Tri and Dong Ha. He was an amazing person. He had several wives in succession. He had like five children born to him after he was 60. Obviously [he was] a rugged person, with a huge white beard—I saw a picture of him one time. And because of him, Khe Sanh village came into being because he also, in addition to exploring, he planted various fruit trees and coffee trees, to see what could take hold and grow in the Khe Sanh area because that area with the laterite soil is exceedingly fertile. So he tried all kinds of fruit trees and there was, in fact, an experimental plantation just northwest of the Khe Sanh Combat Base that some Marines ventured into, but they didn't know what it was, but they knew it was something different. But he's the one who planted the original coffee—there's three different kinds of coffee beans that were grown up there, there was Robiston, and Cheri, and then another one that I can't remember. But anyway, he needed laborers, and the Bru people were not suitable because they were just so savage at the time, not violently savage, but just stupidly savage, I guess, and the language was completely different, and they lived by themselves up in the hills. So he imported Vietnamese, and it's because of that—these Vietnamese laborers are what eventually formed Khe Sanh village.

Kurtz: Was there any intermarriage between the Vietnamese and the Bru?

Stubbe: No, no. The Vietnamese and the Mountain tribesmen generally are just so racially—it's much worse than it is here, like the South a hundred years ago. They actually feared each other. The Vietnamese lived in the coastal areas, and they looked at the hills as a place where they would die, and probably did, because the Bru—or the other mountain tribesmen, would poison them. And on the other hand, the mountain tribesmen looked on the Vietnamese as being warriors—which they were: they were always involved in wars.

So anyway, he formed this Khe Sanh village. Felix, his son, was born at Khe Sanh, and he was also, later, to die at Khe Sanh, on the base.

Kurtz: I'm going to turn the tape.

Kurtz: You mentioned that Felix was born in the Khe Sanh area and died on the base.

Stubbe: That's correct. He was born there. He was living there when the Viet Minh came through at the end of World War II, and his wife mentioned to me, Madeleine Pollane, that they took refuge at Lao Bao Prison at that time—or he did and was injured in his leg. He went back to France and that's where he married Madeleine and brought her back to Khe Sanh. O, I might mention too that when Felix was born his father, Eugene, was out collecting [botanical] specimens, and so his mother gave birth to him alone. It was very primitive conditions there.

Now Felix, when I got there in July '67, there was Felix, Madeleine, and they had two [children], a little boy and a little girl. The boy's name was Jean Marie, and I can't recall the girl's name. They had a yellow concrete structure that was on a roadway that led from the base to the village, which was actually their own road, and we used it as Marines. We had a separate road that ran parallel, but we never used that road; we only used the Pollane road. I visited them only once—because of the language thing; I didn't speak French. But the time I did visit them we had some pilots with us and he [Felix] had a pet deer in a little enclosure. I have a picture of that amongst the pictures I sent down there [to the Veterans Museum in Madison]. They invited me in, and at the time there were some German visitors. I don't know who they were or what they were, but they were visiting and they invited me in and I remember I had some crème de menthe in water; it was really diluted. You could barely tell there was crème de menthe in it. But it was so nice. They were gracious. I don't know much else about them, except that I kept in touch with Madeleine through the years, not just Christmas cards but correspondence, and she sent me a long, long essay about her time there and how life was and all that stuff. That's all in the records I sent over [to the Veterans Museum].

There was another Frenchman named Father Poncet, who was sent up there as a missionary to the Bru. And I remember him during the monsoons. He came on the base asking me if I had any wafers for the communion. At that time we had wafers in a can that you had to open like a tin can which was because of humidity and bugs. But the thing was he was on a bicycle and I remember he was just so emaciated, and he looked so weak and so malnourished, and I remember having a case of C rations in my bunker for convenience so I didn't have to walk down the muddy road to the messhall in all the rain and the cold, but I could just eat in my bunker. I gave that to him because he just needed that.

I remember one of the Marines from the CAC in the village there—he was Catholic and went when Father Poncet said Mass. For Confession, he had a piece of cardboard, and on one side he had all the common sins, and the guy would just point to each sin and indicate with his fingers how many times, and then he'd turn over the card and on the other side were all the penances, and Father Poncet would point to the penances and indicate with his fingers how many times. That's how they communicated that part of thing.

There was also an Episcopalian Vietnamese missionary up there who had a little chapel built. His name was Pastor Loc. And I remember visiting him one time in the village and he had the little kids out there and they were singing "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know, for the Bible tells me so." They sang it in English, then they sang it in Bru, and then they sang it in Vietnamese. I told Pastor Loc, "I can understand English," and although I couldn't understand the Bru it was non-tonal. But I said "I can't understand why you have them sing that song in Vietnamese because in Vietnamese the words have meaning according to what tone they're said—seven different levels of tone, so singing tones according to a Western musical form gives meaningless words. And he said, "O, well I have them do that because their music isn't music!" So he was probably more stern. I don't know his character at all, quite frankly. He was there.

Pastor Loc, when the siege started, he went down to DaNang, and he had like a mental breakdown, but he's still there probably—I heard about ten years ago that he was still there and OK.

Father Poncet, however, went down to Hue City for refuge during the siege and was killed there by the North Vietnamese during one of the battles there.

Felix came back on the 13th of April '68 because he had heard that Khe Sanh—that the relief had taken place. The Army had come up on the 8th of April, I believe it was, and the people on the base were now scouring the area. They weren't taking any incoming, so basically it was a safe place to be. So Felix decided to come back and see how his coffee trees and house had withstood the battle. Actually his house was completely demolished because it had become a headquarters or communications site for a North Vietnamese unit, and our artillery and air strikes completely demolished the place. And I'm sure that his coffee trees were basically demolished, although even today there are coffee trees there which have been nourished and brought back to life. I guess the airstrip itself has been turned into a coffee plantation right now as I speak.

In any event he came back to look and the plane he was in, the tip of the wing crashed into a disabled vehicle or some concertina—I can't remember—and sort of crashed while it was landing. Felix was the only person killed. There were some other injuries, but I guess Felix—I had heard he was decapitated, but that really can't be because when Madeleine wrote me this long essay she mentioned that they brought the body down and there was this little tricklet of blood coming out of his head, so obviously he wasn't decapitated. But in any event, he died on the base. And he was born there [at Khe Sanh] back in the 1920s.

Kurtz: What about the Millers?

Stubbe: The Millers had arrived there in 1962. the first time the Army Special Forces came there. [*The tape says 1963, but it should be 1962*]. And they originally—the Millers belonged to a group called the Wycliffe Bible Translators, which are a group that are determined to go to different tribal areas throughout the world which have no written language and give them a language, listen to the sounds—each language has peculiar sounds—and develop a written language for those sounds and words and then teach the young children to read, so they become literate for the first time, and also to translate the Bible in that native language. And so they're in Africa, South America, and all over the place, and they had quite a few in Vietnam at the time. And the Millers were one of these people. They arrived at Khe Sanh and they—the Wycliffe people don't give any salary; all these missionaries are dependent on individual donors. They also don't remain in an area, like a missionary would, for more than ten years usually. They do what they're supposed to do and then they move on to another place. All of which really impressed me very much. Here were people really involved in their work. They weren't dependent on their salary. They didn't develop their own church, their own kingdom. Also, they listened before speaking. So they initially located in a Bru village and they were there basically to just listen, to pick up the language, right from the beginning. And they lived in the primitive conditions, unlike other missionaries, too, which usually live in one place and then go to wherever they are doing their missionary work, and then go back and live in their home, which is close by, but is in another place. But these people live in the huts that everyone else lived in. They did leave briefly in 1964 when they told me there was some indication the North Vietnamese were moving into the area. The Special Forces, in fact, did have a major battle there where they killed off almost a whole regiment of North Vietnamese—one of the early battles of Khe Sanh that never gets talked about. Anyway, they left for awhile and then came back. And just before I got there there's this large concrete house just north of the village and to the south of this village called Breh and south of Hill 471, there was a concrete house there that belonged to the Poilanes, and I guess they gave it or rented it or whatever to the Millers and the Marines and the Special Forces and the Seabees all refurbished it without cost to the Millers—put in windows and that kind of thing. The Millers, by this time, had three children or so. And so that's where they operated out of. When I first got there, they weren't there for the first month or two. They were at a conference, I guess. And there were two ladies, Nancy Costello and Eugenia Johnston, and they were both from Australia. They were there to do illustrations for these primers for teaching children, like they'd show a pig or a flute or whatever, and they'd have the road underneath, and these young children would be in classes and learning how to speak and write their language. And they were there when I first got there.

I'll never forget—it's one of the most traumatic—I just arrived there and I went down to the village and I saw these two young ladies. They were in the Miller's house, and while I was there—I think it was a Bru mother brought in her child, and the child looked dead already. The eyes were open. I remember one of the ladies gave it an injection in its rear end. It must have been penicillin or something, caused a big bump there, and then within two or three minutes the child was dead—definitely dead. And the mother was just wailing. And these two missionaries told me they don't trust the American medicine—that they should have brought the child in earlier when they could have done something, but they trust their medicine man and then when all else fails, they come in—too late.

So anyway—soon after I got there the Millers came and I came to know them. They were just such wonderful, wonderful people. In fact, Harper Bohr that I was talking about before, when he and I went down to see the Millers, he told me later on that if Jesus Christ were alive today walking the earth, he could see him as John Miller. Not saintly in the sense of being so pious, but just so genuinely Christian and full of joy and love and peace and everything else, just a wonderful person.

They had me down to eat one time, and I remember they had this salad and they had a salad dressing on it and I said: "Gee, that tastes good. What is that?" And she said, "Well, eat it first, and then we'll talk about the stuff later on." So I ate it, and she said, "You were asking about the salad dressing?" And I said, "Yeah." And she said, "Well, that's called nuoc mom." And I said, "O, what's nuoc mom?" And she said, "Well, it's fish oil." And she said that one of the things about living in this area is that people have a tendency to lack salt and because of that they become dehydrated and very weak, especially in the mountains. Along the coastal areas, they can eat fish, they get the fish oils and they get the natural salt—sea salt, but in the mountains, salt becomes almost like gold. So she said, "What this is—." Fortunately I'd eaten it. But she said, "It's made by putting fish in a barrel of water and after about six months you scrape off the oil that's on the top, and that's nuoc mom."

Kurtz: How could you not smell it?

Stubbe: It smells fishy.

Kurtz: I mean, it smells awful! If you've ever been where they make this stuff.

Stubbe: t wasn't that much.

Kurtz: O, OK. It's got a horrible smell.

Stubbe: That was that. They left about the first week of January of '68. Colonel Lownds called them in and said things are getting really bad; you need to leave. They said, "Well, we have a conference anyway that's scheduled in Saigon, so that's a good excuse to leave." So they left. And on the 20th of January, a Saturday afternoon. It was bright and sunny , and INDIA Company, 3/26, had already got into a big battle going up to Hill 881-North, and Lieutenant TONC had already surrendered and gave all the battle plans and that we were soon to be hit. So all of this was going on, and all of a sudden John Miller appeared and went down in the command bunker to see Colonel Lownds and Colonel Lownds was very angry—not vocally angry, but John Miller told me that he was angry. He said: "I got you out of here!" And John Miller had come back because he wanted to get his Bru helper that helped him translate. What they do is they have a person called an "Informant." They said they had to change that later on in Vietnam because it sounded like a spy. But what they have—they call them "informants"—when they translate what they'll do is they translate into Bru and then they'll speak it in Bru to the informant and ask "Does this make sense? or is this something that shouldn't be said?" For example, as an aside, this one seminary student had studied in Strausburg [Germany] for a year and knew French very well, and he was up in Canada and sat in an airplane, and it was kind of cold, and a woman came in, and in perfect French said, "Madame, et vous foi?" But in Canada, Quebec, "foi" has a primary meaning of being frigid, so he was really saying, "Are you frigid?" And this woman got very angry with him, and he couldn't understand why; it was because the language was different. So anyway they had these informants, and John Miller came up to get his Bru helper, and he did get out. But he lost basically all of his books. I happened to have his Greek-English Lexicon because I was doing work in the Greek New Testament myself at that time. Also, another Chaplain up there at the time, Hampton, was teaching his young assistant Greek. So later on when I got to Quang Tri, I still had that lexicon, Arndt and Gingrich. And John Miller said, "Do you still have it?" And I said, "Yeah." And he said, "I'd like it back." I said, "Sure, no problem. Take it. It's yours." But he lost everything else.

And then, later on, they went to a place called Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands and they were captured and spent about a year as prisoners with the North Vietnamese. Carolyn Miller wrote a book called *Captured* which is among the books that I donated [to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum] which talks about that whole experience. There was also a Wycliffe Bible translator named Hank Blood that I met in Quang Tri while trying to get back to Khe Sanh during the siege when I was medevaced. He was a real tall, British-like person with white hair, very ramrod straight [in posture], and he told me about how he had almost been captured once and how he escaped, how the Lord helped him. But he told me one thing that I've used in many sermons. He said, "Never think of the greatness of your problems; always think of the greatness of your God." I've used that in many, many times. And then I found out later on that he was killed, sometime around the time the Millers were captured.

But the Millers right now have risen, still work for Wycliffe Bible Translators and are regional coordinators for all of South-East Asia. They work out of Bangkok and attend lots of conferences and they're involved in translating some of the languages in Laos which are related to the Bru. They told me that there's sort of an arc that runs from Khe Sanh all the way to Chaing Mai [in Thailand] which are little pockets of people that are separated by terrain, but they all have a similar language. And I talked with Carolyn on the phone one time and asked, "Were they ever together?" And she said, "Yes, at one time they had a kingdom, and then their king was killed, and then they all separated, scattered."

Kurtz: Very fascinating.

Stubbe: Yeah, some of that early history—I wish I had talked more with the Poilanes.

Kurtz: In the book that you wrote with John Prados, there's a chapter—is that your research that was in there?

Stubbe: All of that book is [based on] my research except where he talks about Westmoreland, MACV, or Washington, and Johnson—but everything else is all my research.

Kurtz: That's another interview. Now the last person I'd like to ask you about today is Oliver North. What do you know about him?

Stubbe: OK. I was in Okinawa in '73, '74, with Third Marine Division at Camp Hansen. When I first got up there, there's a place called the Northern Training Area, NTA, where infantry Marines are sent to learn river crossing techniques, rappelling down cliffs, rappelling out of choppers, night navigation using compass and stars and so on, things like that, survival. When I first got up there, there was some officer in charge—I can't remember his name [*it was MacDonald*] but then, later on, Oliver North came up there to replace him. He was a Captain. And I remember being up there in November of '73 when it was Marine Corps Birthday, and Oliver North had a huge birthday cake that he had scent up there and the Division Band up there—and I say this because it was a very primitive place. There were about twenty Marines up there. It was very detached. It took maybe two or three hours to travel up there by road, which was winding and difficult to get to, and there were very primitive living conditions up there. But Oliver really took care of his men. Like I say, he got the cake, he got the band. I could tell the men just really admired him deeply. He was a very humble kind of person, just very down to earth.

He had one Marine up there named GOLIGHTLY, and Golightly was a Southern Baptist and wanted to be baptized. And there was a river up there at the base of the hill, Shin Gawa River. And I told this Marine, "You're Baptist and I'm Lutheran, and they might not accept your baptism as valid, and in any event, even if I were Baptist, they'd probably want to re-baptize you anyway." He said, "I want to be baptized." So we went down to the river. It was cold, and he was in a white T-shirt and I was in regular Marine utilities. And we went into the river and I submerged him because that's what he wanted. I did my baptism by submersion. And then we all ran up right away into the showers and took a hot shower. But Ollie North was the one that had put him with me. He really took care of his men. He wrote me a note later on expressing his appreciation for that.

Then about three or four years ago, he suddenly called me—or, actually a lady called me from New York, and said that they wanted to do a video interview, and I said I didn't like to travel and wouldn't come out to New York. She said, "Well, I'll come out to see you. It's 'Ollie North with War Stories'." I said, "OK, if you come out here, that's fine."

They arrived here in two limousines. I live at the end of a court in the suburbs here and all the neighbors who saw him coming out and knew who he was, and they saw these limousines, and later on they said, "What's happening?" But he came in here, and I've been interviewed by several for television and different things, the Weather Station, the History Channel, and other people have interviewed me for one reason or another—I don't know why, but they do—and he's the only one that put makeup on my face, I guess so I didn't glare and shine. He was asking me questions, and one time I looked at him—I was sort of looking off into space—when someone asks me a question, I just sort of get into it, 'into the zone,' so to speak. And I happened to look at him, and there were gigantic tears—.

Kurtz: ... [*fragment of another interview*]. I've finally decided to another tape, and when the tape snapped off you talked about Oliver North coming here and what a relatively nice person he was. Do you have any views about how controversial he became after he left the Marine Corps?

Stubbe: No, quite frankly no. I just always remember him—of course, people are so multi-sided. What the public sees about a person and the images they form and so on is not always the way things really area. And I always remember Ollie—and I spent hours and hours with him as a Marine Captain, and he really cared for his troops, and I hear that from other people who have known him from that time. He just seemed like a very genuine person with convictions. I have very good feelings about him. And what he might of done later, I don't know—we probably will know fifty years from now as we declassify things, but sometimes people aren't always able to say everything either, what they do and why they do it. I must say, though, that when he first contacted me—or, when he was going through these troubles, I wrote him, because I have this picture of him, smiling with this Marine Corps Birthday. And I had this fantasy of putting him up in my attic or something as a refuge, like in World War II with the Jewish people, like the *Diary of Anne Frank*, and I thought, well, I'll put him up for awhile, keep him safe. I never told him that.

Kurtz: Well, is there anything about Vietnam that we haven't discussed that would be useful.

Stubbe: Well, I think Vietnam—there is no "Vietnam Experience." I think it's hard, it would be very difficult for anybody to put it in a few words, which really must be difficult for those teaching American history in high school. I don't know what they say about us. Vietnam was just so multi-faceted, just like the people I mentioned. I mean you had the coastal areas which were hot and cultured, like Hue City had a golden throne and beautiful porcelain vases and everything else in the Citadel and people dressed in very brilliant clothes, and then you have these very primitive mountain tribesmen living in an area which is very cold and full of animals and wild life, and then you have the different kinds of service. You have the people who served in

infantry who were always in the mud, maybe spending six, eight weeks without a shower, without any hot food for months and months, and then you have people who were living the rear areas with supplies maybe getting drunk every night. We had a Chaplain at Khe Sanh who arrived there right after I did, John McElroy, who mentioned that when he came in he reported to a place called Red Beach, which is where all the supplies are, at a place called FLC, which is Force Logistic Command. And he went there because he had a friend who was a senior Chaplain there. And he went into this plywood hut where this Chaplain was, and there was music playing Mozart or something like that, and a "washy-washy woman" was washing his clothes, uniforms and hanging them up. And he gave John McElroy a glass of scotch or something with ice cubes, and after awhile he said, "O, I have to go off and play a tennis match that I'm scheduled for. You can stay here and enjoy for awhile." And then he said, "Vietnam really isn't so bad once you get used to it." Of course, he was referring just probably to the separation from family—which is a big thing for anybody. But John McElroy was telling me this after he had stayed at Khe Sanh one night in a bunker along which there were rats crawling around in the upper rafters or ceiling so to speak—overhead, and one had lost its footing and fallen right unto his bare chest. It was hot and just had his bare chest. And it went "squeak, squeak, squeak!" It landed right on his chest, woke him up. He went straight up and said, "Shit!" Then he told me the story about Red Beach, and he said, "Vietnam really isn't so bad once you get used to it." But the thing is, it's many things to many people, and everyone has different experiences. I think that those who flew helicopters, for example, in our support would come into a combat area where all hell is breaking loose and just pandemonium and sheer terror and horror and excitement, and the adrenalin must be rushing and wondering, "Am I going to get out alive?" and "Am I going to rescue this person," or whatever, and then go back to where the air bases are, and usually they're air-conditioned and you have nice hot food and you're going back and forth and back and forth, which for those who are stuck, like the infantry, like where I was at Khe Sanh where I was, you become sort of numb, and you just go on automatic, and you don't even think of how bad things are. It's just what is, and you never think of how things could be better. But for those who go in and out and in and out, I just think it must have been more difficult, even though they didn't have to put up with all the stuff we did, they had to put up with the *realization* that it was bad. And then there were different times: people got there in the early 60s as opposed to the early 70s. By that time, more disillusionment, more anti-war, more non-acceptance by home—do I have a home to go back to?—more marijuana and drug use, whereas in the early parts, that was unheard of, and you had—like where I was, there were no local women where the men could go out at night, whereas at DaNang and those places, they'd go through mine fields and everything else just to get to the "skivvy shacks" as we called them. So Vietnam is many things, depending on what time, what kind of unit, where you were, and it covered over seven years. So it's going to be—for those who try to make a general survey of Vietnam, it's going to be very difficult to do.

But I was going to say that after I left Khe Sanh, I went to Quang Tri for four months. I met Harper Bohr there and some recon people. I did a Memorial Service for 1/26, which relocated from Khe Sanh to a place called Wunder Beach, and that's spelled W-U-N-D-E-R, oddly enough. It was an old Army logistics site. And I conducted a Memorial Service in an old, bombed out building. And I remember the Adjutant read all the names of the people from 1/26 who were killed—I think it was about 180 or so, very many. And I remember the Commanding Officer, [Lieutenant] Colonel McEwan, who had been the S-4 of Regiment before the siege, remarking that this will always be with us; we will never forget it—words to that effect. After that, I came home for thirty days on extension leave and my mom said I looked like a scarecrow because I had lost so much weight. I'd gone from 180s to 120 something. She was almost in tears, she told me later on. She told me that I talked in my sleep; I had no awareness of that—was thrashing around and that sort of thing. I did get to talk with a company called Amron in Waukesha which were making the grenades that we used—these M33 grenades, and I was talking about COFRAM munitions and I remember afterwards we had a little luncheon and the President of the company came to me and said, "O, how can you talk about it? That's all Top Secret!" I said, "O, it isn't anymore!"

Kurtz & Stubbe: [*laughs*]

Stubbe: But for them it was. He was amazed that I talked about it. I remember going to see the Bishop of my church and his opening words to me were, "How can you spend any time at all with such immoral people?" Meaning the Marines. And that just took me by complete surprise. But that was the temperament of the time. I wanted to tell him—in fact it was in my mind at the time, I remember—I wanted to tell him, "What about all the immoral people in college and seminary?" Because I remember—I had just come from that, too—before going to Vietnam. I had a good awareness there.

So anyway, then I went to DaNang and the main thing there—I won't go into all the details there—but there's one thing that happened: I think it was the 20th of August. At DaNang there's a group of hills called the Marble Mountains which rise out of the earth almost straight up, at least one of them does. And I remember taking—had an enlisted assistant, a clerk who was in the Navy, called a Yeoman, and he had just come off a ship. His name was Dick Straubel. He lived in Kaukauna until just

recently; now he lives in Florida. And I had heard that in the Marble Mountains (which are made of marble) that there were carved Buddha and some statuary that were many hundreds of years old that was very interesting, and I'd never seen it before. And I told him, "Well, let's go down there. We'll take our own little day off and go down there." He said "Fine." So I had my own little vehicle—because my job was to visit some of the small little facilities of the Naval Support Activity like Camp Carter, which was where our Shore Party and security forces where, and Bridge Ramp and Ferry Landing which were our logistic places, and Covered Storage—a lot of logistic things where there'd be only ten people, and I was to go from one place to another. So I had a vehicle, and we went down to Marble Mountain and the Marine unit at the place at the time was Third LVTs, which refers to AMTRACs, Amphibious Tractors, Landing Vehicle Tracked, LVT. And I checked in with their intelligence officer and asked, "Is it alright to walk around in these hills?" I thought it was only prudent to do, to see if there's any enemy activity. And he said, "O, there's nothing to worry about. We haven't had any problems at all."

So Dick Straubel and I walked around, and we saw some people carving little statues and ash trays and whatever out of marble in a little village at the foot of Marble Mountain. And then I started walking up a path and pretty soon a little Vietnamese boy about seven or so started falling and he was whistling. He just wanted to follow, and I said "OK." And he just followed us. And we saw, indeed, some very beautiful and interesting statues. And I remember there were some unusual things. I remember seeing a Vietnamese soldier, or a man in a uniform; I'm not sure what he was, now. But kissing a young Vietnamese girl, sitting on some stone stairs. And I had been taught that Vietnamese don't show affection in public, and I remember it registered in my mind at the time that this was something unusual here. And then we continued walking, and we came into an area which was like a crater, into the side of crater. Or, let me put it this way, I walked in, and all above me was open, but it was like inside a volcanic crater, and in there was a reclining Buddha on one side and some other Buddha statues carved into the side of this crater, and then there was like another little cave that went off, and I started walking in there and saw just a lot of old, rusting tin cans, like it had been a garbage dump. And at that point this little boy started whistling just very, very loudly. At the time, again, I thought this is very, very unusual, but I wasn't afraid and I didn't think anything other than that it was very unusual. I thought "What is he doing?" And then he ran off; he wasn't with us anymore. And I looked inside this cave and thought, "Well there's nothing in here to see," so I walked right out again. Then we continued about two or three hours, walking all through the place. Then we went back to our base which was called Camp Tien Sha, which is on the opposite end of DaNang. There's like an area of DaNang and then there's a little peninsula that goes north and south, and the Marble Mountains are at the south part of that peninsula and where I was stationed at the north part of that peninsula where there's another large mountain, like this peninsula's throwing a big football, and that was called Monkey Mountain, and the camp was called Tien Sha. So I was there. And I remember that night there were all sorts of flares in the air and that kind of thing, and then the word came out the next morning that at this foot of the Marble Mountain where we were, there was an Army Special Forces Headquarters for all the SOG units in I Corps, and that had been overrun, and in fact some of the people who were at Khe Sanh who went down there and made it out safely out of Khe Sanh were killed, including the Sergeant Major, Sergeant Major Pegram, and there was a senior Medic who was killed and quite a few others.

So I went down there again to the Marble Mountain, curious to see what was happening. The battle was over. And all at once while I'm down there, we started receiving 105 rounds, which we found later on were from ARVN artillery, not accurately being fired. They were probably supposed to be fired south, and were being fired north—who knows? They were impacting and making a ringing sound. The 105 is just a terrible sound, and there were no bunkers or trenches or anything. There was just sand in that area and here's Straubel, who has just come off a ship, never been in battle or anything. He's just absolutely shocked by this whole thing, and I'm still a little numb from Khe Sanh but realizing this is not a good place to be in. So I said, "Let's make a run for the vehicle and get out of here." So we did, and got out of there, and got just north of the Marble Mountain, just about a block or two, and he made the remark, he said: "It's interesting how in Vietnam you can go from sheer terror to where everyone's just walking like nothing's happening in a flick of an instant."

And I found out later on that the people who attacked this Army Special Forces camp Headquarters for the SOG called CCN, Command and Control North, about sixty to eighty North Vietnamese soldiers or whoever they were, were in that Marble Mountain while I was walking through there the afternoon before! And that Dick Straubel and I could very easily have been killed or captured during that time, and probably they were in that cave where the tin cans were and that's maybe why that little kid was whistling loudly and then ran off—to warn them. But obviously they were not about to trigger-off their presence before they did their attack, so they didn't do anything to us. But nevertheless, it's one of those instances where we just came that close.

Another incident that happened on New Year's Eve: I was going to the Officers' Club in the main part of DaNang, which is called the Stone Elephant: they had hard drinks for 35 cents each, I remember, and we were going there. There was a big bridge between the peninsula area and the main part of DaNang, and we were stopped right at the end of the bridge because

there was a Vietnamese convoy from the main part of DaNang and then they were going to go south. So we were right there. And off to the right side is sort of like a cliff, like twelve feet, and off to the right is the road where these trucks are driving like fifty, sixty miles per hour, going as fast as they can. I don't know why they were doing that, but they were going fast. And this was early in the evening and there were all sorts of Vietnamese people crowded all over the place.

About six vehicles passed me, and all at once there's this one that's coming fast, and then comes slower and slower and then veers into my lane, like it's going to crash into me. Well, this bridge is like three blocks long, and this vehicle is coming slower and slower and I wondered, "Is it going to crash into me or isn't it?" Because I couldn't back up because there were Vietnamese behind me. I couldn't jump off to the side or either way, and I had another Chaplain with me at the time. We're just sitting in this jeep. This truck comes more and more, like a juggernaut, just advances on me—directly in front of me. And it did crash into me! But at the time of impact it was maybe only going five miles per hour, but nevertheless crashed and caused damage and I couldn't drive. And all at once there's this Marine running down the bridge with his rifle saying, "I had to shoot him! I had to shoot him! He wouldn't stop! He wouldn't stop when I challenged him!" So they opened the driver's side of the thing and this dead Vietnamese flops out with a round right through his skull.! And all these Vietnamese are going [*makes chaotic noise*]. And this other Chaplain and I are the only Americans other than this one Marine who ran down. O my God! So pretty soon there are some MPs came and, but we had to stay there and make statements, and never got to the club for supper, or to celebrate New Year's Eve. But that was another one of those funny incidents—not "funny" but "peculiar." So Vietnam still was always a dangerous place, even in a rear area.

After that I stayed in the service, went to [Marine Corps Recruit Depot at] Parris Island for a year and a half, started writing about Khe Sanh at that point. I needed to get it out of my system, it seemed. And on the basis of diaries and clippings and all that—.

Kurtz: Now they were your diaries?

Stubbe: Yes. I donated them to the Veterans Museum [in Madison]. Fortunately—I kept them daily, too.

Kurtz: How difficult was it keeping a diary in the conditions at Khe Sanh?

Stubbe: Not bad. I usually wrote in the evenings, when things were quiet. Of if we were out on an operation, like three, four days, obviously I didn't, but then I would write in everything as soon as I got back. I had a sense that this was historic, I really did. From the very first day I arrived there, I felt: This is something that is different. I need to write this down. I hadn't kept diaries up to that point. I said I need to keep a record of what's happening here because this is historic. And I didn't know why, but I felt it was. So I wrote this all down in 1970 and then I did it on weekends and on evenings. They had a typewriter there and I used that. So that was Parris Island. I could say many things about Parris Island, but I won't get into that—funny things with Marines, funny things that happened.

But anyway then I went on a brand new ship called the USS SHREVEPORT which was just being commissioned in Bremerton, Washington. It was a brand new ship and I was part of the original crew. And we left there and went south, pulled into San Francisco and into Acapulco and then went through the Panama Canal and pulled into New Orleans where some people from Shreveport came down, then went around the Gulf and pulled into Mayport, Florida, where I met the USS NOA, which was a destroyer, hull number 841, which I had served two years enlisted after high school, and [it] was being decommissioned and then we pulled into Norfolk. I was on there for two years.

After that—I left there because it was going on to the Mediterranean and I was due for orders, but the Navy ran out of money to transfer so I ended up in Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base in Norfolk, and got interested in working out physically with the SEAL team because [the Chaplains at] Little Creek didn't have very much for me to do, and because of that I got to go to the Army Jump School at Fort Benning.

Then from there, when the money became available, I went out to Okinawa for a year, '73 to '74; that's where I met Ollie North. I was there for one year. And from there I went to Camp Pendleton for two years and had a variety of experiences there. Started getting interested in Force Recon—did some writing there. Also was continuing to re-write the Khe Sanh experiences, gathering more information—official information.

Kurtz: Were people contacting you that you knew at Khe Sanh?

Stubbe: No. Well, at that point I had kept in touch with 12, 13, 14 people mainly through Christmas cards and occasionally through other letters. Most of these were from the recon company, but there was also [Lieutenant] Colonel

Wilkinson, Colonel Lownds, Major Bohr, and I can't think of who else, but there were about 12 to 14 people I kept in touch with.

Then after Pendleton, I was sent to the USS IWO JIMA (LPH-2) and we did a variety of operations on that. Okinawa and IWO JIMA were places that the command didn't seem to appreciate Chaplains generally, and I felt very alone and maybe some of my Vietnam memories were coming back more and more, because I was re-writing about Khe Sanh all the time. I also had a fairly major surgery at that time.

Then after that I went to Great Lakes Naval Training Center which I really liked because it was close to home, maybe only 45 miles away. I could come home on weekends. I worked there as a Supervisory Chaplain, I worked retreats, I was the Chaplain of the Chapel for awhile. There was a senior Chaplain who arrived who knew me—I didn't know him at all—and I had orders to go to Bahrein Island in the Middle East, and he said: "Would you rather stay here at Great Lakes?" And I said: "O yes, definitely!" He said, "Well, I want you as my Administrative Assistant to do budgets and that kind of thing." And I said: Fine. So I ended up staying at Great Lakes for about six years, which was very, very unusual, but I was getting to retire anyway.

And then about my last year, my grandma died and my only cousin, who was 26, and that left my parents and my uncle. That's the only family I had at that time. And they were dedicating the Vietnam Memorial in Washington. A lot of it was on television, and for some reason it just started flooding back at me very badly, all these memories, and I was wondering whether there was anybody left from Khe Sanh other than these twelve or so that I had kept in touch with.

Kurtz: What year was the Vietnam Memorial dedicated?

Stubbe: I don't know, but I'm talking about '83, '84, in that time frame. My grandma died July 4th in '83, my cousin the same day, about half an hour apart. Grandma was in her 90s; we expected her to die. And my cousin had a brain tumor and we expected him to die. But we didn't expect them so soon. My uncle at the time lost his only child and his mother, and four months later, lost his wife. So he really had a very bad time. He was a World War II veteran from Burma. He's still with us.

So anyway I started getting all these nightmares and dreams and everything else. I went to the Dispensary and I told them about that and they said you need to see the "shrink." So I saw the "shrink"—he was a Navy Captain, and he said, "Well, I don't know why you're having problems with war. War is normal human behavior and you go to it and you come back and then you forget about it, and that's it." And that's what he told me. And then he went on leave. And he had an assistant Navy psychiatrist, who—.

Stubbe: I'm going into all of this because it has cast me in a very poor light—maybe it's human light; it makes me real, I guess—it explains, nevertheless, why certain things happened afterwards.

So I was—at the time we didn't know very much about what they now call Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, but I found out that there's this thing called the Stress Unit. So they sent me there as an outpatient, to go to one of their evening sessions. And I remember there was this psychiatrist there who had established this unit maybe a year earlier, and his name was "Skip" Shelton, a very intense but very competent psychiatrist, just with a real heart for Vietnam veterans. And I'll never forget, at the end of the session—he could just "read me," I don't know—he could read anybody, I think. He said: "Yeah, Ray, this is the best of all possible worlds, isn't it?" A quote from Voltaire, *Candide*, Doctor Pangloss. And he kept repeating it, and I got angrier and angrier. He hit a nerve, and I don't know how he hit it or why he knew that that would hit it, but he did. Because I'm not usually a person who gets very angry. But I started getting very angry and I sort of lost it, and in fact, I did loose it. And that was at the end of the session, and he said: "OK, come back next week." And I remember getting into my car and somehow I arrived at the Bachelor Officers' Quarters on Great Lakes maybe about an hour or so later. It only takes about ten minutes [to] drive. And I don't know where I was in the mean time or how I got there. And I knew immediately then that there's something definitely wrong. So I went back to this psychiatrist and he got me into the program and I spent three or four months there as an in-patient. And I was still on active duty. And they told me that I could retire on twenty years sometime about April to June of '84, that I could retire. And I got out of that Stress Unit around January of '84, and I thought: I only got three months to go and I can retire and in the meantime the Chaplains put me in an administrative thing to do schedules and whatever, do paperwork. So I was doing that and my orders came in to retire.

And then a message came in saying: We have miscalculated your time. In order to do 20, you now have to serve until December of '84, so I had to serve 6, 7 months more. And the senior Chaplains didn't know what to do with me, and I was just sort of a "basket case" then, quite frankly. So I took leave and went to the Vietnam Memorial in DC by myself—which was a bad thing to do, because then it really came back to me. So I came back and was just in a really bad way and I went back to the Stress Unit and said: This is not working out. So they readmitted me and kept me there for like three months more. So I was there a total of six, seven months inpatient. At that time the senior psychiatrist was really up in arms because I had used

up a lot of their funds because they had to pay the VA for me to be there. And he was going to give me a Medical Board and wanted me to become a patient at the Navy Hospital. I told him, "I can manage now. After all this time, I can handle myself. I know what to do, what to avoid to trigger things off." He said, "OK, if you promise not to go back there as an inpatient, we'll keep you until you retire." So that's what happened.

But anyway, while I was in there as an inpatient, we had a thing called Goals Group and in there we were to determine what we want to do when we get out. And I was the only active duty person at the time. And I'm sure when I first got there they were wondering: What is a Chaplain doing here? Or an officer? But anyway, my goals—I formulated them at the time were two: I was going to form a group, a network, of those who were at Khe Sanh, first of all find out if there were any alive—and I wasn't alone in that, by the way. There's a news article that came out towards the end of the siege in which the Executive Officer of the Recon Company was quoted. It was an article by John Wheeler, Associated Press, in which this officer, his name was Pappy Schlack who was enlisted before he became an officer. He was what they call a "Mustang." He was quoted in this article as saying: "When I get out, I'm going to open a bar, and when it gets more than three deep of people that say they were at Khe Sanh, I'll know someone's lying." So I wasn't alone in the fact of "Is anyone still alive?" So anyway, I wanted to form this group.

And the second goal was to get this book that I had on Khe Sanh published somehow, or somehow get a story about Khe Sanh done. Because while Khe Sanh had occupied the majority of the news in the United States while it was happening, right after it happened, it became conveniently and rapidly forgotten. And I remember reading in the Marine magazine that's designed for enlisted called the *Leatherneck* that there was an article on a new type of Navy ship called a LHA and there were going to be five, and I believe the first was the TARAWA, and there was a BELLEAU WOOD; they were all going to be named after battles. And the fifth one was going to be named USS KHE SANH. And they mentioned that in the article. And then, of course as it happened, LHA-5 was not named USS KHE SANH; it was named after some other battle. There is a ship named after Hue City, but there's no ship named after Khe Sanh. I remember while I was at Parris Island, the Drill Instructors were told not to mention Khe Sanh or not to emphasize it. I think the Marines felt—either of two things, either they had lost it because they abandoned it, or that the other services might have had a major part, like the Air Force with the B52s or the Army coming in to relieve, or whatever. But none of those take away the glory of Khe Sanh, not the glory, but the immensity of the sacrifice and the courage of the people who were there, and somehow I had it in my craw that Khe Sanh should not be forgotten, and that's why I wanted this book to be published.

And so the way that I did this was that I immediately started writing these people I had kept in touch with and asking them if they knew any others that had been at Khe Sanh. And then I put an ad in *Navy Times* and the *Leatherneck*, and eventually I did start to get responses.

And then about this time, in '84, I believe it was, I was still on active duty, but I got leave to go to a ticker tape parade in New York City that was in honor of Vietnam veterans. It was organized by two people, one of which was JAMES HEBRON who was a Khe Sanh veteran, not of the siege. He left right before the siege. He was with BRAVO Company, 1/26. And while I was there—he had managed to get a banner made that said "KHE SANH". And somehow a whole bunch of us, maybe thirty, forty, maybe even more, fifty, Khe Sanh veterans rallied. We saw this banner and we just went there. And we got it together. I got all their names and addresses and everything. And then, after I got out, the Third Marine Division Association—I think it was '88, was having its reunion at Tampa, Florida—it was going to be the 20th anniversary of the Battle at Khe Sanh, and they invited General Westmoreland to be the main speaker. And Colonel Lownds, who lived at Naples, Florida, who only lived a short ways away, didn't attend. I learned later on—not from him, but from others—I had heard he did not attend because Westmoreland did attend. He must have had something there about Westmoreland.

But anyway, while I was there they were honoring Khe Sanh and obviously there were many, many more people that we got in touch with, so we were putting out a newsletter, which was mainly a listing of people, a network for people to get in touch with each other, so we rapidly went from 12 or 13 to 30, then 60, and then 100. We got to 300. So that's how all that started.

And while we were at Tampa in '88, we all got together in a small room and I remember I addressed the group and I said: "Now I think we should organize, and I'll take care of getting us organized, if that's what you want." And they all agreed that's what they wanted. And Earle Breeding passed around his Marine utility cover to get a collection, and he immediately became our first Treasurer because of that.

And I went back here and saw a law firm, Padway & Padway here in Milwaukee, and we became incorporated as a Wisconsin Incorporation, Nonprofit, Non-stock, and the date of that is September 1, 1988.

Our Khe Sanh veteran group met annually as part of the Third Marine Division Association. We let them do all the arranging for rooms and everything else, and we would meet like one afternoon during the reunion as a group. This lasted about five, six years until we decided we were large enough—we were getting like 70, 80 of our own people. We wanted to

have our own reunion. So we broke off. Because at that time Third Marine Division Association was mainly World War II, which didn't want much to do with us, and also, for example, if we would meet on a Saturday afternoon they would suddenly have a parade or something to go to that really interfered. They made our guys make a decision. So we really didn't feel welcomed, and we started meeting separately. And since then—about that time, I withdrew from active leadership. I knew that if a group were to succeed it had to develop its own leadership, and quite frankly I was working on the book at that time and was caring for my ailing parents and I was doing church work. There were a lot of things going on. So others stepped forward, and the group is very solid. We have over 3,000 members now, and they still meet annually, and we still put out a first-class magazine that's a good quality magazine. And the book was published. Unfortunately the book was published. It's called a "Marc Jaffe" book. It's published by Houghton Mifflin. Marc Jaffe was a World War II veteran, and from what I heard from John Prados, Houghton Mifflin was trying to get rid of him and they gave him this one book as his project for the year, and didn't do any publicity at all, which John Prados thought was very unusual and very detrimental to it. They only had a printing of 5,000 copies, did no publicity, there were no talk shows, there was no advertisements, there was nothing. It didn't sell obviously well, then. I bought up a whole bunch of them and gave them out for free to quite a few of our Khe Sanh vets. The book became "remaindered," which meant that I could buy more for about $2.00 apiece, which I did, and I remember seeing a whole stack in Barnes & Noble one time. Then it was out of print for a long time. Then it came back as a paperback by Dell, and there were a couple minor revisions of some incidents there. Then about two years ago the Naval Institute Press wanted to reprint the original one, not the one with the revisions, but take the plates—it had to be the same content on each page, and it came out as a quality paperback. So that's the history of that book.

Kurtz: The casualty book?

Stubbe: OK, the casualty book—I had come out with a smaller casualty—well, first I came out with just a listing back in the late 80s, like two pages of a letter that would be folded over into four pages, something like that. It was just a listing of people and their location on the Wall. Then about '90, '91, I came out with a book called *The Final Formation* which was a little bit more detailed about the casualties that I knew about, maybe where they were, what was happening. But it was very abbreviated. It was about 200 pages long. I had just gotten my computer. It was the first thing I did on my computer. and it was really a learning process. I did that and paid for it by myself and it was sold by our Khe Sanh group—given to some and sold. After that I received innumerable comments of people saying you should have added this or added that of whatever else. So I kept all of these in a big box with the idea that eventually I would rewrite it. In the meantime, also, families of those killed would—that I came in contact with—said that they received very little information about their son or their husband or their uncle, that when people called on them, they learned very little. In fact, sometimes maybe they were told false things, or just were not able to understand. So anyway, I decided when I redo this I've got to put in some background information so people will understand the bigger picture as to why a unit was involved, or why an incident occurred, or that kind of thing, and also to cover the whole breadth of the Khe Sanh battlefield from beginning to end, not just the siege, but through the time the Army was there in '71, '72 era. So I embarked on this and put together all my records pertaining to—I made folders for each day of an incident, and started putting everything in these folders and went through all my files, which are extensive—I'm talking of over well over 100,000 pages of files, of official documents, of interviews, of award citations, of whatever—anything that pertained to the day of the casualty of why an incident occurred. In some cases, these folders might be two inches thick; in some cases only one page, but I had something. So I started to organize it, and then I solicited more comments. I said: "I'm going to come out with this, please send me more," and people did. So I got memoirs, and poems, and letters written home from Vietnam, and all sorts of things, and I just started writing, and going on and on and on. By that time I was living alone, and I had no other obligations. So that's what I did. I just devoted day and night for a little over a year, weekends, doing nothing but writing this book. I finally finished it. I found out that I could get it printed by the same people that put out our [Khe Sanh] magazine, for well under what I thought it would cost. I think we finally got the cost per book was like seven dollars. It was over 400 pages long. Which is very interesting to me that we could do that. And there was a lady in London who had made a painting that she called "Khe Sanh." She had a friend who was a correspondent who was there, and she said I could use her painting for the cover, which I did.

So anyway we got that done. It got finished in May, and our Khe Sanh reunion was going to be in early July. I wanted to get it ready for the reunion to save a lot of postage—to get it to them. And so because of that I really didn't proof read it as much as I should; there are quite a few typographical errors, places where the computer—I can't say it was always my fault, but the computer would sometimes do things, like for example, instead of "the" I would have "t9he," or somehow a number would enter a word or instead of "too" I would have "to0." It would just get in there; I don't know how. So there were a few times those got in there and I could have polished it up more, but I just didn't have time. I thought there would be a thousand

copies printed. I paid for that myself; I donated the $7500.00 or whatever it was, but they could only print 850 copies, and then our veteran group had to put in a thousand dollars, too, because of preparing pages for printing. So I got a few hundred copies and sent them off to families of next of kin and people who had made major contributions and also libraries and archives. It was printed on acid free paper, mainly so these people would never be forgotten. Then the remainder went on sale at our reunion as a way of making some money for our organization. I think there's still a few copies left that they still sell. But for the most part it's all gone. And again, I've received maybe a box full of additional things on some people I didn't have much information on. And I plan to come out with a small supplement that will include some more information. But I'm sort of through with that.

The only other project I have is a book that I might come out with that will be the North Vietnamese history of the battlefield, and that's based on some books that a fellow named Robert DeStatte, who was with General Vessey in Hanoi, sent me. I didn't know him from Adam, but he knew I was interested in Khe Sanh and he sent me these books of history that the North Vietnamese had come out with on Khe Sanh. And some of them are even classified Secret by the North Vietnamese. And I had them in my safe. It was like a treasure that I couldn't read; it was very frustrating. And I made several attempts—Vietnamese here in Milwaukee, Vietnamese veterans, through other people I knew. And a lot of people said: "We can do this," and then they never did. Finally a fellow named Sedgwick Tourison, who had been a document translator for Lieutenant General Davidson on the MACV staff—I contacted him one day because he had written a book on agents and it was very interesting, a good book. And I said: "Are you writing any more books?" And he said: No. And he went on; we had a long conversation on Tonkin and all the background on that. He had been privy to a lot of military documentation and I thought: This was so interesting, I could listen to him for hours. And he was doing translating work for Vietnamese here in the states in the D.C. area for legal and hospital for people who couldn't speak English that well, pro bono kind of work. He had worked at the Pentagon. He said to me: "Did DeStatte ever translate any of those books he sent you?" I said: "No; I'm very frustrated. I would like to." He said: "Well, make some Xerox copies of the pages you want. I can do it over the phone. I can translate it as I read it, and you can record it on cassette and I'll transcribe it. So we did that for a little over a year, once a week—three, four hundred pages with tables! It's very detailed and very interesting. None of this is available in English. And I thought, well, how interesting that our Khe Sanh guys would be the first to read it. So that's been done for a little over a year, and all I want to do with it—I plan to do what he did it but with some footnotes where I think they're in error. And I thought I'd do it before the academics get a hold of it to make money or assign it to their own bias or to use it to make academic credentials. I just want to do it for the guys, so they can find the other side of the story. And in some cases if a guy is wounded on a certain day, he can figure out what unit fired at him and where it came from and what the plans were of the North Vietnamese. Of course, in some areas they are definitely way off, but in many cases they're probably way on and they supply some missing information—like when our platoon went out and got decimated, they talk about what that all was and who fired on Captain Pipes—they even have the name of the Vietnamese who fired on him, and all this sort of stuff. It's all there. So Tourison said I should publish commercially through the Naval Institute. Then I'd have to revise and edit; my interest is just to get it out to the guys. I don't know when I'm going to do that, but that's the other thing I plan to do.

And then after that, as Bob Brewster says, I still have some stuff—in fact, I still have all the documents that I microfilmed, the 105,000 pages in 30, 40 boxes which I plan to use for this book. But once I get through with all of that, then you all can have everything. But right now you do have everything. You have the microfilms. If that were lost, it still wouldn't be all lost. After a few other years, you'll have everything if you want.

So that's how the book came out, the organization. And I'm sort of in the background now, and that's fine. I feel really in the background because in the last decade or so the internet has really taken over, and I'm not on the internet, and we do have a Khe Sanh web page. A few years ago they sent me all the pages, three or four hundred pages. There was a lot of interesting stuff and a lot of stuff that was nothing. And since then I haven't received anything, and I'm sure the guys are talking back and—

[*end of tape and all interviews*]

APPENDICES

NATIONALLY BROADCAST TELEVISION PROGRAMS IN WHICH I APPEARED OR WAS INTERVIEWED:

- "Vietnam: A Soldier's Story" aired on The Learning Channel, Sep 6, 1998,
- "War Stories with Oliver North: Khe Sanh," aired on Fox News, Oct 28, 2001,

- "Atmospheres: War and Weather," aired on The Weather Channel, March 3, 2002,
- "R. Lee Ermey's Mail Call: Back to Vietnam," aired 11 November 2005, on The History Channel.
- "Inside the Vietnam War," aired 18 February 2008, on the National Geographic Channel.
- "Wisconsin Vietnam War Stories: Our Veterans Remember," by Wisconsin Public Television. [My part is on Disc 1, Part 2, Chapter 4, 17:30-24:55, with the NSA, DaNang portion at 23:57-24:55].
- "LZ LAMBEAU TRIBUTE May 22, 2010," by Wisconsin Public Television. [My prayer in the stadium before 35,000 is in Chapter 10, 42:00 - 45:55]

MISCELLANEOUS INTERVIEWS

1991

22 Jan: Interview by Paula Pouda of Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

1992

06 Mar: Interview by Steve Paulson, WHAD

1993

23 Feb: Interviewed at home by Mike Bartley (TV channel 6, Milwaukee); broadcast

1998

23 Jan: Interview by Bob Kurson of Chicago Sun Times

2001

24 Aug: 1030-1730: interview at home for Fox News by Ollie North. Two large vans with TV staff and equipment arrived from Chicago, Ms. Ayse Wieting of Fox News from New York City, and Ollie North here, for interview for TV program. (Aired Sunday, 28 Oct 2001, on FOX NEWS "War Stories with Oliver North: Khe Sanh").

07 Nov: Interviewed on Khe Sanh at home, and aired this date on 6 PM news, Channel 58, WDJT.

07 Nov: Two interviews this date: Rob Golub of the Racine County newspaper, The Journal Times (with photographer), and a lady from Channel 12 (WISN), Milwaukee, WI.

09 Nov: Interviewed by Bob Bach of radio WUWM (FM 89.7).

2002

In TV documentary, "A Time for Honor," produced by Calian Films, Effingham, Il. Interviews in Chapter 4 and at end of program, in DVD format.

03 Mar: Interviews appear in TV program, The Weather Channel, program: "Atmospheres: War and Weather."

2005

29 Apr: On WHAD (FM 90.7) 0900-1000, Kathleen Dunn's program (with Joe Campbell) on 30th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War.

20 Jun: Interviewed at home with professional recording equipment for display in new Marine Corps Museum, Quantico.

15 Aug: Received copy of Drez, Ronald J. and Brinkley, Douglas, Voices of Courage, The Battle for Khe Sanh, Vietnam, New York & Boston: Bulfinch Press, 2005. My photos appear on pp. 7, 16, 20, 30, 31, 33, 35, 46, 56, 105, 122, 132, 135, 136, 142, 156, 173; the 2 audio CDs are "courtesy of Ray W. Stubbe [credited on p. 186], I am mentioned on pp. 56 and 180 and pictured on pp. 56 and 132. My interviews are quoted on pp. 97, 98, 99, 100, 107, 108, 143 (3 times), 153, and 167.

11 Nov: Appeared in television program, The History Channel, "R. Lee Ermey's Vietnam, Mail Call," program titled, "Back to Vietnam," at 8PM. Appearances at 0:55:47, 0:56:02, 0:57:58, and 0:59:21.

05 Dec: Interviewed by James Kurtz of Wisconsin Veterans Museum, oral history archives collection. (Plans to do several additional tapes.)

2006

15 Feb: Second interview by Mr. James Kurtz of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, covering the siege. Interview was about 3 hours.

06 Mar: Interviewed by Mr. Martin Hintz of M Magazine concerning Khe Sanh. Am due to be in the May, 2006, issue. Mr. Nathan Harmann came to my house on 09 Mar to take photographs for the issue.

26 Apr: Interviewed (third time) by Mr. James Kurtz of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (covered post-Khe Sanh period).

2007

10 July: Interviewed by Judy Cole for National Geographic and filmed for TV program to be released early next year by two cameramen from Taylor Production Center who transformed my living room into a TV studio with yards of cords, large TV camera, lights, etc. Interview focused on siege battle at Khe Sanh.

2008

18 Feb, National Geographic Society Channel (Channel 69 in Milwaukee) has a 3-hour special on Vietnam which includes photo of me conducting services at Khe Sanh and also a very brief interview (in which I mention the man on the stretcher with the open abdominal area) about an hour into the program.

29 May Interviewed for three and a half hours by MIK DERKS of Wisconsin Public Television, Madison, for a large program to air in 2010, "Wisconsin War Stories." Interview at Holiday Inn, New Berlin. Derks' phone: (608) 924-3473. I brought various photos. (They scanned, on the spot, the personal ones, and I lent them the copy of my collection of Khe Sanh photos).

11 Nov Interviewed in the afternoon by Renira Pachuta of News Graphic (PO Box 47, Cedarburg WI 53012). Renira, home (262) 377-0186, work (262) 387-4864, for article on my talk next week. Asked about what a chaplain did, about Khe Sanh, etc.

2009

12 Jan - Completed watching the Dirks DVD interviews. It's apparent that I was becoming quite weakened emotionally by the interview and got emotional at the end, pausing to hold back tears! The interview had been very draining.

2010

25 May: My interview appeared on Channel 10 tonight, part of "Wisconsin Vietnam Stories"

2012

02 Aug 0811: Called by NEW YORK CALL (Michael WELT, 212-560-9770), and gave an interview concerning Khe Sanh for about an hour. Later wrote him and sent him various documents. He works with KEN BURNS programs. Address: MICHAEL WELT, Florentine Films, 875 6th Ave., STE 1101, NY NY 10001.

A SELECTION OF WRITINGS PERTAINING TO VIETNAM

1967

"A Letter from Viet Nam," Peace Lutheran Church, Byron, Il, *The Peace Pipe* 1:3 (Dec 1, 1967). [Copy of a letter I wrote to Rev. Robert Wurtz].

1969

"Power Based on Flowers Withers in the Heat," MCRD, Parris Island, SC, *The Boot* 28:21 (Friday, Aug. 1, 1969), p. 2.

"Huss That Doesn't Cut," MCRD, Parris Island, *The Boot* 27:43 (Oct 24, 1969), p. 2

"Birthday at Khe Sanh," MCRD, Parris Island, SC, *The Boot* 27:45 (Nov. 7, 1969), p. 3.

"Marine Corps Anniversary," Beaufort, SC, *Sea Islander* 3:9.

1970

"The Time is Double Time," MCRD, Parris Island, SC, *The Boot* 18:2 (Jan. 6, 1970), p. 2.

"Chaplain Column," MCRD, Parris Island, SC., *The Boot* 28:17 (Fri., May 1, 1970). PAGE ?

"Why Am I Here?" MCRD, Parris Island, SC, *The Boot* (Aug. 7, 1970).

1973

"Birthday at Khe Sanh," Third Marine Division, *Oki Marine* 5:19 (Nov., 9, 1973).

1978

"Chaplain's Corner," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il., *Bulletin* 43:35 (Sep. 1, 1978), p. 6

1979

"And You'll Never Swim Alone," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il., *Bulletin* 44:27 (Jul. 6, 1979), p. 12.

Prayer on Flag Day, 14 June 1979 reprinted in Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il., *Bulletin* 44:25 (Jun 22, 1979) p. 10.

1980

"Would You Believe," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il., *Bulletin* 45:33 (Aug. 22, 1980), p. 8.

1983

"Life is Relationship," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il., *Bulletin* 50:6 (Feb. 11, 1983), p. 16.

"Vietnam Vet Help," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il., *Bulletin* 58:40 (Oct., 7, 1983), p. 20.

(No by-line, but I wrote it), "People Under Stress," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il, *Bulletin* 58:41 (Oct. 14, 1983), p. 40.

"Chaplain's Corner," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il., *Bulletin* 58:43 (Oct. 28, 1983), p. 9.

1985

"A Suggested Reading List on Vietnam Veterans and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, in Kelly, William E.,M.D., ed., *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the War Veteran Patient*, New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers, 1985, pp. 293-322. (Brunner/Mazel Psychosocial Stress Series).

1992

"Khe Sanh—Remember Each Man," Lombard, Il.: *Veterans Voice of America* 5:6 (Jan., 1992) p. 9.`

1993

"A Large Battle in a Small Place: Khe Sanh in Vietnam," U.S. Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C.: *Fortitudine* 22:4 (Spring, 1993) pp. 23-26.

Reprint of *Valley of Decision* in paperback edition. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., January, 1993. [Contains several revised pages, notably of the 9 February 1968 battle by A/1/9].

1994

1996

The Final Formation, Those Who Died Because of Khe Sanh, 1995. [210 pages; published 12 March 1996].

Letters (of 18 Jan 1968, 20 Jan 1968, and 21 Jan 1968), printed in Stevens, Michael E., ed., *Voices from Vietnam*, Madison, Wisconsin: Center for Documentary History, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996, pp. 141-145; SSGT John Reid's photograph of me leading worship on 28 Jan 1968 printed on p. 143.]

[Wrote most of and edited]: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Khe Sanh Veteran*, Issue No. 37 (Fall, 1996).

"War is Obviously Immoral,´ Wauwatosa, Wi., *News Times* 98:47 (Nov., 21, 1996) pp. 1, 13.

1997

[Wrote most of and edited]: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Khe Sanh Veteran*, Issues No. 38 (Special, 1997) and No. 39 (May, 1997), special issue on 1967 Hill Battles at Khe Sanh, and No. 40 (Fall, 1997).

Poems, "The Soul Mate" and "Time Warp" published in Whitmarsh, Barb, ed., *Incoming IV*, Aurora, Missouri, [1997], pp. 71 and 88.

1998

[Wrote most of and edited]: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 41 (Spring, 1998).

"Why Vietnam Poetry," in K. L. Bye, *Tarnished Glory*, Circle Pines, Mn.: Turtle Run Publishing, 1998, p. 7.

1999

[Wrote most of and edited]: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 44 (Summer, 1999).

"Ray Stubbe," in Ron Steinman, *The Soldiers' Story, Vietnam in Their Own Words*, New York: TV Books, 1999, pp. 93-98. [Biog. on p. 365].

2001

Letter (of Jan. 21, 1968) in Carroll, Andrew, ed., *War Letters, Extraordinary Correspondence from American Wars*, New York: Washington Square Press, 2001, pp. 406-408. [Mr. Carroll had received over 10,000 letters and selected 200 for this book. In a hand-written note in a book Mr. Carroll sent me: "To Chaplain Ray Stubbe—You are a real hero in my book (literally), and it is an honor to have you included. Thank you very much."]

[Excerpts from Carroll's book, *War Letters*], Milwaukee Wisconsin, Journal Sentinel Aug. 26, 2001, p. 2E.

2002

Letter to the Editor, *VFW magazine* 89:5 (Jan., 2002) p. 6. [Notes erroneous official count of 205 KIA at Khe Sanh].

"Chaplain's Corner," The Retired Officers Association, Greater Milwaukee Chapter, Substitute Newsletter, [distributed May, 2002].

Khe Sanh and the Mongol Prince, a monograph, published Jul 16, 2002. [Submitted to *Journal of Military History* but rejected for publication].

"No Safe Place at Khe Sanh," Vietnam Veterans of America, *Veteran* 23:2 (Mar/Apr 2003), p. 14. [A commentary on a photo by Robert Ellison, part of a series by Catherine Leroy].

"Mom's White Hair," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 57 (WSinter, 2003/04), p. 55. [A poem].

"Ray's Corner," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 56 (Fall, 2003), pp. 6-8. [Copy of letter written to Mr. John Pessoni, and photograph in room with plaques].

2004

"Mom's White Hair" in Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 57 (Winter 2003/04) p. 55. [A poem].

"Memories of Past Reunions," [Comments at Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, 1990, Nashville, Tn.], Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue #58 (Spring, 2004), pp. 45-46.

Photographs in Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue #58 (Spring, 2004), P. 39 (of ontos), p. 23 (conducting worship on bunker being built at Lang Vei), pp. 28-29 (colored photos of scenes of Hill 861.

[Numerous quotations in]: Floyd, LtCol W.C., *Green Ghosts*, New York, iUniverse, Inc., 2004. [Floyd's hand-written note inside the book: "To Chaplain Ray Stubbe. Ray, I thank you for allowing me to use so much of your research and writing. As you browse through the contents of "Green Ghosts" you will wonder why you are not listed as co-author, but without your thoughts and insight I would not have been able to do justice to the chronicle of these men in combat. Thanks for your service to our country and your love of the Marines whose life you touched. You are a true American hero and more importantly a "real man of God." Semper fi, Bill Floyd."]. [Excerpts from my Aarugha are on pp. 7-9, 10-11, 12, 13-14, 22-23, 38-39, 50-51, 80, 87-88].

Photographs in Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue #59 (Fall, 2004), pp. 32-33 (scenes of Hills 881 South, 950, 471, and CAC OSCAR).

Photograph of Hill 950 scene, in LtCol James B. Wilkinson, " 'All is Calm, All is Bright' For the Last Time at Khe Sanh," Marine Corps Association, *Leatherneck* 87:12 (Dec., 2004) pp. 18-19.

2005

"Khe Sanh," in Catherine Leroy, *Under Fire, Great Photographers and Writers in Vietnam*, New York: Random House, 2005, p. 67.

"Khe Sanh's trenches mirror the war's gash into my soul. Struck within its networks, then and now, images of men I came to know as their chaplain during the six months prior to the siege continue to explode within me.

"At Khe Sanh, we dug deeper and deeper. Deadly incoming–up to 1,600 rounds a day–instantly leveled all aboveground structures and sculpted moonscape devastation. Two craters outside the Battalion Aid Station were so deep, I could stand in them and my head would be below the surrounding surface. We all know" there is no safe place in Khe Sanh.

"Since groups larger than six were prohibited (one round might kill everyone), worship services were small in size and frequent in number: a short prayer, a two-sentence sermon, a reading from the Bible, Communion, and a blessing: all within ten minutes–were repeated from trench to trench a dozen times daily. Sometimes, since the incoming was so intense, all I could do to communicate God's love was to hug. Once, I was alone and my prayers reduced to babblings as I bounced from the shock of explosions of nearby land mines. I held the hand of one painfully wounded man who asked me to say the Ninety-first Psalm, and prayed with another who shared his joy over a wrestling scholarship and his imminent departure. A few days later, he was killed. I stayed overnight with a 106mm recoilless rifle squad. We shared coffee and conversation. The next day, I pulled out and carried a headless Marine from the rubble after that position took a direct hit.

"Khe Sanh was alive with death. Another chaplain, Father Brett, was killed when one of the Khe Sanh trenches took a direct hit. At Graves Registration, I prayed over the corpse of a man I had just baptized a few days earlier.

""My bunker was crowded with wounded waiting through the night to be evacuated. I slept atop a field desk. Nearby, a Marine I knew well, Rick, dabbed his head with a roll of toilet paper. The floor below was filled with his bloody, crumpled papers. I was startled to see him the next day digging deeper trenches in the recon area. "That wasn't my blood," he explained, "It was the blood from others in the trench that were killed."

Letter (written Feb. 5, 1968, at Khe Sanh, Vietnam, printed in) Andrew Carroll, Behind the Lines, New York: Scribner, 2005, pp. 192-194.

Various of my photographs taken at Khe Sanh (in black and white version) appeared in Ronald J. Drez and Douglas Brinkley, Voices of Courage: The Battle for Khe Sanh, Vietnam, New York: Bulfinch Press, 2005: p. 7 (welcome to Khe Sanh), p. 16 (scene while on patrol, in river), p. 20 (hill facing 861), p. 30 (Fr. McElroy on Hill 950), p. 31 (Hill 950), p. 33 (conducting worship on hill 950), p. 35 (recon team on airstrip), p. 46 (C/1/26 bridge site), p. 56 (personal in parachute gear while on Okinawa), p. 105 (CAC O HQ), p. 122 (CH-53 in air), p. 132 (conducting worship on TOC being built at Lang Vei), p. 135 (aerial

of old Lang Vei), p. 136 (Capt Willoughby at Lang Vei), p. 142 (CH-54 sky crane over Khe Sanh carrying vehicle), p. 156 (recon team on airstrip), p. 175 (aerial of Hill 861 and surrounding hills). Photo credits are listed on p. 186.

Battalion of Kings, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, 2005. (469 pages, 4023 footnotes, chronicles casualties on the battlefield of Khe Sanh, Vietnam, printed May, 2005].

Ray's Corner: Presentation to Wisconsin State Veterans Museum on Donation of Khe Sanh Materials, 10 November 2005," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., Red Clay, Issue No. 63 (Winter, 2005), pp. 55-61.

[Various poems published in] Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., The Khe Sanh Veterans Book of Poetry, 2005. [Poems I wrote are: "Incoming on the Battlefield," pp. 141-144, "Determination," p. 144, "Mom's White Hair," pp. 145-146, "Three Movements," pp. 146-147, "Persistence," pp. 147-148, "The Gallery," pp. 148-149, "Veterans Day," pp. 149-151, "Time Warp," p. 151, "The Soul Mate," pp., 151-152.]

2006

Stubbe, Ray William, ed., *B5-T8 in 48 QXD, the Secret Official History of the North Vietnamese Army of the Siege at Khe Sanh, Vietnam, Spring, 1968.*, translations by Sedgwick D. Tourison, Jr., Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, 2006. [Completed May 10, 2006].

"Khe Sanh: A Comprehensive Chronology," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 64 (Spring, 2006), cover and pp. 32-54. [This is an abridged version of a document privately published].

Stubbe, Ray W., Letter to the Editor, Veterans of Foreign Wars, *VFW* 94:4 (Dec., 2006), p. 6. [Concerning Khe Sanh KIA].

2007

Book review of A Long Healing Come Slowly. Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, No. 68 (Spring, 2007), pp. 56-57.

Letters written in Vietnam printed in: Carroll, Andrew, ed., *Grace Under Fire, Letters of Faith in Times of War*, New York: Doubleday, 2007, pp. 93-101, and Colorado Springs, Co.: WaterBrook Press, 2007, pp. 95-103. [Letters of Aug 16, 1967, to Rev. Charles E. Witt; Nov. 25, 1967, to Ellen and Jim Kuehl; Jan. 20, 1968, to parents; and Jan. 21, 1968, to parents]. [Book promulgated in March, 2007].

[Quoted in:] Andrew Carroll, "Why They Pray," *The Wall Street Journal* 249:56 (Mar. 9, 2007), p. W11. [Quote from letter of Nov. 25, 1967, to Ellen and Jim Kuehl: "You would be amazed at the faith expressed here. There are evidences of genuine and deep prayer life, of reading and knowing the Bible backwards and forwards, of sacrificial concern for others." Carroll seized the term "sacrificial concern for others."]

[Comments on back cover of:] Robert J. Topmiller, *Red Clay* on My Boots, Minneapolis, Mn.: Kirk House Publishers, 2007.

2008

"Climbing Hill 881S From the Southern Slope," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 70 (Spring, 2008), pp. 77-78.

[Quoted in:] Laura Ingraham, *Power to the People*, Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing Inc., 2007, p. 312. [Quotation from *Wall Street Journal* article by Andrew Carroll, "Why We Pray," March 9, 2007. Ingraham also focused on the phrase "sacrificial concern for others."

Completed second edition of *Battalion of Kings* on Oct. 3, 2008, distributed in November, 2008].

"Near Death Experiences," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 71 (Fall – Winter, 2008), pp. 22-25.

"The Picture," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 71 (Fall – Winter, 2008), pp. 37-47 and back page. [Pictures of the worship service of 28 Jan 1968 by SSGT John Reid and Richard Swanson, and their various renditions, with descriptions].

"The Fight," ," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 71 (Fall – Winter, 2008), pp. 87 – 88. [Account of fight at Italian Community Center, 28 Mar 2008].

2009

2010

Note in Elliott, Donna E., *Keeping the Promise*, Ashland, OR: Hellgate Press, 2010, p. iv: "We can never forget our past–we are unable to do so...The well-wishers, those who tell us to, just don't understand. How could they?"

Several excerpts from interview and several photographs in Larsen, Sarah A., and Miller, Jennifer M.: Our Veterans Remember, Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2010, pp. 104-118, 301. (Photographs: ordination photo, holding worship on Hill 861 in July, 1967, conducting worship on Khe Sanh base during the siege on 28 Jan 1968, and in parachute gear on Okinawa, 1973.

Prayer delivered at Vietnam gathering at Lambeau Field, Green Bay, Wisconsin, printed in Sunday worship bulletin, St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, May 30, 2010, p. 1. Editorial note preceding the prayer: "Last weekend, Pastor Ray Stubbe, a member was involved with the Lambeau Field Vietnam Veteran Gathering. As a retired Chaplain serving in the Vietnam War, Pastor Stubbe was asked to participate in the Saturday time of prayer and also to officiate and deliver the sermon for the Sunday Morning gathering. As a part of our Memorial Day Weekend observance, we print here the prayer written and delivered by Chaplain Stubbe."

2011'

Various writings in Larkin Spivey: *Stories of Faith and Courage from the Vietnam War*, Chattanooga, TN: God and Country Press (AMG Publishers), 2011, pp. 148, 151, 155 (picture), 160, 161 (and picture), 173, and 374.

Foreword and various quotes and references (pp. 4, 72, 127, 138, 148-149, and 246) in Johnson, Steven A., *Cammie Up! Memoir of a Recon Marine in Vietnam, 1967-1968*, Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Co., Publishers, 2012. [Distributed in mid-November, 2011].

2012

Foreword in John Douglas Foster: *Heroes from the Wall*, Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris Corp, 2012, pp. 5-6.

2013

"The 106 mm bunker: Khe Sanh Memories of Chaplain Ray Stubbe," in John Prados, "The Siege of Khe Sanh," *The American Legion* 175:3 (September, 2013) pp. 20-28. My writing is on p. 26 with the Swanson picture.
Also printed in Military Chaplains Association, United States of America: The Military Chaplain 86:4 (Winter, 2013), p. 14.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES RELATING TO VIETNAM

1983:

21 May	Talk, Lutheran Church Women, Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Milwaukee, WI
08 Nov	Funeral meditation, LCPL David B. Gander, Tyborski Funeral Home, Milwaukee, WI
11 Nov	Prayer, Veterans Day ceremonies, Chicago, IL

1985:

25 Apr:	Presentation at annual Chaplains District Workshop on PTSD, at VAMC,North Chicago, IL
28 Sep	Prayer: wreath laying and dinner, Wisconsin Viet Vets, Chapter 1

1986

26 Jan	Invocation & Benediction prayers at War Memorial program
11 Feb:	Gave presentation at VAMC, Milwaukee, on PTSD to staff: "Unhealing Wounds of the Soul"
13 Jun	Chicago Vietnam Parade; gave impromptu address due to sudden cancellation of main speaker, at banquet
11 Oct	Invocation/Benediction prayer WWV 1 Dinner Dance

1987

29 Jun	Prayers at Travelling Wall
13 Sep	Prayer at POW/MIA Day ceremony, War Memorial Bldg., Milwaukee
12 Oct	At Wilmington, DE, 11-12 Oct for Vietnam Veterans Memorial Institute meeting (gave presentation 12 Oct as part of panel including Gen Westmoreland: "A Montage of Ministry: A Clergy's Involvement in Combat
09 Oct	Prayer at dedication of USS WAUKESHA plaque memorial
17 Oct	Prayer at 3rd annual Dinner Dance, Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans, Chapter 1

1988

26 Apr	Memorial Service : Bill Stross at Chapel, VA Medical Center, North Chicago, Il (b. 24Jul48, d. 17Apr88).
13 May	Vietnam presentation to 8th grade, St. Matthias School, Milwaukee, WI
28 Aug	Prayer at dedication of Vietnam Memorial, MILWAUKEE WI
12 Sep	"Trapper" John Glynn shoots himself right after calling me—I was not at home, but call recorded (I give funeral remarks on 14 Sep at VA Cemetery, Milwaukee)
16 Sep	Prayer at MIA ceremony
08 Oct	Prayer at 4th annual Dinner Dance, Wisconsin Vietnam Vets, Chapter 1
07 Dec	Gave presentation to students at Marquette University on Vietnam

1989

18 Jun	Prayer, Wisconsin Memorial Park for Korean War Plaque dedication
14 Jul	Prayer, K/4/12 reunion dinner
10 Aug	Prayer: Wisconsin Viet Vets Chapter 1 POW cage, War Memorial Bldg.

07 Sep	Prayer for U.S. Army Pigeon Signal Corps at War Memorial
15 Sep	Prayer: last day of POW cage, War Memorial Bldg.
14 Oct	Prayer: Wisconsin Viet Vets Chapter 1 5th annual Dinner Dance
11 Nov	Prayer: Marine Corps Birthday ceremony at banquet, for Marine Corps Recruiting Station, Milwaukee, and reserve unit, F/2/24.

1990

20 Mar	Vietnam talk at Pulaski High- School
28 May	Prayer: Memorial Day ceremony, Wisconsin Memorial Park
14 Sep	Prayer & remarks: POW/MIA Day ceremony
10 Nov	Gave Table Grace at Marine Corps Birthday celebration, Grand Hotel, Milwaukee, for Recruiting Station, Milwaukee and the reserve unit, F/2/24

1991

27 May	Memorial Day Address
12 Oct	Prayers: Wisconsin Viet Vet Chapter 1, 7th annual Dinner Dance
20 Oct	Invocation and Benediction prayers at Dedication of Vietnam Memorial, Veterans Park, Milwaukee WI
09 Nov	Marine Corps Birthday ceremony Prayer
11 Nov	Invocation/Benediction prayer: War Memorial Board breakfast

1992

25 May	Memorial Day prayer/poem, at Pinelawn Memorial Park
10 Oct	Prayer for 8th annual WWV I dinner dance
10 Nov	Prayer: Marine Corps Birthday, Dietze's Wusthaus
14 Nov	Prayer for Marine Corps Birthday at Milwaukee Grand Hotel, for Recruiting Station, Milwaukee, NROTC unit, Marquette Univ., F/2/24, I&I staff, Milwaukee, and Badger Det, Marine Corps League.

1993

31 May	Prayers for Memorial Day (ceremonies at Pinelawn Cemetery, Wisconsin Memorial Park Cemetery, Veterans Park, Milwaukee)
16 Sep	Prayer: POW/MIA National Recognition Day, War Memorial Bldg.

1994

30 May	Memorial Day prayer/poem for ceremonies at Pinelawn Cemetery and Veterans Park, Milwaukee
16 Sep	Prayers for POW/MIA day ceremony

1995

29 May	Prayer at Wisconsin Memorial Park
14 Jun	Prayer at POW/MIA stamp program, Wis. War Memorial Bldg.
26 Aug	Prayer: Moving Wall at Pinelawn Cemetery
02 Sep	Prayer at Waukesha WW II observance

1998

10 Nov	Talk at MarCor Birthday at Dietzes Wusthaus

1999

30 May	Gave talk, Wisconsin Memorial Park, subject: Chaplains (for Marine Corps League)

2001

04-08 Jul	Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, Radisson Hotel O'Hare, Rosemont, IL, attended by some 400, in honor of me as Founder of Khe Sanh Vets, Inc. All name tags so indicated. Gave Address on Sat, 07 Jul, at banquet. Led worship service on Sun, 8 Jul; wrote stanza to Navy Hymn for the event
20 Oct	Gave Invocation prayer and Remarks at 10th Anniversary ceremony of the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Veterans Park, Milwaukee, WI, 7PM, candlelight ceremony, lakefront.
10 Nov	Gave Invocation prayer for 226th Marine Corps Birthday dinner, Brookfield, WI, attended by over 600.

2002

07 Mar	Gave presentation to chaplains of Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il, upon invitation by Capt George Cooper, senior chaplain.

09 Apr Gave prayer at National POW Day ceremony, Milwaukee VA hospital.
11 Nov Gave invocation and benediction prayers at gathering of about 500 at annual Veterans Day Awards Banquet, War Memorial Building, Milwaukee, WI.

2003
15-16 May Led prayers at occasion of the Visiting Wall, Veterans Park, Milwaukee, WI. [in form of poems]

2004
29 Apr Gave presentation to students of Shorewood High School in Vietnam experiences

2005
30 Apr Gave prayers of invocation and Benediction at Veterans Park, Milwaukee, WI, 1200-1430.
10 Nov Gave lecture at Wisconsin State Veterans Museum, Madison, WI, at noon, on Khe Sanh, Vietnam.

2006
17 Sept Gave presentation to about 25 at St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church (adult forum),"Faith on the Frontlines." Talked about Khe Sanh siege and discerning God's presence during it.
30 Sep Gave opening prayer and an informal address at ceremony for the Moving Vietnam Wall, Civic Center, Brookfield, WI, 3PM.

2007
11 Feb Gave presentation on Khe Sanh and donation to Veterans Museum, Madison, to Milwaukee Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) at Klemmers Banquet Center, Milwaukee, WI.
18 Apr Gave presentation on Vietnam (with Joe Campbell) to an Army ROTC class at Marquette University attended by 10 students and instructor MSgt Schmitt.
09 May Participated in author presentation at Harry W. Schwartz Book Stores, Mequon, Wi, with author Andrew Carroll reading from his book, Grace Under Fire. Made comments on Khe Sanh battle. About a dozen attended.
28 May Gave major address at ceremony at Wisconsin Memorial Park hosted by District V of Veterans of Foreign Wars. About 100 present.
28 May Gave invocation and Benediction prayers at lakefront ceremony at conclusion of parade, hosted by Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans, Chapter 1. Several hundred present. 25,000 balloons launched!
12 June Gave presentation to three Fifth Grade classes of McKinley Elementary School, Wauwatosa, WI, (about 60 children), on Khe Sanh.

2008
07 Aug: Gave invocation and Benediction prayers at ceremony in the Rotunda of our Wisconsin State Capitol, Madison, observing the 225th anniversary of the Purple Heart Medal, introduced 07 Aug 1782.
11 Nov Gave presentation to adult forum at Reformation Lutheran Church, Brookfield, WI, on being a Chaplain in war, attended by approx. 25. Good question and answer follow-up.

2009:
07 Feb Presentation to "Rise with the Guys," St. Matthew's. About 30 present. Christian framework for wartime experiences
17 Jul Presentation to Wisconsin Conservatory of Life-Long Learning (with Joe Campbell).12 teachers present.
11 Aug As part of panel, Chazin Museum on campus of University of Wisconsin, Madison. Several hundred present.
18 Nov Presentation to combined classes at UW-Waukesha (with Joe Campbell)
01 Dec Presentation to USAF, 8th Air Force Historians (about 60 WW II veterans).

2010
16 Feb: Attended event at Harley Davidson Museum promoting the LZ LAMBEAU event.
06 May On Panel at Discovery World concerning video of Vietnam interviews ,of LZ LAMBEAU, 21- May
28 May TV interview appeared on Channel 10, 25 May. of LAMBEAU ceremony 28 May
31 May Gave Invocation prayer at dedication of memorial, Whitefish Bay
14 Jun Peck Pavilion, Milwaukee: Gave invocation prayer for Flag Day ceremony.
18 Aug Group at Green Bay of those who led at LZ LAMBEAU
28 Aug Gave prayer at dedication of DRY HOOTCH
10 Sep Gave prayer of invocation at meeting of Wisconsin State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America, Brookfield, WI, and gave prayer at their meeting, 11 Sep

14 Sep Gave prayer and presentation for Star Spangled Banner Day at Roosevelt Elementary School, Wauwatosa, for 5th graders
11 Nov Gave prayer of invocation at dedication of memorial, Franklin
19 Nov Gave presentation to 100+ chaplains at Naval Training Center, Great Lakes

2011:

15 Mar Gave presentation to Wauwatosa Retired Men's Club on my combat experiences in Vietnam
25 May Gave presentation to about 100 psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers at Matusek Auditorium, VA, Milwaukee, on my combat experiences as a chaplain in Vietnam and PTSD.
30 May Gave presentation at Longfellow Middle School assembly (several hundred present) on Khe Sanh (Photo in Wauwatosa *NOW* newspaper, 02 Jun)
14 Jun Gave invocation at Flag Day event, Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, Milwaukee, WI
27 Jun Presentation to group of Iraq/Afghanistan vets at Domiciliary 43, VA, Milwaukee
23 Jul Gave Invocation at Dedication ceremonies, Veterans Quest, 117th and Greenfield
05 Aug Gave presentation to group of teachers, Brookfield, WI
05 Aug Gave prayer at national meeting of Parents of Murdered Children, Radisson Hotel, Milwaukee (over 200 present)
28 Aug Presentation to group of Iraq/Afghanistan vets at Domiciliary 43, VA, Milwaukee
22 Oct Gave Invocation and Benediction prayers at 20th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Vietnam Memorial, Veterans Park, Milwaukee, WI (about 100 present)
09 No v Gave presentation to Shorewood Senior Center on combat experiences as a chaplain
11 Nov Gave Invocation and talk at Veterans Day ceremony, Miller Coors Brewing Co., Milwaukee WI

2012

06 FEB Presentation to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, Bldg. 43, VA, Milwaukee
14 JUN Prayer at Milwaukee Flag Day event, Performing Arts Center, Milwaukee
20 JUL Presentation to teachers, Elmbrook Church.
02 AUG 1-hour telephone interview with MICHAEL WELT, New York (212-560-9770)
17 AUG Prayer at veterans event, traveling Vietnam Wall, Sunnyview Expo Center, Oshkosh
27 SEP Presentation to "Youngtimers," Boy Scouts of America, Milwaukee Headquarters
11 NOV Prayer at gathering on grounds of Froedert Hospital for recently discovered Civil War veteran (Hermann Borghart) buried there
11 NOV Prayer, annual Veterans Day Banquet, War Memorial Bldg, Milwaukee
12 NOV Prayer for a gathering (about 300) at annual Veterans Day event, Miller Coors

2013

14 Jun: Gave prayer at Flag Day event, Peck Pavillion, PAC, Milwaukee
29 Jun John Prados asks me to write article for American Legion magazine
19 Jul Presentation to teachers on Khe Sanh at MATC, Oak Creek with Joe Campbell
11 Nov Veterans Day. 1100: At Miller Coors to give Invocation and Table Grace, 1530: Gave main address for event at Lutheran Home (mainly WW II vets), 1800: Gave Table Grace for Veterans Day Banquet at War Memorial, Milwaukee.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS AND QUOTATIONS INCLUDED IN BOOKS AND NEWS ARTICLES [A SELECTION]

1966

"Pastor in Naval Reserve Commissioned Lieutenant," Community Newspapers, Inc., Oak Creek *Pictorial*, No. 521 (10 March 1966), p. 16.

[Photograph of swearing in, and the following:

"An Oak Creek pastor, the Rev. Ray W. Stubbe, recently was commissioned a Lieutenant, j.g., in the chaplain corps of the U.S. naval reserve.

"He is the pastor of All Saints Lutheran church. He drills on Tuesday evenings with the group command at the naval and marine corps reserve training center.

"The navy is not new to the Rev. Mr. Stubbe, who has accumulated a total of nine years of service. He enlisted as a seaman recruit just after entering his senior year at a Milwaukee high school.

"Following graduation, he spent two years active service aboard the Destroyer NOA 9DD841) which took him to Greece, Lebanon, Italy, Cuba, and the Virgin islands.

" 'I knew before I enlisted in the navy reserve that I would be entering the seminary but I didn't want to be different from other men or privileged; I think all seminary students and clergymen should be liable to the draft,' commented Pastor Stubbe.

"He continued his active naval reserve participation while attending At. Olaf college, Northfield, Minn. He spent a summer with naval intelligence and was commissioned an ensign after entering the seminary.

"Pastor Stubbe intends to serve his 18 years active duty in the navy after earning his Ph.D. degree. He will then teach philosophy and theology sometime in the future.

"He is presently engaged in organizing a congregation that meets in the community room of the Oak Creek Marine National bank. It is under the auspices of the board of American missions of the Lutheran Church of America."]

1967

"God Alive for Marines," Milwaukee, WI: *Sentinel*, Nov. 25, 1967, Part 3, p. 7.

"God is far from dead in the 1st battalion, 26th marines, according to the chaplain, Lt. Ray William Stubbe.

"Chaplain Stubbe sends regular reports on his activities in letters to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Stubbe, 2422 N. 60th St.

"Lutherans in Oak Creek remember the chaplain as Pastor Ray Stubbe, who organized All Saints Lutheran church. In July he left for chaplaincy duty. Although a navy chaplain, he is serving with a marine unit.

"He grew up in Redeemer Lutheran church and frequently comments on its bulletin, which he receives.

"Chaplain Stubbe said the men 'are deeply religious, on the whole, not because they're scared but, I feel, genuinely so.

" 'Many read their Bibles daily. Many wear, or want to wear crosses (openly, since many don't wear shirts). Some have the cross on their battle helmets.

" 'Many come up to me with religious questions—many others with deep problems.'

" 'Today is Sunday. We had a larger attendance than usual at our morning worship, despite the rain and the mud. The pulpit was made by the men in one of the units here who presented it to me one evening out of appreciation for visiting them and taking a personal interest in them. They said I was the first chaplain to take the time to do that.'

"In another letter he explained that many chapel services employ stacked boxes for the pulpit.

"One letter expressed concern about the situation in Milwaukee during the riots. It contained a newspaper clipping showing a picture of Father James E. Groppi and commandos of the youth council of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"The story predicted that the open housing marches would continue.

"After reading about the riots he asked if the house of former Mayor Frank Zeidler was all right.

"If the old custom of inviting the minister to dinner has died in the United States, it is alive in Vietnam. Chaplain Stubbe wrote of a ceremonial dinner in a Vietnamese home in which he was a guest.

" 'The homes are built of stilts, to protect from the rains and have thatched roofs,' he wrote. 'They are very small inside.

" 'The occasion was a worship ceremony and sacrificial meal. He (the host) threw little pieces of bamboo and talked with his ancestors... He rotated a platter of rice six times one way and eight times the other way.

" 'He said the six times stood for six bad dreams he had that the gods would take away from him, and the eight times stood for eight good dreams the gods would fulfill for him.

" 'The meal consisted of rice prepared several different ways, and the sacrificial pig. The latter, fortunately, was cooked. But—over all the pieces of meat was poured fresh blood. You're expected to eat everything placed in front of you or you deeply insult the natives.

" 'Fortunately, the two marines were with me and they ate the bloodied pig!'

"The sacrificial pig, he wrote, cost the host $15, and he earns about $30 per month.

" 'What a tithe offering—50%!'

"At the end of the ceremony the man said, 'Gods don't help. Doctor's medicine does.'

"If Pastor Stubbe ever was a 'desk clergyman,' Chaplain Stubbe is not now a stationary officer. His letters tell of going on patrols with units, and of numerous trips by helicopter, and on foot.

"One letter, however, added news of a different experience:

" 'You'll never guess what you son's doing now! Going on patrols was not enough; eating local dishes was not enough. Now he's going through exercises with the reconnaissance units here.

" 'There are small groups of men who blacken and camouflage their faces and go out for a walk, living and sleeping in the jungle.

" 'Well, today I got all wet, going through river crossing drills. Tomorrow I will be 'repelling' from a helicopter. This is going down a rope, like going down a cliff on a mountain, by jumping off the cliff, having a rope about your torso through which another rope runs. Only, in this case, there is no cliff.

" 'The chopper goes up 100 feet or so, and we fall down on the rope, catching ourselves periodically to brake the rate of descent.

" 'When this happens, you bounce up and down 10 feet or so. You're in a lying down position on the descent. Sounds like a lot of fun, doesn't it?'

"Between church services, patrols, reconnaissance workouts, counseling marines, etc., Chaplain Stubbe finds time to read.

"He repeatedly asks for his books from his theological library—'The Fourth Gospel' 'Consummatum Est,' 'History and Tradition in the Fourth Gospel,' his Greek New Testament, and books of Scripture explanation.

"But he also requested several comic strips and newspaper clippings—specifically from The Milwaukee Sentinel's religion news section."

(Photo and article), Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Milwaukee, WI., *Tidings* 39:4 (Dec 30, 1967).

Photo of conducting worship on Hill 950 at Khe Sanh and a short article:

"The above picture was sent to us by Chaplain Ray Stubbe, who is serving with the Third Marines in Viet Nam. It pictures the conducting of a worship service on top of Hill 950, overlooking the Khe Sanh mountains in the background. The pews and altar are made of C-ration boxes.

"Chaplain Stubbe reports a sincere desire on the part of the men when he serves for the spiritual ministry which he has to offer.

"Perhaps those who serve in such uncertain circumstances are even more appreciative of the Word, which represents the one thing of permanence that they know. Although the war in Viet Nam is an unpopular war with the American people, and generally speaking not a well understood war, these men deserve our support in any way that we can give it. They also deserve our best efforts in helping to achieve a world of peace and security. Let us support them daily in our prayers."

1968

"Viet Chaplain Finds Atheists in Foxholes," Chicago *Tribune*, Feb 14, 1968.

'Saying Not True'

" 'KHE SANH, Vietnam. Feb 13 (AP)—The proportion of atheists in foxholes is the same as that found on any peaceful street in the United States, a chaplain ministering to the much shelled marines at this encircled combat base finds.

" 'I know the old saying that there are no atheists in foxholes,' said Chaplain Ray Stubbe of Milwaukee. 'Maybe that was true once, but it isn't now. Perhaps the world has changed, I don't know.'

"The 5,000 marines defending Khe Sanh already have suffered more than 10 per cent casualties, and the leathernecks know the battle is just beginning.

" 'The shelling isn't bringing in any more men,' the 29-year-old Lutheran said. 'I am getting the normal calls from men with family problems and I talked with one conscientious objector. Their religious attitude hasn't changed much, but those who already were moderately religious tend to be more so. When the incoming artillery begins exploding they say they pray and pray hard.'

"Making religious sense out of the shellfire and North Vietnamese siege is difficult for many marines. Blind luck often seems to determine who lives and dies.

"The Rev. Stubbe, who daily walks thru the Marine lines to give services at bunkers, quotes St. Matthew's account of the great storm that threatened Christ and his disciples.

"Jesus calmed the storm and asked his fearful disciples: 'Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?'

"The chaplain tells the men: 'In this situation we feel things are in turmoil, but we know we can pray to a God who is strong and who can control things.'

"The Rev. Stubbe requested duty in Viet Nam and tries to live as close to his men as possible. He was nearly killed twice in one day by rockets as he walked thru the base to hold services.

"But he finds his work highly satisfying.

" 'I am a chaplain with them all week, in their moments of pain and their moments of joy,' he said."

"Red Shells Don't Dent Atheists at Khe Sanh, Chaplain Finds," Milwaukee *Journal*, Feb. 17, 1968, p. 5.

"A Milwaukee chaplain estimates that the proportion of atheists in foxholes is the same as that found on any peaceful street in the United States.

" 'I know the old saying that there are no atheists in foxholes,' said Chaplain Ray Stubbe, who organized All Saints Lutheran church in Oak Creek in 1966. 'Maybe that was true once, but it isn't now. Perhaps the world has changed. I don't know.'

"The 5,000 marines defending Khe Sanh already have suffered heavy casualties, and the marines say the battle is just beginning. The base has been hit by up to 1,5000 North Vietnamese shells in one night.

" 'The shelling isn't bringing in any more men. I am getting the normal calls from men with family problems, and I talked with one conscientious objector. Their religious attitude hasn't changed much,' the 29 year old Lutheran chaplain said.

" 'But those who already were moderately religious tend to be more so. When the incoming artillery begins exploding, they say they pray and pray hard.'

"Making religious sense out of the shell fire and North Vietnamese siege is difficult for many marines. Blind luck often seems to determine who lives and dies.

"Chaplain Stubbe, who daily walks through the marine lines to give bunker services, quotes St. Matthew's description of the great storm that threatened Christ and His disciples.

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"Chaplain Stubbe tells his men: 'In this situation we feel things are in turmoil, but we know we can pray to a God who is strong and who can control things.'

"The chaplain requested Vietnam duty and tries to live as close to his men as possible. He was nearly killed twice in one day by rockets as he walked through the base to hold services.

"But he said his work in Vietnam was highly satisfying.

" 'I am a chaplain with them all week, in their moments of pain and their moments of joy. This is not a one day a week job out here.

" 'And here there is no congregation or denominational competition. I am able to be interested in a person as a person. It is a more total ministry.'

"Chaplain Stubbe has been in Khe Sanh for seven months and is his battalion's only Protestant chaplain.

"His parents are Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Stubbe, 2422 N. 60th St."

(Photograph by SSGT John A. Reid of worship at Khe Sanh Combat Base during siege battle, 28 Jan 1968), III MAF, *Sea Tiger* 4:7 (Feb 16, 1968), p. 10.

Sider, Don, "Khe Sanh: Ready to Fight," *Time*, 91:6 (Feb. 16, 1968), p. 38.

[*Contains the paragraph*]:

"The dash for cover is part of every man's routine. 'It's a modus vivendi,*' says Protestant Chaplain Ray Stubbe, 29. 'The men run for shelter, but they don't cringe when they get there.' Except for an occasional case of what the corpsmen call 'acute environmental reaction' (shell shock), the Marines at Khe Sanh are taking their ordeal with considerable composure..."*

USMC Official picture A193256 (Conducting worship on Hill 861), Controls Corporation of America, *Contact* 12:2 (Mar/Apr, 1968)

1969

GySgt Tom Bartlett, "He Thought of God Often," III MAF, DaNang, *Sea Tiger* 5:1 (Jan 2, 1969), p. 2.

[*Includes paragraph: "At Khe Sanh, Chaplain Ray Stubbe tended the spiritual needs of the Leathernecks. He, like the Marines, endured artillery and rocket attacks which pounded the base."*]

"Chaplains Travel I Corps," U.S. Naval Support Activity, DaNang, *The White Elephant News*, 3:1 (Jan 10, 1969), p. 3.

[*Article and 2 photographs of worship services on Marble Mountain, DaNang, Vietnam, by PH1 Rus Elder*].

"Climbing 350-feet straight up the side of Marble Mountain, making an altar of sand bags or riding boats on the rivers near the DMZ, Naval Support Activity (NSA), DaNang chaplains have become 'circuit riding' ministers.

"Two such men are LT Merlon Howe and LT Ray Stubbe ...

"Chaplain Ray Stubbe has the same philosophy as Chaplain Howe but carries it to greater heights, like climbing Marble Mountain's Crow's Nest to hold Christmas Services for the Navy, Army and Marine personnel on observation duty there.

"In addition to Crow's Nest he visited an outlying Marine Combined Action Group (CAG), climbed up a smaller mountain to ALPHA-6 Marines and visited the Naval Hospital.

" 'Most of these men could not attend services if I didn't climb up to them,' said Chaplain Stubbe, regularly assigned to Camp Carter.

" 'I've made the climb to Crow's Nest about three times in my four months at NSA,' the chaplain said. 'It may cause sore legs and back but it is very rewarding when you see the smiles on top.'

"Stationed with the Marines at Khe Sanh for several months before coming to NSA, Chaplain Stubbe believes a chaplain's willingness to live and work under the same adverse conditions as the men he serves bring them closer together.

" 'At an outpost like Khe Sanh you can mingle and talk informally, learning what they talk about, what concerns them and you can share these thoughts, anxieties or privations. Then in your preaching and counsel you know the conditions—you know what you are talking about and you can bring them a message that really applies to the condition.'.."

(Photograph and caption concerning worship atop Crow's Nest, DaNang, Vietnam), Milwaukee *Journal*, Sat., Feb. 1, 1969, p. 4.

[*Caption*]:

"ATOP THE 'CROWS NEST' – Navy Chaplain Ray Stubbe of Milwaukee conducted religious services atop Marble mountain near the city of Da Nang, South Vietnam. The outpost, called the 'Crows Nest,' is a remote observation post guarding infiltration routes into Vietnam's second largest city. Stubbe, whose parents are Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Stubbe, 2422 N. 60th St., Organized All Saints Lutheran church in Oak Creek in 1966. Stubbe has been in South Vietnam over 16 months."

"Vietnam Chaplain Climbs to 'Crow's Nest' to Hold Services," Lutheran Church in America, *The Lutheran*, 7:7 (April 2, 1969), pp. 35-36.

[*Three photographs by PH1 Rus Elder and article on worship services*] *Marble Mountain, DaNang :"MARBLE MOUNTAIN is a 350-foot high promontory south of DaNang, in Vietnam. Soldiers stationed there on observation duty call it the 'crow's nest,' for it's a high and lonely spot, away from everybody.*

"The first time Navy Chaplain Ray Stubbe made the climb up the mountain, GI's were amazed. But they're getting used to it. Their visitor stops around every now and then, and he's always warmly received.

" 'Every time I go up there I lose five pounds,' Chaplain Stubbe says. 'It gives me sore legs and a sore back, but it's worth it when I see the smiles at the top and hear the men say 'Welcome aboard, chaplain.'"

"Ray Stubbe, one of the 150-odd Lutheran Church in America chaplains on military duty, hails from Milwaukee. He's a graduate of Northwestern Theological Seminary and a member of the LCA's Wisconsin Upper Michigan Synod. Presently assigned to the Naval Support Activity at DaNang, he has been in Vietnam about 18 months—eight of them with the Marines at Quang Tri and Khe Sanh during the siege.

" 'During the heavy fighting there,' he recalls, 'I found while moving from one position to another that the men who have the roughest spots enjoy a chaplain's visit most.'

"It was this observation that motivated Chaplain Stubbe to seek out the Army, Navy and Marine personnel in out-of-the-way, inaccessible places. Normally, the chaplain is assigned to Camp Carter, a Navy security camp. But in addition to serving the men there—as well as at two boat ramps and the giant public works center on Tien Sha Peninsula—he makes it his duty to see that the men in such difficult places as Marble Mountain are not neglected.

" 'These men are not my responsibility as an NSA chaplain,' he explains. 'In fact, they're really assigned to no one, since there just aren't enough chaplains around to reach every small unit. But I felt someone should provide for them.'

"Circuit-riding preachers a century ago conducted somewhat similar ministries, and some of Chaplain Stubbe's friends call him a modern-day circuit rider. Actually, he's more a mountain climber—at least when he visits the 'crow's nest,' for it's not only a long, and difficult climb up, but a dangerous descent later by rope, down the sheer marble wall to the valley below.

"Ray Stubbe gets 100 per cent attendance at his services in these out-of-the-way places practically every time. It's not hard to see why."

"Today's Navy: Chaplains in Vietnam," U. S. Dept. of the Navy, *All Hands*, No. 628 (May, 1969), p. 34.

[*Photograph of holding worship on Crow's Nest in Da Nang, Vietnam and story, both by Photographer's Mate 1st Class Rus Elder*].

" 'Noah built an altar to the Lord,' according to the Bible, and Navy chaplains in Vietnam are still building them—from boxes, rocks, sandbags, and whatever else happens to be handy.

"Take Lieutenants Merlen Howe and Ray Stubbe, for example. They are latter day circuit riders who make the rounds in the Da Nang area to conduct religious services wherever there are men to listen...

"Chaplain Stubbe also rides and walks the same kind of circuit, but sometimes reaches greater heights when he calls on a Marine Combined Action Group 350 feet up on Marble Mountain, more familiarly known as the Crow's Nest. He also scales a lesser prominence called Alpha Six to visit the Marines there.

"His more conventional duties include serving the religious needs of the men at Camp Carter, the large public works complex near Da Nang.

"The chaplains feel they can get much closer to those they serve by working the way they do in Vietnam. It is an atmosphere which lends itself to informal talk, hence a greater ability to share the men's thoughts, anxieties and privations.

"When the chaplains aren't delivering sermons, they have extension requests to screen, emergency messages to deliver, help to give to men in trouble, and guide service to provide for those seeking to find their faith—much more than delivering religious messages at a specified time."

"Bronze Star Medal," Beaufort, S.C., *Sea Islander* 2:24 (June 20, 1969), pp. 1-2.

[*Photo of Maj Gen O. F. Peatross pinning a Bronze Star Medal at ceremony at MCDR, Parris Island, S.C. and article*]

" 'With complete disregard for his own safety, he boldly exposed himself to hostile fire on numerous occasions as he moved across hazardous terrain to reach isolated combat outposts to provide a ministry to men in combat with the enemy.'

"These actions, in the Republic of Vietnam, of U.S. Navy Lieutenant Ray W. Stubbe, a Depot Chaplain, were responsible for his receiving the Bronze Star Medal with Combat 'V'.

"During a ceremony at Parris Island, Major General O.F. Peatross, Depot commanding general, presented the combat decoration and commended the chaplain for a mission 'well done.'

"Serving a chaplain with the First Battalion, Twenty-sixth Marines and subsequently with the Third Marine Division, Lt. Stubbe traveled extensively throughout his command's area of responsibility to provide worship services, religious counseling, and to enhance the spiritual and moral welfare of Marines in his unit.

"When Lt. Stubbe collapsed from a severe illness and fever, he was hospitalized, but was released from the hospital early, at his own request, in order to return to the Marines besieged at the Khe Sanh combat base."

"Cited for Action," Savannah, GA, Savannah *Morning News*, June 11, 1969.

[*Photo of Bronze Star Medal being pinned on with caption*]

"PARRIS ISLAND, S.C.—Lt. Ray W. Stubbs, a Depot Navy chaplain, was awarded the Bronze Star medal with combat 'V' by Maj. Gen. O. F. Peatross. Depot commanding general, this week. The chaplain was cited for actions in the Republic of Vietnam."]

"To Provide a Ministry," MCRD, Parris Island, SC, *The Boot*, Friday, June 13, 1969.

" 'With complete disregard for his own safety, he boldly exposed himself to hostile fire on numerous occasions as he moved across hazardous terrain to reach isolated combat outposts to provide a ministry to men in contact with the enemy.'

"These actions, in the Republic of Vietnam, of U.S. Navy Lieutenant Ray W. Stubbe, a Depot chaplain, were responsible for his receiving the Bronze Star Medal with Combat 'V.'

"During a ceremony here June 9, Major General O. F. Peatross, Depot commanding general, presented the combat decoration and commended the chaplain for a mission 'well done.'

"Serving as a Chaplain with the First Battalion, Twenty-sixth Marines and subsequently with the Third Marine Division, Lt. Stubbe traveled extensively throughout his command's area of responsibility to provide worship services, religious counsel, and to enhance the spiritual and moral welfare of Marines in his unit.

"When Lt. Stubbe collapsed from a severe illness and fever, he was hospitalized, but released from the hospital early, at his own request, in order to return to the Marines besieged at the Khe Sanh combat base."

"Presented Former Pastor Medal for Vietnam Service," Oak Creek, WI, *Pictorial* (June 19, 1969).

[*Photo of Bronze Star Medal presentation by MG Peatross and article*]

"The first pastor of All Saints Lutheran church, Navy Lt, Ray W. Stubbe, has been awarded the bronze star medal with combat 'V' for his service as chaplain in Vietnam.

"The decoration was presented during a ceremony last Monday at Parris Island, S.C. by Maj. Gen. O. F. Peatross who commended the chaplain for a mission 'well done.'

" 'With complete disregard for his own safety, he boldly exposed himself to hostile fire on numerous occasions as he moved across hazardous terrain to reach isolated combat outposts to provide a ministry to men in contact with the enemy.'

"The chaplain provided worship services and religious counseling while serving the 1st battalion, 26th marines and subsequently with the 3rd marine division.

Lt. Stubbe was hospitalized when he collapsed from severe illness and fever. He was released early at his own request to return to the marines besieged at Khe Sanh combat base. At one time he held 50 services in two days.

"The Rev. Mr. Stubbe organized All Saints Lutheran church following his ordination. Services are still being held in the community room of Oak Creek Marine National bank while a church is being completed on S. Howell ave.

"The pastor resigned to return to his studies in Chicago. He had entered the navy when 17 and remained a member of the navy reserves while studying for the ministry. When he returned to active duty, he was assigned to Vietnam.

"Chaplain Stubbe will visit his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Stubbe, in Milwaukee for two weeks beginning Aug. 20."

"Marines Award Chaplain Medal," Milwaukee, Wi., *Journal*, June 19, 1969.

"Navy Lt. Ray W. Stubbe, a Milwaukee chaplain formerly assigned to the 3rd marine division in Vietnam, has received the bronze star for moving 'across hazardous terrain to reach isolated combat outposts to provide a ministry to men in contact with the enemy.'

"He collapsed from a severe illness and fever and was hospitalized, but was released early at his request to return to the marines besieged at Khe Sanh, a marine corps spokesman said. He received the medal at Parris Island, S.C.

"He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence A. Stubbe, 2422 N. 60th St."

"Bronze Star Medal," Beaufort, SC, *The Sea Islander* 2:24 (June 20, 1969).

[*Verbatim copy of article that appeared in the* Boot, *Friday, 13 Jun 69*].

"Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe Awarded Bronze Star," Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Milwaukee, Wi., *Tidings* (June 28, 1969), p. 1.

[*Photo by Rus Elder and article*]

"Navy Lt. Ray Stubbe who served for 1 ½ years with the 3rd Marine Division in Viet Nam, was recently awarded the bronze star, for moving 'across hazardous terrain to reach isolated combat outposts to provide a ministry to men in contact with the enemy.'

"Ray is currently serving with the Marines at Parris Island, South Carolina.

"He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Stubbe of our congregation."

(Photo of Maj Gen Oscar F. Peatross pinning a Bronze Star Medal at ceremony at MCRD, Parris Island, SC), Lutheran Church in America: *The Lutheran* 7:14 (Jul 16, 1969), p. 40.

[*Caption*]

"Official Marine Corps photo, above, shows Lt. Ray W. Stubbe, a Navy Chaplain at Parris Island, S.C., Marine Corps Recruit Depot, receiving the Bronze Star Medal with Combat 'V' from Maj. Gen. O. F. Peatross, Depot commanding general. Chaplain Stubbe, a member of the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod of the LCA, was cited in a June 9 ceremony at Parris Island for actions with the Marines in Vietnam."

"Chaplain Stubbe Cited," St. Olaf College, MN, *Alumnus* 17:5 (September, 1969), p. 12.

"Navy Lieutenant Ray W. Stubbe, '62, a chaplain, has received the Bronze Star with combat V for gallantry under fire in Viet nam.

"Lt. Stubbe's citation commended him for 'traveling extensively throughout his command's area of responsibility to provide worship services, religious counseling and to enhance the spiritual and moral welfare of Marines in his unit.'

"After being hospitalized as a result of a severe tropical illness, Lt. Stubbe requested early release from the hospital in order to return to the Marines besieged at the Khe Sanh combat base."

"Redeemer Member Receives Bronze Star," Wisconsin Upper Michigan Synod, Lutheran Church in America, bulletin insert, 17 August 1969.

[*Basically a repetition of the article that appeared in the Parris Island* Boot.]

Herr, Michael, "Khesanh," *Esquire* 72:3 (September, 1969), p. 152, 3rd column, 16th line from bottom.

[*Reprinted in his book, Dispatches, see 1977, p. 114*]

"I remember passing a chaplain named Stubbe on the road and seeing his incredible pleasure at the miracle of this morning."

"Honor Chaplain," Controls Corp. of America, *Contact* 13:5 (Sept/Oct, 1969), p. 9.

[*Photo of Maj Gen Peatross pinning on medal and article*].

"Chaplain Corps' 194th Anniversary," MCRD, Parris Island, SC, *The Boot*, 27:48 (Friday, Nov 28, 1969), p. 5.

[*Two photographs of conducting worship at Elliott's Beach and paragraph describing worship services there*]

"Chaplain Ray Stubbe of the 1st Recruit Training Battalion has introduced a new policy. Now the chaplains go out with the recruits to the Elliott's Beach training area. The chaplains conduct a short service in the afternoon when the recruits finish going through their different testing phases..."

Chaplain Corps, Bureau of Naval Personnel, *The Chaplain* 26:6 (Nov. – Dec., 1969) p. 57.

[*Picture and caption*].

1970

(Full page photo of conducting worship at Khe Sanh during siege, 28 Jan 1968), American Baptist Board of Education and Publication, Valley Forge, Pa., *Impact* 4:9 (Nov., 1970), p. 5.

"Pastor's Corner," Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Milwaukee, Wi., *Tidings* 42:43 (Nov., 14, 1970).

"On Sunday, November 15th (at both worship services) we will be privileged to hear Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe as our guest preacher. Ray is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Stubbe.

"He is a Navy Chaplain and has served for a year and a half in Viet Nam, having been in the Khe San region at the height of the fighting. He is now enroute from Parris Island, North Carolina, where he has been serving as a chaplain with the U. S. Marines, and will leave home on November 16th to go to Seattle where he is to be assigned to a new ship, the U.S.S. Shreveport (LPD12).

"The ship will be in Seattle until April (after it has been commissioned in December) and then be out of Norfolk. He will be chaplain for the crew of 450 men, and the ship will ultimately carry up to 900 U.S. Marines.

"Ray has been given recognition for his chaplaincy service, and we know that he is a good chaplain and spiritual leader for his men. Before entering the Navy Chaplaincy, Ray organized All Saints Lutheran Church in Oak Creek and attended graduate school at the University of Chicago.

"He was ordained at Redeemer Church in 1965, following his graduation from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota and Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary in Minneapolis.

"We are pleased to welcome Ray to our pulpit, and we know that you will want to take the opportunity to wish him well in his new assignment."

1972

(Photo with Rev. Erik Jensen, Bishop of Aalborg, Denmark), Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Milwaukee, Wi., *Tidings* 44:25 (Jul 29, 1972) p. 4.

[*Caption reads*]

"CHAPLAIN RAY STUBBE sends his greetings with this picture of himself with the Bishop of Aalbord, ERIK JENSEN. Bishop Jensen, a Danish Lutheran, overseas 200 congregations in northern Denmark, and is the chaplain to the royal house of Denmark, confessor to the Queen, and the officiant for all the royal marriages. The Bishop of Aalborg's seat dates back to the year 1000.

"Thanks for the greeting and insight into the Church, Chaplain Ray."

1973

"Chaplain Stubbe to Speak,:" Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Milwaukee, Wi., *Tidings* 45:3 (Feb. 24, 1973), p. 1.

[*Ordination photo in clerical collar and brief article*]

"On Sunday, February 25th, Chaplain Ray Stubbe, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Stubbe, and a son of Redeemer congregation will be our guest speaker at both worship services. He is home on a brief leave prior to a new assignment with the United States Navy.

"We are pleased to have this opportunity to have him share his ministry with us."

(Note on donation of research on Marine Corps Force Recon), Marine Corps Historical Center, *Fortitudine* 3:2 (Fall, 1973), p. 22.

'By quantity alone, the following accession merits careful scrutiny by interested scholars of the Vietnam conflict. The collection is now enhanced by a meticulous 989-page personal account of Lt Ray W. Stubble, CHC, USNR. Entitled 'Khe Sanh Chaplain: Historical summary of activities while assigned to 1/26, 3rd Reconnaissance and 3rd Shore Party Battalions; July 1967 through June 1968; includes Khe Sanh siege of 1968,' the account records the day to day activity of a member of the III MAF privy to both enlisted and officer's viewpoints of the events in Vietnam during that crucial period."

1974

(Picture conducting baptism in Okinawa with caption), Lutheran Church in America, *The Lutheran* 12:5 (March 6, 1974).

[*Caption reads*]

"BAPTIZING a soldier in Okinawa's Shin-Kawa River is Navy Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe of the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod. Though not usual, immersion is a permissible Lutheran practice. Stubbe was mission developer of All Saints Church, Oak Creek, Wis., prior to entering the service."

"People Problem Solver is 'Leapin' Deacon'," Third Marine Division, *Oki Marine* 5:29 (Jun 25, 1974), p. 2.

[*Photo in parachute gear and article*]

" 'I wish all Marines could be parachutists,' said slim and energetic Chaplain Ray Stubbe, 'because it would eliminate so many of our people problems.'

"Now practicing his office at 3dMarDiv's 3d Service Bn., Chaplain Stubbe, also known as 'The Leapin' Deacon,' is one of only five Navy-Marine Corps chaplains who wear the gold wings of a parachutist.

" 'When people are jumping together,' he explained, ;'there is no distinction between race, rank or anything else. Grunts experience this sort of thing in the field. When people have a common experience, face a common danger together, it helps draw them together.'

"The Chaplain recently authored an article for the October issue of the Marine Corps Gazette recommending the re-establishment of parachute units within the Corps.

" 'I think Marines are better suited than any other service for parachute units,' he said, 'since Marines don't depend on large quantities of equipment and supplies, and because they seem to operate better on the squad level.'

"His own parachute experience goes back to November 1972 when he completed the Basic Airborne training at Fort Benning, Ga., and later continued jumping with Navy SEAL Team Two to earn his gold wings. Since arriving on Okinawa last March, he has jumped with Marines from the Force Recon platoon and with U.S. Army Special Forces units.

" 'I find this activity helps in my ministry,' he noted, 'by forcing me to keep in good physical shape and by literally bringing me "down to earth" in sharing the lives of men in action. It's like the sign I saw at the B Co., 3d Recon Bn., office at Khe Sanh, 'To really live, you must almost die.'

"Chaplain Stubbe is also the 'adopted' chaplain for the Northern Training Area, which he visits twice a month. The rappelling and tactical instructors of the NTA even awarded the Chaplain one of their distinguishing red shirts and made him an honorary instructor.

"On his last visit, December 23, the Chaplain conducted a baptismal service in what he termed 'a very cold stream!' The Marine he baptized, PFC Gary S. Golightly, of 7th Comm Bn., was a Baptist and therefore required baptism by immersion. Making their way to the nearest stream by means of a rope hung over the cliff, the Lutheran Chaplain complied with the Marine's wishes, wading into the icy stream up to his middle to perform the rites.

"Chaplain Stubbe believes in living the motto of parachutists: 'All the way—and then some.'"

"Leapin' Deacon'," Controls Corp. of America, *Contact* 18:2 (Mar/Apr, 1974), p. 10. (Head photo and article).

"Chaplain Ray Stubbe, son of Clarence Stubbe, tool designer at H&A Milwaukee, is the type of man who loves to 'jump right into the thick of things.' Known as 'The Leapin' Deacon,' Chaplain Stubbe is one of only five Navy-Marine Corps chaplains who wear the gold wings of a parachutist.

"Wishing all Marines were parachutists, he stated, '..it would eliminate so many people problems.'

" 'When people are jumping together,' he explained, 'there is no distinction between race, rank or anything else..

"When people face a common danger together, it helps draw them together.'

"Chaplain Stubbe's experience goes back to November 1972 when he completed Basic Airborne training at Fort Benning, Ga., later continuing with Navy Seal Team II to earn his gold wings. Since his arrival in Okinawa, last March, he has jumped with the Marines from Force Recon platoon and with the U.S. Army Special Forces Units.

"The Chaplain finds his activities help in his ministry by forcing him to keep in good physical condition and by literally bringing him 'down to earth in sharing the lives of the men in action.'

"As adopted chaplain for Okinawa's Northern Training Area, Chaplain Stubbe has been awarded the title of 'honorary instructor.' On a recent visit to the NTA, Chaplain Stubbe performed a baptism by immersion in what he termed 'a very cold stream.'

"Making their way to the nearest stream, the Lutheran chaplain and a Marine climbed down a rope hung over a cliff to the frigid stream where the rites were performed.

"Chaplain Stubbe truly believes in living the parachutist's motto, 'All the way—and then some!' "

(Photo of baptism of Marine in Okinawa and caption), Lutheran Church in America, *The Lutheran* 12:5 (Mar. 6, 1974).

1975

Frank P. Zeidler, "An Unusual Chaplaincy," in Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Milwaukee Wi., *"Celebrating the Past—Anticipating the Future," Eighty-Fifth Anniversary, 1890-1975,"* 1975, p. 19.

'The historical documents of the church shed some light on the interesting career as a Navy chaplain of Ray William Stubbe, now Lieutenant Commander R. W. Stubbe.

"At the time of the 75th anniversary Mr. Stubbe was directed toward work in a Mission Church at Oak Creek, Wisconsin. He was ordained on June 6, 1965, at Redeemer. In June, 1967, he was installed as a navy chaplain, and was assigned to the Third Marine Division in Vietnam. Here he underwent one of the most terrifying experiences of the Vietnam war. He was the chaplain for the marines at Khe Sanh when that area was under a long and deadly siege by the North Vietnamese. He survived this experience and left Vietnam after 18 months. He subsequently received a decoration for heroism. He has written a privately circulated manuscript on the religious and theological significance of his experience. Lt. Commander Stubbe has had assignments to several different tours of duty since and is a frequent visitor of his home church."

(Photo with Rev. Arguello), Marine Corps Historical Center, *Fortitudine* 5:2 (Fall, 1975), p. 21.

[*Caption reads*]

"An ecclesiastical atmosphere was almost evident in the division's Reference Section this fall with these two 'clergy-in-residence' pursuing research projects. LtCdr Ray W. Stubbe (left) chaplain of the 7th Marines, spent a two-week leave

period researching the history of 1st Force Reconnaissance Company. A former recon and force recon chaplain, he is writing a detailed history as a personal project. At right is the Rev. Alvaro Arguello, S.J., Director of the Central American Historical Institute and Professor of Nicaraguan History at the Central American University, Manogua, who spent two months researching records.."

1976

"Pendleton Historians to Hold Meeting," Camp Pendleton, Ca., *Scout* 34:6 (Feb 12, 1976), p. 4.

(Photo in uniform, holding a copy of the manuscript, *Paddles, Parachutes, and Patrols*) and caption), Marine Corps Historical Center, *Fortitudine* 6:3 (Winter, 1976-1977), p. 22.

[*Caption reads*]
"A return visitor to the division arrived with the start of the new year: LCdr (Chaplain) Ray Stubbe, USN, who returned for 10 days in January to continue his research on reconnaissance units. His first manuscript draft has been completed and submitted to possible publishers. Here Chaplain Stubbe holds a copy of the manuscript, all 4 pounds of it."

1977

Herr, Michael, *Dispatches*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1977, p. 114.

1978

Shulimson, Jack, and Johnson, Maj Charles M., *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, The Landing and the Buildup, 1965*, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1978, pp. 223, 224.

1979

"Chaplain Corps Celebrates 206 Years," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il., *Bulletin* 44:47, Fri., Nov. 23, 1979, p. 3.

[*Photo of conducting worship at Khe Sanh during siege, 28 Jan 1968 by SSGT John A. Reid, and caption*]
"Chaplain Ray Stubbe leads Marines defending Khe Sanh Vietnam in prayer. Chaplain Stubbe is now at Great Lakes assigned to Chapel By the Lake."

1981

"The Bride Wore Hospital White," Waukegan, Il., The *News-Sun* 81:221 (Friday, Sep. 18, 1981), No. 221.

[*Picture of conducting wedding while bride was in hospital bed. Caption reads*]
"After spending six months planning her wedding, Pamela Thompson of Zion found she couldn't walk down the aisle. In fact, due to a painful blood clot in her leg, she couldn't walk at all. That didn't stop her though. On Thursday, Thompson married Clifton Schwartz of Zion while sitting in her bed at St. Therese Hospital, Waukegan. She was dressed in white—her hospital gown. The new Mrs. Schwartz will be spending another week at St. Therese while doctors try to dissolve the clot. The unusual ceremony took place at about 5 p.m. with Chaplain Raymond Stubbe of the Great Lakes Naval Base officiating. The groom is a petty officer third class at the base. 'We decided to go ahead with the wedding,' the bride said. 'What would you do? We had this all planned. I have a caterer, a hall and everything else for Saturday. We had to cancel, but we've rescheduled everything for Oct. 24.' The couple will renew vows that day and proceed with the festivities. Will the bride finally be able to walk down the aisle? 'I'd better be,' she answered."

1982

Robert Pisor, *The End of the Line, The Siege of Khe Sanh*, New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982.

Page 101: "On New Year's Day, Marine Chaplain Ray Stubbe hitched a ride from the combat base to town to sample the soup at Howard Johnson's. He walked back, an hour's stroll that took him past the Poilane villa. The next evening, at 8:30, a sentry dog on the western perimeter of the base stiffened, then alerted his handler to movement outside the defensive wire..."

Page 259: "The Reverend Ray W. Stubbe, a Lutheran chaplain, estimated that 475 Marines were zipped into green plastic body bags during January, February, and March [1968] at Khe Sanh."

Pages 269-270: "A final valued source for this chapter, and for all the siege, was Ray W. Stubbe's Chaplain at Khe Sanh, Volumes I and II (a typed manuscript, 1,504 pages, dated 1971, in the Marine Corps library). Stubbe's rambling diary is chockfull of eyewitness accounts, wild rumors, and official reports on everything from the weather, the rats, and the Bru to enemy intentions, regimental briefings, and rising casualty tolls."

Page 275: Lists sources of information for pages 93 and 97text based on *Chaplain at Khe Sanh* (p. 131, 684, and 800)..

Page 276: Lists sources of information for pages 103, 103-106, 107, 108-113 (*"Once again the Reverend Ray Stubbe was writing everything down in his diary; he even talked with the two sergeants who interrogated the defector."*),and 108 of test based on *Chaplain at Khe Sanh*)pp. 734, 753, and 771-72).

Page 285: Lists sources of information for pages 186-187, 188. and 190 of text based on *Chaplain at Khe Sanh* (pp. 948, 972, and 971).

Page 286: Lists sources of information for pages 199-200 of text based on *Chaplain at Khe Sanh* (p. 1025).

Page 292: Lists sources of information for pages 242 and 245 of text based on *Chaplain at Khe Sanh* (pp. pp. 410 and 797).

Page 294: Lists sources of information for pages 259 and 260-261 of text based on *Chaplain at Khe Sanh* (pp. 1440, 1222, and 1084-87).

"What Qualities Father Mulcahy and Chaplain Ray Stubbe Have in Common," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il., *Bulletin* 47:45 (Friday, Nov. 19, 1982), p. 8.

[*Picture of holding worship at Khe Sanh during siege, 28 Jan 1968, By SSGT John A. Reid, CREDO picture (with beard), and article*]

*"What do Ray Stubbe, CHC, and the M*A*S*H* character, Father Mulcahy have in common?*

"Bibles and boxing could start the list. While the affable and compassionate Father Mulcahy served in Korea, Chaplain Stubbe served in Vietnam, winning a Bronze Star for holding 20 to 30 prayer services daily, going from bunker to bunker. Both have experienced the ironies and pain of war.

"Perhaps Chaplain Stubbe's most painful memory is the Battle at Khe Sanh where he saw many of his close friends killed. 'I carried a dear friend of mine out of a battle area. He had been decapitated,' Chaplain Stubbe recalled. 'I baptized another young man and three days later, I found his name on a body bag. Another young man I worked with, ironically a conscientious objector, won a Navy Cross posthumously. I had him working in the medical triage area and he would shield others' bodies with his. He got hit in the heart by shrapnel. He died when an infection set in after surgery.'

"While he is proud of being one of the 47 chaplains (out of 800 who served in Vietnam) to receive a Bronze Star, he said that his practice of going to the people hurt him in Washington. He was passed over for a promotion.

" 'I was told that the military people in Washington thought I had a death wish or something,' he explained. 'I guess because I went out to the bunkers where the men and the fighting was, they thought I was trying to be a Marine. But I still wouldn't do it any other way.'

"Even in his peacetime assignments such as his shore duty here, he goes among the people. Having been at Great Lakes since 1978, he is proud of the things he's accomplished here.

"While he was the supervisory chaplain for Service School Command, he succeeded in establishing chaplain's offices in the various schools.

" 'We had been located in one office and things became very congested. When I first came, we were counseling about 200 people a day. Then, word got around that we would talk to anyone—whether they be homosexual or if they beat their wife,' he explained. 'Pretty soon, we were talking with 600 a day and felt that we could do better if we were spread around a little more.'

"He was also the Director of the CREDO program for five months earlier this year. He managed during that time to change the way the CREDO program operated.

" 'Most CREDOs at other bases have everyone sitting around listening to music and relating to it. We do things differently now,' he said.

"People who come down and visit the CREDO office in the basement of Bldg. 3, can relax, study, listen to music or just talk. He holds group sessions where students will draw their family or childhood. They cut things out of newspaper and attach them to large grocery bags to express how they feel about life. He also asks them to write something positive about each person in the group. Then the cards are sorted and distributed.

" 'Everybody then gets a little packet of warm fuzzy strokes,' Chaplain Stubbe said. 'We're trying to build self images here. That's one of the major problems I see here at Great Lakes.'

"He said that loneliness and isolation are a problem for students here and CREDO 'has always been the place where people are "put together:"—with themselves (made whole), with each other, and whether conscious of it or not, put together with God.'

"He is personally bothered by some students' enthusiasm about going to war. 'I served on a ship with a detachment of Marines during another crisis in Lebanon. At the time we were evacuating our embassy. I prayed over the ship's loud speaker. As it turned out, the Marines didn't have to land. The following day, I had privates to lieutenants coming up to me and ask why I had to pray like that because it meant they couldn't go and fight, he said.

" 'I went to my cabin and cried that day—it really depressed me. I think there's something about people's childhoods where they aren't raised with a good self-image. Some of these people think that if they can go to war and fight, they'll become heroes,' he continued.

"Explaining that his attitude upon war was greatly affected by his experiences in Vietnam, Chaplain Stubbe said, 'I'm not anti-military, I guess I'm anti-war. When you've seen the pain and mutilation of a war like Vietnam, you want to try to do everything you can to keep others from suffering that way.'

"His sense of compassion runs high as he goes where the people are. He eats in the enlisted mess hall for all his meals. He'd stay onboard ship when assigned to one that was docked so he could be there for the enlisted people who wanted to talk in the evenings. When he was first assigned to RTC here, he was the first chaplain to make regular visits to the recruits' barracks.

"By doing this, he feels that he's established 'whole ministry' for himself and others. 'If they won't come to me, I'll go to them,' he said. 'I guess you could say that I communicate God's love with action, not just words.'

"His life is full and rewarding. He teaches Bible studies in several Lutheran churches in the community, teaches confirmation classes to young people and adults. He performs weddings and he is active in counseling with CREDO. Chaplain Stubbe will be assigned here until 1984 when he plans to retire and return to his native Milwaukee.

"Featuring Chaplain Stubbe is part of acknowledging the 207th anniversary celebrated Thursday of the establishment of the Navy's Chaplain Corps."

"Events at the Center, Library Gets 410 book collection," U.S. Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C., *Fortitudine* 11:2 & 3 (Winter, 1982), p. 29.

"The Historical Center's Reference Library recently received a 410-volume military history collection from LCdr Ray W. Stubbe, ChC, USNR. The collection is devoted primarily to the Marine Corps and includes general histories and some quite rare regimental histories. Among the most significant titles are: a first edition of Clyde H. Metcalf's A History of the United States Marine Corps, (New York, 1939); a fine copy of the first printing of John W. Thomason, Jr.'s Salt Wind and Gobi Dust, New York, 1934; and a considerable rarity, Robert W. Neeseis' Our Many Sided Navy (Yale University Press, 1914).

"The majority of the collection has been retained at the Center. However, several duplicate sets and volumes have been sent to other base general libraries to fill up their military history holdings."

"Events at the Center, 'Aarugha' Manuscript Donated," U.S. Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C., *Fortitudine* 11:2 & 3 (Winter, 1982), p. 30.

"Five copies of Aarugha, a manuscript history of Marine reconnaissance units with emphasis on the 1st Force Reconnaissance Company and Vietnam were recently donated to the Center by LCdr Ray W. Stubbe, ChC, USNR. The highly readable, well-footnoted manuscript is the produce of almost seven years of research, hundreds of interviews, and over 300 hours of writing and typing. Aarugha is available from the Historical Center's library on interlibrary loan."

1983

(Mentioned in): U.S. Marine Corps Historical Center, Navy Yard, Washington, D.C., *Fortitudine* 13:1 (Summer, 1983) p. 10. (Letter, reporting casualties of Khe Sanh siege).

Unger, Rudolph, "City Honors Veterans of all Wars," Chicago *Tribune*, Sat., Nov. 12, 1983, Section 1, p. 7.

"On a typically cold and blustery Veterans Day, Chicago-area residents gathered Friday in ceremonies around the city to honor men and women who defended the nation....

"Navy Chaplain Raymond Stubbe asked a particular remembrance for the 57,000 Americans who died in Vietnam. 'While we crave peace, there is continual warfare,' he said, noting the sacrifices made by American forces in recent weeks in Lebanon and Grenada.."

1984

Ewalt, Susan, "Vietnam: The Pain Lingers," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il., *Bulletin* 59:19 (May 11, 1984), pp. 1-2.

[Enlarged photograph of worship service at Khe Sanh during siege taken 28 Jan 1968 by SSGT John A. Reid plus personal story of my post-traumatic stress disorder]

"The Vietnam War officially ended for the United States in 1975. But for thousands of Vietnam veterans and families of Vietnam veterans the horrors of the war may never end. The Vietnam War is not over for Commander Ray W. Stubbe, CHC.

"Commander Stubbe served in Vietnam from June 1967 through January 1969. He suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. on Tuesday Chaplain Stubbe was released from the Veterans Administration Hospital PTSD Unit in Bldg. 135 where he has been a patient for the past eight months.

"According to Stubbe, PTSD is often communicable—particularly to family members and loved ones—and is a killer. Many veterans with severe PTSD commit suicide or die a violent death. They are often killed in shootouts, barroom brawls, and one car accidents.

"Of the 2.8 million veterans who served in Vietnam, an estimated 140,000 have died since leaving the service. Of these, more Vietnam vets have died by committing suicide than the 57,000 who died in the war itself.

"Those who live often try to cope through compulsive overwork, alcohol or drugs. Chaplain Stubbe attempted to escape PTSD by working late hours. instead of finding relief, Stubbe experienced intense migraine headaches, headaches which he began having after returning from Vietnam. Eventually one migraine headache lasted five consecutive days and was intensified by nausea.

"Common symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder include recalling traumatic events in dreams and flashbacks.

"Commander Stubbe recalls a recent dream: 'I am returning to my bunker and am surprised to find it occupied by another person. Suddenly, I recognize him and uncontrollably hug him and with tears and say, "Your body is warm, you are alive! I thought you were dead!' And then, after a pause, "But where are all the rest?" And then I wake up uncontrollably crying.'

"The chaplain is also the victim of frequent flashbacks. One day he was in the sauna of Gym 500 just before it closed. He was relaxing after a good workout of running and boxing. There was a muffled, faint 'boom.'

" 'The next thing I knew I was on the floor. I thought a rocket had been fired and I had about seven seconds to take cover before it exploded. I later realized it was just a basketball hitting the hoop,' he recalls...."

[Remainder of article deals with various symptoms of PTSD].

Vietnam War Newsletter 6:64 (June, 1984), p. 12.

[Note I had developed a bibliography of 675 entries on PTSD, was at Khe Sanh, and am presently working on a book about the siege at Khe Sanh]

1985

Cimons, Marlene, "War Experiences Haunt Many Vietnam Veterans," Los Angeles, Ca., *Times* (Apr. 30, 1985), pp. 1, 11. (Paragraphs on Stubbe on p. 12.

"The Rev. Ray Stubbe, an ordained minister who is no longer active in a particular church, remembers Vietnam as a country of extremes. 'Sandy places and tortuous mountains,' he said. 'Beauty and ugliness. Terror and peace. You'd get mortared, and then everything would be normal.'

"Stubbe went on active duty in the Navy chaplain corps in 1967 and immediately was sent to Khe Sanh...

"On January 21, 1968, he said, 'All of a sudden, we found ourselves surrounded by 40,000 of the enemy, North Vietnamese regulars. We took heavy artillery and rockets. We took 1,600 rounds a day of heavy artillery, a round that would leave a crater so big that you could stand in it with your head below the surface.'

"It went on for months.

" 'I lost a lot of very close friends,' Stubbe said. 'I'd go from bunker to bunker to see how the people were and have a prayer with them. After a while, we became oblivious to everything. Numb.'

"For Stubbe, the 'revulsion, fear and tears and the anger' he repressed in Vietnam led to a severely troubled readjustment, plagued by nightmares, migraine headaches and 'withdrawing from people almost from the time I got home.'

" 'I kept dreaming of the bunkers, of people who were dead and their coming back to life. I'd wonder where the rest of them were. I'd see the goriness of it, the blood and the people shot up. I talked to doctors who said people come back and everything's OK. Well, it's not true. It's a big myth.'

"Stubbe, now 47 and living in Milwaukee, finally received help from an in-patient psychiatric stress disorder program at the VA Medical Center in North Chicago. 'The memories are still there, but I know what they are and I can deal with them now,' he said.

" 'In a sense, those were very good days. It sounds funny after all I've said, but we all got very close to each other, even though we didn't always know each other's names. There was a sharing of the basics of life. Here, people are roles and masks and functions. There, people were people. There were no organs, pews or stained glass but it was much more meaningful and intimate than it has ever been for me since."

Boettcher, Thomas D., *Vietnam: The Valor and the Sorrow*, Boston, Toronto, Little, Brown and Company, 1985, full-page picture on p. 272.

Martin, H. Lawrence, ed., *United States Navy Chaplains 1972-1981*, (Vol. 8, History of the Chaplain Corps, United States Navy), NAVPERS 15507, Washington, D.C., 1985, pp. 168 [biographical sketch], 204 [Lutheran denomination indicated], and 217 [year commissioned—erroneously indicated].

Moore, RADM Withers M., ed., *Chaplains with U.S. Naval Units in Vietnam 1954-1975, Selected Experiences at Sea and Ashore*, (Vol. 9, History of the Chaplain Corps, United States Navy), NAVPERS 15508, Washington, D.C., 1985, p. 100.

[*Name listed in appendix, "Chaplains known to have served with naval units in Vietnam"*]

Bergsma, Commander Herbert L., *Chaplains with Marines in Vietnam, 1962 – 1971*, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, 1985. (Photos on pp. 106 and 175; write-up on pp. 162-163).

"Lieutenant Ray W. Stubbe (Lutheran) was with 1st Battalion, 26th Marines for eight months from July 1967 until February of 1968 and, with his battalion, experienced some of the worst shelling of the war. His memories of the siege are especially sensitive. Writing to a worried father of a Marine, wounded at the Khe Sanh Combat Base in February, he spoke about the quality of the Marines and concluded: 'This bravery is something those who have not been to Khe Sanh under fire can perhaps never adequately comprehend or appreciate.'" [Letter to Mr. Royston L. Jones, 8 April 1968, p. 2. [p. 162]

"... Under some of the most intensely beleaguered conditions of that war, the chaplain became very close to his men, as the men often did to each other, and the conditions were rarely usual. Chaplain Stubbe wrote: 'During the siege, the recon Marines were especially hurt—over 75 percent of the Company became casualties because of the incoming rounds. The Company was sandwiched between the airstrip and the regimental headquarters—as well as being near the ammo dump. One night my bunker was so full of casualties that couldn't be evacuated, that I slept atop a 3'x3' field desk, the doctor slept on the deck inside with his feet outside the "door" and five Marines fell asleep sitting up on my rack..'" [p. 163]

[".. Chaplain Stubbe, without a clerk at the beginning of the battle, had PFC Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer transferred to him, since the man had applied for conscientious objector status. Chaplain Stubbe had him work in the C Med area as a stretcher bearer, the area where both Chaplains Driscoll and Stubbe 'lived' at night. Spicer, a mild-mannered and caring person, frequently threw himself over the bodies of casualties during incoming, and during one evacuation of wounded, was fatally wounded himself, dying several days later after having been evacuated. This Marine, although a conscientious objector, was awarded the Navy Cross for his heroism."

1986

Cosmas, Graham A. and Murray, LtCol Terrence P., *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, Vietnamization and Redeployment, 1970 – 1971*, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1986, pp. 418-419.

"New Publications of the History and Museums Division," History and Museums Division, HQMC, *Fortitudine* 15:4 (Spring, 1986), p. 30.

[*lists "Occasional Papers" available, including Bibliography on Khe Sanh Marine Participation (1985) by LtCdr Ray W. Stubbe, ChC, USNR (ret).*]

1987

Gorenstein, Nathan, "Viet vets revive the memories," Wilmington, De., *Morning News* 108:160 (Oct. 13, 1987) p. 1.

"He was a Marine who didn't want to fire his gun, but who ended up at Khe Sanh anyway. So to save him from a court-martial, Ray Stubbe made him his assistant—the chaplain's clerk.

"So the Marine turned into a stretcher bearer, there in Vietnam. 'He became a lion,' Stubbe recalled, shelte3ring wounded comrades with his own body, until on March 8, 1968, a shell landed too close at that hilltop base, and the Marine received a Navy Cross. After he died.

"And Stubbe, the chaplain, still wonders. If he had kept his own counsel, maybe the Marine would have only faced some time in the brig, and still be alive.

" 'I think about it all the time,' Stubbe said of his service in Vietnam, and confesses to be, in a manner, traumatized by his memories. 'We've got to make sense of it. It's sort of like shrapnel of the soul.'

"So on Monday, Stubbe told a symposium sponsored by the local Vietnam Veterans Memorial Institute, 'We have a purpose here, to portray what really happened.. to these people who cared for each other.. And that must never be forgotten.'"

Ewing, Michael, *The Illustrated History of The Vietnam War, Khe Sanh*, Toronto: Bantam Books, 1987.

[*Photographs I had taken appear on pp. 1, 20-21, 22, 24, 25, 44, 45, 52-53, 55, 56-57, 58, 59, 60-61, 74-75, 76, 81, 82-83, 110, and 115. Acknowledgment of photos on p. 10. Photo of me (by SSGT Reid) on pp. 106-107*].

1988

Mitchard, Jacquelyn, "In tribute: Veterans remember MIAs," Milwaukee, Wi., *Journal* (March 29, 1988).

"It was fitting that people remember Vietnam in the rain," said Rev. Ray Stubbe, who opened the program Monday at Bay Viet High School to speak of MIA and POW soldiers of the Vietnam War and to raise a flag in their honor. "What I want to do is pause in the business of our busy days to remember the mothers and children and wives and girlfriends of young men mainly only 18 years old," said Stubbe, 49, who was a military chaplain at Khe Sanh.:"

"Vietnam and Khe Sanh Vets Make Strong Showing in Tampa," Third Marine Division Association, *Caltrap* 34:5 (Oct., 1988) p. 15.

[*Four photographs—Ernie Husted, Ray Stubbe, Earle Breeding—and an extensive article describing the first meeting of Khe Sanh veterans, listing Ray Stubbe as the founder.*]

Photo of me giving prayer in Third Marine Division Association, *Caltrap* 34:6 (Dec. 1988 - Jan. 1989) p. 10.

[*Includes plus photos and article about Khe Sanh meeting at the Division Association annual meeting.*]

1989

Stockwell, David B., *Tanks in the Wire, The First Use Of Enemy Armor in Vietnam*, Canton, Ohio: Daring Books, 1989. Back dust cover contains comments on the book: *"Dave Stockwell's book presents an essential perspective to the Khe Sanh battlefield that must be read by all who would seek to understand what happened there. His presentation, letting the participants speak for themselves, conveys the understanding of that important battlefield as experienced by some of the crucial participants. His presentation blends and balances both the tactical as well as the personal of warfare. I was very impressed by the book. I believe it to be a valuable addition to a clearer understanding of Vietnam in general and Khe Sanh in particular at a time when such an understanding is imperative vis-à-vis the many distorted images of that war are so rampant."*

Hammel, Eric, *Khe Sanh, Siege in the Clouds, An Oral History*, New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1989. [Published in May, 1989].

[*My comments appear on pp. 24-27, 36-37, 77-78, 81, 89-90, 96, 112, 122, 125, 127, 203, 288-289, 297-298, 313, 318-319, 323-324*].

(Photograph of me giving prayer for reunion of K/4/12) in Third Marine Division Association, *Caltrap* 35:5 (Oct. - Nov., 1989), p. 7.

Tom Bartlett, "Books Reviewed," Marine Corps Association, *Leatherneck* 72:11 (Nov., 1989) p. 98. [Review of *Inside Force Recon*].

"Ray Stubbe is neither stranger nor friend. We've met, and I remain in awe of his accomplishments. He has been places I've only read about and accomplished deeds beyond my comprehension. We first met in DaNang in early 1968. He was dirty, needing a shave, shower and sedative. He was very nervous. He smelled. He wore no rank, but appeared too old to be a private. He wore no weapons. He had a story he wanted told. He offered a rough draft on a cruddy sheet of paper. The story was, indeed, rough. But it contained all the facts, so we edited and printed it in the Sea Tiger, newspaper of the III MAF. By the time I realized who the smelly grunt was, he was gone. Back to Khe Sanh where he served as chaplain to the Marines. He was a naval officer. That's Ray Stubbe, a Lutheran minister. Though he has long since hung up his cammies, he still writes of 'his' Marines. He authored an extensive bibliography on PTSD and the monograph 'Khe Sanh Bibliography,' published by the History and Museums Division, HQMC. He is presently working on a history of Khe Sanh, 1962-1968.... The two authors, soldier and sailor, have done the Marines a favor with their joint effort on force recon. Stubbe, the perfectionist when it

comes to dedication and research, poured over all available documents in the archives, and interviewed many of the participants to obtain the pertinent facts... "

"Stubbe Heads Khe Sanh Vets, Chicago Meeting Adopts Bylaws," Third Marine Division Association, *Caltrap* 35:5 (Oct.-Nov., 1989), p. 23.

"Forty-one members of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., met 13 July during the 35th Annual Reunion of the 3d Marine Division Association, to adopt Bylaws and elect officers for 1989-90. Ray Stubbe will fill two billets, President and Chaplain, as will John Kahany who will serve as Vice-President and Secretary. Ernie Husted will continue as Editor of 'The Khe Sanh Vet' newsletter; Earle G. Breeding will continue as Treasurer; and Jack Kilbright was named Sergeant-at-Arms for the group that was organized during the Association's 1988 Tampa Reunion at which the 20th anniversary of the Battle for the Khe Sanh Combat Base was commemorated. Fred Swets opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag followed by the reading of the 91st Psalm by Ray Stubbe...."

Tom Mueller, "Holiday isn't first far from home for US troops," Milwaukee, Wi., *Sentinel* (Dec. 28, 1989), Part 1, p. 5.

"Ray W. Stubbe, who was a Navy chaplain at Khe Sanh in the Vietnam War, said he feels for the troops in Panama this Christmas.

" 'It gets to the point of tears to see young people.. have to go out to slay the dragons of the world,' said Stubbe, 51, now assistant pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. 'There's a chill that war is still happening. You worry about the people.'...

"Stubbe spent Christmas 1967 preaching to his flock—the Marines near Khe Sanh in South Vietnam, a month before the bloody siege of that city began.

"Stubbe said Air Force observation planes were flying around blaring Christmas carols and he went to various outposts held by small groups of troops.

"He said his Christmas message was that 'we were there as sort of shepherds of local tribes people to protect them. It is to you that the announcement comes of the birth of the Savior.'

"Stubbe told them that 'God was with us and concerned about us and we were the shepherds.'

"There was scattered fighting of small arms fire and grenades on Christmas, he said, but 'in spite of all this tension in the air.. it was alike a spiritual odor' at the services."

1991

Paula A. Poda, "Looking back: The horror does not go away for combat veterans," Milwaukee, Wi., *Sentinel*, Wed., Jan 16, 1991, part 1, p. 6.

"Years after battle, images of terror remain.

" 'Vietnam was a lot of boredom punctuated with moments of sheer terror,' said the Rev. Ray W. Stubbe, who served 18 months as a Navy chaplain with the Marines.

" 'You can be talking with someone, and all at once they fall into your arms dead. Or you can be talking with someone and .. in 15 minutes, they're suddenly dead. It's very shocking.'

" ' And yet one is in such a numbed state, there is no time to express the shock or grief at the time.'

"Stubbe, 52, an assistant pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 631 N. 19th St., was a chaplain at the Marine base in Khe Sanh during an engagement that pitted about 6,000 Marines against 20,000 to 40,.000 North Vietnamese troops during a 77-day siege.

"The deaths of local residents and war's effects on the country where it is waged often are overlooked, he said.

" 'You look at a moonscape afterward. The area where we were was a jungle. It was lush. There were tigers and all sorts of animal life.

" 'And it was all destroyed, in addition to the human life. There was nothing.'

"The pumped-up energy of young men eager to fire their first shots—which veterans say undoubtedly exists in the Persian Gulf as war scars—soon diminishes.

...

"Stubbe talked about Jonathan Spicer, of Florida, a conscientious objector, who had been beaten up when he refused to pick up his rifle and clean it.

"After the incident, Stubbe had Spicer transferred from his old unit to become Stubbe's assistant, working as a stretcher bearer.

"Spicer told Stubbe, 'I don't care what happens to me, I just don'g want to hurt anyone else.'

"When the area was being shelled and Spicer was with a wounded soldier, he often shielded the soldier's body with his own.

"Spicer did that for about seven weeks before he died.

"Mortar exploded as Spicer was helping load a helicopter with wounded men, and shrapnel pierced the pericardium sac around his heart. He lived for about two weeks, but developed an infection and died.

"Spicer was awarded the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroI8sm in action.

" 'I always felt if I hadn't intervened he might still be alive,' Stubbe said. 'I had a lot of guilt until I talked that out.'

"Battle forces moral decisions.

"Once, Stubbe saw a spotter airplane crash on a runway. Sometime later, he heard about conversations near the crash site.

"The pilot, pinned in the plane by a seat, was screaming to be shot because he didn't want to die in flames, and pleading that someone tell his wife how much he loved her.

"Two men were trying frantically to get him out while a crew was approaching to put out the fire, but it was clear there was not enough time to save him.

"One Marine was about to shoot the pilot to put him out of his agony. Another Marine said he should not shoot because if the flames were extinguished, the man who shot could be convicted of murder.

"The pilot died in the fire."

Jeff Linkous, "Khe Sanh veteran recalls terror of sustained air bombing," Asbury Park, NY,: *Asbury Park Press*, Jan., 27, 1991, p. A6. [Quotes James Schemelia and Ray Stubbe].

... "Stubbe, now an assistant pastor at a Lutheran church in Milwaukee, has written a book about Khe Sanh that is being prepared for publication by Houghton Mifflin Co. The book, tentatively titled 'Valley of Decision,' is based on more than 20 years of research about Khe Sanh and the Vietnam War....

"Stubbe said that at times, U.S. B-52s were brought in as close to Marine positions as safely possible. At Khe Sanh, the safe distance of 3 kilometers for close air support gave way to 1 kilometer. On one occasion, the U.S. planes bombed as close as 800 meters, he said."

Paula A. Poda, "Technology not perfect, vet warns," Milwaukee, Wi., *Sentinel*, Monday, March 28, 1991, Part 2, p. 15.

"The Rev. Ray W. Stubbe, who was a Navy chaplain at the Marine base in Khe Sanh during a bloody 77-day siege, said he is concerned about the US public's confidence in military technology and air power employed by the anti-Iraq coalition in the Persian Gulf.

"Iraqi Scud missiles that have caused death, injuries and extensive property damage in Israel demonstrate that defense systems are not infallible, Stubbe said.

" 'I think it's a false confidence,' said Stubbe, a chaplain at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 631 N. 19th St. and veteran of the Vietnam War.

" 'The reason I say that is because when I was in Khe Sanh in Vietnam, we dropped 96,000 tons of bombs and that was like in a five-mile radius .. during two months. It was more tonnage than was dropped in the whole Pacific (region) in '42 and '43.'

"Bombs were dropped in 23,803 sorties during Khe Sanh. A daily average of 41 B-52 strikes made the ground tremble, he said.

" 'It was like a continuous earthquake. And it still didn't stop them at all.'

"About 40,000 North Vietnamese troops were killed during that engagement in 1968, he said,

" 'What interests me is that right to the very end.. the North Vietnamese were still able to blast us with artillery and still assemble considerable amounts of soldiers and units. So our air power .. even though it was devastating, it never really silenced the enemy presence.'

"In fact, more US troops were killed and wounded in the two months after the battle than during it, Stubbe said."]

"Marine Corps Memorial Service Planned," Wisconsin Memorial Park, Brookfield, Wi., *Words for Life* (May, 1991) p. 2.

[*Notes Memorial Day ceremony at the cemetery on May 26, 1991, at 9:30 a.m. an*] *"..we will hear from a prominent guest speaker, the Rev. Raymond Stubbe, author and Assistant Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church. He will speak about the 'Gold Star Mothers'."*

B.H. Norton, *Force Recon Diary, 1969*, New York: Ivy Books, 1991. [*Notes in "Acknowledgements"*] *"I am forever grateful to my friend, the Reverend Ray W. Stubbe (Cmdr USN ret.) for his encouragement and personal involvement in getting me to write this account of the superb officers and brave men of the 3d Force Recon Company, in Vietnam, during 1969 and 1970."*

Tom Mueller, "Veterans want peace, predict war," Milwaukee, Wi., *Sentinel*, Tuesday, May 28, 1991, Part 1, p. 6.

"Ray W. Stubbe, 52, of Wauwatosa, a chaplain in Vietnam and now assistant pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, said in 1989 that the world should not get carried away with euphoria and should keep developing peace ideas 'and not get swept into another thing like Munich (in 1938, the year he was born) and Vietnam.'

"Stubbe still warns against complacency and in the wake of the new war says, 'I don't feel that the world is much safer ... I don't feel everything has become good. I still feel we need to work on that.'

"He said that, just as Hussein did, other dictators will continue to make blatant miscalculations and start wars."

Saal, Harve, *SOG, MACV Studies and Observations Group*, Ann Arbor, Mi.: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1990.

[Vol. 2, pp. 57-58, 63-64, 72, 79, 120, 122, and 127 acknowledges information supplied by Ray Stubbe; Vol. 3, p. 261 has the following, attributed to Ray Stubbe] *"I recall holding worship services during the Siege in the large, FOB-3 Medical Bunker. Displayed on the wall right behind me was a very large Playboy centerfold? And I do not know, to this day, if the attentiveness of the men who attended that worship was due to what I'd said, or their awe at seeing the centerfold. No church back in the United States had such 'art-work' among its stained glass!";* **Vol. 4, p. 140** [*Pictures of rough terrain parachute equipment taken by Ray Stubbe*], **p. 276** [*Reproduction of pages from Pippin oral history interview], p. 391 (acknowledgments, notes: "Ray Stubbe, Chaplain, LCDR, USN, author and renowned authority and source on Khe Sanh; for encouragement, research materials, and editing suggestions. (Author:* Aarugha!; *Co-Author:* Inside Force Recon *and* Valley of Decision; the siege of Khe Sanh.

[Book review], *Kirkus Reviews*, Sep 15, 1991, p. 1207.

[*Begins with*] *"A blow-by-blow overview of the Khe Sanh siege, which, more than 20 years after, still ranks among the Vietnam War's most controversial episodes." After a summary of the book, the review concludes: "Pending declassification of archives or the emergence of yet-unknown sources, Prados and Stubbe provide as well-rounded a briefing as is available on a bitterly debated campaign. The engrossing text (marred only by a patent reluctance to trust the motives of military brass and their civilian masters) includes 64 photos.. plus 16 helpful maps. "*

[Book review], *Publishers Weekly*, Sep. 27, 1991, pp. 50-51.

"Here is the definitive history of Khe Sanh, built on interviews, documentary research and the personal experience of one of the authors."

[Book review], *Library Journal*, S.M. 23,888.

"Khe Sanh exemplifies many of the confusing aspects of the Vietnam War. It is difficult to imagine a more detailed account of Khe Sanh being written, at least until Vietnam opens its archives, and all American material on the subject is declassified... This book does for Khe Sanh what Gordon Prange's At Dawn We Slept did for Pearl Harbor."

[Book review], American Library Association, *Booklist*.

"Prados and Stubbe have written what deserves to be regarded as the definitive account of the most important pitched battle of the U.S. war in Vietnam. Besides the 1968 siege, the authors provide illuminating commentary on earlier battles in the Khe Sanh area, the village of Khe Sanh itself, and the people who lived there."

"Your Neighbors," Wauwatosa, Wi., *News Times*, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 1991, Section 2.

"Wauwatosa resident the Rev. Ray Stubbe's two-decade compilation of notes, letters, diaries and eye-witness accounts forms the major part of an upcoming book, 'Valley of Decision,' which documents the battle of Khe Sanh during the Vietnam War. It will be published by Houghton Mifflin on Dec. 16.

"In summer 1967, Stubbe was assigned to the post of Lutheran chaplain at the Khe Sanh combat base in Vietnam. He was involved in many missions through fall and into the winter.

"He now is a retired lieutenant commander of the U.S. Navy and currently is the assistant pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church."

Ken Penn, "Khe Sanh Vets Gather in Winter to Share the Warmth," Veterans for America, Lombard, Il., *Veterans' Voice* 5:5 (Dec., 1991) p. 12.

[*Following a paragraph on the siege battle at Khe Sanh*]

"Years later retired Navy Chaplain Ray Stubbe realized there was a need. Try to locate veterans from this and the surrounding battles. After the war, Chaplain Stubbe kept in contact with over 100 Khe Sanh veterans that he knew when he was the Chaplain for the 26th Marines. These veterans had similar problems and posed similar questions: 'Last time I saw my best friend was when I carried him (he carried me) to the chopper, is he still alive? Why did he die and I survived? How can I

find him? To help answer these questions and to help the Khe Sanh survivors, Chaplain Stubbe started the Khe Sanh Vets Organization."

[Succeeding paragraphs describe Khe Sanh Vets, Inc., organization.]

1992

[Book review], Institute of East Asia Studies, *Indochina Chronology* 11:1 (Jan.- Mar., 1992), pp. 20-21.

"Full scale account of this most famous Vietnam War battle. Front slope perspective, much detail, many maps, photos, graphics. About possible use of The Bomb at Khe Sanh.."

"Alumn Notes," Luther-Northwestern Seminary, *Story* 8:2 (Spring, 1992) p. 23.

"Ray W. Stubbe, '65, is co-author of Valley of Decision, (Houghton-Mifflin) about one of the major battles of the Vietnam War, Khe Sanh. Stubbe was serving as a chaplain at Khe Sanh at the time of the battle."

Floyd Nagler, "Floyd's World," Third Recon. Association, RVN, *Harborsite* Premier Issue (Feb., 1992), p. 6.

"Rev. Ray Stubbe (Khe Sanh chaplain) has a new book out called 'Valley of Decision, The Siege of Khe Sanh.' It's a wonderful example of how the human element, derived from hundreds of personal interviews, created an historical book that rivals works by Bernard Fall. Co-author John Prados coupled his incredible policy and tactics research with Ray's 'view from the bunkers' as seen by the grunts and Recon men that experienced the Hill fights of 66-67 and the siege of 67-68. It's a must read book for any Recon Marine or Corpsman that served in the I Corps area in Nam."

Norton, B. H., *Force Recon Diary, 1970*, New York: Ivy Books, 1992.

[*In the Prologue*]

"In July 1975, I was introduced to Ray Stubbe when he visited our rifle battalion, wearing the uniform of a United States Navy lieutenant commander in the chaplain corps. Besides wearing several rows of ribbons on his chest and the embroidered gold cross on his sleeves, he wore the gold jump wings, insignia of an advanced Navy parachutist.

"Chaplain Stubbe had come to 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, at Camp Pendleton, California, to interview our commanding officer, Col. Alex Lee. The chaplain was writing a historical account on the specialized and Force-level reconnaissance units of the United States Marine Corps, from 1900 to 1974, and Lt. Col Alex Lee had recently played a major role in that history as the commanding officer of 3d Force Reconnaissance Company in 1969-70.

"After interviewing our battalion CO, Ray was pointed in the direction of my platoon's squad bay, and it was there that we began to talk about life in a Force Recon company. Our talk lasted for three days, and by the time that Ray departed, I felt that I had bored him with enough information about my experiences with 3d Force Recon and 1st Force Recon to last him a lifetime. I wished him well and asked him to someday send me a copy of his book whenever it became available.

"It was not until 1981 that I finally got to read a draft copy of Ray Stubbe's original, 318-page history. He had submitted it to the director of the Marine Corps's Historical Division, and it had sat there for almost six years!

"In July 1989, I received a small, brown package in the mail, and I was quite pleased to find that it contained a signed copy of Ray's book, Inside Force Recon. When I finished reading the book, I fired off a fast thank-you note to Ray, who had since retired from active duty, and mentioned to him my surprise at the differences between his original draft and what had been edited into book form. I mentioned that someday I would like to read an account by someone who had actually been in the 'bush' with a Force Recon team. To date, no one had attempted this. Ray's response to my note was simple: 'Why not write one, yourself? You were there.'

"I took his challenge on as a new mission..." [pp. xi – xii]

[Book review], Harry W. Hayes, ed., Geneva, Switzerland, *International Review, A Critical Analysis of World Events* 13:26 (March/May, 1992), p. 19.

"Valley of Decision, by Ray W. Stubbe and John Prados is certainly one of the best books yet published on the Vietnam War and the men who fought it. Focused on the battle of Khe Sanh, Ray Stubbe, the renowned 'Chaplain of Khe Sanh,' created an original manuscript of over 2,000 pages, single spaced, reduced print! Personal notes, letters, diaries, and eyewitness accounts collected over two decades. A book not to be missed! Semper Fi, Ray!"

[Note] in St. Olaf College, Northfield, Mn., Alumnus (Mar/Apr 1992) p. 36.

[*Lists me as co-author of Valley of Decision*]

Frederick Downs, "Book World: Keys to a Bungled Battle," *The Washington Post*, (Monday, April 6, 1992) p. B2. [Extensive book review]

"... Historians will appreciate the 91 pages of notes, bibliography and index. John Prados and Ray W. Stubbe have done an extraordinary amount of well-documented research. At times there is an overabundance of detail from the research for the general reader, but these sections will be of interest to serious students of the conflict. The discovery by the authors of Marine Corps debriefings of men in the field opened up a wonderful source and added immeasurably to the book...

"The story of Khe Sanh is the story of the war in Vietnam. Here is a book that, in describing the siege, points out all the frustration, good intentions, confusion, duplicity, bad and good tactics, military and political decisions, and intrigue, including abandonment of allies, distrust between allies, distrust between services, loss of credibility, unclear mission goals and, at the last, a pullout from the area that was the pattern for so much of the war..."

Col. Ken D. Jordan, "Where the Guns Sounded Daily," *Marine Corps Gazette* 76:4 (April, 1992), pp. 105-106.

"...Ray Stubbe and John Prados have solved this problem, writing what I feel to be one of the most compelling if not comprehensive volumes on Khe Sanh. Valley of Decision covers the history of Khe Sanh from 1961 to well after the siege, drawing on the personal, often emotional, experiences of Stubbe, a former chaplain serving with the Marines at Khe Sanh.

"Stubbe's active contribution is presented in the narrative voice, thus he becomes a character in the book, notwithstanding his personal involvement in a specific event. It is in these areas where the text reads like a novel...

"If you have time for nothing else, read the last chapter, 'Then Is Now.' Unless I miss my guess, you'll find you really haven't topped off yet on Khe Sanh; it's an interesting approach to a war story."

[Book review], Current Reviews for Academic Libraries, *Choice* 29:8 (April, 1992), pp. 1294, 1295.

""This fine volume, the most complete account now available of the controversial battle, its origins and aftermath, is a good blend of documentary research and personal experience drawn from oral interviews. Prados, an authority on intelligence and clandestine activity, and Stubbe, whose extensive diary as Navy chaplain during the siege and his indefatigable interviews establish him as a student of the Khe Sanh experience, provide a balanced interpretation... Good bibliography, photographs, and maps.."

Thomas J. Cutler, "Notable Naval Books of 1991," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 118/5/1,071 (May, 1992) p. 236.

"Another aspect of the Vietnam War is studied in Valley of Decision: The Siege of Khe Sanh, a joint effort by professional historian and author John Prados and a veteran of the campaign, Ray W. Stubbe. The result is a comprehensive account that effectively b lends the documentary with the personal narrative to tell the whole story of this central battle as it was conducted by the Marines on the scene and from the White House."

"Old Business," Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans, Chapter One, *Meeting Minutes*, April 12, 1992, p. 1.

"Chaplain status (Wayne Erdman) Our bylaws are ambiguous as to whether he (in this case, Ray Stubbe) is elected or appointed. Motion made, seconded and passed that Ray be appointed to that office for as long as he wants it. This will be taken to the State Board and a bylaws clarification will be made."

Marc Leepson, [book review], Vietnam Veterans of America, *The Veteran* (May/June, 1992), p. 16.

"It's rare when one book can accurately claim that it contains the 'definitive account' of an important complex part of the Vietnam War. But that's the case in John Prados' and Ray W. Stubbe's Valley of Decision (Houghton Mifflin, 531 pp. $29.95), a detailed, massively researched study of the famous siege of Khe Sanh. Prados and Stubbe complement each other well... Stubbe, a retired Navy chaplain who was at Khe Sanh, provided the book's human element, putting together a group of witnesses.

"The result of Prados' and Stubbe's efforts is what, in fact, can only be described as the definitive account of the Khe Sanh siege. What other Vietnam War military history contains the following: excerpts from a NVA soldier's diary, a history of the Bru Montagnard tribe that inhabited the Khe Sanh valley, a complete rundown on the 1965 Khe Sanh Special Forces camp, incisive analysis of behind-the-scenes planning in Washington, and a smooth narrative of in-coOuntry military matters..?"

"Chaplin Ray Stubbe in for Life," Wisconsin's Vietnam Vets, Inc., *Newsletter* 7:6 (June, 1992) p. 4.

"Chaplin Ray Stubbe will be the chaplin for CHAPTER I for life or until he decides to resign his position. This was voted on and passed at the last meeting by the membership. Congratulations Ray your ours for life."

Arthur L. Kohloff, [book review], *Vietnam* 5:1 (June, 1992) pp. 52-53.

"... Prados and Stubbe's collaboration is an ideal one for this subject...

"Ray Stubbe, retired from the U.S. Navy, was the chaplain for the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, at Khe Sanh. Arriving there in the summer of 1967, Stubbe stayed with the unit throughout the siege. He held religious services for all Marines,

including those manning the all-important outlying hills. Stubbe kept a diary and recorded the events as they happened. According to co-author Prados, 'It was the real story of Khe Sanh.'

"With the merger of both Prados' and Stubbe's exhaustive research, Valley of Decision has to be the most comprehensive book on Khe Sanh to date. Both men have uncovered forgotten events that will certainly be eye-openers for Vietnam War history buffs..."

Robert A. Lynn, [book review], *Military* 9:2 (July, 1992) pp. 44-45.

"Prados and Stubbe's collaboration is an ideal one for this subject. John Prados, a highly respected historian, deals with the larger picture concerning Khe Sanh... Ray Stubbe, retired from the U.S. Navy, was the chaplain for the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, at Khe Sanh. Arriving there in the summer of 1967, Stubbe stayed with the unit throughout the siege. He held religious services for all Marines, including those manning the all-important outlying hills. Stubbe kept a diary and recorded the events as they happened. According to co-author Prados, 'It was the real story of Khe Sanh.' With the merger of both Prados' and Stubbe's exhaustive research, Valley of Decision has to be the most comprehensive book on Khe Sanh to date. Both men have uncovered forgotten events that will certainly be eye-openers for Vietnam War history buffs..."

Col. William H. Dabney, [book review], U.S. Naval Institute, *Proceedings* 118/9/1,075 (Sep., 1992) pp. 112-113.

Chaplain Stubbe was a participant in the siege; John Prados is a historian. Their collaboration has produced a balanced, accurate, and eminently readable history of a long-running battle that in its conduct, no less than in its outcome, typifies the frustrations of the Vietnam War... It is unlikely to be surpassed unless and until there is unrestricted access to Hanoi's archives."

[Book review], Third Recon Association, *Harborsite*, Issue #2 (Oct., 1992) p. 11.

"Ray Stubbe, the renowned Chaplain of Khe Sanh, has spent most of his life since the debacle called the 'Siege of Khe Sanh' occurred, researching what happened there and why! Stubbe is also the founder of the Khe Sanh Vets, Inc. His vow to write a definitive book on Khe Sanh became a reality after over 20 years of research.. [and] teaming up with historian John Prados. The book was compiled from over 50,000 pages of documentation gathered by Ray through personal interviews, notes, letters, diaries, and eyewitness accounts from those that were there... It is the most far reaching history of Khe Sanh experience written. It has a manner and style that will enable all to finally understand the full impact of the war's most controversial engagement.."

Ken Cope, "I Remember," in Third Marine Division Association, *Two Score and Ten*, Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Co., 1992, p. 231.

"I remember running back from the command post bunker and diving into a slit trench as a rocket hit above our heads ... the straps from our packs digging into our shoulders 'till they were numb ... blood in our boots ... and the Reverend Stubbe pronouncing over the dead."

[*SSGT John Reid's photo of the 28 Jan 1968 worship service appears on p. 218.*]

1993

Spector, Ronald H., *After Tet, The Bloodiest Year in Vietnam*, New York: The Free Press, 1993.

"I relied heavily on the extensive material at the Marine Corps Historical Center collected over more than twenty years by Reverend Ray W. Stubbe, the former chaplain at Khe Sanh, a mine of information and a fitting memorial to those who served there."[p. xii.]

[p. xii]:*"The Reverend Ray W. Stubbe, former chaplain at Khe Sanh, kindly allowed me access to his immense collection of material accumulated over two decades concerning the siege of Khe Sanh. Some of this material has since been incorporated into Valley of Decision: The Siege of Khe Sanh, by John Prados and Ray W. Stubbe, published in 1991."*

Page 125: *"Marine chaplain Ray Stubbe noted that at one point Khe Sanh's celebrated rat population suddenly disappeared, not for any lack of garbage and C rations at the combat base, but 'because all the enemy bodies and body parts strewn so close to the combat base made better food.'"* (Ref: *Chaplain at Khe Sanh*, p. 714).

Page 129: *"Chaplain Stubbe wrote in his diary: 'Was it all worth it? Six transit Gloria mundi.'* [*Chaplain at Khe* Sanh, p. 756]. *Chaplain Stubbe's misgivings were mild indeed compared with the reaction of General William Westmoreland when he learned of plans for 'Retrograde.'"*

Douglas Porch, [book review], Society for Military History, *The Journal of Military History*, 57:1 (Jan., 1993) pp. 180-181.

[*"..Prados and Stubbe have produced an impressive account of the siege... Perhaps the final link between Dien Bien Phu and Khe Sanh is that Prados and Stubbe have replicated in quality Fall's study of that earlier battle, in a book which is surely destined to become the classic account of the siege of Khe Sanh."*]

Book review in Parameters, U.S. Army War College Quarterly 23:1 (Spring, 1993) pp. 120-121.

"..With the emotional sweep of a novelist, Stubbe carries the reader through to the apogee and denouement of the fighting. The buildup of fire on the base and the increasingly debilitating existence of the besieged are sympathetically described. Stubbe does not discuss the concomitant debilitation of personal and unit discipline and order among the Marines, a condition which many military visitors to Khe Sanh observed. I am sure that there were few Marines who 'openly wept' when ordered to Khe Sanh, but those who did would likely have sought a chaplain like Stubbe. Stubbe accepts uncritically the opinions of the interviewees, providing a 'chaplainesque' view of the daily miseries and tribulations of the Marines subject to the siege..."

Harris, Richard G., "Khe Sanh," *American History Illustrated* 28:1 (March/April, 1993), pp. 38 and 73.

[*p. 38] "Recommended reading: Valley of Decision: The Siege of Khe Sanh by John Prados and Ray W. Stubbe (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991) is a definitive account of Khe Sanh operations, including events both before and after the 1968 siege. (Coauthor Stubbe served as a chaplain at the combat base)."*

[p. 73] "More than one thousand veterans of Khe Sanh have formed their own organization, which meets annually and publishes a newsletter. For information contact Rev. Ray W. Stubbe, President Emeritus, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., 8766 Parkview Court, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin 53226."

[Review note], Institute of East Asia Studies, *Indochina Chronology* 12:3 (July-September, 1993), p. 29.

" 'A Large Battle in a Small Place: Khe Sanh in Vietnam,' by Rev. Ray Stubbe (ex-Navy chaplain, Khe Sanh veteran), Fortitudine, Spring, 1993. A graphically written description of this all important battle of the Vietnam War about which more nonsense has been written than all others combined. One of the most persistent fiction that the battle never actually came off there was no 'closing.' However, Khe Sanh was not a 13th century siege battle. It was a multi-dimensional far-ranging late 20th century battle, the enormity of which is indicated by the box of statistics that accompanies the article. With map. Recommended."

1994

[Note], "One chaplain's treasure becomes the Chaplain Corps treasure!" U.S. Navy Chief of Chaplains, *Currents* 3:8 (June, 1994) p. 5.

"For years it has been claimed that Chaplain Ray Stubbe could be seen poking through trash bins looking for treasures. Fact is, he was often successful. His recent, extremely generous, donation to the Chaplain Corps Archives is proof. Just recently, Chaplain Stubbe sent eight boxes of materials, books, papers, magazines, as his personal contribution to the preservation of Chaplain Corps history.

" 'Thank you!' doesn't say enough. We are deeply indebted to his willingness to part with numerous books written by or about chaplains. Some of them date back to the 19th century, early 20th century, and WW I. Some gems include....

"These items will be stored in the CHC Archives for reference, with careful attention to their preservation and safe keeping. Chaplains are welcome to stop by and take a look at and make use of our new holdings. Again, we thank Chaplain Stubbe, and request of others in the Chaplain Corps who have found and filed treasures, to remember the Archives when you get ready to carve a path through your storage areas! The CHC Archives are located at the CRB [Chaplain Resource Board]."

1995

Leepson, Marc, "The Broad Brushtrokes Of Ron Zaczek's Word Processor," Vietnam Veterans of America, *The VVA Veteran*, 15:1 (January, 1995) p. 21.

[*Includes paragraph*]

"One memorable letter came from Ray Stubbe, a retired Navy chaplain and the co-author of a book about the Battle of Khe Sanh in which both he and Zaczek took part. 'He recognized my name because of research he is doing about Khe Sanh,' Zaczek said. Stubbe and Zaczek corresponded about a bloody incident in which Zaczek helped evacuate three men from a firefight on a hill near Khe Sanh. 'I assumed one of the guys who was bathed in blood had died, but I never wanted to know,' Zaczek said. 'Stubbe told me their names and that all three guys lived.'"

Joe Williams, "Memorial Day's meaning not lost on vet," Milwaukee, Wi., *Journal Sentinel*, Sunday, May 28, 1995, pp. 1B-2B.

... "The Rev. Ray Stubbe, of Wauwatosa, is part of a shrinking group of patriots who 'will spend Memorial Day doing what Americans did when the holiday originated in 1868—honoring those who offered their lives in exchange for freedom.

" 'Our culture is so caught up in business and entertainment—and lately violence—that we tend to forget the really important things like friendship and loyalty,' said Stubbe, 56, a chaplain in the Vietnam War and assistant pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Milwaukee.

" 'Memorial Day gives us an opportunity to reflect.'

"On Monday, Stubbe plans to join other veterans at ceremonies at Wisconsin Memorial Park...

" 'I think when you are in the service, you just participate in the ceremony,' he said. 'There has to be some distance to appreciate the opportunity to reflect.'

"On Memorial Day, Stubbe reflects about people such as Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer, a young conscientious objector from Florida who had been shuffled through the military bureaucracy for several weeks before landing with Stubbe in Khe Sanh, surrounded by 40,000 North Vietnamese soldiers.

" 'He was so against the war, he wouldn't take up his rifle,' Stubbe said.

"Spicer was transferred to Stubbe's command to help with passive combat tasks such as carrying stretchers and supplies. He wouldn't touch a weapon, but when push came to shove, he more than held his own with his new work, Stubbe said. [p. 2B]

" 'When incoming (wounded) would arrive, he would go out and lay by their sides and cover them with his own body,' Stubbe said. 'When the helicopters would get there, he became a tiger, ordering others to carry stretchers.'

"Spicer arrived in Khe Sanh sometime around Jan. 21, 1968. On March 8, he took a load of shrapnel in his heart.

"A group of young but determined doctors performed open-heart surgery and were able to give Spicer two more weeks of life before he died.

" 'He always told me, "I don't care what happens to me. I just don't want to hurt anybody else,"' Stubbe said. 'They gave him a Navy Cross, which I always thought was pretty impressive for a conscientious objector.'

"Stubbe's Memorial Day thoughts also turn to Frank Kennedy, a young man who was able to transport more than 1,000 pounds of blood by helicopter after the base's landing lights were blown out.

"He thinks of John Hinson, a non-swimmer who drowned after diving into a river to rescue others, and of the young chaplain assistant who was learning Greek so that he could be ordained, but who didn't leave Vietnam alive.

" 'As a chaplain, people shared their lives with me—their friends, families, hopes and fears. And then they would get killed,' Stubbe said.

"Stubbe's Memorial Day thoughts turn to young people such as Hinson, Spicer, Kennedy and so many others who followed to their deaths President John F. Kennedy's challenge to ask what they could do for their country.

" 'There were just so many, and they are the ones I think of on Memorial Day,' Stubbe said..."]

1996

Marc Leepson, "Books in Review," Vietnam Veterans of America, *The VVA Veteran* 16:11 (Oct./Nov., 1996), p. 37.

"Ray W. Stubbe, a retired Navy chaplain, served with the U.S. Marines in Vietnam, most notably at Khe Sanh. Stubbe and John Prados co-wrote Valley of Decision (1992), an excellent, detailed account of that battle. The Final Formation (Khe Sanh Vets, 210 pp. $12. paper) is Stubbe's latest effort to give a full picture of the memorable battle. This book, being sold as a fundraiser for Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., contains a detailed, annotated listing of all the casualties in the general Khe Sanh battlefield. To order, write: 8766 Park Viet Ct., Wauwatosa, WI 53226."

Robin Holzhauer, "One Voice: 'War is obviously immoral'," Wauwatosa, Wi., *News-Times* 98:47 (Thursday, Nov. 21, 1996), pp. 1, 13.

"Maybe sometime this will all end. If the people back there could see all the suffering that the men go through, the 'hawks' would be less 'hawkish' and the doves would be more realistic (and focus their attention on the predicament of the fighting man, not on the immorality of war). War is obviously immoral."—Ray Stubbe.

"Ray Stubbe's desire for it all to end Jan 20, 1968, was not fulfilled. In fact, things soon got worse for Stubbe and the people assigned to a military base at Khe Sanh in Vietnam, near the Laos border.

"One day later, one of the biggest battles of the war would begin when North Vietnamese troops surrounded the base and shelled it almost daily for three months.

"Stubbe had served in the Navy from 1956 to 1958 and remained in the reserved until 1967, when the Navy reactivated his tour and sent him to Vietnam to serve as a chaplain. He stayed in the country until January 1969.

[p. 13]

"When the 40,000 North Vietnamese troops surrounded the base, it surprised the men, although they later found out people on higher ground [sic, should be "higher levels (of command)"] saw the troops amassing but did not tell them. The battle got so bad the command staff considered using small nuclear weapons, Stubbe said, but eventually decided not to.

"The casualties of the three month siege were high. 475 Americans were killed and another 2,000 were evacuated for medical purposes, and 6,000 to 8,000 Bru, the mountain tribe who livged in the area, and up to 20,000 North Vietnamese killed.

" 'And then, right after the battle, we abandoned the place so it's always been very ambiguous if we won or not,' Stubbe said.

" What so many fail to see is that man is not naturally good, and will not naturally do the right thing, and that the choices before men today are not black and white but of different shades of gray. [direct quote from a letter I wrote]

"After fighting in Vietnam, many people came back to America believing in the evilness of man, but Stubbe does not fall into that group. Instead, he went into the war believing 'man is not naturally good,' but, because of his experiences at Khe Sanh during the battle, his philosophy changed.

" 'What I observed was how people would care for each other,' he said. 'there was evgeryday heroism. A lot of people dashed out and rescued people who were wounded. That happened all the time. I suppose what happens in battle is you realize you're going to die at some time and you might as well help each other while you're there.'

"All supplies had to be flown into the base since the North Vietnamese had surrounded the area, Stubbe said. The base itself was about one to 1.5 miles long, so pilots flying in supplies sometimes missed the drop zone. Water came from a creek that began outside the base so the men never knew if it would be cut off or poisoned by their enemies.

"But as the battle continued, people would share their last drops of water and final tins of food, not knowing if another supply would come. Almost every day there would be shelling, not only from the enemy, but from American B-52 bombers sent in to clear away North Vietnamese. Eventually, the planes flew within one half mile of the base, shaking the earth when the bombs dropped.

"As chaplain Stubbe held four-minute services, including a prayer, a qui ck sermon, and communion, with a few people at a time. Large groups could not gather because the lookouts for the North Vietnamese would watch and a large group would become a target for bombers.

" 'I can't say people are basically bad anymore,' Stubbe said. 'I tend to see the goodness of people now. I would say people are basically good now, but they're covered in layers of mud other people splashed on them. I still think we live in a world of grays.'

"While many people believe God deserts in times of war, Stubbe disagrees.

" 'A lot of Vets say, Where was God in the war?' he said. 'Especially in Vietnam. They said he was AWOL—absent without leave. I respond that God was there in these actions I saw.

"Stubbe said he knows of eight men stationed with him at Khe Sanh who became priests or ministers because of their experience in Vietnam. [This has subsequently been increased to about two dozen]

"Well, perhaps that's the way this war is. It's ugly, it's painful, excruciatingly so, but maybe that's the only way new life can come to these people who have lived under terror for 40 years. [direct quote from a letter]

"The people Stubbe came into contact with fit the description of being fearful of the communist government, especially at Khe Sanh. There, mountain tribes people lived, people who were considered a different racial class than the Vietnamese. As such, they were discriminated against and could not leave the area during the fighting.

"Often, modern movies portray the majority of Vietnamese residents as resentful of the American presence but that was not the case, Stubbe said. Many people looked to the Americans as protectors and hoped their situation would improve after the war. In the end though, Stubbe feels Americans abandoned people who needed them most.

" 'We did abandon these people, ,which makes it (the war) all the sadder,' he said. 'We could not evacuate them and later we just abandoned them.'

"Movies, and even the media during the war, have given a distorted image of what Vietnam was like. Soldiers get portrayed as poor, angry drug abusers who treated new recruits badly. Vietnam was complex, Stubbe said, and certainly there was anger, especially during the end of the war, bcut a myth has grown up that has clouded the issue.

" 'You get these movies that are sensational—that's just not an accurate summation,' he said. 'That's not the way things were. There are a lot of false images of Vietnam. the popular movies are all made by people who weren't in Vietnam—(Oliver) Stone, (Francis Ford) Coppola—they weren't; even there.'

"Stubbe said he never saw any drug abuse and often saw more veteran soldiers taking newer people under their wing. This is part of the reason Stubbe sees the book 'Voices from Vietnam' as important. People who fought, lived and worked in Vietnam during the war need to leave a record so people know what really happened.

" 'I think this will help inform and preserve,' he said.

"Stubbe remained in Vietnam for 18 months and remained on active duty in the Navy until 1985. In 1991, he co-authored 'Valley of Decision,' an account of his experiences during the siege of Khe Sanh. He currently lives in Wauwatosa, volunteers as a pastor at a Milwaukee church and works with a veterans' group comprised of people stationed at Khe Sanh."

1997

Herb Richardson, "With Faith and Devotion," *Leatherneck* 80:4 (April, 1997), pp. 14-18.

[*Three photographs: Leading worship on Hill 950, the Reid photo of 28 Jan 1968, and conducting worship at the DaNang POW camp on Christmas Day, 1968, plus an article on chaplains in general, including these paragraphs on p. 15*]

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

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

"Stubbe understood the need for small, frequent services.

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

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

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

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

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

"He conducted 53 total worship services along the way.

"Attendance was 435.

"Stubbe also conducted eight counseling cases while he was resting.

"Rest was a hard thing to find at times.

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

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

[..Mention of Father Brett and Alexander Chin, his assistant]

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

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

"He was killed by incoming ordnance while evacuating casualties.

"Notch up a Navy Cross for the conscientious objector.

TSgt Henry D. O'Hara, Letter to the Editor, " 'Misfit' For Religious Services>'," *Leatherneck* 80:7 (July, 1977) p. 55.

[*Objects to photo showing me conducting Christmas services at the DaNang POW compound that was included in the Richardson article on chaplains*]

"On page 18 (April 1997) the picture you say is of Marines attending church services. Are you sure they are U.S. Marines?

"They are, for sure, a bunch of misfits, and whoever was in charge should have been court-martialed.

"Look at the photo and see some dummy and a clown wearing cowboy hats and not clothed from the waist up, and look at their shoes or what they are wearing.

"I usually give my copy (of Leatherneck) to a recreation hall, but not this issue. It goes in the trash, as I am ashamed of this photo you people saw fit to print."

[*The Editor asked me to respond. This was the Editor's comment:*

"The photo was taken at the DaNang POW compound, just north of Marble Mountain, Vietnam, on Christmas Eve 1968. Chaplain Ray Stubbe said: 'It was indeed a motly crew of Marines, some were off duty, and some were not. The theme (of the service) was of the shepherds and how they were grubby, dirty, looked down on and received the message of the birth of Christ from the angels.'—Sound Off Ed."

Jack Shulimson, LtCol Leonard A. Blaisol, Charles R. Smith, and Capt David A. Dawson, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, The Defining Year, 1968*, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1997.

[*I am cited in footnotes on pp. 58, 59, 61, 65, 263, 276, 283, 327, 486, and listed as a reviewer of the draft manuscript on p. 763*

p. 58: "Former Navy chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, noted authority on Khe Sanh and its environs, observed that this census did not include the approximately 12,000 Montagnard tribesmen who lived in "some half dozen villes" in the immediate Khe Sanh area. LCdr Ray W. Stubbe, CHC, USN, Comments on draft chapter, dtd 23Oc94 (Vietnam Comments File), hereinafter Stubbe Comments."

p. 59: "Chaplain Stubbe noted the sharp contrast between the houses in Khe Sanh Village made of concrete and wood where the ethnic Vietnamese lived and the homes of the Bru made of bamboo and with grass roofs and on stilts in the surrounding "villes," Stubbe comments."

p. 61: "One authority on the battle of Khe Sanh, Chaplain Stubbe, commented that he was not sure why the guns were sent in the first place. His supposition was that they would be used to support FOB-3 operations in Laos. He was certain, however, that the guns would have made excellent targets for the North Vietnamese when they attacked the base. Stubbe comments."

p. 65: "Chaplain Stubbe recalled that the "People Sniffers" were bringing back hundreds of contacts. He remembered in the 26th Marines command post, "the map with the little red dots on the plastic overlay, and everyone wondering if this might not be an error–the detections of the ammonia from the urine of packs of monkeys." Stubbe also observed that the Marines also realized that radio pattern analysis could err when the NVA put out false transmitters, "broadcasting as though they were a Hq thus drawing airstrikes on a lone transmitter in the hills rather than a NVA Hq..." Notwithstanding these flaws, Stubbe contended eventually "together and coordinated, the intelligence was of great significance." Stubbe comments."

p. 263: "According to Prados and Stubbe, Captain Clarke was out on an early morning patrol just before the enemy onslaught on the 21st, but "miraculously got back to the perimeter and under cover" to help coordinate the defense. John Prados and Ray W. Stubbe, Valley of Decision, The Siege of Khe Sanh (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1991), p. 258."

p. 276: "Most Marines agreed with General Cushman and would accept the statement of Navy Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, who has written and researched extensively on the subject of Khe Sanh, that an entire NVA regiment "waited to ambush any rescue force." LCdr Ray W. Stubbe, Comments on draft, dtd 23Oct94 (Vietnam Comments File."

p. 283: "Prados and Stubbe quote Captain Dabney about the possible firing of a Soviet FROG (Free Rocket Over Ground) missile, but found no other evidence of the NVA employing ground to ground missiles during the Khe Sanh campaign,. Prados and Stubbe, *Valley of Decision*, p. 392."

p. 327: "Ray W. Stubbe, who has done extensive research in this area, has provided the following figures based on his findings: He found the number of Marines killed for Operation Scotland to be 274 as opposed to 205. He cautions, however, that there are differences between the figures given in the command chronologies and those in the after-action reports and that none of the totals really jibe. Lieutenant Commander Stubbe gives as the best total for Operation Scotland and Pegasus, not including Lang Vei, as 560, including specialized Marine, Army and Air Force units. He gives a total of 219 KIA (Army and South Vietnamese) for Lang Vei. Chaplain Stubbe explained that there were many reasons for the discrepancies including staff officers frequently engaged with an on-going operation, "while still attempting to write reports on a previous operation,." He also observed that for most troops, "the entire period from the beginning of the siege until their departure is, for them, their Khe Sanh battle." Dates of the beginnings and endings of the various operations are as artificial and abstract as the border of Laos and Vietnam. It is the difference between "lived" battles and "officially recorded battles." LCdr Ray W. Stubbe, USN, Comments on draft, dtd 23Oct and 25Oct94 (Vietnam Comments File)."

p. 486: "Navy Lieutenant Commander Ray W. Stubbe, who has researched and written extensively on Khe Sanh, commented "the US Air Force's count of secondary explosions" at Khe Sanh, by which MACV determined through their complex mathematical formulae just how many NVA were killed, is grossly faulted since many of the "secondary explosions" they counted were actually conjointly-fired artillery missions: What they counted as a secondary explosion being, actually, a "friendly explosion." LCdr Ray W. Stubbe, USN, Comments on draft, 25Oct94 (Vietnam Comments File)."].

William R. Phillips, *Night of the Silver Stars*, Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1997.

[*I am mentioned on p. 114*] *"Authors John Prados and Ray Stubbe, in* Valley of Decision, *tell about Wilkinson sending Alpha Company of the First Battalion, 26th Marines, on the practice run. In their book, Capt. John W. Raymond commanded Alpha Company, which went through the bush, avoided both roads and trails, and accomplished the feat in nineteen h ours. Wilkinson today remembers the practice run exactly as Prado [sic.] and Stubbe described it.."*

1998

Joanne Weintraub, "Soldiers tell their story of Vietnam," Milwaukee, Wi., *Journal Sentinel* 116:327 (Thursday, Oct. 8, 1998), pp. E1, E4.

[*Large colored photo of conducting worship on Hill 950, face shot, and photo of Khe Sanh sign in Khe Sanh village, plus large article*]

"The first time U.S. Navy Lt Ray Stubbe saw Khe Sanh, he thought it was paradise: a place of soaring hills and silken mists, as green as Eden and, from the air, as peaceful.

"When even the illusion of peace gave way, Khe Sanh would never be the same. Neither would Stubbe, nor any of the thousands of other Marines who endured a pitiless 77-day siege there.

"Many of those men, including Stubbe, now a Wauwatosa resident and a Lutheran pastor in Milwaukee, recall their experiences of 30 years ago in 'Vietnam: The Soldiers' Story' (8 p.m., Sunday Tuesday, TLC), a six-hour cable special to be shown over three nights next week.

...

"Stubbe, then a 29 year-old chaplain serving with the Marines, arrived at the South Vietnam hill post in the summer of 1967. What had looked so heavenly from the air was something else at ground level, those green slopes hiding rats, fleas, razor-edged elephant grass and dank mud that dried into clinging red dust.

"Just a few miles from both the North Vietnamese and Laotian borders, Khe Sanh's hills hid something else, too: Viet Cong troops who had been making increasing frequent and deadly raids on the Americans and South Vietnamese. [sic., should be North Vietnamese soldiers, not Viet Cong]

"In January '68, a few months after Stubbe's arrival, these surreptitious raids became an [p. E4] all-out attack, an assault by North Vietnamese rockets, mortars, artillery and sniper fire, met by American B-52 bombers, that would not let up for more than two months.

"Surrounded by tens of thousands of hostile troops, accessible only by air, Khe Sanh received only sporadic deliveries of food, water and other supplies. Stubbe remembers how the men would spread plastic sheets on the ground at night, then lick off the morning dew.

"But religious services went on. The Lutheran chaplain from Milwaukee became the master of the two-sentence sermon, often serving communion to three or four or a dozen men on the battlefield—without his helmet, because he couldn't get used to wearing one while conducting services, Stubbe recalls with a guilty laugh.

"Later, when the Marines awarded him a Bronze Star for his serviced at Khe Sanh, he would be cited for the bravery and 'exceptional compassion' that repeatedly exposed him to hostile fire so he could minister to those who needed him most.

"The Marine base at Khe Sanh drew Viet Cong attacks 'like flypaper,' in Stubbe's words. It would soon become clear that the North Vietnamese had ravages the green hills less for the area's strategic importance than as a diversion, enabling Hanoi to prepare for the even bloodier Tet Offensive that year.

"But Khe Sanh was bloody enough...

"Veteran after veteran interviewed for the program says Khe Sanh was a life-changing event. Stubbe, who at 60 has lived as many years after the siege as before it, says he is still trying to come to terms with his own transformation.

"Following his 1965 ordination, Stubbe founded All Saints Lutheran Church in Oak Creek and entered a doctoral program at the University of Chicago.

"But as the war gathered weight, the young clergyman, though neither a hawk nor a dove, decided his own religious and ethical responsibility was to rejoin the military—he had served a decade before, between his graduation from Washington High School and his enrollment in Minnesota's St. Olaf College—and minister to U.S. troops.

"He never completed the doctoral program. Instead, Stubbe stayed on in Vietnam until '69, then continued with the Navy until retiring in 1985.

"He now serves as a substitute pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in downtown Milwaukee, but his other ministry remains Khe Sanh.

"Stubbe has collected voluminous reminiscences, diary entries and letters about the siege and the months surrounding it, many of which appear in a 1991 book, 'Valley of Decision,' which Stubbe co-wrote with historian John Prados.

"In 1989, he founded an association of Khe Sanh vets, a group which now has a membership of about 2,500 and publishes a magazine.

"He calls the Marines who endured the siege with him 'the finest men I know' and still marvels at their willingness to risk their lives for each other, even when some of them—Stubbe among them—questioned the morality of the U.S. position in Vietnam.

"Stubbe has also done years of research on the Americans who died at Khe Sanh, producing as historian Prados writes, something like a verbal equivalent of the Vietnam memorial wall.

"So Stubbe found a cause and a community—now a scattered community, but from the evidence of the articles in the Khe Sanh magazine, one to which its members are passionately devoted.

"And, of course, there were things he lost. Not just friends, many of them younger than himself, but, says Stubbe, who never married, some of his ability to draw as close to others as he might like.

" 'We were sure we were going to die,' Stubbe says. 'And that changes you permanently.'

"One thing hasn't changed in 30 years. Asked whether he believes the U.S. position in Vietnam was morally defensible, he says: 'You know, I still]can't tell you. I'm still in the woods on that.']

" 'Vietnam: The Soldier's Story'," Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Milwaukee, Wi., *Tidings* 69:18 (Nov. 1, 1998) p. 11.

[*Announces the TV program and the newspaper article, concluding with the paragraph:*
"The interview paints a richly deserved tribute to Ray for all that he has done and all that he is. A copy of the article is in the church office. If you would like a photocopy mailed out to you, please give us a call. We have many reasons to take pride and give thanks for the life and ministry of Ray Stubbe. We are richly blessed."]

1999

"Marine Corps Service Begins Memorial Weekend Observances," Wisconsin Memorial Park, Wi., *The Park's WordsForLife* (Spring, 1999), p. 2

"On Sunday, May 30, at 9:30 a.m., the Badger Detachment of the Marine Corps League and Badger Unit of the Marine Corps League Auxiliary conduct one of the largest Memorial weekend observances at the Park. 500 to 700 people will be in attendance in Liberty Court of the Gardens of Eternal Life.

"The guest speaker for this year's observance will be Ray Stubbe, a chaplain during the Vietnam War, 1976 [sic, should be 1967]-1985. Rev. Stubbe will be joined by the Cudworth Chorus..."

Fred Buning, "Letting Soldiers Talk, Recollections of the horror and perils that were Vietnam," (New York), *Newsday*, Tue., Aug. 31, 1999, Section B, pp. 1, 7, 10.

[*Quoted on p. 10*]

"The Rev. Ray Stubbe, a Lutheran minister who served as a Navy chaplain in Vietnam during the 1968 Khe Sanh siege, voiced similar thoughts in 'The Soldier's Story.'

" 'You don't want to leave your buddies,' Stubbe is quoted as saying. 'It's like being welded almost, in the heat of the battle... You don't want to abandon it.'

"But the world intruded at last. Tours of duty ended. The men came home and went separate ways, and many retreated into their own thoughts, Stubbe said. Still, they never forgot one another. 'They were maybe the most marvelous people, as a group, I've ever met, I've ever been with,' Stubbe said.

"From his home in suburban Milwaukee, Stubbe, 61, who is retired from the Navy but still preaches in a local church, said he hears from many of the vets. 'They call me all the time,' said Stubbe, who wrote a book 'Valley of Decision: A History of Khe Sanh,' and founded a national organization for survivors of the siege. 'They will have grief dealing with friends who died.'

"Stubbe says veterans need to talk—to one another, to the important people in their lives and, in a way, to the nation.

" 'It breaks the spell,' he said. 'If you can externalize by talking about it, then you are not in it. Your wounds enable others to deal with theirs.'"

2001

Beth Laski, "Zwick enlisted for 'Khe Sanh'; Hanks on team," *The Hollywood Reporter* Vol. 367, No. 27 (March 22, 2001) pp. 1 and 48.

"Multihyphenate Edward Zwick, up for an Oscar on Sunday for producing 'Traffic,' is in negotiations to direct Fox 2000's drama 'Khe Sanh,' being scripted by William Broyles Jr. and produced by Tom Hanks, about how a priest's faith is challenged by his experiences at that besieged outpost during the Vietnam war.

"In has not yet been determined whether Hanks, also in the running for an Oscar for his starring turn in [p. 48] 'Cast Away,' will star in the project. The story is told through the eyes of then 30-year-old Ray Stubbe, who served as a Navy Chaplain for the 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment at Khe Sanh from July 1967 through most of the 2 ½ month siege that ended in spring 1968. The siege of Khe Sanh was one of the most bitterly fought battles of the war. 'Khe Sanh' is currently a working title for the project.

"Fox optioned the feature film rights to the 1,500-page diary Stubbe kept during his time in Vietnam when he held as many as a dozen prayer sessions daily. Stubbe spent most of his term of service in the midst of the action, counseling soldiers and witnessing the death and destruction.

"Broyles has been working on the project for the past several years, and Zwick is the most recent addition to the team that has included Hanks. Broyles met with Stubbe at Stubbe's home in Wauwatosa, Wis., and has completed several drafts of the script..."

Geeta Sharma Jensen, "Letters from hell tell heroes' stories," Milwaukee, Wi., *Journal Sentinel*, Sun, Aug. 26, 2001, p. 2E: "Wisconsin War Letters.:

" Vietnam War: Ray W. Stubbe, who now lives in Wauwatosa, was a 29 year-old chaplain with the Navy reserve at the Marine base in Khe Sanh when Communist forces blitzed the base in January 1968. The attack on Jan. 21 was the beginning

of a 75-day siege that would leave hundreds of Americans dead. But Stubbe didn't know that when, on Jan 21, he wrote his parents in Wisconsin:

'Dear Folks:

'First, I'm OK, not even a scratch. The casualties have been comparatively small. So don't worry.

'I feel I'm needed here. I give every waking moment to these men. They are basically good men, but not particularly religious as such, although I'm quite sure many prayed today! Yet I love them all, and give my daily life for them, and I do it not for personal satisfaction or companionship ore a sense of personal accomplishment, but because I feel this is God's will'."

Rob Golub: "Vietnam War chaplain to be subject of movie," Racine, Wis., *The Journal Times* Vol. 144, No. 313 (Fri., Nov. 9, 2001), p. 1. Large colored photograph beside altar made from 105mm ammo boxes and article:

" The screen writer for 'Planet of the Apes' and 'Cast Away' is crafting a new script for a movie about a heroic Wauwatosa pastor who counseled soldiers in the Vietnam War. Tom Hanks could play the pastor.

"The pastor is Ray Stubbe, who by coincidence will lead interfaith prayer services on Veterans Day at Memorial Hall. With thoughts of Sept. 11, Racinians are invited to bring their American flags to Memorial Hall at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, so that Stubbe can lead a joint blessing of the flags.

"Screenwriter William Broyles Jr. has reported to Stubbe in recent months that he is reworking the script. Broyles, an accomplished Hollywood screenwriter, has been working with Stubbe for years on the script for 'Khe Sanh.' The Hollywood Reporter, a trade paper, has reported 'Khe Sanh' might even star its producer, Tom Hanks.

"Despite this flurry of Hollywood activity, Stubbe lives a relatively normal li8fe in Wauwatosa.

"Stubbe is a retired 63-year-old pastor, but he's a superhero in the eyes of some who knew him at the American military base in Khe Sanh, Vietnam. He served as a Navy chaplain at the outpost, where he was a twinkle of humanity in a place of fear and darkness.

" 'He was very inspiring without saying a lot of words,' said Richard Bryant of Kenosha, a former Marine who served with Stubbe. 'He made you want to be a little bit better than you were.'...

"In the siege of Khe Sanh, enemy troops surrounded a vastly outnumbered contingent of a few thousand American soldiers. Enemy rockets and bombs leveled the buildings on base, most especially when an ammunition depot was hit.

"So thousands of American 18- and 19-year-olds hid in trenches for weeks, with bombs constantly [p. 11A] falling from the sky, and the threat of invasion ever-present. They went without fresh water or sleep for days, waiting in the mud for death.

"Soldiers were ordered to avoid getting into groups of more than five or so. Groups of people were easy targets for the North Vietnamese Army. It presented Stubbe with a problem. How could he lead prayer services without grouping soldiers?

"The solution: Go to the soldiers in the trenches. Stubbe could have stayed in a foxhole or a bunker, said Bryant, and no one would have blamed him.

"Bryant, 52, seems 19 again when he remembers Stubbe's words at the prayer sessions: 'We were doing our duties. We were defending freedom. He would tell us how proud he was of us.'

" 'I'd be very, very, very short,' remembered Stubbe during an interview at his Wauwatosa home. 'I'd give maybe a two-sentence commentary about how God is with us. I had (Holy) Communion.'

"Hollywood may want a movie about a pastor whose faith is challenged by living in an outpost under siege. Stubbe's true story, however, is different.

" 'I can't say that my faith was really questioned,' he said. 'People were caring for each other, they were sharing their last drops of water.'

"In any case, he said, 'I think of God as present in suffering.'

"In that sense, his faith was strengthened, he said, though in 1968 he didn't really have much time to think about it.

" 'I felt like I was sort of like a robot,' he said.

"Stubbe sees a disturbing parallel between the siege of Khe Sanh and life in America since Sept. 11.

" 'We realize there's no safe place,' he said. 'Those of us who were in battle, especially Vietnam, understand—the uncertainties, the helplessness.

" 'It's something we have lived with and don't usually talk about because no one really understood.' Now, he said, American civilians have some level of understanding.

"Stubbe has poured memories of the siege into an unused bedroom in his house. The room has become a tribute, with plaques and maps.

"Most striking may be the recreation of the makeshift altar he used before the siege. The altar is made of four stacked rifle boxes and a camouflaged parachute for a tablecloth. He used the bottom half of a rocket-shaped mortar shell for a candle stick.

"The siege of Khe Sanh, which started in January 1968, finally relented in March of that year. Highly targeted American bombing from the air helped drive the enemy back.

"It's all history now, and it's history with a record. Stubbe kept day-by-day diaries at Khe Sanh, which he rewrote into thousands of typed pages. It's the basis for a book he co-wrote, 'Valley of Decision,' and for the first-draft motion picture script Broyles gave him.

"Stubbe, who also founded the first Khe Sanh veterans' association, wants recognition for the men of Khe Sanh.

"He hopes that in the movie he'll be a narrative device, using him to show the viewer what it was like for the grunts. He's doing it for the soldiers. More than 30 years after the siege of Khe Sanh, Stubbe's mission continues."

"Ceremonies planned for Veterans Day," Racine County, Wisconsin, *The Journal Times*, Vol. 144, No. 314 (Sat., Nov. 10, 2001), p. 1D:

... *"The Rev. Ray Stubbe, who was a Navy chaplain during the Vietnam War, will lead the Veterans Day service. During the war, he offered communion to Christians on troop ships. Stubbe will be joined by the Olympia Brown Unitarian Church Choir, Mayor Jim Smith, and Racine County Executive Jean Jacobson. Flag projects from Giese Elementary School and Park High School will be displayed in the hall. Flag label pins and booklets with patriotic statements will be distributed. The event is sponsored by the Racine Area Veteran's Council and The Journal Times."*

Tenuta, Marci Laehr, "A day to honor gains new meaning," Racine County, Wisconsin, *The Journal Times*, Monday, Nov. 12, 2001, p. 1.

"Thoughts of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks brought significantly larger crowds to Sunday's Veterans Day events than those of recent years.

"Ceremonies held around Racine County were crowded with hundreds of people to honor those who have served in the U.S. military and to pray for those currently involved in combat.

"On Sunday morning at Memorial Hall in Racine, the Racine Area Veterans Council held a special prayer service and flag blessing ceremony . Rev. Ray Stubbe, a ELCA Lutheran pastor who was a Navy chaplain during the Vietnam War, led the service.

"Local residents were asked to bring in American flags to be blessed on Veterans Day.

" 'Blessing something or someone is not just saying nice words,' Stubbe said, 'It is giving a thing or a person a force. It is making that person or thing a vehicle of the Lord's presence, so that life and growth of life in all its fullness emanates and radiates outwards.'

"Stubbe asked all those who had brought flags to hold them high above their heads. He said red is the color of blood, of life, of passion, and of warmth.

" 'Increase our love of people, our passion for the gift of life, our readiness to sacrifice, as we recall those who have made the red of this flag a reminder of their sacrifice to our nation and those beyond our nation to give freedom, life, and blessing,' he said.

"White, Stubbe said, is the presence of all colors without spot or blemish.

" 'Keep us aware that we are one people of many colors and backgrounds,' he said. 'Remind us to work to cleanse our nation of destructive, life-robbing forces that would blemish and stain our people, and to keep ourselves pure so we are strong for the sake of all others.

"Finally, he said that blue stood for loyalty, the sea and sky, for hope and is the background of the stars.

" 'As we have experienced the loyalty in which we all depend on each other in desperate battles, may the sight of this starry blue field remind us that we, as individual stars, are joined together in a mighty constellation.' Stubbe said. 'May it remind us to be faithful, and true and loyal.'

At the ceremony, Mayor Jim Smith and Racine County Executive Jean Jacobson extended their thanks to local veterans..."

2002

National Conference of Viet Nam Veteran Ministers, *NCVNVM Membership News* 11:4 (Mar. 1, 2001), p. 7. [*Reprint of the article by Rob Golue of the Racine Journal Times*].

Jurate Kazickas, *et al*, Gloria Emerson, Intro., *War Torn, Stories of War from the Women Reporters Who Covered Vietnam*, New York: Random House, 2002, p. 136.

"I once asked Reverend Ray Stubbe, the Lutheran chaplain of Khe Sanh and a military historian, if the men who lost their lives in Vietnam had died in vain.

" 'I don't think Vietnam was worth fighting for, but I cannot bring myself to say their deaths were meaningless. War is not about divisions and battalions of men. It is made up of squads and recon teams and your buddies in the bunker,' Reverend Stubbe said. 'These men did not die for Vietnam or Washington. They died for their friends—trying to save each other or giving of themselves to prevent others from dying. These deaths were not meaningless because the men died for each other.' "

Jonathan Shay, M.D., Ph.D., *Odysseus in America, Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*, New York: Scribner, 2002. [Listed on p. xiv in acknowledgments].

2003

Edward E. Murphy, *The Hill Fights, The First Battle of Khe Sanh*, New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group, Random House, 2003, p. vii, "Acknowledgments."

"The Rev. Ray Stubbe, of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, was a Navy chaplain with the 26th Marines during the Khe Sanh siege in 1968. Since that time he has devoted untold thousands of hours to research that battle and other events relating to Khe Sanh and has earned a well-deserved reputation as the authority on the subject. His hard work resulted in the publication of the definitive Valley of Decision, which not only covers the siege but also provides considerable background material on the United States military's involvement at Khe Sanh, including the Hill Fights. Ray is also the founder of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, a veterans group with an annual meeting open to anyone who ever served in and around Khe Sanh. From the first time I contacted Ray about my project, he unselfishly provided every bit of help and assistance I needed. He supported my efforts and encouraged Hill Fights veterans to respond to my request for interviews. Ray routinely provided documents from his archives that even the Marine Corps Historical Center could not. When I needed a photograph, Ray provided it. He devoted some of his rare spare time to reviewing the manuscript and helping me over rough spots. Without his support, help, and encouragement, I could not have written this book."

2004

Note on front cover of book: Michael Archer, *A Patch of Ground, Khe Sanh Remembered*, Central Point, Or.: Hellgate Press, 2004.

"Preserves a part of history that might have been forgotten had Michael Archer not written it down. It captures the feelings, characters and events in a superb manner." Ray W. Stubbe, Chaplain of the 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment at Khe Sanh and co-author of Valley of Decision: The Siege of Khe Sanh and Inside Force Recon.

[Numerous quotations in]: Floyd, LtCol W.C., *Green Ghosts*, New York, iUniverse, Inc., 2004. [Floyd's hand-written note inside the book]: *"To Chaplain Ray Stubbe. Ray, I thank you for allowing me to use so much of your research and writing. As you browse through the contents of "Green Ghosts" you will wonder why you are not listed as co-author, but without your thoughts and insight I would not have been able to do justice to the chronicle of these men in combat. Thanks for your service to our country and your love of the Marines whose life you touched. You are a true American hero and more importantly a "real man of God." Semper fi, Bill Floyd."*]. [Excerpts from my *Aarugha* are on pp. 7-9, 10-11, 12, 13-14, 22-23, 38-39, 50-51, 80, 87-88].

2005

"After the Fall: Vietnam 30 Years Later," large colored photograph by Jack Orton showing heavy bag work at Duke Roufus Gym, on front page of: Milwaukee, Wi., *Journal Sentinel* Sat., April 30, 2005, p. 1.

Meg Jones, "Battles still fresh for vets," Milwaukee, Wi., *Journal Sentinel* , Vol. 123, No. 166 (Sat., April 30, 2005), p. 1A, 15A [Quotes on p. 15A]:

"For Ray Stubbe, a Navy chaplain who survived the siege of Khe Sanh, the war hasn't ended.

" 'I think you'll find I'm not alone. Some of these things are permanently there. They color our relationships with other people, how we see events, how we value things,' said Stubbe, a retired Lutheran minister who lives in Wauwatosa.

...

"Battlefield communion

"Stubbe didn't fight the war, but he saw up close the devastation it left on the beautiful land and Vietnamese people. Stubbe, who grew up in Milwaukee, volunteered to go on active duty as a Navy chaplain, knowing he would most likely get s hipped to Vietnam. He arrived in 1967, was attached to a Marine unit and stayed until January 1969.

"During the siege of Khe Sanh, ,which lasted more than two months, Stubbe ran to trenches and bunkers to minister to his Marines, performing 25 to 30 abbreviated services each day. Having a single service didn't work, since the Marines were told not to gather in groups of more than five or six to provide less of a target to the mortars, bombs and bullets that rained down on the base.

" 'During the battle I would do a whole service in like seven minutes. I would get it down to a couple of sentences and communion,' said Stubbe, who carried a small communion set with him that contained a small chalice and wine he had blessed. One time one of the Marines, inste3ad of taking a sip of wine, drank the whole cup of spirits, Stubbe said.

"One of the Marines on the base at Khe Sanh refused to use his rifle because he didn't want to hurt anyone. Stubbe told the man's commander he could work as a stretcher bearer, and the Marine ended up carrying litters with wounded and

dying men as artillery fire landed around them. Even when others were taking cover in trenches, the man stayed with the stretchers, sometimes lying over the wounded to protect them.

"One day the Marine stretcher be3arer was hit with shrapnel that pierced his heart. He died a couple of weeks later.

" 'I got to know him. I talked to him a lot. I thought in some sense I was responsible (for his death) for a long time,' Stubbe said. 'I thought, had I not intervened, they might have shipped him to the rear. Because I intruded he died.'

"It took many years for Stubbe to come to come to grips with the man's death and realize that he wasn't to blame.

"It hurts Stubbe to talk about the war and its effect on him. Since he's a minister, he said, sometimes people ask him where God was in the war. But his reply is always the same – the love he saw, when soldiers gave others their last drop of water or a hug in the midst of battle, the courage he saw, when soldiers risked their lives for their comrades, meant to him that God was present on the battlefield.

" 'There are so many positives and negatives,' Stubbe said. 'I learned a lot about myself and about other people. I learned the value of things that almost everyone takes for granted, a beautiful day, the peace, the quiet. Even bad things turn out to be blessings."

Jacquelyn Brown, *The Look*, Bloomington, Indiana: Authorhouse, 2005, p. ix, "Dedications."

"To my dear friend, Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, who was stationed on the Khe Sanh Combat Base during the Tet Offensive in 1968. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to you for your unyielding encouragement, belief in the integrity and credibility of this story, and your patience and willingness to communicate with me for over a year. Without you, I could not have written The Look. Though I may never meet you, I owe you a debt of gratitude that I can never repay. Thank you for being my friend, and thank you for drafting me as an honorary member of the Khe Sanh Veteran's Association."

"Khe Sanh," in Catherine Leroy, *Under Fire, Great Photographers and Writers in Vietnam*, New York: Random House, 2005, p. 67. [Contains an essay, "Khe Sanh" which I wrote, commenting on photograph by Robert Ellison of a trench in the Bravo Co., 3d Recon area of Khe Sanh during the siege]

"Khe Sanh's trenches mirror the war's gash into my soul. Struck within its networks, then and now, images of men I came to know as their chaplain during the six months prior to the siege continue to explode within me.

"At Khe Sanh, we dug deeper and deeper. Deadly incoming–up to 1,600 rounds a day–instantly leveled all aboveground structures and sculpted moonscape devastation. Two craters outside the Battalion Aid Station were so deep, I could stand in them and my head would be below the surrounding surface. We all know" there is no safe place in Khe Sanh.

"Since groups larger than six were prohibited (one round might kill everyone), worship services were small in size and frequent in number: a short prayer, a two-sentence sermon, a reading from the Bible, Communion, and a blessing: all within ten minutes–were repeated from trench to trench a dozen times daily. Sometimes, since the incoming was so intense, all I could do to communicate God's love was to hug. Once, I was alone and my prayers reduced to babblings as I bounced from the shock of explosions of nearby land mines. I held the hand of one painfully wounded man who asked me to say the Ninety-first Psalm, and prayed with another who shared his joy over a wrestling scholarship and his imminent departure. A few days later, he was killed. I stayed overnight with a 106mm recoilless rifle squad. We shared coffee and conversation. The next day, I pulled out and carried a headless Marine from the rubble after that position took a direct hit.

"Khe Sanh was alive with death. Another chaplain, Father Brett, was killed when one of the Khe Sanh trenches took a direct hit. At Graves Registration, I prayed over the corpse of a man I had just baptized a few days earlier.

""My bunker was crowded with wounded waiting through the night to be evacuated. I slept atop a field desk. Nearby, a Marine I knew well, Rick, dabbed his head with a roll of toilet paper. The floor below was filled with his bloody, crumpled papers. I was startled to see him the next day digging deeper trenches in the recon area. "That wasn't my blood," he explained, "It was the blood from others in the trench that were killed."

Ronald J. Drez and Douglas Brinkley, *Voices of Courage: The Battle for Khe Sanh, Vietnam*, New York: Bulfinch Press, 2005, p. 180, "Acknowledgments:"

"The only other person doing any research on Khe Sanh was Chaplain Ray Stubbe, chaplain of Khe Sanh, who was present for the entire battle of 1968... I joined with Chaplain Stubbe and began an independent, individual research of the veterans who fought there both in 1967 during the Hill Fights, and in 1968 during the encirclement... Stubbe and I became friends and in the end shared our research, and that archive is the basis for this book.."

Letter from General James L. Jones, USMC, 05 October 2005, reprinted in Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue #63 (Winter, 2005), p. 29.

"Dear Chaplain Ray Stubbe,

"Thank you for your thoughtfulness in sending me the book, Battalion of Kings: A Tribute to our Fallen Brothers who died because of the Battlefield of Khe Sanh, Vietnam. I was delighted to receive such a fine historical book of our forces in support of their nation. Thank you also for the honor of mentioning my involvement as a First Lieutenant and the brief sketch about my father. I look forward to reading it at my earliest opportunity. This is an excellent resource and will be a valuable part of my library.

"Thank you for thinking of me, as well as for all that you have done on behalf of the Corps. I wish you continued success."

Tom Eichler, "Our Khe Sanh Archives Find a Permanent Home," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue #63 (Winter, 2005) P. 18.

"With the publication of Battalion of Kings, Chaplain Ray William Stubbe has donated all of his Khe Sanh records and memorabilia, to the Wisconsin State Veterans Museum in Madison, Wisconsin. This includes some 475 books pertaining to what happened at Khe Sanh, about 90 linear feet of files, five boxes of microfilms, over 2,000 cassettes of interviews, several thousand still photographs, several dozen FHS tapes, and a room-full of artifacts sent home from Khe Sanh. The Wisconsin State Veterans Museum includes holdings dating from the Revolutionary War but is especially strong in materiakls dating from the Civil War to the present. There on staff are about half a dozen librarians, a like number of archivists, and a curator. (Read Ray's Speech on Pages 55-61).

"The hundreds of Khe Sanh vets who contributed memoirs, diaries, letters of information, photographs, artifacts, etc,., to Chaplain Stubbe may now rest assured that these are safe from damage or destruction by fire, water, theft, or consignment to a land-fill (should Ray suddenly die or become seriously ill and someone had to clean out his house). These materials will not be immediately open to the public, thus guarding privacy concerns, but will be preserved for future historians many decades from now, who wish to gain an accurate picture of our Khe Sanh experience. This collection is undoubtedly the most complete collection of information concerning Khe Sanh that exists, including not only personal accounts, but official documentation from the Department of Defense, all branches of the military service, CIA, DIA, NSA, and the President Johnson Presidential library. About 110,000 pages of documentation pertaining to Khe Sanh have been microfilmed on archival film which should last at least 300 years under suitable climate control, and sets of these films have been deposited with various archives.

"Chaplain Stubbe plans to prepare two more books: a collection of quality photographs from Khe Sanh, the other being a collection of translations of official (and in many cases, classified Secret) histories of what happened at Khe Sanh which have been recently translated, including numerous tactical maps, tables, and details that provide 'the other side' of what happened at Khe Sanh.

"The 40th anniversary of the siege battle at Khe Sanh will happen in about two years (2008), a time traditionally for doing special commemorative events (as with the D-Day 40th anniversary). Then, just a decade later—and for us who are getting older, ten years passes very quickly!—we wikll have the 50th anniversary. Since it takes several years of 'lead time' to get some things done, the time to plan is NOW. (Possible suggestions might be a performance of special symphonic musical works which have been written specifically to honor Khe Sanh veterans, a smaller one by Randy Cross and Symphony No. 6 by Weresow, the father of a Khe Sanh vet; the issuance of a special US postage stamp, the writing of a commemorative book, a Confessional resolution and perhaps proclamation by the various state governments, a special reunion which would have high-profile dignitaries as part of the program, TV programs, etc.)."

Anonymous, "Khe Sanh Remembered, Stubbe Tells of Siege, Service," Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation, *The Bugle* Vol. 11, No. 8 (Dec., 2005), p. 1.

"On November 10, Reverend Ray Stubbe spoke at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum about his experiences as a Navy chaplain with the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines at Khe Sanh before and during the siege. Stubbe had a number of close calls during the siege as he moved between bunkers and trench lines ministering and performing services for troops as NVA shells rained down upon them. As a front line chaplain, he walked patrols and spent time at the various hill outposts surrounding the Khe Sanh fire base. Stubbe served two tours in the I Corps region of Vietnam. He founded the Khe Sanh Veterans Association and co-authored several books on the siege of Khe Sanh, including the authoritative Valley of Decision, and a book on Marine Force Recon. Prior to the lecture, Stubbe received a commendation from WDVA Secretary John Scocos, honoring him for service to his country and also for donating his archives and artifacts to the WVM.

"In his own words, Stubbe's research about Khe Sanh began in 1970 as an attempt 'to make sense of what I had experienced, trying to find some meaning.' He began by typing his daily Vietnam diary. Over the next two decades he added material from military archives throughout the country and from conversations with thousands of Khe Sanh veterans. His final re-write, completed in 1989, was 1,106 pages of extensive research.

"Stubbe's manuscript collection is of national significance and will be used by future military historians as they interpret the siege of Khe Sanh and its meaning. The collection consists of his diaries, correspondence, oral history interviews, published books and periodicals, records of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, Inc. (an organization Stubbe founded), maps, and research files."

2006

S. P. Callahan, *Close Air Support and the Battle for Khe Sanh, A Study in Institutional Approaches to the Application of Air Power.* A thesis submitted to the faculty of Columbian College of Arts and

Sciences of The George Washington University in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, January 30, 2005. "Acknowledgements":

"Special thanks are also due to the veterans of the Vietnam War who contributed so much to my research. Most helpful was the Reverend Ray Stubbe, whose dedication in commemorating the sacrifice of the men of Khe Sanh has enabled so many fine histories of the battle."

"Remembering Khe Sanh," Massachusetts Foundation for the Advancement of Vietnam Veterans, Inc., *Bay State Veteran*, Vol. 5, Issue 3 (Spring, 2006), p. 1. [Swanson photo of worship on 28 Jan 1968).

"Stubbe Tells of Siege, Service," Massachusetts Foundation for the Advancement of Vietnam Veterans, Inc., *Bay State Veteran*, Vol. 5, Issue 3 (Spring, 2006), p. 13. [Reprint of article first appearing in the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation, *The Bugle* Vol. 11, No. 8 (Dec., 2005), p. 1.]

Jim Dalton, "Memoirs," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 67 (Winter, 2006), p. 50:

"..I became convinced that Tweedy wasn't going to make it, that he needed a priest. Just as I was about to run off half-cocked, I noticed someone hustling toward the hospital. To my complete amazement, I spotted a cross on his collar. It was a Chaplain. I told him about Tweedy in a rush of words, begging for him to help the guy. He didn't hesitate. Giving my shoulder a quick, comforting squeeze, the Padre said, 'Don't worry, son, I'll see to him,' then hustled through the door into Charlie Med...

"When I recently saw my first copy of Red Clay ever, I had quite a shock. I recognized a face I had only seen once 38 years ago. It was [the] Padre I had met outside Charlie Med on that awful 15th of April day in 1968. The name under the picture identified him as the Rev. Ray Stubbe. I have since written to Padre Stubbe, thanking him for the comfort he gave me and my dying buddy so long ago. Someday, soon, I'd like to shake his hand."

Larry L. Larsen, "Sub Unit 5," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue No. 67 (Winter, 2006), p. 32.

"KSV founder Ray Stubbe was originally assigned to SU5 when he arrived.. Ray of course became the 1/26 chaplin."]

Martin Hinz, "Remembering Vietnam," *M Magazine*, Vol. 6, No. 6 (May, 2006), p. 14. [Photograph by Nathan Harrmann and story by Martin Hinz:

"A Wisconsin spring these days is quieter for the Rev. Ray Stubbe of Wauwatosa. In 1968, Stubbe was a Navy chaplain in Vietnam, dodging rockets and sniper bullets during the siege of Khe Sanh. A photo (right) by noted Life magazine photographer Dick Swanson shows him leading Marines in prayer.

"Later this year, that scene will be re-created in a life-size diorama at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison. The exhibit will be part of a display, 'In the Belly of the Dragon: Life and Death in I Corps.' Included will be Stubbe's crucifix, helmet and boots, still caked in Khe SWanh's mud.

"Stubbe, who served two tours in the I Corps region, went on to found the 3,000-member Khe Sanh Veterans Association and co-author several nationally recognized books on the battle. The now retired pastor has also donated 150 boxes of files, thousands of photos, 2,000 cassettes of interviews and numerous artifacts from the siege to the museum. 'It was a great relief for me to know that all that information will now be save.'

" 'You have to understand how it was in Vietnam,' he says, indicating that for those fighting there, the war was compressed into small actions where men risked their lives to save each other, rather than thinking of the conflict as a historical panorama.

"Within minutes of landing at Da Nang, his first taste of the war was seeing an officer treating his own bloody leg wound. 'I thought, "Welcome to Vietnam," ' Stubrmann and story by Martin Hinz:

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"Within minutes of landing at Da Nang, his first taste of the war was seeing an officer treating his own bloody leg wound. 'I thought, "Welcome to Vietnam," ' Stubbe recalls.

"He eventually went on Marine combat patrols around Khe Sanh, barely survived a debilitating fever that still impacts his health, enrolled in jump school and trained with the Special Forces. And although he no longer heads the group he established, Stubbe still keeps in close contact with his wartime acquaintances. 'It's veterans helping veterans,' he says."]

Marc Leepson, "Books in Review," Vietnam Veterans of America, *VVA Veteran*, 26:2 (May/June, 2006), p. 34.

"Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, who served at Khe Sanh and co-wrote (with John Prados) the seminal book on the experience, Valley of Decision (1991), has put together Battalion of Kings (Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., 469 pp. paper), a tribute to the Marines who fell at Khe Sanh. The heart of the book is a long list of individual and personalized tributes (including poems, memoirs, and letters) for each of the Americans who perished. The book has been sent gratis to military archives, libraries, the families of those who were killed at Khe Sanh, and to those who made significant contributions to the research that went into compiling this impressive volume. For more information contact Khe Sanh Veterans at TEIC1448@aol.com."

Martin Hinz, "Of life & death," Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *The Lutheran*, Vol. 19, No. 8 (August, 2006) p. 44.

"The Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison is bringing back ghostly memories for retired Navy chaplain Ray Stubbe. A life-size diorama, part of an exhibit titled 'In the Belly of the Dragon: Life and Death in I Corps,' includes the retired ELCA pastor's cross, helmet and boots still caked in Vietnam's mud.

"Life is quieter these days for Stubbe, who lives in Wauwatosa, Wis., where he attends St. Matthew's Lutheran Church. But in early 1968, he was ducking rockets and sniper bullets during the siege at Khe Sanh. An acclaimed photo by Life photographer Dick Swanson shows Stubbe leading three Marines in prayer. That scene is re-created in the exhibit, which will continue through 2007.

"Stubbe also donated 150 boxes of files, thousands of photos, 2,000 cassettes of taped interviews and numerous other military artifacts to the museum. (http://museum,dva.state.wi.us). 'It was a great relief for me to know that all that information will now be safe,' he said.

"Stubbe, who served two tours in the I Corps region, founded the 3,000-member Khe Sanh Veterans Association in the mid-1980s. 'People could find buddies that they hadn't seen for 25 years. It was a healing process, the gathering of the lost sheep,' he said.

" 'The experience of war developed a real sense of how much we are connected to each other,' Stubbe added. But many of the troops went to Vietnam with a Sunday-school faith, one not related to issues of life-and-death.

" 'When they came back, the vets felt left out,' he said, indicating that churches didn't know how to deal with the challenges of isolation and shame that many felt. As they aged, most gradually reconciled themselves to this but retained the desire to stay in touch with each other.

"Stubbe joined the Navy Reserve in 1956, while in high school, and was on active duty for several years before attending St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn. A graduate of the former Northwestern Seminary, Minneapolis, he became a chaplain in 1967, serving until 1985 when he retired as a lieutenant commander.

" 'Many of my vets had asked, "where was God?" when they witnessed the terrible things going on around them,' Stubbe said. 'I'd answer: "Remember how people cared for each other, risking their lives? Where the action of God is, God is present. He works through people and in those mysterious ways." ' "

"Courses and Mini-courses for Adults, Fall 2006 – Spring 2007" [brochure], St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa, Wi.

"Sep 17, Faith on the Frontlines. Pastor Ray W. Stubbe, former Navy Chaplain (1967 – 1985) who served two tours in Vietnam, addresses the devastation of intense, prolonged battle and discernment of God's presence in it. Chaplain Stubbe was featured in the August edition of The Lutheran magazine, and a life-size diorama of him leading worship is scheduled to be on display at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison. Instructor: Pastor Ray W. Stubbe."

Joe Ahlers, "Finders, Keepers," *MKE*, Vol. 2, Issue No. 45 (Sep. 7, 2006), p. 12.

"Vietnam Veteran Tag for Navy Chaplain Ray Stubbe.

"Found by Katherine Bryja, design editor

"Location Veterans Park right off the War Memorial Center

"Date found About 8 a.m. Aug 14

"The object's story. This type of thing tears at my heart because it's likely a memento that someone valued, but it also feels uncomfortably commercial. I remember visiting the Vietnam Memorial in Washington years ago and marveling at the dozens of vets selling dog tags and mini-POW flags. The people who passed by without purchasing anything sweat beads of guilt. Maybe the little tag I found was actually on the keychain of a friend of Ray Stubbe's, but I bet it was given away or sold to someone passing by a veteran on the street."][*Note: Mr. Joel Paplham later told me that he had made this item.*

"In the Belly of the Dragon: Life & Death in I Corps," Wisconsin Dept. of Veterans Affairs, *Forward Veterans*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Oct., 2006), p. 7.

"A new 1,000 square foot exhibit highlights the experience of Wisconsin veterans in Vietnam. 'In the Belly of the Dragon: Life and Death in I Corps,' opened on September 23, and makes use of newly received artifacts and interactive components.

"The exhibit was professionally designed by Museum curators Bill Brewster and Jeff Kollath. Brewster and Kollath also spearheaded the collecting of major donations of Vietnam War artifacts. Some came in as single pieces, while others were received in truck load quantities. Rev. Ray Stubbe of Wauwatosa, for example, provided an enormous collection of Vietnam materials that focused on his participation at the battle of Khe Sanh in 1968. The Stubbe collection is one of the largest collections that the Museum has ever received, and is of national significance.

" 'In the Belly of the Dragon: Life and Death in I Corps' will be on display until Spring 2008. Admission is free and open to the public from 9AM to 4:30PM, Monday through Saturday, for more information call (608) 267-1799."

"Mail Call, Khe Sanh: Counting KIA," Veterans of Foreign Wars, *VFW* Vol. 94 Vol. 94, No. 4 (Dec., 2006), p. 6.

"Re: 'Three Deadliest Days at Khe Sanh' (October) by Al Hemingway. During the siege of Khe Sanh itself (Jan. 20 – March 31, 19658), 402 Americans were killed. The Marine battalions alone sustained 274 KIA: 1/26=96, 1/9=72, 2/26=42, 3/26=46 and 1/13=18. If all supporting unit casualties (from all services) are included, the total is 402 KIA.

"When allied indigenous and enemy casualties are factored in, the siege battle of Khe Sanh is undoubtedly the most costly in terms of loss of human life for the entire Vietnam War."

2007

"Chapter Affairs," Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter, MOAA, *Newsletter*. Vol. 25, No. 1 (Jan., 2007), p. 3.

"Chaplain Ray Stubbe, LCDR, USN-Ret will be our speaker at the February 11 luncheon meeting at Klemmers. He served on Active Duty with the U.S. Navy for 21 years. His first assignment was aboard the Destroyer USS NOAH, and later he was assigned as a Chaplain with Marine detachments in Vietnam. He served there with the Marines at the Battle of Khe Sanh in 1968. He has provided an enormous collection of Vietnam materials that focus on the war in Vietnam. These war artifices have been donated to the Veterans Museum in Madison. The Stubbe collection is one of the largest collections that the Museum has ever received and is of national significance. These war artifacts are part of the display 'In the Belly of the Dragon: Life and Death in I Corps'."

Carroll, Andrew, "Why They Pray," The *Wall Street Journal* 249:56 (March 9, 2007), p. W11.

[*Contains a print of the Swanson photo of worship on 28 Jan 1968, and includes the following in the accompanying article*]

...

"This presence becomes even more visible inj the life and death context of war, where all that is frivolous and superficial is shorn away to reveal what is truly meaningful and lasting. Lt. Ray Stubbe, a young Navy chaplain serving in Vietnam in 1967-68, often reflected on this theme in his correspondence with friends in Wisconsin. 'People benefit spiritually,' he wrote in one letter, when they 'face the loss of all the trivia of modern day society.' After describing a litany of nightmarish hardships that his Marines had to endure, he noted: 'You would be amazed at the faith expressed here. There are evidences of genuine and deep prayer life, of reading and knowing the Bible backwards and forwards, of sacrificial concern for others.'

"These two words, 'sacrificial concern,' represent the heart of the matter. Countless soldiers have demonstrated their faith by risking their lives for their comrades in arms. (Ray Stubbe himself often came close to dying when he flew by helicopter through hostile territory to minister at Marine bases in the remote mountains of Khe Sanh.)...

Peter Brush, "Re-counting the Casualties at Khe Sanh," *Vietnam*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (June, 2007).

[*Large but cropped Swanson photo of the 28 Jan 1968 worship service appears on p. 37. The article includes, on p. 34*]

"According to Ray Stubbe, a U.S. Navy chaplain during the siege and since then the most significant Khe Sanh historian, the 205 figure is taken only from the records of the 26th Marine Regiment. Stubbe examined the command chro9nologies of the 1st and 2nd battalions, 26th Marines, plus the after-action reports of the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines; 1st Battalion, 9th Marines; 1st Battalion, 13th Marines; and more than one dozen other units, all present at Khe Sanh under 26th Marine operational control. These combined sources report a total of 354 KIA. Unlike the official figures, Stubbe's database of Khe Sanh casualties includes verifiable names and dates of death."

John Prados, "Khe Sanh: The Other Side of the Hill," Vietnam Veterans of America: *The Veteran* 27:4 (July/August, 2007) 23-26, 45. On p. 45:

"The author wishes to acknowledge the continuing efforts of Ray W. Stubbe and the Khe Sanh Veterans Association to document the history of their crucial battle, which included compiling most of the histories used here, as well as the work of Sedgwick Tourison, Robert DeStatte, and Merle Pribbenow, who did the English translations of the histories and documents I used. Most of these histories may be found at the U.S. Army Center of Military History."

Note on back cover of book: Robert J. Topmiller, *Red Clay on My Boots*, Minneapolis, Mn.: Kirk House Publishers, 2007. [Distributed in August, 2007].

[*Note on back cover*]

"Dr. Robert Topmiller, known as 'Doc' by those of us who served with him at Khe Sanh during the famous siege battle there in early 1968, has provided one of the most valuable contributions towards understanding what happened. Bringing the tools of a professional historian and his own personal experience to his book, he provides the reader with the reality of battle. His poignant insights and recounting of numerous incidents not otherwise in print are most helpful to those who want to touch the reality of what happened at Khe Sanh and learn. The book provides background for some of the events, and describes contemporary consequences of what transpired. For those who served, Topmiller provides insights that contribute towards healing: 'Doc' was, after all, a medical corpsman treating the wounds of warriors then, as he now does through this remarkable book."

"Vietnam, Khe Sanh Library Truly a 'Triumph of Faith'," Libraries of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, *Columns*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Nov., 2007), pp. 1, 4.

.."The Khe Sanh library project has the support of Chaplain Ray Stubbe, who served as a U.S. Navy chaplain at Khe Sanh from July 1967 through most of the siege that ended in the spring of 1968. Chaplain Stubbe is the author of the books, 'Battalion of Kings,' a comprehensive account of all the military operations at Khe Sanh during the siege, and 'The Secret Official History of the North Vietnamese Army of the Siege at Khe Sanh, Vietnam, Spring 1968,' as well as the founder of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association.

" 'St. Gregory's admonition that "what is not assumed is not healed"—that is, what we do not confront and address cannot heal—has always touched me, and it embodies the real need for us to record and enshrine the sacrifices of those who fought in the name of faith in God and the triumphant fundamental goodness in man, even in the face of war,' he wrote.

" 'This is more than just a building housing books, computers and learning resources. It will be a monument to the true legacy of America, a legacy of hope and peace for all time to come between the peoples of Vietnam and America. Americans rebuilding to the wake of war and breaking the cycle of vengeance is nothing new—it is part of our heritage unparalleled in the recorded history of the nations of the world.'

"Chaplain Stubbe kept a meticulous diary during the siege. That diary has been optioned for a feature film, possibly starring Tom Hanks, who also will produce it.

"A photo of Chaplain Stubbe conducting a service during the siege hangs in the Vietnamese War Museum in Hanoi, along with a legend that he and the other men pictured were killed in the action. Chaplain Stubbe, along with three of the four Marines pictured, survived the war, and he has since devoted his life to helping veterans and chronicling the history of the battle.

" 'Transforming otherwise very negative experiences of the horrors of war into something life-enriching and blessing for a far-extending future brings a sense of the goodness that remains despite the ruins and shambles of lives, effects of war with which we are all too familiar,' he wrote."

[*Reprinted in Wisconsin State Council, Vietnam Veterans of America, The Badger Veteran, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring, 2008), p. 12.*]

Laura Ingraham, *Power to the People*, Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2007, p. 312.

"In a letter written during the Vietnam War, Lieutenant Ray Stubbe, a young navy chaplain, noted that we tend to derive the greatest spiritual benefit when we 'face the loss of all the trivia of modern day society.' He chronicled the harsh experience of his Marines and then added: 'You would be amazed at the faith expressed here. There are evidences of genuine and deep prayer life, of reading and knowing the Bible backwards and forwards, of sacrificial concern for others.' Sacrificial concern—this is not a phrase we hear enough about today, outside of the great contributions of our military to the cause of freedom and security. Yet this is the animating spirit that made martyrs of the holy and compelled a great generation to face powerful foes in Europe and the Pacific. We must seek to cultivate a sense of sacrificial concern in the republic. This basic virtue will ensure the strength of America and her goodness."

2008

[Announcement in brochure], "Vietnam: Life & Death at Khe Sanh," Wauwatosa School District Recreation Dept., *Fall 2008 Activity Guide*, p. 13.

"In 1968, Rev. Ray Stubbe was a chaplain in Vietnam, dodging rockets and sniper bullets during the siege of Khe Sanh. He will share his experiences, highlighting the reality of the battle, its effect on participants, their families and the local people, plus the lingering significance of that battle in veterans today. Course Number 05."

Renira Pachuta, "Khe Sanh remembered," Ozaukee County, Wisconsin, *News Graphic*, Vol. 126, No. 91 (Nov. 13, 2008), pp. A1 and B3.

[*Page A1: "Khe Sanh recalled," Swanson photo of 28 Jan 1958 and: "Vietnam changed the life of Ray Stubbe, who served as a chaplain during the Vietnam War."*

[*Page B3 also reproduces the Swanson photo along with a photo of working out on a heavy bag at the Duke Roufus Gym by Jack Orton appearing in the Milwaukee, Wi., Journal Sentinel, 30 Mar 2005, and contains article:*

"In 1967, when Ray Stubbe informed fellow students he was going to Vietnam to serve as a chaplain, he was in a PhD program at the University of Chicago, one of the top theological grad schools in the nation. The students' reaction was one of horror, remembers Stubbe, and their words are engraved in his memory to this day. They said, 'How can you go to Vietnam and be the church's endorsement of a corrupt Saigon regime?' to which he replied, 'I am going there to help people, not to make a political statement,.'

"What some of them may not have realized was that Stubbe had already served as an enlisted man. After graduating from high school in 1956, he'd spent two years on active duty on a Navy destroyer, before heading for college and then seminary.

"Vietnam seemed the next logical step in Stubbe's life's journey. The Navy was asking for chaplains, he recalls. 'Having been enlisted, I had a real feel for feelings that the young Marines would have, because I had been one of them. I knew of the separation, the helplessness, the bewilderment, the excitement.' The period, between the ages of 18 and 21, is a very tumultuous time in most people's lives, he points out. The human brain isn't even fully developed then.

"Stubbe spent the next eight months in Khe Sanh as a Navy chaplain with the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, and his time there included the 77-day siege, from January to March 1968, often referred to as 'the deadliest and most intense battle of the Vietnam War, one of the most controversialk battles within a controversial war.'

"While in Khe Sanh, Stubbe did what chaplains of all faiths do—he led worship services and Bible study, counseled those with problems and grieved with them if there'd been a death in the family. 'It was a sharing of life,' he explains, thinking back almost 40 years. 'I looked on my duties as just living with the people, listening to their concerns and their problems, hearing of their hopes and dreams, showing my concern for them.'

"Sometimes when asked by the young soldiers where God was in all of this horror and destruction, Stubbe would remind them of the time they had shared their last drop of water or their last morsel of bread, how they had dashed out in the middle of explosions to rescue a fellow soldier, and how through all this they had maintained humor and concern for each other. 'This was evidence of life in the midst of death, bravery in the midst of fear. This indicated the presence of God,' he says.

"When he first arrived in Khe Sanh in July, 1967, conditions were not unpleasant. 'Life was even tranquil,' Stubbe recalls. 'I sometimes thought of it as the Garden of Eden—pristine and beautiful, cooler than the rest of Vietnam because of the higher elevation.' Of course, soldiers still had to go out on patrol at all times, and were not able to shower for six weeks in a row. There was no electricity, so when it got dark, everyone made do with a candle, if they were lucky enough to have one. But there were not many casualties to begin with, and the soldiers, mostly young kids, were basically happy.

"Two months later, the so-called 'honeymoon' was over. In September the monsoons came—dropping as many as seven inches of rain in one day, day after day, for three months on end with no let-up. 'You couldn't get dry,' says Stubbe, adding, 'I never felt colder in my life than I did over there in the rainy season.' Heavy cloud cover resulted in reconnaissance aircraft being unable to detect enemy troops, the airstrip was totally washed away and no supplies could be flown in. 'We were cut off from the rest of the world,' remembers Stubbe. 'We were very vulnerable and things were very uncertain. In addition, there were all sorts of rumors flying around, including one everyone had heard—psychic Jeanne Dixon had predicted 1200 would die in Khe Sanh.

"Living in a bunker he built himself, Stubbe spent the days during the siege hopping from bunker to bunker, trench to trench. Advised not to gather more than seven in a group because of the likelihood of enemy attacks, he got in the habit of conducting little seven-minute services, complete with scripture lesson, communion, blessing and a three-sentence sermon. He says, 'All of us were quite numb emotionally, and sometimes we would just hug one another. Yes, even hardened Marines would hug each other. I saw the human side of people there.'

"Stubbe, who served two tours in the I Corps region of Vietnam, is considered by many the foremost Khe Sanh historian. In addition to co-authoring several books on the siege, and numerous articles, he has been the subject of frequent television interviews and, in the early 1980s, about the time he was getting ready to retire out of the chaplain corps, he founded Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

" 'My grandmother died,' he explains. 'It was a traumatic time—the death of my career and a death in my family. I started remembering, and I began wondering who was still alive from my time in Khe Sanh.' Stubbe began calling around. From the dozen or so Marines he'd kept in touch with via Christmas cards, others emerged. The number grew rapidly to 300, then to 500, and now remains pretty constant at 3,000.

" 'The organization is basically to preserve the memory of Khe Sanh,' says Stubbe, adding, there's an annual reunion and the group puts out a magazine four times a year. one unintended positive that came out of this, he says, is that people have found lost buddies they thought were dead. And sometimes it is someone who can make statements in support of them to the Veterans Administration and verify their claims. 'It is so satisfying,' emphasizes Stubbe, 'not just for me but all the good people who were there and who now continue to support each other emotionally and with statements, with understanding and with their life. The whole is greater than the part, so they say.' "

2010

"Member of St. Matthew's honored for his service," St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, *The Voice of St. Matthew's* 79:2 (Feb 7, 2010) p. 12. [Has photo of worship atop Crow's Nest, DaNang, and the Gill photo with cross and a note]: *"Cross tangible symbol of the presence of God; Enlisted men take comfort, gain strength through prayer in the battlefield. Pastor Ray Stubbe served as Chaplain to the Navy during the Vietnam War. Recently in preparation for the publication of a book as well as a Vietnam veterans celebration at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Pastor Stubbe was asked to be photographed with an object from his time of service that held special meaning for him. The cross he holds was used several times during worship and prayer in Vietnam with the enlisted men he served. James Gill of Wisconsin Public Television took the photo. The photo on the right shows one of the times that Pastor Stubbe used the cross, Christmas Day of 1968 in DaNang, atop one of the Marble Mountains."*

Jim Stingl, "Vets appreciate belated thank you," Milwaukee, Wi., *Journal Sentinel* Wed., 17 Feb 2010, p. 3B:

"Two vets who appear in the 'Wisconsin Vietnam War Stories' documentary were at the Harley museum. Ray Stubbe, a chaplain who now lives in Wauwatosa, said there's unfinished business for many vietnam soldiers. Psychological wounds have festered over the years. 'We're older now and most of us have become more isolated. An event like this brings people together,' he said."

Mentioned in various places in a special issue of the Green Bay, Wisconsin, *Green Bay Press-Gazette* doe LZ Lambeau, May, 2010. Listed on p. 5 as one of those interviewed for Vietnam War Stories. Listed on p. 6 as leading an ecumenical worship service at 10AM, Saturday, May 23. Photo on p. 10.

Photo (taken by Gill, with cross) in St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, *The Voice*, 79:6 (May 16, 2010), p. 17. Notes I will celebrate the 45th anniversary of my ordination with a sermon at three worship services on Sunday, June 6.

Picture on front page of Wauwatosa *Now*, Vol. 112, No. 38 (Sep. 23, 2010), with children from Roosevelt Elementary School, Wauwatosa, WI, and caption:

"Ray Stubbe, a chaplain and Bronze Star recipient who served in the battle of Khe Sanh in Vietnam, speaks with Roosevelt Elementary School fifth-graders before they sing 'The Star Spangled Banner' as part of the National Banner Project."

Judy R. Lazarus: "Retired chaplain speaks at anniversary luncheon," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois: *Great Lakes Bulletin* 87:47 (Nov. 26, 2010) pp. 8, 26. [Article on presentation for the Chaplain Corps Anniversary celebration at Great Lakes, with photograph with Chaplain (Capt.) Bryan Finch].

3d Recon Association: *Harborsite* 18:3 (December, 2010), p. 28. Photograph of me leading worship at Khe Sanh, 28 January 1968, photo by Richard Swanson.

2011

Picture on page 14 of Wauwatosa *Now*, Vol. 113, No. 22 (June 2, 2011) ,[*In Navy white long, in connection with Memorial Day presentation. Caption reads*]: "Service remembered, honored. Ray Stubbe recounts his days of serving as a Marine chaplain in Vietnam during the Wauwatosa Memorial Day commemoration in the Longfellow Middle School auditorium Monday."

Mentioned in R.R. Keene, "Sound Off" [Letters to the editor], Marine Corps Association: *Leatherneck* 93:10 (Oct, 2011) pp. 13, 66, 68. [Concerning casualty figures at Khe Sanh]

2012

"Pebbles in My Boots!" review article by Rev. Dr. Mark A. Jumper, in Military Chaplains Association United States of America: *The Military Chaplain* 84:4 (Winter, 2011) p. 16.

Dedication, in Prados, John, ed.: *In Country, Remembering the Vietnam War*, London: Ivan R. Dee, 2012, p. v.

Writing included in front of book by John Douglas Foster,. *Heroes From the Wall*, Bloomington, Indiana: Zlibris Corp., 2012, pp. 4-5:

"When the author John Douglas Foster was wounded while serving in Vietnam during Tet '68, he received more than a piece of metal in his body; haunting memories of comrades opened his soul in a quest to learn more about those who didn't return. Far more important than mere names on a monument are the lives of those who died. Memorials to those who die in war need to confront us with real, living persons, with dreams and plans, hobbies and interests, connections to others, who might say something or do something that lingers forever in our heart and soul.

"Foster's book provides an opportunity to grasp truly great individuals, not just numbers and statistics, not just names.

"For those who fight the battles, their fallen brothers and sisters forever live in them. This book helps ensure that they will never be forgotten by future generations who didn't know them on the battlefield. Their quirks of personality, playful antics, heroic actions, compassion and care for others, their caring and sharing with their comrades, tender concern for their family, affirmation of life while engulfed in places of death, and so much more, captivate our attention. Though dead, they vividly live.

"It is common for those who fight in war to say that they were never closer to another person than those with whom they fought, and that in combat they lived with the best men as a group they ever have known. We, too, are privileged to meet some of these through this book.

"We learn of their roots in places like the war-ravaged lands of Finland, the poverty of a large family in New York. We learn how they fell in love and married, just before going to war and dying. We hear of their premonitions of dying. We learn of heroism that contains great fears, like the greater sky shadowed with dark clouds. We read deeply moving and perceptive words by a Sergeant written of his Lieutenant. We learn of a grown woman who learns of a father killed in Vietnam–eventually verifying this through DNA and subsequently brought into a large caring family who related to her a father she never knew, his passion for music and making people laugh. We learn of a nurse, one of eight on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. We learn of a Chaplain whose love for Marines he served moved him to lay down his life for them. We learn of a POW's captivity and ordeal. We learn so much more, and the war becomes more than statistics, tactics, results of winning or losing, but becomes a tapestry woven with individual threads of its participants. We learn of the true cost of war and we learn of the true humanity hidden beneath all the mud, gore, hardness, and ugliness we confront in war.

"Mr. Foster's book not only gives us a monument of lives, he provides us with a legacy for future generations to grasp with a better understanding of the Vietnam War."–Rev. Ray W. Stubbe, US Navy Chaplain, Siege at Khe Sanh, 1968.

Picture (in Navy white uniform) with two Vietnam veterans in connection with Flag Day ceremony, Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, Peck Pavilion, 14 June 2012. (Milwaukee *Journal Sentinel*, Vol. 130, No. 213 (Friday, June 15, 2012), p. B-1. (Photo by Michael Sears)

Picture and note in *The High Ground* (Winter, 2012, p. 10:

"September 8, 2012, LCDR Ray Stubbe received a surprise Meditation Stone from his fellow Vietnam Veterans. Ray Stubbe was a chaplain during the Vietnam War and continues to be a comfort to many friends, family and veterans. Thank you, LCDR Stubbe for your service and dedication."

Meg Jones, "30 years ago, 3 state Marines died in Beirut; terror era began." [Contains paragraph on p. 5A that reads:]

"Ray Stubbe was a Navy chaplain at naval Station Great lakes in northern Illinois when he drove to his hometown to preside over Gander's service at a Milwaukee funeral home. Not long after Gander died, Stubbe who served 19 months in Vietnam, began experiencing the effects of post-traumatic stress, which landed him in a VA hospital for six months.

"'It hit me emotionally,' Stubbe said of Gander's death."

"The 106 mm Bunker, The Khe Sanh Memories of Chaplain Ray Stubbe," in John Prados, "The Siege of Khe Sanh," *The American Legion Magazine* 175:3 (September, 2013) pp. 20-28. [My writing is on p. 26 with the Swanson photograph. The writing consists of diary entries for 07 and 23 February 1968)]

CORRECTIONS TO VOLUMES 1 AND 2 OF *PEBBLES*:

Vol. 1:

PAGE	LINE	CORRECTION
2	REID PHOTOGRAPH, line 9	Change "1005" to "1015"
14-17		Omit quotation marks at beginning of each paragraph
15	Para 6, line 2	Change "Ghandi" to "Gandhi"
	Para 8, line 2	Change "loose" to "lose"
18	Line from bottom	Change "d'etre" to "d'être"
20	Line 13 from bottom	Change "harty" to "hearty"
30	Line 11	Change "Oonly" to "only"
32	Para 4	The young man was Jean Paul Dumaris
35	Section II, Para 2 at end, add:	Chaplain Bill Asher, a Baptist, once mentioned he used a large tray of 4-oz. paper cups with wine at communion
37	Line 18	(Reference on Hank Blood: Conversation with Hank Blood, Quang Tri, Vietnam, Friday, 08 Dec 1967. [Stubbe, *Khe Sanh Chaplain* (unpublished MS), 01 Apr 1970, p. 445, and Stubbe: *Khe Sanh* (unpublished MS), 07 Oct 1971, p. 675.
40	Line 1	Change "Thee" to "There"
60	Line 3 from bottom	Change "Crede4nce" to "Credence"
61	Line 12	Change "ev-en"to "even"
62	Para 7, line 2	Change "ZCR" to" זכר "
	Line 9 from bottom	Change "dfreams" to "dreams"
63	Para 7, line 1	Change "he" to "the"
	Para 9, line 1	Change "iet" to "it"
64	Line 4	Omit second "there" at end of line
69	In Section I, para 3, line 2	Change "se3rves" to "serves"
76	line 22	Change "TTIGHT" TO "TIGHT"
78	line 2	Change "ina" o "in a"
	in "Remarks" line 3	Change "Aril" to "April"
92	2nd poem, line 2	Change "se4aled" to "sealed"
93	line 1	Change "aft3er" to "after"
98	line 16 from bottom	Change "hjis" to "his"
98	line 13 from bottom	Change "uncOommon" to "uncommon"
100	before line 10	("as flowing waters"), insert line:"So may our lives a blessing be"
100	"Prayers for MIA..." second sentence should read: "We gather in Your Name and place for Your Presence.."	
101	Invocation, line 4	Change "s3rve" to "serve"
	In "Determination" line 4	Change "sourageous" to "courageous"
	line 9	Change "FEDELIS" TO "FIDELIS'
104	Para 8, line 5	Change "c9ontrolled" to "controlled"
	line 6	Change "f9or" to "for"
105	Line 1	Change "hikll" to "hill"
106	MEMORIAL DAY prayer	
	line 17	Change "ever ever" to "ever, ever"
	line 26	Change "v8iolently" to "violently"
107	'THE TIME HAS COME..'	
	line 13	Change "nev3er" to "never"
108	In prayer,	

	line 4	Change "tank" to "thank"
	line 8	Change "ev3erything" to "everything"
111	line 5 of "Incoming"	Change "founds" to "rounds"
	23 of "incoming"	Change "o" to "of"
114	Line 3	TOHU WHE BOHU is the original Hebrew of "without form and void" of Gen. 1.2
124	:Line 6	Change "mitiga-ting" to "m itigating"
126	Line 17	Change "tabu" to "taboo"
	Line 30	Change "Bultiaxial" to "Multiaxial"
127	2	Change "subse-quently": to "subsequently"
132	31	Change "asceity" to "aseity"
	line 6 from bottom	Change "Job'd" to "Job's"
143	Line 17 from bottom	Change "ev3er" to "ever"
144	Line 21 from bottom	Change "Ch8in" to "Chin"
146	Line 13	Change "strengthe4n" to "strengthen"
148	Lines 9 and 10 from bottom	Change "organizAtion" to "organization"
152	"Reunion Talk" line 11	Change "ou" to "you"
156	Sermon, line 2	Change "tOo" to "to"
157	Line 26	Change "rollerskating" to "roller-skating"
	Lines 1-11 from bottom	Change "fiancee" to "fiancée"
158	in "Remarks" line 1	Change "Octob3er" to "October"
167	Line 5	Change "elan" to "élan"
177	Line 11	Change "elan" to "élan"
183	5 of para 3	Change "suspe4cted" to "suspected"
186"	Excerpts..." line 4	Change "anc8ient" to "ancient"
	Line 16	Change "for ever" to "forever"
188	Line 4	Change "Fro" to "For"
	"Beholding.." line 1	Change *"Vilanelle" to "Villanelle"*
191	Line 7	Change "Thre" to "There"
215	Line 1	Change "39tdh" to "39th"
217	Lines 9 and 11 from bottom	Should read "Stanley Consultantas"
	Line 7 from bottom	Change "undreds" to "hundreds"
218	Line 1 of "Ten Triolets"	Change "ling-ring" to "ling'ring"
224	Last line	Change "iwy" to
227	Line 16 (ref on Hank Blood)	(See change for p. 37, line 18)
	Line 20	Change ".Olw" to " "
229	"Memorial Day Address:"	
	line 2	Change "cardboaard" to "cardboard" and "caswe" to "case"
235	Line 3 (ref on Hank Blood)	(See change for p. 37, line 18)
243	Prayer, line 16	Change "desp3eratio" to "desperation"
	Line 20 of prayer	Change "was-0-with" to "was with"
245	Para 6, line 4	Place quote marks at end of "Lord"
	Line 27 (ref on Hank Blood)	(See change for p. 37, line 18)
249	Line 4 from bottom of prayer:	Change "gratitud3e" to "gratitude"
250	Line 4 from bottom	Change "ofr" to "of"
252	Line 2 from bottom	Change "Impe4rial" to "Imperial"
253	Line 6	Change "marty4rs" to "martyrs"
254	Line 1	Change "dictionary" to "Dictionary"
255	Footnote 258	Change page from " p.l 463 to "p. 463"
260	Line 15 (ref on Hank Blood)	(See change for p. 37, line 18)
269	Footnote 541	Change "se4rmon" to "sermon"

Vol. 2:

24	Footnote 193	Change "JULIETTe-4" to "JULIETTE 4"
73	Line 3 from bottom	Change "fan" to "ran"
153	psi	Change explanation to "Pounds per square inch"
188	footnote 919	Change "*Curage*" to "*Courage*"
	footnote 920, line 1	Change "19809" to "1989"
190	Line 2 from bottom	Insert "psalm" between "the" and "apply"
209	Invocation Prayer, line 6	Change "be" to "we"
210	Para 5, line 7	Remove "b"

THE MANY FACES OF KHE SANH











PEBBLES IN MY BOOTS
VOL 4

The Patrol of 25 Feb 1968- Biography Colonel David E. Lownds And Miscellaneous Letters, Presentations, And Documents

COUNTERATTACK ON NO-NAME HILL (SOUTHWEST OF KHE SANH COMBAT BASE CONDUCTED BY 8TH COMPANY/2ND BATTALION/9TH REGIMENT ON 25 FEBRUARY 1968

BIEN TRAN PHAN KICH TAI DOI KHONG TEN (NAM TA CON)
Cua c8/d2/eBB9 ngay 25 thang 02 nam 1968

Translation
By Merle Pribbenow



HAND DRAWN NVA SKETCH OF THE BATTLEFIELD FOR THE ACTION OF 25 FEBRUARY 1968

MORTAR CO 120MM | 82MM MORTAR | COMPANY HDQRS | COMMAND LEVEL RADIO TRANSMITTER | 105MM ARTILLERY | 76MM RECOILESS RIFLE

RAY WILLIAM STUBBE
WAUWATOSA, WISCONSIN 30 SEPTEMBER 2016

PEBBLES IN MY BOOTS Vol. 4

A SELECTION OF
MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS INCLUDING:
"The Patrol of 25 Feb 1968 – BRAVO Company, 1/26, at Khe Sanh"
"Sources for a Biography on Colonel David E. Lownds"
and
Miscellaneous Letters, Presentations, and Documents

BY

CHAPLAIN RAY WILLIAM STUBBE

WAUWATOSA, WISCONSIN
30 September 2016

FORWARD

The present volume is he last in the *Pebbles in My Boots* collection, a series of various essays, presentations, poems, prayers, conversations, and other items which, like pebbles in one's boot, eyelash in an eye, sliver in a finger, seed in a tooth, demand attention. An effort has been made to preserve the history of our experience at Khe Sanh—how our experiences there touched our life emotionally and spiritually—as well as physically, through historical accounts, chronologies, listing of terms and vocabulary, biographical sketches, and other documentation. As the footnotes attest, this essay (like others in the Pebbles series) is based on extensive reference to archival sources not readily available today plus inputs from others who directly experienced Khe Sanh. Having served at Khe Sanh some seven months—before and during the siege battle (July '67 – March 68), most of these writings also reflect personal experience.

The first essay focuses on one infantry company's experience at Khe Sanh, B/1/26, culminating in the fated patrol of 25 February 1968, initially referred to as the "lost" patrol and then the "ghost" patrol. In order to understand why this patrol did what it did, an extensive background is provided, including earlier accounts of some of the individuals involved, an understanding of being lured into ambushes, and the larger picture.

This significant patrol has become the subject of a first class documentary film by Ken and Betty Rodgers; it is also the focus of a course for new Marine Corps officers at The Basic School, Quantico, Va. Additionally, a recent translation by Mr. Merle Pribbenow providing the Vietnamese account of that battle now enables a presentation of "both" sides. It seemed urgent to provide a detailed account of that patrol.

The next section presents resources for a biography of David E. Lownds. The siege battle of Khe Sanh was not the result of Generals Westmoreland and Giap, as portrayed in much subsequent writing, but of Colonel Lownds and LtGen Tran Quy Hai and their staffs, as this essay reveals.

Lastly, as with other volumes in the *Pebbles* series, there is a selection of miscellaneous letters, presentations, prayers, and documents—some from many years ago, but most from the past three years which are present-day echoes of Vietnam.

Ray William Stubbe
Wauwatosa WI
30 Sep 2016

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The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Presidential Unit Citation to the

TWENTY-SIXTH MARINES (REINFORCED)
THIRD MARINE DIVISION (REINFORCED)

For service as set forth in the following

CITATION

For extraordinary heroism in action against North Vietnamese Army forces during the battle for Khe Sanh in the Republic of Vietnam from 20 January to 1 April 1968. Throughout this period, the 26th Marines (Reinforced) was assigned the mission of holding the vital Khe Sanh Combat Base and positions on Hills 881, 861-A, 558 and 950, which dominated strategic enemy approach routes into Northern I Corps. The 26th Marines was opposed by numerically superior forces—two North Vietnamese Army divisions, strongly reinforced with artillery, tank, anti-aircraft artillery and rocket units. The enemy, deployed to take advantage of short lines of communications, rugged mountainous terrain, jungle, and adverse weather conditions, was determined to destroy the Khe Sanh Combat Base in conjunction with large scale offensive operations in the two northern provinces of the Republic of Vietnam. The 26th Marines, occupying a small but critical area, was daily subjected to hundreds of rounds of intensive artillery, mortar and rocket fire. In addition, fierce ground attacks were conducted by the enemy in an effort to penetrate the friendly positions. Despite overwhelming odds, the 26th Marines remained resolute and determined, maintaining the integrity of its positions and inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. When monsoon weather greatly reduced air support and compounded the problems of aerial resupply, the men of the 26th Marines stood defiantly firm, sustained by their own professional esprit and high sense of duty. Through their indomitable will, staunch endurance, and resolute courage, the 26th Marines and supporting units held the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The actions of the 26th Marines contributed substantially to the failure of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army winter/spring offensive. The enemy forces were denied the military and psychological victory they so desperately sought. By their gallant fighting spirit and their countless individual acts of heroism, the men of the 26th Marines (Reinforced) established a record of illustrious courage and determination in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. –

LYNDON B. JOHNSON

THE PATROL OF 25 FEB 1968 – BRAVO COMPANY, 1/26, AT KHE SANH

PROLOGUE

"The battlefield is a dirty and ugly place. All the most sophisticated instruments of destruction one can devise won't change the supreme demands of courage, sacrifice, professional skill and dedication which Marines of each and every generation have met on the fields of battle." – Colonel David E. Lownds[1]

"I don't think the kids were given enough praise. I don't think the general overall situation was properly covered. I don't believe that the American people were properly informed as to the reasons we were there and the job that we were doing and the tremendous ability that was shown by all the people there at Khe Sanh" – Captain Kenneth W. Pipes.[2]

The attached essay focuses on the patrol by Platoon B-3 of Bravo Company, First Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment on 25 February 1968 during the siege battle at Khe Sanh, Vietnam. In order to understand what happened on this patrol, the larger setting of it must be provided: what Bravo Company experienced at Khe Sanh prior to that incident, North Vietnamese strategy of luring in support troops so they could be killed, the prohibiting by Gen Tompkins of patrols beyond 500 meters of the perimeter, the experiences of the battle for Khe Sanh Ville and Lang Vei, for example. We are given details which helpfully explain much.

NOTE CONCERNING SOURCES INDICATED IN FOOTNOTES

The term "tape" refers to Oral History Tapes made by a team from HQMC, mainly interviewing participants in an operation or battle, usually on the battlefield itself or shortly thereafter. These were made for training Marines ordered to Vietnam duty. They were deposited in the Historical Division, HQMC, (later in the National Archives).

During the 1980s, all oral history tapes pertaining to Khe Sanh were transcribed by the author and a copy was deposited in the Oral History Section of the Historical Center of the US Marine Corps. All tape transcriptions as well as letters and transcriptions of conversations, copies of all official documents available from USMC, USN, USA, DOD, CIA, NSA, etc., indicated in the footnotes, are in the archives of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, 30 W. Mifflin St, Madison, Wisconsin 53703.

Sets of microfilm reels of the approximately 120,000 pages of documents have also been sent to the following: Eisenhower Center, University of New Orleans; U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks; Headquarters, PA, USAF Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB; Marine Corps Research Center, J.C. Breckinridge Library, Quantico, VA; U.S. Army Command & General Staff College, Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS; Naval War College, Newport, RI; Dept. of the Army, The Center of Military History, Washington, DC; and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

Much of the description of places, incidents, and people, is based on personal experience while serving at Khe Sanh (July, 1967 – March, 1968, and subsequent weekly visits of a day or more at Khe Sanh in March and April, 1968).

A NOTE ON SOURCES

All documents noted in the footnotes are available in hard copy and microfilm at the archives of the Veterans Museum, 30 W. Mifflin St, Madison WI 53073. Microfilm copies of all documentation indicated (and Khe Sanh generally– over 120,000 pages of documents) have been deposited at: The Vietnam Archive of Texas Tech University, the Marine Corps Historical Center, the archives of the USAF and USN, and other libraries.

NOTE ON UNIT DESIGNATIONS

B/1/26 - refers to Company B of First Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment

B-3 - refers to Third Platoon of Company B

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[1] in U. S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Electronic Battlefield Subcommittee of the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, *Investigation into Electronic Battlefield Program, Hearings*, 91st Congress, 2d Session, Nov. 18, 19, and 24, 1970, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971, pp. 87-88.

[2] Comments of Capt Kenneth W. Pipes, Oral History Tape #2810.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

III MAF	- Third Marine Amphibious Force, the senior Marine Corps command
BN, Bn	- battalion
AAR	- After Action Report
ASP	- Ammunition Supply Point
BSM	- Bronze Star Medal
ComdC	- command chronology
CP	- Command Post
CPL	- Corporal
DIV	- Division
H	– local time at Khe Sanh
HistDiv	- Historical Division
HQMC	- Headquarters, Marine Corps
INTSUM	- Intelligence Summary
IPIR	- Initial Photo Interpretation Report
KIA (C)	- Killed in action (confirmed)
KIA (P)	- Killed in action (probable
KSCB	- Khe Sanh Combat Base
LCPL	- Lance Corporal
LP	- Listening Post
LtCol	- Lieutenant Colonel
Ltr	- Letter
LZ	- Landing Zone
Maj	- Major
MAR	- Marines (as in 26MAR – 26th Marine Regiment)
MEDEVAC	- Medical Evacuation
mm	- millimeter
NVA	- A soldier of the North Vietnamese Army
OPN	- Operation
SITREP	- Situation Report
SSGT	- Staff Sergeant
SSM	- Silver Star Medal
SUPIR	- Supplementary Photo Intelligence Report
WIA	- Wounded in Action
WILLY PETER	- White phosphorus
2/Lt	- Second Lieutenant
26MAR	- 26th Marine Regiment
881-S	- Hill 881 (South)

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PART I: THE SETTING OF THE PATROL OF 25 FEB 1968

1. Prologue: Seven Months at Khe Sanh

Bravo Company of First Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment, arrived at Khe Sanh 1430H, 12 May 1967, as Battalion 1/26 relieved the Marines of 2/3, 3/3, and 3/9 involved in the Battle of the Hills (24 April 1967 – 09 May 1967, taking Hills 861, 881-South, and 881-North).[3] Echoes of the desperate and devastating Battle of the Hills continued to shroud the area; despite the almost Garden of Eden Paradise setting of beauty and primitive innocence reflected in the geography and the primitive Montagnard tribe that inhabited the area, the Brou, an uncanny awareness of impending violence lingered. Although we were unaware of it at the time, Khe Sanh sat atop an ancient volcano—the reason for the red laterite clay which afforded abundant nutrients for coffee growing–, and the tactical map indicated the airstrip as "Xom Cham" (or "village of Chams) indicating that the ancient pirates and warriors known as the Chams, active in the 7th Century in Quang Tri Province until they were defeated by the Vietnamese. There were incidents of tigers massacring the Brou. In general, there was a lurking awareness, a shadow side to all the majestic beauty of Khe Sanh that made one sense that at any moment all hell would break loose.

07 June 1967

[3] Results of the Battle of the Hills: 168 friendly KIA, 436 WIA. NVA losses were 824 KIA (C) and another 549 KIA (P), 5 POWs and 1 rallier. [3rd Mar, AAR, KHE SANH]. Artillery fired over 24,000 rounds in support of the operation. Total ordnance dropped in direct support was over 3,000,000 pounds of explosives, not including TPQ-10 or Arc Light missions. (Totals: 611,500 pounds napalm, 3,218,500 pounds of explosives, 1230 250-pound bombs, 3318 500-pound bombs, 380 750-pound bombs, 247 1,000-pound bombs, 387 2,000-pound bombs, and 1170 air SOTRIEs [*Ibid.*, pp. 3, 5]

Significant numbers of NVA remained in the Khe Sanh area following the Battle of the Hills.[4] Bravo Company, 1/26, had just relieved Alpha Company, 1/26, defending Hill 881S, when they departed on 07 June 1967 on a two-platoon size patrol to the same location (XD759444) where 2/Lt John M. Kaheny's 3rd Platoon of A/1/26 had made contact on 21 May and lost two 19 year-old Marines.[5] B Co was to become engaged in a 4-hour battle about 2,000 meters west-northwest of Hill 881-S (at XD 759443) with an estimated two companies of NVA at 1320 resulting in 18 USMC KIA, 16 USMC WIA, and 66 NVA KIA.[6]

All patrols had been using the same route, over a land bridge.[7] During the preceding night, leaders of the patrol expressed their apprehensions. 2/Lt Guy Pete "..told everyone they were going to get hit."[8] The first fire team leader, 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, Gene Weresow, along with Cpl Crooks, told their Lieutenant "..we didn't like the path of this patrol as we ran this same ground several days in a row. We had misgivings about this and the Lieutenant told us these are the orders and we go... I was always of the opinion that someone knew they were waiting for us and let us walk right into that ambush. Wanted to see some action."[9] Lt John Kaheny, "I always suspected that the higher-ups knew that there were large numbers of NVA hanging around just outside 105mm range (11,000 meters) from KSCB and that we were sent out to bait them into range."[10] "Nobody would pay attention to what we were telling them."[11]

At 1105H, the patrol received approximately 15-20 rounds of automatic rifle fire from Hill 881-North (XD775456) during a helicopter landing. The Marines responded with 81mm mortars and 106mm recoilless rifle fire, silencing the enemy—then.[12] A few hours later (at 1320H) the patrol, now at XD760445 (just west and a little north of Hill 881-South) went on line, in a 180 formation as their LOD (Line of Departure) and, as an assault squad moved through this LOD,[13] all received 20-30 rounds of incoming fire followed by an assault from their west by approximately 30-40 NVA,[14] from XD756443.[15] The NVA had the position zeroed-in: "In 10 or 15 seconds the majority of the patrol was decimated. Bravo Company almost did not exist after that. Guys were killed pretty quickly because they mortared us. We were in soft covers. It happened so fast; everybody was killed or wounded within a matter of ten seconds."[16] The Company Commander of B/1/26 Capt James P. B. Connell, Jr., seeing the company was greatly outnumbered and were taking heavy casualties, rallied and led the headquarters section to a relatively safe position in a nearby crater on the reverse slope.[17] In the initial burst of enemy mortars, a machinegun crew in front of the company CP was hit and LCPL Edward C. McFadden, a company radio operator, removed his radio and moved under the NVA fire to the machinegun position where he opened up fire on the assaulting NVA, only 10 meters from his position, stopping their advance and undoubtedly saving many Marine lives.[18]

The enemy mortars were only a prelude to an assault by an estimated force of two companies of NVA soldiers, fighting from bunkered positions.

As the enemy force attempted to overrun the CP group with an assault by grenades, Capt Connell calmly remained in an exposed position in order to call in helicopter gunships and artillery missions on the enemy force.[19]

Denny Bowers, a radioman in Lt McDonald's platoon, suddenly found himself alone. All those in front of him as well as those behind him had been killed, and in this precarious position, his M-16 jammed! John Joseph Chase grabbed a rifle and ran across the fire-swept area to give it to Bowers only to be killed in a burst of automatic rifle fire. Miraculously, Bowers escaped this skirmish with only a second Purple Heart.[20] The Marines had walked into a carefully prepared NVA ambush.[21]

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[4] For a detailed account of the Battle of the Hills at Khe Sanh, see Stubbe, Ray W, *Pebbles in My Boots*, ol. 2, pp. 83-133.
[5] For a description of the action of 21 May, see Stubbe: *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed (2008), p. 64.
[6] 26MAR 071145Z/Jun67, OPN CROCKETT SITREP #101; 3rd MarDiv 072057Z/Jun67, OPN CROCKETT SITREP #101Larry Jones, "26th Marines Kill 59 NVA Regulars in 4-hour battle, " III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:25 (23Jun67) 1; 26MAR 080705Z/Jun67, OPN CROCKETT INTSUM #26].
[7] The following account is mainly from Stubbe: *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed (2008), pp. 81–82.
[8] Email from Guy Pete, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, June 2002, posted 13 June 2002.
[9] Email from Gene Weresow, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, June 2002, posted 11 June 2002.
[10] Email from John Kaheny, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, June 2002, posted 12 June 2002.
[11] Comments by John Kaheny at Khe Sanh Reunion, 20 July 1990.
[12] 3rd MarDiv 072057Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #101.
[13] Conversation with Tom Steinhardt, 07 October 1990.
[14] 3rd MarDiv 072057Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #101.
[15] 26Mar 080705Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT INTSUM #26.
[16] Conversation with Tom Steinhardt, 07 October 1990.
[17] BSM file on Capt James Paul Beardsley Connell, Jr.
[18] Bronze Star Medal file on LCPL Edward Charles McFadden.
[19] BSM file on Capt Connell, cited.
[20] Conversation with Denny Bowers, 01 January 1987.

The mortars streaked right over the top of Tom Steinhardt's fire team which didn't get hit. "We sprayed that area and then we started fighting our way up to the top of that ridge. By the time I got up there I was the only one left in the fire-team. Dutch took an AK [round] through the throat."[22] "Everything happened in slow motion,. I've never been in combat but it wasn't in slow motion."[23]

Most of Eugene Weresow's squad was KIA; there were 2 WIA.. They were on the left flank as the mortars and small arms fire rained upon them. "Most of the platoon fell back to the right side and I was stuck on the left side of the knoll with a wounded Marine and NVA running all over the place."[24]

The Marine patrol returned fire and moved to the reverse slope as artillery, 81mm mortars, and gunships struck the NVA.[25] LCPL Kenneth Ray Keefer, a 3.5" gunner, ran to 2/Lt Dennis E. McDonald asking for targets, and moved through the fire to the right of Staff Sergeant Robert Otis Ward of the Second Platoon. (SSGT Ward had led a squad into a forward position from which he could return fire and throw grenades on the advancing enemy and provide covering fire to protect the CP of the patrol). Along with three other Marines, SSGT Ward held this forward position, dodging grenades thrown from less than 20 meters along with small arms fire. During later evacuation of casualties, LCPL Keefer, was mortally wounded while returning to assist other wounded.[26]

LCPL Phillip Brian McGuire was acting radio operator for SSGT Ward when he saw two Marines hit and go down in an area dangerously exposed to the enemy fire. LCPL McGuire maneuvered across the fire-swept terrain to assist the two wounded Marines and move them to a place of relative safety.

He remained with them and, while delivering a heavy volume of covering fire, killed three enemy soldiers. When a corpsman arrived to administer first aid, he began to move to his original position, but after proceeding only a short distance learned that SSGT Ward was nearly depleted of ammunition and fearlessly returned to the two wounded Marines to obtain their hand grenades and ammunition. While carrying them to his platoon sergeant, he killed another enemy soldier, and then resumed his duties as radio operator.[27]

Meanwhile, two other squads wee also assaulting the enemy position.

Sgt Raymond Couture repeatedly assaulted enemy positions and continued to do so although painfully wounded in his face, forcing the enemy to flee positions from which they had been delivering small arms fire and throwing grenades upon the platoon.[28]

Sgt Peter Ronald Chapin, after first immediately directing his squad to cover in bomb craters during the initial mortar attack, enabling them to escape injuries, then ordered his squad to assault back up the hill, the crest of which was occupied by the North Vietnamese. During the course of the assault, Sgt Chapin repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire so that all the men in his squad could see and hear him. He moved his squad up the hill 10 meters at a time until they were within hand grenade range. He and the squad then exchanged grenades with the enemy for about four minutes until the squad gained fire superiority.[29]

HN Gregory Paul Vercruysse, a newly-arrived Corpsman, replacement for Al Winney had arrived as the patrol was departing and begged to accompany it. Winney said, "No, stick around and meet the guys and I'll take this patrol." He replied, "No, I'm here; I want to get my feet wet, let me go." Winney spoke with the Lieutenant who said, "Hey, he's right, let him go." Vercruysse was the first casualty Winney located. "He was trying to get a cigarette wrapper and go ahead and tape

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[21] John Kaheny recalls a visit by Col Padley (CO, 26th Marines) and LtCol Newton (CO, 1/26) to Hill 881-South just after this incident, saying the action resulted from a chance encounter between patrols. Lieutenant Guy Pete spoke up and said, "Don't you remember two weeks ago [May 21st when we took two KIA] when Alpha-3 almost got cut off just past where Bravo got ambushed. They were waiting for us today." Kaheny recalls, "Soon after that Guy was transferred to recon!" [email from John Kaheny, Khe Sanh Message Board, June 2002, posted 11 June 2002]. Guy Pete: "It was not a chance contact; it was an ambush." [email from Guy Pete, Khe Sanh Message Board, June 2002, posted 13 June 2002].

[22] Comments by Tom Steinhardt at Khe Sanh reunion, 20 July 1990; Conversation with Tom Steinhardt, 7 October 1990. He could not further identify "Dutch," except to note that he had about 20-30 days left to do in his Vietnam tour of duty and was the fire-team leader. "They took him out to the hospital ship, but he didn't make it. He died of wounds was the word I got."

[23] Comments of Mr. Denny Bowers to the author, 01Jan87.

[24] Letter from Eugene Weresow, 19 December 1996.

[25] INTSUM #26, cited.

[26] Statement of 2/Lt Dennis E. McDonald in SSM file of LCPL Kenneth Ray Keefer. The 4th Endorsement on the recommendation by Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, recommended the Bronze Star Medal with "V" instead of the Silver Star Medal. [FF1-1, 1650, Ser 102/5845, 22 Sep 1967].

[27] BSM file on LCPL Phillip Brian McGuire.

[28] BSM file on Sgt Raymond Donat Couture.

[29] BSM file on Sgt Peter Ronald Chapin.

up his own sucking chest wound when I got to him. Harvey [DeMaagd, the 1/26 Battalion Surgeon] opened his chest and apparently cut one of his major vessels and he ensanguanated and died. He did everything he could—with a flashlight and a number Ten blade, what more can you do?"[30]

Corpsman Winney's best friend, LCPL Robert Francis Enderby, was also KIA this day. "We had plans of spending time together after we got home. He really wanted to see the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York, my home, some friends, and do some fishing. Bob was our 60mm mortar man, and he was killed by a NVA mortar. I had just left him and he was covering my butt while I tried to get to 2 wounded Marines on our left flank. Someone started yelling 'Corpsman' behind me. I went to them and found a mortally wounded Marine with much of his face gone. I cut a tracheotomy and attempted to resuscitate him when I read his dog tags and realized it was Bob. Over the months with Bob in combat it seemed whenever we had wounded that Bob was always assisting me in carrying them to a medevac chopper. That afternoon I carried Bob by myself with eyes free of tears and a heart full of hate and remorse."[31]

CPL Edward Francis Furlong had joined the 26th Marines as it formed at Camp Pendleton, assigned then to I/3/26. Another Marine in the same company, Gregg Reed, couldn't stand him: "We're both from Irish Catholic families. He was a typical New Yorker. The next thing I know we're best buddies. The day I was transferred, I'll never forget: he gave me a religious medal. And I remember when I spoke to his mother I said, 'Mrs. Furlong, would you like me to send that to you?' And she: 'Absolutely not. He gave that to you.'"[32]

Lt Guy Pete, watching the entire action from Hill 881-South, went to the 105mm howitzer crew on the western finger of Hill 881-South to ask if they could shoot direct fire. He had them load Willy Peter rounds to identify where the rounds hit and fired until the Company Commander, Capt Connell, called cease fire: the rounds, he thought, were too close.[33] Eugene Weresow, however, credits this fire with saving their hide: "You are right they were close. I was on the left flank all alone at that point and those suckers went right over my head. The NVA got spooked and took off. Otherwise my name may be on that list."[34]

In addition to the artillery, A-1 Skyraiders dropped two 2,000-pound bombs on masses of the NVA. "The bombs looked bigger than the plane; I'd never seen a bomb that big. I don't see how they got in the air!"[35]

2/Lt John Kaheny had been searching with his platoon the area where Ibanez was lost[36] when he got the word to return to KSCB immediately due to the Hill 950 situation. "We were at the airstrip and all of a sudden everything changed." They received word of Bravo Company's contact. "My Company Commander and Company Gunny, Norm Centers and Gunny Parrish, got on a helicopter and went out to 881-South and picked up Guy Pete's Platoon. Guy Pete was there [on Hill 881-South] because Centers took what was left of his platoon to run the medevacs and air strikes. 2/Lt Doug Sykes, the B/1/26 XO was also there, unable to communicate with the patrol due to dead radiomen. John Kaheny, upon arriving with his platoon said, "We got to do something. I got a platoon. I'm going out." "So we took off and went out as the NVA were still making their hat down the slopes of the hills."[37] A-3 departed 881-South, led by John Kaheny, at 1415H.[38]

Upon linking up, a HLZ was established and casualties medevaced as ALFA-6 (1/Lt Norman Centers) directed fixed wing; the NVA broke contact and withdrew to the west at 1640H. ALFA-6 (CO, A1/26) directed gunships and fixed wing (2 F-8 Crusaders and 2 A-4 Skyhawks) on the enemy force as it attempted to set up mortars. 7 H-34 helicopters in flights of two then completed the evacuation of casualties.[39] John Kaheny moved B-3 under fire to Hill 821 (XD763443) to cover return of the patrol.[40] Casualties: 18 KIA, 16 WIA.[41] NVA strength was estimated to include a company at XD756439 and another

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[30] Letter from Al Winney, 03 June 2003; Conversation with Al Winney, 15 November 1989. Al Winney's father had served in World War I and was 61 when Al was born. Al wanted him to as proud of him as Al was of his father, and went into the Hospital Corps, U.S. Navy. After serving in neuropsychiatry at Bethesda, he felt he should be in combat, and volunteered to serve with the Fleet Marine Force.

[31] Letter from Al Winney, 30 July 2003.

[32] Conversation with Gregg Reed, 25 November 1998.

[33] Email from Guy Pete, cited.

[34] Email from Weresow, cited.

[35] Conversation with Tom Steinhardt, 07 October 1990.

[36] XD 905399. For a detailed account of this most mysterious MIA case see Stubbe: *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed (2008) pp. 70-74.

[37] Remarks of John Kaheny at Khe Sanh reunion, 20 July 1990.

[38] 3rd MarDiv 072057Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #101.

[39] 26MAR 080705Z/Jun67, OPN CROCKETT INTSUM #26.

[40] INTSUM #26, cited.

[41] CROCKETT SITREP #101, cited.

company to the north of Hill 821 (XD760445).[42] Although still exposed in .50 caliber machinegun fire, Capt Connell assisted in the medical evacuation of the casualties. With the company gunnery Sergeant seriously wounded and unable to perform his duties, SSGT Ward supervised the evacuation while exposed to heavy automatic weapons fire in the LZ. LCPL Keefer had assisted one Marine aboard the medevac chopper and was returning to assist another waiting wounded when he was killed by the enemy fire coming into the medevac LZ.[43]

At about 1500H, three 34s were diverted on an emergency medevac to evacuate 27 wounded and 18 KIAs from Hill 800, XD 760442, so the Marines could return to Hill 881S located 1500 meters southeast of the zone. All three aircraft made three trips into the Landing Zone.[44]

Upon return, the Marines were greeted by visiting Generals. One, in starched utilities came up and said, "I understand you really did a fine job out there, Marine." PFC Tom Steinhardt, not realizing it was a Brigadier General, said, "If you really think so, why don't you tell it to the dead!"[45] He notes that they were going to put him in for a Silver Star Medal; he said, "Yeah, big deal! What about the dead Marines and the wounded Marines?" "I was pretty upset."[46] Eugene Weresow recalls a LtGen who said, "Good show, Marine." "At that point I was so disgusted all I could say was something like 'yeah, sure!'... The next morning I was sent down to KSCB to identify the bodies of most of first squad. I remember praying for them, but did not expect what I saw. Some had half a head missing. Others had limbs blown off. God, what a bad scene!"[47]

LINGERING DEATH

Marines on Hill 881-South, digging bunkers or deeper trenches during the following months, occasionally unearthed a M-16, AK-47, a human skull, or simply and suddenly were engulfed in a belch from the earth of odor of decayed human bodies. SFC James Perry, the Medic of MACV Advisory Team #4 in Khe Sanh village, noted, "They found later that they [the NVA] had a hospital and mess-hall and some other things under both those mountains, and the blasting just caved-in the roof. Most were buried hundreds inside. They estimated that as high as three or four thousand might have been in that complex network of tunnels inside those mountains."[48]

On Wednesday, 02 August 1967, Captain John Raymond, the CO of A/1/26 on Hill 881-South at the time, mentioned a visit by Major General Louis Metzger, CG of Third Marine Division a few days earlier, in which he discovered several human skulls the Marines had put on stakes which they had dug-up while digging bunkers and trenches. "The General looked at Colonel Padley; Padley looked at Wilkinson, Wilkinson looked at me. There was no place for me to look but up in the air. I think I lost some points there."[49]

THE BIG GUNS THAT DIDN'T ARRIVE

On Friday, 21 July 1967, a convoy of the large 175mm guns together with trucks filled with ammunition, C-4 explosives, claymore mines, and other ordnance, was moving west on Route 9 towards Khe Sanh Combat Base.[50]

First Platoon of B/1/26 (B-1) was patrolling eastward on either side of Route 9 when at 1035H the point squad made contact with an estimated NVA platoon supported by a heavy weapons platoon. The Marines received an estimated 45 rounds of 82mm mortar fire and 5 rounds of 57mm recoilless rifle fire together with small arms and semi-automatic fire.[51] The Marines of B-1 had prematurely sprung a NVA ambush that had been laid from XD 943423 to XD 967432 along Route 9,

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[42] 1/26 ComdC, June 1967, Encl (1), p. 6.
[43] SSM file on LCPL Kenneth Ray Keefer; SSM file on SSGT Ward; BSM file on Capt Beardsley.
[44] Sgt Mike Saska, "Pilots Make 10 Trips Despite Intense Fire to Rescue Wounded," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:26 (30Jun67) 1.
[45] Remarks by Tom Steinhardt at Khe Sanh reunion, 20 July 1990.
[46] Conversation with Tom Steinhardt, 07 October 1990.
[47] Letter from Eugene Weresow, 19 December 1996.
[48] Conversation with James Perry, 28 May 1986.
[49] Stubbe, Ray W., Diary entry for Wednesday, 02 August 1967, *Khe Sanh Chaplain* [unpublished manuscript], 01 April 1970, p. 95.
[50] Comments of LtCol James B. Wilkinson at 1/26 Staff Briefing, 22Jul67, in author's diary. Perhaps the 175s were being pre-positioned before the start of the monsoon season as part of the EL PASO operation. EL PASO was a plan to launch from Khe Sanh along Route 9 into Laos to sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail. (There is a discussion of EL PASO in John M. Collins, *Military Geography for Professionals and the Public*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1998, Chapter 12, "Operation Plan EL PASO," pp. 367-385. EL PASO was shelved due to the approach of NVA units in December, 1967, to prepare to lay siege to Khe Sanh. A later operation, LAMSOM 719, was launched from Khe Sanh in early 1971.].
[51] 26MAR 211215Z/Jul67, ON ARDMORE SITREP #19.

consisting of 2000 meters of anti-personnel mines, 82mm mortars, .50 caliber machineguns, and NVA claymore-type mines. Meanwhile, the 175mm guns had made it as far as Ca Lu; when the contact began, they promptly returned to Camp Carroll.[52]

The initial burst of enemy small arms, machineguns, and rockets had caused several casualties in the point squad of B-1, led by Cpl Terry G. Henderson. With calm efficiency, led his squad until they gained fire superiority, threw grenades at suspected enemy positions, called in artillery support, all while keeping control of his men. When two of his men were pinned down, he doubled back and around towards the enemy gun position and led the men to a safer area.[53]

LCPL Charles Richardson, grenadier for the First Squad moving as point, found himself pinned down. When his 40mm grenade ammunition was nearly depleted and an enemy machinegun position continued to pour our devastating fire, he quickly gathered several fragmentation grenades from companions and maneuvered to within grenade range of the machinegun emplacement. With complete disregard for his own safety, he exposed himself to the intense enemy fire and threw grenades at the enemy position; however it withstood his relentless attack.

When this failed, LCPL Richardson, while under intense automatic weapons fire and with a large number of enemy grenades falling around him, moved in an uncovered and unprotected position where he fired a Light Antitank Assault Weapon ["LAW"] into the position, destroying it.[54]

By 1125H, B-1 reported the heaviest enemy fire was coming from Hill 247 (XD 951432). At 1225H, B-1 sighted approximately 15 NVA soldiers crossing the river at XD 947425. Friendly casualties included three Marines killed: PFC W. A. Pollard, PFC R. E. Wilson, and SGT J. Castillo, and six wounded. Meanwhile, the Battalion Commander and Company B(-) began moving to establish contact with B-1 at XD 940426. Contact was established at 1505H and B/1/26 commenced a sweep towards the last known enemy position (XD 948428).[55]

The 81s section—Sgt Jose Castillo, Gilbert Wall, and his radioman, Bruce Jones—accompanied Lt Ben Long's platoon. (Gilbert Wall was wounded in this action, evacuated for two months, and then returned to Khe Sanh in time for the 25 Feb 68 Jacques patrol)

> Joe Castillo was the Sergeant, who had extended his tour. He was the 81s Forward Observer, and he was teaching Gilbert how to be a Forward Observer. Castillo—he's from Fresno, California, and he had already been done with his first tour and he had extended and he had just come off of leave. In fact, we picked him up not more than 3, 4 days after he had come back from his extended leave.
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> We were walking down the road. We had a couple people out [as] flank along the river and I think very few flankers on the high ground coming off that road on Route 9. That was very rough terrain. Long finally did call in his flankers.
>
> We were in the middle by Weapons Platoon. And Lt Long and his CP group was ahead of us, and then Joe and myself, and Gilbert were the 81s Forward Observer team. We were supporting arms for them, and then behind us was Weapons, because I know 60s came up, the M60s came up. And I remember seeing them drop rounds and then finally a guy got up there with a tube and he didn't even use his tripod; he just dropped is base and started dropping rounds, and was shooting towards the bridge. And somebody was yelling back to him which way to adjust.
>
> We had fired a spotter round, a WILLY PETER, and we had gone up to find out where the round went because we couldn't see it on the bend of the road. And when we came around the bend in the road, they shot all three of us.
>
> Joe was shot twice in the chest and he died immediately. We were crouched along some rocks. And Gilbert was shot through the top of the shoulder. It went through his shoulder, then hit his left lung. It collapsed his left lung, and went out the side. They took him out of country, and he went to Japan for two months.
>
> I got shot through the throat. Gilbert and I talked about it. We think it might have been a RPG round; it might have been a rifle grenade. It wasn't a rocket or anything because it was too quiet.
>
> We got hit, the entire right side of us, with shrapnel, and I got right shoulder, right face, neck, and I was blind in both eyes when they pulled me out of the field. And they took me into Charlie Med there."[56]

As a result of the Co B patrol contact of 211030H, a battalion minus operation, consisting of the Battalion Command Group and Companies B/1/26 and C(-)/1/26, along Route 9 from XD 9140 to XD 9143 to XD 9440 to XD 9443, was conducted 21 – 29 July 1967.[57] A Company-size position was established at the "bridge site" manned by C/1/26.

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[52] Wilkinson briefing of 22Jul67, cited.
[53] BSM file on Cpl Terry Gay Henderson.
[54] BSM file on LCPL Charles Vincent Richardson, Jr.
[55] 26MAR 211215Z/Jul67, ON ARDMORE SITREP #119.
[56] Comments of Bruce Jones to the author, 25Feb89; Comments of Gilbert Wall to the author, 13May89.

The NVA at the ambush site had no identification; there were no letters or photographs. The enemy force had completed construction of 25 bunkers and were in the process of constructing 75 more.. There were five rucksacks of new equipment, including extended rations. The Commanding Officer of 1/26, LtCol James B. Wilkinson, briefing his staff on 22 July 1967, made the evaluation that the enemy were not there to capture the 175s; they probably were unaware they were coming. Rather, they were preparing positions so that during the monsoon they could sever the road as a supply route, at which time they might begin moving three battalions against 881, 861, or try to take the combat base itself, or conduct small, commando-type terror attacks with satchel charges. He noted that much 782-type gear, rifles, and ammunition, had been hastily abandoned because of SPOOKY[58], and then concluded his briefing, "Now, let's see all of the men in church tomorrow!"[59]

During Friday, 21 July 1967, as I walked through the trenches on the combat base, many of the Marines mentioned Jeanne Dixon's prophecy of 1200 deaths here at Khe Sanh and were asking me about her. All I knew was that she was popular back "in the world" for having predicted Kennedy's assassination and several other events before they occurred.[60]

An indication of unreality happened at 2300 on Wednesday, 26 July 1967 when ALFA Relay on top of Hill 950 took a direct hit from our own artillery causing a bunker to collapse and two non-serious wounded Marines. The Marines had called arty to fire on the north slope of the hill, but the arty on the combat base is oriented only to strike the south slope, and the hill was higher than indicated in the tactical maps. The map indicates it as 950, but the hill is actually 963.29 meters high, determined by a later survey by the 2nd Topographic Company.[61]

TARZAN

When I visited Hill 861, "D" Co had departed; "B" Co. now mans the position. Worship at 1415 was attended by forty. Lance Corporal Stephen Wiese of 1st Platoon asked for a pocket Bible. A very large bug landed on the back of my neck which I brushed off. Suddenly there was a burning sensation on my neck accompanied by an odor like varnish or turpentine. A "ring of steel" was fired by the 105mm artillery battery on the combat base on the perimeter of the outpost as a "final protective fire" in the event the enemy attempts to assault the hill. Shrapnel was flying all over; one of the Marines said that there's always the possibility of a short round that might explode in the position.[62]

On another visit (Thursday, 24 August 1967), several of the men asked me about creation *versus* evolution or the difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants. I think they are trying to trap or test me or don't know what to talk about with a Chaplain. While I always answer their questions, I also indicate that religion is really not a matter of argument or discussion, but of how one lives.

Resupply of food from the base included loaves of freshly baked bread. One Marine, Cpl Ken Claire, the one who screams "Tarzan" yells, walked off with a loaf savagely chewing off a hunk with his teeth. He was thoroughly enjoying himself. He is so very human. Although he never attends my worship services, I always look him up when visiting B Co.

I held worship services near "the old rugged cross," erected by a 1/26 company in memory of the Marines who died here during the Battle of the Hills which started on this very hill. There were 25 in attendance. One platoon of the company is patrolling the area until noon tomorrow. B-2 returned around noon, completely drenched—either from sweat or rain. One Marine told me that most of the men have only one set of utilities. They are worn during the day and the men sleep in them at night. They are worn until they literally rot off. They hardly ever get dry during the monsoon season. The men joke about it. Morale couldn't be higher despite such adverse conditions.

2. "You will be in our American History Books"

Hazy, rainy, cold, damp, gusts of wind and generally harsh weather conditions blanketed the most remote American position in South Vietnam, Hill 881-South at Khe Sanh, Vietnam, on 10 November 1967. It was also the 192nd anniversary of the Marine Corps. At 0900, sounds of a helicopter could be heard circling the hill several times, apparently seeking an opening in the cloud cover to land. Eventually, the pilot's balls directed the chopper through the soup, and it parked on the LZ,

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[57] 1/26 ComdC Jul67, p. 6.
[58] AC-47 Gunship equipped with three 7.62mm Gatling-type guns that fire 6,000 rounds per minute.
[59] Author's Diary, 22Jul67.
[60] Author's Diary, Friday, 21 July 1967.
[61] Stubbe, Ray William, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript completed 7 Oct 1971, pp. 201-202.
[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 270-271.

something I've never seen choppers do here in the past several months. The base commander, Col David E. Lownds emerged along with LtCol James B. Wilkinson, CO of 1/26, and the Major who was CO of our artillery, 1/13[63].

B-3, Third Platoon, led by 2/Lt Donald Jacques, was patrolling the nearby area[64] on the daily patrol in this miserable weather which made miserable conditions for the Marines—muddy slopes made slick by man-high elephant grass, leeches that tended to attach to any bare skin of arms (and occasionally find their way to crawl up a penis), a shrouding density of vegetation making detection of any lurking enemy almost impossible to detect with the consequent apprehension that all hell could break loose as fast as flicking a light switch, rotting clothes in which each Marine lived and slept, torn from bristling thorns and falls while patrolling, and no opportunity to clean up or take a shower for six weeks at a time–created an almost animal-like living condition.

The remainder of B/1/26, the cannoncockers of the 105s from C/1/13, the visiting Chaplain, and others formed a U-shaped formation and stood at attention. The Company Gunny presented the Captain; Chaplain Stubbe said a prayer focusing on self-giving service of those who have gone before us; the words of LeJeune and the Commandant's message were read. The latter included: "Although fighting his country's battles is a Marine's profession, it is not his preoccupation. It is not for him to make war, but to keep the peace." LtCol Wilkinson then made a few remarks, noting that this position had deep significance for the NVA who will probably attempt to take it over in the near future, but we will stand firm.

Colonel Lownds then broke up the formation into an informal group, and in his normal, dry humor noted that he and a man he served with in World War II had always celebrated Marine Corps Birthday together, but he doubted that this man would be with him at Khe Sanh today. He then said, "You will all be remembered in our American history books."

Although we had heard warnings of imminent NVA attacks at Khe Sanh during the five months I had already been at Khe Sanh—the national elections, the coming monsoons, increased discoveries of enemy presence in the Khe Sanh area, reports from agent nets of JTAD[65] and other intelligence including "people sniffers" that patrolled the area.[66] An APD mission flown on 30 October 1967, made well over a hundred detections; the S-2's acetate overlay of the 1:50,000 tactical map of our TAOR used in the evening regiment briefing was so covered with red dots it appeared as though the map had a loathsome disease.

One day earlier, 09 November 1967, I was warmly greeted by Captain Bruce Greene, the new CO of B/1/26, and had a turkey loaf C-ration with cocoa in a newly-erected supply tent just north of the LZ. Several flights of CH-53 helicopters—the big ones—were removing the 105 howitzers on this hill and bringing in two new 105s, shaking the tent and blowing over a shitter into the trench, spreading its contents all over the place. "The shit hit the fan!"

As this continued, I began walking the position and noticed a new hooch, small and with an odd roof near the LZ, and peered inside. A Marine holding a manual which had spots like bars of music over the pages, sitting beside a large metal box with compass degrees on top and a revolving, diamond-shaped antenna was shouting, but the noise of the choppers made it impossible to hear what he was saying. He was visibly shocked that I was there. Eventually, I heard him warn that the tent was a restricted area, that I couldn't be there. He was part of a detachment from the First Radio Company of III MAF in DaNang.

I later learned that this group of Marines had arrived at Khe Sanh to monitor NVA radio transmissions. They are able to determine the location of enemy units and through a "pattern analysis," to determine headquarters and the chain of command by who contacts who how many times.

Continuing around the hill position, I learned that the sentry dogs which accompanied patrols from 881S departed around 31 October. I was told the patrols were too arduous for them.

I then returned to the LZ—the bald top of the hill—which, by the way, is not the red clay of the combat base but is a yellowish-tan shade—a Huey was arriving with several "Code fours and code fives and code sixes" (or something like that). It

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[63] Hill 881-A had two 105mm howitzers from C Battery, 1/13, on Hill 881-S.

[64] 1/26 ComdC Nov67, S2/S3 Log, Ser #4.

[65] Joint Technical Advisory Detachment. (For detailed discussion of the JTAD at Khe Sanh, see Stubbe: *Pebbles in My Boots*, Vol. 2, 01 Oct 2011, pp. 11-16).

[66] Slang for the Airborne Personnel Detector (APD) an EM-2 modified E-63 [described with photographs in LtGen John H. Hay, *Tactical and Materiel Innovations*, Wash, D.C.: Dept. of the Army, 1974, pp. 80-81][, the APD was first used in the Khe Sanh area during October, 1967. The device was mounted in a UH-1E and detected the presence of human beings through an ammonia sensor. The aircraft flies at approx. 50 ft. AGL and the APD gathers and registers the air samples. It is "..effective in locating enemy harbor sites and determining infiltration routes that could not be otherwise observed because of the heavy canopy." [26MAR ComdC Oct67, Encl (1), p. 7] It registered the "odor of strangeness." It could also register packs of frolicking monkeys moving through the jungle, and therefore had to be compared with other intelligence sources.

amounted to four Generals, including General Starbird,[67] an elderly-looking gent, the General in charge of I Corps, and some others I didn't recognize. They walked with Captain Greene to the northern side of the LZ (the wall of dirt-filled wooden ammo boxes) and faced north towards 881-N, pointing north several times. I am sure with the radio unit, the increased activity in our area—including deaths of our recon Marines patrolling close to our base, and now four Generals, that something must be brewing.[68]

How did Colonel Lownds know of the approaching enemy?

3. The Approach of Deimos: Menacing Moon of Mars[69]

The North Vietnamese Army[70] had not been inactive during what had been assumed to be a relatively peaceful time. Following the Battle of the Hills in April-May, 1967, it is likely that one regiment remained in the Khe Sanh area to maintain various fortifications in useable condition—foxholes, entrenchments, bunkers, weapons emplacements, and large strong points. These were not only maintained; they were developed in depth.[71]

> From about mid-July 1967 to 1 January 1968, numerous sightings by air and ground forces tend to confirm information received from other sources that at least one enemy battalion is operating Southwest of Hill 881S. It appears that the enemy is taking pains to avoid contact unless entry is made against infiltration routes or base camp areas. Increasing numbers of bunkers, fighting holes, and trenches give credence to the belief that the enemy is currently marking time in this area and preparing for future large scale operations. Hill 557 (XD 768414) has long been considered a meeting point for the infiltration routes through the areas. The area around Hill 557 contains numerous transient type harbor sites ... Khe Sanh Combat Base can expect harassing attacks by mortars and/or rockets at any time. This is particularly valid in that the 8th battalion of the 29th Regiment appears to have moved back into that area.[72]

The NVA spent long months to prepare the battlefield. "The enemy first prepares the battlefield: He's very meticulous in this. He spends a lot of time moving up his supplies and burying them, or hiding them. And then he moves the troops in."[73] That this was being accomplished at Khe Sanh was evident from roadrunner reports. These involved indigenous personnel who were dressed and armed as NVA "guides" at the various supply points who directed NVA troops and porters where to go. Working for us, they were in a unique position to determine the extent of infiltration as well as substitute small arms munitions and mortar rounds that were specially made to explode upon firing, thus causing distrust of the supply system by the NVA trooper, and therefore help disrupt the NVA supply train] and aerial photography which noted increased truck traffic bringing in supplies to this area after the first of November, 1967.[74] The CIA concluded: "Communist forces probably began stockpiling of weapons, ammunition, and equipment possibly by mid-November or earlier."[75]

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[67] General Starbird was head of the DCPG, Defense Communications Planning Group, a CIA-funded component f the Department of Defense formed to develop electronic sensors as part of the "McNamara Line." Col. Franklin N. Pippin (Chief, Evaluation Branch, J-3, MACV) reported in his Top Secret Debrief at FMFPAC: "They have nothing to do with defense communications .. That's just a name. It was Joint Task Force 768 under General Starbird [USMC Tape #2907]. For additional information on sensors, see: van Saaveren, Jacob, *History of Task Force Alfa, 1 October 1967 – 30 April 1968*, USAF, 1969; U.S. Senate: *Hearings* .. 1971, cited; Comments of LtCol Edward J. A. Castagna, Tape #2770; Shore, Moyers, *Battle for Khe Sanh*, original manuscript p. 86; Debrief of Col Kenneth J. Houghton, Tape #2528; and "This SCAMP Plays Havoc with the Enemy Scamps," *Pacific Stars *& Stripes*, Fri, 14 Sep 1973, p. 7.

[68] Stubbe, Ray William, *Khe Sanh* (unpublished manuscript completed 7 Oct 1971), pp. 598 [for 09 Nov]-601 [for 10 Nov].

[69] Mars, the fourth planet from our sun, is named for the Roman god of war. It is sometimes referred to as the "red planet" due to its red soil, just as Khe Sanh is known for its red soil. The planet Mars has two moons, Phobos ("fear") and Deimos ("Terror") the latter named for the son of Ares and Aphrodite.

[70] Material in this section is based on Stubbe: *Khe Sanh*, unpublished MS, 06 Jun 1989, chapter 107, pp. 297-299.

[71] CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, *Intelligence Memorandum*, "Construction and Logistic Activities in the Khe Sanh Area," 07Feb68, SC No. 01244/68, p. 4

[72] 1/26 OpO 1-68, 071900/JAN68, Annex B to 1/26 ComdC Jan68

[73] Comments of MajGen Rathvon McClure Tompkins, Tape #3627

[74] CIA, "Construction and Logistic Activities.." p. 7

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 8

There were other indications. During the fall of 1967, an increasing number of documents and reports obtained by allied intelligence in the I Corps Tactical Zone indicated a possible large-scale offensive was about to be directed against cities and major military installations.[76]

In early November, 1967, the 9th Regiment, 304th NVA Division, departed Tho Xuan of Thanh Hoa Province, North Viet Nam; the 24th Regiment, 304th Division, had departed Cong Chinh, Nong Cong, of Thanh Hoa Province, North Viet Nam, and the 66th Regiment, 304th Division arrived at Dong Trai, of Thanh Hoa Province.[77] The 304th NVA Division was one of the two NVA Divisions that were later to lay siege to Khe Sanh in late January, 1968. In addition, beginning 15 October, North Vietnamese Army trucks were detected "swarming southward in bumper-to-bumper convoys" through eastern Laos. Increased truck traffic was noted beginning after the first of November, 1967, and the CIA concluded that stockpiling of weapons, ammunition, and equipment in preparation of the Khe Sanh battlefield began by mid-November or earlier.[78] American intelligence agents had penetrated into several NVA headquarters even far across the Ben Hai River.[79] It is not unlikely, therefore, that Col Lownds was in possession of some very high-level and very highly classified "far beyond Top Secret" intelligence that indicated plans the NVA had for Khe Sanh even at this time. The National Security Agency (NSA) was later to testify: "NSA began to report the movement of elements of two NVA divisions and three NVA regiments toward South Vietnam. The first report of the movement of any of these elements was made in mid-November 967 ... Reporting ... continued until the units arrived in South Vietnam or staging areas in the DMZ and Laos in late 1967 or early 1968."[80]

By December, 1967, it was obvious that the North Vietnamese Army was planning a major assault against Khe Sanh.

About this time, Khe Sanh began to be a focus of attention at the White House. Dr. Walt W. Rostow, President Johnson's National Security Advisor, recalls: "Khe Sanh began to come into our minds acutely towards the end of November and early December [1967]. What started our thinking hard about the whole region were the attacks at Loc Ninh [29 Oct – 03 Nov 67] and Dak To [3 – 22 Nov 67]." [81]

> Why were they doing it? Well, they obviously, it seemed to us, [wanted] to draw our forces away from the coastal cities.
>
> Then we began to get accumulating data of all kinds: Prisoner-of-War comments; diaries of men that had been killed, and the lectures they'd been given by their political cadres—all manner of intelligence that they planned a major, maximum effort to be decisive.
>
> And that intelligence built up to the point where .. I took the initiative of asking Saigon to get me an evaluation what is your latest portrait of that offensive that's coming, and what is your view of the possibility of a serious negotiation when it fails? That is the way I put the question.
>
> I remember the 8th of December, it arrived. I turned it over to the CIA and the intelligence community to get their comments, and by the 15th of December I had sent it up to President Johnson with my comments.
>
> [It was] early in December, when the whole picture of the coming offensive was shaping up in our minds, that the importance of Khe Sanh emerged. It was clear they were moving big forces in. There were two divisions coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail aiming for Khe Sanh. There were considerable forces there. There were forces quite close to Khe Sanh that could be brought to bear along the parallel. Our attention was fastened on it because it was such an obvious analogy to Dien Bien Phu. And it was easy to see that they might want to have a melodrama there of overrunning this garrison ... And I remember telling President Johnson once, reminding him of something that Marx said when he was speaking to Napoleon III: 'History never repeats itself exactly; the first time it comes around as tragedy, the next time as farce.[82]

It was about this time that Dr. Rostow had the famous "sand- box" 3-dimension contour map of the Khe Sanh area constructed so that President Johnson could better comprehend the significance of the constant flow of information concerning the region.[83]

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[76] MACV, *Command History*, 1968, Vol. 2, p. 883

[77] MACV, JGS, "Study of Viet Cong Documents, 27Apr68, p. 11

[78] CIA, Intelligence Memorandum, "Construction and Logistic Activities I the Khe Sanh Area," 07Feb68 , SC No. 01244/68, pp. 7, 8

[79] Ltr of Maj Mirza M. Baig, 23Dec68, HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file

[80] 15Oct84 filing with the court, Westmoreland *vs.* CBS, quoted in Bob Brewin and Sydney Shaw, *Vietnam on Trial, Westmoreland vs. CBS*, New York: Atheneum, 1987, p. 204

[81] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh*, unpulished MS, Chap. 98, "The Approach of Terror," pp. 273ff.

[82] Transcription of video intv of Dr. Walt W. Rostow by Mr. John Wright, 31Jan89

[83] *Ibid.* For more information on the sand-box see: Brugioni, Dino A., "The President, Khe Sanh, and the 26th Marines," Leatherneck 69:9 (Sep, 1986) 22-25. Mr. George Allen (who was the SAVA, Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs) of the

Meanwhile in Quang Tri, the Province Senior Advisor (PSA), Robert Brewer (who was also the senior CIA man in the area), was watching the melodrama unfold from a different perspective.

Back in August or September, 1967, a high-ranking defector came to the attention of Mr. Brewer, a veteran of the WW II Battle of the Bulge and the Special Operations Branch of the Far East Command during the Korean War. Brewer tasked Capt Warren Milberg, USAF, of the Special Branch (Vietnam's FBI) to investigate this defector, and within a few days, the defector was unmasked as a Moscow-trained, long-range penetration agent, identified as "X-1."[84]

While not thoroughly trustworthy, X-1 did provide a copy of "Resolution 13," an incredible document. In 1918, Ho Chi Minh had issued Resolution #1; only eleven others had been promulgated the intervening fifty years! In Resolution #12, issued about 1960, Ho Chi Minh opted for military struggle rather than political means to conquer South Viet Nam.

> All of us that knew something about this kept wondering when the next shoe was going to drop .. when Resolution 13 was going to come. About September, 1967, a defector walked in with Resolution 13 ... What I did with it was try to read through it and figure out what it meant because it's written in Communist umbrella language. It doesn't really say, 'There will be an attack at Tet,' but it does give you the feeling that something is big behind this particular document. Eventually [this defector] was able to secure the update of Resolution 13. That came in November, 1967.
>
> It was quite specific. And it even mentioned Khe Sanh, and it mentioned all of the Communist military districts in the northern fourth of the country. And we had to say: This could be a plant; they may be trying to provoke us to do something. It may not be true at all, but the thing to do is to take all of the possible indicators that might say that this is true and list them on the wall, and start checking them off as events unfolded.
>
> And I must say that we received every indication that we had expected to receive through those three months. It was a textbook problem. If you had a military intelligence course somewhere you could take this and see how to use indicators towards a possibility, a hypothesis.
>
> We said that if the enemy were going to make a massive attack like this, they would not only rely on low level spies or not rely on local spies but they would send down intelligence officers of considerable rank from North Vietnam to check out their targets.[85]
>
> Another indication: we knew from the past that if the Communists attack, their favorite tactic was to punch a hole in the line and then take reserves held out in an assembly area somewhere, and drive them through that hole. This was the way the North Vietnamese had attacked over and over again. And so we looked for signs that assembly areas were going to be used. We knew which areas had been used in the past, so we kept our eye on those. And sure enough, the assembly areas that were most commonly used began to be booby-trapped again. We said: Here it comes! It's got to be happening because they wouldn't be going through all that trouble just to fool us."[86]

Khe Sanh was also the focus of attention at Saigon. By late November, 1967, Gen Westmoreland assembled his operations staff: LtGen John Chaisson, USMC, LtGen Wil Pearson (MACV J-3), and MajGen Phillip Davidson (MACV J-2).

> And he said: I'd like for you people to draw up a 'war game' and through the device of a war game, to try to figure out what this guy is likely to do, or at least to come up with the various options.
>
> My recollection is that we prepared this 'war game' and that – I think, maybe 'war game' is a little misleading term [since] I don't recollect that there was eve any particular playing out of the scenario. But at any rate we drew the thing up, and we briefed General Westmoreland, and I think all the other principal Saigon actors sometime in November, I'm sure; I'm pretty sure of it.

CIA at the time, noted: "I urged the Agency people, the people from the National Photo Interpretation Center [NPUIC] to build a terrain model of the Khe Sanh plateau. And they did. And they briefed LBJ, and it was retained at the White House. I told them that we had done that at Dien Bien Phu so we could brief the Army staff at the Pentagon—but the Chairman at the Joint Chiefs of Staff stole it from us! If this thing [at Khe Sanh] develops as I suspect it's going to, there's going to be need of one for the Khe Sanh area, so get with it. They did." [Conversation with Mr. George Allen, 25 Sep 1994]. Mr. Allen, a Navy radioman during WW II, helped to bury over a thousand Marine KIA at Tarawa. "We were sent ashore a couple of days because they needed laborers to clean u the battlefield and get all the bodies underground, both friendly and enemy. ...It was "one square mile and 5700 bodies, the size of the Pentagon with parking lots." [Conversation with Mr. George Allen, 21 July 2000].

[84] Information on Mr. Brewer based on personal comments to the author 01Nov87 and ltr to the author 17Nov87

[85] This happened when a NVA Captain was killed in one of the most pacified, prosperous districts in Quang Tri Province

[86] Transcription of video intv of Mr. Robert Brewer by John Wright, 05Feb89

Anyway, he then says: Well, I think we ought to take this up to DaNang and put this on for General Cushman and the key people at III MAF and get their input. Because, my recollection again is that the outcomes of the scenario was that the enemy would make the major effort at the two northern provinces and would make a secondary effort around Saigon and in the Central Highlands and perhaps along the coast, at Binh Dinh, Quang Ngai, which is always hot country.

So I do remember, very distinctly, taking it up – with some trepidation, I might add – up to DaNang, up to III MAF, and we put it on for General Cushman [who] was there and my old friend, Kenny Houghton was there, and the bulk of the Marine brass there.

The briefing concluded that the main effort would be focused against the two northern provinces, and went well. LtGen Cushman remarked: "I think this makes a lot of sense."[87]

But just where in Northern I Corps would the attack be focused? At this meeting, attended by Generals Cushman, Davidson, as well as the new III MAF -2, Col Kenneth Houghton, and specialists—corporals and sergeants, the argument raged all day. Both Major Generals Tompkins and Metzger argued the attack would be directed against Camp Carroll. Eventually the Pattern Analysis of Signal traffic made by the Radio Company Marines of Maj Alfred M. Gray, Jr., and advocated at this meeting by Col Kenneth Houghton, prevailed. Cushman heeded their analysis as did Gen Davidson and because of this the decision was made to fortify Khe Sanh for the impending attack.[88] "We argued all day long in Phu Bai, and we won. We were the ones who said it might come at Khe Sanh. And it's an interesting story why. And we came back that night, and that's when General Cushman made the decision to reinforce Khe Sanh with three battalions. It was based on Marine intelligence."[89]

The NVA battle plan was code-named TCK-TKN ("Tong Cong Kich, Tong Khoi Nghia" translated as "General Attacks, General Uprisings") said to have been devised by Gen Vo Nguyen Giap in the fall of 1967.[90] Phase III of TCK-TKN was to be grand-scale battle with a decisive victory. The place he chose for this was Khe Sanh. The MACV J-2, Phillip B. Davidson, notes that this explains the large force which subsequently encircled Khe Sanh—not to draw American troops from populated areas, but to attack and neutralize Khe Sanh as a "decisive victory." It is sheer stupidity to assume the NVA attracted Americans to Khe Sanh. Davidson writes: no military leader in his right mind would use 32,000 to 40,000 men to divert 6,000, especially when they were so desperately needed in Quang Tri City and Hue.[91]

Meanwhile, on Khe Sanh Combat Base, Colonel Lownds, at the evening staff brief on 17 November 1967, LtCol James B. Wilkinson mentioned that a Scout Sniper on Hill 881-S had fired six rounds and missed a 300-pound deer. A Grunt from B/1/26 shot and killed it. Wilkinson continued, "But I don't know what weapon he used; he might have used a 106 or a 105 on direct fire!" Then Colonel Lownds spoke of setting up a defensive position, assigning priorities, dig in positions, clear fields of fire, set up concertina, and camouflage. He continued: we have to concentrate on the latter and build false hooches, camouflage those we have on the base. "It's easy to see where the COC is, and frankly, I don't want to be a target!" The next morning, at the 1/26 staff brief, LtCol Wilkinson, noting Col Lownds' comments the previous evening, said, "The enemy can accurately hit the COC by adjusting on its antennas. That was the experience at Dien Bien Phu. So, instead of taking 500 rounds on the COC, the whole base will take 1000 rounds!" All were laughing, but the statement was to prove prophetic.

During December, 1967, increased contact with the enemy , signals intelligence, captured documents, agent reports, reports from ralliers, marked increase of traffic along the Ho Chi Minh and Santa Fe Trail networks—all this offered ample evidence of the enemy's intentions at this juncture. The ability to employ long-range artillery, safely emplaced in Co Roc Mountain, Laos, where our troops could not neutralize them, which had a range sufficient to reach us, while our artillery could not reach them,[92] eventually made fighting there impossible anyway, and Khe Sanh was eventually abandoned. But for now, Khe Sanh needed to be fortified: (1) it would block an influx of large numbers of troops together with tanks that would have an

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[87] *Ibid.*

[88] Comments of MajGen Kenneth Houghton to the author, 02 & 17Apr89, 07May89

[89] Comments of Gen Alfred M. Gray, Jr., to the author, 25Apr89

[90] LTC Pham Van Som, Chief, Military History Div, J5, RVNAF, *The Viet Cong "Tet" Offensive (1968)*, 1969, pp. 46-47

[91] Davidson, *Vietnam at War, The History: 1946-1975*, Novato: Presidio Press, 1988, p. 444

[92] The Soviet 152mm gun-howitzer weighs over 17,000 pounds and is capable of firing four rounds per minute at a range of 17,260 meters, about 10.5 miles [FMFPAC 250308Z/Jan68, SITREP #1031; DIA Intelligence Summary 25-68, 25Jan68, p. A-5]. The range of the 130mm field gun was even greater, firing a 74-pound round about 31,000 meters. The Marines' largest artillery at Khe Sanh was the 155mm, with a range of 14,955 meters. The 175mm guns at Camp Carroll, with a range of 32,800 meters, reached just short of Camp Lang Vei, and those at Camp Rock Pile, just short of the Laos border. (It may be of interest to note the max range of the other weapons: 122mm rocket—11,000 meters, 140mm rocket—10,000 meters, the 106mm RR—7,000 meters Max and 10,976 meters effective, the 4.2"—6,000 meters).

unimpeded route into the populated areas to the east; (2) it would, like "fly-paper," attract the mass large numbers of NVA troops so they could be annihilated by supporting arms. A third reason for Khe Sanh: as a launch pad for recon into Laos through the small prop planes of TIGERHOUND and the patrols from SIG, was no longer a reason by after the siege erupted.

The local commander, Colonel Lownds, could summarized December, 1967: "The most significant development during the month was the marked increase in enemy activity."[93]

Contact was made on numerous occasions; sniper fire was prevalent in the vicinity of Hill 881S during the first part of the month; probing or attempted probes of static defensive positions on Hills 861 and 950 occurred on three occasions; infantry patrols made contact with enemy forces on three occasions, usually brief encounters at extremely close range, probably an accidental encounter.[94]

Patrols from the reconnaissance unit at Khe Sanh made numerous sightings, one of over 40 NVA. They also made contact with the enemy 9 times during their 30 patrols, each averaging 3.33 days and an average of 7.7 men per patrol. There were numerous trails, huts, and fortified positions observed by these patrols. During the month, two recon Marines were killed and one died of wounds, two were wounded and one Navy corpsman was wounded.[95]

Activity from the adjacent Laos LOC[96] networks reflected a marked increase. Greater use of the Ho Chi Minh Trail was observed to occur during December. Trucks were found moving supplies that in previous years were carried by sea or through Cambodia.[97] During November, 1967, pilots reported sightings of about 2,500 trucks on the trail, about three times the number spotted during the corresponding period in 1966.[98]

Ensign Kux, Officer in Charge of the Seabee detachment here, wrote I his diary: "Tactically things are looking bad. I expect we'll get hit soon—and hit hard. The anniversary of the beginning of the Siege of Dien Bien Phu is approaching, and things aren't too much different now than they were then. I'm getting somewhat concerned." [99]

One Marine PFC simply wrote, "We are supposed to get overrun."[100] Another Marine wrote:

> I think all hell is going to break loose around Khe Sanh. there has been a big build up in an area west of hill 881S where the Marines had that big battle last spring. I think there will be an operation to take Hill 918 and this will be even bloodier than 881, 881N, and 861. We took close to 1000 casualties then and now because of the weather jets won't be able to fly. It will be the individual grunt who has to take that h ill and I am glad I am in Recon because as soon as the grunts move in our job is done. We found the gooks on 918 and now it is the infantry's job to take it. I am glad I am sitting on this hill [Hill 950] for it will be a costly battle ... I was on top of it once and saw the fortifications the gooks have on it. We were there for three minutes and then all hell broke loose and we had to fight our way off. Like I said it will be costly.[101]

During November, 1967, the strength of the 9th NVA Regiment was increased from 2,838 to 2,857 and in December to 2,917.[102]

Even the Brou Montagnards at Khe Sanh seemed to sense the approach of the terror and horror. At about 0300H at CAP O-3 (just outside KSCB), all the Brou on the perimeter began firing into the dense fog that blanketed us for the night. Roberts, one of the Marines there, violently got up in the total darkness of his bunker, put on his trousers backwards in his haste, and rushed out, as did the marines from the other bunkers, assuming we were under attack. The Brou said that they had seen their evil god, the one who devours people, "*Panoah*," prowling near their compound, and they fired to scare it away.[103]

FMFPAC now indicates the enemy capability of attacking Khe Sanh/Lang Vei area with the equivalent of one reinforced regiment

A document obtained 01 December 1967 written by Nguyen Thanh Van, a Political Officer, described missions for units in the Route 9 area:

(1) To operate along Route 9 in order to down enemy [i.e., American] troops and enable the Tri-Thien and Military Region V HQ to launch a large scale offensive;

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[93] 26MAR ComdC Dec67, Encl (1) p. 3
[94] *Ibid.*
[95] *Ibid.*; 3dReconBn ComdC Dec67
[96] Lines of Communications, namely, roads.
[97] "Foe's Use of Trail in Laos Growing," New York *Times* 01Dec67
[98] UPI Release of 233Dec67
[99] Kux, Diary, 03Dec67
[100] Ltr of PFC R. G. Cruz to his parents, 16Dec67
[101] Ltr of Kevin Macaulay to his parents, 01Dec67
[102] Joint General Staff RVN, "Study of Viet Cong Documents," 27Apr68, p. 15
[103] Author's Diary, 03Dec67

(2) Attack [American] supply basis and installations along Route 9.

(3) Apply pressure on Con Thien.[104]

Pressure on Con Thien meant drawing troops away from Khe Sanh, where the real battle would be fought, according to the general enemy strategy known much earlier.[105]

By December, 1967, the CIA concluded:

> Recent enemy combat actions, the movement of possibly two additional divisions from North Vietnam, and several pieces of evidence from agents, interrogations, and documents combine to indicate that the VC/NVA are undertaking something very much like an all-out punch during the 1967-1968 Winter-Spring offensive.
>
> The enemy is again escalating the war. He is raising his stakes in the gamble that he can win essentially what he wants in the next few months. By rallying his battle-wearied forces in a high pitch for an all-out effort based on promises of decisive achievement in the next few months, the enemy is risking a catastrophic let down if he fails. He is in effect shooting the works.
>
> ...
>
> The Communist Vietnamese, North and South, are hurting badly from the accumulated drain of the past two years. They are losing healthy young men at the rate of about 180,000 a year from their population base of about 22 million. They face the loss of a generation. The economic and psychological drain is also severe."

The enemy cannot sustain continued losses of this magnitude, the CIA memo noted, and concluded: the enemy will ".. use their still formidable assets boldly in a fierce attack that will give the impression of great strength and possibly win them a partial victory ('decisive victory' in their terms) which will end.." the war.[106]

FMFPAC's estimate of the enemy situation at the beginning of 1968 was similar:

> That the enemy would plan a major offensive in the western DMZ region was logical. After 18 months of defeat in northern Quang Tri province, his need for a victory has intensified, and the Marines' combat base at Khe Sanh would appear, to him, to offer some hope of military advantage. Deriving his main strength from relatively secure routes of march in nearby NVN and Laos, he is able to infiltrate large numbers of troops, along with heavy weapons and supply support, into the area proximate to Khe Sanh without fear of envelopment by US ground manpower elements. And a victory at Khe Sanh would accrue additional benefit to the enemy as, situated astride a major infiltration corridor, the outpost further impedes invasion efforts already made difficult by the strong point obstacle subsystem construction in the eastern DMZ area.[107]

SIGINT

Signals Intelligence, SIGINT, is as old as World War I.[108] Interception of Russian messages containing the tactical plans of their field forces contributed to the German victory at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1914. On another occasion during World War I, the British sent decoy messages causing a German zeppelin enroute to Africa to return to Germany.

During World War II, the Germans used both airborne and ground radio direction finding equipment to track down partisan forces in occupied areas such as Norway. The French apparently used some form of this technique during their struggle in Vietnam. A captured VC document called for radio discipline to counter detection techniques such as the French had used against them. In 1961, the Army experimented with Aerial Radio Direction Finding in Vietnam and by 1 Jan 66 had 15 aircraft to satisfy a weekly requirement of 240 hours of coverage of enemy operations, using on the "aural null" technique: when an enemy signal is detected, the pilot maneuvers his aircraft until he obtains an aural null (he hears nothing on that aircraft heading). The aural null means that the aircraft is heading directly toward or away from the enemy transmitter. The aircraft's heading can be plotted as a line of position (LOP). The crew repeats this aural null procedure until several widely spread LOPs are obtained. The LOPs cross at a common point, or fix, which is the location of the enemy transmitter.

Improved equipment later introduced. The AN/ALR-34, obtained the Phase Angle Discrimination (PAD), angle measurements on an incoming radio signal, in one second. This equipment established the direction of the enemy signal

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[104] FMFPAC 230409Z/Dec67, SITREP #998

[105] Comments of Col Benjamin S. Read, G-2 of III MAF, Tape #1529 of 10Jul67

[106] CIA, Vietnam Station Report No. 65/67 (3-9 Dec 67), 100700ZDec67, Saigon #5624 in CIAs Westmoreland vs. CBS Vol. II, pp. 1394-1404

[107] FMFPAC, *Operations of U. S. Marine Forces Vietnam*, Jan68, p. 8

[108] This is a copy of an article by Stubbe, Ray W., "Top Secret Umbra, Top Secret Trine, Top Secret Savin," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #44, pp. 2-4.

and, as a result of computing through a complex process, the time of arrival of the target signal at the three antennas on the aircraft wings and nose. By late 1966, the C-47 was equipped with ARDF[109] with side angle calibration, which made it possible to fix enemy transmitters in any direction without turning the aircraft, reducing the possibility of compromise and enabling a fix in only short bursts. The AN/ALR-34 locks on the target, and then the Doppler data on the position of the aircraft and the C-12 compass (giving an instant readout of aircraft heading within a tenth of a degree), are integrated and displayed on paper tape—all in a process taking less than one second after a lock-on.

So significant was the work of EC-47s and their ARDF during the Siege battle at Khe Sanh that 90% of the total B-52 strikes were targeted through ARDF data.

Brigadier General George J. Keegan, Jr., Director of Intelligence of 7th Air Force (and later Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency), wrote: "On 21 January 1968, MACV had become so overextended in the ground war, that Gen Westmoreland assigned General Momyer a principal role in the defense of Khe Sanh...To meet this problem, General Keegan interrupted all his normal functions at 7AF to mobilize an intelligence exploitation effort....The Air Force thoroughly reconnoitered I Corps using special sensors plus ARDF data supplied by Army analysts. The reconnaissance effort produced 2000 targets around Khe Sanh...The result of all this was that the Air Force showed it could do 'in two weeks what had not been done in two years.'...The experience at Khe Sanh, where 7AF integrated all sources of intelligence with a massive targeting program, showed how much more influence the Air Force could have on the conduct of the ground operations.""[110]

By 29 January, the I Corps TOC[111] sent URS[112] in their SPARS Reports listing 32 FRED locations, two FRED locations changed to Regimental CPs, and four FRED locations to read FRANK.[113]

The 8th Radio Research Field Station at Phu Bai (USM-808), the largest intercept site in Southeast Asia, controlled 30 mobile units known as Direct Support Units (DSU), was a detachment of Marines from 1st Radio Battalion, located on the Combat Base and, at least before the Siege, in a small tent just off the LZ on Hill 881-South.

Of course, it's always possible to set up transmitters in remote hills someplace and transmit, making it appear as though the lone transmitter is actually a headquarters. In a memo of 27 Feb 68, David Y. McMahis, White House Liaison Officer of the National Security Agency, prepared a report[114]: "Here is the evidence on which NSA bases its conclusion that the North Vietnamese are not 'spoofing' us with their communications."[115]

Signals intelligence[116] activities of the National Security Agency had been operating ARDF[117] at Khe Sanh during the Battle of the Hills, reporting "a considerable increase of terminals in the vicinity of Khe Sanh,"[118] was now indicating an

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[109] Aerial Radio Direction Finder.

[110] Hurley, Alfred F., "Interview with Brigadier General George J. Keegan, Director of Intelligence, 7AF, on 14 July 1968," Exhibit #7 of *Supporting Documents to CHECO Report #74, The EC-47 in Southeast Asia*, 20 Sep 1968.

[111] Tactical Operations Center.

[112] Usually Reliable Sources, i.e., SIGINT.

[113] Although "FRED" and "FRANK" are not otherwise interpreted, it is easy to assume "FRED" stands for "Foreign Radio Emission Detected" and "FRANK" "Foreign Radio Analysis Not Known" since FREDs are changed to FRANKS, not vice versa, and also changed to read REGT CP or BN CP or DIV CP

[114] for Mr. Bromily Smith who, in turn, sent it to Mr. Walt Rostow with the note

[115] LBJ LIBRARY document in file "2(A)2 I CORPS & DMZ (1 of 2) 2/68, Container #66, Doc #13,

[116] Signals Intelligence, SIGINT, operated in South Vietnam to cover all aspects of NVA and VC communications and make their results available to the intelligence community. "The objective of this SIGINT reporting and support effort is to present information that is both accurate and timely, to assist in the execution and planning of military operations in Vietnam, and, of course, to aid in a threat assessment... field stations located in Vietnam are charged with timely collection, processing, analysis and reporting on specific targets ... the stations involved are USM-803 at Phu Bai, USM-604 at Pleiku, and USM-626 at Bien Hoa ... There are approximately 30 mobile or semi-mobile units known as Direct Support Units (DSU) ... The results of this extensive collection .. flow back to NSA which is responsible for examining the SIGINT technical and information base; for immediate consolidation and summary reporting in the Southeast Asia Daily SIINBT Summary.."[NSA, SECRET SAVIN document of 20 August 1968, "SIGINT Operations in Vietnam."]

[117] The ARDF (Aerial Radio Direction Finder) was mounted in a EC-47 aircraft which appears as a AC-47 gunship (known as "SPOOKY") which is equipped with three 7.62mm Gatling-type guns that fire 6,000 rounds a minute. The similarity of the two aircraft ensured the enemy kept his head down!. In the initial days of the Khe Sanh siege battle, ARDF indicated 2000 targets around Khe Sanh and 890% of all B-52 strikes at Khe Sanh were targeted through ARDF data. [Hurley, Alfred E., "Interview with Brigadier General George J. Keegan, Director of Intelligence, 7AF, on 14 July 1968," Exhibit #7 of Supporting Documents in CHECO Report #74, The EC-47 in Southeast Asia, 20 Sep 1968.). The ARDF is an AN/ALR-34, ARDF, KY-38 radio, Bendix Doppler Computer CPA-24 (AN/APN-179) C-12 Compass, etc. By 01 Jan 1968, EC-47 aircraft were consistently flying more than 900 sorties each month. [See Porter, Melvin F., *The EC-47 in SEA April 1968-July 1970*, , HQ PACAF, Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Div., 12 Sep 1970; Burch, LtCol Robert M., *Tactical Electronic Warfare Operations in*

ominous threat to Khe Sanh. In addition, since 1964, we had cracked the codes used by the North Vietnamese, communicating with their agents in South Vietnam, but this information was kept by command levels higher than the Division[119]

In February, 1966, the Central Military Party Committee issued a directive formally establishing the Tri-Thien Military Region which was removed from Military Region V, and in June of 1966, they issued directives establishing the Highway 9 Front.[120] In June, 1967, the Party Central Committee[121] "..met to evaluate our victories and the enemy's defeats in the battlefield and concluded: victories over the past two years have opened a new opportunity." They noted the 1968 American Presidential election was an event that could be used for them and they resolved to "secure a decisive victory in a relatively short period of time. If we want this we have to attack the Americans and defeat them militarily."[122] In July, 1967, the Politburo met and decided to launch a General Offensive and Uprising [the Tet Offensive].[123] In October, 1967, the Tri-Thien Party Committee received directions to prepare for the 1968 Spring General Offensive and Uprising.[124] Order No. 1016/KH, Subject: Tactical Plan in Support of Plan "X" was issued in October 1967.[125] At the end of October, 1967, B5 (the NVA tactical area of northern Quang Tri Province) and the High Command's forces prepared to enter the battlefield by road construction, organizing reserve depots and development of roads capable of conveying
motor transport.[126] Artillery preparations for the battlefield began on the 20th of October 1967.[127]

On 15 November 1967, the lead elements of the Front Rear Services[128] reached Commo Liaison Station 53.[129] On 19 November 1967, directives arrived from the Politburo together with orders from the Joint High Command regarding the

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SEA, 1962-1968, HQ PACAF, Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Division, 10 February 1969; and Hurley, Alfred F., *The EC-47 in Southeast Asia*, HQ PACAF, Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Division, 20 September 1968. Gunnery Sergeant George Bailey, the NCOIC of the detachment from 1st Radio Company, III MAF, at Khe Sanh, noted their small group was able to develop a good list of targets as well as chart the NVAs Order of Battle Mirza Baig, the 26th Marines Target Intelligence Officer, continuously and effectively destroyed all these targets, leaving Gunny Bailey to exclaim: "You're destroying all my carefully obtained, analyzed, and plotted targets! You're putting me out of business!" . [Comments of GySgt George Bailey to the author, 7 July 2001].

[118] NSA, Daily Tactical SIGINT Summary, SECRET SAVIN, Retrospective Analysis of 24 Apr – 12 May 1967 Khe Sanh Battle Part 1, NSA 150615Z/Dec67 (In release of documents to CPT Ronnie R. Ford, USA, Ser MDR 95-0059, 16 Jun 1998). (Note: SAVIN is a SCI classification. Other cryptonyms—relating either to a level of classification or how that information is being collected [comments of Sedgwick Tourison, 15 Oct 2002] include LARUM, SPOKE, TRINE, and UMBRA).

[119] Comments by Sedgwick Tourison, 15 October 2002, while translating official North Vietnamese documents discussing the military history of Khe Sanh, commented: "I know the CIA officer who ran that project said that they were getting a tremendous amount of information out of that intercept effort. The problem was that the Administration did not want to believe what was coming out of it, because the view that the Security Services provided of the war did not fit the view of the war as seen in Washington. Also, this was a very highly compartmented operation. Very few people even knew about it, and to what extent maybe Johnson was briefed on it or other people in CIA probably the Director, I'm sure, was aware of it, but to what extent information coming out of that was given the type of distribution that might make it credible is probably something that we won't know for years and years and years." (*The History of the Cryptographic Agencies* is a translation published by the National Security Agency, "Essential Matters: A History of the Cryptographic Branch of the People's Army of Viet-Nam, 1945-1975," with a supplement on "Cryptography in the Border Guard (formerly the Armed public Security Forces) 1959-1989," NSA Special Series Number 5, CCH-E32-94-02, National Security Agency, Center for Crypto logic History, 1994, 195 pages, trans and ed by David W. Gaddy from the Vietnamese book, *Lich su Nganh co Yeu Quan Doi Nhan Dan Viet Nam (1945-1975), Nha Xuat Ban Quan Doi Nhan Dan,* Hanoi, 1990).

[120] *Chien Truong Tri-Thien-Hue Trong cuoc khang chien chong my cuu nuoc toan thans (Du thao)* [The Tri-Thien Hue Battlefield/Military Region during the victorious war of national salvation against the Americans (Draft)], Translated by Sedgwick Tourison, Hue City: Thuan Hoa Publishing House, 1985, p. 115. Translated by Sedgwick Tourison.

[121] the executive committee of the Party

[122] *Lich su bo doi dac Cong: Tap Mot* [History of the Army Sappers, Vol. 1], Translated by Sedgwick Tourison, Hanoi: Peoples' Army Publishing House, 1987, p. 176.

[123] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[124] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[125] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [Rear Services Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign] [Classified "SECRET" and limited for distribution within the army], Translated by Sedgwick Tourison, Hanoi: General Directorate for Rear Services, 1988,., p. 467, copy of the order. Plan "X" was the plan for the Highway 9 Khe Sanh Battlefield in 1968.

[126] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [The Spring Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign], Translated by Sedgwick Tourison, Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, 1987, p. 23.

[127] *Tong Ket Tac Chien Phao Binh* [Artillery Tactical Operations Reports], Translated by Sedgwick Tourison, Hanoi: Artillery Officer's School Printing Press, 1985, p. 116.

General Offensive and Uprising (the "Tet Offensive") throughout the south and the historic mission of the Tri-Thien Hue Battlefield in this new phase.[130]

B5-T8

The NVA headquarters controlling all operations at Khe Sanh (as well as all of I Corps) was established on 6 December 1967 as a Front Headquarters with the secret designation, "B5-T8," commanded by Major General Tran Quy Hai, Assistant Chief of Staff, PAVN General Staff, and Political Commissar Comrade Le Quang Dao, Deputy Director of the General Political Directorate for the PAVN.[131] The presence of NVA in this area had been reported by JTAD in October, 1967, placing a 800-man NVA battalion at XD 687547, armed with two 122mm rocket launchers, 1 82mm mortars, 3 60mm mortars, and other armament.[132] The NVA Front Headquarters is indicated on a CIA map[133] 9 miles west of the DMZ. U.S. tactical maps indicate numerous fortified hill positions in karst[134] formation in the general area from N/S grid line 37 to 58 and E/W grid line 63 to 67[135]

The forces operating in the Highway 9 area all came under the command of the Highway 9—Khe Sanh Campaign Headquarters[136] (B5-T8, located in Laos at Sap Lit, XD6266, a little west of the western edge of the DMZ).[137] From the 25th to the 30th of December 1967, the lead elements of the 325th Infantry Division entered the battlefield.[138] On 28 December 1967, the Campaign Party Committee met for the first time to discuss and to ratify the campaign order. The Khe Sanh area is to be the principle area; the eastern Quang Tri Province area is an important area.[139]

The B5 Front Committee met on 31 December 1967 to assign missions: (1) to destroy a significant amount of American-RVNAF manpower, primarily American. When conditions permit, break through the enemy defense line on Highway 9 and expand down into the Tri-Thien-Hue Region; (2) draw in and in down as many American-RVNAF forces as possible and continue to destroy them; and (3) Coordinate closely with other theaters in the South, create favorable conditions for a popular uprising.. primarily in Hue City and liberate the rural areas in the lowlands. The highway 9 Front was to be divided into two battlefields with the western (Khe Sanh) area the primary sector and the responsibility of the 325th and 304th Divisions.[140]

Deep in the bowels of the large concrete, fortified bunkers of FOB-3 that has been constructed in November, 1967, in the communications section of the TOC, four North Vietnamese Chieu Hois monitored radio traffic of NVA units on the Khe Sanh battlefield. They, along with a small group of Marines who analyzed North Vietnamese signal intercepts concluded by

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[128] i.e., headquarters for the Front, the transportation, road building, medical, etc.

[129] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968, op, cit.*, p. 232.

[130] *Chien Truong Tri-Thien-Hue Trong cuoc khang chien chong my cuu nuoc toan thans (Du thao).,op. cit.*, p. 138.

[131] Vien Lich Su Quan Su Vietnam [Vietnamese Institute for Military History], Chien dich Tien cong Duong so 9—Khe Sanh, Xuan He 1968 [Highway 9—Khe Sanh Offensive, Spring and Summer 1968], Hanoi, 1987, p. 16. *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968. [Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign]* Published by the Tong Cuc Hau Can [General Directorate for Rear services] under direction of Major General Tran Chi Cuong. Hanoi, June, 1988, p. 07, footnote. *Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) Tap II [304th Division (Chronology)(, Vol. 2]*, Published by the People's Army Publishing House (Nha Xuat Ban Quan Nhan Dan), Hanoi, 1990, p. 58].

[132] 26MAR 041110Z/Oct67, Operation ARDMORE INTSUM #79

[133] In CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, Memorandum, "The Continuing Communist Military Threat in Northern South Vietnam," 13 March 1968, NO FOREIGN DISSEM.

[134] Karst refers to an irregular drainage pattern, where streams abruptly disappear into the ground, reappearing elsewhere as large springs, similar to the Karst region of Yugoslavia. It is defined as "an assemblage of topographic forms, consisting primarily of closely spaced sinks," and may be seen in areas of Kentucky, Tennessee, southern Indiana and northern Florida. [Longwell, Chester R., and Flint, Richard F., *Introduction to Physical Geology*, 2nd ed., New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1962, pp. 210-211.

[135] U.S. Army Topographic Command, Series L7015, Sheet 6241 I, Ban Nathon, 1970. The official North Vietnamese military history of Khe Sanh indicates the Front Headquarters at Sap Lit (XD6266). [*Chien Dich Tiehn Cong Duong 9–Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968 [The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh–Route 9 Offensive Campaign*], Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, 1987, p. 24].

[136] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968, op. cit.*, p. 16.

[137] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[138] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968, op. cit..*, p. 233.

[139] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968, op. cit.*, p. 19.

[140] *Su Doan 325 (1954-1975), Tap 2, [325th Division (1954-1975), Vol. 2*; published by the People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi, 12986. Written by Pham Gia Duc. Translated by Robert J. DeStatte for the United States Army Center of Military History.

November, 1967, that Khe Sanh would be attacked. At the time, the Commanding General of 3rd Marine Division, General Westmoreland's J-2 (LtGen Philip Davidson), the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency, all had concluded that the impending North Vietnamese battle would focus on Camp Carroll. On Thanksgiving Day, 1967, an intercepted message indicated the 29th Regiment "was down by the river and have linked up with the 304th Division." Major Alfred M. Gray, Jr.'s Marines of the Radio Company of III MAF analyzed the 1967 Hill Battles in terms of patterns of radio intercepts and concluded that the attack would be against Khe Sanh.[141] In late 1967, the Daily NSA Southeast Asia SIGINT summary noted: "..during the past week, SIGINT has revealed a concentration of PAVN radio terminals immediately west of khe Sanh—in the vicinity of the Laotian-Quang Tri Province border.[142] "General Westmoreland sent everybody, regardless of rank, and from any Service who had studied this matter to Phu Bai. They argued all day long. About ten minutes to five on the 27th (of November, 1967) this little group of Marines won the argument. Colonel Houghton, G-2 of III Marine Amphibious Force, went back to DaNang, saw [Lieutenant] General Cushman at about ten o'clock in the evening, and that's when he made the decision to reinforce Khe Sanh with four battalions."[143] However, caution in reinforcement of Khe Sanh needed to be observed lest the NVA observe that we knew of their intentions. Thus, the sudden, abrupt arrival of 3/26 on 13 Dec 1967, with no advance warning for KSCB to provide increased mess facilities, tents and bunkering materials, etc., and the rather late, but still timely, arrival of 2/26 on 17 January, reinforced Khe Sanh, but not in a way to disclose our awareness of the NVA intentions and still served the function of drawing-in the NVA forces to attack a lucrative target so that, in fact, we could fix them in place and annihilate large numbers through B-52 strikes and hold large numbers of NVA in place that otherwise might have needed to be fought in urban areas.

General Gray states, "we knew all about Tet except for the hour.. we knew the whole plan," and that Tet destroyed the VC infrastructure in the South: "It was all over. It broke their back. There was no more leadership."[144] In response to the criticism of those who regard Tet as an intelligence failure on our part, General Gray quips, "Everyone who should have known knew it was coming; it was no surprise at all."[145]

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This NVA Front Headquarters was targeted and struck by 36 sorties of B-52s in the morning and 9 at night on 30 January 1968, producing 85 secondary explosions and numerous cave-ins,[146] greatly disrupting the enemy's plans."[147] Bruce E. Jones of the MACV Intelligence Section known as CICV (Combined Intelligence Center Vietnam) notes this strike was based on signals intelligence, SPARS (Special Aerial and Radio Sources), striking a honeycombed cave area of a major NVA headquarters.[148]

Some staff at Khe Sanh initially felt—hoped—the strike may have killed Giap. It didn't, of course, but it probably caught many other headquarters types. This particular B-52 strike did not escape White House scrutiny. In a memo by Walt W. Rostow to the President of 7:50am, 30 Jan 1968, he reports: "Herewith Westy reports an extremely successful use of intelligence to identify and attack with B-52s the new, recently established senior headquarters west of the DMZ. (Some of our best analysts suspect Gen. Giap may have taken personal command at this installation). Westy believes the attack may 'at least delay' the major offensive in Northern I Corps."[149]

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[141] National Security Agency msg 140615Z/Dec67 [source of message not declassified], SECRET SAVIN, Part 1 of a 2 part message: "In retrospect, indicators of the alignment of forces within DMZ area/Khe Sanh area was apparent. However, unit identification was not revealed until SIGINT could be collated with collateral material which became available during and after the Khe Sanh battle. Patterns noted prior to April/May Khe Sanh [1967] offensive.. form basis for analysis of present and future intelligence indicators concerning this area." The message giving Part II: The first indications of one of the divisions involved at Khe Sanh was in late October, 1967, by the loss in communications of one of its battalions on 30 Oct 1967 and two terminals of regimental echelon on 31 October and 10 November. On 12 November a communications watch facility was first observed, suspected of serving the Division. The Division was deploying in radio silence [one of the NVA's tactics prior to an attack] and there was a split in Division headquarters. Aerial Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) located 8 separate radio terminals just to the west of Khe Sanh.

[142] DIRNSA 042045Z – TOP SECRET TRINE, Ser 3/0/**/R288-67.

[143] Comments made by General Alfred M. Gray, Jr., at the Reunion of Khe Sanh Veterans, 04 July 1998. General Gray was the immediate past Commandant of the Marine Corps.

[144] *Ibid.*

[145] Conversation with General Alfred M. Gray, Jr., 26 July 1998.

[146] Maj. James B. Pralle, *Arc Light June 1967 - December 1968*, HQ, PACAF, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Division, p. 28.

[147] *Ibid.*

[148] Jones, Bruce E., *War Without Windows*, New York: The Vanguard Press, 1988, pp. 136, 168.

[149] W.W. Rostow, Memorandum to the President, Tue., 30 Jan 1968, 7:50 a.m., MAC 01430, LBJ Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, 2A(1) I Corps and DMZ 1/66 - 1/69, Document #40.

The strike, however, went unknown to the American public. Gen. Westmoreland sent the following to General Wheeler (CJCS) on 01 Feb:

> Any public statement about successful B-52 attack on the major enemy headquarters would certainly compromise the source of the information, enemy corrective action could diminish our intelligence effort country-wide. No valid cover story can be developed. We have no ground reconnaissance resources which could be admitted to be in that area. While photographic interpretation could confirm a possible logistic complex, it could not support identification of a major headquarters.. It should also be pointed out that any such statement would be an admission of our [two lines not declassified]. Additionally, approval for the strike was granted by American Ambassador, Vientiane upon condition that no publicity would be given to the strike.[150]

Some elements of the headquarters were back in communication with Hanoi after 38 hours of silence."[151]

An account of the B-52 strike on B5-T8 was printed in The People's Army newspaper:[152]

> On the 29th Day f the Lunar Month [two days before Tet] enemy reconnaissance aircraft circled many times over the area where the headquarters command post was located. On Tet morning, the first day of Lunar New Year, the atmosphere was still completely still. The General Staff and the General Political Department sent a Tet message by cable down from the North to the Khe Sanh Front.
>
> Suddenly a tremendous roar, the sound of aircraft was heard. B-52s began carpet-bombing the area. During the day wave after wave of aircraft savagely bombed the area. The telephone lines were all cut. The command post lost all communications. All the food that had been prepared to celebrate Tet disappeared during the bombing raids. Luckily, a number of freshly cooked Tet cakes had already been taken into the cave. The bombing was so ferocious throughout the day that no one dared to leave the cave.
>
> The Front Command Group held a conference and concluded that the campaign headquarters command post had been found by the enemy because of our lack of combat experience – the trails and the above-ground telephone lines all led directly back to the command bunker. The Front Headquarters gave an order to move to a different location. General Dao, General Tran Quy Hai, and the personnel accompanying them laid hiding in a string of B-52 bomb craters for many long hours. Falling rocks dislodged by bombs hitting the mountain injured many personnel. Hoa, General Dao's bodyguard, pushed the general into a crevice in the rocks and lay on top of him. Hoa was injured by a rock that crashed down on him. The able-bodied helped the injured to walk as the entire group felt their way forward through the dark night. They did not use their flashlights because they were afraid of being spotted. The entire group stumbled forward down the valley. General Tran Quy Hai said to Dao, 'It seems as if we have taken a wrong turn.'
>
> The bombing still had not ended, but the bomb explosions sounded as if they were farther away. Dao said to Tran Quy Hai, 'Perhaps we should tell everyone to find a place to take cover.'
>
> Bombs dropped by the B-52s had devastated this entire part of the jungle. Trees and bushes were all uprooted, the sides of the mountains had collapsed in massive landslides, and rocks were scattered everywhere. The group found a place along the mountainside where there was a rock dome with a small cave, and they crawled inside to hide. A few of the members of the group had managed to bring their Tet cakes and they shared these with the others.
>
> Suddenly the light of a flashlight shined in at them. One of the bodyguards who was standing watch shouted, 'Halt! Who goes there?' 'Ba Bui,' was the reply.
>
> Dao was overjoyed and hugged General Cao Van Khanh (who was also Ba Vui), the Deputy Commander of the Khe Sanh Front. Khanh had escaped through the area of the B-52 bomb craters, but when he could not find Dao

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[150] Westmoreland, message to Gen. Wheeler, 010010Z/Feb68, in LJB Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, Container #42, 5EE(1) LAOS 10/67 - 12?68, Document #52.

[151] Westmoreland 010010Z/Feb68 to Gen Wheeler, CJCS, in LBJ Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, Container #92, #52.

[152] Nguyet Tu, "Tet Chien Truong," ("Tet on the Battlefield"), *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* [People's Army], 21 January 2006, translated by Merle Pribbenow. Merle Pribbenow notes: "In the standard Chinese Lunar New Year calendar the first day of the 1968 Lunar New Year was 31 January 1968, however, that year the North Vietnamese claimed that their astrologers had recalculated the date of the actual Lunar New Year and declared 30 January 1968 as the date on which North Vietnam would celebrate the Tet Lunar New Year. (I suspect that the real reason they changed the date was to enable their troops to celebrate the Tet Lunar New Year one day before they launched their offensive on the day that South Vietnam was celebrating the Tet Lunar New Year)." [Merle Pribbenow, letter to Rev. Ray W. Stubbe, 04 Sep 2016].

and the Front Headquarters staff, he had turned back to look for them. 'Why have you turned on that bright flashlight? Aren't you afraid that the enemy will spot us?' Dao asked.

Khanh smiled and said, 'It's because of my experience in evading the 'old lady' observation aircraft during the war against the French, brother. Back then they flew very low. But now, the B-52s just bomb target coordinates marked out ahead of time on a map. They are blind and they fly so high that they cannot see anything down here. We can turn on our flashlights and use them to keep us from getting lost.'

The entire group continued its march forward. Dao kept the morale of the others up by telling them funny stories. For the entire previous day they each only eaten a small piece of Tet cake, and everyone was so hungry that they were shivering. Suddenly a private opened up his pack and said, 'Commanders, I would like to invite you to eat some toasted rice.'

The words 'toasted rice' filled everyone with joy. This private had taken leftover rice from many previous meals, dried it in the sun, and toasted it to save, just in case. He never suspected that it would suddenly become such a precious commodity. Fortunately he had not lost his pack during the B-52s bombing strike. The package of toasted rice was only enough to fill a regular bowl, and it had to be shared among many people. Each person got only a handful of toasted rice.

Dao saw one of the young privates who had just recovered from an illness. Dao quietly split his portion in two and gave half of it to the young private.

The next day the group finally found the spot where the alternate command post was located and was able to reestablish contact with the units based along Route 9. Although the entire group was hungry and tired, they were all filled with joy when they received a message from the Central Military Party Committee informing them that on the night of the 30th Day of the Lunar Month [Tet Eve] and the first day of the Tet Lunar New Year, our General Offensive had exploded victoriously throughout South Vietnam.

4. Sunday, 21 January 1968[153]

On Saturday, 20 January 1968, INDIA Company, 3/26, patrolled towards Hill 881-North as the result of a contact made on 18 January by BARKWOOD, a 8-man recon team which was inserted on 881-North the previous day with I-3 providing security. BARKWOOD had made contact and required assistance. As INDIA Company approached 881-North, they came under intense combat, killing four Marines, including two Platoon Commanders.[154]

Also on the 20th, Lt Lathang Dong walked up the positions manned by B/1/26 waving a white flag and surrendered.[155] Lt Dong, CO of the 14th Anti-Aircraft Company, 95C Regiment, 325C Division, provided detailed information of the disposition of attacking NVA forces as well as the general battle plan. Lt Dong had 14 years' service and wasn't promoted to Captain.[156]

As a result, Colonel Lownds ordered Captain Dabney to abort the patrol and return INDIA Company to 881-South. At the evening regiment staff brief, Colonel Lownds mentioned that representatives from III MAF and MACV were on base to assess when the attack would begin on KSCB. The III MAF rep was Col Kenneth Houghton (G-2); the MACV rep was LtGen Philip Davidson (J-2). General Davidson informed Lownds Khe Sanh was surrounded by two NVA divisions with additional divisions in supporting distance.[157] Actually, with three divisions at Khe Sanh, the NVA wasn't merely preparing to strike KSCB in order to lure in other forces which they could then attack and annihilate; the NVA obviously intended to overrun KSCB.[158] Plans were being staffed at higher headquarters to dispatch a fourth infantry battalion to Khe Sanh. The J-4 of MACV noted that 2/26's arrival required 28 sorties, equating to seven C-130 aircraft dedicated for one day and that the logistic requirements for KSCB would significantly increase.[159]

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[153] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh* (Unpublished MS, basis of Prados and Stubbe, *Valley of Decision*), pp. 364-370.

[154] For a detailed description of this incident, see Stubbe; *Battalion of Kings*, pp. 113-119. KIA: 2/Lt Thomas Drew BRINDLEY, CPL Carles William BRYAN, PFC James Alfred COLLINS, and 2/Lt Michael Howard THOMAS.

[155] See 3rdMarDiv 211520Z/Jan68, Preliminary Interrogation – Chieu Hoi 1st Lt Lathang Dong, in 3rdMarDiv Msgs Etc file, Jan68 and III MA COC J&F 21/22Jan68 #399.

[156] For information on Lt Dong, see: FMFPAC 200405Z/Jan68, SITREP # 1030; FMFPAC 250308Z/Jan68 SITREP #1031; Comments of MajGen Tompkins in *Electronic Battlefield Hearings*, p. 82; FMFPAC 0110425Z/Feb68, FMFPAC SITREEP #1038; FMFPAC 270445Z/Jan68, FMFPAC SITREP #1033; and Comments of Mr. Max Friedlander to the author 31May84

[157] Comments of LtGen Davidson to the author, 19Apr89.

[158] Davidson, Phillip, *Vietnam at War*, p. 562.

[159] For logistical requirements at Khe Sanh, see MACV J-4 memo, Khe Sanh Airlift, 20Jan68 and McLaughlin, BGEN Burl, "Khe Sanh: Keeping an Outpost Alive," in *Air University Review* (Nov-Dec68) 68.

Khe Sanh Combat Base received a mortar and rocket attack at 0500H , along with an attack on the District Headquarters and CAC OSCAR in Khe Sanh village, Hill 861, and Recon Team NURSE[160]. Officially between 0500H and 0530H, the KSCB received approximately 100 rounds of 82 mm mortar and 60 122 mm rounds.[161] Destruction was extensive, suddenly changing the combat base into a shambles. All who were on the combat base couldn't help but be affected psychologically by sudden shriek of the 122mm rockets[162] which reminded one of the cries of the Valkyries[163], so poignantly captured in Wagner's opera, Die Walküre (played in the movie *Apocalypse Now!* during a helicopter assault) .

Also, of some concern were the 82 mm mortars with delayed fuse.[164]

Much of the base's ammunition had fortunately been re-staged prior to this attack. Nevertheless, the supply on the base was critical. The boxed-in fires in support of recon team NURSE, in addition to those fired in support of the District Headquarters in Khe Sanh village, the fires in support of Hill 861 as it was being attacked, and the loss of ammunition in the dump, made LtCol Hennelly (CO, 1/13) very uneasy. He only felt confident with a reserve of 20,000 rounds and he had considerably less than 5,000.[165]

While personnel casualties were relatively light, damage to physical objects—equipment, buildings, ammunition, aircraft, etc., was indeed extensive. The damage ranged from $3,298,862.97 worth of ammunition destroyed in the ammo dump due to enemy incoming this morning[166] to the comment of Jack Corbett of the 1/26 81s who had lent Jeff Culpepper a guitar; Culpepper was a Marine in Co B/1/26, the unit that had received most of the cooked-off ammunition. Jeff came to Jack later in the day saying, "I'm alive, but your guitar is blown to bits."[167]

Effects of the attack were concentrated on the eastern portion of the combat base in positions occupied by B/1/26 (The GRAY Sector) and the 105mm artillery battery "C" of 1/13 due to the main ammo dump being hit and exploding, strewing ordnance throughout the area.

A tent near the B/1/26 CP bunker[168] housed the corpsman, supply and radio operators of B/1/26. When the incoming struck, all dashed out of the tent. LPCL Steven Hellwig apparently remembered he had forgotten something and returned to the tent as all the others made it safely to the trench. An artillery round landed very close and just cut him in half; he didn't know what hit him.

Immediately there was the attempt to make order out of the confusion—do this and do that—and then the ammo dump began cooking off and the tear gas started pouring into the trench. (This was the CS from the various types of CS grenades as well as the large containers of CS powder that were used to spread over a large area via special dispensers).

The Marines, most of who were without gas masks, began using wet towels over their faces. Tom Quigley was doing fine until a supply sergeant decided to change towels.

> When he took the one away that I was using to give me a fresh one, and then I got a full intake of that stuff in my nose and eyes and ears, and my throat, and I was burning. And they said, 'Get him out in the trench line.' and I thought, 'Kick my side; I'm not going out there!' Everything in the world was flying. But we had no choice.
>
> And I started crawling out of the bunker and went out. And I had a .45 at my hip and I got caught up in that comm wire that was lying all around the base camp, tied up around my holster. And I couldn't get out of it, and I had to finally roll over on my side, unbuckle my own belt, slide out from under it, Marines running down the road and I yelled at them. And ten that's when these guys took me inside the ammo bunker. They were sitting inside the ammo bunker for the 81s. They said, 'Get on in here.' So I went on in there. There was about six, eight guys in

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[160] At XD 806408

[161] 26MAR 211540Z/Jan68, OPN SCOTLAND SITREP #327. At 1250H, KSCB received three 122 mm rockets and three 82 mm mortars. Four additional mortars were received at 1505H.

[162] For the technically minded, the rocket projectile is 1.93 meters (6.2 ft.) long, weighs 45 KG (102 lb.) with fuse, and has a range of 11,000 meters. [MACV, CICV, "VC/NVA Rocket Artillery Pictorial Study," ST67-082, 14Sep67, p. 2].

[163] In Scandinavian mythology, Valkyries were each of Odin's twelve handmaidens who hovered over battlefields and conducted the fallen warriors of their choice to Valhalla. [*OED*].

[164] A report from the DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency] of 09 December 1967 stated that a recently captured document in South Vietnam described delayed action fuses for 82 mm mortar projectiles which cause them to detonate from 2 ½ to 8 hours after impact. The ammo id intended primarily for use against rear area installations. The delay is achieved by use of an acidic solution which corrodes the firing pin arrester. The solution is contained in a glass tube which breaks jupon firing or impact. Four color codes on the round indicate the amount of delay: yellow-2.5 hours, red-3.5 hours, blue-5 hours, and violet-8 hours. The delay times are subject to a 20% variation [FMFPAC 160259Z/Dec67, SITREP #991].

[165] Ltr of Maj Jerry E Hudson, 25Jan69, HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.

[166] CG III MAF 141216Z/Feb68, LOGSUM 2-68 for Jan68 in III MAF MISC MSGS JAN-AUG68

[167] Comments of Mr. Jack Corbett to the author, 050ct86

[168] This section is from Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, (unpublished MS, basis for *Valley of Decision*), pp. 355-358.

there. So we was sitting on 250 rounds of 81 mortars. I didn't care much for that, but it still was better than being out there.

We stayed there till about daylight. Rounds kept landing all around us—enemy mortars, and a lot of them had delayed fuses, and they weren't going off, and just laying in the pits. Finally someone said, 'Well, we'd better get the hell out of here.' So we got out of there and that's when we got in the trench lines.[169]

A large secondary explosion resulted when the ammo dump was hit. Fragments of exploded ordnance as well as pieces of sensitized ordnance were scattered over a wide area. Some of the rounds exploded on contact, some minutes or hours later; it was always an uncertain matter upon encountering one of these objects. Some ordnance, such as the 40mm HE rounds of the M-79 are armed after rotating 14 times, and must be carefully picked up without rotating or jarring the round and laid down the same way. The eastern area of the combat base was so strewn with unexploded and exploded ordnance and fragments, there wasn't an area of a six-inch square that didn't contain something—from large 155mm rounds to small pieces of fleshettes from the BEEHIVE round or small cylindrical metal pieces from the canister 90mm rounds.[170]

Staff Sergeant Gus Alvarado, Jr., a Platoon Sergeant of B/1/26, constantly exposed himself to the shrapnel while attempting to clear away the pieces of unexploded ordnance and moved through the lines to ensure his men were observing and remaining alert for a possible ground assault. While doing this, SSGT Alvarado was constantly being knocked down by concussions of exploding ordnance, and was wounded in his knee by shrapnel, but he continued his care for his men and concern for the safety of all.[171]

There were, of course, many others who disregarded their own safety amid the shower or ordnance pieces that covered the area, the trenches, the tops of firing positions and bunkers, like hailstones of fiery metal.

LCPL Kenneth William Claire, a squad leader in Lt Jacques' platoon– the one who screamed Tarzan calls while on the hills, ignored the heavy volume of fire and continuously moved along his unit's trench line from one position to another, encouraging his men and assisting in the treatment of casualties. On numerous occasions, he disregarded his own safety and fearlessly removed unexploded artillery and mortar rounds from his company's trench line, carrying them to positions where they presented little danger to his men. He was telling his men, 'Don't be in the trench like sissies—with your face down; they're probably coming to overrun us!'[172]

James Kirk was probably one of the first casualties of the attack on the combat base. His bunker directly faced the ammunition dump; he lost his right leg, a traumatic amputation. Corporal Ken Claire suddenly appeared as Kirk was screaming—not from the pain, but knowing something very bad had just happened. Claire had Doc Cicala patch him up, and then fetched two 'Remington Raider' types (0414 clerks) to carry him to the medical facilities. They were scared and at first reluctant, perhaps in shock, but Cpl Claire screamed at them, and they carried Kirk to the medical area. Despite his 'hard' and atavistic exterior, Ken Claire cared deeply for his men. Kirk was probably the oldest man there at 19; most every other Marine had just turned 18.[173]

During this time, a Listening Post was returning. PFC Tretiakoff fell and became hung-up on the defensive barbed wire as he was returning through the gate. LCPL Claire immediately dashed from his covered position and fearlessly ran across thirty meters of fire-swept terrain to bring PFC Tretiakoff back to the safety of the trench line despite the air being filled with a large volume of streaking pieces of shrapnel.[174]

SSGT George McClelland, a Platoon Sergeant in B/1/26, was another leader who cared for his men's safety. He also completely disregarded his own safety and unhesitatingly moved into the open area to remove unexploded and partially burned-off rounds to a safe area, while also encouraging his men and alerting them to the possibility of a ground assault.[175]

Cpl James W. Chance, an Antitank Assault Section Leader of B/1/26, immediately picked up an unexploded 155mm artillery round that had flown from the exploding ammunition dump and landed inside the B/1/26 Command Post bunker. Ignoring the danger of possible explosion, he carried it outside the emplacement. Later, a 105mm artillery round landed inside the CP. Again he disregarded his own safety and fearlessly removed the ordnance from the command bunker. He also aided a Marine who had no gas mask.[176]

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[169] Comments of Mr. Tom Quigley to the author, 11May86

[170] Diary entry, 21Jan68, Chaplain Stubbe's personal experience

[171] BSM file on SSGT Gus Alvarado, Jr.

[172] BSM rile on LCPL Kenneth William Claire; comments of Mr. Jeff Culpepper to the author, 23Jan84

[173] Comments of Mr. James Kirk to the author, 24Sep84.

[174] BSM file on LCPL Kenneth William Claire; the award citation concludes, "Lance Corporal Claire is authorized to wear the Combat 'V.' He never did; he was killed 25Feb68

[175] BSM file on SSGT George McClelland; he was also killed at Khe Sanh on 25Feb68

[118] BSM file on Cpl James W. Chance.

PFC John F. West was in the Fire Direction Center/CP bunker. The air was filled with ordnance fragments of all kinds, from 155mm rounds to small arms glowing hot and quite frequently exploding in the immediate area. On three different occasions he completely disregarded his own safety and extinguished fires from the exploding rounds. On another occasion, he left the bunker to remove a burning illumination round from the entrance of the FDC/CP bunker. When communications from the FDC/CP were knocked out, PFC West was one of three Marines who crawled from gun pit to gun pit to relay elevation and deflection information to enable the guns to continue accurate counter-mortar fired.[177]

Second Platoon of Co B/1/26, manning the eastern-most portion of the base perimeter, bore the brunt of the exploding ASP [Ammunition Supply Point]. And it was, indeed, a 'venomous' asp sting as explosions from the ammo dump continued showering ordnance for some five hours. The command post of Co B and the command post of 2nd Platoon were located within thirty meters of the ASP #1, and during the dark early morning hours of 21 January, Capt Pipes displaced his CP three times because the exploding ammunition made his position untenable.[178]

1/Lt John William Dillon, Platoon Commander of B-2, moved about his position despite the hail of razor-sharp, white-hot splinters of shrapnel metal and exploding ordnance that filled the air and covered the ground. The Marines of Second Platoon held their position throughout the entire ordeal:

> ..men were hit in the legs, body and head with unexploded 155, 105, 106, 81 mortars, 3.5 rockets, etc., that were blown out of the dump. All the while, CS gas was so heavy that even gas masks were marginally effective. Through all of this hell, the Second Platoon remained in position .. and retained the ability to fire the FPL[179]

The 60mm mortar crew, only fifteen meters from the dump, had to move their position with their mortar tube and seek cover in a nearby trench. When the Marines received a fire mission a few moments later, they were unable to fire due to a lack of ammunition at their new position. 2/Lt Dillon instantly and unhesitatingly left his covered position, and along with two other Marines, PFC Charles D. Bowers and LCPL Robert J. McDonald, III, exposed himself to the intense fire, fearlessly ran 25 meters across the hazardous area to the platoon's ammo bunker. Although knocked down and wounded by the exploding ordnance, he continued his determined efforts and reached the bunker. Ignoring his painful injuries and the enemy rounds impacting around him, he picked up several rounds of 60mm mortar ammo and carried them to the crew.

One of the Marines of the Co B/1/26 60mm mortar squad, Edward I. Prendergast, Jr., recalls the attack:

> One of the rockets hit right behind us and started secondary explosions galore. Never had I felt the ground shake or heard so much metal fly by. After about 15 minutes of praying and shitting we moved forward into 2nd Platoon's trench line. Lt Dillon advised me that he had a L.P. and an ambush out in front of our position. We had to keep our heads down with all the explosions and I thought for sure they would attack any second with all the confusion. Hot rounds were landing in the trenches. They were whole artillery and 105 rounds still glowing red. We took our shirts off and from both sides of the round we picked them up and threw them from the trench. This went on for hours, everyone protecting everyone else.[180]

A bunker containing two Marines from the ONTOS received a direct hit and they emerged from their bunker in a state of shock. One of the Marines ran between the double strands of wire and came under fire from friendly lines. 2/Lt Dillon, with complete disregard for his personal safety, dashed from the cover of the trench line through 35 meters of heavy shrapnel, knocked down several times as he ran, to lead the Marine to the safety of the trench.[181]

Cpl John R. Taylor, Right Guide for Second Platoon, B/1/26, was told by 2/Lt Dillon "..to move up and down the trench and make sure we were connected up, make sure nobody got excited and got up, make sure everybody was down, keep people up watching for the sappers coming in to us if they were to come, which they didn't.."

The Marines were, of course, completely alert to the dangers, as Cpl Hightower, a Squad Leader in Second Platoon, put it: "..we just always on the alert and everything, expecting anything at any time, cause you never know what's going on."

Capt Pipes described his Marines that early morning, most of whom were newly-arrived in Vietnam:

> The men: I just can't say enough about them. They stayed in their positions. In certain areas of the lines, ordnance was within the trench-line one to three foot deep, and the men stayed in their positions, manned their guns, the 60 mortar crews continued to fire at predestinated defensive fires, and actually in all truthfulness, the sway the kids

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[177] BSM file on PFC John F. West

[178] Comments of LtCol James B. Wilkinson, 19Dec68, HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments File

[179] Ltr of Maj K.W. Pipes, undated, in HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file

[180] Edward I. Prendegast, Jr., Biography, 08Nov88

[181] BSM file on 1/Lt John William Dillon

worked and continued to operate throughout the last three weeks or so is enough to bring tears to your eyes; they're really a great bunch of young men.[182]

The 81mm platoon in its entirety was also located near the dump, but continued to return counter-mortar fire throughout the attack. On three occasions the 81mm Fire Direction Center was hit and partially destroyed by the exploding ammunition dump and enemy fire. All lights and communications were knocked out as a result of the murderous incoming fire and exploding ammunition from the dump.

Gunnery Sergeant James Allen Morris, the Assistant Platoon Commander of the 81mm Mortar platoon, 1/26, was twice blown from his position at the plotting board in the FDC, but paying little or no attention, he returned to the board and coordinated, plotted, and fired up to three combat missions at a time, enabling his platoon to suppress murderous incoming 82mm and 60mm mortar fire. On his knees with a candle for light, his calm determined professional bearing inspired and encouraged all in the FDC. In a calm, methodic and inspiring manner, he organized a system of messengers to carry missions to the guns, employed a damage control team to continue to plot and clear missions and direct extremely accurate counter-mortar fire, and offered encouragement and guidance to the mortar crewmen. Capt Kenneth pipes observed him move from position to position during the heavy enemy barrages to offer encouragement, provide guidance, and calm the Marines.[183]

An Artillery Forward Observer with B/1/26, "Hank" [1/Lt Marion Henry] Norman, departed the relative safety of his CP bunker and attempted to detect the enemy firing sites. Although knocked to the ground on several occasions by the concussions from the enemy rounds exploding nearby, he repeatedly made skillful crater analyses and relayed the information to the firing batteries. Electing to remain in his exposed position, and disregarding the exploding main ammunition supply point less than fifty meters away, he courageously directed and adjusted counter-fire against the enemy firing sites until all the hostile weapons positions that he could locate were silenced.[184]

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The rest of the combat base was now, suddenly [185] a shambles.

COL Lownds walked around the base to make a personal assessment of the damage even as rounds were still cooking off.[186] What he saw was grim. The airstrip TACAN was down (although it was repaired later in the day), one UH-1E was destroyed; two more were damaged. Two CH-46s (ET31 and ET41) received substantial damage, ET31 being struck by a rocket from the UH-1E that had received the direct hit. The rocket passed through the aircraft, below and through both engines, but did not detonate. One H-34 was damaged. One CH-53 was damaged. All MACTU-62 living spaces were destroyed.[187] All the weather equipment at KSCB was destroyed.[188] A flavor of the situation is reflected in a telephone conversation: "A pilot from MAG-36 attempted to get into Hill 881 and could not because they were under mortar attack. Went to Khe Sanh. The tower was inoperative. No navigation aids. The field was heavily cratered. The only radio contact he could make was with CommO 26th Mar."[189]

Approximately 15% of all CBMU-301 equipment received minor damage; one grader received extensive damage. The hooch containing most of the Seabee special services gear and most of the clothing and personal gear of the First Squad received a direct hit and burned to the ground, destroying all contents.[190]

Almost everything that was above-ground from the communications section was devastated. Like the rest of the base's defenders, Maj John A. Shepherd's comm section Marines were in desperate need of bunkering materials which were, by now, as precious as gold. Only a few days earlier on Thursday, 18 January, one man was injured when a telephone pole, fashioned from 155 mm canisters, broke at the factory weld. (The "specs" for these containers evidently did not include their suitability for usage as telephone poles!) Everyone on the base complains at the lack of materials so we can adequately protect ourselves; many claim the Corps values equipment more than persons, and perpetuates itself by turning money back to Congress saying it can get the job done more cost-effectively than the Army. The result is always dead and injured Marines.[191]

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[182] Comments of Capt Pipes, Tape #2537 of 14Feb68
[183] BSM file on GySgt James Allen Morris
[184] BSM file on 1/Lt Marion Henry Norman
[185] ACTUAL refers to the Commanding Officer himself, not his radio operator.
[186] CG III MAF 0710000Z/Apr68 in III MAF SPECAT EXCLUSIVE file
[187] FMAW 211610H/Jan68, Resume of Telephone Call, in III MAF COC J&F 21/11 Jan68 #219
[188] 1/26 ComdC Jan68,Encl (1) p. 13.
[189] Cpl McGee of FMAW Telephone Call to III MAF, 211620H/Jan68 in III MAF COC J&F 21/22Jan68 #175.
[190] OIC DetB, CBMU301B/JAW:jw 521303 Feb68, Construction and Maintenance Progress Report for the Month Ending 25 January 1968; submission of.
[191] Author's Diary entry, 18Jan68.

"It's not only my section, but the whole base was not getting the bunkering material and the logistic support required to harden this base. Therefore the initial attack on the base by artillery and rockets did a great amount of damage to my communication lines within the base."[192]

"The majority of all wire lines were destroyed, and it became fearfully realized that the regimental comm center, a log-constructed bunker with a small amount of perforated air matting and sand bags for overhead, was a risk to life and equipment. Nobody wanted to go in there to work. It was not safe. Maj Shepherd requested four large CONEX boxes which were received in early February. Up to that point, the communications personnel worked in grossly inadequate bunkers.[193]

Project TIGERHOUND evacuated KSCB on 21 January under the supervision of Maj Milton Hartentower, site commander (01-21Jan68).[194] Majs Hartentower and Richard Keskinen remained at Khe Sanh after the evacuation to function as Air Liaison Officer to the 26th Marine Regiment.[195]

Another casualty was the club system. Col Wilkinson was one of those who cared deeply for his men. It was in his eyes; anyone could see it. And it was in his actions, even to the remaining beer stock:

> ..we did have some beer up there on January 21st, and what Colonel Wilkinson did was to condemn it all, put it in a secured area, put a guard around it, and issued out the cans at one can peer man every other day. And as I recall, up until the time I left in mid-February, we were still getting that one can of beer every other day and it was certainly great for our morale.
>
> This of course contrasts sharply with what the Air Force had been doing up there. On January 1st, just before the Siege began they had gotten caught I believe by Colonel Lownds himself, selling liquor to the Marines at $65.00 a bottle, that being one's Combat Pay. But the Air Force did leave pretty early in the siege. We didn't know that they had left till one morning I was going about my rounds checking the welfare of everyone in that Command :Post area, and when a rocket came in the nearest place to hide was the Air Force bunker. The Air Force, of course, had built wonderful bunkers up there .. which far exceeded anything the Marines had. When I went inside I found that they had all gone. They'd left. I went back and reported this to Colonel Wilkinson, and eventually the Regiment took it over for use as a medical facility.[196]

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Battery C, 1/13, located at XD 85184154, within 200 meters of the ASP #1, received such damage that three of its howitzers were temporarily displaced to the Battery A position.[197]

Sunny, clear skies enabled massive air support. Marine fixed wing pilots flew 72 attack sorties in support of troops at Khe Sanh,[198] and helicopters of HMM-362 medically evacuated 44 wounded.[199] Airstrikes began in full force about 0900H on the 21st. They were as spectacular to the Marines on the Combat Base as a 4th of July Fireworks, especially the bright orange plumes of napalm in close-in strikes and the white spikes of white phosphorus bombs exploding just outside the wires.

Maj Darrell L. Guttormson, Operations Officer of VMA-311, Lt John Hawkins and Col Leonard from the Wing, scram bled from the Chu Lai hot pad about 0900H and initially were assigned to proceed to the Channel 69 Hue/Phu Bai area. Two of the three aircraft were carrying ten DELTA-ONE bombs (250-pound snake-eye bombs); the other aircraft was carrying DELTA-NINEs (500-pound napalm bombs).

After checking in with PLUTOCRAT TWO and waiting for a TACA to direct the flights in on the area, PLUTOCRAT TWO informed them of a priority mission in the "ONE ZERO NINE TACAN RADIAL TWO FOUR ZERO AT ABOUT 24 MILES" AREA—Khe Sanh. The Khe Sanh TACAN, Channel 85, was down, and as the three jets arrived at Khe Sanh they were met by FINGERPRINT FI VE THREE. "We were the first flight in that day, and in the words of FINGERPRINT FIVE THREE, he had Gooks all over the place."

While approaching the area they were given the general pre-strike brief: run and heading, target elevation, friendly situation. The strike was an area just south of the Khe Sanh Village.

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[192] Comments of Maj John A. Shepherd, Tape #2521.
[193] *Ibid.*
[194] Although the three O2A aircraft and one O-1 aircraft received battle damage on 21 January, they were successfully evacuated by Capts Joseph Johnson, Griffith Scarborough, and 1/Lt Barton Switzer.
[195] "History of 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron, Jan-Mar68," Tab T, 20th TASS, in Vol. II, Quarterly History, 504th TASG, Jan-Mar68, App 6, p. 29
[196] Taped comments of Mr. John M. Kaheny to the author, 30Nov86
[197] 1/13 ComdC Jan68, Encl (1) p. 7
[198] FMFPAC 230411Z/Jan68, SITREP #1029
[199] HMM-362 ComdC Jan68, Encl (1) p. 4

The air support mission assigned to FMA-311 continued through the night with TPQ-10 strikes and secured 0200H on the 22nd, with every pilot of FMA-211 flying at least two missions that day at Khe Sanh, for a total of 54 sorties. The intensity of the commitment meant that some of the Group pilots assisted in order to meet the TPQ-10 night flight requirements. Such support involved not only the striking and bombing aircraft themselves, however:

> A word should be said about the ground personnel of 311. There were people loading bombs who were normally office workers and office 'Pinkies, I guess you'd call them, but when the missions came and the requirement was there, these people were grabbing—I'd see two people grabbing a 250-pound bomb and load it on the aircraft as they were being refueled, thus giving a rapid turn-around of our aircraft. The entire officer and enlisted members of 311 turned-to in this manner.[200]

Maj Guttormson participated in another airstrike on the 21st, an "acetone delivery" of DELTA-29s (1,000-pound semi-armor piercing bomb with a chemical fuse).

> To do this we dropped the centerline tank from the A-4s, a procedure which normally requires 24 hours notice in order to deliver chemical fuse bombs, however, 311 did this operation within 30 minutes. We dropped the centerline tanks which were fully loaded. Loaded 1000-pound bombs on Stations 2, 3, and 4 of the forward aircraft. After the aircraft were started, the bombs were fused. The flight up to the Khe Sanh area with this ordnance load necessitated climbing to a high altitude due to the fact that we did not have the centerline tanks, and upon reaching the target area, we had to request priority over the other flights that were in the area in order to deliver our ordnance and exit the area as quickly as possible in order to get back with just internal fuel ... We delivered the six 1000-pound bombs and two runs each aircraft and depositing them on this hill which the FAC had indicated was honey-combed with bunkers and automatic weapons. These chemical fuses were set for a variety of time limits between 12 and 36 h ours. These were delivered in the afternoon of the 21st approximately 1500.[201]

Capt Ronald M. D'Amora (VMFAW-533) recalls the evening TPQ strikes as a wild mêlée up in the air, with about three F-4, two A-6, and three A-4 aircraft, all in the pattern at the same time, with everybody running in, dropping their ordnance. BDA was over 100 confirmed North Vietnamese Army soldiers killed. "When we got back over here to Chu Lai we found it was pretty good killing 100 North Vietnamese Army troops, and I guess it was some kind of record for the Group. Capt Greenwald and myself felt pretty good about it, and we're really happy we can help the troops down there at Khe Sanh."[202]

At 1545H, an A4D "Skyhawk" (WL-4), callsign "HELLBORNE 519-1," was hit by small arms during a strafing run at XD 819408 and crashed. Capt Bobby G. Downing safely ejected and, while his wingman attempted to ward off the advancing enemy troops, was safely rescued by a UH-1E helicopter ten minutes after his ejection. His was the 225th plane lost to enemy action in South Viet Nam.[203]

The defensive posture on the ground at Khe Sanh was tenuous at best. Although there were under 6,000 men at Khe Sanh, this included the manning of the hill outposts. There were far less than that number on the combat base itself. Battalion 1/26 held about 80% of the perimeter with less than three rifle companies. H&S/1/26, commanded by 1/Lt Ross A. Brown, manned a portion of the perimeter as well as internal security posts. Co C/1/26 (CP at XD 849419) manned the perimeter north of the airstrip, the BLUE Sector, and Co B/1/26 (CP at XD 849415) manned the perimeter east and south of the combat base, the GRAY and GRAY-ALFA Sectors, until they tied in with the FOB-3 perimeter. The western perimeter, the RED Sector, was manned by Co L/3/26 (XD 835420).

The base perimeter did not extend around the eastern end of the runway. There was a 60-ft. gap, the width of the runway, between the lines manned by C/1/26 and B/1/26. Each night, the Marines of 1/26 rigged a new type of barbed wire called "German tape" across this gap. German tape contained razor sharp pieces of metal which made it difficult to breach. In addition, two ONTOS, each loaded with BEEHIVE rounds, covered the eastern end of the runway. Inside the KSCB, HQ 26th Marines CP was at XD 849417, Co A/1/26 at XD 849415, and Co D/1/26 at XD 848416.

The outposts were manned as follows: Hill 558 complex was manned by 2/26 (CP at XD 820451) and its companies F/2/26 (XD 820450), G/2/26 (CP at XD 822441), and H/2/26 (CP at XD 823445). Hill 861-A (XD 805445) was manned by Co E/2/26. Hill 861 (XD 803443) was manned by Co K/3/26 reinforced with two platoons of Co A/1/26 and two 4.2" mortars of W/1/13. Hill 881S (XD 777438) was manned by Co I/3/26 and two platoons of Co M/3/26 (the latter on the on

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[200] Comments of Maj Darrell LO. Guttormson, Tape #2405

[201] Comments of Maj Darrell L. Guttormson, Tape #2405

[202] Comments of Capt Ronald M. D'Amora, Tape #2406

[203] Comments of Capt Bobby G. Downing, Tape #2836; FMAW 211610H/Jan68, Resume of Telephone Call, in III MAF COC J&F 21/22Jan68 #165; Aircraft Mishap in III MAF COC J&F 21/22Jan68 #179; NY *Times* 22Jan68 p. 1; "Bombs Pound Enemy Force," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:5 (02Feb68) 1; 26MAR 211540/Jan68, OPN SCOTLAND SITREP #327

the western finger of 881S), plus three 105 mm howitzers of C/1/13. Hill 950 (XD 844456) was manned by Second Platoon of Co A/1/26.

With the arrival of Battery B, 1/13, during the afternoon (OPCON 26MAR at 1800H), friendly fire support consisted of 46 artillery pieces. Battalion 1/13, in direct support, was composed of three 105 mm howitzer batteries (A, B, and C, 1/13) for a total of 18 tubes (range: 11,000 meters), one 4.2-inch mortar battery (W/1/123) of 6 tubes (range: 6,000 meters), and one Provisional Battery ("P" Battery) of 155 mm towed howitzers of 6 tubes (range: 15,000 meters). In addition, general support was provided by 16 175 mm guns of the U. S. Army's 2nd Battalion, 94th Artillery (12 at Camp Carroll, 4 at Thon Son Lam (the "Rock Pile"), range: 32,800 meters). There were also five 90 mm tanks, two ONTOS Platoons (10 vehicles) and with additional single 106s, a total of 92 106 mm recoilless rifles.[204]

Headquarters Battery and Battery A, 1/13, was located at XD 844418; Batteries B and C, 1/13 were located at XD 852416; W/1/13 was located at XD 846416; and First Provisional 155 Howitzer Battery, 3/12, was located at XDF 841418.

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It is not easy to approach the darkness of the approaching night. Everyone realized just how very vulnerable we were just at this point—our ammunition stocks virtually destroyed, artillery badly damaged, bunkers grossly inadequate, communications lines down. We all know that if the hoards of thousands and thousands of enemy troops assaulted us now the fight would indeed by bloody, but we would hold: "In the early stages of the battle we fully expected a major ground attack at KSC B. There was no serious doubt that we could stop anything the NVA could try. I realized that if the enemy wanted to pay a severe toll he could mount a human wave assault along one or more parts of the perimeter, but that with the vast fire support available to us, coupled with the magnificent young men of my command, KSCB would not fall."[205]

At 1345H, BLACKBUD (1/26) radioed all his companies: "Ensure all troops are prepared for a long night ground attack is possible at any time."[206]

As of 1830H, KSCB, Hill 881S, Hill 861, and CAC in Khe Sanh Village were all receiving sporadic mortar and sniper fire. At 1930H, 3/26 in the KSCB RED Sector (XD 838417) received one incoming mortar round. The Marines returned mortar fire resulting in two secondary explosions.[207]

Col Lownds, INTRIGUE-6 ACTUAL, sent a message that from 1935 to 2035H, enemy soldiers were attempting to reconnoiter the wire of the south side of the combat base. During this period, the mortar fire on the combat base ceased.[208]

At 2109H, enemy units attempted to penetrate the wire in the western portion of the combat base perimeter. Co L/3/26, assigned to that portion of the perimeter, killed at least 25 NVA soldiers before the enemy unit withdrew. Additional light probes of the wire during the night cost the enemy soldiers another 14 killed.[209]

As nightfall approached, so did an emergency resupply mission. The USAF 311th Squadron at DaNang was advised of the "Tactical Emergency" request for ammunition, and in the late afternoon of 21 January directed six C-123 aircraft from other missions and loaded them with ammunition at DaNang.[210]

At twilight, the base shrouded by low clouds, only 1,800 feet of the 3,900-foot long airstrip usable and all the airstrip landing lights destroyed by the incoming, six sorties of C-123 Provider aircraft from the 834th Air Division's 315th Air Commando Wing (315 ACW) delivered nearly 26 tons (52,000 pounds) of ammunition to Khe Sanh.[211]

> As the Providers started on final approaches, they encountered intense .30 and .50 caliber ground fire from the high ridges, and on landing mortar rounds followed them down the already potholed runway. Pilots landed their aircraft and took off again by the light of Marine artillery flares as the six mission sorties went into Khe Sanh where they delivered ammunition critically needed for the camp's night defense.[212]

The Khe Sanh runway was the mouth trough which Khe Sanh defenders breathed and ate. It was essential for its life. Later on air-drops could supply most supplies, but the airstrip remained essential for landing replacement personnel, evacuating the dead and wounded, landing mail, certain sensitive munitions, and medical and surgical supplies.

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[204] FMFPAC, *Operations of U. S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, Jan68, p. 10; ADC 3dMarDiv 21119H/Jan68 in III MAF COC J&F 21/22Jan68 #217

[205] Ltr of LtCol James B. Wilkinson, 19Dec68, HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file

[206] 1/26 ComdC Jan68, S2/S3 Log 21Jan68 Ser #8

[207] 26MAR 211635Z/Jan68 OPN SCOTLAND SITREP #328

[208] 3dMarDiv 211444Z/Jan68, Spot Rpt #202, in III MA COC J& 21/22Jan68 #280

[209] FMFPAC 230411Z/Jan68, SITREP #1029

[210] Bowers, Ray L., *Tactical Airlift*, Office of Air Force History, USAF, Wash, D.C., 1983, p. 297

[211] Pollica, TSGT Bruce W., and Rickey, TSGT Joe R., *Monograph of 834th Air Division Tactical Airlift Support for Khe Sanh 21 January – 8 April 1968*, p. 5

[212] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

The latter was especially apparent during the night of 21 January. III MAF G-3 (air) requested First Marine Air Wing (FMAW) to provide a helo life of 8500 pounds of whole blood for FLC to Khe Sanh. At 2200H the evening of 21 January 1968, Capt Frank James Kennedy and his co-pilot, 1/Lt Paul H. Ellis, departed Marble Mountain, DaNang, on DIMMER 9-0 (a CH-53 aircraft), on mission" LUMINOUS 51," to transport a load of whole blood, morphine, and other medically essential items to Khe Sanh.

Two CH-53 helicopters were dispatched to LZ-23, arriving approximately 2200H. One aircraft was loaded with the blood, the other with medical supplies. Due to existing weather at Khe Sanh (1/4-mi visibility and fog), the aircraft loaded with the medical supplies returned to FMAW, and DIMMER 9-0, carrying the whole blood, diverted to Quang Tri as advised by the HDC.[213]

Enroute Khe Sanh, they were informed by the DASC, PLUTOCRAT 2, that weather at Khe Sanh was below IFR approach minimums, and they were to proceed to Quang Tri and wait for a break in the weather.

On touchdown, after a GCA into Quang Tri, they discovered that no facilities were on hand in which to store the precious cargo of whole blood. Because it was imperative that the perishable cargo reach its destination unspoiled, they departed Quang Tri rather than wait for the weather to break.

The Hue Approach Control was contacted and Capt Kennedy received clearance direct to Khe Sanh VFR on top. They were unable to receive navigational information—a positive lock-on with the TACAN—from either Dong Ha or Phu Bai, and only intermittent lock-on with the Quang Tri TACAN, forcing him to navigate by dead reckoning above a thick cloud layer that obscured the hazardous terrain features.

When he arrived at Khe Sanh, repeated attempts were made on VHF and FM to contact ground personnel. Eventually contact was made. The Khe Sanh tower operator stated that due to bad weather and the fact they had been under attack by enemy mortar fire throughout the evening, the medical supplies were not expected until the following day.

The GCA controller vectored an initial approach fix, but at GCA minimums, Capt Kennedy still didn't have the field in sight, so he requested and was cleared for an extended low approach down the runway in an effort to break out of the cloud cover. This proved futile, and Capt Kennedy executed a missed approach and climbed to VFR on top.

Realizing that low fuel state would permit only one m ore approach, Capt Kennedy conferred with the tower and GCA operations and established a system where the tower operator would notify the GCA controller when a break in the clouds was approaching. The GCA controller gave the CH-53 step-down altitudes to set them up for the approach.

There was no break over the field, but there appeared to be a clear area off their starboard side. Under radar surveillance, Capt Kennedy flew to the area, identified their position, and advised the tower to stand by with an Aldis Lamp to orient them over the field. Using an auto-rotating approach with a 270-degree spiral, they descended beneath the cloud layer and broke out over the perimeter of the base. Landing was approximately 0130H. The tower operator then flashed a green signal from the Aldis Lamp which was the plane's only ground reference.

The cargo was off-loaded, and as they taxied to the runway to take-off, there was a bright flash in front of the plane. "It looked like they were walking rockets right into our cockpit. They hit all around us. We got out safely, to return to Marble Mountain."

Through persistent, untiring effort and unflinching diligence, Capt Kennedy was able to deliver his valuable cargo.[214]

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PFC Jeff Culpepper (B-3/1/26, 2367117, WIA 13 Feb & 30 Mar) managed to find enough light, time, and presence of mind, to write the following letter home tonight:

> The Day after
>
> On Jan 21 at 5:00 AM I became a man. It all started on the 20th when we had B-52 air strikes about 7000 meters away. One NVA didn't like the idea so he gave himself up. He told the Colonel that they knew where everything was, 2 artillery batteries, the air strip, etc., and that we would get hit at dawn. We did! At 5:00 I woke up to rockets coming in. Mom I swear I have never heard anything so spine tingling as those rockets. We took off into the trench and there we sat for about 4 hours. They dropped mortars & rockets in for about 2 hours straight and they were hitting about 100 – 200 meters behind me in the ammo dump. About 9000 rounds in the dump! Also all around us. I laid face down shaking for about half an hour. Then we had to get up and watch to see if they were crawling to the wire. There is about 1 million pieces of shrapnel flying around., big, small, hot, etc. By the grace of God & a small miracle all I got was a few buns. Pieces were sticking in the trench all around me. A buddy of mine had his foot blown off. Another hit in the foot also. A couple others were burned with white phosphorus.

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[213] Helicopter Direction Center

[214] DFC file on Capt Frank James Kennedy; "Copter's Blood Run Draws Rocket Fire," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:6 (09Feb68) 7

The CP tent took a direct hit. And the Company radioman was killed. Two guys from 2 Plt got hit with dud mortar rounds. That afternoon I went around Khe Sanh. It has been leveled. Everything destroyed. The ammo dump kept us down for 2 hours. We got gas from our rounds white phos-smoke etc. Then the sun came up at about 7 o'clock but we couldn't see because of the smoke.. Yesterday I was going after C-rations and I went by Graves Registration 3 dead Marines lying outside. Bloody & mangled. Something I'll never forget. Then while I was carrying C's they drop in more mortars. Gas! I almost choked to death. They also shot down a phantom jet right outside our perimeter. The pilot parachuted out. Last night I went on a LP outside the wire. Never again they'll have to drag me. Last night B-52 strikes almost wiped out a battalion of them. They would have hit us last night. But we messed them up. So now all we do is wait. B-52's and jets are in the air constantly. They want Khe Sanh by the 29th. So they started early. They have a Division out there. The odds are 4 NVA to 7 Marines but we like it that way. They are going to have a battle on their hands. No shit. I am ready. The Lord is with me. Just pray. If he saw me through the mortars he'll see me through all the way. I am seriously thinking about the seminary now! I'll write when I can but there is a war going on now. Jeff.

Casualties for 21 JAN: 15 USMC KIA and 55 wounded. The enemy lost 262 killed including 106 killed by Marine airstrikes[215] At 2259, L/3/26 manning the RED Sector of KSCB, observed an unknown size enemy unit outside their wire. The Marines fired, killing 25 NVA soldiers.[216]

Hill 881S was generally untouched on the 21st, probably because their patrolling had confused the enemy forces assembled on 881N. Capt Dabney later opined: "I believe that the Co I recon-in-force to 881 North on the 20th ran into the NVA battalion that was designed to attack us that night. We could not destroy it, but we found and fixed it in the subsequent fire fight and hit it with supporting arms. Although we may not have decimated the battalion, we probably discouraged it."[217]

Hill 881S did not escape some enemy activity. At 1300H, Co M/3/26, manning the western finger of 881S, received sniper rounds and reported some flashes coming from XD 770447. At 1345H, Co I/3/26 received small arms sniper fire from XD 770447 (Lang Ru'on, one of the proposed sites for the Project DYEMARKER Strong Point Obstacle System, SPOS). No further sniper fire was received from this position after fixed wing strikes were un on it. At 1400H, Co I/3/26 received two rounds 82 mm mortar fire from the south at a range of 2000 to 2500 meters, beloved to be bracketing rounds.[218]

As the evening began, at 1930H, Co I/3/26 reported heavy movement to their north and were preparing for an anticipated attack against their position on 881S. Nothing materialized. At 2259H, Co I/3/26 received mortar fire, and at 2330H, received one enemy illumination round over their position.[219]

The hill outposts were vital to the defense of the KSCB. "Not only did the Marine units on those summits deny the North Vietnamese a vantage point from which to fire down the throats of the base defenders, they also served as the eyes for the rest of the regiment .. situated on the valley floor .. relatively blind to enemy activity."[220]

Two days later, 23 January, along with ammunition, 4,000 pounds of body bags were flown into Khe Sanh Combat Base.[221] 200,000 pounds of ordnance were flown into Khe Sanh on 23 January. News accounts emphasize that at Khe Sanh, we are now facing "the largest and best-equipped military force that North Vietnam has ever concentrated on a single battleground."[222]

N-DAY

N-Day (the equivalent of our D-Day) for the launch of the siege of Khe Sanh, was advanced from the end of January to 21 January by Colonel General Van Tien Dung during a meeting of the Current Affairs Committee of the Central Military party Committee. The attack "..must lure enemy forces [i.e., American and South Vietnamese] out to Route 9 before the moment that all of South Vietnam launched the wave of large operations in order to create conditions that would enable our other

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[215] FMFPAC 230411Z/Jan68 SITREP # 1029
[216] 26MAR 211635Z/Jan68, OPN SCOTLAND SITREP #328
[217] Comments of Col Dabney in HMC HistDiv Tape of 20May82
[218] 26MAR 211540Z/Jan68, OPON SCOTLAND SITREP #327
[219] 26MAR 211635Z/Jan68, OPN SCOTLAND SITREP #328
[220] Donnelly, Maj Thomas and Shore, Moyers S II, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam*, Part VI, *Ho Chi Minh's Gamble*, draft manuscript, Historical Center, HQMC, 10 April 1970, p. 18:19..
[221] *National Observer*, 26 Feb 68, p. 4, in chronology of Khe Sanh battle.
[222] *Time* magazine 91:5 (02 Feb 1968), pp. 21*f*. (Note: news magazines are dated one week ahead of issue date). [Noted in Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 1971, p. 887].

battlefields to launch the general offensive-general insurrection."[223] Further, "..it would not be good for the overall plan if the Route 9-Northern Quang Tri Front were to delay launching its wave of operations because the Route 9-Northern Quang Tri Front's goal was not just to annihilate a portion of the enemy forces currently in the area and pin the rest down; the Front also had to lure more American and puppet forces out to Route 9 and pin them down there."[224]

This sudden advance of N-Day, however, resulted in a frenzied transportation effort by the NVA.[225] "At the start of the supply movement units did not all begin at the same point in time and there was a difference in the starting points/time of two to three days. Furthermore, the units involved in transportation [support] were only involved until 15 January 1968 when they had to stop in order to deploy for combat. Therefore the quantity of materiel which remained on the round-trip segments amounted to 121 tons [that had not been moved completely]."[226]

The PAVN official history of the Khe Sanh battle notes as one of the lessons learned from a failure:

> First, there was insufficient time to prepare the battlefield, and therefore many forces could not be employed, particularly many combat support forces, such as there being no need for the mechanized vehicles; there was no reserve ammunition, and for these reasons even if one had wanted to concentrate forces, it could not have been accomplished.[227]

This history notes that one of the objectives of the attack was to draw-in forces, particularly to western Highway 9, in order to create favorable conditions for attacks elsewhere, and create conditions for other battlefields to attack the cities at the beginning of February, 1968, particularly in the coordinated combined combat in the Hue Front during Phase 1.

> The high point of the Tet 1968 was the General Offensive and Uprising but it wasn't until April, 1968, that the enemy finally sent forces to relieve Khe Sanh.
>
> The reasons for the slowness drawing the enemy out to Khe Sanh was that we had made note of the enemy's old practices, but had not seen their new method of operations. We continued to believe that: wherever our main forces appeared, the enemy would move in, in response immediately into that area such as during 1965-1966 and early 1967. Therefore, our intention was to avoid large scale attacks conducting only some attacks on small positions, surrounding them, waiting for reinforcements to come, and then attacking the reinforcing forces.
>
> Our intentions were not appropriate to the objective situation at that period of time after the enemy had been defeated in two strategic counter-attacks that was no longer as fiery as before. Conversely, at this period of time, in order to send in forces in relief, they had to be more cautious. In particular after we had opened fire in the cities, it became increasingly difficult to draw the enemy out.
>
> From the developments on the Highway 9-Khe Sanh battlefield and in the other campaigns we saw that: in order actively draw in enemy reinforcements we had to attack strongly to the point that the enemy sensed a dangerous condition so that if they did not send in reinforcements then those on site would be eliminated. Specifically during the Highway 9-Khe Sanh campaign if we had attacked continuously the positions on the perimeter and after that had encircled and laid siege to the base at Ta Con immediately then certainly the enemy would have sent in reinforcements early, responding earlier...[228]

The history notes, as a principle failure of their attack:

> The preparatory time was short at time that the tactical formation of that period of time had little tactical capability during a time of rapid preparation. ... During the Highway 9-Khe Sanh Campaign for many different reasons the divisions all had very little time to prepare. Therefore at the start of the campaign [p. 67] many units

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[223] General Tran Quy Hai, *Duong cach mang va nhung lori tri an ["Steps Along the Road and Words of Gratitude"], [draft manuscript], p. 265.*

[224] *Ibid.*, p. 266.

[225] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Cien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968 [Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign]*, p. 478. MAT [SECRET]. Restricted "or Distribution within the Army" [Luu Hanh Trong Quan Doi]. Published by the Tong Cuc Hau Can [General Directorate for Rear Services], under the direction of Major General Tran Chi Cuong, Senior Colonel, and 1st Level Professor Ngo Vi Thien. Edited by Dai ta Nguyen Viet Phuong, Dai ta Le Van Bien, and Lieutenant Colonel Tu Quy, June, 1988. Trans by Sedgwick Tourison.

[226] *Ibid.*

[227] *Dong Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968, [The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign]*, Published by the Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense [Vien Lich Su Quan Su Vietnam, Bo Quoc Phong]. Hanoi, 1987, maps. Written under direction of General Hoang, MinhThao, Major General Cao Pha. Documents compiled by: Major General Hoang Dan and Senior Colonel Hung Dai. Written and approved by: Major General Ho Do, Senior Colonel Tran Hanh, and Senior Colonel Hung Dat, p. 63.

[228] *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

attacked with few results. The 325th Division attacked at the correct time but was unsuccessful in its raid on Hill 832 [Hill 861 in American parlance].."[229]

Luring in forces was a well-known NVA tactic on all scales from wounding a man on patrol or a small recon team, but not killing them, in order to kill the larger amount of those who came to rescue. Indeed, an appreciation of this tactic avoided disastrous results in the sending of a relief force to assist the Huong Hoa District Headquarters and CAC OSCAR in Khe Sanh Village on 21 January 1968 as well as those trapped at Lang Vei when the NVA attacked with tanks on 07 February 1968. It was one of the chief considerations in not sending a reinforcing unit to the platoon on 25 February 1968 and perhaps also the reason for General Rathvon McClure Tompkins' directive against any patrols beyond close-in wire checks.

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KHE SANH VILLAGE

When the District Headquarters for Huong Hoa Province in Khe Sanh village (which also contained the CO and a platoon of CAC OSCAR), was attacked on 21 January (along with Hill 861, Recon Team NURSE, and Khe Sanh Combat Base), a decision to reinforce that position with "D" Company, 1/26, was made, which departed Khe Sanh Combat Base around 1100H. Helicopters had previously attempted to reinforce the outpost, but received too much small arms fire. As DELTA Company approached, Captain Stamper, the CO of CAC OSCAR[230], got on BLACKBUD DELTA's PUSH[231] warning that it appeared that every house contained a bunker inside, that every bunker was manned by NVA, and that the reinforcing unit should exercise extreme caution, but that when they arrived, the Marines of CAC OSCAR would help them inside the perimeter and suggested they man the perimeter.[232] As a result, INTRIGUE[233] reported that D/1/26 could not pursue their rescue attempt at this time. . LtCol James B. Wilkinson had, with Col. Lownds' approval, recalled them.

> Regiment told me to send a company down into the village. It was Lieutenant [Walt] Chapman because he was the company that was not in the perimeter. He got up on the high ground [of Hill 471] and had a Vietnamese scout with him. They checked out the village and detected heavy VC in the village. At that time I immediately halted him where he was. I said, 'Don't go; don't pursue.' I contacted Colonel Lownds and said, 'Col Lownds, I recommend that we not send Lt. Chapman and his company any further than they are. I feel it's a trap in waiting and I don't feel it would be militarily wise to do that. He agreed, and we brought them back—probably saved the company.[234]

PFC Sidonio Patricio ["fish"] recalls: "We could see the air-strikes coming down. Then we went over Hill 471 and through one of those little Bru villages there [ville Breh]. We went through there and right up into Khe Sanh. Just before we got [to the District compound] we got the word to get the hell out of there, and I mean we came back fast! Fast! There was a short guy who passed out due to heat exhaustion."[235]

The warning was very fortunate, for the NVA had formed an ambush to annihilate the rescuing force. Several days later, the JTAD Joint Technical Advisory Detachment] at Khe Sanh reported that the attack on the Huong Hoa District Headquarters was conducted by only a battalion, but that there were three regiments in ambush positions around the headquarters (and seat of loc al provincial civilian government). The report indicated that the NVA had left 270 dead bodies in their attack. At 1400, 23 January 1968, an estimated NVA battalion occupied the District Headquarters (about 300 men composed a NVA Bn) consisting of North Vietnamese and Nungs. The battalion was there as a decoy and the plan was to lure American troops to attempt to retake the District Headquarters. When the American forces are committed and have encircled the compound, the outlying North Vietnamese units would then encircle the American force and attempt to attain total and undisputed victory, thus preventing the reestablishment of Route 9 and forcing American forces back to the coastal area.[236]

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[229] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.
[230] Stamper had assumed command of that unit on 27 December 1967, relieving his predecessor, 1/Lt Elmore, who had received his third Purple Heart at Khe Sanh. Elmore had been ordered to Khe Sanh since it was considered a "safe place" where he wouldn't receive another Purple Heart and thus be returned CONUS.
[231] BLACKBUD was the callsign for 1/26 at the time. "Push" refers to the radio frequency.
[232] Conversations with Lt Tom Stamper while and the author were stationed together at MCRD, Parris Island, SC, 1969-70.
[233] The 26th Marine Regiment's callsign.
[234] Interview of LtCol James B. Wilkinson, 27 May 1988. 1/Lt Walton F. Chapman is the son of the (then) Commandant of the Marine Corps.
[235] Conversation with Sid Patricio at Khe Sanh reunion, 13 July 1989.
[236] III MAF COC 251511Z/Jan68, JTAD IR in III MAF COC J&F 26/26Jan68 #31.

LANG VEI:

Photo intelligence of 25 January and 06 February disclosed numerous foxholes and positions in the immediate area,[237] On 05 February, aerial recon detected an ambush point at XD 81603872 where Route 9 was piano-cut at several places.[238].

In addition, not all the NVA tanks attacked Lang Vei; some apparently took positions to ambush any relieving forces that might arrive by helicopter. In his FMFPAC Debrief, Colonel Lownds commented:

> ..if the intelligence reports were indeed correct, it would appear that the enemy had well anticipated that we might possibly reinforce the garrison at Lang Vei. He had troops positioned along the edges of Route 9, and it's interesting to note that after the tanks had finished their mission at Lang Vei, and as a matter of fact in one case a couple of tanks actually never did get into Lang Vei, but they went north and northeast of Lang Vei's position, and were actually as near as we can determine in a position that we had planned as our helicopter landing zones, so that he had in fact anticipated a relief force and had positioned himself where he could intercept not only ground relief force, but also a helicopter relief force.[239]

Aerial photo recon of 25 January 1968 disclosed 94 foxholes at XD847376, just off Route 9 near Simard's house, opposite the CAP O-2 position (possible an ambush position for forces attempting to reinforce Lang Vei).[240]

In the sequence of events leading to the fall of Lang Vei, at 0335, III MAF confirmed a C-130 to arrive at Khe Sanh with passengers, about 100 paratroopers of Special Forces personnel. At 0400H, a conference was called consisting of Col Smith of III MAF, Capt Edwards of USSF, and Maj Saimon. The Special Forces requested a relief force be dispatched to Lang Vei at first light. Gen. Tompkins, after due consideration of the situation , replied, "Negative." The condition of the runway at KSCB made landing of relief troops who might be dispatched to Lang Vei ill-advised. Furthermore, there were tanks running betsween KSCB and Lang Vei as well as large amounts of infantry (as detected by electronic sensors), and KSCB was receiving considerable incoming. At 0350H, Gen Thompkins and Col Smith, the G-3 Watch officer at III MAF, registered a complaint about the proposed employment of troops moving into the area since it would inhibit our supporting arms, and further, Gen Tompkins inquired, "How would the forces make their way to Lang Vei?" Gen Tompkins also registered a complaint with LtGen Cushman, CG of III MAF, who said he knew nothing of the C-130 plane load of USSF but would check. Tompkins felt the enemy was planning precisely for an attempted rescue and would ambush the route from Khe Sanh to Lang Vei. "General Tompkins had long planned a 'set piece defense,' not venturing out too far and falling into traps that the enemy may have set in the area, but force the enemy to come to us. His opinion was that it would be extremely un wise to mount any sort of move toward Lang Vei. General Cushman concurred that such a move would be exceedingly unwise, in fact, stupid."[241]

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[237] 25 foxholes and 2 antiaircraft positions (XD 809378), 25 foxholes (XD 844361), 94 foxholes (XD 847376), and 24 foxholes (XD 845377), and on 06 Feb 1968: a fortified area with bunkers and heavy trail activity (XD 793393), bunkers above ground (XD 800395), a hut with heavy trail activity (XD 805395), an underground bunker and heavy trail activity (XD 804394), an above-ground bunker with heavy trail activity (XD 803395), an open bunker with well-used trails (XD 803394), a supply area with heavy trail activity (XD 810398), a hut with heavy rail activity, bunkers and 3 underground entrances (XD 809393), 2 foxholes near a well-used trail (XD 84395), 2 bunkers above ground and open,, and well-used trails (XD 819389), and bunkers and possible storage in village (XD 830386). [MACV J2 CICV 090045Z/Feb68, SUPIR #0416-68 (Supplementary Photographic Intelligence Report) on Mission #4673].

[238] III MAF COC 080621Z/Feb68, Project NIAGARA Photo IPIR, (Initial Photographic Intelligence Report), in III MAF COC Journal and File 08/09Feb68 #340].

[239] Comments of COL David E. Lownds, HQMC Oral History Tape #2621.

[240] 6470 Recon Tactical Squadron 270100Z/Jan68, Initial Photo Intelligence Report, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 27/28 Jan 1968 #120.

[241] Comments of BGen Carl W. Hoffman, HQMC Oral History Tape #2535, 3dMarDiv COC 071209Z/Feb68, Spot Rpt #78 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 07/08Feb68 #258. Gen Tompkins later defended his decision: "Why wasn't any column sent? (A) There were no troops and the base was under attack at the same time, and I(B) had the base not been under attack, I still wouldn't have sent a battalion to Lang Vei. Route 9 was completely held by the enemy–complete from Khe Sanh Village to the Laotian border. That was enemy territory. The hills to the north of Route 9 were completely held by the enemy." [Interview of MajGen Rathvon McC Tompkins, HQMC HistDiv, 13 April 1973, transcript p. 30. COL John J. Padley, the previous CO of 26th Marines at Khe Sanh [relieved by COL Davie E. Lownds at 0900, 12 August 1967] in his Debrief, noted: "..if we were to reinforce Lang Vei, naturally we'd reinforce it with troops. But we have to be very leery because the enemy knows we're going to defend that place and if they attack, their attack may be for us to come down the road so they can ambush us. We know that and are very aware of it. In fact, when they attacked that one night [04 May 1967], we did shoot artillery and there was no problem stopping it with artillery. The next day the word came through the grapevine: where were the Marines? Why didn't they reinforce? Most likely they wanted us to come down that route to ambush us. Maybe that's why they attacked Lang Vei, to try to have us come down that road. We'll think three times before we go and we got a lot of other alternate plans on how we'll go." [Comments of Col. J.J. Padley, HQMC Oral History Tape #1504].

500 METERS[242]

It was an understanding of these NVA tactics that led the CG, 3rd Marine Division, Major General Rathvon McClure Tompkins, who visited Khe Sanh almost daily during the entire siege and was therefore intimately aware of the situation, to issue an order that while patrols were to be conducted, their limit was to be determined by how far the patrol could maintain the capability to extricate itself from a contact. Generally, this was within line of sight of the friendly front lines where direct fire weapons could provide support.

> The far sightedness of this decision was brought to light in a diary recovered from a dead body following the attack by 1/9 on Hill 471 [on 01Apr68]. The writer was either a Company Commander or Political Officer of a company that participated in the battle of Khe Sanh Village. He frequently mentioned the company being deployed in ambush positions prior to and during the attack of Khe Sanh village and again at Lang Vei. The comment frequently included, 'Oh, when will they come out.' He indicated that the enemy expected the Marines to come out in mass and were laying in wait for such a move, particularly a reinforcement of Khe Sanh village or Lang Vei.[243]

Gen Tompkins knew what he was doing, even if the Marines on the base itself became intensely frustrated at not keeping the enemy free from their wires through patrolling:

> ...my whole plan for the defense of Khe Sanh was to make the enemy come to us. Now, General Westmoreland has been criticized .. and other people have criticized Saigon for tying the Marines at Khe Sanh to their perimeters. It wasn't Westmoreland; it was me. I told them 500 meters was the absolute max in any position, 500 meters, no more.[244]

Gen Tompkins feared patrols would become sucked into ambushes.[245] Furthermore, there was no need to send patrols; our intelligence was such that we knew where enemy forces were and there was no need to risk the piecemeal ambushing of small, exposed Marine patrols.[246]

> I planned, therefore, a set-piece type of defense that would require the enemy to come to us. The daily papers, I am glad to say, made much of the fact that we were locked into our positions and did not engage in patrolling, et cetera. I hope the enemy high command believed this because such was not the case.[247]

The enemy which had always been in the Khe Sanh area in small groups, a dispersed formation, a few here, a few there, now were attracted to the Combat Base like flypaper which attracted and fixed them and from which position they could be annihilated.

Of course, the Marines on the ground, men of action that they were, were not in favor of this policy. One young artillery officer commented:

> We had no idea what was out there. I would have felt much more secure—and this gets back to it being really a company commander's war. I hate to say it but a lot of the field grades weren't in touch with what was going on. We were having things like guys shot filling sand bags on the lines by sniper fire. All of that could have been precluded by aggressive combat patrols within a reasonable distance that we could support it with direct fire weapons from the base. And all of that tunnel-digging activity—it could have been effectively kyboshed. The order not to conduct patrols outside the base, I think, was absolute foolishness. The result was that the troops weren't given any opportunity to flex their muscles. They were stuck in those trench lines.[248]

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[242] From Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh*, (unpublished manuscript which formed the basis for *Valley of Decision*), p. 402.
[243] Ltr of Maj Jerry E. Hudson, 02Jan69, in HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file
[244] Intv of MajGen Rathvon McClure Tompkins, 13Apr73, HQMC HistDiv, p. 31
[245] *Ibid.*
[246] HQMC HistDiv (OralHist), Memorandum for the Record HDM/JS/srp 15Sep76, Subj: Conversation with Major General Rathvon McC Thompkins, HQMC (ret) 07Sep76
[247] Comments of Gen Tompkins in U. S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Electronic Battlefield Subcommittee of the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, *Investigation into Electronic Battlefield Program, Hearings*, 91st Congress, 2d Session, Nov. 18, 19, and 24, 1970, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971, p. 83
[248] Comments of Mr. W. M. Smith to the author, 16Mar85.

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1968

If the stated strategy of the North Vietnamese Army was to lure Americans to Khe Sanh and thereby weaken forces defending cities so that their troops would have advantage in attacking them, it is notable that American military staffs did not react in this way. Those at Khe Sanh did not reinforce the District Headquarters when it was attacked nor the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp. In both instances, NVA troops were in ambush positions for such reinforcement. Nor did the Generals reinforce Khe Sanh Combat Base or send troops along Route 9, also avoiding NVA ambushes.

On the contrary, one could well argue that the Americans lured the NVA to Khe Sanh and held them there like someone holding on to an electric wire that they cannot release which then kills them, or like flies stuck to flypaper, or rats attracted to the cheese and then killed in a rat trap. Our strategy in reinforcing KSCB instead of abandoning it due to the advancing juggernaut of NVA forces, was to attract two divisions of North Vietnamese Army troops (which could have been employed to attack cities and other targets in South Vietnam) and then annihilate them with B-52 strikes.

> Khe Sanh, and adjacent defended areas, served to lure the North Vietnam forcers into commitments of major forces particularly susceptible to effective employment of massive air strikes, capable of crippling and consuming North Vietnam offensive capabilities in I Corps.[249]

AIR STRIKES

The destructive capability of the B-52 was unleashed at Khe Sanh in the form of approximately fifty sorties a day. (In comparison, there were a total of approximately 750 sorties during the period 18 June 1965 through December, 1966).[250] During the period 22 January to 31 March, there were 2,606 sorties delivering 75,631 tons (or 151,362,000 pounds) of bombs at Khe Sanh.[251]

As encircling troops of NVA dug trenches ever closer to the lines manned by B/1/26 on the eastern section of Khe Sanh Combat Base, Complete annihilation resulted. Although the normal ordnance load was 108 bombs, each B-52 was capable of carrying up to 128 500 and 750-pound bombs which were dropped in a rectangular pattern usually 1,000 yards long by 100 yards width. Sometimes the boxes overlapped or crisscrossed, depending on the target. Most flights consisted of six aircraft, together covering an area one-half mile wide and three miles long, all within a period of several seconds.[252] To obtain a grasp of this area, one need only think of a comparable area within one's own city and then imagine it totally destroyed. Flying at 10,000 to 30,000 feet, the B52s usually were unseen and unheard by those on the ground for whom the bombs came as a surprise. The earth suddenly erupted. A 750-pound bomb fused to explode on contact clears an area 180 ft. in radius; fused to explode below ground it digs a crater 30 ft. across and 10 ft. deep.[253]

To counter NVA trenches approaching the perimeter manned by B/1/26 and the 37th ARVN Ranger Bn, B-52 strikes were brought closer than the 3-mile limit previously imposed.[254] The ground shook like a continuous earthquake and troops on the lines saw NVA tossed into the air. As early as 29 January, a planning group on the staff of Third Marine Division suggested installation of X-Band Radar Beacon at Khe Sanh ASAP to ensure Arc Light delivery within one kilometer.[255]

On 13 February, Gen Westmoreland advised Adm Sharp (CINCPAC) that the tactical situation at Khe Sanh "may require that full defensive fire be brought into close proximity of defensive positions." He recommended that the previous restriction placed on B-52s forbidding strikes any closer than 3 kilometers to friendly combatants be rescinded. On 18 February, CINCPAC granted permission for the change. In emergency situations:

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[249] Ltr of Col Robert E. Brofit, 08Jan69 to HMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file. [Commander of 4133rd Bombardment Wing (Prov.), Anderson AFB, Guam. Brofit was Commander of 4133rd Bombardment Wing (Prov), Anderson AFB, Guam.

[250] *Ibid.*

[251] AFCHO ltr 18Dec68 in HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file

[252] Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Div, *Khe Sanh (Operation Niagara), 22 January – 31 March 1968*, pp. 112-114; Peter Braestrup, "B52 Big Weapon in Defense," Washington *Post*, 11Aug68

[253] Braestrup, "B52..," cited.

[254] An accidentally close B-52 Arc Light strike at Con Thien (# P-73) in November, 1967, made close-ion Arc Light strikes valid. The strike, 1400 meters from friendly lines, caused no injury to friendly lines, lives, or fortifications, while damage to enemy installations was significant. Secondary explosions indicated the enemy had closed on the Con Thien outer defense lines, indicating the main enemy threat to be within one to three miles of the base. [7AF 171400Z/Nov67 and 201800Z/Nov67, in History, 3d AirDiv, Jul-Dec67, Exhibits #191 and 192].

[255] CG 3dMarDiv 291334Z/Jan68, Arc Light Delivery Within One KM of Friendly Forces, in III MAF COC J&F 30/31Jan68 #185.

..minimum separation criterion of three kilometers from friendly combatants may be reduced to one kilometer when circumstances warranted as determined by COMUSMACV. A strike request with less than three kilometers separation will be considered a deviation from normal criterion.[256]

The test for a close-in Arc Light was Target KHE SANH 207 RED, 1.2 kilometers from Hill 881S (Target Box XD 778448 – XD 771456 – XD 785470 – XD 793463).[257] One of the Marines on Hill 881-S recalls the strike:

..we got the word that B52s were going to attack that ridgeline. We kinda looked at each other kinda strange. I mean B52s flying high level, and they were going to drop 500-pounders just across from us! They expected the impact from these bombs to be very severe. Of course, they were. Everyone was ordered inside their bunkers and to stay in there, and it was passed over the radio the moment the bombs were dropped. We were told to place our fingers in our ears and pull our knees up to our chests and scream as loud as we could during the bombing. This, of course, we did. This was, of course, to prevent anyone from getting shock. And even though we did this, many of us had nose bleeds from the concussion of the bombs being dropped.[258]

The first close-in Arc Light at Khe Sanh was conducted 26 February 1968. As these continued and were moved as close as 750 meters from Marine fighting positions, and ASRAT TPQ strikes were brought within 500 meters, the results were impressive. "Hundreds of secondary explosions and fires attested to the destruction of ammunition and supply stocks and undoubtedly caused casualties among [enemy] troop units maneuvering in the area."[259]

After a week of these strikes, the enemy forces began to crumble. Prisoners revealed they had been briefed that B52s were prohibited from bombing within three kilometers. The enemy force now moved, not to 3,000 meters, but out to 10,000 meters and his forces were subsequently split up to where he could only mass in battalion size.[260]

The primary concern, however, was the enemy trenches, part of the siege-works. The trench discovered 25 February within 100 meters of Co B/1/26's lines, had been dug the night of 24 February. On 26 February, additional trenches were discovered. On 27 February, aerial photographs revealed a network of trenches and bunkers extending from 1500 meters south of the KSCB to within 100 meters of friendly positions.[261]

We watched with some fascination and no small apprehension, day by day, as the trenches crept closer and closer to our perimeter. Various schemes for ordnance artillery wee concocted which were hoped would, at the least, seriously inhibit both the expansion and the utility of the network. Two-thousand-pound bombs, napalm 'baths' ignited after a number of tanks had been deposited, rockets, and all other types of ordnance in the aviation arsenal were applied.[262]

Consideration was made to employ 175mm for trench destruction missions. The artillery experts noted that the trenches south of the KSC B would be safer to strike than those east of the base. Range probable error for 175mm guns average range of 20,000 meters is 65 meters and deflection probable error is 10 meters. Assuming four probable errors in relation to point of impact, the projectile could land 260 meters over or 260 meters short of computed point of impact and 40 meters right or left of gun target line. Thus, the maximum troop safety for close-in fire was when the gun target line ran parallel to friendly positions.[263]

Destruction of trenches and enemy anti-aircraft and mortar positions within them was a constant frustration to pilots. Capt Gerald L. Harrington probably flew more missions over Khe Sanh than any other pilot. In an interview he stated:

Every day I went up there and put bombs in on the NVA—and the next day they were still in there digging trenches. It appeared at one time we were actually dropping bombs on them and helping them dig trenches at the same time. They would simply dig through our bomb craters and keep on going—our bombs didn't seem to slow them down at all. They were digging trenches like moles.

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[256] Maj James B. Pralle, *Arc Light June 1967 – Dec 1968*, 15Aug69, p. 29, referencing CICNPAC msg "Arc Light Basic Operation Order, Chg One," 18Feb68.

[257] COMUSMACV 241139Z/Feb68, Arc Light Strike, in III MAF COC J&F 24/25Feb68 #183; COMUSMACV 251730Z/Feb68, Arc Light Strike, in III MAF COC J&F 25/26Feb68 #270; III MAF 251506Z/Feb68, Special Arc Light Strikes, in 3d MarDiv Msgs Etc Feb68 Encl (57); III MAF COC 260013Z/Feb68, Arc Light Strike, in III MAF COC J&F 26/27Feb68 #15.

[258] Taped comments of Mr. James E. Schemelia to the author 01Aug84

[259] FMFPAC , *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces Vietnam*, Mar68, pp. 9-10

[260] Pralle, *Arc Light*, p. 29; Comments of LtCol Castagna, Tape #2770

[261] 1/26 ComdC Feb68 Encl (1) p. 7

[262] Ltr of BGen Robert P. Keller, 6/RPK/fem, 17Dec68, HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file

[263] 12MAR 292120Z/Feb68, Interdiction/Destruction of NVA Trench System at Khe Sanh, in 3dMarDiv Msgs Etc Feb68 Encl (65).]

When we dropped a bomb in one trench, it didn't stop them. We usually dropped at the terminal end of the trench-line, too, where they put their covered bunkers. The next day, I'd see they went right on through our bomb craters. It was very frustrating.

After awhile, the area became so bombed up that the NVA just walked through the bomb craters and I could see their footprints in the holes the next day. Of if the bomb crater had cut a road, I could see the tracks around the crater...

Once I didn't go up [as a FAC] for three days, and after that pause, it was unbelievable what I saw. The trails looked like thousands of troops had moved into the area—and they made no attempt at all at camouflage. They knew we knew—and they had no many troops they didn't care.[264]

MUDRINICH OF BRAVO COMPANY, 1/26

In addition to the 2,567 B-52 sorties, 22 January – 31 March, there were 21,236 Tactical Air sorties (9,684 USAF, 5,167 USN, and 6,385 USMC .[265]

PFC Peter J. Mudrinich (2385291) arrived in Khe Sanh in November, 1967, as part of a major turnover of Marines and was assigned to the mortar platoon serving alongside Gilbert Wall.[266]

On 21 February 1968, Khe Sanh Combat Base received an abnormally large amount of small arms and automatic weapons fire in connecting with an attempt by an estimated NVA battalion assaulting our positions on the eastern perimeter, manned by B/1/26 and the 37th ARVN Ranger Bn. Between 211245H and 211530H, the KSCB received 345 mortars, rockets, and artillery rounds resulting in moderate casualties, none killed. [267]

2/Lt Michael H. ("Hank") Norman, an artillery Forward Observer of A/1/13 attached temporarily to the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, was standing outside a hooch at that position when suddenly a recoilless rifle round whizzed overhead and hit a short distance from him. About this time the enemy opened up with small arms and automatic weapons fire. The GRAY Sector of the perimeter, manned by B/1/26, came under a heavy mortar attack along with small arms fire from a ridgeline approximately 400 or 6500 meters to their front. There was nothing the Marines could do other than lay low in their bunkers.

The real point of the enemy force was, however, focused against the lines just in front of those occupied by the Marines. Here, the 37th ARVN Rangers quickly spotted a hundred or so enemy soldiers moving toward them. The enemy force was probably battalion size since the ARVNs monitored the NVA radio net and heard them talking over four or five different radios.

The Vietnamese Rangers immediately engaged the enemy force, halting their advance. The enemy force never approached closer than 50 meters from the wire despite the heavy shower of their fire under which their troops advanced. KSCB received 250 rounds of mortar, 50 rounds of artillery, and 70 rounds of rockets in connection with this attack. At one point, there were about 75 incoming rounds within one 5-minute period.

In addition to the enemy incoming , a TPQ strike was accidentally dropped about 40 meters inside the KSCB perimeter, making a 40-foot note and throwing dirt all over the hooches. The bomb exploded near B/1/26 in the area between the ARVN and "B" Company lines:

> We all laid up in the trench-lines and my radioman hit the deck. It sent mud hundreds of feet up into the air and then my radioman was laying flat in the trench and this big piece of mud come [down] and gave him a compound fracture. It broke his bone right in half They took him to the aid station. They sent him back down that night. They said that anybody that can walk had to go back.[268]

The radioman, Peter Mudrinich, was a German, tall and muscular, who had attended Northwestern University. He had joined the Marine Corps, which he viewed as training, and planned to return to Germany and become an officer.

> He got a compound fracture that broke his arm right in half. The bone came out of the skin, and they took him off. He had to come back that night, but they took him out the next day.

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[264] Quoted in Beverly Deepe, "How B-52's protected Khe Sanh, *Christian Science Monitor*, 28Jun68

[265] *Khe Sanh (Operation Niagara)*, CHECO Report cited, pp,. 112-114.

[266] Conversation with Peter J. Mudrinich, 24 Aug 2016.

[267] 26MAR AAR OPN SCOTLAND, p. 8; 26MAR ComdC Feb68, p. 50; 26MAR 211036Z/Feb68, OPN SCOTLAND SITREP #45. Material on this incident is based on FMFPAC 230315Z/Feb68, SITREP #1060; Comments of 2/Lt John W. Dillon, Cpl Gilbert L. Wall, HM3 Raymond Toombs, 2/Lt Michael H. Norman, and Capt Walter A. Gunn, Jr., Tape #2768; and comments of Mr. Ted Golab to the author, 22Apr86.

[268] Comments of Gilbert Wall to the author, 26Aug88.

This guy—I mean we used to sit there and talk. There was a German in Delta Company 81s[269] and they used to talk German to each other. I liked old Peter. We used to sing 'Snoopy versus the Red Baron,' and he got mad and said, 'How would you guys like it if I put down Babe Ruth?' That was the last thing he should have said because those Marines never let up on him.

I recorded us in the bunker one night. You could hear the incoming and the laughing, and he was joking. We were giving Doc a bad time. Doc was from Mexico, Kansas. And we were giving him a bad time, cutting up, and stuff. And you could hear Peter and you could hear radioman for Second Platoon. There was me, the corpsman, the radioman for Second Platoon—lived in the same bunker.

We were giving Pete a bad time. See, Pete was older than most people. He graduated from college. He was around 22 or so. They were giving him a bad time.[270]

For all the ordnance expended by the enemy, there were no friendly fatalities. The corpsman of Second Platoon, B/1/26, HM3 Raymond Toombs, although wounded by mortar, shrapnel, attended to 7 or 8 other wounded Marines (2 or 3 with concussions, a couple with broken arms, and one with a badly messed-up elbow) despite his own wounds, and accompanied them to the BAS.

The attack by the NVA was repulsed, leaving an estimated 20-25 killed.

One of those wounded in the attack, Joe Lola, went to C Med with shrapnel in his leg and was evacuated on a CH-46. The chopper, however, took fire, and Lola was again wounded, again in his leg, while within the chopper He yelled, "I'm hit!" but no one could hear him above the noise of the chopper blades. Everyone returned to C Med, and Lola told the corpsman, "I'm hit!" The corpsman replied, "I know you're hit." Lola took down his blanket—he was nude except for the blanket, to show the corpsman he had been wounded a second time, and there was blood from his belly button on down. "O, my God!" shouted the corpsman. Lola was given some morphine and later told, "You're going out on the next chopper!" "No," cried Lola! "I don't want to get into another chopper. I want to stay here!" "You can't" said the corpsman.

At Graves Registration, there was a KIA from FOB-3, Paul Melvin Douglas, E-6. The Log Book at Graves Registration noted that on 19 January the entry was number 12-68. Today, the number is 141-68, indicating that 129 have been killed on the base itself since all this began. Of course, this number does not include all those who died after being evacuated, nor all those who were to die in aircraft attempting to land here to report for duty, nor all those who were yet to die. It was, after all, only 21 February; there were many more days to go.[271]

Today, an enemy self-propelled bun was observed at XD 7447 at 1335H.[272] At 1625H, 1/26 reported a C-130 LAPES drop broke apart on the runway resulting in two wounded Marines.[273] A total of 284 tactical air sorties were flown in support of the Khe Sanh area (USMC-82, USAF-138, USN-64), and B-52s flew five strikes (15 sorties).[274]

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Two days later, PFC Mudrinich was medevaced to Delta Med in Dong Ha by a C-130 which was struck upon landing, its wing leaking fuel. Mudrinich felt he was going to die, having witnessed the C-130 on the airstrip of Khe Sanh on 10 February 1968 being struck and engulfed in flames. He then was sent to Iwakuni, Japan, and eventually returned to Khe Sanh, but it was after the 25 Feb 68 patrol, and, like all Marines who were not with their units when they suffered casualties, had that life-long sense of guilt of not having been with his brothers.[275]

On 23 February 1968, incoming on KSCB totaled 1313 rounds.[276] Men no longer desire to leave Khe Sanh on R&R since that would involve going to the airstrip, a place of death.[277]

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[269] Hans J. Runge, 2329527

[270] Comments of Gilbert Wall to the author, 13May89.

[271] Author's Diary entry, 21Feb68.

[272] FMFPAC 230315Z.Feb68, SITREP #1060].

[273] 26MAR 211036Z/Feb68, OPN SCOTLAND SITREP #451.

[274] GEN Westmoreland back-channel msg to CJCS 211035Z/Feb68, Rpt #18 on Situation at Khe Sanh.

[275] Conversation with Peter J. Mudrinich, 24 Aug 2016.

[276] 476 of arty, 14 of 60 mm, 372 of 82 mm, 4 of 120, 437 of 122 mm rockets, 5 of recoilless rifle, total: 1313, but LtCol James B. Wilkinson reported (from the regimental briefing) a total of 1407 rounds at the 1/26 staff and officer brief on Sat, 24 Feb 1968. Later in the afternoon, Major David Smith, CO of FOB-3, said we received over 1700 rounds if one also counts the rounds that landed in FOB-3. [Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 Apr 1970, p. 701].

[277] Stubbe, Ray W., *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 01 Apr 1970, p. 700.

The battle from the perspective of air support was persistence of trenching by the NVA *versus* pounding by American B-52s and close-in TPQs—and, most important, the bravery and determination of each individual fighting man at Khe Sanh. Eventually the latter won.

At Khe Sanh, support by artillery and air supporting arms reached new records in the history of warfare. The effort saw the first time strategic B-52 bombers were employed on a sustained basis for tactical support of American troops. Total U. S. Air Force support in terms of sorties:[278]

	TACTICAL AIR SORTIES	SAC SORTIES	TOTAL
7th AF	9,684	2,567	12,251
USN	5,167		5,167
USMC	6,385		6,385
TOTAL	27,236	2,557	23,803

This does not include 1,598 FAC sorties and 1,398 reconnaissance sorties [AFCHO ltr 18Dec68 to HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file. A daily breakdown of TAC and SAC strikes is provided in Mr. Warren A. Trest.[279] U.S. Marine Corps records reflect the support in terms of strikes and tons of ordnance:

	STRIKES	TONS
CAS	1,169	36,161
TPQ	4,989	32,500
		68,661
B-52	430	79,575

and notes that while B-52 strikes were delivered against less precisely located targets, they did add depth to the battlefield and denied the enemy the ability to mass troops and supplies necessary to assault Khe Sanh decisively.[280]

During the period 20 Jan – 31 March, UMC air flew 7,078 sorties against enemy forces at Khe Sanh with over 6,000 of these sorties (approximately 85%), delivered against targets located within a 9-mile radius of the KSC B perimeter.[281]

The daily average of tactical air strikes at Khe Sanh was 300. B-52 sorties increased as the operation progressed, increasing from a daily average of 33 in January and February to 41 during March.[282]

With such intensity of bombing in such a small battlefield, the air support, together with 102,660 rounds of III MAF artillery, the enemy was never capable of marshalling more than a battalion for a single, concentrated attack.

Bomb damage from Arc Light strikes included: 4,705 secondary explosions, 1,932 secondary fires, 1,061 structures destroyed and 158 damaged, 891 bunkers destroyed and 99 damaged, and 253 trucks destroyed and 52 damaged.[283] Tactical airstrikes destroyed 267 trucks, 305 guns, 1,378 bunkers, 1,095 structures being used for artillery purposes, and destroyed or damaged 13 tanks.[284]

"WE GOTTA GET OUTTA THIS PLACE"

For the Marines of Bravo Company, 1/26, remaining as sitting ducks in trenches like Marines in World War I,[285] was not an option. Daily conversation among the Marines continuously filling sandbags, revolved around "The Wound:" damage to their male equipment and "If that happens, I'm just going to dash out of the trench and kill as many Gooks as I can." When the chaplain would reply, "But you'll certainly be killed," the response would be, "Well, there's just nothing left to live for, chaplain!" Conversation also revolved around just doing something. The "word" was always that if a prisoner of war could be

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[278] Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CECO Div., *Khe Sanh (Operation NIAGARA) 22 January – 31 March 1968*, pp. 112-114
[279] Trest, *Khe Sanh*, cited, pp. 112-114.
[280] Ltr from HQMC (Code ATA), 22Jan69, in HMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file
[281] FMFPAC, *Operations..*, Mar68, p. 13
[282] Trest, *Khe Sanh..*, p. 90
[283] MACV, *Command History*, 1968, Vol. 1, p. 424; MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 08Jul68, p. 14
[284] *Ibid.*
[285] Cf. Hantranft, SSGT Phil, "Khe Sanh Reminiscent of WW I Trench Warfare," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:16 (19 April 1968) 10.

captured, there would be a free R&R. (Perhaps this might explain why the patrol led by Donald Jacques pursued the "wood-cutters" and became trapped in the ambush on 25 February.

> ..they [the officers] had passed the word that if we get any sappers or anybody, they were wanting prisoners bad, for interrogation. So the big word on the line was: they want to capture somebody alive. So one night—well, you got to take this in context here, being rocketed every single day. So I had gotten to the point—well, OK, screw this! I've had enough of this. I pulled in my squad. I swear to you, this is the honest to God's truth. I pulled my squad in one afternoon and I said, 'Look, I'm sick of this. I'm going to go out—because we could hear the Gooks talking out in front of our lines—I said, I'm going to go out tonight with nothing more—I'm going to camouflage, no rifles, I'm going to take a pistol and a bayonet, and I'm going to go out and capture one of these Gooks out there. We're going to snoop and poop, sneak up on one of them, knock him cold and bring one back for interrogation.' So I told my squad this. I said, 'I want two volunteers, if somebody wants to go out with me.' And I said, 'I don't want anybody saying anything now. I want you to think about it. If anybody wants to volunteer, come let me know on the side. This is going to be totally hush-hush.' And everybody went, like, You're out of your mind, kind of went out, filled sand bags and did their thing. About five minutes later, Smitty[286] came up and said, 'Hey, I want to go. I want to volunteer.' And he was the one guy I was hoping would. Then, about five minutes after that, Moore[287] came up and said, 'Hey, I want to go. I don't care who goes, but I want to go. I want to be one of the guys that goes out.' Through the day, every single man in my squad came up and volunteered—every man in my squad. I couldn't believe it. I was so proud. Then, the amazing thing was, that somehow the word got out. Two guys from Claire's squad came over, and they volunteered. And then some guy from—I don't know where h came from or who he was, but throughout the day I had probably another eight people from other squads. I guess the word started getting out that we were going out, and I had like, seven or eight other men from other squads. But somehow the word got out and the Lieutenant called me and I think it was Captain Pipes, I think, commenced to read me the riot act that if I went out he personally would see that I spent the rest of my life in the brig, so we kind of never made that mission.[288]

Mudrinich also recalls that many of the men wanted to "mount up" and attack the NVA - "why are we sitting here?" The Marines of Bravo Company didn't want to be taking all the fire and do nothing. They wanted to go out and not just shoot them, but to bayonet them.[289]

PART II: THE PATROL OF SUNDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 1968

5. An American Account of the Battle[290]

The 20 year-old "youngest Marine Corps Lieutenant to complete TBS[291] in 18 years,"[292] 2/Lt Donald Jacques, commanded Third Platoon of Company B/1/26. He joined the Marine Corps while attending college. His parents had little money and he didn't want to ask them for more to attend school.[293] Arriving in Vietnam in early October, 1967, he wrote home: "Tonight I had a 19 yr-old come to me for help and advice. He is married to a 18 yr-old and he was having problems. If he knew I was only 20 I wonder if he would have come."[294] The evening of 24 February 1968, he wrote his parents, wishing them a happy anniversary and adding:

> The days go by quite quickly but the nights are long around here. I haven't been getting much sleep.. I stay awake all night sometimes and others not. We get our sleep in the day a couple of ours [*sic*] at a time. That is if the work

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[286] LCPL Author "C" Smith, KIA 30 Mar 68

[287] LCPL Wayne Paul Moore, KIA 30 Mar 68

[288] Conversation with Steven Wiese, 17 March 2005.

[289] Conversation with Peter J. Mudrinich – 24 Aug 2016.

[290] From Stubbe, Ray W., *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed (10 Nov 2008), pp. 215-233, and *Khe Sanh*, (Unpublished manuscript, input for Prados & Stubbe, *Valley of Decision*, 1991), 06 June 1989, Chapters 177-179, pp. 609-633.

[291] The Basic School.

[292] Comment by his sister, Jeanne, quoted in Brandon, Heather, *Casualties*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984, p. 63. Donald Joseph Jacques was born 23 March 1947 in Rochester, New York, and entered on active duty in the USMC 24 March 1967 at Quantico, Va.

[293] *Ibid.*, comments by his other sister, Vallette, p. 61.

[294] Donald Jacques, letter to his parents, 14 October 1967. Jacques was born 23 March 1947 in Rochester, NY, entered on active duty 24 March 1967, and arrived in Vietnam 09 Oct 1967 [Casualty card, HQMC, Historical Division, Washington, D.C.]

load isn't too great. It is a constant digging deeper and the work really never stops. It can't."[295] In what was to be his last day, he also wrote his sister, Jeanne, and her family: "We're just sitting here waiting for all hell to burst loose with each day that goes by the incoming increases and the 3d Plt digs deeper. We are already for them in my opinion but no matter how well prepared you think you are there is always something more you can do. We have been lucky so far and I hope that the good fortune holds for us. Although my platoon has had 30 wounded since Jan 21st none have been too serious and the majority of the men are still on duty and all healing. One or two have made it home early but that is all to the good. For they have done their part. They seem to think that Khe Sanh will be the turning point to the negotiation tables. I hope so but if not we will go on until this is over... I just hope we can do our part well enough so that your Billy and Mark and Matt don't have to come... I'm fine and still kicking. I'll write again soon. Love brother, Don.[296]

2/Lt Donald Jacques was as "green" as the piece of camouflaged parachute he always wore as a dickey.[297]

For 18 year-old PFC Ronald Lewis Ridgeway, the morning of 25 February began with his squads leader, LCpl Kenneth Claire, briefing his men that they were going on a sweep, not to exceed 1000 meters from the combat base perimeter.[298] It was basically to be a perimeter wire check to determine if the wire had been cut or sabotaged, or if there were any NVA forward observers. They were instructed not to go out of sight of the base perimeter. "He said we were looking for any trench positions that were being dug towards our perimeter and for Bangalore torpedoes. He said there was a possibility of receiving enemy mortars because it was open terrain."[299] The patrol was to be far from a normal patrol for Ridgeway; it was the beginning of a 5-year nightmare as a POW.[300] Ridgeway turned 18 in boot camp and went straight over to Vietnam, arriving in November, 1967.[301] In early February, 1968, he got knocked out during a mortar barrage. "I did a foolish thing. I jumped into the trench line to get away from the mortars and I broke my nose."[302] He woke up in a helicopter in DaNang. "I got medevaced, I guess, because they said I was out, unconscious, for so long. Then I came back up [to KSCB]. I got my in-country R&R!"[303]

LCpl Kenneth Claire, the tall, rugged squad leader, probably thought of his family and home in California. He had spent his summers in the 7200-foot high Sierras at Silver Lake with his great-aunt where he would get up each morning and greet it with a Tarzan yell—for which he became quite famous at Khe Sanh before the siege battle. His younger brother (by 7 years), Richard, recalls their 4-hour treks up the 9,800-foot high Thunder Mountain and the sheer 2,000 foot drop to the 7,300-foot high Silver Lake.

> Ken would climb right up to the top and stand there with the wind howling around him, pound his chest and give out this wild Tarzan yell! I think it was at that point Ken got the idea of giving a Tarzan yell whenever he got to the top of a mountain. Unfortunately, he started doing the same thing every morning on our front deck and scared the heck out of our kids. On our last trip up there, he planted a post on the peak and tied his sweatshirt to it. The post stayed there for over 30 years through all the storms and the high winds.[304]

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[295] Donald Jacques, letter to his parents, 24 February 1968. In a letter to his parents dated 14 February 1968, he wrote: "Always tired but when this is over I'll get all the sleep I need."

[296] Donald Jacques, letter to Jeanne, Bob and Billy, 24 February 1968.

[297] Conversation with Jeff Culpepper, 23 July 1984.

[298] Orders were to maintain visual sight of the perimeter (400 meters max from the perimeter) and the patrol was to last 2 hours. [26Mar 251114H/Feb68, from Col Lownds to CG 3rd MarDiv, in III MAF SPECAT Exclusive msgs, #30, forwarded to CG III MAF by CG 3rd MarDiv in 252120Z/Feb68]. As further evidence that the patrol was to be close to the KSCB perimeter, Ed. Prendergast was told to remain at KSCB with his 60mm mortars from where he could better protect the patrol. [Conversations with Ed Prendergast, 14 March 1986 and 5 June 1986].

[299] CMC Rpt AO2A-THM-bfh, 3461, 17 July 1973, Subj: Homecoming Marine Debriefing Report; case of Sergeant Ronald L. Ridgeway, USMC, Debrief Tape #5.

[300] Returned to US control on 16 March 1973. Interestingly, while training, Ridgeway and the brother of James Schemelia [I/3/26 on Hill 881-S during the siege battle] successfully escaped and evaded in a training exercise at Camp Pendleton. Others were dispatched to locate them. They were unaware the exercise had terminated! [Conversation with James Schemelia, 31 July 1984].

[301] Conversation with Ronald Ridgeway, 05 July 1991.

[302] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, Subj: Returnee Press Conference, Sgt Ronald L. Ridgeway.

[303] Conversation with Ronald Ridgeway, 05 July 1991.

[304] Letter from Richard Claire, 5 November 2004.

His niece, Laura, recalls how terrified she was as a little child when Ken placed her on his shoulders and tossed her into the air. "I used to be scared to death because he was so big."[305] While in schools before high school, Ken was a very good baseball player, made the All Star team for the Fair Oaks Little League and Babe Ruth League every year he played, and when he went to Sequoia High School, he made varsity as soon as he started on the team. At high school, Ken "..got the reputation of being one of the toughest and fairest kids in the school. Nobody fooled around with him and whenever he saw someone picking on someone else he immediately stepped in and settled the argument. He also had a reputation of being a real fun guy.. was extremely well-liked and respected."[306] Following high school he briefly attended the College of San Mateo and played football for them (at 6-2 and 245 pounds), but found the academic world not to his liking and joined the Marine Corps.

LCpl Ken Claire was well-known for his Tarzan yell as well as other savage demeanor and actions. When re-supplied with loaves of bread, he would grab a whole loaf and tear off a piece with his mouth and yell.[307] During a battalion-size sweep in late December, 1967, LCpl Claire led his squad (PFC James Hebron, PFC Ronald Ridgeway, PFC Edward C. Rayburn, PFC Jeffrey E. Culpepper, and others), together with another squad and a machine-gunner up a creek bed of about 6 inches of mud. Suddenly they spotted four NVA soldiers at XD803495 carrying a wounded man. When the NVA saw the Marines, they dropped their wounded officer comrade and ran. Claire and Hebron fired 29 M-79 rounds, killing the officer. Ron Ridgeway and Jeff Culpepper threw the dead enemy officer in a poncho. "He was bleeding like crazy and the blood was sloshing around in the poncho and got all over us. When we got back we finished our chow and went on."[308] Upon returning, Lt. Jacques took the officer's pistol. "It should have been Claire's,"[309] but the issue became academic since both Jacques and Claire were to die on 25 February 1968. Lt Jacques asked LCpl Claire, "Is this a fresh kill?" Claire responded, "Of course," and took the blood on his finger and licked it.[310]

LCpl Claire had a reputation for being "hard" but fair; he took care of his men. He was very strict about falling asleep on watch and ensuring sufficient separation between people while on patrol. If someone walked with his head down, looking at the ground, he'd come by and let that person know it—physically as well as vocally! "But then in quiet times when you'd be standing watch or something he'd come around checking lines. He'd apologize to you and say, 'I'm not trying to give you a hard time; I'm just trying to instill in you're the importance of what we're doing. He did care for us."[311]

When the Combat Base was hit the early hours of Sunday, 21 January 1968, PFC Alexander Tretkiakoff fell while returning from a listening post and became hung-up on the wire. LCPL Claire dashed out amid the hail of exploding ordnance which was concentrated in that particular area of KSCB due to proximity to the exploding ammunition dump, along with NVA mortars and rockets, to rescue Tretkiakoff and bring him back to safety.[312] He also continuously moved through the trench line while shrapnel and pieces of unexploded and semi-exploded ordnance fell around him to encourage his men and assist casualties.[313] PFC Jeffrey L. Culpepper had just completed his watch when a rocket shrieked by and he dove into a trench next to PFC Edward C. Rayburn. The trenches at that point weren't very deep: "we were side by side, practically laying on top of each other." Big chunks of shrapnel made whizzing sounds overhead and then landed into the mud, sizzling. One chunk, "..a great big, huge, jagged, steaming-hot piece of shrapnel stuck in the mid right in between us, sizzling, and we both just scrunched down a little bit lower! Corporal Claire came around, walking above the trenches and said, 'Don't be in the trench like sissies, face down; they're probably coming to overrun us!"[314]

For Cpl Gilbert Wall, the 81mm FO and a Blackfoot Indian from Montana, the day began with the Second Platoon Commander, 1/Lt John William Dillon, telling him he was to accompany Third Platoon on today's patrol.[315] Wall already had

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[305] Conversation with Mrs. Laura Claire Bueno, 7 December 1986. In high-school, Ken was 6-1 and 225 pounds. [Letter from Richard Claire, 5 November 2004].

[306] Letter from Richard Claire, cited. Ken's father had been a professional football and professional baseball player [Conversation with Richard Claire, 7 December 1986].

[307] Memory of Ray W. Stubbe.

[308] Conversations with Jeff Culpepper, 23 July 1984 and 30 January 1987; Letter from Jeff Culpepper to Mrs. Madalyn Culpepper, 01 January 1968. The action is documented in 1/26 ComdC Dec 1967 S2/S3 Log 29 December 1967, Ser #18, 19, and 28, and appended list of captured gear; 26Mar 290410Z/Dec67, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #234; 26Mar 291125Z/Dec67, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #235; Letter of Maj Kenneth W. Pipes, undated, in Khe Sanh Monograph File, HistDiv, HQMC, Washington, DC.

[309] Conversation with Jeff Culpepper, 23 July 1984.

[310] *Ibid.*

[311] Conversation with Jeff Culpepper, 30 January 1987.

[312] Statement of Cpl Alan S. Ragio in Bronze Star Medal file on LCPL Kenneth William Claire.

[313] Statement of 2/Lt Donald Jacques in Bronze Star Medal file on LCPL Kenneth William Claire.

[314] Conversations with Jeff Culpepper, 26 June 1991 and 23 July 1984.

[315] Letter from Gilbert Wall, 09 September 1988.

two Purple Hearts and was due to be rotated out of Khe Sanh, but he pleaded with LtCol James B. Wilkinson [CO, 1/26] to stay at Khe Sanh.[316] Only a few days earlier, during a night in which KSCB received heavy mortar fire, the First Platoon Corpsman, Richard Blanchfield, was about to medevac Wall, noting that Wall's eardrums had been blown. Wall refused. He said, "I'll stay. The hell with it." Doc Blanchfield (at 27 much older than most at Khe Sanh, having served 1963-65 with Tom Dooley in Laos previously)[317] notes, "What a wild man!"[318] Wall had been on the patrol along Route 9 on 21 July 1967 which collided with NVA preparing ambush positions—the day the 175s were coming from Camp Carroll to KSCB—as part of the 81mm mortar section (along with Sgt Jose Castillo and Cpl Bruce Jones) that accompanied 1/Lt Benjamin L. Long's Second Platoon, B/1/26. On that patrol Sgt Castillo was shot twice in the chest and immediately died, Cpl Jones was shot through the throat, and Cpl Wall: "The bullet went through up by my shoulder and it went through lung and it broke two of my ribs and they cut it out of my back. I took a ricochet in the face and they shot me right under the eye. I spent July 21st to the last part of September in Yokosuka. That was my second [Purple] Heart and they sent me orders to go back to the 3rd Marine Division Headquarters to be a MP. I didn't want to go. I had to talk with Captain Pipes, who was H&S Company at the time, and then I had to go talk with [Lieutenant] Colonel Wilkinson. I didn't want to go back to the rear, and Wilkinson said, 'OK, well, we'll keep you.'"[319]

Cpl Wall had not had time to clean his M-16; ironically, this was to save his life today. The previous night he was with the ARVN Ranger Battalion and participated in shooting possible probing NVA: "I shot almost 700 rounds from my rifle. The carbon had built up on it, and it would jam after firing three rounds."[320] Wall walked over to Lt Jacques' CP in the Third Platoon portion of the Gray Sector:

> When I arrived Lt Jacques came out of his bunker and invited me in to breakfast and some coffee. Lt Jacques and I had been on many patrols together and knew each other pretty well. He introduced me to the new platoon sergeant [who] asked me to call him 'Mac' [SSgt George McClelland]... I started talking to some of the Marines on the line.. Most of the guys were new. You could tell; they were 'white faced!' [none yet dyed with the red clay pigment of Khe Sanh]. Everybody was in a surprisingly good mood. They all were happy, loose and relaxed. It was a nice day, and just to move out of the base for awhile gave you a good feeling. I checked my gear. I had 25 magazines and 9 grenades. Then I looked over my map and had my radio man get a radio check, then looked out to the area we would be patrolling. I knew the area very well.[321]

PFC Michael J. Laderoute, a Canadian citizen, had enlisted in the USMC. His younger brother, Thomas, recalls him as not particularly athletic, but he did like to play ball, hockey, and was healthy and strong. The family called him by his middle name, "Jack."[322] Michael Laderoute was part of a family with a rich military history. His paternal grandfather fought in WW I and his great uncle, John, died in the same war. His uncle, Michael John, was a radio operator on a bomber during World War II who volunteered as a tail gunner in a bombing raid over Germany, was hit with flak, and killed. Laderoute's mother served in the Canadian Woman's Army Corps during World War II, attached to the Signal Corps as a radio operator. Laderoute's cousin, James Connolly, fought in Korea as a member of the Black Watch. Laderoute's brother, Tom, recalls that Michael John was very adventuresome and liked the outdoors. Even at a young age, his bravery was demonstrated. "One time while Jack and I were walking across a field near home, a herd of cattle was in the same field free ranging. A bull charged across the field at us. Ahead of us there was a steep bank where there were lots of young trees growing. Jack grabbed my hand and we ran for the edge of the field. I was afraid and crying and tried to duck behind a small spruce tree. Jack said 'No,' and held me in front of himself. The charging bull was almost on top of us when Jack jumped sideways and pulled me with him behind the tree. The bull had no time to react and stumbled over the bank through the saplings. I was seven years old at the time. Jack was ten. When Jack was 13, he took me camping about five miles back in the woods to a place called Lyons Lake. That night there was a thunderstorm. Lightning struck all around us. We got soaked and so did our matches. It was after midnight when Jack walked back three miles to a lumber camp to get dry matches. It was pitch dark, but that didn't stop this brave 13 year-old."[323]

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[316] Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 26 August 1988.
[317] Conversation with Richard Blanchfield, 23 July 1990; Blanchfield's *Vita* forwarded in letter of 17 April 1990.
[318] Conversation with Richard Blanchfield, 01 October 1988.
[319] Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 13 May 1989.
[320] Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 26 August 1988.
[321] Letter from Gilbert Wall, 09 September 1988.
[322] Conversation with Thomas Laderoute, 05 May 1991. His middle name is actually "John," but by convention, "John" is called "Jack." Thomas Laderoute claims there were about 1500 men from New Brunswick Province, Canada, and maybe 2600 from the 4 Maritime Provinces that served in Vietnam. [*Ibid.*]
[323] Letter from Tom Laderoute, undated [but from October, 2000].

In his last letter home, dated 22 February 1968, Michael Laderoute wrote: "..We haven't had any mail in four or five days. The place is fogged in and no planes landed. A few landed today. For here is hoping for mail. Not much else to look forward to except mail and chow and hoping for contact. As soon as the NVA attack and we beat them off the wire, we will go on a sweep through the mountains and jungles to Laos and Cambodia after the remainder of their forces."[324]

Culpepper recalls PFC Arnold Javier Rivera as "..a real good-looking Mexican-American, kind of quiet, easy-going, soft-spoken, and real friendly," and PFC Walter F. Skinner as a "kind of hippie-type, free-spirit, kinda cocky, Marine from San Francisco."[325]

Staff Sergeant George McClelland enlisted in the USMC at 17. He was married and raised a family prior to his first Vietnam tour. On 12 August 1967, he celebrated his 25th birthday and soon thereafter deployed for his second Vietnam tour.[326] When KSCB was attacked on 21 January 1968, igniting the ammo dump which strewed exploded and semi-exploded ordnance concentrated in the area occupied by B/1/26, SSgt McClelland, while walking the lines to check on his Marines, was told by Cpl John N. Tracey that his squad area, near the 106 bunker, was covered with numerous dud rounds. "Even though the shrapnel from the incoming rounds was still heavy, SSgt McClelland did not hesitate [to clear them away] until the entire area was secure from dud rounds."[327] 2/Lt Don Jacques witnessed him "repeatedly leaving the cover of the trench line to carry rounds a safe distance from the rest of the Marines. His actions throughout the attack inspired the men of the platoon to fight and stand tall at any cost. He heightened the morale to the extent that they began to make a joke of a very bad situation."[328]

LCpl Frederick Billingham was remembered decades later by Ed Prendergast: "I've had friends since then, but never the best friend that Fred was. Now double his age, I still haven't lived life the way he did! Sometimes I think he knew he'd only be here a short time."[329]

PFC Michael John Brellenthin was married [on 19 August 1967] three weeks when he departed for Camp Pendleton and then to Vietnam.[330] His letters written from Vietnam to his wife, Ruth, attempted to reassure her. "I know that everything is going to work out right... There is nothing to fear. I believe now more than ever that a person who thinks enough can shape his own fate.. An intelligent man who uses his training can easily survive. Don't worry about me Ruth... I've decided that I'm going to be an architect when I get out of here.."[331] After the siege battle erupted: "Things started popping on the 21st of January. It all should be over pretty soon. The way I understand it we could end the war here... Don't worry about me Ruth. I have much waiting for me at home to let anything happen to me here... I got your package today. The one with the rum in it. I'm saving it until all this blows over... I love you boocoo."[332]

HN John A. Cicala, Jr., was 19 and one year out of high school, working for Chrysler, when his draft notice arrived. He went to the Navy recruiter a week before the deadline and enlisted in the U.S. Navy. Following boot camp, he trained at Corpsman "A" School for 14 weeks and was at home on leave when the FBI arrived at his family home while they were eating dinner with a warrant for his arrest for draft evasion![333]

The patrol consisted of 41 men including B-3 led by 2/Lt Donald Jacques and SSgt George McClelland second in command. The squad leaders were: in charge of 2nd squad, Cpl Robert E. Matzka and in charge of 3rd Squad, Cpl Kenneth Claire. Lt Jacques accompanied 2nd Squad who was first in the line of march; 3rd Squad was second in the line of march. Attachments included the 81 FO (Cpl Gilbert Wall) and his radioman, one S-2 Scout, and one Kit Carson Scout, 2 machineguns, and one rocket team.[334]

Not all of Third Platoon went on the patrol. Although LCPL Edward Prendergast, a 60mm mortarman, pleaded to come along, he remained because Lt Jacques decided the 60mm mortars could protect them better from the perimeter lines on

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[324] Letter from Michael John Laderoute, 22 February 1968 to "Dear Mom and family," sent by Tom Laderoute, 16 November 2000.
[325] Conversation with Jeff Culpepper, 28 July 1991.
[326] Information provided by Richard Delotto in letter postmarked 06 July 2004.
[327] Statement of Cpl John N. Tracey in Bronze Star Medal file of SSgt George McClelland.
[328] Statement of 2/Lt Donald Jacques in Bronze Star Medal file of SSgt George McClelland.
[329] Note in card to Earle G. Breeding forwarding a donation to Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.
[330] Letter of Mrs. Ruth Brellenthin, undated [postmarked 02 October 1986].
[331] Michael John Brellenthin, letter to his wife, Ruth, dated 11 October 1967.
[332] Michael John Brellenthin, letter to his wife, Ruth, dated 26 January 1968. "boocoo" is the French word *beaucoup* meaning "much, many" frequently used by Marines in Vietnam; the opposite was "*scoche´or tee-tee*" for little.
[333] Robert Pisor, "The Motown Doc," undated essay.
[334] Comments of HM3 Frank Calzia, HQMC Oral History Tape #2621. Calzia was KIA 05 May 1986.

KSCB. "Our range was 1400 meters and he joked about definitely not going out that far."[335] By now, most Marines, cooped up on the combat base and enduring the daily death of minatory incoming rockets, artillery, and mortars—as well as sniper fire, were more than eager to remove those sources of death, "slay the dragons," and "put a hurt on" that which afflicted them and their buddies! Although Prendergast suggested he carry rocket rounds for the 3.5-inch rocket man (and his friend), LCPL Frederick A. Billingham, (who was short two men), Prendergast's Section Leader, LCPL William M. Woolman, disapproved. "I was the gunner and he wanted me to stay on the guns. My Section Leader was getting ready to rotate home and he sort of had plans for me to be the Section Leader, and didn't want me going out."[336]

LCPL William David Holliman had been wounded 24 February and did not accompany the patrol; a round had split his helmet and creased his skull.[337] PFC Jeffrey E. Culpepper was wounded superficially on 13 February and not medevaced. Instead, he received orders on 17 February to attend Infantry Weapons School on Okinawa and departed Khe Sanh with PFC James Hebron on 23 February.[338]

The mission of the patrol was to locate a NVA 82mm mortar position[339] supposedly 1200 – 1300 meters from the base perimeter and learn whatever they could. Ronald Ridgeway recalls the mission to check for Bangalore torpedoes, to see if the wire had been cut or damaged, to spot any positions, NVA forward observers, and not to make contact unless it was a FO. It was to sweep around the platoon area and not proceed beyond 1,000 meters of the wire, and to remain within sight of the perimeter.[340] By now, the NVA had crept close to the base perimeter as part of their Phase II operation. Phase II (10 February – 31 March 1968) involved the encirclement of KSCB to end re-supply overland and eliminate re-supply by air.[341] In the historical account of the battle of Khe Sanh by the Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense:

> After attacking Lang Vay and being unsuccessful in drawing in enemy reinforcements, the Campaign Headquarters decided to surround Ta Con [i.e., KSCB] in order to forced the enemy to send in reinforcements to lift the siege.. The old plan to surround Ta Con was re-organized into an effort to attack the enemy even harder, from surrounding the enemy expanded into a siege; the units in siege were required to construct strong positions.. forces had to be mobile and prepared to attack enemy counter-attackers or those who would land by air... forcing the enemy to become more and more unsettled as the days went on and forcing them to bring in forces [to lift the siege].[342]

According to the official NVA History of the 304th Division, the 9th Regiment was ordered to encircle KSCB by the Front Headquarters [B5-T8]. "Before carrying out the mission, cadre from Platoon Commanders on up had discussed and agreed upon the tactical guidelines to be: to stress the political factor, bravery and steadfastness in the encirclement, tying down the airfield so it could not be used for re-supply.. The encirclement of a large American base system was being set forth for the first time. Not only did the US troops not have to go to 'search' and 'destroy' our forces, but we would be face to face, attacking a large American base system."[343] Prior to the 9th Regiment's move to encircle KSCB, while the 2nd Battalion was moving into regrouping positions, it was hit by 3 B-52 strikes on the night of 6 February, causing nearly 200 casualties while it was along the Hoc Coc Giang Stream. Despite the casualties, the battalion officers argued that:

> the entire battalion wanted to directly attack the Americans in order to get revenge for their unit."[344] On 10 February, the 9th and 66th Regiments of the 304th Division together with the 95C and 101D Regiments of the 325C Division and local force troops from Huong Hoa District established 13 positions that encircled KSCB.[345] "The enemy didn't dare permit the heavy transport aircraft, like the C-130 to land and re-supply Khe Sanh and become a target for our small arms and artillery fire.. This created a shortage of food, ammunition, and an increasing number of wounded and dead that could not be removed and this caused the morale of the troops to

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[335] Edward Prendergast, "Biography," 8 November 1988.
[336] Conversations with Edward Prendergast, 14 March 1986 and 05 June 1986. The rockets man, LCPL Billingham, was KIA; had Prendergast accompanied the patrol, he too would probably have been KIA.
[337] Conversation with Jeff Culpepper, 13 July 1984.
[338] *Ibid.*
[339] Comments of HM3 Frank Calzia, USMC Oral History Tape #2621.
[340] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, Subj: Returnee Press Conference, Sgt Ronald L. Ridgeway.
[341] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968 [Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign]*, Hanoi: General Directorate for Rear Services, 1988, Chapter on "Military Medical Operations, Highway 9/Khe Sanh Front (B5-T8) from December, 1967 to July, 1968," p. 267. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison.
[342] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968 [The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign]*, Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, pp. 30, 31. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison.
[343] *Su Doan (Ky Su) (Tap II) [304th Division (Chronology) (Volume II)]*, Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, p. 88. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison
[344] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[345] *Ibid.*

suffer.. The American Marine commander at Khe Sanh, LAO-DO [Col Lownds], together with his staff organized continuous counter-attacks in hopes of breaking our encirclement.[346]

One of the 13 positions, Strong Point #3, was the responsibility of the 8th Company, 2nd Battalion, and was divided into three areas. The principle strong point of the position was 600 meters southwest of KSCB's barbed wire perimeter on an unnamed high point opposite Khe Sanh and separated by a dry streambed with banks on each side from where they could clearly see the entire Khe Sanh base area. A secondary strong point 400 meters southwest of the primary strong point was established at Chau Long Chan, and 300 meters southeast of the main strong point was another. "All 3 strong points were like the three legs on a stool and this was one of the most advantageous points of the encirclement. From this group of strong points we dug a communications trench for about 300 meters toward the enemy and at many places it even entered the enemy's barbed wire defenses. From this position 82mm mortars, B40, B41, recoilless rifles, and particularly a 12.7mm heavy machinegun operated by Bui Xuan Chuc created continuous casualties.. on the enemy... The encircling position of the 8th Company, 2nd Battalion, was like a thorn in the enemy's eye. The 8th Company's Strong Point here had 32 weapons of which there were 2 60mm mortars, 3 B41s, and after 10 days of combat 20 men remained and if one adds the fire support detachment, the strength as of the 25th of February, was 39 people."[347]

By its proximity to KSCB, the encircling NVA units avoided devastating artillery and awesome B-52 Arc Light strikes that were kept a safe distance from friendly forces (3 KM in the case of Arc Lights). Within and from this sanctuary, NVA gunners continued to harass friendly aircraft as well as KSCB itself. At 1300H on 21 February, the entire GRAY Sector manned by Co B/1/26 (XD850418) came under medium to heavy mortar and rocket fire, approximately 50 rounds of mortars and 10 of 122mm rockets.[348] Then, late in the morning of 22 February, Co B/1/26 received 20 recoilless rifle rounds, 121 82mm mortar rounds, 15 122mm rockets, and 15 artillery rounds (suspected 130mm), and numerous small arms fire from NVA forces, most of which were in close proximity. The recoilless rifle at XD 856407, the small arms fire from XD 859405; a .50 caliber machinegun at XD 859403; enemy troops massed at XD 856402; a FP at XD 844440; and an enemy mortar site at XD 845409. Suppressive friendly fire was returned with 29 NE and 2 WP mortar rounds, 5 rounds of 106mm recoilless rifle, and 5 rounds of 90mm tank fire.[349]

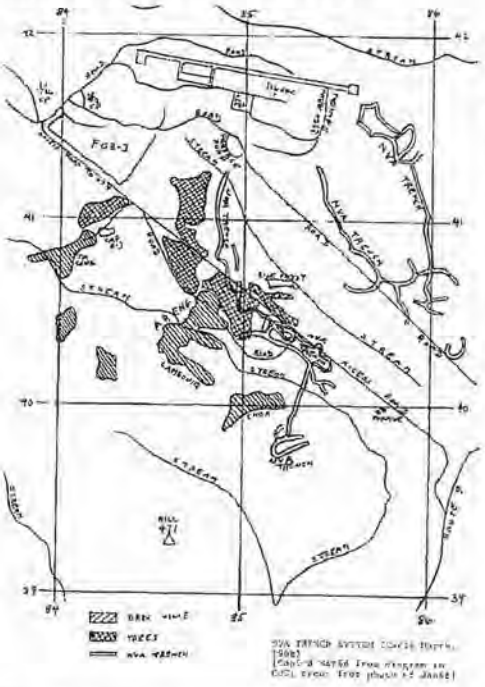

Of greater alarm was the NVA trench network that was reported to be approaching the KSCB perimeter. The 1/26 CP had received a Spot Report from 26th Marines at 1230H, 16 February from the U.S. Army Advisor to the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, Capt Walter A. Gunn, that a platoon-size element of his unit encountered an extensive, well-developed bunker complex in the vicinity of XD851402 capable of supporting a regiment.[350] On 22 February, Capt Gunn reported that an analysis of reports from his LP and OP elements during the prior 2 days indicated that the NVA forces were constructing a defensive trench network between XD858408 and XD855416 which would support a very large unit in a defensive posture.[351] On 23 February, 1/Lt John William Dillon led Second Platoon, B/1/26, and followed the general trace of the patrol of B-3 today (25 February) and found nothing unusual. In one day, the trench system had been constructed, in places only 100-200 meters from the perimeter lines manned by B/1/26 and the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion.[352] Finally, on 24 February, a Visual Reconnaissance report indicated large trenches, 3-ft. wide, 4-ft. deep and approximately 1000 meters long, sighted from XD848407 to XD855400, parallel to the road with 2 adjoining parallel trenches forming a trench complex. The trenches had

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346 *Ibid.*, p. 92.
347 *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.
348 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log, 21 Feb 1968, Ser #37.
349 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log, 22 Feb 1968, Ser #59. The recoilless rifle was at XD856407, the small arms from XD859405, a .50 cal. machinegun at XD859403; enemy troops massed at XD856402; a FO at XD844440, and a mortar site at XD845409. Suppressive friendly fire was returned with 29 HE and 2 WP rounds, 5 rounds of 106mm recoilless rifle, and 5 rounds of 90mm tank.
350 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log, 16 Feb 1968, Ser #13.
351 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log, 22 Feb 1968, Ser #75.
352 Letter of Maj Kenneth W. Pipes, undated, in HQMC, HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.

numerous off-shoots containing bunkers. The report noted the enemy was trenching from present locations towards KSCB.[353]

The reason enemy trenching activity was viewed with such concern was that the 304th NVA Division now at Khe Sanh had employed the same tactic 14 years earlier at Dien Bien Phu. It was the final phase of preparation before an assault, having previously arrived on the battlefield and encircled the garrison, then having constructed the siege works and supporting bases. At Dien Bien Phu, the Viet Minh were able to penetrate the French perimeters by sending waves of troops through the trenches dug in zigzagged patterns to evade a direct line of fire.[354]

To the AOs, the NVA trenches were like a sinister hand reaching, ready to grasp a prey: "From the air, these enemy trenches looked like long, thin arms reaching for the wire. In a few cases, they were over 500 meters in length, all dug in one night."[355]

The Marines of B-3 were unaware of recently-learned intelligence of the trenches constructed in one day. GySgt Patrick E. Duffy (MOS 0239) in the 1/26 CP had gone to the 26th Marines COC the night before to learn current information. "I was told there was nothing out there, just to send them out there to see what was going on. When they got hit and really got chewed up, I ran back up there and said, 'How come? What happened?' And they had aerial photography taken by an AO that showed that position. It was on a Major's desk that night and I didn't get to see him because he was asleep and I didn't get to see it."[356] Being a Sunday, the 1/26 Battalion staff brief was scheduled for 0930H, but the diamond-shaped patrol[357] of B-3 departed 0806[358] and proceeded through the trash pit facing the GRAY Sector of the perimeter.
They immediately noticed a trench built by the NVA that half-encircled the trash pit and went down the face of a small hill, across a river, and up the face of another small hill.

> We proceeded down this trench for approximately 30 meters, then decided to move out of the trench and continue our patrol as planned. We moved down the slight side of this small hill into and across a small creek and across an open slope which led up to a heavy tree line. When we reached this tree line we were in a single column and spread out very well, and we stopped, got down on one knee, and a couple of fire teams were moved up to the front.[359]

PFC Calvin E. Bright, on his first patrol in Viet Nam and running point[360] was "..scared to death!"[361] PFC Clayton Theyerl told Bright, "This is your first patrol and I think you and I ought to switch." Bright recalls, "Probably twenty minutes later he was laying on the ground [dead] and I was still standing. I think if it wasn't for him, I'd be in his position and he'd be in mine right now."[362] By 0831, B3 was at XD849414 and by 0840 at XD847416.[363] Just as the NVA's contact with KSCB was something they could not release hold of, the intriguing trench became something B3 couldn't release. Like being killed by electricity from holding a wire and being unable to release that which kills, imprisoning compulsions or memories of traumatic experiences that will not disappear from the psyche, evil from which one can't let go that enslaves, imprisons, and kills, so also the fascinating evil enticed B3 to proceed.

The NVA's 304th Division's history records

> Early in the morning of 25 February, the enemy sent two companies of Marines and a company of Vietnamese who took advantage of the fog to come along the dry stream bed, directly in front of Strong Point Number 3... At 0850, the lead elements on the left encountered two of our troops guarding the forward area. The enemy opened fire and these two were killed on the spot, and it was at that point that we first discovered the enemy... Platoon Leader

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353 3rd MarDiv COC 241635Z/Feb 1968, Daily VR Rpt, in III MAF COC Journal & File, 24/25Feb68, #289.
354 Capt Moyers S. Shore, II, USMC, *The Battle for Khe Sanh*, HMC, Wash, D.C., 1969, p. 11; *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, 01Mar68.
355 Comments of LtCol W.J. White, HistDiv, HQMC, Khe Sanh Monograph File.
356 Conversation with Patrick E. Duffy, 10 April 1990. Duffy died in 1999.
357 26Mar 251114H/Feb68, SPECAT Exclusive from Col Lownds to MGen Tompkins in III MAF COC SPECAT Exclusives #30. Interview of James B. Wilkinson by John Wright, 14 July 1989 (also refers to it as "the diamond-shaped patrol"). While the patrol has been variously labeled, "The Doomed Patrol," "The Lost Patrol," the "Jacques Patrol," and so on, designation as "Diamond-shaped patrol" apparently was the original designation.
358 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log, 25 February 1968, Ser #7.
359 Statement of HM3 Frank Calzia, cited. Cpl Gilbert Wall's account corresponding in all details with Calzia's adds that the trench was about 2 – 3 feet deep and about a foot wide, just wide enough for an American Marine to stand sideways up to his waist, but through which the NVA would be able to run. [Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 26 August 1988].
360 Conversation with Calvin E. Bright, 01 August 1988.
361 *Ibid.*
362 Calvin E. Bright, comments at Khe Sanh reunion, 13 July 1989, printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Issue #9 (Summer 1989), p. 6.
363 *Ibid.*, Ser #11 and 13.

Nguyen Quoc Thang, upon observing many US troops advancing, motivated the troops and assigned men missions and waited for the enemy to approach closer before opening fire.[364]

As the patrol advanced to the tree line, three North Vietnamese soldiers dressed in camouflaged utilities and helmets were spotted at 0845H running along the road.[365] Lt Jacques moved up along with HM3 Calzia, and the NVA soldiers turned off the road and disappeared after the Marines shot at them. Jacques requested permission to attempt capture of a live prisoner. POWs are always an intelligence prize since NVA soldiers almost always willingly supplied vital information on units present, morale, weapons carried, disposition and location of headquarters and rear supply areas, future planned actions, etc. BRAVO-6, Captain Kenneth Pipes, thinking they were on the road that led from the trash dump, not the parallel road further to the west that was the usual road used by Marine vehicles—Felix Poilane's private plantation road, told them to be extremely careful not to get sucked into an ambush, a tactic as old as warfare itself and one which LtCol Wilkinson had repeatedly cautioned in battalion staff and officer briefings during the previous months, but if they could make a capture, to do so. The B-3 patrol was, however, much further out than they were supposed to be and thought to be by Captain Pipes; Captain Pipes assumed they were near the base defensive perimeter, on the road closest to the KSCB. They were, in fact, about 600 - 700 meters from the KSCB.[366]

For some reason—disorientation and confusion by Lt Jacques (who had complained in his letters home of little sleep), the shrouding fog, negligence of some radio operator, misinterpretation of check points, the desire to capture a live POW, being too aggressive, not being able to restrain further examination of the trench system which fascinated and attracted, the desire to capture a live POW—the patrol was not where they were assumed to be by those in the command bunkers at KSCB.

Although the day had begun with low, drifting ground fog, periodically dispersed and then again shrouding the area, by now I t was clear skies. On the ground some rice was found scattered here and there; someone had recently been eating in this area.

As the patrol began to sweep the treeline area with CPL Steven Wiese's squad walking point, three North Vietnamese Army soldiers dressed in camouflaged utilities and helmets jumped up and ran towards the Marines and then dashed into a treeline after the Marines shot at them. "Jacques told me to take my first team and investigate; I told him he was out of his fricking mind. This is an ambush! This was my second tour in Vietnam, and I'd been there for almost 16 months. It was in an open area, so there's no way in the world that these guys would jump out in the road and run in our direction, then dive off in the treeline, other than they're trying to suck us over to there. I told him I wouldn't take my squad. It was suicide. So he got pissed off and told me I was relieved of command. He took my first team leader and told him to take the squad and check it out. I remember him saying, 'Sir, with all due respect, if Wiese isn't going, I'm not going either.' So at that point, he told us to 'take a knee.' He was pissed. He told me 'to take a knee,' and I was on report."[367]

The Kit Carson Scout accompanying the patrol warned that it was a trap.[368] Calvin Bright remembers "..the word coming down that we had found them [the N VA] and the Kit Carson Scout that was with us begged and pleaded not to go; he said, 'Don't go any further!'"[369] HM3 John A. Cicala, knowing it was an ambush, said, "Are you crazy?"[370] Cautiously, Lt Jacques moved his patrol across the access road [the Poilane road] and stepped into the brush.

From his position, Cpl Wall noticed the Marines in front of him "..were talking fast and loud. They looked confused. Lt Jacques ended the confusion by shouting 'Let's go get them' while his pistol was in the air and his hand was forward in the charge manner. Then he turned and looked at me and we both smiled at the same time. It was like the same thought went through our minds: 'This is what we want.' We started moving after them and the fire began."[371]

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[364] 304th Division history, *op. cit.*, p. 93. The official NVA history's exaggeration of the American strength not only includes one platoon suddenly being 2 companies, but also the one Kit Carson scout suddenly becoming "a company of Vietnamese!" The basis of the NVA estimate of 2 US companies may lie in the dispatching of B1 once the contact began. However, B1 did not enter the battle scene but was dispatched to assist WIAs and removal of KIAs.

[365] 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log, 25 February 1968, Ser #47.

[366] 26Mar 251114H, cited.

[367] Conversation with Steven Wiese, 17 March 2005. The phrase "take a knee" is explained by Wiese: "Like, kneel down, sit down, in other words. Basically he told me to fall in the back of the platoon, and then he would talk to me later for disobeying a direct order."

[368] Comments of HM3 Frank Calzia, USMC Oral History Tape #2621.

[369] Comments of Mr. Calvin E. Bright to the author, 01Aug88.

[370] Conversation with John A. Cicala, 22 March 1987.

[371] Letter from Gilbert Wall, 09 September 1988.

Suddenly, the NVA opened up with heavy automatic weapons and machinegun fire. As soon as the patrol crossed the road and stepped into the brush at XD847408 they were fired upon with heavy automatic weapons and machinegun fire from fortified positions in trenches in two tree-lines, one running north-south, the other east-west, forming a L-shaped ambush at XD849409.[372]

> He [Jacques] took the Platoon, made a 90-degree turn, right into the treeline, and started sweeping into the treeline. All of a sudden there was just a huge roar of gunfire. There's no question the reason I survived and most of the guys in my squad survived is because we were at the very left end of this line and it put us out of the main killing zone.[373]

It was now apparent to the 1/26 battalion COC that the patrol was not where they were supposed to be.

> The platoon was definitely almost 400 meters beyond their checkpoint position. They radioed in that they were at Checkpoint 2, and within a minute and a half .. they said they were taking fire. We left the command bunker to see where, precisely, they were, and they were almost out of sight. They were far beyond where they were supposed to be.[374]

By 0915H, B-3 was in contact with NVA at XD849409, receiving heavy automatic weapons fire; B-3's unit leaders were the first hit.[375] PFC Alexander Tretiakoff, a rifleman, suddenly found himself face to face with a NVA soldier. "I wanted to shoot him, but my rifle wouldn't shoot. So I.. took the magazine out and throwed [*sic*] it away and put another one in. To my right, LCPL [Richard W.] McKenzie was shot. The Lieutenant crawled up to him and took his weapon. The enemy was firing from my right and from my left."[376] Sgt Patrick J. Fitch, a radio operator with B/1/26, upon hearing they were in a fire fight, "..left the command bunker to see where, precisely, they were, and they were almost out of sight. They were far beyond where they were supposed to be."[377]

Most of these Marines were new to Viet Nam. The shock could not have been greater, the loss of friends more devastating. "One minute they're there; the next they were dead."[378] PFC Theyerl, the point man was instantly killed.

Lt Jacques immediately dispatched Cpl Claire's 3rd Squad accompanied by the Platoon Sergeant, SSgt George McClelland, along with one of the machineguns, to move to the right and hook around the rear of the NVA position and remove the flanking action. The maneuver might have succeeded, but Cpl Claire did not hook sufficiently far enough to the west before turning back in on the NVA positions. Instead of hitting the tender flank, the squad walked into more blistering frontal fire.

The NVA history records:

> With strong fire power and experienced troops, the first fire left enemy [American] bodies at the strong point. Light machine-gunner Nguyen Van Lang fired off two series of rounds and eliminated 19 of the enemy. The Americans were tall and big and because they were so slow, many died. However those who remained alive continued the attack. Now they became the target for our mortar fire which fired into the troops and the counter-attack by the two companies of Americans... We only began to fire when the enemy was about 20 meters from our Combat Trench #1. Having killed a number, but with the enemy having a large force and having entered our position, they occupied a portion of the combat trench. They intended to use our trench to continue the attack. But because the Americans were so big and because they carried so much equipment, in a trench of ours that was so narrow, they could not move easily and in some cases were forced out of the trench. In the face of this situation, the company sent Comrade The's squad to move in from the south and the squad of Comrade Chuc to move along the communications trench attacking from the north. Being attacked unexpectedly on their flanks by two squads, the [American] commander [Lt Jacques] and the radio operator were eliminated.[379]

PFC Edward C. Rayburn, next to CPL Claire, was shot in his jaw and watched as several others were hit, including Claire, who grabbed as many men as he could and pulled them into the trench line. Claire continued firing for about an hour from the trench and was again hit a second and a third time, killing him.[380]

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[372] 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log 25 February 1958, Summary.
[373] Conversation with Steven Wiese, 17 March 2005.
[374] Comments of Sgt Patrick J. Fiotch, Tape #2498.
[375] *Ibid.*, Ser #4., Ser #49 and Summary of Period's Action.
[376] Comments of PFC Alexander Tretiakoff, USMC Oral History Tape #2621.
[377] Comments of Sgt P.J. Fitch, USMC Oral History Tape #2498.
[378] Comments of Mr. Jeff Culpepper to the author, 23Jan84.
[379] *Su Doan 304, op. cit.*, p. 94.
[380] Conversation with Richard Claire, 25 June 2004. Rayburn had visited the Claire family just before he committed suicide and reported the details of Claire's last moments.

Initially, the Marines had fire superiority. HM3 Calzia noticed from his position with 2nd Squad that the Corpsman with the 3rd Squad had been wounded and was not on the road. "When I went down to get him, I noticed that the 3rd Squad [Cpl Claire's], from all indications, had been wiped out. There was no one left. He [the Corpsman, Doc John A. Cicala] was the only person left, and he was wounded."[381] Sgt Fitch, radioman with B/1/26, remembers B3 lost one fire team and sent out a squad to envelop to the left which was in turn enveloped, and one of these men were never again seen alive.[382]

HN John A. Cicala, the wounded Corpsman, had accompanied 3rd squad which charged into a mouth of a crescent of bunkers and were immediately cut down by fire from three sides. Doc Cicala treated one dying Marine, LCPL Jerry Dodson.

> I ran over to him and I took care of him. He had caught a round through his left eye. Believe me; I'll never forget it. It came out the side of his head, but he was still conscious. There was nothing I could do. I put a dressing on him and he told me—it totally freeked me out—but the last thing he said to me was, 'Doc, make sure I got my weapon.' I gave him his piece back and I laid a couple of clips by him.[383]

As Cicala dashed to another Marine who cried, "Corpsman," a NVA soldier fired and hit him. The round struck his taped neck chain that included his dog tags, a large St. Christopher medal, a GI can opener, and pushed everything into his windpipe. Another round ripped into his flak jacket, tore through his chest and right lung. He fell backwards and, to his horror, realized he had one of those dreaded sucking chest wounds. The NVA attempted to kill him with a grenade which landed between the Doc's legs and blew away his kneecap, shredded his thighs and calves, and tore into his groin. Despite this, Cicala lived, and covered his sucking chest wound with cellophane torn from a cigarette pack. He began crawling towards the KSCB perimeter.[384]

The Marines were not to be intimidated—frozen, clinging to the earth—but were constantly moving. Cpl Robert E. Matzka, leading the Second Squad, Third Platoon, was seen constantly exposing himself to the enemy fire with no thought for his own safety as shrapnel and heavy machinegun and small arms fire showered the area, while going from man to man to direct fire and encourage them.[385]

[*paragraph omitted*]

LCPL Doss B. Thrasher, PFC Calvin E. Bright, and HM3 Frank V. Calzia were on the left flank, further down the road. "Observing one of his comrades fall mortally wounded while attacking an enemy machinegun emplacement, PFC Calvin Edward Bright ignored intense enemy fire as he crawled to within a few meters of the hostile position to retrieve his fallen comrade and return with him to a covered position."[386] HM3 Frank Vincent Calzia could see the corpsman that had traveled with Third Squad was wounded. As Calzia went down to rescue him—he had been moving from wounded to sounded with complete disregard for his own personal safety, treating the more serious wounded and dragging the less serious to cover, constantly exposing himself to enemy fire–, he saw the gruesome reality: Cpl Claire's entire squad had been annihilated. There was no one left alive—or so it seemed. Actually, although the main assault force were all killed, there were a few scattered individuals in holes and trenches that were, in fact, still alive.[387]

One of those in Claire's squad still alive was Claire's Point Man, Ed Rayburn, the first man in Third Squad to be hit. His jaw was shot off. Cpl Claire placed him in a trench; Rayburn, in a state of physical shock witnessed in minute detail the entire sequence of his entire squad being killed. Writing from a hospital shortly thereafter, he told Capt Pipes: "I saw and heard them all die for three hours."[388]

PFC Thomas A. Detrick was part of the machinegun crew that accompanied 3rd Platoon. The machine gunner had been hit, and Detrick, following him, was also hit while in the process of firing the weapon.

> I was on the verge of blacking out, then I yelled 'machine gunner out of action, replacement up' and crawled into a crater and passed out. When I came to, a Marine [PFC Rayburn] had joined me and he had his lower jaw blown off.

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[381] Comments of Calzia, Tape #2621, cited.
[382] Comments of Fitch, Tape #2498, cited.
[383] Conversation with John Cicala, 22 March 1987.
[384] Pisor, "The Motown Doc," cited. Despite wounds in the groin area, Doc Cicala was able to father a child.
[385] BSM file on Cpl Robet E. Matzka.
[386] BSM rile on PFC Calvin Edward Bright.
[387] BSM (post) file, HM3 Frank Vincent Calzia; BSM file on PFC Calvin Edward Bright; Comments of HM3 Calzia on Tape #2621.
[388] Ltr of PFC E. C. Rayburn to Capt Kenneth Pipes, undated (ca. Mar or Apr 68.

This Marine and I spent the next several hours in agony and hell. We came to realize that either the patrol had been wiped out, or had been pulled back.[389]

PFC Ronald Ridgeway recalled the action in vivid detail, even after years as a Prisoner of War. It has been seared and branded into his soul. As the Marines pursued the 2 NVA, they ran through a three line into a Montagnard village [Clong Sareh] and an adjacent field that had been ploughed by the Montagnards. The field was bare and approximately 50 by 50 meters. They came upon a newly-dug trench—the dirt was fresh—approximately 6 ft. long and 4 ft. deep into which the Corpsman, Lt Jacques, radioman, and SSgt McClelland moved for protection. SSgt McClelland, back inside the tree line, told Cpl Claire to get his squad up and moving. While one squad occupied the trench to provide a base of fire, CPL Claire stood in the middle of the field and directed the squad to move in fire team rushes through the barren field towards a series of interconnecting trenches to their front.[390] When Rayburn didn't move, Claire turned around and said, "Rayburn, what's the matter with you? Get up and move! Are you hit?" Rayburn replied, "No, I'm just laying here for my health."[391] "We began our fire team maneuvers across the field, receiving 2 or 3 rounds here and there. Off to our front we could see a trench running the full length of the field. The trench was approximately .. 50 – 60 meters long curving off to our left, back around the end of the field, against waist-high shrubbery. We couldn't see anyone as we started across. We picked up fire until we had just a full hail of fire coming in on us. We were caught in the open about half way out, and we kept our assaults up.. The first man hit was to my left. The Corpsman came and got him when he started screaming.. Another man was wounded off further to my left."[392] "When we assaulted, Claire was standing up in the middle of this field telling us to move, hollering and ducking bullets. He told us .. to just get up and run, forget maneuvers, that we were to try to get to the trench. So we got up and ran, three of us."[393] The three were PFC Ridgeway, PFC Bruder, and LCpl Geller.[394] In a later personal conversation, Ridgeway noted there were actually two fire teams of three each for a total of six that made it to the trench and that they had started with fire team rushes because it was a plowed-up field.[395]

Once they got into the trench, Ridgeway, Bruder, and Geller moved through the trench under cover of the machinegun fire of the other fire team, until they arrived at another small trench with a small bend. As they advanced, a grenade exploded and they returned to their initial trench, engaging in an exchange of tossing grenades.[396] LCPL Geller stood up, attempting to locate the rest of the squad when a round was fired creasing Geller's forehead and knocking him back into the trench. "Geller rolled back into the trench and said, 'Everybody's dead. Everybody behind us is dead. There's nobody left alive. What are we going to do?' We had been down below ground level for awhile and the NVA had taken it for granted that all of us were dead."[397] Ridgeway and Geller stood up and, spotting four NVA approaching them, Ridgeway fired a burst from his M-16 killing 2 and forcing the other 2 to cover while Geller killed one with his .45 pistol. After Ridgeway and Geller jumped back into the trench, Bruder stood up catching a round that came through the dirt in the side of the trench and penetrated his chest, instantly killing him.[398]

Geller, the Fire Team Leader, told Ridgeway they had to move. "We had to try to get back inside the perimeter because there was nobody left but us. He got out and took off running back across the field. At first I got stuck in the trench because it

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[389] Ltr of PFC Thomas A. Detrick to Capt Kenneth Pipes, undated.

[390] Material on Ridgeway is contained in the following documents in the archives of the U.S. Marine Corps Historical Center archives # 127-77-0049, Box 39: CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244/Apr73, Subj: Returnee Press Conference (Sgt. Ronald L. Ridgeway); CMC Report AO2A-THM-fh, 3461, 17Jul73, Subj: Homecoming Marine Debriefing Report; case of Sergeant Ronald L. Ridgeway, USMC; Asst Chief of Staff, G-2, report AO2A-BFH-bfh, 3461 of 1 May 1973, Subj: Debriefing Summary, case of Sergeant Ronald L. Ridgeway, USMC, with appended FMFTMCMDR FIRST CIT I MAF CAMPEN CA 290300Z/Mar73, Daily Summary 005 for 23 Mar 73, debrief of Sgt Ronald L. Ridgeway; I MAF CAMPEN CA 200300Z/Mar73 to CMC, Subj: Message Summary Homecoming Marine; 1st Counterintelligence Team Report 16-9X-73, Operation Homecoming-Marine detailed report debrief of R. L. Ridgeway, Sgt, USMC; CMC letter AI2A-THM-bfh, 3461, 17 July 1973, Subj: Homecoming Marine Debriefing Report, case of Sergeant Ronald L. Ridgeway, USMC. Ridgeway spent five years as a POW in North Viet Nam and was returned to US control in March, 1973. He was 18 when captured; he returned at age 23. During the first part of Feb68 he had jumped into a trench during a mortar attack and broke his nose. He was sent to DaNang, had his nose fixed, and then returned to Khe Sanh in mid-February.

[391] CMC Report, cited.

[392] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244/Apr73, cited.

[393] CMC report, cited.

[394] FMFTMCMDR FIRST CIT I MAF CAMPEN CA msg, cited.

[395] Conversation with Ronald Ridgeway, 05 July 1991.

[396] CMC report, cited.

[397] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244/Apr73, cited.

[398] 1st CIT Report 16-9X-73, cited.

was so small with my pack on. I pulled loose, got out, and started back out across the field."[399] Geller came upon a black Marine, PFC Willy Ruff, who had a broken arm and was lying on his back. Geller knelt beside Ruff and was hit on the right side of his face. The round took out the whole left side. "He was spitting teeth all over the place. Just as I ducked, another round came from the back and I got hit in the shoulder. I dropped down to the ground and just laid there."[400] Ridgeway checked Geller, finding him alive but in shock. The three (Ridgeway, Ruff, and Geller) decided to wait for a reactionary force and to play dead until dark and then try to make it to safety.[401] "We were surrounded by NVA, so we decided to stay where we were. We laid there talking."[402]

While the squad led b Cpl Claire had moved to the right, Lt Jacques and Cpl Wall moved to the left of a little access road and became pinned down. Cpl Wall moved away from Lt Jacques and managed to reach a tree where he finally became pinned down and could move no further. "We were right in front of their trenches and bunkers. The air was filled with screaming, shouting, open fire, and blood." It was fortunate that Cpl Wall's rifle jammed: "My jammed rifle probably saved my life, because it would jam about every three times [I shot it], and I would get back and [then] they [the NVA] would just chew up the tree."[403] As Cpl Wall took out his map to call in fire missions from the 81s, he realized that trees obstructed his sight of the other Marine squad and he feared calling a mission that was too close. While he could hear the initial registration round exploding, he was unable to see where it struck. He couldn't move, due to intense fire, until another Marine gave him covering fire. As he moved he noticed wounded screaming for help everywhere—as well as NVA: "I couldn't believe how many of them were there. I threw a grenade in their trench and killed 3, but they filled the spot in no time. The more we killed and got killed, the more they came. The screaming and shouting was so loud you couldn't hear your own voice. By this time I was terrified and could see the deep trouble we were in clearly. We just didn't have enough men to match their fire power."[404] For CPL Wall, the battle was riveting madness:

> We were putting some heavy fire out now. I took out my map to call a fire mission in 81s. I wanted to call the mission in front of the squad that got hit first [Cpl Claire's].
>
> The visibility was bad because of the weather but that was not my problem. The trees that were between us and that squad to my right was right by their trenches were the real problem that kept me confused. I didn't know where all the Marines were.
>
> I wanted to call the mission but I was scared of hitting my own people, so I never did call the mission too close or more than one round. I didn't want to get careless.
>
> When my first round landed, I could not see it but I heard it. Between ducking and returning fire I couldn't place exactly where my round hit. I checked the map and the grids was what I wanted so I requested a repeat and was going to go with W.P. but I changed my mind. I couldn't move at this time because I was under too much fire. I was pinned behind the tree. A Marine was telling me to pull back then he opened up fire along with the Marines to my left and this took the fire off me. I moved back and to the right.
>
> Marines were wounded and screaming for help everywhere. My round had landed I guess in front of the Marines but behind the NVA trenches. I couldn't see it. I made a correction to move the 81s in front of us. Then the right to my right was stopped. I looked. All Marines were dead.
>
> I couldn't believe how many of them were there. I threw a grenade in their trench and killed three, but they filled the spot in no time. The more we killed and got killed the more they came.
>
> The screaming and shouting was so loud you couldn't hear your own voice. By that time I was terrified and could see the deep trouble we were in clearly. We just didn't have enough men to match their fire power.
>
> My round landed again and I didn't see it but I heard it very close and I knew it had to be behind the NVA trenches so I decided to move it closer to us.
>
> The Marine to my right got hit. My radioman behind us got out a magazine as I went for the wounded Marine. My radioman was behind a tree to the right and back a few meters. I bandaged the wounded Marine then moved back to the tree up front on the left.
>
> I was pinned there. They were chewing up the tree and I could hear the bullets cracking the tree. I put my rifle around the tree and kept firing blindly. My rifle jammed....

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[399] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, cited.
[400] CMC Report, cited.
[401] FMFTMCMDR FIRST CIT I MAF CAMPEN CA msg, cited; 1st CIT Report 16-9X-73, cited; CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, cited.
[402] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, cited.
[403] Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 26 August 1988; Letter of Gilbert Wall, 09 September 1988.
[404] *Ibid.*

Some Marines moved to my left and took the fire off me. I looked around the tree, and an NVA was looking at me, looked like he froze instantly and I shot him in the face then turned left and noticed the Marine next to me had his ass in the air, his face in the ground. I reached over and pulled him. He was shot in the face. They had blew out the back of his head.

I took his rifle and threw mine away. I was also running out of ammo. A Marine moved up by the mount and asked me for some grenades. I gave him three.[405]

Cpl Wall had nine grenades, and tossed a few to the Marine as the two of them tossed them in the enemy trenches. Three enemy soldiers popped up in one side, then three on the other. The Marines to the right returned fire, enabling Cpl Wall to free himself from the snare. He knew he was too far out, but was confused as to where to call the 81 fire missions. Lt Jacques came back, firing a M-79. Cpl Wall ran up to him:

I was telling him what I wanted: to bring the fire mission in on the bunkers would be too close to us. I wanted to bring it in on the line, and I wanted to tell him that's what I wanted to do. And he told me, 'Pull out.' He said, 'Take the wounded and leave the dead and come out.' Then, while he was running away, he hollered at me, 'Come on, Chief, get the hell out of here!' He said, 'Every man for himself.'

Then we started pulling out. Me and another Marine there stayed and returned fire. And this other Marine tells me he's getting the 'uck out of there. He said, 'Come on, let's go.'

And we ran through the treeline. And they [the NVA] were already running down the hill, and they were shooting, but the bullets weren't coming at us.

I picked up two boxes of M-60 when I started going down the little road. I was the last Marine who came out of the tree line so I could see the Marines running down the hill; some were wounded and others on their own.

As I moved out in the open area and started going down the hill, I heard a Marine laying by a tree, and he was screaming at me, he was hollering at me, 'Marine, Marine, help me! Help me!' So I ran back to get him and these two other Marines came running, and they took him. They gave me his rifle because mine was already jammed up and I had already threw my rifle away and I had taken the dead Marine's rifle. They gave me his rifle, and they started carrying him. And we were the last ones.

And I turned around and I was using both rifles and I was just shooting them both at where they were coming from. Then we ran down to the rice paddy, crossed a really small rice paddy.

Marines in front of us were feeling a little relief because of getting closer to the base, when they ran into another ambush as they entered the treeline. We were under their fire again.

Right in the middle of all banana trees and high grass there was this circular open area which we were trapped in. Bullets were flying all over the place, cracking sound of AK-47 and M-16s were all you could hear, wounded Marines were all you could see, and the familiar odor of blood and fresh grass was all you could smell.

I thought of calling a fire mission, so I laid down on my stomach to get the map out and realized that I had lost it maybe when I was carrying the wounded Marine. Anyway the fire mission was out of the question. The bullets were cutting up the big leaves above my head to pieces. Everyone was laying there dead or wounded, and there was no time to be scared of death.

I was still on the ground when I saw this Marine who was shot in the chest and wounded real bad. He was moaning and obviously in a deep pain. I reached him and put a bandage on his chest but he was bleeding too much, and the bandage didn't do much and I knew there was no much more I could do for him. He was dying.

One look to the other side I saw Lt Jacques shot in the stomach lying on the ground. So I reached over and started putting bandage on his wide open wound. All the blood went through the bandage and ran down my fingers. He was hurt very bad and I couldn't do anything more to stop the bleeding. All this time he was trying to talk to me but I couldn't understand him. That was when a couple of bullets hit me on my flak jacket on the shoulder and knocked me on my ass, and the other one went between my arm and my ribs and left a hole in my sleeve.

I started moving Lt Jacques to a safer place where there was not that many bullets flying in the air. So I moved him behind a small mound of dirt. Uselessly I tried once again to stop the bleeding. But shortly I noticed the change in the color of his face. It was turning white. His head fell back. His eyes rolled back, and he died."[406]

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[405] *Ibid.*

[406] Comments and Ltr from Mr. Gilbert Wall to the author.

Another Native American, John Washa, dragged Jacques back to the KSCB lines. A dramatic colored photo of this is contained in a *Newsweek* issue with numerous photos by John Ellison.[407]

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Meanwhile, 2nd Squad under the leadership of Cpl Robert E. Matzka was on the left flank, further down the road. Cpl Matzka was seen exposing himself to enemy fire with no regard for his own safety as shrapnel and heavy machinegun and small arms fire showered the area, going from man to man to direct fire and encourage them.[408] Observing one of his comrades fall mortally wounded while attacking a NVA machinegun, PFC Calvin E. Bright, ignoring the intense NVA fire, crawled to within a few meters of the hostile position to retrieve his fallen comrade and move him to a covered position.[409]

Although HM3 Calzia (with those in 2nd Squad) moved to the area where 3rd Squad was slaughtered and assumed all were killed, one of those in Claire's squad was still alive. PFC Edward C. Rayburn, the first one in 3rd Squad to be hit, had his jaw shot off. Cpl Claire placed him in a trench from which Rayburn, in a state of physical (but not mental) shock witnessed the entire sequence as he observed his entire squad being killed in minute detail. Writing from a hospital shortly after the action, he told Captain Pipes: "I saw and heard them die for three hours."[410] PFC Thomas A. Detrick was part of the machine-gun crew that accompanied 3rd Squad. When the gunner was hit, Detrick picked up the weapon and was firing when he also was hit. "I was on the verge of blacking out, then I yelled 'machine gunner out of action, replacement up' and crawled into a crater and passed out. When I came to, a Marine [PFC Rayburn] had joined me and he had his lower jaw blown off. This Marine and I spent the next several hours in agony and hell. We came to realize that either the patrol had been wiped out, or had been pulled back."[411]

PFC Ed Rayburn recalled that he and PFC Thomas Detrick passed in and out of consciousness:

> The United States Air Force then proceeded to strafe us with .50 caliber guns, then drop High Explosive bombs, then as a finale, they dropped two napalm bombs. Sir, I cannot describe the fear coursing through us as this happened. But the second bomb seemed to be the cue for us to shag ass. My lungs had been punctured by the AK-47 bullets that hit me, so I could only go 40 – 50 meters before I had to stop and rest. I told my fellow Marine to go on ahead and tell them I couldn't make it and would try to and get to the rice paddies. I eventually made it to the rice paddies but after waiting what seemed to be an extremely long time I decided to try and make it back on my own.
>
> Sir, I dodged two NVA patrols of four to seven men when I left there but finally made it to the south side of the mine field in front of the ARVN's lines.
>
> To my horror I discovered that I could not yell loud enough to be heard. So I found a white parachute flare and waved it for several minutes. Then, seeing no response, I sat down and cried. I was too tired to move to my left around the field and knew that if I moved to my right I would be shot by a trigger happy ARVN. A short while later I heard movement to my left and turned to find several Marines coming to my aid. I would like to thank the lieutenant who led that party but I don't know his name. So I'll just say thanks to the officers of the United States Marine Corps, which he represents to the highest caliber.
>
> I am presently in the 249th General Hospital, Osaki, Japan ... Could you please have somebody write and inform me of the events of that day and how our patrol made out.[412]

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One of the corpsmen with B-3, "Doc" John A. Cicala, Jr., had just finished attending to Dodson. He jumped up and was going to another wounded Marine when an enemy soldier stood up in a trench ten feet away and began firing his AK-47 at Cicala.

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[407] Ellison, Robert, "The Agony of Khe Sanh," Newsweek 71:12 (Mar 18, 1968) 29-36. Ellison had "lived" with the Marines of B/1/26 in their trenches, and after taking numerous photos and flying to Saigon to his boss, was told he could return to the States. However, he wanted to be with his Marines and didn't want to leave Khe Sanh until they did. On a flight returning to Khe Sanh, on 06 March 1968, his plane crashed just outside KSCB (at XD 933404), killing him and all 47 Marines aboard. Interestingly, he was 23 when he died, as was h is father who was killed in World War II, and there were 23 years separating their deaths!

[408] Bronze Star Medal Citation, Cpl Robert E. Matzka.

[409] Bronze Star Medal Citation, PFC Calvin Edward Bright.

[410] Letter of PFC E.C. Rayburn to Captain Kenneth Pipes, undated (*ca.* Mar or Apr 1968). Ed Rayburn visited the Claire family around 1970 and related the battle in detail. He watched Ken Claire shot three times in a hour or so of battle. [Conversation with Richard Claire, 30 January 1987; Letter of Richard Claire printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Vol. I (Fall, 1992), p. 15].

[411] Letter of PFC Thomas A. Detrick to Captain Pipes, undated [*ca.* March or April 1968].

[412] *Ibid.*

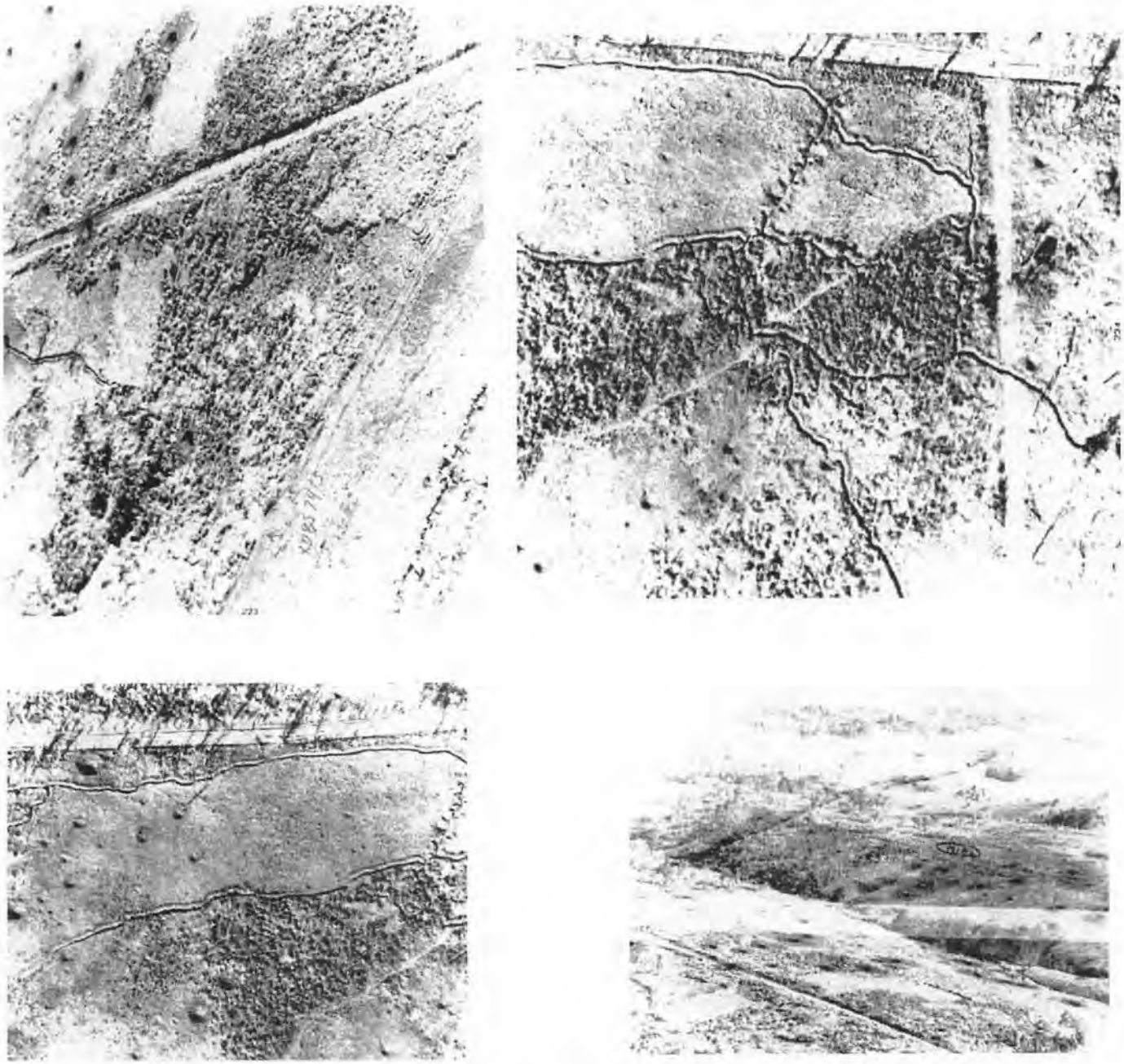

SITE OF JACQUES PATROL (Photos by SFC Herbert Marshall of FOB-3 operations section)

Cicala was hit at the base of his throat. The round struck his dog tags, a large St. Christopher Medal, and a C-rat can-opener—all fastened as Grunts I the field in Viet Nam do, with tape to prevent noise. Everything was pushed into his trachea. A second round struck his flak jacket, shredding its fiberglass plates and entered his right lung.

> When I was wounded, Jacques came running by me. I was just laying there. The grenade had gone off. And I was kinda stunned. And he come by me and he said, 'We got to get out of here.' He said, 'Get out of here the best way you can. We're getting wiped out.'[413]

After taking some cellophane from a cigarette pack and dressing his sucking chest wound, he began to crawl back to the base alone, through friendly artillery which was by now plastering the battle zone, through mines, concertina, and barbed wire, and finally pulled in by Ed Prendergast.[414]

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[413] Comments of Mfr. John Cicala to the author, 22Mar87.

[414] Robert Pisor, "The Motown Doc." Cicala had been thought dead; a message had already been sent to that effect.

About 4 PM down the trench line to my right someone was firing at something moving outside the wire. It looked like a wounded Marine. Wishing it was Fred, I ran out the opening in the wire that 3rd Platoon had gone out that morning. When I reached the body I was in front of the 1st Platoon's machine gun pit, next to the old trash dump. It was the Corpsman from 3rd Platoon I only knew as Motown Doc [John Cicala]. He had a sucking chest wound with cigarette wrapper on it, face and leg wounds. Doc was white as a ghost mumbling deliriously that everyone was dead. One of the replacement grunts had run out behind me. Everyone could see us and they were yelling to get him in the wire. By now I realized that I only had my .45 with me; the other grunt had his rifle. We carried him to a dirt clearing. I thought for sure he was going to die the way we had to handle him. At one point I had him fireman style across my back. The other grunt was protecting our backs. Marines from the trench were yelling we were near a mine field. My new friend and I looked in each other's eyes and knew we weren't going back where we had come from. Till the New York parade [07 May 1985] I had always thought that the Motown Doc had died of those terrible wounds and our handling at Charlie Med.[415]

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Doc Cicala had been with Lt Jacques when he was hit. "When I was wounded, Jacques come running by me. I was just laying there. The grenade had just gone off, and I was stunned. He came by me and said, 'We got to get out of here!' He said, 'Get out of here the best way you can. We're getting wiped out.' I just started crawling, left my rifle and just had my .45 with me. As I was going back, I heard him. I looked over and he stood up for some ungodly reason, and that's when he got it. He got hit, I crawled over to him. He caught it right across his femoral arteries, and he was dead within minutes. There was nothing that could be done. It looked like he got hit with machinegun fire and it caught him just below the groin area. It severed both arteries.[416]

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Beginning at 1005H, KSCB came under heavy rocket, mortar, and artillery fire.[417] Emergency TPQs and artillery counter-battery missions were being fired, but the enemy fire persisted.[418] By 1800H, KSCB had received approximately 350 rounds, well-directed, from several positions around KSCB and aircraft in support received intense small arms, automatic weapons, and anti-aircraft fire from numerous sites circling the base.[419]

The G-2 of III MAF, Col Kenneth J. Houghton, visited KSCB amid this incoming, and at his FMFPAC Debrief three days later stated: "I'm probably the only Colonel in the Marine Corps that got a 100-gun salute on landing. No 21-gun salute for me!.. We always get fired at. They wait until the planes land and then the mortars fire. They are just zeroed in on the runway and they follow you right down the runway. It's a right interesting trip if you want to make it!"[420]

One of the base's ammo dumps was damaged and small groups of NVA were spotted throughout the south and west areas close to the perimeter wires, at XD 847416, XD 854412, and in the vicinity of XD 832416 and XD 827425. The heavy volume of incoming resulted in 9 KIA, 27 WIA, 2 UH-1E destroyed, 1 H-34 shot down (pilot and crew OK), 1 U.S. Army slick destroyed, several CH-46s damaged, and the DASC bunker took a direct hit from a 122mm point-detonating rocket but withstood it, and 2 enemy self-propelled guns were spotted within 100 meters at XD 674475.[421]

When B3 made contact, Capt Kenneth Pipes realized that, for whatever reason, Lt Jacques and his patrol had veered several hundred meters from his assigned patrol route. Capt Pipes requested permission from battalion [1/26] to deploy the First Platoon as a reaction force, an assignment B1 had received the previous night. They were ready. The request was granted. Capt Pipes then requested assistance from the tanks, which was approved, and the tanks provided excellent fire power.

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[415] Edward I. Prendergast, Jr.,"Biography," 08Nov88.
[416] Conversation with John Cicala, 22 March 1987.
[417] III MAF COC 252317Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #466, Para 4.C.
[418] 3dMarDiv COC 250504Z/Feb68, INTRIGUE-6 251100H SITREP, in III MAF COC J&F 25/26Feb68 #93.
[419] 3rd MarDiv COC 260105ZFeb68,Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #467 in III MAF COC Journal and File, #190. By 0900H, 26 Feb, the casualty count from the 350 incoming rounds had caused 3 KIA, 52 WIA (32 evacuated), 2 UH-1E destroyed, 2 CH-46 damaged, and the runway's condition was poor. [III MAF COC 260443Z/Feb68, Daily Report on Khe Sanh for period ending 260900H Feb68, in III MAF COC Journal and File, #55.
[420] Debrief of Col. Kenneth J. Houghton, USMC Oral History Tape #2528.
[421] 3dMarDiv COC 250556Z/Feb68, in III MAF COC J&F 25/26Feb658 #114; 3dMarDiv COC 251300Z/Feb68 in III MAF COC J&F 25/26Feb68 #188; Comments of Maj William J. Sullivan, Tape #2935.

First Platoon, under the leadership of 2/Lt Peter William Weiss[422], [0103881], manning the south-east perimeter near FOB-3, plus one squad from B-2[423] moved out of Gate 42 at 1115H with its 1st and 2nd squads.[424] PFC Donald E. White, Point, moved the patrol out to the access road and moved parallel to it for about 300 meters when it was immediately pinned down by two machineguns approx. 600 meters from Bunker #42 (XD846416) along with mortar fire. LCpl George William Jayne went looking for a radio and found the radioman, the squad leader, and the corpsman killed along with 3 MIA. "We were separated from Lt Weise and the rest of the platoon, and I just felt like we needed to have a radio. I figured he [the radioman] must have been wounded and started to crawl back, and ran into part of Delta Company which came out also. I led them back to where we had been. By the time we got there, there was nobody there. People had started to pull back, and so we started to pull back."[425]

Although t he 2nd Squad of 1st Platoon became pinned down, the Corpsman, Hospitalman Lloyd W. Moore, fearlessly moved through the heavy barrage of fire to provide medical aid to the seriously wounded and saved the lives of at least 3 Marines. As he was moving to a fourth wounded Marine, an incoming mortar round took his life.[426] One of those he rescued, LCpl Johnny F. Bellina, had been next to a buddy who was shot through the forearm—"just like a paper punch"—while Bellina rolled on his right side with his left leg sticking up in the air. A NVA shot him across his leg. "I saw the muzzle flashes keep shooting and I put a couple of magazines in that [position] about 100 yards off. I stopped him. He didn't shoot anymore. I rolled down in a ditch and I was bleeding so bad I thought I was going to pass out. I thought they'd run up and bayonet me or something. I just laid and a corpsman got out to me, gave me 4 or 5 morphine syrettes in the leg. He threw me across his shoulders and carried me back."[427]

Donald F. Santner and Melvin Frazier attacked one of the enemy machinegun positions with grenades. The enemy threw them back at the Marines, and Santner took shrapnel in his legs. Then, an enemy soldier arose from a trench behind him. Frazier told Santner to hit the deck as he blew away the enemy soldier. Then they let a spoon fly from a grenade, tossed it at the enemy, and blew away the machinegun.[428]

> In the ensuing firefight, there wasn't a whole lot we could do. This higher command apparently 'nixed' a heavy relief force due to the fact that they thought we were getting in over our heads, and we had lost radio communications with the Third Platoon.[429]

Sgt Patrick J. Fitch was sent out by Lt Peter Weiss along with three or four other Marines to locate any wounded of Third Platoon.

> We got out beyond what was the dump just south of Khe Sanh. Beyond this dump there is a tank mine field. We went out beyond that to look for some of the wounded. We found three or four men that the corpsman [probably Doc Cicala] had managed to struggle back, a few stragglers, but we could find nothing else, and after an hour and a half or two hours of futile searching around in the bush, we were ordered back in.[430]

Sgt Fitch was surprised by what he <u>did</u> see: the enemy trench about 800 feet long and 4 ½ feet deep. He had been in this area only two days previously; then it wasn't there. The trench had been built in a day. Listening Posts had constantly reported sounds of digging and, while these were not dismissed, they were not regarded as significant.[431] (Two days earlier, on 23 February, Lt John W. Dillon led the Second Platoon of B/1/26 and followed the general trace of this patrol of the 25th, finding nothing unusual. Today, on the 25th, there were numerous trenches, in some places only 100-200 meters from the perimeter lines manned by B/1/26 and the 37th ARVN Ranger Bn.[432]

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[422] Lt Peter Weiss was greatly admired by his men. During this patrol, he personally assaulted a machinegun bunker. On one occasion, Ronnie Seals, a radioman, froze in a bomb crater. A Gook threw a ChiCom grenade into the crater. Dick Cruz, standing beside Seals, saw Lt Weiss pick it up and throw it out. "..like it didn't mean anything. He was crazy; he was a good man." [Comments of Mr. Richard Cruz to the author, 19Aug84].

[423] 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log, 25 February 1968, Ser #47.

[424] *Ibid.*, Ser #51.

[425] Conversation with G. William Jayne, 01 Oct 1988. Jayne was wounded in this action with a piece of shrapnel in his ankle.

[426] CG, 3rd MarDiv 021051Z/Sep68 to CG, FMFPAC, in Bronze Star Medal file (post) of HN Lloyd W. Moore.

[427] Conversation with Johnny Bellina, 08 February 1987.

[428] Comments of Mr. Donald F. Santner to the author, 27May84.

[429] Comments of Sgt Patrick J. Fitch, Tape #2498; PC Kenneth R. Totten, Jr., Lt Jacques' radioman, stated they lost communications for about 15 minutes [Comments of PFC Totten, Tape #2621].

[430] Comments of Sgt Fitch, Tape #2498.

[431] *Ibid.*.

[432] Ltr of Maj K.W. Pipes, undated, HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.

Capt Pipes requested deployment of another line company to break the NVA ambush and blocking positions and to recover the wounded and dead. "The request was denied. I was at first extremely bitter at this decision, however reflections indicated that it was a wise one."[433]

LtCol James B. Wilkinson rapidly thought: Do I send a squad or are we going to send a company? Apparently, Delta Company, 1/26, was ready to go, to relieve and reinforce the two platoons.[434]

> It was the most difficult decision a commander has to make, and the decision I made was: we would not send out the force or go to the aid of those Marines. Now that violates all the Marine principles that I was taught from my first day at Parris Island in 1948. When a Marine gets in trouble, you go out and help him and bring him back. My decision was based on the fact that the casualties had been inflicted rapidly. The Marines went into a killing zone and were either killed or seriously wounded. Then, the history of the Vietnamese War was filled with [instances in which] you get a squad in trouble, you send out a platoon; the platoon gets in trouble, you send out a company; you send out another company. Before long night falls and you've got half a battalion out in a very tenuous position. My mission was to defend Khe Sanh Combat Base. I was thin. That's why I did not send aid to the Bravo Company patrol.[435]

I/Lt William F. Smith, an artillery FO recalls that within the 1/26 there was

> a lot of fighting, a lot of recriminations, a lot of bad things said; everybody was at each other's throats. It was total confusion and it took a long time to get it unscrewed. It was even a question of who went and was actually on the patrol... We couldn't give any close support or direct support because we still didn't know exactly where they were. We didn't really know until we started to get some word from the patrol itself that they had crossed the 'Brown Line,' which was code for the [access] road. There were two roads; which road did they cross? It was totally confused. Then we had to figure out not only which road they crossed, but where were they along the road? We really didn't know. Everything was going real fast. Hours went by in seconds, it seemed. Then the stragglers started to come in. It was wild! It was so wild you had to get out of there... Everybody was at a loss for what to do. Half the people wanted to send out a heavy relief force, but we were under orders not to run any combat patrols out of the base at that time. Everybody wanted blood, and at that time I think we would have very hastily run a battalion minus out there and gotten really in shit.. gone piecemeal to our oblivion.[436]

Sgt Fitch reported a rather furious debate in the command whether or not to dispatch a relief force or to remain. The battalion commander [LtCol James B. Wilkinson] felt that if Delta Company (which was eager to go) to reinforce B-3, they would be lost since there were just too many NVA and they were too well entrenched.[437]

In a SPECAT EXCLUSIVE message from Colonel Lownds to Major General Tompkins, CG, 3rd MarDiv, Colonel Lownds reported, "Due to difficulty in interviewing members of Bravo 3 it is difficult to determine status of 25 MIAs. However, it is surmised a considerable number were hit in the initial ambush. Naturally it is my desire to recover the 25 MIAs but am sure it would take a minimum of two companies and probably a battalion which as you know I cannot afford to use at this time."[438]

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Meanwhile, Maj Dennis J. Kiely of VMF(AW)-235 launched from DaNang on flight WING NECK 517, a flight of two F-8 jet aircraft, at 1230H. The target was troops in trenches at XD 856400.

The TACA, FINGERPRINT TWO THREE, informed Maj Kiely that the weather and ceiling were particularly poor for operations, but that the situation at that time warranted the effort. Ceilings varied from 500 to 300 overcast throughout the target and surrounding areas, and the only avenue of approach was up a small valley which afforded a quick look at the target before releasing their ordnance.

The lead aircraft dropped eight DELTA-ONE-ALFAs (250-pound snake-eye bombs), and Maj Kiely approached the target from the east at 400 to 450 knots and an altitude of approximately 100 feet to drop one of his two DELTA-NINEs (napalm). The second run, during which he planned to drop the other DELTA NINE, was a no-drop due to an obscured target.

He then noticed a rapid loss in fuel, and aborted the remainder of the mission. Upon return to DaNang at 1353H, it was discovered that his aircraft had taken seven hits from heavy automatic weapons and .50 caliber machinegun fire.[439]

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[433] Letter of Maj K.W. Pipes, cited.
[434] Comments of Sgt Patrick J. Fitch, USMC Oral History Tape #2498. Sgt Fitch was a radio operator with B/1/26 at the time.
[435] Interview of James B. Wilkinson by John Wright, 14 July 1989.
[436] Conversation with William Smith, 16 March 1985.
[437] Comments of Sgt Fitch, Tape #2498.
[438] 26Mar 251114Z/Feb68, in III MAF SPECAT EXCLUSIVE file #30.
[439] Comments of Maj Dennis J. Kiely, Tape #2552.

Ironically, it was undoubtedly the enemy fire on his aircraft that saved Ron Ridgeway from certain death!

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The agony of the commanders was not only the decision not to reinforce, but also the decision to bomb the area of contact. "Heavy suppressive fire was placed on the ambush site and suspected NVA mortar positions. These fires, along with our own friendly .50 cal, 106RR and 60mm mortars undoubtedly caused friendly casualties, but did, I feel, enable both platoons to break contact and return. The airborne controllers controlled air-strikes into the area consisting of rockets and napalm."[440] Ordnance expended into the trench system for the period 251300H - 260600H included: 3 rounds of 60mm mortars, 235 rounds of 81mm mortars, 47 rounds of 4.2-in. mortars, 11 rounds of 106mm RR, 25 rounds of 105mm howitzer, 75 rounds of 175mm, 2 rounds of 90mm tank, and in addition there were 35 CAS [Close Air Support] missions flown by the Air Force and 13 TPQ-10 flights expending 210 DELTA-2s (500-lb. bombs) and 8 DELTA-26s (M-117 750-lb bomb with a 1-second delay enabling it to penetrate 16-ft. before detonation).[441]

By noon the battle broke.[442] 1/Lt Thomas F. O'Toole, Jr., flying as an AO for G-2, 3rd Marine Division (Radio call sign SOUTHERN OSCAR) observed and reported the trench extending due north to within 30 meters of the KSCB perimeter. The new trench was an extension of a trench network in the vicinity of XD848404 to XD850405 and represented approx. 700 meters extension in less than 24 hours. The new trench was 2-ft. wide and approx. 4-ft. deep and terminated in a trench approx. 50 meters long running parallel to the KSCB wire. A large trench complex was observed containing 2 parallel extensions of trench network running northwest to within 15 meters of the KSCB wire at XD854417 and containing 50 - 100 NVA soldiers.[443]

O'Toole had other, sadder, things to report: fifteen or twenty Marines near the trench line at XD853409 to XD854409, bodies in helmets and flak jackets. Three of the bodies were lying together as if a machinegun crew [perhaps Ridgeway, Ruff, and Geller]. One man was bandaged on chest and another lying close by, as if a corpsman, giving aid. On the second pass, the AO received fire from nearby and from one figure who stood up from among the bodies, probably a NVA who was searching the bodies and had dropped to the ground to avoid detection. The bodies were in the center of the trench complex, in open area.[444]

O'Toole accompanied a Marine Birddog piloted by John L. Clark of VMO-6, sat right over that platoon when it got wiped out.[445] The next day, 26 February, as he landed he was met by a Colonel from the Division staff and led into the CG's office where a stenographer took down his statement on one of those little court-room machines:

> There were about 15 Marines in the trench trying to make it back and although I couldn't see it, I thought they were taking fire because the rear man was shooting to the rear. I informed the 26th Marines and asked what was going on. They said they had a unit out there that had made contact. They had lost communication with them. I told them I had at least 15 of them about 100 meters outside the wire, and I was worried that the extension [of the trench system], which went parallel to the perimeter, would be a NVA ambush... We went back to the area of the bunker complex and in the middle of a field surrounded on all sides by the trenches.. there appeared to be 15 to 20 Marine bodies. I advised the pilot and we turned around and I did identify them as Marine bodies because of the flak jackets, helmets. Three men lay together as if they had been a machinegun crew. One man was bandaged on the chest while another may lay beside him as if he were a corpsman. I didn't get a good look, so we came around again. This time a figure from among the bodies stood up and fired at us, and with that the entire trench line opened up and we received three hits on the aircraft. The grids would be approximately XD853-854409. The pilot said that they were probably NVA trying to trick us, but I told him at that time that maybe [while] all weren't

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[440] Maj K.W. Pipes letter, undated, cited.

[441] 3rd MarDiv COC 260741Z/Feb68, Spot Rpt #99, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Feb 1968 #232.

[442] III MAF COC 260443Z/Feb68, Daily Report on Khe Sanh for Period ending 260900H Feb 68, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Feb 1968, #55.

[443] 3rd MarDiv COC 250905Z/Feb68, Enemy Trenches at KSCB Perimeter, in III MAF COC Journal and File 25/26 Feb 1968, #150; also filed in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc File, Feb 1968, Encl (54). On 26 February, an IPIR [Initial Photographic Interpretation Report] based on a photo run over the area disclosed: (1) A trench system oriented NE/SW at XD855400, XD850414, XD855405, and XD857404; (2) A trench system with numerous supplies at XD856395, XD854385, XD854393, and XD856383; (3) 4 anti-aircraft/ automatic weapons positions, 2 possibly occupied, at XD846397; (4) 4 occupied anti-aircraft/automatic weapons positions at XD849398, (5) a trench system in circular pattern and 5 bunkers at XD820338 [this is about 1200 meters south of Hill 552]. [FMAW COC 261530Z/Feb68, III MAF PHOTO IPIR MSN NR 1-5-02-68, Sortie 0552, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27Feb68, Ser #245; III MAF COC 290811Z/Feb68, SUPIR #438-68 (same mission), in III MAF COC Journal and File 01/02 March 1968 #13. [SUPIR=Supplementary Photo Interpretation Report].

[444] 3rd MarDiv COC 261551Z/Feb68, AO Debrief, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Feb 1968 #245.

[445] Conversation with Thomas O'Toole, 08 August 1990.

Marines, I was thoroughly convinced that the majority were... Later in the afternoon we were shot out of the area by .50 caliber machine guns from Hill 471 to the south [and] we could not fly over that area any further.. We ran air strikes.. on an area about 600 meters south of where the bodies were, trying to hit the ville at XD851404 and the ville at XD848403 when a yellow smoke came out of the area where we had seen the bodies. We could not go out and check. I called 26th Marines. They said they had no friendlies further than 200 meters from the perimeter. We continued the air strike around that position.[446]

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HM3 Thomas E. Casey had just arrived at Khe Sanh and, along with a few others, ventured outside the perimeter to assist any returning WIA. They came upon PFC Edward C. Rayburn, not far from the perimeter. "He walked to us as we walked to his aid. I was surprised to see the lower jaw was completely gone! I examined him quickly and saw that he was not bleeding and did not appear to be in shock. One of the Marines wanted him to lie down. He didn't want to do that. The Marine said to me, 'Shouldn't he be laying down, Doc?' I said, 'Well he made it all the way back here and it's hard to carry a guy out of here, so if he wants to walk, let him.' I don't recall putting any dressing on him. At that time I had no serum albumin which may have been good to start. He did not want to leave and kept looking back from where he came. I asked him then if he was trying to tell us something and he nodded his head 'yes.' I asked him if there were others still alive out there and he seemed relieved and very much shook his head 'yes.' Once he had communicated that to us he was ready to be helped back to the base, but only then! We found no others that day and darkness was coming. We looked for awhile and returned. That wounded Marine did all he could possibly do for his buddies that day!"[447]

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When B-1 became frozen in place, other Marines from B-1, including LCPL William H. Woolman, LCPL Edward I. Prendergast, CPL Wood N. Lathrop, and one or two others, moved down the trail.[448] Wood Lathrop is standing a few feet off to the side, and "Chief," PFC John P. Washa, is dragging Lt Jacques. Prendergast helped carry the Lieutenant. "I couldn't get a pulse."[449] A civilian photographer, Robert Ellison, had lived with the Marines of B/1/26 in their trenches for several weeks. Wood Lathrop recalls, "He was in the trenches with us every day. When we went out there to rescue the 3rd Platoon, we didn't know how to get through the mine field. He led us through the mine field! I'm serious! He was out there with a camera in one hand and a .45 in the other. He was something else. He was probably the bravest man there as far as I was concerned."[450] Ellison snapped a photo of Marines dragging back the body of Lt Jacques which appeared in a 2-page, full-color spread, in the 18 March 1968 issue of *Newsweek*.

Prendergast continues:

On our left flank the NVA were moving up a trench we had passed on our way out. A machinegun team from our wire was keeping them occupied and waving frantically for us to get behind the wire. The Chief [Washa] thought everyone was dead because they were out in the open when it happened. Capt Pipes came on the radio and ordered us to come in. I knew by the tone of his voice that he was upset and probably following orders from someone higher to pull back. By now air-strikes were hitting the area... About 4 PM down the trench line to my right someone was firing at something moving outside the wire. It looked like a wounded Marine. Wishing it was Fred [Billingham, Prendergast's friend], I ran out the opening in the wire that 3rd Platoon had gone out that morning. When I reached the body I was in front of the 1st Platoon's machine gun pit, next to the old trash dump. It was the Corpsman from 3rd Platoon I only knew as 'Motown Doc' (John Cicala). He had a sucking chest wound

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[446] Statement of 1/Lt Thomas F. O'Toole, Jr., 093732/0302, G-2 (AO) on flight of 25 Feb 1968. Copy furnished by Mr. O'Toole. The low passes over the bodies were at 60, 70 miles per hour, 15 or so feet off the ground. [Conversation with Thomas O'Toole, 08 August 1990].

[447] Letter from Thomas E. Casey, 02 February 1995. Casey died from an abdominal aneurysm 01 March 1998. James Hebron notes that Rayburn had been a very handsome guy, but after this, his girl friend left him. His jaw was fastened to his shoulder and he used his two front teeth to mash French fried potatoes. He became addicted to drugs, and committed suicide in 1979 while in a VA hospital. [Conversation with James Hebron, 26 March 1987.] Tom Winston, who had been badly burned during the Khe Sanh siege on 09 April 1968, spent a year in the U.S. Naval Hospital, Balboa, along with Ed Rayburn. According to Winston, the doctors took a rib out of Rayburn in order to construct a jaw and also made a graft on his chest to look like a chin. The doctors failed, however, to clean the jaw bone where it was shot off, and after gangrene developed, they had to remove it, repeat the procedure, and Rayburn became very depressed. Winston recalls that he was a fantastic person. "He used to blow smoke rings out of his trach!" [Conversations with Thomas Winston, 30 July 1996 and 23 August 1996. Sometime around 1997, Winston died from Huntington's Disease].

[448] Conversation with Wood Lathrop, 12 March 1993; Edward I. Prendergast, "Biography," 8 November 1988.

[449] Prendergast, "Biography," cited.

[450] Conversation with Wood Lathrop, 12 March 1993.

with cigarette wrapper on it, face and leg wounds. Doc was white as a ghost mumbling deliriously that everyone was dead.[451]

PFC Bright repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire to provide covering fire until his platoon maneuvered out of the fire.[452] He then moved towards the combat base, he noticed the ARVN Rangers trying to flag him down. "Hey, don't go that way! Get out of there! Stop!" He later commented, "I didn't realize it at the time until I came up to a barbed wire fence with the triangle-shaped [sign that indicates a mine field], but I was facing it from the wrong side. I just went through a mine field!"[453] He then went back out when he spotted a Marine walking back "like he was in a daze. I hurried up real quick and went back out. As soon as I went out to him, it looked like the back side of him was smoking, like a fire in a trash barrel, and the fire had gone out and all there is, is smoke. When I brought my hand up to touch his shoulder to help him along, part of him and his clothing came off in my hand. I peeked over the side of him and realized he had just been hit with a napalm strike. We had to stand a stretcher up to him, get him to lean on it, then try to get him to grab hold it, then lay him down. I remember him say, 'God, it hurts!' He kept saying this over and over."[454]

GySgt Patrick E. Duffy (S-2 Chief in the 1/26 COC) and 1/Lt William F. Smith both recall that in succeeding days, Capt. Ken Pipes sat up all night on the radio and cried.[455]

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Survivors of B-3 trickled back to the base throughout the afternoon and night through an open area that afforded no cover. Those who returned did so singly—Doc Cicala, Ed Rayburn, Johnny Bellina, Thomas Detrick—and could say little. Ted Golab recalls:

> They didn't know what was going on. They were all shell-shocked. For some of them, it was their first fire-fight. You'd ask them what happened and they'd just say, 'I got knocked out;' 'a grenade went off,' or something like that, and woke up, and 'here I am.' Or, the guy that came back and half hour later said that he was fighting and the next thing you know he was the only one there, and he was just fighting by himself. He ran out of ammunition, and he said he just stayed there, and after that he just came back and after everything was over with he just ran back to the lines when all the firing stopped ... He said it took him forever. He said he was scared. He didn't want to go too quick—run back—because he didn't know if they were still going to be there or what happened.[456]

HM3 Frank Vincent Calzia, on his return, suddenly spotted another unit of North Vietnamese soldiers attempting to envelop his position. Concerned only with the safety of his patients, he unhesitatingly seized a rifle and commenced directing a heavy volume of fire on the advancing force in an attempt to prevent further injury to his already wounded comrades. His heroic and timely actions prevented the enemy soldiers from isolating his position and enabled h is companions to evacuate the wounded.[457]

The Kit Carson Scout returned carrying an AK-47 rifle, saying that an enemy soldier was about to shoot him but the rifle jammed. The Kit Carson Scout killed the NVA soldier and took his AK-47. ("And ever since until I left country, he always had it with him, because he figured this was the rifle that was going to kill him and he wanted to keep it.").[458]

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Initial casualty figures from the Third and First Platoons of B/1/26 today were: 1 KIA, 13 WIA (medevaced), 8 WIA (minor), and 25 MIA.[459]Obviously, these figures were soon readjusted. "After thorough investigation into the results of the contact, the following totals are submitted: 9 FR KIA, 15 WIAE, 10 FR WIANE, 19 MIA. Of the 9 FR KIA, only 1 body was recovered. Add 8 FR KIA, 2 WIAE, 2 FR WIANE, and drop 6 MIA.[460] A "minor" WIA (wounded in action) was not simply someone who received a scratch while entering a bunker during incoming. The following wounds of Marines who were on the 25 February 1968 patrol were designated as "minor" or "non-serious:" shrapnel in back; gunshot—back; gunshot-right shoulder and right hand; shrapnel in back; gunshot-lower arm; gunshot-upper arm. These are the wounded that were not medically evacuated, but continued their duties at khe Sanh.[461]

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[451] Prendergast, "Biography," cited.
[452] BSM file PFC Calvin Edward Bright.
[453] Comments of Mr. Calvin E. Bright to the author, 01Aug88.
[454] Conversation with Calvin E. Bright, 01 August 1988.
[455] Conversation with Patrick E. Duffy, 10 April 1990; Conversation with William Smith, 16 March 1985.
[456] Conversation with Ted Golab, 22 April 1986.
[457] BSM (post) file on HM3 Frank Vincent Calzia.
[458] Comments of Mr. Ted Golab to the author, 22Apr86.
[459] 26MAR 251250Z/Feb68, OPN SCOTLAND SITGREP #467.
[460] 26MAR 041100Z/Mar68, OPN SCOTLAND SITREP #499.
[461] 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log 26Feb68 Ser #1.

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The next day, on 26 February 1968, a photographic reconnaissance run was made on the area with the following IPIR:[462]
XD 855400, XD 850414, XD 855405, XD 857404 – Trench system oriented NE/SW
XD 855395, XD 854385, XD 854393, XD 856383 – Trench system with numerous supplies
XD 846397 – 4 Anti-aircraft/Automatic Weapons positions, 2 possibly occupied
XD 849398 – 4 Anti-aircraft/Automatic Weapons positions, occupied
XD 820 338 – Trench system in circular pattern and five bunkers
XD 805423 – 2 Anti-aircraft/Automatic weapons positions, possibly occupied
XD 813394 – 35 foxholes
XD 814395 – 10 foxholes
XD 778401 – 4 Anti-aircraft/Automatic Weapons positions
XD 797407 – 10 foxholes
XD 803413 – 15 foxholes and 2 Automatic Weapons positions
XD 800413 – 20 foxholes
XD 854423 – 2 mortar positions
XD 779414 – 4 Anti-aircraft/Automatic Weapons positions
XD 783414 – 30 foxholes
XD 792416 – 60 foxholes
XD 808383 – 3 Anti-aircraft/Automatic Weapons positions
XD 814384 – 4 Anti-aircraft/Automatic Weapons positions
XD 826387 – 5 Anti-aircraft/Automatic Weapons positions.

POW

Still alive, Ridgeway, Geller, and Ruff, wounded and surrounded by NVA, moved in and out of consciousness. Ridgeway remembers a birddog aircraft flying over them. "My left arm was broken. Geller's right arm was broken and he was on his back. He reached down to the man that was wounded [Ruff] and pulled off a smoke grenade. We used this to notify the birddog that someone was alive. I held it and he pulled the pin and I threw it to the right, looked up and all I could see was a jet coming straight down. We ducked and the napalm hit back behind the NVA trench lines. We got small fragments of the napalm on us but we were able to knock it off as we laid there.. I came to in the afternoon around 3 or 4 o'clock. Both men were still alive. The man with the broken arm and I talked just to keep each other's morale up because we didn't know what was going to happen. The other man was delirious. All he wanted was a cigarette. He kept moving around. We told him to be still. He was afraid we were going to leave him. We told him that we weren't going to leave him."[463] Geller came up on his knees, and as he did, grenades were thrown, one of which killed him. When the grenades ceased, Ridgeway saw small arms fire from the right front traversing the field from right to left, firing into the bodies. A round hit between Ruff and Ridgeway causing Ridgeway to flinch. Another burst was fired in his direction. A round ricocheted off his helmet, hitting him in the left buttock and Ruff received a round in his leg, breaking the bone. Ridgeway lost consciousness.[464]



RONALD RIDGEWAY

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Ridgeway woke. It was dark. It was around midnight. When I came to,

[462] Initial Photographic Intelligence Report, FMAWCOC 261530Z/Feb68, III MAF PHOTO IPIR MSN NR; 1-5-02-68, Sortie: 0552, in III MAF COC J&F26/27Feb68 #245; III MAF COC 290811Z/Feb68, SUPIR #438-68 (same mission), in III MAF COC J&F 01/02Mar68 #13.
[463] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, cited.
[464] 1st CIT Report 16-9X-73, cited.

artillery was going off during the night sometime. It

> was going off all around us, in front of us, behind us, all around us. The thing that I said was 'Ruff, Ruff, are you still alive?' He said, 'Yeah.' I asked him if he was alright and he said that all he had was a busted arm. I said 'We've got to get out of here because of the fire. We got to get back. We have to get to a trench line to get away from the shrapnel.'
>
> He said, 'Let's go where Stoney was.' Stoney was by a trench. I said, 'Which direction was it?' Now he didn't remember which way he was facing or where he saw Stoney last. I still knew that the deep trench was in front of me. There was a small one behind in the trees. So I said, 'We've to get back to the small one.'"[465]

That would be away from the NVA who were in the large trench, only about fifteen meters from them.

> About that time, another round hit, and Ruff hollered again that he had been hit. He said that his leg was busted. I had already tried to remove my flak jacket and tried to push my pack off, but I could not push up with all my gear on. Well, just as I started to take it off, Ruff got hit.
>
> I said, 'We've got to get up and move.' And he said that his leg was broken. I told him to roll and crawl, and he got pissed a little bit because he said, 'If you can't crawl you can't move." He wasn't going any place. And about that time another round went off and he said that he was hit in the temple and that he was bleeding to death. All I could tell him was 'Put your hand against it and press on it, that we had to stay here and just hope we didn't get hit.[466]

He said he was already holding it, but that it wouldn't stop.

> So we just curled up underneath our flak jackets and put our helmets down and got as close to the ground as we could. That was the last thing I remember.[467]

Abandonment—the feeling almost everyone had at Khe Sanh no matter what year or what circumstance they were at Khe Sanh—was now especially and painfully felt.

> Everyone was always trained to think: We will always come and get you; being Marines, no one will be left on the battlefield. And here we were, a Major and a Lieutenant Colonel and a First Lieutenant basically saying, 'We're going to kill you.' I had a lot of problems with my people over it. We blew the place away.[468]

The MIAs now became a focus of preoccupation in the 1/26 COC. It was "..almost like an insult, about the worst thing that ever happened to the unit ... Regiment was talking about it all the time. It got to be almost like the horrible family secret that you didn't want to talk about. Pipes used sit up on the radio and cry all night."[469]

Regiment was indeed having a problem piecing together the facts. In a personal message to MajGen Tompkins, Col Lownds noted:

> "..Due to difficulty in interviewing members of BRAVO-3, it is difficult to determine status of 25 MIAs. However, it is surmised a considerable number were hit in the initial ambush. Naturally it is my desire to recover the 25 MIAs but am sure it would take a minimum of two companies and probably a battalion which as you know I cannot afford to use at this time ... I have committed another platoon and a Comm Hq to fill the void left by today's casualties [in the GRAY Sector of the perimeter defense]. This leaves me with one platoon in reserve and a reaction force (cooks and bakers etc) approx. 300.[470]

One of the artillery officers present in the 1/26 COC recalls the scene: "Every morning there were briefings and debriefings, interviews. And I think regiment was interviewing the survivors too, again trying to piece together who it was that was out there, cause it was days before anybody knew exactly how many people were there and who they were. And then it went into even more detail when the aerial photographs came in, 'cause they requested aerial photograph after aerial photograph after aerial photograph to pin-point the bodies—exactly who was there, where they were. And that went on for a long, long time ... I remember everybody talking like, 'They haven't taken the weapons. I could never understand why [they talked about weapons that were probably damaged beyond use]. But everyone wanted to have something to talk about."[471]

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[465] Debrief documents on Ridgeway.
[466] *Ibid.*
[467] *Ibid.*
[468] Comments of Mr. Bill Smith to the author, 16Mar85. Smith was one of the artillery officers serving with 1/26.
[469] *Ibid.*
[470] Msg from Col Lownds to MajGen Tompkins, 26MAR 251114Z/Feb68, in III MAF SPECAT EXCLUSI VE file #30.
[471] Conversation with William Smith, 16 March 1985

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During the early morning hours of 26 February, just past midnight, a FOB-3 OP heard enemy activity and possible tracked vehicles at XD 845404, then numerous vehicles at XD 945403. Artillery missions were directed against these noises.[472] At 0409H, 26th Marines set Anti-Mechanized Condition #3 and continued PTQ-10 controlled airstrikes and artillery missions at XD 845404 resulting in numerous secondary and large fires.[473]

Morning came. Ridgeway awoke.

> When I came to in the morning somebody was pulling my arm. The first thing that I thought of was that somebody was there who came out to get us. I just looked up. And my watch had a stretch band and he had led my arm up by the watch. I looked up and it was the NVA. He looked at me. He jumped about ten feet backwards. My watch came off. He looked and looked. At the time I didn't care. I knew they were going to shoot me. There was nothing I could do. I just put my head down and he started hollering and he kicked me. I looked up and there was nothing but dinks around.
>
> He started hollering and about eight or nine more guys came out. They took my pack off. My flak jacket, pulled me up and started pointing—talking Vietnamese. The guy who had been wounded with shrapnel, they kicked on his helmet, making sure he was dead, and they told me, 'Move!'."

Ridgeway then noticed the bodies of Baptiste, Ruff, Geller, a demolitions man, and a black man called "Stoney" and others he could not identify.

> They took me to the nearest trench line. They gave me a dirty rice b all and my canteen of water. They brought American field dressings, and they put them against my wounds and put me in a little hole in the side of the trench line. I don't remember how long I stayed there. Then they took me out and said, 'Move!'
>
> I moved about fifty to seventy-five meters to the camp and CP. It was a 'Yard' village that had been bombed out [probably the Areng, Clong Sareh settlements]. There were NVA trench lines and bunkers. Some of them were approximately fifteen feet under the ground and there were three levels. On the way up, walking down the trench line where it was shallow, I stood up and raised my head. I could see inside the Khe Sanh perimeter. I could see the Americans walking around. The NVA got bent out of shape and told me to 'get back down,' and they put me in a bunker.
>
> They came back about ten minutes later and told me to go with them to the trench. We came to a hole, approximately 35 to 40 feet in diameter that I believed to be the battalion CP. They brought me up to the front of it and there were more NVA officers running around there than I thought they had in the whole military."

Thus began the long and painful ordeal of Ron Ridgeway as he walked through Khe Sanh Village and then to a large rear area of NVA in Laos. He eventually met some of the American POWs from the Lang Vei Army Special Forces camp that had earlier been overrun—Staff Sergeant Thompson, Specialist McMurray, and Sergeant First Class Brande, as well as Specialist Fourth Class Young who was captured on 30 January. The NVA captors were initially kind to Ridgeway:

> When I was first captured in the jungle, I had three men with me as stretcher bearers in case I needed them, and five or six guards. They treated me good. I ate the same things they did and they shared their cigarettes with me. Something hard to get in the jungle are cigarettes. One guard was down to his last three cigarettes and he took one out, looked at me, broke it in half and gave it to me. They gave me some meat and fish. They never treated me bad or anything. There was a lot of NVA moving south and they all said 'Hi' to the Americans.

(Ridgeway's MIA status was changed to KIA subsequent to 15 August 1968 "when remains, later thought to be nine members of the patrol, were recovered from the ambush site. Positive identification of some remains was impossible because of intense bombardment and deterioration from the tactical environment. The remains of what was thought to have been Sergeant Ridgeway were interred in a communal grave at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, Missouri. Sgt Ridgeway's status was changed to POW on 27 January 1973 subsequent to the receipt of the Provisional Revolutionary Government's list of U.S. POWs captured in Southeast Asia).

In late February, 1968, an agent reported passing approximately twelve groups of U.S. and ARVN POWs, each group containing ten to twenty men, including a total of about twenty to thirty Americans and approximately 130 ARVN POWs. The agent, infiltrating South Vietnam with a NVA unit, learned they had been captured at "Lang Cay" Village [probably "Lang Vei"]

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[472] 3dMarDiv COC 252346Z/Feb68, INTRIGUE-6 060400H, III MACOC OPN SCOTLAND Journal File Pt 5 #255.
[473] 3dMarDiv COC 252347Z/Feb68, III MAF OPN SCOTLAND Journal File Pt 5. #256.

near Khe Sanh. The Americans were wearing standard jungle uniforms and boots. Some wore "strange caps" which were olive drab and made of cloth. Two were being carried on stretchers by fellow prisoners.[474]

Due to this live sighting report, discrepancies in the numbers of MIA in the various official reports, the subsequent return of Ronald Ridgeway who was also assumed killed, and the lack of positive identification of the remains, Mrs. Ruth Brellenthin remains [as of 1986] unconvinced that her husband died on 25 February 1968.[475] She still wonders.

Ed Rayburn, remembered as a very handsome 18 year-old before the 25th, had lost his entire lower jaw. Upon return home he visited the family of Ken Claire to set their minds at rest by telling them everything he witnessed, especially that Ken was indeed dead. Doctors attempted to graft his head to his shoulder. He could only eat fluids together with some soft foods which could be mashed against his two remaining front teeth and then swallowed. He experienced terrible emotional readjustment problems. His girl friend left him. He got heavy into drugs and became dependent on them. He committed suicide in a VA Hospital at Kalamazoo, Michigan, in the late 1970s.[476] In 2010 and 2011, Mr. Michael Preston attempted to get Rayburn's name added to the Vietnam Memorial Wall in D.C., arguing that it was the medications provided by the VA that led to his suicide.

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On 8 March, between 0630H – 0815H, a patrol from the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion encountered one Marine body at XD855404. Identification was missing and the patrol was unable to retrieve the remains. It was assumed this was one of the un-recovered KIAs or MIAs from the B-3 patrol.[477] Captain Pierce Durham of FOB-3 led a patrol to the area of contact in early March. Accompanying Durham were three to five Americans who had never before been in combat and an equal number of Bru, a total of about ten. They reached the KIA Marines and suddenly were showered with grenades. "I reported back that the bodies were there. They were in the best condition they could possibly be. The only thing missing were flak jackets, helmets, and the gas masks. We got in contact and had to get out of there. Colonel Lownds wanted me and my 10 men to carry the 25 bodies back!"[478]

On 30 March, when Lt John Kaheny returned to KSCB following an emergency leave, he "ran into Ken Pipes who I think is one of the best Marines I've ever had to serve with and who was woefully distraught over the fact that his Marines had been left to stay outside the wire for 30 days. I found out later from [1/Lt] Walt[on F.] Chapman, who was the [Marine Corps] Commandant's son, who had been in Delta Company [1/26], that the order not to bring back those bodies had come from the White House itself. Walt, as the Commandant's son, was privileged to get in on some briefings back in Washington when he got home in February, and later when I served with him again at MCRD he related that story to me. It was kind of a reflection of the paranoia that was rampant in the White House. My own personal feelings were then that if President Johnson had one-tenth of the courage of the Marines at Khe Sanh, the siege wouldn't have lasted as long as it did."[479]

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Like the Vietnam War in general, certainly the Battle at Khe Sanh specifically, there were just too many questions, too many unresolved and nagging nightmarish images, a certain vaporous vagueness that could never form closure to the soul. It could never be a finished chapter. It remains an unhealing wound. We will never know why Jacques went out as far as her did. We will never know the real fate of some of those who were in that patrol. We will never know the many heroic actions of the brave young men who left no one to chronicle their action. We will never know their last words or thoughts. We will never know the degree of the devastating impact of grief and loss to wives, girl friends, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, children—how many died of heart attacks, succumbed to deep depression, from the scars of battle are always born by the living, and battle never finishes for those who have participated in it.

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[474] HQ 6499th Special Activities Group Rpt #1516-0724-69. The debriefer noted the caps described fit a description of USMC utility covers. Note: these caps could have been Seabee covers which are exactly like the USMC covers except they do not have the black USMC emblem printed on the front. The Seabees had just completed construction of the new Lang Vei camp and undoubtedly left behind uniform items. It is unlikely these were Marines from the 25 February action since the Marines wore helmets; their soft covers would have been back on the combat base. Ronald Ridgeway's debrief states he spent five years in Laos and during this time eventually met Americans captured at Lang Vei, but none are mentioned from the 25 February actions, which, had some still been alive, he undoubtedly would have encountered.

[475] Conversation with Mrs. Ruth Brellenthin, 21Aug86.

[476] Comments of Mr. James Hebron to the author, 25Mar87; Comments of Mr. Jeff Culpepper to the author, 30Jan87; Comments of Mr. Richard Claire to the author, 31Jan87.

[477] 3rd MarDiv COC 080738Z/Feb68, 26th Marines INTRIGUE SITREP for 080900H/Mar68, in III MAF COC Journal and File 08/09 March 1968 #136.

[478] Conversation with Pierce Durham, 13 February 1989.

[479] Taped comments of John M. Kaheny, 30 November 1986.

Some do know; those who were involved can never forget. Jeff Culpepper, having departed 3d Platoon of B/1/26 on 23 February, later wrote home:

> "Dear folks. The whole damn war became too real today. As soon as I got to Phu Bai I found out that my whole squad was killed along with almost my entire platoon ... It happened about two days after I left. I just found out. Every buddy I had is dead ... I just don't know what to say. I should have been right there with them. They were all great guys. We were all tight. The war has taken too many of my friends now. You can't imagine what I'm going through right now. I don't care anymore. I'm going to be the craziest shit here in VN because I have revenge running through my veins. Nothing can stop me now! If I die I'll feel proud to be back with them. I'm sorry mom, but I have suffered 1000 times more than you can imagine. I ran out on those guys and I am going to make it up to them. No one can change my mind ... about 20 guys that meant the world to me. Their parents, wives, and girl friends all have lost more than can be replaced.."[480]

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It is possible that this tragedy may have had a positive side. Jacques' venturing too far might have served the purpose of disclosing a poised, a regimental-size enemy force poised to assault the combat base or 1/9's position at the Rock Quarry, which was then destroyed by supporting arms that rained a fire storm hail of artillery and aerial bombardment. It might have broken up the assault that was to occur the night of 29Feb/01Mar. It is also possible that what Ronald Ridgeway subsequently told his captors made them delay an assault, a delay that decimated them due to friendly supporting arms striking them. "One day they were trying to interrogate me, and I inflated the numbers. I inflated the truth – the number of men on the base, the number of rows of concertina, and everything else. I made it worse than what it was from their side."[481] Ridgeway's words certainly must have had a chilling effect on those officers poised to execute an attack on the Combat Base. Of these minor, totally unexpected, very small details are entire battles determined! (Of course, Ridgeway is the first to dismiss the large impact of his words. When he was told, "Ronald, you may have saved us!" he replied, "O, no, I really don't think so.")[482]

6. THE NORTH VIETNAMESE ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF 25 FEB 1968

A WEAKENED NVA FORCE

Before quoting the North Vietnamese account of the battle of 25 February 1968, it is important to note that the NVA force involved in ambushing the patrol of B-3 had been significantly weakened by a B-52 strike a few weeks earlier. The official NVA history of the 304th Division[483] records:

> Prior to the 9th Regiment's move into encircling positions there was an unexpected development, that being that on the night of the 6th of February, while the 2nd battalion was moving into its regrouping positions, it was hit by three B-52 strikes while it was along the HOC COC GIANG stream. The entire battalion suffered nearly 200 casualties. Immediately following the surprise B-52 strike, Comrade DU NHAN, the Regiment's Deputy Political Officer, Regimental staff and Division staff arrived at the site to resolve its aftermath. They quickly recovered the wounded in order to send them to the medics, buried the dead, organized recovery of the survivors, and strengthened the troops' resolve so they could resolutely carry out the mission of higher command had assigned to them.
>
> The losses in the 2nd Battalion of the 9th Regiment not only led to a loss of a portion of the combat forces, but it also had an impact on the combat resolve of the troops. In light of this situation, there were thoughts by some that the 2nd Battalion should not be employed in the encirclement, a mission that required a determined combat attitude and ability to withstand high casualties and ferocious fighting. However, the military and political

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[480] Ltr of PFC Jeff Culpepper to Mrs. Madalyn Culpepper, 18Mar68.

[481] Comments of Ronald Ridgeway to the author 21Feb89.

[482] *Ibid.*

[483] *Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) Tap II.* [304th Division (Chronology), Volume 2. Published by the People's Army Publishing House (Nha Xuat Ban Quan Nhan Dan], Hanoi, 1990. Published under direction of the Party Current Affairs Committee and the Commander of the 304th Division, Major General Hoan Dan, Lt General Nguyen Trong Hop. Written by Nguyen Huy Toan—Chapters I, II, III, and Conclusions; Pham Quang Dinh—Chapters IV, V, and VI. Trans Sedgwick Tourison. Stubbe, Ray W., *B5-T8 In 48 QXD*, Wauwatosa WI, 2006, p. 79.

commanders of the 2nd Battalion, after reestablishing the morale of the troops proposed to the regimental command staff that the battalion accept the mission of participating in the encirclement. The battalion officers argued that in light of the unit's heavy losses, the fact that a number of cadre... However, the entire battalion wanted to directly attack the Americans in order to get revenge for their unit. The Division and Regimental cadre came down to help the 2nd Battalion build its determination and resolve and sent the battalion into combat. A number of soldiers deserted, or shot themselves so they could be taken to the rear, but now they all sprang forward to participate in the encirclement. The entire command and leadership of the 2nd Battalion was committed to sending the unit into the encirclement because in reality the combat would provide the fastest way to train the unit and through that mechanism the unit would mature.

The weakened 2nd Battalion, 9th Regiment, 304th Division, then moved to the strongpoint of Siege Position 3 just outside the KSCB.[484]

Strong Point 3 was the responsibility of the 8th Company, 2nd Battalion, and was divided into three areas. The principle strong point of the position was 600 meters southwest of the Khe Sanh barbed wire perimeter where our troops had established a fire base on an unnamed high point opposite Khe Sanh and separated by a dry streambed with banks on each side, and from here they could see clearly the entire Khe Sanh base area. 400 meters southwest of the primary strong point was the secondary strong point at CHAU LONG CHANH [Note: XD840408, approx 1,000 meters SW of KSCB] and 300 meters southeast of the main strong point was the secondary strongpoint. All three strong points were like the three legs on a stool and this was one of the most advantageous points of the encirclement. Form this group of strong points we dug a communications trench for about 300 meters toward the enemy and at many places it even entered the enemy's barbed wire defenses. From this position 82mm mortars, B40, B41, recoilless rifles, and particularly a 12.7mm heavy machinegun operated by BUI XUAN CHUC created continuous casualties and ... on the enemy.

There was no shortage of enemy fire into this area including that from B52 aircraft. There were times B52s bombed inside the barbed wire. When we first established this position, this was an area that was covered with light vegetation but now the hillside had been flattened meters into the ground.

The enemy bombs and bullets were mixed with the sand and the dirt but our positions held. In addition to the infantry our indirect fire units were also armed with assault rifles so that when necessary they could fight the same as an infantryman. During one ten-day period of the encirclement, the company's strong point was supported by and closely coordinated with the 122mm rockets and D74 artillery causing the enemy to suffer many casualties and contributing to our control over the airstrip and preventing the enemy from re-supplying the base.

The encircling position of the 8th Company, 2nd Battalion, was like a thorn in the enemy's eye. The 8th Company's Strong Point here had 32 weapons of which there were two 60mm mortars, three B41s, two B-40s, and after ten days of combat 20 men remained and if one adds in the fire support detachment the strength as of the 25th of February, was 39 people.

25 February 1968: 304 DIVISION HISTORY

The official history of the 304th Division continues with an account of the battle of 25 February[485] :

Early in the morning of 25 February, the enemy sent two companies of Marines and a company of Vietnamese who took advantage of the fog to come along the dry stream bed, directly in front of Strong Point Number 3. They were divided into two wings. The first wing of about one company of Americans followed the streambed into the area that was on the right flank of the strong point. The second force, consisting of one American company and a company of Vietnamese was broken down into two elements which took advantage of our communications trench in order to attack along the left flank of the strong point.

At 0850, the lead element on the left encountered two of our troops guarding the forward area. The enemy opened fire and these two were killed on the spot, and it was at that point that we first discovered the enemy. The troops holding the strong point quickly went into their combat positions. Platoon Leader NGUYEN QUOC THANG, upon observing many US troops advancing, motivated the troops and assigned men missions and waited for the enemy to approach closer before opening fire. With strong fire power and experienced troops, the first fire left

[484] Ibid., pp. 80-81.
[485] *Ibid.*

enemy bodies at the strong point. Light machine-gunner NGUYEN VAN LANG fired off two series of rounds and eliminated 19 of the enemy. The Americans were tall and big, and because they were so slow, many died. However those who remained alive continued the attack. Now they became the target for our mortar fire which fired into the troops and the counter-attack by the two companies of Americans and Vietnamese on the left flank was broken. The enemy was forced to withdraw and call in artillery and air-strikes on our positions. On the right flank the enemy took advantage of our efforts on the left flank and advanced forward. We only began to fire when the enemy was about 20 meters from our Combat Trench #1. Having killed a number, but with the enemy having a large force and having entered our position, they occupied a portion of the combat trench. They intended to use our trench to continue the attack. But because the Americans were so big and because they carried so much equipment, in a trench of ours that was so narrow, they could not move easily and in some cases were forced out of the trench. In the face of this situation, the company sent Comrade THE's squad to move in from the south and the squad of Comrade CHUC to move along the communications trench attacking from the north. Being attacked unexpectedly on their flanks by two squads, the commander and the radio operator were eliminated. The enemy force was thrown into confusion to the point that the artillery from Khe Sanh even fired into his own troops. The enemy was driven out of this strong point and withdrew to the rear, leaving 40 dead bodies in the communications trench that they had so recently occupied.

At 1015, the two enemy forces were forced to withdraw and ended their counter-attack. When we inspected the battlefield to recover weapons we counted 125 dead Americans but according to the statements from two Vietnamese who had surrendered from Khe Sanh, on 25 February they had 200 KIA of whom 180 were Americans.

When we went out on the battlefield to recover the weapons, we counted the bodies of 125 dead Americans, but according to the statements of South Vietnamese soldiers who had been at Khe Sanh and surrendered that on the 25th of February, about 200 had been killed and of those 180 were Americans.[486]

We permitted the enemy to recover its battle dead with the condition that each time two people would come out under a white flag, but the enemy ignored it.

At twelve o'clock noon that day, three reconnaissance aircraft were targeting for a large number of tactical jet aircraft who ferociously attacked our positions. After that they refueled and dropped napalm in order to burn up bodies of the dead. [They're referring to the American dead]. Of those there were even some who were only seriously wounded. The anti-aircraft units together with the infantry troops on the battlefield coordinated their operations to shoot down four aircraft and in particular, Comrade TAI, an infantryman, used 25 rounds from his assault rifle to shoot down a jet aircraft. That evening the command group and headquarters staff of the 2nd Battalion had moved its forces into Strong Point in order to motivate the troops and so that they could together rebuild Strong Point Number 3. After the attack the Division arranged for the command cadre from each of the strong points involved in the encirclement to come and observe and get lessons learned from the site. The lesson of the attack against the enemy's counter-attack on the 25th of February by the 8th Company motivated the cadre and soldiers all across the Front. The first time that an American Marine company had been completely wiped out [Note: only the majority of one platoon, B-3 of 1/26] and an enemy counter-attack had been chastised. The Division command quickly awarded battlefield commendations to the 8th Company.

25 FEB 1968: STUDIES OF BATTLES FOUGHT BY VIETNAM'S 2ND CORPS[487]

After we gained control of Khe Sanh village, Huoi San[488] and the Lang Vei strong-point, enemy forces were forced back into a passive, defensive posture. They reacted clumsily and were forced to fall back to try to hold out while waiting for reinforcements to relieve the siege.

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[486] There were 9 KIA, 1 WIAE, 10 WIANE, 19 MIA (one subsequently known as a POW) (Ref: 26Mar 041100Z/Mar68, Operation SCOTLAND SITREP #499.

[487] "Counterattack at No-Name Hill (south of Ta Con) by 8th Company, 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment (25 February 1968): [*Tran Phuc Kich Tai Doi Khong Ten (Nam Ta Con) Cua Dai Doi 8 Tieu Doan 2 Trung Doan Bo Binh 9*), in *Second Corps: Battles During the War of Liberation (1945-1975)*, Internal Distribution Only, *Quan Doan II: Nhung Dan Danh Trong Chien Tranh Giai Phong (1945-1975) (Luu Hanh Noi Bo)*, II Corps Headquarters: People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi, 1994, pp. 52-61 Trans by Merle Pribbenow.

[488] Ban Houei Sane, Laos, CP of BV-33 at XD 625379, overrun by tanks on 25 January 1968.

Assigned to conduct a siege attack on Ta Con[489] in an important sector, 8th Company, 2nd Infantry Battalion used steadfast defensive tactics combined with small-scale counterattacks against the flanks and rear of the enemy's attack formation. The cadre and enlisted men of 8th Company fought stalwartly and courageously. Holding firm control of their fighting positions, they repelled wave after wave of enemy attacks and gained an outstanding victory. This was a small-unit battle that displayed many strengths, achieved a high level of combat efficiency and contributed to the success of our siege of the enemy's Ta Con strong-point in February 1968.

I. General Situation

A. Terrain:

The fortified battle positions held by 8th Company, 2nd Battalion covered three areas. The primary fortified position was located 600 meters southwest of the Ta Con perimeter wire.

The position was located on No-Name Hill, directly opposite Ta Con and separated from the enemy base by a dry streambed. The two sides of the streambed sloped gently, and from this position our troops could clearly observe the entire enemy position at Ta Con. A secondary fortified position was located at Chau Long Chanh,[490] 400 meters southwest of our main position. Secondary Position 2 was located 300 meters to the southeast of our main fortified position. The ground in this area was soft and it was easy to dig all types of fortifications in this area.

Generally speaking the natural terrain was relatively advantageous for us to build solid defensive positions with good fields of vision and that could engage the enemy in many different directions. However, in this type of terrain the enemy was able to exploit his heavy firepower, especially his artillery and his air power, to attack us constantly, thereby causing many difficulties for us.

B. Enemy Situation

After a puppet commando company suffered heavy losses when it tried to push forward out of the position, every day enemy forces in Ta Con sent out anywhere from a platoon to a company (minus) to try to use the terrain to push forward to feel out and locate our forces. When they found that we had pushed our siege lines up right next to their outer perimeter wire on the southern side of the Ta Con strong-point, enemy reconnaissance and observation constantly circled overhead and enemy jet planes and artillery bombarded us savagely to prepare the way for large enemy forces to push out and recapture the area.

The enemy's greatest strength was his superior numbers and his large numbers of modern weapons. Our forces were very close to the enemy position, so the enemy could send out a large force and use the terrain to make surprise attacks on our fortified siege positions.

The enemy's weakness was that when he attacked he was forced to leave his fortifications and he could not fully exploit the power of his long-range artillery guns and B-52 strategic bombers because he did not dare use them so close to his own front lines. The siege mentality and the fear of being surrounded and isolated had caused a serious decline in the fighting spirit of his troops

C. Friendly situation

The 8th Company force defending the position originally had 32 combatants whose armament included two 60mm mortars, three B-41 [RPG-7] rocket launchers, and two B-40 [RPG-2] rocket launchers. After ten days of fighting, however, the company had only 20 able-bodied combatants left. If we also include the battalion's heavy weapons units stationed inside the company's position (an 82mm mortar, two recoilless rifles, and a number of B-40 and B-41 gunners), there were a total of 39 men defending the position. The main fortified position and the two secondary positions formed a tripod, and this was one of our most effective siege attack complexes. From this fortified complex, we dug more than 300 meters of trenches toward the enemy lines, and in one place our trench-line had penetrated the enemy's perimeter wire. From this siege position our heavy weapons and especially the 12.7mm machinegun commanded by Comrade Bui Xuan Chuc constantly inflicted casualties on enemy forces. The enemy used all types weapons to destroy the trees and vegetation, and the enemy fired reduced the height of the sides of the hill by a dozen meters or more, but our position still held firm.

In addition to our infantrymen, the heavy weapons units were also equipped with assault rifles and hand grenades so that when necessary they could fight close quarters battles. During ten days of siege attacks, the company's fighting positions had received close support from higher-level artillery guns and had helped to dominate the enemy airfield and completely cut off the enemy's supply line.

II. Preparation for Battle

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[489] Ta Con refers to Khe Sanh Combat Base.

[490] XD 835409.

A. Higher Authority's Battle Intentions

Based on the actual course of developments on the battlefield, our policy was to resolutely send our siege forces forward against the enemy's Ta Con strong-point in order to totally cut the enemy's supply line. This would force the enemy to send out relief forces, thereby enabling us to fight enemy forces while they were outside of fortified defensive positions. Our forces had to combine siege attacks with constant readiness to kill enemy forces if they pushed out from the enemy position and prepare forces to fight small-scale and medium-scale battles

B. 8th Company's Assigned Mission

The company, reinforced by battalion heavy weapons units and supported by higher-level artillery, was responsible for, together with other friendly units, pushing in close and conducting siege attacks into the enemy's front line along the southern perimeter of the Ta Con base, while at the same time maintaining a firm hold on the No-Name Hill area and blocking and destroying any enemy forces trying to push out from the enemy base.

C. Battle Resolve:

Resolutely maintain a firm hold on the fighting positions, actively push forward into the enemy's defensive strong-point, and if the enemy pushed out from the base annihilate anywhere between two platoons and a company (minus) of enemy troops.

- Deployment of forces:

9th Platoon was deployed on No-Name Hill (the main position) and would coordinate its com bat operations with other friendly units pressing up next to the enemy perimeter wire. Specifically, the platoon was deployed as follows:

–Trench Line 1: two infantry squads, two B-40 rocket launchers, two B-41 rocket launchers, one engineer cell, one reconnaissance cell [Translator's Note: A "cell" was usually three men]

–Two recoilless rifles were deployed on the northwestern side to place direct fire on targets inside the enemy perimeter wire

–Trench Line 2 was held by 3rd Squad plus 82mm and 60mm mortars.

7th Platoon, with three medium machineguns and two B-41 rocket launchers, was deployed at the Chau Long Chanh position. Its mission was to protect the western flank and be prepared to provide combat support to 9th Platoon.

8th Platoon was deployed at Secondary Position 2 (300 meters southeast of the main position).

The Company command post was located 150 meters behind 9th Platoon where it could best direct the employment of heavy weapons (mortars and recoilless rifles)

III. Progress of the Battle, Results, and Significance of the Battle

A. Progress of the Battle:

At dawn on 25 February the enemy sent out two Marine companies and one infantry company. Utilizing the cover provided by the morning fog, they moved down the dry streambed in front of 9th Platoon's position. The enemy was di vided into two wings. The first wing, approximately one company of U.S. Marines, followed the streambed toward the right flank of our position. The second wing, made up of one Marine company and one infantry company divided into two spearheads, moved down our own siege trenches to advance toward the left flank of our position.

At 8:50 in the morning, the lead element of the left wing encountered two of our soldiers assigned to a listening post in front of our lines. They opened fire, killing both of our soldiers. Only then did we realize that enemy troops had entered our fighting position.

Platoon Commander Nguyen Quoc Thang saw a large number of enemy troops slowly and cautiously advancing toward the position. He immediately ordered the soldiers to come out of their bunkers and deploy to their battle stations. Comrade Thang assigned primary firing positions to the B-40 and B-41 gunners while at the same time encouraging the troops and reminding them all to strictly follow orders, wait until the enemy troops were extremely close, and to wait for his order before opening fire.

Seeing no reaction from our forces, the enemy troops hastily rushed forward, intending to seize our position, but the platoon commander immediately gave the order to open fire. With heavy firepower and simultaneous volleys fired by experienced gunners, the initial volleys left enemy bodies sprawled across the ground in front of the position. Light Machinegun Gunner Nguyen Van Long fired two bursts that wiped out 19 enemy soldiers. The enemy recklessly continued to fire and charged forward, but our B-41 rockets and 60mm mortar rounds hit accurately in the middle of their formation, terrifying them. They tried to escape by running off to the north, but they ran into accurate fire from our recoilless rifles.

The frightened enemy troops pulled back and called in artillery barrages directly against the platoon's trench lines.

The enemy's right wing, taking advantage of the fact that our forces were engaged in dealing with his left wing, moved forward silently. When they were only about 20 meters from Trench Line 1, the squad defending this section of the line suddenly opened fire simultaneously. A number of enemy troops were killed, but the rest charged forward into the position and captured a section of our trench line. The enemy troops planned to use the trench sections that they had captured as a springboard to attack our main fortifications. However, the American Marines were big and tall and they were carrying all kinds of things on their backs and around their waists, while our trenches wee deep but very narrow. They jumped in the trenches, but it was difficult for them to turn or move in the trenches. Some of them had to jump back out again, while others got stuck and could not turn or move at all.

Seeing this situation, the company ordered Comrade The's squad to move up from the south and Comrade Chuc's squad to move down the trench line from the north to attack them. When they were h it by surprise attacks on both flanks and when their commander and his radio team were wiped out in the first volley, the enemy's formation fell apart. Enemy artillery guns from inside the base bombarded the area heavily, but because there was no one to adjust the artillery fire, the barrages also hit the area where the enemy troops were regrouping. The enemy was driven out of our fighting positions, and his troops fled, leaving 40 bodies behind in the area of the trench sections that he had captured.

Both enemy wings suffered heavy losses. The enemy troops fled back down to the dry streambed and used individual mortars [M-79s] and medium machineguns to rake our fighting positions. They also called in continuous artillery fire. All of No-Name Hill was covered in a blinding cloud of fire and smoke, but the soldiers of 8th Company steadfastly clung to their positions. The company commander ran back and forth, encouraging the troops, directing them to repair trench sections and firing positions, and reminding the troops to load more magazines and lay out additional hand grenades to be ready to fight the enemy in the event the enemy troops charged our positions again. The return fire of our 82mm and 60mm mortars and our recoilless rifles inflicted many casualties on the enemy force. The company's snipers moved along the trenches, spotting targets to eliminate and confusing and frightening the enemy, so that he could neither advance nor retreat.

The fighting went back and forth until 10:15 A.M., when the enemy was forced to risk making a retreat under the cover of their direct-fire heavy weapons firing from the southern perimeter of the base.

The battle ended. At 11:00 we used a loudspeaker to offer to allow the enemy to come back to recover the bodies, with the condition that, 'Each time only two men may come forward, and they must display a white flag.' However, the enemy did not dare to accept our offer.

At 12:00 noon, three enemy reconnaissance [observation] aircraft spotted for a large number of enemy jet aircraft that savagely bombed our positions and then sprayed fuel and dropped incendiary bombs to incinerate the bodies of their fallen comrades, including a number of their troops who were severely wounded. Our anti-aircraft artillery units and our infantry troops on the southern perimeter of Ta Con fought together, shooting down four enemy aircraft. Comrade Tai, an infantry private, shot down a jet bomber with 25 rounds from his assault rifle when the aircraft made a low dive-bombing run near the area of our fighting position.

B. Results of the Battle

Enemy: according to two deserters from the Ta Con base, on 25 February the enemy lost 200 men killed.

Friendly: six men killed and seven men wounded.

C. Significance

The battle ended in victory. This was the first time we had ever completely annihilated an entire U.S. Marine company, and the enemy's counterattack was a complete failure. This feat of arms performed by 8th Company, 2nd Battalion thrilled the hearts of the cadres and enlisted men throughout the entire front. Our battlefield posture was further reinforced and solidified by this victory, and our plan to conduct a siege attack against Ta Con was able to create an important new advantage. The enemy was surrounded and isolated, and his situation became even more frightening and confused.

After the battle, division headquarters arranged for the officers commanding the other siege positions to come to the scene of the battle to study what had happened and to draw battlefield lessons from the fight.

IV. Strengths, Weaknesses, and Lessons Learned

A. Strengths

1. Cleverly and flexibly massed and dispersed our forces as appropriate to shatter the enemy's attack waves.

2. Maintained close combat coordination between infantry forces, attached heavy weapons units, and high-level artillery units.

3. Battle commanders were flexible, employed small-unit, three-man cell tactics well, and maintained constant, good communications.

4. The soldiers fought bravely, constantly achieved the element of surprise, employed all our different types of weapons expertly, and achieved a high level of combat efficiency

B. Weaknesses:

1. Poor organization of forward listening [warning] posts, failed to detect the enemy's attack.

2. Our organization of forces and battlefield command was slow during the initial stage of the battle. Some mortar and recoilless rifle crews were initially unable to join in the battle immediately because they had not had enough time to set up their weapons. The company did not send the personnel of the two platoons in the rear forward to reinforce our front-line fighters. The company allowed the balance of forces to be heavily weighed against us, thereby creating difficulties and causing additional casualties for 9th Platoon

The enemy attack took the company by surprise, but the unit remained calm, fought a close quarters battle, maneuvered its troops, counterattacked resolutely, and drove the enemy out of its fighting position.

The defensive, siege position held by 8th Company was very close to the enemy's front line, and in places our trenches had reached the enemy's perimeter wire. In the face of powerful pressure exerted by our forces from many different directions, the enemy employed many crafty, insidious tricks, including using the early morning fog as cover to launch an attack. This was a very new enemy tactic. 8th Company was vigilant and had deployed a forward listening post in front of its position, but because the enemy selected the early morning as the time to launch his attack, our field of vision was limited and we were unable to see his preparations and then his troops moving toward our position. This is why, when the enemy unexpectedly opened fire, attacking both flanks of our position, the two soldiers assigned to the forward listening post were both killed in the first minute of the attack.

However, with its fighting spirit and its courage, the company's officers, and most directly 9th Platoon Commander Nguyen Quoc Thang, remained calm and ordered the entire platoon to take their fighting positions. The platoon commander then assigned positions and pointed out targets to the heavy weapons teams while at the same time he encouraged his troops, waited until the enemy was very close, and then gave the order to open fire simultaneously, in a volley. From initially being on the offensive, the enemy quickly found himself in an unfavorable position, trying desperately to respond to our fire while caught on the hillside with no foxholes and no cover or protection from the terrain. Because we waited until the enemy was so close, our first volleys inflicted very heavy losses on the enemy force. The man firing the light machinegun wiped out almost twenty enemy troops with just two bursts. The unit attained a high level of combat efficiency that was achievable only by fighting at close quarters, exploiting the terrain expertly, and using skillful, accurate firing techniques.

The enemy's right-wing force exploited the period while we were fighting off his left wing force to silently advance toward our position. Our troops waited until the right-wing force was only about 20 meters from our position before opening fire, stopping the enemy force in its tracks.

The fighting took only a short period of time, but it was extremely violent and intense. In spite of his heavy losses, the enemy managed to capture a portion of our position. Resolutely determined to prevent the enemy from using our fortifications as a spring board for further attacks, the company commander ordered Comrade The's squad to move forward and Comrade Chuc's squad to attack down from the north. Even though these two counterattack forces were small (only eight to ten men each), their attacks were directed at key points, and they quickly attacked the enemy on both flanks. This terrified the enemy force so much that it had no time to react and was forced to retreat. This was a very resolute way of dealing with the situation and that was suited to our principles for defending a fortified position. If we had been slow in launching our counterattack, the enemy would have been able to use his springboard to expand outward and use his heavy firepower to suppress our forces. If that had happened, it would have been very difficult for us to hold this fighting position.

Author
Senior Captain Nguyen An Bo

Reference Documents

- File No. 218 (Archives of the Ministry of Defense
- File No. 234b, dated 11 September 1968
-History of the 304th Division, Volume II [*Lich Su Doan 304, Tap II*], People's Army Publishing House, 1990.

PART III
THE AFTERMATH

7. THE PATROL OF 30 MARCH 1968
An American Account[491]

The specter, terror, and horror of what happened on 25 February became an *idée fixe* continually gnawing at the souls of those still alive at Khe Sanh, especially within the command and staff of 1/26. Almost immediately, the battalion staff initiated plans for a return to the ambush site to retrieve the MIA.[492] Reports from the Division's AOs and aerial photography as well as patrols from the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, provided daily, up-dated intelligence. Reports indicated that the area was occupied by a reinforced NVA battalion in heavily fortified positions along with a regimental command group which occupied the high ground behind the battlefield area at the Old French Fort position.[493] Supporting arms plans were prepared utilizing pre-planned artillery concentrations on known NVA assembly areas, routes, reserve and supply areas by Capt Mirza Munir Baig, the Regiment's Target Intelligence Officer along with 1/Lt William F. Smith, an artillery officer from A/1/13 assigned as an artillery FO to 1/26[494] in which the commander on the ground would call "apples," "grapes," "peaches," etc., to designate a variety of targets to be struck by a variety of artillery, known as "the fruit basket."[495] Routes of movement through friendly mine fields laid by the engineers and through terrain features were committed to memory.[496] Originally, the plans called for a full battalion assault; this was rejected by the Regiment "because of the potential exposure to the Combat Base by having so many troops outside the perimeter at one time and because of the potential of getting the battalion in a fight that would be difficult from which to extract."[497] Indeed, this would have played into the hands of the NVA's master plan of creating a situation into which American troops would arrive in great numbers so that they could be annihilated,[498] a tactic presciently grasped and assiduously avoided by Col Lownds and his staff which precluded sending relief to the attack on the

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[491] The following is basically verbatim from Stubbe: *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed (2008), pp. 367-275

[492] Pipes, Maj K.W., "Men to Match Their Mountains," *Marine Corps Gazette* 58:4 (April, 1974) 22.

[493] Statement of LtCol Charles E. Davis, III, USMC (Ret), 24 August 2001, Para. 9, Exhibit 14 in Letter from Capt Charles E. Patterson, Subj: Summary of Action in Support of Award Recommendation for Captain Kenneth W. Pipes, for Heroic Action Above and Beyond the Call of Duty in Combat on 30 March 1968 at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam [hereinafter referred to as "Pipes, MOH package."]

[494] *Ibid*., para. 13.

[495] William Smith recalls that Baig would ask Smith, "What will we call this fire plan?" and Bill said, "Grapes," "And what about this?" "Apples." Smith: "We did it for one reason and one reason alone: everybody got a copy, everybody carried it. All they had to do was yell 'Peaches!' and everything was pre-planned, pre-shot, pre-fired. We figured the range of a 82mm mortar, drew a circle ad tried to take I all the possible positions for 82mm mortars. Then we took in all the high ground from which you could observe; we targeted all of that. For the hills, for instance, we would have 'Peaches' up on top of a hill; 'Peaches' would be a combination, let's say, of Battery-6, Fuse VT, which would fling the people off. If you took fire from the hill over there, then 'Peaches' would be an artillery counter-fire which would have in it smoke, white phosphorus, fuse VT, to clean the people off, and would also neutralize all positions on the reverse slope of the hill. So if you just thought you were taking fire, you'd just yell 'Peaches!' and 'Peaches' would take care of anything. Of if you took fire from your front, you yelled 'Apples' and 'Apples would basically take care of everything to 82mm mortar range that we found." [Conversation with William Smith, 16 March 1985]. The term "fruit basket" was used by the artillery FO, PFC Theodore H. Golab. [Conversation with Theodore Golab, 15 August 1985].

[496] Pipes, Maj K.W., "Men to Match Their Mountains, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[497] Statement of LtCol Charles E. Davis, 24 August 2001, in Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*,Para. 11.

[498] Mission of the Highway 9-Khe Sanh Campaign included "..to draw the enemy to Highway 9, the more the better, to pin them down and continue to eliminate them." [*Chien Dien Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh-Route 9 Offensive Campaign*], Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, 1987, p. 14. On 9 January 1968, the B5-T8 Command Headquarters issued the mission to the Khe Sanh section of the battlefield: "304th Infantry Division deployed to the south of Highway 9 would concentrate its forces to attack and seize the Huong Hoa district seat (including Ku Boc if the enemy was present). Be prepared to reinforce land forces from Tan Lam and Ca Lu on north if the enemy landed forces by air in the Huong Hoa area; if the enemy did not reinforce, then eliminate Houi San [*note, Ban Houei Sane, the location of BV-33 in Laos*] and Lang Vay [*Lang Vei*] and move forces to surround and constrict Ta Con [*Khe Sanh Combat Base*] in order to draw in enemy reinforcements. [*Ibid*., p. 21]. Cf also "..to draw out and tie down American and puppet forces, the more the better, and continue to eliminate them" [*Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) (Tap II)* [*304th Division (Chronology) (Vol II)*], Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, p. 58].

Huong Hoa District Seat in Khe Sanh Village and the attack on Lang Vei, as well as the avoidance by Major General Tompkins in resisting sending reinforcements to the besieged Khe Sanh Combat Base, and an avoidance by General Westmoreland for sending in troops to relieve the siege until well after major elements of the North Vietnamese Army had departed the battlefield (sending the relief in April, after the 325C Division had departed in February/March, with some battalions and regiments departing in mid-February).

In what would be the first offensive action out of the Combat Base, approximately 75 – 80% of the NCOs and enlistedmen from the company had been there only a short time[499] and although there was no way to rehearse the plan of attack nor train for it, several days prior to the attack, briefings were given repeatedly to the troops in the trenches.[500] The mission was "to attack a known fortified position with an alternate mission of attempting to establish and if possible recover our comrades who had been ambushed on the 25th of February 1968."[501] The mission was broken into 2 phases. Objective #1 (XD 844411),[502] a NVA trench line would be secured by B-2 (led by 1/Lt John W. Dillon). The second phase would be to seize Objective ALFA (XD 853404),[503] a piece of high ground just beyond the area containing the MIA from the 25 February patrol. Just prior to first light, B/1/26 would stage itself outside the KSCB. Following intensive prep fires, B-2 would jump off, securing Objective #1 with 2 squads up and one back. After it was secured, the remainder of Co "B" would jump off in the assault of Objective ALFA which would be taken with 2 platoons up and one back. After securing Objective ALFA, the Company would establish a defensive perimeter while recovery teams searched for the bodies. After the bodies were recovered, the Company would pull back into KSCB.[504]

By 0001, 30 March 1968, a small unit from FOB-3 had occupied a position near Hill 471 to act as a blocking force.[505] PFC Theodore H. Golab [A/1/13] and his radioman, "Roach," accompanied this group as an artillery FO, along with an Army Captain, three Army Sergeants and a platoon of indigenous soldiers. When PFC Golab and his radioman, upon arrival at the FOB, were issued black pajama uniforms, he questioned being "out of uniform," but they insisted. Golab was amazed at their gear which included small radios in their helmets—small pads, microphone, and ear plug.[506]

Marines from Co. "B," 3rd Recon Bn were brought in to man the defensive positions normally occupied by B/1/26.[507] Reveille for B/1/26 was at 0330, and by 0430, the company had assembled in perimeter trenches. The Marines of B/1/26 were given the order to "fix bayonets!" "I almost shit myself when [Lt] Weiss said 'Fix bayonets!' O gees! One of the things that's stuck in my mind forever was that I told [PFC Ted] Britt, 'Don't worry about nothing; I'll bring your body back.' And he laughed—cause we were all geared. He said, 'No, I'll bring your body back.' I'll always remember that."[508] A platoon of FOB-3 departed the FOB compound at 0537[509] to occupy a pre-designated screening position southeast of the raid objective area.[510] B-2 which departed at 0606 out of the main gate in the vicinity of bunker #42 was followed by the remainder of Co "B" which departed the FOB gate at 0612. All units maneuvered to their pre-planned positions behind their LOD [Line of Departure]. An initial delay because of fog and poor visibility[511] actually aided the force which was able to take advantage of the concealment the fog provided to shroud their movement before it lifted. At 0725, B-2 crossed their LOD followed by Co B (-) (Rein) crossing their LOD at 0734. At 0738, the lead elements of B-2 reached Objective #1 (XD 844411) followed by the remainder of B-2.[512] B-2 (1/Lt John William Dillon) established an intermediate rally point for the rest of the company , set up

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[499] Statement of Capt Kenneth W. Pipes, 21 May 1968, in HQMC Oral History Tape #2810.
[500] Statement of LtCol Charles E. Davis in Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*, Paragraphs. 16 & 17.
[501] Statement of Capt Kenneth W. Pipes, 21 May 1968, in HQMC Oral History Tape #2810.
[502] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log 30 March 1968, Ser #20.
[503] *Ibid.*
[504] Statement of 1/Lt John William Dillon, HQMC Oral History Tape #3716.
[505] Statement of PFC Theodore H. Golab, 1 August 2001, in Pipes, MOH package.
[506] Conversations with Theodore Golab, 15 August 1985 and 22 April 1986.
[507] Statement of LtCol Frederick J. McEwan, 30 August 2001, in Pipes, MOH package. The Marines brought with them .50 caliber machineguns they had taken from disabled helicopters—they could hardly fire them from their position in the center of the Combat Base!—and fired them over the heads of the Marines of B/1/26. About 6-8 guns were fired until the rounds no longer fired straight. Firing continuously instead of in bursts, they changed gunners when their thumbs got tired. [Conversation with David Doehrman, 4 February 1984].
[508] Conversation with Michael McCauley, 9 February 1997.
[509] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log 30, March 1968, Ser #20.
[510] Pipes, "Men to Match Their Mountains," *op. cit.*, p. 22.
[511] The fog also temporarily obscured the battlefield from the AO and the 1/26 "6" and "3" halted the advance of the patrol behind the LOD temporarily. [Pipes, "Men to Match Their Mountains," *op. cit.*, p. 22].
[512] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, March 1968, Ser #20.

a medevac station, and skillfully deployed his Marines to provide security for the field medical aid station.[513] Heavy H&I fires which were pounding the entire area did not eliminate the element of surprise since these fires had struck the same area regularly in previous weeks.[514] At 0750 the FOB-3 platoon was in position.

Facing the Marines, the North Vietnamese 2nd Battalion, 9th Regiment, 304th Division, was poised on what they referred to as their "Battlefield #3." The Company Commander of the 6th Company in command of the battlefield was killed at the outset.[515] The NVA position was approximately 600 to 1,000 meters across the front and about 500 to 1,000 meters deep[516] in the vicinity of XD 845429 to XD 853404.[517]

After B-2 (1/Lt Dillon) secured Objective #1, the Company paused momentarily (at 0751)[518] to link-up and reorganize and then jumped off from Objective #1 toward their final objective, moving out on a line from XD 844411 to XD 843406 with B-1 (led by 2/Lt Peter William Weiss) in a platoon wedge/squad wedge and B-3 in a platoon "V".[519] After moving 25 meters beyond Objective #1, at 0800, B-3 came under extremely heavy RPG, 82mm, ad 60mm mortar fire, heavy automatic weapons and small arms, and ChiCom grenades from mutually supporting and very well-built NVA bunkers. The area was "fortified a bit more than any of us had initially anticipated."[520] The momentum of attack, however, never slackened as B-1 and B-3 assaulted fortified positions.

PFC Ted D. Britt, a fire team leader with the 3rd Squad, B-1,[521] maneuvered his fire team by individual rushes until his squad secured the outermost defensive position. While consolidating in the NVA trench line, heavy NVA mortar and automatic weapons fire pinned down the squad. PFC Britt immediately left the cover of the trench and assaulted the enemy position from which the largest volume of automatic fire was coming, destroying the position, the weapon, and killing four NVA soldiers. He then moved to attack a NVA spider hole position and was fatally wounded in the process, but not before he had accomplished his mission. "He was greatly responsible for reducing the number of friendly casualties."[522]

HM3 Thomas E. Casey, responding to the call "Corpsman Up!" continuously moved from casualty to casualty despite mortars and heavy automatic weapons fire around him.[523] As he jumped into a crater to render medical aid, 3 mortars exploded in and around the crater, killing 2 Marines. Disregarding the danger around him, Casey continued to treat all the wounded in the crater.[524]

In an official, taped interview conducted shortly after the action, Pipes was to say, "I believe all of the young Marines that we had in the company had been waiting several weeks for this opportunity... Once the kids started, there was nothing, it seemed, that could stop them. From the point of initial contact until we reached our final objective, some 500 to 600 meters, perhaps more, they covered the ground in 20 to 25 minutes. A later body count indicated confirmed approximately 115 North Vietnamese Army were actually killed.. by kids using small arms fire, grenades, bayonets, M79s, all weapons organic to an infantry company."[525] In addition, a section of flame throwers participated in the attack. Capt Pipes felt these were a complete surprise to the NVA. "When we first used them there was a noticeable slack in their fire. I think the shock effect at that particular time of the NVA seeing the flame throwers, knowing that we did have them with us.. put a bit of fear in them and enabled us to continue the initial momentum of the attack clear through to the final objective."[526] LCPL Thomas N. Quigley, carrying the Company radio in the CP group, recalls being next to one of the Marines with a flame thrower and asking, "Man, how long will one of those tanks last?" "And it really amazed me because there were only so many seconds and the whole thing's empty.. And I said, 'That don't seem like very much,' and he said, 'Well, if you're at the other end, it's an eternity!'"[527]

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513 Statement of 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss in Bronze Star Medal file on 1/Lt John William Dillon.
514 Pipes, "Men to Match Their Mountains," *op. cit.*, p. 22.
515 *Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) (Tap II)* [*304th Division (Chronology) (Vol II)*, Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, p. 100.
516 Statement of LtCol Charles E. Davis in Pipes, 21 August 2001, MOH package, *op. cit.*, Paragraph 20.
517 3rd MarDiv COC 302100Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #603, Para. 3.A.
518 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log 30 March 1968, Ser #20.
519 *Ibid.*
520 Comments of Capt K. W. Pipes, HQMC Oral History Tape #2810.
521 Statement of LCPL Michael H. McCauley in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of PFC Ted D. Britt.
522 Statement of CPL Rickey M. Brunk in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of PFC Ted D. Britt.
523 Statement of Cpl Kenneth J. Bragalone in Bronze Star Medal file of HM3 Thomas E. Casey. Casey died of an aneurysm 01 March 1998.
524 Statement of PFC James A. Smith in Bronze Star Medal file of HM3 Thomas E. Casey.
525 Comments of Capt K. W. Pipes, HQMC Oral History Tape #2810.
526 *Ibid.*
527 Conversation with Thomas Quigley, 11 May 1986. [The Portable Flame Thrower, M2A1, has a burning time of 6 – 12 seconds. Weight empty: 43 lbs.; weight full: 68-72 pounds.]

PFC Golab, from his vantage point, watched the entire action: "Everything looked like it should be. They all had fixed bayonets. They got flak jackets on. They got helmets on. They looked good. They had all their formations down pat, and they were moving out. You could see the NVA walking in their trenches, just nonchalantly. One guy had a cup in his hand. I called artillery on Khe Sanh ville because I knew something was going to come out of there, to cut off that road. And then there was this mortar round. It lands and doesn't go off. It must of landed 6 yards from me, went into the mud, and its fins are sticking out."[528]

The assaulting elements reached the limit of advance at 0815 and consolidated their position as planned. As the artillery was pounding the NVA positions, suddenly the command, 'Cease Fire!' 'Cease Fire!' came over the Conduct of Fire net, and the artillery stopped. "This was not according to plan! The battalion forward CP was trying to find out who gave this order. The order apparently had come from the NVA using imitative deception. Before the artillery barrage could be turned back on, the NVA lobbed several mortar rounds into the middle of Ken's [Capt Pipes'] command group."[529] At the time, the Company's senior radioman, LCPL Thomas N. Quigley, was on the radio. "I had my left hand on my right forehead and my right hand on my receiver, bent over to talk to one of the platoons, and the Lieutenant said, 'Doc's hit.' And he started getting up. As he started getting up, I turned back to look at him, Lt. Norman, and that's when the rounds hit and I saw him get it."[530] It was now 0830, when the company CP group, moving in trace of the two assault platoons, received an estimated at 20 rounds of 82mm.[531] The mortar barrage was deadly. 1/Lt Henry Norman, the Artillery FO, was killed, Norman's and Pipes' radio operators were wounded. Pipes was momentarily knocked unconscious, and the ensuing radio silence caused the battalion forward CP to dispatch 1/Lt William Smith, the Battalion Artillery Liaison Officer, and his radio operator, LCPL John J. O'Donnell, to attempt a link and find out what happened to Pipes' command group and resume direction of protective and withdrawal artillery fires.[532]

The Corpsman hit, Richard Blanchfield, had been a Marine with 3/3 (1955-1963) after which he served with the Thomas A. Dooley Foundation as a medical corpsman to the Hmong and Lao (1963-1965) and then became a US Navy Corpsman in 1967. Initially assigned to the medical facilities at Phu Bai, he was asked by a One Star (Commodore) Navy Doctor to volunteer to serve at Khe Sanh. The siege battle was already well under way when he arrived.[533] Accompanying B-1 (2/Lt Peter William Weiss) Doc Blanchfield received a large piece of shrapnel in his left shoulder and was placed on a pile of dead bodies; no further medical aid was deemed necessary—he was near death. Blanchfield had distributed 2 morphine syrettes to each Marine and said, "If I can't get to you, only use this morphine for what you need." Now, he jabbed one into his own leg. It didn't work. He jabbed another one directly into his chest near his heart. Chaplain Charles ("Chick") Kelly came by and started giving Last Rites. Blanchfield looked up at him and said, "Kelly, I don't want Last Rites, get me some blood!" "Sure enough he came back; he had the blood. But he didn't tell me he took a bullet right through his leg."[534] A helicopter landed. The pilot emerged, picked up the naked, blood-soaked Blanchfield in his arms, put him inside the helicopter, and flew off to a medical aid station from where he eventually was sent to the USS REPOSE.[535] Michael E. O'Hara remembers seeing Doc Blanchfield: "When I found him, he already had two needles in his leg and he was really tore-up. We stopped and put a bandage on him, and then went on. He was so tore-up, and had so much morphine in him, he was laughing! He was phased-out!"[536]

Meanwhile, PFC Golab, after the mortar incident at his location, had moved to and linked up with Pipes' command group. "At that time I first saw Captain Pipes, who was helmetless and his face white from loss of blood. Captain Pipes was standing alone, propped up against a tree at the edge of a bomb crater. He had apparently lost his helmet (I later learned that a round had knocked the helmet off of his head) and his face was white from loss of blood. I saw that he was severely wounded: his left arm and chest were wrapped in blood-soaked battle dressings. Captain Pipes held a .45 caliber semiautomatic pistol in

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[528] Conversation with Theodore Golab, 22 April 1986.
[529] Statement of LtCol Charles E. Davis in Pipes, 24 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*, Paragraphs 24 & 25; Conversation with Charles E. Davis, III, 17 February 1990.
[530] Conversation with Thomas N. Quigley, 11 May 1986.
[531] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 30 March 1968, Ser #20.
[532] *Ibid.*, para. 26; Statement of 1/Lt William F. Smith, III, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*
[533] Conversations with Richard Blanchfield 15 July 1990 and 23 July 1990; Vita in letter from Richard Blanchfield of April, 1990; Comments by Richard Blanchfield at Khe Sanh reunion, 21 July 1990, Nashville, TN, printed in Khe Sanh Veterans *Newsletter*, Issue #12 (November 1990) 12.
[534] Blanchfield, comments at reunion, *op. cit.*
[535] Conversation with Richard Blanchfield, 23 July 1990.
[536] Conversations with Michael E. O'Hara, 23 March 1993 and 28 March 1993; O'Hara, "The Wind Beneath My Wings," n.d. [mailed 27 April 1995], p. 25.

his right hand and was shooting into enemy bunkers at a distance of 4 – 5 meters."[537] According to the NVA's official history of the 304th Division, they assumed Pipes had been killed: "A newly-assigned replacement, Nguyen Huu Dong, shot and killed the battalion commander and eliminated the enemy's signal section."[538] Captain Pipes took grievous wounds to his chest and shoulder. Lt Norman's radio operator was hit in the face. Thomas Quigley saw it all close-hand: "Lt Norman, he was just—it was like someone took a machete and split him right down the middle. At the time I was on the radio. I had my left hand on my right forehead and my right hand on my receiver, bent over to talk to one of the platoons. The Lieutenant said, 'Doc's hit," and he started getting up. As he started getting up, I turned back to look at him, Lt. Norman, and that's when the rounds hit, and I saw him get it. He didn't know what hit him. It picked him up and slammed him right back inside the trench line. It took the whole side of him off. I screamed... It scared me, because Lt. Norman was one of the best officers besides Capt Pipes and Ben Long that I ever had the privilege of serving with, just a super straight guy, and when I saw him, I screamed. My hand busted out blood. The shrapnel had broke my radio."[539]

1/Lt John W. Dillon now led some of the Marines from B-2, to Captain Pipes' position to carry the dead and wounded to the field medical station while B-1 and B-3 were engaged with the enemy. 1/Lt Benjamin L. Long, the Company Executive Officer, along with 1/Lt Dillon helped the wounded Capt Pipes to reestablish communication and regroup the remaining Marines in the CP group.[540] When 1/Lt Long reached Capt Pipes, he observed that Capt Pipes had immediately put battle dressings on one of his radio operators who was profusely bleeding and quickly evacuated the four radio operators to the field aid station as he rapidly regained communications with his maneuver elements, the battalion, the artillery net, and air support.[541] LCPL Michael E. O'Hara saw the CP group being hit and was one of the few Marines from B-2 to move forward and reach the company CP. He found Captain Pipes "had received a devastating wound from shrapnel in his left armpit which was bleeding profusely. The Battalion Surgeon, LT Harvey J. Demaagd, tried to treat Captain Pipes for his wounds,[542] but Captain Pipes refused any type of pain killer and refused medical evacuation from the field. As Dr. Demaagd was trying to treat him, Captain Pipes gathered up the Company radio, the Battalion radio, and the [artillery] forward observer's radio on his right arm and began to call in artillery fire in support of the advance... He continued, despite his wounds, to press the attack, including directing the individual groups of Marines in their assaults upon enemy trench lines and bunkers, joining, whenever necessary, in attacking fortified positions while continuing to lead the Company."[543]

HM3 Thomas E. Casey remembers the scene: "I remember him standing still with the radio and his arm wounded. He still stood there, giving orders. I thought he was a really big battlefield commander. [He wasn't crouched down]. He stood by the next bomb crater, giving orders on the radio."[544] Michael E. O'Hara: Pipes "..stood his ground to call for air and artillery and just wouldn't quit until all of his men were back safe."[545] "He set an example for my whole life... He was standing up, bleeding like a stuffed pig. He had two [radio headset] handles, one on each ear, controlling. Demaagd couldn't get him to hold still. He was trying to keep him bandaged up, and the blood would just explode out—'pfssh'—I mean I thought the man was going to die. He was torn-up in his armpit real bad, real bad!"[546] "I was simply in awe of this guy. Here most of his good friends were lying dead or wounded right at his feet, and he was still in control. I bent over and picked up Lt. Norman's body. When I saw who it was, I was devastated. Hank Norman had made friends with everyone in the company, from Private to Captain, and was admired by all who knew him... When I stood up and threw his body across my shoulder, I turned around to

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[537] Statement of PFC Theodore H. Golab, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*

[538] *Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) (Tap II) [304th Division (Chronology) (Vol. II)]*, Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, p. 100. The same document notes, "The squad leader of the 82mm mortar squad, Nguyen Huy Hung, fired in support a succession of 110 rounds of mortar fire in order to break up one wing of the enemy." [*Ibid.*]

[539] Conversation with Thomas Quigley, 11 May 1986.

[540] Bronze Star Medal Citation of 1/Lt Benjamin L. Long; Statements of 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss and SSGT Gus Alvarado, Jr., in Bronze Star Medal file of 1/Lt John William Dillon.

[541] Statement of 1/Lt Benjamin L. Long in Silver Star Medal file of Capt Kenneth W. Pipes.

[542] Dr. Harvey J. Demaagd and a group of Navy Corpsmen from the 1/26 BAS had established a field medical station in a bomb crater to the rear of the company. As friendly casualties were taken, Lt Demaagd examined each Marine, supervised the treatment and personally attended all cases in which the Marine's life hung in the balance. [Statement of Capt Kenneth W. Pipes, in Bronze Star Medal file of LT Harvey J. Demaagd]. As in the case of attending to Captain Pipes, he left the security of the bomb crater numerous times, with complete disregard for his personal safety, to render medical aid to the wounded. "There is no doubt that the loss of lives would have been far greater had it not been for.. Dr. Demaagd." [Statement of SSGT William S. Dale in Bronze Star Medal file of LT Harvey J. Demaagd]

[543] Statement of Michael E. O'Hara, 4 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*

[544] Conversation with Thomas Casey, 16 December 1990. Casey died 1 March 1998 of an abdominal aneurysm.

[545] Michael E. O'Hara, letter of 1 September 1992.

[546] Conversation with Michael E. O'Hara, 23 March 1993.

look back for just an instant. Lt Mascato was about 50 meters away and Ken Rodgers was right behind him... A F-4 Phantom.. unloaded his napalm so close that I could actually feel the heat. I saw his tail shudder because he was too close to the ground. He nearly blew himself out of the air giving us the covering fire... Lt Norman was a slightly build man, but I remembered he seemed so heavy. My legs were beginning to ache with pain, and I was very nearly ready to drop him. I laid him down on the back of the APC, fell back on my butt, and began to cry. I began to wonder, 'How much can a man take?'"[547]

1/Lt John William Dillon (B-2) made numerous trips through the fire-swept terrain carrying wounded Marines to the field medical station.[548] The Marines of his Platoon, B-2, continued the momentum of the assault of NVA positions. LCPL Michael E. O'Hara captures the moment: "When I reached their trenches and jumped in, it was unreal. The trenches were full to the brim with freshly killed NVA soldiers. My foot never hit the ground while I was in their trenches. The rats were everywhere. Those bastards fear nothing and I would later reflect that we had become like rats. We were like sharks on a feeding frenzy. We were passing by wounded Marines on our quest for the kill. We went clear over the top and began charging down the back side before we realized we had inflicted total destruction on an entire NVA battalion. For just a moment, we all cheered like a come-from-behind football team who had just won a pennant or something. We began to pull back and started to realize there was a very high price for our exhilaration. Dead and wounded Marines were everywhere you looked and the danger had certainly not past."[549]

Cpl Edward I. Prendergast, Section Leader of 60mm mortars attached to B-2 also managed to reach Captain Pipes and saw him "standing in an exposed position under the continuing heavy enemy fire, calling in artillery fire on the forward observer's radio as well as directing the operations of the three platoons of the Company... If Captain Pipes had not acted in the manner that he had, even though severely wounded, and had not maintained the communications with the fire support center, the enemy would have been able to launch a counterattack to our advancement into their fortifications."[550]

During the next hour and fifteen minutes, the Bravo Co CP reorganized while B-1 and B-3 searched and destroyed the bunkers, killing all NVA in sight.

PFC David B. Anderson, a Marine with the search team, point squad, B-1, upon seeing a Marine laying in an open and unprotected area, rushed to give aid; while administering emergency first aid, PFC Anderson was fatally wounded.[551] PFC Anderson, like several other KIAs at Khe Sanh,[552] had a premonition he was going to die and told Capt Pipes before the patrol departed that he didn't want to go. After Pipes explained that he was needed, he agreed to go. He said, "I can understand; I just wanted to talk to you, Skipper, and let you know what my feelings were."[553] Anderson had less than 10 days left "in country."554 While giving emergency first aid to one of the wounded, PFC Anderson was fatally wounded.[555]

Also with B-1, LCPL Wayne Paul Moore, a rifleman assigned to the point squad, personally assaulted one of the enemy bunkers that was spewing intense fire. Upon reaching the trench, LCPL Moore destroyed 2 NVA fortified positions with hand grenades and continued to kill 2 enemy soldiers. To permit the rest of his squad to proceed, LCPL Moore exposed himself to the intense enemy fire to establish a base of fire with his M-16 and then sprinted to the aid of two WIA. As he exposed himself to draw the enemy's fire and permit his squad to advance, he was mortally wounded.[556] His Squad Leader at the time recalls: "Lance Corporal Moore jumped up and he charged that line, single-handedly. He got shot three times or four times, went down twice, got back up, and continued to charge this gun bunker and got hit, dropped his rifle, took out a pistol and dove into the trench—threw a grenade in, and dove into the trench line, and the last thing I seen of him was him beating this Gook with his pistol, and then it was literally like a 'John Wayne' movie, everybody just leaped up and charged. [Along with

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[547] O'Hara, "Wind," *op. cit.*, p. 26.
[548] Statement of SSGT Gus Alvarado, Jr., in Bronze Star Medal file, 1/Lt John William Dillon.
[549] O'Hara, Michael E., "The Wind Beneath My Wings," n.d. [mailed 27 April 1995], p. 25.
[550] Statement of Edward I. Prendergast, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*
[551] Statement of 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous), PFC David Bruce Anderson.
[552] *Vide* PFC Randy Neal McPhee (30 Apr 67), CPL Delbert Louis Leasure (23 Feb 68), and 2/Lt Ferdinando DiSteffano (24 Feb 68); there were undoubtedly numerous others.
[553] Conversation with Kenneth Pipes, 11 January 1988.
[554] Pipes, "Men to Match Their Mountains," *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[555] Statement of 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file, PFC David Bruce Anderson.
[556] Statements of LCPL Ezell Green and 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file on LCPL Wayne Paul Moore. Moore's father, SGT Paul Moore, fought in WW II and was wounded on Okinawa 11 May 1945. He writes that his 6-ft., 190-lb. son with sandy hair and blue-green eyes, had joined the Marines 22 April 1966 and returned in Sep 1967 to marry his wife. "His Sgt. at H&S told him if he would sign-up for 6 more months he would not have to return to 'Nam.' He did, and returned Oct 1967 to rejoin his fellow Marines. In his last letter of 29 Mar 68 he stated he had volunteered to go out next morning, 30 Mar, to recover remains of fellow Marines." [Letter of Paul Moore, 11 Feb 1990].

Author C. Smith] these were both two of the best Marines you could ever imagine. These guys were absolutely fearless in combat. They weren't crazy, just flat brave! I'm so proud of these guys, you cannot imagine!"[557]

Moore was a good friend of Tom Quigley and had trained him for Point. "A friend told me later that when 'Charlie' jumped up from one of those spider holes behind him, he shot him right in the back."[558]

LCPL Moore had, on this date, just returned from the special 30-day "free" leave granted to those who extended six months for additional Vietnam duty. "He was actually listed on the company rolls at Bravo Company HQ as AWOL, as he didn't check-in with Headquarters when he returned to his platoon and no one from his platoon had notified Headquarters that he was back."[559]

LCPL Author "C" Smith, Third squad leader with B-1 left the trench line which had been secured in the initial battle in order to rush across open terrain to silence a NVA position. Successfully silencing the position, he returned to the trench to consolidate his squad which was by now under intense enemy fire. Again, he leaped from the trench and assaulted another NVA position from which heavy automatic fire was spewing. Again, he silenced the position. As LCPL Smith continued his assault to silence a NVA spider hole, he was mortally wounded.[560]

His Squad Leader, Steven Wiese, remembers "Smitty" as "..just such an outstanding person. We lived in the same bunker and we were pretty good friends. He was very short and had a dry humor. He never showed any fear at all. It wasn't like crazy; it was just when something happened, he was rock solid. He was there. He knew. If you went over and said, 'Hey, Smitty, how's it going?' he'd have this little smile. I don't ever remember him complaining once. If I had some clean-up detail or sandbags, he'd never bitch. He'd never say, 'O man, it's not my turn; I did it.' Most of the other guys complained.[561]

CPL Donald A. Warren, the Platoon Right Guide for B-1, volunteered to be one of four men to recover bodies of the KIA of 25 February and was located in the middle of the platoon.[562] After the initial burst of NVA fire, Cpl Warren led his fire team to the front of the platoon to direct their fire against the NVA positions. He maneuvered them out of the unprotected area, regrouped, and then led the squad in an assault against the NVA position. After knocking out 2 NVA positions, CPL Warren again moved the squad in the assault while under heavy automatic and semi-automatic fire. While directing accurate M-16 fire at the enemy, CPL Warren was mortally wounded by an enemy sniper round.[563] Cpl Warren had the "body bags" for the KIA. CPL Wood N. Lathrop remembers it as the "suicide squad," and recalls seeing Warren fall after being hit. "I just left him. I was the squad leader and was leading a charge into the NVA trench. I really had no choice. But all these years that has bothered me that here was my best friend. I seen him get hit. I seen him fall. And I don't go to him."[564]

PFC James Allen Williams, 1st Squad of B-1, although wounded, continued to expose himself to enemy fire to keep the NVA from encircling the squad.[565]

Five Marines from the Weapons Platoon (60mm mortars) of H&S Company, 1/26, reported to Capt Pipes the night before the assault. They moved immediately behind the Company command group which was about 25 meters behind the two assault platoons, B-1 and B-3, but had left their base plates at the point of contact and were without sites.566 As the Marines of B-3 became pinned down by NVA mortars as they advanced on the enemy, Cpl Kenneth A. Korkow left his position of safety and, hand-holding the mortar (there being no base plate), fired mortars at an angle of fire which put himself within the bursting radius of the round, but successfully eliminated the NVA mortar position allowing B-3 to proceed. Due to the accuracy of Cpl Korkow's fire, 4 NVA bunkers and 1 NVA mortar were destroyed. Depleted of 60mm mortar rounds, the mortarmen began moving casualties. While assisting a wounded Marine to move to the field medical position, Cpl Korkow was critically wounded.[567]

When the Marines of his squad were pinned down, PFC Albert Moguel, the grenadier of the point squad, B-3, assaulted 2 NVA bunkers that pinned down B-3. The range was so short that PFC Moguel was unable to use his M-79 and proceeded to

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[557] Conversation with Steven Wiese, 17 March 2005.
[558] Conversation with Thomas Quigley, 11 May 1986.
[559] McNeely, Milton, "More Web Briefs, March 30, 1968," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #61 (Spring 2005), p. 9.
[560] Statements of LCPL Michael H. McCauley and CPL Rickey M. Brunk, in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file, LCPL Author "C" Smith.
[561] Conversation with Steven Wiese, 19 January 2006.
[562] Statement of SSGT Leo E. Robert in Silver Star Medal file (posthumous) on Cpl Donald A. Warren.
[563] Statement of 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss in Silver Star Medal file (posthumous) on Cpl Donald A. Warren.
[564] Conversation with Wood Lathrop, 12 March 1993. Note: Cpl Lathrop was one of those who received wounds sufficiently serious to be medevaced (gunshot to his right side). [1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 30 March 1968, Ser #36.
[565] Statements of LCPL William F. Shafer and PFC Leslie E. Olson in Bronze Medal file of PFC James Allen Williams.
[566] Comments of Capt K. W. Pipes, Tape #2810, cited.
[567] Statements of LCPL Richard L. Ward and PFC Vincent R. Tuzar in Navy Cross file, CPL Kenneth A. Korkow; Comments of Capt K. W. Pipes, Tape #2810, cited.

kill 4 NVA with his .45 caliber pistol.[568] PFC Julio Manuel Miranda, another grenadier for B-3, rose up from his position and made a one-man assault on a NVA position with his M-79, giving cover for the rest of the squad to advance. He leaped from the trench on several other occasions to repeat the action and, during the evacuation of the dead and wounded, provided cover.569 PFC Lonnie Wayne Morrison, a rifleman in the point squad of B-3, rushed across the fire-swept terrain, firing into NVA bunker apertures and throwing numerous grenades to knock out several enemy positions enabling the rest of B-3 to advance.[570] PFC Donald Ray Rash, a Marine with the point squad of B-3, overcame 3 NVA positions with grenades and small arms fire. When the Company was ordered to break contact, PFC Rash remained behind to provide effective suppressive fire for the evacuation of KIA and WIA, and was killed when he was struck with shrapnel from one of the NVA mortars.[571]

PFC Rash has just arrived at Khe Sanh on 20 January 1968, hours before the base was struck. "That night, he spent the night in the supply tent along with several other replacements who had arrived that day. They got in late enough that they had not even received weapons, helmets, or flak jackets. Not a good situation when the incoming poured in on the morning of the 21st.[572]

LCPL Ferdinandez Ludiveekus Van Eeten, from the Netherlands, had a body bag for the MIA of 25 February, and was able to retrieve the only corpse from the 25 Feb 1968 action. "He was all black skin because he'd been there so long. I started pulling on the guy's flak jacket to try and put him in the 'death bag' and his arms fell back and I fell back, and these thousands of flies came up and attacked me. I came flying out of the trenchline screaming, and I looked down and the whole circle of his back was nothing but maggots, just thousands of maggots about 3 inches long and as thick as my finger—I'll never forget it.. I finally rolled him over and his helmet came off... I wound-up putting him in the body bag, and nobody helped me. Nobody wanted to have anything to do with it. I dragged him to where they were loading bodies... I remember when we got back to the base, I needed to take a shower. I felt so dirty! And there was no place to take a shower."[573]

Capt Pipes ordered Golab, his radio operator, and 2 other Marines to stand guard over the bodies of the dead Marines, "that we were not to leave our fallen brothers for any reason, but to make our stand there."[574] The NVA were advancing in their trenches in a counter-attack, and Capt Pipes shot the lead soldier in the face, pushing him back into another soldier, breaking up the attack. He repeatedly ignored advice to seek cover as he fired his pistol at advancing enemy soldiers. When 3 OTTERs[575] arrived to carry out the dead, Capt Pipes was yelling at the enemy, "You're not going to get our dead again, you bastards!"[576] At 0945, the Bravo Co CP moved to Objective #1 and assisted in the evacuation of dead and wounded while B-1 and B-3 withdrew assisted by two squads from B-2. B-2 moved forward and made a thorough search of Objective ALFA, evacuating 3 KIA and 2 MIA.[577] During the withdrawal, Golab radioed Lt Smith to fire a WP round to mark the NVA for an air strike. As Smith replied, "Where do you want it?" a WP round exploded in the midst of the Marines, followed by 2 more WP rounds! Golab asked if Smith had fired the WP. "Negative!" Apparently the NVA, monitoring the net, had fired it. "Had our jets fired on that WP, the Marines would have been annihilated."[578] Golab hurriedly radioed the jets to ignore the WP marking rounds.[579] All units were in the vicinity of Objective #1 by 1030, by 1100 the lead elements of Co B were in KSCB, and by 1130, the withdrawal was complete.[580] Capt Pipes stood at the entrance of the wire until all of the Marines from Co "B" were inside the perimeter wire.[581]

1/Lt Marion Henry Norman had never received the Bronze Star Medal that was awarded for his actions the day the siege erupted on KSCB, Sunday, 21 January 1968. From the Citation: "Ignoring the heavy volume of hostile fire, he unhesitatingly left the relative safety of his bunker and attempted to observe the enemy firing sites. Although knocked to the ground on several occasions by the concussions from enemy rounds exploding nearby, he repeatedly made skillful crater analyses and relayed the information to the firing batteries. Electing to remain in his exposed position, and disregarding the exploding

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568 Statements of LCPL Julio M. Miranda and Sgt William M. Simpkins, in Silver Star Medal file of PFC Albert Moguel.
569 Statement of LCPL Theodore S. Harris in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Julio Manuel Miranda.
570 Citation and Statements of PFC Darwin E. Howard and SGT William M. Simpkins in Silver Star Medal file on PFC Lonnie Wayne Morrison.
571 Statements of CPL William D. Holliman and 1/Lt John W. Dillon in Navy Cross (posthumous) file of PFC Donald Ray Rash.
572 McNeely, Milton, "More Web Briefs, March 30, 1968," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #61 (Spring 2005), p. 9.
573 Conversations with "Joe" Van Eeten, 8 April 1994 and 25 March 1995.
574 Statement of PFC Theodore H. Golab, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*
575 Pipes, "Men to Match Their Mountains," *op. cit.*, p. 23.
576 Statement of PFC Theodore H. Golab, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*
577 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log 30 March 1968, Ser #20.
578 Conversation with Theodore Golab, 15 August 1985.
579 Conversation with Theodore Golab, 22 April 1986.
580 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log 30 March 1968, Ser #20.
581 Statement of PFC Theodore H. Golab, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*

main ammunition supply point less than fifty meters away, he courageously directed and adjusted counter fire against the enemy firing sites until all the hostile weapons positions that he could locate were silenced."[582]

1/Lt Norman, the second son of Lloyd Eugene and Dorothy Norman, was born 27 Sep 1940 in Livingston, Texas. At Milby High School, he played quarterback on the football team. In 1964 he graduated from North Texas State University and in 1965 married Charlotte Sanders. He joined the Marine Corps in 1966, and after graduating from TBS [The Basic School], he graduated from the U.S. Army Artillery & Missile School, Fort Sill, OK, and arrived in Vietnam July, 1967.[583]

Chuck Patterson, who shared a locker with Hank Norman at TBS, recalls him as "..the warm one. When the group of us would get together at someone's apartment, Hank could always handle the small problems, like making a barbecue sauce from Karo and catsup or snow ice cream with a little vanilla extract. He always had that dry Texas smile that radiated a quiet confidence."[584]

Capt Pipes received a Silver Star Medal for his actions this date,[585] but around 2001, Charles E. Peterson gathered numerous statements of participants, official records, prepared diagrams of the battlefield actions, provided analysis, and forwarded to the Commandant of the Marine Corps a recommendation that the Silver Star Medal be upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

Co B/1/26 was recommended for the Meritorious Unit Commendation.[586]

NVA Account[587]

> On the 30th of March the enemy organized a counter-attack against Battlefield #3 of the 2nd Battalion, 9th Regiment. The enemy employed a large force consisting of two battalions of Marines, two companies of Vietnamese and a number of tanks supporting the engagement.[588] Their approach had also changed. They fired artillery and used air-strikes to attack on the evening of the 29th. At one o'clock in the morning of the 30th, the enemy once again conducted fire missions, and at four o'clock in the morning the infantry and tanks had reached within 300 meters of our position. Throughout nearly five hours, we engaged the enemy, one side would hold, one side would be determined to seize the other's position. The enemy forces were ten times larger than our forces and so the fighting was ferocious. The Company Commander of the 6th Company in command of the battlefield, was killed at the outset, but the troops coordinated by themselves to strongly attack the enemy. Comrade VINH single-handedly broke one of the enemy attacks. A newly-assigned replacement, NGUYEN HUU DONG shot and killed the battalion commander and eliminated the enemy's signal section.[589] The squad leader of the 82mm mortar squad, NGUYEN HUY HUNG, fired in support a succession of 110 rounds of mortar fire in order to break up one wing of the enemy.
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> At 0853, at this point, we and the enemy were engaged in hand-to-hand combat, but because of the difference of size of the forces, the majority of our troops at the Strong Point had been killed or wounded. The enemy occupied two-thirds of the Strong Point. At 1000 we were down to very few weapons, but at that point the enemy withdrew its forces back into the base, leaving behind nearly 300 dead.
>
> That evening we sent more forces in to rebuild Strong Point Number 3. It can be said that this was the last large counter-attack by the enemy, but they had already been defeated by the determined combat morale of the Division's cadre and troops. During fifty days of the encirclement, our troops eliminated 3,055 of the enemy, captured 217, shot down and damaged on the airstrip 279 aircraft, destroyed a large quantity of weapons and ammunition and enemy supplies. The American Marines had to put up with days and months of increasing pressure, constantly in a state of alert, afraid of a surprise attack by our forces. In addition to weapons fire which had flattened the area around the

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[582] Citation, and Statements of 1/Lt Denis H. McDonald and Capt Kenneth W. Pipes, in Bronze Star Medal file of 1/Lt Marion Henry Norman.

[583] David Rogers, "Hank's Family: An 'In Touch' Rendezvous," n.d.

[584] Chuck Patterson, "Hank Norman," The Khe Sanh *Veteran* 2:2 (Spring, 1996) 22.

[585] Silver Star Medal Citation and file, Capt Kenneth W. Pipes.

[586] By CO, 1/26, printed in The Khe Sanh *Veteran* 1:5 (Spring, 1994) 4.

[587] *Su Doan 304 (Ky Su)* Tap II. [*304th Division (Chronology)*, Volume 2. Published by the People's Army Publishing House (Nha Xuat Ban Quan Nhan Dan], Hanoi, 1990. Published under direction of the Party Current Affairs Committee and the Commander of the 304th Division, Major General Hoan Dan, Lt General Nguyen Trong Hop. Written by Nguyen Huy Toan—Chapters I, II, III, and Conclusions; Pham Quang Dinh—Chapters IV, V, and VI. Trans Sedgwick Tourison, in Stubbe: *B5-T8 in 48 QXD*, 2006, pp. 82-83.

[588] Note: Only Company B, 1/26; no Vietnamese unit participated.

[589] Note: the CP group with the radios was hit, killing the artillery FO and severely wounding the CO of B/1/26 along with two radiomen.

base, they organized counter-attacks to block our trenches which were getting deeper into the base as time went on. They even used a special means of defense, establishing units to find our underground tunnels where they put metal stakes into the ground attached to generators to prevent us from digging tunnels into the middle of the base and then conducting a surprise attack on them.

The fate of Khe Sanh had in reality become a nightmare for the American military command and the situation at Khe Sanh had given great headaches to the war mongers at the White House. In the American Congress there began a debate arguing among themselves whether or not Khe Sanh should be held or not.

RECOVERY OF THE MIA FROM 25 FEB 1968

On 06 April 1968, Co D/1/26 executed an early morning assault upon the NVA trench/bunker complex located parallel to the Route 9 access road, at XD 848407, securing it at 0730H. Co B/1/26 moved in trace of Co D and together with the assistance of Co D, policed the battlefield.[590]

The area was strewn with gear including enemy head-sets for calling mortars and rounds with Chinese and Russian writing on them. "I walked over to a boot and I picked up the boot and there's the rest of the bone in the leg. At least on the boot was a dog tag. A lot of the guys at that time used to put the dog tags on the boot. And there were a couple of guys scared; they didn't want to touch them cause these guys were laying there a month. I said, 'Put them in the bag; let's get out of here. I don't like this any more than you do, but these are Marines.'"[591]



GROUP GRAVE AT JEFFERSON BARRACKA, MO.

Seventeen Marines previously declared MIA on 25 February 1968 and on 30 March 1968 (the first rescue attempt) were recovered.[592] The recovery team put the bodies in Willy Peter bags, sand bags, ponchos—anything else that would carry them. All the remains were in bits and pieces.[593] Officially this patrol "..recovered the bodies of all the Marines listed as MIA and their bodies returned to Graves Registration Khe Sanh."[594]

The task of attempting to identify the almost totally decomposed bodies left in the hot, humid jungle filled with rats and bacteria fell to the Company Commander, Capt Kenneth W. Pipes. "The shock of losing 25 men MIA for a month and a half, then going to graves registration several weeks later to help identify the decomposed remains is indescribable."[595]

All but nine bodies were positively identified. The remaining pieces of bodies were so badly mutilated that identification was not possible, so they were placed in a group grave on 10 September 1968.[596]

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[590] 1/26 ComdC Apr68 S2/S3 Log 06Apr68 Ser #23.
[591] Comments of Mr. Ted Golab to the author 22Apr86. Note: as of 1989, Mr. Golab was working with the homicide division of the Chicago Police Dept and noted he was still involved in the grisly task of attending those killed, and "still assaulting enemy positions.
[592] 1/26 ComdC Apr68 S2/S3 Log 06Apr68 Ser #23.
[593] Comments of HN James R. Brown, Tape #2810.
[594] 3dMarDiv COC 160702Z/Apr68, OPN SCOTLAND FINAL SITREP, in III MAF COC J&F APR68 #101.
[595] Ltr of Maj K. W. Pipes, undated, in HQMC HiastDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.
[596] These were: LCPL Frederick A. Billingham, Jr.; LCPL Michael J. Brellenthin; PC James R. Bruder; LCPL Jeffery L. Dodson; LCPL Bruce E. Jones; PF Ronald L. Ridgeway; PFC David C. Scarbrough; PFC Michael B. Baptiste; and PFC John A. Lassiter. [CMC 067506Z/Sep68. PFC Ronald L. Ridgeway was, of course, not dead, but a POW.

8. THE CORRECT FIGURES FOR KIA AT KHE SANH[597]

The Siege of Khe Sanh battle during the first three months of January, 1968, resulted in more casualties than any other battle of the Vietnam War. It was undoubtedly the most violent and bloodiest battle of the Vietnam War. The actual number of Americans killed far exceeds the official regimental reported KIA of 205. The artificial date for the "end" of the siege, 31 March, does not correspond to the experienced battle for those who were there for whom the battle raged until they departed Khe Sanh. It is unfortunate that under-reporting of casualties continues to be made, diminishing the intensity of the battle those who were there experienced.

Operation SCOTLAND terminated at 310800 March 1968 at which time 26th Marines became OPCON to CG, 1st Air Cav and commenced Operation PEGASUS.[598] By the end of March, the formerly enchanted Garden of Eden with all its beauty, perhaps containing species of flora and fauna not yet known, full of wild animals from ocelots to large tigers, koupreys, durian fruit trees, rock apes, wild boar, a thousand shades of green, had been transformed into a moonscape, a wasteland product of human technology, a valley of dry bones. Mountains had been moved, tens of thousands of human lives perished, the lives of survivors, their families and the families of the dead were forever altered. One pilot, flying into Khe Sanh on 26 March 1968 noted: "It was quite evident that the B-52 Arc Light raids had significantly affected the countryside around the Khe Sanh area. It appeared to me that there's a major bomb crater every 200, 300 feet surrounding all the hillsides and surrounding terrain."[599]

Support by artillery and air reached new records during the siege battle at Khe Sanh. The battle saw the first employment of strategic B-52 bombers on a sustained basis for tactical support. In 70 days of operations, 96,000 tons of bombs were dropped, nearly twice as much as was delivered by the Army Air Corps in the Pacific during 1942 and 1943.[600] General Momyer, USAF, notes more tons of bombs dropped in the immediate vicinity of Khe Sanh during the siege battle than were dropped in the entire Pacific in all of World War II.[601] The USAF records this in terms of sorties while the USMC records this in terms of strikes and tons of ordnance. USAF documents note 9,684 tactical air sorties and 2,567 SAC [B52] strikes by the USAF, 5,167 tactical air sorties by the USN and 6,385 tactical air sorties by the USMC, for a total of 23,803 sorties.[602] USMC documents record 1,169 close air support missions delivering 36,161 tons, 4,989 TPQ-10 strikes delivering 32,500 tons, and 430 B-52 strikes delivering 79,575 tons.[603] CG, FMFPAC, reported 7,078 sorties flown 20 Jan – 31 March 1968 with over 6,000 sorties (approximately 85%) delivered against targets located within a 9-mile radius of the KSCB perimeter.[604]

With all the accumulated garbage on KSCB—accumulated because the high saturation of enemy incoming made usual trash removal an almost sure way to kill Americans, the rat population multiplied in geometric proportions. Then, suddenly, the rats disappeared—not due to death from eating C-rations, but, it was assumed, to all the enemy bodies and body parts strewn so close to the base which made for better food.

NVA losses on the Khe Sanh battlefield reflect the tenacity with which they pursued their objectives. It was almost as if Khe Sanh had become a large piece of flypaper, a gigantic spider web, from which they could not extricate themselves. They grabbed the tail of a tiger, the end of a high voltage electric wire, could not release it and were killed by it. Their loss was obviously heavy. Bru Montagnards from villages south and west of Khe Sanh reported at least 2,000 and possibly 10,000 were killed by bombing. Casualties due to secondary explosions and fired from destruction and damage to guns, bunkers, supply dumps, headquarters, and structures, although not capable of being accurately counted, must have been high. Assuming 2 NVA soldiers per secondary explosion, with over 6,000 secondary explosions and fires, 12,000 may be estimated. Some of these explosions continued several hours. Approximately 900 bunkers were destroyed, some of which must have been occupied. 300 gun positions were destroyed. Forward Air Controllers flying O1 and O2 aircraft counted 1,400 bodies,

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597 Stubbe, Ray W., *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed, 2008, pp. 279-282.
598 3rd MarDiv COC 010640Z/Apr68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #606, Para 4.
599 Comments of Maj Kenneth H. Wilcox, USMC Oral History Tape #2661. Wilcox was Asst S-3, MAG-16, pilot of a CH-53.
600 LtGen John J. Tolson, *Airmobility, 1961-1971*, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1973, p. 167.
601 Gen William W. Momyer, USAF, "Operation NIAGARA," in Trest, Warren A., *Khe Sanh (Operation NIAAGARA), 22 January – 31 March 1968*, CHECO Report, 13 Sep 1968, *Supporting Documents*, No. 12. Total for Pacific Operating Area, WW II: 32,735 tons; total at Khe Sanh (22 Jan – 29 Feb 68): 53,380 tons.
602 Trest, Warren A., *Khe Sanh (Operation Niagara) 22 January – 31 March 1968*, PACAF: Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Division, pp. 112-114.
603 HQMC (Code ARA) letter, 22 Jan 1969, in Khe Sanh Monograph File, HQMC Historical Branch, Washington, D.C.
604 CG, FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam, March, 1968*, p. 13.

and approximately 1,000 bodies were killed on the wires of KSCB from the three attempted assaults on the combat base in March, 1968.[605]

During Operation PEGASUS/LAM SOM 207A, 13,890 tons of enemy supplies were found of which 13,626 tons were food. The NVA left over 1800 dead bodies on the hills around Khe Sanh, a dreadful thing to do in their culture.[606]

Col Donald A. Gruenther, Director of MACEVAL, COMUSMACV, analyzed the probable number of NVA KIA using a formula by which the NVA suffered: an estimated 15,760 casualties (3550 KIA + 12,210 wounded and evacuated) from delivered fires plus 8880 casualties (2000 KIA + 6880) from ground action, for a total of 24,640.[607]

Official (classified "Mat"="Secret") documentation of casualties at Khe Sanh during the siege battle[608] indicate the: following numbers participating in combat: from 325th Division (15 Jan): 28,440; 304th Division (20 Mar): 25,580; Front Rear Services (30 Jun): 25,124. 325 Division suffered 398 KIA and 689 WIA (20 Jan – 3 Jul 68), 304th Division suffered 1,342 KIA and 2,527 WIA (20 Jan – 31 May 68), 45th Regiment (artillery) suffered 21 KIA and 53 WIA (20 Jan – 29 Mar 68), 675th Regiment suffered 54 KIA and 57 WIA (20 Jan – 10 Jun 68), 241st Regt suffered 22 KIA and 60 WIA (20 Jan – 30 Apr 68), 7th Regt suffered 42 KIA and 94 WIA (20 Jan – 27 Mar 68), and Front Rear Services suffered 73 KIA and 115 WIA (20 Jan – 15 Jun 68), for a total of 2,270 KIA and 4,219 WIA.[609]

While 26th Marines Regiment records reports 205 American KIA for the siege battle,[610] the Command Chronologies of 1/26 and 2/26 and the After Action Reports for Operation SCOTLAND of 3/26, 1/9, and 1/13 report a total of 274 KIA.[611] In addition, there were 219 KIA sustained in the Lang Vei battle (10 Americans), and the following KIA from other units: 13 from Co "B", 3rd Recon Bn; 6 from Hq Co, 26th Marine Regiment; 4 from "A" Co, 3rd Shore Party Bn; 4 from "A" Co., 3rd Engineer Bn; 2 from FLC (POL); 2 from HMH-463; 3 from VMGR-152; 8 from HMM-262; 5 from FOB-3; 3 from MACV Det-19 and 282nd AHC; 3 from the 37th Signal Bn; and one each from: HqBn, 3rd MarDiv; H&S Co., 3rd Shore Party Bn; SptCo, 3rd Eng Bn; 5th Comm Bn; CBMU-301 Det "B"; HQ, 12th Mar; CAC "O"; Co A, 3rd AT Bn; MASS-3, I MAW; MWHG-1; MABS-36; MACTU-62; VMO-6, and the USAF 20th TASS, for a total of 70 from other units. This gives a grand total of American KIA for the siege battle at Khe Sanh of: 354 Americans and 209 Vietnamese (not including those from the 37th ARVN Ranger Bn), for a total of: 563.

If Operation PEGASUS totals are added (01-15 Apr 1968) there were 6 KIA from 1/26, 23 KIA from 2/26, 12 KIA from 3/26, and 23 KIA from 1/9, for a total of 64.[612] The grand total for 17 January – 16 April is therefore 560.

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[605] MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 8 July 1968, p. 13; Gen. Wm. C. Westmoreland, speech of 13 June 1968, to 3rd Air Division, in *History, 3rd Air Division, Jan – Jul 1968*, Vol. I, Exhibit #180; MACV, *Command History*, Vol. 1, pp. 423-424.

[606] MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 8 July 1968, pp. 14-15.

[607] MACEVAL: "An Analysis of the Khe Sanh Battle," 5 April 1968, in ACofS, MACV, letter to Chairman, JCS, 10 April 1968, in OJCS File 091, Vietnam, April, 1968, p. 3. An egregious under-counting of US KIA renders the value of "K" erroneous. According to the formula, KIA = K times the number of troops divided by the square kilometers of the battlefield times the tons of ordnance. "K" is a constant of proportionality based on the friendly experience at Khe Sanh for the period 27 January through 31 March with troop strength of 6085, tons received: 99.25, friendly KIA: 167, and area in sq. km.: 4.8. If the US number of 563 KIA is factored in instead of 167, the result is a "K" factor of 0.0044746, and, using the formula, 11,932 NVA KIA.

[608] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign*], "For Distribution within the Army—Luu Hanh Trong Quan Doi, classified MAT, [Secret], Hanoi: Tong Cuc Hau Can [General Directorate for Rear Services], June, 1988, Medical Section, pp. 264ff.

[609] *Ibid.*, Appendix 2, p. 327. Specific battles: 154 KIA/486WIA on 20 Jan, Battle of Huong Hoa by 3rd Regt, 304th Div; 15 KIA/95WIA on 20 Jan, Battle for Hill 832 [Hill 861, XD803443] by 6th Bn, 2nd Regt, 325th Div; 20 KIA/68WIA on 20 Jan, Battle of Hill 845 [Hill 881, XD777438] by 4th Bn, 2nd Regt, 325th Div, 54 KIA/80WIA on 7 Feb 68 for Battle of South Lang Vei by 3rd Bn, 1st Regt, 325th Div; 36 KIA/140 WIA on 7 Feb 68 in Battle of North Lang Vei by 2nd Regt, 304th Div; an unknown number of KIA and 982WIA from the encirclement of KSCB by 1st Regt., 304th Division, etc. [*Ibid.*, p. 330]. By units: 325th Division suffered 398 KIA and 698 WIA, 304th Division suffered 1,342 KIA and 2,527 WIA. [*Ibid.*, Appendix 3, p. 331].

[610] 26Mar, AAR SCOTLAND, p. 15. General Tompkins gave the same figure, 205, in testimony before the U.S. Senate, Electronic Battlefield Subcommittee of the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services. [*Investigation Into Electronic Battlefield Program*, 91st Congress, 2nd Session, Nov 18, 19, and 24, 1970, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971, p. 95]. It is intriguing to note that if the 1/9 KIA total (72) is subtracted from the 274, one arrives at 202, almost the 205 figure. Was 1/9 considered ADCOM to another regiment, although OPCON?

[611] 1/26: 5 KIA for Jan (Command Chronology), 44 KIA for Feb (Command Chronology), and 47 KIA for Mar (Command Chronology); 2/26: 1 KIA for Jan (Command Chronology), 25 KIA for Feb (Command Chronology), 16 KIA for Mar (Command Chronology); 3/26: 46 KIA (AAR Opn SCOTLAND)' 1/9 72 KIA (AAR, Opn SCOTLAND); 1/13: 18 KIA (AAR, Opn SCOTLAND)' total: 274. In addition, there were 10 American USSF from the Battle of Lang Vei.

[612] Based on After Action Reports for these battalions. The 26th Marines Regiment AAR indicates only 43, 21 less than the total for the individual battalions. In addition, the 12st Air Cav 'Division's AAR for PEGASUS reports 59 KIA for US Army, 51 KIA for USMC and 33 KIA for ARVN There were also 70 additional KIA from assorted support units.

During the battle, 2,541 patients were seen and treated in the medical facilities at Khe Sanh. Of these 2,031 were wounded in action and 490 were non-battle casualties. 2,249 patients were evacuated by fixed wing very early in the siege, but later entirely by helicopter. Of these, 292 were returned to duty.[613]

Concerning the local Montagnards of the Bru tribe, when the siege battle began on 21 January 1968, the 1200 Vietnamese of Khe Sanh Village were evacuated but the I Corps Commander, General Xuan Lam, prohibited the local Bru from departing, saying there was no place to settle them in Vietnam.[614] The Bru were told to return to their villages, which were soon burned and abandoned. Bru were forced to carry supplies for the NVA and thus strafed and bombed by our own planes that were unable to differentiate between them and the NVA. Eventually many were flown out by helicopter from FOB-3 in mid and late March. Those who were able to depart the battlefield were settled in a refugee village south of Cam Lo called Cua. Among the refugees were many who had still been in the hills and not resettled in the strategic villages close to KSCB in 1962. Official Marine Corps records indicate 10,000 Bru located within a 5 km radius of Khe Sanh ville.[615] Another official Marine Corps document indicates 21,000 total indigenous persons located in 9 villages of Huong Hoa District,[616] a much larger area than the 5 km radius. Since there were 1200 Vietnamese, the figure of approx. 20,000 Bru in the total area and 8800 in the immediate area reflects the census. The population of the Cua refugee center as of June, 1968, was approx. 6,000,[617] although usually 3 or 4 were dying a day from starvation, dehydration, and wounds and illness. Therefore, somewhere between 2800 to 12,800 Bru perished during the first three months of 1968 at Khe Sanh. The figure may be higher. In early March, 1968, there were 1,643 Bru at the Ca Lu Combat Base (before their movement to the Cua center).[618] The disparity may be from Vietnamese refugees also at the refugee center making up the rest of the 6,000.

During the siege battle at Khe Sanh, the NVA strength was from 20,000 – 25,000 in some 21 battalions plus supporting forces, about 50% of the NVA forces in I CTZ, plus another 24,000 readily available in nearby Laos. US forces at Khe Sanh numbered 5,700 Marines and about 500 Vietnamese, representing about 3% of the total friendly forces in I CTZ. Within a radius of 10 miles of Khe Sanh there were 3,800 more Marines and 500 Army and within 40 miles, 37,000 more troops. Fire support, in addition to 18 105s, 5 155s, 10 ONTOS, 32 individual 106mm RR, 5 tanks, and 98 mortars included 175mm guns and 6 155mm howitzers at Camp Carroll and Thon Son Lam, at least 45 B-52 sorties available per day and 300 or more tactical air sorties per day. It was not uncommon to drop as much as 1,800 tons of bombs in the Khe Sanh area in a single day. During the siege battle, an average of 194 short tons of supplies and 70 troops per day were air delivered to Khe Sanh, for a total of 14,356 short tons of supplies and 5,180 troops. US forces fired a total of 117,643 rounds of artillery (including 12,441 rounds of 175mm). B-52 sorties averaged 35 per day delivering 1,022 tons per day of bombs. 533 sorties delivered ordnance within 3 km of friendly ground troops. Tactical air supported Khe Sanh with 15,266 attack sorties with a daily average of 184. US aircraft losses in support of Khe Sanh (1 November 67 – 1 April 68) were 8 fixed wing and 13 helicopters.[619]

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[613] CDR Brown, Robert A., "Dateline: Vietnam," *Pennsylvania Medicine* (August, 1968), pp. 45-53. CDR Brown was CO, 3rd Medical Bn. and frequently visited KSCB during the siege battle.

[614] 26Mar 191316Z/Feb68, Disposition of Displaced Personnel, in 26Mar ComdC Feb68; *Vide* p. 127 of this book.

[615] 26Mar, AAR Operation SCOTLAND, 31 May 1968, p. 10, notes 1250 Vietnamese in Khe Sanh Village and approximately 10,000 Bru "primarily resided in a dozen small villages and resettlement areas located within a 5 kilometer periphery of Khe Sanh Village."

[616] Citation and statement of LtCol Clark in Bronze Star Medal file of Capt Henry Lebaron Preston. Preston was the 26 Marines S-5 (Civil Affairs)

[617] Journal kept by CPL Daniel Kelley, entry for 17 April 1968, records: Total Bru: 5,668 (1,026 families, 758 families with no money, 92 deaths) and 1225 Vietnamese (353 families, 25 families not paid, 8 deaths). [Recorded in Ray William Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 7 October 1971, p. 1345, Encl (1) to CNO letter Ser 10516P942. CPL Kelley (from CAC "O"), along with Mr. Robert Handy (civilian) and SFC James Perry (Medic from MACV Det 4, Huong Hoa) were three Americans permanently assigned to the Cua Refugee Center to manage it.

[618] GySgt Ed Brey, "Ca Lu," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:11 (15 March 1968) p.3.

[619] Memorandum for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, DJSM-448-68, 17 Apr 1968, Subj: Khe Sanh Fact Sheet (prepared by CDR J.H. Cullen, USN, LtCol J. McG. Bohen, USA, Maj R.C. Lyons, USAF, Combat Analysis Group, J-3), in OJCS File 091, Vietnam, April, 1968.

APPENDIX
KHE SANH CHRONOLOGY MAY, 1967 – JUL, 1968[620]

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

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

13 MAY – COL JOHN J. PADLEY, CO, 26th Marines, relieves COL J. P. LANIGAN, CO, 3rd Marines, as "SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh."

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

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

MAY - The North Vietnamese Politburo and Central Military Party Committee concur with the reorganization of the command and leadership system in the Tri-Thien (B-5 Region). Province party committees and province unit headquarters are dis banded. District party committees come directly under the leadership of the region party committee. Group 31 is responsible for the area from Highway 9 north to the demilitarized zone using two infantry battalions under the command of the B5 Highway 9-Tri Thien Front Headquarters. The result: one commander has control over forces around Khe Sanh and Hue City. In Region 5, the main forces are augmented by the 577th (122mm) rocket regiment (formerly the 68th regiment, 304th Division).

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

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

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

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

06 JUN – KSCB receives approximately 19 rockets at 0105H. Hill 950 (XD 844456) is attacked by approx. 40-50 NVA from the 6th Bn, 95C Regt, 325C Div. and feared overrun, but a few Marines hold off the attack and in a daring early morning counter-attack, repulse remaining NVA attackers.

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

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

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

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

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

06 JUL - Politburo member General Nguyen Chi Thanh, Secretary of the Central Office for South Vietnam and Political Officer of the Liberation Army Headquarters, dies of a heart attack. General Thanh is replaced by Politburo member and Deputy Prime Minister Pham Hung, to continue preparations for the 1968 Tet Offensive.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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[620] For a complete chronology of Khe Sanh, see Stubbe:*Pebbles in My Boots* (2011), pp. 199-218.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1967, cont.

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

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

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

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

20 OCT – North Vietnamese artillery units begin preparation of the Khe Sanh battlefield.

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

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

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

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

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

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

05 NOV - The entire 559th network begins to implement the 1967-1968 dry season transportation plan with 61,000 tons moved into the system, twice as much as during the 1966-1967 dry season, aimed at an early materiel preparedness for all battlefields for the Tet Offensive.,

03-22 NOV – 1,000 troops of US 4th Division and 173rd Airborne Brigade at Dak To are attacked by 4 NVA regiments (about 6,000 troops); NVA fatalities are estimated at 1455 while US casualties are 285 KIA, 985 WIA, 18 MIA. Some regard this as a prelude to Khe Sanh, testing siege tactics and gearing-up for the attack against Khe Sanh.

06 NOV – Radio call-sign of 1/26 changes from MOLLY PITCHER to BLACKBUD; CAC "O" from ACTIVATOR to MUTTER; 26th Marine Regiment from MORRAY to INTRIGUE; recon from SANTA ANA BRAVO to AIR-MINDED BRAVO.

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 NOV – North Vietnamese Politburo and Joint High Command issue directives for the "General Offensive and Uprising" (Tet) establishing 2 battlefields across the entire South Vietnam area. Highway 9 Front is given the mission of drawing-in and

dispersing mobile forces to create favorable conditions for all of South Vietnam. N-Day [the Vietnamese equivalent of D-Day] is set for 31 January 1968.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<u>1968 –</u>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 JAN – GEN WESTMORELAND requests JCS declassify COFRAM munitions for use in non-populated areas of I Corps (i.e., Khe Sanh). Sub Unit #5 is reduced to zero strength

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

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

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

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

14 JAN – The North Vietnamese 304th Division Party Committee meets from 1800 to 0300 on 15 JAN to discuss their combat mission. The main issue was the change in launch time which had been planned to begin the end of February; now it was changed to 20 JAN and combat preparations "had to move quickly." Troops, moving over a long route of march, had just arrived on the battlefield. Organization of the troops and preparation of caches of rice and ammunition had not yet been accomplished. Recon of the battlefield had just been initiated. Military medical detachments had just arrived on the

battlefield and route to evacuate wounded had still not been established. The mission assigned to 304 Division was to attack BV33 at Ban Houei Sane and to "liberate" the Huong Hoa District (Khe Sanh village). The 7th Bn, 66th Regt, did not reach its regrouping point to attack Khe Sanh village until 0400, 21 Jan since their route of march had just been bombed by B52s which knocked down trees causing slow movement with some elements becoming lost. The 7th Bn was the unit assigned to "liberate" Huong Hoa District and was reinforced by a 82mm recoilless gun company, a 82mm mortar company, a transportation platoon, a sapper squad, and an engineer squad.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 JAN – Hill 861 defended by K/3/26 is attacked by 6th Bn, 95C Regt, 325C Div; perimeter is penetrated with brunt of the attack on the northwest side of the hill. NVA force is repulsed by the Marines leaving 47 NVA KIA. Hill 861 is reinforced with a platoon of A/1/26.

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

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

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

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

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

21 JAN – Project TIGERHOUND ceases operations at Khe Sanh.

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

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

22 JAN – Counter-mortar radar arrives at KSCB.

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

23 JAN – 3rd MarDiv G-2 augmentation arrives at KSCB consisting of Majors MIRZA MUNIR BAIG (TIO) and ROBERT B. COOLIDGE (Signals Intelligence).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

01 FEB – Aerial photographs reveal tanks near Khe Sanh.

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

02/03 FEB – Electronic sensor SPOTLIGHT reports reflect heavy NVA troop movement along approacdhing KSCB.

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

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

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

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

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

07 FEB – USSF Camp at Lang Vei (XD 786357) is attacked by the 66th Regt, 304 NVA Div, supported by the 198th Bn, 20-3rd Regt (tanks), the first use of tanks (Soviet PT-76 amphibious tanks) by the North Vietnamese Army in the Vietnam War. The attack overruns the camp. USMC artillery fires COFRAM munitions, the first use of this type of ordnance. Several thousand refugees gather at KSCB including approx. 2,000 Laotians and 5,000 – 6,000 Bru Montagnards. The refugees are refused access onto the KSCB and told to return to their villages. Most of the Bru are subsequently killed while Lao are eventually evacuated. A daring rescue by a small group from FOB-3 rescues Americans from Lang Vei.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13 FEB – A major NVA supply area (at XD 8734) is struck resulting in approx. 1,000 secondary explosions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 FEB – Total defenders at Khe Sanh: 154 USMC officers and 3070 USMC enlister
enlisted, 10 USN officers and 191 USN enlisted, 5 USA officers and 30 USA enlisted (does not include FOB, classified at the time), and 5 USAF officers and 24 USAF enlisted, for a total of 3489. (The 16 April manning message indicates 21 officers, 110 enlisted, and 455 ARVN at FOB-3 and 2 US officers, 3 US enlisted, 14 ARVN officers, and 436 ARVN enlisted for 37th Ranger Bn, making a grand total of friendly defenders at Khe Sanh approximately 4530).

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 FEB – SUPERGAGGLE helicopter resupply of the Khe Sanh hill outposts commences.

24 FEB – The city of Hue is declared secure after a 25-day battle. A combined force of Marines, Army, and South Vietnamese forces had accounted for
more than 4,500 Communists killed and the capture of large amounts of supplies.

Mass graves of several thousand Vietnamese civilians (government workers, priests, and women) massacred by North Vietnamese forces are discovered.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 MAR – Newsweek cover, "The Agony of Khe Sanh."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

31 MAR – President JOHNSON announces he would neither seek nor accept nomination for another term as President.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12 APR – Route 9 reopened to KSCB.

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

13 APR –Felix POILANE, the coffee plantation owner, returns to KSCB and is killed when the aircraft in which he is riding crashes. Born at Khe Sanh, he managed his father's plantation since 21 Dec 1957 when he arrived at Khe Sanh with his wife, Madaleine. The Poilane family had departed KSCB 22 Jan 1968 and sought refuge in Hue.

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

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

16 APR – Bn 3/26 departs Khe Sanh.

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

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

18 APR – Bn 2/26 departs Khe Sanh.

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

21 APR – Bn 1/9 departs Khe Sanh.

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

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

25 APR – TF GLICK redesignated TF HOTEL, under command of BGen Carl W. Hoffman.

25 APR – US tanks ambushed upon departure from KSCB

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19 JUN – 05 JUL – KSCB is destroyed.

24 JUN – ASRAT departs Khe Sanh for Chu Lai.

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

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

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

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

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

08 JUL – 1/1 is reinforced by L/3/4.

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

12 JUL – 1/1 is heli-lifted from Hill 689, thus ending the period of permanent installations at Khe Sanh for Marines as a mobile tactic is adopted. Cumulative statistics for SCOTLAND II (16 Apr – 11 Jul): 301 USMC KIA, 25 USA KIA, 1489 USMC WIAE, 123 USA WIAE, 242 USMC WIANE, 34 USA WIANE, 2 USA MIA, 2440 NVA KIAC, 56 NVA POW. 2/4 remains in Khe Sanh area with a platoon on Hill 950 (E-3) and one company on ridgeline between Hill 950 and FSB CATES (XD 927437). 3/4 continues to operate in Khe Sanh area.

SOURCES FOR A BIOGRAPHY ON COLONEL DAVID E. LOWNDS

PREFACE

Books and articles on the siege of Khe Sanh consistently portray the controllers of the Siege of Khe Sanh to be General Westmoreland and General Giap. Actually, the main players were Lieutenant General Tran Quy Hai and Colonel David E. Lownds.

LtGen Hai was the Front Commander for the B5-T8 Front that controlled two battlefronts, the primary battlefield, Khe Sanh, and the area to the east.[621] General Giap wasn't even in Vietnam, having departed due to a medical issue. Col Lownds with his staff controlled the tactical situation at Khe Sanh and even initiated 95% of all local B-52 Arc Light strikes.[622] During an ordinary day, his intelligence staff generated targets for 100 TPQ-10 missions,[623] 16 Arc Lights,[624] 100 flights of fixed wing aircraft and up to 500 artillery missions.[625]

That General Westmoreland permitted Colonel Lownds to have control over the strategy and tactics at Khe Sanh rather than controlling these himself is reflected in the tank assault on the Army Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei.

While KSCB was receiving copious incoming, the nearby Army Special Forces camp at Lang Vei was rather tranquil. The XO, Miles Wilkins, comments: "We actually had very little contact, even when Khe Sanh was having a hard time leaving their perimeter. I was still driving up and down Highway 9, taking out mamasans back. We had vry little enemy contact. They basically just let us alone. We could go out on patrols and never see anybody."[626] Col Jonalthan Ladd (Commander, 5th Special Forces Group) had visited the Lang Vei camp on 6 Feb (along with Col Dan Baldwin and Sergeant-Major Hodge of CCN[627] and LTC Schungel) in connection with attempts to obtain anti-tank mines for them. Sounds from moving tanks could even be heard while he was visiting them![628] Col Ladd requested that Col Lownds execute the Contingency Plan[629] but conditions had changed considerably with the addition of tank and attack by a battalion-size NVA unit, along with detected NVA ambush sites in the area, making the execution a suicide mission. Even a patrol from A-101 moving east toward Khe Sanh village on 31 Jan was ambushed and Sgt John A. Young was captured.[630] While Col Ladd, based on his visit on 6 Feb, assumed a relief force could be dispatched, Col Lownds refused, saying it would be a suicide mission.

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[621] For an extensive, detailed biography of LtGen Hai, see the draft manuscript, General Tran Quy Hai, *Duong cach mang va nhung hoi tri an* [*Steps Along the Road and Words of Gratitude*].

[622] Ltr of Maj Mirza Munir Baig to Col. F.C. Caldwell, 23 Dec 1968, p. 7. For geneeral account of the control of the battle by Col Lownds, see "Khe Sanh and the Mongol Prince," in Stubbe: *Pebbles in My Boots*, 30 March 2011, pp. 162-186. Citation from p. 166.

[623] TheTPQ-10 radar emits a small beam that locks on an aircraft. Using target coordinates provided by the FSCC, the TPQ-10 controller programs the enemy position, ballistic characteristics of the bombs, current winds, and other pertinent data, into a computer attached to the radar. The radar provides corrections due to air speed of the aircraft, altitude, and heaving. One A-6 Intruder could drop 28 500-pound bombs. Most TPQ-10 missions at Khe Sanh were flown at 290 knots. [Comments of 1/Lt Roy W. Schmidt, USMC Oral History Tape #2688].

[624] Khe Sanh saw the first time strategic B-52 bombers were employed on a sustained basis for tactical support of American troops. [LtGen John J. Tolson, *Airmobility 1961-1971*, Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Army, 1973, p. 167]. The B-52 Stratofortress flew 2,602 sorties at Khe Sanh delivering 75,631 tons (151,262,000 pounds) of bombs during the period 22 Jan – 31 Mar 1968. [AFCHO ltr 18Dec68 to HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file]. The B-52's normal load was 108 bombs but each B-52 is capable of carrying up to 128 500- and 750-pound bombs which are dropped in a rectangular "box" usually 1,000 yards long by 100 yards wide. Sometimes the boxes overlap or crisscross. Most sorties consist of 6 aircraft, together covering an area one-half mile wide and 3 miles long, all within a period of several seconds. To grasp the extent of this destruction, one need only think of a comparable area in one's own city totally annihilated. The aircraft fly at 10,000 – 30,000 foot altitude. One 750-pound bomb clears an area 18-0-ft. in radius; fused to explode below ground, it digs a crater 30 ft. across and 10 ft. deep. [Trest, *Khe Sanh*, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-114; Peter Braestrup, "B-52 Big Weapon in Defense," Washington *Post*, 11 Aug 1968].

[625] Ltr of Maj Jerry E. Hudson, 2 Jan 1969, HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.

[626] Conversation with Miles Wilkens, 08 April 1995.

[627] Conversation with Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, 25 Sep 1989.

[628] The NVA force, supported with tanks, had overrun BV-33 at Ban Houei Sane in Laos, on 25 January 1968, and were enroute to tttack Lang Vei.

[629] Contingency Plan for the Relief of Lang Vei, OpO 5-67 of 16 Sep 67, which called for a reinforced rifle company from 1/26.

[630] The man was Sgt John A. Young. At 1100H, a 17-man Lao recon element was ambushed by an estimated enemy force of two NVA companies at XD 815370 resulting in one friendly WIA and 1 USSF and 1 Lao MIA. [CO COC 5th SFGA 311530Z/Jan68, SITREP #30-68, in III MAF COC Journal and File 31Jan/01Feb68 #315]. The area was on Route 9, half-way between Khe Sanh village and Lang Vei. Later, the Special Forces attacked the enemy unit, resulting in 54 NVA KIA, 40 NVA WIA, and eight weapons captured [CO CO C 5th SFGA 011050Z/Feb68, Subj: 21 Message, in III MAF COC Journal File, Operation SCOTLAND, Pt. 3]. The Team Leader at Lang Vei, Bill Craig, notes: "He [Young] should be in jail. I didn't want that kid. I told the Sergeant-Major I don't need no SPEC-4s up here. He said, 'I don't have anybody else as a weapons man.' I said, 'Well, I'll do without.' He'd already sent him up there. Ashley called me and said that Young wanted to go out on patrol. I said, 'I don't want that kid going anywhere ... And you know what he did? He talked those stupid Laotians into going into Khe Sanh city! That's why I say, if I had my way, I'd of put him in jail because of that." [Conversation with Bill Craig, 04 Oct 1988]. For Young's story, see Ch. 11 of Zalin Grant, *Survivors, American POWs in Vietnam*, New York: Berkeley Books, 1985, pp. 189-199. According to Young, Capt Frank Willoughby, having just returned from a 30-day leave in the States, ordered him to

Col Ladd then flew from KSCB to DaNang and contacted GEN Westmoreland who was there in connection with a Marine Civic Action matter. Col Ladd's frustration is reflected in his memoir of that meeting.[631] "When I finally got his attention long enough, I told him, 'We have to do one of three things. We either stay there and just hold Lang Vei; we "DD" out and abandon the place; or the Marines execute their contingency plan. We can hold for probably another 3 or 4 days."[632] Col Ladd recounts: "Well, he couldn't make up his mind. Meanwhile I kept getting these radio calls from out there, telling me 'the Goddamn people are dropping charges down our air holes.' So I called Gen. Abrams on the phone and told him what was happening and I said, 'I just can't get Westmoreland's attention long enough to do anything. He is putting it off.' So, he called a General Anderson.. and told him that he was telling me to go ahead and evacuate the camp at the earliest opportunity and for the Marines to help us, which they did. Now in Westmoreland's book, he said that he did all that, but he didn't. Abrams did it, because he, Westmoreland, kept going back to those civic action meetings. Anderson was a great help; they dropped these CBUs all over the top of the camp and the people got out."[633]

Gen Westmoreland wanted the local commander (Col Lownds) control the battlefield situation.

The battle of the Siege of Khe Sanh was controlled by LtGen Hai and Col Lownds, not Gen Giap and Gen Westmoreland! It is for this reason that an adequate account of Col Lownds must be presented and preserved for future historians.

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Col Lownds at Khe Sanh Reunion, 1997



Col Lownds at Khe Sanh 1868

From Stubbe, Ray William: *Battalion of Kings*, 2nd ed, 30 Sep 2008, pp. 149-152.

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patrol out to Lang Bu ville, some 2000 meters northeast of Lang Vei, where Route 9 bends. Young departed just after sunrise on the 31st, proceeded along Route 9, and after some 45 minutes, cut north toward the jungle towards Lang Bu when enemy fire suddenly erupted, killing the point man with a shot to the head. The Laotians suddenly evaporated, leaving Young alone. He was then shot in his lower leg, fell, and shot twice more. His trouser leg was soaked in blood; pieces of bone protruded. After rapidly firing two magazines, he felt two bayonets stick in his back. He had been captured, not released until 1973. [Stubbe: *Khe Sanh*, 06 June 1989 (unpublished manuscript), p. 453.

631 which occurred shortly after noon and was attended by Gen Chaisson, USMC [Chief COC, MACV], Gen Cushman [III MAF], Gen Tompkins [CG, 3dMarDiv], Gen Anderson [CG, I MAW], and several other officers, including LGTC Hassinger [DCO, Special Ops], and Col Baldwin.

632 The official AAR for the Battle of Lang Vei notes: "There was considerable argument against implementing the plan because of the possibility of losing more men as well as the helicopters."

633 Ladd, COL Jonathan, *Interview by Col James P. Bergen and LtCol Willard M.Burleson*, 26 Feb 1971, Dept. of the Army, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, for "The Creighton Abrams Story." [Khe Sanh archives pp. 67961-67970].

LtCol Louis Rann, the Executive Officer of Regiment recalls the radioman leaning over and saying: "Colonel, the President wants to talk with you! The President's on the other end of the phone!" Rann notes, "I won't tell you what Colonel Lownds said—you're a minister!" "Shit?" "Well, a few other choice words!" "The next thing I know, Colonel Lownds picked up that phone [and was saying], 'Yes, Sir!.. No, Sir!' He's standing at attention!" Rann thought, "My God, it is the President!" Afterwards, Rann asked, "What did he say?" Lownds: "He said, 'I made the Joint Chiefs of Staff sign a paper that we're not going to make you guys surrender!'"[634]

During the months prior to the Siege, Colonel Lownds frequently wandered about the area, getting the lay of the land—noting possible routes the enemy might take, timing movement from one point to another, observing possible Ops and assembly areas, and so on. "I went out all the time. I was out most of the time. As a matter of face, at one point when it [the siege] first started, I went out towards the water point—before General Tompkins ordered me not to go out. I got three-quarters of the way there, heard something in the brush, so I headed back. Somebody was there. From time to time I'd go out; sometimes I'd even go out by myself [without a radioman]. Nobody knew it. I didn't want to jeopardize anybody else. I went out quite frequently. A commander needs to know the terrain he's fighting in; if he doesn't, he's in trouble. I was able to pinpoint in my own mind the likely places of attack and also where the lines of departure would be. As a matter of fact, when we had that B-52 strike that came as a result—nobody wanted to give it to me—General Tompkins did, but Westmoreland and nobody else did. I told them, 'That's where they are and that's their Line of Departure, and if they're going to attack, they're going to attack from there. They said, 'That's too close to your lines.' I said, 'I don't give a damn how close they [the B-52 strikes] are. It all paid off in the long run."[635]

LtCol Frederick McEwan, the S-4 of Regiment during the Siege, recalls: "Around December [1967], the North Vietnamese Army blew a French bridge across Highway 9. Well, Uncle Dave, who was Colonel Lownds, and the Engineer Officer and myself went to a steel bridge over the river at Route 9, and we swam across that river to check out that area, see if the bridge could be rebuilt. It couldn't. So we got out of there hastily. It was a precarious situation."[636]

Thomas Buono was assigned to Colonel Lownds when the Siege began as his driver and to accompany him during his rounds of the base: "The morning the Siege started, Col Lownds was out, and I had a hard time keeping up with him. As a matter of fact, we had mortars walking up main street right in front of Regimental Headquarters and we had two guys hit, and he went after them, and I followed him. The mortars were still walking towards us. He grabbed one guy, and the other guy was limping towards him, and the other guy made it around the side of regimental headquarters, along the wall. Luckily it stopped about 5 or 6 feet short of the edge of that wall, or else we would all have been fragmented that day. He was out moving around the base that morning and the rest of that day, and the following two weeks that I was driving, he was out and about. We were dodging sniper fire.. so at one point we just abandoned the jeep, crawled from bunker to bunker... He had a way of motivating you without actually having to give you the boot in the rear end—his comments, or the way he would say something, or his mannerisms. You knew exactly what he meant. We were getting ready to go out and he asked me, 'Corporal, how come you haven't shaved yet?' And I said, 'Colonel, I don't have a razor.' He opened up his desk drawer and pulled out one of those disposable razors and said, 'Here, shave!' 'Right here, Sir?' He said, 'Yep, go ahead, you've dry-shaved before haven't you?' He said, 'I want you to look like a Marine.' And I said, 'OK,' and proceeded to dry-shave. We checked on some of the different Commanding Officers, checked casualty reports, made it to the runway, checked the status there. It was a daily routine... Most of Colonel Lownds' time was spent above-ground... He stayed away from the media. His time was too valuable. He knew what the situation was. There was a possibility of nuclear intervention. I had a Top Secret clearance, perhaps one of the reasons they sent me over to the Colonel's bunker... I remember laying in a slit trench next to Colonel Lownds right outside headquarters. We had dug [it] the first day as quickly as we could; it was only about 10 inches deep. And incoming came in, and the two of us are laying there, side by side, facing one another. After the incoming subsided, he just literally stood up and picked me up with one hand and said, 'Come on, we have work to do.'... [He avoided "salty" language]. He expressed himself with the education and the intelligence that he had. He was able to stay away from vulgarity. There were times when his language might have been a little strong, but very seldom, very seldom, like the average Marine, like myself. He didn't express himself in that way at all. Even when the situations seemed like they were taking a turn for the worse, he still had an inner character and a strength about him that I saw him display, that really kinda gave everybody around him not only hope, leadership that he displayed... He was like a "shadow" the way he moved around the

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[634] Conversation with Louis Rann, 30 Oct 1994. Capt Earle G. Breeding recalls, "The President talked to him on the telephone. When a President calls a Regimental Commander on the telephone, every subordinate person—subordinate to the President—is kissing butt. Nobody's going to stand up to him and say, 'Hey! That's stupid!'" [Conversation with Earle G. Breeding, 29 Oct 1994].

[635] Conversation with David E. Lownds, 2 December 1994.

[636] Comments of Frederick McEwan at Khe Sanh Reunion, Nashville, Tn, 21 July 1990.

base, like the "Phantom" movie that just came out. He moved. Sometimes he moved very openly. He very seldom had me stop the jeep, even for incoming rounds. There were only one or two situations that I can remember where he actually said, 'You'd better stop and take cover in the ditch.'"[637]

PFC Craig W. Tourte (HQ/1/13) in 2004, 36 years after the siege battle, wrote: "I was manning the line .. just a hundred yards or so south of the main gate. It was one of those dark dreary nights when you just stand there looking straight ahead at nothing. Exhausted from lack of sleep, C rats, rain and cold, digging and just plain being there, I turned towards a voice behind me who said, 'How is it going, Marine?' I looked up and saw..a Marine.. who had a big broad mustache and was accompanied by another Marine with a radio... He introduced himself as Colonel Lownds. He said he was just seeing how things were going and asked how we were getting along... He smiled, turned away, and continued walking down the trench line... I never expected a colonel to express concern for a lowly PFC... That simple act lifted my spirits and for some reason I felt a lot more secure knowing that the commanding officer was in this with us and was exposing himself to the same dangers the rest of us faced... I am proud of all who served—and of Colonel Lownds, who shared the danger and the pain, and made one lowly PFC feel as if his life was worth something."[638]

Capt H.J.M. ("Mac") Radcliffe (CO, A/1/9) recalls that after the Alpha Outpost (Hill 64) had been attacked and A/1/9 lost over 30% of its company on 8 February, he had told his troops, "Nobody gets into the Company perimeter I don't know about it." "They called down and said, 'We got somebody coming into your area.' I said, 'Stop him! We had a lot of press people and others coming in. I said, 'Who is it?' They said, 'I don't know who he is, Sir. He has a moustache and cigar and has his radio operator with him.' Well, I knew right away that was Colonel Lownds. He looked at me and said, 'How you doing, Captain?' I said, 'Fine, Colonel.' He said, 'No.' He pulled me aside, away from the radio operator, and said, 'Mac, how you doing?' And I said, 'I'm hanging in there.' And he said, 'I know you will.' And he gave me a cigar. Just that touch. I knew what I'd known before, but reinforced the fact that we had a caring, concerned, intelligent, super Regimental Commander, who knew what the hell it was to 'take it,' 'take it,' 'take it' and bounce back to be a Marine!"[639]

On one of his walks through the KSCB during the Siege, Colonel Lownds came into the Ponderosa area containing D/1/26 and noticed the men's clothing was getting raggedy. He told George E. Myrick, "Corporal, you get clothes anyway you can get I'em!" "I said, 'Yes, Sir! We stole them off the comm. lines. So I got his shirt. A day or so later, Lownds was again visiting the area, walking around. He saw his shirt, but said nothing at the time. Returning, he simply said, 'Nice shirt, Corporal! You got my sox, too?' and he walked away."[640]

John Hargesheimer (A/3rd AT Bn) remembers that during the Siege, "I was sent to deliver a message to Col. Lownds. I had to go to the concrete bunker that was his headquarters and was led through the maze to where he was. He was sitting in a chair and he looked exhausted. He didn't look up when I delivered the envelope, but he did thank me. I immediately turned around and left, but it left a lasting impression on me of the enormous responsibility that this one man had to carry and I was humbled. After that experience I prayed every night during the siege for Col Lownds. If anyone needed God's help and strength it was Col. Lownds during the siege."[641]

While histories of Khe Sanh generally focus on General Giap and General Westmoreland, neither had much to do with Khe Sanh other than in general, strategic ways. It was Colonel Lownds, with his staff, that targeted 95% of all B-52 strikes and generally conducted the entire course of the battle.[642] It was Colonel Lownds who had to make the agonizing decisions to abandon Huong Hoa District, to deny entry by the Lao refugees after Lang Vei had been overrun, to place a perimeter of KSCB with machineguns and riflemen pointed into the appended FOB-3 compound (both of the latter due to the possibility of NVA agents which could assassinate Americans as they did on 4 May 1967 when Lang Vei was attacked and the CO and XO killed, which led to the construction of the "new" Lang Vei so that no indigenous were within the inner perimeter, reserved for Americans). Colonel Lownds had very deep feelings for the local Bru (who were prohibited from leaving the Khe Sanh area by the Vietnamese ARVN I Corps Commander, General Xuan Lam). He recalls, "There was an old guy in town. I used to have a bunch of cigars. I'd take a few and put a few in my pocket and stop at his hootch and talk with him—not talk with him—I'd just give him the cigars. He was an old-timer and I took a real liking to him. I often wondered what happened to him."[643]

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[637] Conversation with Thomas Buono, 11 June 1996.
[638] Craig W. Tourte, letter in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #59 (Fall, 2004) pp. 16-17.
[639] Comments of Col Radcliffe at Khe Sanh Reunion, 9-13 July 1997; reprinted in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #40 (Fall, 1997, p. 13.
[640] Conversation with George Myrick at Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, St. Louis, Mo., 13 July 1997.
[641] Letter from John M. Hargesheimer, 11 August 1997.
[642] Letter of Capt Mirza M. Baig to Col. F.C. Caldwell, HQMC Historical Branch, 23 December 1968, p. 7. [Baig was the Target Intelligence Officer for 26th Marines Regiment at the time].
[643] Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 01 September 1994.

"I took the driver and radio and went back in the hills to a village and saw a little boy standing there, naked and he couldn't speak any English and I couldn't speak any Bru. But he held up something. Now this was way back in the woods. He held it up. And as you know there's plenty of clay there. He made himself a clay helicopter to proportion. He had even gone on to the point of having the machineguns come out of the helicopter at the right spots. I got a picture at home. It's always impressed me that people say they were dumb. They're not dumb; they just never had the chance to have an education."[644]

Col Lownds was born 4 Oct 1920 in Holyoke, Massachusetts, and graduated in 1938 from Westerly High School, Westerly, Rhode Island, and earned a B.S. in agriculture in 1942 at the University of Rhode Island.[645] His father had served in the Army during World War I, but rarely talked about his experiences. "He was just like me: didn't want to impress people; all he would say was [I was] a good boy."[646] A Marine recruiter came to college and half a dozen young men joined the Marine Corps, including Lownds,[647] who was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in October, 1942 in the USMCR and shortly thereafter reported to 4th Marine Division as a Platoon Leader. He was promoted to 1/Lt in July, 1943. During World War II, he saw action as a Platoon Leader with Co. B , 1/24, 4th Marine Division, at Roi-Namur in the Marshall Islands, Saipan in the Marianas, and at Iwo Jima.[648] He was wounded on Saipan and Iwo Jima; one of the wounds involved a shot through the hip[649] and the other a concussion.

From July 1953 to February, 1954, he served as the Intelligence Officer of 9th Marine Regiment. "When I went in the 9th Marines, I wanted to be the "3" but Colonel [William Kenefick] Jones [the "father of Marine Corps Corps-level amphibious reconnaissance during WW II, later LtGen, and father of James Logan Jones, who served as a Captain at Khe Sanh in May, 1968, and later was Commandant of the Marine Corps, Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, and as Presidential Military Advisor to President Obama during his first term] said, 'No.' He had 'Pinky' Saunders and said, 'I'm not going to replace Pinky now, so I'll make you the '2.'"[650] It was at this time that several Privates and PFCs reported in as scouts—Harper Bohr, Jerry Hudson, and Earle Breeding—the first two the S-2 of Regiment and the latter CO of E/2/26 during the Siege.

He served in Korea with 1st Shore Party Bn of 1st Marine Division. He served as a staff officer at the Armed Forces Special Weapons [nuclear weapons] Project in November, 1954 until October 1957. After being promoted to LtCol in July, 1958, he served as Plans Officer of the 2nd Marine Division and from September, 1964 to July, 1965, as S-3 of 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade during the Santo Domingo involvement, Dominican Republic.[651] He was promoted to Col in July, 1965.

He married the former Jean C. Bruner of Cranston, RI and had 6 daughters and a son. Mrs. Lownds recalls that while Col Lownds was at Khe Sanh during the siege, one of their daughters was in 6th Grade and taunted by her classmates who said her father was a killer—because of the TV coverage. Mrs. Lownds was unaware of this at the time.[652] Even high-ranking officers and their families were not immune from the ill-treatment of many Americans at the time!

LETTER TO GENERAL RON CHRISTMAS, 04 September 2011, upon the death of Colonel Lownds and his invitation to preside at his funeral:

Dear General Christmas:

As I mentioned on the telephone, Colonel David E. Lownds had a profound effect on my life. Although I was assigned to 1/26 and not the regiment, for a long time, 1/26 was the only battalion at Khe Sanh and I came to know Colonel Lownds through informal conversation and the evening regiment briefings. Soon after his arrival at Khe Sanh on 12 August 1967, I noticed his presence at memorial services for a Marine from recon that had been killed while his team attempted an insertion and for a Marine who drowned in the nearby Rao Quan River. His concern and interest in the welfare of the Marines at Khe Sanh was plainly evident. He cared.

I recall an incident during the monsoon rainfall in which a recon team had completed about eight days of patrolling, had run out of water and food, and due to the weather, the helicopters couldn't extract them. 1/26 had alerted an infantry company to move to them and bring them back. (They were south of us, south of Route 9, as I recall). Knowing all the men in

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644 Col Lownds, remarks at Khe Sanh reunion, July, 1997, printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #40 (Fall, 1997), p. 15.
645 HQMC, Historical Branch, Biography, "Colonel David E. Lownds, USMC."
646 Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 02 October 1994.
647 Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 01 September 1994.
648 Biography, cited.
649 Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 25 August 1990.
650 Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 01 September 1994.
651 Biography, cited.
652 Conversation with Mrs. Jean Lownds, 12 July 1997.

the recon team, I had obtained permission and decided to accompany the patrol. Just as we were about to depart the combat base, the skies cleared and the helicopters were able to extract the team. Colonel Lownds suddenly appeared with our infantry patrol and informed us that the team had been successfully extracted and thanked us for preparing to rescue them. He didn't have to do that, of course. His presence there spoke volumes of his concern for his men.

I recall talking to a recon Marine (Kevin Macaulay) who overheard a conversation in the regimental bunker. It was a conversation between Colonel Lownds and the recon commander who was about to commit another team to replace one that had just been shot out. Obviously, we knew where the enemy was! Colonel Lownds told the recon commander, "Don't you care about your men? Why are you sending them to the place where we already know the enemy is located?"

Colonel Lownds had his humorous moments. At one regimental briefing, he had just returned from a visit to 3d Marine Division at Phu Bai, and he jokingly reported to the staff and officers gathered about his trip "to the wonderful world of 'Bai'." I can still hear him talking about how they "actually had sidewalks of wooden pallets so you don't get your boots muddy!" (laughs). "And then there was hot and cold running water–and flushing toilets!" (more laughs). "They actually had air-conditioning–but I don't think they'll ever get it as cool as we have it here at Khe Sanh!" (by now he was on a roll, and everyone was roaring!)

As I mentioned to you, General, I am firmly convinced that I am here today because of some very difficult, agonizing decisions that Colonel Lownds made during that Khe Sanh siege battle. In fact, had I given a short eulogy for him, I might have been tempted to use the text from John 10.10 ("I am come that they might have life, life in its abundance") and noted that while this may be strange to use for a Marine officer, it certainly reflected what Colonel Lownds accomplished. He made numerous decisions that all turned out right. Probably from his earlier duty as a regimental S-2 (in which he had, by the way, two very junior lieutenants who later served him as Captains during the siege–Jerry Judson, one of his S-2 scouts who was, during the siege b, his S-2, and Capt Earle Breeding, another scout who was the commander of E/2/26. Earle tells me that when 2/26 arrived at Khe Sanh just a few days before the battle erupted, the officers and staff of 2/26 were in the regimental bunker and Colonel Lownds said, "We will hold." And then spotting Earle, continued, "Won't we, Captain Breeding?" to the astonishment of all the officers of 2/26!))

For example, he placed battalion 1/9 at a blocking position to guard the approach to the combat base in an area (we called it the "Rock Quarry" because the Seabees quarried basalt and crushed it for a sub-base for repairing the airstrip in the fall of 1967), rather than on Hill 471 near the junction of the base access road and Route 9 near Khe Sanh village, an area where a recon team had been surrounded the very day the base was attacked. He also placed the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion on the eastern perimeter of the base after learning (from a North Vietnamese rallier) that the NVA attack plan indicated a major assault would come from that direction. He maintained the base perimeter when the Army's SOG unit, FOB-3, formed a large "bubble" on the perimeter. He even had .50 caliber guns and M60 machineguns pointed into the FOB-3 position, much to the consternation of the soldiers there! But they had hundreds of indigenous troops, and who knew how many NVA were among them? (In fact, one of the FOB-3 troops that worked for Special Projects, SFC Charles Minnicks, once told me that his point man was a NVA soldier they had captured on one of their patrols!). He made the agonized decision to abandon Khe Sanh village and withdraw the Marine CAC OSCAR unit as well as the District Headquarters since it was indefensible. He refused to be lured into the trap of dispatching a Marine contingency company to reinforce the Army Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei when it was overrun with tanks since aerial observers and signals intelligence indicated numerous ambush sites. He refused to admit the refugees from the Laotian BV-33 battalion that had been overrun by tanks and taken refuge at Lang Vei which was subsequently overrun by the same tanks. The Laotians had thrown down their arms at Lang Vei, much to the anger of the Special Forces from FOB-3 that went to rescue that position, and who knew how many North Vietnamese were among them?

For all these actions, he was severely criticized by some–by some who were in Khe Sanh village, by the press (for not permitting the Lao refugees on the combat base), by the soldiers of Lang Vei for not coming to their rescue, and so on. Yet, it was the correct decision and it meant that human life was maximized. That is why I was thinking of John 10.10 as a text for his funeral!

There were many other decisions–a platoon of the Combined Action Company OSCAR (O-2) had been planning to relocate to a position near Lang Vei, but that was stopped by Colonel Lownds. Had they gone ahead with their plans to relocate, they certainly would have been annihilated in the opening days of the battle. When the siege battle began and Khe Sanh village was attacked, an infantry company (D/1/26, led by Walt Chapman, the Commandant's son) had left the combat base and reached Hill 471, just a click away from the village, when Colonel Lownds recalled them. He had received intelligence that only a NVA battalion attacked the district headquarters but a whole NVA regiment was in ambush positions to snare any reinforcements. Again, he was able to save dozens of lives!

He had personally (sometimes, only by himself!) walked through the entire area, becoming totally familiar with all the approaches to the base. SFC Bill Craig, the Team Leader for the Special Forces camp once told me how he was very nervous with Colonel Lownds walking about the area near Lang Vei–by himself! The Colonel also thoroughly scouted the eastern approaches to the base, a flat terrain going north from Route 9, and the location of a regimental assault on the combat base on the night of 29Feb/01 Mar, and with the expert abilities of Major Mirza Munir Baig, his Target Intelligence Officer and also an expert in artillery, was able to decimate the attaching regiment so none closed on our wires.

On Marine Corps Birthday, 1967, I was on top of Hill 881-South, one of our outposts, a position captured during the 1967 Hill Fights at very great loss of life. It was a very foggy day, rainy, and very cold. Although I grew up in Wisconsin and spent 7 years of college and seminary in Minnesota, I can say that I never felt more cold than I did at Khe Sanh. We were at a high elevation, and it rained, perhaps seven inches a day, for several months. We could never get dry. Trenches and bunkers collapsed. Resupply was tenuous. Many of the 31 bridges over the only land access route to logistic bases to the east (Route 9) had washed-away. Aerial observers were unable to detect enemy encroachment. Patrols were wet, muddy, miserable. Bunkers collapsed. One bunker on the combat base being built for the regimental communications section collapsed, killing two short-timers due to crushed chests, while a dozen or so others received broken ankles, arms, legs. On Hill 881-South, being Marine Corps Birthday, two platoons were gathered in a formation; one platoon was out on patrol. We could hear a helicopter attempting to land, but which had no visible approach. Miraculously, it did land, and out came Colonel Lownds along with our 1/26 commander (LtCol James B. Wilkinson) and the artillery commander. They brought a birthday cake. We were all in a formation, and I recall–I even put in my daily diary–the Colonel mentioned something about how he always got together with a couple other Marines for this special day, "but I doubt they'll be coming to Khe Sanh to be with me today.! (The Colonel always had that humorous element). He then said, "You all soon will be in the American history books!" I don't recall any of the troops or officers there subsequently commenting on that. I guess we had been warned so many times earlier to expect an attack–the Vietnamese elections, the monsoons, etc.,, that it was almost like "crying wolf." But I took it seriously!

I remember a regimental briefing in mid-January, about ten days before the battle), in which the Colonel announced that all Marines would have their rifles with them while on the base, would wear helmets, and he wanted internal concertina. He also said "The forward observers can readily see where the command bunker is with all the antennas. Therefore, I want false bunkers built and false antennas erected. During the 1/26 battalion briefing the next morning, LtCol Wilkinson quipped, "The Colonel wants false antennas because his location is prominent. Therefore, instead of the regiment taking 50 rounds, the whole base will take 500 rounds!" How prophetic that all turned out to be!

General, I believe I already sent you a copy of my 2nd edition of Battalion of Kings. On pages 148-151, there is an extensive piece about Colonel Lownds, and I am attaching those pages in case you don't have that particular book at hand. There are numerous accounts of Colonel Lownds that reflect his personality and leadership.

Many years ago, while still on active duty, I was doing some research at the Marine Corps Historical Division, and Colonel Lownds picked me up one late afternoon, and drove me through all that horrendous DC traffic to his home. I seem to recall it was in Fairfax. His wife, Jean, prepared a wonderful supper and we had a most enjoyable time. He then drove me back to where I was staying. I think it was Ft. Myers, in a temporary officer quarters. His hospitality, warmth, will never be forgotten.

Over the years, we've maintained connection through letters, birthday and Christmas cards, and he even telephoned me a few times in recent years.

I've always thought that he should have become a General, perhaps even Commandant. Khe Sanh was so controversial–as was the entire Vietnam war, of course. The question of "who won," and who provided the crucial element (the resolve of the Marines, the B52s of the Air Force). Certainly, the politicians didn't! Yet, Khe Sanh was perhaps the bloodiest battle of the war (over 40,000 enemy and locals killed, nuclear weapons were considered, the JCS had to sign-off that we wouldn't fall, etc.). History books speak of Westmoreland and Giap, and yet it was Colonel Lownds and his staff that planned most of the Arc Light strikes (according to Mirza Baig). Colonel Lownds is the real hero (i.e., the one who got us through it all).

Fortunately, I was able to tell him, in writing and phone, how I feel, how I admire him, how I remain so grateful to him for bringing us all out of that horrible hell! Perhaps I've written too much, but even these words can't express the fullness of gratitude and admiration I have for this truly great man.

You can see why I was so honored and yet humbled by your gracious invitation.

Please convey to the rest of the family my sincerest condolences with the assurance you all remain in my prayers.

Semper Fidelis, Ray W. Stubbe

VARIOUS CONVERSATIONS, LETTERS, and EVENTS

FROM MAJ MIRZA M. BAIG:[653]

> There is no question that to Colonel Lownds goes the credit for the successful defense of Khe Sanh and for the destruction of two NVA divisions. To my mind, his greatest gift lay in his ability to use his staff. Recognizing that his offensive capability lay with his supporting arms, Colonel Lownds called upon the FSCC for more and greater efforts. Given enough supplies, he could have held indefinitely. This was not only his view, but the opinion of everyone, too.

CONVERSATION WITH EARLE BREEDING, Wednesday, 18 July 1984

Mentioned that when he was a Private in 1953, he was a scout for then Major Lownds, S-2 of 9th Marines.

CONVERSATION WITH KEVIN C. MAC AULAY, 12 August 1984 in his home

The regimental Commander for the 26th Marines, Colonel David Lownds was a very impressive figure—and that handle-bar moustache. He had a quiet way about him. We took incoming this one day and one 122mm rocket landed in the street between Bravo Company's company office [B Co, 3rd Recon Bn] and the entrance to the COC bunker. This brand-new 2nd Lieutenant [1/Lt Robert J. Mariz, KIA 30 Jan 68] had just exited the COC bunker, I guess after checking in with the Colonel. The Colonel didn't need any platoon commanders and was going to use him in an administrative post. His utilities were perfectly clean. His flak jacket was green where the rest of ours were red because of the clay. His helmet liner and helmet cover—they were perfectly green. His jungle boots were the bright green and the dark black that characterized jungle boots. And he walked out of the COC bunker after getting his assignment and walked right into the middle of this barrage. He was wounded extremely severely by this 122mm rocket, and we saw him laying on the ground and one of his feet at a totally impossible angle. His foot was almost severed, and there was a big pool of blood around him.

We were carrying our company clerk, a fellow by the name of Coleman, out of the company office. He had taken shrapnel from the same round that had hit this Second Lieutenant

Coleman had lost the major portion of all his fingers on both hands, plus he had a gaping wound over his right kidney, but I do believe that he survived. We ran Coleman up to CHARLIE MED and then we came back and there was a group of fellows around this poor Lieutenant. As we were loading him on to the stretcher, Colonel Lownds came up out of the COC bunker to take a look what was going on, and he spotted us there. Immediate recognition came upon his face as he saw this poor Lieutenant.

We picked up this Lieutenant and Colonel Lownds was watching us. Colonel Lownds looked over to us and yelled, "Hey, Marine, how's he doing?" And I looked back to Colonel Lownds and I shook my head, because as soon as we had brought him into the aid station, doctors took one look at him and said, "Put him over there," and it was the same place that they put Reather [PFC Wallace Lee Reather, Jr., KIA 27Jan68], so I knew at that point in time that he was dead.

And you could see the look that came across Colonel Lownds' face. You could see how visibly he was upset by this man's death. It was one of the few times that I had seen Colonel Lownds and had direct conversation with him. I had seen him numerous times in the COC bunker, but it was the first time that I had really spoken to him, and it just gave me the impression that the man really cared. Not only did he care about the entire base—the worry that he had on his mind that we had anywhere between ten to forty thousand NVA against us, but he was concerned about the individual. And he was visibly shaken by this man's death. And it impressed me because it showed me that—I admired Marine officers in the war and I thought they were all "John Wayne" or "Sergeant Striker charging up the Mount Suribachi in Iwo Jima" and it showed me that they were personally affected by our death.

CONVERSATION WITH EARLE BREEDING, Wednesday, 29 May 1985

When 2/26 arrived at Khe Sanh (17 January 1968), the officers assembled in the regimental COC for a briefing. Everything was highly classified[654] but they needed to be told everything anyway. Lownds said, "We must hold." Then he

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[653] Ltr from Mirza M. Baig, 23Dec68, HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh monograph comments file.

[654] LtGen Phillip B. Davidson, J-2 of MACV, upon visiting Colonel Lownds just before the siege erupted, mentioned: "Lownds had the information. As a matter of fact, I remembered it was posted openly in the command bunker, and I thought at the time, this is serious security violation because it was communications intelligence." [Conversation with Lt Gen Phillip B. Davidson, 19Apr89].

noticed Breeding sitting there. He then said, "Won't we, Captain Breeding?" Very surprised at being recognized, Earle simply said, "Sir, with ECHO Company, Khe Sanh will be held!" – much to the shocked looks of the others present.

LETTER FROM COL DAVID E. LOWNDS TO RAY W. STUBBE, 18 June 1990
[To be read to Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., reunion]

Dear Chaplain Stubbe:

First, I consider myself a warrior not a writer

As a famous General once said, 'Unhappily, I possess neither that eloquence of diction, that poetry of imagination, nor that brilliance of metaphor to tell you.." I, too, cannot express the deep feeling I have for those whom I served with at Khe Sanh.

It was a honor and privilege to command some of the finest Marines in our Corps' history.

A great deal was written about Khe Sanh – about the feasibility and desirability of defending it. Khe Sanh was important at that time and North Vietnam wanted it so much that they committed three divisions to try and overrun it. As you know they failed. Their defeat was made possible by a team with all members of the team giving a hundred percent effort.

To those who died at Khe Sanh, we say fear not that you died in vain for we caught the torch you passed to us and held it high. Marines rest

"Your warfare is long over
Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking
Dream of battle fields no more."

Some of you are or have suffered from Post Vietnam Syndrome and my prayers are with you for a complete recovery. May God stand between you and harm in all the empty places you may walk.

My sentiments are best expressed in a dispatch which was received in April, 1968, and which I quote in part: "...Marines of other years have said with pride, I was at Belleau Wood or I was at Tenaru, or Suribachi, or Inchon or at the Reservoir and well they may be proud, because our country has benefited and our Corps has flourished as a result of their deeds. Now this is a new group, those gallant Marines who can lift their heads and say, I was at Khe Sanh, knowing that through their indomitable conduct they have brought reassurance, confidence, and strength to the whole free world.

Khe Sanh was to have been the enemy's decisive strategic triumph. He vowed that he would overwhelm you. But he failed, and his failure at your brave hands is plain for everyone to see.

Have a wonderful reunion and may God bless you all.

Semper Fidelis, David E. Lownds, Colonel, USMC (ret)

CONVERSATION WITH DAVID E. LOWNDS, 265 August 1990

[*Speaks of his return trip to Iwo Jima during the summer of 1990*]

I was able to find the exact spot that I was shot at. I would guess within a foot or two, because I remembered it that well. I was in B Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Regiment. I got it through the hip.

CONVERSATION WITH DAVID E. LOWNDS, 01 September 1994

[*On whether he would be open for me to write up a biography on him*]

Well, I don't want to publicize myself. I don't know if that's right or not, but I just feel that there's plenty of other people in the world that people should know, not me.

...

I got a call last week from some First Sergeant that retired and he just wanted to let me know that he thought that I had gotten a bum rap, and the time he was in the Marine Corps he always said, If I saw a situation I didn't know quite how to handle, I'd say to myself, I wonder how Colonel Lownds would of done in this situation? That to me is the ultimate—gee, it makes you almost want to cry to think that after 25 years would think of you and call you on the phone and tell you that. It makes you think: what a wonderful organization it is that people would think to do that.

... I went to an Army Intelligence School in Fort Riley, Kansas, at one point in my career, when I was a Captain or a Major. Well, when I went in the Ninth Marines, I wanted to be the "3," because I had been "3" of the Second Marines. And Colonel [William Kenefick] Jones, who had the Ninth Marines at the time, said, No. He had "Pinky" Saunders. He said, I'm not going to replace Pinky now, so I'll make you the "2." [*He had on his staff, then Privates and PFCs, Jerry Hudson, Earle Breeding, and Harper Bohr. all who later served at Khe Sanh as Captains and Majors*]

[*Colonel Lownds was born in 1920, and his father served in World War I*]

[*He grew up in the Depression*] I was very fortunate. My dad never missed a day of work. He was a Superintendent of a mill, elastic web mill. He never missed a day's work. When everybody else was out of work, my dad was still working. So I guess one of my ambitions was—I always felt when I came in the Marine Corps, if I could make as much money as my dad made, which I think at that time was, $50.00 a week, I guess. If I could make that amount of money and get to be a Captain in the Marine Corps, I will have satisfied my life-time ambitions. I did a little better!

The recruiter came around to college, and there were about six or us that went. One of the guys got spinal meningitis in Quantico—he lived through it all right, and after he got out of the Marine Corps he was very successful as a financial—some kind of financial–. There were about six or seven of us: Oscar Morrell and Morey Flynn, Billy Rutledge, and a couple others—all went down the same time and joined up.

[*He was wounded twice, once on Saipan and once on Iwo Jima*]

I was probably in every scrap they had. I had a battalion in Panama when the rioting broke out there; that was the first time. General Mara had the Canal Zone at the time. Anyway, I was down there training and all of a sudden it broke out, so they just put me in an alert status. They never did anything, but I was all ready to go if they needed me. Then I went to the Dominican Republic. I don't even remember where else I went.

[*Mentions an old Brou man at Khe Sanh village*]

I used to always have a bunch of cigars. I'd take a few and put a few in my pocket and stop at his hooch and talk with him—not talk .. because he couldn't speak any English. But he was an old-timer and I took a real liking to him. I often wondered what happened to him.

CONVERSATION WITH DAVID E. LOWNDS, 02 October 1994

[*You had become intimately familiar with the whole area, possible storage sites and assembly sites, places of movement*]

Well, I patrolled by myself, with just a radio operator. I went out all the time. I was out most of the time. As a matter of fact, at one point, when it first started, I went out to look at the water point. I got three-quarters of the way there, heard something in the brush, so I headed back. somebody was there. Sometimes I'd even go out by myself. Nobody knew it. I didn't want to jeopardize anybody else. I went out quite frequently. Any commander needs to know the terrain he's fighting in. If he doesn't, he's in trouble. [*because of this*] I was able to pinpoint in my own mind the likely places of attack and also where the lines of departure would be. In other words, the terrain. As a matter of fact, when we had that B-52 strike: that came as a result—nobody wanted to give it to me—General Tompkins did, but Westmoreland and nobody else did. but that—and I told them, that's where they are and that's their line of departure, and if they're going to attack they're going to attack from there, and I want them. And they said, Well, that's too close to your lines. And I said, I don't give a damn how close they are. Yeah—it all paid off in the long run.

[*Your father had been in World War I. Did he ever comment on the similarities to the trenches at Khe Sanh?*]

No. My dad was not that type. He was getting pretty old by then, anyway. He never commented on it at all. He was just like me—didn't want to impress people. All he could say was that I was a good boy.

CONVERSATION WITH LOUIS RANN, 10 October 1994

Upon mentioning to him whether or not Colonel Lownds walked around the base during the siege: "O yeah, he wandered around. He was always checking up and walking around."

CONVERSATION WITH EARLE G. BREEDING, 29 October 1994

"The President called him on the telephone. ... I was talking to Lownds the last time I saw him, in Florida. I asked him a number of things. We had quite a talk.. I said, Colonel, to put us up on a hill like that with orders that no Listening Posts, no anything—out in front of the wire, to me goes against all the training I ever had. And he said: That was from higher up. And I said: Well, I want you to know if it hadn't been for a Listening Post we had out there, we may have been overrun. I had one out there, in violation of anybody's orders. And he said: I knew you would! That's all he said. That told me a lot right there."

CONVERSATION WITH FREDERICK MC EWAN, 30 October 1994

Mentioning that he had said that he and Colonel Lownds swam across the Rao Quan River:

Yeah, Colonel Lownds and I did that. It was the last steel bridge that they blew. I forget which company—we had one rifle company went out there with a battalion staff. Dave Lownds and I swam across that river and back, and it was a strong

river.[655] Of course we were both excellent swimmers and all that [?] to determine what it would take to rebuild that thing, and it was going to be a major engineer effort. The river was very deep. It wasn't fordable by a tracked vehicle.

[Frederick McEwan also mentioned this river crossing at the 1990 Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, 21 July 1990.]

CONVERSATION WITH KEVIN MAC AULAY, 30 March 1996

The day that we got hit, on the 21st [of January, 1968], he's [Capt Reynolds, CO of B Co, 3rd Recon Bn] putting a patrol together to go out and probe the area a thousand meters in front of the Rock Quarry. And Lownds said to Reynolds: Don't you like these people? Reynolds said: What do you mean? He said: We know that these people are out there, why send a 7-man recon team out there to get wiped-out to confirm that they're out there. Do we need bodies to confirm that they're there? What's why I love Lownds.

CONVERSATION WITH TOM BUONO, 11 June 1996

I was is [Lownds] driver for the first two weeks during the Siege.

[In response to statement, "people have said that Colonel Lownds stayed in his bunker"] Absolutely not. The morning the Siege started, Colonel Lownds was out and I had a hard time keeping up with him. As a matter of fact, we had mortars walking up main street right in front of Regimental Headquarters at about nine in the morning, and we had two guys hit. And he went out after them, and I followed him. The mortars were still walking towards us. And he grabbed one guy, and the other guy was limping towards him, and the other guy made it around the side of regimental headquarters, along the wall. And the last of the mortars hit. Luckily it stopped about five or six feet short of the edge of that wall, or else we would all have been fragmented that day. He was out moving around the base very, very quickly that morning and all the rest of that day. And the following two weeks that I was driving, he was out nd about. As a matter of fact, we were dodging sniper fire on the west perimeter of the base to check on the Forward Observers that were out there, right on the perimeter. So at one point we just abandoned the jeep. We crawled from bunker to bunker. At that time he had a handlebar moustache. In the Department of Defense film it shows him completely clean shaven.

One thing that he insisted on was that I shave every day. I think more than anything else he was trying to keep my spirits up because I was feeling pretty low at that point because I knew what the casualty figures were, what our ammo supply was like, and the forces that were surrounding us. I was right there in the middle of everything, hearing everything, and it was a pretty bleak picture.

He had a way of motivating you without actually having to give you the boot in the rear end. His comments, or the way he would say something, or his mannerisms. You knew exactly what he meant. As a matter of fact, the day after the Siege started, I was in Headquarters with him. We were just getting ready to go out. He asked me: How come you haven't shaved yet? And I said, Colonel, I don't have a razor. And he opened up his desk drawer and he pulled out one of those disposable razors and he said, Here, shave! Right here, Sir? He said, Yep, go ahead, you've dry shaved before haven't you? I said, Yes, Sir, I have. And I did. He said, I want you to at least look like a Marine. And I said, OK. So, I proceeded to dry shave. And we checked on some more of the different Commanding Officers. They were spread around the base—checked casualty reports, made it to the runway, checked the status there. It was a daily routine.

Most of Colonel Lownds' time was spent above ground. .. He was in the bunker when it was hit. He was in his cot, and it hit the wall where he was, and it threw him out of the cot.

I did have a Top Secret security clearance. I think that was one of the reasons they sent me over to the Colonel's bunker.

... I remember Christmas Eve.... at that time I think they knew [we were going to get hit]. From conversations I had with the people that were working in intelligence—that I more or less went through Basic [training] with, they got there [at Khe Sanh] before I did. Some us came to me with some pretty serious concern—almost felt like we were being "set up," In a sense, we were.

[*He then mentions he left KSCB on 19 Jan to go to Dong Ha*] to get two jeeps with special "sound sensitive equipment for being able to detect enemy movement. [*Perhaps they were for the electronic sensors or for signals intelligence*] We picked these up—that was one of my assignments from Colonel Lownds because of my security clearance. When we got back to the base the first confrontation on 881 had started and there was air support going on. [*This was INDIA Company, 3/26's patrol to 881-North*]. We picked them up—myself and another NCO. We came back the following morning. It is the most vivid memory I have. I had a splitting headache when we landed. When we landed, one of the whip antennas from the jeep got

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[655] Two Marines at Khe Sanh drowned while crossing the Rao Quan River: PFC John Robert Hinson (16Aug67) and LCPOL Marion Lee Meggs (16 Nov67).

caught in the rotor blade after we backed it out. The antenna on the jeep wasn't damaged and the sound equipment wasn't damaged, but the blade on the chopper was. So it was grounded.

[*Did you ever see Colonel Lownds get angry?*]

I can't ever remember seeing him actually lose his temper. But I can remember seeing that one look of panic on his face when the artillery dump went off and he saw the casing of a round coming towards a Marine on top of the bunker trying to rearrange sandbags. And as he was yelling to him it was almost like a look of panic on his face. I remember that so vividly because the guy dropped and rolled to his right, and that's the direction it was coming at him. And as he rolled to his right it impacted, and it dropped about three or four sandbags right off the top of the bunker, because he was right on the edge of the bunker. It missed him by inches. If it would of hit him it would have literally split him. And it all seemed like it happened in slow motion—very slow motion. I remember laying in a slit trench next to Colonel Lownds right outside headquarters that we had dug the first day as quickly as we could. It was only about ten inches deep. And incoming had come in, and the two of us are laying there, side by side, facing one another. And he was quite a bit taller than I am. And after the incoming subsided, he just literally stood up and picked me up with one hand and said, "Come on, we have work to do." He could see that I was pretty well shaken because the rounds were real close.

I was 19 at the time and pretty impressionable. I joined the Marine Corps with some pretty high expectations for myself, but when reality set in, it was a whole different b all game.

[*I never heard Colonel Lownds utter an off-color word*]

No, not at all. He expressed himself with the education and the intelligence that he had. He was able to stay away from vulgarity. There were times when his language might of gotten a little strong, but very, very seldom, where the average Marine, like myself, that was a common, everyday situation. He didn't express himself in that way at all. And even when situations seemed like they were taking a turn for the worse, he still had an inner character and a strength about him that I saw him display that really kinda gave everybody around him not only hope but the leadership that he displayed.

It disturbs me when he said that some people said he wasn't out and about the base. He was like a "shadow" the way he moved around the base. I kind of related it to "the Phantom," the movie that just came out. He moved. Sometimes he moved very openly and we'd go right down main street, right past the airfield, and right out the main gate and check the perimeter, see what's the situation out there—1/9, Special Forces. He very seldom had me stop the jeep, even for incoming rounds. There was only one or two situations that I can remember where he actually said, You'd better stop and take cover in the ditch.

REUNION AT ST. LOUIS, MO, 10-13 July 1997

[*During this reunion, Col David E. Lownds was present. Attendees also made a trip on 12 July to the nearby Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery where there were two large mass graves for the unidentifiable remains of the 25 Feb 1968 patrol and the 06 March 1968 crash of the C-123 that killed 43 USMC, 4 USAF, and 1 USN*] *At Jefferson Barracks, Col Lownds said:*

I speak for no individual. As a Commanding Officer, I speak for those who have no one to speak for them today. I want you to know—that although I don't know any of them personally—I may have patted them on the back, I may have shouted at them—but they were my brother, and they will always live within my heart, regardless of their name. And if you don't think a commander suffers when he loses people, you're sadly mistaken, because it goes deeply into your heart. It never leaves. The loss of one, single individual is more than enough. When it gets into a hundred, that's almost unbelievable. There are battles where thousands are lost. I can't imagine what the commander of the units must have felt. So I speak for all the brothers who died, and I know that they are all in our prayers."

At the general meeting of Khe Sanh veterans, several former Company Commanders came to the front (Earle Breeding, John Kaheny, and Mac Radcliffe. Col H.J.M. Radcliffe (CO, A/1/9 at Khe Sanh) then introduced Colonel Lownds:

RADCLIFFE: I remember the 8th of February. I was going to say something today at Jefferson Barracks, and I just couldn't do it. I took a helluva hit, as did my fellow Company Commanders here. I lost 50 some Marines that day, about 30% of my Company. ... When Colonel Lownds made h is comments today about what it means to lose one Marine, how it hurts—you can't show that when you're in command because you think you have to stand tall and not waver, and not be brushed aside by the horror of combat. You needed to lead by example. Let me tell you something nobody has ever heard. After Alfa got hit, two days later, after we reconstituted and tried to rebuild the Company, coming into my perimeter is some unknown individual with a radio operator. I told my troops: Nobody gets into the Company perimeter, I don't know about it. They called down and they said, We got somebody coming into y our area. I said, Stop him! We had a lot of press people and others coming in. I said, Who is it? They said, I don't know who he is, Sir. They said, He has a moustache and a cigar and has his radio operator with him. Well, I knew right away that was Colonel Lownds. He looked a me and he said, How you doing,

Captain? I said, Fine, Colonel. He said, No. He pulled me aside away from the radio operator, and he said, Mac, how you doing? And I said, I'm hanging in there. And he said, I know you will. And he gave me a cigar.

Just that touch, folks, just that touch. I knew what I'd known before, but reinforced the fact that we had a caring, concerned, intelligent, super Regimental Commander, who knew what the hell it was to 'take it,' 'take it,' 'take it,' and bounce back to be a Marine. God bless you!

COLONEL LOWNDS:

You know how to bring a grown man to tears, that's for sure. I've known these three men for many years now. They're all outstanding figures as everyone else in the Regiment is, as far as I'm concerned. Your courage, your determination, your fortitude, your obedience—everything about you, is outstanding. I think I could stand up here for a week and I could never tell you what you have meant to me.

You're a band of brothers. Well, in my case, I guess you'd say, A band of sons. I don't know that people ever really realize that if you're in command of a group of Marines, not necessarily in combat, when you go home at night, they really all sit down at the table with you. I mean, you can't take them out of our mind. You're always thinking of them. You take those people home with you at night. They're yours and you love them.



AT KHE SANH REUNION, 1997, ST. LOUIS, MO, AT GLEN RAPPOLD'S MEMORIAL TO KHE SANH AT HIS HOME. L-R: Ray W. Stubbe, Col David E. Lownds, Earle G. Breeding, and John Kaheny

Colonel Lownds then told of some incidents before and during the Siege, reflecting on the life and the humanity of the people that were there:

My sister, Pat, when she was a youngster—my dad served in World War I in the Army. At Christmas time he'd always tell the story—or used to start telling the story, and say, Pat, did I ever tell you about the guy in the Army that I served with? And she'd say, Dad, don't do it. And he'd say, Well, let me tell you this, I'll tell you once more, Pat. He said: The mail call'd come and they'd call out the names—Lownds, here; Majorsky, here; Smith, here; Jones, here. And this poor old Corporal or PC, with tears in his eyes, would say, No mail for me? He'd say, No. My sister—well, that was the end. She broke up.

Well, just to show you how things come around—probably none of you know this, or may be the gentleman's in the room today. I went out on Christmas Day and was walking the lines and I come beside this Marine who was sitting beside the road, crying. I asked him what was the matter? What is the matter, son? He said, Colonel, I just got here a few days ago, been in country now for about a month, and I haven't got any mail. And I said, Where have you been? He said, They keep transferring me.

Well, right away, tears come to my eyes, because I know what in the hell he was talking about because I had watched my sister cry many Christmases. So I went back to the CP and said, I don't care what happens, I don't care if you move heaven and earth, this man gets mail today! Not tomorrow, today! They came back, Bad weather for helicopters. I said, I don't care whether the helicopters are flying or not flying, bring it up by carrier pigeon. [They said], Well, they can't find it. [I said], Find it! Or, I'm going to see the General.

And eventually the young man got his mail. The story has always stuck with me.

I don't know whether it's true or not, so I'm not going to state it unequivocally, but I'd have to guess that you people in this room came the closest to B-52 strikes as anybody. the JCS at the time of Vietnam had a restriction that said you can't come within a thousand meters of the troops.[656] And that didn't quite satisfy me because I knew—or thought I knew—I guess I did, as it turns out—where their jump-off point would be. So I went to General Tompkins and said, I want a B-52 strike. He said, Well, they're already in the air. I said, I don't care. I had talked to the Air Force people to make sure that, Number One, they

[656] Note: This is a little over half a mile.

were accurate within 250 meters, and Number Two, that they could change it in the air. And he said, I'm sorry, Dave, I can't do it. He said, You're welcome to talk to General Westmoreland. He had a helluva Marine General down there [in Westmoreland's staff]. I don't know whether any of you eve served with him or knew him—John Chaisson. He was kind of the "3," the operations guy and a helluva officer, a Harvard graduate, intelligent as they come—rough as they come. I don't know it to be true, I understand that somebody gave him a bunch of sass at school when they were going to junior school, and he laid him out low, and kept his promotion down one year. And John said, I'll talk to General Westmoreland again. I said, I'd had about enough. I want something. How about you patch me through to the President. Oh! That shook them! So, to make a long story a little shorter, they finally said, OK, we'll change it; we'll put it where you want them. So I told them: 250 yards in front of the front lines by the early dawn. "Oh! Can't do it!" Said, How 'bout 500. I said, No, I want them 250. Said, We gotta go back to Washington. So they went back to Washington and Washington eventually gave us permission, so we got our B-52 strike. Incidentally, I'm told that that B-52 strike wiped out two battalions or the better part of a regiment.[657]

[Col Lownds then mentioned some stories about the Brou. Col Lownds had been known to walk the area around Khe Sanh by himself or with a radioman or one or two others on a frequent basis before the Siege. He gained much awareness of possible assembly points, places for strong points, mortar sites, etc., so that when the Siege began, he had a very good feel for the land. Bill Craig from the Army Special Forces at Lang Vei once remarked how critical they had been of what they regarded as reckless walking that the Colonel did. During his frequent walks through the area before the Siege, he came to know the Brou people, and like all who came in contact with them, felt deeply for them. There is official message traffic that relates how disturbed he was when the I Corps Commander, General Lam, permitted the 1200 Vietnamese at Khe Sanh Village to depart when the Siege began—on aircraft that had delivered many tons of ammo, but refused to permit the Brou to leave the area, saying, "There's no place in Vietnam for them," voicing the racism between Vietnamese and Montagnards. So they were forced to stay. Neither could he permit them inside the perimeter of the combat base—for several reasons: he couldn't provide shelter for them or food (we were frequently down to one C-ration a day ourselves, and without water for several days at a time) and it would have made for an insecure situation. Lang Vei had been attacked during the Battle of the Hills on 4 May 1967 when four Vietnamese who posed as CIDG recruits but were actually NVA, and who knifed the sentries on duty on the perimeter, permitting a large force to enter and kill the CO and XO, Captain Willoughby, CO of the Special Forces at the new Lang Vei camp, constructed in November-December, 1967, arranged that there would be no indigenous within the inner perimeter, only Americans. This explains why the Vietnamese and Brou from Khe Sanh Village were not allowed in the Combat Base perimeter, why the 37th ARVN Ranger Bn lines were a separate perimeter in front of our own lines, and why we had machineguns and perimeter facing in to the FOB-3 compound; in case the 15,000 NVA made a human wave" attack and put the local Brou in front of them as a "human shield" the question always was: would the Brou fire on their own people.

It must have therefore been a most agonizing and heart-wrenching decision for Colonel Lownds to keep the Brou he had come to love so deeply and respect so profoundly, outside our wires.]

Col Lownds continued—

I think that one thing that really impressed me: took the driver and the radio and went back in the hills to a village—a little boy standing there, naked, and he couldn't speak any English and I couldn't speak any Brou. But he held up something. Now this was way back in the woods. He held it up. And as you know there's plenty of clay there. He made himself a clay helicopter to proportion. And he had even gone on to the point of having the machineguns come out of the helicopter at the right spots. I got a picture at home. It's always impressed me that people say they were dumb. They're not dumb; they just never had the chance to have an education.

There was an old man—and everybody knows my cigar; I got one right here... Way back, I had taken a box of cigars and gave them to the S-1 and said, Put these cigars so when I run out, I got a box to fall back on. We got a bunch of incoming,. I was out of cigars. I needed a cigar to relax my nerves a little bit, so I said, Send me the "1." The "1" didn't come in because, unfortunately, he had been killed by that blast.[658] But the Top Secret clerk said, Your cigars were in the Top Secret safe, Colonel, and I hate to tell you this, but that blast took the Top Secret material out and took your cigars out. So I didn't have any cigars. Well, the people in the hills—on 881, if I'm not mistaken, sent me down a box.

It had been my habit, when I went down to Khe Sanh Village—there was an old Brou man—he must have been 70, 80, and he would be sitting on the front porch, and we'd stop the jeep, go in and light up a couple of cigars. We'd sit down. I'd give him one, I'd have one, and we'd smoke together. I got an awful lot of information from him. He couldn't speak any English

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[657] This particular incident relates to the regimental-size assault from Route 9 to the eastern perimeter of KSCB on 28/29Feb68 [See Lownds, Debrief, Tape #6369, and his testimony to the Electronic Battlefield Subcommittee, 1971, p. 87].

[658] 1/Lt Robert J. Mariz, KIA 30Jan68.

and I couldn't speak any Brou, but he had ways of transmitting stuff to me and he was really a big help. He was a grand old guy, and I always wonder what happened to him—I could never find out.

[As Colonel Lownds returned to his table, with the assembly standing and applauding, someone began singing "He's a Jolly God Fellow," and the thunderous singing continued.]

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CONVERSATION WITH MRS. JEAN LOWNDS at Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion, St. Louis, Mo. , 12 July 1997

Mrs. Lownds mentioned that while her husband, Colonel Lownds, was at Khe Sanh, his daughter , in 6th grade, was taunted by her classmates who said her father was a killer—because of the TV coverage. Mrs. Lownds (Jean) was unaware of this at the time.

CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE MYRICK, 13 July 1997

Colonel Lownds was visiting DELTA Company, 1/26, one day. The men were getting raggedy. He says, "Corporal, you get clothes any way you can get em." I said, "Yes, sir!" So we stole them off the comm lines. So I got his shirt on. A day or so later, Lownds was again visiting the area, walking around and he saw me wearing his shirt, but said nothing at the time. Returning, he simply said: "Nice shirt, Corporal!" He said, "You got my sox, too?" and walked away.

CONVERSATION WITH GARY DAHLHEIMER AND COLONEL DAVID E. LOWNDS, 13 July 1997

LOWNDS: For COFRAM to work properly they have to go up in the air. That's funny. I wrote a message to the Marine Corps about that. They came to me and said, What's your clearance? And I said, I worked for the atomic weapons business, so I probably have the highest clearance you probably have. And they said, Well, we're going to have to give you another clearance so we can talk to you about COFRAM. I said, What the hell do you mean you're going to have to give me another clearance? Here I am, the god dam Commander and you're telling me you can't talk to me about it unless—I told them to take the damn stuff and go home! They said, OK, fill out this form. I said, I'm not going to fill out a damn form; I just finished a tour in the armed forces special weapons project working in the atomic weapons with a clearance that would include anything, and if you don't want to believe it—I couldn't fill it out because my mind wouldn't let me concentrate enough to know where I was ten years ago. The war was going on!

STUBBE: You had pressing things right now.

LOWNDS: Right. So eventually they said, OK, we can talk about it. So I wrote a letter to the Marine Corps. I said, If you're going to do this kind of stuff, then teach it in the Basic School or the Senior course at Quantico—some place teach it, so a Commander, before he goes into combat knows. It's funny; the knowledge that you have to have is so secretive that the enemy has it before you do!

STUBBE: We had a battery on each side of the base that maybe could fire a high arc to support the other side.

LOWNDS: O, no, no. It would never have happened.

STUBBE: Would we have a B-52 strike on ourselves if indeed we got overrun?

LOWNDS: No, no. with the supporting fire we had, they couldn't have.

STUBBE: Did you have a BRAVO Command Post with the XO in case the Regiment took a direct hit?

LOWNDS: No, no. We'd all go together. Being in an area that small, there's no sense having—once they get inside an area that small, the only place it would be any good to have an alternate CP is if we were spread out so that if they hit this way. I guess as a matter of fact, I guess we did, because it would be good military thinking that we would have something like that and that it would be the 1/26 bunker.

LETTER FROM JOHN M. HARGESHEIMER, 11 August 1997

[Referring to Colonel Lownds' appearance at the Khe Sanh Veterans reunion 10-13 July 1997 at St. Louis, Mo,]

"I was impressed with Col Lownds. I've often wondered if he was ever going to attend a reunion and I was extremely pleased that he was at this one. I've always held him in high esteem since and during the siege. During the siege I was sent to deliver a message to Col. Lownds. I had to go to the concrete bunker that was his headquarters and was led through the maze to where he was. He was sitting in a chair and he looked exhausted. He didn't look up when I delivered the envelope but he did thank me. I immediately turned around and left but it left a lasting impression on me of the enormous responsibility that this one man had to carry and I was humbled. After that experience I prayed every night during the siege for Col. Lownds. If anyone needed God's help and strength it was Col Lownds during the siege."

FROM DIARY ENTRIES INCLUDED IN VARIOUS UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS ON KHE SANH:

EXCERPTS FROM: Stubbe, Ray William: *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, completed 01 Aril 1970, at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, SC

Monday, 21 August 1967

0900: Memorial service for Tallent. Conducted the service jointly with the Roman Catholic father. The altar was a small wooden table. We all assembled between the wings of the regimental mess hall, over 100 in attendance, including Captain Bohr, 1/Lt Hester, and Col Lownds. [p. 142]

Monday, 18 September 1967

It is nothing short of absolute misery in this rain! The basic problem seems to be how to stay dry. All the clothing gets wet and there's no way to dry it. I've got about three sets of utilities out on comm wire lines now; at least they're getting a good washing! It also gets too cold to take showers; the mud is ubiquitous, and my roof leaks! My clerk, Glen, and I, during a large rainfall, lifted up my old tent and put it on top, but it still leaks.

In the afternoon, went out on a projected three-day patrol to rescue a squad of 3rd recon who couldn't move due to immersion foot and immersion hand,. They are located at the old sites of Lang Kat (1) and (2), south of highway 9, south of the area of the bridge site previously manned by C/1/26. It was pouring, but Captain Greene, the Company "6," said we shouldn't wear our rain suit, but rather pack it for warmth at night. Went to the LSU to get a case of C-rats, and took out several meals. We started down the road and the rain ceased. We walked down the road leading past our dump, not the regular road used to take us into Khe Sanh ville. We got to Highway 9. The rivers were furiously rushing. A little further, we passed two goats; one was a baby. They stood right by the road, but didn't move when we approached. We passed a Brou village and continued about 1,000 meters when we received word to return to the combat base. The 45 minutes of clear weather had enabled the choppers to rescue the men, who also had been without chow for several days.

Colonel Lownds himself met us as we returned, arriving at the area just south of "C" Med, and explained why we had gone, but that how he was able to send the choppers there and took advantage of the situation, but how much he appreciated us having gone out there. [p. 271]

Sunday, 15 October 1967

Colonel Lownds mentioned he'd left the base for the first time recently and went to the fabulous "world of the Bai" (Meaning, Phu Bai). "There are things along the road, hard strips, on which you can walk without getting muddy! I walked in through a door, and there were sinks—and faucets. I'd forgotten what hot water was, and practically burned myself. I was afraid to take a shower for fear the loss of dirt would make me cold! They're trying to imitate us in Khe Sanh, however, with air conditioning, but can't make it quite as cold! Then there were flush toilets!" (After each phrase, appropriate laughter erupted from the officers and staff. This was during his remarks at the evening regimental meeting).

After the meeting, I mentioned to the Colonel that attendances were slightly lower because of all this rain. (He likes to be kept informed about my activities even though he's one command level above my own Commanding Officer). I mentioned I'd like to get into the bush with the troops—to get to know them better and to try to communicate to them that God loves and accepts them. He said he liked chaplains to do this. He indicated he will be getting a Roman Catholic chaplain who was formerly USN but got a bad fitness report and sued his Commanding Officer for defamation, so he was given a USNR commission. "I told the Division Chief of Staff, 'Thank you!" He continued that one of the most important things a chaplain could do is just to visit and show interest in the men. [pp. 317-318]

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EXCERPTS FROM STUBBE: *KHE SANH*, UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT, completed 05 June 1989

"Colonel Lownds didn't like the way our Vietnamese flew their helicopters. He was really pissed off about that. They flew sideways, and they come skimming across in the air. They wouldn't tell anybody they were coming or anything else because the first thing they did was throw all their comm gear out: they'd lighten their aircraft so they could do tricks with it." – [Comments of Billy Waugh to the author, 18Mar89.] [p. 185]

On 17 August 1967, Colonel Lownds permanently closed the Khe Sanh airstrip so that necessary repairs could be made. This action was to be significant later on for several reasons: not only was the airstrip itself strengthened for absolutely essential aircraft during the siege, it also afforded an opportunity to test means of supply delivery—LAPES (Low Altitude Parachute Extraction system) as well as air drops, which were to become so vital in early 1968. [p. 190]

Following the death of a recon Marine upon insertion into a zone, a memorial service was held the next day: The next day, 21 August 1967, at 0900H, a memorial service was conducted. the altar was a small, wooden table set within the U-shaped entrance of the regimental mess hall. There were over a hundred in attendance, including Capt Harper L. Bohr, Jr., 1/Lt Hester, and Col Lownds. At the time for the prayers, a floppy cloth bush hat was brought up and laid before the cross. One young Private who was standing in the formation wiped a tear from his eye. The sun was brightly shining. [p. 223]

On Saturday, 16 September 1967, all of 1/26 was issued rain gear—coat and trousers, and everyone was wearing them about the base, trying them out. But they were made of very flimsy plastic and soon burst open in the crotch and everywhere else. A few were able to obtain a special rain hat, which appeared like a monk's and was officially designated as "HAT, MANS, RAIN, COTTON, RUBBR COATED." Colonel Lownds wore his with the brim turned up on either side, like a cowboy hat. [p. 238]

On the death of Marion Lee Meggs: Colonel Lownds was furious that we now had two Marines drowned, both involving men who could not swim. [p. 243] *At the memorial service for Meggs* Colonel Lownds, LtCol Rann, Majs Bohr and Beall, were present along with so many men from the recon company that one remarked, "I haven't seen so many of B Company together at one time." [Author's Diary entry for 20Nov67] [p. 246]

On 15 January [1968], Major General Tompkins directed Colonel Lownds to:

A. Maintain constant aggressive patrolling on a 360° front;

B. Search to the west and south for suitable outpost locations;

C. Continue to improve outlying positions to ensure that they have sufficient tactical and protective wire and that the fields of fire are being constantly improved. Each position should have a full complement of weapons and a sufficient supply of Class I [Rations], III [Oil and lubricants], and V [ammunition] to withstand any attack;

D. As a master of urgency, improve, strengthen overhead fighting holes o include at least two layers of sand bags;

E. Prepare plans to receive reinforcements in increments of battalions;

F. Prepare counter-attack plans on basis of current forces and on basis of 1 – 3 additional battalions. [CG 3dMarDiv 150350Z/Jan68, Improvement of Combat Readiness, in 3dMarDiv Msgs Etc Jan68 Encl (31)] [p. 311]

When recon patrol NURSE made contact the night of 20/21 Jan 1968: As a result of this patrol's contact, Col Lownds made the tactical decision to hold Battalion 1/9 (when it later arrived) at the hill above the Rock Quarry instead of pushing them out to Hill 471 or 689 where he would rather have positioned them. The enemy was probably laying in wait for such a force. [Ltr of Maj Jerry E. Hudson, 25Jan69, in HQMC, HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file]. [p. 343]

On the day KSCB was attacked, Sunday, 21 January 1968: Col Lownds walked around the base to make a personal assessment of the damage even while the rounds were still cooking off. [CG III MAF 071000Z/Apr68 in III MAF SPECAT EXCLUSIVE file]. [p. 364]

The evening of 21 Jan 68: Colonel Lownds, INTRIGUE 6-ACTUAL, sent a message that from 1935H to 2035H, enemy soldiers were attesting to reconnoiter the wire of the south side of the combat base. During this period, the mortar fire on the combat base ceased. [3dMarDiv 211444Z/Jan68, Spot Rpt #202, in III MAF COC J&F 21/22Jan68 #280] [p. 367]

30Jan68: Colonel Lownds had just exited the regimental command bunker and was on the runway, bringing Gen Cushman and another General who were there to meet with him. The rocket landed about 12' away from Sgt Gidlof, wounding him in the arm, a little bit in the chest and the head, and a few others were slightly injured. Not so with 1/Lt Robert J. Mariz who had just checked in as one of the officers of the regiment's S-2 section. He had only been on Khe Sanh about 28 hours and only in Vietnam about 5 days, and was just in the process of checking-in. [Comments of Sgt David A. Gidhlof, Tape #2477] [p. 448]

Maximum use of Arc Light strikes was being made at Khe Sanh, and on 30 January, Col Lownds personally requested several specific targets be struck by Quick Run Strikes as soon as possible due to buildup of enemy forces during the previous 48 hours. [p. 451]

Months preceding the 21st of January, Colonel Lownds, Lieutenant Colonel Wilkinson, and their S-4s, had pleaded for material to build bunkers. The requests were denied: "..they seemed to get no priority because we were unable to get heavy lumber, any kind of heavy matting or, for a long time, even sand bags, until just before Khe Sanh was initially hit on the 21st of January." [Comments of Sgt Patrick J. Fitch, Tape #2498] [p. 473]

07Feb68, attack on Lang Vei: At 0150H, MajGen Rathvon McC Tompkins, Commanding General of 3d Marine Division, directed Col Lownds to employ COFRAM artillery against the enemy tanks at Lang Vei. [Comments of MajGen Tompkins, Tape #2535] [p. 511]

On 10 February, a message was sent from Col Lownds to 3d MarDiv summarizing all tank activity and sightings to that point, concluding: "Request whatever information available .. and our analysis of armor threat at Khe Sanh." [26MAR 101330Z/Feb68, Subj: Armor Threat at Khe Sanh, in 26MAR ComdC Feb68]./ [po. 525]

Concerning the refugees from the fall of Lang Vei (mainly Brou and survivors of the fall of BV-33 in Laos) that gathered outside the KSCB wires, and Col Lownds' refusal to let them on the base

"The decision to close the gates of this embattled fortress to the fleeing Vietnamese defenders of the fallen Lang Vei Special Forces camp was made by Khe Sanh's commander in sorrowful anguish and full awareness of the moral and ;political issues involved.

"I sat with Marine Col David E. Lownds in his combat command center through the dark hours between Wednesday and Thursday when that decision was made.

"No one in the crowded 20-by-20 foot banker .. was more aware than he of the conflict between human values and military necessity in which he was involved...

"'This,' said Lownds, a 47 year-old native of Holyoke, Mass., 'is a sticky one. There's no right answer. Here are these people whom we organized, trained, gave weapons to, and promised we would help defend themselves. They come to my gate and ask me to take them in. They have fought bravely on our side and have been overrun. They are hurt and beaten and they need help, and they've come here expecting to get it.

"'On the other hand, the fact is I don't know really who any of these people are. Even if most of them are Vietnamese and Montagnards who worked with our Special Forces people at Lang Vei, I know they are certainly infiltrated with VC. I can't let them in without also letting in several thousand civilians out there with whom I know even less about. Once they're in, I have to feed them, and I can't. I'm responsible for them. I can't be responsible for them on this base. I can't even spare men to watch them.

"'From a strictly military point of views, there's simply no problem. But the days of Teddy Roosevelt, when a military decision was that and nothing else, are long gone. This thing can come back to haunt me—all of us. If these people say when the chips were down, after getting us to fight for you, you wouldn't protect us, then the whole civil action business here goes down the drain.'" [Newbold Noyes, *The Washington Star*, in the Boston *Globe*, Thu, 22Feb68, pp. 32-33]. [p. 527]

08 Feb 68: In the midst of the bleakness of Khe Sanh at this time—the fall of Khe Sanh Village and the seat of government for the area, the fall of Lang Vei Special Forces Camp, the attacks on 861A and the 1/9 OP which were very costly but which nevertheless held, the problems of the thousands of refugees, the uncertainty of who would die next, tanks, the expected human-wave assault on the combat base by tens of thousands of frenzied foe, Col Lownds received the following message:

> For Colonel Lownds. For the past two weeks the eyes of the world have been on Khe Sanh, and particularly, the U.S. Marines tasked with the responsibility for its defense. The enemy has thus far been unable to claim even a small success despite continual attacks by fire on the combat base and ground attacks on outpost positions. This can only be attributed to the well organized defensive system, extreme alertness on the part of all units, extensive patrolling, and good intelligence. Though we mourn those who have gallantly given their lives in defense of this outpost of freedom, we who are directly involved, and the free world, know it has not been in vain. The main ground contest for Khe Sanh remains to be fought, and a continued effort of vigilance is still necessary. Your professional performance and the determination of every Marine, Soldier, Airman, and Seabee involved to win, are

the same denominators used wince 1775. Keep up the outstanding work. Well done! LtGen Cushman sends. [CG III MAF 080112Z/Feb68, in III MAF Outgoing SPECAT Exclusive File 04Feb-01Mar68 #5]

[p. 545]

11 Feb 1968: At 1145, one rocket impacted on a 106mm RR bunker (XD 848416) killing PVT Walter Michael Scott [26MAR 111105Z/Feb68, OPN SCOTLAND SITREP #411; 1/26 ComdC Feb68 S2/S3 Log 11Feb68 Ser # 15].. The regimental Adjutant reported two men killed and three other wounded, and 8 Recon reported three men wounded (and evacuated), all as a result of the heavy mortar and rocket attack at noon today [26MAR 111105Z/Feb68, OPN SCOTLAND SITREP #411]. Caught in the barrage of incoming was an Air Force C-130 aircraft, filled with passengers. Landing at 1130H, it was greeted with a barrage of incoming that lasted 20 minutes. The first round landed 15 feet from the plane, resulting I n the death of two passengers and serious wounds to the loadmaster. Among the passengers were all the company First Sergeants of 1/9 who were sent to obtain the payroll for the battalion. As a result of the hit, all five First Sergeants were medevaced. First Sgt Robert L. Turner, although evacuated to Delta Med at Dong Ha, died of his wounds.

Col Lownds raced to the scene and immediately took charge of rescue operations, placing himself in immediate proximity of the burning plane without benefit of protective clothing while exposed to flame, burning debris, and numerous explosions. He personally and diligently searched the wreckage for survivors. Locating one crew member, he pulled him from the wreckage in a vain attempt to save his life. Throughout the rescue efforts he continually exposed himself to the billowing flames directing operations and personally trying to extricate other crew members from the wreckage. [CG, III MAF 071000Z/Apr68, in III MAF SPECAT Exclusive file]. [p. 556]

12 Feb 1968. Col Lownds submitted the following estimated requirements for CAS (Close Air Support) of Khe Sanh:

1. Following considered minimum requirements for support of Khe Sanh Combat Base:
   A. Minimum of five flights fixed wing per hour on continuing basis.
   B. Minimum of four aircraft on strip alert.
   C. Minimum of six air observers on station. This HQ [3dMarDiv] will request four FAC aircraft from 7th AF representative Khe Sanh. Urgently require positioning of two USMC observation aircraft at Khe Sanh to provide immediate surveillance capability during periods of visibility

2 ... Current tank threat requires minimum of two flights of 5-inch ZUNI rockets be available throughout the day for immediate use.

3. Helicopter support has been adequate considering constraints imposed by weather and hostile fire. Minimum daily requirements fr resupply aircraft remain as follows:
   A. 4 CH-46
   B. 4 UH1E
   C. 2 UH-34
4. Recommend employment of additional TPQ-10 ASRT team for following reasons:
   A. MASS-3 ASRT team currently operating at maximum capability
   B. Priority targets continue to back up during period of heavy enemy activity.
   C. Rate of operation and personnel shortage does not allow sufficient time for adequate maintenance.
   D. Difficulties inherent with artillery resupply causes reliance on air ordnance above normal requirements.
   E. Sudden reliance on artillery alone would jeopardize defense of KSCB
   F. Air Force priority commitments outside of Khe Sanh AO preclude use of MSQ-77 (MILEY) as backup

[CG 3dMarDiv 130705Z/Feb68 to CG, III MAF, Air Support for Khe Sanh, in III MA Outgoing SPECAT Exclusive file 4Feb-1Mar68 #19].

23 Feb 1968: Colonel Lownds summarized the results of 5today's incioming barrage in a meswsage to MajGen Tompkins:

2. Runway cond fair with one large crater midfield 12' inboard from edge, 25 craters rockfilled, ramp—10 craters all field repaired. West taxiway to cargo ramp is closed. Runway was closed five times for short periods due to shrapnel. Lost two TAFDS fuel pumps due to enemy action. TACAN was down for a 30 min period. Both GCAs are operational. Tower has been moved underground due to receiving direct hits. Four fuel hoses for TAFDS destroyed, plus 1 bag punctured resulting in loss of 3000 gallons of AVGAS. All crash trucks are down for fighter repairs or in need of water. TRC-97 comm are operational but antennas and feed horn assys have extensive shrapnel damage. Due to both weather and high density of incoming only a limited amount of air traffic was received here at KSCB.

3. We have 1500 gallons of potable water on hand and 2000 gallons of non-potable. Pump is operational at a reduced rate. Equipment at this time there is no report of damaged tractors or forklifts, however, all tractors are down and three of seven forklifts are operational. No additional artillery pieces are down due to todays action. Received nine air drops today mostly Class I with some Class III. Drop zone is all cleared.

4. Supply Class I good shape. Class III, have no capability for bulk hoses, pump. No hand pumps available in LSU. However, some units have them. Class V. A fire broke out in ASP NR 3 where 1100 rds of 90mm, 560 rds of 106mm beehive and some 57mm recoilless rifle ammo. All the 90mm, 57mm and 500 rds of beehive 106mm were destroyed.

5. Aviation ordnance is in good shape. ASRT and DASC both in good working condition.

6. Air Force representative of Khe Sanh has indicated unless fires are suppressed the Air Force will n ot fly in any aircraft. We are using all assets available to suppress these fires. They have been requested by me to send Third MARDIV a message on this subject.

7. There has been an increased interest in Hill 950 all day. They have received mortar rounds, and there are indications of a buildup north of that position. I am keeping a close watch on it.

8. Only resupply to the hills conducted today was 1600 lbs of concertina to Hill 881. Hill 950 has 5 gallons of water remaining. Patrol sent out for water resupply encountered enemy and was turned back. [CG 3MarDiv 240808Z/Feb68, III MAF SPECAT Exclusive #21; 26MAR 231330Z/Feb68 in 26MAR ComdC Feb68].

[p. 594]

24 Feb 1968. A considerable number of casualties at C Med early this morning were waiting to be evacuated as soon as the fog lifted. Col Lownds was there, visiting the wounded. Col Lownds is a sensitive person, deeply concerned for the welfare of the Marines here. He is very unassuming, hardly distinguishable in a group, except for his well-developed moustache waxed into two points. He is frequently seen touring the lines, and is 47 (born 4 October 1920 in Holyoke MA). He served in WW II where he was wounded during the Marine landing on Saipan and again at Iwo Jima; he served in Korea and in the 1965 Dominican Republic Crisis. He has seven children at home and over 5,000 youngsters here at Khe Sanh. [Biographical data from New York *Times*, 12Feb68, p. 4] [p. 605]

25 Feb 1968: Col Lownds requested additional manning, so he could get out and destroy the approaching enemy forces:

> Over the past week we saw the enemy dig trenches, build fortifications and close to within 100 meters of the perimeter. I have utilized all of my assets in an endeavor to stop this closing in of the enemy. However a point has been reached where the only method I can see to stop the digging, fortifying and prevent the enemy from getting closer vantage points to KSCB is to go out and close with the enemy from these areas to spoil his attacking posture. However all of my battalions are committed to the [defense] of KSCB and are not available for either a spoiling or counterattack. In view of the above, it is requested that additional troops be provided to conduct spoiling/counterattack on the enemy and drive him away from the Khe Sanh Combat Base. [26MAR 251229Z/Feb68 to CG, 3dMarDiv, Reinforcement for Khe Sanh Combat Bse, in III MAF SPECAT EXCLUSIVE file #31]. [p. 633]

27 Feb 1968. The following message was received from MACV:

> P270938Z/Feb68
> FM: COMUSMACV
> TO: 26th MARINES
> INFO: COMUSMACV FWD, III M AF, 3D MAR DIV
> 1. YOU, YOUR MARINES, AND THE ASSOCIATED US ARMY AND VIETNAMESE TROOPS ARE AT THE CENTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE. YOU ARE FACED WITH A MILITARY CHALLENGE UNPRECEDENTED IN THIS WAR. I WANT YOU AND YOUR TROOPOS TO KNOW THAT I H AVE THE UTMOST CONFIDENCE IN YHOUR FIGHTING SPIRIT, PROFESSIONALISM, AND ALERTNESS. THESE ESSENTIAL QUALITIES, PLUS THE INDOMINABLE COURAGE OF THE US MARINES, ARE DESTINED TO PREVAIL OVER THE ENEMY. THE ENEMY WILL TRY EVERY TRICK IN THE BOOK BUT YOU WILL DEFEAT HIM AT EVERY TURN. BE ASSURED THAT THE CHAIN OF COMMAND IS WATCHING YOUR SITUATION HOUR-BY-HOUR AND PROVIDING YOU FIRE POWER NEVER BEFORE EQUALLED ON ANY BATTLEFIELD.
> 2. MY PERSONAL COMPLIMENTS AND BEST WISHES TO YOU.
> BT

[Copy of this message in 3dMarDiv Msgs Etc Fe b68 Encl (67)]. [p. 639]

26-29 Feb 1968

During 26-29 February, 14 U.S. Air Force C-130s landed on the KSCB.[659] In a personal message to Col Lownds, LtGen Robert E. Cushman, Jr., detailed the effort as the greatest air support in recorded military history.

> 1. I thought you might like to know that the support provided Khe Sanh by FMAW, 7th AF, and 7th Fleet has been greater than any other air support effort in history of warfare. From 22 Jan to 29 Feb, aircraft committed to Operation Niagara delivered 53,380 tons of ordnance, 2,500 secondary explosions and nearly 1,000 secondary fires were caused, 1,000 structures/bunkers were destroyed or damaged, and in excess of 100 trucks were destroyed. These statistics are attributed to only one-half of the 13,298 sorties flown, ordnance dropped by remaining sorties was under radar control due to weather, and the damage caused was not directly assessed.
> 2. This unprecedented support from the sky, combined with your masterful employment of ground weapons and units has caused the enemy to suffer heavy losses. You and your officers and men are making a great contribution – keep up the outstanding work. Warm regards to all. LtGen Cushman sends.[660]

[p. 645].

11 April 1968

Ensign Kux[661] wrote in his diary tonight[662]

> Col Lownds called me to his bunker tonite: (1) He's been relieved by Col Meyers. (2) The Army has vacated the blue sector and to provide security for our area, I assigned 6 men—starting tonite—to stand perimeter watch in front of our area. This was quite a shock—to realize that Army has left us open to Charlie (without even telling us so!) (3) This is the item that has me keyed up so much. Col Lownds asked how long it would take to completely tear up the airfield and load the panels on trucks for convoy out. He also wants a summary of all our equipment for airlift or road convoy. All this is to happen in two weeks—if word doesn't change again?

[p. 747]

AWARDS

On 23 May 1968, Col David E/. Lownds and SgtMaj Agrippa Waren Smith[663] received the Presidential Unit Citation from President Johnson on behalf of all who fought at Khe Sanh during the siege.

The 26th Marines also received (as a unit) the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm at a ceremony on 05 March 1970 as they prepared to depart Vietnam.[664] They also received the award twice previously—since both Third Marine Division and also III MAF also received the award. Rather than have the Marines wear a fourragere—which is worn if one's unit receives more than one of these awards—it was decided (by whom?) to accept only the award given to III MAF. Since the aware to the 26th Marines came after the acceptance of the III MAF award (was bestowed 27 July), this award was never "received." Again, the "rear" deemphasized the courageous Grunt, disallowing us this special distinction—the wearing of a fourragiere

There was a special award to those who were at Khe Sanh during the Siege: everyone became eligible for the individual award of the Combat Action Ribbon. The official notice indicated:

The SECNAV has established the Combat Action Ribbon .. which is intended to provide recognition of personnel .. who have actively participated and satisfactorily performed in combat action as a direct confrontation with the enemy ground or surface forces ... This aware is personal in concept, intended to be restrictive and, therefore, should be awarded only in case of participation and satisfactory performance in combat and not as a campaign ribbon ... All personnel within an advanced combat base, e.g., Khe Sanh or Camp Carroll are eligible in event a heavy attack occurs which threatens the entire base..[665]

NAVY CROSS file on Colonel Lownds:

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[659] AFCHO ltr 18Dec68, HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.
[660] CG III MAF 111412Z/Mar68, in III MAF SPECAT Exclusive file.
[661] OIC of CBMU-301 which maintained the runway during the siege.
[662] Kux, Diary, 11Apr68.
[663] SgtMaj of 1/9.
[664] ALMAR #47, May 1970; "Honors Bestowed on 26th Marines," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 6:11 (13Mar70) 1, 8.
[665] CMC 191509Z/Apr69, ALMAR MCBUL 1650 Combat Action Ribbon.

III MAF P 071000Z/Apr68
To: CG FMFPAC
Info: CG Third MarDiv
SPECAT EXCLUSIVE FOR LTGEN KRULAK FROM LTGEN CUSHMAN INFO MGEN TOMPKINS
1. I find it difficult to improve upon lucid accounts contained in Ref A. As Tommy says the situation was at the center of a scene watched by the world and every person has a feel for what went on during the most crucial days at KSCB. I have, however, made some independent inquiries in an attempt to isolate a few specific examples of Col Lownds heroic actions.
2. A specific example of his personal courage and dedication to duty occurred during the early morning hours of 21 January when the KSCB was subjected to an intense enemy rocket and mortar barrage. As the result of the firing the primary ammunition dump was hit almost immediately starting to burn and explode culminating in a tremendous explosion in mid-morning which scattered a large number of mortar rounds, artillery rounds and deadly explosive devices throughout the eastern end of the base. After the initial explosions Colonel Lownds amid continual enemy mortar and rocket fire toured the entire area of the still burning and exploding ammunition dump in order to make an immediate assessment of the damage to his positions and to calm his troops in their positions. He fearlessly and courageously walked over terrain, heavily littered with various explosive ordnance items, many of which were still exploding from heat generated by the burning dump. His dedication to duty in the face of grave danger to himself was of the highest order. Never faltering from this duty he was able to give accurate assessments of damages taking remedial action where required.
2. As another example of his cool courageous leadership and immediate response I am reminded of the Air Force C-130 aircraft which on 12 February crashed on the strip and was immediately engulfed in flames. Colonel Lownds raced to the scene of the accident and immediately took charge of rescue operations. To do so he placed himself in immediate proximity to the burning place without benefit of protective clothing while exposed to flame, burning debris and numerous explosions caused by the fire. He personally and deliberately searched the wreckage for survivors. Locating one crew member he pulled him from the wreckage in a vain attempt to save his life. Throughout the rescue efforts he continually exposed himself to the billowing flames directing operations and personally trying to extricate other crew members from the wreckage.
4. Still another specific example of his courage and indomitable spirit occurred on 23 February when KSCB was subjected to the heaviest mortar, rocket, and artillery barrage encountered. More than 1300 rounds were fired in an effort by the enemy to make the Combat Base untenable. Throughout this critical period, Colonel Lownds provided firm, decisive and highly professional leadership at all times demonstrating supreme coolness and calm despite constant landing of large caliber enemy rocket and artillery rounds on and in proximity to his CP bunker. Throughout this tremendous barrage Colonel Lownds coordinated accurate and timely counter fire using the complete spectrum of fire support available to him. His actions throughout undoubtedly saved many lives and significantly reduced the number of casualties suffered during the barrage.
5. Colonel Lownds' caliber of leadership which he has demonstrated throughout has been a constant source of inspiration to all who were there with him. Each man and officer there could look to him as the bulwark of the KSCB area of operations, continually providing dynamic leadership, exhibiting keen judgment and foresight in reaching the many decisions he had to make during each 24-hour period.

FOR ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION OF COLONEL LOWNDS AT KHE SANH DURING THE 1968 SIEGE BATTLE the following are relevant:

- Taped Historical Interview with Col Lownds on USMC Historical Tape # 2621, interviews 8-13 March 1968 on Khe Sanh Combat Base
- Debrief of Col Lownds, Tape #3139, interview at FMFPAC HQ, 29 July 1968
- Testimony, in *Hearings* before the Electronic Battlefield Subcommittee of the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, 91st Congress, 2nd Session, November 18, 19, and 24, 1970, *Investigation into Electronic Battlefield Program*, pp. 86–95.

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS, PRESENTATIONS, DOCUMENTS, cont.

NOTE ON MEMORIAL SERVICES CONDUCTED WHILE IN VIETNAM

RECON MEMORIAL SERVICE, Saturday, 20 April 1968

[*Stubbe*, Khe Sanh Chaplain, *unpublished manuscript, 01 Apr 1970, pp. 866-869, and Stubbe*: Khe Sanh, *unpublished manuscript, 07 Oct 1971, pp. 1313-1317*]

It rained during the late morning and it was very windy. It was to be the day of our arge recon memorial service. I tried to think of how the bush hats could be kept on the altar without blowing away and came up with the idea of putting some rope or comm wire around the top of the altar and putting the bush hats underneath.

There was a very large formation—about 250 men. They formed a large "U" in front of the altar. Eighteen men with helmets stood directly in front of the altar; Father (Bernie) Filmyer and I stood on the other wide of the altar. To one side of the altar was the American flag and to the other side were the church flag and the church pennant (they really wanted everything!) The Company Gunny stood in front of the church flag and pennant. the "B" Co. Gunny, Gunny Wells, read off the names, one by one. As he read a name, one of the eighteen Marines advanced, came to port arms, and cleared his weapon. The company "top" then took the weapon with his right hand sharply grasping the top, and twisting it, pointing it downwards, and thrust it into the ground, harshly. The man then, slowly and sadly—reverently—placed his helmet that he was wearing on top of the inverted rifle, stepped back, put on a soft cover he had in his utility trouser pocket, and walked away. This was done for all eighteen. It all took a lot of time, and the tragedy of it all seemed to sink in deeper and deeper as each new rifle was plunged into the earth. After this was done, the rifles and helmets still in place, the formation was dismissed and re-formed as a close group about the altar in a more informal manner. The trumpeter that I had arranged for at Division Band played Church Call, and the Father and I conducted the religious portion. Then came three volleys of fire from the firing squad and Taps by the bugler. The service was conducted for all those killed from the time I arrived at Khe Sanh, including Tallent and Meggs.

I wrote the parents of each of these eighteen with a two-page, single-spaced letter, and received some replies. The following is an answer to one of these replies:

Dear Mrs.—

Thank you for your letter of the 12th. It is indeed with great difficulty that one can ever justify the loss of a person, even when that loss is occasioned by sacrifice to a greater cause. Death and loss of people is indeed meaningless and inexplicable; it is the enemy of man, but conquered through our Lord Jesus Chris's resurrection.

Aside from all religious or political aspects of the war, one might say that value in life and a sense of meaning is only obtained through sacrifice and devotion to something or someone outside of oneself. In your case, this was to your son. But in his case, it was undoubtedly to service. This might have been an inner compulsion he felt to prove himself, as so many young men feel as part of growing up. I know your son was somewhat firm and when his mind was made up, that was the way it was going to be. ... Perhaps one of the reasons he was here was that he had just made up his mind to be heere, and nothing or nobody would shake him away from that.

He was medevaced to one of the hospital ships in November due to malaria, but returned to B Co. in December. He was part of a reconnaissance team called 'Dock Leaf' that experienced many close calls. In one week they were extracted from their reconnaissance zone of operations in an emergency situation, four times. Sometimes they were surrounded and could hear noises. After awhile some became quite jumpy and shaky. I believe your son was a little high strung and perhaps full of some degree of anxiety, as was the whole team.

This might have been the occasion of his request for baptism. Although my denomination usually requires a period of instruction prior to adult baptism, being in a combat zone in which people might at any time be killed, has caused me to baptize anyone who desires to be baptized. I do, of course, briefly explain the meaning of baptism, but I have always felt that baptism is what God is doing, not what men are doing, and as one of the early church councils declared, its efficacy is not affected by the baptizer or the person being baptized...

Mrs... I wish there were more I could write. I always visited the Reconnaissance area, and developed many passing friends there. They were always so friendly to me and seemed to appreciate my coming into their living areas and just listening to them and talking with them. Your son was one of those who always had a smile when I came around. I really didn't come to know him deeply, but I'[m sure he was living a life the way he felt he must. He had determination, courage, and conviction. He was friendly and kind. He suffered the same fears and temptations we all do. He was deeply appreciated as a friend by those close to and around him. In the end, it really isn't the quantity of life we live, but how we live the brief span of years we have. If he felt his life to be meaningful because of what he was doing, and if this gave him satisfaction, then at least we must be thankful for that.

Please be assured I remember all those men daily in my prayers. I was especially dismayed in that I had taken a picture of the baptism of your son, but my camera was stolen when I laid it down in order to help carry off some dead bodies to

graves registration. I would have treasured those photographs so much as I have no photograph of your son. But he does live in my memory and in the memories of those who were close to him...

Please be assured I will remember you personally in my prayers, that our Lord will comfort you in your grief. Faithfully yours...

COMMENTS IN MEMORIAL SERVICE BULLETIN FOR BRAVO COMPANY, THIRD RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION, Saturday, 20 April 1968, by Ray W. Stubbe, printed in worship bulletin:

> We remember today those who gave their lives while engaged in a life in maintaining Khe Sanh Combat Base. How they died is not as significant perhaps as how they lived. Personal sacrifice is indeed great when one voluntarily lays down his life to serve his brother in one glorious moment, but greater still is the daily sacrifice of living a life in service to others, a continual laying down of one's life, for it is not life itself that is significant, but how one lives. These men were called from us while performing their duties and engaged in the life of our community at Khe Sanh.
>
> That day-to-day life, concentrated in serving others, involved a daily encounter with all the anxieties and fears struck into our hearts by the enemy, whether on patrol or on the base during "incoming." With firmness and faith, dedication to daily duty, and personal perseverance, we all held fast, refusing to weaken.
>
> Khe Sanh represents the triumph of all the armed services contributing in concert the greatest they could– perhaps the greatest expenditure of B-52 strike bombs; vast numbers of soldiers. But the greatest single factor was the resolve of courage by our U.S. Marines and corpsmen, living under continual threat of attack, through the screeching rockets, with shocking and fear-inspiring cracks, splats, and whomps of artillery and mortars, day after day after day. We held firm; the base is still ours.
>
> These men lived such a life of firmness and resolve despite unnerving adversity. The determination of their lives is the factor determining the triumph of freedom over forces of intimidation, the battle we now fight.
>
> Our Lord, as the Good Shepherd, laid down His life for us that we might have a more abundant life. He has said that we live as branches in His vine, living by participating in His same life of self-giving love. It was in this context He said, "Greater love has no man than that a man lay down his life for his friend." The promise of such a life of service: "Where I am, there shall my servant be also." Such love never ends: "Having loved his own who were in the world, He loved them to the end," and then washes His disciples' feet. "God so loved the world that He gave.." That is the life these men lived; that is their accomplishment; that is their hope; that is their significance; that is their salvation.
>
> –Chaplain Stubbe

ADDITIONS

My lingering memory of that recon memorial service is the sadness I felt watching so many march off at the end of the ceremony, back to their area.

The formation: It must have been the first time the entire Bravo Company plus others from the recon battalion, gathered together. When Bravo Recon Company moved from Khe Sanh to Quang Tri Combat Base (which was just being built up), it was the first time that all the companies of the recon battalion were together, including a new, fifth company, ECHO Company, commanded by the former CO of A/1/26, Capt John Raymond. The Marines of Bravo Company had the adjacent 3d Shore Battalion and the Engineer Battalion dig a long slit trench, the only company of the Recon Battalion to do so. Those from Khe Sanh KNEW to dig!

FOR 1/26 CONDUCTED AT WUNDER BEACH, VIETNAM, 06 May 1968

[*From Stubbe,* Khe Sanh, *unpublished manuscript, 01 April 1970, pp. 885-888; and* Khe Sanh, *unpublished manuscript, 07 Oct 1971, pp. 1332-1335*]

I received a phone call from LT COLE of the 1/26 rear that a vehicle would pick me up to take me to Wunder Beach (used to be called Utah Beach) for the 1/26 memorial service this afternoon.

We rode down on a 6-by with three reporters (with long hair), civilian type and the Division memorial service bugler, LCPL RICHARDSON. The ride was described by one of the reporters as being the worst he has ever been on as far as dusty. We rode behind on Otter most of the way which kept us in a dense cloud of dust of the powdery type. One man sat next to me, closest to the front slowly had his scalp of hair changed to a brown, dusted appearance, and everyone had a face caked with

the powder, like make-up. I fortunately was wearing the wind goggles I had picked up from the Shore Party supply. It seemed to be no good to be able to keep the eyes open despite all the dust. It was as though we were all being "baptized under the cloud." Along the way, small children demanded "chop chop." "Hey, you—you, you, gimme chop chop!" (How different from the Brou Montagnard children cho used to cheer, jump, shout, and wave to us at Khe Sanh). The Montagnards aren't so sophisticated that they have become corrupt as yet. The new uniform I had put on last night and wore all last night due to the readiness condition of security, was now all dust and dirt.

Wunder Beach, a logistic area, is simply a series of bunkers, like a whole bunker city, mainly Army. Off the Beach was a Navy supply ship. All the 1/26 personnel are, of course, most glad to be here. The S-1 personnel are in a large tent rather than the cramped, hot, humid bunker they had occupied in Khe Sanh in which it was necessary to do contorted movements in order to move from one place to another. I mentioned to one man that it must be good to be in a relaxed atmosphere and relax a bit but he replied that they can't relax. He was referring to the paperwork. But I was referring to the battle situation. Perhaps he was new; perhaps he forgot all too soon how bad things once were. Work and needs of the moment suspended any feelings.

I received quite a few friendly greetings from many of the men. Sgt. Meeker was there. He said the hymnals were saved, but the pulpit that recon had made had been blown away. It was with a sense of relief that I saw him and the others; I knew they were relatively safe, or at least, they had made it through that horrible situation and had been spared. Not so the others we were to remember today. The effects, however, were still among the living. Sgt. Meeker mentioned that Capt. Pipes, the Bravo Co. Commander, had almost reached the stage of breaking up. He was a most conscientious person. (He later received the Silver Star for his bravery.) I recall how anxious he was when several of the Bravo Marines were killed or hit while receiving rounds in the trench. And that was before the two times Bravo patrols were hit so hard.

The chapel is a blown-out concrete structure,. The walls still stand, but the roof is gone. At the entrance is a bell tower with the bell. (We finally got it back to its consecrated use),. There is a sign that announced RC mass and Prot. Bible study. Lt Fitzgerald read off all the names. I discovered that Stanley Strong and Terrell from ":A" Co. were both killed on the plane crash at Khe Sanh. Two of the three men killed at the 106 bunker where I had remained the night before were CHISHOLM and LCPL MCKEEVER. (The latter was, I think, the one that was playing "I Heard it on the Grapevine"). 1/Lt Ben Long read the Epistle from Thessalonians, and enlisted representatives from the four letter companies read various parts of the liturgy. Chaplain Kelly gave the prayer and a sort homily, free-style, in which he emphasized that the real saints are those who enter the situations in which they sacrifice all, giving to others, sharing with others, giving of themselves, neglecting all their comforts, etc.

The men wore flak jackets and helmets. The altar had a haversack and E-tool.

I read the message I had prepared and mimeographed on the back of the recon memorial service of the 20th of April.

LtCol McEwan, the new 1/26 CO, gave a very brief comment at the very beginning of the service, and then explained he had to be off at a regimental meeting for tactical purposes. His remarks were read by the battalion XO, Major McCartney at te proper time during the memorial service:

> ..In this service, we have honored not only those who have died at Khe Sanh, but all those who were there. We have fulfilled our promise to the families of our Marines killed in action. Equally important for you men of this battalion is the fact you will always remember the Battle of Khe Sanh. You will live with it for the rest of your lives and in so doing, you will always remember those who gave their lives.
>
> To each of you men who were there, I have this to say. For three months, the eyes of the world looked at you and the enemy, who was unable to claim success. At another outpost and milestone in Vietnam's history, this same enemy claimed success at the battle of Dien Bien Phu and with it fell half of Vietnam. Had Khe Sanh fallen there would have been far reaching effects. But Khe Sanh held. You held Khe Sanh living in the trenches, constantly subjected to heavy bombardment by mortars, rockets, artillery, recoilless rifle and sniper fire. You held because of your fighting spirit and indomitable courage. May God bless you and return you safely home.[666]

There was an attendance of about 60. I was somewhat surprised that there was no formation as such, and only 60 out of the whole battalion. The photographers took pictures of me while reading the address; one later taped an interview for radio broadcast.

LETTER TO CDR HERBERT BERGSMA, CHC, USN, Sunday, 27 August 1978

[Chaplain Bergsma was writing the volume that focused on U.S. Navy Chaplains who served Marine Corps units in Vietnbam for the Marine Corps Historical series on the Vietnam War]

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[666] Printed in the *Khe Sanh Veteran*, 2:1 (Fall, 1995), p. 8.

Dear Chaplain Bergsma:

I am enclosing a few other items which I located since your visit some of which may be of interest to you. There are some copies of award citations from the microfilms in the library. I have indicated what reel they were from, e.g., "HD66." You may want to exercise some caution in these, however. For example, ... Furthermore, he organized a lay leader program and did not himself visit his battalion's positions although they were all ensconced in a very small area. I cannot vouch for the others.

I am also enclosing a brief piece entitled "The Author"[667] since you asked how I became interested in "recon" organizations. It is self-explanatory.

I located a brief piece on the "Chaplains Service Corps," and a roster of 3rd MarDiv chaplains of May68. The chapel in painting on the 17 Dec 1969 issue of *Family* looks just like the chapel which was at Ai Tu (or Quang Tri Combat Base).

The articles on Con Thien, Saigon City Map, packet of propaganda leaflets picked up around Quang Tri Combat Base I April, 1968, miscellaneous issues of *Sea Tiger*, and the *Navy Times* article on Rabbi Frankel, are all other items I am forwarding.

All items forwarded in this letter you may retain or dispose of as you see fit. The items which you took for use I would eventually like to have returned, unless you hear that I have died before then. A review of past biopsies of my kidney tissue by the histopathologuist now indicates that the favorable diagnosis which I received last year was erroneous, that I still do have glomerulonephritis, and I anticipate hospitalization in the near future.

There is one item I wanted to discuss with you, but forgot—what Vietnam did to chaplains. I am not the only one, but there are many of us even after ten years, who still have the lingering effects of a grief reaction, of which the powers that be in the chaplains division are totally insensitive. Some of this is reflected in "The Author" piece which is enclosed. But it goes much deeper; I still cannot forget many of my friends who died there.

A second effect on me personally has been the conscious obsessive-compulsive behavior of always putting everything in order since I "just know" that each day is going to be my last. Perhaps that is my heritage from Khe Sanh, where I used to visit and remain over night at places like Lang Vei or the CAC outposts or Khe Sanh village CAC or the hills like 950, all of which were overrun just prior to my arrival there, and I always kept a compass, extra C-rations, pencil flares, etc., because I just knew we'd be overrun and I might be the only survivor.

A third effect has been an irreconcilable ambivalence towards the Marine Corps generally. I deeply love and have very deep feelings towards the individual Marines, especially the lower ranking Ems—they shared their life with each other and with me. That's on the one hand. But the other hand are the policies by the USMC which made life so very awful for them, even killed them on numerous occasions. When that comm bunker collapsed on a Sunday because it was being built out of locally-obtained timbers vice appropriate bunker materials which were available at the time and place, used by Seabees to build the FOB portion of the Khe Sanh Combat Base—and two men were killed after shrieking in excruciating pain from crushed chests, I have always and with deep disgust and revulsion hated the fiscal austerity policies of the Marine Corps for killing my friends. There were also young officers like Jacques who led part of B/1/26 and 2 platoons were wiped out during the siege—because he wouldn't call on supporting fire, report enemy trenches encountered, etc. But it was all part of a pattern what was so manifest elsewhere—that Quantico had inculcated in these young men to earn their medals and assault positions—all at the expense of their men,. It happened numerous times, such as also with Meggs, as I chronicles in my long MSS. What this did to me was made me want to be with those who suffered—the Marines, but deeply detest their milieu. What do you write a young man who was called "Preacher" because he planned to enter the ministry, who was always of the highest moral standards, of B Co., 3rd Recon Bn, at Khe Sanh, who extended 3 times, and who finally sent me a taped message dated 1 July 1969, in which he stated that he now enjoyed killing the enemy because they had killed his friends, that he could no longer read his Bible or plan on church work since he felt his feelings and actions to be irreconcilable with being a Christian. I have it in exact quotation "This environment is anything but conducive to being a good Christian which you know,. I just can't—you know—pray and read the Bible and then go out on patrols as I do, because to me it's just being—I don't know—a sacrilegious or hypocritical or what, I can't do it. Because to me I'm making a mockery of something I like very much; I really do ... I just can't, you know, read the Bible and then turn around like this last patrol—I just got in the day before yesterday—we were at Mutter's Ridge, and we got about 7500 meters outside our LZ and it took a company of Grunts, six air strikes and about, Oh, five hours to get us out. We did a job on 'em, but I mean, I just can't go from something like this to come in, and then read—you know—that I should, you know I should love people and this, because I' ve seen too many guys get zomped over there, and I hate 'em; I really do."

On 23 December 1969, while getting out of my automobile, having just parked it and facing the "A" Company building at Parris Island, the 1084 series was returning from their morning PT and chanting as they ran:

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[667] "The Author" appears in Stubbe, *Pebbles* [Vol. 1], 2011, pp. 27-30.

DI: BLOOD EN GUTS
MEN; BLOOD EN GUTS
DI: KILL!
MEN: KILL!
DI: GRRRH!
MEN: GRRRH!
DI: KILL!
MEN: KILL!
DI: WOMEN!
MEN: WOMEN!
DI: CHILDREN!
MEN: CHILDREN!
DI: KILL!
MEN: KILL!
DI: GRRRH!
MEN: GRRRH!

A fourth effect is hardness of Marines. You live with those who go through long, excruciating patrols, eight hours up and down hills in hot, humid jungles, whipped by branches, tripping over vines, getting leeches on arms, legs, day after day, week after week, no showers in over 6 weeks (the company commander hands you a box of soap saying "Give this to the missionaries; we have no use of this here.")—then returning to their rat-infested and wet bunkers to stand watch, dig more trenches in the hard clay dirt, no hot food no electricity or candles and therefore no light after sunset to write letters or read them. Then you go to Parris Island and recruits are treated harshly and painfully—for their own good—for their survival—they'll die or crack up in battle, they and others too; it's a life-and-death matter. A mother calls and complains her son is in a place where he has to do exercise all day long, and you reply, "O, how good, now he'll become strong and be able to take care of himself.": And she pauses and then says, "Well, I'm gonna lie to the Red Cross and get him out of that place!" You can sympathesize with her feelings, her anguish. Reality is painful; life is death and is tragic. You condone the harshness even if it erodes and bruises the spirit of the man; you have seen where harshness prepares him so he'll return from the battle alive. Yet it does work against your humanizing concerns. You did also.

Another problem of Vietnam with chaplains was identification. You begin to get very close to your men; you are one of them; you feel their hurt, share their sorrows, comfort their spirits. To get close to them you "put off" special privilege and "humble yourself" in a truly kenotic manner (Phil 2.5-11) because you are participating in the life of Christ who did the same thing. But then you find yourself becoming "too much identified," accommodating to the world, seeing reality as they do.

Well, I write only my own heart. I returned from Vietnam with no more tears to shed, but still crying deeply inside my soul. I returned without a Purple Heart despite the ravages of Khe Sanh (and I didn't remain in any bunker or trench, but was always circulating around)—("Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night nor for the arrow that flieth at day; a thousand shall fall at thy side, ten thousand at thy right hand, but.."). Yes, I returned without a scratch, but I had died there. I returned with an eternally lasting respect for Marines and a deep love and desire to be with them, but was always revolted at their milieu and sitz-im-Leben. I have been shaken by participating in dehumanization in order that men might live! I have been grossly misunderstood by other chaplains who felt I liked being with Marines—the military aspects, that is—and who even called me a "Marine!" I felt like vomiting.

Of course, I don't feel the Chaplain Corps is really pastoral to its fellow chaplains anyway. After all, I submitted last year materials simply to help others. They were laughed at. But I learned out of that how people laughed at Christ because love, actions of love—in this case attempting to help others without expecting anything in return—they could all have been anonymous—was laughed at. Love is always regarded as being something stupid and foolish. What I learned out of all this is, I think, how God must feel at times!

Well, I didn't mean to digress so much, but simply to indicate some areas of the lasting effects of Vietnam on chaplains, not just me.

And, I'm really not bitter, although as I look over what I've written it may appear that way. If anything, I feel disappointed that for so many years the Chaplains Division kept ordering me to duty where I couldn't be part of a team ministry and where I had to serve alone, because I deeply need other chaplains. And I feel disappointed that I was continually ordered to Marine units when there were Captain chaplains who had never served with Marines, and the hurt became deeper and deeper since every time I saw Marines, I was confronted with death—even visually seeing dead Marines as I looked at Marines I was then

serving—and I had to go to my office or staterooms ad just have a big cry. And I feel disappointed that for so long I was denied the opportunity for serving in a parish situation with children and families or in a hospital situation.

What keeps me from becoming bitter is my deeper love of Christ and His love of me, His acceptance of me when the Chaplain Corps continually casts me off. The reason that really doesn't bother me is that I don't seek the favor of men, only God, and I know that I have served the Gospel and His Kingdom well.

It is really Christ living within me. I do not complain of my sufferings, but regard them as participating in the wounds of Christ. If my close identification with Marines caused me to be called a "Marine" by other chaplains, well, they did the same thing to Jesus when he associated with sinners and tax-collectors. If they think I go off into places on my own and not part of a team to lonely outposts in Khe Sanh or the peaks of Marble Mt. in DaNang, it's because no other chaplains went there, and well, Jesus did the same thing by not remaining in the temple, but going where the common people were. Of course all that was ten years ago—but the rejection apparently still is here. I have the awareness that it is not a rejection of me, but of Christ living in me, who has motivated me to love, forgive, proclaim his concern. If I jump out of airplanes in the past (but have not done so in over three years and do not plan to do so again) it was only to minister to SEALs, USMC force recon, ANGLICO, air delivery, etc. -people who never see a chaplain for fear of revealing that they went to see a chaplain, but who are people in need of Christ, and to paraphrase Paul, "I because all things to all men in order to win some to Christ." Perhaps none of these things were seen as being "proper role" of a chaplain. But my suffering is the suffering of Christ. "He who receives you receives me; he who rejects you rejects me." There is perhaps nothing more evident in the Bible than that the people of God suffer—it's a sign of being a disciple, as Jesus repeatedly told His disciples. So there is actually a joy in the suffering—it indicates to me my election and participation I Christ.

It's odd how other chaplains could feel me to be a "Marine" or that I enjoyed parachuting or going off by myself in dangerous places, or that I was not a "team man"—all absolute lies (and of course, the Devil himself is the author of all lies)

Since I may have only a very short time left to live here on earth—that's what the doctors now tell me—I see things in their proper perspective—as Heidegger voluminously wrote about in *Sein und Zeit*. The words of the psalmist ring true, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." [Ps 118.9] or that of Jeremiah, "Cursed be every man that trusteth in man." [Jer 17.5]. People may disappoint us and let us down. I still love them; I pray for our Corps—I would only strongly wish that those in high places could, at least for a short time, again experience the joy, the thrill, the life that comes, from being with the common, ordinary, enlistedman in honest confrontation in sharing in his life as on a ship (say and night), or in bunkers and foxholes. As Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me," [John 4.34] or I John, "We know we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren." [1 John 3.14]. So many of our Captain chaplains have been abstracted away from reality for so long—from ministry to the common man that Jesus was with—and who is with—that they no longer know anything anymore. That is tragic. So I am neither bitter nor angry. If anything I have a hope that they too may know love.

I am only, and have always only been in all my activities, a pastor—someone intensely concerned, sensitive to, and loving his people, doing things that will never get me any credit, being in relationships to people where they may even forget me but through which they grow. It's not me that's doing it; it is the Lord living in my and through me to others.

It is for these reasons that I did not become bitter or depressed when passed over; it is for these reasons that I continue to give totally in ministry here at Great lakes—having three worship services a Sunday, seeing up to 23 men a day in counseling or a type that is very draining, supervising and nurturing two other chaplains assigned me me—and will continue to give my all in ministry until I die or am transferred. It is for these reasons I was more than willing—even eager—to share with you any of my materials for your—our—project. I don't need to rake the credit for anything; I'm just overjoyed that the history is finally being written. What I am saying is that I no longer live for myself; I live only to love my fellowman as Christ's love lives in me.

I very much enjoyed our brief visit together. You are a person I would like to know more. You are very strong in the Word. The time is perhaps too short for me to say that I hope that someday we could serve together, but I do look forward to that day when we shall eternally be together in Christ. Then, all these distasteful, revolting aspects of my personal hurts-the derangements of my soul—will have been purified out, and there will be only Christ who really is my life—our life.

Your friend, Ray

LETTER TO BRIGADIER GENERAL E. H. SIMMONS, USMC, Director, Marine Corps History and Museums, Headquarters Marine Corps (Code HD), Washington, DC 20380 - 26 April 1982

[*Comments on draft manuscript for 1968 volume on the Vietnam War*]

Dear General Simmons:

First, permit me to express my deep appreciation for permitting me an advance look at the history of U.S. Navy chaplains with Marines in Vietnam, and the opportunity to make comments.

I am very much impressed with the overall book, and have only the following general comments on the book as a whole: unit identification of chaplains, pp. 287*ff*, while essential (especially since the biographical sketch volume of the history of Navy chaplains did not include specific units, but only, e.g., 3rd Marine Division) is somewhat defective since chaplains were usually rotated between various units; they usually spent six months with an infantry unit and six months with a support unit (at least in 3rd Marine Division, 1967-68). I don't know if it would be possible, but a more accurate listing of units with each chaplain might be worth the tremendous effort involved in such research. Second, there should be a listing of individual awards. This only follows the practice of previous volumes in the history of Navy chaplains, WW II and Korea, and especially since there were so very few: one MOH, no NCs, two SSs, 47 BSMs, etc. Finally, much of the 'general flavor' of the situations—the feeling of daily life, the organizational and ecclesiastical problems (e.g., whether to be in the rear or with one's unit in the field), and the stating of 'just what it was really like' is somewhat defective, but might be written down in other Vietnam era histories.

My specific comments relate entirely to what I am personally acquainted with: Khe Sanh. While literally thousands of pages could be written, the rather terse treatment on pp. 219-224, could be, I honestly believe, just a little more expanded due to the quite general interest then and now in that Battle. I would strongly suggest the following information which I have previously noted in my diaries written right at the time they happened and which I have consulted (so the information is not 'off the top of my head!'):

p. 220, first line, after 'Khe Sanh.' – Chaplains serving the approximately 6,000 Marines, Navy, and Army units included LCDR Walt Driscol, Roman Catholic, covering the combat base and outlying battalion areas, frequently riding on a motorcycle left by a local French priest, Father Poncet, when he was evacuated, for which Chaplain Driscoll received the title 'Hoodlum priest.' At other times, he rode the OTTER. Chaplain Ray Stubbe, attached to 1/26, covered the entire combat base with the exception of the small western section which was covered by Chaplain Roy O. Swift until 25 January and then Chaplain William Hampton, both of 3/26, and also covering the hill outposts. Chaplain Brett, 2/26, provided Roman Catholic coverage for his battalion situated at Hill 558 guarding the northwest approach to the combat base, and Hill 861AS, until his death, and then Chaplain Hollis Bond arrived as the 2/26 chaplain. Chaplain Jack Heino was situated with his battalion, 1/9, at the Rock Quarry area guarding the southwest approach to the combat base. Chaplain Chick Kelly arrived on 3 March (from 9th MAB) as the 1/26 chaplain, and provided Roman Catholic coverage [of the entire combat base] since Walt Driscoll was wounded and evacuated.

p. 220, paragraph 3, line 5, after 'the combat base.' There was, of course, some discrepancy in the amount of rounds. The official Sharp and Westmoreland report listed 1307, 26th Marines Regiment listed 1313, 1/26 counted 1407, and Major Smith and his deputy, Major Quamo, of the top secret FOB-3 base told chaplain Stubbe there were over 1700 rounds. Perhaps the discrepancy is attributed to one of the rounds touching off an ammunition supply detonating 1620 rounds of 90mm tank and 106mm recoilless rifle rounds. Living in an area approximately one-half mile wide and one and a half miles long, such high intensity of incoming could not help but produce casualties, among which was the Latter Day Saints lay-leader, First Lieutenant Kim Johnson, the Supply Officer of 1/26. The words of Isaiah, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows' were fulfilled by Chaplain Stubbe who wrote in his diary of another casualty of that day:

> The 106 recoilless bunker where I had slept one night took a hit in the hootch and then in the trench adjacent it, injuring one and killing four. The dead were not all together. There were pieces—arms, bodies. There was one less head than all the bodies; it was completely vanished. There were small pieces of flesh all over the place. I knew them all. Parts of one of the man's body hung out as I held him in my arms carrying him into the truck. A hand, an arm, a stringy piece of flesh with cloth caked with mud. The 106 gun was completely untouched, but three of my friends were gone—James, Mike, Gary. The letter to Gary's parents said I said prayers for Gary. What an understatement! I said many prayers; I am saying them still.

Chaplains Driscoll and Stubbe visited the Graves Registration area daily, saying prayers over the collected, filled plastic body bags. On 21 January, the log book entry was 12-68; on 21 February, it was 141-68; 129 killed. Actually, this number did not include those killed after being evacuated or those shot down in aircraft enroute the combat base. Chaplain Stubbe accumulated a listing of 475 killed as a result of the combat at Khe Sanh, January through April. [*Revised to 615 (20 Jan – 16 Apr, and an additional 396 for 17 Apr – 11 July, when the base was abandoned. All are listed with date and unit and circumstances on the book* Battalion of King, 2nd ed (2008)].

There was really no safe place. The artillery rounds left craters in which a man could stand and still be below the surface of the [surrounding] ground. Everyone kept moving about; very few remained fixed in their bunkers. Chaplain Stubbe, at the suggestion of Major Green of 1/26, conducted short worship services complete with Bible reading, prayer, homily, and

communion, jumping between rounds from bunker to bunker, trench to trench. During one two-day period, he conducted approximately fifty such worship services. (Ref: Bronze Star Citation). During one communion, the first Marine drank the entire contents of the chalice unlike other communions where each took a sit; all the other Marines followed suit, so Chaplain Stubbe merely consecrated the bottle itself.

Continuous blasts of incoming, anxiety over incoming when planes arrived, the ever-present and increasing population of large rats, the absence of any light after sunset other than for those in the command bunkers or those fortunate to have candles, a day or two without any water, the continuous talk of being overrun like the nearby Lang Vei Army Special Forces camp with Russian tanks, the clothes that were rotting off everyone, the reddish Khe Sanh mud that impregnated the pores of the skin (and soul!), the absence of 'fox hole' religion, the caring of each for each other, and the daily heroism by everyone that was the usual way of life, were the characteristics of those at Khe Sanh during the battle.

p. 220, after last sentence. Chaplain Hampton reported his service as a reliving of the early Christian experience of worshiping in catacombs, feeling the danger outside but the presence of the Lord in the earth.

Enlisted Marines assigned as clerks for the chaplains at Khe Sanh suffered great loss. In addition to Alexander Chin who was killed along with Father Brett, Chaplain Hampton lost his clerk, and Chaplain Stubbe, who was without a clerk at the beginning of the battle managed to have PFC Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer transferred to him as his clerk since the man had applied for Conscientious Objector status the previous month. Chaplain Stubbe had him work in the C Med area as a stretcher bearer, the area where both Chaplains Driscoll and Stubbe 'lived' at night. Spicer, a very mild-mannered person who sincerely desired no one be harmed frequently threw himself over the bodies of casualties during incoming, and during one evacuation of wounded, was fatally wounded himself, dying several days later after having been evacuated. This Marine, although a conscientious objector, was awarded the Navy Cross for his heroism. Chaplain Stubbe bears the wound in his soul: were it not for his actions, perhaps Spicer would be alive today.

Very respectfully, RAY W. STUBBE"

REMARKS FOR KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION, St. Louis, 14-18 July 1999

[Enclosed in Letter to Mr. Dick Peloquin, President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., 05 July 1999]

Soon after we started connecting as Khe Sanh Veterans, an excitement, a new joy, a new life energized many of us. A buddy with whom we had shared everything in desperate times, a buddy who perhaps saved our life or one we saved, a buddy thought to be dead—suddenly standing in front of us—to whom we rushed and hugged. Someone with whom we could talk who understood our experience. Someone who could fill in the missing links—like, whatever happened after I was evacuated? whatever happened to so-and-so? and the always dreaded, but pressing question: who didn't make it? Someone to write a letter to verify a VA claim for benefits. Someone to share our fears, tears, guilt and grief.

I always said that 'Ma Bell' and the US Postal Service should make a charitable donation to us for all the tens of thousands of telephone calls and letters our members generated.

The philosopher Hegel wrote that organizations are reflections of their leadership. Perhaps this explains why, when I first started gathering together those that had been at Khe Sanh—back in December, 1983, it was important to me to include everyone that had been there. I had been a chaplain there, caring for men of all units, not only doing my religious things, but sharing life, staying overnight and going on patrols with those in the various Marine outposts before the Siege battle—Hills 861, 881-South, 950, the Route 9 Bridge Site, the CAP OSCAR outpost just outside our base, and even the Lang Vei Special Forces camp—the S2 of both Regiment and my own Battalion were very apprehensive since Lang Vei had been overrun. I also had visited the local French coffee planter (Felix Poilane) and his family, the local Wycliffe Bible Translator missionaries (John and Carolyn Miller), and, through the CAC OSCAR Marines, was invited to many of the local Brú Montagnard ceremonies and family meals. I enjoyed the rice parts, but the bloodied pig meat—well, that, fortunately, some of the Marines with me enjoyed far more and I readily gave my portion to them. The rice wine mixed with various herbs—the Bru called it "Blang Kang"—was very potent, and drinking it from a straw along with one of the other Marines, caused strange sensations, indeed! What had these Marines gotten me into!?

But the point is that it is not unexpected that those first listings of members of our Khe Sanh Vets group included Marines from all the infantry units at Khe Sanh, arty, recon, the CAC OSCAR, Shore Party, Engineers, Motor T, ITT, LSU, Marine Air units, Navy Corpsmen and doctors, soldiers from FOB-3 and Lang Vei, and 3 civilians who had been at Khe Sanh for many years.

Our membership is based on a common experience of having been at Khe Sanh, rather than based on branch of service or even when they were at Khe Sanh has. This has made our organization unique. Numerous friendships have emerged between men who were there who didn't know each other then, and who were, in fact, in entirely different units. Numerous mini-reunions of members of platoons, recon, the 1967 Hill Battle vets, as well as gatherings for the 1984 New York Ticker

Tape Parade, have been made possible because of our policy of making our membership inclusive of all those who had been at Khe Sanh.

Our early reunions exhibited all the excitement of a new birth. Everything was simple. Earle Breeding passed a hat—or should I say, a "cover"—and at the 1988 meeting in Tampa where the 3d MarDiv Association was honoring the 20th anniversary of the Siege Battle at Khe Sanh. He was promptly designated our first Treasurer by popular acclaim! We had no dues for many, many years, and printed our magazine—our only real expense—with money people just donated. Our meetings consisted of several hours of sharing our stories—of Khe Sanh and since—and perhaps 15 minutes of business. here was no Board of Directors. Ernie Husted donated his time and that of his friends—to assemble and mail our newsletter to up to 500 people at the time. Although we met with 3dMarDiv Association—who sort of tolerated us like some wayward child—our men weren't really interested in tours, events, shows, banquets, but just relished the time together, now, with their friends. The reunion was a time to hug, shed a tear, a belly laugh, stories, life.

The American philosopher, Josiah Royce, observed that community exists for those who share a common past experience, usually of suffering, form communities. That certainly is true of us, who have been forged together on the anvil of the battlefield of Khe Sanh, in the heat and with the hammer of battle. We have all been shaped as different men because of our experience of what happened there.

Royce also noted that a common hope or vision for the future also cements communities together. I want to address, not our organization's past, nor what happened at Khe Sanh. What I wish to address is our future.

Obviously, one cannot attend one of these reunions without being aware of being together with some very special men. I have consistently told anyone who would listen, that as a group, I've never been with men who exhibited greater humanity, greater caring for others, greater dedication, even greater moral fiber, than those I knew at Khe Sanh and those I've come to know since who were also there that I didn't know at the time.

A wise man once observed that the gifts are in all the people, and that we affirm and validate people most when they know that we need them. In other words, those gifts are drawn out and made active when we are in need—as we all were during the various battles at Khe Sanh—when it was not uncommon to see men share give their last drops of water, hare their last cans of Cs, to dash out during incoming to pull a wounded man to safety. One very rugged, battle-hardened soldier at FOB-3 during the Siege battle pointed me to Lao refugees outside the wire. He said, "Padre, I'm not a religious man. Please say a few prayers for these people." In fact, while strengths always seem to divide people—strengths of power, money, intellect, popularity, even morality and piety—weaknesses and needs always join people together.

Perhaps that's why Marines are so tight—we had so little and faced so much—but it was always together. And we knew others depended on us, and we depended on others—or we wouldn't make it back alive. That's where *Semper Fidelis* is not just words, but a way of life. There's not a man sitting here, who very well might not be sitting here, were it not for the work of others. What will shape our future, pull is into the future?

Thanksgiving and gratitude will characterize our lives as we move into the future. Others have given us so much. So when you get a chance, say, "Thank you" to that pilot or air crewman, that artilleryman, that man who moved ammo during incoming, the doctor and the corpsman, the recon Marine who probably was one of a working party to move wounded on litters—maybe even you. Say "thank you" even if you don't know the man or what he did there. It doesn't matter. Everyone who was there was crucially important to the survival of all.

Our losses were great—much greater than the official regimental total of 204. In fact, if one adds up the totals from the various official subordinate battalions the total is 274, and if one adds those of the various other assorted units there—an additional 70, plus those from Operation Pegasus and up through 16 April—the date 1/9 departed—the total is 560 for the period 17 January - 16 April. We all know that our losses were great. But think for a moment how much greater they'd be if those 40,000 or more enemy surrounding us had finally been able to assault our base! We had, on 16 March 1968, a total of 6,475 American servicemen at Khe Sanh. Had it not been for our superior intelligence through the signal intercepts, newly-used electronic sensors, and other means, had it not been through the wise decisions of our commander to move B-52 strikes closer to us, and so on, had not everyone done their part to fight to hold our outposts on 861 and 861-Alfa and Hill 64, and bravely fought in Khe Sanh ville and Lang Vei inflicting such loss on the enemy—had it not been for all that, our losses might reasonably been in the thousands. Perhaps none of us would be sitting here tonight. It's really a very great miracle that we made it out alive. We need to thank a lot of people!

Then, compassion will also move our future actions. I'm always amazed at how our members continue to exhibit a humanity and morality and dedication to their community far exceeding what might be anticipated. I know, for example, of a former battalion commander at Khe Sanh who retired on Hilton Head Island after working in high, executive positions of Merrill Lynch in the years following Khe Sanh. What does he do? He volunteers for Meals-on-Wheels and Habitat-for-Humanity. Then there are two Sergeants from FOB-3 who single-handedly have returned to do good for the Bru mountain

people at Khe Sanh that we, as Americans, said we would protect—and then abandoned them. They have managed to built and stock dispensaries and schools, have had wells dug, distributed medical manuals so that the Bru can help themselves, distributed mosquito netting and good will. A former FOB-3 CO visited Vietnam last year, talked with the American ambassador and various Vietnamese officials and was able to cut through all the red tape to establish this Bru volunteer work on a more solid foundation. Then there is a former CAC OSCAR Marine who made his millions in contractor work, yet who also was the one who donated devices to search through the rubble on the collapsed interstate highway in the Bay Area of San Francisco from an earthquake to locate survivors. O, there are so many—many, many dozens of such stories, in fact, of our Khe Sanh vets who now do so much.

There are people who care for each other. A former B-52 crewman, John Gaston, once wrote that I seemed a little "down" and he promptly began sending me a hilarious, and somewhat "off color" monthly magazine to "cheer me up a little." He was a bouncer in a local bar. A few months ago the magazines stopped coming; I discovered he had died.

We all need each other. Someone once observed that the face of a friend is the face of God. Think about it. There have been many Khe Sanh reunions. A small handful has attended all or almost all of them. Many hundreds have attended one or two. As I look over the attendees, I see the following names: Bill BARKOWSKI, Tom BYSTROM, Clay ERNST, Les FAUREBRAC, Bill JABUSCH, Quiles JACOBS, James LAHR, Andy METTS, and Ernie FRANK. These are those who attended a reunion and who are no longer with us. The opportunity to embrace them, to give them a "thank you," to appreciate their life, is past. But it isn't past for those still with us right now, whom we can still hug, still share life and conversation, still appreciate.

And so I encourage us, not to be pushed forward by the past, but to be pulled forward into the future by our thanksgiving and gratitude, our compassion and care, our brotherly love. Love is not really, fundamentally, a thing, a noun, a feeling, an emotion; it is really a verb, an action, something done. And in the end, as the Jesuit John Powell noted, we will all be judged by our love—what we have done that has benefited others—the cop of water we did or did not give to a thirsty brother, the one imprisoned in fear and aloneness that we visited, the one who was naked in resources to survive or naked in knowing the value of his life that we did or did not visit and attend. [Matt 25.31ff] Our true wealth will be measured in what we have given to others, not received or accumulated.

As I look at our Khe Sanh vets, this is not something strange, something we must work at, a challenge. Almost everyone already is thankful, compassionate, loving, and serving. So like the ancient Greek poet, Pindar, the word for the day is, simply, "be who you are." Don't hide your gifts. The suffering and pains of the past only serve as windows and opportunities to see and help those in need. The angers and rage sometimes felt can be the energy to become involved in volunteer work.

Share your stories; share your life. Write down your past experiences and stories and get it out of your system; your children and others will probably be happy you did so. This will also help to form an accurate historical account for the future. Like the controversial Civil War, Vietnam will be studied for Centuries into the future. Help make what they understand to be our experience accurate by writing down your part in it. Contribute to our Khe Sanh magazine, which is a place to share feelings and thoughts and experiences, a place to contribute poems that express emotions, images, dreams. Most important, express your appreciation of each other. We don't have much time left to do so and the opportunity may never again be there.

I want to close by telling you that life is very, very fragile and very short, and very precious. There is a rather famous picture of me holding worship services at Khe Sanh during the siege with Hills 950 and 1015 in the background. I had a 100-degree fever at the time that photo was taken and soon thereafter collapsed. As I write this to you now, I have a 100-degree fever and it's been about a week from an emergency appendectomy I had. I am aware that my life is a matter of not being able to count on the next day—just as we all finally realized at Khe Sanh during the battles there.

Back in 1984, when I was getting ready to retire from the Chaplain Corps on 21 active years, I found myself hospitalized for six months in the nearby VA hospital. I was still on active duty, and was there for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder due mainly to grief that was finally coming out for all the dead I had personally known at Khe Sanh—many dozens of Marines and corpsmen—even my own enlisted assistant, and then, all the thousands of Bru that I didn't know personally, but knew as a tribe of caring, playful, innocent, and wonderful human beings. I needed time to grieve and fell into a deep depression that forced me to become grounded—depression can be a good thing, you know.

At the time, I reached out for people to embrace me; I felt so very lonely. My fellow chaplains, only a mile away at Great Lakes, mainly avoided me, like I was contaminated by some sort of plague. I compiled a listing of those I knew had been at Khe Sanh with me and shared it with the others on the list, out of a very painful need for connections with those who understand, know, and care. As they did back in Khe Sanh, these friends rallied, supported, embraced me. Then the miracle happened: they started connecting to each other. Gradually those listed added many more names. We came together in parades in New York City and Chicago, met in Tampa with 3d Marine Division Association in 1988, and I was privileged to get us incorporated officially, and thus began our organization.

We have met every year since, and have grown. We can never forget our past; we are unable to do so, actually, despite the well wishers of those who tell us to do that. How could we? But let us also look forward. The War Memorial here in Milwaukee has as its motto: "Let us honor the dead by serving the living."

God bless you all, my comrades, my friends.

Why don't you all, now, stand up. Go to the one Khe Sanh vet next to you, give a hug and say something like, "Thank you for saving my life; I wouldn't be here if it weren't for you," or something like that, and then go to someone else, and someone else. Do this for a few minutes and then go back to your seats. I can tell you, you're going to feel something very, very precious.

LETTER TO MRS. CONSTANCE GIBBONS, 24 October 2011

Dear Mrs. Gibbons:

...

I see by the Khe Sanh Directory that your husband was in the S-1 section of our battalion, 1/26. I still recall seeing the Adjutant himself in April, I think it was. He was, like all of us, so very gaunt; emaciated, nervous. (Was his name Fitzgerald? Right now, as I write this, I can't be sure of his name.) I recall he had a very large box of Purple Hearts for the Marines and Corpsmen of 1/26; I wondered why Division had sent them to Khe Sanh since the battalion would be moving, and now he had to transport all the Purple Hearts. There were hundreds of them! He and that box of Purple Hearts was a sort of icon, image, through which the reality of the siege battle was so apparent. It's a scene that I'[ll never forget.

It would be so easy to write something about how bad it was, and what happened to us, and the tragedy of war, and so on. Some of that might have its place, of course, and writing about it does help the writer–as well as readers who might be prompted to do the same, and thereby get what is buried deep within and place it in the light of day. I recall a very ancient Christian writing, the Gospel of Thomas, in which there is a statement: "If you take out what is inside of you, what is inside of you will heal you, but if you keep what is inside of you inside of you, what is inside of you will kill you."[668] I think that's a very helpful insight.

Hopefully, the attached might be of some use, perhaps not. It's where I am right now in dealing with the lingering legacies of the experiences of prolonged and intense combat, over forty years ago!

Sincerely,

...

A NOTE ON LIVING WITH THE LEGACY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF INTENSE, PROLONGED COMBAT

Perhaps for all of us who were at Khe Sanh during the Siege battle, the story of Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise echoes our own story. Despite the living conditions on Hills 861, 881-South, and other places at Khe Sanh, and despite the misery of monsoons, raging rivers, and torturous terrain, elephant grass and leeches, for the post part, the ravishing beauty we saw at Khe Sanh, cooler temperatures, separation from those in the rear–the Generals and their staffs along with their picky regulations, made our time there almost a Garden of Eden experience.

Then, suddenly, like someone flicking a light switch, all turned into horror, terror, desperation, isolation, living moment to moment with no assurance of another moment. Youthful innocence was lost forever; we could never again return to Paradise, "to the Garden" from which we felt expelled. We emerged completely changed and, for us, everything and everyone else also changed. It was hard to "fit in" and others made it even more difficult by despicable venomous hatred heaped on us as representatives of the war they hated. Just like Adam, we hid, only to hear the voice, "Adam, where are you?"[669] as our question. Where, indeed, were we?

Now the challenge became to live with it, to transform negatives into positives, using what we had learned to bring life to others, to make rational sense out of what was really irrational. Perhaps we had become more compassionate, more aware of injustices, more sensitive to what could injure. Perhaps our angers gave us energy to be productive. Perhaps we learned to put our pains and hurts into a wider context of meaning–a wider context of a larger understanding of what happened through talking with others who were with us and who saw things from a different perspective, through a wider context of friendships and a hopefully understanding family, through a wider context of an awareness of God's Presence and love for us, so that our dark pains became like dark clouds within a much greater sky. Perhaps the larger context became realizing that a few months of our life, however intense they were, were only a few months of a much larger life. Life and hopes, which had become narrowed, squeezed, pressed, crushed, needed greater containers, larger space. Everyone needs a container for their soul. Everyone needs their space. Everyone needs a good hug of embracing arms of love within which we feel a peace, like a

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[668] *Logion* 70.

[669] Gen 3.7.

hurt, crying child running into its mother's arms. The pain remains, but somehow, all is well. Perhaps the great context is our love for others, not as an emotion, but as an action–what we do, not what we feel. For the network of caring for others, that we knew in battle as we shared our last bits of C-ration, drops of water, as we dashed out to drag a wounded man to safety during incoming, all brought us closer together than blood relatives and gave us life. Humor and heroism in battle always emphasize life instead of death, courage that lives with the reality of fear but doesn't let it take control.

In the end, we can all become "wounded healers," as much as alcoholics and victims of abuse helping others with the same issues. We all have pieces of the whole, and when we come together, we become whole. Negatives are transformed into positives. In the end, we learn that God is on the cross of our pain and suffering, in our shadows and in our valleys.

–Ray William Stubbe, 24 October 2011

FLAG DAY PRAYER – 2014, Peck Pavilion, Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, Milwaukee WI, 13 June 2014

Dear Lord, our Father,
Your hand weaves us
    into families, communities, and a nation.
As we focus on our flag,
    we see a social fabric
        of many individual, colored threads
    of so many who gave so much.
REMINDING us:
    we are a nation richly blessed
    by You, that we might bless others,
        That our true wealth is what
            we have given away,
            not what we accumulate;
        And we will be remembered
            by how we've enriched others,
            not how we've enriched our self.
Our flag CALLS us to freedom, Your gift,
    from imprisoning self-seeking,
    and the opportunity to do good
        and do what is right.
Our flag COVERS caskets
    of our honored dead
        who lived to give, to bless,
            and to serve.
    We see colors,
        not the ugliness of death,
Our flag RALLIES us to action.
    It's red reminds us:
        There is no birth without blood
        No life without passion,
        No enrichment without sacrifice.
Our flag UNITES us:
    It's white is only pure
        as the presence of all colors.
    We are only strong as each person
        is affirmed, valued,
        and whose contribution
        enriches the whole.
    All depend on each other;
        give life to each other,
    As branches in a vine

Our flag EMBRACES AND INCLUDES.
As its blue field contains
a new constellation of stars
in the wide blue sky,
we are contained
in "true blue" loyalty
of each to each.
Open our eyes that we might be aware
of the needs of those around us,
Give us "strength equal to our tasks,
not tasks equal to our strengths,"
That we might serve others
in Your Presence
of the peace and power
of Your Holy Name. We pray. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE DEDICATION OF WAR DOG MEMORIAL STATUE, Sunday, 22 June 2014, Village Park, Menomonee Falls, WI

O Lord, our God, Creator of all life:
We thank You for your gift of war dogs.
Through them, O Lord, You bless us
with companionship, protection, and guidance
in dark times and dangerous places.
Through them, O Lord,
we know Your presence with us in all places.
Through their faithfulness and watchfulness
as companions on our way,
and by their ability to detect explosives
and the presence of enemy
You, O Lord, have saved thousands of lives.
Accept, O Lord, our gratitude,
and keep us always
in the protective peace and presence
of Your Holy Name.
We pray. AMEN.

REMARKS AT THE DEDICATION OF "JOURNEY OF SOULS" PAINTING BY STEVEN ALPERT BSED ON A PHOTOGRAPH BY LCPL PAULT. DARGAN, MARINE CORPS MUSEUM, QUANTICO VA, 16 JULY 2014

[Sent to Mr. Steve Alpert to be read in my absence]

We will never forget them. Their young faces are forever burned into our soul. Located in the center of the Khe Sanh combat base, sandwiched between the airstrip and the regimental headquarters, Bravo Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, received most of the incoming enemy rockets, mortars, and artillery from 21 January to 30 March 1968. Three weeks into the Siege battle, over 70 of the recon company of Marines at Khe Sanh had been wounded or killed. They retained their position rather than relocate to a safer portion of the combat base since they were the last defense to defend the Combat Operations Center of Regiment against a human wave attack by the approximately 40,000 North Vietnamese troops that surrounded Khe Sanh. Their resolve, undeterred by the ferocity of the battle, exhibited an unexcelled bravery as they daily continued to rescue comrades trapped in collapsed bunkers and trenches, for over two months. Some frantically scraped away the hard clay until their fingernails split and then gave mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to revive a trapped comrade. Daily, they faced death. The scene at Khe Sanh reminded one of the horrors of the trench warfare of World War I—pinned down in constant shelling, filth and rats.

We will never forget them. These young men gave their last drops of water to a thirsty comrade at a time when we were restricted to one canteen cup of water a day. They shared their C-rations at a time when we were down to one C-ration a day and burning-up calories while improving defensive positions and in the anxiety of the battle, day after day, week after

week, month after month. Loss of more than fifty pounds of body weight was not uncommon. These young men maintained their humor. During one of many hundreds of rocket attacks, one could overhear one Marine declare that the NVA gunners were piss-poor since they couldn't even hit their bunker, disregarding the fact that the rockets were fired from launchers over half a dozen miles away. Some pulled wounded buddies to safety during incoming. They exhibited an everyday heroism of the highest degree.

We will never forget them. Their young faces are burned forever into our soul. These Marines and Navy Corpsmen are perhaps the best group of men we have ever known,

LETTER TO MR. DAVID MARAGNI, 21 Oct 2014

Sometimes people ask me a question that appeared in Mahedy's book.

> [The central religious question to come out of the war is.. 'Where was God in Vietnam?' When vets ask it, the question carries an element of rage directed against God. Like most Americans, vets have a religious impulse buried deep within their souls. Like most of us, they believed in God; they also believed that God was good and just. But where was God at Khe Sanh?" (Mahedy, William P., *Out of the Night: The Spiritual Journey of Vietnam Vets.* New York: Ballentine Books, 1986, p. 125).]

That question never really arose in my soul, either while at Khe Sanh nor afterwards, for despite all the horror and terror and the darkness of the situation, I always felt the presence of our Lord. In fact, on Veterans Day, 11 November 2009, I was part of a panel in front of several hundred at the Chazin Art Museum on the campus of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wi. During the question and answer time, the last question was directed to me by a young girl sitting in the front row: "What was the spiritual condition of the men during the siege at Khe Sanh?" In my response, I indicated that over two dozen there at Khe Sanh during the siege battle, later became priests and ministers. In conversations with them, they said that they experienced God in the midst of all that horror and terror. I was reminded that great anti-slavery poem, "The Present Crisis," by James Russell Lowell, which includes the line: "and beyond the dim unknown / standeth God within the shadows / keeping watch above His own." I said, "God is with us in our darkest times. God is on the cross!" As I said that, I suddenly recalled holding the crucifix for a photograph taken by an interviewer from Wisconsin Public Television who wanted us Vietnam vets to hold something that was significant to us from Vietnam for our photograph. I then suddenly realized it was a metaphor of Khe Sanh during the siege: God with us, suffering with us, on the cross!

PRAYER, TENTH ANNIVERSARY/VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION
Hmong American Peace Academy, Milwaukee, WI, 07 November 2014

With thankful hearts, full of joy
we remember Your compassion, O Lord:
You deliver us from evil
places and people that diminish life.
You faithfully place us where we may live
and grow in peace
with family, friends, and teachers
that we may enjoy a full and rich life
You give us opportunities
beyond our dreams and expectations
to help one another
to appreciate Your goodness
and praise You,
to develop into persons
we might be.
Bless this gathering, O Lord:
these people and this school
That it continue to be a place of peace
where life abundant flourishes,
its teachers dedicated
to bless their students,

its students receptive to blessings
You give through this school,
their families, and their friends
That all may enjoy Your blessings of peace
in Your Holy Name—
We pray, AMEN

VETERANS DAY REMARKS AND PRAYER, 11 November 2014 – Milwaukee War Memorial, Milwaukee, WI

World War I began a hundred years ago this summer; Veterans Day has its origin in the ending of that war.

Upon entering the World War I National Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, one stands before a glass floor. Beneath that glass is a large map of the battlefield of that war, covered with poppies. There are so many, it is as impossible to count them as it would be to count the leaves through which we walk in autumn. A nearby guide quietly whispers that each poppy represents a thousand killed. There are actually 8,000 poppies representing over eight million soldiers killed. The war raged for three years before American soldiers entered it, and although American soldiers were in the war for only a little over a year, our loss was such that our Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C., however overwhelming it's loss makes us feel, would have to be over twice as large if the names of all those killed were listed.[670]

Veterans Day started as Armistice Day, following World War I. Thus, the celebration was not a remembrance of the horrors and casualties of that war, but of the Armistice, the peace. The Day was not focused on memories of war, but on peace. It was a declaration that we would be more drawn into the future than pushed by the past. There is work to be done! Peace is forward-looking, future-oriented. Life is not what happened to us in the past, but what we're going to do with it to make a better future, to take what we have learned and make a better world. Over 2,000 years ago, the citizens of Athens, Greece, pledged to give to their sons and daughters a better nation than what they received. The women who organized our Milwaukee War Memorial gave us a motto which says it all: "To honor the dead by serving the living."

With this background, let us pray:

O Lord, our God
In Your presence we know peace
though we be in battlefields
of turmoil and terror
swirling around us like a hurricane
destroying lives, hopes, dreams,
even our faith in You,
You miraculously and mysteriously
remain with us
like the eye of that hurricane,
a refuge of peace in the midst of war,
strength when our power and spirit wilt.
Centered in You,
we have peace,
as confidence, strength,
fulfillment and future
Centered in You,
we know peace,
not as the world gives,
but as only You can give:[671]
The world knows peace
as the absence of conflict,

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[670] Vietnam KIA 58,000. World War I American KIA 117,000. There were also seven times as many killed in World War II (408,000) and ten times as many killed in the Civil War (620,000) at a time when the US population was a tenth of what it now is, (U.S. population in 1860: 31,443,321; in 1870: 39,818,449; in 1865 (by interpolation): 35,630,806. US population on 26 August 2013: 316,539,860.

[671] Jn 14.27.

war, danger,
turmoil and threat.
Your peace brings blessing,
strength, power,
fullness of life, assurance,
hope and a future
so a soldier can have peace
in the midst of desperate battle.
The world knows peace
as a balance of terror,
"mutually ensured destruction,"
as slavery
resulting from imposed force and fear;
You give us peace
as a living, compelling,
dynamic force of life.
We ask Your blessing on our veterans
and their families
that life may grow
into fullness, wholeness,
and completion
As You draw us into Your future
may the power of Your peace
flowing from You
like ripples radiating
from a pebble tossed on water–
make us an instrument of Your peace
in the power of Your Holy Name,
We pray. AMEN.

DEDICATION PRAYER; GARY G. WETZEL MEMORIAL
War Memorial, Milwaukee, WI, 25 March 2015. [Gary Wetzel is a Medal of Honor recipient]

INVOCATION:
Our Father:
Today we honor Your servant
and our brother, Gary G. Wetzel.
You, O Lord, empty Yourself to serve us[672]
that we might live life in its fullness,[673]
In Gary we see an image
of Your image[674] of love and life:[675]
Despite loss of an arm,
and disregarding his own safety
he rescued others,
His life reflects Your consistent emphasis:
greatest are those who serve[676]

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[672] Phil 2.5-11
[673] John 10,.10.
[674] We are created in the image of God, Gen 1.27.
[675] "Pops" Donald Turek, Director of the Milwaukee War Memorial in the late 1980s, often remarked, "The closest we can get to God is to see His face in the face of our brother." *Cf.* Gen. 33.10, Jacob upon seeing Esau, "truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God.."

and no greater love is known
than to lay down life that others might live.[677]
Long after all of us are gone,
Our children's children's children
in far-off generations yet to be
will see this granite monument and ask,
"What does this stone mean?[678]
Who is Gary G Wetzel?"
As his story is retold, may his life inspire
service of others.
For Your Presence, always and everywhere,[679]
becomes a blessing and is experienced
as we care for each other.
Help us, O Lord, to catch this healing vision;[680]
move us to serve others,
living to Your glory in Your Holy Name,
We pray. Amen.

BENEDICTION: (First used at Veterans Day Banquet, War Memorial, 11 Nov 2012)

May the strong arm of the LORD
protect you from all harm.
May the right hand of the LORD
guide you in serving others.
May you see God in the face of your friend.
May the gracious Presence of the Lord
still your troubled waters.
May our Lord's peace make you whole
and equip you to
do justice, help the needy,
and be an oasis of blessing and life.
May the Lord direct you
into paths of nourishment,
strength and peace
in His Holy Name. AMEN.

(If asked to give a Table Grace, might give the following, first given at Miller-Coors and Veterans Day Banquet, 11 Nov 2013):

You open Your hand, O Lord,
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.[681]
As we gratefully acknowledge Your gift
of this food for our nourishment, we know
we do not live by bread alone,[682]
but by all Your actions[683] which nourish us.

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[676] Luke 22.26: "Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves." *Cf.* Luke 22.27, Matt 20.28, and Mk 10.45.

[677] Jn 15.13: "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. (ESV).

[678] Josh 4.21: " And he said to the people of Israel, "When your children ask their fathers in times to come, 'What do these stones mean?'" (ESV)

[679] *Cf.* Jer 23.24, Eph 4.6 & 10, Col. 1.17, Acts 17.28, and Ps 139.7-9.

[680] Biblical testimony emphasizes the healing comes through a vision (Prov. 29.18, Ex 3.2, and Jn 3.14,1 Kings 19.11, Job chapters 38 through 42.6, Matt 17.2 and parallels, Luke 5.8, etc.

[681] Ps 145.16.

[682] Matt 4.4, Lk 4.4.

As we eat this food, our soul feeds
on the strength of friends and family,
Your love, beauty, and peace.
Today, we especially thank You (*for Gary Wetzel and*)
for those who serve and have served
our nation,
who guard and protect us
that all may have life–life in its fullness.[684]
Bless us, we pray,
that we may be Your food to nourish others
through our presence, words, and actions.
Keep us
in the power of Your Holy Name we pray. AMEN.

PRAYER AND REMARKS AT INTERNMENT OF SP4 TERRENCE LEE SUND, Wisconsin Memorial Park, 08 August 2015

[*Mr. Conto, a Vietnam veteran, was compiling a listing of all KIA Wisconsin Vietnam veterans and where they were buried. In the process, he discovered this man's remains, along with his mother's, in a warehouse on a shelf, not having been buried., I was requested to provide the service for his internment. Mr. Conto subsequently discovered many additional remains of Vietnam vets who had not been buried*]

INTRODUCTION:

We meet today to place our brother, Terrence Lee SUND in his final resting place along with his mother, Magdalene.

A SP-4 with "B" Co., 12th Infantry, 4th Infantry Div, Terrence was killed in action in Kontum Province, Vietnam, on 6 December 1967, after serving in Vietnam five months. He was 20.

Even after 48 years, our bond remains. We care for each other. We remember. We do not forget.

PRAYER Let us pray:

O God, your days are without end and your mercies cannot be counted. Make us aware that Your gift to us of human life which is precious, fragile, and short. Let Your Holy Spirit lead us in serving Your will of love, justice, and bringing fullness of life to each other, so that, when we shall have served in our generation, we may be gathered with our families, having the testimony of a good conscience, cleansed by our Savior, in the confidence of a certain faith, in the comfort of a holy hope, in favor with You, our God, and in peace with all humanity through Jesus Christ, our Lord, AMEN.

SCRIPTURE (A reading from the 7th Chapter of the Book of Revelation, verses 9 through 17:

I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ... Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" ... "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ... the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water *of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*"

RFMARKS:

The end of the story is not the battlefield of terror and horror, of desperate situations we experience and endure, or our passage through the "great ordeal" of living life itself. Our destiny lies with the great heavenly crowd, which no one can number, cleansed from all dirt and stain by our Savior in the center of the throne of God, waving palm branches, the symbol of

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[683] Mt 4.4b.
[684] Jn 10.10.

victory in ancient Israel. There are no more tears, no pain or discomfort, no more hunger or thirst. There is reuniting in community. There is praise of God, joy, and peace.

PRAYER: Let us pray:

O Lord, our God
for whom every single individual is precious
source of all love, mercy, and compassion
without whom those who build the city labor in vain
without whom all community fragments into
sharp chards of pain
We come to You today to ask Your blessing upon us,
granting final rest to our brother, Terrence Lee
and his mother, Magdalene
remembering that with You, no one is lost or least.

We commit their remains to this resting place. Christ was the first to rise from the dead, and we know that he will raise up our mortal bodies to be like him in glory. We commend our brother and his mother to the Lord. May the Lord restore them into his peace and raise them up on the last day; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The Lord bless and keep them, the Lord make his face to shine on them and be gracious to them. The Lord look upon them with favor and give them peace. Amen.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord
And let perpetual light shine upon them.
Amen.
Let us go in peace. Amen.

PURPLE HEART PRAYER, 07 August 2015, Milwaukee War Memorial Building

INVOCATION:

Dear Lord, Heavenly Father:
Help us to remember today
those who have borne the burden
and paid the price
those whose spilled blood
and sacrifice on the battlefield
we, today, honor.
Give us strength, dear Lord
to care
for family members with wounded loved ones
and for one another in actions and not simply words and feelings
In the Purple Heart may we see
the cost of our freedom
the suffering and sacrifice by some
that others may live
May Your Presence, O Lord, today:
enable those wounded to be Wounded Healers
give us insight to mend our brokenness,
give us strength to invigorate our commitment
to justice
and to our social contract of bearing one
another's burdens
bring peace, even in the midst of conflict
and bless us all with life abundant,
in Your Holy Name. We pray. AMEN

BENEDICTION:

Receive the blessing:
In the sight of so many, may you be blessed with courage.
In the love of our Lord, may you be blessed
with love to serve each other.
In the Presence of our Lord, may you be blessed with peace.
in Your Holy Name. We pray. AMEN.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR BRUCE PAUL NETTESHEIM, 27 July 2016, Menomonee Falls, WI

[*Mr. Richard Trawicki had been asked to repair an outdoor sign for St. Matthew's Catholic Church and discovered that on the back it had been erected as a memorial to Bruce Paul Nettesheim, a Vietnam veteran. Much of the underground wiring had to be replaced, and Mr. Trawicki, upon seeing it was a memorial to a Vietnam veteran, donated all his costs and arranged for a memorial service. I was asked to give the prayers. The entire Nettesheim family, several dozen, were present, along with Mr. Gary Wetzel, Medal of Honor recipient, and others*]

Today, we remember Bruce Paul NETTESHEIM, killed in action in Vietnam while serving as a Sergeant in C Co., 2nd Battalion, 377th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. Paul had been in Vietnam only two weeks. He was 23 and a half years old.

LET US PRAY:

O Lord, our God, we praise Your presence with us now, at this place, and on this occasion.

Your sea of loving compassion in which we live and move and have our being, like the deep sea of the atmosphere around us and in us, gives us assurance that all shall be well.

O Lord, as we travel along the pathways of our life, we sometimes find ourselves in strange places, but You are always with us, so we do not fear.

We find ourselves ensnared in webs of memories of the past, stuck in problems of the present, and anxious over uncertainties of the future, yet Your hand guides and holds us even if we are unaware.

Bless us now, we pray, with Your gift of faith that trusts in Your unfailing presence with us, that grasps Your life-giving blessing upon us, and that assures us of Your never-failing mercy on us all.

In Your Holy Name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING: From Ecclesiastes 3.1-8:

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: [2] a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; [3] a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; [4] a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; [5] a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; [6] a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; [7] a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; [8] a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace."

COMMENTS:

When Mr. Richard Trawicki noticed the name of Bruce Paul Nettesheim on the back of the church sign erected in his memory, his first thought was to have a brief ceremony to remember him.

It is common for Vietnam combat veterans to remember those who were with them in Vietnam, even if we didn't personally know them. Indeed, we never really know another person, even those closest to us—or even our self for that matter. There are always surprises as new experiences and situations disclose a hidden aspect that suddenly emerges. So although we might not have known Paul personally, we know he was there with us and shared the same life we did while in that far-away place, and we remember him.

The important fact is that we remember, for to remember reflects our basic humanity. We remember each other because we aren't really individuals but are all part of a greater whole, or as John Donne famously said, "No man is an island, entire unto itself." We are individual threads woven into the fabric of our society and humanity. People will remember us in terms

of our relationship to others, what we gave to others and not by what we accumulated for ourselves, for true wealth is always what we've given away, not what we've accumulated.

Remembering shapes the contours of who we are and determines how we live.

We remember who we are—our relationships to others who give us life, who depend on us, and who shape our life by the values we've learned by living with them.

Most important: God remembers us. We might not always remember God, but God always remembers us, with our best interests in mind. For God knows we face many tasks and do not always have strength within ourselves, that we are limited and vulnerable. We pray to God for strength equal to our tasks, not tasks equal to our strength. Life is short, precious, and uncertain. God does not remove us from danger or pain, but promises to be with us in them, blessing us with strength and confidence by His presence with us.

We recall the 23rd Psalm:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. [2] He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. [3] He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. [4] Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. [5] You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. [6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Today we celebrate faithfulness, someone on whom we can rely with certainty and conviction.

That is what Bruce Paul NETTESHEIM exhibited in laying down his life for his friends and for us, for "greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friend." [John 15.13].

That is what we see in all of you gathered here today, indicating that you remember.

That is what we know in relation to our God. Remembrance has to do with faithfulness, with recalling that we are part of the greater whole, part of the larger set of values that determine who we are and how we live. Remembrance makes us human.

We are thankful to Bruce Paul Nettesheim and all those who, like him, laid down their life in service that we might be free to develop into all we could be and free to do what is right.

We are thankful for our family and our nation, especially those who instilled in us the set of values and the sense of how we ought to live, so that we might be a blessing to others.

We are thankful to Mr. Trawicki for seizing the opportunity to call for this assembly.

But most of all, we are thankful to our God who is always faithful, whose faithfulness is the solid rock on which we stand, the firm foundation on which we build our life, our family, and our society.

BLESSING:
Now, receive the blessing:
May the strong arm of the LORD
protect you from all harm.
May the right hand of the LORD
guide you in serving others.
May you see God in the face of your friend.
May the gracious Presence of the Lord
still your troubled waters.
May our Lord's peace make you whole
and equip you to
do justice, help the needy,
and be an oasis of blessing and life.
May the Lord direct you
into paths of nourishment,
strength and peace
in His Holy Name. AMEN.

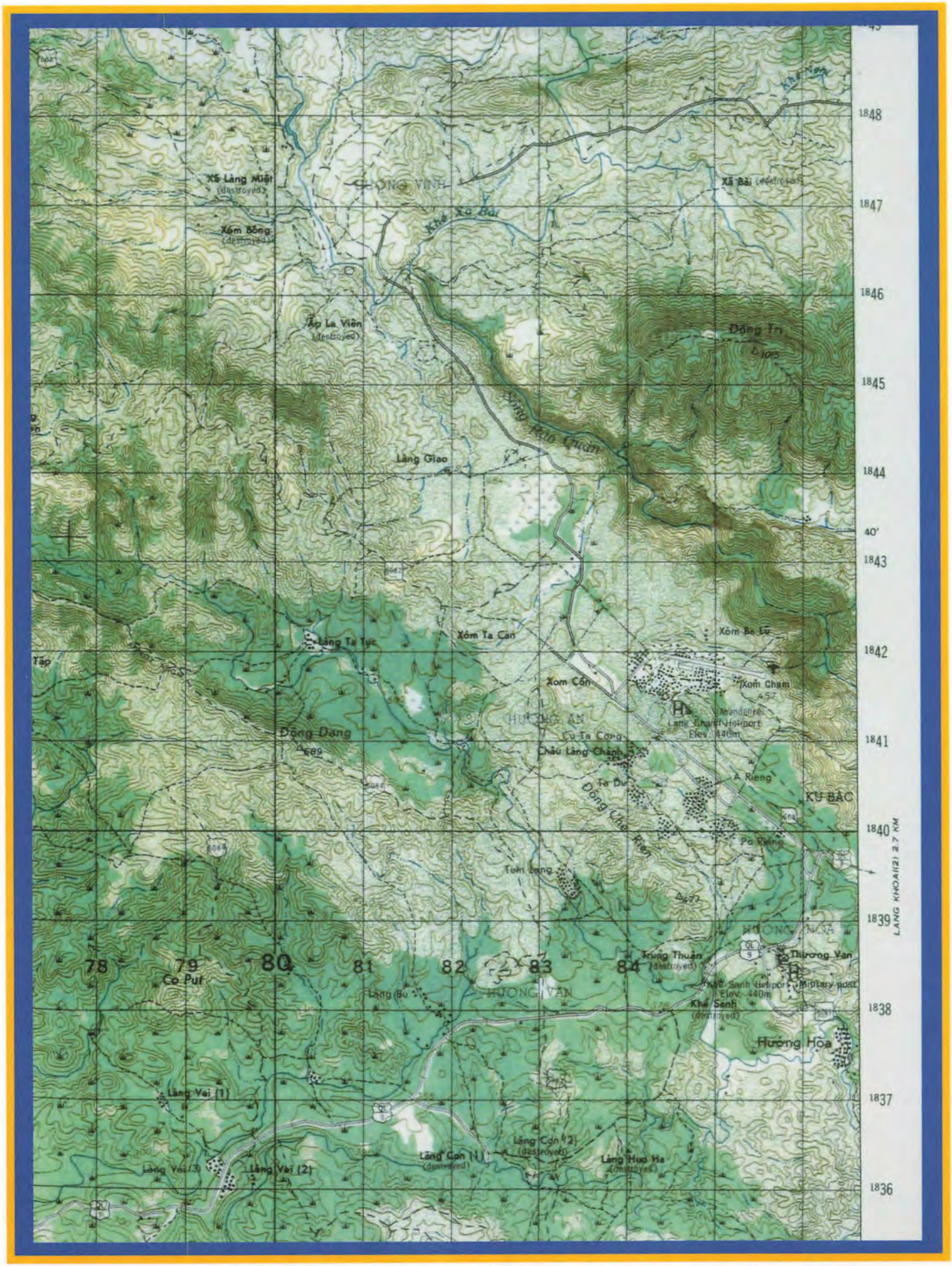

Xã Làng Miệt
(destroyed)
Xóm Bông
(destroyed)
Khe Xã Bài
Xã Bài
Ấp La Viên
(destroyed)
Đồng Trì
Làng Giao
Làng Ta Tục
Xóm Ta Cần
Xóm Bà Lũ
Xom Cồn
Xom Chạm
Đồng Dang
Cu Ta Cong
Châu Làng Chánh
Ta Du
A Rieng
KU BẮC
Po Rieng
Tum Lang
Trung Thuận
(destroyed)
Thương Văn
Military post
Khe Sanh
(destroyed)
Hướng Hòa
Làng Bu
Làng Vei (1)
Làng Vei (3)
Làng Vei (2)
Làng Con (1)
(destroyed)
Làng Con (2)
(destroyed)
Làng Huo Ha
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LANG KHOAI(2) 2.7 KM

THOSE WHO DIED BECAUSE OF KHE SANH

Compiled by Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe

Memorial Day 1985

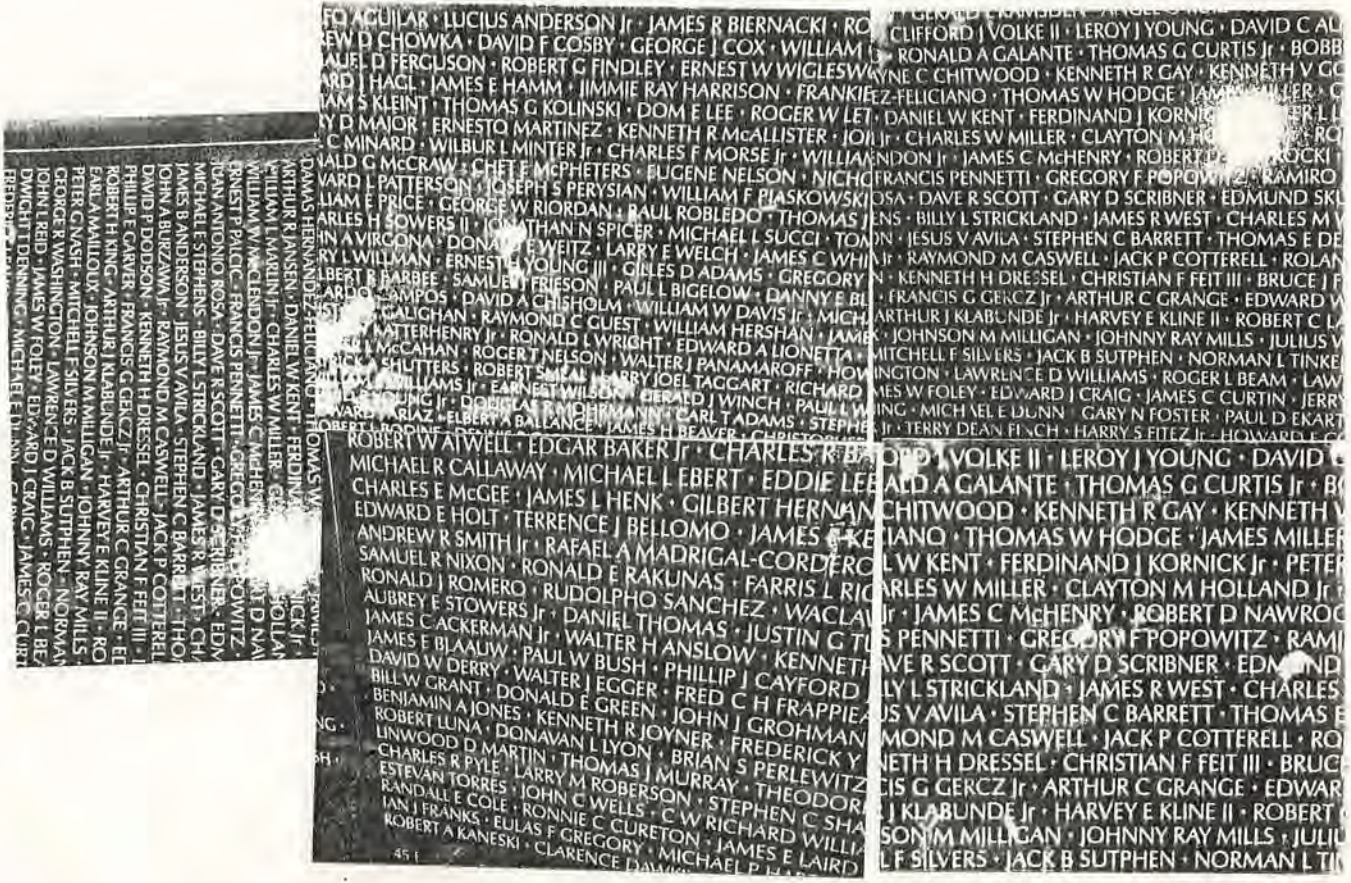

The attached is a listing of 470 men who died because of Khe Sanh: killed there, died subsequently because of wounds received there, and who died within five miles in aircraft arriving or departing Khe Sanh. It is based upon memorial bulletins of memorial services conducted within a few weeks of leaving Khe Sanh and upon review of the 3d Marine Division G-1 Casualty Section log at Quang Tri. It covers the period of August, 1967, through April, 1968, with a few additions of persons known killed in June and July, 1967.

The following units have been checked:

1/26, 2/26, 3/26, 1/9
B Co, 3d Reconnaissance Bn
C Co, 3d Medical Bn (none)
B Co, 3d Tanks Bn (none)
3d Anti-Tanks (Ontoss) (The Bn had dissolved; those ontoss personnel in Khe Sanh were the last of the Bn)
A, B, C, & W Batteries, 1/13
A Co, 3d Shore Party Bn
H&S Co, 3d Shore Party Bn
CBMU-301
Hq Battery, 1/12
Hq, 26th Marines Regiment
Hq Bn, 3d Marine Division
CAC OSCAR

Among the many units not checked include the following:

All Army units: dusters, quad 50s, FOB-3, USSF A-101 (Lang Vei)
FLC: LSU, Graves, EOD
All Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force air units
1st Radio Bn, III MAF
5th & 7th Comm Bn

Additions to the attached listing:

19 JUL - 1 Vietnamese officer
25 JUL - 5 men from SOG/Khe Sanh
15 OCT - 5 men in fire/crash of C-130
02 NOV - 1 Nung from FOB-3
19 NOV - 1 Nung from FOB-3
29 NOV - 3 Brou Montagnards
13 APR - Mr. Polaine, the Frenchman, in plane crash at KSCB
22 JAN - 38 from MACV Detachment 19, Quang Tri, in Khe Sanh Ville
07 FEB - 219 from fall of Lang Vei: 10 USASF, 5 VNSF, 165 CSF, 34 MSF, 5 interpreters
15 APR - 148+ from Operation PEGASUS: 59 USA, 51 USMC, 33 ARVN (While the listing includes 26th Mar (rein), it does not include 1/1, 2/1, 2/3, and attachments)
06 MAR - 5 men from 1st Radio Bn operating out of III MAF and 19 USAF crewmen and others on the C-123 shot down on 06 MAR (30 of the total 44 Marines and 5 USAF are listed)

The census of the Brou Montagnards in July, 1967, was 8,930. In addition, there were reports from many sources that many more migrated into the Khe Sanh area from just inside Laos when the conflict began. There were also 500 Laotians plus their dependents when the 33d Laotian Elephant Bn was overrun and took refuge in Lang Vei village. Only approximately 5,000 Montagnards made it safely to the Cam Lo refugee village. It is therefore a very conservative estimate that over 5,000 Brou Montagnards were killed during the siege.

Intelligence reports based on testimony of captured enemy personnel, who, for example, stated that they saw 60%+ of their units annihilated by B-52 air strikes, and that those who did not die immediately, died several days later from internal hemorrhage, all indicate that a very conservative estimate of enemy killed, mainly through B-52 strikes and artillery would be 15,000 enemy killed. (Note: General Westmoreland in Time Magazine, 12 Apr 68, Vol. 91, No. 15, gives the figure of 15,000; the 1969 Armed Forces Report, p. 23, gives the figure as 10,000).

All this gives a rough, and conservative, number of deaths because of Khe Sanh, and only during the indicated period, of: 20, 897 killed.

(This, of course, does not include those killed from 1962 through the costly battle for the Khe Sanh Hills of 1967, nor those killed subsequent to the indicated period during Operation SCOTLAND II).

The apparent discrepancies between 470 and officially-reported figures (100 or 200 killed) may be attributed, in part, to the disregard for those who died of wounds received at Khe Sanh after they were evacuated and those who died, e.g., in the C-123 plane crash of 06 March.

The attached consists of two lists: one alphabetical with rank, name, unit, date of casualty, and location on the Vietnam Memorial in Wash; the second list, beginning on p. 10, is a listing arranged by appearance on the Vietnam Memorial, roughly a chronological listing.

MEN WHO DIED AT KHE SANH (AND WHO DIED OF WOUNDS RECEIVED AT KHE SANH AND WHO DIED IN AIRCRAFT NEAR KHE SANH) JUNE 1967 - APRIL 1968

PFC	ADAME, Gilbert Jimmie	2/26	07 APR	48E/38
SWF2	ADAMS, Edward Cody	CBMU-301	16 APR	50E/10
CPL	AGUIRRE, Carlos Cruz	E-2/26	24 FEB	41E/6
LCPL	AKINS, Ronald Paul	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/15
CPL	ALDRICH, David Alan	~~B-1/26~~	30 MAR	47E/7
PFC	ALDRIDGE, Herbert Ray		06 MAR	43E/12
PVT	ALENCASTRE, Anthony Albert	L-3/26	14 APR	49E/50
PFC	ALLEN, Kenneth Jeffrey	A-1/13	08 FEB	38E/22
2LT	AMMON, William Resor	M-3/26	15 APR	50E/10
PFC	ANDERSON, David Bruce	~~B-1/26~~	30 MAR	47E/7
PFC	ANDERSON, David George	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/24
SGT	ANTRIM, Tommy Edward	A-1/13	08 FEB	38E/20
CPL	AVERITTE, William Clayton	D-1/9	16 APR	50E/11
LCPL	AYERS, Leslie Steven	A-1/13	08 FEB	38E/20
LCPL	BAILEY, Joseph Thomas	C-1/26	19 FEB	40E/17
PFC	BALADES, David Zavala	A-3dShoreP	28 FEB	41E/58
PFC	BAPTISTE, Michael Bradford	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/15
LCPL	BARMMER, Timothy Michael	B-3dRecon	30 JAN	35E/65
HN	BARRETT, Michael Barry	H&S-1/9	08 FEB	38E/20
PFC	BATTLE, Joseph Chriss	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/15
SGTMJ	BEAN, Donald Wayne	H&S-1/26	11 MAR	44E/13
PFC	BEAUFORD, Willis Jr	~~B-1/26~~	06 MAR	43E/13
CPL	BEASLEY, Luzon	H&S-1/9	30 MAR	47E/8
PVT	BECK, John Theron	D-1/9	24 FEB	41E/6
PFC	BEDDOE, Paul Melvin Jr	B-3dRecon	21 JAN	35E/2
CPL	BELCHER, Robert Winslow	H&S-3/26	11 APR	49E/19
PVT	BELLAMY, Paul Robert	K-3/26	21 JAN	35E/2
LCPL	BENGE, Larry Wayne	H&S-1/9	01 MAR	42E/15
PFC	BERGER, John Edward	~~B-1/26~~	27 FEB	41E/48
PFC	BIERLEIN, Patrick M R	A-1/26	12 APR	49E/28
LCPL	BILLINGHAM, Frederick A Jr	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/16
CPL	BIRCH, Thomas H	A-1/26	23 FEB	40E/72
PFC	BIXBY, Thomas Eugene	~~B-1/26~~	27 MAR	46E/44
PFC	BOGARD, Jack Crosby	E-2/26	05 FEB	37E/31
CPL	BOICOURT, Jess Burton Jr	H&S-1/9	11 MAR	44E/14
PFC	BORRELL, Clifford Glenn	E-2/26	24 FEB	41E/7
PFC	BOYER, Charles Goodhue	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/14
HM3	BOYNTON, Charles B Jr	H&S-1/9	16 APR	50E/11
PFC	BRELLENTHIN, Michael J	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/17
LTJG	BRETT, Robert R CHC	H&S-2/26	22 FEB	40E/58
SGT	BRIDGES, Ernest Larry	C-1/9	04 APR	47E/59
CPL	BRIGNAC, Joseph Paul	~~B-1/26~~	06 MAR	43E/14
2LT	BRINDLEY, Thomas Drew	I-3/26	20 JAN	34E/83
PFC	BRITT, Ted Dennis	~~B-1/26~~	30 MAR	47E/14
PFC	BROWN, David D Jr	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/12
LCPL	BROWN, Marcus Jr	C-1/26	28 AUG	25E/55
PFC	BROWN, Theodore Jr	K-3/26	21 JAN	35E/3
PFC	BRUDER, James Robert	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/17
CPL	BRYAN, Charles William	B-3dRecon	20 JAN	39E/83
PFC	BRYANT, James Roy	K-3/26	23 FEB	40E/72
CPL	BUCIOR, Anthony Zbigniew	C-1/9	05 APR	48E/15

PFC	BUGGER, Curtis Burke	W-1/13	21 JAN	35E/3
PFC	BUMSTEAD, Donald Royce	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/15
LCPL	BURGESS, Alex Leroy	H&S-3/26	19 FEB	40E/18
PFC	BURGESS, Ruben Anthony	B-1/9	23 FEB	40E/73
CPL	BURKHEAD, Jerry Clark	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/22
1LT	BUSH, Paul William	C-1/26	22 MAR	45E/54
CPL	CALDWELL, Robert Edward	H&S-3/26	28 FEB	41E/60
SSGT	CALVIN, Glenn Henry	E-2/26	10 FEB	38E/65
PFC	CAMPBELL, Thomas Francis	A-1/9	09 APR	48E/56
CPL	CASTILLO, George Ralph	L-3/26	24 JAN	35E/20
SGT	CASTILLO, Jose	H&S-1/26	21 JUL	23E/97
PFC	CAVAZOS, Ronald Thomas	H&S-1/9	04 APR	48E/1
SGT	CHAMBLIN, Donald Ray Jr	1/13	08 MAR	43E/52
CPL	CHILDRESS, Lewis Clayton	FLC ParaDel	16 NOV	29E/104
PFC	CHIN, Alexander Scheleph	H&S-2/26	22 FEB	40E/58
PFC	CHISHOLM, James	H&S-1/26	23 FEB	40E/73
LCPL	CHRISTIAN, Daniel K	A-1/9	16 APR	50E/12
PFC	CICIO, Robert Daniel	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/12
CPL	CLAIRE, Kenneth William	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/18
PFC	CLAY, Doyle Gregory	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/18
PFC	CLEMSON, Gerald Richard	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/23
PFC	COLEGATE, William Karl	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/23
LCPL	COLEMAN, Michael John	B-1/9	27 JAN	35E/44
PFC	COLEMAN, William Frank	D-1/26	16 APR	50E/12
PFC	COLLINS, James Alfred	I-3/26	20 JAN	34E/84
PVT	CONTRERAS, John Jenaro	H&S-3/26	21 JAN	35E/4
CPL	COOL, Mark Douglas	H&S-1/26	02 MAR	42E/28
LCPL	CORBIN, Russell B Jr	~~B-1/26~~	07 FEB	37E/81
LCPL	CORLEY, Thomas Eugene	C-1/26	06 FEB	37E/52
LCPL	COTTRELL, Thomas Lee	~~B-1/26~~	22 JAN	35E/11
PFC	CRAIG, Bruce Keith	A-1/9	16 APR	50E/11
PFC	CRAIG, Thomas R Jr	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/24
PFC	CRAMER, David Arthur	H-2/26	22 FEB	40E/59
PFC	CRAUN, Gale Eugene	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/13
LCPL	CRASE, Lionel Russell	H&S-2/26	07 APR	48E/40
PFC	CRICKENBERGER, Richard Way	A-3d Eng	26 MAY	66W/4
PFC	CRITCHFIELD, Reece A Jr	I-3/26	21 JAN	35E/4
PFC	CRUITT, Michael Douglas	K-3/26	21 JAN	35E/4
PFC	CUNNINGHAM, Bruce Edward	C-1/26	08 FEB	38E/24
PFC	CUNNINGHAM, William L	D-1/9	01 MAR	42E/14
MSGT	D'ADAMO, John Jr	VMGR-152	10 FEB	38E/66
PFC	DALTON, Bill Norman	A-1/13	08 FEB	38E/24
PFC	DEARING, Jerry Wayne	H&S-3/26	26 JAN	35E/37
LCPL	DELANO, Jimmy Lynn	SPTCo-3dEng	13 MAR	44E/34
HN	DELAPLANE, James Charles	H&S-2/26	17 APR	50E/27
CPL	DEMPSEY, Ronald Lee	B-1/13	28 FEB	41E/63
PFC	DENNING, Dwight Thomas	A-1/26	26 JAN	35E/38
LCPL	DEVIK, David Ralf	VMGR-152	10 FEB	38E/66
PVT	DICKIE, Guy Douglas	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/25
2LT	DISTEFANO, Ferdinando	E-2/26	24 FEB	41E/8
LCPL	DODSON, Jerry Lee	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/19
PFC	DOLAN, William John	D-1/9	17 APR	50E/35
PFC	DOLBY, Melvin Lester	F-2/26	07 APR	48E/40

PFC	DOOLEY, Robert Ellis	M-3/26	22 FEB	40E/61
CPL	DOORNBOS, Don Michael	D-1/9	14 FEB	39E/31
SSGT	DOUGLAS, Paul Melvyn	FOB-3	21 FEB	40E/52
PVT	DUNLAP, Darrell Edward	I-3/26	08 FEB	38E/26
LCPL	DWYER, Matthew Murice Jr	A-3d Eng	28 FEB	41E/63
PFC	EDMONDS, Arthur Lee Jr	H&S-2/26	13 FEB	39E/20
LCPL	EDMONDS, Joseph	L-3/26	14 APR	49E/52
CAPT	EGGER, Walter Jacob	C-1/26	22 MAR	45E/55
PFC	ELLIOTT, George L III	A-1/13	06 MAR	43E/17
CPL	ENZINNA, John Joseph	A-1/9	24 MAR	46E/4
PFC	ERWIN, Richard Eugene	H&S-3/26	11 APR	49E/21
PFC	FEATHERSTONE, Richard H	A-3d ShoreP	08 FEB	38E/27
HN	FEIT, Cristian Franz III	H&S-3/26	25 JAN	35E/31
SGT	FERRARI, Arnold Jay	C-1/26	31 MAR	47E/21
LCPL	FERREN, Jerry Wayne	VMGR-152	10 FEB	42E/15
LCPL	FERRY, Ray Leonard III	A-3d ATs	09 APR	49E/55
CPL	FIGUEROA, Javier Puentes	H&S-3/26	28 JAN	35E/54
PFC	FINLEY, Charles Richard	M-3/26	11 APR	49E/21
2LT	FORDHAM, Benjamin S	K-3/26	15 APR	50E/3
PFC	FORDHAM, Kenneth Charles	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/27
LCPL	FOSTER, Julius Cartwright	E-2/26	22 FEB	40E/62
LCPL	FRANCAVILLA, John F	I-3/26	09 APR	49E/1
LCPL	FRAZIER, Ronald Leon	C-1/9	09 APR	49E/1
PFC	GAINES, Allen Joseph	G-2/26	07 APR	48E/41
PFC	GAINES, Bernard Laverne	A-1/9	24 MAR	46E/5
CPL	GARBER, Charles W Jr	C-1/9	09 APR	49E/1
PFC	GAUGHAN, Austin Michael	A-3d ShoreP	15 MAR	44E/59
SGTMJ	GAYNOR, James Thomas	H&S-1/26	15 FEB	39E/47
LCPL	GELLER, Charles Gregory	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/20
LCPL	GLASPER, William L	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/28
PFC	GOLZ, James Roland	I-3/26	27 JAN	35E/46
PFC	GOMEZ, Armando Abel	E-2/26	20 FEB	40E/39
PFC	GOODMAN, Kenneth Virgil	K-3/26	24 JAN	35E/21
LCPL	GREENIDGE, Michael R	D-1/9	31 MAR	47E/22
GYSGT	GROHMAN, John Joseph	C-1/26	22 MAR	45E/56
PFC	GRZEGOREK, James Andrew	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/19
PFC	GUILLORY, Wendell	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/13
PFC	GULA, Paul Richard	D-1/9	30 MAR	47E/11
PFC	HABERMAN, David	A-1/9	16 APR	50E/14
SGT	HAGARA, Leslie Paul	A-1/9	16 APR	50E/14
PFC	HALL, Blucher Ray	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/19
PFC	HAMEL, Wayne Douglas	HQ-12thMar	05 FEB	37E/36
CPL	HANDLEY, Anthony William	H&S-1/9	08 FEB	38E/29
PFC	HARRIS, Earl Wayne	E-2/26	28 FEB	41E/65
E-5	HAWKINS, Don Albert	FOB-3	01 NOV	29E/3
1LT	HAYDEN, Michael Pym	A-1/9	16 APR	50E/14
LCPL	HAYES, Phillip III	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/21
CPL	HEALY, Richard John	B-3d Recon	14 JAN	34E/48
PFC	HEIFNER, Edward William	F-2/26	25 JAN	35E/32
LCPL	HELLWIG, Steven Louis	H&S-1/26	21 JAN	35E/6
PFC	HICKS, Paul Everett		06 MAR	43E/21
PFC	HIGGO, Ralph E 236 36 86	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	?
CAPT	HIMMER, Lawrence	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/14
PFC	HINKLE, Jack Lee	D-1/9	16 APR	50E/14

PFC	HINSON, John Robert	C-1/26	16 AUG	25E/1
PFC	HOLLAR, Howard Eslie	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/22
PVT	HOLLIMON, Billy Michael	F-2/26	05 MAR	43E/6
LCPL	HOLLIS, Thomas William	B-3d Recon	28 JAN	35E/54
LCPL	HOLLOWAY, James O Jr	A-1/9	04 APR	48E/5
PFC	HORVATH, Robert John	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/22
PFC	HOUSTON, John Davis Jr	L-3/26	17 APR	50E/29
LCPL	HOWLETT, Norman L Jr	A-3d Eng	30 MAR	47E/12
LCPL	HUDSON, Roy	A-1/26	31 JAN	36E/16
CPL	HUFF, William Edward	K-3/26	25 FEB	41E/22
CPL	HUNT, Joseph Thomas	B-1/9	27 JAN	35E/47
CPL	HURLBERT, Roy Douglas	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/15
SGT	HUTCHINS, Frank John	D-1/9	02 MAR	42E/33
GYSGT	IBANEZ, Di Reyes	A-3d Recon	05 JUN	21E/58
PFC	IVES, William Allen	A-1/9	24 MAR	46E/7
LCPL	JACKSON, Andrew		06 MAR	43E/23
PFC	JACKSON, Leonard Jr	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/30
CPL	JACKSON, Nathaniel El	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/15
PFC	JACOB, Robert Michael	A-1/9	04 APR	48E/5
2LT	JACQUES, Donald	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/22
LCPL	JEFFRIES, Gerrie George	E-2/26	24 FEB	41E/10
CPL	JENKINS, Earl Dale Jr	FLC Air Del	16 NOV	30E/3
LCPL	JOHNSON, Eugene M Jr	G-2/26	07 APR	48E/42
CPL	JOHNSON, Howard Leon	HQ-26th Mar	22 JAN	35E/11
LCPL	JOHNSON, Kenneth Richard	B-1/9	16 FEB	39E/62
1LT	JOHNSON, Kim Williams	H&S-1/26	23 FEB	40E/77
PFC	JOHNSON, Terry Melvin	I-3/26	21 JAN	35E/6
HN	JOHNSTON, Dennis Neil	H&S-1/9	16 APR	50E/19
PFC	JOHNSTON, Richard William	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/16
LCPL	JONES, Bruce Edwin	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/22
LCPL	JONES, Clifton Randal	K-3/26	21 JAN	35E/6
PFC	JONES, Donald Ernest	K-3/26	08 MAR	43E/56
PFC	JONES, Jimmie Lee	~~B-1/26~~	30 MAR	47E/12
PFC	JONES, Larry Allan	H&S-1/9	24 APR	51E/47
PFC	JONES, Terry Agusta	B-3d Recon	30 DEC	33E/3
CAPT	JONES, Walter Chapman III	H&S-1/9	04 APR	48E/5
PFC	KAMINSKI, Kenneth	B-1/9	26 MAR	46E/36
CPL	KEEFE, Dennis Michael	HQ-26thMar	11 FEB	38E/78
CPL	KENNEDY, Larry Scott	A-1/13	06 MAR	43E/23
LCPL	KENT, Gregory Patrick	D-1/26	28 MAR	46E/55
PFC	KIDD, Phillip Meridith	C-1/9	09 APR	49E/3
PFC	KILGORE, Danny Ray	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/16
LCPL	KING, DeWayne	M-3/26	14 APR	49E/53
LCPL	KINGSTON, Thomas Lloyd	I-3/26	21 JAN	35E/7
CPL	KISSLING, Benjamin Kaon	D-2/12	09 APR	49E/3
2LT	KOMAN, Lawrence Ryland	D-1/9	30 MAR	47E/13
CPL	KOT, Myron	H&S-3/26	07 FEB	38E/5
HN	LABONTE, Donald Arthur	H&S-2/26	28 FEB	41E/68
PFC	LACEY, Franklin D	L-3/26	28 MAR	46E/56
PFC	LADEROUTE, Michael John	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/23
LCPL	LAMITIE, Tyrone Francis	E-2/26	05 FEB	37E/38
SGT	LANE, Louis Michael	K-3/26	09 APR	49E/3
HM3	LAGENFELD, Charles T	H&S-2/26	17 APR	50E/30
PFC	LASSITER, John Alfred	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/24

LCPL	LAWRENCE, Larry Eugene	(Hill 950)	06	JUN	21E/62
PFC	LASSITER, John Alfred	~~B-1/26~~	25	FEB	41E/24
CPL	LEASURE, Delbert Louis	C-1/13	23	FEB	40E/76
CPL	LE BANC, Alfred Leroy	D-1/9	16	APR	50E/16
LCPL	LESAGE, Armand Paul	K-3/26	07	APR	48E/42
CPL	LEWER, Thomas Charles	A-1/9	08	FEB	38E/32
CPL	LEWIS, Clarence Henry	B-1/9	15	MAR	44E/63
LCPL	LINDBERG, Brian Victor	A-1/9	04	APR	48E/7
PFC	LINDSAY, Philip Trieste	A-1/9	09	APR	49E/4
LCPL	LINK, Frederick Beard	C-1/9	01	MAR	42E/19
CPL	LITTLEFIELD, Robert H	A-1/9	16	APR	50E/17
PFC	LIVINGSTON, Billy Dale	CAC "O"	26	FEB	41E/40
PVT	LLOYD, Kenneth Edwin	D-1/9	02	MAR	42E/35
CPL	LOHMAN, Herman A Jr	G-2/26	06	APR	48E/29
HN	LONG, Leonard	H&S-1/9	26	MAR	46E/37
HN	LOPEZ, Jose Angel Jr	H&S-2/26	18	APR	50E/40
PFC	LOVATO, Michael Leon	C-1/9	09	FEB	38E/55
PFC	LYONS, Carl	B-3d Recon	22	MAR	45E/59
HM3	MACAGBA, Edilberto Dula	~~B-1/26~~	13	MAR	44E/38
1LT	MARIZ, Robert J	HQ-26th Mar	30	JAN	35E/75
PFC	MARSON, Rickey Joe	2/26	07	APR	48E/43
LCPL	MARTIN, Gary Alan	C-1/9	01	MAR	42E/20
PFC	MARTINEZ, Mauro	C-1/9	16	APR	50E/18
PFC	MASTERS, Edward Ulyses	G-2/26	06	APR	48E/30
LCPL	MATTHEWS, William L Jr	H&S-3/26	15	APR	50E/6
MGYSG	MAYER, Paul Evans	MWHG-1	28	MAR	46E/57
SGT	MC CALL, Billy Ray	G-2/26	22	FEB	40E/66
LCPL	MC CANN, James Kevin	B-3d Recon	03	FEB	37E/10
PFC	MC CLELLAND, Aubery D	C-1/9	16	APR	50E/19
SSGT	MC CLELLAND, George	~~B-1/26~~	25	FEB	41E/25
LCPL	MC COSAR, Winford	~~B-1/26~~	06	MAR	43E/28
CPL	MC DANIEL, Roy Dean	A-1/9	08	FEB	38E/35
PFC	MC DONALD, Henry III	~~B-1/26~~	25	FEB	41E/26
CPL	MC GARVEY, Patrick G	H&S-1/26 ✓	12	APR	49E/35
CPL	MC GRATH, Edward	2/26	06	APR	48E/31
LCPL	MC KEEVER, Michael E	H&S-1/26 ✓	23	FEB	40E/75
LCPL	MC KENZIE, Richard W	~~B-1/26~~	25	FEB	41E/26
PVT	MC KINLEY, Allen	A-1/9	08	FEB	38E/35
SSGT	MC KINNEY, Bernard B Jr	A-1/9	08	FEB	38E/35
CPL	MC MAKINS, Rueben E	L-3/26	14	APR	?
HN	MC NAMAR, Jim Carl	H&S-3/26	17	APR	50E/32
PFC	MC RAE, Jimmie Lefon	~~B-1/26~~	28	MAR	46E/57
PVT	MEAD, Dennis Michael	D-1/26 ✓	06	MAR	43E/26
CPL	MEADE, Thomas Allerton	D-1/26 ✓	06	FEB	37E/62
CPL	MEADOWS, Artis W Jr	G-2/26	07	APR	48E/44
PFC	MEADS, Kim Elmer	C-1/26 ✓	25	FEB	41E/25
LCPL	MEDEIROS, William C	A-1/9	16	APR	50E/18
LCPL	MEGGS, Marion Lee	B-3d Recon	16	NOV	30E/4
PFC	MEIER, Roy Alan	D-1/9	02	MAR	42E/36
PFC	MEYSEMBOURG, Daniel L	B-1/9	11	MAR	44E/18
SGT	MIKELS, James Herbert Jr	H&S-1/26 ✓	28	FEB	41E/69
PFC	MILES, James Edward		06	MAR	43E/27
LCPL	MILLER, Charles Claude	H&S-1/9	04	APR	48E/7
HN	MILLER, Charles Wayne	B-3d Recon	24	JAN	35E/24

PFC	MILLS, Arthur Lee	C-1/26	12 APR	49E/34
PFC	MINCH, Roger Carl	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/26
PFC	MOISE, Herne Jean	A-1/9	16 APR	50E/18
HM3	MOLE, Malcomb Geoffrey	H&S-3/26	21 JAN	35E/7
LCPL	MOLETTIERE, Joseph Anthony	2/26	05 FEB	37E/40
PFC	MOORE, James Ezra		06 MAR	43E/27
PFC	MOORE, Larry Gene	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/19
PFC	MOORE, Lewis Wayne	A-3d Eng	10 MAR	44E/10
LCPL	MOORE, Wayne Paul	~~B-1/26~~	30 MAR	47E/14
PFC	MORDEN, Robert Nelson	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/33
GYSGT	MORROW, Harold Eugene	M-3/26	21 JUL	23E/101
PFC	MOSES, Clifton	F-2/26	07 APR	48E/44
PFC	MOSS, Thomas John Jr	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/27
SGT	MOSSO, Robert Bruce	B-1/9	26 MAR	46E/39
LCPL	MULGREW, Kevin Spear	A-1/9	09 APR	49 E/4
PFC	MULLET, Steven James	M-3/26	21 JUL	23E/102
PFC	MURPHY, Patrick Michael	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/34
LCPL	MUTZ, Dennis Howard	K-3/26	04 MAR	42E/69
LCPL	NELSON, Max Alvin	E-2/26	24 FEB	41E/11
HN	NELSON, Roger Miller	H&S-2/26	07 APR	48E/45
PFC	NEWTON, Leonard Lee	I-3/26	19 JAN	34E/80
HM2	NIEBUR, Edward Leroy	H&S-1/26	27 FEB	41E/52
LCPL	NIELSEN, Charles Joseph	L-3/26	14 APR	49E/52
CPL	NIELSEN, Harold Richard	M-3/26	21 JUL	23E/103
PFC	NIGHTENGALE, Timothy J	A-1/9	06 APR	48E/31
1LT	NORMAN, Marion Henry	A-1/13	30 MAR	47E/15
PFC	O'HARE, Richard James		06 MAR	43E/29
LCPL	OSTAPCHUK, Walter Michael	A-1/9	05 APR	48E/19
CPL	OWENS, Robert Franklin	D-1/9	16 APR	50E/19
PFC	OWENS, Timothy Eugene	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/19
PFC	PATRICK, Albert Earl	A-3d Eng	14 FEB	39E/37
PFC	PATTERSON, Patrick Chasie	K-3/26	15 APR	50E/7
CPL	PAYNE, Robert Paul	A-3d ATs	11 MAR	45E/24
PFC	PEMBLETON, Ronald Lee	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/36
LCPL	PENNETTI, Francis	K-3/26	24 JAN	35E/26
PFC	PEPPER, Anthony John	G-2/26	06 APR	48E/32
CPL	PERRETTA, John Rocco	I-3/26	15 FEB	39E/52
PFC	PHELPS, Randall Carl	A-3d Eng	08 APR	48E/54
PFC	PIAZZA, Robert Gary	G-2/26	06 APR	48E/33
PFC	PINATELLI, Thomas Michael	C-1/9	09 FEB	38E/71
CPL	PIZARRO, Vic Manuel	A-1/13	06 MAR	43E/30
CPL	PLUNKETT, Raymond Louis	D-1/9	30 MAR	47E/15
PFC	POLLARD, William Alfred	~~B-1/26~~	21 JUL	23E/103
PFC	POLT, Erwin Andrew	H&S-1/9	24 MAR	46E/10
PFC	PONDOFF, John Christopher	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/36
LCPL	POPOWITZ, Gregory Francis	B-3d Recon	24 JAN	35E/26
PFC	PRESLEY, Ronnie Calvin	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/30
PFC	PRUIETT, Thomas Pierre Jr	K-3/26	31 MAR	47E/25
CPL	PRUITT, George Alan	H&S-2/26	08 APR	48E/54
PVT	QUATTLEBAUM, John F	F-2/26	07 APR	48E/46
LCPL	RAMPULLA, Terry James	A-1/9	16 APR	50E/20
PFC	RASH, Donald Ray	~~B-1/26~~	30 MAR	47E/15
PFC	RAY, Franklin Daniel	A-1/26	23 FEB	41E/2
PFC	REATHER, Wallace Lee Jr	B-3d Recon	27 JAN	35E/50
CPL	REDENIUS, David Gary	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/20
PFC	REYES, Ronald	D-1/9	30 MAR	47E/16

SGT	RICE, Robert	A-1/9	16 APR	50E/20
PFC	RICHARDSON, James Douglas	F-2/26	07 APR	48E/47
CAPT	RILEY, James Thomas (Rex)	HMH-463	22 FEB	40E/68
GYSGT	RIMEL, Melvin Lewis	K-3/26	21 JAN	35E/9
PFC	RIMSON, Martin Luther	E-2/26	05 FEB	37E/43
PFC	RIVERA, Arnold Javier	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/27
LCPL	RIZZO, James Patrick	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/38
2LT	ROACH, Terence Raymond Jr	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/38
PFC	ROBERTSON, Gerald William	A-1/9	14 FEB	39E/38
CPL	ROBINSON, Lionel Larue	A-1/9	10 APR	49E/15
GYSGT	ROBITAILLE, Paul Edward	M-3/26	23 FEB	41E/2
PVT	RODRIGUEZ, Domingo Jr	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/31
LCPL	ROMERO, Manuel Villareal	G-2/26	06 APR	48E/33
PFC	ROSA, Juan Antonio	B-3d Recon	24 JAN	35E/27
LCPL	ROUNTREE, Ronald Corbin	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/38
LCPL	ROZELLE, David Thomas	K-3/26	21 JAN	35E/9
PFC	RUFF, Willie Jerome	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/28
PFC	RUIZ, Jose Jr	~~B-1/26~~	30 MAR	47E/16
CPL	RUIZ, Jose	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/20
PFC	RUSH, Marvin Gene	D-1/9	16 APR	50E/21
SGT	RUSSELL, David Adams	H&S-1/26	09 MAR	43E/69
LCPL	RUSSELL, James Lowell	D-1/9	11 MAR	44E/20
PFC	RUSSELL, John Malcolm Jr	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/32
LCPL	RUSSELL, Larry Gene	L-3/26	17 APR	50E/33
CPL	RYAN, Ronald Royce	~~B-1/26~~	06 MAR	43E/32
CPL	SANFORD, Albert Russell	~~B-1/26~~	30 MAR	47E/16
LCPL	SAXTON, Gary Lee	HQ-26th Mar	22 JAN	35E/11
HM3	SCARBOROUGH, Russell	G-2/26	06 APR	48E/34
PFC	SCARBROUGH, David Clifton	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/28
LCPL	SCHAVELIN, Hugh Ernest	D-1/9	16 APR	50E/21
CPL	SCHROEDER, Donald Ray	F--/26	07 APR	48E/47
LCPL	SCOTT, James Frank	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/38
GYSGT	SCOTT, Jeremiah	I-3/26	01 FEB	36E/60
PVT	SCOTT, Walter Michael	H&S-1/26	11 FEB	38E/80
LCPL	SCRIBNER, Gary David	B-3d Recon	24 JAN	35E/27
PFC	SCULLEN, Thomas James	D-1/9	02 MAR	42E/41
CPL	SEARS, Michael	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/33
CPL	SEDILLO, Juan Natividad	H&S-1/9	08 APR	48E/54
PVT	SELDERS, William Dean	K-3/26	05 FEB	37E/43
LTC	SEYMOE, Joseph P	MACV DET 19	21 JAN	35E/8
CAPT	SHAFER, Francis Loe Jr	D-1/9	30 MAR	47E/15
LCPL	SHANNON, Stephen Craig	C-1/26	22 MAR	45E/60
LCPL	SHERIDAN, Phillip Francis	1/13	14 APR	50E/1
PFC	SILER, Jimmy Louis	B-1/9	15 FEB	39E/53
CPL	SINK, Melvin Francis	D-1/26	13 OCT	27E/101
PFC	SISSON, Bennie Joe	C-1/26	22 MAR	45E/60
PFC	SKINNER, Walter Francis	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/30
LCPL	SKUZA, Arvid Burdeen	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/39
PFC	SLACK, Steven George	D-1/9	08 FEB	39E/39
PFC	SMITH, Alan Ray	E-2/26	05 FEB	37E/44
LCPL	SMITH, Author "C"	~~B-1/26~~	30 MAR	47E/17
1LT	SMITH, Cary Carson	HMH-463	22 FEB	40E/69
PFC	SMITH, Dennis	D-2/26	05 APR	48E/11
PFC	SMITH, Douglas Wayne	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/30

PFC	SMITH, John Archer	I-3/26	08	FEB	38E/39
HN	SMITH, Richard John	B-3d Recon	08	APR	48E/55
SGT	SMITH, Terrence Glen	HQ-26th Mar	21	JAN	35E/9
CPL	SMITH, Terry Lee	H&S-3/26	20	FEB	40E/48
PFC	SOBEL, Irwin Ross	M-3/26	27	MAR	46E/50
CPL	SPANGLER, Larry Kieth	HQ-26th Mar	12	FEB	39E/13
PFC	SPARKS, Steven Lee	H&S-1/9	06	APR	48E/35
PFC	SPICER, Jonathan Nathaniel	~~B-1/26~~	08	MAR	44E/54
BU1	SPILLMAN, Charles Otto	CBMU-301	28	FEB	41E/74
LCPL	STANCIU, Kenneth Allan	K-3/26	06	MAR	43E/35
LCPL	STAPLES, Louis Franklin	E-2/26	05	FEB	37E/45
LCPL	STEDMAN, Paul Francis	A-3d ShoreP	28	FEB	41E/44
LCPL	STENBERG, Jerry Oscar	C-1/13	21	JAN	35E/10
PFC	STEVENSON, Charles	E-2/26	05	FEB	37E/45
PFC	STEWART, Tommy Lane	A-1/9	08	FEB	38E/40
PFC	STICKEL, Gary Stephen	B-3d Recon	22	DEC	32E/48
SGT	STORZ, George William	H&S-1/9	08	MAR	43E/62
LCPL	STRAUSBAUGH, Harold A	H&S-2/26	09	MAR	44E/1
CPL	STRONG, Stanley Grant	C-1/26	06	MAR	43E/35
PVT	STUCK, Ransom Lee	C-1/26	26	FEB	41E/44
CAPT	STULL, Jay Webster	HQ Bn	28	FEB	41E/69
LCPL	SUNIGA, Michael Edward	K-3/26	22	DEC	32E/48
CPL	SUTTER, Richard Furlong	M-3/26	21	JUL	23E/105
LCPL	SWEENEY, Thomas James	C-1/26	26	FEB	41E/45
PFC	SWEET, Jerry Alan	C-1/9	16	APR	50E/24
PFC	SZYMANSKI, Frank Adam IV	I-3/26	25	FEB	41E/31
LCPL	TAGLIEBER, Leonard Joseph	LSU	05	JUL	23E/16
LCPL	TALLENT, Garry Glenn	B-3d Recon	20	AUG	25E/21
CPL	TAYLOR, Bobby Allen	B-1/9	03	FEB	37E/14
PFC	TAYLOR, Ernest Vernon	E-2/26	05	FEB	37E/45
CPL	TAYLOR, Homer Jr	I-3/26	18	FEB	40E/14
LCPL	TAYLOR, Louis Gains	A-1/26	06	MAR	43E/36
PVT	TAYLOR, Steven Earl	L-3/26	14	APR	50E/2
PFC	TERHUNE, Daryl B ert Jr		06	MAR	43E/36
PFC	TERRELL, William Lee	A-1/26	06	MAR	43E/36
PFC	THEYERL, Clayton Joseph	~~B-1/26~~	25	FEB	41E/31
2LT	THOMAS, Michael Howard	I-3/26	20	JAN	34E/92
CPL	THORPE, Gary Wilford	H&S-1/26	23	FEB	41E/5
LCPL	TINGLEY, Thomas James	B-3d Recon	30	DEC	33E/5
HN	TONER, Louis Joseph	H&S-3/26	06	MAR	43E/37
CPL	TORRES, Manuel Prieto	A-1/9	08	FEB	38E/42
PFC	TOTTEN, Kenneth R Jr	~~B-1/26~~	30	MAR	47E/17
PFC	TOWSLEE, Edward Lawrence	A-1/9	04	APR	48E/12
CPL	TRIMBLE, James Mitchell	G-2/26	06	APR	48E/35
1SGT	TURNER, Robert Lawrence	A-1/9	11	FEB	38E/82
CPL	TURNER, William Oliver	H&S-3d Shore	28	FEB	42E/1
HM3	TYRCZ, Walter Fred Jr	A-1/26	14	MAR	44E/54
PVT	UZZELL, Frank Nelson	D-1/26	27	JAN	35E/51
GYSGT	VALENTE, Anthony Nicholas	C-1/9	26	FEB	41E/56
PFC	VANCE, Reggie Lee	A-1/26	22	FEB	40E/70
HN	VANDERSHANS, Donald Ed	H&S-1/9	01	APR	47E/37
SGT	VASQUEZ, Jesus Roberto	EOD	30	JAN	35E/83
PFC	VASQUEZ, Jose Maria	M-3/26	21	JUL	20E/79

LCPL	VICKERS, Robert Lee	A-1/26	06 MAR	43E/37
MSGT	WALDRON, Howard Bert	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/37
LCPL	WALSH, Jeffrey Michael	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/41
CPL	WARREN, Donald Albert	~~B-1/26~~	30 MAR	47E/18
CPL	WEED, Donald Edmond	B-1/9	27 JAN	35E/51
LCPL	WELLS, James Randall	F-2/26	07 APR	48E/49
PFC	WELLS, Robert James Jr	A-1/9	16 APR	50E/23
SSGT	WEST, Seth Lee Jr	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/24
PFC	WEST, Stephen Alan	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/38
HN	WETHINGTON, David L Jr	H&S-1/9	02 MAR	42E/45
PFC	WHEELER, Joseph Keith	C-1/9	31 MAR	47E/28
CPL	WHITAKER, Donald Eugene	~~B-1/26~~	25 FEB	41E/32
LCPL	WHITE, Larry Frederick	H&S-3/26	21 JAN	35E/10
HM3	WICKLIFFE, Robert Logan	H&S-3/26	22 JAN	35E/13
CPL	WIEDEMAN, Robert Arthur	I-3/26	25 FEB	41E/33
PFC	WIENCKOSKI, David Raymond	L-3/26	06 MAR	43E/39
LCPL	WILEY, Gilbert	F-2/26	07 APR	48E/49
CAPT	WILLIAMS, Derex Jr	USAF O-1s	23 AUG	25E/36
1LT	WILLIAMS, Maxie Raymond	A-1/26	10 APR	49E/17
PFC	WILLIAMS, Nathaniel M	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/22
PFC	WILLIAMS, Richard Earl	M-3/26	05 APR	48E/22
PFC	WILLIAMS, Thomas Hansford	H&S-1/26	06 MAR	43E/39
PFC	WILLIAMS, Tommy Dorsey	L-3/26	17 APR	50E/35
PFC	WILSON, Reginald Eugene	~~B-1/26~~	21 JUL 67	23E/106
HN	WILSON, Wilmer Dwayne	H&S-1/9	16 APR	50E/24
GYSGT	WIRE, Eugene Charles	M-3/26	23 FEB	41E/6
PFC	WITMER, Omar David Jr	A-1/26	17 SEP	26E/86
LCPL	WOOD, James Anthony	E-2/26	25 FEB	41E/33
SSGT	WOODARD, Paul Leroy	A-1/9	15 MAR	44E/63
LCPL	WOODS, Cordell Emanuel	H&S-1/9	16 FEB	39E/68
E-7	WOODS, David Alexander	FOB-3	02 NOV	29E/8
1LT	WOODS, John Kevin	H&S-3/26	11 FEB	39E/1
PFC	WRIGHT, Michael Vincen	E-2/26	26 FEB	41E/46
CPL	WRIGHT, Robert	C-1/9	16 APR	50E/24
HN	WURTZ, Emil John	H&S-3/26	22 FEB	40E/71
PFC	WYMER, William Wayne	A-1/9	16 APR	50E/24
LCPL	YAMANAKA, Roger Kimo	H&S-3/26	04 MAR	43E/2
2LT	YEARY, Randall Douglas	B-3d Recon	14 JAN	34E/48
LCPL	YOHN, William Leon	G-2/26	06 APR	48E/50
CPL	YORK, Henry	A-1/9	08 FEB	38E/42
PFC	ZERBST, Gilbert Leroy	F-2/26	07 APR	48E/50

MEN KILLED AT KHE SANH ARRANGED BY APPEARANCE ON VIETNAM MEMORIAL

66W 4 - CRICKENBERGER RW
20E 79 - VASQUEZ, Jose

21E 58 - IBANEZ, Di
62 - LAWRENCE, Larry

23E 16 - TAGLIEBER, Leonard
97 - CASTILLO, Jose
101 - MORROW, Harold
102 - MULLET, Steven
103 - NIELSEN, Harold
103 - POLLARD, William
105 - SUTTER, Richard
106 - WILSON, Reginald

25E 1 - HINSON, John
21 - TALLENT, Gary
36 - WILLIAMS, Derex
55 - BROWN, Marcus

26E 86 - WITMER, Omar

27E 101 - SINK, Melvin

29E 8 - WOODS, David
13 - HAWKINS, Don
104 - CHILDRESS, Lewis

30E 3 - JENKINS, Earl
4 - MEGGS, Marion

32E 48 - STICKEL, Gary
48 - SUNIGA, Michael

33E 3 - JONES, Terry
5 - TINGLEY, Thomas

34E 48 - HEALY, Richard
48 - YEARY, Randall
80 - NEWTON, Leonard
82 - BRINDLEY, Thomas
84 - COLLINS, James
92 - THOMAS, Michael

35E 2 - BEDDOE, Paul
2 - BELLAMY, Paul
3 - BROWN, Theodore
3 - BUGGER, Curtis
4 - CONTRERAS, John
4 - CRITCHFIELD, REESE
6 - HELLWIG, Steven
6 - JOHNSON, Terry
6 - JONES, Clifton

35E 7 - KINGSTON, Thomas
7 - MOLE, Malcolm
8 - SEYMOE, Joseph
9 - RIMEL, Melvin
9 - SMITH, Terrence
9 - ROZELLE, David
10 - STENVERG, Jerry
10 - WHITE, Larry
11 - COTTRELL, Thomas
11 - SAXTON, Gary
11 - JOHNSON, Howard
13 - WICKLIFFE, Robert
20 - CASTILLO, George
21 - GOODMAN, Kenneth
24 - MILLER, Charles
26 - PENNETTI, Francis
26 - POPOWITZ, Gregory
27 - ROSA, Juan
27 - SCRIBNER, Gary
31 - FEIT, Christian
32 - HEIFNER, Edward
37 - DEARING, Jerry
38 - DENNING, Dwight
40 - MOLETTIERE, Joseph
44 - COLEMAN, Michael
46 - GOLZ, James
47 - HUNT, Joseph
50 - REATHER, Wallace
51 - UZZELL, Frank
51 - WEED, Donald
54 - FIGUEROA, Javier
54 - HOLLIS, Thomas
65 - BARMER, Timothy
75 - MARIZ, Robert
83 - VASQUEZ, Jesus

36E 16 - HUDSON, Roy
60 - SCOTT, Jeremiah

37E 10 - MC CANN, James
14 - TAYLOR, Bobby
31 - BOGARD, Jack
36 - HAMEL, Wayne
38 - LAMITIE, Tyrone
43 - RIMSON, Martin
43 - SELDERS, William
44 - SMITH, Alan
45 - STAPLES, Louis
45 - STEVENSON, Charles
45 - TAYLOR, Ernest
52 - CORLEY, Thomas
62 - MEADE, Thomas
81 - CORBIN, Russell B

38E
5 - KOT, Myron
20 - ANTRIM, Tommy
20 - AYERS, Leslie
20 - BARRETT, Michael
22 - ALLEN, Kenneth
22 - BURKHEAD, Jerry
23 - CLEMSON, Gerald
23 - COLEGATE, William
24 - CRAIG, Thomas
24 - CUNNINGHAM, Bruce
24 - DALTON, Bill
25 - DICKIE, Guy
26 - DUNLAP, Darrell
27 - FEATHERSTONE, Richard
27 - FORDHAM, Kenneth
28 - GLASPER, William
29 - HANDLEY, Anthony
30 - JACKSON, Leonard
32 - LEWER, Thomas
33 - MORDEN, Robert
34 - MURPHY, Patrick
35 - MC DANIEL, Roy
35 - MC KINLEY, Allen
35 - MC KINNEY, Bernard
36 - PINATELLI, Thomas
38 - RIZZO, James
38 - ROACH, Terrence
38 - ROUNTREE, Ronald
38 - SCOTT, James
39 - SKUZA, Arvid
39 - SMITH, John
40 - STEWART, Tommy
41 - WALSH, Jeffrey
42 - TORRES, Manuel
42 - YORK, Henry
55 - LOVATO, Michael
65 - CALVIN, Glenn
66 - D'ADAMO, John
66 - DEVIK, David
71 - PINATELLI, Thomas
78 - KEEFE, Dennis
82 - TURNER, Robert

39E
1 - WOODS, John
13 - SPANGLER, Larry
20 - EDMONDS, Arthur
37 - PATRICK, Albert
38 - ROBERTSON, Gerald
39 - SLACK, Steven
47 - GAYNOR, James
52 - PERRETTA, John
53 - SILER, Jimmy
62 - JOHNSON, Kenneth
68 - WOODS, Cordell
83 - BRYAN, Charles
31 - DOORNBOS, Don

40E
14 - TAYLOR, Homer
17 - BAILEY, Joseph
18 - BURGESS, Alex
39 - GOMEZ, Armando
48 - SMITH, Terry
58 - BRETT, Robert
58 - CHIN, Alexander
59 - CRAMER, David
61 - DOOLEY, Robert
62 - FOSTER, Julius
66 - MC CALL, Billy
68 - RILEY, James
69 - SMITH, Cary
70 - VANCE, Reggie
71 - WURTZ, Emil
72 - BRYANT, James
72 - BIRCH, Thomas
73 - BURGESS, Ruben
73 - CHISHOLM, James
75 - MC KEEVER, Michael
76 - LEASURE, Delbert
77 - JOHNSON, Kim
52 - DOUGLAS, Paul

41E
2 - RAY, Franklin
2 - ROBITAILLE, Paul
5 - THORPE, Gary
6 - AGUIRRE, Carlos
6 - BECK, John
6 - WIRE, Eugene
7 - BORRELL, Clifford
8 - DISTEFANO
10 - JEFFRIES, Gerrie
11 - NELSON, Max
15 - AKINS, Ronald
15 - BAPTISTE, Michael
15 - BATTLE, Joseph
16 - BILLINGHAM, Frederick
17 - BRELLENTHIN, Michael
17 - BRUDER, James
18 - CLAIRE, Kenneth
18 - CLAY, Doyle
19 - DODSON, Jerry
20 - GELLER, Charles
21 - HAYES, Phillip
22 - HUFF, William
22 - JACQUES, Donald
22 - JONES, Bruce
23 - LADEROUTE, Michael
24 - LASSITER, John
25 - MC CLELLAND, George
25 - MEADS, Kim
26 - MC DONALD, Henry
26 - MC KENZIE, Richard
27 - RIVERA, Arnold
28 - RUFF, William

41E
28 - SCARBOUGH, David
30 - SKINNER, Walter
30 - SMITH, Douglas
31 - SZYMANSKI, Frank
31 - THEYERL, Clayton
32 - WHITAKER, Donald
33 - WIEDEMAN, Robert
33 - WOOD, James
40 - LIVINGSTON, Billy
44 - STEDMAN, Paul
44 - STUCK, Ransom
45 - SWEENEY, Thomas
46 - WRIGHT, Michael
52 - NIEBUR, Edward
56 - VALENTE, Anthony
58 - BALADES, David
60 - CALDWELL, Robert
63 - DEMPSEY, Ronald
63 - DWYER, Matthew
65 - HARRIS, Earl
68 - LABONTE, Donald
69 - MIKELS, James
69 - STULL, Jay
74 - SPILLMAN, Charles

42E
1 - TURNER, William
14 - CUNNINGHAM, William
15 - BENGE, Larry
15 - FERREN, Jerry
19 - LINK, Frederick
20 - MARTIN, Gary
28 - COOL, Mark
33 - HUTCHINS, Frank
35 - LLOYD, Kenneth
36 - MEIER, Roy
41 - SCULLEN, Thomas
45 - WETHINGTON, David
69 - MUTZ, Dennis

43E
2 - YAMANAKA, Roger
6 - HOLLIMON, Billy
12 - ALDRIDGE, Herbert
13 - BEAUFORD, Willis
14 - BOYER, Charles
14 - BRIGNAC, Joseph
15 - BUMSTEAD, Donald
17 - ELLIOTT, George
19 - GRZEGOREK, James
19 - HALL, Blusher
21 - HICKS, Paul
22 - HOLLAR, Howard
22 - HORVATH, Robert
23 - KENNEDY, Larry
23 - JACKSON, Andrew
24 - ANDERSON, David
26 - MEAD, Dennis
26 - MINCH, Roger

43E
27 - MOSS, Thomas
27 - MILES, James
27 - MOORE, James
28 - MC COSAR, Winford
29 - O'HARE, Richard
30 - PIZARRO, Vic
30 - PRESLEY, Ronnie
31 - RODRIGUEZ, Domingo
32 - RUSSELL, John
32 - RYAN, Ronald
33 - SEARS, Michael
35 - STANCIU, Kenneth
35 - STRONG, Stanley
36 - TAYLOR, Louis
36 - TERRELL, William
36 - TERHUNE, Daryl
37 - TONER, Louis
37 - VICKERS, Robert
37 - WALDRON, Howard
38 - WEST, Stephen
39 - WIENCKOSKI, David
39 - WILLIAMS, Thomas
52 - CHAMBLIN, Donald
56 - JONES, Donald
62 - STORZ, George
69 - RUSSELL, David

44E
1 - STRAUSBAUGH, Harold
10 - MOORE, Lewis
13 - BEAN, Donald
14 - BOICOURT, Jess
18 - MEYSEMBOURG, Daniel
20 - RUSSELL, James
34 - DELANO, Jimmy
38 - MACAGBA, Edilburto
54 - TYRCZ, Walter
59 - GAUGHAN, Austin
54 - SPICER, Jonathan
63 - LEWIS, Clarence
63 - WOODARD, Paul

45E
24 - PAYNE, Robert
54 - BUSH, Paul
55 - EGGER, Walter
56 - GROHMAN, John
59 - LYONS, Carl
60 - SHANNON, Stephen
60 - SISSON, Bennie

46E
4 - ENZINNA, John
5 - GAINES, Allen
7 - IVES, William
10 - POLT, Erwin
36 - KAMINSKI, Kenneth
37 - LONG, Leonard
39 - MOSSO, Robert

46E
44 - BIXBY, Thomas
50 - SOBEL, Irwin
55 - KENT, Gregory
56 - LACEY, Franklin
57 - MAYER, Paul
57 - MC RAE, Jimmie

47E
7 - ALDRICH, David
7 - ANDERSON, David
8 - BEASLEY, Lyzon
11 - GULA, Paul
12 - HOWLETT, Norman
12 - JONES, Jimmie
13 - KOMAN, Lawrence
14 - BRITT, Ted
14 - MOORE, Wayne
15 - NORMAN, Marion
15 - PLUNKETT, Raymond
15 - RASH, Donald
16 - REYES, Ronald
16 - RUIZ, Jose Jr
16 - SANFORD, Albert
15 - SHAFER, Francis
17 - SMITH, Author
17 - TOTTEN, Kenneth
18 - WARREN, Donald
21 - FERRARI
22 - GREENIDGE, Michael
25 - PRUIETT, George
28 - WHEELER, Joseph
37 - VANDERSHANS, Donald
59 - BRIDGES, Ernest

48E
1 - CAVAZOS, Ronald
5 - HOLLOWAY, James
5 - JACOB, Robert
5 - JONES, Walter
7 - LINDBERG, Brian
11 - SMITH, Dennis
12 - TOWSLEE, Edward
7 - MILLER, Charles
15 - BUCIOR, Anthony
19 - OSTAPCHUK, Walter
22 - WILLIAMS, Richard
29 - LOHMAN, Herman
30 - MASTERS, Edward
31 - MC GRATH, Edward
31 - NIGHTENGALE, Timothy
32 - PEPPER, Anthony
33 - PIAZZA, Robert
33 - ROMERO, Manuel
34 - SCARBOROUGH, Russell
35 - SPARKS, Steven
35 - TRIMBLE, James
38 - ADAME, Gilbert

48E
40 - CRASE, Lionel
40 - DOLBY, Melvin
41 - GAINES, Allen
42 - JOHNSON, Eugene
42 - LESAGE, Armand
43 - MARSON, Ricky
44 - MEADOWS, Artis
44 - MOSES, Clifton
45 - NELSON, Roger
46 - QUATTLEBAUM, John
47 - RICHARDSON, James
47 - SCHROEDER, Donald
49 - WELLS, James
49 - WILEY, Gilbert
50 - ZERBST, Gilbert
50 - YOHN, William
54 - PHELPS, Randal
54 - PRUITT, George
54 - SEDILLO, Juan
55 - SMITH, Richard
56 - CAMPBELL, Thomas

49E
1 - FRANCAVILLA, John
1 - FRAZIER, Ronald
1 - GARBER
3 - KIDD, Phillip
3 - KISSLING, Benjamin
3 - LANE, Louis
4 - MULGREW, Kevin
4 - LINDSAY, Philip
19 - BELCHER, Robert
15 - ROBINSON, Lionel
17 - WILLIAMS, Maxie
21 - ERWIN, Richard
21 - FINLEY, Charles
28 - BIERLEIN, Patrick
35 - MC GARVEY, Patrick G
34 - MILLS, Arthur
50 - ALCASTRE, Anthony
52 - EDMONDS, Arthur
52 - NIELSEN, Charles
53 - KING, DeWayne
55 - FERRY, Ray

50 E
1 - SHERIDAN, Phillip
2 - TAYLOR, Steven
3 - FORDHAM, Benjamin
6 - MATTHEWS, William
10 - ADAMS, Edward
10 - AMMON, William
11 - AVERITTE, William
11 - BOYNTON, Charles
11 - CRAIG, Bruce
12 - BROWN, David
12 - CHRISTIAN, Daniel K

50E
12 - CICIO, Robert
12 - COLEMAN, William
13 - CRAUN, Gale
13 - GUILLORY, Wendell
14 - HABERMAN, David
14 - HAGARA, Leslie
14 - HAYDEN, Michael
14 - HIMMER, Lawrence
14 - HINKLE, Jack
15 - HURLBERT, Ray
15 - JACKSON, Nathaniel
16 - JOHNSTON, Richard
16 - KILGORE, Danny
16 - LE BANC, Alfred
17 - LITTLEFIELD, Robert
18 - MARTINEZ, Mauro
18 - MEDEIROS, William
18 - MOISE, Herne
19 - JOHNSTON, Dennis
19 - MC CLELLAND, Aubrey
19 - MOORE, Larry
19 - OWENS, Robert
19 - OWENS, Timothy
20 - RAMPULLA, Terry
20 - REDENIUS, David
20 - RICE, Robert
20 - RUIZ, Jose
21 - RUSH, Marvin
21 - SCHAUELIN, Hugh
23 - WELLS, Robert
22 - WILLIAMS, Nathaniel
24 - SWEET, Jerry
24 - WEST, Seth
24 - WILSON, Wilmer
24 - WRIGHT, Robert
24 - WYMER, William
29 - HOUSTON, John
30 - LANGENFELD, Charles
27 - DELAPLANE, James
32 - MC NAMAR, Jim
33 - RUSSELL, Larry
35 - DOLAN, William
35 - WILLIAMS, Tommy
36 - PATTERSON, Patrick
40 - LOPEZ, Jose

51E
47 - JONES, Larry

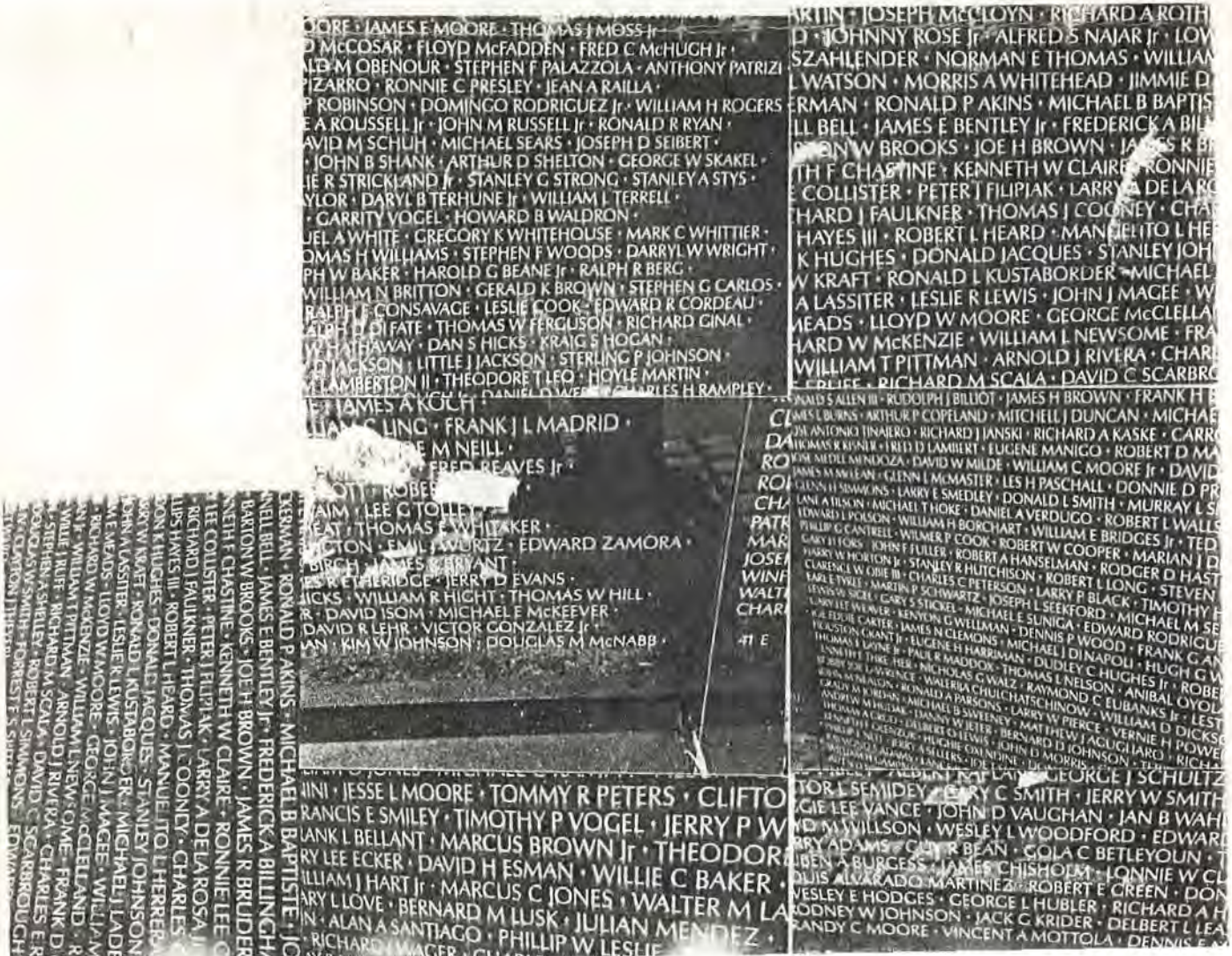

VETERANS SALUTED, 10 YEARS LATER

The Washington Post, Wed, May 8, 1985



UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

New York throws a belated welcome-home party, with 25,000 veterans of Vietnam war—many in jungle fatigues—marching in ticker-tape parade and hailed by huge crowd. Among the marchers: retired Gen. William C. Westmoreland, 26 Medal of Honor winners.

Battalion of Kings

A Tribute to our Fallen Brothers who Died Because of the Battlefield of Khe Sanh, Vietnam

Second Edition—2008—Revised

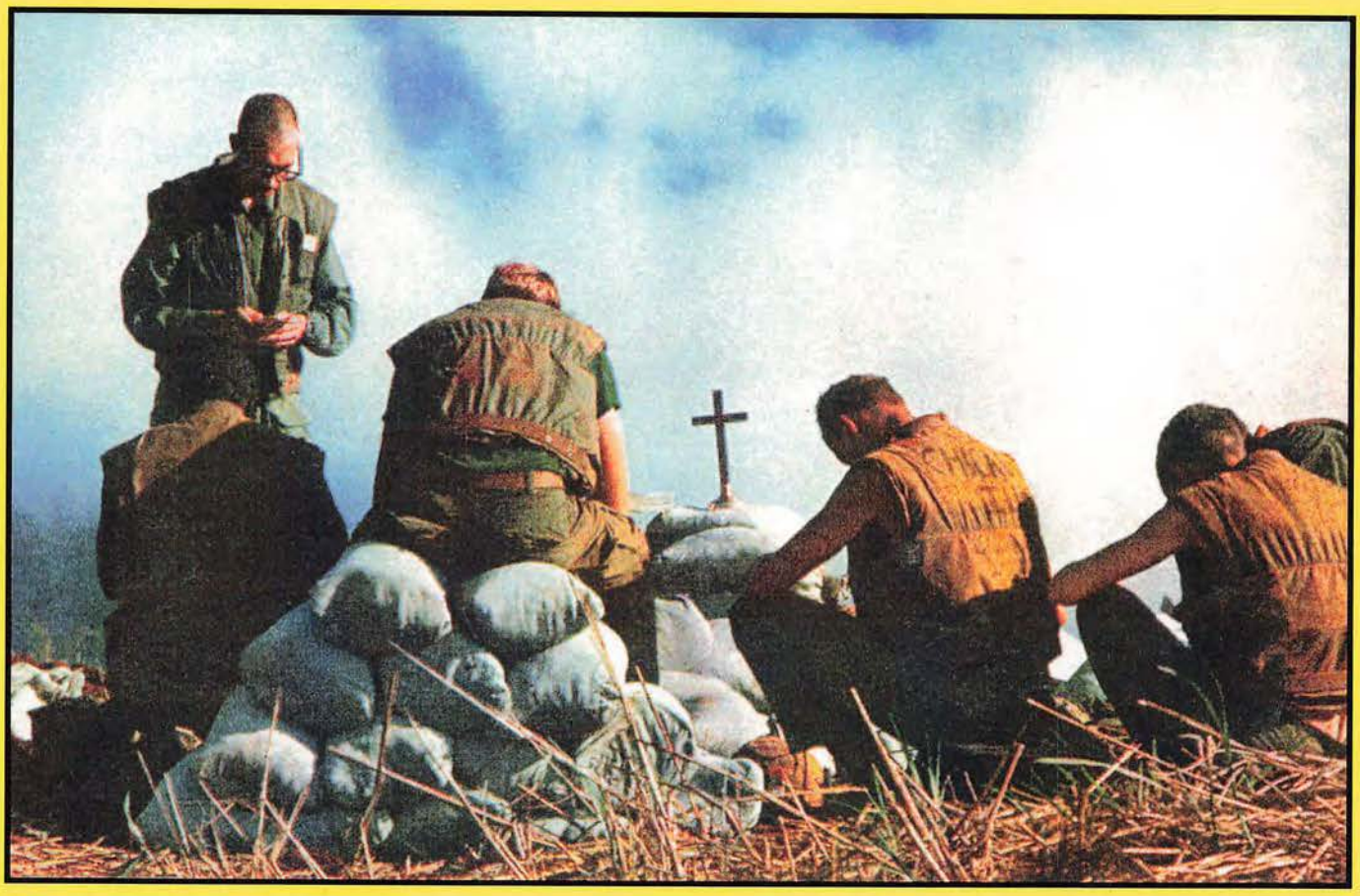

By
Chaplain Ray William Stubbe
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Marine Corps Birthday, 2008

BATTALION OF KINGS

A Tribute to our Fallen Brothers who died Because of the Battlefield of Khe Sanh, Vietnam

Second Edition

By

Chaplain Ray William Stubbe

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.
Wauwatosa WI

2008

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(414) 771-9987

τὸ γὰρ
ἀπρὸσληπτον
ἀθεραπευτον
[St. Gregory Nazianzen,
Letter 101 to Cledonius]

Tuesday, 30 September 2008

LETTER PROMULGATING SECOND EDITION OF *BATTALION OF KINGS*

During the three years since the publication of the first edition of this book, several dozen persons have contributed new materials on some of our casualties as well as the action in which they were involved. There have also been a few corrections of fact. For those who made these contributions, the memories of our fallen comrades are enhanced. Many years ago, I read the preface of a book memorializing dead from a much earlier American war which noted that although monuments have a lasting reminder to succeeding generations, what our fallen comrades really need is descriptions of them as persons and not simply names. It has been the effort of this book to preserve the memories of our fallen brothers in terms of their words, their hopes and dreams, their personal characteristics—what stands out when we remember them. For this reason, poems, letters, memoirs, and other notes have been included. In addition, the more general background of what was happening, the setting, the context, which may explain why certain actions happened.

This second edition incorporates several major revisions and also corrects typographical errors present in the first edition.

Copies of the first edition, limited to 850 copies, were distributed to family members of our fallen comrades and to libraries and archives to help ensure the preservation of our story and the memories of our fallen.

Again, should any be motivated to submit new information, it may be used for a future reprint of this book. Please submit them to me at the address in the letterhead.

RAY WILLIAM STUBBE

Excerpts from Letter Promulgating the First Edition:

Memorial Day 2005

The attached book, *Battalion of Kings*, is sent to you with the compliments of the author.

The primary purpose of this book is to preserve the memory of our fallen brothers who "bore the burden and paid the price," to quote from President Kennedy's inaugural address. While it covers the entire period of American involvement on the battlefield of Khe Sanh, from 1964 through 1973, the focus is on those who died rather than a complete historical account. This is military history written from the perspective of war's casualties...

Included are various poems, letters written from Vietnam, memoirs by family members and fellow servicemen, and accounts of the background for the incidents—the bigger picture which may help to explain why the action happened, why a specific unit or person was involved, and what happened. Hopefully, this will preserve the memory of our brothers as real persons rather than simply a listing of names, as well as an account of what was the situation which they had to face. The effects on those who survived who were also involved, who also knew these men, should be an obvious affirmation of the adage that "for those who fight in a war, it never ends." In a very real sense, those who we knew who didn't return home, have been buried not in the ground, but in our hearts and live there as long as we live. Nikos Kazantzakis, writing a summary of his life's work, notes that his grandfather "..will live inside me as long as I live. We shall die together. This grandfather was the first to make me wish not to die—so that the dead within me should not die. Since then, many departed dear ones have sunk, not into the grave, but into my memory, and I know now that as long as I live they shall live too." (*Report to Greco*, pp. 29-30).

The Holocaust survivor, Elie Wiesel, writing soon after 9/11, writes that we confront violence best through memory; he writes, "In recalling an event, I provoke its rebirth in me... To live through a catastrophe is bad; to forget it is worse." What these good men did shall not pass into oblivion! Hopefully also, this book will provide healing and assistance to those who survived, who struggle with the VA in making claims and in being able to understand a fuller picture of what happened. Although the tragedies and pains do not disappear, they can be put into a larger context, and this sometimes helps.

I write this as a Chaplain, caring for those who hurt and commending to the source of life and love those who didn't return to live among us, to contribute to families, to society, to culture, to posterity. These live in us, as Kazantzakis writes. For those who write memoirs, poems, and provided information on them, their memory is preserved. Unless an account is written down, it didn't happen—as far as history and posterity are concerned.

God bless us all!

Ray William Stubbe

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Khe Sanh, an enchanted place of beauty, almost a "Garden of Eden" filled with lush vegetation, exotic animals, spectacular natural beauty of mountains and clouds, with primitive tribal people friendly and so uncorrupted they didn't know to steal, remote—even isolated—from vexing artificialities of social conventions and expectations, an apparent place of "peace" and tranquility, soon became a place of unspeakable terror and unimaginable horror, a place where many thousands perished, a site shrouded in its genesis in the violence of crashing tectonic plates and volcanic eruptions. It was here, in the darkness of death, that the light humanity reflects glimmered in comradeship welded in the heat of battle. It was here, under the immensity of pressure that the ordinary was transformed into diamonds—ground into our souls forever shining and glimmering in dreams and daily thoughts, abrading, ulcerating, yet enriching. It was here that so many were buried forever in us and live in us as long as we live. This book is meant to be a permanent (and hopefully adequate) tribute to our fallen brothers, remembered not simply as numbers or even just names, but in terms of real people with personal characteristics and hopes. We remember, as individuals, what is summarized in numbers that reflected what happened on the battlefield of Khe Sanh, Vietnam:

PERIOD	ARMY	MARINE	NAVY	AIR FORCE	CIVILIAN	TOTAL
1964-1966	11			12	2	25
1967: JAN-23 APR		25	2		116	143
1967: 24 APR-13 MAY	2	160	6			168
1967: 14 MAY – 16 JUL	2	57	4			63
1967: 17 JUL – 31 OCT	1	26	1			28
01 NOV 67 – 19 JAN 68	11	10		6		27
1968: 20 JAN – 31 MAR	30	355	14	7	1	407
1968: 01-15 APR	58	101	5		1	165
1968: 16 APR		39	4			43
1968: 17 APR – 11 JUL	21	359	16			396
12 JUL 68 – 28 JAN 71	64	253	5	15		337
1971: 29 JAN – 06 APR	253				4	257
07 APR 71 – 1973	19	6		2	11	38
TOTAL AMERICANS:	472	1391	57	42	135	2097
TOTAL BRU:					APPROX:	10,000
TOTAL NVA:					IN EXCESS OF:	10,000

This book tells the story of the major battle of the Vietnam War in human terms (rather than strategy, tactics, political implications, etc.). Not only individual deaths, but how that death affected others, and continues to do so, makes the implications of President Kennedy's statement about bearing any burden and paying any price to ensure freedom profound beyond mere words. In our fallen brothers we know the meaning of "Greater love has no man than this, to lay down his life for his friends." [John 15.13, understanding "love" as a verb, not a noun, as an action, not a feeling or a thing].

Ἀρηιφάτους θεοὶ τιμῶσι καὶ ἄνθρωτοι
--Heraclitus, Fragment 102 (born 500 B.C.)
("Gods and men honor those who are killed in battle")

PREFACE TO *THE FINAL FORMATION* (1995)

IN MEMORY

We remember now our brothers who died because of what happened at a place called Khe Sanh in the country of Vietnam. It is appropriate for us who are veterans of those events to do so. It is incumbent upon us who carry the precious memory, however also painful, to ensure these men and what they did are not forgotten.

For those who served at Khe Sanh, this list may assist to piece together just what happened in the chaos of battle. This list may prompt you to face your pain and, knowing the truth, be freed. This list may help you find a name of a close friend, perhaps even someone who saved your life—a name that you perhaps have since forgotten—so when you visit the Memorial Wall in DC you may be able to pay your respects—to touch the name, make a rubbing, place a flower or memento, shed a tear, say a prayer, to pause, to reflect. Hopefully, this list will facilitate closure of open wounds that do not heal.

Names cast in bronze, engraved on a wall
Faces branded upon our hearts
We cannot forget; we know them all
Soul-seared scenes that n'er depart.

Perhaps this listing will finally put to rest the question of casualties at Khe Sanh: how many there really were. Perhaps this may enlighten others to appreciate, however limited, your experience there, so as a World War I poet (E.M. Walker) put it:

Now you are one with us, you know our tears
You have tasted of our hopes and fears..

For those who did not serve at Khe Sanh, this list will reflect the cost of battle; it indicates the burden and the price of serving. When President Kennedy declared in his Inaugural Address of 20 January 1961: "..we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.. and so.. ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country," perhaps we really did not comprehend the magnitude of the price and the greatness of the burden when these very words motivated so many to go to Vietnam. How can one read through these pages without realizing just how good and decent these young men were who gave so much, who cared so deeply about others? Although the full story surrounding each loss is not provided—not enough books could contain a full description of all—these are written that you may know the degree of caring, sacrifice, giving, service, and dedication that was the common characteristic of all and reflected in the last moments on earth by those among us who died. Alongside such dedication, however, remains the horrible nastiness and brutality of war, of which US Confederate General Robert E. Lee once remarked in 1862 after watching the slaughter at Fredericksburg: "It is well that war is so terrible or we should grow too fond of it." For those who were not at Khe Sanh, may this confrontation with the specter that jolts into greater appreciation those who fight the wars to which politicians and civilians send them as so many "hot hearts for chilling deeds" [Sophocles, *Antigone*[1]], and greater soul-searching deliberation before committing them.

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

[Poem by Talis Kaminskis, 1994. Talis served with CAC OSCAR at Khe Sanh]

In a much greater purpose, however, this special listing is neither to prove a point to posterity, nor to benefit those of us who still remember and cannot forget; this document is really for our brothers. It is to honor these men who died "because of Khe Sanh," that this listing has been compiled, out of love to them and respect for them.

KHE SANH
FIRMLY STOOD
THE FEW
COURAGEOUS
SHARING LIFE IN SERVING
SERVING LIFE IN SHARING
VICTORIOUS
SEMPER FIDELIS

By far the greater number are those who died thinking of others, that others might live. Not all died in some especially heroic manner; some were simply ensnared in webs of death spun by others, and yet were involved in living to serve which is why they were there. For the most part, these are ordinary men involved with their destiny of extraordinary deeds and circumstances. Heroes always change what is, confront that which means life-or-death

[1] Line 88. [In *Loeb Classical Library*, Sophocles I, p. 320].

for others, and transform the situation by their personal involvement in it. These are real people yet great people, ordinary people yet extraordinary. These are people who make a difference.

One Khe Sanh vet stated: "..he was more than just a battlefield statistic. It's funny how an average person reading books about a particular battle—these KIAs are just statistics or names. But every KIA had somebody in their outfit that could tell you a personal story about them." [Daniel O. Allen]. Kevin Macaulay says: "We are all better persons for having known them."

A fourth reason for these lists is to note the trauma of those who were near their friends who died and who have harried these memories. "Surely, he hath borne our grief and carried our sorrows." [Isa 53.4]. One vet declares: "We are the tears of those who died." May those who read this document gain a greater appreciation of those who lived these experiences and now carry these memories since for some, the memory is like a scratch in a LP record that repeats the same portion of a melody. Maybe this list will enable the picking-up of the playing arm so that the song of life may continue!

Finally, it would be appreciated if you, the reader, would relate stories of these herein, especially of those who have no story of the circumstances surrounding their death indicated, and also if you are aware of additional names to add to the list of those killed because of Khe Sanh or the list of those who died after having served at Khe Sanh. For some of these, their delayed death is but a "Died of Wounds" received at Khe Sanh, perhaps in the form of a cancer or emotional trauma. We need this for our historical records and also for possible follow-up printing of what you might add in the form of an updated version of this document. Send to: Rev Ray W. Stubbe, 8766 Park Viet Ct., Wauwatosa WI 53226.

—Ray W. Stubbe, 30 September 1995

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION OF *BATTALION OF KINGS* [2005]

The title, *Battalions of Kings*, refers to the quantity of those killed because of Khe Sanh with a Marine battalion numbering approximately 1200 men, and the word "kings" was one of the brevity codes used in radio communications to report a man "killed in action." For this author, the word also has a connotation of a man demanding respect and with a degree of power.

In the eight years following publication of *The Final Formation*, several dozen have submitted additional information concerning those who died because of Khe Sanh. These additional comments have been incorporated to enhance the effort of portraying each man as a real person with hopes, characteristics, abilities, not simply a list of names or a statistic. A focus on each individual, and the immensity of the cumulative impact, cleanses one from lubricious passing over their loss, as Goethe wrote: "I am rent to the core by this simple one's suffering; you pass carefree over the fate of thousands."[2] Family members have written of their son, father, brother, uncle, and veterans have written of their friend, their buddy, the one who shared their bunker, and of their last words and actions.

This revision, while far from providing comprehensive descriptions of each skirmish, still provides more contexts so that non-veterans may better understand what was happening. More details concerning the incident of their loss—details which are not provided in military histories—have been submitted by those who were with them in their last moments. Some of these are very precious, tender, reflecting depths of humanity, some are filled with horror:

"There was one guy in our 81s. I guess he got a direct hit. He was by himself in a mortar pit, and they couldn't find enough of his body to list it as him. Three weeks later we were filling sandbags and we found an ear, and we were by then—nobody really worried about that stuff, and we just went ahead and stuck it in the sandbag."[3]

For those living on Hill 881-South during the siege battle, KIAs were unable to be evacuated due to heavy NVA mortar attacks whenever a helicopter landed. For sanitary purposes, a "body bunker" provided a temporary mortuary:

"The body bunker was located between the two machinegun positions over on our sector of the hill, the Second Platoon sector and had been abandoned because of the poor construction. It was narrow, and it was too high and the parapet of this bunker just wasn't made properly to house a machinegun. We had no other facilities or no other bunkers in the trench-line in which to put our mortally wounded, and this is what became known to us on the hill as the body bunker. We would stack them up, and later on, it became full... Later, when the body bunker became full, we started stacking them in the area where the water buffalo was, behind the warming tent. This was a small, flat area of ground. They had placed a cargo net in this area, and we would stack them in the cargo net like you would stack logs for building a log cabin. We would run three or four bodies in one direction, and three or four or five in the opposite direction, and a helicopter would come in. They would hook up the hook on the rings of the net to the bottom of the helicopter and the bodies were taken down to Khe Sanh that way.."[4]

Numerous family members noted they received so little information when initially notified and had subsequently learned little. Many veterans, especially those

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[2] Goethe, *Faust* II, 4398f.

[3] Conversation with William Jabusch, 21 February 1990. Bill died 08 Nov 1991 from a brain fungus after receiving a bone marrow transplant. He had served with H&S/3/26.

[4] Taped comments of Mr. James E. Schemelia to the author, 01 August 1984.

who were medically evacuated, never knew what happened to others. Some veterans, filing for claims with the Veterans Administration, only knew a first name, or couldn't be specific about a date. Due to the silence of returning veterans, many family members really didn't learn of the immensity of the experience of their loved one. Most Americans had little appreciation of the loss, not as a statistic, but in human terms. For many others, memories had been deeply buried and only reappeared in dreams or motivated behaviors which diminished fullness of life, plunging them into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Not only have we been slowed down by the burden of their loss, but we also have been enriched: "The tomb of a hero is in the hearts of the living."[5] Elie Wiesel, a survivor of a World War II concentration camp experience, wrote: "To live through a catastrophe is bad; to forget it is worse."[6] Great effort has been made, starting with the Vietnam War, to remember individuals (e.g., on the wall of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.) and to account for all the Missing in Action through the efforts of the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting. In some cases, although the physical remains have not been recovered, memories still vividly are always present to survivors. An officer who worked in the Pentagon's Missing in Action section, once noted:

"The acidity of the soil will let them know a chance in a million of finding a bone. Some of the soil in Laos I know specifically—if the body wasn't wrapped in a poncho, it's gone. They threw them in a shallow grave, and they're gone. The acidity of the soil, the wild animals, the predators, sometimes the local villagers—the bones are gone. We had a recent incident where we went in and interviewed villagers in Laos and they said, Yeah, our medicine men dug them up and made aphrodisiac potions with them."[7]

On Memorial Day, veterans and surviving family members resonate with the words of Jeremiah: "Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by?"[8] The cost paid and the burden borne, so soon forgotten, needs to be remembered. The Hebrew word for "remember" [*zachar*] does not refer simply to recall something mentally, but to recall it in order to motivate and shape action. The motto of the War Memorial in Milwaukee, WI, suggests appropriate remembering: "To honor the dead by serving the living."

Hopefully this book will bring resolution to unhealed wounds and lingering doubts, will provide a caution against those who rush to war without counting its cost, and will be a suitable tribute, even encomium, to our fallen brothers.

Lieutenant Colonel Fred McEwan, Commanding Officer of First Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, at a memorial service for the KIA of 1/26 conducted at Wunder Beach, said:

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

"To each of you men who were there, I have this to say. For three months, the eyes of the world looked at you and the enemy, who was unable to claim success. At another outpost and milestone in Vietnam's history, this same enemy claimed success at the battle of Dien Bien Phu and with it fell half of Vietnam. Had Khe Sanh fallen there would have been far reaching effects. But Khe Sanh held. You held Khe Sanh living in the trenches, constantly subjected to heavy bombardment by mortars, rockets, artillery, recoilless rifle and sniper fire. You held because of your fighting spirit and indomitable courage. May God bless you and return you safely home."[9]

It is again requested that should you, the reader, wish to contribute further information concerning a particular man mentioned herein or further data concerning the loss, that you provide that information to: Rev. Ray W. Stubbe, 8766 Park Viet Ct., Wauwatosa, WI 53226-2729, for inclusion in some future revision of this book.

THE KHE SANH BATTLEFIELD

The men included in this book perished on the "Khe Sanh battlefield" or who died because of Khe Sanh. This area covers most of western Quang Tri Province of South Vietnam. For the North Vietnamese Army[10] the Khe Sanh battlefield during the 1968 siege battle at Khe Sanh included not only that area, but also three adjacent Lao-

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[5] Inscription found on a stone wall of the marketplace where Joan of Arc was burned, reproduced on a plaque in the Joan of Arc Chapel, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI.

[6] Wiesel, Elie, "How Can We Understand Their Hatred?" *Parade Magazine*, 7 April 2002, p. 5. Wiesel's article focused on the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack and concluded that fanaticism must be faced by fighting indifference through education and diminished through compassion. The most efficient remedy is memory since memory provokes rebirth of the event or person which opposes constrictions and limitations felt by the fanatic so that nothing confronted today is final.

[7] Comments of Maj Ronnie R. Ford to the author, 12 August 1997.

[8] Lamentations 1.12.

[9] Printed in the *Khe Sanh Veteran*, 2:1 (Fall, 1995), p. 8.

[10] The term, "North Vietnamese Army" (NVA) in American parlance refers to the army (and individuals in it) that operated from the country of North Vietnam during the war. This army referred to itself as the Peoples' Army of Vietnam (PAVN). Since the readers of this document are mainly veterans of that war or next-of-kin of those who fought in it, the term "NVA" will be used to avoid confusion.

tian districts as well.[11] The Khe Sanh battlefield was designated the H-2 "direction" of the B-5 Front, and the secret designation of the Khe Sanh battlefield was "B5-T8."[12]

For American forces, the term "Khe Sanh battlefield" included the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB),[13] its supporting outposts: Hills 552,[14] 558,[15] 861 and 861-A,[16] 881-South,[17] 950,[18] the Combined Action Platoons of Combined Action Company (CAC) OSCAR, headquartered (along with the Advisors of MACV Advisory Detachment 4 and the Joint Technical Advisory Detachment, (JTAD),[19] and Lang Vei.[20] Beyond local patrolling from these positions, long-range operations originating from these positions radiated out to areas reconned by Project DELTA in late 1966, the Detachment of 3rd Force Reconnaissance Company in early 1967, liaison with BV-33 in Ban Houei Sane, Laos, for which 26th Marines had artillery support requirements, areas patrolled by Project TIGERHOUND aircraft from the KSCB airstrip into Laos, and the areas patrolled by teams from FOB-1 using KSCB as a launch site and from FOB-3 into Laos. Later, Fire Support Bases in late 1968 through 1970 and mobile operations generally covered a more extensive area, as did support of Vietnamese units for Operation LAMSOM-719 in early 1971.

The Headquarters for the NVA Corps-sized operation waged against KSCB in early 1968 was located at Sar Lit (also Sap Lit) in Laos.[21]

The borders of South Vietnam were, in fact, a matter of dispute. While we were prohibited from dispatching ground troops (but not small, time-constrained reconnaissance units) into Laos, the NVA freely flowed down the Ho Chi Minh Trail in violation of the 1961 Laotian Accords. North Vietnam did not regard the borders as definitive. The anthropologist, Gerald Hickey, researching mountain tribes in the early 1960s, noted: "The border wasn't too well defined up there. Half the time we didn't know which side we were on."[22] When the first Special Forces team arrived in Khe Sanh in 1962, the Medic, Gerald J. Howland recalls: "Neither Vietnamese nor Laotians knew where the border was, and they didn't care. We saw Laotian troops in Khe Sanh routinely then.

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[11] Muong Phin, Se Pon, Nuong Noong. General Directorate forf Rear Services [Tong Cuc Hau Can], *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign], Hanoi, 1988, p. 269. In April, 1966, the "Tri-Thien Military Region" was established, cut off from Military Region V, and in June, 1966, the "Highway 9 Front" was established. [Le Tu Dong and Nguyen Xuan Hoang, *Chien Truong Tri-Thien-Hue Trong Cuoc Khang Chien Chong My Cuu Nuoc Toan Thang (Du Thao)* [*The Tri-Thien-Hue Battlefield/Military Region during the Victorious War of National Salvation against the Americans*], Thuan Hoa Publishing House, Hue, 1985, p. 115]. On 6 December 1967, the Central Military Party Committee ordered the establishment of the Party Committee and Headquarters of the Highway 9 Front, with Brigadier Tran Guy Hai, commanding. [People's Army Publishing House (Nha Xuat Ban Quan Doi Nhan Dan), *Lich su Quan Doi Nhan Dan Viet Nam, Tap* 1 [The History of the People's Army of Vietnam, Vol. 2, Book 1], Army Printing House, Hanoi, 1988.] B5-T8 was the secret designation for the area of Khe Sanh operations. *Cong Tac Hau Can..., Ibid.*, p. 207. While the entire "Battlefield B5 stretched 150 kilometers from east to west and about a hundred kilometers from north to south [*Ibid.*, p. 230], the Khe Sanh portion was the primary battlefield. [Le Tu Dong and Nguyen Xuan Hoang, *Ibid.*, p. 136.]

[12] General Directorate for Rear Services, People's Army of Vietnam [Tonc Cuc Hau Can, Quan Doi Nhan Dan Viet Nam], *Van Tai Quan su Chien Luoc Tren Duong Ho Chi Minh Trong Khang Chien Chong My* [*Strategic Military Transport on the Ho Chi Minh Trail During the War Against the United States*], Hanoi, 1988, p. 77, classified "Secret" [*Mat*].

[13] Referred to as "Ta Cong" by the NVA and indicated as "Xom Cham" on French and American maps, KSCB was located at 48QXD 849415 or 16°39'N 106°44'E on AMS Series L7014, Sheet 6341-III, *Huong Hoa*, 1:50,000 (3d Ed, 1966, 6th ed, 1971) and Series L803, Sheet 6342-IIIH, *Khe Sanh and Vicinity*, 1968, 1:12,500.

[14] 48QXD 822402, 16°38'N 106°44'E.

[15] 48QXD 820451, 16°41'N 106°43'E.

[16] 48QXD 803443, 16°41'N 106°41'E, referred to as High Point 832 in NVA parlance.

[17] 48QXD 777438, 16°40'N 106°40'E, referred to as High Point 845 in NVA parlance.

[18] 48QXD 844456, 16°43'N 106°44'E.

[19] 48QXD 845380, 16°37'N 106°44'E.

[20] 48QXD 78495 35687, 16°35'49"N 106°40'24"E, referred to as Lang Vay in NVA parlance.

[21] 48QXD 666614 [NVA coordinates 62-66] [*Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968*, p. 24]. The CIA [Directorate of Intelligence, *The Continuing Communist Military Threat in Northern South Vietnam*, 13 March 1968, map] indicates this Headquarters at 9 miles west of the western edge of the DMZ. It was struck by B-52s on 30 January [WW Rostow memo to President Johnson, WR58, in LBJ Library, NSF, Vietnam Country File, container 66, 2A(1) I Corps and DMZ 11/66-1/68]. General Wheeler, CJCS, cautioned against any public disclosure of this attack since "any public statement.. would certainly compromise the source of the information.. No valid cover story can be developed. We have no ground reconnaissance resources which could be admitted to be in that area. While photographic interpretation could confirm a possible logistics complex, it would not support identification of a major headquarters." Furthermore, he added "approval for the strike was granted by American Ambassador, Vientiane upon condition that no publicity would be given to the strike." [General Wheeler 010207Z/FEB68, MAC 01463, in LBJ Library, 5EE(1) Laos 10/67-12/68, Doc #52].

[22] Conversation with Dr. Gerald Hickey, 31 August 1989.

They came in force."[23] A team leader with that first USSF unit at Khe Sanh, Jacques Standing, recalls a hilarious incident at Lao Bao when a Caribou aircraft came there from Thailand, and slid into the XePone River: "..the Lao came over and challenged us and said their border was on our side, and we said it was in the middle of the river, but they had more men than us—30, 40 people in fatigues with weapons. Then one of their Captains came up, who spoke English real good. He started mentioning names that we knew and everything else. He told us that he'd been watching us from across the river, knew we were in trouble, so he came over to help. It was crazy! The whole situation up there was crazy!"[24] A Joint U.S./Lao survey team attempting to resolve MIA sites attempted to travel to a particular site on 31 October 1992, was stopped due to a border change which was now at the 63 north/south grid line (instead of the 658 line).[25] In fact, as early as 1964, North Vietnam claimed a border as much as six miles into Laos, thus assigning to Vietnam the area of jungle trails of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. A CIA document indicates: "In 1954 and again in 1958, North Vietnam followed up its claims by moving troops into the region, cited historical precedents dating from 1428, and termed the disputed area "uninterruptedly part of Vietnamese territory."[26]

Dispute concerning the location of the DMZ had a long history. During the Conference of Berlin (the Potsdam Conference), at the conclusion of World War II, General Marshall asked Admiral Mountbatten (UK) what he thought of the idea of splitting French Indo-China into two and placing the southern half, south of 16 N, in the Southeast Asia Command. Admiral Mountbatten concurred.[27] (The northern portion would be under control of China). The precedent for portioning Indo-China was established.[28]

During the Geneva Conference, the dividing line became a matter of dispute. While the Vietnamese representative, Dong, was ready to go as far as the 16th parallel running just south of Tourane, (DaNang), the French representative, Mendes-France, insisted on French control of Tourane (DaNang) and Hue as well as control of the road (Route 9) running from Quang Tri to Savannakhet in Laos. Mendes-France insisted on the 18th parallel (Dong Hoi area).[29] According to classified French documents, Chou-En-Lai took the general view that Vietnam should be split. Giap said, "Split at the 16th parallel," and Mendez-France said, "split at the 18th parallel." Molotov said, "Then we agree that the split should be at the 17th parallel."[30] Bernard Fall indicates that Molotov's suggestion "..has been explained by the conciliatory role played at Geneva by the U.S.S.R., which in 1954 was trying to induce France not to join the European Defense Community."[31] On 20 July 1954, the 17th parallel was adopted.[32]

WHY WERE WE AT KHE SANH?

Millions of years ago, when the Kontum Massif slammed into the shallow seas of what is now Laos, the rugged mountain range known as the Truong Son Mountains (or the Annamite Cordillera) was formed as the land masses crumpled and rose, forming such cliff-like features as the Co Roc Massif. Despite monsoon rainfall, these rugged mountains remained as almost impassible barriers except

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[23] Conversation with Gerald J. Howland, 20 March 1989.
[24] Conversation with Jacques Standing, 20 March 1989.
[25] JTF-FA, Honolulu HI 101102Z/Dec92.
[26] CIA, *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 11 Dec 1964, p. 6 (MORI 207893).
[27] US Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, The Conference of Berlin, 1945*, Vol. 2, Washington: Govt. Printing Office, 1960, p. 377 [meeting of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, 24 July 1945]. President Truman sent a message to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek: "On the advice of the Combined Chiefs of Staff we have reached the conclusion that for operational purposes it is desirable to include that portion of French Indo-China lying south of 16 north latitude in the Southeast Asia Command. This arrangement would leave in the China Theater that part of Indo-China which covers the flank of projected Chinese operations in China.." [*Ibid.*, No. 1273, p. 1321]
[28] *Documents Relating to British Involvement in the Indo-China Conflict, 1945-1965*, Misc No. 25 (1965), London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966, p. 6.
[29] Dept of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954*, Vol. XVI, The Geneva Conference, Washington: Govt. Print. Office, 1981, p. 1368.
[30] Joyaux, Francois, *La Chine et le reglement du premier conflit d'Indochine*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1979, quoted in a ltr from W.W. Rostow, 17 Aug 1995. B.S.N. Murti [*Vietnam Divided, The Unfinished Struggle*, New York: Asia Publishing House, 1964, p. 20] opines that France insisted on the 18 parallel perhaps to compensate for the evacuation of Hanoi and Haiphong. The 18th parallel is the northern border of ancient Annam, passing through the Porte d'Annam, the entrance to Annam.
[31] Fall, Bernard B., "Indochina (1946-1954)," as part of the 3-vol. series, *Challenge and Response in Internal Conflict*, Dept of the Army, The Center for Research in Social Systems (CRESS) of the American University, p. 26. [Copy in archives of United States Military Academy, West Point, NY].
[32] Raskin, Marcus G., and Fall, Bernard B., eds., *The Viet-Nam Reader*, New York: Vintage Books, p. 84, Gettleman, Marvin E., ed., *Viet Nam*, Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Crest Book, 1965, p. 137. The Provisional Demarcation Line was fixed as follows: from East to West: the mouth of the Song Ben Hat (Cua Tung) River, and the course of that river (known as the Rao Thanh in the mountains) to the village of Bo Ho Su, then the parallel of Bo Ho Su to the Laos-Vietnam frontier. A 5-kilometer demilitarized zone on either side of this line was established. [*Documents Relating to British Involvement...*, p. 16]. The line was approximately 60 kilometers (roughly 37 miles) long.

for a few major passes: the Ban Karai[33] and the Mu Gia Pass[34] far to the north, and the D'Ai Lao at Lao Bao[35] approximately 9.5 miles west of KSCB.

It is this latter mountain pass by which attacking armies moved east into central Vietnam (the country of Annam) and from it, attacking westward. In 1282 the Mongol General, Sogatu, followed the route through Lao Bao along the present Route 9 passage to attack westward.[36] The Mongols attacking the Chams[37] forced them into the mountains. From the mid-18th Century, the Annam kings, Vo Vuong (1738-65) and Gia Long (1802-20), extended Vietnamese authority into the highlands of the present Savannakhet Province of Laos by moving through the D'Ai Lao Pass moving into Tchepone.[38] In 1827, the Thai moved through the D'Ai Lao Pass and the Vietnamese abandoned their positions, fleeing to Cam Lo.[39] The French stopped the advance of the Siamese [Thai], and in November, 1890, Captain de Malglaive reoccupied D'Ai Lao.[40] This pass provided a strategic choke point through which invading armies flowed east and west for centuries. In 1954, a French column going from Laos back into Vietnam was ambushed at Lao Bao by Viet Minh, with much bloodshed.[41] In 1960, William Colby (later Director of the CIA) picked up an automobile in Hue and drove with his son and a friend from Hue to Lao Bao finding it heavily jungle-covered and abandoned.[42]

There was also a political consideration as well as a warning that the paradise of the Khe Sanh area contained within it much suffering and death. Lao Bao became the site of a prison to which Christians were sent to their death, constructed on order of Minh Mang (1820-41).[43] On 25 May 1834, Father Odorico died of hunger here after no one had been permitted to bring him anything to eat or drink.[44] A Century later, in 1896, the French established the prison at Lao Bao as one of their two major penitentiaries with a space for 250 prisoners.[45] In 1915, a prison revolt due to forced laborers having sharp tools destroyed the Lao Bao prison.[46] In 1934, a Communist document was confiscated at Lao Bao which enunciated the power and sophistication of communist prison organization; such prisons were routinely described as revolutionary schools.[47] Harry Hervey, writing of his travels in the area in the 1920s, noted the prison at Lao Bao was as grim as a medieval fortress, housed some hundred or more native criminals, and was administered by a guard of Annamite troops and one white man.[48] Over the entrance was a plaque commemorating the bravery of the prison guards during the 1915 mutiny. His description is chilling: "The convicts lay in rows on broad

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[33] XE 262117, 17° 22' N 106° 09' E.

[34] WE 8153, 17° 40' N 105° 47' E.

[35] XD 697368, 16° 37' N 106° 36' E.

[36] Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Sons of the Mountains*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982, p. 85. Reference is made to Henri Maspero, "Histoire d'Annam," pp. 35-36.

[37] The Chams established their kingdom in 192 AD with their capitol in what is now Hue City. They continued to move northward, replacing the original aboriginal tribes which were pushed into the hills, like the Bru, and conducted raids into the area around what is now Hanoi. In the Centuries following there was almost continuous warfare in what is now Quang Tri Province between the Chams and others. The Chams were known for their fierce, war-like quality as pirates, and for their artistic style (During the Vietnam War, there was a Cham Museum in DaNang housing specimens of their art). When the Mongols invaded in 1282, the Chams moved westward into the mountains. [Hickey, *op. cit.*, p. 85]. Of note, the place name on the maps where KSCB is located is "Xom Cham," (i.e., "village of Chams").

[38] Hickey, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

[40] Bourotte, Bernard, "Essai d'historie des populations Montagnards du Sud Indochinoise jusqu' a 1945," *Bulletin de la Societie des Studes Indochinoies*, n.s., Vol. 30, No. 1 (1955), p. 83.

[41] Conversation with Dr. Gerald Hickey, 21 May 1990.

[42] Conversation with William Colby, 28 April 1990. Due to Mr. Colby's untimely death, it was impossible to ask him whether this may have been connected with contact of agents which were sent into Laos, or if it were simply part of his familiarization with the country.

[43] Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Shattered World, Adaptation and Survival among Vietnam's Highland Peoples during the Vietnam War*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, p. 141.

[44] Guy Marie Oury, *Le Vietnam des Martyres et des Saints* [The Viet-Nam of Martyrs and Saints], 1988, mentioned in a letter from Madame Madeleine Poilane to the author, 06 July 1990. On 19 June 1988, 117 Christian martyrs of Vietnam were canonized saints by Pope John Paul II.

[45] Zinoman, Peter, *The Colonial Bastille, A History of Imprisonment in Vietnam, 1862-1940*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, pp. 42, 62.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 139, 155. "After stabbing three guards, one of whom they decapitated, the prisoners broke into the barracks of the Garde indigene, killed the handful of militiamen they found inside, seized several dozen rifles, and pillaged the treasury. After setting fire to the seventeen buildings in the penitentiary complex, forty-two prisoners fled across the border into Laos, leaving behind eight dead guards and the ashes of what had once been the largest penitentiary in Annam." [p. 155].

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

[48] Hervey, Harry, *King Cobra, An Autobiography of Travel in French Indo-China*, New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corp., 1927, p. 278. Hervey was born 05 November 1900 in Beaumont, Texas, served 3 mo. as a 2nd Lt in 1918, wrote 15 books and about 70 short stories on his numerous travels in Asia, Africa, Europe and South America. For some months he studied in a Buddhist monastery in Burma, lived in the homes of natives, and visited Asiatic rulers. The late Dr. Sun Yat-sen was one of his friends. He led an expedition into upper Indo-China in 1925 and discovered additional Khmer ruins. He remained unmarried and died 12 August 1951.

wooden slabs built against the walls, with cangues about their necks and their feet thrust into stocks. Smoky lamps half illuminated the two great wards, casting a soiled reflection upon the many faces... The whole scene swam in a nauseating stench."[49] Between 1930 and 1932, Giap along with his brother, Vo Thuan Nho, and several other influential Viet Minh were imprisoned at Lao Bao, a period of his life which he always passes over in silence.[50] One can only wonder whether General Giap's negative familiarity with this area may have informed his subsequent actions! Another inmate of the Lao Bao Prison was Ho Chi Minh himself.[51] In the late 1950s, the American Advisor to the 1st ARVN Division at Khe Sanh, Captain Eugene Hardy, found Lao Bao's ruins to contain rectangular boxes, like ovens into which they put prisoners, closed them, and slowly cooked them.[52] Major James Whitenack, Senior Advisor for Huong Hoa District March-December, 1967, recalls: "They had walls that were 20 or so foot thick. They had cells in one area exposed to the weather and the elements—no roof other than bars on the top. You could walk into a hallway with doors going into these cells completely open to the weather, open to the sun, the rain, the weather."[53] Major Fred Patton, commanding the element that would eventually become FOB-3, surveyed the Lao Bao site and concluded that it would be perfect for the new FOB-3 unit: "The walls of the fort itself were pretty well intact except on one corner and they had all kinds of heavy walls still standing inside. It would have taken a minimal amount of materiel and effort to make one hellacious fort out there."[54] Patton flew to Saigon which disapproved the site, claiming it was within mortar range of surrounding high ground. "It was funny because a few months before that I had been in downtown Saigon waiting on a parade with [General] Westmoreland and we got run off the street by mortar fire!"[55] A Bru named Onya whose parents worked for the Poilanes and who was educated along with the Poilane son, Felix, in Hue University and thereby became a kind of unofficial leader among the Bru (although not really a chief since leadership was hereditary in the Bru tribe), "..was just beside himself [at the disapproval]. He said, 'I'll put 1500, 2000 men out here in nothing flat,' and he really looked forward to it."[56] As of April, 1990, the Vietnamese had established a prisoner camp at Lao Bao housing 400-450 inmates.[57]

In addition to the important D'Ai Lao pass at Lao Bao, the pass produced what was eventually to become QL-9.[58] In 1877, Dr. Jules Harmand, a Navy doctor and naturalist, led an expedition which eventually took him through the D'Ai Lao Pass and along a path that would become Route 9. By 19 July 1877, he had reached "Dinh" [the name for Lao Bao] "..which serves as a site for exile, much like New Caledonia, destined mainly for women, children and those convicted of political crimes by Tongking.. The place is extremely unhealthy.. to live in Dinh might seem a disguised death sentence without bloodshed. It appears that few survive more than four or five years under such miserable conditions." Escape into Laos was unthinkable due to intense fear that Laotians were cannibals.[59] On 03 January 1891, an exploration team led by Captain Malglaive and Inspector Odend'Hall, split with the latter moving by canoe across the Xepone River to the D'Ai Lao pass with Captain Malglaive moving overland from Tchepone to "Dinh, Ai Lao, or Lao Bao, three names to designate one ruin. There's nothing left there of the Annamite fort occupied only three years ago by a French post before the Annam returned entirely to their indigenous masters."[60] Only seven enlistedmen remained at Ai Lao who were left unsupported for food. In 1904, work began on construction of QL-9 under the supervision of Mssrs. Bourard, Assistant Public Works Engineer, and Captain Odend'Hal, Civil Service Administrator, and, following their deaths, Mr. Valentin, the Province Administrator. "Because of its location and its general layout, the Ailao Gap must have served, from time immemorial, as a means of communication between the two sides of the Annamitic Chain. Its advantages immediately struck the members of the Pavie expedition .. [which summarized].. Ailao is the isthmus between Annam and Laos, between the limestone of the North and the sandstone of the South, and, among the Indo-Chinese races, forms the junction of the three main ones: the Laotians, the Khas, and the Annamites. It's the economic key

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[49] *Ibid.*, p. 281.
[50] Currey, Cecil B., *Victory at Any Cost, the Genius of Viet Nam's Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap*, Washington: Brassey's, Inc., 1997, p. 25.
[51] Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Shattered World, Adaptation and Survival among Vietnam's Highland Peoples during the Vietnam War*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, p. 142.
[52] Conversation with Eugene Hardy, 21 June 2003.
[53] Comments of Mr. James Whitenack to the author, 06 October 1988.
[54] Conversation with Fred Patton, 09 September 1997
[55] *Ibid.*
[56] *Ibid.*
[57] USDAO [US Defense Attache Office], Bangkok, TH 230919ZApr90 in Library of Congress MIA files, reel 355, folder 286. The camp (also known as Camp C-5) consisted of 8 inmate detention buildings, four cadre houses, assembly hall, and a kitchen.
[58] QL is an abbreviation of Quoc Lo [National Route].
[59] Harmand, Jules, *Le Tour du Monde: Le Laos et les Populations Sauvages de L'Indo-Chine,"* Troisieme Partie: Du se Bang Hieng a Hue, L'Annam, Chapter 22, p. 303.
[60] Mission Pavie: *Indo-Chine, 1879-1895; Geographie et Voyages.* Vol. 4, *Voyages au Centre de L'Annam et du Laos et dans les Regions Sauvages de L'Est de L'Indo-Chine par le Capitaine de Malglaive et par le Captaine Riviere*, Intro par Auguste Pavie, Paris: Ernest Lerous, 1902, p. 133.

to Indo-China, and can easily be linked to Tourane [DaNang], the best port on the Annam coast.."[61]

In addition to this strategic mountain pass and development of a highway through which invading forces could rapidly move east into the populated areas of Vietnam (Cam Lo, Quang Tri, DaNang), political events in neighboring Laos portended ill. Following the coup of 09 August 1960 led by Kong Le who overthrew the Laotian government of Prince Tiao Somsanith,[62] the city of Tchepone[63] soon became a target and was reported captured on 01 May 1961.[64] On 02 May, South Vietnam took emergency counter-measures due to the overrunning of Tchepone by Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces and moved an infantry battalion to Lao Bao, and on 04 May, a 150-man special forces group, in civilian clothes, penetrated about six miles into Laos to aid Laotian government troops withdrawing eastward from Tchepone toward the border.[65] The South Vietnamese forces withdrew to the border on 23-24 May.[66] The Khe Sanh area now emerged as significant for the Communist strategy developed in the 1950s and 1960s which dictated capture of periphery territories and working backwards towards centers of power. The plan was to "find its bases far from the capital and gradually work inward against the government in hope that after a number of years it would be strong enough either to assault the capital itself or bring the government to its knees in a protracted struggle."[67] QL-9 became the principle east-west infiltration routes, intensively employed since the end of 1958 by Communist forces.[68] The enemy situation during the summer of 1961 gave indications that North Vietnamese forces would push eastward along Route 9 toward Hue.[69] Urgently, the situation reflected a menace and the Chief of the MAAG [Military Assistance and Advisory Group], Vietnam, was "..convinced that this guerrilla war cannot be won by free world unless effective steps taken to plug up porous border."[70] That the border might be incapable of being sealed almost doomed further American assistance and involvement in Vietnam. In late 1961, planners in Washington, D.C., explored the idea of introducing an international force to guard against infiltration from Laos into South Vietnam.[71] Chief of Naval Operations reported: "Current information from the Chief of the Military Assistance and Advisory Group at Vietnam indicates that Viet Cong infiltration is mainly overland through Laos. Since the fall of Tchepone, Communist forces have had free access to the Vietnam border by this secure and well concealed route."[72]

Exploratory efforts to halt this ingression became the focus of the biennial SEATO exercise,[73] TULUNGUN conducted 02 March – 12 April 1962 with the scenario:

"After the fall of Tchepone, Laos, to Pathet Lao and Kong Le forces, Aggressor used this route to infiltrate large numbers of guerrilla elements into northern Republic of Vietnam... Unable to copy with the overall deteriorating situation alone, the Republic of Vietnam government requested SEATO assistance in restoring order and government control."[74]

The Taylor Mission Report, proposing a "Frontier Force, Vietnam," indicated that as of the summer of 1961, the 325th North Vietnamese Division was just north of the 17th parallel and the 304th and 324th NVA Divisions were in the vicinity of Route 9. The Frontier Force concept included securing willing assistance of Montagnards to make infiltration along the 103-mile "hot" area impossible.[75]

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[61] [Anon.], "Les Provinces d'Annam: Quang Tri," *Revue Indo-Chinoise*, n.s. 2, vol. 1, Issue #69 (15 Nov 1907), pp. 1588-1591.

[62] U.S. Dept of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, Vol. 1, *Vietnam, 1961*, p. 126.

[63] 48QXD 3244.

[64] CIA, *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 04 May 1961, MORI 207619

[65] CIA, *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary,* 11 May 1961, MORI 207620

[66] CIA, *Current Intelligence Weekly Summary*, 01 June 1961, MORI 207623.

[67] George K. Tanham and Dennis J. Duncanson, "Some Dilemmas of Counterinsurgency," *Foreign Affairs* 48:1 (Oct, 1969), p. 166.

[68] "Memorandum from the President's Military Representative (Taylor) to the President (Kennedy)," 18 Sept 1961 in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961-63, p. 304.

[69] Memorandum from Edwin F. Black of the Office of the Secretary of Defense to the President's Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Rostow)," 27 July 1961, in U.S. Dept. of State., *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961-63, p. 245.

[70] Telegram from the Ambassador in Vietnam to the Dept. of State, 08 Dec 1960," in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1958-60, p. 719.

[71] Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, p. 145.

[72] Memorandum from the Chief of Naval Operations (Anderson) to the Secretary of Defense (McNamara)," 09 Oct 1961, in U.S. Dept. of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961-63, p. 329.

[73] Exercises were conducted every other year to test new concepts and ensure that armed forces of the SEATO nations could operate effectively with each other. These included STRONBACK (1958), BLUE STAR (1960), TULUNGUN (1962), and BACKPACK (1964). TULUNGUN, conducted 02 March – 12 April 1962 in the Philippines is a Philippine word meaning "mutual assistance."

[74] CG, Philippine Army/Commander SEVENTH Fleet Joint ltr FF/7/LWW:ml, 3500, Ser N32-N00184, 13 Dec 1961, Subj: Letter of Instruction for SEATO Amphibious Exercise 'TULUNGUN'," in USMC archives VE23.2.N121615; COMPHIBGRU OpO 301-62, 130900L/Jan62, USMC archives VE23.2.N.235/1.

[75] Letter from the President's Military Representative (Taylor) to the President," U.S. Dept of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1961-63, pp. 520-521.

Accordingly, a Special Forces "A" Team arrived at Khe Sanh Village and established a permanent camp there on 08 July 1962,[76] to check infiltration along Route 9 by North Vietnamese Army forces. It located just to the east of the village in an old French fortified hilltop that was neither secure nor easily defended, referred to as "the old French Fort."[77]

Thus began the permanent American military presence at Khe Sanh to "plug up" the hole in the porous border at the D'Ai Lao pass (Lao Bao) and preclude massive movement of enemy troops down Route 9 eastward toward Hue, a route taken in 1972 after American and South Vietnamese military had abandoned the area.

NOTE ON GRID COORDINATES

Military maps designate locations by following UTM (Universal Transverse Mercator) grids rather than longitude and latitude designations. Thus, for example, Khe Sanh Combat Base is designated as XD 849415 rather than 16°39' N 106°44' E.

The use of grid coordinates enables setting of artillery to strike accurately. In fact, while patrolling in a heavily canopied area such as at Khe Sanh, where it is difficult to see hilltops and thus orient one's location through compass cuts, patrol leaders occasionally requested artillery to fire a "registration round" on a specific grid coordinate, usually a WP (White Phosphorus) round. Hopefully, the patrol leader wouldn't call the fire on where he thought he was! When the round exploded, the patrol leader then could determine his location in relationship to the exploding round.

Also, the use of grid coordinates provides ease in communicating locations by radio, provides for designating locations where there are no roads or built-up areas. In the United States, land acquisitions such as the Northwest Territory, were divided into range and township lines following a grid system to determine accurate surveys of property.

The UTM system divides the surface of the world between 80° N and 80° S into large geographic areas extending 6° in longitude and 8° in latitude. Starting at 180°, each of these columns is consecutively numbered, from 1 to 60 proceeding easterly. The rows 8° high, are identified by letters are identified by letters, C through X (with the letters I and O omitted). (The Khe Sanh area is within the zone designated 48Q). These zones are then further divided into 100,000 meter squares by a series of two letters lettered A through V (I and O omitted), reading from south to north. (To compensate for the curvature of the earth, the first zone, "AA" does not cover a full 100,000 meter square. The first full 100,000 meter squares are in the next column, "BA," "BB," "BC," etc., moving north, and "BA," "CA," "DA," etc., moving east.) This partial alphabet repeats itself every 2,000,000 meters. North of the equator, lettering of rows starts with A at the equator in odd numbered UTM zones and with F at the equator for even numbered zones.[78]

Thus, references to a geographic area consist of a series of numbers, letters, and numbers. (The Khe Sanh area is in "XD," with "YD" being the next 100,000 meter square to the east. Thus, for the Khe Sanh area, the 100,000 meter square is "48QXD." For convenience, since consideration is not focused on a larger area, the "48Q" is omitted, and only the "XD" is used). Each square, increasingly divided by ten lines across and ten lines up and down, provides focus on smaller areas. For example [the added 10th line is underlined for illustrative purposes]:

48QXD locates a point within a 100,000 meter square

48QXD84 locates a point within a 10,000 meter square

48QXD8441 locates a point within a 1,000 meter square

48QXD849415 locates a point within 100 meters [the usual designation for Khe Sanh Combat Base

48QXD84934169 locates a point within 10 meters [location of the 26th Marines COC[79] during the 1968 siege battle]

When reading a grid designation, move right, then up.

Map sheets are named for the most prominent human habitation designated therein. Thus, the map sheet covering KSCB is named "Huong Hoa," and indicates a major population center southeast of Khe Sanh village (at XD865375). This village, however, is imaginary. Madame Madeleine Poilane (who lived at Khe Sanh for many decades, John and Carolyn Miller, the missionaries

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[76] Shelby Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, Novato, CA.: Presidio, 1985, p. 46.

[77] 48QXD 859387, indicated as Thuong Van on military maps.

[78] U.S. Dept. of the Army and U.S. Dept. of the Air Force, *The Universal Grid Systems*, Dept. of the Army Technical Manual TM 5-241/Dept of the Air Force Technical Order TO 16-1-233, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, August, 1951, pp. 10-13. Dept. of the Army Field Manual FM 21-26, *Map Reading*, 1969, p. 3-7 through 3-12.

[79] COC=Command Operations Center, the Command Headquarters, or CP (Command Post). In U.S. Army parlance, this would be designated as the "TOC" or Tactical Operations Center. [There are numerous differences between the language used by the Navy and Marine Corps on the one hand, and the Army and the Air Force. For example, the Army and Air Force refer to time using the word "hours," (as in "0800 hours") while the Navy and Marine Corps simply say "0800" without the word "hours" added. The Army and the Air Force refer to "inclosures," and the Navy and Marine Corps refer to "enclosures" the Army has "latrines" and "fatigues," and the Navy and Marine Corps have "heads" and "utilities."]

who lived at Khe Sanh from 1962-1968, Bruce Clarke, the senior District Advisor for Huong Hoa District, and those who occupied the Old French Fort position (within 1,000 meters from "Huong Hoa") do not recall a populated area there! James Moore (FOB-3) states: "I've seen the map. It looks like a built-up metropolitan area, but it was never that way. I asked Fred Patton about that because he was up there in '66 and I said, "Why do that call Huong Hoa?" He said, "That comes from something the French had on their old maps, and there was never a city there."[80] Allan B. Imes, Commanding Officer of the Special Forces team (A-728) that replaced Floyd Thompson, served at Khe Sanh in 1964, operating out of the old French Fort just east of the village, said, "concerning Huong Hoa village: "It's shown prominently on the map, but when you get there it's not there!"[81] Old French maps from the 1920s and 1940s indicate a "Huong Hoa" over the Highway 9 area between Bong Kho and Ca Lu, as an area name. The word "Huong Hoa" refers to "pretty flowers." No one who was there can ever forget the luxuriant beauty of the area, almost an enchanted, spiritual place, like re-entering the "Garden of Eden." And yet, with all the lurking violence—not only the enemy, not only the pervading sense of violence that perhaps traced its origin to the origin of the area since Khe Sanh sat atop an ancient, weathered caldera of a volcano, one of five in northern I Corps, but also the extreme dangers associated with raging rivers, malaria-bearing mosquitoes. (Malaria is thought to have originated in the area of Vietnam).

[There are several other inaccuracies on the map of the Khe Sanh area. For example, during the attack on Hill 950 on 06 June 1967, artillery attempted to strike the northern slope, furthest away from KSCB, but the rounds didn't clear the summit. A survey team from 2d Topographic Company in August, 1967, determined Hill 950 to be actually 963.29 meters high! At the same time, Hill 881-South was really only 856 meters high—perhaps because of all the 2,000 bombs that were dropped on it during the Battle of the Hills, and 861 was really only 837 meters high. The Combat Base at the main gate was 495 meters and at the eastern end, 475, indicating an odd slope rise of the airstrip for landing aircraft which flew uphill after touchdown.]

Khe Sanh Village resulted from the coffee plantations of the Poilanes. When Eugene Poilane arrived at what would become Khe Sanh village in 1918, following his military service in Saigon during World War I, and again visited it in 1921, the "village" consisted of only one house, the engineer who had built National Route 9, the first metal road to Laos.[82] Eugene Poilane introduced chairi coffee trees and tended them for ten years before they became productive. The Bru people were quite savage at this time, and terrified when he brought the first motarized vehicle down the road. The Bru women in those days wore dresses made from the bark of a poisonous tree, the sap of which was used to douse their hunting arrows to paralyze animal prey.[83] Initially, Poilaine hired Bru to work his coffee plantation, but as they proved unreliable, they were replaced by Vietnamese from the coastal areas to the east,[84] and thus arose the village of Khe Sanh, inhabited by approximately 1,200 Vietnamese by late 1967.

The name, "Khe Sanh," "Khe" meaning "stream" and "Sanh," (pronounced "schan," the "s" in Vietnamese having a "sch" sound, and the "s" sound designated by "x" as in the major river separating Laos and Vietnam at Route 9, the "Xe Pone" which is pronounced "Seh Pone.") The Marines from the summer of 1967 and thereafter mispronounced the place "Khe San" instead of the proper "Khe Schan." (Pronounced correctly, i.e., as "schan," the word does not mean "river.") This prophetic slip of the tongue might have portended subsequent history since the word "Xan" means "green." Where was the "green river?" It was the "green river" of green-uniformed Marines and green-uniformed NVA soldiers! The Bru designated the town as "Saran."

Time Zone

The Khe Sanh area was in the "H" (+7) time zone, exactly 12 hours difference from the time in Washington, D.C. (-5). Since World War II, with so many operations happening all over the globe, and with increasing micromanagement of military operations from the National Military Command Center (NMCC) in Washington, D.C., the use of ZULU time designations appears on most messages and reports of actions. ZULU, "Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) or "Z" time zone, is the one containing Greenwich Observatory in southeast London, England, through which 0° longitude passes.

Thus local time in Vietnam is designated as "H" and "Z" designations must add 7 hours in order to arrive at the local time. What was happening at midnight in Khe Sanh was noon in Washington, D.C., and vice versa.

Military time designated in messages (as in the footnote references in this book) use the date, time, and time zone, followed by the Month. This is called the "date time group," and is written, for example, as "200430H/Jan68" which refers to January 20th, 1968, at 4:30 AM. The same time, using GMT would be written as "192130Z/Jan68" (being seven hours different).

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[80] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.
[81] Conversation with Allan B. Imes, 14 Oct 1988.
[82] Fisher, Charles A., *South-East Asia, A Social, Economic and Political Geography*, London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1964, p. 552.
[83] Comments by Felix and Madaleine Poilane to the author at Khe Sanh, 19 July 1967.
[84] Hickey, Gerald Cannon, *Shattered World, Adaption and Survival among Vietnam's Highland Peoples during the Vietnam War*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, p. 142.

CASUALTIES BY DATE

FEBRUARY, 1964

Monsieur Wolff Pharmacist

"In February, 1964, a French pharmacist from Dong Ha, Monsieur Wolff, had come to visit Monsieur Emmanuel Llinares who was sick. Upon going back down in his car, Monsieur Wolff was killed. They had taken him for an American, we thought."[85]

26 MARCH 1964

WHITESIDES, Capt Richard Lebrou

19th TASS, 34 TG[86]

Capt Whitesides departed Khe Sanh[87] at 1415H as a pilot of an O1F (L-19), #55-4695, on a visual reconnaissance mission scheduled for two hours with three hours of fuel on board. He crashed at XD890419 [in the area of the Llinares plantation]. His passenger, Captain Floyd J. Thompson, Commander of the Special Forces A-Team at Khe Sanh, was captured when he regained consciousness and discovered he was surrounded by a group of enemy guerrillas, one of which was trying to cut off his finger to obtain a ruby ring he was wearing.[88] He was told by his captors that the pilot had been killed. Thompson became the longest-held American POW of the Vietnam War, released 16 March 1973.[89]

[During April, 1964, Major Alfred M. Gray, Jr., accompanied by a few Vietnamese, conducted a preliminary recon in preparation for operation of the Signal Engineer Survey Unit, SESU. The unit consisted of 5 officers and 152 enlisted Marines,[90] from the 1st Composite Radio Company, augmented by a 76-man infantry detachment from Co G, 2/3, reinforced with an 81mm mortar section. SESU, designated as Advisory Team One, was "..the first actual Marine ground unit to conduct independent operations in the Republic of Vietnam."[91] Tiger Tooth Moun-

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[85] Letter of Madame Madeleine Poilane, 18 July 1988. Emmanuel Llinares figures prominently in the subsequent losses of 1964. The plantation which he worked had originally been that of Monsieur Rome (listed on map sheet 6342 II, Series L7014, at XD 882394, approximately 500 meters south of Route 9, 2,000 meters directly west of Lang Kat (1) (XD 905395) and 4,000 meters directly east of Khe Sanh village. Intrigue blanketed this location. Both the wife and the gardener of M. Rome were Japanese and, with the arrival of the Japanese in the 1940s, they lived well, but then mysteriously disappeared. According to Mrs. Poilane (conversations in 1967 with the author), Mrs. Rome spied both for the Japanese and the Viet Minh on French positions and was killed, some say by the VC, other say by the French. Her body was never found, and the property reverted to the government, there being no heir. M. Llinares, settled on this plantation. Llinares was born in Montpellier in the Herant (northeast Pyrenees of France) [Madeleine Poilane ltr of 06 Jul 1990, p. 4], had become quite wealthy in North Vietnam, but having fled North Vietnam during the Passage to Freedom, lost everything, and had no great love for the North Vietnamese, according to Mrs. Carolyn Miller [comments to the author, 27 May 1986]. His wife, however, had contacts with the Viet Cong. A network of VC was discovered on his plantation, near the Rao Quan River, Bru living in the mountains far from Route 9, were resettled in hamlets near the road, and many defected to the VC, refusing to be resettled. Following a double assassination of two workers of Llinares in his house, the wife departed, demanded protection from the Province Chief in Quang Tri, and never returned to her husband. Col John D. Waghelstein (then a Capt.), CO of the USSF team at Khe Sanh in 1965-66, relates: "We had an recon operation who spotted Llinares on the road about two o'clock in the morning all by himself. Shortly after, maybe a minute or two later, a patrol of VC came by, following him and my intel handler, Minh, was convinced that he was—we always had known that the guy had a lot of connections. We always thought he was involved in supporting the VC in one way or another and Poilane didn't have much to do with him.. I think Poilane was trying to stay neutral and I think this guy, the Basque, was in it up to his ears." [Taped comments of Col. John D. Waghelstein, 09 May 1986].

[86] Born 14 Jan 1937 in Manila, Philippine Islands, Capt Whitesides attended the US Military Academy, West Point (Jul 55 – Jun 59). Service No.: 55637A. More than 190 air search missions and a ground party of over 200 Vietnamese and USSF scouring the flight path, failed to discover anything. Data on this incident is based on documents in the Library of Congress MIA microfilm, Reel 213, Folder 12.

[87] The Special Forces at Khe Sanh who arrived in 1962, occupied the old French Fort position (XD858388), a place which had been overrun in the mid-1950s when occupied by the French who threw their dead down the well there [Conversation with James Whitenack, 06 Oct 1988]. During the second USSF team at Khe Sanh (arriving around Sept, 1962, commanded by Capt Chuck Korchek, Team A-131) a Vietnamese engineer unit placed pierced steel matting over what had been, to that time, simply a dirt field, about December, 1962. [Conversation with Frank Fowler, 21 March 1989, who was a member of that USSF team].

[88] Hubbell, John G., *P.O.W.*, New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976, pp. 383-384.

[89] For further information on Thompson, *vide* Philpott, Tom, *Glory Denied, The Saga of Jim Thompson, America's Longest-Held Prisoner of War*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2001, and Rochester, Stuart I., and Kiley, Frederick, *Honor Bound*, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Historical Office, Washington, D.C., 1998, pp. 81-85.

[90] Asst CoS Memo AO1a (JCSO-kh 001A32564, 13Nov64 to CMC, Subj: USMC participation in Vietnam, Encl (1), p. 2.

[91] Whitlow, Capt Robert H., *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Advisory and Combat Assistance Era, 1954-1964*, Washington, D.C.: HQMC, 1977, p. 139.

tain (Dent du Tigre, also known as Dong Voi Mep or Hill 1739, XD832543, the highest point in northern I Corps, over a mile high, became the site for SESU operations. Major Gray later became Commandant of the Marine Corps. G/2/3 was the first ground unit to operate in Vietnam; this was at Khe Sanh].

20 April 1964

POILANE, Eugene Civilian

".. on the 20th of April 1964, a Monday, at the time when we were going to market as we did each day we stopped at my father-in-laws at noon. His wife told us that he had left to go to Quang Tri that very morning. She was uneasy following the death of the pharmacist. Felix [Eugene's son, Madame Madeleine's husband] reassured her by saying that both of us had just gone down and come back up without any problems. He had not finished his sentence when a Vietnamese soldier who we knew well came in and quickly shouted to us in Vietnamese: 'Monsieur Poilane is dead! He was killed in his automobile by the Viet Cong.' We were stunned and very tense by the announcement... He was killed by three bullets of which one near the heart was fatal. It was at kilometer marker 51. The Viet-Cong told his chauffer to leave. The latter was shot in the foot. To complete their work, the Viet-Cong tossed a grenade into the engine of the car... I went to Khe Sanh accompanied by Father Poncet to the house of my father-in-law and there I helped my husband wash his father. We placed him in the dining room and the arrangements were made. We decided to bury the body near his sister on the plantation, near to his house... Papa was 76 years old."[92]

Llinares had been with Eugene Poilane in the little Citroen car when the assassination occurred. "Everybody knew that car. There wasn't any doubt who what was."[93] "He had a beard as long as his courage, and a great will to work. He'd come to Khe Sanh as a young man with his wife, and, when he came, Khe Sanh didn't exist: only the woods. He'd made that plantation entirely himself, loving the land as if he'd been born there, and people who talk about colonialism when it involves people like Papa Poilane make me laugh: he wasn't a colonialist, he was a peasant who cultivated the land, that was all, and he wasn't stealing from anyone."[94]

His obituary[95] indicates his birth at Saint-Sauveur de Landemont, district of Champtoceaux, France, 16 March 1888, the son of peasants. He was sent as an artillery worker to Cochinchine in 1909, and after the war met Auguste Chevalier who recognized in Eugene qualities of courage and insight and assigned him to the Botanical Institute of Saigon. He was appointed a botanist prospector in 1919 and promoted to correspondent of the Museum in 1928. By 1926, Poilane was established at Khe Sanh. His trees and buildings were destroyed or burned by the Japanese in 1945 and by the Viet Minh in 1953, but he remained. He fathered six children, five of whom were born after he was 60. He traveled more than 40 years, most often by foot, to the frontier of China and to Siam [Thailand] to gather botanical specimens from sectors that were little known or even completely unknown. He sent from 1500 to 5000 specimens a year. There are over 40,000 samples of his discoveries in the Natural History Museum in Paris. He discovered 21 new species. He also experimented with fruit trees at Khe Sanh at his experimental orchard [located near Hill 558 northwest of KSCB]. He imported grafts from France, Japan and other countries to study grapevines, peach trees, strawberry plants, plum trees, pear trees, chestnut trees, and walnut trees, could survive and flourish.

In 1921 he returned to France for a population census, met his future bride, Mlle Yvonne Bourdeauducq (who was 13 years younger than he) who wanted to become a nun. Her third child, Felix, was born at Khe Sanh 30 April 1931. She gave birth alone, her husband being out collecting botanical specimens. In 1926, Eugene settled in Cu-Bach (Khe Sanh), built a straw hut to house his little family and cleared the land for a coffee plantation.[96]

[*On the American national level, the National Security Council met on 17 March 1964 at the White House to approve National Security Action Memorandum No. 288 [NSAM 288], providing for cross-border operations from Vietnam into Laos. Recommendation No. 11 provided for Vietnamese ground operations into Laos; recommendation No. 12 for a full range of Laotian border control operations.*[97] *CINCPAC developed OPLANs 37-64 and 98-64 to implement NSAM 288. The latter provided for cross-border operations into Laos south of the 17th parallel to obtain positive evidence of communist use of Laos as an infiltration route into the Republic of Vietnam and to disrupt such infiltration. No Vietnamese or American uniforms would be worn and no American troops would participate. Operations would penetrate to a depth of 50 kilometers.*[98] *The NSC meeting disclosed "the basic problem here in Washington... When Maxwell Taylor talks, he is representing a composite view of the Chiefs. There*

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[92] Poilane, Madame Madeleine, ltr of 18 July 1988.
[93] Conversation with John and Carolyn Miller, 27 May 1986.
[94] Fallaci, Oriana, *Nothing and So Be It.*, Trans. Isabel Quigly, Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1972, p. 225.
[95] Tardieu-Blot, L., "Eugene Poilane, 1888-1964," *Andansonia* [publication of the Paris Museum of Natural History], Vol. 4 (1964) pp. 352-354.
[96] Poilane, Madame Madeleine, letter of 06 July 1990.
[97] NSAM 288 in LBJ Library, NSF, NSAMs, container 3.
[98] DJSM-1069-64, 25 June 1964, in NSAM 288 file, LBJ Library, OPLAN 98-64, OPLAN 98A-64 (old 34B-64), and CINCPAC OPLAN 37-64.

is an element in that body.. who wish to bomb or otherwise interdict the infiltration routes in Laos. This is consistent with their view that the war in Vietnam is essentially a conventional one, which should be fought by the United States with all the conventional resources at our disposal, especially those which involve a minimum loss of American life.. General Taylor and General Wheeler have a more sophisticated view.. but they are naturally unwilling to ask a subordinate command (MACV) to undertake an action which in their view can have no real military effect on the enemy... The State Department.. is fundamentally worried about the precarious situation in Laos... In my own opinion, our real problem is that we have given to the military (MACV) missions in South Vietnam which they are unwilling and unable effectively to perform. We do want hard intelligence on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, both for military and political reasons; but in the getting of it, we do not want an overt invasion of Laos at this time."[99]

By May, Operation LEAPING LENA plans were devised to obtain intelligence in Laos between Route 9 and the 17th parallel east of Tchepone in Laos.[100] *Although plans included two Americans on each team, MACV was constrained by OPLAN 98-64 from their presence, and morale plummeted among the indigenous members. However, by mid-June, five of the 8-man teams were ready and on the night of 24 June, Team 1 embarked an unmarked C-47 to be inserted by parachute and padded jumpsuits to land in thick trees. The results of parachute insertion of all the teams were a preclude to the 1971 LAMSOM-719 operation into Laos from Khe Sanh: it failed miserably, and the folly of making blind parachute drops near Tchepone was obvious.*[101] *Of the five 8-man teams inserted along Route 9 east of Tchepone by parachute, only five survivors emerged.*[102] *Nevertheless, we did learn that the area was "alive with enemy ground forces.. equipped with the uniform of the North Vietnamese Army.. every culvert on every road and every bridge had a minimum of two enemy personnel guarding it.. Units as large as battalion-size were observed, including one that was actually in the act of crossing into Vietnam, west of Khe Sanh.. confirmed by a helicopter crew that had been sent out to rendezvous with one of the teams."*[103] *Following transfer of USSF from CAS [the cover for CIA in Vietnam] to MACV during Operation SWITCHBACK, LEAPING LENA became Project DELTA.*[104]

The Marine Corps SESU operations on Tiger Tooth Mountain were conducted 13 June 1964 – 17 July 1964, during which they experienced a severe thunderstorm and an enemy probe, compromising their position, forcing them to depart within a couple of days.

USSF Team A-728 at Khe Sanh under command of Capt Allan B. Imes, was relieved at the presence of the Marines, convinced that their presence meant that they would not be attacked. Gen John K. Waters, Commander of US Army Forces, Pacific, a 4-star General and Gen. Patton's son-in-law, visited Khe Sanh during this time and informed Imes of at least 15,000 NVA in the immediate area, that the thought was the NVA would cross the DMZ, try to take I Corps, and declare it a neutral country. "It scarred me to death."[105] *In November, 1964, Capt. Chuck Allen's A-team from 1st Special Forces, Okinawa, arrived and moved the USSF from the Old French Fort to the airstrip where he spent his 6-month tour constructing the concrete bunkers*[106] *that later Marines referred to as "old French bunkers!"]*

03-04 JANUARY 1966

11 KIA [all CIDG, no Americans]

By December, 1965, increased presence of North Vietnamese Army units became obvious. The Special Forces team (A-101) that had arrived in early October, 1965, under command of John D. Waghelstein, had the mission of interdicting re-supply from Laos. His Team Sergeant was Pete Morakon. His four to five separate agent nets reported that NVA units were no longer moving south but had halted and were stockpiling large quantities of supplies. By December, indications of a considerable enemy presence was evident. On the night of 17 December 1965, a small border village protected by PF soldiers was overrun. Three nights later, agent reports confirmed two regiments of NVA soldiers had crossed the border. A 65-man patrol was dispatched from the Khe Sanh USSF camp to screen the western edge of Huong Hoa District, then move north and back to the base. The patrol discovered evidenced of heavy enemy traffic. Fog had diminished visibility to less than 40 meters. The USSF patrol caught the NVA in an ambush[107] **The NVA regiment that had been decimated, carried brand-new equipment, the troops had fresh haircuts, and included a Chinese ad-**

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[99] Michael V. Forrestal memo to Mr. Bundy, National Security Council, 29 Apr 1964, in LBJ Library, NSF, Country File, Laos, Container 266, Memos Vol. 2, 4/16/64-4/30/64.
[100] Ken Conboy and James Morrison, "Project Delta Disaster," *Vietnam*, Oct 2000, p. 49.
[101] *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
[102] JCS, J3M-1242-70, 16 Jul 1970, Subj: Draft MACSOG Documentation Study, Annex D, Cross-Border Operations in Laos, p. D-7.
[103] Statement [name omitted by declassifier] in *Ibid.*, p. D-9.
[104] Thompson, Leroy, *US Elite Forces—Vietnam*, Carrollton, TX: Squadron/Signal Publications, Inc., 1985, p. 13.
[105] Conversation with Allan B. Imes, 14 Oct 1988.
[106] Conversation with Chuck Allen, 19 Jun 1986.
[107] Infantry Magazine, *Infantry in Vietnam*, Fort Benning, GA, 1967, pp. 284-290.

visor.[108] The NVA, however, soon launched a retaliatory attack.

A-101 consisted of a company of Vietnamese CIDG, two companies of Bru CIDG. On 03 January 1966, a company of Nung Chinese mercenaries arrived along with two U.S. Air Force Birddog observation aircraft to begin Project Tigerhound.[109] The unit operating at Khe Sanh was the 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron (20th TASS), subordinate to 504th Tactical Air Support Group.

The evening formation was just breaking-up, and Waghelstein was having his "usual evening harangue right before supper [with the LLDB commander] because I wasn't crazy about these formations. And sure enough, they put the first three rounds right into the middle of the formation. That's where we took most of our casualties... We took heavy mortar fire for about the next hour, anywhere from a round a minute to two rounds a minute. Once we got everyone underground, we didn't take any more casualties. One of the rounds hit the team room and the team house went up. We didn't have to worry about illumination. The team house burned for a couple of hours and we had plenty of light... In the underground bunker—it had been an ammo storage and we had cleaned it out and converted it earlier into a beginning of an Op Center and a medical bunker. It turned out we had 13 killed and some 50 or 60 wounded, some critical with traumatic amputations."[110] U.S. Marine medevac helicopters landed in the middle of incoming to evacuate the wounded.[111]

The NVA used 120mm mortars, the first time this weapon was used in the war.[112] The mortars were located at XD858440 and XD866432, and subsequent patrols through this area disclosed Chinese documents and firing tables at these sites which were manned by an estimated 200-man force.[113] About one out of ten rounds had a rather strange sounding crump, and it turned out that the NVA were firing delayed-fuse so that it could cut through 12 feet of laterite soil before detonating. The 120s were fired just outside the range of the camp's 81s, but although within range of the 105s, there were no recoil pits to permit 105 high angle fire, so the NVA moved into the "dead space" with their tubes and fired unmolested,[114] a tactic that was to be repeated during the 1968 siege battle when NVA units moved into an area where they would be safe from B-52 strikes, but far enough from the perimeter to avoid fire from within the perimeter.

The newly-arrived Tigerhound aircraft had not yet been placed in large underground revetments that were to be dug by USMC engineers who had just arrived, and were severely damaged in the attack.[115] Doc Cobb, the senior medic, was in DaNang, so Doc Robinson, the junior medic, along with the local missionaries (Nancy Costello and Eugenia Johnson, who had just found refuge here) and four Bru girls that the Army had been training as nurses, attended and saved the wounded. Their work was well done: out of 12 or 14 critically wounded, only one was lost.

03 FEBRUARY 1966

BROWN, Capt Wilbur Ronald [Co-pilot]
CARTER, LtCol James Louis [Pilot]
PARSLEY, A1C Edward Milton [Loadmaster]
WALLER, A1C Therman Morris [Engineer]
—all from 311th Air Commando Squadron
DaNang Air Base

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[108] Taped comments of Col John D. Waghelstein, 09 May 1986 to the author.

[109] Gen Westmoreland had given the name "Tigerhound", "tiger" for aggressiveness and "hound" for smelling out the enemy. Their mission was to conduct aerial recon inside Laos to a depth of 12 miles inside the border, support USSF teams, and acquire targets for B-52 strikes. [Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1976, p. 196]. The 20th TASS had been organized 06 May 1965 and became fully operational 04 Sep 1965 before deploying two aircraft to Khe Sanh. [504 Tactical Air Support Group, *History*, 01 Apr 1967 – 30 June 1967, Chap. 3, "History of 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron, DaNang AB, Vietnam, 01 April 1967 – 30 June 1967," p. 29.

[110] Waghelstein ltr of 09 May 1986. The Special Forces camp at Khe Sanh (and later, at Lang Vei) was a Vietnamese camp with American advisors, not an American installation; the Vietnamese had the final word.

[111] Waghelstein, Col. John D., letter of 30 July 1985.

[112] Westmoreland, *History File* #7, 29 May – 16 Jul 66, LBJ Library, Container No. 8, Chronology 1 January – 30 June 1966; MACV, *Command History*, 1966, p. 3; CIA, Weekly Report, *The Situation in South Vietnam*, 12 Jan 1966,p. 8. The Soviet 120mm Regimental Mortar M1943 weighs 606 lb in firing position and 1,100 lbs in traveling position, has a range of 5,700 meters and can fire 15 rounds per minute. [Dept of the Army, *Pamphlet 381-10, Weapons and Equipment Recognition Guide*, Washington, DC: Dept. of the Army, 1966, p. 139]. A USMC EOD team confirmed 120mm mortars with body delay fuses and PD types. [A-101 MOPSUM, Jan66, cited].

[113] Det A-101 Monthly Operational Summary (MOPSUM), January 1966, p. 4.

[114] Col John D. Waghelstein, taped comments, 09 May 1986. Waghelstein notes: "We'd been pleading with the ARVN to dig recoil pits so they could elevate the 105s to cover that dead space which we had plotted in that Rao Quan valley, which is where they put the 120s. They were inside the 105 range and outside the 81 range. They just set there where they were unmolested and they just pounded the shit out of us for most of the night."

[115] Tigerhound hangers were completed 15 Feb 66 by USMC engineers and Tigerhound began operations at Khe Sanh on 26 Feb 1966. [A-101, MOPSUM, Feb 1966, pp. 4 & 5].

The C123B cargo aircraft departed DaNang at 1320H, arrived at the Khe Sanh Special Forces camp (XD845415) at 1410H, departed Khe Sanh, and flew to Dong Ha (YD008434) and returned to Khe Sanh on supply shuttle runs. The aircraft then departed Khe Sanh at 1655H on its second supply shuttle to Dong Ha, 28 miles distant. When the aircraft failed to return to Dong Ha around 1720 as scheduled, a communications search was initiated and the crew was declared missing in action at 1830H. Weather at Khe Sanh was 3000 overcast, 2 miles of fog. The flight path is over mountainous jungle of high trees and dense foliage. Two C-123 aircraft flew low over the flight path until last light in an attempt to locate the downed aircraft or crewmembers. The next morning additional aircraft joined the search and the flight path was again covered many times. Areas extending ten miles to either side and beyond the flight path were searched all day without success. The search efforts were hampered by thick jungle, constant haze and occasional thundershowers. The search was terminated 10 February 1966 when the search commander determined that further efforts would be of little value.[116]

LtCol Hugh L. Baynes reported discovery of an aircraft wreckage on 01 March 1966, "..located at the end of a box canyon approximately 15 miles northeast of Khe Sanh and on a ledge at approximately the 3000 foot level of a sheer cliff. The wreckage..would require professional mountain climbers and equipment for ground access [and] is controlled by unfriendly forces.. official records show that a USAF C-47 crashed in this location in 1963. The report I received indicated that the wreckage was new and the possibility existed that the missing C-123 had crashed into the same position. The wreckage was checked by rescue personnel from a helicopter and they reported that there was no evidence of the C-123 having crashed into this position or of the wreckage being anything but the C-47 that crashed in 1963."[117]

It is possible that four South Vietnamese troops were also aboard the Provider aircraft for the flight when it went missing.[118]

[116] MIA file on James Louis Carter, Library of Congress MIA microfilm reel #373, folder #13; MIA file on Therman Morris Waller, LC microfilm reel #375, Folder #35; MIA file, LC Reel #464, Folder 2.

[117] Carter MIA file, *op. cit..*, Statement of LtCol Hugh L. Baynes, FR49233. Mr. John R. Horn (Chief, External Inquiries Div., Defense POW/MIA Office, Pentagon) writes: "We thoroughly researched our files and data bases, and we also had the United States Air Force Historian and the Central Intelligence Agency Historian check their records for information related to this crash. I am pleased to report that this particular aircraft loss is not associated with anyone unaccounted for from the Vietnam War. It appears that the personnel associated with this downed aircraft were rescued at the time of the crash." [Horn ltr, I-95/48522, 05 Oct 1996].

[118] Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses.*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 49.

15 MARCH 1966

HOLMES, LTC David Hugh 22nd TASS

Colonel Holmes departed Khe Sanh Special Forces camp at 1050H on a FAC mission flying an O-1E Birddog, #56-2530, to control air-strikes in the Steel Tiger sector of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. A large concentration of NVA troops was spotted at a concealed truck part in the Xe Namkok river valley protected by half a dozen gun emplacements,[119] and Holmes' aircraft was hit by ground fire, and crashed in the vicinity of XD214536, 164549N 1060821E (approx. 13 KM NW of Tchepone, Laos) near an embankment on the edge of a creek, about 2 KM from an anti-aircraft battery. About ten minutes later, Capt Jack R. Harrington, flying 7 miles from Capt Holmes in another O1E observed the crash site at 1315H and reported the aircraft had landed flat, there were no visible holes, the cockpit door was slightly open, and Capt Holmes, who showed no sign of life, was still strapped in his seat and leaning against the instrument panel. He concluded that Capt Holmes controlled a forced landing and that he was alive since the aircraft landed in the only spot in the area that was suitable for a forced landing, the aircraft was basically undamaged, and the cockpit was intact. Capt. David A. Farrow, the Detachment Commander at Khe Sanh, relieved the other FAC (Capt Jack R. Harrington) flying in the area within 7 miles of Capt Holmes, and also observed Holmes' aircraft on a grassy slope adjacent to a stream as though it had purposely landed in a controlled crash. The aircraft was pretty much intact. Ground fire in the area was intense. Rescue attempts could not be made due to heavy ground fire, bad weather, and approaching darkness. An organized ground search was conducted on 16 March, but rescuers reported the pilot was not in the aircraft when they reached it at 1400H.[120]

Colonel Waghelstein [then Capt.], Commanding the USSF team at Khe Sanh, notes: "We had four pilots and two Birddogs in the camp, and a guy who became a good friend, David Holmes, was shot down and presumed dead. We mounted an operation to go get him, but it was called off by higher headquarters."[121]

06 APRIL 1966

GATES, Capt James Wayne 20th ASTA
LAFAYETTE, Maj John Wayne

[119] Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 53.

[120] MIA file on Capt David H. Holmes, Library of Congress MIA microfilms, Reel #441, Folder #27, and Reel #464, Folder #2.

[121] Taped comments of Col John D. Waghelstein, 09 May 1986.

[MACV, Saigon]

Two crews of OV-1A Mohawk aircraft, SPUD-5 and SPUD-6 took off on a visual and photo mission to the Tigerhound area at 1540H. At approximately 1655H, Hillsboro (The USAF ABCCC) received a "Mayday" message that both aircraft had crashed within a kilometer at XD830033 (161819N 1064116E). Hillsboro directed Forward Air Controller aircraft, Hound Dog 51 and 53 to conduct a search for the downed aircraft. About 1730H SAR aircraft located the crews, came under intense ground fire, and, at 1900H were able to rescue the crew of SPUD-5. SPUD-6 (OV-1A #63-13117) with Captain Gates, pilot, and Major Lafayette, observer, reported being surrounded by VC. Their last transmission: "Please hurry. My God, they're all around us. Bring air power." The rescue helicopter made several low passes, but no visual sighting or radio contact could be established. The FAC aircraft reported that enemy forces had surrounded the area and the situation appeared grave.[122]

[*Based on multi-source intelligence, Gen. Westmoreland's J-2 staff concluded by early 1966 that the NVA infiltration into South Vietnam averaged 7,000 men a month during January – March, 1966, and that the NVA were massing in Laos opposite the Lao/Vietnam border "to prepare the battlefield."*[123] *While the G-2 of III MAF did not concur in this ominous conclusion, Operation VIRGINIA was launched at Khe Sanh*[124] *This first large-scale U.S. Marine operation at Khe Sanh was conducted by 1/1. Capt Waghelstein was dismayed that the advance party to plan the operation focused on the valley to the north of the range containing Hills 950 and 1015 whereas Waghelstein strongly asserted that the NVA were operating south of Route 9: "if they wanted to make contact, go south of Route 9. That's where the action was. It was full of camps. We didn't have the clout to go in there without getting beat up on. And they said, 'No, this is the one we're going to do,' and I think the sum total were heat strokes."*[125] *It was almost as though the Marine command did not want to make contact so that they could claim there was no NVA activity in the area. During the summer of 1966, the CIA reported NVA use of Route 9 in Laos, just west of Khe Sanh, to move up to 600 tons of supplies daily.*[126] *Increased patrolling by SOG teams and Tigerhound aircraft operating in eastern Laos thus became crucial to determine NVA activity. SOG patrols into Laos under Operation SHINING BRASS had begun in October, 1965.*[127]]

29 JULY 1966

LAWS, SFC Delmer Lee FOB-1
SAIN, SFC Don Rue FOB-1

A recon team with three Americans and seven Vietnamese of FOB-1 launched from their Khe Sanh Launch Site, inserted atop Co Roc Mountain, Savannakhet Province, Laos. As the unit stopped by a small stream, they were ambushed by an enemy force, and the team dispersed along a trail with Laws at the rear in a crouched position. The terrain consisted of elephant grass approximately 8 to 10 feet high and observation was very poor. Whalen: "I was situated between the VN 01, Tran Quang Thanh, and the US radio operator, Sain. Laws at this time was in a crouched position attempting to observe back up the trail. He glanced at me and signaled with his hand by pointing that he heard something to the rear. The team was fired on from the rear and flanks by automatic fire. I saw the American radio operator throw back his head and fall backward. A VN team member, Tran Thanh Van, who was next to the radio operator, rolled forward. I looked to see if I could see Laws, but he was nowhere in sight. I rallied the remainder of the team and moved north to the stream."[128] Laws gave a hand signal that he heard something to the rear. At this time the patrol received fire from their rear and flank from automatic weapons, immediately killing 3 ARVN and SFC Sain. The team leader, MSGT ("Crash") Whalen, rallied the remaining team, was unable to locate Laws, and moved north to evade capture. On 31 July 1966, a recovery team (led by SGM James A. Craig) returned to the scene of the contact, XD709269, and recovered the body of Sain and one Vietnamese. Other bodies could be seen but could not be recovered or identified because of the proximity of NVA forces. On 04 August 1966 another recovery team returned and located one Vietnamese who had completely decayed due to the hot jungle climate, but all his limbs were present. Billy Waugh "..walked up the trail on which the ambush had taken place and found a beaten area. Sergeant First Class Memorio Quiroga, FOB-3, called me and I found a human leg from the hip down in the area. I placed the leg into a bag and re-

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[122] MIA file on James W. Gates, Library of Congress microfilm reel #227, Folder #54. ABCCC=Airborne Command & Control Center. ASTA=Aerial Surveillance Target Acquisition (detachment).

[123] Shulimson, Jack, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: An Expanding War, 1966*, Washington, D.C.: HQMC, 1982, pp. 139-140.

[124] CF, 3dMarDiv OpO 343-65, 190904Z/Mar66 in ComdC, 3dMarDiv Mar66. The AO of Opn VIRGINIA was a 10-Km circle centered at the USSF Camp at Khe Sanh (i.e., within 105mm artillery fan). The Operation, conducted 17 Apr – 01 May 1966, had negative enemy contact or detection.

[125] Conversation with Col John D. Waghelstein, 14 May 1986.

[126] CIA Memorandum, "The Vietnamese Communists' Will to Persist," SC #09624/66, 26 August 1966, Fig 1-4.

[127] MACV, *Command History*, Annex M (Special Operations), 1966, p. 5.

[128] Statement of Harry D. Whalen in MIA file on Delmer L. Laws, Library of Congress microfilm, Reel #226, Folder #33.

turned it to Khe Sanh."[129] "I picked his leg up myself. I personally carried his leg out of the jungle."[130] On 05 August 1966, medical personnel accidentally cremated the leg, making the case MIA rather than KIA.[131]

SGM James A. Craig was attending the National League of Families annual meeting in Washington, D.C., and at a banquet the evening of 18 July 1987, noted by name tag a lady who was a relative of a MIA. She said it was her brother who served in Special Forces in 1966. "I asked Pat what was her brother's name. Pat then replied, 'My brother's name is SSG Delmer Laws.' .. I replied, 'Oh my God, I know your brother!' At this time Pat and I stopped eating and it became very quiet around the table. Pat asked me, 'What do you know about my brother?' I replied, 'Your brother is dead.' 'How do you know?' Pat asked. I told her, 'I was there when it happened.' ... I then told her that I was on the body recovery team which went in and brought out the bodies. Pat asked 'What did you find about my brother?' I replied, 'I am so sorry but we only found and brought out your brother's leg.' At this time Pat stood up at the table and remarked, 'O God, you do know what happened to my brother,' and stormed out of the dining room in tears... I also left the dining room to find Pat and try to console her... She said she was glad that I told her what happened.. Pat began to cry again and started shaking all over and asked me if I would sit down with her by ourselves and talk with her some more about her brother.. Pat and I went off to an area by ourselves... I could not eat; by this time I had tears rolling down my cheeks also. But, I left anyway and went back to the dining room. Of course everybody at the table wanted to know what happened and how Pat was doing and how I was doing. I felt like shit and the food tasted the same. The other M.I.A. relatives sitting at the table told me not to feel this way and that the families of all of the M.I.A.s are looking for people who know what happened to their relatives and that they wish it had been their son or brother whose body I had found so that they could have peace of mind."[132]

Craig adds the following information: The rescue helicopter "..went in and pulled out the surviving members of the team, which included SGM Whalen. During this time the helicopter took a heavy volume of ground fire from the NVA in the area. We Got SGM Whalen and what was left of his team back to Khe Sanh and asked him what had happened. The questions were being asked by LTC James Van Sickle, commander of the launch site, Maj Jerry Kilbourne, second in command of the launch site; MSG William (Billy) Waugh, NCOIC of the launch site; and myself, who as the Intelligence Sergeant was plotting the information on the map inside the target folder. SGM Whalen stated that they had been moving north through elephant grass and came upon a creek and decided to break for lunch. They did not know that they were being followed by the NVA and their trackers until the last minute when they were ambushed and half of the team got killed. He (Whalen) and the rest of the team jumped down into the creek and broke out of the ambush by running down the creek, east, thus breaking contact and eluding the enemy until rescued... The body recovery team consisted of LTC Van Sickle, SGM Whalen, MSG Waugh and several other NCOs which launched out of Khe Sanh on two helicopters, two gun ships and a FAC spotter plane..."[133]

28 SEPTEMBER 1966

TAYLOR, SSG Danny Gene
HHC, 5th Special Forces Group Airborne

The patrol was inserted at approximately 1755H on 25 September 1966 and performed normal patrolling until 6030H, 28 September when the rear security informed the Patrol Leader, SFC Larry S. McMillian, that two VC were approaching from the direction the team had moved. Just then, firing commenced. SSG Taylor, the patrol's radio operator, picked up his weapon and immediately returned fire. The patrol was in the vicinity of XD760640 (two clicks south of the southern boundary of the DMZ in Vietnam, 1651N 1063908E). McMillian, saw Taylor returning fire for some ten minutes and then, during a lull in the firing for a few seconds, moved approximately 15 feet to his radio. He put it on his back and moved to the rear of SFC McMillian.[134] He again moved, and SSG James R. Moore observed that Taylor attempted to jump off some rocks but was hit; he died immediately. He "was hit in the back by a machine gun bullet. The round went through the radio, cut his spine and opened up his stomach. In my opinion he died immediately. Prior to leaving the area I checked his body and there was no pulse or heart beat."[135] He then left Taylor in a standing position between two rocks.

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[129] Statement of William D. Waugh, FOB3 in MIA file on Delmer L. Laws.

[130] Conversation with Billy Waugh, 30 Oct 1988. Waugh relates that Whalen was called "crash" because of heavy drinking at the SOG club in DaNang and his repeated falling on his head. His fellow SOG soldiers actually built a seat-belt so he wouldn't injure himself! [*Ibid.*]

[131] Conversation with LtCol James G. Cole, (Chief of POW/MIA Affairs, Pentagon), 20 September 1991.

[132] Statement of SGM James A. Craig, 25 July 1987, PC-340/002, MIA files of Library of Congress, Reel #254, Folder #93.

[133] *Ibid.*

[134] Statement of SFC Larry S. McMillian in MIA file on Danny Gene Taylor, Library of Congress microfilm Reel #404, Folder #58.

[135] Statement of SSG James R. Moore in *Ibid.*

[By the end of September, 1966, Detachment A-101 at Camp Khe Sanh had 2 VNSF officers, 12 VNSF enlisted, 4 US officers and 18 enlisted, 340 CIDG, 504 RF/PF, 13 assigned to Tigerhound, 10 operating the FOB-1 Launch Site, 62 Navy Seabees, 5 USAF operating the 15th Aerial Port, 4 with the 1st Mobile Command Group, 4 with 7th ITT and 4th Marines, and 875 of 1/3 with 6 105mm howitzers and 2 155mm howitzers.[136] Those not attached to A-101 increased during October, 1966, to include: 11 (Tigerhound), 13 (SOG), 3 (3dMarDiv), 38 (NMCB 10), 1050 (1/3), 7 (1st MOB), 4 (15th Aerial Port), 4 (Naval Security Group), 17 (1st MAW), 6 (USMC tank farm), 70 (Project DELTA).[137]

Gen Westmoreland firmly believed that NVA forces would descend in large numbers,[138] but the senior USMC command assumed that aggressive reconnaissance would disclose any large-scale movement of NVA forces. Concerning the Khe Sanh area, CG, III MAF, General L.W. Walt, wrote: "I believe far too much emphasis is being placed on the importance of the infiltration threat. I base this on my conviction that our primary enemy here remains the guerrilla... In my mind.. we should not fall into the trap of expending troops unduly seeking to prevent the entry of individuals and units who pose the lesser threat to our ultimate objective, which remains the people of South Vietnam."[139] The Marines fully believed the enemy forces were pursuing a strategy of drawing American forces into static positions away from the local populace where determinative battles were to be won. They eschewed holding static positions. Gen Westmoreland interpreted the intelligence to reflect a rapid buildup of NVA forces and the Defense Intelligence Agency reported, on 22 Sep 1966, elements of the 324B Division reorganizing near Khe Sanh Special Forces Camp on 16 Sep with about 14 elephants transporting supplies.[140] A SOG patrol uncovered a NVA base camp on 27 Sep at XD837653 with 150-200 enemy in green utilities.[141]

During a meeting at III MAF, General Westmoreland observed, "I notice you haven't made any commend about putting a force in Khe Sanh. What's your reason for this?" The Marines replied, "Well, we think it would be too isolated, too hard to support." Westmoreland responded, "Nevertheless, I think that we ought to have a larger forced out there," and indicated he desired a battalion.[142] The III MAF staff immediately embarked on a very detailed comparison of Khe Sanh's location with Dien Bien Phu with the conclusion that Khe Sanh was indeed very similar.[143]

Accordingly, a detachment of 65 Navy Seabees from U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion TEN arrived on 10 Sep to upgrade the airstrip. 300 sorties of C-130s brought in bundles of AM-2 matting, and obtained a bulldozer from BV-33 in nearby Laos.[144] On 12 hours' notice, First Battalion, Third Marine Regiment, moved to Khe Sanh on 29/30 September 1966 "..in response to an expected major offensive by NVA to attempt to overrun Khe Sanh."[145] The AO assigned to 1/3 consisted of a circle with a 10,000-meter radius from the Khe Sanh camp. The BN CP and Co A were on the base itself, Co B at XD825415, Co. C at XD855410, and Co D at XD8344. Co B and D patrolled and exchanged positions while Co C remained stationary. Most patrols were oriented towards the valley containing Hill 558, the villes and river basin, and towards Hill 861. For the most part, all was peaceful.[146] Local patrols conducted by squads and platoons went out to approx. 6,000 meters from company positions and later the patrols fanned out to 15,000 meters in company-size patrols, the limit of 105mm artillery support.[147] On 04 October 1966, the last of 1,385 bundles of AM-2 matting was received.[148] While 1/3 conducted local patrols within the 105mm fan, longer-range recon and formation of additional agent nets became a priority. Accordingly, III MAF requested FMFPAC to accelerate deployment of the 3d Force Reconnaissance Company,[149] and by mid-October, 1966, III MAF reported formation of JTAD [Joint Technical Advisory Detachment], with four teams operating in III MAF's AO, one of which was at Khe Sanh.[150]]

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[136] A-101 MOPSUM, Sep 1966.
[137] A-101 MOPSUM, Oct 1966.
[138] FMFPAC, *Trip Summary, Visit to Western Pacific by Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, 29 August – 7 September 1966*, 08 Sep 1966, p. 2
[139] Top Secret ltr of LtGen L.W. Walt to LtGen H.W. Buse, Jr., Ser 000200966, 29 Dec 1966, appended to III MAF OPLAN 121-66, PRACTICE NINE.
[140] DIA, *Intelligence Summary*, 22 Sep 1966, IDAS 222-66, p. A-3.
[141] III MAF COC 280341Z/Sep66 to MACV COC, Immediate Arc Lite, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 28/29 Sep 1966, #30.
[142] USMC, Historical Center, Oral Hist Transcript of LtGen John A. Chaisson, 1975, pp. 370-374.
[143] "Khe Sanh Area Report," appended to 3dMarDiv Command Chronology (ComdC), Jan, 1967.
[144] NMCB 10, *News Release*, "Seabee Detachment Upgrades Vital Airstrip Khe Sanh Special Forces Camp," 1966.
[145] G-2, 3dMarDiv ltr 2/PAW/cis, 22 Aug 1967 in BSM file on Maj Anthony Lukeman, the S-3 of 1/3, who planned the move.
[146] Comments of Capt George W.T. O'Dell to the author, May 1968]
[147] Comments of LtCol Peter A. Wickwire on USMC Oral History Tape #384.
[148] III MAF ComdC October 1966, p. 18. Each piece of AM-2 was 12 ft. long, 2 ft. wide, and weighed 144 pounds.
[149] CG, III MAF 011258Z/Oct66.
[150] III MAF COC 201311Z/Oct66 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 20/21 Oct 1966, #123].

03 OCTOBER 1966

ECHEVARRIA, SGM Raymond Louis
JONES, SGM James
WILLIAMS, SGM Eddie Lee
—all assigned to FOB-1

A 7-man team (with 3 Americans) made a helicopter insertion at approximately 1800H into a LZ at XD632624 (3 miles west of the DMZ) and after moving about 20 meters to the high ground south of their position, encountered and killed an enemy soldier. They instantly came under fire from all directions and requested immediate helicopter extraction, but heavy enemy fire prevented the team's rescue. The team's interpreter, Bui Kim Tien, heard the enemy say, "Hold your fire, try to capture them." Tien estimated the NVA force at battalion strength. The team decided to split in an attempt to escape and evade the enemy force. Bui Kim Tien, the only team member who returned to friendly control, later stated that he initially started out alone. Later he linked up with Williams who had been wounded in the leg above the right knee. Williams told him "Jones is dying and Ray [Echevarria] is the same way," and said they should escape by going over the mountains. On 04 Oct, while Tien was investigating some caves, he heard Williams exchanging gunfire with the enemy and did not again see him. Tien was rescued the afternoon of 04 October.[151]

Billy Waugh recalls the incident: "I remember that just as clear as a bell. They launched out of Khe Sanh by 34 with a recon mission. They were not to fight; they were there to take a prisoner if they could. They landed and got one transmission out, an 'on the ground' transmission. We had a code set up and they gave us a 'BLUE-6' or whatever it was that stood for 'we're on the ground and we're moving from the LZ.' That was it. A lot of times the NVA would wait until the helicopters got out because they knew we had gunships and Skyraiders normally and they didn't want any part of the Skyraiders—their napalm, bombs."[152]

[*On 15 October 1966, Project DELTA [B-52] arrived at Khe Sanh for Operation 13-66, commanded by Maj Charles Beckwith with the mission to locate enemy concentrations through small recon teams and then insert a reaction force in response to any developed targets. Location of the enemy was through area saturation by 12 recon teams, each composed of 2 American advisors and 6 Vietnamese Special Forces [LLDB], and trail network recon by up to 5 Roadrunner teams, each composed of Vietnamese CIDG dressed and armed as VC. Total strength of B-52 was about 600 men.*[153] *The FOB for Operation 13-66 was established at Camp Khe Sanh on 141650H.*[154]]

09 NOVEMBER 1966

GLIDDEN, SFC Arthur	B-52 det
SWOPE, CAPT Charles Frederick	USAF FAC

On 09 November, Road Runner Team 102 infiltrated at last light without incident. Capt. Swope (USAF FAC) and SFC Glidden departed Khe Sanh airfield at 1130H for a routine flight of radio relay and visual reconnaissance. After take-off, one radio contact was made at 1140. Although numerous attempts were made to regain radio contact, no further transmissions were made and at 1400 a full scale search was initiated. At 1645, O1E wreckage was discovered by Capt Richard E. Fitts, USAF, who reported the plane generally intact, but completely burned from the rear of windows forward and out two feet on the wings. The recovery party reported three .50 caliber holes in the tail, two in the left wing, and one in the right wing. SFC Glidden (positively identified) was lying about six feet from the cockpit near the right wing. The pilot, Captain Swope, was still in the cockpit, charred beyond recognition. When removed from the plane, his body became disjointed at the knees. Both bodies were placed in body bags, secured to McGuire rigs and transported to Camp Khe Sanh.[155]

[*By 30 November 1966, personnel at Khe Sanh included: 2 officers and 11 enlisted (VNSF), 4 officers and 11 enlisted (USSF), 393 CIDG, 504 RF/PF, 12 (Tigerhound), 10 (Shining Brass), 25 (III MAF CIC/COC), 29 (NMCB 10), 26 (1 MAW), 10 (1st MOB Comm, USAF), 5 (USAF 15th Aerial Port), 4 (Naval Security Group), 1 (USAF 5th Weather Det), 1150 (Bn 1/3) and approx 260 (Project Delta).*[156]]

02 DECEMBER 1966

BODZICK, SP4 William Joseph	17th AvnGrp
BOTT, MSGT Russell Peter	Det B-52
BOURDEAUX, SP4 Lee Joseph Jr	17th AvnGrp
DYER, SGT Irby III	Det B-52
HARRISON, WO Donald (pilot)	281 AHC
STARK, SMAG Willie Ernest	Det B-52

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[151] MIA file on Eddie Lee Williams, Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #241, Folder 7; MIA file on Raymond L. Echevarria, Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #244, Folder #61.

[152] Conversation with Billy Waugh, 30 Oct 1988.

[153] Kelly, Col Francis J., *Vietnam Studies: U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961-1971*, Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Army, 1973, pp. 53-54.

[154] Det B-52 After Action Report to OpOrd 13-66, 14 Oct – 18 Nov 1966 (Phase I), 19 Nov 1966.

[155] *Ibid.*

[156] Det A-101 MOPSUM, Nov 1966, p. 1

Project DELTA AO at Khe Sanh was designated as XD6670 – XD9070 – XD9050, the extreme northwest corner of South Vietnam.[157]

Col John G. Hayes, CO of Det B-52 at Khe Sanh, received missions from III MAF and had no charter to conduct operations in Laos. On 28 November, MSGT Bott made an over-flight over the proposed recon zone in an 0-1 aircraft to select landing zones for their patrol, operating approximately 1 click east of the Lao/Vn border and 2 clicks below the DMZ.

When Bott's Team #1 was inserted 29 Nov the weather in the area had deteriorated with ground fog, rain and high winds, and the team inadvertently picked the wrong LZ and landed in Laos. SFC Stark broke radio silence and reported that he doubted his true location and believed his team had landed inside Laos by mistake. He was instructed to move east, establish a secure patrol base and maintain radio watch. Back at Khe Sanh, the Det B-52 officers determined they had, indeed, landed in the wrong area and were approximately 3-4 KM south of the DMZ and approximately 3 KM west of the Lao/Vn border. Throughout the night heard movement close to its position. Det B-52 radioed SFC Stark to move east, that the weather was not flyable due to bad weather. The following morning, Sgt Bott and his four comrades fiercely engaged ten enemy troops, killing six and forcing the rest to flee. The team was able to evade for a day and again found itself in heavy contact at which time SFC Stark, the Patrol Leader, was wounded in his left thigh and chest and one Vietnamese killed. The team was again assaulted and Stark shot in the chest and one ARVN was killed. The team was outside of artillery range and all air assets were grounded at Khe Sanh due to heavy rain and fog, making a ground rescue impossible.

Four gunships from the 241" Aviation Company were sent to the area, and Col. Hayes was present in the airspace above the recon team in his command and control helicopter. Communications links were made between Col. Hayes, Capt Flannagan (FAC), the gunships, the operations element at B-52 HQ at Khe Sanh, and SSG Bott and SFC Stark on the ground.

At 1000H, WO-1 Sulander, Aircraft Commander, WO-1 Donald D. Harrison, Pilot, SP4 Bodzik, Crewchief, SP4 Bordreaux, Gunner, and Sgt Dyer, a Medic from Det B-52, boarded a UH-1D, #65-10088, and departed Khe Sanh to extract SFC Stark's patrol. WO-1 Sulander's helicopter was part of a flight of seven helicopters in the recovery attempt. The flight orbited in the vicinity of Recon Team 1, while a Forward Air Controller (FAC) located the team. Meanwhile, hearing that helicopters had reached the team's area, the ARVN leader ordered the patrol to move out and ran ahead. As the Vietnamese soldiers departed, Bott remained, refusing to abandon his Patrol Leader. This incident was at XD634633. The team's point man said he heard the enemy open fire on the ARVN Team Leader and then saw him hit the ground, possibly wounded. Weather conditions in Team 1's area was extremely adverse.

As Sulander's helicopter (one of seven helicopters in the recovery mission) located the team and began his approach, he came under intense fire, but nevertheless managed to land his helicopter. Captain Lynn F. Coleman, pilot of a UH-1C gunship flying protective cover saw a man (assessed to be the ARVN Team Leader) running toward Sulander's aircraft. Due to intense ground fire, Capt Coleman's UH1C was driven off and the crew could not determine if the man ever reached the helicopter. WO1 Sulander's aircraft was next seen to take-off, out of control, and descend in a nose down attitude, and at 1041H crashed and burned for about 15 minutes at XD633631.

The FAC maintained radio contact with SSG Bott on the ground throughout the incident, who was located with SFC Stark approximately 300 meters northeast of the crash site, at XD634633. SSG Bott said "they" could see smoke from the crash but made no reference to possible survivors. He reported to SSG Cranford, flying an Army Beaver aircraft for radio relay purposes, that he was out of ammunition, that his capture was imminent, and was destroying his radio. The last transmission heard was a North Vietnamese soldier saying, "Here you are! We've been looking for you. Tie his hands. We'll take him this way."

An immediate search of the crash site was impossible due to intense ground fire, but on 09 December a Spike Team entered the area and on 10 December a Hornet force (which built up to 80 men) of Operation Scramble reached the crash site and took photographs of the remains, finding numerous boot prints and some remains. SFC Bobby W.K. Linville, SSG Charles L. Berg, SSG William T. Copeland, and SGT Gerald F. Apperson, members of the recovery team, found five charred bodies, burned beyond recognition and having been horribly mutilated by the NVA with two of them booby trapped. No identifying objects were found on the bodies, clothes, dog tags, etc. The tail boom was almost intact, with the US Army and aircraft number plainly legible. The tail section was hoisted out by CH-46 helicopter. We did not find it feasible to recover the bodies at this time due to booby traps and ground fire. On December 11-13 the crash site was subjected to heavy air strikes and on 14 December, an Arc Light struck the area.

Following these air-strikes, on 15 December, another recovery team reached the crash site and retrieved those partial remains which could be found. The air strikes had disturbed the site to the extent that less than five complete bodies were retrieved. Sufficient remains were recovered positively to identify Harrison, Bodzick, and

[157] III MAF COC 010827Z/Dec66, Subj: Designation of Delta Operation Area, in III MAF COC Journal and File, Dec66 #J54.

Bourdeaux. No trace of Sulander or Dyer could be located, nor was any trace of Bott or Stark discovered.[158]

The area was struck by Arc Lights,[159] and MACV promulgated a SICR [Specific Intelligence Collection Requirement] soliciting identification, strength, composition, and disposition of enemy forces in the area.[160]

Russell Bott's mother, Mark K. Bott Bedugnis, a machine operator for Worcester Woven Label Co. for ten years and previously a foundry worker, also lost a son in the Korean War. She was very active in POW causes and even traveled to the Paris Peace Talks in 1971 to appeal to North Vietnamese officials on behalf of her son, Russell. She flew to Switzerland to appeal to a convention of 40 nations who were discussing the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and frequently visited Washington, D.C. on behalf of people missing in action. She died 10 February 1988.[161]

[*In his November, 1966, Monthly Operational Summary, Capt Pauls C. Hutton, II, CO of A-101 USSF Det at Khe Sanh Camp, noted that the large number of American forces at Khe Sanh (with the arrival of battalion 1/3 and other units) raised considerable difficulties: rapidly increasing buildings, antennae, radars, airport control towers, generators, repair facilities, mess, showers, laundry, water supply, etc., took up all available space; movement of heavy earth-moving equipment turned every road into a quagmire," the LLDB Camp Commander and staff were excluded from the III MAF COC (NOFORN) due to classified (SOG) missions, and concluded: "If the US presence at Khe Sanh is to remain indefinitely at such a high level, I recommend that consideration be given to separate the CODG, LLDB, and this detachment. by relocating the CIDG .. to another area, perhaps Lang Vei if the ARVN battalion there is indeed going to abandon it.*[162]

Marine artillery had been fired on A-101 patrols (of 2 Americans and 40-50 Vietnamese) and Marines withheld fire one day on a group of 20 uniformed Vietnamese, assuming they were from A-101, but were later informed they were not. The Special Forces, feeling their missions were classified, did not always inform the Marines of their patrol activity. The Marines said they would henceforth fire on all suspicious, uniformed Vietnamese.[163]

Furthermore, NVA activity near Lao Bao and with nearby BV-33 indicated the need for increased American monitoring of activity in the area. American patrols had spotted Russians, Chinese, and North Vietnamese at Lao Bao and at BV-33 and on one occasion a USSF patrol was ambushed at Lao Bao after apparently receiving information from a nearby village of the American patrol. 1/Lt Stallings (XO of the Det) wiped it off the face of the map with 4.2" mortars. "We moved the camp so we could better police the area... It would be a better place for us at Lang Vei."[164]

During 19-25 December 1966, the USSF camp at Khe Sanh relocated to the ARVN camp at Lang Vei, replacing ARVN Battalion 3/2 (which then located itself at the old French Fort). The move was assumed to be temporary, and Marines were directed not to destroy permanent structures of the camp "..in the event future repositioning of the Khe Sanh USMC BN requires relocation of the CIDG camp back to Khe Sanh.[165]

The other major event of the time that impacts on casualties, was the request of Colonel Thomas M. Horne, "Senior Officer Present 3dMarDiv/III MAF Representative, Khe Sanh" to replace Project DELTA recon operations with a detachment from USMC Force Reconnaissance. Project DELTA, he noted, was only able to field an average of one recon team for four days to every two weeks during its 2-month operation at Khe Sanh.[166]

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[158] MIA file, Daniel Sulander, Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #229, Folder #106; MIA file, PC-052/095 in Library of Congress microfilm Reel #454, Folder #588; MIA file on Willie E. Stark, Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #285, Folder #132; MIA file on Daniel Arthur Sulander in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #229, Folder #106; Distinguished Service Cross Citation for Sgt Russell P. Bott [General Orders No. 460, 30 Jan 1967]; Ltr from LtCol J.G. Cole, POW/MIA office, Pentagon, 22331-0482 of 28 Jun 1991; After Action Report, OPORD 13-66 (Phase II), 24 November – 24 December 1966; MIA file on Russell P. Bott, Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #347, Folder #61; MACV, *Command History*, 1966, Annex M (Special Operations), 1966, p. 107.

[159] Target "Quang Tri 331" (XD 6666 – XD 6866 – XD 6864) [MACV CICV Targets Br 210310Z/Dec66, Arc Light Program 600, in III MAF COC Journal and File, Dec 66 #94.

[160] COMUSMACV 060840Z/Dec66, SICR U-UPE-U0744, in III MAF COC Journal and File #85].

[161] *Obit.*, Worcester *Telegram*, in MIA file on Russell P. Bott, Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #347, Folder #61.

[162] A-101 MOPSUM, Nov, 1966, pp. 6-7.

[163] Comments of LtCol George W.T. O'Dell to the author, May, 1968.

[164] Conversation with William Steptoe, 06 Oct 1988. (Steptoe was Team Leader of A-101 at the time).

[165] CO Co C 5th SFGA DaNang 180900Z/Dec66, Movement of Khe Sanh CIDG Camp to Lang Vei, and III MAF COC 250251Z/Dec66, in III MAF COC Journal and File, #J35 and 39.

[166] Col T.M. Horne, USMC Oral History Tape #1539. Since its original formation on 19 June 1957, the Marines of the Force Reconnaissance Companies had the mission of long-range recon—up to 300 miles inland from the beach (as dictated during, e.g., Operation GREENLIGHT) to collect information on the enemy's rear areas for the Force-level commander formulating operational plans. Third Force Recon Company was formed 04 Oct 1965, basically from assets of the 2nd Force Recon Co., at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina. The Detachment of 3d Force Recon Co arrived on Oki-

When the Marines of Det, 3d Force Recon Co., arrived at Khe Sanh they called the Marines of 1/3 the "orange men" due to the color of their skin from the Khe Sanh clay.[167] *Indeed, the weather starting with 17 Oct 1966 liquefied the laterite soil making for a miserable limicolous existence. The Chaplain of 1/3 quipped: "I believe that along with combat pay, there should be 'monsoon pay.' Even Noah would complain. Everyone gained about twenty pounds due to wet utilities and muddy boots. Ponchos help the rain drip down your neck. No one told me how cold it becomes in Vietnam. I may not have believed it."*[168] *Pluvial rains during November, almost 25 continuous days, accompanied by winds gusting from 15 to 20 knots and an average temperature in the 50s, made for a raw cold and intense wet chill.*[169] *The CO of 1/3 noted: "We were totally unprepared both mentally and physically for the monsoon season here in the northern highlands."*[170]

18 JANUARY 1967

SCANLON, CPL MICHAEL JOHN Det, 3d Force Recon Co

When Clay Ernst sat down in the hotel lounge with the author during a Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, he knew he had about two years left to live and was anxious to tell the story of Michael Scanlon while he still could.[171] Michael was to be the first USMC KIA at Khe Sanh.[172]

Scanlon, younger than his comrades, red-headed, and especially short—so short at about five feet that Senator Dodd of Connecticut had to intervene to get him on active duty, and very athletic (had been a wrestler), won the hearts of all in his unit. James Capers, who served in all three Marine Force Recon Companies, and the Officer in Charge of the Detachment at Khe Sanh, got very close to him: "It was a problem I had mostly because I got so close to him. He did a lot of things for me. He cut my hair. He was my driver. I loved that little kid, I'll tell you. He was just a tremendous young man, and so when he was killed, the war came home to us."[173] Master Gunnery Sergeant Tom Nicholson recalls that when Scanlon attended SCUBA School he was almost dwarfed by the SCUBA tanks. A red-headed kid, short and muscular, high-school wrestling champion, Michael was very mild mannered, nearly timid, very strong, full of energy and the victim of many practical jokes.[174] Clay Ernst notes, "He was the unit virgin; we tried to alter that...,"[175] and another member of the Detachment, David Sibley, recalls that Scanlon was going to be a Catholic priest."[176] The Detachment corpsman, Doc Lowell Burwell, notes: "Mike would of made a good priest."[177]

On the night of 17 January 1967, Sgt Thomas Dean Willson inserted a 7-man force reconnaissance patrol some 14 miles north of Khe Sanh, far outside the artillery fan and near the DMZ with the mission of locating enemy infiltration routes. The team included Clay Ernst as Assistant Patrol Leader, Leonard Stephen Bessent (who had never been on patrol with this team previously) as communicator, PFC Thompson (from A/3rd Recon, who also had never been on patrol with this team previously), HM2 William H. Feyh and a dog handler (Boucher) and two scouts.

Clay Ernst recalls that Willson was taken aside and briefed by Lieutenant Schmidt and given the only map. "Later, in the hospital, a Major from G-2 came in, and I was a little drugged-out. He told me: When you get back to the States, don't tell anybody where you were." There was no brief before insertion, and no over-flight of the area.

"As soon as the [insertion] chopper cleared the area there was sound of wood chopping all the way around us, lower down on the mountain and what sounded like a rifle range down in the valley below us. So we moved maybe 500 meters to set up the harbor site and sat in for the night. First thing in the morning, wood-chopping and shooting started again, so I took Scanlon and we went west on the ridgeline, checking it out. It looked like

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nawa 25 May 1966 and was OPCON to 3d Recon Bn 26 Apr 1966.

[167] Conversation with Ronald J. Lauzon, 01 Jun 1986.

[168] Chaplain George Robert Witt, *End of Tour Report.*

[169] Quantities in A-101 MOPSUM, Nov 1966, p. 5

[170] Comments of LtCol Wickwire, USMC Oral History Tape #384.

[171] Conversation of 02 July 1993 with the author. Clay Ernst had a torn brain stem that had healed but left scar tissue that pressed against blood vessels causing him to be light headed and to experience extreme high blood pressure. He died in January or February, 1995.

[172] This section is based on the above conversation as well as a conversation with Clay Ernst of 07 August 1989, Conversations with Mr. James Capers of 24 May 1986 and 11 Sep 1988; Conversation with HMC Lowell Burwell of 19 Oct 1993; Silver Star Medal Citation (posthumous) file of Cpl Michael John Scanlon; 1/3 ComdC Jan 1967, p. 3; Bronze Star Medal Citation files for Sgt Thomas Dean Willson and Cpl Clayton Howard Ernst.

[173] Conversation with James Capers, 24 May 1986. James Capers graduated from high school June 11th, 1956, and two days later was in boot camp at Parris Island, the youngest in his platoon (17). He served two years as an infantryman in Second Marine Division, and then, in 1960, was accepted in First Force Recon Co where he served 1960-63 and went overseas with its Sub Unit #1 led by Pat Duffy. In 1965, he was with 2nd Force Recon Co, and when 3d Force was forming, became a Team Sergeant in it He was commissioned in Oct, 1966. He retired in 1978.

[174] Conversation with MGySgt Tom Nicholson, 01 June 1986.

[175] Conversation with Clayton Ernst, 02 July 1993

[176] Conversation with David Sibley, 05 January 1997.

[177] Conversation with Lowell Burwell, 19 October 1993.

a farmer once had tried to clear the land. It was about three-foot high elephant grass and 3-foot high tree stumps all over the area along with a split-log fence, like Abraham Lincoln used to build. We headed west and the rest of the team remained as an OP. We got out about five, six hundred meters out and then came back. All the wood was old and dry. Then in the afternoon we were going to move east and then return for the night.

"While I'm sitting here, Willson signals me from the top of the ridge that there's enemy on the other side of the ridge coming over. So I told Scanlon to set up in a position about ten yards below me and hide behind a tree stump in a grassy area. I was behind another tree stump, near the fence. I could hear them as they came over the top of the ridge, and I looked up. Scanlon started to stand up, and I waved him down. He tried to stand up again, and I waved him down a second time. I waved him down three times.

"Then the enemy was right in front of me, three of them, all at sling arms and one was carrying a pack. They weren't patrolling, and got down past me, and I'm still watching behind the tree stump. All of a sudden I felt something. I looked up, and Scanlon had got up, run around behind me, jumped over the fence, ran out about a yard towards the trail and yelled. He opened fire on the three and probably killed all three because they went down. I was shocked. What's he doing! He was standing, looking down towards the trail, and I started to stand up, about half-crouched, trying to think when it was a blast of fire like on a rifle-range. These three were a point for a company! (About 30 to 40 NVA, according to the rest of the team on top of the hill).

I hit the ground and crawled over to the fence. Scanlon had been blown back against the fence and was laying flat on the ground. I counted five hits on him—on his legs, his hip, his shoulder, and his chest. I got up to reach over the fence to pull him over to my side so I could pull him to the top of the hill. As I got about halfway up to the fence, they opened up with automatic weapons and the top of the fence splintered.

"Meanwhile, the other members of the patrol were firing and throwing grenades. I hit the ground and tried to pull a couple of the logs loose from the bottom of the fence so I could get him to my side, but it was a well-built fence. I started throwing grenades and firing my weapon, and I had a M-79, firing it into the trees and letting them burst off the trees. I was throwing all my grenades and Scanlon passed me two of his grenades, I believe, and I threw those.

"There were three enemy soldiers to the south of me, I pulled the pin on one grenade, let the spoon go, counted to three, and just as I started to throw it, I got hit in the right arm and knocked the grenade out. It felt as though somebody had kicked me, so I turned around to see who had kicked me. I saw blood running down my arm and looked up and there was this man looking at me. I believe he was aiming at my chest, but as I twisted to throw the grenade, he got my arm. I grabbed the M-79 and hit him in the chest. His head and arm came off; they went one way and the body went cart-wheeling down the hill.

"The rest of the team was about 50 yards above me, in the middle of a fire-fight, and weren't really paying attention to what we were doing below them.

"The bullet went through the elbow, so my right arm was useless. I stuck it in my jacket and was firing my M-79 left-handed as best I could. I looked up and saw four grenades in the air and told Scanlon to lay flat. One landed at my feet and I kicked it away; one landed by my side, and I threw it away. One landed over my head and exploded, blew out an ear-drum, and one landed to the side of Scanlon. We were getting intense automatic weapons fire. When the four grenades came, I knew they had me pinned; they know where I am. I can't do any fighting with one arm. So I stuck my M-14 and M-79 under the fence, jumped up and grabbed Scanlon by his harness, and I was going to run for the top of the hill where the rest of the team was.

"As I jerked him up, it felt like he grabbed my arms and squeezed my arm. I looked down, and there's a big bone—the bullet hit the bone and blew out three inches of the arm. I looked at him, and his chest was blown open, and blood was all over him. I assume that was from the grenade that landed near him. From the blood on his chest plus the large hole, I believe Corporal Scanlon jumped on the other grenade or pulled it under him to keep me from being harmed. I dropped him and I took off to the top of the hill. Both my arms were broken. Tommy Willson later told me that machinegun bullets were right at my heels and he thought I'd set the world's record for running up a mountain!

"I got to the top of the hill, dived over the fence, and landed at Bill Feyh's feet. I told him I couldn't use my arms and asked him about morphine. He was firing the M-60 machinegun and said, 'Wait a minute.' He fired a burst and then said, I can't get the morphine. I asked why, and he said, I've just been hit. I believe it was his left wrist and rode down the bone to the elbow, which put him semi out of action. Tommy Willson was hit in the forehead with shrapnel and didn't have a battle dressing, so he tied sox around his forehead to stop the blood from rolling into his eyes. I think Bessent was hit in the hand."

Leonard Bessent maneuvered to Scanlon's corpse and, upon reaching it, was wounded by an enemy grenade. He succeeded in recovering the body and returned to the patrol's perimeter.

Bn 1/3 dispatched a Sparrowhawk[178] platoon which inserted at XD874613 and the recon team was successfully extracted.

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[178] SPARROW HAWK is a platoon-size reaction force. A Company-size reaction force was a BALD EAGLE.

27 JANUARY 1967

SRSEN, PFC Steve Alert **A/1/3**
[pronounced "Seir-sen"]

It all began when "Mad Dog" (GySgt) Gordon Boyer Hopkins led Team 5-2 of the 3d Force Recon Co Det at Khe Sanh into their IP [Insertion Point] at XD666527 at 1145H on 26 January 1967—within a click of the Laotian border. There had been Red Haze reports as well as TIGERHOUND and a SLAR report of 24-25 January 1967 of enemy troop movements at XD660573.[179]

The team, consisting of six Marines and one dog, moved northeast to XD672529.[180] At 1745H, the team spotted ten armed NVA with AK47s moving about 15 meters away. Holding fire until all were within the killing zone, the team opened fire killing all ten. The team then immediately received heavy automatic weapons fire from an estimated 35 NVA moving tactically by fire and maneuver. Two Marines of the patrol were immediately wounded, and the team rapidly found itself ensnared in a heavy donnybrook with small arms, automatic weapons fire, and grenades. After twenty minutes under fire, the team realized they were in trouble and a reaction force was requested. The team was now surrounded by approximately 150 NVA, located on a 2300-ft. hill covered with six to ten foot high elephant grass in an area approximately 100 meters long and 15 meters wide, and well beyond friendly artillery support.[181]

For about two and a half hours (before the SPARROW HAWK arrived), Hopkins repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire as he fired on the enemy and moved from place to place in the small perimeter to control his team's fire. The team was able to ward off several attempts by the vastly superior enemy force to annihilate them, all without any supporting arms.[182]

At 1805H, two H-34 helicopters of HMM-163, SUPERCHIEF 1-9 piloted by 1/Lt Robert William Hein, Jr., and SUPERCHIEF 1-10, piloted by J.H. Brickell, were launched on Mission #8002D, emergency medevac for the two wounded members of the team. In addition, two UH-1Es ofVMO-2, DEADLOCK 4-0 and DEADLOCK 4-2, were launched for cover. The four helicopters arrived at the zone at 1812H. Lt Hein said they were coming in, but the Team Leader said, "You can't get in; need reinforcements." Nevertheless, Lt Hein made an attempt, but was hit as he landed and was unable to embark the team due to the heavy hits, one of which (later identified as a .50 cal.) went between Hein's legs, shearing the gas and hydraulic lines. Due to the intense fire, the helicopter was forced to take-off. The H-34 had been hit approximately 17 times by .30 and.50 cal. and automatic weapons fire, had to abort, and returned safely to Khe Sanh.[183]

At 1845H, a section of CH-46A transport helicopters from HMM-265 arrived. Due to the heavy fire, closing darkness, and lowering weather, it was decided to return to Khe Sanh, disembark the reaction force, and return to the team to rescue them. The lead bird, piloted by Capt Joseph Gerald Roman and the wingman, Capt Harold James Campbell, Jr., had an embarked a 30-man SPARROWHAWK from 1st Platoon, A/1/3. Upon arrival, due to the heavy engagement, Capt. Roman returned to Khe Sanh to discharge his part of the reaction force and return empty to rescue the team. After being hit several times, Capt Roman landed to the right of the recon team in 8-10-ft. elephant grass. The co-pilot, Capt Jimmie Edward Cook and Capt Roman attempted to lift the collective, but it would not budge. They had lost their number one and number two hydraulic systems and had no flight control boost. In a matter of seconds, Capt Roman turned to see the aft portion of the aircraft in flames. Capt Roman ordered the crew to abandon their aircraft, EP-171 as Capt Cook cut the engines and engaged the rotor brake and spotted the recon team 20 yards down the trail engaged in a fierce fire fight.[184] Captain Harold J. Campbell, Jr., Captain Roman's wingman, saw Capt Roman and his crew shoot their way up the hill to the recon position, due to the close enemy.[185]

As everyone gathered in a 10-yard perimeter, Capt Roman sized up their situation: only seven were capable

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[179] III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Jan 67 #16. "Red Haze"=infrared; SLAR=Side Looking Airborne Radar (detects movement of vehicles).

[180] Col Kenneth D. Jordan notes that the team, by the time of their contact, had actually slipped into Laos: "I can tell you we were outside the border. At the time it was very politically sensitive, and we weren't supposed to go outside the border. We were out there, and there was a lot of high-level discussion about how to—hoping no one would read a map and look at those carcasses [of the downed helicopters].. There were two helicopters down there that we eventually had to blow in place because the NVA were all around them. We blew them up with fixed-wing aircraft, but they left the debris of the burnt helicopter carcasses there, and that was indelible evidence that we were outside the country." [Comments of COL Kenneth D. Jordan, 02 June 1986]. Also, the award recommendation for Capt Olivo's award citation lists the location as XD659533, inside Laos.

[181] III MAF 281342Z/Jan67 to CMC, in III MAF Outgoing SPECAT EXCLUSIVE 28 Jan – 28 Mar 1967; Debrief of Recon Team 5-2, 3d Force Recon in 3d ReconBn ComdC Jan67.

[182] Det, 3d Force Recon Co. ltr KDJ:tdw, 1650, 24 Feb 1967, in Bronze Star Medal award file of GySgt Hopkins.

[183] CG, III MAF 281342Z/Jan67, cited.

[184] CO, HMM-265 ltr Admin:ROH:lce, 1650, 03 Apr 1967, in Silver Star Medal file of Capt Joseph Gerald Roman; Statement of Capt Jimmie E. Cook in Silver Star Medal file of Capt Harold James Campbell, Jr.

[185] Statement of Capt Harold J. Campbell, Jr., in Bronze Star Medal file of Capt Jimmie Edward Cook.

of fighting the enemy force. There were four wounded including one critically wounded recon Marine who had been hit three times lay in the center of the perimeter. Another recon Marine with leg wounds was on his stomach, firing. Capt Roman took the PRC-25 and assumed command as BONNIE SUE GROUND. Firing continued for about 15 minutes by which time the chopper was completely engulfed in flames and the .50 cal. ammo left in the aircraft began to cook-off, confusing the enemy force. The Americans heard screams of pain and shouts of orders and the enemy broke contact and withdrew to the south.

Capt. Campbell returned to Khe Sanh, re-embarked a 16-man reaction force. At 1914H, while in the LZ, the chopper received extensive hits, lost power, and the crew of 4 plus the reaction force of 16 joined the team and the other crew members in the perimeter. Captain Cook later wrote: "Within minutes the helo crew and reaction force were in our position. Without them I am sure we could not have survived the night. Although Captain Campbell knew what he was getting into, he probably saved all our lives by risking his own. Once inside our perimeter, Captain Campbell and Captain Roman inspected the perimeter and enlarged it to accommodate the additional troops."[186] By this time the NVA force had moved in close and were throwing hand grenades. At 1945H, two additional CH-46s arrived at Khe Sanh from Dong Ha and lifted the remainder of the reaction force. At 2030H, a CH-46 piloted by Major Watson lost power while approaching the LZ, crashed and burned as its blades hit a tree 200 meters north of the other downed helicopters. The four members of the crew and the reaction force of 15 escaped with only one WIA but were separated into two groups and unable to join up with the others in the LZ. Capt Roman advised them to hold their position. They were not attacked and were rescued the following day.

At 2230H, a CH-46 bringing ammo from Dong Ha collided with a Huey parked off the side of the Khe Sanh runway; both aircraft were destroyed, but there were no casualties. Visibility at the time was extremely poor due to ground fog.[187]

Flareships, fixed wing, and SPOOKY[188] were on station by 2000H. The moon was bright. U.S. Army cannoncockers of 2/94 displaced two of their tubes from Camp J.J. Carroll to Thon Son Lam[189] under cover of darkness and began firing at 0200H.

At 270308H, a CH34 piloted by Capt Thomas Runyon Olivo, directed by strobe light and radio, bounced his main landing gear across the knoll, clearing Capt Roman's rotor blades by several feet, striking several small trees obscured by the low handing fog and darkness, and successfully embarked one medevac.[190]

At 0615H the NVA force attacked from the south, PFC Steve A. Srsen, a rifleman with the First Platoon of A/1/3, part of the reaction force who had covered the southwest portion of the perimeter during the night, stood up and yelled "Grenade! Grenade! Incoming!" warning three other Marines—PFC David M. Tillotson, PFC Raymond E. Maguinness II, and one other, allowing them to take cover and escape injury. The Marines threw two or three grenades, then three grenades exploded inside the perimeter causing four casualties, including PFC Srsen, who received fragments in his right side and right leg. After receiving treatment, PFC Srsen returned to his position and rejoined the fire-fight. Approximately 30 minutes later, the NVA force threw another barrage of about 70 grenades,[191] one of which landed near another Marine while he was changing positions. PFC Srsen saw the enemy grenade, jumped up and pushed the other Marine to the ground thereby saving him from injury. PFC Srsen received the full blast of the grenade, instantly killing him.[192]

In his endorsement of the award recommendation, General Bruno A. Hochmuth, CG, 3d Marine Division, recommended upgrade to the Medal of Honor noting that PFC Srsen requested to be returned to action after being wounded, that the act was clearly intentional in his leaping to his feet and pushing the other Marine "thereby saving that Marine's life, giving his own in exchange," and that he had a choice at the time he performed the action.[193] General Lew Walt, CG, III MAF, concurred in his endorsement, but General Westmoreland (MACV), Admiral Roy L. Johnson (CINCPACFLT), and Admiral U.S.G. Sharp (CINCPAC) all concurred in MACV's recommendation for the Navy Cross instead.[194]

Fixed wing air-strikes enabled extraction of the American force by 0937H.[195]

Steve Srsen's nickname was "surfer Joe" (from the Jan & Dean song of that title) since he was from California and had blonde hair. "All of us from CA were

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[186] Statement of Capt Jimmie E. Cook, cited.
[187] III MAF 281342Z/Jan67, cited.
[188] SPOOKY is the name of a modified C-47 aircraft equipped with three mini-guns able to spew out a deadly barrage of 7.62mm bullets at a rate of 6000 rounds a minute, able to cover a target the size of a football field with a shot in every square foot in a minute.
[189] XD984546
[190] Statement of Capt J.G. Roman in Distinguished Flying Cross file of Thomas Runyon Olivo.
[191] Debrief of Recon 5-2, cited. Mr. Ray Maguinness recalls being next to Srsen when the first grenade came in, hearing the warning, and rolling away as Steve was wounded the first time. LCPL Gregan was the one saved from death or injury. [Conversation with Ray Maguinness, 15 Jan 2004].
[192] CO Co A, 1/3, ltr ELB/fes, 1650, 20 Feb 1967, Subj: Navy Cross Medal; recommendation for, in NC file of Srsen.
[193] 6th Endorsement on *Ibid.*
[194] 8th, 9th, and 11th endorsement on *Ibid.*
[195] CG, III MAF 281342Z/Jan67, cited.

'surfers' back then. He was a fairly quiet individual, about a half-year younger than I. We both had been wrestlers in our respective small town high schools. He was an 0311; I was a corpsman."[196]

Steve's sister, Joanne Srsen Norman recalls: "Steve was born in Oakland California, January 25, 1947. We were a very close-knit family. We all loved each other and made sure the other knew it. To give you an idea about my brother, I was in a serious accident when I was 16. He came to the hospital after visiting hours but talked the nurse into letting him in to see me. He told me he loved me no matter what he said and left me his prized graduation ring as collateral that he would be returning the next day. He put other people's needs above his own; he was a very special person!... For as long as I can remember, Steve wanted to be a Marine. My parents talked him into going to a junior college. After only a few months he came home and announced he had enlisted in the Marines! My parents were in shock. Steve simply said the Marines are the best and I want to be a part of their family. He was so happy and excited."[197]

[*The Command Group and three rifle companies of BLT 1/3 departed Khe Sanh 01 February 1967 as B/1/3 assumed defense of the airstrip and maintained fire team Ops and LPs at XD839417 (the main gate of the combat base) and XD840422 (just off the west end of the runway).*[198] *MAJ James L. Day, CO of 1/9, was directed to send an infantry company to Khe Sanh.*[199] *Co B/1/9, augmented with one section of 106mm recoilless rifles, one section of 81mm mortars, two extra M-60 machineguns, and one extra 3.5-inch rocket launcher, departed 3d Marine Division Headquarters at Phu Bai on 6 February 1967 and arrived at Khe Sanh, fresh off Operation DECKHOUSE V. Its mission: defend the airstrip and contonement and conduct patrols out to 15 kilometers. About a week after their arrival, Capt. Michael W. Sayers, CO of B/1/9, was augmented with a 45-man security platoon from Headquarters Company, Headquarters Battalion, 3d Marine Division, none of whom were combat experienced and lacked an officer.*[200] *The newly-arrived B/1/9 immediately began patrolling. Normal daylight activity was four full 13-man patrols and four 4-man LPs or four Ops. Night activities included 4 ambushes and 4 LPs. Additionally, the Det of 3d Force Recon Co. at Khe Sanh usually had 3 to 4 teams in the field at all times.*]

25 FEBRUARY 1967

CUTBIRTH, SSGT Kendell Dwayne B/1/9

A patrol, consisting of a 13-man squad with a 2-man gun team attached, led by SGT Donald E. Harper[201] from 1st Squad, 2nd Platoon, B/1/9, departed Khe Sanh about 0800H to recon the area around the combat base. As they began to scale a hill at 1100H at XD829425 (1500 meters west of the airstrip), Cpl Wright, the first fire team leader, spotted three men going up the trail to the hill where the patrol was headed. Cpl Wright opened up with a 12 gauge shotgun and the machinegun team opened up on three directly in front of the patrol.

An additional squad (from Lt David L. Mellon's 1st Platoon) was dispatched to reinforce the patrol. The SPARROW HAWK platoon, 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, B/1/9, was composed of Sgt. Robert Anthony Chapp's 1st Squad, an M-60 machinegun team under Cpl Kenneth Vermillion, HN Daniel W. Polland, Platoon Right Guide SSGT Kenneth D. Cutbirth, and Platoon Commander 2nd Lt David L. Mellon. Missing was Cpl Robert A. Mettert, 1st Fire Team Leader, who was returning from R&R on 25 Feb 1967.[202] David L. Mellon later wrote:[203]

"We left the Khe Sanh perimeter early afternoon on 25 Feb 1967. It was an overcast day, but visibility was good. We we3re not in the clouds, which was typical of that time of the year at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. We followed the road westerly out of the Combat Base for about 1000 meters and picked up a less traveled but substantial trail. We proceeded about another 1000 meters

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[196] Letter from Mr. Steve Scott, 24 June 2003. Scott was a HM3 with A/1/3.

[197] Letter of Joanne Srsen Norman, 19 August 2003.

[198] SOP 3dMarDiv/III MAF Rep 011330/Feb67, SI TREP #1.

[199] "Jim earned the Medal of Honor for his actions as a 19 year-old Corporal at Sugar Loaf Hill on Okinawa with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Marines, 6th Marine Division. Jim fought almost single-handed for 3 days and nights, from 14th to the 17th of May, 1945, as his men were serious casualties. Jim received white phosphorus burns and shrapnel wounds, but fought on through repeated Japanese attacks on his squad's position. When he was finally relieved, the bodies of 158 enemy soldiers were found surrounding his position. He was credited with saving the lives of his fellow Marines and inspiring them by his example to fight on against a numerically superior enemy force. Major Day selected Bravo Company, commanded by Captain Michael W. Sayers for this detached duety. The balance of 1/9 was assigned duty on 'The Street Without Joy.': [Letter from David L. Mellon, 4 Aug 2005].

[200] Comments of Capt Michael W. Sayers, USMC Oral History Tape #566; ltr of Maj Michael W. Sayers to US Marine Corps Historical Center, 18 May 1981.

[201] SGT Harper was KIA at Khe Sanh on 16 Mar 1967.

[202] David L. Mellon writes: "I learned from LCPL Kenneth D. Lease.. that Cpl Mettert was killed in a friendly fire incident while patrolling the environs of Camp Carroll on 7 May 1967. Apparently, Cpl Mettert was leading a patrol and called in artillery. The first round, a marking round, exploded at his feet and killed him. LCPL Lease was wounded in the same incident and evacuated." [Letter of David L. Mellon, 4 Aug 2005].

[203] *Ibid.*

and were met on the trail by St. Harper's Squad. As Sgt Harper's squad was in disarray, I had him organize them into a small perimeter and instructed them to remain where they were in the event we needed some covering fire to maneuver under.

"Our mission to locate the lost weapons was facilitated by Cpl Steve Wright, a member of the 1st Squad, 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company (Sgt. Harper's squad). Cpl Wright volunteered to lead the SPARROW HAWK unit back up the hill to the spot where the weapons were located. Cpl Wright was Sgt. Harper's 1st Fire Team Leader. Cpl Wright was one of those who had lost a weapon. He had been carrying a 12 gauge shotgun and had taken a small group of NVA soldiers under fire during the initial encounter. He had the shotgun to his shoulder when a NVA bullet hit the shot gun shattering the stock and rendering it useless.

"We proceeded in a well-spaced column another 300 meters to the intermittent stream bed at grid coordinates XD828423. The stream was bordered on both sides by a stand of bamboo. We crossed the stream, passed through the bamboo which channeled us and the reinforced squad got on-line in very tall elephant grass on the northwest side of the bamboo. I then resumed the fire mission that Sgt. Harper had placed on the top of the hill from the 105mm battery at the Combat Base. After working salvoes on the face of the hill, we began our advance to the top of the hill slowly under the covering fire of the artillery. As we advanced, I shifted the fire mission to keep it at least 200 meters to our front. When we reached the crest of the hill, we were preparing to begin searching for the lost M-14 rifles when we noticed movement to our front. The elephant grass at the top of the hill was only about waist high and we could see it moving. I called Cpl. Vermillion forward with his gun team to hose down the area of movement with M-60 machinegun fire. The team started firing above the top of the elephant grass, but eventually put rounds down into the grass. At that time, we, also, began throwing hand grenades down the back side of the hill.

"Next, I formulated a plan to envelop the enemy to our immediate front by sending a fire team under Cpl. Harold Tucker out to a tree located approximately 100 meters to our left and approximately 50 yards down the back side of the hill.[204] Once Cpl. Tucker departed with his fire team, we began taking effective fire from our front. We could not see those who were directing their fire on us, but I believe it was coming from high ground to our front (the southeast approach to Hill 861). We were taking rifle fire from one or more M-16s[205] and there were a few substantial explosions in our perimeter. The shrapnel from these explosions generated hundreds of very small shards of metal, similar to our M-26 fragmentation grenade. There is a question in my mind as to whether the explosions (estimated at 3 to 5) were mortar rounds or grenades, possibly even our own outbound grenades being thrown back at us. I had never been subjected to mortars previously, so I do not know if the small shrapnel fragments were characteristic of the NVA's 60mm or 82mm mortar rounds. I do not recall hearing the distinctive 'thunk' characteristic of our own outbound mortars, but there was so much confusion and other communication going on at the time that I may just have missed it... One KIA was attributable to the explosions: SSGT Cutbirth's upper body and face was charred and singed.

"The Combat Base had been monitoring our radio traffic and scrambled a forward air controller aboard a Huey. I coordinated with the FAC to get some fixed wing aircraft with 500-pound bombs on the high ground to our front. The FAC advised us to get down as he was bringing in a flight. I passed the word up and down the line and we hunkered down. Soon, we had F-4B Phantom jets bombing to our front. At this point, the NVA broke contact and withdrew from the area. During the period we were under fire and the explosions were rocking our lines, we sustained several casualties. I was hit with small arms, presumably an M-16 round, in the right knee. An explosion that rocked our Command Post area hit my radioman, LCPL Frederick A. Westerman. He sustained shrapnel wounds to his lower back, buttocks, and the backs of his legs. He was peppered on his entire back with the exception of the area where he was carrying the PRC-25 radio...I subsequently learned that while HN Polland was administering first aid to the shrapnel

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[204] David L. Mellon writes that he literally "ran" into Cpl Harold Tucker after reporting to Camp Pendleton in late August, 1967: "While jogging along, Cpl Tucker asked a critical question that had obviously been bothering himn for some time: 'When you sent me out to that tree to do the envelopment, you forgot about me, didn't you?' I had to admit that with everything going on that afternoon, I had, indeed, forgotten about him and his fire team being in position out there in front of our lines. We had a real laugh about my oversight there in the safety of San Onofre at Camp Pendleton. In retrospect, however, I am sure it wasn't as funny to Cpl Tucker when his ass was hanging out there waiting for his Lt. to give him the order to move out and begin his assault across our front, a few months before!" [Letter of David L. Mellon, 22 Jul 2005].

[205] Concerning the M-16 fire from the enemy, David L. Mellon notes that the bullet or bullets that struck Sgt. Chapp were given to Doc Dan Polland by the surgeons that removed them from Chapp. Polland subsequently had them analyzed and was informed they were M-16 rounds. Mellon writes: "It raises an interesting question regarding how the NVA acquired the M-16s. This was prior to our troops being issued the M-16. My troops were carrying the M-14 during this action. As I reflect upon my wound, I previously thought that I was hit by a carbine round as the round passed through my right knee joint without doing much damage. I think my wound is, however, consistent with the smaller caliber of the M-16 as well." [Letter from David L. Mellon, 22 July 2005].

wound on Westerman's back, a second explosion went off by Westerman, causing him to receive yet another set of shrapnel wounds to his side and face.[206] HN Polland also received minor shrapnel wounds to his chest and left leg.. HN Polland was lucky to escape serious injury that day, as his helmet also had a very large dent in front from the explosions.

"As my reinforced squad had sustained several casualties, Captain Sayers sent a further relief column to help consolidate the position, evacuate the casualties, assess and police the battlefield. The 2nd Platoon, under 2nd Lt John Kramer, was dispatched from the Combat Base to our position. After my casualties had been evacuated by CH-46 helicopter and I had briefed Lt. Kramer on the situation, I turned over command of the position and was evacuated myself by CH-46 helicopter back to the Combat Base at Khe Sanh.

"[Our] 'Sparrow Hawk' suffered a significant number of casualties in this firefight. Sgt Chapp was mortally wounded in the upper right quadrant of his abdomen [and] died of his wounds approximately 7 weeks later on 14 April 1967.[207] SSGT Cutbirth was killed instantly by some sort of explosive device, either a grenade or mortar round.[208]

As Sgt. Chapp's squad with Lt. Mellon (B-2) attached had met such fierce resistance and sustained numerous causalties, Capt Sayers took two squads from B-2 along with 2/Lt John M. Kramer, to augment B-1. Kramer initially had difficulty reaching the patrol due to the intense enemy fire. The fight, however, was over by the time they did. Kramer subsequently swept the battle area and located 9 KIA by body count, 15 probable KIAs. Special Forces agents reported the enemy carrying 30-40 dead and wounded with them. Kramer also located one 82mm mortar complete, two more base plates and one more bipod, 180 rounds of 82mm with fuses, one complete FDC with wire and telephone. Also found: 1 pistol, ammo, 1 AK47, 3 rifles and a mortar site.[209] One of the enemy was a cadre officer from the NVA who had "lots of maps and other goodies showing complete breakdown of their personnel, weapons, munitions, where they came from, unit designation, mission. etc. They were here as part of a coordinated attack on Khe Sanh, Phu Bai, Dong Ha, Camp Carroll, the Rock Pile, and Lang Vei. Everyone got hit but us. CG 3rd MarDiv sent Bravo [Company, 1/9] a real nice msg saying how well you did."[210]

Capt Michael Sayers notes the significance: "..I felt that right there was probably the first long indication that there was going to be a big buildup in that area. We

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[206] HN Polland wrote: "..concerning Westerman's injuries.. I had given him a shot of ¼ grain morphine for his pain due to multiple shrapnel injuries and dressed some wounds. I then painted a big red 'M' on his forehead to signify he had received morphine (policy). I ran to treat someone else and during the interlude another explosion (grenade or mortar?) went off by Westerman causing him to receive yet another set of shrapnel wounds to his side and face. Westerman said to me (as a joke) as I was treating his second set of wounds that he deserved another shot of morphine because he was wounded twice. I saw Fred Westerman in July, 1997, and we laughed about that for awhile. By the way, the policy of tagging the wounded and writing the big red M on the forehead with my merthiolate vial is nuts. By the time I got back to see Westerman for his second set of wounds, the merthiolate M had literally melted off his forehead due to the intense heat and humidity, so I wrote it on the tag I wired to his shirt." [Letter of Dan Polland, undated, ca. 1999, to David L. Mellon, attached to Ltr from Mellon, 22 Jul 2005].

[207] LCPL J.S. Brown wrote to Lt. David Mellon (hospitalized for three months, March-May of 1967 at Naval Hospital, Yokosuka, Japan) on 01 Apr 1967 [Attached to Ltr from Mellon, 22 Jul 2005]: "Sgt. Chapp was hit by a M-15. Doc Polland brought the bullet back. Doc said the bullet had hit his spine but he didn't think he would be paralyzed. He also had his spleen, one kidney and some of his intestines removed." "Doc" Dan Polland wrote: "Sgt Chapp was shot in the right upper quadrant of his abdomen. As soon as he was hit, he started reciting a Catholic prayer repeatedly about Mother Mary, and don't let me die. I literally stuffed everything I had into the hole in his abdomen (like the plastic wrappers for the battle dressings). The surgeons at Dong Ha told me that packing his liver saved his life. I am sure he suffered tremendously.

[208] HN Polland later recalled: "SSGT Cutbirth may have been shot in the chest, but I know when I turned him over, he had gotten hit by a tremendous explosion very close to him as his face was burnt and his mouth was open like screaming in pain and there were black marks around the face and torso like a singing burn." [Letter of Dan Polland to David L. Mellon, undated, ca. 1999, attached to Ltr from Mellon, 22 Jul 2005.] HN Dan Polland, who later became a Doctor of Osteopathy, O.D., specializing in anesthesia and pain management, died of post-surgical complications in 2003. Brig Gen Harry T. Hagaman, USMC, reported his death: "Dr. Dan Polland's death was a shock to the many thousands of people that he treated in his many years as an anesthesiologist at our local hospital. I met Dan six years ago when he was treating me for a lower spinal problem that I received when I ejected from a F4B Phantom on 22 Jan 1968 outside of Khe Sanh... He was a great corpsman, an honorary Marine, a superb doctor, and devoted family man. He will never be forgotten by those that knew him." [BGen Harry T. Hagaman, letter, Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay* Issue #56 (Fall, 2003) p. 6.

[209] Officially, a search of the area disclosed 5 more NVA and one POW who DOW, one 82mm tube, 3 base plates, 3 bipods, 380 rounds of 82mm, and a variety of other gear and ammunition. [3rd MarDiv 260205Z/Feb67, Khe Sanh Operating Area SITREP #25; Comments of 2/Lt John M. Kramer and Sgt Donald E. Harper on USMC Oral History Tape #567].

[210] Letter from Captain Michael W. Sayers to 2/Lt Davide Mellon (USN Hospital, Yokosuka, Ward 2-B, SOQ), 27 Mar 1967.

brought those maps back to Khe Sanh. They were quickly whisked away and I never got to look at them again."[211]

[*Combined Action Company OSCAR became operational at Khe Sanh in early February, 1967. After final plans were completed with the Huong Hoa District Chief for three CAPs [Combined Action Platoons][212] the three platoons arrived the morning of 05 February 1967 at 0945H[213] and the CAC at Khe Sanh was officially established at 061530H in Huong District Headquarters in Khe Sanh village.[214] Khe Sanh's CAC OSCAR had the peculiarity of being the only CAC composed of Montagnard tribesmen and was organized with CAC O-1 and the CAC HQ CP located in the District HQ in Khe Sanh village (XD846380), CAP O-2 located at the western edge of Khe Sanh village (XD843380), and CAP O-3 located at the village of Ta Cong, just outside the main gate of KSCB (XD841408). The 52 Marines of CAC OSCAR under command of Lt William T. Sermeus developed a very strong tie of friendship and the Bru tribes people eagerly welcomed the Marines of the CAPs into their huts to participate in festivals and meals. The Marines very soon learned to appreciate the Bru as very hard-working, extremely friendly, trusting, and loyal.*]

02 MARCH 1967

116 UNKNOWN BRU

At 1900H, 02 March 1967, the Bru Montagnard village of Lang Vei (XD794363) was mistakenly bombed by two USAF F-4Cs aircraft dropping one of the deadliest anti-personnel munitions in the arsenal, CBUs. Lang Vei village consisted of 300 – 400 thatched hootches setting on stilts across the road from the USSF camp.[215]

The planes, COYOTE 11 and 12 launched out of DaNang to work under BLIND BAT 01, the ABCCC for the area. COYOTE 11 carried 6 MK-82 (500-pound GP bombs) and 2 CBU-2A pods while COYOTE 12 carried 2 CBU pods plus 4 LAU-3 rocket dispensers. Due to TACAN [Tactical Air Control and Navigation] malfunctions in one aircraft and switching between crew in the second, the commander of COYOTE 12 thought he was reading radial and distance from Channel 85, Khe Sanh, when in actuality he was reading Channel 109, Dong Ha. Lang Vei lies approximately 30 NM from Dong Ha on the 250 radial of channel 109. The geographic features of the Lang Vei area—a road paralleling the bulge in the river's course, a stream that crosses the road and joins the river, the prominent saddle-back mountains—are almost identical with the geographic features of the area 30 NM from Khe Sanh on the 250 radial of channel 85. The latter was the intended target. With the aircraft approaching "Bingo" fuel and ordnance not fully expended, the pilot saw the road, river and mountain features and assumed he was 20 miles inside Laos in the free bombing zone. When no moving targets are spotted, the ordnance is pickled. The second pilot, who had not yet seen the target, expended his CBU and expended his 500-pound bombs in a ripple mode to cover a long area while the first pilot came around for his last pass expending his 2.75-inch rockets.[216]

On KSCB, some of the Marines thought they were under attack by Russian MIGs flown by the NVA: "We were in panic because we thought, 'My God! Here we're up here and if they introduce fixed wing aircraft in an exposed place like this, we're in trouble!' And for awhile we couldn't determine if they were American aircraft or Russian aircraft that had bombed Lang Vei."[217]

CH-46 and H-34 helicopters were immediately dispatched from KSCB to evacuate the wounded despite increasingly deteriorating weather. When the weather finally made flying impossible, trucks were sent.[218] Marines were on the scene within 20 minutes to assist Captain Duffy's Special Forces Det A-101 in treating and evacuating the wounded, including a truck load of Marines from the Det, 3d Force Recon Co.[219]

Maj Richard C. Conway of VMGR-152 launched as ANCESTOR 890 despite the Khe Sanh airstrip being below GCA minimums: indefinite 200', sky obscured, visibility ¼-mi variable, ½ in fog, as he made his approach at 2125H. It was unsuccessful. Informed of the numerous civilian casualties requiring immediate medical attention, and with complete disregard for his own safety, he maneuvered his aircraft and landed safely, embarked 53 critically wounded and proceeded to 3rd Med Bn, undoubtedly saving many lives by his resolute determination and composure under very difficult conditions.[220]

Captain Michael Sayers, CO of B/1/9 at Khe Sanh recalls the language problem with the casualties. "In order to identify their wounds you had to strip them, inspect to see if they were hurt. They didn't make any noise, One of those Montagnard women was laying there with her guts out and she's not making a peep. I felt the stripping was degrading, even if necessary."[221]

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[211] Comments of Michael Sayers, 14 August 1990.
[212] SOP Khe Sanh 031530Z/Feb67, SITREP #3.
[213] SOP Khe Sanh 051315ZFeb67.
[214] SOP Khe Sanh 061414Z/Feb67, SITREP #6.
[215] HQ, PACAF, Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Division, *Short Rounds*, 28 Sep 1967, SECRET NOFORN AIR FORCE EYES ONLY, p. 30.
[216] *Ibid.*, pp. 31-33.
[217] Conversation with James Capers, 24 May 1986.
[218] 3dMarDiv COC 021631Z/Mar67, SITREP #30.
[219] Conversation with Col Kenneth D. Jordan, 02 June 1986.
[220] Statement of 2/Lt Ronald L. Dodge, OinC of MACTU-62 and CO, VMGR-152 ltr 1/JU:rlp, 1650, 31 May 1967, in DFC file of Maj Richard Clarence Conway.
[221] Conversation with Michael Sayers, 05 October 1991.

"Survivors walked around little piles of smoldering remains of burned-out huts, still dazed, looking for things and people who weren't there any more. Others sat on their haunches, stark naked, and they just stared and stared. There were a few children around. They were strangely quiet—too quiet."[222]

Casualty estimates: 112 KIA, 213 WIA, 4 MIA, and a minimum of 140 structures destroyed.[223]

III MAF sent relief supplies (food and construction materiel) and equipment for rebuilding was moved to the scene provided by Sub Unit #5, FLSU, and MCB-40. By 0900, 03 March, KC-130 aircraft were able to land and all remaining casualties were evacuated.

Due to this tragedy, LtGen Lew Walt dispatched an Advisory Team (MACV Advisory Team #4) to Huong Hoa Sub-sector, Khe Sanh village under the leadership of Captain James Whitenack who arrived with Sgt. Humphrey (Ops Sgt), 2 carbines, a radio, a case of C-rations, and arrived on an Air America flight about 1500H.[224]

03 MARCH 1967

LAVOY, PVT Eugene Louis Jr.	FLSG A 3dServBn
GOODWIN, LCPL Raymond	HqCo, HqBn 3dMarDiv

The western sector of KSCB (at XD843417) received approximately 74 rounds of 82mm mortars resulting in 2 Marines killed and 17 wounded (7 medevaced).[225] "It was a long night. They got 2 CH46s and 2 gunships that were on the pad. Tore up the strip a little. All the mortars fell on 3rd Plt [B/1/9], LSU, and the chopper pad."[226]

LCPL Goodwin had previously been sick, vomiting, and Joseph J. Johnson took his watch. When he felt better, he replaced Johnson on his watch. During the night the enemy infiltrated and "blew the top of his head off with a satchel charge."[227]

[Co E/2/9 arrived to reinforce Khe Sanh on 07 March at 1615H.[228] Major General W.B. Kyle stated in his FMFAC debrief that the NVA neither wanted nor had a need for Khe Sanh, that there were now two Marine Corps rifle companies there to frustrate any attacks the enemy forces might possibly launch.[229] Senior Marine officers neither believed there were any enemy forces in the Khe Sanh area, nor did they want to hear there were any. The newly-arrived Col James M. Reeder, SOP Khe Sanh, who had previously served a tour of several years at the CIA, felt torn between Generals Westmoreland and Walt: "I happened to know Lew Walt rather well at the time. He was constantly telling me, 'Now, you don't tell Westmoreland this when he comes up.' And Westmoreland would drop in, make a point; then Walt would be chugging right after him in his helicopter and say, 'Did you know he was coming?' And I'd say, 'I didn't have the foggiest!' I truly thought at the time that I could have gotten a lot better service and could have gotten a lot better information if the two of them hadn't been so at odds."[230] Col Reeder reflected the opinions of his superiors as Marines of the Force Recon Det and the infantry company at Khe Sanh anguished that their reports of enemy presence were apparently disregarded by the Colonel.[231] Sgt Herb Marshall at the SOG launch site at Khe Sanh had been sending training patrols to hills 881 south and north. "I came off the hill with my team and the Captain said: We gotta go over to the Marines for a debriefing. So we went over to the Marine bunker and the Captain told me to do the briefing. So I showed them were we inserted and told where we went and where we saw numerous bunkers and lots of enemy. My Captain said, 'Sergeant Marshall, if you were going to take that hill, how would you take it?' And I said, 'Well, Captain, I would give it many, many hours of prep with airstrikes and then I would form my artillery and I would lay a barrage and I would walk my troops up with a barrage of artillery in front.' A Marine Major looked around and said, 'Bullshit!' The Captain looked at me and said, 'Well, Sergeant, our briefing is completed.' We turned around and walked out of there. And the Marines sent a Company up on that hill and the Company got wasted; they ran into a world of shit and it ended up just being a real cluster."[232]

Infantry patrols from B/1/9 and E/2/9 dispatched small squad-sized patrols from PPBs (Platoon Patrol Bases), saving time by not having to travel from the main combat base and preserving a modicum of secrecy by avoiding noisy helicopters while yet able to patrol some distance from KSCB. These PPBs were mobile, ever-changing, just as were the enemy forces in the area.

On 13 March, a platoon from the newly-arrived E/2/9 on the southern tip of Hill 861 (XD805435) received 12 – 15 mortar rounds from the vicinity of 881-North (XD777458).[233]]

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[222] Vanderbie, Jan H., *Prov Rep Vietnam*, Philadelphia: Dorrance & Co., 1970, p. 47.
[223] III MAF ComdC, Mar 1967, Encl (1), p. 43.
[224] Conversation with James Whitenack, 06 October 1988.
[225] COC 3dMarDiv 031714Z/Mar67, SITREP #31.
[226] Letter from Capt Michael W. Sayers to 2/Lt David Mellon, 27 Mar 1967, appended to letter of David L. Mellon, 22 Jul 2005.
[227] Conversation with Joseph J. Johnson, 08 October 2006.
[228] COC 3dMarDiv 071653Z/Mar67, SITREP #35.
[229] USMC Oral History Tape #797.
[230] Conversation with Col James Reeder, 07 May 1989.
[231] Conversations with GySgt Lawrence Keen, 04 December 1975, James Capers, 24 May 1986, Major Michael W. Sayers to HQMC HistDiv 28 May 1981 (in Comments file on 1967 Vietnam volume).
[232] Conversation with Herb Marshall, 03 January 1996.
[233] COC 3dMarDiv 131923Z/Mar67, SITREP #41.

16 MARCH 1967

BENOIT, HM3 Francis Arthur	E/2/9
CATLIN, PVT Norman Richard	E/2/9
DALEY, LCPL Michael James	E/2/9
GOETZ, LCPL James Gormon	E/2/9
GUNN, LCPL Charley Edward	E/2/9
HARPER, SGT Donald Eugene Jr	B/1/9
IMPERIALE, LCPL Ronald Joseph	E/2/9
JOHNSON, PFC George Dennis	E/2/9
KURTZ, PFC Lloyd Nelson	E/2/9
LAMON, LCPL William Charles Jr	E/2/9
LAND, SGT Sylvester	B/1/9
MC KEE, LCPL Julian Allan	E/2/9
NICKLOW, PFC Danny Eugene	B/1/9
PERRY, PFC James Earl	B/1/9
PINO, LCPL Alfred	B/1/9
RHOADES, PVT David	B/1/9
SCHROEDER, PFC Joe Lawrence	E/2/9
VEDDER, SGT Richard Jerome	E/2/9
WILLIAMS, LCPL Ted	B/1/9

At 1000H, SSGT Spencer F. Olsen, Platoon Commander of 1st Platoon, E/2/9, moved his patrol down Hill 861 (XD803444)[234] along a narrow trail through very thick elephant grass and bamboo with point man George Johnson in front followed by LCPL McKee. When Johnson came to a fork and turned for directions, he suddenly confronted several NVA. Although he fired, the NVA instantly killed McKee and mortally wounded Johnson.[235]

Danny Schuster of E/2/9 later wrote:[236] "On 15 March 1967, 1st Platoon of Echo, 2/9, left the Khe Sanh combat base via trucks and were dropped off at the French plantation at the foot of Hill 861[237] to begin a PPB. We were under strength by at least a dozen Marines. We made it nearly three fourths of the way up the hill before dusk. SSGT Olson, our Platoon Commander, chose to leave our squad, led by Lou Damiano, in some elephant grass as an ambush. There was a huge ravine near where we set up and we could hear the NVA talking all night.

"When we rejoined the rest of the platoon early the morning of the 16th we informed SSGT Olson that we hard a lot of chatter from the NVA during the night. He requested artillery support from the Base Commander prior to our platoon moving out that morning but was flatly turned down.

"We were on the move for about a half an hour when Johnson, the point man, saw a couple of NVA setting up a h ome-made claymore mine. He opened up on them and they returned fire, seriously wounding him. If it were not for the immediate action of Doug Goodin, our gunner from Weapons Platoon, many of us would have died very quickly. Goodin had the gun up and blazing in a matter of seconds, and the enemy fire subsided long enough for us to set up a makeshift line along a trail through a bamboo thicket. It was shortly after we set up that the enemy started rolling grenades down the hill on us. SSGT Olson was finally successful in getting air support. I can still remember those crazy bastards flying those jets right at tree top level, dropping 500 pounders on the NVA positions. Those pilots saved our asses. A chopper came in for Johnson. Joe Schroeder was one of the Marines who volunteered to carry Johnson. An enemy soldier suddenly appeared and opened up with his AK47. Joe was killed instantly and, most likely, Johnson. Fens returned fire killing the NVA who had shot Johnson and Schroeder.

"We were sent out into a perimeter and were digging foxholes when mortars started falling on us. Lou [Damiano] immediately realized that they were walking the mortars with great accuracy, along the line of our perimeter. He got my fire team out and was running behind me when he went down. I remember turning around and not seeing him. I went back and found him. The entire fire team grabbed him and carried him back to our platoon CP area. When we saw how seriously he was wounded, we thought that he was not going to make it.

"By now we had between five and seven KIAs and just as many WIAs. Lou [Damiano] was the worst off. A helicopter arrived to mede3vac Lou and the other WIAs. Lou, the most seriously wounded, was the first to be placed on the helicopter. Our fire team carried him on aboard. We are probably alive today because we were on board when a mortar round hit the ramp just as the helicopter was taking off. Most of the men in the immediate area of that chopper were killed by that incoming round."

The point squad (3d), led by Sgt Donald Lord was far in front of the other two squads and was immediately ambushed at XD802443 by an estimated NVA platoon north of them and an enemy squad south of their position. E-1 took 1 KIA and 5 WIA.[238] Third squad immediately returned fire and the other two squads came down, firing.

The only suitable LZ to medevac casualties was back on top of the hill. As casualties were being carried there, the enemy force, now occupying it ferociously fired on the Marines, killing 6, wounding 4, and there was one

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[234] SOP Khe Sanh/III MAF Rep 170805Z/Mar67, Operations Summary.

[235] Murphy, Edward F., *The Hill Fights*, New York: Ballantine Books, 2003, p. 42.

[236] Schuster, Dannyu, "Hill 861, 16 March 1967," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #65 (Summer, 2006), pp. 4-5.

[237] An experimental botanical garden started by Eugene Poilane when he arrived at Khe Sanh after WW I, to determine which fruit trees would grow in the area.

[238] Comments of Capt. William B. Terrill, USMC Oral History Tape #1017.

MIA.[239] LCPL James L. Chase called napalm, then aborted as the planes were too close. The cancellation was too late, however, and napalm splashed the top of the hill and brush fire approached the Marines, snuffed out by squad leader Sgt Stephen P. Bodie. The napalm not only cleared away the enemy force, but also created a LZ.[240]

During the ensuing fire-fight HM3 Benoit received multiple fragmentation wounds to his arms and legs, but ignored his own wounds in order to render aid to others wounded.[241]

Meanwhile, at 1100H, 2/Lt John M. Kramer's 2nd Platoon, B/1/9, assisted by moving from their PPB at XD823440 (about 1500 meters east of Hill 861), and at 1415H B-2, which had been on their last day of patrol and were returning to KSCB, linked up with E-1[242] and a LZ was secured for medevacs. "We were only about 15 minutes from the base; we thought we were coming home, but it didn't turn out that way," noted PFC Walter H. Weber, grenadier, 3d squad, 2nd Platoon, B/1/9.[243] "We'd been out on patrols and ambushes for about 12 days. We were supposed to be relieved after four days by another platoon, but they couldn't, and we stayed their four days. Then another platoon was supposed to come out and relieve us, and we did their four days also."[244]

The first CH-46 medevac helicopter landed amid sniper and mortar fire, embarked 7 casualties including the dying Johnson and safely lifted. Doc Benoit, noting that not all the wounded had been evacuated, refused to be evacuated himself.[245] (The only other corpsman, Doc Jackobsen, was the most seriously wounded and was evacuated).[246]

A second helicopter landed and three more NVA mortars exploded right on the LZ.[247] Oddly, the Marines had not expected mortars while evacuating their dead and wounded. Captain William B. Terrill, CO of E/2/9, said: "This is one thing we never expected in a landing zone—to be mortared. And this is when we took most of our casualties."[248] HM3 Benoit was to have left on this one, but opted to remain to treat casualties. Both of Sgt Donald Harper's legs were severed by a shell exploding at his feet.[249]

SSGT Olsen faced a dilemma: more medevac choppers would undoubtedly mean more casualties; he should carry his casualties down the reverse slope. On the other hand, he needed to evacuate the casualties where they could receive life-saving medical attention, and there were insufficient able-bodied Marines remaining in either of the platoons to do this.[250]

A third helicopter landed about 20 minutes after being requested (about 1615H) and all remaining wounded were placed aboard except two. 14 additional 82mm mortar rounds exploded and more casualties were taken than from the previous fire fight or mortar attacks. "I saw trees lifting out of the ground and hot hit a second time."[251]

One of them, HM3 Benoit, lost his life carrying the wounded aboard the helicopter. Sgt Bodie wrote: "This man had multiple fragmentation wounds but they were never touched by a bandage. His men came first."[252]

The mortars ceased and there was silence. The scene was apocalyptic: "Bodies were laying everywhere and wounded men. Both of our corpsmen were dead and we had no one left to fix the wounded except for a few Marines that were still walking abound the top of the hill... We made radio contact with ECHO-6 [i.e., the CO] and said that the only way we could get the wounded and dead off the hill was to carry them; we cannot risk any more medevac choppers coming in with the few walking men remaining."[253]

Fixed wing blasted suspected enemy positions; the enemy mortar fire ceased. At 1705H, a reaction force (3d Squad, B-2) was sent from KSCB to XD802443, but overshot the LZ, crashed at XD805438,[254] and rolled down the embankment. "We had approximately 20, 22 Marines on board and we were coming in for a landing just before dusk. We got hit and shot down. Nobody got killed. I took a leg wound in the right leg and a couple other Marines on board got hit.. we rolled down the backside of the hill. Fortunately we had the infantry on board and they immediately set up a perimeter."[255] Only minor casualties were taken in the crash and the crew and reaction force were extracted by another helicopter and returned to KSCB. At 1730H, E-2 and Captain Terrill's company command group lifted to the LZ, made their way to the top of the hill and carried casualties down to the LZ. By 2100H, under light from flare-ships, all casu-

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[239] Telfer, Maj Gary L., Rogers, LtCol Lane, and Fleming, V. Keith, Jr., *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, Fighting the North Vietnamese*, HQMC: Washington, D.C., 1984, p. 34.
[240] Comments of Sgt Stephen P. Bodie, USMC Oral History Tape #1017.
[241] Statement of PFC Danny J. Clark in Silver Star Medal file of HM3 Francis A. Benoit.
[242] SOP Khe Sanh 170805Z/Mar67, cited.
[243] Comments of Walter H. Weber, USMC Oral History Tape #1017.
[244] Conversation with Keith Price at Khe Sanh Reunion, Washington, D.C., 03 July 1993.
[245] Statement of Bodie, cited.
[246] Statement of PFC Danny J. Clark in Silver Star Medal file of HM3 Francis A. Benoit.
[247] Statement of Sgt Bodie, cited.
[248] Terrill, Tape #1017, cited.
[249] Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
[250] Terrill, Tape #1017, cited.
[251] Jim Chase, email, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, June 2002.
[252] Statement of Bodie, cited.
[253] *Ibid.*
[254] SOP Khe Sanh 170805Z/Mar67, cited.
[255] Conversation with Douglas Craig Taylor, 21 February 1995.

casualties except three MIAs had been evacuated, but due to heavy fog, the helicopters had to secure. The platoon worked throughout the night, and by 0630H on 17 March had moved all KIAs and weapons on to the LZ.[256] Artillery fired throughout the operation and 13 air-strikes were run during the night.

Shortly after midnight (at 0002H), Sgt Richard Jerome Vedder was by the wire and set off a trip flare. Twice he was challenged and told to halt by troops on the line, but he didn't. Troops on the line opened fire shooting Sgt Vedder in his shoulder, the round emerging from his neck, and he died.[257] Joseph J. Johnson ("JJ") had joined the Marine Corps in March of 1966 at the age of 17. He was held on Okinawa until he turned 18 on 27 Nov 1966 and then sent to Phu Bai where he volunteered to go to Khe Sanh with the Headquarters Battalion detachment stationed there. He arrived at Khe Sanh before Christmas of '66 and, when Sub Unit #5 was formed on 01 Feb 1967, was assigned to it. On this particular night, Sgt Vedder, after being challenged, was fired upon by the position next to "JJ" but they missed. "JJ" then fired, shooting him through the neck. He was later told that Sgt Vedder must have been sleep walking.[258]

By 1300H all 782 gear, KIAs, and equipment were evacuated. Total results of the skirmish: 18 Marines killed, 56 wounded (18 serious), and one MIA (later recovered as a KIA).[259]

"As it ended, the 2nd Plt had 4 men left up on the hill that wasn't hit. Took 19 hours to get the WIAs & KIAs out. E Co. sent another platoon up. Charlie broke contact. 10 VC by body count. It was a long night. We lost radios, weapons, etc. Echo made a few bad moves that really hurt us. John [Kramer] almost flipped his lid (really). Physically, he's not too bad but mentally I'm not too sure. He blames himself for the losses. We lost Sgt Harper and Sgt Land, Pvt Rhodes, Pfc Perry, Pfc Daley, LCPL T. Williams, LCPL Pino, Pfc Nicklow. I gave 2nd Plt to Lt Kinhg with SSGT Riner as Plt Sgt. We got replacements immediately and kept functioning."[260]

On 18 March at 0845H, the MIA was located.[261] "They brought him up to the top of the hill and he was unidentifiable. He had been shot in the back of the head and it looked like he had been trying to crawl up to the top of the hill. Our own napalm got him. He was burned."[262]

Corpsman Keith Price recalls Sgt Land: "I thought he made it. We got him out. He was hit bad. He had on his flak jacket—a lot of us had thrown them away. It was about 100° and double-time [*Price is in tears as he tells this*]. We stopped and filled-up canteens in the ditches. When we got up there, they were out of water, so we gave them what we had—the ECHO people. [*Price has a long pause, emotionally choked up*].[263]

CINCPACFLT recommended that Benoit receive the Navy Cross instead of the originally recommended Silver Star Medal, which is what was awarded.[264] Benoit lived in and graduated from high school in Red Lake Falls, Minnesota and had one sister.[265]

Sgt Harper's son, Michael, was 14 months old when his father was killed. After his death, Harper's second wife raised Michael, but never adopted him. "She kept me as her own and severed all contact with the family. We moved around—many years." He later joined the 82nd Airborne Division.[266]

Alfred Pino was known to his family and friends as "Freddy." While in high school, Alfred Pino loved sports and participated in the Clifton's football and Little League programs.[267] After graduating from Clifton High School, New Jersey in 1965, he originally tried to enlist in the Navy. Their quotas being filled, he joined the Marine Corps and arrived at Parris Island on 31 Jan 1966. After boot camp he became engaged to Loretta Russo of Clifton, and arrived in Vietnam on 7 July 1966.[268]

2/Lt Howell was later KIA on 7 July as the S2 of 1/9 during Operation BUFFALO when the CP bunker was hit by artillery and rockets at Con Thien in a barrage that killed 15.

26 March 1967[269]

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[256] Comments of Terrill, cited.
[257] SOP 3dMarDiv/III MAF rep 161840Z/Mar67, Final Spot Report.
[258] Letter from Larry L. Larsen, 16 Oct 2005.
[259] Telfer, *et al, op. cit.*, p. 34.
[260] Letter from Capt Michael W. Sayers to 2/Lt David Mellon, 27 Mar 1967, appended to Ltr from David L. Mellon, 22 Jul 2005.
[261] SOP 3dMarDiv/III MAF rep 181545Z/Mar67, SOTREP #46.
[262] Comments of PFC Jack E. Gresham, USMC oral history tape #974.
[263] Conversation with Price, cited.
[264] 4th endorsement on CO, Co E/2/9 ltr WET:ewl, 1650, 31 Mar 1967; Stevens, Paul Drew, ed., *The Navy Cross, Vietnam*, Forest Ranch, Ca.: Sharp & Dunnigan, 1987, p. 31.
[265] Ward, Don., *The Faces Behind the Names*, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1996, p. 25.
[266] Conversation with Michael Harper, 24 September 1999.
[267] Wahlers, Robert, "The War Comes Home," *Clifton Merchant Magazine*, 6:5 (May, 2000), p. 6.
[268] Information from Richard Delotto, 06 July 2004.
[269] In the original, 1st edition, of this book, HN Leonard N. Long is listed as KIA. This entry was erroneous since HN Long was KIA on 26 Mar 1968. The circumstances of his death are discussed on the entry for that date in this book. This error was noted by David L. Mellon in his letter of 22 Sep 2005.

[Col Reeder, SOP Khe Sanh, was unreceptive to reports by the Force Recon Det and B/1/9 of NVA in the area. When the mortar crew was caught 25 February 1967, along with maps, wire, mortars and equipment, the Colonel informed Capt Sayers that this was just some gear that had been found. "It was this action and what we didn't bring in that caused Reeder to tell LtCol Wilder that 'they have two 82mm mortars but only one base plate.' We captured the rest."[270]

Brigadier General Michael P. Ryan, Commander of 3d Marine Div (forward), who frequently visited KSCB had known Mike Sayers previously when the General was a LtCol and regimental commander for recruit training at Parris Island and Sayers was a Series Commander. He asked Sayers what he needed to defend KSCB, and Sayers gave him a "shopping list."[271] *The "list" included a light section of Marine tanks and a heavy section of Ontos, along with U.S. Army quad 50s, 40mm "dusters," and two Searchlights.*[272] *(He discovered that with a low cloud cover, the Searchlights could bounce lights off the clouds and illumine a large area).*

The tanks, quad 50s, Dusters, and Ontos were able to arrive at Khe Sanh due to the re-opening of Route 9 on 27 March 1967 when a Rough Rider convoy of 68 vehicles departed Dong Ha at 0832H and arrived at KSCB at 1155H without incident. It was the first time that Route 9 had been open since September, 1964.[273] *The two Ontos [Light Section, 2nd Plt, Co A, 3d AT Bn] remained at Khe Sanh as the convoy took back with them the remnants of E/2/9 to Dong Ha. FOXTROT Battery, 2/12, arrived 2 April (at 1430H) to relieve I Battery, 3/12.*[274]]

Capt Sayers wrote (on 27 Mar 1967): "On 20 Mar.. E Cmpany pulled out so we've [B/1/9] got it all alone again. Charlie is really out there now. We've been mortared 3 or 4 times since our first time but neg. results. Charlie didn't hit too good. Col. McGee was replaced by a Col Reeder. He's 10 times as bad as McGee. A bug on police & flowers and sanitation and shaving & clean clothes, etc. Highway #9 opened today. 1" rough rider got through from Phu Bia. Big deal. We now have a hot shower unit behind the mess hall. Also got 2 quad 50s and 2 Ontos up here. The Onti arrived today. Force Recon replaced by Div. Recon this week... We've lost a total of 7 helos in the last month. They don't stay here at night anymore... Our strength is now—don't feint—305 (including attachments). Each platoon is about 72-75 strong with their weapons attachments. We're fat. Our S-1 has orders to keep B [1/9] at 250 effrective."[275]

30 MARCH 1967

KEGLOVITS, 2/Lt Edward Joseph VMFA-542

On 30 March, Platoon B-3 of 1/9 discovered a NVA base camp just as the sun was rising. The Marines blasted away their LP but was informed that about 400 NVA were on line, approaching.[276] **At approximately 0830H, B-3 began receiving approximately 85 rounds of 82mm or larger mortar fire and took cover in the NVA bunkers and received no casualties.**[277] **Later that morning, at 1140H, fixed wing began working the area in their support.**

Second Lieutenant Keglovits was a NFO on a F4B (#151512) when his aircraft received hostile ground fire and crashed at XD804449 and burned while conducting an air strike in support of B-3 against mortar positions and caves where units of NVA had dug themselves threatening the KSCB. The plane crashed into the side of a hill and caught fire The pilot, 1/Lt J. B. Geller, ejected and survived but the navigator was still in the aircraft when it crashed.[278]

On 27 June 1967, a patrol from D/1/26 found a downed USMC F-4 aircraft at XD802451 along with assorted maps, documents, a section of rib cage and vertebrae and a dog tag for Keglovits, one .38 pistol, a USMC clasp knife, and a steel toe to a boot. Remaining portion of the aircraft was destroyed.[279]

"Just yesterday [31 March 1967] 3rd Plt [B/1/9] was sent to check out 2 caves on the other side of 861 ran into a gook position that was fortified with caves and sleep-

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[270] Letter from Michael Sayers, 05 May 1997.

[271] Interview of Sayers, 14 August 1990.

[272] Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35; Ltr of Sayers, 05 May 1997; Conversation with Michael Sayers, 06 October 1991.

[273] The Rough Rider included: 1 Mite, 3 M-38 jeeps, 8 radio jeeps, 3 ¾-ton trucks, 15 2½-ton trucks, one M-49 tanker, 13 dump trucks, 17 5-ton trucks, 4 M-55 MG, 2 wreckers, 2 Ontos, 3500 pounds of rice, 4320 pounds diesel, 4680 pounds Class IV, 6640 pounds Class V. It was hoped that this convoy would encourage the use of Rt 9 by civilian and government vehicles and relieve dependence on air cargo. [3dMarDiv COC 270956Z/Mar67; 3dMarDiv ComdC Mar67, p. 30; FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam, March, 1967*, p. 63; III MAF ComdC Mar67, pp. 7-8. The opening of Rt 9 was part of Phase I of PRACTICE NINE, the electronic barrier of Strong Points. ["Briefing Paper," Subj: PRACTICE NINE, Encl (6), 3dMarDiv ComdC Jan67, p. 3.

[274] COC 3dMarDiv 022245Z/Apr67, SITREP #61.

[275] Letter from Capt Michael W. Sayers to 2/Lt David Mellon, 27 Mar 1967, attached to Ltr from David L. Mellon, 22 July 2005.

[276] Conversation with Tom Ryan, 24 August 1986.

[277] SOP 300230Z/Mar67, Follow up Spot Report.

[278] SOP 3dMarDiv/III MAF Rep 300545Z/Mar67, Follow up Spot Report; Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 94. There are two Keglovits names on the Vietnam Memorial wall in D.C., both from Northampton, Pa. 2/Lt Edward was born 08 Feb 1938; the other is PFC Ronald Edward, born 05 September 1946 who served with E Co., 4th Bn, 12th Inf Rgt, 199th Inf Bde, KIA 26 August 1967.

[279] 26th Marines 271135Z/Jun67, Operation CROCKETT SITREP #181.

ing positions and had 130 [mm.] mortars showered on them."[280]

[On 12 April 1967, LtGen Krulak, CG, FMFPAC, sent a SPECAT EXCLUSIVE MARINE CORPS EYES ONLY message to CG, III MAF quoting a message exchange between Ambassador Sullivan (of Laos) and General Westmoreland.[281] This significant message portends much future action at Khe Sanh, not only for the imminent Battle of the Hills, but for the later 1968 siege battle and Tet Offensive.

Ambassador Sullivan: "I have been watching with great concern the situation developing in the western reaches of the DMZ, the area immediately south of this in SVN and the adjacent eastern frontier regions of Laos... As I see it, they have been taking two sets of actions in the last several weeks. First, they have moved a considerable amount of stores and equipment down the Ho Chi Minh Trail and have pushed the bulk of it eastward to positions just south of the DMZ either in SVN or in base areas on the Laos frontier. Secondly, they have moved vast numbers of troops (perhaps in divisional strength) across the western reaches of the DMZ into SVN, presumably to marry up with this equipment... I would like to suggest a hunch.. I start from the assumption that it is something which has a political and propaganda as well as a military content. I assume it is the constantly recurring effort to emulate Dien Bien Phu. It seems to me that the logical place for them to begin such an effort is at Khe Sanh.. [where there are forces] who can be quietly surrounded by troops which may be already tunneling in against potential air attack. They can make their preparations quite undisturbed because they control the hills and the countryside... They will assume that the Marines at DaNang will attempt to relieve Khe Sanh and that the Marines will therefore move in reinforcements as fast as they can. But these.. will be susceptible to ambush and destruction piecemeal. In short, I would assume that they will use the bait of a besieged Khe Sanh to draw more and more of your Marines into the totally inhospitable territory of western Quang Tri [Province]. Then.. they will send some of their other units.. and carry out major raids either on Hue or on DaNang itself... I wonder whether you would consider it prudent to pull your Marines and ARVN temporarily out of Khe Sanh in order to deprive them of the bait for their trap.. you could lift them out and also clear out friendly villagers in order to open up the hills for a full scale shampoo [and].. follow up by a massive campaign of defoliant spraying [and] saturate the area all around Khe Sanh with Arc Light raids... If you agree to pull temporarily out of Khe Sanh, please let me know.."

General Westmoreland replied: "I share your concern over the enemy's movements from Laos... within the past few days I completed one of my periodic personal inspections of the Khe Sanh area. [He then reviews various actions that make Khe Sanh defensible.].. Contingency plans exist to deploy on short notice my strategic reserve to predetermined locations in I CTZ... The CIDG base at Lang Vei and the USMC base at Khe Sanh serve as integral patrol bases for our surveillance activities in the northwest. In fact, it is from Khe Sanh that we launch PRAIRIE FIRE [i.e., SOG, later called SHINING BRASS] operations into the areas of more immediate interest to you... Experience has proved that the enemy has suffered his greatest losses when he has chosen to mass for attack against our defensive positions, or when we have managed to engage his forces in open combat.."]

14 APRIL 1967

CHAPP, SGT Robert Anthony	**B/1/9**

DOW received in the action on 25 Feb 1967.[282]

24 APRIL 1967

BARBER, LCPL Ronald Lee	**B/1/9**
BARTH, LCPL Wayne Robert	**B/1/9**
CARTER, PFC Ralph Winfield	**B/1/9**
CASAREZ, PFC Raul	**B/1/9**
CASTRO-RAMOS, LCPL Justino E	**B/1/9**
HAMILTON, PFC Douglas Blake	**B/1/9**
LEONARD, PFC Kent Alan	**B/1/9**
PEREZ, LCPL Daniel Torres	**B/1/9**
POMERLEAU, CPL James Gerald	**B/1/9**
SAUER, 1/Lt Phillip Howard	**A/3d AT**
SUTTON, LCPL Jack Lenn	**B/1/9**
TWOMEY, PFC Raymond Lee	**B/1/9**
WAINZ, LCPL Robert Michael	**B/1/9**

The "Battle of the Hills" at Khe Sanh began this date with two platoons of B/1/9 (B-1 and B-3) moving out of their PPBs [Platoon Patrol Bases] at 0430H to check out some caves near Hill 861. At 0530H the two platoons moved until about noon and set in for chow after which they separated and moved about 300 -400 meters apart. As the 57-man B-1 moved towards the caves, a Marine in 3rd Squad spotted 4 – 5 NVA in khaki uniforms moving toward them and the Platoon Commander, 2/Lt James D. Carter, Jr. passed the word to hold fast. The NVA element moved to within 50 meters from the Marines, spotted one of them, and began to fire. After an exchange of fire, a fire team was dispatched to check out the area.[283]

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[280] Letter from LCPL J.S. Brown to Lt David Mellon, 01 Apr 1967, attached to letter from David L. Mellon, 22 Jul 2005.
[281] CG FMFPAC 120337Z/Apr67 to CG III MAF.
[282] Letter from David L. Mellon, 22 Jul 2005.
[283] Comments of Sgt Milton G. Norwood, USMC Oral History Tape #992.; Comments of SSGT Dennis W. Ritchie,

The First Squad leader, CPL James Pomerleau, went down into a gully. "I heard a BAK! BAK! BOOM! And two guys from the fire team yelled, 'Get a corpsman down here!' Somebody had hit the [Willy Peter][284] grenade on the back of Pomerleau and blew him in half—cut him right in half,"[285] as smoke from the exploded WP round shrouded escape of the NVA.[286]

SSGT Gilberto Telles, the First Squad Leader, B-1 "..was there when Cpl James Pomerleau went after the NVA and got killed. I was very well acquainted with Pomerleau, for we had both seen action down in the Delta. It was quite hard for me to loose such a fine Marine. Pomerleau was due to get his Sergeant stripes as soon as we got back to Khe Sanh."[287]

As B-1 brought Pomerleau's body back up the hill, some 300 meters toward Hill 861, they began to receive heavy fire, pinning them down. LCPL Dana Cornell Darnell, a mortar ammunition carrier, saw his mortar gunner fall unconscious as the mortar tube he was carrying struck him in the head when he hit the deck as the ambush was sprung.[288] With extraordinary calm in the face of the intense enemy fire, Darnell retrieved the mortar. Due to the intensity of the enemy fire, the Marines having mortar rounds which had been distributed among the platoon, could not reach Darnell, so Darnell, with complete disregard for his own safety, raced through the enemy fire to gather the rounds. Unable to set up the mortar properly, he propped the tube between his legs and steadied it with his hands, using his helmet as a base plate and began to fire accurate rounds into the enemy positions. His A-Gunner urinated on Darnell's hands and tube to cool it.[289] An O-1E Tigerhound aircraft circling overhead marked NVA positions as fixed-wing bombs battered the NVA. (Darnell was KIA on 26 April 1967 while trying to drag a wounded Marine from a heavily mortared position.)[290]

The NVA fire having been silenced, B-1 was ordered to withdraw from the clearing and to leave their KIA with B-3 which was approaching, and join up with BRAVO-6 and assist B-2 which had lost four men.

After moving half an hour, a dug-in NVA force showered small arms fire on the Marines. One, PFC Wayne R. Barth, although hit, gleefully exclaimed, "I'm going home. I'm going home!" Although Doc Polland [later a D.O., Doctor of Osteopathy] started toward Barth, Lt Carter held him back due to the intense, deadly fire.[291] SSGT Gilberto Telles, 1st Squad Leader, B-1 "..was present when PFC Wayne R. Barth got hit. I remember coming up to him and trying to comfort him until the corpsman got there. He had been hit in the legs several times and was lying on the ground. He then proceeded to holler, 'It's OK, Charlie, I'm going home and I'll still be able to ride a bike.' In an instant, he was shot through the head and killed. Damn good Marine."[292]

Early on the morning of the 24th, 2/Lt Thomas G. King had led 30 Marines from B-2 plus a 81mm mortar section with approximately 120 rounds and 1/Lt Phillip H. Sauer (the Commander of the Ontos Section) to Hill 700 (XD804437), about a click south of 861 (XD802445) to provide security for platoons (B-1 and B-3) sweeping a cave area behind Hill 861. He set up his 81mm mortar tube, began firing into the cave area, and dispatched a 5-man OP to Hill 861 for better advantage to call in fire missions and possibly air support for B-1 and The OP advanced until it reached a bamboo thicket about 300 meters from the top of the hill, and at 1100H was ambushed by dug-in 20-30 NVA. The point collapsed, yelling "I'm hit!"[293]

Lt Sauer, a gung-ho Marine who always wanted to get into the action,[294] and the FO, PFC William Marks made it to a foxhole after the first burst killed the point man. The radioman and security took cover about 15 feet behind them as the NVA plastered them with fire. Lt Sauer, armed only with his .45 covered the escape of the others. Marks' M-16 had become caked with mud and wouldn't fire and a NVA round had burst the muzzle of the security man's rifle. Marks took off and ran with the others through the heavy fire. The radioman was hit in the chest and collapsed and the security man disappeared, so Marks ran blindly, stumbling and falling as bullets hit all around him along the narrow and slick mud path.[295] The 81 security had moved forward to investigate the contact, and Marks stumbled into them. Breathless, exhausted, and caked with mud, he blurted, "They're all dead. The other four. All dead."

Lt King immediately dispatched one of his squads to retrieve the four bodies. They arrived at the ambush site and had their hands on two bodies, but didn't see the

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USMC Oral History Tape #995; Comments of Cpl Michael A. Brown, USMC Oral History Tape #960.

[284] Marine slang for "white phosphorus."

[285] Comments of Ken Lease, 01 June 1993.

[286] Ynostra, Sgt Roger, "New Lieutenant Plays Major Role in the Battle for Hill 861," III MAP: *Sea Tiger* 3:20 (19 May 1967) 11.

[287] Letter from Gilberto Telles, postmarked 23 Aug 2005.

[288] Statement of Sgt R.A. Brown, Jr., in Navy Cross file of LCPL Dana Cornell Darnell.

[289] Telfer, Rogers and Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[290] Navy Cross Citation for Darnell.

[291] Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

[292] Letter from Gilberto Telles, postmarked 23 Aug 2005.

[293] Comments of 2/Lt Thomas G. King, USMC Oral History Tape #994; Comments of SSGT Leon R. Burns, USMC Oral History Tape #993; Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

[294] R. Scott Berry, "Ontos," The Khe Sanh Veterans *Red Clay*, Issue #49 (Spring 2001), p. 30.

[295] UPI, "When Your Buddies Are Dead, Run Like Hell," *Stars and Stripes*, 01 May 1967.

other two.[296] Due to the heavy fire, the squad was forced to withdraw and Lt King proceeded to call an artillery mission on Hill 861 where it was assumed the NVA were dug-in. Lt King continued to direct fire in support of B-1 and B-3 and the FO of B-1 radioed that the rounds were landing directly on top of a NVA company and to fire for effect. 105mm howitzers of "F" Battery, 12th Marines, fired 140 rounds into the cave area.

B-1 had been moving towards Hill 861 as ordered, but was ambushed with heavy automatic machinegun fire killing another Marine. The platoon disengaged, moved to a LZ and was able to medevac two or three of their wounded. Remaining behind were 4 WIA and 1 KIA, along with several new casualties. Receiving additional fire, the platoon moved to another LZ where another chopper arrived—along with NVA fire which killed another Marine and wounded three more. SSGT Gilberto Telles, First Squad Leader, B-1, was standing about ten feet from PFC Twomey "..when a chopper started to land. I was right below the chopper and I had to roll to my left or the left tire of the chopper would have landed right on top of me. As I looked up at the pilot, he got shot, the co-pilot took control and took the chopper up. The crew chief started firing away with the .50 cal. machinegun. Just then, PFC Twomey got on one knee to shoot at a sniper when a bullet from the hopper's machinegun hit PFC Twomey square in the head. Brains exploded all over. I seen PFC Twomey's body fall quivering for a few minutes until it stood still on the ground. I went over to check him out. The only thing left of his head were the jaws. PFC Twomey was a Nez Pierce Native American. I am of Lipan Apache stock. If it has been hard to accept all this carnage, [the death of] PFC Twomey was especially hard."[297] The chopper was unable to land, so B-1 dug in for the night with their wounded and dead.

B-3, the other sweeping platoon, fared no better. After B-1 left them with Pomerleau's body, they started to receive small arms fire, mortars and .30 and .50 machinegun fire from the ridge opposite them. A machinegunner in B-3 recalls: "We couldn't figure whether we were supposed to set in or not when all of a sudden all kinds of fire opened up on the ridge line across from us and rounds started to pop into us, and we jumped down... We heard a couple of guys get hit and they were screaming and it shook us up... It was the mortar section.. One of them seemed to be alright at first. He was on his feet running. Then he was laying down, unconscious. Another guy got hit twice in the leg and in the arm. It tore up his arm pretty bad, but he never let down his spirits. He kept his morale up.. One of the gunners in my squad gave up his machinegun and started carrying on his back a WIA who was hit in the leg."[298]

Fortunately, the NVA mortar fire was not accurate. Then friendly air began dropping bombs—too close. The bombs killed six Marines. "The jets blew my whole fire team away. I think they thought we were the enemy the way we were coming off that hill."[299] "There were bodies spread over the area. There was one guy almost completely mutilated. One guy was dying and all the rest of them were dead."[300] The Marine still barely alive but dying, PFC Daniel T. Perez, had a badly mangled leg, and he died. There were insufficient able-bodied Marines to carry both dead and wounded. Breaking Marine Corps tradition, the dead were abandoned in order to carry the wounded.[301] "I was in the middle of the formation.. and we moved to this area that had been bombed.. and parts of bodies were all over the area, and we were told to move past this area so that the platoon sergeant could move up and stay with this man who was dying. And the man wouldn't die right off, so we got the word to pick him up with all—most—of the gear we could carry and the wounded, and move down to the LZ."[302]

That night B-1 and B-3 dug in as best they could. They had no entrenching tools and dug using canteen cups and bayonets. One Sergeant in B-3 who had been shot in the legs kept telling everyone, "We're all going to die!"[303]

Casualties for the first day of the Battle of the Hills included 14 Marines killed, 18 wounded, and 2 MIA.[304]

A Marine with the Ontos unit later recalled: "I was told that he was cut in half by a .50 or .51 cal. NVA machinegun and that they recovered half his body eight days later."[305] Sauer's sister, Mary Schoelch, notes that although he remained behind in order to cover the escape of the other Marines (only Marks made it, however), he was only awarded the Purple Heart.[306]

Ron Taylor recalls Kent Leonard: "He was from Las Cruces [New Mexico] and I went all the way through school with him. Everyone was surprised when he joined the Marines because he was a real skinny kid and was a bookworm."[307]

SSGT Gilberto Telles, First Squad Leader, B-1, sat next to corpsman, Doc Pollard, that evening "..when I noticed bullet holes from side to side on my trousers. I

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[296] King, Tape #994, cited. The two other bodies were later found. They'd been decapitated and burned. [Sayers, Michael, ltr of 18 May 1981 to USMC HistCent, p. 2].

[297] Letter from Gilberto Telles, postmarked 23 Aug 2005.

[298] Comments of Brown, Tape #960, cited.

[299] Conversation with Tom Ryan, 24 August 1986.

[300] Comments of Brown, Tape #906, cited.

[301] Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[302] Comments of LCPL Donald A. Clark, USMC Oral History Tape #959.

[303] Conversation with Tom Ryan, 24 August 1986.

[304] SOP 261900Z/Apr67, SITREP #84.

[305] Berry, *op. cit.*

[306] Mary Schoelch, email, Khe Sanh Message Board, posted 01 July 2001.

[307] Letter from Ron Taylor, 6 June 1996.

noticed three bullet holes in my pack that had also penetrated through three C-ration cans. One bullet had gone sideways and hit a can of blasting caps sideways and dented it. I was also carrying 2 ½ pounds of C-4 on top of my pack. Imagine if the blasting caps had gone off and detonated the C-4; I would have been scattered all over Vietnam."[308]

[*Co K/3/3 had been scheduled to relieve B/1/9 at Khe Sanh on 29 April, and the "advance party" of 3/3 was already at Khe Sanh on the 24th.*[309] *On 20 April 1967, SOP Khe Sanh passed to OPCON of 3rd Marines with commencement of Operation PRAIRIE IV. The Khe Sanh AO, not included as part of the PRAIRIE IV AO, was "a territorial appendage for operational control purposes to the 3rd Marines which, occupying the adjacent area of operations, was in the best position to oversee activities there and to reinforce if the need arose.. with the commencement of the operation, reports were submitted to the 3rd Marine Division via the 3rd Marines."*[310]]

[*B/1/9's patrol had revealed an enemy plan not unlike the strategy used at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Reconstruction of the enemy plan*[311] *included isolation of the battlefield by mortar attacks on Dong Ha, Gio Linh, Con Thien, and Camp Carroll, all designed to deny fire and logistic support. A mortar attack on Phu Bai would endanger helicopter support, while destroying bridges along Route 9 would sever overland re-supply. In addition, a diversionary attack on Lang Vei, 4 miles west of Khe Sanh, would make the enemy threat appear focused there. LtGen Krulak summarized: "All this was to be ancillary to the main effort, a strong ground attack on Khe Sanh, coming southward from the mountainous regions near the Laos-RVN-DMZ corner." On 27 and 28 April, Phu Bai, Dong Ha, and artillery and logistic support bases near the DMZ were struck with some 1,200 rounds of rockets, artillery, and mortar fire, killing 10 Americans and wounding 226. Lang Vei was overrun on 4 May 1967 and Route 9 was cut. In retrospect, it appears that the North Vietnamese, not quite ready to strike, were anxious that patrols depart rather than expose their plans for the ground attack. The aggressive patrol of B/1/9, however, forced their hand.*]

[*Over the millennia, two annual monsoon rains of biblical proportions carved numerous caves in the ancient sea-floor that had been uplifted and folded into sharply-rising hills and cliffs at Khe Sanh. The rains and tropical heat ensured lush vegetation—with grass over six-foot high, bamboo thickets, and weathered the laterite soil, making it as slick as ice when wet, making ascending and descending the mighty hills arduous and dangerous. Because of this terrain, moving units were forced to fragment into squads and platoons. A necessity to maintain intervals between men so that one mortar would not kill many and to avoid many being in the kill zone of an ambush, movement through the tall grass, winding rivers, and frequent fog, made the possibility of getting lost very real. These considerations explain why patrols at Khe Sanh were so fragmented into small-size units. Moving squads, recon patrols, helicopters, commanders in them, etc., reminds one of chessboard pieces moving in various ways on the battlefield.*]

25 APRIL 1967

CARMICHAEL, PFC Dale Eugene	K/3/3
GAGNON, LCPL Patrick John	K/3/3
GIBBS, HM3 Michael Gerald[312]	K/3/3
LYVERE, PFC Ronald Lee	K/3/3
MONAT, HM3 Donald Henry Jr	K/3/3
NEAL, LCPL Charles Marion Jr	K/3/3
NELSON, PFC Stephen Carl	K/3/3

On 25 April a medevac helicopter landed at B-1's position about 1000H when the fog temporarily cleared, attracting a hail of small arms fire. It departed almost immediately, but not before the Company Commander (Capt Sayers) had debarked along with 22 men of B-2 and several wounded were embarked. Due to fog, this was the only helicopter able to reach B/1/9 on 25 April.[313]

As they moved, much gear plus three more Marine bodies were found. The humping of sharp slopes made slippery by the rain, anxiety of battle and the always realized possibility of death, and the lack of water made them dangerously desiccated and weaker as they progressed. The dead bodies still had some canteens of precious water to assuage their thirst. Even in death, Marines of Khe Sanh shared—gave—what they had to each other.

"We found another dead man. By his dog tags we recognized him as a man from First Platoon... The last three men were supposed to pick up this dead man and carry him along.. Word was passed to move out. We passed the word that the litter wasn't ready. Word came back, 'We're moving out anyway.' So we moved out, got about 75 meters from this dead man, and word was passed to go back and get him. The fog was, by now, very, very thick, and it was also dark. We told them we couldn't even find the path to get back there, and just moved on. We already had about three KIAs with us."[314]

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[308] Letter from Gilberto Telles, postmarked 23 Aug 2005.
[309] 3dMar, AAR, 3/RRB/lws, 3100, 09 June 1967, p. 14.
[310] *Ibid., p. 12.*
[311] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, April 1967, pp. 27-30.
[312] The Vietnam Memorial, Washington, D.C., book lists GIBBS as KIA this date; his Silver Star Medal Citation, however, indicates that he was KIA on 26 April 1967.
[313] Comments of Cpl Brown, Tape #906, cited; Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
[314] Comments of LCPL Donald A. Clark, USMC Oral History Tape #959.

The other sweeping platoon of B/1/9, B-1, still separated from B-3, had been able to evacuate their wounded, but not their dead, and moved carrying them all day until about 2100H.[315]

Fog delayed movement of the Battalion 3/3 Command Group under the leadership of LtCol Gary Wilder from Thon Son Lam until noon on the 25th, at which time 3/3 assumed OPCON of B/1/9. Co K/3/3[316] under leadership of Capt. B.L. Spivey, received the immediate mission from LtCol Wilder to take Hill 861 and be prepared to aid B/1/9 and exploit their contact.[317] K/3/3 proceeded shanks' mare at noon as artillery prepped Hill 861, approximately 5000 meters from the airstrip, and "a pretty good climb."

When it was about three-fourths there, Capt Spivey deployed Co K for the attack. It was about 1500H as two platoons separated to ascend the two ridge lines approaching the hill in a two-prong attack. An hour later, the Marines were about 500 meters from the top and had taken no fire. Upon permission from LtCol Wilder, Co K moved to take Hill 861. Platoon K-1 moved up the ridge line directly south of the summit of 861 with the Co K Command Group about 100 meters behind them; K-3 moved from the east to XD806445 (a hill later called "Hill 861-Alfa" during the 1968 siege battle). About 1645H, Marine 105mm blasted ahead of K-3, and then—a short round!

Tom Vineyard recalls: "My first Khe Sanh memory is standing in a line with the rest of the platoon, maybe the rest of the company, waiting for orders. While waiting, I was chatting with Cpl Hall. He was really scarred about this thing we were about to do... I have a vivid recollection of him. In my memory he was rather short, stout with a cherub-like face."[318] Cpl Hall had previously served in Co A, 3d Reconnaissance Battalion and on 12 July 1965 was shot while part of a team in which Lt Reasoner was KIA and received the Medal of Honor.[319] It was about 1600H. There was "..a loud explosion up front. As we passed through the area in a single file, Cpl Hall lay there mortally wounded. I have never seen anything like it. I can best describe it as he was broken. I saw no blood, just a quivering mass."[320] Hall pleaded, "Please don't let me die here. Please! Please don't let me die here."[321]

The platoons were not tied together due to the terrain. At 1700H, Cpl Alfonso Ray Riate, leading the Point Squad as Point, disappeared from view as he proceeded in the tall grass on the curved trail. (Riate became MIA and was repatriated by PRG 16 March 1973). At 1705H, the lead elements of K-1 reported heavy contact, approximately 300 meters from the crest of the hill. Cpl Maloney frantically yelled that his newly-issued M-16 rifle had jammed. Suddenly no one heard his screaming.[322] By 1730H, the Marines had advanced to within 100 meters of the crest, but were depleted of fighting troops; only 10 effectives remained in K-1, the remainder all WIA and KIA.[323]

K-1's corpsman, HM3 Michael G. Gibbs, had rushed to the forefront, the heat of the battle, to treat a Marine with a sucking chest wound and then moved him 15 meters to a safer location. He then rushed into the intense fire to help another Marine—and then to a third, where he received a wound that broke his leg. He remained there, quiet until darkness whereupon he and the others moved to a more secure area. HM3 Gibbs was killed the following morning during a mortar attack.[324] (Although his Silver Star Medal Citation indicates his death on 26 April, the Vietnam Memorial in D.C. lists him as KIA 25 April. On 7 July 1967 at 1605H, Marines of WHISKY Battery, 1/13 (the 4.2" mortars) digging a position near the LZ of Hill 861 uncovered a wallet containing personal effects and ID of Michael G. Gibbs, 795-99-92.)[325]

"Of all the firefights I had been in this was by far the worst. We were out gunned by a ton.. Within minutes several of the guys in the squad were hit. I remember the screaming, the confusion, the fear, and worst of all the feeling of certainty about my own impending death. I vividly recall seeing Dale [Carmichael] get hit by an exploding grenade." It had rolled near his head, and killed him instantly. "I believe I was next to him when he was KIA. The memory of that event stays with me to this day as it was especially gruesome."[326]

The sun was setting along with their hopes; darkness was setting in, along with the dark unknown, fear and terror. The Marines were just under the enemy bunkers

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[315] Comments of SSGT Dennis W. Ritchie, USMC Oral History Tape #995.

[316] Strength: 8 in Hq, 37 in K-1, 20 in K-2, 36 in K-3, and 34 in K-weapons. [Ltr of Capt B.L. Spivey, 01 May 1967 to CO, 3/3 (S-3), appended to his ltr to BGen E.H. Simmons, 18 Jun 1981.

[317] Comments of Capt. B.L. Spivey, USMC Oral History Tape #950.

[318] Thomas Vineyard ltr to Harold A. Croft, 21 Feb 1995.

[319] Vetter, Lawrence C., Jr., *Never Without Heroes*, New York: Ivy Books, 1996, p. 23.

[320] Vineyard letter of 21 Feb 1995, cited.

[321] Quoted in Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 77. Hall is listed in the Vietnam Memorial book as KIA 26 April, perhaps DOW.

[322] Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 74. The newly-issued M-16s were widely criticized as causing the deaths of many of the Marines in this battle, and were later modified with a different ammunition powder and firing mechanism. Maloney is listed officially as KIA on 26 April, perhaps DOW.

[323] Spivey, Tape #950, cited; Spivey, ltr, 01 May 1967, cited.

[324] Statement of SSGT Charles R. Shoemaker in Silver Star Medal file of HM3 Michael G. Gibbs.

[325] 1/26 ComdC, July 1967, S-2/S-3 Log, 07 July 1967, Ser #27.

[326] Thomas E. Vineyard, email, Khe Sanh Guestbook, 09 Sep 1997; Thomas E. Vineyard, letter of 21 Jun 1996.

and Capt. Spivey was unable to disengage K-1 from the immediate contact with the NVA. K-3 had been unable to arrive at K-1's position; K-2 arrived about 1830H. All the WIA of K-1 were recovered along with all but four of the KIA. "During this time I had many people who were moving about, pulling in the wounded and dead, risking their lives every time they moved, but they did the job real fine."[327] 3/3 set in for the night in close proximity to the NVA. K-3 was within 100 meters of the top of Hill 861 and the remainder of Co K/3/3 200 meters to the south of K-3. The command group was at XD805435.[328]

With the arrival of K-2, an attempt was made to retrieve the 4 KIA, but when 2 additional casualties were taken while so doing, the effort was discontinued, although all remained within sight.

During the evening, ammunition was distributed, reorganization was made, and K-1 and K-2 made preparations for continuing the attack in the morning. K-3 continued forward but reported slow progress in the saddle northeast of Hill 861. They reached XD804444 and set in for the evening.[329]

B/1/9 had succeeded in moving to a point 800 meters northwest of Hill 861.[330]

[*Due to today's action, Co K/3/9, commanded by Capt Jerrold E. Giles, was flown into Khe Sanh from Camp Carroll. 3d Marine Regiment assumed OPCON of K/3/9 at 251830H and remained at the airstrip overnight.*[331]]

26 April 1967

BARROW, PFC Thomas Melvin Jr	**K/3/3**
BERNARD, PFC Donald Lee	**B/1/9**
BUTLER, LCPL Larry Wayne	**K/3/3**
DARNELL, LCPL Dana Cornell	**B/1/9**
EGLY, PFC Shelly	**B/1/9**
FRANCISCO, LCPL Patrick Phillip	**K/3/3**
GEIGER, PFC Larry Frederick	**B/1/9**
GETTINGS, PFC Guy Clifton	**K/3/3**
HALL, CPL Lindy Ronald	**K/3/3**
HEDGEPATH, PFC William Thomas	**K/3/3**
JONES, LCPL Isaac	**B/1/9**
LAPORT, LCPL Leonard Oscar	**K/3/3**
MAHARG, PFC Evert Ralph	**B/1/9**
MALONEY, CPL Jeffrey Raymond	**K/3/3**
MC CASKILL, PFC William	**K/3/3**
MURRAY, CPL James Francis	**K/3/3**
ORTON, SGT Kenneth William	**B/1/9**
PAYNE, CPL Troy David	**B/1/9**
PEOPLES, LCPL Perry Lee	**H/2/3**
RAY, LCPL Kermit Anthony	**K/3/3**
RIPORTELLA, LCPL Frank L Jr	**B/1/9**
SOUTHERN, CPL Ricky Dale	**K/3/3**

The sun arose on the Marines of K/3/3 still in place on Hill 861 pinned down by the enemy. Capt Spivey noticed, however, that by 0615H on the 26th, K/3/3's Third Platoon's presence was apparently still undetected by the NVA. Shortly before first light, K-3 was ordered forward in an attempt to take the enemy position from that direction. K-1 and K-2 were alerted to move out on order, pending developments of K-3's advance.[332]

2/Lt Curtis L. Frisbie led K-3 by stealth until the enemy positions could be observed and voices heard. By 0815H preparations for the assault were being made when the platoon came under an intense volume of automatic weapons fire and grenades, immediately sustaining casualties including Lt Frisbie, who was seriously wounded and medevaced.[333] Sgt Dana L. Dick assumed command as Platoon Commander.[334] LCPL Kermit Anthony Ray was KIA from a gunshot wound to his neck and PFC William Thomas Hedgepath received a mortal wound to his chest from NVA mortars.[335]

By this time it had also become apparent that B/1/9's platoons were a considerable distance to the west and could not influence the action. It was also apparent to Capt Spivey that he just did not have the horsepower to overcome the extensive and well-organized defense on Hill 861. Due to the close-in fighting, no supporting arms could effectively contribute to the action. Capt Spivey requested permission from Col Wilder to disengage K-3. Wilder concurred, and K-3 pulled back to a secure LZ to extract their wounded.[336]

K-1 and K-2 were instructed to disengage under cover of gunships which arrived about 1030H. The platoons leapfrogged 25 meters at a time down the hill, an arduous task to bring down their dead, wounded, and gear.[337]

At 0800H, Col Wilder ordered Capt Giles to move 2 platoons of K/3/9 to assist Capt Spivey disengage and evacuate his WIA and KIA.[338] "As we approached.. we could see them bringing down some of the wounded and dead. A lot of the men, as they were coming down, were telling us not to go up, how bad it was up there."[339] By 1600H all elements of K-1 and K-2 were within the 3/3 Command Group's position and medevacs completed. At

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[327] Spivey, ltr of 01 May 1967, cited.
[328] 3Mar, AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Search and Destroy, Encl (1), p. 15.
[329] *Ibid.*
[330] Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
[331] 3Mar ComdC Apr 1967, Encl (1), p. 19; Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
[332] Spivey, ltr of 01 May 1967, cited.
[333] Bronze Star Medal Citation and file on 2/Lt Frisbie.
[334] Bronze Star Medal file on Sgt Dana Lee Dick.
[335] HQMC, HistCent, Casualty cards.
[336] Spivey, ltr of 01 May 1967, cited.
[337] Comments of Spivey, Tape #950, cited.
[338] Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
[339] Comments of LCPL Larry W. Umstead, USMC Oral History Tape #1126.

about 1900H, K-3 linked up with the remainder of Co K at XD806444. All Marines had disengaged from Hill 861. The Company, with elements of K/3/9, established a perimeter defense the night of 26/27 April and returned to KSCB the morning of 27 April, arriving by 1100H. After collecting all their gear and equipment, what remained of K/3/3 boarded aircraft and returned to Dong Ha. There had been 19 men killed from K/3/3, including two corpsmen and one who later died of wounds, two were MIA, and 36 wounded (evacuated) with 6 wounded (not evacuated).

The remaining Marines from B/1/9 did not fare as well during the 26th.

B-3 dispatched a fire team of 5 Marines to retrieve the body they had passed the previous afternoon. They had been gone only about 5 minutes when they became involved in a firefight. The rest of the platoon gathered their fighting gear and quickly moved to where they were, a path on top of a slope. As the platoon moved, they found one dead Marine. While moving another man was hit in the leg, breaking it.[340] They moved from about 0800H until they met up with their "6" and parts of B-1 and B-2 platoons at about 1030H.

The rest of B/1/9 had begun the day at 0700H attempting to move east along the trail leading to 861 and immediately encountered enemy resistance at XD795449. B-1 and B-3 linked up at 0840H at XD802443. Enemy small arms fire coupled with sporadic mortar fire succeeded in limiting B/1/9's advance to a bitterly contested struggle for each foot of terrain.[341]

That's the official version. The human version is given by SSGT Leon R. Burns, Platoon Sergeant of B/1/9 in an interview conducted 8 May 1967, while all was very fresh:

"..at dawn we moved out. We were still heading for Hill 861. We got to a small hill approximately 500 meters to the west of it. We got to the top of it. We took a few sniper rounds. We started down the far side, and then the stuff really hit the fan... The Third Platoon had managed to link up with the First, and my people were in the middle with the CP group. As they started down off this hill, getting right up to the very base of 861, they came under heavy automatic fire. At this time the First Platoon leader was wounded and about four or five other men. I lost one of my squad leaders and the M-79 man and one of my machine-gunners, LCPL Puelo who spotted an enemy machinegun, fired on it, exposed himself to fire and lost his left thumb and was wounded in the left side in two or three places... Sergeant Orton, my squad leader [and Point man] was cut in half by a burst from a machinegun..."[342] ["Sgt. Orton had been 1st Platoon, B/1/9, Right Guide, when we were on Libertyu Road in July, August, and September of 1966. He was transferred to another platoon when we got back to Okinawa and SSGT Cutbirth assumed the Right Guide position for 1st Platoon. I believe Sgt Orton was transferre3d to 2nd Platoon, commanded by 2/Lt Mel Thompson oin the Mekong Delta and then 2/Lt John Kramer, 2/Lt Tom King, and ultimately SSGT Burns, while the company was at Khe Sanh."[343]]

A round hit PFC Shelly Egly in his head. Still alive, he moved his helmet, spilling brain matter down his face. Another Marine grabbed him, "Stop it. Stop it," but Egly's brain injury caused him to jerk[344] until he died.

Following a medevac in which only one WIA was able to be rescued before mortar rounds forced the chopper to depart, the Company moved with everyone grabbing the wounded and headed over the ridge line accompanied by NVA mortars, and in the process some of the wounded were killed.[345]

One of those was Cpl Troy David Payne, Jr. Cpl Payne had not accompanied his company when it went to Hill 861 due to a cold. He was on light duty. A Marine Corps General landed at Khe Sanh to receive instructions on how to get to the scene of the battle once B/1/9 made contact. In a characteristic Marine move, Cpl Payne boldly climbed aboard the General's helicopter and accompanied him to the action, where he joined his unit. Upon reaching the battlefield, Cpl Payne carried wounded to the landing zone and fought off repeated enemy attacks with weapons he retrieved from the WIA. He moved right to the center of the impact areas to aid the stricken men to a safer position and even used his own body to shield the wounded from mortar fragments. He was hit. He died that others might live. He was awarded a Bronze Star Medal for his bravery.[346]

Capt Sayers reported to Col Wilder's S-3 at 1445H that he had so many casualties that he couldn't move. The S-3 responded that he should abandon the dead and just bring out his wounded. Capt Sayers replied he couldn't even move with his wounded and that he would assume a defensive posture, move into the fog, and fight until it was all over.

"We were carrying KIAs and WIAs in ponchos, four men to a litter. The heat deteriorated the bodies rapidly and they bloated fast. It was almost impossible to carry in the dark, the mud, and the rain. Many times we stopped our march to retrieve a body that had fallen out of a poncho and rolled down a hill. Identification was difficult. KIA tags were lost. It was not until we arrived back at Khe Sanh and matched our company roster with

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[340] Comments of LCPL Donald A. Clark, USMC Oral History Tape #959.

[341] 3Mar, AAR, Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 15.

[342] Comments of SSGT Leon Burns, USMC Oral History Tape #993.

[343] Letter from David L. Mellon, 04 Aug 2005.

[344] Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

[345] Comments of LCPL Donald A. Clark, USMC Oral History Tape #959.

[346] Letter of 1/Lt Gatlin J. Howell to parents of Troy E. Payne, Jr., in Bronze Star Medal file of Payne.

the evacuation list was I convinced that we had not left a fellow Marine in the hills."[347]

Cpl Frank D. Thompson of B-1 spoke his emotion by his silence in an interview conducted 10 October 1967:

Interviewer: "What did you think about that?

Thompson: "It was bad, but we had to do it."

Interviewer: It was a bad situation, then. What did you feel about it and what did the other people feel about it? What did they think?

[*LONG SILENCE, NO RESPONSE*]

Interviewer: "Did they think it was a hopeless situation?"

Thompson: "It was—".

Interviewer: "Were the people scarred? Were the Marines scarred?"

Thompson: "You're always scarred when you're getting shot at."[348]

At approximately 1800H, K/3/9 elements married up with B/1/9. The Marines of K/3/9 gave all the water they had and their corpsman began attending to the wounded of B/1/9. The men cut poles for stretchers and, four men to a stretcher, saddled up and moved out skirting to the southwest of Hill 861. The air was dense fog, which gave the Marines some assurance the NVA might not detect them. It was muddy, and at one time it rained extremely hard. They finally arrived in the vicinity of XD805428 and set in for the night.[349]

As a result of the contacts, General Bruno A. Hochmuth, CG of 3d Marine Division, CHOPed the SLF, BLT 2/3, commanded by LtCol Earl R. ("Pappy") DeLong, then conducting Operation BEACON STAR, back to its parent regiment. Picked up in the middle of operations the morning of 26 April, 2/3 was transported by helicopter and fixed wing to KSCB with the lead elements (E/2/3) arriving at noon. Co G/2/3 arrived about an hour later, and Co H/2/3 another hour later. The companies moved out and set in for the night by 2120H at XD812431.[350]

27 APRIL 1967

GRIJALVA, CPL David Centeno B/1/9

[*M/3/3 arrived at 1610H to replace K/3/3 which departed at 1500H to Thon Son Lam (the Rock Pile). M/3/9 arrived at 1730H to replace B/1/9 which departed at 1630H by C-130 to Dong Ha and then trucked to Camp Carroll that night. The remaining company of the SLF, F/2/3, arrived and assumed the mission of reserve force. B/1/12, the SLF artillery battery, arrived at 1900H and was laid and ready to fire by 2150H.*[351]]

28 APRIL 1967

CHEEKS, CPL John Herbert B/1/9

Cpl Cheeks died of wounds (DOW) received on 16 March 1967.

[*During the day, air dropped 136,000 pounds of bombs—(DELTA 1, DELTA 2, and 18,000 pounds of DELTA 9*[352]*), primarily on Hill 861. 2/3 assaulted Hill 861 (XD803443) with 2 companies abreast (Co E and G) and secured it at 281600H encountering negative enemy but finding 200 fighting holes, 4 mortar positions, 11 sleeping bunkers, along with weapons and munitions. Half an hour later, 2/3 secured Hill 861 and recovered 6 Marine KIA previously reported as MIA.*[353]]

29 APRIL 1967

BODA, LCPL James Albert G/2/3[354]
SANSEVERINO, CPL Anthony F/2/12

Both died of gunshot wounds.

At 290800H, 3/3 attacked XD782445, a hill 750 meters northwest of Hill 881-South (XD778438). At 1120H, the right flank became engaged in a draw (XD792448) and suffered 2 KIA in a battle lasting until 1300H.[355]

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[347] Comments of Sayers, letter of 18 May 1981.

[348] Comments of Cpl Frank D. Thompson, USMC Oral History Tape #1677.

[349] 3Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 16; Comments of SSGT Burns, Tape #993, cited.

[350] 3dMar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 16. CHOP=Changed Operations to; SLF=Special Landing Force; BLT=Battalion Landing Team. Sizes of NVA units differed greatly from the Marines: A NVA Division contained approx. 6,000 or more men (USMC about 20,000); a NVA regiment numbered approx. 1,500 men (USMC about 3,500); a NVA battalion numbered approx. 400 men (USMC about 1,200); a NVA Company numbered about 100 men (USMC about 250); a NVA Platoon numbered about 30 men. [HQ, USMACV, MACV J-2, PERINTREP 20 April 1967].

[351] 3dMar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), pp. 16-17.

[352] D-1=MK 81, 250-pound general purpose bomb; D-2=MK82, 500-pound general purpose bomb; D-9=MK-77 500-pound napalm bomb.

[353] III MAF ComdC, April 1967, Encl (1), p. 18; 3dMar, AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 17.

[354] While the 3d Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, indicates 3/3 with two KIA in this skirmish, there are only two Marines from the Khe Sanh area who were KIA this date, as listed. Boda's Casualty Card at HistCent, WashDC, lists him as a Marine of G/2/3. It is possible that Sanseverino was an artillery FO accompanying the patrol.

[355] 3d Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), pp. 18-19.

30 April 1967

APONTE, LCPL Edwin	K/3/9
APPLETON, LCPL John Burdette	K/3/9
ARD, CPL Bobby Joe	M/3/3
BAUER, SSGT Karol Raymond	M/3/3
BELLER, PFC William Russell Jr	K/3/9
BIVENS, CPL Frederick Wood Jr	H/2/3
BROTZ, LCPL Danny Ray	K/3/9
BYRD, PFC George Benjamin Jr	M/3/3
CERVANTES, LCPL George Andrew	K/3/9
CHUTIS, SSGT John Vincent	M/3/3
CORNELL, PFC Robert Leslie	H/2/3
DAVIS, CPL Clifford Gordon	H/2/3
DUTY, PFC Charles Howard	M/3/3
EARLY, CPL William Dail	M/3/3
GARCIA, PFC Joe Cecilio	E/2/3
GRAFF, CPL Thomas George	K/3/9
HACKETT, 1/Lt David Spencer	H/2/3
HALLOCK, CPL Douglas Paul	M/3/3
HANRAHAN, CPL Jerome M Jr	H/2/3
HEPNER, 2/Lt Stephen Thomas	K/3/9
HERNANDEZ, PFC Richard	K/3/9
HOOD, PFC Jerry Wayne	M/3/3
IVES, CPL Timothy James	K/3/9
KESSLER, CPL Julius Allen II	H/2/3
KINNEY, HN Richard Lee	H/2/3
KOTIK, PFC Robert John	M/3/3
MAZILLO, LCPL Peter Jr	M/3/3
MC PHEE, PFC Randy Neal	M/3/3
MIECZKOWSKI, CPL Joseph	K/3/9
MINES, CPL James Jr.	M/3/3
MITCHELL, 2/Lt Joseph Robert Jr	M/3/3
MORGAN, LCPL Michael Roy	M/3/3
OMMEN, PFC Peter Richard	M/3/3
PALMA, LCPL Francis Michael	M/3/3
PITTS, LCPL Freddie Richard	K/3/9
PRESCOTT, SGT Milton Emmett Jr	M/3/3
PRIEBE, LCPL James Edward	K/3/9
RANDALL, PFC James Arthur	M/3/3
RICHARDSON, PFC Scott Douglas	H/2/3
ROBINSON, LCPL Walter R Jr.	H/2/3
ROLDAN, LCPL William Junior	G/2/3
ROTH, LCPL Frank Theodore	M/3/3
SCHAFER, LCPL Marvin Albert	M/3/3
SCHLEY, CPL Robert James	M/3/3
SCHMITZ, CPL Richard Travis	G/2/3
SEALL, LCPL George Melvin	G/2/3
SHIVER, LCPL Charles Jr.	M/3/3
SMITH, CPL Larry Michael	M/3/3
SMITH, PFC Rickey Gene	M/3/3
STOUDT, LCPL Gordon Edward	K/3/9
TINO, PFC John Francis	E/2/3
WHISENHUNT, CPL James Henry	M/3/3
WILLIAMS, PFC Dorsey Burwin	M/3/3
WOODALL, 1/Lt John Braxton	K/3/9
WOODARD, CPL Wayne Howard	M/3/9

H/2/3

On the morning of 30 April shortly after first light, H/2/3 moved into the area of M/3/9's contact of 29 April (XD791449). The NVA allowed Co H to move to within 100 meters of their bunkers and then opened up with .50 caliber automatic weapons as well as sniper rifles with high-powered scopes. An estimated 50 NVA soldiers dug in bunkers to their front and 15 NVA on their left flank at XD791447 caused immediate heavy casualties in the cross-fire of an estimated two NVA platoons at XD793446. Platoons H-2 and H-3 were immediately pinned down and took heavy casualties.[356]

From a small depression, 1/Lt David Spencer Hackett, the Company Executive Officer, noticed the location of the majority of enemy fire and charged 30 meters through a hail of murderous fire to direct fire of a M-60 machine-gun team near him against the enemy bunker firing on them.[357]

One of the Navy Corpsmen, HN Richard L. Kinney, rushed through the intense enemy crossfire, moving from one injured Marine to another to attend to their wounds. While doing this, he was killed by the enemy.[358]

1/Lt Hackett, still under heavy fire, directed the evacuation of several wounded Marines and sent his radioman to replace Cpl Clifford G. Davis, the radioman of the Company Commander who had been killed, leaving himself without communications. While moving through the intense fire to direct the attack, and move to the wounded 2/Lt Bruce E. Griesmer, the H-2 Platoon Commander, Lieutenant Hackett was killed by an enemy rifleman.[359]

In Memoriam
By L. McKay, Jr., May 2, 1967
(In honor of 1/Lt David S. Hackett)

In the shadows of a lonely hill,
Strong to be—strong of will.
There stands a man beside a tree,
A part of us—apart to be.
A day will come in traveling time,
A fire will roar and he will find
A moment's love when eternity's day
Bids him farewell and he goes his way.

A person special—the temperance here,
A chance to be when life's so dear.

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[356] SOP 3dMarDiv/III MAF Rep 301245Z/Apr67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #3.
[357] Statement of Capt. Raymond C. Madonna (CO, Co. H/2/3) in Silver Star Medal file of 1/Lt David Spencer Hackett.
[358] Statement of SSGT T. H. Delorey in Silver Star Medal file of HN Richard L. Kinney.
[359] Statement of GySgt Wilfred J. Catalon in Silver Star Medal of 1/Lt David Spencer Hackett; Letter of Raymond C. Madonna, 02 March 1998.

A cause in mind, a purpose wrought,
But life is out and death is sought.

The sap does sour—the blossom dies,
Dandelions fade and summer cries.
The Spring has up and gone away,
But will return again someday.

But a time has come—a silent song.
Though life was short—his glories long.
Honor gained—courage won,
A purpose bettered—
day is done.

LCPL Jerome Hanrahan received a gaping hole wound in the left side of his back, but amazingly lived long enough to be medically evacuated. A good Catholic, he had time to say an Act of Contrition before two of his buddies (Cpl Gerald C. Pett and LCPL John Radgoski) carried him to the casualty collection LZ, passing the dead bodies of 1/Lt Hackett, Cpl Davis, and PFC Julius Kessler, who had been right behind Pett when the firing erupted and making Pett wonder why he lived and Kessler didn't.[360]

H/2/3 pulled back with its casualties and cleared the area for close air support strikes. They had suffered 9 Marines killed and 43 wounded (29 evacuated).[361]

E/2/3

E/2/3 meanwhile moved on the left flank of H/2/3, receiving several rounds of sniper fire during Company H's contact. E/2/3 continued to advance unhindered to the southern approaches of Hill 881-North.[362] E-3 had the mission of seizing the high ground on the right flank of 881-North when it suddenly came under intense small arms and automatic weapons fire and was pinned down. The Company suffered 2 KIA. Gunships were called to neutralize the enemy fire and casualties were successfully extracted. At 1927H, E/2/3 reported sporadic small arms fire directed at them and heard a warning device making a "beep" sound every time an aircraft passed over the area bounded by Hills 861, 881-South, and 881-North. E/2/3 remained in a tight perimeter at XD778452 for the night.[363]

G/2/3

At mid-afternoon after traveling one and a half hours through extremely dense foliage, Company G/2/3 arrived at the area where H/2/3 had made contact in the morning. At about 1700H G-1 moved two squads down to the base of the incline and got on line to assault the hill, half crawling, half walking up the bomb-riddled slope. The move was without contact until they arrived at the crest at which time the assaulting squads came under intense fire from automatic weapons and extremely accurate sniper fire from the top of the hill, about 75 meters to their front causing immediate casualties.

2/Lt Peter Hesser, commander of G-1, was standing right next to LCPL William Junior Roldan, who was attempting to clear his jammed M-16, when he was shot in the left lung and left shoulder and instantly died from fire as they came over the military crest of the hill.[364] A French photographer, Kathy Leroy, who accompanied the platoon, snapped one of the most famous photos of the Vietnam War as G-1's corpsman, Vernon Wike, bent over in anguish over the corpse of Roldan.[365]

The NVA were entrenched, having a wide field of fire. Darkness was approaching. Due to twilight, several of the spider traps were passed unnoticed as the hilltop was seized and the platoon established a 360° perimeter.

When it came time to clear and search the NVA holes and bunkers, Cpl David M. Coleman saw Cpl Richard Travis Schmitz being pulled into an enemy bunker. Cpl Coleman jumped in front of the bunker, grabbed ahold of Cpl Schmitz's foot and attempted to pull him out of the NVA bunker. The NVA inside, shooting through Cpl Schmitz's body, wounded Cpl Coleman in five different places and knocked him to the ground. Although shot in his legs, Cpl Coleman again crawled back trying to aid Cpl Schmitz, whom he thought was still alive. SSGT Ruben Santos arrived and resumed the attempt to dislodge Cpl Schmitz, tying a line to the man's legs. He tossed in a CS grenade, hoping the NVA inside would surrender. As he attempted to pull the Marine from the hole, the enemy soldiers fired through the body of Schmitz, wounding Santos. Realizing that Schmitz was dead, 2/Lt Hesser ordered his men to cover the bunker with dirt and logs and block all exits.[366] The Marines had thrown frag grenades inside before blocking it, and the next morning discovered one NVA, still alive, who apparently had sat on the grenade because of the holes in his rear end.[367]

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[360] Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-163.
[361] 3d Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 20.
[362] SOP 301245Z/Apr67, cited.
[363] SOP 3d MarDiv/III MAF Rep 301845Z/Apr67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #4.
[364] Comments of Cpl John P. Hayes, USMC Oral History Tape #949; Conversation with Peter Hesser, 05 June 1994. The Military crest is the line of the built-up area on top of a hill.
[365] Wike's buddy, Doc Gerry March (assigned to F/2/3), notes that he looked like a Marine, like a fire-plug. He had pressed to be assigned to a line company, to go into combat when both of them were assigned to 11th Engineers. This was his first real casualty. [Conversation with Gerry March, 8 July 1994].
[366] Statement of 2/Lt Peter M. Hesser in Silver Star Medal file of Cpl David M. Coleman; Statement of 2/Lt Peter M. Hesser in Silver Star Medal file of SSGT Ruben Santos.
[367] Comments of SSGT Ruben Santos, USMC Oral History Tape #949.

G/2/3 had sustained two KIA this date along with 9 WIA, and set in for the night at XD789449.

M/3/3 and K/3/9

On the morning of 30 April, M/3/3 and K/3/9 linked up at 0800H as lead elements of M/3/3 attacked Hill 881-South (XD778438). The assault was led by Capt Raymond H. Bennett, CO of a Marine detachment aboard the USS ENTERPRISE who had requested TAD assignment in order to participate in the Khe Sanh operation.[368] During the evening of 29 April, 33 aircraft sorties dropped 250 DELTA 4 bombs[369] in addition to over 1,300 rounds of artillery that rained on the hill.[370] No one suspected just what was there. By 1025H, the lead platoon (M-1) led by 2/Lt Billy D. Crews, had reached the top of the hill and received sporadic small arms fire. As he progressed, M-1 ran into heavy opposition. M-1's radio operator, LCPL Francis Michael Palma, wore glasses which apparently glared in the sun and created a target. In the midst of a radio call, he was shot right through the eye by a NVA sniper.[371] and another platoon (M-3) commanded by 2/Lt Norman D. Houser reinforced M-1. Both units were hit by heavy fire from a well dug-in enemy in heavily camouflaged positions and by sniper fire from rifleman who had tied themselves into trees. They also received about 30 rounds of 82mm mortar fire and they were trapped, unable either to advance or withdraw. The NVA had permitted them to advance past their bunkers while scaling the steep slope of the hill and had excellent fire discipline.[372] The battle was to last six hours.

The thick vegetation, tall grass, and intense enemy fire had caused the various squads of M-1 to become separated. One squad was forced to seek cover several meters in advance of the remainder of the platoon where it remained some 5 hours.

Realizing the necessity to assist and supply the advance squad with ammunition—they were almost depleted fending off repeated NVA assaults—PFC Dorsey Burwin Williams exposed himself to the enemy fire by crawling forward with the ammunition. Advancing only a few meters, he sustained a painful shoulder wound but refused to return to safety despite being urged to do so, and continued forward. Approximately ten meters from the advance squad, PFC Williams threw several magazines of ammunition to them. At the same time, NVA soldiers rushed from the thick foliage. Although PFC Williams wounded a few of these NVA, one fired a burst of automatic weapons fire into his head, killing him.[373]

The Second Platoon (M-2) led by 2/Lt Michael R. Mitchell, veered to the left (eastern section) of Hill 881-S as 1st Platoon moved right (west) after scaling the declivitous slope filled with trees, vines, and slippery mud. As they advanced, a Sergeant yelled "Let's go get 'em, let's go around the other side and get 'em." One of the men in 1st Squad, M-2, replied "We're not lifers; we're draftees, we ain't going nowhere!" Just then, PFC Robert John Kotik was hit between his eyes and another Marine (LCPL Charles Shiver) was also KIA by a sniper; both immediately died.[374]

PFC Randy Neal McPhee was on point, got off the first shot in the ambush zone which precipitated the donnybrook firefight that ensued. McPhee was shot in his right hip. Actually, the round struck his cartridge belt and, although he screamed he was dying, the shot didn't kill him; the next shots did.[375]

It was McPhee's second Vietnam tour of duty. Everyone respected McPhee. "We'd stand watch together many times. I'd stand with him when it was his turn; he'd stand with me when it was my turn." He was considered "a Marine's Marine," "but just before we went into this particular battle he fell down before the Sergeant there and cried and begged not to go to this particular fight because, he said, 'If I go, I'm going to die'."[376] The premonition proved correct; he took two rounds to his chest. (When the Marines later withdrew from Hill 881-South and subjected it to massive bombardment, they returned on 3 May to recover KIA. In their search of the battle area, they located 37 human remains from M/3/3 and K/3/9, but none which could be identified as those of PFC McPhee. Remains originally identified as those of McPhee were later identified (by dental records) as those of Cervantes. All the corpses were in an advanced stage of decomposition.

As M-2 advanced, fire from one particular NVA bunker inflicted heavy casualties and halted its progress. A machine-gunner's jaw was shot off as a RPG round shattered the gun's receiver. The squad leader, Cpl William D. Early, attempted to fix the machinegun, then shouted, "I don't think I can fix it, sir." A mortar round exploded, killing CPL Early along with three more Marines.[377] LCPL James H. Whisenhunt, a rocket squad

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[368] Bronze Star Medal file on Capt Raymond H. Bennett. TAD=Temporary Additional Duty

[369] D 4= M-84 2,000-pound general purpose bomb.

[370] Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

[371] Deuel, Austin, *Vietnam, Even God is Against Us*, Escondido, Ca.: Impressions West, 1988, p. 44.

[372] Comments of Capt David M. Rogers, USMC Oral History Tape #3533.

[373] Letter of CO, 3/3 (LtCol Gary Wilder), 1/JHA/jls, 1650, 4 Jul 1967, in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Dorsey Burwin Williams.

[374] Conversation with Joe Gensor, 10 April 2002.

[375] *Ibid.*

[376] Conversation with John P. Colvis, 5 May 1992; Statements of SSGT T. L. Meier and LCPL Lester R. Calhoun, Jr., in Library of Congress MIA file on McPhee, Reel #428, Folder #119.

[377] Deuel, *op. cit.*, p. 42; Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

leader with M/3/3, on his own initiative advanced into an exposed area with a clear field of fire and destroyed the bunker with a M-72 LAW. He then advanced across the open field to the remains of the bunker and killed the remaining enemy. While so doing, enemy machinegun fire killed him.[378]

The next mortar exploded just as 2/Lt Joseph R. Mitchell, Jr., peered from a kneeling position to see what was happening. The wood pump on his shotgun sent splinters into his face as he turned to his radioman, Don Hossack, and said, "Did you see that?" Hossack, next to him, put battle dressings on his own wounds, then turned to see the Lieutenant's boots jerk in a spasm as he died.[379] "He had one tiny piece of shrapnel that hit him in the left cheek bone, and it evidently deflected right up into his brain. That was the only mark on him."[380]

His mother, Florrie Mitchell, wrote the following:

Where are you now
Soldier boy of mine
you with the Pied Piper laugh
that even the smallest child
would try and follow in your footsteps.
Where are you now
Soldier boy of mine;
whose life was made
known by your courage and your dreams
of the unbelievable made known
by the believable.
Wipe the tears from my eyes,
Soldier boy of mine;
so they will not blur the vision of you
drenched in God's glory.

In an obituary by a classmate, Judge H. Gerald Reynolds wrote:

"Death is feared by most Americans. But today there lies one in final repose whose valor, courage, and honor will long be remembered. Joseph Robert Mitchell, Jr., known as 'Bussy' to those of us who were privileged to know him, lived as he died, a Marine!

"During his childhood years Bussy played soldier—during school, after school, in the summer, in the winter, during the day, and at night until his mother would make him take off his Confederate cap and go to bed.

"He often went to school wearing a Confederate uniform, sometimes with a long sword. Bussy marched and drilled the other boys in the neighborhood, preparing them for the time when the South would rise again. He always carried a confederate flag, one carried by an ancestor during the Civil War more than one hundred years ago.

"Time passed and Bussy Mitchell grew into manhood. He followed his lifelong dream of becoming a Marine. He attended Marion Institute where he was an outstanding cadet. He graduated from Auburn University, the same college where his father had been an outstanding football player. At graduation he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps....

"Bussy Mitchell left behind a young wife, a ten months old daughter, a bereaved mother and father... men such as Lt. Bussy Mitchell who gave their lives for freedom will live forever in the hearts and minds of those who love liberty."[381]

Staff Sergeant Karol R. Bauer was approaching the crest of the hill when he began warning his comrades to remain back and take cover as he heard mortars pop from their tubes. His warning saved many lives as moments later an enemy mortar barrage saturated the Marine advance. After this, SSGT Bauer rushed to assist the casualties to safety, and while assisting one Marine, an enemy sniper mortally wounded him.[382]

As Don Hossack moved to collect ammunition from his fallen comrades, he spotted his best friend in the platoon, PFC James Arthur Randall, seriously wounded. As he applied battle dressings and cradled Randall in his arms, his buddy died. He recalled how his friend often told Don he planned to be a Baptist minister after he left the Marine Corps. This event was preserved in a painting by Austin Deuel and became the basis for the San Antonio, Texas, Vietnam Memorial sculpture.[383]

Cpl Charles B. Baltafarmaggio, a fire team leader, moved on Hill 881-South. About 1600H, LCPL George Andrew Cervantes was atop the hill, about 10 feet from Baltafarmaggio on a tree line and stood up to throw a grenade. Just then, a NVA sniper shot him in the chest, killing him.[384] HM3 Jerry L. Bartachek, the Platoon Corpsman for K-2 of K/3/9, only a short distance away from Cervantes, immediately went to him and found him dead.[385]

Cpl Robert J. Schley, a machinegun team leader attached to M-1 fired his weapon for several hours until his gun was low on ammunition. While under heavy fire, he moved to locate additional ammunition. Successful, al-

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[378] Statements of SSGT Terrence L. Meier and Cpl Joseph R. Censor in Silver Star Medal file of LCPL James Henry Whisenhunt.

[379] Deuel, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

[380] Conversation with Donald Hossack, 28 August 1992.

[381] Clipping from Alexander City, AL, newspaper sent by Mr. David G. Rogers in his letter of 23 March 1998.

[382] CO, 3/3 (LtCol Gary Wilder) ltr 1/JHA/jls, 1650, 26 June 1967, in Bronze Star Medal file of SSGT Karol R. Bauer.

[383] Deuel, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

[384] Statement of Cpl Charles B. Baltafarmaggio in MIA file of Randy N. McPhee, Library of Congress Reel #428, Folder #119.

[385] Statement of HM3 Jerry L. Bartachek in MIA file of PFC Randy McPhee, Library of Congress Reel #428, Folder #119.

though painfully wounded in his shoulder, he refused medical evacuation and returned to his gun as the only member of his team able to fire. While he continued to fire, he received a serious neck wound. Although profusely bleeding, he continued to fire, halting numerous enemy assaults until he died from loss of blood and his wounds.[386]

A NVA soldier was seen standing over Schley and his A-Gunner, LCPL Michael R. Morgan, firing into their position with his AK-47. Lt Crews fired his M-16 at the NVA soldier killing him, but not before he had shot both Schley and Morgan.[387]

Meanwhile, M-3 had advanced to the top of Hill 881-South, and after Cpl Larry Michael Smith, Point of M-3, reached the top, his squad was sent to reinforce the embattled M-2. He maneuvered towards their position, exposing himself to enemy fire when a NVA mortar round exploded nearby wounding him mortally. Cpl Smith had volunteered to be in this battle; being a short-timer, he could have chosen to remain behind.[388]

Other Marines of M/3/3 KIA today include: LCPL Peter Mazzillo who died from gunshot wounds to his chest, PFC Jerry Wayne Hood, who died from fragmentation wounds to his head; SSGT John Vincent Chutis, who died from fragmentation wounds to his head and abdomen, and Cpl Douglas Paul Hallock, who died from a gunshot wound to his chest.[389]

Third Platoon (M-3) was sent to assist M-2 to secure the eastern portion of Hill 881-South. 2/Lt Douglas Houser, commanding M-3, organized both platoons into an effective fighting force, rallied his men and directed and encouraged them to continue the assault. It became obvious, however, that the overwhelming volume of NVA fire dictated disengagement of M/3/3 to permit fire from supporting arms to reduce the objective. Although the hill had been heavily bombarded, many NVA bunkers remained intact or only lightly damaged. Additional bombardment was necessary prior to a continued attack.

M/3/9, sent to assist in the evacuation of casualties, suffered casualties as the NVA attempted to stop the link-up, pouring heavy blocking fire between the two Marine units.

"I was pinned down, talking on the radio behind a log about 8-inches in diameter. Woodie [Cpl Wayne Howard Woodard] piled in on top of me wanting to get into one more good fight before he left for home in two weeks. I described to him what he would see when he looked up and that the most accurate fire was from the bunker just to the right of the one small tree across from us. Not realizing that the gunner was still trying to take me out (since I had the radio) and that he was sighted in on my radio antenna that stuck up from my position, Woodie raised his head to have a look. Three shots from that automatic weapon hit him in the forehead about an inch below the front rim of his helmet. He fell lifeless onto me. Woodie saved my life with that move. I was just through talking on the radio and was getting ready to do exactly what he had just done. It cost him his life. I had filled out a lot of WIA and KIA reports and sent them, but something just took the heart out of me right then. I couldn't write up Woodie's report. Such a full-of-life, enthusiastic man dead, two weeks before he was scheduled to lave Vietnam."[390]

Co K/3/9 jumped off at 300615H to link up with M/3/3 and linked up with rear elements of M/3/3 at 300815H.[391] The squad leaders gathered at the base of Hill 881-South and, the battalion advanced, company on line, platoon column with K-2 and K-3 on the left side and K-1 on the right. "About an hour later all hell broke loose on the top of the hill. You could hardly hear yourself think where we were— so much small arms fire and mortar fire going on."[392] About half-way up, K-1 became pinned down by a sniper who seriously wounded the rockets man K-3 moved up 881-South through a ravine with thick vegetation. As they neared the summit, they saw the other platoons pinned down by enemy fire. "We weren't receiving any fire of any kind from our movement up the hill. So we continued moving up on the hill, thinking that they hadn't spotted us yet and we might be able to get in behind them. That's when we underestimated them."[393] The NVA position was prepared and they had lulled the unsuspecting K-3 into a trap.

First Squad of K-3 veered to the left with the Platoon Commander, 1/Lt John Braxton Woodall, and immediately found itself in cross-fire from an interlocking bunker system. The initial burst of enemy fire felled the two point men. LCPL Edwin Aponte was killed. "We had gone through Jungle Training together. He was a very good friend... The entire top of his head was gone."[394] Attempts to reach two critically wounded Marines were thwarted by the hail of minatory bullets. With a total disregard for his own personal safety, 1/Lt Woodall grabbed a rifle and placed accurate fire into a NVA bunker and then charged the bunker, killing both

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[386] Statement of Sgt Robert E. Salser and Navy Cross Citation in Navy Cross Citation file of Cpl Robert J. Schley.

[387] Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

[388] *Ibid.*; Statements of 2/Lt Norman D. Houser and PFC William R. Cox in Navy Commendation Medal file of Cpl Larry Michael Smith.

[389] Casualty cards in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #143, Folder #680, Case #03036.

[390] Rick (Ira) Johnson, "Ambushed," Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay*, Issue No. 49 (Spring 2001), p. 13.

[391] SOP 3dMarDiv/III MAF Rep 300630Z/Apr67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #2.

[392] Comments of LCPL Larry W. Umstead, USMC Oral History Tape #1127.

[393] Umstead comments, cited.

[394] Hebert, Gordon H., "My Personal History With 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines and Their Service at Khe Sanh," Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay*, Issue #57 (Winter 2003/04), p. 48.

its inhabitants and laid covering fire to enable the two wounded Marines to be carried to safety. As he covered their withdrawal, Lt Woodall was fatally wounded by an enemy sniper.[395]

The Second Platoon Commander, 2/Lt Stephen Thomas Hepner, was also KIA.[396]

R.J. Hill, the senior corpsman with K/3/9 this day, had begun the day with Lt Hepner's platoon and reached a point about half way up the hill when two Marines carrying a wounded Marine reached him. The Marine, wounded in an ear and trachea, needed a trach to restore breathing. "Then we were pinned down in a bomb crater, and I guess it was probably lucky that I didn't make it all the way to the top or I probably wouldn't be able to talk with you right now."[397]

LCPL John Burdette Appleton rose slightly from his prone position to see if he could locate the source of incoming NVA grenades. Just then one exploded before him, sending fragments into his face and chest, killing him.[398]

Although K-3 reached bomb craters and a heavy tree line where most of the dead and wounded were, they were only able to retrieve the wounded; "..the dead we couldn't hardly even move to get at them—snipers and machine-guns set up."[399] 37 dead Marine bodies had been abandoned on top of Hill 881-South; trying to retrieve them would have meant the loss of much additional life. "..from what I saw I didn't think it was really feasible to go up there and sacrifice other Marines to get dead Marines down off the hill, even though you are taught in basic training never to leave a dead Marine out on the field if at all possible."[400]

The order was given to withdraw. "We went back and sat in and waited that night for whoever was going to come back. They brought the wounded and the dead back in, and it wasn't very pretty. They—quite a few of my friends were dead or wounded pretty badly."[401]

The battalion force (M/3/3, M/3/9, and K/3/9) disengaged, moved to XD782445, and set in for the night. Evacuation of WIA was completed by 302155H.[402] Final casualty figures for the 881-South battle of 30 April 1967 were: 43 Marines killed, 109 wounded (90 medevaced), 125 NVA killed (confirmed) and 85 (probable).[403] 33 Marine bodies along with body parts were left on Hill 881, recovered 0222100H by 3/3 who evacuated the body parts in one bag.[404]

190 men of M/3/3 went into the battle; 26 remained.[405]

The Hill Fights
By PFC John P. Colvis, USMC
Infantry Rifleman, MIKE Company, 3/3

What day is this?
A yesterday that doesn't go away!
A day of honor and deep sorrow dipped in blood
to bond us all together.
A day whose sights and sounds and odors grabbed
our souls and won't let go.
Who amongst us would not lay down his life
for his friend?
Or go through hell to save one of our own? Indeed,
we've been there.
This is who we are.
Our covenant was written and sealed in blood
on and around the hills of Khe Sanh.
Was it 30 years ago?
Today we live our lives—to each his own.
But on this ground we all agree:
Our hearts will not forget
what took place at Khe Sanh.
Neither will our covenant be broken.

[On 01 May 1967, over 650,000 pounds of ordnance were dropped on Hills 881-South and 881-North from 166 sorties, including over 130 DELTA 4 bombs[406] and 1,445 artillery rounds.[407] Air support was the highest number of sorties flown in support of one battalion in a single day since Operation STARLIGHT in August, 1965.[408]

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[395] Silver Star Medal Citation, 1/Lt James Braxton Woodall.
[396] Hepner is listed as KIA on 02 May 1967 in the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. However, the senior corpsman of K/3/9, HM2 R. J. Hill, found him on 02 May when the hill was searched for KIA, and placed him in a body bag. He had been shot by an automatic weapon across his chest and fallen in mud, face-down. Despite all the heavy bombardment, having been in the mud preserved his face, while most other bodies were in advanced decomposition and dismemberment. He was killed on 30 April 1967. [Conversations with R. J. Hill, 17 Sep 2003 and 27 July 2004.]
[397] Conversation with R. J. Hill, 27 July 2004.
[398] Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
[399] Umstead, comments, cited.
[400] Comments of Capt David G. Rogers, USMC Oral History Tape #3533. Leaving Marine KIA on the field of battle at Khe Sanh was something that was to be repeated numerous times due to battle conditions.
[401] Comments of LCPL Terrence Walsh, USMC Oral History Tape #1125.
[402] SOP 3dMarDiv/III MAF Rep 301845Z/Apr67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #4.
[403] 3rd Mar, AAR, Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 21.
[404] SOP 3dMarDiv/III MAF Rep 021610Z/May67, KHE SANH SPECIAL SITREP #12.
[405] Deuel, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
[406] D-4=M-84 2,000-pound general purpose bomb.
[407] Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
[408] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, April 1967, p. 31.

At 010630H, M/3/3 began moving to the 3/3 CP in order to be relieved by F/2/3 which was helilifted in. By noon, the turn-over was completed.[409]

E/2/3 on the southern slope of Hill 881-North (XD778451) received 18-20 mortar rounds at 0725H on 01 May along with small arms fire. The enemy fire stopped following counter-mortar fire and air strikes, but the Marines suffered 3 KIA and 16 WIA. Plans for E/2/3 to move on 881-North were therefore postponed so that further supporting arms might reduce the objective.[410]

E/2/9 completed its movement to KSCB via fixed wing at 1910H.[411]

02 MAY 1967

CARTER, PFC Anderson Jr.	**G/2/3**
DYE, CPL Ralph Victor Jr.	**G/2/3**
HEATH, HN Lloyd Lavern	**G/2/3**
HENDERSON, LCPL John Michael	**H/2/3**
HILL, PFC James Edward Jr.	**G/2/3**
VLASAK, LCPL William James	**G/2/3**

Following a final, heavy artillery prep, Companies K and M of 9th Marine Regiment launched an assault of Hill 881-South (XD778438), securing it at 1420H with negative contact.[412] All had changed. "It just didn't look the same anymore. There were no NVA, no trees, no nothing."[413] "There was nothing but the smell of death."[414] 33 Marine bodies and 1 bag of body parts from the M/3/3 and K/3/9 contact of 30 April were recovered.[415] One of the Marine KIA, brought aboard USS PRINCETON, was booby-trapped with a grenade inserted into an open head wound and a string leading out of the wound. The booby trap was discovered and disarmed.[416]

Hill 881 North was assaulted at 1015H with Company E/2/3 (XD772451) attacking the hill from the south and Company G/2/3 (XD787452) assaulting from the east, with Co H/2/3 in a support position between the two advancing companies.[417]

At 1455H, as 2nd Lt Andrew B. McFarlane's G-1 Platoon (with 1st Squad led by Cpl Robert E. Torter as point) received small arms fire from one automatic weapon (XD778460) which increased as the Marines advanced. Cpl Torter reported: "After our magazines were reloaded, we stood up to assault.. and we ran into quite a bit of a problem with the rifles. Of the 13 of us that went up there, there were 9 riflemen left, and only 3 of the rifles would fire.. and we took 10 casualties, 5 KIAs and 5 WIAs. The only ones not getting hit were my 2nd team leader, my 3rd team leader, and myself."[418] Unable to communicate, Lt McFarlane moved his Second Squad forward to aid Cpl Torter, as Cpl Torter left his covered position to retrieve his wounded. Driven back time and time again, Cpl Torter nevertheless managed to retrieve some of the wounded, but not all. He ceased his valiant efforts only after being directed to do so by the Company Commander.[419] LCPL William James Vlasek received a bullet in his temple and HN Lloyd Lavern Heath, trying to reach one of the wounded, fell from a burst of enemy fire.[420] Following UH1E gunship support, and through very heavy rain and fog that shrouded the movement of the Marines, two more casualties were spotted, apparently KIAs. As the Marines advanced to recover them, they took heavy automatic fire from the tree line and from ground-level foxholes resulting in another Marine killed (the squad leader) and one wounded (a fire team leader).[421] Total casualties: 6 KIA and 7 WIA. Co H/2/3, which had advanced to provide support to G/2/3 during the afternoon, received sporadic 82mm mortar fire at the same time as G/2/3.[422] Approximately 1400 rounds of artillery had been placed on the area of contact prior to returning.[423]

(The 4 MIA from G/2/3 were recovered 05 May at 1430H.[424] "One Marine had his weapon between his legs with a rifle cleaning rod down his weapon. Also he had a pen knife in his hand. As we looked over the weapon, a M-16, we found that there was a cartridge in the chamber. After speaking to his squad leaders, this man had definitely been cleaning his weapon earlier and was always cleaning his weapon. It was due to a malfunction...

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[409] 3rd Mar, AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 22.
[410] *Ibid.*; SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 010555Z/Apr67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #6. Note: There are no USMC casualties for E/2/3 for this date listed in the Vietnam Memorial listing nor on the weekly casualty memoranda for HQMC.
[411] 3rd MarDiv COC 012310Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #8.
[412] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 021500Z/May67, Plans Summary.
[413] Comments of LCPL William A. Culbreath in Sgt Dan Wisniewski, "Marines Find Hill 881 South Well Fortified," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:21 (26 May 1967) 8.
[414] Comments of LCPL Larry W. Umstead, USMC Oral History Tape #1127.
[415] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 021610Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #12.
[416] COC 3rd MarDiv 041751Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #15. The booby trap was originally reported 031800H.
[417] Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
[418] Comments of CPL Robert E. Torter, USMC Oral History Tape #949.
[419] Bronze Medal file on Cpl Robert Edward Torter.
[420] Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
[421] Comments of Sgt Harry W. Steere, Jr., on USMC Oral History Tape #949.
[422] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 021200Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #11; 3rd Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 24.
[423] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 021500Z/May67, Plans Summary.
[424] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 051050Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #22.

All the Marines found there were shot through the head. One Marine, I might add, had an enemy weapon, when he got close enough to an enemy to take the weapon away from him. He had it underneath him. He also had been shot through the head.)"[425]

Home From the Woods
By William Stross[426]

As I stood on the hangar deck with its empty spaces that could hold 5,000 strong men—only a wooden crate stood, full of broken equipment, broken dreams, and blood-stained web gear, staring out at me.

All that was left of untold numbers of brown haired, sandy haired, bright eyed, innocent young—Oh, so young warriors.

I felt compelled to touch, and turn over, and hold every piece of metal, every piece of material, trying to feel, trying to bring back, trying to remember the faces, the smiles, the names of the men—the boys, that only a few days before had been my friends, my comrades, my buddies. My point man, my radio man, my tail-end Charlie.

I tried to remember what ha brought me to this hollow wooden graveyard so cold, with the sweet smell of death still surrounding it. I was numb, I was going back, almost running into the hills—the hills called Khe Sanh. Somewhere else called the foothills of Ohio, or Kentucky, or Pennsylvania, but remember, come back, you are not home. Remember you are in the mountains, the mountains of Khe Sanh, of the country of Vietnam, of the Province of Quang Tri.

This is the season for walking through the woods, dog at my side, rifle at the ready. Keen eyes, alert senses, await the rabbit or squirrel soon to cross my path.

Remember—remember, this is the season for walking in the woods, but these are not the familiar warm woods of Ohio, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania. These are the woods and trails of the mountains, the mountains called Khe Sanh.

My rifle is at the ready, my senses are keener and sharper than they have ever been. For no squirrel nor rabbit will this day graced my game bag. For today we are after bigger game, game that is wiser and knows the ways of these woods, the hills called Khe Sanh. They live here, they have lived here for untold thousands of years. These are the men of the woods, the woods called Khe Sanh.

We are the intruder, we are the trespasser, we don't belong, not in these hills, these hills called Khe Sanh.

I stopped by the local grain and feed store to buy my hunting license for a mere fee, for a mere fee—I could be master of the woods I walked.

But remember—remember, these are the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh, and no license has been issued. You are here, but not invited. You are here, but not wanted. You are here and they know, they know, these men, these men of Khe Sanh.

They watch, and they wait, these men—Oh so patiently they wait. They have waited for decades, before I was born, before my father was born. They wait, these men, these men of Khe Sanh.

As I run and hide behind a tree, I lose my breath, in the woods, the woods of Ohio. I can hear my heart pounding, pounding so loud that my friends can hear it, and I will be found, and it will be my turn to find them. But remember—remember, these are not the woods of Ohio, these are the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh.

My heart is still beating, harder, faster. These woods with the silent eyes of the owners—watching, waiting, silently, patiently.

We move, we stop, we look, every head in a different direction, every sense smelling, beating, a different smell, a different feeling.

We are getting close. The woods are quiet now, the only sound is the perspiration as it runs off the tips of the noses, on the forest floor, and splashes like a giant waterfall.

These young men—the prides of their families.

Fresh from the Prom, and remember the smell of her hair and the softness of her cheek, the smell that arose from her ivory neck.

Come back, come back, remember—remember, you are in the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh. We are through the field and valley, and into a tree-line. We stop, almost in unison.

I feel the tension—should we move on line, should we recon by fire, should we throw grenades?

Oh God! What should I do?

I look to my left, and then to my right. Joe and Ray nod, and John and Bill smile. Yes it is my decision—they trust me and why not, I have led them through many valleys, and many tree-lines, through untold streams and hills.

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[425] Comments of Cpl John P. Hays, USMC Oral History Tape #949.

[426] Written 29 March 1984 and presented to the Stress Disorder Treatment Unit, North Chicago V.A. Medical Center. Mr. Stross, a veteran of G/2/3, died 17 April 1998. Printed in the Khe Sanh Vet *Newsletter* #6 (Dec 1987) pp. 11-12.

They trust me, they believe in me.

We move closer, the signal is given, the decision has been made, in the time it would take to drop a cigarette to the ground. They were all down, all these fine young men, bloodied and twisted, life being pulled and jerked from their still not grown bodies.

I hear the dog barking and he is excited, a clean shot, he should be running back, through the woods, these warm, pleasant woods of Ohio.

But remember—try to remember, these are the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh.

Their patience and silence had paid off, for the men of the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh.

Twelve young, shiny-faced, unassuming men—boys from the land, the lands of Ohio, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania, and everywhere the Stars and Stripes fly.

I pulled myself up on my elbow, can it be, these men of Khe Sanh, with their shoes made of old tires and hats of straw, have beaten and won over our shiny new rifles, our helmets of steel, and our flak jackets of the bullet-proof type.

I am getting tired now, I feel the life running out from my body, nourishing the floor of this forest, these woods, these woods of Khe Sanh.

I call out names, but no one answers.

Ollie, Ollie in free, can't you guys find me? I call out the names but these are not the names of my childhood days.

These are the names of my comrades, lost—never to speak my name again, nor I theirs.

I am drifting now. All is quiet and peaceful. I have done my best, I am due for a rest.

My men and I have come home, home to the woods, the woods of Ohio.

Simultaneously with Co G's advance, Co. E/2/3 advanced and almost reached the top of Hill 881-North.[427]

At 1500H, a heavy electrical, wind and rain storm struck the area limiting close air support and obstructing artillery fire. 3 Marines were struck by lightning.

"Halfway up the hill the assault was stopped, not by enemy, but by order of the Company Commander (Capt Lyons). 'How strange,' I thought. Nothing stops the assault except the enemy and we had not made contact.. We would later learn it was a matter of control—an inability to control such large units so far out in such bad weather... We were to return to the position we had previously occupied... It became increasingly dark during our movement back to our previous position, and by the time we arrived it was night. It was still raining. Everyone was tired and miserable and the bone-chilling rain didn't help. We searched out the inner perimeter and, after doing so, each platoon took up their old positions. It was still raining hard."[428] It was this nightly re-occupation amid the noise of rain that was to prove deadly within a few hours.

With gusts up to 40 miles per hour, LtCol DeLong pulled back the battalion to more defensible terrain for the night.[429]

03 May 1967

ALMEIDA, LCPL Richard Henry	E/2/3
ALMONEY, CPL John Stanley	E/2/3
ANDERSON, PFC James (n)	E/2/3
BERGENSTEIN, CPL Dennis Paul	E/2/3
BIEHL, LCPL Garry Ladd	E/2/3
DAVIS, PFC Charles Cecil	E/2/3
DOWNING, CPL William Kelly	E/2/3
FLANNERY, PFC Robert Edward Jr	E/2/3
HEAVIN, SGT Willis Ray	E/2/3
HOLDWAY, LCPL David Keith	H&S/2/3
HUWELL, PFC Michael Francis	E/2/3
JOHNSON, PFC Daryl Linn	E/2/3
KOENIG, LCPL David Bruce	E/2/3
KRUGER, PFC Robert Henry Jr.	E/2/3
LOUIS, PFC Robert Youngdale Jr.	E/2/3
MARTEL, PFC Normand Richard	E/2/3
MEUSE, PFC John Richard	E/2/3
MOORE, CPL William Roosevelt	H/2/3
PICANSO, PFC Leonard Jr.	F/2/3
POWELL, SGT Robert Clyde	E/2/3
RAMIEREZ, LCPL Juan Jose	H/2/3
RICE, PFC John Climath	E/2/3
ROBERTS, PFC Ben	E/2/3
SANCHEZ, SSGT Javier Arturo "E"	E/2/3
SKINNER, LCPL Phillip Craig	E/2/3
WILLIAMS, LCPL Woodrow	E/2/3
WOMBLE, LCPL William Thomas Jr.	E/2/3
YAGUES, PFC Robert Gene	E/2/3

"It was 0400 in the morning. The rain had stopped and there was an eerie mist hovering over the hill. I had taken my boots off, wrung the water out of my socks, and turned my boots upside down to allow them to drain. Everything was quiet. The silence was broken by my second squad leader [Sgt Billy Like]. I heard him shout, 'Halt! Who goes there?' With that challenge the entire northern half of the hill exploded. We were hit. I sprang for the bunker entrance. As I did so, one of my Marines was blown in on top of me, badly wounded... From my right at about 2 o'clock enemy machine guns

[427] 3rd Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 24.

[428] Cannon, James R., "The Khe Sanh Hill Fights," unpublished memoir attached to ltr to BrigGen E. H. Simmons, 14 Dec 1990, p. 6.

[429] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 021500Z/May67, Plans Summary; Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

were raking my section of the perimeter. At the same time, enemy mortars were falling over the entire hill.. and I knew this was not just a probe. My second squad leader was nearly cut in half by machine-gun fire."[430]

CPL Dennis Paul Bergenstein, machine-gunner, died about four feet from Larry Welch. Everybody got killed there except one guy. Later, when Bergenstein's body was recovered, there were 20, 25 dead NVA in front of his hole.[431]

Co E/2/3 (at XD778451), a small hill 500 meters south of Hill 881-North was under attack by an estimated company-size unit,[432] The Second Platoon (E-2), under the command of 2/Lt James R. Cannon, situated on the northeast section of the perimeter, bore the brunt of the assault.

PFC John R. Meuse, the radio operator of First Squad, E-2, who had chased down a wounded man on May 1", was seriously wounded during the initial burst of fire today. When asked by 2/Lt Cannon of the situation, he replied that he had been hit and gave the impression he was dying. He also said that his squad had been penetrated and their positions heavily overrun. Though mortally wounded, he refused to abandon his position and seek the medical help that could have saved his life. He instead remained on the radio for over an hour to inform his company commander and platoon commander of the situation. This accurate information on the disposition and nature of the enemy force enabled the company commander to make essential decisions on the employment of his maneuvering elements and the coordination of supporting arms necessary to repulse the enemy assault. (PFC Meuse was found about noon, still in his position, his radio hit but still working, his hand-set still in his hand, and five enemy dead in front of his position.[433]

An engineer of Co A, 3rd Engineers, attached to E/2/3, LCPL William Thomas Womble, unhesitatingly rushed from his position, retrieved ammunition from overrun positions, and proceeded through heavy automatic weapons fire to redistribute badly needed machine-gun and 60mm mortar ammunition. Then, spotting several pinned-down Marines in platoon E-2, he opened fire with his M-14 and single-handedly engaged the enemy, drawing their fire upon himself so that the Marines in the bunker could gain fire superiority. As he daringly delivered a large volume of well-aimed, accurate fire into the enemy, he was instantly killed by heavy automatic weapons fire.[434]

The fight was bitter to the end.

SSGT Javier Arturo Sanchez was killed: "A 'young', clean cut, very personable, married Marine—had just become a father.[435] Also killed was PFC Robert Henry Kruger, Jr. Before entering the Marine Corps, Kruger had been active in his church, Trinity Lutheran Church in Clifton, NJ. He had attended Clifton School #4, Christopher Columbus, and Clifton High School where he played varsity soccer before graduating in 1966. He enlisted in the Marine Corps prior to graduation, attended the graduation ceremonies, and departed for boot camp the next day. He was only 18 years, 10 months old, when killed.[436]

The Company Commander, Capt Lyons, sent a squad from E-1 to assist, but they never arrived. Another squad was sent. It too never arrived. NVA gunners decimated the squad, killing and wounding most.[437] Both squads had been badly hit trying to reach Jim Cannon's E-2. A 3.5" rocket launcher team was dispatched and arrived. LCPL Thomas Rice, carrying the launcher, and PFC Phillip G. Skinner who carried the rockets and Rice's M-16, prepared to fire. NVA fire, however, spewed rounds into their area, and just as Rice asked for his rifle, Skinner raised up a little to pass it and was killed by the NVA fire.[438] Cannon was just in the process of directing their fire when an explosion went off right before him, knocking out the rocket team. "I was still standing. For some ungodly reason, I thought nothing could touch me."[439]

Another Marine instrumental in containing the enemy was Cpl William K. Downing, a member of the composite squad organized by the Company Commander and commanded by 2/Lt John L. Eller (E-3). Cpl Downing, second in command of this squad, moved his fire team in the direction of the enemy penetration and was wounded in his leg. The squad was able to halt the advance of the enemy. Someone asked if he needed medical attention, and Cpl Downing shouted, "Don't come down here and help me; take care of the rest of the men first." He continued courageously to deliver continuous and effective fire on the enemy forces as casualties were removed under his covering fire. Having ensured that the last wounded Marine was evacuated, he remained firing from his position. His body was later found with 6 dead NVA around his position.[440]

All during the battle, the Second Platoon Commander, 2/Lt Cannon, repeatedly exposed himself to en-

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[430] Cannon, Memoir cited, pp. 6-7.
[431] Conversation with Larry Welch, 18 January 1994.
[432] 3rd Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 24.
[433] Statement of 2/Lt James R. Cannon in Navy Cross file on PFC John R. Meuse.
[434] Statement of Capt Alfred E. Lyon in Silver Star Medal file of LCPL William Thomas Womble.
[435] Letter from R. E. French, 29 March 1991. (SSGT Robert French was the 2/3 Bn logistic rear support sent to Khe Sanh with a provisional rifle platoon. He and his unit manned the KSCB perimeter and carried medevacs during the battle.)
[436] Letter from Richard Delotto, 06 July 2004.
[437] Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
[438] *Ibid.*
[439] Cannon, Memoir cited, p. 7.
[440] Statement of PFC Ernest S. Alford, III, in Silver Star Medal file of Cpl William K. Downing.

emy fire as he moved from position to position, occasionally engaging in hand-to-hand combat, skillfully directing the defense of his critical position[441] "I informed my company commander that my entire 1st and 2nd squads were wiped out, that there was only one friendly position up there—my bunker. My third squad, although lightly engaged, was still intact and had suffered no casualties."[442]

After hours of bitter fighting, the penetration was contained, action was taken to eliminate remaining NVA. First Platoon, H/2/3, was approaching on the extreme right, moving northwest along the ridgeline XD785450 – XDE778460, placing them at the rear of the noisome bunkers. As they advanced, they received intense small arms and .50 caliber machine-gun fire, almost immediately sustaining a number of casualties from the well-fortified and well-concealed bunkers and spider holes.

Results of the action: 27 Marines KIA, 84 WIA. Cannon writes: "I would cry later and when I did the tears would never completely stop. The memory of these Marines, so young, so brave, would stay with me forever."[443] Later he would reflect on Meuse: "After finally reaching his position in the morning I stood there for the longest time wishing I could have reached him in time. I remember thinking, 'My God, how young he was.'"[444]

"PTS"
By James Cannon (E/2/3, 1967)

It was long after Nam
that I went astray.
Thinking of those brave men and
of 3-4 May.

For many years after
I would just sit and think,
But it was the pullout that
brought me to the brink.

I felt myself slipping
I could not hold
It was Post Traumatic Syndrome
I was finally told.

Fifty-eight thousand
gave their all,
But in the end
the South would fall.

All for what?
I could not understand,
Cause the whole damn country
was not worth one single man.

Today my walls are covered with
memories in this place I call home,
And I continue to wrestle with this
Post Traumatic Syndrome.

I ask 'will it ever be over?'
As I lay at night and pray,
And I hear a tiny voice answer:
Yes, maybe, someday.

Battalion 2/3 (E/2/3(+), G/2/3, and H/2/3) passed the night with three companies in tight perimeter defense on the southern slopes of Hill 881-North surrounded by barbed wire, trip flares, and Claymore mines.

04 May 1967

CRENSHAW, CAPT William Anderson	A-101
JAGGERS, CPL Thomas Murl	G/2/3
STALLINGS, 1/Lt Franklin Delano	A-101

Jaggers "..was from Mississippi and he spoke with the accent and everything... He was a short-timer. He was given the option of staying aboard ship in supply because he had so much time in country, or to go out in the field, and he wanted to go out in the field with his friends. We had just gotten a re-supply of food, and Jaggers had been transferred out of a line company to supply and took charge of all of the food from the helicopter. He filled his hole with cases of C-rations. I remember we were all sitting around his hole, and while we were talking and he was giving us our individual food some artillery rounds started falling in. They were our own rounds, and some of them landed short. Jaggers was killed and another guy lost his leg... Jaggers tried to get into his hole, but his hole was all filled-up with all these cases he'd put inside. So he laid on top of them as best he could, and he was decapitated."[445]

At 040315H, Lang Vei Special Forces Camp (XD795360) came under mortar attack that lasted 10-15 minutes followed by a ground attack through Lang Vei Village by an estimated NVA battalion. The attack was aided by several VC infiltrators who had posed as recruits. After killing the guards, the enemy force which had broken through the wire by Bangalore torpedoes under the leadership of the infiltrators inside the camp[446] proceeded systematically to destroy the vital installations within the compound—the communications center, the command bunker, and to eliminate key personnel. The

[441] Silver Star Medal file on 2/Lt James Roscoe Cannon.
[442] Cannon memoir cited, p. 8.
[443] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[444] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[445] Interview of Robert Maras [G/2/3] by Dr. Peter C. Rollins, undated.
[446] Stanton, Shelby L., *Green Berets at War*, Novato, Ca.: Presideo, 1985, p. 148.

swiftness and the thoroughness of the raid reflected a well-planned, well-led, well-executed attack.[447]

Within minutes after breaching the wire, the command bunker in which Capt Crenshaw was sleeping was hit with an estimated anti-tank rocket. Inside the bunker at the time it was hit were the Commander, Capt Crenshaw, the Team Sergeant, MSG William Steptoe, and Captain Ledee. As he attempted to exit the bunker, Capt Crenshaw was killed by small arms fire. While this was happening, 1/Lt Stallings, on guard duty approximately 20 meters from the command bunker, was killed by small arms fire at his guard post.[448]

The bullets that killed Captain Crenshaw went through Steptoe's arm. "I was in the team house asleep on the lower bunk when the first rounds exploded. As I went down the steps in my underwear, a man jumped up and fired at me, and I dodged the bullets that hit Stallings. He fell, hit in the chest... As I hit the main bunker, a mortar hit me, blew off a finger and got me as I dove through the door. Once I was in there I talked to Crenshaw who was standing up against the wall. I had my back to the bunker and I told him that people were in the camp. At that time a burst from an AK-47 got me in the left arm and shoulder, and the same bullets that got me killed Crenshaw. He was a black man, so was Stallings."[449] Crenshaw had been in country for two weeks at this time and had just returned from a patrol. Steptoe leading a 30-man patrol that engaged the NVA in a terrific fire-fight near Hill 881, had reported enemy near Hill 881 of division-size to SOP Khe Sanh (at that time, LtCol Reeder, called "Cynthia" by the Special Forces) who dismissed such information as ridiculous.[450]

The insider enemy agent, Dinh Nhon, was recruited by the VC approximately January or February, 1967, and sometime in April, the VC directed him to join the CIDG at Lang Vei in order to obtain information about the camp. After joining, Nhon recruited Sam Boi who was to determine location of bunkers in the camp, A Loi, a member of the 103rd CIDG Company, who was to report all the guard positions and how well they were manned, Than Dinh, a member of the 101st CIDG Company, who was to make a sketch of the camp, and Sang Dinh, who was to report on supplies brought into the camp. Nhon and his helpers in the camp were informed about the attack and given instructions, including removal of their shirts so the VC attackers could recognize them during the attack. On the night of the attack, Nhon and Sam Boi killed the CIDG guards on the northwest positions of the camp, and then Nhon led the VC force through the wire and remaining mine fields into the camp perimeter.[451]

Results of the attack: 2 U.S. Army soldiers KIA and 2 WIA, 20 CIDG KIA, 34 CIDG MIA, 7 enemy KIA (confirmed) and 5 more possibly killed.[452] The new Commanding Officer of A-101, Capt Frank Willoughby, was a former USMC non-commissioned officer.[453]

At 1530H, F/2/3 and E/2/3 commenced a final assault of Hill 881-North. Movement was slow and methodical and only the southern edge was secured by nightfall.[454] Co C/1/26 began arriving at 041350H by fixed wing from Phu Bai, completing its movement by 1610H.[455]

At 041530H, Companies F/2/3 and E/2/3 began a final assault of Hill 881-North through very densely vegetated terrain. Movement was slow and methodical and they only reached the southern edge of the hill.[456] 2/Lt James Cannon (with his platoon now strengthened to 17 men with the addition of a gun team and rocket team) recalls: "Echo Company was guide company and Foxtrot was to guide on us. Foxtrot Company fell behind on my left and was slow maneuvering even though we met minimal resistance. To prevent any decrease in our momentum we, Echo Company, pushed forward up the ridgeline and over the crest and into a hasty defense. We were already in our hasty defense when Foxtrot company arrived... There were a few NVA bodies lying around on the hill... Just to our front stood a peak. It towered over us. Sooner or later it would have to be taken. It was too late in the afternoon to do it now. We set about establishing our night defense... There was a sense of relief throughout the company."[457]

05 MAY 1967

LANGSTON, LCPL Michael Gary	**2/3**
PEPPLE, CPL Carl Franklin Jr	**CAC O**
REVLAND, PFC Rickey Don	**2/3**

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[447] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 040515Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #18; AAR attached to A-101 MOPSUM, May, 1967.

[448] AAR in A-101 MOPSUM, May, 1967, cited.

[449] Conversation with William Steptoe, 06 October 1988. Steptoe's wounds were such that he spent the next year hospitalized in Valley Forge and was medically retired. He died 07 Feb 1993 from a heart-attack.

[450] *Ibid.*

[451] FMFPAC 300255Z/Jun67, SITREP #791. Nhon was subsequently captured 23 May 1967 and provided the information.

[452] 3rd Mar, AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), pp. 26-27; SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 040515Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #18; A-101 AAR in MOPSUM May, 1967.

[453] Comments of Col J.J. Padley, USMC Oral History Tape #1504.

[454] 3rd Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 27.

[455] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 041045Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #19.

[456] 3rd Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 27. For dense terrain, Raymond C. Madonna, memoir, "Hotel 2/3 in the Hill Battles of Khe Sanh," 01 Oct 1997, p. 3.

[457] Cannon memoir, 14 Dec 1990, cited.

Hill 881-North was secured at 1445H following an attack by F/2/3 supported by fire from E/2/3 with G/2/3 assaulting from the east along the northwest ridgeline.[458] "The smell of death was everywhere. There is no doubt those 1,000 and 2,000-pound bombs took a terrible toll of them. We found shreds of clothing, bits and pieces, but nothing you could put together."[459]

"After the actual capture of Hill 881 North by E Company under Captain Al Lyons and Golf Company under Captain Jim Sheehan, it was determined that the place was not good defensive terrain."[460] (This may explain why Hill 881-North was not subsequently manned by Marine infantry companies as were Hills 861 and 881-South).

At 052050H, E/2/3 at XD777456 and F/2/3 at XD773459 received 92 rounds of 82mm mortars equally divided between the two companies. One Marine was KIA and 6 WIA.[461]

CPL Carl Franklin Pepple, Jr., of CAC OSCAR, was on watch at night by himself and killed by an explosion from his own grenade. Carroll ("Chip") E. Daly, also with CAC OSCAR (Plt O-3), speculates he may have pulled the pin on a grenade. "It was the practice of some Marines to do this on watch. They would hold the grenade this way as a method of staying awake. They were convinced that they would never fall asleep when it meant certain death."[462] Pepple had enlisted 30 Mar 1964.[463]

07 MAY 1967

THOMAS, LCPL Barry Don E/2/3

In the HQMC weekly listing of USMC KIAs[464] there is an entry for THOMAS, LCPL Barry D, 2135198, Died of Wounds (DOW) 07 May 1967, from fragment wounds to the body. The entry notes: "(Date of initial injury and circumstances unknown)," and the Vietnam Memorial listing indicates THOMAS as a member of E/2/3. On 01 May, E/2/3 suffered 3 KIA from a morning mortar attack (*q.v.*), but no KIA are listed in the Vietnam Memorial casualty listing nor on the HQMC weekly casualty memoranda. Possibly Thomas may have been one of these.

09 MAY 1967

BEAN, LCPL Richard Raymond	F/2/3
BETTENCOURT, CPL Daniel Stephen	F/2/3
BUTTENBAUM, PFC Gary Richard	F/2/3
CLIFTON, PFC Layne Farell	F/2/3
CZARNY, LCPL William Eugene	F/2/3
DIXON, CPL Morris Franklin Jr.	F/2/3
FRALEY, CPL David Forrest	F/2/3
FROMME, LCPL Frederick W Jr	F/2/3
GREENE, LCPL Danny Marvin	F/2/3
HOLDER, HM3 Kenneth Leroy	F/2/3
KLEMENCIC, PFC Joseph Gordon	F/2/3
LANDERS, LCPL Ronnie Ray	F/2/3
LECASTRE, CPL Kenneth John	F/2/3
MC COOK, SGT Gregory Madison	F/2/3
NILES, CPL Ronald Edward	F/2/3
QUIGLEY, CPL James Michael	F/2/3
STEIN, CPL Ronald Marvin	F/2/3
TATE, CPL Lyle Scott	F/2/3
TILLSON, HM2 Gardner Jr	F/2/3
TODD, PVT Robert Jacy	F/2/3
WALLER, LCPL Charles Robert	F/2/3
WHITTEN, GYSGT Tommie Joe	F/2/3
WILLIAMS, PFC Robert Earl	F/2/3

Co E and F patrolled northwest of Hill 881N with F moving northwest and E moving west and then swinging north to marry-up at the final objective, Hill 803 (XD746473).[465]

Two platoons of Co F/2/3 were moving along a trail that was fairly well-used along a stream and then pulled off the trail to proceed up the slope of Hill 778. F-3, running point, collided with what appeared to be a NVA with a mortar tube and the Company began to receive automatic weapons fire from three or four directions. Since it was fairly light, they continued to maneuver, one squad on line, sweeping through a tree-line as the enemy fire rapidly intensified and included grenades.

"We had quite a few wounded at this time. My senior corpsman was hit; he was about ten feet from me when he got hit. And three guys that was in the squad that was going to sweep through [the tree-line] got hit. The NVA seemed to be coming in closer and stronger with their automatic weapons. We started taking a few more casualties."[466] 2/Lt Cannon (E-2) "could hear Foxtrot giving situation reports to Battalion. They started off with messages such as 'Pygmalion 6[467] this is Foxtrot

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[458] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep 051050Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #22.

[459] Quote from l/Lt Jack Adinolfi (CO of E/2/3) in Reuters news release of 06 May 1967.

[460] Madonna memoir of 01 Oct 1997, cited.

[461] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 051715Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #24; 3rd Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 28. Although only one Marine from 2/3 is listed as KIA, there are two names of 2/3 Marines in the Vietnam Memorial list for this date, as indicated.

[462] Letter from Larry L. Larsen, postmarked 01 Jul 2003.

[463] National Archives NA Form 13164 on Pepple.

[464] DN memorandum to AO1C (Attn: Lt McCabe), 15 May 1967.

[465] Cannon memoir, 14 Dec 1990, cited.

[466] Comments of Cpl James H. Ward, USMC Oral History Tape #997.

[467] Note: the "6" is the Commanding Officer, the "5" is the Executive Officer, the "one four" is the Air Officer, the "one

6, we have encountered snipers; we have 1 'kangaroo' (KIA) and 3 wolves (WIA)'. In no time it became 'we have 5 kangaroos and 9 wolves'. The situation was intensifying."[468]

The Marines pulled off to higher ground, taking heavy casualties. The Platoon Commander, 2/Lt Patrick G. Carroll, had been hit in both legs and an arm, SSGT Watts was hit in his shoulder and mouth, Cpl McKeen was hit in his chest and both lungs, and there was only one corpsman remaining.[469]

LtCol Earl R. Delong, PYGMALION-6 (CO of 2/3), immediately ordered E/2/3 to reinforce F/2/3.

2/Lt Cannon, peering through his field glasses upon reaching high ground spotted Foxtrot. "What I saw horrified me. The North Vietnamese were crawling over men of Foxtrot company and stabbing what appeared to me as wounded Marines. Foxtrot company had been drawn into a saddle along a small ridgeline and couldn't move. I saw the NVA attempt to drag off what looked like a wounded Marine. I grabbed a M-60 machine-gun and determined that a clump of bushes.. would be my reference point. I determined that all left of those bushes were dead Marines and NVA. I opened up with a long burst of fire raking the ridgeline from the bushes to the tree-line and the left end of the finger. The range was about 1100 meters. I turned and told the weapons platoon sergeant to take the other gun, watch my tracers and rake the finger from the bushes to the left. Our fire was right on target. Meanwhile my company commander had come up behind me. He shouted, 'Get off the gun Cannon.' 'Go to hell' I replied and kept firing. I meant no disrespect. He had not seen what I had seen. I knew what I was doing."[470]

Pygmalion-6 ordered ECHO-6 to dispatch 2/Lt Cannon's platoon [of 13 men!] to pull F out. Upon reaching the hill, "we formed on line and swept up the hill. At the top I found 2/Lt Carroll and three other Marines.. It was payback time. I was glad that I could help him. He had helped me so much just six days earlier. 2/Lt Carroll informed me that he and the other three Marines were the only ones that could brake out and reach the high ground."[471] 2/Lt Cannon, leading two squads through Foxtrot which fired over their heads, passed a big black Marine who asked, "Who was that mother f. on that machinegun?" Cannon cautiously asked why. "He replied, 'he saved our asses'. I felt relieved. I believe he was a gunnery sergeant. We passed through Foxtrot and opened up with our assault fire. My Marines ran, firing and screaming across the northern finger."[472] The NVA fire ceased, the position was secured, choppers began to arrive to extract Foxtrot Company, and Echo provided security. Cannon was the last to depart.

Results of the engagement: 24 Marines KIA, 19 Marines WIA. The majority of the casualties were taken during the initial moments of the encounter.[473]

Lance Campbell, recalling the scene of the KIA: "As we reached the edge of the ravine, I immediately noticed the dead Marines who were all lined up in a neat row. The horrible thing that we first saw was that most of them had no faces. We realized what the NVA had been doing when we saw them first overrunning the main group. They were firing full auto into the dead and wounded. Some appeared to have been stabbed and that was probably the bayonet action we saw. One of the dead I recognized only by his reddish-blond hair and his slight build. His face was totally unrecognizable. I don't remember his name and really didn't know him very well. But [of] all the Marines who died that day and throughout my tour, I think of this Marine the most when I think of Marines I knew killed in action. For only a couple of days before this he was going around showing everyone a picture of his brand new baby girl. I wanted to break down and cry!"[474]

"After we got back aboard ship.. there was an investigation: Foxtrot Company was missing a man. They wanted me to take my platoon back in there and find him. I thought: Somebody's crazy! There's no way I could find him. I personally checked that hill. There were no Marines left. He may have been missing, but he certainly wasn't on that hill anymore."[475]

The MIA was PVT Robert Jacy Todd.

The Company Executive Officer, 1/Lt Richard D. Koehler, wrote Todd's parents: "On 9 May the First Platoon was taken under heavy automatic weapons fire.. During this struggle your son was mortally wounded and his death was instantaneous. His body was carried by his platoon Sgt. and comrades to a helicopter landing zone for evacuation; however, at this time the company again came under attack by a strong element of a North Vietnamese Army, and the ensuing action was such that evacuation of your son's body was not accomplished.. Aerial reconnaissance of the area was conducted for the next two days in an effort to ascertain that his body was still there. The unsuccessful search can only lead to the conclusion that his body was bound by the enemy when they recovered those of their own dead. Your son at this

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nine" is the Chaplain, the "one zero" the Communications Officer, etc.

[468] Cannon memoir cited, p. 14.

[469] Ward comments, Tape #997, cited.

[470] Cannon memoir cited, p. 14.

[471] *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16; Conversation with James Cannon, 05 January 1990.

[472] *Ibid*, p. 16.

[473] 3rd Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 30.

[474] Lance Campbell email, 10 May 1999 in letter from William Ryan to Ray W. Stubbe, 6 May 2001.

[475] Conversation with James Cannon, 08 December 1990.

time has been placed in the status of 'killed in action – body not recovered'."[476]

F/2/3's action took place at XD747473 and they later moved to night positions at XD750463.[477] The Joint Casualty Resolution Center Report (Case 0675-0-01) states that on 09 May 1967, Pvt Robert J. Todd of F/2/3 was "..struck in the head and back by small arms fire while near Huong Hoa Village, in the vicinity of coordinates XD860375 [The location known as the Old French Fort]. The tactical situation prevented other members of his unit from reaching him." A map in the file correctly portrays the location at coordinates approximately 1000 meters east-southeast of Khe Sanh village, an erroneous notation. [478]

There were four brothers in the Todd family and another, James, was stationed in DaNang. Pvt Robert J. Todd had been in Guam, but got into disciplinary trouble, was in the brig and, to get out, volunteered for Vietnam duty. He never informed his mother who assumed he was still in Guam. He was in Vietnam only two months when he died. He had written his brother in DaNang who knew he was in Vietnam, but his brother also had not informed their mother. His mother's first thought, upon hearing of his death, was, How could this be? He's in Guam.[479]

The Marines in F/2/3 were unaware they had a MIA. There are two differing accounts of Todd: A black Sergeant recalls putting Todd on a helicopter and evacuating him. 1/Lt Koehler's letter indicates that Todd was left on the LZ, the unit withdrew due to enemy action, and when they returned, the body was missing.[480]

The Joint Task Force investigated this case in 1993 without success. "Unless new information comes to light there is little likelihood that Pvt Todd's remains will be found.[481]

10 MAY 1967

AHLMEYER, 2/Lt Heinz Jr.	A/3rd Recon
LOONEY, CAPT Paul Thomas	HMM-164
MILLER, HM3 Malcolm Thomas	A/3rd Recon
SHARP, LCPL Samuel Arthur Jr.	A/3rd Recon
TYCZ, SGT James Neil	A/3rd Recon

Lance Corporal Samuel Arthur Sharp, Jr., loved the outdoors. An only son, he accompanied his family camping, hunting, and fishing in the great outdoors of California and Oregon. He had lots of friends and was liked by everyone who knew him. He never participated in school sports, but preferred being in the hills and forests with his dog "Spot," purchased for one dollar when he was five years old. He bought his own 270 Winchester with a scope. After graduating from Pioneer High School, he worked at a gas station for awhile and then volunteered for the Marines in the Fall of 1965. He often wrote of the new car he planned to buy upon returning stateside, a Malibu, and told his dad to take care of his rifle and use it if he wanted. He asked if his dad had his deer yet and added, "Don't worry day, I'll be home next year and we will get our share then."[482]

That was not to be.

He wrote home that he arrived at Khe Sanh in March, 1967, arriving earlier than the rest of his unit (A Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion). In his last letter home, dated 7 May 1967, he wrote:

"Dear Mom, Dad, and Sis

"Well I am just fine. They took 861 – 881 now and things are beginning to quiet down around here now. We could sit on our chairs out in back of the tent and watch the jets and B-52s make the runs on Hill 861.

"They have about 3,000 Marines up here now. I don't know how long they are going to be up here. I hope they stay up here for a few more weeks at least...

"I'm sending this $5.00 home to Janet [his sister] for her birthday. She can buy something with it. The other is a North Vietnamese dollar. Have you got the pictures of the wedding yet?...

"It has been raining here off and on for the last week. They had a bad wind storm here and it blew a few tents down, and blew the mess hall roof off.

"Well I'm going to say goodbye now. With love always. Your son Sam."

The letter is postmarked 10 May 1967. Sam was already on patrol. His last.

YT-1 (piloted by Capt Manz) and YT-21 (piloted by Capt Kirk) inserted reconnaissance team 1A2, "BREAKER," at 1600H, 09 May 1967 at XD758534 (Hill 665).[483]

BREAKER, a 7-man recon team, was assigned the mission of observing suspected enemy infiltration routes

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[476] 1/Lt Richard D. Koehler letter of 18 May 1967 to Mr. and Mrs. Dennis F. Todd.

[477] 3rd MarDiv COC 091853Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #39; 3rd Mar AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 31.

[478] Library of Congress, MIA Rell #242, Folder #29, DD Form 1300, 12 Jun 67, on TODD, Robert Jacy, and misc. documents in the file, including a map showing the location of the loss at Huong Hoa Village. Undoubtedly, the report (prepared at HQMC in Washington, D.C.) was prepared looking at the map sheet titled "Huong Hoa," and subsequent researchers assumed it was the "fictitious" Huong Hoa village rather than the general area.

[479] Conversation with William Ryan, 04 June 2001.

[480] *Ibid.*

[481] Letter of Richard Hites, 27 December 1999.

[482] Letter from Mrs. Irene Sharp, 07 May 1986.

[483] Statement of Maj Arthur B. Colbert in Distinguished Flying Cross file of Capt Paul Tucker Looney; CO, HMM-164 letter 1:RFR, 1650, 21 Sep 1967, Subj: Distinguished Flying Cross recommendation for, case of Maj Arthur B. Colbert 061266/7562, USMC; Comments of Maj Gary A. Davis, USMC Oral History Tape #1115.

and to uncover any indications of enemy build-up in the area.[484]

The Patrol Leader, Sgt James Neil Tycz, at 21 was considerably older than most of the Marines in Vietnam. A thoughtful man who had once attended St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Tycz was known to sometimes lead prayer services before leaving on patrols. He had eight brothers and sisters.[485] A fellow Vietnam veteran recalled: "I attended South Division High School [Milwaukee, Wisconsin] with Jim [Tycz] during the middle 60s. We both played on the tennis team. Although Jim was two years ahead of me in school [a Senior], he gave me his friendship and provided support during my first year [Sophomore] at South Division. To have called Jim a 'nice guy' would have been a gross understatement. He was always smiling, pleasant, and caring. Jim displayed a positive attitude toward everything he encountered."[486] High-school yearbooks indicate his activities: cross country, wrestling, tennis, men's club, school newspaper (proofreader).

Another Marine in the patrol, Carl "Britt" Friery, had been in Vietnam 7 months but never in combat. Prior to his transfer to recon he'd served as a 106mm recoilless rifle gunner in infantry.[487]

1/Lt Heinz Ahlmeyer was attached to observe and gain experience. The 3rd Marine Division Intelligence Officer augmenting the Khe Sanh bunker staff, 1/Lt Lee Klein, recalls him as "..a real hard charger, a heck of a nice guy, just the kind of guy you expect to see go into recon."[488]

An argument had taken place in the command bunker before BREAKER was inserted. 1/Lt Lee Klein had been given 35mm photos taken by a Marine pilot which Klein sent to Division and received developed prints within 24 hours disclosing NVA digging their position. The newly-arrived regimental XO said, "We're going to send a recon patrol in there." Klein recalls: "I should of fought it more, but I said, 'We know what's there. Why are we sending a recon patrol?' You send recon patrols out where you don't know what's happening. The XO replied, 'We want to send a recon patrol in there." (Klein recalls the XO, a LtCol who spent all his time in the bunker, "..wore 'Mickey Mouse' ears, a headset with large pads over the ears. I'd never seen anything like that in a command bunker before; everybody else listened to the radio with their regular ears.")[489] One of the pilots who was to participate in the rescue noted, "These guys should never have been put in there in the first place. It was stupid because it was obviously a hot spot. We knew that."[490]

Immediately upon insertion, BREAKER came upon 4 well-constructed NVA bunkers and assorted enemy gear. After traveling only a few minutes, they came upon 9 additional bunkers with gear.[491] The hill in which they were inserted, in fact, was covered with camouflaged bunkers that could not be seen from the air—nor on the ground unless one walked right on one,[492] as they soon discovered. At 1755H, 10 NVA bunkers were discovered at XD755530 ranging in size from 2-man to 10-man, all of which were in good condition and had been occupied recently; rice, remains of meal, smell of fish, all indicated recent presence by the enemy. The area showed signs of being bombed, and the team also found a pith helmet and a partially destroyed letter. Moving only a few meters, the team discovered an enemy harbor site with 11 sleeping racks, 9 well-constructed bunkers, and miscellaneous combat gear.[493] They found unopened packs and they found rifles.[494]

Back at Khe Sanh, the Commanding Officer of Co A, 3rd Recon Bn, asked Sgt DiDonna, "Tony, what do you think?" DiDonna replied, "Tell the men to get the hell out of there. If they stay, they're gonna be dead five minutes after midnight. It's a trap. Something's wrong. No way those packs could be there."[495]

Within the team, an argument arose between the Patrol Leader, Sgt Tycz, and the attached 1/Lt Ahlmeyer. Tycz wanted to move to an alternate LZ; Ahlmeyer wanted to stay put. Britt Friery and Steven Lopez were off to the side. "Several of the guys were arguing with Ahlmeyer to get to the secondary LZ, a better location. We knew we were in a bunker complex. We knew they might be back at any minute, and we wanted to get out of there. There had been a B-52 bombing in that vicinity and what we were told is that some reconnaissance photos were taken after the B-52 bombing and that a recon patrol needed to reconnoiter on the ground after every B-52 bombing."[496]

BREAKER was informed to depart the NVA campsite since it was becoming dark, and to move to some high ground and establish a night defensive position,

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[484] Comments of Capt Albert D. Crosby, USMC Oral History Tape #951.
[485] Nelson, Bill, "The Unending Ordeal," The Milwaukee *Journal Wisconsin Magazine*, 24 May 1987, p. 8.
[486] Kwiatkowski, David, article in Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans, Inc., Newsletter (1996).
[487] Conversation with Carl Friery, 09 February 1994.
[488] Lee Klein, taped comments he sent home on 12 May 1967.
[489] Conversation with Lee Klein, 05 August 1989.
[490] Conversation with Clarence A. Mumford, 13 April 1992.
[491] Comments of Capt Albert D. Crosby, USMC Oral History Tape #951.
[492] Letter from Carl Friery, undated (but apparently while he was still hospitalized following this patrol).
[493] 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep 091700Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #40.
[494] Friery, Carl, letter of 09 February 1994.
[495] Comments of Antonio DiDonna, 28 April 1990.
[496] Conversation with Carl Friery, 09 Feb 1994. This is known as a "BDA" (Bomb Damage Assessment).

which they did.[497] They set up their harbor site on the top of Hill 665 (XD758534).

Shortly after midnight the patrol heard a North Vietnamese force estimated to be about 30 – 50 men moved toward BREAKER, returning to their fortified camp site to reoccupy their bunkers. Sgt Tycz cautioned his men to remain silent, hoping they would remain undetected by the NVA. The bunkers had a tunnel system and apparently when the bombing started, the NVA went underground, abandoning the bunkers, but were now returning. The Marines, laying in 3 foot-high elephant grass, were about 10 – 20 yards uphill from the NVA bunkers.[498]

Two of the NVA troops, however, walked into the patrol's position and started to un-sling their weapons after seeing the Marines. PFC Steven D. Lopez, the radioman, was sitting in the elephant grass when the NVA soldier suddenly appeared: "I looked at him and he looked about 14 years old. And he wasn't ready at all. He didn't expect me to be there. I fired several rounds at him with the rifle. He was extremely young. I didn't even know if I should shoot him or not; he didn't even look like a soldier. He had a weapon and military gear. He was young."[499] The enemy force, now alerted to the Marine presence, immediately began delivering a heavy volume of small arms fire into the patrol's perimeter. 2/Lt Heinz Ahlmeyer, Jr., the blond-haired, blue-eyed Platoon Commander along to gain field experience, was badly hit and started groaning.[500] Lopez was wounded in his side and LCPL Sam Sharp, Jr. was shot through the head next to Carl Friery. "I saw him fire an automatic burst.. I crawled over to see how he was but he had a hole the size of a silver dollar in the back of his head."[501]

Sgt Tycz immediately called in supporting arms and artillery missions on suspected enemy positions. Despite the heavy volume of fire being poured into their small perimeter, he fearlessly moved among his men to direct their fire and shouted words of encouragement.[502] The NVA tossed grenades in on Ahlmeyer's groans. Tycz was groping for them and managed to toss back three or four grenades. They were landing next to him because he was next to the Lieutenant. He couldn't find the last one, and while groping for it, it exploded in his face. Then he started groaning too. Carlson treated them as best he could, and then they stopped tossing grenades at the Marines.[503]

Vicious enemy fire battered the patrol's position, and within minutes several more Marines became casualties, including red-haired and blue-eyed HM3 Malcolm Thomas Miller, the corpsman attached to the patrol. With complete disregard for his own safety, LCPL Clarence R. Carlson, Point Man of the patrol, maneuvered to different positions in order to bring a heavy volume of small arms and grenades against the enemy force. Lopez ignored his painful wound in his side in order to move to a position from which he could deliver effective fire against the assaulting NVA. Friery was shot in his abdomen "by a bullet that I later found out had bounced around my insides, tearing up much of my intestines."[504] Half an hour later he was hit in the back from grenade shrapnel and went unconscious until dawn. Carlson and Lopez assumed he had died. In less than two hours, there were only two Marines remaining able to man their weapons—Lopez and Carlson.

Moving to the side of his fallen patrol leader who had been using his radio to call in artillery support, PFC Lopez directed effective artillery fire on the enemy, dangerously close to their position—for almost 12 hours. PFC Lopez was wounded several other times during the course of the action and PFC Carlson was also wounded twice more.

The NVA had reoccupied their bunkered position: "These bunkers were placed in strategic positions around this entire hill where they could overlook the valley below. And we were right in the center of the top of the hill. There was no bunkers near us—approximately ten meters from us in sort of a perimeter around us, where they were lobbing grenades and sniper rounds—they were in these bunkers."[505]

Throughout the night the enemy continued to probe and attempted to close with the patrol, sometimes approaching within 15 feet, but was driven off by the intense volume fired by PFC Lopez and LCPL Carlson.

A flare ship illumined the area as SPOOKY spewed its destructive dragon-breath of bullets. Communications difficulty, bad weather, and close proximity of the enemy hindered any accurate assessment of the situation and ability to render optimal support.[506] Yet, the 18 year-old Lopez, on his third recon patrol, continually requested artillery to be placed closer and closer "..because the enemy was within 10 meters of us, and it seemed as though the artillery batteries wouldn't cooperate; they couldn't bring rounds in for us. And we kept calling 'fire for effect' and they wouldn't fire for effect.. they refused to do this."[507]

Cooler heads on the Combat Base had more fear than the younger men in their desperation: "He kept calling in artillery closer and closer to his position. Back

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[497] Crosby, Tape #951, cited.
[498] Friery, letter of 19 August 1993
[499] Comments of PFC Steven D. Lopez, USMC Oral History Tape #1115.
[500] Friery, letter of 09 Feb 1994, cited.
[501] Friery, letter of 19 August 1993.
[502] Silver Star Medal Citation, Sgt James Neil Tycz.
[503] Friery, letters of 09 February 1994 and 19 August 1993.
[504] Friery, letter of 19 August 1993.
[505] Comments of PFC Lopez, Tape #1115, cited.
[506] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep 092300Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #41.
[507] Comments of Lopez on Tape #1115, cited.

here they were actually scared to drop them closer. But he kept repeating, 'Drop it closer.'"[508]

At about 02340H, both Lopez and Carlson were again hit by small arms fire, but continued delivering fire and throwing grenades at the enemy force. The NVA force which had attacked BREAKER then withdrew. 1/Lt Klein opined: they just went back to await rescuers so they could annihilate them.[509] The NVA "..could easily have overrun the 7-man team; however, they chose not to do so, probably in hopes of shooting down any helicopters attempting extraction."[510] It was an old, old NVA tactic reproduced at all levels: create a casualty and destroy those who came to rescue—whether this was an individual WIA or a whole unit or position (e.g., Khe Sanh Village on 21 January 1968 when they attacked with a battalion but had a whole regiment in ambush positions ready to annihilate any rescuers or reinforcements, or 07 February 1968 when they attacked the Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei, or the entire Khe Sanh encirclement which was meant to draw-in American troops—which didn't happen until three months after the attack; their plan had miserably failed, probably because were aware of this tactic and strategy].

The first attempted extraction resulted in the helicopter taking extensive hits throughout, making it appear like a piece of Swiss cheese. The aircraft shuddered. A round hit the co-pilot's foot. Hydraulic pressure plummeted. The aircraft barely made it back to KSCB, having taken 53 new hits.[511]

Inside the command bunker at KSCB a second launch to rescue was being planned. Captain Paul Tucker Looney (a Section Leader of a division led by Major Arthur B. Colbert) who had been awakened at 0145H and his Co-pilot, Lt John C. Roots, were being briefed. VMO-2 ("DEADLOCK") UH-1Es were on station along with "PUFF" (C-47 gunships). In this grim situation, Capt Looney launched in his CH-46, YT-5 (#151923) at 0235H. His wingman, Captain Douglas A. Manz, orbited at 5,000 feet as Captain Looney arrived on station about 0245H and made contact with the UH-1E gunships who pointed out the zone. Following a marking round from one of the gunships, Capt Looney began a descending right hand turn.[512] The gunship informed Capt Looney they were out of 7.62mm ammunition and would remain at 1000-ft. AGL.[513]

Capt Looney dropped YT-5 to within a few feet off deck, a hundred yards from the zone, and then proceeded to within 10 meters of the crater. He pulled his aircraft into a hover and asked BREAKER to shine a strobe light. Upon shining, the bird began to receive intense automatic weapons fire from 360°. The first round penetrated the windscreen on the pilot's side and sprayed plexiglass within the cockpit, and after that rounds seemed to come from everywhere, hitting Capt Looney, Sgt Bon H. Reese, and Corpsman Bridges. Capt Looney, hit in the right collar bone just above his chest protector, convulsed and pulled up the collective and pushed the cyclic forward. Lt Roots, realizing that Capt Looney was hit, immediately took the controls, made a left turn to the west, and began climbing. Capt Looney came up on the ICS: "I'm hit bad, John; let's go home!" Capt Looney began to un-strap from his seat, and Cpl Remo assisted him to the cabin to remove his vest. HN Bridges, having regained consciousness, worked with Cpl Remo on him. Lt Roots landed the aircraft at KSCB at 0308H. Sgt Reese had a shattered left arm but had continued firing his machinegun until the danger was past. Corpsman Bridges had taken shrapnel in his hip and ass. Capt Looney, although given emergency treatment for a serious throat wound, died about 15 minutes later.[514]

Captain Manz later wrote: "Captain Looney—pilot of the second attempt lead aircraft—he paid the supreme sacrifice for God and country. What more can a man do? In his twelve months in country, Captain Looney has contributed a great deal to the success of his squadron. On this particular occasion he was again contributing his professional flying skill and the combat knowledge of his many past experiences. His approach was perfect but the situation was far from it. He took a fatal round and died thirty minutes later. His courage and professionalism were always in the highest tradition of the United States Marine Corps."[515]

Meanwhile, BREAKER's predicament was fast becoming desperate. The two remaining effective Marines were becoming dangerously low on ammunition as LCPL Carlson put himself in a position where he could cover PFC Lopez as the latter moved among their fallen comrades and stripped them of their ammunition. At this time he discovered that Carl Britton Friery, "Britt," although extensively wounded, was still alive. The other four members of BREAKER were dead.

At 0645H, DEADLOCK Gunships (VMO-2) and OAKGATE (VMO-3) took turns making firing runs,

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[508] Quote from Capt A.B. Crosby in Ray Wilkinson, "Seven Man Recon Patrol Fights Off NVA Company," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:20 (19 May 1967) 3.

[509] Klein, taped comments sent home, 12 May 1967, cited.

[510] 3rd MarDiv, AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 31.

[511] Comments of Cpl Mark P. McDonald, USMC Oral History Tape #3368; Statement of Capt Douglas A. Manz in DFC file of Maj Arthur B. Colbert; CO, VMO-2 ltr 10:PMC:rmg, 1650, Subj: Distinguished Flying Cross Medal; recommendation for, in DFC file on Capt Clarence Allen Mumford.

[512] CO, HMM-164 ltr 1:RFS:wmm, 1650, 21 Sep 1967, Subj: Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross (Posthumous); recommendation for, case of Capt Paul T. Looney, 089775/7562, USMC, in DFC file of Capt Paul Tucker Looney.

[513] Statement of 1/Lt John C. Roots in DFC file of Maj Arthur Bruce Colbert. AGL=Above Ground Level.

[514] *Ibid.* ICS=Interior Communications System.

[515] *Ibid.*

strafing the elephant grass and surrounding wood lines adjacent the recon perimeter. The NVA, within ten meters of BREAKER, were struck by pinpoint and devastating fire from the Gunships' TAT-101E and M-60 machineguns. One gunship expended 9000 rounds of 7.62 and 32 2.75" rockets. Debris and bodies covered the entire area.[516]

"We could hear the enemy in the bush. I thought they were going to walk on us and finish us up, so I kept calling in the Hueys for ground cover and they strafed right next to us. At this point I think (I'm pretty sure) one of the .50 caliber rounds from the Huey hit [Carlson]. At that point I wasn't sure if he was dead or alive and I thought I was alone. He got it pretty bad."[517]

A third attempt was made to rescue BREAKER at 0915H. The plan was to have one CH-46 land 5 Marines into the zone to rescue the 3 wounded survivors. Although the chopper was met with very heavy fire, the pilot continued to maneuver his chopper towards the patrol. As the helicopter was about to set down in the zone, an enemy round damaged the chopper's fuel line and the pilot was forced to abort and return to KSCB.[518]

In this desperate situation, jet aircraft dropped napalm and snake eye bombs as close as prudent while almost simultaneously, the Huey gunships made passes on three sides of the team in close proximity while two CH-46 helicopters approached as feints to confuse the enemy. Major Charles Andrew Reynolds, assigned this date to pilot Major General Bruno Hochmuth's UH-1E "slick," had merged crews and decided to take only one aircraft instead of two so that two pilots would be aboard in case one was hit, while two crew chiefs (LCPL Ronald Zaczek and Cpl Jackie Lynn Acosta) could assist the remaining wounded aboard.[519]

The last napalm drop started a bush fire which rapidly spread toward BREAKER. Lopez radioed that extraction had to be immediate; they were being engulfed in flames.

Major Reynolds approached, receiving intense automatic weapons fire from a tree line west of the zone as OAKGATE gunships fired on either side and across the front. With the intensity of the fire, Major Reynolds waved off and then commenced a second approach from a different direction. Again, he was met with intense fire. BREAKER reported they could not hold off much longer due both to the incoming and the brush fire. Boxed in with fixed wing and gunships, the eastern end of the box was opened and with two gunships firing as cover, Major Reynolds' UH-1E retrieved the three survivors of BREAKER.[520] As Major Reynolds touched down, 1/Lt David G. Myers called in the obstacles and directed the aircraft toward the team avoiding the close-in brush fire. Immediately upon touchdown, Cpl Ronald Joseph Zaczek and LCPL Jackie Lynn Acosta, the Crew Chiefs, leaped from the aircraft and assisted the three wounded Marines aboard while NVA fired on them.

Ronald Zaczek, one of the two Crew Chiefs recalls the scene: napalm had struck the lower slopes of the mountain leaving it charred black. The final hundred feet of the hill was in flames with very, very thick gray smoke from the wet grass, "..like thick clouds of gray cotton just boiling up, and we could see flames but couldn't see the team very well. They were pretty darn much completely engulfed in smoke, and you could see flames inside the smoke, going higher and higher... Lopez came on [the radio] and said, 'We're burning up. We're burning up down here. You gotta get us out. The fire's close. Please get us out.' And it was just really horrible... When we landed there was a ring of burning grass a few yards from the patrol. They were being roasted. The fire was upon them. And there was a lot of ground fire from the NVA, popping all over the place, but confused because of the smoke... First we came in to a hover, but lost visual contact. Couldn't see a damn thing. The blades were just churning the smoke.. When we finally found the team, they had no cover at all. All the grass around them had been beaten down, and they were just sitting on top of it. They were absolutely naked. Just imagine: take a smooth, relatively smooth hilltop and put a thick mat of green grass on top if it, then stick people on top of that... [They] had piled up the bodies of the dead and hid behind the bodies of the dead.. bodies of the Marine and the North Vietnamese dead. They had built—it wasn't like a big wall—18-inches of cover, 2 or 3 bodies piled [high]... they had to do it.. they were all Marines. And if those spirits of those dead Marines could of spoken, they would of said: Take shelter behind us. They would of wanted their friends to live...

"My pilot landed us right next to them. We didn't have but a yard to go. We stepped over the bodies, grabbed them, and we got them in. Carlson and Lopez helped Friery in first. I dragged him in and literally shoved him as far forward in the aircraft as I could. Carlson was next. And then we pulled Lopez in and propped him behind the pilot's seat in a seated position; Carlson and Friery were both prone.

"I started to work on Friery—we had taken medical kits [aboard]—to keep him alive. All of them were pretty bloody. Their shirts, their trousers were well soaked with blood... When I brought Friery in I shoved him into my M-60, so he was blocking it, and I pulled him away from it [to fire it] and he had dumped his guts into the receiver section of the M-60.. I tried to get Fri-

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[516] Statement of Capt Rodney H. Alley, Jr., in SSM file of Maj Charles Andrew Reynolds.

[517] Comments of PFC Steven D. Lopez, USMC Oral History Tape #1115. (Date of interview: 10 May 1967)!

[518] Bronze Star Medal file on Cpl Jackie Lynn Acosta.

[519] Statement of Maj Charles A. Reynolds in BSM file of Cpl Jackie Lynn Acosta.

[520] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 100435Z/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #42.

ery's pants off and when I unbuttoned his fly, everything started to come out—bowels—and I tried to push it back in and I didn't know what to do... Everything was slippery with blood and I just couldn't get it [closed], so I held him. I was kneeling. I pulled him up and I held him in my arms and put rags over the stuff. Jack [Acosta] was working on Lopez, and we couldn't do anything for Carlson behind us."[521]

Friery recalls, "When I dove for the chopper I didn't have strength enough to get in, and the crewmen pulled my arm and we took off."[522] The bird lifted off at 1145H as the tree line beneath them erupted with intense fire.[523]

"We tried to lift off out of the zone and we couldn't lift. We were too heavy [for the altitude]. Finally, the way we got out was: Reynolds [the pilot] jiggled the aircraft over the edge of the hill, put us into a skid, sledding down the hill, and this gave us enough translational lift that we were able to bounce clear. We would not have been able to get out of the zone with another alive person on board the aircraft."[524]

Due to the close proximity of the enemy and the heavy volume of fire as well as the brush fire started by the napalm, it was virtually impossible to retrieve the bodies of the dead members of BREAKER. When the three surviving Marines returned to Khe Sanh, they only had approximately 20 rounds between them.[525]

Friery "..was told that with the wounds I had at the time that normally you died within 2 hours without treatment, and I'd been out there 13 hours without any kind of treatment." He spent the next 9 months in the hospital and then returned to active duty at Camp Lejeune, NC. During this duty he was guarding a payroll office during a hold-up and fired at the robber. Then the armory was broken into and several machineguns stolen. "I stayed in a combat situation even after I got to the States!"[526]

After Major Reynolds departed with the three survivors of BREAKER, what the holocaust of the flames didn't consume, very intensive bombardment by fixed wing completely obliterated.[527] Zaczek opines, "There were no bodies or bones left."[528]

In 1998, 31 teeth along with some bone fragments were discovered as remains from the patrol and the POW/MIA Accounting Command identified them as members of BREAKER by DNA and dental records. All that remained of Tycz were three of his teeth. The remains of Ahlmeyer, Tycz, and Miller were interred at Arlington and Sharp's remains next to his father at Oak Hill Memorial Park in San Jose, California. Tycz was interred on 10 May 2005, the same day and month of his loss.[529]

[*May 10th was the last major enemy contact. The Battle of the Hills officially ended 131500H when Col. John J. Padley, CO of 26th Marines, relieved Colonel J. P. Lanigan, CO, 3d Marines as SOP 3rd Marine Division/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh.*[530] *The cost of the Battle of the Hills: 168 US KIA, 443 US WIA, 2 US MIA, 824 NVA KIA (confirmed) and 551 additional probable; 6 NVA POW. Artillery fired over 24,000 rounds. Total ordnance dropped was over 3,000,000 pounds, not including TPQ-10 and Arc Light missions (611,500 pounds of napalm, 3,218,500 pounds of explosives, 1230 250-pound bombs, 3318 500-pound bombs, 380 750-pound bombs, 247 1000-pound bombs, 387 2,000-pound bombs, and 1170 air SORTIEs. There were 23 Arc Light strikes*[531] *Co C/1/26 had arrived 1350H, 04 May*[532] *Operation CROCKETT commenced 1500H, 13 May 1967 with the mission of defending KSCB, establishing company-size defensive positions on Hills 861 and 881-South from which patrols were to saturate the area within artillery range, and maintain a radio relay atop Hill 950 for units in the field.*[533] *Enemy contacts, evidence of their recent presence and movement, fire, probes, and sightings were a daily occurrence, along with reports from agent nets (e.g., the JTAD) of hundreds of NVA ten miles or so from KSCB. On 12 May 1967, more units of 26th Marine Regiment arrived. Relief by 26th Marines was somewhat deceptive. Although battalion 1/26 arrived, the Regimental Headquarters was split, with a rear in Okinawa and a forward staff at Khe Sanh. The Khe Sanh 26th Marines staff did not include the Sergeant-Major, and was officially a unit of 9th MAB (Marine Amphibious Brigade), not a III MAF unit. (MACV had limits on the amount of Marines that could be "in country", and so the Marines had 9th MAB units, a SLF (Special Landing Force) that operated from Navy ships off-shore, although they were usually ashore, and the repair and logistic rear was positioned on Okinawa, not in-country, so that there was a*

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[521] Conversation with Ronald Zaczek, 13 January 1996.
[522] Friery letter of 19 August 1993, cited.
[523] SITREP #42, cited.
[524] Conversation with Ronald Zaczek, 13 January 1996.
[525] Comments of Capt Crosby, Tape #995, cited.
[526] Friery letter of 09 Feb 1994, cited. He subsequently worked as a Park Ranger and made 28 moves in 20 years.
[527] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep 101300Z/May67, Plans Summary.
[528] Ronald Zaczek letter of 21 December 2002.
[529] Memorial Bulletin, Donnae [Donna E. Elliott], "They Are All Finally Coming Come," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #61 (Spring 2005) 27-30. "Breaker Patrol Found," *Military Officer*, August, 2005, p. 71. 3rd Recon Association, RVN, *Harborsite* 13:1 (Summer, 2005) 1. Paul Meyer, "Marine who died a hero heads home," Dallas, TX.: *DallasNews.com*, 24 Feb 2005.
[530] 3rd Marines, AAR, The Battle of Khe Sanh, Encl (1), p. 53.
[531] *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 5.
[532] SOP 3rd MarDiv/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh 041045H/May67, Khe Sanh Special SITREP #19.
[533] 3rd MarDiv 131440Z/May67, OPN CROCKETT SITREP #1.

3-man "logistic tail" for every Marine infantryman in Vietnam, whereas the Army had a "logistic tail" of 9 or more soldiers for every infantryman in country.]

21 MAY 1967

HENDERSHOTT, PFC Thomas Edward A/1/26
HURD, LCPL Roger Michael A/1/26

For the Grunt on the ground in Vietnam, the time was an occasional rifle shot, occasional grenade that suddenly exploded, artillery H&I missions, air strikes, always and ever patrolling, digging, filling sandbags, night ambushes with endless tense silence and un-peaceful quiet, peering from perimeter trenches always watchful. For the most part, Khe Sanh remained peaceful bedecked in all its sheer beauty, and life was boredom punctuated by intense terror.

One such terror occurred Sunday, 21 May 1967 when it ensnared a platoon in its deadly web.

2/Lt John M. Kaheny furtively moved his 43-man patrol of 3rd Platoon, A/1/26 (A-3 or "PINEFOLD ALPHA THREE") out of the west gate of Hill 881-South at "O dark thirty:" 0520H, into a valley just west of Hill 881-South where an AO had just reported heavy trail use by enemy units.[534] Dense fog shrouded everything. At 0700H, the patrol spotted 4-5 sets of footprints on Hill 821 (XD763443) made within the previous 24 hours. The patrol paused in the morning mist called "crachin"[535] until the fog burned off enabling gunships at KSCB to launch.[536]

At 0850H the patrol (at XD757446) heard firing in the distance. "We called in to see if there were any friendlies in the area. The shots seemed to be quite a ways off and were quite rapid. We were told there were no friendlies in the area, and we proceeded out to the west roughly along an almost continuous ridgeline past an area of land bridge where Bravo Company [1/26] would later be ambushed [on 07 June 1967]. We found some letters and some spent rounds and knew NVA were in the area."[537]

Gunships (OAKGATE 1-1 and 1-2) arrived on station at 1000H as the fog dissipated and requested targets. While none could then be spotted, Lt Kaheny's intuition moved him to point to a tree line and had his 3.5-inch rockets fire a smoke round to mark a target. The gunner, misunderstanding the spot Lt Kaheny indicated, fired about 200 meters from that point. The gunships zeroed on the smoke mark and to everyone's surprise, struck about a dozen NVA lurking in the streambed.[538]

Following continuous gunship strikes, artillery poured on the target. Lt Kaheny then moved A-3 to a small knoll (XD751449) to their left which had several bomb craters to provide some cover. Radio transmission back to Hill 881-South had become weak, broken, and unreliable (the PRC-25 radio being "line of sight"), so Lt Kaheny moved a squad to the top of the knoll (Hill 721) for radio relay as he moved with 2 squads to its backside and into a streambed. There were slash marks on trees marking trails, and he circumspectly proceeded for about half an hour. A NVA soldier was spotted on one of the hills peering at the area where the radio relay squad had been positioned.[539] The NVA were beyond 105mm artillery range, but 155mm howitzers could drop a "precision destructive mission." The first round was low on the slope of the NVA OP. The NVA didn't move, apparently aware they were beyond the 105mm fan. Lt Kaheny adjusted rounds up the slope as one of the NVA flashed the finger (the universal sign of disrespect). The next round blew off the top of the hill along with all NVA there.[540]

It was now about 1800H. "We were low on ammo, we were all real tired, it had been a long day."[541] Five minutes later, all hell broke loose as the NVA fired from XD756454. "Evidently when we took out their Observation Post they were not quite ready to assault, but [now] they had to, because we were leaving. They all stood up out of the grass and attacked up the hill, supported by mortars, RPGs and grenades."[542]

The initial rounds killed two 19 year-olds: PFC Thomas Hendershott's radio was pierced with bullets that tore into his body, and LCPL Roger Hurd was shot and killed as he fired his M-16 with a round that went in one armpit and exited the other. In addition, there were four serious WIAs.[543]

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[534] 26Mar 180601Z/May67, Opn CROCKETT INTSUM #5. "AO"=Aerial Observer.
[535] French word meaning "spit."
[536] Kaheny, John, "Squalls Between the Storm," Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay* 55 (Spring 2003) 54; Conversation with John Kaheny, 04 May 1990; "Vietnam Chronology of John M. Kaheny, Jan 67 – Jul 68," p. 6.
[537] Kaheny, Conversation of 04 May 1990; Kaheny, "Vietnam Chronology..," cidted.
[538] Kaheny, "Squalls..," *op. cit.*, p. 55.
[539] Kaheny, Conversation of 04 May 1990. About 1100H, Admiral U.S.G. Sharp, Commander in Chief, Pacific, the Unified Commander in charge of all military units and activities in the Pacific (including Vietnam), along with LtGen Lew Walt, CG, III MAF, and MGen Bruno Hochmuth, CG, 3rdMarDiv, visited KSCB. [COC 3rdMarDiv 211330Z/May67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #33]. They then proceeded to visit A/1/26 on Hill 881-South, [1/26 ComdC May67, p. 3] distracting the A Company Commander from attending to A3's situation. [Kaheny, "Vietnam Chronology.." *op. cit.*]
[540] Kaheny, "Squalls..," *op. cit.*, p. 56.
[541] Kaheny, Conversation of 04 May 1990.
[542] *Ibid.*; Kaheny, "Squalls..," *op. cit.*, p. 56.
[543] Kaheny, "Squalls..," *op. cit.*, p. 56; Conversation with Russell Turner, 09 January 1995.

Les Faurebrac recalls: "Everything was so quiet and one second later it looked like Custer's Last Stand. I was never so scared in my life."[544] And, "At times there was so much fire in the air it sounded like Puff the Magic Dragon was with us. I thought we were cut off and surrounded with little chance of making it out."[545] "The NVA had us. They assaulted uphill... They could of walked around behind us, got up on the ridge-line and sealed off our exit completely, and then attacked us from the high ground and we wouldn't—[of returned]."[546]

"A Marine Remembers on Memorial Day"
By John M. Kaheny

"Suddenly, the Cat of Death leaps from a tree line on the exposed flank of the platoon. Two young rifleman, each but nineteen years old, shun available cover, stand up, stand fast and fire into the charging horde. Taking the full force of the enemy's assault, they purchase with their blood a precious gift of reaction time for their fellow Marines and Corpsmen. Helmets fade slowly into chest high grass and soon disappear from view. Eventually forty-one make it back to safety, some bleeding, none broken, but the two go on home to rest forever beneath marble crosses. Their names, Private First Class Thomas Edward Henderschott and Lance Corporal Roger Michael Hurd, are now etched in stone on that Wall beneath Lincoln's watchful eye. The years have passed but everyday I see their sacrifice reflected in the smiling faces of my children. For had not those two brave men held their ground with everything they had, Coleen, Meghan and John Peter simply would not be, because one of those they saved that day was me..."

A medevac helicopter attempted to land to extract 8 seriously wounded Marines, but with 200 rounds of small arms fire directed on them, they waved off. Artillery was called within 50 meters of A-3. Eventually the choppers returned, evacuated the wounded, and the platoon was able to disengage as jets dropped DELTA-2 bombs[547] on the NVA,[548] and OAKGATE gunships ran rockets on the NVA. While moving to Hill 881-South, A-1, led by 2/Lt "Rusty" Reeves, assisted in their return and they got inside the wire as darkness descended.

About a week later, Lt Kaheny was briefing in the command bunker on the base when he "noticed there were four holes in my right trouser leg near the crotch. There weren't any on the left leg. I asked Master Sergeant Dubois why they only put ventilation holes in the right leg and not in the left. The old Master Sergeant looked at me like most Master Sergeants looked at Second Lieutenants, went over and picked up a 7.62 caliber round, returned and showed me how I got the holes in my leg. And then I realized how close those bullets had been coming on the 21st of May—2 of the 3 round bursts right through the folds of my trousers. The other [round] went right in between!"[549]

03 JUNE 1967

BODDEN, MSGT Timothy Roy	**HMM-165**
DEXTER, SGM Ronald James	**FOB-1**
GARDNER, CAPT John Garrett	**HMM-165**
HANSON, MAJ Stephen Paul	**HMM-165**
LANEY, SGM Billy Ray	**FOB-1**

It was now early June, 1967, and NVA build-up was escalating near Khe Sanh.[550] Based on 1,200 signal intercepts in one day, the SOG launch site at Khe Sanh[551] dis-

[544] Les Faurebrac, letter of 12 February 1988.
[545] Les Faurebrac, letter of 18 March 1990.
[546] Conversation with Les Faurebrac, 16 September 1990.
[547] MK 82 500-pound General Purpose Bombs.
[548] 26Mar 220600Z/May67, Opn CROCKETT INTSUM #9.
[549] Conversation with John Kaheny, 04 May 1990.
[550] NVA units, moving into Quang Tri Province in May, 1966, were soon detected and a Marine Operation (HASTINGS) inflicted heavy losses on them. They learned, however, that the Marine reaction force had been at the expense of Marine-supported pacification, considerably relieving pressure on local Communist forces from Hue to DaNang. In addition, the NVA thrust had also drawn forces from III Corps. (This was to provide the background of the 1968 Tet Offensive strategy). Beginning in January, 1967, NVA forces in the DMZ were realigned and augmented. The Hill Battles revealed Division-strength entry into the area. Extensive bunkering and automatic weapons emplacements were discovered along the Laos-Quang Tri border near Route 9. CIA reported that a former NVA officer disclosed NVA plans for a gradual increase in the size of attacking forces, moving to regimental and divisional operations by the summer of 1967, embracing all I Corps [CIA: Intelligence Memorandum, *The Communist Build-up in South Vietnam's Northern I Corps*, 11 May 1967, in LBJ Library, National Security Files, Vietnam Country File 2A(1) I Corps & DMZ 11/66 – 1/68 #44.
[551] MSGT William D. "Billy" Waugh, the senior permanent party person at the Khe Sanh launch site from June 1966 – January 1968, supported teams of for Phu Bai-based FOB-1 operations into Laos as part of Operation SHINING BRASS, changed in early 1967 to PRAIRIE FIRE. The Launch Site also included a communicator, Danny Horton, and two radio operators. Teams launched in H-34s consisting of 3 Americans and 2 – 7 Montagnards on patrols not less than 5 days; one patrol remained in the field 65 days. Targets were exploited with a Hatchett Force of 60 – 80 men. [Conversation with William D. Waugh, 30 Oct 1988].

patched a 80-man HATCHETT force into OSCAR-8[552] to conduct a BDA of a massive B-52 Arc Light strike on what was reputed to be the headquarters for the entire Ho Chi Minh Trail.[553] The place was XD793044, a very small piece of flat land roughly 460 meters high, surrounded by cliff-like hills out to 3,000 meters away rising 900 to 1200 meters, about 24 miles almost due south of KSCB.[554] The location was reported to be protected by a NVA regiment. Only 4 aircraft, not the 18 planned, had struck the target.[555]

Since only 4 B-52s had struck the area and the area was under heavy thunderstorms with high winds, the initial insertion, scheduled for 0630H on 02 June 1967, was delayed until 1600H.[556]

Captain Stephen Wesley Pless, TIGER THREE, launched as section leader of two UH-1E gunships from VMO-6,[557] and joining with 2 additional UH-1Es from VMO-2, escorted 5 Marine CH-46 helicopters of HMM-165 and 9 Vietnamese helicopters to insert the 80man SOG HATCHETT force. The Vietnamese H-34s were the first aircraft into the landing zone, 2 of which received hits from small arms fire.[558]

Major Richard Eugene Romine of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM)-165 (of MAG 36) launched as Flight Leader ("SHARK LEAD") of the 5 CH-46A and 9 UH-34D transport helicopters. As the aircraft debarked the first half of the force,[559] it was immediately apparent that the zone was ringed by enemy automatic weapons and the fire so intense as to make the zone normally unacceptable. This discovery was not, however, made until the insertion was already in progress, and it became mandatory that the remainder of the troops be inserted to ensure the safety or at least the chance for safety of those already on the ground.[560] The NVA had 12 – 15 automatic weapons, each with 2 – 3 heavy caliber guns, mostly 12.7mm, and the noise was deafening.[561]

Billy Waugh, monitoring everything from a helicopter, recalls: "We tried to keep the birds from going in, but we couldn't. There was so much screaming on the radio when all that was taking place. We used three different channels, UHF, VHF, and FM for the team, but as the gunships were going down, they were on the UHF, and they couldn't hear anything but a bunch of screaming. They said, 'Hell, we got to get those guys out!' So they did what they thought they had to do."[562]

As the UH-1E gunships continued to deliver suppressive fire, the lead aircraft, VT-4, piloted by Maj G.H. Coffin, received several hits and crashed a few minutes later in a densely forested area 2500 meters from the LZ.[563] Maj Romine, observing the crash, immediately debarked his reaction force passengers into the LZ and flew to the crash site which was marked by Capt Pless. Maneuvering along a mountain slope, he located the wreckage deep in the dense jungle along with its crew who were unable to move due to the terrain, the enemy presence, and the pilot's broken back from the crash.[564] Realizing that time would not permit a properly equipped helicopter to be dispatched to the site without endangering the lives of the ground crew, he began the rescue despite adverse weather and terrain. Unable to land in the area covered with 100-foot high trees, Maj Romine hovered at tree top, remaining in that precarious position exposed to heavy enemy fire and gusting winds as the hoist was lowered through a narrow opening in the trees. He remained in this position 25 minutes and successfully extracted the four Marine crew.[565] During the extract, he dumped fuel as each new crewmember was rescued to compensate for the weight, taking care not to spray JP-4 on the survivors. "When the last was aboard my low fuel level light had been on for several minutes and I briefed my crew that I was almost certain we couldn't make Khe Sanh. We did! My Crew Chief (CPL Bradshaw) was so awe-stricken that he opened the tanks to measure what we had left and couldn't even wet a dip-stick!"[566]

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[552] OSCAR-8 was a target designation. Targets in August, 1966, included GOLF-4 (XD628586), HOTEL-4 (XD563564), INDIA-4 (XD553513), and JULIETTE-4 (XD 645549). [COMUSMACV 040430Z/Aug66, Subj: SHINING BRASS INTENT MESSAGE]. Targets covered 6 – 12 grid squares of area, and they overlapped so that every point was within 4 different targets. By overlapping, SOG could comply with the American Ambassador in Laos (Sullivan) who prohibited more than 3 Americans on the ground in any one target area. By overlapping, 12 Americans could be placed with 4 different recon teams. [Conversation with Harve Saal, 16 June 1990].

[553] Letter of Mr. William D. Waugh, 22 October 1988.

[554] Map Series L7015, Sheet 6341 IV; Letter of Mr. Richard Romine, 09 March 1988.

[555] 3rd MarDiv 031810Z/Jun67, Special Spot Report, in III MAF COC Journal and File 3-4 June 1967, #199.

[556] Romine letter, cited; CO, VMO-6, letter 10:WJW:gjh, 1650, 25 Sep 1967, in DFC file on Capt Robert Lynn Henry, Jr.

[557] CO, VMO-6 ltr 10:WJW:glh, 1650, 25 Sep 1967, Subj: Distinguished Flying Cross; recommendation for, in DFC file for 1/Lt Dalfe Theodore Almida. First aircraft: Pilot Capt S.W. Pless, Co-pilot Capt R.L. Henry, Crew Chief LCPL J.R. King, Gunner LCPL A. C. Bowen, Jr. Second aircraft: Pilot 1/Lt D.T. Almida, Co-pilot Capt T.J. Peckman, Crew Chjief LCPL C.R. Mitchell.

[558] Statement of Capt R.L. Henry, Jr., in DFC file on Maj Richard Eugene Romine.

[559] DFC Citation, Major Richard Eugene Romine.

[560] Statement of Capt Robert W. Byrd in SSM file on Capt Stephen Wesley Pless.

[561] Romine letter, cited.

[562] Conversation with William D. Waugh, 30 October 1988.

[563] DFC Citation, Major Richard Eugene Romine.

[564] Romine letter, cited.

[565] DFC Citation, Maj Romine; Aircraft Mishap Flash Report 021640Z/June67 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 3-4 June 1967, #21.

[566] Romine letter, cited.

When the UH-1E helicopters returned at first light on 03 June, the ground unit reported they were in contact with the enemy on all quarters and required assistance. Each strafing run was met with increasing enemy anti-aircraft fire until the entire valley seemed full of automatic and individual weapons fire,[567] mainly 37mm fired from bluff tops which encircled the zone for 200°. The mission was felt to be a suicide mission due to lack of prep in the area of suspected strong resistance and lack of sufficient air cover for extraction.[568]

After return to Khe Sanh to brief SOG, assess damage, rearm and refuel, the flight returned to the area to attempt an emergency extraction, but was hindered not only by the massive enemy force, but also lowering overcast and heavy thunderstorms.[569] An emergency extraction would have to be executed immediately since nightfall was approaching. The SOG team leader expressed doubts they would be able to hold off the enemy until reinforcements could arrive, and they had several severely wounded needing immediate medical attention. The enemy was closing in on their haven, a crater made by a 750-pound bomb, the only protection they were able to reach.[570]

Maj Romine, the first 46 in the zone, had set his chopper in the trees. With the exception of three NVA, no other enemy were visible and after stripping the aircraft of anything that might aid the enemy, the crew gathered up all the ammunition, weapons, and any other gear they could carry, and fought their way for about 15 minutes through a dense jungle forest to the tenuous shelter of the large bomb crater. Survival became a team effort for the 51 in the crater. Maj Romine as senior person organized a tight defense, directed the fire of the men and repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire as he improved the defense. The defensive zone was marked for the pilots making strikes by having all available strobe lights shine prior to each flare drop and air strike around the rim. This enabled the 2 A-1 Sky Raiders—the only fixed wing available—to attack any target outside the lights and yet bomb very close. Utilizing valuable experience gained from a tour with ANGLICO, Maj Romine assisted the TACA in calling close-in air-strikes.[571]

The survivors were huddled around the rim of a slimy red muck-bottomed crater approximately 12' deep and 30' across, and were probed 360°. From approximately 1600H on 03 June until approximately 1500, 04 June, Maj Romine directed both air strikes and flare drops without sleep or relief, some strikes as close as 10' from the crater. They were hopelessly outnumbered.

In addition to their grave predicament, rain clouds blew into the area, soaking everything and denying use of close air support aircraft at a very critical time. Everyone shivered in the mud throughout the lonely, anxious night as sounds of construction filled the night from the enemy creeping closer and closer, clearing fields of fire, preparing fortifications, and emplacing additional automatic weapons.

A second CH-46A (SHARK-2), piloted by Captain Jack Hill McCracken (co-pilot Capt John Henry Hartman IV), upon seeing Maj Romine's aircraft crash, landed, embarked 16 troops, and was successful in leaving the zone.

A third CH-46A (SHARK-3, plane #150955), piloted by Capt Stephen Paul Hanson (co-pilot, John Garrett Gardner, and Sgt Timothy Ray Bodden and LCPL Frank Edward Cius, Jr. as crew) in aircraft YW-7, embarked 12 of the survivors including SFCs Billy R. Laney, Ronald J. Dexter, and Charles F. Wilklow. The loading was difficult since the ramp, although open, was so high off the ground the two gunners, Bodden and Cius, had to pull each man up onto it. SFC Laney had already been wounded in his back. When the gunners determined enough passengers had embarked, they signaled the pilot who was looking to the rear, and he immediately lifted.

Both gunners ran forward to their .50 caliber machine guns and began firing as the plane lifted. Unfortunately, Capt Hanson as he lifted turned YW-7 toward the heaviest enemy concentration, probably not realizing they were there. The helicopter immediately started to receive fire which became increasingly intense. "By the time we got right over them bullets were flying all through the aircraft. I think several passengers were hit at this time. About that time it sounded as if one or both engines quit and the helicopter started down rapidly. We continued to be hit by bullets all the way down. We hit hard and I bounced off my seat onto the floor. I estimate that we came down through trees about 50' tall. It appeared that we landed right in the middle of an enemy camp because there was a hut not more than 2 feet from the left side of the aircraft and we were sitting in a cleared area under the tree canopy. There were other huts and clearing nearby."[572]

Sgt Timothy Bodden was hit in his stomach, got to his feet clutching his stomach and was hit a second time in the same area and fell to the deck of the helicopter where he remained motionless with his eyes closed. (It is

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[567] CO, VMO-6 letter 10:WJW:glh, 1650, 25 Sep 1967, Subj: Distinguished Flying Cross; recommendation for, in DFC file of 1/Lt Dalfe Theodore Almida.

[568] 3rd MarDiv COC 031810Z/Jun67, Special Spot Report, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 3-4 June 1967, #199.

[569] Statement of Capt Stephen W. Pless in DFC file, 1/Lt Dalfe Theodore Almida.

[570] Statement of Maj Richard E. Romine in BSM file, Cpl Michael Stephen Bradshaw.

[571] ANGLICO=Air/Navy Gunfire Liaison Company.

[572] Statement of SFC Charles F. Wilklow in MIA file on Timothy Roy Bodden, Library of Congress MIA files Reel 223, Folder #121, Vol. 1.

believed that he died). He was wearing a flak jacket, and the rounds seemed to enter just below it.[573]

Cius, meanwhile, continued firing and was able to fire 300 to 500 rounds before both engines were knocked out and the helicopter crashed at approximately 1705H with a hard jolt in an upright positions in trees 50 to 100 foot tall, approximately 340 meters from the rest of the survivors (at XD795050),[574] just a few kilometers from commo-liaison station T-19 of Binh Tram 33.[575] It was suspended about 4 and a half feet off the ground by trees, and continued to receive a heavy concentration of fire from three different directions.[576]

"The enemy continued to pour fire into the sides of the aircraft after we landed. There seemed to be a particularly heavy stream of bullets coming in the windows where the .50 caliber machine guns were mounted... One Nung was jumping from window to window firing a M-79 grenade launcher. Each time he would fire, a hail of bullets would come in the same window just as he jumped to the next one."[577]

SFC Charles F. Wilklow was hit in his left knee by a bullet, but was able to hobble on his feet. There was an explosion inside the aircraft spraying Wilklow and Laney with what seemed to be acid. "I got a little on my face and quite a bit on my lower arm. It was very painful. SFC Dexter seemed to be hit in the face by the same stuff. When that happened, he said, 'I'm getting out of here.' He left and I haven't seen him since."[578] The enemy fire subsided and more was fired on the right side of the aircraft. Wilklow pulled himself over the half-door on the right side and fell to the ground. Captain Hanson, wounded in his thigh or abdomen, followed. The aircraft was still under fire and Wilklow crawled behind a log as the enemy began tossing grenades against the left side of the helicopter and into the windows. Captain Hanson said he had to return to the chopper to get his carbine, and left. Wilklow decided to move further away, went over a hill crest and down a small stream.[579]

Three indigenous passengers of YW-7 successfully made their way to the crater position of the 51 survivors about an hour after the crash. This was the first they were aware of the crash.[580]

In addition to a back wound received prior to being pulled into the helicopter, SFC Billy R. Laney had a badly broken leg and was unable to move. When SFC Wilklow attempted to examine him, he said, "Please don't touch me." Laney remained on the aircraft when Wilklow departed.[581] According to a statement of Cius in 1973 after repatriation, Laney "..had sustained shrapnel wounds in the back prior to the extraction and subsequently received additional injuries on lift-off, was seriously wounded and appeared to be in a state of shock."[582]

Captain Hanson received a bullet wound to his right leg and was last seen alive in the helicopter. He was close friends with Capt Jack H. McCracken—both pilots having served in HMM-165 for two years. Hanson, due to rotate home in June, 1967, was very anxious to see his wife and child.[583] SFC Wilklow later stated: "I crawled forward and saw one of the pilots crawling out of the cockpit into the cabin. The other one was already in the cabin lying on his back trying to use his survival radio to broadcast MAYDAY. I don't know which pilot was which. The one crawling out of the cabin appeared to be wounded in the upper thigh or lower abdomen. The pilot lying on the floor appeared to be hurt but I don't know how bad or what type injury he had."[584] According to later interviews, Vietnamese said that Capt Hanson was shot in the head and died; 1/Lt Gardner was shot in the chest and died.[585]

In 1969, Hanson's 2 ½-year-old son, Todd, was quoted in a newspaper article, "Please God, bring my daddy home soon," as a prayer he said every night as he got down on his knees beside his bed. Hanson, a former school teacher, had arrived in Vietnam just 10 days before his son, Todd, was born. His wife, Carole, also a former school-teacher, was quoted as believing her husband was still alive and would return home.[586]

In an article printed at the time of Hanoi's release of American POWs (1973), Todd was now 6 ½, and his mother explained the possibilities that the following afternoon would bring concerning Hanoi's accounting of American POWs. "Carole Hanson thought about the passage of time.. when she sat on her son's bed and tried

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[573] Summary of the Incident, 7 Mar 1979, and Statement of Frank E. Cius of 16 March 1973, in MIA file on Bodden, cited.

[574] Joint Task Force Full Accounting Narrative, Case 0720, in MIA file on Bodden, cited.

[575] Case 0720 in MIA file on Capt Stephen P. Hanson, Library of Congress MIA reel #333, folder #168.

[576] Intelligence Synopsis, INTC-BFH-mls, 3461, in MIA file on Bodden, cited.

[577] Statement of SFC Charles F. Wilklow in MIA file of Bodden, cited.

[578] *Ibid.*

[579] *Ibid.*

[580] CO [F.E. Wilson], MAG-16 letter 17:FEW:wcd, 3040, 03 Jul 1967, Subj: Final Report of Missing Persons..., in MIA file on SFC Billy R. Laney, Library of Congress MIA Reel #343, Folder #32.

[581] Statement of Wilklow, cited; Message #76, 061115Z/Jun67, from CO,. FOB#1 to CO, C&C Det.

[582] Summary of Experiences of Staff Sergeant Frank E. Cius, Jr., USMC, AO2A-THM-fcs, 3461.

[583] 7th Counterintelligence Team Rpt 7CIT-013-3E-67, 27 June 1967, based on intv with Capt McCracken, 13 June 1967, in MIA file of Capt Stephen Paul Hanson, microfilm Reel #333, Folder #168.

[584] Statement of Wilklow, cited.

[585] MIA file on SFC Laney, Library of Congress MIA Reel #343, Folder #32.

[586] Gene Cowles, "Please, God, Bring Daddy Home Soon," Orange County (CA), *Evening News*, 6 April 1969, in MIA file on Capt Hanson, cited.

to prepare the boy for the possibilities of the next day... The bedside talk had taken about a half hour... It was plain Todd was trying to grapple with the real possibility that a father he had never known might never be home. After minutes of silence, Carole Hanson had heard the gentle sobs of a boy too early forced to be a man..." The phone rang at 5 or 5:30 PM. The voice said, "Carole, Steve's name is not on the list." Todd, playing outside, came to the door. His mother said, "Todd, your daddy is safe in Heaven with God."[587]

Approximately 45 minutes after the crash, Capt Hanson told Cius to leave the aircraft and attempt to establish a defensive perimeter. Cius never again saw Hanson, Gardner, or Bodden. Cius was armed with a Thompson Submachine gun and one of the indigenous had one fragmentation grenade. The group, consisting of Cius, Dexter, and ten indigenous soldiers, departed the immediate area and spent the night on a hilltop approximately 200 meters east of the crash site. The following morning extensive enemy movement continued in the area and the group did not return to the crash site, but traveled the entire day without encountering any enemy. At dusk they arrived at a 2-lane dirt road and spent the night. The next morning the group continued to move, and as they passed a Montagnard hamlet, became separated. A short distance further, Cius, Dexter, and one Montagnard soldier were captured by North Vietnamese Army regulars.[588]

After capture, the 2 Americans and ten Montagnards were repeatedly beaten with sticks and rifle butts as they walked into Quang Binh Province where they were placed in trucks for further travel to North Vietnam. Prior to entering Thanh Hoa City they stopped at a bombed-out bridge and waited to cross. At that time, Dexter asked for medicine for his stomach and leg wounds. Ha Van Son, an interpreter for the group, requested medicine from the NVA guard. The soldier thought Dexter wanted a cigarette and gave him the one he was smoking. Dexter took one puff and threw the cigarette away which infuriated the guard who proceeded to beat him on the back with his rifle butt. Dexter yelled at the guard for which he was again beaten. After crossing the bridge, Dexter asked the guard to stop the truck so he could urinate. The request was denied. Dexter insisted and shook the soldier's leg and was again beaten on the back and nape of the neck. Dexter moaned and urinated in his trousers. The truck stopped at Hau Loc village [WH901006] where Dexter climbed down the side of the vehicle, collapsed on the ground, and called for Cius. According to the interpreter (Son) and the source (Chen, who later informed Ly Son), Dexter told Cius that he missed his wife and he wanted Cius to keep his wedding ring and return it to his wife. Dexter then lapsed into a coma. Cius and the Vietnamese carried him and placed him on the ground outside a civilian house where at 0330, 30 June 1967, Dexter died. The body was wrapped in his and Cius' hammock, placed on the truck by NVA guards, and driven away.[589] During their movement, Dexter told Cius that he was 34 years old and had 6 children.[590]

(Following the events of Capt Romine, Capt McCracken, and Capt Hanson, the first three CH-46s sent to rescue the survivors, Capt Robert William Byrd, alternate flight leader, held the remainder of the flight back from landing and called in fixed wing support. When no fixed wing aircraft were available and darkness closed in, he directed the remaining helicopters to return to Khe Sanh.[591] Throughout the night, plans were developed as terrain features, availability of fixed wing, and developments at the crater holding the survivors, were considered. To decrease the vulnerability of the larger CH-46A helicopters it was recommended that the entire extraction be performed by 9 VNAF H-34s while Capt Byrd led a section of CH-46As as airborne SAR.[592]

On 4 June, low clouds precluded fixed wing support and gunships launched and expended all their ordnance in support of the 51 in the crater. At 1500H, after hours of aerial bombardment, a helicopter armada which now included 6 USMC CH-46As, 9 Vietnamese Air Force H-34s, 2 VNAF O1Es, and 2 A1E Skyraiders, launched.

When the first H-34 landed, Cpl Bradshaw dashed out of the crater with sniper bullets bursting at his heels, and lifted aboard five wounded soldiers for evacuation. He stood right in the middle of the zone to prevent the H-34s from being over-loaded.[593] The third VNAF H-34 was shot down as it exited the zone and the crew and passengers were retrieved by two other choppers. Another H-34 was shot up so badly it was unable to pick up any passengers,. As the last H-34 made its way out of the zone, 12 people remained to be rescued. Capt Romine recalls, "when we got out the place smelled like a barbecue."[594] Capt Byrd's section of Sea Knights was now

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[587] Robert Kistler, "MIA Family Still Waiting—and Hoping," Los Angeles *Times*, 27 Feb 1973, clipping in MIA file of Capt Hanson, cited.

[588] POW Operation Homecoming file on SSGT Frank E. Cius, Jr., CMC rpt AO2A-THM-fcs, 3461 [in Marine Corps archives 127-74-65, Box 1, and 127-77-0049, Box 35].

[589] USDAO Saigon RVN 190831Z/Oct73, Subj: Follow up on six Americans in Laos; in Library of Congress MIA file on SFC Dexter, Reel #246, Folder #93. Other documents indicate 0330, 29 July 1967 [DAAG-PSC-S, DEXTER, Ronald J., 11 Apr 1973, Subj: Review of Missing/MIA/Captured Personnel, in DEXTER MIA file, cited.]

[590] Homecoming Marine Debriefing Team 6, St. Albans 120502Z/Apr73, in Library of Congress MIA Reel #452, Folder #422.

[591] DFC file on Capt Robert William Byrd.

[592] CO, HMM-165 ltr 01:RER:hfb, 1650, 31 Oct 1967, Subj: Silver Star Award; recommendation for, in DFC file, Capt Robert William Byrd.

[593] Statement of 1/Lt John C. Jones in BSM file on Cpl Bradshaw.

[594] Romine letter of 22 April 1986, cited.

committed and within seconds Capt Byrd was sitting in the zone, aware that his larger helicopter would draw more fire. He remained in a hovering position with only two wheels touching the deck as the last dozen men of the SOG patrol embarked. Back at Khe Sanh, Capt Byrd refueled his helicopter, instituted repairs—enemy fire had knocked out his electrical power—and requested clearance to search for the Captain Hanson and the downed crew missing from the previous night. His request was over-ruled by higher authority, however.[595]

No search was made for survivors on 4 June since all aerial resources were involved in the extraction of the 51 survivors. Poor weather and enemy fire on 5 June prevented determination whether or not an air panel that was spotted was part of those from YW-7. Then, on 06 June, a single person was spotted in a bomb crater next to a colored panel, and he was retrieved by a Vietnamese helicopter. It was SFC Charles F. Wilklow, badly wounded, suffering from lack of water, and in a state of shock. He said he had departed the aircraft alone and evaded the enemy until picked up without having come in contact with any of the others on the aircraft.[596])

05 JUNE 1967

IBANEZ, GYSGT Di Reyes — A/3rd Recon

The disappearance of Sgt Di Reyes Ibanez, shrouded in mystery, haunting those who were with him, generating numerous speculations, may never be solved. The Marine Sergeant, third oldest in a family of seven children (oldest male), all born in the Philippines, was named "Di" after his father, a U.S. Navy veteran, whose name, Deo Gratias, was shortened to Di. His mother died when he was 11, was a very religious Roman Catholic, and during his first year in college before he joined the Marines, he was still very active in the church. In addition to the father, one of Di's brothers served in the U.S. Army and another in the USMC. His sister, Dina Sepe, remarks, "..it really runs in the family; I think it's in the blood."[597]

Sgt. Albert R. Lumpkin[598] recalls that A Company, 3rd Recon Bn, at Khe Sanh had lost several men and 18 to 20 were sent to Okinawa to retrain and integrate several new Marines for recon, among whom was Sgt Ibanez. The cadre from the recon company soon knew Ibanez as a good Marine, the type "..that knew the Marine Corps 'manual' from cover to cover and could answer a question very quickly and accurately. During training in the field in Okinawa, however, "..he just couldn't seem to get himself together. He wasn't good in the field." He was quick as a cat and had a black belt in karate. He constantly moved, was pretty well disciplined, and got along with everyone, although he maintained a certain personal distance. His knuckles had an ungodly appearance from heavy calluses since he continually practiced striking a small 2 x 4 board about 6 – 8 inches long which was wrapped with twine used for tents. "He would sit there with each hand, individually, and keep hitting it and keep twisting his wrist." He kept that board with him always, taking it even to chow and in the field on training maneuvers.[599] Ibanez had almost ten years in the Marine Corps by this time, and one of the Marines in his unit, Mark M. Hughes, thinks he was involved in operations into Laos in the early 1960s.[600]

The training in Okinawa was cut short due to the Battle of the Hills and the necessity for recon teams to scour the area following that battle. On 04 June 1967, two different teams (total of 17 men), NEPTUNE I and NEPTUNE II, one led by Sgt Gary D. Trowbridge and the other by Sgt Albert R. Lumpkin, 4A1 and 4A2, were to be inserted together, then split off into their respective RZ [recon zone]. The mission of the two teams was: "to find a company size HLZ and a suitable area for a Bn-size command post in the vicinity of LL XD8934 UR XD9137 and search in the vicinity of LL XD9132 UR XD9335.[601] It was Ibanez' first combat recon patrol. Sgt Trowbridge, 4A1, was the senior patrol leader while they operated as a single patrol.[602]

All were given their particular gear. Ibanez, Assistant Patrol Leader, was given a claymore mine, used to secure positions at night or any other time the team harbored. Ibanez, however, was not satisfied. "He liked to carry a gas mask full of grenades with him because you wouldn't give your position away at night by throwing a grenade. He carried a bag with about 25 frags in it."[603] Sgt Lumpkin objected: although Ibanez was in excellent

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[595] Later, Steve Pless, who would be awarded a Medal of Honor for another incident, was killed in a motorcycle accident at Pensacola in 1969; Jack McCracken was killed in an automobile accident at Pensacola in 1967. [Romine letter of 09 March 1988, cited].

[596] CO, MAG-16 [F.E. Wilson] ltr, cited.

[597] Conversation with Dina Sepe, 15 November 1992.

[598] Patrol Leader of one of the two recon teams comprising this patrol. After leaving the USMC, Lumpkin worked for the Pennsylvania Narcotics unit until he died of an unexpected heart attack 09 Dec 2000.

[599] Taped comments of Special Agent Albert R. Lumpkin, 06 May 1986. Others have said that Ibanez was "quick as a cat" (exact words): Letter of Rev. Gary Trowbridge, 2 April 1986; conversation with James Hutton, 10 August 2004.

[600] Conversation with Mark M. Hughes, 06 November 1991.

[601] 26Mar msg of 07 Jun 1967 (no DTG) to CG, 3rd MarDiv, Subj: Debrief of Recon Patrol 24-67. HLZ=Helicopter Landing Zone; LL=Lower left (of the grid square recon zone box); UR=Upper right (of the grid square recon zone box).

[602] CO, Co A, 3rd Reconnaissance Bn, AKW:drp, 5800, 16 Jun 1967, Subj: Investigation into the disappearance of Sergeant Di R. Ibanez, 1896393/0311, USMC, while on patrol in the vicinity of Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam on 5 June 1967, p. 2; Rev. Gary Trowbridge letter of 2 April 1986.

[603] Conversation with Mr. John Franklin, 06 December 1986.

physical condition, slender and muscular, it was still too much weight; Lumpkin feared that if he became fatigued, he might pawn off the grenades on the other Marines in the patrol. Ibanez insisted, however, and assured Lumpkin that he would carry the grenades until the end of the patrol.[604]

The two teams sat on the airstrip all day, waiting to be inserted by helicopter. The weather, however, made flying impossible: there was an especially low ceiling and as the day progressed, pouring rain.[605] The teams were therefore trucked to their insertion. However, the truckload of Marines were sent in the exact opposite direction of where they were to be inserted, ending up on the Laotian border! "We drove and drove. It just didn't feel right, like we were in an area that was extremely remote, like we were in the wrong place, an awful strange area... We had one of the smaller guys climb a tree to give us an idea [where we were]. We called in WILLY PETER rounds. We couldn't see the cloud; we couldn't see anything. We concluded, we're not at any point near where we're supposed to be. Quite awhile had passed, a couple of hours. They finally called us back and said they were coming to get us. We waited and waited and they took us back in. It was getting quite late in the afternoon by this time."[606] The teams were inserted at 041645H at XD 885399.[607] (Mark M. Hughes testified the time as 1715H.[608]

Sgt Lumpkin was very uneasy. It was, by now, becoming late, not permitting time to determine if they had been spotted during their insertion or to move off to a different location to harbor for the night. (Recon teams frequently would harbor in one site; then, after dark, furtively move to another harbor site in case they had been spotted, thus obviating assault). Had any enemy force heard the commotion from the trucks and spotted the Marines without helmets and flak jackets, they would know it was a lucrative target to be exploited. Some WILLY PETER registration rounds were called; the teams were sure of their location. The two teams moved a short distance to a location along a small cliff overlooking a river, a place they could defend, and set in for the night in a 360. Lumpkin noticed that Ibanez was quite nervous, constantly moving his gear around. "I remember going over to him on more than two occasions and telling him that he'd have to settle down and stay in one spot... I'm sure he was scarred, being his first patrol, maybe. He had a M-16 and went out and set his claymore, got all his gear together, got adjusted, and set in for the evening. It had started raining, and was just an absolute downpour. You almost couldn't see your hand in front of your face, and of course it started getting dark."[609] The jungle at night is a matter of complete darkness! Trowbridge and Lumpkin whispered to each other, planning the next day's activities.

Then, with the distracting sounds of the nearby rushing river and the whistling wind of the storm, in a downpour of rain, and in 10-12 foot-high elephant grass,[610] in the cold,[611] in complete darkness,[612] it happened.

The official patrol debrief states: "At 050010H June 1967 several members of the team heard a sound like something falling in the brush about 30 meters from their position (XD905399). About five minutes later the patrol heard a short (about one second) human groan."[613] Cpl Mark M. Hughes, located approximately 2 meters from Ibanez,[614] hearing "sounds of a scuffle, like a grunting, and movement in the bushes and thrashing around over and above the rain,"[615] "thought we were being overrun. I grabbed my weapon and jumped towards Sergeant Ibanez's position. I landed on Sgt Ibanez's rifle, but I could not locate him. In the mean time, PFC James A. Seastrom awoke and came over by Sgt Ibanez's position. I told him to cover me while I crawled out to see if I could locate Sgt Ibanez. I crawled out approximately 20 meters from our position. It was raining very hard and there was no visibility. I crawled in a zigzag manner searching with my hands. I thought I felt the canvas part of a jungle boot but it was only a pouch containing his magazines."[616] (PFC James A. Seastrom testified, "I awoke to a sharp and sudden moan. I grabbed my rifle and got to my knees."[617] Jack J. Gottlieb recalls, "The evening of 5 June 1967, myself and Sergeant Trowbridge were on watch. Our watch began at 2330 and ended at 0100 thereabouts. I heard more or less a moan to my left flank. I turned my head in that direction and [there] was a large figure to my direct front. I reached for my rifle

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[604] Taped comments of Albert R. Lumpkin, 06 May 1986

[605] Conversations with John Franklin, 06 December 1986 and 22 March 1990; conversation with Mark M. Hughes, 06 November 1991.

[606] Lumpkin, *op. cit.*

[607] 3rd MarDiv COC 040832Z/Jun67, Opn CROCLETT SITREP #88; Debrief of Recon Patrol 24-67, cited. This location later became the site in August, 1967, of company-size patrol base (manned by C/1/26) following the 21 July 1967 battle in connection with the 175mm guns sent to KSCB. WILLY PETER=White Phosphorus rounds fired as "registration rounds;" artillery could accurately pinpoint the splash point of the explosion within a meter; patrols could therefore determine their location by observing where the round exploded.

[608] Statement of Mark M. Hughes, 8 June 1967, in CO, Co A, Investigation, cited.

[609] Lumpkin, *op. cit.*

[610] Conversation with John Franklin, 06 December 1986.

[611] Conversation with Mark M. Hughes, 06 Nov 1991.

[612] Letter of Rev. Gary Trowbridge, 02 April 1986.

[613] Debrief of Patrol 24-67, cited.

[614] CO, Co A, Investigation, cited, p. 2.

[615] Conversation with Mark M. Hughes, 06 Nov 1991.

[616] Statement of Mark M. Hughes, 08 June 1967, in CO, Co A, Investigation, cited.

[617] Statement of James A. Seastrom, 08 June 1967, in CO, Co A, Investigation, cited.

and took the safety off. I then realized it was Corporal Hughes to my direct front. I stared at him a second."[618] Howard G. Vaughn testified: "I was awakened by a noise which sounded like someone moaned and moved some bushes."[619])

Hughes crawled over to Sgt Lumpkin and "..whispered to me that while he was on watch he had heard what he thought was a noise. In trying to describe the noise, he thought it sounded as though someone had been hit or punched in the stomach—kind of a UGH! noise in the area where Ibanez was. He called over to make sure Ibanez was still there, and Ibanez was not there. I sent Hughes back to his position, thinking maybe Ibanez had just gone out to—to go to the bathroom.[620] Sgt Gary D. Trowbridge reported hearing "a sharp crack like someone falling down on some brush."[621]

Hughes "took a .45 and a K-Bar and went out and followed the claymore wire. I couldn't see anything. I didn't know if my eyes were playing tricks on me or if anything else was going on, but it was like you could see movement. And when I was going back, I found one claymore we had set out, and it was turned around. So I turned it back. I remember I had enough presence of mind to reach around it and reach under it very slowly to make sure it wasn't booby-trapped. I turned it back and stuck it towards the root of the tree. I came back and said, Man, he is gone! Nobody wanted to believe that somebody got grabbed from the security of our harbor site. And by that time it was only a couple of hours 'till dawn, and we waited."[622]

Hughes came back and said, He's still not there. I again asked Hughes what kind of a noise it was he heard, and it was like somebody got hit or slugged; that's the best way he could describe it. I sent Hughes back to his position and I then crawled over to Ibanez' position. Ibanez was not there. I couldn't see his gear. It was too dark. Of course, as you well know at night recon doesn't use flashlights. So I started feeling around and found that his rifle was laying there, up over his gear. The pouch of grenades was there and his deuce gear. I just couldn't understand where he was. I went back and told Trowbridge and we were both rather stupefied on what to do. We didn't feel it was necessary to call back to the command post cause there was nothing they could do at the time. We figured the best thing to do is wait for first light and then find out what's going on, which really, at that time, wasn't that long of a period away, maybe an hour. We waited for first light."[623]

As noted, Ibanez had been moving about at the beginning of the patrol. He had, in fact, "a habit of wandering off to be alone in garrison."[624] Sgt Trowbridge assumed that Ibanez had moved to better cover from the rain. He requested illumination, but was still unable to see anything.[625]

At 0715H, the recon patrol reported to RAINBELT ALFA [Co A, 3rd Recon Bn CP] Ibanez as missing since 050001H.[626] Sgt Lumpkin recalls that nobody other than Hughes heard anything, that George W. Hee and Craig C. Kuhlenbeck, near the river, had not heard anything, but, "it was very difficult to hear anything because how heavy it was raining."[627]

At first light the patrol scoured the area. They round Ibanez' M-16 on "automatic" which was unusual because Marines always carried their rifles on "safe."[628] Mark M. Hughes found Ibanez' dental plate that fit on the roof of his mouth with 4 teeth on it, split down the middle.[629] The pieces were covered with blood. Drag marks were found like "someone dragging their feet or someone dragging an object on the ground."[630] "An extreme chill at that point went through me, thinking that if they—who were they or whatever was that close all night, why didn't they take the rest of us or why they didn't try for the rest of us. I followed the drag marks probably 10 or 15 yards of our position. Branches and leaves and stuff were broke in half. It was a very short scuffle if it was a scuffle at all. It was very short and sweet."[631] Sgt Lumpkin, along with Cpl Vaughn, Cpl Holmes, and LCPL Schloerb, found a fighting hole which would hold three people 50 meters east of the patrol's harbor site which showed signs of recent use, and a harbor site 20 meters east of the fighting hole was found which could hold 8 – 10 people which also showed signs of recent use.[632] Hughes recalls, "It almost looked like we set in right next to the goonies, and they were more

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[618] Statement of Jack J. Gottlieb, 08 June 1967, in CO, Co A, Investigation, cited.
[619] Statement of Howard G. Vaughn, 8 June 1967, in CO, Co A, Investigation, cited.
[620] Taped comments of Lumpkin, cited.
[621] Statement of Sgt Gary D. Trowbridge, 8 June 1967, in CO, Co A, Investigation, cited.
[622] Conversation with Mark M. Hughes, 06 Nov 1991.
[623] Taped comments of Lumpkin, cited.
[624] CO, Co A, Investigation, cited, p. 3.
[625] Statement of Sgt Gary D. Trowbridge, 8 June 1967, in CO, Co A, Investigation, cited.
[626] 3rdMarDiv COC 050640Z/Jun 67, Spot Report, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 05/06 Jun 67 #83; 3rd MarDiv COC 051228Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #92.
[627] Taped comments of Albert R. Lumpkin, 06 May 1986, cited; sounds were heard, however, by Sgt Trowbridge, PFC Seastrom, and Cpl Gottlieb [CO, Co A, Investigation, cited.]
[628] Conversation with John Franklin, 06 Dec 1986; taped comments of Lumpkin, cited.
[629] Conversation with John Franklin, 06 Dec 1986; Conversation with Mark M. Hughes, 06 Nov 1991.
[630] Taped comments of Albert R. Lumpkin, 06 May 1986.
[631] *I bid.*
[632] Debrief of Recon Patrol 24-67, cited; statement of Sgt Albert R. Lumpkin, 8 June 1967, in CO, Co A, Investigation, cited.

scarred than we were."[633] Company A/1/26 scoured the area,[634] who found traces of blood on leaves a trail (XD903500) to Lang Kat (1). By 1745H, A/1/26 completed a search of the Bru villages of Lang Kat (1) and (2) at XD904394 and reported that the village had not been inhabited for approximately two months.[635] The recon teams remained with the Grunts that night and continued to scour the nearby areas, sweeping the whole valley.

What had happened to Ibanez?

Rumors began to fly. One was that Ibanez was a spy, that he really wasn't a Philippino but a Vietnamese![636] He was, in fact, very Oriental-looking; whereas some Philippinos appear more Indian or more Spanish, he was more Oriental.[637] Sgt Trowbridge recalls that on the ship from Okinawa, he apparently told some of his team that on the first patrol he would disappear, and Trowbridge believes that he walked off in the country there.[638] "Some of the guys told me that while on the ship, Ibanez had said that he was going to defect and join the North Vietnamese. To this day, I believe that he did, or at least tried to do so. I don't believe that it happened any other way."[639] This, however, does not explain blood on the trail and leaves, cracked dental plate, leaving his rifle and other gear, and the sounds of scuffle, nor does it fit with the description of Ibanez as being a good Marine.

SSGT James L. Hutton, who accompanied the patrol for orientation, being his first, thinks that Ibanez was snatched. He recalls that the little village nearby, Lang Kat (1) had two suspected VC living there for a long time.[640] Col John D. Waghelstein (CO of the A Team at Khe Sanh in 1965-66) recalls the French planter that occupied this area, Llinares, as a bit of "unfinished business I didn't attend to before I left Vietnam. We had a recon element out and they had spotted him on the road about two o'clock in the morning by himself. Shortly thereafter, maybe a minute or two, a patrol of VC came by following him and my intel handler named Minh was convinced that he was—we always had known that the guy had a lot of connections. We always thought that he was involved in supporting the VC in one way or another and Poilane didn't have much to do with him."[641]

Another theory was that Ibanez was attacked and dragged off by a tiger, noted by John M. Kaheny, a Platoon Commander of A/1/26 that searched the area immediately after the report of Ibanez' loss.[642] Tigers freely roamed the area.[643]

Another possibility may be the corpse discovered in the Hill 689 area on 13 July 1967 at 1000H at XD804408 containing a NVA harbor site used by an estimated 20 NVA. A part of a USMC utility uniform was found, covered with flies. Odor in the area indicated a dead body, but none was initially found. Further search of the area revealed empty ChiCom ammunition cans and tunnels cut into the brush. At 1245H, Co K/3/26 reported finding the remains of one Marine body at XD804408, estimated to be 15 days old, ID unknown. Body was 6'1"

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[633] Conversation with Mark M. Hughes, 06 Nov 1991.
[634] 3rdMarDiv COC 051228Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #92.
[635] 3rdMarDiv COC 051430Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #93 and 3rdMarDiv COC 061150Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #94.
[636] Tape of Lumpkin, cited.
[637] Conversation with Mark M. Hughes, 06 Nov 1991.
[638] Conversation with Rev. Gary Trowbridge, 22 Sep 1994
[639] Trowbridge, letter of 2 April 1986, cited.
[640] Conversation with James Hutton, 10 August 2004. Note, this is the area of the Rome plantation which was subsequently farmed by Llinares, and for several decades a place of spies and intrigue. [See p. 12 of this book and the comments concerning the death of Pharmacist Wolff in February, 1964].
[641] Conversation with Col John D. Waghelstein, 09 May 1986
[642] John M. Kaheny, "Squalls Between the Storms," Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay* 55 (Spring 2003) 59.
[643] Fallaci, Oriana, *Nothing and So Be It*, Trans. Isabel Quigly, Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1972, p. 224, quotes: "The only bad thing in Khe San was the tigers. You had to shoot them or they'd eat you. Madame Bordeauducq [Eugene Poilane's wife], the owner of the plantation, spent whole nights in the trees firing at the tigers and by the time she was old she'd killed forty-five. She used to say: 'I don't like to kill the tigers, but they eat up my peasants.'" Madame Madeleine Poilane [Felix Poilane's wife] writes: "We were right in the middle of the coffee harvest in 1958 and for sometime we had known that a tiger, a manp-eater, was roaming around the villages. He had already killed a dozen Montagnards. One Sunday morning, after we returned from Mass, the Montagnards of the village of Ta Can came to tell us that a woman had just been killed by the tiger. The women, there were five of them, had come into the *ray* (rice field) to pull weeds. The victim's mother was among them. The tiger had laid in wait for them and had jumped on the woman, mortally wounding her with its paw. (They know just where to strike). The mother and the three other women had then screamed and pulled on one side of the woman while the tiger pulled on his side in an attempt to drag off his prey to devour it. They eventually succeeded in driving off the tiger..." [Letter of Madame Madeleine Poilane, 06 July 1990]. Gerald J. Howland, with the first Special Forces team at Khe Sanh in 1962, recalls: "The Bru would leave us if the tigers came, and that was every night. They didn't believe you could kill a tiger, so they wouldn't mess with them. They attributed a lot of religious power to a tiger." [Conversation with Gerald J. Howland, 20 March 1989]. Jacques Standing, with the same unit: "Every time they [the Bru] didn't want us to go in the area, they'd say, 'There's teegers, teegers!'" [Conversation with Jacques Standing, 20 March 1989]. In January, 1969, a 400-pound tiger was killed by members of a small Marine recon team standing watch near Fire Support Base Alpine (north of Khe Sanh) after it attacked one of its members. ["Tiger Killed Near Viet Border," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 5:1 (3 Jan 1969) 1.

tall and approximately 180 pounds. The body was decapitated and right arm was missing. Two M-14 magazines and ammunition, two M-26 grenades, one compass, and one cartridge belt with one canteen was found on or in the vicinity of the body. The area was further searched and the head was located near the body, but no evidence of the right arm or weapon was found.[644] One might speculate that since the right arm was missing, and Ibanez was proficient in karate, it might have been severed and taken "for its magical properties." The Joint Task Force, Full Accounting, in Hawaii, lists this KIA as SSGT Gilberto Caballero, Jr., who was a Marine from BLT 1/3. BLT 1/3, however, was at this time operating in the Con Thien area in Operation BUFFALO/ HICKORY II[645] 30 miles from Khe Sanh! Also, the Death Certificate for SSGT Caballero indicates not only decapitation and right arm missing, but also his right leg is missing, and the latter was not indicated in the SITREP. It is therefore unlikely that this KIA is CABALLERO, and might very well be Ibanez, although the finding of M-14 rather than M-16 pouches and ammunition does not agree with Ibanez having a M-16.

Lumpkin went to his grave with apprehensions: "It has always been in my mind. God bless him. I hope [*long pause*] it wasn't too bad for him."[646] John Franklin: "I've had something just eating me to death in the last 20 years."[647] We are left with a great mystery.

06 JUNE 1967

BARNES, EOCS Donald Joseph	**NMCB-10**
BURKE, CPL John Roland	**H&S/1/26**
HUBBARD, BUL3 Charles Austin	**NMCB-4**
LAWRENCE, LCPL Larry Eugene	**HqCo 26Mar**
SHERRELL, CPL David Frank	**A/3rd Recon**
SPEIR, CPL Dale Lloyd	**A/3rd Recon**
STUPAR, LCPL Michael Nick	**H&S/1/26**
WITHEY, CPL Howard Hugh	**A/3rd Recon**

Shortly past midnight (at 060105H), approximately 19 very sudden loud, screeching rockets pierced the calm, silent, very dark summer jungle night, exploding on Khe Sanh Combat Base, killing two, wounding eleven.[648]

Rodney C. Little was sitting on an orange crate playing cards when the rounds crashed, striking the nearby Seabee tent just across the roadway, striking the top of the tent pole so that it detonated as an air burst.[649] Senior Chief Equipment Operator Donald J. Barnes had been sent to KSCB to maintain the heavy equipment used to construct roads and facilities at the rapidly-expanded base. 05 June 1967 was the first day of his second tour of Vietnam service. The Seabee camp at Dong Ha was later named in his memory.[650] During the attack, Gunnery Sergeant James Wilkinson Moore, Jr., of H&S Co., 1/26, dashed from his bunker to the Seabee bunker, but was knocked back into his bunker by the blast. Although he suffered bruises to his ribs and torn cartilage, he still ran to the Seabees and assisted in the evacuation of the wounded, only after which he allowed himself to be treated and evacuated.[651]

At 0125H, the secret SOG unit located at the Old French Fort just east of Khe Sanh village, received 6 mortar rounds.[652] The main attack, however, was an assault up the very steep slopes of Alpha Relay on Hill 950 (XD844456). This aerie was used as a radio relay since the PRC-25 radios used by patrols moving in the steep hills and declivitous valleys were "line-of-sight" and frequently moved into positions where it would have been impossible to communicate with the headquarters on KSCB were it not for this high radio relay site. Approximately 40 – 50 North Vietnamese Army soldiers of the 6th Battalion, 95th Regiment, 325C Division, attacked from Hill 1015 to its east.[653]

Two sheer cliffs on either side of the outpost of Hill 950, one facing KSCB and the other facing the Rock Pile, along with a very steep and rocky slope to the east, facing Hill 1015, helped to create a sense of security for those atop the position. A gradual slope opening into a grassy area on the western side of the hill provided the most probable access to the position. Two machinegun

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[644] 26Mar 131105Z/Jul67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #245. Note: the 2 MIA from CAC at Hill 689 from the skirmish there of 27 June were recovered. Neither I/3/26 nor L/3/26 reported any MIAs from their battle there. The entire area had been scoured thoroughly following the battle there on succeeding days.

[645] Telfer, Rogers, and Fleming, *op. cit.*, notes on pp. 163-164 that BLT 1/3 on 6 July was involved with a tank that had been knocked out by NVA rockets. "The fighting around the disabled tank became so savage that the BLT did not reach the burnt-out hulk until 1000 on the 7th of July." The history reports that BLT 1/3 sustained 8 KIAs in this battle.

[646] Lumpkin tape, cited.

[647] Conversation with John Franklin, 06 Dec 1986.

[648] 26Mar 052300Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #95; 1/26 ComdC Jun67, Encl (1), p. 5. The rounds appeared to be fired from XD803464. 26Mar ComdC June 1967 lists the rocket and mortar attack as commencing at 060150H. [26Mar ComdC June 1967, Encl (1), p. 2].

[649] Letter of Rodney C. Little, 12 July 1993; Conversation with Rodney C. Little, 15 July 1993.

[650] Bows, Ray A., *Vietnam Military Lore 1959 – 1973, Another Way to Remember*, Hanover, MA: Bows & Sons Publishing, 1988, pp. 188-189.

[651] Statement of 2/Lt Norman C. Cefail in Bronze Star Medal of GySgt James Wilkinson Moore, Jr.

[652] Opn CROCKETT SITREP #95, cited.

[653] 1/26 ComdC Jun 1967, Encl (1), pp. 5, 7.

positions were set up, #1 facing Hill 1015 and #2 oriented to the gradual slope.[654]

Eighteen Marines manned the outpost,[655] including nine Marines from Headquarters Co., Security Platoon, 26th Marine Regiment (SGT Richard Baskin, the NCOIC, CPL Richard Green, LCPL Larry Lawrence, LCPL Charles Richard del Castillo, CPL J. B. Powell, LCPL William C. Balzano, PFC David Stevenson, and PFC Steve Arnold) which had been sent to man the outpost to provide security for the Marine communicators on Monday, 28 May 1967, relieving Marines from Sub Unit #5.[656] "We walked into hell at Khe Sanh."[657] Also manning the outpost were six radio operator Marines of H&S Co., 1/26 (including CPL Dale Lloyd Speir, CPL John Roland Burke, LCPL Kenneth S. Howard, LCPL Michael Nick Stupar, and LCPL Kenneth S. Howard) and three radio operator Marines from A Co., 3rd Reconnaissance Bn (CPL David Frank Sherrell, CPL Dale Lloyd Speir, and CPL Howard Hugh Withey). "The Marines were told a tour of duty on top of Hill 950 was like R&R, so no one ever thought there was a need to fortify the hill. Never thinking their lines would be penetrated, they did not sandbag the rear of the shallow foxholes housing the M-60 machineguns."[658] It was very easy for these people to just lob grenades in and be effective."[659]

LCPL Castillo and PFC Arnold were on watch the evening of 5 June when, at 2230, Castillo saw rockets hitting KSCB and yelled to awaken Sgt Baskin, in charge of the security detachment atop the outpost.[660].

At 0150H, a trip flare ignited about 30 meters out from the hill's east side, and a minute later, a RPG fired by the NVA sailed over the tiny hilltop and detonated a trip flare on the west side of the perimeter. Then the eastern side of the hill began receiving hand grenades, a few RPGs, and a high volume of small arms fire.[661] Cpl Green and LCPL Balzano, awakened in their tent on the west side adjacent their M-60 foxhole (position #2) as AK47 rounds stitched the top of their tent.

Shortly thereafter, PFC Arnold was deafened by concussion from a RPG, started screaming incoherently, and was placed in the ammo bunker by LCPL Balzano as CPL Green moved to fortify the south (right) side of the perimeter against a possible enemy assault.

LCPL Castillo yelled "Incoming grenades! Everybody get up! We're under attack!"[662] A grenade had exploded in front of his position on the west side of the hill.[663]SGT Baskin yelled to CPL Withey, the recon radioman on watch, to bring in artillery on the east side of the h ill.[664] SGT Baskin ran out of his hootch and "before anybody knew it, there were NVA swarming up the eastern side of 950 and grenades were going off all over the place. I could hear people screaming and hollering and there was a lot of confusion. At the time I was standing outside my hootch."[665] SGT Baskin dashed into his bunker and grabbed his M-16, disregarding his flak jacket or cartridge belt.

CPL Powell's machinegun #1, on the eastern side of the hill, was immediately overrun in the initial attack, seriously wounding CPL J. B. Powell, LCPL Lawrence, and PFCs Monroe and Stephenson. Their machinegun, guarding the eastern sector of Hill 950, became unserviceable and the Marines decided to fall back towards LCPL Balzano's position.[666] LCPL Larry Eugene Lawrence, A-Gunner of the machinegun, covered their withdrawal as the three wounded men went first. While withdrawing, the three wounded were fired upon at close range by the NVA. LCPL Lawrence, seeing this, stood and fired point blank at the enemy, driving them back and allowing the three men to make it to safety. While facing the enemy, LCPL Lawrence was hit, fell, stood up again, and was again wounded and killed.[667] SGT Baskin saw him get hit, stand, and get hit again: "I wanted to go out, but I just couldn't. There were NVA on our right flank and they were penetrating right up through the center.[668]

PFC David Stephenson, followed by PFC George D. Monroe, staggered into the position manned by LCPL Richard C. Green and PFC Jeffrey L. Arnold, as PFC Monroe yelled, "Cpl Powell has been hit." At that moment, two grenades were thrown into Green's hole, but

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[654] Balzano, William C., "The Saga of Hill 950, The Battle of June 5-6, 1967," undated, appended to letter from William C. Balzano, 22 July 2005.

[655] Sgt Boo Pitner, "Early Morning Attack by NVA Stopped by Radio Relay Crew," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:27 (7 July 1967) 1.

[656] *Ibid.* Statement of Sgt Richard W. Baskin, 18 June 1967, in Silver Star Medal file of LCPL Charles Richard Castillo.

[657] Charles Richard del Castillo, notarized letter of 6/1/2003, appended to Letter from William C. Balzano, 22 July 2005.

[658] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[659] Comments of Sgt Richard W. Baskin, USMC Oral History Tape #1196. Date of interview: 23 June 1967.

[660] Security Platoon, Sub Unit #1, Headquarters Company, 26th Marines (Forward), Lt David Campbell, OinC.

[661] 26Mar 071342Z/Jun67, Summary of the Enemy Activity on Hill 950.

[662] Statement of LCPL Richard C. Green, 18 June 1967, in Silver Star Medal file of Sgt Richard William Baskin [upgraded to Navy Cross; Stevens, Paul Drew, ed., *The Navy Cross*, Forest Ranch, CA: Sharp & Dunnigan, Publishers, 1987, pp. 26-27].

[663] Statement of LCPL Charles R. Castillo, 10 June 1967, in SSM [NC] file of Sgt Richard William Baskin.

[664] Statement of Sgt Richard W. Baskin in SSM file of LCPL Charles R. Castillo.

[665] Comments of Sgt Richard W. Baskin, Tape #1196, cited.

[666] Statement of Sgt Richard W. Baskin in SSM file on LCPL Charles Richard Castillo.

[667] OinC [D.D. Campbell] ltr DDC/jm, 1650, 18 June 1967, Subj: Silver Star Medal; recommendation for, in SSM file of LCPL Larry Eugene Lawrence; Statement of Sgt. Richard W. Baskin in SSM file of LCPL Charles Richard Castillo.

[668] Comments of Sgt Baskin, Tape #1196, cited.

although they exploded, no one was injured. A trip flare went off on the east side showing four North Vietnamese soldiers jumping up and down on top of the radio bunker. LCPL William C. Balzano killed two with the machinegun while PFC Arnold and LCPL Green killed the other two with their rifles. SGT Baskin had moved into a hole in front of Green and Arnold to cover the southeast as LCPL Castillo dashed from the hole containing LCPL Balzano's machinegun and took over SGT Baskin's position, killing several NVA soldiers. The NVA moved to bunker in the center of the hill where they set up three machineguns, pouring heavy fire on the Marines in bunkers on the perimeter.[669]

LCPL Balzano "saw another trip flare ignite, illuminating a sea of NVA charging from the rear. He swung his M-60 around since the onslaught was coming from the [hill] 1015 side of the hill by what seemed like hundreds of NVA.[670] Bullets kicked up dirt in front of him, but, oblivious to his jeopardy, he "..opened up the machine gun and just kept firing, having more than 1000 rounds belted together so reloading was infrequent. Another flare went off and it appeared that now the NVA were dancing on the tops of bunkers without their helmets but wearing bush hats.. Balzano thought they might be high on drugs because they were holding their rifles over their heads, laughing and jumping up and down. It was a frightening, lonely feeling because Balzano thought only he and Arnold had survived the invasion. Balzano quietly called out to SGT Baskin who was in a nearby bunker and believed he answered but wasn't able to hear clearly over the [deafening] noise. He was somewhat relieved, thinking another Marine might [still] be alive."[671]

Although the position atop hill 950 was very small, the dark night, the turmoil of the attack, and the noise, fragmented the defenders. A bunker occupied by CPL David Buffalo, CPL Dale Lloyd Speir, and LCPL Kenneth S. Howard of H&S Co., 1/26, "PINEFOLD RELAY," had been isolated throughout the attack. CPL Buffalo was on the radio, calling in artillery on positions from where the NVA fired as the other two Marines looked and listened for rockets from the north fired over the hill toward KSCB. Following the fourth volley of rockets, Howard heard grenades explode on the outpost, and CPL Buffalo reported the outpost was under attack. CPL Speir spotted a NVA soldier entering their bunker and unloaded half a magazine on him. LCPL Howard, spotting three NVA attempting to enter the adjacent bunker, left his bunker and opened fire on them. While outside his bunker, another NVA soldier tossed a grenade into the bunker containing Buffalo and Speir.[672] It has been raining for about ten days and the deck of the bunker was soft mud. Buffalo was near his rack as Speir moved from side to side. "When the grenade went off, I remember feeling something hot hitting me. Howard came back into the bunker. Neither of us knew at that time what had happened to Speir. It was at this time I whispered to PINEFOLD[673] I was hit and the camp had been overrun. They asked me to key my set, once for yes, twice for no, in response to their questions if it got too dangerous to speak. I told them to fire on the camp as it seemed we were the only ones left and we were in the bunker. As we found out later, Speir was already dead... The ground was muddy. I always thought the grenade that killed him and wounded me had sunk in the mud before it went off and he had caught shrapnel in his chest because he wasn't wearing his flak jacket and I was saved because the combination of the grenade sinking and my being on the top bunk, away from the major explosion. It could be true that Speir either fell on the grenade partially or it landed on him, but as I recall, he was standing... As the night wore on, I prayed that we would be safe and made every promise in the book if God would see me through this."[674]

Meanwhile, a bunker containing 4 snipers was hit by grenades. Two Marines, CPL John Roland Burke and PFC Thomas R. Back, dashed from the bunker, but a ChiCom grenade exploded in their midst knocking both snipers into their bunker.[675] CPL Burke was badly hit in his head and, although profusely bleeding, attended to LCPL Carper, also wounded. Burke placed Carper on top of the rack and placed his body on top of his body to keep shrapnel and other flying objects from hitting the wounded Carper. CPL Burke, after rendering aid to the wounded, then charged the enemy from his bunker and was killed by a deadly hail of enemy fire.[676]

SGT Baskin observed three NVA throw the charges or grenades into the sniper's bunker and heard their

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[669] Statement of LCPL Richard C. Green in SSM [NC] file of Sgt Richard William Baskin.
[670] Balzano, William C., "The Saga of Hill 950..," *op. cit.*
[671] *Ibid.*
[672] Statement of LCPL Kenneth S. Howard in BSM file of Cpl David William Buffalo.
[673] Radio call sign for 1/26.
[674] Letter from David Buffalo, 20 November 1989. David Buffalo received wounds in both legs from the thigh to the neck as well as a hole in his ear, and was medevaced to DaNang to Japan to Alaska to Edwards AFB, to Hanskin Field in Boston. [Conversation with David Buffalo, 09 March 1990]. Howard emerged without a scratch! Howard, according to Buffalo: "God was certainly looking upon him because when that grenade went off, and he came back in the bunker without a scratch.. God was certainly looking after him as He was looking after all Marines on that particular night." [Comments of David Buffalo at Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, 21 July 1990, Nashville, TN, printed in Khe Sanh Veterans *Newsletter*, Issue #12 (Nov., 1990) 14.
[675] Statement of PFC David Stephenson in Navy Cross file of Cpl John Roland Burke.
[676] Navy Cross Citation, Cpl John Roland Burke.

screaming. He also saw two emerge, only to be cut down by the waiting NVA despite his attempts to provide cover for them. At this point, SGT Baskin took a Willy Peter grenade, pulled the pin, let the spoon fly and held it. "I finally released the thing and I saw the soldier and he was looking at me and I was looking at him, and it h it him right in the chest and it went off. And it was terrible. It just blew him off his feet. His partner there caught a fraction of it and both of them were aflame. This one, he may have been a Lieutenant; he was a good-looking young man, and he was just blown to pieces. He was like ash when I found him that morning."[677]

PFC Stupar dashed from the recon bunker, only to be shot and killed.[678] The recon bunker was hit by a RPG that entered the bunker through an opening and exploded inside, killing the three occupants.[679]

The hilltop was shrouded in dense fog. Trip flares created eerie silhouettes. SGT Baskin heard B alzano tearing away with his machinegun. As SGT Baskin moved, CPL Powell, the gunner on the other machinegun position that had been overrun, came up to Baskin, fell at his knees and said, "Sarge, help me. I need help. I'm hit in the back." SGT Baskin grabbed him and dragged him to his hootch. "There's lead flying all around. There's grenades. You could hear rockets to the northwest over our heads heading towards Khe Sanh. At the same time we could hear artillery pounding from Khe Sanh over our heads and then eventually was coming right down on top of us."[680]

LCPL Balzano "then saw a muzzle flash and got a glimpse of a large number of NVA crawling up the center of the hill. He began throwing as many hand grenades as humanly possible to allow the machine gun barrel to cool off and decoy the NVA from the machine gun position. After throwing cases of grenades, PFC Arnold, now deaf from the earlier concussion but able to function, found grenades still packaged in their canisters, opening them with a bayonet because the dampness swelled and sealed them, continued to feed them to Balzano to throw. We each saved one grenade apiece in case we were captured. We knew they would kill us slowly, taking pleasure in the mutilation of our bodies, so we were prepared to use the grenades on ourselves."[681]

During a lull, LCPL Balzano managed to change barrels on the machinegun, thinking that the barrel was burned out since it glowed when last fired. A NVA round exploded and he saw CPL Green sail through the air. Although hit in the leg by shrapnel, Green said he was okay. He also saw two Marines, which he thought to be Castillo and Green, to his right firing. They kept the side covered while he kept the center covered, walking his machinegun fire side to side from a point in front of him to the far end of the hill. The M-60 finally jammed.[682]

Balzano and PFC Arnold desperately attempted to repair the M-60, breaking it down and checking each piece, but were unable to fix it.[683] Balzano told Baskin: "I can fire one round, but can't get any sustained rate of fire out of it, no automatic fire." The weapon had been previously test-fired, but he was only able to fire 200 – 300 founds and it jammed."[684]

Hand grenades were getting low, so LCPL Balzano found a willie peter grenade in his bunker. Not recalling the time delay, he saw a NVA coming around the side, popped the spoon, counted, and threw it, hitting the NVA soldier about chest high as it exploded, causing the enemy soldier to scream a cry he says he will never forget.[685]

SGT Baskin saw PFC Steve Arnold with CPL Powell who was seriously wounded: "..his elbow on one of his arms was plain and I saw blood running out of one ear, and he had shrapnel wounds covering one portion of his body. It just scarred me. I was scarred. I was frightened. This was my first fire fight and I knew—I'm in a position now where everyone's depending on me as I depend on everyone else."[686]

CPL Buffalo, who was wounded about 0130, had remained on the radio directing artillery on the enemy positions and finally on the hilltop itself since the position had all but been lost. He later noted that it was a good thing the artillery didn't have the correct coordinates "or else he wouldn't be here today." Although Khe Sanh base fired "everything but the kitchen sink," he was unable to determine its effectiveness due to the night and the fog that socked them in. Then, either a RPG or grenade came into his bunker, killing Speir and wounding himself and Howard.[687] (Note: in July, 1967, Marines from 2nd Topographic Company who surveyed the Khe Sanh area, determined that Hill 950 was actually 963.29 meters high.[688] Rounds fired from KSCB to the northern slope of Hill 950 obviously didn't clear the summit!)

The NVA force clearly had fire superiority in addition to their element of surprise. SGT Baskin spotted the NVA setting up a machinegun atop the bunker in the center of the outpost and their determination despite being shot at and killed by the American defenders. "I saw

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[677] Comments of Sgt Baskin, Tape #1196, cited.
[678] Statement of Sgt Richard W. Baskin in SSM file on LCPL Charles Richard Castillo.
[679] 26Mar 071342Z/Jun67, Summary of the Enemy Activity on Hill 950.
[680] Comments of Sgt Richard W. Baskin on USMC Oral History Tape #1196.
[681] Balzano, William C., "The Saga of Hill 950..," *op. cit.*
[682] *Ibid.*
[683] Statement of LCPL Richard C. Green in SSM [NC] file of Sgt. Richard William Baskin.
[684] Comments of Sgt Baskin, Tape #1196, cited.
[685] Balzano, William C., "The Saga of Hill 950..," *op. cit.*
[686] Comments of Sgt. Richard W. Baskin, Tape #1196.
[687] Balzano, William C., "The Saga of Hill 950..," *op. cit.*
[688] Diary of Chaplain Ray William Stubbe, entry for 29 July 1967.

two go down, only to be replaced by two more. They were filling sandbags; believe it or not, they were taking sandbags from the base of this position and filling them up, and they built a parapet around this gun.[689]

LCPL Balzano heard something land in his hold, but couldn't find what it was. He later discovered it was a ChiCom grenade which was thrown without the string pulled to detonate it. As he looked up, he saw a head without a helmet starting to come between two bunkers. He aimed to fire, but just before he pulled the trigger, he saw it was CPL Green, who looked at him and smiled![690]

LCPL Green continued to fire at the NVA, and at least five or six fell over the cliff. Marines not in the radio bunkers or on the each machinegun position withdrew in the southwestern side of the perimeter[691] where SGT Baskin established a 360 perimeter around one bunker and two hootches.[692] LCPL Balzano, PFC Steve Arnold, CPL Powell, and PFC Monroe manned a machinegun position while SGT Baskin, LCPL Green, and LCPL Castillo manned a bunker covering the right flank. SGT Baskin refused LCPL Balzano's request to send over one man, thinking the NVA might attempt to penetrate from the right flank. "Why I made this decision I don't know because it turned out to be for the better."[693] Then a ChiCom grenade exploded, peppering the backs of Castillo and Baskin.[694]

By 0220H, SGT Baskin had requested artillery be fired on top of the hill, and the request was granted as artillery, 4.2" mortars, 40mm dusters and 106s blasted the hilltop.[695] SGT Baskin recalled the rounds: "..these twin 40s down at Khe Sanh were firing right on top of us, right directly on top of us, and they were like eyes coming out of the fog. You could see them. They were all over the place. It felt good to have this artillery. I felt as though it wouldn't hurt us, because, you know, we were on the same side."[696]

At 0230H, 3d MarDiv COC reported to III MAF COC: "The situation looks grim on the hill. One report received indicated the position was overrun, however, cannot tell complete situation at this time."[697] Ten minutes later: "3 are reported still alive. Looks like the enemy is trying to overrun the position."[698]

At 0310H, a misfire of the 40mm Dusters resulted in 3 WIA. At 0320H, Recon team VIPER was adjusting fire on the north side of Hill 950.[699] At 0323H, 3rd MarDiv COC reported to III MAF: "All contact has been lost with Marines on Hill 950. Appears position completely overrun."[700] At 0340H, TPQs were fired at XD805465 and XD825485.[701]

At 0500H, fog completely shrouded the outpost and NVA soldiers held the bunker containing three radios in the center of the hill.

The NVA machine-gunner atop the comm. bunker in the center of the hill continued to fire on the Marines.

"Balzano had a M-79 in the hole with him, so he tried to hit the tree behind the NVA gunner with the hope the explosion would annihilate him. He hit his mark on the tree, but without success. The NVA gun still fired. Balzano then decided to wait for him to put his head down and then sight his gun on the spot where he should come up, and kill him. It soon appeared that he was down, so Balzano stuck his head up and found himself looking straight into the eyes of the NVA gunner for what seemed like minutes. Balzano wondered why he would want to kill him; he probably has a family, parents, a home, a wife waiting for him, just like him, when something struck Balzano in the front of his head and knocked him over. He thought to himself that he must be dead and the first thought that came to his head was that he would never get the Corvette he dreamed about. He touched himself all over and realized that he was still alive. The gunner had pulled the trigger aiming at Balzano and in those few seconds he realized it was all for real and acted upon what the Corps had taught him – kill or be killed. After looking at his helmet later he realized that if the bullet wasn't deflected by the liner it would have entered through the top left side of his head and came out of the right side of his jaw. He touched his head and realized, although bloody, that he had only been graced."[702]

SGT Baskin told LCPL Castillo: "We got to get over there; we got to get that radio." LCPL Castillo picked up two of the AK-47 rifles strewn over the area and gave one to Baskin. Castillo, a former sniper, put down his M-16 (which was giving him trouble) and told Baskin: "If I see one, Sarge, I'm going to hit him right between the eyes." "And he did! He knocked one out of the tree,

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[689] Comments of Sgt. Baskin, Tape #1196, cited.
[690] Balzano, William C., "The Saga of Hill 950..," *op. cit.*
[691] 26Mar 071342Z/Jun67, Summary of the Enemy Activity on Hill 950.
[692] Statement of Sgt Richard W. Baskin in SSM file on LCPL Charles Richard Castillo.
[693] Comments of Sgt Baskin, Tape #1196, cited.
[694] *Ibid.*
[695] 26Maqr 052300Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #95; COC 3rd MarDiv 052222Z/Jun67, Spot Report, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 05/06 June 1967, #225.
[696] Comments of Sgt Baskin, Tape #1196, cited.
[697] Resume of Telephone Call, 060230H in III MAF COC Journal and File, 05/06 June 1967, #185.
[698] Resume of Telephone Call, 060250H in III MAF COC Journal and File, 05/06 June 1967, #189.
[699] 26Mar 052300Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #95.
[700] Resume of Telephone Call, 060323H, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 05/06 June 1967, #197.
[701] 26Mar 052300Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #95.
[702] Balzano, William C., "The Saga of Hill 950..," *op. cit.*

and that morning when we found him, he had a round right between the eyes."[703]

Sgt Baskin furtively crept up on the 2 NVA sitting behind a gun, fired on them, and killed them. LCPL Castillo's helmet was shot off his head during the continual NVA fire. SGT Baskin told him to spray covering fire as he maneuvered to the center and assaulted the comm.. bunker occupied by the NVA. "I knew it was e3ither take that bunker or stay here all day, and who knows what may happen?" As SGT Baskin, LCPLs Castillo, Balzano, and Green, and PFC Arnold went on line and assaulted the NVA-occupied comm.. bunker, the NVA fled. "They showed their backs and we were happy. We knew we had them." SGT Baskin seized the bunker along wi8th a NVA POW, and comm.. was restored with KSCB.[704] The Marines heard the NVA dragging their dead from the position and fired at them until they disappeared into the woods.[705]

CPL Buffalo had worried about the antenna sticking out of his bunker. The NVA evidently has assumed no one was alive in his bunker (containing both he and LCPL Howard) and, after the one grenade, had made no further assaults on it. As the morning dawned, "I heard someone ask 'What the hell is Vietnamese "to stop"?' I jumped out of the bunker and shouted 'Americans, Americans!' Someone said, 'Come the hell out of there' and I did with both my hands preceding the rest of me. I was afraid I'd be shot if I didn't. Howard came out after me. I couldn't walk, and Howard didn't have a physical scratch. Howard then took over the radio and got a call from some General saying everything was OK and reinforcements were on the way.[706]

LCPL Balzano remembers CPL Buffalo emerging from his bunker: "We looked at him and he looked bad."[707]

SGT Tom Howard of D/1/26, landed to secure the position.[708]

Following the fight, the Marines secured the perimeter but decided not to touch their KIA, which might have been booby-trapped. They returned to KSCB. "We cried; it was a nice feeling to be safe for awhile."[709] Balzano and Green later returned to the hill to assist in fortifying the perimeter.

SGT Baskin later killed himself in his attic with a .45.[710] CPL Green and LCPL Balzano, although meritoriously promoted, were never recognized with either a Purple Heart for their wounds nor an individual award for their heroism. William R. Fultineer, also from the Security Platoon, later wrote: "No braver Marines have ever served.. How individuals such as these are simply forgotten is beyond imagination.[711]

Back on KSCB, 2/Lt Lee Klein, the Intelligence Officer sent from Division, recorded a tape he sent home: "One major problem is now they've taken the hill which is right above our base, Hill 950. You'll probably hear about that in the newspapers. If they've taken that we're going to be in some deep trouble. They're going to try and send a rifle company up that hill today to see if they can take it. We don't know exactly what the status of the people is up there. This is the morning now; it's about 8:15 right now. We haven't got a real good idea of what's going on up there. The thing is all cloud-covered right now so we can't see anything."[712]

At 0945H, KSCB received the radio call from Alpha Relay that all friendly were accounted for: 6 friendly KIA, 2 friendly WIA.[713] One of the WIA, Carper, an Afro-American, was covered with shrapnel holes over 90% f his body. At 1230H, weather broke, and helos landed elements of Co D/1/26 to secure and evacuate the WIA and KIA.[714] Cannoncockers of A/1/13 and W/1/13 had fired 3,206 rounds in support of the Hill 950 fight.[715] Marines from D/1/26 scouring the area discovered a NVA WIA, PFC Nguyen Van Chat, of C-9 Co., K-9 Bn, 95th Regiment, 325C Division. The 20 year-old NVA from Thanh Hoa in North Vietnam stated that his unit of 100 men attacked Hill 950 with 50 AK-47s and 38 CKC-90s.[716] PFC Chat disclosed that his unit walked two days and nights from the north (vicinity of Dong La Ruong, XD8551) with only six hours rest in the three days preceding the attack. C-9 Company was composed of 100 men (90 of which were combat effective). The mission of their unit was to overrun the Marine position and then retreat back to their base area at Dong Tri Mountain (Hill 1009, known as Hill 1015 on American military maps). The 325C Division began their infiltration into South Vietnam, crossing the Ben Hai River on 7 March 1967 and their first engagement was this attack on Hill 950.[717]

Following the battle, two platoons were left on the hill to construct adequate defenses. After sufficient wire and other defenses were complete, it was planned to re-

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[703] Comments of Sgt Baskin, Tape #1196, cited.
[704] *Ibid.*
[705] Statement of Sgt. Richard W. Baskin in SSM file on LCPL Charles Richard Castillo.
[706] Letter from David Buffalo, cited.
[707] Balzano, William C., "The Saga of Hill 950..," *op. cit.*
[708] Notarized letter of Charles Richard del Castillo, 6/1/2003, in Letter of William C. Balzano, 22 July 2005.
[709] *Ibid.*
[710] Notarized letter from Charles Richard del Castillo, 6/1/2003, in letter from William C. Balzano, 22 July 2005.
[711] Notarized statement of 15 Nov 2003 in letter from William C. Balzano, 22 July 2005.
[712] Lee Klein, taped letter home, 06 June 1967.
[713] 26Mar 060425Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #96.
[714] 26Mar 061030Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #97.
[715] 26Mar, AAR, Opn CROCKETT, Encl (1), p. 3.
[716] 26Mar 070550Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT INTSUM #25.
[717] ACoS, G-2, 3rd MarDiv, Special Intelligence Study 11-67 (Khe Sanh, South), 2/PAD/rb, 3800, Ser: 02A161-67, 10 June 1967, Encl (4), p. 1.

duce the number to approximately 26 men to include communicators, scout-snipers, and infantry.

John Franklin, who had been on the Ibanez patrol, was sent to Hill 950 as one of the recon radio operators. 'I went up, rebuilt the bunker. They sent up another guy to help me stand watch because staying on it 24 hours a day was tough. I was sitting there pulling dirt clods off the wall of the bunker and a finger rolled out! It stunk the whole bunker up so bad. I called for my secondary man who came in there and got one of those little milk cartons. He took a stick, scraped this thing and put it in the milk carton and threw it away. It was a body part that got thrown back into the wall when the charge went off."[718]

07 JUNE 1967

BLAZ, LCPL James Lujan	B/1/26
CHASE, LCPL John Joseph	B/1/26
CROOKS, CPL Ronald Lee	B/1/26
ENDERBY, LCPL Robert Francis	B/1/26
FURLONG, CPL Edward Francis Jr.	B/1/26
GOTTI, PVT Gale Edward	A/1/13
HEALY, PFC Thomas Michael	B/1/26
JOHNSON, PFC Kenneth Michael	B/1/26
KEEFER, LCPL Kenneth Ray	B/1/26
MILLETT, PFC Steven Lawrence	B/1/26
MORRIS, PFC Larry Lee	B/1/26
PITTS, PFC Wayne Monroe	B/1/26
SHOVLIN, PFC Frank Joseph	B/1/26
VAN DEUSEN, PFC Philip Andren	B/1/26
VERCOUTEREN, LCPL Edward Arnold	B/1/26
VERCRUYSSE, HN Gregory Paul	B/1/26
WARD, CPL Walter Leonard	B/1/26
WORTHEN, PFC Larry Eugene	B/1/26

That significant numbers of NVA remained in the Khe Sanh area following the Battle of the Hills should have been apparent to those who ordered operations in the area following the contact of 21 May. Bravo Company, 1/26, had just relieved Alpha Company, 1/26, defending Hill 881S, when they dispatched a two-platoon size patrol to the same location as the contact of 21 May, moving from Hill 881-South towards Hill 800 (XD759444). All patrols had been using the same route, over a land bridge. During the preceding night, leaders of the patrol expressed their apprehensions. 2/Lt Guy Pete "..told everyone they were going to get hit."[719] The first fire team leader, 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, Gene Weresow, along with Cpl Crooks, told their Lieutenant "..we didn't like the path of this patrol as we ran this same ground several days in a row. We had misgivings about this and the Lieutenant told us these are the orders and we go... I was always of the opinion that someone knew they were waiting for us and let us walk right into that ambush. Wanted to see some action."[720] Lt John Kaheny, "I always suspected that the higher-ups knew that there were large numbers of NVA hanging around just outside 105mm range (11,000 meters) from KSCB and that we were sent out to bait them into range."[721] "Nobody would pay attention to what we were telling them."[722]

At 1105H, the patrol received approximately 15-20 rounds of automatic rifle fire from Hill 881-North (XD775456) during a helicopter landing. The Marines responded with 81mm mortars and 106mm recoilless rifle fire, silencing the enemy—then.[723] A few hours later (at 1320H) the patrol, now at XD760445 (just west and a little north of Hill 881-South) went on line, in a 180 formation as their Line of Departure and as an assault squad moved through this LOD,[724] all received 20-30 rounds of incoming fire followed by an assault from their west by approximately 30-40 NVA,[725] from XD756443.[726] The NVA had the position zeroed-in: "In 10 or 15 seconds the majority of the patrol was decimated. Bravo Company almost did not exist after that. Guys were killed pretty quick because they mortared us. We were in soft covers. It happened so fast; everybody was killed or wounded within a matter of ten seconds."[727] During the mortar attack, a machinegun crew in front of the company CP was hit and LCPL Edward C. McFadden, a company radio operator, removed his radio and moved under the NVA fire to the machinegun position where he opened up fire on the assaulting NVA, only 10 meters from his position, stopping their advance and undoubtedly saving many Marine lives.[728]

Denny Bowers, a radioman in Lt McDonald's platoon, suddenly found himself alone. All those in front of him had been killed as well as those behind him, and in this precarious position, his M-16 jammed! John Joseph Chase grabbed a rifle and ran across the fire-swept area to give to Bowers only to be killed in a burst of automatic rifle fire. Miraculously, Bowers escaped this skirmish with only a second Purple Heart.[729] The Marines

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[718] Conversation with John Franklin, 22 March 1990.
[719] Email from Guy Pete, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, June 2002, posted 13 June 2002.
[720] Email from Gene Weresow, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, June 2002, posted 11 June 2002.
[721] Email from John Kaheny, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, June 2002, posted 12 June 2002.
[722] Comments by John Kaheny at Khe Sanh Reunion, 20 July 1990.
[723] 3rd MarDiv 072057Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #101.
[724] Conversation with Tom Steinhardt, 07 October 1990.
[725] 3rd MarDiv 072057Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #101.
[726] 26Mar 080705Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT INTSUM #26.
[727] Conversation with Tom Steinhardt, 07 October 1990.
[728] Bronze Star Medal file on LCPL Edward Charles McFadden.
[729] Conversation with Denny Bowers, 01 January 1987.

had walked into a carefully prepared NVA ambush.[730] The mortars streaked right over the top of Tom Steinhardt's fire team which didn't get hit. "We sprayed that area and then we started fighting our way up to the top of that ridge. By the time I got up there I was the only one left in the fire-team. Dutch took an AK [round] through the throat."[731]

Most of Eugene Weresow's squad were KIA. There were 2 WIA and Eugene, unwounded. They were on the left flank as the mortars and small arms fire rained upon them. "Most of the platoon fell back to the right side and I was stuck on the left side of the knoll with a wounded Marine and NVA running all over the place."[732]

The Marine patrol returned fire and moved to the reverse slope as artillery, 81mm mortars, and gunships struck the NVA.[733] LCPL Kenneth Ray Keefer, a 3.5" gunner, ran to 2/Lt Dennis E. McDonald asking for targets, and moved through the fire to the right of Staff Sergeant Robert Otis Ward of the Second Platoon. (SSGT Ward had led a squad into a forward position from which he could return fire and throw grenades on the advancing enemy and provide covering fire to protect the CP of the patrol). Along with three other Marines, SSGT Ward held this forward position, dodging grenades thrown from less than 20 meters along with small arms fire. LCPL Keefer, during later evacuation of casualties was mortally wounded while returning to assist other wounded.[734]

HN Gregory Paul Vercruysse, a newly-arrived Corpsman, replacement for Al Winney had arrived as the patrol was departing and begged to accompany it. Winney said, "No, stick around and meet the guys and I'll take this patrol." He replied, "No, I'm here; I want to get my feet wet, let me go." Winney spoke with the Lieutenant who said, "Hey, he's right, let him go." Vercruysse was the first casualty Winney located. "He was trying to get a cigarette wrapper and go ahead and tape up his own sucking chest wound when I got to him. Harvey [DeMaagd, the 1/26 Battalion Surgeon] opened his chest and apparently cut one of his major vessels and he ensanguanated and died. He did everything he could—with a flashlight and a number Ten blade, what more can you do?"[735]

Corpsman Winney's best friend, LCPL Robert Francis Enderby, was also KIA this day. "We had plans of spending time together after we got home. He really wanted to see the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York, my home, some friends, and do some fishing. Bob was our 60mm mortar man, and he was killed by a NVA mortar. I had just left him and he was covering my butt while I tried to get to 2 wounded Marines on our left flank. Someone started yelling 'Corpsman' behind me. I went to them and found a mortally wounded Marine with much of his face gone. I cut a tracheotomy and attempted to resuscitate him when I read his dog tags and realized it was Bob. Over the months with Bob in combat it seemed whenever we had wounded that Bob was always assisting me in carrying them to a medevac chopper. That afternoon I carried Bob by myself with eyes free of tears and a heart full of hate and remorse."[736]

CPL Edward Francis Furlong had joined the 26th Marines as it formed at Camp Pendleton, assigned then to I/3/26. Another Marine in the same company, Gregg Reed, couldn't stand him: "We're both from Irish Catholic families. He was a typical New Yorker. The next thing I know we're best buddies. The day I was transferred, I'll never forget: he gave me a religious medal. And I remember when I spoke to his mother I said, 'Mrs. Furlong, would you like me to send that to you?' And she: 'Absolutely not. He gave that to you."[737]

Lt Guy Pete, watching the entire action from Hill 881-South, went to the 105mm howitzer crew on the western finger of Hill 881-South to ask if they could shoot direct fire. He had them load Willy Peter rounds to identify where the rounds hit and fired until the Company Commander, Capt Connell, called cease fire: the

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[730] John Kaheny recalls a visit by Col Padley (CO, 26th Marines) and LtCol Newton (CO, 1/26) to Hill 881-South just after this incident, saying the action resulted from a chance encounter between patrols. Lieutenant Guy Pete spoke up and said, "Don't you remember two weeks ago [May 21st when we took two KIA] when Alpha-3 almost got cut off just past where Bravo got ambushed. They were waiting for us today." Kaheny recalls, "Soon after that Guy was transferred to recon!" [email from John Kaheny, Khe Sanh Message Board, June 2002, posted 11 June 2002]. Guy Pete: "It was not a chance contact; it was an ambush." [email from Guy Pete, Khe Sanh Message Board, June 2002, posted 13 June 2002].

[731] Comments by Tom Steinhardt at Khe Sanh reunion, 20 July 1990; Conversation with Tom Steinhardt, 7 October 1990. He could not further identify "Dutch," except to note that he had about 20-30 days left to do in his Vietnam tour of duty and was the fire-team leader. "They gook him out to the hospital ship, but he didn't make it. He died of wounds was the word I got."

[732] Letter from Eugene Weresow, 19 December 1996.

[733] INTSUM #26, cited.

[734] Statement of 2/Lt Dennis E. McDonald in SSM file of LCPL Kenneth Ray Keefer. The 4th Endorsement on the recommendation by Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, recommended the Bronze Star Medal with "V" instead of the Silver Star Medal. [FF1-1, 1650, Ser 102/5845, 22 Sep 1967].

[735] Letter from Al Winney, 03 June 2003; Conversation with Al Winney, 15 November 1989. Al Winney's father had served in World War I and was 61 when Al was born. Al wanted him to as proud of him as Al was of his father, and went into the Hospital Corps, U.S. Navy. After serving in neuro-psychiatry at Bethesda, he felt he should be in combat, and volunteered to serve with the Fleet Marine Force.

[736] Letter from Al Winney, 30 July 2003.

[737] Conversation with Gregg Reed, 25 November 1998.

rounds, he thought, were too close.[738] Eugene Weresow, however, credits this fire with saving their hide: "You are right they were close. I was on the left flank all alone at that point and those suckers went right over my head. The NVA got spooked and took off. Otherwise my name may be on that list."[739]

In addition to the artillery, A-1 Skyraiders dropped two 2,000-pound bombs on masses of the NVA. "The bombs looked bigger than the plane; I'd never seen a bomb that big. I don't see how they got in the air!"[740]

2/Lt John Kaheny had been searching with his platoon the area where Ibanez was lost when he got the word to return to KSCB immediately due to the Hill 950 situation. "We were at the airstrip and all of a sudden everything changes." They received word of Bravo Company's contact. "My Company Commander and Company Gunny, Norm Centers and Gunny Parrish, got on a helicopter and went out to 881-South and picked up Guy Pete's Platoon. Guy Pete was there [on Hill 881-South] because Centers took what was left of his platoon to run the medevacs and air strikes. 2/Lt Doug Sykes, the B/1/26 XO was also there, unable to communicate with the patrol due to dead radiomen. John Kaheny, upon arriving with his platoon said, "We got to do something. I got a platoon. I'm going out." "So we took off and went out as the NVA were still making their hat down the slopes of the hills."[741] A-3 departed 881-South, led by John Kaheny, at 1415H.[742]

Upon linking up, a HLZ was established and casualties medevaced as ALFA-6 (1/Lt Norman Centers) directed fixed wing; the NVA broke contact and withdrew to the west at 1640H. John Kaheny moved B-3 under fire to Hill 821 (XD763443) to cover return of the patrol.[743] Casualties: 18 KIA, 16 WIA.[744] NVA strength was estimated to include a company at XD756439 and another company to the north of Hill 821 (XD760445).[745]

Upon return, the Marines were greeted by visiting Generals. One, in starched utilities came up and said, "I understand you really did a fine job out there, Marine." PFC Tom Steinhardt, not realizing it was a Brigadier General, said, "If you really think so, why don't you tell it to the dead!"[746] He notes that they were going to put him in for a Silver Star Medal; he said, "Yeah, big deal! What about the dead Marines and the wounded Marines?" "I was pretty upset."[747] Eugene Weresow recalls a LtGen who said, "Good show, Marine." "At that point I was so disgusted all I could say was something like 'yeah, sure!'... The next morning I was sent down to KSCB to identify the bodies of most of first squad. I remember praying for them, but did not expect what I saw. Some had half a head missing. Others had limbs blown off. God, what a bad scene!"[748]

738 Email from Guy Pete, cited.
739 Email from Weresow, cited.
740 Conversation with Tom Steinhardt, 07 October 1990.
741 Remarks of John Kaheny at Khe Sanh reunion, 20 July 1990.
742 3rd MarDiv 072057Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #101.
743 INTSUM #26, cited.
744 CROCKETT SITREP #101, cited.
745 1/26 ComdC, June 1967, Encl (1), p. 6.
746 Remarks by Tom Steinhardt at Khe Sanh reunion, 20 July 1990.

08 JUNE 1967

MYERS, 1/Lt David Gephart VMO-3

On 08 June 1967, 1/Lt David Gephart Myers launched as pilot of a UH-1E gunship of VMO-3 (#154763), assigned a VR [Visual Reconnaissance] mission for mortar positions west of Hill 881-South. (Capt Boyd Leedean Barclay was Co-Pilot[749] and the crew consisted of Cpl Lannan[750] and LCPL Charles P. Alexander). As they flew approximately 1000 feet above Hill 881, suddenly at 1412H, a big ball of fire crashed through Lieutenant Myers' front window, head on, throwing Lt Myers back into his seat. He dropped his arms to his side and the bird started down in a wobbly flight. A few seconds earlier, another ball of fire and explosion had crashed through Capt Barclay's front window, severing his left hand above his wrist.[751] The pilots had been struck by a .50 cal.[752]

The chopper lost all power and immediately commenced loosing rotor turns, descending into the trees. Acting instinctively and despite his serious condition, Capt Barclay lowered the collective[753] with the remaining portion of his left arm to save rotor turns and expertly

747 Conversation with Tom Steinhardt, 07 October 1990.
748 Letter from Eugene Weresow, 19 December 1996.
749 Capt Barclay, although senior in rank, had less flight time than 1/Lt Myers; Barclay had served his first Vietnam tour in artillery, then went to flight school. [Conversation with Boyd L. Barclay, 22 August 2004].
750 Died of a heart attack *ca.* 2000.
751 26Mar 081120Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #105; Statement of LCPL Charles P. Alexander in SSM file of Capt Boyd Leedean Barclay. Although Alexander's statement indicates that Myers was hit first, Capt Barclay recalls the sequence being that he was hit first, yelled, "I'm hit," and then Myers shouted, "I'm dead! I'm dead!" [Conversation with Boyd L. Barclay, 22 August 2004].
752 "When I got back, I asked our section leader 'What was it that got us?' He said, 'It was a quad .50. I saw them get you.' He was coming in behind us and saw what hit us." [Conversation with Boyd L. Barclay, 22 August 2004].
753 The "collective" is raised with the left hand and twisted to give gas and engage the rotors with the engine. When engines are lost, to autorotate, the collective is lowered to disengage the rotors from the engine so the rotors will "free wheel." [Conversation with Boyd L. Barclay, 22 August 2004].

guided the aircraft toward the ground, resulting in a semi-controlled landing in dense undergrowth as they crashed at XD763467. The aircraft rolled several times down a steep incline, breaking Capt Barclay's left leg. The two crewmen were uninjured except for minor cuts and bruises. Had it not been for Capt Barclay's quick response, there assuredly would have been no survivors of the crash.[754]

The two crewmen crawled out and went to Capt Barclay who was rapidly loosing blood from his severed hand. LCPL Alexander took the tie down from the bird and used it as a tourniquet to stop the bleeding, took his .38 and the survival radio and began calling for help. Five or ten minutes later, a H-34 arrived, but could not get to them due to the vegetation and terrain. "We dragged the Captain all the way using a chain method by grabbing each other's hands with the lead man grabbing a bush.. vine or anything handy. He'd tug the second man who had a hold on the Captain's good arm or flight suit. The hill was steep and the going slow. We were around ten yards from the bird and the smoke was very thick."[755] "When they were dragging me up the side of the hill, I thought my hand was gone—I didn't look at it. But they were dragging me on their hands and knees up the side of the mountain and I felt a tug on my arm. I looked down and my hand was still hanging on by an inch of skin ther by the thumb and it was getting tangled in shrubs and the tourniquet came off, but there was hardly any blood coming out."[756] As the three struggled to the top, Capt Brackins flew cover, aware that whatever struck Lt Myers and Capt Barclay could not be far away. The three boarded the H-34 and all returned to Khe Sanh.

The three survivors escaped just in time: NVA soldiers were crawling over the carcass of the helicopter within five minutes. The body of Myers was not recovered. The area remained hot for a long time. Air strikes were run, completely destroying the aircraft.[757] "Some of the crews in the unit wanted to go back immediately to recover his body but they were overruled. Eventually an effort was made to recover his remains, but they were long gone."[758]

"Davy" Myers
By Christopher J. Vann[759]

"It was an evening in late November, 1966. The sharp, late autumn cold could not be felt within the warmth of the Rathskeller at Penn State, where I stood at the bar drinking Schmidt's of Philadelphia draft beer with David, an Airborne Ranger Army Captain. The jukebox was playing the early '60s songs favored by the college crowd; the Four Tops' *Baby I need your lovin; Reach out, I'll be there;* etc. David and I had gone to high school and Penn State together, I had left to serve in the Army, while David was graduated in '63, went into the Army, went to Vietnam with the 101st Airborne, and was now back as an ROTC instructor. I had returned after the Army to finish my last year, and would be graduated in a few weeks.

"Their arrival is as clear as if it happened yesterday; the door swung open and two Marine officers strode in. I can see the sweep of their arms as they removed their garrison caps and pulled them under the right side of the belts on their woolen forest green uniforms. The taller dark haired Captain, I did not know. The Lieutenant on the right, walking up and extending his hand was, astonishingly, 'Davy' Myers. Davy and I were both members of Sigma Phi Epsilon; in fact, he had been my 'little brother' when he pledged the house. My astonishment was occasioned because in my experience, Davy was not one whom I would have imagined as a Marine. He was a *gentle*, good natured boy with a ready smile and laugh. A boy whom I could believe *had never done a mean thing in his life*. A boy who, with his good manners and Teutonic blood handsomeness, were he to show up on the arm of your daughter, you would silently exclaim *'Thank God!'*

"We talked and caught up. Davy introduced his friend. They were both from State College, Marine aviators, and were home on leave before shipping out for Vietnam. They had just come from some sort of a meeting with the VFW or something.. They of course were mightly interested in David's experience of Vietnam. We drank Schmidt's, and at the end wished them well and good luck.....

"Now it's 1989. I've got two kids... Just before Christmas, visiting in-laws in suburban DC, I got up and got going one morning. My wife asks, 'Where are you off to?' *'Going down to the Vietnam Wall.'* 'Do you know someone on it?' *'Oh, yes.'*

"On the street from the Metro Station it was brisk. I guess I thought about Davy Myers at times over the years, I just don't remember. I had no idea what had happened to him, nor what sort of helicopter he flew, or where he had died. I was wearing running shoes for the walking and broke into a slow trot. Turning the corner onto Constitution Avenue, I suddenly experienced a *physical, and emotional, sensation*. A tingling, electrical surge on and through me, coupled with a feeling of great joy and happiness; a *grand frisson; a spiritual embrace*. I know it was Davy saying, *'You son-of-a-bitch!...you didn't forget me!!!'*"

[754] Statement of Alexander, cited.
[755] *Ibid.*
[756] Conversation with Boyd L. Barclay, 22 August 2004.
[757] *Ibid.*, Conversation with Leonard W. Davis, 8 May 2001.
[758] Letter from Ronald Zaczek, 25 October 1999.
[759] Letter from Christopher J. Vann, 10 February 1998.

Lt Myers had been one of the pilots that rescued recon team BREAKER on 10 May 1967.

[*Numerous reports of detections of NVA units during June, 1967, ominously reflected portending battle. A SOG unit operating just west of the DMZ (near the location of the future site of the NVA's headquarters for the 1968 Siege battle) on 10-11 June heard equipment and an estimated 150 troops moving into a bivouac near XD697667 and 17 trucks moving to a second bivouac area.*[760] *In the area just west of Hill 881-North to the area of Hill 918 (XD726445) numerous NVA positions were discovered and destroyed by air rather than infantry as had been the case in the Battle of the Hills.*[761] *A JTAD report of 15 June indicated that just west of the Co Roc massif, on 13 June there was a large unit of NVA located in a triangular area (XD700308, XD740317, XD709328). In the same area a large tunnel was discovered with entrances at XD700308, XD740317, XD709328, and XD704314. Large quantities of food were stored in the area and there were about 1800 men armed with many heavy weapons, anti-aircraft weapons, machineguns, and individual rifles.*[762] *On 23 June 1967, the S-2 of 26th Marines reported two NVA battalions operating near Hill 918 (XD726444), and the ridgeline (XD740510 to XD780500). A prisoner and captured documents indicated this to be the 4th and 6th battalions, 95C Regiment, 325C Division. Recon patrols had made numerous contacts in this area and discovered numerous well camouflaged and well fortified bunkers, tunnels, and foxholes through the area of Hill 918. The majority of the positions are unmanned but could be occupied at any time.*[763]

Col John J. Padley did not possess sufficient troops to venture into these areas without risking a repetition of what happened to B/1/9 in April. In fact, being beyond the artillery fan, the situation would be more tenuous. At his FMFPAC debrief, he warned: "Operations there should be at least battalion-size. Whether they're there or not we're never too sure. They've built bunkers. They can move in and occupy any time they desire.[764]

TIGERHOUND and JTAD agent reports indicated a heavy buildup of NVA forces in the vicinity of the Laotian border near the northwestern portion of the TAOR, XD643494, XD619521, and XD580507, with the mission to attack U.S. forces.[765]

Due to sustained and reinforcing NVA presence in the Khe Sanh area, another Marine battalion arrived to permit saturation patrolling of the area. Battalion 3/26 was CHOPed to the 26th Marines on 13 June 1967 at 1815H.[766] *The next day, "C" Battery, 1/13, arrived via Rough Rider convoy at 1550H along with K/3/26 and the RLT-26 Scout Sniper Platoon, and F/2/12 departed via the same Rough Rider.*[767] *Co "B," 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, replaced Company "A," 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion on 25 June 1967 (although many Marines of Co. A remained at Khe Sanh, now assigned to Co B), and Co. B, 3rd Tank Battalion arrived on 28 June 1967. Exchange facilities (the barest of essentials!) became available at Khe Sanh on 15 June and postal facilities the next day.*[768]

On 14 June 1967, two Marines of CAC OSCAR were seriously injured while clearing a friendly mine field with C-4 explosives, at XD842408 (just outside KSCB).[769] *One of the Marines, Cpl Craig William Albers, lost both his legs above his knees.*[770] *The Marines from CAP O-3 had purloined mines from the base and installed them in the fire zone around their camp. They then were ordered to remove them but had neglected to map the locations or had lost the map. Cpl Albers, who had set the mines, volunteered to recover them. His nickname was "Slats," which describes his build. Supposedly he was an aspiring track and field athlete.*[771]

During the evening of 18 June 1967, a rainstorm developed when suddenly, at 2230H, a loud explosion rocked the hilltop of Hill 950 as it was struck by lightning, igniting the 30 claymores that had been set around the hill.[772] *One Marine's back was burnt about one foot wide straight down from the nape of his neck to his boot tops, and no clothing. One was peppered by an exploding grenade with fragments puncturing his lung, face, and legs, and the corpsman quickly cut his throat to permit breathing. The lightning bolt had struck their RC-292 antenna, gone down the guide lines, one of which ran into the hole where the Marine with the burnt back lived.*[773]

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[760] FMFPAC 160308Z/Jun67, SITREP #808.

[761] Cf., *e.g.*, 26Mar 101620Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #114, 26Mar 120444Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT INTSUM #30.

[762] 26Mar 160730Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT INTSUM #34.

[763] 26Mar 230420Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT INTSUM #41.

[764] Debrief of Col J.J. Padley, 17 August 1967, USMC Oral History Tape #1504.

[765] 26Mar300525Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT INTSUM #48.

[766] 3rd MarDiv COC 132001Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #126; 3/26 ComdC Jun67, Encl (1), p. 9 provides details of the moves.

[767] 26Mar 141050Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #129.

[768] All First Class letters were sent "free" with no need of a post office; the only need was to send packages, registered mail, or obtain Postal Money Orders.

[769] 26Mar 141050Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #129.

[770] BSM file on Cpl Craig William Albers. Albers died 15 April 1982.

[771] Letter from Lacey W. Lahren, 22 April 2001.

[772] 26Mar 181623Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #146; Comments of Cpl Paul W. Rogers, USMC Oral History Tape #1195.

[773] Comments of Cpl Rogers, cited. A typical lightning bolt contains about 30,000 volts and 25,000 amperes of current, and generates about 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit, or about five times the temperature of the sun's surface.

27 JUNE 1967

ALLEN, 2/Lt Dale Charles	I/3/26
BOLGER, 2/Lt Lawrence Joseph	A/1/26
BRENKE, PFC Frederick Joseph	L/3/26
BURNS, LCPL Victor L	A/1/26
BYNUM, CAPT Franklin Delano	L/3/26
DAMIAN, LCPL Allan James	A/1/26
DAVID, LCPL Jeffrey Jay	I/3/26
DICESARE, CPL Anthony Jr.	I/3/26
GODINEZ, LCPL Alejandro Ray	I/3/26
JACKSON, HM3 Curtis D	L/3/26
JOHNSON, LCPL Freddie Lee	I/3/26
KINCAID, SGT Paul Eddie	A/1/26
LYNCH, LCPL Charles Aaron	CAC O[774]
MAZARIEGOS, LCPL Francisco Alberto	CAC O
MILLARD, LCPL Kenneth Arthur	I/3/26
O'CONNOR, CPL Dennis Alfred	CAC O
RODROGUEZ, PFC Paul M Jr.	A/1/26
SHEPARD, CPL James Merrill Jr.	CAC O
STEWART, PFC Rick James	A/1/13
TRAVIS, CPL Edward Burke	A/1/13
WALKER, CPL Richard Lee	I/3/26
WASSENICH, CPL Stephen George	I/3/26
WHITTICOM, LCPL Jonathan Charles	H&S/1/26
WILLIAMS, LCPL Ira Winard	A/1/26
WILLIAMS, PFC William Jack	L/3/26

Just past midnight on 27 June 1967 (at 0035H), KSCB received over 50 rounds of 82mm mortars fired from XD820395.[775] The mortars were walked up and down the tent area housing troops of "A" Battery, 1/13, killing two (PFC Rick Stewart and Cpl Edward Travis). Robert J. Sullivan, in the same tent where the Marines slept only several feet apart "..often wondered why fate had dealt so kindly to me."[776] Approximately 30 were wounded, including the Fire Direction Officer and the Commanding Officer of the Battery, Capt John Vincent Brennan, who, despite his wounds, immediately led the battery in counter-mortar fires, supervised evacuation of casualties, and skillfully moved non-cannoneers to replace the casualties as he moved from one gun position to another shouting the encouragement it takes to remain on the guns with mortar rounds impacting in the area, as well as assisting the men break out ammunition and fire.[777]

Alfa Company, 1/26, was decimated. The CO received his second and third Purple Hearts and was sent to Okinawa, Lt Rusty Reeves was severely wounded and evacuated. Larry Bolger, the Second Platoon Commander, was killed. Sgt. Kincaid had been held past his rotation date only to give his life.[778] The A/1/26 CO, Norm Centers, had placed the company out in the grass behind the artillery battery without digging in, and they were butchered in the attack.[779] "I was talking with my Platoon Commander, Larry Bolger, when he was killed. He called over to me and said, 'As soon as this barrage lifts, get your stuff together; we're going to move out.' One hit in front of us and I said, 'Lieutenant, you'd better jump in.' And one hit closer and I said, 'Lieutenant,' and when I said that there was an explosion and I got knocked down. A man jumped around by the name of Rodriguez; he had his face blown off and he wrapped his arms around me. I couldn't hold him, and I went down in the bottom of the foxhole. There was another kid screaming. His hand was blown off."[780]

A posting on the Virtual Wall notes: "Bolger ran like lightning. At Cardinal Dougherty High School, he ran the mile a good time for the early 1960s. Before graduating from St. Joseph's College, 1966, he led its cross country team to victory in the IC4A and Mid-Atlantic Conference Championships. Cardinal Dougherty High School sponsors the Bolger Run in his memory each year."[781]

Tom Quigley, a radioman with B/1/26, had been sent from Hill 881-South to KSCB as a nominee for demolitions school on Okinawa. When it came time to return to 881-South, he learned that the last chopper for the day had already departed; he remained overnight on the combat base with some friends with whom he had trained in the recon company area. He soon discovered it was not safer on the combat base than on the isolated and far away hill from which patrols had resulted in deadly encounters. After the mortars ceased, some of the old "salts" that had been around awhile said, "Well, that's it; they won't bother us no more tonight. If they open up again tonight they know we got them pinpointed and

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[774] All the CAC OSCAR KIAs are listed officially as belonging to Sub Unit #5 of 3rd Marine Division. (CAC OSCAR became part of a reorganization called CAG, Combined Action Group, under III MAF, in January, 1968).

[775] 26Mar 270035Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #179.

[776] Ltr of Robert J. Sullivan, undated, printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Issue #37 (Fall, 1996), p. 29.

[777] Statements of SSGT Enos H. Davis, Jr., and MSGT George C. Noll in Bronze Star Medal file on Capt John Vincent Brennan.

[778] John Kaheny, email on Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page Message Board, posted 27 July 2001.

[779] Conversation with John Kaheny, 04 May 1990.

[780] Conversation with Ron Gulbronson, 14 March 2004. Gulbronson relates that he was going to be promoted the next day to Corporal, but didn't get his E-4 until November. He spent 9 months in Bethesda Naval Hospital and was retired as a Corporal, having had the back of his heart torn, part of his lung blown out, lost part of his stomach, a bone was blown from his left knee, ligaments out of his right knee and shrapnel throughout his shoulder and back. He had been tossed on a pile of corpses, assumed to be dead. A Marine named Moss dragged him, and Gulbronson yelled at him, then passed in and out of consciousness. He woke up to the words, 'Hey, this guy's alive.'

[781] Posted by Robert Greer, 12 March 2001.

we'll call in an air-strike on them."[782] They were to prove to be false prophets.

At 170525H, the base received approximately 50 rounds of 120mm rockets. The Marines on Alfa Relay, Hill 950, spotted the enemy positions firing from the base of Hill 1015 (XD857445).[783] Disregarding his painful injury and lacking a FDO, Capt Brennan ran between the guns and the FDC and led his cannoncockers of A/1/13 saturated the area; the enemy fire ceased.[784] The final casualty count for the two attacks on the 27th was: 9 Americans KIA, 125 WIA.[785]

The newly-arrived Marines of 3/26 had been informed that the base was a secure area, that they needn't bother about fortifications. The 3/26 COC wasn't even underground; it was still in a tent![786] Consequently, 3/26 received many casualties since most everyone was sleeping in tents. The 3/26 BAS was especially hard hit: total 3/26 casualties included 1 USN KIA (HM3 Curtis D. Jackson), 1 ARVN KIA, 10 USN WIA, and 22 USMC WIA, one of which later died of wounds. The rounds were walked from the BAS to the 3/26 supply tent which took a direct hit, and then stopped just short of the 3/26 COC tent.[787]

At daybreak, a USAF AO spotted mortar positions near Hill 689 (XD802409) occupied by approximately 10 NVA along with bunkered positions in the vicinity of Hill 758's southern slope, and ran air strikes on both positions.[788]

A patrol from Combined Action Platoon O-3 in Ta Cong (XD842408) just outside KSCB, was dispatched at 0830H to Hill 689 to investigate. As the patrol reached the summit of Hill 689, the point man discovered a mortar storage position at XD800410, some 4000 meters due west of KSCB. By 1230H, the patrol began receiving heavy small arms fire, was pinned down in a L-shaped ambush, and took two immediate KIAs in the initial burst from well-directed, well-disciplined machinegun and automatic weapons fire. An artillery mission was called, and the patrol pulled back off the hill since the artillery was almost on top of them, carrying one wounded Marine who shortly thereafter died. Two men returned to the hill searching for the wounded and friendly dead. Two Marines and one Popular Forces MIA had been left on the hill. One returned; the other was missing.[789] A fourth CAC OSCAR Marine, CPL James Merrill Shepard, Jr., is listed as having died by circumstances unknown. His body, initially not recovered later disclosed he had died from a gunshot wound that entered his left shoulder and penetrated into his chest.[790]

Companies K and M of 3/26 along with the Alfa Command Group had been patrolling to the southeast when KSCB was mortared and rocketed, and they lifted back to KSCB.[791] Co I/3/26, having left KSCB two days earlier, was operating west of Khe Sanh. The Marines of I/3/26 had been told it was just an overnight ambush: "We only took two meals with us, two canteens of water, and just one BA [Basic Allowance] of ammo. We weren't expecting to make any kind of contact because another company of our battalion had just swept the area five days prior."[792] It was late afternoon by the time INDIA Company began its physical assault up the northern slope of Hill 689 (at 1615H) following movement through heavy vegetation and halting to permit the AO to direct air strikes on small groups of enemy observed on the hill. I/3/26 began taking very accurate sniper fire from bunkers dug into and well-placed on the military crest of Hill 689.[793]

LIMA Company was readied at KSCB for a lift to Hill 689. L/3/26 lifted into its LZ approximately 1900H, south of Hill 689. At that time they began movement up the southern slopes of Hill 689 while I/3/26 continued up the northern slope. Both units received mortar fire from the north and northwest. An AO on station observed muzzle flashes near XD785415 and counter-mortar fires were fired by 4.2" mortars on Hill 881-South silencing the NVA mortars[794] but not the enemy on the hill itself.

I-1 and I-2 proceeded up the northern slope and, upon reaching the lower ridge, I-1 was given the order to secure the uppermost ridge while I-2 was assigned the mission of assaulting the western slope. The word was passed "to fix bayonets." David Given, one of the few 3/26 Corpsmen that escaped injury during the morning mortar and rocket attack, along with the Marines he accompanied, thought it was a joke. Almost immediately, a Marine in front of Given tripped a booby-trapped grenade and received a sucking chest wound.[795] As the point element of I-1 came within 20-25 meters of the peak, the

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[782] Conversation with Tom Quigley, 11 May 1986.
[783] 26Mar 270035Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #179.
[784] FDO=Fire Direction Officer; FDC=Fire Direction Center.
[785] 26Mar 270510Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #180.
[786] Comments by HMC Paul B. Freeze, 15 Oct 1968, on HQMC Oral History Tape #3556
[787] Comments of HMC Paul E. Freeze, HQMC Oral History Tape #3556; 3/26 ComdC Jun67, Encl (1), p. 13. BAS=Battalion Aid Station.
[788] 1/26 ComdC, Jun67, p. 6.
[789] 26Mar 271135Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #181; 26Mar 280945Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT INTSUM #46; 3/26 ComdC Jun 67, Encl (1), p. 14.
[790] HQMC (AO1C) Memo, 3 Jul 1967, Subj: Viet Nam Casualties—HOSTILE DEAD, p. 5.
[791] Comments of 1/Lt Thomas A. Bailey, HQMC Oral History Tape #1768.
[792] Comments of Sgt Dennis Stratthouse, 3 Sep 1967, on HQMC Oral History Tape #1701.
[793] "Military crest" refers to the line of defense extending down the slope of the hill.
[794] 26Mar 271640Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #182.
[795] Harden, Mike, "Fallen Timbers," The Columbus, Ohio, *Dispatch*, Nov 1, 1988.

enemy opened up, mortally wounding the Point and immediately thereafter, the Platoon Commander, Lt Allen, the Platoon Sergeant, and First Squad Leader were all killed, and the Platoon Guide seriously wounded in his leg along with a number of other men.[796] LCPL Joseph J. Bristol took charge and began directing fire on the enemy positions. Bristol's squad fired some 120 M-79 rounds, plastering the area from which the NVA was sniping at them which killed several in his squad. One of the sniper's rounds penetrated his steel helmet creating a hole about the size of a little finger. He removed the helmet, determined that his skin had not been penetrated, and replaced it. "It rattled me."[797] The man leading the squad had been shot in his thigh by a NVA sniper. Using the typical NVA tactic of creating a casualty in order to kill more men—those who came to rescue—the sniper didn't kill him. "We came to the conclusion that this was bait, that he [the enemy sniper] was trying to get other people up and drag him [the casualty] away.. This we figured out because he had a clear shot to the man he shot for bait, to kill him. He didn't... The men came up and started to drag him away, and each man came up over the small ridge line, he [the sniper] fired at them, and each one was shot in the head."[798] A total of eight Marines were killed in this contact plus ten more wounded.[799] The Marines remained pinned down by three enemy positions.

While the First and Second Platoons of Capt M.E. Coulter's I/3/26 pressed from the north, Capt Frank Bynum, commanding L/3/26, moved his troops up the southern slope of Hill 689. L-3 moved on the left flank, L-2 on the right flank, and L-1 provided security in the LZ.[800] 2/Lt Frank H. McCarthy, Platoon Commander of L-3, although exposed to heavy, devastating sniper fire which rained on the platoon, encouraged his men forward up the hill under increasing enemy fire, hand grenades, and even DH-10 anti-personnel mines.[801] Almost immediately upon reaching the top of Hill 689, Lt McCarthy was seriously wounded by an enemy sniper and the Company Commander, Capt Bynum, moved up from his position behind Third Platoon wearing his shiny Captain bars prominently glowing on his soft cover.[802] He was instantly wounded from the rear by a sniper. LCPL Andrew B. Moreno immediately moved through the mined area to the side of Capt Bynum and placed him on his back, using himself as a sled, and crawled back with Capt Bynum on top of him, carefully maneuvering around the enemy mines to a position of relative safety.[803] Capt Bynum's wounds, however, proved fatal. He had received a sucking chest wound.[804]

2/Lt Thomas Charles Biondo of Battery "C", 1/13, attached to L/3/26 as an artillery FO [Forward Observer], accompanied the lead platoon in the assault during which the L-3 Platoon Commander was hit and the platoon lost momentum in the mine field. Lt Biondo worked his way through the mine-field, and took charge of the platoon, leading the Marines through the mines and still un-cleared spider traps. In large measure due to his calm presence of mind and resolute determination under fire, his men seized the crest of Hill 689.[805] Co L/3/26 located the two Marines from CAP O-3; both were dead.[806]

India Company secured the land bridge across the slopes which lead on to Hill 758; L/3/26 secured the top of Hill 689, formed a defensive perimeter, and held for the night.[807] The troops were on 100% alert and spent most of the night "..thinking we might be hit again by people coming over and trying to take the hill again."[808]

Early in the morning of 28 June 1967, the command group of 3/26 and MIKE Company landed on Hill 689 to mop up whatever enemy troops remained in the area. It was suspected that the NVA had pulled off to the west or the southwest.[809] The enemy, however, had remained. That night, at 1940H during a staff meeting, another rocket attack was launched by the enemy against KSCB. Approximately 25 120mm rockets were fired, nearly all of which landed outside the perimeter, with 6 falling in Co K's area, but no casualties resulted.[810] The command group saw the rockets being fired from about 1500 meters from their southwest (from XD785415, XD835326, and XD853447).[811] Marine artillery silenced the NVA's rockets with 401 rounds (Battery C) and 390 rounds (Battery A). There were no casualties at KSCB.[812]

PFC Frederick Joseph Brenke was the second of five children in his family. Prior to enlisting in the Marine Corps, his sisters recalled him on an orange rug right in front of the TV spending all Saturday afternoon watch-

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[796] Statement of 1/Lt R.E. Stimson in Bronze Star Medal file of LCPL Joseph J. Bristol.
[797] Conversation with Joseph Bristol, 23 September 1989.
[798] Comments of Cpl Robert E. Stanton, HQMC Oral History Tape #1702.
[799] 3/26 ComdC, Jun67, Encl (1), p. 14.
[800] 3/26 ComdC Jun67, Encl (1), p. 14.
[801] Statement of 1/Lt Jaak Aulik in Bronze Star Medal file of 2/Lt Frank H. McCarthy; Comments of 1/Lt Thomas A. Bailey, 30 August 1967, on HQMC Oral History Tape #1768.
[802] Conversation with Joseph Bristol, 23 September 1989.
[803] Bronze Star Medal Citation, LCPL Andrew B. Moreno.
[804] Kazickas, Jurate, "These Hills Called Khe Sanh," in *War Torn, Stories of War from the Women Reporters Who Covered Vietnam*, Intro. Gloria Emerson, New York: Random House, 2002, p. 152.
[805] Statement of 1/Lt Jaak Aulick in Bronze Star Medal file, 2/Lt Thomas Charles Biondo.
[806] 3/26 ComdC Jun67, Encl (1), p. 14.
[807] Bailey comments, cited.
[808] Comments by Cpl Robert E. Stanton, 3 September 1967, HQMC Oral History Tape #1702.
[809] Comments of 1/Lt Bailey, cited.
[810] 3/26 ComdC Jun67, Encl (1), p. 16.
[811] 26Mar 290715Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT INTSUM #47.
[812] 26Mar 281650Z/Jun67, Opn CROCKETT SITREP #186.

ing old movies, especially those featuring Hercules, knights, and other heroes. He enjoyed hunting squirrel and deer in the open fields of Minnesota and cruising through town in his '59 Ford Galaxie which was his pride and joy. He was active in Scouts, loved to cook, and spend time at his aunt's and uncle's farm. He was a very fun-loving young man.[813]

One of the Marines of Kilo Company recalls his CO, Capt Bynum as "..an imposing figure, 6'2", 220 lbs. and could have been a model for the Marine Corps recruiting poster.... When we arrived in Vietnam, Captain Bynum acted like he wanted to win the MOH or die trying. Although he was always hard on me, he would not ask anyone to do anything he would not do."[814]

29 JUNE 1967[815]

BACON, SSGT William Ivory Tenny	**H&S/3/26**
SANDERS, LCPL Glenn Edward	**A/1/26**

01 JULY 1967[816]

MARCOTTE, LCPL Andre Edward	**3dFLC**

05 JULY 1967

TAGLIEBER, LCPL Leonard Joseph	**LSU**

A group of Marines from the LSU [Logistic Support Unit] were on the airstrip near the 3rd ATs, burning excess, unused increments of 4-deuce and 81s and Taglieber, who had been their liaison for the 15th Aerial Port [USAF detachment that managed landings of USAF cargo aircraft] caught on fire.[817]

[Upon the termination of Operation CROCKETT the same basic TAOR, plans, forces, orders, and mission continued as Operation ARDMORE, commencing 0001H, 17 July 1967.][818]

21 JULY 1967

ANDERSON, 2/Lt John Louis	**M/3/3**
ANTOINE, CPL Dennis Lloyd	**M/3/3**
CASTILLO, Sgt Jose	**H&S/1/26**
CLARK, HM3 Thomas Osborn	**M/3/3**
COLEMAN, PFC Richard Freeman	**M/3/3**
COOLEY, PFC Ocie Daniel	**M/3/3**
DRIGGERS, PFC Arthur M	**M/3/3**
LINDERMAN, PFC Mark Thomas	**M/3/3**
MC NAMARA, CPL Donald Woodward	**M/3/3**
MEIER, SSGT Terrance Leo	**M/3/3**
MORROW, GYSGT Harold Eugene	**M/3/26**
MULLET, PFC Steven James	**M/3/26**
MURFF, PFC William Edward	**M/3/3**
NIELSEN, CPL Harold Richard	**M/3/26**
OUTWATER, SGT Albert Aleya	**M/3/3**
POLLARD, PFC William Alfred	**B/1/26**
SUTTER, CPL Richard Furlong	**M/3/26**
VASQUEZ, LCPL Patrick John	**M/3/26**
WILSON, PFC Reginald Eugene	**B/1/26**

While visiting the Marines of D/1/26 in the trenches on Hill 861 today, the general scuttlebutt concerns Jeanne Dixon, the one who tells the future, who predicts 1200 deaths here at Khe Sanh.[819]

175mm artillery pieces were included in a convoy that moved from Camp Carroll to KSCB.[820] The convoy included trucks filled with ammunition, C-4 explosives, claymore mines, and other ordnance.[821] Just why they were about to be sent to KSCB is unclear. One explanation might be the mission assigned to 26th Marines to support the Laotian battalion, BV-33, at Ban Houei Sane, just inside the Laotian border.[822] Another explanation might be provision of artillery support to the forming FOB-3 which would dispatch patrols into eastern Laos. Another explanation might be reports of increasing NVA presence in eastern Laos along a new road referred to as the "Santa Fe Trail."

The 21st of July, 1967, was a day of heavy enemy contact in the Khe Sanh area, beginning at 0525H with ten rounds of 82mm mortar slamming into the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei. All the rounds landed between the perimeter defensive wire and trench line and

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[813] Ward, Don, *The Faces Behind the Names*, Minnesota: Memorial Press, 1996, p. 478.

[814] Mahoney, Brian, "My Tour with Kilo Company, 3/26," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #63 (Winter, 2005), pp. 32, 33.

[815] Probably these Marines died of wounds received during the mortar and rocket attack of 27 June 1967.

[816] Probably died from wounds received during the mortar and rocket attack of 27 June 1967

[817] Comments by the OinC at Memorial Service for Taglieber, 19 July 1967 in diary kept by Chaplain Stubbe; Conversation with William Amunson, 01 December 1990. The memorial service was attended by 30, and the OinC mentioned there had been several more near-death accidents in connection with burning. Increments are explosive charges attached to mortar rounds to push the round out of the tube as it is fired. The amount of increments to be used determines the range of the round. Increments were frequently burnt in metal ammo containers during the cold monsoon weather to keep warm.

[818] CG 3rd MarDiv 180539Z/Jul67, OpO 43-67 (ARDMORE) in 26Mar ComdC Oct67, Tab B.

[819] Diary of Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, entry for 21 July 1967.

[820] The range of 175mm cannons is 32,800 meters

[821] Comments of LtCol James B. Wilkinson at the 1/26 battalion staff briefing, 22 July 1967, noted in diary of Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe.

[822] 26Mar ComdC Jun67, Encl (1), p. 4, Para A.(2), and ComdC Jul67, Encl (1), p. 3, Para A.(2).

there were no casualties.[823] Later in the morning, a recon team reported 14 NVA soldiers at XD766423 moving north toward Hill 881-South (XD778438) and then spotted an additional 15-20 moving toward the first group. The NVA disappeared into the canopy before an artillery fire mission could be called on them.[824]

The really big contact, however, was to the east of the Combat Base. Based on intelligence reports of a heavy weapons company north of Khe Sanh and increased movement along Route 9, MIKE Company, 3/26, was dispatched into an area northeast of KSCB where several base camps had been found by reconnaissance patrols. Leaving one platoon with 81mm mortars on the hill, two platoons began sweeping east.[825] The mission was to secure the road for a convoy. LCPL Eugene Weresow's squad walked flank security on the left through the hills overlooking the road; there was a river to the right.[826]

Sgt James Williams of First Squad, First Platoon, M/3/26, was leading the Company from Hill 606 (XD882496) to XD903497, across a valley of thick elephant grass dotted by tree lines when a new trail was located at XD902496 and the patrol followed the trail east to XD905493 for some two hours. At 0920H, the Point entered a tree line and discovered a bunker complex with huts on stilts in the Bru style and bunkers covered with two layers of logs and twelve inches of dirt, defensively oriented west.[827] As the point element advanced to investigate, the enemy opened up with fire from an estimated .50 cal. machinegun, two large machineguns, and 10-15 small arms on the point and on the rest of the platoon led by Lt Krangle.

Meanwhile, Gunnery Sergeant Harold E. Morrow, upon receiving the word that the Platoon Commander, Platoon Sergeant, and one squad leader had become casualties, immediately moved to take command of First Platoon. Moving forward under extremely intense enemy fire, he reached the unit and assumed command. While moving from man to man, controlling the fight, Gunnery Sergeant Morrow fell, mortally wounded.[828] William H. Mead, who had been Capt Debona's radioman for several months, suddenly had the top of his radio shot away by an automatic weapon. Although the antenna makes the radioman an especially lucrative target, the radio saved his life, absorbing the bullets that would have penetrated his back. "I was still talking on the radio. I was like in shock. I found out there was nobody at the other end! I was standing because I couldn't get reception, trying to call in a report to battalion."[829] LCPL Weresow's squad was crossing a bridge when the enemy opened up with their machineguns, "..and I could see the wood splinters flying off the bridge at my feet. The guy in front of me got hit; I remember he was a black guy, as I dove off the bridge into the gully below. I guess it was a RPG that blew the bridge. At that moment our point man, the squad leader, and the radio man came rolling down the hill, hit badly. I remember administering first aid to one man who had a nasty stomach wound. At this point there were 5 or 6 of us who were in the lead element and were pinned down by the machinegun on top of the hill. The rest of the company was on the road back around the bend. I had never called in a fire mission before, but I took a stab at it; we had no other choice. I got the radio and called in the coordinates of where I thought the machinegun position was. A smoke was sent which looked good to me. "Fire for effect." God was with me again. The far side of the river erupted. The machinegun fell silent."[830]

Lt Mazzi's Third Platoon, on the right flank of Lt Crangle's First Platoon, was in an excellent position to move into a flank and sweep across Lt Crangle's front through the built-up area from which they were taking fire. Capt Debona, Commanding M/3/26, so directed and the assault was just about to begin when word was received that B/1/26, sweeping east on Route 9, was hit. Due to lack of reserves in the area, the decision was made to disengage MIKE Company and continue the pursuit in the area of Route 9.[831] At 1145H, M/3/26 was helilifted back to KSCB and from 1300H to 1600H, air strikes (CASTOR OIL 173, CHAIN 105, and LOW GAP 20) were run on the NVA positions at XD953425 to XD956427, resulting in 32 structures destroyed, 10 secondary explosions, and 3 secondary fires. Air-strikes were also conducted against a suspected enemy mortar at XD964440 resulting in two secondary explosions.[832]

Killed from M/3/26 were: Gunnery Sergeant Harold E. Morrow, PFC Steven J. Mullet, Cpl Harold R. Nielsen, LCPL Patrick John Vasquez, Cpl Richard Sutter, and Sgt James Williams (the latter DOW 04 Aug). Cpl Sutter was the third of six children in his family, a kind of rebel—one friend likened him to James Dean, and he was into mischief so that his father sent him to a military prep school to get squared away.[833] He had attended college a year and a half before enlisting in the Marine Corps. Writing home to a friend, he noted concerning

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[823] 26Mar 202345Z/Jul67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #17.
[824] 26Mar 211215Z/Jul67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #19.
[825] Comments of 1/Lt Thomas A. Bailey, HQMC Oral History Tape #1768.
[826] Letter from Eugene Weresow, 19 December 1996.
[827] 26Mar 211215Z/Jul67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #19; 3/26 ComdC Jul67, Encl (1), p. 10.
[828] Statement of Capt Andrew D. Debona in Silver Star Medal file of GySgt Harold E. Morrow.
[829] Conversation with William H. Mead, 06 March 1994.
[830] Weresow letter, cited.
[831] Bailey, comments cited.
[832] 3/26 ComdC Jul67, Encl (1), p. 10; 26Mar 220745Z/Jul67, Opn ARDMORE INTSUM #6; 26Mar 210440Z/Jul67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #18.
[833] Ward, Don, *The Faces Behind the Names, The Vietnam War, Vol. II*, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1999, p. 207.

Vietnam, "Hell isn't the word for it."[834] "And the saddest part of it all was he was killed on the 21" of July and was to be home between the 15th and the 30th. He had already done his 13 months and been wounded twice prior to that."[835] He had died instantly, shot through the left side of his forehead by a sniper.[836]

M/3/3 patrolled from Ca Lu and likewise sustained numerous KIA.

2/Lt Benjamin L. Long led First Platoon of B/1/26 which patrolled eastward on either side of Route 9. At 1035H the point squad made contact with an estimated NVA platoon (at XD951432) supported by a heavy weapons platoon. The enemy appeared to have been surprised when B-1 approached the flank of the enemy position oriented along Route 9, and opened fire when the lead elements of B-1 were within 20 meters of their position. The Marines received an estimated 46 rounds of 82mm mortar fire from Hill 214 (XD945435) and 5 rounds of 57mm recoilless rifle fire together with small arms and semi-automatic fire.[837] The Marine patrol had prematurely sprung a NVA ambush that had been laid from XD943423 to XD967432 along Route 9, consisting of 2000 meters of anti-personnel mines, 82mm mortars, .50 caliber machineguns, and NVA claymore-type mines. The 175mm guns had made it as far as Ca Lu and, due to the contacts, returned to Camp Carroll.[838]

The initial burst of NVA small arms, machineguns, and rockets caused several casualties in the point squad of B-1 led by Cpl Terry G. Henderson. Calmly he led his squad until they gained fire superiority, threw grenades at suspected enemy positions, and called in artillery support.[839] By 1125H,B-1 reported the heaviest enemy fire was coming from Hill 247 (XD951432), and at 1225H, B-1 sighted approximately 15 NVA soldiers crossing the river at XD947425.

The 81's Forward Observation team: Sgt Jose Castillo, Bruce Jones, and Gilbert Wall, proceeded down Route 9 which had steep hills covered with dense foliage on one side, steep cliffs to the other side, and followed a sinuous path, a perfect site for an ambush. In fact, that's what they entered, suddenly finding they were in a U-shaped ambush in which the NVA were getting ready to "close the back door" and annihilate them. "We had fired a spotter round, a WILLY PETER, and we had gone up to find out where the round went because we couldn't see it on the bend of the road. When we came around the bend in the road, they shot all three of us."[840] There was no place to go. The team crouched down. Sgt Jose Castillo, the 81s FO, had extended his tour, and not more than four days after returning from extension leave, now was on patrol teaching Gilbert Wall, a Black Foot Indian from Montana, to replace him. Castillo was shot in the chest and died immediately. Wall was shot through the top of his shoulder. The round penetrated the shoulder and went through his left lung, collapsing it, and broke two of his ribs before exiting his side.[841] Bruce Jones was shot through the throat.[842]

Friendly casualties as of this time included three Marines killed: PFC William A. Pollard, PFC Reginald E. Wilson, and Sgt Jose Castillo, plus six WIA. Meanwhile, the Battalion Commander and Company B(-) began moving to establish contact with B-1 at XD940426. Contact was established at 1505H and B/1/26 commenced a sweep towards the last known enemy position (XD948428).[843]

The NVA ambush site revealed that the personnel there had no identification; there were no letters or photographs. The enemy forces had completed construction of 25 bunkers and were in the process of constructing 75 more. There were five rucksacks of new equipment, including extended rations. The Commanding Officer of 1/26, LtCol James B. Wilkinson, evaluated the contact at the battalion staff and officers briefing the next morning, stating that the enemy were not there to interdict and destroy the 175s as such; they probably were unaware they were coming. They were rather there to dig in so that during the approaching monsoon season they could sever the road as a supply route at which time they might begin moving three battalions against Hills 881-South and 861 or try to take the combat base itself, or conduct small, commando-type terror attacks with satchel charges. He noted that much 782-type gear, rifles, and ammunition, had been hastily abandoned because of SPOOKY, and then concluded his briefing: "Now, let's see all of the men in church tomorrow!"[844]

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[834] Quoted in McCombs, Phil, " 'Hell Isn't the Word for It'," The Washington *Post*, Sunday, 19 July 1998, p. A17.

[835] Conversation with Robert Sutter, 26 February 1989 (is brother of Richard).

[836] McCombs article, *op. cit.*, p. A20.

[837] 26Mar 211215Z/Jul67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #19; 1/26 ComdC Jul67, Encl (1), p. 6.

[838] Wilkinson briefing of 22 July 1967, cited.

[839] Statements of 2/Lt Benjamin L. Long and LCPL Eugene Weresow in Bronze Star Medal file of Cpl Terry Gay Henderson.

[840] Conversation with Bruce Jones, 25 Feb 1989.

[841] Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 13 May 1989; Conversation with Bruce Jones, 25 Feb 1989. Wall spent the next three months in Yokosuka hospital and, upon returning for duty in Vietnam, received orders to be an MP at 3rd Marine Division headquarters. "I didn't want to go. I had to talk with Captain Pipes [CO, H&S Co., 1/26, at the time] and Colonel Wilkinson [CO, 1/26] and tell them I wanted to stay with BRAVO Company. I didn't want to go back to the rear. Col Wilkinson said, "OK, we'll keep you." [Wall, Conversation of 13 May 1989, cited.] Wall was later one of the very few survivors of the patrol on 25 February 1968 during the siege battle.

[842] Jones, Conversation of 25 Feb 1989, cited. Jones spent 33 days at the Naval Support Activity [NSA] Hospital, DaNang.

[843] 26Mar 211215Z/Jul67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #19.

[844] Diary entry, Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, 22 July 1967.

On the evening of 21 July 1967 at 2045H, CAC O reported a Bru family abandoned all their personal belongings at the Village of Lang Bu (XD819380) and moved to Khe Sanh ville, expecting trouble at Lang Bu within the next few days and claimed that 30% of the population there were VC.[845]

04 AUGUST 1967

WILLIAMS, SGT James M/3/26

Sgt Williams died of wounds [DOW] from the 21 July 1967 contact.

[*Col John J. Padley was relieved by Col David E. Lownds as Commanding Officer, 26th Marine Regiment at 0900H, 12 August 1967*]

16 AUGUST 1967

HINSON, PFC John Robert C/1/26

Company C/1/26 had occupied a company-size outpost at a temporary position (XD910400) established near a bridge of Route 9 that crossed the raging Rao Quan River from which Marines patrolled eastward to ensure the NVA did not re-occupy their ambush positions along the road that had been prematurely uncovered on 21 July. Company "C" was preparing to depart and a temporary bridge had been removed. A group of Bru and lowland people including a caravan selling items were attempting to cross the river using a rope strung up by the Marines. It had been raining hard and the turgid river, in addition to rising some 3 to 4 feet, was raging. As they were crossing, one of the occasional swells of the river swept away some of the people and PFC Hinson, a non-swimmer, jumped in to rescue them. While he was coming to their aid, another swell swept him away. He came eventually came to a large rock, and it appeared that he would be safe, but then he was swept away.[846] Daniel Hobart, on one side of the river, and Sgt Chuck Meyers on the other, immediately dove into the river and was about 30 feet from Hinson when Hinson was swept away: "It was just like somebody reached down from underneath and pulled Hinson under."[847] Hobart recalls that Hinson thought himself invincible and had told Hobart and others "A bullet is never going to get me." Hobart: "He was one to be wondered about when he went out in the bush with us because he didn't think anything was going to happen to him."[848]

He was gone for three days until Lt Harry McNulty (C-2 Platoon) took a reinforced squad and finally located his body in a backwater pool at 1615H at XD850454.[849] The Marines established a check point at 1235H at the river's edge to provide security, and Captain Cloud, "C" Company Commander, had given explicit orders: "Do not help the people, just make sure that they don't intermingle or anything with our positions."[850]

Lt Epps, Hinson's Platoon Commander in Co "C," notes a religious dimension: "He appeared to the people in my platoon that night, and it took three days to find his body. People saw him walking around outside the wire. It was an amazing story. There were very few people I could talk to with any kind of—because most people would consider me crazy about it, but it actually happened. I did not personally see him; everybody in his Fire Team saw him. They talked about him coming back up the hill. He was looking for his hole again, to come back.[851] In addition, there were fish scales in his hair and a fish had eaten out one of his eyes.[852] James Epps wrote a poem about Hinson:

A Letter Not Written
By James Epps

I knew we would find him
the day the black water cobra slithered
across the roiling brown water
of the *Rao Quan* River in *Quang Tri* Province.

The sun looked him in the eye
when it came up the third day after
he was down under the flash flood that
sucked him, clinging, off the smooth rock.

The semiautomatic letters they sent you
didn't tell the story—
how he was helping civilians cross
the river—against orders—
when it exploded and left them
handing-on the frayed ends of a hemp rope.

That rushing river beat an old woman to pulp
then spit her back up.
An hour later we found a child asleep almost in a pool
and brought him back to his hysterical mother.
Your son couldn't swim when he went in that river

[845] 26Mar 220745Z/Jul67, Opn ARDMORE INTSUM #6.
[846] Conversation with James Epps, 07 January 1995.
[847] Conversation with Daniel Hobart, 09 December 1999; Hobart, "Dawn Till Dusk," unpublished memoir, notes a fourth Marine at the checkpoint, Cpl Rick Burrows.
[848] Conversation with Daniel Hobart, 24 April 1996.
[849] Conversation with James Epps, 07 January 1995; 26Mar 161955Z/Aug67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #132.
[850] Conversation with James Epps, 26 May 1992; 26Mar Opn ARDMORE SITREP #123.
[851] *Ibid.*
[852] Conversation with Daniel Hobart, 24 April 1996; Conversation with James Epps, 17 April 1994.

to help those people; he stayed down for three days
and
came up when the fish had eaten his left eye and left
the other
to identify him by.

The company commander remembered
giving specific orders to guard the river crossing
but not to help the refugees.
He was a general's son.
They relieved him and made him a Divisional phone
watch officer.
Bu custom and his own insistence
he wrote you the condolence letter.
Your son's name does not appear in his record of ser
vice.

Those letters did not tell you
how that river made a huge angry hissing sound
while we searched downstream
or how two squads found him and brought him to the
LZ
in a poncho.
His buddy zipped him up in a black plastic body bag.
I signed the identification.

The next day his buddy
told me that your son had given him
the radio that was left
but I packed it up with the other
things the two Marines in dress blues
brought to your house.
He used to listen to it a lot.

Your son's squad leader read me
the local newspaper clipping you sent him
saying you were proud
that your son died gallantly for his
country.

Not his country,.
He died because he could not watch people
die in front of his eyes
and at night the listening post hears
someone weeping
out in front of the wire.
Your son is lurching
up our steep outpost hill
brown water sloshing in his boots
trailing the river behind him
the fish have given him back his sight
scales in his hair
he turns like the leaf of a banana palm.

A Memorial Service was conducted at KSCB on 22 August in the 1/26 mess hall. A brass cross atop the serving table covered with an olive drab blanket formed an altar. About 100 Marines sat at the tables on either side. Lt Epps, Hinson's Platoon Commander mentioned that Hinson had been supporting his mother and also financed the education of a young girl in Greece, that he was a hard worker, always obedient, that he had just begun processing an extension so that his brother wouldn't have to come to Vietnam, and that he died serving the people here, thus epitomizing what we're all here for.[853]

In a newspaper article, his maternal grandmother, Mrs. Pearl M. Jones wrote:

Farewell to a Marine
By Mrs. Pearl M. Jones

My grandson, PFC J. Robert Hinson, USMC, was killed Aug. 16 in Vietnam. He was due home Sept. 10

I wrote to him every Sunday while he was in Vietnam and I would like to pay tribute to him this way:

SEMPER FIDELIS

Farewell to a gallant Marine, who died for his country, PFC JOHN ROBERT HINSON, 27 AUG. 1948 – 16 AUG 1967.

Dear Bobby:

Every Sunday while you were in Vietnam I wrote to you. Today, Sept. 10, I will write my last letter to you, hoping that somehow, you will know about it.

Always faithful, you gave your life on Aug. 16.. at the tender age of 18. You died trying to help others to have life more abundantly, people whose names you never knew.

That was your way of life, always thinking of others. Recently in a letter home you said, 'If I don't get home, don't worry, I am prepared to die.' You believed what you were taught as a child: 'God made me to know him, to love him, to serve him in this world, and to be happy with him in heaven.'

And you said you knew the good Lord was always looking after you.

Today, Sept. 10, we would have been looking for you to come home, but you won't be coming home to us. You are at home where you will be happy with God forever: where there is no fighting, no dying, no tears. And although we grieve for you, we are consoled to know, as you lived, you died, by your faith., Why? Only God knows, but like you, we trust His reason. And in our hearts we feel that in heavenly land, another Marine has landed and the situation is well in hand.

Semper Fidelis, United States Marines. Farewell Bobby, until I join you some day.

Love, Grama, Mrs. Pearl M. Jones.

20 AUGUST 1967

BAUCHERIO, LCPL Harold **HMM-164**

[853] Diary entry of Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, 22 August 1967.

TALLENT, LCPL Garry Glenn B/3rd Recon

The 10-man reconnaissance patrol, SAMPLE CASE I (2B1) had been in trouble from the beginning. It was Sunday, 20 August 1967, as Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe led worship at 1000H in the 1/26 mess hall on KSCB. It was well-attended, and included both the Commanding Officer of 1/26, LtCol James B. Wilkinson, and the 1/26 Executive Officer, Maj R. M. Otterean. About ten minutes into the worship, about three or 4 recon Marines, their faces all painted with dark green and black variegated camouflage face-paint, walked in. The recon team had been playing cards in their hootch waiting for their insertion, and one of the Marines, LCPL Garry Tallent, had suggested that they go to church, and he brought them here.[854]

Shortly after noon (at 1340H), a CH-46 helicopter (#152536) piloted by 1/Lt J.W. Mahoney carrying the recon team attempted to insert at XD904498. The CH-46 landed and the team leader, 1/Lt Albert Ritchie Pfeltz, III, leaped out followed by his radioman, LCPL Garry Glenn Tallent. The aircraft came under heavy .30 caliber small arms and automatic weapons fire from well camouflaged positions to the east and west of the zone. Tallent was immediately killed. The gunner on the helicopter, LCPL Harold Bauchiero, returned fire and was hit, dying later. As the chopper lifted off, Pfeltz ran back on, unharmed, unscratched, as fixed wing (MISS MUFFETT 115 and 109, and CASTER OIL 175) ran air strikes.[855] There had been a 60-round artillery prep of the zone plus fixed wing prep five minutes before the team attempted to insert.[856]

Chaplain Stubbe unzipped the dark green outer body bag in Graves Registration and gazed through the clear plastic inner body bag at a face that seemed vaguely familiar. The face still had remnants of a few granules of camouflage face paint. The Commanding Officer of the recon company, Captain Williams, was very visibly shaken. All his Marines know how very deeply he cares for each one of them.

A memorial service was held the next day within the U-shaped entrance of the regimental mess hall with over a hundred in attendance, including Col Lownds, his S-2, Capt Harper L. Bohr, Jr., and the OinC of Sub Unit #5, 1/Lt Hester. At the time for the prayers, a floppy cloth bush hat worn by recon Marines in the field was brought up and laid before the cross on a small wooden table. One young Private, standing in the formation, wiped a tear from his eye in the brightly shining sunny day.[857]

SGT Steven A. Johnson recalls Tallent was on several of his patrols since Tallent was a radioman and rotated among the various patrols.[858] "Even when things got nasty, he was always smiling aobut something."[859]

23 AUGUST 1967

WILLIAMS, CAPT Derex Jr. 20th TASS

Captain Williams, a pilot of Project TIGERHOUND,[860] was taking off from the KSCB airstrip in his OE-1 (#56-2589) when, at 1945H, his engine failed and he crashed approximately 1000 meters from the western end of the runway at XD833418. Another man in the aircraft escaped with only minor injuries.[861] Another source indicates the aircraft was at 50 feet when its engine was hit by small arms fire.[862]

William Jabusch recalled a conversation with a Corpsman who related that the pilot had pushed his seat forward to permit the observer to leave the aircraft, but that his seat locked and he was unable to un-strap himself. The plane was aflame and he was literally burning to death, unable to extricate himself. The corpsman relating the account plus some Marines that were with him had tried to pry him loose; the fire singed the hair on their arms. They were unsuccessful. The pilot kept repeating: "Somebody, tell my wife that I love her. O, somebody, shoot me!" He wanted to be put out of his misery.[863] One Marine was about to shoot him when his buddy cautioned: "If they manage to put the fire out, you'll be accused of murder."

Col John Roberts, CO of the TIGERHOUND Detachment at Khe Sanh, relates an incident (which may or may not be this one, although there were only two crashes of TIGERHOUND aircraft during his command, the other being 17 January 1968) in which the pilot "..made a

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[854] Diary entry for 20 August 1967 by Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe

[855] Comments by Capt Williams [CO, B Co., 3rd Recon Bn] to Chaplain Stubbe, 20 August 1967; 26Mar 201300Z/Aug67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #139; Aircraft Mishap Rpt 201350H, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 20/21 Aug 1967, #82; Resume of Telephone Call 202103H/Aug67, in III MAF COC Journal and File 20/21 Aug 1967, #123.

[856] Comments of Capt James L. Williams, USMC Oral History Tape #1759.

[857] Diary entry for 21 August 1967 by Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe.

[858] Conversation with Steven A. Johnson, 29 Jan 2006.

[859] Steven A. Johnson, "Vietnam...the Sequel," April, 1998, p. 13.

[860] Gen Westmoreland coined the term "TIGERHOUND" coupling "tiger" for aggressiveness and "hound" for smelling out. These were O-1 aircraft that flew to a depth of 12 miles inside Laos to locate targets for fixed-wing or even B-52 strikes. [Westmoreland, Gen William C., *A Soldier Reports*, New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1980, p. 256].

[861] 26Mar 231650Z/Aug67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #152.

[862] Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 115.

[863] Taped comments sent by Mr. William Jabusch, 08 March 1990. Mr. Jabusch died 08 Nov 1991 after receiving a bone marrow transplant due to his leukemia, and developing a brain fungus as a result.

right-turn out of there and piled in off the end of the runway. Sometimes the kids would get boozed up and they'd laugh about being an 'ace' and shooting down an airplane. Well this guy had a bullet hole in him and he hadn't got ten feet off the runway. Those things happen. Those kids get a few drinks down them. Sure, we had enemy down there pulling water out of the river and so forth, but we didn't have people ten feet off the end of the runway! I never filed any reports on it. I told the base Colonel about it."[864]

Chaplain Stubbe visited Graves Registration to say a prayer. A Marine there unzipped the outer body bag. "Usually the head is right at the top. They unzipped almost half-way down. One could see bumps on the bag where two legs down to the knees formed a fixed "V". The head was all I saw. It was almost half normal size, all black from being burnt. The back of the skull was gone—only a few sharply-pointed white bones were there. There were no eyes, no hair, just a mass of black, charred flesh and bones beginning to decompose and giving off a sickening, sweet odor. I said a few prayers for peace, for comfort, for the family, for forgiveness for any sins the man may have had and for our gracious Lord to accept him into His eternal habitations."[865] The small tag attached to the body bag had penciled words which read: "This pilot was coming in for a landing. The plane went out of control and crashed."

Several days later, some Birddog aircraft flew over the combat base as though an air show. I asked some of the officers why this was and was informed that they do this to pay last tribute to their comrade. The flying went on for over 45 minutes. It was very, very sad.[866]

28 AUGUST 1967

BROWN, LCPL Marcus, Jr. C/1/26

The area from which Co C/1/26 patrolled eastward along Route 9 following the contacts of 21 July was an area of high malaria risk. Several men contracted malaria including LCPL Brown, a machine-gunner with Weapons Platoon, attached to C-2. His fever became so intense that he was flown in a CH-46 helicopter far aloft to cool him, but he nevertheless died from the malaria fever. Lt James Epps recalls, "He was a nice person, one of those that are too easily forgotten."[867]

17 SEPTEMBER 1967

WITMER, PFC Omar David Jr. A/1/26

And

24 SEPTEMBER 1967

MC CLUNG, PFC Ronald Olin A/1/26

During the monsoon rains (from noon Saturday to noon Sunday, 7 inches!), 12 Marines from A/1/26, all short-timers (and thus not in the field on patrol) were inside a 26th Marines Regimental Comm bunker they were building using sandbags and locally-cut trees for reinforcement. The weight of the water-logged sandbags caused the entire structure suddenly to collapse at 0745H,[868] injuring all. PFC WITMER, a married 20 year-old, had internal bleeding and a chest drainage tube was inserted as well as head injuries. He died upon arrival at Phu Bai. All 12 were medevaced.[869] PFC McClung died of wounds received in the collapsed bunker.

Diary Entry: Sunday, 17 September 1967
By Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe

It was a Sunday, 17 September 1967. Somehow an ambulance (we called them "cracker boxes") managed to negotiate the exceedingly slippery road which had also been torn up with ruts and holes from the recent heavy rains and large truck movements, and just as I neared the C Med triage tent, was off-loading casualties. The 1/26 Battalion Surgeon, Dr. Harvey Demaagd, was already there. I helped carry one of the men into the triage tent. Blood was all over, coming out of his nose and mouth, and he was unconscious. His rain gear, shirt, and flak jacket were cut off, and Dr. Demaagd cut into the side of his chest and inserted a plastic tube to drain out blood from internal bleeding and permit him to breathe. Then a tube was inserted into his neck.

Then another Marine was brought in, in a very bad condition but still conscious and in much pain, pleading to have his head elevated. After the first man was treated, they began to work on him, cutting a hole in the side of his chest also. He screamed in extreme pain as a large quantity of blood drained into the tube.

Then they brought in the others, twelve in all, all from ALFA Company, 1/26, all short-timers and therefore not out in the bush. They had all eaten breakfast and were sitting in the new regimental communications bunker being constructed near our 1/26 COC. It collapsed very suddenly, not giving them time to escape, and the men were crushed un-

[864] Conversation with Col John Roberts, 02 September 1999. Col Roberts died of a stroke 09 March 1991.
[865] Diary entry of 24 August 1967 in Diary of Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe.
[866] *Ibid.*, addition made in 1969 from memory.
[867] Conversation with James Epps, 07 January 1995.
[868] 26Mar 170535Z/Sep67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #248; 1/26 ComdC Sep67, S2/S3 Log, 17 Sep 67, Ser #20.
[869] *Ibid.*

der the heavy logs and pierced steel matting—scrap from the airstrip being repaired.

One of the Marines, PFC Ronald McClure, had been practicing Taps on the battalion bugle for our memorial services. Another had received shrapnel recently from a "too close" close air support strike off the northern slope of Hill 881-South.

David Witmer's brother, Robert, was also serving in the Vietnam War aboard a Navy ship and didn't learn of his brother's death until after their parents had been notified. He recalls his brother as an athlete, very active in cross-country, javelin throwing, and other track and field events. They had grown up on a farm until their father began work as a mechanic in a garage.[870]

13 OCTOBER 1967

SINK, CPL Melvin Francis D/1/26

It was 2235H. A night ambush from Third Platoon of D/1/26 (commanded by Lt Walter F. Chapman, the Commandant's son) off Hill 881-South was set in a circular formation in a bomb crater at XD778437, with twelve o'clock being west. The ambush leader, Cpl Melvin Francis Sink, along with a dog handler, was at the six o'clock position, the sniper team at ten o'clock, and two Marines at two o'clock. The scout dog alerted and Cpl Sink left his position to direct a search using a starlight scope. Cpl Sink then went into the center of the crater to urinate. He apparently became disoriented and instead of returning to his position, walked out into the kill zone at approximately three o'clock. A Marine at the two o'clock position, a new, very young man who had just reported to Khe Sanh from the States, heard a noise. Although Cpl Sink had attempted to move without making noise, the young trooper heard him and fired three rounds, not challenging, apparently because that would have disclosed his own position were it an enemy.

Then there was a cry from Cpl Sink.

Cpl Sink was brought to the hill and waited some 15 minutes before deciding to medevac him,. The request was "priority," nor "emergency," since he only had several small holes in his shoulder and the corpsman assumed it was only a small flesh wound, nothing serious. Cpl Sink was fully conscious.

The medevac was completed at 2315H, and Cpl Sink was dead on arrival at C Med from loss of blood due to internal bleeding, the bullets having hit a large vein or artery.[871]

The young Marine who shot Cpl Sink was WIA during the siege battle on 04 March 1968 and KIA 13 June 1968.

[*Onding rainfalls beginning in September collapsed all non-concrete, underground bunkers and began to erode the soil underneath the metal airstrip, creating dangerous landing conditions as the matting buckled under the weight of incoming aircraft. Top priority was assigned to upgrading the Khe Sanh airstrip, especially due to inability to utilize the overland logistics link, Route 9, which was impassible due to washed out bridges and probable NVA ambush sites. CBMU-301, Detachment B, was assigned the mission of upgrading the airstrip. A basalt knob, one of three within 1/8-mile of the Combat Base, was chosen as a quarry, about 8 minutes distant from the perimeter, and would supply an estimated ten to fifteen thousand cubic yards of useable material. The rock produced unweathered particles which are sharp-edged, angular, hard, and durable; the weathered break down to sharp, angular, hard and durable sand. Fracture is conchoidal.*[872] *Rather than maintain it piecemeal, the decision was made to rebuild it entirely. Compacted crushed rock would replace the laterite clay under the matting to ensure optimal drainage. Closure of Route 9 meant that equipment for this purpose needed to be transported to Khe Sanh by air.*[873] *Despite the rainfall, reconstruction was commenced in earnest, including a rock quarry, rock crushers, major excavation of mud from the sub-base once the matting was removed, grading and compacting the rock, sealing it with RC-3 asphalt, and then relaying the AM-2 aluminum matting.*[874] *As Marines from B/1/26 provided security, engineers from 3rd Engineer Battalion cleared a nearby hilltop of all trees and dirt, then planted dynamite and blasted. A 27-man Navy Seabee team from Naval Support Activity, DaNang, operated two rock crushers each operated by a 125 horsepower engine, smashing 12" boulders of basalt into tiny bits in seconds, generating about 200 cubic yards of gravel per day. The Khe Sanh airstrip was not level, but rose gradually from the east end until it was 100 meters higher on the west end. It was also higher in the*

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[870] Conversation with Robert Witmer, 25 April 2003. Robert retired from the U.S. Navy as a CTTC.

[871] Comments by Capt Davis at 1/26 morning staff and officer brief, 14 Oct 1967 and recorded in Diary of Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe for that date; 26Mar 140030Z/Oct67, Opn ARD-MORE SITREP #355; 1/26 ComdC Oct 1967, Encl (1), S2/S3 Log for 14 Oct 1967, Ser No. 1.

[872] John C. Ireton, Soils Engineer, "Report on the Evaluation of Quarry Site and Aircraft Landing Facilities at the Khe Sanh Combat Outpost, Republic of Vietnam, 29 August 1967.

[873] Ltr of Capt C.J. Merdinger in CO, CBMU-301/TBM:cft, 5213, 2 June 1968, Subj: Annual Operations Report for the Period 26 June 1967 to 25 April 1968; Submission of, pp. 11-16.

[874] Ens Kux, Diary entry for 03 November 1967. Each section of AM-2 matting was 12-foot long, 2-foot wide, and weighed 144 pounds.

middle than on its edges to ensure drainage.[875] *The rock quarry was put into operation 2 September 1967 and the actual repair work began 10 September. Weather was the enemy constantly fought by the Seabees during the reconstruction. By 12 October, enough of the airstrip sub-base had been properly graded and sealed with RC-3 asphalt to permit 310 feet of matting to be laid and earth anchorage for their length to be fabricated and installed, making the total length of useable airstrip equal to the requirements for operation of C-123 aircraft.*[876]]

15 OCTOBER 1967

BANEY, Sgt Charles Lynn	**109th QM Co**
BERNESKI, A1C Lawrence Augusti	**314 TAW**
BJORKE, CAPT Erle Lawrence	**314 TAW**
HOTTENROTH, 1/Lt James Randall	**314 TAW**
MOSLEY, TSGT Edward	**314 TAW**
SNYDER, A2C John Herbert	**314 TAW**

It was a Sunday that began as a sunny, cheerful day. A Corpsman, Ebert, at C Med, was playing Vivaldi's *Gloria* on a newly-acquired tape recorder. The colorful state flags on either side of the road to "A" Battery added splashes of color to our red-mud base. Then the weather changed and became pouring rain and clouds.[877] At 1405H a USAF C-130F (#64-0548) of the 314th Tactical Air Wing, loaded with sandbags and preparing to make a ground-controlled radar approach low-level air drop, crashed into the cloud-covered eastern end of the runway (at XD853417). EO1 Gilbert Schoultz and EON2 Bone of CBMU-301 Det B were on a grader and had just scraped the shoulder from west to east, turned around, and moved east to west when they heard the crash and watched the plane slide to a halt less than 200' from them. 15-20 seconds saved their lives. Another 100 feet or so and the plane would have struck the ammo dump. The plane crashed into 400-500 barrels of RC-3 asphalt and burst into flames.[878]

The palleted load of sandbags skewed as it moved and jammed in the cargo hold. The drogue parachute which normally pulled pallets out of the low-flying aircraft, had deployed, and when the plane attempted to gain altitude it could not, and crashed.[879] The Beltmaster, who had no practical experience, only school training, panicked when the load jammed, and blew the fuse that exploded the parachute-deploying mechanism.[880]

Hundreds of people gathered.

The pilot escaped only slightly scratched. Another crewman suffered both legs broken, a broken clavicle, and skull damage. Five other men were alive inside, trapped, and pounding on the side of the plane attempting desperately to escape the flame-engulfed aircraft.[881] PFC James A. Pauley of A/1/26 immediately rushed to the blazing inferno and struggled with bare hands, fire axe, and steel rods attempting to make an opening in the aircraft to permit those trapped to escape, but to no avail. PFC Pauley had to be physically removed from the chaos when it became evident that no effort, however valiant, could succeed.[882] The crash crew arrived and began attempts to extinguish the holocaust, but it was useless. PFC Kenneth O. Meyers (A/1/26), PFC James A. Carter (A/1/26), LCPL Arthur A. Hall (A/1/26), LCPL Michael A. Woodard (A/3rd AT), CPL Pierre D. Carter (A/3rd AT), and CPL Lynn K. Chapin (A/3rd AT) all actively attempted to remove those trapped inside the burning aircraft.[883]

SP4 Charles L. Baney was killed instantaneously[884] from penetrating wounds to head and fractured skull. He also had penetrating wounds to his left elbow and both knees.[885]

Capt Lawrence Bjorke, known as "Corky," was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota and graduated from Mounds View High School in June, 1957. He attended the University of Minnesota from 1957-1960, pursuing engineering, and then entered the USAF and graduated from pilot training at Laughlin AFB, Del Rio, Texas, in February, 1967. He was married and had a daughter.[886]

Sgt Charles Baney, a soldier attached to the 109th Quartermaster Company at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, was flying in the aircraft as an inspector to ensure proper

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[875] PFC Ray Intrabartolo, "Northern Hilltop Being Leveled to Repair Khe Sanh Runway," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:43 (27Oct67).

[876] OIC, Det B, CBMU-301 ltr CBMU301B/MJK:jaw, 5213, Ser 18-67, 25 Oct 1967, Subj: Operations Report for the Month Ending 25 October 1967; Submission of

[877] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 15 October 1967.

[878] Ens Kux, Diary entry for 15 October 1967; 26Mar 151220Z/Oct67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #361; Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 121.

[879] Conversation with Ray Anderson, 23 April 1996, who based his comments on conversations with Col [then 2/Lt] William W. Mortis of the 109th who was at Khe Sanh to retrieve parachutes and skids (4630 platforms).

[880] Conversation with Ray Anderson, 04 November 1996.

[881] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 15 October 1967.

[882] Statements of Capt Kenneth W. Pipes and 1/Lt Stephen A. Fitzgerald in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC James A. Pauley

[883] Statement of Sgt Nearlin Carter, Jr., in Navy Commendation Medal file of LCPL Michael A. Woodard.

[884] DA Form 10-249, Certificate of Death, SP4 Charles L. Baney, RA 16822312. Forwarded in letter from Terry Frushour, 4 Apr 2008.

[885] DD 893, Record of Identification, Anatomical Chart, 16 Oct 67 for Charles L. Baney. Forwarded in letter from Terry Frushour, 4 Apr 2008.

[886] Ward, Don, *The Faces Behind the Names*, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1996, p. 31.

rigging.[887] The U.S. Army 109th Air Delivery had a detachment of 50 in DaNang which rigged the airdrops at Khe Sanh.[888] Born in Warsaw, Indiana, he graduated from Warsaw Community High School, attended the Methodist Church there, and entered the United States Army 7 June 1965. He completed Army Infantry Basic, Army Airborne School, and Parachute Packing, Maintenance and Air Delivery School.[889]

30 OCTOBER 1967

BENNETT, Capt James Harrell, Jr. 20thTASS

Capt Bennett died of wounds this date. At 1400H, 21 September, there was a sudden cloud of black smoke over the airstrip as the engines of an O1-E USAF spotter plane from the 20th TASS TIGERHOUND crashed. LCPL Paul Manley was at his machinegun bunker when he heard the engines stop. He turned and with fixed horror saw the plane coming directly towards his bunker on a crash course. The wingtip missed Manley by only a few scant feet.

The aircraft had lost power on take-off, lost altitude, and its wingtip caught a pile of crushed rock and tipped over. The observer in the back seat immediately freed himself and escaped. The pilot, however, was trapped inside, pinned down by a piece of twisted metal. LCPL Manley, together with four very brave Seabees of CBMU-301 Det B, feverishly worked to free the pilot despite the flames and managed to drag the pilot to safety.

Dr. Demaagd, the 1/26 Battalion Surgeon, was on the ambulance along with several corpsmen. A naked man with skin peeled off like a thin cellophane and charred legs, black and swelling, fully conscious, was crying, "O the pain! Doc, knock me out! I can't stand the pain! O shit! The plane just stopped! Doc, give me some oxygen! I can't breathe! O now it's beginning to hurt bad!" His face was all brown, skin charred. His hands were bloodied with skin scraped off and just hanging at various places. A tracheotomy was performed at C Med; he became very agitated. He was evacuated to DaNang with good prognosis.[890]

[During a visit to the construction site of the new Lang Vei Special Forces Camp (XD786456) being built by MCB-11, the Commanding Officer of A-101, Captain Frank Willoughby at the old Lang Vei camp site (XD795360) stated that they received 142,000 tons of supplies by airdrop in 2 ½ days on the smallest DZ in proportion to the amount dropped, in Viet Nam. It set an Air Force record. He remarked that the new camp is being built so that it would take at least a regiment of NVA soldiers to overrun it. Sloping, long fields of fire had been cleared, and in the new camp, only Americans will be in the inner perimeter with indigenous in an outer ring, to prevent a repetition of what happened on 4 May when the camp was overrun from within.[891]

[On 01 March 1967, the nickname SHINING BRASS was replaced by PRAIRIE FIRE to designate SOG operations into eastern Laos.[892] *In March, 1967, COMUSMACV proposed organization of a guerrilla force using hill tribes of the Annamite mountains. The basic mission was stated: "The basic purpose of PRAIRIE FIRE operations is to conduct special operations to counter enemy infiltration through Laos and into South Vietnam."*[893]

Major Fred Patton arrived at Khe Sanh village in late February, 1967, and located in a building (referred to as the "Howard Johnson's" by those who were in Khe Sanh village), directly across from the Huong Hoa District Headquarters. Working solo, he departed before Thanksgiving after bringing up half an A-team led by MSGT Charles "Skip" Minnicks.[894] *FOB-3 began to form, training Bru tribespeople. Major Patton, while evaluating the Bru as loyal and uncannily adept in patrolling, nevertheless probably would not make good soldiers, being a "joyful and passive" people.*[895] *The Wycliffe Bible Translator missionaries in Khe Sanh village recalled Maj Patton who allegedly was working on a "history project," but, as Mr. John Miller noted, "Just how many people do you need to write a history?" The American force then gathered a dozen Bru to work with them, then 20, then 40, and eventually located at the Old French Fort. They temporarily ruined the local economy, paying an extravagant rent of 20,000 to 24,000 P [Piasters, the local Vietnamese money] per month! The Bru became very disturbed; it wasn't "right." When John Miller informed the Maj Patton that this was gross in-*

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[887] 1/Lt Carmelo Meletiche, *Annual Historical Supplement of the 109th Quartermaster Company (Air Delivery), 1 January 1966 – 31 December 1967*, HQ 278th S&S Battalion (GS), n.d., Supplement to Unit History, 1 January 1967 – 31 December 1967, p. 3.

[888] Conversation with Ray Anderson, 23 April 1996.

[889] Memorial bulletin for SP4 Charles Lynn Baney conducted at Cam Ranh Bay Chapel, 18 October 1967.

[890] 26Mar 211145Z/Sep67, Opn ARDMIRE SITREP #265; 26Mar ComdC Sep67, Encl (1), p. 3; Ens Kux, Diary entry for 21 Sep 1967; Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 21 Sep 1967; "Aircraft Crashes Near Bunker: Wingtip Just Misses Marine," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:43 (27 Oct 1967) 4; OIC CBMU-301 Det B ltr CBMU301B/MJK:jaw, 5213, Ser 9-67, 25 Sep 1967, Subj: Operations Report for the Month Ending 25 September 1967; submission of.

[891] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 31 October 1967.

[892] JCS Memo J3M-1242-70, 16 July 1970, Subj: Draft MACSOG Documentation Study, Appendix D, Cross Border Operations in Laos, p. D-30.

[893] *Ibid.*, p. D-38.

[894] Conversation with Fred Patton, 09 September 1997.

[895] Conversation with Fred Patton, 26 March 1994.

flation, he was told this was what they were required to pay. Some Bru received more pay than their village chiefs, their salaries ranging from 8,000 to 18,000 P per month. In addition, some Bru received "hazardous" pay for going out on patrols, and could not understand why some should be paid more for doing that.[896] *Nevertheless, the program was started, and FOB-3 operated from an old French fortified area to the east of Khe Sanh village.*

Detail JULIETT, NMCB [Naval Mobile Construction Battalion] TEN arrived at Khe Sanh on 11 October 1967 to construct FOB #3.[897] *The Detail built eight 16 x 32-foot huts, 9 heads, a 72 x 20-ft. dispensary, and four massive 32 x 36-foot underground bunkers.*[898]

FOB-3, however, while incorporating the "Special Projects" effort to develop the guerrilla force in Laos, had as its principle objective, the western anchor of the Electronic Barrier (known as the "McNamara Line" or "Dyemarker" or "Project 792"): "The reason that FOB-3 was established was primarily not strategic reconnaissance in a third country; it was to put McNamara's Wall in; it was our charter to support the construction of that electronic barrier."[899]]

[*Operation ARDMORE terminated at 2369H, 31 October 1967; Operation SCOTLAND commenced with the same mission.*[900] *The TAOR was defined: From DMZ south along GL 85 to GL48, east to GL 90, south to GL 43, east along GL to GL 95, south on GL 95 to Da Krong River, southeast along Da Krong River to YD004302 then south to Laotian border at YD004234. Boundary then follows Laotian border on the south and west to the DMZ and east along DMZ to point of origin. The area encompassed approximately 403 square miles.*[901]]

01 NOVEMBER 1967

HAWKINS, SGT Don Albert	**FOB-1**
WOODS, SFC David Alexander	**FOB-1**

The SOG team was inserted into Laos from the Khe Sanh launch site. While on their patrol, the team discovered and reported a gray land line communications wire, and were instructed to place one of their wire tap devices [Surveillance System 4-114A Wire Tap Kit] on it.[902] **Since the area was saturated with NVA and the SOG team determined it unwise to remain in the area, they cut the wire. The NVA had teams that followed their land lines, located the SOG team, and a fierce firefight ensued. They were on a high ridge between SOG Targets GOLF-6 and GOLF-8, about 19 kilometers from Khe Sanh at 160 radial.**[903]

SFC Woods was the ONE-ZERO [Team Leader], getting ready to rotate home.[904] **Sgt Don Hawkins arrived in Vietnam 17 September**[905] **and went to the ONE-ZERO School in Kham Duc with Pat Johnston before reporting to FOB-1 at Phu Bai. He was killed on his 23rd birthday, probably unaware that his wife was pregnant 8 weeks with a daughter (Dawn). It was his first SOG patrol and WOODS was breaking him in as a replacement.**[906]

Philip Montaldo, the only American survivor, recalls that Woods had given him money to buy an ocelot in DaNang to eradicate the rats. Unbeknown to Montaldo, the ocelot was a "pussy cat," that had even been tattooed. Woods had packed all his gear getting ready to rotate from Vietnam.[907]

"There were three dead bodies at Graves Registration on Thursday, 02 November: two U.S. SOG soldiers (E-5 Don A. Hawkins and E-7 David Alexander Woods) and one Nung, unidentified. They all looked so very young! Blood covered their naked bodies. One had a large, gaping hole below his ear where he had been shot; the other was shot in his thigh and evidently died from loss of blood."[908]

08 NOVEMBER 1967

BAXTER, MSGT Bruce Raymond	**FOB-1**
BROWER, CAPT Ralph Wayne	**37th ARRS**[909]
CLAY, SSGT Eugene Lunsford	**37th ARRS**
KUSICK, SGT Joseph George	**FOB-1**
MAYSEY, SGT Larry Wayne	**37th ARRS**

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[896] Conversation with John and Carolyn Miller, fall of 1967, at Khe Sanh.

[897] CO, NMCB 10 ltr to Commander, Naval Construction Battalions, Pacific, NMCB10/30:ajg, 5213/1, 15 July 1968, Subj: End of Deployment Completion Report; forwarding of, p. 3. The last 14 men of NMCB 10, Detail JULIETT, returned to battalion headquarters from Khe Sanh on 19 Feb 1968.

[898] JO3 A.F. Kuhn, NMCB-10 News Release No. 44VR68.

[899] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 10 Sep 1988. Dunlap was CO of Operational Detachment A-221, 1st Special Forces Group, sent to Khe Sanh to train Bru for SOG operations.

[900] 3rd MarDiv 290825Z/Oct67, OpO 49-67 (SCOTLAND) in 3rd MarDiv ComdC Oct67, Pt. 2.

[901] 26Mar AAR Opn SCOTLAND, p. 9.

[902] Conversation with William Waugh, 30 October 1988.

[903] Saal, Harve, *SOG, MACV Studies and Observation Group (Behind Enemy Lines)*, Vol. III, *Legends*, Milwaukee, Wi: Jones Techno-Comm, 1990, p. 159.

[904] Conversation with Pat Johnston, 01 May 1995.

[905] Conversation with Mrs. Dawn Hawkins-McMaster, 20 April 1995, daughter of Sgt Don Hawkins.

[906] Conversation with Mrs. Dawn Hawkins-McMaster, 31 March 1995.

[907] Conversation with Philip Montaldo, 07 August 1995.

[908] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 02 November 1967.

[909] ARRS=Aerospace Rescue & Recovery Squadron

MSGT Baxter was the Team Leader and Sgt Kusick was the radio operator for a SOG patrol of Phu Bai-based FOB #1 which launched out of KSCB Launch Site[910] to operate at YC012973, an area with geologic formations that rose as spires and sheer cliffs from rather flat land, known as karst.[911] The patrol required emergency extraction and two USAF "Jolly Green Giant" helicopters (H3s) were launched from the DaNang AB at 1505H.[912]

Col Jack Roberts from the TIGERHOUND detachment at Khe Sanh (20th TASS), flying over the area advised the Jolly Greens to hold while three US Army UH-1E helicopters ran air-strikes. A C-130 flare ship provided illumination. At 1630H, "Jolly Green 29" rescued three indigenous members of the patrol before being driven off by hostile fire. The pilot radioed Captain Gerald Young, flying the second H-3 helicopter, that he had received major damage and was heading for KSCB airstrip; he advised Capt Young to abort due to the heavy ground fire.[913] Captain Young replied that he would make an attempt. Twenty minutes later, as he and his co-pilot, Captain Ralph Brower, hovered their helicopter, "Jolly Green 26" against the side of the cliff, additional members of the SOG patrol were lifted into the helicopter, including Baxter and Kusick. As the last soldier came aboard, Captain Young attempted to lift, but NVA machineguns raked the bird causing it to crash in a burst of flames as it hit ground. Flames burnt most of Captain Young's clothing, but he managed to kick out a window and escape. Over 20% of his body sustained second and third degree burns. Despite his pain, he searched for other survivors, but spotted approaching NVA and hid. As the NVA set up their machineguns to kill any who would come to rescue, Captain Young got on his radio and warned, "It's a trap. Forget about me. I'll signal you."[914]

MSGT Bruce Baxter's dead body slid out of the H-3 onto the soft, muddy dirt at the top of the hill, and down until his combat boots caught in a tree coming out of the side of the cliff;[915] he hung by one foot from a tree root, and it was impossible to get to him. The NVA moved three or four 37mm guns into the area as though to say, "Come on! We want you to come in here with all those aircraft you have and all these bad troops you have, and we'll teach you something."[916]

Captain Young crawled off, evading searching NVA soldiers, going in and out of shock for some 17 hours[917]. Convinced he had lost the pursing NVA and locating a suitable area, he radioed and was rescued.[918]

On 10 November, a Special Forces group searched the charred aircraft, finding three bodies, two with identification tags which identified them as members of the aircrew; the third had no tags, but was identified as Sgt Kusick by the long antenna from his AN/PRC-25. About 34 meters downhill from the wreckage, another body was located, identified as a member of the recon team. No trace was found of the third aircrew member.[919]

Capt Gerald Young's heroic action was recognized with the Medal of Honor.

The USAF H-3 made an emergency landing on the KSCB airstrip at 0110H from low fuel and being shot up while making the emergency recon extraction in the southern part of our TAOR.[920]

[On 09 November 1967, word was received on Hill 881-South that a Huey was arriving with several "CODE FOURS and CODE FIVES and CODE SIXES" or something like that; it was four Generals, including Lieutenant General Alfred D. Starbird, an elderly-looking gent who headed the DCPG [Defense Communications Planning Group], a CIA-project to develop electronic sensors to detect enemy presence. The others in the party included General Antonelly, Brigadier General Caruthers, and the Commanding General of III MAF. They all walked over to the north side of the hill along with Capt Bruce Greene, commanding B/1/26, and gazed towards 881-North, pointing out there several times.[921]

The next day was hazy, rainy, cold, damp, and horrible for those atop Hill 881-South on the 192nd Anniversary of Marine Corps Birthday. Somehow a chopper penetrated the fog and landed with Colonel Lownds, Lieutenant Colonel James B. Wilkinson, and the CO of 1/13, along with a cake, sodas and beer. 2/Lt Don Jacques was leading his platoon patrol through the mud at the time, having departed 881-South earlier. While LtCol Wilkinson mentioned that this hill had a deep significance for the NVA and that they would probably attempt to recapture it, the most chilling comments came from Colonel Lownds who broke the formation into an informal gathering around him and said: "We here at Khe Sanh are going to be remembered in our American

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[910] Conversation with James Moore, 26 February 1996.
[911] Grid coordinates are from LtCol James G. Cole, telephone conversation of 20 Sep 1991. Cole was in charge of the POW/MIA desk at the Pentagon. References to karst: Conversation with James Moore, 18 March 1996. Moore was the OpsSgt at FOB-3.
[912] Saal, Harve, *MACV Studies and Observations Group (Behind Enemy Lines)*, Milwaukee, Wi.: Jones Techno-Comm, 1990, Vol. III, Legends, p. 159.
[913] Cebulash, Mel, *Man in a Green Beret and Other Medal of Honor Winners*, New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1969, pp. 123-124.
[914] *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125.
[915] Conversation with James W. Moore, 26 February 1996.
[916] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.
[917] Medal of Honor Citation, Capt Gerald O. Young.
[918] Cebulash, *op. cit.*, p. 125.
[919] Saal, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170.
[920] 26Mar 082352Z/Nov67, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #33; 26Mar ComdC Nov67, Encl (1), p. 4.
[921] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 09 November 1967.

history books!" That statement, coupled with the recent arrival of the signal intelligence Marines on this hill and the visit by General Starbird yesterday, and the always ominous warnings from the S-2, was almost as scary as the Marines talking a month ago on this very hill of Jeanne Dixon's prophecy of "1200 dead at Khe Sanh!"[922]]

16 NOVEMBER 1967

CHILDRESS, CPL Lewis Clayton	**FLC**
JENKINS, CPL Earl Dale Jr.	**FLC**
MEGGS, LCPL Marion Lee	**B/3rd Recon**

Thursday, 16 November 1967, was a day of rain, as have been most of the recent days, necessitating air drops of supplies by the Air Delivery Platoon, 1st Service Regiment, Force Logistics Command (FLC). There were about 3-4 drops a day involving more than 100,000 pounds of supplies daily. The parachutes were prized by the troops at KSCB who gleefully retrieved them and covered their tents externally as well as internally. To retrieve the expensive chutes and replenish a diminishing stock of them, some of the Para Delivery Marines jumped with the supplies. The drops are made from 800 feet which means the 60-foot diameter, 200-pound parachute is only in the air a few seconds, restricting lateral movement away from the drop zone. The plane approaches the DZ and then noses up about 15 – 20 and an extraction parachute (known as a "drogue") pulls out the load.[923]

Marines on the KSCB almost always looked at the colorful spectacle as various colored parachutes descended, in rapt peace, frequently snapping photos. Today, it was a spectacle of horror when, at 1115H, two Marines were killed as they jumped with the air-drop and their parachutes failed to deploy fully.[924]

James Dawdy took a dump truck through the wire and, with a Navy Corpsman, was first on the scene. The Corpsman performed CPR on one, but it was hopeless. "I'll always remember how surreal it was to hold a man's hand as he died."[925] **"It was, for me, the time when I felt the most helpless, the greatest despair that I'd felt in my life. And at that time, it occurred to me that somewhere, there was a mother or father, sister or brother, good friend, girlfriend, that in just a few hours or a day would hear that their loved one had died."**[926] **Grady L. Branch (C/1/13) recalls: "That boy died in my arms, and I couldn't do a thing for him. He struggled so hard to live. I can still see the look on his face today... Me and doc both cried for the both of them."**[927] **2/Lt Nick Romanetz of C/1/26 had just arrived on KSCB when Co "C" rotated from Hill 861 to become the KSCB base security/reaction force. "I think we just walked through the drop zone, returning from a patrol. I watched the aircraft pass over the drop zone and saw both Marines fall to the earth. That incident was my first experience with death. I had only been in country and at KSCB for just over a month."**[928]

"The operation went like this. A 5-man recovery team parachuted in with the first air drop and remained on the ground 'to man the drop zone' and receive the daily—sometimes several a day—air drops. Aside from recovering the supplies, we salvaged all useable slings, containers, parachutes, etc., to be sent back to DaNang on space available on any aircraft that left Khe Sanh. When possible, I would send a man back to escort the gear. Back in DaNang the gear would be repaired and re-used. What made this operation noteworthy was that of using every parachute and every container that we rated by T/E and we were far from 100% T/E. The maximum weight capability of a reinforced Air Delivery Platoon is 110,000 pounds. In Khe Sanh, over less than a five week period, we air dropped just short of 1,000,000 pounds of supplies. This was made possible by using recovery teams.. retrieving the gear."[929]

What happened today was that the two who died were told to walk off the rear ramp as in marching, a step at a time, and allow for an interval of one full second between jumpers, but these two jumped off together at the same time and their parachutes became tangled. One of the Air Delivery Marines inside the aircraft had a

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[922] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 10 November 1967.

[923] SSGT Dan Wisniewski, "Air Delivery Team Stays Busy Keeping Khe Sanh Resupplied," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 3:42 (20 Oct 67) 8.

[924] 26Mar 160417Z/Nov67, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #62.

[925] James Dawdy, letter in Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay* 55 (Spring 2003) 15. Dawdy later "..called Childress's mother and expressed my condolences to her.. She had never been provided a convincing explanation.. concerning her son's death, so I traveled to Las Vegas a few weeks later and met with her, a daughter, and a son whom they were visiting who lived in Las Vegas. It was a duty I felt I owed to Cpl Lewis Clayton Childress."

[926] Remarks by James Dawdy at the Vietnam Memorial wall in Washington, D.C., during Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, 03 July 1993, printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran* 1:4 (Winter, 1993) 23.

[927] Grady L. Branch, letter of 23 May 1990.

[928] Nick Romanetz, letter printed in Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay* 55 (Spring, 2003) 15.

[929] Ojars Jurjans letter of 01 July 1989. The Air Delivery Plt had about 110-130 troops. "It was a total team effort." Jurjans was born in Latvia. "When the Russians in the early part of World War II started to invade the country, we took the last ship out to Germany, as refugees, and spent the whole World War II in Germany... I even stayed overnight in a concentration camp one time until they realized we were refugees and not a shipment of Jews, and then they allowed us to leave... I came to America at the age of 11, and joined the Marine Corps in 1956. [Conversation with Ojars Jurjans, 06 August 1994]. T/E=Table of Equipment (*i.e.*, the amount of gear permitted).

8mm camera and recorded the entire incident, exonerating the riggers and everyone else involved in the drop.[930]

The head of Cpl Earl Dale Jenkins, Jr., was split open, and the body of Cpl Lewis Clayton Childress was very badly bruised. It was the 8th jump for one of the Marines, the 29th for the other.[931]

From Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe's Diary entry for 16 November 1967:

"We departed about 1530H in a 6-by and almost arrived at the IP [Insertion Point] when our radioman received word that there had been a drowning. It was "M221." (Marines used the first letter of the man's last name plus the last three numbers of his service number so the enemy, if listening to radio traffic, would not know the identity of the casualty. Meggs' service number was 223221). Everyone in the truck immediately said, "It's Meggs," and then expressed an immediate barrage of hostile feelings against those in charge.

"We speeded back to the base where everyone was furious—the men at those in charge, Colonel Lownds that we now had two Marines drowned, both non-swimmers. Everyone had been especially close to "Muggs" as he was known—a short, fun-loving kid who could make everybody laugh at his antics. One evening he acted out a parody on military ceremony marching with his pipe in what he called "The Manual of the Pipe," presenting the pipe as one would a sword, and making exaggerated movements with his pipe. He liked the date pudding in the C-rations, something most others didn't, and I saved any date puddings I received, to give to him. Now, I would not be giving any to him. He only had a few days left to do in Viet Nam. He always brought freshness of life to those around him.

"Back at the tent that billeted his team, the men who had been with Meggs during his last moments were especially furious. They had been told to cross at a point where the Grunts recently had declared the Riviere de Rao Quan impassible, apparently just to prove that recon could do it if the Grunts could not. Furthermore, the rains had caused the river to become a swollen rapids. 'When we said the river was impossible to ford, the reply came back, "Nothing is impossible".' [apparently confusing "impassible" with "impossible"] The team said that yesterday the skies cleared about 1730H and they were in an immense area, about nine football fields large, and requested to be helo-evaced. BRAVO SIX ACTUAL radioed 'Negative.'

"The men were gathering Meggs' things. 'Better clean his boots so the next man that get 'em doesn't know he's wearing dead man's boots,' said one of the recon Marines. 'You mean you're that low on supplies?' I asked, astonished. 'Yes Sir!'"

Team 2B2, FROSTBURG, consisting of 6 Marines and one Navy Corpsman was assigned to patrol the area bounded by N-S lines 87 and 90 and E-W lines 45 and 47 during the period 10-16 November. This is the northwest section of the mountain ridge overlooking the combat base to the north.[932]

Another team, 4B2, SPEEDING HOME was assigned to patrol the area bounded by N-S lines 82 and 85 and E-W lines 48 and 50 during the period 12-16 November. This was the base of Hill 1371, the big mountain north of Hills 950 and 1015. In addition, they were to select a suitable fording point on the Rao Quan River and provide security for 2B2's crossing.

SPEEDING HOME was the first to reach the river, arriving 1300H on the 15th. A crossing was chosen that appeared passable from their vantage point, about 100 meters above a waterfall and 50 meters wide with three or four small islands.

FROSTBURG arrived at the river 1130H on the 16th, a little further downstream from SPEEDING HOME where the river did not appear to be moving too swiftly. LCPL Dennis L. Newton crossed the river at this point with safety line and six empty canteens on his belt for buoyancy, and experienced little difficulty in crossing. The river, in fact, was moving in a manner to push a swimmer to the other bank. While a double line was being rigged by LCPL Newton and HM3 Charles W. Miller, and the team was preparing to pull its gear across, they were suddenly ordered to proceed to SPEEDING HOME's position. The team radioed that they were at a good crossing and already had one man across. Furthermore, as Cpl David L. Jones noted, "It was impossible for us to move along the stream toward the other team due to a steep cliff that came out to the edge of the stream. We called back and said that due to the terrain it was practically impossible to move toward SPEEDING HOME. The reply was that nothing was impossible, that we were to comply with orders."[933]

FROSTBURG proceeded as ordered. When it arrived, they said the river was far too swift and deep from their vantage point. SPEEDING HOME couldn't see this from where they were. Both teams then moved about 75 feet upstream to what they thought was a large, slow-moving pool. Sgt Nicholas F. Micke entered the river about 8-12 feet and was immediately swept downstream about 25 feet, pulled under by the water, and only

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[930] Conversations with Ojars Jurjans, 23 September 1989 and 12 February 1994.

[931] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 16 November 1967.

[932] Ltr of 1/Lt Carl J. Schlack, CJS:cc, 5800, 22 Nov 1967, to CO, 3rd ReconBn, 3rd MarDiv (rein), FMF, Subj: Informal investigation to inquire into the circumstances surrounding the missing in action report on Lance Corporal Marion L. Meggs, 2236221/0311/8651, U.S. Marine Corps, which occurred on 16 November 1967 while on patrol in the vicinity of Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, and 23 enclosures thereto; 26Mar 161005Z/Nov 1967, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #63.

[933] Encl (17) to Investigation cited, Statement of Sgt Nicholas F. Micke.

accidentally managed to grasp weeds and pull himself to an island, loosing his rifle in the process. PFC Richard C. Noyes attempted to heave a line across to him, but even after tying a full canteen on the end, was unable to get the rope to him. Sgt Micke managed to swim upstream a short way and the team was able to get a line to him. Eventually a double line was rigged and all the packs, belts, weapons, and men were hauled across to the island where Sgt. Micke was.[934]

Meggs, followed by LCPL Daniel F. Velardi, started across the rock ledge. When Sgt Micke saw them, he called them back, having been unaware they had started to cross the second half of the river, a rapids of large, smooth, slippery rocks. Meggs seemed intent on crossing. Velardi started back, but Meggs slipped and went backwards into the downstream. he resurfaced, appeared to be having trouble, so Micke yelled to him to throw off his pack. As he attempted to do this, he was again pulled down, swept down the rapids, caught a rock, slipped off, resurfaced still attempting to remove his pack, and was then again swept under.[935]

PFC Noyes, a former life guard before entering the Marine Corps, athletic (having played football and participated in gymnastics for four years in high school) immediately jumped in to rescue Meggs.[936] "I swam towards the pack and then saw Meggs about ten feet to my right." Noyes attempted to swim to Meggs, but was caught in the current which kept pushing him further away. "No matter how hard I tried the current kept pushing me down. Soon I became exhausted and went under again." Noyes was pulled back in, barely making it back alive. Sgt Micke later wrote that PFC Noyes acted with complete disregard for his own safety, "..knowing well that he too could be swept under by the strong undertow. He was pulled under twice but both times miraculously fought his way to the surface."

The Marines of FROSTBURG eventually were extracted, one at a time. The Marines of SPEEDING HOME, all suffering painful "immersion foot" walked back to the combat base, arriving 1900H.

Sgt William F. Blum led a 7-man recon team to the place where Meggs drowned, XD843437, at 1130H on 17 November. He, together with Sgt Hargraves, combed the entire area, crossing the river 24 times at various places, but could not locate Meggs. The body was found on Monday, 20 November by Cpl Robert E. Skinner near XD842438 at approximately 1030H. The river, at this point, was approximately 45 yards from bank to bank and full of numerous rock islands, some large, some small, some long and thin, some of which were covered with grass from two to three feet tall. The river was calm to still where the body was found. The depth of the river was 10-15 feet. The body was laying on side facing the south side of the bank in approximately 5 ½ feet to six feet of water.[937]

A memorial service was conducted at 1800H. The gunny of the recon company, Mitchell J. Sutherland, (the "Rock") had taken some parachute to cover a desk as an altar. Col Lownds, LtCol Rann (Regimental XO), Majors Harper L. Bohr, Jr. (Regimental S-2) and Beall were present along with so many men from the recon company that one remarked, "I haven't seen so many of B Company together at one time."[938]

Interestingly, Meggs and Tallent (KIA 20 Aug 1967) had been the best of friends.[939] Meggs used to sing the song, "Miles and Miles and Miles and Miles," and was within five days of his flight date. "Every time that song 'Miles and Miles' comes on, it brings it all back [to me]."[940]

[*The approaching Khe Sanh siege battle approaches along with the darkness and misery of the monsoon weather. In February, 1966, the Central Military Party Committee issued a directive formally establishing the Tri-Thien Military Region which was removed from Military Region V, and in June of 1966, they issued directives establishing the Highway 9 Front.*[941] *In June, 1967, the Party Central Committee* [the executive committee of the Party] *"..met to evaluate our victories and the enemy's defeats in the battlefield and concluded: victories over the past two years have opened a new opportunity." They noted the 1968 American Presidential election was an event that could be used for them and they resolved to "secure a decisive victory in a relatively short period of time. If we want this we have to attack the Americans and defeat them militarily."*[942] *In July, 1967, the Politburo met and decided to launch a General Offensive and Uprising* [the Tet Offensive].[943] *In October, 1967, the Tri-Thien Party Committee received directions to prepare for the 1968 Spring General Offensive and Uprising.*[944] *Order No. 1016/KH, Subject: Tactical Plan in Support of*

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[934] *I bid.*

[935] *Ibid.*

[936] Navy Commendation Medal Citation for PFC Richard C. Noyes; Conversation with Richard C. Noyes, 14 August 1994

[937] Encl (22) to Investigation Report, *op. cit.*

[938] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 20 November 1967.

[939] Conversation with Roger A. Howes, 17 June 1990.

[940] Conversation with Julian P. Kalama, 26 May 1990.

[941] *Chien Truong Tri-Thien-Hue Trong cuoc khang chien chong my cuu nuoc toan thans (Du thao)* [The Tri-Thien Hue Battlefield/Military Region during the victorious war of national salvation against the Americans (Draft)], Translated by Sedgwick Tourison, Hue City: Thuan Hoa Publishing House, 1985, p. 115. Translated by Sedgwick Tourison.

[942] *Lich su bo doi dac Cong: Tap Mot* [History of the Army Sappers, Vol. 1], Translated by Sedgwick Tourison, Hanoi: Peoples' Army Publishing House, 1987, p. 176.

[943] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[944] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

Plan "X" was issued in October 1967.[945] *At the end of October, 1967, B5 [the NVA tactical area of northern Quang Tri Province] and the High Command's forces prepared to enter the battlefield by road construction, organizing reserve depots and development of roads capable of conveying motor transport.*[946] *Artillery preparations for the battlefield began on the 20th of October 1967.*[947]

On 15 November 1967, the lead elements of the Front Rear Services [i.e., headquarters for the Front, the transportation, road building, medical, etc.] reached Commo Liaison Station 53.[948] *On 19 November 1967, directives arrived from the Politburo together with orders from the Joint High Command regarding the General Offensive and Uprising ["Tet Offensive"] throughout the south and the historic mission of the Tri-Thien Hue Battlefield in this new phase.*[949]

"On 6 December 1967, in accordance with the order of the Central Military Party Committee, the [B5-Highway 9] Party Committee and Campaign Command Headquarters for Highway 9 and Khe Sanh were established under the command of Major General and Deputy Chief of Staff [of the High Command] Tran Quy Hai, with Comrade Le Quang Dao, the Deputy Director of the General Political Department as Campaign Political Officer. The forces operating in the Highway 9 area all came under the command of the Highway 9—Khe Sanh Campaign Headquarters[950] *[B5-T8, located in Laos at Sap Lit, XD6266, a little west of the western edge of the DMZ].*[951] *From the 25th to the 30th of December 1967, the lead elements of the 325th Infantry Division entered the battlefield.*[952] *On 28 December 1967, the Campaign Party Committee met for the first time to discuss and to ratify the campaign order. The Khe Sanh area is to be the principle area; the eastern Quang Tri Province area is an important area.*[953]

Concerning what <u>we</u> knew and what we did: A small group of Marines who analyzed North Vietnamese signal intercepts concluded by November, 1967, that Khe Sanh would be attacked. At the time, the Commanding General of 3rd Marine Division, General Westmoreland's J-2 (LtGen Philip Davidson), the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency, all had concluded that the impending North Vietnamese battle would focus on Camp Carroll. On Thanksgiving Day, 1967, an intercepted message indicated the 29th Regiment "was down by the river and have linked up with the 304th Division." Major Alfred M. Gray, Jr.'s Marines of the Radio Company of III MAF analyzed the 1967 Hill Battles in terms of patterns of radio intercepts and concluded that the attack would be against Khe Sanh.[954] *"General Westmoreland sent everybody, regardless of rank, and from any Service, [who had studied this matter] to Phu Bai. They argued all day long. About ten minutes to five on the 27th [of November, 1967] this little group of Marines won the argument. Colonel Houghton, G-2 of III Marine Amphibious Force, went back to DaNang, saw [Lieutenant] General Cushman at about ten o'clock in the evening, and that's when he made the decision to reinforce Khe Sanh with four battalions."*[955] *However, caution in reinforcement of Khe Sanh needed to be observed lest the NVA observe that we knew of their intentions. Thus, the sudden, abrupt arrival of 3/26, with no advance warning for KSCB to provide increased mess facilities, tents and bunkering materials, etc., and the rather late, but still in*

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[945] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [Rear Services Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign] [Classified "SECRET" and limited for distribution within the army], Translated by Sedgwick Tourison, Hanoi: General Directorate for Rear Services, 1988,., p. 467, copy of the order. Plan "X" was the plan for the Highway 9 Khe Sanh Battlefield in 1968.

[946] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [The Spring Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign], Translated by Sedgwick Tourison, Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, 1987, p. 23.

[947] *Tong Ket Tac Chien Phao Binh* [Artillery Tactical Operations Reports], Translated by Sedgwick Tourison, Hanoi: Artillery Officer's School Printing Press, 1985, p. 116.

[948] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968, op, cit.*, p. 232.

[949] *Chien Truong Tri-Thien-Hue Trong cuoc khang chien chong my cuu nuoc toan thans (Du thao).,op. cit.*, p. 138.

[950] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968, op. cit.*, p. 16.

[951] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[952] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968, op. cit..*, p. 233.

[953] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968, op. cit.*, p. 19.

[954] National Security Agency msg 140615Z/Dec67 [source of message not declassified], SECRET SAVIN, Part 1 of a 2 part message: "In retrospect, indicators of the alignment of forces within DMZ area/Khe Sanh area was apparent. However, unit identification was not revealed until SIGINT could be collated with collateral material which became available during and after the Khe Sanh battle. Patterns noted prior to April/May Khe Sanh [1967] offensive.. form basis for analysis of present and future intelligence indicators concerning this area." The message giving Part II: The first indications of one of the divisions involved at Khe Sanh was in late October, 1967, by the loss in communications of one of its battalions on 30 Oct 1967 and two terminals of regimental echelon on 31 October and 10 November. On 12 November a communications watch facility was first observed, suspected of serving the Division. The Division was deploying in radio silence [one of the NVA's tactics prior to an attack] and there was a split in Division headquarters. Aerial Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) located 8 separate radio terminals just to the west of Khe Sanh.

[955] Comments made by General Alfred M. Gray, Jr., at the Reunion of Khe Sanh Veterans, 04 July 1998. General Gray was the immediate past Commandant of the Marine Corps.

time, arrival of 2/26 on 17 January, reinforced Khe Sanh, but not in a way to disclose our awareness of the NVA intentions and still served the function of drawing-in the NVA forces to attack a lucrative target so that, in fact, we could fix them in place and annihilate large numbers through B-52 strikes and hold large numbers of NVA in place that otherwise might have needed to be fought in urban areas.

General Gray states, "we knew all about Tet except for the hour.. we knew the whole plan," and that Tet destroyed the VC infrastructure in the South: "It was all over. It broke their back. There was no more leadership."[956] In response to the criticism of those who regard Tet as an intelligence failure on our part, General Gray quips, "Everyone who should have known knew it was coming; it was no surprise at all."[957]]

22 DECEMBER 1967

STICKEL, PFC Gary Stephen B/3rd Recon
SUNIGA, LCPL Michael Edward K/3/26

On 13 December 1967, Major General Tompkins (CG, 3rd MarDiv) received a call on the secure voice phone from Lieutenant General Cushman (CG, III MAF) who expressed concern over NVA buildup at Khe Sanh. General Cushman said he had better intelligence than General Tompkins and wanted more troops at Khe Sanh.[958] So, on the evening of Wednesday, 13 December 1967, LtCol Rann, the 26th Marines Executive Officer asked the 1/13 XO if he could feed 250 more men that evening, that 3/26 was arriving tonight—a whole battalion—on forty minutes' notice. Of course, there were no prepared positions for 3/26 to occupy as CH-53 after CH-53 arrived with more and more men.[959]

No place to go, that is, other than to Hill 918 (XD726444), some 5100 meters west of Hill 881-South. At 0700H, 21 December 1967, 3/26 commended a battalion (minus one line co.) search and destroy mission to Hill 918 (XD726445). The battalion was heli-lifted to Hill 881S with arriving units immediately dispersed to avoid being a lucrative target.

Hill 918 had, for many months, been a symbol of NVA luring in the area, a stronghold against which we had insufficient strength to investigate. As early as 14 July 1967, when two Marines temporarily waiting at the DaNang Air Base for transportation back to the recon unit at Khe Sanh stated they were eager to return to Khe Sanh so they could be part of a planned operation to assault Hill 918,[960] probing of the hill by recon teams always disclosed NVA presence—trails, bivouac sites, discarded equipment, etc.

On 27 June 1967, a B/1/26(-) patrol scoured Hill 778 (XD745411) on the eastern slope of Hill 918 and destroyed 26 bunkers with demolitions and noted 10 others destroyed by recent air strikes.[961] On 29 July, the AO spotted extensive enemy activity in the Hill 918 (XD725444) to Hill 862 (XD716447) area, locating 2 large craters used as a storage area. The AO received heavy small arms fire from XD718468 and heavy .50 cal. fire from other locations.[962] Fixed wing air strikes by JERSEY DAY 182 resulted in 5 large secondary explosions and 20 enemy soldiers KBA.[963]

A letter from a Marine from Bravo Company, 3rd Recon Bn, the recon unit at Khe Sanh, dated 01 December 1967, reflects the apprehension:

"I think all hell is going to break loose around Khe Sanh. There has been a big buildup in an area west of Hill 881S where the Marines had that big battle last spring. I think there will be an operation to take Hill 918 and this will be even bloodier than 881, 881N, and 861. We took close to 1000 casualties then and now because of the weather jets won't be able to fly. It will be the individual grunt who has to take that hill and I am glad I am in recon because as soon as the grunts move in our job is done. We found the gooks on 918 and now it is the infantry's job to take it... I was on top of it once and saw the fortifications the gooks have on it. We were there for 3 minutes and then all hell broke loose and we had to fight our way off. Like I said, it will be costly."[964]

As the Marines of K/3/26 were eating their C-ration breakfast, folding ponchos and poncho liners (for those lucky to have one!) and packing their haversacks and repacking the C-ration cans back into their black boot sox, an abrupt explosion at 0630H shattered an otherwise sunny, beautiful morning.[965]

PFC Daniel G. Allen, a S-2 scout sitting next to Captain Jaspers (CO, K/3/26) recalls: "All of a sudden there was a heck of an explosion on the other side of the little knoll. What happened—this guy [Suniga] had been putting down his own booby-traps with grenades, and he put it [the grenade] back on his belt, and it blew up... We thought it was a mortar round. We didn't know—what in the world! Captain Jaspers went running back over

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[956] *Ibid.*
[957] Conversation with General Alfred M. Gray, Jr., 26 July 1998.
[958] HQMC, HistCent, Intv of MG Rathvon McClure Tompkins, 13 April 1973, pp. 15-16.
[959] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 13 Dec 1967.
[960] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 14 July 1967.
[961] 1/26 ComdC Jun 1967, S2/S3 Journal, 25 June 1967, Ser #24.
[962] XD710445, XD693441, XD724414, XD711460, XD725457, and XD718471.
[963] 26Mar 190500Z/Jul67, Opn ARDMORE INTSUM #13. KBA=Killed by air.
[964] Kevin Macaulay, letter to his parents, 01 December 1967.
[965] 26Mar 220427Z/Dec67, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #206. Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 22 Dec 1967 (for sunny day).

there. He [Suniga] had milked the spoon and put it back on his belt, and it blew up."[966]

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At 0905H, Lance Corporal Ronald E. Clark was leading the 7 Marines comprising Recon Team 3B3, SEVEN UP, near Hill 557 (XD763411). It was PFC Ray Milligan's first recon patrol as assistant patrol leader and it was PFC Gary Stickel's first recon patrol, having transferred from the Grunts. The Marines of SEVEN UP woke up the next morning and decided to remain where they were, as an ambush. They were informed, however, to pack up and move. They removed their claymores and were preparing to move from their harbor site when they received automatic weapons fire and semi-automatic fire from approximately 12 NVA in camouflaged utilities and bush covers. The radioman, Cpl Edward C. Pooley, was making "a call of mother nature" within eyesight of the others. "And then all of a sudden a company or so of them walked right up on us. Stickel was right next to me [and was seriously wounded]. I was standing up; the other guys were sitting down, and Pooley ran back across our firing line, was hit in the chest and had his tit shot off. They came around the back and just opened fire on us. We called in artillery on top of ourselves, stayed back, threw some grenades, and then made our way up the mountain. The rounds came in so low and close that shrapnel was flying over us. We then called in more. We were told that Stickel would be medevaced but to keep moving once he was out. Then we told headquarters that we had a second WIA. We were informed to move to a hilltop for extraction. Stickel was able to run up the mountain under his own power. We grabbed his gear, but he was able to run."[967]

SEVEN UP returned fire and moved to a HLZ at XD768414, receiving and returning fire as they ran. SEVEN UP was extracted at 0950H.[968]

PFC Stickel was hit in his liver and died later that morning.[969]

30 December 1967

JONES, PFC Terry Agusta B/3rd Recon
TINGLEY, LCPL Thomas James B/3rd Recon

The account of this contact began three days earlier with another recon patrol in the same area, three miles directly west of Hill 689, as recon team 1B2, CLEMSON SONG, observed some 40 or more NVA moving from XD748408 to XD741405 at 1130H on 27 December 1967. The NVA wore green camouflaged utilities and were equipped with AK47s, heavy packs, and had three rockets per man tied to their packs.[970]

The vegetation was so thick, the team opted to follow a trail. Following a trail was not usual or prudent procedure if one wished to remain undetected. The terrain beside the trail was so dense, however, that if they used it, anyone using the trail would hear them hack through the jungle. So they used the trail, the lesser of the two evils, that they could move more quietly and furtively along the trail, and figuring that if they had to, they could scamper off the trail when necessary. CLEMSON SONG paused at a point where the trail split into a "Y" and then rejoined, forming a little island of extremely dense green brush. The recon Marines decided to go into this, and paused to eat chow. After eating, some pulled out mirrors to check their face camouflage and applied more where required. They finished that task. Everyone stood. The point moved three or four feet—and froze. He reached down and began to unfasten the straps on his demo pouch where he carried grenades. Then he brought his rifle to his shoulder, flicked the selector on automatic, and was quietly looking down the trail.[971] At this point, everyone in CLEMSON SONG realized that whatever it was, it was big and dangerous. Ernie Husted, the radioman for CLEMSON SONG, peered through the foliage at the NVA: "They were no longer muzzle flashes in a tree line or shadows glimpsed at night. They were young men. The gear they carried was of a different design but it served the same purpose as our own. They were soldiers, but they were also people."[972] The NVA column bifurcated at the "Y" as CLEMSON SONG was surrounded, but the NVA patrol, only 15 feet away, had not detected the presence of the Marines. One of the NVA pulled a cigarette; perhaps he could catch an undetected smoke. Pungent smells, however, are easily detected, and the cigarette was promptly yanked out of his mouth. The soldier appeared ashamed to Husted, but as the column proceeded, a man behind pushed his hat over his eyes and everyone was laughing. Husted could never again regard the NVA as mere "enemy;" they were, indeed, people.

Radio communications to this point had been sporadic at best. The PRC-25 broadcasted "line of sight" and some of the hills blocked transmissions. After the NVA rocket patrol had passed, CLEMSON SONG backed up, Husted attached his big whip antenna, and the patrol called the COC to relate all the details. The response from the base: they were to follow the NVA! The

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[966] Conversation with Daniel G. Allen, 25 Oct 1990.
[967] Conversation with Ray Milligan, 25 March 1991; Letter from Ray Milligan, 31 August 2004.
[968] 26Mar 220427Z/Dec67, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #206; COC 3rd MarDiv 221014Z/Dec67, Spot Rpt #123, in III MAF COC Journal and File 22/23 Dec 67, #138; 3rd MarDiv 221500Z/Dec67, Recon SITREP #955, in III MAF COC Journal and File 22/23 Dec 67.
[969] Letter from Ray Milligan, 31 August 2004.
[970] 26Mar 271200Z/Dec67, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #227; COC 3rd MarDiv 271421Z/Dec67, Spot Rpt #140 in III MAF COC Journal and File 28/29Dec67 #20.
[971] Conversation with Ernest C. Husted, 21 August 1984.
[972] *Ibid.*

Marines of CLEMSON SONG could not believe what they heard, being so vastly outnumbered and if they moved in most any direction, they'd loose radio communications with the base. "There's no way you can tail somebody for any period of time without them spotting you. It's just unwise." The Recon CO asked the team to "ROGER" the order. But Husted was more creative: "I looked over to the team leader and he shook his head, and I shook my head that I understood. I had found out—purely by accident one day (because I wasn't a school-trained radio operator)—a control plug on the top right corner of the radio that you put a jeep plug into when it's on a jeep for external power so you don't run your batteries down. If this plug is loose or out, it cuts off the power supply. So I started calling back to the base asking for clarification on the message, and the whole time I was loosening and playing with the plug. You could hear by the crackling that the radio was going out. The other radio was normally kept on a secondary frequency. It seemed to have the same trouble, only it had it quicker because we didn't have anyone on the net talking to us on it. We just pulled that plug right out. And then we backed up and stayed for quite a few hours."[973] After reconnecting the radio, comm. was instantly restored and the CO wanted to know if they had followed the NVA force. The team replied, "Negative. We didn't understand the message—radio problems." The CO wanted the old battery brought back so he could inspect it, but Husted responded that it had been cut open and the individual cells destroyed and buried, a standard operating procedure. There was no doubt in Husted's mind that had they followed orders, they would all have been killed and no further information would have been gained.

The CO was unsatisfied; another recon patrol would be inserted into the same area to investigate the sightings. Eight more Marines would be sent to where over 40—Husted says "over 100"—NVA were spotted. That job fell to team BARKWOOD.

On 30 December 1967 at 1045H, Recon team 1B3, BARKWOOD, at XD761409[974] (4 Km directly west of Hill 689) had reached a fork in the trail where TINGLEY, the Point man for the patrol, looked back for directions. He was shot in the back of his head, instantly killing him. The next man, PFC JONES, was shot in his thigh and stomach.[975] The two, TINGLEY and JONES, were dragged by the other Marines in great haste.

Although TINGLEY was dead, under the confusion and anxiety of the moment, and reflecting an inherent care for others especially after loosing his friend a month before in the raging Rao Quan River (Meggs), Rick Noyes, in horror, saw Tingley's head being dragged in a river they had to cross. Concerned that the water would get into the bullet holes in his head, Noyes rushed and tenderly picked up Tingley's head.[976]

Gunships (SCARFACE, CYCLONE LEAD, and CYCLONE-2) arrived on station and the team was extracted at 1220H.[977]

CPL Lionel Guerra recalls PFC Jones: "He was always smiling and we called him 'Smiley'. He was my roommate in the tent, and I wanted to run Point on that particular patrol, but was told I couldn't, and I was disappointed, upset. I was the one that helped him [Jones] from the helicopter along with two others. I remember someone saying, 'Grab his head,' because it's dangling. I remember picking up his head with my two hands, and he was smiling. He got hit in the groin area and a couple of places, and he died."[978]

When the bodies arrived at Graves Registration on KSCB, the running stretcher-bearers dropped Tingley's corpse and he went face-down in a culvert. The Corpsmen attempted to stop Jones' bleeding, but he was already dead. Hit in the groin area, his scrotum was the size of a football.[979]

[*A CIA report dated 10 January 1968, summarized the situation at Khe Sanh: "In the past several weeks there have been a number of indications that the enemy is building up its forces in the Laotian panhandle west of the Demilitarized Zone. The target primarily threatened by these forces appeared to be the allied base at Khe Sanh.. Enemy reconnaissance and probing activity near Khe Sanh has increased markedly in the last few weeks."*[980] *"Their primary objective in attacking Khe Sanh would be to draw US reinforcements into the area, tie them down to static defensive positions, and to inflict maximum casualties on US forces over a period of time."*[981] *"The Communists have long regarded Khe Sanh, located near the infiltration corridors in Laos, as a thorn in their side."*[982] *The CIA argued that the size of the enemy force, upwards of 22,000 men, that was surrounding Khe Sanh was much greater than necessary to take Khe Sanh and Lang Vei, and therefore the strategy seemed to be the same as that of the 1967 strategy: "lure US units away from populated areas, disperse them, and inflict a maximum number of casualties in the process."*[983] *The CIA summarized: "the enemy's objectives in any sustained offensive in the Khe Sanh area would be, at the mini-*

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[973] *Ibid.*
[974] 26Mar 300410Z/Dec67, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #238.
[975] Conversation with Rick Noyes (patrol member) at Khe Sanh, 31 Dec 1967 (the very next day).
[976] *Ibid.*
[977] 26Mar 301140Z/Dec67, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #239.
[978] Conversation with Lionel Guerra, 25 July 1997.
[979] Conversation with Philip Wright, 21 November 2000.
[980] CIA, "The Enemy Threat to Khe Sanh," 10 January 1968 (SC No. 01237/68), Para 1.
[981] *Ibid.*, Para 2.
[982] *Ibid.*, Para 6.
[983] *Ibid.*, Para 9.

mum, to force the abandonment of the Khe Sanh base and the Lang Vei CIDG camp and to inflict heavy casualties. At the maximum, the Communists would hope to draw substantial US reinforcements from other areas in South Vietnam and tie them down in the Khe Sanh area."[984]

The CIA analysts did not count on the tenacity and resolve of the Marines, nor the confidence of General Westmoreland's estimation that they could hold their ground, and thus General Westmoreland did not dispatch ground reinforcements to Khe Sanh until April, 1968, well after most of the NVA forces engaged in the encirclement of KSCB had departed, so that the strategy of luring in Americans to annihilate them was rendered nugatory.

MACV saw through the NVA intentions and stated: Khe Sanh "..was another move to draw-off and destroy a US unit and seize western Quang Tri Province for use as a major base from which to support his next campaign toward Quang Tri City. Evidence suggested that Khe Sanh was staged as another spectacular battle for propaganda as well as military purpose,"[985] *and added: "Khe Sanh.. guarded the approaches from the west to Quang Tri City and Dong Ha and with them the two northern provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien; loss of Khe Sanh would provide the enemy with a base from which to strike out during the bad weather and seize these areas, outflank the forces defending along the DMZ and bombard the installations with artillery, rocket, and mortar fire from both the west and the north; and the seizure of the two northern provinces was a long-term aim of Hanoi, one to be exploited at any future negotiating table where battlefield possession would be a telling point of strength."*[986]]

[*On 02 Jan 1968, a Co L (DUNBAR COUNTY LIMA) LP (XD842421), set approximately 400 meters from where the western (or RED) sector of the KSCB perimeter tied in with the BLUE sector (manned by C/1/26, BLACKBUD CHARLIE), observed 6 persons dressed in what appeared to be USMC uniforms. After checking to ensure that BLACKBUD CHARLIE had no men in the area, a squad dispatched to investigate received small arms fire. Fire was returned and the area swept.*[987] *At 030630H, a patrol from L/3/26 checked out the area of contact and found 5 NVA KIA.*[988] *Along with photographs, plaster face masks were made of the NVA for identification.*[989] *"Three of the officers were found to be a NVA regimental commander, an operations officer, and a communications officer. That the North Vietnamese would commit such key men to an extremely dangerous personal reconnaissance indicated that Khe Sanh was a priority."*[990] *The regimental S-2, Maj Harper L. Bohr, Jr., noted "..one of the KIA was Chinese. He was just too big and too non-Vietnamese-looking, to be a Vietnamese. My interpreter was also certain it was a non-Vietnamese."*[991] *The battalion S-3, Major Matt Caulfield recalls: "One of them was very tall. He was about six-foot, well-manicured, very good haircut, clean clothes. The weapons they had indicated that they were officers."*[992] *Ens Martin Kux, the OinC of the Seabee detachment repairing the runway, wrote in his diary: "One of the dead was over 6' tall—probably Chinese. Quite a bit of a stir! They were probably a recon element attempting to find access to the base... Something big will happen within the next 10 days, while the moon is dark."*[993]]

05 JANUARY 1968

BRIGGS, SFC Ernest Frank	**176 Av Co**
GALLAGHER, SFC John Theodore	**FOB-3**
HAMILTON, CWO Dennis Clark	**176 Av Co**
SCHULTZ, WO1 Sheldon Duane	**176 Av Co**
WILLIAMSON, SFC James D	**176 Av Co**

WO-1 Hamilton, Aircraft Commander, XO-1 Schultz, Pilot, SP-4 Williamson, Crewman, and SSG Gallagher, passenger, were aboard a UH-1D aircraft (#66-1172) on a mission to infiltrate an indigenous recon patrol into Laos. It was FOB-3's first mission.

"On the 5th of January we were supposed to go in for a wire-tap [mission] We got briefed and got loaded on the helicopters and were going off. We were riding in American Hueys and as we were on our way in, at least 15 minutes or maybe even half an hour out of the landing zone of the area we were going to infiltrate, all of a sudden there was a lot of conversation [in the aircraft]. I couldn't figure exactly what was going on. People were talking and shouting at each other—big eyed. Then the Crew Chief came in and said, 'Mission's aborted; we're going back.' And I said, 'Why?' And he said, 'They shot down the other chopper.' We were at 3,000, 3,500 feet above ground level, and they apparently shot him with a 37mm or 57mm anti-aircraft gun, and the whole helicopter went down. It was spinning down. [The NVA] shot the tail rotor off. It hit the ground and it exploded.

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[984] *Ibid.*, Para 10.
[985] MACV, *Command History*, 1968, Vol. 1, p. 128.
[986] *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.
[987] FMFPAC 050524Z/Jan68, SITREP #1011; III MAF COC 030455Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #252 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 3/4 Jan 68 #140
[988] 26Mar Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #254.
[989] Conversation with Richard Camp, 09 June 1994.
[990] Amphibious War College, *The Siege of Khe Sanh*, April, 1983, p. 19.
[991] Letter of Maj Harper L. Borh, Jr., 18 Dec 1968, to CMC (AO5D) in HQMC HistCent Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.
[992] Comments of Maj Matt Caulfield, HQMC Oral History Tape #6157.
[993] Ens Martin J. Kux, Diary entry for 04 Jan 1968.

There was no fire on the way down, and nobody that I talked to saw any bodies fall out, although spinning end around end there should have been one or two bodies come out of the thing. It hit the ground and just exploded in a fire ball."[994]

The pilot had been told not to descend below 4,000—feet, but for whatever reason dropped altitude and was within anti-aircraft range, and was shot out of the sky.[995] SFC Donald E. Ross, flying as Forward Air Controller saw the troop helicopters at 2,000 feet take 37mm anti-aircraft fire from an area 400 meters.[996] At that height AGL[997], Hamilton's aircraft came under heavy 37mm AA fire, immediately entered a vertical nosedive, plummeted and crashed at XD701021. Upon impact the aircraft burst into flames that were 10 to 20 feet high. No radio transmissions were heard during the helicopter's descent, nor were radio or beeper signals heard after impact. Four attempts to enter the area of the downed helicopter failed due to intense ground fire. The pilot who saw the wreckage stated that the crashed helicopter was a mass of burned metal and that there was no part of the aircraft that could be recognized. No signs of life were seen in the crash area..[998]

Harlan Van Winckle's Hatchett Force DENVER at FOB-3 was alerted to attempt the rescue mission, even rigging up a 55-gallon drum of CS powder [tear gas] and dropped it up-wind of the crash site without success. The enemy fire was just too heavy.[999] After the weather improved, the successful insertion of a ground team was made east of the crash site to avoid enemy fire. After searching for two days, the team was extracted, having found nothing.[1000]

A MIA Board was convened nine days into the Siege battle, on 30 January, concluding "..there is no doubt that all persons aboard the helicopter were killed," and recommended that Staff Sergeant John T. Gallagher be declared as killed in action.[1001]

SFC Ernest F. Briggs, CWO Dennis C. Hamilton, WO1 Sheldon D. Schultz, and SFC James D. Williamson, were also aboard the helicopter that crashed.

09 JANUARY 1968

GREEN, LtCol Norman Morgan	497 TFS, 8 TFW[1002]
IRSCH, 1/Lt Wayne Charles	497 TFS, 8 TFW

On 09 January 1968, LtCol Green, Aircraft Commander, and 1/Lt Irsch, Systems Operator, were aboard the number 2 aircraft (#66-8729), in a flight of two F4Ds which departed Ubon Airfield, Thailand, at 0945H on a night armed recon mission, call sign CROW. During the mission, the lead aircraft began to receive enemy ground fire while attacking trucks along a road, and number 2 aircraft was cleared to attack the active gun positions. As lead pulled up, he noticed a large explosion and fire about one mile from his target in the vicinity of XD234537, approximately 8 Km northwest of Tchepone.[1003]

[*Beginning on 11 January, patrols from FOB-3 scoured Co Roc Mountain. (See entry for 21 February)*]

[*On 12 January, Sub Unit #5, 3rd Marine Division (which included within its ranks CAC OSCAR, communicators, those who manned the post office, PX, and Division photo and ISO) was disbanded.*[1004] It had been established on 01 February 1967.[1005]]

12 JANUARY 1968

COHRON, SFC James Derwin ST INDIANA

Strike Team INDIANA was inserted at 111255H and the first 24 hours were without incident. At 0930, 12 January, SFC Cohron suspected trackers and placed two mines on the back trail of the team. The team proceeded in a zig-zag course, stopping irregularly for listening and observing. At about 1300H came under attack from a hostile force in the vicinity of XD929208. Cohron was the second man from the rear of the team formation. The decision was made to break contact and pull back to a predetermined Rally Point [using the "scatter tactics" commonly used by Morgan's Rangers], and by hand and arm signal, the team dispersed. Sgt Cohron did not arrive at the Rally Point. None of the patrol members recalled seeing him after the initial engagement.[1006]

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[994] Conversation with William S. Wood, 18 November 1997.
[995] Conversation with Harlan "Rip" Van Winkel, 23 October 1994.
[996] Statement of SFC Donald E. Ross, 30 Jan 1968, in Library of Congress MIA microfilms, Reel #280, Folder #41.
[997] AGL=Above Ground Level.
[998] LtCol J.G. Cole, Chief, POW/MIA Affairs, ltr to Harve Saal, 22331-0482, 28 June 1991, p. 12.
[999] Letter from Harlan Van Winkel, 31 December 1996.
[1000] Cole letter, *op. cit.*
[1001] MIA Board, 30 January 1968. Board consisted of Maj Lucius J. Campbell (CO, FOB-3, 1/Lt Gerald L. Crews (S-2, FOB-3), and 1/Lt Joseph Whelan (S-1, FOB-3). Letter in Library of Congress MIA microfilms reel #280, Folder 41.
[1002] TFW=Tactical Fighter Wing
[1003] Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #292, Folder #2.
[1004] CG 3rd MarDiv 100551Z/Jan68, Sub Unit Five HqBn Reduction in Strength.
[1005] 3rd MarDiv ComdC, Encl (1), p. 8.
[1006] Statements of SFC John H. Robertson and SFC Clyde D. Nicely, Case Narrative, Case 0984-0-01, MIA Board Pro-

1/Lt Gamble C. Dick infiltrated Hatchet Force SANTE FE into the general area where ST INDIANA was ambushed. The HF with SFC Robinson, the ONE ZERO of INDIANA as a guide, reached the actual ambush site approximately one hour later. The location was on the side of a steep hill with fairly thick vegetation. Visibility was limited to a maximum of 15 meters because of the terrain and vegetation. The exact impact point of one of the grenades that was thrown at ST INDIANA was located with a small splattering of blood. There were no recognizable trails, blood or otherwise, leading from the area. The team later located Sgt Cohron's chow which was identified by an empty Winston pack in it (Sgt Cohron was the only member of the team who smoked this brand).[1007]

According to a PAVN officer who helped interrogate a captured American that possibly was Sgt Cohron, two platoons from the 3rd Company, 7th Bn, Dong Ngai Regiment, conducted the attack on the reconnaissance team. An interpreter from a regiment of the PAVN 304th Infantry Division also assisted in the interrogation. Although he did not report the ultimate fate of the American prisoner, it was customary for PAVN units in this area, such as the Dong Ngai Regiment and elements of the 304th Division, to deliver American prisoners to appropriate representatives of Binh Tram 41 for transfer to a prisoner of war camp. If the prisoner died, it was customary to bury him in a marked grave and send a full report along with the prisoner's identification media to central authorities.[1008]

14 JANUARY 1968

HEALY, CPL Richard John	**B/3rd Recon**
YEARY, 2/Lt Randall Douglas	**B/3rd Recon**

PFC James E. Schemelia (2nd Squad, I-2) on Hill 881-South was standing in a "warming tent" on Hill 881-South heating some tea he had received from home. Marines from a recon team were also there, preparing to walk off into their RZ [Recon Zone]. It was very early ("O dark thirty" as we called the time before dawn); the crowds of other Marines on the hill had not yet arrived to heat their C-ration breakfast. "I didn't realize it at the time, but when I spoke to those men, I would be the last to speak to them."[1009]

The Patrol Leader of DOCKLEAF, 2/Lt Randall Yeary, was a young officer many in the recon company at Khe Sanh had come to know and respect. He, along with 2/Lt Waddell and PFC David Doehrman, all of Co B, 3rd Recon Bn, had attended Recon School together in Camp Pendleton, California, at 5th Recon Bn, Camp Horno. The staff there had requested volunteers for recon; only one volunteered. The requirement was 31, so the staff then asked for all First Class Swimmers to sign a list, which they did. Then, at the top of the sheet, the staff added the words, "and volunteer for recon." Thus, the requirement of 31 "volunteers" was met![1010]

PFC Doehrman was scheduled to be on this patrol, but he had "obtained" two cases of steaks from a locked freezer at the KSCB messhall a few days earlier. The recon Marines gorged themselves and then flounced on their racks and slept in sheer, contented delight. David Doehrman's hand dangled into the metal tray containing the steaks, and he was bit by a rat. On medical hold to receive rabies shots, he was unable to accompany DOCKLEAF.[1011]

Lt Randall Yeary had been out on three or four patrols previously; in every one of them, the team was shot out. The Marines joked with him "because he had never made one day out in the field. They told him, 'Why don't you go with us, this [patrol] is going to be a cakewalk.'"[1012]

The patrol was composed of members of various teams, and Lt Yeary was along to observe.

The remainder of DOCKLEAF, recon team 2B1, flew to Hill 881-South and were to become the ones who triggered-off the famous 1968 siege battle at Khe Sanh. The patrol "..indicated for the first time that the North Vietnamese Army was in strength in close proximity to the combat base, and that he was preparing.. fortified positions."[1013]

On its first day, the patrol moved from Hill 881-South and advanced about half-way to Hill 881-North with LCPL Richard C. Noyes running point. The second man in the patrol, LCPL Ulis Murray, Jr., a black Marine who had served previously in infantry, spotted footprints. Noyes regarded these as coming from a prior Marine patrol, but Murray insisted, "I smell Gooks." "Rich Healy came to me and said, 'Murray says he smells Gooks,' and I thought, 'Baloney! You can't smell them.'"[1014] Noyes spotted an ambush, and Lt Yeary stopped the patrol; all waited, silently, cautiously, as they set into a 360 defense and called back to Hill 881-South to inform them of their sighting. After a few moments, the patrol was ordered to return to Hill 881-South. During the return, PFC Edward L. Mertens saw one of the

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ceedings of 26 Jan 1968 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #312, Folder #62.

[1007] Statement of 1/Lt Gamble C. Dick in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #312, Folder #62.

[1008] Case 0984 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #312, Folder #62.

[1009] Taped comments of Mr. James E. Schemelia, July, 1984.

[1010] Conversation with David Doehrman, 04 Feb 1984.

[1011] *Ibid.*

[1012] Conversation with David Doehrman, 10 Sep 2004.

[1013] Comments, May 1968, of Capt Philip E. Reynolds on HQMC Oral History Tape #2621; 3rd MarDiv COC 141700Z/Jan68, 3rd MarDiv Recon SITREP in III MAF COC Journal and File, 15/16Jan68, #10.

[1014] Conversation with Richard C. Noyes, 20 November 1989.

enemy soldiers prepare to open up on the recon team. Mertens opened up on him, and the team returned to 881-South. That night, one of the patrol members, LCPL Gregory Popowitz, was bit by a rat, and the next day the patrol departed with seven Marines.[1015]

They had been out three days, and on the afternoon of the 4th, Sunday the 14th of January, they were returning to 881-South to complete their mission.

> "We didn't see anything, any signs of the Gooks, and it was fairly quiet. We hadn't heard anything, didn't see any signs or anything. About eleven o'clock we were moving up the north slope of Hill 881-North, heading back to 881-South for our extraction. I faced the top of the hill. I was the point man."[1016]

Being in a fairly open area, Noyes was about 50-75 feet ahead of Healy to avoid being too close to each other, "and I simply stumbled onto the NVA, and at that time I was the only one being shot at. I recall laying on the ground, changing my rifle magazine, when a NVA stood up in front of me, up the hill, and tossed a hand grenade at me, but I couldn't shoot him as I was changing magazines.. Rich at this point could not see where I was, as I had gotten pretty far up ahead of him, but I could hear him talking and saying I* was hit. I then crawled back to Rich and told him I was OK and what I had seen, and that's when I made the mistake of telling Rich, 'Let's go get em,' which was exactly the wrong thing to do. I truly believe if I had told Rich I think we should get the H out of there, he would have agreed, but then I'll never know. I went back up the hill to where I had been and within no time we started receiving heavy fire."[1017]

> "And the Gooks opened up from our left. I guess they were ten, maybe fifteen, meters away. They opened up with small arms fire and everybody hit the deck. And we returned fire. And they called up and asked me if I was hit. They thought I had been hit for some reason, but I wasn't hit and nobody else was hit at that time. So we pulled back down, about 15, 20 meters, and got into a 360.
>
> "Everyone was in a 360. We couldn't see the Gooks. I don't know if they were dug-in or what, but we couldn't see them. And Corporal [Richard J.] Healy crawled out of our 360 and went looking for them to see if he could see them."[1018]

It was now 141417H, January 1968; DOCKLEAF was at XD777455.[1019] As Cpl Healy (Assistant Patrol Leader) moved forward to an exposed position attempting to fix the NVA's position, he was forced to return to the 360 by incoming grenades.[1020]

> "We were doing real good, holding off the Gooks and everything. Then the Gooks opened up from our rear. It was the north side, the side we'd come up, from our rear. And they were giving us quite a bit of small arms fire, and [Second] Lieutenant [Randall] Yeary was standing up on his knees returning fire and he got hit in the left leg, pretty close to the groin, and Healy ran down to him and was giving him first aid and took over as Patrol Leader, and he was giving commands to the radioman.. he had pinpointed some positions and we were shooting at them and all of a sudden the Gooks hit us with a RPG, and it hit right on top of Corporal Healy and Lieutenant Yeary, and there were three more men that were wounded from that. The RPG round landed right on top of them, just tore them all to hell. When it hit, everything was red, just like somebody popped a red smoke in the middle of us—blood all over and pieces of meat all over you and everything. It was really bad. And everyone was stunned from the shock and, like I said, three more men were hurt, and one of them was hurt real bad, [PFC Edward L.] Mertens."[1021]

The RPG instantly killed both Cpl Healy and Lt Yeary, and wounded all but one of the team (PFCs Kenneth R. Martin, Edward L. Mertens, Andrew T. Miceli, Santos R. Morales, and LCPLs Ulis Murray, Jr. and Richard C. Noyes).[1022]

The recon team was immediately fragmented: two men crawled off to the right, the opposite direction from where the RPG had been fired; two more crawled into a bomb crater; two more held up about 10 meters away. All were dazed; all were in shock. LCPL Noyes was attempting to assemble everybody together, but was unable to locate Murray and Martin. Steve Morales said they had lost communications. Noyes began to move to Yeary and Healy to grab their radio.

> "I turned around; there wasn't anybody there. And then, about half-way there I heard Murray and Martin yell that they had a radio—from the bomb crater, they yelled. I wasn't sure whether Rich and the Lieutenant were dead. I guess I was just stunned or something, like everybody else."[1023]
>
> "I took a count and saw the Lieutenant and Rich weren't there. I asked them, 'Does anybody know the story on them?' They said, 'Yeah, they were dead; they had been all blown away.' So we sat in a bomb crater in a 360, and a grenade hit right up on top.

[1015] Comments, May, 1968, of LCPL Richard C. Noyes on HQMC Oral History Tape #2621.
[1016] *Ibid.*
[1017] Letter from Rick Noyes, 29 August 2008.
[1018] Comments, May, 1968, of LCPL Richard C. Noyes on HQMC Oral History Tape #2621.
[1019] 26Mar 141200Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #299.
[1020] Statement of PFC Kenneth R. Martin in BSM file of Cpl Richard J. Healy.
[1021] Comments of Noyes, Tape 2621, cited. RPG=Rocket Propelled Grenade.
[1022] NAVPERS 1650/6 in BSM file on Cpl Richard J. Healy.
[1023] Comments of Noyes on Tape 2621, cited.

The Gooks were moving in on us again. I changed the magazines. And Murray said, 'We gotta get out of here; they're coming at us again.' And Steve Morales said, 'Look, we can't leave those bodies back there.' I told him, 'Don't worry; we aren't leaving anybody.'

"Finally everybody was gone, except for Steve, and the Gooks moved in. And I didn't know what to do. I didn't know whether to get those two bodies or move with the other guys. But I went after the four guys. I don't know if I did right or not, but that's what I did. And Murray was leading them away. He was in shock... We were in bad shape. When the round hit, guys left their rifles and everything, cause they were so messed up. We only had three rifles between us... They were moving north again, and I caught up with them, carrying Mertens for awhile. And I yelled to Murray to stop. He wouldn't. He didn't hear me. I went up to him. I grabbed him. I said, 'Hey, you carry Mertens.' He carried Mertens, and I took them to a little place about 5000 meters northwest of 881-South. And we stayed there.. in some kind of 360. On the way, Morales picked up rear security, and I was taking point. We got there... I called up choppers and had choppers on the way. And the guys were in pretty bad shape. Steve [Morales] and I were putting first aid on them—on Mertens; he had blood all over his head and his neck was covered real bad. I didn't think he was going to make it, for sure. I wasn't really sure, but it turned out he did."[1024]

Three UH-1E CADAVER gunships[1025] from VMO-6 came on station led by CADAVER 4-23 and, although receiving heavy automatic weapons fire and despite lowering clouds and deteriorating weather, provided DOCKLEAF with sufficient suppressive fire to enable them to break contact. Although the devastating barrage of suppressive fire from these three CADAVERs upon the NVA force which was about to overrun DOCKLEAF enabled the team to break contact and move down the hill into defilade, their hasty movement required them to leave behind their two dead. After about 20 minutes, two CH-46 helicopters (FROSTY GOLD 1-1 and 1-2) arrived and retrieved the surviving members of the recon team.[1026] Location of the team was difficult since the team didn't have any smoke other than one carried by Noyes, which, when thrown, didn't ignite. The team was finally spotted after they spotted Morales and Noyes waving an air panel.

A platoon from I/3/26 on Hill 881-South had been dispatched to assist DOCKLEAF and the team returned to KSCB.

"We got back to the heliport.. on the strip, and it seemed like everybody in the company were there. Got off the chopper and I guess it looked like something out of a horror strip: everybody was all covered with blood and our clothes all ripped and everything, pretty bad, I guess. And I remember Captain Reynolds asked, 'What happened?' because we had lost radio communications.. He asked me where Rich and the Lieutenant were, and I told him that they were both dead."[1027]

Capt DuPont (CADAVER 4-23), upon learning that two of the Marines had not been recovered, returned to the scene; LCPL Noyes went along. About 1715H, the Hueys spotted the bodies of 2/Lt Yeary and Cpl Healy and directed the platoon from I/3/26 to the area. The infantry patrol located them at 1730H. "It was right on the top of the hill, and as soon as we got over the crest of the hill we could see the bodies... I remember one body was split in two. I think he took a direct hit from a RPG. I can remember he had blue eyes and I could see on one hand he had a wedding ring."[1028] As CADAVER 4-23 made continuous low passes and low level gun runs suppressing enemy fire, CH-46s entered the hot zone and retrieved the reaction force and the two bodies.

David Doehrman rushed to the helicopter. He and another man carried the stretcher containing the remains of Lt Yeary. Everything from his abdomen on down was missing; his intestines were dangling; grenades on his cartridge belt were half-exploded. Suddenly Doehrman was jolted by the reality of the insecurity of life. He now seriously faced his own possible death.[1029] He had aged decades in minutes.

"When we came in for debriefing, everybody was looking at me like: What the hell happened out there? Like it was my fault or something. And I kept thinking: Goddamn man, I did everything I could to get the bodies and to get these guys out; it was either stay there and we all die, or try to save these guys. I can remember Bob Skinner looking at me. He came up to me and said, 'Where's Rich Healy?' And I said, 'He's dead.' And he just totally lost it. That affected a lot of people. It really affected me... If we'd of listened to Murray, none of that would have happened."[1030]

SSGT Mitchell J. Sutherland (of B/3rd Recon) was sent by Capt P.F. Reynolds to identify the bodies of Lt Yeary and Cpl Healy and recover their weapons and

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[1024] *Ibid.*

[1025] CADAVER 4-1 (May C.D. McRaney and Capt Tyler Alexander), CADAVER 4-23 (Capt Delbert Henry DuPont and 1/Lt B.G. Galbreath), and CADAVER 4-24 (Capt Gregory Aloysius McAdams and 1/Lt Paul Andrew Jensen). Jensen was later KIA on 6 Feb 1968.

[1026] 26Mar 141200Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #299.

[1027] Comments of Noyes, Tape 2621, cited.

[1028] Conversation with Robert "Skip" Unangst at Khe Sanh Reunion, 04 July 1993. (John Macias and Richard Dworsky, from the same action, were present as Unangst made his comments).

[1029] Conversation with David Doehrman, 04 February 1984.

[1030] Conversation with Richard Noyes, 20 November 1989.

equipment. "Upon arriving at Graves [Registration], I found Lt. Yeary's body laying out back, behind a GP tent. He lay on his back with all his 782 gear on with legs and arms spread. Cpl Healy lay next to him but on his side, his eyes wide open and they cut through me like a knife. For some strange reason pictures of dead Marines laying in the volcanic ash of Iwo Jima flashed through my mind... They were so real. When I tried to remove Lt. Yeary's pack, his arm came off and lay there in the orange soil all white and the arm was still in the sleeve of Lt. Yeary's utility jacket. I began to talk to Lt. Yeary although I knew he was dead. I told him what I was doing. His K-Bar was still in its sheath and I drew his K-Bar and cut the other pack strap. When I did this the pack came open and spilled out C Rations and several M79 rounds, 3 of which had been damaged by the RPG that killed Lt. Yeary and Cpl Healy. The two corpsmen watching me saw the damaged M79 rounds and decided to watch from a safer distance. I recovered all the equipment from the bodies and took the gear back to my hard back and lay it in the floor. That evening I went back to my hard back to find the whole place smelled of blood and flesh. That is when I discovered that both M16s were drenched in dried blood.. I knew then that there was something I could still do for Lt. Yeary and Cpl Healy and that was to turn those two weapons in the next morning to the company armory in spit shine condition. I cleaned those M16s boot camp clean and when I lay down to sleep that evening I certainly didn't know that the North Vietnamese Army was marching on Khe Sanh and I would see many more dead Marines in the days ahead."[1031]

Cpl Richard Healy had thought of becoming a minister upon leaving the Marine Corps.[1032] Rich Healy was Rich Noyes' best friend in Khe Sanh: "Our cots were right next to one another. We were both from Ohio, both played 4 years of high school football, and when I went to see his family when getting back home, his mom told me how Rich often wrote home about me."[1033]

Lt Yeary had been in Vietnam 6 weeks when he was killed. He had graduated in 1961 from Ketron High School in his native Surgoinsville, Tennessee, where he avidly played football and lifted weights, and from East Tennessee State University in 1965. He had his black belt in Karate.[1034] Randal Yeary's father had always wanted to farm, bought one and worked it for about 7 or 8 years until he became financially well enough to move to Kingsport from their home in Natural Tunnel, Virginia, and build a house on it. Randall, just completing high school, went on to college and never moved with the rest of the family to Kingsport, Tennessee.[1035] He planned to be a teacher, but first wanted to serve his country and joined the Marine Corps. Around home, he was very much of a joker, mischievous.[1036] He was married (to Louise Carty) and had a three-year old daughter, Laura Lee.[1037] His comrades from The Basic School in Quantico remember him as having "a natural ability as a woodsman and found the Land Navigation Course at Quantico a breeze."[1038]

Lt Yeary "..was such a well-respecte3d individual. The only way I could describe him was, 'a gentleman.' He never had a bad word for anybody. You could take him at his word, and all of the guys respected him. When I carried him off the helicopter, I couldn't comprehend that this is what happened when you went into battle. Always before, it was: people would shoot at you and it would be all over, and everybody would go home. I couldn't really comprehend what it was about until I carried him."[1039]

In their haste, DOCKLEAF had left behind a PRC-25 radio.[1040] Co I was later dispatched on the 19th, and thus began the siege of Khe Sanh battle.

On Friday, 19 January 1968, "Little Rich"[1041] said he had a large recon patch he wanted to give to Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe. "When I walked over to the recon area later on to visit him he was very drunk and was vomiting at the entrance to his hootch. When I entered he recognized me and made some remark, '..unless I get them that got the young Lieutenant Yeary and Healy—,' and then he plopped into his sleeping bag and slept. This is what had been on his mind—and probably forever would be. The horrible and violent death of friends tended to drive us all crazy."[1042]

[*On 12 January, COMUSMACV requested JCS declassify COFRAM munitions for use in non-populated areas of I Corps. On 13 January, a portion of KSCB's ammo dump (ASP#1) is relocated; Col. Lownds directs various defensive measures be implemented. On 14 January, COMUSMACV requests III MAF review contingency plans to relieve the CIDG Lang Vei Special Forces Camp. (III MAF notifies COMUSMACV on 20 January that contingency plans for the relief of Lang Vei are*

[1031] Mitchell J. Sutherland, letter of 10 September 1990.
[1032] Conversation with Richard C. Noyes, 20 November 1989.
[1033] Letter from Rick Noyes, 29 August 2008.
[1034] Conversation with Lannis Yeary, 25 Sep 2004. Lannis was Randall's younger brother (6 years younger).
[1035] Conversation with Lannis Yeary, 25 Sep 2004. Lannis is the younger brother of Randall.
[1036] Conversation with David Doehrman, 10 Sep 2004, just after Doehrman visited with the Yeary family.
[1037] Obit., Kingsport *Times*, Jan 17, 1968
[1038] Jack Wells, Letter of 02 June 2004.
[1039] Conversation with David Doehrman, 10 Sept 2004.
[1040] Comments of Maj Matthew P. Caulfield, HQMC Oral History Tape #6157.
[1041] Cpl Lawrence C. Richards, named "little Rich" to distinguish him from Cpl Scott W. Richardson; both were Marines in Co B, 3rd Recon Bn at Khe Sanh.
[1042] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 19 January 1968.

valid; no additional support is required). ASRAT BRAVO arrives on KSCB on 17 January and is operational the next day. Also on 17 January, 26th Marines receives OPCON of battalion 2/26 making the first time all of the 26th Marines Regiment and attached infantry battalions are operating together in combat since Iwo Jima; 2/26 moves to positions near Hill 558 to guard the northwest valley approach to KSCB. "By the 17th of January, most everyone on KSCB were true believers; concertina was up all over within the base—obstacles for any mass wave attack that might penetrate the perimeter defenses. The medical area has been expanded by the arrival of a USAF surgical augmentation team, and two additional Navy Corpsman arrived."[1043] *On 18 January, General Westmoreland directs diversion of electronic sensors to seed the Khe Sanh area. (Electronic sensors first seeded in the Khe Sanh area on 20 January).*]

17 JANUARY 1968

BEACH, CAPT Sam Festis, Jr. 20th TASS
CHANEY, SFC Donald Lee FOB-3

Shortly after noon (at 1205H), an Air Force O-2A aircraft crashed southeast of the Khe Sanh runway (at XD853418). Although the Marines of B/1/26 attempted to rescue the pilot and passenger, they were unsuccessful due to the intense fire that ensued.[1044] Killed in the crash was Capt Sam F. Beach[1045] and the passenger, SFC Donald Lee Chaney.

The Marine Corps Spot Report indicates it was "not due to enemy fire,"[1046] while the official USAF history attributes "His death..to hostile action."[1047] Hobson's account indicates "his aircraft was hit by small arms fire and crashed."[1048]

Gene Patterson, a radio operator with 15th Aerial Port Squadron at KSCB recalls that "..he got shot down on take-off. He just barely got off the ground. He called me and said, 'I'm airborne, Pat.' And that was it. Next thing I know everybody was running around yelling. I was down in the bunker. Everybody was telling me he just got shot down after he took off, by ground fire."[1049]

[1043] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary, 17 January 1968.
[1044] 3rd MarDiv 170902Z/Jan68, Spot Report #93 in III MAF COC Journal and File, Opn SCOTLAND, Pt. 3, #134.
[1045] "History of 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron, Jan-Mar68," Tab T, 20th TASS, contained in Vol. II of *Quarterly History, 504th Tactical Air Support Group, Jan-Mar68*, App. 6, Subordinate Unit Histories, p. 20.
[1046] Spot Report #93, cited.
[1047] History of 20th TASS, cited.
[1048] Hobson, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
[1049] Conversation with Gene Patterson, 5 March 1996.

19 JANUARY 1968

NEWTON, PFC Leonard Lee I/3/26

On 17 January, Capt William H. Dabney (CO, I/3/26) on Hill 881-South dispatched 2/Lt Thomas Brindley's Third Platoon to Hill 881-North. An 8-man reconnaissance patrol accompanied I-3 and was to drop off clandestinely enroute. There was no contact. Then, on 18 January, Capt Dabney dispatched 2/Lt Michael Thomas' I-2 towards Hill 881-North to patrol an area about a kilometer south of I-3. Again, there was no contact or sighting of enemy. About 1400H on the 18th, the recon team that had been inserted on the 17th reported contact with NVA on the north slope of Hill 881-North; they had wounded and needed assistance.[1050] I-2 was ordered to return expeditiously, which it did as I-3 "shucked its packs, flak jackets, and all except weapons, ammo and water, and literally double-timed to 881-North in three squad columns.. In less than two hours, about 1600, the platoon found the recon team, set up an LZ to evac the wounded, and returned to Hill 881-South, arriving about 1900 with the six uninjured recon team members in tow. There was no contact. Upon debriefing the recon team, we discovered that during the contact they had abandoned a radio and some shackle sheets. We so reported to battalion, and in due course, we were directed to recover them the next day. I directed Lieutenant Rick Fromme to take his 1st Platoon and do so. They jumped off about dawn on the 19th, reinforced with a section of M-60 [machineguns], a section of 60mm mortars and the 81 FO."[1051]

At approximately 1100H as I-1 maneuvered to about 500 meters short of the crest of hill 881-North (on the south slope), it made point-to-point contact with an estimated NVA platoon which was maneuvering south along the same finger.[1052] In the ensuing fire fight the Marines of I-1 sustained several casualties and were pinned-down. PFC Leonard L. Newton, carrying a M-60 machinegun continuously stood up in the tall elephant grass to fix the location of the NVA and deliver bursts with his M-60 to enable the Marines to pull into covered positions. After a few bursts, his gun jammed; he repaired it twice and put it back into action and suppressed the fire from at least three automatic weapons as he fired from his shoulder.[1053] The fifth or sixth time he stood up,

[1050] Transcript of interview of Col William H. Dabney by Mr. Benis M. Frank, 20 May 1982, Marine Corps Oral History program, p. 61.
[1051] *Ibid.*
[1052] Statement of 2/Lt Charles J. Schneider, Jr., in Silver Star Medal file of PFC Leonard L. Newton.
[1053] Statement of 2/Lt Harry F. Fromme, Jr., in Silver Star Medal file of PFC Leonard L. Newton.

he took one round through the head, dying immediately.[1054] The NVA had shot him through the eye.[1055]

"I remember him. He was a new guy. He was a pretty good-sized fellow. I remember him having the M-60 because I was a machine-gunner before I became a scout, and I remember them go out. Of course they all had that look. They had that false look of bravado. I was really worried about him. Sure enough, he got killed."[1056]

The radio and the shackle sheets were not recovered.[1057]

20 JANUARY 1968

BRINDLEY, 2/Lt Thomas Drew	I/3/26
BRYAN, CPL Charles William	B/3rd Recon
COLLINS, PFC James Alfred	I/3/26
THOMAS, 2/Lt Michael Howard	I/3/26

The recon contact of 14 January and the platoon contact of 19 January now made apparent, through aggressive patrolling, the threatening NVA presence close to Hill 881-South. The shroud of jungle and terrain could no longer hide the extent of the NVA presence at Khe Sanh.

On 19 January 1968, a 7-man team, "BARKWOOD," arrived on Hill 881-South under the leadership of Cpl Charles W. Bryan with the mission of patrolling the west flank of Hill 881-North and retrieving the shackle sheets.[1058] In order to get into their RZ [recon zone] unobserved, they would walk off 881-South as the rear security for a company-size patrol by INDIA Company, 3/26 and slip off unnoticed while enroute.[1059] Capt William H. Dabney (CO, I/3/26) and Cpl Bryan discussed the mission at length the evening of 19 January. Cpl Bryan was instructed by his CO that if Co I made contact, to return to Hill 881-South. BARKWOOD was not under the operational control of INDIA Company.

BARKWOOD consisted of CPL William Bryan, Patrol Leader; CPL Lionel Guerra, APL (Assistant Patrol Leader), LCPL Robert "P.J." Pagano, radioman; LCPL Thomas Hollis, PFC Paul Beddoe, PFC Ron Parr, riflemen, and another PFC on his first patrol.[1060] CPL Kevin Macaulay, who had been the recon radioman on top of Hill 950 in November, 1967, was due for this patrol, but since there were "too many Corporals," PJ Pagano was assigned instead.[1061] CPL Lionel Guerra was suddenly struck with apprehension about the patrol when he realized he didn't have a pocket New Testament. "I always carried it with me in my left pocket. My uncle had given it to me after he had carried it in the Korean War when he was a soldier. By the time I realized I didn't have it, it was too late; we were moving out. I never saw it again, and years later I would have to apologize to my uncle for losing his New Testament."[1062]

The weather on Saturday, 20 January, was fair with good visibility during the day (although not so visible when Co I departed 881-South at 0600H!)[1063] The temperature was 75° as Capt Dabney led Co I towards Hill 881-North to investigate the enemy force encountered by the recon team on the 14th and the platoon patrol of the 19th. Two platoons and company command group of M/3/26 led by Capt John J. Gilece, Jr., had been lifted to Hill 881-South the afternoon of 19 January to man the lines while Co I patrolled. (The other platoon of Co. M was in reserve on KSCB).[1064]

Co I divided into two elements moving about 500 meters apart: I-3 (led by 2/Lt Thomas D. Brindley) together with the CP group and recon team BARKWOOD (1B3) moved on the east (right, looking north from 881-S); I-1 (led by 2/Lt Harry F. Fromme, Jr.) and I-2 (led by 2/Lt Michael H. Thomas together with the CO, moved on the west (left, looking north from 881-S).[1065] Hill 881-N had two protruding fingers forming its southern slope, a perfect avenue to approach to its summit, two axis mutually supporting.

The columns proceeded abreast through dense fog until 0930H when they reached a point about 500 meters south of 881-North. At this point, I-3 was 100 meters south of Objective #2, a steep nose of 881N (XD775455), and INDIA-6 with I-1 leading, about 100 meters south of Objective #5, a similar nose about 400 meters to the west. The Marines moved circumspectly. Contact was imminent. I-1 had received heavy NVA fire from Objective #5 while patrolling there the previous day.[1066] Lt. Harry Fromme led I-1 on Objective #5 with two squads up (3rd and 2nd) with the Lieutenant and Cpl George T. Barczay between them. They were only 20-30 meters from the

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[1054] Statement of Schneider, cited.
[1055] Taped comments of Daniel O. Allen, Eisenhower Center, no date (but 1980s).
[1056] Conversation with Daniel G. Allen, 25 October 1990.
[1057] Dabney interview, cited.
[1058] Ronnie D. Foster, *One Day as a Lion*, True Stories of the Vietnam War, Heroes From Collin County, Texas, 2007, p. 67.
[1059] Statement of 1/Lt J. P. Dusenbury in Bronze Star Medal file on LCPL Robert G. Pagano.
[1060] Foster, *One Day as a Lion*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
[1061] Comments of Kevin Macaulay in Foster, *One Day as a Lion*, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
[1062] Comments of Lionel Guerra in Foster, *One Day as a Lion, op. cit.*, p. 69.
[1063] Comments of Cpl Michael C. Elrod, HQMC Oral History Tape #2809.
[1064] Comments of Maj Matthew P. Caulfield, HQMC Oral History Tape #2535.
[1065] Donnelly, Maj Thomas and Shore, Capt Moyers S., II, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam*, HQMC, Historical Division, 10 April 1970, Pt. VI, Ch. 18, p. 18:7.
[1066] Statement of Capt William H. Dabney, 21 January 1968, in Navy Cross file of 2/Lt Thomas D. Brindley.

crest when they came under heavy RPG and automatic weapons fire including .50 caliber. The volley of fire cut through the Marine ranks like a giant scythe and within 30 seconds, 20 men were down and out of action, most with severe leg wounds. The NVA were well dug in and camouflaged. "We never did see them."[1067]

"We were in very tall elephant grass, taller than we were, and that's where we first made contact with the enemy. All of a sudden it seemed like the fog lifted and they started firing at us, but in that thick elephant grass, and our team being in the rear of the column, we couldn't tell where it was coming from. Bullets were whizzing by through the grass. The company point man, Jim Collins, was the first man killed. He was supposed to leave for home the next day. He had walked directly into the NVA position surprising them as well as him... There was a lot of confusion and one guy was on the ground in a state of hysteria. I grabbed him by his back and encouraged him to get up, at which time he did and went on about his job."[1068]

The recon radioman, "PJ" Pagano, recalls the scene prior to the firefight: "We were walking in elephant grass that was about five to six feet tall. Being in the rear of the grunts, I could see just their helmets above the grass, and I remember thinking how funny that looked, like a bunch of turtles floating along in a sea of grass. All of a sudden the sound of a heavy machine gun broke the silence. Seven shots. I remember it like it was two seconds ago, three shots, a pause, and then four. All those turtles slowly submerged and it was just grass again. I was so enthralled with that visual that I suddenly thought to myself, 'get down, stupid.'"[1069]

Capt Dabney ordered them to pull back, enabling friendly artillery and mortars to fire on Objective #5. Lt. Fromme directed their withdrawal as each squad supported the other with supporting fire while they carried their wounded down the hill.

Chester W. Wilson, Jr., suddenly found himself alone: "I was with Lt Fromme and my squad was advancing up the hill on line when we got hit by fire from the crest of the hill.. I was busy loading and firing, when I hear some movement behind me and I thought to myself, Charlie got behind us. What had happened was both of the guys to either side of me had been hit, and when the word was passed to pull back, I didn't get it. Here I am all alone one the side of the hill fighting a one-man war! The noise to my rear was [LCPL P.] Provenzano coming back to tell me they had all pulled back. He asked me if I was trying to win the battle all alone, so I hauled my rear out of there, back to the others. After we got back that afternoon I thought about that and it scared the beans out of me. It still does."[1070]

Pinned down on a slope, 2/Lt Fromme called up his M-60 machinegun crew to provide covering fire to enable withdrawal of the wounded and to continue the assault to the high ground. The M-60 crew suffered an immediate RPG hit wounding all but two members of the crew.[1071] Continuously changing positions to avoid being a target, Sgt. James L. Moore from the crew nevertheless was wounded his leg by a RPG. He shouted: "I'm hit in the leg, but I'm OK; I can keep shooting. Don't waste a Corpsman on me. Keep giving these Marines cover."[1072]

James E. Schemelia suddenly heard the peculiar sounds of rounds being fired at him as he dove for cover: "..you hear just like you were taking a leather belt and snapping it, and that's all you could hear, just hundreds of these snapping sounds over your head and a lot of screaming. Seconds later, most of First Platoon came crawling down the hill. I didn't see any of them come down walking. They were all crawling. Many of them were soaked in blood. There was a bomb crater near me, and the corpsman was pulling them into the bomb crater and trying to do the best to bandage them up and try to keep them calm."[1073]

"FROSTY GOLD," a CH-46 helicopter of HMM-262 piloted by 1/Lt R.R. Ropelewski (Co-pilot, Capt S.R. Stegich) was diverted from a re-supply mission to retrieve the wounded from I-1. The LZ (XD777438) was a slope: "The slope was so steep that we couldn't land. We had to back into the hill and hover above the ground."[1074] PFC James E. Schemelia ("little one" of 2nd Squad, I-2) put PVT Richard R. Darling's arm over his shoulder and walked him up the ramp of the helicopter. "No sooner did I get to the front of the helicopter when machinegun rounds came ripping through the walls of the helicopter severing the electrical wires and hitting one of the fuel lines and aviation fuel came pumping out of the line and burst into flames, splashed onto the crew chief and he ripped off his flak jacket and threw it out of the helicopter. At that time the helicopter was waving uncontrollably, trying to hold its position, but it couldn't. I realized we were headed down, down into the valley. I looked over to the Marine that I had taken into the helicopter and I said, 'Come on, we're getting out of here.' I picked him back up and it was like trying to climb back up a mountain because the helicopter was headed down into

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[1067] Comments of Cpl Michael C. Elrod, HQMC Oral History Tape #2809; Donnelly, *op. cit.*, p. 18:8.
[1068] Comments by Lionel Guerra, in Foster: *One Day as a Lion*, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
[1069] Comments of Robert "PJ" Pagano, in Foster: *One Day as a Lion*, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.
[1070] Letter from Chester W. Wilson, Jr., 26 Feb 1986 (printed in Khe Sanh Veterans *Newsletter*, No. 12 (Nov, 1990), p. 20.
[1071] Statement of 2/Lt Harry F. Fromme, Jr. in Bronze Star Medal file of Sgt James L. Moore.
[1072] Statement of HM3 Roderick J. Pierce in Bronze Star Medal file of Sgt James L. Moore.
[1073] Taped comments of James E. Schemelia, July, 1984.
[1074] LCPL M.E. Frank, "Medevac Mission Suddenly Gets Hot," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:6 (9 Feb 1968) 8.

the valley and it was hard trying to walk to the rear of the helicopter. The ramp was still down. We were about 30 feet from the side of the hill and I just pushed him out. By the time that I jumped, it was a lot further down the hill and when I jumped out I landed into some brush which broke my fall, and I climbed back up the hill about another 50 feet from where the Marine was, and I picked him up. I took him back and put him back in the bomb crater. There was nothing else that could be done."[1075]

The entire rear section of the CH-46 burst into flames so intense the crew chief and gunner leaped out of the bird.[1076] Lt Ropelewski succeeded in landing ET-35 (#152544) and both he and his co-pilot jumped to safety as the entire chopper became engulfed in flames. A UH-34D of HMM-262 successfully rescued the crew.[1077]

I-3, 2/Lt Thomas C. Brindley

At 0930H, the fog lifted as I-3 at XD773451 deployed and immediately came under moderate automatic fire and semi-automatic weapons fire from Objective #2 killing the point man and sustaining three serious casualties. Cpl Robert W. ("Skip") Unangst had noticed the Point Man, PFC James A. Collins, getting ready before they departed 881-South. "He was just a super Marine. He was on his second tour and this was his last day in the field. He said he wanted to be the Point because he felt the rest of us needed a good Point. He could have gotten out of it, because it was his last day."[1078] Collins had entered the NVA perimeter unaware and was stuck inside as the NVA fired. "He was shot in the back because he was inside the perimeter, and the man behind Collins shot the NVA who shot him, and then all hell broke loose. We started to pull back a little bit. There was a Sgt Powell. He came down and his jaw was shot off. I remember him trying to talk with his tongue against his pallet: 'Help me! Help me! Help me!' His jaw was hanging down. That was the first squad; there wasn't much left of them."[1079] Second squad went up as PFC John Barrett rushed right into the NVA perimeter while PFC Reece A. Critchfield, Jr., a machine-gunner (KIA the next day, 21 January) and others laid down a base of fire. Cpl Unangst tossed a grenade at a NVA: "it exploded and a chunk of arm and shoulder came out...Barrett got to Collins and he just said to him, 'Leave me alone. I'm dying.' Well, we pulled him back anyway. The Doc tried to save him, but couldn't.[1080]

Tall elephant grass kept Lt Brindley from determining a definite fix on the NVA positions and he joined his Second Squad and maneuvered this squad in order to extricate his lead squad and recover casualties while directing a heavy volume of M-60 and M-79 grenade launcher fire against the enemy.

Rather than returning to Hill 881-South, Cpl Bryan, the Patrol Leader of BARKWOOD, moved up to 1/Lt Richard M. Foley, Jr., the INDIA Co XO, requesting instructions. Lt Foley asked him if he could use his team to select and secure a LZ to the rear. Cpl Bryan immediately did this as I-3 extracted their casualties and pulled back to the LZ while supporting artillery fire rained on the NVA positions.

Lt Brindley's 3rd Squad only had four "effectives" and one of the M-60 machineguns had jammed and was inoperable. The order came for I-3 to resume its attack on Objective #2 so that I-1 and I-2 could seize Objective #5. Cpl Bryan, after consulting with his team and receiving permission from his headquarters, volunteered BARKWOOD to assist in the attack. Lt Brindley combined what remained of his 3rd Squad (4 men) with Cpl Bryan's team and made Cpl Bryan the Squad Leader. Lt Brindley yelled, "Squad Leaders up! He said, 'We're going to get on line. Fix bayonets! And I said, 'O shit!' So we got on line and started firing."[1081] "They told us to fix bayonets! And I said, 'These people are crazy!'"[1082] Using the supporting fires of artillery and mortars together with I-1's M-60 machineguns for target preparation, 2/Lt Brindley led his platoon in the attack using his 2nd Squad and BARKWOOD on line on the right flank with 1st Squad back as Lt Foley established a base of fire with the one M-60 and several walking wounded.

Although the fire support was excellent, the NVA were well fortified, entrenched, and reinforced with .50 caliber machineguns. The assault was about 75 meters up a 30 slope,[1083] and the entire line came under heavy fire from small arms and grenades immediately upon beginning the assault.

Capt Dabney, from his position with I-1, watched the movement and saw 2/Lt Brindley prominently in the lead, leading his platoon up and over the objective by sheer force of example. "It was right out of the pages of Chesty Puller. He went from flank to flank, knocking each one of his Marines on the back, and up he went."[1084]

BARKWOOD

Simultaneously, at 1435H, BARKWOOD proceeded around the right flank of the objective and successfully

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[1075] Statement of Schemelia, cited; LtCol William H. Dabney, 3rd End on CMC ltr MSDM-abc, 1650, 18 Feb 1977, 40p/WHD/mal, 1650, 20 May 1977, Subj: Award, Case of Mr. James E. Schemelia, former U.S. Marine, 2347553; in personal papers of Col Dabney.

[1076] III MAF, Flash Report, 201130H/Jan68, in III MAF Journal and File #144.

[1077] M.E. Frank article, cited.

[1078] Comments of Robert W. Unangst at Khe Sanh reunion, 04 July 1993.

[1079] *Ibid.*

[1080] *Ibid.*

[1081] Comments of Unangst, cited.

[1082] Conversation with Lionel Guerra, 25 July 1997.

[1083] Statement of Capt William H. Dabney in Navy Cross file of 2/Lt Thomas C. Brindley.

[1084] *Ibid.*

halted the advance of the enemy who were in the process of enveloping that portion of the objective.

For the radioman of BARKWOOD, LCPL Robert E. Pagano, an intuitive sense of urgency to escape the craziness of battle preparations on the combat base motivated him to accompany this patrol:

"The funny thing about that patrol for me was that that wasn't my regular team. It was Bryan's team. He had just come to the team from infantry. He was a Corporal and a seasoned infantry Corporal, but he hadn't taken out a recon team before. And he was taking out this new team made up of people from here and there. They didn't have anybody seasoned on it. For some reason, I had this tremendously strange feeling that I had to get off the base. I'd just come in from patrol with [Cpl Julian] Kalama's team and was due for 2, 3, 4 days' rest, but I just couldn't abide it; I just had to get off the base. I'd never had that feeling before.

"So I pulled strings. I went to our platoon commander and asked if I could volunteer for this patrol that Bryan was taking out, and his radio operator could stay and cool his heels. So the Lieutenant said, 'If Bryan doesn't have any problem, I don't have any problem.' And Bryan welcomed it because he wanted somebody seasoned. That was my 15th patrol.[1085]

With CPL Lionel Guerra, the Assistant Patrol Leader on the extreme right and LCPL Robert E. Pagano, the radioman, on the left with Cpl Bryan, BARKWOOD soon began receiving fire, perhaps from nearby friendly squads which had become disoriented in the tall elephant grass. "It was just chaos. As we were going up I got hit from the left arm to the shoulder, and Pagano was hit. He was a few feet ahead of me and was yelling, 'My leg! My leg! My leg!' And I said, 'Just a moment.' I could see Charles Bryan behind me, to the left. At that time I could hear voices because to this day I still think that there was enemy and at the same time there was cross-fire. And I said [to Pagano], 'You got to call in to have them stop fire.'"[1086] Guerra's backpack was cut by the fire, "And my rifle—I didn't know where it was. And then I saw my hand, all distorted. Then I went up and I looked up and I saw my arm was twisted and I said, 'Oh, my God, I lost my arm!' Then I remember looking at my fingers to see if they moved, and they did move. And I remember saying, 'Come on, babies!' I rolled to my back because I was bleeding profusely because the bullet went through my humerus and went back through the scapula. Pagano was screaming, 'My leg! My leg! My leg!' I said, 'Hold on, I'll help you. I'll be right there.' I remember Bryan calling Pagano to call in Cease Fire! I turned around to get my tourniquet and I got hit by a grenade, like a slap. Just about that time Charles Bryan gets up to go to Pagano, and that's when he gets shot. He falls close to me, to the left, and I remember he looked up. He just went down. About this time a black Sergeant crawled up and asked how I was. I asked, 'How's Bryan?' 'He's dead.' And I asked, 'How about him (Pagano)?' He said, 'He's all right; we're going to get him, too. And I remember crawling down, and then there's another Marine next to me, and we're getting fire from the top, and we're being fired from the back. And so I'll always wonder in my heart: was it NVA? Because you know how that is—with the elephant grass, you couldn't see."[1087]

Pagano recalls: "Bryan died coming over to save me. I had been hit in the right leg and he came over and was actually attending to my wounds when he was shot by a fellow who was about six feet away from us, but we couldn't see him in the elephant grass. This fellow shot—the bullet went by my ear and got Bryan in the armpit. I went back on the radio and was talking and Bryan didn't move. I asked him if he was OK, and he looked upset and said, 'No—hit bad—going to die,' and then gave what sounded like a death rattle.... And when I was taken from the hill, we left him there. And when I met 'Twiggy' [LCPL Timothy J.] Dwyer years later he said, 'O, no, they had gotten to Bryan's body a few hours later, and he was blue, but he was still alive. They got him to the bottom of the hill, and then he died.'... When these infantry fellows volunteered to come up and get me—they located me by rifle shots—he asked me, (indicating Bryan's body), 'What about him?' And I said, 'He's dead.' And I felt like this tremendous scream—that's as close as I can come to describing it. I thought to myself, 'I guess it must just be the realization that Bryan's dead sinking into me.' It was a scream within me; it sounded like it was all around me, but I knew, of course, that nobody else heard it. And I was terribly afraid. We were still pinned down and the North Vietnamese hadn't gone away. And these guys crawled to where I was, grabbed me, and dragged me back down."[1088]

BARKWOOD had effectively eliminated any resistance from the flank they secured, including destruction of a NVA .50 caliber position. It was obvious from the manner in which BARKWOOD was deployed and from its fire discipline, that Cpl Bryan had led the assault with unusual professional skill. There was a cost: the enemy fire had been so intense that all but six men from the assaulting unit were killed or wounded. All but one man of BARKWOOD were killed or wounded. Cpl Bryan died a few hours later from his wounds.[1089]

Thomas D. Brindley

I-3 encountered heavy small arms fire from the reverse slope as it went over the top of the hill, and Capt Dabney saw 2/Lt Brindley running back and forth along the line, urging his Marines forward and directing their

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[1085] Conversation with Robert E. Pagano, 22 October 1988.
[1086] Conversation with Lionel Guerra, 14 September 1998.
[1087] Conversation with Lionel Guerra, 25 July 1997.
[1088] Conversation with Robert E. Pagano, 22 October 1988.
[1089] 3rd MarDiv COC 201830Z/Juan68, Recon SITREP #984 in III MAF COC Journal and File 20/21 Jan 1968, #278.

fire, all the while exposed to fierce fire in his attempt to fix the origin of the hostile fire. The North Vietnamese position was overrun. But there were other enemy positions. About this time, Lt Brindley's radio operator informed Capt Dabney that the platoon was running out of ammunition and that all the "actuals" (the squad leaders and platoon sergeants) were hit. Capt Dabney saw Lt Brindley for a moment after that, and then was informed by the radio operator, 'There is nobody left in charge up here. What should I do?"[1090] 2/Lt Brindley was hit by a burst of automatic fire and tumbled forward on the reverse slope, mortally wounded.[1091] Lt Brindley screamed as he grabbed his shoulder and rolled away. His last words and thoughts were of his men: "Keep low, keep going, and stay on line."[1092]

Capt Dabney told the radioman to get down and hold what he had. He then directed I-5, 1/Lt Richard M. Foley, Jr., who was at that time on a hill 400 meters behind I-3 with I-3's base of fire, to advance and take over the platoon. Lt Foley later wrote: "I find it hard to say it all in words. I only know that Tom Brindley led an attack that was in the tradition of Iwo, Tarawa, and all the others. They never stopped until they took that hill."[1093]

2/Lt Michael H. Thomas

Along with 2/Lt Michael H. Thomas, commanding I-2, Capt. Dabney gathered 22 Marines from the element on the left and set out from his position 100 meters south of Objective #5 to reinforce I-3. The Marines dashed down the ridgeline to the south until they were protected from enemy fire, then darted 500 meters through open terrain to the other ridgeline and headed north, joining the remnants of I-3 from the rear. After having skillfully maneuvering his platoon to the rear of I-3, 2/Lt Thomas then began to lead I-2 up the hill where I-3 was pinned down by four .50 caliber machineguns and deadly accurate small arms fire.[1094] Lt Thomas, ignoring the enemy fire, linked up with the remnants of I-3 and immediately consolidated the position and organized a rescue party to evacuate the wounded. "We entered the tree line and all hell broke loose"[1095] as I-2 encountered heavy fire. Lt Thomas was constantly moving among his Marines, ordering them to get down on their bellies and keep low, attempting to determine the enemy's location.

As Lt Thomas led the assault, it was determined that eight Marines were missing. Lt Thomas organized and personally led a search party which rescued five Marines in separate locations under enemy fire. He located a sixth Marine and was carrying him back when he was painfully hit in the face by enemy fire. Lt Thomas refused medical attention and continued his rescue operation. A report was received that two wounded Marines were located forward of the objective and in an area under direct enemy observation and machinegun fire. By this time, Lt Thomas was physically exhausted, wounded, and appeared to faint. His radio operator shed his radio and said, "Sir, I'll go after the next one." Lt Thomas replied, "No, it's my job. I'm a Lieutenant." He began inching forward to the wounded Marine, and was again shot—in the head and back.[1096]

Other Marines observing Lt Thomas and inspired by his example rescued the wounded Marines and carried Lt Thomas to the Landing Zone.

LtCol Harry L. Alderman, who had flown to the top of Hill 881-South about 1400H along with some of his battalion staff, saw that Capt Dabney had cracked the center of the NVA defenses, and "I notified the regimental commander and said that if he wanted to get on top of 881-North and see what was up there, he would have to reinforce."[1097] The reinforcements would apply the *coup de grace*. The request was denied; INDIA Company was to withdraw. (A NVA Lieutenant, La Than Tonc, had surrendered at KSCB, providing the NVA's plan of attack, which was imminent). By 1800H, Co I had returned to Hill 881-South.[1098]

"A silence came over the hill and it lasted several days. It was very difficult to explain the mood. The men were very quiet, sort of in mourning for the buddies that didn't come back that day."[1099]

The dead were brought to KSCB. Captain Reynolds (CO, Co B, 3rd Recon Bn) was there when Cpl Bryan arrived.

"Reynolds [had taken] an immediate liking to Bryan because he was a good Marine. He was a good squad leader. He had a damn good record coming over from the grunts. And he was dead.. And I could see Reynolds was visibly affected."[1100] "Pagano, the radio operator who replaced me, was wounded badly and never returned to the company. My good friend, the little Mexican kid, Lionel Guerra, was wounded also and never came back to us. Weeks later when I was hit by shrapnel and thrown thirty feet by a rocket blast as I filled sandbags, I ripped the medical entry out of my service record book to avoid

[1090] Statement of Capt William H. Dabney in Navy Cross file of 2/Lt Thomas C. Brindley.
[1091] NAVPERS 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 6 Apr 1968, in Navy Cross file of 2/Lt Thomas C. Brindley.
[1092] Statement of PFC Kenneth O. Brewer in Navy Cross file on 2/Lt Thomas C. Brindley.
[1093] Statement of 1/Lt Richard M. Foley, Jr., in Navy Cross file on 2/Lt Thomas C. Brindley.
[1094] Donnelly, *op. cit.*, p. 18:8.
[1095] Statement of PFC Thomas R. Romback in Navy Cross file on 2/Lt Michael N. Thomas.
[1096] Statement of Maj Matthew P. Caulfield in Navy Cross file of 2/Lt Michael N. Thomas.
[1097] Comments of LtCol Harry L. Alderman, HQMC Oral History Tape #2535.
[1098] 3/26 ComdC, January 1968, Encl (1), p. 7.
[1099] Taped comments of James E. Schemelia, July, 1984.
[1100] Conversation with Kevin Macaulay, 22 August 1984.

the presentation of a Purple Heart. I hadn't suffered enough. I still hold those feelings today."[1101]

Bryan grew up in McKinney, Texas and graduated from high school in May, 1966, with no plans for the future. While in high school he gathered an extensive collection of comedy records and was learning to play the guitar.[1102] He frequently visited his good friend, Ronnie D. Foster, "..two blocks away, where we'd sit out in the back yard and sing songs by Hank Williams, the Kingston Trio, and the Hot Nuts 'Get em from your peanut man.' We loved to recite Redd Foxx jokes."[1103] He was active in Boy Scouts and, for two years, played center on his football team (number 53) which lost less than six games in five years. He also enjoyed the outdoors and was an avid fisher and hunter, skills which undoubtedly contributed to his subsequent life in the jungles of Vietnam. His parents were hard-working. His mother worked in the high school cafeteria and his father worked long hours in a local cotton mill. While in school, he and his friend, Ronnie D. Foster, read the book, *The Green* Berets by Robin Moore, along with *Guadalcanal* Diary and *Battle Cry*, and listened with rapt attention to a Marine Sergeant recruiter along with others from the senior high school class. "Bill Bryan was in. There was no doubt left in his mind. Marine Corps here we come."[1104] While on leave, in May of 1967, he returned home to marry Deidra Simpson. He was 18, she was 19, and within four months, she would become a widow.[1105]

PFC Daniel G. Allen recalls that "..everybody liked Lieutenant Thomas and everybody liked Lieutenant Brindley. They were two of the—you know how sometimes you have a rapport with some officers over others? or just natural leaders? He [Thomas] was the kind—he didn't have to say anything; you just got it done."[1106]

LCPL Thomas F. Peavey remembers Lieutenant Thomas as his Platoon Commander before Khe Sanh: "We were on an operation out of Camp Evans and I got malaria and I started throwing-up. He picked me up—with all my gear and his gear and my rifle and his rifle, and he carried me for about half an hour! I was throwing up. I was out of it, fever and everything. He was a strong man. That guy should of got the Medal of Honor. I really feel sorry that I wasn't there, because if I was there I might of kept him from getting killed."[1107]

On the patrol to Hill 918 in December, 1967, INDIA Company had the point, and Lt Brindley was the point platoon. While moving through the ridgeline to the south of Hill 881-South that ran into Laos, the point man hacked a bees nest with his machete. Both the Point and Lt Brindley were stung so badly that their faces swelled up and their eyes swelled shut and they needed to be medevaced. But, recalls Capt Dabney, "Brindley was a tough boy and he was back in three of four days."[1108]

Thomas Drew Brindley grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota and was a very good student and good athlete, playing football and hockey. While in high school, he pumped gas at his father's Brindley Oil Co. station. He received a hockey scholarship to play at Colorado College in Colorado Springs and played for three years. When he transferred to the University of Minnesota he was caught between quarters and was drafted. He chose to enlist in the Marine Corps, and following boot camp went to OCS and the Basic School. He left for Vietnam in October, 1967.[1109]

[The North Vietnamese Army launched the 1968 "siege" battle at Khe Sanh with two factors that negatively impinged on them. The first was an abrupt advancement of their "N-Day" [their parlance for the American "D-Day," the date in which a battle commences]. For example, in the Medical Section of their secret account of the battle: "One aspect of our operations had an impact on the military medical activities and that was that we [launched the offensive] in advance of the time [originally] decided upon. Day N was decided to occur in early February, 1968, after that it was changed to 20 January 1968. At this point the effort to conduct battlefield reconnaissance was still incomplete, the military medical detachments had just arrived [on the battlefield] and had to work quickly as they received wounded. Routes used to evacuate the wounded had still not been established. Because of the frantic activity the military and rear service conferences and the military medical conferences had still not been carried out."[1110] In the section providing analysis of support given to the Khe Sanh battle, it was noted that

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[1101] Letter of Kevin Macaulay to Ernest Husted, 28 October 1987.

[1102] Information supplied by Ronnie D. Foster, Bryan's high school friend, who is writing a book on him, and on an article he wrote for the Dallas *Morning News*, January 21 and 22, 2004.

[1103] Ronnie D. Foster, *One Day as a Lion, True Stories of the Vietnam War, Heroes from Collin County, Texas,* 2007, p. 51.

[1104] *Ibid.*

[1105] Information supplied by Ronnie D. Foster, Bryan's high school friend, who is writing a book on him, and on an article he wrote for the Dallas *Morning News*, January 21 and 22, 2004.

[1106] Conversation with Daniel G. Allen, 25 October 1990

[1107] Conversation with Thomas F. Peavey, 21 January 1994.

[1108] Conversation with William H. Dabney, 29 August 1993.

[1109] Conversation with James Brindley, Thomas' younger brother, who also served as an officer in the USMC (entering in 1971); Ward, Don, *The Faces Behind the Names*, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1996, p. 43.

[1110] "Military Medical Operations Highway 9/Khe Sanh Front (B5-T8) from December, 1967, to July, 1968, in *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign], Hanoi: General Directorate for Rear Services, 1988, p. 267. [This document is classified "Mat" (or "Secret")]. Translated by Sedgwick Tourison.

support bases A2 and A3 "..arrived slowly including both the headquarters element and the depot resources. There were elements that after fire had commenced were still unable to begin to carry out their mission and therefore they were not able to provide appropriate support in a timely manner."[1111] *In the general history of the Khe Sanh battle, the North Vietnamese Army stated: "First, there was insufficient time to prepare the battlefield, and therefore many forces could not be employed, particularly many combat support forces, such as there being no road for the mechanized vehicles; there was no reserve ammunition, and for these reasons even if one had wanted to concentrate forces, it could not have been accomplished."*[1112] *Just why their N-Day was advanced from early February to 20 January while unknown and not discussed in their printed histories of Khe Sanh, certainly crippled their efforts.*

A second negative factor was the location of the controlling headquarters for the Khe Sanh campaign (B5-T8), located west of the western edge of the DMZ, in Laos (at Sar Lit, XD6266), "..a distance of approximately 30 kilometers from the campaign Command Headquarters to the headquarters of the 304th Division (to the south of Khe Sanh) and approximately 45 kilometers to the command headquarters of the 320th Division (to the north of the district seat of Cam Lo). Much time was expended when employing runners or delegated representatives from the Front down to the division level. The command headquarters equipment was rudimentary and compromised. Therefore at the outset the campaign headquarters was attacked by B-52s and had to move; the divisions in the forward area lost contact with the Campaign Command Headquarters for a period of time and the lack of command had an impact on the campaign areas."[1113] *On 30 January 1968, "..the largest B-52 strike of the war to that date was flown against a command and control center in eastern Laos, 36 sorties in the morning and 9 at night. There were 85 secondary explosions and numerous cave-ins."*[1114] *Presidential advisor, Dr. Walt Rostow wrote a memo to President Johnson (concerning this strike), "Herewith Westy reports an extremely successful use of intelligence to identify and attack with B-52s the new, recently established senior headquarters west of the DMZ."*[1115] *General Westmoreland cautioned, "Any public statement about successful B-52 attacks on the major enemy headquarters would certainly compromise the source of the information, enemy corrective action could diminish our intelligence effort country-wide. No valid cover story can be developed. We have no ground reconnaissance resources which could be admitted to be in that area. While photographic interpretation could confirm a possible logistics complex, it would not support identification of a major headquarters."*[1116]]

21 JANUARY 1968

BEDDOE, PFC Paul Melvin Jr	**B/3rd Recon**
BELLAMY, PVT Paul Robert	**K/3/26**
BROWN, PFC Theodore Jr	**K/3/26**
BUGGER, PFC Curtis Burke	**W/1/13**
CONTRERAS, PVT John Jenaro	**H&S/3/26**
CRITCHFIELD, PFC Reece A Jr.	**I/3/26**
CRUITT, PFC Michael Douglas	**K/3/26**
ELLIOTT, SSGT Jerry W	**282nd AHC**[1117]
HELLWIG, LCPL Steven Louis	**H&S/1/26**
HILL, SGT Billy David	**282nd AHC**
JOHNSON, PFC Terry Melvin	**I/3/26**
JONES, LCPL Clifton Randal	**K/3/26**
KINGSTON, LCPL Thomas Lloyd	**I/3/26**
McKINSEY, WO Gerald Leroy Jr.	**282nd AHC**
MOLE, HM3 Malcolm Geoffrey	**H&S/3/26**
RIMEL, GySgt Melvin Louis	**K/3/26**
ROZELLE, LCPL David Thomas	**K/3/26**
SEYMOE, LTCOL Joseph Phillip	**MACV Det 19**
SMITH, SGT Terrence Glenn	**HQ 26th Mar**
STENBERG, LCPL Jerry Oscar	**C/1/13**
WHITE, LCPL Larry Frederick	**H&S/3/26**

[Hill 861 – 0330H]

"..in the mid afternoon [of the 20th] we spotted 5 or 6 gooks on a hill 500 yards to the west of 861. I worked up a fast fire mission, and our Captain asked for a platoon to check for results. I went too. I was so at ease I even wore my Converse Black Low sneakers! We had just reached the top of the ridge, when the word on the radio came to us to get back now! Our Lt asked for permission to stay another ten minutes as we were just getting to the impact area from the 105s. Our CO came on the air personally and said, 'Get the @uck back now, 6 out!' It was only months later did I learn that the moment out there was about the time that the NVA trooper gave up at the base and had said that 861 was due to get hit that night. I shudder to think of what lay on the other side of that ridgeline, because it was

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[1111] *Ibid.*, p. 254.

[1112] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign], Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, 1987, p. 63.

[1113] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[1114] Maj James B. Pralle, USAF, Project CHECO, *Arc Light June 1967 – Dec 1968*, 15 August 1969, p. 28.

[1115] W.W. Rostor, memo, 7:50 a.m., Tuesday, January 30, 1968, referencing MAC 01430, in LBJ Library, National Security Files, Vietnam Country File, folder: 2A(1) I Corps and DMZ 11/66-1/68, container 66, WR58.

[1116] Gen Westmoreland 010010Z/Feb68, MAC 01463, in LBJ Library, National Security Files, Vietnam Country File, file: 5EE(1) Laos 10/67 – 12/68, Container No. 92, Doc 52.

[1117] AHC=Assault Helicopter Company

only 8 or 9 hours later that we got attacked—and from that very location."[1118]

During the late afternoon of 20 January, the officers and NCOs on Hill 861[1119] had been briefed to expect an attack on their position, and as the sun set, everyone went on 100% alert. But as the night progressed, there was relative peace, no indication of anything out of the ordinary. There were a few probes, but this caused no concern; they had been probed on previous nights as well,[1120] and the probe seemed to be one more "Cry Wolf."

For the most part, everything was mysteriously shrouded in a dense ground fog in the low-lying areas around the hill, severely limiting visibility.[1121] Cpl Victor Martinez was on LP (XD801441) and at 2305H heard some movement. "At first we thought they were probing or something."[1122] 60mm mortars on 861 fired a mission and the LP threw one hand grenade and heard some enemy moaning outside the wires.[1123] The plan was for the LP to sweep the area at first light—a plan which would not be executed.[1124]

All was quite until 0030H when sounds of people in the outer wire were certain. At this time the Marines of K/3/26, manning Hill 861, threw grenades and fired M-79s to preclude breaching of the wire in front of First Platoon. Moaning and movement sounds emerged from the fog and darkness shrouding the hill as the soldiers of the 6th Battalion, 2nd Regiment, 325C Division[1125] invested the outpost, assuming assault positions.

Cpl Dennis Mannion, an artillery FO, made several trips down the trenches on the northwest corner of the hill to listen to the noises: "They were operating in the fog and dark and didn't even practice much noise discipline! It was an unsettling feeling to hear people go about the business of trying to penetrate the wire oblivious to the hand grenades that were thrown out into the dark at them. At some points, they were even laughing among themselves."[1126]

"Doc" (HM3) Malcolm Mole crept up to the top of the darkened hill 861 to relieve himself at the piss tube. Cpl Dennis Mannion and his radioman, PFC David J. Kron (C/13th Mar), heard him approach through the darkness and challenged him. Mole, who aspired to be a disc jockey and was from Miami, responded, "O, this is KWN in Miami, Florida! Weather 71 degrees!" Mannion responded, "O, Doc, come on! Give us a break!" After the Doc relieved himself and as he walked back down the crest of the exposed northern side, the enemy opened up, and he was instantly killed by a Rocket Propelled Grenade.[1127]

About 0330H[1128] the NVA force popped two red star cluster flares. LCPL Dale R. Flaharty, manning the .50 caliber machinegun at First Platoon assumed one of the Marines made a mistake. Then everything broke loose—RPGs, mortars, small arms fire,[1129] from XD798442, XD800446, XD798447, XD801443, and XD805445.[1130] The NVA force opened up with a base of fire from the ridgeline immediately west of Hill 861, a position actually higher by about ten meters which provided a view of the entire top of the hill and the western slope. The Marines fired at this base of fire with 106 recoilless rifles and .50 caliber. Sgt Michael H. Lyons and LCPL Flaherty, manning the .50 caliber on the top of the hill cut loose with about 50 rounds and then his gun jammed and he then ran down to augment the lines. About five minutes later, the 106, about ten yards to his left, took a direct hit, destroying all the ammo.[1131]

Meanwhile, Mannion and Kron had been sent by Captain Jasper (CO, K/3/26) to the lower, southern tip of 861 after the Marines there reported spotting 25-30 NVA outside the wire, in order to direct artillery on them. Just as he reached the bottom of the steep hill, the NVA opened up. Since nothing could be seen there, he dashed back up the hill to the CP bunker.[1132] The CP was devastated. The Company radio operator was blinded, the Company Gunny, Melvin Rimmel, died in Mannion's arms as he bled to death. Mannion recalls Gunny Rimmel:

"About five or six days before the shit hit the fan, we had a rare day off from running the patrols. Instead, the Company Gunny asked for volunteers to go down into the deep ravine that lined the western side of 861. Mission: to locate the burnt out wreckage of a H-34 helicopter that had crashed some months back, and to

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[1118] Letter of Dennis Mannion, 29 May 1984. "6" refers to the Commanding Officer.

[1119] Hill 861 (XD803443) is indicated as High Point 832 in NVA documents and maps and is actually 837 meters high as determined by radio signal survey by a visit of engineers from the 2nd Topographic Company visiting in August, 1967.

[1120] Comments of Sgt. Mike Stahl, 22 January 1968, on USMC Oral History Tape #2589.

[1121] Comments of 1/Lt Jerry N. Saulsbury, April, 1968, USMC Oral History Tape #2776.

[1122] Comments of Cpl Victor Martinez, April, 1968, USMC Oral History Tape #2776.

[1123] Comments of Sgt Michael H. Lyons, April, 1968, USMC Oral History Tape #2776.

[1124] 26Mar 201700Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #324.

[1125] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign*], Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, 1987, p. 26.

[1126] Letter of Dennis Mannion, 20 August 1984.

[1127] Conversation with Dennis Mannion, 31 August 1986.

[1128] 26Mar 210230Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #325.

[1129] Comments of LCPL Dale R. Flaharty, April, 1968, USMC Oral History Tape #2776.

[1130] 3rd MarDiv 211521Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #326; 26Mar 211010Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #326.

[1131] Comments of Sgt Michael H. Lyons, April 1968, USMC Oral History Tape #2776; Comments of Flaharty, cited.

[1132] Letter of Dennis Mannion, 20 August 1984.

retrieve (if possible) the M-60 machineguns... Gunny Rimmel and I were pretty close. He was a big bear of a guy. I think I kinda took him for a father figure. About eight of us went, slipped out of the wire after sun up and worked our way into the ravine. We found the wreckage after about an hour, spent a leisurely time sifting around the wreckage, had lunch, and hiked out. Yes, we did find the M-60s. It was like a bunch of campers exploring the ruins of some historic event. One of the things we talked about (the burnt wreckage brought up the topic) while we ate lunch was a Marine Corps helicopter crash at Camp LeJeune earlier that year.. A number of Marines were killed. Sergeant Rimmel was supposed to have been on that flight, but a problem at home with one of his kids getting seriously sick, forced him to change places with another sergeant. He talked about fate and being in the wrong place at the right time. I've never forgotten the conversation, the locale, or the fact that five days later [Gunnery] Sergeant Rimmel was dead, one of the first to die when the NVA attacked us on the 21".[1133]

Gunny Rimel enlisted in the Marine Corps during the Korean War. Dennis Mannion remembers that he was, like most Marine Corps Gunnies, "big;" he was well over 6'4" and over 245 pounds "with a voice to match." He was married and had four children.[1134]

The S-3 of 3/26, Maj Matthew P. Caulfield, after receiving the word that Capt Jasper had been badly wounded, asked that the next senior officer, 1/Lt Jerry N. Saulsbury, assume command.[1135] When Caulfield got Saulsbury on the horn, "I asked him to get his gunny, who was a very strong one, and I said, 'Make sure you rely on him,' and he immediately answered, 'The gunny is dead.' Then I told him to get hold of his First Sergeant.. who was a real legend in the battalion and a tremendous Marine. I was told that he was over on the side of the CP, and he was dying."[1136] "I had a couple of holes in me and one real bad one in the neck, which later on they told me here in the hospital that I had a carotid artery severed and they don't know how I'm with it right now, but, well, thank God, I came through."[1137] "First Sergeant Goddard, who was running around with a finger on the artery on his neck to hold the blood in, told me later in a letter that he was looking for the gunny who was killed.. and he couldn't find him. He heard somebody singing; someone was singing the Marine Corps Hymn. He went over to the position. It was the 81mm mortar section. These kids had two mortars, and they were firing the mortars just as fast as they could get them into the tubes, and on top of everything else, the ammo people and the mortar people were screaming at the top of their lungs the Marine Corps Hymn."[1138]

The brunt of the attack burst against the lines manned by K-1 on the northwest corner of the hill. The NVA force penetrated their lines and in the chaos of battle, it became imperative to close the lines with the ever-present threat of enemy not only firing from the front, but also the rear—and within the trench-perimeter itself!

PFC Michael Douglas Cruitt was killed manning his machinegun. (One of his friends, with whom he had gone through machine-gun school, recalls that while they were in Okinawa to be processed for Vietnam and no liberty was allowed. "He was tall and slender, had a 'book wormish' look about him. He was a great guy. We went AWOL in Okinawa. We were going to Vietnam and they said: You're confined to the base. We said: O great! We're going to Vietnam and you're not going to let us go into town! Well, they had this hold in the fence, and we went into town and half the unit was in town! And I was glad for that memory of Cruitt."[1139])

2/Lt Linn Oehling's Second Platoon covered the lower part of the hill—the LZ area with the point, an area that was not overrun, nor did a single enemy soldier set foot on it.[1140] K-2 was augmented by a detachment of four deuce mortars from WHISKY Battery, 1/13 consisting of two M30 base plate 4.2" mortars and one HOWTAR (which is actually a 107mm pack howitzer) under the leadership of 1/Lt Erich E. Gabrys. The 4.2 was especially good for providing illumination because of its high trajectory and slow-moving round. "You can crank that tube up, put it up to ten-sixty-five elevation, which is a thousand sixty-five, almost pointing straight up. You put a real light charge, just one little powder bag, and set a real close time on your time fuse for your illumination, and it does a beautiful job of illuminating your own position."[1141]

When the break in K-1's lines was realized, four Marines of Lt Oehling's K-2 (LCPL William Edward Huff (later KIA on 25 Feb 68), LCPL Wheeler, PFC Lonza, and PFC Harold W. Pagel) together with two men from

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[1133] Letter of Dennis Mannion, 20 December 1984.
[1134] Dennis Mannion, "The Gunny," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.,: *Red Clay*, Issue #62 (Spring, 2005), p. 30.
[1135] Comments of Maj Matthew P. Caulfield, USMC Oral History Tape #6157. Caulfield notes that Saulsbury had flown at Pensacola for about 6 months and had no infantry experience, "..yet he took over that Company like a real trooper." [*Ibid.*]
[1136] *Ibid.*
[1137] Taped letter home from 1st Sergeant Bernard Goddard, 12 February 1968, in Tape #8A of a series of 8 cassettes he made of his cassettes he sent home while in Vietnam, 1967-1968.
[1138] Comments of Maj Matthew P. Caulfield, USMC Oral History Tape #6157.
[1139] Conversation with Daniel G. Allen, 25 October 1990.
[1140] Letter of Dennis Mannion, 27 August 1985.
[1141] Conversation with Gary O'Neal, 11 July 1993. W/1/13 was split with 3 tubes on 861 and 3 on KSCB.

the 4.2 tubes (LCPL David L. King and LCPL Ronald G. Wasielewski) were sent up the hill to close the lines.[1142]

K-2's lines held in large part due to two machine-gunners, Curtis B. Bugger and LCPL Billy R. Moffett: "We were being hit very hard.. and when they started opening up with this .50, they started drawing all the NVA fire to their particular position. They were getting hit with RPGs and also a .50 caliber operating on the far ridgeline [to the west]. Nevertheless, the people in this position just continued to fire. [The enemy] slipped in behind our .50 position and opened up on our .50 caliber position from the rear. Almost immediately our A-Gunner [PFC Curtis B. Bugger] was shot through the head and fell dead. LCPL Moffett, the gunner, fell and pretended to be dead, as he could not get to his weapon at this time. The NVA stood over the trench with his weapon down into Moffett as he pretended to be dead for maybe five or six seconds before turning to leave. When he turned to leave, Moffett grabbed his rifle and opened up on him."[1143]

A NVA who had penetrated the wire at the top of the hill had followed a little path down to the bottom of the hill, about ten feet from PFC Gerald F. O'Neal. Training at Camp Pendleton had ingrained the image of the enemy as one wearing black pajamas with little rice hats. "I sincerely thought this guy was a Marine. He had on utilities, a helmet, web belt. After he passed me, Sgt [Bobby J.] Barrickman, across from me in the doorway of our FDC bunker, was upset, and said, 'Why didn't you kill that man?' And I said, 'God, Sergeant Barrickman, it was a Marine!' He said, 'No. It was a NVA!'"[1144]

PFC O'Neal was called up by Billy Moffett to become his A-gunner, feeding the belt of .50 cal ammunition as Moffett continued to fire his machinegun. "Moffett fired the .50 cal. continuously, never letting up to cool the barrel. The incoming fire he was drawing was tremendous. There were 82mm mortars dropping all around us and what seemed like a steady stream of RPG fire. I could see green tracers from heavy machine guns coming into our little area from two different directions... The NVA fire he drew was so heavy it was impossible to move. I looked up and over my shoulder and saw the barrel of his .50 glowing bright red. I hoped it would melt, so he would have to stop firing."[1145] O'Neal, who eventually retired as a First Sergeant in the U.S. Army in 1989, "..stuck to Billy Moffett like glue after that night. In my 21 years as a Marine and a professional soldier, I never saw a man so calm under fire... Billy, you are the finest combat Marine I ever knew."[1146] Courageously continuing to fight, the soft-spoken Moffett said, the very next day, "On the 21st, I was scared shitless. It was hell."[1147] From his machine-gun he looked down on the 4.2 Sergeant's bunker: "..he went into his bunker and didn't come out.. He was in his own bunker all the time."[1148]

PFC Curtis Bugger "..was our youngest trooper. He was just barely 18, and we had just sent him up to the hill as a replacement barely 3 weeks before everything started."[1149]

Technicians at FOB-3 who monitored the NVA's radio transmissions throughout the siege battle, heard the North Vietnamese assault commander screaming for his reserves. He never received an answer. The reserves were annihilated by friendly artillery while the assault troops died on the wire.[1150] Marines on Hill 881-South fired 680 81mm mortars in support of the Co K Marines on 861 throughout the night. The 81mm tubes became so hot that juice was used to cool the tubes and after that was expended, the Marines urinated on the tubes to cool them.[1151]

The battle raged throughout the night until about 0630H as everyone prayed for light: "..It seemed like endless hours. That last hour between six o'clock and seven o'clock, waiting for the light, was a long hour, but when it came it was greatly appreciated."[1152] The NVA popped a green star cluster and retreated.[1153] Dawn disclosed the specter of battle: unexploded Bangalore torpedoes and satchel charges, dead enemy bodies strewn in trenches and all over the hill. "We tossed them outside. They hung up in the barbed wire—sorry about that. We went outside, got their weapons. They drug off a lot of them. We found a lot of drag marks."[1154] There were 4 KIA, 11 WIA, 45 NVA KIA and one NVA POW.[1155]

LCPL Clifton Randall Jones played football in high school and was an only child and adopted.[1156]

[1142] Comments of 2/Lt Linn Oehling, 22 Jan 1968, USMC Oral History Tape #2589.

[1143] Comments of Sgt Mike Stahl, 22 Jan 1968, USMC Oral History Tape #2589.

[1144] Conversation with Gerald O'Neal, 11 July 1993.

[1145] Letter of Gerald F. O'Neal to Ernie Spencer, 25 November 1992; printed in The Khe Sanh *Veteran* 1:3 (Summer, 1993) 23.

[1146] *Ibid.*

[1147] Comments of LCPL Billy R. Moffett, 22 Jan 1968 on USMC Oral History Tape #2589.

[1148] Letter of Billy Ray Moffett, 4 Nov 1996.

[1149] Comments of Ken Penn at the Khe Sanh reunion in Denver, 20 July 1991, printed in Khe Sanh Veterans *Red Clay*, Issue No. 2 (Fall, 1991) 4.

[1150] Comments of Maj Matthew P. Caulfield on USMC Oral History Tape #6157.

[1151] *Ibid.*

[1152] Comments of 2/Lt Linn Oehling, USMC Oral History Tape #2589.

[1153] Comments of LCPL Dale R. Flaharty, USMC Oral History Tape #2776. The Green star cluster appears to be the signal to terminate an assault and was used several months later during their assault of LZ LOON.

[1154] Comments of PFC Michael R. James, 22 January 1968, USMC Oral History Tape #2589.

[1155] 3/26 ComdC January 1968.

[1156] Letter from James Fowler, 2 June 2002.

Later in the afternoon (at 1400H), K/3/26 was reinforced by a reinforced platoon of Co A/1/26.[1157] When 1/Lt Geoffrey L. Stack led his platoon of A/1/26 to Hill 861 he was assigned the same area that had bourn the brunt of the attack—the northwest and west side. All the bunkers that had been on the hill before the attack on the 21st were destroyed and Co K, now reinforced with a platoon of Co A, rebuilt the entire hill position. Nothing new was now above ground.[1158]

Even after several weeks, the stench of decaying NVA bodies was so intense, the Marines of Co K had to wear gas masks on the western slope. Yet, every time the Marines attempted to bury the bodies, they encountered sniper fire. The best they could do was to toss the bodies into a deep ravine near the hill. "We had no way of getting out to these bodies to dig a mass grave or burn them, so all we could do was let them decay out there."[1159]

[Hill 881-South – 0500H]

At 0500H, Hill 881-South received small arms and RPG fire.[1160] Several rounds of 120mm mortar struck the hill wounding four. As they were being evacuated, additional rounds impacted, killing several Marines.[1161] PFC Terry Melvin Johnson, the INDIA Co., 3/26, supply clerk was standing next to Captain Dabney as the rounds started to impact. "We both jumped into holes, He jumped into the left one and I jumped into the right one, and a round landed in the hole with him. What was left we just wrapped up in a poncho and stuck on a helicopter. And I heard a few months later from his mother to the effect that the remains that were received were not her son's because there was a birth mark. And I wrote her back at the time and several times since. I explained the circumstances of his death. But for several years thereafter I would hear pretty regularly that she felt he was a POW and could I help. I kept writing back, No, I know he's dead. I was standing right beside him just before he died. He was my supply clerk. There wasn't much to put on the helicopter. Those were the days before DNA."[1162]

LCPL Thomas Lloyd Kingston was a cartoonist, carpenter, Shakespearean devotee, entertainer, who loved to play baseball and golf, camping, fishing, and swimming.[1163] A newspaper reporter wrote of how Kingston delivered papers, in the dark and cold of winter and the heat of summer, how he helped as an altar boy in their church, and wondered if the other people in the worshipping congregation that day, when the priest announced Kingston's death, really cared.[1164] A few days later, he wrote, "They Really Do Care!" and noted an overwhelming outpouring of letters and telephone calls in support of the Kingston family.[1165] So many responded, that Kingston's mother noted, "On the night last January when the men came to the door with the telegram, I felt along in the world. And now I know that I am surrounded by compassion.. as if the whole world were looking over my shoulder." One person cared so much he sent 5,000 green scapulars from the Shrine of Our Lady of the Immaculate Heart to the 26th Marines at Khe Sanh.[1166]

[Khe Sanh Combat Base – 0545H]

When the main ammo dump (ASP#1) on KSCB was hit at 0545H, the exploding dump spewed rounds to the degree that it became impossible to determine incoming from shells exploding from the dump as numerous duds and enemy fire covered the base.[1167]

Artillery on the base had been busy, supporting Hill 861 as well as boxing in recon team NURSE (3D1) at XD823403 who had observed NVA in green uniforms at XD825404 wearing packs and carrying rifles.[1168] By 2045H on 20 Jan, NURSE boxed themselves with arty as an enemy force of 75-100 moved within 30 meters of them. Flareships and SPOOKY were on station throughout the night. At 210800H, the team broke contact and moved to friendly position.[1169]

Only three guns of Battery "C", 1/13, operated on KSCB when the attack began; the other 3 tubes were located on Hill 881-South. The 3 on KSCB were located only about 25 meters from the base perimeter and only 50-75 meters from the now exploding ammunition dump which contained some 11,000 artillery rounds.[1170] So many rounds cooked-off from the ammo dump that it became impossible to distinguish them from those fired by the NVA. Gun #2 was out of action for approximately 15 minutes due to dud mortar rounds having

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[1157] 26Mar 211540Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #327.
[1158] Comments of SSGT Joseph Green, USMC Oral History Tape #2776.
[1159] Comments of HM2 Roderick J. Lyons, USMC Oral History Tape #4570.
[1160] 26Maqr 210230Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #325.
[1161] Comments by Col Dabney on draft MS of Historical Center, 1968 volume, Dec 1994.
[1162] Conversation with Col William H. Dabney, 28 May 1996.
[1163] Don Ward, *The Faces Behind the Names*, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1996, p. 189.
[1164] Gareth Hiebert, "The Oliver Towne Column: Death of a Carrier Boy!" St. Paul, Minnesota, *Dispatch*, second section, p. 1, Feb 1, 1968.
[1165] Gareth Hiebert, "The Oliver Towne Column: They Really Do Care!" St. Paul, Minnesota, *Dispatch*, second section, p. 1.
[1166] Gareth Hiebert, "People Care About Tommy," St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, May 26, 1968.
[1167] 3rd MarDiv COC 211521Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #326.
[1168] 3rd MarDiv 201830Z/Jan68, Recon SITREP #984 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 21/22 Jan 1968 #194.
[1169] 3rd MarDiv 211710Z/Jan68, Spot Report #233; 3rd MarDiv 211840Z/Jan68, Recon SITREP #985 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 21/22 Jan 1968 #354.
[1170] Comments of Capt William J. O'Connor and Sgt Ronnie D. Whitenight, 13 Feb 1968, on USMC Oral History Tape #2536.

landed within the parapet which were removed by the battery Executive Officer, 1/Lt William L. Eberhardtt and the battery's supply chief, Sgt Ronnie D. Whitenight.[1171] Gun #5 took a direct hit with a "willy peter" [white phosphorus] round which exploded out of the dump and hit the gun's ready ammunition bunker which started burning. The section chief cleared the crew from the gun as he put out the fire; he was hit with an incoming round and wounded in his leg and arm, but the fires were extinguished.[1172] The three guns of the battery on the base continued to fire until about 0800H by which time all land lines to the guns (to communicate firing data) had been severed and all aiming stakes destroyed, and there was no means to return fire. The guns had fired approximately 3,000 rounds, during which time "..the troops were very calm and went about their job in a professional manner, stayed out in the parapets, exposing themselves to great hazard from incoming rounds."[1173]

When the initial barrage struck the base, PFC Glenn E. Prentice was walking to the 1/26 messhall to begin his mess duty, scrubbing pots and pans. The first incoming round impacted on the road, the second struck the messhall. "I'm jumping for joy because I don't have to scrub any pots, and the next second it hits the ammunition dump, and all hell breaks out. I jumped in a hole, and I remember jumping in the hole with a guy named [LCPL Jerry Oscar] Stenberg. And it's really coming down fast, and I said, 'Let's go to the FDC bunker,' which is an old concrete bunker. And Stenberg goes, 'I don't want to go.' I said, 'Well, I'm going out of here!' About ten seconds after I got out, a big round hits, hits Stenberg in his head."[1174] The round destroyed Stenberg's body: "I knew it was Stenberg because he was the only blonde haired Marine in the Battery at the time. From the middle of his chest up was gone. I found only some blonde hair around the fox hole."[1175]

Death of a Cannoncocker[1176]
By Raymond C. Nicol

He did not hear them coming,
With the shrieks of death they made.
He was busy on the gun.
Sending out his own fusillade.

The last thing he remembered
Was sailing high up off the ground.
Landing face up with eyes wide open,
He couldn't hear or make a sound.

As he lay there bleeding,
He wanted very much to say
'Please Lord, I'm too yo0ung to die this way.'
He passed on, bled his life out,
On Khe Sanh's blood red clay.

The quantity of strewn ordnance, duds and semi-cooked-off rounds from the dump, in the battery area was so great that the two remaining good 105mm howitzers were temporarily located at ALFA Battery's position at the western end of the combat base while the area was policed by a working party to remove the shell casings and canisters and a team from EOD removed the dangerous duds out of the area. The area was re-occupied by "C" Battery along with a newly-arrived "B" Battery and a replaced Gun #5 on the morning of 23 January.[1177]

BRAVO Company, 1/26, occupied the perimeter lines (The GRAY Sector) protecting the eastern side of Khe Sanh Combat Base, augmented by three Ontos from A/3rd ATs, and 106s, two .50 caliber machineguns, and a 3.5-inch rocket team along with a 60mm mortar from H&S/1/26. Platoon B-2, on the forward edge of ASP #1 (about 25-30 meters from them), bore the brunt of the ammo dump's explosion.[1178] In addition to the ordnance, large quantities of CS powder had been stored in ASP #1 and the eruption from that area spread the acrid fumes throughout the area; many of the Marines had neglected to keep their gas masks with them, causing some to return to their tents. The tear gas "..was so heavy that even gas masks were marginally effective. Through all of his hell the 2nd Platoon remained in position, returning 60 mortar fire and retained the ability to fire the FPL. Also, the 81mm platoon in its entirety, were located near the dump and during this time continued to return counter-mortar fire."[1179] Captain Pipes displaced his CP three times during the five hours that the ammo dump exploded because exploding ammunition made his position untenable.[1180] The area also was strewn with flechettes, the little darts about one-inch long, contained in some 106mm rounds (9,000 in each round). "Many

[1171] Statements of 1st Sgt Ernest. R. Keith and Capt William J. O'Connor in Bronze Star Medal file on 1/Lt William L. Eberhardtt, Jr.; Comments of Capt O'Connor, Tape #2536, cited.
[1172] Comments of Capt O'Connor, Tape #2536, cited.
[1173] *Ibid.*
[1174] Conversation with Glenn Prentice, 10 July 1997.
[1175] Letter from Glenn Prentice, 22 July 1997.
[1176] While Nicol's words do not correspond to Stenberg's situation, this poem was written by a Marine from BRAVO Battery, 1/13, which arrived on Khe Sanh Combat Base 23 January 1968 and co-located with CHARLIE Battery's three guns. The poem was printed in Khe Sanh Veteran's *Red Clay*, Issue #45 (Autumn, 1999) 5.
[1177] Comments of Capt O'Connor, Tape #2536, cited.
[1178] Comments of Capt Kenneth W. Pipes and 2/Lt John W. Dillon, 14 Feb 1968, on USMC Oral History Tape #2537.
[1179] Letter of Maj K.W. Pipes, undated, in HQMC, Historical Center, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.
[1180] Statement of LtCol James B. Wilkinson, 19 Dec 1968, to Historical Center, HQMC, in Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.

men in the 2nd platoon had 106mm flechettes stuck in their flak jackets and clothing. The ground, in certain areas, was thick with these deadly arrows."[1181] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe gathered several dozen and formed a large cross in the front of his helmet as a reminder of the participation and presence of God within the pain, suffering, and death in which we now were.

Captain Kenneth W. Pipes, commanding BRAVO Company, 1/26, recalls: "We made it down into that Bravo command bunker behind Dillon's platoon, within yards of the ammo dump, and the attack started. We got our gas masks, but Steve [Hellwig] didn't have his, and he went back up to those tents that were beside the bunkers to get his, got it and was headed back down and a 122mm rocket must of hit just behind him. We're missing him, and don't know what happened to him. The attack had blown the lights out, the generators [were out]. So I went back up the steps, and I felt something and I turned my flashlight on and I put my hand clear through his chest. He'd taken just a massive hit. He was cut in half."[1182] He had instantly died: "It just cut him right in half. I mean he didn't know what hit him."[1183]

(Hellwig's brother, Ray, later joined the Marine Corps and served with C/1/26 during 1969. "My oldest brother, Gary, went in before Steve, and he ended up getting a medical discharge, being injured in training. Then Steve went in to follow my brother Gary. He was a really motivated Marine. He was gung-ho. He believed in it and excelled in boot camp. He came out a PFC.. I went in—I just needed to see the place where he died. [Steve] played basketball, ran cross-country, and was a very popular guy; he had that kind of personality that people like. I think he was made for the Marine Corps. He was a kid who won 'inspiration trophies' when he was on sports teams. He was enthusiastic and passionate about life and the things he believed in. He was my big brother. I idolized him, and there's not a day goes by that I don't think of him."[1184])

Steve Hellwig's parents, Bud and Verly, met at a USO dance in Bremerton, Washington on 2 Dec 1944 when he was a 19 year-old sailor in the US Navy. He had run away from his home in Arizona to join the Navy in WW II and survived the sinking of a ship by a German submarine. He recalls that when Steve was killed, they received telephone calls from strangers, "Your baby killer got killed." He also remembers how their two other sons were jeered whenever they wore their uniforms in public, meeting only criticism and scorn, kicked off airplanes when trying to get home to make room for late arriving civilians. No media welcomed them.[1185]

PFC Paul Melvin Beddoe, Jr., of BRAVO Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, had been wounded on the patrol on 20 January to Hill 881-North, and died of wounds.[1186] CPL Lionel Guerra, one of the gravely wounded from that patrol, was at DaNang when a hospital bus met the plane carrying the casualties on the runway. "It was set up for stacking stretchers on racks, and on the way to the hospital I heard someone saying, 'I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die.' I couldn't see him, but recognized the voice. It was my buddy, Paul Beddoe from BARKWOOD. I got mad at him and told him he wasn't going to die. He died the next day."[1187]

[District Headquarters, Khe Sanh village – 0640H]

At noon on 20 January, the 7th Battalion, 66th Regiment, 304th Division of the NVA began to move out along a path that had just been bombed by B52s. The trees had been knocked down and units moved slowly with some units becoming lost. It was not until 0400 on the 21st that the major force reached its grouping point, just in time to execute the regimental orders to commence their offensive at 0445.[1188]

On 20 January, Capt Clarke was on a patrol 6-7 kilometers south of the village when he received a rather cryptic message from the Special Forces to depart the area immediately because there would soon be a lot of action there. Some three hours later, a B-52 Arc light struck the area.[1189]

At 210640H, the Huong Hoa District Headquarters, (XD858386), two miles south of Khe Sanh Combat Base and seat of the local government under the leadership of Captain Nhi came under mortar and ground attack. The position was manned by the 915th RF [Regional Forces] Company and two PF [Popular Forces] platoons.[1190] The American advisory team (MACV Advisory Team #4 under the leadership of Capt Bruce B.G. Clarke) had intercepted a radio message the night before indicating a regiment was assembling across the river.[1191] The two Vietnamese PF platoons were under the leadership of a 1/Lt who would be killed during the attack. The position was also the headquarters for Combined Action Com-

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[1181] Letter of Maj K.W. Pipes, cited.
[1182] Conversation with Kenneth W. Pipes, 28 May 2003.
[1183] Conversation with Thomas Quigley, senior radioman for "B" Company; Hellwig was also a radioman in the company.
[1184] Conversation with Ray Hellwig, 21 December 2003.
[1185] Jerry Large, "The Sorrow of Unhearalded Soldier Sons," *The Seattle Times*; reprinted in Khe Sanh Veterans *Red Clay* 56 (Fall 2003) 41-42.
[1186] Conversation with Lionel Guerra, 06 August 1996.
[1187] Comments of Lionel Guerra, in in Foster: *One Day as a Lion, op. cit.*, p. 76.
[1188] *Su Doan (Ky Su) (Tap II)* [304th Division (Chronology) (Vol. 2), Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, p. 65. Translated by Sedgwick Tourison.
[1189] Conversation with Bruce B.G. Clarke, 17 May 1989.
[1190] I Corps TOC G2 DaNang 220504Z/Jan68 to III MAF COC Serial No. 5308, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 22/23 January 1968 #95.
[1191] Conversation with James Perry, 06 July 1986. SFC Perry was the Medic with the Advisory Team.

pany (CAC) Oscar (radio call sign, MUTTER) and contained its First Platoon, O-1. Platoon O-2, located at the western edge of Khe Sanh village (XD842380) had plans to re-locate southwest of Lang Vei a few hundred meters north of Lang Con (1) and (2), but had abandoned at the direction of Col Lownds who told Stamper, "I can't tell you why."[1192] Stamper also recalls that around the 15th or 18th of January, Stamper was sent an abnormally large quantity of ammunition—small arms, mortars, and frag grenades and the men complained as they attempted to find places to store it. During this time, CAC OSCAR constructed an extensive trench system.[1193] Platoon O-3 was located at the village of Ta Cong just west of the main gate of the combat base. The position was also the location of the small Joint Technical Advisory Detachment (JTAD), which operated an agent net reporting NVA forces in the area. The JTAD had departed the Huong Hoa District site a day or two earlier. "It's almost as though they knew it was coming."[1194]

Capt Thomas Burton Stamper had assumed command of CAC OSCAR on 27 December 1967, replacing 1/Lt Elmore who had been at Khe Sanh only a short time because, although sent to Khe Sanh since it was relatively quiet and he already had two Purple Hearts, soon after he arrived he received his third "Heart" which meant automatic rotation back to the States.

Stamper suggested to one of his Marines that they walk to the small messhall for some coffee. "It was lucky we hadn't left a few seconds before. I just started getting out of the trench by the COC when AK-47 fire began cracking all over the perimeter. We were completely surrounded, 360-degrees." The messhall received a direct hit. The assaulting NVA force commenced fighting in the streets of Khe Sanh village and took over the dispensary, located about a click east of the barricaded headquarters compound.

In the ensuing battle, the District Chief, Capt Nhi, called in mission "BA-911" VT fuse 105s, a ring of steel. Over 1,000 of these variable-timed rounds (set to explode just above ground) showered air bursts of steel over the wire.[1195] The Marines fired over 500 rounds of 81mm mortars, all without increments, which landed and exploded just outside the wires. During this time, Sgt John James Balanco, the senior advisor and squad leader of O-1, courageously moved through the intense fire to each fighting position to redistribute dwindling ammunition, bolster the morale of he Marines and PF soldiers, replace casualties, and reassign sectors of fire.[1196] When a machinegun position was disabled, Cpl Verner Ray Russell immediately moved to the weapon, repaired it, and began to deliver a heavy volume of suppressive fire and continued to do so for 36 hours even after being wounded in his leg and stunned by the concussion of a RPG round.[1197]

At 0811H the NVA assaulting force broke contact and dispersed to the north.[1198] 43 enemy bodies were left laying in the wire with numerous additional bodies outside the wire. The temporary relief from enemy pressure was the result of the devastating VT artillery as well as one single A-6 from Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 533 [VMA(AW)-533] which dropped 28 MK-82 500-pound general purpose bombs causing at least 100 NVA KBA [Killed by air] in this one air-strike.[1199]

About 1100H, Col Lownds dispatched Co D/1/26 to rescue the trapped men in Khe Sanh village. Capt Stamper radioed BLACKBUD DELTA [D/1/26] to use extreme caution since it appeared as though every house in the village was occupied by NVA, but that when they arrived, the CAC Marines would guide them into the perimeter. After awhile, INTRIGUE [26th Marines Regiment] advised Stamper that BLACKBUD DELTA could not pursue their rescue attempt at this time. LtCol James B. Wilkinson had, with Col. Lownds' approval, recalled them.

> "Regiment told me to send a company down into the village. It was Lieutenant [Walt] Chapman because he was the company that was not in the perimeter. He got up on the high ground [of Hill 471] and had a Vietnamese scout with him. They checked out the village and detected heavy VC in the village. At that time I immediately halted him where he was. I said, 'Don't go; don't pursue.' I contacted Colonel Lownds and said, 'Col Lownds, I recommend that we not send Lt. Chapman and his company any further than they are. I feel it's a trap in waiting and I don't feel it would be militarily wise to do that. He agreed, and we brought them back—probably saved the company."[1200]

PFC Sidonio Patricio recalls: "We could see the airstrikes coming down. Then we went over Hill 471 and through one of those little Bru villages there [ville Breh]. We went through there and right up into Khe Sanh. Just before we got [to the District compound] we got the word to get the hell out of there, and I mean we came back

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[1192] Conversations with Tom Stamper, 1969-1970.
[1193] *Ibid.*
[1194] Conversation with Col Bruce B.G. Clarke, 07 October 1988.
[1195] Maj Jerry E. Hudson, letter of 02 Jan 1969 to HQMC Historical Division; in Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file. Maj Hudson was S-2 of 26th Marines Regiment.
[1196] Statement of 1/Lt Thomas E. Stamper in Silver Star Medal file of Sgt John James Balanco.
[1197] Silver Star Medal Citation, Cpl Verner Ray Russell.
[1198] 26Mar 210230Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #326.
[1199] FMFPAC 230411Z/Jan68, SITREP #1029; FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces Vietnam, January 1968*, p. 61.
[1200] Interview of LtCol James B. Wilkinson, 27 May 1988. 1/Lt Walton F. Chapman is the son of the (then) Commandant of the Marine Corps.

fast! Fast! There was a short guy who passed out due to heat exhaustion."[1201]

The Joint Technical Advisory Detachment later reported "..that the attack on the Huong Hoa District Headquarters was conducted by only a battalion. However, three regiments assumed ambush positions around the area.. to keep American reinforcements from reaching the besieged post,"[1202] implementing their common tactic of causing a battle (or a WIA) in order to lure and kill those who would come to the rescue.

Meanwhile, Mr. Robert B. Brewer, the Quang Tri Province Senior Advisor (PSA) and senior CIA man in the area, saw the strategic necessity of preventing the fall of a seat of government. "Colonel Lownds and I had an agreement that the Combat Base would come to the aid of the Khe Sanh District if the District got in trouble."[1203] During a visit to the Huong Hoa District Headquarters on New Year's, 1968, Mr. Brewer said that he would try to reinforce the headquarters, should it be necessary, by way of the coffee plantation just to the south of the headquarters complex. The trees there were only7 to 8 feet tall and could be easily leveled by preliminary airstrikes.[1204] Brewer assembled a "Council of War" and his Deputy Province Senior Advisor, LtCol Joseph Seymoe, volunteered to lead the rescue force[1205] consisting of the 256th RF Company[1206] transported by the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company. At 1710H, this force consisting of 50 PFs in 9 UH-1E helicopters, the BLACK CAT Company,[1207] landed atop a position known as the "Old French Fort" (XD863385, approximately a click east of Khe Sanh village) because, according to Mr. Brewer, LtCol Seymoe, a West Point graduate (same class as the astronaut Col Frank Borman and General Fidel "Eddie" V. Ramos of the Philippines) and former USAF pilot who had been awarded a DFC for his flying exploits in the Korean War, had developed defective hearing and so was transferred to the U.S. Army infantry.[1208] The chopper armada was delayed due to a FAC flying the area that could not be contacted by radio, causing the helicopters to fly and become low on fuel. A USAF FAC, Captain Cooper, flying with the armada radioed to Seymoe to hold off landing, that "..the planned air strike couldn't be pulled off yet." "Apparently Seymoe didn't hear the 'yet,' and decided, directly counter to my orders before he left the ground in Quang Tri City, that he'd put the RF Company on the Old French Fort."[1209]

The pilot in charge from the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company, Major Tommy Stiner, had earlier been celebrating his 30th birthday in a surprise party given by his men in the operations building when the call came for him to fly the mission.[1210]

The NVA 7th Battalion, 66th Regiment, 304th Division, fighting in this Huong Hoa District battle, had lost their commander, Nguyen Van Thieng, in the fighting and nearly all from the battalion were wounded. Most of the Regiment, however, was displaced in various ambush positions. "Just as we had planned when we opened fire attacking Huong Hoa, the enemy sent [a force] to land by air at Ku Boc, the 11th Company, 9th Battalion, was waiting for them there. Because of our diversionary organization and our effective maintenance of secrecy, our troops waited until the enemy had landed before opening fire and eliminating nearly the entire company.. During this engagement, Comrade Tran Dinh Ky, a squad leader, fired a B40 round to knock out a helicopter and 12 of the enemy. After that he led troops in his squad to knock out another helicopter."[1211]

Within days of the incident, Major Stiner testified before a Board of Inquiry:

> "Khe Sanh, the town itself and the MACV compound of Khe Sanh.. reportedly were surrounded by a regiment and had .50 caliber positions on a 360° from at least 4 positions. It was decided that it probably would be impossible to get the troops into Khe Sanh which was their final destination. We were given an alternate landing site, an old fort called the Old French Fort, about 1200 meters due east of the city of Khe Sanh. Mr. McKinsey had been operating in that area all morning. He had flown over this old French Fort for approximately 2 hours at various altitudes. He further had operated up there for the past 11 months. With his knowledge of the area, having already been in there the same day, he volunteered to fly in the lead aircraft with me.. LTC Seymoe wanted to ride on the lead aircraft also since there were no American advisors to go with this unit he wanted to see where they went and coordinate. We loaded without incident, took off [at 1500H], flew directly to Khe Sanh... We circled this old French fort 360 degrees at a mean altitude of approximately 800 to

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[1201] Conversation with Sid Patricio at Khe Sanh reunion, 13 July 1989.
[1202] III MAF COC 251511Z/Jan68, NIAGARA I Report, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 21/22 Jan 1968 #3.
[1203] Conversation with Mr. Robert B. Brewer, 01 November 1987.
[1204] Letter of Mr. Robert B. Brewer, 10 January 1987.
[1205] Brewer letter of 10 January 1987, cited.
[1206] I Corps TOC G2 220504Z/Jan68, #5308, in III MAF COC Journal and File 22/23 Jan 1968 #95.
[1207] *Ibid.*
[1208] Brewer letter of 10 January 1987, cited; Conversation with Mr. Brewer, 25 Jan 1992; Interview of Mr. Brewer by Ronald Drez, 05 May 1988.
[1209] Brewer letter of 10 January 1987, cited.
[1210] Gloria Emerson, "A Major at Khesanh Recalls 1968," New York *Times*, Sunday, 21 February 1971, p. 3. [Stiner participated in Operation LAM SOM 719 from Khe Sanh in early 1971].
[1211] *Su Doan (Ky Su) (Tap II)* [304th Division (Chronology) (Vol. 2), Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, p. 66. Translated by Sedgwick Tourison.

1000 feet. Looked perfectly harmless. We determined to make the landing there, informed the MACV American advisor who was in Khe Sanh [village] itself. He agreed that that's where he wanted them and that there should be no activity there... Just as my skids touched down the NVA stood up all around us... The ARVN troops had begun to off load. We, McKinsey was flying to the ground and still on the controls at this time... I instructed SGT Billy Hill, who was the gunner, SP5 Howington, who was the crew chief that as soon as we picked up over the edge of the ARVN for them to start shooting. I know Sgt Hill was in the aircraft at this time because I looked back. We picked up to approximately 8 feet, 8 to 10 feet of altitude, nosed the aircraft forward to get out of the area, at that time we were hit with what could have been any large caliber weapon, I suspect maybe a 57mm recoilless rifle... Chopper took a hit in the right side approximately where the engine and transmission run up through the fuselage. The blast or hit or subsequent explosion that it caused knocked all the glass out of the helicopter. It appeared to have buckled in the middle with the tail and nose both falling down. Rotor blades stopped. We just had enough forward momentum to pitch on over the hill.. over the embankment.. as much as 30 feet to fall. The aircraft was in flames at this time. It crashed into the ground about maybe 35 to 40 meters north of the perimeter that was occupied by the NVA [and] came to rest inverted. McKinsey and I crawled out through the windshield. At this point Warrant Officer Gerald McKinsey appeared to have sustained no injuries.. He took his carbine and started firing up the hill.. The NVA troops were storming down this position. He took up a firing position, prone position, facing up the hill and commenced delivering fire. I saw the Colonel [Seymoe] lying on his back, pinned under the aircraft, flames had not yet reached him. I ran to the Col's aid and attempted to free him. LTC was still alive at this time or at least he blinked his eyes a couple of times. He didn't make a sound.. I tried to free him by lifting his arms tugging at his belt, free one leg at a time—had no luck. A rescue aircraft, the second aircraft in formation saw that we had crashed, did a 360 and was at the crash site seconds after we had crawled out of the airplane. SP5 Danny Williams hopped out of this aircraft to help us. When he arrived he came straight to me; he and I both tried to free the Col. He got one leg and I got the other leg, [but] we couldn't free him. I had determined by this time that Col Seymoe was dead. His eyes were wide open and rolled back up into his head and there was no apparent breathing. The flames had gotten to his feet at this time. We left him. I crawled to McKinsey and just got maybe 3 feet from McKinsey and started to take up a firing position with him. At that time he was struck in the back of the head by a bullet... He fell over, tumbling slightly down hill... I have no doubt that Gerald McKinsey died instantly at approximately 1745... PVT Jerry Elliott was in the second helicopter that attempted to come in for rescue after the first helicopter had to depart. The helicopter was flown by Warrant Officer Lee.. Elliott jumped out of his aircraft approximately 60 meters from where my aircraft had crashed. He attempted to reach us."[1212]

Warrant Officer Lenny S. Lee (W1) reported:

"PVT Elliott was riding with myself on my ship as gunner. He was sitting on the right hand side of the aircraft in the gunner's slot... Elliott jumped out the right side and the last time I saw him he was going by the rear of the aircraft that was in front of us.. We were receiving so much fire we had to take off. We did just a fast 360 around the hill in hopes that if he had gotten anybody, he had got them and got right back at the spot he knew he would be picked up at. And I called the gun ships and told them that I'd left him in and we would try to get him out and anybody else."[1213]

Warrant Officer Lee testified that Elliott was unarmed, that the helicopter touched down looking for him, and that he saw what he believed to be Elliott's body while aloft at about 100-150 feet, seeing blood on his trousers. He believed it was Elliott because he didn't have on a chest protector but a flak vest, and while Sgt Hill also had a flak vest, it had a huge ugly face drawn on its back with bright ink, so this flak vest wasn't Hill's. He had no doubt whatever that this was Elliott.[1214]

Results of the debacle: From the lead ship: LtCol Seymoe, WO McKinsey were KIA, Sgt Hill was MIA, and Capt Stiner and SP4 Howlington made their way to Khe Sanh Combat Base. SP4 Elliott from the second ship is MIA.[1215] Stiner had made it to CAP O-3 where the Marines opened fire on him, assuming he was the enemy; it took some time to convince them he was American![1216]

Jerry Elliott's sister, Donna, made several trips back to the Khe Sanh area, focused on finding anything she could regarding her missing brother. Finally, in April

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[1212] Statement of Captain Tommy C. Stiner in Board of Inquiry report contained in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #280, Folder #51.

[1213] Statement of W1 Lenny S. Lee in Board of Inquiry report contained in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #257, Folder #232.

[1214] *Ibid.*

[1215] ITOC G-2 (Spec Reavis) 221430H/Jan68, Resume of telephone call, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 22/23 January 1968, #107.

[1216] Gloria Emerson, article in the NY *Times*, cited.

2004, after several days of digging at the old French Fort position, remains were recovered, but Donna, looking on, immediately realized it could not be her brother's remains due to the size of the combat boot.[1217]

POW/MIA—Who Can Say?
By Donna Elliott

In my dreams I can clearly see Jerry's face,
But harsh reality reveals only an empty space.
To Vietnam, Mike, his Army buddy, and I, his sister came,
Searching for something, anything to ease the pain.

The last Elliott alive, I am eternally duty bound,
To question until my big brother is someday found.
My worn body aches, heart and mind so very tired,
Yet questions unanswered still burn like fire!

My Father, my friend, my rock, my guide,
Does he perhaps in Your heavenly house abide?
With Mama, Daddy, and little sister Cindy Ann,
Or does he somehow, somewhere, survive in some foreign land?

No sure answer, no piece of bone have we found,
Walking over the crash site's hallowed ground.
Only half the chopper's blade, a cornerpost in a cowpen,
Surely, Lord, this cannot be the final end!

We and the 55th JTF Team traveled far to find my brother,
All clues end in Khe Sanh, at this time we can go no further.
Now, in the rainy darkness of a Vietnam morning I pray,
Please, Lord; give us all word of Jerry some day.

During Operation PEGASUS, the old French Fort area was searched with the result of finding the body of Gerald L. McKinsey. Identification was based on personal property found on his remains.[1218]

Donna Elliott recalls that her brother "..was born a 'bluebaby,' an old Southern term used in 1948 Mississippi to describe a newborn infant that was born blue from lack of oxygen. The doctor left the delivery room of the tiny rural hospital, giving him up for dead. But his mama and the nurse didn't stop until he came to life and began to breathe on his own. Bill and Mary named their firstborn, Jerry William Elliott; he would be their only son. A miracle boy.. He was proud of his accomplishments, of being a Paratrooper and a Pathfinder... He was a man of action."[1219]

The much smaller platoon-size CAP O-2 on the western edge of Khe Sanh village faced the attack isolated, completely vulnerable.

> "We could not go to the aid of our sister unit nor could she to ours. Both compounds were surrounded and cut off. It was still dark. A RPG slammed into our front observation bunker. LCPL Sergeant and Sgt. Harper were in the top of the tower. Sgt Harper was hit in the face with shrapnel... As the sun began to rise the NVA pulled back. Lt Stamper radioed the base commander requesting air support. In a short while, the jets came in dropping napalm so close we could feel the intense heat as though we were in an oven. Later in the day we had helicopter gunships in our support as well. They were great. The base notified us that a rifle company was on its way to dislodge the enemy.. Later we were told that our relief column was ordered back to the base. A superior size force was waiting for them in ambush near a bridge they must cross. We were told we would have to hold for the night. We were afforded excellent artillery support throughout the evening and the night. To us the prospect of being alive the next morning seemed remote. All of us were determined that if the enemy did overrun our position they would pay a very heavy price for it. Throughout the night no man slept and each time the enemy was spotted, pre-plotted artillery allowed us to call in a ring of steel. At daybreak the next morning [22 Jan] all gunfire stopped. It had been a soul-searching night for us all. Two hours passed and nothing happened... We thought it was all over. Artillery came screaming into both compounds... We called the base to see if they had fired on us by mistake. They had fired none... Round after round landed in and near us smashing bunkers and tearing down nearby trees. It was about noon when we were ordered to make a run for it to the other compound to consolidate our forces. Carrying nothing but our flak gear and weapons we ran down Route 9 in a staggered column and made it to the other unit... The whole village was on fire. Many were wounded. Women were screaming for those they had lost. All was chaos! The entire village was in shambles. A half an hour after joining forces we learned that

[1217] Letter from Donna Elliott, 15 May 2004.
[1218] DD form 896, Field Search Record, date of recovery 8 April 1968, reported by Sgt Jackie Farmer, 625th S&S Co.
[1219] Biography of Jerry W. Elliott, by Donna Elliott, 28 June 2004.

evacuation choppers were on the way in for us... The whole engagement lasted 31 hours."[1220]

Back at Quang Tri, Mr. Robert Brewer informed Gen Truong [Commander, 1st ARVN Division] who was adamantly opposed to vacating the Huong Hoa District seat of government. "I well remember sitting with Gen Truoung in the Quang Tri TOC for more than 30 minutes. Neither of us said anything. Radios chattered in the background. The ball was in Truoung's court. Finally he said, 'All right, try to get them out.'"[1221]

Colonel Lownds had made the tactical decision: "..the terrain within the town of Khe Sanh where the CAP was located was really not defensible terrain since although it was on fairly high ground, it was right in the middle of a village and almost impossible to get any fields of fire. As a matter of fact, within 25 meters or perhaps even closer, there was a Buddhist temple, which made it almost impossible to fight from that position.. After long consideration and proper evaluation of the facts, it appeared that this unit should be withdrawn, and that the seat of the district government be moved within the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. After checking with appropriate echelons, this was done."[1222]

Captains Glenn Wayne Russell, Jr. and Russell Edward Hohman of HMM-362, assigned as the "working birds" at Khe Sanh [a section of two UH-34s] and had been doing emergency re-supply to Hill 861 (which had been so heavily attacked, to deliver munitions as well as the reinforcing platoon from Co A/1/26) and also Hill 881-South when they were diverted to a mission of emergency medevac pickup in Khe Sanh village. Landing in the very small LZ, surrounded by tall trees, and while taking enemy fire, they successfully evacuated 38 WIA in seven trips. Some of the WIA were serious and attended by HM1 Craig, part of the crew while Cpl Funderburk (crew chief) and Cpl Jogodka (gunner) assisted. Following this, they resumed their emergency re-supply missions to 861 and 881-South. They were again diverted by INTRIGUE-14 [26th Marines Regimental Air Officer] to evacuate CAC OSCAR. In their excitement, too many attempted to board the helicopters at once, and all 26 Marines were evacuated. The aircraft flew 8.8 hours, rescued 44 medevacs, 26 CAC Marines, and delivered 19,650 pounds of desperately needed cargo while subject to enemy fire on 14 occasions.[1223]

The third platoon of CAC OSCAR, CAP O-3, located at Ta Cong ville just outside the main gate of the combat base, received the radio call: "MUTTER 3, MUTTER 3, draw back to the FOB camp immediately. Approximately 8 to 9 thousand moving toward your position." "We had 41 men, 11 Americans and the rest P.F.s Then the radio operator said, 'Don't take time to get clean underwear, just get the hell out now!' We dumped 55 gallons of gas on the hootch with a C-4 charge and put C-4 in all the bunkers, took our fighting gear and what we had on our backs, got the villagers away, and blew CAP-2 off the map with all of everyone's gear and everything."[1224]

By 221249H, CAC OSCAR evacuated Khe Sanh village by helicopters[1225] while the District Chief, RF forces, and the 4 soldiers of MACV Detachment 4 walked to Khe Sanh Combat Base (because the 2 small H-34 choppers, the only working birds, could only manage to transport Americans due to their other tactical emergency missions, and the Americans of the Advisory Detachment did not want to abandon their Vietnamese counterparts.

The senior NCO at Lang Vei, Bill Craig, notes: "They let Khe Sanh city go, and that killed us. We [at Lang Vei Special Forces Camp] were now cut off. We had to get everything by air. I even offered to give him one MIKE force company to hang on, because they already kicked the hell out of the NVA. I even had a company on the way. He [Lownds] said, 'No, we're going to let it go.' We was finished."[1226]

[*Thus began the famous "siege battle of Khe Sanh." According to American reckoning, the "siege" part of the battle lasted until 8 April 1968 when Co D, 2-7 Cav, entered the combat base to link-up forces and formalize the "relief." In subsequent multi-battalion operations, American forces scoured the area until they finally abandoned the combat base 12 July to adopt a more mobile posture. According to North Vietnamese reckoning, the entire battle consisted of four phases: Phase I (20 Jan – 7 Feb) with the mission of eliminating Hill 832 [Hill 861], to draw in 2 to 3 American divisions, pin them down and destroy them, destroy the Laotian BV-33 position at Ban Houei Sane and Lang Vay [Vei]; Phase II (10 Feb – 31 Mar) with the mission of encircling Ta Con [Khe Sanh Combat Base]; Phase III (1 Apr – 7 May) with the mission of attacking those relieving the siege; and Phase IV (8 May – 15 July) with the mission of re-encircling Ta Con [Khe Sanh Combat Base] and attacking the withdrawing American forces.*[1227] *The battlefield included 3*

[1220] Letter from 1/Lt John R. Roberts, 27 Dec 1972. Roberts had been the Navy Corpsman at CAP O-2 during this battle.

[1221] Robert Brewer, letter of 10 January 1987.

[1222] Comments of Col. David E. Lownds, USMC Oral History Tape #2621.

[1223] Statements of Maj Walter H. Shauer, Jr. and Capt Russell E. Hohman in Silver Star Medal file of Capt Glenn Wayne Russell, Jr.; Statement of Capt Glenn Wayne Russell in Distinguished Flying Cross file on Capt Russell Edward Hohman; Silver Star Medal Citation of Capt Glenn Wayne Russell, Jr.

[1224] Letter of Cpl Frank Iodice to his parents, 01 February 1968.

[1225] "Khe Sanh Notes," in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc. file, Jan 1968, Encl (156).

[1226] Conversation with William Craig, 04 October 1988. Mr. Craig died 29 April 1999.

[1227] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer

districts of Laos and extended to the Cua Viet. The Khe Sanh portion of the battlefield, designated "B5-T8" was the primary part of the battlefield.[1228] *Reflecting this primary focus, in their secret (classified "Mat") history of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the amount of materiel that had to be provided to B5-T8 was more than twice as much as that provided to Tri Thien [the rest of the I Corps battlefield], two-and-a-half times that provided to Region V [all of I Corps], and 24.5 times that provided to southern South Vietnam [the rest of the country for Tet].*[1229]

They admit the failure of their mission of drawing-in American forces to tie them down and eliminate them. They attribute this because "..we had made note of the enemy's old practices, but had not seen their new method of operations. We continued to believe that: wherever our main forces appeared, the enemy would move in, in response immediately into that area such as during 1965-1966 and early 1967. Therefore, our intention was to avoid large scale attacks conducting only some small attacks on small positions, surrounding them, waiting for reinforcements to come, and then attacking the reinforcing forces. Our intentions were not appropriate to the objective situation at that period of time after the enemy had been defeated.. after we had opened fire in the cities, it became increasingly difficult to draw the enemy out... in order actively draw in enemy reinforcements we had to attack strongly to the point that the enemy sensed a dangerous condition so that if they did not send in reinforcements then those on site would be eliminated. Specifically during the Highway 9-Khe Sanh campaign if we had attacked continuously the positions on the perimeter and after that had encircled and laid siege to the base at Ta Con immediately then certainly the enemy would have sent in reinforcements early."[1230]

Thus, the 26th Marines at Khe Sanh were allowed to fight the battle without reinforcement [other than the arrival of battalion 1/9 on 23 January and the 37th ARVN Ranger battalion]. Confidence placed in them by senior military staffs (to include a memo from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to President Johnson that Khe Sanh could be held) resisted falling into the traps of ambushes that the North Vietnamese Army had set up at Khe Sanh to lure (by attacking Khe Sanh) reinforcements into the area in order that they could be annihilated. The massive reinforcements that had been anticipated did not materialize until early April, by which time Tet was over and the NVA forces in the Khe Sanh area had been rendered combat-ineffective due to massive B-52 strikes.]

22 JANUARY 1968

COTTRELL, LCPL Thomas Lee	B/1/26
JOHNSON, CPL Howard Leon	Hq26Mar
SAXTON, LCPL Gary Lee	Hq26Mar
WICKLIFFE, HM3 Robert Logan	H&S/3/26

During the day, KSCB and its outposts received 50 rounds of 122mm rocket, 5 rounds 120mm mortar, and 27 rounds 82mm mortar, killing 4 Marines and wounding 12 (6 evacuated). CPL Johnson was killed by an incoming round that landed just outside the regimental COC at 1000H.

At 1340H, Hill 881-South received five rounds of 120mm mortar fire killing HM3 Wickliffe, a Naval Reservist from Louisiana, who was killed in the LZ while assisting in the evacuation of a casualty.[1231] **PFC Daniel G. Allen (H&S/3/26) recalls that Doc Wickliffe had lanced a boil on his back "because we couldn't bathe or we couldn't clean ourselves because we didn't have any water up on the hill.. I asked him where he was from, and of course he heard my accent. He told me he's from Louisiana. I couldn't believe it!"**[1232]

Cpl Walter B. Nickerson recalls the circumstances of LCPL Gary Lee Saxton's death. He, LCPL Saxton, and LCPL Murphy, has been on Hill 881-South prior to the siege. On 20 January, when INDIA Company patrolled to Hill 881-North, Captain Dabney asked Nickerson if he could provide his team members not actually on radio watch to help man the perimeter. The 106mm recoilless rifle crew, located just below his bunker, was moving to the north side of the hill to provide direct fire support. "Gary [Saxton] and I spent the day humping and loading ammo for the 106 crews.. Gary and I were making our way over the hill past the LZ to help the 106 guys move their guns back to the south side. A CH-34 was coming into the LZ and I told Gary 'Why don't you go up there and give them a hand and I'll meet you at the gun.' For the past 33 years, I've asked myself why I did that. Why did I send him? Why didn't I go too? You know the drill. Anyway the LZ took two, just two, 120mm mortar

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Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign], Hanoi: General Directorate for Rear Services, 1988, pp. 267-268 [This document is classified "Mat," or "Secret" and restricted "for distribution within the army"], translated by Sedgwick Tourison; *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He, 1968* [The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign], Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, 1987, pp. 25, 30, 325, and 45, translated by Sedgwick Tourison.

[1228] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9*, cited., pp. 14 and 20.

[1229] *Van Tai Quan Su Chien Luoc Tren Duong Ho Chi Minh Trong Khang Chien Chong My* [Strategic Military Transport on the Ho Chi Minh Trail During the War Against the United States], Hanoi: General Directorate for Rear Services, 1988, p. 77 footnote (1). [This document is classified "Mat," or secret. Translation by Sedgwick Tourison.

[1230] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968*, cited., pp. 65-66. Translations by Sedgwick Tourison.

[1231] 26Mar 221235Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #331; Maj Walter L. Whitesides letter of May, 1989. Originally 4 KIA were reported [3rd MarDiv COC 221720H/Jan68, Resume of Telephone Call to III MAF COC in III MAF COC Journal and File #199].

[1232] Conversation with Daniel G. Allen, 25 October 1990.

rounds blowing the CH-34 off the hill and killing and wounding many Marines. I ran to the top of the hill and bodies were everywhere. While looking for Gary I did what I could for one seriously wounded guy who had his jaw blown off. About this time one of the LTs was yelling for someone to get some smoke grenades as we had a CH-46 coming in and had to mark an alternate LZ. We had some in our bunker so I was running there, jumped a trench just above our generator pit and there was Gary. LCPL Murphy, another one of my team members was holding him. He looked like he was just unconscious but Murphy told me he thought he was dead. I told Murph to take care of him and headed for the bunker and got the smoke grenades. We picked a spot between the trench and the wire on the south side of the hill to mark the spot and brought the CH-46 in there. The bird would not land as the hill was too steep there so I stayed in front where the pilots could see me and guided them in and held them there until they loaded everyone on board. I kept watching for Murph Whalen to bring Gary down but they didn't. Gary was in fact already dead. When we looked him over all we could find was a hole about the size of your little finger right in the center of his chest, almost no blood. He always wore his flak jacket unzipped, as a lot of us did."[1233]

CPL Johnson was killed when an artillery round landed just outside the Tech Shop of the regimental Comm Section. Sgt David A. Gidlof recalls: "The communications area was right in the center of the base, right around the COC, and on the second day of the attack we were working in our Tech Shop. We had a lot of gear to get up [that] was destroyed during the attack the day before. We were trying to get this all fixed up, get the new circuits that we had to get up, and there was an artillery round landed right outside the Tech Shop and killed two people inside the Tech Shop."[1234]

LCPL Michael J. Archer (of the 26th Marines Comm Section) had been with CAC OSCAR in the District complex when it came under siege. Just before he returned to the combat base, the rocket had killed CPL Johnson and he learned that the previous night the Marines in the comm. section had played a poker game in the old bunker, a game that lasted well into the evening. Johnson got a full house of aces and eights and LCPL Morley R. Sweet, IV, (of the Message Center of Regiment) kibitzed him to fold because it was "The Dead Man's Hand," the same hand Wild Bill Hickock allegedly held when he was murdered. Johnson, gazing at the rather sizeable pot of $2.00, chose to ignore his buddy's advice, and the next day he was killed. "There was not a Marine in that company.. who would doubt that playing that poker hand had as much to do with his death as the rocket."[1235]

[From Diary of Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe for this date: The regiment is located in the area of the combat base that Chaplain Walt Driscoll, the Roman Catholic Chaplain here, calls 'the downtown.' It is really our own 'Street Without Joy.' Actually it is a street with a deep, ominous and foreboding fear that pervades the place and which one immediately feels upon entering the area. It is the center of focus of enemy rounds. The enemy FOs on the ridge overlooking the combat base evidently direct strikes in an attempt to knock out the nerve center for the entire area. It is not a good place to be. Just a few feet north is the recon area. The row of plywood hardbacks in the recon area is completely demolished, including the base PX and Post Office. One of the men along the lines asked me whether the PX were open. 'Why yes,' I exclaimed with a smile, 'It's completely open!' This 'downtown' is ominously devoid of all people, except for an occasional man nervously running from one place to another. Flechettes scatter the ground. The men in the S-1/S-4 regiment bunker are digging in the dirt deck within their bunker in order to build a bunker within a bunker. Everything proclaims a past that foretells the future.]

[Also on 22 January: Co E/2/26 (radio call-sign HASTY FOOT ECHO) moved by foot and occupied Hill 861-Alfa after traveling all day from a patrol north of Hill 558, and without any prior prep; positions at 861-A were unprepared. In a FLASH priority message, CG, III MAF stated: "Situation Khe Sanh requires immediate rein[forcement] by one battalion. I desire to deploy 1/9 from Camp Evans to Khe Sanh."[1236] At about 1700H, 22 January 1968, battalion 1/9 (Radio call-sign: GARDEN VALLEY) arrived on KSCB with Co "C" and the rear command group arriving 1500H, 23 January. Eventually the battalion occupied a position southwest of the combat base, near the tiny drop zone and near FOB-3's perimeter, a position which had been the quarry from which basalt rock was obtained to refurbish the airstrip. Counter-mortar radar arrives.

Basically the total Vietnamese population in the area was evacuated from Khe Sanh Combat Base on aircraft which brought in munitions to re-stock the dangerously low supplies on hand expended in boxing in recon team NURSE, providing artillery support for Hill 861 and Khe Sanh village, and destroyed in the explosion of the main ammo dump. Rather than return empty, the planes were

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[1233] Walter B. Nickerson, letter of 23 June 2002 to Patrick Wayne [contained in letter of Patrick Wayne of 29 June 2002; Conversation with Michael Brophy, 16 August 1999, also mentions these circumstances of Gary Saxton.

[1234] Comments of Sgt David A. Gidlof, 19 April 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2477. Reference to "two people" may relate to another WIA that was so serious that Gidlof assumed he'd died.

[1235] Michael Archer, *Murmurs*, an unpublished manuscript, 2000, p. 144.

[1236] CG III MAF 220400Z/Jan68, Employment ARG/SLF ALPHA and BRAVO, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs, Etc. file, Jan 1968, Encl (61).

loaded with the Vietnamese. By mid-afternoon on 23 January, 1,156 refugees had been evacuated from Khe Sanh to refugee centers at DaNang and Phu Bai.[1237] *The I Corps Commander, General Xuan Lam, expressly prohibited evacuation of Bru Montagnards.*[1238] *He supposedly declared that there was no place in Vietnam for Montagnards. Neither did the NVA permit their departure. In early February, 2,000 to 3,000 attempted to migrate by foot to Ca Lu and were intercepted by the NVA at XD852399 and turned back.*[1239] *The total civilian population of the area was 10,195 civilians according to a census of 31 Dec 1967.*[1240] *The Bronze Star Medal Citation for Captain Henry Lebaron Preston (S-5, Civil Affairs, of 26th Marines) indicates a population of Huong Hoa District of 21,500 people. Since only about 7,000 made it to the refugee center at Mai Loc, south of Cam Lo, following the siege battle (by October, 1968)*[1241] *and since many of the Bru that made it to the refugee center were those who had not resettled in the strategic hamlets near KSCB in 1962 but had opted to remain in distant hills, it may safely be conjectured that at least 5,000 Bru perished during the first three months of 1968 at Khe Sanh during the battle. "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof...The earth shall be utterly emptied, and clean despoiled." (Isa 24.1, 3).*]

24 JANUARY 1968

CASTILLO, CPL George Ralph	**L/3/26**
GOODMAN, PFC Kenneth Virgil	**K/3/26**
KENT, CPL Daniel Wilder	**B/3rd Tk**
MILLER, HN Charles Wayne	**B/3rd Recon**
PENNETTI, LCPL Francis	**K/3/26**
POPOWITZ, LCPL Gregory Francis	**B/3rd Recon**
ROSA, LCPL Juan Antonio	**B/3rd Recon**
SCRIBNER, LCPL Gary David	**B/3rd Recon**

Today, a C-123 Loadmaster landed on Khe Sanh Combat Base with pallets of 155mm artillery ammunition, "..and then .. four large wooden crates addressed to 'Fifth Graves Registration Team, Khesanh.' The crates contained 4,000 pounds of 'body bags'—rubberized, zipped sacks for transporting the dead."[1242]

At 1324H, Co. K/3/26 on Hill 861 received 2 rounds of 82mm mortar from XD 801446.[1243] **The official SITREP, however, records no KIA from this, the only reported incoming for the hill on this date. Cpl Cecil R. Young recalls the death of LCPL Pennetti: "He was a rocket team leader, under my squad at the time he died. His whole team got it. In fact, Pennetti's brains was on the back of the bunker. There was all four of them there in a group, and I come up and down through there several times, and I kept telling Pennetti to break it up, a RPG was going to come in. 'You know, Pennetti, the RPG's going to come in and kill every damn one of you.' I took one step. The trench turned, and when I turned, the RPG got them."**[1244]

According to (then PFC) Boysie Price (H&S/3/26, CPL George Castillo's eyes were blood red when he was awakened by Price on the morning of 24 January. Castillo had set a case of hand grenades five to six inches from his back and was leaning back towards the case of grenades when a rocket hit the foxhole and detonated the grenades, killing Castillo, wounding LCPL John N. Prather, and throwing Price against the trench call, knocking him out.[1245] **Price recalls that Castillo related how he pleaded with his father, then a Master Sergeant in the US Air Force saying, "Dad, you could have done something else for a living," "meaning his father forced him into military service, or that he was walking in his father's footsteps."**[1246]

Between 1730H and 1800H, Khe Sanh Combat Base received approximately 150 rounds of 100mm or larger artillery.[1247] **One of these rounds struck a bunker in the BRAVO Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Bn, area containing 22 men, killing four. "I remember pulling a fellow by**

[1237] FMFPAC 280335Z/Jan68, SITREP #1034.

[1238] 26Mar 191316Z/Feb68, Disposition of Displaced Personnel, in 26th Marines ComdC Feb68.

[1239] *Ibid.*

[1240] COMUSMACV 230615Z/Jan68, Special TELECON, in III MAF COC Journal and File 23/24 Jan 1968 #144. The boundaries of the census: XD760440, XD850440, XD850420, XD865420, XD867360, and XD760360. The vast majority of people were clustered within 6 KM of Khe Sanh, southwest along Route 9 to the vicinity of Lang Vei (2) (XD794365) and northwest along unnumbered road to vicinity Xom Con (XD836417) and the immediate area surrounding Khe Sanh.

[1241] Letter from John and Carolyn Miller, 9 Oct 1969. The Millers lived with the Bru as Wycliffe Bible Translators; Letter from Daniel Kelley, 8 Feb 1970. Cpl Kelley (along with SFC James Perry, Medic of the MACV Det 4) and a civilian, Bob Handy, remained within the refugee center for many months.

[1242] Charles Mohr, "5,000 Men Massed at Khe Sanh by U.S.," New York *Times*, Jan 24, 1968, pp. 1, 3; also noted in "Waiting at Khe Sanh," The *National Observer*, Feb 26, 1968, p. 4.

[1243] 3rd MarDiv COC 241932Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #339.

[1244] Conversation with Cecil R. Young. Young was a Cpl at the time. This incident probably includes Goodman.

[1245] Letter from Boysie Price, 30 November 1996.

[1246] Letter from Boysie Price, 19 December 1996.

[1247] 3rd MarDiv COC 241815H/Jan68 to III MAF COC, Resume of Telephone Call, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 23/24 Jan 1968, #239; 3rd MarDiv COC 241932Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #339 reports "heavy artillery attack" against KSCB and Hills 881S and 861; III MAF COC 250845Z/Jan68 to MACV COC, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #340 reports "KSCB, Hill 881S and Hill 861 received heavy 100mm guns, 122mm rockets, 82mm mortars and possible 152mm gun howitzers."

the name of Painter out. He was covered with blood from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet, and he was in bad shape. But poor Scribner, of them, well, Doc Miller was in bad shape also. But Scribner looked like the rocket went off right in his lap. There was nothing left of him below the knee, nothing left of him above the shoulder, and the entire front of his body was gone. He was married to an airline stewardess."[1248] When PFC Robert C. Painter threw up his arms as he was being pulled out, Sergeant Delbert G. Weidler, the Company Gunny, was startled and jumped back. "You're alive!"[1249] "Gunny was the one who pulled my ass out of the bunker. He was the very first face I saw, and I scarred him. I looked up and he was the first face I saw. He's looking down at me, and I went, 'Gunny!' And I reached for him, and it startled him. He thought I was a dead man."[1250] Painter's back was peppered with innumerable, black spots where small pieces of shrapnel burned into it, along with his legs.

Robert C. Painter recalls the sequence of events beginning with recon team DOCKLEAF out on patrol as KSCB was hit.

> "We were trying to get water for ourselves because they wanted us left out there. We were spotting artillery. We got the word on the 20th [of January], 'We need you guys to stay.' At that point we had already been four days without food and two days without water. And then they extended us to the 20th and then the 23rd we were hallucinating for lack of water. We crawled on our hands and knees everywhere we went. We didn't dare stand up in the daylight. When the sun went down, we were standing up and trying to spot gun flashes and rocket flashes and trying to direct. We had two different fire missions going on at once.
>
> "[Eventually] they just sent the choppers out because they said we were hallucinating. We seen the bad guys everywhere. I was second point, because I was the grenadier. Rick Noyes was point. And they pulled us in on the 23rd and we spent the night down in that big Air Force bunker where the dentists were. We spent the night down there, and they kept hydrating us. They were feeding us water loaded with electrolytes and they sent us back on light duty. Gunny says, 'There ain't no damn light duty! You gotta dig holes!' So the morning of the 24th we were digging holes and eating C-rats. It was real strange day. All day long we were digging, and then they started hammering at us. And we're diving into different bunkers along the runway there. That whole day I just had this feeling, 'Man, I'm going to get it!'
>
> "And they went, 'Painter, how come you ain't jumping? [at the incoming] And I go, 'I don't know, I guess I'm just used to it by now.' I mean, there ain't nothing you can do about it. All we can do is just lay here in the hole and wait!
>
> "It was towards the end of the day. We secured from work detail, and I was walking back with a bunch of stuff, and they started right in on us again. I'm caught out in the open! And everywhere I turn, something's going off—over there, something's going off over here. And Scribner yells, 'Hey Painter! Get your ass over here! And I ran over and got past Scribner, and I went—three, four more guys into the bunker. Now Scribner was at the far end, close to the runway. And I went down a little bit. And I said, 'Wait a second. I got something here for us.' Aha! And I had my little stash up there. And we fired one up. We were laughing and giggling. And the stuff was hitting around us, and we're going: Whew! That was close! [*pause*] And [*pause*] we heard a loud THUMP! And zzzzt! [*pause*]. That was a delayed fuse in that. It came in the door, hit the deck, went zzzzzt! At that same time Scribner goes, Shit! [*very loud*]. And then it was like a fly—you know how that fly feels or that mosquito that you slap between your hands? Everything went *black*. It just went black. And I—heard it go off. I actually heard the blast! So for me, the one that got me, I heard it; I heard it go off. Knocked my ass right out—knocked me cold with the concussion. Then some time passed. I have no idea, and I had a conscious thought: So this is what it's like to be dead? It's not so bad. And then, slowly, sounds started coming to my ears—screaming. And I realized it was me doing the screaming. I was screaming real loud. And I stopped, and said to myself, I'm screaming! I'm alive! And at that point, then I actually stopped. I was pushed down, the roofing, sandbags, just sandwiched me down. I was ninety degrees to the blast, and I was facing the blast when it went off. And it turned, it spun me.
>
> "Some of the guys started settling down. I could hear someone coughing, 'I can't breathe! I can't breathe!' Later on I found out it was Ken Martin. He was alone, full of cordite, on the far end. His ears were gone. My ears were bleeding, too. I think I was bleeding from my eyes, my ears. Then somebody said, 'They're coming to get us; they're going to get us out of here.
>
> "They evacuated me the next morning. I spent the night in Charlie Med. I don't know whose care I was under, but I remember waking up during the night—O, the pain! In my back and my neck! Just constantly ached—for months after that...
>
> "As they were pulling me out, they go, 'Damn, Painter!' And I go, 'All these months in the bush.

[1248] Conversation with Kevin Macaulay, 22 August 1984.
[1249] Conversations with Robert C. Painter, 01 February 1992 and 20 April 1993.
[1250] Conversation with Robert C. Painter, 26 August 1990.

43 days left to do in country, and they had to bang my ass in the hole!'...

"Scribner was one of my best friends. I didn't have a whole lot of real, close friends."[1251]

The Recon company Top recalls: "As soon as that rocket hit there we rushed over there and started pulling them out. There was one of the men had his scalp—was all down, hanging over his face. He really looked bad. He was still alive. So we got him in a stretcher and I helped with another man, took him over to the aid station, and I didn't see him any more. Months later, Corporal Corsetti—we got to talking about that and he started talking about one of his friends that was hit pretty bad. It was this same man... Doc Miller: he had been hit before. He had been out on patrol and they got pinned down. They called in close air support, and he got hit by one of our own planes, strafing the area close to them, in December [1967],[1252]

Kevin Macaulay recalls:

"When Rosa and Popowitz and Miller and Scribner were killed, I went over and I started working on the bunker after it was hit; we were going to destroy the bunker because nobody wanted to stay in it. And I think we found Popowitz' body and part of his boot and part of his foot was still inside. And we found Scribner's helmet with part of his head still inside. And I started to shake, and he [1/Lt Carl J. Schlack, the XO of the recon company] grabbed me by the stock and swivel and pulled me over and said, 'I don't want you to go near there again, you can't handle it.' I said, 'Pappy, I can handle it; I've got to handle it. If I don't handle it I won't be able to handle anything.' And he respected me and said, 'All right, Just go over and sit by the side. There's no reason why you have to wade about through the gore of battle.' He said, 'You just sit there for awhile and reflect on these four men and think about these four men.' And he snapped me out of it...

"Miller—he had been wounded out on patrol two weeks before Christmas or a week before Christmas in '67, and he went down, I guess, to DaNang, and they operated on him there. He wasn't that seriously wounded; he took a round through the scrotum—and he came back about a week before we were hit in January..

"We had so little over there, but the little that we had we shared with everybody. We were rough son-of-bitches; I remember that. A fellow would show us a picture of his wife and we'd look at it and say, 'Boy, is she a dog, how did you ever marry such a beast?'... We would joke back and forth, but the joking meant so much to us. It would take the edge off. Sitting in the bunkers, listening to the rounds impact—maybe three, four, maybe five minutes before a bunker took a direct hit we had four guys killed and—we were terrified, but the way we showed our terror: we would joke back and forth: 'O listen to that one, that sounded pretty! Listen to that one coming in!' And then somebody would say that a bunker got hit. And we'd run over, and all the joking would stop, and we'd rip the bunker that had taken us five days to build in 30 seconds to get out the guys who were inside...

"We shared, and I live better because we shared."[1253]

Gary Scribner "..was the type of guy that could lighten things up and make you laugh."[1254] Richard Noyes recalls: "..the second time I went out on patrol, I still had stateside boots, and they were terrible. I mean they got wet and they stayed wet and they were very uncomfortable. And a guy that I had known from the States was there; his name was Scribner. He gave me a pair of boots that he had, that were like brand-new, jungle boots. And I became more aware of the fact that you had to rely on your friends than the Marine Corps or the 'system.' The supply system didn't work, but your friends took care of friends."[1255] Gary was ten when his father died when a building fell on him. Gary liked sports and history and told his mother that he planned to go to college. As he held his infant nephew, he said, "Mom, the only thing I want out of life is to come home, go to school, have a family, and hold a little baby like this."[1256]

"One of the guys trying to dig the wounded Marines out of the bunker said later that all they found of Scribner was his helmet with part of his skull still inside."[1257]

"There were six dead bodies [in Graves Registration], four from the collapsed bunker at recon last afternoon. I went from body bag to body bag, looking at the tags, praying. The second tag—I didn't believe it—Popowitz! I had just talked with him yesterday. I was with a group and asked, 'Where's Popowitz?' 'Here,' he said; he was standing right in front of me! I examined his head after partly unzipping the bag—a small hole in his cheek, about ½-inch diameter. I wept. I had baptized him the morning of 23 December 1967 after his recon team, Dockleaf, had been shot out four times and his face was all camouflaged. Now I baptized him with my tears. I

[1251] Conversation with Robert C. Painter, 02 July 1993 at Khe Sanh reunion.

[1252] Conversation with James Walsh, 23 September 1989.

[1253] Comments of Kevin Macaulay, 22 August 1984, at the occasion of the New York ticker tape parade for Vietnam veterans and the first time Khe Sanh Veterans came together as a group.

[1254] Conversation with Kevin Macaulay, 26 December 1993.

[1255] Conversation with Richard Noyes, 20 November 1989.

[1256] Conversation with Mrs. Audra Scribner, 11 December 1993.

[1257] Letter from Steven A. Johnson, April, 1998, p. 15.

still had a few left. He was only 18, born 30 January 1949."[1258]

Kevin Macaulay and Gregory Popowitz raced for cover as the rockets hit. "Greg was in front of me and ran to one bunker that was just about filled with Marines. He directed me to another bunker about 20 feet away. As I ran to it, a rocket went through the door of the bunker Greg had just entered. He, Gary Scribner, Juan Rosa, and Doc Miller were killed instantly."[1259]

CPL Rick Noyes, also in the struck bunker, recalls: "We had all Ijust sat down to eat our daily C-rations and we started receiving incoming mortars in the Recon area. They landed one right after the other and just kept coming closer to us. Since they were so close and coming so fast, about 20 of us dove into a bunker. This bunker is the one I usually slept in and had a hole at each end to crawl into then about a 30-foot trench covered in sandbags. We were packed in really tight as the incoming mortars kept some of the guys, including Greg, from going to his usual bunker. Greg was sitting right nexdt to one of the holes at one end of this bunker and a rocket came right in the hole. The explosion instantly killed Greg and three other guys and wounded all the rest of us. Everyone was torn up from shrapnel and the concussion caused us to bleed out of our ears and noses. The other guys from B Company came over immediately and dug us out, one at a time, but there was no hope for Greg and the other 3 guys as the explosion was something you just couldn't imagine."[1260]

"Last night Velardi, Noyes, and others came to my bunker at C Med, for safety to wait in case we had another barrage of incoming. Five recon Marines in all. Then an Air Force LtCol who had minor shrapnel in his lower buttocks hobbled into my bunker. He removed his flak jacket and we all immediately noticed a tiny piece of shrapnel just below the neck, in the middle, where his spine was. Then a postal clerk came, shell-shocked. These seven, in addition to Dr. King who had just moved in, the corpsman who has been staying with me the last several nights ("Goober" Heath) and myself. It is now 2125H as I write this in my diary. No one talks; everyone just sits, silent. Five of these men are sitting side by side on my metal frame rack in my bunker. I'm curled on top of my field desk, which will be my bed for the night. Rick Noyes dabs his head every now and then with a roll of toilet paper, causing a pile of crumbled white paper died red in blood to accumulate on the deck."[1261]

Noyes, who wrote on his helmet, "God walks with me,"[1262] had always gone in the bunker at one particular end and looked out. "But there was so much coming in. It was coming in so fast, I didn't have time to go down the far end. I just jumped down by the nearest hole. And gosh, we'd only been sitting in there maybe a few minutes, and a rocket came right in the opening where I had usually sat. It just came right in. I mean, it should have killed—that's where I should have been. That's where I'd always been before. The worse thing I remember—I remember sitting there and the guys were screaming, and I'm covered with meat! It was just like somebody had thrown hamburger on you, and it was pieces of these guys! And I went to your place. You said I kept dabbing my head; it was pieces of these people. Somebody came in and got us out and Ulysses Murray—he was with me and Lieutenant Yeary and Rich Healy got killed. They couldn't get him out of the bunker. He wouldn't come out. They came and said, 'We can't get Murray out of the bunker, would you talk to him?' So I had to go back in there and he was just sitting there in a little ball, holding on to his knees. All I could see was pieces of people. It was a nightmare down in there. It was just like a solid wall where it had caved in. Everything had collapsed, and there was just pieces of people everywhere. It was just unbelievable!"[1263]

> "Dear Ray: Here is my diary recollection of the day the bunker was hit (1/24/68)... The innocence of my youth died as quickly as did Scribner, Popowitz, Rosa and Doc Miller... The bunker's destruction marked the beginning of the deaths in Bravo Recon on the base. Those deaths took the heart out of us. We pulled ourselves into a shell that some of us still haven't broken out of... I am now Kevin Macaulay but parts of me are Gary Scribner, Greg Popowitz, Doc Miller, Junior Reather. In my accomplishments, I accomplish things for them. They look over my shoulder as I experience joy and happiness, and pain and sorrow."[1264]
>
> [*Appended copy of his diary entry for 24 January 1968*:]
>
> ...
>
> "Conversation: Incoming, incoming, incoming...
>
> "Thoughts: Move, asshole, you've gotta move, don't freeze up now. Those bastards are too close. They're landing in the company area. Where is the bunker? There's one over there, get in, Scrib. Shit, now that one's full. The shrapnel is all over.

[1258] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry, Thursday, 25 January 1968.

[1259] Email from Keven C. Macaulay, Nov., 2006, in letter from Linda Mason, 21 Nov 2006.

[1260] Email from Rick Noyes, Nov., 2006, in letter from Linda Mason, 21 November 2006.

[1261] *Ibid.* The blood on his scalp was not his own, but his buddies.

[1262] John T. Wheeler, "Life in V Ring a Weary Round of Shelling, Lulls," AP article, 12 Feb 1968 (Printed in Braestrup, Peter, *Big Story*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977, Vol. 2, p. 144.

[1263] Conversation with Richard Noyes, 20 November 1989.

[1264] Letter from Kevin Macaulay, 5 October 1989

Where's the next bunker? Please God, not me, not me. Where's the bunker?

"Conversation: Over here, Mac, over here, get in here, buddy...

"Thoughts: Dive, you silly bastard, you're not going to make it. Shit, that stuff burns, goddam shrapnel is still hot. God, thank you for...

"Conversation: CORPSMAN, CORPSMAN, SOMEBODY GET A @UCKING CORPSMAN!!! MAC, GO TELL THE SKIPPER A BUNKER'S BEEN HIT. GUYS #UCKED UP BAD; BUNKER'S COLLAPSED.

"Thoughts: I knew those rockets were hitting in the company area. I hope Junior wasn't in that bunker.

"Conversation: Skipper, a bunker's been hit. I don't know how many guys were hit, but Sgt. Herb said some of the guys are &ucked up bad. I'll send a runner over to COC as soon as I find out.

"Thoughts: O, sweet Jesus, where the @uck is his head...and his legs...and his arms? Who is it? Scribner? How can you tell? The rocket must have gone off in his lap. There's nothing left of him. God, what a horrible smell—burnt flesh.

"Conversation: Rip the top of this bunker, this end is collapsed. O shit, here's another one.

"Thoughts: It's Doc Miller and he's blown in half—poor little guy, he don't even belong here. Another one, it's Popowitz. Not him too...Who's that over there? Rosa? Shit, man, there's so much blood.

"Conversation: Hey, watch where you're throwing that stuff, this @ucking boot still has got a foot in it. Who do we put it with, Scribner or Rosa? Maybe it belongs to Popowitz. How the @uck should I know? Here's Scribner's helmet. Part of his head and his brains are still in it. I've got them all over me.

"Thoughts: I think I'm going to be sick. Help me hold it in, there's still people trapped in there. Be sick later on.... Take it easy, Painter, the Docs'll help you....

"Conversation: Give me a hand with this body bag, Little Rich [Cpl Lawrence D. Richards], we've got to get these bodies over to Graves. Come on, Rich, it's the last thing that we can do for our friends. Lift him gently now.

"Thoughts: God, what a place to work, Graves. How in the world do these guys keep their sanity. Must be fifteen twenty bodies in here.. Let me get out of this place.....

"Thoughts:... Sweet Jesus, I've got Scribner's brains under my fingernails...

"Conversation: Hey, Big Rich [Cpl Scott W. Richardson], sit down and take a load off. What's the report on the wounded? How's Painter?.... I almost jumped into that bunker myself but it was full. I pushed a guy in and ran to the next one. Oh my God, the guy that I pushed in was Scribner. What if he was heading someplace else? I was diving for the bunker when I bumped into Scrib. He was trying to get Doc Miller moving. Little guy was frozen in his tracks. Rich, why them and not me? It don't make no sense...

"Thoughts: Shit, four guys dead and eighteen wounded.... Sure wish I could be back in Niagara now. I'd be the best student the place had ever seen. I'd look forward to mandatory study. Be nice to be able to read a book again. After study, I'd go over to the Student Center for a soda and a hamburger. Just sit there and watch all the girls heading off to classes or coming in to have lunch. I'd get into a conversation about this place and what the hell we are doing here. Pretty soon I'd notice everyone staring at my hands and my face, what with all the blood that is all over me. Yeah, mostly at my hands because I've got Scribner's brains under my fingernails. God, am I ever going to be able to get clean? How much washing will it take to wash the blood and body parts off? How am I going to clean the blood and gore out of my mind?.... Up until this past week, I thought that I would live forever. I was Mac Marine, the terror from Recon, the best radio man in the battalion, shit, in the whole Marine Corps. I was invincible. Now I'm not so sure.... I feel so old. I don't know whether or not I'm going to get much older.. Scribner, Popowitz, Rosa and Doc Miller. All their hopes and dreams, gone in a split second. What time is it now? Almost 2200. I'm exhausted—just wish I had someplace to go to get all of this blood off me. Man shouldn't have to sleep covered with his friends' blood. Gotta get some sleep, gotta rest, how knows what the hell tomorrow will bring. Jesus, let me sleep!"[1265]

The mother of Gregory Popowitz was particularly devastated: she had lost her husband in World War II, and, when she had become incapable of raising her sons, still mourning the loss of her husband, Gregory, at the age of 16, decided to enlist in the Marine Corps to escape a chaotic household. Legal guardianship had been turned over to Gregory's grandmother due to the home situation. Gregory's mother protested: "No way! That's how your father got killed," and so on. His grandmother signed the papers for a minor to enlist, and his mother "went out of her mind." When his remains arrived, she refused to permit the casket to be opened, and the grandmother "insisted to her last breath, that Greg made it out of the war, deserted, was safe, but couldn't contact our family for fear of prosecution. I never bought that, but there was always that lingering doubt handing around our

[1265] Kevin Macaulay, Diary entry for 24 January 1968.

family. Since nobody did see his remains, she said, 'It's probably a box full of sandbags.' Now, with the emails those in his unit have been sending me, we don't have to wonder any more."[1266]

[*Portending an ominous situation in store for Lang Vei (and Khe Sanh generally), at 0700H, 24 January 1968, the 1st Battalion, 24th Regiment, 304th Division, augmented by one company of amphibious tanks (8 PT-76s) attacked and overran the 33rd Royal Laotian Elephant Battalion (FAR BV-33) at the abandoned airstrip of Ban Houei Sane (XD625379).*[1267] *According to the NVA history (which refers to the position as "Houei San"), the 33rd BV consisted of 6 infantry companies and a number of civilian defense platoons, totaling 730 with defenses organized at 13 large and small locations and the command headquarters at Ta May. "The enemy had organized this defensive position in order to tie-off Highway 9 and block our transportation on it. In order to carry out the next mission of the campaign we had to wipe out the enemy here and open a road so that the engineers and technical support units could move in and prepare and attack Lang Vay and Khe Sanh."*[1268] *BV-33 (known as "Elephant") had occupied its position for over seven years with no serious effort to dislodge it.*[1269] *It "..had controlled the Ban Houei Sane area and blocked the use of Route 9 to the Communists since mid-1961."*[1270]

A USAF FAC reported 5 NVA tanks at XD653374,[1271] *as well as possible MIG aircraft 10-15 miles west of Khe Sanh.*[1272]

The refugee situation at Lang Vei now became a matter of serious concern. The 519 military and 2270 Lao civilians of BV33 crowded into the Lang Vei area swelling the total civilian refugee population there to 6,000. Approximately one out of four refugees were children. The refugees reported that they were warned by the enemy force to evacuate the area or be killed, that the VC would annihilate Camp Lang Vei. An unreported source stated a Three Star General flag was flying outside the Khe Sanh District Headquarters.[1273]]

25 JANUARY 1968

FEIT, HN Cristian Franz III	**H&S/3/26**
HEIFNER, PFC Edward William	**F/2/26**

Company F/2/26, "HASTY FOOT FOXTROT," departed on 24 Jan 1968 on a company-minus patrol to an area known as Hill 516, approximately 1800 meters northwest of Hill 558 (the 2/26 Bn position) with the mission: to determine whether or not there were any enemy forces located in the high ground at XD804458 and XD799460.[1274] The battalion S-2, 1/Lt Edwin R. Matthews, suspected that is was from this position that 2/26 had been mortared the morning of 23 January. Furthermore, the area had possible military significance as a perfect assembly area and attack position for an assault on Hill 861 and possibly 881-South; it could protect rocket positions behind it in the vicinity of Hill 516 and west to Hill 881-North; both the 2/26 CP and Hill 861 were within 60mm and 81/82mm mortar range of this position; and KSCB was within rocket range of this position.[1275] Co F was briefed that if contact were made with enemy units, they were to fall back and employ supporting arms to destroy the enemy position prior to continued movement against the objective.

"Our platoon [F-3] in which I was the machinegun squad leader, was given Hill 516 as our objective. We left our perimeter during the morning. We ran into sniper fire... I took over the point. After rounding the bend, I saw the back of a Marine and was relieved to make contact again. About half-way up the hill we were hit with small arms fire from several bunkers. The point man was hit.. and was down in front. The point fire team got on line and called for the gun (M-60). My first gun team was ready except for the gunner; he was in shock and could not move. I ran down to get the gun. Me and the assistant gunner got on line with the fire team. Our target was only the muzzle flashes from the bunkers. The NVA threw several grenades down at us. There was plenty of confusion and several of our men

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[1266] Conversation with Linda Mason, 15 November 2006.
[1267] 3rd MarDiv COC 241020H/Jan68 to III MAF COC, Resume of Telephone Call, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 24/25 Jan 1968 #109; *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign], Trans. Sedgwick Tourison, Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, 1987, p. 26; III MAF COC 240421Z/Jan68 to MACV COC in III MAF COC Journal and File, 24/25 Jan 1968, #188. BV=Bataillon Volontaire, FAR=Forces Armees Royales.
[1268] *Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) (Tap II)* [304th Division (Chronology) (Vol. 2), Trans. Sedgwick Tourison, Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, p. 67.
[1269] MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 08 July 1968, p. 1.
[1270] CIA, Intelligence Memorandum, "Construction and Logistic Activities in the Khe Sanh Area," 07 Feb 1968, SC No. 0244/68, p. 3.
[1271] MACV COC Resume of Telephone Call to III MAF, 241235H/Jan68, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 24/25 Jan 1968, #128.
[1272] FMAW G-2 Resume of Telephone Call to III MAF COC 241246H/Jan68 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 24/25 Jan 1968, #130.
[1273] Col Smith, G3 Ops 242030H/Jan68, Resume of Telephone Call, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 24/25 Jan 1968, #284; CO Co C 5th SFGA 241315Z/Jan68, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 24/25 Jan 1968, #315.
[1274] Comments of LtCol Francis J. Heath, USMC Oral History Tape #2779; Comments of Maj Gerald F. Kurth, USMC Oral History Tape #2775.
[1275] S-2, 2/26, ltr 2/ERM/rjb, 25 January 1968, to S-2, 26th Marines, Tab J in 2/26 ComdC, January 1968.

were down."[1276] Contact had been made with an estimated NVA company at XD800460 and XD804458. F-3 was upon the bunkers before they were aware of them. The bunkers were well-camouflaged and the enemy force employed many automatic weapons and exercised good fire discipline. After about two hours of prep fires, Co F resumed its movement toward the top of the objective.[1277] Co F withdrew to permit 81mm mortars, artillery, fixed wing air, and 106s to strike the area for three more hours.

On 25 January, Co F departed for the objective at XD804458 to determine if any enemy remained. The Marines proceeded very cautiously, and at 1015H spotted two figures. The patrol continued forward under cover of supporting arms and just prior to reaching the topographical crest of the hill, came under heavy small arms fire, grenades, and mortars fired from the reverse (north) slope of the hill. The enemy soldiers, wearing helmets and flak jackets, made identification of friend and foe difficult for the jet pilots providing close air support. The NVA force was determined to hold and defend this hill. At 1700H, with darkness approaching, the Marines were ordered to disengage and return to Hill 558. The action had cost the lives of 17 NVA soldiers confirmed killed, and the death of PFC Edward Heifner, ten Marines wounded (5 medevaced, 5 minor).[1278]

PFC Heifner had been shot in his shoulder, got up, was shot in his leg, again got up, and was then shot in his chest and died.[1279] Heifner, a fire-team leader, was "..a German kid from Ohio, a super nice guy... When they opened up, we all hit the ground, and he just wasn't quick enough. Four or five rounds hit [him] real quick, walked right down his chest and throat. I was watching him. It was horrifying. I was 18, and this was the first realization of—you're going to die."[1280] "He always took more of a load on himself. He was a nice guy and he had a good sense of humor. From walking through all this elephant grass and stuff, the crotch of his pants had been torn, and everything was just handing out. We were carrying supplies to 558 a few days after we had been there, and he had put leaves to cover that! He had a good sense of humor."[1281]

26 JANUARY 1968

DEARING, PFC Jerry Wayne	**H&S/3/26**
DENNING, PFC Dwight Thomas	**A/1/26**

A-2 was patrolling the area around Hill 861 to secure the terrain and make contact with any NVA present. At approximately 0900H, the patrol made contact and the fire was intense.[1282] A-2 was making slow progress due to the enemy fire with both A-2 and the NVA force at XD800445. A-2 pulled back and the AO called in artillery after which the patrol returned to the area of contact and came under intense automatic weapons fire.[1283] PFC Dwight Denning, a grenadier [M-79 man] with Third Squad of A-2 fired rounds into the entrance of one of three bunkers from which approximately 10-15 NVA were firing.[1284] He rushed to the enemy fusillade, firing two of his M-79 rounds to silence the enemy. The bunkered NVA force now directed its fury onto the rushing PFC Denning who was drawing fire to himself, enabling the rest of his unit to move forward.[1285] Standing to fire his rounds, he was struck by the enemy fire and fell mortally wounded. "Inspired by his selfless devotion to duty at great personal risk, his companions aggressively continued their assault and quickly destroyed the enemy force."[1286]

During a re-supply of Hill 881-South yesterday, at 251400H, a CH-46 helicopter was damaged and forced to land. At 261030H, the helicopter was lifted out safely, but the recovery helicopter received sniper fire from XD775445 and Hill 881-South received two 82mm mortar rounds from XD782443. The suspected mortar position was taken under fire with unknown results and the sniper, after taken under fire by .50 caliber and M-60 machinegun, was seen falling from a tree.[1287] An evacuated wounded Marine, PFC Jerry Wayne Dearing, was brought into the newly-constructed OR [operating room] bunker of C-Med. Half his left forearm and all of his right hand were missing; he had multiple holes all over his head, and died from his wounds.[1288]

[Although Gen Tompkins had restricted patrolling, Col. Lownds asked FOB-3 whether they might be willing to do some local patrolling. As a result, Maj Lucius Campbell, the CO of FOB-3, dispatched HF [Hatchett Force] DENVER to determine the status of civilians in Khe Sanh village and whether it was occupied by the NVA. Captain "Rip" Van Winckle led the patrol (six other Americans and 24 Bru) on the south side of Route 9 to the east side of the village until they were approximately

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[1276] Letter of Joseph Beebe, undated
[1277] 2/26 ComdC Jan 1968; S-2 letter of 25 January 1968, cited.
[1278] 2/26 ComdC Jan 1968; Comments of LtCol Heath on Tape #2779, cited.
[1279] Letter of William T. Mitchell, III, 13 June 1985.
[1280] Conversation with Ken M. Melanson, 11 May 1996. Melanson was a Canadian citizen at the time.
[1281] *Ibid.*
[1282] Statement of PFC Robert K. Brown in Silver Star Medal file of PFC Dwight T. Denning
[1283] 3rd MarDiv COC 261735Z/Jan68, COC Spot Report, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Jan 1968 #338.
[1284] NAVPERS 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 18 Feb 1968, in Silver Star Medal file of PFC Dwight T. Denning.
[1285] Statement of Sgt William B. Dennis in Silver Star Medal file of PFC Dwight T. Denning.
[1286] Silver Star Medal Citation, PFC Dwight T. Denning.
[1287] 26Mar 261200Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #347.
[1288] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry, 26 January 1968.

150 meters east of the MACV compound.[1289] *At 1400H, a patrol from FOB-3 to Khe Sanh village received heavy automatic and small arms fire from an estimated platoon. There are no civilians remaining in the area.*[1290] *Captain Lee Dunlap, the OinC of Operational Detachment 221 (of which HF DENVER was a part), rushed to the 26th Marines COC to request artillery support for the engaged patrol in which several Bru had been killed, the medic [Crone] shot in the leg, and a Weapons Sergeant [Fusco]shot—had an AK-47 bullet sticking out in the bump behind his ear. There were, quite obviously, no "friendly civilians" in Khe Sanh town! A Marine Major replied, "I can't fire any artillery in there." [Note: many, many rounds of artillery had already been fired into Khe Sanh ville in support of the District/CAC OSCAR fight of 21/22 January]. "My people are under fire!" exclaimed the astonished Dunlap. "I'm not going to help," replied the Major. Dunlap walked over to the USAF TIGER-HOUND shop, and within a few minutes Dunlap had declared a "PRAIRIE FIRE ALERT" [the SOG call for the highest priority for air in Vietnam] and within minutes "..had more jets than I could handle and they went down there and just blew the hell out of the place." A Marine FAC reported all that was happening to the Marine COC and Dunlap was summoned to report ASAP. He expected to be met by Col Lownds, ripped, and would say, "Well, Sir, I just used my best judgment." Instead, he encountered the same Major—Col Lownds was not yet aware of what had happened. The Major declared, "That was dereliction of duty. Consider yourself under arrest!" Dunlap replied, "Well, Sir, fine, we will sort this thing out later, but now I have to get my men out." The Marine Major, livid, shouted, "Marine! Restrain that man!" The Major's voice had become so loud as to arouse the temporarily sleeping Lownds. "What's going on?" asked the Colonel. When all was explained, Lownds said, "Captain, check on your men and I'll take care of this."*[1291] *SP5 John Frescura, directing his men to fighting positions along the road as they were savagely attacked, shielded a wounded soldier with his own body, treated his wounds and then aided another casualty, sprinting through a hail of bullets and then maneuvered the patrol to break contact as he remained behind to deliver suppressive fire. He moved into the open and silenced NVA snipers from positions around the LZ.*[1292] *Medic, SFC Robert L. Scully, leaped 15 feet from a rescuing helicopter which could not land due to intense small arms fire directed at it, immediately moved to the wounded and began to aid them. At times, he shielded them with his own body. He treated all the wounded, moved them to a nearby building and returned to the LZ to guide-in the rescuing helicopters which successfully evacuated 6 badly wounded soldiers.*[1293] *Grenville Sutcliffe jokingly recalls that one of the reasons he specifically went on this patrol to Khe Sanh village was to retrieve some bagpipes left there by PFC Taylor of the Marine CAC OSCAR Platoon O-2;*[1294] *Taylor's Scottish flag had been rescued and was atop one of the main bunkers at the FOB until it became a NVA aiming stake, but his bagpipes had been left in the ville. (Actually, they had been retrieved!). The pandemonium of the tense withdrawal included going house to house to destroy rice and other things beneficial to the NVA who started returning in heavy numbers. F-4s were dropping cluster bombs; green NVA tracers ripped through the air. NVA artillery began to pound the area. After returning to FOB-3, an intercepted NVA radio transmission indicated they were concerned about holding the village and were dispatching a larger force to reinforce. Rip commented, "They're welcome to it. My mission was to confirm they were there. They are."]*

27 JANUARY 1968

[At 270010H there were 30 large secondary explosions at XD843385 (500 meters directly north of the former CAP O-2 position) and at XD847369 (about 1000 meters directly south of Khe Sanh Village). The latter was reported to be an artillery headquarters.[1295]

COLEMAN, LCPL Michael John	B/1/9
GOLZ, PFC James Roland	I/3/26
HUNT, CPL Joseph Thomas	B/1/9
REATHER, PFC Wallace Lee Jr.	B/3rd Recon
UZZELL, PVT Frank Nelson	D/1/26
WEED, CPL Donald Edmond	B/1/9

During the period 1200H to 1700H, the KSCB and surrounding hill positions received medium to heavy incoming mortar fire—120mm, 60mm, and 82mm. Three of the incoming mortars were duds.[1296] **The incoming was particularly destructive in the area containing the 1/9 battalion command group and Companies B and D (located at XD830415) which received approximately 30 rounds of mixed artillery and rocket fire, 1300H – 1315H, killing three and wounding 14.**[1297] **"Most of those were in D Company area. They had had several days to dig in under cloud and fog cover but had not done**

[1289] Letters from Harlen E. ("Rip") Van Winkle, 16 March 1994 and 31 December 1996.
[1290] 26Mar 261200Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #347.
[1291] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 27 August 1988.
[1292] Silver Star Medal Citation, John Frescura, Dept of Army General Orders No. 2263, 15 May 1968
[1293] Silver Star Medal Citation, Robert L. Scully, Dept of Army General Orders No. 2453, 24 May 1968.
[1294] Conversation with Grenville Sutcliffe, 06 April 1990.
[1295] 26Mar 262240Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #349; 3rd MarDiv COC 261915Z/Jan68, Spot Report #32, in III MAF COC Journal and File Opn SCOTLAND, Pt. 3.
[1296] 26Mar ComdC Jan 1968, Encl (1), p. 16.
[1297] 1/9 ComdC Jan 1968; 26Mar 271135Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #351.

enough. It was rough digging with those little e-tool shovels in hard red clay and rock, but it had to be done. We had to dig deep enough to allow movement in the trenches to have all heads below ground level while in a standingt position. That was the guidance. D Company was not to that point when we were hit and suffered from it. After the attack we had new reason to dig, dig, and dig more."[1298] "Joe Hunt was a 'lankey' Marine from Situate, Mass, a real 'easy to get along with kind of guy.' Don Weed was a 'laid back' southern Californian who carried around a picture of his '57 Chevy and was more than glad to tell anyone that would listen all about it. Mike Coleman was a nice kid from the Chicago area, very unselfish, caring, 'eager to please' Marine. Joe and Don joined us in July of '67, right after the July 2 battle that started Operation Buffalo. Mike came during our 'second time around at Con Thien (around October)."[1299]

Two 82mm mortar rounds exploded in the Co "B," 3rd Recon, area at 1430H,[1300] killing PFC Reather. "I saw him standing right in front of his bunker. He'd come up out of his bunker for a few minutes and he was standing right in the doorway. I happened to see him, and I turned around or something, and a mortar round went off, came in, and a piece went right into his windpipe. I remember that very well."[1301]

> "..I was no more than 15 to 20 feet from Reather when he was killed. I heard the shrapnel go past me and into him. We were in the company area. We were filling sandbags. And the day before, I was the company radioman and asked for Reather to come over to help me fill sandbags, to help with the bunker that I was staying in. It was a two-man bunker, old, concrete. I was sandbagging it to protect myself and the company gunnery sergeant, Delbert Weidler.
>
> "At the time Reather was over filling sandbags for his bunker. And we got into an argument that day. He says, 'What the heck am I filling sandbags to protect you, when I should be over there filling sandbags to protect myself.' But then we sat down. We had a good conversation. He told me about his wife and his daughter. Chewed the fat for awhile while we were filling sandbags.
>
> "The next day, Weidler, the gunny, came up to me. He says, 'You got to fill sandbags again.' I said, 'All right, let me have Reather again.' He said, 'No, no, Reather's going to fill for his own, and you're going to fill for your own.' I said, 'All right, fine.' There was no big deal."[1302]

JUNIOR
By Kevin Macaulay

Thoughts: ***Gotta get up, gotta fill more sand bags. Has it really been three days since the bunker got hit? It feels like a lifetime. This shelling is really getting me down. I think the gooks are just throwing some of these rounds in to demoralize us. I wish they would let us do something other than fill these sandbags. I'd even go on a working party today just to get out of the company area. It's starting to look like a garbage dump around here. All the god-damn tents are blown to shit. All my gear is gone from that last rocket attack yesterday afternoon. Shit, I've only got this one set of utilities left that I am wearing. I'll be pretty ripe soon.***

Spoken: ***Hey, Lt. Nosal, we get any mail yet? Didn't think so. The stuff that I brought up to the Post Office two days ago is still sitting there, Nothing in and nothing out. Hey, Lt. do you think that we'll be put on the lines with 1/9 today? Shit, yeah, I'd go. Anything is better than this place. Holy shit, that sounds like a mortar! Incoming, incoming!***

Thoughts: ***Those landed just the other side of the bunkers, where the guys are filling sandbags...***

Spoken: ***Hey, Purefoy, get over here, come here man, come here, stop running around. O shit, look at his fingers. They're all blown to shit. Corpsman! Lay down, Purefoy; I'll patch you up. Hey, Sgt. Weidler, throw me my first aid kit. No, he's not too bad, just lost the tips of his fingers. All of them! Both hands. OK, Purefoy, you can get over to the BAS by yourself, someone is calling for stretcher bearers.***

Thoughts: ***Oh, shit, more wounded, when the @uck is this shit going to stop? There's Doc Turner and he looks like he's hit. His knee is all blood. Who is he working on? That looks like—.***

Conversation: ***Junior? No! Please good Christ, don't let it be Junior! Hey, Doc, how is he? How bad is he hurt? He ain't breathing! O @uck, come on Junior, breathe, come on Buddy, you've gotta***

[1298] Charles Hartzell, Memoir, p. 52, forwarded in letter from Lauretta Davis Hartzell, 17 May 2006.
[1299] David Granger, Letter of 25 November 1996.
[1300] III MAF COC 272303Z/Jan68 to MACV COC, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #351, III MAF COC Journal and File 27/28 Jan68 #71; III MAF COC 281827Z/Jan68 to MACV COC, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #352, III MAF COC Journal and File 27/28 Jan68 #369.
[1301] Conversation with James Walsh, 23 September 1989.
[1302] Conversation with Kevin Macaulay, 22 August 1984.

breathe! Get your goddamn hands offa me, I gotta help Junior, he's going home in a few weeks. Let me carry the stretcher. I'll get him over there. I'll carry him myself. Stop holding me back, you assholes, can't you see that I've gotta help Junior. I'm all right, I just gotta help Junior. OK, I've got this end of the stretcher. Come on, Doc, keep working on him. Where is he hit? I don't see any blood. Come on, let's get him to Charlie Med. BAS is closer? What do you mean, it don't make any difference? Come on, Preacher [Ernie Husted], *give me a hand. Move, let's go, the doctors will help him.*

Thoughts: *Come on, Junior, just hand on for a little while longer. Why does it seem so far? Hang on Junior, I'll take care of you, just hang on. OK, Junior, we're almost there. Just around the corner. Pretty soon they'll have you all patched up. Just a few more feet. Hang on, Junior, please hang on. Jesus, let him live! He's got a wife and a little girl back home, you've got to let him be able to go back there. I'm going to visit him when I get out of here. Please, God, please!*

Conversation: *Hey, Doc, we've got a wounded man here. He ain't breathing. Help him please. Doc, there ain't much blood, just a little bit on his forehead. Come on, Doc, please keep trying. No! Don't put him in the corner to die. He can't be hurt that bad. Doc, it was just a lousy mortar. Please, Doc, he's got a wife and a daughter at home who need him. He's got a mom and dad waiting for him. Doc! I need him! Shit, Junior, what did they do to you? Doc, let me stay a little while longer. I'll just sit with him until he's gone. I'll be good, Doc, you won't even know that I'm here.*

Thoughts: *O, Junior, what's going to happen to us? I can't think of this place without you. We've been together too long for me to leave you here alone. Let me hold your hand for a while. You taught me what I was supposed to do. I wouldn't have made it this far without you. You kept picking me up when I kept falling on my first patrol. You covered for me the night I fell asleep on the radio out in the bush. You came back for me when the gooks separated me from the team on that patrol in Laos. Junior, you saved my life too many times, and now I can't do anything for you except hold your hand and watch you die. Junior, you never gave me the chance to save you. Junior, you're beginning to turn cold already. This ain't the way that I figured it. I wanted to kick you in the ass as you got on the plane to the "world." Junior, talk to me. Say something. I can't hold back the tears any longer. I got too close to you, Junior, just like they say that we shouldn't. I never expected this. It don't make no sense. Junior, I've got to go now. They say that I'm in the way. I love you, Buddy. I can say it but you can't hear me. Goodbye, Junior. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil. Amen.....*

Can't let anybody see me like this. I'm supposed to be a hard-assed Marine. Let me just get into my bunker. I'll be safe in my bunker—yeah, real safe, asshole, just as safe as Scribner and the other guys were. No safe place in Khe Sanh, no safe place at all. God, I'm so tired! Tired of all this shit. What time is it? Doesn't matter, anyway. OK, here's my little bunker...

What am I going to do now? I can't seem to think... I want to go home. I want to see my mom and dad again. I want to see Ann. I want to get married and have fourteen hundred kids... I want to see you again, Junior, but now I can't because of a lousy piss ant mortar....

Thoughts: *God, please take care of my friend, Junior. He took care of me for so long and for that smile at him and keep him safe with you. As for me, help me keep from losing the little bit of sanity I have left. Some day, let me see the why for what has happened today. God help me, for I can't make any sense out of it."*[1303]

LETTER TO THE EDITOR
Kevin C. Macaulay

"..my thoughts go back 15 years.. I am again sitting with buddies, hurriedly filling sandbags, reinforcing bunkers and moving our lives underground. Fifteen years ago, I was a

[1303] Kevin Macaulay, Diary entry for 27 January 1968.

member of Bravo Company, 3rd Recon Battalion, at Khe Sanh..

"Many changes have been noted since January 24, 1968. My body has softened and thickened; my hair has thinned and grayed. Yet, in my mind's eye, I still see the bunkers that replaced our strongbacks and tents on January 21, 1968, the day the 'siege' of Khe Sanh began. The bad times have been, for the most part, buried in my subconscious mind; the good times, the laughs, friendships and camaraderie we all experienced are looked back upon with a certain yearning. We experienced the fullness of life in those days, and we learned the finality of death.

"On January 29, 1983, my good friend 'Junior' (known officially as Pfc Wallace Lee Reather, Jr.) will be dead 15 years. This anniversary, for the most part, will go unrecognized. However, one of the greatest strengths of the Marine Corps has been its ability to honor its fallen members.

"The purpose of my writing is to personally renew that tradition. To this day, I still cherish the friendship 'Junior' and I shared. Unfortunately, I have never been able to duplicate this friendship. Perhaps it is better that way, for we shared far too much for this type of friendship to happen again.

"Fifteen years have passed. I still miss him and mourn his passing."[1304]

[*During the first two weeks of the Siege at Khe Sanh, Co B, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion lost 60% of its personnel. Oddly, they were taking more casualties than had been in the uncertain and vulnerable territory outside the base, patrolling. It is as incomprehensible as it would be for someone to say that the most unhealthy place to be is in the hospital or the most spiritually dangerous place to be is in a church. The Marines of recon are now engaged in duties of being the Base Reaction Force, and work daily in working parties for C Med as stretcher bearers, moving ammunition in the Ammunition Supply Points, or work in the Fuel Dump and Drop Zone moving supplies, as well as stand watch on the lines.*[1305]

At 1430H, Platoon D-2 of 1/26, under the leadership of 1/Lt Daniel L. McGravey, departed from the northern sector (the BLUE Sector) of KSCB, a small parcel of land sandwiched between the perimeter and the Rao Quan River into which NVA soldiers had crept. The water point for the base was located here, outside the wires. An hour later, D-2 made contact at XD857423 with an enemy recon or OP element and received 82mm mortar from XD860429.[1306] The NVA unit, estimated to be seven soldiers, fired from well-concealed spider trap holes pouring heavy automatic machinegun fire on the Marines.[1307] Suddenly, a RPG went over everybody, but caught the point, PVT Frank N. Uzzell, who was down on one knee, in the groin and chest.[1308] PFC Henry R. Gagne, who normally walked point, had been hit the previous day by a mortar round, and Uzzell, who was his good friend, was on his first point.[1309] Lt McGravey immediately requested a helicopter medevac, but the calm voice of the DELTA Company Commander, Capt. Ernest E. Spencer, radioed McGravey to carry him in since the patrol was just outside the wire.[1310] After the Marines in the patrol had aggressively attacked the enemy force with small arms and grenades with support from 81mm mortars of 1/26,[1311] D-2 returned to the base.

Concerning PFC Golz, the official Operation SCOTLAND SITREP indicates that Co K/3/26 (defending Hill 861) reported receiving 4 incoming 82mm mortars at 1320H[1312] and a subsequent SITREP indicates the results as one friendly KIA.[1313] No KIAs for K/3/26 are indicated for this date, and PFC GOLZ is listed as a member of INDIA Company. No KIAs from INDIA Company are reflected as casualties in the SITREPs, however. How a Marine from INDIA Company (which defended Hill 881-South) is reflected as KIA on Hill 861 remains unexplained.[1314]

[*On 27 January 1968, the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, the last major unit to defend KSCB arrived.*[1315] *Commanded by Capt Hoang Pho and with U.S. Army*

[1304] Letter to the Editor of *Leatherneck* 66:4 (April, 1983) 3-4.

[1305] NAVPERS 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 22 Dec 1968, Bronze Star Medal file, 1/Lt Michael E. Waddell.

[1306] III MAF COC 272303Z/Jan68 to MACV COC, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #351, in III MAF COC Journal and File 27/28 Jan 1968 #71; 1/26 ComdC January 1968, Encl (1), p. 5.

[1307] Bronze Star Medal Citation, PVT Frank N. Uzzell; Written statement of LtCol James B. Wilkinson to Capt M.S. Shore, Historical Branch, HQMC, 19 Dec 1968, in Khe Sanh Monograph file, p. 5

[1308] Conversation with Thomas Boze, 05 November 1993.

[1309] Conversation with Henry R. Gagne, 19 October 1994.

[1310] Ernest Spencer, *Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man*, California: Corps Press, 1987, p. 91.

[1311] Statement of Wilkinson, 19 Dec 1968, cited.

[1312] 26Mar 271135Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #351, Para 4.J.

[1313] III MAF COC 281827Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #352, Para 4.A.

[1314] He may have been a passenger on a helicopter going to or from 881-South which landed at 861 due to mortars and small arms fire; he may have been temporarily assigned to Co "K," or in the process of reporting to Co "K" (since, in military accounting, one belongs to the unit from which he was transferred until he actually is "received" by the new command); or some other explanation.

[1315] 26Mar 271135Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #351.

Advisor, Captain Walter Gunn, the unit located in a separate perimeter line ahead of the lines manned by B/1/26 on the eastern side of KSCB. The NVA officer who surrendered 20 January, Lt La Thanh Tonc, had revealed that the NVA plan was to seize Hills 861 and 881-South as fire support bases from which troops would push against the northern and western sections of the perimeter—as a diversion. The main assault would be a regimental-size thrust against the eastern sector, and thus collapse the entire defense.[1316] *Col. Lownds was therefore concerned about that section, especially since it did not enclose the eastern end of the runway, and had planned positions 200 yards further out from the combat base than existing lines. The 37th, 318 men strong (some 100 to 150 people short of full strength) were therefore placed here.*[1317]]

28 JANUARY 1968

FIGUEROA, CPL Javier Puentes	**H&S/3/26**
HOLLIS, LCPL Thomas William	**B/3rd Recon**

The recon area, sandwiched between the regimental COC and the airstrip, as the last defensive line for the regimental command center should the base be overrun, is the bulls-eye of the target for NVA gunners. The Company Executive Officer, a "mustang," 1/Lt Carl J. Slack, says "When I get back to California, I'm going to open a bar especially for the survivors of Khe Sanh. And any time it gets two deep at that bar, I'll know someone is lying."[1318]

At 1130H, Co B, 3rd Recon Bn, took 3 incoming rockets resulting in the death of LCPL HOLLIS.[1319] **James Walsh recalls the incident: "We sent Hollis out—he was on the perimeter just to the west, facing the airstrip on our perimeter out there. They started taking incoming and he stuck his head up out of his bunker for just a minute and just about that time a round came in and he got it right through the head."**[1320] **Bessie Hollis, Thomas' mother, wrote: "I miss my son so much. I wish this war would end."**[1321]

Hollis' older brother, Nicholas, recalls that while growing up, Tom "..was real fragile, he was real little, and everyone thought he was a sissy. So when he gets in 7th, 8th grade, he starts pumping iron. After that' there's a complete transformation of this guy. They called him 'skull;' that was his nickname ast home. He'd taken a lot of crap from my brother next to me. My other brother used to pick on him. One time they went to the theater in Gillespie [Illinois], and he was picking on my little brother, Tommy. Tommy said he had enough of it, so he went outside and punched my brother out and gave him a black eye in goth of his eyes. When he came home, he looked like a raccoon. Dad said, 'See, I told you; you mess with that kid long enough, he's going to get back at you.' Tom was the kind of a kid that would smile, and then punch somebody. He'd just smile, and then God help anybody around him that he was mad at. Later, while in high school, the team was 'All Conference' in 1964. They never lost—a perfect season in football. He and my brother played on that team and they were caqlled 'ram' and 'jam.' My brother Ronnie was 'ram; and T?ommy was 'jam.'"[1322]

"He was married a week before he went off and she was fooling around while he was overseas and she ended up marrying this guy she was fooling around with. My brother had just finished changing the insurance over from my mother to her. They went through that like you wouldn't believe."[1323]

[Locations of units as of 28 January: HQ 26th Mar (XD849417); A/1/26 (XD849482); B/1/26 (XD848416—manning the GRAY Sector); C/1/26 (XD849419—manning the BLUE Sector); D/1/26 (XD848416); 2/26 (XD820451—Hill 558); E/2/26 (XD805445—manning Hill 861-Alfa); F/2/26 (XD820450); G/2/26 (XD820450); H/2/26 (XD823445; 3/26 (XD837417); I/3/26 (XD777438—Hill 881-South); K/3/26 (XD803443—Hill 861); L/3/26 (XD835420—manning the RED Sector); M/3/26 (XD777438—Hill 881-South, western finger); 1/9 (XD831415—Rock Quarry); A/1/9 (XD831419); B/1/9 (XD831415); C/1/9 (XD831419); D/1/9 (XD831415); HQ/1/13 (XD844418); A/1/13 (XD844418); B/1/13 (XD852116); C/1/13 (XD852416); W/1/13 (XD846416); 1stProv 155 3/12 (XD841418); A/3rd At (XD844419); B/3rd Recon (XD849417); ARVN 37th Ranger Bn (XD849417—outer eastern perimeter); A(-)/3rd SP Bn (XD846417).[1324]

29 JANUARY 1968

CRONE, SSGT Gary Lee	**FOB-3**
MAHONEY, SP5 Michael Thomas	**FOB-3**

[1316] Maj Thomas Donnelly and Capt Moyers S. Shore, II, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam*, Part VI, *Ho Chi Minh's Gamble*, HQMC, Historical Division, 10 April 1970, p. 18:17.

[1317] Comments of Col David E. Lownds, USMC Oral History Tape #2621.

[1318] Quoted in John T. Wheeler, "Life in the V Ring," Associated Press release, 12 February 1968, reprinted in Braestrup, Peter, *Big Story*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977, Vol. 2, p. 144.

[1319] 3rd MarDiv COC 291852Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #355, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 29/30 January 1968 #108.

[1320] Conversation with James Walsh, 23 September 1989.

[1321] Letter from Mrs. Bessie Hollis, 22 June 1968.

[1322] Converfsation with Nicholas Hollis, Jr., 18 February 2006.

[1323] *Ibid.*

[1324] 3rd MarDiv 290302Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #356; III MAF COC 291213Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #356 [both messages are needed to compile the listing].

TREDINNICK, SFC Charles Nichol FOB-3

On 29 January, SFC William WOOD led his team from FOB-3 (team TIGER) to Hill 471, departing later than he had planned due to small, annoying delays, such as turning in emergency radios since they were in short supply. He was irritated as he departed about 0830H; he wanted to reach 471 before the heavy fog that blanketed the area burned off. (This usually happened about 0900). TIGER moved directly to 471 across a shallow valley that extended west and southwest from the FOB-3 perimeter, and the movement was slow. The fog lifted while the patrol was in the middle of an open area, still some 900 meters from 471.

Upon reaching the saddle between Hill 471 and the small "pimple" hill southeast of 471, the Bru component of the patrol became agitated, saying there "were beaucoup VC!" As they advanced, the patrol took fire from a range of about 5 meters. Wood returned two magazines as well as several M-79 rounds and discovered he was alone. "Crone lay face-up some 3-4 meters behind me and I could hear a lot of firing back about where we had stopped.. I scrambled back to Crone to find he'd been shot in the right cheek, the right eye, and the right forearm, which was broken. He may have had other wounds, too. I tried to find signs of life. The bullets hadn't exited although there was a large pool of blood under the back of his head... While trying to get Crone up into a fireman's carry his .45 fell out onto the ground. I picked it up, finding I couldn't carry him: he was a big man, 6'1" or 2" and 200 lb or more... [I] started to drag Crone back to the rest of the team, but a grenade came in and knocked me loose. I scuttled back to where the rest of the team was, to find Xon wounded in the ankle, one Bru dead (the M-79 gunner) and only Voorhees and 3 Bru firing at the top of 471... I told Voorhees that Crone was dead and asked after Mahoney and the rest of the Bru. He replied while changing magazines that he didn't know. They had disappeared when the shooting started, presumably downhill... After a hurried scan of the area (during which I spotted not less than 4 auto weapons on the military crest of 471) without sign of Mahoney or the other Bru, I was gone too."[1325]

Eventually Wood and the remainder of his team were retrieved by choppers and flown to FOB-3.

A notice concerning Michael Mahoney relates that he positioned himself in front of his team in order to lay down a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire while his team was moving to a more secure area. After the team reached it, Mahoney attempted to withdraw but was killed while he left his position.[1326] Mahoney liked football, skydiving, and hunting and had joined the Army on 20 Sep 1965.[1327]

At about 1000H, the helicopter had picked up and delivered Bill Wood to FOB-3. He had been shot through both knees and reported that one American had been killed and another captured, and that he was the only one of his team to escape. Hatchett Force DENVER was selected to recover the body and locate/rescue the missing American, and Captain Harlan E. Van Winkle, the Executive Officer of A-221, was selected to lead the team. 1/Lt Granville Sutcliffe, who was being groomed to replace Van Winkle, along with SFC Robert Scully (senior medic of FOB-3), SFC Charles N. Tredinnick (senior combat engineer of A-221), Sgt Dennis C. Lansing (junior communications NCO, A-221), Sgt Donald R. Rumph (junior medic of A-221), SP5 John L. Frescura (junior combat engineer of A-221), and PFC James Taylor (CAC OSCAR), along with 16 Bru, composed the rescue force.[1328]

SP5 John L. Frescura suggested that SFC Tredinnick accompany the patrol.[1329] The CO of A-221, Lee Dunlap, recalls Tredinnick as "one of the best Special Forces soldiers that I've ever met because he had a willingness and a tendency and a patience to teach the officers, and that was a little tough. He was so well respected, and he taught the whole team."[1330] SFC Charles Tredennick had wanted to be a Marine, but was turned-down because he was flat-footed. He joined the Army and then completed Ranger training and joined the Special Forces.[1331]

"PFC Taylor happened to be in the area where we were preparing for the mission, stated he was familiar with the area where the ambush occurred and volunteered his services. I was never one to question why someone volunteers to perform a dirty job; all I asked was, could he operate a radio? He said he could, and that was all I needed to hear."[1332]

At 1135H, the 24 men (8 Americans and 16 Bru) flew to Hill 471 with 2 Americans and 4 indigenous Bru per helicopter with the mission to recover one known American KIA, two indig. KIA, and one American MIA. Cover on the hill was non-existent; there was only elephant grass to a height of less than three feet and a few bushes. Tredinnick took three Bru and moved about 150-175 meters to another peak of the hill, remaining within

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[1325] William Wood, "Fiasco on Hill 471," 4 Jan 1997 [contained in letter from Harlan Van Winkle, 6 May 1997].
[1326] Ward, Don, *The Faces Behind the Names*, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1999, p. 128.
[1327] *Ibid.*
[1328] Harlan E. Van Winkle, "Ambush on Hill 471, January 29, 1968," appended to his letter of 31 December 1996, p. 10.
[1329] Statement of SP5 John L. Frescura, 8 Feb 1968, in Silver Star recommendation file of SFC Charles N. Tredinnick (in letter from Lee Dunlap, 13 Sep 1988).
[1330] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 08 August 1989.
[1331] Conversation with Dennis Lee Tredennick, 09 Oct 2006. Fishbaugh, Mike, "Sgt/1st Class Chuck Tredennick," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue #70 (Spring, 2008), p. 64.
[1332] Van Winkle, "Ambush on Hill 471," cited.

sight of Van Winkle, but was unable to locate any bodies and didn't make any contact. He did spot, however, a large force of NVA ground troops attempting to encircle the team. Van Winkle instructed him to return to the rest of the team and, upon returning to Van Winkle to plan their next movement, spotted movement in a small bush directly to their front, less than 6 feet away. As he asked, "What was that?" the NVA opened fire, initiating a brutal fire-fight.

Tredinnick ran to Sutcliffe screaming, "Sir, we can't hold the hilltop. We gotta get out." The NVA had set up a .51 caliber machinegun on one of the hilltops and Sutcliffe got up on one knee to shoot an azimuth to get the gunships a fix on its position, to hit it. "And I presented a rather good target; unfortunately they hit me with a grenade. And I remember the explosion to my left, this tremendous impact. And I thought, 'No, Sutcliffe, you're not going to do it!' As I was falling down, I said, 'Help! Medic!'"[1333]

1/Lt Grenville Sutcliffe received a wound in his throat. "I remember a big flash of light. Impact. It went through my throat and shoulder. I put my leg up in the air in the elephant grass so they could see where I'd fallen. One of our medics came over. I opened my eyes, and all I could see was this bloody hand in my face. The medic rolled me over and said, 'Sir, can you breathe?' And he and I had just trached a guy two nights before—one of our 'yards' got hit with an artillery round and he'd been buried and mud had impacted down his throat and the medic and I trached him—got him breathing. So I responded, 'I can breathe quite well, thank you!'"[1334] Tredinnick and Van Winkle rushed to him: "He was such a mess that I sensed it was a mortal wound. SFC Scully was already working on him and Tredinnick started back to his position in the perimeter and I turned my attention to getting us some type of fire support.. What occurred next could only be called a thunderstorm of enemy hand grenades being thrown into our position."[1335] PFC Taylor, the Marine accompanying the patrol, "..happened to glance up and saw what appeared to be a black thunderstorm. I then realized I was seeing a great number of ChiCom grenades, and yelled to the Captain, 'Down, Sir!' and pushed him down. I reflected that it wasn't every day one got to knock an officer on his ass."[1336] As with so many in combat situations, Taylor saw the grenades seeming to descend in slow motion as they exploded among the team. Van Winkle caught a piece in his leg and Taylor noticed he received some splintered fragments in his knuckles and joints. "I pulled a few out with my teeth and checked Rip, who said he'd make it, and then we became too busy to sweat a few pieces of shrapnel."[1337]

Van Winkle heard the distinctive sound of a bullet strike someone behind him, turned, and saw Tredinnick lying still on the ground. Sgt Rumph, PFC Taylor, and Van Winkle ran to him. "He had been wounded low down on the left side of his chest. The entrance wound was very small but the exit wound was massive. His last words to me were, 'It hurts real bad, Sir!'"[1338] Sgt Donald A. Rumph found SFC Tredinnick unconscious, breathing very irregularly. "I cut off his web gear and shirt and finished applying the dressing. His pulse was very weak, and 4 or 5 times stopped breathing. Captain Van Winkle called for a medevac for Lt Sutcliffe and SFC Tredinnick, which arrived about 15 minutes later."[1339] Sutcliffe and Tredinnick had been wounded within three to five minutes of the team's landing on Hill 471.[1340]

Sutcliffe remembers the medevac helicopters arriving. "Another medic was working on Tredinnick and shouted out, 'We got to get the medevacs in or we're going to loose this one.' And I couldn't talk very well by that time. My medic yells, 'Yeah, we're going to loose this one, too!' Well, I knew he was wrong. There wasn't a chance in the world that I was going to die on that hill!"[1341] (Choppers came and evacuated Sutcliffe and took him to C Med. "I always carried a compass around my neck, a pistol in my pocket and grenades, so when I threw away everything else and ran, I'd have some way to defend. Well, the Marine doctors weren't quite used to that, so they started cutting off my uniform and a grenade falls out of one pocket, a pistol out of another, so they ran out of the tent!"[1342])

The team, still on 471, received fire support from helicopter gunships which was limited due to the close proximity of the team to the NVA. During one gunship runs, the door gunner missed Taylor and Van Winckle by less than six inches and shot one of the Bru in both legs, shattering both of them. Another Bru soldier was shot dead. The SOG team managed to move to the north side of the hill and a Marine Corps FAC, "American Beauty Delta," coordinated air-strikes to protect the team while also directing strikes against a 2-battalion size NVA force. Gunship runs, 250-pound bombs, CBUs, and finally napalm strikes managed to disengage the NVA from the SOG team. After a medevac chopper evacuated the wounded, the remainder of the patrol walked back to FOB-3. Crone's body had not been located and Ma-

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[1333] Conversation with Grenville Sutcliffe, 06 April 1990.
[1334] Conversation with Grenville Sutcliffe, 05 February 1994.
[1335] *Ibid.*
[1336] James Taylor, "Up Hill 471 with the Green Berets," 1980, (sent 19 July 1993).
[1337] *Ibid.*
[1338] Van Winkle, "Ambush on Hill 471," cited.
[1339] Donald A. Rumph, "Report on Operation 29 Jan 58 in RVN," 9 October 1994.
[1340] Statement of Sgt Dennis Lansing, 8 Feb 1968, in Silver Star Medal file on SFC Charles N. Tredinnick (in letter from Lee Dunlap, 13 Sep 1988).
[1341] Conversation with Sutcliffe, 5 Feb 1994, cited.
[1342] *Ibid.*

honey's whereabouts remained unknown. It had been a classic NVA ambush "designed to take advantage of our desire to recover the bodies of Americans killed in action."[1343]

SFC Charles Nichol Tredennick's nickname growing up was "Sonny." He loved animals and the family always had dogs and cats. He had a pet spider monkey, "Chico." He worked in a hardware store in Dallas, PA, (a little town east of Wilkes-Barre) while in school and played the clarinet and guitar. He also was good at basketball and enjoyed horseback riding with his sister, Jean.

His last letter home, to his wife Joy, dated 27 Jan 1968, noted that news of Khe Sanh must be painting a grim picture, but he emphasized things were really not that bad. "We must be in all the papers and on the news and I know they make it sound real bad... The reason why I am telling you this is because I don't want you worrying. I am alright... The good only die young... a guy came in from Co C Det to give us a hand got a quart of I.W. Harper so that helps... I just wanted you to know what's going on so you won't worry as much. You know how those newspaper people are plus we haven't had one man killed so it can't be too bad, and the Marines had only 11 killed in one week out of about 5,000."

His wife, Joy (died in 2005) posted the following on the Virtual Wall website:

07 Jul 2002

They say that time heals all wounds, so why won't this one heal?

It's been over 34 years now and you are still in my dreams all the time. I still miss you so much. We used to talk about growing old together, sitting on the front porch in our rockers and watching the rest of the world go by. It's not much fun sitting there alone.

Love, Joy

"My Green Beret"

"Don't worry 'bout me," he writes, "I'm fine."
In the thick of the fighting in Vietnam
From his bunker at Khe Sanh.
"Don't worry 'bout me, I'll be okay
Only the good die young. Ha ha"

But, who's that knocking on my door?
Two men in uniform.
It must be a mistake, I tell myself.
But already I feel so forlorn.

There's silence for a moment
When I open the door.
Then... "I'm Lieutenant Greene."
"Oh, no" I cry, "Please tell me you're not here for that!"
But the look on his face is my answer
For silence reigns supreme.

They are both so kind, and want to help
But there is no consolation,
When you lose the one love of your life,
There is nothing but desolation!

So, as the lonely days and nights pass,
And I re-read that letter... his last,
I tell him, "You're right as always, my darling...
Only the very best die young."

After being in the camp for only a few minutes, the Americans of HF DENVER were notified to pack up their gear and get ready to depart from FOB-3 for DaNang.[1344]

In early April, 1968, after 1/9 had taken Hill 471, FOB-3 was notified of several bodies believed to be FOB-3 members found on the hill. LtCol Roy Bahr, the CO of FOB-3, sent Hammond M. Salley and one of their medics, Denis Chericone, to retrieve them. Five or six Marines met them and escorted them to two bodies, one American and one Bru Montagnard but wouldn't come near the bodies. The stench was terrible.[1345] "We walked over and we turned one guy over. And I remember turning him over, and he was a friend of mine. And the flies all flew in my face, and the smell got on me, and I peuked really quick."[1346] The bodies had been virtually untouched by the NVA. Personal effects and most of their military gear was still in place. A radio with several bullet holes in it was still on the American's back. There was a sheath knife that Denis recognized as belonging to Sgt Crone; the knife had Crone's name on it. There was no evidence of molestation.[1347] As Salley and Chericone picked up Crone's body, his body was so deteriorated that his head fell off and rolled down the slope. Salley retrieved it and placed it back in the body bag.

Upon return to FOB-3, "We stank so much that Chericone burned his clothes. I had to take a shower and change clothes before I was allowed back into our TOC."[1348] After burning his clothes in the trash burner, Chericone "went down in the medical bunker and drank. I drank a half a bottle of whisky straight down—Bourbon. It didn't even touch me. Stone-sober. I remember one of the Sergeants standing there and going, Wow, kid, what happened to you? He was amazed a 21

[1343] Van Winkle, 'Ambush on Hill 471," cited, p. 15.

[1344] Statement of SP5 John L. Frescura, 8 Feb 1968, in Silver Star Medal file of SFC Charles N. Tredinnick (in letter from Lee Dunlap, 13 Sep 1988).

[1345] Hammond Salley, letter of 6 September 1993; Hammond Salley, "Ambush Epilogue #2," 6 November 1996.

[1346] Conversation with Denis Chericone, 21 August 1993.

[1347] Salley, "Ambush Epilogue #2," cited.

[1348] Salley, letter of 6 Sep 1993, cited.

year-old kid poured this bottle of liquor straight down."[1349]

COLONEL DAVID EDWARD LOWNDS

[On 29 January 1968, President Johnson has the Joint Chiefs of Staff sign a statement that Khe Sanh would be held. The statement,[1350] concludes: "The Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed the situation at Khe Sanh and concur with General Westmoreland's assessment of the situation. They recommend that we maintain our position at Khe Sanh."

LtCol Louis Rann, the Executive Officer of Regiment recalls the radioman leaning over and saying: "Colonel, the President wants to talk with you! The President's on the other end of the phone!" Rann notes, "I won't tell you what Colonel Lownds said—you're a minister!" "Shit?" "Well, a few other choice words!" "The next thing I know, Colonel Lownds picked up that phone [and was saying], 'Yes, Sir!.. No, Sir!' He's standing at attention!" Rann thought, "My God, it is the President!" Afterwards, Rann asked, "What did he say?" Lownds: "He said, 'I made the Joint Chiefs of Staff sign a paper that we're not going to make you guys surrender!'"[1351]

During the months prior to the Siege, Colonel Lownds frequently wandered about the area, getting the lay of the land—noting possible routes the enemy might take, timing movement from one point to another, observing possible Ops and assembly areas, and so on. "I went out all the time. I was out most of the time. As a matter of face, at one point when it [the siege] first started, I went out towards the water point—before General Tompkins ordered me not to go out. I got three-quarters of the way there, heard something in the brush, so I headed back. Somebody was there. From time to time I'd go out; sometimes I'd even go out by myself [without a radioman]. Nobody knew it. I didn't want to jeopardize anybody else. I went out quite frequently. A commander needs to know the terrain he's fighting in; if he doesn't, he's in trouble. I was able to pinpoint in my own mind the likely places of attack and also where the lines of departure would be. As a matter of fact, when we had that B-52 strike that came as a result—nobody wanted to give it to me—General Tompkins did, but Westmoreland and nobody else did. I told them, 'That's where they are and that's their Line of Departure, and if they're going to attack, they're going to attack from there. They said, 'That's too close to your lines.' I said, 'I don't give a damn how close they [the B-52 strikes] are. It all paid off in the long run."[1352]

LtCol Frederick McEwan, the S-4 of Regiment during the Siege, recalls: "Around December [1967], the North Vietnamese Army blew a French bridge across Highway 9. Well, Uncle Dave, who was Colonel Lownds, and the Engineer Officer and myself went to a steel bridge over the river at Route 9, and we swam across that river to check out that area, see if the bridge could be rebuilt. It couldn't. So we got out of there hastily. It was a precarious situation."[1353]

Thomas Buono was assigned to Colonel Lownds when the Siege began as his driver and to accompany him during his rounds of the base: "The morning the Siege started, Col Lownds was out, and I had a hard time keeping up with him. As a matter of fact, we had mortars walking up main street right in front of Regimental Headquarters and we had two guys hit, and he went after them, and I followed him. The mortars were still walking towards us. He grabbed one guy, and the other guy was limping towards him, and the other guy made it around the side of regimental headquarters, along the wall. Luckily it stopped about 5 or 6 feet short of the edge of that wall, or else we would all have been fragmented that day. He was out moving around the base that morning and the rest of that day, and the following two weeks that I was driving, he was out and about. We were dodging sniper fire.. so at one point we just abandoned the jeep, crawled from bunker to bunker... He had a way of motivating you without actually having to give you the boot in the rear end—his comments, or the way he would say something, or his mannerisms. You knew exactly what he meant. We were getting ready to go out

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[1349] Conversation with Denis Chericone, 25 July 1993.

[1350] JCSM-63-68, 29 Jan 1968, Memorandum for the President, Subj: The Situation at Khe Sanh, LBJ Library. The memorandum begins: "You will recall that on 12 January 1968 General Westmoreland informed me that the Khe Sanh position is important to us for the following reasons: (a) it is the western anchor of our defense of the DMZ area against enemy incursions into the northern portion of South Vietnam; (b) its abandonment would bring enemy forces into areas contiguous to the heavily populated and important coastal area; and (c) its abandonment would constitute a major propaganda victory for the enemy which would seriously affect Vietnamese and US morale. In summary, General Westmoreland declared that withdrawal from Khe Sanh would be a tremendous step backwards. At 0910 hours this morning I discussed the Khe Sanh situation by telephone with General Westmoreland... General Westmoreland stated to me that, in his judgment, we can hold Khe Sanh and we should hold Khe Sanh. He reports that everyone is confident. He believes that this is an opportunity to inflict a severe defeat upon the enemy. Further, General Westmoreland considers that all preparatory and precautionary measures have been taken, both in South Vietnam and here, to conduct a successful defense in the Khe Sanh area."

[1351] Conversation with Louis Rann, 30 Oct 1994. Capt Earle G. Breeding recalls, "The President talked to him on the telephone. When a President calls a Regimental Commander on the telephone, every subordinate person—subordinate to the President—is kissing butt. Nobody's going to stand up to him and say, 'Hey! That's stupid!'" [Conversation with Earle G. Breeding, 29 Oct 1994].

[1352] Conversation with David E. Lownds, 2 December 1994.

[1353] Comments of Frederick McEwan at Khe Sanh Reunion, Nashville, Tn, 21 July 1990.

and he asked me, 'Corporal, how come you haven't shaved yet?' And I said, 'Colonel, I don't have a razor.' He opened up his desk drawer and pulled out one of those disposable razors and said, 'Here, shave!' 'Right here, Sir?' He said, 'Yep, go ahead, you've dry-shaved before haven't you?' He said, 'I want you to look like a Marine.' And I said, 'OK,' and proceeded to dry-shave. We checked on some of the different Commanding Officers, checked casualty reports, made it to the runway, checked the status there. It was a daily routine... Most of Colonel Lownds' time was spent above-ground... He stayed away from the media. His time was too valuable. He knew what the situation was. There was a possibility of nuclear intervention. I had a Top Secret clearance, perhaps one of the reasons they sent me over to the Colonel's bunker... I remember laying in a slit trench next to Colonel Lownds right outside headquarters. We had dug [it] the first day as quickly as we could; it was only about 10 inches deep. And incoming came in, and the two of us are laying there, side by side, facing one another. After the incoming subsided, he just literally stood up and picked me up with one hand and said, 'Come on, we have work to do.'... [He avoided "salty" language]. He expressed himself with the education and the intelligence that he had. He was able to stay away from vulgarity. There were times when his language might have been a little strong, but very seldom, very seldom, like the average Marine, like myself. He didn't express himself in that way at all. Even when the situations seemed like they were taking a turn for the worse, he still had an inner character and a strength about him that I saw him display, that really kinda gave everybody around him not only hope, leadership that he displayed... He was like a "shadow" the way he moved around the base, like the "Phantom" movie that just came out. He moved. Sometimes he moved very openly. He very seldom had me stop the jeep, even for incoming rounds. There were only one or two situations that I can remember where he actually said, 'You'd better stop and take cover in the ditch."[1354]

PFC Craig W. Tourte (HQ/1/13) in 2004, 36 years after the siege battle, wrote: "I was manning the line .. just a hundred yards or so south of the main gate. It was one of those dark dreary nights when you just stand there looking straight ahead at nothing. Exhausted from lack of sleep, C rats, rain and cold, digging and just plain being there, I turned towards a voice behind me who said, 'How is it going, Marine?' I looked up and saw..a Marine.. who had a big broad mustache and was accompanied by another Marine with a radio... He introduced himself as Colonel Lownds. He said he was just seeing how things were going and asked how we were getting along... He smiled, turned away, and continued walking down the trench line... I never expected a colonel to express concern for a lowly PFC... That simple act lifted my spirits and for some reason I felt a lot more secure knowing that the commanding officer was in this with us and was exposing himself to the same dangers the rest of us faced... I am proud of all who served—and of Colonel Lownds, who shared the danger and the pain, and made one lowly PFC feel as if his life was worth something."[1355]

Capt H.J.M. ("Mac") Radcliffe (CO, A/1/9) recalls that after the Alpha Outpost (Hill 64) had been attacked and A/1/9 lost over 30% of its company on 8 February, he had told his troops, "Nobody gets into the Company perimeter I don't know about it." "They called down and said, 'We got somebody coming into your area.' I said, 'Stop him! We had a lot of press people and others coming in. I said, 'Who is it?' They said, 'I don't know who he is, Sir. He has a moustache and cigar and has his radio operator with him.' Well, I knew right away that was Colonel Lownds. He looked at me and said, 'How you doing, Captain?' I said, 'Fine, Colonel.' He said, 'No.' He pulled me aside, away from the radio operator, and said, 'Mac, how you doing?' And I said, 'I'm hanging in there.' And he said, 'I know you will.' And he gave me a cigar. Just that touch. I knew what I'd known before, but reinforced the fact that we had a caring, concerned, intelligent, super Regimental Commander, who knew what the hell it was to 'take it,' 'take it,' 'take it' and bounce back to be a Marine!"[1356]

On one of his walks through the KSCB during the Siege, Colonel Lownds came into the Ponderosa area containing D/1/26 and noticed the men's clothing was getting raggedy. He told George E. Myrick, "Corporal, you get clothes anyway you can get 'em!" "I said, 'Yes, Sir! We stole them off the comm. lines. So I got his shirt. A day or so later, Lownds was again visiting the area, walking around. He saw his shirt, but said nothing at the time. Returning, he simply said, 'Nice shirt, Corporal! You got my sox, too?' and he walked away."[1357]

John Hargesheimer (A/3rd AT Bn) remembers that during the Siege, "I was sent to deliver a message to Col. Lownds. I had to go to the concrete bunker that was his headquarters and was led through the maze to where he was. He was sitting in a chair and he looked exhausted. He didn't look up when I delivered the envelope, but he did thank me. I immediately turned around and left, but it left a lasting impression on me of the enormous responsibility that this one man had to carry and I was humbled. After that experience I prayed every night dur-

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[1354] Conversation with Thomas Buono, 11 June 1996.

[1355] Craig W. Tourte, letter in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #59 (Fall, 2004) pp. 16-17.

[1356] Comments of Col Radcliffe at Khe Sanh Reunion, 9-13 July 1997; reprinted in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #40 (Fall, 1997, p. 13.

[1357] Conversation with George Myrick at Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, St. Louis, Mo., 13 July 1997.

ing the siege for Col Lownds. If anyone needed God's help and strength it was Col. Lownds during the siege."[1358]

While histories of Khe Sanh generally focus on General Giap and General Westmoreland, neither had much to do with Khe Sanh other than in general, strategic ways. It was Colonel Lownds, with his staff, that targeted 95% of all B-52 strikes and generally conducted the entire course of the battle.[1359] *It was Colonel Lownds who had to make the agonizing decisions to abandon Huong Hoa District, to deny entry by the Lao refugees after Lang Vei had been overrun, to place a perimeter of KSCB with machineguns and riflemen pointed into the appended FOB-3 compound (both of the latter due to the possibility of NVA agents which could assassinate Americans as they did on 4 May 1967 when Lang Vei was attacked and the CO and XO killed, which led to the construction of the "new" Lang Vei so that no indigenous were within the inner perimeter, reserved for Americans). Colonel Lownds had very deep feelings for the local Bru (who were prohibited from leaving the Khe Sanh area by the Vietnamese ARVN I Corps Commander, General Xuan Lam). He recalls, "There was an old guy in town. I used to have a bunch of cigars. I'd take a few and put a few in my pocket and stop at his hootch and talk with him—not talk with him—I'd just give him the cigars. He was an old-timer and I took a real liking to him. I often wondered what happened to him."*[1360]

"I took the driver and radio and went back in the hills to a village and saw a little boy standing there, naked and he couldn't speak any English and I couldn't speak any Bru. But he held up something. Now this was way back in the woods. He held it up. And as you know there's plenty of clay there. He made himself a clay helicopter to proportion. He had even gone on to the point of having the machineguns come out of the helicopter at the right spots. I got a picture at home. It's always impressed me that people say they were dumb. They're not dumb; they just never had the chance to have an education."[1361]

Col Lownds was born 4 Oct 1920 in Holyoke, Massachusetts, and graduated in 1938 from Westerly High School, Westerly, Rhode Island, and earned a B.S. in agriculture in 1942 at the University of Rhode Island.[1362] *His father had served in the Army during World War I, but rarely talked about his experiences. "He was just like me: didn't want to impress people; all he would say was [I was] a good boy."*[1363] *A Marine recruiter came to college and half a dozen young men joined the Marine Corps, including Lownds,*[1364] *who was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in October, 1942 in the USMCR and shortly thereafter reported to 4th Marine Division as a Platoon Leader. He was promoted to 1/Lt in July, 1943. During World War II, he saw action as a Platoon Leader with Co. B , 1/24, 4th Marine Division, at Roi-Namur in the Marshall Islands, Saipan in the Marianas, and at Iwo Jima.*[1365] *He was wounded on Saipan and Iwo Jima; one of the wounds involved a shot through the hip*[1366] *and the other a concussion.*

From July 1953 to February, 1954, he served as the Intelligence Officer of 9th Marine Regiment. "When I went in the 9th Marines, I wanted to be the "3" but Colonel [William Kenefick] Jones [the "father of Marine Corps Corps-level amphibious reconnaissance during WW II, later LtGen, and father of James Logan Jones, who served as a Captain at Khe Sanh in May, 1968, and later was Commandant of the Marine Corps] said, 'No.' He had 'Pinky' Saunders and said, 'I'm not going to replace Pinky now, so I'll make you the '2."[1367] *It was at this time that several Privates and PFCs reported in as scouts—Harper Bohr, Jerry Hudson, and Earle Breeding—the first two the S-2 of Regiment and the latter CO of E/2/26 during the Siege.*

He served in Korea with 1st Shore Party Bn of 1st Marine Division. He served as a staff officer at the Armed Forces Special Weapons [nuclear weapons] Project in November, 1954 until October 1957. After being promoted to LtCol in July, 1958, he served as Plans Officer of the 2nd Marine Division and from September, 1964 to July, 1965, as S-3 of 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade during the Santo Domingo involvement, Dominican Republic.[1368] *He was promoted to Col in July, 1965.*

He married the former Jean C. Bruner of Cranston, RI and had 6 daughters and a son. Mrs. Lownds recalls that while Col Lownds was at Khe Sanh during the siege, one of their daughters was in 6th Grade and taunted by her classmates who said her father was a killer—because of the TV coverage. Mrs. Lownds was unaware of this at the time.[1369] *Even high-ranking officers and their*

[1358] Letter from John M. Hargesheimer, 11 August 1997.
[1359] Letter of Capt Mirza M. Baig to Col. F.C. Caldwell, HQMC Historical Branch, 23 December 1968, p. 7. [Baig was the Target Intelligence Officer for 26th Marines Regiment at the time].
[1360] Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 01 September 1994.
[1361] Col Lownds, remarks at Khe Sanh reunion, July, 1997, printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #40 (Fall, 1997), p. 15.
[1362] HQMC, Historical Branch, Biography, "Colonel David E. Lownds, USMC."
[1363] Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 02 October 1994.
[1364] Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 01 September 1994.
[1365] Biography, cited.
[1366] Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 25 August 1990.
[1367] Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 01 September 1994.
[1368] Biography, cited.
[1369] Conversation with Mrs. Jean Lownds, 12 July 1997.

families were not immune from the ill-treatment of many Americans at the time!

The NPIC[1370] reported approximately 55 foxholes at XD897500, seven miles northeast of Khe Sanh. Additionally, in an area approximately one click south of this position were two possible camouflaged rocket positions, one possible rocket position under construction and three automatic weapons positions.[1371] CG, FMFPAC, noted that a bivouac area, possibly that of the 95C Regiment, 325C Division, was reported in this general area on 22 January 1968.[1372]

In other photographic reconnaissance conducted on 29 January, a possible supply and communications area containing 13 grass-covered shelters, two possible communications antennae and approximately 10 underground bunkers, was detected at XD84453876, the former old French concrete home of John and Carolyn Miller, the Wycliffe Bible Translators (who had departed Khe Sanh at the strong recommendation of Col Lownds in early January).[1373] This information reflects why the patrol to Hill 471 encountered such resistance!]

30 January 1968

BARMMER, LCPL Timothy Michael	**B/3rd Recon**
MARIZ, 1/Lt Robert J	**HQ 26 Mar**
VASQUEZ, SGT Jesus Roberto	**EOD**

At 301145H, the KSCB received one incoming 122mm rocket from the northwest[1374] killing 1/Lt Robert J. Mariz.

The Top of BRAVO Company, 3rd Recon, was in the by-now-mostly-demolished company office in a plywood hardback near the regimental COC along with a couple clerks. "We didn't spend too much time in there. A rocket came in, hit just to the west of us a little, and it threw shrapnel through that old company office. It got both clerks. It blew the fingers off one of the clerks, a red-headed man and hit the other one in the leg. I was standing right in the middle of them, and everything missed me. I don't know how that happened. Anyway, I found out that Lieutenant Mariz had just come up out of the regimental bunker and was walking right past the recon office there when that rocket hit, and that's where he was killed."[1375]

Kevin Macaulay, a radioman in BRAVO Company, 3rd Recon, recalls the incident: "This brand new Lieutenant—he'd been in country maybe two days—had just exited the [regimental] COC bunker. His utilities were perfectly clean. His flak jacket was green where the rest of ours were red because of the clay. His helmet liner and helmet cover were perfectly green. His jungle boots were the bright green and the dark black that characterizes the jungle boots. And he walked out of the COC bunker and right into the middle of this barrage. He was wounded extremely severely by this 122mm rocket that came in, and we saw him lying on the ground. One of his feet was at a totally impossible angle; his foot was almost severed, and there was a big pool of blood around him. We were already carrying our company clerk, a fellow by the name of [LCPL Ronald D.] Coleman out of the company office who had taken shrapnel from the same round. Coleman lost, I believe, the major portion of all his fingers on both hands, plus he had a gaping wound over his right kidney. It looked, as we loaded him on the stretcher, that he was in bad shape, but I believe he survived. His kidney, I think, was destroyed though; luckily we have two of them. We ran Coleman up to Charlie Med and then we came back and there was a group around this poor Lieutenant. As we were loading him onto the stretcher, Colonel Lownds came up out of the COC bunker and he spotted us there. Immediate recognition came upon his face as he saw this poor Lieutenant lying, and Colonel Lownds watched us as we picked him up and took him to the aid station. We came back with the empty stretcher which was now totally covered with blood. Colonel Lownds looked over to us and yelled, 'Hey Marine, how's he doing?' And I looked back over to Colonel Lownds and I shook my head. And you could see the look that came across Colonel Lownds' face; you could see how visibly upset he was by this man's death. It was one of the few times that I had seen Colonel Lownds and had direct conversation with him. I had seen him numerous times in the COC bunker, but it was the first time I had ever really spoken to him, and it just gave me the impression that the man really cared. Not only did he care about the entire base—the worry that he had on his mind that we had anywhere between ten to forty thousand NVA around us, but he was concerned about the individual. And he was visibly shaken by this man's death."[1376]

Robert Mariz, born 9 July 1930, had enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1948.[1377] In 2002, one of his daughters wrote: "My dad was very special to me and his memory is

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[1370] NPIC=National Photographic Interpretation Center, Washington, D.C.

[1371] XD898497, XD898495, XD897496, XD896495, and XD897495. Ref: Initial scan of YANKEE TEAM MISSION YT 6009S of 29 Jan 1968, in III MAF COC 151525Z/Feb68, NPIC 3010, in III MAF COC Journal and File 15/16 Feb 1968 #330.

[1372] FMFPAC 180257Z/Feb68, SITREP #1055.

[1373] 7647 ReconTechSq TanSonNhutAB 310925Z/Jan68, IPIR MSN #AM 4436, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 01/02Feb68 #3.

[1374] 26Mar 301015Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #363.

[1375] Conversation with James Walsh, 23 September 1989.

[1376] Conversation with Kevin Macaulay, 22 August 1984.

[1377] Don Ward, *The Faces Behind the Names*, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1996, p. 262.

very strong in my mind and in my heart. I know I am lucky to have loved him and known him for the years that I had with him. I was 13 at the time that he died. We lived in Oceanside, California. We finished out that school year and then moved to Minnesota (always considered our home state) that summer. My mom has never remarried and still loves him very much. I have a sister, Pati, who was 10 at the time... He was only at Khe Sanh about 2 days when he died. He had been a courier out of Okinawa for 6 months before going to Khe Sanh. He had traveled to Vietnam as a courier, but at Khe Sanh he would have been permanently stationed until August or September. He would have had 20 years in the Marines as of April in 1968. He had also served in Korea when he was young and was at the Chosen Reservoir. I was named after the Marine Corps although my name is spelled differently. If I'd been a boy (I was told) I would have been named Gung Ho or Semper Fi, but I think that was a joke. The Marine Corps was important to him as was his country. He believed in it."[1378]

His daughter, Maureen (Mariz) Hudak, wrote the following to the Vietnam Memorial in D.C. to be placed there as a memorial for Father's Day, 40 years later:[1379]

A 40 year Father's Day Tribute to My Dad
1st Lt. Robert J. Mariz

My dad, Robert J. Mariz, was the best dad a girl could have. I treasure the memories and the years that I was able to have with my dad, for all of the love that he gave me, and for the things that he taught me in the 12 years that we had together. I was 12 when my dad left for Vietnam. I was 13 years old when he died and my sister, Pati, was 10 years old. The love that he showed me helped me through difficult times in my life. There were many times that I made choices based on knowing that he would have been proud of me. I have so many great memories of him bike riding with me, walking on the beach looking for shells, him teaching me to body surf and to ride the waves, our family picnics, trips in the car as we were being transferred to a new place, playing cribbage together, family board games, and of him helping me with my homework.

I can picture him teaching me how to do the twist or of him giving me rides on his back. He taught me that education was important and told me to study hard so I could get a scholarship. He also taught by example. I remember him often studying so he could further himself in the military. He taught us that good manners at the table and with people were important. Thank yous and thank you notes for gifts we received were expected as was staying at the table until everyone was finished and then asking to be excused. We were taugthtd to say 'yes, mam' and 'yes sir' to adults. He taught me about honesty, respect, honor, integrity, and to stand up for what you believe in. He taught us to do the 'right' thing even when it is not always easy. He worked hard and enjoyed life. He had a very playful and fun side to him. His youngest sister, Maryanne, once told me that when he came home to visit his mom and siblings (when he was first in the Marines), that it was like a visit from Santa Claus as he always made things special by bringing home gifts for the younger siblings or by helping his mom fix something in the house.

It was fun to hear that from her as my dad was that special to me, too. My mom and my dad met while they were both in the Marine Corps. I was even named after the Marines (Maureen), but with a different spelling. Luckily, I was a girl or I may have been named Gung Ho or Semper Fi.

My dad was a career Marine. He would have had 20 years in the year that he died. He was killed during the TET offensive in 1968 in Khe Sanh. My dad was very proud of being a Marine and I was proud of him. I don't know how he would have felt about the war since 1968 was a turning point for the war, but I do know that he believed in what he was doing. He honored his call to service and believed in his country. For that reason, I will forever feel that he did not die in vain. There is not one person in the world that could ever confince me of anything other than that. It is hard to imagine all that has happened in the 40 years that have gone by since he died. Occasionally, I have had dreams that he came home after all of these years... In reality, I know those dreams will never happen, so I cling to the memorsies I have of him that are real and very special. I loved my dad with all of my heart! Below is a poem I wrote about my dad many years ago..

MY FATHER, ROBERT MARIZ
Written April 4, 1971

Lover of life
Believer in right
Leader of men
Sponge of knowledge
Foundation of strength
Built of faith
Husband, father, and friend
All these things have passed before us
In one human soul
The soul lives on
In our hearts and minds
We'll never forget the life he had
Or the life he gave
Our memories are beautiful
We were one
He is a part of our life
Every day in spirit
Even though...
He is no longer present to
Claim the day his.

[1378] Letter from Maureen (Mariz) Hudak, 21 April 2002.
[1379] Contained in her letter of 17 July 2008.

It makes us realize the
Days are numbered—
We too must live
Each day as he did,
Caring and loving each precious
Moment before us.

At 301230H, EOD (FLSG-A) the ammo dump received incoming rounds.[1380] The barrage of rockets ignited a stack of Grade III projectiles in ASP #1, all but a few of which were high explosive.[1381] Master Gunnery Sergeant John P. Driver, Master Sergeant George J. Edwards, Gunnery Sergeant Donald H,. McIntyre, Sgt Jesus R. Vasquez, Sgt Alvin E. Sittner, and 1/Lt Eugene L. Keiter entered ASP #1 to extinguish the fire to prevent mass detonation of the stack which could have caused widespread damage and extensive injury to men in the surrounding area. Sgt Vasquez ran for the fire truck as GySgt McIntyre ran to the men in exposed positions to warn them.[1382] The last detonating round beat down the flames, foam was applied, then water. Then, MGySgt John P. Driver noticed a small fire about 10 feet to the side of the stack, and upon investigation discovered a 81mm mortar round in the middle of some burning trash which he kicked clear of the fire, called a warning, and went for a fire hose. Sgt Vasquez, who was wearing barbed wire gloves, picked up the round to toss it into a crater, the walls of which would have absorbed the blast had the round detonated. As he leaned over the crater while tossing the round, it exploded in his arms, giving him mortal wounds.[1383]

At 301650H, Co B, 3rd Recon received four 122mm rockets from the southwest resulting in 1 KIA and 5 WIA (evacuated).[1384] The Marine who was killed, LCPL Timothy Michael Barmmer, had endeared himself to many and died while saving others. The Platoon Commander of 3rd Platoon of Co B, 3rd Recon Bn, Craig Swanson, tells the story: "..he was killed because he saved others... Those of you who were there remember that we could hear very clearly when the incoming was on the way. There was a distinct 'thunk,' which we all learned to identify very quickly.. As I remember, we had about 5 seconds to find cover whenever we heard that dreadful sound. On a day like any other day during the siege, Corporal Barmmer and a handful of other Marines were standing around outside their bunker, when they heard that familiar sound. Barmmer quickly started hustling all the Marines around him into the bunker. The entrance to the bunker was small, and only 1 man could go through it at a time. While Barmmer may have been the closest to the bunker [entrance], he insured that every other Marine in his group got into the bunker before him—grabbing them, pushing them, pulling them. Everyone got into the bunker in time except Lance Corporal Barmmer. The shell hit near him killing him, before he could get in."[1385]

Also receiving major wounds in this incident was Barmmer's friend, LCPL James Kevin McCann, who died 03 February 1968 of wounds received in this incident. "Timmy and Jimmy were inseparable. Where one was, the other was. The day that they got hit, they got hit together. The artillery round came at the bunker, and whether they did it knowingly or did it unknowingly, they shielded the round from going into the bunker, and they died within a week of each other. They were hit at the same time and medevaced at the same time."[1386]

One of the Corpsmen in Bravo Company, 3rd Recon Bn, "Doc" R. David. Hagewood, was in the bunker and fondly remembers Timmy Barmmer: "Tim and I had a special relationship. He took me under his wing when I got there and showed me a lot of the ropes, and taught me the things you can do and can't do, and how to survive—more or less the short cuts. When Tim got killed, he died in my arms. He died trying to get someone else in the bunker during incoming. We were walking down the street and incoming started in and we all started to a bunker. You could only get so many in the door at one time. Tim was standing there literally throwing people in the door. I was next to the last one in, and Tim would have been the last one in. About the time he jumped, he got hit. Tim held a special place in my heart because of the kind of person he was: he was big and he was rough and he wanted to be a lot tougher than he was. He was just a super nice guy but he took me under his wing, taught me how to pack my pack, and what I needed to carry, and what I didn't need to carry. He didn't have to do that. As soon as I got in, I turned around and he more or less fell in. He just collapsed, and then I pulled him into the bunker with us, away from the open doorway and did what I could, but he didn't live very long."[1387]

In a letter PFC Roger A. Howes wrote his mother from Khe Sanh: "Yesterday we were sitting in our bunker eating C rations and a rocket came in about three feet

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[1380] 26Mar 301015Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #363. The SITREP notes only WIA, no KIA, and states "Not added to casualty totals." The official designation of the unit is: Ammunition Company, Supply Battalion, First Force Service Regiment, Force Logistic Command. FLSG-A=Force Logistics Supply Group ALFA (there was also a BRAVO).

[1381] Statement of 1/Lt Eugene L. Keiter in Navy Cross file of Sgt Jesus R. Vasquez. Grade III refers to damaged, unusable munitions. ASP=Ammunition Supply Point.

[1382] Statement of GySgt Donald H. McIntyre in Navy Cross file of Sgt Jesus R. Vasquez.

[1383] Statement of MGySgt John P. Driver in Navy Cross file of Sgt. Jesus R. Vasquez; Navy Cross Citation of Sgt Jesus R. Vasquez.

[1384] 26Mar 301015Z/Jan68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #363.

[1385] Letter from Craig Swanson, 20 March 1997. (Printed in Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay*, Issue #40 (Fall, 1997), p. 29.

[1386] Conversation with Scott Miller, 18 November 1986.

[1387] Conversation with David Hagewood, 11 June 1988.

from it. Huck (Tim's nickname), Doc, Mac and Zeke were outside heating chow. Huck tried to push them in like the big stupid loveable guy he was and took the blast and was killed instantly. The other three are in serious condition and sent back to the States. My God, what a dear friend we've lost. Huck was big and big hearted. He could be gruff yet gentle. We loved him like a brother and he left an impression that could never be forgotten. Everyone in our company could not help but like him. He was first to help a new guy coming in. He was the first one to welcome me here. This place can never be the same without him. God had some purpose in it I know, but Oh God, will we miss him. Could you do me a very great favor and have a Mass said for Huck. His name is Timothy Barmmer. Thanks Mom, so much."[1388]

Kevin Macaulay remembers that Tim Barmmer consoled him initially when his friend, "Junior" Reather died. "There's a picture, published on the West Coast of me kneeling on the ground with my helmet in front of me, sobbing. Timmy has got his hand on me, behind my head and the other hand on my shoulder trying to console me after Reather died. And two days later, I was about 15 feet away from Timmy when a 122 came in, blew him apart."[1389]

[*During the month of January, 1968, B Co., 3d Recon Bn, suffered 10 USMC KIA, 1 USMC DOW, 53 USMC WIA, 1 USN KIA, and 3 USN WIA (one twice).*[1390]]

31 JANUARY 1968

FLAHIVE, CAPT William Joseph, Jr.	MACTU-62
GUTHRIE, SP4 Steven Allen, Jr.	1/44 Arty
HUDSON, LCPL Roy	A/1/26
WRIGHT, LCPL O'Neal	A/1/9

At 1442H, SP4 Guthrie and Cpl Knick from the Army guns on the KSCB were on top of their bunker. While Cpl Knick was holstering his .38 caliber pistol, one of Guthrie's arms accidentally hit the pistol causing it to discharge into Guthrie's head. Guthrie was taken to Charlie Med and further evacuated to DaNang in very critical condition.[1391]

"At 0830 5 or 6 82mm mortars hit, 2 or 3 in our [CBMU 301 Det B] area, wounding Frye and LeBlanc just slightly, thank God (both have returned to duty), and another landed near the MACTU tower and killed Capt Bill Flahive. I was near our area and just hit the deck and crawled to a hole. I'm real sorry about Bill—he only had about 40 more days to do—but I don't think about it much. He never knew what hit him—it could happen to any of us at any time."[1392]

A relative of Flahive writes: "William Flahive was born on Dec 5, 1943. He attended Mt. St. Michael Grammar School in the Bronx, N.Y. He attended La-Salle Military Academy on L.I. and he graduated from Fairfield University in Conn. He was commissioned a 2nd Lt in the Marines in 1965. His dad, William Flahive, was in the Army in World War II and was wounded in action. His mom, Juanita Flahive still resides in NYC right next to the twin towers of the World Trade Center, which were attacked on 9/11/01 and destroyed. I named my first son William Flahive after my cousin William when he was born on 8/1/69. Until this day we Flahive's are very proud of our cousin, Capt. William Flahive. He paid the ultimate sacrifice for his country. We know it was not in vain. He loved the Marine Corps. William Flahive was the first Flahive to also graduate college and had a great career ahead of him. For whatever reason we know God had other plans for Capt. William Flahive and decided to call him home and start a new career in heaven. Till this day I wear a military bracelet of my cousin William who was KIA at Khe Sanh."[1393]

[*As of 31 January 1968, there are 226 USMC officers, 5,294 USMC enlisted, 10 USN officers, and 247 USN enlisted as part of Marine Corps units serving at Khe Sanh.*[1394] *From 20-31 January, a total of 13,457 rounds of artillery were fired, complemented by 1,087 Marine, 811 US Navy, and 2,092 Air Force fixed wing attack sorties and 288 SAC B-52 sorties.*[1395] *USAF deliveries to Khe Sanh averaged 250 tons per day. The C-130s averaged 18 landings daily in the same period. USAF C-130s delivered a single-day high of 310 tons on 27 January, the highest for the Vietnam campaign to date. According to USMC statistics, Marine Corps C-123s and C-130s hauled 3600 tons into Khe Sanh and CH-53 helicopters carried in 565 tons.*[1396]

John Donnelly of the Newsweek *staff wrote that the Marines at Khe Sanh "..were bearing the ordeal with their traditional show of humor and guts. But their casualties were mounting steadily with each new bombardment, and with punctured sandbags, burned-out shelters, shreds of wire and pieces of shattered equipment visible every-*

[1388] Letter sent to Viola Howes from Roger Howes.
[1389] Conversation with Kevin Macaulay, 22 August 1984.
[1390] 3rd Recon Bn ComdC, January 1968.
[1391] 1/26 ComdC January, 1968, S2/S3 Log, 31 January 1968, Ser #11. SP4 Guthrie was KIA this date.
[1392] Ens Martin Kux, Diary entry for 31 January 1968. MCTU=Marine Corps Traffic Unit; is the air tower for the airstrip.
[1393] Letter from James Flahive, 23 March 2003.
[1394] FMFPAC 030406Z/Feb68, SITREP #1040.
[1395] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, January, 1968, p. 11.
[1396] Bowers, Ray L., *Tactical Airlift*, Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, USAF, 1983, p. 299.

where. Khe Sanh was shaping up into another version of hell in a very small place."[1397]

President Johnson at his news conference, 02 February 1968, stated: "..we may at this very moment be on the eve of a major enemy offensive in the area of Khe Sanh."[1398] *A few days later, on 17 February, he said: "The eyes of the nation and the eyes of the entire world—the eyes of history itself—are on that little, brave band of defenders who hold the pass at Khe Sanh and the area that is around it. We do not doubt the outcome."*[1399] *A CIA aerial reconnaissance and photo interpretation expert, notes: "Of all the engagements of the Vietnam War, President Lyndon B. Johnson.. developed a special relationship with the men of the 26th Regiment.. who defended the base during that crucial period."*[1400] *In order to appreciate better the situation as indicated by the hundreds of photographs taken by the SR-71 flying at 80,000 feet and 2,100 miles an hour that arrived in Washington daily as well as intelligence cables, Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence, had Arthur C. Lundahl, Director of the National Photographic Interpretation Center, prepare a terrain model of the Khe Sanh area. The model, prepared in only 3 days, was referred to as "The President's Sandbox" and was utilized daily by the President to appreciate the situation at Khe Sanh. "During the day, he would frequently view the model which was updated daily with information from reconnaissance and other sources. Always, he would ask about the 26th Marines."*[1401]

Perhaps the pilots and crew of the UH-1Es of VMO-6 were greatly relieved at the change of their radio call-sign from "CADAVER" to "SEAWORTHY" as of 01 February 1968.[1402]

Aerial photographs taken 01 February disclosed tanks at the intersection of Routes 9H and 92C (XD50404022 and XD49354062), traveling south and east.[1403]]

01 FEBRUARY 1968

SCOTT, GySgt Jeremiah I/3/26

At 1013H, I/3/26 on Hill 881-South received 2 rounds of incoming, believed to be 60mm mortars.[1404] At 0115H, they received 2 rounds of incoming 120mm mortars resulting in 3 WIA (evaced) and at 1245H received another 120mm incoming round.[1405] Between 1645H and 1715H, I/3/26 took 4 rounds of 120mm mortar during medevac pickup and re-supply. Again, at 1745H, they received 2 incoming 120mm mortars. They received one 120mm mortar at 1855H and 1910H. At 2000H, they received 4 incoming mortars from approximately XD774436 resulting in 1 KIA and 2 WIA (evaced).[1406]

The 325C Division had 35 82mm mortars, 4 recoilless rifles, and 4 120mm mortars.[1407] NVA records state 184 rounds of 120mm mortar were fired during their Phase I (20 Jan – 07 Feb 1968) and 403 fired during their Phase II (10 February – 31 March 1968).[1408]

02 FEBRUARY 1968

ALFANO, 1/Lt Rodney Arthur	**37th SigBn**
BETTS, SP5 Albert Leon	**362nd Sig Co**
HUBER, SP4 Leon Fairden	**544th Sig Det**
RANEY, SP4 Steven Leon	**362nd Sig Co**

[All from 1st Signal Brigade]

Operating a TRACK-129 mobile troposphere scatter terminal (a radio link between KSCB and Phu Bai) as well as a teletype circuit to NKP [Nakhon Phanom Air Base], Thailand (for a link to Task Force ALFA, the electronic sensor headquarters), a detachment from the 37th Signal Battalion, 1st Signal Brigade, arrived on KSCB in mid-January. Being unannounced and unexpected, the TROPO van was set up without bunkering, on top of the ground; its large, prominent lollipop-shaped antenna making it a good target, and the only way to link the regimental comm. center to it was through 5 pair of cable over a distance of about a quarter mile between the van and the center.[1409]

[1397] *Newsweek* 71:6 (05 Feb 1968) 33f.
[1398] Lyndon B. Johnson, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, 1968 – 1969*, Vol. 1, p. 156.
[1399] *Ibid.*, p. 240.
[1400] Dino A. Brugioni, "The President, Khe Sanh, and the 26th Marines," *Leatherneck* 49:9 (Sep 1986) 23.
[1401] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[1402] VMO-6 ComdC February 1968, Encl (1), p. 1.
[1403] 6470 ReconTechSq TanSonNhut 020532Z/Feb68, IPIR MSN YT895S, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 02/03Feb68 #372.
[1404] 3rd MarDiv COC 020830Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #370.
[1405] 3rd MarDiv COC 021330Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #371.
[1406] 3rd MarDiv COC 021520Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #372.
[1407] *Tong Ket Tac Chien Phao Binh* [Artillery Tactical Operations Reports]. Classified *MAT* [Secret]. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison. Hanoi: Artillery Branch, People's Army of Viet Nam, 1985, p. 136. The Soviet M38 120mm mortar can fire 12-15 rounds per minute, each round weighs 15.4 KG. It had a maximum range of 5,700M and a minimum of 460M. Weight of the weapon in traveling position is 500KG (1100 lb.) and has a crew of 6 men.
[1408] *Ibid.*, p. 136.
[1409] Comments of Maj John A. Shepherd, HQMC Oral History Tape #2621. Maj Shepherd was the Communications Officer of 26th Marines Regiment.

The Officer in Charge of the detachment was 1/Lt Rodney Arthur Alfano, from Boston. The Marines of Co D/1/26 enjoyed a special relationship with them, and Lt Alfano readily shared what special foods he had with them. He even prepared a meal of shrimp and a home-made cocktail sauce for the officers of DELTA Co, 1/26.[1410]

SP4 William Hawkinson from this unit had just walked away from their area when, at 1605H KSCB received four incoming 122mm rockets screeching in from the west causing 4 KIA and 10 WIA (evaced).[1411] As the rockets exploded, Hawkinson dove into a Marine bunker and, a few seconds later, another Marine dove into the bunker exclaiming, "The whole Army bunker got wiped out. What a mess!"[1412] The 122mm rocket had entered an opening in the bunker and detonated inside it.[1413] Hawkinson immediately rushed outside to find his buddies—buddies no more, but was restrained by the Marines who began to console him as only brothers in battle can.[1414]

Two Marines of Co B/1/26, LCPL Johnny F. Bellina and PFC Richard G. Cruz, were in their trench during the incoming, about 30 feet from the Army van. Bellina recalls: "It was coming in hot and heavy and I guess I got rescue stuff in my blood, but I ran up there and their bunker had caved-in, and I was digging them out during that incoming and dug one of them up—got his head out, started to give him mouth to mouth. And then found another man. Then when it slacked up, others came to help. One of them was definitely dead. I'll never forget: I saw his hand sticking out of that red dirt and he had a wedding ring on. I will never forget that."[1415]

One of the Marine officers desperately fought back tears; he knew the Army officer as a friend. "I will write his wife," he muttered.[1416]

The three Army signalmen in the struck bunker all subsequently died from their wounds. There were 4 KIA, 1 WIA. Specialist Hawkinson, together with the assistance of 2 Marines, kept the system on line for 40 hours until replacements arrived.[1417]

1/Lt Alfano, born in Boston, Massachusetts, attended St. Lazarus School in East Boston and St. Mary's Junior and Senior High School in Lynn. He played four years varsity baseball in high school, graduated in the Class of 1966 from Providence College, and was commissioned upon graduation. He was married.[1418]

03 FEBRUARY 1968

McCANN, LCPL James Kevin	**B/3rd Recon**
TAYLOR, CPL Bobby Allen	**B/1/9**

LCPL McCann DOW received when Timmy Barmmer was KIA on 30 January (*q.v.*). Top Walsh recalls McCann's situation slightly differently. He recalls that McCann and several others were out in front of their bunker late in the afternoon when the round came in. McCann's foot was blown off and he was medevaced, but later died.[1419]

At 031230, A/1/9 (XD823416) spotted approximately 40 NVA moving east to west at XD840381 believed to be carrying a mortar tube. The Marines fired 60mm mortar and artillery missions on the NVA with unknown results. Then, at 1340H, 1/9 (XD827416) received four rounds of 60mm mortar and 3 rounds of 82mm mortar incoming from XD821402 resulting in the death of Cpl Bobby TAYLOR, 4 WIA (evaced), and 1 WIA (minor).[1420]

Official records for 04 February indicate a KIA from FOB-3 during a patrol to Hill 471;[1421] no American KIAs from FOB-3 are indicated in the roster of those on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., for this date, however. It may be that the KIA was a Bru member of the patrol.

05 FEBRUARY 1968

BOGARD, PFC Jack Crosby	**E/2/26**
HAMEL, PFC Wayne Douglas	**Hq 26Mar**
LAMITE, LCPL Tyrone Francis	**E/2/26**
LOWERY, PFC James Allen	**A-1-40**
MOLETTIERE, LCPL Joseph Anthony	**2/26**
ORNELAS, SGT John Carl	**FLC (POL)**
RIMSON, PFC Martin Luther	**E/2/26**
SELDERS, PVT William Dean	**K/3/26**

[1410] Ernest Spencer, *Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man*, California: Corps Press, 1987, pp. 107-109.
[1411] 3rd MarDiv 130625Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #375
[1412] John T. Wheeler, "Life in the V Ring," Associated Press release, 12 February 1968, reprinted in Peter Braestrup, *Big Story*, Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1977, Vol. 2, p. 143.
[1413] HQ, 37th Signal Battalion (SPT), Operational Report of 37th Signal Battalion (Spt) for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1), 8 May 1968, p. 1.
[1414] Wheeler, *op,. cit.*
[1415] Conversation with Johnny Bellina, 08 February 1987.
[1416] Spencer, *op. cit.*
[1417] MajGen Thomas Matthew Rienzi, *Communications – Electronics, 1962-1970*, Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Army, 1972, pp. 108-109. Betts' MOS, 26L, was "Tactical Microwave System Repairman;" Huber's MOS, 52B, was "Power Generation Equipment operator/repairman; Raney's MOS, 32E, was "Fixed Plant Carrier Repairman (Communications)."
[1418] *Obit.*, The Boston *Globe*, Fri., 16 February 1968, p. 34.
[1419] Conversation with James Walsh, 23 September 1989. He opines that McCann died from shock; it could have been infection or loss of blood or some other reason.
[1420] 3rd MarDiv 130605Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #379.
[1421] 3rd MarDiv 041745Z/Feb68, Spot Report #178, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 03/04 Feb 1968 #309; 26Mar ComdC, February 1968, Encl (1), p. 7.

SMITH, PFC Alan Ray	**E/2/26**
STAPLES, LCPL Louis Franklin	**E/2/26**
STEVENSON, PFC Charles Robert	**E/2/26**
TAYLOR, PFC Ernest Vernon	**E/2/26**

That the battle at Khe Sanh was subsequently to be won by something so secret that it could not be included in the official siege battle at Khe Sanh published shortly after the battle, something of which all but a few knew nothing, was to become determinative in the battles of this date. The TOP SECRET NOFORN project of Joint Task Force 728 directed by General Starbird involved electronic eavesdropping on the enemy—an anti-filtration barrier to detect and monitor vehicles and troop movements. Although developed by DCPG [Defense Communications Planning Group], it had nothing to do with communications. Even as late as June, 1968, the South Vietnamese were unaware of the electronic sensors, and only a handful of Thai were briefed under the very close supervision of the U.S. State Department.[1422]

The gathering, ominous threat to Khe Sanh prompted Gen Westmoreland on 18 January to request a diversion of sensors from Laos (where they had originally been destined to monitor NVA infiltration via the Ho Chi Minh Trail network) to Khe Sanh. Task Force ALPHA, the sensor headquarters for southeast Asia, stationed at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base in Thailand, sent representatives to meet with Major General Tompkins to brief him on what they could accomplish.[1423] U.S. Navy OP-2E aircraft of VO-67 along with CH-3s, dropped several strings of sensors around Khe Sanh; several of the OP-2E aircraft were shot down (on 17 and 27 February).[1424]

"Many veterans of Khe Sanh owe their lives to these sensors, even though they may have been completely unaware of them."[1425] The sensors "..turned the tide by hammering these people [NVA] prior to their jump-off points. Several times that we knew, or we figure.. that these people were in assembly areas and actually were preparing for the attack and this was given to us through these sensor devices."[1426] Capt Moyers S. Shore, II, in his original manuscript wrote: "Almost every major attack against the 26th Marines was picked up well in advance by the sensors.."[1427] The sensor program at Khe Sanh was costly, "..somewhere in the neighborhood of a billion dollars."[1428] Lives saved by them far exceeded the billion dollars, and Colonel Lownds, testifying before a Congressional committee investigating the sensor program stated that the number of Marines killed at Khe Sanh may well have doubled were it not for these devices.[1429]

NVA forces had previously attempted to take Hill 861 in the morning hours of 21 January. The next day, Co E/2/26 moved to and occupied the small knoll to the east, Hill 861-A, a position which had not been developed with trenches, bunkers, and perimeter wire to that point. (When 2/26 arrived at Khe Sanh on 16 January 1968, Col Lownds briefed the officers and staff in the regimental bunker saying, "We must hold." Noticing Captain Earle G. Breeding among those gathered, he blurted, "Won't we, Captain Breeding?" To the astonishment of all those present, Breeding, with the bravado that tense moments generates, immediately replied, "Sir, with ECHO Company, Khe Sanh will be held!" PFC Breeding had been a scout when (then) Major Lownds was S-2 of 9th Marines in 1953.)[1430] Hill 861-A was the linchpin to the defense of Khe Sanh. "Obviously they would have to take 861-Alpha before they could take 861. Had they taken those two [hills] they could have isolated 881, and this would have allowed the North Vietnamese to look right down on top of 558, which was the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines minus one company. They were well-dug in and defended, but they would have been just sitting ducks. And so they would have to take 861-Alfa and then 861 in probably a 2-prong attack. And then they would have owned that piece of territory and they would have looked down to Khe Sanh proper. They could have annihilated 558 from that position, and that would have opened up the entire valley for a massive onslaught of even armor, heavy armor, to come down that valley and just roar right into Khe Sanh. They would have to (in my opinion) take 861-Alfa to be able to take and hold Khe Sanh."[1431]

The 4th of February had been a normal day for the Marines of ECHO Company, 2/26, atop Hill 861-Alfa. "I remember it was real hot, and we'd been stringing wire and so forth, and it was just kind of a normal type day.

[1422] Comments of Col. F. N. Pippin, 24 June 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2907. Col. Pippin was Chief of the Evaluation Branch of J-3, MACV, 30 June 1967 – 23 June 1968.

[1423] Van Staaveren, Jacob, *History of Task Force Alpha*, Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand: 7/13 Air Force, 13th Air Force, Pacific Air Forces, 1969, p. 49.

[1424] *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 58.

[1425] GySgt Jerry Perdue, "This SCAMP Plays Havoc With the Enemy Scamps," *Pacific Stars & Stripe,* Fri., 14 Sep 1973, p. 7.

[1426] Comments of LtCol Edward J.A. Castagna, HQMC Oral History Tape #2770. LtCol Castagna was S-3 of 26th Marines.

[1427] Shore, Moyers S., II, *The Battle of Khe Sanh*, (original MS), p. 86. This was deleted from the published version due to the security classification given to the sensor program at the time of publication.

[1428] Comments of Col. F.N. Pippin, 24 June 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2907.

[1429] U.S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, Electronic Battlefield Subcommittee, 91st Congress, 2nd Session, Nov., 1970, *Investigation into Electronic Battlefield Program*, p. 95.

[1430] Conversation with Earle G. Breeding, 29 May 1985 and 18 July 1984.

[1431] Interview of Earle G. Breeding by Duon Rose, 13 July 1989.

As night fell, we were on our normal two or three hour watches—one may sleeping, one man awake. As usual, the fog had done set in where you couldn't see past the wire, just real heavy, dense fog."[1432] Capt Earle G. Breeding, CO of E/2/26, recalls: "The night was very, very dark. Literally, you could not see a white handkerchief held in front of your face. It was totally black. I think the moon phase was zero, and we were heavily fogged in. We could not see anything."[1433]

Major Mirza Munir Baig[1434] began is 12-hour watch in the Khe Sanh FSCC at midnight alarmed at a pattern of electronic sensor activations. One large troop movement was detected along the river some four clicks north of 861 and 5 ½ clicks north of 881S (XD76824976 to XD79684807); another moved from a position 5 ½ clicks northeast of 861 to the other movement (XD80904795 to XD82094847); a third movement was also to the north of 861 (XD80904795 to XD82094847).[1435] Throughout the night of 3/4 and 4/5 February, sensor activations (generating SPOTLIGHT reports) indicated numerous heavy troop movements along a ridge to the northwest of Hill 881S. Baig evaluated these as at least two infantry battalions of NVA soldiers (or an equivalent number of porters) who reached a point 3000 meters to the northwest of Hill 881S from the direction of the known location of the 325C Division.[1436]

By 0100H, 05 February, all sensors were quiet and Capt. Baig waited. "I could not prove that which I was beginning to believe. The forces had either moved off the line of sensors and the ridges away from Hill 881-S (therefore, no danger) or they were moving towards the hill (therefore, grave danger..). I plumped for the second explanation; for this fell neatly within the [NVA] Lieutenant's remarks."[1437] The total number of enemy troops as reported by the sensors amounted to a possible 1,500 to 2,000 men. It was now 0200H and Baig knew that if it were a NVA regiment, the force would be in regimental column, battalions on line at an interval of 100 meters, standard NVA regimental tactics for a night attack. There would be a last minute reconnaissance and the attack would be in waves. Colonel Lownds concurred in Baig's evaluation, and LtCol Hennelly, the FSC [Fire Support Coordinator] and CO of 1/13, ordered about 30 minutes of fire from five batteries within KSCB and 4 batteries of 175s to pour continuous fire into a 1,000 x 300 meter target box to the south of Hill 881-S to a point where a large force, moving at 2 KM per hour (NVA rate of march in darkness and mist) would reach. (Later, LtCol Peese, USAF, at NKP told Baig that the sensors recorded the voices of hundreds of men running in panic through the darkness and heavy fog in a southerly direction. Seismic sensors had gone wild.[1438]) The Marines defending 881-South had been spared a regimental assault.

Upon Baig's recommendation, artillery fired 350 rounds of light and medium artillery into a 500 x 300 meter box while four batteries of 175mm guns at Camp Carroll and the Rockpile fired 200 rounds along 1,000 meter curtains at each end of the east-west box. The enemy force would still have half an hour march to reach 881-South. 0300H came and went; euphoria pervaded the FSCC. "To this day I regret what followed. It never oc-

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[1432] Taped comments of Larry E. Jackson, late November, 1984.

[1433] Interview of Earle G. Breeding by Duon Rose, 13 July 1989.

[1434] 26th Marines Target Intelligence Officer (TIO). Baig was born in Panchgani, India, 13 July 1932. His amazing grasp of the total battlefield situation enabled him to direct strikes against major headquarters, artillery and logistics positions within days of his arrival and destroy them. Educated in Trinity College of Cambridge University in England (a prep school for British officer candidates destined for Sandhurst) and having received a Masters degree at McGill University in Canada, his keen intellect enabled him to devise an interpretation of the large amount of sensor readouts and develop patterns of enemy movement—to direct strikes at where they would be at a certain time; whose adept grasp recommended and devised effective artillery tactics. His father, Osman Baig, established the Pakistan embassies in Canada and the United States as Ambassador and was also the Secretary General of CENTO (Central Treaty Organization (similar to NATO and SEATO). His grand-father, Mirza Imam Abbas Ali Baig, was the first Indian in the British Cabinet of Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and was knighted by the King of England. His great-grandfather was the last defender of the fort at Bijapur, India, a position held by hereditary leadership as a prince. Baig, because of whose efforts so many survived Khe Sanh, was assassinated while serving in the MAAG in Bangkok, Thailand, on 20 April 1971. His mother, Juliette, notes that his name, "Mirza," is Arabic for "prince," "Munir" means "refulgent," and "Baig" is a title "spread from Samarkand along all the Muslim republics of Russia into the Turkish Empire of old and into all the Muslim world but its spelling changes. It started as Beg, became Bek in Turkey, Bey in Arabic. The only other senior title is Pasha." [Letter from Juliette Baig, 19 Feb 2002]. Mr. George Allen, then Deputy SAVA (Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs) at the CIA recalls how Baig personally requested the CIA furnish him with photos the French had taken at Dien Bien Phu in order to study patterns of their entrenching tactics, and how Baig briefed three senior officials at the CIA upon the conclusion of the siege battle at Khe Sanh. [Conversation with George Allen, 21 July 2000].

[1435] 3rd MarDiv 021823Z/Feb68 in III MAF COC Journal and File 02/03 Feb 1968 #343.

[1436] Letter of Mirza M. Baig, quoted by MGen Rathvon McC Tompkins, in *Electronic Battlefield Hearings*, *op. cit.*, p. 84; Letter of Maj Miraza M. Baig, 23 December 1968, HQMC, Historical Division, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.

[1437] Baig letter quoted by Tompkins, cited. Lt La Than Tonc had revealed the plan of attacking Hills 861 and 881S simultaneously as a diversion. The main attack would then approach KSCB from Route 9 to the south.

[1438] Baig letter of 23 December 1968, pp. 4-5, cited.

curred to me that night that the enemy's intent was and always had been to attack Hills 881S and 861 simultaneously. I had forgotten the NVA battle plan. There were no sensors near Hills 861 and 861-A.[1439] The NVA, attacking in 2-battalion strength, assaulted Hill 861-A. "The missing two battalions had been signaled by the sensors and I had, to my shame, completely forgotten them.... Only one battalion actually made a known appearance on the hill... The second battalion, if one there was, was attended to by our one hour of shelling and air strikes, which landed on all the possible assemble/reserve areas at the base of the hill.[1440]

Facing the onslaught of the surviving NVA battalion were the Marines of Co E/2/26. The only indication of anything different that night was a pungent, persistent stink of something like marijuana that filled the air from about midnight to 0200H.[1441] (Maybe it was the stench of smelly troops that had so arduously humped that terrain!)

Then, at 0405H, enemy troops were suddenly in the wire perimeter of 861A, commencing a heavy ground assault supported by a tremendous volley of 82mm mortar fire from XD806448 and XD803447,[1442] during which the majority of the casualties to ECHO Company were sustained.[1443] As the first mortars of the NVA's barrage struck, PFC Larry W. Curado and PFC Martin Luther Rimson were standing about ten feet apart. Both were hit. Rimson was killed; Curado was able to make it to a trench and to the company's medical area,[1444] a crater formed from a 500-pound bomb.[1445]

One group of NVA slid a Bangalore torpedo under the wire of 2/Lt Donald Edmund Russ Shanley's First Platoon, and streamed within the Marine position. "..human waves seemed to move right under their own mortars. They blew our wire and moved right up on us. They seemed to have a good idea what their objective was once they got into the area. Their first RPGs knocked out gun positions and mortars. Some people didn't really have a chance to get under cover when everything hit."[1446] The initial assault, directed against E-1, included the Marines' 60mm mortar and M-60 machinegun.

One of the LPs, PFC Jack Bogard, miraculously made his way back into the lines and was informed that his fighting hole had been knocked out. Under the heavy fire, he dashed to his hole to drag back the wounded PFC Gomez. He then returned under NVA mortar fire to retrieve another buddy, but was killed by automatic weapons fire in the process.[1447] He had been hit by a round in the head, instantly killing him. The E-1 Platoon Commander, Donald Shanley, later noted: "Bogard was just remarkable; out of those guys I knew Bogard the best. He was a very funny man and I felt a good Marine too, and I was pretty blown away by him getting killed."[1448] Staples, Bogard, Smith, and Rimson were all part of Shanley's E-1. "We were pinned down on that trench line. We heard the Gooks laughing as they fired down in the trench line towards us. I heard one man scream out, saying he was hit in the arm, and I heard a Gook laughing."[1449]

"The Vietnamese just come running in like wild people. And then on this point, there were parts of First Squad and I think parts of Second Squad or maybe the Gun Squad. Just immediately they had knocked out our machineguns on that point. That's where they concentrated on coming in our perimeter, and before we even knew what happened most of the guys on the point was gone. They were either killed or wounded. We actually had guys on the point that were fighting with E-tools and just whatever they could use to help themselves."[1450]

"I was down on the point when it got hit. I was inside my hootch and, well, it all started out. I heard one shot go off and I thought that was just somebody, like they thought they saw something in the wire and just fired. And all of a sudden, mortar rounds dropped all around the gun pit and around my hootch. I had one man that got trapped inside this hootch when they busted the lines and myself. I was still inside my hootch and I saw the flashes of light from the inside of my hootch because I had a tunnel leading from my hootch straight to the gun pit, and I seen different colors of light. I didn't know exactly what it was—come to find it was shrapnel flying around inside the gun pit. As I tried to get out my gun pi8t I got right up in it and concussion from one of the rounds knocked me back into the gun pit. I tried to get out again. That's when I see a couple of enemy troops coming up on side of the hill... Then, as soon as the rounds let up, the mortar rounds, I got outside the hootch and got inside the gun pit. I had another hootch right next to me which had another man, PFC Stevenson, in this hootch. They snuck up beside this hootch and dropped a ChiCom inside this hootch and blew him away right there. As for myself, I tried to fire the tube while I was inside the gun pit to get the guys some illumination

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[1439] *Ibid.*.
[1440] Baig letter quoted by Tompkins, cited.
[1441] Taped comments of Larry Jackson, cited.
[1442] 3rd MarDiv 082318Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #385.
[1443] Comments of Capt Earle G. Breeding, March, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2621.
[1444] Comments of PFC Larry W. Curado, April, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.
[1445] Conversation with Earle G. Breeding, 18 July 1984.
[1446] Comments of 2/Lt Aleck J. Bodenweiser, April, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.
[1447] Statement of 2/Lt Donald E. R. Shanley, 18 Feb 1968, in Bronze Star Medal file on PFC Jack C. Bogard.
[1448] Interview of Donald Shanley by Ronald Drez, 14 April 1989.
[1449] Comments of HM3 Richard Lynn Woodard, April, 1968, USMC Oral History Tape #2775.
[1450] Taped comments of Jackson, cited.

because they hit so hard and so fast that nobody know exactly what was going on. I dropped one round in the tube; didn't go off. Come to find out the tube was all busted. It had shrapnel holes went on through it."[1451]

Cpl Thomas J. Eichler thought it unusual for the NVA to shell before light. "Making my way down the trench line I found three of my machinegun crew laying severely wounded. Thinking they had been hit by a mortar shell, I took off my ammunition belt, laid down my rifle and placed one of the wounded Marines on my back. Making my way back through the trench line I suddenly came face to face with a NVA soldier. Instinctively I turned and began running back down the trench line. The NVA soldier opened fire and I could feel the bullets striking me in the back but they were not penetrating. The wounded Marine was absorbing the rounds in his flak jacket. I ran right into another NVA soldier who was firing a rocket down the trench line. With the wounded Marine on my back, I strangled the NVA soldier with the strap from his rocket pouch. During this incident the young Marine on my back who was now close to death was whispering directions in my ear. Funny, I had started out saving his life, now he had saved mine. Then and only then did I realize that we had been overrun. After getting the three Marines to safety, I was in the process of running from position to position telling the Marines to pull back to our secondary position, when I came upon a sight I will never forget as long as I live. Here in one of the holes lay three young Marines who had been blown apart. And on the dirt walls of their hole you could see TEN LONG BLOODY MARKS from the top of the hole to the bottom made by the bloody hands of one of those Marines who had attempted to crawl out before he died."[1452]

PFC Newton D. Lyle recalls that later, "..when the sun finally did come up and we thanked God that the ones of us that had lived God let us live, I had to help pull two of my best buddies out of Corporal Franklin's positions where they'd been killed in their bunkers before they could get out. We got Stevenson out of his bunker. He'd been hit by a ChiCom and was killed instantly by the way it looked because he was really mangled up. We went to the next hole to get 'Reds' out and we could see where 'Reds' had been hit, but was still alive, because he had claw marks on the wall where you could see he had tried to get out."[1453]

Nine minutes after the attack on 861A KSCB artillery began firing all available pieces in support.[1454] The Khe Sanh FSCC fired three phases of artillery, all simultaneous. The first included three batteries of 1/13 firing on the slopes of the hill with a 4th battery concentrating in the area where the enemy movement was thickest and then rolled down the slope to prevent the enemy from retiring or being reinforced. The second phase included 4 batteries of 175mm guns from Camp Carroll and the Rock Pile delivering ordnance along two arms of a broad "V" which embraced the base of the hill from the northeast with the objective of saturating the area wherein the NVA reserve battalion was estimated to be. Slowly the "V" crept up the slopes until it reached a point 200 meters from the wire... The third phase involved rapidly assembling aircraft delivering TPQ-10 controlled air-strikes in the form of 200 and 300 meter ripples dropped outboard of and parallel to the "V" to avoid check fires. Bombs fell on known mortar clusters, possible assembly areas, and through the area to the far rear of the assault battalion. Enemy attack doctrine frequently positions the reserve battalion directly behind the assault unit. At all costs, the FSCC was determined to prevent their juncture. Hence, the multiple bands of fire. The reserve battalion never materialized."[1455]

In addition to artillery, 861-A received significant 81mm mortar support from INDIA Company on 881-South. "Bill Dabney was the real hero. He had 3 81mm tubes. They were further away than the max. range, but he had 20 meters more elevation and this was enough to give him extra range. They fired 1100 rounds out of 3 tubes in 3 hours."[1456] Additionally, there was 106mm recoilless rifle fire from 2/26 at Hill 558.

All during this time, KSCB received an exceptionally heavy volume of incoming rocket, mortar, and suspected artillery fire,[1457] undoubtedly meant to stop our artillery support. "They all did a magnificent job. See, they were getting hit, too. There was a lull for awhile, and I called back. In no uncertain language I told them to get firing again. And very calmly I heard this voice on the other end of the radio saying, 'No matter how many guns we loose, we will support you.' And they started shooting again. They had to take guns off other targets."[1458]

Since the initial mortar barrage on E-1 had knocked out the 60mm mortar there, Cpl Billy E. Drexel, Jr., as Mortar Section Leader, disregarded the heavy, minatory fire from the NVA and led another mortar squad and tube to E-1's position and fired over 300 rounds within 25 meters of the Command Post area. When 2 NVA came to within 30 feet of his position, Cpl Drexel accurately threw a fragmentation grenade, killing both.[1459] Michael

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[1451] Comments of Cpl Eugene J. Franklin (mortar squad, E-1), April, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775

[1452] Letter of Thomas Eichler, postmarked 3 September 1986.

[1453] Comments of PFC Newton D. Lyle, April, 1968, USMC Oral History Tape #1775.

[1454] 26Mar ComdC February, 1968, Encl (1), p. 8.

[1455] Baig letter of 23 December 1968, cited, pp. 3-4.

[1456] Conversation with Earle G. Breeding, 18 July 1984.

[1457] 26Mar ComdC February, 1968, Encl (1), p. 8.

[1458] Interview of Breeding, 13 July 1989, cited; Comments of Earle G. Breeding, 13 July 1989, Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion, Chicago, Il., printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran*, issue #9 (Summer 1989) 7.

[1459] Statement of 2/Lt Donald E.R. Shanley, 19 Feb 1968, in Bronze Star Medal file of Cpl Billy E. Drexel, Jr.

B. DeLaney recalls: "We shifted our tube straight up in an effort to reduce greatly the number of NVA that were fighting to control and overrun 861A. Our mortar crew lay as flat as we could around and in the gun pit so as to still operate our weapon, praying we could survive our own rounds. The spectacle and thought of what we were doing was beyond comprehension. Our crew survived with only minor injuries while producing substantial casualties for the NVA."[1460]

In the midst of the carnage and horror, terror, and fear, a bit of battlefield humor intervened. "While in the trench line at our last defensive perimeter, I was in the process of throwing grenade after grenade out of the position when I thought: this is taking too long. So in my haste to speed up the process I pulled the pin on two grenades and laid them behind the Lieutenant who was directing supporting fire from hill 881. The Lieutenant turned around just as I came to my senses and had barely managed to get the grenades out of the trench line before they exploded. To this day he believes that I saved his life by throwing enemy grenades out of the position. At the time I was afraid to tell him what really happened."[1461]

Michael Worth remembers this grenade throwing by Eichler, "Ike," and feels he should have been recognized by the Medal of Honor: "When we reached the point where the enemy was coming through the wire, Ike [Eichler] unbelievably was standing above the trench line with no regard for his own life, throwing one grenade after another and screaming at the enemy. The rest of us were trying to keep low. Ike was a sitting duck since the hill at this time was like daylight with all the illumination. There must have been an angle of the Lord protecting him. It was a miracle he was not killed. His continued grenade attack plugged the hole up where the enemy was coming through. This enabled the hill finally to be secured. The rest of us felt like if Ike had not plugged the hole up the enemy would of kept pouring in and eventually conquered the hill... We all felt like Ike deserved the Medal of Honor for his uncommon valor and bravery."[1462]

The first assault against Hill 861-Alpha ceased at 0520H.[1463] E-1, under the leadership of Lt Shanley, had pulled his platoon back into supplementary positions, counterattacked, and drove out the NVA that had penetrated the defensive wire.[1464] "We bent the company perimeter around to just north of the aid station and then it became fixed bayonets and we had a bayonet charge. Once we really engaged the enemy that way, it was all our ball game from that point on because a trained Marine rifleman is so much superior to any other rifleman in the world, and I will stake my life on—I did! We pushed them and drove them out."[1465]

At 0616H, the NVA again assaulted Hill 861A.[1466] The NVA assault, made by survivors of the first assault, was quickly beaten back. The reserve battalion never materialized, having been caught in the artillery barrage.[1467] Capt Breeding assumed that the second assault was meant as a distraction so they could retrieve their dead and wounded left outside the wire on the northern sector.[1468] By 0955H the wounded of Hill 861-A had been evacuated and extra medical supplies flown in. At 1430H, a platoon from D/1/26 reinforced Co E on 861-A.[1469] The platoon, D-3, led by 2/Lt Samuel James Hannah, one officer and 36 enlisted Marines, included one with completely white hair who looked at Breeding and asked, "Sir, are you the Company Commander?" "Yes," responded Breeding. "May I speak with you, Sir?" He then related that all the replacements had been told that none of them would get off that hill alive![1470]

The NVA attack had obviously proved the validity of defending this hill outpost,[1471] but the cost was indeed great. Marine losses were 7 KIA and 25 WIA (evacuated).[1472] The Platoon Sergeant of E-1, SSGT McChurty G. Allen, in words that are reminiscent of John Donne's famous lines: "Everyone of the men that were lost were part of me."[1473] The specter of battlefield's horror etched itself on PFC Edward Steward: "You could see Vietnamese laying all over, everywhere. Guts laying everywhere—eyeballs and stuff like that. Being a boot that I was, I never forget that night, the 5th."[1474]

[1460] Letter from Michael B. DeLaney to Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., 29 July 1996. DeLaney indicates Cpl Billy E. Drexel as the Squad Leader, LCPL James Appleman and LCPL J.T. Nangle as gunners, and PFCs James Carmichael, Donald M. Wyatt, Carl Lerose, Michael Roberts, and Michael B. DeLaney as ammo humpers.

[1461] Letter of Thomas Eichler, postmarked 3 September 1986.

[1462] "Thank You, Ike!" letter from Michael Worth, 23 June 1991, printed in the Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Issue #37 (Fall, 1996) 21.

[1463] 3rd MarDiv COC 082318Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #385.

[1464] Comments of Capt Earle G. Breeding, March, 1968, USMC Oral History Tape #2621; Statement of 2/Lt Alec J. Bodenweiser in Bronze Star Medal file of 2/Lt Donald Edmund Shanley.

[1465] Interview of Earle G. Breeding by Duon Rose, 13 July 1989.

[1466] 3rd MarDiv COC 151559Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #386.

[1467] Letter of Baig, 23 December 1968, cited.

[1468] Comments of Breeding, Tape 2621, cited.

[1469] 26Mar ComdC, Feb, 1968, Encl (1), p. 8.

[1470] Conversation with Earle G. Breeding, 29 May 1985.

[1471] Comments of Col David E. Lownds, HQMC Oral History Tape #2621.

[1472] 3rd MarDiv COC 151559Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #386.

[1473] Comments of SSGT McChurty G. Allen, April, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.

[1474] Comments of PFC Edward Steward, April, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #1775.

"After the battle was over, we had Vietnamese scattered everywhere. We were picking them up and carried them down to the point where they came in—mutilated bodies where they'd been shot up real bad. We piled them up. Another man helped me dig a hole and bury them... I never thought that I could ever throw 19 human beings in a hole and just covered them up. What made it so bad—I stood up and peed on them. It just affected me so bad because that was the first time I'd ever saw a dead Marine, my squad leader, Bogard. I remember helping take him to the LZ to be transported out. And I remember just falling down on my knees, crying just like my 3 year-old baby."[1475]

Sgt John Carl Ornelas was killed by a 152mm artillery round. His fellow Marines had cautioned him against walking the main base road that went by recon, LSU, C-Med, and to use the trench system instead, but he was determined to use the road. He just stepped out of his hootch and was walking up toward the main road. "The shell damn-near landed on his bootlaces and split him wide open and gutted him all at one time. There was a very surprised look on his face; his face didn't get hurt. His eyes were as big as saucers."[1476]

PFC James Allen Lowery died in an artillery attack on the Rockpile positions of A Battery, 1st Battalion, 40th Artillery Regiment, 108th Artillery Group, 1st Field Force, supporting Khe Sanh.[1477]

06 FEBRUARY 1968

CORLEY, LCPL Thomas Eugene	C/1/26
MEADE, CPL Thomas Allerton	D/1/26

KSCB was struck by 3 incoming rockets at 1845H, killing 2 Marines.[1478]

Cpl Meade, a Company Clerk for D/1/26, was killed by a rocket at the entranceway of his bunker that took him apart; his head was missing.[1479]

One of his buddies, Cpl Patrick J. Fitch, a company clerk for B/1/26, remembers him: "Tom had mesmeric eyes. His 'black Irish' features and quick wit were gifts denied an entire generation of young American peers. He was a principled man who truly believed in God and country without affectation. It was my deep pleasure to have known him. Like all deaths, I try not to dwell on the end. He was gregarious and [playing] cards were one of our few diversions... My last game with the S-1 troops who worked with Tom was replete with booze. I have no idea how it appeared... The game was on at Delta Company and there was enough of something that looked like Jack Daniels to make every one of us happy. As I recall, there were always about eight people in the game... I left the tent with Tom, went outside, visited the piss tube and felt elated that I escaped with a mere $60 deficit and all my limbs appropriately attached. Then we laughed. That's what I still remember about Tom. Not the end, but the beginning and the middle. He was only a Corporal here but he's now a celestial Sergeant Major."[1480]

Thomas Aloysius Meade[1481]
By Patrick Fitch, B/1/26

"Hippiecrits" he called them.
Students in "The World."
Did they know? Did they care?

His name was Thomas.
Apostle of doubt.
Penultimate Aloysius,
surname Meade.

The rocket round
directly taken.
Chest high – no cry.

He had a name, and it wasn't "Corporal."
Left a twin brother
and a father who asked:
"How did he die?"

But the letter was a lie.
No body bag need apply.
A backpack sufficed.
For the arm and the watch
we tagged remains.

Just another stat.
Body count ours.
On a damp little mesa.

Just a faded memory of the 26th Marines
in a place called Khe Sanh.

His death was obscene.

07 FEBRUARY 1968

ASHLEY, SFC Eugene	A-101
CORBIN, LCPL Russell B Jr.	B /1/26
HANNA, SMAJ Kenneth	A-101
HOLT, MSGT James William	A-101
KOT, CPL Myron	H&S/3/26
LINDEWALD, MSGT Charles W Jr.	A-101

[1475] Taped comments of Larry E. Jackson, November, 1984.
[1476] Conversation with Philip Wright, 12 January 1995.
[1477] Letter of Mark Swearengen, 9 March 2007.
[1478] 26Mar 061615Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #392, para. 4.H.
[1479] Conversation with Ernest E. Spencer, 16 July 1996.
[1480] Letter of Patrick Fitch to Ernest E. Spencer, 1993, printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran* 1:5 (Spring, 1994) 36.
[1481] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

MORELAND, SFC James Leslie A-101
PHILLIPS, SFC Daniel Raymond A-101

On 14 January 1968, the 304th Division Party Committee met from 1800 until 0300 the following day to discuss the coming campaign and combat mission assigned by the Front. "The reason that the meeting lasted so long was because of the change in the timing. At the beginning the intention was to open fire launching the campaign at the end of February. But now it had been changed to the 20th of January. Therefore the combat preparations had to move quickly. The troops who had a long route of movement had just arrived in the battlefield. The organization of the troops, the preparation of rice and ammunition had not yet been done. The reconnaissance and preparation for combat plans had also just been initiated. The total time permitted to prepare would only be within the next four to five days. At that time the mission the Front assigned to the Division was extremely heavy. The Division was reinforced by the 198th Tank Battalion.."[1482]

During the attack on BV-33 at Ban Houei Sane, only two of the eleven tanks of 3rd Tank Company went into combat; after the battle, all eleven tanks returned to their regrouping point.[1483] At the 14 January meeting, it was decided that Lang Vei would be attacked the night of 26 January; the date had to be delayed "because the date of arrival of the tanks could not be guaranteed."[1484] The forces attacking Lang Vei consisted of units from two divisions and represented the first time tanks where employed in the war.[1485] "This was the first time the [304th] Division carried out a combined branch operation with a complement of infantry, engineers, armor, and artillery participating in a major engagement."[1486]

The mission was to "..eliminate the enemy forces at A-2 [the secret cover name for Lang Vei] and liberate the populace. If the enemy came out of their positions [i.e., if additional troops arrived, then the reinforcements were to be attacked]. This engagement would create favorable conditions to surround and isolate the enemy at Khe Sanh.. and permit reinforcements to be attacked.."[1487]

Two major issues at the 14 January meeting raised by the 24th Regiment included how to attack strong fortifications. As a result, the Front Command requested the 24th Regiment to prepare numerous explosive charges and augmented the regiment with a flame-thrower unit. The second problem was the requirement to make 16 bridges trafficable by tanks moving from the west. A sand table was utilized to establish the route for the armor and coordination with the infantry.[1488]

Prior to the 14 January meeting, engineers had secretly and frequently conducted reconnaissance and measured the various depths of the Xepone River. At the meeting, the engineer unit was to establish (by 24 January) the tank route, destroy underwater obstacles so that the tanks could move across the water in sections of the river that were deep and move on tracks in shallow areas. "Hundreds of engineer troops swam underwater to lead the tanks and cadre and soldiers riding the tanks so that they knew how to drive the tanks safely at night."[1489] From the Xepone River, the engineers took advantage of a small stream to create a road in secrecy nearly 4 KM long that would permit the tanks to arrive so that when the attack was launched, they would have the element of surprise. As planned, on 24 January the 9th Armor Company consisting of 8 PT-76 amphibious tanks[1490] reached a regrouping point at Pe Sai, 3 KM from Lang Vei (as the crow flies). However, because the tanks could not withdraw, the attack was delayed.[1491] The tanks were on a brush-covered hill with grass covering only the top of the

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[1482] *Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) (Tap II)* [304th Division (Chronology) (Vol. 2), Trans. Sedgwick Tourison, Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, pp. 63-63. [See p. 113 of this book for ramifications of the change of "N-Day" on other battlefield operations].

[1483] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[1484] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[1485] *Ibid.*, p. 73. Units participating in this battle were: the 24th Regiment of the 304th Division (minus the 6th Battalion which had been assigned to the Hue Front), the 4th and 40th Sapper Companies, the 3rd Battalion of the 325th Division, one 122mm Artillery Battalion from the 45th Artillery Regiment, the 7th Engineer Battalion (minus), the 3rd and the 9th Armor Companies which were under the command of the 304th Division.[1485] The plan was for the 3rd Battalion of the 325th Division together with the two sapper companies and the 4th and the 40th (minus) augmented by the 9th Armor Company were to attack from the south with the mission of eliminating the command headquarters and Companies 104 and 101. The 5th Battalion together with 2 sapper squads and 6 tanks were to attack from the secondary direction from the west with the mission of eliminating Companies 102, 103, and coordinate with the 3rd Battalion of 325th Division to wipe out the American command headquarters. The 7th Company, accompanied by 2 tanks from the 3rd Armor Company were to attack the outer outpost. The 4th Battalion of the 24th Regiment, using the 2nd and 3rd Companies were to attack from the northeast into the positions of Company 101. The 3rd Company deployed one platoon to attack the camp in the village of Lang Vei.

[1486] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[1487] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[1488] *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

[1489] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[1490] The PT-76 has a welded hull which makes it completely waterproof and amphibious, despite its 15.4 tons. Armament includes a 76mm main gun that fires high explosive rounds. Its main gun can fire 15 rounds per minute on a sustained basis. It also has a 7.62mm coaxial machinegun. The tank has a crew of three: tank commander, gunner, and driver. The maximum road speed is 27 mph (6 mph max. in water) and has a max. range of 161 miles. [Stockwell, David B., *Tanks in the Wire*, Canton, Ohio: Daring Books, 1989, p. 175].

[1491] *Su Doan 304*, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

tracks; the armor troops used dirt in order to camouflage the tanks. "Although the enemy routinely used reconnaissance aircraft and commando forces to sweep the surrounding area, our troops were able to maintain secrecy for the large mechanized force for 12 days and nights until the hour arrived to open fire."[1492] Meanwhile NVA infantry units closed in and surrounded the Lang Vei base.

Following the overthrow of BV-33 at Ban Houei Sane, Laos, 520 Lao soldiers and their 2200 dependents[1493] moved to Lang Vei and were located at the old Lang Vei camp site (XD794361) pending arrangements for their air evacuation back to Laos.[1494] LtCol Daniel F. Schungel (CO of the "C" Company,[1495] radio call-sign CROSS-BOW), had arrived the afternoon of 6 February replacing LtCol Hoadley (the C Company XO); it has been Schungel's policy to keep one of the Company's three field grade officers at Lang Vei since the CO of BV-33 (radio call sign, ELEPHANT) was a LtCol and to coordinate with the complex tactical and refugee situation that had developed.[1496] With the fall of BV-33, Lang Vei was isolated. Following the fall of the Huong Hoa District on 22 January, the Team Sergeant of A-101, William Craig, noted, "..that killed us. We were cut off. We was finished."[1497] MACV had requested a review of contingency plans to reinforce Lang Vei in view of the NVA buildup threatening it;[1498] 3rd Marine Division responded that the plan written in September, 1967, providing for initial support of one reinforced rifle company and command group to be deployed on a 2-hour alert remained valid with no additional assistance or support required (as of 20 Jan).[1499]

All of this reassurance obviously changed due to the battlefield situation that rapidly developed at Khe Sanh as it became surrounded by 40,000 NVA that saturated the area. No one bothered to inform Lang Vei (radio call sign SPUNKY HANSON), and military units and individuals never say they cannot discharge their mission. Those in the C Company rear in DaNang or those at MACV perhaps should have ordered the newly-constructed camp abandoned. They did not.

Its tenuous and precarious location (close to the Laotian border and the D'Ai Lao Pass at Lao Bao on Route 9) and difficulty in traveling to it from the KSCB,[1500] together with last minute intelligence (aerial photography, electronic sensors, signals intelligence) indicated that the NVA had "anticipated that we might possibly reinforce the garrison at Lang Vei; [and] had troops positioned along the edges of Route 9" and in planned helicopter landing zones.[1501] Major General Rathvon McClure Tompkins, the CG of 3rd Marine Division, had dictated a prohibition against local patrols; patrols were to be limited to 500 meters from the KSCB.[1502] Tompkins, evaluating the developed situation at Khe Sanh following 20 January, stated: "there were no troops [available], the bases were under attack at the time, and had the base not been under attack I still wouldn't have sent a battalion to Lang Vei. Route 9 was completely held by the enemy—complete from Khe Sanh village to the Laotian border was enemy territory, [and] the hills to the north of Route 9 were completely held by the enemy."[1503] When Lang Vei came under attack, the KSCB was under heavy artillery

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[1492] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[1493] BV-33, as with similar Lao units, were similar to our National Guard; they were locally static troops together with their families, chickens, livestock, etc. The CO of BV-33 was LtCol Soulang Phetsomphou.

[1494] "General Narrative of Events," Encl (8) to 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), *Combat After Action Interview Report, Battle of Lang Vei Special Forces Camp, 7 February 1968*, 22 March 1968. (Hereinafter referred to as AAR, Lang Vei).

[1495] In Special Forces organization, the "A" teams are the operational detachments and the "C" Company is the headquarters coordinating the various "A" teams.

[1496] Statement of LTC Daniel F. Schungel, Encl (2) to AAR, Lang Vei.

[1497] Conversation with William Craig, 04 October 1988.

[1498] COMUSMACV 140801Z/Jan68, Lang Vei Special Forces Camp in 3rd MarDiv Msgs, Etc. file, Jan 1968, Encl (34).

[1499] 3rd MarDiv 200808Z/Jan68, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs, Etc., file, Jan 1968, Encl (53).

[1500] LtCol James B. Wilkinson, CO of 1/26, had sent Co A/1/26, led by Captain John Raymond, to conduct an imaginary rescue mission, avoiding roads and trails, and moving overland to Lang Vei. The exercise, launched at 0600H on 25 September 1967, brought the Marine company to Hill 552 by 0945H, Hill 542 (XD809391) [later, LZ PEANUTS] at 1625H where they set in for the night, and then moved out at 0630H the next morning arriving at XD805381 by 0840H and Lang Vei (at XD 791363) at 1600H, remaining at XD781375 for the evening. The movement took approximately 19 hours. [1/26 ComdC Sep 1967, S-2/S-3 Log, 25 and 26 Sep 1967; Intv of James B. Wilkinson by John Wright, 14 July 1989; Letter of LtCol James B. Wilkinson to Capt. Moyers S. Shore, HistBr, G-3, HQMC, 19 December 1968]. Maj Matthew P. Caulfield, S-3 of 3/26, made a similar trek in January, 1968, with the conclusion: "..it was tactically impossible to go down there. The place should have been closed up if the intelligence showed that they were going to be overrun. The Army people at Lang Vei actually thought that we were going to come down and help them out. It was tactically unsound to do so... Someone should have told them that it was impossible for us to help them in almost any instance." [Comments of Maj Matthew P. Caulfield, HQMC Oral History Tape #6157].

[1501] Comments of Col. David E. Lownds, HQMC Oral History Tape #2621; Conversation with David E. Lownds, 04 November 1989.

[1502] Intv of MGen Tompkins by Oral History team, HistBr, HQMC, 13 April 1973, Transcript p. 31. Tompkins' strategy was to conduct a "set piece" battle: to create a lucrative target and annihilate gathering large numbers of NVA troops by air power.

[1503] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

attack and the airstrip had become unusable and deteriorated weather the morning of the 7th was not conducive to aerial operations. An Air Force CHECO report begins its discussion of the fall of Lang Vei: "Although there was more than sufficient advance notice that the Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei would come under heavy attack, probably backed by armored support, the enemy appeared to have little difficulty in overrunning this outpost on 7 February."[1504]

Although Captain Frank Willoughby,[1505] the Commanding Officer of A-101 at Lang Vei, was aware the NVA utilized armor, he "..did not expect an attack in which tanks would physically penetrate the camp defenses... Willoughby suspected that the tanks were intended for an attack against the Khe Sanh combat base."[1506] Captain Willoughby had served 3 years in the USMC and was a Sergeant before going to Army OCS from which he was commissioned in 1963. Interestingly, he was the OCS Commander when Miles Wilkins, the Executive Officer of A-101, went through officer training.[1507] The camp at the new Lang Vei site had just been completed at great cost: extensive fields of fire had been cleared; a sound and sturdy concrete TOC [Tactical Operations Center] had been built; only Americans were permitted within the inner perimeter (to avoid a repetition of the 4 May 1967 overthrow of the camp by agents from within); and Captain Willoughby confidently asserted the camp could withstand an assault by a NVA regiment.

At 061810H, an estimated 40 – 50 rounds of 152mm artillery exploded within the southern perimeter of the camp launching the battle.[1508] The artillery was fired by the 45th Regiment and from artillery organic to the 304th Division. "Taking advantage of the sounds of the exploding artillery rounds, the 9th Armor Company moved parallel to Highway 9 to its point from which it would launch its combat movement. The engineers had repaired the bridges and the fords, organized recovery parties if necessary to ensure that the route was satisfactory for the armor, and at 2300 all eight tanks had arrived at the Bi Hien Bridge, 2 kilometers from the enemy. The 3rd Armor Company after having hidden itself for twelve days at Pe Sai rid itself of its camouflage and moved along a branch of the Xepone River, advancing to [Lang] Troai hamlet which was 1800 meters from the enemy."[1509]

Sgt Peter Tiroch, in the TOC when the rounds started to impact in 104 Company (at 1800, 6 Feb) linked up with Sgt Fragos who had gone there (from the TOC guard tower) to aid 2 WIA. Since no friendly artillery was being received, Tiroch became frustrated and went to the 4.2-in. position approximately 30 meters to the west of the TOC where he met LTC Schungel and 1/Lt Longgrear who already were there. Using maximum charge, 1/Lt Longgrear passed the H.E. rounds to LtCol Schungel who passed them to Sgt Tiroch who dropped them in the tube. After the NVA fire ceased, Tiroch returned to the TOC. He learned of some trouble at the MSF OP: SFCs Lindewald and Hanna reported that the indigenous troops did not want to remain there because they had seen numerous enemy. Sgt Tiroch then went to sleep in the TOC and was awakened "about midnight" with the words, "There are tanks in the wire!"[1510]

All NVA firing ceased approximately 1900, and at 1930, two CIDG troops within the 104 Company area reported hearing noises similar to engines running, coming from the vicinity of Lang Troai (XD780344) south of the camp. About the same time, the Mobile Strike Force OP (location of Sgts Hanna and Lindewald) to the west (XD778531) also reported hearing noises,[1511] although the USSF with the platoon (SFCs Lindewald and Hanna) reported by radio that they had personally seen no enemy.[1512]

Camp Lang Vei was shaped like a dog biscuit with Highway 9 its top (north) edge. The northeast corner was occupied by 101 Company, the southeast corner defended by 104 Company, the southwest corner defended by 103 Company, and the northwest corner by 102 Company. Outside the wire and to the west lay the Mobile Strike Force OP. Along the long northern edge the CRP 1 had its position, while at the southern edge lay CRP 2. Within the inner concertina perimeter, the TOC was located just above the 104 Company.

The locations of Americans at Lang Vei when the battle erupted indicate a wide dispersion:
[* = KIA]

<u>At the TOC:</u>
Capt Frank C. Willoughby, Detachment CO
LtCol Daniel F. Schungel, CO of Co C
SSG Emmanuel E. Phillips, Radio operations supervisor
SSG Peter Tiroch, Intelligence Sergeant

<u>In the TOC Guard Tower:</u>
SGT Nikolas Fragos, Assistant Medical SP

<u>At the 81mm Mortar #1:</u>
1/Lt Thomas E. Todd, Co C Asst Eng Off
*SP5 Daniel R. Phillips, Demo SP

[1504] Warren A. Trest, *Khe Sanh (Operation Niagara), 22 January – 31 March 68*, HQ, PACAF, Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Division, 13 September 1968, p. 29. ["CHECO"=Contemporary Historical Evaluation of Combat Operations].
[1505] Willoughby died 5 April 1998 in Alabama.
[1506] "General Narrative," cited.
[1507] Conversation with Miles Wilkins, 27 March 1994.
[1508] Statement of Capt Frank C. Willoughby in AAR Lang Vei.
[1509] *Su Doan 304, op. cit.*, p. 79.
[1510] Statement of SSG Peter Tiroch, AAR, Battle of Lang Vei.
[1511] Statement of Capt Frank Willoughby, AAR, Battle of Lang Vei.
[1512] Statement of Emanuel E. Phillips, AAR, Battle of Lang Vei.

At the 81mm Mortar #2:
1/Lt Paul R. Longgrear, CO of 12th MSF Co.
At the 4.2-in. Mortar:
1/Lt Miles R. Wilkins, Detachment XO
SFC William T. Craig, Team Sergeant
SP4 Franklin H. Dooms, Jr., Radio operator
At 101 Company:
SFC Harvey G. Brande, Plt Leader, 12th MSF Co.
At 102 Company:
SGT John D. Early, Plt Leader, 12th MSF Co.
At CRP 2 area:
SFC Earle F. Burke, Plt Leader, 12th MSF Co.
At Mobile Strike Force OP:
*SFC Kenneth Hanna, Heavy Weapons Sgt
*SFC Charles W. Lindewald, Plt Leader, 12th MSF Co.
At the Emergency Medical Bunker:
*SFC James W. Holt, Senior Medic
At Supply Bunker #1:
SSG Arthur Brooks, Light Wpns Sgt
SSG Dennis L. Thompson, Jr. Radio Operator
At the Team House:
SP4 William G. McMurray, Jr. Radio operator
*SP4 James L. Moreland, Medic for MSF
At the Old Lang Vei campsite:
*SFC Eugene Ashley, Jr., Intelligence SGT
SGT Richard H. Allen, Assistant Medical SP
SP4 Joel Johnson, Asst Medical SP[1513]

"Under the command of the 5th Battalion Commander, Dinh Xuan Nguyen, and the Political Officer of the 6th Company, Bui Dinh Cang, led two squads of sappers to place connected explosive charges [i.e., Bangalore torpedoes]. Arriving next to the base, the enemy threw grenades, and Dung, the sapper squad leader, threw them back. However, he didn't throw the second grenade fast enough and he was killed... The tanks advanced first. Company Commander Dan led his force behind the tanks seizing their objectives and providing protection for the tanks. When they reached the center, separated by one roll of barbed wire, Squad Leader Nguyen Van Ngan used demolition charges to finish the job. Nguyen Van Tuat's squad and two tanks penetrated deep into the area with the flag pole."[1514]

Captain Willoughby's first indication of the battle that was to erupt came at 2330 when the 104 Company reported enemy troops in their wire.[1515] Then, at 0015, the observer in the TOC tower (Sgt Nikolas Fragos) reported seeing 2 men cutting the wire in front of a vehicle (later identified as a tank). "Both men were cut down by small arms fire from the camp perimeter. At this time the tank turned on its spotlight for about 30 seconds and 'G-2d' the area before running over the wire."[1516] Sgt Fragos ran down to the TOC to report what he had seen; LTC Schungel emerged with him to observe the tank with his own eyes. At 0030, tanks were sighted by SGT Lindewald with many ground troops behind them and Capt Willoughby called INTRIGUE (26th Marines) to report they were being hit with tanks.[1517] At 0030 on 07 February 1968, Company C, 5th SFGA, recorded the radio message: 2 tanks in the wire, hit from 2 sides, one company of CSF overrun.[1518] At 0032, Willoughby requested JACKSONVILLE (Artillery at KSCB) to fire pre-plotted concentrations.[1519] The 26th Marines COC records 070042H: Lang Vei USSF camp reported NVA troops and tanks on the camp's defensive wire.[1520] This was followed at 0054H with the report of tanks inside the camp's defensive wire. Seven tanks were reported.[1521] Capt. Willoughby was vexed at a delay in receiving artillery: "If we had received it in time, we could have knocked out the tanks in the wire... Two tanks were knocked out in the wire with our 106 and they were sitting there smoking. Another tank pulled around the two that were destroyed and rolled into 104 Company [SE corner of the camp].. blowing bunkers apart and finally 104 Company fell.. The tank remained in 104 Company's area."[1522] Capt Willoughby was unaware that beginning at 0040 and lasting until 0400, KSCB came under heavy mortar and rocket fire, the majority of the fire impacting in the area of 1/26 (XD849417) and 3/26 (XD837417).[1523] This incoming may have been the occasion for CPL Myron Kot's death.[1524]

When the attack started, SP4 Franklin H. Dooms was in the 4.2-in mortar bunker. 1/Lt Wilkins and SP4 Dooms were told to shoot illumination rounds. Dooms set the time on the illum while Wilkins fired them. A few minutes later they learned of the tanks in the wire and were joined by SFC Craig and SP4 Phillips who were bleeding from head wounds. SSG Tiroch (who was jolted

[1513] Encl (1) to Combat After Action Interview Report, Battle of Lang Vei.
[1514] *Su Doan 304, op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.
[1515] Statement of Capt Frank C. Willoughby, AAR Lang Vei.
[1516] Statement of Nickolas Fragos, AAR Lang Vei.
[1517] Statement of SP4 Joel Johnson, AAR Lang Vei.
[1518] Co C, 5th SFGA Journal Entries, AAR Lang Vei, Encl (7).
[1519] Monitored Radio Transmissions 6-7 February 1968, Encl (8) to AAR Lang Vei.
[1520] 26Mar Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #393, Para 3.A.
[1521] *Ibid.*, Para 3.B.
[1522] Statement of Frank C. Willoughby, AAR Lang Vei.
[1523] 26Mar Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #393, para 4.A. Kent O.W. Steen, an officer at the FSCC at Khe Sanh later noted that the reason artillery wasn't immediately fired was because of the SAV-A-PLANE doctrine which enunciated a prohibition against artillery once any aircraft had been requested (for fear of a round hitting the aircraft). [Conversation with Col. Kent O.W. Steen, 25 Mar 1992].
[1524] The Opn SCOTLAND SITREPs for this date do not note any KIA. In fact, SITREP #393 (covering the period 0001 – 0600) notes 63 KIA for Opn SCOTLAND to this point, and SITREP #396 (covering the period 1801 – 2400) notes 62 KIA for Opn SCOTLAND to this point! Kot's MOS, 2511, is in the communications field, "Wireman."

awake by the words, "there are tanks in the wire,") joined them and suggested some H.E. [High Explosive] rounds also be fired just outside the wire to detain any ground troops that might accompany the tanks.[1525] In addition to SP4 Dooms, SSG Thompson, SFC Burke and SSG Peter Tiroch, about 15 minutes later SFC Craig and SP5 Phillips joined them in the 4.2-in. mortar position. The latter two had been hit by fragments in the face and were both almost deaf.[1526]

1/Lt Thomas E. Todd, who arrived at Lang Vei the afternoon of 5 February to supervise the repair of its airstrip found himself in supply bunker #1 when, at 0100 he observed a NVA tank drive in front of his position headed towards the TOC. He dashed to his bunker to retrieve some grenades and, while searching for them, his bunker took a direct hit by NVA artillery. He immediately vacated his destroyed bunker and dashed to the emergency medical bunker located just north of his bunker. He had just arrived when one tank stopped in front of the bunker's front entrance and fired point blank in to the stairway and another tank positioned itself at the rear entrance and fired. Both tanks then departed, and Todd decided to remain in the bunker until morning and then see what the situation was. While in the bunker, he observed that the tanks were active within the camp from about 0230 to 1600.[1527]

By 0135, KSCB was averaging 6 rounds a minute of incoming.[1528]

As SGT Holt delivered effective fire against the tanks with a 106mm recoilless rifle single-handedly until joined by SSG Peter Tiroch, LTC Daniel Schungel organized tank-killer teams consisting of 1/Lt Longgrear, 1/Lt Quy [VNSF S-3, Det C-1], SGT Fragos, SP5 McMurray, and later, 1/Lt Wilkins, to contain the tanks that had penetrated the 104 Company area.[1529] Schungel dispatched Fragos and McMurray for all the LAWs they could carry plus hand grenades and sent 1/Lt Longgrear to the TOC for additional LAWs and hand grenades. By 0100, the 106RR had knocked out two tanks at the wire, but two more had penetrated the wire and one was practically upon Schungel. A tank had fired at the entrance of the TOC, caving it in. Only 1/Lt Quy remained unscathed in this effort and was able to maintain a heavy volume of fire against the NVA attempting to outflank the Americans. "I am sure he saved our lives."[1530] 1/Lt Wilkins was knocked unconscious, crushed between barrels and SP5 McMurray was gravely wounded: he was unable to see and both of his hands were mangled. Schungel was knocked "head over heels" by the concussion, but sustained only a slight wound to his right hip. He took McMurray to a pile of sandbags, attempting to make him comfortable. "He looked to me as if he was out of it. Then I got Wilkins awake and got him situated. He was beginning to come around."[1531] 1/Lt Quy suggested that he and Schungel hide in a shell crater until dawn, however another tank approached from the rear. It was now about 0300 and "there were plenty of NVA around in small groups on top of the hill... I took Wilkins and we crept down to the team house. I deposited him behind the half finished bar, and then stood in the middle of the building where I could observe both entrances." He cut the rubber inner tubes on the doors so they remained open.[1532]

Meanwhile, three tanks were lumbering up Route 9 just below the Mobile Strike Force OP to the west and SP4 Joel Johnson reported two tanks sitting in the drop zone between Highway 9 and Lang Vei village (vicinity XD791358).[1533]

A FAC was on station at 0055 and made radio contact with SPUNKY HANSON, informing him that fighter aircraft were on the way. "SPOOKY" was on station at 0101 but was concerned over the possible effect of tank fire on his aircraft. At 0105, SPOOKY radioed JACKSONVILLE (arty, KSCB) saying that he could not do anything to the tanks, but they could sure work on him. Although Capt Willoughby requested fire on the south edge of the perimeter, SPOOKY never delivered the fire.[1534] Fighter aircraft were orbiting on station shortly after 0100.[1535]

Almost all of the LAWs misfired.[1536] SP5 Daniel R. Phillips was able to fire a LAW successfully by dashing close to a threatening tank.[1537] At 0115 the last 106RR was knocked out by a tank,[1538] but not before SFC Holt managed to knock out his third enemy tank, the one that had penetrated 104 Company. After Holt fired his last HEAT round, he left the 106 and almost immediately afterwards, a blast from an enemy tank destroyed the recoilless rifle and the beehive rounds located with it.[1539] SSG Peter Tiroch who was with SFC Holt, returned to the 4.2-in. bunker while Holt ran for more LAWs. This was the last time Tiroch saw Holt.[1540]

[1525] Statements of SP4 Franklin H. Dooms and SSG Peter Tiroch, AAR Lang Vei.
[1526] Statement of SSG Peter Tiroch, AAR Lang Vei.
[1527] Statement of 1/Lt Thomas E. Todd, AAR Lang Vei.
[1528] KSCB Running Log, 07 February 1968, in 26Mar ComdC Feb68.
[1529] Statement of LTC Daniel F. Schungel, AAR Lang Vei.
[1530] *Ibid.*
[1531] *Ibid.*
[1532] *Ibid.*
[1533] "General Narrative of Events," Encl (2), AAR Lang Vei, p. 3.
[1534] "Monitored Radio Transmissions 6-7 February 1968," AAR Lang Vei.
[1535] *Ibid.*
[1536] *Vide* Statements of SSG Peter Tiroch and SGT Nikolas Fragos, AAR Lang Vei.
[1537] Phillips, William R., *Night of the Silver Stars*, Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1977, p. 86.
[1538] Statement of Capt Frank C. Willoughby, AAR Lang Vei.
[1539] "General Narrative of Events," AAR Lang Vei, p. 4.
[1540] Statement of SSG Peter Tiroch, AAR Lang Vei.

At 0130, SFC Craig radioed that the POL dump "just went up."[1541] The fire provided a reference point for air strikes. Simultaneously, LTC Schungel, SFC Holt, SP4 Moreland and Sgt Nickolas Fragos made a mad dash towards the Bru company area where the tank was and attempted to fire a LAW, without success. They moved back to the TOC at which time someone asked for some C-4. SP4 Moreland and Sgt Fragos moved to the 4.2 pit and were on their way to the ammo bunker when the fuel dump blew up into roaring flames.[1542] At 0135, 2 F-100s were on station with 750-pound general purpose bombs.[1543] Unable to move to the ammo bunker (next to the POL), Moreland and Fragos returned to the TOC. In addition to the Americans, about 25 Vietnamese were packed in the TOC.[1544]

At 0220, SPUNKY HANSON reported enemy troops hitting both ends of the camp, and nine minutes later, enemy troops inside the compound.[1545] The official NVA history of the 304th Division relates: "To the northeast, the 4th Battalion was meeting more difficulty because it had selected a breech on a hillside between two enemy bunkers and therefore when the firing began, Comrade Dang, the Battalion Commander, Comrade Si, the Company Commander, Comrade Dau, the Company Deputy Commander, and most of the platoon and squad attempting to place the explosives, were killed... The troops had only breeched two rows of barbed wire when they ran out of explosives. The enemy was firing ferociously from the two bunkers. Le Minh Thuyet, a light machine gunner, fired heavily into the bunkers but without results. The B-40 gunner, Nguyen Van Truc, was unable to fire because of the position where he was lying on the hill. The only way he could do anything was to stand up straight, fire his weapon, but Truc began to rise when he was hit and killed. Thuyet then took his friend's launcher and.. stood up straight and fired a B-40 round into the bunker, causing the enemy to break firing... The two bunkers at the breech were eliminated but the enemy's fence remained. We were out of explosive charges and those in direct command were dead or wounded. In light of this situation, the Regimental Commander gave a direct order to the battalion commander, Le Dac Long, to find any way at all to cut or break through the barbed wire so the troops could move through the breech.. While Political Officer Hoang Tho Nha ran like the wind into the breech, deputy squad leader Bui Xuan Cot moved forward with four others to cut the barbed wire and at the same time other squads moved in quickly to cut the barbed wire permitting the troops to assault into the base."[1546]

By 0230, SFC Hanna at the MSF OP reported that SFC Lindewald was gravely wounded and the OP remained under heavy attack.[1547] About this time, communications were lost with the MSF OP. Survivors from the OP escaped to the south and last saw SFC Hanna, who was also wounded, administering first aid to Lindewald on top of the OP as it was about to be overrun.[1548]

Back in the TOC, a large explosion from the tower of the TOC, apparently blown away by a tank, was followed by hand grenades dropping down the tower along with incendiary grenades which caused all the paper in the TOC to burn making smoke "so thick that it made visibility impossible [and] also made breathing impossible unless you laid flat on the floor."[1549] The NVA dropped CS grenades. "I saw the VNSF camp commander coughing and speaking some Vietnamese to his people and the next thing I saw was all the Vietnamese make it to the outside of the TOC including our Interpreter [Tiep]. I waited about five minutes and went towards the door of the TOC... Outside was light from.. flares. I saw five or six Vietnamese lined up around the exit on top and my interpreter asking me to come out. I started to ask him something when I saw the head of a NVA with a camouflaged steel pot and an AK-50 folding stock pointed at the prisoners. I pulled back from the door and heard the click of a grenade follow me.. The grenade blew up and I got a small piece of shrapnel in the left elbow. I managed to move junk on top of me since more grenades were tumbling down the staircase."[1550] The was followed by more exchange of words and grenades. 1/Lt Longgrear, SP4 Moreland and Sgt Fragos stood by the door and opened up simultaneously to discourage anyone from entering. As Fragos went into the CO's room to get some ammo, a huge charge and explosion came down the air vent knocking him unconscious.[1551]

SPUNKY HANSON reported at 0243 that all friendly personnel were in bunkers and VT fire was requested over the camp itself.[1552]

About 0245, as a tank rolled from the 103 Company area past supply bunker #1 and appeared to be headed to the 4.2-in pit, approximately 40 – 50 CIDG attempted to escape and evade through the north eastern perimeter wire. As they arrived at the wire, SFC Craig saw that SP5 Daniel R. Phillips and another (unidentified) Green Beret had made their way through the triple concertina. Although trapped in a crossfire, they appeared safe since the tanks were firing above their heads. It was the last

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[1541] "Monitored Radio Transmissions," AAR Lang Vei.
[1542] Statement of Sgt Nickolas Fragos, AAR Lang Vei.
[1543] *Ibid.*
[1544] *Ibid.*
[1545] 26Mar Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #393, Para. 3.E. and G.
[1546] *Su Doan 304, op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.
[1547] Statement of SSG Emanuel E. Phillips, AAR Lang Vei.
[1548] "General Narrative of Events," AAR Lang Vei, p. 4.
[1549] Statement of Sgt Nickolas Fragos, AAR Lang Vei.
[1550] *Ibid.*
[1551] *Ibid.*
[1552] 26Mar ComdC Feb 1968, Encl (1), p. 10.

time Craig saw Daniel Phillips.[1553] Machinegun fire from the eastern end of the camp prevented Craig and Tiroch along with about 10 MSF from getting through the wire. They remained fixed due to illumination still lighting the camp, and remained in shallow ditches for about 5 minutes until the illumination ceased and then rushed through the wire approximately 100 meters to the north into a bamboo thicket where they remained about 15 – 30 minutes as CBUs dropped around them causing the remainder of the MSF to take off, leaving Craig and Tiroch by themselves. They moved another 100 – 200 meters to a dry creek bed or washout and remained at its edge for the remainder of the night.[1554]

The CBUs they encountered were the result of a decision by Major General Tompkins who use FIRECRACKER munitions for the first time in the Vietnam War. Also referred to as "Improved Conventional Ammunition," these were anti-personnel, area-clearing munitions that initially exploded in a most non-spectacular manner, sending out numerous ping-pong-sized spheres which in turn exploded as numerous small grenades. The small spheres formed with an interior skin of thousands of small bumps which fragmented into tens of thousands of small bits of steel. COFRAM was classified TOP SECRET NOFORN. On 12 January 1968, Gen Westmoreland, in a back-channel message to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (Gen Wheeler) said: "As I file this message, another thought occurs to me which I tag on. I believe the time has arrived to declassify and employ COFRAM. I recommend that the JCS act on this matter and that it be authorized for use in the unpopulated area of I Corps."[1555] COFRAM was controlled at the highest levels—CINCPAC and FMFPAC.[1556] At Khe Sanh, the Commander, Col. David E. Lownds was informed he needed to complete forms for another security clearance in order to have access to COFRAM information. "I said, 'What the hell do you mean you're going to have to give me another clearance? Here I am, the Commander, and you're telling me you can't talk to me about it unless—I told them to take the damn stuff and go home!' They said, 'OK, fill out this form.' I said, 'I'm not going to fill out a damn form; I just finished a tour in the armed forces special weapons project working in the atomic weapons with a clearance that would include anything.'"[1557] (The Khe Sanh Siege battle had just begun; Col Lownds obviously had more important things to do than fill out forms!) In his end of tour debrief at FMFPAC, Col Lownds noted: "When I asked for somebody to come down and give me the scoop, I finally got a Brigadier General from Fort Sill.. Now maybe this type of munitions has to be kept this secret, but you can't really make me believe it... There was nobody at Khe Sanh really who knew how it should be used, how it should be fired, what the limitations of it were, what the advantages of it were, what was a good target, what wasn't a good target."[1558] One of the artillery officers at Khe Sanh, Lt William Smith, remembers, "When it came out, it came with such hype that everyone thought, 'This is the answer to war!' Nobody knew how it was going to do... They were saving it to use on the NVA in the mass ground attack—50,000 of them in the open and one FO blow them away: Surprise!"[1559] On the highest levels, on 16 January, JCS (Earle G. Wheeler) in a memo to the Secretary of Defense, noted that COFRAM was envisioned for use at Khe Sanh and that "COFRAM submissile munitions are particularly effective against personnel targets and can take much greater advantage of the element of surprise than can their conventional counterparts."[1560] The 105 rounds were designated M444, the 155mm rounds as M449, the 8-in as M404, the 40mm cartridge as M386, M397, and M441, and the hand grenade as M33.[1561] Production costs of COFRAM totaled $47,032,600.00.[1562]

Following upon a message from SPUNKY HANSON that all above ground are to be considered enemy, Tompkins told the S-3 of 26th Marines to "use FIRECRACKER, then HE on the tanks, then air." At 0257, 28 FIRECRACKER rounds were fired on the enemy troops at Lang Vei over a 5-minute period, then 5 minutes of mixed HE and VT, then air.[1563] This was the first employment of COFRAM in the Vietnam War and in-

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[1553] Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 97. SP5 Phillips was unaccounted for when the survivors were rescued and was carried as MIA.

[1554] Statement of SSG Peter Tiroch, AAR Lang Vei.

[1555] Westmoreland 121422Z/Jan68, Subj: Khe Sanh, in Westmoreland *vs* .CBS file.

[1556] Cf FMFPAC Telephone Call 220330H/Jan68 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 21/22 Jan 1968, #356 which notes that CINCPAC advised FMFPAC that information from MACV indicated that the III MAF G-4 would receive 40% of COFRAM 20 January and the remainder 21 January and that FMFPAC was unaware of this. "If you want COFRAM immediately, tell FMFPAC how much and where and FMFPAC will ship immediately."

[1557] Conversation with Col David E. Lownds, 13 July 1997, at Khe Sanh reunion.

[1558] Debrief of Col David E. Lownds, HQMC Oral History Tape #3139; BGen Kenny and a team arrived at KSCB 30 January 1968 to brief 1/13 Marines on the employment of COFRAM munitions [1/13 ComdC January 1968, Encl (1), p. 7].

[1559] Conversation with William Smith, 16 March 1985.

[1560] JCS, JCSM-28-68, 16 January 1968, in Wheeler files, Box 1, folder: JCS, NATO, VN, Nuclear, etc.

[1561] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[1562] Table 2, Annex B, in JCS 092317Z appended to JCSM-29-68, cited.

[1563] 26Mar Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #393, Para. 4.D. The same pattern was fired at 0420 with an expenditure of 36 FIRECRACKER rounds.

volved Gun #3 of BRAVO Battery, 1/13, and Gun #2 of CHARLIE Battery, 1/13.[1564]

At about 0300 a tank demolished the entrance to the TOC, trapping Capt Willoughby, 1/Lt Longgrear, Sgt Phillips, Sgt Early, Sgt Fragos, SP4 Dooms, and SP4 Moreland inside along with the VNSF camp commander, the VNSF Sergeant Major [SgtMaj Day], the Company commander of 104 Company, the interpreter Minh, and a CIDG commo man. A tank sat atop the TOC for about 20 minutes, satchel charges were being thrown down the main entrance and the tower, and outside comm. was lost.[1565]

At 0330, LTC Schungel (with 1/Lt Wilkins at the team house) spotted 5 NVA approaching, three with AK-47s, 2 with satchel charges. LTC Schungel shot all 5. The team house then was struck with a satchel charge and small arms fire hitting Schungel in the right lower leg. Knowing it was unwise to remain there, upon 1/Lt Wilkins' recommendation, they moved to the dispensary, arriving about 0430 and remaining there into the morning. Schungel assumed at this time that they were the only two Americans alive on the hill.[1566] They hid under the northern end of the building behind a wall of sandbags.[1567]

In the TOC (Willoughby, Longgrear, Phillips, Early, Fragos, Moreland, and Dooms) satchel charges and grenades continued to explode from about 0300 and for the next four hours. Bullets ricocheted all over. At 0600 they received a thermite grenade that started a fire, along with CS or CN, followed by satchel charges.[1568] "We played dead and hoped for help in the morning."[1569] 1/Lt Todd remained in the medical bunker. SSG Tiroch and SFC Craig remained in the creek bed.

At approximately 0320, the TOC lost all communications with the outside. While the radios were still in good condition, the primary and secondary antennae had been cut.[1570] "Dan, a Company Commander, located the signal communications antenna being used by the enemy in the underground bunker. It had been very carefully camouflaged. He was able to break it and pour gasoline into the hole. The enemy was no longer able to communicate."[1571]

At 0452 tanks were observed on the road east of Lang Vei moving in an easterly direction toward KSCB.[1572] The tanks were spotted again at 0510 and taken under fire by aircraft.[1573]

At first light, LTC Schungel (and 1/Lt Wilkins), hearing continued ground fire, knew it wasn't yet time to emerge from their shelter. They finally hobbled out at about 0930 and eventually LTC Schungel made it to the old Lang Vei camp.[1574] Those inside the TOC heard sappers on top yelling, "We are going to blow up the bunker, so give up." The indigenous troops all surrendered. There was much firing, and Capt Willoughby assumed they had all been shot. At about 0430 the NVA started to dig a hole down the north side of the TOC. A satchel charge exploded a hole six or seven feet deep on the north side of the TOC through which the NVA tossed fragmentation grenades. Capt Willoughby was wounded by one of these at 0705 and passed out about 0800. When he came to, he reestablished comm. with Sgt Craig at the old camp site and emerged from the TOC at about 1100. He was informed that Sgt Ashley from the old camp site was attempting to link up with them.[1575] Sgt Nickolas Fragos was attempting to calm down SP4 Moreland who had earlier been hit in the head by the explosion from the air vent. "He was semi-conscious, screaming when someone touched him, unable to recognize or understand anything said to him. Realizing that morphine was contradictory in head injuries I found it necessary to give him a morphine syrette I.M. to keep him quiet as it was the only way possible that we could make the enemy think that we were dead."[1576] Capt Willoughby noted: "Moreland had been hit when the sappers blew the north wall. We tried to get him up but he was frantic and began flinging his fists and arms, kicking and yelling at the top of his lungs. With the amount of injured people that we had on our hands, the decision was made to leave Moreland there... We climbed out of the TOC and received fire from the east end of the camp. We.. filtered out in ones and twos. Sergeant Phillips and I carried Sergeant Early out. Lt Quy, VNSF, met us at the front gate with a jeep. We put everybody in the jeep and went back to the old camp. Time: about 1600."[1577] Sgt Fragos noted: "There were eight of us. We were all injured in one way or another except the two commo people (Dooms and Phillips). We decided that it was getting late and it would be suicide to stay here another night. We had been without water or food for over 24 hours. Everyone was physically exhausted and close to the point of shock. I had thrown up about seven times all through the night from

[1564] Comments of Capt William J. O'Connor, HQMC Oral History Tape #2535. This was reported by MACV to CINCPAC as the first employment of COFRAM in SEA [COMUSMACV 071421Z/Feb68].
[1565] Statement of Frank C. Willoughby, AAR Lang Vei.
[1566] Statement of LTC Daniel F. Schungel, AAR Lang Vei.
[1567] "General Narrative of Events," AAR Lang Vei.
[1568] Statement of Capt Frank C. Willoughby, AAR Lang Vei.
[1569] Statement of SP4 Franklin H. Dooms, AAR Lang Vei.
[1570] "General Narrative of Events," AAR Lang Vei.
[1571] *Su Doan 304, op. cit.*, p. 83.
[1572] 26Mar ComdC, Feb 1968, Encl (1), p. 10; 26Mar Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #393, Para 4.F.
[1573] *Ibid.*
[1574] Statement of LTC Daniel F. Schungel, AAR Lang Vei.
[1575] Statement of Capt Frank C. Willoughby, AAR Lang Vei.
[1576] Statement of Sgt Nickolas Fragos, AAR Lang Vei.
[1577] Statement of Capt Frank C. Willoughby, AAR Lang Vei.

the smoke and the gas causing me to be dehydrated and weak."[1578]

1/Lt Thomas E. Todd left the medical bunker where he had been hiding at 1700 and ran to the TOC where he discovered all had departed, that it was completely destroyed, and "one American was found buried in the debris; he appeared dead." He immediately proceeded to the air strip and was rescued.[1579]

Unknown to those at the new camp, SFC Ashley (radio call sign 15A) at the old camp (along with Sgt Allen and SP4 Johnson) were making efforts to relieve the trapped Americans. At first light, they attempted to muster up 100 Lao troops go accompany them, but it took almost an hour to gather them.[1580] The three Americans, together with approximately 60 Lao troops moved west on Highway 9 toward the new camp Lang Vei, encountering a group of approximately 20 – 40 CIDG survivors near the road and the Americans who persuaded them to assist in the operation. When they reached the 101 Company area, they found a few seriously wounded CIDG, several NVA bodies, and numerous satchel charges strewn in the area.[1581] They came under machine-gun or automatic small arms fire and the Lao broke and ran back toward Highway 9, forcing the Americans to withdraw. SFC Craig and SSG Tiroch had left their hiding place in the creek bed and stumbled upon the Lao troops and the three Americans near the gate on Highway 9.[1582]

Following air strikes directed by SFC Ashley, the five Americans led a second assault which met similar results. This time they also received 81mm and 60mm mortars. A third assault was attempted, but also failed. Air strikes were being directed on the target by SFC Ashley throughout these attempts. At about 0930, LTC Schungel and 1/Lt Wilkins hobbled out from under the dispensary, and with the assistance of a CIDG soldier, eventually made it to the old Lang Vei camp. At approximately 1000, the TOC regained comm. with SFC Ashley. When Capt Willoughby regained consciousness (at approximately 1100), SFC Ashley was making his fourth assault attempt, but met the same determined resistance by the NVA troops.[1583]

On the fifth attempt to link up with those trapped in the TOC, SFC Ashley was hit on the right side of his chest; the round penetrated his radio. Sgt Richard H. Allen attended to Ashley's wound and administered artificial respiration. He had run out of battle dressings after treating a bunch of indigenous and found a T-shirt on the ground which he stuffed into Ashley's wound. Sgt Allen carried Ashley to the wire with SSG Peter Tiroch covering him. Six indigenous assisted in getting SFC Ashley into a jeep. Ashley's left lung was collapsing because of blood filling his chest cavity and he was going into shock. SP4 Joel Johnson and Sgt Richard H. Allen continued giving artificial respiration until they arrived at the old Lang Vei camp, where they were hit by an artillery round that knocked out Johnson making it necessary for Allen to administer artificial respiration to him.[1584]

Capt Willoughby had managed to break out and was retrieved by the jeep driven by Quy (who had been captured by the NVA, escaped and evaded to the old Lang Vei clamp). By this time, SFC Ashley was dead.[1585]

At 1550, the Special Forces reported enemy all along Route 9 in (preparation?) to ambush any road bound relief column.[1586] Major George Quamo (Special Projects Officer at FOB3) was gathering a relief force to land at Lang Vei to provide security and retrieve the Americans. At 1630, choppers departed from PIEDMONT (FOB-3) to SPUNKY HANSON.[1587] Supporting the exfiltration were two FACs, 6 A1E Skyraiders, 4 jet aircraft, 5 or 6 Army and Marine helicopter gunships, and 4 USMC CH-46 helicopters. LTC Schungel, Craig, Johnson, and Wilkins were placed on the UH-1D (slick) which landed first at the old Lang Vei airstrip (vicinity XD796364). Major Quamo directed the entire operation.[1588] This was followed by the landing of the C&C element (radio call sign RUSTY SPIKE) which established a perimeter as the Americans were evacuated. Capt Willoughby departed about 1630 or 1700 on the 6th or 7th helicopter.[1589] All US survivors were evacuated with one exception,. Lt Todd, who had spent most of the attack by himself in the emergency medical bunker emerged from it, went to the TOC where he found Moreland, who appeared to be dead. "He was mostly covered with debris. He appeared unconscious or dead. I only stayed in the TOC 30 seconds. He appeared dead; that's the reason I didn't go over there and check him out."[1590] He then and proceeded to the airstrip and was evacuated by the helicopter that departed with the last four Americans from FOB-3. Approximately 160 survivors made their way to KSCB between the evening of 7 February and 1600, 8 February.[1591]

[1578] Statement of Sgt Nickolas Fragos, AAR Lang Vei.
[1579] Statement of 1/Lt Thomas E. Todd, AAR Lang Vei.
[1580] Statements of Sgt Richard H. Allen and SP4 Joel Johnson, AAR Lang Vei.
[1581] Statement of Sgt Richard H. Allen, AAR Lang Vei.
[1582] "General Narrative of Events," AAR Lang Vei.
[1583] *Ibid.*
[1584] Statement of Sgt Richard H. Allen, AAR Lang Vei; Sworn statement by Sgt Allen in Library of Congress MIA microfilms, Reel #396, Folder #48.
[1585] *Ibid.*
[1586] Company C, 5th SFGA Journal Entries, Encl (7) to AAR Lang Vei.
[1587] *Ibid.*
[1588] "General Narrative of Events," AAR Lang Vei.
[1589] Statement of Capt Frank C. Willoughby, AAR Lang Vei.
[1590] Sworn statement of 1/Lt Thomas E. Todd in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #396, Folder #48.
[1591] "General Narrative of Events, AAR Lang Vei.

SFC Ashley, who had only been at Lang Vei for about three weeks prior to the battle,[1592] received the (Congressional) Medal of Honor (posthumously).

Of the 24 Americans at Lang Vei, 6 were KIA and 4 were MIA (SFC Harvey G. Brande, SFC Earl F. Burke, SSG Dennis L. Thompson, and SP4 William G. McMurray).

Dennis Thompson (who had been in Supply Bunker #1 when the battle erupted) had fought to the old Lang Vei camp. He was unable to make it out on the last helicopter, but saw it lift out. The NVA overran the old camp and killed off the Bru. They dragged Thompson off. "Things were surrealistic. We hadn't had any sleep for some 36 hours and 18 hours of misery at Lang Vei. I was very exhausted." His elbows tied, he was led into Laos. While walking, he's speed up and slow down until he found a time when the person in front of him couldn't be seen and the person behind him couldn't be seen, and he'd push off into the tall elephant grass. Unfortunately, he landed right in the middle of a NVA encampment who were sleeping. Just waking up, they weren't aggressive. He was returned to the unit from which he escaped where "they just about killed me with an entrenching tool. They interrogated me. They kept asking me about Tacon." Thompson was unaware they were talking about Khe Sanh, using their term for Khe Sanh Combat Base. He was put into a little ditch where he met Brande, whose legs were shredded and arms and chest peppered with fragments. Both again escaped as Thompson carried Brande 7 days to Lang Vei. NVA were everywhere and had eaten everything. "It was like a bunch of locusts had come through the area. The Xepone River was just full of bodies—people, fish, birds." He once found himself on a forward slope of a hill as B-52s blasted off the top of the hill causing the side of the hill to become liquefied earth—fluid, but didn't stick. He was almost buried in it. Again he was captured; again he escaped. Guided by flares at night, he managed to approach Hill 881-South, but the Marines didn't know who he was, fired at him (assuming he was enemy), and he was again captured.[1593]

LCPL Corbin was in a bunker alongside the road to the garbage pit which was hit by a 122mm rocket and collapsed. "He was pinned from the waist down and crushed... He was a terrific person—he was a big man but a very kind person. It is the loss of a good, good man—suddenly many things that 'Hoss' [Corbin] and I did as friends rushed back to my memory."[1594] The official records note that at 1700 Bunker #18 (XD847417) received rocket fire resulting in Corbin's death after receiving shrapnel in his entire body. Also seriously wounded in the same incident was LCPL Noel E. Tucker who also received shrapnel through his entire body.[1595]

08 February 1968

ALLEN, PFC Kenneth Jeffrey	A/1/13
ANTRIM, SGT Tommy Edward	A/1/13
AYERS, LCPL Leslie Steven	A/1/13
BARRETT, HN Michael Barry	H&S/1/9
BURKHEAD, CPL Jerry Clark	A/1/9
CLEMSON, PFC Gerald Richard	A/1/9
COLEGATE, PFC William Karl	A/1/9
CRAIG, PFC Thomas R Jr.	A/1/9
CUNNINGHAM, PFC Bruce Edward	C/1/26
DALTON, PFC Bill Norman	A/1/13
DICKIE, PVT Guy Douglas	A/1/9
DUNLAP, PVT Darrell Edward	I/3/26
FEATHERSTONE, PFC Richard H.	A/3d SP Bn
FORDHAM, PFC Kenneth Charles	A/1/9
GLASPER, LCPL William Lawrence	A/1/9
HANDLEY, CPL Anthony William	H&S/1/9
JACKSON, PFC Leonard Jr.	A/1/9
LAPHAM, MAJ Robert Granthan	14 ACW
LEWER, CPL Thomas Charles	A/1/9
McDANIEL, CPL Roy Dean	A/1/9
McKINLEY, PVT Allen	A/1/9
McKINNEY, SSGT Bernard B Jr.	A/1/9
MORDEN, PFC Robert Nelson	A/1/9
MURPHY, PFC Patrick Michael	A/1/9
PEMBLETON, PFC Ronald Lee	A/1/9
PONDOFF, PFC John Christopher	A/1/9
RIZZO, LCPL James Patrick	A/1/9
ROACH, 2/Lt Terence Raymond	A/1/9
ROUNTREE, LCPL Ronald Corbin	A/1/9
SCOTT, LCPL James Frank	A/1/9
SKUZA, LCPL Arvid Burdeen	A/1/9
SMITH, PFC John Archer	I/3/26
STEWART, PFC Tommy Lane	A/1/9
TORRES, CPL Manuel Prieto	A/1/9
WALSH, LCPL Jeffrey Michael	A/1/9
YORK, CPL Henry	A/1/9

At 0400H, a 122mm rocket landed in the perimeter of Gun #6, Battery "A," 1/13, hitting a WP [white phosphorus, or 'Willy Peter'] ready bunker, causing all the powder in the bunker to burn and explode. 3 Marines were on watch where the rocket hit, instantly killing Sgt Antrim, LCPL Ayers, and PFC Allen. LCPL Jan K. Strieter rushed to their aid unmindful of the burning white phosphorus fires and amid the unexploded projectiles scattered in the gun parapet; when he saw all three were dead,

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[1592] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.

[1593] Conversation with Dennis Thompson, 25 February 2001. Thompson had addressed the assembled Khe Sanh Veterans reunion in 2000 with a longer account.

[1594] George S. Heckanauer, unpublished memoir, undated, p. 163.

[1595] 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log for 07 February 1968, Serial No. 20. Tucker is identified by the first letter of his last name and service number, "T 2213387." His MOS was 0311. Corbin's MOS was 0351.

he grabbed a fire extinguisher and began to extinguish the fires. He entered a bunker storing some 700 rounds of artillery ammunition where some flaming debris had entered and extinguished that fire also.[1596] HM2 Alfredo P. Lucero recalls Sgt Antrim: "Johnny was about ready to leave in about a month. He was coming home to get married. He was a very nice man, a handsome young man, red-haired. I called him 'OUTLAW' because there had been an outlaw a long time ago named Antrim."[1597] LCPL Hal C. Johnson (D/3rd Recon) happened to be assigned as a working party to help transport wounded at C Med to waiting medevac helicopters and was carrying a badly wounded Marine. "I only checked dog tags twice while I was over there; this happened to be one of them. His name was [PFC Robert W.] Flaherty, from the arty outfit on the west end of the base [A/1/13]. He was just blown up. His left leg—there was nothing left of it. He was full of holes. You could see his heart beating through the big hole in his chest. I held his left leg while the doctors snipped the last piece of skin holding it." Many years later, Hal Johnson was visiting a VA hospital and met Flaherty. He said he had been standing next to Louis Ayers when the rocket exploded.[1598]

PFC Dalton was also killed at Battery "A." Cpl Robert Holscher (Hq Btry, 1/13) recalls: "I'm down in S-4 and we get another barrage of incoming. We dive in our bunker, and you hear that blood-curdling scream, 'Corpsman!' So I go running up and everybody's running to my old bunker. We had taken a round right in that back door opening that was just covered with a piece of plywood. Dust is still in the air. One fellow that had glasses was leaning up against my foot-locker box. His glasses were broke, lying down on his nose. His faced was covered with dust. There wasn't a spit of blood on him, but he had a hole in his chest the size of a quarter, about where his heart was. It went right through his rib cage. All was darkness. The fingers on one of his hands were sliced off from the shrapnel. There was one guy who was laying down in my rack when the shrapnel just kind of filleted him—bottom part of his body and just kinda ripped it straight up and layed him open, all bloody but still alive. The only thing he's saying is, 'Am I going to die? Am I going to die?'... It was then that they decided to move these bunkers below ground—at least ours. They brought in a TD-15 bulldozer and dozed-out an area and we just took the runway matting off the top ceiling and the good boxes out that were still left, and built it down under ground."[1599]

Continued NVA mortaring of Hill 881-South by 120mm mortars took their toll today. At 0540H, three rounds impacted, killing one Marine and wounding three (2 evacuated). 7 rounds landed at 0706H and 10 at 0725H, but neither caused any casualties. Then at 1001H, two rounds exploded, killing one and wounding two (both evacuated). Artillery was called on the active enemy mortar site (XD790499) resulting in numerous secondary explosions.[1600]

At 1430, Co. C/1/26 (XD847419), in the northern (Blue) sector of the perimeter, received one incoming rocket resulting in two WIA (evacuated) and one KIA.[1601] LCPL Steven M. Jenkins later wrote (concerning Cunningham): "He was just a kid, as was I. He was scheduled to go on R&R in a few days and was quite apprehensive about it. He confided in me that he had never even kissed a girl before and, based on stories he'd heard from the other guys returning from R&R, he didn't think he could measure up. He was afraid of being ridiculed by the other guys by returning with no sea stories of passionate drunken romances. I told him to take his camera with him, be himself, and enjoy his five days as he saw fit. Then I told him to spend some of his time making up the biggest 'sailor story' he could dream of, and relate this upon his return. He was killed the next day."[1602] Another Marine from C/1/26, Cpl George S. Hecknauer, notes (concerning Cunningham): "A young kid.. caught a large piece of shrapnel in the head—it took off the side of his helmet. He never knew what hit him and thank God for that. I think his mother would be happy to know that only God and her ever knew the tenderness of his kiss."[1603]

In order to counter the new threat posed by tanks in the Khe Sanh area,[1604] Maj Robert Lapham was flying HOBO-1, the lead A1G (#52-135043) in a flight of 2 from Detachment 1, 14th Air Commando Wing at Pleiku Air Base. The plane was diverted by HILLSBORO (the ABCCC) to the area immediately south of Lang Vei and alerted to join an airborne FAC (FINGERPRINT 24) at XD778322 to destroy 3 NVA tanks. Each HOBO aircraft was loaded with 6 BLU 23, 4 CBU 25, and 800 rounds of 20mm. During the first pass, Major Lapham

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[1596] 26Mar 072304Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #397; NAVPERS 1650/6, Award Recommendation for Bronze Star Medal for LCPL Jan K. Strieter, 10 Feb 1968.

[1597] Conversation with Alfredo Lucero, 27 April 1994

[1598] Conversation with Hal Johnson, 3 August 1996.

[1599] Interview of Robert Holscher, no date, Eisenhower Center tapes.

[1600] 26Mar 080450Z/Feb68 and 081224Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREPs #s 398 and 399, respectively.

[1601] 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log for 08 February, Serials #21-24; 26Mar 081224Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #399. The two WIA included PFCs Richard Campbell and Michael Pendleton. There was one more WIA indicated, "P2375085," but there is no Marine whose last name begins with "P" and with that service number in the C/1/26 Monthly Personnel Roster (RUC 15165) dated 26 January 1968 which infers that he may have just arrived at Khe Sanh.

[1602] Letter from Steve Jenkins postmarked 8 Jan 1990 [Printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue No. 1 (Spring, 1991) 3]; Conversation with Steve Jenkins, 03 Feb 1991.

[1603] George S. Hecknauer, unpublished memoirs, p. 91.

[1604] Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 136.

dropped 4 BLU 23s completely engulfing one tank. On his second pass, Maj Lapham had already dropped his napalm when he crashed at XD792357, about 100 meters beyond the target at XD792357, approximately 100 meters SSW of Lang Vei. Neither the second A1G, who was then on his attack run, nor the FAC, observed a parachute. A helicopter flown to the crash site from Khe Sanh closely observed the crash site at close range and reported no recognizable portions of the aircraft remained.[1605] The crash was reported by the AO at 1700H.[1606]

The great devastation of the day, however, occurred on Hill 64,[1607] an outpost manned by First Platoon, Alfa Company, 1/9, to the west of the main 1/9 battalion position (southwest of KSCB) at XD813415. The football-shaped hill was occupied on 23 January; the day after 1/9 arrived at KSCB and moved out to occupy the former quarry for basalt rock used to repair the KSCB airstrip, known as "the rock quarry." "On January 23rd.. I remember we stopped on the road just below a small hill. Some people went up on the hill and looked around. When they came back, the orders were given that 1st Platoon was going to occupy that hill. Our platoon went up onto the hill under the command of Lt. Roach."[1608] LtCol John F. Mitchell, CO of 1/9, had directed this outpost be manned: "I put them out as a buffer, just like you'd put out a fire team for a platoon."[1609] The "A" Company Commander, Capt H.J.M. Radcliffe,[1610] recalls the position not only as an early warning of approach of enemy, but if the enemy were to approach from the west, they'd have to take this hill first.[1611] Given the saturation of the area by the NVA, Col. John Mitchell remarks, "I knew surely that this [the attack] was going to happen."[1612]

For the next 20 days "we dug deeper, and dug a five foot trench all the way around the hill and for the post part with only one meal and 1/2 canteen of water a day."[1613] Having been in the quarry operations site, "..the ground was hard and full of rocks, making it hard work to dig in."[1614] The rocks were imbedded in dense clay,[1615] making digging onerous. Although there was a hastily-dug trench encircling the hill, the Marines of A-1 configured it into a zigzag trench[1616] so that if an incoming round landed in it, the force of the blast would not be as destructive. "I remember digging the trench line deeper and deeper and finally having to dig steps into the side of the trench to be able to see down the hill, because the trench line was up over eye-level."[1617]

PFC Edward Wayne Welchel remembers one night in which it was very cold. "I had a large tear in my trousers from running concertina wire and I was freezing, hungry, thirsty and just about at the end of my patience. I put on my poncho to keep my body heat in and the fire team leader told me to take if off and I told him to get @*#&ed! The next morning he told my squad leader that I had disobeyed his orders and I was sentenced to hard labor digging and filling sand bags without any chow for the day and only 1/2 canteen of water. I was placed in a different fire team a couple of bunkers up from [PFC Gerald R.] Clemson. There were three of us, the fire team leader's name was LCPL [Jeffrey M.] Walsh. A couple of days later they asked for volunteers to go out on a LP without any way to communicate back to the rear and as hungry as I was I volunteered just to get an extra meal!"[1618]

Soon after occupying the position, Capt Radcliffe sent 2/Lt Francis B. Lovely to the outpost, the Weapons Platoon Commander: "I put him up there for two reasons: One, I didn't like the idea of them being out there, but that was a decision made above my head, so when I reinforced them, I brought some 60mm mortars out there. I had an extra mortar; I had four. I put some mortars up there and part of the weapons machineguns. I sent Lovely up there with Roach in command and charged: I want you to integrate the automatic weapons on the western and northwestern tip."[1619] Capt Radcliffe was

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[1605] Biographic Section, Narrative (Case 1043-0-01), and AF IN 14348, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #402, Folder #35

[1606] 26Mar 081224Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #399.

[1607] Unlike numerical hill designations in military parlance, "Hill 64" does not refer to its height in meters, but rather to the fact that it was manned by approximately 64 defenders. [Conversation with Arnold Alderette, 11 March 1992]. CPL David R. Ford, in a letter to his father dated 2 May 1968, refers to the location as "O.P.—Hill 64."

[1608] Statement of Guy W. Leonard to David Ford, November, 1994.

[1609] Remarks by Col John F. Mitchell at Reunion of 1/9, 17 July 2002.

[1610] Named for his grandfather, "Henry James MacDonald," and was known by his nickname, "Mac," Capt. Radcliffe was born in 1939 when his father was over 50 years old. His father had served in World War I where he was in action for which he was awarded the Silver Star Medal. There is a corner in the Globe and Laurel pub at Quantico that honors him. He retired as a Captain with 30 years in the USMC before Mac Was born. Mac had commanded "A" Company 4 or 5 months by the time they arrived at Khe Sanh. [Conversations with Col H.J.M. Radcliffe, 31 August 1994 and 06 February 1995]

[1611] Conversation with Col H.J.M. Radcliffe, 31 August 1994.

[1612] Mitchell remarks, 17 July 2002, cited.

[1613] Letter of Edward Wayne Welchel to David Ford, 11 May 1994.

[1614] Letter of David Ford, 29 November 1993.

[1615] Conversation with Arnold Alderette, 11 March 1992.

[1616] Statement of Guy W. Leonard, November 1994; Conversation with H.J.M. Radcliffe, 31 August 1994.

[1617] *Ibid.*

[1618] Letter from Wayne Welchel to David Ford, 11 May 1994. Welchel remained later transferred to the U.S. Army and retired as a First Sergeant.

[1619] Conversation with H.J.M. Radcliffe, 3 July 1993.

grooming him to take over when one of the lieutenants rotated. "I sent him up on the hill with Roach a few days prior to the attack to get some experience up there [and] made it clear to both Roach and Lovely that there was only one person in charge up there and that was Roach, that he was responsible for what was going on and Lovely was to learn and observe."[1620] The position had about 45 Marines from A-1 plus 20 from Weapons (60 mortars and M-60 machineguns).[1621]

About the first week of February, the outpost began to be probed by the NVA; the Marines could hear them in the concertina and tossed a few grenades at the sounds. "We were told by Capt Radcliffe that there were approximately 45,000 NVA around us and that we were to be expected to be hit at anytime. We started receiving first aid classes form the corpsman."[1622]

The Battalion Chaplain (Lt Jack Heino) arrived on the hill on Tuesday, 30 January, and PVT Guy W. Leonard, realizing he didn't have a bayonet, wrote home and had his mother send his uncle's bayonet from World War II. Lt Roach put out the word to have everybody put a piece of camouflage parachute on the back of their helmet to keep the sun off their neck which made PVT Leonard wonder if he was imitating Lawrence of Arabia! PFC Colgate was experiencing foot trouble; he couldn't keep his boots on and was wearing tennis shoes, waiting orders off the hill to the rear.[1623] "Supplies from KSCB didn't always get there on time and a few times we went without rations and water... The lack of sleep, the digging all day, the incoming, C-rations, very little water, all were taking a toll on everyone."[1624] Between nightfall of 5 February and morning of 6 February, one of David Ford's men woke up the other for watch, but went to sleep before his relief was fully awake. Lt. Roach, making his rounds, found Ford and the other two all asleep at the position. The next morning, Ford was told to change fire teams with a friend on the other side of the hill, an action that was to save his life when the attack was sprung on 8 February.[1625] Unlike the guidance provided by senior officers on KSCB which recommended sleeping at any time—even during the day—that one was free to do since one never knew when a night attack might occur which would demand lack of sleep for a prolonged period, "Lieutenant Roach did not allow anyone to sleep during the day. Therefore, as time went on, we became more and more lethargic as far as staying awake. He continually caught people falling asleep... When you have now been a week, ten days, with only two and a half hours sleep a night, you become very complacent.. regardless of how dangerous it is to you."[1626]

The night of 07/08 February was pitch black but clear and the moon was not out.[1627] The heavy ground attack came at 0415,[1628] preceded by a bugle call![1629] LCPL Arnold Alderette had been informed a couple days earlier of elephants in the area carrying supplies so that when he heard the bugle—"just a high screech—my first thought was: My God! They're using elephants on us! I was afraid that elephants would crumple up everything!"[1630] Simultaneously, the 1/9 battalion position came under a heavy mortar, rocket, and artillery fire which lasted throughout the attack.[1631] Some 350 NVA mortar and heavy artillery shells rained on the 1/9 battalion CP position from 0530 to 0900 in support of the NVA attack on Hill 64.[1632]

The initial NVA attack was focused on the four bunkers facing Laos, 2nd Squad, under the leadership of George Chapman. Chapman had just completed chjecking the squad because the radioman reported that Lt Roach radioed the wires were being probed. Chapman had just completed checking the line when the rounds hit, probably from a recoilless rifle, completely wiping out the machinegun bunker and a second bunker containing the team leader of the "B" team, killing PVT Dickie.[1633]

The first explosion was a hit on Cpl William L. Glasper's machinegun bunker followed with an explosion resulting from a hit on Cpl Jerry C. Burkhead's machinegun bunker. In retrospect, LCPL Alderette believes the NVA had been watching the Marines on Hill 64 for many days and determined the positions of the machineguns; many of the Marines cleaned their guns on top of their bunkers, so the NVA knew were they were.[1634] The NVA poured into the position through the northwest sector, near Cpl Burkhead's machinegun position.[1635]

Realizing that the NVA had scoped out the positions, and that the safest place was not in a bunker but in the trench, LCPL Arnold Alderette attempted to dash out of his bunker. After wrapping up the machinegun in a poncho liner that had been used to keep light from the sleeping area, his A-gunner, who was already out in the trench

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[1620] Taped comments of H.J.M. Radcliffe to David Ford, 7 January 1996.
[1621] Comments of 2/Lt Francis Brian Lovely, Jr., May, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.
[1622] Letter from Welchel, 11 May 1994, cited.
[1623] Statement of Guy W. Leonard to David Ford, November, 1994.
[1624] Letter of David Ford, 29 November 1993.
[1625] *Ibid.*
[1626] Taped comments of David William Moody, 09 June 1994.
[1627] Conversation with Arnold Alderette, 11 March 1992.
[1628] 26Mar 080426Z/Feb 1968, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #398; 1/9 ComdC Feb 1968, Encl (1).
[1629] Conversation with George Einhorn, 17 March 1992.
[1630] Conversation with Arnold Alderette, 11 March 1992.
[1631] 26Mar 080426Z/Feb 1968, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #398; 1/9 ComdC Feb 1968, Encl (1).
[1632] Letter of Col J. F. Mitchell to Col F.C. Caldwell, 31 Jan 1969 (in Khe Sanh Monograph file).
[1633] Conversation with George Chapman, 28 Nov 2004.
[1634] Conversation with Arnold Alderette, 11 March 1992.
[1635] Conversations with George Einhorn, 2 April 1992 and Arnold Alderette, 11 March 1992.

yelled, "Come on! Let's get out of here! They're all over the place!" The bipods of the machinegun stuck in the opening as Alderette was rushing out, there was an explosion, and his A-gunner, whose legs were blown up in the explosion, grabbed a hold of Alderette's and he screamed, "Don't leave me!" Alderette, was thrown backwards, deeper into the bunker, "broke like a baby. I was scarred, and I was crying. Luckily one of the flares went off. Something came inside my bunker. It hit my head, my helmet and fell to the floor as a flare went off. It was a ChiCom! So I covered it, just threw my body backwards, and that's where the shrapnel got me"[1636] He had deftly covered the grenade with his helmet. "As soon as that happened, I grabbed the machinegun and "went over the edge," stepped out of the bunker and killed the guy that was there."[1637] Aldrette met up with PFC Raymond Rosales, and got his A-gunner (he can't recall the name; he was a new man) to the platoon corpsman,[1638] HN Michael F. Coonan.

PFC Welchel had been standing watch and was looking forward to an hour of sleep after he was secured. Just after he returned to his bunker on the north end of the outpost, the NVA threw a grenade inside, destroying his rifle and wounding all the bunker's occupants. Welchel's bunker was the first to be attacked.[1639] "The NVA fired a red smoke grenade inside our bunker and almost instantly they fired a frag grenade exploding inside our bunker which blew me up against the right side of the bunker with such force it blew my helmet off my head and my rifle out of my hand. As I tried to get to my feet another grenade exploded; by this time all I could think about was getting out of the bunker. I could not see anything or the other team members; the red smoke was so thick. I dove in the direction that I thought the hatch way was, and as I did I felt someone following me out as they fell on the back of my legs. I crawled out of the hatch and somehow Lt Roach grabbed me and asked me if I was hit.. All I could feel at the time was my face and arms burning like they were on fire and I had caught three pieces of shrapnel in my left leg but was not aware of it until later on in the battle. He pulled me and the guy behind me out, and put us in [PFC Gerald] Clemson's bunker which was right next door [on the northeast side]... Lt Roach went to the back side of the hill to get the M60 machinegun; the NVA had entered our perimeter and were running up the hill on top of us.. I was laying on my stomach and shaking so bad, my whole body; I was so scared. Clemson placed his hand on my ankle and was trying to help me get it together when a grenade exploded inside the bunker... I jumped down into the trench in front of my squad leader, Cpl [Edward H.] O'Connor. I was laying in a prone position and Cpl O'Connor was squatting down in front of me.. and about that time somebody yelled ChiCom and it exploded right between us. I caught a piece of shrapnel in the left side of my jaw with such force it blew my head and neck back.. For a few seconds I thought I was dying.. During this time the NVA were already in the trenches with us, and I'm sitting there with no helmet or rifle and there would have nothing I could have done had a NVA jumped into the bunker with me. A few minutes later a Marine by the name of Larry Cioffi told me and O'Connor to follow him because we were being overrun. The three of us started running back to the other side of the hill in single file with Larry in the front, me in the middle, and O'Connor last. A grenade exploded within two feet of O'Connor's face. The force blew him almost at a position of attention. He covered his face with both his hands and the blood was spurting in every direction. O'Connor was screaming and started running in the wrong direction back toward the NVA thinking he was running away from them. Larry went after him and brought him back and the three of us found a few other Marines on the other side of the hill.. O'Connor was temporarily blinded.. Larry was running back up the trench to help the wounded and to find more weapons and ammo we could use. If it had not been for Larry's leadership and courage I doubt if any of us five Marines would be here today."[1640]

Larry Seavy [Cioffi], although wounded himself, personally moved about half a dozen wounded Marines to the bunker containing the platoon corpsman at the extreme south end of the outpost. A black Marine whose legs were severely mangled by a NVA grenade cried for help but was isolated; between him and the rest was the location where the NVA were throwing many grenades. PFC Welchel remembers Seavy [Cioffi] calmly directing two Marines to fire continuously over the trench line in the direction of the place where the grenades were exploding. The grenades kept coming. "Without saying a word or hesitating he ran forward himself in the direction of the wounded, isolated Marine. Seavy-Cioffi was running into a heavy, continual barrage of enemy grenades and into almost certain death. We thought he was a dead man. However, in a short time Seavy-Cioffi reappeared again, running backwards and pulling the wounded Marine after him.. pulled by his wrists. This wounded Marine had lost blood but was given first aid and survived.. Seavy-Cioffi was entirely without a helmet or [flak] jacket and in addition to his numerous shrapnel wounds he was also wounded by blast and concussion on several occasions though he refused medical treatment.."[1641]

"I had been wounded four times and had caught a grenade between my legs which caused a hole.. the size of

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[1636] Conversation with Arnold Alderette, 11 March 1992.
[1637] *Ibid.*
[1638] *Ibid.*
[1639] Statement of Edward W. Welchel, 12 October 1986.
[1640] Letter of Edward Wayne Welchel to David Ford, 11 May 1994.
[1641] Statement of Edward W. Welchel, 12 October 1986.

a dime and a hole in my left jaw the size of a silver dollar. I was standing there shaking, crying, and scared to death. I had my M16 on auto and on my hip position as I began to want to dream [that what] I was seeing [was] a NVA soldier crawling toward me from my left side only 20 feet away. During this time as the capping sounds were going off, the enemy screaming in foreign tongue, flares going off occasionally, and the feeling of cold tears running down my cheeks, I felt the presence of Jesus Christ so strongly as if he had entered my body.."[1642]

On the north side of Hill 64, LCPL Robert L. Wiley "played dead" as a NVA soldier entered his bunker. In a letter written February 9th, 1968, after being medevaced, he wrote: "You can never imagine the fear I felt when the gooks checked to see if I was breathing and ran their hands up and down my legs to see if I had anything in my pockets. When you are scared and want to live I guess you can even play dead real well. To top it all off they stepped all over my head and back, I guess using me as a step to get in and out of the hole. All the time I never lost faith in my fellow Marines and knew that soon they would come back to me. When I heard your voice I was so relieved I guess I just went a little spastic crying and all but it was such a relief I just had to let myself go."[1643]

On the east, directly facing the battalion 1/9's lines, Cpl Henry York grabbed the sleeping PFC David W. Moody, "Come on, man, get up! Gooks in the line!" Illumination flares created the eerie specter of shadows. For LCPL Alderette, "..there's something about light—gives you that security. We could see what we were doing,"[1644] but for PFC Moody, the light disclosed the Marines to the NVA more than *vice versa*.[1645] In the following hours, Cpl York and PFC Moody traded positions in the trench; York kept telling Moody to keep his head down.[1646]

2/Lt Lovely "ran out into the trench line and discovered that we were being hit by a large enemy force. As I ran down the trench line I ran into about 3 NVA who had already penetrated the perimeter, apparently knocked out our western-most positions, and penetrated our perimeter. Lt Roach, the Platoon Commander, had run across the top of the hill to try to bring defensive fires and bring in our On-Call defensive fires. He was shot almost immediately by a NVA soldier who leaped up in a bunker [and] took him under fire. He was killed instantly. At that time I took over the First Platoon in the defense of the hill."[1647]

Unknown to Lt Lovely, Lt Roach had moved from his CP bunker without his radio operator, almost immediately following the initial mortar barrage at a point where there were already 2 or 3 NVA squads in the northeast sector. This portion of the perimeter was weak, with some empty bunkers due to lack of troops. "Lt Roach was attempting to rally our trapped Marines in the northeast sector and halt the enemy influx.. Upon reaching the northeast sector Lt. Roach had enemy to his rear and both flanks... Lt Roach was lost to us while directing fire upon instantly reaching the northeast trench line perimeter, [dying] within the first five minutes of the initial enemy ground assault subsequent to the mortar attack."[1648]

Cpl David R. Ford's father had been a Sgt in the USMC during World War II, was captured by the Japanese on Corregidor and remained a POW throughout the war. His brother, Cpl Dennis V. Ford, was wounded near Con Thien while on patrol with C/1/9 (28 Jun 1967).[1649] Asleep when the attack began, he was jolted awake by the sound of explosions on the other side of the hill (where he had been located only a few days earlier). As he woke, he heard screams of Marines that there were NVA in the trenches. "There was no panic; everyone was calm, even though we suddenly realized we were being overrun. I thought about my squad on the other side of the hill. Somebody had to warn them to watch the trench line behind them. I turned to the Marine nearest to me and told him I was going across the hill to tell the guys on the other side.. I should have taken a few seconds to grab my rifle, but I didn't. I climbed up on the inside wall of the trench and ran as fast as I could.. headed straight towards my old bunker, holding a grenade in my right hand.. I saw Lt Roach's bunker and headed for it... I stuck my head just inside the entrance a couple of times, but there was no answer, so I started running again... I landed on my feet.. There was just enough light to see a NVA about 10 feet away.. crouched down on the edge of the trench... We stared at each other for a split second, both of us startled to see the other."[1650] Ford pulled the

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[1642] Letter of Edward Wayne Welchel, 17 March 1987.
[1643] Letter of Robert Wiley to Cpl Sutherland, 9 February 1968, DaNang (copy provided by 1/Lt James Eddie Grissom, XO of A/1/9 at the time, on 14 Feb 1995).
[1644] Conversation with Arnold Alderette, 11 March 1992.
[1645] Conversation with David William Moody, 27 June 1994.
[1646] Taped comments and Conversation with David William Moody, 09 June 1994.
[1647] Comments of 2/Lt Francis Brian Lovely, Jr., May, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.
[1648] Statement of Edward H. O'Connor, 10 February 1986.
[1649] Letter of David Ford, 29 Nov 1993.
[1650] *Ibid.* Ford left his position wearing only a flak jacket, no helmet, and holding a grenade in his hand. [Letter of David R. Ford to Commandant of the Marine Corps, 21 April 1997]. In an interview conducted 3 months after the fact (in May, 1968), Ford stated: "First thing I heard was ChiComs. At first I thought they was 60s. But then it dawned on me they were ChiComs. So we got on 100%, got everybody alert and got some illumination. Then all of a sudden a bunch of wounded made it down the trench towards our direction, so we knew that the other side got hit pretty bad. So I was told to go look for the Right Guide of the Platoon. He was some-

pin on his grenade, tossed it, and fell to the ground fully expecting the NVA to shoot him. He felt he was about to die. After the explosion that threw dirt and pieces of cloth about him, he jumped out of the pit and ran back in the other direction crossing the top of the hill in a matter of seconds. Upon his return to the trench, he met up with LCPL Alderette who had his M-60 on the side of the trench and who was holding a M-16.[1651] (Alderette, was wounded with a piece of shrapnel in his shoulder).[1652]

At 0400, PVT Guy W. Leonard was awakened by Cpl Roy D. McDaniel since it was his turn to sleep. PFC David M. Moseley and Leonard were on watch in the bunker for 15 minutes when the rockets and mortars struck the top of Hill 64. "Cpl McDaniel came into the bunker with blood streaming down his face. He said when the explosions began he sat up really fast and hit a nail which was protruding through some board with his forehead. He said, 'Stay here and keep your eyes open; I'll go to the CP and find out what's going on!'... Shortly after that, Cpl McDaniel returned and told us that gooks were in the wire and in the trenches on the north side. He said, 'One of you stay here, the other come with me. We'll have to start pushing them back off the hill.'"[1653] McDaniel and Leonard started to crawl across the top of the hill as the mortars struck, raising them off the ground 6 or 8 inches every time they exploded. As they proceeded, McDaniel asked for Leonard's grenade pouch when another ChiCom grenade landed between them. "Everything seemed to be in slow motion. Cpl McDaniel's face seemed to lift off, leaving a bloody mess, and then he fell backwards into the trench. I saw my rifle, which was in my left hand, go sailing up and out of the trench. My helmet flew up and back, and then I could see dirt and flame and smoke hurling at me until it all hit at once. I remember thinking it felt as if someone hit me full in the face with a shovel, [that] I would not get up again, and I'd die right there in that trench... Blood was streaming from my hands and I was unable to see clearly, but I reached into my jacket pocket and got my mess kit knife, since I didn't have a bayonet. I had sharpened my mess kit knife on rocks... I wiped the blood out of my eyes to see better and saw a NVA. He started to turn around to face me with his rifle. I jabbed him in the throat with my mess kit knife... As I went further down the trench line, I came across one wounded Marine sitting on a sandbag leaning against the bunker. There was another Marine sitting next to him trying to help him. The Marine sitting on the sandbags had been shot through the left eye and had a big hole in the back of his head, but he wasn't dead yet. The other Marine, who wasn't wounded, tried to stop me to help him. I put my hand on the wounded man's shoulder and just told him that there wasn't anything that could be done, that he wouldn't be in pain very much longer... I don't remember who the wounded Marine was, but I remember he was muscular and good-looking—like a 'poster Marine.' He was a bigger guy, not scrawny like most of us. I remember PFC Colegate was a bigger guy, too, but I don't believe this was him."[1654]

PFC James R. Martinez was asleep in his bunker when the NVA attacked. CPL Manuel Torres was to his right as a grenade (or satchel charge) fell between the wall and Torres, killing him and wounding Martinez' right side. Martinez immediately escaped from the bunker and went into a little hole, the entrance to the Second Squad Leader's bunker, George Chapman.[1655]

Michael Coonan, the Corpsman on the position remembers everyone on the outpost as physically exhausted and sleep-deprived. He was in his bunker when the attack began, a med bunker that didn't face downhill but was built into the side of the hill so the NVA didn't actually see it. Chapman, the squad leader, who shared the bunker with him, woke him, "Hey Doc, we got wounded." He then took off. "I had no idea—it's blacker than hell. Grabbed my Unit-1 and walked around, outside to the trench line and went down about 20, 130 feet, and there's Staff Sergeant McKinney, laying on the ground. He almost shot me because he didn't know who I was. I said, 'Where are you hit?' He says, "In my hip.' So I bend over, and as I bend over, a NVA comes walking around the corner and he shoots that guy. This is the first that I even know that we're under attack. He's huge, and at that time I weighed about 117 pounds. I tried to drag him but couldn't. He said, 'Go get me some help.' I go back—it's only about 30, 50 steps at the most, and I go to this bunker and holler, 'Hey, we need some help,' and someone hollers 'Chi Com!' At that time, two Marines come diving out of that bunker and land on top of me. ChiComs blow up inside the bunker. Martinez and Torres are hit by it. The other two guys that jumped on me take off, running. I see that we have a case of grenades by my bunker, so I grabbed two grenades, pulled the pin,a nd threw them down the hill. Martinez is hit, so I dragged him out of his bunker and put him in my bunker which is about ten feet away. The NVA are in the line. We can hear them talking, right behind us, so they must of already killed McKinney. They're going right past us."[1656]

LCPL Glasper's machinegun bunker was in front of CPL James Feasel's (Squad Leader of Third Squad of A-1, the other squad leaders being CPL Chapman and CPL

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where up on top of the hill, but nobody knew where. I ran over the top of the hill, jumped in a mortar pit.." [Comments of David R. Ford, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803].

[1651] *Ibid.*

[1652] Letter of David R. Ford, 29 November 1993.

[1653] Statement of Guy W. Leonard to David Ford, November, 1994

[1654] *Ibid.*.

[1655] Taped comments of James Martinez to David Ford (received from Ford on 5 August 1994).

[1656] Conversation with Micdhael Coonan, 02 Nov 2006.

Joseph J. Sutherland). Feasel dashed to Glasper's bunker finding it blown-up but not caved-in. Those inside were on the floor, dead, blown in half. Feasel got two Marines to pick up the gun and set it up in the window of Feasel's bunker. However, when they retrieved the weapon, they neglected to grab the ammo, and needed to return to bring back two cans of ammunition.[1657] Feasel also crept to the command bunker to speak with Lt Roach for the plan of attack, but found it empty.[1658]

Just as he was leaving it, LCPL James P. Rizzo, the platoon radio operator, entered, followed by a hail of heavy NVA automatic and rifle fire directed at and into the bunker. Rizzo attempted to raise GARDEN VALLEY (the radio call sign of 1/9), but was unable to do so. All during this time, the NVA were attempting to blow up the bunker. Rizzo mentioned to Feasel, "I've got to get out of the bunker so I can transmit and get artillery fire and reinforcements up here to help the platoon!" Rizzo had been through Con Thien and was well experienced.[1659] He well knew the dangers that lurked and threatened outside the bunker. "Rizzo again told me that he had to get into the open to transmit because we needed reinforcements to turn back the NVA assaults. At this time, Rizzo broke from the bunker and into the open and began to transmit. He was shot several times in the chest. I pulled Rizzo back into the bunker. Rizzo was still alive and he transmitted, 'I'm the radio man and I've been shot and I'm dying.' Shortly thereafter James Rizzo succumbed to his wounds and died."[1660] Rizzo had got through to Capt Radcliffe: "I said, Rizzo, let me speak to your '6'; this is ALFA-6, and he replied, 'Skipper, he's not here now.' I said, 'I need to talk to him, find out what the hell's going on out there.' He said, 'They're all around us, Skipper. They're all over the place! Come and get us, Skipper! And it broke my heart. I said, 'I need to talk to your 6.' He said, 'We looked there, we looked here, we don't know where he is.' I remember the last words, 'Skipper, you gotta come and get us."[1661]

CPL Feasel continued to move about the remaining area controlled by the Marines as the remaining effective squad leader as he re-positioned the men. He also singlehandedly took out a NVA mortar tube.[1662] Feasel took another Marine with him to retrieve Rizzo's radio, but found the radio to be inoperable, after which he went to the Weapons Platoon bunker and asked for supporting fire missions. He did this several times.[1663]

PVT George E. Einhorn, the Grenadier (M-79 man) for the Platoon, became frustrated that his rounds were ineffective on the NVA troops already in the Hill 64 position. (The M-79 round must rotate 14 times before becoming armed, and the distance was too short). Consequently, he attempted to fire it as a mortar—straight up.[1664] This, however, was abandoned as the rounds landed among them, one round landing almost on top of Alderette, Ford, and Einhorn, and "after that Einhorn abandoned that idea and returned to the trench line."[1665] PVT Einhorn frequently moved positions, each time becoming the object of extremely heavy enemy fire, and yet continued to place effective the 40mm M-79 rounds on the influx of NVA.[1666]

Alderette does not recall that Cpl Jerry Burkhead's machinegun was retrieved. Fortunately, there were three M60 machineguns on the hill, including an extra one obtained during a previous battle in the Street Without Joy area.[1667]

LCPL Alderette dashed with his machinegun to the top of the hill and fought side by side with PFC Larry J. Seavy [whose name was later changed to Seavy-Cioffi], an artillery FO who joined the outpost platoon on 03 February[1668] and together Alderette and Seavy [Cioffi] "fought in the trenches and assaulted the northern hilltop in two men assaults, preventing the enemy from charging over the top.. After many of these two men assaults, Cioffi and I were separated and I remained alone on the hilltop."[1669]

Larry Seavy-Cioffi, a Forward Artillery Scout Observer (MOS 0846) assigned to D Battery, 2/12, and attached to 1/9, was attempting to call in pre-registered on-call artillery. In the total darkness and with the registration numbers written on the map, he struck a match to read the number. His radio operator immediately blew it out since the poncho covering the entrance to the bunker leaked light. Several grenades were tossed inside, blowing Seavy-Cioffi and his radio operator against the wall. Seavy-Cioffi struck another match and located the registration number, called it in, but was told the Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC) declared a "check fire." More grenades were exploding inside the bunker, causing

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[1657] Conversations with James Feasel, 8 September 1997 and 11 July 2003.

[1658] James M. Feasel, Jr. "Hill 64, Feb. 8, 1968," undated statement attached to award recommendations for Bronze Star Medal award to George E. Einhorn, David R. Ford, and LCPL James P. Rizzo.

[1659] Conversation with James Feasel, 8 September 1997.

[1660] Letter of James M. Feasel to Commandant of the Marine Corps, 29 April 1997. Rizzo was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal in January, 1998.

[1661] Conversation with H.J.M. Radcliffe, 12 August 1994 and taped comments to David Ford, February, 1996.

[1662] Statement of George Einhorn, 20 March 1997.

[1663] James M Feasel, Jr., "Hill 64," cited.

[1664] Conversation with George Einhorn, 9 March 1992.

[1665] Statement of David R. Ford, appended to Bronze Star Medal recommendation for George Edward Einhorn, submitted by Joseph Donnelly, 15 August 1997. Einhorn was awarded the Bronze Star Medal in January, 1998.

[1666] Statement of James Mark Feasel, Jr., 29 April 1997.

[1667] Conversation with Arnold Alderette, 11 March 1992.

[1668] Lawrence J. Seavy-Cioffi, "Our Victory for Alpha One, 14 April 1986, p. 1.

[1669] Statement of Arnold Alderette, 25 March 1997.

Seavy-Cioffi to hear nothing but ringing. He was told the fire mission needed to be cleared by the CO (Lt. Roach). Seavy-Cioffi insisted that the clearance was given by the CO since the previous day. FSCC insisted it needed a second clearance to fire. Seavy-Cioffi knew he needed to locate Lt Roach. With no helmet, flak vest, and being wounded in the thigh, he dashed from the bunker across the top of the hill where he stumbled upon some NVA and engaged in hand-to-hand combat with them.[1670] After moving through ordeals of encounters with pockets of NVA that parallel the ancient accounts of Homer's *Odyssey*, he learned that Lt. Roach was dead and Lt. Lovely was in charge, his hands full repulsing the NVA on the southern part of the outpost.[1671] Proceeding through the gauntlet of battle, he reached Lt. Lovely's bunker and, with the Lt's permission, radioed the fires.[1672]

1/Lt Michael J. Walker's 81s stood ready to suppoirt. His subordinate, 2/Lt Maurice M. ("Ray") Casey (later LtCol), recalls the radio traffic with Larry Seavy-Cioffi, being with 1/9's 81s: "We were the only ones that could fire on them other than direct support 105s from the main base. I was working the Plotting Board, and he kept closing the circle on their position. Finally he called in some coordinates, and I told him I wouldn't shoot those positions because according to my map, that was his position I was firing on... He said, 'Put WHISKY-6 [1/Lt Michael J. Walker] on.' [who] said, 'Sorry we can't fire those coordinates; they're on your position.' And he said, 'Well, Sir, you have two choices: you can fire those coordinates and most of our guys are either down or dead, and you'll get a lot of them still in the open in our trench line, or, you cannot fire them, and they'll finish off the rest of us!' That's the time you have to kind of depend on the guy on the ground to tell you"[1673] Over the strenuous objections of the 1/9 F.D.C., Walker gave the orders to fire.[1674]

After holding that position for 30 minutes to an hour, Alderette was joined by David Ford "For the next two to two and a half hours we fought side by side, attacking the top and far end perimeter with two men assaults, keeping the enemy at bay.. and were able to keep them from controlling the top of the hill."[1675] PVT Einhorn vividly recalls Alderette throwing rocks, seen doing so under the illumination.[1676] Marines were throwing magazines to them, and when they ran low on grenades, they tossed rocks,[1677] as Alderette and Seavy had previously done. So heroically did Ford perform, that Alderette felt he should receive the Silver Star Medal.[1678] Ford and Alderette screamed as they charged the NVA in the trenches, Ford firing the M60, Alderette firing the M16 and throwing grenades. Alderette's M60 fired sluggishly due to damage from a piece of shrapnel when Alderette was wounded in his shoulder. Their forays may well have confused the NVA into believing there was a large number of Marines rather than the two who popped up at different spots and screamed as though there were many. Ford recalls hearing grenades and firing in the trenches to his right where Larry Seavy [Cioffi], Edward Wayne Welchel, and Edward O'Connor were fighting to stop the NVA advance; George Einhorn, Bill Moody, Malloy, Cpl York, Cpl Sutherland, and Lt Lovely were doing the same thing on Ford's left side.[1679]

With Alderette and Ford firing the machine-gun, throwing grenades and rocks, and George Einhorn firing the M-79 grenade launcher, the NVA were unable to advance, and never overran the position. For David Ford, the fight was "to the end:" he was wearing a belt he'd taken from a dead NVA at Con Thien bearing a Communist star on its buckle and, upon realizing the consequences of being captured with it, he and Alderette agreed that they definitely would never surrender or be captured![1680]

The attack had been launched at 0415, by 0513 NVA were inside the position and at 0615 the initial attack had been beaten back. The NVA force then regrouped and massed for another attack.[1681] The battle raged. Once PVT Guy Leonard was pulled safely into a bunker, "I'd be sitting there and my whole body would begin to jerk and convulse, then stop, like someone had jolted me with electricity. The corpsman came in and pushed the sleeve to my rain jacket up and gave me a shot of morphine... I felt detached, like I was watching a movie. I remember looking out and seeing one gook get hit. He just blew completely apart. Arms flying, head rolling, body parts everywhere."[1682]

Daylight came. Cpl McDaniel was sitting at the entrance to a bunker; his legs blown. The NVA poked a rifle into the bunker and fired, opening McDaniel's body from his belly button on up. The NVA then tossed in a grenade. "Mac had the strength to pick it up and put it under his body, and that saved us."[1683] For this action,

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[1670] Lawrence J. Seavy-Cioffi, *Our Victory for Alpha One*, 14 April 1986, pp. 15-18.
[1671] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[1672] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[1673] Note from Ray Casey printed in Khe Sanh Veteran's *Red Clay*, Issue No. 2 (Fall, 1991), p. 6.
[1674] Letter from Michael J. Walker, 23 Jan 2006.
[1675] Lawrence J. Seavy-Cioffi, *Our Victory, op. cit.*.
[1676] Conversation with George Einhorn, 9 March 1992.
[1677] Statement of Arnold Alderette, faxed to Joseph Donnelly, 16 Sep 1967.
[1678] Statement of Arnold Alderette, 13 November 1997, p. 8.
[1679] Letter of David Ford, 29 November 1993, p. 7.
[1680] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[1681] 26Mar 080450Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #398.
[1682] Statement of Guy W. Leonard to David Ford, November, 1994.
[1683] Taped comments of James Martinez sent to David Ford, 05 August 1994.

which should have been recognized with a Medal of Honor, McDaniel received nothing. CPL George Chapman, the Squad Leader of Second Squad, decided they'd better leave the bunker. Three Marines moved down the trench, led by Cpl Chapman, followed by James Martinez, and then another (unidentified) Marine. Cpl Chapman was shot in the back by a NVA who also shot the last Marine, leaving Martinez alone to spot the NVA, rifle in one hand, grenade in the other, about to toss the grenade. He tossed it, but his aim was off, and it landed above the trench and exploded to the side, giving Martinez sufficient time to pull a .45 and shoot the NVA. David Ford suddenly appeared—"boy he was a pretty sight! He came around and grabbed me. I was back with the fellows."[1684]

Cpl York was shot through the skull with a bullet that exited and took off three-quarters of Feasel's ear.[1685] After dawn, David Ford noticed Cpl York: "Off to my left and behind me, when it was light enough to see, I saw Malloy holding Cpl York in his arms. He (York) was either dead or unconscious. He appeared to have been shot through the left eye and temple. I looked at Malloy and he looked back at me. We didn't speak. Blood covered both of their flak jackets and I couldn't tell if one or both were hit. I learned later that Cpl York was already dead although Malloy continued to hold him in his arms after he died... Malloy would have to wear his flak jacket for days, with the entire front of it covered with dried blood, until someone finally found another one for him to wear."[1686]

Capt Radcliffe (CO, A/1/9) called LtCol Mitchell (CO, 1/9) and said he was forming the Company to reinforce Hill 64; Mitchell responded, "No, you're not! Orders from higher headquarters are not to leave."[1687] "I was told: Hold what we have in the line until the situation gets clarified. I just couldn't do that."[1688] He told his XO, 1/Lt James Eddie Grissom, "..to stay on the Land Line and keep talking to the Battalion Commander like I was there and tell him I was just out checking the lines—which is true: I was checking the lines to see if anyone was dumb enough to volunteer to go out with me."[1689] "Damn near the whole company wanted to go, but I couldn't leave the line deserted."[1690] At 0740, the relief force with command group departed 1/9's position to reinforce and consolidate the OP position, arriving at the base of the hill at 0805.[1691] The hill was still receiving NVA mortars and sniper fire.[1692]

Capt Charles B. Hartzell, S-3 of 1/9, "..was on my normal night radio watch when the attack started. For the most part, all we could do was listen and stay out of Captgain Mac Radcliffe's way while he directed the war. Captain Radcliffe was maybe the best qualified leader in the battalion at that time and his unit was tough and aggressive. My problem as the representative of the battalion command was holding him back. We had orders from Gen. Westmoreland [*sic.*, orders were actually from MG Rathvon McClure Tompkins, CG of 3rd MarDiv] to not leave our wire. The top guy wanted to use supporting arms to kill the enemy. It was my job to make those orders happen. I very well recall Capt. Radcliffe's response at first light that day: 'F*** you.. I'm going in to get my men out!' Major Ringley and Col. Mitchell took to the radio to try to get control of the situation. Radcliffe was into one of those Marine moments. If he won the situation he could be a hero and get a medal and all those in higher position would find a way to be part of it.. If he lost, he would have been lost as far as having a future as a Marine officer, and everyone would have piled on to get that asshole who violated the Man's order. Well he did good, very good, and got a silver star. I say, 'outstanding!!'"[1693]

The fog, which normally blanketed Khe Sanh during these days until 1000, lifted this particular day aty 0730, and the 1/9 S-3, Charles Hartzell noticed NVA on hill 64: "They were all over our side of the hill like little ants running around. The ceiling wasw still too low for attack aircraft, but direct fire weapons were now in play from our side. The sniper called all his guys forward and they went to work. I called the other companies to get all the machineguns at my position on the double. They were all there within minutes and Gunny D's [D'Hondt] training at Camp Evans really paid off big time. We had about twenty machineguns lined up in the trench line, most tripod mounted, withb the operators talking and marking, total control, no bullshit spray fire. It was talk, watch my marker round, then five or six guns short burst to zero out the target. I did not move the 106mm recoilless rifles, those guys really were not ready for a shoot out, Incoming began as they could see us now, too... I did call our two tanks into play. They moved up out of the pit to the firing position we had dug to cover the road from the west. The tankers stayed locked inside to avoid the incoming and got to work on the hill with their main guns and machineguns. With their strong far-seeing gun sight they could locate and mark targets for our line of machine gunners, too. We really had our stuff together. Controlled, well-aimed fire, well within effective range of all weapons,."[1694]

Shortly after 0745, when COVEY 252 had checked in with the ABCCC to reconnoiter refugee movements on Route 9, the FACs moved from Route 9 to direct strikes

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[1684] *Ibid.*
[1685] Conversation with George Einhorn, 17 March 1992.
[1686] Letter from David Ford, 29 November 1993.
[1687] Conversation with H.J.M. Radcliffe, 17 October 1996.
[1688] Conversation with H.J.M. Radcliffe, 12 August 1994.
[1689] Conversation with H.J.M. Radcliffe, 3 July 1993.
[1690] Conversation with H.J.M. Radcliffe, 12 August 1994.
[1691] 26Mar 080450Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #398.
[1692] Conversation with George Einhorn, 17 March 1992.
[1693] Martzell, Charles, Memoir, p. 60.
[1694] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

in support of Hill 64. CANASTA 403, a flight of 4 Navy A-1Hs were on station with MK-81s (250-pound general purpose bombs), MK-82s (500-pound general purpose bombs), and 20mm. The FAC found it difficult to distinguish between friendly and enemy forces due to the uniforms worn and their close proximity. Air strikes were directed by the FAC on the northwest base of the hill. Task Force ALFA at Nakhon Phanom Air Base, Thailand, scrambled a flight of three A-26s (NIMROD 32A, 34A, and 35A) to aid the outpost, and three T-28 ZORROs were already working the area to help repulse the attack.[1695]

Capt Radcliffe crawled to the center of the hill outpost, taking small arms fire while pitching grenades and maintaining eyeball contact with the two squad leaders on either side of him. James Feasel rolled over the hill, exposed himself, to toss him grenades; had it not been for Feasel, Radcliffe feels he might not have made it.[1696] As he inched forward, a NVA popped up about 15 feet from him with an AK-47 and fired. "I was waiting to feel the round. I said to myself: I hope he didn't hit me in the groin! But nothing happened, and I shot him."[1697] The going was slow: "we didn't know if our friendlies were still alive or actually where our flanks were, and who controlled what bunkers. It took us about three hours to push the remaining [NVA] forces off the hill. The NVA had pulled back, but had left approximately two squads on the hill, apparently suicide squads to keep us and maintain contact."[1698] The relief force took some casualties, among them PFC John C. Pondoff.[1699] Capt Radcliffe knew there were Marines that were trapped in bunkers with the NVA or between himself and the NVA and had to advance with great care. As he advanced, someone yelled Chicom! Capt Radcliffe pushed down Cpl John J. Enzinna, one of the squad leaders accompanying him, and caught the grenade as it flew towards him and flipped it back where it detonated on the edge of the trench, killing 2 NVA. As they continued, LCPL Robert L. Wiley rushed out, grabbed the Captain, crying, sobbing, and saying, "Skipper, I knew you'd come for us; I knew you'd come for us!"[1700] Capt Radcliffe's relief force reached the crest of the hill at 0825.[1701] On LtCol John F. Mitchell's Bronze Star Medal recommendation for Capt Radcliffe, Major General Rathvon McClure Tompkins (CG, 3rd Marine Division) wrote: "In my opinion deserves a Silver Star. I am intimately familiar with this action and the terrain on which it took place. Had it not been for Radcliffe we never would have thrown the enemy back out of that position."[1702] The brave Marines on Hill 64, while so few, had managed to prevent the hill from being overrun, and yet those remaining were exhausted. Sgt Larry L. Powell, part of the relief force, describes the battlefield: "It was quite a scene up there. People were all over the place, laying around, wounded, dead, blown up pretty bad... It was a real bad sight to see. I know they fought hard on that hill. Men that made it had to do some real good fighting."[1703] At about noon, an accounting was determined and by 1230, all had pulled from the hill and returned to the battalion perimeter.[1704]

Edward Wayne Welchel was squatting down with a M-16 after Capt Radcliffe ordered a squad to go up the trench, watching two Marines ahead of him. Suddenly a grenade exploded, killing one instantly. He saw Larry Seavy [Cioffi] and the other Marine running right down the middle of a group of NVA on top of the hill, spraying the whole area with M60- machinegun fire. (Evidently, Burkhead's machinegun had been retrieved). Slowly the hill was re-taken. Welchel made his way to where he last saw his friend, PFC Gerald R. Clemson, hoping he were still alive. He met Clemson's fire team leader who said that Clemson jumped up during a firefight and was killed along with Welchel's other friend, PFC William K. Colegate. Welchel went to the bunker where he found the corpse of Clemson, still in one piece. He found Colegate sitting with legs crossed in front of him, his head bowed, his chin touching his chest, and black powder burns all over his face. Welchel reached to pick up his helmet, where the men kept their mail, "..thinking maybe I would write his wife and there was about two inches of his blood in the bottom of his helmet which covered the mail and then I noticed he had a hole in his forehead."[1705] He then returned to his own bunker and found LCPL Jeffrey M. Walsh "..in a position I will never forget. He was on his knees sitting on the back of his legs with his head tilted up, eyes open as if waiting for someone to help him get out. He died that way. I was told later on they had to break his legs to get him out of the bunker."[1706]

CPL David Ford found PFC James R. Martinez laying on his stomach: "I crawled up to him and grabbed his

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[1695] Trest, Warren A., *Khe Sanh (Operation NIAGARA),* HQ, PACAF, Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Division, 13 September 1968, pp. 43-45. The action mentioned refers to Hill 861, but the date indicated plus the details obviously refer to the Hill 64 action.

[1696] Conversation with H.J.M. Radcliffe, 15 October 1997.

[1697] Conversation with H.J.M. Radcliffe, 17 October 1996.

[1698] Comments of 2/Lt Francis Brian Lovely, Jr., May, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[1699] Conversation with Guy Leonard, 14 January 1995.

[1700] Taped comments of H.J.M. Radcliffe sent to David Ford, 7 January 1996.

[1701] 26Mar 080450Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #398.

[1702] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 8 April 1968. CG, FMFPAC, approved a Silver Star Medal.

[1703] Comments of Sgt Larry L. Powell, May, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[1704] Comments of 2/Lt Francis Brian Lovely, Jr., May, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[1705] Letter from Edward Wayne Welchel to David Ford, 11 May 1994

[1706] *Ibid.*

hands which were stretched out toward me. He wasn't at all panicked, but happy to see another Marine. As I started to drag him, I could see his legs were bloody from mid-thigh down to his boots. He'd been shot several times and behind him was another Marine also badly wounded."[1707]

As Ford continued searching through the battlefield rubble, he came upon a bunker containing three dead NVA, their bodies on top of three dead Marines covered with a layer of dirt. Then he came to another bunker, completely destroyed and collapsed, and then his old bunker. As he moved up the connecting trench he saw the Marine who had replaced him only days earlier, on his back, his legs doubled back underneath him. His old fire team was at the rear of the bunker, appearing as though they had covered up an exploding grenade. Sandbags were shredded with a large amount of dirt on top of them. "I don't remember feeling anything. I was numb."[1708]

Larry Seavy-Cioffi moved to locate LCPL Rizzo since his own radio was failing due to weak batteries. He located Rizzo "..collapsed backward, sitting down against the bunker's wall. He was propped up with his PRC-25 field radio strapped onto his back and resting against the far wall, his radio behind his back like a couch's pillow. His both legs were fully extended and apart in a "V", and his lifeless arms hanging at his sides... I observed that his radio's handset wire had been cut. This description of locating LCPL Rizzo's body is forever burned into my own mind's eye like an indelible and vivid color photograph. Thirty-five years later I still clearly see him."[1709]

Just as Capt Radcliffe was consolidating the position and feeling fairly secure and hold it for the night, he received the word to withdraw. "It was incredible to me. I said, What! And he said, 'Abandon the hill.' I said, 'You gotta be kidding me; we just fought for this—we're not giving it up to them and besides, I don't have all my dead and wounded out of here.' He said, 'Well, move your wounded out.' We filled up two Otters with NVA equipment, arms... There were some C-rations and stuff we just didn't bring out of there."[1710]

David Ford helped carry Marines in body bags to the center of the hill while the wounded were carried down to the base of the hill. On one of the trips down, he saw a dead NVA at the bottom of the hill and thought it strange that he was killed there.[1711] PFC Andrew L. Metts recalls the NVA: he had lost the lower portion of his leg, from the calf down, and a Corpsman had applied a tourniquet.[1712] The Corpsman, HM2 Richard Goodwin, the senior Corpsman of C/1/9, had accompanied the relief force to provide medical assistance to the wounded Marines. An Army Staff Sergeant (from FOB-3) grabbed and brought him to a wounded NVA Colonel. "I need you to save him." "Well, I had seen the Colonel and said, 'There's nothing I can do for him, and besides that, I've got some of my own men I need to take care of.' He pulled a .45 on me! He said, 'I'm not asking you; I'm telling you! I really shocked him because I was so frustrated at that point that I grabbed the barrell of the gun and I put it to my forehead and I said, 'Do me a favor and pull the trigger! And he looked at me and said, 'You're crazy!' And I said, 'No, but I probably will be if you think I'm going to let my boys lay here and bleed and take care of a NVA, you're crazy—when the NVA is shot-up so badly that I can't do a thing. Colonel Mitchell came over and asked what was going on. Colonel Mitchell told him that he had about 30 seconds to get out of the area or he'd be declared a 'free fire zone! He was very irate that he [the SSGT] expected me to let my men lay and take care of someone else."[1713]

Capt Radcliffe then went to C-Med "..to see our wounded get out of there, make sure they got on helicopters. I just needed to see them... I was dirty and bloody and standing there. I looked like hell. Dr. Brown [CO of 3rd Med Battalion] was there and he ordered me out of there. He said in a real rough voice, 'Get that Marine out of here! I didn't have time to tell him I was the Company Commander and those were my troops, I just started getting furious. I was crying uncontrollably, tears run down me, and I was shaking. I had to change my uniform. My bodily functions went kaput and I was sobbing uncontrollably. But I was able to regroup. One of the Corpsmen grabbed me, sat me down, and they gave me some coffee laced with brandy."[1714]

A few days later, Marines from Co "A" returned to retrieve the bodies of three MIA: PVT Gary D. Dickie, CPL Manuel P. Torres, and LCPL James F. Scott. While they dug out the bunker, the NVA lobbed in a couple of mortars.[1715] Dickie, a very good friend of George Einhorn, was a Canadian citizen who joined the USMC to become a citizen. Einhorn recalls, "There was nothing left. A RPG hit him."[1716] David Ford writes: "I went to the bunker Pvt Dickey had been in, the one that I'd seen destroyed and collapsed. Some Marines began digging it out, starting in the front, working backwards. They'd been digging a few minutes when we heard tubes popping on the ridge line across from us. We all took cover in the trenches and bunkers just before the mortar

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[1707] Letter from David Ford, 29 November 1993, p. 16.
[1708] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[1709] Letter of Larry Seavy-Cioffi, 24 July 2003, p. 6.
[1710] Taped comments of H.J.M. Radcliffe sent to David Ford, 7 January 1996..
[1711] Letter from David Ford, 29 November 1993.
[1712] Letter of Andrew L. Metts, 14 December 1995.
[1713] Conversations with Rev. Richard Goodwin, 17 March 1994 and 12 June 1994.
[1714] Conversations with H.J.M. Radcliffe, 12 August 1994 and 6 February 1995; Taped comments of H.J.M. Radcliffe to David Ford, 7 January 1996.
[1715] Taped comments of David William Moody, 9 June 1994.
[1716] Conversation with George Einhorn, 9 March 1992.

rounds hit the hill.. We continued digging. It wasn't long before we found the first body. It was Pvt Dickey. His head was blown apart from the base of his skull to his forehead; his brain was gone. Even though his face was distorted, I could still recognize him. The smell was sickening. We then dug out a black Marine, LCPL James Scott, who I'd known since getting in country, a member of the mortar crew who'd been standing watch with them at night."[1717]

CPL Dewey Edward Troup, newly-arrived, received a first aid pack bearing the name "Roach." Nobody else wanted it, thinking it was jinxed, but Troup took it, knowing it might come in handy.[1718]

Philip Wright, a Marine with the FLC, was working at Graves Registration as the KIAs from Hill 64 arrived. "The one that just sticks out in my mind—they wrapped the kid's head in a poncho liner—it just looked like someone emptied an AK-47 into his head. But he still had Stateside utilities, and they still had that shine to them—they were so green, and he still had Stateside combat boots. He couldn't of been there a week."[1719]

A map found on one of the NVA "..marked every tank and every armored position on the perimeter.. This map showed, almost to a bunker, that they knew where everything we had was, including the positions of our underground ammo bunkers."[1720]

Terrence Raymond Roach, Jr., was known as a nonconformist when in high school, an "individual," who would go to New Mexico and climb mountains. He wore a tam-o'-shanter,[1721] and was even suspended from high school for wearing kilts. He was athletic and played varsity baseball. His daughter, Mary Scott, was born three months after he was buried with honors on a cold, wintry day at Sacred Heart Cemetery in Detroit, Michigan. Mary Scott named her son Terry in honor of the father she never saw.[1722]

Cpl Thomas Lewer was born in Waseca, Minnesota, and moved to Bemidji in 1959 where he graduated from high school in 1965 and attended Bemidji State College before he enlisted in the Marine Corps in June, 1966.[1723] Cpl James F. Scott, Jr., a native of Mobile, Alabama, was survived by his wife, Mrs. Barbara D. Scott, and one son, Michael E. Scott.[1724] Cpl Henry York was active in football, wrestling, and track at North Babylon High School prior to enlisting in the Marine Corps in August, 1966. He was an enthusiastic surfer, a "daredevil," according to his mother.[1725]

[*Message from CG, III MAF: "SPECAT EXCLUSIVE for Colonel Lownds. For the past two weeks the eyes of the world have been on Khe Sanh, and particularly the U.S. Marines tasked with the responsibility for its defense. The enemy has thus far been unable to claim even a small success despite continual attacks by fire on the combat base and ground attacks on outpost positions. This can only be attributed to the well organized defensive system, extreme alertness on the part of all units.. and good intelligence. Though we mourn those who have gallantly given their lives in defense of this outpost of freedom, we who are directly involved, and the free world, know it has not been in vain. The main ground contest for Khe Sanh remains to be fought, and a continued effort of vigilance is still necessary. Your professional performance and the determination of every Marine, soldier, sailor, airman and Seabee involved to win, are the same denominators used since 1775. Keep up the outstanding work. Well Done! LtGen Cushman sends."*[1726]]

09 February 1968

LOVATO, PFC Michael Leon	**C/1/9**
PINATELLI, PFC Thomas Michael	**C/1/9**

Brief contacts with NVA and exchange of small arms fire and grenades characterized the night of 9/10 February. At 2215H, a LP of C/1/9 at XD831418, after receiving small arms fire and grenades, withdrew to the company perimeter. C/1/9 then received 7 satchel charges in their wire during which 2 enemy penetrated the outer wire to the tangle foot strands. The action resulted in the deaths of 2 Marines:[1727] PFCs Lovato and Pinatelli.

"I remember when our Listening Post got hit: I just wanted to jump up and go out there. They had movement—lots of movement—and they were attempting to come back in, and something went wrong. And I wanted to go out there because Lovato got hurt real bad—both legs blown off—there, screaming for help. And I jumped up and I was going to go out there, but then the Lt. started yelling: OK; we're going to get a patrol out there. And it seemed like it took hours; it might have been 5, 10 minutes. But I wanted to go out there. [The patrol retrieved the body]—and Tom Pinatelli: he was still alive when we got to him, but he died that night or early the

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[1717] Letter of David Ford, 29 November 1993, pp. 19-20.
[1718] Conversation with Ed Troup, 28 March 1993.
[1719] Conversation with Philip Wright, 15 July 1993.
[1720] Comments of Sgt P. J. Fitch, April, 1968, HQMC Oral History Tape #2498.
[1721] Conversation with Terry Charbonneau, 21 February 1998. A tam-o'-shanter is a large woolen cap worn by Scots.
[1722] Information supplied by Jack Wells, 2 June 2004.
[1723] *Obit.*, Bemidji, Minnesota, *Daily Pioneer*, Tuesday, 27 Feb 1968.
[1724] *Obit.*, Mobile, Alabama, *Register*, Thursday, 7 March 1968.
[1725] *Obit.*, paper unidentified.
[1726] CG III MAF 080112Z/Feb 1968 to CG 3rd MarDiv in III MAF Outgoing SPECAT EXCLUSIVE file 4 Feb – 1 Mar 1968.
[1727] 3rd MarDiv 100328Z/Feb68, Daily Report of Khe Sanh, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 10/11 February 1968, #72.

next morning. I always assumed that if we just got them back alive, that we're going to save them. [Lovato].. was dead when we got to him. He bled to death, and he was screaming for help."[1728]

10 FEBRUARY 1968

BROWN, SSGT William Leo	**H&HS-1**
CALVIN, SSGT Glenn Henry	**E/2/26**
D'ADAMO, MSGT John Jr.	**VMGR-152**
DEVIK, LCPL Daniel Ralf	**VMGR-152**
PETERSON, COL Carl Elving	**I MAW**
WALBRIDGE, SSGT George Wilcox	**H&HS-1**

At noon,[1729] a silvery[1730] KC-130F of VMGR-152, #149813, call-sign BASKETBALL-813, on Mission #810, approached the KSCB runway carrying 6 500-gallon JP-4 fuel bladders and 2 pallets of flame throwers[1731] on an emergency re-supply of vitally needed fuel. Due to weather and wind conditions a TACAN approach was made to Runway 28, discontinued at approximately 900 feet to enter a right downwind VFR to Runway 10.[1732]. Flying in, just under the cloud cover and after turning from the 180 degree position, the aircraft received several hits from hostile fire while 2 miles SW of the airstrip (over Khe Sanh village). At least one round penetrated the fuel bladders causing fuel to splash the interior which was ignited by aircraft electrical systems. Within seconds, the plane's interior was engulfed in flames.[1733] The fuel went underneath the flight station, was ignited by the air turbine units and the flames came out of the throttle quadrant (where the pilots's hands control the throttle), severely burning Wildfang's hands, and flames came out of the air-conditioning ducts.[1734] The fire and smoke not only made breathing difficult, it also limited visibility to near zero at times.[1735] The aircraft touched down approximately 800 feet from the approach end of the runway. "The plane landed from the west, moved down the runway with a burst of speed, twisted to the south and headed into a row of bunkers, managing to steer the crippled plane away from the bunkers and bring it to a stop, a scant hundred feet away, before it was engulfed in flames."[1736] Prior to completing a full stop, two separate explosions occurred followed by the third and final explosion which completely engulfed the aircraft in flames. The pilot, an old legend of Marine Corps aviation, CWO-4 Henry Wildfang,[1737] expertly managed to land the aircraft, thus saving 5 of the 10 on board. Despite his painful burns to his hands, the smoke-filled compartment, and imminent danger, Wildfang maneuvered the aircraft from the runway to permit other planes to land, and risked his life to help extricate two others from the burning aircraft.[1738]

Master Sergeant D'Adamo, the flight engineer, remained in the cockpit to assist Wildfang to land the aircraft.[1739] He pulled his own flight suit up over Wildfang to try to stop the fire from burning him as he landed the aircraft.[1740] LCPL Ferren, First Mechanic, remained at his post until the aircraft stopped and then made his exit

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[1728] Conversation with Richard Bryant, 25 May 1990.

[1729] 26Mar 100425Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #406, Para. 4.N.; 26Mar 101054Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #407; Resume of Telephone Call from TADC I MAW 101215Z/Feb68, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 10/11Feb68 #73.

[1730] USMC C-130s were silvery; USAF C-130s were camouflaged brown and dark green.

[1731] Letter of CWO-4 Wildfang to Jack Shulimson,. Marine Corps Historical Center, 26 Nov 1994.

[1732] The KSCB airstrip was 60-ft. wide, 3,900-ft., and with a 1500-ft. elevation. It was oriented ESE-WSW and had the peculiarity of a higher elevation on the western end so that planes landing from the east went up-hill (the normal use of the runway) and planes landing west to east went down-hill on a 3% gradient. There was a sharp cliff off the eastern end dropping some 800-ft. with a trough through which prevailing winds carried warmer, moist air from the lowlands to the airstrip and, together with a waterfalls, produced fog. [Pollica, TSGT Bruce W., and Rickey, TSGT Joe R., *Monograph of 834th Air Division Tactical Airlift Support for Khe Sanh, 21 January – 8 April 1968, 834AD-DXI-69-001*, pp. 5, 9, 28)

[1733] Letter of R.M. Williams, CO, Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152, 1/HC/khb, 1650, 22 Mar 1968, Subj: Appropriate Awards, recommendation for (in Navy Comm Medal file of Cpl Tommy Floyd Taylor and Bronze Star Medal file of SSGT Joseph Hookano Kahee, Jr.; Resume of Telephone Call from TADC, I MAW 101215Z/Feb68 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 10/11 Feb 1968 #73. "Over Khe Sanh Village" (Diary of ENS Martin Kux, 10 February 1968).

[1734] Conversation with James Veletto, 9 July 1995. (For burnt hands of Wildfang, Richardson, *op. cit.*, p. 48).

[1735] Wildfang letter of 26 Nov 1994, cited.

[1736] Statement of LtCol John A. Wachter in Bronze Star Medal file, Sgt David G. Cumming.

[1737] CWO-4 Henry Wildfang was commissioned in 1942 and during World War II had been awarded four Distinguished Flying Crosses and attained the rank of Major. With demobilization following the War, he left the USMC, but within 90 days returned under a program that permitted enlisted pilots, and picked up the rank of Master Sergeant. By 1976, he had flown more than 22,000 flight hours and was designated the "Silver Hawk," the Naval Aviator with the longest active duty. [Herb Richardson, "Silver Hawk," *Leatherneck* 59:3 (Mar., 1976) 46-49]. CWO-4 Wildfang retired in June, 1978, after nearly 37 years of active service. [Letter from Henry Wildfang, 28 March 1988].

[1738] He was awarded his fifth Distinguished Flying Cross in this incident.

[1739] Distinguished Flying Cross Citation of MSgt John D'Adamo, Jr.

[1740] Conversation with John Merchant, 24 June 1993.

through the crew entrance door receiving severe burns.[1741] (He later died from these wounds, on 01 March).

LCPL David Ralf Devik was the Radio Operator aboard BASKETBALL-813 and remained in the smoke-filled rear compartment, advising Wildfang of the situation until he was killed in the third explosion.[1742] David was a minister's son from Seattle, Washington. "He was a typical minister's kid: he was 'hell on wheels.' I had red hair at the time. I'm 5-6. He was about 6-ft. with red hair, and he and I were best buddies. He had been with a reserve unit up there in Seattle and they had talk about '67 about activating the unit and sending them over to Nam. He wanted to beat that, so he opted for active duty.. He was just about set to come back to the States when he went on that flight."[1743] The fuel sloshed and the fire went into the throttles, consuming everything forward of the 245 bulkhead.[1744]

Because of the dangerous cargo, CWO-4 Wildfang didn't want to embark any passengers and so Master Gunnery Sergeant John Merchant and a Marine Corporal were bumped from the manifest.[1745]

SSGT Walbridge was coming to Khe Sanh to write stories on Air Wing personnel at Khe Sanh. He had only been in country a few days.

COL Peterson, a reserve officer from Green Bay, Wisconsin, had volunteered for active duty only a few months previously.[1746] Despite Wildfang's reluctance to embark passengers, apparently the Colonel had pushed his rank and said, "I'm going to take this flight!"[1747]

The Crash Crew arrived under the leadership of SSGT Joseph Hookano Kahee, Jr.[1748] Cpl Tommy Floyd Taylor managed to open the port paratroopo door and despite the extreme heat, assisted in extracting four crew members and one passenger.[1749] SSGT Kahee attempted to gain entrance to the aircraft through the forward hatch.[1750] The crash crew covered the flaming aircraft wreckage with 8,000 gallons of water, 500 gallons of foam concentrate and 600 pounds of PKP to control and extinguish the flames.[1751]

The aircraft had stopped less than 100-feet short of the bunker containing the Combat Correspondents, and Sgt David G. Cumming ran to the aircraft, assisted one badly burned man onto a stretcher and then moved to assist in the attempt to rescue others.[1752] Many others simply had seen the aircraft move from the 3/26 Red Sector on the western end of KSCB to the eastern end, looking "..like it was crop-dusting—there was so much fuel leaking out of it... Everybody ran over there. Everybody had to just stand and watch it burn, and once everybody found out there's nothing we could do—let's get the hell away from it, before the rounds start coming in."[1753]

The two pilots were brought to C-Med. "Two very badly burned, older men. The skin of their faces was peeling, darkened, burned, charred. One, obviously in shock and perhaps numb, asked for a Roman Catholic priest. He was relatively composed and didn't utter a word. The other was in excruciating pain and pleaded, 'O Shit! O God help me! Please let me sit up! I got to sit up! O, please let me sit up!.."[1754]

GEORGE WALBRIDGE AT KHE SANH
By MGySgt Ed Evans

"..As I approached, my attention was held by the burned out hulk of what had been a C-130 Hercules, still resting on the edge of the runway.. I turned from the C-130 and saw Gunnery Sergeant Chuck McCormick.. After a few pleasantries, Chuck said, 'You know George Walbridge burned up in that.'.. I hadn't known George Walbridge was in Viet Nam. I dropped my gear where I stood, left Chuck and walked toward the wreckage, slowly. After a few moments, carefully facing toward the plane so that if Chuck were still behind me he wouldn't see the tears..

"I first met George.. in September., 1964... George was a real clown most of the time, a con artist, but he had a good heart and if he had something you needed, it was yours.... He introduced me to my wife, who was then a Navy WAVE going through the school... What is so poignant about all this is that George had one real weak spot.

[1741] Distinguished Flying Cross Citation, LCPL Jerry Wayne Ferren.
[1742] Distinguished Flying Cross Citation, LCPL David Ralf Devik.
[1743] Conversation with Jon Filina, 25 August 1993.
[1744] Conversation with John Merchant, 24 June 1993. The "245 bulkhead" was the wall between the crew compartment and the cargo compartment, 245 inches from the nose of the plane." [Conversation with Jon Filina, 25 August 1993].
[1745] Conversation with John Merchant, 24 June 1993.
[1746] Letter of LtCol Johnny D. Gregerson, 3 Jan 1969, in Khe Sanh Monograph File, Historical Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C.
[1747] Conversation with Jon Filina, 25 August 1993.
[1748] Others in the Crash Crew: Sgt Rito Aguilera, Jr., Cpl Daniel M. Decato, Cpl Michael L. Orr, Cpl Paul R. Carmean, Jr., and Cpl Tommie F. Taylor. [Ltr of R.M. Williams, CO, VMGR-152, cited.]
[1749] Navy Commendation Medal file on Cpl Tommy Floyd Taylor.
[1750] Bronze Star Medal file on SSGT Joseph Hookano Kahee, Jr.
[1751] CO, VMGR-152 ltr of 22 March 1968, cited.
[1752] Bronze Star Medal file on Sgt David G. Cumming.
[1753] Conversation with Philip Wright, 20 August 1993.
[1754] Diary entry of Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, 10 Feb 1993.

He wanted desperately to be loved. He would do anything for a girl, and often did. But they simply took what he offered them and ran off with somebody else. George's broken heart was a regular item.. In 1967..he was married and he was very much in love with her... His wife, a pretty Woman Marine.. let me know George meant a great deal to her, and if I had any ideas about taking him out and getting him into trouble like most of is old cronies, well, what she promised isn't found in anybody's book of polite mannerisms. She said he'd been through enough, too much. She let me know he'd tried to go to Nam and they wouldn't let him, but I better not try to make George feel guilty about that. I loved her for that..

"I thought about her as I stood in the wind, gazing at the burned out hulk where George died... George had apparently only been in country a few days, but he wanted to be where the action was.. As a new guy, he didn't know you shouldn't get on a plane filled with a bladder of AV-gas headed for Khe Sanh..."[1755]

[On 10 February, the B5-T8 Front withdrew 5 regiments from the Khe Sanh battlefield. By "..the middle of February, 1968, the 66th Regiment [304th Division] replaced the 325th [C] Division."[1756] *On 10 February, the NVA began "Phase 2" of their Khe Sanh battle, the encirclement of Khe Sanh Combat Base.*[1757] *The resolve and tenacity of the Marine defenders, the inability to draw-in infantry so they could be annihilated, the inability to restrict resupply, the inability to mass troops (due to electronic sensors and signals intelligence which pinpointed NVA units with uncanny accuracy), and B-52 strikes which annihilated any massing, all made overrunning KSCB impossible given the situation. LtGen Phillip B. Davidson, General Westmoreland's J-2 (Intelligence staff officer), opines the removal of NVA units to the leak in the papers concerning the possible use of nuclear weapons in the defense of Khe Sanh.*[1758]

So significant had the battlefield of Khe Sanh become, employment of nuclear weapons in its survival was considered under the code name FRACTURE JAW. President Johnson's apprehensions over Khe Sanh reflected in his demand for a statement from the JCS that it could be held, the construction of a sand-box in the White House Situation Room of the Khe Sanh battlefield, and his continual questions concerning the welfare of the 26th Marines,[1759] *led him to express his apprehensions concerning nuclear weapons. The possibility employing tactical nuclear weapons (artillery-fired or mines (SADM)) loomed as a definite possibility should the base be in danger of being overrun, and the President vehemently eschewed having to make the decision to release this chimera. On 1 February, General Wheeler, CJCS, asked the advice of General Westmoreland and Admiral Sharp (CINCPAC) "..whether tactical nuclear weapons should be used if the situation in Khe Sanh should become [like Dien Bien Phu]. I consider such an eventuality unlikely. Nevertheless, I would appreciate your views as to whether there are targets in the area which lend themselves to nuclear strikes, whether some contingency nuclear planning would be in order, and what you would consider to be some of the more significant pros and cons of using tac nukes in such a contingency."*[1760] *Two days later, he informed General Westmoreland: "I have just had a phone conversation with the President in which he reiterated his concern that the situation could become so serious in the Khe Sanh area he could be confronted with a decision to use tactical nuclear weapons to redress the imbalance, a decision which he does not want to be forced to make."*[1761] *General Westmoreland's response vexed both General Wheeler and President Johnson,*[1762] *for whereas he reiterated the differences between Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu (supporting air, reinforcing heavy artillery, and techniques for aerial re-supply), together with sufficient manpower either at Khe Sanh or nearby, he concluded, "The use of tactical nuclear weapons should not be required in the present situation in view of the authority to use COFRAM. However, should the situation in the DMZ area change dramatically, we should be prepared to introduce weapons of greater effectiveness against massed forces. Under such circumstances I visu-*

[1755] Printed in The Khe Sanh *Veteran* 1:6 (Nov., 1994) 18-20.

[1756] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign*], Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, 1987, p. 32.

[1757] *Cong Tau Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*Rear Services Operations: 1968 Spring Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign*]. Classified "Mat" [Secret], Restricted "For Distribution within the Army, Luu Hanh Trong Quan Doi, Hanoi: General Directorate for Rear Services, 1988, p. 267.

[1758] Davidson, Phillip B., *Vietnam at War, The History: 1946-1975*, San Francisco, Ca.: Presidio, 1988, pp. 564-565.

[1759] Brugioni, Dino A., "The President, Khe Sanh, and the 26th Marines," *Leatherneck* 69:9 (September, 1986) 24. Brugioni was a senior official and aerial reconnaissance and photo interpreter expert for the CIA.

[1760] JCS 011526Z/Feb 1968, JCS 01154 to COMUSMACV and CINCPAC, in OCJCS File 091, Vietnam February, 1968.

[1761] JCS 030332Z/Feb 1968, JCS 01272 to COMUSMACV in OCJCS File 091, Vietnam February, 1968.

[1762] Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 565.

alize that either tactical nuclear weapons or chemical agents would be active candidates for employment."[1763] *Admiral Sharp, the CINCPAC Unified Commander, reported to General Wheeler that although use of tactical nuclear weapons at Khe Sanh was unlikely, "..we felt that military prudence alone requires that we do some detailed planning regarding [it].. We are accomplishing the planning under the strictest security in Okinawa with a special planning team headed by a CINCPAC planner.. [and have assigned] the unclassified nickname of FRACTURE JAW.."*[1764] *General Wheeler responded that any plans that are developed under FRACTURE JAW not be forwarded until the JCS requests them "..or until a critical situation arises which, in your judgment, dictates the need for us to consider such plans."*[1765]

Then, on 5 February, an anonymous telephone call was made to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations reporting that a noted nuclear weapons expert had arrived in South Vietnam,[1766] *the Committee had hearings in closed session, and Senator Eugene J. McCarthy reported it at a news conference.*[1767] *General Wheeler directed Admiral Sharp "..to discontinue the FRACTURE JAW special planning efforts. There has been much news media speculation and opposition assertions on this subject, and he [President Johnson] desires that there be no foundation for allegations being made."*[1768] *CINCPAC instructed General Westmoreland: "Discontinue all planning for FRACTURE JAW. Place all planning material, including messages and correspondence relating thereto, under positive security. Debrief all personnel with access to this planning project that there can be no disclosure of the content of the plan or knowledge that such planning was either underway or suspended. Security of this action and prior actions must be air tight."*[1769]

LtGen Davidson opines that it was the public disclosure of consideration of the use of nuclear weapons at Khe Sanh—and, in the mind of Gen Giap, the possible use against choke points in the Ho Chi Minh Trail and dikes along the Red River—that caused Giap to cease attacking the outposts of Khe Sanh and withdraw significant numbers of troops.[1770] *Davidson argues that Giap may well have remembered Operation VULTURE, Admiral Radford's plan (as CJCS) to relieve the besieged French troops at Dien Bien Phu by using nuclear weapons.*[1771]

Military planning exercises including the use of simulated atomic weapons were included in the biannual SEATO Exercise STRONGBACK.[1772] *In 1964, a CIA cable from Laos noted: "Communist China and North Vietnam sincerely believe that the United States will not engage in atomic warfare to win in Vietnam."*[1773]

Whereas the Institute for Defense Analyses, Jason Division, study on nuclear weapons in Southeast Asia concluded: "..the political effects of U.S. first use of TNW in Vietnam would be uniformly bad and could be catastrophic,"[1774] *General Westmoreland demurred: "If Washington officials were so intent on 'sending a message' to Hanoi, surely small tactical nuclear weapons would be a way to tell Hanoi something, just as two atomic bombs had spoken convincingly to Japanese officials during World War II and the threat of atomic bombs induced the North Koreans to accept meaningful negotiations during the Korean War. It could be that use of a few small tactical nuclear weapons in Vietnam—or even the threat of them—might have quickly brought the war there to an end... I felt at the time and even more so now that to fail to consider this alternative was a mistake."*[1775]

Ominous similarities between the fated Dien Bien Phu and Khe Sanh soon prompted much apprehension.

[1763] COMUSMACV 031226Z/Feb 1968, MAC 01586, to CJCS, in OCJCS File 091, Vietnam February, 1968; in Memorandum for the President from CJCS, CM-2944-68, 3 February 1968, in LBJ Library, March 31st Speech, Vol. 6, Khe Sanh Reports

[1764] CINCPAC 020208Z/Feb 1968, in OCJCS File 091, Vietnam February, 1968.

[1765] JCS 101848Z/Feb 1968, JCS 01678, to CINCPAC, in OCJCS File 091, Vietnam February, 1968.

[1766] Hammond, William M., *Reporting Vietnam, Media and Military at War*, Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998, p. 118. The scientists had arrived in Vietnam in connection with the study of the electronic barrier, the "McNamara Line," and had nothing to do with nuclear weapons. [Tannenwald, Nina, *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Nonuse of Nuclear Weapons Since 1945*, (unpublished email by Nautilus Institute, Nuclear Policy Project (to be published by Cambridge University Press), March, 2003, section entitled "Khe Sanh."]

[1767] "Viet Nukes Requested, McCarthy Says," *Washington Post*, 9 February 1968; "White House Disputes McCarthy on Atom Arms," New York *Times*, 10 Feb 1968.

[1768] JCS 111913Z/Feb 1968, JCS 01690, to CINCPAC, in OCJCS File 091, Vietnam February 1968.

[1769] CINCPAC 120242Z/Feb 1968 in OCJCS File 091, Vietnam February, 1968.

[1770] Davidson, *op. cit.*, pp. 565-566.

[1771] *Vide*, Memorandum from Admiral Arthur W. Radford to Secretary of Defense, Charles E. Wilson, 26 May 1954, Para. 3.a., reprinted in *The New York Times, The Pentagon Papers*, p. 45.

[1772] Conducted 11 Feb – 13 March 1958. National Security Council Progress Report, 6 November 1957 on U.S. Policy in Mainland Southeast Asia (NSC 5612/1)

[1773] Intelligence Information Cable TDCS-3/581,821, Vientiane, Laos, 17 May 1964, Para 7.F., CIA MORI document #11432.

[1774] F. J. Dyson, R. Gomer, S. Weinberg, and S.C. Wright, Institute for Defense Analyses, Jason Division, Study S-266, *Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Southeast Asia*, March, 1967, p. 51.

[1775] Westmoreland, General William C., *A Soldier Reports*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1976, p. 338.

Marine planners had been sensitive to this from the beginning of permanent Marine Corps presence at the Combat Base. Indeed, a 30-page detailed analysis reflects their cognizance of differences and similarities as early as January, 1967.[1776] *The North Vietnamese newspaper, Nhan Dan, warned that the U.S. faced a defeat as "disastrous as that suffered by the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954."*[1777] *Despite General Giap's assertions that Khe Sanh was no Dien Bien Phu ("Khe Sanh didn't try to be, nor could it have been, a Dien Bien Phu. Khe Sanh wasn't that important to us.")*[1778] *Phase II of the Khe Sanh battle is described as an encirclement (i.e., "siege") in official NVA histories,*[1779] *their attack of outposts (Hill 861, Huong Hoa District Headquarters, BV-33, Hill 861-A, Lang Vei, and Hill 64, together with extensive trenching activities with saps and other traditional siege tactics, betray their true intentions. In an undated Top Secret analysis, CG, FMFPAC, gave his reflections on the similarities and differences to General Chapman, Commandant of the Marine Corps.*[1780] *On 11 February, Colonel Reamer W. Argo, Jr., the MACV Historian, briefed General Westmoreland and his staff comparing Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu.*[1781] *Col Argo argued: "It appears that Khe Sanh is following the pattern of previous sieges," and concluded, "If a purely defensive course of action is pursued at Khe Sanh, the enemy may succeed in concentrating sufficient combat power to overwhelm our base in spite of our firepower, as has been the case in most sieges in the past," and recommended "urgent consideration be given to employing an outside force in offensive action against the enemy's forces devoted to the siege." Gen Westmoreland recalls that his staff was stunned by Col Argo's presentation and the General responded that it was good they had heard the worst, "But we are not, repeat not, going to be defeated at Khe Sanh. I will tolerate no talking or even thinking to the contrary."*[1782] *A 24-page analysis by the SACSA, General DePuy, complete with maps and statistical tables was forwarded to President Johnson by Walt W. Rostow as a "brilliant comparison," and with three appended interrogation reports on the NVA campaign plan, Rostow wrote, "they define what we are up against."*[1783] *A 105-page, single-spaced document prepared in March, 1968, by COMUSMACV, reported the final results of the committee to study the comparison between Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu,*[1784] *concluding with political and physical similarities, but two major differences: Khe Sanh's extensive fire-support (16 175mm guns and a very sophisticated air environment) and reinforcing logistic capability for Khe Sanh.*[1785] *He failed to mention the tenacity of the Marine defenders and, although few, just the right people on the ground to make the right decisions that would ensure Khe Sanh would hold, however desperate the situation was to become.*]

11 FEBRUARY 1968

KEEFE, CPL Dennis Michael	**HQ 26 Mar**
SCOTT, PVT Walter Michael	**H&S/1/26**
TURNER, 1/Sgt Robert Lawrence	**A/1/9**
WOODS, 1/Lt John Kevin	**H&S/3/26**

At 1115H, a rocket from the south exploded on a 106mm recoilless rifle bunker (XD848416) killing Pvt Walter Michael Scott.[1786] **"My best buddy who I've known since 27th Marines was killed.. A 122mm rocket landed on the roof of Mike Scott's bunker. I run over and crawled inside and pulled out a body. It was horrible. There wasn't any head and I looked on the shirt and seen the name of Scott. I about went crazy."**[1787] **From the official 1/26 Command Chronology report: "Fm: B – KIA Report – A. S235986 B. 111115H C. XD848416 D. Shrapnel and concussion E. Multiple lacerations F. Dead G. Yes H. Defense of perimeter I. Rocket J. H&SCo, 106 Plt." Official records hardly disclose the reality!**

Richard Cruz first met his buddy, Mike Scott, in Staging Battalion. As the siege battle at Khe Sanh progressed, Cruz notes, "Food was short. My bunker was right behind the messhall. He was with H&S Company, attached to 106s. So him and a couple other guys made a

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[1776] "Khe Sanh Area Report," appended as Enclosure (1) to 3rd Marine Division Command Chronology, January, 1967.
[1777] "Waiting at Khe Sanh," The *National Observer*, 26 Feb 1968, p. 4.
[1778] Fallaci, Oriana, *Interview with History*, Trans. John Shepley, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976, p. 85.
[1779] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign], *op. cit.*, p. 267; *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign], *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[1780] "Khe Sanh and Dienbienphu," in archives of Historical Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C.
[1781] MACJ031, Subj: Analysis of the Khe Sanh Situation in Light of Previous Sieges, COL Argo/lpb/3838, 3 March 1968, in LBJ Library, Westmoreland Papers, b. 16, History File #30 [II], Doc. #153. Col. Argo not only compared these two battles, but also provided a summary of 38 past sieges beginning with that at Constantinople in 1453.
[1782] Westmoreland, *op. cit.*, p. 338.
[1783] LBJ Library, Files of Walt W. Rostow, Khe Sanh-Dien Bien Phu Comparison by Gen DePuy.
[1784] Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, *Strategic/Tactical Study*, prepared by ACos, J-5, 10 March 1968.
[1785] *Ibid.*, pp,. 8-9.
[1786] 3rd MarDiv 160015Z/Feb 1968, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #411; 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log for 11 Feb 1968, Serial #15
[1787] Letter of Richard Cruz to his parents, 16 February 1968.

raid on the supply—H&S Co. Supply, where they had all the C-rations the night before. He said, 'Man are you hungry?' and I said, 'I'm starved!' So he went over and got me some food, around through the trenches. He wasn't walking above ground—all the way by the trash dump. He crossed the road right there where Perez had his M60 set up, by the gate, by the ammo dump. And we just hear BOOM! I looked, and it was Mike's bunker. So I ran right there, and Perez, he lifts the Air Force matting up and I crawl in there and pull out a body with no head. So I go in and I can't find Mike. I come out and I saw 'Scott' right across his shirt—first one I pulled out—no head, decapitated. And that's when I went nuts."[1788]

As a USAF C-130 from Tuy Hoa Air Base landed on the KSCB airstrip at 1130H, a rocket and mortar barrage erupted lasting for 20 minutes. The first round, landing 15 feet from the plane, resulted in the death of two passengers, serious wounds to the loadmaster, extensively damaging the plane's tail section, and starting a fire inside the plane.[1789] "Colonel Lownds raced to the scene of the accident and immediately took charge of rescue operations. To do so he placed himself in immediate proximity to the burning plane without benefit of protective clothing while exposed to flame, burning debris and numerous explosions caused by the fire. He personally and diligently searched the wreckage for survivors. Locating one crew member he pulled him from the wreckage in a vain attempt to save his life. Throughout the rescue efforts he continually exposed himself to the billowing flames directing operations and personally trying to extricate other crew members from the wreckage."[1790]

Among the passengers were all the company First Sergeants of 1/9 who were sent to obtain the payroll for the battalion. As a result of the hit, all five First Sergeants were medevaced. Top Robert L. Turner (of Co A/1/9), although evacuated to Delta Med at Dong Ha, succumbed to his wounds.[1791]

Bill Jabusch was dying from leukemia at the Madigan Army Hospital, Tacoma, Washington, in 1990. He later received a bone marrow transplant from marrow donated by his sister, but then died from a brain fungus 8 November 1991 in connection with the transplant. Facing his last days, he wrote down his experiences in Vietnam and wrote of his Lieutenant, John Kevin Woods who had been in Dong Ha with the 3/26 rear supply and was one of those killed in the plane crash today. "He came up to Khe Sanh, wanted to see how his Motor Transport troops were doing. He apparently wasn't supposed to be there, but he had enough concern for us to check. I didn't give him much credit for being a decent guy. He was just a Second Lieutenant to me and I was a forever-time-in-grade Private. His plane got hit and burned up inside, and he burned to death in it."[1792] He wrote the following:

"Lt Woods was a pretty good guy as far as officers go.. He joined us at Camp Evans in September, 1967... He was about 6-1 with dark red hair and a bright red mustache which he was really proud of. He even started to let it exceed regulations a bit, a little bit of rebellion but not much. He caught me with little to do one afternoon around the first of October and decided he wanted to tell me all about going through O.C.S... I think he was just dying to tell someone something about himself.. I think at the time I must have been standing perimeter in one of the 60 bunkers because he just had to tell me about being the 60 gunner in O.C.S... I'm sure he thought of this as get acquainted time, but I got the impression he would like to become another Audie Murphy. A day or two later he really outdid himself. He'd gotten up, walked out of his tent with his little shaving pan, walked to a water can by the shop tent, filled his pan up and walked back to the tent. Trouble was, it wasn't water, it was gas. A lot of the cans were too rusty, so we used them for gas when we needed to. He was red, he was so mad. He'd gotten it on him before he'd realized and was fit to be tied... General Hochmuth got killed. Our Battalion got detailed to retrieve the bodies. Someone, probably the Battalion Commander, thought a wreath or something like that should be sent to his widow. Lt Woods got detailed to collect from all of Headquarters. I think he'd collected from most sections when he came to us and told us he'd need 50 cents per man donated. That's all well and good, but I did some quick calculations and $600.00 was just a little too much for our battalion to buy one wreath, so I gave him a ration of shit about where the rest of the money was going. Before long, he was standing in the middle of the hooch screaming, 'Jabusch, you're just a P.V.T.—shut up!' Over and over; he was livid. It took him a couple of weeks to get over it and I really felt bad, but Privates just don't tell Lieutenants they're sorry!... [We went to Khe Sanh]. He'd gotten left at Dong Ha and I was at Khe Sanh driving ammunition and such for S-4.

[1788] Conversation with Richard Cruz in his home in Columbus, Ohio, 19 August 1984.

[1789] Pollica, TSgt Bruce W., and Rickey, TSgt Joe R., *Monograph of 834th Air Division, Tactical Airlift Support for Khe Sanh, 21 January – 8 April 1968* pp. 12-13; 3rd MarDiv COC (Cpl Petri 111530H/Feb 1968, Resume of Telephone Call to III MAF COC, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 11/12 February 1968, #100. The latter document puts the rocket attack at 1155H. 3rd MarDiv COC 160015Z/Feb 1968, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #411 (puts the attack at 1200H).

[1790] CG III MAF 071000Z/Apr68, SPECAT EXCLUSIVE for LtGen Krulak from LtGen Cushman info MGen Tompkins in III MAF Outgoing SPECAT Exclusive file 28 Mar – 11 Apr 1968.

[1791] Comments of Capt Peter A. Woog, USMC Oral History Tape #4726. (Capt Woog was the Adjutant and Headquarters Commandant of 1/9; Bronze Star Medal Citation on First Sergeant Robert L. Turner.

[1792] Taped comments of William Jabusch sent 8 March 1990, transcript p. 14.

"I hardly had a chance to even think about him, and didn't until Feb... I guess he'd just wanted to see how the troops were, so he hopped a ride our way, intending I was told to see us, his platoon, and then catch the next bird out back to Dong Ha... He was thinking about us at the end. I never did get to apologize and a couple of times I really wanted to, but didn't let myself. I guess shitbird Privates like me thought they had an image to maintain, and never saying you're sorry to a Lt is one of them....

"The most important thing I've got to say is this: 1st Lieutenant Woods, John Kevin, USMC—you were a good man. I never gave you much reason to believe this, but I honestly do say it now. We laughed at some of the things you did and kept our distance, but you did make us smile. Most officers didn't. You stuck up for us, especially me, and I returned the favor... You thought about us, I see that now. You're actions clearly proved that. Perhaps God will deliver this for me!

"Sir! Please accept my most humble apology. My actions to you were reprehensible. My respect for your rank only grudgingly given, but I recall I liked you, and you generated more smiles on my face than frowns. You busted your ass trying, and that's as much as you can do. I respect you for who you are, and even though I didn't let myself say it then, I say it now—proudly. You're a good Marine. Thank you."[1793]

[*On 12 February, the USAF ceased landing C-130s on the Khe Sanh airstrip due to the dangerous situation. Prior to that, between 21 January and 11 February, the 834th Air Division had delivered 3,669 tons (7,338,000 pounds) of assorted supplies via 320 C-130 (jet-equipped "K" models) and C-7A sorties.*[1794]

12 FEBRUARY 1968

SPANGLER, CPL Larry Keith HQ 26 Mar

Died of fragment wounds to his head.

13 FEBRUARY 1968

EDMONDS, PFC Arthur Lee, Jr. H&S/2/26

NVA shelling during the early afternoon included 5 rockets impacting in the LSA area of the KSCB at 1410H, killing one man and wounding 8 (2 evacuated).[1795] The Marine killed, PFC Arthur Lee "Slip" Edmonds, Jr., was an American Indian, a member of the 81mm mortar section of 2/26 who had lost a part to his rifle and went in to the main base to get the part from the armory. He was on the base for about an hour when the rockets exploded killing him.[1796]

14 FEBRUARY 1968

BUNGARTZ, PFC Frederick William	K/3/9
COMBS, CPL Lowell Thomas	K/3/9
DOORNBOS, CPL Don Michael	D/1/9
FLEMING, CPL Dennis K	K/3/9
GOSS, HM2 Larry Jo	K/3/9
JAMES, LCPL Mark Everett	K/3/9
JONES, PFC Melvin Lewis	K/3/9
PATRICK, PFC Albert Earl	A/3rd Eng
REESE, 2/Lt William Robert	K/3/9
RIGSBY, PFC Barry Lane	K/3/9
ROBERTSON, PFC Gerald William	A/1/9
SCHNEIDER, CPL David Francis	K/3/9
SLACK, PFC Steven George	D/1/9
WARD, CAPT Alexander Kearney	K/3/9
WENTZELL, Jeffrey Raymond	K/3/9

On 13 February 1968, K/3/9 departed Ca Lu Combat Base (YD012455) to an objective 150 meter hill running north and south (XD990450) terminating at Route 9, approximately 2500 meters west of Ca Lu Combat Base and 13000 meters east of KSCB. At 1645H on 14 Feb, all four of KILO's companies were in contact with a reinforced NVA unit whose mission was to prevent movement of vehicles up Route 9 to assist the besieged KSCB. Early in the battle, a 60mm mortar landed in the CP group mortally wounding the CO, XO, and chief Corpsman (Capt Alexander Ward, 2/Lt William Reese, and HM2 Goss). Over 80% of KILO Company was wounded in this battle and sustained 10 KIA or DOW Marines and 1 KIA Navy Corpsman.[1797]

Raymond Felle, the Corpsman assigned to K-1 of 3/9, recounts the detail of the action:[1798]

"Our platoon headed down the hill to a streambed below. We had seen NVA at the streambed and knew that we would be in contact soon. There was a well-made trail leading up the side of soon to be called Valentines Ridge. Our Platoon Commander, 2nd Lt Holladay, and his trusted Marine, Cpl. Williams, wanted to get our men off the well-made trail even if it meant climbing up a very steep slope in the jungle. We only got about 10 of us off the trail when a .50 cal. machinegun started to fire on us, killing the point man in 3rd Platoon. The ten of us continued up the hill, only to be fired on by a NVA with

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[1793] Essay appended to letter from William Jabusch, 6 January 1990.

[1794] Pollica and Rickey, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

[1795] 3rd MarDiv 152213Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #426.

[1796] Interview of Ron Bennett by Kathi Jones, 29 January 1990, transcript p. 9.

[1797] Information provided by Raymond Felle in his letter of 4 December 2001. (Felle was 1st Platoon, K/3/9, Corpsman). Printed in Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay* 49 (Spring, 2001) 31.

[1798] Email to Kate Nicholson in letter from Ray Felle, 9 Dec 2005.

a RPG which exploded on a rock sending fragments into most of us. The Marine in front of me was the most seriously wounded with half of his rear end removed. By this time everyone was firing and yelling commands. Holladay took Marines up to the summit of the hill taking out the RPG fighting hole. About two hours into the battle he lost contact with Capt Ward. That is most likely when the mortar landed near him mortally wounding the XO, the Chief Corpsman, and himself. Our Platoon Commander, Holladay, sent Williams back down the mountain to find the rest of 1st Platoon and brought them up to the summit. He then called in jets to pound the NVA. They were dropping the HE so close you would be lifted off the ground with the explosions along with the shrapnel tearing through the jungle. Night was coming fast, so Holladay took us over the summit and down the other side. I knew we were going to get ambushed carrying our wounded and being on low ground, but luck was with us, and we got down to Route 9. The battle3 was still raging above in the jungle but we did not know where each platoon was and there was no radio contact and our commander [Capt Ward] was unable to give commands to the platoons. It became very chaotic. We formed a defensive position and waited for orders from Major Oliver and India Company. Along the way we picked up several lost Marines. What was left of our platoon got back into base and waited till morning. We knew that the CO, XO, and Chief Corpsman had been wounded but did not know how bad. That whole day wounded were coming off the mountain and into Ca Lu...Kilo Company was decimated with 9 KIA Marines, 1 DOW [Capt Ward] and 1 KIA Corpsman, along with 80% of the company wounded."

KSCB received one incoming rocket at noon impacting in the 3rd Engineers area next to a PC, killing PFC Albert Earl Patrick and seriously wounding another man.[1799]

At 1515H, Co D/1/9 received 3 rounds of 60mm mortars resulting in one seriously wounded and one non-seriously wounded man. Later, 2 additional rounds impacted, one of which landed in a bunker doorway killing Cpl Michael Doornbos and PFC Steven George Slack, and seriously wounding LCPL Kenneth L. Madello.[1800] Madello was spared death because he was closest to the doorway and protected by a dirt wall.[1801] Doornbos was a Canadian citizen who volunteered for the USMC.[1802]

[*At 1835H a major NVA supply area was struck just inside Laos (at XD7622, a location about 21 KM south-southwest of KSCB, 9 KM south-southwest of Co Roc (XD7431), and 1 KM west of the Xe Pone River). The strike caused so many secondary explosions and fires that another strike was made 4 hours later. During this strike probably 4 ammunition dumps were hit which burned from 5 to 30 minutes and then another fire started burning into a cave, setting off numerous secondary explosions. The FAC reported that he believed there was a great deal more in the area. Niagara Control decided to keep pounding this area with tactical fighters and also requested a B-52 strike. For the next seven days it was repeatedly hit and the strikes generated approximately 1,000 secondary explosions and fires.*[1803]

Also on 14 February, General Maxwell Taylor (Special Consultant to President Johnson), in a Memorandum for the President, wrote: "My review of Westy's [General Westmoreland] cables does not convince me of the military importance of maintaining Khe Sanh at the present time if it is still feasible to withdraw. Whatever the past value of the position, it is a positive liability now. We are allowing the enemy to arrange at his leisure a set-piece attack on the ground.. which will allow us little opportunity to punish him except by our air power... B-52s cannot attack with safety to our own forces."[1804]]

15 FEBRUARY 1968

GAYNOR, SGTMAJ James Thomas	**H&S/1/26**
PERETTA, CPL John Rocco	**I/3/26**
SILER, PFC Jimmy Louis	**B/1/9**

At 1230H, B/1/9 (XD831415) received one incoming 60mm mortar killing PFC Jimmy Louis Siler and wounding three who were medically evacuated.[1805]

At 1510H, the CP of C/1/26 took a direct hit by a 122mm rocket resulting in 5 seriously wounded (medically evacuated) and one minor wounded.[1806] LCPL Jo-

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[1799] 3rd MarDiv 160311Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #424, Para 4.B.

[1800] 26Mar 141002Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #423; 1/9 ComdC Feb68, Encl (1); Letter from Charles Olson, 20 March 1995.

[1801] Letter from Olson, 20 March 1995, cited.

[1802] Ken Madello, email posted 24 April 2002, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board.

[1803] MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 08 Jul 1968, p. 14.

[1804] Appended to Memo from Walt W. Rostow to Robert Ginsburgh, 14 Feb 1968, in LBJ Library archives, National Security Files, Vietnam Country File, 2A(2) I Corps & DMZ, Doc. #49, and the basis for Rostow's memo to the President of Tuesday, 13 Feb 1968, 4PM, same file, Doc #53.

[1805] 3rd MarDiv COC 161300Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #427, Para 4.F.; 26Mar 151050Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #427, Para 4.F.

[1806] 3rd MarDiv COC 161300Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #427, Para 4.Q.; 26Mar 151050Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #43rd MarDiv COC 161300Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #427, Para 4.Q.; 26Mar 151050Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #427, Para. 4.P. The 1/26 ComdC, S2/S3 Log, notes the time at 1515H, and lists those wounded as G258762 (SgtMaj James T. Gaynor), J2390988 (Pvt Larry L. Jenkins), D211469 (Cpl James A. Densmore), E091132 (Capt David L. Ernst), B2361418

seph T. Bailey was in the process of waking up LCPL Charles Norman Chamberlin to assume the radio watch in the Co C bunker along the northern (Blue) sector of the KSCB perimeter. At this time, the bunker was still above ground, and just after Joseph roused him, he stood up next to a wood pillar that supported the roof. At that instant, the round impacted and hit LCPL Bailey in the back of his head giving him wounds from which he would die on 19 February. Sergeant Major James Gaynor was visiting the Co C CP, behind a poncho hanging in the bunker to separate the enlisted from the officers. As the round exploded, he stumbled back and fell on the floor. Captain Ernst (CO of Co C/1/26) was badly hit in his arm, eventually loosing his arm as a result. LCPL Chamberlin was spared injury by the fluke of being behind the wooden pillar which shielded him from the minatory bits of steel.[1807]

"I had been sleeping after standing radio watch until early that morning, and LCPL Bailey had tried to wake me by shaking my shoulder a few moments before the incoming rocket hit. I did not get up immediately, and will always regret that.. I fell back to sleep and then heard Joseph call to me from the north side of the bunker where our radios were set up on ammo boxes. I stood up and happened to be standing next to a post that supported the roof of the bunker when the round came in.. LCPL Bailey was seriously wounded in the back of his head. He pitched forward on the bench he was sitting on and I went to help him but was unable to determine in my confusion where to start to assist him, as he had multiple head injuries and I believe wounds to his back also. He did not regain consciousness in the 5-10 minutes it took to get a stretcher to the bunker and evacuate him... Captain Ernst came forward from the rear of the bunker and was attempting to apply a field bandage to LCPL Bailey's wounds when I noticed he (Capt Ernst) was bleeding profusely from his arm in a manner that suggested arterial wounds, and Sgt Maj Gaynor was unconscious on the floor of the bunker."[1808]

1/Lt John M. Kaheny received word that his orders to return home for special leave in connection with his father's grave illness had arrived. He went to the 1/26 Bn CP and LtCol James B. Wilkinson (CO, 1/26) told him that something tragic had just happened: the Battalion Sergeant Major and the CO of Co. "C" had been seriously wounded by a rocket that struck their command post. He said, "You're the next senior Lieutenant; do you want to take Charlie Company?" After Kaheny related the news concerning his father and the orders, LtCol Wilkinson, in his typically sensitive manner patted Kaheny on the back and said, "Why don't you go home," and indicated that upon his return he might get a rifle company later.[1809]

The only way to leave Khe Sanh was to hop a medevac helicopter and help tend to the wounded, so he went to CHARLIE MED. While waiting, he walked to the helicopter landing area for a few minutes and met up with 1/Lt Charles W. King who had come off Hill 881-S (where he was a Platoon Commander with MIKE Co., 3/26) who was walking to Graves Registration with the remains of a Marine from 3/26; "all he had was a small Willy Peter bag. The young Marine had been hit directly with an enemy mortar."[1810] The KIA Marine, CPL John Rocco Peretta, had been killed as a result of a heavy fire attack directed against 881-South by NVA units firing 122mm rockets, 82mm mortars and sporadic fire from automatic fire. At 1615H, Hill 881S (XD777437) received 2 incoming 82mm mortars.[1811] The Company Commander having been wounded and evacuated, 1/Lt Esslinger immediately assumed command, moved into the impact area to direct the movement of WIAs to safe positions, and then ran to the middle of the LZ, standing amid the intense barrage of mortars and sniper fire, personally directing in the medevac helicopter. Although wounded, he personally carried three of the wounded to the helicopter.[1812]

Both King and Kaheny were called back to CHARLIE Med since the helicopter was enroute, and Kaheny was assigned to assist with Sergeant Major Gaynor. "You have to realize that Sergeant Major Gaynor and I had lived together in the alternate Command Post for the past 30 days or so and I had gotten to know him fairly well. He had been in the Air Wing, and this was to be his "twilight cruise" before retirement. He made a request to serve his last tour with the Grunts because he had never

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(LCPL Joseph T. Bailey), and B2163655 (CPL Ronald J. Barry) [Serials #34-39].

[1807] Conversation with Charles Norman Chamberlin, 13 Oct 2004.

[1808] Letter from Charles Chamberlin, 8 November 2004.

[1809] Taped comments of John M. Kaheny, 30 Nov 1986. Kaheny was the 1/26 S-3 Liaison Officer, attached to 1/26 from January, 1967 to July, 1968 (CO, Co "D").

[1810] *Ibid.*

[1811] 26Mar 151050Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #427, Para. 4.R. NAVPERS 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 8 September 1968, Bronze Star Medal file of 1/Lt John Thomas Esslinger. During this attack, the CO of M/3/26, Capt John J. Gilece, Jr., had been a lawyer who, during The Basic School, decided to transfer to infantry. "Gilece had a great affinity and interest in airplanes, particularly the old airplanes. I was on one side of the trench and I called him up on the phone and told him that a couple of South Vietnamese propeller planes, A-1s, were flying up the valley on the opposite side. He jumped out of the trench and ran across the hill, and while he was running across the hill, a sniper shot him in the leg. The bullet went right through the thigh, above the knee, and he was medevaced." [Conversation with J. Thomas Esslinger, 28 July 1993]. 1/Lt Esslinger became Co of CO M/3/26 until late March. Esslinger notes that 1/Lt King, although unable to return to the hill, did send a bottle of scotch to Esslinger. [*Ibid.*]

[1812] Bronze Star Medal Citation, 1/Lt John Thomas Esslinger.

served with the infantry and felt that one could not be a retired Sergeant Major of Marines without having so served. He was injured doing what he did best and that was visiting the troops on the lines during the siege. I thought highly of the man, and it was very difficult for me to go down and see him as badly wounded as he was. I took one end of the stretcher and we raced out when a 53 came in and got him aboard. It was getting dark; it was always kinda gloomy in those days. We barely got out of Khe Sanh while there was enough light. Captain Ernst was next to me. I remember lighting a cigarette for him. It probably wasn't good for him, but at the time he probably appreciated it. I had, in my hand, the IV bottle for the Sergeant Major. He was resting on my lap. The closer we got to Dong Ha (where DELTA Med was located) the greyer he became, and sometime, I think on the way in to Dong Ha, he passed away."[1813]

SgtMaj Gaynor, who had been the Sergeant Major of 1/26 since 2 January 1968,[1814] was First Sergeant of the Embassy Marines in Rome when he met his future wife, who was in the Women's Army Corps, and married in 1952 after returning from service in Korea. He'd been captured (as a Corporal) in Corregidor and remained a Prisoner of War for most of World War II, released when Japan fell as a Gunnery Sergeant. Mrs. Gaynor notes that although he was forced to eat rice several times a week during his captivity, he still ate it. "How come you eat rice? I'd think you'd hate it." He replied, "The rice saved my life." They had one son who was 13 or 14 when his father was killed. He refused to let his mother speak of his father for the first two years after his death. The death affected him deeply and he left home five years later and Mrs. Gaynor never again heard from him.[1815]

"My Sergeant Major"
By James B. Wilkinson

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

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

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

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

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

"Jim Gaynor was alive when he left Khe Sanh, but died in route to Dong Ha. I was devastated. I had to go and identify him. I am honored to have been given that assignment. He was my sergeant major. Al-

[1813] Taped Comments of John M. Kaheny, 30 November 1986.
[1814] Bronze Star Medal Citation, SgtMaj James Thomas Gaynor.
[1815] Conversation with Mrs. Betty Gaynor, 20 November 1992.

though the difference in our ages was not that great, he was more a father to me than my sergeant major. The entire battalion was deeply saddened by his death. His steadfast bearing, his maturity and experience, his sense of humor, his dedication to the Corps and, above all, his inspiration to the young Marines at Khe Sanh is a lasting memorial to his indomitable spirit. I could not bring myself to visit him at the Wall until 1993 when we had our [Khe Sanh Veterans] 25th reunion in Washington. I shall never forget the man. He was an remains forever a Marine's Marine."[1816]

[By mid-February, 1968, General Ginsburgh (member of the National Security Council staff) reported: "There is an outside chance that the battle for Khe Sanh may be over... SIGINT [signals intelligence] information indicates the movement of six possible NVA units away from Khe Sanh."[1817] *The NVA history of Khe Sanh notes that during the middle of February, 1968, the 66th Regiment replaced the entire 325C Division which was assigned to the Tay Nguyen [B3] Front. The 66th Regiment left behind a small force to be used against Hill 832 [i.e., Hill 861 on American maps] and Hill 845 [i.e., Hill 881-South on American maps].*[1818] *The NVA history attributes this departure to the failure of their mission "to totally eliminate one combat experienced battalion of Americans defending the hill in order to draw in additional American forces to the mountains and jungles of Khe Sanh."*[1819]]

16 FEBRUARY 1968

JOHNSON, LCPL Kenneth Richard	**B/1/9**
SHULL, LCPL Sandy Lee	**H&S/1/9**
WOODS, LCPL Cordell Emanuel	**H&S/1/9**

At 1230H, 1/9 received 5 incoming recoilless rifle rounds from XD823403 resulting in one KIA and one WIA (medevaced).[1820] **"LCPL Sandy Lee Shull was a fellow member of the H&S Company 81mm mortar platoon of 1/9 with the MOS of radioman for the platoon... We were ordered out of our holes and the mortar gunpits to bask in the morning sunlight. LCPL Shull emerged from the 81s command bunker calling out to all of us to get out of our holes and bunkers, as ordered by [1/Lt Michael J.] Walker. [I had a premonition the enemy] was going to take some more kills this morning. We stood and watched as the enemy.. landed a 82 round three feet to the front right of LCPL Shull as he stood talking to LCPL Woods and the corpsman. As we stood and watched, the explosion blew out the right hip area of LCPL Shull and an area of some eight inches long out of his left elbow area of his arm. The sound of the flesh and clothing material leaving his body flying through the air was a slashing sound as all of them fell to the ground.. The other platoon members, especially LCPL [James J.] Delfino, LCPL Healy and others, moved ahead to rescue the fallen Marines. I screamed at all of them, knowing the enemy mortarman would like nothing better than to level his bubbles and fire again. He waited, as several moved cautiously ahead. He fired again, but his gun dope was off the target area about ten yards. LCPL Woods raised up into the push-up position to look underneath his opened flak jacket at the small wound to his heart area. Upon doing so, LCPL Woods fell back to the ground dead. The corpsman and LCPL Shull were put onto stretchers and moved past my gun pit up the backside of the rock quarry hill."**[1821]

Michael J. Walker, the 81s commander, recalls Woods as an Afro-American, tall, thin, and rather quiet.[1822]

At 1700H, a patrol from B/1/9 at XD834410 received heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire from XD831411. While attempting to locate the enemy, more fire came from the enemy position resulting one KIA.[1823] **"Like everybody else, I lost some good buddies at Khe Sanh... Kenny Johnson died of a AK47 wound to the head while on patrol south of the Rock Quarry on Feb. 16. He was a quiet, dependable guy who had a sister that wrote to him religiously, and would often write to the squad to offer support and kind words. I remember a letter we received about a month after his death (mailed the day of his funeral). She told of the ceremony, the color guard, the outpouring of sympathy by friends and family, etc., but the one line I remember most was 'they folded the flag and gave it to mom, that's not much of a**

[1816] Jim Wilkinson, "My Sergeant Major," The Khe Sanh *Veteran* 2:1 (Fall, 1995) p. 4. Wilkinson's comments at the Wall on 03 July 1993 are reprinted in the Khe Sanh *Veteran* 1:4 (Winter, 1993), p. 22. He also made comments at the 1989 Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion in Chicago, Il, printed in The Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Issue No. 9 (Summer, 1989), p. 8.

[1817] Gen Ginsburgh, hand-written memo to Walt W. Rostow, 15 Feb 1968, in LBJ Library archives, National Security Council File, Vietnam Country File, file: 2A (2) I Corps & DMZ, Doc. #46.

[1818] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968 (The Spring-Sumnmer 1968 Khe Sanh-Route 9 Offensive Campaign)*, Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, Hanoi, 1987, p. 32.

[1819] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[1820] 3rd MarDiv COC 171120Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #431, Para 4.C.

[1821] Letter from Joseph G. Creed, 7 December 1996.

[1822] Conversation with Michael J. Walker, 02 January2005.

[1823] 3rd MarDiv COC 171858Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #432, Para. 4.E.

trade, a brother for a flag'. That one line stuck. I've never met the lady, but we share a loss."[1824]

UNITS/MANNING AT KHE SANH
(16 FEB 1968)[1825]

UNIT	USMC (off/enl)	USN (off/enl)	USA (off/enl)	USAF (off/enl)
HQ 26Mar	13/191	1/4	0/0	0/0
1/26	44/1115	3/60	0/0	0/0
2/26	40/994	2/58	0/0	0/0
3/26	41/1131	2/61	0/0	0/0
SU5, 3dMarDiv	5/20	0/0	0/0	0/0
HQ/1/13	14/133	2/3	0/0	0/0
A/1/13	8/23	0/3	0/0	0/0
C/1/13	6/119	0/3	0/0	0/0
W/1/13	4/81	0/1	0/0	0/0
1stSearchlights	0/6	0/0	0/0	0/0
A(-)/3rd AT	4/85	0/1	0/0	0/0
B/3rd Recon	6/122	0/6	0/0	0/0
1/44 ADA AW	0/0	0/0	1/11	0/0
G/65th Arty	0/0	0/0	0/8	0/0
2ndPlt/A/3rd SP	1/18	0/1	0/0	0/0
3rdPlt/B/3rd Tk	1/19	0/0	0/0	0/0
Det A/9th MT	0/3	0/0	0/0	0/0
Det B/9th MT	0/2	0/0	0/0	0/0
Otter Plt/3rd MT	0/8	0/0	0/0	0/0
B/CBMU-301	0/0	0/28	0/0	0/0
2ndPlt/C/3rdMed	0/1	1/14	0/0	0/0
UtPlt/3rdEng	1/55	0/0	0/0	0/0
Det Radio Bn	1/15	0/0	0/0	0/0
LSU	1/45	0/0	0/0	0/0
20th TASS	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/9
15th Aerial Port	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/6
1stMobile Unit	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/9
VMGR-152	0/5	0/0	0/0	0/0
FOB-1 [strength unavailable without authority of MACSOG]				
FOB-3 [strength unavailable without authority of MACSOG]				
Det 3rdDental	0/0	1/3	0/0	0/0
Det HqBn 3rdDiv				
Det Postal	0/3	0/0	0/0	0/0
Det Exchange	0/2	0/0	0/0	0/0
Photo	0/2	0/0	0/0	0/0
TOTAL:	153/3039	10/188	1/19	5/24
Det A-101	0/0	0/0	4/11	0/0
CAC OSCAR	1/30	0/3	0/0	0/0
TOTAL:	1/31	0/3	4/11	0/0

[*The first delivery by LAPSE effectively brought supplies to Khe Sanh on 16 February 1968. The Khe Sanh Drop Zone*[1826] *presented many difficulties: (1) it was 200 yards shorter than the standard for container delivery system drops; (2) it was located outside the KSCB defensive perimeter, 1000 yards from the west end of the runway; (3) wind velocities in the Khe Sanh valley were extreme and unpredictable; (4) the terrain was extremely hazardous, rising steeply on three sides of the field and containing enemy gun emplacements; (4) turbulence was expected to be moderate. Air-drops on the airstrip (3900 x 60 ft.) were ruled out since they might damage the airstrip.*[1827] *In addition, Marines possessed insufficient MHE (Materiel Handling Equipment) to recover as much cargo on the DZ as the 834th Air Division could deliver and all supplies left overnight might be booby-trapped or appropriated to enemy use and therefore had to be destroyed.*[1828] *Landing of cargo aircraft on the airstrip, while encouraged by the 26th Marines, was rapidly becoming untenable in the minds of the USAF due to the military situation and climatic conditions. If required tonnage was to be delivered, some other method was indicated.*[1829] *The solution was to use the TPQ-10 radar to deliver the supplies. In LAPES (Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System), the aircraft approaches as in a normal landing "..except that the aircraft is flared to a straight and level flight path approximately five feet above the ground. On the approach, the rear cargo door is opened and the ramp is lowered to the airdrop position. The extraction parachute is deployed in a reefed condition while the aircraft is descending on the approach, approximately ten seconds prior to the extraction point. When the aircraft reaches the extraction point the parachute is disreefed electrically and extracts the roller-mounted cargo pallets from the rear cargo door, and the pallets skid to a stop on the runway.*[1830] *On a single pass, payloads varying from 4,000 to 18,000 pounds per platform of ammunition, rations, fuel drums, or 500-gallon containers may be extracted either singly or in tandem.*[1831]

18 FEBRUARY 1968

TAYLOR, CPL Homer Jr. I/3/26

[1824] Letter from David Granger, postmarked 25 November 1996.

[1825] 26Mar 162126H/Feb68, in 26Mar ComdC Feb 1968. While FOB-3 strength was unavailable in this message, the 16 April message of units and strengths indicated 1/30 CAC O, 1/31 USMC, 0/3 USN, 20/105 USA and 2/455 ARVN for FOB-3 and 2/3 USA, 14/436 ARVN for the 37th ARVN Ranger Bn. The A-101 (Lang Vei) personnel had, by this time, been evacuated from the Khe Sanh area.

[1826] Center of DZ (XD83224231), Distance from east end of runway (2620 meters), altitude of DZ (1574 ft.), length of DZ through PI (point of impact) (550 meters), width of DZ through PI (300 meters), coordinates of DZ (North, XD83034268; East, XD83404231; South, XD83394207; West, XD82744226), Ref: 26Mar 010430Z/Mar68, Point of Impact Khe Sanh DZ, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc March, 1968, Pt. 1, Encl (10).

[1827] McLaughlin, BGen Burl W., "Khe Sanh:Keeping an Outpost Alive," *Air University Review* (Nov-Dec 1969) 60-61.

[1828] Pollica and Rickey, *834th Air Division*, pp. 18, 19.

[1829] *Ibid.*, p. 10. [The daily re-supply requirement was 185 tons; however, during February, an additional 650 tons was required for an average daily net requirement of 235 tons. *Ibid.*, p. 24.]

[1830] Letter of Col Robert D. Brown, in HQMC Historical Division, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments File.

[1831] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, March, 1968, p. 83.

"In a day when we are so technologically sophisticated that we are almost able to land on the moon itself—250,000 miles away—we cannot go out a few miles to a hilltop to save a dying man."[1832]

The weather at Khe Sanh for the period 0900 on the 17th to 0900 on the 18th "resulted in fog and stratus on both days reduced the ceiling and visibility to zero during the morning hours. The visibility improved to seven miles by noon of Tue 16th but was again lowered by fog after 2300H."[1833] "Weather was bad during 17-18 February, with little improvement forecast. Low clouds and dense fog reduced the ceiling to less than 300 feet and visibility to less than one-half mile. Little change is expected extending into 19 February. Ceilings and visibility will be near zero with only slight improvement in the afternoon."[1834]

Early in the morning, about 0530, a mortar round exploded on the top edge of the trench as Cpl Taylor was walking through it.[1835] Shrapnel from a NVA mortar round had hit Cpl Taylor in the head and shoulder, with several a large wound in the temple area, but he was unable to be evacuated due to fog. The wound was, at the time, not serious, and HM3 Ronald V. Bowling attended to his wounds. What began as a non-serious wound, deteriorated during the following 36 continuous hours that Corpsman Bowling attended his wounds. Bowling became so exhausted and tired that finally, after 36 hours, he got someone to relieve him briefly and he fell asleep.[1836]

In a letter to his parents, J. Michael Jones wrote: "Three days ago Cpl Taylor, the 1st Squad Leader, was about three feet from a 82mm mortar round that dropped in. Needless to say, he was pretty messed up. He had three or four good sized holes in his head and a hole through his right lung. Well, the fog was so bad we couldn't get a med-evac in and had to keep him over night. I stayed up all night sitting on his legs and holding his arms. The next day we still couldn't get him out so we started the night routine over again marvelling that he was still alive. We only marveled until 0100 that morning when he died. It was tough to lose him and even tougher to see a man fight so hard to live for nearly 40 hours die from lack of help. We did all we could but we just didn't have enough gear."[1837]

As night fell, Captain Dabney (CO, I/3/26) radioed for medical advice. The heavy fog continued throughout the following day, precluding any helicopter landing, and Cpl Taylor began to slip into a coma. As night darkness fell, messages from Captain Dabney became more urgent. Thick fog continued to blanket Hill 881-South, the remotest outpost in the Khe Sanh defense—indeed, the most remote outpost in Vietnam! A radio operator, peering into the night sky, saw stars; the fog had temporarily lifted! Although a night landing is extremely hazardous, a helicopter was launched with a 4-man crew. As it approached, the radio operator reported: "Be advised the medevac is now routine, repeat, routine." Cpl Taylor had died.[1838]

"Corporal Taylor died as the bird was coming in. We got some flak on that because it was initially called in as an emergency medevac and we waited and waited for the weather to clear. As his condition worsened the need for an evacuation became more critical and finally the weather cleared enough that a helo making his final attempt prior to returning to Dong Ha could get in. About that time Corporal Taylor died and the medevac was changed, as was correct, to a routine. Evidently the aviators, who had been sincerely trying to get in, didn't realize why the medevac precedence had changed and complained once they got back to their base."[1839]

19 FEBRUARY 1968

BAILEY, LCPL Joseph Thomas	**C/1/26**
BURGESS, LCPL Alex Leroy	**H&S/3/26**
HORNBAKER, PFC Kenneth Eugene	**2-94**
WILLIAMS, SP4 Douglas Condit	**2-94**
WRIGHT, SP4 Arkie Junior	**2-94**

LCPL Bailey succumbed to wounds received when the C/1/26 bunker was hit on 15 February, mortally wounding Sergeant Major Gaynor and severely wounding Captain Ernst.[1840]

At 191625H, 3/26 received one incoming rocket from the northwest killing LCPL Burgess.[1841]

[1832] Diary entry, Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe.

[1833] General Westmoreland 171013Z/Feb68, MAC 02269, 17 February 1968, Report #13 on the Situation in Khe Sanh and DMZ area.

[1834] General Westmoreland 181131Z/Feb68, MAC 02318, 18 February 1968, Report #14 on the Situation in Khe Sanh, DMZ area.

[1835] Conversation with J. Michael Jones, 13 November 2004. There is no record of this incident in the Operation SCOTLAND SITREPs for 17 February 1968.

[1836] Letters from Ronald Bowling, postmarked 15 December 1992.

[1837] Letter of J. Michael Jones to his parents, 20 February 1968.

[1838] "Fog Fails to Lift, and a Marine Dies," New York *Times*, 22 February 1968, p. 7.

[1839] Letter from Maj Walter L. Whitesides, undated. At the time a Corporal, Whitesides was one of the Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) operators assigned to I/3/26; his radio call sign was DUNBAR COUNTY INDIA ONE FOUR.

[1840] See entry for 15 February 1968 for description of the event.

[1841] 26Mar 191024Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #443, Para. 4.R.; 3rd MarDiv COC 192020Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #443, Para. 4.R.

PFC Hornbaker, SP4 Williams, and SP4 Wright were KIA on the morning of 19 Feb when Camp Carroll came under a heavy rocket attack, all three soldiers providing 175mm support to Khe Sanh. Hornbaker was schedule3d to be sent home on a hardship discharge because of his mother's health condition.[1842]

20 FEBRUARY 1968

GOMEZ, PFC Armando Abel	**E/2/26**
SMITH, CPL Terry Lee	**H&S/3/26**

At 201320H, Co E/2/26 on Hill 861-A (XD806444) received 3 incoming 82mm mortars killing PFC Gomez.[1843]

Major David Lawrence Althoff (XO, HMM-262), flying CHATTERBOX 20-1, launched in minimum weather to Khe Sanh to pick up emergency medevacs. Upon arrival at Khe Sanh, he was informed there were no medevacs and the mission was changed to re-supply Hill 881-South. They were initially to retrieve a load of cargo slings. "As we approached the zone on 881 we found them unaware of our mission. Major Althoff waved off the approach because there was no one to hook up our load. As we waved off the zone began taking heavy mortar and fifty caliber fire. We were in the process of making a 360-degree turn to make another approach when we were called to get an emergency medevac that had been a direct result of the last few mortars taken in the zone."[1844]

Re-supply of Hill 881-South, always by helicopter, attracted mortar fire, frequently of 120mm size. The Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) radio operators directed the inbound helicopters with the troops or medevacs assembled in nearby trenches. After it became obvious that the bald hilltop was a well-registered target, alternate landing zones were established, one outside the wire (to the east) on the Khe Sanh side and the other in the saddle between the western knoll of the hill (occupied by Mike Company) and the main hill (occupied by India Company). The TACP operators decided on which zone would be used when the helicopter was making its final approach by popping a colored smoke. As helicopters landed, the grunts fired weapons in the general direction of Hill 881-North, the location of a NVA forward observer directing their fire. The TACP operator then directed Marines onto the helicopter and, as the helicopter lifted, dashed into a nearby hole awaiting the cessation of the incoming.[1845]

Cpl Terry Smith ran to the landing zone and began using hand signals to direct the inbound CH-46 helicopter.[1846] Cpl Smith had been Major Matthew P. Caulfield's [S-3, 3/26] radio operator and volunteered for duty on Hill 881-South telling Major Caulfield he wanted "to be where the action was, where I can do the most good for the battalion." Maj Caulfield cautioned him of the dangers of leaving covered positions at that location during daylight, being aware of the numerous wounded Marines from the Shore Party HST [helicopter support teams] and others. Maj Caulfield later noted, "There is absolutely no question that Corporal Smith knew well that by leaving a covered position and crossing the LZ while a helicopter was inbound and in full view of the enemy, he risked almost certain death. It was characteristic of Corporal Smith that he acted fully aware of the consequences in order to save the helicopter and the Marines on board from certain death."[1847]

Cpl Smith had proceeded about 20 meters into the center of the LZ when the first mortar round struck him. HN Ronald V. Bowling immediately grabbed his Unit-1 Corpsman's bag and ran to him, covering Smith body with his own and administering medical assistance while several more mortars exploded in the zone.[1848]

SGT J. Michael Jones [of 1st Platoon, I/3/26] was next to Bowling when Smith was hit. "I can still see the incident vividly: the sky was blue, the color of everything is sharp, and the smells intense. Terry had freed a hooked cargo net and was running towards us when an incoming mortar round landed right in front of him. The explosion lifted him in the air and he did a slow cartwheel against the sky as his blood spun away from him. Doc and I reached him right after he landed and we immediately saw how terrible his wounds were. His concern was for us. He knew how badly he was hit and he told us to leave him and get back to the trench. It is a moment that I have always been able to relive, not just recall, and it was one that haunted me for years."[1849]

[1842] Letter from Mark Swearengen, 9 March 2007.

[1843] 26Mar 201100Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #447, Para 4.F.; 3rd MarDiv COC 201939Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #447, Para. 4.F.

[1844] Statement of 1/Lt William Arthur Murphy in Air Medal file for Maj David Lawrence Althoff. 1/Lt Murphy was flying co-pilot.

[1845] Letter of Maj. Walter L. Whitesides, received May 1989.

[1846] Conversation with Chaplain Timothy C. Sims, 27 August 1989. At the time, LCPL Sims was TACP for M/3/26. After becoming a Lutheran minister, he became a Navy Chaplain, retired, and was killed 10 June 2002 in an automobile accident while traveling to a 3/26 reunion after which he was planning to return to Vietnam and visit Khe Sanh.

[1847] Maj Matthew P. Caulfield, 3rd Endorsement, 6/MPC/glm, 1650, 6 Nov 1974, Subj: Award recommendation; case of the late Corporal Terry L. Smith, 230 68 18/2533, USMC.

[1848] Statements of 2/Lt Richard F. Dworsky (Weapons Plt Cdr of I/3/26), Sgt Joseph M. Jones, SSGT Karl G. Taylor, and Cpl Robert E. Stanton, appended to Silver Star Medal file, HM3 Ronald V. Bowling.

[1849] Letters from J. Michael Jones, postmarked 18 May 1990, and 30 June 1993

"Major Althoff complied with the request and made another approach into Hill 881. As we landed in the zone the men on the ground with the medevac started towards the aircraft. Just as they cleared their trenches the zone again came under mortar and fifty caliber fire. The Marines stopped and put the medevac in a shell crater, leaving us alone in the zone. Our crew chief motioned the men to bring the man to the aircraft. After about one minute in the zone the medevac was finally aboard the aircraft. During this time that had elapsed numerous mortar and fifty caliber rounds had landed in and about the zone. The aircraft had received control cable damage due to mortar fragments. Major Althoff lifted out of the zone and got the medevac safely back to Charlie Med at Khe Sanh."[1850]

Cpl Walter L. Whitesides was getting a haircut on Hill 881-South when he heard that Cpl Smith was hit. "I remember saying, 'Good,' knowing that he would get out of there since that would have been his third Purple Heart. "It was only his second award and I had no idea that it was to be fatal. I regret having ever said that."[1851]

Through the efforts of Col William H. Dabney, the gymnasium for Headquarters Battalion, USMC, Henderson Hall, Arlington, VA, was dedicated as "Terry L. Smith Gymnasium" on 30 September 1988. The dedication brochure notes that Terry L. Smith was born on 13 May 1947 in Nashville, TN, and was active in little league baseball, Cub Scouts, Boy's Club and church activities. He served as a camp counselor and during high school lettered in football, tennis and band. He was an avid outdoorsman, enjoying hunting, fishing, camping, horseback riding and water skiing. He briefly attended Middle Tennessee State University for a year, but felt the need to serve his country in the military, following the example of his father who had served in World War II. He enlisted in the Marine Corps 17 May 1966.[1852]

His mother recalls that when he played high school football, he would tell her, "Now mother, if I get hurt and they haul me off of that field, don't you come down out of those stands! If they put me in an ambulance and take me off, don't you come down!"[1853]

21 FEBRUARY 1968

BAKER, SFC Robert Nelson	**FOB-3**
DOUGLAS, SSGT Paul Melvyn	**FOB-3**

SFC Baker died from blood clots[1854] on 21 February 1968 from wounds he received 14 January 1968 while on patrol on the Co Roc Massif, the looming cliff just inside the Laotian border.[1855] Maj George Quamo, in charge of Special Projects, had been promoted to Major 01 October 1967. He was 27. His mission was to move the Special Projects effort from the initial planning, conceptual phase, to an operational phase (training and then conducting a long-range unconventional warfare (UW) role in the Mu Gia/Tchepone area). In early January, 1967, he was at the Royal Lao BV-33 battalion at Ban Houei Sane and during the period 7-17 January, BV-33 guerrilla teams discovered extensive NVA positions in the vicinity of Co Roc Mountain.[1856] "On 11 January, a team found an occupied 50-man foxhole complex at the top of Co Roc peak. On 13 January, a patrol observed 75 NVA soldiers and sighted heavy ground fire, including .50 caliber machinegun fire at an aircraft. On 15 January, a team observed a hut with a long wire antenna set up next to it. The area showed signs of heavy foot traffic in the immediate vicinity. On 16 January, two caves were discovered, one of which contained two tons of rice. Three enclosed structures were located nearby which could house 30 men each. Approximately 900 meters southeast of the caves, an extensive bunker complex was discovered. The team counted 500 bunkers and reported that many were of 10-man capacity. One large bunker was estimated to be a regimental command post. The other bunkers were constructed with gun ports for defensive action."[1857]

SFC Charles ("Skip") Minnicks, the ONE ZERO[1858] of ST[1859] PENNSYLVANIA recalls that Colonel Harold

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[1850] Statement of 1/Lt William Arthur Murphy in Air Medal file for Maj David Lawrence Althoff, cited.
[1851] Letter of Maj Walter L. Whitesides received May, 1989.
[1852] Dedication of Terry L. Smith Gymnasium, brochure.
[1853] Conversation with Mrs. Henry Smith, 13 July 1991.
[1854] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 27 October 1993; Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.

[1855] Co Roc, 14.8 KM southwest of KSCB, just inside the Lao border, "..is a granite ridge that runs along the border from XD725348 southeast to XD768321 and then south to XD753270. Varying in height from 850 meters to 515 meters above sea level, the Co Roc is more than 300 meters higher than the Khe Sanh plain and the crest of the ridge is only one to three kilometers inside Laos." [HQ, 1st Inf Brig, 5th Inf Div (Mech): Combat AAR, Operation TASK FORCE REMAGEN, 16 Mar – 29 Apr 1969, 4 Jun 1969, Paragraph 8.c.Tab E & E to 3rd MarDiv ComdC, May, 1969]. The entire area is covered by forest and laced with trails and streams. Co Roc was formed with the Kontum Massif slammed into the Southeast Asia mainland, lifting up an ancient sea bed of what is now Laos (like shoving a hand under a stack of newspapers), this sheer cliff of the limestone sediment from that sea bed, doused with monsoon rains over many millennia, had formed numerous caves where the water trickled into the cracks. Caves, in ancient myths, are openings to the realm of demons of the deep, an entrance to the underworld, the place where evil beings bent on destruction of human life dwell.
[1856] Warren A. Trest, *Khe Sanh (Operation NIAGARA), 22 January – 31 March 68*, HQ PACAF, Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, Project CHECO [Contemporary Historical Evaluation of Combat Operations], 13 September 1968, p. 18.
[1857] FMFPAC 280335Z/Jan68, FMFPAC WESTPAC SITREP #1034; Trest, *Khe Sanh, op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
[1858] ONE ZERO refers to "Team Leader."

K. Rose, circling overhead in a Birddog aircraft radioed Quamo, "I want you out of there. I want you out of there—now!" Field grade officers of SOG were not to be in Laos. Quamo radioed back to his senior officer, "To my knowledge, I am in command at this location. Out!" Minnicks was astounded. "I couldn't believe my ears, and we did not come out."[1860]

On 14 January, a helicopter inserting SFC Robert Cavanaugh, ONE ZERO for Spike Team OKLAHOMA and 1/Lt Harlan ("Rip") Van Winkle, leading a Hatchett force of 8 Americans and about 30 Bru, was about to touch down on the summit of Co Roc when a command detonated (Claymore-type) mine was detonated, slamming into the left side of the chopper, seriously wounding the pilot, the door gunner, and most of Cavanaugh's team along with Rip's platoon leader, Lua.[1861] Van Winkle, standing on the skids on the right side of the helicopter, was thrown to the ground and was about to get up. "Something just told me to get down again, and as I ducked, the boom of the helicopter flopped around and knocked my hat off! If I'd of just stood there, it would of taken my head right along with it."[1862] An immediate defensive perimeter was established, and SFC Cavanaugh attempted to coax the door gunner out of the chopper and place his machinegun in their defensive perimeter. He froze. "He was a scarred kid, so I had to make him 'scarreder!' He took his gun out and did what I told him to do, and I got him out on the next chopper."[1863] A medevac chopper came in to evacuate the wounded, and Cavanaugh, looking at the helicopter carcass said, "What are we going to do with this thing?" Van Winkle replied, "Burn it." Cavanaugh replied, "I gotta hear it from somebody more than an O2," so after radioing Maj Lucius Campbell, the CO of FOB-3, permission was granted and the helicopter destroyed.[1864] Sgt Fusco had been carrying an American flag for 5 ½ months, looking for the proper place to plant it. The top of Co Roc Mountain seemed appropriate to him, and there he placed it.[1865]

Cavanaugh led his patrol, following the edge of Co Roc when he happened to notice "a funny-looking object sticking out of the face of the cliff. We found a little trail—you could hardly see it, and that's when we found the first of the big caves, right in the face. We found all kinds of stuff in that cave and just burned everything up. We found no men and we never made any contact with anybody."[1866]

On 16 January 1968,[1867] SFC Baker (of team WISCONSIN) was one of the FOB-3 Team Leaders patrolling atop Co Roc Mountain.[1868] The patrol had been scouring Co Roc, finding caves full of NVA gear and munitions, but no NVA. Signals intelligence had determined that NVA units had moved into the Khe Sanh TAOR from eastern Laos; they were already poised to attack and commence the siege battle.

Robert Cavanaugh recalls: "Skip was the boss—so he took out the patrol, and my team went with it... Skip and we went out. We came to this clearing. We hadn't made any contact. We came to this clearing by a river and I said, 'Well, I'm going to check over the top of this rise—see if there's anything over at the top of this rise.' And I said, 'You guys wait here.' At that time, Skip and Bob [Baker] said, 'No, we're going to go with you.' So I said, 'OK,' and Bob was on my left side, I was in the middle, Skip was on the right side. We had maybe ten yards between us as we're walking up there. To this day, I can still hear 'click, click,' which is Bob and Skip taking their weapons off 'safety' and putting them on 'full automatic.' And this guy jumped out of a hole—to shoot me. He'd seen me, and he jumped up to shoot me, and when he did that, Bob was no more than three feet to four feet away from him, and he swung his weapon away from me, and that's when he hit Bob [three times in the gut]."[1869]

Doc Secore dashed to Baker and miraculously kept him alive. "I remember Bob kept hollering, 'I gotta take a crap! I gotta take a crap!' And Doc was saying, 'Don't do that! Don't do that! Just be good! Stay in there!'"[1870]

It was about 1500,[1871] and Major Quamo called FOB-3 for a medevac, but someone at DaNang had pulled off the Army helicopters there. When Colonel Lownds was asked, he replied that he couldn't send the choppers without permission from III MAF. "So when Major Quamo heard the answer—there will be no air extraction with

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[1859] ST=Spike Team. The Spike Teams consisted of three Americans and about seven Bru Montagnards. [Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993].
[1860] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 December 1991.
[1861] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 26 December 1996.
[1862] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 23 October 1994.
[1863] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 27 October 1993.
[1864] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.
[1865] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 23 October 1994.
[1866] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993.
[1867] Maj Ira Snell ltr of 16 February 1968, Subj: Letter of Commendation, appended to Air Medal file of Capt James Hargreve Knox. [Maj Snell was CO of FOB-1]
[1868] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993. The three team leaders had "..all chipped in for a knife for Major Quamo—a Randall knife. We had engraved on it—because this is the way our Montagnards said the names—we had 'ST WISSICON, ST OKLAHOME, and ST PENNSYLVANE' That's how they said them and we put that on the knife for Major Quamo." [Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 13 September 1993].
[1869] Conversation with Robert Cavanaugh, 27 October 1993.
[1870] *Ibid.*
[1871] Letter of Maj Ira Snell, Jr., CO, FOB-1, appended to Air Medal file of Capt James H. Knox.

the Marine helicopters at Khe Sanh, he lost his temper and became very profane. He came up on the Marine command frequency and called some people a series of very bad names. Now some Marine helicopter pilot, a very large guy, heard this, and he went up in his H-34 and took off in the fog."[1872]

Capt James Hargreve Knox, co-pilot to Major Horace ("Hoss") S. Lowrey, Jr., "a legendary, gutsy aviator, mustang officer" recalls "It was a wild day. Things really could not have been much worse at Khe Sanh and the general area. The weather was absolutely horrendous! A decision was made to try to get the whole team out. We attempted to launch with several gunships and transport helicopters and didn't even make it to the end of the runway. We almost ran into one another. It was just an impossible weather situation to control that number of aircraft. We all got back down on the ground—fortunately without a midair collision, and there was another briefing. The Army people were screaming at us that we had to get this wounded guy out of there. An extremely gutsy guy named Charlie Upshaw, a Major, said that he would take a H-34 and go out and try to hoist this guy out if we would send one gunship to give him a little cover. Charlie led the flight. We stayed behind him with the gun switches hot and headed south from Khe Sanh, basically just went over the treetops the entire way. We didn't dare go up in the 'goo' because it was so damn mountainous and we were afraid we would crash. At one point I saw a guy run out of a hut, stand there and opened up on us with a sub-machinegun All I did was give him 'the finger' as I went by. There was absolutely nothing we could do, because you didn't dare turn around and go after the guy cause you'd lose the H-34. We got to the zone. The zone was a depression, like a little valley in the top of Co Roc. Charlie found the team and lowered his hoist in that H-34, hovered over this jungle cliff situation for 15 minutes, an absolutely steady hover. They got the kid up in the plane. We made it back to Khe Sanh—and all changed our underwear!"[1873]

The evening before the extraction of all the Americans on this Co Roc operation, Major George Quamo had an early version of a "smart bomb" strike from Navy aircraft, and the morning of the extract, he had everyone fire a "mad moment."[1874] The American force with Bru Montagnards departed Co Roc with a bang.

SSGT Paul M. Douglas, unlike the regularly-assigned soldiers of FOB-3, was not airborne-qualified. He had volunteered for assignment to SOG, but was a "leg." Harve Saal, Team Leader of recon team BEAR, recalls "He was from the 7th Long Range Reconnaissance Unit or something in Germany, not airborne, not Special Forces. He volunteered for it. He was a real nice guy. He took off his flak jacket to put on a sweater and a mortar round came in and got him."[1875] Charles Berg recalls sitting with Douglas in the trench one night. "He said, 'You know why I'm in the Army?' I said, 'No, why?' He said, 'I belong to the Ku Klux Klan.' I said, 'What!' He said, 'Yeah, I was told to come in the Army to get demolition training; I didn't think I was going to be sent to Vietnam.' I looked at him and said, 'Paul, you can't tell me that! This is a Top Secret organization. How did you get a clearance?' He said, 'Everybody where I live belongs to the Ku Klux Klan so when some guy comes by to validate your clearance—wonderful person!'... There was a lull. He came up out of the trench and was just washing off, under his flak vest. I used to joke with him. I was just so surprised."[1876]

"I went to Graves Registration and said prayers over Paul Melvin Douglas, E-6, RA 147 60 613, of FOB-3, who died today. The logbook at Graves Registration reflected that on 19 January the entry was number 12-68. Today, the number is 141-68, indicating that 129 have been killed on the base itself since all this began. Of course, this number does not include all those who died after being evacuated nor all those who were to die in aircraft attempting to land here, nor all those who were yet to die. It was, after all, only 21 February, and the battle still goes on."[1877]

22 FEBRUARY 1968

BRETT, LTJG Robert R (Chaplain Corps)	H&S/2/26
CHIN, PFC Alexander Scheleph	H&S/2/26
CRAMER, PFC David Arthur	H/2/26
DOOLEY, PFC Robert Ellis	M/3/26
FOSTER, LCPL Julius Cartwright	E/2/26
McCALL, SGT Billy Ray	G/2/26
RILEY, CAPT James Thomas	HMH-463
SMITH, 1/Lt Cary Carson	HMH-463
VANCE, PFC Reggie Lee	A/1/26
WURTZ, HN Emil John	H&S/3/26

Yesterday afternoon, between 211245H and 211530H, KSCB received 345 mortars, rockets, and artillery rounds

[1872] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.
[1873] Conversation with James Hargreve Knox, 04 October 1994.
[1874] Conversation with Harlan E. Van Winkle, 23 October 1994. "Mad Moment" refers to everyone firing their weapons simultaneously for a moment. It corresponds to an artillery "TOT" (Timed on Target) when all guns in a battery (or several batteries) plus mortars, etc., fire simultaneously on a specific target.

[1875] Conversations with Harve Saal, 12 March 1991 and 13 March 1993.
[1876] Conversation with Charles Berg, 05 June 1994.
[1877] Diary entry, Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe.

resulting in moderate casualties, none killed.[1878] In addition to NVA incoming, a TPQ-10 strike accidentally dropped about 40 meters inside the KSCB perimeter between the ARVN and Co B perimeter, causing a 40-foot crater and throwing clumps of dirt hundreds of feet into the air. One such clump crashed into a radioman lying flat in a trench giving him a compound fracture of his right arm; the bone protruded. He was sent back to man the perimeter after being treated at C Med; anybody who was ambulatory was returned. The casualty, PFC Peter J. Mudinich, was a German national who had joined the USMC (which he viewed as training) so he could return to Germany and become an officer.[1879]

"I remained in the C Med Triage, looking after all the casualties that had arrived. One man, Smith, was trembling and crying. A round had exploded on top of the bunker beside which he was standing and he had already been twice wounded since all this began, and I remained with him, attempting to comfort him."[1880] Another wounded Marine, Reggie Lee Vance, later died. The condolence letter from LtCol James B. Wilkinson (CO, 1/26):

> "On 21 February Reggie's section was assigned to the northeastern sector of the defensive perimeter at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. During the afternoon of 21 February, his sector of the perimeter was subjected to enemy small arms and mortar fire in support of a light ground attack. At 4:25 PM a C-130 cargo aircraft, while making a low-level approach over the runway was fired upon by enemy anti-aircraft weapons forcing it to make radical evasive maneuver. In doing so, the tail section of the airplane struck Reggie's bunker and caused it to collapse seriously injuring Reggie and one other Marine. Reggie was immediately taken to Company C, 3rd Medical Battalion and treated by our surgeons, however, despite all efforts, he failed to respond and expired at 1:00 AM, 22 February. Reggie received the ministrations of our Protestant chaplain, Lieutenant Ray Stubbe.. just before his death."

PFC David J. Tonick (Plt A-1 of 1/26) was two bunkers down from Reggie Vance's bunker playing cards with other Marines when they heard the airplane. "After awhile you know if they're landing or taking-off, but it didn't sound right, so we all popped our heads out like a bunch of little chickens and saw this plane coming at us!"[1881]

While at C Med, "One of the corpsmen asked me to remove the boots from an injured may lying on a stretcher, moaning, covered with blood. The boots were caked with mud and blood, and my hands became completely red from the mixture. As it dried, the coating caused an odd sensation of something living, yet shrinking on my hands. Somehow, not only the sight of the blood, but the feeling of it kept me aware of its presence on my hands. I could not wait to wash them. I rushed to my bunker to wash them in the small plastic basin outside my bunker."[1882]

The Soul Mate[1883]
By Ray William Stubbe

The blood on his hands
So alive
with death
Gripped
Drying, dying, contracting, squeezing
Suffocating, suffusing,
Penetrating, transforming
So alive, so real, so near
So always
The brother's cry from his clay
in violent shouts
in words what is not said
in feelings what is not felt
in actions what is never accomplished
in passing time what always is
No washing of hands removes
the pain stain interpenetrated
soul
Within: always
present, always
shedding, always
staining.
Red clay born
in violenced mud
New birth bourn
in sacrificed blood:
Unseen on green
uniforms darkened;
Unseen in gleam
glowed brass, colored
medals - ribbons - rank - flags:
the rust of battle's reality
stored in time capsule's self
Living blood within
retained
in black hole unremembered memory
unseen, unknown, pulling within
released

[1878] 26Mar AAR Opn SCOTLAND, p. 8; 26Mar ComdC Feb68, Encl (1), p. 50; 26Mar 211036Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #451.
[1879] Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 26 August 1988.
[1880] Diary entry, Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe.
[1881] Conversation with David Tonick, 3 February 1995.
[1882] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry.
[1883] Poem written 29 April 1996, printed in The Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Issue #37 (Fall, 1996), p. 5, and in Barbara Menghini Whitmarsh, ed., *Incoming!, Issue IV*, Aurora, Mo.: Hawk's Nest Publishing, 1996, p. 71.

in lacerations by those who don't know
in unhealing wounds that heal:
oasis of life in the valley exceedingly dried,
dismembered bones and body parts
The blood of God.

"While washing, I was facing and looked up towards the water point. All of a sudden there was a large blast and large pieces of metal and other debris flew up in the air. A CH-53 had been hit."[1884]

At 1645H, a CH-53 helicopter received a hit from an unknown type of round and crashed on the airstrip killing both pilot and co-pilot.[1885] The pilot, Capt James T. Riley, had earlier received incoming rounds in three blades and also in the cabin of his aircraft, YH-26, on 4 February while hauling a 105mm into a pad at YD676254.[1886] On 22 February 1968, Captain Riley, flying in YH-21, departed Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 463 at the Marble Mountain Air Facility, DaNang, on mission DIMMER THREE TWO and proceeded to Quang Tri Air Base where they were assigned a re-supply mission to deliver approximately 8,000 pounds of needed materiel to Khe Sanh. The weather between Quang Tri and Khe Sanh was particularly bad for flying; a heavy overcast blanketed the area. Approaching KSCB, the pilot, Capt James Thomas ("Rex") Riley, and the co-pilot, 1/Lt Cary Carson Smith, attempted to find a hole in the cover through which he could descend and deliver the equipment and supplies. Finding one—as well as an area not zeroed in by NVA gunners who were plastering the base, he dropped the external load.[1887] NVA shelling of KSCB had steadily intensified with a steady volume of mixed rocket, artillery, and mortar fire. "Enemy gunners had laid in and adjusted their weapons to deliver a devastatingly accurate concentration of fire across the ramp and runway areas. Within seconds of landing every aircraft arriving at Khe Sanh became a target as rockets exploded within the perimeter and mortars walked the runway. All approach corridors to the field were registered by enemy heavy caliber anti-aircraft weapons."[1888]

Upon taking off, Capt Riley was advised of a medical evacuation. The area was well-known to be registered by NVA gunners, and after the fire subsided, one of the air controllers, Sgt Rick Rasmussen, ran out to walk ahead of the chopper and guide the pilot using the phone jack in front of the aircraft. Just before the plane could embark the wounded, it came under a heavy mortar and rocket attack. Completely disregarding his own safety, Capt Riley bravely remained as the Marines struggled to place the wounded aboard.[1889] Within seconds, the NVA gunners scored a direct hit on the aft portion of the CH-53.[1890] Capt Riley shouted for a damage assessment and directed loading be discontinued. The Crew Chief, Sgt William Michael Sullivan, Jr., critically wounded, staggered forward into the cabin. His ICS [Interior Communication System] had been blown away and he was unable to communicate by that means with the pilot. The aft pylon was hit, there were numerous holes in the aircraft, and fluid sprayed throughout the interior.[1891] Capt Riley took the only course of action available: he attempted to save his aircraft and crew from almost certain destruction by flying clear of the area. As he lifted, severe vibrations developed, and he was forced to land immediately, flying only about 30 yards (to the area between recon and the airstrip). Although he landed in a level, near-normal attitude, as the bird contacted the ground, the vibrations increased and caused the main rotor blade to sever the cockpit from the fuselage, killing both Captain Riley and Lt Smith.[1892]

Inside the cabin, Cpl Murgallis thought he was about to be buried, pinned down in the forward corner of the cabin. "I must have fainted because the next thing I remember is seeing Sgt. Sullivan lean over and carry me out the side door of the aircraft. We went about 15 or 20 feet from the helicopter when he collapsed."[1893]

Sgt Rasmussen ran down to the aircraft, pulled out about four passengers, noticed the blade had decapitated one pilot and sliced the other through his chest, then cried

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[1884] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry.
[1885] 3rd MarDiv COC 230146Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #455, Para 4.F; Aircraft Mishap Flash Report, 221645H/Feb68 in III MAF COC Journal and File, 22/23 Feb 1968 #387.
[1886] Aircraft Mishap Flash Report 041630H in III MAF COC Journal and File, #264.
[1887] Silver Star Medal Citation, Capt James Thomas Riley; Comments of Sgt Karl R. Leech, USMC Oral History Tape #3278, 13 Sep 1968. (Sgt Leech was port gunner on the aircraft).
[1888] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation in Silver Star Medal file, Capt James Thomas Riley.
[1889] Silver Star Medal Citation, Capt James Thomas Riley; Conversation with Rick Rasmussen, 10 March 1984.
[1890] Sgt Leech states this was from an artillery round [Oral History Tape #3278]; the official Opn SCOTLAND SITREP notes "an unknown type round" [SITREP #455, Para 4.F.]; Rick Rasmussen thought it was a recoilless rifle round "that went right over my shoulder, about 4-feet above my head causing a pink, then a purple and black smoke" [Conversations with Rick Rasmussen, 22 May 1995 and 26 May 2003]; 1/Lt Ernie Spencer, who had run to the aircraft from the 1/26 COC bunker with the 1/26 Air Officer, Capt Jeffrey E. McElroy, recalls it as a 82mm round [editor's note in The Khe Sanh *Veteran* 2:1 (Fall, 1995), p. 19.
[1891] Statement of Cpl P.M. Murgallis and NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, Bronze Star Medal file of Sgt William Michael Sullivan, Sr.
[1892] Silver Star Medal Citation, Capt James Thomas Riley.
[1893] Statement of Cpl P.M. Murgallis in Bronze Star Medal file of Sgt William Michael Sullivan, Sr.

and vomited without stopping.[1894] SSGT Charles H. McCormick, at his bunker about 35 yards from the crash, raced to the crash and pulled surviving passengers to safety, disregarding impacting mortar rounds, splattering engine oil, and the imminent danger of the situation.[1895]

2/Lt Nicholas S. Romanetz (Platoon Commander of Second Platoon, C/1/26), only about 50 yards from the crash, recalls that the next morning—foggy and chilly—his Platoon radioman "went out to make a head call and take a leak in the weeds, which wasn't supposed to happen—there were artillery canisters banged into the ground to be used as the urinals. He came back and informed me that there was an arm laying out in the weeds. I went out into the weeds and sure enough there was an arm severed at the shoulder; it obviously belonged to one of the pilots. It had a wedding band on the left finger. We threw it in a mail sack and sent it down to Graves Registration."[1896]

The Souvenir[1897]
By James Epps

An aviator friend of mine
gave me a pair of sunglasses
standard issue pilot's type
M1A1
He had four kids
was the flight leader
would stop and shut down in the LZ at Dong Ha
he didn't really want to fly
there just weren't any joy rides to Khe Sanh—
only artillery rounds and land mines under fire
touching down an extra time for the wounded.
He took in whole blood.

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

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

At 1725H, one incoming rocket from an unknown direction hit in a trench (in vicinity of XD848419) at the LSA Shore Party area off the western end of the runway causing 15 casualties of which 6 were KIA.[1898] Casualties started pouring in from 2/26; others went directly to Graves Registration.

Among those who died was Sgt Billie Ray McCall. "We were both promoted on January 15, 1968. I remember walking back down the street to our hootch at Phu Bai and how happy he was that he had made Sergeant."[1899] Also killed was PFC David Arthur Cramer whose brother, Joseph, was on the USS RANGER in the Gulf of Tonkin when David was killed. The brothers had grown up on a farm. Joseph recalls his younger brother was wilder, hung out with a rough crowd in high school, wanted to play sports, but growing up on farm, was unable. When he arrived in boot camp, David wrote home about his DI; he realized what he had lost with the family. "He wrote letters home, I think more affectionate than I did. He was just a kid."[1900]

Also killed was LCPL Julius ("Corky") Cartwright Foster who had walked 404 miles from his home in Welch, West Virginia, to Camp Lejeune to re-enlist in the Marine Corps at 29 years of age. (He had first enlisted in February, 1961). He walked 17-18 miles a day, carrying a 35-pound pack, registering "the intent of the American people to win the war in Vietnam. In a ceremony naming a boulevard at Camp Geiger, Camp Lejeune, after him, his mother noted his 404-mile walk and stated: "People tried to get him to say he was protesting the war in South Vietnam. He was very forceful in letting them know that he was making the walk to show support for the Marines in South Vietnam and that he wanted the United States to definitely get in there and win the war... He said, 'I want to emphasize the effort and sacrifice that so many others have made. I want to register the intent or prove or show the intent of the

[1894] Conversation with Rick Rasmussen, 10 March 1984.
[1895] Statement of SSGT Edward M. Evans (who was in the bunker with SSGT McCormick, also occupied by LtCol John A. Wachter).
[1896] Taped comments of Nick Romanetz, undated (although it must have been in 1987 since he states he is 42 and he was born 22 January 1945).
[1897] Poem in *A Walk in Golden Gate*, undated; printed in The Khe Sanh *Veteran* 2:1 (Fall, 1995) p. 19. Lt Epps had served in C/1/26 and during the Siege battle served in 3rd Shore Party at Dong Ha where external loads were affixed to helicopters enroute to Khe Sanh.
[1898] 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log for 22 February, Serial #76.
[1899] Letter from William T. Mitchell, III, 13 June 1983.
[1900] Conversation with Joseph Cramer, 9 October 1998.

American people to win the war, not buy it out or bargain, or talk it out, but to win!"[1901]

Also killed were the 2/26 Battalion Chaplain, 32 year-old LTJG Robert R. Brett, and his Chaplain's Assistant, PFC Alexander Scheleph Chin, an African/Chinese-American.[1902] PFC Chin was in college studying art when he entered the Marine Corps.[1903] LCPL Laurence A. Ballard recalls that sometimes Chin would "..come, crawling through the grass, slide on into the hole, and he talked about God, and that's when he told me that God had told him he shouldn't be killing anymore, and he put down his rifle and told his Captain that he was going to get killed."[1904] He was assigned to the Chaplain. Chin, who already had received three Purple Hearts, was scheduled to return home and was engaged to be married. "We had a banner stretched outside the door that said, 'Welcome Home, Alex,' recalled one of Chin's sisters. We had saved all his presents from Christmas, and we were going to celebrate all over again. Then we got the knock at the door telling us he'd been killed."[1905] Chin, who said, "I won't take a life, but I'll put my life on the line for another,"[1906] had volunteered to go to Vietnam to keep his younger brother, who was already in the Army, from having to go there.[1907]

Chaplain Robert Brett was born 3 January 1936 in Morton, Pennsylvania, and ordained 4 February 1962. After teaching Latin in high school and seminary, he volunteered to enter the Navy Chaplain Corps[1908] and volunteered to go to Vietnam because "..he wanted to help people in dire situations."[1909] On the cloth cover of his steel helmet he had written: "Some men are waiting until the eleventh hour to believe, but die at 10:30."[1910] On 5 March 1968, LCPL James A. Everidge (G/2/26) was in a bunker that was struck by NVA artillery that killed PVT Holliman, wounded Everidge and another Marine. "When he woke up, he had a vision of [Chaplain Brett] with that slogan on his helmet, had a religious conversion, and decided to become a minister. He was raised in a very strict Christian family, and when he got in the Marine Corps he became like a Prodigal Son, and that was his turn-around in life."[1911]

Chaplain Brett hopped a re-supply helicopter to Hill 861-A and visited the Marines of E/2/26. The CO of that unit, Capt Earle G. Breeding, recalls: "Bob Brett was probably one of the best all-around people I ever met. He was up at the company's position 4 – 5 days and went on a patrol [through mine-fields] to Company K's position [on Hill 861], holding masses for everyone regardless of denomination. He was one outstanding individual. He walked around the trench lines and stayed at night in the CP. He was very concerned about the troops. He made sure everyone had enough food before he ate himself. He stayed up one night and we talked. We didn't go to bed before five o'clock and philosophized all night. It was very stimulating. I thought the world of Bob Brett."[1912]

While with E/2/26, he baptized Michael Delaney. "He asked if I had a sponsor, somebody that could help me through this. I said, 'Yeah,' and I introduced him. They talked and he said, 'OK, I'll baptize you,' and he did. I felt like, from my toes up to my head, my hair was tingling. I felt so in touch with God. I felt like something had left my body and something entered my body."[1913]

HN Thomas C. Stott frequently reflected on being blown to smithereens while on patrol in Vietnam. He had frequent conversations with Father Brett and had focused on the empty tomb, that the total annihilation of the body now reflects the resurrection, that the effects of the resurrection have already begun. So, when he heard that Chaplain Brett's body had been disintegrated in the explosion he almost blurted out to his fellow Marines, "That's great!" He felt this to be a continuation of the resurrection.[1914] He later became a Catholic priest.

SGT James B. Mink [G/2/26] was going to replace the Right Guide. Both he and the Sergeant he was replacing, Sgt Billy Ray McCall, were in a trench in the Shore Party logistics area off the western tip of the airstrip. Sgt McCall was awaiting a chopper to go home. Chaplain Brett and PFC Chin were there since there was no direct helicopter flight from Hill 861-A to the 2/26

[1901] Clipping from the Camp Lejeune *Globe*, "Foster Boulevard Dedicated." Dedication was on 26 May 1968. Interestingly and appropriately, Major General Rathvon McClure Tompkins was the CG of the base at the dedication and had been the CG of 3rd MarDiv during the Siege, flying in to KSCB almost daily.

[1902] LtCol Gerald F. Kurth, *Walk With Me, A Vietnam Experience*, Leawood, KS: Leathers Publishing, 2000, p. 132. (This chapter was reprinted in Khe Sanh Veterans: *Red Clay* 49 (Spring, 2001) 10-11.

[1903] Leef Smith, "A Reunion at Arlington," The Washington *Post*, 27 May 1999, p. A22.

[1904] Conversation with Larry Ballard, 18 May 1999. Ballard served with 81s of 2/26.

[1905] Quote by Lottie Chin Benyard, quoted in "A Reunion..," *op. cit.*, pp. A22-A-23.

[1906] Quote by RADM Barry C. Black, Deputy Chief of Chaplains, quoted in "A Reunion..," *op. cit.*, p. A1.

[1907] Press Release, 23 May 1999; Conversation with Larry Ballard, 18 May 1999.

[1908] Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Dept. of the Navy, *Items of Interest*, 6:3 (1982) p. 14.

[1909] Quote by his brother, Rev. Frank Brett, who also served as a Chaplain in Vietnam, quoted in "A Reunion..," *op. cit.*, p. A22.

[1910] Kurth, *op. cit.*, p. 130

[1911] Conversation with Ed Rouse, 19 November 1999. James Everidge did, in fact, become a clergyman.

[1912] Conversation with Earle G. Breeding, 18 July 1984.

[1913] Conversation with Michael Delaney, 21 Oct 1989.

[1914] Conversation with Father Tom Stott, 9 September 1991.

battalion area, Hill 558; they were awaiting another chopper to take them to their final destination when a sole rocket round landed in the trench. The men in the trench were sitting alternatively back and forth, facing each other. With no warning, the sudden explosion tossed dirt and dust as a tremendous concussion filled the trench. "I was told that the one that was sitting next to me lost one leg, and the one next to him lost two legs, and the next seven were dead."[1915]

Many of those in the trench were brand new in country, according to PFC Joseph P. Gibney who dashed to the trench: "It landed in a guy's lap, blew his head off. The guy across from him—totally disintegrated his body, but left his uniform there intact, boots and all. The guy next to him—there were three or four, maybe even five guys, that had their heads completely blown off, and about two or three guys that had their bodies totally disintegrated. In this whole muck, this whole mess of blood and bones and bodies, the only thing was a chalice as clear as the day, not a scratch on it, just lying there in the trench-line, shiny as could be."[1916]

Chaplain Walter Driscoll, the Roman Catholic Chaplain on KSCB, had recovered Chaplain Brett's missal and pondered whether or not to send it to his mother. It was bloodied and shredded. He felt it might be too disturbing and tossed it on the pile of clothing that was stripped off casualties at C Med to be burned.[1917]

Chaplain Brett was posthumously awarded the Legion of Merit. In 1999, at the behest of Brett's family and with the permission of Chin's family, Chin's body was removed from his family plot in the town of Princess Anne, Maryland, and reinterred next to Chaplain Brett at Arlington National Cemetery.[1918] On 8 August 2000, the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps School, Newport, RI, was officially dedicated as "Brett Hall," and the main lounge named in honor of Chin.

Corpsman Emil Wurtz of 3/26 had temporarily taken refuge in a hole during incoming when a round exploded, killing him.[1919] It may have been the same trench.

HN Wurtz's good friend, Jim Fisher, writes: "Emil Wurttz and I met while we were both stationed at the Great Lakes Naval Station. Emil was from Chicago and the only child in his family. He was a great guy that would do anything for anyone. When we had weekend leave, Emil would always return home rather than go out and party with his peers in the Navy. It was very late in the year of 1967 when Emil told me that he had received his orders to go to Vietnam. It wasn't a surprise; as medical corpsmen, it was our inevitable fate to end up in Vietnam. Emil had waited to tell me of his ordrs until the night prior to his departure. It must have been about 9:00 or 10:00 PM when he told me of his orders and he asked if I would like to go into North Chicago, which was a town just off the base, to have some coffee or soup. It was snowing heavily. The temperature must have been in the low teens or single digits, and the wind was blowing about 20 miles per hour. But given Emil's circumstances and the fact that he was a very good friend of mine, I agreed and we made the trek. We ate a bowl of soup and drank a cup of coffee and just talked about life and our pasts. Emil then advised me that he knew that he would not return from Vietnam alive. I told him that was crazy talk, but he advised me that he just knew. We made the journey back to the barracks about 1:00 AM in the morning and I wished Emil the best and told him not to consider his fears. With that we parted and the next day he was gone. About two or three months later, I was assigned to his honor guard for his funeral in Chicago."[1920]

23 February 1968

BIRCH, CPL Thomas H	**A/1/26**
BRYANT, PFC James Roy	**K/3/26**
BURGESS, PFC Ruben Anthony	**B/1/9**
CHISHOLM, PFC James	**H&S/1/26**
JOHNSON, 1/Lt Kim Williams	**H&S/1/26**
LEASURE, CPL Delbert Louis	**C/1/13**
McKEEVER, LCPL Michael E	**H&S/1/26**
MOTTOLA, PFC Vincent Antonio	**B/1/26**
RAY, PFC Franklin Daniel	**A/1/26**
ROBITAILLE, GYSGT Paul Edward	**M/3/26**
THORPE, CPL Gary Wilford	**H&S/1/26**
WIRE, GYSGT Eugene Charles	**M/3/26**

"I got up at 0700 to check on the 1/26 staff and officers meeting, but as land line phones at C Med weren't 'up' I just walked to the 1/26 COC bunker at the east end of the base. It was very foggy. Passwords: Hammer lamp/Chair topaz. Hill 950, out of water, dispatched a patrol, made contact 100 meters outside their wires. Incoming yesterday: 155 82s, 30 120s, 21 recoilless rounds, 17 arty, total: 400. Low flying C-130s this morning are seeding the clouds to clear away the fog. It didn't work. There were 6 medevacs yesterday, 17 TPQs, 12 175mm missions. The Supply Officer, 1/Lt Kim Johnson, spoke of weapons reconciliation reports. 2/26 had 15 men in a trench close together on our Shore Party LSA, waiting for several days to get to 558. A rocket landed by C Co, then one inside their trench. I walked past the CH-53

[1915] Conversation with James Mink, 23 May 1993. Sgt Mink had less than six months remaining in his enlistment when he was sent to Vietnam due to a shortage of Sergeants. His Platoon Commander was 2/Lt Robert D. Winn.

[1916] Conversation with Joseph P. Gibney, 21 September 1987, taped comments of Joseph Paul Gibney, Eisenhower Center, University of New Orleans, LA, 25 September 1990.

[1917] Recollection of Chaplain Ray William Stubbe.

[1918] "A Reunion at Arlington," *op. cit.*, p. A1.

[1919] Email from James Fisher to Barbara Smith (a distant cousin of Wurtz) contained in her letter of 6 March 2006.

[1920] *Ibid.*

wreckage just behind the 1/26 COC. The entire front was missing up to the pilot's seat. There is blood all over, pooled in crevasse or angled sheets of metal. The tail is crumpled. As I took cover during incoming at the Regimental MPs, they requested worship services. Visited the regimental COC and talked with the S-2, Maj Jerry Hudson. Someone brought in a few pieces of shrapnel with threads. They want to determine the artillery. "We really don't know what they're giving us," he said.[1921]

Third Platoon of Co A/1/26 defending Hill 950 (XD844456, which was actually 963.29, according to a survey by 2nd Topographic Company in the summer of 1967) under the leadership of 2/Lt Maxie R. Williams had been without re-supply for nine days and suffered a major shortage of water. LtCol James B. Wilkinson [CO, 1/26], during the 1/26 staff and officers morning briefing on 24 February said that we have only 500 gallons of water remaining on the combat base itself and that the water point had not been receiving water for about three days. Hill 950 was down to two gallons; they have been "out" of water for about three days. Plans are being made to have a rifle company from 2/26, with one platoon humping water, to scale the hill and re-supply them, or, we might drop 155mm canisters with plastic bladders filled with water on them, or, we might just abandon the position if we can't get water to them.[1922] At the 1/26 morning staff and officers meeting, the S-4 was chewing out one of his men for using potable water this morning. Defensively, the Marine replied, "Sir, I only used a thimble full!" The S-4 replied, "Do you realize we might not get another drop out of the water point?"[1923]

At 2200H on 21 February, the 1/26 COC radioed A3 on Hill 950, "In view of present weather, it is impossible to re-supply your position. Request your comments concerning water patrol." At 2310, A3 replied, "It is feasible.. Will submit water patrol route."[1924] LtCol James Bascom Wilkinson [CO, 1/26] authorized a squad to conduct a patrol off Hill 950 for the purpose of obtaining water from a small stream about 2 hours distance [towards Hill 1015].[1925]

PFC Robert A. Harrison, a member of the patrol, recalls that Lt Williams had ordered SSgt. Ronald P. Zeiss to select a fire team from each squad plus a gun team, a total of about 15. The Marines selected talked among themselves and concluded that the chances of moving undetected were not good. The slopes of Hill 950 are so steep, that patrols prior to the siege to Hill 1015 to the east were made by sliding down a tree trunk, then grabbing the top of the next tree and sliding down its trunk, and so on, with return a matter of climbing a tree to its top and then grabbing the bottom of the next tree trunk. The morning of the 23rd was cold and foggy. The patrol departed loaded with empty canteens through the wire perimeter which caught on their clothing; their departure was anything but one of stealth as they noisily made it through the wire. In addition, noise from falling resulted from rains for the past several days had made the ground muddy and slippery. On the other hand, dense foliage and fog shrouded their departure. PFC Robert A. Harrison, towards the end of the patrol column, recalls that PFC Anthony Weaver, just in front of him, turned, looked at Harrison, and just rolled his eyes; Harrison shrugged his shoulders, and they continued. With Sgt Zeiss and the gun team in the middle, Cpl Birch's fire team walked point. The patrol had moved about 70 meters when they ran into a dozen or so NVA[1926] smoking near 3 bunkers at XD847454 armed with AK-47 and colt action rifles.[1927]

CPL Robert R. Spurgeon's 2nd Squad (of 3rd Platoon, A/1/26) was running point for the patrol. His second fire team leader, Robert Ickes, was a point, followed by CPL Birch and then CPL Spurgeon, followed by LCPL Frank L. Scott who was the 3rd fire team leader. Spurgeon recalls:

"We were not making any noise whatsoever, and that's why we walked up on them. We went down into the saddle between 950 and 1015 and had taken a right, going down to the ravine where the water would be. Scott was the last man to make it, and SGT Zeiss and the radioman, LCPL Richard Higuera [WIA on 10 Apr 1968] were right there in the break of the hill. That's when we heard the sneeze and everybody stopped. It may have been a cough. It came from my right front and I thought, "No, no!" And then he coughed again. We could see. The fog was there, but we could see, O shit, maybe 75 feet away. My point man, LCPL Ickes, saw them and he motioned back that they were smoking. There were two of them. I motioned back to SGT Zeiss and filled him on what it was, and I asked him if it would be all right for us to lay down a base of fire and let the rest of the platoon assault becauwse they couldn't see them, and we could. Sgt Zeiss overruled me and said we would assault. So I went down and informed Birch and went back and informed Ickes, and Ickes opened up

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[1921] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 23 February 1968.

[1922] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 24 February 1968.

[1923] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 26 February 1968.

[1924] 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log, 21 February 1968, Serials #52 and #54.

[1925] Statement of LtCol James B. Wilkinson, 19 December 1968 to Capt Moyers S. Shore, Historical Branch, G-3 Div., HQMC, in Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.

[1926] Conversation with Robert A. Harrison, 16 July 1989, at Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion; Letters of Robert A. Harrison, 7 March 1986, 31 March 1986, and undated, furnished by Mr. Harrison; Harrison letter postmarked 2 March 1989.

[1927] 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log, 23 February 1968, Serial #36.

on them. Then Ickes hit the deck and stayed hid the rest of the time while Birch and I assaulted.

"Then seven of them jumped up. Later on, I found out that SGT Zeiss and Higuera had shot two of the enemy to our left rear. They were about to kill Birch and I, and they killed them instead. One of them shot Sergeant Zeiss' helmet off, as a matter of fact. They were in black pajamas. I didn't see them.

"So Birch and I, when the seven jumped up, assaulted and just started killing them. CPL Birch got hit with an automatic burst that went under his right leg and he went down. Then I killed that one. Corpsman Thomas R. Richards was already attending Birch by this time, and I walked over and saw a bullet hole about two inches below his belly button, and I said, 'O, Birch!' He had died; his eyes were—.

"The reason Birch got killed was because my gun malfunctioned, and a man that I had already shot six times in the chest killed Birch. He was about to kill me, because his head—in my view, when I killed him, I hit him in the head. That bothers me, because if I had killed the man, he wouldn't have killed Birch.

"A husky guy in first squad came up and picked Birch up and carried him up the trails.

"Birch was a magnificent young man, and he was an only child. When I told Birch [we were going on the patrol] he came to me and told me, 'Corporal Spurgeon, I wish the Chaplain would have made it'—which would have cancelled our patrol. 'I don't think I'm going to make it out of the patrol alive.' Of course, I didn't know what to say to him."[1928]

Cpl Birch sustained mortal wounds to his leg and groin at 0805H.[1929] The NVA force was unshaven and had long hair but their equipment appeared to be in good condition and was clean. As the remaining NVA withdrew under covering fire from the south and east one of their bunkers was searched. It was empty except for leaves spread over dirt in the sleeping area.[1930] The Marines withdrew, four carrying Birch, and about five badly wounded (loss of fingers, an eye)[1931] as they leap-frogged with one man setting up a tail-end defense, and then the man behind him, with the former one withdrawing behind him. "One of the things that sticks in my mind: I was carrying Birch by the shoulder and lost my grip. It was extremely muddy and everybody was wet. His head hit a large rock. I thought to myself, 'that must of hurt,' and then I realized how dumb it was to think that."[1932]

Khe Sanh[1933]
By Robert A. Harrison

Touch the wind, blowing
the gray veil over the memories.
A curtain to hide the
Dimming light.
Seventy-Seven days and
Four hundred gone.
Touch the wind, and
remember the hope
Of life,
and
pray
that one cannot die in vain,
forgotten beneath the pallor of time.
Touch the wind, and
feel the grief of those who knew
and cared.
Searching the reasons...why..,
and speak not of futility,
but of the silence.

At 0945, K/3/26 (Hill 861, XD 803443) received four incoming rockets from XD799446 killing PFC Bryant.[1934]

At 0955, a Marine with C Battery forward on Hill 881-S was killed by a NVA sniper.[1935] "I had one good friend that died up there. He was killed right in front of me by a sniper. In fact, when the round hit him, he didn't fall. He ran, and he ran right—he put his arms around my neck. The round hit him in the right shoulder and completely passed through his upper chest. I couldn't talk for love nor money for about two or three days after that; my voice box was gone and I just sat there on the ground, never moved. I just sat there until I finally, slowly came out of it. The bullet hit him, and he immediately turned and let out an awful scream and he ran straight into me, charged me, pinned me right up against the wall, and put his arms, trying to hold me—desperate. Then he started to fall, and I was trying to help him down and saw the wound... Someone called for a corpsman, and the corpsman come running up and commenced to pound his fist on Leasure's chest, and one of my other best friends gave the corpsman a punch. Every time the corpsman punched Leisure, my friend punched the corpsman. When the whole thing ended, I remember the corpsman—his face was bleeding. My friend and everyone was just kind of out of it... I had spent the whole

[1928] Conversation with Robert R. Spurgeon, 03 Feb 2007.
[1929] 1/26 ComdC Feb, S2/S3 Log, 23 February 1968, Serial #14.
[1930] *Ibid.*, Serial #36.
[1931] Conversation with Keith Gum, 27 February 1996.
[1932] Conversation with Robert A. Harrison, 16 July 1989.
[1933] Enclosed in letter of Robert A. Harrison, postmarked 19 December 1988.
[1934] 3rd MarDiv COC 231641Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #459, Para 4.B.
[1935] 3rd MarDiv COC 231640Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #458, Para 4.B. The SITREP indicates the action on Hill 861, but three tubes of 105s from C/1/13 were atop Hill 881-S, not 861.

night up with him before he got killed. In fact he told me, a couple of hours before he was killed, that he knew he was going to die. He played this card game on me. He kept shuffling, and he kept drawing this Ace of Spades, Ten of Diamonds, and telling me what they meant: The 10 of Diamonds was the $10,000; the Queen of Hearts, he was, was his mother who would get the Ten Grand cause he didn't have a girl friend. I remember I got really ticked off at him. He was talking so serious, and it scarred me. He was on his second tour in Viet Nam. We stayed up all night on watch in the trench lines, and then the sun came up. Him and I walked out, following the wall, thinking we were safe. It was real quiet. There was kind of a pop in the distance. Then he just let out this awful scream and ran right into me... It went in his right shoulder, through his upper chest. When it came out the other side, it actually broke his left arm, the bone going through the bicep. I remember saying to myself: I can't believe what I'm seeing."[1936]

1/Lt Kim Johnson, our 1/26 Supply Officer (and LDS Lay-leader along with Chief Rees of CBMU-301 Det B) had returned from the 1/26 briefing to his bunker in the western section of KSCB and was in his bunker with 1/Lt Charles A. Bourgeois, the 1/26 Motor Transport officer. During the monsoon rains of October or November, he had given Chaplain Stubbe his own Marine- Corps-issued dark green woolen shirt to keep warm. He was married to the former Miss Arizona, Mrs. Evalyne Johnson. He had a premonition of his own death, not when he would die, but that he would die relatively unmarked.[1937] He was going to travel "to the rear" the next day (in connection with the weapons reconciliation reports he had mentioned at the morning staff meeting). LCPL Leopold ("Lee") R. Burger had been in the bunker with another Marine "to get some stuff," and then left. "The way the dug-out was built, you had a little, tiny path that led out and then it made a turn before it hit daylight. We had just made the bend headed out, which shielded us fro the explosion. When the bunker was hit, we were the first two men back in there and we dug them out. We were digging frantically. I remember as soon as I saw his face, I cleared the dirt from his face and I touched his hand and went for a pulse, but I could already see that the color and everything else was out of him. There was not a mark on him"[1938] One of the other men with Burger was Joseph R. Murray who recalls that the Motor Transport Officer in the bunker while alive had a broken arm.[1939] When told of Lee Burger, Murray called him and later remarked: "That was one of the most important phone calls I've ever made in my life! Perceptions are different, and my perception screwed me up for a long time. It was a real therapeutic phone call. I always thought that I dug in slow motion—because of fear, and he told me that was not his perception. He was right next to me. I always blamed myself for that guy's [Johnson's] death. I felt if I had dug a little faster—. But according to Lee, I dug as fast as anybody. That phone call that I made to you, and then you called back—I can't tell you how much that helped!"[1940]

A third person involved in digging out Lt Johnson, Cpl Robert A. Parker,[1941] recalls "He was sitting in his bunker, waist-deep in dirt. The round that hit him came from the back of the bunker and he died from a broken neck... I recall loading Johnson on a mule and taking him over to Graves Registration. I don't think he had a scratch on him. In fact, when I first got down to where he was, I really just thought he was unconscious and was buried waist-deep in the dirt. But the force of that concussion, I guess, had broken his neck."[1942] Parker "liked him very much. I absolutely thought he was a wonderful man. His death seemed so unfair. Here was a man who had everything going for him. He was so devout. I was crushed."[1943] "We would talk religion and had different opinions about things. We simply forgot we were in the Marine Corps and that I was an enlistedman and he was an officer, and that's the thing I remember most about Kim Johnson, the thing I remembered the most as I was trying to dig him out. I was just suddenly crushed because all of a sudden I realized that I was loosing this friend. It was devastating."[1944] "He could maintain his dignity as an officer and yet make an enlisted man feel like a brother and a friend. Three or four of his guys would come over to visit from time to time and they just couldn't stop talking about what a great guy he was."[1945]

1/Lt J. Thomas Esslinger (CO, M/3/26 01 Feb-23 Mar 68) had two Gunnery Sergeants on the western knoll of Hill 881-South: Gunny Wire, the Company Gunny, and Gunny Robitail, the Weapons Platoon Commander. Both were killed on 23 February 1968. "Gunny Wire and Gunny Robitail had dug themselves a nice-sized foxhole down in the middle of one of those 2,000-pound bomb craters, so they were already 16 feet below ground. Then they dug another six feet down. They were sitting down in there, and one of these things came in and landed right

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[1936] Conversation with James E. Payne, 24 April 1988.
[1937] Conversation with Kenneth Pipes, 11 January 1988.
[1938] Conversation with Lee Burger, 06 June 1993.
[1939] Conversation with Joseph Murray, 06 July 1993.
[1940] *Ibid.* Many veterans of combat report that everything happens in slow motion.
[1941] Worked in B/1/26 supply. The Company supply tents along with the 1/26 battalion supply tents were all located together.
[1942] Conversation with Robert A. Parker. Parker died 5 November 2001.
[1943] Conversation with Robert A. Parker, 15 June 1994. Note the thought of "crushed" concerning Parker's spirit and its parallel with the crushing of Lt Johnson's breath—in Hebrew and Greek, "breath" and "spirit" are the same word, and in Hebrew thought, the "soul" (*nephesh)* has its physical locality in the throat.
[1944] Conversation with Robert A. Parker, 10 February 1997.
[1945] Letter of Dennis Smithy, 25 June 1990.

in that hole! They both were killed, and we just found little bits and pieces."[1946]

LCPL Timothy C. Sims, the CO's radioman (later a Navy Chaplain) had known Gunny Wire for many months, when he carried the radio to call in helicopters and direct bomb runs. "He [Wire] was our dad. Nobody could believe it [when he was killed]. I had to go and look at the body. I could not believe it. I kept expecting him to show back up. Well, I was 19."[1947] LCPL David M. Anderson, the M-2 Platoon radioman, remembers that the two Gunnys were having lunch together in their foxhole when the round came right in the hole. "It was incredible, because the Gunny had just come up on the hill with us. He was an older fellow. At first I thought, 'Gees, he's too old to be in the Marine Corps,' but he was just like everybody's dad. He came around the hill and said, 'Hey, listen guys, it's alright. It's the pits, but it's alright; you'll make it.' He was real well respected... He had come up on the hill at just the right time, when we were really getting down on morale, cause we were all awfully young."[1948]

Sgt Ronald E. Harriman took over the responsibilities of Mike Company Gunny after Gunny Wire was killed.[1949]

On 23 February 1968, the KSCB and outlying outposts received 1307 rounds of incoming mortar, rocket, and artillery fire.[1950] Most were rocket and artillery.[1951] The incoming exceeded the record single-day previously held by Con Thien (1,233 rounds on 2 July and 1,203 rounds on 25 September 1967).[1952] LtCol Wilkinson, at the 1/26 staff and officers brief, reported 1,407 (although the quantities he gave—476 artillery, 15 60mm, 372 82mm, 4 120mm, 437 122mm, and 5 recoilless rifle—total 1313), and Major Smith, CO of FOB-3 claimed over 1,700 rounds.[1953] Col Lownds sent a message[1954] to Major General Tompkins: "A total of 1307 arty, rocket and mortar rounds were received at KSCB and outlying facilities resulting in 6 KIA, 19 WIA (medevaced) and 19 WIA (minor). Considering the total number of rounds fired I consider the casualty rate extremely low... A fire broke out in ASP Number 3 where 1100 rounds of 90mm, 560 rounds of 106mm beehive and some 57mm recoilless rifle ammo was destroyed.. Air Force representative of Khe Sanh has indicated unless fires are suppressed the Air Force will not fly in any aircraft.. Only resupply to the hills conducted today was 1600 lbs of concertina to Hill 881. Hill 950 has 5 gallons of water remaining.." The incoming knocked out the communications link with 3rd Marine Division for 3 ½ hours. "Division.. was in the dark. They didn't know what we were doing or anything about it.. whether our COC was still operating.. They just stood by and waited until we came back up. And if we didn't come back up eventually, I guess they would have guessed we were blown off the face of the earth."[1955]

At 1615, one of the rounds struck the 106mm position near C Med in the GRAY Sector of the perimeter instantly killing four Marines, three from the 106 crew and one infantryman from BRAVO Company.[1956]

Diary entry for Wednesday, 7 February 1968: "Went down to the 106 bunker on the lines near the 'C' Med area. There were about 6 men here and there was an empty rack. I did this to be with the men and also because it's probably the safest place: if there's an attack, the base will be receiving numerous artillery, rockets, and mortars first, but not the lines, because that requires pinpoint accuracy, and they wouldn't want to waste rounds outside the trench. The men were most appreciative. They received the word on the tanks [that had overrun Lang Vei]. It's interesting the fear that is present. Although cool and hard on the outside, the bunker presented all the warmth and quiet and security of returning to the womb. The most obviously safe place was out on the lines, in the trenches. The bunker, on the other hand, is above ground, a visible target, has a large area of vulnerability, and the ceiling could easily collapse. I spot one Marine outside with the small prayer book that I had previously distributed, reading from it. It was cool, even cold, outside. I woke up at 0230; one man was due to relieve another. Before he went out, he had to heat up some cocoa and breakfast. This took exactly one hour! From that time until 0730, there was always somebody coming in to prepare cocoa, or coffee, or chili con carnie. The base started taking incoming. At 0430 the base went on red alert and there was 100% manning the perimeter instead of 50%. At this time the men started playing the record player they had, a very jumpy song [Credence Clearwater's "I heard it on the Grapevine"]. The procrastination in the 'womb' became more pronounced. At 0730

[1946] Conversation with J. Thomas Esslinger, 28 July 1993.
[1947] Conversation with Rev. Timothy C. Sims, 27 August 1989.
[1948] Conversation with David M. Anderson, 13 July 1990.
[1949] Letter from Ronald E. Harriman, 23 March 1994.
[1950] 3rd MarDiv COC 231640Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #458, Para 4.C.; 3rd MarDiv COC 231641Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #459, Para 4.A.
[1951] III MAF COC 232155Z/Feb68 to MACV CIIB, Doc #363 in III MAF COC Journal and File.
[1952] CG, FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam, February, 1968*, p. 23.
[1953] Conversation with Major Smith at Khe Sanh, 24 February 1968. He claimed the increased total was from additional rounds that landed within his area, however, he may have counted rounds that "cooked off" from the exploding ASP #3. The official Sharp & Westmoreland report indicates 1,307 [*Report on the War*, p. 164].
[1954] 26Mar 231330Z/Feb68 in 26Mar ComdC Feb68.
[1955] Comments of Sgt H. E. Stroud, HQMC Oral History Tape #2452.
[1956] 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log, 23 February 1968, Serial #110

the word was that they'd fill 50 sand bags and then turn in—to sleep!"[1957]

It was this bunker, this crew, these men, that were hit by incoming on 23 February 1968. "I went down there to assist loading the dead into the 'crackerbox' [ambulance]. The Catholic Chaplain [Walt Driscoll] was also there. The dead were not all together. There were pieces—arms, bodies. There was one body without a head; it had completely vanished. We looked for it but couldn't find it. There were small pieces of flesh all over the place. I knew them all. These were the nervous ones that played, 'I Heard it on the Grapevine.' Parts of one of the man's body hung out as I held him in my arms carrying him into the truck—a hand, an arm, a stringy piece of flesh intertwined with cloth and caked with mud. The 106 gun itself was completely untouched, but three of my friends were gone [plus one more from "B" Co.]. In the letter to the next of kin: 'Lieutenant Ray W. Stubbe, U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps, offered a prayer for Gary [Thorpe] shortly thereafter."[1958] What an under-statement! I offered a passionate prayer—I still am!

Others were deeply affected also, including one corpsman that lost two good friends. "The kid broke down and was later evacuated... Here you are, seeing some of your best friends, some of your best comrades, people you really feel for, care for.. they're lying dead, and you have to sit there and take more."[1959]

PFC James E. Griffin, a clerk typist (MOS 0141) with H&S Co., 1/26, recalls Gary Thorpe who had a little hole not far from the 1/26 H&S Company bunker. Griffin remembers going down to talk with Thorpe who told him about an earlier Nam tour.[1960] "I do not remember which unit he served with on his first tour, only that, as with so many Marines, he immediately volunteered to go back... During that first tour Gary was called on to fire in support of a squad of Marines that had been ambushed and pinned down. Close to the ambush site on the slope of the hill there was a shallow cave and the surviving Marines had managed to scramble into this cave and it was from there that they were desperately radioing for fire support. According to Gary, the NVA soldiers were almost at the mouth of the cave, lobbing grenades and firing almost directly into it when he was given the order to open fire. He said he remembered what happened in slow motion, that he could see it in his mind in great detail, that since that day he had seen it over and over and over again. The first round took out the NVA soldiers attacking to those right of the entrance and the second round was aimed at those approaching the mouth of the cave to the left. Gary said he knew as soon as he had fired that the second round was going into the cave, that he could see it, that he could see the faces of the Marines in the cave and that he knew they that they were going to die and that it was Gary Thorpe who was going to kill them. There were no survivors."[1961] As he and Jim Griffin sat talking, Gary said he was ready to die. The scene haunted him and he was ready to go.[1962]

Michael McKeever played football and basketball while in high school and was active in his Catholic church as an altar boy and sang in the choir. Active in Boy Scouts, he achieved Eagle Scout. His father had served as a Marine in the Korean War and his dream was to become a combat photographer for the Marine Corps. He enlisted 13 June 1966.[1963]

24 FEBRUARY 1968

AGUIRRE, CPL Carlos Cruz	E/2/26
BECK, PVT John Theron	C/1/9
BORRELL, PFC Clifford Glenn	E/2/26
DISTEFANO, 2/Lt Ferdinando	E/2/26
JEFFRIES, LCPL Gerrie George	E/2/26
JONES, LCPL Howard Lemuel Jr.	FLC (POL)
NELSON, LCPL Max Alvin	E/2/26

As an example of under-counting of KIAs, the Operation SCOTLAND SITREPS for this date indicate 5 friendly KIA, 11 WIA (evacuated) and 9 friendly WIA (minor).[1964]

In the early morning hours, "..one of our own artillery rounds landed short. It was a direct hit on my machine gun bunker and caved the bunker killing Cpl Carlos Aguirre and LCPL Gerrie Jeffries. I drew the short straw, so I slept in the trench outside the bunker (it was only big enough for two to sleep in)."[1965] The bunker containing the two, machine-gunners, took a direct hit by the errant artillery round, causing the bunker to collapse, suffocating them. "We could not get them out. I heard a muffled scream. It was terrible! It was night. A new Gunnery Sergeant vomited in my canteen, and I got very, very upset because we had so little water."[1966] The Com-

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[1957] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry, 07 February 1968.
[1958] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry, 23 February 1968.
[1959] Comments of Sgt Patrick J. Fitch, HQMC Oral History Tape #2498. Sgt Fitch was a radioman with B/1/26 from 10 Jan – 27 Feb 1968.
[1960] Conversation with James E. Griffin, 16 May 1996.
[1961] James Griffin, letter postmarked 18 May 1996, forwarding a letter he wrote to two school teachers; printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Issue No. 37 (Fall, 1996), pp. 16-17.
[1962] Conversation with James E. Griffin, 16 May 1996.
[1963] Don Ward, *The Faces Behind the Names*, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1996, p. 278.
[1964] Reported in 3rd MarDiv COC 250052Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #463. (3rd MarDiv COC messages 241328Z/Feb68, 241517Z/Feb68, and 250053Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREPs #s 461, 462, and 464, respectively, report no KIA.)
[1965] Khe Sanh Message Board, email by James Kaylor posted 28 March 2002.
[1966] Conversation with Michael Thomas Lucas, 08 June 1991; the quote is from a letter he received from James Kaylor. Lucas was a Squad Leader in 3rd Platoon.

pany Commander, CAPT Earle G. Breeding, questions whether there was much moaning or suffering: "If my recollection is correct, it was only like thirty seconds after the round landed that they found that it caved in, and it didn't take very long to dig them out—maybe twenty minutes to dig, but twenty minutes of not breathing—... When they dug them out, they were both lying flat on their back, and they were motionless."[1967] PFC William Griffith [later a Major, USMC] was in an adjacent bunker when the round exploded. "In fact, I was on watch and yelled 'incoming!' I hit the dirt and the rounds hit a few feet behind me and caved-in the bunker and killed them."[1968]

Howard Jones had relieved Joseph Lola (who was severely wounded on 21 February)[1969] as a fork-life driver. "Needless to say, he was one of the most 'shot-at' people during daylight hours because he had to get the [pallets of ammunition for the] 105s, 155s moved. And he got pretty well shell-shocked. He was scarred to death. The afternoon that he got killed, there was a pretty heavy dose of incoming, and he jumped off the fork-lift and dove into a culvert near the POL area near Graves Registration. He panicked. He felt so exposed laying in that ditch that he got up and tried to run across the road into one of the bunkers. A shell went off, and a piece of shrapnel tore his throat out, and that was that."[1970]

Some of the 275 rounds of incoming also struck Hill 861-Alfa, defended by Company E/2/26. The Marines there were still developing their position, still taking incoming, still taking casualties. PVT Larry E. Jackson vividly recalls the day:

"On February 24th we were still stringing wire and concertina. I remember this particular day. It was the first time that I got wounded. I was so scarred I didn't even know I'd been wounded; somebody had to tell me. I was hit by shrapnel behind the leg and was bleeding. We were stretching barbed wire. We wrapped it around the post four times, then continued to the next post and did the same on that. The weather was so hot it was just almost unbearable. We had shifts. We would stay out maybe 45 minutes, maybe an hour, and then we rotated with different members of the squad. On this particular day, they [the NVA] had got back to dropping one shell a day. This started on the 16th or 17th of February. On this particular day I'd wrapped the wire around a post twice and a Black Sergeant gave the command to trade off and we could go back to our trench line. The man who replaced me right on the particular pole that I was on—I mean right in my footprints—the first shell came in [*pause*]. The first shell that came in landed just behind him. His name was Borrell. It decapitated his legs at the knees, and that was the first shell that came in. And naturally they began to pound us with mortar shells. It was unbelievable, and the guys were caught outside the wire. We had just one particular place to where you could go out through the wire, and it was on down the front of this particular place. These guys were trapped outside the wire, trying to run through the wire, trying to crawl through the wire just to get back the best way they could, and shells hitting in the wire, outside the wire. The next thing we heard was 'First Squad get out and get 'em' or something, I don't remember exactly."[1971]

PFC Borrell was nicknamed "pops." He was older—had been in the Navy four years.[1972]

PVT Jackson continues: "We had to cut through the wire, and as we'd be out towards the wire, the shells started hitting up in the trench line and inside the perimeter. Then, when we finally got through the wire to get a hold of some of the wounded, we pulled them back through the wire and up to the trench line and the shells started hitting outside the wire and in the wire, again like it started. We were real fortunate because they would hit in the trench line when we were out of the wire, and then we pulled a wounded Marine back to the trench and they would be hitting back in the wire again, wounding more... I was the first one to get to Borrell. I was trying to drag him along and he was such a big person. He was a big, strapping man. Just a little bit after I got to him, one of the corpsmen came by and I saw that he [Borrell] was bleeding excessively, so he commenced to put tourniquets on each one of his legs. I laid the weight of my body, which was 165, 170 pounds [on Borrell], and he just raised up like I wasn't even laying on him. He got one look at his legs that had been blown off, and he just fell back, turned white, and died."[1973]

LCPL Max Nelson, the CO's radioman of E/2/26, was one of the heroes of the battle of 5 February on 861-A, maintaining radio comm. with the platoons of Co E, with the platoons of Co K/3/26 (on the nearby Hill 861), and assisted in calling in supporting fire. He fearlessly moved about the fire-swept terrain to skillfully assist other radio operators who were experiencing transmission difficulties.[1974] Max's dad, who had been a POW in World War II and got out of the Army as a Major, taught art in the high school Max attended in Walker, Minnesota, and Max himself was a good artist. He had

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[1967] Conversation with Earle G. Breeding, 18 September 1991.

[1968] Conversation with William Griffith, 19 February 1993.

[1969] Conversation with Joseph Lola, 16 November 1996.

[1970] Conversation with Philip Wright, 12 January 1995. Joseph Lola reports the same information [Conversation with Joseph Lola, 16 November 1996]. During the period 1200-1800, KSCB and outlying outposts received approximately 275 rounds of incoming. [3rd MarDiv COC 250052Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #463].

[1971] Taped comments of Larry E. Jackson, November, 1984.

[1972] Conversation with William Griffith, 19 February 1993. Griffith and Borrell had gone through training together in California prior to going to Vietnam.

[1973] Taped comments of Larry E. Jackson, November, 1984.

[1974] Bronze Star Medal Citation, LCPL Max Alvin Nelson

taken the 1:50,000 tactical map and drew 861-A and surrounding areas on a much larger scale on the sleeve of a C-ration carton and then superimposed the grid over it, all to scale, greatly helping Captain Breeding to conduct the defense against the assault of the outpost on 5 February.[1975]

Max Nelson was one of those who rushed to rescue the trapped, wounded Marines. "He wouldn't be dead today, probably, because I wouldn't of let him go out there. But I happened to be checking the lines and they came in on the other side of the Company perimeter. I wouldn't of let anybody go out there to get those people until the rest of those rounds stopped landing,"[1976] laments Breeding.

2/Lt Ferdinando Distefano, the Executive Officer of E/2/26, was not on Hill 861-Alfa when it had been hit on 5 February. Upon returning to Khe Sanh, he had seen (and had a confrontation with) Major Royce L. Bond, the 2/26 Battalion Executive Officer. He said he had a premonition that if we went back on 861-Alfa, that he was going to die. He pleaded with Bond. He was in tears. "I'm going to die!" Major Bond ordered him to return to his unit. Today he died. "Lieutenant Distefano went out not as a hero, but just doing the things that people do. Here's this Second Lieutenant, almost fresh out of Basic School, not dry behind the ears, and he went out to help one of my troopers, an artillery FO, and a Navy Corpsman, all of whom he didn't know they're all dead, and he 'bought it.' Strange thing is, I viewed his body. He didn't have a mark on him! I have discussed this with the medical personnel, and they say probably what happened was a round landed close, and the concussion.. splits everything apart inside you in pieces, and you just die instantly."[1977]

Ferdinando, his parents' only child, had emigrated with them and settled in New York where his parents ran an Italian grocery store. His premonitions of death were evident from the time he boarded a plane that would take him eventually to Vietnam. At the airport, he told his good friend, Ralph DiToro, "I don't think I'm coming back." There were other portends. His mother always kept a candle lit in her son's room and when she got up the morning of his death, the candle was blown out. On the way to the store, one of her neighbors stopper her. "I had a dream about Freddy," she said. Sometime later, she saw Marines walk into the store and immediately (before they uttered a word) she got on the telephone and called DiToro's friend: "Vinny, get over here, Freddy is dead." "Nine months after Freddy died, his father died. His mother became a wandering nomad: she would go to California, she would go to Italy, go here, go there, and finally she passed away... She never recovered."[1978]

[The 24th of February brought the first Supergaggle. While the USAF re-supplied the Combat Base itself by fixed wing landings (along with USMC fixed wing air-landings, of course), para-drops into the Drop Zone, and LAPSE, the outlying outposts could only be re-supplied by helicopter. The commitment was assigned to MAG-36A and MAG-39.[1979] Helicopter pilots encountered the same ground fire as did fixed wing, perhaps in an even more disadvantageous manner because of their slow speed and vulnerability. When the siege battle began, 26th Marines had a support package of 2 UH-1E, 2 to 4 CH-46, and 2 UH-34 helicopters, whose primary mission was re-supply and medevac support of the hill outposts, coordinated by the 26th Marines ALO [Air Liaison Officer]. As the battle progressed, the increased tempo of operations resulted in control passing to the DASC.[1980] Hill 881-South was continuously bombarded by 120mm mortars, particularly during medevacs. Capt Dabney attempted to diminish this vulnerability by use of several different LZs, directing helicopter landings by last-minute popping of smoke at the designated LZ. Tactics evolved. Supplies were never dropped twice in the same place consecutively. Feinting a drop at one hill and then dropping off at another hill was another tactic. Approaches were always low-altitude and high-speed. Aircraft had only 30 seconds to enter, drop supplies, and de-

[1975] Conversation with Earle G. Breeding, 20 January 1990.
[1976] *Ibid.* Two of Nelson's brothers also served in the military. As of 1997, one was a Major and one a Lieutenant Colonel. The father, upon his return from WW II, started the Reserve Company in Walker, Minnesota, where the two sons served as Company Commander prior to its decommissioning in 1995. [Conversation with James Best, 26 May 1997]. Max Nelson's sister, Jamie Woodruff, recalls that during childhood there was no TV, and the six brothers and sisters of the family played war, cowboys and Indians, or games of softball and kick-the-can in the alley, rode bikes to the beach and enjoyed a stop at the local Dairy Queen (if they had a little money). Their dad died in 1971. "Max was always the clown. Not an inspired student, he enjoyed extra-curricular activities more than school.. He played drums in the band and sang in the choir." He and his friends formed a quartet and performed in school concerts. Max went to movies and dances with his girlfriend, Jean, and joined the Marines directly after graduation from high school. He died two days after his 19th birthday. [Tribute by Jamie Woodruff in Don Ward, *The Faces Behind the Names*, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1996, p. 298].

[1977] Comments of Earle G. Breeding at Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, Denver, CO, printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #2 (Fall, 1991), p. 4.
[1978] Conversation with Ralph Di Toro, 11 February 2005.
[1979] Comments of Maj Wm. A. McGaw, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #3293. Maj McGaw was S-3, Aviation Safety Officer, and NATOPS Officer of VMO-6.
[1980] Comments of Maj William J. Sullivan, HQMC Oral History Tape #2935. Maj Sullivan was XO, MASS-3.

part before mortars began to explode. Low altitudes greatly increased vulnerability to small arms and .50 caliber machineguns.[1981] *Since it was assumed the NVA were monitoring our radios, Shore Party Marines at the KSCB LSA indicated the hill to be re-supplied by a sign they held up. Pilots acknowledged they understood by a "thumbs-up" signal and the UH-1E gunships, not knowing to which hill the re-supply birds were headed, simply followed, covering the transport helicopter as it landed.*[1982] *Despite these and other tactics, NVA fire made use of parked helicopters at Khe Sanh landing on LZs of hill outposts untenable. In some cases, it took the pilots a longer time to move from their bunker on KSCB to their helicopters than it would take a helicopter from Quang Tri to fly to Khe Sanh! Maj Arthur B. Crane, S-3 of MAG-39, "..spent as much as 45 minutes trying to make it from the bunker.. to the aircraft, diving in ditches and laying in culverts on the way.."*[1983] *Sometimes the trip from bunker to plane took as long as an hour to an hour and a half.*[1984] *The situation deteriorated proportionately as enemy fire intensified. Far too many aircraft were being lost and taking hits. No amount of bombing seemed to diminish the intensity and accuracy of the numerous hidden NVA weapon positions, and it became necessary to coordinate fixed-wing air strikes with helicopter drops.*

Thus Col Joel B. Bonner, LtCol Richard E. Carey was conceived and termed "Supergaggle" by the author of the Operation Order, LtCol Carey.[1985] *Supergaggle commenced 24 February 1968 at Khe Sanh.*[1986] *"We always referred to a formation flight of helicopters as a gaggle, like a 'gaggle of geese.' Well, when you get as many aircraft in the sky as we had on our Khe Sanh resupply runs, it's a supergaggle."*[1987] *The quantity of aircraft was formidable. The plan included 12 A-4s, 1 TA-4, 12 CH-46s, and 4 UH-1E gunships.*[1988] *Supergaggle involved a resupply of about 32,000 pounds per hill. By the time Supergaggle began on 24 February, HMM-262 had lost more than half of their CH-46D helicopters.*

Execution of Supergaggle involved (1) softening up known NVA positions by 4 A4s; (21) saturation of known enemy anti-aircraft and automatic weapons positions by 2 A4s armed with CS gas tanks; (3) laying of a smoke screen 30-40 seconds prior to final run by the CH-46Ds along the selected avenues of approach; (4) fire suppression during the final runs by 4 A4s equipped with CBUs, rockets, and 20mm.[1989] *Ordnance used included DELTA-2 (500-lb. bombs), DELTA-5 (rockets), DELTA-9 (napalm), DELTA-11 (CBU-1AA), DELTA-14 (CBU-24), DELTA-15 (CBU-21), DELTA-21 (smoke), DELTA-24 (gun pod), and DELTA-32 (CS gas). Most effective was the DELTA-21 and DELTA-32 was not as effective as anticipated. DELTA-11s were very effective, being laid in a string 1100 meters long. After 4 or 5 days, DELTA-15s were used instead of the DELTA-11s since they possessed the effect of detonating anywhere up to 2 hours after being laid, an effective method of keeping the enemy off-balance. A combination of DELTA-14 and DELTA-15 appeared to provide optimal coverage.*[1990] *Helicopters descended from their patterns with their 4,000-pound loads. Supergaggle proved effective: only 2 CH-46s were downed enroute to the hill outposts during Operation Supergaggle, whereas prior to Supergaggle, as many as 3 helicopters were shot down in a single day.*[1991]]

25 February 1968

AKINS, LCPL Ronald Paul	**B-3/1/26**
BAPTISTE, PFC Michael Bradford	**B-3/1/26**
BATTLE, PFC Joseph Chriss	**B-1/1/26**
BILLINGHAM, LCPL Frederick A Jr.	**B-3/1/26**
BRELLENTHIN, PFC Michael J	**B-3/1/26**
BRUDER, PFC James Robert	**B-3/1/26**
CLAIRE, CPL Kenneth William	**B-3/1/26**
CLAY, PFC Doyle Gregory	**B-3/1/26**
DODSON, LCPL Jerry Lee	**B-3/1/26**
GELLER, LCPL Charles Gregory	**B-3/1/26**
HAYES, LCPL Phillip III	**B-3/1/26**
HUFF, CPL William Edward	**K/3/26**
JACQUES, 2/Lt Donald	**B-3/1/26**
JONES, LCPL Bruce Edwin	**B-3/1/26**
LADEROUTE, PFC Michael John	**B-3/1/26**
LASSITER, PFC John Alfred	**B-3/1/26**
McCLELLAND, SSGT George	**B-3/1/26**
McDONALD, PFC Henry III	**B-3/1/26**
McKENZIE, LCPL Richard W	**B-3/1/26**
MEADS, PFC Kim Elmer	**B-3/1/26**
MOORE, HN Lloyd Whitfield	**B-1/1/26**
RIVERA, PFC Arnold Javier	**B-3/1/26**
RUFF, PFC Willie Jerome	**B-3/1/26**
SCARBROUGH, PFC David Clinton	**B-3/1/26**

[1981] Comments of Maj William A. McGaw, Tape #3293, cited.
[1982] Comments of LtCol Melvin J. Steinberg, USMC Oral History Tape #3423.
[1983] Comments of Maj Arthur C. Crane, USMC Oral History Tape #3294.
[1984] Comments of LtCol Bertram A. Maas, USMC Oral History Tape #3422.
[1985] Letter of MGen Keith B. McCutcheon, AAJ-1-jap, HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file. McCutcheon was CG, 1 MAW.
[1986] VMO-6 ComdC Feb 1968, Encl (1), p. 2; FMAW OpPlan 3-68 in I MAW ComdC Feb 68 G-2 Sec App 6, Tab 48.
[1987] LtCol David L. Althoff, "Helicopter Operations at Khe Sanh," Marine Corps *Gazette* 54:5 (May 1969) 47.
[1988] Ltr of MGen McCutcheon, cited.
[1989] *Ibid.*
[1990] Comments of LtCol Robert W. Rasdal, HQMC Oral History Tape #2627.
[1991] DFC file on Capt Wesley H. Birt; MGen McCutcheon letter, cited.

SKINNER, PFC Walter Francis	**B-3/1/26**
SMITH, PFC Douglas Wayne	**B-3/1/26**
SZMANSKI, PFC Frank Adam IV	**I/3/26**
THEYERL, PFC Clayton Joseph	**B-3/1/26**
WHITAKER, CPL Donald Eugene	**B-1/1/26**
WIEDEMAN, CPL Robert Arthur	**I/3/26**
WOOD, LCPL James Anthony	**E/2/26**

The 20 year-old "youngest Marine Corps Lieutenant to complete TBS [The Basic School] in 18 years,"[1992] 2/Lt Donald Jacques, commanded Third Platoon of Company B/1/26. He had joined the Marine Corps while attending college. His parents had little money and he didn't want to ask them for more to attend school.[1993] Arriving in Vietnam in early October, 1967, he wrote home: "Tonight I had a 19 yr-old come to me for help and advice. He is married to a 18 yr-old and he was having problems. If he knew I was only 20 I wonder if he would have come."[1994] The evening of 24 February 1968, he wrote his parents, wishing them a happy anniversary and adding: "The days go by quite quickly but the nights are long around here. I haven't been getting much sleep.. I stay awake all night sometimes and others not. We get our sleep in the day a couple of ours [*sic*] at a time. That is if the work load isn't to great. It is a constant digging deeper and the work really never stops. It can't."[1995] In what was to be his last day, he also wrote his sister, Jeanne, and her family: "We're just sitting here waiting for all hell to burst loose with each day that goes by the incoming increases and the 3d Plt digs deeper. We are already for them in my opinion but no matter how well prepared you think you are there is always something more you can do. We have been lucky so far and I hope that the good fortune holds for us. Although my platoon has had 30 wounded since Jan 21st none have been too serious and the majority of the men are still on duty and all healing. One or two have made it home early but that is all to the good. For they have done their part. They seem to think that Khe Sanh will be the turning point to the negotiation tables. I hope so but if not we will go on until this is over... I just hope we can do our part well enough so that your Billy and Mark and Matt don't have to come... I'm fine and still kicking. I'll write again soon. Love brother, Don."[1996] 2/Lt Donald Jacques was as "green" as the piece of camouflaged parachute he always wore as an dickey.[1997]

For 18 year-old PFC Ronald Lewis Ridgeway, the morning of 25 February began with his squads leader, LCpl Kenneth Claire, briefing his men that they were going on a sweep, not to exceed 1000 meters from the combat base perimeter.[1998] It was basically to be a perimeter wire check to determine if the wire had been cut or sabotaged, or if there were any NVA forward observers. They were instructed not to go out of sight of the base perimeter. "He said we were looking for any trench positions that were being dug towards our perimeter and for Bangalore torpedoes. He said there was a possibility of receiving enemy mortars because it was open terrain."[1999] The patrol was to be far from a normal patrol for Ridgeway; it was the beginning of a 5-year nightmare as a POW.[2000] Ridgeway turned 18 in boot camp and went straight over to Vietnam, arriving in November, 1967.[2001] In early February, 1968, he got knocked out during a mortar barrage. "I did a foolish thing. I jumped into the trench line to get away from the mortars and I broke my nose."[2002] He woke up in a helicopter in DaNang. "I got medevaced, I guess, because they said I was out, unconscious, for so long. Then I came back up [to KSCB]. I got my in-country R&R!"[2003]

LCpl Kenneth Claire, the tall, rugged squad leader, probably thought of his family and home in California. He had spent his summers in the 7200-foot high Sierras at

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[1992] Comment by his sister, Jeanne, quoted in Brandon, Heather, *Casualties*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984, p. 63. Donald Joseph Jacques was born 23 March 1947 in Rochester, New York, and entered on active duty in the USMC 24 March 1967 at Quantico, Va.

[1993] *Ibid.*, comments by his other sister, Vallette, p. 61.

[1994] Donald Jacques, letter to his parents, 14 October 1967. Jacques was born 23 March 1947 in Rochester, NY, entered on active duty 24 March 1967, and arrived in Vietnam 09 Oct 1967 [Casualty card, HQMC, Historical Division, Washington, D.C.]

[1995] Donald Jacques, letter to his parents, 24 February 1968. In a letter to his parents dated 14 February 1968, he wrote: "Always tired but when this is over I'll get all the sleep I need."

[1996] Donald Jacques, letter to Jeanne, Bob and Billy, 24 February 1968.

[1997] Conversation with Jeff Culpepper, 23 July 1984.

[1998] Orders were to maintain visual sight of the perimeter (400 meters max from the perimeter) and the patrol was to last 2 hours. [26Mar 251114H/Feb68, from Col Lownds to CG 3rd MarDiv, in III MAF SPECAT Exclusive msgs, #30, forwarded to CG III MAF by CG 3rd MarDiv in 252120Z/Feb68]. As further evidence that the patrol was to be close to the KSCB perimeter, Ed. Prendergast was told to remain at KSCB with his 60mm mortars from where he could better protect the patrol. [Conversations with Ed Prendergast, 14 March 1986 and 5 June 1986].

[1999] CMC Rpt AO2A-THM-bfh, 3461, 17 July 1973, Subj: Homecoming Marine Debriefing Report; case of Sergeant Ronald L. Ridgeway, USMC, Debrief Tape #5.

[2000] Returned to US control on 16 March 1973. Interestingly, while training, Ridgeway and the brother of James Schemelia [I/3/26 on Hill 881-S during the siege battle] successfully escaped and evaded in a training exercise at Camp Pendleton. Others were dispatched to locate them. They were unaware the exercise had terminated! [Conversation with James Schemelia, 31 July 1984].

[2001] Conversation with Ronald Ridgeway, 05 July 1991.

[2002] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, Subj: Returnee Press Conference, Sgt Ronald L. Ridgeway.

[2003] Conversation with Ronald Ridgeway, 05 July 1991.

Silver Lake with his great-aunt where he would get up each morning and greet it with a Tarzan yell—for which he became quite famous at Khe Sanh before the siege battle. His younger brother (by 7 years), Richard, recalls their 4-hour treks up the 9,800-foot high Thunder Mountain and the sheer 2,000 foot drop to the 7,300-foot high Silver Lake. "Ken would climb right up to the top and stand there with the wind howling around him, pound his chest and give out this wild Tarzan yell! I think it was at that point Ken got the idea of giving a Tarzan yell whenever he got to the top of a mountain. Unfortunately, he started doing the same thing every morning on our front deck and scared the heck out of our kids. On our last trip up there, he planted a post on the peak and tied his sweatshirt to it. The post stayed there for over 30 years through all the storms and the high winds."[2004] His niece, Laura, recalls how terrified she was as a little child when Ken placed her on his shoulders and tossed her into the air. "I used to be scarred to death because he was so big."[2005] While in schools before high school, Ken was a very good baseball player, made the All Star team for the Fair Oaks Little League and Babe Ruth League every year he played, and when he went to Sequoia High School, he made varsity as soon as he started on the team. At high school, Ken "..got the reputation of being one of the toughest and fairest kids in the school. Nobody fooled around with him and whenever he saw someone picking on someone else he immediately stepped in and settled the argument. He also had a reputation of being a real fun guy.. was extremely well-liked and respected."[2006] Following high school he briefly attended the College of San Mateo and played football for them (at 6-2 and 245 pounds), but found the academic world not to his liking and joined the Marine Corps.

LCpl Ken Claire was well-known for his Tarzan yell as well as other atavistic demeanor and actions. When re-supplied with loaves of bread, he would grab a whole loaf and tear off a piece with his mouth and yell.[2007] During a battalion-size sweep in late December, 1967, LCpl Claire led his squad (PFC James Hebron, PFC Ronald Ridgeway, PFC Edward C. Rayburn, PFC Jeffrey E. Culpepper, and others), together with another squad and a machine-gunner up a creek bed of about 6 inches of mud. Suddenly they spotted four NVA soldiers at XD803495 carrying a wounded man. When the NVA saw the Marines, they dropped their wounded officer comrade and ran. Claire and Hebron fired 29 M-79 rounds, killing the officer. Ron Ridgeway and Jeff Culpepper threw the dead enemy officer in a poncho. "He was bleeding like crazy and the blood was sloshing around in the poncho and got all over us. When we got back we finished our chow and went on."[2008] Upon returning, Lt. Jacques took the officer's pistol. "It should have been Claire's,"[2009] but the issue became academic since both Jacques and Claire were to die on 25 February 1968. Lt Jacques asked LCpl Claire, "Is this a fresh kill?" Claire responded, "Of course," and took the blood on his finger and licked it.[2010]

LCpl Claire had a reputation for being "hard" but fair; he took care of his men. He was very strict about falling asleep on watch and ensuring sufficient separation between people while on patrol. If someone walked with his head down, looking at the ground, he'd come by and let that person know it—physically as well as vocally! "But then in quiet times when you'd be standing watch or something he'd come around checking lines. He'd apologize to you and say, 'I'm not trying to give you a hard time; I'm just trying to instill in you're the importance of what we're doing. He did care for us."[2011]

When the Combat Base was hit the early hours of Sunday, 21 January 1968, PFC Alexander Tretkiakoff fell while returning from a listening post and became hung-up on the wire. LCPL Claire dashed out amid the hail of exploding ordnance which was concentrated in that particular area of KSCB due to proximity to the exploding ammunition dump, along with NVA mortars and rockets, to rescue Tretkiakoff and bring him back to safety.[2012] He also continuously moved through the trench line while shrapnel and pieces of unexploded and semi-exploded ordnance fell around him to encourage his men and assist casualties.[2013] PFC Jeffrey L. Culpepper had just completed his watch when a rocket shrieked by and he dove into a trench next to PFC Edward C. Rayburn. The trenches at that point weren't very deep: "we were side by side, practically laying on top of each other." Big chunks of shrapnel made whizzing sounds overhead and then landed into the mud, sizzling. One chunk, "..a great big, huge, jagged, steaming-hot piece of shrapnel stuck in the mid right in between us, sizzling,

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[2004] Letter from Richard Claire, 5 November 2004.

[2005] Conversation with Mrs. Laura Claire Bueno, 7 December 1986. In high-school, Ken was 6-1 and 225 pounds. [Letter from Richard Claire, 5 November 2004].

[2006] Letter from Richard Claire, cited. Ken's father had been a professional football and professional baseball player [Conversation with Richard Claire, 7 December 1986].

[2007] Memory of Ray W. Stubbe.

[2008] Conversations with Jeff Culpepper, 23 July 1984 and 30 January 1987; Letter from Jeff Culpepper to Mrs. Madalyn Culpepper, 01 January 1968. The action is documented in 1/26 ComdC Dec 1967 S2/S3 Log 29 December 1967, Ser #18, 19, and 28, and appended list of captured gear; 26Mar 290410Z/Dec67, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #234; 26Mar 291125Z/Dec67, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #235; Letter of Maj Kenneth W. Pipes, undated, in Khe Sanh Monograph File, HistDiv, HQMC, Washington, DC.

[2009] Conversation with Jeff Culpepper, 23 July 1984.

[2010] *Ibid.*

[2011] Conversation with Jeff Culpepper, 30 January 1987.

[2012] Statement of Cpl Alan S. Ragio in Bronze Star Medal file on LCPL Kenneth William Claire.

[2013] Statement of 2/Lt Donald Jacques in Bronze Star Medal file on LCPL Kenneth William Claire.

and we both just scrunched down a little bit lower! Corporal Claire came around, walking above the trenches and said, 'Don't be in the trench like sissies, face down; they're probably coming to overrun us!"[2014]

For Cpl Gilbert Wall, the 81mm FO and a Blackfoot Indian from Montana, the day began with the Second Platoon Commander, 1/Lt John William Dillon, telling him he was to accompany Third Platoon on today's patrol.[2015] Wall already had two Purple Hearts and was due to be rotated out of Khe Sanh, but he pleaded with LtCol James B. Wilkinson [CO, 1/26] to stay at Khe Sanh.[2016] Only a few days earlier, during a night in which KSCB received heavy mortar fire, the First Platoon Corpsman, Richard Blanchfield, was about to medevac Wall, noting that Wall's eardrums had been blown. Wall refused. He said, "I'll stay. The hell with it." Doc Blanchfield (at 27 far older than most at Khe Sanh, having served 1963-65 with Tom Dooley in Laos previously)[2017] notes, "What a wild man!"[2018] Wall had been on the patrol along Route 9 on 21 July 1967 which collided with NVA preparing ambush positions—the day the 175s were coming from Camp Carroll to KSCB—as part of the 81mm mortar section (along with Sgt Jose Castillo and Cpl Bruce Jones) that accompanied 1/Lt Benjamin L. Long's Second Platoon, B/1/26. On that patrol Sgt Castillo was shot twice in the chest and immediately died, Cpl Jones was shot through the throat, and Cpl Wall: "The bullet went through up by my shoulder and it went through lung and it broke two of my ribs and they cut it out of my back. I took a ricochet in the face and they shot me right under the eye. I spent July 21st to the last part of September in Yokosuka. That was my second [Purple] Heart and they sent me orders to go back to the 3rd Marine Division Headquarters to be a MP. I didn't want to go. I had to talk with Captain Pipes, who was H&S Company at the time, and then I had to go talk with [Lieutenant] Colonel Wilkinson. I didn't want to go back to the rear, and Wilkinson said, 'OK, well, we'll keep you.'"[2019]

Cpl Wall had not had time to clean his M-16; ironically, this was to save his life today. The previous night he was with the ARVN Ranger Battalion and participated in shooting possible probing NVA: "I shot almost 700 rounds from my rifle. The carbon had built up on it, and it would jam after firing three rounds."[2020] Wall walked over to Lt Jacques' CP in the Third Platoon portion of the Gray Sector:

"When I arrived Lt Jacques came out of his bunker and invited me in to breakfast and some coffee. Lt Jacques and I had been on many patrols together and knew each other pretty well. He introduced me to the new platoon sergeant [who] asked me to call him 'Mac' [SSgt George McClelland]... I started talking to some of the Marines on the line.. Most of the guys were new. You could tell; they were 'white faced!' [none yet dyed with the red clay pigment of Khe Sanh]. Everybody was in a surprisingly good mood. They all were happy, loose and relaxed. It was a nice day, and just to move out of the base for awhile gave you a good feeling. I checked my gear. I had 25 magazines and 9 grenades. Then I looked over my map and had my radio man get a radio check, then looked out to the area we would be patrolling. I knew the area very well."[2021]

PFC Michael J. Laderoute, a Canadian citizen, had enlisted in the USMC. His younger brother, Thomas, recalls him as not particularly athletic, but he did like to play ball, hockey, and was healthy and strong. The family called him by his middle name, "Jack."[2022] Michael Laderoute was part of a family with a rich military history. His paternal grandfather fought in WW I and his great uncle, John, died in the same war. His uncle, Michael John, was a radio operator on a bomber during World War II who volunteered as a tail gunner in a bombing raid over Germany, was hit with flak, and killed. Laderoute's mother served in the Canadian Woman's Army Corps during World War II, attached to the Signal Corps as a radio operator. Laderoute's cousin, James Connolly, fought in Korea as a member of the Black Watch. Laderoute's brother, Tom, recalls that Michael John was very adventuresome and liked the outdoors. Even at a young age, his bravery was demonstrated. "One time while Jack and I were walking across a field near home, a herd of cattle was in the same field free ranging. A bull charged across the field at us. Ahead of us there was a steep bank where there were lots of young trees growing. Jack grabbed my hand and we ran for the edge of the field. I was afraid and crying and tried to duck behind a small spruce tree. Jack said 'No,' and held me in front of himself. The charging bull was almost on top of us when Jack jumped sideways and pulled me with him behind the tree. The bull had no time to react and stumbled over the bank through the saplings. I was seven years old at the time. Jack was ten. When Jack was 13, he took me camping about five miles back in the woods to a place called Lyons Lake. That night there was a thunderstorm. Lightning struck all around

[2014] Conversations with Jeff Culpepper, 26 June 1991 and 23 July 1984.
[2015] Letter from Gilbert Wall, 09 September 1988.
[2016] Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 26 August 1988.
[2017] Conversation with Richard Blanchfield, 23 July 1990; Blanchfield's Vita forwarded in letter of 17 April 1990.
[2018] Conversation with Richard Blanchfield, 01 October 1988.
[2019] Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 13 May 1989.
[2020] Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 26 August 1988.
[2021] Letter from Gilbert Wall, 09 September 1988.
[2022] Conversation with Thomas Laderoute, 05 May 1991. His middle name is actually "John," but by convention, "John" is called "Jack." Thomas Laderoute claims there were about 1500 men from New Brunswick Province, Canada, and maybe 2600 from the 4 maritime provinces that served in Vietnam. [*Ibid.*]

us. We got soaked and so did our matches. It was after midnight when Jack walked back three miles to a lumber camp to get dry matches. It was pitch dark, but that didn't stop this brave 13 year-old."[2023]

In his last letter home, dated 22 February 1968, Michael Laderoute wrote: "..We haven't had any mail in four or five days. The place is fogged in and no planes landed. A few today. For here is hoping for mail. Not much else to look forward to except mail and chow and hoping for contact. As soon as the NVA attack and we beat them off the wire, we will go on a sweep through the mountains and jungles to Laos and Cambodia after the remainder of their forces."[2024]

Culpepper recalls PFC Arnold Javier Rivera as "..a real good-looking Mexican-
American, kind of quiet, easy-going, soft-spoken, and real friendly," and PFC Walter F. Skinner as a "kind of hippie-type, free-spirit, kinda cocky, Marine from San Francisco."[2025]

Staff Sergeant George McClelland enlisted in the USMC at 17. He was married and raised a family prior to his first Vietnam tour. On 12 August 1967, he celebrated his 25th birthday and soon thereafter deployed for his second Vietnam tour.[2026] When KSCB was attacked on 21 January 1968, igniting the ammo dump which strewed exploded and semi-exploded ordnance concentrated in the area occupied by B/1/26, SSgt McClelland, while walking the lines to check on his Marines, was told by Cpl John N. Tracey that his squad area, near the 106 bunker, was covered with numerous dud rounds. "Even though the shrapnel from the incoming rounds was still heavy, SSgt McClelland did not hesitate [to clear them away] until the entire area was secure from dud rounds."[2027] 2/Lt Don Jacques witnessed him "repeatedly leaving the cover of the trench line to carry rounds a safe distance from the rest of the Marines. His actions throughout the attack inspired the men of the platoon to fight and stand tall at any cost. He heightened the morale to the extent that they began to make a joke of a very bad situation."[2028]

LCpl Frederick Billingham was remembered decades later by Ed Prendergast: "I've had friends since then, but never the best friend that Fred was. Now double his age, I still haven't lived life the way he did! Sometimes I think he knew he'd only be here a short time."[2029]

PFC Michael John Brellenthin was married [on 19 August 1967] three weeks when he departed for Camp Pendleton and then to Vietnam.[2030] His letters written from Vietnam to his wife, Ruth, attempted to reassure her. "I know that everything is going to work out right... There is nothing to fear. I believe now more than ever that a person who thinks enough can shape his own fate.. An intelligent man who uses his training can easily survive. Don't worry about me Ruth... I've decided that I'm going to be an architect when I get out of here.."[2031] After the siege battle erupted: "Things started popping on the 21st of January. It all should be over pretty soon. The way I understand it we could end the war here... Don't worry about me Ruth. I have much waiting for me at home to let anything happen to me here... I got your package today. The one with the rum in it. I'm saving it until all this blows over... I love you boocoo."[2032]

HN John A. Cicala, Jr., was 19 and one year out of high school, working for Chrysler, when his draft notice arrived. He went to the Navy recruiter a week before the deadline and enlisted in the U.S. Navy. Following bootcamp, he trained at Corpsman "A" School for 14 weeks and was at home on leave when the FBI arrived at his family home while they were eating dinner with a warrant for his arrest for draft evasion!"[2033]

The patrol consisted of 41 men including B-3 led by 2/Lt Donald Jacques and SSgt George McClelland second in command. The squad leaders were: in charge of 2nd squad, Cpl Robert E. Matzka and in charge of 3rd Squad, Cpl Kenneth Claire. Lt Jacques accompanied 2nd Squad who was first in the line of march; 3rd Squad was second in the line of march. Attachments included the 81 FO (Cpl Gilbert Wall) and his radioman, one S-2 Scout, and one Kit Carson Scout, 2 machineguns, and one rocket team.[2034]

Not all of Third Platoon went on the patrol. Although LCPL Edward Prendergast, a 60mm mortarman, pleaded to come along, he remained because Lt Jacques decided the 60mm mortars could protect them better from the perimeter lines on KSCB. "Our range was 1400 meters and he joked about definitely not going out that

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[2023] Letter from Tom Laderoute, undated [but from October, 2000].
[2024] Letter from Michael John Laderoute, 22 February 1968 to "Dear Mom and family," sent by Tom Laderoute, 16 November 2000.
[2025] Conversation with Jeff Culpepper, 28 July 1991.
[2026] Information provided by Richard Delotto in letter postmarked 06 July 2004.
[2027] Statement of Cpl John N. Tracey in Bronze Star Medal file of SSgt George McClelland.
[2028] Statement of 2/Lt Donald Jacques in Bronze Star Medal file of SSgt George McClelland.
[2029] Note in card to Earle G. Breeding forwarding a donation to Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.
[2030] Letter of Mrs. Ruth Brellenthin, undated [postmarked 02 October 1986].
[2031] Michael John Brellenthin, letter to his wife, Ruth, dated 11 October 1967.
[2032] Michael John Brellenthin, letter to his wife, Ruth, dated 26 January 1968.
[2033] Robert Pisor, "The Motown Doc," undated essay.
[2034] Comments of HM3 Frank Calzia, HQMC Oral History Tape #2621. Calzia was KIA 05 May 1986.

far."[2035] By now, most Marines, cooped up on the combat base and enduring the daily death of minatory incoming rockets, artillery, and mortars—as well as sniper fire, were more than eager to remove those sources of death, "slay the dragons," and "put a hurt on" that which afflicted them and their buddies! Although Prendergast suggested he carry rocket rounds for the 3.5-inch rocket man (and his friend), LCPL Frederick A. Billingham, (who was short two men), Prendergast's Section Leader, LCPL William M. Woolman, disapproved. "I was the gunner and he wanted me to stay on the guns. My Section Leader was getting ready to rotate home and he sort of had plans for me to be the Section Leader, and didn't want me going out."[2036]

LCPL William David Holliman had been wounded 24 February and did not accompany the patrol; a round had split his helmet and creased his skull.[2037] PFC Jeffrey E. Culpepper was wounded superficially on 13 February and not medevaced. Instead, he received orders on 17 February to attend Infantry Weapons School on Okinawa and departed Khe Sanh with PFC James Hebron on 23 February.[2038]

The mission of the patrol was to locate a NVA 82mm mortar position[2039] supposedly 1200 – 1300 meters from the base perimeter and learn whatever they could. Ronald Ridgeway recalls the mission to check for Bangalore torpedoes, to see if the wire had been cut or damaged, to spot any positions, NVA forward observers, and not to make contact unless it was a FO. It was to sweep around the platoon area and not proceed beyond 1,000 meters of the wire, and to remain within sight of the perimeter.[2040] By now, the NVA had crept close to the base perimeter as part of their Phase II operation. Phase II (10 February – 31 March 1968) involved the encirclement of KSCB to end re-supply overland and eliminate re-supply by air.[2041] In the historical account of the battle of Khe Sanh by the Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, "After attacking Lang Vay and being unsuccessful in drawing in enemy reinforcements, the Campaign Headquarters decided to surround Ta Con [*i.e.*, KSCB] in order to forced the enemy to send in reinforcements to lift the siege.. The old plan to surround Ta Con was re-organized into an effort to attack the enemy even harder, from surrounding the enemy expanded into a siege; the units in siege were required to construct strong positions.. forces had to be mobile and prepared to attack enemy counter-attackers or those who would land by air... forcing the enemy to become more and more unsettled as the days went on and forcing them to bring in forces [to lift the siege]."[2042]

According to the official NVA History of the 304th Division, the 9th Regiment was ordered to encircle KSCB by the Front Headquarters [B5-T8]. "Before carrying out the mission, cadre from Platoon Commanders on up had discussed and agreed upon the tactical guidelines to be: to stress the political factor, bravery and steadfastness in the encirclement, tying down the airfield so it could not be used for re-supply.. The encirclement of a large American base system was being set forth for the first time. Not only did the US troops not have to go to 'search' and 'destroy' our forces, but we would be face to face, attacking a large American base system."[2043] Prior to the 9th Regiment's move to encircle KSCB, while the 2nd Battalion was moving into regrouping positions, it was hit by 3 B-52 strikes on the night of 6 February, causing nearly 200 casualties while it was along the Hoc Coc Giang Stream. Despite the casualties, the battalion officers argued that "the entire battalion wanted to directly attack the Americans in order to get revenge for their unit."[2044] On 10 February, the 9th and 66th Regiments of the 304th Division together with the 95C and 101D Regiments of the 325C Division and local force troops from Huong Hoa District established 13 positions that encircled KSCB.[2045] "The enemy didn't dare permit the heavy transport aircraft, like the C-130 to land and re-supply Khe Sanh and become a target for our small arms and artillery fire.. This created a shortage of food, ammunition, and an increasing number of wounded and dead that could not be removed and this caused the morale of the troops to suffer.. The American Marine commander at Khe Sanh, LAO-DO [Col Lownds], together with his staff organized continuous counter-attacks in hopes of breaking our encirclement."[2046]

One of the 13 positions, Strong Point #3, was the responsibility of the 8th Company, 2nd Battalion, and was

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[2035] Edward Prendergast, "Biography," 8 November 1988.

[2036] Conversations with Edward Prendergast, 14 March 1986 and 05 June 1986. The rockets man, LCPL Billingham, was KIA; had Prendergast accompanied the patrol, he too would probably have been KIA.

[2037] Conversation with Jeff Culpepper, 13 July 1984.

[2038] *Ibid.*

[2039] Comments of HM3 Frank Calzia, USMC Oral History Tape #2621.

[2040] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, Subj: Returnee Press Conference, Sgt Ronald L. Ridgeway.

[2041] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968 [Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign]*, Hanoi: General Directorate for Rear Services, 1988, Chapter on "Military Medical Operations, Highway 9/Khe Sanh Front (B5-T8) from December, 1967 to July, 1968," p. 267. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison.

[2042] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968 [The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign]*, Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, pp. 30, 31. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison.

[2043] *Su Doan (Ky Su) (Tap II) [304th Division (Chronology) (Volume II)]*, Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, p. 88. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison

[2044] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[2045] *Ibid.*

[2046] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

divided into three areas. The principle strong point of the position was 600 meters southwest of KSCB's barbed wire perimeter on an unnamed high point opposite Khe Sanh and separated by a dry streambed with banks on each side from where they could clearly see the entire Khe Sanh base area. A secondary strong point 400 meters southwest of the primary strong point was established at Chau Long Chan, and 300 meters southeast of the main strong point was another. "All 3 strong points were like the three legs on a stool and this was one of the most advantageous points of the encirclement. From this group of strong points we dug a communications trench for about 300 meters toward the enemy and at many places it even entered the enemy's barbed wire defenses. From this position 82mm mortars, B40, B41, recoilless rifles, and particularly a 12.7mm heavy machinegun operated by Bui Xuan Chuc created continuous casualties.. on the enemy... The encircling position of the 8th Company, 2nd Battalion, was like a thorn in the enemy's eye. The 8th Company's Strong Point here had 32 weapons of which there were 2 60mm mortars, 3 B41s, and after 10 days of combat 20 men remained and if one adds the fire support detachment, the strength as of the 25th of February, was 39 people."[2047]

By its proximity to KSCB, the encircling NVA units avoided devastating artillery and awesome B-52 Arc Light strikes that were kept a safe distance from friendly forces (3 KM in the case of Arc Lights). Within and from this sanctuary, NVA gunners continued to harass friendly aircraft as well as KSCB itself. At 1300H on 21 February, the entire GRAY Sector manned by Co B/1/26 (XD850418) came under medium to heavy mortar and rocket fire, approximately 50 rounds of mortars and 10 of 122mm rockets.[2048] Then, late in the morning of 22 February, Co B/1/26 received 20 recoilless rifle rounds, 121 82mm mortar rounds, 15 122mm rockets, and 15 artillery rounds (suspected 130mm), and numerous small arms fire from NVA forces, most of which were in close proximity.[2049]

Of greater alarm was the NVA trench network that was reported to be approaching the KSCB perimeter. The 1/26 CP had received a Spot Report from 26th Marines at 1230H, 16 February from the U.S. Army Advisor to the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, Capt Walter A. Gunn, that a platoon-size element of his unit encountered an extensive, well-developed bunker complex in the vicinity of XD851402 capable of supporting a regiment.[2050] On 22 February, Capt Gunn reported that an analysis of reports from his LP and OP elements during the prior 2 days indicated that the NVA forces were constructing a defensive trench network between XD858408 and XD855416 which would support a very large unit in a defensive posture.[2051] On 23 February, 1/Lt John William Dillon led Second Platoon, B/1/26, and followed the general trace of the patrol of B-3 today (25 February) and found nothing unusual. In one day, the trench system had been constructed, in places only 100-200 meters from the perimeter lines manned by B/1/26 and the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion.[2052] Finally, on 24 February, a Visual Reconnaissance report indicated large trenches, 3-ft. wide, 4-ft. deep and approximately 1000 meters long, sighted from XD848407 to XD855400, parallel to the road with 2 adjoining parallel trenches forming a trench complex. The trenches had numerous off-shoots containing bunkers. The report noted the enemy was trenching from present locations towards KSCB.[2053] To the AOs, the NVA trenches were like a sinister hand reaching towards a prey, ready to grasp: "From the air, these enemy trenches looked like long, thin arms reaching for the wire. In a few cases, they were over 500 meters in length, all dug in one night."[2054]

The Marines of B-3 were unaware of recently-learned intelligence of the trenches constructed in one day. GySgt Patrick E. Duffy (MOS 0239) in the 1/26 CP had gone to the 26th Marines COC the night before to learn current information. "I was told there was nothing out there, just to send them out there to see what was going on. When they got hit and really got chewed up, I ran back up there and said, 'How come? What happened?' And they had aerial photography taken by an AO that showed that position. It was on a Major's desk that night and I didn't get to see him because he was asleep and I didn't get to see it."[2055] Being a Sunday, the 1/26 Battalion staff brief was scheduled for 0930H, but the diamond-shaped patrol[2056] of B-3 departed 0806[2057] and proceeded

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[2047] *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

[2048] 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log, 21 Feb 1968, Ser #37.

[2049] 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log, 22 Feb 1968, Ser #59. The recoilless rifle was at XD856407, the small arms from XD859405, a .50 cal. machinegun at XD859403; enemy troops massed at XD856402; a FO at XD844440, and a mortar site at XD845409. Suppressive friendly fire was returned with 29 HE and 2 WP rounds, 5 rounds of 106mm recoilless rifle, and 5 rounds of 90mm tank.

[2050] 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log, 16 Feb 1968, Ser #13.

[2051] 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log, 22 Feb 1968, Ser #75.

[2052] Letter of Maj Kenneth W. Pipes, undated, in HQMC, HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.

[2053] 3rd MarDiv COC 241635Z/Feb 1968, Daily VR Rpt, in III MAF COC Journal & File, 24/25Feb68, #289.

[2054] Comments of LtCol W.J. White, HistDiv, HQMC, Khe Sanh Monograph File.

[2055] Conversation with Patrick E. Duffy, 10 April 1990. Duffy died in 1999.

[2056] 26Mar 251114H/Feb68, SPECAT Exclusive from Col Lownds to MGen Tompkins in III MAF CPC SPECAT Exclusives #30. Interview of James B. Wilkinson by John Wright, 14 July 1989 (also refers to it as "the diamond-shaped patrol"). While the patrol has been variously labeled, "The Doomed Patrol," "The Lost Patrol," the "Jacques Patrol," and so on, designation as "Diamond-shaped patrol" apparently was the original designation.

through the trash pit. They immediately noticed a trench built by the NVA that half-encircled the trash pit and went down the face of a small hill, across a river, and up the face of another small hill. "We proceeded down this trench for approximately 30 meters, then decided to move out of the trench and continue our patrol as planned. We moved down the slight side of this small hill into and across a small creek and across an open slope which led up to a heavy tree line. When we reached this tree line we were in a single column and spread out very well, and we stopped, got down on one knee, and a couple of fire teams were moved up to the front."[2058] PFC Calvin E. Bright, running point[2059] was "..scarred to death!"[2060] PFC Clayton Theyerl told Bright, "This is your first patrol and I think you and I ought to switch." Bright recalls, "Probably 20 minutes later he was laying on the ground [dead] and I was still standing. I think if it wasn't for him, I'd be in his position and he'd be in mine right now."[2061] By 0831, B3 was at XD849414 and by 0840 at XD847416.[2062] Just as the NVA's contact with KSCB was something they could not release hold of, so also the intriguing trench became something B3 couldn't release. Like killing electricity from holding a wire and being unable to release that which kills, imprisoning compulsions or memories of traumatic experiences that will not disappear from the psyche, evil from which one can't let go that enslaves, imprisons, and kills, so also the fascinating evil invited B3 to proceed.

The NVA's 304th Division's history records "Early in the morning of 25 February, the enemy sent two companies of Marines and a company of Vietnamese who took advantage of the fog to come along the dry stream bed, directly in front of Strong Point Number 3... At 0850, the lead elements on the left encountered two of our troops guarding the forward area. The enemy opened fire and these two were killed on the spot, and it was at that point that we first discovered the enemy... Platoon Leader Nguyen Quoc Thang, upon observing many US troops advancing, motivated the troops and assigned men missions and waited for the enemy to approach closer before opening fire."[2063]

As the patrol advanced to the tree line, 3 North Vietnamese soldiers dressed in camouflaged utilities and helmets were spotted at 0845H running along the road.[2064] Lt Jacques moved up along with HM3 Calzia, and the NVA soldiers turned off the road and disappeared after the Marines shot at them. Jacques requested permission to attempt capture of a live prisoner. POWs are always an intelligence prize since NVA soldiers almost always willingly supplied vital information on units present, morale, weapons carried, disposition and location of headquarters and rear supply areas, future planned actions, etc. BRAVO-6, Captain Kenneth Pipes, thinking they were on the road that led from the trash dump, not the parallel road further to the west that was the usual road used by Marine vehicles—Felix Poilane's private plantation road, told them to be extremely careful not to get sucked into an ambush, a tactic as old as warfare itself and one which LtCol Wilkinson had repeatedly cautioned in battalion staff and officer briefings during the previous months, but if they could make a capture, to do so. The B3 patrol was, however, much further out than they were supposed to be and thought to be by Captain Pipes; Captain Pipes assumed they were near the base defensive perimeter, on the road closest to the KSCB. They were, in fact, about 600 – 700 meters from the KSCB.[2065] For some reason—disorientation and confusion by Lt Jacques (who had complained in his letters home of little sleep), the shrouding fog, negligence of some radio operator, mis-interpretation of check points, being too aggressive, not being able to restrain further examination of the trench system which fascinated and attracted, the desire to capture a live POW—the patrol was not where they were assumed to be by those in the command bunkers at KSCB. The Kit Carson Scout accompanying the patrol warned that it was a trap.[2066] and HM3 John A. Cicala, knowing it was an ambush, said, "Are you crazy?"[2067] Cautiously, Lt Jacques moved his patrol across the access road [the Poilane road] and stepped into the brush.

CPL Steven Wiese's squad was walking point as the Vietnamese jumped up and ran towards the Marines and then dashed into a treeline. "Jacques told me to take my

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[2057] 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log, 25 February 1968, Ser #7.

[2058] Statement of HM3 Frank Calzia, cited. Cpl Gilbert Wall's account corresponding in all details with Calzia's adds that the trench was about 2 – 3 feet deep and about a foot wide, just wide enough for an American Marine to stand sideways up to his waist, but through which the NVA would be able to run. [Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 26 August 1988].

[2059] Conversation with Calvin E. Bright, 01 August 1988.

[2060] *Ibid.*

[2061] Calvin E. Bright, comments at Khe Sanh reunion, 13 July 1989, printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Issue #9 (Summer 1989), p. 6.

[2062] *Ibid.*, Ser #11 and 13.

[2063] 304th Division history, *op. cit.*, p. 93. The official NVA history's exaggeration of the American strength not only includes one platoon suddenly being 2 companies, but also the one Kit Carson scout suddenly becoming "a company of Vietnamese!" The basis of the NVA estimate of 2 US companies may lie in the dispatching of B1 once the contact began. However, B1 did not enter the battle scene but was dispatched to assist WIAs and removal of KIAs.

[2064] 1/26 ComdC Feb 1968, S2/S3 Log, 25 February 1968, Ser #47.

[2065] 26Mar 251114H, cited.

[2066] Comments of HM3 Frank Calzia, USMC Oral History Tape #2621.

[2067] Conversation with John A. Cicala, 22 March 1987.

first team and go investigate, and I told him he was out of his fricking mind. This is an ambush! This was my second tour in Vietnam, and I'd been there for almost 16 months. It was in an open area, so there's no way in the world that these guys would jump out in the road and run in our direction, then dive off in the treeline, other than they're trying to suck us over to there. I told him I wouldn't take my squad. It was suicide. So he got pissed off and told me I was relieved of command. He took my first team leader and told him to take the squad and check it out. I remember him saying, 'Sir, with all due respect, if Wiese isn't going, I'm not going either.' So at that point, he told us to 'take a knee.' He was pissed. He told me 'to take a knee,' and I was on report."[2068]

From his position, Cpl Wall noticed the Marines in front of him "..were talking fast and loud. They looked confused. Lt Jacques ended the confusion by shouting 'Let's go get them' while his pistol was in the air and his hand was forward in the charge manner. Then he turned and looked at me and we both smiled at the same time. It was like the same thought went through our minds: 'This is what we want.' We started moving after them and the fire began."[2069]

Suddenly, the NVA opened up with heavy automatic weapons and machinegun fire. As soon as the patrol crossed the road and stepped into the brush at XD847408 they were fired upon with heavy automatic weapons and machinegun fire from fortified positions in trenches in two tree-lines, one running north-south, the other east-west, forming a L-shaped ambush at XD849409.[2070]

"He [Jacques] took the Platoon, made a 90-degree turn, right into the treeline, and started sweeping into the treeline. All of a sudden there was just a huge roar of gunfire. There's no question the reason I survived and most of the guys in my squad survived is because we were at the very left end of this line and it put us out of the main killing zone."[2071]

By 0915H, B-3 was in contact with NVA at XD849409, receiving heavy automatic weapons fire; B-3's unit leaders were the first hit.[2072] PFC Alexander Tretiakoff, a rifleman, suddenly found himself face to face with a NVA soldier. "I wanted to shoot him, but my rifle wouldn't shoot. So I.. took the magazine out and throwed it away and put another one in. To my right, LCPL [Richard W.] McKenzie was shot. The Lieutenant crawled up to him and took his weapon. The enemy was firing from my right and from my left."[2073] Sgt Patrick J. Fitch, a radio operator with B/1/26, upon hearing they were in a fire fight, "..left the command bunker to see where, precisely, they were, and they were almost out of sight. They were far beyond where they were supposed to be."[2074]

Lt Jacques immediately dispatched Cpl Claire's 3rd Squad accompanied by the Platoon Sergeant, SSgt George McClelland, along with one of the machineguns, to move to the right and hook around the rear of the NVA position and remove the flanking action. The maneuver might have succeeded, but Cpl Claire did not hook sufficiently far enough to the west before turning back in on the NVA positions. Instead of hitting the tender flank, the squad walked into more blistering frontal fire.

The NVA history records: "With strong fire power and experienced troops, the first fire left enemy [American] bodies at the strong point. Light machine-gunner Nguyen Van Lang fired off two series of rounds and eliminated 19 of the enemy. The Americans were tall and big and because they were so slow, many died. However those who remained alive continued the attack. Now they became the target for our mortar fire which fired into the troops and the counter-attack by the two companies of Americans... We only began to fire when the enemy was about 20 meters from our Combat Trench #1. Having killed a number, but with the enemy having a large force and having entered our position, they occupied a portion of the combat trench. They intended to use our trench to continue the attack. But because the Americans were so big and because they carried so much equipment, in a trench of ours that was so narrow, they could not move easily and in some cases were forced out of the trench. In the fact of this situation, the company sent Comrade The's squad to move in from the south and the squad of Comrade Chuc to move along the communications trench attacking from the north. Being attacked unexpectedly on their flanks by two squads, the [American] commander [Lt Jacques] and the radio operator were eliminated."[2075]

PFC Edward C. Rayburn, next to CPL Claire, was shot in his jaw and watched as several others were hit, kncluding Claire, who grabbed as many men as he could and pulled them into the trenchline. Claire continued firing for about an hour from the trench and was again hit a second and a third time, killing him.[2076]

Initially, the Marines had fire superiority. HM3 Calzia noticed from his position with 2nd Squad that the

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[2068] Conversation with Steven Wiese, 17 March 2005. The phrase "take a knee" is explained by Wiese: "Like, kneel down, sit down, in other words. Basically he told me to fall in the back of the platoon, and then he would talk to me later for disobeying a direct order."

[2069] Letter from Gilbert Wall, 09 September 1988.

[2070] 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log 25 February 1958, Summary.

[2071] Conversation with Steven Siese, 17 March 2005.

[2072] *Ibid.*, Ser #4., Ser #49 and Summary of Period's Action.

[2073] Comments of PFC Alexander Tretiakoff, USMC Oral History Tape #2621.

[2074] Comments of Sgt P.J. Fitch, USMC Oral History Tape #2498.

[2075] *Su Doan 304, op. cit.*, p. 94.

[2076] Conversation with Richard Claire, 25 June 2004. Rayburn had visited the Claire family just before he committed suicide and reported the details of Claire's last moments.

Corpsman with the 3rd Squad had been wounded and was not on the road. "When I went down to get him, I noticed that the 3rd Squad [Cpl Claire's], from all indications, had been wiped out. There was no one left. He [the Corpsman, Doc John A. Cicala] was the only person left, and he was wounded."[2077] Sgt Fitch, radioman with B/1/26, remembers B3 lost one fire team and sent out a squad to envelop to the left which was in turn enveloped, and one of these men were never again seen alive.[2078]

HN John A. Cicala, the wounded Corpsman, had accompanied 3rd squad which charged into a mouth of a crescent of bunkers and were immediately cut down by fire from three sides. Doc Cicala treated one dying Marine, LCPL Jerry Dodson. "I ran over to him and I took care of him. He had caught a round through his left eye. Believe me; I'll never forget it. It came out the side of his head, but he was still conscious. There was nothing I could do. I put a dressing on him and he told me—it totally freeked me out—but the last thing he said to me was, 'Doc, make sure I got my weapon.' I gave him his piece back and I laid a couple of clips by him."[2079] and then dashed to another who cried, "Corpsman!" A NVA soldier fired and hit Cicala. The round struck his taped neck chain that included his dog tags, a large St. Christopher medal, a GI can opener, and pushed everything into his windpipe. Another round ripped into his flak jacket, tore through his chest and right lung. He fell backwards and, to his horror, realized he had one of those dreaded sucking chest wounds. The NVA attempted to kill him with a grenade which landed between the Doc's legs and blew away his kneecap, shredded his thighs and calves, and tore into his groin. Despite this, Cicala lived, and covered his sucking chest wound with cellophane torn from a cigarette pack. He began crawling towards the KSCB perimeter.[2080]

PFC Ronald Ridgeway recalls the action in vivid detail: As the Marines pursued the 2 NVA, they ran through a three line into a Montagnard village [Clong Sareh] and an adjacent field that had been ploughed by the Montagnards. The field was bare and approximately 50 by 50 meters. They came upon a newly-dug trench—the dirt was fresh—approximately 6 ft. long and 4 ft. deep into which the Corpsman, Lt Jacques, radioman, and SSgt McClelland moved for protection. SSgt McClelland, back inside the tree line, told Cpl Claire to get his squad up and moving. While one squad occupied the trench to provide a base of fire, CPL Claire stood in the middle of the field and directed the squad to move in fire team rushes through the barren field towards a series of interconnecting trenches to their front.[2081] When Rayburn didn't move, Claire turned around and said, "Rayburn, what's the matter with you? Get up and move! Are you hit?" Rayburn replied, "No, I'm just laying here for my health."[2082] "We began our fire team maneuvers across the field, receiving 2 or 3 rounds here and there. Off to our front we could see a trench running the full length of the field. The trench was approximately.. 50 – 60 meters long curving off to our left, back around the end of the field, against waist-high shrubbery. We couldn't see anyone as we started across. We picked up fire until we had just a full hail of fire coming in on us. We were caught in the open about half way out, and we kept our assaults up.. The first man hit was to my left. The Corpsman came and got him when he started screaming.. Another man was wounded off further to my left."[2083] "When we assaulted, Claire was standing up in the middle of this field telling us to move, hollering and ducking bullets. He told us.. to just get up and run, forget maneuvers, that we were to try to get to the trench. So we got up and ran, three of us."[2084] The three were PFC Ridgeway, PFC Bruder, and LCpl Geller.[2085] In a later personal conversation, Ridgeway noted there were actually two fire teams of 3 each for a total of 6 that made it to the trench and that they had started with fire team rushes because it was a plowed-up field.[2086]

Once they got into the trench, Ridgeway, Bruder, and Geller moved through the trench under cover of the machinegun fire of the other fire team, until they arrived at another small trench with a small bend. As they advanced, a grenade exploded and they returned to their initial trench, engaging in an exchange of tossing grenades.[2087] LCPL Geller stood up, attempting to locate the rest of the squad when a round was fired creasing Geller's forehead and knocking him back into the trench. "Geller rolled back into the trench and said, 'Everybody's dead.

[2077] Comments of Calzia, Tape #2621, cited.
[2078] Comments of Fitch, Tape #2498, cited.
[2079] Conversation with John Cicala, 22 March 1987.
[2080] Pisor, "The Motown Doc," cited. Despite wounds in the groin area, Doc Cicala was able to father a child.
[2081] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244/Apr73, Subj: Returnee Press Conference (Sgt. Ronald L. Ridgeway); Asst Chief of Staff, G-2, report AO2A-BFH-bfh, 3461 of 1 May 1973, Subj: Debriefing Summary, case of Sergeant Ronald L. Ridgeway, USMC, with appended FMFTMCMDR FIRST CIT I MAF CAMPEN CA 290300Z/Mar73, Daily Summary 005 for 23 Mar 73, debrief of Sgt Ronald L. Ridgeway; I MAF CAMPEN CA 200300Z/Mar73 to CMC, Subj: Message Summary Homecoming Marine; 1st Counterintelligence Team Report 16-9X-73, Operation Homecoming-Marine detailed report debrief of R. L. Ridgeway, Sgt, USMC; CMC letter AI2A-THM-bfh, 3461, 17 July 1973, Subj: Homecoming Marine Debriefing Report, case of Sergeant Ronald L. Ridgeway, USMC.
[2082] CMC Report, cited.
[2083] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244/Apr73, cited.
[2084] CMC report, cited.
[2085] FMFTMCMDR FIRST CIT I MAF CAMPEN CA msg, cited.
[2086] Conversation with Ronald Ridgeway, 05 July 1991.
[2087] CMC report, cited.

Everybody behind us is dead. There's nobody left alive. What are we going to do?' We had been down below ground level for awhile and the NVA had taken it for granted that all of us were dead."[2088] Ridgeway and Geller stood up and, spotting four NVA approaching them, Ridgeway fired a burst from his M-16 killing 2 and forcing the other 2 to cover while Geller killed one with his .45 pistol. After Ridgeway and Geller jumped back into the trench, Bruder stood up catching a round that came through the dirt in the side of the trench and penetrated his chest, instantly killing him.[2089]

Geller, the Fire Team Leader, told Ridgeway they had to move. "We had to try to get back inside the perimeter because there was nobody left but us. He got out and took off running back across the field. At first I got stuck in the trench because it was so small with my pack on. I pulled loose, got out, and started back out across the field."[2090] Geller came upon a black Marine, PFC Willy Ruff, who had a broken arm and was lying on his back. Geller knelt beside Ruff and was hit on the right side of his face. The round took out the whole left side. "He was spitting teeth all over the place. Just as I ducked, another round came from the back and I got hit in the shoulder. I dropped down to the ground and just laid there."[2091] Ridgeway checked Geller, finding him alive but in shock. The three (Ridgeway, Ruff, and Geller) decided to wait for a reactionary force and to play dead until dark and then try to make it to safety.[2092] "We were surrounded by NVA, so we decided to stay where we were. We laid there talking."[2093]

While this was happening, Lt Jacques and Cpl Wall moved to the left of a little access road and became pinned down. Cpl Wall moved away from Lt Jacques and managed to reach a tree where he finally became pinned down and could move no further. "We were right in front of their trenches and bunkers. The air was filled with screaming, shouting, open fire, and blood." It was fortunate that Cpl Wall's rifle jammed: "My jammed rifle probably saved my life, because it would jam about every three times [I shot it], and I would get back and [then] they [the NVA] would just chew up the tree."[2094] As Cpl Wall took out his map to call in fire missions from the 81s, he realized that trees obstructed his sight of the other Marine squad and he feared calling a mission that was too close. While he could hear the initial registration round exploding, he was unable to see where it struck. He couldn't move, due to intense fire, until another Marine gave him covering fire. As he moved he noticed wounded screaming for help everywhere—as well as NVA: "I couldn't believe how many of them were there. I threw a grenade in their trench and killed 3, but they filled the spot in no time. The more we killed and got killed, the more they came. The screaming and shouting was so loud you couldn't hear your own voice. By this time I was terrified and could see the deep trouble we were in clearly. We just didn't have enough men to match their fire power."[2095]

Meanwhile, 2nd Squad under the leadership of Cpl Robert E. Matzka was on the left flank, further down the road. Cpl Matzka was seen exposing himself to enemy fire with no regard for his own safety as shrapnel and heavy machinegun and small arms fire showered the area, going from man to man to direct fire and encourage them.[2096] Observing one of his comrades fall mortally wounded while attacking a NVA machinegun, PFC Calvin E. Bright, ignoring the intense NVA fire, crawled to within a few meters of the hostile position to retrieve his fallen comrade and move him to a covered position.[2097]

Although HM3 Calzia (with those in 2nd Squad) moved to the area where 3rd Squad was slaughtered and assumed all were killed, one of those in Claire's squad was still alive. PFC Edward C. Rayburn, the first one in 3rd Squad to be hit, had his jaw shot off. Cpl Claire placed him in a trench from which Rayburn, in a state of physical (but not mental) shock witnessed the entire sequence as he observed his entire squad being killed in minute detail. Writing from a hospital shortly after the action, he told Captain Pipes: "I saw and heard them die for three hours."[2098] PFC Thomas A. Detrick was part of the machine-gun crew that accompanied 3rd Squad. When the gunner was hit, Detrick picked up the weapon and was firing when he also was hit. "I was on the verge of blacking out, then I yelled 'machine gunner out of action, replacement up' and crawled into a crater and passed out. When I came to, a Marine [PFC Rayburn] had joined me and he had his lower jaw blown off. This Marine and I spent the next several hours in agony and hell. We came to realize that either the patrol had been wiped out, or had been pulled back."[2099]

[2088] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244/Apr73, cited.
[2089] 1st CIT Report 16-9X-73, cited.
[2090] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, cited.
[2091] CMC Report, cited.
[2092] FMFTMCMDR FIRST CIT I MAF CAMPEN CA msg, cited; 1st CIT Report 16-9X-73, cited; CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, cited.
[2093] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, cited.
[2094] Conversation with Gilbert Wall, 26 August 1988; Letter of Gilbert Wall, 09 September 1988.
[2095] *Ibid.*
[2096] Bronze Star Medal Citation, Cpl Robert E.Matzka.
[2097] Bronze Star Medal Citation, PFC Calvin Edward Bright.
[2098] Letter of PFC E.C. Rayburn to Captain Kenneth Pipes, undated (*ca.* Mar or Apr 1968). Ed Rayburn visited the Claire family around 1970 and related the battle in detail. He watched Ken Claire shot three times in a hour or so of battle. [Conversation with Richard Claire, 30 January 1987; Letter of Richard Claire printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Vol. I (Fall, 1992), p. 15.
[2099] Letter of PFC Thomas A. Detrick to Captain Pipes, undated [*ca.* March or April 1968].

Cpl Wall, moving back to KSCB, heard a wounded Marine by a tree. "He was screaming at me, hollering, 'Marine, Marine, help me!' So I ran back to get him and two other Marines came running, and they took him. They gave me his rifle because mine was jammed and I had already thrown my rifle away and had taken the dead Marine's rifle. They gave me his rifle, and I turned around and was using both rifles, just shooting them both. Marines in front of us were feeling a little relief because of getting closer to the base. Then they ran into another ambush as they entered the tree line. We were under their fire again.. Bullets were flying all over the place. I thought of calling a fire mission and laid on my stomach to get the map and realized that I had lost it, maybe when I was carrying the wounded Marine. Anyway, the fire mission was out of the question. Bullets were cutting up the big banana leaves above my head to pieces. Everyone was lying there dead or wounded, and there was no time to be scared of death."[2100]

Next to Wall, a Marine who was shot in the chest was moaning, obviously in deep pain. Wall placed a bandage on his chest, but he was bleeding too profusely. He was dying. Then Wall came upon Lt Jacques. When he attempted to put a field dressing, "all the blood went through the bandage and ran down my fingers.. I couldn't do anything to stop the bleeding. All this time he was trying to talk to me, but I couldn't understand him."[2101] At this point, Wall was hit by NVA fire "on my flak jacket on the shoulder and knocked me on my ass, and the other one went between my arm and my ribs and left a hole in my sleeve."[2102]

Doc Cicala had been with Lt Jacques when he was hit. "When I was wounded, Jacques come running by me. I was just laying there. The grenade had just gone off, and I was stunned. He came by me and said, 'We got to get out of here!' He said, 'Get out of here the best way you can. We're getting wiped out.' I just started crawling, left my rifle and just had my .45 with me. As I was going back, I heard him. I looked over and he stood up for some ungodly reason, and that's when he got it. He got hit, I crawled over to him. He caught it right across his femoral arteries, and he was dead within minutes. There was nothing that could be done. It looked like he got hit with machinegun fire and it caught him just below the groin area. It severed both arteries.[2103]

Beginning at 1005H, KSCB came under heavy rocket, mortar, and artillery fire.[2104] By 1800H, KSCB had received approximately 350 rounds, well-directed, from several positions around KSCB and aircraft in support received intense small arms, automatic weapons, and anti-aircraft fire from numerous sites circling the base. Casualties from this fire included 3 KIA, 24 WIA (evacuated) and 17 WIA (minor).[2105] The G-2 of III MAF, Col Kenneth J. Houghton, visited KSCB amid this incoming, and at his FMFPAC Debrief three days later stated: "I'm probably the only Colonel in the Marine Corps that got a 100-gun salute on landing. No 21-gun salute for me!.. We always get fired at. They wait until the planes land and then the mortars fire. They are just zeroed in on the runway and they follow you right down the runway. It's a right interesting trip if you want to make it!"[2106]

When B3 made contact, Capt Kenneth Pipes realized that, for whatever reason, Lt Jacques and his patrol had veered several hundred meters from his assigned patrol route. Capt Pipes requested permission from battalion [1/26] to deploy the First Platoon as a reaction force, an assignment B1 had received the previous night. They were ready. The request was granted. "Within minutes, the First Platoon, commanded by 2/Lt Peter Weise, was moving out the wire between FOB-3 and the Gray Sector. As they reached the access road to Route 9, they were subjected to extremely heavy small arms, RPG, mortar, and machine-gun fire. They were unable to advance, but were able to maintain their position."[2107] Pipes then requested assistance from the tanks, which was approved, and the tanks provided excellent fire power.

B-1, manning the south-east perimeter near FOB-3, plus one squad from B-2[2108] moved out of Gate 42 at 1115H with its 1st and 2nd squads.[2109] PFC Donald E. White, Point, moved the patrol out to the access road and moved parallel to it for about 300 meters when it was immediately pinned down by two machineguns approx. 600 meters from Bunker #42 (XD846416) along with mortar fire. LCpl George William Jayne went looking for a radio and found the radioman, the squad leader, and the corpsman killed along with 3 MIA. "We were separated from Lt Weise and the rest of the platoon, and I just felt like we needed to have a radio. I figured he [the radioman] must have been wounded and started to crawl back, and ran into part of Delta Company which came out also. I led them back to where we had been. By the time we got there, there was nobody

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[2100] Conversation and letter from Gilbert Wall, cited.
[2101] *Ibid.*
[2102] *Ibid.*
[2103] Conversation with John Cicala, 22 March 1987.
[2104] III MAF COC 252317Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #466, Para 4.C.
[2105] 3rd MarDiv COC 260105ZFeb68,Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #467 in III MAF COC Journal and File, #190. By 0900H, 26 Feb, the casualty count from the 350 incoming rounds had caused 3 KIA, 52 WIA (32 evacuated), 2 UH-1E destroyed, 2 CH-46 damaged, and the runway's condition was poor. [III MAF COC 260443Z/Feb68, Daily Report on Khe Sanh for period ending 260900H Feb68, in III MAF COC Journal and File, #55.
[2106] Debrief of Col. Kenneth J. Houghton, USMC Oral History Tape #2528.
[2107] Maj K.W. Pipes letter, cited.
[2108] 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log, 25 February 1968, Ser #47.
[2109] *Ibid.*, Ser #51.

there. People had started to pull back, and so we started to pull back."[2110]

The Corpsman, HN Lloyd W. Moore had fearlessly moved through the heavy barrage of fire to provide medical aid to the seriously wounded and saved the lives of at least 3 Marines. As he was moving to a fourth wounded Marine, an incoming mortar round took his life.[2111] One of those he rescued, LCpl Johnny F. Bellina, had been next to a buddy who was shot through the forearm—"just like a paper punch"—while Bellina rolled on his right side with his left leg sticking up in the air. A NVA shot him across his leg. "I saw the muzzle flashes keep shooting and I put a couple of magazines in that [position] about 100 yards off. I stopped him. He didn't shoot anymore. I rolled down in a ditch and I was bleeding so bad I thought I was going to pass out. I thought they'd run up and bayonet me or something. I just laid and a corpsman got out to me, gave me 4 or 5 morphine syrettes in the leg. He threw me across his shoulders and carried me back."[2112]

Capt Pipes then requested deployment of another line company to break the NVA ambush and blocking positions and to recover the wounded and dead. "The request was denied. I was at first extremely bitter at this decision, however reflections indicated that it was a wise one."[2113] 1/Lt William F. Smith, an artillery FO recalls that within the 1/26 there was "a lot of fighting, a lot of recriminations, a lot of bad things said; everybody was at each other's throats. It was total confusion and it took a long time to get it unscrewed. It was even a question of who went and was actually on the patrol... We couldn't give any close support or direct support because we still didn't know exactly where they were. We didn't really know until we started to get some word from the patrol itself that they had crossed the 'Brown Line,' which was code for the [access] road. There were two roads; which road did they cross? It was totally confused. Then we had to figure out not only which road they crossed, but where were they along the road. We really didn't know. Everything was going real fast. Hours went by in seconds, it seemed. Then the stragglers started to come in. It was wild! It was so wild you had to get out of there... Everybody was at a loss for what to do. Half the people wanted to send out a heavy relief force, but we were under orders not to run any combat patrols out of the base at that time. Everybody wanted blood, and at that time I think we would have very hastily run a battalion minus out there and gotten really in shit.. gone piecemeal to our oblivion."[2114]

LtCol James B. Wilkinson rapidly thought: Do I send a squad or are we going to send a company? Apparently, Delta Company, 1/26, was ready to go, to relieve and reinforce the two platoons.[2115] "It was the most difficult decision a commander has to make, and the decision I made was: we would not send out the force or go to the aid of those Marines. Now that violates all the Marine principles that I was taught from my first day at Parris Island in 1948. When a Marine gets in trouble, you go out and help him and bring him back. My decision was based on the fact that the casualties had been inflicted rapidly. The Marines went into a killing zone and were either killed or seriously wounded. Then, the history of the Vietnamese War was filled with [instances in which] you get a squad in trouble, you send out a platoon; the platoon gets in trouble, you send out a company; you send out another company. Before long night falls and you've got half a battalion out in a very tenuous position. My mission was to defend Khe Sanh Combat Base. I was thin. That's why I did not send aid to the Bravo Company patrol."[2116]

In a SPECAT EXCLUSIVE message from Colonel Lownds to Major General Tompkins [CG, 3rd MarDiv], Colonel Lownds reported, "Due to difficulty in interviewing members of Bravo 3 it is difficult to determine status of 25 MIAs. However, it is surmised a considerable number were hit in the initial ambush. Naturally it is my desire to recover the 25 MIAs but am sure it would take a minimum of two companies and probably a battalion which as you know I can not afford to use at this time."[2117]

The agony of the commanders was not only the decision not to reinforce, but also the decision to bomb the area of contact. "Heavy suppressive fire was placed on the ambush site and suspected NVA mortar positions. These fires, along with our own friendly .50 cal, 106RR and 60mm mortars undoubtedly caused friendly casualties, but did, I feel, enable both platoons to break contact and return. The airborne controllers controlled airstrikes into the area consisting of rockets and napalm."[2118] Ordnance expended into the trench system for the period 251300H – 260600H included: 3 rounds of 60mm mortars, 235 rounds of 81mm mortars, 47 rounds of 4.2-in. mortars, 11 rounds of 106mm RR, 25 rounds of 105mm howitzer, 75 rounds of 175mm, 2 rounds of 90mm tank, and in addition there were 35 CAS [Close Air Support] missions flown by the Air Force and 13 TPQ-10 flights expending 210 DELTA-2s (500-lb. bombs) and 8 DELTA-

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[2110] Conversation with G. William Jayne, 01 Oct 1988.
[2111] CG, 3rd MarDiv 021051Z/Sep68 to CG, FMFPAC, in Bronze Star Medal file (post) of HN Lloyd W. Moore.
[2112] Conversation with Johnny Bellina, 08 February 1987.
[2113] Letter of Maj K.W. Pipes, cited.
[2114] Conversation with William Smith, 16 March 1985.
[2115] Comments of Sgt Patrick J. Fitch, USMC Oral History Tape #2498. Sgt Fitch was a radio operator with B/1/26 at the time.
[2116] Interview of James B. Wilkinson by John Wright, 14 July 1989.
[2117] 26Mar 251114Z/Feb68, in III MAF SPECAT EXCLUSIVE file #30.
[2118] Maj K.W. Pipes letter, undated, cited.

26s (M-117 750-lb bomb with a 1-second delay enabling it to penetrate 16-ft. before detonation).[2119]

By noon the battle broke.[2120] 1/Lt Thomas F. O'Toole, Jr., flying as an AO for G-2, 3rd Marine Division (Radio call sign SOUTHERN OSCAR) observed and reported the trench extending due north to within 30 meters of the KSCB perimeter. The new trench was an extension of a trench network in the vicinity of XD848404 to XD850405 and represented approx. 700 meters extension in less than 24 hours. The new trench was 2-ft. wide and approx. 4-ft. deep and terminated in a trench approx. 50 meters long running parallel to the KSCB wire. A large trench complex was observed containing 2 parallel extensions of trench network running northwest to within 15 meters of the KSCB wire at XD854417 and containing 50 – 100 NVA soldiers.[2121]

O'Toole had other, sadder, things to report: 15 or 20 Marines near the trenchline at XD853409 to XD854409, bodies in helmets and flak jackets. Three of the bodies were lying together as if a machinegun crew [perhaps Ridgeway, Ruff, and Geller]. One man was bandaged on chest and another lying close by, as if a corpsman, giving aid. On the second pass, the AO received fire from nearby and from one figure who stood up from among the bodies, probably a NVA who was searching the bodies and had dropped to the ground to avoid detection. The bodies were in the center of the trench complex, in open area.[2122]

O'Toole accompanied a Marine Birddog piloted by John L. Clark of VMO-6, sat right over that platoon when it got wiped out.[2123] The next day, 26 February, as he landed he was met by a Colonel from the Division staff and led into the CG's office where a stenographer took down his statement on one of those little courtroom machines:

"There were about 15 Marines in the trench trying to make it back and although I couldn't see it, I thought they were taking fire because the rear man was shooting to the rear. I informed the 26th Marines and asked what was going on. They said they had a unit out there that had made contact. They had lost communication with them. I told them I had at least 15 of them about 100 meters outside the wire, and I was worried that the extension [of the trench system], which went parallel to the perimeter, would be a NVA ambush... We went back to the area of the bunker complex and in the middle of a field surrounded on all sides by the trenches.. there appeared to be 15 to 20 Marine bodies. I advised the pilot and we turned around and I did identify them as Marine bodies because of the flak jackets, helmets. Three men lay together as if they had been a machinegun crew. One man was bandaged on the chest while another may lay beside him as if he were a corpsman. I didn't get a good look, so we came around again. This time a figure from among the bodies stood up and fired at us, and with that the entire trench line opened up and we received three hits on the aircraft. The grids would be approximately XD853-854409. The pilot said that they were probably NVA trying to trick us, but I told him at that time that maybe [while] all weren't Marines, I was thoroughly convinced that the majority were... Later in the afternoon we were shot out of the area by .50 caliber machine guns from Hill 471 to the south [and] we could not fly over that area any further.. We ran air strikes.. on an area about 600 meters south of where the bodies were, trying to hit the ville at XD851404 and the ville at XD848403 when a yellow smoke came out of the area where we had seen the bodies. We could not go out and check. I called 26th Marines. They said they had no friendlies further than 200 meters from the perimeter. We continued the air strike around that position."[2124]

Survivors of B-3 trickled back to the base throughout the afternoon and night through an open area that afforded no cover. Those who returned did so singly—Doc Cicala, Ed Rayburn, Johnny Bellina, Thomas Detrick—and could say little. "They didn't know what was going on. They were all shell-shocked. For some of them, it was their first fire-fight. You'd ask them what happened and they'd just say, 'I got knocked out;' 'a gre-

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[2119] 3rd MarDiv COC 260741Z/Feb68, Spot Rpt #99, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Feb 1968 #232.

[2120] III MAF COC 260443Z/Feb68, Daily Report on Khe Sanh for Period ending 260900H Feb 68, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Feb 1968, #55.

[2121] 3rd MarDiv COC 250905Z/Feb68, Enemy Trenches at KSCB Perimeter, in III MAF COC Journal and File 25/26 Feb 1968, #150; also filed in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc File, Feb 1968, Encl (54). On 26 February, an IPIR [Initial Photographic Interpretation Report] based on a photo run over the area disclosed: (1) A trench system oriented NE/SW at XD855400, XD850414, XD855405, and XD857404; (2) A trench system with numerous supplies at XD856395, XD854385, XD854393, and XD856383; (3) 4 anti-aircraft/automatic weapons positions, 2 possibly occupied, at XD846397; (4) 4 occupied anti-aircraft/automatic weapons positions at XD849398, (5) a trench system in circular pattern and 5 bunkers at XD820338 [this is about 1200 meters south of Hill 552]. [FMAW COC 261530Z/Feb68, III MAF PHOTO IPIR MSN NR 1-5-02-68, Sortie 0552, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27Feb68, Ser #245; III MAF COC 290811Z/Feb68, SUPIR #438-68 (same mission), in III MAF COC Journal and File 01/02 March 1968 #13. [SUPIR=Supplementary Photo Interpretation Report].

[2122] 3rd MarDiv COC 261551Z/Feb68, AO Debrief, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Feb 1968 #245.

[2123] Conversation with Thomas O'Toole, 08 August 1990.

[2124] Statement of 1/Lt Thomas F. O'Toole, Jr., 093732/0302, G-2 (AO) on flight of 25 Feb 1968. Copy furnished by Mr. O'Toole. The low passes over the bodies were at 60, 70 miles per hour, 15 or so feet off the ground. [Conversation with Thomas O'Toole, 08 August 1990].

nade went off,' or something like that, and woke up, and 'here I am.'"[2125]

HM3 Thomas E. Casey had just arrived at Khe Sanh and, along with a few others, ventured outside the perimeter to assist any returning WIA. They came upon PFC Edward C. Rayburn, not far from the perimeter. "He walked to us as we walked to his aid. I was surprised to see the lower jaw was completely gone! I examined him quickly and saw that he was not bleeding and did not appear to be in shock. One of the Marines wanted him to lie down. He didn't want to do that. The Marine said to me, 'Shouldn't he be laying down, Doc?' I said, 'Well he made it all the way back here and it's hard to carry a guy out of here, so if he wants to walk, let him.' I don't recall putting any dressing on him. At that time I had no serum albumin which may have been good to start. He did not want to leave and kept looking back from where he came. I asked him then if he was trying to tell us something and he nodded his head 'yes.' I asked him if there were others still alive out there and he seemed relieved and very much shook his head 'yes.' Once he had communicated that to us he was ready to be helped back to the base, but only then! We found no others that day and darkness was coming. We looked for awhile and returned. That wounded Marine did all he could possibly do for his buddies that day!"[2126]

When B-1 became frozen in place, other Marines from B-1, including LCPL William H. Woolman, LCPL Edward I. Prendergast, CPL Wood N. Lathrop, and one or two others, moved down the trail.[2127] A civilian photographer, Robert Ellison, had lived with the Marines of B/1/26 in their trenches for several weeks. Wood Lathrop recalls, "He was in the trenches with us every day. When we went out there to rescue the 3rd Platoon, we didn't know how to get through the mine field. He led us through the mine field! I'm serious! He was out there with a camera in one hand and a .45 in the other. He was something else. He was probably the bravest man there as far as I was concerned."[2128] Ellison snapped a photo of Marines dragging back the body of Lt Jacques which appeared in a 2-page, full-color spread, in the 18 March 1968 issue of *Newsweek*. Wood Lathrop is standing a few feet off to the side, and "Chief," PFC John P. Washa, is dragging Lt Jacques. Prendergast helped carry the Lieutenant. "I couldn't get a pulse. On our left flank the NVA were moving up a trench we had passed on our way out. A machinegun team from our wire was keeping them occupied and waving frantically for us to get behind the wire. The Chief [Washa] thought everyone was dead because they were out in the open when it happened. Capt Pipes came on the radio and ordered us to come in. I knew by the tone of his voice that he was upset and probably following orders from someone higher to pull back. By now air-strikes were hitting the area... About 4 PM down the trench line to my right someone was firing at something moving outside the wire. It looked like a wounded Marine. Wishing it was Fred [Billingham, Prendergast's friend], I ran out the opening in the wire that 3rd Platoon had gone out that morning. When I reached the body I was in front of the 1st Platoon's machine gun pit, next to the old trash dump. It was the Corpsman from 3rd Platoon I only knew as 'Motown Doc' (John Cicala). He had a sucking chest wound with cigarette wrapper on it, face and leg wounds. Doc was white as a ghost mumbling deliriously that everyone was dead."[2129]

PFC Calvin E. Bright, a survivor of B-3—and not wounded!—spotted a Marine walking back "like he was in a daze. I hurried up real quick and went back out. As soon as I went out to him, it looked like the back side of him was smoking, like a fire in a trash barrel, and the fire had gone out and all there is, is smoke. When I brought my hand up to touch his shoulder to help him along, part of him and his clothing came off in my hand. I peeked over the side of him and realized he had just been hit with a napalm strike. We had to stand a stretcher up to him, get him to lean on it, then try to get him to grab hold if it, then lay him down. I remember him say, 'God, it hurts!' He kept saying this over and over."[2130]

GySgt Patrick E. Duffy (S-2 Chief in the 1/26 COC) and 1/Lt William F. Smith both recall that in succeeding days, Capt. Ken Pipes sat up all night on the radio and cried.[2131]

[2125] Conversation with Ted Golab, 22 April 1986.

[2126] Letter from Thomas E. Casey, 02 February 1995. Casey died from an abdominal aneurysm 01 March 1998. James Hebron notes that Rayburn had been a very handsome guy, but after this, his girl friend left him. His jaw was fastened to his shoulder and he used his two front teeth to mash French fried potatoes. He became addicted to drugs, and committed suicide in 1979 while in a VA hospital. [Conversation with James Hebron, 26 March 1987.] Tom Winston, who had been badly burned during the Khe Sanh siege on 09 April 1968, spent a year in the U.S. Naval Hospital, Balboa, along with Ed Rayburn. According to Winston, the doctors took a rib out of Rayburn in order to construct a jaw and also made a graft on his chest to look like a chin. The doctors failed, however, to clean the jaw bone where it was shot off, and after gangrene developed, they had to remove it, repeat the procedure, and Rayburn became very depressed. Winston recalls that he was a fantastic person. "He used to blow smoke rings out of his trach!" [Conversations with Thomas Winston, 30 July 1996 and 23 August 1996. Sometime around 1997, Winston died from Huntington's Disease].

[2127] Conversation with Wood Lathrop, 12 March 1993; Edward I. Prendergast, "Biography," 8 November 1988.

[2128] Conversation with Wood Lathrop, 12 March 1993.

[2129] Prendergast, "Biography," cited.

[2130] Conversation with Calvin E. Bright, 01 August 1988.

[2131] Conversation with Patrick E. Duffy, 10 April 1990; Conversation with William Smith, 16 March 1985.

Still alive, Ridgeway, Geller, and Ruff, wounded and surrounded by NVA, moved in and out of consciousness. Ridgeway remembers a birddog aircraft flying over them. "My left arm was broken. Geller's right arm was broken and he was on his back. He reached down to the man that was wounded [Ruff] and pulled off a smoke grenade. We used this to notify the birddog that someone was alive. I held it and he pulled the pin and I threw it to the right, looked up and all I could see was a jet coming straight down. We ducked and the napalm hit back behind the NVA trench lines. We got small fragments of the napalm on us but we were able to knock it off as we laid there.. I came to in the afternoon around 3 or 4 o'clock. Both men were still alive. The man with the broken arm and I talked just to keep each other's morale up because we didn't know what was going to happen. The other man was delirious. All he wanted was a cigarette. He kept moving around. We told him to be still. He was afraid we were going to leave him. We told him that we weren't going to leave him."[2132] Geller came up on his knees, and as he did, grenades were thrown, one of which killed him. When the grenades ceased, Ridgeway saw small arms fire from the right front traversing the field from right to left, firing into the bodies. A round hit between Ruff and Ridgeway causing Ridgeway to flinch. Another burst was fired in his direction. A round ricocheted off his helmet, hitting him in the left buttock and Ruff received a round in his leg, breaking the bone. Ridgeway lost consciousness.[2133]

Ridgeway woke. It was dark. Ridgeway decided they should attempt to reach the trench. However, Ruff could not crawl due to his broken arm and broken leg wounds and pleaded with Ridgeway not to leave him behind. Ridgeway tried to calm him down, bolster his morale and said he would not leave him. Both Marines curled up under their flak jackets and helmets and decided to wait until morning in hopes that a reaction force would find them. Incoming artillery continued to fall about them and Ruff complained that he had been hit in the head by shrapnel and bleeding badly. Ridgeway was unable to assist him and told him to place his hand over the wound to stop the bleeding. During the shelling, Ridgeway lost consciousness and did not again awaken until early morning.[2134]

"At first light Ridgeway became aware that someone was tugging at his wristwatch. As he opened his eyes, a NVA soldier was standing over him. Apparently the NVA had thought him to be dead and Ridgeway's movement startled him. The NVA jumped back and locked and loaded his AK-47 which caused Ridgeway to think that his death was imminent. Instead, the NVA motioned him to get to his feet, but due to his wounds he was unable to comply. More NVA soldiers appeared, stripped him of his flak jacket and pack and lifted him to his feet... As Ridgeway started toward the trench, he observed Ruff lying with his head in a pool of blood. A NVA soldier kicked Ruff's head to make sure that he was dead. Ridgeway also noticed several bodies including Baptiste, Geller, the demolitions man, a black Marine named 'Stoney' and others he could not identify."[2135]

"When they captured me and moved me, I could look at the trench and see the Americans walking around inside."[2136] From there, Ridgeway was walked through Khe Sanh Village and then to a large rear area of NVA in Laos. He eventually met with some of the American POWs taken from the battle at Lang Vei (SSGT Thompson, Specialist McMurray, SFC Brande, and SP4 Young who had been captured on 30 January).

On 8 March, between 0630H – 0815H, a patrol from the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion encountered one Marine body at XD855404. Identification was missing and the patrol was unable to retrieve the remains. It was assumed this was one of the un-recovered KIAs or MIAs from the B-3 patrol.[2137] Captain Pierce Durham of FOB-3 led a patrol to the area of contact in early March. Accompanying Durham were 3 to 5 Americans who had never before been in combat and an equal number of Bru, a total of about 10. They reached the KIA Marines and suddenly were showered with grenades. "I reported back that the bodies were there. They were in the best condition they could possibly be. The only thing missing were flak jackets, helmets, and the gas masks. We got in contact and had to get out of there. Colonel Lownds wanted me and my 10 men to carry the 25 bodies back!"[2138]

On 30 March, when Lt John Kaheny returned to KSCB following an emergency leave, he "ran into Ken Pipes who I think is one of the best Marines I've ever had to serve with and who was woefully distraught over the fact that his Marines had been left to stay outside the wire for 30 days. I found out later from [1/Lt] Walt[on F.] Chapman, who was the [Marine Corps] Commandant's son, who had been in Delta Company [1/26], that the order not to bring back those bodies had come from the White House itself. Walt, as the Commandant's son, was privileged to get in on some briefings back in Washington when he got home in February, and later when I served with him again at MCRD he related that story to me... My own personal feelings were then that if President Johnson had one-tenth of the courage of the Marines at Khe Sanh, the siege wouldn't have lasted as long as it did."[2139]

[2132] CG MARCORB CAMPEN CA 100244Z/Apr73, cited.
[2133] 1st CIT Report 16-9X-73, cited.
[2134] *Ibid.*
[2135] *Ibid.*
[2136] Conversation with Ronald Ridgeway, 05 July 1991.
[2137] 3rd MarDiv COC 080738Z/Feb68, 26th Marines INTRIGUE SITREP for 080900H/Mar68, in III MAF COC Journal and File 08/09 March 1968 #136.
[2138] Conversation with Pierce Durham, 13 February 1989.
[2139] Conversation with John M. Kaheny, 30 November 1986.

On 06 April 1968, Co D/1/26 moved to the NVA trench/bunker complex parallel to the Route 9 access road, at XD848407, securing it at 0730H. Co B/1/26 moved in trace of Co D and together with the assistance of Co D, policed the battlefield.[2140] The area was strewn with battle detritus including NVA headsets for calling in mortars and rounds with Chinese and Russian writing on them. "I walked over to a boot and picked up the boot, and there's the rest of the bone in the leg. At least on the boot was a dog tag. A lot of the guys at that time used to put the dog tags on the boot. And there were a couple of guys scared. They didn't want to touch them cause these guys were laying there a month. I said, 'Put them in the bag; let's get out of here. I don't like this anymore than you do, but these are Marines.'"[2141] Seventeen Marines previously declared MIA on 25 February and 30 March 1968 (the first rescue attempt) were recovered.[2142] The recovery team put the bodies and body parts in Willy Peter bags, sand bags, ponchos—anything else that would carry them. All the remains were in bits and pieces.[2143] Officially this patrol "..recovered the bodies of all the Marines listed as MIA, and their bodies returned to Graves Registration Khe Sanh."[2144]

The task of attempting to identify the almost totally decomposed bodies left in the hot, humid jungle, filled with bacteria, rats, fell to the company commander, Capt Kenneth W. Pipes. "The shock of loosing 25 men MIA for a month and a half, then going to graves registration several weeks later to help identify the decomposed remains is indescribable."[2145] All but 9 bodies were positively identified. The remaining pieces of bodies were so badly mutilated that identification was impossible, so they were placed in a group grave at Jefferson Barracks, Mo., on 10 September 1968.[2146]

Bill Jayne,[2147] writes that the family members came from as far away as Massachusetts, Florida, and Texas, to witness the unusual burial of the remains in two separate caskets laid to rest in a common grave with one monument to mark the grave. When Ridgeway was returned, a new stone was ordered and placed on the grave without Ridgeway's name. While the Army mortuary command and the Marine reporting process had evidence of 9 MIA, the anatomical evidence disclosed a count of 8 as the "minimum number of individuals." Jayne writes, "They always tried to identify the greatest number of individuals. It stands to reason. Even though the anatomical evidence indicated 8 sets of remains, they had no evidence that would allow them to rule out any of the 9 identified by other evidence. They were faced with a dilemma: name all 9 or leave all unknown. The decision was made to name all 9... My source says it was the only case in the Vietnam War in which the military made such a mistake of identification. Another distinction for Khe Sanh."[2148]

[Hills 881-South and 861, 25 February 1968]

John P. Kilbride was being medevaced off Hill 881-South when two of his buddies, PFC Frank Szmanski and Cpl Robert Wiedeman, came to him; Szmanski asked for his .45. "He was from Pennsylvania, had a couple of kids, a coal miner or whatever, a real sweetheart of a man, one super guy. I left the hill and they were standing in the trench line right behind my gun hole and a round came in right between them. Szmanski got hit behind the leg and Wiedeman took some shrapnel through the head and chest. A Corpsman asked Szmanski, 'You alright?' He said, 'Yeah, I'm alright.' So he went to work on Wiedeman. He turned around when he realized Wiedeman was dead, and Szmanski had bled to death."[2149]

E/2/26 on Hill 861-A took incoming instantly killing LCPL James A. Wood.[2150] "He was with rockets, my best friend in Nam...Minutes before we were talking about home, watching through the binoculars. And the 82s started coming in, and he was completely disintegrated—no head at all."[2151] Another Marine wounded in the same barrage had both of his feet blown off. He said, "Stand me up; I saw where they came from." "We strapped him to a stretcher, shoved him up against the side of the trench, and he called in artillery and air-strikes on the mortars that blew his feet of. We knocked them out."[2152]

On 24 February, Cpl Huff had departed Hill 861. The 6-2 Marine that weighed about 200 pounds initially confused Cpl Dennis M. Mannion into assuming that from his size (and from what he said) that he was related to the football staff, Sam Huff. Huff had just been selected as Corporal and was being sent to the 5-day NCO School on Okinawa as a way of giving him an R&R that

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[2140] 1/26 ComdC Apr68, S2/S3 Log, 06 April 1968, Ser #23.
[2141] Conversation with Ted Golab, 22 April 1986.
[2142] 1/26 ComdC Apr 1968, S2/S3 Log, 06 April 1968, Ser #23.
[2143] Comments of HN James R. Brown, HQMC Oral History Tape #2810.
[2144] 3rd MarDiv COC 160702Z/Apr68, Opn SCOTLAND Final SITREP, in III MAF COC Journal and File, April 1968, #101.
[2145] Maj K.W. Pipes, undated ltr, in HQMC HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.
[2146] These were: LCPL Frederick A. Billingham, Jr.; LCPL Michael J. Brellenthin; PFC James R. Bruder; LCPL Jerry L. Dodson; LCPL Bruce E. Jones; PFC Ronald L. Ridgeway; PFC David C. Scarbrough; PFC Michael B. Baptiste; and PFC John A. Lassiter. [CMC 061506Z/Sep68. Ronald Ridgeway was, of course, not dead, but a POW].
[2147] LCPL George William Jayne was a member of B/1/26 and later became head of the Veterans Administration Cemetery system.
[2148] Bill Jayne, "The Bravo Company Group Burial," 6 July 1997, printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay* 40 (Fall, 1997), p. 19.
[2149] Conversation with Jack Kilbride, 31 July 1994
[2150] Letter from Lawrence E. McCartney, 21 April 1995.
[2151] Conversation with Michael Thomas Lucas, 08 June 1991.
[2152] Conversation with James Kaylor, 08 April 1991.

didn't count as such. Sometimes, during the night, Huff brought his civilian radio to Mannion and they listened to Armed Forces Radio (which they couldn't pick up during the day). Eventually, Mannion "requisitioned" some land line set which wasn't being used and ran it between their bunkers: Huff left the handset next to his radio and Mannion could also listen to it. When Huff departed, Mannion bought the radio.[2153] A couple of weeks later, in a letter home, Mannion wrote: "..I gave him $25.00 to buy me a radio. He left the hill.. and went into K.S. ..As shitty luck would have it, he 'bought' it. Got hit by a rocket while he was running off the chopper down at K.S. I felt shitty, as we had become good friends – but I still had a 'legal' claim to his radio."[2154]

"Before he went down to the Landing Zone he stopped by the bunker with the radio. So I had the radio. Then the next day, when the word came back that he had been killed, the guys in his squad showed up, to take the radio... We almost had a fistfight there, outside my bunker in the afternoon dusk over this radio. Captain Sneed had to come. He kept the radio overnight and the next day called me in and then he called in the squad leader in Huff's group and heard both sides of the story. 'You gave him money?' I said, 'Yes, Sir, I did.' He said, 'Well, then, the radio's yours.' And so for the rest of the siege we had a radio at night."[2155]

Huff's sister, Marsha, recalls: "I was 17 when Billy was killed, and it was the turning point in my life. It really changed it. I just wouldn't accept it. It was just really hard." Their father had served six years during World War II and signed-off on his son's enlistment since Huff was under-age. "To this day, my father won't admit that he signed for Billy to go in."[2156]

[*Well before the NVA's Phase II encirclement of KSCB began in the early days of February or NVA trenches became a specter for all to see, as early as 27 January, Gen Westmoreland, in a message to Gen Momyer [CG, 7th AF, pronounced "mo-meyer"] and LtGen Robert E. Cushman [CG, III MAF], expressed concern over the ever-advancing NVA forces: "In reviewing the targets that have been struck in the Khe Sanh area, it appears there are a number which still remain which are within very close proximity to our own ground forces. I consider it essential all of these close in targets be struck without delay... In the future we must continually strike any target that is in close proximity to our defensive positions. The enemy will try to press as close as he can to these positions in hope of denying air strikes..."*[2157]

An accidentally close B-52 Arc Light strike at Con Thien (#P-73) in November, 1967, made close-in Arc Light strikes valid. The strike, 1400 meters from friendly lines, caused no injury to friendly lines, lives, or fortifications, while damage to enemy installations was significant. Secondary explosions indicated the NVA had closed on the Con Thien outer defense line, indicating the main enemy threat to be within 1 to 3 miles of the base.[2158] *As early as 29 January, a planning group on the staff of 3rd Marine Division suggested installation of X-Band Radar Beacon at Khe Sanh ASAP to ensure Arc Light delivery within one kilometer of friendly forces.*[2159] *On 13 February, Gen Westmoreland advised Admiral Sharp (CINCPAC) that the tactical situation at Khe Sanh "may require that full defensive fire be brought into close proximity of defensive positions." He recommended that the previous restriction placed on B-52s forbidding strikes any closer than 3 KM to friendly forces be rescinded. On 18 February, CINCPAC granted permission for the change. In emergency situations, "..minimum separation criterion of three kilometers from friendly combatants may be reduced to one kilometer when circumstances warranted as determined by COMUSMACV. A strike request with less than 3 kilometers separation will be considered a deviation from normal criterion."*[2160]

The test for a close-in Arc Light strike was target 'KHE SANH 207 RED," 1.2 kilometers from Hill 881S.[2161] *PFC James E. Schemelia on Hill 881-South recalls: "We got word that B52s were going to attack that ridgeline. We kinda looked at each other kinda strange. I mean B52s flying high level, and they were going to drop 500-pounders just across from us! They expected the impact from these bombs to be very severe. Of course, they were. Everyone was ordered inside their bunkers and to stay in there, and it was passed over the radio the moment the bombs were dropped. We were told to place our fingers in our ears and pull our knees up to our chests and scream as loud as we could during the bombing. This, of course, we did. This was to prevent anyone from getting shock. Even though we did this,*

[2153] Conversation with Dennis Mannion, 02 May 1993.
[2154] Letter to Joe Doherty, 11 March 1968.
[2155] Conversation with Dennis Mannion, 02 May 1993.
[2156] Conversation with Mrs. Marsha Slack, 30 April 1993.
[2157] Gen Westmoreland 271158Z/Jan68, in III MAF Incoming SPECAT EXCLUSIVE (Top Secret), 19 Jan – 08 Mar 1968, #14.

[2158] 7AF 171400Z/Nov67 and 201800Z/Nov67, in History, 3rd AirDiv, Jul-Dec67, Exhibits #191 and 192.
[2159] III MAF COC Journal and File, 30/31 Jan 1968, #185.
[2160] Maj James B. Pralle, *Arc Light June 1967 – Dec 1968*, 15 August 1969, p. 29, referencing CINCPAC msg, "Arc Light Basic Operation Order, Chg One," 18 Feb 1968.
[2161] Target box: XD778448 – XED771456 – XD785470 – XD793463; COMUSMACV 241139Z/Feb 1968, Arc Light Strike, in III MAF COC Journal and File 24/25 Feb 1968 #183; COMUSMACV 251730Z/Feb 1968, Arc Light Strike, in III MAF COC Journal and File 25/26 Feb 1968 #270; CG III MAF 251506Z/Feb 1968, Special Arc Light Strikes, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc Feb 1968, Encl (57); III MAF COC 260013Z/Feb 1968, Arc Light Strike, in III MAF COC Journal and File 26/27 Feb 1968 #15.

many of us got nose bleeds from the concussion of the bombs being dropped."[2162]

The first close-in Arc Light near KSCB was conducted 26 February 1968. As these continued and were moved as close as 750 meters from Marine fighting positions, and ASRAT TPQ-10 strikes were brought within 500 meters, the results were impressive. "Hundreds of secondary explosions and fires attested to the destruction of ammunition and supply stocks and undoubtedly caused casualties among [enemy] troops maneuvering in the area."[2163]

CG, 3rd Marine Division radioed CG, III MAF: "Visual reconnaissance and electronic surveillance have clearly established that the enemy has concentrated strong forces within the sanctuary provided by the three kilometer limitation. In some instances his trenches and saps have approached to within 100 meters of the perimeter... TPQ-10 directed air strikes and artillery mission cannot match the overall effect of B-52 bombardment. Consequently, the following close arclight strikes are requested for emergency reasons. All troops dug in: Target Khe Sanh 217 Red, 1800 meters; Target Khe Sanh 191 Green, 200 meters; Target Khe Sanh 246 Red, 1500 meters; Target Khe Sanh 119 Green, 2000 meters."[2164]

After a week of these strikes, the NVA forces began to crumble. Prisoners revealed they had been briefed that B-52s were prohibited from bombing within 3 kilometers. The enemy force now moved, not to 3,000 meters, but out to 10,000 meters and his forces were subsequently split up to where he could only mass in battalion size.[2165]]

26 FEBRUARY 1968

BRERETON, PFC Raymond James H&S/1/9
LIVINGSTON, LCPL Billy Dale CAC OSCAR
STEDMAN, LCPL Paul Francis A/3rd Shore Party
STUCK, PVT Ransom Lee C/1/26
SWEENEY, LCPL Thomas James C/1/26
VALENTE, GYSGT Anthony Nicholas C/1/9

[2162] Taped comments of James E. Schemelia, 01 August 1984.

[2163] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, March, 1968, pp. 9-10.

[2164] 3rd MarDiv 260500Z/Feb68, ArcLight Program, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Feb 1968 #58. Target boxes were: 217 Red (XD852375 – XD867389 – XD844383 – XD859397); 191 Green (XD793403 – XD807389 – XD800410 – XD814396) 246 Red (XD867389 – XD881403 – XD859397 – XD873411) [III MAF COC 261239Z/Feb68, Arc Light Strikes, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Feb 1968 #200. 119 Green (XD793403 – XD807389 – XD800410 – XD814396 [COMUSMACV 260643Z/Feb 1968, Arc Light Strike, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Feb 1968, #78].

[2165] Pralle, *Arc Light*, p. 29; Comments of LtCol Castagna, HQMC Oral History Tape #2770.

WRIGHT, PFC Michael Vincent E/2/26

PFC Wright died of wounds (DOW) received on 19 February. His brother, James, had fought in the Hill Battles at Khe Sanh in April/May, 1967, while a member of G/2/3. James recalls that his brother, Michael, always dreamed of being a Marine. He had read Chesty Puller's book "about 10,000 times."[2166]

A part of the close-in air strikes against encroaching NVA trenches and positions, at 1100H a friendly American aircraft inadvertently fired 2 rockets into the FOB-3 compound, resulting in the death of PFC Billy Dale Livingston.[2167]

"We got a break in the shelling, and all the guys came up and got some sun. I was walking back to the commo bunker and this guy was coming overhead, crossing the combat base. I heard the scream of the jet and looked up. He had already made one pass, and I saw him dump his load over the commo bunker. I said, 'That isn't going to make it!' I started running like hell for the lines because I knew there was going to be people hit down there. As I was pounding down the road, I saw it hit. What happened was the shock wave crushed his 'grape' [skull] first, and then some fragments took off his head. I remember John Roberts, a little time after that, and a bunch of us were sitting around. He had a can of 'beans and balls' [Meat Balls and Beans C Ration], and there was a little piece of Billy had gotten onto the can. John had this sickened look on his face, but he flicked it off and continued eating. I remember that like it was yesterday."[2168]

HN John R. Roberts, the Corpsman from CAP OSCAR-2, was standing with Livingston on his left and a black Marine on his right as all three while drinking some C-ration coffee, yelled, screamed, and cheered Phantoms fired into the area just beyond the perimeter. "Get 'em, guys! Get 'em!"[2169] Roberts and Livingston had frequently talked with each other. Livingston was within days of rotating home and had just been selected for Corporal. "We had a nice, long discussion whenever we had a few minutes, and he was really dedicated to making his life right and going back home and really making

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[2166] Conversations with James Wright, 28 July 1999 and 04 August 1999.

[2167] 3rd MarDiv COC 260739Z/Feb 1968, spot report from 26 Mar, in III MAF COC Journal and File 26/27 Feb 1968 #230; 3rd MarDiv COC 261029Z/Feb 1968, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #478, Para. 4.G.

[2168] Conversation with Freeman James ["Bagpipes"] Taylor, 08 April 1993. John Roberts was the Corpsman attached to Second Platoon of CAC OSCAR. All of CAC OSCAR occupied the southeast portion of the FOB-3 perimeter after evacuating Khe Sanh village and Ta Cong village. Livingston was to be the only KIA of CAC OSCAR during the siege battle.

[2169] Conversations with John R. Roberts, 13 September 1989 and 17 November 2002.

something of his life."[2170] "He was getting married in two weeks when he got home, and I had written a letter to his fiancée for him; he didn't know how to write too well. He was really a neat kid, real conscientious, worked hard. He didn't know how to express himself. He was very quiet, and when he said something it was worthwhile listening to."[2171]

Sgt John J. Balanco, known for moving about and checking on the troops of CAC OSCAR and their welfare, had just been talking with Livingston about what kind of car he was going to buy when he returned "to the world" [Marine slang in Vietnam for America—or any place other than Vietnam]. He spoke of the hottest car of the day. Balanco had walked about 20 feet when the jet dropped the ordnance.[2172]

A jet from the USS KITTY HAWK—"you could see the name on it"—made a swift, low pass and pickled his rockets, blowing Roberts a good 30 feet into the air. He landed in the concertina wire of the trench line perimeter, and was deaf a good two hours. He spotted Livingston's body, "nothing but raw meat hanging out of his neck." The black Marine had a broken back and was medevaced. Livingston's body was placed on the small mule truck and driven to Graves Registration. Roberts returned to his C-ration coffee. Now cold, he heated it up with some C-4 explosive and "something floated to the top. It was a piece of Livingston's brain, floating in my coffee cup, and it was sizzling. I threw it out and I just went bananas! I emptied a full magazine at one of the planes coming over. Fortunately, it did not bring it down! Sgt Harper hit me with a butt stroke and knocked me out. He told me later, 'Don't mention this. I've talked to everybody else who saw it, and don't worry about it.'"[2173]

After the explosion, Livingston's head was completely gone. Balanco went over to Livingston, took his wallet and dog tags and brought them over to the Gunny [Robert J. Boyda] and then sat down and finished eating his Pork and Beans C Ration, unfazed by what had just happened. Sgt Balanco was not alone in his numb reaction. A few days later, LCPL Howard McKinnis found an eyeball, made a little leather pouch, placed it inside, and carried it around with him.[2174] By this time, many of those at Khe Sanh had become numb, unable to express any emotion, callous and hard—a defense against the insanity we were experiencing, a wall against the flood of terror washing over us.

LCPL Thomas James Sweeney was raised in the steel town of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, which was particularly hard hit economically when the steel industry entered into decline. Sweeney's nick name, "Jitters," referred not to any nervous tic, but to his love with music and dance. He used to "jitterbug" and sang for the local radio station during his high school days.[2175] Sweeney's obituary notice indicates he was wounded by a bullet in the abdomen while in a defensive position.[2176]

From the diary for today: "Air strikes were bombing all morning on mortar and automatic fire positions near the former CAP 3 position [at Ta Con ville]. Napalm and A-1 Sky-raiders and Navy Phantom jets all fired, as did our arty and the 106 near C Med. Two men who were among those MIA yesterday returned last evening. The C Med living hootch took a direct hit where the casualty bags were located. LtCol Wilkinson said that 8 of the MIAs are known dead. Two critical patients were in the OR of C Med from E Co, 2/26, Hill 861A, one having a head wound, the other will loose his right arm and right leg, and possibly will be blind. It was a very ghastly sight—black, charred flesh, hanging down from an open, ripped open, area of the leg to the bone. The hand was off; the arm was a stump. One corpsman walked back to where I was standing. "I don't want to look at that, but I have to," he said, resignedly walking back to aid the patient. Bloody clothes poncho and bamboo poles that had served as the stretcher—all over the deck. At Graves I said prayers over the bodies of B.D. Livingston and R. L. Stuck. The latter had seen be before. He was due to be 'out' this month, but due to 'bad time' had to continue to serve here. He had two scholarships and wanted to be 'out' to attend college in April. Incoming set off the recon area CONEX box, spewing out dense clouds of smoke. There was one casualty due to WP burns. The C Med Chief asked if my flag pole [with the Chaplain Corps pennant] couldn't be taken down; it might be an aiming stake. Three men from the 1/26 BAS came by asking for M-16s that may have been

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[2170] Conversation with John R. Roberts, 27 June 1990.
[2171] Conversation with John R. Roberts, 17 November 2002.
[2172] Conversations with John Balanco, 30 May 1992 and 24 December 1992.
[2173] Conversations with John R. Roberts, 8 and 13 September 1989 and 17 November 2002.
[2174] Conversations with John Balanco, 30 May 1992 and 24 December 1992. A week or two later, a tooth and part of Livingston's skull were found along the perimeter. [email from Frank J. Taylor to John Roberts, 14 Oct 2002].

[2175] Conversation with Donald Gillespie (member of C/1/26), 5 December 2004; Letter from Donald Gillespie, 23 November 1998. Gillespie's brother, Tim Merlin, wrote in the Khe Sanh Veteran's *Red Clay* of a memorial service by the Boys and Girls Club in McKeesport to honor its fallen members, including his brother. [Tim Merlin, note in The Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #47 (Fall, 2000), p. 32.
[2176] Obit. 29 Feb 1968. His parents are listed as Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Merlin, and he was posthumously awarded the Vietnamese Military Merit Medal and the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with palm. [clipping, "Parents Get Son's Medals," 14 Apr]. He was listed in guarded condition. [Clippings in letter from Donald J. Gillespie, 8 August 1998]. He apparently died 1 March 1968 from his wounds, but the Directory for the Vietnam Memorial Wall lists him as KIA on 26 February 1968

brought in by casualties, saying that 'tonight's the night.' Dr. Demaagd said we intercepted a message to that effect. At 2020 the Arclights and yet strikes really started pouring in close to the base—very loud noise."[2177]

At 1545H, an incoming rocket killed Pvt Ransom Lee Stuck as shrapnel and concussion struck his chest while in the Blue Sector of the perimeter (at XD853418).[2178] 1/Lt Nicholas S. Romanetz, Platoon Commander of Second Platoon, C/1/26, reassured the family through an exchange of emails in 2001, that it was "a day when we got barrages of incoming, and then nothing for awhile. As Randy was walking in the trench line with his helmet and flak jacket on, a round landed quite close to him. Since our trenches were not too deep at the time, he was hit about chest high and probably killed instantly. I'm sure he never heard the round until it was too late. Had he lay down in the trench, he would have survived but as I said, the rounds often came out of nowhere and this was the case. I last saw him moments before his death.. I do recall he was serving 'bad time' and was talking to Rev. Ray Stubbe about it. His infraction causing the bad time happened before I took over the platoon and I never knew what the cause was. I do remember his being upset about having to stay in RVN longer and that, at least, he could be sent to the rear to finish his time. He was real upset about that. However, he was liked by the other men and got along well with them. He was also a good Marine and not afraid of combat."[2179]

Stuck's cousin, Terry, emailed that he and Ransom "..were both simple country kids raised in a small town of 1,000 people in Southern Indiana. The town is named Farmersburg.... I can tell you Randy was not a coward and as a 'kid' would stand up to face any bully."[2180]

As an example of the accounting of KIA, the official Operation SCOTLAND SITREP for the period 0001-0600 for today indicates a cumulative total of 234 KIA.[2181] The official Operation SCOTLAND SITREP 24 hours later indicates a cumulative total of 135 KIA.[2182]

27 February 1968

BERGER, PFC John Edward	B/1/26
NIEBUR, HM2 Edward Leroy	H&S/1/26

At 1350H, PFC Berger was killed by sniper fire which hit his back.[2183] At the time, while visiting the H&S Co. bunker and eating lunch there, initial reports were that the "81mm mortars reported a direct hit. One man was injured. Others jumped on him to protect him. More rounds came in, injuring several others."[2184]

HM2 Niebur was injured and later died from his wounds when a mortar round exploded at 1330 near the 1/26 BAS shitter where he was standing.[2185]

[*415 tactical air sorties were flown in support of Khe Sanh today (USMC 157, USAF 153, USN 105). BDA: 11 large fires (numerous small fires), 39 secondary explosions, 39 road cuts. 6 Arc Lights (33 sorties) were flown in support of Khe Sanh. Re-supply of 237 short tons arrived today at Khe Sanh (15 tons of vehicles, 6 tons of mail, 3 tons of medical supplies). In addition 68 passengers were landed at Khe Sanh. 14 C-130 aircraft completed 10 air drops and 3 air landed on the airfield. 28 USMC helicopters delivered passengers and cargo.*[2186]

General Westmoreland sent the following message to Colonel Lownds: "You, your Marines, and the associated US Army and Vietnamese troops are at the center of the international stage. You are faced with a military challenge unprecedented in this war. I want you and your troops to know that I have the utmost confidence in your fighting spirit, professionalism, and alertness. These essential qualities, plus the indomitable courage of the US Marines are destined to prevail over the enemy. The enemy will try every trick in the book, but you will defeat him at every turn. Be assured that the chain of command is watching your situation hour-by-hour and providing you fire power never before equaled on any battlefield. My personal compliments and best wishes to you."[2187]]

28 February 1968

BALADES, PFC David Zavala	A/3rd Shore Party
BENIGNI, CPL Alfredo	HMM-262
BRADLEY, CPL Kenneth Robert	HMM-262
CALDWELL,. CPL Robert Edward	H&S/3/26
CHRISTMAN, LCPL Ronald S. J.	HMM-262
COLES, LCPL Kyle "J"	H&MS-36
COOPER, CPL Donald Nathaniel	HMM-262

[2177] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for Monday, 26 February 1968.
[2178] 1/26 ComdC, Feb 1968, S2/3 Log, 26 February 1968, Serial #69.
[2179] Nick Romanetz, email of 16 Jan 2001 to "Rose," printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #49 (Spring, 2001), p. 34.
[2180] Terry Stuck, email in *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[2181] 3rd MarDiv COC 260312Z/Feb 1968, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #469, Para. 6.
[2182] 3rd MarDiv COC 270618Z/Feb 1968, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #473, Para 6. (for period 270001-270600H Feb68).
[2183] 1/26 ComdC, S2/S3 Log, 27 February 1968, Ser #43.
[2184] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for Tuesday, 27 February 1968.
[2185] *Ibid.*
[2186] Gen Westmoreland, Report #24 on the Situation at Khe Sanh/DMZ Area for 27 February 1968, in LBJ Library archives, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, 2A(2) I Corps & DMZ 2/68, #5.
[2187] COMUSMACV 270938Z Feb68, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc Feb 68 file, Encl (62).

DEMPSEY, CPL Ronald Lee	**B/1/13**
DWYER, LCPL Matthew Murice	**A/3rd Engineers**
ELLIS, CAPT John Patrick	**MABS-36**
GARD, CPL Dany "D"	**HMM-262**
HARRIS, PFC Earl Wayne	**E/2/26**
LABONTE, HN Donald Arthur	**H&S/2/26**
McCABE, SGT Mark Wayne	**HMM-262**
MEIXNER, Maj Edwin George	**HMM-262**
MIKELS, SGT James Herbert Jr.	**H&S/1/26**
PARSONS, SGT Charles Edward	**5th Comm Bn**
SEVELL, CAPT Robert Lee	**HMM-262**
SPILLMAN, BU1 Charles Otto	**CBMU-301 Det B**
STANTON, PFC Emmett Charles	**A/3rd Engineers**
STULL, CAPT Jay Webster	**HQBN, 3rdMarDiv**
THOTLAND, LCPL John Alfred	**HMM-262**
TOTH, SGT John Paul	**HMM-262**
TURNER, CPL William Oliver	**H&S/3rd Shore Party**

[Note: All except Harris and Labonte were in the CH-46 plane crash]

Harris DOW received 26 February when he was gravely wounded by NVA mortar fire on Hill 861-Alfa. "Earl was on the northwest corner of the hill which looked in the direction of Hill 861 when the mortar rounds came in. Nobody heard the rounds being fired as we normally did .. because a helicopter was coming in to the landing zone on the southeast side of the hill which was looking down on Hill 558. The Marine he was with, PFC Michael Vernon Wright, died that day and another Marine who was nearby, LCPL Bobby Joyner, was seriously wounded but as far as I know he survived."[2188]

HMM-262, located at Ai Tu Airbase, Quang Tri, not only flew daily missions in support of Khe Sanh, they kept two CH-46 birds and crews continuously at KSCB until it became untenable. William L. Barba [pronounced "Bar- bay"], who had been at Khe Sanh the day the siege erupted, and who vividly recalls times in the FOB-3 bunker, was shot down three times during medevac missions at Khe Sanh and the surrounding hills, was flying re-supply to Khe Sanh on 28 February. He relates:

"The first leg of the mission called for picking up 40 replacement Marines at the Dong Ha LSA, taking them to Khe Sanh, returning to Dong Ha for external cargo loads for Khe Sanh. On this day, weather was marginal with rain showers and overcast ceiling varying between 500 to 800'.[2189] I was disappointed that I wasn't assigned as Section Leader for this flight because I had been flying in the area for the past three months, was one of the most experienced combat pilots in the squadron, and knew the routes and threats into and out of Khe Sanh like the back of my hand...

"Shortly after lunch, we launched 2 CH-46s from Quang Tri and landed at the Dong Ha LSA to pick up 40 troops. After figuring my load computations, I could only safely carry 18 troops, and I passed this info to Maj Meixner. My crew was good for a total of 22 souls on hand. After this incident, I learned that Maj Meixner had 27 souls on board which gave him no capability to hover out of ground effect. Besides his crew and the troops, he also had on board several squadron maintenance personnel who were to be dropped at Khe Sanh to try to fix several battle damaged CH-46s. Bottom line was that he was extremely heavy, exceeding the maximum gross weight in the aircraft. None of the troops we picked up had weapons, for they were to receive their weapons upon arriving at Khe Sanh.

[Concerning the routes we flew into Khe Sanh], after the siege started we initially flew the following route to Khe Sanh: Lifted from Dong Ha, climbed to 3000-ft., flew westbound over Route 9 (pass Cam Lo, Ca Lu) to the Balong Valley, then north to Khe Sanh. As the NVA started placing AA guns on the mountains on the east and west side of the Balong Valley, we changed our tactics by flying higher—5000-ft to 6000-ft., arriving at Khe Sanh and then spiraling down to land at the runway or LSA. As the NVA artillery became more effective (i.e., you would be sitting on the runway, the LSA or fuel pits, and the NVA would start walking artillery rounds toward you), we attempted to mask our arrival by flying the 'back door route' to prevent an artillery round from meeting us as we touched down. The 'Back Door Route' was as follows: Dong Ha over Route 9 to the Rockpile, NW along a river bed and up a cliff to a valley on the east side of the mountain range (Hill 973) east of Khe Sanh, around the north side of this ridge to Hill 552 and low level into Khe Sanh from the north. Well, the NVA got wise to us, and 4 days prior to the incident in question, I received 6 hits returning from Khe Sanh along the 'Back Door Route.' I reported this to S-2, and the squadron determined that this route could only be flown at altitude. In bad weather, we woiuld receive a GCA (radar) climb out at Dong Ha to VFR on top, use our TACAN to navigate to Khe Sanh, and look for a hole to spiral down. If we couldn't get VFR on top, we flew in the

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[2188] Khe Sanh Message Board, email posted by Larry McCartney, 02 March 2002. DOW=Died of Wounds.

[2189] The weather forecast for Khe Sanh for the period 8PM/27Feb – noon/28Feb: "500-ft. scattered, 1000-ft. scattered, 1500-ft. broken, visibility 5 miles, showers. Intermittent thundershowers with ceiling 100-ft., visibility ½ mile during rain" and for the period noon/28Feb – 4AM/28Feb: "500-ft. overcast, visibility 2 miles, drizzle and fog." [National Military Command Center (MNCC) Memorandum for the White House, 27 Feb 1968, 0700 EST, in LBJ Archives, National Security File, Vietnam Country File 2A(2) I Corps & DMZ, 2/68, 1 of 2, #11.

weather on instruments to Khe Sanh and flew either a GCA or TACAN approach into Khe Sanh.

"Back to the incident. After loading troops on board at the Dong Ha LSA I fully anticipated Maj Meixner to request a GCA climb-out; however, instead a westerly departure over Route 9 was requested. I questioned this decision on the FM radio, and recommended a GCA climb-out because of the weather. He stated he wanted to check the weather out in the vicinity of the Rockpile and the 'Back Door Route.' Again, I reminded him that I had taken hits on the Back Door Route, and unless the weather ceiling [changed] dramatically we wouldn't be able to stay VFR and get to a safe altitude. He gave me a Roger and we proceeded over Route 9 to the Rockpile. At the Rockpile, the ceiling was varying between 500-ft. to 800-ft. and we proceeded NW to the Back Door Route. Flying up a riverbed toward the cliff leading to the entrance to the valley/Back Door, there was only a 150 – 200-ft. window between the valley floor and lower cloud layers with the clouds occasionally dropping down to the valley floor. At this point, I thought for sure Maj Meixner was going to turn around, proceed tack to Dong Ha and request a GCA climb-out. However, he didn't. He headed for the valley entrance. I was concerned for 2 reasons: (1) If we entered the valley, we would both end up IFR, in the clouds, surrounded by mountains, which is a No No! and (2) we would be at 150-ft. or lower flying over a known enemy AA area on a routine mission. Again, I yelled over the FM for him to do a 180° turn, that he was entering IFR conditions and was in a known threat area. He didn't answer and proceeded on. One more time I came up on the FM and stated, 'DASH 1, do a 180° turn now!' He didn't respond, so I came up on the radio and told him I was conducting a 180° turn. As I was in my turn to the left, Maj Meixner came up on the radio and yelled, 'We've been hit!' That was the last radio communications they made.

"At this time, Meixner's aircraft did a left turn and appeared to be attempting an autorotation to the river bed below. I could see his left engine was on fire. I tried to join on him, but I couldn't stay with him, even with my collective bottomed for his rate of descent was too great. At approximately 200-ft. above the river bed, he flared the helicopter, struck some large rocks on the bank of the river bed and then crashed into the river bed, throwing bodies and pieces of helicopter over a 200-400 yard area. The terrain at the crash site was extremely rough, so I made several low passes looking for survivors and a place to land. I found neither. I saw no survivors, and judging by the rate of descent of the helicopter, all were killed on impact. I then climbed as high as I could and contacted Khe Sanh DASC telling them what happened and asked for some gunships and a reaction force in order to recover the bodies. Within 10 minutes two UH-1E gunships arrived on scene and took charge. (I still had 18 unarmed Marines on board). Within 30 minutes, a security force and recovery team arrived, landed downstream and hiked to the crash site... All the bodies were recovered... The two pilots' bodies were found in their armored seats, thrown from the helicopter and mangled."[2190]

Dr. Drew Morris, the Flight Surgeon of HMM-262, accompanied the recovery team. His CO recalls, "He was a first-line football player at the University of Texas when he was an undergraduate, and of course [when] he went into medical practice, [he] gave up football. What a wonderful person, a wonderful man!"[2191] Dr. Morris recalls Capt Sevell as "my best friend. All were killed on impact except for one of those who were to repair damaged birds at Khe Sanh, Cpl Danny D. Gard, "who was still alive at the time. We picked up Danny Gard and put him on a Huey, and flew [him] to Delta Med, and he died just as we got there, and they opened his chest and revived him, and I think he lived for another 3 or 4 hours." Dr. Morris recalls there were 2 groups of 20 Marines in 2 CH-46 choppers, but only one was landed as a security force. "I'd gone off [from the chopper] there leaving my rifle on board, had only a .38, and the Marine in charge of the 20 handed me a grenade and put me in the center and said, 'Here, Doc, grab it, and if they start shooting at us, pull the pin and throw it towards the noise!' They thought they [the NVA] had it [the landing site] zeroed in from the hill, and did not even put the other 20 in, expecting we were going to be ambushed from that hill. Fortunately, we were not. We had a lot of fixed wing overhead that deterred them, I guess." There was no fire. The helicopter was in pieces "and I didn't even recognize Bob Sevell. I unstrapped him from his seat."[2192]

Crash of a Pilot[2193]
By Jim Dykes

Now they are reconstructing it,
Putting the fine sticks of fate together
As if they were tinker toys.
Man has never come to terms
With accident, his own birth;
Or its antithesis.
Surprised at miracles, he lives,

[2190] Letter from COL William L. Barba, 3 June 1991. S-2 (Intelligence section or staff); VFR=Visual Flying Regulations; TACAN=Tactical Air Navigation (a system consisting of short-range UHF radio stations); AA=Anti-aircraft; IFR=Instrument Flying Regulations; GCA=Ground Controlled Approach; DASC=Direct Air Support Center; D Med=medical facility of 3rd Medical Bn located at Dong Ha; LSA=Logistic Support Activity (or area).

[2191] Conversation with COL Melvin Steinberg, I November 1990.

[2192] Conversation with Dr. Drew Morris, 5 November 1990.

[2193] Poem printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #46 (Spring, 2000), p. 34.

Thinking that Order,
Explains everything;
And that Reason is why
Men fly into the trees,
Or sink at sea, or die of disease.
It is difficult to think Nothing.
We grow up thinking our ways
Out of jungles, and often survive
To reinforce thinking Something.

And so, while the crews work
Cleaning the site, I fly
Among fog-caressed valleys,
Forging the wild rivers of faith;
Knowing the chances are
Reasonably on my side.

If I should die in flight today
By some malfunctioning of skies
Will there be peace before I cease to be?
Or shall I terror stricken, cling to fear
And wail until this tumbling craft
Defines my destiny?

I can but contemplate how I'll respond
And I'll define that now,
Because I've treated death before;

In truth I do believe that in a tumbling craft,
I'd try to analyze its path
And chart its twisting course.

When fury waned
I'd soar as Angels have for centuries past,
Then seek a lofty plain and cling to it
Until I'd journeyed Home.

CPL Dempsey, "..a very close friend.. was coming back after 30 days leave at home. It would have been his second tour or duty... It was a very bad day for me. We shared a lot of good times together."[2194]

CPL Robert Edward Caldwell had arrived in Vietnam 28 February 1967[2195] and had been a machine-gunner with M/3/26[2196] before he was assigned as the Chaplain's Clerk. According to another Marine from Co M/3/26 at the time, (then) LCPL Timothy C. Sims, "one of the reasons they did that was because they wanted to get him out of the bush. Bob had done his dues! He'd been in battles in '67 and they thought: he's a good guy. They wanted to do something good for him, so they let him go to the Chaplain."[2197]

"Chaplain William Hampton [Chaplain of 3/26 during the siege battle] had borrowed my Greek New Testament and the Arndt & Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon I had borrowed from Mr. John Miller, the Wycliffe Bible Translator missionary in Khe Sanh village. He was teaching Cpl Caldwell New Testament Greek since Caldwell intended to enter the ministry. Cpl Caldwell was a very kindly person, a good-looking young man, mild-mannered, and had been learning and rapidly picking up New Testament Greek."[2198] Caldwell was bitten by a rat and he and the rat were sent to DaNang for rabies test. The test was negative and he caught a chopper to return to Khe Sanh to complete his time in-country.[2199]

Sgt Charles Parsons of 5th Comm, was either reporting aboard or was a courier. The detachment at Khe Sanh sent one or two couriers at a time.[2200]

BU1[2201] Charles Spillman was bringing 40 pounds of mail along with beer and soda pop[2202] to CBMU 301, Det B, at Khe Sanh, which had repaired (and during the siege, maintained) the airstrip. Spillman, one of the older ones at Khe Sanh (born 11 Oct 1928),[2203] had arrived with the main body of CBMU 301 in late June, 1967 at Dong Ha

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[2194] Letter from Ray Nicol, 12 March 1986.
[2195] "Report of Casualty" card in Library, Historical Division, HQMC, Washington, D.C.
[2196] Letter from Chaplain Timothy Sims, 18 August 1989
[2197] Conversation with Chaplain Timothy Sims, 27 August 1989.
[2198] Diary entry, Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, 08 March 1968 (meeting with Chaplain Hampton upon return to Khe Sanh. Chaplain Hampton returned John Miller's Lexicon: "We won't have any use for that now," he sadly said.)
[2199] Letter from Rev. Wm. R. Hampton, 27 Nov 2004. When meeting with Chaplain Hampton on 8 March 1968, Hampton mentioned that he had sent Caldwell down to DaNang a few days early (he was due to rotate within a month, on his 13 months' tour) and since Hampton was in a static position during the siege, had no need for Caldwell to remain in the embattled base. Those at DaNang, however, returned him to Khe Sanh since he had more time to do before reporting in for processing to return to the States. [Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 8 March 1968]. This was stated in a written memo to the 3rd MarDiv Chaplain, who had requested information on the chaplains clerks at Khe Sanh, all of whom were killed. [Chaplain, 3rd Shore/3rd Recon memo to Division Chaplain, 23 May 1968]. Chaplain Hampton was teaching Caldwell Greek one hour a night. [Diary entry, Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Thursday, 08 February 1968].
[2200] Letter from James Fowler, 2 June 2002.
[2201] BU1=Builder, First Class, E-6. CBMU=Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit
[2202] Diary entry, ENS Martin Kux, 29 February 1968. Hardly any mail ever arrived at Khe Sanh, as Lewis Messner, a member of CBMU 301 Det B, recalls: "They wouldn't pay us and wouldn't bring mail in, so he flew out and went down to get our mail." [Conversation with Lewis Messner, 6 January 1993].
[2203] Bows, Ray A., *Vietnam Military Lore 1959-1973, Another Way to Remember*, Hanover, MA: Bows & Sons Publishing, 1988, p. 204.

where he was the supervisor in charge of several builder crews. In November, 1967, he arrived at Khe Sanh as the builder in charge of construction.[2204]

During a Change of Command ceremony of CBMU 301 at Dong Ha, the Seabee section was dedicated as "Camp Spillman."[2205]

Official count of KIA as of 0001, 28 February, was 141 KIA.[2206] Despite the 24 KIA for today, the official KIA count as of 1200, 29 February was still 141.[2207]

[*During the evening of 29 February/01 March, the NVA mounted a regimental-size assault against KSCB. Col Lownds had made frequent personal reconnaissance walks throughout the entire area surrounding Khe Sanh during the Fall of 1967, sometimes by himself. The information and general "feel" of the area, along with electronic sensors seeded along Route 9 that went crazy, led him to conclude a major assault was about to close on the eastern perimeter of KSCB.*[2208] *"I figured he's out after something. Well, as it turned out, I felt very strongly about it.. I figured that this might well be the main attack. So as he started down.. I called up Division and said, 'I need a B-52 strike NOW; any later than two hours from now, forget it because he's going to have closed with me.'"*[2209] *He concluded this to be at least a NVA regiment approaching the Combat Base.*[2210] *The Arc Light struck the approaching juggernaut and "..this was the only time the kids on the lines told me.. that they actually saw bodies being thrown in the air. I sincerely believe .. that those strikes caught at least two battalions. We were already in contact on the perimeter.. with a battalion, so I feel we had a regiment."*[2211]

The main attack—by those remnants of the assaulting regiment that did manage to close—was against positions occupied by the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion. Three probes were made by the NVA. The first came at 2130H, the second at 2330H, and the third at 0315H. By 010430H the Ranger's front was secured. Results of the attack included at least 71 NVA killed and one ARVN Ranger wounded.[2212] *Included among the materiel captured by the Rangers was a large number of enemy devices to be used to breach the wire of KSCB. These crude, but workable, devices were constructed of bamboo strips laced around blocks of TNT. The enemy planned to use these as Bangalore torpedoes but never had the opportunity.*[2213] *"A physical reconnaissance of the area.. revealed 78 NVA KIA with numerous bangalores and satchel charges.. indicating a major effort to break the wire had been planned. The dead were still huddled in trenches, many in the kneeling position, in three successive platoon lines, as if they had been caught in the assault position. The devastating effect of the 'FIRECRACKER' round was apparent. An Arc Light within 1800 meters of the friendly positions presented a deterrent to enemy reinforcements, and in fact, may have ht him in his assembly areas, thus rendering any reserve elements ineffective.*[2214]

Maj Mark A. Swearengen, the Liaison Officer from 2nd Battalion, 94th Artillery, at KSCB to coordinate and plan 175mm gun fire from Camp Carroll and the Rockpile, made the interesting observation that the attack occurred about 40 days after the initial attack against KSCB. 40 days is the length of time feudal armies besieged and soldiers were then paid for their 40-day commitment. Failure to cause a fortress to fall within 40 days, the attacking forces simply departed the siege.[2215]

These Arc Light strikes had, by now, totally annihilated Khe Sanh village. "Khe Sanh Village is in fact a free fire area. Either the entire or major portions of Khe Sanh Village located vicinity of coordinates XD846381 were included in Arc Light strikes on 27 February, 29 February, twice on 1 March and twice on 5 Mar."[2216] *LCPL Michael J. Archer, a radioman in the 26th Marines COC recalls the strike of 27 February. Capt Baig took a small piece of cheesecloth, erased the grease pencil marking that surrounded Khe Sanh village, and ordered an Arc Light strike on it, completely obliterating it. Col Lownds "..stormed into the FSCC room that evening. I had never seen him so angry. He shouted, 'Harry, I understand that you just bombed the ville!' Baig courteously replied, 'Yes, Sir.' Lownds reminded him that he had strictly forbidden it. Baig calmly explained the necessity of having to do it: tanks, assault troops [a regimental assault force was massing], and anti-*

[2204] Anon, *USN Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301, Republic of Vietnam '67 – '68* [Cruise book], Dedication page.

[2205] Bows, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

[2206] 26Mar Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #477 (280001-280600H Feb68), Para 6. 3rd MarDiv COC 280241Z/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #477 lists 136 KIA.

[2207] 26Mar 291115/Feb68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #483 (291201-291800H Feb68), Para 6.

[2208] Capt Mirza Munir Baig, Letter of 23 Dec 1968 to Historical Branch, HQMC, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file, writes, "Sensors clearly foretold the attack on KSCB during the night of 29Feb-1Mar and gave us time to divert two arclights, one of which struck the best part of two battalions, moving up to support and reinforce the assault battalion." [p.10]

[2209] FMFPAC Debrief of Col David E. Lownds, USMC Oral History Tape #3139.

[2210] Comments by Col Lownds, US Senate, Electronic Battlefield Sub-Committee, *Hearings*, 1971, p. 87.

[2211] Col Lownds, Tape 3139, cited.

[2212] 26Mar ComdC Feb 1968, Encl (1), p. 46.

[2213] Ltr of LtCol James B. Wilkinson, 19 Dec 1968, HQMC, HistDiv, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.

[2214] 26Mar ComdC Feb 1968, Pt. 2.

[2215] Maj Mark A. Swearengen, "Siege: Forty Days at Khe Sanh," Marine Corps *Gazette* 57:4 (April, 1973) 27.

[2216] CG, 3rd MarDiv 081440Z/Mar68, Khe Sanh Village, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc Mar68, Pt. 1, Encl (88).

aircraft guns. I will never forget the look on the Colonel's face. It was part anger at the insubordination, and part resignation to the face that it was done, and there was nothing he could now do about it. He looked at Baig for several moments and then said, quite seriously, 'Harry, I wouldn't want to be you when the war crime trials start.' The Colonel turned and left the room."[2217]

The History of the NVA's 304th Division describes the encirclement phase: "Units involved in the encirclement had to prepare carefully so that they could move forces into encircling positions immediately. In order to establish their [field of fire] for one detachment, it was necessary to concentrate the forces of many units close together, establish fortifications to be used in the encirclement, dig bunkers and foxholes to avoid enemy air and artillery fire.. Great amount of work had to be completed immediately at night so that in the morning our positions involved in the encirclement would be established right at the enemy's barbed wire fence."[2218]

The NVA soldiers continuously dug and tenaciously held. The master plan disclosed by Lt La Than Tonc on 20 January was for a diversionary feint attack from the west followed by the main attack approaching KSCB from the east, and thus, from the beginning, the main concern of the 26th Marines command was with that sector. It was also in this area that the NVA established his siege works.[2219] *For Captain Mirza Munir Baig, the Target Intelligence Officer for the 26th Marines, "Our entire defense philosophy was to allow the enemy to surround us closely, to mass about us, to reveal his troop and logistic routes, to establish his dumps and assembly areas, his truck parks and artillery positions, and to prepare his siege works as energetically as he desired. The result was an enormous quantity of targets, located in dispersed but common areas. Such complexes were ideal for heavy bombers... Once the enemy had firmly embraced us, we had him fixed. His siege doctrine and battle plan.. forced him to stay.. He had to do certain things and to be in certain places because, given the situation, there was little choice open to him. Arc lights were dropped on all the places where the enemy was known or estimated to be. Bombs were not case into the jungle just for the sake of doing so... 95% of all Arc light strikes were targeted and requested from Khe Sanh, NOT Saigon as certain authorities would have us believe."*[2220]

For Capt Baig, the attack of 29 February – 1 March reinforced belief that senior NVA commanders at Khe Sanh had been killed in the air attack of 30 January against their B5-T8 Front Headquarters, "..for if anyone could have changed the attack master plan, in view of our determined opposition, these officers could. Since the plan was never changed, perhaps they died in that building."[2221]

As much as the Marines on the Combat Base were eager to leave their bunkers and trenches and engage the foe,[2222] *soldiers of the 304th NVA Division could hardly restrain their impulse to attack the Marines on KSCB, and this may explain their "last fling" attack of 29 February – 1 March. Their history records: "Our forces clung to the enemy's barbed wire.. The cadre and troops who were involved in the encirclement were determined to sacrifice themselves and to accept the ferociousness of the fighting. Each day they had to repair and expand their fortifications by 40 meters. There were times when they had to repair 80 meters of new fortifications because enemy fire had destroyed what they had just built. When the person up front fell, the person behind him moved up front. When a detachment's morale fell, another detachment moved in to replace them. The entire Division moved into the battlefield."*[2223] *As days continued, "The troops felt that we had the ability to liberate Khe Sanh, so why did the higher command not order an attack? Why continue an encirclement day after day and permit the enemy artillery and air-strikes to cause mounting casualties? Previously when we attacked in Dien Bien Phu, it lasted 55 days and nights and now at Khe Sanh we had also surrounded the enemy for nearly the same number of days. The enemy was fearful.. we were in control of the battlefield, and if the higher command ordered an attack to overrun Khe Sanh we could do it. There were those who asked the question: 'Who knows how much longer the higher headquarters will wait before giving as a gift to [President] Johnson a Dien Bien Phu in Khe Sanh?"*[2224]]

01 March 1968

BENGE, LCPL Larry Wayne	**H&S/1/9**
CUNNINGHAM, PFC William L	**D/1/9**
FERREN, LCPL Jerry Wayne	**VMGR-152**
LINK, LCPL Frederick Beard	**C/1/9**
MARTIN, LCPL Gary Alan	**C/1/9**
McCLATCHEY, SP5 Jeffrey Jr.	**FOB-3**

[2217] Michael Archer, *Murmurs*, Unpublished memoir manuscript, 1 November 2000, pp. 176-177.

[2218] *Su Doan (Ky Su) (Tap II), op. cit.*, p. 89. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison.

[2219] Letter of Maj Mirza M. Baig, 23 December 1968, to Historical Branch, HQMC, in Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file, p. 3

[2220] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[2221] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[2222] In a SPECAT EXCLUSIVE message from CG, III MAF, to COMUSMACV, LtGen Cushman interpreted the patrol of B-3 on 25 February : "They know they are not supposed to take such action against the superior dug in forces of the enemy in the vicinity but apparently could not restrain themselves." [CG III MAF 251532Z/Feb68, in III MAF SPECAT EXCLUSIVE (Secret) msgs, #38.

[2223] *Su Doan (Ky Su) (Tap II), op. cit.*, p. 91. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison.

[2224] *Ibid.*, p. 96.

LCPL Ferren DOW by contracting pneumonia due to burns on his body from the C-130 crash of 10 February 1968 at Khe Sanh.

Sp-5 Jeffrey McClatchey, a black soldier from Alabama, was a demolitions specialist attached to FOB-3. Every night, FOB-3 sent Listening Posts outside the wire through an exit half-way between the trash dump and the main gate to KSCB.[2225] On this night, 2 Americans (including McClatchey) and three "indig" left the perimeter, and "McClatchey attached a Claymore mine under his web gear to his stomach and chest—and armed it! There was a grave yard over to the left about 200 meters down the road. They went over and crossed over into the grave yard, heard something, and laid down beside the grave stones. [Russ] Mann was on one side of those large, flat Vietnamese grave stones and McClatchey was on the other side. As McClatchey crawled forward through the brush and underbrush, it activated the Claymore mine and blew him into three or four pieces."[2226]

The 1/9 Battalion Command Chronology indicates, "Total incoming rounds taken by the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines amounted to 6 (60mm), 20 (82mm), and 1 (120mm) mortar resulting in three friendly KIAs and seven WIAs of which two were serious."[2227]

Joseph R. Murray (H&S/1/26, MOS 3041) arrived Christmas Day, 1967, at Khe Sanh and was wounded on 1 March by an incoming mortar round and spent the next year at the Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland.[2228]

02 MARCH 1968

COOL, CPL Mark Douglas	H&S/1/26
HUTCHINS, SGT Frank John	D/1/9
LLOYD, PVT Kenneth Edwin	D/1/9
MEIER, PFC Roy Alan	D/1/9
SCULLEN, PFC Thomas James	D/1/9
WETHINGTON, HN David L Jr.	H&S/1/9

Cpl Mark Cool DOW received on 27 February 1968.[2229] PFC John A. Corbett remembers Mark as his best friend at Khe Sanh. In this incident, PFC James C. Gillam and Cpl John T. Flores of the 1/26 81 mortar section had been wounded by an incoming NVA 60mm mortar and Mark Cool rushed to help them. Another 60mm exploded sending chards of shrapnel into Cool's face. Gillam and Flores were both slightly wounded in their arm, but Cool's wounds were serious.[2230] Immediately, Cool went into a coma, and Corbett lamented that with no officers around to witness his heroism in rushing to aid his wounded comrades, he received no posthumous award for his heroism. Corbett writes, "We who knew him decorated him in our hearts."[2231]

At 1900H, Co. D/1/9 (XD831415) received one incoming 122mm rocket which impacted in a trench killing five Marines and giving two minor wounds.[2232]

As the NVA relentlessly constructed their siege networks, the Marines of 1/9 feared firing mortars on them at night since that would disclose the mortar's position, Claymore mines were stolen, and night ambushes were not permitted. Then, one morning the fog lifted and the light of dawn disclosed four or five moving from the area. The M-79 grenadier spotted them, cornering them on a knoll, and the Marines were given permission to get them; they located three bodies and a blood trail. Although the lead fire team made it safely inside the perimeter, most were caught outside as a recoilless rifle fired on the patrol. HN Wethington and HM3 William G. Gessner [2nd Plt, D/1/9] rushed out to attend to the wounded. During a lull in the incoming, the seriously wounded were moved inside the perimeter. Fixed air silenced the NVA recoilless rifle while on station, but when the plane departed, the incoming resumed. HN Wethington, standing in the 1st Platoon trench line, was hit in his chest and literally blown apart from one of the recoilless rounds.[2233]

[General Westmoreland sent the following to General Wheeler, Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 2 March: "The following is a reply to the question.. would the evacuation of Khe Sanh and the establishment of a defensive line located further to the east improve or degrade your military situation in I CTZ: Answer: There are no advantages of military significance accruing from abandoning Khe Sanh if it is indeed our purpose to eject or destroy the invading NVA forces from the RVN. On the other hand, the disadvantages of voluntarily withdrawing from Khe Sanh are tactically and psychologically of the greatest significance.

"In the immediate time frame, abandoning the Khe Sanh launch base and withdrawing forces to the east has one overriding disadvantage—to do so under siege would involve abandoning or destroying tanks, artillery, ontos, other vehicles, and great quantities of equipment. To do this, except under the most extreme emergencies, is militarily unacceptable. The better solution would be to relieve the garrison by attack...

2225 Conversation with Harve Saal, 16 February 1991.
2226 Conversation with James Moore, 26 February 1996.
2227 1/9 ComdC Mar68, Encl (1), p. 1.
2228 Letter from Joseph Murray, 28 June 1990.
2229 1/26 ComdC Feb68, S2/S3 Log, 27 February 1968, Ser #40 indicates C2264900 received serious wounds from shrapnel in head and legs from a mortar at 1255H, 27 February 1968.
2230 Conversation with John Corbett, 5 October 1986
2231 Corbett, John, *West Dickens Avenue, A Marine at Khe Sanh*, New York: Ballantine Books, 2003, p. 152.
2232 3rd MarDiv COC 031132Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #492, Para. 4.C.
2233 Letter of William G. Gessner, 1 October 1987.

"The military advantages of holding Khe Sanh are as follows: A. It is at the confluence of numerous valley infiltration routes leading into the population centers of Quang Tri and Thua Thien. This base inhibits and at best interdicts the unrestricted use of these routes by the enemy to supply and reinforce his attacks on Quang Tri and Hue. B. Retention of Khe Sanh denies the enemy free and untrammeled access to our western flank and the opportunity to envelop our forces north of Quang Tri City. C. Khe Sanh provides a forward launch and recovery base for deep reconnaissance patrols and observation groups in the western mountains of RVN and the Laotian panhandle. D. It provides an invaluable base for patrols and intelligence gathering means of major enemy movement southward from the western reaches of the DMZ and Laotian infiltration routes.. Its retention forces the NVA into using the longer routes of the Laotian panhandle. E. Our presence at Khe Sanh has forced the enemy to divert sizable forces that have become vulnerable to our massive fire power. Although we do not know the extent of his losses from our fire, it is reasonable to assume they are substantial. F. Aside from the political aspects, the retreat of US/ARVN units in the face of NVA forces would send a psychological shock wave of inestimable magnitude throughout the armed forces of RVN. Its traumatic impact on the morale and fighting spirit of ARVN troops would be of major consequence in the further defense of RVN."[2234]]

04 MARCH 1968

MUTZ, LCPL Dennis Howard	**K/3/26**
SAUNDERS, PFC Donald Baron	**HQ/1/13**
YAMANAKA, LCPL Roger Kimo	**H&S/3/26**

As an indication of the dispersion of people and how battle did not permit men to socialize within their area due to incoming and the focus on building defensive positions, PFC James N. Kaylor and LCPL Roger Yamanaka, who had been active in the same church (although they attended different high schools), were in the same unit at Khe Sanh, E/2/26, but unaware of each other at the time! Yamanaka's father had been Kaylor's father's attorney, and Kaylor remembers the entire family as nice people. Not only was Kaylor was unaware of Yamanaka being in E/2/26 with him on Hill 861-Alfa, but he was also unaware he had been killed until he returned home![2235]

PFCs Craig W. Tourte and Donald B. Saunders were with Headquarters Battery, 1/13 when Saunders was ordered by Sgt. Michael Secli to join a working party adding sandbags to their Major's bunker. While there, a mortar round hit him in the ribs. "He never knew what hit him." Tourte collected his personal effects to send to his parents. Although unmarried, Saunders had two small boys.[2236] Saunders had enlisted in the Marine Corps on 28 September, his father's birthday. He had participated in the cross-country team while attending Belleville High School, a team which won the Big Ten Conference Championship in 1965.[2237]

05 March 1968

HOLLIMON, PVT Billy Michael	**H/2/26**

06 MARCH 1968

ALDRIDGE, PFC Herbert Ray	**B/1/26**
ANDERSON, PFC David George	**H&S/1/26**
ANSELMO, SSGT William Frank	**APS-15**
BEALE, PFC George Eugene	**2/26**
BEAUFORD, PFC Willis Jr.	**B/1/26**
BOYER, PFC Charles Goodhue	**H&S/1/26**
BRIGNAC, CPL Joseph Paul	**B/1/26**
BUMSTEAD, PFC Donald Royce	**H&S/1/26**
CLARK, LCPL John Howard Jr.	**2/26**
CONLIN, SGT Jeffrey Francis	**311 ACS**
ELLIOTT, PFC George L III	**A/1/13**
ELLISON, Robert	**Civilian**
GRAY, PFC Michael Douglas	**H&S, FLSG A**
GRZEGOREK, PFC James Andrew	**H&S/1/26**
HALL, PFC Blucher Ray	**H&S/1/26**
HAMPTON, LTC Frederick Jordan	**311 ACS**
HELGESON, 1/Lt Ellis Eugene Jr.	**311 ACS**
HICKS, PFC Paul Everett	**G/2/26**
HIGGS, PFC Ralph Edward	**H&S/1/26**
HOLLAR, PFC Howard Eslie	**H&S/1/26**
HORVATH, PFC Robert John	**H&S/1/26**
JACKSON, LCPL Andrew	**F/2/26**
KENNEDY, CPL Larry Scott	**A/1/13**
LATSHAW, PFC Harry K	**G/2/26**
MACMILLAN, LCPL Thomas	**K/3/26**
MARTURANO, PFC Joseph Anthony Jr.	**G/2/26**
McCOSAR, LCPL Winford	**B/1/26**
MEAD, PVT Dennis Michael	**D/1/26**
MEDEIROS, CPL Dennis J	**H/2/26**
MILES, PFC James Edward	**H/2/26**
MINCH, PFC Roger Carl	**H&S/1/26**
MOORE, SGT Dallas Henry	**311 ACS**
MOORE, PFC James Ezra	**G/2/26**
MOSS, PFC Thomas John Jr.	**H&S/1/26**
O'HARE, PFC Richard James	**G/2/26**
PIZARRO, CPL Vic Manuel	**A/1/13**
PRESLEY, PFC Ronnie Calvin	**H&S/1/26**

[2234] General Westmoreland 021045Z/Mar68, MAC 02954. (In Westmoreland *v.* CBS files).

[2235] Conversation with James Kaylor, 17 January 1992; letter from James Kaylor to Earle Breeding, undated.

[2236] Letter from Craig W. Tourte, 24 November 2003; email on Khe Sanh message board dated 04 March 2003.

[2237] Craig W. Tourte, "Every Single One is Important," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., *Red Clay*, Issue #61 (Spring, 2005), p. 12.

RIOS, SSGT Noel Luis	APS-15
ROBINSON, CPL Samuel Percell	2/26
RODRIGUEZ, PVT Domingo Jr.	H&S/1/26
RUSSELL, PFC John Malcolm Jr.	H&S/1/26
RYAN, CPL Ronald Royce	B/1/26
SEARS, CPL Michael	H&S/1/26
SMITH, LCPL James Herbert Jr.	SupCo, FLSG-A
STANCIU, LCPL Kenneth Allan	K/3/26
STRONG, CPL Stanley Grant	C/1/26
TAYLOR, PFC James Otis	2/26
TAYLOR, LCPL Louis Gains	A/1/26
TERHUNE, PFC Daryl Bert Jr.	G/2/26
TERRELL, PFC William Lee	A/1/26
TONER, HN Louis Joseph	H&S/3/26
VICKERS, LCPL Robert Lee	A/1/26
WALDRON, MSGT Howard Bert	H&S/1/26
WEST, PFC Stephen Alan	H&S/1/26
WIENCKOSKI, PFC David Raymond	L/3/26
WILLIAMS, LCPL Hollis Jr.	H/2/26
WILLIAMS, PFC Thomas Hansford	H&S/1/26

LCPL Thomas J. Tompkins, a communicator with 26th Marines Regiment staff, was sitting in a large group beside two C-123s at the DaNang Air Base lined nose to tail on his right, waiting for transportation to Khe Sanh. After a black Staff Sergeant walked through the middle of the group counting heads and moving people around, he said that the group to his left would get on the first C-123 and told the group to his right that they would return to the R&R Center and fly in the next day. A few hours later, the group that returned to the R&R Center learned that the first plane had been shot down.[2238]

One Marine, LCPL Hector L. Perez [B/1/26] had gone to mail a package to his mother and missed the plane.[2239]

LCPL Bruce W. Stuckey [B/1/26] was assigned #63 on the flight to Khe Sanh, but while he was making a "head-call" someone else answered to his number and boarded the aircraft. Because his name was on the list, his parents were subsequently informed that he was MIA.[2240]

PFC James A. Carter [A-2/1/26] started to get his gear ready to board the airplane when his number was called, but realized someone had picked up his rifle by mistake. He went to the plane to look for it, but was unable to locate it. The plane took off and he was later reported as MIA, and then KIA.[2241] PFC Michael W. Thompson [also of A-2/1/26] accompanied PFC Carter in the search for the rifle, left the aircraft, went to their Battalion supply (rear) to check out another rifle, and arrived too late, missing the flight by 5 minutes.[2242]

Cleophas Kearney was crew chief for the plane, but didn't embark "because I was told it was already overbooked."[2243]

The Marines of MACTU-62 (Marine Air Control Tactical Unit) ran the air tower at Khe Sanh Combat Base who provided air traffic control service and radar ground control approach to all aircraft using the Khe Sanh airfield. Because of this job and proximity to the airstrip, MACTU-62 took numerous casualties to personnel and equipment, including two wounded Marines that took their third Purple Hearts, the death of their Commanding Officer, Capt William Flahive on 31 January, and the destruction of most of their equipment above ground including the original air tower.[2244]

At 1530H on the afternoon of Wednesday, 06 March 1968, LCPL Larry Gaffney was on duty as the "tower flower" and Sgt Robert E. Powell on duty as the "scope dope"[2245] when a C-123K Provider, Callsign BOOKIE 762 (#54-0590) broke out of the clouds, ready to land with its 44 passengers and crew of 5.[2246] Gaffney relayed the visual contact to Powell and then quickly scanned the runway to ensure it was clear of trucks and people.

"Larry also checked the sky west of the runway, and to his shock and amazement there was a little O1E Bird-dog.. turning a steep left base to final for the opposite end of the runway! Head-on into the other plane!!! The

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[2238] Letters of Thomas J. Tompkins, 5 May 1994 and 25 April 1997.

[2239] UPI Release, 6 March 1968, printed in Quincy, Il.: *Herald-Whig*, "C123 Downed at Khe Sanh, 47 Die," p. A2.

[2240] Statement of LCPL Bruce W. Stuckey in Library of Congress MIA file, Reel #420, Folder #5, Rios, Noel L.

[2241] Statement of PFC James A. Carter, in Library of Congress MIA file, Reel #280, Folder #54, Anselmo, William.

[2242] Statement of LCPL Michael W. Thompson in Library of Congress MIA file, Reel #280, Folder #54, Anselmo, William.

[2243] Conversation with Cleophas Kearney, 17 December 2005.

[2244] Comments of Capt Richard W. D'Ambrosio, USMC Oral History Tape #2621. The air tower received a direct hit early in the siege battle, detonating on a sandbag near the lower corner of the control shack. The next day, a new "tower" which was only about 7-ft. high was constructed to direct air traffic at Khe Sanh. ["Khe Sanh's Traffic Unit Digs Deeper," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:10 (8 March 1968), p. 12.]

[2245] Letter of Richard G. Rasmussen, 7 January 1985. Sgt Rasmussen served in MACTU-62 during the siege battle at Khe Sanh. "Tower flower"=term used by MACTU Marines for the air tower controller on duty; "scope dope"=term used by MACTU Marines for the radar controller on the GCA.

[2246] 3rd MarDiv COC 061320Z/Mar68, SITREP for 26th Marines for 061800H, in III MAF COC Journal and File #319 and III MAF Journal File, SCOTLAND, Pt. 5 (25 Feb – 8 Mar 68); 3rd MarDiv COC 061402Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #507, Para. 4.E.; Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 140. "BOOKIE 762" is identified in Letter of Richard G. Rassmussen, 7 January 1985. The plane was attached to the 311 ACS, 315 ACW, USAF, Phan Rang, detached to DaNang, with 49 aboard (5 crew and 44 passengers including a civilian photographer).

O1E had descended through the clouds VFR (visually) and didn't contact anyone. It was piloted by a South Vietnamese aviator.. and there was a U.S. Special Forces Colonel riding in the back seat as a passenger.

"Larry immediately transmitted in the blind on all frequencies.. instructing the O1E to take it around in both English and Vietnamese. VNAF pilots were notorious for flying where they wanted without contacting control towers. Larry did the next logical thing in accordance with common sense and procedure; he immediately went to the aircraft that was communicating with the ground. To avoid the collision he instructed Bob to give BOOKIE 672 a go around due to no radio opposite direction traffic.

"All this happened in .. about 30 seconds with incoming artillery exploding on and near the runway. As is standard evasive flight on a go around, the C-123 turned right 90 degrees, pulled her nose up and started to climb adjusting flaps, ailerons and drawing up its landing gear as she tried desperately to climb into the safety of the overcast skies. This was a fatal position for the C-123 because as she climbed her underbelly was exposed to the point blank fire of the enemy guns dug into the mountains just north of the runway. There were several bursts of .50 caliber machine gun fire and some recoilless rifles. Everyone on the base could see her get hit. She lost three of her engines in the barrage but managed to climb to about 4,000 feet and hoped to reach DaNang on the lone prop engine. As she disappeared into the clouds Larry sent as many helicopters as possible (those without external loads and not carrying wounded) about four or five—two HU1Es 2 CH-46s, and I believe one CH-53 hot on the trail of the damaged C-123.

"In the mean time the little O1E did not land, rather it made a low pass down the runway. Larry memorized the numbers on the side of the fuselage. [The C-123].. made it a few miles east of Khe Sanh when it simply lost altitude and crashed into the side of a steep mountain. The choppers that had gone after it caught up to her moments after the impact and there was an immediate explosion and intense fire... The helicopter remained circling the site for a long time and searched intensely for survivors.[2247]

The aircraft crashed on the north side of the DaKrong River at XD933404. Helicopters were at the crash site within 2 – 3 minutes and COVEY-243 and HAMMER-91 (HILLSBORO) went to the crash site and reported complete destruction[2248] and no survivors.[2249] "A forward air controller who had the aircraft in sight saw an explosion and fire on the left wing of the aircraft, then observed it as it rolled into a vertical dive from an altitude of 2,700 feet, and crashed. A huge fireball was seen to arise from the ground. Neither the forward air controller nor the pilot of a helicopter which arrived within a few minutes observed indications that any of the crew or passengers had survived."[2250]

The next day, 7 March 1968, the group that remained at DaNang boarded another C-123 and took off for Khe Sanh, landing at Phu Bai as an intermediate stop. After landing, the pilot of the aircraft drove the aircraft off the airstrip into the sand and walked away. "We were told his buddies were killed the day before and he was in no condition to fly the aircraft. We waited several hours for a new pilot to arrive,"[2251] took off for Khe Sanh, and arrived at Khe Sanh.[2252]

Also on 7 March 1968, the VNAF O1E again appeared over the airstrip at Khe Sanh and rolled out on the runway past the tower. "Larry opened up on it with both barrels of [Major Havlik's] shot gun putting some holes in the side of its fuselage. The next day they medevaced Larry out for mental stress."[2253] 16 years later, Larry was in tears as he related all this to his friend, Rick Rasmussen;[2254] "..convinced—and I must agree with him—that if that damn O1E hadn't broken the rules, if he had called the control tower, [the] C-123 would have landed safely and the 49 young men on board might be alive today."[2255]

Most of the passengers aboard were returning to KSCB from R&R or previous medevacs, and were close friends of the "old-timers" on the base. Lt William Smith lost his two radio-operators, PFC George L. Elliott, III, and Cpl Larry Scott Kennedy:

"PFC Elliott had a photographic memory. He ended up handling the radios the night that the ammo dump flew. I took him to battalion with me and Elliott was unbelievable. He was a Private who told me when I first arrived there, 'What are you grabbing the handset for?' He said, 'All the officers are exactly the same. I went to communications school; I'm carrying the radio. You leave the goddamn radio alone! You tell me what to say.' He said, 'You want to carry the radio? You want to go to radio school? I'll let you carry it. But don't be grabbing

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[2247] Letter of Richard Rasmussen, 7 January 1985.

[2248] 26Mar ALO Log entry for 6 March 1968. The ALO Log was the regimental Air Officer's notebook used at one time or another by Captains Donahue, Fitzsimmons, and Graves. It remained in the regimental COC the day the 26th Marines departed and one of the radiomen, LCPL Michael J. Archer, retrieved it and kept it with his gear. It had been with his Vietnam memorabilia until it was forwarded to Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe 30 May 2002. UPI press release, 6 March 1968, printed in Quincy, Il, *Herald-Whig*, 6 March 1968, "C123 Downed at Khe Sanh, 47 Die," p. 2A.

[2249] 3rd MarDiv COC 061400Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #507.

[2250] Letter from Major General Robert J. Dixon, 10 December 1968, to CO, 1st Marine Brigade, in Library of Congress MIA file Reel #420, Folder #5, Rios, Noel L.

[2251] Letter of Tom Tompkins, 5 May 1994.

[2252] Letter of Tom Tompkins, 25 Apr 1997.

[2253] Letter of Richard Rasmussen, 7 January 1985; Conversation with Richard Rasmussen, 10 March 1984.

[2254] Conversation with Richard Rasmussen, 9 March 1984.

[2255] Letter of Richard Rasmussen, 7 January 1985.

my radio!' I said, 'Fine.' And it was the hardest thing for me to learn because when we're under fire, to take the radio was like grabbing a bottle; all officers did it. Once I learned and developed faith in the kid—he was only 17 ½ or something like that, but he had a mind that was like a steel trap. He had an incurable sense of humor. He could remember three or four sets of coordinates that people were throwing at him at once and repeat them flawlessly. He was great."[2256]

Lt Smith recalls one time when he and Elliott had just come off operations from Hill 861 and Elliott went into the Headquarters Battery supply tent for some jungle utility trousers. The Supply Sergeant said, 'We don't have any; the grunts get them all first and we don't get any.' So he walked around the corner from the supply tent, angry. The anger turned into rage when he spotted a Marine carrying 10, 15 pair of brand-new jungle utilities out of the tent. "He went apeshit—out of his mind! He took his .45 and started shooting—holes in that tent like you wouldn't believe! He was crazy, absolutely crazy. He kept screaming, 'I'm a field Marine and can't get trousers, and these goddamn "rear echelon pogues" get all the trousers!' He had just made Lance Corporal and was busted back to Private again!"[2257]

Elliott and Kennedy (who had been assigned to Lt Smith later as a Scout Observer during an operation Smith accompanied out of Lang Vei before the siege) had gone on R&R separately[2258] and, while they were at DaNang, called Smith: "They called me on the land-line, 'Lt can we have an extra day together?' And I said, 'Yes, you can have an extra day together, but get here tomorrow.'"[2259] They should have returned to Khe Sanh on March 5th, but now they were on the flight of March 6th.[2260]

LCPL William Terrell was also an "old salt" of Khe Sanh days. On Thursday, 3 August 1967, he had asked Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe to take a photo of him with a canister with Russian markings on it, and then gave the canister to the Chaplain.[2261] Also on the flight was the mild-mannered clerk typist ("Remington Raider") for C/1/26, Cpl Stanley Strong who had received some shrapnel in his leg. Cpl Strong always attended religious worship services, and was a married man.[2262] After treatment on the hospital ship he was returning for duty at Khe Sanh.

Robert Ellison was a civilian on the flight. Ellison had lived for some six weeks in the trenches[2263] with the Marines of B/1/26, and even assisted the Marines who went out to rescue survivors of the Jacques' patrol on 25 February move through a mine field. Ellison knew where the mines were. He had taken photos of the return of Jacques' body from that patrol along with other photos that appeared on the cover and inside the 18 March 1968 issue of *Newsweek* ("The Agony of Khe Sanh") while he was working for Evans Photo-Journalism, Empire News, based in Saigon. He had delivered his photos, but felt he hadn't quite captured what he wanted to say visually about Khe Sanh and also didn't want to leave those he had come to know so well until they also left Khe Sanh. So, unmanifested, he was on the flight of the C-123 on 6 March.[2264]

Ellison had studied at the University of Florida in Gainsville to be a herpetologist and got to taking photos of snakes and reptiles and learning photography through the man who was doing the newspaper for the university. He then changed his major to journalism, and subsequently did major civil rights photography during the Selma March with Dr. Martin Luther King. When Dr. King was assassinated, the *Ebony* magazine was ready to go to press and all was tossed out in order to devote the issue to Dr. King, except for a piece they wrote on Robert Ellison that they left in the beginning of the magazine, a tribute they included for what he did on the Selma march and the voter registration effort.[2265]

Ellison was awarded (posthumously) the Overseas Press Club Award for the photographs that appeared in the *Newsweek* issue.[2266]

Ellison died at the age of 23, the same age that his father died during World War II (in 1944)—and, there were 23 years separating their deaths![2267] Not only his father (Albert "Jack" Ellison of the 11th Airborne Div, but his entire family had a rich military background. His great-grandfather founded the Western Military Acad-

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[2256] Conversation with William Smith, 16 March 1985.
[2257] Conversations with William Smith 13 January 1990 and 24 June 1991.
[2258] Conversation with William Smith, 23 March 1985
[2259] Conversation with William Smith, 24 April 1988.
[2260] Of course, given the large number of those traveling on the 6th, it is apparent that passengers were unable to depart from DaNang for several days, and departure on the 5th would not have occurred anyway. During the siege, due to priorities assigned for medevacs and re-supply, as well as foggy weather, getting a flight into Khe Sanh was an exceedingly difficult process.
[2261] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 3 August 1967. Terrill entered active duty 13 September 1966 in Nashville, Tn.
[2262] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 25 January 1968.
[2263] Comments of Mrs. Miriam Eaton at Khe Sanh reunion 3 July 1993, printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran* 1:4 (Winter, 1993), p. 4.
[2264] Conversations with Mrs. Miriam Eaton, 01 March 1993 and 03 June 1993. Mrs. Eaton is Robert Ellison's mother, having re-married following the death of her first husband.
[2265] Conversation with Mrs. Miriam Eaton, 1 March 1993; Faas, Horst and Page, Tim, *Requiem*, New York: Random House, 1997, p. 319, "Robert Jackson Ellison," quotes *Ebony*, Ellison as "the young white photographer who lived free of prejudice, full of understanding and respectful of the rights of all men."
[2266] Conversation with Mrs. Miriam Eaton, 01 March 1993.
[2267] Conversation with Mrs. Miriam Eaton, 29 October 2002.

emy in Alton, Illinois, where Ellison attended high school, and nearly everyone of age, including two of his aunts, served in the military during World War II. "While he was not a proponent of the war, Elliso's passion for the soldiers, sailors, Maries, and airme he covered shows I his photographs, capturing their every thought ad emotion."[2268]

James Hampton had planned a trip to Vietnam for over 30 years: "If you ask me why, I couldn't give you a logical answer. I was looking for a man I can't remember, that I know a lot about. I know his statistics, the facts, figures and history, but I never really got to know him personally because on March 6, 1968, near Khe Sanh, Vietnam, the C-123 he was flying was shot down leaving no survivors. He is my father."[2269] James Hampton returned to Vietnam, and with only two days remaining on his visa and through great difficulties, found himself on the plateau that had once been KSCB. "I tried to imagine the horror of the bloody battles fought here. I walked away from our guide and oriented myself with maps and diagrams of the base... The distant mountains were the key. That was where the anti-aircraft guns had been and that was where his plane was. The last thing my father saw were those mountains rushing up at the end of his life. My throat tightened. I whispered 'Hi Dad' to the mountains. The sound of my voice on that quiet hillside startled me. 'I have come to tell you Dad, how much I love you and miss you and that your son grew up OK. Can you hear me?' Turning away, I wiped the sweat and tears from my eyes. I had come to speak to my father, and I had done it as best I knew how. I climbed back into the car and whispered a quiet goodbye."[2270]

The younger brother of PFC Daryl Terhune—and the whole family—remained perplexed over the death: "In March of 1968 our family was notified that Daryl was officially listed as MIA. Later we were told that he died on 3/6/68 in a plane that was shot down at Khe Sanh. I don't think anyone in the family has ever believed that. His fellow soldiers said that he was not scheduled to be on that plane. There was never an official roster as to who was on the plane. And, we received two calls four months later from an overseas Asian operator trying to connect a collect call that went dead when we tried to accept."[2271] When the death notice appeared in the local paper, the younger brother, Mark, was sent to obtain copies: "One of the longest days of my life was collecting newspapers from the neighborhood. Mom wanted to send copies to relatives and she sent around cause I was the youngest. I had to stop at each walk to dry my eyes before knocking. Then the condolences when I explained what I wanted just made them start back up again."[2272]

Master Sergeant Howard Waldron had served in the Marine Corps during World War II and Korea, and had been away from the Corps sufficiently long that he yearned to return. After he visited all his family members, he rejoined. He had two children from his second marriage—four and six years of age when he died after 26 years of active service. His nephew, David, and one of his sons later also served in the Marine Corps—"it was a family tradition [to serve in the Marine Corps]."[2273]

Victor Pizzaro's brother, Nelson Marquez, was serving with the 26th Infantry, U.S. Army, at Cu Chi at the time of the crash.[2274]

On 6 March 1968, Sgt William F. Anselmo, USAF, and Sgt Noel L. Rios, USAF, were directed to proceed to Khe Sanh to repair 463L equipment, specifically, the steering mechanism of a rough terrain forklift. After they manifested on an aircraft, tail number 662, mission number 701, the aircraft was unable to take-off due to maintenance problems. Another aircraft, mission number 702, departed DaNang for Phu Bai where they embarked Marine passengers, proceeded to Khe Sanh, and crashed. Although it could not be verified, it was assumed that Anselmo and Rios boarded the C-123, tail number 590, 702 mission, after the previous aircraft was unable to proceed to Khe Sanh. They were not manifested. Although not seen by USAF aerial port personnel at Phu Bai, the presence of four or five pallets of beer and sodas which had to be palletized on a speed pallet, while not of great significance, might relate to the four or five pallets of beer and soda that Anselmo and Rios had with them when they departed DaNang for their buddies at Khe Sanh. This gave credence to the assumption that they probably boarded the aircraft after the other passengers had on-loaded.[2275]

At 1133H on 25 March, Co E/2/3 conducted a heliborne assault from XD895406 to an LZ at XD920410 in preparation for recovery operation of the crashed C-123.

[2268] Jeff Kollath, "An Instinct for Light: The Photography of Robert J. Ellison," Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation: *The Bugle* 13:4 (December, 2007). Some of Ellison's photographs were exhibited at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in 2008. His mother, Miriam Eaton, had donated all his letters, photographs, and artwork to the Museum.

[2269] James Hampton, "Getting to Goodbye: A Homage From a Son to His Father," *Tampa Bay Magazine*, March/April, 1996, pp. 58-61. (Quote on p. 58).

[2270] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

[2271] Letter from Mark Lee Terhune, 2 May 2000.

[2272] Letter from Mark Lee Terhune, 7 December 2001.

[2273] Conversation with David F. Waldron, 14 May 1997. David Waldron was Howard Waldron's nephew.

[2274] Conversation with Nelson Marquez, 14 March 2002.

[2275] Letter from 15th Aerial Port Squadron, 17 March 1968, Subj: Report of Missing Personnel, Sgt William F. Anselmo, AF17696843 and Sgt Noel L. Rios, AF12576605, in Library of Congress, MIA file, Reel #420, Folder #5, Rios, Noel L. Anselmo and Rios were assigned to 15th Aerial Port Squadron (15 APS) and attached to the 463L Maintenance Section of the 366th Transportation Squadron. The C-123, tail number 662 was "down" due to an inoperative nose wheel.

At noon, they found the remains of the C-123 aircraft at XD933406 and commenced recovery operations until 1745H. A search of the area disclosed the remains of scattered skeletons which made even an estimate of who or how many were on the aircraft impossible, 6 identification tags, parts of seven service record books (partially or almost totally destroyed), and assorted items such as health records, dental records, personal letters, wallets, and so on. All remains and personal effects were forwarded to A-Med on KSCB.[2276]

The crashed aircraft lay in a very steep draw with sides nearly vertical so that recovery personnel were unable to walk but had to crawl. The aircraft was 95% destroyed, approximately 40% by fire. The left wing was completely sheared off and while the right wing was intact, it was totally scorched by fire. The right engine was found in a draw about 35 meters from the body of the wreckage. The wreckage was in a compact area; no part was more than 35 meters from the main body of the wreckage. The area behind the wreckage was plowed up to about 45 meters which indicated the aircraft crashed at a very steep angle.[2277] Human remains had decomposed and only skeletal sections remained. Individual bones were scattered throughout the area with most skeletal parts found in the immediate area badly burned. Clothing was burned and deteriorated and there were signs of prevalent animal life. Axes and machetes were used to ensure access to all areas where documents, remains, or equipment might be located. After 5 hours and 45 minutes of searching, the possibility of locating additional remains, records or equipment was deemed extremely remote.[2278]

Evidently, not all remains were evacuated since, on 25 June, at 1330H, a patrol from D/1/4, came upon the remains of the downed C-123 and 15 bodies. "Graves Registration assistance was used in recovery. Also found were 30 M-16 rifles, 3 SRBs and other equipment including helmets and cartridge belts."[2279]

On 3 July 1968, an operation to recover all human remains and materiel which could assist in the identification of the remains was conducted at the crash site. Graves registration personnel accompanying the operation reported that further recovery operations would be fruitless. Remains were found both inside the aircraft and scattered throughout the underbrush near the crash site. As the recovery force departed, engineer personnel used demolitions to destroy communications equipment and damaged weapons in the aircraft.[2280]

At 1300, 5 November 1968, a C/1/4 patrol found one body at XD931405 completely decomposed and fully clothed with flak jacket. The patrol took the following items for classification: rims of glasses, lower part of jawbone with teeth, one Marine Corps gift pen, part of chain from dog tags and one cross, one stamp pad (Marine type) with initials and two letters of last name and one wrist watch.[2281]

The skeletal remains of 35 unidentified were buried in a mass grave at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, Missouri, on 23 November 1968.[2282]

It wasn't until 26 Sep 2003 that the USAF conducted a ceremony for Noel and Anselmo. "The Air Force had been able to identify all the other remains on the airplane well before this ceremony. The only remains left to be buried where Noel's and William Anselmo's. While the Air Force could not definitely say the remains were those of Noel and Anselmo, they had conclusively identified everyone else. Since Noel and Anselmo were known to be on the aircraft and there were 2 sets of inconclusively identified remains, the remains were finally declared to be theirs and the burial ceremony finally set up to take place. There were 30 Marines, 1 Navy Seaman, 4 US Air Force Airmen, and 1 civilian on the airplane."[2283]

[*By now Khe Sanh village was totally annihilated. An aerial photo recon mission flown on 06 March reported: "XD841381—Village of Khe Sanh, destroyed and abandoned including triangular fort at XD846377." Also destroyed was the old French Fort to the east of Khe Sanh Village: "XD859385—Square Fort, destroyed."*[2284]

Photo recon also disclosed NVA forces using the overrun Lang Vei Special Forces came as a storage depot.[2285] *A COVEY FAC noted moderate vehicle traffic along the Santa Fe Trail, XD690507 southeast to XD721493, indicating placement of heavy artillery positions, reported anti-aircraft and automatic weapons positions and mortar positions 1,000 meters between Hills 861 and 881S, digging 150 feet from Hill 861 and a perpen-*

[2276] 2/3 ComdC Apr68; 1MAR ComdC Apr68, p. III-A-12; 1Mar Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #42.

[2277] "C-123 Missing Aircraft Report signed by 2/Lt Ernest F. Lusky, 3rd Plt, 3/4, in Library of Congress MIA Rell #420, File #5, Rios, Noel L. (Almost all of the report is illegible, but does contain a legible diagram of the crash site).

[2278] CG III MAF 071350Z/May68 to SecNav, Washington, DC, in Library of Congress MIA file Reel #420, Folder #5, Rios, Noel L.

[2279] Bn 1/4 ComdC, 01-30 June 1968,, Part II, p. 3.

[2280] CG III MAF 060642Z/Jul68 to CMC, in Library of Congress MIA file Reel #420, Folder #5, Rios, Noel L.

[2281] 1/4 ComdC Nov68, Encl (1), p. 5.

[2282] Section 81, Grave 327-329.

[2283] Email dated 16 Nov 2003 contained in letter from William Jayne, 30 April 2008.

[2284] MACV J2 CICV 082010Z/Mar68, SUPIR #0538-68 (MSN #5690) in III MAF COC Journal and File, 09/10 March 1968 #86. The triangular fort was the old Huong Hoa District Headquarters/CAC OSCAR CP compound. SUPIR=Supplementary Photographic Interpretation Report.

[2285] III MAF COC 091247Z/Mar68, IPIR MSN M-03-07-720, in III MAF CIC Journal and File 11/12 Mar 1968 #198.

dicular trench to Hill 558 which was struck by air causing 10-15 meters of the trench to burst into flames.[2286]

Evacuation of Bru Montagnards began on 07 March when FOB-3 spotted a large group of the tribespeople heading for KSCB at 0715H. It was a tense moment, for simultaneously they also spotted a company-size NVA unit of NVA on Hill 471.[2287] *On 11 March, 2 large groups of Bru approached KSCB. FOB-3 screened and evacuated 243 with 223 more waiting evacuation.*[2288] *At noon, 13 March, FOB-3 reported 625 Bru refugees inside their compound and approximately 200 more waiting outside. An AO reported 500 more on a road headed generally toward KSCB.*[2289] *During the period 09-19 March 1968, 1,247 Bru refugees were air-evacuated from Khe Sanh to the Cam Lo Refugee Center, the majority being airlifted by helicopter to Dong Ha and then trucked to Cam Lo.*[2290]].

08 MARCH 1968

CHAMBLIN, SGT Donald Ray Jr.	**1/13**
JONES, PFC Donald Ernest	**K/3/26**
STORZ, SGT George William	**H&S/1/9**

As of 1350 local time at Khe Sanh, the weather report indicated a high of 79, low of 59, humidity at 80%, clouds 600 scattered, 1500 overcast, visibility 5 miles.[2291] At 1030H incoming at Khe Sanh increased from sporadic to heavy. Within 4 minutes 40 rounds of mixed artillery and rockets were received.[2292]

A mortar round landed on the airfield where a CH-46 had just landed causing 40 casualties.[2293]

On 8 March, Sgt Best was at the Khe Sanh airfield to fly to DaNang and begin his processing to return home to be discharged,[2294] along with his friend, Sgt George Storz.[2295] LCPL George A. Johnson (also of 106s, H&S/1/9) remembers Storz coming out in a vehicle to say good-bye to his buddies.[2296] He had enlisted in 1963 and served a previous Vietnam tour in 1965, and in September, 1967, was a Corporal with less than 6 months remaining on his enlistment. At that rank he was ineligible to be ordered to Vietnam. He was promoted to Sergeant and, arriving in Vietnam 26 November 1967, had less than 4 months remaining on his enlistment.[2297] "He did not want to go back. He appealed to his Congressman. His wife was pregnant. He wrote Congressman Clawson who wrote the Marine Corps and got a refusal."[2298]

While at the airstrip, it is assumed that Sgt Storz assisted in loading the wounded on the helicopter that was hit. (It was in this incident that PFC Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer, involved in carrying stretchers of the wounded to the helicopter, received wounds from which he would later die on 14 March 1968).[2299]

Days earlier, George had written home, "My main job now is to save my men's lives no matter how much they dislike it." He added, "I take good care of myself, always in my hole and I'm armed to the teeth, knives, pistol, rifle, grenades, everything." He wrote about how the top of his bunker collapsed—300 pounds of dirt weakened by tunneling ants, fell on him has he lay in the bottom bunk, unhurt. He wrote, "So there I was on the floor with big chunks of dirt pinning me down and about a million ants crawling all over me. All we could do was laugh."[2300]

His mother recalls: "George had written about the time at Khe Sanh when a buddy had shared his bottle of wine with him. He wanted so badly to reciprocate, asking at the end of every letter, 'Where's my wine?' His wife was afraid to send it for fear he would get tipsy and get hurt.. Finally she bought the wine.. and gave it to me to mail. It was very late at night when I popped some popcorn to cushion the bottle, and I went to bed intending to finish the package in the morning.

"That night I woke up about 12:30 and tossed and turned the rest of the night. I felt terrible in the morning, put some cheese and crackers in with the wine and

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[2286] Telephone call from MACV FWD to III MAF, in III MAF COC Journal and File 07/08 Mar68 #244.
[2287] 3rdMarDiv COC 071605Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #510.
[2288] 3rdMarDiv COC 122101/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #527.
[2289] 26Mar 130421Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #534.
[2290] 3rdMarDiv ComdC Mar68, Encl (1), p. 37.
[2291] 3rd MarDiv COC 082050Z/Mar68, Third MarDiv Weather Report, in III MAF COC Journal and File 09/10 Mar 1968 #327. (ZULU time is 7 hours difference from HOTEL time, the local time in Vietnam).
[2292] 3rd MarDiv, Resume of Telephone Call to III MAF, 081045H/Mar68, in III MAF COC Journal and File 08/09 Mar 1968 #63.
[2293] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for Friday, 8 March 1968. (There is no mention of this in the Opn SCOTLAND SITREPs. SITREP #513 indicates the cumulative KIA number at 0001 as 155 KIA and SITREP #516 indicates the cumulative KIA total at 2400 as also 155 KIA.)
[2294] Conversation with James Best, 26 March 1999. (PFC James A. Best and Sgt Storz flew from the States to Vietnam together and both were with H&S/1/9, 106s).
[2295] Letter from Mrs. Betty Storz, 7 Oct 2005.
[2296] Letter from Betty Storz, 22 December 1998.
[2297] Mrs. Betty Storz, "Article for Red Clay," 23 September 1999. (Mrs. Betty Storz was George's mother).
[2298] Conversation with Betty Storz, 30 March 1999.
[2299] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for Saturday, 9 March 1968. The Corpsmen of C Med said that Spicer had directed in the CH-46 medevac helicopter when it was mortared.)
[2300] Mrs. Betty Storz, "Article for Red Clay," in letter of 17 June 1999. Printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #45 (Autumn, 1999), p. 8.

took the unsealed package with me when I left to go to my teaching job. As I was driving to work, I listened to the radio as the announcer told about the fierce shelling that had gone on at Khe Sanh during the night. I was overcome with emotion and, crying, pulled over and waited until I could continue.

"When I got to the classroom, I put the package on my desk and left the room for a minute. I returned to find that kids had gotten into the popcorn. I rescued the package and hid it until after school, when I sealed it and mailed it on the way home. Not wanting the package traced to me, I did not include a return address. The next day, I wrote to George telling him I had sent the wine on March 8.

"On the 26th, we got the word that George had been killed on March 8th at about 10:30 A.M. Vietnam time, 12:30 California time."[2301] The helicopter was damaged, but Sgt Storz was the only one outside the chopper to be hit. "He was not killed instantly, but he was unable tol respond, but knew Jim [Best] was there... Jim Best told me that he and George discussed faith many times. He said, 'George was a true Christian. He would not leave the bunker normally, because he was afraid he would get hurt. But whenever we heard that Chaplain Stubbe was coming, George would go to hear him and he was not afraid. He and I took Communion every time he came."'[2302]

At 1220H, "A" Battery, 1/13, received one incoming round severely damaging Gun #3.[2303] Although no personnel casualties are indicated in the official SITREP, Sgt Donald R. Chamblin, Jr., a wire chief of 1/13, was mortally wounded in the attack. Sgt Chamblin was one of the wiremen who frequently worked in the open while rockets, mortars, and artillery rounds exploded around him rather than taking cover in bunkers or trenches, in order to ensure communications by land lines[2304] which were always being cut by incoming explosions (as well as the shovels of Marines digging deeper trenches and bunkers).

Cpl Ernest Frank, one of the wiremen for Headquarters Battery, 1/13, found himself atop a pole holding the black comm. wire—poles fashioned out of welded together metal canisters used to contain artillery rounds. In a letter to his parents he writes: "Friday [08 March 1968] was another hectic day. I was climbing poles all day and splicing power lines.. I had just put one line up on a pole and was starting up with another line when I heard a pop in the distance. I jumped off the pole and crouched behind a bunker.. Then it happened! An artillery round landed about 30 feet away from us. It landed right between 2 bunkers where our Staff Sgt. in charge of the radio operators, our Sgt. who was chief wireman (telephone wires), and our supply Cpl. were crouching. It really was a horrible sight. I won't ever be able to forget that sight. The Staff Sgt. and the Cpl were pretty mauled up but are not okay as far as we know. (They were medevaced). the Sgt was only just 20 yrs. old and both his legs were completely blown off at the upper thighs. Our corpsman got him going for a while but after he was medevaced out of here he died."[2305]

Ernie Frank later added that Sgt Chamblin "..was sitting on his bunker and he was shaving. He had just made the comment to somebody, 'There ain't no Gook around to get me! I've only five days left!'... He was on the way out, and died before he got to Dong Ha or wherever they were taking him. It's something I can't get out of my mind. It's something that lives wit h me to this day... He had one leg completely blown off and the right leg was hanging on by a piece of skin, and he looked up at me like a dead man. He was in complete shock, and he said, 'Am I dead?' I said, 'No, man, hang in there!' The thing that bothers me to this day is that I wasn't able even to help at the time. I was just so devastated. I was in shock. I just went over and puked. Everyone else came over and put him on a stretcher, but after they took him off, we ran one way and found his leg, and we ran that over there. I don't know if it made it out on the medevac with him or not. After a few hours we got the word that he didn't make it."[2306]

09 MARCH 1968

RUSSELL, Sgt David Adams	**H&S/1/26**
STOVALL, LCPL Wilbur	**HQ/1/13**
STRAUSBAUGH, LCPL Howard Albert	**H&S/2/26**
WILLIAMS, CPL Kenneth R Jr.	**2/26**

"Saturday [09 March 1968] was another hectic day. We were hit real hard by 'MR. CHARLES' (everybody has started respecting the enemy now). Our battery is really getting short of men. A round landed right next to the Bat. Hq. office and the 1st Sgt, a Sgt, and a Cpl got it. The Cpl was killed instantly and the other two were medevaced. We got all our lines back up except one or two to individual bunkers and the generator was working like a charm. Then it happened! An artillery round hit my tech bunker and blew half of it away. Lucky for me I wasn't in it at the time... Everybody around here is pretty well shaken up and some are about to have nerv-

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[2301] *Ibid.*

[2302] Letter from Mrs. Betty Storz, 7 Oct 2005.

[2303] 3rd MarDiv COC 090110Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #516, Para. 4.B.

[2304] Sgt. Donald R. Chamblin, Jr., Bronze Star Medal Citation.

[2305] Cpl Ernest A. Frank, letter to "Mom and Dad," 10 March 1968.

[2306] Conversation with Ernie Frank, 31 January 1997. Ernie Frank died 2 September 1997 of a heart attack. Perhaps the reason Sgt Chamblin is not indicated as a KIA at Khe Sanh is that he died leaving it while being medevaced.

ous breakdowns. I know I'm not paranoid but I feel like I'm sitting on a bullseye."[2307]

Cpl Robert Holscher [HQ Btry, 1/13] remembers LCPL Stovall as tall, thin; "Willie was a short-timer, having only about 15 days to go until he rotated back. One of my last memories of him was his statement, 'I can't wait to get some of Ma's fried chicken.' He was really excited and anxious to get back to his family. Another Marine, [Cpl] Paul Turnbull, and I ended up taking Willie to graves registration and helped to survey his gear."[2308]

At 1100H, a LAPES [Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System] drop landed off target killing Cpl Williams.[2309] "On March 9, 1968 about 11:00 AM, we—Corporal Kenneth R. Williams, 2108298, USMC, Corporal Rickey L. Chran, 2285703, USMC, and Lance Corporal John T. Reilly, 2170864, USMC, were working in the mess tent of 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines. I walked out of the tent as I heard a plane approach. The skid pallet came out and started coming toward us. I yelled for everybody to hit the deck. Lance Corporal Reilly didn't hear me. I dove as I yelled, and Corporal Williams pushed Lance Corporal Reilly towards me. Corporal Williams didn't have time to get of the way himself."[2310] Williams had the nickname "Porky."[2311]

As Cpl Williams was killed instantly by the sliding pallet from the LAPSE drop, LCPL Howard A. Strausbaugh later died as a result of injuries from this same incident.[2312]

In 2002 Robert Frey posted an email on the Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board: "Gentlemen, I was involved in the resupply to you all in '68. I was flying C-130s as a loadmaster.. I performed the Low Altitude drops (LAPES) that resulted in one of my missions contacting the ground and leaving a substantial part of the airplane in a bunker. We did make it back to base, however the mission has haunted me in that I was directly responsible for the loss of your fellow Marines.."[2313]

1/Lt Nicholas S. Romanetz [Plt Cdr C-2, 1/26] responded: "My bunker was near the runway and I remember you made a couple of passes trying to line up with the runway in the fog. On about the third pass, the plane came out of the fog headed for a tall, 2-story bunker. The tail ramp struck the bunker and the ramp separated from the aircraft. The ramp came tumbling towards our position, all in very slow motion, and came to rest in a position normally occupied by a twin 40 or quad 50... you guys were doing your job, and as we all know, things like this happened and continue to happen.."[2314]

10 MARCH 1968

MOORE, PFC Lewis Wayne	**A/3rd Eng**

11 MARCH 1968

BEAN, SGTMAJ Donald Wayne	**H&S/1/26**
BOICOURT, CPL Jess Burton Jr.	**H&S/1/9**
MEYSEMBOURG, PFC Daniel L.	**B/1/9**
RUSSELL, LCPL James Lowell	**D/1/9**

[*Message from LtGen Cushman (CG, III MAF) to Col Lownds: "I thought you might like to know that the support provided Khe Sanh by FMAW [First Marine Air Wing], 7th AF, and 7th Fleet has been greater than any other air support effort in the history of warfare. From 22 Jan to 29 Feb, aircraft committed to Operation Niagara delivered 53,380 tons of ordnance, 2,500 secondary explosions and nearly 1,000 secondary fires were caused, 1,000 structures/bunkers were destroyed or damaged, and in excess of 100 trucks were destroyed. These statistics are attributed to only one-half of the 13,298 sorties flown. Ordnance dropped by remaining sorties was under radar control due to weather, and the damage caused was not directly assessed. This unprecedented support from the sky, combined with your masterful employment of ground weapons and units has caused the enemy to suffer heavy losses. You and your officers and men are making a great contribution. Keep up the outstanding work. Warm regards to all. LtGen Cushman sends."*[2315]]

At 1300H, Co D/1/9 received 3 rounds of 82mm mortars into their defensive position causing 5 WIA (3 evacuated). At 1435, an OP from Co "D" spotted one enemy bunker, 4 60mm mortars were fired at the bunker with good coverage of the target.[2316]

Official accounts fail to reflect the reality. Robert Sellick [D/1/9] was in LCPL Russell's fire team and remembers that Russell was known as "Bambi." "During our time in the perimeter we became very good friends and of course discussed going home and going to Detroit to buy a car direct, going to New York City in search of

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[2307] Cpl Ernest A. Frank, letter addressed "to Mom and Dad," 10 March 1968.
[2308] Letter from Robert Holscher, letter of 19 August 1993, printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran* 1:4 (Winter, 1993), p. 28.
[2309] 26Mar 091602Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #520, Para 4.B.
[2310] Statement of Cpl Rickey L. Chran in Navy and Marine Corps Medal (posthumous) file of Cpl Kenneth R. Williams, Jr.
[2311] Conversation with Michael Cook, 15 March 2008. Cook served as a cook with H&S Co., 2/26 on KSCB and Hill 558.
[2312] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 15 March 1968, in Navy and Marine Corps Medal (posthumous) file of Cpl Kenneth R. Williams, Jr.
[2313] Bob Frey, email posting, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, 25 May 2002.
[2314] Nicholas Romanetz, email posting, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, 26 May 2002.
[2315] CG III MAF 111412Z/Mar68 in III MAF Outgoing SPECAT EXCLUSIVE (1-27 Mar 1968).
[2316] 1/9 ComdC Mar68, Encl (1), p. 4. No KIAs are indicated, perhaps due to dying after being medevaced.

girls and just leaving Vietnam. Bambi always finished the conversation with 'if I get out of here.' He had been voted Best Looking in his high school and around his neck wore approximately 12 religious medals which were given to him by girls from his home town... On 11 March 1968, our squad was assigned to an observation patrol outside the perimeter. Bambi went on this detail.. We were on the uneventful OP for several hours before returning to the perimeter. Once inside we went to our hootches to stow our gear. When I exited my hootch I walked to Bambis' and called him out. He came out without his flak jacket on (I was wearing mine) and approached me from my left front... It was approximately 1530. At this time I heard a very loud and sharp explosion from behind me that seemed to echo in my head, and a sharp pain on my back, and was thrown to the ground on my left side. I could see a lot of blood but could not see Bambi. I called to [PFC Philip Trieste] Lindsay, who shared the hootch with Bambi, and he came right out and together with the rest of the squad took us to the BAS. It was so far away that the stretcher bearers had to be relieved several times. Once there I was put on the deck and still could not see Bambi... I found out three days later in a Navy hospital in New York that he had died approximately 1 hour after the mortar hit us."[2317]

At 1755, Co "B " received one round of 82mm mortar into their defensive position killing PFC Daniel Meysembourg.[2318] PFC Michael J. Guess [C/1/9] could hardly believe it; another Marine in the battalion was from the relatively small town of Madison, Wisconsin, an ultra-liberal, anti-war hot bed, capital of Wisconsin, home of the University of Wisconsin, that had put a referendum on the ballot calling for an immediate cease fire and withdrawal of U.S. troops after 9,.400 signed a petition (nearly 20% of the city's eligible voters).[2319] Mike Guess had attended Madison East; Daniel Meysembourg Madison Central. Guess frequently walked the long trench line to visit with his comrade from the same town, and they shared their letters from home, as many of the Marines did at the time. During one of these visits, the bunker took a direct hit and collapsed on them. Then, a few days later, another round hit and killed Meysembourg instantly. He had only been at Khe Sanh about two weeks.[2320]

CPL Boicourt, a mortarman with H&S/1/9, KIA this date, had an older sister, a Benedictine Nun. Lt Walker, the 81s commander, named his son after Jess.[2321]

Nita Bean was only 14 when her father, Sergeant Major Donald Wayne Bean, left for Vietnam. He had already served in WW II and Korea, and "he told me when he boarded the plane that he wouldn't come home."[2322] Was it a premonition—frequently enough mentioned by some of those who died at Khe Sanh to arouse an uncanny suspicion that those who were about to die knew it.

PFC James E. Griffin, after his discharge and earning his Ph.D., wrote of his "Top" to two high school teachers: "..if God shined his grace on you, you had a Top like First Sergeant Donald Bean.. First Sergeant of H&S, 1/26, he was my Top and we all loved him dearly... I do not think I ever knew how old he was then, but he had the kind of youthful face.. that you would like to have when you are that old. Husband and father of two young children, he was also father and friend to us all. Like any good father or Top, his only concern was for the well-being of his boys—his Marines. Oh, he could lay some shit on you if you screwed up and he pushed us hard at times but we understood and rarely complained because we knew that he was always there ready to work with us.

"In the afternoon, when the fog or clouds lifted, Top would come out of the bunker where he and four or five us lived and fill sandbags with us and watch the airstrikes that were taking place... I like to think that Top and I were very close. Maybe that is because I felt such a terrible loss the day he died washing clothes.. He always had a smile for everyone, a kind word of encouragement when the going got tough. In the morning he would sometimes say 'rise and shine boys, pat your ass because we made it through another night,' and that was enough to get the day started on a note of hope. At night or early in the wee hours of the morning when I was on radio watch, sometimes he would join me by the radio, our knees almost touching, and we would make hot chocolate or coffee and chat, not much, but a little."[2323]

Griffin recalls his last days: "He was always with us in the main part of the bunker, by the radios, the typewriters. But in those last 2 or 3 days, he was in another part of the bunker most of the time, and he had a picture of his family. He was very quiet—I would say, almost resignation. Not that he didn't go about doing his thing; he was a wonderful First Sergeant."[2324] "The night before he died he was sitting on his cot looking at some pictures when I got off radio watch. He asked me to sit down, to keep him company while I drank my coffee. We did not talk much, but I know he was thinking about his family,

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[2317] Letter from Robert Sellick, 13 February 1996. BAS=Battalion Aid Station. Note: PFC Lindsay was KIA 09 April 1968.

[2318] 1/9 ComdC Mar68, Encl (1), p. 4.

[2319] New York *Times*, Sunday, 3 March 1968, p. 4, "Madison, Wis., Puts War on the Ballot."

[2320] Comments of Michael Guess, April, 1986.

[2321] Letter from Mrs. Boicourt to 1/Lt Mike Walker, 19 May 1968.

[2322] Conversation with Mrs. Nita Bean Brown, 17 February 1996.

[2323] Letter of James Griffin to Brenda Fairbairn and 'Christa Vera, Lafayette High School, Williamsburg, VA, contained in his letter postmarked 18 May 1996 and printed in Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Issue No. 37 (Fall, 1996), pp. 16-17.

[2324] Conversation with James E. Griffin, 16 May 1996.

thinking of the things he would like to say to them, as we all so often did. I believe that Top knew that soon it would be his time to go home and this was his way of letting me know so that I would remember."[2325]

Apparently Christopher Lane [H&S/1/26] was the last person to speak with Bean: "He told me to go inside the bunker and tell everyone to come outside because the sun was shining, and he stepped inside with two water containers that he had filled from the water buffalo, and set them down. He carried the water to the bunker." The Top was outside, washing his socks. Lane said, "Top, I hope you're planning on drinking that water when you're done because we were rationing it." Top replied, "Oh yeah, that's right; I just want to get this Vietnam dirt out of my socks before I go home." He had something like 3 or 4 days before he left for the States.[2326]

Officially, during the period from noon to 6PM, KSCB and outposts received approximately 150 rounds of incoming mortar, rocket, and artillery fire resulting in 3 friendly KIA, 8 WIA (evacuated) and 12 WIA (minor).[2327]

[PFC Glen B. Rappold [B/1/13] was wounded on 12 March 1968[2328] and at the Khe Sanh Veterans reunion in Nashville, TN, 21 July 1990, told his story: "If it wasn't for our Corpsmen, I'd be dead today. The blast took me 15, 20 feet off the ground. My left leg was under my rear end. I kept screaming, 'O my God! Where's my legs?' I played football, baseball, soccer. I said, 'I'm not going home with only one leg!' I got hit in the left ribs and it looked like a squirt gun, squirting me in the face. I passed out 3 times... Two guys took me off the jeep on a stretcher. One was a soul brother; he had a big patch over his left eye, got hit in the face with shrapnel.. He dropped me off the stretcher because he slipped and fell, and I rolled off the stretcher... That night I had to urinate so bad. I was in an underground bunker. I got up off my stretcher and tried to get up, and I fell down twice. This big Mexican Sergeant—was 6-4, 250-pounds, comes in and says, 'What's wrong, Glenn?' I said, 'I got to urinate.' 'No problem.' Picks me up, takes me out, I do my thing, come back. I'm crying. He says, 'Why are you crying?' [Glenn is so choked up in telling this story, he can barely continue]. I said, 'Because us Marines really stick together!' [pause]. That's all I can say."[2329]

13 MARCH 1968

DELANO, LCPL Jimmy Lynn SptCo, 3rd Eng
MACAGBA, HM3 Edilberto Dula B/1/26

At 1330H, KSCB received several incoming recoilless rifle rounds killing LCPL Delano and causing damage to the water point.[2330] The Support Company, 3rd Engineer Battalion, maintained the pump for the water point; every day they went down to start the pump.[2331]

HM3 Macagba had arrived on KSCB in early March[2332] and ran out of the protective trench to bandage the head of one of the men who had been hit. The mortars continued exploding while he was providing medical assistance to the wounded Marine, one of which exploded near him almost decapitating him.[2333]

[A CIA memo of 13 March 1968 notes that although the 320th NVA Division moved from the central DMZ to coastal lowlands of Quang Tri Province, reducing the possibility that it would be used against Khe Sanh, a formidable concentration of enemy troops, perhaps as many as 20,000, still threatens Khe Sanh. Two battalions of the 325th Division's 29th Regiment redeployed from Khe Sanh to Hue, but additional NVA artillery units have recently moved down into position west of the base, more than compensating for the departure of these infantry units.[2334]

LtCol J.C. Studt relieved LtCol H.L. Alderman as CO of 3/26 on 14 March, and LtCol F.J. McEwan (former S-4 of 26th Marines Regt.) relieved LtCol James B. Wilkinson as CO of 1/26 (who became XO of 4th Marine Regt.)].

14 MARCH 1968

GREENE, SP4 Kenneth John SVC Bty, 8-4
SPICER, PFC Jonathan Nathaniel B/1/26
TYRCZ, PFC Walter Fred Jr. A/1/26

SP4 Greene of SVC Battery, 8th Battalion, 4th Artillery Regiment, 1st Fie,ld Force, US Army Vietnam, died from enemy artillery in an ambush on Route 9 near

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[2325] Letter of Griffin to high school teachers, 18 May 1996, cited.
[2326] Conversation with Nita Bean-Brown, 5 June 1996 in which she recounts what Christopher Lane told her in a telephone conversation to her.
[2327] 3rd MarDiv COC 122101Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #527, Para. 6.
[2328] Conversation with Glenn Rappold, 4 October 2002.
[2329] Comments of Glenn Rappold, Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion, 21 July 1990; printed in Khe Sanh Veterans Newsletter, Issue 12 (November, 1990), p. 16.
[2330] 26Mar 131030Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #535, Para. 4.A.; Ltr from John J. Pessoni, postmarked 14 December 2001.
[2331] Conversation with Billy K. Stewart, 14 December 2004. Stewart was the Gunny in charge of the Support Company detachment at KSCB, arriving in Khe Sanh in December, 1967, and remaining throughout the Siege. He does not recall the death of LCPL Delano.
[2332] Conversation with Edward P. Pershing, 15 May 1996. HM3 Pershing arrived at KSCB with HM3 Macagba about a week prior to this incident.
[2333] *Ibid.*
[2334] CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, Intelligence Memorandum, *The Continuing Communist Military Threat in Northern South Vietnam*, 13 March 1968, SC No. 01936/68, Paras 2, 3, and 24.

Camp Carroll, part of the 175mm gun support to Khe Sanh.[2335]

At 1120H, K/3/26 on Hill 861 (XD803443) reported that a Marine was killed when he tripped an NVA booby trap (made from a US M-26 grenade) that had been placed in their defensive wire.[2336] The Marine, PFC Walter Trycz (pronounced "tears"), a member of Second Platoon, A/1/26, that had been sent to the hill after it was attacked on 21 January, was conducting a wire check (to determine if the wire had been cut or any other evidence that the NVA were attempting to penetrate the perimeter or making preparations for an assault, e.g., placing of Bangalore torpedoes) when he detonated the device, receiving shrapnel in his back, face, and buttocks.[2337] The perimeter was thoroughly checked "because it is believed that NVA are aware of daily morning wire check and set the booby trap."[2338] Trycz, who had recently arrived on 861, was informed the night before that his wife had just given birth, and he was one happy trooper.[2339] Trycz was carried by some Marines to the nearby bunker housing one of the platoon's corpsmen, HN Rick Zunino,[2340] who gave mouth to mouth resuscitation—"my mouth was covered with blood"—but to no avail.[2341]

"On 12 January 1968, PFC Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer saw me concerning an application to be a conscientious objector. He had just arrived at Khe Sanh and said he had asked his chaplain at Parris Island who said, 'Wait until you finish your training;' he asked his chaplain at Camp Pendleton, who said, 'Wait until you get to your permanent duty station;' and here he now is, at Khe Sanh in Vietnam. He said his father is a Methodist minister, that he had never hunted or been in a fight. The chief thing he said was, 'I don't care what happens to me; I just don't want to hurt somebody else.' He said he's not afraid to give up his life and would like to work for the people here. He just doesn't want to kill. We immediately began the paperwork to write up his application."[2342]

His hero was Albert Schweitzer, and when it came time for him to be drafted, he did not feel he should run off to Canada, but enlisted in the Marines where he was told by the recruiter that he would become a dog-handler.[2343]

Spicer was initially assigned to B/1/26 Supply and was picked up at the plane, when he arrived at KSCB, by PVT George Anderson, and to get them their weapons. "Everything was going real good, when the Sgt. told me that one of the guys wouldn't take his weapon.. It turned out to be Spicer. Let's face it, we really got on that kid. But he held on to that big old Bible and kept saying that no matter what we did to him he still loved us. That kinda pissed me off.. I thought he was a coward.. But a few months later, I had a 180° turnabout in how I felt about Spicer. I was watching the CBS evening news from my hospital bed, when a picture of a young Marine in his dress blues, taken while he was in boot camp appeared behind Walter Cronkite. It was Pvt Jonathan Spicer. According to the news report, Spicer gave his life trying to save another Marine. But that wasn't all of the story. It seemed that Spicer wrote to his parents and told them what we did to him."[2344]

Of course, who can blame PVT George Anderson or the others in that group; we were, after all, about to be attacked, the signs of the times were evident in directives that everyone always keep their rifles with them, everyone always wear helmet and flak jacket, the cancellation of general messhall eating, the necessity to dig trenches and bunkers deeper, and so on. Everyone needed everyone else; we all depended on each other to take their place in defending the whole. Naturally, a weak link in the chain of defense provoked intense anxiety, expressed physically by the Marines involved.

Cpl Earl K. Clark [A/1/26 Supply] recalls the day Spicer reported aboard. The Co A and Co B Supply were co-located in the same GP tent: "There was normal conversation at first, business as usual. After a few moments however we heard a raised voice or two. If my memory serves me, it was Capt Pipes that was speaking at the time our attention was drawn to their area of the tent. He was not yelling at PFC Spicer as such. I think his voice raised out of frustration more than anything. He asked PFC Spicer how in the world he managed to get into a combat infantry unit if he was a bonafide conscientious objector. PFC Spicer explained to him his various stops along the way, mentioning that all had been documented in his service record. I remember Capt Pipes looking repeatedly at the record book, looking up now and then, asking a question from time to time. I think the longer Capt Pipes read the contents, the more frustrated he became. He was well aware of how the military bureaucracy worked at times—passing the buck here, let someone else take care of this... PFC Spicer kept his composure at all times. Things were pretty quiet in between questions and answers. You could cut the air with a knife, it was so heavy. We all became very still on our side.. If I were able to read Capt Pipes' mind I would say that he waffled between anger and frustration... I be-

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[2335] Letter from Mark Swearengen, 09 March 2007.
[2336] 3rd MarDiv COC 150358Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #539, Para 4.A.
[2337] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 14 March 1968, Ser #23 and 24.
[2338] *Ibid.*, Ser #24.
[2339] Conversation with Rick Zunino, 16 December 2004. Zunino was a HN at the time.
[2340] Email posted by Rick ("Doc Z") Zunino, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, posted 14 March 2002.
[2341] Conversation with Rick Zunino, 16 December 2004.
[2342] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry, 12 January 1968.
[2343] Conversation with Scott Miller, 18 November 1986.
[2344] Letter of George Anderson to Dennis Smith, 11 February 1991.

lieve in my heart that PFC Spicer was a CO. When he was explaining to Capt Pipes and others his predicament, his expressions were those of sincerity and honesty."[2345]

The First Sergeant of "B" Co., 1/26, approached the battalion Chaplain: "Chaplain, you have to do something about Spicer; he won't take up his rifle." The Chaplain, deserving a Chaplains Clerk, but not having one, suggested that he be transferred to be his Clerk, but since he didn't really need one, since the Chaplain's bunker was in the C Med area, to have Spicer become a stretcher-bearer to move the wounded to awaiting helicopters, as the Chaplain moved about the base. (There was no need to endanger another person in this peregrination nor a need to carry supplies, and there might not even be enough room during panicked dashing into a nearby trench or bunker during incoming). Therefore Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe wrote a note to the Top of "B" Company: "If possible, we would desire Spicer to help out at 'C' Med for such duties as stretcher bearer, holding IV bottles, and other general work. We can use all this kind of help we can get. I understand and appreciate the peculiar problems and circumstances with the men with whom he now is, and make the above request as a positive solution to alleviate the situation."[2346] Within hours, Spicer was at C Med.

With the revolving door of new working parties and Spicer being the one permanent person involved, Spicer soon assumed the job of coordinating the moving of casualties to awaiting helicopters. Working parties from the Recon Company at KSCB ("B" Co., 3rd Recon Bn augmented by a platoon from "D" Co.) came to know Spicer as "..a really hard person—almost crazy—getting stretcher bearers out of protective cover when it came time to move and care for casualties." Although the recon Marines were aware he was a conscientious objector, they all deeply respected his bravery under fire.[2347] During incoming when other stretcher bearers rushed to the protective cover of nearby trenches, Spicer remained with the casualty on a stretcher, reassuring the man, sometimes covering him with his own body. Dr. Edward Feldman [C Med] was quoted at the time, "What no one realized was that he was thoroughly unselfish and wouldn't hesitate to put himself in danger."[2348] "He gradually took on a very authoritarian role and even drew Sergeant stripes on his helmet. It was never resented. He recognized the need for someone to take charge because we would have different working parties every day, and he would just take charge, and I never saw anyone resent him."[2349]

About noon, a NVA mortar had wounded Jurate Kazickas, a free lance correspondent, and Spicer had led a 4-man stretcher-bearer group to carry her to a waiting helicopter for medical evacuation. When he returned to the C Med bunker, he retrieved a pair of small jungle boots in the big metal mount-out tub into which old field dressings, medical waste, uniforms which were cut off by the Corpsmen, and field gear was tossed. Up to this point, Spicer wore black high-top sneakers issued to Vietnamese soldiers—his feet were so small. Gleefully, he picked them up, but then, thinking of Jurate, told the doctor that these should accompany her. The laces hadn't been cut; they were in perfect condition. The C Med Doctor, realizing it was far too dangerous to run the boots out to the chopper, told Spicer to keep them. It was a moment of pure joy for Spicer. Gleefully he laced them up. "I watched the funny, happy, little Marine hopping about, warming us all with his own joy," said the doctor.[2350]

About six hours later, at 081600H, Spicer was helping evacuate the wounded, and while returning to the bunker, was wounded by shrapnel from an incoming mortar. He had ignored an officer who told him to get into a bunker and instead ran to the helicopter where men were having trouble loading the wounded onto a waiting helicopter due to the enemy shelling.[2351] Additionally, two men were wounded by shrapnel from the same mortar while waiting to fly out to Phu Bai.[2352] Although very seriously wounded, Spicer "warned his comrades to remain in their protective positions while he attempted to crawl from the hazardous area to safety by himself."[2353]

Dr. Donald Magilligan immediately opened Spicer's chest as Dr. Joseph W. Wolfe forced a plastic tube into his trachea and began pumping oxygen. Dr. Magilligan, (although unqualified to do so knew that if he didn't act, Spicer would die) suspected that a piece of shrapnel had penetrated the pericardium, the sac surrounding the heart.

[2345] Letter of Earl Clark, 4 March 1999, printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #46 (Spring, 2000), p. 12.
[2346] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe (1/26 "19") to "B" Co Top, 23 January 1968, Subj: Spicer.
[2347] Conversation with David Doehrman, 4 February 1984.
[2348] Quoted in John T. Wheeler, "Outcast Minister's Son Now a Hero to Marines,:" The Boston *Globe*, Monday, 11 March 1968, p. 8.
[2349] Conversation with Dr. Donald Magilligan, 1 October 1989. Dr. Magilligan died 20 June 1989 from skin cancer after having been the head cardiac/thoracic surgeon at the Ford Hospital in Detroit and later in a hospital in California. He was survived by his wife and five daughters. He had written a book (unpublished) concerning how his father suffered a heart attack in connection with his time at Khe Sanh during the siege, and how family members generally suffered.
[2350] John Randolph (The Los Angeles *Times)*, "A Few Moments of Joy With His New Boots," *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, Monday, 15 April 1968, p. 11.
[2351] "Heart Surgery at Khesanh Saves 'Dead' Marine Hero Who Refused to Kill," New York *Times*, 12 March 1968, p. 14.
[2352] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 08 March 1968, Ser: #64-67, note S2390916 [Spicer], S2276734 [Cpl Joseph R. Sherman], and M2272415 [PFC Harold D. Munger].
[2353] PFC Jonathan N. Spicer, Navy Cross Citation.

As Dr. Magilligan began giving massive blood transfusions, Dr. James O. Finnegan began heart massage, getting the heart to beat, put a finger into the small hole in the heart to stop the bleeding, and stitched up the hole. The heart beat strong, breathing was normal, blood pressure was 92, and all this took place in 15 minutes on the stretcher which served as the operating table. Spicer was then medevaced.[2354]

HM2 Braune, standing off to the side, said he was going to recommend Spicer for the Silver Star. "He did more work than any one of us," he said softly.[2355] Spicer was medevaced to Dong Ha, then DaNang, and finally to Tachikawa, Japan, where he died from infections on 14 March 1968. He was buried by Episcopal Vicar Calvin O. Schofield, Jr., in Miami, Floridca. At the funeral, his parents, his sister Donna (15) and brothers Bill (21) and Rocky (9) were present along with his brother Tim (17) in a US Marine uniform.[2356]

"That boy left us a lesson about living up to our convictions that we would all do well to remember and emulate,"[2357] wrote CPL Dennis P. Smith (who had been one of the Marines in B Co. Supply).

15 MARCH 1968

GAUGHAN, PFC Austin Michael	A/3rd Shore Party
LEWIS, CPL Clarence Henry	B/1/9
WALSH, PFC Charles	K/3/9
WOODARD, SSGT Paul Leroy	A/1/9

Officially, during the period from noon to 1800H, KSCB and outposts received approximately 185 rounds of incoming mortars and artillery fire resulting in one KIA, 3 WIA (evacuated) and 5 WIA (not evacuated).[2358]

LCPL Danny C. Hudson recalls Cpl Lewis: "We called him 'sweet Lou;' he was a big, black, muscle-bound kid, and it was his last day in Nam."[2359]

The Co "A" Gunny, Camille J. D'Hondt, remembers that SSGT Woodard "had more fear than any man I've ever known, but still kept pushing ahead. I talked to the Skipper about it and said, 'Let's try and get him out of here'—not relieve him—but one of the reasons that you could get him out honorably. I really respected the man. He was wanting to live for his little daughter."[2360] The insight of the theologian, Paul Tillich (who was a Chaplain during World War I and whose battlefield experiences determined much of his thought) notes that courage is not the absence of fear, but the affirmation of self in spite of the threat posed by the presence of non-being, of that which annihilates.[2361]

Sgt Carl Oksnee had served with SSGT Woodard 6 years previously in the Far East and was only about 5 feet away when he was killed. They were going out on a local patrol and he was standing in the trench, in the doorway to his bunker when a mortar round exploded on the top edge of the trench sending fragments of shrapnel that killed him. Just moments before, Woodard yelled to Oksnee, "Goddamn it, Carl! Get that helmet on!" as Oksnee was moving towards the wire perimeter. "I was just getting ready to put it on. I said, 'Yes, Sir!' And just then the round came in. What really hurt is Woody—they had just adopted a baby boy. They had tried for years, and Woody used to send home tapes all the time, and he and I had a lot of plans. We were going to get together back in the States. That one really hurt me."[2362]

PFC David W. Moody ("Bill") remembers Woodard as a very good man, "big, tall, black guy, bald-headed, a caring-for-his-troops type person, deep-voiced, rough-sounding person, but who had compassion."[2363] It was his last day at Khe Sanh; his replacement, a Philippino Staff Sergeant, who was in the bunker, was wounded in the same blast that instantly killed Woodard, taking out a part of his head. The trench in front of his bunker entrance did not have the usual "zig" to deflect shrapnel and the force of an explosion.[2364]

KILO Co., 3/9, was dug in on a hill northwest of Ca Lu at XD984485 providing security for reconstruction of

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[2354] "Heart Surgery at Khesanh Saves 'Dead' Marine Hero Who Refused to Kill," New York *Times*, 12 March 1968, p. 14. The article notes, "Neither of the three doctors has completed his residency. 'In the United States, we wouldn't even have been allowed near the operating table except to lift the man on and off,' Lieutenant Finnegan said." Dr. Magilligan added, "The operation would have been done by a senior surgeon assisted by 10 to 12 others."

[2355] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 8 March 1969.

[2356] "Kin Bury Gentle Hero of Khe Sanh," *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Friday, 29 March 1968, p. 6.

[2357] Letter of Dennis Smith, postmarked 22 Feb 1991.

[2358] 26Mar 151125Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #543.

[2359] Conversation with Daniel Hudson, 2 December 1991. Hudson places Lewis in the 16 April 1968 battle, however, and states that he "walked right up on top of a small group of enemy soldiers. They shot him point blank, and three others were hit." The 1/9 ComdC records that for this day there was a patrol from Co "D" of 1/9 at 1330 that came upon a trench line 20-ft. long with 4 fighting holes and 1 bunker, all estimated at 3 weeks old. An 81mm mission was called which destroyed the position. No casualties are indicated nor is there any patrol from Co "B" mentioned. It may be that Hudson misplaced Lewis in the 16 April battle. The ComdC states: "total incoming amounted to 5 82mm and 31 60mm mortar rounds. Casualties sustained by the battalion was one KIA and 8 WIAs." The 1 KIA probably refers to Woodard.

[2360] Conversation with Camille J. D'Hondt. Gunny D'Hondt died of a heart attack on 13 Jan 2000.

[2361] Cf. Tillich, Paul, *The Courage to Be*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952.

[2362] Conversation with Carl H. Oksnee, 4 July 1994.

[2363] Conversations with David William Moody, 24 April 1994 and 27 June 1994.

[2364] Taped comments of David William Moody, 9 June 1994.

Route 9 and the construction of Ca Lu airfield as part of the plan to life the Siege of Khe Sanh.[2365]

PFC Walsh, a 3.5-inch Rocket Team Leader[2366] died as a result of short rounds from a 4.2-inch mortar that was directed against several NVA running towards tall elephant grass.[2367] The Company Commander wrote Walsh's mother: "After your son was hit, we immediately had him treated by a corpsman and called for a medevac helicopter. Within 20 minutes we had your son on the way to Dong Ha where they have facilities to properly handle any type of wound. Your son made it to Dong Ha but was in too bad of condition for the doctors to save him. We did everything we could to help him before his medevac and we even had a corpsman on the helicopter with your son while they were flying him back to Dong Ha. The flight time is about 10 minutes. The hospital had an ambulance waiting at the airstrip to speed your son to the doctors... We had a memorial service the other day for your son. All the Marines of Kilo Company that could attend were there. We won't forget any of our Marines who are killed because they have given the maximum for their country and displayed the greatest bravery and courage."[2368]

[*In what was eventually to cause the death of hundreds of those in the Khe Sanh area, on 17 March 1968, COMUSMACV sent a message to Commander, 7th Air Force: "In order to support planned offensive operations in northern I CTZ, the following urgent defoliation missions must be accomplished without delay in order of priority listed: A. Route 9 from Khe Sanh to Bong Kho..*[2369] *A report issued by the Comptroller General of the United States shows flight paths of missions flown on 29 March along Route 9 as part of the clearing operations for Operation PEGASUS, and missions flown on 14 and 25 May and 16 June 1968 near Khe Sanh. Within 2.5 kilometers and within 28 days of spraying, an estimated 25,900 Marines were affected.*[2370]]

18 MARCH 1968

GOI, CPL Louis Charles B/1/13
PAYNE, CPL Robert Paul A/3rd AT

During the period 1800H – 2400H, KSCB and outposts received approximately 45 rounds of incoming mortar and artillery fire resulting in 1 KIA, 7 WIA (evacuated) and 11 WIA (not evacuated).[2371]

PFC Michael C. Loehrer [B/1/13] recalls the living situation: "People became badly constipated for fear of using the above ground outhouse. I recall not defecating for 10 days because the incoming was so bad. Late one night, even though we had just taken incoming, and even though the night was clear.. I couldn't wait any longer. I scurried to the outhouse. Fortunately I did not take incoming. Others were not so fortunate. Some people just used their helmets, but I shared a bunker with two others that was only 7 x 7 x 5 feet deep. I could not bring myself to use my helmet, even though we were confined to that stinking hole for three months.

"One of the three of us living in that tiny hootch was Cpl Lou Goi. He got tired of the confinement and decided to eat his C-rations just outside our bunker instead of inside, like we usually did. A mortar shredded him from head to foot, killing him instantly."[2372]

Goi was the only Marine in the battery that had been trained on the FADAC computer.[2373] Goi worked in the Fire Direction Center along with PFC Michael C. Loehrer, Sgt Dennis J. Hewitt, LCPL Philip D. Mineer, and a Marine named "Chief." "Lou was a 'sharp cookie' and was also favored by the CO—and for good reason: he was a neat guy."[2374] After Goi was killed, those determining the settings for the 105 and the charge resorted to using slide rules. Loehrer had a friend in LIMA, 3/26, in the western perimeter of KSCB, and received permission to visit him. "So I went up and visited him, and when I got back the next day, Lou had just—hours before, got blown away... The man I visited was one of the 6 that died in the recapture of Hill 881-North [on Easter Day, 14 April 1968]. We took Infantry Training Regiment together in Camp Pendleton and we were real close."[2375]

Captain William J. O'Connor had put out the word: "If you're out of your bunker, your helmet has to be on, your flak jacket has to be zippered. And I remember be-

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[2365] Shore, Moyers, *The Battle for Khe Sanh*, Washington, D.C.: HQMC, p. 133.
[2366] Letter of LtCol Edward J. LaMontagne, 17 March 1968. LaMontagne was CO of 3/9 at the time.
[2367] Letter from Ray Felle, 5 January 2002. Felle a Corpsman with First Platoon, K/3/9, at the time.
[2368] Letter of 1/Lt B. E. Bryan, Jr., to Mrs. Walsh, 20 April 1968.
[2369] COMUSMACV 171825Z/Mar68, MAC 07624 from MACCO C7, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 17/18 March 1968, #330. Bong Kho is at XD920420., about 4 miles directly east of KSCB on Route 9.
[2370] Report FPCD-80-23, 16 November 1979, *Report by the Comptroller General of the United States: U.S. Ground Troops in South Vietnam Were in Areas Sprayed with Herbicide Orange*, sent to U.S. Senator Charles Percy, B-159451, Appendix IV.
[2371] 3rd MarDiv COC 181300Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #556, Para. 4.A.
[2372] Letter from Michael ("Spider") Loehrer, 24 June 2002.
[2373] FADAC=Field Artillery Digital Analysis Computer, used to compute artillery settings and powder charge when fed coordinates.
[2374] Conversation with Michael Loehrer, 21 November 1992.
[2375] *Ibid.* The Marine KIA on 14 April was Cpl Reuben Carl McMakins, Jr.

ing really angry about that [incident]. [I guess] he thought: I'll do this real quick. Boom! He's dead!"[2376]

Kenneth Bartels [Motor Transport, 1/13] recalls Goi as self-conscious about being bald. "His main goal while he was there was to go to Hong Kong and get a wig or toupee, a custom made toupee to cover the bald spot on his head."[2377]

John Hargesheimer recalls Cpl Payne as "..extremely bright and had been trained in some of the most sophisticated communications schools in the Marine Corps. Somehow, when he was sent to Vietnam, his orders were changed and he was sent to Ontos. Bob was manning the communications bunker when it took a direct hit by a rocket. The bunker was destroyed and Bob was trapped underneath all the debris but still conscious. He had a crushed shoulder and the wound did not seem life threatening. A few days after evacuation we received word that Bob had died from complications of pneumonia. Before joining the Marine Corps, Bob had been a student in a divinity school but felt he was not doing enough for his country."[2378]

[*The cover of* Newsweek *dated 18 March 1968 contains a striking colored photo of the Ammo dump at KSCB exploding and the words, "The Agony of Khe Sanh," along with a collection of photos by the late Robert Ellison inside the magazine.*

On 18 March, an estimated 600 NVA assault the eastern perimeter defense manned by the 37th ARVN Rangers. The Rangers held, the perimeter was not penetrated, and 2 NVA were reported KIA.[2379]]

20 MARCH 1968

FELLOWS, COL Allen Eugene	**20th TASS**
VAN TASSELL, CPL James Warren	**D/1/26**
[DOW 5 July 1968]	

At noon, an incoming mortar wounded Cpl VanTassell, peppering him with shrapnel in his right leg, chest, and right arm.[2380] He was medically evacuated and died of his wounds on 5 July 1968.

Major Fellows launched from Ubon Air Base, Thailand, in a 02A observation aircraft [#6721338] on a solo FAC mission (COVEY 616) to support Khe Sanh. The last voice contact with Maj Fellows was at 1435H with the ABCCC (HILLSBORO) when he was at XD068059, some 50 miles SW of Khe Sanh. Radar contact was maintained until approximately 1500H. Loss of contact at this time did not cause any undue concern since this is a frequent occurrence for aircraft flying at low altitudes. When contact could not be reestablished, a communication check with other airfields was made to determine if the aircraft might have been diverted to one of them, with negative result. Aerial and electronic searches failed to find any trace of the missing aircraft or pilot.[2381] No trace of the pilot or aircraft was ever found.[2382]

22 MARCH 1968

BUSH, 1/Lt Paul William	**C/1/26**
EGGER, CAPT Walter Jacob	**C/1/26**
GROHMAN, GYSGT John Joseph	**C/1/26**
LYON, MAJ Donovan Loren	**559 TFS**
LYONS, PFC Carl	**B/3rd Recon**
SHANNON, LCPL Stephen Craig	**C/1/26**
SISSON, PFC Bennie Joe	**C/1/26**

[*On 22 March the NVA made it patently plain that while their infantry might be departing the battlefield at Khe Sanh, their artillery remained. From 1830H to midnight, NVA guns fired 642 rockets, artillery, and mortars into KSCB, the most concentrated shelling of the Combat Base. The barrage of incoming continued during the early morning hours of 23 March as 534 additional rounds struck the base from 0001H to 0600H. The total was in excess of 1100 rounds in one night.*[2383]]

LtCol Theodore Wilson Guy was flying as Aircraft Commander with Major Lyon as rear seat pilot in Number 2 aircraft in a flight of two F4C Phantoms from the 559 TFS, 12 TFW to strike a suspected automatic weapons site and known bunker complex on the road between Tchepone and Khe Sanh, approximately 15 miles west of Khe Sanh, directly across the Lao/SVN border. The flight had made two bomb deliveries on the target, receiving heavy ground fire from his left on his second de-

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[2376] Conversation with William J. O'Connor, 13 November 1994.

[2377] Transcription of tape from Kenneth Bartels, May, 1986.

[2378] Letter from John Hargesheimer postmarked 17 August 2004.

[2379] 3rd MarDiv COC 180559Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #553, Para. 3.A.; MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 8 July 1968, p. 11.

[2380] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 20 March 1968, Ser #31. During the period 1200 – 1800, KSCB and its outposts received approximately 105 rounds of incoming mortar and artillery resulting in 3 WIA (evacuated) and 8 WIA (non-serious): 3rd MarDiv COC 212550Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #563, Para. 4.A.

[2381] Library of Congress MIA file, Reel #286, Folder #138, Mission Data report, Biographic Report, 366 Combtsptfp DaNang 201730Z/Mar68, Narrative Case 1099-0-01

[2382] Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 142.

[2383] 26Mar 221725Z/Mar68, 230430Z/Mar68, and 230540Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREPs #572, 573, and 574. The incoming was broken down to 418 artillery, 248 mortar, 214 rocket, 12 RR, and 197 unknown caliber rounds. There had been a daily average of 150 rounds, mostly mortars, during the preceding days of March. [26Mar ComdC Mar68, Pt. 2, p. 10].

livery. Guy then made a pass to mark the area with his cannon for the lead aircraft which followed him, but remained at approximately 300 feet above to determine where Guy had fired. Guy's aircraft was last seen at 0925 (local time) coming off the target at about 2000-feet, nose up and climbing. The lead aircraft then rolled in on the target. As he pulled out, he unsuccessfully attempted to contact the #2 aircraft. After searching the area for 30-35 minutes, another flight, HAMMER 01, continued the search, without results. Further search was not practical due to hostile fire and negative findings. The terrain was hilly with heavy vegetation and sparsely populated.[2384]

LtCol Guy, a Korean War veteran with 5,600 hours flying time and 287 combat missions, was captured, became the senior officer of all prisoners captured in Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam, at the Plantation POW Camp in Hanoi. Upon his release, 16 March 1973, he brought charges against other American POWs, but was convinced to drop the charges. Initially he was convinced there were no alive POWs but later changed his mind.[2385]

Between noon and 1800H, the KSCB and outposts received approximately 65 rounds of incoming mortar and artillery fire resulting in 1 KIA, 4 WIA (evacuated) and 8 WIA (non-serious).[2386] PFC Lyons was struck by a large chunk of shrapnel in his stomach.[2387]

From 1800 – 2400, KSCB received approximately 515 rounds of mortar, rocket, and artillery resulting in 5 KIA[2388] beginning some of the heaviest action at Khe Sanh in March. "Intelligence officials later estimated that the enemy had planned to stage a major assault against Khe Sanh on 22-23 March. NAIL 35 [a USAF FAC] who flew in the Khe Sanh area during the daylight hours of 22 March reported 'working several flights within 400 meters of the Khe Sanh perimeter.' Each bomb that hit a trench produced several secondaries which were believed to be rockets. The FAC also noted 'small holes' which he said were not foxholes.. about 200 feet from the perimeter and dug at an angle so the bottom could only be seen from the west, i.e., over the strip. NAIL 35 suggested these might be mortar positions."[2389]

At 1900 on 22 March, KSCB initially began to receive heavy fire which tapered off but then resumed into a ferocious barrage at about 2045 causing III MAF to consider it a possible pre-assault barrage. By midnight of 22 March, KSCB had received 300 artillery rounds, 92 rockets, and 250 mortar rounds, a total of 642 rounds. 636 additional rounds were received on 23 March.[2390]

In the preceding days, the Marines of Co "C", 1/26, busily constructed bunkers and trenches in the northern, BLUE Sector, of KSCB:

"We decided that we needed another bunker for our squad—we had too many people grouped in one spot—if that bunker would take a hit we'd lose too many guys. We dug deep into old mother earth and filled sandbags. We did not have airstrip mat for our roof since supplies were very hard for us to get. We knew that the Gunny was building a bunker so we waited until dark and then we went on patrol down the trenchline. There we found our roof! We carried the heavy metal sheets back to our position and placed them on our new bunker—we worked nearly all night to put the sandbags on top of the metal. The next day the Gunny came to us and admired our new addition—he said to us that he knew we were stealing C-rations from the LZ near the airstrip and he knew we stole cases of juice from the supply area—but—when we stole the roof of his bunker we were un-pardonable. 'Your squad are the biggest thieves at Khe Sanh'—He was kind of upset but you could see a kind of amazement of our talent and sly smile on his face. He never demanded that we give his roof back to him and he later moved in with the Captain. A little while—perhaps a couple of weeks later—our Captain decided to build a new bunker and it would be a masterpiece. Everyday each squad would send a work party to build the work of art. Enough supplies arrived for the Capt. to get all he needed for his bunker. Many men worked very hard to build the bunker to our Captain's requirements. The bunker was approx. 15 meters square. It had a double roof. One roof was built and 55 gallon drums were placed on top and another roof built on top of the drums. The feeling was that if a mortar or rocket hit the roof, the first roof would absorb the impact and detonate the round [and] it would not penetrate the second roof. The Company Gunny, Executive Officer, a couple of radiomen and a couple of corpsmen moved into the bunker with our Captain when the bunker was completed. A few weeks later—one night—a terrific noise like aircraft flying low or a train coming—then an explosion directly in front of our bunker—and another approx. 30 meters down the trench—then a third 20 or 30 meters down from the second. The third hit was by far the worse. It impacted on the roof of the Capt's bunker. The roof caved in on the

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[2384] Library of Congress, MIA microfilm, Reel #464, Folder #4; Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 142.

[2385] Hobson, *op. cit.* Guy died of cancer on 23 April 1999.

[2386] 3rd MarDiv COC 230305Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #572, Para. 4.A.

[2387] Conversation with James E. Thomas, 6 March 1990. Thomas was a Cpl with the platoon of Co. "D" 3rd Recon Bn that had reinforced Co "B" 3rd Recon Bn at Khe Sanh.

[2388] 3rd MarDiv COC 230304Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #573, Para 4.A.

[2389] Trest, Warren A., *Khe Sanh (Operation NIAGARA), 22 January – 31 March 1968*, PACAF, Project CHECO, 7AF, 13 September 1968, p. 88. [Trest references, as his source: ABCCC Mission Report by OLB 1, 6250th Spt Sq to HQ 7 AF, 22 Mar 68].

[2390] *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

occupants and the sandbags burnt those trapped inside to death."[2391]

When the incoming round detonated at 220342H[2392] LCPL Charles Norman Chamberlin, one of the radiomen, was knocked out: "I know for a fact that Captain Egger, Lieutenant Bush, and Gunnery Sergeant Grohman were within 6 or 8 feet of me. When I woke up, the only one I could see was Gunnery Sergeant Grohman, and he was not yet dead, but I assumed the other two were because the round impacted on their side. The lights went out for me, and when I woke up the place was on fire. I had just filled a Coleman lantern with JP-4 and it drenched my radio operator, [LCPL] John Mattern from his chin to his knees and he got burned real bad. He and I followed each other from Khe Sanh to Dona Ha to the REPOSE to Japan and out here to Oak Knoll Naval Hospital. He pulled through and ended up marrying his Intensive Care nurse and they had a daughter."[2393]

LCPL Chamberlain remembers "waking up and seeing an arm hanging above my head in the wreckage of the bunker. I think one of the officers may have still been alive and trying to get out prior to succumbing to his wounds. All of the men in the west end of the bunker died. I saw a patch of sky and climbed out like a chicken with a broken wing, having suffered no more than a broken shoulder and minor shrapnel and burns to my right arm and left leg. My radio operator, LCPL John Mattern, suffered deep second and third degree burns from his chin to his knees, as well as losing his right bicep and left kneecap."[2394]

Within seconds, PFC Terrell Eugene Fitzgerald alerted his squad and, being unable to enter the bunker, made a hole in the side. Entering wearing his gas mask, he extricated the badly burned LCPL John A. Mattern and pulled him from the bunker. He then pulled out PFC Stephen Jenkins who was badly burned on his left leg and right arm. Returning to the bunker, he uncovered GySgt Grohman, as the bunker began to collapse.[2395]

PFC Charles Dominic Parise meanwhile knocked a hole in the west wall of the bunker. Due to the fire, smoke, and gas, he removed his helmet and flak jacket to get through the hole and donned a gas mask. All during this, NVA artillery, rocket, and mortar rounds continued to strike the area. After he removed the radioman, Charles Chamberlin, he returned to search for others as the roof began to collapse. He remained inside until he grabbed GySgt Grohman and pulled him from the bunker. Despite his gas mask, he had difficulty breathing. When a count revealed that there was someone still inside, Parise started up and moved towards the burning hulk until he was restrained by the corpsman.[2396]

PFCs Fitzgerald and Parise, in addition to facing the incoming barrage (without flak jacket or helmet!), the collapsing bunker, and fire, were unaware "..that several boxes of grenades were inside and on fire."[2397]

Details necessary to note, lest the painful reality of war and its cost be lost and people fail to remember just how ghastly and horrific war really is, include Grohmen (shrapnel and concussion to face, both arms and left leg), Bush (shrapnel and concussion, decapitation of head, loss of both arms and legs and third degree burns), Egger (shrapnel and concussion, third degree burns, partial decapitation of head, loss of right arm and left leg).[2398]

"It took a couple of days to dig out the remaining fried bodies and send their bodies to graves registration... The gunner.. was awarded a Bronze Star for his bravery, but he told me that he'd gladly trade it if it would give back life to those men. Such is not the case in war—heroes happen and corpses are sent home to their loved ones—both are facts of war. If we had no dead, we'd have no heroes, and maybe we'd have no war. Ah but that would not serve humankind as they like it. We love to wave flags, sing sons, and send our young away to face the inhumanity of war. When will we realize that killing and dying does not solve anything?"[2399]

Also killed during the same barrage and in another bunker, were LCPL Stephen Shannon and PFC Bennie Sisson. When both Marines were dug out, they were found not wearing flak jackets or helmets.[2400] Shannon, having been in Vietnam close to 12 months, was short, almost due to rotate home.[2401]

PFC Sisson had lettered two years in football at Lufkin High School in Zavalla, Texas. His coach recalls that he always gave 100%, caught four passes for 43 yards his senior year and intercepted a pass while playing defense.[2402] His close friend, Donald J. Gillespie remem-

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[2391] George S. Hecknauer, Memoirs [unpublished] sent in his letter of 22 May 1997, pp. 92-93. Cpl Hecknauer was an 0311 with C/1/26 at the time.

[2392] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 22 March 1968, Ser #68.

[2393] Conversation with Charles Norman Chamberlin, 13 Oct 2004.

[2394] Blackbud Charlie [Charles Chamberlain], "Remembering March 22," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #61 (Spring 2005), pp. 7-8.

[2395] Statement of LCPL Calvin E. Wallace in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Terrell Eugene Fitzgerald; 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, Ser #52 (LCPL John A. Mattern, non serious burns to arms and face), and Ser #53 (LCPL Stephen Jenkins, serious shrapnel wounds to left leg and right arm).

[2396] Statements of CPL Michael A. Gallagher and LCPL Daniel J. Brady in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Charles Dominic Parise.

[2397] Hecknauer, Memoir, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

[2398] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 23 March 1968, Ser #54, 55, and 56.

[2399] Hecknauer, Memoir, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

[2400] Letter from Col Nicholas S. Romanetz, 17 January 1998. Romanetz was Platoon Commander of C-2 of 1/26. PFC James M. Marler received shrapnel wounds to his ribs. [1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 23 Mar68, Ser #59.]

[2401] Letter from Donald J. Gillespie, 3 July 1998.

[2402] *Obit*, 27 Mar 1968, in letter from Donald J. Gillespie, 7 Feb 2007.

bers "Bennie:" "..he had this really big smile and always was there willing to lend a helping hand. I remember he loved country western music and had a small portable reel-to-reel tape player. It only held one song, which he played over and over again. To this day if I hear that song I always smile thinking of him."[2403]

GySgt Grohman, born 27 March 1931, had arrived in Vietnam 3 December 1967.[2404] The Gunny, who normally would have been in a bunker he shared with Nick Romanetz, visited the CP bunker and was there only about half an hour when the incoming round hit. The company radioman, Chuck Chamberlain remembers him: " 'Eee Tai!' Gunny used to say (Japanese for 'it hurts'). Despite many aspersions cast at himn, Gunny Grohman did care about the guys in 'C' Company. Being Company Gunny wasn't a popularity contest, and I saw him cry the day that '53 got shot down southeast of us."[2405]

1/Lt Paul William Bush, born 8 July 1944, had arrived in Vietnam 26 April 1967.[2406]

During his teen years, Bush was an active member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and in high school was in the honor society, played baritone in the band, was class treasurer, and was on the golf team. He was intellectually gifted, graduating 4th in his class of 171, and then attended Thiel College where he majored in accounting. He graduated magna cum laude in 1966 and was listed in *Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities*. He had an offer from Price Waterhouse in May of 1966, but told them to contact him after he served his duty with the U.S. Marine Corps, which he entered upon graduation.[2407]

At ceremonies dedicating the Paul Bush Fitness Center at Thiel College, Rev. Martin M. Roth noted: "He was intellectually gifted. He was an excellent student at Thiel and could have gone to graduate school in any of four disciplines. When he got on the plane to leave for the Marines, he walked to the plane with a paperback copy of Shakespeare's *King John* under his arm. He also had the prayer book his mother gave him. In boot camp the platoon commander confiscated the Shakespeare, but permitted Paul to keep the prayer book. These books, I always thought, were symbolic of who Paul was. Here was a balanced person—one with gifts of intellect and a caring personality, a loving person toward family and friends, a person of deep faith, poetry, gentleness, humor, military tactics and prayer all found a home in this simple yet complex man."[2408]

"Paul Bush—a good Marine, a great guy, a loving husband, a faithful Christian. Just like other men who fall in battle every day. In remembering Paul Bush, we pay tribute to all who place their lives on the line in a cause that they believe just. No matter where it comes, death comes hard."[2409]

LCPL Stephen M. Jenkins writes: "I had 18 days and a wake-up left [when the bunker was hit]. I will always have fond memories of Lt. Bush who was my Platoon Leader when we went to the hills in early May, 1967, to clean up the mess that was left. He was a compassionate and strong leader who would never put his Marines in jeopardy without being there with us. Semper Fi, Paul Bush—you will always be remembered."[2410]

24 MARCH 1968

ENZINNA, CPL John Joseph	A/1/9
GAINES, PFC Bernard Laverne	A/1/9
HALL, 1/Lt William Gardner	VMO-6
HUTCHINSON, PFC Paul Lee	A/1/9
IVES, PFC William Allen	A/1/9
POLT, PFC Erwin Andrew	H&S/1/9

A particularly vexing NVA .51 caliber machine-gunner that fired on fixed-wing aircraft landing on the Khe Sanh airstrip and dropping supplies by LAPSE or on the Drop Zone motivated a patrol from 1/9, originally scheduled for 20 March, then postponed to 21 March, and finally went out on Sunday, the 24th.[2411] A-2, under command of 2/Lt Michael Pym Hayden ran a combat patrol within 1,000 meters to silence it[2412] with check points at XD828423, XD825424, and XD822425.[2413] While these daily patrols usually involved 6 – 8, this particular patrol had 13, 6 of which were new troops on their first patrol.[2414] The Marines reached the check points without difficulty as they crept under a full moon in the early morning hours through a valley with no foliage cover, then on top of a small hill overlooking a valley. The Marines furtively moved under the darkness and fog of the early morning. The plan was to dig in on check point

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[2403] Letter from Donald J. Gillespie, 7 Feb 2007.
[2404] HQMC, Historical Center, Casualty Card on John Joseph Grohman.
[2405] Blackbud Charlie [Charles Chamberlain], "Remembering That Night," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #61 (Spring, 2005), P. 8.
[2406] HQMC, Historical Center, Casualty Card on Paul William Bush.
[2407] Information provided by Mrs. Jill Haer, 5 June 2000, sister of Paul Bush.
[2408] Rev. Martin M. Roth, Remarks, 12 May 2000.
[2409] "Why Paul Bush?" article in National Lutheran Council: *A Mighty Fortress*, 18:6 (October 1968).
[2410] Steve Jenkins, "Remembering that Night," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #61 (Spring, 2005), p. 8.
[2411] Comments of LCPL Clifford L. Butler, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.
[2412] Comments of 2/Lt Francis Brian Lovely, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.
[2413] 26Mar 241630Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #580, Para. 3.A.
[2414] Lanier, William E., *Reflections* [unpublished memoir], n.d. (but prior to 1990), p. 11.

3 as a daytime OP and survey the area.[2415] One of the new, peering through binoculars, spotted what appeared to be an American who moved in and out of a bunker on a hill opposite the Marines.[2416] After determining there were no American recon patrols in the area, and an hour or so of surveillance, LtCol Mitchell (CO, 1/9) ordered the patrol to move towards the area of the sighting and report back their findings. "We saddled up and in a single column moved carefully down the hill and up the other side 50 yards short of the location of the 'US trooper'."[2417] The Marines spread out, found cover to provide fire support while four Marines slowly and deliberately advanced.

It was high noon at XD818427[2418] when "All of a sudden there was a burst of automatic rifle fire spraying the four of us... We were caught in cross fire. Briefly hugging the dirt, I did a rapid retreat crawl to a bomb crater to my right rear diving in and feeling a temporary relief with the high walls around me. Erv [Polt], who was to my immediate front, took several rounds throwing him on his back. As he hit the ground, his rifle was thrown about 8 feet from him and he laid still, making no attempt to reach his weapon.. I rapidly discarded my pack.. my deep friendship enabled me to overcome my mounting fear and I pushed myself out of the crater heading toward Erv.. I only made it 6 feet out when a volley of NVA rounds sprayed the area around me."[2419]

PFC Polt, one of the 1/9 Battalion S-2 Scouts, who was immediately cut down had an unusual background. His two sisters were Roman Catholic nuns and his two older brothers were Roman Catholic priests. He himself had studied for the priesthood in Spain for 2 years, but then felt a need to serve God as a serviceman in Vietnam.[2420]

The Squad Leader, CPL John Joseph Enzinna, attempted to rescue PFC Polt, but was also hit in the attempt. Enzinna, shot in the stomach, wasn't dead at first, and PFC Hutchinson rushed to assist, only to be killed. Then Enzinna was again hit, and died.[2421] The complete absence of any racial prejudice in the life of those at Khe Sanh during the siege battle is reflected in the fact that Hutchinson was Black, Enzinna was Mexican-American, Polt was Caucasian, and all were the best of friends; they literally were willing to die for each other. There is no racial distinction in combat; all are brothers. Then NVA mortars showered the small group of Marines, and for awhile, it appeared they were completely surrounded. Lt Hayden, however, had positioned two squads together with a machinegun to their rear. As it was, however, the Marines took fire from three sides and LAWs and the 3.5-inch rockets were unable to annihilate the 5 NVA bunkers. The enemy force, initially estimated at 14 was now estimated at 31 with 20 additional NVA spotted moving down the ridgeline as reinforcements.[2422]

The battle raged into a stalemate: "They had us in a gully and we couldn't really advance or withdraw. We battled on there for about 4 hours at which point we withdrew."[2423] The 3 KIA could not be recovered without sustaining further casualties[2424] and the three dead—a Black Marine, a Hispanic Marine, and a Caucasian Marine—were left on the battlefield as the Marines withdrew back to the 1/9 battalion perimeter under cover of .50 caliber machinegun fire sprayed directly over their heads in an evacuation directed by the Company Commander, Capt H.J.M. Radcliffe.[2425] The NVA buried the three in a shallow grave. In early April, the Battalion 6 called LCPL Lanier over and said, "Look, Lanier, you were on the first ambush. You know where they're at. I want you to go over and find them." So Lanier led a small group and located where the North Vietnamese had buried them, in a bomb crater. "I could smell them. The other people couldn't find them. I told this Lieutenant, 'Can't you smell them?' Anything that hadn't been covered by cloth had decayed. The bodies were intact. Their legs were skeletons and their skulls. I remember digging them up, and the skulls came off the body. The Lieutenant said, 'OK, that's enough; let's go. Let's get out of here!' I almost knocked him down. I said, 'Look! Lieutenant, with all due respect, how would you like your body to go home in a sandbag? We're going to get the whole body out of here if it takes me all day!' We put them in bags. Nobody would get around me and nobody would help because they were loosing their stomachs. They kept telling me, 'How can you do it and not get sick?' And I said, 'When they're your friends, it's a different mission than just digging the bodies."[2426]

About 1430, HIGHBOY 3-1 and 3-2 (2 UH-34 helicopters) and SEAWORTHY 4-22 and 4-23 (2 UH1E helicopters) launched on Mission 53 to Khe Sanh to pick up emergency medevacs from GARDEN VALLEY [Bn 1/9] taken during the battle. The medevacs were located at XD822428, approximately 2 miles NW of the Khe

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[2415] *Ibid.*
[2416] *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
[2417] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[2418] 26Mar 241630Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #580, Para. 3.A.
[2419] Lanier, *op. cit.*, p. 12..
[2420] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[2421] Conversations with Leonard G. Cosner, 3 December 1989, 20 January 1990, and 20 August 1994. This was Cosner's first combat patrol.
[2422] Comments of LCPL Clifford L. Butler, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803; 26Mar 241630Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #580, Para. 3.A. Lt Hayden was KIA 16 April 1968.
[2423] Comments of 2/Lt Francis Brian Lovely, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #2803. Lovely was Platoon Commander, A-1.
[2424] 3rd MarDiv COC 250100Z/Mar68, 26 Mar SITREP for 242230H, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 26/27 Mar68, #26.
[2425] Lanier, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
[2426] Conversation with William Lanier, 26 June 1990.

Sanh airstrip.[2427] The medevac birds orbited while the SEA-WORTHY gunships fired rockets on the NVA positions. The pickup zone was not secure and the ground unit was in heavy contact. After orbiting about an hour, the medevacs were still not ready for pickup, so 3-1 and 3-2 returned to Quang Tri for fuel and oil; the Hueys also returned to rearm while fixed wing continued to strike the NVA positions.[2428]

The medevac birds returned to Khe Sanh, orbiting until the air-strikes were completed. The Hueys made another gun run and the medevac birds were cleared to swoop in for the pickup. Maj Franklin D. Rickey (co-pilot, Lt Larry A. Bartel) in HIGHBOY 3-1 approached low level to the ridge line and picked up one emergency and one priority medevac while Capt Burns (co-pilot Lt Norman) in HIGHBOY 3-2 orbited high.[2429]

Just as 3-2 came in for the next pickup, SEAWORTHY 4-23 (pilot, Capt J.J. Hanley, Co-pilot, 1/Lt W.C. Hall) was pulling off a gun run when suddenly, while at an altitude of 800 – 1000 feet, Capt Hanley felt a jolt and heard a noise "..as if someone had taken a sledge hammer and struck the side of my aircraft. Less than a second later, I discovered that I had absolutely no rudder control and my aircraft began a gentle turn to the right. At this time I broadcast a MAYDAY on FM. I then told my co-pilot, First Lieutenant W.C. Hall, to jettison the rocket pods, which he immediately did. The aircraft at this time was spinning quite rapidly so that I could neither orient myself over the ground nor read my instruments. I then attempted to reduce power in an effort to reduce the speed of spin, but I got the low-RPM audio signal and was forced to come back on with some power which made no noticeable difference in the rate of spin. Then I attempted to put the aircraft into a left slip but this caused it to become momentarily uncontrollable. My only recourse was to try and maintain a level attitude since I still had control of the tip-path plane, and hoped to hit the ground as flat as possible. My last conscious recollection was that when the right skid touched down, I was surprised because I still thought I was at a higher altitude."[2430]

The UH-1E, SEAWORTHY 4-23 (Model WB-23, BuNo 153761), crashed at XD823414, about a mile south of the pickup zone.[2431] Upon impact, the tail boom separated, the rotor head came off and traveled to the one o'clock position about 25 meters, and the aircraft instantly burst into flames, engulfing the aft portion and port side of the cabin.[2432] PVT Marion Cornelius Trivette, Jr., the aerial gunner, who apparently withstood the impact better than the rest aboard, immediately ran from the burning aircraft and attempted to remove Capt J.J. Hanley, the pilot. As he was doing so, he noticed the Crew Chief, Sgt H.G. Clark, was on fire and hurriedly removed him to a position of relative safety away from the fire and then returned to extricate the pilot. He then attempted to remove Lt Hall, but the flames were too intense.[2433]

"I was commencing my approach to the LZ when over the radio we heard one of the gunship pilots (Captain Joe Hanley) announce that he had lost his tail rotor drive shaft. I looked up and to my left and there was his aircraft entering into a flat upright spin. Frank called me and said go after him which was somewhat unnecessary since I had almost automatically started to do just that. Following him down, I just knew that they weren't going to make it since they were descending almost completely out of control and at a very high rate of descent. They crashed on the side of a small bowl-shaped valleyu with a tremendous impact followed by a huge fire ball as the fuel tanks ruptured and I probably wasn't more than 1000 meters from them when they impacted, and I had to do a very rapid quick stop to get slowed down to make my landing. I did a quick right hand button hook approach we call it, and landed about 25 meters from the wreckage which was burning like mad. I didn't expect to see any survivors, but low and behold if out of the junk three of the crew came staggering out under their own power.. They glopped into [our] aircraft and I got out of there in record time. Once we got airborne, I told Frank that we had three of the four crewmen and the other gunships by this time had arrived overhead and after a short look he spotted the fourth crewman, who was a co-pilot. He had been badly burned in exiting the aircraft and had become separated from the other three."[2434]

HIGHBOY 3-2 (piloted by Captain Burns, co-pilot Lt Norman) followed the spinning SEAWORTHY into its crash and landed within 30 meters of the bird as it crashed and burst into flames.[2435] The three crew members who had exited the Huey were assisted into the H-34 y the crewmen, Cpls Morton and Thonen as ammunition cooked-off in the wreckage and was flying in all direc-

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[2427] Statement of Maj Franklin D. Richey in DFC file of Capt Thomas Victor Burns.

[2428] Statement of Lt Larry A. Bartel in DFC file of Capt Thomas Victor Burns

[2429] *Ibid.*

[2430] Statement of Capt J.J. Hanley in SSM file of Cpl Robert Charles Rich.

[2431] 26Mar 241630Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SOTREP #580, Para. 3.A.; VMO-6 ComdC Mar68, Encl (3), p. 1. Aircraft Mishap Report in III MAF COC Journal and File 24/25 Mar68, #364, lists the crash at XD822415.

[2432] Statement of Maj R. L. Neff in SSM file of Cpl Robert Charles Rich.

[2433] Statement of Capt J.J. Hanley in SSM file of Cpl Robert Charles Rich.

[2434] Transcript of oral tape made by Major T. Burns, University of New Orleans, Eisenhower Center, no date, p. 9.

[2435] Statement of Lt Larry A. Bartel, in DFC file of Capt Thomas Victor Burns.

tions.[2436] It was necessary for 3-2 to lift out due to the extreme heat and danger of explosion plus the fact that the airborne AO reported a large number of armed NVA approaching 30 meters to the west. 3-2 was safely airborne with the three survivors within a matter of seconds after the crash.[2437]

The AO then reported the remaining crew member, 1/Lt Hall, staggering near the tail section about 20 feet from the crashed helicopter. Maj R. L. Neff, Section Leader flying in SEAWORTHY 4-22, following a U.S. Air Force F-4 (SHARKBAIT 41) dropping 3 tanks of napalm on top of the hill containing the swarming enemy troops, completely engulfing the hilltop in flames, commenced a low-level approach into the zone and was able to retrieve the seriously burned Lt Hall.[2438] The zone was covered with small trees and saplings, and while still 15 feet in the air, Cpl Robert Charles Rich, Crew Chief, jumped out of the helicopter and picked up Lt Hall (who was heavy and made Cpl Rich's movement difficult). Cpl Rich staggered into the aircraft with Lt Hall and yelled to go while he was still on the skid. The 1/9 Air Officer, GARDEN VALLEY-14 reported that there were NVA swarming all over the hill. Lt Hall was still alive as Maj Neff proceeded to "D" Med at maximum power, low level in order to keep Lt Hall as warm as possible.[2439] Two Division AOs, observing the action, saw the NVA open up on Maj Neff's helicopter during the entire pickup. Enemy fire hit within inches of the crew and helicopter.[2440]

Lt Hall, after being given emergency treatment for 2nd and 3rd degree burns over 60% of his body, was immediately sent to the NSA [Naval Support Activity] Hospital in DaNang. "Word was received the following day that Lt Hall had died from his burns at approximately 0400 of the 25th."[2441]

26 MARCH 1968

KAMINSKI, PFC Kenneth	**B/1/9**
LONG, HN Leonard	**H&S/1/9**
MOSSO, SGT Robert Bruce	**B/1/9**

On 26 March, 1/9 again became ensnared in a desperate debacle. Daylight Ops, established to survey surrounding areas, included an OP consisting of a small hill some 150 meters (within M79 range) in front of the lines occupied by B/1/9. This position had been manned as an OP for at least a month with Marines moving to it at pre-dawn.[2442] The morning of 26 March was very thick fog, the kind of fog that made Marines such as CPL Bert D. Mullins, a radioman, think, "My God! They could be on us before we'd ever know it."[2443] After the patrol had been out 5 or 10 minutes, Mullins received a whispered voice over the PRC-25 radio asking if anyone was supposed to be out there. Mullins replied, "Negative." The radio operator of the OP whispered, "I hear noises." Mullins, on his own initiative, said, "Get out of there!"[2444]

Just at that moment, an unknown number of NVA soldiers appeared on the top of the hill (XD825415),[2445] threw a dozen ChiCom fragmentation grenades at the Marines and then quickly disappeared. Fortunately, the point man was able to alert the remainder of the OP to move to safety. "They came scrambling back in. Thank God they made it OK. They told us there were Gooks on the hill."[2446]

2/Lt James R. Talone quickly organized two squads to check out the contact and departed at 0710H.[2447] The hill was small—about 40 meters across—and Lt Talone, in the center, with one squad on his left and one on his right, moved to the summit when Sgt Mosso, on his left, was hit. "The air was full of ChiComs. My rifle jammed as did another 3 or 4 in the squad. [There] was nothing we could do but roll back down the hill, pull pins and throw grenades at them. Luckily we were in defoliate and we had outstanding support from the lines. My three machineguns put in about 6,000 rounds over our head, plus the 60mm dropped another 200 rounds on the reverse slope of the hill."[2448]

The squad on the left managed to retrieve Sgt. Mosso's body, but had to drop him several times when the NVA threw ChiComs at them on the way down. Initially, Lt Talone had estimated only 6 or 8 NVA, but he quickly revised his estimate as the Marines ran out of grenades and were running short of ammo. That, together with jammed M-16s, forced them to retreat to the

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[2436] Statement of Maj Robert L. Neff in DFC file of Capt Thomas Victor Burns.
[2437] Statement of Maj Franklin D. Richey in DFC file of Capt Thomas Victor Burns.
[2438] Statement of Capt J.J. Hanley in SSM file of Cpl Robert Charles Rich; Statement of Maj Franklin D. Richey in DFC file of Capt Thomas Victor Burns; Statement of Maj R. L. Neff in SSM file of Cpl Robert Charles Rich.
[2439] Statement of Maj R. L. Neff in SSM file of Cpl Robert Charles Rich.
[2440] Statement of 1/Lts R. E. Happy and D. R. Kendig in SSM file of Cpl Robert Charles Rich.
[2441] VMO-6 ComdC Mar68, Encl (3), p. 1.
[2442] Comments of 2/Lt James R. Talone, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.
[2443] Taped comments from Bert Mullins, 8 January 1984.
[2444] *Ibid.*
[2445] 3rd MarDiv COC 261027Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #586, Para. 3.A.
[2446] Comments of 2/Lt James R. Talone, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.
[2447] 3rd MarDiv COC 261027Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #586, Para. 3.A.
[2448] Comments of 2/Lt James R. Talone, HQMC Oral History Tape #1803.

lines.[2449] A NVA company was estimated to be occupying bunkers in the vicinity of XD822416 – XD 824415.[2450]

As the right flank advanced, 2 NVA mortars landed among the lead fire team, seriously wounding the Platoon Sergeant. Hospitalman Leonard N. Long, the platoon corpsman, immediately moved forward to administer medical aid to the wounded Marine. The squad sustained other casualties, and HN Long continued to move through the NVA fire to administer aid. While he was rushing to aid PFC Kaminski, another mortar round exploded, killing both HN Leonard Long and PFC Kenneth Kaminski.[2451]

2/Lt Talone, in his statement recommending the Bronze Star Medal for HN Long, wrote: "This disregard for his own safety in his endeavor to aid wounded Marines was SOP for HN Long. He always managed to be the first to the side of a wounded Marine. H is courage as well as his confident treating of the wounded frequently under fire was an inspiration to the whole platoon. With HN Long beside him, a Marine knew he was in the best possible hands."[2452]

Sgt Robert Bruce Mosso graduated from Wellsboro High School, Pennsylvania, in 1964, and enlisted in the USMC in October, 1964. The 22 year-old Marine was due to be discharged in October, 1968.[2453]

27 MARCH 1968

BIXBY, PFC Thomas Eugene	**B/1/26**
SOBEL, PFC Irwin Ross	**M/3/26**

At 0530H, a 81mm mortar H&I short round fell in the 37th ARVN trench perimeter, killing one ARVN.[2454]

PFC Bixby was killed at 1405H from a gunshot wound to his stomach while in perimeter defensive positions at XD851415.[2455]

During the period 1800 – 2400, KSCB and outposts received approximately 20 rounds of incoming rocket and mortar fire resulting in one KIA.[2456]

Harry W. Jenkins, Jr., had just assumed command of M/3/26 on 24 March, having arrived in country on 10 March. The night of 25 March was illumined by a full moon, the light of which permitted the Marines to dig their trenches and bunkers deeper. PFC Sobel was improving his machinegun position when suddenly a tremendous explosion shattered the night calm severing both of Sobel's feet. Jenkins, thinking back on it, opines it may have been the result of Sobel's E-tool striking a buried dud from some time past.[2457] Both MIKE and INDIA Companies on 881-South brought the military crest of their perimeter lines further down the slope to accommodate the larger number of troops manning the position than had been the case with the various 1/26 companies occupying the hill. Also, due to monsoon flooding and consequent trench collapse, the trenches had not been dug as deeply as the siege incoming dictated, and the Marines were always digging deeper and deeper.

28 MARCH 1968

BOYER, SFC Alan Lee	**FOB-4**
BROWN, SGM George R.	**FOB-4**
HUSTON, SFC Charles Gregory	**FOB-4**
KENT, LCPL Gregory Patrick	**B/1/26**
LACEY, PFC Franklin D.	**L/3/26**
MAYER, MGYSGT Paul Evans	**MWHG-1**
McRAE, PFC Jimmie Lefon	**B/1/26**
WALLACE, LCDR Michael Walter	**VFP 63, Det 14**

From noon to 1800 today, KSCB and outposts received approximately 70 rounds of incoming mortar and artillery fire causing 2 KIA, 4 WIA (evacuated), and 4 WIA (non-serious).[2458]

In a peculiar way, the cause of PFC Lacey's death occurred several days before the siege battle erupted while he and his friend, PFC Patrick G. Brady, were clearing fields of fire as Co L/3/26 prepared to occupy positions in the western (RED) sector of KSCB near the main gate. The Seabees had sprayed the foliage the previous day. "We were given a break, and we were sitting on one of the piles. The backs of our uniforms were just saturated with this stuff. We got up and the Seabee officer.. said it was just a glorified weed killer that they'd sprayed the day before."[2459] The skin of Lacey's back broke out in

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[2449] *Ibid.*

[2450] PCV TOC (Maj Coombs) Resume of Telephone Call 270200H/Mar68 in III MAF Journal File, SCOTLAND, Pt. 6 (9-31 Mar 68), Ser #301.

[2451] Statement of 2/Lt J. R. Talone in Bronze Star Medal file of HN Leonard N. Long. Bert Mullins notes that the round that killed Long and Kaminski was a friendly "short round." [Taped comments from Bert Mullins, 8 January 1984]. The official 1/9 ComdC for Mar68 it as "two rounds of enemy mortar fire." [1/9 ComdC Mar68, Encl (1).]

[2452] Statement of 2/Lt J. R. Talone in Bronze Star Medal file, HN Leonard N. Long.

[2453] Ward, Don, *The Faces Behind the Names, The Vietnam War*, Vol. II, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1999, p. 144.

[2454] 3rd MarDiv COC 270847Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #590, Para. 4.A.

[2455] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 27 March 1968 Ser #12.

[2456] 3rd MarDiv COC 281600Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #592, Para. 4.A.

[2457] Comments of Brigadier General Harry W. Jenkins, Jr., n.d.

[2458] 26Mar 281145Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #595, Para. 4.A.

[2459] Conversation with Patrick Brady, 27 November 1988. Although Patrick Brady's back did not break out in irritation and infection, his shirt was saturated the whole time of the siege, and later, when hospitalized, "it took them a couple of

large blisters and he was told to keep his back bare, exposed to the air and sun. Not only did he not wear a flak jacket, most of the time he wore no shirt because the irritation "was massive, but healing."[2460]

Today, Lacey was killed during from an incoming round. "We had to look hard to find anything wrong with him. He had a very, very tiny piece of shrapnel, but it went in and tore up his heart. He had just a little spot of blood in his chest area. I remember we looked at him and couldn't find where he'd been hit—for awhile—before the corpsman came up and found it."[2461]

By the end of March, the KSCB airstrip had begun to look like a junk yard and a team was sent from HQ, 1st Marine Air Wing, to retrieve what might be useable. Master Gunnery Sergeant Paul Mayer, the Wing's Aircraft Maintenance Chief, volunteered to supervise this operation. He had previously volunteered for activation from the Fleet Marine Reserve, volunteered to go to Vietnam, volunteered to extend his normal 13-month tour of duty, and voluntarily relinquished his 30-day extension leave. The team was able to palletize 12 critically needed jet engines, rotor blades, and other gear. After working at Khe Sanh for four days, he was preparing to depart from Khe Sanh, he was struck by shrapnel from a rocket and killed.[2462]

Cpl Quiles Ray Jacobs [B/1/26], a Squad Leader, accompanied a patrol on 21 March to check out the trench line. While his squad provided security, the other two squads of the platoon advanced to check out the area. Just as the patrol left the wire, Jacobs' squad was ambushed from the right with small arms and mortar fire, wounding four of his men while he was shot in the back.[2463]

"I came in and Dr. Demaagd [the 1/26 Bn Surgeon] sewed me up, gave me 106 stitches in my back. I was very fortunate and blessed because the bullet came into the right side of my back, hit my flak gear, and spinned inside my flak gear, over my spine, and out the other side of my back, and then came out. After that day on the 21st I was at the Battalion Aid Station for a few days. And then we were taking some incoming rounds. When the rounds would come in, the doctors would run out and get in the holes and the patients were still stuck. So I asked Dr. Demaagd if I could go back down to my lines, and he let me go back. I was there a couple of days with the stitches in my back, Ace bandages, and a couple of my buddies came to my hootch to see me, see how I was doing. They got called back to their lines. Right after they left my hootch, a round came in right between them—Kent and McRae. The round killed Kent, and I went down there [to the Battalion Aid Station] with McRae, and he died on the table holding my hand."[2464]

LCPL Ronald Exum was wounded in the blast that killed Kent and McRae. LCPL Michael E. O'Hara writes of McRae: "He had been there a while and was liked by everyone. He was a jovial, short, rotund little guy with a smile worth a million bucks."[2465]

LCDR Michael Walter Wallace, a Navy pilot from Detachment 14, VFP-63, on the USS TICONDEROGA, was flying a RF-8G Crusader to strike a target at XD642241 near Ban Tampank, 17 miles southeast of Khe Sanh along with 5 Skyhawks. Either he lost control of his aircraft as he rolled in with the Skyhawks (which normally performed this maneuver at a speed slower than the Crusader) or he may have been hit by ground fire. His remains were recovered and returned to the States for burial in December, 1988.[2466]

The Headquarters of B5-T8, the controlling headquarters for the entire Khe Sanh battlefield, was located in a karst formation of sharp-rising, cliff-like spires and hills, filled with caves. According to the official NVA history of the Khe Sanh battle, it was located at Sap Lit (XD6266).[2467] This location corresponds to the CIA's determination (which indicates the NVA Khe Sanh Area Front HQ located 9 miles west of the western edge of the DMZ.[2468] U.S. tactical maps of that area indicate numerous fortified hills in the karst formations in the general area from N/S grid line 37 to 58 and E/W grid line 63 to 67.[2469]

On 30 January 1968, into the Siege, a massive B-52 Air Light strike targeted the Headquarters, and the assumption at the time was that we may have killed Gen-

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days to get the thing off. They had to soak it in something because it had actually attached itself to my back. I've had acne in that area ever since. I was also getting a discharge down by my groin that was turning my shorts blue. They ran smears on that and said it was chemicals coming out of my body. Since then, I've become paralyzed." [*Ibid.*]

[2460] Conversation with Donald Ener, 03 December 1996. [His name is pronounced like "energize" without the "gize"].

[2461] *Ibid.*

[2462] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 22 April 1968, signed by LtCol G. L. Caldwell, in Legion of Merit (posthumous) file of Mastery Gunnery Sergeant Paul Evans Mayer.

[2463] Interview of Quiles Ray Jacobs by John Wright, 15 July 1989; 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 21 March 1968, Ser #15, 16, 22, and 23.

[2464] Comments of Quiles Ray Jacobs at Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion, Chicago, Il., 13 July 1989, printed I Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Issue No. 9 (Summer, 1989), p. 7.

[2465] O'Hara, Michael E., *The Wind Beneath My Wings*, mailed 27 April 1995, p. 22.

[2466] Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 143.

[2467] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign*]. Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, 1987, p. 24.

[2468] CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, *The Continuing Communist Military Threat in Northern South Vietnam*, 13 March 1968, map.

[2469] U.S. Army Topographic Command: Sheet "Ban Nathon," Sheet 62421, Series L7015, 1970.

eral Giap.[2470] General Westmoreland, however, cautioned strongly against any public announcement "about successful B-52 attacks on the major enemy headquarters" since it "would certainly compromise the source of the information," noting that no valid cover story could be developed since there were no ground recon resources in that area and photo interpretation, while it might confirm a logistics complex, would not support identification of a major headquarters. (The only source of the information would have been from signals intelligence analysis). Furthermore, there were indications that an element of the headquarters was back in communications with Hanoi after 38 hours of silence.[2471]

Capt James Hargreve Knox, a pilot with VMO-3 who flew numerous missions in the Khe Sanh area before and during the siege battle (including the rescue of the three teams on Co Roc in mid-January 1968),[2472] recalls a brief in the FOB-3 bunker after the Siege battle erupted led by several "guys from the CIA or wherever, in their short sleeved, white shirts, looking like IBM execs" in which "they were going to put a team in, up I a very severe geological formation known as karst, north of Khe Sanh, and the idea was to grab General Giap. Nobody liked it. There was a discussion on how big the team would be and the logistics of getting them out in a hurry if they got I trouble. And the decision was made that we would not extricate them at night. Due to the terrain there would be no possible way but to make a bad situation worse if we tried to go in there with a bunch of helicopters at night and get this team out. The team wasn't hot on going. At that point a Second or First Lieutenant who was going on the team, 'You mean, if I'm in there at night, nobody's going to come and get me?' And we [the Marine helicopter pilots] said, 'Look, we'll do whatever we're told to do, but I don't think we can get the whole team out. We'll run an airstrike and that kind of thing.' And around we went. Finally this Lieutenant told the Colonel he wasn't going! Whereupon the Colonel arrested him on the spot and put him on a helicopter and said he was going to be court-martialed. Right on the spot! Right in front of me!"[2473]

On 4 March 1968, Ambassador Sullivan in Vientiane, Laos, approved a request from MACSOG, COMUSMACV, to conduct a wire-tap mission outside the Prairie Fire Zone due to its great urgency.[2474] Wire-tap equipment that arrived in March, 1968, known as CIRCUS ACT,[2475] permitted extended recordings of communications over a period of several weeks, and to enhance the probabilities of clandestine insertion, SOG team ASP was inserted from Thailand rather than the usual insertion from South Vietnam (Kontum or Khe Sanh).[2476] After ASP installed the wiretap gear, two CH-3 Jolly Green Giants piloted by Majors Villotti and Jay Oberg, prepared to extract the team.[2477] The terrain at the extraction point, XD434574,[2478] did not permit a landing, and a rope ladder was dropped. Six Vietnamese on the patrol were able to climb into the helicopter and after the 7th Vietnamese member of the patrol climbed aboard, the helicopter came under intense ground fire and was forced to depart. Sgt Boyer, who had held the ladder steady to ensure the Vietnamese could climb it, was climbing the rope when it broke as the helicopter pulled away.[2479] The medic aboard the H-3, Sgt (E5) David J. Mayberry, turned away for a moment to tend to a crewman who had received a minor wound. When he turned back to the door, he noticed Sgt Boyer and the rope were gone;

[2470] W.W. Rostow, Memorandum for President Johnston, Tuesday, 30 January 1968, 7:50 AM, referencing MAC 01430, in LVJ Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, 2A(1) I Corps and DMZ 11/66-1/67, Container 66.

[2471] General Westmoreland 010010Z/Feb68 in LBJ Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, 5EE(1) Laos 10/67-12/68, Container 92.

[2472] Maj Ira Snell, Jr., CO, FOB-1, Letter of Commendation, 16 February 1968, in Air Medal file of Capt James Hargreve Knox.

[2473] Conversation with James Hargreve Knox, 4 October 1994.

[2474] AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 041130Z/Mar68, VIENTIANE 4889, in LBJ Library, National Security File, Vietnam Country File, 5EE, Box 93.

[2475] Capt Hammond Salley, who arrived at FOB-3 into the siege battle from his job as Assistant S-3 of the 4th Psychological Operations Group in Saigon to assume duties as S-2 at FOB-3 had custody of all Top Secret documents, debriefed all the patrols, prepared and sent captured intelligence materials to the rear for inspection, and was custodian for insertions of "Eldest Son," and custodian of "Circus Act" devices and helped determine locations for "Frantic Goat" airdrop of leaflets on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. [Letter from Hammond Salley, 20 June 2002]. "Eldest Son" was an operation of OP-33/35 and involved placing munitions that exploded as they were fired into NVA caches (AK and mortar) to create distrust by the NVA of their own ammunition supplies; "Circus Act," a project of SOG's OP-35/38, was an induction device placed around commo wire to record NVA conversations. [Letter from Hammond Salley, 10 August 2002].

[2476] Conboy, Ken, and Morrison, James, "The Rise and Fall of Recon Team Asp," *Vietnam* (August 2001) 18.

[2477] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[2478] Location approximately 4 clicks west of Route 92, a road which starts on Route 9 at XD520398 and proceeds north, then northwest in a loop, then east through the karst formation about the E/W grid line 69 to the western edge of the DMZ. The location of the extraction point is about 23 clicks directly south of the karst formation and the B5-T8 Khe Sanh Front Headquarters. [U.S. Army Topographic Command, Series L7015, Sheets 6242 I, "Ban Nathon," and 6242 II, "Ban Donhai," 1970].

[2479] Narrative of Case 1108-0-01 through 03, in Library of Congress, MIA microfilm Reel #346, Folder #51.

the rope wells in the ladder handle had broken and the mounts in the doorway had ripped out.[2480]

On 1 April, SSG (E6) Charles L. Feller, Jr., led a team to search and recover the remains of the 3 Americans. After a search for over 6 hours with no indication of anyone still in the area, along with an absence of expended shell casings, equipment, blood stains, and odor of decaying bodies, and the heavy presence of NVA in the area, it was assumed they had been captured.[2481]

[A last assault by the NVA against the positions manned by the 37th ARVN Ranger Bn resulted in 7 NVA KIA by ground fire and 71 KIA by artillery.[2482]

30 MARCH 1968

ALDRICH, CPL David Alan	B/1/26
ANDERSON, PFC David Bruce	B/1/26
BEASLEY, CPL Luzon	H&S/1/9
BRITT, PFC Ted Dennis	B/1/26
GULA, PFC Paul Richard	D/1/9
HOWLETT, LCPL Norman L Jr.	A/3rd Eng
JONES, PFC Jimmie Lee	B/1/26
KOMAN, 2/Lt Lawrence Ryland	D/1/9
MOORE, LCPL Wayne Paul	B/1/26
NORMAN, 1/Lt Marion Henry	A/1/13
PLUNKETT, CPL Raymond Louis	D/1/9
RASH, PFC Donald Ray	B/1/26
REYES, PFC Ronald	D/1/9
RUIZ, PFC Jose Jr.	B/1/26
SANFORD, CPL Albert Russell	B/1/26
SHAFER, CAPT Francis Leo J.	D/1/9
SMITH, LCPL Author "C"	B/1/26
TOTTEN, PFC Kenneth Romaine Jr.	B/1/26
WARREN, CPL Donald Albert	B/1/26

The specter, terror, and horror of what happened on 25 February became an *idée fixe* continually gnawing at the souls of those still alive at Khe Sanh, especially within the command and staff of 1/26. Almost immediately, the battalion staff initiated plans for a return to the ambush site to retrieve the MIA.[2483] Reports from the Division's AOs and aerial photography as well as patrols from the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, provided daily, up-dated intelligence. Reports indicated that the area was occupied by a reinforced NVA battalion in heavily fortified positions along with a regimental command group which occupied the high ground behind the battlefield area at the Old French Fort position.[2484] Supporting arms plans were prepared utilizing pre-planned artillery concentrations on known NVA assembly areas, routes, reserve and supply areas by Capt Mirza Munir Baig, the Regiment's Target Intelligence Officer along with 1/Lt William F. Smith, an artillery officer from A/1/13 assigned as an artillery FO to 1/26[2485] in which the commander on the ground would call "apples," "grapes," "peaches," etc., to designate a variety of targets to be struck by a variety of artillery, known as "the fruit basket."[2486] Routes of movement through friendly mine fields laid by the engineers and through terrain features were committed to memory.[2487] Originally, the plans called for a full battalion assault; this was rejected by the Regiment "because of the potential exposure to the Combat Base by having so many troops outside the perimeter at one time and because of the potential of getting the battalion in a fight that would be difficult from which to extract."[2488] Indeed, this would have played into the hands of the NVA's master plan of creating a situation into which American troops would arrive in great numbers so

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[2480] Statement of Sgt David J. Mayberry, Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #346, Folder #51.

[2481] Statement of SSG Charles L. Feller, Jr., in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #284, Folder #116.

[2482] MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 8 July 1968, p. 11.

[2483] Pipes, Maj K.W., "Men to Match Their Mountains," *Marine Corps Gazette* 58:4 (April, 1974) 22.

[2484] Statement of LtCol Charles E. Davis, III, USMC (Ret), 24 August 2001, Para. 9, Exhibit 14 in Letter from Capt Charles E. Patterson, Subj: Summary of Action in Support of Award Recommendation for Captain Kenneth W. Pipes, for Heroic Action Above and Beyond the Call of Duty in Combat on 30 March 1968 at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam [hereinafter referred to as "Pipes, MOH package."]

[2485] *Ibid.*, para. 13.

[2486] William Smith recalls that Baig would ask Smith, "What will we call this fire plan?" and Bill said, "Grapes," "And what about this?" "Apples." Smith: "We did it for one reason and one reason alone: everybody got a copy, everybody carried it. All they had to do was yell 'Peaches!' and everything was pre-planned, pre-shot, pre-fired. We figured the range of a 82mm mortar, drew a circle ad tried to take I all the possible positions for 82mm mortars. Then we took in all the high ground from which you could observe; we targeted all of that. For the hills, for instance, we would have 'Peaches' up on top of a hill; 'Peaches' would be a combination, let's say, of Battery-6, Fuse VT, which would fling the people off. If you took fire from the hill over there, then 'Peaches' would be an artillery counter-fire which would have in it smoke, white phosphorus, fuse VT, to clean the people off, and would also neutralize all positions on the reverse slope of the hill. So if you just thought you were taking fire, you'd just yell 'Peaches!' and 'Peaches' would take care of anything. Of if you took fire from your front, you yelled 'Apples' and 'Apples would basically take care of everything to 82mm mortar range that we found." [Conversation with William Smith, 16 March 1985]. The term "fruit basket" was used by the artillery FO, PFC Theodore H. Golab. [Conversation with Theodore Golab, 15 August 1985].

[2487] Pipes, Maj K.W., "Men to Match Their Mountains, *Marine Corps Gazette* 58:4 (April, 1974), p. 22.

[2488] Statement of LtCol Charles E. Davis, 24 August 2001, in Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*,Para. 11.

that they could be annihilated,[2489] a tactic presciently grasped and assiduously avoided by Col Lownds and his staff which precluded sending relief to the attack on the Huong Hoa District Seat in Khe Sanh Village and the attack on Lang Vei, as well as the avoidance by Major General Tompkins in resisting sending reinforcements to the besieged Khe Sanh Combat Base, and an avoidance by General Westmoreland for sending in troops to relieve the siege until well after major elements of the North Vietnamese Army had departed the battlefield (sending the relief in April, after the 325C Division had departed in February/March, with some battalions and regiments departing in mid-February).

In what would be the first offensive action out of the Combat Base, approximately 75 – 80% of the NCOs and enlistedmen from the company had been there only a short time[2490] and although there was no way to rehearse the plan of attack nor train for it, several days prior to the attack, briefings were given repeatedly to the troops in the trenches.[2491] The mission was "to attack a known fortified position with an alternate mission of attempting to establish and if possible recover our comrades who had been ambushed on the 25th of February 1968."[2492] The mission was broken into 2 phases. Objective #1 (XD844411),[2493] a NVA trenchline would be secured by B-2 (led by 1/Lt John W. Dillon). The second phase would be to seize Objective ALFA (XD853404),[2494] a piece of high ground just beyond the area containing the MIA from the 25 February patrol. Just prior to first light, B/1/26 would stage itself outside the KSCB. Following intensive prep fires, B-2 would jump off, securing Objective #1 with 2 squads up and one back. After it was secured, the remainder of Co "B" would jump off in the assault of Objective ALFA which would be taken with 2 platoons up and one back. After securing Objective ALFA, the Company would establish a defensive perimeter while recovery teams searched for the bodies. After the bodies were recovered, the Company would pull back into KSCB.[2495]

By 0001, 30 March 1968, a small unit from FOB-3 had occupied a position near Hill 471 to act as a blocking force.[2496] PFC Theodore H. Golab [A/1/13] and his radioman, "Roach," accompanied this group as an artillery FO, along with an Army Captain, three Army Sergeants and a platoon of indigenous soldiers. When PFC Golab and his radioman, upon arrival at the FOB, were issued black pajama uniforms, he questioned being "out of uniform," but they insisted. Golab was amazed at their gear which included small radios in their helmets—small pads, microphone, and ear plug.[2497]

Marines from Co. "B," 3rd Recon Bn were brought in to man the defensive positions normally occupied by B/1/26.[2498] Reveille for B/1/26 was at 0330, and by 0430, the company had assembled in perimeter trenches. The Marines of B/1/26 were given the order to "fix bayonets!" "I almost shit myself when [Lt] Weiss said 'Fix bayonets!' O gees! One of the things that's stuck in my mind forever was that I told [PFC Ted] Britt, 'Don't worry about nothing; I'll bring your body back.' And he laughed—cause we were all geared. He said, 'No, I'll bring your body back.' I'll always remember that."[2499] A platoon of FOB-3 departed the FOB compound at 0537[2500] to occupy a pre-designated screening position southeast of the raid objective area.[2501] B-2 which departed at 0606 out of the main gate in the vicinity of bunker #42 was followed by the remainder of Co "B" which departed the FOB gate at

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[2489] Mission of the Highway 9-Khe Sanh Campaign included "..to draw the enemy to Highway 9, the more the better, to pin them down and continue to eliminate them." [*Chien Dien Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh-Route 9 Offensive Campaign*], Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, 1987, p. 14. On 9 January 1968, the B5-T8 Command Headquarters issued the mission to the Khe Sanh section of the battlefield: "304th Infantry Division deployed to the south of Highway 9 would concentrate its forces to attack and seize the Huong Hoa district seat (including Ku Boc if the enemy was present). Be prepared to reinforce land forces from Tan Lam and Ca Lu on north if the enemy landed forces by air in the Huong Hoa area; if the enemy did not reinforce, then eliminate Houi San [*note, Ban Houei Sane, the location of BV-33 in Laos*] and Lang Vay [*Lang Vei*] and move forces to surround and constrict Ta Con [*Khe Sanh Combat Base*] in order to draw in enemy reinforcements. [*Ibid.*, p. 21]. Cf also "..to draw out and tie down American and puppet forces, the more the better, and continue to eliminate them" [*Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) (Tap II) [304th Division (Chronology) (Vol II)*], Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, p. 58].

[2490] Statement of Capt Kenneth W. Pipes, 21 May 1968, in HQMC Oral History Tape #2810.

[2491] Statement of LtCol Charles E. Davis in Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*, Paragraphs. 16 & 17.

[2492] Statement of Capt Kenneth W. Pipes, 21 May 1968, in HQMC Oral History Tape #2810.

[2493] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log 30 March 1968, Ser #20.

[2494] *Ibid.*

[2495] Statement of 1/Lt John William Dillon, HQMC Oral History Tape #3716.

[2496] Statement of PFC Theodore H. Golab, 1 August 2001, in Pipes, MOH package.

[2497] Conversations with Theodore Golab, 15 August 1985 and 22 April 1986.

[2498] Statement of LtCol Frederick J. McEwan, 30 August 2001, in Pipes, MOH package. The Marines brought with them .50 caliber machineguns they had taken from disabled helicopters—they could hardly fire them from their position in the center of the Combat Base!—and fired them over the heads of the Marines of B/1/26. About 6-8 guns were fired until the rounds no longer fired straight. Firing continuously instead of in bursts, they changed gunners when their thumbs got tired. [Conversation with David Doehrman, 4 February 1984].

[2499] Conversation with Michael McCauley, 9 February 1997.

[2500] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log 30, March 1968, Ser #20.

[2501] Pipes, "Men to Match Their Mountains," *op. cit.*, p. 22.

0612. All units maneuvered to their pre-planned positions behind their LOD [Line of Departure]. An initial delay because of fog and poor visibility[2502] actually aided the force which was able to take advantage of the concealment the fog provided to shroud their movement before it lifted. At 0725, B-2 crossed their LOD followed by Co B (-) (Rein) crossing their LOD at 0734. At 0738, the lead elements of B-2 reached Objective #1 (XD844411) followed by the remainder of B-2.[2503] B-2 (1/Lt John William Dillon) established an intermediate rally point for the rest of the company , set up a medevac station, and skillfully deployed his Marines to provide security for the field medical aid station.[2504] Heavy H&I fires which were pounding the entire area did not eliminate the element of surprise since these fires had struck the same area regularly in previous weeks.[2505] At 0750 the FOB-3 platoon was in position.

Facing the Marines, the North Vietnamese 2nd Battalion, 9th Regiment, 304th Division, was poised on what they referred to as their "Battlefield #3." The Company Commander of the 6th Company in command of the battlefield was killed at the outset.[2506] The NVA position was approximately 600 to 1,000 meters across the front and about 500 to 1,000 meters deep[2507] in the vicinity of XD845429 to XD853404.[2508]

After B-2 (1/Lt Dillon) secured Objective #1, the Company paused momentarily (at 0751)[2509] to link-up and reorganize and then jumped off from Objective #1 toward their final objective, moving out on a line from XD844411 to XD843406 with B-1 (led by 2/Lt Peter William Weiss) in a platoon wedge/squad wedge and B-3 in a platoon "V".[2510] After moving 25 meters beyond Objective #1, at 0800, B-3 came under extremely heavy RPG, 82mm, ad 60mm mortar fire, heavy automatic weapons and small arms, and ChiCom grenades from mutually supporting and very well-built NVA bunkers. The area was "fortified a bit more than any of us had initially anticipated."[2511] The momentum of attack, however, never slackened as B-1 and B-3 assaulted fortified positions.

PFC Ted D. Britt, a fire team leader with the 3rd Squad, B-1,[2512] maneuvered his fire team by individual rushes until his squad secured the outermost defensive position. While consolidating in the NVA trench line, heavy NVA mortar and automatic weapons fire pinned down the squad. PFC Britt immediately left the cover of the trench and assaulted the enemy position from which the largest volume of automatic fire was coming, destroying the position, the weapon, and killing four NVA soldiers. He then moved to attack a NVA spider hole position and was fatally wounded in the process, but not before he had accomplished his mission. "He was greatly responsible for reducing the number of friendly casualties."[2513]

HM3 Thomas E. Casey, responding to the call "Corpsman Up!" continuously moved from casualty to casualty despite mortars and heavy automatic weapons fire around him.[2514] As he jumped into a crater to render medical aid, 3 mortars exploded in and around the crater, killing 2 Marines. Disregarding the danger around him, Casey continued to treat all the wounded in the crater.[2515]

In an official, taped interview conducted shortly after the action, Pipes was to say, "I believe all of the young Marines that we had in the company had been waiting several weeks for this opportunity... Once the kids started, there was nothing, it seemed, that could stop them. From the point of initial contact until we reached our final objective, some 500 to 600 meters, perhaps more, they covered the ground in 20 to 25 minutes. A later body count indicated confirmed approximately 115 North Vietnamese Army were actually killed.. by kids using small arms fire, grenades, bayonets, M79s, all weapons organic to an infantry company."[2516] In addition, a section of flame throwers participated in the attack. Capt Pipes felt these were a complete surprise to the NVA. "When we first used them there was a noticeable slack in their fire. I think the shock effect at that particular time of the NVA seeing the flame throwers, knowing that we did have them with us.. put a bit of fear in them and enabled us to continue the initial momentum of the attack clear through to the final objective."[2517]

[2502] The fog also temporarily obscured the battlefield from the AO and the 1/26 "6" and "3" halted the advance of the patrol behind the LOD temporarily. [Pipes, "Men to Match Their Mountains," *op. cit.*, p. 22].

[2503] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, March 1968, Ser #20.

[2504] Statement of 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss in Bronze Star Medal file on 1/Lt John William Dillon.

[2505] Pipes, "Men to Match Their Mountains," *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[2506] *Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) (Tap II) [304th Division (Chronology) (Vol II)*, Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, p. 100.

[2507] Statement of LtCol Charles E. Davis in Pipes, 21 August 2001, MOH package, *op. cit.*, Paragraph 20.

[2508] 3rd MarDiv COC 302100Z/Mar68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #603, Para. 3.A.

[2509] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log 30 March 1968, Ser #20.

[2510] *Ibid.*

[2511] Comments of Capt K. W. Pipes, HQMC Oral History Tape #2810.

[2512] Statement of LCPL Michael H. McCauley in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of PFC Ted D. Britt.

[2513] Statement of CPL Rickey M. Brunk in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of PFC Ted D. Britt.

[2514] Statement of Cpl Kenneth J. Bragalone in Bronze Star Medal file of HM3 Thomas E. Casey. Casey died of an aneurysm 01 March 1998.

[2515] Statement of PFC James A. Smith in Bronze Star Medal file of HM3 Thomas E. Casey.

[2516] Comments of Capt K. W. Pipes, HQMC Oral History Tape #2810.

[2517] *Ibid.*

LCPL Thomas N. Quigley, carrying the Company radio in the CP group, recalls being next to one of the Marines with a flame thrower and asking, "Man, how long will one of those tanks last?" "And it really amazed me because there were only so many seconds and the whole thing's empty.. And I said, 'That don't seem like very much,' and he said, 'Well, if you're at the other end, it's an eternity!'"[2518]

PFC Golab, from his vantage point, watched the entire action: "Everything looked like it should be. They all had fixed bayonets. They got flak jackets on. They got helmets on. They looked good. They had all their formations down pat, and they were moving out. You could see the NVA walking in their trenches, just nonchalantly. One guy had a cup in his hand. I called artillery on Khe Sanh ville because I knew something was going to come out of there, to cut off that road. And then there was this mortar round. It lands and doesn't go off. It must of landed 6 yards from me, went into the mud, and its fins are sticking out."[2519]

The assaulting elements reached the limit of advance at 0815 and consolidated their position as planned. As the artillery was pounding the NVA positions, suddenly the command, 'Cease Fire!' 'Cease Fire!' came over the Conduct of Fire net, and the artillery stopped. "This was not according to plan! The battalion forward CP was trying to find out who gave this order. The order apparently had come from the NVA using imitative deception. Before the artillery barrage could be turned back on, the NVA lobbed several mortar rounds into the middle of Ken's [Capt Pipes'] command group."[2520] At the time, the Company's senior radioman, LCPL Thomas N. Quigley, was on the radio. "I had my left hand on my right forehead and my right hand on my receiver, bent over to talk to one of the platoons, and the Lieutenant said, 'Doc's hit.' And he started getting up. As he started getting up, I turned back to look at him, Lt. Norman, and that's when the rounds hit and I saw him get it."[2521] It was now 0830, when the company CP group, moving in trace of the two assault platoons, received an estimated at 20 rounds of 82mm.[2522] The mortar barrage was deadly. 1/Lt Henry Norman, the Artillery FO, was killed, Norman's and Pipes' radio operators were wounded. Pipes was momentarily knocked unconscious, and the ensuing radio silence caused the battalion forward CP to dispatch 1/Lt William Smith, the Battalion Artillery Liaison Officer, and his radio operator, LCPL John J. O'Donnell, to attempt a link and find out what happened to Pipes' command group and resume direction of protective and withdrawal artillery fires.[2523]

The Corpsman hit, Richard Blanchfield, had been a Marine (1955-1963, with 3/3) after which he served with the Thomas A. Dooley Foundation as a medical corpsman to the Hmong and Lao (1963-1965) and then became a US Navy Corpsman in 1967. Initially assigned to the medical facilities at Phu Bai, he was asked by a One Star (Commodore) Navy Doctor to volunteer to serve at Khe Sanh. The siege battle was already well under way when he arrived.[2524] Accompanying B-1 (2/Lt Peter William Weiss) Doc Blanchfield received a large piece of shrapnel in his left shoulder and was placed on a pile of dead bodies; no further medical aid was deemed necessary—he was near death. Blanchfield had distributed 2 morphine syrettes to each Marine and said, "If I can't get to you, only use this morphine for what you need." Now, he jabbed one into his own leg. It didn't work. He jabbed another one directly into his chest near his heart. Chaplain Charles ("Chick") Kelly came by and started giving Last Rites. Blanchfield looked up at him and said, "Kelly, I don't want Last Rites, get me some blood!" "Sure enough he came back; he had the blood. But he didn't tell me he took a bullet right through his leg."[2525] A helicopter landed. The pilot emerged, picked up the naked, blood-soaked Blanchfield in his arms, put him inside the helicopter, and flew off to a medical aid station from where he eventually was sent to the USS REPOSE.[2526] Michael E. O'Hara remembers seeing Doc Blanchfield: "When I found him, he already had two needles in his leg and he was really tore-up. We stopped and put a bandage on him, and then went on. He was so tore-up, and had so much morphine in him, he was laughing! He was phased-out!"[2527]

Meanwhile, PFC Golab, after the mortar incident at his location, had moved to and linked up with Pipes' command group. "At that time I first saw Captain Pipes, who was helmetless and his face white from loss of blood. Captain Pipes was standing alone, propped up against a tree at the edge of a bomb crater. He had apparently lost his helmet (I later learned that a round had knocked the helmet off of his head) and his face was white from loss of blood. I saw that he was severely

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[2518] Conversation with Thomas Quigley, 11 May 1986. [The Portable Flame Thrower, M2A1, has a burning time of 6 – 12 seconds. Weight empty: 43 lbs.; weight full: 68-72 pounds.]

[2519] Conversation with Theodore Golab, 22 April 1986.

[2520] Statement of LtCol Charles E. Davis in Pipes, 24 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*, Paragraphs 24 & 25; Conversation with Charles E. Davis, III, 17 February 1990.

[2521] Conversation with Thomas N. Quigley, 11 May 1986.

[2522] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 30 March 1968, Ser #20.

[2523] *Ibid.*, para. 26; Statement of 1/Lt William F. Smith, III, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*

[2524] Conversations with Richard Blanchfield 15 July 1990 and 23 July 1990; Vita in letter from Richard Blanchfield of April, 1990; Comments by Richard Blanchfield at Khe Sanh reunion, 21 July 1990, Nashville, TN, printed in Khe Sanh Veterans *Newsletter*, Issue #12 (November 1990) 12.

[2525] Blanchfield, comments at reunion, *op. cit.*

[2526] Conversation with Richard Blanchfield, 23 July 1990.

[2527] Conversations with Michael E. O'Hara, 23 March 1993 and 28 March 1993; O'Hara, "The Wind Beneath My Wings," n.d. [mailed 27 April 1995], p. 25.

wounded: his left arm and chest were wrapped in blood-soaked battle dressings. Captain Pipes held a .45 caliber semiautomatic pistol in his right hand and was shooting into enemy bunkers at a distance of 4 – 5 meters."[2528] According to the NVA's official history of the 304th Division, they assumed Pipes had been killed: "A newly-assigned replacement, Nguyen Huu Dong, shot and killed the battalion commander and eliminated the enemy's signal section."[2529] Captain Pipes took grievous wounds to his chest and shoulder. Lt Norman's radio operator was hit in the face. Thomas Quigley saw it all close-hand: "Lt Norman, he was just—it was like someone took a machete and split him right down the middle. At the time I was on the radio. I had my left hand on my right forehead and my right hand on my receiver, bent over to talk to one of the platoons. The Lieutenant said, 'Doc's hit," and he started getting up. As he started getting up, I turned back to look at him, Lt. Norman, and that's when the rounds hit, and I saw him get it. He didn't know what hit him. It picked him up and slammed him right back inside the trenchline. It took the whole side of him off. I screamed... It scarred me, because Lt. Norman was one of the best officers besides Capt Pipes and Ben Long that I ever had the privilege of serving with, just a super straight guy, and when I saw him, I screamed. My hand busted out blood. The shrapnel had broke my radio."[2530]

1/Lt John W. Dillon now led some of the Marines from B-2, to Captain Pipes' position to carry the dead and wounded to the field medical station while B-1 and B-3 were engaged with the enemy. 1/Lt Benjamin L. Long, the Company Executive Officer, along with 1/Lt Dillon helped the wounded Capt Pipes to reestablish communication and regroup the remaining Marines in the CP group.[2531] When 1/Lt Long reached Capt Pipes, he observed that Capt Pipes had immediately put battle dressings on one of his radio operators who was profusely bleeding and quickly evacuated the four radio operators to the field aid station as he rapidly regained communications with his maneuver elements, the battalion, the artillery net, and air support.[2532] LCPL Michael E. O'Hara saw the CP group being hit and was one of the few Marines from B-2 to move forward and reach the company CP. He found Captain Pipes "had received a devastating wound from shrapnel in his left armpit which was bleeding profusely. The Battalion Surgeon, LT Harvey J. Demaagd, tried to treat Captain Pipes for his wounds.[2533] Captain Pipes refused any type of pain killer and refused medical evacuation from the field. As Dr. Demaagd was trying to treat him, Captain Pipes gathered up the Company radio, the Battalion radio, and the [artillery] forward observer's radio on his right arm and began to call in artillery fire in support of the advance... He continued, despite his wounds, to press the attack, including directing the individual groups of Marines in their assaults upon enemy trench lines and bunkers, joining, whenever necessary, in attacking fortified positions while continuing to lead the Company."[2534]

HM3 Thomas E. Casey remembers the scene: "I remember him standing still with the radio and his arm wounded. He still stood there, giving orders. I thought he was a really big battlefield commander. [He wasn't crouched down]. He stood by the next bomb crater, giving orders on the radio."[2535] Michael E. O'Hara: Pipes "..stood his ground to call for air and artillery and just wouldn't quit until all of his men were back safe."[2536] "He set an example for my whole life... He was standing up, bleeding like a stuffed pig. He had two [radio headset] handles, one on each ear, controlling. Demaagd couldn't get him to hold still. He was trying to keep him bandaged up, and the blood would just explode out—'pfssh'—I mean I thought the man was going to die. He was tore-up in his armpit real bad, real bad!"[2537] "I was simply in awe of this guy. Here most of his good friends were lying dead or wounded right at his feet, and he was still in control. I bent over and picked up Lt. Norman's body. When I saw who it was, I was devastated. Hank Norman had made friends with everyone in the company, from Private to Captain, and was admired by all who knew him... When I stood up and threw his body across

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[2528] Statement of PFC Theodore H. Golab, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*

[2529] *Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) (Tap II)* [*304th Division (Chronology) (Vol. II)*], Hanoi: People's Army Publishing House, 1990, p. 100. The same document notes, "The squad leader of the 82mm mortar squad, Nguyen Huy Hung, fired in support a succession of 110 rounds of mortar fire in order to break up one wing of the enemy." [*Ibid.*]

[2530] Conversation with Thomas Quigley, 11 May 1986.

[2531] Bronze Star Medal Citation of 1/Lt Benjamin L. Long; Statements of 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss and SSGT Gus Alvarado, Jr., in Bronze Star Medal file of 1/Lt John William Dillon.

[2532] Statement of 1/Lt Benjamin L. Long in Silver Star Medal file of Capt Kenneth W. Pipes.

[2533] Dr. Harvey J. Demaagd and a group of Navy Corpsmen from the 1/26 BAS had established a field medical station in a bomb crater to the rear of the company. As friendly casualties were taken, Lt Demaagd examined each Marine, supervised the treatment and personally attended all cases in which the Marine's life hung in the balance. [Statement of Capt Kenneth W. Pipes, in Bronze Star Medal file of LT Harvey J. Demaagd]. As in the case of attending to Captain Pipes, he left the security of the bomb crater numerous times, with complete disregard for his personal safety, to render medical aid to the wounded. "There is no doubt that the loss of lives would have been far greater had it not been for.. Dr. Demaagd." [Statement of SSGT William S. Dale in Bronze Star Medal file of LT Harvey J. Demaagd]

[2534] Statement of Michael E. O'Hara, 4 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*

[2535] Conversation with Thomas Casey, 16 December 1990. Casey died 1 March 1998 of an abdominal aneurysm.

[2536] Michael E. O'Hara, letter of 1 September 1992.

[2537] Conversation with Michael E. O'Hara, 23 March 1993.

my shoulder, I turned around to look back for just an instant. Lt Mascato was about 50 meters away and Ken Rodgers was right behind him... A F-4 Phantom.. unloaded his napalm so close that I could actually feel the heat. I saw his tail shudder because he was too close to the ground. He nearly blew himself out of the air giving us the covering fire... Lt Norman was a slightly build man, but I remembered he seemed so heavy. My legs were beginning to ache with pain, and I was very nearly ready to drop him. I laid him down on the back of the APC, fell back on my butt, and began to cry. I began to wonder, 'How much can a man take?'"[2538]

1/Lt John William Dillon (B-2) made numerous trips through the fire-swept terrain carrying wounded Marines to the field medical station.[2539] The Marines of his Platoon, B-2, continued the momentum of the assault of NVA positions. LCPL Michael E. O'Hara captures the moment: "When I reached their trenches and jumped in, it was unreal. The trenches were full to the brim with freshly killed NVA soldiers. My foot never hit the ground while I was in their trenches. The rats were everywhere. Those bastards fear nothing and I would later reflect that we had become like rats. We were like sharks on a feeding frenzy. We were passing by wounded Marines on our quest for the kill. We went clear over the top and began charging down the back side before we realized we had inflicted total destruction on an entire NVA battalion. For just a moment, we all cheered like a come-from-behind football team who had just won a pennant or something. We began to pull back and started to realize there was a very high price for our exhilaration. Dead and wounded Marines were everywhere you looked and the danger had certainly not past."[2540]

Cpl Edward I. Prendergast, Section Leader of 60mm mortars attached to B-2 also managed to reach Captain Pipes and saw him "standing in an exposed position under the continuing heavy enemy fire, calling in artillery fire on the forward observer's radio as well as directing the operations of the three platoons of the Company... If Captain Pipes had not acted in the manner that he had, even though severely wounded, and had not maintained the communications with the fire support center, the enemy would have been able to launch a counterattack to our advancement into their fortifications."[2541]

During the next hour and fifteen minutes, the Bravo Co CP reorganized while B-1 and B-3 searched and destroyed the bunkers, killing all NVA in sight.

PFC David B. Anderson, a Marine with the search team, point squad, B-1, upon seeing a Marine laying in an open and unprotected area, rushed to give aid; while administering emergency first aid, PFC Anderson was fatally wounded.[2542] PFC Anderson, like several other KIAs at Khe Sanh,[2543] had a premonition he was going to die and told Capt Pipes before the patrol departed that he didn't want to go. After Pipes explained that he was needed, he agreed to go. He said, "I can understand; I just wanted to talk to you, Skipper, and let you know what my feelings were."[2544] Anderson had less than 10 days left "in country."[2545] While giving emergency first aid to one of the wounded, PFC Anderson was fatally wounded.[2546]

Also with B-1, LCPL Wayne Paul Moore, a rifleman assigned to the point squad, personally assaulted one of the enemy bunkers that was spewing intense fire. Upon reaching the trench, LCPL Moore destroyed 2 NVA fortified positions with hand grenades and continued to kill 2 enemy soldiers. To permit the rest of his squad to proceed, LCPL Moore exposed himself to the intense enemy fire to establish a base of fire with his M-16 and then sprinted to the aid of two WIA. As he exposed himself to draw the enemy's fire and permit his squad to advance, he was mortally wounded.[2547] His Squad Leader at the time recalls: "Lance Corporal Moore jumped up and he charged that line, single-handedly. He got shot three times or four times, went down twice, got back up, and continued to charge this gun bunker and got hit, dropped his rifle, took out a pistol and dove into the trench—threw a grenade in, and dove into the trench line, and the last thing I seen of him was him beating this Gook with his pistol, and then it was literally like a 'John Wayne' movie, everybody just leaped up and charged. [Along with Author C. Smith] these were both two of the best Marines you could ever imagine. These guys were abso-

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[2538] O'Hara, "Wind," *op. cit.*, p. 26.
[2539] Statement of SSGT Gus Alvarado, Jr., in Bronze Star Medal file, 1/Lt John William Dillon.
[2540] O'Hara, Michael E., "The Wind Beneath My Wings," n.d. [mailed 27 April 1995], p. 25.
[2541] Statement of Edward I. Prendergast, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*
[2542] Statement of 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous), PFC David Bruce Anderson.
[2543] *Vide* PFC Randy Neal McPhee (30 Apr 67), CPL Delbert Louis Leasure (23 Feb 68), and 2/Lt Ferdinando DiSteffano (24 Feb 68); there were undoubtedly numerous others.
[2544] Conversation with Kenneth Pipes, 11 January 1988.
[2545] Pipes, "Men to Match Their Mountains," *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[2546] Statement of 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file, PFC David Bruce Anderson.
[2547] Statements of LCPL Ezell Green and 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file on LCPL Wayne Paul Moore. Moore's father, SGT Paul Moore, fought in WW II and was wounded on Okinawa 11 May 1945. He writes that his 6-ft., 190-lb. son with sandy hair and blue-green eyes, had joined the Marines 22 April 1966 and returned in Sep 1967 to marry his wife. "His Sgt. at H&S told him if he would sign-up for 6 more months he would not have to return to 'Nam.' He did, and returned Oct 1967 to rejoin his fellow Marines. In his last letter of 29 Mar 68 he stated he had volunteered to go out next morning, 30 Mar, to recover remains of fellow Marines." [Letter of Paul Moore, 11 Feb 1990].

lutely fearless in combat. They weren't crazy, just flat brave! I'm so proud of these guys, you cannot imagine!"[2548]

Moore was a good friend of Tom Quigley and had trained him for Point. "A friend told me later that when 'Charlie' jumped up from one of those spider holes behind him, he shot him right in the back."[2549]

LCPL Moore had, on this date, just returned from the special 30-day "free" leave granted to those who extended six months for additional Vietnam duty. "He was actually listed on the company rolls at Bravo Company HQ as AWOL, as he didn't check-in with Headquarters when he returned to his platoon and no one from his platoon had notified Headquarters that he was back."[2550]

LCPL Author "C" Smith, Third squad leader with B-1 left the trench line which had been secured in the initial battle in order to rush across open terrain to silence a NVA position. Successfully silencing the position, he returned to the trench to consolidate his squad which was by now under intense enemy fire. Again, he leaped from the trench and assaulted another NVA position from which heavy automatic fire was spewing. Again, he silenced the position. As LCPL Smith continued his assault to silence a NVA spider hole, he was mortally wounded.[2551]

His Squad Leader, Steven Wiese, remembers "Smitty" as "..just such an outstanding person. We lived in the same bunker and we were pretty good friends. He was very short and had a dry humor. He never showed any fear at all. It wasn't like crazy; it was just when something happened, he was rock solid. He was there. He knew. If you went over and said, 'Hey, Smitty, how's it going?' he'd have this little smile. I don't ever remember him complaining once. If I had some clean-up detail or sandbags, he'd never bitch. He'd never say, 'O man, it's not my turn; I did it.' Most of the other guys complained.[2552]

CPL Donald A. Warren, the Platoon Right Guide for B-1, volunteered to be one of four men to recover bodies of the KIA of 25 February and was located in the middle of the platoon.[2553] After the initial burst of NVA fire, Cpl Warren led his fire team to the front of the platoon to direct their fire against the NVA positions. He maneuvered them out of the unprotected area, regrouped, and then led the squad in an assault against the NVA position. After knocking out 2 NVA positions, CPL Warren again moved the squad in the assault while under heavy automatic and semi-automatic fire. While directing accurate M-16 fire at the enemy, CPL Warren was mortally wounded by an enemy sniper round.[2554] Cpl Warren had the "body bags" for the KIA. CPL Wood N. Lathrop remembers it as the "suicide squad," and recalls seeing Warren fall after being hit. "I just left him. I was the squad leader and was leading a charge into the NVA trench. I really had no choice. But all these years that has bothered me that here was my best friend. I seen him get hit. I seen him fall. And I don't go to him."[2555]

PFC James Allen Williams, 1st Squad of B-1, although wounded, continued to expose himself to enemy fire to keep the NVA from encircling the squad.[2556]

Five Marines from the Weapons Platoon (60mm mortars) of H&S Company, 1/26, reported to Capt Pipes the night before the assault. They moved immediately behind the Company command group which was about 25 meters behind the two assault platoons, B-1 and B-3, but had left their base plates at the point of contact and were without sites.[2557] As the Marines of B-3 became pinned down by NVA mortars as they advanced on the enemy, Cpl Kenneth A. Korkow left his position of safety and, hand-holding the mortar (there being no base plate), fired mortars at an angle of fire which put himself within the bursting radius of the round, but successfully eliminated the NVA mortar position allowing B-3 to proceed. Due to the accuracy of Cpl Korkow's fire, 4 NVA bunkers and 1 NVA mortar were destroyed. Depleted of 60mm mortar rounds, the mortarmen began moving casualties. While assisting a wounded Marine to move to the field medical position, Cpl Korkow was critically wounded.[2558]

When the Marines of his squad were pinned down, PFC Albert Moguel, the grenadier of the point squad, B-3, assaulted 2 NVA bunkers that pinned down B-3. The range was so short that PFC Moguel was unable to use his M-79 and proceeded to kill 4 NVA with his .45 caliber pistol.[2559] PFC Julio Manuel Miranda, another grenadier for B-3, rose up from his position and made a one-man assault on a NVA position with his M-79, giving cover for the rest of the squad to advance. He leaped

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[2548] Conversation with Steven Wiese, 17 March 2005.
[2549] Conversation with Thomas Quigley, 11 May 1986.
[2550] McNeely, Milton, "More Web Briefs, March 30, 1968," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #61 (Spring 2005), p. 9.
[2551] Statements of LCPL Michael H. McCauley and CPL Rickey M. Brunk, in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file, LCPL Author "C" Smith.
[2552] Conversation with Steven Wiese, 19 January 2006.
[2553] Statement of SSGT Leo E. Robert in Silver Star Medal file (posthumous) on Cpl Donald A. Warren.
[2554] Statement of 1/Lt Peter W. Weiss in Silver Star Medal file (posthumous) on Cpl Donald A. Warren.
[2555] Conversation with Wood Lathrop, 12 March 1993. Note: Cpl Lathrop was one of those who received wounds sufficiently serious to be medevaced (gunshot to his right side). [1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log, 30 March 1968, Ser #36.
[2556] Statements of LCPL William F. Shafer and PFC Leslie E. Olson in Bronze Medal file of PFC James Allen Williams.
[2557] Comments of Capt K. W. Pipes, Tape #2810, cited.
[2558] Statements of LCPL Richard L. Ward and PFC Vincent R. Tuzar in Navy Cross file, CPL Kenneth A. Korkow; Comments of Capt K. W. Pipes, Tape #2810, cited.
[2559] Statements of LCPL Julio M. Miranda and Sgt William M. Simpkins, in Silver Star Medal file of PFC Albert Moguel.

from the trench on several other occasions to repeat the action and, during the evacuation of the dead and wounded, provided cover.[2560] PFC Lonnie Wayne Morrison, a rifleman in the point squad of B-3, rushed across the fire-swept terrain, firing into NVA bunker apertures and throwing numerous grenades to knock out several enemy positions enabling the rest of B-3 to advance.[2561] PFC Donald Ray Rash, a Marine with the point squad of B-3, overcame 3 NVA positions with grenades and small arms fire. When the Company was ordered to break contact, PFC Rash remained behind to provide effective suppressive fire for the evacuation of KIA and WIA, and was killed when he was struck with shrapnel from one of the NVA mortars.[2562]

PFC Rash has just arrived at Khe Sanh on 20 January 1968, hours before the base was struck. "That night, he spent the night in the supply tent along with several other replacements who had arrived that day. They got in late enough that they had not even received weapons, helmets, or flak jackets. Not a good situation when the incoming poured in on the morning of the 21st.[2563]

LCPL Ferdinandez Ludiveekus Van Eeten, from the Netherlands, had a body bag for the MIA of 25 February, and was able to retrieve the only corpse from the 25 Feb 1968 action. "He was all black skin because he'd been there so long. I started pulling on the guy's flak jacket to try and put him in the 'death bag' and his arms fell back and I fell back, and these thousands of flies came up and attacked me. I came flying out of the trenchline screaming, and I looked down and the whole circle of his back was nothing but maggots, just thousands of maggots about 3 inches long and as thick as my finger—I'll never forget it.. I finally rolled him over and his helmet came off... I wound-up putting him in the body bag, and nobody helped me. Nobody wanted to have anything to do with it. I dragged him to where they were loading bodies... I remember when we got back to the base, I needed to take a shower. I felt so dirty! And there was no place to take a shower."[2564]

Capt Pipes ordered Golab, his radio operator, and 2 other Marines to stand guard over the bodies of the dead Marines, "that we were not to leave our fallen brothers for any reason, but to make our stand there."[2565] The NVA were advancing in their trenches in a counter-attack, and Capt Pipes shot the lead soldier in the face, pushing him back into another soldier, breaking up the attack. He repeatedly ignored advice to seek cover as he fired his pistol at advancing enemy soldiers. When 3 OTTERs[2566] arrived to carry out the dead, Capt Pipes was yelling at the enemy, "You're not going to get our dead again, you bastards!"[2567] At 0945, the Bravo Co CP moved to Objective #1 and assisted in the evacuation of dead and wounded while B-1 and B-3 withdrew assisted by two squads from B-2. B-2 moved forward and made a thorough search of Objective ALFA, evacuating 3 KIA and 2 MIA.[2568] During the withdrawal, Golab radioed Lt Smith to fire a WP round to mark the NVA for an air strike. As Smith replied, "Where do you want it?" a WP round exploded in the midst of the Marines, followed by 2 more WP rounds! Golab asked if Smith had fired the WP. "Negative!" Apparently the NVA, monitoring the net, had fired it. "Had our jets fired on that WP, the Marines would have been annihilated."[2569] Golab hurriedly radioed the jets to ignore the WP marking rounds.[2570] All units were in the vicinity of Objective #1 by 1030, by 1100 the lead elements of Co B were in KSCB, and by 1130, the withdrawal was complete.[2571] Capt Pipes stood at the entrance of the wire until all of the Marines from Co "B" were inside the perimeter wire.[2572]

1/Lt Marion Henry Norman had never received the Bronze Star Medal that was awarded for his actions the day the siege erupted on KSCB, Sunday, 21 January 1968. From the Citation: "Ignoring the heavy volume of hostile fire, he unhesitatingly left the relative safety of his bunker and attempted to observe the enemy firing sites. Although knocked to the ground on several occasions by the concussions from enemy rounds exploding nearby, he repeatedly made skillful crater analyses and relayed the information to the firing batteries. Electing to remain in his exposed position, and disregarding the exploding main ammunition supply point less than fifty meters away, he courageously directed and adjusted counter fire against the enemy firing sites until all the hostile weapons positions that he could locate were silenced."[2573]

[2560] Statement of LCPL Theodore S. Harris in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Julio Manuel Miranda.
[2561] Citation and Statements of PFC Darwin E. Howard and SGT William M. Simpkins in Silver Star Medal file on PFC Lonnie Wayne Morrison.
[2562] Statements of CPL William D. Holliman and 1/Lt John W. Dillon in Navy Cross (posthumous) file of PFC Donald Ray Rash.
[2563] McNeely, Milton, "More Web Briefs, March 30, 1968," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #61 (Spring 2005), p. 9.
[2564] Conversations with "Joe" Van Eeten, 8 April 1994 and 25 March 1995.
[2565] Statement of PFC Theodore H. Golab, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*
[2566] Pipes, "Men to Match Their Mountains," *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[2567] Statement of PFC Theodore H. Golab, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*
[2568] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log 30 March 1968, Ser #20.
[2569] Conversation with Theodore Golab, 15 August 1985.
[2570] Conversation with Theodore Golab, 22 April 1986.
[2571] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log 30 March 1968, Ser #20.
[2572] Statement of PFC Theodore H. Golab, 1 August 2001, Pipes, MOH package, *op. cit.*
[2573] Citation, and Statements of 1/Lt Denis H. McDonald and Capt Kenneth W. Pipes, in Bronze Star Medal file of 1/Lt Marion Henry Norman.

1/Lt Norman, the second son of Lloyd Eugene and Dorothy Norman, was born 27 Sep 1940 in Livingston, Texas. At Milby High School, he played quarterback on the football team. In 1964 he graduated from North Texas State University and in 1965 married Charlotte Sanders. He joined the Marine Corps in 1966, and after graduating from TBS [The Basic School], he graduated from the U.S. Army Artillery & Missile School, Fort Sill, OK, and arrived in Vietnam July, 1967.[2574]

Chuck Patterson, who shared a locker with Hank Norman at TBS, recalls him as "..the warm one. When the group of us would get together at someone's apartment, Hank could always handle the small problems, like making a barbecue sauce from Karo and catsup or snow ice cream with a little vanilla extract. He always had that dry Texas smile that radiated a quiet confidence."[2575]

Marion Henry Norman Khe Sanh—1968[2576]
By Chuck Patterson

Ca Lu, March 1968

They took your life
As if it belonged to them.
If only they had told me
They needed a life,
I would have given them mine.

I wonder
What they did with your life?
Perhaps,
If they don't need it now,
They'd give it back.

The World, 1983

I saw you dead
But never buried.
In my heart you've lived,
Laughing, smiling Hank.
I would keep you there forever,
In a memorial more perfect
Than hands could build.

Finding an end to my war
I can mourn you now,
And, in sadness, leave
This loving, painful
Magic caretaking.
So I may live
At peace.

To celebrate your death,
To elevate your life,
And its conclusion,
Which was neither sweet
Nor fitting.
Duty's harshest price
For which the consideration
Should have been honor.

Capt Pipes received a Silver Star Medal for his actions this date,[2577] but around 2001, Charles E. Peterson gathered numerous statements of participants, official records, prepared diagrams of the battlefield actions, provided analysis, and forwarded to the Commandant of the Marine Corps a recommendation that the Silver Star Medal be upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

Co B/1/26 was recommended for the Meritorious Unit Commendation.[2578]

Author "C" Smith [2579]
By Mrs. Jo Ann Harrison

"Webster's definition of sharecropper is 'a tenant farmer who works the land for a share of the crop.' I don't think that my brother felt that he ever got his share of anything. Certainly not food, clothes, toys or expressions of love.

"The Smith family with its seven children did not have a problem finding run down shacks in which to live. Fayette County, AL, had an abundance of cotton and cornfields owned by people with the names of Hubbert and Hollingsworth. It didn't matter that William Smith liked drinking more than he liked work. He had seven healthy, strong, hard-working children that were kept home from school to work in the fields. The families with the most children (*aka* field hands) were sought after by the landowners—the reason is obvious.

"The oldest child of Ruby and William B. Smith was born in 1947 at home, his grandmother serving as midwife. 'C', that is what

[2574] David Rogers, "Hank's Family: An 'In Touch' Rendezvous," n.d.
[2575] Chuck Patterson, "Hank Norman," The Khe Sanh *Veteran* 2:2 (Spring, 1996) 22.
[2576] Patterson notes that he was at Ca Lu when he was informed of Norman's death, and it was then he wrote the first part of the poem. When he returned to the States, he couldn't talk about Vietnam until 1983, when it all came "rushing back" and after awhile, he completed the poem. [Patterson, *op. cit.*]
[2577] Silver Star Medal Citation and file, Capt Kenneth W. Pipes.
[2578] By CO, 1/26, printed in The Khe Sanh *Veteran* 1:5 (Spring, 1994) 4.
[2579] Letter of Mrs. Jo Ann Harrison, 1 February 2004.

his brothers and sisters called him. The 'C' has no middle name attached, just 'C.' The misspelling of his first name Author was a result of lack of education I'm sure. Education wasn't high on our Dad's list. Our father was a World War II veteran. We were told that our brother, Author, was named for his best friend that died during WW II. There is a remote possibility that his name was spelled that way, but I doubt it.

"A couple of years later I came along. It seemed that my mother was pregnant my entire childhood. I was 13 years old when the seventh child, David, was born. David's life was short. He was 18 months old when he contracted encephalitis. Maybe he died due to the disease, maybe due to the fact that we had no money and ho hospital insurance. He was the first brother I lost; 'C' was the second.

"Author was a thin kid with unruly hair and a 'tough guy attitude.' Being the older brother, he was 'the boss of us,' as he reminded us on a daily basis. His best physical asset had to be his smile. When I think of him he is always smiling. Every morning when my Dad dropped us off at the field, he put 'C' in charge. Too much responsibility for one so young.

"One of his favorite games growing up was to play soldier. Constantly hiding in the wagon of cotton or rows of corn to wait for me to appear so that he could not only scare me to death but also shoot me with a stick that looked somewhat like a gun. He was the first to drop out of school so that he could work around the farm full time. He had grown tired of what comes with poverty. The kids at school laughing at him because he had little or no lunch, the holes in his shoes and his hand-me-down clothes were just a few of the reasons for giving up.

"I knew that somehow we had to get an education if we were to save ourselves. It took much pleading with the teachers to bend the rules and allow us to do make-up work. Many nights were spent doing homework by moonlight in my room shared by four other brothers and sisters. One of my Dad's rules was that when he went to bed, everyone went to bed.

"It was a hard life: children doing work that they were not physically capable of doing. In retrospect, I do not know how any of us made it to become the people that we are today. It is amazing that we all became fairly well educated, with careers ranging from business owners to healthcare providers. My brother would have made it too, but he must have felt that he had to become the 'man of the family' since our Dad didn't take that role very seriously.

"It is so hard to remember when you have spent your lifetime trying to forget. My brother and I, being the oldest, felt that life was leaving us behind. There were no birthday parties, school functions, running water, inside bathrooms, toys on Christmas morning, heat in the winter, doctors when you were sick, soft drinks and candy and not many words of affection. There were however an endless list of chores and taking care of siblings.

"Our father was in and out of the Veterans hospital all our lives. Most of the time it was after being on a drinking binge for several days. Mom was the most devoted wife I have ever known. Whether it was love or fear, I'm not sure. She was with him until the day he died.... I now know that our father was living with demons, some from the war and some from his life after, that made it difficult to be a good father and husband. I will try to understand and maybe someday forgive.

"I remember the day 'C' came home after joining the Marines. He was finally going somewhere. Having never been past the Alabama state line, he was very excited to be going to Parris Island, SC. That excitement soon turned into what he called 'hell.' By the time he arrived to Parris Island we had a telephone, however we could not accept many of his collect phone calls. We always looked forward to his version of what his sergeant dished out on a daily basis, and how he could take it but many of his fellow Marines could not, always confident that they would be whipped into shape before leaving there....

"Eventually he was home—so handsome in his uniform. I remember the night before he departed to Vietnam as if it were yesterday. Coming home late from a date, everyone was asleep. He came to wake me and ask if I would mind warming dinner for him. He wanted one more home-cooked meal. I remember thinking how unusual of him to do that. I was not accustomed to him asking anyone to do anything for him, but was happy to be the one he asked. When I got to the kitchen he was sitting at the table, head down, crying. He looked at me and said, 'Sis, I won't be coming home.' I immediately began to cry with him and told him that I was sure that everyone going to Vietnam must

feel the same way. 'You are the toughest guy I know and I know you will come home,' I said. We talked into the night, about our childhood and things we wanted to do in the future. The next morning he was gone.

"We wrote letters and when I could I mailed packages to him. We watched the news every day. The worst fighting and the most deaths seemed to be Khe Sanh. That is where he was. Every night I would sit glued to the evening news. They would sometimes show pictures of Marines and I would pray that one of them would be him. He was nearing the end of his tour and I was feeling slightly more comfortable since he was still alive and did not have much longer to stay.

"Of course you know the rest. I still cannot talk about him without crying. Sometimes his presence is so strong that I have conversations with him. The anger that I felt toward our country is still there. The manner in which our veterans were treated upon their return is something I can never forgive. I watch people's faces when the subject of the Vietnam War is discussed. It is almost as if I am not to mention that my brother was killed in 'that war' and that I should not be proud. They would like for it to go away. I watch as people are made heroes for much less than the men that fought in Vietnam.

"I hope and pray that one day I will be able to deal with my feelings—maybe writing this will help."

[D/1/9]

During the period 1801 – 2400, KSCB and outposts received approximately 15 rounds of mortar fire resulting in 6 KIA.[2580]

The battle between D/1/9 and the NVA began at 1325 when 2 squads deployed from Co "D" to sweep the area of freshly-dug enemy trenches immediately in front of their company CP; the squads made contact with an estimated 20 NVA. The NVA fired 2 RPG rounds and 4 82mm mortars at the 1/9 perimeter and 2 rounds of artillery along with sniper fire were also received. After firing back with organic weapons, the 2 squads withdrew to the perimeter to permit air-strikes to neutralize the position. Following the air strikes, 2 squads from Co "D" investigated the area and found 5 NVA KIA. Friendly casualties from the contact: 3 minor WIA. At 1800, Co "D" observed one NVA by a bunker, called in 2 rounds of 106mm RR and destroyed the bunker.[2581]

The CO of Co "D", Captain Francis Leo Shafer, Jr., was held in the highest esteem by those who knew him. The 1/9 Battalion Commander, LtCol John F. Mitchell who described Shafer as "..my best Company Commander.. Just a super young man. That guy was so loyal. He impressed me more than anybody else. Unfortunately I didn't get him out in time. I had transfer orders on him for two weeks, but they were never executed. You don't want to get too close, but I was very close to him. He had the toughest position out in my defensive position."[2582] A Corpsman in 2nd Platoon of Co "D", HM3 William G. Gessner, sent a request to his father in the States to have a special plaque made for the Captain.[2583] In a letter of 8 March, Gessner wrote: "The Skipper leaves towards the end of this month. We will forward it [the plaque] to him if he leaves too soon but we'd rather give it to him, you understand. He's saved our ass a few times and we appreciate it."[2584]

The Co "D" CP bunker was a CONEX box that was set down in a cut that had been made by a bulldozer, and everyone felt quite secure in it.[2585] Capt Shafer was sitting in his bunker "all excited. He had this NVA officer's belt on and he was bragging about all the documents and all the NVA his men had killed and all this information they had found on these NVA soldiers."[2586]

Capt Charles B. Hartzell, S-3 of 1/9, later wrote of Capt Schaffer: "Capt Schaffer, I think, had the attitude he was showing the troops how brave he was by strutting around drawing fire then ignoring it as if he couldn't be hit. He had been missed so many times, maybe he thought he couldn't be hit, that there was something different about him. When I tgried to get him to knock off his bullshit, pointing out they were missing him but his troops were getting hit and taken out in much larger numbers than the other companies, he pointed out to me that his unit was on the forward face of the hill under direct enemy observation. He was saying, 'When it was God's will for a man to go, nothing could change that. Hartzell, "no guts, no glory!"' Schaffer would continue his macho walk-about bullshit getting those around him killed and wounded until he was killed by incoming along with his radio man, who always followed him. Major Ringley was with Capt Schaffer on [this,] a clear day around noon on the forward face of the hill in the D Company sector when he was taken out. To me, totally unnecessary. If that walk-about was needed it could have been done at night or under the fog cover we always had until 10 a.m. Others were being hit, but he didn't

[2580] 3rd MarDiv COC 010015Z/Apr68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #604, Para. 4.A.
[2581] 1/9 ComdC Mar68, Encl (1).
[2582] Conversation with LtCol John F. Mitchell, 8 January 1998.
[2583] William G. Gessner, letter to "Dear Dad," 12 February 1968.
[2584] William G. Gessner, letter to "Dear Dad," 8 March 1968.
[2585] Taped comments from Bert Mullins, 8 January 1984.
[2586] Taped comments of Lance Larson, no date, Eisenhower Center, University of New Orleans, LA

stop until he was dead. After Schaffer was killede, my friend, Capt. Cargile, took over D Company, and the unit casualties almost stopped overnight. Everyone went underground during the day and God's will went somewhere else to kill Marines."[2587]

Colonel Mitchell's "runner," CPL Luzon Beasley, was also liked by all who encountered him within the battalion. He had already "paid his dues" in the Grunts. "You couldn't ask for a better friend than he was."[2588] PFC Lance C. Larson recalls: "Everyone knew Corporal Beasley. He was a black guy who was real good-looking, always by the CP bunker, and every time you saw him, he was eating. He was the nicest guy and we used to kid him all the time. We'd come by and say, 'Gee you really got a rough job, eating C-rations,' and he'd say, 'No, I really work hard.' We always used to raze the heck out of him. He had been a Grunt and everything, and just got picked for that job."[2589] Beasley had requested transfer to the Chaplain's Office of 3rd Marine Division, and was to depart for that assignment. Beasley, who had been in Co "D," came to LtCol Mitchell: " 'Do you mind if I see my former Company Commander [Shafer]?' I said, 'OK, but don't get involved, I want to get you to your new assignment.' So he went up there."[2590]

It was approximately 1900 when the mortars came. Two Marines were hit by the fragments, and Captain Shafer and CPL Beasley ran to the side of one, managing to get him to safety, and while trying to assist another Marine, another round exploded near them resulting in both Capt Shafer's and CPL Beasley's death.[2591]

For LCPL Peter A. Mestas the sequence of events is permanently etched into his memory. "That particular day, basically what happened, there was a MULE that was pulled into the CP bunker [area]. That day was the first day that we received any kind of beer ration. And our radioman, Tommy, received 2 beers and everyone else got one. Well, Tommy and I were very good friends. I drank a beer and he drank a beer, and we split a beer. Then our section leader came to us and said to go to the CP bunker and pick up some ammo. I was in 60 mortars, so we went over across the hill (because we didn't have a trench to the CP bunker) and we picked up the ammo. We came back, put the ammo down, and just kinda enjoyed the beer. About a half-hour later, he came back to us and said we had 4 boxes of the wrong ammo. So Tommy picked up a box and started going across the hill, and I took a box, tossed it over the trench, and I was bending over to pick up a box, and the first rounds that came in were rockets. And one went by and went BOOM! At that point I have the ammo box almost put up on my shoulder and it knocked me back into the trench and the ammo landed on my chest. Well, I got the box off me, and then another rocket came in and it was followed by another, and it just hit me that Tommy's out there, so I basically got up, looked out there, and he was laying there. So I ran out and tried to pick him up, but he was dead weight. I couldn't pick him up. I couldn't see where he was hit. Another rocket came in and knocked me down. Then I started dragging him and a black guy came out and helped and we drug him to the trench.. We called for stretcher bearers. Everybody showed up. There were 6 of us carrying the stretcher, and [Cpl Raymond Louis] Plunkett was right next to me. We're in the rear of the stretcher, and we were going across the hill, and we were running. Plunkett said, 'Slow down.' Then, all of a sudden, BANG. I didn't know that I was wounded. I didn't hear the blast. It was just like I was thrown. I started to get up and noticed that my left leg was flipped completely around. Then I felt something coming off my forehead. I went to wipe it off, and I could see through my left hand and my left arm. So I lost my little finger and a big chunk of my left arm. I couldn't move my legs. I was right at the edge of the CP bunker which was down in a gully that was on top of the hill.

"Captain Shafer came out of his bunker. I saw him and said, 'Sir, I'm hit!' He came up the gully and picked me up underneath my arms and said, 'You're going to be all right.' He dragged me down off the hill, down into the gully. He walked away. He got maybe 10 feet away from me, and I heard another one come in. They sound like WHOOSH-WHEW-SHH. I covered up and that thing went off, almost like a dead-on hit. Nobody else was around me and I was trying to move my right arm. I was trying to get to him, but I blacked out because I was bleeding so bad. I saw Lieutenant Koman running across the ridge of the gully, and then I blacked out again. I didn't know that Lieutenant Koman was killed. I didn't know that half those guys were killed."[2592]

LtCol Mitchell was standing next to his relief, LtCol Cahill, when he learned of Capt. Shafer's death and broke down.[2593]

Luzon Beasley, born 4 Sep 1946, had entered the USMC on 27 July 1966 after attending Higgins High School in Clarksdale, Mississippi.[2594] He played basketball and played in the band. He was a paperboy that delivered papers among all the more wealthy, white areas of the city. While tossing the papers, he'd hum or sing. When his body came back and at his funeral, there were

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[2587] Charles B. Hartzell, Memoir, pp. 56-57.
[2588] Taped comments from Bert Mullins, 8 January 1984.
[2589] *Ibid.*
[2590] Conversation with Col John F. Mitchell, 23 November 2004.
[2591] Statement of LCPL Russell W. Mayes in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) of CPL Luzon Beasley.
[2592] Conversation with Pete Mestas, 22 May 1996.
[2593] Conversation with Col John Mitchell, 23 November 2004.
[2594] *Obit.*, and Memorial Service bulletin, furnished by his brother, James.

so many people present, the church rigged outdoor speakers to accommodate the crowd. "Everybody showed up. He brought everybody together—black, white. People we didn't even know in Clarksdale showed up. It brought the whole community together. His girl friend, who had moved to California, came back. There were 5 limousines at the funeral. It was almost like for the President. Then they blew the horn [trumpet "Taps"] and shot the guns and gave my mom the flag—something you never forget."[2595]

Paul's Poem[2596]
By Keith Cochran (D/1/9)

A mother's torture she did grieve.
A bit of pain, at last, he breathed.

A little bundle of squirming joy.
So proud they were, a baby boy.

A doctor, a lawyer, an Indian chief,
Of future plans, his folks did speak.

From knee high to fully grown.
By his smile, he was known.

He grew up happy with love abound.
A war did come his time around.

To a foreign country he was sent.
To fight for freedom, we thought it meant.

Within sandbagged bunkers we did talk,
It was life and love that we stalk.

Our own warning we did not heed,
"Don't get too close, painful loss you'll breed."

The captain and I did see,
The mortar round, death to be.

A scream of terror on it's descent,
And then the blast was hell sent.

Hazily I saw the heave,
Was it the last Paul would breathe?

Still not sure he bit the dust,
Have to know: become a must.

Back up the hill with a mind a runnin',
It can't be true, gray thoughts a comin'.

Oh, please! a dream make it,
It's Paul's life, don' take it.

Shapeless form beneath a blanket,
I lift a corner, reality, scream it.

A mother, a family, and I now grieve,
A bit of pain, the last Paul breathed.

LCPL Howlett was directing traffic through one of the mine fields near the Rock Quarry area [where 1/9 was located]. Two rounds came in and went over their heads. The next round landed behind Howlett who had only dropped to one knee. He took shrapnel in the back and in his head, and died before getting back to the base.[2597]

[Operation SCOTLAND terminated at 310800 March 1968 at which time 26th Marines became OPCON to CG, 1st Air Cav and commenced Operation PEGASUS.[2598] By the end of March, the formerly enchanted Garden of Eden with all its beauty, perhaps containing species of flora and fauna not yet known, full of wild animals from ocelots to large tigers, koupreys, durion fruit trees, rock apes, wild boar, a thousand shades of green, had been transformed into a moonscape, a wasteland product of human technology, a valley of dry bones. Mountains had been moved, tens of thousands of human lives perished, the lives of survivors, their families and the families of the dead were forever altered. One pilot, flying into Khe Sanh on 26 March 1968 noted: "It was quite evident that the B-52 Arc Light raids had significantly affected the countryside around the Khe Sanh area. It appeared to me that there's a major bomb crater every 200, 300 feet surrounding all the hillsides and surrounding terrain."[2599]

Support by artillery and air reached new records during the siege battle at Khe Sanh. The battle saw the first employment of strategic B-52 bombers on a sustained basis for tactical support. In 70 days of operations, 96,000 tons of bombs were dropped, nearly twice as much as was delivered by the Army Air Corps in the Pacific during 1942 and 1943.[2600] The USAF records this in terms of sorties while the USMC records this in terms of strikes and tons of ordnance. USAF documents note 9,684 tactical air sorties and 2,567 SAC [B52] strikes by the USAF, 5,167 tactical air sorties by the USN and 6,385 tactical air

[2595] Conversation with James Beasley, 13 December 2004.
[2596] Printed in Khe Sanh Veterans *Newsletter*, Issue #11 (April, 1990) 6. Cochran notes that the "Paul" in the poem is PFC Paul R. Gula, the Captain is Capt. Francis Leo Shafer.
[2597] Letter from John J. Pessoni postmarked 14 December 2001. Pessoni was a member of the engineer company on KSCB during the siege battle.
[2598] 3rd MarDiv COC 010640Z/Apr68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP #606, Para 4.
[2599] Comments of Maj Kenneth H. Wilcox, USMC Oral History Tape #2661. Wilcox was Asst S-3, MAG-16, pilot of a CH-53.
[2600] LtGen John J. Tolson, *Airmobility, 1961-1971*, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1973, p. 167.

sorties by the USMC, for a total of 23,803 sorties.[2601] *USMC documents record 1,169 close air support missions delivering 36,161 tons, 4,989 TPQ-10 strikes delivering 32,500 tons, and 430 B-52 strikes delivering 79,575 tons.*[2602] *CG, FMFPAC, reported 7,078 sorties flown 20 Jan – 31 March 1968 with over 6,000 sorties (approximately 85%) delivered against targets located within a 9-mile radius of the KSCB perimeter.*[2603]

With all the accumulated garbage on KSCB—accumulated because the high saturation of enemy incoming made usual trash removal an almost sure way to kill Americans, the rat population multiplied in geometric proportions. Then, suddenly, the rats disappeared—not due to death from eating C-rations, but, it was assumed, to all the enemy bodies and body parts strewn so close to the base which made for better food.

NVA losses on the Khe Sanh battlefield reflect the tenacity with which they pursued their objectives. It was almost as if Khe Sanh had become a large piece of flypaper, a gigantic spider web, from which they could not extricate themselves. They grabbed the tail of a tiger, the end of a high voltage electric wire, could not release it and were being killed by it. Their loss was obviously heavy. Bru from villages south and west of Khe Sanh reported at least 2,000 and possibly 10,000 were killed by bombing. Casualties due to secondary explosions and fired from destruction and damage to guns, bunkers, supply dumps, headquarters, and structures, although not capable of being accurately counted, must have been high. Assuming 2 NVA soldiers per secondary explosion, with over 6,000 secondary explosions and fires, 12,000 may be estimated. Some of these explosions continued several hours. Approximately 900 bunkers were destroyed, some of which must have been occupied. 300 gun positions were destroyed. Forward Air Controllers flying O1 and O2 aircraft counted 1,400 bodies, and approximately 1,000 bodies were killed on the wires of KSCB from the three attempted assaults on the combat base in March, 1968.[2604]

During Operation PEGASUS/LAM SOM 207A, 13,890 tons of enemy supplies were found of which 13,626 tons were food. The NVA left over 1800 dead bodies on the hills around Khe Sanh, a dreadful thing to do in their culture.[2605]

Col Donald A. Gruenther, Director of MACEVAL, COMUSMACV, analyzed the probable number of NVA KIA using a formula by which the NVA suffered: an estimated 15,760 casualties (3550 KIA + 12,210 wounded and evacuated) from delivered fires plus 8880 casualties (2000 KIA + 6880) from ground action, for a total of 24,640.[2606]

Official (classified "Mat"="Secret") documentation of casualties at Khe Sanh during the siege battle[2607] *indicate the: following numbers participating in combat: from 325th Division (15 Jan): 28,440; 304th Division (20 Mar): 25,580; Front Rear Services (30 Jun): 25,124. 325 Division suffered 398 KIA and 689 WIA (20 Jan – 3 Jul 68), 304th Division suffered 1,342 KIA and 2,527 WIA (20 Jan – 31 May 68), 45th Regiment (artillery) suffered 21 KIA and 53 WIA (20 Jan – 29 Mar 68), 675th Regiment suffered 54 KIA and 57 WIA (20 Jan – 10 Jun 68), 241st Regt suffered 22 KIA and 60 WIA (20 Jan – 30 Apr 68), 7th Regt suffered 42 KIA and 94 WIA (20 Jan – 27 Mar 68), and Front Rear Services suffered 73 KIA and 115 WIA (20 Jan – 15 Jun 68), for a total of 2,270 KIA and 4,219 WIA.*[2608]

[2601] Trest, Warren A., *Khe Sanh (Operation Niagara) 22 January – 31 March 1968*, PACAF: Directorate, Tactical Evaluation, CHECO Division, pp. 112-114.

[2602] HQMC (Code ARA) letter, 22 Jan 1969, in Khe Sanh Monograph File, HQMC Historical Branch, Washington, D.C.

[2603] CG, FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam, March, 1968*, p. 13.

[2604] MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 8 July 1968, p. 13; Gen. Wm. C. Westmoreland, speech of 13 June 1968, to 3rd Air Division, in *History, 3rd Air Division, Jan – Jul 1968*, Vol. I, Exhibit #180; MACV, *Command History*, Vol. 1, pp. 423-424.

[2605] MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 8 July 1968, pp. 14-15.

[2606] MACEVAL: "An Analysis of the Khe Sanh Battle," 5 April 1968, in ACofS, MACV, letter to Chairman, JCS, 10 April 1968, in OJCS File 091, Vietnam, April, 1968, p. 3. An egregious under-counting of US KIA renders the value of "K" erroneous. According to the formula, KIA = K times the number of troops divided by the square kilometers of the battlefield times the tons of ordnance. "K" is a constant of proportionality based on the friendly experience at Khe Sanh for the period 27 January through 31 March with troop strength of 6085, tons received: 99.25, friendly KIA: 167, and area in sq. km.: 4.8. If the US number of 563 KIA is factored in instead of 167, the result is a "K" factor of 0.0044746, and, using the formula, 11,932 NVA KIA.

[2607] *Cong Tac Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign*], "For Distribution within the Army—Luu Hanh Trong Quan Doi, classified MAT, [Secret], Hanoi: Tong Cuc Hau Can [General Directorate for Rear Services], June, 1988, Medical Section, pp. 264ff.

[2608] *Ibid.*, Appendix 2, p. 327. Specific battles: 154 KIA/486WIA on 20 Jan, Battle of Huong Hoa by 3rd Regt, 304th Div; 15 KIA/95WIA on 20 Jan, Battle for Hill 832 [Hill 861, XD803443] by 6th Bn, 2nd Regt, 325th Div; 20 KIA/68WIA on 20 Jan, Battle of Hill 845 [Hill 881, XD777438] by 4th Bn, 2nd Regt, 325th Div, 54 KIA/80WIA on 7 Feb 68 for Battle of South Lang Vei by 3rd Bn, 1st Regt, 325th Div; 36 KIA/140 WIA on 7 Feb 68 in Battle of North Lang Vei by 2nd Regt, 304th Div; an unknown number of KIA and 982WIA from the encirclement of KSCB by 1st Regt., 304th Division, etc. [*Ibid.*, p. 330]. By units: 325th Division suffered 398 KIA and 698 WIA, 304th Division suffered 1,342 KIA and 2,527 WIA. [*Ibid.*, Appendix 3, p. 331].

While 26th Marines Regiment records indicate 205 American KIA for the siege battle,[2609] the Command Chronologies of 1/26 and 2/26 and the After Action Reports for Operation SCOTLAND of 3/26, 1/9, and 1/13 report a total of 274 KIA. In addition, there were 219 KIA sustained in the Lang Vei battle (10 Americans), and the following KIA from other units: 13 from Co "B", 3rd Recon Bn; 6 from Hq Co, 26th Marine Regiment; 4 from "A" Co, 3rd Shore Party Bn; 4 from "A" Co., 3rd Engineer Bn; 2 from FLC (POL); 2 from HMH-463; 3 from VMGR-152; 8 from HMM-262; 5 from FOB-3; 3 from MACV Det-19 and 282nd AHC; 3 from the 37th Signal Bn; and one each from: HqBn, 3rd MarDiv; H&S Co., 3rd Shore Party Bn; SptCo, 3rd Eng Bn; 5th Comm Bn; CBMU-301 Det "B"; HQ, 12th Mar; CAC "O"; Co A, 3rd AT Bn; MASS-3, I MAW; MWHG-1; MABS-36; MACTU-62; VMO-6, and the USAF 20th TASS, for a total of 70 from other units. This gives a grand total of American KIA for the siege battle at Khe Sanh of: 354 Americans and 209 Vietnamese (not including those from the 37th ARVN Ranger Bn), for a total of: 563.

During the battle, 2,541 patients were seen and treated in the medical facilities at Khe Sanh. Of these 2,031 were wounded in action and 490 were non-battle casualties. 2,249 patients were evacuated by fixed wing very early in the siege, but later entirely by helicopter. Of these, 292 were returned to duty.[2610]

Concerning the local Montagnards of the Bru tribe, when the siege battle began on 21 January 1968, the 1200 Vietnamese of Khe Sanh Village were evacuated but the I Corps Commander, General Xuan Lam, prohibited the local Bru from departing, saying there was no place to settle them in Vietnam.[2611] The Bru were told to return to their villages, which were soon burned and abandoned. Bru were forced to carry supplies for the NVA and thus strafed and bombed by our own planes who were unable to differentiate between them and the NVA. Eventually many were flown out by helicopter from FOB-3 in mid and late March. Those who were able to depart the battlefield were settled in a refugee village south of Cam Lo called Cua. Among the refugees were many who had still been in the hills and not resettled in the strategic villages close to KSCB in 1962. Official Marine Corps records indicate 10,000 Bru located within a 5 km radius of Khe Sanh ville.[2612] Another official Marine Corps document indicates 21,000 total indigenous persons located in 9 villages of Huong Hoa District,[2613] a much larger area than the 5 km radius. Since there were 1200 Vietnamese, the figure of approx. 20,000 Bru in the total area and 8800 in the immediate area reflects the census. The population of the Cua refugee center as of June, 1968, was approx. 6,000,[2614] although usually 3 or 4 were dying a day from starvation, dehydration, and wounds and illness. Therefore, somewhere between 2800 to 12,800 Bru perished during the first three months of 1968 at Khe Sanh. The figure may be higher. In early March, 1968, there were 1,643 Bru at the Ca Lu Combat Base (before their movement to the Cua center).[2615] The disparity may be from Vietnamese refugees also at the refugee center making up the rest of the 6,000.

During the siege battle at Khe Sanh, the NVA strength was from 20,000 – 25,000 in some 21 battalions plus supporting forces, about 50% of the NVA forces in I CTZ, plus another 24,000 readily available in nearby Laos. US forces at Khe Sanh numbered 5,700 Marines and about 500 Vietnamese, representing about 3% of the total friendly forces in I CTZ. Within a radius of 10 miles of Khe Sanh there were 3,800 more Marines and 500 Army and within 40 miles, 37,000 more troops. Fire support, in addition to 18 105s, 5 155s, 10 Ontos, 32 individual 106mm RR, 5 tanks, and 98 mortars included16 175mm guns and 6 155mm howitzers at Camp Carroll and Thon Son Lam, at least 45 B-52 sorties available per day and 300 or more tactical air sorties per day. It was not uncommon to drop as much as 1,800 tons of bombs in the Khe Sanh area in a single day. During the siege battle, an average of 194 short tons of supplies and 70 troops

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[2609] 26Mar, AAR SCOTLAND, p. 15. General Tompkins gave the same figure, 205, in testimony before the U.S. Senate, Electronic Battlefield Subcommittee of the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services. [*Investigation Into Electronic Battlefield Program*, 91st Congress, 2nd Session, Nov 18, 19, and 24, 1970, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971, p. 95]. It is intriguing to note that if the 1/9 KIA total (72) is subtracted from the 274, one arrives at 202, almost the 205 figure. Was 1/9 considered ADCOM to another regiment, although OPCON?

[2610] CDR Brown, Robert A., "Dateline: Vietnam," *Pennsylvania Medicine* (August, 1968), pp. 45-53. CDR Brown was CO, 3rd Medical Bn. and frequently visited KSCB during the siege battle.

[2611] 26Mar 191316Z/Feb68, Disposition of Displaced Personnel, in 26Mar ComdC Feb68; *Vide* p. 127 of this book.

[2612] 26Mar, AAR Operation SCOTLAND, 31 May 1968, p. 10, notes 1250 Vietnamese in Khe Sanh Village and approximately 10,000 Bru "primarily resided in a dozen small villages and resettlement areas located within a 5 kilometer periphery of Khe Sanh Village."

[2613] Citation and statement of LtCol Clark in Bronze Star Medal file of Capt Henry Lebaron Preston. Preston was the 26 Marines S-5 (Civil Affairs)

[2614] Journal kept by CPL Daniel Kelley, entry for 17 April 1968, records: Total Bru: 5,668 (1,026 families, 758 families with no money, 92 deaths) and 1225 Vietnamese (353 families, 25 families not paid, 8 deaths). [Recorded in Ray William Stubbe, *Khe Sanh*, unpublished manuscript, 7 October 1971, p. 1345, Encl (1) to CNO letter Ser 10516P942. CPL Kelley (from CAC "O"), along with Mr. Robert Handy (civilian) and SFC James Perry (Medic from MACV Det 4, Huong Hoa) were three Americans permanently assigned to the Cua Refugee Center to manage it.

[2615] GySgt Ed Brey, "Ca Lu," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:11 (15 March 1968) p.3.

per day were air delivered to Khe Sanh, for a total of 14,356 short tons of supplies and 5,180 troops. US forces fired a total of 117,643 rounds of artillery (including 12,441 rounds of 175mm). B-52 sorties averaged 35 per day delivering 1,022 tons per day of bombs. 533 sorties delivered ordnance within 3 km of friendly ground troops. Tactical air supported Khe Sanh with 15,266 attack sorties with a daily average of 184. US aircraft losses in support of Khe Sanh (1 November 67 – 1 April 68) were 8 fixed wing and 13 helicopters.[2616]]

31 MARCH 1968

FERRARI, SGT Arnold Jay	**C/1/26**
GREENIDGE, LCPL Michael R	**D/1/9**
PRUIETT, PFC Thomas Pierre Jr.	**K/3/26**
WHEELER, PFC Joseph Keith	**C/1/9**

1/9 received 13 60mm mortars, 9 82mm mortars, and 2 RPG rounds, resulting in one KIA and 4 WIAs.[2617]

At 1325 a 82mm mortar exploded on the southern tip of Hill 861 killing Tom Pruiett.[2618] CPL Dennis M. Mannion, the Arty FO for K/3/26, was on top of the hill position when the mortars exploded and, listening on his PRC-25 heard a request for a routine medevac, not priority, meaning someone had been killed, not wounded. "An hour or so later, just by chance, I was sent down the hill past the LZ because some sniper activity was going on. Capt Snead sent me down to see if the sniper location could be pinpointed and some artillery be brought to bear. I dropped into the trench [and] someone (a Marine unknown to me) was on my left. I said, 'I heard you guys had a KIA earlier.' He said, 'Yeah, a guy about 6 foxholes up the line—almost took a direct hit on his position—didn't have much of a chance.' Since I knew 5 or 6 guys in the [3rd] Platoon, I said, 'Who was it?' He said, 'Tom Pruiett, but I didn't know him too well. I'm glad it wasn't me. He got it in the neck, shoulder, side.' I said something to the effect on the bitch of not knowing how or when you'd meet your death and moved down the trenchline. I passed the foxhole—a lot of dried blood, some small flesh fragments, bandage wrappings, etc. The 82mm mortar doesn't make a big hole (no more than 5 inches around and 3 inches deep in solid dirt) so there was no noticeable damage to the foxhole."[2619]

PFC Thomas P. Pruiett, born 16 November 1967, was a good athlete in high school where he played basketball 3 years, but "He didn't make it into his senior year cause he failed 11th grade. I believe he was failing again and I believe that's why he enlisted in the Marines in April [6 April 1967] because I believe it hurt him to see us graduated and he didn't make it."[2620] Pruiett arrived in Vietnam 18 September 1967 and was transferred to K/3/26 the next day.[2621] In December, 1967, he wrote: "I am over here because I have to protect those who are in school and those who like to burn draft cards, and all the families. I realize this, and I am proud to fight for my country, even if it does mean death. At least, I can say I fought for my country."[2622]

A high school sweetheart wrote: "The year 1967, we were just kids in high school and we knew about the war going on in that faraway place called Vietnam. You and I [were in] high school together. We were having the time of our lives and making plans for our future.. Yes it was only yesterday and you were by my side and I was in your arms feeling the closeness of you and your warm kisses. While you were away you wrote me letters telling me what it was like over there and I waited for you to come home again. Then came the telegram saying you had been killed... It was only yesterday and now you are gone from me forever, but I'll always have those happy memories of our time we had together."[2623]

At 1830H, a mortar exploded in the northern, Blue Sector manned by C/1/26, amputating the legs of Sgt Ferrari, killing him[2624] and wounding PFC Jerry W. Slaughter (laceration of left side of head, non serious) and CPL Bradley O. Evans (non serious wounds to right arm and both hands).[2625]

1/Lt Nicholas S. Romanetz, Platoon Commander of C-2, 1/26, had made Sgt. Ferrari his Platoon Right Guide, responsible for supplies to the platoon. On his own initiative, not going through the regular channels of the Company Gunny, Gunny Grohman, he had contacted the battalion S-4 and ordered 3 cases of grenades to be delivered to the platoon lines. Prior to coming on active duty, Sgt. Ferrari had played college football and was a muscular, handsome, action-seeking Marine, sometimes talking with Lt Romanetz about wanting to earn a Bronze or

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[2616] Memorandum for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, DJSM-448-68, 17 Apr 1968, Subj: Khe Sanh Fact Sheet (prepared by CDR J.H. Cullen, USN, LtCol J. McG. Bohen, USA, Maj R.C. Lyons, USAF, Combat Analysis Group, J-3), in OJCS File 091, Vietnam, April, 1968.

[2617] 1/9 ComdC Mar68, Encl (1). Obviously there are 2 KIA; it is possible one might have died of wounds.

[2618] 3/26 AAR, Operation PEGASUS, Para 9. 2 Marines were also WIA.

[2619] Letter from Dennis Mannion to Diedrie Hulshof, 24 Mar 1987.

[2620] Letter from Diedrie Hulshof, September, 1985.

[2621] Letter from Mr. Danny Crawford, Marine Corps Historical Branch, HQMC, 5750/1222, HDH-2/AAF, 19 Jul 1985.

[2622] Article in Coloma, Michigan, paper [unidentified], "Coloma Marine Pays Full Price," 5 April 1968.

[2623] Diedrie Hulshof, "It Was Only Yesterday," clipping in *Reflecting* (May, 1987), p. 32, in her letter of 9 July 1987.

[2624] 1/26 ComdC Mar68, S2/S3 Log 31 March 1968, Ser #44.

[2625] *Ibid.*, Ser #45 & 46.

Silver Star Medal. One day a mortar round exploded in the trench and severed both of Sgt. Ferrari's legs. Both of his legs were placed on the stretcher with him, and it was apparent he wasn't going to survive. About an hour later, C Med reported he had died. "The thing that was sad about it: here was a guy that didn't have to be there. He volunteered to come over from where he was a draft-exempt guy. He wanted to do something, win himself a medal, and instead got himself killed. Shortly after we took him away we found his boot lying outside of the trenchline. Still had his foot in it, and [since] he'd been gone for awhile, we just buried that boot somewhere in the dirt out in front of us, and I guess to this date, that boot with his foot is still in there."[2626]

[On 31 March 1968, *President Johnson announces he would neither seek nor accept the nomination for another term as President.*]

[*On 01 April 1968, the B5-T8 NVA commanders began Phase III operations at Khe Sanh lasting to 7 May 1968. The mission of Phase III was to "attack enemy forces (endeavoring) to (lift the siege on) Ta Con [i.e., KSCB]. Our forces were transformed from troops encircling (the enemy) to mobile attacking forces which carried out combat operations such as raids, ambushes, attacking lines of communication, indirect artillery fire."*[2627] *By the beginning of April, the eastern half of the battlefield was detached and placed under the direct command of the PAVN High Command and the area of the campaign focused on the Khe Sanh area. NVA forces at Khe Sanh consisted of: the 304th Division (minus one battalion), the 8th Independent Infantry Battalion, one 122mm artillery battalion, one 122mm rocket regiment, and one anti-aircraft artillery regiment. The NVA Campaign Headquarters, aware of American engineers, reconnaissance, and road repairs from Ca Lu to Huong Hoa, determined that a large operation in the direction of Khe Sanh was being planned. It was unclear to them, however, whether this was intended to lift the siege and then withdraw or to rotate forces and attempt to hold Khe Sanh. In any event, the Americans would have to deploy forces along Highway 9, and this created "an advantageous situation for us to eliminate them outside their fortifications... There was an immediate requirement to rapidly reorganize forces so that forces could be sent to establish strong points blocking Highway 9. The 8th Battalion (minus one company) moved to the west of Ca Lu to attack the enemy aimed at wearing them down and tying them down during an advance along Highway 9. The element laying siege to the strong point at Ta Con had to maintain its control of the battlefield, to move in closer to the enemy, to attack the enemy counter-attacks and to isolate them within their base. Mobile forces had to be prepared to attack enemy landing by air close to the base complex."*[2628]

Operation PEGASUS/LAM SON 207A was conducted 310800H March, 1968, to 150800H April 1968. At noon, 22 January, within hours of the attack on KSCB (Sunday, 21 January 1968), the US Army 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) [abbreviated "I ACD" in this book] *had moved from the Bong Son (49P BS8090) in the II Corps Tactical Zone to the Hue-Phu Bai base (at 48QYD8020).*[2629] *Pegasus, the flying horse in Greek mythology, was an apt name for the operation in which the I ACD, whose symbol is a horse's head, was the symbol. On 25 January, CG, III MAF (LtGen Robert E. Cushman, Jr.) directed the I ACD to prepare a contingency plan for the relief and/or reinforcement of the Khe Sanh base,*[2630] *Other events, including the NVA's TET Offensive (29 January – 14 February), the Battle of Hue City (31 Jan – 25 Feb), the establishment of HQ, MACV Forward (13 February) and its conversion into Headquarters, Provisional Corps Vietnam (PCV) on 10 March diverted planning and execution of the planned relief operation,*[2631] *(and saved the American force from falling into the trap of the NVA plan to lure Americans to the Khe Sanh battlefield in order to annihilate them piece-meal). Major General John J. Tolson, III, Commanding General, 1st Cavalry Division, briefed General Abrams on 2 March on his concept for an operation to open Route 9 into Khe Sanh and relieve pressure on the base. The concept was approved. PCV was placed under OPCON of III*

[2626] Comments of Nicholas Romanetz, no date [but it must be 1987 since in the conversation he said he's 42, and he was born 22 Jan 1945].

[2627] *Cong Tadc Hau Can: Chien Dich Duong 9 Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*Rear Service Operations: 1968 Spring-Summer Khe Sanh Route 9 Campaign*], classified "Mat" [Secret], restricted "for distribution within the Army," Hanoi: Tong Cuc Hau Can [General Directorate for Rear Services], 1988, Military Medical Operations Highway 9/Khe Sanh Front (B5-T8), p. 268.

[2628] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign*], Hanoi: Vien Lich Su Quan Su Vietnam, Bo Quoc Phong [Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense], 1987, pp. 35-36.

[2629] Waldron, Maj Miles D. and Beavers, SP5 Richard W., *The Critical Year, 1968*, [Part 2], HQ, Provisional Corps Vietnam, 31st Military History Detachment, May, 1968, *Historical Study 3-68, "Operation PEGASUS,"* pp. 1-2.

[2630] *Ibid.*, p. 2. Ref: HQ, III MAF 251428Z/Jan68, Subj: Contingency Planning.

[2631] *Ibid.* Gen Creighton W. Abrams, Deputy Commander, MACV, commanded the MACV (Fwd) CP. On 28 Jan '68, LtGen William B. Rosson, CG, I Field Force Vietnam, was directed to prepare a contingency plan for a Provisional Corps Headquarters to move to I CTZ and assume OPCON of designated US Army units. Upon implementation, Gen Rosson would be the Provisional Corps Commander. LtGen Rosson reported to MACV FWD on 01 March and was appointed Deputy to General Abrams.

MAF.[2632] *At 1201, 10 March 1968, Provisional Corps Vietnam became operational at Phu Bai under the command of LtGen William B. Rosson, and assumed OPCON of 1st Cavalry Division, 3rd Marine Division, 101st Airborne Division with the 3rd Brigade, the 82nd Airborne Division, and Task Force CLEARWATER.*[2633] *Starting 12 March, an airstrip was constructed at Ca Lu capable of handling a C7A aircraft.*[2634] *The airstrip and compound became known as "Landing Zone STUD."*[2635] *On 21 March the base at Ca Lu (48Q YD0145) was established with 5515 short tons of supplies. Ten days later, 80% of the supply level was achieved.*[2636]

On 28 March 1968, "..the 26th Marine Regiment.. was instructed to conduct limited attacks out of Khe Sanh Combat Base to determine the enemy's posture, his intention, and to fix the enemy in position."[2637]

The basic concept of the operation: the 26th Marine Regiment would attack south and west of the Combat Base against NVA positions west of Khe Sanh and north of Route 9, the 1st Marine Regiment would launch a ground attack west toward Khe Sanh along Route 9 with 2 battalions accompanied by USMC engineers(11th Engineer Bn) and Seabees and heavy construction equipment, while the 1st Air Cavalry air-assaulted the high ground. All elements would continue moving west toward Khe Sanh and on D+3, the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Cav would land three battalions southeast of Khe Sanh and attack northwest.[2638]

Operation PEGASUS was the largest III MAF operation of the war, involving 18 infantry battalions (7 USMC, 8 USA, 3 ARVN Rangers),[2639] *a total of some 19,000 Army soldiers, 10,000 Marines, 300 helicopters and 114 heliborne artillery pieces.*[2640] *Major units were divided as follows:*

- *1st Brigade, I ACD (1st Bn, 8th Cavalry; 1st Bn, 12th Cav, and 2-19 Artillery);*
- *2nd Brigade, I ACD (1st Bn, 5th Cav; 2nd Bn, 5th Cav; 2nd Bn, 12th Cav, and 1-77 Artillery);*
- *3rd Brigade, I ACD (1st Bn, 7th Cav, 2nd Bn, 7th Cav, 5th Bn, 7th Cav,, 1-21 Artillery, 37th ARVN Ranger Bn, 1/13 USMC artillery, and all KSCB support detachments);*
- *26th Marine Regt (1/26, 2/16, 3/26, and 1/9);*
- *1st Marine Regt (1/1, 2/1, 2/3, and 1/11 artillery);*
- *3rd ARVN Task Force (3rd, 6th, and 8th Airborne Bns, C Btry, 12th Artillery).*[2641]

Personnel strength at KSCB and its outposts at this point included: 239 USMC officers, 5,632 USMC enlisted, 10 USN officers, and 287 USN enlisted, for a total of 6168.[2642]

The Area of Operations was defined as XD9766 to YD0334 to the Laotian border at XD7726, north along the border to the southern boundary of the DMZ, and east along the DMZ to XD 9766.[2643]

In addition to relieving the defenders at KSCB, successful completion of Operation PEGASUS/Lam Son 207A would mark, for the first time since September, 1967, the opening of Route 9 over the 42 road miles from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh.[2644] *The task of opening Route 9*

[2632] *Ibid.*, Part I, pp. 19-20.

[2633] *Ibid.*, p. 23. Ref: HQ, III MAF 041128Z/Mar68, Subj: Command Support Forthcoming Deployments.

[2634] Ist Air Cavalry Div, AAR, Operation PEGASUS, p. 4, Para. 7; Waldron and Beavers, *Critical Year, op. cit.*, Part 2, p. 3.

[2635] Tolson, LtGen John J., III, "Pegasus," *Army* 21:12 (December, 1971) 15.

[2636] HQ, PCV, AAR Operation PEGASUS, p. 19.

[2637] Waldron and Beavers, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 33; FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, April, 1968, p. 7.

[2638] Tolson, "Pegasus," p. 14.

[2639] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, April, 1968, p. 7.

[2640] Cutts, Bob, "Reds Booted Off Khe Sanh Hill," *Pacific Stars & Stripes* 24:150 (31 May 1968) 9, 12-13.

[2641] HQ, I ACD, AAR Opn PEGASUS, Tab C.

[2642] FMFPAC SITREP #1102.

[2643] III MAF COC 300205Z/Mar68, Concept of Opn PEGASUS, in III MAF COC Journal and File 30/31 March 1968, #36.

[2644] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, April, 1968, pp. 7, 64. In September, 1967, torrential monsoon rains washed out the road bed in many places, swept away 3 bridges, and loosened overhanging bluffs which tumbled landslides across the road. Additionally, NVA forces occupied the area and 10 bridges were damaged or destroyed, innumerable trenches and craters were cut into the road. The 42-mile route (Dong Ha-Khe Sanh) has 49 bridges, 27 of which are along the 15-mile stretch between Ca Lu and Khe Sanh. [FMFPAC, *Operations*, April, 1968, *op. cit.*, p. 64]. The status of bridges and road as of early January, 1968, included 26 bridges posing blockages: YD009453 (20 x 8-ft. bridge intact, by-pass difficult), YD002453 (60 x 20-ft. bridge intact, by-pass difficult), YD000452 (117 x 20-ft. bridge intact, by-pass difficult), XD997448 (60 x 24-ft. bridge intact, by-pass fair), XD994445 (90 x 30-ft. bridge badly damaged, by-pass fair), XD993443 (90 x 30-ft. bridge badly damaged, by-pass difficult), XD989443 (90 x 24-ft. bridge out, by-pass impossible), XD987441 (bridge intact), XD983438 (intact, possible culvert), XD981436, XD979436, and XD977434 (bridges intact, possible culvert), XD976434 and XD973433 (bridges out, by-pass impossible), XD971432 and XD970432 (bridges intact, possible culvert), XD965429 (37 x 12-ft. bridge intact by damaged, by-pass impossible, XD959429 (16 x 16-ft. bridge intact, by-pass good), XD957428 (bridge intact, possible culvert), XD956428, (bridge out, by-pass impossible), XD942428 (bridge out, by-pass difficult), XD941422 and XD925421 (bridges out, by-pass impossible), XD921419 (bridge out, by-pass difficult), XD918416 (bridge out, by-pass impossible), XD913403 (60 x 14-ft. bridge intact), and the following road conditions: XD950427 (road out), XD934422 (rectangular hole in road), XD955428 (landslide), and XD996447 (numerous craters in

fell to the 11th Engineer Battalion which received a warning order on 16 February. On 8 March, Co "A" of 11th Engineers had moved from Dong Ha to Ca Lu in order to open Route 9 from Ca Lu to the Rock Pile and participate in the building of LZ STUD (later named LZ CAMEO due to its proximity to the Khe Meo River, but a name which caused chagrin to Marines, and later changed to Vandegrift Combat Base).[2645] *Third Platoon, 3rd Bridge Company, 7th Engineer Battalion, handled the actual construction of the bridges. The motto of the unit was "Erections are our Business."*[2646] *The CH-54 "Flying Crane" helicopters of the 1st Air Cavalry Division's 470th Flying Crane Co. were used to insert M4T7 bridges into 3 sites, one 30-ft. bridge which weighs 16,500 pounds and two 38-ft. bridges which assembled in a skeleton fashion weigh 16,000 pounds.*[2647]

LtCol Roy Bahr became CO of FOB-3 on 01 April 1968.]

01 April 1968

DARDEN, LCPL Larry Euel	E/2/3
GIAMBRONE, 1/Lt Richard Lawrence	1-7 Cav
RIDENHOUR, SSG Darwin Bruce	8th Eng,
SIMOES, SP4 Anthony	1-50,
STAYER, SP4 Harry Sherman	8th Eng,
VANDERSHANS, HN Donald Ed	H&S/1/9
WILSON, PFC Ronald Eugene	2-5 Cav

Persistent low clouds and fog shrouded Khe Sanh through late morning[2648] in what was to become an almost daily pattern during Operation Pegasus.[2649]

Commencing at 0700, Cos E and H/2/3 attacked southwest to seize Objective #6 (YD016431), securing it at 0720H. Units continued the attack toward Objective #7 (YD009428) until 1500. At 1340H, while attacking west toward Objective #7, E/2/3 received rocket and machine gun fire from a friendly UH1B/C killing LCPL Darden and causing 18 WIA (medevaced) and one WIA (minor).[2650]

On 01 April 1968, 1-7 Cav air assaulted into LZ MIKE (XD937409).[2651]

02 April 1968

PATTON, LCPL Barry Michael	H&S/2/3
SANTISTEVAN, PFC Benny Manual Jr.	I/3/26
WHITE, LCPL Wesley William	E/2/1
WILLIAMS, PSGT Doyle	1-8 Cav, I ACD

PFC Santistevan died of wounds received while in a defensive position (Hill 881-South) on 02 March 1968.

Commencing at 0645H, Co E/2/1 continued to attack toward Objective #3 (XD988452), seizing and securing it at 1220H. E/2/1 then commenced a heliborne assault into LZ ROBIN (XD960445) in conjunction with G/2/1. The lift commenced at 1530H and was completed at 1725H and Cos E and G consolidated night defensive positions and commenced night defensive operations. At 0745H, at LZ ROBIN, LCPL White detonated an unknown type explosive device rigged as a mine. Immediately after the explosion, E/2/1 was taken under fire with small arms by an unknown number of NVA at XD963448. Following organic and supporting fires (from 2 UH1B/C from I ACD), the Marines assaulted the NVA positions. In addition to LCPL White, there were 5 USMC WIA (evacuated).[2652]

03 April 1968

BOYD, PFC Wayne	C/2-7 Cav
BRADY, 2/Lt John James	C/2-7 Cav
CHAMBERS, PFC David Wayne	A/2-7 Cav
CRANEY, PFC Leslie Lee	F/2/1
DILLON, CPL Raymond Lawrence	A/1-5
FAHRENBRUCH, SGT Richard L	D/2-7 Cav
GILLIAM, PFC George Harvey	C/2-5 Cav
GONZALES, PFC Robert	H&S/2/3
LANGFORD, SP4 James Minter	A/2-7 Cav
MIRACLE, PFC James	C/1-8 Cav
RUSH, LCPL Ervin Lee	H&S/2/3
RYDEN, PFC Gary Ardean	D/1-5 Cav
SMITH, PFC Harold Roger	A/1-5 Cav
STREET, PFC Lenard Jr.	H&S/2/3

At 0705H, Co F (vicinity of XD987427) called in a prep fire to the south of the company position. Whiskey Battery, 1/11 (155mm)[2653] fired the mission and 2 rounds impacted inside the perimeter and 3 outside the perimeter

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road). [3rd MarDiv, "Intelligence Estimate of the Route #9 area," 071500 Jan 1968, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc. Jan 1968 file, #14, map following p. 7.

[2645] Comments of LtCol Victor A. Perry, USMC Oral History Tape #2755. Perry was CO of 11th Engineer Bn.

[2646] Comments of Maj Joseph C. Thorp, USMC Oral History Tape #2775; Diary of Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe.

[2647] *Ibid.*

[2648] Gen Westmoreland 021028ZApr68 to Gen. Wheeler (CJCS) and Adm Sharp (CINCPAC), MAC 04443, Khe Sanh Report #58.

[2649] Tolson, *op. cit.*, p. 17, notes "Seldom were we able to get in high gear before 1300."

[2650] 1st Marines AAR, Opn PEGASUS, pp. 13, 14.

[2651] I ACD AAR, Opn PEGASUS, p. 5.

[2652] 1st Marines AAR, Opn PEGASUS, pp. 15, 17.

[2653] 1/11 had a HQ Battery, A Battery, and a W Battery (155s) and also two 4.2-inch mortars at LZ Stud designated as "Wy" and another mortar battery detachment at LZ Ca Lu consisting of one 4.2mm mortar and 2 107mm Howtar mortars, designated as "Wx." [Letter of Ron Taylor, 1 November 1989].

causing 3 USMC KIA and 19 USMC WIA (evacuated).[2654] F/2/1 was providing security for uncovered bridges and engineer upgrade efforts along Route 9.[2655] "The FO with F/2/3 called a prep fire mission on a target. W/1/11 fired for effect. The volley fell short by 500 meters and impacted in the F/2/3 perimeter... After the check fire the data on the guns and in the FDC was checked and found to be correct. While an investigation was underway, the same FO with F/2/3 called in another mission with 'danger close' of 600 meters. Due to the incident involving the same FO a safety factor of plus 400 meters was figured into the data at the FDC. The first round fired landed approximately 800 meters short of the target and the FO realized that the grid that he had given for the fire mission was only 100 meters from his position. It relieved us to hear that it wasn't our fault, but it didn't help knowing that our guns had killed Marines."[2656]

On 03 April (D+3 of PEGASUS), while 1st Marine Regiment continued to attack west along Route 9, the 3rd Brigade continued to establish LZs. 2-7 Cav, attacking west along Route 9, made contact with an estimated company-size blocking position at XD890404. Due to lack of significant enemy resistance, the 2nd Brigade air-assaulted one day earlier than planned with 2-5 Cav into LZ TOM (XD900345) and 2-12 Cav into LZ WHARTON (XD880360). 1-5 Cav was then airlifted into LZ WHARTON. Both LZ TOM and LZ WHARTON received incoming NVA artillery fire during the air moves. Additionally, LZ WHARTON received approximately 20 rounds of 130mm artillery during the night.[2657] At 1500, LZ TOM received 30 rounds of unknown size artillery resulting in 1 KIA and 7 WIA. At 2215, LZ TIMOTHY received 20 rounds of 105mm or 155mm artillery resulting in 6 KIA and 17 WIA. At the same time, B,D/1-5 Cav received 7-8 rounds unknown size artillery resulting in 3 KIA, 14 WIA.[2658]

[*The new CO of FOB-3, LtCol Barr (who took command 01 April) said their S-4, Lt Garrett, had been badly wounded, that the Frenchman's house had become a known meeting place or CP for the NVA and was therefore completely blown apart, and that Hill 471 was one of the first objectives of the NVA on 21 January who occupied it before they attacked the District Headquarters. One of the Sergeants at FOB-3 said that all the buildings at "Fort Dix" (the "old French Fort" east of Khe Sanh Village) were now destroyed. The CAC OSCAR Marines inside FOB-3 compound now number 26; they began here on 22 January with over 50.*[2659]]

04 April 1968

BAXTER, SP5 Terry Lee	**HHC, 2nd Bde**
BRIDGES, SGT Ernest Larry	**C/1/9**
BUONO, PFC Matthew Joseph	**B/1-77**
CAVAZOS, PFC Ronald Thomas	**H&S/1/9**
CHAMBERS, SP4 John Luther	**A/1-5 Cav**
HOLLOWAY, LCPL James Owens Jr.	**A/1/9**
JACOB, PFC Robert Michael	**A/1/9**
JONES, CAPT Walter Chapman III	**H&S/1/9**
LINDBERG, LCPL Brian Victor	**A/1/9**
MILLER, LCPL Charles Claude	**H&S/1/9**
PECKHAM, LCPL George Robert	**F/2/1**
PERILLO, PFC Donald Lee	**G/2/3**
PHEARS, WO Ronald Gene	**HHC, 2nd Bde**
RUNKLE, LTCOL Robert Leslie	**1-5 Cav**
SMITH, PFC Dennis	**D/1/26**
TAYLOR, SFC Robert L	**RT BEAR, FOB3**
TOWSLEE, PFC Edward Lawrence	**A/1/9**

On the evening of 3 April, 1/9 prepared for their patrol to Hill 471, a high ground overlooking Khe Sanh village, 2 miles south of the Combat Base. From this hill, a full view of KSCB is possible along with most Bru villages in the area along with Khe Sanh village, Route 9, and even the outskirts of Lang Vei.[2660] NVA forward observers were frequently spotted here by Marines on the Combat Base during the siege and it had been the site of a bloody skirmish on 29 January when a patrol from FOB #3 was forces to leave an American MIA at this location (SSG Gary Lee Crone).[2661] "They brought us beer.. and we had to pack just an enormous amount of equipment.. canteens, sleeping gear, rifle-cleaning gear, entrenching tool, flak jackets, helmets, grenades, 20 magazines of ammo, radios, extra batteries, C-rations. Then every man was assigned extra ammo—a can of gun ammo, 200 rounds for machineguns, extra mortar rounds."[2662]

Reveille was at one o'clock in the morning, pitch dark,. and the battalion column was at their LOD [Line of Departure] at 0230H for a 0600H jump off.[2663] In addition to darkness, a misty fog enshrouded the Marines.[2664] The scheme was to proceed under the cover of

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[2654] 2/3 ComdC April 1968; 1st Mar AAR OPN PEGASUS, p. 20.
[2655] 1st Mar AAR OPN PEGASUS, p. 19.
[2656] Letter from Ron Taylor, 1 November 1989.
[2657] I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 6.
[2658] *Ibid.*, Tab G, Mortar/Rocket Attack.
[2659] Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 3 April 1968.
[2660] Personal experience of Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe who accompanied patrols from CAP O-3 to this position.
[2661] *Vide* pp. 138-140, *supra.*
[2662] Taped comments of Lance Larson, no date, Eisenhower Center, University of New Orleans, LA. PFC Lance C. Larson was a radioman attached to H&S Co., 1/9, as the S-3's radioman.
[2663] 1/9 AAR Operation PEGASUS; Larson comments, cited.
[2664] Conversation with Lance Larson, 13 February 1994; Comments of Capt Charles B. Hartzell, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803. Capt Hartzell was the 1/9 Bn S-3A officer.

the morning fog, use no prep, and move by stealth to an attack position just under Hill 471, hoping to catch the NVA before they could reinforce the position and create heavier casualties.[2665]

"We had to go through a mine field.. It was a single-line path, and the whole battalion's marching at night. We're trying to keep quiet, and you could hear our equipment rattling and the shuffling of feet. There isn't a light anywhere. I remember, suddenly my whole pack fell off my back! I had it on a packboard—all these straps—and it came undone and collapsed down, and no one could go around me because of the minefield. It was narrow. Suddenly I got the whole column halted. Here's this huge operation, big movement, and everyone is watching, and here Lance Corporal Larson is holding up the whole operation because I had it blocked!"[2666]

B/1/9 remained behind at the Rock Quarry to guard that position. D/1/9 led the formation, followed by C/1/9 and A/1/9, which proceeded towards Hill 471 with no resistance until the Marines arrived about a click from 471 at which time they received a few rockets.[2667] By noon, 1/9 was in position on high ground overlooking Hill 471.[2668]

The Battalion Alfa Command group (LtCol John H. Cahill, the Bn CO, and his radioman, Capt Walter C. Jones, III, the Bn One-Four (Air Officer) and his radioman, the radioman for the 81s, Maj Ted R. Henderson, the Bn S-3 and his radioman, Lt J. LeBlond, the Two-Four officer (arty FO) and his radioman) gathered in a bomb crater. PFC Cavazos, a real good friend of Lance Larson's was on Larson's right side, talking, kidding-around, throwing little rocks at Larson's leg because his radio wasn't busy, "and he was trying to make me goof-up on the radio so I'd look like a fool."[2669] Arty was not forthcoming due to helicopters in the area and as Capt Jones, the Bn One-Four, stood up with his binoculars, ready to call in air strikes, the CP group started to receive incoming rockets. For Larson, it was the most terrifying moment of his life despite having experienced numerous times of incoming during the siege and numerous fire-fights during his entire Vietnam tour. PFC Cavazos, the 81s radioman, was killed along with Capt Jones.[2670] Maj Henderson "was all blown to bits. He wasn't killed; he was just a mess. On the other side of him was my best buddy, [PFC Samuel W.] Saxon, was really critically wounded. The artillery officer was wounded. His radioman was wounded. The Colonel was wounded. It was just chaos. I lost two of my best friends. Regiment's calling, wanting to know what the hell's going on. The Alfa Company Commander's trying to call the Colonel and get reinforcements."[2671] Cpl Anthony C. Borja, Jr., the CO's radioman, described the scene as "a regular Dante's Inferno."[2672]

"Since we did not have time to dig in, we had no place to hide. The next thing I knew was hearing an explosion and then I was airborne [and] then I crashed to the ground. I had flown some 20 feet down the hillside... The Colonel was nearby bleeding from a wound to his right hand. I placed a field wrapping on his hand. He said he was okay and told me to get the PRC-25 which was not on my back. I returned to the radio and found that the 14 was dead and his radioman wounded. Both the 24 FO and his radioman [were] wounded. The 24 radioman was a friend. We had spent many hours in the COC on radio watch together. His name was "Chico" Cavazos and he was a 'short-timer.' He wore a raggedy flak jacket with a drawing of snoopy on the back which he used as a calendar, coloring in portions as his time in country grew shorter. Snoopy was almost fully colored. Chico was on his back, gasping for air and crying out in Spanish for his mom. I went to his left side and began to check for injuries. None were observable. I rested his head on my lap and as I did, he gave me a look that I can't describe and mumbled something in Spanish. His body convulsed and shuddered. He then died as I held him. I remember feeling so helpless and afraid."[2673]

Lance Larson recalls that when he and Cavazos were on watch together, he used to tell Larson, "Stop by my hole and we'll have a beer and listen to some tunes." "And I'd say, 'Yeah, sure!' He said it to me all the time. So one day I happened to be kinda running along this trenchline and he stuck his head out of his hole and said, 'Hey, come in.' I said, 'Alright.' He was living by himself in this hole. He had a real nice hole—went way down in the ground. He had the parachute in there, and it was real nice. Sure enough, the guy had a record player! I said, 'Where in the hell did you get this?' He told me he got it from a guy on the main combat base that had gone home, and he was using batteries. I re-

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Weather at Khe Sanh was low overcast with fog until 1100H when ceilings improved to 3,000 feet. [Gen Abrams, Dep COMUSMACV 051108Z/Apr68, MAC 04567, Khe Sanh Report #61].

[2665] Comments of Hartzell, cited.

[2666] Comments of Larson, Eisenhower Center interview, cited.

[2667] Comments of 2/Lt Francis Brian Lovely, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[2668] 1/9 AAR Opn PEGASUS.

[2669] Comments of Lance Larson, Eisenhower Center interview, cited.

[2670] LtCol John H. Cahill, letter of 8 January 1968 to Historical Branch, G-3 Div, HQMC, in Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.

[2671] Comments of Lance Larson, Eisenhower Center interview, cited.

[2672] Cpl Anthony C. Borja, Jr., "Khe Sanh Memories," printed in Khe Sanh Veterans *Red Clay*, Issue #43 (Fall/Winter, 1998), p. 32.

[2673] *Ibid.*

member that some batteries were missing from the H&S inventory for the PRC-25s, and the gunny was complaining that he couldn't figure out where these extra batteries were going. Here's Cavazos in his hole; he had taken all these extra batteries and taped them together and was using that for the power. I remember him playing this Rolling Stones album, and he pulls out a couple beers. I said, 'Where in the hell did you get this?' And he wouldn't tell me. He said, 'Some secret source," and he just had this big grin that he always had. There I was in his hole, drinking a beer and listening to the Rolling Stones, and I couldn't believe it. It was like a dream come true."[2674]

Now Cavazos was next to him in the bomb crater. "The shrapnel went right through the radio on his back and went into his lungs, and he asphyxiated, turned blue, and he was looking—I can still remember his face looking at me, and he turned blue and died."[2675]

PFC Daniel E. Beckham ("Lurch"), MOS 0341, had volunteered as a mortar FO with A/1/9 and became good friends with the radioman, LCPL Charles C. Miller. His account of the action while attacking Hill 471:

"As Alfa Company attacked, the NVA started pouring on their own supporting fire. They blasted us with 122mm rockets and a mixture of 82mm and 60mm mortar fire. At this time, a radioman and myself had moved to the right crater leaving the rest of the group of 5-6 Marines in the left bomb crater. As the incoming landed, shrapnel flew everywhere. You could hear it hitting the dirt everywhere around, and then one round hit really close. Although we were hit with hot pieces of metal, the radioman and I were unscathed, and I flew over the rim of the bomb crater to check on the other group. What I saw I still remember vividly today. There was a cloud of dust hanging in the bomb crater, and I could see that everyone was wounded and called out for the corpsman. I ran to Miller, the FO radioman, and grabbed him to check his wounds. He was still kneeling on both knees like I had left him a few minutes ago, but slightly bent over. The radio that he had fastened to his pack on his back was now gone. As I looked down, it was apparent that the round had hit just behind him, the impact crater was visible on the ground. As I pulled him back, I yelled his name and realized he had been killed instantly. All the shrapnel had cooked off the bandoleer of ammo he carried across his chest. I let him go and went to help the others. The Captain had a neck wound and everyone helped to cut off the flow of blood. The Sergeant just lay there moaning. He was in a great deal of pain. His flak jacket was nowhere in sight, and shrapnel had hit him quite severely all over his back. I tried to talk to him and comfort him, but he was in shock, and moaning. It's a horrible feeling seeing your buddies hurt'n real bad and you just can't do much about it. One rocket had wiped out almost the entire command group."[2676]

A lingering fragment of the battle's effects was discovered by the daughter of a best friend of Kevin Macalay of B Co., Recon, many years later. She and her hustand were clearing some brush on a large property they owned in central Islip on Long Island, New York, when they came upon a grave headstone. They brought the name to the attention of Macaulay who recalled the name from reading the Khe Sanh casualty list and who had recalled the action on Hill 471 as he had watched it from atop the bunkers. Kevin Macaulay then called the various cemeteries on Long Island, but found no evidence he had been buried on Long Island, in the national cemeteries, or Catholic cemeteries. He looked up the family in the telephone book and spoke with a lady: "I said, 'I'm not a crank. I'm a former Marine, and friends of ours found a headstone for what I believe might be your brother-in-law out on Long Island.' About a week later, the husband called and verified that the headstone of his brother was still standing." Perhaps this was an imperfection that had been tossed by the makers of the markers. The husband had graduated two years before Kevin from the same high school. His brother flew Crusaders for the first half of his Vietnam tour and then transferred to be the ALO of 1/9. Kevin brought the stone over to the man who was most appreciative.[2677]

A/1/9 moved through with the mission of taking 471 as D/1/9 took up a position on the hill before reaching 471. The hill's slope was so steep that it was necessary to proceed on all 4's.[2678] At about 1500H, "A" Company initiated its assault on Hill 471 across a narrow approach with "D" Company providing a base of fire.[2679] A-1 (2/Lt Francis Brian Lovely, Jr.) was given the mission of securing the hill. As they proceeded, a heavy NVA barrage caused Lt Lovely and his right guide to receive slight concussions, and the "A" Co CO, (Capt Henry Duane Banks) committed A-2 (1/Lt Michael Pym Hayden) and A-3 (1/Lt Paul H. Wallace) to take the hill. Following an air and arty prep, A-2 moved up on line followed by A-3, receiving very little resistance until they got to about 15-20 feet from the crest at which time they received a heavy 82mm barrage, rifle grenades, ChiComs, and heavy small arms fire, and became bogged down.[2680] As A-2 took numerous casualties, Sgt Gary Nathan Wiggins, a squad leader with A-2, maneuvered elements of his squad to reinforce and hold the platoon's position while the NVA attempted to envelop its right flank.

[2674] Comments of Lance Larson, cited.
[2675] *Ibid.*
[2676] Dan Beckham, "Next Time I'll Go!", 1/9 Network: *The Proud Warrior*, Spring, 2002, p. 17.
[2677] Comversation with Kevin Macaulay, 21 October 2006.
[2678] Conversation with William Lanier, 8 December 1968; personal experience of having been on Hill 471.
[2679] 1/9 AAR, Opn PEGASUS.
[2680] Comments of 2/Lt Francis Brian Lovely, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

When the Marines became depleted of grenades, Sgt Wiggins moved forward in the face of the enemy fire to capture and use the NVA's own grenades in repulsing a counterattack.[2681] A-3 then was brought up to help in the assault, but was also held up. Cpl Barry L. Thoryk fearlessly rushed and destroyed a NVA machinegun position, grabbed the enemy's gun and used it against them. He also moved forward to retrieve NVA grenades to throw back at various enemy positions. All of this was done despite painful and multiple fragmentation wounds which he received and for which he refused to be medevaced until the hill was secured.[2682] The Platoon Commander of A-3, 1/Lt Paul Harvey Wallace, although severely wounded by an enemy AK-47 which completely penetrated his neck, refused to be medevaced in order to retain command of A-3.[2683]

LCPL William E. Lanier, a 1/9 Bn Scout accompanying the assault, was crawling up the steep hill on all 4's, like everyone else when he veered off to the right of Co "A" and dashed for a bomb crater with enemy fire at his heels. Diving head-first into a bomb crater, he suddenly realized there were already 4 occupants there—young 13 and 15 year-old North Vietnamese Army soldiers, scared and paralyzed with fear, especially upon seeing the 6e-foot, 3-inch "elephant" of Lanier! They immediately surrendered. Lanier called his Kit Carson Scout, placed sandbags over the heads of the NVA soldiers, and took them back to KSCB.[2684]

The 3 NVA, who were from the 66th Regiment, revealed that morale was low and losses had been heavy in their regiment. They were thin, looked anemic, and claimed to have been without food for 3 days.[2685] Hoang Van Khoi said that following a B-52 strike one kilometer from his unit, several men bled from their nose, ears, and mouth, some of whom later died.[2686] Bui Van Tinh said the mission of his unit was to conduct ambushes and attacks against heliborne troops. The third POW, Doan Van Sinh, stated that one of the regiments in the 304th Division lost 75% of its men in B-52 strikes.[2687]

Hill 471 was secured at 1600H with Co "A" responsible for the western half and "C" Company for the eastern half. 1/9 had received 12 artillery, 72 rockets, and 103 mortar rounds and sustained 10 KIA and 55 WIA (medevaced).[2688] Cpl Anthony C. Borja, Jr., his ears still ringing, dug a 2-man foxhole and was given 2 Darvon by the corpsman. He finished his radio watch by informing Regiment of the discovery of the corpse of an Army Special Forces soldier that had been discovered by the Marines.[2689]

From 1720H to 2400H, 04 April 1968, the NVA fired 192 rounds of mixed artillery, mortars, and rockets on the Marines occupying Hill 471.[2690] Three Marines from Co "C," Sgt Ernest Larry Bridges, CPL Timothy J. Haley, and LCPL Thomas K. Allen, were digging holes inside a bomb crater when a NVA mortar landed right inside the crater.[2691] "The concussion was intense. When the smoke cleared there was lots of screaming wounded. Tom Allen, one of the best mortarmen in Nam, was hit in the elbow. He had been standing about 3 feet from me. To my left about 5 yards away was Sergeant Bridges and the weapons platoon commander—blown up. We got the corpsman who took one look and declared them both dead."[2692]

During the early morning hours or 5 April, the LP detected movement and requested illum. PFC Larson, manning the radio, woke up Capt Hartzell, acting as S-3, to inform him. Regiment radioed, "Shot out!" as the tubes could be heard firing the illum and then the rounds flying overhead. The illum popped, lighting up the area, and "Holy Gripes! You couldn't believe it. There were just hundreds of NVA soldiers tip-toeing up this hill."[2693] It was 0430H, and an estimated 2 NVA companies assaulted. Fighting was intense as the NVA, as close as 20 meters to friendly lines, fired small arms, automatic weapons and heavy machine guns, grenades and RPGs. The NVA force broke withdrew at 0630H to a hill southeast of Hill 471 from where they continued to fire sporadic small arms, mortars and RPG fire on Hill 471.[2694] Capt Hartzell noted that the NVA couldn't have picked a worse approach: their approach was exactly the area the Marines had anticipated and the NVA were caught in a vicious crossfire. "They had quite a few heroes; they gave it a real valiant effort. But they were unable to carry off the attack."[2695] After sunrise, 148 NVA bodies were found to the immediate front of the Marines on 471 that could be counted and the AO reported that suppression fire on the approach to the hill caught a couple of NVA companies coming into position to reinforce, which were wiped out.[2696]

[2681] Navy Commendation Medal Citation, Sgt Gary Nathan Wiggins.
[2682] Statement of 1/Lt P.M. Wallace in Navy Cross file, Cpl Barry L. Thoryk.
[2683] Statement of Cpl Barry L. Thoryk in Silver Star Medal file of 1/Lt Paul Harvey Wallace.
[2684] Conversation with William Lanier, 10 January 1987.
[2685] MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 08 July 1968, p. 12.
[2686] FMFPAC 170232Z/Apr68, SITREP #1114.
[2687] FMFPAC 100441Z/Apr68, SITREP #1107.
[2688] 1/9 AAR, Opn PEGASUS.
[2689] Borja, "Khe Sanh Memories," cited. The KIA was SSG Gary Lee Crone, KIA 29 January 1968; See p. 140 of this book.
[2690] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam,* April, 1968, p. 12.
[2691] Conversation with Timothy J. Haley, 31 December 1995.
[2692] Letter from Timothy J. Haley, 12 December 1995.
[2693] Larson comments, cited.
[2694] 1/9 AAR, Opn PEGASUS.
[2695] Comments of Hartzell, Tape #2803, cited.
[2696] *Ibid.*; 1/9 AAR, Opn PEGASUS.

The North Vietnamese account of the battle describes the battle in terms of the Marines moving to occupy their high points 3, 4, and 5 at Dong Khe Rieng to the northwest of Hill 471. A small element of the 13th Company, 9th Battalion, 304th Division, plus 4 NVA from the 7th Company, 2nd Battalion, deployed to defend the hill. The Americans lost 2 companies and the NVA shot down 5 helicopters. The Americans were kept from occupying Hill 471, and suffered 250 killed. That night, the 304th Division ordered the 9th Battalion to raid the American's bivouac positions and cadres from the 11th and 12th Companies attacked the Americans on High Point 2 killing 100 Americans.[2697]

Meanwhile, F/2/1, conducting search and destroy operations north of Route 9 between XD988452 and XD966437, to provide security for bridge and engineer upgrade along Route 9 from Ca Lu Combat Base to KSCB, was conducting resupply when a mechanical mule, M274, at XD965429, detonated a 155mm round rigged under a box type mine killing LCPL George Robert Peckham.[2698]

PFC Donald Lee Perillo died from a gunshot wound "when mistaken for the enemy while walking in front of the command post area."[2699]

At 1208H, LZ Stud (Ca Lu) received 11 rounds of 130mm artillery from XD930530 causing 4 KIA.[2700] 2-7 Cav, attacking west along Highway 9 in the 3rd Brigade AO, encountered an enemy defensive position at XD883399; contact was made and continued throughout the day. The battle resulted in 83 NVA KIA, 1 POW, and 121 individual and 10 crew-served weapons captured. The 2nd Brigade concentrated efforts in improving LZs with the 2-5 Cav conducting operations in the vicinity of LZ Tom (XD900345). The 1-5 Cav initiated an attack toward an old French Fort at XD895383 which was occupied by an estimated NVA battalion. In view of the casualties sustained and the apparent futility of attacking the fortress towards the northwest, 1-5 Cav was replaced by 2-5 Cav, who assumed the mission of seizing the objective.[2701] The 1-5 Battalion Commander, LtCol Robert L. Runkle, KIA in the fighting, was replaced by LtCol Clarence Jordan.[2702]

SFC Robert Taylor of Recon Team BEAR from FOB #3, was shot through the head as he climbed over a bomb crater wall to throw a hand grenade at a group of NVA advancing on the team. He rolled to the bottom of the bomb crater, still clutching the hand grenade with the pin pulled. Harve Saal directed a Bru Montagnard soldier to follow his rolling body and take the grenade from him. As soon as Taylor stopped rolling on the bottom of the crater, the Bru was right behind him and grasped the grenade. Saal grabbed the grenade and tossed it just over and outside the rim where it exploded. Taylor had lost much blood, his entire body shook and then went limp. There was no pulse, or any sign of breath vapor on the signal mirror. Helicopters circling overhead refused to land, saying the recon team was completely surrounded. RT Bear then broke for the FOB #3.[2703]

05 April 1968

BUCIOR, Cpl Andrew Zbigniew C/1/9
HENDRIX, SP4 John Russell B Trp, 7th Sqd, 1st AVN Bde
OSTAPCHUK, LCPL Walter Michael A/1/9
WILLIAMS, PFC Richard Earl M/3/26

LCPL Ostapchuk died of wounds [DOW] received on 4 April during the battle when the NVA attempted to retake Hill 471. As the battle ended (about 0600-0630), CPL Bucior raised from his hole to ensure the NVA were not regrouping. Just then, a mortar round exploded within 20 feet, instantly killing him.[2704]

At 0035H, Co M/3/16 occupying the western knoll of Hill 881-South received three round "from unknown enemy positions." Actually, PFC Williams was killed from an artillery round fired from KSCB from a gun that had not been properly laid during nightly H&I fires. The round almost completely disintegrated PFC Williams and it was difficult to ascertain his identity so the casualty could be reported.[2705]

On 01 April a new system for coordinating all air assets, known as "Single Manager for Air," was implemented at Khe Sanh. The concept, pushed by the Air Force and resisted by the Marine Corps, involved increased complexity due to additional layers of staff and officers necessary to act on requests for air, as far as the Marines were concerned. On 5 April, the new system almost wiped out the entire 1/9 on Hill 471. Colonel

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[2697] *Su Doan (Ky Su) (Tap II)* [304th Division (Chronology) (Vol. 2), Hanoi: Kha Xuat Ban Quan Nhan Dan [People's Army Publishing House], 1990, pp. 106-107.
[2698] 1st Marines AAR Opn PEGASUS, pp. 21, 23.
[2699] HQMC memo from DN to AO1C, Attn: WO Helbringer, Subj: Viet Nam Casualties – HOSTILE DEAD, 15 April 1968, p. 7, in Reference Section, History Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C.
[2700] I ACD AAR Operation Pegasus/Lam Son 207A, Tab G, Mortar/Rocket Attack.
[2701] I ACD AAR Operation Pegasus/Lam Son 207A, pp.3, 6.
[2702] Tolson, LtGen John J., III, "Pegasus," *Army* 21:12 (December, 1971), p. 17.
[2703] Letter from Harve Saal, January, 1989; Conversation with Harve Saal, 29 August 1989. Harve Saal was a radioman with RT Bear.
[2704] Statements of LCPL T. E. Whetten, and PFC W. L. Godette, 1st Plt, C/1/9, in Bronze Star Medal file of CPL Andrew Zbigniew Bucior. 2/Lt William C. Connell, Plt Cdr, noted both of these Marines were in his platoon.
[2705] 3/26 AAR, Opn PEGASUS, p. 3; Comments of Brigadier General Harry W. Jenkins, undated.

Lownds, in his FMFPAC Debrief lamented: "The time of request for an on-call mission just about doubled. We got an echelon of command interposed between us. We had to increase our hours from 12 to 16 hours and also pull guys off radios and let guys double up on radios just to take care of the paperwork involved... If you wanted a pre-planned strike you could have it the next night following the night you put it in as a TPQ strike—in other words, 48 hours afterwards... Air should be more responsive than 48 hours! At Khe Sanh the enemy didn't stand still to wait for you to hit him. He moved around constantly. I think it was on the 5th or 7th of April we had 26 500-pound bombs drop on 1/9. Not a single one went off and not a single casualty, thank God. What had happened was that the bombs had been requested there 48 hours before. 24 hours later, 1/9 had taken their objective and were on the objective, so 24 hours before the strike was going to be held, a cancellation was put in: Don't hit this target because friendly troops made their objective and they're on the objective. Somewhere in the system, one of the echelons failed to notify people, and consequently the bombs dropped."[2706] Fortunately, the bombs had not been armed!

I Air Cavalry Division's official records indicates three KIAs this day (but only one is indicated in the listing of KIAs at the Vietnam Memorial for Washington, D.C.): at 1315 at XD882399, Companies B and C of 2-7 Cav received 60mm mortar fire resulting in 1 KIA, and at 2010 at XD8836 (LZ WHARTON), 9 rounds of recoilless rifle and artillery were received causing 2 KIA.[2707] 2-7 Cav again made contact with NVA at XD883399 which continued throughout the day resulting in 9 NVA KIA.[2708]

06 April 1968

ADAMS, 2/Lt Lee Scott	B/2-7 Cav
BEECK, SP4 Ronald Marvin	D/1-5 Cav
BENSON, PFC Robert John	B/2-7 Cav
BROWN, PFC William Franklin	D/1-5 Cav
DOWNS, PFC Jack Dennis	B/2-7 Cav
GEMMATI, CPL Oronzo	D/2-12 Cav
GRAVEL, SP4 Bobby Joe	C/2-7 Cav
GULLING, PFC Joseph Frank III	B/2-7 Cav
HANCOCK, PFC William Tyler	D/1-5 Cav
JORDAN, 1/Lt Allan Harold	B/1/13
KERCHNER, SGT Robert Bard	B/2-7 Cav
LOHMAN, CPL Herman Augusta Jr.	G/2/26
MASTERS, PFC Edward Ulyses	G/2/26
McGRATH, CPL Edward	G/2/26
MOODY, SSG Charles Wilburn	D/2-12 Cav
NIGHTENGALE, PFC Timothy James	A/1/9
PEPPER, PFC Anthony John	G/2/26
PIAZZA, PFC Robert Gary	G/2/26
ROMERO, LCPL Manuel Villareal	G/2/26
SCARBOROUGH, HM3 Russell	G/2/26
SNYDER, PFC Michael Allan	D/1-5 Cav
SPACH, PFC Jimmy Russell	B/2-7 Cav
SPARKS, PFC Ronald David	D/2-12 Cav
SPARKS, PFC Steven Lee	H&S/1/9
SWANGUARIM, PFC Lawrence Alfred	D/2-12 Cav
TRIMBLE, CPL James Mitchell	G/2/26

At 0230H, 1/9 at XD846393 received a probe from an unknown size NVA force attaching with grenades, rifle grenades, small arms, and mortars.[2709]

1/26 executed a morning assault on the NVA trench system and complex located parallel to the accdess road which runs southeast from KSCB to Route #9 (in the vicinity of XD848407). Co D/1/26 seized the objective against light resistance and policed the battlefield returning to KSCB at approximately noon with the remains of 21 Marines, 4 of which could not be identified. 17 were identified as those declared MIA on 25 February and 30 March.[2710]

On 5 April, 26th Marines approved a long-distance patrol for 2/26 and on 06 April, 2/26 broke out of its fortified position on Hill 558 at dark as Co "G" conducted a company-size combat patrol to the southwest of Hill 558. The mission was to determine if the NVA occupied the high ground (XD806435 to XD823425), approximately 1800 meters west of and overlooking Hill 558.[2711] The terrain was reasonably flat and the elephant grass had been burnt off.[2712] Under the leadership of Capt Lee R. Overstreet, Co "G" moved in a company column, platoon wedge across the flat terrain going up to a ridgeline to Hill 700, just to the south, southeast of Hill 861. Capt Overstreet has been described by one of his troops "as tough as they come, born and raised in Tennessee who, as a teenager fought in Golden Gloves. "I've talked to him a few times in the last 2 years and I always get a chill down my spine when I call him. He still has that command voice. When Golf Company started returning fire on April 6, 1968, I'm sure many NVA got a cold chill down their spines!"[2713]

[2706] Col David E. Lownds, HQMC Oral History Tape #3139. Date of debrief, 29 July 1968.

[2707] I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS/LAM SON 207A, Tab G, Mortar/Rocket Attack. Gen Abrams Report to Gen Westmoreland 070241Z/Apr68/Apr68, MAC 04629, indicates 1 friendly KIA, 4 WIA (minor), and 9 NVA KIA.

[2708] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[2709] 26Mar, msg to CG, I ACD, Subj: Periodic Opns Summary Rpt #7 (PEGASUS) 052000H-062000 Apr 68

[2710] *Ibid.*; 1/26 AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 2

[2711] 2/26 ComdC, Apr 1968, p. 4.

[2712] Comments of 2/Lt William M. Wentworth, HQMC Oral History Tape #2779.

[2713] email posted 8 April 2002 on the Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board by Joseph Olszewski. 2/Lt Joseph Olszewski, who served in G/2/26 (Sep '67 – Feb '68), notes that

With one G-3 deployed on line, the company continued to advance with G-1 (2/Lt William M. Wentworth) and G-2 (2/Lt Robert D. Winn) as a base of fire.[2714] The terrain was marked by elephant grass ranging from 4 to 10 foot high and an absence of wooded areas except in the draws leading to the hill. In these draws, the vegetation was extremely thick. No resistance was encountered as the patrol moved up a finger running from XD817434 to XD812432.[2715] At 1130H,[2716] the point (G-3) reached a position some 40 meters short of the topographic crest[2717] and came under heavy fire from what was later estimated to be aNVA reinforced company on the ridgeline extending from XD805435 to XD824424.[2718] Large quantities of mortars began dropping throughout the line and ChiCom grenades were thrown from positions that could not be determined. Wounded, PFC Pepper and CPL Trimble took refuge in a nearby bomb crater. A NVA mortar hit right in the crater and both Marines were killed. PFC Romero and PFC Masters then tried to get them back, and were killed in the process.[2719] PFC Masters "gave his life trying to help other fellow Marines."[2720] The crater then came under automatic and sniper fire. Cpl Feger arrived at the crater twice and was in the crater, finding all four dead. NVA mortars requiring him to withdraw.[2721] 2/Lt Peter A. Post (XO, G/2/26) organized a squad to attempt to rescue the 4 KIA in the crater and crawled across the hill almost to the reverse military crest. "As we approached the crater we began taking mortar rounds, hand grenades, and sniper fire. At this time I saw and recognized the 4 men in the crater as Trimble, Masters, Pepper, and Romero. They were all dead. This was approximately 1200H. We sustained 3 casualties at this time which we medevaced back to the friendly side of the hill. We later made 3 more unsuccessful attempts to retrieve these bodies, sustaining casualties each time."[2722]

The NVA had permitted the point (G-3) to advance within their mutually-supporting spider traps and bunkers before firing.[2723] Co "G" immediately sustained several casualties and G-1 and G-2 were called up. LCPL Ronald M. Vivona lost both legs above the knee.[2724]

(Interestingly, the day after the siege battle started, 22 January 1968, G-3 had been deployed to the position later known as "Hill 861-Alfa," occupied by E/2/26, and on their return to Hill 558, "our platoon took the left fork down to the valley. After a period of time, we noticed that Masters and Piazza were missing. We went back and located them. They had taken the right fork. They never could explain how they got lost from the center of the patrol. We left 558 at 10 AM and got back at 6 PM."[2725])

In Loving Memory of "Doc" Scarborough,
Killed in action while serving his country and friends
April 6, 1968
"Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
[John 15:13]

By Donald Eutzy, Jr.,[2726]
3rd Platoon, Weapons, G/2/26, Hill 558

"Heidi and I lay in bed talking and laughing. Heidi is my 5 year-old daughter, one of the wonders and joys of life. When Heidi falls asleep in my bed, she asks me to tell her a story about my life. I was silent for a moment and remembered Russell 'Doc' Scarborough. My eyes filled with tears. I could see his face, hear his voice, and feel his kindness. Doc was the kind of man I think Christ wants us to be. I remembered too, that Doc Scarborough lay down his life for his friends. I turned to Heidi and softly began the story.

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after 2 days of fighting, over half of the company did not return to Hill 558..

[2714] Comments of 2/Lt William M. Wentworth, HQMC Oral History Tape #2779. 2/Lt Wentworth was PltCdr of G-1.

[2715] Statement of 2/Lt Peter A. Post, Encl (4) in Investigation report into circumstances surrounding eleven persons listed as mission in action on 6 and 7 April 1968, 10/JWA/mjv, 5830, 14 April 1968. Investigation contained in Library of Congress, MIA files, Reel #284, Folder #106 (James Trimble).

[2716] 2/26 AAR Opn PEGASUS,p. 4; 2/26 ComdC Apr 68, Part II, p. 3.

[2717] Comments of Maj Gerald F. Kurth, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775. Maj Kurth was S-3 of 2/26.

[2718] Comments of LtCol Francis J. Heath, HQMC Oral History Tape #2779. LtCol Heath was CO of 2/26.

[2719] Statement of Cpl J. E. Feger in Investigation, *op. cit.*

[2720] CG, 3rd MarDiv 090153Z/Aug68 to CG, FMFPAC, Subj: Recommendation for individual award (posthumous), in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file, PFC Edward Ulyses Masters.

[2721] *Ibid.* Cpl Feger led his men on 3 occasions to the crater to retrieve the KIA, only to be repelled by the mortars, sniper fire, and NVA grenades. [Statement of 2/Lt Peter A. Post in Bronze Star Medal file of Cpl Jacob E. Feger, II].

[2722] Statement of 2/Lt Post, *op. cit.*

[2723] 2/26 AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 4; 2/26 ComdC Apr 68, Part II, p. 3.

[2724] email by Joseph Olszewski, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, posted 6 April 2002.

[2725] Letters from William T. Mitchell, III, 13 June 1983 and 28 April 1996. From personal experience, in the thick vegetation of the area, unless one maintains visual contact with the man before and behind, it's entirely possible to get lost in the high elephant grass and bamboo thickets near Hill 861.

[2726] Printed in the Khe Sanh Veterans *Newsletter*, No. 8 (June, 1989), p. 7. PFC Donald E. Eutzy served in Weapons, 3rd Platoon, G/2/26. Eutzy wrote another account of how his Christian faith was strengthened in the midst of the horror of battle ["Reflections," The Khe Sanh Veterans *Newsletter*, Issue #7 (October, 1988), pp. 6-7].

"I had a friend in Vietnam. His name was Russell 'Doc' Scarborough. The first time we met was on hill 558 at Khe Sanh. I had a bad infection in my trigger finger from a cut I received stringing barbed wire. I needed to see a corpsman and Doc was the corpsman for my platoon, so I went to see him.

"Doc was an odd-looking fellow. His clothes were baggy and his helmet sat lopsided on his head. He had dark hair, pale skin, a few days' bear growth, black-rimmed glasses, and an incurable smile he couldn't hide under his scraggly mustache. Actually, he looked like he was in the midst of a drinking binge, but of course, he wasn't.

"Doc welcomed me and asked for the problem. I showed him my finger. He studied it like a well-trained physician. Doc said, 'You have jungle rot. I'll have to lance it and give you something for the pain.' After a few weeks of treatment, my finger became normal. Over those weeks Doc Scarborough and I became very good friends. We talked about everything—our families, our friends, Vietnam, what we would do after the service, and we even shared our goody packages from home. But lancing fingers and talking about home wasn't all Doc did.

"He went on patrols and ambushes; up the hills we assaulted; quinine was passed out so we had a better chance of avoiding malaria. The water had to be checked for disease. Our feet had to be inspected for immersion foot. We needed salt tablets because of the heat. There was dysentery and hepatitis, and Doc never stopped. He took care of us, body, mind, and spirit—'a real good man!' I won't ever forget a friend like him.

"Heidi seemed contented with the story, snuggled closer and dozed off to sleep. I was silent again and thought about Russell—his face, his voice, and his kindness. I remembered our conversations and sharing our goody packages. I thought of the patrols, ambushes, and hills. I can't forget the quinine or salt tablets, and especially Doc's caring. I also remembered and will never forget that 'Doc' Scarborough lay down his life for his friends."

PFC Piazza was on top of the ridge directly west of the bomb crater at XD81264324 or slightly backwards from it, about 25-30 meters. It was 1030 or 1100. "I was looking directly at him when the burst from an AK-47 or small machine gun opened up. PFC Piazza closed his eyes and slumped forward very easily as he fell to the ground on his face."[2727]

After G-1 (2/Lt William M. Wentworth) and G-2 (2/Lt Robert D. Winn) reached the top of the hill, the Marines' 60mm mortar fire immediately eliminated a NVA machinegun and mortar position. All then withdrew.[2728]

1/Lt Jordan, an artillery forward observer from B/1/13 was killed while accompanying this patrol. He had only been with G/2/26 for one day[2729] and was some 30 feet from the 81s FO with G/2/26, LCPL Eric F. Smith. Smith had spotted a NVA mortar site and Jordan came to verify it. Lt Post, meanwhile, had given the order, "Let's get outta here!" and Smith took off as Lt Jordan continued to check the NVA mortar site, "and bang; he took a direct hit."[2730]

After Co "G" withdrew from the top of the hill, supporting arms were called from JACKSONVILLE (1/13), "..and we had a 2-hour wait, I repeat, a 2-hour wait, due to the fact that supply helicopters flew through the area and they wouldn't move out of the way. We had 2 hours under mortar fire. All this time we're sitting there, getting mortars and getting casualties, and nobody would fire for us."[2731] The Marines returned several times to attempt to retrieve their KIA, but took additional casualties each time. 15 NVA were spotted, very lightly armed and in plain view. They were taken under fire by M-60 machinegun fire. "I believe they were trying to lure us out into the open area. We found out later that their bunkers faced down in that direction which means that we would have been wiped out had we gone out there."[2732]

After going up and down the hill for 8 hours, G Co returned to Hill 558. "Since the contact occurred late and there were many delays in delivering fire support, the position was not secured prior to darkness. It was the policy of the Regiment to recall units prior to nightfall. The 6 Marines felled within the enemy's position were therefore not recovered."[2733] Casualties for the action: 4 KIA, 36 WIA (evacuated), 11 WIA (not evacuated), and 6 MIA.[2734] The position was bombarded by friendly fire throughout the night as plans were made for a 2-company assault on the position by Companies "F" and "G" the next morning.[2735] Bombardment "throughout the

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[2727] Statement of PFC Patrick A. Lidrick in Investigation, *op. cit.*

[2728] Comments of 2/Lt William M. Wentworth, HQMC Oral History Tape #2779.

[2729] email from David Caldon, posted 15 August 2002 on the Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board.

[2730] Conversation with Eric Smith, late August 1996.

[2731] Comments of 2/Lt William M. Wentworth, HQMC Oral History Tape #2779

[2732] *Ibid.*

[2733] 2/26 AAR, Opn PEGASUS, p. 4.

[2734] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[2735] Comments of LtCol Francis J. Heath, HQMC Oral History Tape #2779.

night" did not mean extensive prep as Lt Wentworth bitterly complained: "The area should have been bombed before we went back up there, and I don't mean just diddly bombing; I mean blowing the hell out of the place. Those people were dug in, and three or four rounds of artillery shells aren't going to do a damn thing, and that's all we got."[2736]

Units of the 1st Air Cavalry Division continued operations along Route 9. The heaviest fighting occurred in the 3rd Brigade's AO as 2-7 Cav continued its drive west on Route 9. NVA forces blocking the advance offered stubborn resistance, but in a day-long battle eventually abandoned their positions and fled to the west. Results of the fighting included 83 NVA KIA and 1 POW captured.[2737]

Meanwhile, 2-12 Cav was airlifted to Hill 471 to relieve the Marines of 1/9 on that position, permitting them to scour the land to the west. While 2 companies of 2-12 remained on Hill 471, 2 companies initiated an attack to the south toward Khe Sanh ville (XD846381). Also during the day 1-5 Cav, continued its attack on the old French Fort position. The 1-5 soldiers, receiving a heavy volume of NVA mortar fire, withdrew to LZs Wharton and Tom and the mission of seizing the French Fort was given to 2-5 Cav.[2738]

At 1320H, the 84th Co of the 8th Airborne Battalion, 3rd Airborne Task Force, was airlifted by I ACD aircraft into KSCB and linked up with elements of the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, marking the first link-up of forces at Khe Sanh[2739] (other than that which occurred on Hill 471).

One of the I ACD soldiers killed, PFC Ronald David Sparks, had married (12 August 1967) just prior to leaving for boot camp on 21 August 1967. Both he and his wife were 19. He had grown up in the Wolf Creek area of Narrows, Virginia, in Giles County. The 6-1 tall Sparks had excelled as a high school athlete (track, baseball, basketball, and a football full back) and his future wife was one of the cheerleaders. His wife was later to note that as she took him to the Roanoke, Virginia, airport on 12 January 1968 to begin his journey to Vietnam, "I felt, in my heart, I would never see him alive again. I certainly didn't want to think that, but I 'just knew.' Over 20 years passed before I found out that his mother had felt the same way."[2740] Sparks had been wounded 21 February during the Battle of Hue City, hospitalized in Japan, and then returned to duty.[2741] The CO of 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, LtCol Richard S. Sweet, wrote in his condolence letter to Sparks' parents: "At approximately 2 AM, the base camp came under heavy enemy rocket and mortar fire. Your son was mortally wounded when his head was struck by fragments from an enemy rocket which landed almost directly on his position.. he died quickly.."[2742]

07 APRIL 1968

ADAME, PFC Gilbert Jimmie	G/2/26
ADKINS, CPL John	A/2-7 Cav
BAYES, PFC Thomas Joseph	G/2/26
CRASE, LCPL Lionel Russell	H&S/2/26
DOLBY, PFC Melvin Lester	F/2/26
GAINES, PFC Allen Joseph	G/2/26
JOHNSON, LCPL Eugene Melvin Jr.	G/2/26
LESAGE, LCPL Armand Paul	K/3/26
MARSON, PFC Rickey Joe	2/26
MC CASKEY, Maj Robert Walter[2743]	11th GS AvnCo
MC MURRAY, 1/Lt Fred Howell Jr.	Trp B, 1st Sq 9th Cav
MEADOWS, CPL Artis Wilbur Jr.	G/2/26
MOSES, PFC Clifton	F/2/26
MOUNT, LCPL John Edward	E/2/1
NASH, PFC Thomas Steven	E/2/1
NELSON, HN Roger Miller	H&S/2/26
OESTERREICH, CPL Tilo Rudolf	E/2/1
PEDA, 1/Lt Robert Charles	A Trp, 1stSq
QUATTLEBAUM, PVT John Franklin	F/2/26 9th Cav.
RANSBOTTOM, CPL Michael Lee	C/2-7 Cav
RICHARDSON, PFC James Douglas	F/2/26
SAMUELSON, SGT Robert L	A/2-7 Cav
SCHROEDER, CPL Donald Ray	F/2/26
SEE, SFC Otto William	A Trp, 1st Sq 9th Cav
SNYDER, LCPL John Marshall Jr.	G/2/26
WELLS, LCPL James Randall	F/2/26
WILEY, LCPL Gilbert	F/2/26
YOHN, LCPL William Leon	G/2/26
ZERBST, PFC Gilbert Leroy	F/2/26

The weather on Palm Sunday, 7 April 1968, was clear to partly cloudy skies with a visibility of 5 miles or

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[2736] Comments of 2/Lt William M. Wentworth, HQMC Oral History Tape #2779.
[2737] I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 7.
[2738] *Ibid.* [At 1152H, D/1-5 Cav at XD8637 received 70 rounds of unknown size mortar from XD847363 causing 1 KIA and 47 WIA. [Tab G, Mortar/Rocket Attack]].
[2739] *Ibid.*; Waldron and Beavers, *op. cit.*, p. 43; Tolson, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
[2740] Carolyn Sparks Edwards, "Ronald David Sparks," in Don Ward, *The Faces Behind the Names, The Vietnam War*, Vol. 2, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1999, p. 198.
[2741] Letter from Carolyn Sparks Edwards, 18 June 1997.
[2742] Letter from LtCol Richard S. Sweet, 7 May 1968 to Mr. and Mrs. Claude S. Sparks.
[2743] While Maj McCaskey is listed in the "green book" published by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C.: *Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Directory of Names*, 1982, p. 474, (listed on the Wall at 48E 44), he is not included in the "Coffelt Database" of Vietnam Casualty with Unit Designations, June, 2002, prepared by Richard Coffelt.

more.[2744] More important, it was to become extremely hot. "The sun was extremely bright and before noon the companies were bogged down, climbing the high ground with people who were about to experience heat exhaustion, so the movement was extremely slow, extremely difficult, and the time schedule was not met."[2745]

Plans were for 2 companies of 2/26 to continue the assault of the NVA-held hill where Co G became ensnared yesterday. "We called it Ridgeline 720."[2746] Co. "F" left Hill 558 under cover of darkness at 0500H and moved to an attack position on the northeastern flank of the NVA position (at XD810433), and at 0700, Co "G" departed Hill 558 and moved to attack the position from the western flank of the enemy-held objective.[2747] The mission of Co "F" was to lay down a base of fire for GOLF Company.[2748] "We moved out. It was a long hump. It was hot. We had a lot of people who got heat stroke. Everybody was tired—real tired."[2749] "It was quite hot, very hot, in fact. Our water was very low. The humping was very hard and rough, but the men were up to it.. We wanted to kick Charlie's ass."[2750] About a third of the way to the objective, the F-3 Platoon Commander (1/Lt Don A. Haggard) became a victim of heat exhaustion and the Platoon Sergeant was hurt in his leg; both were medevaced, and Sgt Robert H. Scott took over as Platoon Commander of F-3.[2751] The plan for Co "G" was to have G-1 approach up the north side and G-3 go up the east side. "We were supposed to be at the top of the ridge by light. About 11 o'clock in the morning we (3rd Platoon) three-fourths up the ridge. We were definitely not going to surprise anyone."[2752]

Although originally planned to reach a Line of Departure by noon, the Marines were not in position until approximately 1530 in the afternoon at which time a probing attack by GOLF Company was made to determine whether the NVA still occupied the position. If hit, they were to pull back, call in supporting arms, and then FOXTROT Company would move down the ridge into the attack, hitting the NVA position from their flank. The NVA permitted GOLF Company to reach almost the topographic crest at which time they unleashed a vicious volume of fire on the Marines including a mortar attack which was extremely accurate and difficult to avoid.[2753] "We [G-3] were to wait until the 1st Platoon reached the top. Their job was to chase? scare? the NVA toward us or 2nd Platoon. We could now see 1st Platoon moving onto the ridge top. Then it happened. Incoming was tremendous, small arms fire erupted. 1st Platoon was down. We were told to move up. As we stood for our assault, we were hit. Some of us dove into bomb craters. The incoming was unbelievable. We were pinned down in the crater. We had dying and dead Marines all over the ridge... Me and my best Marine friend went and got to Sgt Connell. He was hit and could not move. My friend was putting him on my back so I could carry him back. Then he was shot in the chest... I got to a machine gunner who had lost both legs. I gave him some water, he then died. [PFC Moses]. I took him to the crater. My friend and I then got to another gunner [Schroeder]. He was the 1st Platoon's gun squad leader. He was dying but alive."[2754]

G-2 was the point platoon moving with 1st squad on the left side of the finger and second squad on the right with 2/Lt Robert D. Winn, Jr., the Platoon Commander of G-2 and his radioman, PFC Gary W. Rodd, centered between them,[2755] when they came under automatic weapons fire and grenades, wounding PFC Rodd. LCPL Thomas J. Vinson, III, a fire team leader in 2nd Squad, G-2, volunteered to creep up on a ridge overlooking the bunker from which the fire came that wounded PFC Rodd and hit it with a LAW.[2756] The first LAW failed to fire—as did the second. The third time LCPL Vinson moved to retrieve a LAW and move to a position to fire it was successful. Shortly after firing it, LCPL Vinson was shot through his chest and received several other fragments in his body.[2757] LCPL James P. McCormick maneuvered his 3.5-in. rocket squad to a position dangerously exposed to the NVA fire to provide security for G-2. Ignoring hostile rounds impacting near him, he repeatedly advanced across the fire-swept terrain while as-

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[2744] Gen Abrams 081058Z/Apr68, MAC 04709, Khe Sanh Report #64

[2745] Comments of Maj Gerald F. Kurth, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775. Maj Kurth was the 2/26 S-3.

[2746] Letter from Joseph F. Beebe, undated [May, 1990]

[2747] Comments of LtCol Francis J. Heath, HQMC Oral History Tape #2779.

[2748] Comments of LCPL Anthony S. Tisler, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.

[2749] Comments of Cpl Rudy De La Garza, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775. De La Garza was a squad leader of F-1.

[2750] Comments of Cpl Winfield Trivette, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775. Trivette was a squad leader of machineguns attached to F-1.

[2751] Comments of Sgt Robert H. Scott, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775. Scott was Platoon Commander of Weapons Platoon, FOX-4 Actual.

[2752] Letter from Joseph F. Beebe, cited.

[2753] Comments of Maj Gerald F. Kurth, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.

[2754] Letter from Joseph Beebe, cited. (Sgt Connell is listed as KIA on 8 April, undoubtedly having DOW; His Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) Citation notes: "Observing two injured Marines lying in an area dangerously exposed to the enemy fire, he fearlessly rushed across the hazardous terrain.. and was mortally wounded by the North Vietnamese fire.").

[2755] Statement of CPL Kenneth R. Evans in Bronze Star Medal file of LCPL Thomas J. Vinson, III.

[2756] LAW=M72 Light Anti-tank Assault Weapon.

[2757] Statement of 2/Lt Robert D. Winn, Jr., in Bronze Star Medal file of LCPL Thomas J. Vinson, III.

sisting casualties to covered positions. He also aggressively assaulted NVA bunkers on 2 occasions.[2758]

HASTY FOOT GOLF, Capt. Lee R. Overstreet, was up on the ridgeline maintaining constant coordination of the 2 assaulting platoons as he repeatedly exposed himself to hostile small arms fire and grenades to lead the charge, although painfully wounded twice.[2759] The NVA had set up machineguns and other small arms in much greater numbers than the previous day, and the Marines of Co "G" were unable to dislodge the enemy force.

About 1630, PFC Adame was killed by a sniper round through his chest while lying down.[2760] CPL David Donald Dumas was wounded three times attempting to reach Adame, and when he did, told 2/Lt Peter A. Post, "He's already dead" and HM3 Greg L. Bahny medevaced Dumas.[2761] At 1630, LCPL Eugene Johnson was killed trying to take a spider hole and LCPL John Snyder was killed by a bangalor torpedo while trying to retrieve Johnson. At 1700, CPL Artis Meadows was shot in the head while trying to kill a NVA sniper and at 1830, PFC Thomas Bayes was shot through the chest and killed by a sniper while pinned down.[2762] Adame, Bayes, Johnson, Meadows, and Snyder were all attached to G-1.[2763] LCPL William Yohn of G-2 was moved by 2/Lt Peter A. Post along with 5 other Marines to the crest, attempting to secure the left flank. Yohn said there were some bodies about 10 meters ahead of him that he thought he could reach. He crawled out, followed by PFC Charles J. Mack, and was near the body when he was hit in the left breast by sniper fire. PFC Mack shouted back to Lt Post that YOHN was dead.[2764]

As Co. "G" was unable to dislodge the NVA, it was withdrawn back down the slope into a supporting position to permit Co "F" to continue the attack along the long axis of the ridge.[2765] Following 12 sorties of fixed wing and napalm in addition to heavy artillery prep fire placed on the position, Co "F" commenced its attack.[2766] At 1530H, FOXTROT Company moved through the objective under heavy NVA 82mm mortar fire with two platoons up and one platoon back: F-1 (2/Lt Terry P. McNulty) on the left, F-2 (2/Lt William K. Wonders) on the right, and F-3 in the rear with 60mm moving just in front of them and the Co. XO and Gunny moving in the rear.[2767] Moving by fire team rushes, the Marines moved extremely fast and seized the right half of the high ground and moved down the ridgeline with initially light casualties. Their fire and maneuver was good, but they ran into trouble as they advanced the last third of the objective from mortars and small arms fire from a piece of ground that ran to their west, and sustained numerous casualties.[2768] "We started going across the top of the hill and beaucoup mortar rounds and shit was coming in."[2769]

PFC Michael F. Dagner captured the chaos: "Up we go – 'Move, there's men dying up there.' – Shit your pants and throw up. Mortars walking right down to us – down! – funny noises – gurgling of a body 5 feet away – roll him over – no holes – fear and shell shock – he's completely lost it – medevac – back up the hill – more mortars – man just ahead – he's missing his abdomen and everything else below – keep on moving – bodies all over the hill – Marines and gooks – corpsmen running around nuts – groups of walking wounded coming down, alone or with 1 or 2. 'I don't want to die, I don't want to die!!' His knees smashed open, helped down by two other Marines wounded also – his left leg bent back, locked in – heel pushed tight to his ass. Utilities still shiny green, no red mud worked in yet – what a baptism – keep moving up."[2770]

During the assault, both F-1 and F-2 lost their platoon commanders from NVA fire; they had been up front with their troops. When they became casualties, subordinate commanders continued the assault. Cpl De La Garza, who had only just been assigned as a squad leader, ended up as the acting Platoon Commander by the time the assault concluded.[2771] LCPL Paul M. Keast, a squad leader, took over as Platoon Commander of his platoon.[2772] CPL De La Garza, now in charge of G-1, moved the squads forward in fire team rushes, throwing grenades ahead of them. "We got to about a hundred to

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[2758] Statements of 2/Lt Peter A. Post and LCPL Robert E. Chesnut in Silver Star Medal file of LCPL James P. McCormick.

[2759] Statement of 2/Lt Robert D. Winn, Jr., in Bronze Star Medal file of Capt Lee R. Overstreet.

[2760] Statement of PFC John A. Ambrifi, Encl (6) in Investigation, *op. cit.*

[2761] Statement of 2/Lt Peter A. Post, Encl (4) in Investigation, *op. cit.* 2/Lt Post was the Co "G" XO.

[2762] Statement of PFC John A. Ambrifi, Encl (6) in Investigation, *op. cit.*

[2763] Statement of J. W. Arnn, Jr., Investigating Officer, Encl (1) in Investigation, *op. cit.*

[2764] Statement of 2/Lt Peter A. Post, Encl (4) in Investigation, *op. cit.*

[2765] Statement of LtCol Francis J. Heath, HQMC Oral History Tape #2779.

[2766] *Ibid.*.

[2767] Comments of Capt Charles F. Divelbiss, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775. Capt Divelbiss was CO of Co F/2/26.

[2768] Statement of Maj Gerald F. Kurth, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775. CPL Rudy De La Garza noted, "This is the first time I've seen fire team rushes work as well as it did. I believe if we hadn't used fire team rushes we would have probably been totally annihilated. It worked out fine, but as soon as we got more than half-way, we found out that our Platoon Commander was gone; he was hit by a mortar." [Comments of CPL De La Garza, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775].

[2769] Statement of LCPL Stanley J. Jarczewski, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.

[2770] Letter of Michael Dagner, 19 Oct 1987.

[2771] *Ibid.*

[2772] Bronze Star Medal file on LCPL Paul M. Keast.

fifty meters from the top of the hill and I got a call to pull off our platoon on the south slope of the hill. I knew how it'd feel that we pull off then. We'd take more casualties and then fell useless, and I knew the men could take it. Most of the guys were yelling to Charlie to come out of his hole and face us hand to hand. I called back and told them, hell, we can take this damn hill and we want it. The 'six' (that is the Captain [Overstreet]) called up and asked who it was, and I said it was the PAPA ONE ACTUAL, my call sign, and he said, 'Well, take your hill then.' So we got back on line, moved on fire team rushes again, and we moved right over the top of this hill, real fast. We started getting set in and the mortar barrage was coming in pretty heavy by then. We had to move through the mortar barrage and we couldn't stop. Some of the men would yell over to me that somebody was hit. We'd just throw a battle dressing on him, yell for the 'squid up,'[2773] and the 'squid' would take care of him.

"We had this one 'squid,' Doc [HN Roger] Nelson [who] did an outstanding job running from one Marine to another, just kept bandaging them up and taking them to the LZ and come running back up and never seemed to stop to think that somebody was out there trying to kill him. Bullets were bounding all around him and he just kept going."[2774]

Sgt Robert H. Scott, the Weapons Platoon Commander who had taken over G-3 when the Platoon Commander was evacuated, was working on a wounded Marine when the NVA dropped 3 mortars into the hole where he was, wounding his radioman who caught a big piece of shrapnel in his face. While working on both of them, Doc Roger Nelson took over caring for the two wounded, freeing up Sgt Scott to lead his platoon.[2775]

HN Nelson was killed while medically assisting another wounded Marine.[2776] "He went down to help one of the Marines out and got hit in the leg, bandaged up his leg, turned around, started helping the Marine out again, and he got shot in the back and was killed."[2777]

PFC Michael F. Dagner later wrote: "Running down the hill now – damn, hot & sweaty – 'Hey you guys, here's one – hurry' – grabbing his head, what's the hurry, he's dead!' Flip him on the ground, thud – just a lifeless, bump – staring, shaking – shocked – Look at your damn utilities – blood soaked – puke. A kid yells, 'Hey, what the f--- you doing, that's our corpsman.' 'F--- you man, he's dead!' Cross words – 2 punches – both going up the hill – more, countless wounded – all day."[2778]

The other Navy Corpsmen with Co "F" also were heroes of the day. The G-3 Platoon Corpsman, HM3 James E. Updike, while pinned down by sniper fire from 2 directions and not being able to move, attended to 5 wounded while standing on his knees directly in the line of fire.[2779] HM3 Miles Edward Constantine, the G-1 Platoon Corpsman repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire to recover and aid the wounded, although seriously wounded himself.[2780]

Contact continued until 2030H with the Marines at XD814434.[2781] As the NVA presence remained, the Marines were exhausted, and it was becoming dark, 2/26 requested Regiment to permit Cos "G" and "F" to remain on the objective for the night, but were denied the request and the companies returned to the 2/26 CP on Hill 558.[2782] The move was completed at 0030, 08 April.[2783] 12 Marine MIA from Co "G" remained on the objective. CPL Joseph F. Beebe, moving the KIA, had arrived at the LZ only to discover everyone had already departed! "We were alone, it was now dark and we were both paralyzed with what had happened. We thought that we should dig in to the side of the crater and stay for the night but decided against it. We then decided to get back to Hill 558 which was approximately 1-2 miles to the northeast of our position. We made it back somehow."[2784]

Fortunately, they departed the enemy-held position, for over the next two days (April 8th and 9th) it was struck with fixed wing air strikes, artillery, and mortar fire. During the night of the 9th alone, 1202 rounds of artillery were fired on the position. At 0630 on 10 April, three companies of 2/26 moved against the position, finding it abandoned.[2785] Captain David L. Caldon, the 2/26 Battalion Air Officer ("HASTY FOOT ONE FOUR") air-evacuated from the position (XD812432): 8 whole bodies, 1 partial torso (no legs, 1 part arm), 1 leg, 1 arm, 1 hand, and miscellaneous pieces of flesh and bone.[2786]

[2773] "Squid" was Marine slang in Vietnam for a Navy Corpsman.

[2774] Statement of CPL Rudy De La Garza, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.

[2775] Statement of Robert H. Scott, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.

[2776] Statement of Capt Charles F. Divelbiss, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.

[2777] Statement of CPL Rudy De La Garza, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.

[2778] Letter of Michael Dagner, 19 October 1987.

[2779] Statement of LCPL Steven E. Miller in Navy Commendation Medal file of HM3 James E. Updike.

[2780] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 30 Jul 1968, in Bronze Star Medal file, HM3 Miles Edward Constantine.

[2781] 26Mar, Periodic Opns Summary Rpt #6 (PEGASUS) 062000H-072000H APR 68, Para 8.C.

[2782] Statement of Maj Gerald F. Kurth, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.

[2783] Statement of LtCol Francis J. Heath, HQMC Oral History Tape #2779.

[2784] Letter from Joseph Beebe, undated. Beebe was a squad leader of machineguns with F-3.

[2785] Comments of LtCol Francis J. Heath, HMC Oral History Tape #2779.

[2786] Statement of Capt David L. Caldon, Encl (2) to Investigation, *op. cit.*

PFC Michael F. Dagner of F/2/26 wrote: "Back up the hill – My God – bodies – many – bloated already – beetles – stink – battle's over."[2787]

Co. E/2/1, pushing westward along Route 9 towards Khe Sanh was helilifted from LZ KIWI (XD966465) to Objective #21 (XD947444). When the lift was completed and the objective secured at 1510H, Co E established a company patrol base on the objective and conducted search and destroy operations until darkness. At 1615H, while in the vicinity of XD955493, E/2/1 requested 81mm fired on suspected NVA routes of withdrawal at XD944487. The WP marking round was on target and the unit requested "fire for effect" using HE. The rounds impacted on the Marines at XD955493 causing 3 friendly KIA and one WIA (evacuated) NBC.[2788]

By 7 April, engineers working on Route 9 had completely reconstructed over 8 kilometers of the road and had replaced or rebuilt 5 of the 9 bridges to Khe Sanh.[2789] The 2nd Brigade continued its attack on the French Fort as the 2-5 Cav air assaulted to XD883382 and then attacked west into the fort, seizing it.[2790] 2-7 Cav continued moving west on Route 9. 2 Army helicopters crashed at XD927497 and XD780559, killing three US soldiers.[2791]

1/Lt Fred McMurray was the pilot of an OH-13S observation helicopter (63-9084) on an armed reconnaissance mission in the vicinity of Khe Sanh. An AH-1G chase ship accompanied him on the mission. Capt McMurray, flying low level, reported spotting camouflaged bunkers. As he marked the target with a smoke grenade for the AH-1G to shoot its rockets, he reported enemy troops and began engaging them with his door gunner. At 0716 Capt McMurray's aircraft was then struck by enemy weapons and crashed at XD925512 and burned. Sgt James J. Powers, the door gunner, was spotted in a bomb crater and air-lifted from the area. Although thrown clear of the aircraft, he was badly burned. The next morning a search party found 2 badly burned chest protectors and one flight helmet belonging to Sgt Powers. "There were definite signs that someone had been through the wreckage. No evidence of Capt McMurray's fate or whereabouts was found except for footprints and a freshly made trail leading away from the aircraft. Since the observer, Sgt Powers, received extensive critical burns prior to being thrown clear of the aircraft, it is reasonable to assume that Capt McMurray received the same or possibly more critical burns. Evidence at the scene indicated that he was probably taken from the aircraft or crash site by enemy personnel. Since no information has ever been received to show that he was captured, it may be presumed that he died of his burns, if not killed in the crash, and was buried by the enemy some distance from the crash site at an unknown location."[2792]

08 APRIL 1968

CONNELL, SGT Edwin Douglas	**F/2/26**
GROSHONG, HN Allen Eberly	**F/2/1**
LINDSAY, PFC Philip Trieste	**A/1/9**
PHELPS, PFC Randall Carl	**A/3rd Eng**
PRUITT, CPL George Alan	**H&S/2/26**
SEDILLO, CPL Juan Natividad	**H&S/1/9**
SMITH, HN Richard John	**B/3rd Recon**

SGT Connell, although listed as KIA this date, received mortal wounds on 07 April.[2793] Joseph F. Beebe (Squad Leader of machineguns with F-3), recalls carrying Sgt Connell, still alive. "Sergeant Connell—he made it to the [hospital] ship. We got him to the ship that was off the coast. I think he died a day or two later. When I carried him back to the chopper, he was still alive."[2794]

At 0400H, the 3rd Airborne Task Force received a ground and mortar attack at LZ SNAKE (XD808378). Contact was broken at 0630H with 72 NVA KIA and 11 KIA for the ARVNs.[2795]

At 0600, with C/1/9 as point platoon, Bn 1/9 crossed the LOD [Line of Departure] and moved to take Hill 689. By 0720, 1/9 had secured Hill 689 without making contact. Between 1500 and 1630, the Marines of 1/9 on Hill 689 received 38 rounds of 82mm mortar fire causing 9 KIA, 27 serious WIA, and 1 NBC.[2796] Capt Charles B. Hartzell, the S3A of 1/9 reported it as a "registered mortar barrage [giving] us very heavy casualties—about 20 wounded and killed in a very short time by shooting a heavy concentration in on us before we could knock that position out."[2797] Capt Ralph H. Flagler (CO of C/1/9 from 15 Feb 68) notes that Hill 689 "had been previously zeroed in by enemy mortars ranging all the way from 120s down through 60s. Once our position was estab-

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[2787] Letter from Michael Dagner, 19 Oct 1987.
[2788] 1st Mar AAR Opn PEGASUS, pp. 28 and 29. WP=White Phosphorus; HE=High Explosive; NBC=Non-Battle Casualty.
[2789] Waldron and Beavers, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2790] I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, pp. 3, 7.
[2791] FMFPAC SITREP 110325Z/Apr68, SITREP #1108.
[2792] I ACD 090945Z/Apr68, Subj: Bright Light and "Summary of Casualty Status Events" in Library of Congress MIA microfilm, Reel #284, Folder #107.
[2793] *Vide* notes for 07 April.
[2794] Conversation with Joseph Beebe, 09 February 2006.
[2795] I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 8; Waldron and Beavers, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
[2796] 1/9 AAR Opn PEGASUS; 1/9 ComdC Apr68. Note: only 2 KIA are listed in the Wash, D.C., Vietnam Memorial. The 1/9 AAR indicates that for 09 April, the battalion received 18 rounds of 82mm mortars causing 2 KIA and 3 serious WIA. The 9 KIA, however, remain unexplained. The error might possibly be attributed to the 9 WIA of A/1/9.
[2797] Comments of Capt Charles B. Hartzell, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

lished.. we were taken under fire."[2798] The mortar barrage wounded Capt Flagler, and he was medevaced that afternoon. Also wounded and medevaced was the Company Executive Officer, and Co C was down to 2 Second Lieutenants and 2 staff NCOs.[2799]

PFC Randall C. Phelps (a combat engineer attached to C/1/9 to do demolitions) perished in the barrage while helping to load wounded Marines aboard a medevac helicopter.[2800] Another Marine of C/1/9, PFC Richard R. Richey, assisted the Co. Corpsman to move WIA, refusing to seek cover as he moved them to the LZ, although wounded in the initial barrage himself. Although wounded a second time while moving the WIA, he ignored his painful wounds to assist in moving the casualties until all had been evacuated.[2801] PFC Victory M. Lamas, Jr., also wounded in the barrage, nevertheless assisted in moving the WIA to the LZ.[2802] PFC Richard R. Richey and HM2 Robert J. Gaspard (both serving with C/1/9) were recommended for the Silver Star Medal.[2803] The initial mortar barrage wounded approximately 33 Marines.[2804] A call went out to the platoons to send their Corpsmen to the Company CP. When the first chopper arrived, HN Kenneth A. Plock, was wounded, but after dressing his own wound, HN Plock remained in the LZ to treat the wounded despite a continuing mortar barrage. When a second chopper arrived, HN Plock was again wounded, this time more severely, but again, after dressing his own wound, he continued to direct the treatment of others and was one of the last men to be evacuated.[2805] HM3 Daniel P. Baker likewise attended the WIA for more than an hour, undaunted by continuous NVA mortar fire around him. After all the casualties had been evacuated, he continued to search the area for additional wounded men, ensuring all were accounted for.[2806]

2/Lt Francis Brian. Lovely, Jr.'s First Platoon, A/1/9, secured the northwestern slope of Hill 689 and notes that Co C, while digging in their mortars high on the hill, unfortunately bunched up a few people and thus took casualties. Lovely's A-1 took 9 WIA and 3 KIA from that mortar barrage.[2807]

PFC David William Moody (A/1/9) remembers a large round landed between the feet of one of the Navy Corpsmen, HN D. A. Roberts (H&S/1/9), but it didn't detonate! The squad took a break in a large crater, probably from a 1,000-pound bomb, a good 25-ft. in diameter and approximately 7-ft. deep. CPL Dewey E. Troup told the squad to stand down and spread out as he crested the top of the crater. Suddenly an explosion temporarily blinded Moody: "I remember saying, 'O my God, I'm dead—but I can't be dead if I can talk to myself! I couldn't see, but my sight came back to me like in 3 or 4 minutes. I could feel the warm fluids coming down off my head. When my sight came back, I looked down at my arm, and it was ripped open. [PFC John M.] Silenovich was looking at me and said, 'Well, I won't see you no more! He tried to put a bandage on top of my head, and it just wouldn't stay. I had blood on my jaw, blood on my leg, and my arm was ripped open. I looked up, and there was [PFC Thomas Francis] Campbell. I kept talking to him, but Campbell didn't move. I could see [PFC George E.] Einhorn in graphic pain, tormented by the pain. His legs looked like they were doubled under him. Actually, most of it was just skin. It was just skin, dangling off of his legs and back. [CPL David R.] Ford was with him. Troup was trying to pick himself up because the explosion had blown him over the side of the hill."[2808]

LCPL Anthony C. Borja, Jr., the Bn CO's radioman, wrote of the mortar barrage: "There was a large bomb crater; the '14' [air officer] radio operator, an American Indian nicknamed 'Chief', another radio operator, and I used as a ready-made foxhole.. We were lounging and enjoying the break when I suddenly got that 'itch,' an urge to move—something bad was going to happen. I obeyed that feeling and climbed up the side of the crater and sat down along its rim. The two down below said I was crazy and remained in the crater. As I yelled down, the whooshing sounds of two 82mm mortars could be heard from the west., I flattened myself and then heard the sounds of incoming rounds.. The bomb crater was filled with smoke and a cloud of dust.. The 82 round had hit almost directly in the center of the crater. The shrapnel flew up at such an angle as to catch both Chief and the other radio operator in the head area. The other radioman was headless and at first glance, Chief appeared

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[2798] Comments of Capt Ralph H. Flagler, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[2799] *Ibid.*

[2800] Statements of 1/Lt Paul C. Hopper and Sgt Harold W. Hudson in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file of PFC Randall C. Phelps. The award Citation notes that on 3 February [should be 5 February] during the NVA counterattack against Hill 471, PFC Phelps bravely remained in his position on the perimeter despite NVA white phosphorus and small arms fire hitting near his position, delivering accurate and devastating fire on an estimated squad of NVA.

[2801] Statements of CPL Robert S. Applebaum and CPL Timothy J. Haley in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Richard R. Richey

[2802] Bronze Star Medal Citation, PFC Victory M. Lamas, Jr.

[2803] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, HM3 Daniel P. Baker.

[2804] Bronze Star Medal Citation, HM3 Daniel P. Baker.

[2805] Statement of 2/Lt William C. Connelly in Bronze Star Medal file of HN Kenneth A. Plock.

[2806] Bronze Star Medal file on HM3 Daniel P. Baker.

[2807] Comments of 2/Lt Francis Brian Lovely, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #2803. (The "3 KIA" figure might refer to 3 A/1/9 KIA listed for 9 April: PFCs Campbell, Lindsay, and LCPL Mulgrew, who may have been reported the next day).

[2808] Taped comments of David William Moody, 9 June 1994. Note: Campbell is listed as KIA the following day, 9 April, perhaps DOW. Campbell was Lt Lovely's radioman.

to be unhurt—but he was not... I noticed that the right side of his head was bloody with the brain fully exposed... Chief grabbed my hand and asked if he was going to die—his last coherent words... For the next 45 minutes, I sat by him as he talked nonsense, crying and mumbling. I placed dressing after dressing on his wound as the brains began to slowly ooze out... Chief, despite his horrendous injury, was still alive, holding my hand and mumbling. I soon ran out of dressings.. The corpsman showed up as did some other Marines. Using ponchos, they loaded up the one dead Marine, then we loaded up Chief and carried him up the steep side of the crater to an awaiting CH-46. Chief was still hanging in there. The corpsman had to pry his hand from mine."[2809]

CPL Juan Sedillo (nickname, "Chico") was the radioman for the 1/9 XO, Maj. J. A. Donnelly, standing next to him when he was hit. Donnelly had taken him as his radioman because he was going to leave in about 2 days for a special communications school, Communications Security School. "He didn't know why he was going or anything else, but I knew. He just got it, in that crater. He took his helmet off, and got hit right in the head. I said some prayers with him, but I knew he wasn't going to make it... He was very bright, a good man."[2810] Like the man in World War I who reached out for a butterfly and was killed, Sedillo undoubtedly was in touch with the day, wanted some fresh air, and had momentarily removed his helmet.

One of his fellow Marines remembers: "He was a great Marine and the sad part is, he had less than 2 weeks left and could have gone to the rear, but he knew we were short-handed on Pegasus, so he stayed out in the field. He was that kind of individual. I shared a hole with him for 2 nights after we took Hill 471, so I heard an earful of his immediate plans for when he was to arrive home from Nam. He had many relatives and they had an eat planned."[2811] PFC Lance C. Larson, another radioman with 1/9, recalls the scene in which Co "C" passed through the Bn CP group at the base of Hill 689: "I saw 'Chico' standing there next to the Major [Maj Donnelly], and I said, 'Hey, Chico, what'd you say? You'd expect him—because he's standing next to the Major—to say something like, 'Yeah, too bad!' or something like that. He says, 'This sucks!' Just as loud as he could, and right next to the Major! I just about died laughing."[2812] About 15 minutes later, the mortar barrage struck the Marines and "Chico" was killed. PFC Larry Allen Jones (H&S/1/9) had both his legs blown off when a round landed in his hole.[2813] PFC Jones died of wounds on 24 April.

At approximately 0900, the staff and officers of Co "B", 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, were meeting while their corpsmen were outside to burn garbage out of the trenches, one of whom was HN Richard J. Smith. Following a tremendous explosion and tremendous commotion outside, HN Smith dashed into their meeting, screaming. He was in flames. Several Marines attempted to catch him, but he continued to run wild. SSGT Delbert G. Weidler, calmly caught and restrained him, sustaining numerous burns over his own body.[2814] Smith "was burnt very, very badly. About the only thing he had left on him was the bottoms of his boots; everything else was just about burned off. I can remember peeling skin off of him. He was burnt from his head to his toe."[2815] Smith had been using kerosene but needed some more and took JP-4 which he threw on the fire. The wind changed and it blew back on him.[2816] HN Smith kept yelling, "Get me to the Philippines!" His parents worked there at Clark Air Force Base. He was conscious, talkative, but died of shock at DaNang.[2817] HN Smith was his parents' only child.[2818]

Co F/2/1 made a helicopter assault from LZ KIWI to Objective #20 (XD951480) from 1010 to 1026H where they established a patrol base from which they patrolled the area.[2819] One of the company corpsmen, HN Groshong, was killed when his mule hit a mine.[2820]

At 0800H, soldiers of 2-7 Cav successfully cleared Route 9 to KSCB and effected a link-up with the 26th Marine Regiment.[2821] The 3rd Brigade airlifted its command post into KSCB and Col. Campbell was given the mission of securing the area, which was done after the 2-7 Cav successfully cleared Route 9 to the base and linked up with the 26th Marines.[2822] Also today, the remains of WO1 Gerald L. McKinsey of the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company, who had been MIA on their assault on the Old French Fort on 21 January 1968, were recovered. The entire area of the crash was searched by Sgt Farmer,

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[2809] CPL Anthony C. Borja, Jr., "Khe Sanh Memories," written for his daughter, Elizabeth; printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #43 (Fall/Winter, 1998), p. 33.
[2810] Conversation with Joseph Donnelly, 30 August 1994.
[2811] Letter from Lance C. Larson, 9 February 1994.
[2812] Interview of Lance C. Larson, no date, Eisenhower Center.
[2813] *Ibid.*
[2814] Statement of 2/Lt Michael M. Waddell and NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, in Navy and Marine Corps Medal file of SSGT Delbert G. Weidler.
[2815] Conversation with Richard D. Hagewood, 11 June 1988. Hagewood was one of the Recon Company Corpsmen.
[2816] *Ibid.*
[2817] Conversation with David Doehrman, 4 February 1984 and 1 March 1997.
[2818] Letter from Mrs. John Smith, 27 May 1968.
[2819] 1st Mar AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 30.
[2820] email from SSGT Charles V. Thompson, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, posted 10 August 2002.
[2821] I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 8; FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, April, 1968, p. 10.
[2822] Tolson, "Pegasus," *op. cit.*, p. 18.

SP4 Wallace and soldiers of Co C, 2-5 Cav, searching 2 hours for remains and other identification media.[2823]

09 APRIL 1968

CAMPBELL, PFC Thomas Francis	A/1/9
FERRY, LCPL Ray Leonard III	A/3rd AT
FRANCAVILLA, LCPL John F.	I/3/26
FRAZIER, LCPL Ronald Leon	C/1/9
GARBER, CPL Charles W. Jr.	C/1/9
GREEN, PFC Claude Hewitt	E/2/1
JACKSON, SSGT Billy Lee	F/2/1
KIDD, PFC Phillip Meridith	C/1/9
KISSLING, CPL Benjamin Kaon	D/2/12
LANE, SGT Louis Michael	K/3/26
LINDSAY, PFC Philip Trieste	A/1/9
MULGREW, LCPL Kevin Spear	A/1/9

(For PFC Campbell, PFC Lindsay, and LCPL Mulgrew, see notes for 8 April 1968). PFC David William Moody, while acknowledging the date of 9 April for Campbell, claims "I'll put it this way: the reason I'm alive today is because he was in front of me. When I could finally open up my eyes, he was dead. There were no signs [of life]. He died that day. I think what happened was, because of all the medevacs, they didn't do anything about it in the morgue [Graves Registration] until the next day."[2824] PFC John M. Silinovich (A/1/9) recalls being at the bottom of the crater and Campbell up on the top rim when the shrapnel came right up and got him. Silinovich remembers how Campbell helped other Marines as they moved up hill: "Here he is, carrying a radio, and he's still helping people go up the hill. He was just a good guy."[2825]

At 0720H, 1/9 on Hill 689 received 18 rounds of NVA 82mm mortar resulting in 2 KIA and 4 WIA.[2826] CPL Timothy J. Haley remembers: "Perimeters were set up and I busily placed my gun squads in strategic locations with instructions to dig in fast. Secure in the knowledge that this was being accomplished, I jumped into a NVA gun pit and was eating a can of chicken and noodles when we were mortared with BIG STUFF. Still, unconcerned, I continued to eat. Next thing I knew, [CPL Robert S.] Applebaum from Weapons Platoon was leaning over my hole crying that I had to come quick—I had just lost my whole section. My reply was 'Bullshit, they're all dug in.' He said, 'No,' that I was to come quick! I left the safety of the hole to view a sight of wholesale carnage—wounded everywhere. First Garber's Squad, Garber dead, 2 or 3 more wounded. Next, Frazier's squad: Frazier dead, Doc torn up bad. The X.O. was hit, the Gunny was hit (who passed the company ledger he kept to me), and the Captain was hit. My last squad was decimated. Some officer had moved them from where they had dug in and now they were wiped out. I cried harder than I ever had. I was responsible for these guys and they were all gone."[2827] Both Frazier and Garber were Squad Leaders. "Frazier had gone to Australia on R&R and came back and gave me one of those Australian military logos that I think goes on their hats, and I had it for 20, 23 years, and when I went to the Wall, I put it down on the ground by his name, and a Purple Heart there for those guys."[2828]

At 1115H, 3/26 received enemy machinegun and 120mm mortar fire from NVA positions southwest of XD777437, damaging one CH-46 helicopter and causing 1 KIA and 13 WIA (evacuated).[2829] HM3 David Steinberg shared a bunker with LCPL John F. Francavilla, a mortarman. "We had spent the entire 77 days talking. He'd come down the hill from the top of 881 and we talked and we talked."[2830] One day the cry came, "Corpsman up!" Steinberg left Francavilla in the bunker to attend to the WIA. When Steinberg returned, the bunker was gone and so was Francavilla: it had taken a hit; his friend was dead. "When I came back to that area where I had spent most of my time, they were putting what remained of Francavilla in a plastic bag. A mortar round had come right into the trenchline. I spent the next 16 years denying I knew Francavilla was killed, that there by the grace of God probably my name would have been next [to] if someone hadn't needed a Doc Dave. I've never forgotten that."[2831]

General Westmoreland may have reported that 9 April was the first time since 20 January 1968 that Khe Sanh received no incoming enemy fire,[2832] but John

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[2823] DD 896, Field Search Record, signed by Sgt Jackie Farmer of 625th S&S Co (DS), dated 9 Apr 1968.
[2824] Conversation with David William Moody, 27 June 1994.
[2825] Conversation with John Silinovich, 28 August 1994.
[2826] 1/9 AAR Opn PEGASUS.
[2827] Tim Haley, "Brief Synopsis of My Khe Sanh Experience," in his letter of 12 December 1995. Haley was with 60mm mortars. Note: the description seems to apply to events of the previous day. Again, as with Campbell, Lindsay, and Mulgrew, it may be that the KIAs were not officially recorded until 9 April, but were killed on 8 April.
[2828] Conversation with Tim Haley, 31 December 1995.
[2829] 26Mar, Periodic Operations Report (PEGASUS) 082000-092000H APR68, Para 8.D. The 3/26 ComdC for Apr68 notes that at 1030H, 9 Apr 1968, Co I received approx. 35 82mm incoming rounds causing 2 USMC KIA and 11 USMC WIA. The same information is reported in the 3/26 AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 3.
[2830] Conversation with David Steinberg, 21 May 1989.
[2831] Taped comments of David Steinberg, no date [*ca*, December, 1987]; Comments by Steinberg at Khe Sanh Veterans reunion at Nashville, TN, 21 July 1990, printed in the Khe Sanh Veterans *Newsletter*, Issue #12 (November, 1990), p. 16.
[2832] Gen Westmoreland 101130Z/Apr68, MAC 04795, Khe Sanh Report #66, para. 3. In an official listing of USMC KIA, LCPL Ferry is listed as killed: "Frag wds body from undetermined explosion while helping to load truck with

Hargesheimer was standing next to LCPL Ray Ferry when one round came in and exploded, wounding 6, none seriously except for Ferry. "He lived for 3 – 4 minutes... I still think of Ray. He was just 18 and the closest friend I had at Khe Sanh. I still remember him lying there gasping for breath."[2833] Later, Hargesheimer wrote that "Ray was one of the funniest guys I ever met. No matter how terrible the situation, Ray would say something funny and make life at Khe Sanh a little more bearable. As he was unloading some old 106mm ammo crates, a lone NVA mortar round landed just a few feet away. Most of the shrapnel was absorbed by the old ammo, but Ray was struck in the aorta by a single, small piece of shrapnel. Despite heroic efforts by doctors at Charlie Med, Ray died of his wounds."[2834]

From 0725H, Co E/2/1 conducted search and destroy operations from Objective #21 (XD947496) to Objective #22 (XD961497), and at 1718H, the Company was helilifted from Objective 22 to LZ STUD and at darkness consolidated defensive positions at XD997482.[2835] At 1640H, while moving toward a hill at XD967500, E/2/1 at XD966500 suffered several heat casualties: 1 KIA NBC (PFC Claude H. Green) and 2 NBC (medevaced).[2836]

On 9 April, 1-12 Cav seized the old Lang Vei Special Forces Camp (XD795360) in the face of limited enemy resistance.[2837]

10 APRIL 1968

BRANAM, SGT Ronnie Franklin	A/2-7 Cav
ROBINSON, CPL Lionel Lareu	A/1/9
WALKER, SP4 Tommy Dale	C/1-12 Cav
WILLIAMS, 1/Lt Maxie Raymond	A/1/26

CPL Robinson died of acute barbiturate intoxication.[2838]

The weather at Khe Sanh was clear to partly cloudy skies with good ceilings and visibility.[2839]

1/Lt Maxie Raymond Williams, Jr. (known to Marine peers as "Ray" and to his family as "Spike"), 22 years old during the Siege battle, was the son of Col Maxie R. Williams, Sr., who served in the Marine Corps during World War II, first as Assistant Operations Officer of 1/2 where he served in Tulagi and Guadalcanal, and then as Company Commander of B/1/2 where he participated in the assault and seizure of Tarawa for which action he was awarded the Navy Cross and his first Purple Heart. In 1944 he was again wounded while leading B/1/2 in the assault and seizure of Saipan.[2840]

Lt Williams, 6-ft, 2-in. tall was admired and respected by all the men who knew him while he commanded A-3.[2841] While in high school at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, he became an Eagle Scout and lettered in varsity sports at the high school there. (After his death, the football stadium there was named in his honor). In May, 1967, he graduated as part of Basic Class 5-67 from The Basic School. His father retired from the Marine Corps as a Colonel in August, 1967.[2842] On 10 October, he became Platoon Commander of Third Platoon, Co. "A",[2843] and was to lead approximately 75 platoon patrols and participate in 30 company patrols and 2 battalion operations. He was the commander of the outpost atop Hill 950 during the siege for three months (Jan – Apr 1968).[2844]

On 8 April, 1/26 participated in the general outbreak from the Combat Base, with 1/9 moving to the south towards Hill 689 and 2/26 patrolling to the north. 1/26 moved to the Rock Quarry area and on 9 April, the rifle companies fanned out from this location to sweep the eastern side of the valley. A/1/26 had set in for the night at XD826416.[2845]

CPL Robert R. Spurgeon, 2nd Squad Leader, 3rd Platoon, A/1/26, remembers walking through the area, devetated from B-52 saturation of the area. The Marines were well spread due to the open terrain. "It was really hot. Everybody was getting tired, and then that boy, Pruitt started crying and he flops down and says he's not going anywhere else. I looked at him and I said, 'Boy, tell me what the NVA will do to you if you get away!' So I start to take off [on him], and the Lieutenant, off to my left, said, 'Corporal Spurgeon, you can't do that.' So I went back and I slapped Pruitt's helmet off and grabbed him by the hair and started dragging him, and the Lieutenant said, 'Corporal Spurgeon, you can't do that either!' I said, 'I'm not going to carry him and I'm not going to make any of my men [carry him] because they can just

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ammunition," in the "Viet Nam Casualties Non Hostile dead" category. [HQMC Memorandum from DN [J.F. Hogsett, Jr.] to AO1C, Attn: WO Helbringer, 15 April 1968, Subj: Viet Nam Casualties, p. 7.

[2833] Letter of John Hargesheimer, 20 July 1985.

[2834] Letter from John Hargesheimer, postmarked 17 August 2004.

[2835] 1stMar AAR Opn PEGASUS, pp. 32-33.

[2836] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[2837] I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 3.

[2838] HQMC Memorandum from DN [J.G. Hogsett, Jr., By Direction] to AO1C, 6 May 1968, Subj: Viet Nam Casualties, p. 10

[2839] Gen Westmoreland 111231Z/Apr68, MAC 04845, Khe Sanh Report #67.

[2840] Wayne, Patrick R., "Alpha-Three Actual, First Lieutenant Maxie Raymond 'Spike' Williams, Jr., USMC, A Khe Sanh Platoon Commander," unpublished manuscript, 7 December 1996.

[2841] Stubbe, Ray William, *Khe Sanh Chaplain*, 1970, p. 529 (entry for 21 January 1968).

[2842] Wayne, *op. cit.*

[2843] "Chronological Record of Duty Assignments," in Service Record Book, Maxie R. Williams.

[2844] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 4 May 1968, signed by Ray G. Snyder, CO, A/1/26, in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file, 2/Lt Maxie R. Williams, Jr.

[2845] Wayne, *op. cit.*

barely make it, too.' He said, 'Leave him with me.' I said, OK. Well, about that time, the Battalion Commander told us to get in a single line because he had already found the area he wanted to set in for the night.

"So we formed a single line. We hadn't gone very far, and the grenade [blast] knocked me on the ground. LCPL Scott was behind me and he got wounded in the ankle. The Lieutenant—it was around a little bend; I couldn't see anything yet. When I set the men up, I thought we were getting ambushed. So I set the men up facing one way and then the other, and I went back to see, because my men are back there. I had Higuera and another man—I can't remember his name—he had one fair eye and one good eye. And I looked down on him [the other man] and he had a piece of steel coming out of the pupil of his good eye. It stuck out about an inch. Higuera was just a bloody mess. What had happened was—Pruitt wasn't anywhere around. So I think that he was hanging on to the Lieutenant and he pulled the Lieutenant's cotter pin [of the grenade]. The Lieutenant was dead on us bending our cotter key so it couldn't be pulled easily, and so I know his were right. Probably that boy got hung up in it, jerked away, and when he did, pulled it. He was the only one who wasn't wounded. He knew what he did, and he had taken off. That is exactly what happened, and I've always felt guilty about that."[2846]

PFC Robert A. Harrison remembers humping the patrol through dense vegetation. PFC George R. Pruitt, ahead of Harrison, was having trouble moving through the vegetation and Lt Williams had "come back from his position near the front of Third Platoon to offer 'words of encouragement' to Pruitt," and then returned to his position in the column.[2847] Suddenly, an explosion and the cry, "Corpsman Up!" pierced the silence. "My fire team was called up to help. We moved up to where the explosion had occurred and found that a booby-trap had gone off. Don't know for sure wht type of booby-trap it was. Lt. Williams was killed outright and PFC Richard Higuera, his RTO [radioman], was wounded.[2848] "It was obvious that one of the Lieutenant's grenades had gone off. One of the pins must have worked loose."[2849] Yet, the manner of the cause of the explosion was difficult to determine. "It's very peculiar because he actually had it [the M-33 grenade] on his belt and his jacket, of course, was over that. And you know how they strapped [taped] those spoons so that they would not come off. So it's a real mystery as to what exactly happened there."[2850]

One of the platoon's corpsmen, Keith Gum (then HM3) later wrote:

"The business about Lt. Williams does not rest easy on my mind. We dug our holes in rock hard ground just NNW of the base, maybe a mile out or even less. Doc [HN Thomas R.] Richards and I were assigned a spot near 2 dead NVA that smelled to the high heaven! Was on radio watch as usual through the night. No sleep of course. We mounted up.. Moved through the thick underbrush. Hot as hell. Dripping in our own sweat. I was in the rear and Doc Richards was forward, closer to Lt. Williams. Not sure about the time, but think it was early afternoon. Very near exhaustion from sweltering heat and full pack. An explosion about that of a 60 mm mortar was heard some hundred yards up the line. We thought it was incoming and hit the dirt. 'Corpsman Up! Oh God, what now! The vines were thick and caught my pack repeatedly as I made my way forward. I was being cleared of entangling brush and pushed by grunts along the way, it was that thick. I simply could not get through it without help. I arrived on a scene grotesque as any I was to see during my tour: The wounded lay in a pocket of brush, rather dark and choked with dust. Lt Williams was on his back, upper torso elevated. From groin to throat, he was open. Yes, open like a cadaver being observed by medical students. I paused over him. Surprisingly little blood. He was still alive! 'Doc, help' were his last words, words that will ring in my ear forever to be sure! From the moment the grenade exploded until I arrived must have been no more than minutes. Certainly less than 5 minutes. There was nothing to do for him. He was finished. Others were lying about screaming. [HN] Richards was working like a mad man. I was about to help him with Higuera whose fingers were barely hanging with a thread of skin, an eye badly hurt, and a dozen other wounds... Richards and I used nearly every battle dressing we had between us. I remember this lesson well. From then on, I carried bandoleers full of battle dressings.

"How did it happen? To this day, I can't figure it out. It was one of those deadly baseball shaped grenades. Why was he carrying it? We were just ordered to collect them. Even if the pin was ripped out by thorns or brush, the strap on his 782 gear should have held the spoon. I remember Lt. Williams did not carry his gear sloppily (like me!). It would seem a very rare thing for both strap and pin to give way simultaneously... What really happened.. is still a matter of speculation, a haunting mystery. I have even thought that somebody might have held a grudge and tampered with the grenade. Not likely, considering the Lt. was never alone and would certainly take a number of random victims along with him. Another senseless death in a strange war... They put him on a stretcher with the side of his belly dangling nearly a foot or so to one side. I stopped the stretcher

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[2846] Conversation with Robert R. Spurgeon, 03 Feb 2007.
[2847] Letter from Robert A. Harrison, 31 March 1986.
[2848] *Ibid.*
[2849] Conversation with Robert A. Harrison, 16 July 1989.
[2850] Conversation with Keith Gum, 27February 1996. Many days prior to this patrol, Lt Williams had given the order to collect all the newly-issued COFRAM M-33 grenades.

bearers to replace it and watched them carry him off to Graves."[2851]

His Service Record Book records that it was a booby trap.[2852] It is possible that while moving through the bamboo with his radioman, a NVA may have mistaken him for the Company Commander and exploded a command detonated mine which, in turn, detonated his grenades as a secondary explosion. The location of the incident: XD811418. Lt Williams is buried in Arlington National Cemetery in grave 9101-C, Section 6.

In September, 1968, CPL Robert L. Spurgeon, 2nd Squad Leader, 3d Platoon, A/1/26, met Higuera at Balboa Naval Hospital: "He was messed-up bad. I mean, his left arm was crushed. He had been drafted by the [New York] Giants. He was a lefty, and his left arm was crushed. He couldn't make his eyes look in any one direction. They went in two different directions. He was in pitiful shape."[2853]

Today, 1-12 Cav encountered stiff resistance from enemy elements as they attacked the new Lang Vei Special Forces camp (which fell to friendly forces on 12 April).[2854]

Also today, a helicopter was hit on Hill 881-South causing 5-10 casualties. 1/Lt Dennis Dee Andrews (M/3/26), without regard for his own safety, rushed to the LZ to assist the wounded, moving them to the I/3/26 position on the hill. He remained on the LZ which was under constant mortar fire until it was cleared of all wounded.[2855]

Lt Gen Robert Cushman sent the following SPECAT EXCLUSIVE message to Col David E. Lownds this date:

"Your resolution to win, the courageous example of your heroism, and the professional pride of your men had caused the enemy to withdraw in bitter defeat. They had no choice. Khe Sanh will long endure in the minds of the Marines, soldiers, sailors, airmen, and ARVN who served there as an example of determination in the cause of freedom. The victory is ours because of devotion to Corps and country. Many times in the face of grave danger, you risked your personal safety to bolster the confidence of your men, assist with the wounded, and supervise activities throughout the combat base, all this and more, under continual enemy fire. You and your troops have done an outstanding job. Because of this, Khe Sanh will be added to the list of unforgettable names in Marine Corps history. Well done!"[2856]

[*Col Bruce F. Meyers, the father of USMC Force Reconnaissance units, arrived at KSCB on 10 April 1968 with the mission of destroying and abandoning KSCB. As G-3 of 9th MAB, he had spent some time each month at Khe Sanh from August, 1967, up to and including January, 1968,*[2857] *since RLT26 was a unit of 9th MAB, not 3rd Marine Division. Ens Martin Kux, the Officer in Charge of CBMU-301, Detachment "B" at Khe Sanh, was sick and angry that KSCB would be abandoned; in a diary entry he wrote: "Can't quite believe that the US will abandon KS—after loosing 500-1000 lives here (2500 casualties since 21 Jan) and spending millions of dollars defending it. But maybe it's better to admit the mistake now than to continue the mistake!"*[2858] *Brigadier General Jacob E. Glick, the ADC [Assistant Division Commander], 3rd Marine Division, was sent to KSCB by verbal orders of Major General Tompkins to command the forces there upon departure of LtGen Tolson, including the 1st and 26th Marine Regiments and supporting units.*[2859] *Task Force GLICK was activated 110800H/Apr68 for planning purposes in conjunction with the deactivation of KSCB.*[2860]]

11 April 1968

ADDICE, HN Frank Paul	MAG-36
ALLEN, CPL Paul James	VMO-6
BELCHER, CPL Robert Winslow	H&S/3/26
DAVIDSON, PFC Dennis Robert	A/3rd Tk Bn
DEMARCO, LCPL Michael Gregory	VMO-6
DICKEN, LCPL Perry	E/2/1
ERWIN, PFC Richard Eugene	H&S/3/26
FINLEY, PFC Charles Richard	M/3/26
GANNON, CAPT Eugene Richard	HMM-163
GRATEN, CPL Frederick Dunham	VMO-6
HOLDEN, 2/Lt John Parker	HMM-163
MC MILLAN, CAPT Bruce Francis	VMO-6
NIXON, CPL John Arleigh	VMO-6
POWELL, SP5 Peter Earl	HHC, 8th Eng
RIEDE, 1/Lt Ronald Edgar	VMO-6
THOMPSON, PFC Kenneth David	A/1-8 Cav
WOODEN, SGT Charlie K.	B/1-7 Cav

[2851] Letter of Keith Gum to Patrick Wayne, undated, contained in Letter from Patrick Wayne, 25 May 1996.
[2852] Combat History – Expeditions – Awards Record.
[2853] Conversation with Robert R. Spurgeon, 03 Feb 2007.
[2854] I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 3.
[2855] Statement of Sgt Michael J. Rooney in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) of 1/Lt Dennis Dee Andrews. Lt Andrews was KIA 14 July 1968.
[2856] CG III MAF 110112Z/Apr68, to CO TWENTY-SIXTH Marines, Info LtGen Rosson andMGen Tompkins, in III MAF outgoing SPECAT EXCLUSIVE 28 Mar – 11 Apr 68.
[2857] Comments of Col Bruce F. Meyers, HQMC Oral History Tape #2777.
[2858] Ens Martin Kux, Diary entry, 12 April 1968.
[2859] Comments of BGen Jacob E. Glick, USMC Oral History Tape #2777.
[2860] CG, 3rd MarDiv 120310Z/Apr68, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc Apr68 file, Encl (90).

Today, Khe Sanh experienced a significant increase in low cloudiness as a cold front advanced into the area from the northeast. Ceilings and visibility approached zero conditions.[2861]

During the night, M/3/26 dispatched an ambush at the foot of Hill 881-South, off the westernmost finger. It had long been suspected that NVA had camped in this location in order to avoid bombardment all around the hill. This was to be the first patrol departing the hill since the beginning of the siege battle, and LCPL Terry Stewart (M/3/26), on his third Vietnam tour, led his squad. A Lieutenant also accompanied the ambush which departed slowly and cautiously down the steep slopes about midnight. LCPL Stewart heard some noises. The Lieutenant, without informing Stewart, had dropped off two Marines as a rear guard to cover their "back door." Odors of NVA cooking fires were detected along with rustling in the bushes to their front. LCPL Stewart recommended to the Lieutenant that they pull back 100 meters to determine what was in their area. Instead of inverting the patrol (where the last man would become the point, and vice versa), he had the point of the patrol move back. Neither the point nor LCPL Stewart, of course, knew of the two Marines that had been stationed in the rear. When the point man noticed a boot sticking out, touched it, and it moved, he opened fire. Stewart dove for cover and happened to face the second Marine that had been left behind who was whispering, "Are you alright?" LCPL Stewart, hearing the safeties of the M-16 clicking off "safe" to "semi-automatic" suddenly realized these were Americans and shouted "Cease Fire!" The Marine whose boot had been sticking out of the bush had been badly wounded, and the ambush, now compromised and with a seriously wounded Marine, returned up the very steep slope of the hill.[2862]

It was early morning by the time the medevac helicopter was called, and the wounded Marine, PFC Finley, seemed to be doing OK; all thought he would survive.[2863]

PFC Dennis R. Davidson was another medevac, picked up at Khe Sanh and killed in the mid-air collision. PFC Davidson had been shot in the chest by another Marine during an altercation which later resulted in his death. "The accused Marine was tried by General Court Martial and was acquitted."[2864] PFC Erwin was also a passenger.

The weather at Quang Tri was drizzle.[2865]

At 0705H, SEAWORTHY 4-5 and 4-6, led by Captain B. F. McMillan, launched as armed escorts for HIGHBOY 6-1 and 6-2 to pick up PFC Finley. The two sections launched separately and joined at Khe Sanh, then both headed for Dong Ha in separate sections. Seven miles west of Dong Ha, with a 1500-ft. broken cloud cover, Capt McMillan's aircraft and Highboy 6-1 collided in mid-air. The H-34 came apart before reaching the ground and the UH1E burned upon impact. No survivors of either aircraft were found and all personnel were accounted for. 1/Lt Ronald. E. Riede was the co-pilot of the UH1E, Cpl Paul. J. Allen the crew chief, and LCPL Michael. G. Demarco the gunner.[2866]

CPL Allen, the Crew Chief, was born 12 November 1946 in Woodstock, Illinois, then moved with his family to Rochester, Minnesota, where he attended and graduated from John Marshall High School in 1965 after participating in track, and known for his love for driving (even racing) and repairing cars, especially a '63 Chevy and a '65 Mustang. He was described as "a determined young man who held strong beliefs about what was right." He joined the Marine Corps in September, 1965 and took great pride in being a Marine, even to buying a set of dress blues and escorting his girl friend to the Homecoming Dance while on leave. His father had been a Marine in World War II, and he grew up making friends at a nearby Christian Servicemen's Club.[2867]

Although CPL Belcher had an exotic communications MOS, 3/26 didn't have the equipment he was trained to operate, and he humped the PRC-25, spent time on watch in the CommO and in the line companies. Belcher and PFC William G. Jabusch became good friends, frequently talking with each other, and Jabusch remembers Belcher as one "who belonged on a recruiting poster. "He looked the part. He looked like he came out of a 'John Wayne' movie. He looked good uniform, and he was one of the nicest people I ever met."[2868] "I always felt good after I'd seen him. I feel good now knowing I had his friendship at one time. The whole world would have benefited from knowing him."[2869] "It was pure chance that I found out he'd gotten killed. I was on the end of

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[2861] Gen Westmoreland 121148Z/Apr68, MAC 4897, Khe Sanh Report #68.

[2862] MSGT Terry Stewart, "Life in General on Hill 881," pp. 5-6; partly quoted in Hammel, Eric, *Khe Sanh, Siege in the Clouds, An Oral History*, New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1989, pp. 445-446. Master Sergeant Stewart notes that this is not "throwing rocks at the Lt, [it was] just an unfortunate thing."

[2863] Comments of Brigadier General Harry W. Jenkins, Jr., undated.

[2864] HQMC, Report of Casualty, Library, Historical Center, Washington, D.C. notes CG, FMFPAC's 3rd Endorsement, 17/11t, 5830 of 20 Jun 1968 on 1/Lt Hatcher's ltr CCH/mmd, 5830, 3 June 1968.

[2865] Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 11 April 1968.

[2866] VMO-6 ComdC April, 1968, Encl (3), p. 1.

[2867] Mary Lou Capelle, "Paul James Allen," in Ward, Don, *The Faces Behind the Names, The Vietnam War*, Vol. 2, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1999, pp. 3-4.

[2868] Taped comments of William Jabusch, 8 March 1990. Jabush, at the time of this taping, was dying from leukemia.

[2869] Letter from William Jabusch, 6 January 1990.

the perimeter opposite where our lines met Highway 9 doing some little task. I guess I must have been near the Commo bunker because some of the people there came to tell me he'd gotten killed while laying wire."[2870] Apparently it was a new and more powerful NVA artillery, for the crater it left seemed bigger than those left by 152mm artillery.[2871]

Co E/2/1 continued providing security for the 2/1 rear at LZ STUD until 1430H when it was moved by helicopter to Objective 19 (XD970479) to relieve the lines with Co. "G." The lift was completed at 1613H.[2872] At 1655H, while in the vicinity of XD971479, Co "E" received 5 rounds of small or medium artillery from unknown positions, killing LCPL Dicken.[2873]

Beginning late in the morning of 11 April, Companies "A," "B," and "C" of First Battalion, 12th Cavalry, began moving toward the "New Lang Vei Special Forces Camp" (XD783358), receiving artillery fire as they approached. By dusk (1800H), Co B/1-12 Cav made contact with approximately 30 NVA. Artillery and tactical air was called on the NVA positions, resulting in 27 NVA KIA with 2 U.S. soldiers wounded.[2874]

On 11 April, the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion departed Khe Sanh for DaNang.[2875] 2-12 Cav moved by air to Camp Evans and 2-8 Cav moved to LZ BETTY.[2876]

[*Bravo Company, 3rd Recon, had moved from KSCB to Quang Tri Combat Base, co-located with the other companies of the battalion in one encampment with all the companies forming a long line of tents. Being in the relatively safe area was unnerving for the Marines who had just emerged from the bulls-eye of KSCB, sandwiched between the airstrip and the regimental headquarters, and having taken over 70% casualties. The Marines of B/3rd Recon gave all their captured souvenirs (NVA belt buckles, canteens, etc., to the Seabees and had them dig a large slit trench for the entire length of their tents.*[2877]]

12 April 1968

BIERLEIN, PFC Patrick M. R.	A/1/26
HELMKE, PFC Darrel Bruce	A/1-8 Cav
MC GARVEY, CPL Patrick George	H&S/1/26
MILLS, PFC Arthur Lee	C/1/26

[*At 1300 today, Col Bruce F. Meyers relieved Col David Edward Lownds as CO, 26th Marine Regiment*].[2878]

At 1245H, a friendly WP round killed PFC Bierlein at XD808414.[2879] PFC George M. Spunar (A/1/26) remembers PFC Bierlein had just finished digging his foxhole and sat down to have a C-ration, while his buddy was still digging. A short round from KSCB hit him in the head, only about 50 yards from Spunar. Bierlein had only about a month and a half to go before he rotated out of Vietnam.[2880]

PFC Mills and CPL McGarvey were killed at 1600H from shrapnel from 6 NVA 82mm mortars while in defense of the night defensive position.[2881]

PFC Helmke, a native of Cokato, Minnesota, attended the Cokato, Minnesota, High School, and had only been in Vietnam three weeks when he was killed by mortar fragments. He was 18 and loved to hunt and fish.[2882]

13 April 1968

POILANE, Felix Civilian

[*The senior USAF officer at KSCB, LtCol Zane G. Brewer, attended a planning 26th Marines Regimental meeting at 1030 on the proposal to move out of Khe Sanh and destroy the base. The Marine plans called for complete evacuation of Khe Sanh beginning on 17 April 1968.*[2883] *On 15 April, he learned at the 0700 Regimental Brief that the plans to evacuate and destroy Khe Sanh had been disapproved in Saigon.*]

Weather today was marginal with low ceilings except during late afternoon and early evening.[2884]

At 1405H, A C-130 aircraft (#61-0967), Mission #603, landed "after one missed approach. He left the runway (to the left), crashed through GPES Twister equipment, 6

2870 *Ibid.*
2871 *Ibid.*
2872 1stMar AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 37.
2873 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
2874 Waldron and Beavers, *op. cit.*, p. 57; I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 9.
2875 I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 9.
2876 *Ibid.*
2877 Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 11 April 1968.
2878 26Mar 121445Z/Apr68, Periodic Opns Summary Report #13 (PEGASUS) 112000H-122000H Apr68, Para. 10.
2879 1/26 ComdC Apr68, S2/S3 Log, 12 April 1968, Ser #3 and 14.
2880 Conversation with George M. Spunar, 23 September 1989.
2881 1/26 ComdC Apr68, S2/S3 Log 12 April 1968, Ser #8, 11, 12, and 13. McGarvey, at XD806423, received shrapnel to his arm, abdomen, and head. Mills, at XD808423, received shrapnel to his head and left hand.
2882 Darlene C. Davidson, "Darrel Bruce Helmke," in Don Ward, *The Faces Behind the Names*, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1996, p. 147. Darlene C. Davidson was the sister of Darrel Helmke.
2883 LtCol Brewer, Mission Commander's Report (12-26 April 1968), Document #133 appended to Pollica, TSGT Bruce W. and Rickey, TSGT Joe E., *Monograph of 834th Air Division Tactical Airlift Support for Khe Sanh, 21 January – 8 April 1968*, n.d., 834AD-DXI-69-001.
2884 Gen Westmoreland 141124Z/Apr68, MAC 4976, Khe Sanh Report #70, Para 2.

abandoned GPES loads, a Marine truck, a fork lift, then burned."[2885] The crash was attributed to engine failure.[2886] Major Walter Thomas Cook [S-4, 26th Marines] was standing next to the runway when the crash occurred. He recalls that the pilot reversed his props before touching his wheels, and when the wheels touched down, "he just started weaving all over the runway and ended up in a somewhat of a heap down at the end of the runway. He wasn't shot down. I really think that he just reversed his props a little soon."[2887]

Adolph ("Steve") Novotny [MACTU-62] immediately saw the huge blaze. The MB-5 Crash Truck was inoperable due to damage it had sustained during an ammunition dump fire of 22-23 March. As a result, he was forced to use the Navy structural fire truck which did not have foaming capacity to fight fuel fires.[2888] He almost ran over some newsmen on the way who were in the way; he was determined to get to the fire ASAP and wasn't about to slow down.[2889] The crew fought the blaze with the Navy truck—just water, no foam. "We had a heck of a time."[2890]

Meanwhile, LCPL David Gilliam, Jr., and PFC Charles George Smotzer [Headquarters Co., 26th Marines] rushed to the aircraft and boarded the burning hulk, pulling wounded and stunned passengers and crewmen from the smoke and flame-filled fuselage.[2891]

The only person who died as a result of the crash was the civilian, Monsieur Felix Poilane, who had managed the coffee plantation established by his father, Eugene Poilane, since 21 December 1957 when he arrived with his new wife, Madaleine. The Poilanes, with their two children, along with Father Poncet, had departed KSCB on 22 January 1968 and sought refuge in Hue, where Father Poncet was killed. By 9 April, Felix learned that Khe Sanh was liberated, and by means of a Philippine nun who spoke perfect English, he requested to return to Khe Sanh to survey the condition of his house and plantation. The Americans were reluctant to give authorization, cautioning it was still a dangerous place. His wife was also apprehensive and hid his passport. Felix was determined and his wife acquiesced. "I did not want him to leave without any identity papers, but I was really against his decision. The departure was postponed until Holy Saturday, April 13th, 1968. There was a departure, but alas, no return. Felix was supposed to return in the evening. On Saturday evening, nothing. Easter Sunday, still nothing. I did not stop crying, having the presentiment that something had happened. On the evening of Easter Sunday, Mother Angel was notified of the tragedy by a journalist of the AFP. She did not want anybody to tell me because she wanted me to sleep. On Monday morning, she had someone call me. I saw her. She was pale [and after returning to the Consulate] she informed me of the horrible news, the death of Felix. The Americans brought back Felix's body to one of their hospitals at DaNang. It was necessary to find out which one. Sister Angel, accompanied by American officials, began a search, making the rounds of these hospitals. She found him... Fortunately for me the nuns were there to take care of everything—official papers at the Consulate and with the American authorities, the ordering of the coffin, telegrams to his mother and to the family... While waiting, the Americans kept the body and embalmed it. They turned it over to us on April 17th. He rested there in this coffin in his Navy blue suit. A small drop of blood and water at his right ear fell from time to time. One might have said that he had fallen asleep the day before. A long tri-color ribbon on the coffin and a simple bouquet of flowers. On April 18th at 10 o'clock there was the funeral at the

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[2885] LtCol Brewer, Mission Commander's Report, *op. cit.* GPES=Ground Proximity Extraction System. GPES arrived at KSCB on 30 March due to the destruction wreaked by LAPES in which sleds crashed into the last 750 feet of the runway's west end, the portion which had not received the crushed rock subbase during the overhaul of the runway. Also, LAPES drops were free-flying, a danger to persons nearby, and some components of the LAPES system were, by now, scarce. The USAF began a world-wide search for other delivery systems. GPES had been in storage since 1966 and was sent from CONUS to SEA. GPES involved the use of a cable, similar to that used for arresting an aircraft landing on a carrier at sea, stretched across the runway. The aircraft flew in low over the cable, with a hook down. When the hook, attached to the cargo, engaged the cable, the cargo platform became extracted. Loads up to 27,000 pounds, on single or tandem connected platforms, were capable of being delivered on one pass of the aircraft. [Letter of Col Robert D. Brown, HQMC Historical Center, Washington, D.C., Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file; Pollica and Rickey, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-40 and Doc #2; BGen Burl W. McLaughlin, "Khe Sanh: Keeping an Outpost Alive," *Air University Review* (Nov-Dec68) 63-64; Capt Ken Kashiwahara, "Lifeline to Khe Sanh," *Airman* (Jul68) 6.]

[2886] Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 145. Hobson notes that although Nos 3 and 4 propellers were placed in a cargo sling and extracted by USMC helicopters, the load was unbalanced, swung wildly, and had to be cut loose due to danger to the helicopter. Since it landed in an enemy-controlled area, the cause of the accident remained undetermined.

[2887] Taped comments of Major Walter Thomas Cook, November, 1987.

[2888] Conversation with Adolph Steve Novotny, 26 November 1994; Letter printed in the Khe Sanh *Veteran* 2:2 (Spring, 1996) 16.

[2889] Conversation with Adolph Steve Novotny, 19 November 1994.

[2890] Conversation with Adolph Steve Novotny, 26 November 1994.

[2891] Statements of 2/Lt Robert E. Boylan and LCPL Henry M. Robinson in Bronze Star Medal file, PFC Charles George Smotzer; NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 3 May 1968, in Bronze Star Medal file, LCPL David Gilliam, Jr.

Cathedral of DaNang. 9 priests concelebrated the Mass said by the Vietnamese parish priest, all friends... Around us the French authorities and the American Lieutenant who had given the authorization for the plane and who was very distressed, feeling himself almost responsible for this death. Felix was hardly 37 years old. His birthday was on April 30th. Born at Khe Sanh, he also died at Khe Sanh."[2892]

[*During the period 1152H – 1425H, Companies "A" and "B" of 1-12 Cav moved in and occupied the site of the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp, finding 11 NVA bodies killed by artillery along with extensive NVA weapons and munitions.*[2893] *5th Special Forces had requested an element of 6 soldiers from A-101 (the detachment that had defended Lang Vei) accompany the sweep of the Lang Vei camp (XD785356).*[2894] *With the extensive search which located no American bodies, it is improbable that any remaining American MIA that had been left at Lang Vei when it was overrun, remained.*

The new camp Lang Vei (XD784357, located approximately 500 meters west of the old Camp Lang Vei, XD795362) was also searched on 23 April. Those searching the camp found mostly rubble from the heavy bombardments of February and March as well as at least one B-52 strike which covered a portion of the camp "..causing widespread damage to the bunkers and obliterated the evidence of previously existing fortifications."[2895]]

14 April 1968

ALENCASTRE, PVT Anthony Albert	L/3/26
ANDERS, PFC Richard Alan	B/1-5 Cav
COCHRAN, PFC James Clifford	B/1-5 Cav
EDMONDS, LCPL Joseph J.	L/3/26
GREB, SGT James J	B/1-5 Cav
JANOWICZ, SP4 Joseph Anthony	B/1-5 Cav
KING, LCPL DeWayne	M/3/26
MARIN-RAMOS, SGT Hector Ramon	B/1-5 Cav
MC MAKINS, CPL Reuben Carl Jr.	L/3/26
NIELSEN, LCPL Charles Joseph	L/3/26
PETTITT, SP4 James Allen	B/1-5 Cav
QUAMO, MAJ George	FOB-3
SHERIDAN, LCPL Phillip Francis	C/1/13
TAYLOR, PVT Steven Earl	L/3/26

Weather today: low clouds and fog produced ceilings and visibility near zero during the night and early morning hours. Between 1130H and 1800H, weather was generally good.[2896]

Between 0240H and 0255H, 1-5 Cav received 8 unknown size rockets, 10-15 mortars, satchel charges, small arms, and automatic weapons fire at their position southeast of Khe Sanh (XD828321), killing 6 soldiers and wounding 9. At 0410H, the 1st Battalion received 7 more rounds of mortar, causing negative casualties.[2897]

Easter Sunday, 14 April 1968, was the occasion for the Marines of 3/26 on Hill 881-South to be resurrected from the tombs of their underground bunkers and ascend northward to sweep the Hill 881-North area (XD775459). As the last elements of the First Air Cavalry Division flew away from Khe Sanh, the Marines ended the siege battle at Khe Sanh where it had begun, Hill 881-North. The Marine troops referred to it as their "Easter Egg Hunt," and were determined and anxious to eliminate the cause of so much of their suffering. During the siege, Hill 881-South, manned by INDIA and MIKE Companies of 3/26 had seen 167 of their men medevaced, either dead or seriously wounded, while everyone lived beneath 8-ft. of sandbags, logs, and earth, attempting to survive the daily pounding from 120mm mortars.[2898] During the siege battle, over 5,000 rockets were fired from Hill 881-North. Moreover, ever since 4 April, patrols from 881-South sweeping to the north and northwest of their positions had taken fire from Hill 881-North. "The enemy troops still clung tenaciously to that piece of real estate."[2899]

The entire battalion, 3/26, assembled on Hill 881-South on 11 April after Co K/3/26 had been relieved on Hill 861 by Co E/2/26, in preparation to assault Hill 881-North. Co K/3/26 moved to Hill 800 on 12 April, slightly northeast of Hill 881-South. The physical condition of the Marines, having been cooped up in their bunkers on

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[2892] Letter from Madame Madeleine Poilane, 18 July 1988, "Memories of Vietnam, 1957 – 1968."

[2893] Waldron and Beavers, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63; PCV [Provisional Corps, Vietnam] Resume of Telephone Call to III MAF COC 131945H/April 1968, in III MAF COC Journal and File, Doc #135. Among the items found: 40 crew-served weapons, [I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 10] and the following American munitions: 113,000 rounds of small arms, 5,000 81mm mortars, 1,000 57mm RR rounds, 300 rounds of 4.2-in. mortars, 400 M-79 rounds, and 50 rounds of 106mm RR. [PVC 131945H/Apr68, cited.]

[2894] CO Co C 5th SFGA 130025Z/Apr68 in III MAF COC Journal and File, Doc #15.

[2895] MACV, *Lessons Learned*, No. 69, "Analysis of Enemy Positions at Khe Sanh and Evaluation of Effectiveness of Weapons Systems Against Enemy Fortifications Study," LBJ Library archives, National Security File, Country File: Vietnam, Box #187.

[2896] Gen Westmoreland 151106Z/Apr68, MAC 05009, Khe Sanh Report #71, Para 2.

[2897] Waldron and Beavers, *op. cit.*, p. 64; I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, Tab G, Mortar/Rocket attacks.

[2898] LtCol J. A. Studt, "Battalion in the Attack," *Marine Corps Gazette* 54:7 (July, 1970) 40.

[2899] Shore, Moyers, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

the hills, was a concern of those who planned the attack.[2900]

The mission for the patrol of 14 April, aside from eliminating the NVA, was to clean out these positions and make helicopter operations to 881-South less hazardous.[2901] Rockets had been fired from the western and northern slopes of Hill 881-North as late as 10 April.[2902]

Since 881S was well zeroed in by enemy gunners and was still taking daily incoming 120mm mortars and occasional rockets, all attacking elements moved off the hill and into attack positions at the base of 881S at night. "Thus the battalion not only avoided a probable plastering while moving off the exposed slopes of 881S, but achieved a tactical surprise from which the enemy never really effectively recovered."[2903] Three companies comprised the assaulting elements: LIMA on the left flank, MIKE and KILO. INDIA Co was battalion reserve.[2904] The attacking companies moved precisely the same as Captain Dabney's platoons moved on 20 January, except that now the units were companies, not platoons.[2905]

KILO Company (Capt P. L. Snead) initiated the assault on 12 April by seizing Hill 800 (XD778445).[2906] At midnight, DUNBAR COUNTY LIMA [L/3/26], commanded by Capt William F. Hurley (an old hand at Khe Sanh, having commanded the KSCB LSU 14 July 1967 – 26 January 1968),[2907] moved down the northern slope of 881S to avoid being spotted by the enemy. At 0030H on 14 April, MIKE Company (Capt W. C. Jenkins) seized Objective 3 (XD773447) from which it blasted Objective 2 (XD773451) with intense 81mm mortars and artillery fire.. LIMA Company, to the west of MIKE Company, seized Objective 1 (XD769451) and then moved to seize Objective 4 (XD769451).[2908]

2/Lt Charles W. King, Platoon Commander of L-3, was then directed to move his platoon and attack a hill just behind Objective #4, known to contain dug-in NVA. An enemy force, about squad size, had just been spotted there. Following a prep fire, Lt King, standing in a large bomb crater, ordered his platoon forward, up the hill. "Almost immediately I had several men shot—killed and wounded. They dropped where they were. The attack continued. As we progressed up the hill, a rain of Chinese Communist grenades began falling on us so heavy that it appeared it was just raining grenades. All this time, enemy fire was sweeping the hill. Men were dropping all around us. All we could do was just keep pushing forward. We got about to the crest. I received word from my Company Commander that we had to pull back, that there was just too much fire. At this time I knew I had too many casualties. I couldn't leave them on the hill. I just said, 'Negative, Sir; we can't pull back."[2909] All the KIAs involved in this operation (other than LCPL DeWayne King) were from LIMA Company. When the sudden burst temporarily halted the momentum of the assault which proceeded slowly because of the many casualties LIMA Company sustained, it was then that Lt King led the assault once more while under heavy fire. One of the only men still standing, he started upward, without stopping until he was over the crest, all the while encouraging the men by yelling, 'Come on Lima 3, let's get 'em!' It was quite a sight.. to see our Lieutenant take charge of a perilous situation."[2910]

The Marines were fiercely determined. Maj Matthew P. Caulfield [S-3 of 3/26], who had worried about the physical condition of the Marines, noticed that some of the troops were further out than he thought they should be, and told the Company Commander to pull them back. "And his answer—I'll never forget it—was, 'Sir, I can't stop them; they won't stop.' They had bayonets on their rifles and the troops were really pissed off."[2911]

When L-3 was finally able to seize the hill, 10-11 enemy bodies were left behind along with numerous weapons and much gear. The enemy force had been as determined to hold the hill as the Marines were to seize it. "The people that were left up there.. evidently meant to fight to the death because we killed each and every one of them. There was no chance of taking prisoners. They just fought to the end. My troops did an outstanding job taking it. I was real proud of them. They went up the hill screaming, yelling, and really kicking ass."[2912] "CPL Eldridge Patterson, Jr., the 2nd Squad Leader in L-3, was shot in the head by a NVA sniper, but by sheer intestinal fortitude, he got up and regained control of his squad. He charged up the hill rallying his men and inspiring them to the top. Though painfully wounded in his head

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[2900] Comments of Maj Matthew P. Caulfield, 4 Jan 1969, HQMC Oral History Tape #6157. Maj Caulfield was S-3 of 3/26 at the time.
[2901] Letter of LtCol J. C. Studt to HQMC, Historical Branch, 24 December 1968, in Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.
[2902] Comments of 1/Lt John T. Esslinger, HQMC Oral History Tape #2776.
[2903] Letter of LtCol J. C. Studt, 24 December 1968, cited.
[2904] Comments of 2/Lt Daniel T. Madison and Capt Lawrence A. Luther, HQMC Oral History Tape #2776.
[2905] Comments of Maj Matthew P. Caulfield, HQMC Oral History Tape #6157.
[2906] 3/26 AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 3.
[2907] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation in Bronze Star Medal file of Capt William F. Hurley.
[2908] 3/26 AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 3.
[2909] Comments of 2/Lt Charles W. King, HQMC Oral History Tape #2776.
[2910] Statement of LCPL James C. Gray in Silver Star Medal file of 2/Lt Charles W. King.
[2911] Comments of Maj. Matthew P. Caulfield, HQMC Oral History Tape #6157.
[2912] Comments of 2/Lt Charles W. King, HQMC Oral History Tape #2776.

and badly bleeding, Cpl Patterson located and killed the same enemy who had shot him."[2913]

During the assault, a rifleman in LIMA Company, PFC Anthony A. Alencastre, spotted a NVA sighting in on the Marine to his right. PFC Alencastre jumped up, making himself a target, which would enable the others to move forward. It cost him his life.[2914] "He gave his life to save another Marine."[2915]

LCPL Sheridan had made a special request to his Battery Commander, Capt O'Connor, to accompany LIMA Company on the operation to Hill 881-North, switching with PFC Glenn E. Prentice who was assigned this radioman duty. Before leaving, Prentice reminded him to put his antenna down his sleeves, not to carry a .45 or field glasses, and to put his radio in his pack. "He did not take my advice [and] was killed by a sniper, hit in the heart, died instantly. I was on radio watch when 3/26 called and told me how he died."[2916]

PFC Michael C. Loehrer [B/1/13] had gone through Infantry Training Regiment (ITR) at Camp Pendleton, California, with CPL Reuben McMackins. Since Loehrer lived near Camp Pendleton, the two took weekend passes to his home and became very close.[2917] "He was a great guy! A grunt's grunt. An Expert rifleman, machinegunner and weapons specialist. He didn't get to Khe Sanh until March 5th. I got to visit with him once before I was medevaced out on April 4th."[2918] McMackins, a 3.5-inch rocket man attached to Co "L," was unable to employ his rocket launcher due to the proximity to the Marines. Disregarding his own safety, he armed himself with hand grenades and daringly maneuvered forward to assault the NVA positions until he was mortally wounded.[2919]

A Tribute[2920]
By Michael C. Loehrer

Mac, you knew you weren't coming home.
I didn't believe it when you told me.
Maybe death in war was meant for some,
but not for you, Mac, not for you.
Why didn't someone prepare me for death?
Who prepared you Mac, God?
Maybe He's using your death to prepare me.
Thanks Mac. I miss you.

As LIMA Company seized its objective, KILO Company attacked and seized Objective 6 (XD777453) and, after lifting its preparatory fires, MIKE Company continued the attack and seized Objective 2 (XD773451).[2921] The point man of one of the lead platoons of Co "M," LCPL King, was shot in the head, forcing a temporary halt in the progress up the hill until he could be retrieved.[2922]

Results of the battle for Hill 881-North: 6 USMC KIA, 19 WIA (evacuated), 2 WIA (minor), 106 NVA KIA (confirmed), 2 NVA POW.[2923] LtCol J. C. Studt notes, however, that in addition to the 106 NVA bodies actually counted, air strikes and artillery were delivered against 3 different groups of fleeing NVA, platoon and company size, with excellent coverage. Due to the dense vegetation and the fact that time did not permit a ground search into the area into where the NVA fled, no number could be determined, and the number of NVA who perished must have been considerably greater.[2924]

Maj George Quamo, the Special Projects Officer, FOB #3,[2925] was born 20 June 1940 in Lynn, Massachusetts, and grew up in a section of the city known as the "Brickyard. His brother, James, about two years younger than George, recalls "We lived in a third floor flat. We didn't have any money and really everybody was kind of poor, but we didn't realize it back then."[2926] His parents were born in Terin, Albania (his father in 1895, his mother in 1905)[2927] and emigrated to the United States in the 1930s. They were hard workers and family values were important. His father worked long hours as a factory worker and his mother spoke about half a dozen

[2913] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, Silver Star Medal file, Cpl Eldridge Patterson, Jr.
[2914] Statement of LCPL Robert M. Ware in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file of PFC Anthony A. Alencastre. LCPL Ware was 1st Squad Leader of L-3. [HQMC Oral History Tape #2776].
[2915] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file of PFC Anthony A. Alencastre.
[2916] Letter from Glenn Prentice, 22 July 1997.
[2917] Conversation with Rev. Michael C. Loehrer, 21 November 1992.
[2918] Letter from Michael "Spider" Loehrer, 18 July 1993.
[2919] Bronze Star Medal Citation, Cpl Reuben C. McMackins, Jr.
[2920] Letter from Michael C. Loehrer, postmarked 19 Feb 1998; printed in Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #44 (Summer, 1999) 14.
[2921] 3/26 ComdC Apr 1968, p. 4; 3/26 AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 3, Para 6.c.(2).
[2922] Taped comments of Brigadier General Harry W. Jenkins, Jr., n.d.
[2923] 26Mar 141435Z/Apr68, Periodic Operations Summary Report #15 (PEGASUS) 132000H-142000H APR 68, Para 8; 3/26 AAR Opn PEGASUS
[2924] Letter of LtCol J. C. Studt, 24 December 1968, in Historical Center, Khe Sanh Monograph Comments file.
[2925] MACJ2 Form 34, "US Personnel, Missing/Captured in Southeast Asia, Biographical Data," in records of George Quamo. There were four men assigned to the Special Projects at FOB #3: Maj George Quamo, SFC Charles Minnicks, MSG Gilbert A. Secor (medic, KIA 23 Aug 68 when CCN was overrun in DaNang), and William Harris (radioman). [Conversation with Harve Saal, 30 March 1991].
[2926] Conversation with James Quamo, 2 January 2003.
[2927] DD398, "Statement of Personal History," in Service Record, George Quamo.

languages, but English was not one of them. When George was 12, his father died and the family moved to Averill Park, just outside of Albany, New York.[2928] George was a very good athlete in high school (football, basketball, and baseball), either the Captain or Most Valuable Player in all three. He was a class President and colleges sought him.[2929] Instead, he enlisted in the Army 23 October 1958[2930] and at age 19, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant (18 December 1959).[2931] He was promoted to Major on 6 October 1967[2932]; he was 27. Capt Lee Dunlap recalls George Quamo as a "movie-star-looking guy, absolutely handsome."[2933] George Quamo was proficient in Vietnamese and, after attending a 47-week course in Thai at the Defense Language Institute (1965) he was given a 2-year college equivalency.[2934]

Major David "Bulldog" Smith, who was later to command FOB #3 (February, 1968) and George Quamo made plans at SOG Headquarters in Saigon in December, 1967, to slip into Laos, develop a guerrilla force of Bru to operate in the area from the Mu Gia Pass to Tchepone.[2935] Apparently, Smith and Quamo were prepared to go in and be declared "Missing in Action" as a cover, and when Smith later heard that Quamo flew off and couldn't be found, he exclaimed (to himself), "That son-of-a-gun left without me!"[2936] George Quamo, of course, had extensive ties with BV-33 at Ban Houei Sane, and had been involved in the lengthy Co Roc operation in mid-January, 1968.[2937] The patrol stopped at Lang Vei before proceeding to the FOB-3 compound on KSCB, and informed them that they were in danger, that the patrol had spotted and encountered large numbers of NVA moving east on Route 9 and that Co Roc was honeycombed with caves full of munitions and supplies.[2938] For leading the three patrols on Co Roc 7 – 17 January 1968, Quamo was awarded a Silver Star Medal.[2939] Once the siege battle erupted, Maj Quamo personally ensured the installation of a land line to communicate "real time" intelligence (FOB #3 had Vietnamese listening in on NVA radio traffic and translating it, as well as information from agents, etc.) to Major Jerry Hudson, S-2 of the 26th Marines—a wire from the FOB-3 TOC all the way to the Marine COC. He wasn't supposed to do that, of course, but thought it was stupid to have the raw information sent to Saigon and then, several days later (when it was really history) sent to the Marines.[2940]

When Lang Vei was overrun, it was Maj George Quamo who led the relief force to extract their survivors,[2941] "He went to the Colonel there at the Marine base [Col David E. Lownds] and asked for a force in the morning to go in and get those people out, and the Colonel refused. From the Colonel's viewpoint [it was] a perfectly legitimate reason. He didn't know what he was getting into and felt there were two regiments there at that precise spot. So Major Quamo came to me and said, 'Let's get a force together and go in and bring out whoever's left. It has to be explained to everyone: we'll go in; we may not come out.'"[2942] The Americans were evacuated, as were the Laotian officers of BV-33. The Lao troops, however, "..had thrown away their weapons. For all purposes, they had surrendered,"[2943] and therefore were not extracted. "When we came out we were thrilled to death! We really didn't [*pause*] think we were coming out of there. When we went in, we didn't think we was coming back. The Laotian Commander [LtCol Soulang Phetsomphou] ran over, hugged and kissed Quamo, hugged and kissed me, and told us we had saved him. Then, they found out that we didn't bring his people out. That's when the dirt started about Major Quamo. There was—I don't know what that Colonel [Soulang] sent to his headquarters across the [Laotian] border, to the Ambassador [Sullivan]. He and Westmoreland and those people got together. We got a very terse message addressed to Quamo. All it said was—this is quote and unquote—'The General will not be embarrassed.' That was all that was ever heard about it, and then, very soon thereafter Major Quamo is dead."[2944] SFC Charles "Skip" Minnicks later lamented, "My biggest hurt over that situation was—honest to God, I thought the man should of got a Medal of Honor for what he did at Lang Vei, but it was down-played."[2945] Quamo was awarded (posthumously) Distinguished Service Cross for this action[2946] [one award under the Medal of Honor]

[2928] Conversations with James Quamo, 2 January 2003 and 15 January 2003.
[2929] Conversation with James Quamo, 4 June 1995.
[2930] DA Form 20, "Enlisted Qualification Record," Service Record, George Quamo.
[2931] DA Form 66, "Officer Qualification Record," Service Record, George Quamo.
[2932] *Ibid.*
[2933] Conversation with Lee Dunlap, 25 November 1990.
[2934] DA Form 66, "Officer Qualification Record," Service Record, George Quamo.
[2935] Conversations with David Smith, 15 September 1990 and 27 July 1995; Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995. Moore comments: "Now, that was daydreaming if there ever was!"
[2936] Conversation with David Smith, 27 July 1995.
[2937] See pp. 189-191 of this book.
[2938] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 December 1991.
[2939] Silver Star Medal Citation, signed 13 November 1974. He was also awarded a Silver Star Medal for actions on 27 March 1963, the Legion of Merit for his service from September 1967 to April 1968 as Special Projects Officer and Executive Officer of FOB3.
[2940] Conversation with Jerry Hudson, 4 May 1996.
[2941] See p. 163 of this book.
[2942] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 December 1991.
[2943] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 26 December 1991.
[2944] *Ibid.*
[2945] Conversation with Charles Minnicks, 5 May 1990.
[2946] Citation dated 13 November 1974.

LtCol Roy Bahr took over command of FOB #3 on 1 April 1968 after arriving in mid-March. Although he knew George Quamo less than a month: "But that man impressed me. You know he was only about 25 years old. I was 37, going to be 38. I see George Quamo, and by God, he's a Major and 25 years old! And this guy is sharp! I mean, he was outstanding."[2947] "I'd like to go to the exact place where George Quamo died. I'd like to say, 'Hey, you were a great guy!' I was asked to write—I didn't mind because I wanted to—I wrote him up for a Legion of Merit. I said, 'Hey, I've only known this guy 14 days, but this is a man who did so many things, so much, and had such respect, he deserves this. He did ten things ten times faster than I ever did. His ability to communicate was so great."[2948]

Bahr was the last one to see George Quamo alive. "I took George down to the airfield there at Khe Sanh and put him on board. There were two Vietnamese pilots, and they took off April 14th."[2949] He was placed aboard a U-17 aircraft that departed from Khe Sanh at 1535, 14 April, enroute to DaNang Airfield.[2950] Bahr had his acting S-2, Hammond Salley, type up a Top Secret report, so sensitive that he didn't want an enlisted clerk typist to do it, nor did he trust the encrypted secure electronic transmission (and, for good reason, as it turned out: during the Walker spy affair, it was learned that the KY secure communications had been sold to the Russians). The report was then handed to Quamo to deliver personally.[2951]

In a covering letter, addressed to LTC John S. Warren, Bahr, alarmed at the news that 1st Air Cav was leaving and that KSCB would be abandoned and destroyed, but having received no notice that FOB 3 would not be withdrawn, wrote: "I am sending Maj. Quamo as my personal representative in this matter. The subject is important enough to warrant my personal appearance, but I feel my place is here, no matter what decision is reached... Believe me Col. Warren, no one is pushing the panic button here. However, I do not feel that you, Col. Johnson, Col. Singlaub nor any others within our channels has fully grasped the situation here... As you know, I have no assigned mission at this time in support of other forces.. nor do I have the assets to carry out missions assigned by our higher headquarters... If my mission is to defend in the Khe Sanh area with the forces available to me and in conjunction with any small, air transportable 'stay-behind' unit, I will be forced to change the physical location of FOB3 to more defensible terrain... There are many questions that must be answered if we stay: (a) What are my orders in reference to destruction of material? (b) For how long do I defend the terrain I shall occupy: (c) When will I be authorized to make a decision to begin an overland withdrawal? (d) What support can I expect from air and artillery? (e) When do the RF/PF forces leave? the CAG Marines? (f) How can a forced of 80 US and possibly 200 Bru defend in an area that previously required a reinforced Marine regiment? (h) What is my mission?... If the decision is reached that FOB 3 will stay, then the withdrawal presently planned by the 1st Air Cav Div and the 26th Marine Brigade may place this organization in the position of another 'Lang Vei.'"[2952]

The statement is historically significant, reflecting the situation at that point in time:[2953]

"1. Lack of significant enemy contact; discovery of cache sites with abundant weapons and ammunition; failure of enemy to employ AA against friendly forces; non-identification of 'hard core' troops; continued enemy rocket and artillery capability; and continued high utilization of FM radio communications; all tend to indicate that the enemy has been merely 'pushed out' of the AO or has faded into unoccupied areas in small groups which can be reformed into fighting forces within a short period of time.

"2. It is believed that once the enemy becomes aware of the evacuation of the Khe-Sanh area by the 1st Air Cav Div, the enemy will, once again, close on the Khe-Sanh Combat Base with the intentions and capability of denying the use of the airfield and attempting to defeat friendly forces found here. This belief is based upon the indications stated in paragraph 1 above.

"3. There are numerous advantages which could accrue to the enemy if he were to once again concentrate and attack Khe-Sanh. These are as follows:

"a. The enemy could 'prove' that Operation Pegasus did not really hurt him.

"b. The enemy would have an opportunity to destroy the force which prevented earlier victory (i.e., the 26th Marines and FOB #3). This would 'save face'.

"c. The enemy realizes that the name of Khe-Sanh still holds considerable world attention which gives it a psychological and political value, even though its military value is negligible.

[2947] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 28 February 1993.
[2948] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 9 December 1993.
[2949] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 28 February 1993.
[2950] MACJ2 Form 34, US Personnel, Missing/Captured in Southeast Asia, Biographical Data, in MIA file, George Quamo; Statement of LTC Roy W. Bahr, 18 April 1968, in MIA Board Proceedings, 22 April 1968, C&C Det, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, LTC Ira Snell, Jr., President, in MIA file, George Quamo. MSGT Billy Waugh notes that the U-17 was a fixed-wing aircraft with immense wings enabling it to fly very slowly—even at about 5 miles an hour!—from which one could almost rappel down, and belonged to "the Agency" (i.e., CIA). [Conversation with Billy Waugh, 3 September 1989].
[2951] Conversation with Roy Bahr 28 February 1993.
[2952] LTC Roy W. Bahr, Letter to LTC John S. Warren, C&C Det, 14 April 1968.
[2953] LTC Roy W. Bahr, Letter to CO, C&C Det, 5th SFGA, 13 April 1968, Subj: Study of Khe-Sanh Situation.

"d. An attack on Khe-Sanh could relieve military pressure on other forces presently engaged in other AO's or planned for in future offensive operations.

"e. The Provincial area in which Khe-Sanh is located can serve as a future guerrilla base area south of the 17th Parallel.

"f. Khe-Sanh Combat Base will provide him with equipment, spare parts, demolitions (explosives) material and other 'raw' materials which can be effectively utilized in future operations.

"g. The realization that maintaining sizeable forces at Khe Sanh are extremely costly for allied forces due to dependence on air resupply.

"4. These advantages could prove to be of significant value to be worth an inexpensive gamble which would be of high overall value if successful.

"5. The area occupied by FOB 3 is considered untenable unless: (a) Friendly forces occupy flank positions and (b) sufficient artillery fire support is readily available and responsive. Minimum forces required are judged as: (a) One reinforced regiment and (b) one artillery battalion consisting of two (2) 105MM batteries and one (1) 155 battery. In addition, engineer, quartermaster and medical units would be required to support the troops in Khe-Sanh Combat Base."

This analysis and the covering letter were handed to George Quamo to deliver, and was the reason for his trip to DaNang. There were other speculations as to his trip as well as other facets. He was carrying Bahr's dirty laundry to be washed[2954] along with an odd, unexploded piece of ordnance that had fallen into the FOB-3 camp. James W. Moore, in the operations section of FOB-3, states: "He was going down to personally answer for his failure as Officer in Charge of Special Projects,"[2955] alluding to the fiasco that developed once LtCol Soulang Phetsomphou's complaints had reverberated in the embassy halls.

Soon after take-off, the U-17 pilot made contact with PANAMA air control (on Monkey Mountain, DaNang). Contact with the aircraft was lost at 1645H when it was in the vicinity of AT9887.[2956] At approximately 1845H, FOB 3 was contacted to determine whether or not the U-17 had returned to Khe Sanh since it didn't arrive in DaNang.[2957] The area was extensively searched by air[2958] Since DaNang is on the ocean coast, it was presumed that the aircraft may have plunged into the sea without trace.[2959] Some CIA analysts stirred up a hornet's nest among those at FOB-3 by suggesting that since Quamo was carrying Top Secret materials and since the plane was piloted by a former North Vietnamese as pilot, that Quamo was a spy and had flown to North Vietnam![2960] Saal recalls that Minnicks was livid with rage at such an egregious accusation against Quamo. "What they claimed was beyond our comprehension and it just made everybody irate!"[2961]

LTC Roy Bahr wrote a statement on behalf of George Quamo:

"Major George Quamo, OF 114482, served under my command as Executive Officer of Special Forces Forward Operational Base #3 during the period 1-14 April 1968. Although this period of time was tragically shortened by his disappearance on 14 April 1968 during a flight from Khe Sanh to DaNang, Republic of Vietnam, I feel that I had the opportunity to know and appreciate his outstanding capa bilities. I consider Major Quamo to be one of the most outstanding officers with whom I have served in my military career and he performed the duties of Executive Officer in the most superior manner that I have observed. This officer had a complete and detailed knowledge of the personnel, intelligence, operational and logistical fields which made him invaluable to me as the new commander during a complex combat situation. Major Quamo was highly respected by seniors and subordinates alike, and devoted his utmost attention to the welfare of the US and indigenous troops alike. His interest in learning the language and emotions of the Bru, his concern for the care and evacuation of the Bru refugees, and the patience, kindness and understanding displayed by him at all times are worthy of emulation by all."[2962]

Quamo's remains were discovered commingled with two Asians on 28 June 1974[2963] by a Vietnamese woodcutter clearing an area in the mountains.[2964] The woodcutters wrote a letter to Quamo's family in which they wrote "We are looking forward to receiving a letter from you; in we know your address, we will be able to correspond with you, to tighten the bonds of friendship between our

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[2954] Conversation with Roy Bahr, 28 February 1993.

[2955] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.

[2956] Refugee Report & Evaluation, 19 Apr 1982, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #123, Folder #283, Case #01201.

[2957] Bahr statement, 18 April 1968, cited.

[2958] The route of the aircraft was searched in the area roughly bounded by YD700100, YD700400, BU000000, and BT000800 by a total of 25 VNAF fixed wing sorties and 16 helicopter sorties on 19 April. Each aircraft had 2 observers, and the air search effort totaled some 80 hours. [Statement of Capt Donald T. Ward, 21 April 1968, in MIA Board Proceedings, cited.

[2959] Mather, Paul D., *M.I.A. Accounting for the Missing in Southeast Asia*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1994, p. 32, note 12.

[2960] Conversations with Harve Saal, 14 August 1989 and 14 July 1991.

[2961] Conversation with Harve Saal, 14 July 1991.

[2962] LTC Roy Bahr, "Eyewitness Statement," 4 May 1968, in letter from Bahr, 22 April 1993.

[2963] Hand-written note on "Report of Casualty," 2 March 1971, in MIA file, George Quamo.

[2964] Sally Buckley, "Medal to family of a hero," Rochester, N.Y., *Democrat and Chronicle*, Mon, 11 August 1975, p. 3B.

two peoples."[2965] With the fall of South Vietnam, however, James Quamo was reluctant to respond, feeling it might jeopardize their welfare.

The Quamo family was notified on 15 August 1974 and the remains of George Quamo were released the next day for transport to the United States.[2966] He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on 21 October 1974 "as his family and several Army officers and soldiers looked on. There were no bands, no generals, and no parades. He died at age 27."[2967]

On 14 April 2007—the exact date of his disappearance—the Post Office building in his home, Averill Park, NY, was dedicated as the "Major George Quamo Post Office Building," in a special ceremony. The renamed Post Office was authorized by Public Law 109-311, signed on 6 Oct 2006, which reads: "To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2951 New York Highway 43 in Averill Park, New York, as the 'Major George Quamo Post Office Building.'"[2968]

[*As of Sunday, 14 April, work was progressing to abandon KSCB. The word was that everything would be removed by Friday or Saturday (19, 20 April). Lt Cole, USN, a Navy Gunfire Officer at KSCB, had scheduled 7 Arc Light strikes to destroy the base. The general attitude of people on the base is that it's wrong to abandon the base after fighting so long for it. The plan, approved by General Westmoreland, was to adopt a mobile posture, reducing the combat base to less than 1,000 men—mainly a supply base for operations—while retaining a stronger deployed force moving throughout the area. The airstrip would remain intact, but many of the trenches and bunkers would be destroyed. The extent of destruction would depend on what the North Vietnamese do.*[2969] *What the NVA did was to move at least 9 tanks into the area.*[2970] *Then, suddenly, the plan was reversed. On 15 April the decision was announced at Khe Sanh that the base would not now be destroyed. Ens Kux, the Officer in Charge of the Seabee detachment, wrote in his diary: "Today at the meeting [0700] I received a very great shock. Late last nite word came down from 'high levels' (I suspect LBJ was just then informed about 'retrograde') that Khe Sanh Combat Base would <u>not</u> be abandoned!.. It'll take at least a week to get our area built-up again."*[2971] *Those at C-Med had also prepared to depart. The doctors were more than a little confused and disturbed. Would they be moving or not? Suddenly, artillery rounds woke us up to the reality of Khe Sanh. It was about 1020H, and the fire was to continue all day—every 15 or 20 minutes for a total of about 200 rounds, mainly artillery and some rockets. It was cruel but a source of some amusement to recall the article in the* Stars & Stripes, *the headline reading, "Quiet Ending to a Long Battle," regarding Khe Sanh.*[2972]]

15 APRIL 1968

CORRY, SP5 Charles Michael	**FOB-3**
FORDHAM, 2/Lt Benjamin S.	**K/3/26**
MATTHEWS, LCPL William Lawrence Jr.	**H&S/3/26**
PATTERSON, PFC Patrick Chasie	**K/3/26**
SANDOVAL, SP5 Daniel Flore	**FOB-3**
THORPE, SGT Dennis Ray	**FOB-3**

[*Operation PEGASUS terminated at 0800H, 15 April, and Operation SCOTLAND II commenced at 0801H.*[2973] *3rd Marine Division assumed control of remaining American units at Khe Sanh (4 USMC and 2 USA battalions).*[2974] *Facing them were 10 NVA maneuver battalions in the Khe Sanh area.*[2975] *The command at Khe Sanh was Task Force GLICK, and the "concept of operations" for SCOTLAND II was to continue "..offensive operations in SCOTLAND II AO. In conjunction with offensive operations the 26th Mar will be relieved by the 1st Mar through a coordinated phase in, phase out plan. Maximum emphasis will be placed on tactics that emphasize flexibility and mobility in order to close with the enemy with concentration of forces decisive points with a view to denying him freedom of action and inflicting maximum enemy casualties in personnel and equipment. Minimum forces will be employed in the protection of fixed installation and/or strong points commensurate with security required."*[2976]

Casualties for Operation PEGASUS: KIA: 59 (USA), 51 (USMC), 33 (ARVN) for a total of 143 KIA. WIA: 236 (USA), 459 (USMC), 187 (ARVN) for a total of 882. There were 5 MIA (all USA). There were 638 NVA KIA (by USA), 404 NVA KIA (by USMC), and 260 NVA KIA (by ARVN) for a total of 1302 NVA KIA. There were a total of 18 NVA captured.[2977] *26th Marine Regiment lost*

[2965] Letter (original in Vietnamese plus an English translation) dated 5 September 1974, in possession of James Quamo.
[2966] Conversation with LtCol James G. Cole, 20 September 1991. LtCol Cole was Chief of POW/MIA Affairs in the Pentagon.
[2967] Tom Haggerty, "The Perfumed Prince."
[2968] Dedication Ceremony brochure.
[2969] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary Entry for 14 April 1968.
[2970] UPI release in *Stars & Stripes*, 17 April 1968.
[2971] Ens Martin Kux, Diary Entry, 15 April 1968.
[2972] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry.
[2973] CG Prov Corps Vietnam 170731Z/Apr68 in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc Apr 68 file, Doc #136.
[2974] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, April, 1968, p. 11.
[2975] Gen Westmoreland 161310Z/Apr68, MAC 5058, DMZ/Northern ICTZ Report #1, 150900-160900 April 1968.
[2976] CG Task Force GLICK 151610Z/Apr68, Operation Order 2-68, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc. Apr 68 file, Doc #119.
[2977] I ACD AAR Opn PEGASUS, Tab D, Losses. These are broken down to 7 officers and 52 enlisted KIA, 2 officers and

43 KIA, 287 WIA (evacuated), 80 WIA (not evacuated) for a total of 367 casualties.[2978] *1st Marine Regiment lost 5 KIA, 30 WIA (evacuated), 7 WIA (not evacuated) and 0 MIA.*[2979]]

Lt Fordham was killed around noon.[2980] PFC Wayne E. Shumaker [K/3/26] recalls: "It was a sad day. He was my platoon commander and one of the finest officers I ever served with. I happened to be one of the Marines who pulled his body onto the CH-46 in a hail of mortar fire. He was to be our last casualty in Khe Sanh."[2981] CPL Dennis M. Mannion notes that he was probably the last person to speak with him: "He got hit just as he was running for the helicopter after I ran for mine."[2982]

FOB 3 had requested more personnel to man their perimeter, and the Special Forces headquarters at Nha Trang had sent up 22 extra soldiers. "Now they were all Special Forces, but they were what we called 'candy stripers'. They had that little, pencil-thin [yellow stripe] on their berets for personnel who do not have Special Forces training [but are assigned to Special Forces units], like supply or personnel. We had three people that came up—no combat experience or anything, and one of them was my man, the only guy that could type fast enough to do all the things we had to. His name was Sandoval. He asked me one day if he could go out to the line where the road came between [Bn 1/9] and FOB-3, what we called 'bunker six one' to visit his buddies Corry and Thorpe. I was 45 then and already had 3 tours in Korea. So I said: 'Son, I'm gong to tell you right now, you'd better stay here in this bunker where you got 12 by 12s between you and the rounds coming in. 'O, I wanna go and see my buddies!' I said, 'OK, [but] if you get out of the trenchline, if you don't have on your helmet, or if you take off your flak jacket, I'm going to fine you a hundred dollars if I catch you.' So I let him go out there and the three of them had jumped up on the side of the trenchline and were sitting side-by-side talking, with Sandoval in the middle. The round hit Sandoval. It blew out a 20-foot chunk of our trenchline. We had smoking legs and boots, pieces of torso, and hamburger meat, and all three of them were just annihilated... They were highly misplaced people stuck into a position that they shouldn't of been allowed to be in. I look back on it now and I wish that we'd never asked for them. We could of handled it with our combat troops."[2983]

Larry Payne remembers that the incoming round hit a small steel post that stuck a foot or 18-inches above the trenchline to hold the sand bags in place and sprayed the whole trenchline. "Really, there was nothing to be found."[2984]

Charles Almy, the S-1 of FOB-3 made out the casualty reports and sent them out. "All I could think about was Sandy's family getting the news. The whole war was getting to me; we could not get back at the enemy... All I could do was duck rounds."[2985]

16 April 1968

ADAMS, SWF2 Edward Cody	**CBMU-301/B**
AMMON, 2/Lt William Resor	**M/3/26**
AVERITTE, CPL William Clayton	**D/1/9**
BOYNTON, HM3 Charles B Jr.	**H&S/1/9**
BROWN, PFC David Dee Jr.	**C/1/9**
CHRISTIAN, LCPL Daniel Keith	**A/1/9**
CICIO, PFC Robert Daniel	**C/1/9**
COLEMAN, PFC William Frank	**D/1/26**
CRAIG, PFC Bruce Keith	**A/1/9**
CRAUN, PFC Gale Eugene	**C/1/9**
GUILLORY, PFC Wendell	**C/1/9**
HABERMAN, PRC David	**A/1/9**
HAGARA, SGT Leslie Paul	**A/1/9**
HAYDEN, 1/Lt Michael Pym	**A/1/9**
HIMMER, CAPT Lawrence	**C/1/9**
HINKLE, PFC Jack Lee	**D/1/9**
HURLBERT, CPL Roy Douglas	**C/1/9**
JACKSON, CPL Nathaniel Earnest Lee	**C/1/9**
JOHNSTON, HN Dennis Neil	**H&S/1/9**
JOHNSTON, PFC Richard William	**C/1/9**
KILGORE, PFC Danny Ray	**C/1/9**
LE BLANC, CPL Alfred Leroy	**D/1/9**
LITTLEFIELD, CPL Robert Henry	**A/1/9**
MARTINEZ, PFC Mauro	**C/1/9**
MC CLELLAND, PFC Aubrey David	**D/1/9**
MEDEIROS, LCPL William Correia	**A/1/9**
MOISE, PFC Herve Jean	**A/1/9**

3 enlisted MIA, 20 officers and 216 WIA. [*Ibid.*, Tab K, Casualty and Medevac]. Provisional Corps Vietnam lists 41 USA KIA, 51 USMC KIA, 33 ARVN KIA, for a total of 125 KIA; 207 USA WIA, 459 USMC WIA, and 187 WIA, for a total of 853 WIA; and 5 USA MIA. [Provisional Corps Vietnam AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 16,

[2978] 26Mar, Periodic Opns Summary Report #16 (PEGASUS) 142000H-150800H APR 68 (Final Report). The 26 Mar AAR Opn PEGASUS lists the same number of KIA, but has 293 WIA (evacuated) and 82 WIA (not evacuated) [26 Mar AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 9]. 1/26 reported 6 KIA and 66 WIA. [1/26 AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 3]. 2/26 reported 23 KIA, 125 WIA (evacuated), 31 WIA (not evacuated), and 2 DOW. [2/26 AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 6]. 3/26 reported 12 KIA and 42 WIA [3/26 AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 6]. 1/9 reported 23 KIA and 133 WIA. [1/9 AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 8].

[2979] 1st Mar AAR Opn PEGASUS, p. 45.

[2980] Dennis, email, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, posted 15 April 2002.

[2981] Wayne Shumaker, email, Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, posted 15 April 2002.

[2982] Conversation with Dennis Mannion, 31 August 1986.

[2983] Conversation with James W. Moore, 12 December 1995.

[2984] Conversation with Larry Payne, 17 September 1988.

[2985] Charles Almy, "Recollections of the Defense of Khe Sanh, Viet Nam," 14-28 June 1971, unpublished paper.

MOORE, PFC Larry Gene	C/1/9
OWENS, CPL Robert Franklin	D/1/9
OWENS, PFC Timothy Eugene	C/1/9
RAMPULLA, LCPL Terry James	A/1/9
REDENIUS, CPL David Gary	C/1/9
RICE, SGT Robert	A/1/9
RUIZ, CPL Jose	C/1/9
RUSH, PFC Marvin Gene	D/1/9
SCHAVELIN, LCPL Hugh Ernest	D/1/9
SWEET, PFC Jerry Alan	C/1/9
WELLS, PFC Robert James Jr.	A/1/9
WEST, SSGT Seth Lee Jr.	C/1/9
WILLIAMS, PFC Nathaniel Mearlo	C/1/9
WILSON, HN Wilmer Dwayne	H&S/1/9
WRIGHT, CPL Robert	C/1/9
WYMER, PFC William Wayne	A/1/9

On 16 April, 1/9 occupied the high ground of Hill 689 (XD803409) with Companies A, C, and C. Co B/1/9 was positioned on Hill 552, southeast of 689. Other friendly forces which had previously occupied the high ground to the northwest of 689 and the low ground to 1/9's north (Lang Ta Tuc), had departed. It was rapidly becoming time for the 26th Marines Regiment and its battalions to depart, relieved by 1st Marine Regiment and its supporting battalions (1/1, 2/1, 2/3, and 3/4).

On 13 April, Co A on a routine search and destroy mission to the west made contact with remnants of a NVA platoon at approximately XD788405 resulting in 3 NVA killed and 2 POW captured.[2986] On 15 April, a routine company-sized patrol made contact at XD814396 resulting in one NVA killed.[2987] From these contacts, it appeared enemy FO teams were returning into 1/9's AO with small sized units. Also during these patrols from 08 – 16 April, numerous caches of enemy equipment and munitions were located.

On 16 April, Co A/1/9 was ordered to conduct a search and clear operation to the southwest of Hill 689, near the area of Co A's previous contact on 13 April, the high ground from XD793399 to XD788404.[2988] The assumption was that there would be little or no enemy soldiers remaining in the area. The mission was to secure the high ground and check it out for forward observer teams.[2989]

At 0900H, Capt Henry D. Banks (A/1/9) moved out of the 1/9 perimeter on Hill 689 with two reinforced platoons: A-1, commanded by 1/Lt Francis B. Lovely, Jr., and A-2, commanded by 1/Lt Michael Pym Hayden. There were also 2 60mm mortars and a total personnel strength of 85 men in the patrol.[2990] A thick fog blanketed the area, causing Co A's advance to hold up a short while.[2991] Following prep fires on the objective (XD794398) of 12 rounds of 81mm mortars,[2992] the patrol proceeded through their first checkpoint (XD805404), almost directly south from Hill 689 using as much terrain and concealment as possible. The Marines regarded this as "just a normal, routine patrol."[2993]

Co "A" then reached XD797397 where A-1 set in 2 squads and dispatched the remaining squad (3rd) to XD795398. (A-2 was following in trace of A-1).[2994] The plan was to stay on the reverse slope of the ridge line with only a small observation element sent to the top to survey the area.[2995] Two squads were dispatched forward to secure the ridgeline, one squad on one side, one on the other side of the ridgeline.[2996] After the squad moving up the forward face of the hill reached this high ground, the squad leader, LCPL R. L. McClausen sent out a fire team proceeding by law crawl to check out the low ground on the western side of the ridgeline. This squad took sniper fire from their direct front (XD794399) which Lt Lovely at the time (1045H) estimated as a single sniper. The squad deployed on line and, under a base of fire from 2 fire teams, the A-1 Platoon Sergeant, SGT Robert Rice, moved one fire team on line in an attempt to clear the sniper position. He was shot in the head by small arms and instantly died while 2 other men of the fire team were severely wounded by small arms fire. Capt Banks ordered Lt Lovely to deploy his 2 remaining squads to assist 3rd Squad. In doing so, all came under heavy small arms fire which Lt Lovely now estimated to be an enemy squad.[2997] Again, extremely accurate sniper fire from an estimated eight bunkers set up in a horseshoe shape, killed three or four Marines instantly with head shots.[2998]

[2986] 1/9 ComdC Apr68; Statement of Capt Hartzell in CG, 3rd MarDiv 6/RMcCT/bjw, 20 May 1968, Subj: Informal Investigation of an operation conducted by 1st Battalion, 9th Marines in the vicinity of Khe Sanh, RVN, 16-18 April 1968 while attached to and serving with the 26th Marines (Rein), including statements and testimony. [*Hereinafter referred to as: Investigation*]

[2987] 1/9 ComdC April 1968; Statement of Capt Hartzell in *Investigation.*

[2988] Statement of Capt Hartzell, in *Investigation.*

[2989] Comments of Capt Charles B. Hartzell, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[2990] Statement of Capt Henry D. Banks in *Investigation*; Statement of 1/Lt Francis B. Lovely, Jr., in *Investigation.*

[2991] Statement of HN Richard M. Itezak, in *Investigation.*

[2992] Findings of Fact, Para 7, and Banks Statement, in *Investigation.*

[2993] Statement of SGT Paul J. Cogley, in *Investigation.* SGT Cogley was Squad Leader of 1st Squad, A-2.

[2994] A-2 was in the rear because it had taken casualties the previous day. [Statement of HN Richard A. Itezak, Corpsman with A-2, in *Investigation.* [The 1/9 ComdC for Apr 1968, however, does not indicate any contact by Co "A" on 15 April].

[2995] Statement of Capt Banks in *Investigation.*

[2996] Comments of Capt Charles B. Hartzell in HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[2997] Statement of 1/Lt Francis B. Lovely, Jr., in *Investigation.*

[2998] Comments of Capt Charles B. Hartzell, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

The first Marine KIA was CPL Robert H. Littlefield: "The first shot that was fired went through Littlefield and almost hit me. I thought he was going to live. I was carrying down the body of a wounded guy—I did that so many times, and toward dark, I saw Littlefield still laying there, but by then he was dead. The only thing I can figure is that the helicopters couldn't get in there and he just bled to death. But he was walking under his own power, under a lot of pain, but walking down the hill with a corpsman. It looked like it [the round] went through his upper arm or chest."[2999]

A Letter and a Poem from a Wife
By Suzi Littlefield

"Bobby was next to the youngest of five children. His mother became very ill when Bobby was still in grammar school. He and his siblings were placed in an orphanage for a period of two years due to this. Due to many hardships growing up, Bobby was mature way beyond his years. Bobby and I met, fell in love and a year and eight months later we were married. Bobby came to me and told me had joined the Marine Corps for me. He wanted to make something of himself. All his interests, all his dreams were of making a life for us.

"Bobby's two older brothers were already in the Marine Corps when he joined. We were married three months when he came to me with orders for V.N. in his hand for his older brother Earl and himself. Bobby said he should go... Bobby's decision only made me love and respect him more... Bobby's middle older brother, Ernie, was only back from V.N. two weeks when Bobby left to go. Bobby arrived V.N. June 1st, 1967. He only had 45 days left when he was killed.[3000]

Bobby
I was so blessed to find you
The person I was born to love
The special kind of love we shared
If only for a short time

You changed my life with just one kiss
You surpassed my everything
You gave your all in life and love
If only for a short time

You were all I ever wanted
You are all I'll ever need
I wish everyone could know this kind of love
If only for a short time

Life is not forever
Love is
Your wife
If only for a short time. Suzi.[3001]

Capt Banks then deployed A-2 (Lt Hayden) to a position to the right of A-1 to sweep the ridge area from which A-1 was receiving fire. Based on the quantity of fire received and the small area, the enemy force at this time was estimated to be a fire team, certainly no more than a squad. The enemy had, however, held his fire. When A-2 assaulted, they were cut down by small arms fire. "It appeared that when the Second Platoon had got into position to assault, that they [NVA] were just waiting for them, and just cut them down with small arms fire."[3002]

Because of their situation, Lt Hayden said that the only thing they could do now was to take the hill, to attack.[3003] Lt Hayden, in front of the assaulting A-2 and covered by a machinegun team, advanced some 50 – 60 feet when he was hit and mortally wounded.[3004] "We didn't move 15 feet when Lt Hayden got hit and was killed. Suddenly they opened up and everybody it the ground. We stayed that way for at least an hour."[3005] While the machinegun team attempted to spot the source of the enemy fire, SGT Homer D. Compton was hit (about 15 feet behind Lt Hayden), and the Marines withdrew "because we didn't have anyone around to cover us."[3006] Lt Lovely took over both platoons since both Lt Hayden and the Platoon Sergeant were now dead.[3007] Capt Banks attempted to withdraw at this point, but was informed by his platoon commander that the Marines were wounded within 10 meters of some of the enemy bunkers.[3008] Due to the close proximity of the enemy force and the extremely accurate sniper fire, Co A was unable to extract their casualties. At this time (1130H), Co A estimated they had 10 men killed and 20 wounded. Capt Banks requested assistance to extract casualties and break contact.[3009] Co A established a LZ at XD794402 to

[2999] Conversation with David Ford, 16 May 1992.
[3000] Letter from Suzi Littlefield, 6 July 1999.
[3001] Poem printed in Khe Sanh Veterans' *Red Clay*, Issue #47 (Fall, 2000), p. 44.
[3002] Statement of Capt Banks in *Investigation.*
[3003] *Ibid.*.
[3004] Statement of PFC Jesus A. Santiago in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file of 1/Lt Michael Hayden.
[3005] Statement of SGT Paul J. Cogley, in *Investigation.*
[3006] Statement of PFC Jesus A. Santiago in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file of 1/Lt Michael Hayden.
[3007] Statement of 1/Lt Francis B. Lovely, Jr., in *Investigation*; Comments of 1/Lt Lovely in HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.
[3008] Statement of Capt Banks, in *Investigation.*
[3009] *Ibid.*

medevac its casualties which were not under direct observation of the enemy position.[3010]

The A-2 Platoon Corpsman, HN Richard R. Itezak, spotted LCPL James A. Hunt. "I had to put a dressing on his stomach before I took him back because his intestines would fall out if we didn't block them."[3011] HN Itezak was then informed of more casualties in a nearby bomb crater. Among the WIA there was LCPL Rampulla, KIA. By this time, the Platoon Sergeant, Cpl Homer D. Compton, had been wounded and "after that I was informed of many KIA and WIA. At the time, I wasn't aware of the number because everybody was sufficiently excited. Nobody was really sure of themselves, then. There were 3 that told me that they knew for sure Lieutenant Hayden, [the] first squad's M-79 man, PFC Haberman, [and] our platoon's right guide, who is Lance Corporal Herve Moise [were KIA]. This will give you some idea of that condition the platoon was in... I couldn't get to the dead and the wounded who had fallen right by the machine-gun site [due to a NVA sniper]... I was going to make a try and the Marines that were left said they were dead so don't worry about them."[3012]

Soon after Co A began to take fire (at about 1000H), LtCol John H. ("Blacky") Cahill, CO of 1/9, was informed that Co A was in contact with enemy in bunkered positions which allowed the point elements to enter the complex before opening fire. Cahill asked Banks if he needed assistance; Banks stated he could handle the situation. Nevertheless, Cahill placed one company on alert and moved the Battalion Command Group to a forward position on Hill 689 (XD803409) to observe and control the situation. At this time, Capt Banks requested no fire due to his men intermingled with the NVA and that he was pinned down by small arms fire, grenades, and mortars. Hill 689 began to receive rockets.[3013]

At 1215H, GARDEN VALLEY 6 ACTUAL, LtCol John M. Cahill,[3014] ordered Co D/1/9 (Capt John W. Cargile) to prepare to assist A/1/9. At 1245H, Co D saddled up and moved out with 2 platoons: D-1 under the leadership of 2/Lt David W. Tuckwiller, and D-2, under the leadership of 1/Lt Kenneth J. Wilkinson. D-3 remained on Hill 600, just south of Hill 689, for security. Total strength of the Co D group was D-1 (37 + 1), D-2 (30 + 1), and Headquarters (7 + 1) for a total of 74 enlisted and 3 officers.[3015] With D-2 leading followed by the headquarters element and D-1 in the rear, the two platoons of D/1/9 arrived at their jump-off location (XD799401) at approximately 1430H. D-2 then moved up the northwest slope to assist A/1/9 evacuate its dead and wounded.[3016]

CHARLIE Company was given the mission to sweep the area of the bunker and sniper complex from the rear and clean out enemy resistance. [3017] and sweep to the north and east along the high ground Co C [Capt Lawrence Himmer] departed Hill 689 with 2 platoons: C-1, led by 2/Lt David O. Carter, and C-2, led by SSGT Seth Lee West, Jr., and proceeded to its attack position (at XD794398), a large bomb crater where LtCol Cahill, Capt Banks, and Capt Himmer gathered. Capt Banks reported that his men remained within the area of contact, pinned down by enemy in bunkers in a U-shaped area. LtCol Cahill proposed a pincer movement with Co D approaching from the right and Co C from the left.

At about 1600,[3018] C-1 [Lt Carter] got on line and moved through a wooded portion of the hill (XD795398), moving to about 20 meters from the top, with C-2 on line behind him. Lt Carter only had 2 squads, one being on OP.[3019] They were to run into another bunker complex from which the Marines to this point had not taken fire.[3020] Lt Carter, at the head of his platoon, led the assault. His left flank squad was taken under fire from enemy in spider traps, bunkers, and bomb craters to his front and left flank, and he took 4 casualties. Lt Carter received a shattered forearm from the fire and shrapnel in his jaw, but continued to lead the assault.[3021] PFC

[3010] Statement of 1/Lt Francis B. Lovely, Jr., in *Investigation*. According to Capt Banks, Cos C and D arrived about 1600 and Co A was, by that time, no longer involved in taking the objective as it was retrieving and rescuing its WIA and KIA and securing a LZ. At approx. 1830, the CP group of Co A was hit by a 60mm mortar and Capt Banks was evacuated. [Banks statement in *Investigation*.]. Lt Lovely assumed command of Co A. It became dark, and LtCol Cahill ordered withdrawal. Co D withdrew through Co A while Co A held the position until about 0005H on 17 April when it moved to Hill 689, arriving there with 51 of its original 84 men. [Statement of Lovely, in *Investigation*].

[3011] Statement of HN Richard M. Itezak, in *Investigation*.

[3012] *Ibid.*

[3013] Statement of LtCol John H. Cahill, in *Investigation*.

[3014] Cahill was an enlisted Marine during World War II and commissioned through a meritorious promotion program as an officer in 1947. He served in Korea as a Platoon Leader and Executive Officer of a rifle company. Following his service as G-4 of FMFPAC (forward), he requested service in Vietnam and served 2 months as the G-3 Plans, Division, prior to being assigned as CO of 1/9. [Testimony of Cahill in *Investigation*.].

[3015] Statement of Capt John W. Cargile, in *Investigation*. The Headquarters element included LCPL Louis R. Johnson (FAC), HM3 William E. Gessner (Corpsman), PFC Ferris (Arty FO), PFC Tunstall (Arty FO radio operator), PFC Carey Wayne McGiffin (Bn Scout), PFC Kenneth Seebach (Bn radio operator), and LCPL Raymond L. Balzan (Co radio operator). [Statement of Cargile, in *Investigation*.]

[3016] Statement of Cargile, in *Investigation*.

[3017] Comments of Capt Charles B. Hartzell, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[3018] Statement of CPL John S. Kocsis, in *Investigation*.

[3019] Statement of 1/Lt William C. Connelly, C/1/9, in *Investigation*. Lt Connelly was XO of Co "C".

[3020] Comments of Capt Charles B. Hartzell, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[3021] Statement of HM3 Daniel P. Baker in Bronze Star Medal file of 2/Lt David O. Carter. Baker was the Corpsman for C-

George Cimmerman and Lt Carter's radioman, LCPL Michael J.; Fedorawicz, were also hit, and of the casualties, 3 were killed: Cpl Roy Douglas Hurlburt, PFC Larry Gene Moore, and PFC Richard William Johnston.[3022] Lt Carter spotted some NVA positions on the southeast slope as he moved into position.

Noting that Co D was pinned down, Lt Carter was later to relate "..the only choice for CHARLIE Company was to get on line in classic Marine fashion with bayonets and whatever we had and come up the hill at them... We got to the top of the hill. They were everywhere. They were dug in bunkers. I was hit three times. I went up to [there with] 32 men and only 8 men didn't get hit. We did one helluva job up there. I think the only thing that saved us was basic aggressiveness at this time."[3023]

Capt Himmer then directed SSGT West to move C-2 to protect the left flank where the positions were located. SSGT West designated one fire team and one gun team together with a M-79 man to cover this area.[3024]

At the same time, Lt Carter's right flank squad had advanced forward 75 meters and taken 4 casualties: CPL Jose Ruiz, the Squad Leader, and PFC Wendell Guillory; both were killed, and LCPL Smith, a new man, was wounded.[3025] When the Platoon Sergeant and Platoon Commander were wounded, CPL Jose Ruiz had taken charge of the platoon, moving about the fire-swept area, oblivious of the danger, to render first aid to the wounded. Cpl John Kocsis later wrote: "..he got down and gave each and every one of them the best medical care he could. After this he and his men continued on the assault. There he gave his life by jumping in front of a wounded Marine to save his life."[3026]

At this time, Capt Himmer told SSGT West to bring his platoon forward and pass through Lt Carter's platoon and continue the assault. As SSGT West's platoon cleared the crest, they took fire from their front but could not locate the enemy positions. His left flank squad saw enemy reinforcements assaulting from their left flank. They were taken under fire. PFC Robert Daniel Cicio was killed in this deadly encounter and PFC George Panykaninec was seriously wounded; Cpl Nathaniel Earnest Jackson was wounded, and the squad was pinned down.[3027]

ROBERT CICIO: A MOTHER'S LETTER, A CLIPPING[3028]

"Bobby loved his family, friends, school, but he loved his country best. When I pleaded with him to finish school before enlisting, he said he was needed now. He believed in the war. He said a people were fighting for its freedom and we had to help, just as we were helped by other countries when our country fought for its freedom. When I told him to be careful, he said, 'I'll be careful, mom, but I'll never run. In his last letter home [dated 14 April] ***he wrote 'I really feel I helped defend Khe Sanh which will help to end the war sooner.'"***

"The Robert Cicio Memorial Peace Scholarship has been instituted.. The award will be made.. to a second semester sophomore with a major or concentrate in Math.."

"Known as 'Chico', Cicio, 20, left school after the Spring 1967 semester, having completed his sophomore year. He was an original brother of ITK, having helped in its formation last year.."

"Bobby joined the Little League and was in the Boy Scouts... As a guard and a tackle, Bob Cicio lettered all four years of high school; he also received two letters playing defense on the lacrosse team. In 1965, 'Chico' Cicio went to the State University of New York at Oneonta. One of his first acts there was to form a fraternity with some other freshmen in his dormitory.. Iota Tau Kappa...[His roommate] Bob Hoch, said, 'Everyone really respected

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1. Lt Carter later received another wound, this time in his hip, while jumping into an enemy bunker complex. Baker writes: "He was helping evacuation procedures on his wounded men when he was finally ordered to go to the LZ himself. He could not find the LZ, so he returned to Hill 689 on foot, alone. When he reached Hill 689 he was in shock from loss of blood and the exertion from his trip. He would not succumb to medical treatment until he had reported to his superior officer about the condition of his men." Lt Carter's life had been saved by PFC Eddie R. Pritchett, a machinegun ammunition carrier attached to C/1/9. Although himself wounded, PFC Pritchett continued in the assault. He knocked down Lt Carter to keep him from being hit, and immediately placed him in a protected place to prevent further injury. Then, with complete disregard for his own safety, he boldly jumped into an emplacement occupied by NVA and aggressively engaged them. [Statement of CPL John S. Kocsis in Bronze Star Medal file on PFC Eddie R. Pritchett].

[3022] Statement of 1/Lt William C. Connelly, in *Investigation.*

[3023] Comments of 1/Lt David O. Carter, 24 March 1969, HQMC Oral History Tape #3950.

[3024] *Ibid.*

[3025] *Ibid.*

[3026] Statement of CPL John C. Kocsis in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file on CPL Jose Ruiz.

[3027] Statement of 1/Lt William C. Connelly, in *Investigation.*

[3028] Letter from Nellie Cicio, 4 February 1997; Joseph M. Treen, "Robert Cicio;" various clippings furnished by Nellie Cicio. Cicio's last letter home was printed in the Khe Sanh Veteran's *Red Clay*, Issue #44 (Summer, 1999), p. 20.

him and looked up to him because of his physical strength and personality. He attracted people... At the end of his sophomore year, Cicio dropped out of school and joined the Marines

SSGT West was moving with Cpl David G. Redenius's squad in the center when they were pinned down. SSGT West, observing a wounded Marine lying in a forward area, ignored the danger to his own life as he dashed across the fire-swept area to reach the WIA Marine, dodging rounds of a deadly sniper who had already taken a great toll of Marines. While administering first aid, he was mortally wounded by the sniper. "This Marine gave his life trying to help another and was in fact a great man and Marine."[3029] SGT Leslie Paul Hagara, the Platoon Sergeant of C-2, was killed. Hagara had extended his Vietnam tour so that his son could have an operation. He had been "short" but said the operation his son needed was expensive and if he extended, the military would take care of it. He had gone up to locate the NVA sniper and took a round in his face.[3030] When the SSGT Platoon Commander was killed, CPL John S. Kocsis took over as Platoon Commander.[3031] From this squad, PFC Aubrey McClelland was killed and CPL Earl R. Best, LCPL Parris E. Joyce, CPL Jose A. Kosaka, and PFC Lawrence E. Hutson were wounded. CPL Redenius was MIA[3032] (later determined to be KIA). Reacting instantly, CPL Melvin R. Curry "took charge of the platoon and fearlessly maneuvered about the fire-swept terrain deploying the Marines into a defensive perimeter and directing the delivery of a heavy volume of fire on the hostile emplacements."[3033]

Charlie Company's attack had enabled Alfa Company to extract all of their WIA and most of their KIA and returned them to a collection point.[3034] Co A had established a LZ at the bottom of a relatively steep hill, out of direct mortar fire, but still taking occasional sniper fire. Co A evacuated its casualties from about 1600 until 2400, getting its last casualties out about 0030 on the 17th of April.[3035] LCPL Gerald Wayne Post, a Forward Air Controller with A/1/9, used a cigarette lighter to bring in helicopters for 6 hours after darkness precluded use of smoke to guide them.[3036] Capt Banks was wounded about 1600, and 2/Lt Lovely assumed command of A Co.[3037]

Cpl Hubert H. Hunnicutt's squad (3nd Squad in C-2)[3038] on the right flank made the best progress, advancing about 100 meters across the top of the hill. (But it was this good advance that was to prove to be tragic). Cpl Hunnicutt was wounded along with PFC Darwin G. Rice; PFC Nathaniel M. Williams and PFC Mauro Martinez were killed.[3039] PFC Martinez had thrown his body over Cpl William P. Holland in order to shield him from the rounds. In doing this, he was fatally wounded. "He paid the supreme sacrifice in order that one of his buddies would live."[3040]

Then Captain Himmer was hit. "We tried to take care of him and bandage him up. We were pinned down by a sniper, I would say about 6 feet in front of us. I told Capt Himmer not to get up and he just got up and started walking right on top of the sniper, and the sniper shot him and he fell right beside a bomb crater. He sat right straight back up and looked over, and the whole right hand side of his face was torn up. I tried to get to him at that point, but I couldn't because of the sniper.. This was about 1800. Myself and 2 more men went up there and tried to get him. The 2 men had a stretcher, ready to put Captain Himmer on the stretcher. The sniper popped up and killed one of ours and put some rounds in the back of Captain Himmer."[3041]

Meanwhile (at about 1630H), Capt Cargile moved Co "D" over the crest of the hill but had negative sighting of anyone from "C" Company. D-1, which was to hook up with Co C, was on the back side of the hill, but could not make contact with them. D-2 was called to move up to D-1, but couldn't, due to accurate sniper fire and mortars. There were dead and wounded Co D was trying to extract. It was getting darker and helicopters weren't arriving.[3042] HM3 William G. Gessner, senior corpsman of D Co, attended LCPL James C. Lee who had been hit in his hand and assisted HM3 Hurtz [D/1/9] in the treatment of the seriously wounded PFC Floyd R.

[3029] Statement of CPL William T. Parr in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file on SSGT Seth L. West. SGT West was married and had two sons. [Conversation with Mark S. Miller, 28 December 1989]. The remains of SSGT West were recovered on 22 April. Already badly decomposed, the mortuary in DaNang was "unable to determine specific cause of death due to condition of remains." [CG 3rd MarDiv 250530Z/Apr68, Report of Death, to SecNav, in Bronze Star Medal file of SSGT West.

[3030] Conversation with Ed Troup, 28 March 1993.

[3031] Bronze Star Medal Citation for CPL John S. Kocsis; Statement of Capt Hartzell in *Investigation*.

[3032] Statement of 1/Lt William C. Connelly, in *Investigation*.

[3033] Bronze Star Medal Citation, CPL Melvin R. Curry.

[3034] Statement of Capt Hartzell in *Investigation*; Comments of Capt Hartzell, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[3035] Comments of 2/Lt Francis Brian Lovely, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[3036] Statements of HM2 James F. Ray and 2/Lt Francis B. Lovely in Bronze Star Medal file of LCPL Gerald Wayne Post.

[3037] *Ibid.*

[3038] Statement of CPL H.H. Hunnicutt, II, in *Investigation*.

[3039] Statement of 1/Lt William C. Connelly, in *Investigation*.

[3040] Data from NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 30 May 1968, in Navy Cross (posthumous) file on PFC Mauro Martinez.

[3041] Statement of CPL John S. Kocsis, in *Investigation*. CPL Kocsis was 3rd Squad Leader, C-1.

[3042] Statement of SSGT Carl O. Stucker [D-2], HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

Reno.[3043] As they moved over the crest, they came under mortar fire and very accurate sniper fire. The First Platoon moved quite well despite the fire. The terrain was not what they expected. Once over the crest, they ran into a slope that plunged into a draw. D-1 found themselves on a finger covered with heavy shrubbery. There were no sightings of Co C.

It was now about 1745. HM3 Gessner made it to a bomb crater along with CPL Peter W. Johnson and PFC Carey Wayne McGiffin. "An AK-47 was to our left front and he was raising havoc. After we had been there 15 minutes we decided to scrape out some hasty holes inside the crater. At this time LCPL William John Dolan crawled up to the crater (he had been a stretcher bearer). Then for some reason he stood up and started running to the right front. After taking 3 steps we saw a bullet hit his head. He went down and we heard him moaning. PFC McGiffin said he would get him. He crawled out of the crater and one minute later a mortar round landed in the depression he had made. I was knocked out. When I came to, I heard Johnson asking for me. I crawled over to him and put battle dressings on his wounds."[3044] Gessner and Johnson helped each other to the LZ, arriving about 1915. HM3 Gessner then gave Johnson a shot of morphine and, assisted by HM3 Hurtz, gave mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to one Marine for an hour and a half until the Marine died. Helicopters retrieved the wounded, and HM3 Gessner lefrt at 2230H.[3045]

Capt Cargile testified: "Our movement in any forward direction was nominal due to intense fire and extremely accurate sniper fire. Already, I had 5 KIA of my own and could see that I would have my hands full getting my own KIA/WIA out, let alone A and C. We were receiving the sniper's fire from 2 to 3 directions. Still we could not pinpoint the source. The snipers or sniper were very good. Four out of my five KIAs had been shot in the head. To continue to charge an unseen enemy would obviously be foolish. So, with darkness approaching, I consolidated and attempted to retrieve all the dead."[3046] The Marines were able, by slowly crawling forward, to pull back three of their KIA, and were about to move out again to retrieve a fourth KIA, but with darkness, they were ordered to leave him. "To attempt to get the last man, further out than the other, was a definite risk of 2 or 3 lives at least. The man left, CPL Robert F. Owens, was reported dead by several men, specifically, Sgt Fielding, Plt Sgt 1st Plt, and 1st Lt Wilkerson."[3047] Co "D" walked back to Hill 689 that night under illumination flares.[3048]

The KIA that were retrieved were, from D-1: CPL Alfred L. LeBlanc (KIA by sniper wound to head), Cpl William Averitte (KIA by sniper round to head), LCPL Hugh E. Shavelin (KIA by sniper wound to head), PFC William John Dolan (WIA, sniper wound to head—but later DOW on 17 April), HN Charles B. Boynton, Jr. (MIA, last seen helping the wounded HN W. R. Harper to the LZ) and from C-2: PFC Jack Lee Hinkle (KIA by shrapnel wound to chest), and PFC Marvin G. Rush (MIA, last seen helping PFC Floyd R. Reno to the LZ and was returning to his machinegun team, but did not arrive).[3049]

At 1830H, with Co D pinned down unable to advance, and with dusk, Lt Connelly was told to extract all the wounded and any of the dead they could and pull back. By 1915H, all the wounded had been pulled back except CPL Hunnicutt who was in a bomb crater in front of the line.[3050]

LCPL Ross M. Kasminoff [C/1/9] was in a bomb crater along with several other Marines, including PFC Antonio Borjas (who was in the process of bringing a paralyzed Marine back into the lines) setting a base of fire when he heard Cpl Hunnicutt yelling to them from another crater about 125 meters to their right front.. Hunnicutt yelled that he had with him 2 WIA and 2 KIA and that the WIA were unable to move. Kasminoff yelled to him, asking if he could run. Hunnicutt replied he could, but didn't want to abandon the 2 WIA.[3051]

It was now about 1940H as 11 men of Co C protected the others moving 3 KIA which were to be extracted by helicopter. It was obvious that the choppers wouldn't get there for some time. Lt Connelly called the S-3, Capt Hartzell, and said he thought he was about to be overrun and that he had all the Co C WIA. Capt Hartzell told him to withdraw.[3052]

In the crater with CPL Hunnicutt, CPL Redenius was shot in the head, bleeding profusely, and was going into convulsions. "He must have lost 2 quarts of blood in about 10 seconds. I got him down in the bottom of the crater and put his head up a little bit, sort of stop the bleeding, but then he started throwing up dark blood."[3053] Everyone in the crater had been hit except Martinez. Cpl Hunnicutt told everyone to stay away from the rim of the crater so that their silhouette would not disclose their position to the enemy. Hunnicutt heard Kasminoff behind him on the ridge but by now he was very weak, "..and I didn't know what would be the best thing to do in order to get these men out of here." Then Hunnicutt realized he and those with him in the bomb crater were

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[3043] Statement of HM3 William G. Gessner, in *Investigation.*
[3044] *Ibid.*
[3045] *Ibid.*
[3046] Statement of Capt John W. Cargile, in *Investigation.*
[3047] *I bid.*
[3048] Comments of SSGT Carl O. Stucker, HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.
[3049] *Ibid.*
[3050] Statement of 1/Lt William C. Connelly, in *Investigation*
[3051] Statement of LCPL Ross M. Kasminoff, in *Investigation.*
[3052] Statement of 1/Lt William C. Connelly, in *Investigation.*
[3053] Statement of CPL Hubert H. Hunnicutt, II, in *Investigation.* The following paragraphs are all from his statement. CPL Hunnicutt was later awarded the Navy Cross.

alone. He waited until dark and told Martinez to go. "If I had been physically able we could have dragged both men down and gone down to the gulch and gone back up to the machine gun position behind us, however, I couldn't pull with my arm. I was weak." Martinez left and then, later, realized that the NVA must have got him. With the two WIA now "almost gone" he decided to crawl out of the crater, and came upon Capt Himmer who "was laying on his side. He had been shot in the mouth and shot in the arm and back of the neck. He had apparently lost a lot of blood because he could barely speak. He called to me. He said, 'Marine, help me.' I said, 'Skipper, we got to get out of this place, but we can't move right now; we'll just wait about another 5 or 10 minutes.' He said, 'OK.' About that time I moved away from him a little bit, and an AK opened up on me and hit me in the leg and hand and elbow." Hunnicutt managed to pull a grenade and toss it, but by then was so weak he was unable to do much more. He played dead for about 5 hours. Some NVA passed by, kicking his canteen. He managed to get closer to Capt Himmer.

At first light (on 17 April) he yelled for Kasminoff, but nobody answered. About 8 o'clock he yelled real loud, and heard someone answer him back towards Hill 689 who said they were going to rescue him. Hunnicutt and Himmer then slid down hill until they reached a ledge that dropped sharply (about 10 or 15 yards of sheer drop off) into a valley. Capt Himmer's face was covered with blood, his legs were very weak, and he was much heavier than Hunnicutt who was therefore unable to carry him. A voice of a Marine yelled, "Preacher,[3054] is that you?" Hunnicutt replied, "Can you come and help?" They replied, "Yeah, we're coming." No one came that day. At night an air strike dropped ordnance almost on top of Hunnicutt.

About noon, an Army Huey dropped a red smoke on Hunnicutt "and scarred me to death. I thought they were going to blow me away." The helicopter set down and snatched Hunnicutt. At the medical facilities, he was asked if there were any more alive. He was asked if Capt Himmer had been killed, "and I said, 'He couldn't be dead. I had him with me for two days.'"

It was about midnight that Companies A, C, and D were enroute back to the 1/9 perimeter on Hill 689, and by 0310, all remaining members of these companies were returned to their positions on Hill 689.[3055] After all the survivors had made it back in the very late hours of 16 April, the company commanders immediately began to assess their casualties. Companies A and D were able to provide a fairly accurate report, but Co C, due to breakdown of communications within their company, had a difficult time trying to account for their personnel; it was only after Lt Connelly (XO, Co C) returned that the full impact of the casualties was realized. Co C did not arrive at the battalion position until 0300 on the 17th.[3056] What had happened to Co B/1/26 on 25 February was again repeated at Khe Sanh: "We were forced to do something we had never done before—just leave bodies out, to report people as missing. I don't feel this was through carelessness of the individuals. It was simply that there weren't enough walking bodies left to carry the limp bodies out."[3057] LtCol Cahill felt "..that additional casualties would have resulted if I had chose to remain on the hill. Plans were formulated by me to recover the KIAs on the 18th but other plans by higher headquarters had been made preventing the battalion to do this job."[3058]

CO	KIA	WIA	NBC	MIA
A	5	13	4	7
B	[*negative casualties*]			
C	1	22	0	25
D	3	5	1	2
H&S	0	6	7	2

About noon on the 17th of April, one of the AOs, checking the area of contact, reported spotting one Marine in a crater approximately 50 meters down the slope from the enemy U-shaped bunker complex. He appeared to be alive, but the AO was unsure whether he was a Marine or a NVA dressed in a Marine flak vest and helmet to lure rescuers. Two CH-46s were loaded with volunteers, one carrying a fire team of 1/9 augmented by a Corpsman, the other carrying a dozen 1/9 Marines. After considerable suppressive rocket and gunship attacks, the first CH-46 landed on top of the bunker complex and the fire team emerged with guns blasting, killing approximately 4 NVA just exiting their bunker. Unfortunately, they searched the area on the wrong side. "They went around the left side of the helicopter and checked the bomb crater. There was 5 Marines, it was reported to me later, that were in there. Two of them had been partially decapitated, one of them disemboweled and the other two they checked out, they were dead. After checking these 5, they got back into the helicopter, and the Marine that was alive was off to the right of the chopper."[3059]

Major General Tompkins arrived at KSCB at 1500 and at 1615, a U.S. Army unit (Callsign "BIRTH CONTROL 3") came up on the 1/9 "push" and [3060]offered its assistance in rescuing the Marine. At 1840H, BIRTH CONTROL 3 dispatched BLUE MAX, Air Cav ARA [Aerial Rocket Artillery] gunships consisting of a flight

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[3054] "He's a preacher. He's over here fighting along with us." [Comments of SGT Thomas E. Debroy [C-3], HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[3055] 1/9 ComdC Apr 1968, Encl (1).

[3056] Statement of LtCol John H. Cahill, in *Investigation*.

[3057] Comments of 1/Lt Kenneth L. Harman (XO, C/1/9), on HQMC Oral History Tape #2803.

[3058] Statement of LtCol John H. Cahill, in *Investigation*.

[3059] Testimony (cross-examination by Investigating Officer) of Capt Hartzell, in *Investigation*.

[3060] "Push" refers to the radio frequency.

of 9 Huey gunships to the area. While 8 of the helicopters circled in 2 orbits, saturating the area with continuous rocket and machinegun fire, the 9th, "BLUE MAX 48," alighted and rescued the Marine. Amazingly, the man rescued was not CPL Hunnicutt, but PFC George Panyaninec (also of Co C).

On 18 April, CPL Henry Casteneda could again hear CPL Hunnicutt at about 0715H, calling for help. A rescuing patrol was launched but halted some 300 meters from Hunnicutt's location by the regimental commander. The reason was that all of the infantry battalions of 26th Marines were due to be CHOPed to 1st Marines as of 0800H, 18 April. Over 1700 troops were soon to be in the process of being heli-lifted from Khe Sanh. Col Meyers requested BGen Glick to delay the CHOP so the rescue could be completed prior to Col Hughes assuming responsibility as Commander, 1st Marine Regiment. The rescue was assumed to require more than a day. BGen Glick, being in receipt of orders from MGen Tompkins to move 26th Marines to Quang Tri in anticipation of a forthcoming operation would not delay the CHOP. Col Meyers did not want to commence an operation, and in the middle of it, not be able to see it through. The matter became academic, however, as BLUE MAX repeated the performance of the previous day, swooped down, and successfully snatched CPL Hunnicutt.

KIAs PFC Danny A. Kilgore, PFC David D. Brown, Jr., and PVT Robert H. Collins, had all arrived at Khe Sanh on 15 April 1968.[3061]

Bn 2/3 was given the grisly task during April, 1968, of recovering decomposed, dead Marines. On 19 April 1968, 2 USMC bodies were found at a bridge at XD956428 and 2 USMC bodies were recovered on Route 9 at XD962437.[3062] Of greater impact, 2/3 was given the task of recovering the 1/9 KIA from 16 April. David Brombaugh, one of the Marines in the recovery unit later recalled: "We were the ones who went up Hill 689 and recovered the 1/9 bodies... We took the hill at a great loss of men. They only let us take our weapons and one E-tool per fourth man. They didn't give us much of a chance. 1/9 was caught in a U-shaped ambush and wiped out and they figured we were headed for the same fate. All our gear was left behind as they said they didn't want to give the gooks any more gear than what they got from 1/9."[3063] Another Marine from H/2/3, Ben Williams, remembers seeing three bodies at the foot of Hill 689. "I distinctly saw the NVA belt buckle with the red star in it and the bodies were really very badly decomposed. The first thing I saw was that red star, so I thought they were 3 NVA. But I got a little bit closer and saw the jungle boots, the size, and the 782 gear, and it was a Marine. He had just taken a NVA buckle. They were so decomposed, black, and again there was enough that I couldn't recognize they were Marines until I got closer. We moved on. We went up the hill. As we went up the hill we were exchanging rounds and we were taking mortar fire on our end. We fanned out across this hill and we jumped into little bunkers the NVA had built all along, and then we started maneuvering a little bit and we got a mortar. The mortar round hit right behind me, and I got hit in the back with shrapnel.[3064]

The next day, the Marines of 2/3 recovered the bodies. "My squad moved down a little trail off the ridge and there was nothing but American grenades, Russian grenades, there were RPGs, there were rounds, there was a mix of gear of the NVA and the Marines and there were bodies. I would say in the little section I was in there was probably 15 or so bodies. We moved down and we could see—the first bodies we could see were in a bomb crater and they were all lined up side by side, about four guys. And when we got down there, it was obvious that they had been taken prisoner and then killed because they had their hands tied behind their backs with LIMA LIMA wire. They looked like they hadn't moved, but one guy with his hands tied behind his back was about 15 or 20 feet out of the bomb crater. It looked like he had tried to run and they shot him down. At first we tied ropes to their legs and pulled the bodies. We didn't know if there were mines or booby-traps. We did that to a couple and then we just stopped that. We used their E-tools to turn them over into ponchos and carried the bodies back to the top of the hill where we could medevac them out. They were in advanced stages of decay, and I have a weak stomach, and I threw up. I'd put my gas mask on and thought I'd be able to do it. I threw up in the gas mask."[3065]

One of the Marines from C/1/9 was later to experience an unusual benefit from having served with Captain

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[3061] *Investigation.*

[3062] 2/3 ComdC Apr 1968

[3063] Letter from David Brombaugh, 17 February 1997. Brombaugh was with H/2/3 at the time. Letter was later printed in the Khe Sanh Veterans, *Red Clay*, Issue #40 (Fall, 1997) pp. 30-31.

[3064] Conversation with Ben Williams, 8 December 2002. Officially, from 1630H to 2000H on 21 April 1968, Companies E, G, and H, while attacking the objective at XD795396 received 60mm mortar fire, small arms fire and grenades from an estimated company of NVA dug in on the reverse slope of the hill in bunkers and spider traps. The objective was seized and held resulting in 21 NVA KIA. One Marine was KIA and 49 WIA. [2/3 ComdC April 1968].

[3065] Conversation with Ben Williams, 8 December 2002. During the search and recovery mission, 5 rounds of heavy caliber fire were received by the Marines at 1050H on 22 April. By 1130, 10 USMC MIAs had been recovered, bringing the total recovered to 30. At 1230, a NVA bunker complex was attacked resulting in 4 NVA KIA, and by 1406H, a total of 38 MIA had been recovered from 1/9's casualties. 2/3 had sustained 6 KIA, 55 WIA (major) and 31 WIA (minor) in the operation, and 34 NVA were KIA. [2/3 ComdC April 1968]. LIMA LIMA= Land line wire, black plastic covered communication line.

Himmer in the battle of Hill 689: "I got promoted because of Captain Himmer! I was in Staging Company, going back to Nam for my second tour. I was a Lance Corporal and got in a small bit of trouble, and the Gunny wanted to write me up. I was lying down on the rack during the day with my boots on, and he didn't like that at all, and he was going to make an example out of me. So he takes me to the First Sergeant and tells him what I did. The First Sergeant—like I really broke the big commandment... The First Sergeant takes me into the Captain's office. He starts reading me the riot act—just because I'm going to Vietnam doesn't mean—you know—I have to obey all the orders, I'm a Marine—and he goes on and on. Finally he opens up my Record Book and goes, 'Charlie, 1/9?' I said, 'Yes, Sir.' And he goes, 'Delta, 1/9. Captain Himmer was the Best Man at my wedding.' And he gave me Meritorious Mast to Corporal right there. It's a true story, and it's so weird."[3066]

[*Casualties other than 1/9, 16 April 1968*]

A rocket exploding on KSCB at 1430 took the life of SWF2 Edward C. Cody, a Steel Worker with CBMU 301, Detail BRAVO, and wounded BUH2 Tennis and CN Scott.[3067] "Adams was killed by shrapnel which went through his helmet. No other marks on his body. The round hit about 10-ft. from him, and about 30 – 40-ft. from where Tennis and I were standing, talking. All I remember is a big explosion & finding myself on the ground... I was next to Tennis on the ground, but I was so stunned that I didn't realize right away that he was hurt... Again we're wondering what kind of an asinine war we're fighting here – where we sit tight and let him shoot! .. It really hit home today. Adams was one of the best liked guys in the Detail and the best SW2 we've ever had. Nothing seemed to shake him. We've all suffered a great loss."[3068] SWF2 Adams arrived in Vietnam on 3 November 1967[3069] and was posthumously awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for his outstanding efforts in repairing the airstrip at Khe Sanh.[3070]

From 15 January to 15 April, 2/Lt William Resor Ammon, Platoon Commander of Second Platoon, MIKE Company, 3/26, had been on the western finger of Hill 881-South during the siege battle where he repeatedly exposed himself to the large 120mm mortars and artillery, watched Marines get blown away, struggled with a paucity of supplies, and yet, according to the Commanding Officer of Co "M", "his inexhaustible efforts to make the best of the situation and his ability to extract maximum effort from his troops bespoke a level of leadership seldom attained by officers of his rank."[3071] Lt Ammon's radioman, LCPL David M. Anderson, admired his platoon commander.[3072] Anderson comments: "I knew him very well, intimately you might say. He was well respected by the troops because he was not only a professional, but he cared about his men too and when he got orders to do things that's absolutely asinine, he would question them. He wasn't afraid to question and say, 'Wait a minute; there's probably a better way to do this. Let's look at it again.' He got a lot of respect for that."[3073]

Lt Ammon had written his parents who published some of their son's letters in the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, letters which raised specific logistic deficiencies. General Krulak sent a SPECAT EXCLUSIVE message to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Chapman, responding to these comments. "The majority of Lt. Ammon's complaints are attributable to the difficulties of providing resupply at Hill 881 S solely by helicopter. These difficulties, in turn, are directly related to weather and enemy interdiction... Except for 7 days, the month of February was characterized by marginal flying weather. During the month there were 24 cloudy and 5 overcast days. Fog and rain were experienced throughout the month. Although the average visibility for the Khe Sanh area during the month was 3 miles, the higher elevations such as Hill 881S were frequently shrouded in clouds or fog. Humidity averaged 87 percent during the month. During the first 19 days of March, there were 13 cloudy, 2 partly cloudy and 4 overcast days... Visibility in the general area averaged only 4.7 miles... Humidity averaged 89 percent during March. 33 helicopters have been permanently disabled or destroyed in resupply operations in the Khe Sanh area since 21 January 1968. This reduction of helicopter assets has, of course, further eroded our ability to conduct such resupply operations... Specific comments: Statement: 'Hasn't had a whole lot of chow and went 2 days without supplies.' Comment: Hill 881S did run out of rations on 20 February and was not resupplied until 22 February due to bad weather... Statement: 'Put part of platoon on line and swept through garbage dump. Everyone got plenty to fill stomachs..' Comment: 'When subsisting on "C" rations troops are likely to discard the less favored items.. it was to be expected that previously discarded, but still sealed, cans of food would be recovered and consumed.... Statement: 'No combat gear or ponchos to sleep in, not to mention mail..' There has never been any shortage of

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[3066] Conversation with Richard H. Bryant, 25 May 1990.

[3067] Diary entry, ENS Martin J. Kux. Builder Second Class Tennis received serious wounds to his chest (punctured lung), back, and right thigh; Constructionman Scott received minor wounds.

[3068] *Ibid.* A clipping notes that Adams was 23 and joined the Navy in December, 1965, for a 4-year tour.

[3069] Dedication, in Cruise Book, *USN Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301, Republic of Vietnam '67 – '68.*

[3070] Bows, Ray A., *Vietnam Military Lore, 1959 – 1973, Another Way to Remember*, Hanover, Massachusetts: Bows & Sons Publishing, 1988, pp. 204-205.

[3071] Statement of 1/Lt John D. Esslinger in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) on 2/Lt William Resor Ammon.

[3072] Conversation with Rev. Timothy Sims, 14 May 1994.

[3073] Conversation with David Anderson, 13 July 1990.

combat equipment which would affect his unit's combat efficiency... Conclusion: Lt Ammon has been guilty of minor exaggeration.."[3074]

While waiting for a helicopter with his platoon, one round came in and killed Lieutenant Ammon.[3075] The round which killed Lt Ammon wounded the Platoon Sergeant, radioman, and Corpsman HN David M. Sarley. HN Sarley, after dressing his own wound, crawled to the aid of the other seriously wounded.[3076] The radioman, LCPL David M. Anderson, remembers the round, probably a 152mm artillery round, made a direct hit on the Lieutenant. "I was only about 10 feet from him. When I got medevaced out, I had a big plastic sandwich bag with his 2 feet and his 2 hands in it. That's all that was left. He vaporized. It was on my stretcher. I remember vividly when the chopper landed on the [hospital ship] SANCTUARY and they went to move my particular stretcher off the chopper, a kid came up and I handed him this bag. It was a clear bag. It was obvious what was inside of it. The kid just bent over and started peuking right there. At that point in time we'd been 3 months up on 881 and had seen that daily."[3077]

David Anderson had also written home about the lack of supply, and when his parents showed their minister he was so appalled that he contacted Senator Mike Mansfield who inquired and received a letter that after a thorough investigation, no such thing had happened.

Conversation:

Anderson:"I found that real disappointing, when the leader of the nation can tell a mother and a father that their son's a liar."

Stubbe: "In that combat situation, a lot of the lack of supply was understandable. They could admit it without loosing face."

Anderson: "I agree."

Stubbe: "I know that Captain Dabney is still livid, still angry over the fact that he lost people because of a lack of bunker-building materials."

Anderson: "O absolutely!"

Stubbe: "And utilities rotting off. They couldn't even get body bags or stretchers to evacuate the wounded."

Anderson: "I remember sleeping among the dead more than once because we had nowhere to put them, and just watch the rats eat them at night and smell them rotting during the day. It's quite an experience, let me tell you!"[3078]

At 2230H, Co D/1/26 at XD849416 reported "one man killed by unknown explosion."[3079] It was PFC William Frank Coleman.

17 April 1968

DELAPLANE, HN James Charles	H&S/2/26
DOLAN, PFC William John	D/1/9
HOUSTON, PFC John Davis Jr.	L/3/26
LAGENFELD, HM3 Charles T	H&S/2/26
LAMON, PFC Francis William	G/2/1
LAWRENCE, PFC William Aubrey	G/2/1
MC NAMAR, HN Jim Carl	H&S/3/26
RUSSELL, LCPL Larry Gene	L/3/26
WILLIAMS, PFC Tommy Dorsey	L/3/26

PFC Dolan died of wounds received yesterday, 16 April, when at about 1745, after carrying casualties as a stretcher bearer, he crawled up to a bomb crater and then, as he stood up and started running, was shot in the head.[3080]

[*Effective 1246H, 1/26 departed Operation Scotland II and came under control of 3rd Marine Division. Effective 1916H, 3/26 departed Operation Scotland II and came under control of 3rd Marine Division.*[3081]]

At 1112H, Battalion 2/1 commenced a helicopter displacement to Khe Sanh Combat Base, with the Command Group CHOPed to 26th Marines at 1400. By 1405, 1st Marines CP closed at Ca Lu Combat Base and the forward command group commenced displacement from Ca Lu to Khe Sanh via motor vehicle convoy. By 1430, the displacement of 2/1 was completed and at 1600, 1st Marines CP opened at KSCB. As of 0800, 18 April, 1st Marines assumed responsibility for the 26th Marines portion of the Scotland II AO.[3082]

During the displacement of 2/1, a helicopter lost power and landed in a minefield instead of the normal helicopter landing zone.[3083] "The personnel on the chopper panicked, thought the bird was on fire and began pushing people off the rear into the friendly mine field. One man, our Artillery Forward Observer, was killed, and approximately 10 were wounded including the Company Executive Officer, Company Gunnery Sergeant, Weapons Platoon Commander, one Marine from 81s, 2 from the Helicopter Support Team, and so forth."[3084] In an entry for 17 April in a diary kept by Don Dennis, a

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[3074] CG FMFPAC 220314Z/Mar68, Subj: News article from Cincinnati Enquirer, in file at Historical Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C. titled "HQMC: Supply Situation, Khe Sanh."

[3075] Conversation with J. Thomas Esslinger, 28 July 1993.

[3076] Statement of LCPL Richard T. Tomlinson in Navy Commendation Medal file, HN David M. Sarley.

[3077] Conversation with David Anderson, 13 July 1990.

[3078] *Ibid.*

[3079] 1/26 ComdC April 1968, S2/S3 Log, 16 April 1968, Ser #28 and 29.

[3080] Statement of HM3 William G. Gessner, in *Investigation.*

[3081] FMFPAC 2102477Z/Apr68, WESTPAC SITREP #1118

[3082] 1st Mar ComdC Apr68, Encl (1), p. III-A-8.

[3083] 26Mar Operation SCOTLAND [II] SITREP #10, 171201H-171800H APR 68, Para. 3.A. The SITREP indicates 4 friendly WIA (medevaced).

[3084] Comments of 1/Lt Lawrence E. Beeson, HQMC Oral History Tape #2781. Beeson was acting XO of G/2/1.

Marine with 3rd Platoon, G/2/1: "We to Khe Sanh at 1435. The helicopter behind us landed in a mine field. They had 1 KIA and a couple of WIA. The WIA had their feet blew off. It's a waste of lives. Khe Sanh is dumb. Trash everywhere."[3085]

PFC Lamon was called "Butch" by his family and friends, one of which later memorialized: "We were childhood friends and I think of him often... I remember the day 'Butch' came over to my house to tell me that he had enlisted in the Marine Corps. I remember telling him, 'Are you crazy, they will send you to Vietnam.' He said, 'That's what I want to do, fight for my country.' I begged him to reconsider. He did not, and that is why his name is listed here. I will never forget you, Butch my friend or the others that lost their lives in the Vietnam War."[3086]

At 1645, Co E/2/26 received 2 rounds of 122mm rockets killing two.[3087] LCPL Derek E. Brockway of E/2/26 recalled the sequence that led to this horror. "We left 861 [A]. A lot of people that I'd come over with weren't there and a lot of people that had come after I'd got there weren't there [either], so I was feeling pretty good about the fact that I was still there. We started humping down from 861, going to the battalion area... We got down to 558, and there's a lot of people playing basketball, football, no helmets or flak jackets. So we thought, well, we're in a secure area now, might get to rest... We got set in for the night. The next day they passed the word that there was a stream down there that they used to take baths and things. So they passed the word that we could go down. We was all really happy about that. Spirits were up. We moved down there, and I was walking point. Everybody got all cleaned up, and we was coming back. I was walking point on the way back. There was about 20 of us, and I didn't even have my helmet on. I had just washed my hair [and] I wasn't too happy about getting it dirty again. I figured we were in a secure area. About half way back, something made me put my helmet on [as] I was talking along. The next thing I knew, all I could feel was hot air and I was flying through the air. I landed and scrambled after my helmet. Got my helmet back on, and I was waiting for some part of me to start hurting because I could see the cloud of smoke. The round hit to my right front, but I didn't get a scratch. I turned around, and there was about 4 more rounds come in... The man behind me—about 5 foot behind me before I went flying—he was dead, and the rest of them were missing legs and things."[3088]

PFC James N. Kaylor remembers this incident on the very last day they were at Khe Sanh. The Marines went to the stream in squad groups, "but the Corpsmen could do basically what they wanted."[3089] "We're spread out the way we're supposed to. I remember the first round hit the top of this little hill closer toward 558. The kid in front of me, Deleplane, a Corpsman: it blew his head right off his shoulders. The kid behind me, a black Marine: I remember his femor sticking out with no knee, and he lost his leg. I looked back, further down the hill where the other rocket hit, (and all the corpsmen were interspersed too). It was really peculiar. It killed only Navy guys. Not one Marine got killed in this. All the Marines got wounded, except the very first guy [LCPL Derek E. Brockway]. The Navy guys were all interspersed. Nobody knew it was coming. There was no warning."[3090]

PFC William J. Griffith remembers going to the stream in staggered squads. As each squad was washing up, another squad was enroute and another squad was returning. "It was our turn to go next when this other squad jumped in front of us, the Headquarters section, and we had to wait a little bit longer, and then it was our turn to go next. We went down, and we were in the water. It was ever so small, but it was adequate. As the Headquarters was coming back—which included the Corpsmen, some radiomen, and others—they were coming back and the rounds came in... That would have been us coming back [if the Headquarters group hadn't gone ahead of them]."[3091]

LCPL Brockway remembers the problem of getting medical help: all the Corpsmen near them were dead. "All the jolly feelings were gone. Everybody was feeling kinda bad because we figured that the Khe Sanh ordeal was over and that we wouldn't be loosing too many more people, and yet we were still loosing, getting out of it... The thing I learned mostly in the Khe Sanh which really impressed me is the fact that you neer know when you're going to go. You have to be on your toes at all times no matter what anybody tells you—how secure an area is or not, that there's going to be times when you're going to be there and the next minute you're not. you loose a lot of

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[3085] Printed in *We Remember, The Vietnam Stories of the Men of 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines*, Vietnam Era 2nd Bn, 1st Mar, 1993, p. 218.

[3086] Diane M. (Koller) Butcher, email, posted on the Vietnam Virtual Wall, 01 June 1999.

[3087] 26Mar, Operation SCOTLAND [II] SITREP #10, 171201H-171800H APR 68, Para 3.D. lists the source of the rockets as XD798463; 2/26 ComdC, Apr 68, Encl (1), p. 12, lists 7 incoming rocket rounds from vicinity of XD774479 and the friendly group at XD821444. In addition to the 2 KIA, there were 15 WIA (14 of which were evacuated).

[3088] Comments of LCPL Derek E. Brockway, HQMC Oral History Tape #2775.

[3089] Conversation with James Kaylor, 8 April 1991. Corpsmen, while having a strong bond to the Marines with which they lived and died, were Navy and naturally had a bond with each other and most probably would have wanted to be with each other at a time like this.

[3090] *Ibid.*

[3091] Conversation with Major William Griffith, 19 February 1993.

buddies. You learn a lot of things that maybe you shouldn't learn."[3092]

One of the KIA Corpsmen, HM2 Charles T. Lagenfeld, had very heroically served his men during the attack of 5 February 1968 on Hill 861-A when he "..personally treated the numerous casualties and directed the activities of other corpsmen. Repeatedly exposing himself to intense enemy mortar, rocket, and automatic weapons fire, he moved throughout the fire-swept area to aid fallen Marines and assist in their evacuation to the company aid station."[3093]

His youngest sister remembers playing badminton with Charles, "but more important, what we would do is that he would get a new record of the Beatles. We would go downstairs in the basement and sing the Beatles songs together over and over and over again. Any time he would go driving, we would sing songs together. Chuck's mother always thought that he could do no wrong. Little did she know that he skipped about a month of school of play poker and drink beer with his friends. I'd come home from school and the kitchen would be smoke-filled and there'd be empty beer bottles and poker chips laying all over the kitchen table. I was sworn to silence."[3094]

Mr. Terry Redlin, a world-renowned artist of nature scenes, remembered his brother-in-law and good friend, Charles Lagenfeld in a painting, "His Last Good-Bye." Mr. Redlin recalls that although he was 10 years older, the two of them loved to hunt and fish and enjoyed Chess and other board games, spending hours together.[3095]

On 18 April, as of 1500H, 2/26 departed Operation Scotland II and came under the operational control of 4th Marines, joining Operation Lancaster II.[3096]

3092 Comments of Brockway, cited. Underscoring provided.
3093 Navy Commendation Medal Citation for HM2 Charles T. Lagenfeld; Statement of 2/Lt Donald E. R. Shanley in NCM file on HM2 Lagenfeld.
3094 Taped comments of Jill Palmquist, September, 2004.
3095 The painting portrays a snow-covered house and landscape at night. "Dad has just finished hanging the homecoming banner. He has been busy all day getting ready for his son's return. The cars are all washed and the garage straightened. Mom has the tree decorated and lit; and from the house wafts the aroma of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies, his favorite. From the window, she sees a car slowly pull up to the front walk. As she opens the door, expecting to embrace her son, she is horrified to see a representative from the Navy and a Chaplain walking up the snowy steps. At this moment, our hearts sink as we realize it is not her son, but the devastating news that he has been killed in war. As her body begins to crumble from the inside out, she finds herself unable to speak... unable to even breathe." Mr. Redlin most graciously will donate all proceeds from "His Last Good-Bye" to Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. [From brochure]. Tom Eichler, "A Trip Worth Remembering," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #59 (Fall, 2004), p. 19.
3096 FMFPAC WESTPAC SITREP #1118.

18 April 1968

CLARKE, PFC James Phillip G/2/3
LOPEZ, HN Jose Angel Jr. H&S/2/26

Corpsman Lopez may have died of wounds from the rockets that killed the corpsmen yesterday.

PFC Clarke died from fragment wounds to his head while on patrol.[3097] G/2/3 on this day was providing road security along Route 9.[3098]

[*Co H/2/1, while on a perimeter patrol of KSCB, found a bunker at XD849419, previously a perimeter position, destroyed by artillery. Inside were remains of one M-16 rifle and other 782 gear, a boot with part of a foot in it, a right hand severed at the wrist, a piece of intestine, camouflaged cover with bits of brains and scalp in it, part of scalp with black hair, part of spinal column, and other unidentified pieces of meat and remains of camouflaged utilities. The Marines also found letters written in Vietnamese dated April 7 and one set of ARVN dog tags.*[3099]

[*At 180800H, 1st Marines (-)(Rein) assumed OPCON of 1/1, 2/1, 1/9, and 2/26 from the 26th Marines and assumed responsibility for the 26th Marines portion of the SCOTLAND II AO. The units were assigned the following missions: 1/1 was on Hills 881S, 861, 950, and 558. 2/1 provided defense of KSCB and reserved one company as BALD EAGLE reaction force. 1/9 maintained positions on Hill 689. 2/3 continued to provide road security for Route 9. 2/26 prepared to depart (except for H/2/26).*][3100]

[*At 190930H, three vehicles from 2/3 headed east on Route 9 discovered 2 USMC bodies at the bridge at XD956428. At 1530 the same date, 3 tanks and 1 squad from F/2/3 went to the assistance of an ambushed convoy on Route 9 at XD936423 and received mortar, machine-gun and small arms fire from XD962437. The relief force recovered 2 USMC KIA, 3 USMC WIA, and 1 tank.*[3101]]

20 April 1968

CLAYTON, LCPL Michael Marshall A/1/1
REYNA, CPL Samuel A/1/1

HN Charles David Bunner (assigned to First Platoon, Alfa Company) recalls LCPL Clayton:[3102]

3097 HQMC Memo, 29 Apr 1968, Subj: Viet Nam Casualties—HOSTILE DEAD, in HQMC, Historical Center, Washington, D.C., p. 6.
3098 1stMar ComdC Apr68, Encl (1), P. II-C-7.
3099 2/1 ComdC Apr68, S-2 Journal, 18 April 1968, Ser #1.
3100 1stMar ComdC Apr68, p. II-C-6.
3101 2/3 ComdC Apr68.
3102 Letter from Charles David Bunner, 8 September 1995.

"We went out from Hill 861 on patrol looking for mortars on our second patrol. [LCPL Michael Marshall Clayton] was hit by mortar fire after the jet pilots blasted the area where the spotter pilot had dropped his flare... The only problem being the spotter pilot missed by 500 yards. After the jets flew away, their mortar .. opened up on us.

"LCPL Clayton was in a crater hole with his machine gun attempting to hit the mortar.. from a distance. When the mortars opened up on his position, he was hit along the left side of his body and head. Doc Tura and I both responded.. when we heard the call for 'Corpsman Up.'

"We got to him and decided immediately to move him back about 15 yards where we had more room in a 500 pound crater hole in order to work on him. After we moved him and was attempting to keep his airway open and bandage him up, I happened to look up at the top of the crater. I saw a stunned Marine standing there looking down at us. I immediately yelled at him to get down before he drew the enemy fire down on us. As I was saying this, I realized that it was too late because the mortars were encircling our position. Then a mortar.. landed about 5 yards to my left.

"We had 2 Marines standing by waiting to transport LCPL Clayton once we had him stabilized. They were hit down their backsides. Doc Tura was hit down his right side. I was hit down my left side. I was the only one left conscious and called out for other corpsmen for help.

"I could only watch LCPL Clayton breath his last breath. Due to the seriousness of my wounds, I couldn't get to the 2 Marines or Doc Tura to check them out. Finally other corpsmen came in and attempted to check me out first. I refused being treated first since I didn't know the status of the other three. By the time I was treated I was crying because of my concern for them and I couldn't stand not knowing how they were.

"LCPL Clayton was the first man I ever had to die in front of me in which I felt powerless. I couldn't have handled it if the other three were also dead. Later on, I found out that only LCPL Clayton had died. Doc Tura's injuries resulted in him losing 18 inches of his small bowel. One of the Marines had to wear a leg brace on his leg. The other Marine's injuries I'm not sure of. My injuries were the worse of the lot which resulted in my eventually being medically discharged....

"I hope that by telling you what happened on the day I was wounded that perhaps LCPL Clayton's family will find out how their son died on that hill a long time ago...

"Maybe as the story is being told about Khe Sanh, all of the truth will come out about all the KIAs so that their families can also have finally peace of mind.

"It has been hard for me to sit down to write this letter.."

MEMORIES OF A WOUNDED CORPSMAN
By Doc Bunner

I had just turned twentyone
a few days before I entered Nam,
never dreaming that all my beliefs
would be left there on the fields
while endless nightmares
even though buried
would come back
to haunt me without relief.....
MEMORIES

I remember th inking
as I entered the country, foolheartily
that I only had twelve months to do
before I would be back to the world
Never dreaming that my life
would be changed forever....
MEMORIES

The Good, the bad
some you remember
some you bury
trying to hold onto your sanity.
You remember the events
when you joined your platoon
of why you're out in the field
so that a Marine won't take a life
that would result in him having....
MEMORIES

You attempt to do what is right
in order to save all lives.
You risk your life
putting to work all that you've learned,
so that others would not be harmed.
You save most
and get them out
so that they won't have
MEMORIES

After the first fire fight
you know that you did prevent
when they came up to you,
pounding you on the back,
telling you what a good job you did
only to compound the problem
when in reliving the fight
they mentioned things
that you never thought about
resulting in you having
MEMORIES

You thought that you could save the world
Or at least that's what you were taught.

You tried to do what was best
while you were there
trying only to remember the good
and attempting to forget the rest.
But when you least expect it
something comes along....
MEMORIES

Days pass
some good, some bad
you make new friends
and experience that comradeship
that guys that had been under fire get
as you wonder about the greenies
wondering if they would be there
in the heat of battle protecting your back
as you attempted to patch them up
to get them to survive
to get them home
to their loved ones
in the real world....
MEMORIES

Yet the day finally comes
that makes you face the truth
you are only a mortal
attempting to bring a little
compassion an d act of kindness
leaving you to question God
After you get wounded
Watching a Marine friend take his last
'Why God, oh why
do you insist on leaving me alive...'
MEMORIES

To this day
I still remember
that last 'Corpsman Up' cry
running up as I always did
attempting to save another life
never dreaming that this would be my first.
His name I can't remember,
even though I have it written down
His face haunts me today
questioning me with a puzzled stare
MEMORIES
Questions of hope
because 'old Doc's here'
that things will be alright
that he'll treat me right.
But Doc
how did you get wounded,
you weren't suppose to get hurt,
after all we looked out for you
now who is going to take care of us,
better yet, who is going to save me?
MEMORIES

Watching him die
breathing his last
knowing that all your training
could not stop his fate.
Yet you and three others
are now wounded
wondering your fate
as you hear again
that cry of 'Corpsman Up'
coming from your own throat
still trying to do your job.
MEMORIES

Now almost Thirty years later
thinking that you had put
it all behind you
you find yourself being put
in a similar situation
Unfinished business
that you have to get straight
of that fateful day
when you lost your first
and only one....
MEMORIES

You almost lost it
yet realized before you did
that you needed the help
that you had given to others
in order to get through
those.....
MEMORIES

The Marine's name:
Michael Marshall Clayton
KIA April 20, 1968.

SSGT Thomas E. Murphy, Platoon Commander of A-1, 1/1, crawled forward under intense small arms fire until he came within hand grenade range of the NVA mortar that had wreaked havoc on his platoon. Raising up, he threw a grenade into the emplacement, killing the 2 NVA manning the mortar tube. At this point, SSGT Murphy was fired on by other NVA in an adjoining bunker. After being knocked back by a NVA grenade, he threw his remaining grenade into the enemy bunker, killing the NVA soldier.[3103]

[3103] Statement of 1/Lt Allen W. Courtney in Silver Star Medal file of SSGT Thomas E. Murphy.

BARROWS, PFC Irving Donald	E/2/1
CASSELL, PFC Kevin Ray	H/2/3
CHABERT, PFC Gary August	G/2/3
COLEMAN, PFC John Lee	G/2/3
HUGHES, SP5 Samuel Reuben	FOB-3
KEARSLEY, PFC Ronald Charles	H/2/3
NEELEY, PFC William Merritt	H/2/3
RUDD, PFC Richard John Jr.	H&S/2/1
SPINDLER, 2/Lt John Gates	G/2/3
STRONG, PFC Gridley Barstow	H/2/1
TURNER, LCPL Michael Glenn	G/2/3
ZIMMERMAN, LCPL David Paul	G/2/3

[*At 0600H, 1st Marines CHOPed 1st Battalion, 11th Marines to CG, Task Force GLICK.*[3104]]

Prior to being killed this date by shrapnel wounds, SP5 Samuel Hughes had received four Purple Hearts for minor injuries during the siege battle of Khe Sanh. Upon his death, he held a dubious FOB record: he had received 5 Purple Hearts.[3105]

Commencing at 0700, 1st Marines continued plans and preparations for a helicopter lift into Hill 689 (XD806409) to recover the MIA dead from 1/9's battle on 16 April. At 1040H, 2/3(-) with a command group and Companies E, G, and H, 2/3 moved by helicopter from XD792393 to Hill 689, completing the lift at 1115H. At 1300H, 2/1 (-) with a command group and Companies E and F, 2/1, assaulted by helicopter from XD833425 to LZ EAGLE (XD787413), completing the lift at 1525H. 2/3 (-) attacked to the southwest at 1400H, securing Objective 1 (XD800405) at 1450H, 2/1 (-) secured LZ EAGLE at 1525H and commenced to attack west toward Objective 3 (XD777405). At 1655H, 2/3 (-) secured Objective 2 (XD796396) and commenced search and destroy operations and recovery operations for the 1/9 MIA.[3106]

At 0830H, G/2/3 at XD927443 received 2 incoming rounds believed to be 122mm rockets. The rockets ignited a pile of ammunition that had been staged in the LZ resulting in 4 USMC KIA and 8 WIA (7 medevaced).[3107]

Doc [Corpsman] Jerome E. Thomas lost his best friend, LCPL Michael Turner, in this explosion. "Up until that point, the lookout post duty on the hill (at XD927443) had been pretty good. The hill sat between Route 9 and a river... The river served as both a water point and a place to bathe. A bath was a real luxury for the grunts. That morning we got the word to rejoin the rest of the company. It was light and we had a small bonfire going in the bottom of one of the bomb craters on the top of the hill. I was by the bonfire heating up some mocha (a mixture of C ration coffee, cocoa, sugar, and creamer) when the two rockets came in. We had no warning. I heard nothing until this terrific explosion. Something hit me in the back of my shoulders, almost knocking me into the fire. It was Turner. I looked across the fire at him; he was dead. Our lieutenant was also killed [2/Lt John Spindler]. We found a piece of what we believed was his foot, put it into a radio battery bag, tied a medical tag on it, and sent it out with the rest of the body bags. Later that morning, we were picked up by helicopters, flew from the hill to KSCB, and rejoined the rest of our battalion at KSCB. I had been weapons platoon corpsman. I believe the reason I had been on the hill was because the 60mm mortar section was attached to 2nd platoon to provide additional firepower for the lookout post."[3108]

Although the LZ had been adequately prepped, at 1330H, shortly after 2/1 moved into LZ EAGLE (XD787415), the battalion began receiving approximately 150 – 175 mortars, mainly 82s, and took several casualties.[3109] One of the Corpsmen of 2/1, Ralph ("Doc") Daniello, recalls one of the KIA, PFC Gridley Strong as "..a very intelligent and caring person who hated killing of any kind. We used to stay up late on the line or in a bunker and just talk about life and living. He was killed by a mortar round. I tried to revive him with mouth to mouth resuscitation, but he just lay there with his eyes closed and one lens of his glasses cracked and the other completely out of the frame. I'll never forget his face both when he was alive and sadly as he lay dead. He was a beautiful human being who continues to inspire me. Thanks Gridley."[3110]

From 1630H – 2000H, Companies E, G, and H of 2/3, while attacking an objective at XD795396 received 60mm mortars, small arms fire and grenades from an estimated NVA company dug into the reverse slope of the hill in bunkers and spider traps causing one Marine KIA and 49 WIA.[3111]

G/2/3 was the point company for the assault and as soon as the lead elements of the company reached the crest of the hill, they started taking small arms fire and yelled for everyone to run to the top of the hill. Once atop the hill, the Marines began to receive mortars. Doc Thomas, suddenly the senior corpsman for the company (Doc Quick, the senior corpsman, having departed earlier in the day)[3112] had found a bomb crater on the reverse

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[3104] 1stMar ComdC Apr68, Encl (1), p. II-C-7.
[3105] Saal, Harve, *SOB, MACV Studies and Observations Group (Behind Enemy Lines)*, Vol. III, *Legends*, Milwaukee, WI: Jones Techno-Comm, 1990, p. 286.
[3106] 1stMar ComdC Apr68, pp. II-C-7 & 8.
[3107] 2/3 ComdC Apr68.
[3108] Letter from Jerome E. Thomas, 15 June 1992.
[3109] 2/1 ComdC Apr68, S-2 Journal, 21 April 1968, Ser #3 and 7; Comments of LtCol Billy R. Duncan, HQMC Oral History Tape #2781.
[3110] Ralph Daniello, email in Khe Sanh Guest Book, Record 60 posted 9 July 1997.
[3111] Letter from Jerome E. Thomas, 15 June 1992
[3112] *Ibid.*

slope for an aid station for casualties when the Company Gunny, Kenny, advised him that one of his corpsmen was hit. Somewhat surprised that the Gunny would move through all the mortar fire to inform him, Doc Thomas discovered that although there were two corpsmen with each platoon, all the others were either dead or wounded![3113]

The one KIA, PFC Cassell, was David Brombaugh's (of H/2/3) friend: "We left this ridge walking. Just weapons and ammo. Still no water or food. Told us to write last letter home, no gave us much of a chance. Each 4th man had an E-tool. They said we don't want the gooks to get much off of us if we were wiped out too. It was April 21, 1968, going after 1/9 who were wiped out April 16. We just got to the base of the hill and Co Roc hit us with incoming. Lt Bill Henry was hit bad, partial foot loss. We dragged him back and proceeded up 689. We found a few dead here and there, mutilated grossly, privates cut off and in their mouths, ring fingers cut off, etc. We made it to the top and I was 10 yards behind Cassell. We were down and all got on line. I was behind a little because I was 3.5 rockets. They just called us up to try and hit a bunker. Cassell stood up and was cut down by A.K. He was right at a spider hole and didn't know it. His back was smoking from tracers as he lay in front of me. The next was an explosion. We feel the gook blew up himself with a satchel charge or could have been grenades on Cassell. His leg flew over me and Jim Fosaid had a baseball size chunk of flesh hit him in the face. His body got mixed up somehow."[3114]

It wasn't until about a year later that Cassell was identified. Cassell had landed on top of a spider hole, and the NVA soldier shot right through his body. "The only thing we found were his legs—blew over the top of me. I can see his leg right now as I tell you this story. We found what was left of him—the chest on up. [But then] he got mixed up with those bodies from 1/9, and a guy named Roy Peck and I went over [to Nam] together and came home together—right at the end of our tour they were going around asking if anybody knew a Kevin Cassell. 'Yeah,' We told them the story. 'Well, they got his remains in DaNang, frozen, and they need somebody to go down and make a positive identification.' He [Peck] went down and identified him, and after all that, O, it just tore him up terrible."[3115]

Kevin Cassell was Roy Peck's best friend in Nam. "When I came back off R&R they were circulating a picture—if anybody knew who this was to come down to the morgue. I was with him every minute for 5 months that we were over there together... The bullet that he was shot with entered his body from his stomach. He was lying on the ground. I could actually see it coming out of his back. In fact, the tracers caught his flak jacket on fire. Then there was an explosion and all we found was his head and his leg. It was a satchel charge or something because we could see him put whatever it was on him. I couldn't believe he was dead."[3116]

After Cassell was blown up, "We didn't go any further. We stayed on here and tried to dig in, two men together. We were next to a bomb crater that had about 20 1/9 bodies in it. It appeared these were the dead and wounded and survivors and where they fought to the last. E-tools were out and made into picks, few 16s found and were broken stocks, no ammo, fought till overwhelmed. The gooks were all around us in the ground. As we tried to dig in you'd see an arm come out and throwing grenades at us.. I had my .45 and tried to shoot their arms and hands. We'd start scratching some more [digging a hole], and Kearsley started up towards the NVA that was throwing the grenadews. A mortar team leader—Bentley—kept telling him to get back, 'Get back; you don't know where they're at.' He got back about 2 different times. And Kearsley said, 'I'm going to get him!' He started out there and took a couple rounds in the top of the head from that bunker. Bentley run up there and threw a grenade in and killed him [the NVA]. We found the 2 gooks the next day. But dark was setting in. Kearsley was still alive. He was lost and the Corpsman brought him back three or four times. A 46 tried to come in at dark, foggy, and came close but couldn't see our signal light and gave up. He died in the middle of the night. The gooks came for us, even talked to us, 'You die, I'm coming in Marine,' etc. At this time I had 3 rounds left for the .45.. We found 46 bodies the next day as I recall. We were after 49. We found Cassell's remains, rib cage up."[3117]

By 1406H, 38 of 1/9's MIAs were recovered. The recovery operation had caused 6 Marine KIAs, 55 WIA (major) and 31 WIA (minor), and 34 NVA were killed.[3118]

"We were all given 1 or 3 body bags. We had to lay out the body bags next to the body and then try and roll the body into the bag. I grabbed one Marine by the foot and the whole foot and boot came away from the body. The smell was terrible. We could hardly stand the smell. We finally got that all done and then we saw about 6 more Marines at the bottom of the hill. We got on line and started down the hill, but every time we tried, the

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[3113] Letter from Jerome E. Thomas, 1 June 1992.

[3114] David Brombaugh, letter of 28 June 1992. Another Marine with H/2/3, Ben Williams, recalls seeing the 1/9 Marines, very badly decomposed. One group was in a bomb crater, lined up, side by side. "It was obvious they had been taken prisoner and then killed because they had their hands tied behind their backs with comm. wire." [Conversation with Ben Williams, 8 December 2002].

[3115] Conversation with David Brombaugh, 24 March 1990.

[3116] Conversation with Roy Peck, 28 August 1994. Peck had the nickname of "Bird." "The first time we was ever mortared, they said that I actually flew to the hole; my feet never touched the ground."

[3117] *Ibid.*; Letter from David Brombaugh, 28 June 1992.

[3118] 2/3 ComdC Apr68.

NVA would shoot a couple rounds of arty at us. We tried this about 3 times and they did the same thing... We decided to try and send down a squad of about 8 men. They moved down the hill to the bodies, put them into the body bags and then we called in choppers to come in and get the bodies. The choppers came in, picked up the bodies and then our 8 men came back up the hill, and the NVA never fired a shot. I guess they saw that all we wanted were the bodies and nothing more... We were short of food, as usual. We found food from the dead. Most had been burned. It was the first time I had burned peaches for desert. It wasn't too bad."[3119]

Doc Thomas [G/2/3] recalls the night at Hill 689 as very difficult. The Marines continued to receive mortars. He was almost depleted of morphine and other medical supplies. At dawn of 22 April, reveille was provided by the NVA through 152mm artillery screaming over them and exploding in the valley. The next rounds landed on the other side of the hill, wounding more Marines, including a head wound with arterial bleeding on a young lieutenant from H/2/3. Later in the morning, helicopters arrived to evacuate the dead and wounded as well as 1/9's MIA.[3120]

22 April 1968

GUSTAFSON, HM3 James Ernest	**G/2/3**
PARCEL, LCPL John William	**G/2/3**

G/2/3 (along with Companies "E" and "H" of 2/3) while continuing to search and recover the 1/9 MIA on Hill 689 this date continued to receive NVA incoming. Total casualties for the operation (21-22 April) were: 6 friendly KIA, 55 major WIA and 31 minor WIA.[3121]

23 April 1968

MURPHY, Cpl David	**D/1/1**

CPL Murphy was KIA by fragment wounds to the head while on operations.[3122]

24 April 1968

JONES, PFC Larry Allen	**H&S/1/9**

PFC Jones legs were blown off on 8 April; today he died of his wounds.[3123]

25 April 1968

[Task Force GLICK assumed OPCON of M/3/4 and K/3/4 effective 241630H and passed OPCON of these companies to 1st Marine Regiment.[3124] Effective 250001H TF Glick is redesignated TF HOTEL.[3125]]

BALKIT, PFC Donald	**G/2/3**
DENNIS, LCPL Paul Leslie	**D/1/1**
JAYNES, LCPL James Oakley	**C/3rd Tanks**
NOVEMBRE, CPL Carmine	**D/1/1**

[At 1133H, Co E/2/3 made a helicopter assault from XD895406 to a LZ at XD920410 in preparation for recovery operation of a downed C-123 in the vicinity of XD934405. By noon, E/2/3 had arrived and commenced search and recovery operations. By 1745H, E/2/3 had recovered: "Unknown number bodies (skeletons) (scattered remains made even an estimate totally impossible), 6 pair of identification tags, 7 service record books (partially or almost totally destroyed), assorted items such as health records, dental records, personal letters."[3126]

At 1220H, D/1/1 at XD778438 (Hill 881-South) received 2 rounds of 82mm mortars with one round scoring a direct hit on a bunker, killing three Marines.[3127]

At 252110H, a squad from G/2/3 accompanied by a tank (C-21) patrolling Route 9 was hit with satchel charges, RPG rockets and grenades in the vicinity of XD904398 (near Lang Kat) resulting in 8 USMC WIA and 4 MIA (tank crew).[3128] The tank crew of four consisted of: CPL Gary Lee Hall (tank commander), PFC Charles Wilson Tucker, Jr. (loader), LCPL John Rodriguez, and LCPL James Jaynes (driver).

"Prior to going on this night patrol we were mortared while in our base camp near Landing Zone HAWK (XD892405). Because of this Cpl Garry Hall, the tank commander of C-21 sensed the danger of the patrol and

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[3119] Torrence, Carl, "In Country 1967 – 1969," written in February, 1984.
[3120] Letter from Jerome E. Thomas, 1 June 1992.
[3121] 2/3 ComdC Apr68.
[3122] HQMC Memo from [illegible] AO1C, 6 May 1968, Subj: Viet Nam Casualties, in [illegible]C, Historical Center, Washington, D.C., p. 4. D/1/1 occupied and operated from Hill 881-South.
[3123] HQMC Memo from DN to AO1C, 29 Apr 1968, Subj: Viet Nam Casualties, in HQMC, Historical Center, Washington, D.C., p. 5. The Vietnam Memorial records indicate H&S/1/26, but the H&S/1/9 Monthly Personnel Diary lists him as a member.
[3124] CG Task Force GLICK 241110Z/Apr68 in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc Apr68 file #187.
[3125] CG 3rd MarDiv 241450Z/Apr68 in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc Apr68 #188.
[3126] 1stMar ComdC Apr 1968, Encl (1), p. III-A-12; 1stMar 251615Z/Apr68, SCOTLAND II SITREP #042 (251800H to 252400H) Apr68, Para. 3.B.
[3127] 1stMar 251011Z/Apr68, SCOTLAND II SITREP #041 (251200H to 251800H) Apr 68, Para. 3.D. Although the SITREP indicates 3 KIA, only two are listed (It is possible that CPL James DODD, who died 29 April 1968, may have DOW and be the third Marine). The SITREP indicates NVA fire from XD790450, XD772432, XD774459, and XD792452.
[3128] 2/3 ComdC Apr68.

therefore gave us a thorough briefing in case we should be ambushed.

"At 2100 we began the patrol with a squad of infantry riding on the tank. The night was extremely dark and we hadn't gone more than 300 meters before the NVA hit us. We were rounding the first bend in the road when they hit us from the front and sides. The first hit was a RPG which was deflected off the front of the tank and down on the driver. Corporal Hall began firing the cal. 50 machine gun and was radioing for help at the same time. When the cal. 30 machinegun jammed Cpl Hall had us fire canister after canister into the enemy position. At this time the tank began moving again and we all thought our driver had regained consciousness and was pulling out of the killing zone. The tank then left the road and careened down a steep embankment to the bottom of a ravine.

"When we landed in the ravine, Cpl Hall tried continuously to get help, but all radios were out. He had us spraying the immediate area with the cal. 45 'grease gun,' grenades, and cal. 45 pistols. He worked to shut off our engine because it had already started to spread fire along the suspension.

"We remained to fight [in] the tank as long as possible, but when the small arms rounds began cooking off Cpl Hall had us remove all available weapons and designated a foxhole to go to. After Cpl Hall had tried but failed to recover the driver's body from the burning tank he joined us in the foxhole. When the 90mm rounds started to cook off throwing debris all over the area, Cpl Hall had us set up a watch in a location further from the tank until first light when we met with friendly troops."[3129]

[*The next day, at 260700H, Co H/2/3 arrived at the ambush site, XD904398, and recovered the three alive tank crewmen (2 with minor wounds and one unhurt), recovered the Marine KIA and also found one NVA KIA with RPG rocket launcher and rocket at the side of the road, apparently killed by 90mm canister rounds. The tank was a total loss.*[3130]]

26 APRIL 1968

BURGESS, PFC Russell David	**F/2/3**
FIX, PFC William Leroy	**F/2/3**

[*A platoon from G/2/1 while conducting a road sweep discovered portions of a head and a body at XD845407 (the site of the B/1/26 ambush on 25 Feb 1968), believed to be from a U.S. serviceman, 10 badly decomposed NVA bodies in unmarked green utilities, various U.S. and NVA gear and equipment littered throughout the area, and no weapons. Also discovered were 25 – 30 living bunkers (5 x 10- ft.) containing approximately 2000 pounds of rice.*[3131]]

From 1530H – 1830H, Co F/2/3 had sporadic contact in the vicinity of XD901390, receiving small arms fire, automatic weapons fire, and RPG rounds from an estimated platoon of NVA, resulting in 2 USMC KIA.[3132] This official account does not reflect the chilling, haunting memory of one of those who were involved:

"We got word that there was movement in the ravine off to the left of the road. Two platoons went down to investigate. First platoon was in front and my platoon was behind. When we reached the ravine, 2nd platoon turned right into the ravine. First platoon did not enter the ravine. When we turned it was as if we were about to walk in front of 1st Platoon. As I remember, Pvt Fix, Cpl Echart, Pvt Dave Burgess, and I were the first to reach a clearing that had been bombed out long before. All four of us were more or less in line when automatic fire opened up from our right. David [Burgess] took one round in the side. Private Fix took three rounds across the side of his neck almost taking his head off. Being the FNG I was and plus the fact I was trained with a M-14 and had never seen a M-16 til I got to Viet-Nam, I didn't know the difference between the sounds of an AK-47 as to an M-16. I later found out that difference but not that day. From the direction of fire we took the only place it could have come from was 1st Platoon. I think David Burgess and Pvt Fix were killed by friendly fire. Later when I did learn that distinct difference between sounds of weapons I know we were not fired upon by the enemy. I think the whole thing was a horrible fatal mistake. We went back to the ravine and found no evidence of enemy activity in the area. No spent shell casings, no holes, no trampled down elephant grass, nothing. I stayed up the rest of the night talking to another Pvt named Willie Peoples about what could have happened. He told me it was best that I never say anything more about it. I never have until now. I know what happened. There was never any enemy down there... I've lived with it for 27 years and I can't do it any more. I never told anybody this because I felt like I waited too long."[3133]

[3129] Statement of PFC Charles W. Tucker in Bronze Star Medal file of CPL Garry Lee Hall. After the tank rolled into the ravine and came to rest and burst into flames, "PFC Tucker made no attempt to abandon the vehicle but, instead, picked up the cal. 45 sub-machine gun [grease gun] and began spraying the immediate area to fend off the enemy. He kept firing and throwing hand grenades thereby allowing me to attempt radio communications with our unit in the rear." [Statement of CPL Garry L. Hall in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Charles Wilson Tucker, Jr.]

[3130] 2/3 ComdC Apr68.

[3131] 2/1 ComdC Apr 68, S-2 Journal, 26 April 1968, Ser: #1 and 5.

[3132] 2/3 ComdC Apr68.

[3133] Letter from George M. Atwood, 13 December 1994.

29 APRIL 1968

DODD, CPL James William D/1/1

CPL Dodd be the third KIA from the action of 25 April 1968.

30 APRIL 1968

TERRY, CPL Allen Lee H/2/3

CPL Terry died from fragment wounds to the body while in a defensive position.[3134]

[*NVA activity in May in the Khe Sanh area "..focused repeatedly on the area south of Route #9. It was estimated that enemy forces consisted of at least 12 battalions of the 304th Division and the 102nd Regiment of the 308th Division. There was also increased evidence of a new enemy road leading from Laos across the far southern extremity of the Scotland II area of operations."*[3135]]

[*Effective at noon on 01 May 1968, Brigadier General Carl W. Hoffman relieved Brigadier General Joseph E. Glick as CG, TF HOTEL.*[3136]

01 MAY 1968

BOSHEERS, LCPL James Larry K/3/4
OLSEN, PFC George Charles B/1/1

LCPL Bosheers died when a friendly grenade exploded while burning trash. PFC Olsen died from gunshot wound to the body from friendly rifle fire when he walked in front of an ambush site.[3137]

02 MAY 1968

LAFOND, CPL Roland Robert H/2/3

03 MAY 1968

CHANEY, WO1 Arthur Fletcher A/1-9 Cav
MC KAIN, CWO Bobby Lyn A/1-9 Cav

An AH-1G helicopter (#66-15332), departed LZ SHARON (YD336492) with CW-2 McKain as pilot and WO-1 Chaney as copilot with the mission of armed escort for a recon team operating west of Khe Sanh. At about 1405H, their plane was hit by 37mm AA fire at XD708388 (about 1500 meters north of Lao Bao) and exploded in mid-air at about 1500-ft. above ground. The tail hook and one main rotor separated from the aircraft as it spun to the ground out of control and on fire. The aircraft impacted at XD685382. Seconds later the ammunition on board detonated.[3138]

04 MAY 1968

[*Task organization at Khe Sanh: 3rdMarDiv(-)(Rein) [Major General Tompkins], TF HOTEL [BGen Hoffman], 1st Marines (Rein) [Col Hughes], HqCo 1st Mar, 1/1 [LtCol Gravel], 2/1 [LtCol Duncan], 2/3 [LtCol Davis], 3/4 [LtCol Bourne], 1/11 [LtCol Hughes], 2nd Brigade (-) 1st Air Cavalry Division [Col Kinnad, USA], 1-5 Cav [LtCol Jordan], 2-5 Cav [LtCol Leary, 1-77 Arty [LtCol White]; Additional U.S. Forces in TF HOTEL: SU-2 (LSU), Det HqBn 3rd MarDiv, Det 1st RadioBn, Det MASS-3, Det MACTU-62, Det VMGR-152, Det WERS-17, Det H&MS-29, Det H&HS-1, Det 3rd ForceRecon, Det CBMU301, Sec Btry C/1-144 Arty (USA), Sec Btry G/65 Arty (USA), FOB-3 (USA), Det 37th Signal Bn (USA), Det 15th Aerial Port Sqdn (USAF), Det 1st Mobile Unit (USAF). Indigenous: FOB-3 has 328 indigenous personnel.*[3139]]

[*The 2nd Brigade, 1st Air Cavalry Division consisted of two infantry battalions, the 1st of the 5th and the 2nd of*

[3134] HQMC Memo from DN to AO1C, 6 May 1968, Subj: Viet Nam Casualties, p. 9.

[3135] "History of Task Force HOTEL," appended to ComdC Ju69.

[3136] CG 3rdMarDiv 010500Z/May68, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc May 1968, Encl (2).

[3137] HQMC Memo from DN to AO1C, 6 May 1968, Subj: Viet Nam Casualties, in HQMC, Historical Center, Washington, D.C., p. 10.

[3138] Statements of Capt Harry E. McCloud and 1/Lt William H. Dunavant, and Circumstances of Loss, Case #1155, Library of Congress MIA microfilm reel #284, Folder #120. McKain and Chaney were flying in the wing position to Capt Harry E. McCloud. When McCloud received heavy automatic weapons fire from XD708388, McKain and Chaney made a fire pass and then were hit. Immediately following the crash, Lt William H. Dunavant and his wingman, WO-1 Dayle A. Kasner (other helicopter pilots in the area) immediately flew to the scene of the crash and observed the helicopter engulfed in flames. They were driven from the site by heavy automatic weapons fire.

[3139] CG 3rd MarDiv 040750Z/May68, Annex A (Rev) to OPORD 11-68 SCOTLAND II, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc May 1968, Encl (20). Locations: 1/1 (XD820450), A/1/1 (XD802444), B/1/1 (XD820450 and a plt on XD843456), C/1/1 (XD779439), 2/1 (KSCB), E/2/1 (KSCB), F/2/1 (XD885397), G/2/1 (KSCB), H/2/1 (XD876383), 2/3 (XD895406), E/2/3 (XD906385), F/2/3 (XD895406 and a plt at XD902399), H/2/3 (XD892423), 3/4 (XD802409), I/3/4 (XD802409, K/3/4 (XD806409 and a plt at XD922402), L/3/4 (XD802409, M/3/4 (KSCB), 2nd Bde 1st ACD: 1/5 (LZ PEANUTS, XD 810393), A/1-5 (LZ PEANUTS), B/1-5 (XD793373), C/1-5 (XD793373), C/1-5 (LZ BUTCHER), 2-5 (LZ SNAPPER), A/2-5 (XD878349), B/2-5 (XD868353), C/2-5 (XD848331), and D/2-5 (LZ SNAPPER). [3rd MarDiv COC 070340Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #77 041201H – 041800H.

the 5th, each with four infantry companies, Alfa, Bravo, Charlie, and Delta. They were supported by 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery, which had 2 105mm batteries and one 155mm howitzer battery. The 3 batteries were organized on 2 fire bases which were also landing zones to facilitate helicopter delivery of ammunition. LZ SNAPPER (XD845344) had the 155 battery and one of the 105 batteries and LZ PEANUTS (XD808395) had the remaining 105mm battery. The 155mm battery fan of the Brigade reached about 4 clicks into Laos and was able to render some counter-battery fire into Co Roc (center of mass, XD7530).[3140]]

CLARK, CPL Jimmy Ray	**A/1-77 Arty**
COTTRELL, LCPL Darrell Wayne	**G/2/1**
FOWLER, SMAJ Robert Allen	**C/1-5 Cav**
GALINDO, CPL Edwin Gene	**C/1-5 Cav**
GARIEPY, CPL Robert David	**A/1-77 Arty**
HURST, PFC Ronald Lynn	**C/1-5 Cav**
JOHNSON, LCPL Charles Timothy	**G/2/1**
LEAGUE, SGT Roy Barry	**C/1-5 Cav**
YERION, PFC Jeffrey Allen	**E/2/3**

From 041412H to 041750H, the 105mm howitzer battery of 1/5 Cavalry at LZ PEANUTS (XD810393) received a total of 14 rounds of 120mm mortar and 122mm rocket resulting in 1 soldier KIA and 10 WIA (evacuated).[3141] At 1705H, 1-5 at LZ PEANUTS received 1 incoming round and then 10 more of mixed 122 rockets and 120mm mortars resulting in the death of another Army soldier and 9 WIA (evacuated).[3142] At 1730, the ammo dump at LZ PEANUTS suffered a direct hit; secondary explosions prevented immediate assessment.[3143]

At 041605H, G/2/1 on KSCB received 6 rounds of 120mm rockets, one of which made a direct hit on the 60mm mortar pit resulting in 1 KIA[3144] (Actually, there were two)

05 MAY 1968

CHERVONY, SGT Eddie Edwin	**A/1-77 Arty**
DUNDAS, SGT Jerry Richard	**A/1-77 Arty**
FLEMING, PFC Morris Lafond	**A/1-5 Cav**
GUENTHER, SSG Carlyle Lloyd	**A/1-50, 173Avn**
HAEFNER, CPL David Allen	**A/1-77 Arty**
HARRELL, PFC Lenwood Thomas	**A/1-5 Cav**
JOHNSON, PFC Gerald Lee	**A/1-77 Arty**
LOCKETT, PFC Lloyd	**A/1-77 Arty**
MOCK, PFC Donald Ray	**H&S/1/1**
MONTGOMERY, CPL Michael Mallory	**A/1-77 Arty**
POTIER, CPL Milton Phillip	**A/1-77 Arty**
WALTERS, SP4 Craig Collins	**B/1-5 Cav**

At 0230H, the 1-5 CP at LZ PEANUTS noticed NVA in their perimeter near the location of the burning ammo dump. NVA were spotted to the west and suspected in the east. SPOOKY flareship on station and NVA engaged with mortars. Contact was broken at 0445H. As of 0530H, the ammo dump fire at LZ PEANUTS continued and crews were unable to approach their guns due to the fire. 5 105mm howitzers have damage to their optics.[3145] Total casualties from the attack on LZ PEANUTS included 9 friendly KIA, 19 friendly WIA (evacuated) and 15 NVA KIA (confirmed).[3146]

PFC Mock died of fragment wounds to the body while on an operation.[3147]

SSG Guenther grew up in Garfield, Minnesota, and was drafted into the Army at age 17 while still in high school. He was awarded "Soldier of the Month." He died on 5 May 1968 as a result of gunshot wounds while protecting a LZ. His mother wrote: "Oh what bitter grief and pain!.. Everyday is Memorial Day for us war casualty mothers and families."[3148]

06 MAY 1968

HAMMONS, PFC James Luther	**H&S/3/4**

At 1522H, the 3/4 CP at XD803409 received 6 rounds of 120mm mortar fire resulting in 1 WIA (evacuated). From 061500H – 061800H, 2-5 Cav at LZ SNAPPER received approximately 50 rounds of 122mm rockets and recoilless rifle fire causing 1 KIA and 4 WIA (evacuated).[3149]

[*At 071830H, TF HOTEL passed OPCON of 2nd Brigade, 1st Air Cav Division to CG, 3rd Marine Division.*[3150]

[3140] Comments of Maj Walter J. Donovan, HQMC Oral History Tape #2781. Maj Donovan was G-3, TF H.

[3141] 3rdMarDiv COC 070340Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #77, Para 3.F.

[3142] 3rdMarDiv COC 070342Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #78, Para 3.K.

[3143] *Ibid.*, Para. 4.A.

[3144] *Ibid.*; Para 3.A.

[3145] 3rdMarDiv COC 070343Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND SITREP II #79, Para 3.A. and 4.A.

[3146] 3rdMarVid COC 071500Z/May68, Opn SOCTLAND SITREP II #80, Para. 3.A.

[3147] HQMC Memo from DN to AO1C, 13 May 1968, Viet Nam Casualties, p. 7, in HQMC Historical Center, Washington, D.C.

[3148] Article in Ward, Don, *The Faces Behind the Names, The Vietnam War*, Vol. II, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1999, p. 75.

[3149] 3rdMarDiv COC 081930Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #85, Para. 3.G. and H. The 1 WIA may be the KIA indicated; no KIA from 2-5 Cav are listed in the Vietnam Memorial for this date.

[3150] 3rdMarDiv COC 081941Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #90, Para. 4.A.

[About 60 men gathered this date at Wunder Beach for a memorial service for those killed from 1/26 during the siege battle. "They stood silently, dressed in flak jackets and helmets. Could it be these were all that remained from 1/26 who were at Khe Sanh, all the rest of the battalion being new arrivals? It was Monday, 06 May 1968, and the place was an old concrete building that had been blown, burnt, destroyed. The walls remained, jagged silent witness to the horror of destruction they witnessed. There was no roof, no wood at all. The hulk of the war's desolation and destruction was the container of our souls, oddly mirroring damaged bodies. There were so many of them, one could not help remember them—always...The new Commanding Officer of 1/26, LtCol McEwan, said a sentence of two: 'The Memorial Service for those who died at Khe Sanh will begin with the reading of the names by the battalion Adjutant'—and said he had to be off to a regimental brief for tactical purposes, and departed. As long as one was busy, one did not have to face the real demons and dragons of death, grief, sorrow, frailty of life and fragility of friendship. Lt Fitzgerald read off all the names. There were so very many, so very many. Men so young, just really boys, playful with so many dreams, men married with babies they had not seen, men whose names appeared on boxes of cookies sent by a loving mother not yet grieving. Enlisted representatives from the 4 letter companies read various parts of the liturgy. 1/Lt Ben Long read the lesson from First Thessalonians 4.13-18. Chaplain Charles T. Kelly, the Chaplain of 1/26, gave a prayer and a short but deeply thought-out homily in which he emphasized that the real saints are those who enter situations in which they sacrifice all for others... The closing remarks were ready by the 1/26 Executive Officer: 'In this service we have honored not only those who have died at Khe Sanh, but all those who were there. We have fulfilled our promise to the families of our Marines killed in action. Equally important for you men of this battalion is the fact you will always remember the Battle of Khe Sanh. You will live with it for the rest of your lives, and in so doing you will always remember those who gave their lives. To each of you men who were there I have this to say. For three months the eyes of the world looked at you and the enemy who was unable to claim success. At another outpost and milestone in Vietnam's history this same enemy claimed success at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu and with it fell half of Vietnam. Had Khe Sanh fallen there would have been far reaching effects. But Khe Sanh held. You held Khe Sanh living in the trenches, constantly subjected to heavy bombardments of mortars, rockets, artillery, recoilless rifles and sniper fire. You held it because of your fighting spirit and indomitable courage. May God bless you and return you safely home."[3151]]

[3151] Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, Diary entry for 6 May 1968.

[From 7-11 May, Task Force HOTEL conducted Search & Destroy Mission #5, an attack on Hill 881-North and hills northwest and northeast of 881-N. 1/1, occupying positions at 881-South and 861, attacked on 7 May by ground movement towards their north and northwest and established a series of blocking positions, while 2/1 made a helicopter-borne landing on Hill 881-North screened by extensive use of smoke. The NVA had withdrawn, although they harassed the Marines with 82mm mortar fire resulting in several KIA and WIA.[3152]]

08 MAY 1968

CONNOR, PFC Glenn Marshall	**F/2/1**
FLETCHER, LCPL David Foster	**L/3/4**
MEISTER, LCPL David William	**H&S/3/4**
NORTON, CPL Kenneth Bradley	**F/2/1**
PRESTON, PFC Alvin Lewis	**H&S/1/1**

At 081029H D/1/1 (Capt H. L. Haley) at XD774437 received 2 120mm mortars resulting in 1 KIA.[3153] From 081043H to 081300H, 2/1 at XD777457 received mortars of unknown caliber or origin while conducting a heliborne assault on Hill 881-North resulting in 1 KIA and 9 WIA (evacuated).[3154] "On the 8th of May we were lifted to 881-North into a LZ right on the hill itself as the 3rd company in, on another battalion search and destroy mission... At the time we landed, the LZ was hot—incoming mortars. We took one KIA, a squad leader in the 3rd Platoon, and moved out of the LZ to the west.. swept on out approximately 1500 to 2000 meters to the west of 881 North."[3155] The area had not been patrolled in some time.[3156]

[On 8 May, the B5-T8 Front Headquarters controlling the operations of the NVA on the Khe Sanh battlefield, began Phase IV of their operation which continued until 15 July 1968.[3157] On 9 May, the 308th Division was assigned the mission to "make Khe Sanh once again be isolated overland, force the enemy to come to relieve [Khe Sanh], create favorable conditions for us to eliminate part of the enemy's forces outside of their emplace-

[3152] Comments of Maj Walter J. Donovan, HQMC Oral History Tape #2781.
[3153] 3rdMarDiv COC 082025Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #92, Para. 3.E.
[3154] 3rdMarDiv COC 082033Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #93, Para. 3.B.
[3155] Comments of Capt Troy R. Oliver, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #2781. Oliver was CO of F/2/1. Oliver was KIA 19 May 1968.
[3156] Comments of 1/Lt Lawrence E. Beeson, HQMC Oral History Tape #2781. Beeson was acting XO, G/2/1.
[3157]: *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign*], Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, 1987, p. 45. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison.

ments, bring pressure on the enemy at Ta Con [Khe Sanh Combat Base], force them to withdraw forces in other areas in order to augment Ta Con, tie down the greatest number of enemy possible, the longer the better."[3158] *Additionally, "The primary thrust is to attack the enemy outside of their fortifications, coordinating small and intermediate size attacks, and to create conditions for large attacks.. Based on the enemy's continued defense from within the base, we decided to conduct small and intermediate scale attacks, attacking in every way possible in order to draw the enemy out and eliminate them."*[3159]]

09 MAY 1968

DAUGHERTY, LCPL James	**H&S/2/1**
HORSLEY, CPL La Monte Van	**H&S/2/1**
JOHNSON, LCPL Charles William	**A/1/1**

From 091145H to 091215H, E/2/3 on KSCB received 14 rounds of artillery, 8 of which impacted in the vicinity of the 2/1 CP resulting in 2 KIA and 6 WIA (3 of which were evacuated).[3160] CPL Horsley and Michael P. ("Skip") Matey were reinforcing a bunker, putting on more sandbags, when a 122mm rocket exploded about 6-feet away sending shrapnel into Horsley's spine and the bottom back of his head. "A Sergeant got a 'mighty-mite' from somewhere and they took him down to C-Med, but we already knew."[3161]

At 091645H, a patrol from A/1/1 (Capt J. P. McHenry) at XD787450 discovered a NVA bunker complex and was engaged by small arms fire and grenades. The patrol returned fire, calling in artillery and fixed wing which destroyed two NVA mortar sites, U-shaped bunkers, 60 meters of trench and killed 8 NVA. During the battle the Marines lost 1 Marine killed by gun shot to his body and 2 wounded (evacuated).[3162] The patrol, originally scheduled for one day, ended up 7 days long. The contact was on the second or third day as Third Platoon of A/1/1 went up a hill to check on a suspected mortar site. Nothing was noticed as they advanced to the summit other than bunkers all over the top. About ten meters further, the patrol began to receive grenades and machinegun fire, hitting one of their men. 1/Lt Allen Wesley Courtney, Jr., Platoon commander of A-3, attempting to rescue the wounded man and keep others from being hit, had everyone else run off the hill as he personally threw grenades and shot into the bunkers, attempting to keep the NVA down so they wouldn't fire on the Marines of his platoon. "He was the only one on top of the hill at the time. He had ordered the rest of the men off the hill. At this time, our man that was hit, [LCPL Charles] Johnson, was hit in the legs. Lt Courtney suggested he crawl into the bunker because we had already fragged the bunker. There was one NVA dead. So Johnson crawled around to the side. Lt Courtney said, 'No, no, go ahead and just lay there.' Instead, Johnson, I guess in a state of shock, just crawled into the bunker thinking he was safe. [He] got inside the bunker. [We] heard a scream. There was one live NVA in there that had shot him. Lt Courtney, in order to save us also was right by the bunker, had to throw a grenade in to protect the rest of his men. Johnson was already dead, but it was quite a hard thing for Lt Courtney to do—throw a grenade in on his own man in order to protect the rest of us. But he did it. He had to do it, and if it wasn't for him doing that, there would have been a lot more of us hurt and killed. We retreated back down off the hill, went back over to our position.. approximately 100, 200 meters away, and called in air strikes on the hill. The next day we went back to the hill, not finding any NVA bodies but many, many bunkers. We got our man Johnson out of the bunker that had been shot."[3163]

12 MAY 1968

RIZO, CPL Albert Martinez	**H&S/2/3**

At 121700H, G/2/3 (1/Lt C. L. Woodard) at XD907391 engaged a NVA squad armed with automatic weapons and semi-automatic weapons. The NVA squad appeared to be waiting in ambush for the convoy moving from LZ STUD to KSCB. One Marine was killed in the contact.[3164]

14 MAY 1968

LOWE, LCPL Louis Cardell	**K/3/4**

15 MAY 1968

AMESCUA, PFC Steven Epefanio	**L/3/4**
BYRNES, CPL Robert Howard	**K/3/4**
DIAZ, PFC Francisco	**F/2/3**
FURTADO, PFC Edward Jr.	**E/2/3**
JASNOCHA, LCPL Alfred Ladislaw Jr.	**L/3/4**
LOFSTROM, LCPL Leland Eddy	**L/3/4**
MIDTHUN, PFC Roger Wayne	**D/1/1**
MUELLER, LCPL Marco Francisco	**F/2/3**
MURDOCK, LCPL Carl Thomas	**H/2/3**

[3158] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[3159] *Ibid.*
[3160] 3rdMarDiv COC 091930Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #97, Para 3.D.
[3161] Conversation with Michael P. Matey, 26 July 1996; letter from Michael P. Matey, postmarked 1 March 2003.
[3162] 3rdMarDiv COC 100706Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #98, Para. 3.D.
[3163] Comments of HN David W. Allen, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081. 1/Lt Courtney was KIA at Khe Sanh on 17 May 1968.
[3164] 3rdMarDiv COC 130841Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #110, Para. 3.A.

PAGAN, PFC Miguel	**F/2/3**
WHITTED, SGT Joe Ray	**H&S/2/3**
ZIEGLER, GYSGT Lawrence Goric	**F/2/3**

Beginning 15 May 1968, contacts with the enemy became more frequent and reflected a new determination by NVA units to hold the area of Khe Sanh, perhaps indicating an influx of new units and now operating in the area. At 1045H, while ferreting out 4 or 5 snipers encountered on a patrol 4 KM east of Khe Sanh village, security elements of Co E/2/3 (Capt W. E. Russell) at XD883383 uncovered a large NVA force (estimated to be 50) which poured automatic weapons fire from bunkers and trenches. At 0917H, Co H/2/1 (Capt F. J. Mahady) had commenced a helicopter movement to Hill 471 (XD846393), planning to relieve Co E. Co E, reinforced by Cos F (1/Lt W. C. Dishman) & H (1/Lt T. R. Thompson) , 2/3, attacked the NVA positions under cover of extensive airstrikes and artillery fire and, after 7 hours of heavy fighting, the NVA withdrew. Co. E (in the vicinity of XD883383) suffered 1 KIA (PFC Furtado) in the battle (1100H – 1600H). Co. H, fighting in the vicinity of XD885385 received fire from an estimated NVA platoon (rein) dug into bunkers and spider traps, and suffered 1 KIA (LCPL Murdock) during the battle (1430H – 1700H) "Our orders were to move rapidly across the hill.. on to the next knoll.. An air strike on the forward knoll was enroute, and we were to attack as soon as the air strike was completed. My orders to LCPL Murdock's squad were to attack fast across the top of the knoll .. to the next knoll. LCPL Murdock was the point man, and as soon as he crossed the top of the knoll, he was hit by fire from a NVA soldier in a spider hole on the forward slope of the next knoll... He remained there overnight, and we recovered his body the next morning."[3165] Co F (in the vicinity of XD886381) encountered intense automatic small arms fire and 1 RPG resulting in 5 KIA during their battle (1400H – 1700H). The total cost of the battle was 7 Marines KIA and 17 WIA (and evacuated). A search of the area disclosed 15 large bunkers with overhead cover that could hold 4 – 5 men each. Among the items of gear abandoned by the NVA were: 1 light machinegun, 1 map case, 2 diaries, and 20 sets of NVA uniforms.[3166]

Earlier on 15 May (at 0805H), the Second Platoon of L/3/4 at XD792419 on patrol west of Hill 689 received heavy automatic weapons fire from an estimated 9 NVA well dug into covered bunkers (XD792416 and XD788418). L-2, unable to take the objective, consolidated their position and prepared their casualties for evacuation while the Company Command Group (Capt John L. McLaughlin) and 3rd Platoon, commanded by Lt Charles D. Raper, reinforced them under cover of artillery and mortar fire. Although L-3 had suffered many casualties and Lt Raper was hit seriously in both arms, he continued the attack taking all the enemy positions and security the area. The objective was seized at 151154H and began moving back to Hill 689, receiving 120mm mortars while enroute. Suppressive fire was called by friendly artillery, and the firing ceased. The Marines suffered 4 KIA, 34 WIA (evacuated), and 4 WIA (not evacuated).[3167]

16 MAY 1968

ADDINGTON, LCPL Zach Taylor	**M/3/4**
BURNLEY, HM3 Earl Rosemond, Jr.	**M/3/4**
CLAYBORNE, LCPL Milton Gay	**M/3/4**
KNIGHT, PFC Hubert Charles	**M/3/4**
MC CLAIN, SGT William David	**K/3/4**
MENTON, LCPL Charles Russell Jerome	**K/3/4**
PAMPLIN, CPL John Mac	**M/3/4**

A platoon patrol from K/3/4 was sent out to check the area where Co L/3/4 had made contact yesterday, and at 1020H made contact with NVA dug in at XD788419 and XD792416 (the same area where L/3/4 made contact). The platoon returned fire, called in supporting arms and Huey gunships. At 1335, the patrol started receiving heavy 82mm mortar barrages. The patrol called in counter-mortar artillery and the incoming ceased at 1530. At 1515H, the remaining units of Co K/3/4 (Capt S. E. Thomas) linked up with the patrol, and by 2020, Co K/3/4 returned to Hill 689, leaving one MIA and evacuating 10 wounded.[3168]

The MIA, Sgt William D. McClain, Platoon Sergeant of K-2, was wounded in the initial contact of small arms and grenades from approximately 5 NVA well dug in on the hill. Refusing to be medevaced, he remained and led his Marines in a withdrawal to permit the supporting arms to strike the enemy. He kept telling his men, "We're going to take this hill," and following the supporting fire, he led the assault up the hill with Second

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[3165] Letter from Charles S. Gaede, 2 December 2003. Gaede is a LtCol (Ret).

[3166] 2/3 ComdC May68, FMFPAC 170418Z/May68, WESTPAC SITREP #1144; 3rd MarDiv COC 170540Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #120, Para. 3.E.; 3rd MarDiv COC 170541Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #121, Para. 3.A.; 3rd MarDiv COC 170600Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #122, Para. 3.E. and 3.E.

[3167] 3rd MarDiv COC 170540Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #120, Para 3.A.; 3rd MarDiv COC 170541Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #121, Para. 3.F.; 3/4 ComdC May68, Encl (1), p. IV-6; Statement of Sgt Earl E. Spencer, III, NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation signed by Capt John L. McLaughlin (CO, L/2/3), and Citation in Silver Star Medal file on 2/Lt Charles D. Raper.

[3168] 3/4 ComdC May68, Encl (1), p. IV-6; 3rd MarDiv COC 170645Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #124, Para. 3.E.; 3rd MarDiv COC 170648Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #125, Para. 3.H.

Fire Team, Second Squad. Despite his wounds and the enemy opening up with small arms fire, he stood up yelling and firing his rifle to direct the throwing of grenades to distract the enemy as his troops advanced. His rifle malfunctioned and he operated it in a manual bolt action manner. Upon reaching the crest of the hill, Sgt McClain was fatally wounded through his neck.[3169]

Earlier on the 16th of May, Co I and M of 3/4 manned the perimeter of CHARLIE-3 near Cam Lo, and departed upon relief by 1/9 and were CHOPed back to 3/4 at Khe Sanh (from where they had departed on 4 May). At 1600H, after their return to Khe Sanh, they moved out for Hill 689 with I/3/4 dropping off enroute to reoccupy the abandoned position on Hill 552 and Co M/3/4 continued to Hill 689 when it made contact with the NVA at 1900 at XD817402. The lead platoon was separated from the two rear platoons.[3170]

The temperature was in the high 90s and the slopes of the hills were steep, 55 – 65 degrees. Two heat casualties required medical evacuation while enroute to Hill 552.[3171] (Lt Rait writes that the temperature was over 100° and that many troops suffered dysentery during the approximately 7,000-meter route from KSCB to Hill 689.[3172] Second Platoon (M-2, led by 1/Lt Donald M. Rait, Jr.) had the point.

The platoon, moving in tactical column formation after reaching Hill 552 had moved about 400 meters beyond Hill 552 and the point had just crossed a saddle between two high places of terrain when it was taken under extremely heavy machinegun and automatic weapons fire. The Point squad (Third Squad, M-2, under the leadership of Cpl Randall Theodore Planchon, II) immediately took 2 KIA and 1 WIA.[3173]

"My guess is that there were 20 or more of them [NVA]. It was an L shaped ambush. They were across the trail to our front and all along our left side. They waited 'till we were fully in the killing zone and then opened up on us. We lost most of our casualties right away; they also started mortars in on us within a few minutes. We were cut-off and trapped as the rest of the Company and some of the Platoon pulled back. We consolidated in a huge bomb crater [and] called in mortars, artillery, and did our best to stop their fire. We had several hand grenades explode close to us but no further casualties."[3174]

When M-2 became ensnared in the NVA ambush, the next platoon, M-1, was hit with mortar, small arms, and automatic weapons fire along with grenades, was taking many casualties and was effectively pinned down. Following M-1, the last platoon, M-3, was also effectively pinned down by the NVA fire.[3175]

1/Lt Donald M. Rait, Jr., commanding M-2, disregarded his own personal safety as he repeatedly exposed himself to the enemy fire to maneuver his platoon into a better position and engage the enemy, establishing a base of fire and deploying a maneuver element. As his casualties mounted, it became apparent that there were insufficient able bodied men to remove the wounded and the dead. Rather than abandon his dead on the battlefield and withdraw, Lt Rait chose to hold his ground and continue to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy.[3176]

HN Burnley "had moved forward into the 'killing zone' of the ambush and was wrapping the head wound of a tall Black Marine.. when he was killed. What I remember to this day was BURNLEY was a bit of a redneck and professed to hate Blacks, [but] when it came time to work, color didn't matter. I have told this story a number of times over the years as an example of sacrifice, and man's lovingness in the midst of the horror of war."[3177]

CPL Planchon tried to carry LCPL McLean, the wounded point man, and with the help of CPL Adamson, who had maneuvered his way to CPL Planchon, managed to move the two KIA and the one WIA into the cover of a bomb crater. CPL Planchon was blown back into a crater by a booby trap which was in a stand of trees, returned to help the wounded, was again knocked down by concussion of a grenade, got up and continued to coordinate extraction of wounded and dead.[3178] CPL Planchon's squad remained cut off for approximately one and a half hours, during which time CPL Planchon kept moving among his squad encouraging his men, redistributing ammunition and adjusting 81mm mortar fire. It was af-

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[3169] Statement of CPL James M. Mathews and NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, signed by l/Lt Bradley E. Place, Jr., Executive Officer, in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file on Sgt William D. McClain.

[3170] 3/4 ComdC May68, Encl (1), p. IV-7; 3rd MarDiv COC 181306Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #126, Para. 3.G. and Para 4.

[3171] Statement of 1/Lt Edward N. Fiertz and NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, in Silver Star Medal file of 1/Lt Donald M. Rait, Jr. 1/Lt Fiertz had been CO of M/3/4 1-4 May, and Capt J.D. Carr was CO 5-13 May 1968 [3/4 ComdC May68, Encl (1), p. I-1].

[3172] Statement of Donald M. Rait, Jr., to LtCol R.W. Kalm in support of award recommendation for 2/Lt John Leffen, 22 Nov 1982.

[3173] Statement of CPL Richard C. Kasprowicz in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of CPL Randall Theodore Planchon, II.

[3174] Letter of Donald M. Rait, 31 March 1999. M-2 suffered 4 KIA and 7 WIA immediately when the ambush was sprung, and they found refuge in an old 1,000-pound bomb crater. [Rait, Statement of 22 Nov 1982, cited.]

[3175] Statement of 1/Lt Edward N. Fiertz in Silver Star Medal file of 1/Lt Donald M. Rait, Jr.

[3176] Statements of 1/Lt John S. Leffen, Jr., and 1/Lt Edward N. Fiertz in Silver Star Medal file of 1/Lt Donald M. Rait, Jr.

[3177] *Ibid.*

[3178] Statements of CPL Raul Morin and CPL Richard C. Kasprowicz in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of CPL Randall Theodore Planchon, II.

ter dark before the first and second squads were able to link-up.[3179]

When the Point (3rd Squad, M-2), was pinned down by heavy fire and had heavy casualties, CPL John Mac Pamplin, the Platoon Sergeant, worked his way to the wounded. While carrying out the wounded under fire, Cpl Pamplin was seriously wounded in his back, but disregarding his wound, he continued to aid the wounded Marine and removed him from the intense line of NVA fire. When asked if he were hit, he replied, "I'm all right; it doesn't hurt now." At this point he was killed by a NVA grenade.[3180]

Upon learning of CPL Pamplin's death, CPL Planchon was appointed Platoon Sergeant and began aiding in the consolidation of the platoon's defensive position.[3181]

HM3 Donald E. Ballard, while in the rear of the platoon with the heat casualties,[3182] was not immune from the heat of the battle. Indeed, it was precisely in this situation in which his heroism was to result in being presented the Medal of Honor. "Observing a wounded Marine, Petty Officer Ballard unhesitatingly moved across the fire-swept terrain to the injured man and swiftly rendered medical assistance to his comrade. Petty Officer Ballard then directed four Marines to carry the casualty to a position of relative safety. As the four men prepared to move the wounded Marine, an enemy soldier suddenly left his concealed position and, after hurling a hand grenade which landed near the casualty, commenced firing upon the small group of men. Instantly shouting a warning to the Marines, Petty Officer Ballard fearlessly threw himself upon the lethal explosive device to protect his comrades from the deadly blast. When the grenade failed to detonate, he calmly arose from his dangerous position and resolutely continued his determined efforts in treating other Marine casualties."[3183]

It was well after darkness as 1/Lt Rait with his men assembled into a 360 in a large bomb crater had been told to pull back and leave his dead behind, "but he refused to do so and prepared to spend the night after accounting for all his men."[3184]

[*Major General Rathvon McClure Tompkins, CG 3rd MarDiv, realized the influx of new NVA forces in the Khe Sanh area portended another attempt to attack fixed bases in the Khe Sanh area. In a SPECAT EXCLUSIVE message he warned: "Pattern indicated by all intelligence sources, recent ground contact and arty/rocket fire by enemy in Khe Sanh area is similar to that experienced during late CY [Calendar Year] 1967. The enemy continues to maintain forces in the general area of Khe Sanh which can rapidly close on the base and seriously threaten its land lines of communications to the east. This capability exists irrespective of whether or not his main objective would be to again attempt to seize Khe Sanh itself or to compel a major diversion of our forces, especially our tactical and logistic air, to coincide with a major operation elsewhere. As a measure of prudence I have decided to deploy an additional regimental HQ, another infantry BN and 1 105mm howitzer battery to the Khe Sanh area within the next four days. This will bring the forces under CTF [Commander Task Force Hotel] in the Khe Sanh area to 5 infantry battalions, 4 105mm howitzer, 1 battery 4.2 inch mortars and 1 155mm howitzer battery. These are all the forces I consider can be made available for KSCB at this time. I again urge that early resolution be reached regarding our long term force commitment in the Khe Sanh area. I believe we should further reduce to a helicopter-mobile, light infantry battalion size force functioning primarily in a reconnaissance role or provide forces sufficiently large to clear and hold both the land LOC to the east and a deep AO surrounding KSCB itself."*[3185]

LtGen Robert Cushman, CG, III MAF, responded: "I cannot concur that Khe Sanh needs any reinforcement at this time. As I read the intelligence picture, there are probably nine enemy battalions in the area which at full strength would be about 4500 men. We have four battalions at Khe Sanh which should total about 4000 men backed by a battalion on the road behind them, plus our air-artillery power. I consider this entirely sufficient to maintain the offensive in that area."[3186]]

By O what havoc "about 4500" NVA could wreak! A sufficient force to scour the large area, still dense with vegetation, caves, and numerous places where NVA could lurk, to cleanse the area from NVA was not to be the case at Khe Sanh. The reality was to be one of continual reinforcement and audacity of action on the part of the NVA, and continual bleeding on the part of Marine defenders. Khe Sanh continued to be "hell in a very small place."

17 MAY 1968

ALLEN, PFC Richard James H/2/1

[3179] Statement of PFC Jack B. Jones, Jr., in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) of CPL Randall Theodore Planchon, II.

[3180] Statements of LCPL James W. Shores, PFC Jack B. Jones, Jr., and CPL Randall T. Planchon, II, in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file on Cpl John Mac Pamplin.

[3181] Statement of CPL Raul Morin in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) of CPL Randall Theodore Planchon, II.

[3182] Letter of Donald M. Rait, Jr., 31 March 1999, who writes: "I was left with no Corpsmen and a pile of KIA and WIA to care for the rest of that night."

[3183] Medal of Honor Citation, HM3 Donald E. Ballard, USN.

[3184] Statement of Capt William J. Macardle in NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, in Silver Star Medal file of 1/Lt Donald M. Rait, Jr.

[3185] CG 3rdMarDiv 160725Z/May68 for LtGen Rosson, Info LtGen Cushman and BGen Hoffman, Subj: Khe Sanh, in III MAF SPECAT EXCLUSIVE, 1968, #25.

[3186] CG III MAF DNG 170030Z/May68, SPECAT EXCLUSIVE for LtGen Rosson Information MGen Tompkins and BGen Hoffman, in III MAF SPECAT EXCLUSIVE file.

CAMPESTRE, PFC Albert John	E/2/1
COURTNEY, 1/Lt Allen Wesley, Jr.	A/1/1
DAGGER, CPL Carl Richard	I/3/4
FONTENOT, HN Chester Joseph C.	2/1
ISLER, HM3 Reid Allen	2/1
KELLY, CPL Eddie Jr.	B/1/1
MARSHALL, PFC Roland Trent	M/3/4
MC MULLIN, PFC Charles	H/2/1
PERKINS, GYSGT Charles Harold	K/3/26

GySgt Perkins had replaced GySgt Melvin Lewis Rimel as Company Gunny for K/3/26 when the latter was KIA on 21 January 1968. Gunny Perkins was wounded by a .51 cal round on Hill 861 on 28 March 1968 and medevaced with extensive damage to his internal organs. CPL Dennis Mannion, the FO for K/3/26 at the time, had received some pins bearing Irish slogans, "Irish Power," and "Kiss Me, I'm Irish," which he proudly placed on his helmet. Gunny Perkins "was always on my case about snipers and providing them with a target (the buttons). It became a daily thing, 'Mannion, take those – ucking pins off. Sure and shit you're gonna get sniped!'" Then, during the dense foggy morning of St. Patrick's Day, 17 March, Mannion heard a noise outside his bunker. "It was Perkins voice with the words, 'Here you go, you Irish bastard,' and a large can landed in our bunker. It had a green blanket roll strap wrapped around it like a ribbon and on the can was a Magic Marker [with] the following: Happy St. Patrick's Day—1968.' It was a can of hamburgers... My bunker guys and I made a fire and cooked them for breakfast using C-rat bread as rolls! I never have a beer (or two or three) on St. Pats day without thinking of those burgers and him. Sometime later on.. the word spread around the hill that he had been shot by a sniper... The reaction of many of us was, 'Wow! For all the getting on our cases about snipers and being careful and not taking risks, he was the one who got hit that way."[3187]

Just past midnight on 17 May, 2/Lt John Leffen called Lt Rait: "We're coming to get you—hang in there." On his own initiative, he brought out his platoon through the "unknown environment of the location of the NVA who initiated the ambush" to help Lt Rait's M-2 carry out their dead and wounded.[3188] Lt Rait later wrote, "The only reason I am alive today is due to his initiative and courage in coming to our assistance that night."[3189]

At 1000H, H/2/1 on a recon in force near XD826387 (about a mile west of Khe Sanh village) spotted 5 NVA with helmets, flak jackets and M-79; at first they were assumed to be Marines. When the unit called to them, the NVA fled into tree line at XD840380 and the unit swept through the tree line with negative results. At 1430H, H/2/1 at XD 832380 was brought under fire at close range by an estimated NVA company in a bunker complex. After the Marines broke contact to permit air and artillery strikes they swept through the area finding 52 NVA KIA while they sustained 6 USMC KIA and 8 USMC WIA. During the sweep of the area following the air and artillery, enemy wounded were heard moaning and one voice was heard to say in English "Die Marine!" as the unit departed.[3190]

One of those killed, PFC Richard J. Allen, a rifleman with H/2/1, was part of a squad directed to destroy a NVA emplacement that was halting the platoon's advance. PFC Allen volunteered to attempt the dangerous mission and, along with several others, maneuvered across the fire-swept terrain when he was mortally wounded by the fire.[3191]

1/Lt Allen Courtney had bravely remained alone atop a hill on 9 May when LCPL Johnson was killed (having ordered the rest of his men to safer positions) while he single-handedly threw grenades and fired into NVA positions to keep them from firing on his men. On 17 May, his platoon was to act as a blocking force for others patrolling from Hill 881. "We were supposed to go through this field that was supposedly an area that had been mined. We didn't know for sure. Instead of the point man walking, Lieutenant Courtney took it upon himself to walk point, feel out the path, to protect his own men. As he was walking through the supposed friendly minefield, he was out approximately 20 meters in front of the platoon when he stepped on a 'Bouncing Betty.' The Bouncing Betty hit him. Called 'Corpsman Up.' I ran down. We had 3 people hit. Lt Courtney was laying approximately 20 meters into the mine field. The rest of the men were standing back, lying down. One man, Cooper, our radioman, was injured pretty badly. I ran down to take care of my men. The first I ran into was Cooper who was hit in the left leg by a piece of shrapnel which had torn quite a hole. I went on over to the next man hit, Rodriguez. Then I saw Lt Courtney lying in the path. When I first saw him, I didn't know he was hit. I just couldn't believe he was hit. He was lying on his pack and his head straight in the air... I began to make my way down through the mine field to take care of Lt Courtney. I got approximately 5 meters from him and he wasn't moving. I tried to tell myself that he was alright, but I got down there and he was lying on his

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[3187] Dennis Mannion, email to James Wodecki, 2 February 2005; Conversation with Dennis Mannion, 8 February 2005.
[3188] Donald M. Rait, Jr., "Statement Regarding the Actions of 2nd Lt. John Leffen May 16-17," sent to LtCol R. W. Kalm, 22 November 1982.
[3189] Letter of Donald M. Rait, Jr., to LtCol R. W. Kalm, 22 November 1982.
[3190] 2/1 ComdC May 1968; 3rd MarDiv COC 201230Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #129, Para. 3.B.; 3rd MarDiv COC 201402Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #135, Para. 3.A.; 3rd MarDiv ComdC May 1968, Encl (1), p. 19; 1st Mar ComdC May 1968, Encl (1), p. II-C-5.
[3191] Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) Citation, PFC Richard J. Allen.

back. The Bouncing Betty he had stepped on had hit him right straight in the buttocks. He was blown up quite a bit... There wasn't anything I could do for Lt Courtney. He was killed instantly.... Alfa Company, when they lost Lt Courtney—naturally it was a great loss to have such a fabulous person and great leader killed, so time went slow and things were pretty bad there for awhile."[3192]

Early in the morning, at 0415, Co I/3/4 observed 8 NVA digging at XD818401 and called in 81mm mortars with illumination. At 1000, Co I received heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire from that same grid coordinate and called in 6 flights of fixed wing on the enemy in preparation for an assault on that position. At 1525, Co I/3/4 began their assault, encountering heavy small arms and automatic weapons, and pulled back to strike the area with 60 and 81mm mortars. At 1700, I/3/4 resumed its assault on XD818401 and secured the top of the hill. The battle had wounded 20 Marines and killed 22 NVA.[3193]

18 MAY 1968

DAVIS, PFC Gary Ray	H/2/3
ENSIGN, PFC Walter Lyman Jr.	E/3rd Recon
FORBES, PFC Kevin Lynn	H/2/3
PADILLA, LCPL David Esequiel	E/3rd Recon
SCATES, PFC Charles Edward Jr.	H/2/3
SULLIVAN, CPL Neil Brian	E/3rd Recon
THOMAS, CPL Gary Joseph	E/3rd Recon
YOUMANS, PFC James Nelson	K/3/4
YOUNG, PFC James Ray	E/3rd Recon

At 180515H, H/2/3 at XD883387 (about 1500 meters northwest of Khe Sanh village) received a probe from the south and southeast (from Route 9) by an estimated NVA platoon using RPG rockets, heavy small arms fire, grenades and 60mm mortars. The Marines called in 244 rounds of 105mm artillery and 181 rounds of 81mm mortars (night defensive fires) and on routes of withdrawal. As a result of the NVA probe, 3 Marines were KIA and 7 WIA (3 evacuated).[3194]

The hilltop was the same hill that the platoon (H-3) from H/2/3 had occupied right after LCPL Carl Thomas Murdock was killed (15 May 1968) and was attacked every night for several days. PFC Kevin Forbes was killed while he slept by a round to his head. Forbes had been in country 18 days before he was killed and, after taking away processing rear time, couldn't have been in the field more than a week.[3195] Despite the short time with his platoon, "In one particular incident with total disregard for his own safety he crawled through a hail of bullets to pull a wounded man to safety no doubt saving that Marine's life. Third Platoon had been on the hill where Kevin died for three days on the 18th of May and every night we were there the NVA attacked us. On the 18th they opened their attack with a burst of machinegun fire from an adjacent hill and Kevin was hit by the first bullets fired while he was asleep under his poncho."[3196]

Kevin's sister, Susan Shannon, named her son after her deceased brother: "I was in seventh grade when he died. I will always remember his sometimes warped sense of humor. He always made us laugh. Besides my 19 year-old son, Kevin, I also have a 14 year-old daughter, Kathryn 'Katie'. It's incredible to think that Katie is about the same age I was when Kevin was killed and my son Kevin is the same age that my brother was when he died."[3197]

Before dawn, at 0335H, Co M/3/4 observed 7 NVA sitting on a hill at XD819402 (about 300 meters directly west of Hill 552) and called in an artillery mission on them. At 0620, Co M discovered and captured an injured NVA inside their perimeter. Upon interrogation, the NVA said he thought he was entering his own perimeter![3198] At 180725H, the 3/4 CP at XD802406 (the southern slope of Hill 689) received 2 rounds of 82mm,[3199]

On 18 May, en entire recon team was killed. At approximately 1100H, the patrol came under heavy small arms and mortar fire. A large explosion occurred where LCPL Padilla was sitting, and a later search of the area revealed parts of his utility jacket and utility belt around a 12 – 15-inch hole caused by the explosion.. There were no remains; his body had disintegrated.[3200] 1/Lt Nels C. Youngstrom, CO of ECHO Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Bn, stated that the men were killed at XD885512 after they had run into the point of a supposed NVA platoon. They took evasive action, but ran into a squad of NVA. They finally reached their extraction LZ, and it was there they were killed.[3201] Padilla had just turned 21 (birthday 01 May 1947).

[3192] Comments of HN David W. Allen, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081, 13 July 1968. A "Bouncing Betty" mine is activated by stepping on a triggering mechanism which sends a grenade upwards about 4-5 feet which then explodes, sending shrapnel into the chest area.

[3193] 3/4 ComdC May 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-7.

[3194] 3rd MarDiv COC 201405Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #132, Para 3.A.

[3195] Letter from Charles Gaede, LtCol, USMC (Ret), 9 August 2002.

[3196] Ben Williams email to Susan Shannon [Forbes' sister], 14 March 2002, 1:04AM, in letter from Ben Williams, undated.

[3197] Susan Shannon email to Ben Williams, 13 March 2002, 9:48PM, in letter from Ben Williams, undated.

[3198] 3/4 ComdC May 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-7.

[3199] 3rd MarDiv COC 201405Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #132, Para 3.C.

[3200] CG 3rd MarDiv 211330Z/May68 to SecNav, Report of death—Hostile (1068-68) in Library of Congress MIA microfilm, Reel #286, Folder #143.

[3201] Conversation with Nels Youngstrom, 20 May 1968 in diary entry by Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe, same date. There are no patrol reports included in the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion Command Chronology for May, 1968, but there is a notation

19 MAY 1968

BRAUN, PFC Harry Walker Jr.	F/2/1
BURLESON, LCPL Michael Finnie	F/2/1
BURNHAM, PFC Joseph Francis	F/2/1
CAUDILLO, CWO Pedro Jaime	3rd ITT
COLEMAN, PFC Lynn Bailey	F/2/1
COOPER, PFC James William	F/2/1
EWING, PFC Lon Barry	F/2/1
FOSTER, CPL James Lester	I/3/4
GILLESPIE, PVT Albert Aloysius	F/2/1
GRIMSTAD, PFC Sigard Richard	E/2/1
JOHNSON, PFC Donald Vern	F/2/1
KRISELL, LCPL James Lee	H/2/3
MOLAISON, CPL Gordon Thomas	E/2/1
MONTZ, PFC Roger Ellis	F/2/1
MUVICH, 2/Lt Dennis Robert	E/2/1
OLIVER, CAPT Troy Robert Jr.	F/2/1
REECE, SGT Walter James	F/2/1
RIORDAN, PFC Patrick Carlisle	F/2/1
SACHEN, LCPL William George	H/2/3
TRANTHAM, LCPL Raymond Farley	F/2/1
VALRIE, PFC Dwight Theodore	F/2/1
WILKINS, LCPL Gary Lee	H/2/3
WILLIBER, CPL Gerald Paul	F/2/1

At 0230H, Co I/3/4 at XD825404 (half-way between Hills 552 and 689) reported their lines were probed by 10 – 15 NVA who fired small arms, threw grenades and fired 2 RPG rounds. Co I returned fire with small arms, automatic weapons, and supporting arms. At 0440, Co I received 60mm mortar fire and were assaulted on the east and west flanks by an estimated company-sized unit. At 0455, the enemy began digging in south and west of Co I at Hill 552 and Co I was receiving heavy small arms fire. At 0845, Co I had repelled the attack and was preparing to move out and sweep the area in front of their position. As the company moved out, the lead elements made contact with 6 NVA approximately 15 meters in front of their lines.[3202]

It was during this battle that CPL James Foster was KIA.

The major action of the day, however, was the ambush of a road sweep detail of Co F/2/1 0700H-1830H just outside the KSCB perimeter on the access road to Route 9 near the former location of the Frenchman's house! It was Ho Chi Minh's birthday, and the NVA had planned a bold attack to overrun KSCB—finally! The plan was to position a NVA battalion near KSCB and permit the daily road sweep patrol to pass through as well as the daily resupply convoy to LZ STUD. The resupply convoy would be stuck through the jungle near LZ HAWK as a reaction force from Khe Sanh would be ambushed by the NVA battalion along the road. By this time, it would be dark and another force would not be able to reinforce the KSCB perimeter. KSCB would be defended only by support troops, no infantry; it was a lucrative target.[3203]

It was a clear, sunlit day. The NVA battalion (a unit of the 304th Division)[3204] waited in a well dug-in complex of trenches, spider holes and bunkers approximately 25 meters off the side of the road. Large bomb craters made from B52 strikes during the Khe Sanh siege pocked the earth on either side of the road, while woods and tall bamboo shoots along with elephant grass bordered both sides of the road. The NVA battalion had been reinforced with a larger than normal amount of RPG teams in order to destroy Khe Sanh's armor capability.[3205]

While Third Platoon of F/2/1 was preparing to debark on the convoy run to Ca Lu for supplies (along with tanks B12 and B15),[3206] Second Platoon, F/2/1, providing security for the engineers performing the road sweep for mines, reached XD851405 at 190710H when they observed 2 NVA, and the ambush was sprung— prematurely.[3207] The NVA battalion commander, who did not wish to ambush these particular Marines, was now committed; he had to fight. He later said he had a tiger by the tail and couldn't let go.[3208]

Second Platoon's flank security received one casualty during the initial heavy enemy automatic weapons fire, and their advance was brought to an abrupt halt. The lead element was separated from the main body. Two Marines from the lead element attempted to regroup with the main body but were gunned down in the process. Not

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that Co "E" suffered a total of 5 KIA during the month. [p. 4]. The Joint Task Force—Full Accounting, "Narrative, Case 1180-0-01," lists the coordinates of the action at XD8040 (about 900 meters directly south of Hill 689)

[3202] 2/1 ComdC, May 1968; 3/4 ComdC May 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-7; 3rd MarDiv COC 201402Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #135, Para 3.D.; FMFPAC 230311Z/May68, WESTPAC SITREP #1150.

[3203] Comments of 1/Lt John A. Schmid, HQMC Oral History Tape #3949. 1/Lt Schmid was a Platoon Commander with G/2/1.

[3204] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign*], Hanoi: Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense, 1987, p. 47. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison.

[3205] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Arden Maurice Conklin.

[3206] Michael A. Pipkin, "Cannon Fodder: A Corpsman's Point of Viet," *We Remember*, Vietnam Era 2nd Bn, 1st Mar, 1993, p. 259; NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation (signed by Maj C. Samuelsen, XO, 3rd Tank Bn), in Bronze Star Medal file, 1/Lt Harris D. Himes.

[3207] 3rd MarDiv COC 201515Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #136, Para. 3.D.

[3208] Comments of 1/Lt Wayne T. Haaland, HQMC Oral History Tape #3949.

knowing whether his 2 men were seriously wounded or dead, and since there was no Corpsman in sight, Sgt Walter J. Reece, the Platoon Sergeant of F-2 and LCPL Erwin L. Fixley made a rush to their aid. Finding the enemy in one position, he knocked it out with a fragmentation grenade, but did not see another NVA spider hole nearby which then opened up on him with an AK-47 as he advanced further towards his wounded men, wounding him in his legs and then shooting him fatally in the head.[3209] PFC Francisco V. Velo, a machine-gunner with F/2/1, also spotted the wounded flank man, and dashed from the road under heavy enemy fire some 75 meters to reach the wounded Marine. After knocking out a NVA machinegun position with a fragmentation grenade he aided the wounded Marine.[3210]

At about 0800H, a reaction force consisting of the remainder of Co F, reinforced with tanks, reached the beleaguered platoon which was pinned down by intense automatic weapons fire, nearly overrun, and suffering numerous casualties.[3211]

Moving on the left flank of the road, Sgt. Charles V. Thompson, Platoon Commander of F-3, soon took fire which struck Cpl C. W. Elliott, the Platoon Sergeant. "He was medevaced to the rear. I then received my last orders from Captain Oliver to sweep up a slope parallel with the road, towards [the] enemy positions. I had only one radio, and went with Alpha squad and directed them to a bomb crater beside a destroyed 6x6 truck. I hollered down to Bravo and Charlie to set in down the slope to repel the enemy sneaking up on the left flank of us. We were receiving heavy automatic and sniper fire from well concealed enemy positions. I directed the machinegun to return fire, but was unable to knock out the enemy automatic weapon due to obstructing trees and the bunker the enemy gun was in."[3212]

Moving on the right flank of the road, F-1 advanced by fire and maneuver beyond F-2's position. PFC Patrick C. Riordan, a machine gunner with F-1, advanced until he was depleted of ammunition. After returning to the platoon he picked up a wounded Marine's weapon and began to cover the evacuation. The Marines of F-1 made it to safety, but PFC Riordan was killed by a gunshot wound while covering them.[3213]

Within ten minutes, Capt Troy Oliver (CO of F/2/1) and most of the other officers and staff NCOs were killed or wounded. "A relief column was immediately formed up at the base consisting of about anyone who could carry a weapon and was led by Col Duncan himself and Major Wright... Upon arrival at the battle, all was mass confusion."[3214] LCPLs Jackie G. Porter and Wayne C. Renalls, the 81mm mortar FO team, accompanied the F-3 and F-1 and the CP group of Co F and immediately ran to the highest ground in the vicinity to direct 81mm mortars on the NVA positions. During the ensuing 5-hour battle, they adjusted more the 800 rounds into the NVA and were instrumental in breaking the attack.[3215] CPL Daniel Poirier, Jr., an Anti-Tank Assault Team Leader, accompanied F-3. While under heavy fire, he fired 13 LAAW [Light Anti-Tank Assault Weapon], 3 of which he obtained from F-1.[3216]

PVT Gillespie, in a foxhole with Albert Licciardone, was shot in his head and died while Licciardone was hit with a grenade and shot in his right shoulder.[3217] The actions of PFC Leo D. Chichester, Jr. illustrate the sheer determination that imbued the Marines. When his unit advanced to assist F-2, they took several casualties. PFC Chichester ran across the terrain filled with minatory bullets and "..administered first aid to two wounded men. After carrying one of the casualties to a covered position, he returned to his emplacement and continued aggressively forward until he was seriously wounded. While treating his own injury, he observed another Marine fall wounded. Reacting instantly, he moved to the side of the casualty and administered first aid. Unhesitatingly continuing to maneuver forward, he delivered a heavy volume of fire upon the hostile fortifications, but was again wounded by fragments from an enemy grenade. Ignoring his painful injury, he exposed himself to the hostile fire and killed the North Vietnamese soldier who had thrown the grenade... [He] steadfastly refused medical evacuation until his unit was directed to withdraw to a more defensible position."[3218]

Tanks B12 and B13, accompanying the road sweep detail, came under heavy small arms, automatic weapons, and RPG fire at about 0745 as they neared completion of their mission to sweep the road to Route 9.[3219] "We had

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[3209] Statements of LCPL Erwin L. Fixley and PFC M. V. Cropp and NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) for Sgt Walter J. Reece.

[3210] Statements of LCPLs J. C. Losoya, M. V. Cropp, and J. S. Cortez in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Francisco V. Velo.

[3211] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 13 Oct 1968, (signed by Capt W. T. Cassano, Jr., CO, H&S/2/1) in Bronze Star Medal file of LCPL Wayne C. Renalds.

[3212] Statement of Sgt C. V. Thompson in Bronze Star Medal file of Cpl Daniel Poirier, Jr.

[3213] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, signed by 1/Lt Thomas P. Lang, Jr., CO, and Statement of CPL H. Slaton in Navy Cross (posthumous) file, PFC Patrick C. Riordan.

[3214] Letter from Michael P. Matey, postmarked 1 March 2003.

[3215] Statements of LCPL L. Pomazon and LCPL M. V. Cropp in Bronze Star Medal file of LCPL Jackie G. Porter; NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation (signed by Capt W. T. Cassano, Jr., CO of H&S/2/1) in Bronze Star Medal file, LCPL Wayne C. Renalds. (Renalds was the radio operator; Porter was the FO).

[3216] Statement of Sgt Charles V. Thompson in Bronze Star Medal file of CPL Daniel Poirier, Jr.

[3217] Letter from Albert Licciardone, 20 Nov 1995.

[3218] Bronze Star Medal Citation, PFC Leo D. Chichester, Jr.

[3219] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation in Bronze Star Medal file of 1/Lt Harris D. Himes.

just gotten to the wooded area outside of Khe Sanh when through my periscope I saw two NVA in a hole. I told my tank commander but he told me not to fire. At this time we got small arms fire from the left side of the road. I was looking at the NVA on the right side of the road. At this time we got two RPG that hit our gun shield but did not penetrate. Then I was told to fire... Later I was told that we couldn't fire at first because we had some of our troops next to our main gun."[3220]

During the initial stages of the ambush, LCPL Stanley Sylvester Williams deftly drove B-12 among the bomb craters in pursuit of the enemy, informing CPL Fred Raymond Kellogg, the Tank Commander, of the locations of enemy positions.[3221] PFC Carlos Trinidad, the gunner on B-12 was wounded in the back and left arm by the same RPG round which wounded his tank commander, CPL Fred R. Kellogg and the loader, LCPL Charles R. Lehman.[3222] When the RPG slightly damaged the radios and had stunned the loader and rendered CPL Kellogg unable to remain in command, PFC Trinidad assumed command, repaired the radios, and reestablished radio contact. He bandaged CPL Kellogg's wounds and exposed himself to heavy small arms fire to put out a fire on the gypsy rack on the rear of the turret.[3223]

The other tank accompanying F-2 in the road sweep detail, B-13, proceeded about 500 meters from the main gate of KSCB and was behind B-12 when all of a sudden B-12 stopped. PFC Mark S. Anderson, driving B-13, stopped about 30 meters behind B-12 and saw the infantry scrambling for cover around the trees and bomb craters. "We got the word to move up and flush out the snipers [and] moved off the road and up onto a small bank surrounded by bomb craters. We fired about 6 canister rounds and a lot of .30 caliber. By this time, B-12 had [received] 2 RPGs but no damage was apparent to me. We moved back onto the road and started to receive small arms fire from our left side... At the time B-12 was still off the road on our right and about 10 meters in front of us..."[3224] Then a RPG exploded on the Tank Commander's cupola, sending shrapnel into the left side of the Tank Commander, PFC Arden Maurice Conklin's face.[3225] PFC Mark S. Anderson (Driver), PFC Raymond Francis Bardett (Gunner), and LCPL Silvano Camardese kept the tank combat effective and without their cooperative efforts, "the tank would have been a useless hulk and vulnerable."[3226] PFC Bardet assumed command of the tank after PFC Conklin's wounds disabled him.[3227]

B-12 then received another RPG that penetrated the right side of the tank, wounding the Tank Commander (CPL Fred R. Kellogg) and the loader (LCPL Charles R. Lehman), the gunner (PFC Carlos Trinidad). The tank commander fell from his compartment and there was a small fire. The driver, LCPL Williams, moved back, slowly.[3228]

1/Lt Harris D. Hines then led the two tanks that had been scheduled for the resupply run, to the ambush site. As a result of the action, one tank was destroyed, 10 tankers were medevaced and five tanks suffered major damage.[3229]

Cos G and E, 2/3, were dispatched to assist F/2/1. After breaking contact to permit air and artillery to strike the area, Co E/2/3 swept through the enemy position into blocking forces established by Co F and Co G. The enemy force was decimated and left behind 69 NVA KIA (confirmed) and 1 POW. 8 Marines were KIA and 38 wounded (evacuated), but counting those who subsequently died of wounds, the friendly casualty figure was 16 KIA.[3230]

The wounded NVA POW was taken to the Regimental Aid Station, suspected to be the NVA battalion commander. WO-1 Pedro J. Caudillo of the 3rd Interrogator/Translator Team detachment at KSCB immediately moved from the relative security of his bunker and ran through a downpour of enemy incoming rounds to the RAS, a distance of 100 yards. Upon arrival at the Aid Station and conferring with the medical personnel, WO Caudillo learned of the serious condition of the wounded prisoner; he was about to be medevaced as soon as possible. WO Caudillo, acutely aware of the highly valuable intelligence source at hand, was determined to let nothing interfere with an interrogation of this officer, and without the benefit of an interpreter, immediately

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[3220] Statement of PFC Carlos Trinidad in Bronze Star Medal file of CPL Fred Raymond Kellogg.

[3221] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation in Navy Commendation Medal for LCPL Stanley Sylvester Williams.

[3222] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation in Bronze Star Medal file, LCPL Carlos Trinidad; Navy Commendation Medal Citation of LCPL Charles Ray Lehman.

[3223] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation in Bronze Star Medal file of LCPL Carlos Trinidad.

[3224] Statement of PFC Mark S. Anderson in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Arden Maurice Conklin.

[3225] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Arden Maurice Conklin. As of the date of the recommendation, there was danger that PFC Conklin would loose sight in his left eye. Statement of LCPL S. Camardese in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Arden Maurice Conklin.

[3226] Statement of 1/Lt Harris D. Hines in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Arden Maurice Conklin.

[3227] Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) Citation, PFC Raymond Francis Bardet. Bardet was KIA 28 May 1968. The Vietnam Memorial lists his middle name as "Frederick;" the Citation lists it as "Francis." They are the same man, however, having the same unit and same first and last names and middle initial.

[3228] Statement of PFC Carlos Trinidad in Bronze Star Medal file of CPL Fred R. Kellogg.

[3229] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, in Bronze Star Medal file of PFC Johnny Clarence Cox.

[3230] FMFPAC 230311Z/May68, WESTPAC SITREP #1150; 3rd MarDiv COC 201653Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #137; 2/1 ComdC May68, Pt. III.

began conducting a preliminary interrogation from which he determined that the POW was, in fact, a battalion commander.

Fully realizing that a battalion commander would possess an abundance of important information, coupled with the fact that this particular officer had been captured in an area through which the 2/3 Marines was to conduct an operation that day, WO Caudillo knew that an effective and timely interrogation would likely disclose key facts concerning locations, weapons, and proposed tactics of the enemy force.

With this in mind, WO Caudillo, although suffering from a badly twisted knee, moved out through the incoming, coolly disregarding the rounds impacting around him, to the area of the 3rd ITT bunker where he summoned SSGT Nguyen Duy Hung, his interpreter. Within seconds they both started back to the RAS through the steady hail of incoming. When they had traveled approximately 85 yards and were within 15 yards of the Aid Station, they were both killed by an artillery round which detonated a few feet from them.[3231]

[*At first light on 20 May, 2/1, with companies E, F, G, and H attacked south and southwest to regain contact with the NVA and exploit the contact. 2/1 continued until 22 May but met only minor resistance. Results of the 4-day operation were: 8 USMC KIA, 34 USMC WIA, 113 NVA KIA confirmed, 3 detainees, 22 individual weapons and 14 crew-served weapons recovered.*[3232]]

23 MAY 1968

DANBERRY, PFC Charles Labaw K/3/4

Beginning at 0730 when a patrol from K/3/4 located one ChiCom claymore mine and one fresh footprint at XD803407 (about 100 meters southeast of Hill 689), it began to encounter NVA still present in the area. At 1010 it received small arms fire (from XD794398) and returned fire and assaulted the enemy position. At 1125, the patrol received 25 60mm mortars from XD790400, and at 1145 received 20 additional 60mm mortar rounds from the same location. At 1330, the patrol continued to receive small arms fire and more 60mm mortar fire. The NVA force was estimated to be one reinforced squad with one mortar section. At 1430, Co K continued to receive 60mm mortars and 2 120mm mortars resulting in 2 KIA and 9 WIA. They continued the attack and located several L-shaped bunkers and by 1550 had secured the area but were receiving 82mm mortars. At 1800 all of Co K had returned to Hill 689.[3233]

24 MAY 1968

ANDERSON, LCPL Michael Francis	G/2/3
BALDWIN, PFC Clarence Jay	G/2/3
BEAN, PFC Stephen Louis	G/2/3
BOWERS, CPL James David	G/2/3
CALHOUN, PFC Franchot Tone	G/2/3
COOK, HN Ronald John	H&S/2/3
DAVILA, PFC Jose	G/2/3
DISCEPOLO, LCPL Anthony Albert	G/2/3
HILL, PFC Jerry James	G/2/3
MASSIE, PFC George Edgar	G/2/3
RILEY, LCPL Larry Lloyd	G/2/3
STEFFEN, HN Frederick George	H&S/2/3
VRANKOVICH, LCPL Nicholas Samuel	G/2/3

At 1400H, Co G/2/3 at XD884385 (about 3 KM due east of the old French fort and a little under 4 KM east of Khe Sanh village), while sweeping the area made contact with an estimated NVA company well dug in, in spider holes and a bunker complex from XD884385 – XD889380, receiving grenades and heavy small arms fire. The NVA positions had withstood prep fire by air and artillery. Following the initial contact, the NVA attempted to flank the Marines, and Co G responded with small arms, M-60, M-79, and 60mm mortars. An AO was called on station, followed by fixed wing air strikes. The action resulted in 12 Marines KIA and 17 WIA.[3234]

The action involved First Platoon. The platoon was climbing a hill of grass and trees, some 300-400 meters off Route 9 when they were caught in the ambush. Robert Seibert's rifle jammed and he then played dead. The radio had 5 holes, and some 15 or 16 wounded were still putting out fire. The company brought in air support and the hill caught on fire, badly burning the bodies. "One of the men, Anderson, was only identified because they knew he wore size 14 boots."[3235]

Following the air strikes, G/2/3 resumed the attack, again receiving a heavy volume of small arms and automatic weapons fire from the enemy dug into the objective. 3 additional Marines were KIA. The high ground

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[3231] Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) Citation on Warrant Officer Pedro J. Caudillo with NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation (signed by Capt Peter J. Howe, Team Leader, 3rd ITT) and Statement of Capt F. J. Smith, III.

[3232] 1st Mar ComdC May 1968, Encl (1), p. II-C-5.

[3233] 3/4 ComdC May 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-8-9. Only one KIA is listed in the Vietnam Memorial listing

[3234] 2/3 ComdC May 1968; 3rd MarDiv COC 260108Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #157, Para. 3.F. (SITREP #157 indicates 2 KIA and 12 WIA, while the ComdC indicates 12 KIA and 17 WIA).

[3235] Conversation with Robert Seibert, 7 July 2001 at Khe Sanh Reunion, Chicago, Il. Seibert said that there were only 2 men in the platoon who weren't wounded: himself and PFC Kalata.

was secured by 2015. Results of the battle were: 15 USMC KIA and 21 USMC WIA.[3236]

25 May 1968

KNOLL, PFC Anthony	**E/2/4**

26 MAY 1968

CRICKENBERGER, PFC Richard Way	**A/3rd Eng**
CROWELL, CPL Arthur Albert	**D/1/1**
HALEY, CAPT Harrison LeRoy	**D/1/1**
SHELTON, PFC Henry Earl	**M/3/4**

At 0930H, Co M/3/4 received sniper fire from XD807399; after calling in artillery on the position, the firing ceased. At 1100H, M/3/4 at XD811395 (in LZ PEANUTS area, about 1000 meters southeast of Hill 689 and 1000 meters west-southwest of Hill 552) received sniper fire from a bunker. They withdrew and called in an artillery mission. At 1130H, Co M at XD811395 observed NVA in bunkers at XD801391 with barbed wire channeling avenues of approach. Co M called in 81mm mortars, artillery and 106mm RR on the bunkers. At 1245H, Co M received one short round of 105mm resulting in one USMC WIA. At 1400, Co M withdrew to XD812398, leaving one MIA (PFC Shelton) in the vicinity of LZ PEANUTS.[3237]

At 1100H, H/2/3 at XD864397 (just east of the junction of the access road from KSCB and Route 9) received an artillery round which impacted near tanks and engineers on a road sweep resulting in 1 USMC KIA (PFC Crickenberger).[3238]

At 1150H, one man from Co D/1/1 at XD806445 (Hill 861-Alfa) stepped on a bouncing betty mine resulting in 1 KIA and 4 WIA (evacuated).[3239]

27 MAY 1968

ALLEN, PFC Eddie Hugh	**M/3/4**
FOILES, PFC Francis Ivan	**M/3/4**
HIMEBAUGH, CPL Lee Edward	**M/3/4**
MARX, CPL Robert Garry	**M/3/4**
MC NAMARA, LCPL William James	**M/3/4**
YBARRA, PFC Ricardo	**M/3/4**
YOUNG, LCPL John Curtis	**M/3/4**

The morning at Khe Sanh was clear and hot (100 - 110) as M/3/4 moved to the abandoned LZ PEANUTS to recover PFC Shelton killed the previous day. The terrain was hilly with 55 – 65 degree slopes leading up to Hill 542 from the north that precluded visibility of what lay ahead. Perimeter wire around the old U.S. Army artillery position was intact, forcing channelization.[3240]

Marines of M/3/4 and a NVA unit had been engaged in deadly sparring for several days. On the 26th, at 0950H, a patrol from M/3/4 at XD813393 received small arms fire from a sniper. The Marines fired back with a 891mm mortar mission and 10 rounds of 106mm RR HE[3241] The next day, the 27th, at 1300H, M/3/4 at XD805396 received small arms from an estimated NVA squad and returned fire with small arms, M-60 machine-gun, 3.5-in. rockets, M-79 and supporting arms to rear of the enemy position. At 1350H, the patrol began receiving mortars. Contact was to remain throughout the afternoon.[3242]

The forward element of the company had been allowed to reach the military crest of Hill 542 at which time 2 platoons were pinned down by NVA in a well-reinforced bunker complex. "Mortars blew us off the hill. We didn't see or forget Shelton. The NVA had moved his body at night; he was also mutilated. They put his body in front of three bunkers; each had a machine gun. We tried to grab his body and run. We got hit with the machine gun fire and mortars. [LCPL Leonard] was my radioman."[3243] Koontz, a Marine with M-2 (one of the platoons pinned down), gave his radio to his platoon commander (1/Lt Rait) and began crawling on his hands and knees to one of the bunkers that was firing on the Marines. Most of the bunkers had extremely small apertures. LCPL Koontz tossed a grenade inside, neutralizing the bunker, and then proceeded to go from bunker to bunker to knock them out, returning to the platoon only to receive additional grenades and LAAWs. While doing this, 2 82mm mortars landed close to him, the concussion throwing him quite a distance down the hill; he immediately was up, moving back up the hill to give aid to two casualties while still under fire, and removed them to a safer area.[3244] "He single-handedly took out the three bunkers with machine guns. Somehow we

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[3236] 3rd MarDiv COC 260100Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SOTREP #158, Para. 3.C.; 2/3 ComdC May 1968. The Vietnam Memorial lists only the 13 indicated.

[3237] 3/4 ComdC May 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-9

[3238] 3rd MarDiv COC 270523Z/May 1968, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #164, Para. 3.C.

[3239] 3rd MarDiv COC 270523Z/May 1968, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #164, Para. 3.D.

[3240] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 21 June 1968 (signed by Capt Macardle) in Navy Cross file of LCPL Leonard Koontz.

[3241] 3rd MarDiv COC 270524Z/May 1968, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #164, Para. 3. RR=Recoilless rifle, HE=high explosive.

[3242] 3rd MarDiv COC 290415Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #169, Para. 3.F.

[3243] Letter from Donald M. Rait, 31 March 1999.

[3244] Citation, NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation of 21 June 1968 (signed by Capt William J. Macardle), and statements of 1/Lt Donald M. Rait, Jr. and Cpl Randall T. Planchon, II, in Navy Cross file of LCPL Leonard Koontz.

managed to get off that hill with all our people. Koontz received a well-deserved Navy Cross."[3245]

By 1730H, the patrol reported 5 KIA, 22 WIA (evacuated), 2 WIA (not evacuated), and 2 MIA.[3246] The 2 MIA were recovered by a patrol from A/1/4 at 021210H/June 1968 at XD809393.[3247]

28 MAY 1968

ARTHUR, PFC Lawrence Kenneth	F/2/3
BACOTE, LCPL Moses June	F/2/3
BAKER, CPL Steven Dewitt	F/2/3
BARDET, PFC Raymond Frederic	B/3rd Tk
CUTBIRTH, LCPL Richard Eugene	F/2/3
CUTRI, LCPL Michael John	F/2/3
DRAKE, PFC Michael Leon	F/2/3
GRIST, LCPL William Anthony	F/2/3
HUBER, LCPL Randy "S"	F/2/3
KESTLER, LCPL Gary Lyle	F/2/3
LUEBBERS, LCPL Ralph Joseph Jr.	F/2/3
MAKIN, PFC Woodrow Jr.	F/2/3
OBREGON, PFC Raul Albert	E/2/3
PONIKTERA, LCPL Stanley Francis, Jr.	F/2/3
SCHUCK, PVT Donald Philip	F/2/3
SMITH, LCPL Michael Stephen	F/2/3

1/Lt James Logan Jones, Jr.[3248] assumed command of F/2/3 on 25 May 1968[3249] and took the company to a piece of high ground (XD874383) as part of the battalion's mission to provide security for Route 9. "The reason we wound up going there was kind of accidental... The Battalion Commander [LtCol J. W. Davis] instructed me to find a place that was defensible.. and I selected this ridgeline. It was such a good Observation Point, you could see all the way to Laos. Unbeknownst to us, the valley that were looked over was a major infiltration route, and for several days we saw, through our high-powered binoculars, evidence of large groups moving through the brush. We were basically sitting up there hitting them with artillery, and evidently disrupting them. One time the guns on Co Roc turned on us and tried to knock us off, but because of the orientation of the ridge, the guns either went too far or fell short, so they couldn't hit us. In retrospect, the reason I thought they attacked us was because we were causing major delays in their efforts to move people through that major infiltration route and they decided that they couldn't take us out with artillery, so they launched one of their fresh battalions at us.".[3250] Terrain of the position selected was optimal: "It had vertical slopes on all sides with one prominent piece of terrain on the easternmost boundary. We called this the Crow's Nest. It overlooked our position, and we could see Laos to the south where the enemy had been infiltrating, so it was also a very good OP."[3251]

Soon after occupying the position, the Marines of F/2/3 were supplied with extra claymores, extra grenades, extra ammunition, even sandbags for preparing their positions.[3252] Kevin Howell, a sniper remembers when one squad was detached and went to a LZ that later became the Crow's Nest: "They detached one squad of us and had us drop all of our gear except our weapons and ammo and water, and run like hell to get up on that hill so that

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[3245] Letter from Donald M. Rait, 31 March 1999. Mr. Rait indicates that Koontz retired as a Sergeant Major around 1999.

[3246] 3rd MarDiv COC 290416Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #170, Para 3.B.

[3247] FMFPAC 080329Z/Jun68, FMFPAC WESTPAC SITREP #1166.

[3248] James L. Jones, Jr., is the son of Major James Logan Jones, the father of amphibious reconnaissance during World War II. When Capt James Logan Jones [Sr.] reported in January, 1942 at Quantico, Va., with another officer and 20 enlisted, he formed "Observer Group," the first unit in the Marine Corps to be organized and trained specifically for amphibious reconnaissance. [1/Lt Leo B. Shinn, "Amphibious Reconnaissance," Marine Corps Gazette 29:4 (Apr 1945) 50]. on 7 Jan 1943, CG Amphibious Corps expanded Jones' unit into Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, Corps Troops, Amphibious Corps Pacific Fleet (ACPF), a unit of 6 officers and 92 enlisted. The Reconnaissance Company performed preliminary beach surveys for amphibious landings on Apamama, Majuro, Eniwetok, and after expanding into battalion strength, Tinian, and Okinawa. [Stubbe, *Aarugha!, USMC: Marine Corps Development Command, FMFRP 12-21,* 15 May 1989, pp. 20-42]. Maj Jones' brother, W.K. Jones, later became CG, FMFPAC. James Logan Jones, Jr. was commissioned a 2/Lt in the USMC in January, 1967, and upon completion of The Basic School, Quantico, Va., in October, 1967, went to Vietnam where he served as a platoon and company commander of G/2/3 and was promoted to 1/Lt in June, 1968. After a long and distinguished career, he became Commandant of the Marine Corps. [Biography furnished by Historical Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C.].

[3249] The CO of F/2/3, 1/Lt Wilbur C. Dishman, had departed to meet his wife on R&R, and during his absence, 1/Lt James L. Jones, Jr., a Platoon Commander in G/2/3, temporarily took command of the company. When 1/Lt Dishman returned, Jones assumed command of G/2/3 for a few months, and then became the Senior Aide to General Davis, CG, 3rd Marine Division, a post "..which was far more dangerous than anything else I had ever done because General Davis was a Medal of Honor winner in Korea and he was absolutely convinced that he was immortal. Unfortunately, that umbrella didn't extend to the Aide! There were far more harrowing stories working with Ray Davis than I ever had as a Company Commander." [Conversation with Major General James L. Jones, Jr., 7 November 1994].

[3250] Conversation with Major General James L. Jones, Jr., 7 November 1994. G/2/3 had suffered 13 KIA in a major contact with the NVA on 24 May 1968.

[3251] Comments of 1/Lt James L. Jones, Jr., HQMC Oral History Tape #2745.

[3252] Conversation with Philip Ball, 20 April 1994.

we could meet those choppers and bring in the ammo. They brought in four extra machineguns too, and a whole bunch of mortar ammo and machinegun ammo, because they knew what we were carrying was not going to be enough... [The position] started off as a LZ but it was deliberately going to be an OP because it was the highest point."[3253]

The NVA's official history of the battle at Khe Sanh states that "the 102nd Infantry Regiment of the 308th Division was given the mission of eliminating the enemy and seizing the hill at Lang Kat. After 2 days of preparations, at 0312 on 28 May, the 8th Battalion of the 102nd opened fire and assaulted the enemy, eliminating an enemy element, but not decisively."[3254]

From the day the position was occupied (25 May) the days on the new position were uneventful. "We weren't probed; there was no enemy contact whatsoever until the night of the 27th . On the night of the 27th, things were proceeding as normal until about 1 AM. The LPs were out... We had claymores. We had night defensives with 81s, 105s, 60s were registered. At approximately 1 AM we were probed on our eastern flank. Due to the very good position I thought we had I wasn't too preoccupied by it at the time. We dispersed the enemy, which was first sighted through a starlight scope by one of the LPs, with 60mm fire. However, this turned out to be a diversionary attack on our position, and within 20 minutes, the complete southern perimeter of my defensive position reported heavy movement coming straight up the hill. And then a really unusual amount of RPGs were fired at us. They hit my position and the Crow's Nest simultaneously. It covered the length of our position. We had a reinforced squad on the Crow's Nest. The attack was triggered by green pencil flares by the enemy leaders."[3255]

For the 14 of F-2 and F-3 Marines manning the Crow's Nest, the fight at began about 0200 was ferocious and close. Kevin Howell was bayoneted through the right arm and both hands and up inside his mouth. His sniper's rifle, good for about 5 single shots, was set aside and he and the others there used M-16s and E-tools to repel the attack. "We went through an awful lot of hand grenades, and we learned how to take a claymore mine and turn it into a frisbie" by taking the primer and spoon from a grenade and inserting it into the claymore and tossing it like a frisbie. "It goes BOOM! real big."[3256] When one side of their tiny perimeter was threatened, PFC Lawrence Kenneth Arthur moved under a heavy base of fire to throw fragmentation grenades at the enemy, turning the tide of the battle at that location. Then, while the enemy ground attack was renewed, PFC Arthur was seriously wounded by a grenade at 0300H. He continued to fire his weapon until it jammed (at 0315H) and, as an enemy soldier approached his position, he leaped upon the soldier armed only with his bayonet and killed him. A short time later, PFC Arthur died of his wounds from the earlier ChiCom grenade.[3257]

1/Lt Jones was confident that the Crow's Nest position would not fall: "They were in a virtually impregnable position. They were surrounded and cut off from us but they had a M-60 machinegun. They had LAWs. They had an arty FO scout team. They had a M-79, and they had plenty of ammunition and they just held them off. They did a magnificent job considering the fact that they were surrounded."[3258]

Officially, from 280230H – 280300H, F/2/3 at XD874384 received a probe from south and north, primarily from the north by an estimated NVA company. The enemy force from the north overran a 4 man LP when 3 NVA jumped in the hole with satchel charges and blew up themselves and 3 Marines. 1 Marine made it back to the perimeter. The enemy attacked on a wide front from the north using small arms and at least 40 RPG rounds.[3259]

Philip Ball recalls the hill configured like a bell lying on its side with the open end facing west and the top of the bell facing east. At the top of the bell there was a gully and then the Crow's Nest. F-1 manned the west sector, F-2 the north, and F-3 the south. In basically 3-man bunkers, F-1 had: Pagen and Watt in one bunker, Paoge, Carver, and Erno in the next (moving south), then Diaz, Swift and Huber, then Quinn, Baker and Grist, then Luebbers and Smith, then Bacote and Sabantino, then Cutri, Poniktera and Chapin. The F-1 LP consisted of Schuck, Kestler, Makin, and Hicks. The Crow's Nest had four bunkers: Richardson and Howell, Blunk and a radioman, Croft and Espejio, and Arthur, Gentry, and

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[3253] Conversation with Kevin Howell, 21 August 1994. Howell was nicknamed "Canadian," having been born in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, and serving three years in the Canadian army. After his service in the USMC he became a sniper on a police department and worked almost 10 years in Europe with anti-terrorist groups before becoming a nurse.

[3254] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign*], Trans. Sedgwick Tourison, Vien Lich Su Quan Su Vietnam, Bo Quoc Phong [Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense], Hanoi, 1967, p. 47.

[3255] Comments of 1/Lt Jones, Tape #2745 cited.

[3256] Conversation with Kevin Howell, 21 August 1994.

[3257] Statement of PFC Reuben C. Gentry and NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 11 June 1968, in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of PFC Lawrence Kenneth Arthur.

[3258] Comments of 1/Lt Jones, Tape #2745, cited.

[3259] 3rd MarDiv COC 290417Z/May68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #171, Para. 3.B. A later SITREP reported the incident with the LP: "The 3 NVA with satchel charges reported to have jumped into hole with 4 Marines in fact blew only themselves up. No friendly casualties from this incident." [3rd MarDiv COC 010800Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #173, Para. 3.C. The Marines managed to leap away to safety just before the explosion!

Nichol.[3260] (Those of F-2 and F-3 are not mentioned here since they did not involve KIAs).

Phil Ball ("Butterball") recalls: "My squad leader woke me up shortly after mid-night by whispering the one, alarming word that immediately shocks the most sleepy-eyed grunt into action: 'MOVEMENT!' One of our LPs (4-man listening posts outside the perimeter) using a starlight scope spotted a few NVA."[3261] 60mm mortars began to fire on the NVA who immediately began to attack the Crow's Nest, but this was diversionary, for at 0245 they attacked the opposite end of the ridge, the western slope, which had a more gradual incline than the rest of the hill. "Like a giant finger, it rose from the heavy jungle, approximately 100 meters before leveling-off to an open summit, covered with chest-high elephant grass. We smelled the drugs they were smoking, but we also smelled their rotten body odor. They stunk-up the whole place with their lack of hygiene. The 4-man LP down the finger called in and said, 'We got bookoo gooks comin' straight up the trail at us.' The excited whispers of the grunt [on the radio] from the LP were very familiar. It was my best buddy, Private Donald P. Schuck, a tough country-boy from [Brookville] Indiana who I had first met back in boot camp. Don was as tough as nails, thus the nickname 'nails' suited him well."[3262]

2/Lt Ray Dito, commander of F-1, rallied the survivors of his platoon to a fall-back position closer to the summit of the hill.[3263]

LCPL Randy "S" Huber, manning his position as a rifleman with 1st Squad, F-1 platoon, had given the alert when he spotted the enemy attempting to encircle the company's flank. "At this time, he sounded the general alert which was to prove later to be the most singular cause in the stunning victory for the Marines in that position. After the alert had been given, he returned to his position to direct fire on the enemy. To better observe the fire he was directing, he continued to expose himself to direct enemy fire.. In an attempt to pursue the enemy by fire, LCPL Huber was mortally wounded."[3264] Despite the efforts by the corpsman at his position, he later died of his wounds.[3265]

"Our own artillery pounded away at targets all around the ridge line, but nothing seemed to stop the human wave of NVA, especially up the western finger where Schuck was still trying to get back to the perimeter and where 1st Platoon's lines were beginning to crumble under pressure. After 1st Platoon's machinegun was knocked-out by a RPG direct hit, killing both gunner and A-gunner, things really went down hill fast. The mortar pit, next to the gun hole was next when a ChiCom grenade bounced into their position. The 4 mortar-men leaped out at the last instant... PFC Allen "Chief" Walker, while fleeing the mortar pit, ran head long into 2 of the NVA. He shot one in the head with his .45 while he struggled with the second. More and more Marines were being forced from their holes in 1st Platoon's sector as some 60 to 80 NVA rushed up the finger.[3266]

As the NVA force overran and bypassed the mortar pit, Walker recalls Kinsella fleeing, assuming the others also fled. The remaining Marines "played dead" as the NVA force passed through and around them. Gradually and cautiously, they got up and dashed toward their lines. As additional NVA passed, they'd again "play dead." LCPL Luebbers, of the 3.5" rocket squad, assuming Walker and the others were still at the mortar pit, single-handedly went there, finding it now abandoned. As he approached, he realized it was unmanned and returned under a hail of fire to his own pit. As he jumped on top of his men, he was hit and killed.[3267]

When F-1 was overrun, the NVA got on the radio and were talking over the radio in English. The Marines went to radio silence. "It wasn't that we were afraid they would listen and learn of our strategy, they were playing with the damn thing like school kids on a telephone. I heard them laughing and cutting up, they kept us from transmitting messages because they kept the microphone keyed."[3268]

HN Frank Sarwicki, F-1's Corpsman, had his hands full during the night with the Marines from his platoon. "He kept them alive for many hours. I cannot say exactly how long. They were under siege. He told me that one of his patients gave a groan and the NVA troops heard it and they subsequently put a round through each of the patient's heads and killed them and almost killed my First Platoon corpsman except the round just penetrated his helmet and just grazed the right side of his

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[3260] Phil Ball, "Foxtrot Ridge," in letter from Phil Ball, postmarked 6 June 1995, Map #1.

[3261] Phil Ball, "Fox 2/3's Foxtrot Ridge," in letter from Ball of 23 June 1997, p. 1.

[3262] *Ibid.*, p. 2. Ball was a radioman with F-3 two bunkers away from F-1. Others in his bunker were Rodrigus and Lampkins. Ball had just arrived in country on 28 April and was in the bush just about a month when this battle occurred. Just that day, 28 May, he had been assigned as radioman and therefore was not on the LP (as he normally would have been). [Conversation with Philip Ball, 20 April 1994]. 1/Lt Jones also recalls the stench and prattle: "These people were acting as though they were under the influence of some medicine or narcotic. They were babbling incoherently, yelling, laughing, screaming, smoking. It was not at all like the tactics we might imagine." [Jones, Tape #2745, cited.]

[3263] Woodruff, Mark W., *Unheralded Victory,* Arlington, Va.: Vandamere Press, 1999, p. 138.

[3264] Statement of 2/Lt Raymond E. Dito, 10 June 1968, in Bronze Star Medal file of LCPL Randy "S" Huber. ["Dito" is pronounced "ditto."]

[3265] NavPers 1650/6, 11 June 1968, in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file of LCPL Randy "S" Huber.

[3266] Ball, "Fox 2/3's Foxtrot Ridge," *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[3267] Conversation with Alan Walker, 04 October 2005.

[3268] Ball, "Fox 2/3's Foxtrot Ridge," *op. cit.*, p. 6.

face. He just narrowly escaped death. He spent the night out there and came in the next morning very shook up. He did a good job."[3269]

By 0300, F/2/3 was under attack by a NVA battalion-sized force supported by artillery from Co Roc. Approximately 60 NVA had secured the top of the hill, the First Platoon area had been breached, and a 60mm mortar position had been overrun. 1/Lt Jones had no choice: he called artillery on top of his own position after passing the word for all the Marines to take cover. "My arty FO did an outstanding job.. It was within 50 meters of us...this immediately caused approximately 20 enemy KIAs and forced the majority of them that were again pouring on top of the hill back down the slopes. 81s supported artillery. We had a flareship ["BASKETBALL"] on station; we had constant illumination."[3270] "The whole place was lit up like an outdoor sports arena."[3271]

As the Marines of F-1 withdrew into a fall-back perimeter position while under murderous enemy fire, PFC David Ray Kinsella, a mortarman, dashed forward to rescue a wounded Marine lying exposed in enemy-held territory and rescued him, saving his life while endangering his own.[3272] CPL Steven Dewitt Baker, a grenadier with F-1, although wounded in his right leg during the initial attack, after dressing his own wound repositioned himself to an area that was threatened by the NVA assault to harass the enemy with fire from his own grenade launcher. He constantly moved in order to preclude the NVA from getting a fix on his location. While doing this, he came to the aid of a fallen comrade. Exposed to the enemy fire, he returned his comrade to safety. Upon his return, he was mortally wounded.[3273] PFC David Kinsella was the last man out of the mortar pit when the NVA grenade exploded. Although the blast caught him in the soles of his feet as shrapnel penetrated his boots, he made several trips back and forth from the newly-formed secondary line of defense to within 5 meters of where the NVA were setting up their lines and managed to help several wounded to a more secure area.[3274]

Sgt Joseph Michael Quinn was a squad leader in F-1 who became the acting Platoon Commander of F-2[3275] since 2/Lt Greenfield had been medevaced with malaria.[3276]

LCPL Michael John Cutri, a Fire Team Leader in the 3rd Squad of F-1, immediately alerted his team when the alert had been sounded and shortly thereafter, the lines to the right flank of LCPL Cutri were penetrated. As he repositioned his men, he heard cries for help forward of the lines from a Marine of the LP. Exposing himself to the enemy fire, he advanced to within 10 meters of the NVA to rescue the fallen Marine and return him to a covered position. When he had administered first aid, he returned to his team's position. In an attempt to reposition his team to a better firing position, he was mortally wounded.[3277] He was just one month shy of his 19th birthday, and his mother, Doris Ione Kirkpatrick lamented, "What makes it so hard is the fact that he could have gotten out. They offered him officer's training. But he told his commander he couldn't leave his men."[3278]

As this was happening, the Company Gunny, GySgt Ralph J. Larsen, noticing the red pencil flare signals of the NVA, mentioned to 1/Lt Jones that he had a pencil flare. Jones said he had some of the little flares in his pocket, "and just to see what would happen, we fired two or three red flares up in the air. Surprisingly enough, the enemy interpreted this as being a signal from them, and they withdrew temporarily. The amount of enemy activity decreased significantly and we kept on doing this as much as possible. However, eventually I think they figured it out."[3279] "It was 30 minutes before they could get reorganized and by that time we were ready for them—at least more ready than we had been the first time because their diversion was really pretty successful."[3280]

From 0415H – 0620H, the attack against the Marines became ferocious as the NVA regrouped and attempted to overrun F/2/3 using an estimated 500 RPG grounds fired from the high ground at XD880383 in support of the ground troops.[3281] The NVA attack was so well-organized, the NVA had stretcher-bearers to remove their dead.[3282] At 0700H, armed Huey gunships arrived and reported the entire area strewn with dead NVA bodies. At 1045H, Co E/2/3 moved from Bridge #35 (XD862399) to support F/2/3. 2 tanks in direct support delivered 90mm fire on the NVA moving across and up the ridgeline to

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[3269] Comments of HM2 Emanuel D. Layos, HQMC Oral History Tape #2745. Layos was the senior corpsman for F/2/3.
[3270] Comments of 1/Lt Jones, Tape #2745, cited.
[3271] Conversation with Philip Ball, 20 April 1994.
[3272] Statement of PFC Morris J. Nelson, 10 June 1968, and NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 20 June 1968, in Bronze Star Medal file of David Ray Kinsella. (The form indicates he was recommended for the Silver Star Medal, but this was crossed out and "Bronze Star Medal" was inserted).
[3273] Statements of 2/Lt Raymond E. Dito and SGT Joseph M. Quinn in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of CPL Steven Dewitt Baker.
[3274] Ball, "Fox 2/3's Foxtrot Ridge," *op. cit.*, p. 5.
[3275] Statements of 1/Lt James L. Jones, Jr. and GySgt Ralph J. Larsen and NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 20 June 1968, in Bronze Star Medal file of SGT Joseph Michael Quinn.
[3276] Ball, "Foxtrot Ridge," *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[3277] Statement of 2/Lt Raymond E. Dito, 10 June 1968 and NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 11 June 1968, in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file of LCPL Michael John Cutri.
[3278] Clipping, Elizabeth Perez, "Vietnam Vets Remembered," Marin *Independent Journal*, 28 Oct 1996, pp. A1 and A10.
[3279] Comments of 1/Lt James L. Jones, Jr., Tape #2745, cited.
[3280] Conversation with Major General James L. Jones, cited.
[3281] 3rd MarDiv COC 010801Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #174, Para. 3.
[3282] Comments of 1/Lt Jones, Tape #2745, cited.

F/2/3's position. At 1130H, fixed wing began to deliver napalm within 20 meters of the Marine defenders and the attacking NVA soon departed as the napalm killed an estimated 30 NVA.[3283] While the first napalm strike was right on target, the second one was carried past the position to the reverse slope and caused a grass fire which caused problems of attempting to extinguish it while still securing the position.[3284] In the process, two of the KIAs taken early in the battle were inadvertently left on top of the hill and the fire charred their bodies.[3285] LCPL Steve Baker, a member of SGT Joseph Quinn's squad in F-1 was killed when he couldn't get out of the way of the napalm dropped on the western end of the perimeter.[3286] Strong winds suddenly picked-up and blew the fire towards the Marines "..so quickly that we had only enough time to grab our weapons and the radio before scrambling over the top of the ridge line and back down the northern slope where 2nd Platoon had their lines dug. Attempts to put the fires out were made impossibly dangerous, not only because we were still taking considerable fire from the retreating enemy, but also because all the extra ammo and hundreds of 'dud' RPG rounds and enemy grenades and satchel charges, lying all over the ground, began 'cooking off' in the extreme heat."[3287]

Phil Ball and the others returned to their bunkers. "Everything looked totally different.. Instead of the tall grass that had previously surrounded my position and restricted visibility to only a few feet.. the entire area was now burnt to the ground.. A black blanket of powdery ash was all that was left. The wind was still blowing, picking up the ash and soot on wet skin and eyes. Dozens of dead NVA were everywhere, burnt to a blackened crisp, contorted in every imaginable grotesque position. Some seemed to teeter on all fours.. apparently burnt alive as they crawled. Then, out of the corner of my eye, one of these God-awful morbid beings looked like it moved.. almost like something out an old horror movie."[3288] The Marines fired their last ammo at the fleeing enemy and yelled typical profanities. A RPG exploded between Mark Woodruff and PFC Richard ("Dickie") Cutbirth's holes with deadly accuracy. The F-2 Corpsman in the hole with Woodruff and Quinn making his 'rounds' knocked him unconscious. After quickly checking Woodruff for wounds and unable to find any, he turned to his good friend, Cutbirth. Cutbirth had taken a fatal wound to his head and was dead.[3289]

Co E/2/3 (Capt William E. Russell), advancing towards F/2/3's position, attacked along a ridgeline routing NVA from bunkers and fighting holes with small arms, M-26 grenades, and M-79. NVA continued to offer resistance. CPL John Arnold Krause, a squad leader with E/2/3, although seriously wounded by a bullet in his arm, led an assault on a NVA heavy machine gun.[3290] After securing the western portion of the ridge line, E/2/3 pushed east where the F/2/3 OP was receiving NVA fire.[3291] At 1150H, E/2/3 arrived at Co F/2/3's position.[3292] At 1500 emergency re-supply arrived by helicopter and the WIA were evacuated.[3293] Contact with the enemy was broke at 1800H. There were 13 Marines killed, 44 wounded (evacuated), and 174 NVA killed—adjusted to over 200 as more were subsequently located.[3294]

Phil Ball located the corpse of his friend, PVT Donald Schuck. "The body was lying face down and I could see the huge opening in the back of the skull, obviously the fatal wound. I knelt down and saw the inside of the head was completely empty of brain matter or blood. I believed then that I was staring at the inside of Don's face, yet it still was not registering fully in my mind. How could it be? All that young life, full of energy and hope only a few hours earlier, gone. I had a very hard time dealing with the loss of my friend, especially so early in my tour. I still had 12 more months to serve."[3295]

29 MAY 1968

SEGINE, LCPL Ronald Eugene A/1/1

[No KIA from A/1/1 are indicated in the 6-hour SITREPS for 29 May 1968]

30 MAY 1968

JEREMIAH, PFC Randall Craig L/3/4

At 0915H, a recon patrol from L/3/4 (XD794415, about 1,000 meters northwest of Hill 689) made contact with an estimated 6 NVA at XD793415 armed with a 51 cal. machine gun. The patrol called in 105s on the NVA and sustained 2 WIA.[3296] At 1100 the remainder of the platoon linked up with the recon patrol and set up a LZ to medevac the WIA and continued to conduct 105mm missions on the enemy position along with 60mm mor-

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[3283] 3rd MarDiv COC 010801Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #174, Para. 3; 2/3 ComdC May 1968.
[3284] Comments of 1/Lt Jones, Tape #2745, cited.
[3285] Comments of HM2 Layos, Tape #2745, cited.
[3286] Ball, "Foxtrot Ridge," *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[3287] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[3288] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[3289] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[3290] Statement of GySgt Richard A. Moss in Bronze Star Medal file of CPL John Arnold Krause.
[3291] 3rd MarDiv COC 010801Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #174, Para. 3.
[3292] 2/3 ComdC May 1968.
[3293] *Ibid.*
[3294] *Ibid.*; Comments of 1/Lt Jones, Tape #2745, cited.
[3295] Ball, "Fox 2/3's Foxtrot Ridge," *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[3296] 3rd MarDiv COC 020001Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #180, Para 3.E.

tars.[3297] A search was made for a MIA sustained, with negative result.[3298] At 1640, the patrol at XD795415 received 3 rounds of 60mm mortars from the NVA at XD776403 and returned fire with 81mm mortar and 105mm howitzers.[3299] At 1801, L/3/4 at XD795415 received sporadic 60mm mortars resulting in 1 KIA (PFC Jeremiah), and at 1815H, the patrol returned to the CP having sustained 1 KIA, 8 WIA (evacuated), and 1 MIA.[3300]

During the night, NVA forces attacked Co E/2/3 occupying the position occupied by F/2/3 when it was attacked on 28 May. The NVA were repulsed as the Marines killed 96 NVA.[3301]

[*Noisome NVA artillery fired from Co Roc in Laos continued to make live at Khe Sanh difficult. Particularly vexing to CG TF HOTEL was the inability of artillery positioned at Khe Sanh to reach beyond the Co Roc escarpment to the depth necessary to hit enemy artillery pieces.*[3302] *The same chagrin was expressed by the average trooper. When H/2/1 moved back on KSCB in May, all knew the place was an extremely undesirable place to be since they'd be sitting targets for NVA artillery which hit almost every day: "We moved back to Khe Sanh for a little rest—in quotes! No one looked forward to sitting inside Khe Sanh base again. The enemy had the artillery capability which he utilized all the time, almost every day."*[3303]

CG, FMFPAC, had requested RAP rounds [Rocket Assisted Projectiles] which would extend the ranges of 105mm and 155mm howitzers to 15.4 and 30 kilometers respectively.[3304] *The NVA artillery fire was unrelenting, and therefore Operation DRUMFIRE II was planned as an artillery raid against NVA artillery emplacements in the vicinity of Co Roc. 4 175mm guns would be displaced from Camp Rockpile to hastily prepared positions in the vicinity of LZ HAWK (XD896406) and 4 8-inch howitzers would be placed in selected positions in the vicinity of KSCB (XD822428).*[3305] *8-inch would fire precision destruction missions; 175s would concentrate on targets beyond 8-inch range, and the firing would be continuous.*[3306]

DRUMFIRE II was executed as planned except that highly unfavorable weather precluded observation resulting in a preponderance of unobserved missions. Summary:

	Missions	*Rounds*
300001H-302400H/May68		
8-in.	*40*	*669*
175mm	*9*	*162*
310001H-312400H/May68		
8-in.	13	219
175mm	45	417
010001H-022400H/Jun68		
8-in.	6	114
175mm	45	244
TOTAL		
8-in.	59	1002
175mm	99	823[3307]

Jerome E. Thomas, a Corpsman working in the 2/1 BAS (the old Charlie Med on KSCB), remembers two 8-inch howitzers moved onto KSCB on 30 May which fired over the next two days on Co Roc. "In addition, each night Co Roc was arc lighted. We took no incoming during this two day period. I recall sitting on top of the bunkers at night watching the arc lights. The explosions rumbled like thunder and the flashes looked like heat lightening reflecting up through the clouds. On the morning of June 1, 1968, the 8-inch guns were withdrawn from the perimeter. About 11 AM the gooks dropped six rounds of 152s on KSCB to let us know they were still there."[3308]

31 MAY 1968

ALLEN, LCPL Robert Christian	**B/1/1**
BOYE, PFC Henry Joseph Jr.	**B/1/1**
DICKSON, LCPL Eric Voughn	**B/1/1**
EVANS, PFC Haydn	**E/2/3**

[3297] 3rd MarDiv COC 020115Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #181, Para 3.B.
[3298] 3/4 ComdC May 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-10.
[3299] *Ibid.*, Para 3.I.
[3300] 3rd MarDiv COC 031505Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #182, Para 3.A. (The MIA was found in good condition on 03 June 1968 at 1230H. [3rd MarDiv COC 080152Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #197, Para. 3.G.]
[3301] Navy Cross Citation, Capt William E. Russell.
[3302] Comments of BGen Carl W. Hoffman, HQMC Oral History Tape #2781.
[3303] Comments of 1/Lt Wayne T. Haaland, HQMC Oral History Tape #3949.
[3304] CG FMFPAC 190211Z/Mar68, Subj: 105/155mm Rocket Assisted Projectiles, in FMFPAC Misc Msgs file. The M101A1 105mm howitzer has a max. range of 11,000 meters; the -114A 155mm howitzer has a max. range of 15,080 meters. CG. FMFPAC's message to CMC notes that RAP was under development and requested advice on their availability.
[3305] ADMINO III MAF 281410Z/May68, DRUMFIRE II, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs May68 Etc. file, Encl (175); CG 3rd MarDiv 281410Z/May68, FRAG O 19-68, DRUMFIRE II in 3rd MarDiv Msgs May68, Etc. file, Encl (176).
[3306] FRAG O 19-68, cited. Class V required: 1400 rounds of 8-in positioned at KSCB with 300 additional rounds positioned at LZ CAMEO, 400 rounds 175mm moved to LZ HAWK with the 175mm gun convoy with 800 additional 175mm rounds positioned there the day before the operation commenced.
[3307] 3rd MarDiv 060105Z/Jun68, Opn DRUMFIRE II, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc Jun68, Encl (59).
[3308] Letter from Jerome E. Thomas, 20 July 1992.

FERGUSON, CPL Ralph	B/1/1
GATEWOOD, LCPL Charles Hue	B/1/1
GIFFORD, LCPL William Gary	E/2/3
GORE, CPL Harold Douglas	E/2/3
GRAY, LCPL John Patrick	E/2/3
GRAY, PFC Ruzell	E/2/3
HALLER, CPL Leroy Clayton	B/1/1
HICKS, CPL Norman Edward Jr.	H&S/2/3
JOHNSON, LCPL Harrell Wayne	H&S/2/3
KAULBACK, LCPL Peter Jon	B/1/1
MARTORELLA, LCPL Gary Mario	E/2/3
MAYBERRY, PFC Squire Newton Jr.	E/2/3
MC ELRATH, LCPL Winston Jr.	K/3/4
MOORE, LCPL Harry Truman	B/1/1
MORGAN, LCPL Charles Lewis	B/1/1
MORRIS, PFC Wayman Dewey	B/1/1
PLILER, SGT Larry Dean	B/1/1
RAMOS, SGT George Michael	H&S/2/3
ROGERS, CPL Douglas Manuel	G/2/3
SMITH, LCPL Robert Lee	H&S/2/3
TRANTHAM, LCPL Donald Ray	B/1/1
WEST, LCPL James Edward Jr.	E/2/3
WILLIAMS, CPL Samuel	B/1/1

A platoon combat patrol from L/3/4 commanded by Lt Joyner searched out the area of contact on 30 May for Co L's MIA with negative results. Co L later displaced to Hill 881-South.[3309]

At 0400H, Co E/2/3 at XD874382 (the position at which F/2/3 had experienced a savage attack on 28 May) received a ground attack from 4 different directions. The attack was repulsed when Co E fired the final protective fire.[3310] The attacked was launched by the 7th Battalion, 102nd Regiment,. 308th Division.[3311] From 0020H – 1547H, Co E suffered 4 KIA and 48 WIA.[3312]

LCPL James West, John Brain, and two others were at a LP during the night. Brain recalls: "A sister company [F/2/3] had been overrun.. and we were sent to help them and claim their dead... The next day we spent tightening up our perimeter. I could sense something big was about to happen. We four were chosen to go on that LP, a couple hundred yards in front of our lines. Rus [LCPL West] was the senior at that time in that LP [and we were] friends, not just the friends that are maintained in the service, but something that could have continued after the Corps. That night on LP started like most nights on other LPs that we had been on. Nervous, scared but we know what we have to do. Our fox hole was L shaped, only about 5 x 3 and had been badly damaged from fighting.. Four guys, the gear and a radio.. We started our watch at 2 [hours] on 2 off. Well, that lasted till about midnight when we had movement, and then we were all 4 on watch till about three when all hell broke loose. Our company, Echo, 2/3, was hit by a battalion size attack of NVA and the 4 of us were stuck in front of our line calling in mortars and artillery... we heard the frustration in the voice of our 2nd Lt who wanted us back... Our own ammunition was almost gone when a NVA suicide.. dove into our hole (like we had room), we all got wounded with that attack. Soon after, a satchel charge was thrown in the hole but it was caught by one guy. All that I remember is he was black and one of four fighting Marines. He tried to toss it out of the hole when it blew. That charge killed him. That charge killed Russ [LCPL West], and it sent a guy named Earl and myself to hospitals. I believe that Earl lost a lung and was blown out of the foxhole. Next to him was the black guy, next to him Russ and then me. I was hit in the face and left side of my body. We were already in a crowded space when that satchel charge came in. Rus wound up on top of me taking most of the blow that would have hit me. He knew that this was it but seemed to have a peace or togetherness within him when he died."[3313] John Brain later described the scene: "There are dead NVA piled up around us and the second satchel charge comes into our hole, kills the black guy instantly. Rus and I are hit and thrown to the ground. Rus is on top of me and in my arms with his head on my chest. We are both in shock from the concussion... Rus is looking up at me and says, 'O, my God, this is it,' closes his eyes and passes away. I start to say the same thing. I can feel my eyes and body sinking. God as far as 'O my God, this is..' and almost like a voice saying, 'No it's not," I shook my head, thought, OK I can do this. Was able to crawl out from under Rus, head back to our lines, tripping over the 4th guy who had gotten out ahead of me, and crawled up to a machine gun position. Boy were they surprised to see friendlies coming in."[3314]

At 0850H, Co B/1/1 at XD871392, attacking a hill enroute to reinforce E/2/3, had just moved south off of Route 9 when they encountered a dug-in NVA force. The Marines received very heavy small arms fire and RPG rounds from an estimated NVA platoon in spider holes, and returned fire with small arms fire as they con-

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[3309] 3/4 ComdC May 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-10.

[3310] 2/3 ComdC May68; 3rd MarDiv COC 031501Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #184, Para. 3.A.

[3311] *Chien Dich Tien Cong Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968* [*The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign*], Hanoi: Vien Lich Su Quan Su Vietnam, Bo Quoc Phong [Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense], 1987, pp. 47-48.

[3312] 2/3 ComdC May68.

[3313] J. S. Brain, email to June Austin [sister of LCPL James "Rusty" West] 17 Jan 2000, 6:56:57 PM, EST., in Letter from June Austin, 2 February 2000.

[3314] J. S. Brain, email to June Austin, 2 February 2000, 9:13:46 AM, EST, in Letter from June Austin, 2 February 2000.

solidated their position. The ambush was deadly: 8 Marines were killed and 22 wounded.[3315]

In the initial burst of fire, the second squad of B-2, walking point, took many casualties. The only 2 left uninjured were the squad leader and LCPL Ronnie D. Taylor, the radio operator. The squad leader, attempting to reach the wounded, also became a casualty, and LCPL Taylor, while calling for aid, proceeded to move forward to the wounded men. He was unable to lay down his own base of fire and carry the wounded to a safer area, and he was completely alone, directly in the face of the enemy. He advanced to within 20 meters of the enemy positions and time after time made the perilous journey forward to remove the wounded Marines to a safer area. At one time he was knocked from his feet by the concussion of an enemy grenade.[3316]

During the battle, SGT Larry D. Pliler, the Platoon Sergeant of Third Platoon of B/1/1, was seriously wounded while trying to aid fellow Marines. LCPL Mark E. Vanderheid was approximately 30 meters away when he noticed SGT Pliler fall from the enemy fire, and with complete disregard for his own personal safety, LCPL Vanderheid rushed across the fire swept terrain to aid Sgt Pliler. LCPL Gary Lee Lefevers summoned HM3 Gary Bauchamp, the platoon corpsman, to where Vanderheid was aiding Sgt Pliler. Approximately 10 minutes later, 3 grenades were thrown into the bomb crater by the NVA wounding Cpl Vanderheid and HM3 Bauchamp.[3317]

The 18 year-old LCPL Charles H. Gatewood, a Black Marine with B/1/1, received a gunshot wound in his back and treated by a corpsman. Since he was ambulatory, he was permitted to talk to a rear area where a helicopter medical evacuation landing zone had been established, and was seen at different times walking to the LZ by CPL Gary L. Lafevers and LCPL Cecil W. Bowser, who remembered he did not show any outward appearance of being in any great pain. It wasn't until 25 August when the CO, 1/1, received a letter from Gatewood's family that they hadn't heard from him since 24 May, that Gatewood's disappearance was evident. An investigation reported that the inordinate delay in reporting his disappearance was due to the Company Commander's transfer, his Platoon Sergeant and Right Guide KIA in the action and added, "Further, LCPL Gatewood was considered a routine Wounded in Action on 31 May and evacuated to a medical facility, location unknown. Once an individual is evacuated from this command under these circumstances, the command looses contact with the man, until Division.. locates him and notifies the command of his whereabouts or the medical facility sends notification of admittance of the individual. In this case, neither were received by this command. Based upon past experience with medevac cases of this nature, it has been normal for several weeks, and even periods in excess of a month, to have elapsed before a casualty would show up on a hospital admittance report or transfer report. For this reason, it was not considered an unusual time element until approximately 26 August 1968, when additional assistance in locating Gatewood was requested from Division."[3318]

The lifting of the siege at Khe Sanh quite obviously had not meant cessation of conflict! During the period 16 April – 31 May 1968, 178 Marines had been killed, 816 wounded (628 evacuated) and there were 3 USMC MIA, 25 US Army soldiers KIA and 158 WIA (124 evacuated), and 32 US Army soldiers MIA. There were 1297 NVA killed and 15 POWs taken.[3319]

During June, 1968, 2/1 retained the mission of defending KSCB and 2/3 retained the mission of road security for Route 9 until relieved on 20 June by 3/4 when 2/3 departed Khe Sanh to provide perimeter defense at LZ STUD.[3320]

TASK FORCE HOTEL

[*The month of May, 1968, ended with NVA forces in the Khe Sanh battlefield as determined as ever. Efforts by the Army's brief operation to clean up the area were nugatory. "..earlier reports of enemy departure were not accurate. While the enemy's earlier main effort against Khe Sanh had been deflected, sightings by reconnaissance teams, aerial observers and other intelligence sources revealed that the enemy was still present in considerable strength in the region immediately south of Khe Sanh. By late April his strength there was estimated as 12 battalions, at least. By late May, two distinct enemy build-ups were taking place."*[3321] *The two concentrations of NVA forces were: (1) south of Route 9 a few miles east of Khe Sanh, evidently poised to sever the overland route between Khe Sanh and Ca Lu; and (2) a new east-west road near the Laos border at the southern fringe of the SCOTLAND II AO. "Extensive road building activity has been noted in the South Vietnam salient south of Khe Sanh. The enemy has been constructing a road which enters South Vietnam about 20 KM southwest of KSCB, extends eastward to a point 20 KM southeast of the base,*

[3315] 1/1 ComdC May68, p. I-II-6; 2/3 ComdC May68; 3rd MarDiv COC 031501Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #184, Para. 3.B.

[3316] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation in Bronze Star Medal file of LCPL Ronnie D. Taylor.

[3317] Statements of LCPL Gary Lee Lafevers and SSGT Darold E. Roberts in Bronze Star Medal file of LCPL Mark E. Vanderheid.

[3318] 1/Lt Stuart A. Dorow ltr 1/SAD/jdh, 5830, 14 Sep 1968, Subj: Report of missing; Case of Lance Corporal Charles H. Gatewood, 2381218/0311, USMC, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm reel #286, Folder #146, and miscellaneous documents in this file.

[3319] 3rd MarDiv COC 031504Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #185, Para. 6.

[3320] 2/3 ComdC June 1968.

[3321] Dalby, Col. M.C., "Taslk Force Hotel's Inland Beachheads," Marine Corps *Gazette* 53:1 (June, 1968) 36.

and then turns northeast to a point 18 KM southeast of the base. The road supports vehicular traffic to this point. Traces of an old trail extend northward from this point to within 14 KM southeast of Khe Sanh."[3322]

To counter this threat, TF HOTEL on 25 May directed the 1st and 4th Marine Regiments to prepare a concept for a multi-battalion helicopter-borne assault designed to slip in behind the enemy, penetrate his supply routes, and destroy him before he could reassemble and reequip his units. The AO had not been previously penetrated by major combat units, and was the first Marine multi-regiment operation supported entirely by helicopters. The operation consisted of two phases. Phase I involved the construction of advanced Fire Support Bases (FSB) at LZ ROBIN (XD913334) and LZ LOON (XD876334) to provide an umbrella of artillery support for Phase II operations further south. The friendly force consisted of 2 regiments (7 infantry battalions), 2 ½ 105mm batteries and 1 155mm battery.[3323] *Phase I was conducted 2 – 14 June 1968 while Phase II was conducted 6 – 18 June.*[3324]

The mission: "TF HOTEL conducts operations south of Route #9 in SCOTLAND II AO to seek out, fix and destroy enemy forces, supply/logistics caches and fortified positions."[3325] *The AO for Phase I was the area bounded by XD940280 to XD940420 to XD840280 to XD840420. Phase II was anticipated to be an extension of Phase I south and west as determined by enemy situation.*[3326] *D-Day was set for 1 June 1968. 1st Marines conduct operation with 3 battalions and execute helicopter-borne assault into LZ ROBIN (XD917334) and 4th Marines a helicopter-borne assault into LZ LOON (XD876334).*[3327]

TASK FORCE HOTEL, originally TASK FORCE GLICK (named for BG Jacob E. Glick, ADC, 3rd) was assembled in early April, 1968, to manage the closing of KSCB and the retrograde of heavy equipment and supplies from Khe Sanh. On 15 April, upon the conclusion of Operation PEGASUS to open Route 9 to Khe Sanh, the mission of the TF was significantly altered: the TF was now ordered to "conduct search and destroy operations throughout the SCOTLAND II AO to kill enemy, detect and destroy enemy positions, supplies, and equipment, hold certain specdified key terrain, and to secure Route #9 from Ca Lu to Khe Sanh." The TF began by launching operations west and south from Khe Sanh. Contact throughout April, 1968, was heavy with continued incoming artillery, rocket, and mortar attacks. In early May, 1968, due to heavy fighting just across the river from Dong Ha, the 2nd Bde of 1st ACD displaced from the SCOTLAND II AO to that area and the NVA focused on the area south of Route #9. It was estimated that NVA forces consisted of at least 12 battalions of the 304th Division and the 102nd Regiment of the 308th Division. There was also increased evidence of a new enemy road leading from Laos across the far southern extremity of the SOTLAND II AO. As a result, TF HOTEL directed 1st and 4th Marines to prepare for a multi-battalion helicopter-borne assault to penetrate the area behind the enemy, sever his supply routes, and destroy him. The concept called for construction of advanced fire bases from which infantry forces could operate under an umbrella of fire support. This became ROBIN NORTH and ROBIN SOUTH.

Throughout June, 1968, the idea of combining the two AOs, SCOTLAND and LANCASTER (to the immediate east of SCOTLAND) gained credence. The decision was made in mid-June to assign both AOs to TF HOTEL and the area between Thon Son Lam and Ca Lu would become the HQ of the TF. On 19 June 1968, Operation CHARLESTON commenced to relocate the 1st Marines and TF HOTEL's CP from KSCB to LZ STUD. The TF officially displaced to LZ STUD on 30 June, and by 6 July, KSCB had been completely deactivated and destroyed.[3328]]

01 JUNE 1968

HANSON, LCPL Robert	**W/1/11**
ROWE, PFC Arthur Mortimer	**F/2/1**

At 011013H, the artillery battalion, 1/11, received 20 rounds of unknown caliber artillery fire at XD843417 and XD840417, killing one Marine[3329] **(LCPL Hanson) and damaging 1 155mm gun and 1 105mm howitzer (both requiring evacuation to Dong Ha for repair). 4 Marines were WIA (evacuated).**[3330]

[3322] PCV TOC CP HOCHMUTH 280235Z/May68 in III MAF COC Journal and File 28/29 May 1968 #52.

[3323] TF HOTEL History, appended as Tab A to 3rd MarDiv ComdC Jun69; *Critique SCOTLAND II Campaign (South of Khe Sanh) 2-19 June 1968*, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc. June 1968 file, Encl (115), pp. 3-6; 3rd MarDiv ComdC June 1968, pp. 26-27; FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, June, 1968, pp. 7-9; Dalby, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[3324] "History of Task Force HOTEL," appended to TF Hotel ComdC June 1969, Tab A.

[3325] CG 3rd MarDiv 291300Z/May68, Concept of Operations, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc Jun68 file, Encl (185), Para. 2.

[3326] *Ibid.*, Para. 3.E.(3).

[3327] COC 3rd MarDiv 291225Z/May68, Concept for Search,. Fix, and Kill Operation (Phase I). Intermediate objectives for 1/1: (1) XD917344, (3) XD917363, (5) XD903360, (7) XD960373, and (9) XD892378; Intermediate objectives for 2/4: (2) XD882346, (4) XD899347, (6) XD885360, (8) XD863362, and (10) XD880372.

[3328] Information concerning TASK FORCE HOTEL is from "History Task Force Hotel," Tab A to 3rd MarDiv ComdC, June, 1969.

[3329] FMFPAC 080329Z/Jun68, FMFPAC WESTPAC SITREP #1166.

[3330] 3rd MarDiv COC 031605Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #189, Para 3.B.

"On June the first we got a lot of incoming. One Marine was killed and three were wounded on Gun 6 at Tango Battery (155 towed), 1/11. That night a NVA soldier, fully armed and equipped, walked through the lines on the southwest side. He was not challenged at all. The soldier walked over to Tango Battery, walked into one of the living bunkers and gave himself up to the Marines that were in there. The men in Tango Battery were already jumpy that day so you can imagine the shock that they got. This was one of those dark nights that you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. I understand someone burned over that incident."[3331]

PFC Arthur Rowe died of wounds as a result of fragment wounds to his head while on patrol.[3332]

[*On 01 June, BLT 2-4(-) was at LZ Stud. Co G/2/4 had been helilifted to KSCB on 31 May. At 0700H on 02 June, BLT 2/4 (-) was placed under the OPCON of 1st Marines and at 0930H that date was helilifted from LZ Stud (XD003476) to LZ Robin (XD913335).*[3333]]

02 JUNE 1968

OLNEY, CPL Steven Ira H&S/2/3

[*Following 3 days of extensive preparation of the general target area by some 1,000 tons of bombs delivered by 219 fixed wing attack and 30 B-52 sorties, and by over 10,000 rounds of artillery, the 1st Marines initiated Phase I as 1/1 (LtCol Archie Van Winkle) landed 021200H/Jun68 unopposed on LZ ROBIN (XD911334). 1/1 attacked north, hoping to drive the NVA in the area into the 2/3 blocking positions. Bn 2/4 also landed on ROBIN due to the inability of aircraft to burn off the wet elephant grass on LZ LOON. 2/3 elements formed a blocking position at XD874382.*[3334]]

CPL Olney died of wounds as a result of fragment wounds to his body while in a defensive position.[3335]

At 021210H, a patrol from A/1/4 found 1 NVA body, one weapon, and recovered 2 USMC KIA (at XD 809393) that had previously been reported as MIA from M/3/4.[3336]

03 JUNE 1968

QUINONES, CPL Edward E/2/1

Cpl Quinones died of accidental injury (DAI) from a gunshot wound to his head from accidental discharge of a .38 pistol.[3337]

[*Bn 1/4 was fed into the ROBIN operation as its CP and Companies "A" and "B" were lifted from Camp Carroll by helicopter into LZ ROBIN this date.*[3338] *BLT 2/4 landed in LZ LOON (XD876334), but the lift was halted twice due to enemy fire. After dropping the first wave, helicopters received fire from the north. Later, troops in the LZ began to receive small arms fire. Heavy air strikes and artillery were called in to neutralize the area. A warning of what was to come occurred at 1345H when 7 rounds of unknown type artillery fire impacted in the LZ from a westerly origin.*[3339] *The move was completed at 1623H.*[3340]

Maj George F. Warren, S-3 of BLT 2/4, describes the site: "Landing Zone LOON was surrounded on all sides by high terrain. It was not a commanding piece of terrain at all and very difficult to defend.. The battalion, three companies and H&S Company—the 4th company having been CHOPed to 2/1 on the 30th of May—defended Landing Zone LOON and set ourselves in a relatively tight defensive perimeter pretty much on the low ground in the area because the high ground had movement spotted on it and we were not able to get a sufficient prep to take the high ground."[3341]

Cumulative casualty statistics for Operation SCOTLAND II at this point were: 192 USMC KIA, 749 USMC WIAE, 191 USMC WIANE, 25 USA KIA, 123 USA WIAE, 34 USA WIANE, 2 USA MIA, 1366 NVA KIAC, 74 NVA detained, 18 NVA POW.[3342]]

[3331] Letter from Ron Taylor to Editor, Khe Sanh *Veteran*, undated [printed in the Khe Sanh *Veteran*, I (Fall, 1992, Issue #25), p. 39.

[3332] HQMC Memo from DN to AO1C, 10 June 1968, Viet Nam Casualties, p. 5, in Historical Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C.

[3333] BLT 2/4 ComdC Jun68, Encl (1), p. 6.

[3334] FMFPAC, *Operations*, June, 1968, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-9; 3rd MarDiv, *Critique*, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4; Shulimson, Jack, *et al*, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, The Defining Year, 1968*, History and Museums Division, HQMC, Washington, D.C., 1997, p. 321.

[3335] HQMC Memo from DN to AO1C, 10 June 1968, Viet Nam Casualties, p. 8, in Historical Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C.

[3336] FMFPAC 080329Z/Jun68, FMFPAC WESTPAC SITREP #1166. (The MIA from M/3/4 were from the contact on 27 May 1968).

[3337] HQMC Memo from DN to AO1C, 17 June 1968, Viet Nam Casualties, p. 13, in Historical Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C.

[3338] 1/4 ComdC June 1968, Part II, p. 3.

[3339] 3rd MarDiv, *Critique, op. cit.*, p. 4; 3rd MarDiv COC 080152Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #197, Para. 3.C.

[3340] BLT 2/4 ComdC Jun68, Encl (1), p. 6.

[3341] Comments of Maj George F. Warren, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921.

[3342] 3rd MarDiv COC 080152Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #197, Para. 6. WIAE=Wounded in Action Evacuated; WIANE=Wounded in action not evacuated; KIAC=killed in action confirmed.

BORDUAS, PFC Raymond Arthur	G/2/4
DABREU, PFC Daniel John	F/2/4
DAVIS, PFC Randall Mark	K/3/4
HARRINGTON, PVT John Charles	F/2/4
MOFFETT, CPL James Delton	F/2/4
RYDER, PFC Aldo Eugene	G/2/4

At 040600H, F/2/4 near XD881329 received a probe by an estimated company-size force of NVA supported by mortars. "My 3rd Platoon, which was on the right flank on the finger, was hit by approximately a company or 2 companies and possibly a weapons company. They held off the attack, repulsed it, and were not overrun."[3343] 2 Marines from F/2/4 were killed and 17 wounded (and evacuated).[3344]

At 041500H, K/3/4 (XD778438, Hill 881-South) received one round of incoming 60mm mortar from vicinity of XD776445 resulting in 1 KIA (PFC Davis).[3345]

During the afternoon, a patrol from G-2 of 2/4 became misdirected while returning to Hill 861 (XD803443) and accidentally moved into a friendly minefield at XD806447, 500 meters east of Hill 861, while moving up a hill west of the prescribed patrol route. Golf Six Actual, who had spotted them from his position on the hill, told them to halt. The patrol leader advised the actual that he was trying to find a hole in the wire. As the patrol retraced its path, a mine was detonated killing 2 Marines and wounding 4. While moving the casualties out of the minefield, a second mine was detonated sympathetically detonating a 3rd mine, wounding an additional 8 Marines.[3346]

2/Lt William F. Green, the Platoon Commander of G-1, reflects the care most Marine officers had for their troops. When the first mine explosion wounded several Marines, he immediately organized a rescue party and quickly led them to the edge of the minefield. Then, "rapidly assessing the situation, he ordered his men to remain in position as he began using his bayonet to probe for mines. Completely disregarding his own safety, he.. cleared a path to the beleaguered Marines. Immediately administering first aid to the injured, he directed his rescue party along the cleared path to the wounded and then commenced probing and clearing a path to a landing zone for the medical evacuation of the casualties. Although seriously wounded when a second mine detonated, 2/Lt Green refused medical attention in order to complete the clearing of a path to the landing zone. Only after ensuring that all of the casualties were removed from the mine field and evacuated would he allow himself to be medically evacuated."[3347]

When Capt William P. Negron took C/1/4 to LZ LOON on 04 June 1968 (followed by 1/Lt Michael E. Jackson taking D/1/4 there on 05 June 1968),[3348] two under-strength companies relieving a whole battalion (2/4), he was the only officer in Charlie Company. His Executive Officer, 1/Lt Jackson, had been given command of Delta Company, and there was no Bravo Command Group from the Battalion (which was split with Alfa and Bravo Companies sent to LZ ROBIN).[3349] Battalion 1/4 had suffered the loss of many of its officers; on 22 May, the entire command of Bravo Company were killed or wounded on a mission near Con Thien,[3350] and on 26 April 1968, 2/Lt Donald W. Pratt (Platoon Commander of A-1 of 1/4 along with 4 Marines and 2 Navy Corpsmen were killed while attacking a bunker complex at YD096703.[3351] The 1/4 Battalion Commander, LtCol J. H. Maclean, not receiving replacements while also suffering the loss of other officers by normal rotation, had moved the officers from Delta Company to command Bravo Company and directed the new XO of Charlie Company to command Delta Company. Thus, by 5 June, when SMITTY CHARLIE and SMITTY DELTA along with 2 squads of 81mm mortars from H&S Company moved to occupy LZ LOON, both companies were under-strength, lacking normal officers and platoon leader ranks. In addition, a battalion of NVA was poised to attack the position. When 2/4 departed, the position was too large for the arriving, much smaller Marine force, and the distance between foxholes on the perimeter was at least twice what it should be.[3352] The position had fighting holes, but it had no trenches.[3353]

Capt Negron "..was told that we were going to set up a Fire Support Base and that a battery of 105s was going to come in and we were supposed to hold the ground and prepare the ground to bring in the 105 artillery to cover the rest of the operation... They flew in a team of engineers and a backhoe. As soon as the action started, they were evacuated.. and left the backhoe. I was told to protect it at all costs. I took 2 blocks of C-4, put it on the motor and blew it up. I wasn't going to sacrifice my Marines for a backhoe!"[3354]

The arrival of C/1/4 was not without warning of what would follow. During the heli-lift into LOON, a

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[3343] Comments of Capt James H. Butler, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921. Capt Butler was CO, F/2/4.
[3344] 3rd MarDiv COC 080155Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #200, Para. 3.B.; 2/4 ComdC Jun68, pp. 6-7.
[3345] 3rd MarDiv COC 090515Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #201, Para. 3.I.
[3346] 3rd MarDiv COC 090516Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #202, Para. 4.A.; 2/1 ComdC June 1968, Part III.
[3347] Bronze Star Medal Citation, 2/Lt William F. Green.
[3348] 1/4 ComdC June 1968, Part II, p. 3.
[3349] Conversation with William Negron, 03 December 2003.
[3350] Anonymous, *LZ LOON.*
[3351] S-3 Journal entry of 1130H, 26 Apr 1968, 1/4.
[3352] *LZ LOON, op. cit.*
[3353] Conversation with David Bobbitt, 11 August 1997. Bobbit was a LCPL with Co D/1/4.
[3354] Conversation with William Negron, 03 December 2003.

considerable amount of incoming rounds (which, although not actually hitting the zone hit close enough to make it very difficult for helicopter pilots to maneuver) forced a helicopter to land on the very steep reverse slope of the hill. "As the people got off the back of the CH-46 they fell all the way to the bottom of the hill and landed right in the impact zone of the artillery, thereby 2 being killed and about 11 being seriously wounded. The helicopter lift was stopped after this incident and no more helicopters attempted to come in that night."[3355] "We were receiving artillery fire from Co Roc, Laos. They didn't have us pinpointed; they were kinda shooting over the top of us."[3356]

05 JUNE 1968

BARBOUR, PFC James Wesley	C/1/4
CARBAUGH, SGT Woodrow Franklin	C/1/4
CARSON, 1/Lt John Harvey	D/1/4[3357]
CLEAVE, PFC Lonnie Leonard	C/1/1
EATON, PFC Clifford Lyman	C/1/4
FESER, LCPL Jeffrey Evan	C/1/1
GARCIA-GIGUREOA, LCPL Juan F	C/1/4
KING, PFC George Louis Jr.	C/1/4
KLEIN, CPL Joseph	C/1/4
MC MANUS, LCPL Truman Joseph	D/1/4
MORRISSEY, CPL Thomas J Jr.	C/1/4
NOEL, CPL Joseph Paul	D/1/4
ORTIZ, PVT Eliezer	D/1/4
RUBY, PFC Blane Markwood	C/1/1
SIMON, LCPL Michael Wayne	C/1/1
UUTELA, PFC Derris Lee	D/1/4
WALKER, PFC Thomas Edward	D/1/4

On 05 June 1968, the remainder of the second company of 1/4 , Co. D/1/4 landed on LZ LOON this date[3358] completing its movement from LZ EAGLE to LZ LOON at 1100H.[3359] BLT 2/4 (-) moved by helicopter from LZ LOON to LZ CROW (XD898348), completing its move at 1330H.[3360] By this time, the NVA gunners on Co Roc could fire with precision on LZ LOON. "They were really pinpointing us and we lost probably 8 or 9 KIAs."[3361] The NVA were determined that the Marines not occupy LZ LOON! From 051700H to 051730, C/1/4 (XD 882333) received 18 rounds of 130mm field gun artillery from the vicinity of Co Roc resulting in 9 USMC KIA and 3 WIA (evacuated).[3362] At 051755H, C/1/1 at XD899360, while assaulting Objective #5 (XD900360) made contact with an estimated NVA platoon (reinforced) firing from treetops and fighting holes. The enemy was engaged with and then the Marines pulled back to permit air strikes and artillery to hit the area. Three flights of fixed wing from MAG-12 and MAG-13 and the USAF dropped 7 750-pound bombs, 20 500-pound bombs, 4,000 pounds of napalm and 8 2.75-inch rockets. 5 Marines were (*officially*) killed in the skirmish along with 15 WIA and 12 NVA KIA (confirmed).[3363]

Second Platoon, C/1/4, took the brunt of the artillery barrage. In a half hour period, 7 Marines of the platoon were killed with numerous others wounded. "During the worst of the incoming fire, PFC King left the safety of his fighting hole and ran to the other positions in order to aid his wounded comrades or to assist in removing the casualties to safer ground. Later, when helicopters were summoned to evacuate the casualties, PFC King went to the landing zone to help the wounded. The enemy then shifted their fire onto the landing zone, but PFC King remained there until all the wounded had been evacuated. He then proceeded to carry up the bodies of the dead. It was at this time that PFC King was killed by an incoming artillery round."[3364]

Meanwhile at about 0230, at the position that D/1/4 occupied (some 150 meters away from C/1/4), LCPL David Bobbitt heard sounds of digging. "We thought it was Charlie Company trying to dig in. So we called back and forth. Charlie Company said it wasn't them. They wanted to know if we were digging. No, we weren't digging. So everybody was a hundred percent [alert] to maybe 4, 4:30 when they told us to go to 50%. About 0530, the break of daylight, it was like dark and it was daylight, like a mist, and all of a sudden all hell broke loose. They walked in on us, and they were shooting our guys that were asleep and didn't have a chance. It was just a slaughter. I didn't want to fire because I was afraid I was going to hit our own men. We fought from 5:30 in the morning and we were still going at it at 7:30 at night—all day."[3365]

SMITTY CHARLIE ONE FOUR [the Air Officer for C/1/4] reported that SMITTY CHARLIE and SMITTY DELTA [C/1/4 and D/1/4] were taking heavy casualties from the incoming artillery. Capt Thomas L. Sebring observed from the air that the NVA artillery position was XD680283 and requested soft ordnance to be scrambled. The position was located in a high AAA [ae-

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[3355] Comments of Maj George F. Warren, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921. Maj. Warren was S-3, BLT 2/4.
[3356] Conversation with Terry Tillery, 05 May 1994.
[3357] The Coffelt database of the Vietnam Memorial listing indicates his unit as E/2/9, but he was with D/1/4.
[3358] 1/4 ComdC June 1968, Part II, p. 3.
[3359] 3rd MarDiv COC 090518Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #204, Para. 4.B.
[3360] BLT 2/4 ComdC June 1968, Encl (1), p. 7.
[3361] Conversation with Terry Tillery, 05 May 1994.
[3362] 3rd MarDiv COC 090615Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #205, Para. 3.Q.
[3363] 3rd MarDiv COC 090632Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #206, Para. 3.B.
[3364] Statement of 1/Lt Stick, NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 3 July 1968, in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file, PFC George Louis King.
[3365] Conversation with David Bobbitt, 11 August 1997.

rial anti-aircraft] threat area and low ceilings and thunderstorms precluded use of high dive ordnance. Maj James Edward Lary, Section Leader of HELLBORN 553 (2 A-4 Skyhawks from Marine Attack Squadron 311, VMA-311) dropped 2 DELTA-9s [Mark 77 500-pound napalm bombs] on the first pass, placing their ordnance exactly on target. NVA 37mm anti-aircraft fired on them, but despite the fire, they made an additional pass placing 6 DELTA-2 bombs [MK-82, 500-pound general purpose bombs] on the target causing two large secondary explosions.[3366]

Maj James Louis Bolton, Section Leader of 2 CH-46 Sea Knights, brought in emergency re-supply and medevac support for SMITTY CHARLIE and SMITTY DELTA. Although Huey gunships and fixed wing aircraft could not suppress the intensive fire the zone was receiving, Maj Bolton led his section four times into LZ LOON successfully dropping all the loads.[3367]

CPL William H. Milner, Jr., aerial gunner in YR-47 (of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 161, HMM-161) loaded emergency medevacs through the side door since the LZ was not suitable, was able to stop the bleeding of several of the wounded Marines. The aircraft had not been rigged for medevac work.[3368]

The whole "..day was just a total chaos of assault after assault. They just kept coming up the hill at us, and pinned us all down right there during broad daylight."[3369] During the attack, CPL Eugene Herman Veisz, the Forward Air Controller, continuously exposed himself to small arms, artillery, and mortar fire as he moved about to call in air as well as assist the artillery officer in striking NVA targets. Rather than expose his radioman to danger, he shouldered the radio himself.[3370]

General Davis (CG, 3rd Marine Division) radioed Capt Negron directly and asked what he needed. "Do you need reinforcements?" "I told him, 'No, I'm in the V-ring. Any Marines you put up here are going to die.' I took all the compasses in the company and issued one to every 3 men. I was going to escape and evade off LOON, because we all were going to die. I told General Davis that. He said, 'Hold what you got; we're getting you out.' And every airplane and every helicopter in I Corps showed up and they boxed me in with artillery, and then I called a mission in on myself—after we got in our holes, and fortunately we came out on the better end of that... I turned off my radio so I couldn't hear the Battalion Commander and I took my troops. I said, 'Grab your rifles and your ammo; we're going to the high ground. It was about two o'clock in the morning."[3371]

06 JUNE 1968

BRAZIER, SSGT John Kenneth	**C/1/4**
BROWN, PVT Joseph "L" Jr.	**I/3/4**
BURGARD, PFC Paul Edward	**C/1/4**
BURKES, PFC Bruce Wayne	**C/1/1**
CASARES, PFC Manuel	**D/1/4**
EBRIGHT, CPL William Raymond O	**H&S/1/4**
ENIX, LCPL Jack Gene	**D/1/4**
FLORES, LCPL Felix Frank	**H&S/1/4**
FRANKENSTEIN, LCPL Jackie	**D/1/4**
FRAZIER, LCPL Timothy Joseph Jr.	**D/1/4**
GREGORY, LCPL Frank Edwin	**D/1/4**
HANNINGS, LCPL William Elwood	**H&S/1/4**
HARPER, LCPL Ralph Lewis	**H&S/1/4**
HOWARD, HN James Byron	**H&S/1/4**[3372]
LANGSTON, PFC Melvin Doyle	**C/1/4**
LA PLANT, LCPL Kurt Elton	**H&S/1/4**
MILLARD, HM3 Loren Ray	**H&S/1/4**
MORELOS, PFC Catarino Jr.	**H&S/1/4**
PALACIOS, LCPL Luis Fernando	**H&S/1/4**
PARKER, LCPL William Hill	**D/1/4**
PORTER, LCPL Lawrence Eugene	**H&S/1/4**
REED, PFC Larry Bruce	**D/1/4**
REID, PFC James Alfred	**D/1/4**
ROBERTS, LCPL Gary Kenneth	**D/1/4**
SANCHEZ, PFC Jose Ramon	**H&S/1/4**
SATTER, PFC Donald Stephen	**C/1/4**
SIMMONS, PFC William	**G/2/4**
SMITH, LCPL Donald Lee	**D/1/4**
STOOPS, PFC Jonathan Lynn	**H&S/1/4**
WILSON, PFC Eugene	**C/1/4**

At about 0200, Capt Negron moved SMITTY CHARLIE to join with SMITTY DELTA on the higher

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[3366] Statement of Capt Thomas L. Sebring in Air Medal file of Maj James Edward Lary.

[3367] Statement of 1/Lt Frederick A. Penning in Distinguished Flying Cross file for Maj James Louis Bolton.

[3368] Statement of 1/Lt Frederick A. Penning in Air Medal file of CPL William Hayes Milner, Jr. Others recommended for awards for valor for the same incident: CAPT Richard C. Glover, 1/Lt Brent C. Blair, 1/Lt Frederick A. Penning, CPL Bernard J. Soignet, CPL James C. Withrow, LCPL Paul B. Bevil, LCPL Jeffrey D. Cross, and Donald W. Vaughn. [NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 10 Jul 1968, in DFC file of Maj James Louis Bolton].

[3369] Conversation with Terry Tillery, 05 May 1994.

[3370] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 17 Sep 1968, for Silver Star Medal for CPL Eugene Herman Veisz. Endorsements by the CO of 1/4 (LtCol T. M. Galbraith) and MGen R. G. Davis (CG, 3rd MarDiv) concurred in the Silver Star Medal recommendation, but FMFPAC authorized the Bronze Star Medal.

[3371] Conversation with William P. Negron, 03 December 2003.

[3372] HN Howard, one of the C/1/4 corpsmen, was mortally wounded while treating a wounded comrade in the open. The official paperwork on his Bronze Star Medal notes his name as Dennis William Howard of Bakersfield, CA. There is no such person on the Vietnam Memorial in D.C. There is, however, a HN James Byron Howard of Bakersfield, CA, KIA 6 June 1968.

ground, a distance of about 150 meters up hill through elephant grass, and the two units of Marines defended the hill.[3373] "We took what was left of Charlie Company into us [D/1/4] and when I looked, it was 'dead carrying dead.'"[3374] After dawn, Captain Negron "sent a squad with Staff Sergeant [Brazier] to blow up artillery rounds that had been brought the night before by the artillery people. There were rounds all over the place that I didn't want to get into the hands of the NVA. SSGT Brazier considered himself a demolitions expert, although he was just good at handling dynamite; he wasn't an expert. I gave him an under-strength squad to blow up the ammunition. When they walked down they were ambushed by the NVA. We opened up from the top of the hill to support them, and they all died. In order to prevent the NVA from getting the ammo, I used 60mm mortars and blew it up."[3375]

HN Dennis William Howard [James Byron Howard] was killed while treating a wounded Marine in the open.[3376] LCPL Michael Joseph Kilderry was hit in his side with a small piece of shrapnel that damaged both of his lungs and his liver and some organs. His friend, Terry Tillery, recalls him as a "real nice fellow. He was my best friend."[3377] Kilderry died of his wounds on 6 July 1968.

Prior to the last extraction of C/1/4 at about 1400H, at 0945 a helicopter (SEAWORTHY 4-5) crashed and burned as a result of heavy enemy .50 caliber fire at XD877334,[3378] in such a position that it could not be reached at that time by friendly forces and the remaining forces of C and D companies were extracted later that afternoon.[3379] The helicopter that was downed contained the 81mm mortar section. "It was a sad thing to watch because we were surrounded and the other hill was surrounded, and we really couldn't go down to their aid."[3380] The Marines of C/1/4 sang the Marine Corps Anthem at the top of their lungs to orient any possible survivors of the crash to friendly lines.[3381] Four Marines did manage to escape and crawl to the safety, one of which was Sal St. Angelo.[3382] "He was left down there without a weapon, without anything. I just talked with him at our reunion this summer. He said, 'I thought I was going to die. I didn't have a weapon. I started holding my breath to see if I would pass out and die. I looked around to kill myself. I didn't want to become a POW.' At this point, a helicopter landed, picked him up and got him out of there."[3383]

Although the attack was repulsed, it was decided that the FSB was too lucrative a target for the enemy and was abandoned that afternoon. Results of the attack were 24 USMC KIA, 37 USMC WIAE, and 154 NVA KIAC. The following day, a new FSB (FSB TORCH) was established 12 kilometers southeast of Khe Sanh.[3384] "We started out on the 4th with 168 men in Charlie Company and when we regrouped we had 62 people left. We were only the size of a platoon—the whole company."[3385]

On 17 June 1968, 3/9 was assigned the mission of recovering the bodies from the crashed helicopter, along with C/1/4. The unit landed at LZ LOON at 170900H with C/1/4 landing first, followed by Co L, M. and I and the CP group of 3/9, following extensive TPQ-10 and arty prep. Co C/1/4 secured the LZ and moved to the location of the downed helicopter. Only a few charred remains could be extracted. "The extreme heat of the helicopter fire destroyed almost all evidence of human remains. All pieces of bodies were extracted, tagged, and placed in body bags. Eight other bodies which had been ready for evac during the height of fighting on 6 June were recovered and a thorough search was made of the objective area by all units. Total recovered were 8 complete bodies and 3 body bags filled with partial remains....CG, 1st Air Cav Division sent LtCol Henry to LZ LOON to check his bulldozer and backhoe. We evacuated both these items via U.S. Army crane [CH-54]. He decided to leave the dozer's blade at LZ LOON due to extensive damage."[3386]

[*Despite the debacle at LZ LOON, Operation ROBIN SOUTH was launched on schedule on 6 June 1968 with Bn 3/9 landing to the south to locate the new NVA road leading from Laos to Hue. "The battalion located the road and found it to be quite well developed, up to 15 feet wide in places, with stone bridges, culverts, and a surface graded smooth by heavy engineering equipment. The North Vietnamese had concealed the road by bending trees over it and tying them together to form a living archway of vegetation beneath which troops and vehicles could pass unseen from the air. Along the road,*

[3373] Conversation with William P. Negron, 03 December 2003.
[3374] Conversation with David Bobbitt, 11 August 1997.
[3375] *Ibid.*
[3376] Bronze Star Medal Citation and NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 19 June 1968, for HN Dennis William Howard.
[3377] Conversation with Terry Tillery, 5 May 1994.
[3378] Library of Congress, MIA microfilm, Reel #287, Folder #149 [Harper, Ralph L.], Biographic Site Report as of 02/19/88. Also Folders #151 [Sanchez, Jose] and #152 [Palacios, Luis] in came reel; NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 25 June 1968, in Distinguished Flying Cross file of Maj Harvey Elmore Britt.
[3379] 1/4 ComdC June, 1968,l Part II, p. 3.
[3380] Conversation with Terry Tillery, 22 May 1994.
[3381] *LZ LOON, op. cit.*
[3382] Conversations with Terry Tillery, 5 and 22 May 1994.
[3383] Conversation with William P. Negron, 03 December 2003.
[3384] 3rd MarDiv ComdC June 1968, pp. 26-27.
[3385] Conversation with Terry Tillery, 05 May 1994.
[3386] CG Task Force HOTEL 200920Z/Jun68, Summary of Recovery Operations at LZ LOON 17 June, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc June 1968 file, Encl #122.

the Marines found fighting holes, living bunkers, hospitals, kitchens, and a wealth of equipment, especially tools. Captain Gary E. Todd, who commanded Company I, 3/9 and a former division intelligence officer, observed that the road 'was a virtual clone of the Ho Chi Minh Trail.'[3387] *An attached detachment of engineers used approximately 2,000 lbs. of demolitions to blow large craters in the road, using 50-lb. cratering and 40-lb. shape charges. Numerous bunker complexes were found, probably for housing the NVA constructing the road. There were no friendly casualties, no incoming. There were 2 NBC due to wasp stings: one man was bit on his lip, the other in his eye swelling shut his eyelids.*[3388]]

REMEMBERING: THE 'COCKY KIDS IN GREEN'[3389]
By William P. Negron

I live among the remains of young dead men, their broken bodies twisting into the shape of where and how they die. Some curled up, some bent around the initial wound, others flat. They die in the open, often reaching for some reason, arms outstretched. They come in all sizes and colors. One has his first mustache, another too young to shave, a third can never grow a bears—he is a Navajo.

They have verses on their steel pots: Mo-Town, Tex Mex, La Rasa, Born to Raise Hell, Peace, Love, War, Hate. Some believe in this war; some don't. A freckle-faced young Marine asks me, 'Why?' Then he dies. That was then; this is now.

Why won't these images fade? I can't remember the face of someone I met at a party last week, but I can't forget the faces of over 30 years ago. Only Jack found me and remembers. Where are all the others? Living well and happy, I hope. Camacho wrote for a while, then he too disappeared. Where is Terry? Where is Tim? Brownie was a good Marine. What happened to him? I'm still 'Charlie Six Actual' and always will be.

I received a letter from Puerto Rico. It was one of the few responses to 32 condolence letters. This young man's dad said he was proud of me and proud of his son. A mother in St. Louis wrote and said she wasn't allowed to open the box, but she was sure that her boy wasn't in it. Well, mom, someone's son was in that box. I hope you treated him well.

I'm over sixty now, but age hasn't dimmed the memory of those young men who believed that being a Marine was the fulfillment of a dream. Well the dream turned into a nightmare and to some the nightmare turned into death. Maybe they were the lucky ones. They don't have to live with the memory of unfulfilled dreams and broken relationships. They don't have to stare into the bottom of a glass and wonder what happened. They don't have to serve time, or disgrace their families with their acts of violence. They don't come to alert mode when a helicopter or a loud noise of a whisper disturbs their sleep. They are gone and I loved them all.

Some nights they call to me. Is it the dead or is it those who are still alive who call me? Someday maybe I'll know. I still see the demons, but only at night now. A whisper hovers above my bed until I shout it away. A banshee walks in the yard. A crow sits on the fence and watches. Something is always behind me. I don't usually turn around, but when I do it is gone.

Who picks who will live and die?

At a memorial service, the Chaplain said that God had chosen these soldiers to join him in heaven. That God had made the decision of life and death. I didn't believe it then, and I don't believe it now. Those deaths came as a result of trying to occupy the same space as a fragment of metal, a bullet, a bomb. What about those who died of fright? What about the young Marine who died from a wasp bite? We had tested him for everything, but who knew to test him for an allergy to wasp? What about the young Marine who drowned in a monsoon stream? We taught him how to swim, but neglected to show him how to stay above water with 50 pounds of combat gear strapped to his back. Whose fault is it when young men die? I was so afraid.

They gave me a medal, and then another, and another. They said I was a hero, but I did what I had to do. I did what I was trained to do. That company was my heart, my soul. There were many battles and many challenges after Viet Nam. Those many months in the heat of Southeast Asia, in the cold chilling monsoon rains, in the grief of losses and the joy of

[3387] Shulimson, *op. cit.*, pp. 322-323.
[3388] Comments of Capt Richard A. O'Neill, GySgt Jose M. Padilla, and SSGT W. B. Brown, HQMC Oral History Tape #3084.
[3389] LtCol William Negron, USMC (Ret), written 30 May 1999.

camaraderie, despite all else, I was 'Charlie Six,' the man.

In my heart I'll always be 'CHARLIE SIX ACTUAL' and don't you forget it.

I would give up the time that I have left on this Earth if I could bring everyone back from the dead, out of prisons, out of the detoxification wards, out of corporate offices, out of the classrooms, out of the hospitals and we could be 'Charlie Company' again. I'd give anything I have for just one more day, one more mission, one more chance to walk with and lead those magnificent young men the Corps called 'Charlie One Four, Third Marine Division.'

And may God bless them all.

On 6 June a company (-) patrol by I/3/4 to the vicinity of XD820390 departed KSCB at 1102. The patrol found NVA ammunition and equipment at XD818393. There were no other findings, and the patrol returned to KSCB at 1535. From 1835 to 1920, Co "I" received 42 rounds of 82mm mortars from XD79193926 resulting in 1 KIA (PVT Joseph "L" Brown, Jr.) and 5 WIA.[3390]

07 JUNE 1968

CORCORAN, CAPT Richard Francis	HqCo, 3rdMarDiv
HARTNESS, LCPL Donald Harry	M/3/9
HUNT, 1/Lt Ralphe Edward Jr.	VMO-6
KURILICH, MAJ Robert Vaso	H&S/1/1
LEAHY, PFC Robert Michael	3/9

[*On 07 June 1968, 1/4 executed a helicopter-borne assault into LZ TORCH (XD911278), a new fire base to support infantry battalions scouring the southernmost portion of the AO to interdict the new NVA road leading from Laos.*[3391]]

Battalion 1/1 was occupying the hill positions at Khe Sanh, and their Operations Officer, Maj Kurilich, unfamiliar with the terrain, ordered a helicopter for an overflight. Maj Gerald Kurth (S-3, 2/26) knew Maj Kurilich and states that a NVA automatic weapon shot down the helicopter. Maj Kurth also relates that a LtCol aboard fell out of the crashing helicopter and broke his back. "While he was in the hospital, his hair turned totally white." The initial message reporting the death of Kurilich was garbled, with only "KUR" legible, making some assume that Maj Gerald F. Kurth, S-3 of 2/26, which had occupied Hill 558 during the siege battle and had a Company (E/2/26) on Hill 861-A, had been killed.[3392]

The incident happened at 0842H at XD909365 (3200 meters S of Rt. #9, S of Lang Kat) and the LtCol was M. J. Gravel, the Battalion Commander of 1/1. Colonel Gravel was injured, retrieved, and medevaced at 0930. At noon, Maj R. L. Walsh, the Battalion XO, and Capt T. V. Barrett, newly appointed S-3, were flown to the battalion CP, assumed control, and continued the attack to seize Regimental Objectives 4 (XD898348) and 5 (XD900359).[3393]

A SPARROWHAWK unit, F-2 of 2/1, was dispatched to the downed Huey helicopter "which apparently struck the top of a ridge and crashed in the vicinity of XD909365. The Sparrow Hawk was lifted into the crash area and proceeded to the site of the wreckage. Three bodies, burned beyond recognition, were found in the wreckage, which was completely consumed by fire... Returned to Khe Sanh Combat Base with the remains."[3394]

Captain Corcoran had been severely wounded in a previous tour of duty in Vietnam while serving as Company Commander of A/1/4 (11 Oct 66 – 11 Jun 67). After being wounded on 23 April and 27 April 1967 in Gio Linh, he received multiple shrapnel wounds to his lower back on 13 May 1967, requiring major surgery. After an intensive 8-week training course in aerial observation, he returned to Vietnam for a second tour on 28 December 1967.[3395]

RICHARD FRANCIS CORCORAN[3396]
By
CPL Gerry Van Reusen, USMC

I'll always remember Capt. 'Skipper' Corcoran as long as I live and be indebted to him for who he was. He was respected as a man and a great officer by his entire company of men and anyone who met him—he is the epitome of a 'Marine's Marine.'

I first met Skipper at the end of 1966. I was a 'hard-charging' 19 year-old Corporal who served as the forward observer for the 81mm mortars attached to 'Alpha' Company commanded by Capt. Corcoran. He met me with a great smile and enthusiastic handshake to welcome me to 'Alpha'

3390 3/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-6.
3391 FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, June, 1968, pp. 10-11.
3392 Conversation with Gerald F. Kurth, 7 December 1999.
3393 1/1 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. 1-II-5; 1st Mar ComdC, June, 1968, Enclosure (1), p. 1-III-1
3394 2/1 ComdC June, 1968, Part III.
3395 Information from Service Record Book, Richard Francis Corcoran
3396 Gerry Van Reusen, Tribute for the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, 28 September 2001. Sent by Richard Delotto, 6 July 2004.

Company—the best-trained outfit in the Corps! He had such a tremendous appreciation and faith in his troops. As I was to find out much later, he led his men by example...

It's known throughout the Marine Corps that the most dangerous thing in combat is a brand new 2nd Lieutenant, a 'by-the-book' officer who has a know-it-allo attitude. They rarely listened to the advice of their underlings, even combat-experienced ones. Capt. Corcoran was NOT like that. He relied on the trained knowledge and experiences of his Non Coms (privates to sergeants). He listened to the advice, formulated a correct decision and gave the orders. I never had an officer trust me, a lowly corporal, the way he did...

...

I wouldn't be alive today if it wasn't for Capt. Corcoran... It was May 19th, 1967... We were at Con Thien..and I was with Alpha Company when they stormed our wire at 3:30am... Capt. Corcoran could have stayed in his bunker & foxhole that night, but true to form, he traversed his company's perimeter foxholes encouraging his men, directing fire and making sure they were all right. Skipper had 'brass ones' (if you know what I mean!)...

When the enemy breached our lines, it left a big hole in our perimeter.. [and] I joined other Marines who were waiting to enter two Am Tracks to take us over to the breeched area... 'Where are you going, Van?' asked the voice. 'Is that you, Skipper? I was going to help fill the hole in the perimeter,' I answered. 'I need you here with me,' replied Capt Corcoran... Both Am Tracks took off and about 100 yards away, they were both hit... Everybody was killed... If he didn't come at that precise time, I wouldn't be alive today... I always wanted to thank Capt. Corcoran for his timely intervention, divine or otherwise. He was wounded and they medevaced him out before I could talk to him... I never got to express my appreciation for him. [I located his family to let them know that] Richard was a true HERO. All his men, including me, loved him and would have followed him to the ends of the earth... Without him, many men including myself wouldn't have lived through the Vietnam experience. He'll always be in my thoughts, and even after 35 years, I still can see him in my mind with his warm, infectious smile and pleasant voice. He was a tough and disciplined officer but commanded in a gentle, authoritarian way. He commanded, and earned everyone's RESPECT... He is truly what the Marine Corps is all about – Semper Fidelis ('Always faithful')."

At 2030H, 3/9 at XD943283 received small arms fire in the perimeter resulting in 1 KIA[3397] (PFC Robert Michael Leahy).

[*After 1/1 concluded its operation, Co A/1/1 returned to its defensive position on Hill 861 (XD803443), Co B/1/1 took defensive positions on Hill 881-South (XD777438), and Co C/1/1 took positions on Hill 558 (XD821449) where the 1/1 CP was located. Co D/1/1 took positions on Hill 689 (XD802409), and a 50-man detachment from H&S Co., 1/1, manned Hill 950 (XD844455).*[3398]]

09 JUNE 1968

ALLEN, CPL Terry Lee	**H/2/4**
BAKER, LCPL Donald	**F/2/1**
BARRINGER, PVT Ardrey Watts Jr.	**F/2/4**
BELL, PFC Ronald Eugene	**H&S/2/4**
BURDICK, PFC William F Jr.	**C/1/4**
CAHILL, HM1 Edwin Lewis	**F/2/1**
CHEARNLEY, PFC Joseph Michael	**H/2/4**
EVANS, SGT Clifford Melvin	**B/3rd Tk**
FORD, LCPL Clifford Eugene	**1st MT**
HOUSTON, LCPL Marvin Lynn	**F/2/1**
IANIERI, LCPL Richard Joseph	**F/2/4**
KIDD, PFC Melton Lavone	**F/2/1**
LITTLE, CPL Donnie Hugh	**A/1/1**
LOWE, PFC Barry	**F/2/1**
MARTIN, PFC Harry Pemberton	**H&S/2/4**
MIZNER, PFC Darrell Condie	**F/2/1**
NASH, SGT David Eugene	**F/2/1**
PATTERSON, PFC William Anthony	**F/2/1**
POLK, LCPL Robert Louis	**F/2/1**
ROMANO, PFC August	**F/2/1**
VOORHIES, CPL Emory David	**H&S/2/4**
WENGER, PFC David Allen	**H/2/4**
WOOLSEY, LCPL Jack Lee	**H/2/4**

By 1125H on 08 June 1968, BLT 2/4 had completed a move by helicopter to Objective #8 (XD864360) following prep by air and artillery. At 1230H, they took 16 rounds from a NVA direct fire weapon that resulted in 15 Marines wounded (and evacuated), and throughout the remainder of the day continued to receive incoming from

[3397] 3/9 ComdC June 1968, S-3 Journal, 07 June 1968, Ser #9.
[3398] 1/1 ComdC June 1968, Encl (1), p. 1-II-3.

the same weapon.[3399] 2/4 moved there with 3 companies (G/2/4 was not with them at the time) and a command group; the Bn Headquarters and 81s occupied 2 hills adjacent to the hill H/2/4 occupied. Hotel Company was set in on the higher of the hills with Echo Company on its right flank and Fox Company on its left.[3400] The position was a jumping-off point towards the last objective of the operation, and small patrols were dispatched to recon the area.[3401] H-2 (led by 2/Lt John T. Williamson) patrolled to the north and northwest toward Huong Hoa Village, finding extensive NVA fighting holes and spider holes which appeared recently used. After about 5 hours of patrolling, Lt Williamson reported to his Company Commander, Capt Thompson, his conclusion that the NVA were still in the area and in heavy numbers. "That time I took my platoon down and told them I had been in this area. I'd been stationed at Khe Sanh during the Siege, and I was very nervous about it. I said I wanted them to dig their holes deeper and be especially alert during the night. We had our company briefing with Captain Thompson, the 3rd Platoon leader, Gunnery Sergeant Hooper, and the 1st Platoon leader, Lt Isabel were there."[3402] H/2/4 was set on the long finger of a fairly steep hill with H-1 on the left side of the finger tying in with F/2/4, H-2 in the middle, and H-3 on the right side tying in with H&S Co which eventually tied in with E/2/4.[3403]

The night of 08/09 June was cloudy with good illumination early in the night, but the moon set about 0100 and about that time it began to rain. "At one time there were quite high winds and a good amount of rain."[3404] The long finger seemed to be a likely avenue of approach, and Lt Williamson placed a machinegun to cover the point. Some of the 5 to 6-ft. grass was cleared to give a field of fire.[3405]

At 0255 on the morning of 09 June 1968, F-2's position on the point, near where they linked up with H-1, reported movement on the finger. "It was still raining and the wind was really blowing around so that it was hard to discern actual movement, but I was pretty sure also that we heard it so I called a M-79 man over [who].. proceeded to fire M79s down the point. The M-79 must have stirred them up because we definitely heard more movement down there... I believe at this time we triggered their attack a little prematurely because we started getting rifle grenades back in return, but not noticeable small arms right away. The rifle grenades were quite accurate and one of them hit right next to myself and my M-79 man, wounding us, neither one very seriously... At this time I realized it was more than just a probe."[3406] 2/4 was attacked by an estimated company-size force with another estimated company-size unit in one of the draws who had not yet commenced the attack. "It would seem to me that the attack was designed to draw our attention to one side while.. they were going to try to come in with a larger force."[3407] A round exploded right into the H/2/4 company CP (about 40 meters up the hill from Lt Williamson's H-2 Platoon CP) wounding the Company Commander. When Lt. Williamson arrived at the company CP, "they were pulling Captain Thompson out of the hole and it looked like just a mass of bodies in the bottom of it. We eventually found out that they had taken a direct hit from a rifle grenade... Captain Thompson seemed to be in shock. He couldn't see.. and they immediately carried him off."[3408] Lt Williamson, the H-2 Commander, took over command of the company and Sgt Hooper (Platoon Commander of H-3) put Sgt Gary G. Miller, Platoon Right guide for H-3, was put in charge of what was left of H-2. When Sgt. Miller arrived at H-2, he found that in about every hole there were 2 or 3 wounded; only about a dozen men remained in fighting condition. A squad from F/2/4 was brought over to augment him.[3409] F-2's M60 machinegun position was overrun[3410] The 106mm RR was put in the day before, apparently visible to the NVA soldiers "because they knew exactly where to come. 2 men penetrated the lines [and] got to the 106 position and tried to damage [it]. Actually they were not able to put their satchel charges on it and damage the 106.. However, small arms fire and rifle grenade fire did damage the 106 sufficiently enough to have it evacuated."[3411] Lt Williamson's Platoon Sergeant had been killed, his second squad leader was shot though the arm, and his radioman wounded.[3412]

The ONE FOUR, Capt Moore, brought flareships on station and the Artillery FO, Lt Carpenter, worked artillery throughout the night.[3413] "It is believed that the

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[3399] ComdC 2/4, June, 1968, Encl (1), p. 7. Maj. George F. Warren, S-3 of BLT 2/4, notes that 35 rounds were received and 29 WIA (medevaced) were sustained. [HQMC Oral History Tape #2921. Interview conducted 13 June 1968].
[3400] Comments of 2/Lt John T. Williamson, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921.
[3401] Comments of Maj George F. Warren, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921.
[3402] Comments of 2/Lt John T. Williamson, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921.
[3403] *Ibid.*
[3404] *Ibid.*
[3405] *Ibid.*
[3406] *Ibid.*
[3407] Comments of Maj George F. Warren, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921..
[3408] Comments of 2/Lt John T. Williamson, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921.
[3409] Comments of Sgt Gary G. Miller, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921.
[3410] Comments of Cpl James A. Summey, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921.
[3411] Comments of Maj George F. Warren, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921.
[3412] Comments of 2/Lt John T. Williamson, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921.
[3413] *Ibid.*

artillery night defensive fires prevented the enemy from massing and thus broke up the attack."[3414] Medevac helicopters came in before dawn, guided by a strobe light and started evacuating casualties in the dark.[3415]

The attack resulted in 7 KIA and 41 WIA (evacuated).[3416]

A 1st Marines convoy with F/2/1 providing security was taken under fire in the vicinity of XD924404 and XD926404 by an unknown size NVA unit who fired intense small arms and then threw satchel charges, grenades and fired B-40 rockets from both sides of Route 9. One platoon was deployed to the high ground on the left side of the road and swept through the area encountering light contact. The convoy returned to KSCB. The contact resulted in 8 KIA, 9 WIA, and 11 NVA KIA.[3417]

10 JUNE 1968

SMITH, LCPL Jimmy Herman H&S/2/1

On 10 June, a patrol from Co F/2/3 thoroughly searched the area of yesterday's ambush site (XD925402) of the 1st Marines convoy, and located 1 USMC KIA near a disabled vehicle along with 1 NVA KIA, NVA weapons and grenades. The USMC KIA had a map with thrust points on his body. The search of the area was completed at 0940H and the Marine KIA was tagged and sent to KSCB.[3418]

11 JUNE 1968

ALLERBY, HN Milton Richard	A/1/4
ANDRUS, LCPL Daniel Francis	A/1/4
CASTELOT, PFC Robert Sheehan	A/1/4
DICKERSON, CPL Bernard W Jr.	A/1/4
EWING, PVT Michael Lee	C/1/12
IRWIN, LCPL Robert Joseph	A/1/4
JONES, LCPL Sam	A/1/4
MONROE, LCPL Wilber Dean	A/1/4
PHIPPS, PFC James Alvin	C/1/12
PRICE, PFC Dwight Anthony	A/1/4
SNEAD, PFC Bernard James	A/1/4
WHITE, LCPL Charles Clinton	A/1/4
WRIGHT, GYSGT Edward Taylor	A/1/4

When A/1/4, commanded by Capt Richard R. Mannila, landed on LZ TORCH there were no holes. Elephant grass was chest-high; it was fresh territory, out of the artillery fan from KSCB. The LZ, not on the high ground, was chosen because helicopters could land on it.[3419] Major General Ray David (CG, 3rd MarDiv) personally inspected the position at the time of the artillery insertion. He regarded it as good defensive terrain, and instructed the CO of the artillery battery (C/1/12) to "dig in and prepare the position with all possible speed in view of the enemy artillery/mortar capability."[3420]

The day after landing, the 1/4 Battalion Commander (LtCol J. H. Maclean) ordered Capt Mannila to conduct a company-size patrol: "Go as far as you can to the north, follow the stream out of here, and then when you can't go any further, turn around and come back. Be sure you get back before dark." Mannila recalls, "I went out for about 5 hours. I don't think we made it a mile [because of] the brush in that area; it was virgin area. We were cutting with machetes to go along there. Coming back, I was very concerned. When I came in to the company position, I didn't come right up the nose of the finger where I felt they were going to come; I purposely brought the company another 150 yards in front of the company position, then hooked back in so that I wouldn't disclose that we had good fields of fire from that defensive position. [I] reported in to the Battalion Commander and said, 'It's almost impossible with a company out here, Sir, we're going to have to break into smaller units on patrol."[3421]

The patrols reported NVA and squads-sized units of NVA were seen moving from helicopters. "We knew what happened on LOON and that we were going to get hit." On the night of 10/11 June 1968, Capt Mannila went outside the position just before dark carrying a M-16 (with his .45 under his flak jacket, so that he didn't appear to be an officer). "Right before it got dark, I told [SSGT Norman "Kip"] Kiplinger, the First Platoon Commander, 'I'm going forward in the jungle to see how we look. Be careful you don't shoot me when I come back in,' and I disappeared into the jungle along this kind of wide path.. I stayed within the jungle canopy and there was a 5, 6-foot bank on my shoulder. I'm moving fairly rapidly, then stopping and listening to see if I hear anything. I got out to about 75, 100 yards and I looked back to see how we're looking as it gets dark, and I'm satisfied that we weren't showing anything from the company position. Then, all of a sudden, a chill goes up my back: there's no sounds in the jungle. There's nothing. I thought, They're here! I flipped my 16 on automatic, stayed against the bank again, and worked my way back again as rapidly as I could, but not running... I get back inside the perimeter and I tell Kiplinger, 'They're out there. We're going to get hit, so make sure when we set

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[3414] 2/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. 7.
[3415] Comments of 2/Lt John T. Williamson, HQMC Oral History Tape #2921.
[3416] 2/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. 7.
[3417] 2/1 ComdC June, 1968, Part III.
[3418] 2/3 ComdC June, 1968.
[3419] Conversation with Richard R. Mannila, 5 September 2003.
[3420] CG 3rd MarDiv 120920Z/Jun68, Subj: 1st Bn 4th Mar Contact of 11 June at LZ TORCH, to LtGen Cushman, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc. June 1968 file, Encl (89).
[3421] Conversation with Richard R. Mannila, 5 September 2003.

the trip flares and the Claymore mines, we do a good job.' It gets dark and all of a sudden the wind starts to blow hard, and there was no moon; it was a perfect night for an attack.. Everyone's alert, and no one's sleeping."[3422] A/1/4 had not been at the position sufficiently long to build substantial bunkers or string concertina wire, but all were well dug in and friendly arty was registered.[3423]

At about two o'clock in the morning, Capt Mannila and First Sergeant Crawford went out to check the lines. Crawford was like a big "John Wayne" character who had seen quite a bit of combat. Capt Mannila had just returned to his CP when two shots were fired in the dark followed by three rapid explosions—big satchel charges exploding. "All hell breaks loose in front of us, and there's a pretty good-sized force out there... It was wild. I knew we had a problem because I heard the explosion, then I heard a couple more explosions. The .50 [caliber machinegun] gets red hot. It goes crazy. Now we're getting 81 illumination... My radioman yells, 'Skipper, where in the hell's the artillery?' When they hit us, they hit our artillery position at the same time.. so we didn't have any artillery... The radioman comes on the horn again. All the front is lighting up. He yells, 'The First Squad is all dead—all eleven, with the same squad, just totally eliminated."[3424] "The NVA crawled up in the elephant grass and threw satchel charges into foxholes of the 1st Platoon, killing 10 Marines and were able to overrun our perimeter on the finger of the hill."[3425] One Marine, Robert Gutierrez, was the only man who lived out of A-1. "Robert was blinded by the flash from all the explosions around him and started to make his way back toward the rear. He had 3 Chinese and North Vietnamese mercenaries with satchel charges following him. He was unable to see where he was trying to go. That's when I jumped out and grabbed him and threw him back into the bottom of our foxhole. He told us that 'Alphie' [HN Allerby], our corpsman, had been killed!.. In about 15 minutes it became the longest and loneliest six and a half to seven and a half hours of my life. All I was able to think about was Alphie. The second hand on my watch was moving as slow as the hour hand. I was totally alone with just myself with no one to talk to. It was absolutely the loneliest and longest night of my life."[3426]

HN Allerby had managed to help several wounded Marines before he was shot.[3427]

It was approximately 0215H as an estimated company of NVA assaulted LZ TORCH (XD911278) manned by A/1/4 and the artillery battery, C/1/12, using small arms, RPG, satchel charges and ChiCom grenades.[3428]

The cannoneers of Battery C, 12th Marines depressed the muzzles of their 105mm howitzers to fire point-blank into the ranks of the attackers but the enemy did succeed in reaching one gun parapet.[3429] CPL Gary D. Conner, a radio operator with C Battery, 1/12, seeing the NVA breaching part of the perimeter, immediately deployed several Marines to plug the hole. Although seriously wounded, he was instrumental in reestablishing the defensive perimeter and repulsing the attack.[3430]

LCPL Rudolph Martinez Cortez, a squad leader with A/1/4, seeing that the NVA had rendered two machineguns inoperable, quickly moved his squad along the perimeter and deployed his men along the besieged sector. Although only a PFC at the time, he located a reaction force and led it to the perimeter and directed the men into defensive positions.[3431]

At first light, the Marines of A/1/4 were bringing the wounded to the LZ for evacuation when NVA mortar began to hit in the jungle in front of the lines. The Marines' four mortars returned the favor on the 2 NVA mortars that had been moved up during the night, but then suddenly went silent. The Marine mortar position had taken a direct hit. Capt Mannila, with wounded from the night, without artillery and without mortars, is at the bottom of his hole when "just then, the radioman comes on the air and says, 'Sir, we got 2 A4s in 2 or 3 minutes.' We don't have a target, a position. If we're going to get air, they're going to drop their stuff and they're going to leave. I'm thinking rapidly, faster than I can talk about it. As soon as I stand up, the mortars are going to start firing, and also I'm going to be shot at. The next thing—it's almost as if I came out of my body—I find myself standing up. I tell myself and my binoculars, 'Don't loose it, don't loose it!' To them [the NVA] it must have been: Look at this guy! He's got binoculars. He's an officer or NCO, and he's saying, 'Come, get me!' My heart is just pounding like hell, and sure enough, they start moving the mortars back on me... All of a sudden I spot them. I say, 'I got 'em!'.. Just then the first A4 cleared the top of the hill—15 feet above it. The round [of the NVA] hit 3 to 5 feet behind me! They went through the flak jacket. I wake up at the bottom.

[3422] *Ibid.* [Most of the time in the jungle the sounds of insects are heard, except when there is something moving; then there is a sudden, unnerving silence].

[3423] CG 3rd MarDiv 120920Z/Jun68, cited.

[3424] Conversation with Richard R. Mannila, 5 September 2003.

[3425] Dick Harris, email to Richard Manilla, 12 May 2003, 12:13AM.

[3426] Gary R. Blankenship email to Larry Bosko [was a LCPL in A/1/4] in documents sent by Richard R. Mannila, 10 Sep 2003.

[3427] Note from Richard Manilla, 10 September 2003.

[3428] 1/4 ComdC June, 1968, Part II, p. 3.

[3429] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, June, 1968, p. 11.

[3430] Bronze Star Medal Citation, CPL Gary D. Conner.

[3431] Bronze Star Medal Citation, LCPL Rudolph Martinez Cortez.

They're firing for effect on me now. I wake up at the bottom of the hole and my radioman—I hear him yelling to the Battalion, 'I think the Captain's dead.'.. I tell him, 'Tell Battalion I'm alive. I've been hit, but I'm alive. I'm not dead!' He radios that, and they're firing for effect... All of a sudden I hear footsteps running.. Father Evan Greco had heard I'd been hit and he knew I'd lost a Corpsman. He picked up a medical kit, had been timing the mortar rounds, worked his way up the backside of the ridge, took off and jumps in the top of the hole. I was getting ready to fight whoever was coming at the top and the next thing I hear his voice and I knew who he was, and I said, 'Father Greco, you shouldn't be here, be quiet.' They're firing for effect again and he lies on top of me. Then he pulls my flak jacket off. And I think: O, my God, don't take that flak jacket off! And he tells me that the flak jacket fell apart in his hands. He sticks cotton in the major big holes in my back. I got, like, 6 holes. Then they fired for effect again and he lays on top of me again. Then he takes off running down the side of the ridge to help some other wounded... The second A4 comes and it was a direct hit; we take out the two mortar positions.... I was medically discharged from the Marine Corps in March, 1969."[3432]

Casualties: 13 KIA and 80 WIA from 1/4 and 1 KIA and 33 WIA from C/1/12.[3433]

[*On 11 June, LtGen Cushman, CG of III MAF, provided a rationale for a modified posture in the Khe Sanh area: (1) During the 2-month period following the siege, 4 to 7 maneuver battalions have successfully fought the 304th NVA Division generally to the west and south of KSCB, utilizing Route 9 as the principle artery of support, making the airfield at KSCB unnecessary; (2) Maintaining the security and repair of Route 9, with its many bridges, between Ca Lu and KSCB has been an expensive undertaking requiring between 1 and 2 maneuver battalions. Resupply of company fire bases by helicopters from KSCB could be done with less cost if helicopters were sent from Ca Lu, with a considerable savings of troops necessary to maintain Route 9; (3) The NVA appear to be employing light forces with stand-off artillery and mortar support. When confronted, the NVA resorts to evasive tactics. "In light of the foregoing it is considered highly desirable to adjust our modus operandi in the Khe Sanh area to achieve greater operational flexibility, economize on forces, and deal most effectively with the enemy pattern of activity. Accordingly, it has been decided to: operate in the Khe Sanh area from several randomly positioned and frequently moved fire bases supplied by helicopter from the vicinity of Ca Lu... discontinue use of the Khe Sanh base as a principle combat and logistic support base, terminate use of Route 9 between Ca Lu and KSCB, recovering the tactical bridging for use elsewhere, employ the several battalions saved as a result of the foregoing adjustments to conduct strong offensive thrusts elsewhere in ICTZ."*[3434]]

12 JUNE 1968

HUMPHREYS, PFC Larry Don	K/3/4
JOHNSON, PFC Havert Earl	K/3/4
NEWFIELD, LCPL Jimmy Charles	3/4
PADILLA, PVT Ralph Henry	K/3/4
SCOTT, LCPL Edward Drake	K/3/4
WHITE, PFC Michael Matthew	K/3/4

On 11 June, 3/4 (callsign TEMPLE LAKE) was CHOPed from OPCON 1st Marines to 4th Marines. Trucks moved the battalion from their night defensive positions starting at 0750 with all units being lifted from Khe Sanh to XD880295, about one click south of the designated LZ. In the process of securing the LZ, a squad from K/3/4 walked into a bunker complex and made contact with an estimated NVA platoon at XD880289. A squad from the company was approaching the hill up a well traveled path when they were hit from 3 bunkers oriented toward the trail. The first 2 men were felled by heavy small arms fire and the unit had to withdraw so that Huey gunships could work over the area. Once the LZ had been firmly secured and the CP established, CO, 3/4, LtCol F. L. Bourne, directed each company to send out recon patrols to check out the area in front of their lines and for K/3/4 to mark the position of their MIAs.[3435] On 12 June, Co K/3/4 went on a patrol to recover 2 MIA from 11 June.[3436]

At 1400 on 12 June, the battalion was lifted by helicopter to Objective 14 completing movement at 1645. At 1500, 3 estimated 250-pound snake eyes were dropped on the LZ resulting in 1 KIA, 15 WIA (evacuated) and 4 WIA (not evacuated).[3437]

[*3rd Marine Division issued a 5-paragraph order ordering the disestablishment of KSCB this date.*[3438] *Mission: "3rd Marine Division on order conducts operations along Route #9 effecting a transition in the disposition of forces in the Khe Sanh area to a mobile defense posture. Initially, forces of up to one battalion in strength will*

3432 Conversation with Richard R. Mannila, 5 September 2003.

3433 CG 3rd MarDiv 120920Z/Jun68, cited. These figures were preliminary, as is reflected in the listing.

3434 CG III MAF DNG 110156Z/Jun68, SPECAT EXCLUSIVE for Gen Abrams Info LtGen Rosson, Subj: Rationale for Modified Posture in the Khe Sanh Area, in III MAF Outgoing SPECAT EXCLUSIVE 11 May – 17 June 1968.

3435 3/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. III-3 and IV-6-7.

3436 *Ibid.*, p. IV-7.

3437 *Ibid.*

3438 CG 3rd MarDiv 121510Z/Jun68, Subj: Concept of Operations: Transition to Mobile Defense at Khe Sanh, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc Jun68 File, Encl (90).

operate in the vicinity of Khe Sanh with reaction forces available from other AOs. Fire support bases are established to cover movements of forces and to provide support for future operations in the Khe Sanh area." The operation involved 4 phases: (1) "Commencing immediately Task Force HOTEL will perform evacuation/destruction tasks at Khe Sanh.. which can be accomplished without loss of tactical integrity of that position.." (2) "..Selected artillery batteries displace from KSB to fire support bases.. Outlying Khe Sanh hill positions continue to provide area security." (3) "Evacuation/destruction of KSB is completed. Evacuation/destruction of outlying Khe Sanh hill positions commences... Mobile defense posture is assumed.. up to one battalion remains in Khe Sanh area conducting operations to detect enemy presence while remaining within range of artillery support.." (4) "Tactical bridging west of Ca Lu is removed... Mobile defense posture has reaction forces from outside Khe Sanh area up to 2 regiments in size... Support of forces.. is by helicopter."]

[On 12 June, the Joint High Command and Front Command Headquarters, B5-T8 [Khe Sanh Front], ordered the 304th Division to be withdrawn from the Khe Sanh battlefield to the rear to be refitted. "The mission of the siege at Ta Con [KSCB] and attacking the enemy on Highway 9 using the 308th Division and the Viet Bac [Military Region] 264th Regiment replaced [the 304th Division]. Comrade Thai Dung, the 304th Division Commander, was sent by the High Command to command the 308th Division."[3439] The 325C Division had been withdrawn during the middle of February, replaced by the 66th Regiment.[3440] The 308th Division had entered the battlefield in mid-May (minus its 36th Regiment).[3441] Apparently the 304th Division CP was struck by a B-52 mission: "Near the end of the campaign during the period that the enemy was dropping B52 bombs, Comrade Chu Nghi, who was in charge of the Military Region III Entertainment Unit, was martyred at the Division Command Headquarters. Comrade Vu Tao, a reporter for the news agency and two entertainers.. were wounded together with Comrade Nguyen Trong Hop, the Division's Deputy Political Officer, together with a number of staff cadre and soldiers."[3442]]

[3439] *Chien Dich Tien Cond Duong 9—Khe Sanh Xuan He 1968 [The Spring-Summer 1968 Khe Sanh—Route 9 Offensive Campaign]*, Hanoi: Vien Lich Su Quan Su Vietnam, Bo Quoc Phong [Vietnam Institute for Military History, Ministry of Defense], 1987, pp. 48; *Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) (Tap II) [304th Division (Chronology) (Vol II)* Nah Xuat Ban Quan Nhan Dan [People's Army Publishing House], Hanoi, 1990, pp. 115-116. Trans. Sedgwick Tourison.

[3440] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[3441] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[3442] *Ibid.*, p. 115. The B52 strike must have made a direct hit on the 304th Division CP HQ.

14 JUNE 1968

OVERTON, PFC Doyle Wayne L/3/4

PFC Overton died this date from falciparum malaria with renal failure contracted 11 June 1968 in the Khe Sanh area.

15 JUNE 1968

BERTRAM, PFC David Michael	**L/3/4**
CRUSE, HN James Dale	**M/3/4**
FITTS, PFC Richard Lee	**3/4**
HAWYER, LCPL Donald Robert	**L/3/4**
JOYNER, 1/Lt Stephen Douglas	**L/3/4**
LAVOIE, CPL Gerald Henry	**L/3/4**
LOPEZ, PFC Robert Francisco	**M/3/4**
MC CLINTOCK, PFC Gerald	**L/3/4**
MC HENRY, LCPL Paul Vincent	**H&S/3/4**
MERCER, HM2 William Ivan	**M/3/4**
MURPHY, LCPL Richard Brian	**M/3/4**
PLANCHON, CPL Randall Theodore II	**M/3/4**
SMITH, LCPL Charles Daniel	**L/3/4**
SPICZKA, PFC Aloysius Francis Jr.	**K/3/4**
THIBAULT, PFC Jeffrey Allen	**M/3/4**
THOMAS, PFC Nathan	**L/3/4**
WALLACE, PFC Jackie Elmore	**M/3/4**
WILLS, LCPL Robert John	**K/3/4**

The TEMPLE LAKE (3/4) position, about 10 miles south of Khe Sanh (XD880267)[3443] started hearing movement about 0445 in the streambed to the north and at 0545 started receiving an attack from what was estimated as portions of 2 NVA battalions. The attack was preceded by the firing of 30 RPG rounds. At 0550, Huey gunships and an AO were requested. At 0605, 4 flights of fixed wing were on the way. At 0643, an emergency medevac was requested. At 0645, the AO was on station. At 0647, an active enemy mortar was observed at XD879266. About 0635, 5 NVA occupied some of the Co "M" holes. At 0710, Co "M" reported a machinegun set up inside their 2nd Platoon CP. All holes were cleared at 0730. At 0720, Huey gunships were on station. At 0737, a Co "I" FO observed a mortar tube destroyed. At 0853, Companies "I" and "L" observed a green star cluster in the vicinity of the Co "M" position. After the star cluster, the attack seemed to slow down and ceased at 0915. At 0915, a Co "K" platoon was alerted that they would check out the streambed to the north of the Co "M" position. At 1115, units sweeping in front of Co "M" made contact with an enemy sniper at XD877262. At 1128, the Co "K" platoon moved out to check the assigned area. At 1135, Co "M"

[3443] FMFPAC 170442Z/Jun68, WESTPAC SITREP #1175, Para. 2.A.; 3rd MarDiv COC 160700Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #244, Para. 3.F.

reported killing the sniper at XD877262. At 1138, a Co "M" unit sweeping in front of the Co "M" lines reported NVA playing dead and opening up on personnel as they passed by. At 1202, the Co "M" sweep unit made contact with an unknown number of NVA at XD876263 and encountered automatic weapons fire at XD877263. At 1315, Co "I" heard a tube popping and observed 4 NVA at XD867264. At 1350, the Battalion received 7 rounds of 82mm mortars in the area of the old LZ and 81mm mortars. At 1428, a Co "K" platoon made contact with several automatic weapons at XD872262. At 1530, all contact was broken and at 1745, all units had returned to the perimeter.[3444]

Results of the contact: 16 KIA, 58 WIA (evacuated), 3 WIA (not evacuated), 1 MIA.[3445]

"One of the most moving things I ever witnessed was this young kid on the 15th. He was very badly wounded, shot in the gut... This young, blonde-haired kid looked up at me and said, 'Sir, I did the best I could,' and I said, 'Son, I know you did,' and he died right there. They let the poncho down and all the blood ran out of the poncho. I'll never forget it. He was a young kid. He looked about 18, 19. He said, 'Sir, I did the best I could.'"[3446]

Among the dead were two who served in such an exemplary manner a month earlier. CPL Planchon, who had been the Third Squad Leader of platoon M-2 on 16 May when M/3/4 was ensnared in a desperate battle and who became the Platoon Sergeant was killed today as was HN James Dale Cruse who, under heavy enemy fire which caused heavy casualties, treated the wounded without regard for his own safety, and then returned to his position on the line with little or no sleep.[3447]

HM2 William Ivan Mercer was the senior Corpsman for M/3/4 who died trying to save the lives of 2 Marines wounded by a NVA sniper.[3448] HM2 Mercer had voluntarily accompanied the platoon assigned the mission of searching the area forward of the friendly positions when it came under accurate NVA sniper fire.[3449] He rushed to the aid of one Marine who was shot through the abdomen, bandaged him and took him to the LZ for evacuation. "He returned again to treat another Marine wounded in the leg and arm who could not move. He was on his knees leaning over the Marine with his back to the sniper fire trying to bandage the Marine and protect him at the same time, when he was hit by sniper fire and fatally wounded. The wounded Marine also died after receiving more fire from the sniper."[3450]

16 JUNE 1968

BOND, LCPL Theodore Charles F/2/1
GALINDEZ, LCPL Manuel Antonio H/2/4

17 JUNE 1968

CARNEY, PFC Tyrone Edward H/2/4

[On 17 June 1968, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred in III MAF's proposal to adopt a mobile posture in western Quang Tri Province with the concomitant phase down and deactivation of KSCB[3451] Destruction of KSCB was conducted as Operation CHARLIE (17 June – 06 July 1968) with the assigned mission: "On order, the 3rd Marine Division evacuates Khe Sanh Base (KSB) of all operating and supporting units, facilities, and of any material that would be of use to the enemy; decreases the size and type of forces presently committed to the Khe Sanh area; continues extensive reconnaissance in the SCOTLAND II AO and maintains quick reaction capability to exploit any suitable target uncovered by reconnaissance forces."[3452] At 1530H on 17 June 1968, Bn 3/9 was CHOPed OPCON to 1st Marines at KSCB with the mission to demolish Khe Sanh Combat Base and participate in the retrograde movement from Khe Sanh to LSA CAMEO.[3453] The next day, Bn 1/1 commenced Operation CHARLIE while maintaining combat outposts on Hills 950, 558, 861, and 881-South throughout the remainder of the month.[3454]

The task—even aside from increased NVA shelling—was indeed Herculean. The Khe Sanh airfield consisted of 17,000 individual sheets of AM-2 matting with each typical sheet weighing 144 pounds and measuring 12 ft. x 2 ft.. Using 30 men, the estimated removal, bundling, and loading was 30 men working 15 days.[3455] There were 166 large bunkers (bunkers that housed 5 or more men). Complete destruction of all Grade 3 ammunition was essential to ensure it did not fall into the hands of the enemy. 10 days were required to collect loose ord-

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[3444] 3/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-8.
[3445] 3/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-8; 3rd MarDiv COC 171402Z/Jun68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #246, Para. 3.F.
[3446] Conversation with Frank Lee Bourne, 21 January 1990. (Bourne was CO of 3/4).
[3447] CG 3rd MarDiv 270619Z/Aug68, Recommendation for Individual Award (Posthumous), in Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) file, HN James Dale Cruse.
[3448] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 3 August 1968, in Navy Cross (posthumous) file, HM2 William Ivan Mercer.
[3449] Navy Cross (posthumous) Citation for HM2 William Ivan Mercer.
[3450] Statement of CPL Tandy W. Wells in Navy Cross (posthumous) file, HM2 William Ivan Mercer.
[3451] HQMC Briefing Paper AO3H13-dnw, 11 July 1968 in file: "HQMC: Reduction of KSCB Briefing," Historical Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C.
[3452] 3rd MarDiv OpO 20-68, Evacuation of Khe Sanh Base, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc June 1968 file, Encl (72).
[3453] 3/9 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. 4.
[3454] 1/1 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. 1-II-6 and 1-III-2.
[3455] 3rd MarDiv OpO 20-68, Evacuation of Khe Sanh Base, Annex B, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc June 1968 file, Encl (72).

nance. in addition, an estimated 120 tons of Grade 3 ammo was buried in an area south of the airstrip at approximately the 1400-ft. mark of the runway from the eastern approach. If blown, the resulting crater would be an estimated 130 ft. x 300 ft. x 50 ft. This was to be blown by EOD after everyone else had departed.[3456] *The hasty protective minefield at Khe Sanh and the surrounding positions would remain in place; no attempt would be made to remove or destroy the minefields due to minimum records and the inherent danger to friendly troops.*[3457]

The destruction of KSCB proceeded with Marines just off Operation ROBIN, flew into the base and each company was assigned an area. Each company commander was responsible to ensure all bunkers and trench lines were destroyed and anything salvageable was deposited at a collection point. Many casualties were taken by 3/9 in this operation: "In destroying the bunkers and filling in the trench lines we did away with our only means of protection and the enemy harassed us continually."[3458]

For the trooper at KSCB, it was a nightmare: "Basically it was mass confusion because everybody's worried about incoming artillery and trying to get everything packed away in the jeeps and the trailers and mounted on pallets. You're worried about incoming and you're tearing down bunkers, destroying everything. And we were delayed 2 or 3 days basically because of the fact of incoming and couldn't get the bunkers torn down fast enough. It was really a scary experience... We had quite a few guys messed up because of that... It wasn't because of the lack of leadership.. We had our job to do."[3459] *Jeff Loomis recalls: "We were kept busy fighting off the rats so kindly left behind for us by our predecessors (they proved to be a worthy adversary) while we were trying to avoid the sampling of rockets and artillery that the NVA had saved just for us. It was rather disheartening trying to avoid the incoming while we were destroying the bunkers and trenches designed to protect us from that very thing; we were running out of places to hide fast!"*[3460]

Despite these obstacles and difficulties, the annihilation of KSCB proceeded as planned:[3461]

DATE	LB	SB	T	W
20 Jun	3 + ½ of 2	77 + ½ of 6	2550	2550
21 Jun	23 ½	178	2920	1360
22 Jun	30	23	890	3675
23 Jun	11	12	345	2650

[LB=Large Bunkers; SB=Small Bunkers; T=Trenchline filled in (in ft.); W=Wire torn (in ft.)]

A news reporter from the Baltimore Sun *"leaked" the news concerning Khe Sanh before the base was destroyed and the troops evacuated, thus reflecting the unreliability of news reporters on the battlefield with no regard to the safety of our fighting men. His release was sent from Khe Sanh on 24 June and appeared in the New York* Times *on 27 June 1968. MACV suspended Mr. Carroll's military accreditation because he had broken the rules that forbade discussion of future plans, operations or strikes, to ensure protection of the troops. Mr. Carroll lost his credentials for 6 months; Marines lost their lives due to his news release. Within 12 hours of the article, there was an immediate increase in NVA artillery on KSCB resulting in several men killed. In addition, there was increased NVA activity directed against Hill 689, with a strong probe on 26/27 June that actually penetrated the wire.*[3462] *On 29 June 1968, CG TF Hotel reported: "Increased artillery and mortar attacks on 1st Marines and ground contact vicinity FOXTROT RIDGE [location of 3/4 indicates increased enemy activity in Khe Sanh area."*[3463] *Richard Camp (who had been CO of L/3/26 during the Siege battle and now was Aide to CG, 3rd Marine Division, Major General Raymond Davis, recalls that he became irate when Carroll's article was printed: "There was a dramatic increase in shelling. I al-*

[3456] On 6 July 1968, Master Gunnery Sergeant John Pertl Driver returned to KSCB to detonate 120 tons of unsalvageable ordnance near the east end of the runway. Because of the quantity, this could only be done after all troops had left and when there would be no helicopter operations under way. After previously preparing a shot to be triggered by two 500-pound bombs plus 1000 pounds of Grade III ordnance, at 1400 on 8 July, some 18 hours after the last ground troops had departed under cover of darkness, MGySgt Driver returned by helicopter alone and detonated the ordnance lest it fall into the hands of the NVA. [NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 19 August 1968, in Bronze Star Medal file of MGySgt John Pertl Driver].

[3457] CT TF H 180640Z/Jun68, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc. Jun68 file, Encl (114).

[3458] 1/Lt Peter M. Walsh, "Filling Trench Lines," Marine Corps *Gazette* 54:5 (May, 1969) 11. Walsh was a Platoon Commander with L/3/9.

[3459] Comments of CPL George E. Moore, HQMC Oral History Tape #3165. Moore was with the LSU at Khe Sanh 29 Dec 1966 – 15 August 1968.

[3460] Letter of Jeff Loomis, 23 July 1993.

[3461] 3/9 ComdC June 1968, S-3 Journal entries for 20-23 June 1968. 3/9 was awarded a Meritorious Unit Commendation by CMC for its activities during Operation CHARLIE which notes that 3/9 was also assigned to provide one company during the hours of darkness as regimental reaction force for 1st Marines. "The destruction work was extremely difficult and must of it had to be accomplished by manual labor... The heat and dust were extremely adverse, and constant mortar and artillery attacks by the enemy.. made the assigned mission especially dangerous and hazardous... When completed, the Khe Sanh Combat Baswe resembled a natural and undisturbed piece of terrain."

[3462] Comments of LtCol Billy R. Duncan, HQMC Oral History Tape #3662. Duncan was CO of 2/1.

[3463] CG TF HOTEL 290920Z/Jun68 in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc June 1968 file, Encl (171).

ways thought if I ever ran into that guy, I would kill him. In fact, if I still run into him I won't kill him, but I'll beat the hell out of him. He'll get his come-uppance!"[3464]

CBMU-301 Det B departed 20 June and the Khe Sanh ASRT moved from Khe Sanh to Chu Lai on 24 June. The Khe Sanh DASC was deactivated on 27 June and moved to LZ STUD by truck convoy over Route 9.[3465]

Because of the Carroll leak, the White House was placed under pressure to explain why Khe Sanh was being abandoned.[3466] *On 27 June 1968, Gen Abrams sent a message to Gen Westmoreland: "We shall be asked such questions as.. 'General Westmoreland once said that Khe Sanh must be held, if he was correct, why the change?' What I would like to do is to have your concurrence in replying.. as follows: "Some weeks before he departed for his new assignment, General Westmoreland requested.. General Cushman review his deployments in northern I CTZ, including Khe Sanh and make any recommendations he thought appropriate to improve his troop dispositions... General Westmoreland after weighing the pros and cons instructed that this outline be developed in detail. He did not see the detailed plan prior to his departure from Vietnam."*[3467]]

18 JUNE 1968

BALL, PFC Robert Lee	K/3/4
CARROLL, CPL Fergus Joseph	K/3/4
DEGNIS, PVT James Edward	H&S/3/4
FAULKNER, PFC Elmer Lee Jr.	A/3rd Eng
GIBSON, PFC William Terry	K/3/4
JOHNS, LCPL Carey Lee	H&S/3/4[3468]
LAVIGNE, LCPL Steven Bruce	K/3/4
MATHEWS, CPL James Michael	K/3/4
MONCAYO, SGT Jose Roberto	M/3/4
OWENS, LCPL Elwood	K/3/4
SCHURRER, CPL Jon Rodney	M/3/4
SILVA, LCPL Rito	K/3/4
TAYLOR, SSGT Albert Russell II	K/3/4

On 18 June, TEMPLE LAKE (3/4) received an attack from an estimated NVA company of the 88th Regiment, 308th NVA Division that began at 0555 when Co "K" received a light probe and called in illumination and HE [high explosive]. At 0610, Co "K" received the main thrust of the attack as the enemy crawled within 30 feet of the lines before launching their attack, supported by 82mm mortars and RPGs. The NVA assault was able to penetrate the FEBA [forward edge of the battle area]. Co "M" was ordered by LtCol Bourne to dispatch one platoon OPCON to Co "K". At 0620, an AO came on station, and upon observing one group of 25 – 30 NVA and numerous smaller groups of 8 – 10 NVA at XD875264, called in fixed wing air strikes and Huey gunships. The attack continued until 0945. The NVA left snipers and automatic weapons behind to cover their withdrawal. During the attack, the fixed wing air strikes and artillery struck Hills 703 (XD878268) and 749 (XD866272) to block reinforcement of NVA units in contact. At 1030, Co "K" (with the platoon from Co "M") was able to reestablish the FEBA and tie in with Co "I". At 1137, the battalion received 12 rounds of estimated 152mm artillery from Co Roc. At 1215, units began to sweep the battlefield and clear out remaining pockets of resistance. At 1417, the sweep was completed and all units were prepared to be extracted by helicopter to new positions. Casualties were 14 KIA and 30 WIA. There were 129 NVA KIA (confirmed).[3469]

Capt Rudolph H. Fahrner, section leader of CATTLE CALL 5-10 and 5-11 on mission 106A, 2 CH-46s assigned to move TEMPLE LAKE to their new Landing Zones (HAWK, FOXTROT RIDGE, and Hill 471), commenced the lift at 1430 at XD879267. The lift needed to be completed by dark since there were no supporting fires available to suppress any night attack. TEMPLE LAKE's LZ was "T" shaped with the north-south ridge being 20 – 40 feet higher than the east-west finger. Unfortunately, the troops in the lower zone had collected all their garbage and set it afire causing an unnecessary hazard of smoke along with "cooking" rounds which had been inadvertently tossed into the fire, while the upper ridge was exposed to sniper fire and mortar rounds throughout the day. As soon as the last trooper boarded, the aircraft was bracketed on both sides by NVA mortar rounds which fortunately hit on the slopes of the zone. Without panic, Capt Fahrner checked to determine that all troops were safely aboard before lifting from the zone.[3470]

During the helicopter extract, 3/4 received 100 rounds of 82mm mortar and 90 rounds of 152mm artillery. The helicopter lift was completed with Co "I" at Foxtrot

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[3464] Conversation with Richard Camp, 3 June 1989.
[3465] MASS-3 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. 3.
[3466] Walt W. Rostow, Memo to the President, 25 June 1968, in LBJ Library, National Security Files, Vietnam Country File, box 67/2, folder "VN2A(S) I Corps 5/68-11/68 (2 of 3), #81.
[3467] GEN ABRAMS MAC 8394, in Rostow, Memo to the President, 25 June 1968, cited *supra*, Doc #76a. Westmoreland's terse reply: "Agree with proposed replies to press RE: Khe Sanh. Needless to say, your decision on Cushman proposal is sound under current circumstances." [WESTMORELAND 270217Z/Jun68 to ABRAMS, in *supra*.
[3468] Is listed as a member of H&S/2/4 in the Coffelt database.
[3469] 3/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-10.
[3470] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 31 July 1968, in Distinguished Flying Cross file on Capt Rudolph Hugo Fahrner. The 3/4 ComdC, June, 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-10, also notes the fire and exploding ammunition rounds.

Ridge (XD874383), Co "K" at Hill 471 (XD846393), and the CP group with Companies "L" and "M" at LZ Hawk (XD895407).[3471]

The community of Porterville, California, from where SSGT Taylor lived, lost more young men per capita in the war than any other town in the United States.[3472] Eva Taylor, SSGT Albert Taylor's mother, recalls her son "playing soldier" with the other young boys in the oak-covered hills above Porterville. Albert had 3 children and another one on the way when he went to Vietnam. He wrote home: "I am a Marine and an American. If we stop (Communism) here, it will someday be a help to our children." He wrote home on 13 May of a patrol to Khe Sanh village, "It was really bombed out. There were bodies all over.." The corpse was sealed. His mother says, "I wanted Albert to be identified. A friend of ours said he would identify Albert, but they wouldn't allow it. Kenny [Albert's brother, who also served in Vietnam and accompanied the body back home] said he was pretty sure it was Albert."[3473]

19 JUNE 1968

ALLEN, SGT Herbert Marshall	H&S/1/1
HELMSTRETTLER, 1/Lt Michael David	HMM-161
SHARP, CAPT Lufkin Scott	HMM-161

A flight of 4 CH-46D helicopters of HMM-161 was conducting a troop lift in the Khe Sanh area this date. As the lead helicopter, YR-31, touched down in the drop off zone, a cargo parachute was blown into the air and drawn into the rotor system. In a matter of seconds, it was entwined in the rotor system and caused the rotors and shaft to pull out of the aircraft and crash into the cockpit.[3474]

LCPL Peter J. Despard, the Crew Chief of YR-31, described the incident: "We were coming into LZ TURKEY[3475] with 15 troops aboard when the aircraft came apart on touchdown. Visibility was zero and I was leaning out the upper hatch trying to see the ground through the blowing dirt to direct the pilots in. Upon touchdown the aircraft started violently shaking, so I pulled myself back inside. All the passengers were trying to hit the deck, so I did the same just inside the front hatch. Something, I think it was the upper hatch, fell on my back. As soon as the aircraft stopped shaking I stood up and hydraulic fluid and oil were spraying down from lines ripped loose overhead... I turned around and saw that all the passengers were trying to get out. I jumped out over the lower hatch and checked the aircraft to see if it were burning. The aft pylon was gone and smoke was rising from the area, but it wasn't burning. I took a look into the pilot's compartment and thought both the pilots were dead, so I ran back and with Cpl [William] Cody's help started pulling passengers out of the right-hand fuselage escape hatch. I then looked in through the escape hatch to see if anyone was still in the cabin section. No one was, so I started moving forward and away from the aircraft. It was then that I saw one of Captain [Lufkin Scott] Sharp's hands move, so I ran over to him. He was hanging upside down in his seat hanging out of the escape hatch by the springs below the seat. I started yelling for some help and about 4 people came running up. They held the seat up so we could unhook the seat harness. Then we put him on a stretcher and put a tourniquet on his leg. I then ran over and directed YR-32 [in]."[3476]

Inside the aircraft, Marines from 1st Platoon, K/3/9, who had been picked up from an OP, were being transported to KSCB. Among them was Ray Felle, a platoon corpsman who had been with his unit for 6 months. Felle recalls: "On the initial approach the pilot aborted the landing due to a mule[3477] in the landing zone from what I could see from the window. In the process of circling for another landing we picked up a parachute in the blades. I remember the helicopter shaking violently, then dropping to the ground. This closed the [rear ramp] and made escape impossible.[3478] We tried to open the doors but

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[3471] 3/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-10.

[3472] Susan Sward, "Immeasurable Losses," San Francisco *Chronicle*, 27 April 1995. [Clipping furnished by Michael Archer in his letter of 23 January 2004].

[3473] *Ibid.*

[3474] ComdC HMM-161 June, 1968, Part II, p. 4.

[3475] LZ TURKEY was located at the location of the Bru ville of Ta Cong just outside the main gate of KSCB, XD835417 [3/9 ComdC June, 1968, S3 Journal, 19 June 1968, Ser #2 and 4] [1st Marines ComdC, June, 1968, Encl (1), p. III-A-6, indicates LZ TURKEY at XD832419]. Time of the accident was 1335H. The incident is mentioned in Winter, Ronald, *Masters of the Art, A Marine's Memoir of Parris Island and Vietnam*, New York: Carlton Press, Inc., 1989, p. 119, although the author mistakenly writes that the Marines were being embarked at LZ Turkey rather than arriving there.

[3476] Statement of LCPL Peter J. Despard in Navy Commendation Medal file of CPL Rodney Everett Weiss.

[3477] M274A1 small 4-wheeled platform type vehicle used to move supplies.

[3478] According to Bruce Lake, who was a CH-46 maintenance test pilot and who tested re-fabricated aircraft in Japan before they were delivered to the USMC, the rear ramp was powered by a very powerful hydraulic system that ran near 3000 pounds per square inch, making efforts by the Marines to oppose that force impossible. He states that the pilots must have seen the parachute, been concerned for the welfare of the Marines, and closed the door to keep anyone from leaving [i.e., being tossed from] the aircraft. [Bruce Lake email to Raymond Felle, Tue., 16 Feb 1999, 12:57PM, in Letter from Ray Felle, 1 March 1999]. He notes that it may be that the 13,000-pound helicopter (weight unloaded of the CH-46) plus another 2000 – 4000 pounds of men and equipment aboard could easily have closed the door from the pressure of landing. [Bruce Lake email to Raymond Felle, Wed.,. 17 Feb 1999, 1:21 PM, in Letter from Ray Felle, 1 March 1999].

couldn't. The whole while fuel was pouring on us from broken lines above and I got a sense of peace thinking this was the end of the line and I was about to die in a fiery crash."[3479]

Jack McKenna, a 60mm mortar Marine with 3/9, saw the pilot in the left seat "working his butt off killing switches. I saw something come through the wind screen that looked like metal. At that time we hit really hard on the front strut, bounced off the ground, and settled down."[3480] The pilot in the right seat was alive, but suffered the loss of one arm and his foot above the boot, while the pilot in the left seat was crushed by the front transmission. "I know now that the pilot in the left seat was killing fuel pump switches and the batteries along with it because I asked a pilot at Ft. Rucker, Al, [who] told me that we could have burned that day and that the pilot was thinking of us all the time."[3481]

Meanwhile, the embarked Marines were desperately attempting to budge the rear door open, all while being sprayed with the hydraulic fluid. "We only went in the front and out the back door; we never even thought of the fact that there were side doors in the thing... It never occurred to us to go out the side. We just tried to get out the back and pretty soon we were just paralyzed by the fact, knowing that this was it, and the whole platoon was in there."[3482]

CPL William Cody, the gunner on YR-31, saw the embarked infantry troops thrown off the seats onto the deck and felt the wet mist of sprayed fuel, and started to climb out from under the gun mount where he had been thrown when the aircraft started to come apart. "I started pulling the grunts out of it because the ramp was still up."[3483]

Felle recalls: "A person called to us from the gunner door telling us to get out before the craft caught fire. Out the door we all went in a big hurry and with hope once more. Tom Parnofiello was having trouble seeing so I washed his eyes out with water and checked my other men for injuries. They were okay except for bumps and fuel burns. I went up to the left side of the helicopter to see if the pilot and copilot were okay and that is when I saw 1st Lt. Helmstretler crushed."[3484]

1/Lt Harold E. Massey lowered his aircraft, YR-32, into the zone directed by LCPL Despard, Crew Chief of the downed YR-31, approximately 75 yards from the downed YR-31 and GySgt Jackie L. Payne and CPL Rodney E. Weiss in YR-32 dashed to YR-31. The co-pilot was dead, and Capt Sharp was being pulled out as they arrived.[3485] Immediately after Capt. Sharp was placed aboard YR-32, LCPL Despard applied pressure to the pressure point of the Captain's upper thigh to retard the flow of blood coming out his left leg and GySgt Payne directed CPL William Cody to apply pressure to the Captain's left upper arm to retard the flow of blood from his left arm. The helicopter landed at Khe Sanh, requesting a corpsman, but as none were in the immediate area, they took off for Delta Med. Although both CPL Cody and LCPL Despard began to get cramps in their hands and fingers as they held the pressure points, they continued to hold the pressure during the entire trip to Delta Med. After two or three minutes of departure from Khe Sanh, GySgt Payne noticed the Captain was experiencing difficulty breathing and CPL Weiss applied a tube used for mouth to mouth resuscitation until he tired, and then and GySgt Payne gave Capt Sharp external heart massage while Cpl Weiss returned to the job of resuscitation. All four Marines of the crews maintained their life-saving efforts until reaching Delta Med and thought the Captain was still alive upon landing.[3486]

1/Lt Michael David Helmstrettler
A Tribute[3487]
By
Bruce Lake

"Mike and I were close. He and I went through the infantry training regiment at Camp Geiger together and were then assigned to Casual Company while we waited for our orders to flight school in Pensacola... We had a heck of a good time. We used to sneak into the Sergeants' club (we were Privates and PFCs at the time) and went on liberty together. Mike and I got orders to arrive in Pensacola on the same day. Sometime in February 1966, we flew down on a commercial flight together, got adjoining rooms in the hotel and spent a great day on the beach in Pensacola before checking into flight school. We were only 18 but somehow he managed to buy a bottle of brandy and we celebrated our

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[3479] Letter from Ray Felle, 14 Jan 1999.
[3480] Jack McKenna email to Ray Felle, 10 May 2000, 9:06:51 PM, in letter from Ray Felle, 30 November 2004 and in Letter from Jack McKenna of 26 May 2000.
[3481] *Ibid.*
[3482] Conversation with Ray Felle, 7 January 1999.
[3483] Statement of CPL William Cody in Bronze Star Medal file on LCPL Peter J. Despard. LtCol Paul W. Nielsen, CO, HMM-161 recommended the Bronze Star Medal, and CO, Prov MAG-39 concurred in the award recommendation for Bronze Star Medal (signed by W. Sienko, 30 Jul 1968), but CG, I MAW, recommended no award (signed by MGen C. J. Quilter, 9 Sep 1968) and FMFPAC disapproved the award (endorsement dated 29 Oct 1968).
[3484] Letter from Ray Felle, 14 Jan 1999.
[3485] Statement of GySgt Jackie L. Payne in Navy Commendation Medal file of CPL Rodney Everett Weiss.
[3486] Statement of 1/Lt Harold E. Massey in Navy Commendation Medal file of CPL Rodney Everett Weiss.
[3487] Bruce Lake, email to Raymond Felle, 16 Feb 1999, 12:57 PM, in letter from Ray Felle, 1 March 1999.

good fortune in being selected for flight school by raising a few glasses together...

"He and I went all the way through flight school together. Indoctrination (just like boot camp all over again), flight in the T-34s, then in the T-28s, and then on to Ellyson for chopper school. We did everything together.. I even remember some nights at the drive-in theater (we didn't have cars so we walked in and sat on wooden benches) when it was so darn cold we literally hugged each other trying to keep each other warm as we watched the end of the movie... Mike was a guitar player and used to sing with a bunch of guys in the (dry) showers where we trained in Pensacola to get the acoustics right when they played the 'House of the Rising Sun'. I can still hear them play that today in my mind. When I hear the song on the radio I usually stop what I'm doing or slow down in the car and turn the radio up as a tribute to/memory of Mike. He worked at a ticket counter for a commercial airline before going into the Marine Corps. He loved flying and everything about it. We even went to an air show together to see the Blue Angels... I still miss Mike a lot. He was a wonderful friend."

[*Throughout June, 1968, the concept of assigning both the Lancaster and Scotland II AOs to Task Force HOTEL gained tactical acceptance. Although Lancaster forces had responsibility for LSA Cameo and 15 kilometers of Route 9, the only military significance of the LSA and MSR was support for Scotland II. The tactical situation created a requirement to be able to move forces and deploy them rapidly over long distances. Furthermore, helicopter and fixed wing assets could be controlled and allocated more productively through a single headquarters along with mutual support by general and direct support artillery. The decision was made to assign both AOs to Task Force HOTEL and the area between Thon Son Lam ("Rock Pile") and Ca Lu would become the headquarters. On 19 June, Operation Charleston commenced to relocate the 1st Marines and Task Force HOTEL CPs from KSCB to LZ Stud. The Task Force officially displaced to LZ Stud on 30 June and by 6 July, KSCB had been completely deactivated and destroyed.*[3488]]

20 JUNE 1968

JOHNSON, PFC Gerald Lee C/1/4
LATANOWICH, PFC Thomas Daniel H&S/1/1

From 19 – 30 June, 1/4 was located at LZ Mike (XD937409) with 2 companies in the perimeter and 2 companies screening south of Route #9.[3489]

The CP for 1/1 was at Hill 558 and about 50 men from H&S Company manned Hill 950 radio relay (XD844455).[3490]

[*As a result of the ROBIN SOUTH operation, the newly constructed NVA road was examined. It commences in the Scotland II AO on the east bank of the Xe Pone River at XD776237 as an extension of a road leading off Route 92 in Laos. The river crossing appears to be an underwater rock causeway. The road runs almost due east for 14.2 kilometers, generally following old trails, until it swings north at XD900227 where it continues north for 8.4 kilometers along old trails and along the banks of creeks to XD916296 where it again swings east for approximately 2.8 kilometers to XD9428 at which point it abruptly terminates. The total length of the road is 25.4 kilometers and varies from 5 to 6 meters wide. There are numerous feeder trails throughout the entire length. It is estimated that tracked and wheeled vehicles up to 30 tons could be transported on this road. Permanent denial of use of the road to the NVA is impractical and cratering and destruction of fills would have little effect since the surrounding area offers easy by-pass and repairs could be made with minimal delay. Mining of the road would have little permanent effect.*[3491]]

22 JUNE 1968

SHAVER, HM3 Ronald Lee BLT 2/4
WEINTRAUB, PFC Neil William G/2/4

On 21 June 1968, Co G/2/4 commenced a lift to Hill 512 (XD954451) at 0915 and throughout the day received incoming 60mm and 82mm mortars from several NVA positions. On 22 June, Co G/2/4 received a total of 12 82mm mortars that resulted in 2 Marines killed and 13 WIA (evacuated).[3492]

[*Operation ROBIN SOUTH terminated 22 June 1968. Cumulative casualty figures for ROBIN NORTH were 16 USMC KIA and 130 USMC WIA (evacuated) and 92 NVA KIA (confirmed); total casualties for ROBIN SOUTH were: 77 USMC KIA, 286 WIA (evacuated), 20 WIA (not evacuated), and 604 NVA KIA (confirmed). During the ROBIN operations, supporting heli-*

[3488] Task Force HOTEL, *History, Task Force HOTEL*, appended to Task Force HOTEL, ComdC June 1969.

[3489] 1/4 ComdC June, 1968, Part II, p. 3.
[3490] 1/1 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. 1-II-3.
[3491] CG TF HOTEL 200923Z/Jun68 in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc June 1968 file, Encl (123).
[3492] BLT 2/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. 10.

copters transported 6,164,374 pounds of cargo and 18,767 combat troops, a daily average of 334,946 pounds and 963 troops. 1,118 close air support missions expended 1740.5 tons of ordnance. There were 64 secondary explosions. Artillery fired 13,381 105mm and 2,103 155 rounds. Not one round resulted in a friendly casualty.[3493] *Casualties from 01 April to mid-June, 1968 at Khe Sanh were: 431 US KIA and 33 ARVN KIA, 2313 US WIA (evacuated) and 187 ARVN WIA (evacuated).*[3494]]

23 JUNE 1968

POWELL, LCPL David Lee K/3/4

At 2200 and 2230, Co K/3/4 picked up enemy movement at XD848383 and XD849381 (Khe Sanh Village) with a SID [Seismic Intrusion Device] at their position.[3495]

[*On 25 June 1968, a patrol from D/1/4 "..found remains of a downed C-123 with 15 bodies. Grave Registration assistance was used in recovery. Also found were 30 M-16 rifles, 3 SRBs and other equipment including helmets and cartridge belts."*[3496]]

[At noon on *24 June 1968, US Special Forces A Team A-101, which had been at Lang Vei, became Camp Mai Loc (at YD089512) with 13 USASF, 18 VNSF, 114 CSF, and 210 MSF.*[3497]]

28 JUNE 1968

GORDON, PFC Richard Dale H&S/1/1
VANDERHEID, LCPL Mark Edward B/1/1

LCPL Vanderheid was KIA on "Hill 881N from incoming mortar round which also knocked down the VC effigy left by 26th Marines."[3498]

29 JUNE 1968

BROWN, LCPL Dennis Lee G/2/1
GERO, CPL John Anthony G/2/3
WAFER, PFC David Earl G/2/4

From the diary of Don Dennis: "June 29:..Tonight about 2130, Brown the Machine Gunner who came over the same time as me shot himself in the head. They don't think he'll live. They don't know how it happened... June 30:... We heard today that Spanky died on the way to Dong Ha. He was a great little guy. It's a shame."[3499]

At 0945H, a patrol from G/2/4 were taken under fire by small arms and 82mm mortars from an undetermined size enemy unit (XD956470 to XD952473). While maneuvering on the enemy, one Marine tripped a booby trap. Supporting arms were called, and the enemy broke contact at 1430H. The Marine unit suffered 2 KIA and 3 WIA (evacuated).[3500]

30 JUNE 1968

BUFFINGTON, LCPL Fred I/3/4
POWELL, LCPL John Dee W/1/11

LCPL Powell, of Weapons Co., 1/11, was killed by incoming on Hill 861 where W/1/11 had 2 4.2-inch mortars, designated as WHISKY XRAY. 4 NVA 82mm mortars hit the area, one of which landed in gun pit #2. Two other Marines, SGT John B. Thomas, Jr., and PFC Michael H. Girton, were WIA (evacuated).[3501]

At 0900 a Co "M" OP observed 5 NVA near XD876393 (2 clicks E of the old French Fort, about 100 meters S of Rt. #9) moving west. The information was passed to Co I/3/4 who had a patrol moving toward that area. At 0935, the I/3/4 patrol made contact with partially dug-in NVA and called in artillery and gunships. A sweep of the area found 7 fresh fighting holes. The patrol continued and discovered 2 USMC bodies about 1 month old (which were sent to 2nd Plt, Co M/3/4 location and later to 1st Marines). The I/3/4 patrol returned to its defensive position (XD874384) at 1830.[3502]

At about 1700H, 6 NVA mortars exploded in the area of I/3/4. These were immediately brought under fire

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[3493] 3rd MarDiv, *Critique, op. cit.*, pp. 43, 47, and 59.
[3494] CG, 3rd MarDiv 220200Z/Jun68, Personal for LtGen Rosson from MGen Davis, Subj: Operations at Khe Sanh, in 3rd MarDiv Msgs Etc June 1968 file, Encl (130).
[3495] 3/4 ComdC June, 1968, pp. III-5 and IV-11. The official reports do not indicate any KIA.
[3496] 1/4 ComdC June, 1968, Part II, p. 3. [Note: The quantity of KIA and designation of a C-123 argues strongly that this was the 6 March 1968 crash. See pp. 234-235 (footnotes 2182-2186) for other searches of the area.
[3497] HQ, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Operational Report of 5th Special Forces Group (Abn) for Period Ending 31 July 1968, 15 August 1968, pp. 3 & 14.
[3498] Steve Busby email to David Doehrman, 11 June 2003, 6:21 PM.
[3499] Don Dennis, "Thirteen Months in the Life of a Rifleman," *We Remember, The Vietnam Sotires of the Men of 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines*, Vietnam Era 2nd Bn, 1st Mar, Rockbridge Baths, Va." Leatherneck Cottage Press, 1993, p. 222.
[3500] 2/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. 11.
[3501] Unit Diary (107mm battery, 1/11, RUC-11317) for 30 June 1968 (in letter from George Schamberger, 24 Nov 1991); ComdC 1/11, June, 1968, Encl (1), p. 7 (in letter from Ron Taylor, 6 June 1996); Ron Taylor, email posting on Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, posted 11 July 2001 at 11:37:15 PM; Letter from George J. Schamberger, 24 Nov 1991 [Schamberger was a CPL with W/1/11 at the time]; Letter from Edward M. Landry, 22 Jan 1991 [Landry was with W/1/11 and Powell was a good friend; Landry was transferred on 5 June 1968]
[3502] 3/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-12; 3rd MarDiv COC 011341Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #305, Para 3.A. and I.

by friendly artillery directed by Capt Merlyn Sexton, CO of I/3/4. Between 1700 to 1900, the NVA fired 82mm mortars.[3503] Then, at 2040H, Co I/3/4 received about 15 rounds of artillery from Co Roc and at 2045H, an additional 32 rounds of 130mm field artillery from Co Roc, the latter resulting in 1 USMC KIA (LCPL Buffington).[3504] "Because of Capt Sexton's quick actions and effectiveness he already had his men prepared and ready for the enemy attack. When the enemy artillery came in, the men were deep in their fighting holes. Capt Sexton's foresight of preparing his men prevented many casualties from being taken. After the enemy artillery lifted and an enemy attack was imminent, Capt. Sexton immediately called in supporting arms to cover all avenues of approach and enemy assembly areas."[3505] The battle was to continue into the next day.

01 JULY 1968

GARCIA, PFC Ludin	I/3/4
HESTER, PFC William Walter	I/3/4
LE COMPTE, LCPL John Ault	1/1
RUIZ, LCPL Thomas	H&S/2/1
WILLIAMS, LCPL James Alec	D/1/1

TEMPLE LAKE INDIA (I/3/4) had occupied its position (XD874384, FOXTROT RIDGE) from 19 June in terrain consisting of steep hills and heavy vegetation. The company conducted patrols in connection with the deactivation of KSCB. Then, during the evening of 30 June, the company received incoming mortars and artillery.

At 0020H on 01 July, one NVA was spotted through the starlight scope at the outer edge of the perimeter and taken under fire.[3506] At 0325H, I/3/4 received a light probe by an unknown number of NVA throwing ChiCom grenades at the lines. The company returned small arms and M-26 grenades and called in an artillery mission. At 0406H, I/3/4 spotted 5 NVA near the wire at XD870382, throwing grenades. The Marines again fired back with small arms and grenades, along with 5 rounds of 60mm mortar. At 0430H, the unit spotted 1 NVA at XD877380 crawling towards the LP. The LP fired on the NVA and pulled back 25 yards to establish a new position. At 0455H, the LP observed movement at XD877380 of at least 5 NVA. The LP took the enemy under fire resulting in at least 1 NVA KIA.[3507] The Listening Post then withdrew to the company position having taken no casualties.[3508]

Movement was then detected in the 2nd Platoon area on the eastern hill. Captain Sexton's foresight in adding this hill to the company perimeter on 19 June, now prevented the NVA from gaining a critical piece of terrain.[3509] At 0500H, the main NVA attack struck the southeastern portion of the 2nd Platoon (XD876382) while a supporting attack continued in the saddle between I-1 and I-3 in an attempt to isolate I-2. Some 900 rounds of 60mm mortar and M-79 40mm rounds limited the NVA's penetration to the immediate areas of the inner tactical wire. I-2 quickly repulsed the attack while artillery was brought so close, shrapnel was flying into the perimeter,[3510] as SGT David R. Turnage, the acting Platoon Commander of I-3, left the safety of his own position on numerous occasions to shout encouragement to all his troops and direct fire on the enemy as well as move the wounded to safety.[3511]

At 0630H, I/3/4 observed an estimated NVA company in groups of 5 – 20 outside their wire at XD874382, and at 0725H, received an attack from an estimated NVA company at XD876380 and XD875380 supported by 60mm and 82mm mortars and 130mm field guns from Co Roc, causing 1 USMC KIA and 2 WIA (evacuated). At 0900H, a I/3/4 patrol made contact causing 1 USMC KIA.[3512]

Gunships were requested and fixed wing ran air strikes on the enemy positions. Capt Edward N. Engle, flying as FINGERPRINT 33, the TAC(A), observed I/3/4 on the top of a ridge and the main body of the NVA force on an adjacent ridge about 150 meters from the friendly position (at XD879379). The NVA were dug in well, and artillery and direct fire weapons seemed to be ineffective due to terrain features. Although the weather in the area seemed to prohibit air, Capt Engle requested one scramble in hopes that the weather would improve before the arrival of the flight. About 2 ½ hours elapsed before the air request could be answered and Capt Engle was getting low on fuel with no relief on station. At this time RINGNECK 520 checked in. Although the weather had improved somewhat, it was still 1200-foot overcast

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[3503] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, in Navy Cross file of Capt Merlyn Arthur Sexton.
[3504] 3/4 ComdC June, 1968, Encl (1), p. IV-12; 3rd MarDiv COC 011341Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #305, Para. 3.A.
[3505] Statement of SGT David R. Turnage in Navy Cross Medal file of Capt Merlyn Arthur Sexton.
[3506] 3rd MarDiv COC 011341Z./Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #305, Para. 3.E.
[3507] *Ibid.*, Para. 3.I.
[3508] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, in Navy Cross file on Capt Merlyn Arthur Sexton.
[3509] *Ibid.*
[3510] *Ibid.*
[3511] Statements of 2/Lt Richard J. Bartolomea and SSGT Robert F. Fully, Jr., in Bronze Star Medal file of SGT David R. Turnage.
[3512] PCV TOC/III MAF COC 021548Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #306, Para. 3.B.; 1st Mar ComdC, July, 1968, Encl (1), p. II-C-3, Para. f.

with 3-4 miles visibility, a condition especially hazardous in the Khe Sanh area due to the rugged terrain.[3513]

RINGNECK 520 consisted of a flight of 2 F4 Phantom aircraft of Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 542 with Maj Wales Scribner Dixon leading the flight withy his RIO [Radar Intercept Officer] 1/Lt Bullock. The second F-4 was piloted by 1/Lt Vernon L. Vanhise with his RIO, 1/Lt D. L. Groothuis. Maj Dixon's aircraft was armed with 12 DELTA-1-A (Mk 81, 250-lb. general purpose, low-drag snake eye bombs) while 1/Lt Vanhise's aircraft was armed with 4 DELTA-9 (MK-77, 500-lb. napalm) plus one DELTA-24 (MK-4, gun pod).[3514]

"As we started inland just north of Hue, it immediately became apparent that weather conditions were going to play a large role.. Although the coastal plains were relatively clear.. such was not the case over the mountainous terrain of the Khe Sanh area. There existed a layer of low broken to overcast clouds covering the entire area.. Since visual navigation was impossible, Lt Groothuis quickly and skillfully used TACAN and ADF cuts to direct us to the target area. We made radio contact with FINGERPRINT 33 who started the target brief while we proceeded to the target area. He stated that a well entrenched force of NVA of considerable strength had a group of our troops on the adjacent ridgeline pinned down with automatic weapons fire. Artillery and returned ground fire seemed to have no significant effect on the enemy and he was forced to ask for air support.. He cautioned us that the NVA were dug in on a ridgeline about 300 to 400 meters above the valley floor and there was only about 1200 feet of clearance between the valley floor and the base of the clouds. He also cautioned that many of the surrounding mountain peaks extended into the cloud deck and were completely obscured. He gave us a strict run-in heading of 040° and insisted that we adhere to it because of the close proximity of our troops who were only 50 – 100 meters to the left of the enemy position....

"Major Dixon rolled in hot and I observed heavy ground fire coming from the ridgeline. He dropped a pair of Snake-Eyes right on target and pulled up into the relative safety of the clouds. I rolled in 'hot' right behind him and could see ground fire coming from an old bomb crater. That's where I wanted to put my napalms and I assume that's where they went because after I pulled up into the clouds, the TACA went kind of wild and said that NVA were crawling and running all over the ridgeline. Contrary to existing SOP which dictates that we make no more than 1 or 2 runs when under heavy ground fire, we determined that the existing conditions warranted the risk of additional runs. Major Dixon rolled in on his second and I again got a visual on him just before he released. He accurately placed several more Snake-Eye bombs right on target despite the still existing ground fire. I was right behind him with my remaining napes and scorched 'Charlie' again. Major Dixon made one more run and placed his remaining bombs with devastating accuracy on the ridge. I rolled in again, this time with the MK-4 gunpod and started walking the rounds up the ridge. I fired out about 100 rounds when the gun jammed, so I pulled up through the clouds High and Dry."[3515]

A subsequent search of the battle area on 02 July disclosed 212 NVA KIA, 77 weapons captured, 150 fresh fighting holes, 2 60mm mortar pits (5-ft. diameter) on the forward slope of the hill (XD879379) and one 82mm pit (3-ft. diameter) on the reverse slope, 8 rolls of comm. wire, 8 bloodied helmets, and assorted gear. Friendly casualties for the skirmish were 7 USMC KIA and 35 WIA.[3516]

When a platoon from Co D/1/1 arrived at Hill 689 (XD803409) OPCON to 2/1,[3517] the men were briefed that their mission was to be a security for the hill, provide LPs, and conduct local patrols around the base of Hill 689. "They couldn't send them out much further because of the increase of the mortar rounds that we would be taking in and we would receive quite a few casualties."[3518] D-1 was conducting one of these patrols on 1 July when they ran into a NVA ambush by a reinforced platoon that had been set up at the base of the hill, firing from well-concealed and well-fortified bunkers and fighting holes. The patrol (consisting of only 16 men)[3519] ran into NVA and sustained 2 Marines KIA and 5 WIA.[3520]

A recovery patrol on 2 July made contact with enemy units and simultaneously began to receive heavy incoming 60mm, 82mm, and 120mm mortar fire. One body was successfully recovered but the enemy had set up snipers and prepared an ambush[3521] around the body of LCPL

[3513] Statement of Capt Edward N. Engle, in Distinguished Flying Cross Medal file of Maj Wales Scribner Dixon.

[3514] Statement of 1/Lt Vernon L. Vanhise in Distinguished Flying Cross Medal file of Maj Wales Scribner Dixon.

[3515] *Ibid.*

[3516] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, in Navy Cross file of Capt Merlyn Arthur Sexton; 3rd MarDiv COC 050931Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #312, Para. 2.A.

[3517] 2/1 ComdC July, 1968.

[3518] Comments of CPL James M. Grimsley, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081. Grimsley was a radioman in D/1/1.

[3519] Comments of CPL James M. Grimsley, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081. Grimsley was a radioman in D/1/1, and notes that the patrol had proceeded about half way around the hill when it was hit by small arms sniper fire and a few incoming 82mm mortar rounds.

[3520] 2/1 ComdC July, 1968.

[3521] CO, 1st Marines 2nd End on CMC SpdLtr DNA/mls, 3 Oct 1968, 1/GMF/eew, 5860, of 20 Oct 1968, Subj: Congressional Correspondence; case of Lance Corporal Jerry D. Dewberry, 2387088, USMC (deceased); in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #288, Folder #177.

John Ault LeCompte,[3522] and the Marines were unable to bring the body back due to heavy incoming. The recover mission resulted in 13 more USMC WIA.[3523] Having sustained numerous casualties, the platoon patrol began to crawl back with the casualties they could drag and carry as mortars on 689 fired smoke to cover their movement.[3524]

LCPL Robert E. Williams left his own fighting position and commenced making his way to assist movement of the WIA. While making his way, he crossed an open, fire-swept area and received a severe wound. Disregarding his own wound, he kept pushing forward and made it to the wounded Marines and then began to carry them to safety. He insisted that others be cared for before his own wounds could be treated. He later succumbed to his own wounds.[3525]

Noticing that the WP [60mm mortar white phosphorus] was ineffective and off target, SSGT Herbert George Baker, the Platoon Commander for D-2, placed himself in an exposed position at the front of the hill to call in accurately-placed smoke screening and high explosive fire on the NVA positions.[3526]

At 1720, H/2/1 on KSCB received 10 130mm field gun artillery rounds from Co Roc killing one Marine (LCPL Thomas RUIZ), wounding 6 (evacuated) and destroying one 106mm RR.[3527]

[3522] Statements of 1st Sgt Philip J. Imbrenda, CPL Andrew A. Ruiz, and SGT James R. Johnson in Library of Congress MIA microfilm file on LCPL Jerry D. Dewberry, Reel #288, Folder #177. Dewberry is officially listed as KIA on 5 July 1968.

[3523] 2/1 ComdC July, 1968, Part III; 3rd MarDiv COC 050931Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #312, Para. 3.F.

[3524] 3rd MarDiv COC 050931Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #312, Para. 2.F.; Statements of SSGT Edward L. Fontaine and SSGT Herbert G. Baker in Bronze Star Medal file of SSGT Daniel J. Bott. Bott was directing the supporting fire from the perimeter when he observed the Marines dragging their wounded. He immediately left his position and advanced toward the casualties, moving through the fire-swept area, and began to assist moving the dead and wounded to the perimeter.

[3525] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, and Citation in Bronze Star Medal file (posthumous) of LCPL Robert E. Williams. Officially, Williams is listed as KIA on 5 July 1968, a date in which D/1/1 lost many KIA in a local patrol at Hill 689. It is possible that Williams DOW on 5 July from wounds received on 1 July. The BSM award file indicates the action occurring on 2 July. The Coffelt database for the KIA of Vietnam lists LCPL James Alec Williams as KIA on 1 July and a member of D/1/1, and lists LCPL Robert Eugene Williams as KIA on 5 July.

[3526] Statements of SSGT Edward L. Fontaine and 1/Lt Daniel L. Anderson in Silver Star Medal file of SSGT Herbert George Baker.

[3527] 1st Mar ComdC, July, 1968, Encl (1), p. II-C-3, Para. n.

02 JULY 1968

OROPEZA, PFC Manuel Garcia G/2/4

On 2 July 1968, G/2/4 was moving in dense jungle, rocky and mountainous terrain[3528] when the patrol discovered a 82mm mortar pit and 10 82mm mortar rounds near XD956464. At 1130, the Company made contact with an unknown sized NVA unit at XD956463 which threw grenades at the Marines and fired 20 rounds of 82mm on the patrol.[3529] PFC Michael G. Castle relates: "After assaulting the bunker and killing one enemy and wounding two others, we started down in a very thick jungle valley.. to get the 2 enemy which we wounded and got away. As First Platoon started into the valley, we had to go through an open area in which the enemy F.O. saw us. When half of First Platoon got down into the valley, we got heavy mortar fire from the enemy. At this time, 3 Marines were wounded, and Corpsman Dipper ran back up through the heavy wooded terrain to their aid. Doc Dipper then called out for help; he said, 'I need 4 men, Oropeza is hit and cannot move.'... As I was coming up the hill I could see Dipper working with Oropeza. When rounds would come in he would stay by his side, laying over him to protect him from being wounded again. I could see Dipper bleeding from his arm bad, and his leg bleeding through his trousers... I could hear Oropeza yelling to get him out of there... Oropeza was fighting him off and would not let Dipper help him... I yelled to him and told him to get out of there, but he wouldn't listen. He stayed right there... He endangered his own life by staying with Oropeza, but he kept this man alive for that period of time anyway."[3530]

[Locations of units at Khe Sanh: 1st Mar (at Ca Lu), 1/1 (XD820450), A/1/1 (XD803443), B/1/1 (XD777437), C/1/1 (XD820450), D/1/1 (XD803408), 2/1 CP (KSCB), F/2/1 (KSCB), G/2/1 (XD822402), H/2/1 (KSCB), 3/4 CP (XD895406), I/3/4 (XD873384), K/3/4 (XD847394), L/3/4 (XD917418), M/3/4 (XD895406, 3/9 (XD844416), M & I/3/9 (XD844416), L/3/9 (XD830415).[3531]

03 JULY 1968

CARTER, LCPL John Lewis D/1/1

[3528] NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 11 Aug 1968, in Bronze Star Medal file of HN Raymond H. Dipper.

[3529] 2/4 ComdC July, 1968, Part III, Encl (1), p. 8.

[3530] Statement of PFC Michael G. Castle in Bronze Star Medal file of HN Raymond H. Dipper

[3531] 3rd MarDiv COC 050935Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #314, Para. 1.

At 0430H, D/1/1 at XD802408 received 4 incoming rifle grenades from the vicinity of XD802411 resulting in 1 USMC KIA.[3532]

04 JULY 1968

BECKWITH, LCPL William Arnold	3/4
FERNANDEZ, PFC Dennis	I/3/4
PINALES, LCPL Lawrence	M/3/9[3533]
SKANSON, PFC Louis James	M/3/9

July began with the CP of 3/4 at LZ HAWK (XD895403) and Co I/3/4 on FOXTROT RIDGE (XD875383) in a defensive position with 2 platoons occupying the main terrain feature and 1 platoon in defense of a small knoll to the east. The two positions were separated by a narrow saddle approximately 100 meters long and not physically occupied. Just past midnight (at 0005H), several NVA were observed skirting the edges of the perimeter and Co "I" began to receive light probes at approximately 0320.[3534] At 0430H, I/3/4 at XD873383 came under attack by an estimated NVA company from the east, supported by RPGs, resulting in 2 USMC KIA and 13 WIA (evacuated).[3535] Movement continued throughout the night and at 0630H, I/3/4 came under attack by an estimated NVA battalion supported by automatic weapons, 60mm and 82mm mortars, and 130mm field gun firing from Co Roc. The Marines responded with 106mm RR, artillery, fixed wing and Huey gunships throughout the night and day, accounting for 54 NVA KIA. A sweep by I-2 accounted for 93 NVA KIA. At 2230H, enemy movement increased and 3rd Platoon reported hearing digging and pounding to the south of their lines.[3536]

At 1130H, a Marine from Co "M" while on a working party struck one dud round with his E-tool resulting in 1 KIA and 4 WIA.[3537] Sgt Robert Nordstrom writes: "I was the Platoon Sgt. of 2nd Platoon that had the task of policing up the area when one of my men used his entrenching tool to scoop up some trash on the ground; instead he hit the 'dud' just under the surface of the ground. Mike 3/9 men killed were: Lawrence Pinales, Louis Skanson, and Dennis Harms (DOW 8/18/68)."[3538] John Bosley "was within 50 yards.. when it happened. I thought 2 Marines were killed and their names were Scanson [should be "Skanson"] and Pinales."[3539]

05 JULY 1968

BAKER, PFC Tony Anderson	K/3/4
BROWN, CPL Richard Samuel	G/2/1[3540]
DEWBERRY, LCPL Jerry Don	D/1/1
DIEUDONNE, PFC Carroll Stephen	K/3/4
DILWORTH, LCPL Arthur William	D/1/1
HEALY, PVT Louis Glenn	F/2/3
HOPKINS, CPL Gary Wayne	H&S/1/1
JONES, LCPL Jack Pahl	K/3/4
JONES, PFC Joseph Richard	D/1/1
LANGLEY, SGT David Francis	D/1/1
REYES, LCPL William	D/1/1
SANDERS, LCPL Gerald Jude	D/1/1
TAYLOR, LCPL James	G/2/1
THOMPSON, LCPL Louis Kenneth	D/1/1
WILLIAMS, LCPL Robert Eugene	D/1/1
WOODARD, PFC Jon Robert	1/1

At first light (0615)[3541] on 5 July 1968[3542] another patrol (consisting of the entire First Platoon, which now consisted of 21 Marines)[3543] was dispatched from D/1/1 to retrieve the body of LCPL John A. LeCompte[3544] (KIA 1 July 1968). Again encountering NVA fire from an estimated NVA platoon dug in at XD679407,[3545] the point man, PFC Danny F. Nelson, remembers "Everybody was dropping. [We] tried to get out the best way we could."[3546] CPL James M. Grimsley: "..the order came down from higher-ups... and our people didn't want to go down [the hill] because they knew it was suicide. They saw that the air strikes had negative results.. So D-1 went down again.. and received the same incoming, ex-

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[3532] 1st Mar ComdC July, 1968, Encl (1), p. II-C-4, Para. w.

[3533] LCPL Pinales is listed in the Coffelt database as a member of III MAF. Ray Felle and John Bosley both note him as a member of 3/9 (which, of course, is part of III MAF).

[3534] 3/4 ComdC, July, 1968, Encl (1), pp. I-1 and IV-4.

[3535] 3rd MarDiv COC 060203Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #317, Para. 3.D.

[3536] 3/4 ComdC, July, 1968, Encl (1), pp. I-1 and IV-4.

[3537] 3/9 ComdC July, 1968, S3 Journal, 4 July 1968, Ser #3; 3rd MarDiv COC 061353Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #319, Para. 3.G.; 1st Mar ComdC July, 1968, Encl (1), p. II-C-5, Para. aa.

[3538] Quoted in letter from Ray Felle, undated. PFC Lloyd Harms is listed in the Coffelt database as a member of D/1/3 and KIA 18 Aug 1968. (However, there are some other discrepancies in this database, and Harms may have been DOW as indicated).

[3539] John Bosley, email on Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page Message Board, posted 1 July 20o01, 6:52:59 PM.

[3540] Listed as G/2/7 in the Coffelt database.

[3541] 1st Mar ComdC, July, 1968, Encl (1), p. II-C-5, para. cc.

[3542] 3rd MarDiv COC 061352Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #322, Para. 3.C.

[3543] CO, 1st Mar 2nd End on CMC SpdLtr DNA/mls of 3Oct 68, 1/GMF/eew, 5860, 20 Oct 1968, Subj: Congressional Correspondence; case of Lance Corporal Jerry D. Dewberry, 2387088, USMC (deceased) in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #288, Folder #177.

[3544] Statement of LCPL Daniel T. Nelson in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #288, Folder #177.

[3545] 1st Mar ComdC, July, 1968, Encl (1), p. II-C-5, para. cc.

[3546] Comments of PFC Danny F. Nelson, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081.

cept this time a larger increase in mortar fire down around the bodies."[3547]

Sgt David F. Langley volunteered to accompany the patrol, although not requested to do so. D-1 entered a U-shaped ambush that lashed out at the Marines with heavy automatic rifle fire and accurate 82mm mortars, causing numerous casualties. Sgt. Langley, hearing the call for Corpsman, reached the wounded Marines and got them into a secure area. Then he proceeded to a bomb crater in which 5 Marines had sought refuge and were pinned down by heavy automatic rifle and .50 caliber fire. He proceeded to lead these men out to the left flank of the bomb crater, but caught a sniper's round in his left side. Although under intense pain, he continued to crawl and lead his men to safety. Then a burst of automatic rifle fire opened up on him and killed Sgt Langley, but not until he had enabled 5 Marines to live.[3548]

The Corpsman was shot twice in the head but made it back to the D/1/1 lines. Only 4 returned who were not wounded from this patrol; the rest were WIA or KIA. There were 7 more bodies now, abandoned at the base of the hill. A reactionary force was dispatched to assist, "..but there was nothing we could do because every time we sent men down there they just got hit again."[3549]

LCPL Jerry D. Dewberry, a rifleman in the front element of the recovery patrol of D/1/1 (about the 3rd man from LCPL Nelson, the Point and carrying a radio),[3550] had moved about 75 meters from the unit's perimeter wire when he was hit several times in the chest and fell dead in a bomb crater (XD802409) as the remnant of the recovery team returned to the unit's perimeter wire.[3551]

Most of the WIA were able to crawl back to the wires under their own power and assistance from those on the lines. LCPL Nelson (the point man) and 5 other Marines, 2 of which were wounded, "were pinned down for approximately 6 hours in bomb craters, getting up occasionally to fire at the enemy and make our way to the other bomb craters closer to our lines. As we were moving, I spotted LCPL Dewberry's body in a bomb crater. He was dead. He must have got it with an automatic AK-47 burst judging from the straight line of bullet holes from his chest to his neck. The jets started dropping napalm, and I thought this was the last chance we would get to make it back up the hill, so we took it and with the help of God and luck, we made it... All of the men that died on 5 July 1968 died trying to retrieve one body."[3552]

By now there were a total of 8 bodies left at the base of the hill, and Co D/1/1, critically short of "effectives," requested assistance. Co G/2/1 moved its headquarters element and an additional platoon to Hill 689 to assume control of the extraction effort. Just prior to darkness, after all available fixed wing assets had been focused on the target, 2 platoons of G/2/1 maneuvered to the outer edges of the kill zone and managed to recover 3 bodies of D/1/1's MIA. The recovery unit then came under very accurate small arms sniper fire and the decision was made to stop the illumination and withdraw under cover of darkness. This was done; no additional casualties were taken.[3553]

When LCPL Joseph C. Jaynes, monitoring the air net in the COC of 2/1 at KSCB, heard that the D/1/1 Forward Air Controller was killed, he immediately volunteered to take the dead Marine's place. Landing in an unfamiliar zone and under fire, LCPL Jaynes quickly found his way to the dead operator's radio and by 1020H was on the air net talking with the AO, preparing to call in air strikes. Throughout the rest of the day, that night, and the next day, Jaynes controlled numerous air-strikes, gunships, and SPOOKY aircraft, and coordinated the air attack with supporting artillery, continually exposing himself to enemy fire in order to adjust the ordnance and warn the rest of the Marines to take cover as he brought air strikes on the perimeter wire.[3554]

Napalm, 500-lb. bombs, artillery—everything that could be obtained, plastered the area of the bodies. A sampling of the strikes included: 2 A-4s from MAG-13 fired 4 ZUNI rockets and dropped 6 500-lb. snake-eyes on XD801410 at 051700H. At 051715H, 2 A-4s from MAG-13 dropped 8 500-lb. bombs on XD801410. At 051725H, 2 Marine F-4s dropped 12 500-lb. snake-eyes, 6 500-lb. fire bombs, and one 5-in. ZUNI on XD801410.[3555] From 070001H – 070600H, 178,600 pounds of ordnance was dropped on targets around Hill 689 and south of Hill 471 in 43 sorties causing 4 secondary explosions.[3556]

[3547] Comments of James M. Grimsley, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081.

[3548] Statement of PFC Daniel T. Nelson in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of Sgt David F. Langley.

[3549] Comments of CPL James M. Grimsley, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081.

[3550] Statement of LCPL Daniel T. Nelson in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #288, Folder #177.

[3551] Case Summary, RefNo 1223, 16 Dec 1975, in Library of Congress, MIA microfilm Reel #288, Folder #177. Both CPL Dennis M. Coelho and PFC Daniel T. Nelson witnessed Dewberry being shot and killed by small arms fire. "They tried to bring body back but could not due to heavy enemy fire. Some bodies were recovered from the rear element but none from the front element of the patrol." [CG 1st MarDiv 270745Z/Sep68 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #288, Folder #177].

[3552] Statement of LCPL Daniel T. Nelson in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #288, Folder #177.

[3553] Comments of CAPT Clyde E. Woods, HQMC Oral History Tape #3662. Woods was CO of G/2/1.

[3554] Statement of Capt Stanley M. Joseph in Bronze Star Medal file on LCPL Joseph C. Jaynes.

[3555] 3rd MarDiv COC 061350Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #324, Para. 3.A., B., and C.

[3556] 3rd MarDiv COC 090250Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #329, Para. 4.

At 2230H, on the night of 11 July 1968, a recovery team consisting of 25 Marine volunteers (most of which came from A/1/1) swept the entire area and retrieved 7 bodies. Two other bodies were observed to be hit and disintegrated by air and artillery strikes on the area.[3557] "As a result of the almost continuous bombardment from artillery and air strikes, which included the use of napalm, most of the bodies were dismembered, badly burned, or mutilated by enemy small arms fire and shrapnel from friendly artillery fire and air strikes. Due to the difficulties involved in a night recovery and the scattered condition of the remains in the area, the recovery team returned with only 7 of the fallen Marines. Three Marine bodies were not accounted for. It is believed that they were completely destroyed by the bombing."[3558]

[*At 0630H, Bn 2/1 began its preparations for departure from Khe Sanh. Co F/2/1 began its lift to Quang Tri at 0745H, completing the move by 0815H. At 0830H, the 2/1 Command Group lifted to Mai Xa Thi, completing its move at 0900H, followed by H/2/1's lift-out. At 1715H, E/2/1 lifted from Hill 552 followed at 0805 by G/2/3 from Hill 689 to LZ BLUE JAY (XD998478). E/2/3 lifted out of the LZ to Mai Xa Thi; all units arrived there by 1910H. At 071000H, G/2/3 lifted from LZ BLUE JAY to Mai Xa Thi completing the movement of 2/1 from Khe Sanh.*[3559]

The concept was to evacuate KSCB itself first in order to prevent NVA use of hill outposts while it was being evacuated.[3560] *The final stand would be on Hill 689, itself a precarious position. "Although Hill 881S was the westernmost hill outpost, Hill 689 was the most exposed and easiest for the enemy to assault, especially if human wave tactics were employed from multiple directions at the same time. Next easiest was Hill 861 becauswe of the great number of protected and hidden approach routes that could only be hit by very high-angle indirect fires while allowing enemy forces to get very close to the position. The hardest to assault was Hill 950, but the NVA kept trying time and again. On Hill 689 there were few usable entry/exit points,m maybe two usable water points, just about all of which could be brought under fire by the NVA from afar and from close in, with little or no friendly "direct fire" support by any other position. Thus it was easy for a small NVA force to invest any Marine patrol coming off the main position, especially if a patrol had to use the same route near the hill many, many times."*[3561]]

06 JULY 1968

KILDERRY, LCPL Michael Joseph C/1/4
MAHONEY, LCPL Thomas P III B/1/1

LCPL Kilderry DOW received during the attack on LZ LOON on 5 June 1968 when he was hit in his side with a small piece of shrapnel that penetrated both lungs, his liver, and some other organs.[3562]

At noon, 06 July, CO, 1st Marines directed that the remainder of the regiment lift to Hill 689 to assist Co D as G/2/1 secured a LZ on the eastern slope of the hill.[3563] The lift was scheduled to begin at 1500H; however, at 1515H, Co B/1/1 reported a Marine was missing from the perimeter on Hill 881S.[3564]

The tragic loss of LCPL Mahoney probably began before he enlisted in the Marine Corps. His father, Lt Thomas P. Mahoney, II, USAF, had been killed in the Korean War.[3565] During his high school years, he fell in love with his sweetheart, Linda, and after graduation, Linda's wealthy parents shipped her off to an exclusive Rhode Island school, Vernon Court. For Mahoney it wasn't a high-school fling, but serious.[3566] In May, 1967, as both Mahoney and his good high-school friend, Michael Archer, were about to depart for boot camp, Archer had a dream in which Mahoney was killed on Hill 881. (At the time, the 1967 Hill Battles at Khe Sanh were raging and were in the news, and Archer dismissed the dream as a dream mind's mingling of the news with their departure for service in the Marine Corps,[3567] but like so many other premonitions indicated throughout this book, perhaps there was more to it.) Just days before his death, he received a "Dear John" letter from his sweetheart, Linda, in which she said he was "a baby killer" and "I can't believe I ever cared for you. I never want to hear from you again."[3568] Archer attributes this letter as a probable contributing cause of Mahoney's death: "Knowing his feelings for the girl, I can imagine that he was distracted to some degree. I don't know if it contributed to his seem-

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[3557] 3rd MarDiv COC 130646Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #347, Para. 5.
[3558] CO, 1st Mar 2nd End on CMC SpdLtr DNA/mls of 3Oct 68, 1/GMF/eew, 5860, 20 Oct 1968, Subj: Congressional Correspondence; case of Lance Corporal Jerry D. Dewberry, 2387088, USMC (deceased) in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #288, Folder #177.
[3559] 2/1 ComdC July, 1968, Pt. III.
[3560] Email from Capt Robert A. Black to Terry Charbonneau, in Charbonneau letter of 11 July 2006.
[3561] *Ibid.*
[3562] Conversation with Terry Tillery, 5 May 1994. Kilderry was Tillery's best friend at the time.
[3563] 1st Mar ComdC July, 1968, Encl (1), p. 1-II-6; Comments of CAPT Clyde E. Woods, HQMC Oral History Tape #3662. Woods was CO of G/2/1.
[3564] 1st Mar ComdC, July, 1968, Encl (1), p. l-II-6, Para. (4).
[3565] Letter from Michael Archer, 17 Feb 2004. Archer was a very good friend of Mahoney during these years; both attended St. Mary's High School. Mahoney was 6 when his father died.
[3566] Archer, *Murmurs*, unpublished memoir, 11 May 2001, Reno, Nevada, pp. 31-32.
[3567] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[3568] *Ibid.*, p. 210; Letter from Archer, 17 Feb 2004, cited.

ingly poor judgment in going 30 meters outside of the interior wire to defecate. We will never know."[3569]

In the middle of February, 1968, the 325C Division, which operated west of KSCB during the siege battle, was replaced by the 66th Regiment, and on 12 June 1968, the 264th NVA Regiment replaced the entire 304th Division with the mission of operating in that area.[3570] The history of the 264th Regiment,[3571] records that on 5 July 1968, a team led by Nguyen Van Luong advanced close to Hill 845 [on US tactical maps, Hill 881-South], just outside the main tactical wire perimeter. Others in the team included Tran Ngoc Long, Nguyen Van Din, Nong Van Haw, and Nguyen Tien Thanh. "At 1400.. we saw one American walking outside the entrance of the outpost. He wore a cement-colored uniform.[3572] His face was red and his eyes were blue like a mean animal. He was looking towards Mr. Luong's team. The sounds of AK weapons roared immediately, and the American fell. Mr. Luong and Mr. Long jumped out of their positions and dragged the American's body down. They placed the body in front of them to create an ambush for other Americans coming out of their bunkers."[3573]

A NVA squad of seven or less in a spider hole dug into wire on the steep slope of the hill just as it fell off to the northwest, had set up a killing zone covered by a dug-in machinegun to the north of the western gate of Hill 881S Alfa while 82mm mortars dug into deep positions on Hill 881-North covered them. "The location could never have been hit by USMC or Army artillery (even had it been available at KSCB) and it was very difficult to hit with organic 60mm or attached 81mm mortars. The only fire support that could hit it was helo gunships or very, very precise close air by Marine Air."[3574]

Around 1330, LCPL Mahoney (a Marine from the 1st Platoon of B/1/1, manning the western knoll of the Hill 881-South complex) came up to the OP manned by CPL Joe L. Maxedon asking for some toilet paper. Maxedon said he didn't have any and Mahoney left. About 15 minutes later, Maxedon heard Mahoney scream, "Someone help me," after which there was a burst of automatic fire which Maxedon believed to be AK-47.[3575] 1/Lt Francis B. Ahearn, commanding Platoon B-1 of 1/1, upon being informed by his Right Guide, CPL Fernandes, of the incident, ran to the OP on the west end of the perimeter, talked with CPL Maxedon, and immediately ordered a search of the entire hill for Mahoney. When he was not found, Lt Ahearn advised the Company Commander, Capt Robert A. Black, Jr., and a search party crawled outside the wire to search for Mahoney. "We crawled outside of the wire along a trail for about 8 meters and then made a left turn along the trail for about another 7 or 8 meters. It was there that we saw a pool of blood next to some fresh human waste that was Lance Corporal Mahoney's. The first man in the formation, PFC Delucie, looked to his right off of the trail and down the draw that dropped off to the north and said he saw LCPL Mahoney's body about 10 meters away. He started to crawl down the draw to get the body when an automatic weapon opened up and wounded him in the foot. We then pulled back to get the wounded PFC Delucie out and try again. The second time, PFC Bird was the first man in the formation and when he got to the same point as PFC Delucie.. he too saw the body.. the trousers were still pulled down to his feet and he could see the bare legs and buttocks. When PFC Bird started to crawl down the draw to get the body he was wounded in the neck by a burst of automatic weapons fire. We again pulled back to evacuate the wounded PFC Bird. Both times we preceeded our movement by prepping the area with CS riot gas from gas grenades and an E-8 gas launcher but we were unable to spot exactly where the automatic weapons fire was coming from."[3576]

1/Lt Louis T. Pierce, flying co-pilot on a Huey gunship, spotted Mahoney: "The body we spotted was definitely not living.. All that was visible was the lower half of the body (which was nude). The entire upper half of the body appeared to be completely separated from the lower half. I could not locate the upper half from the air."[3577]

Following air-strikes, another attempt was made to retrieve Mahoney's body, and the first man got to within about 1 meter of where he could look off to the right of the trail and down into the draw to see the body, and the NVA started throwing grenades. LCPL Williams and PFC Sherwin had already been wounded by these grenades, it was getting dark, and the word came over the net to evacuate the hill, that helicopters were on the way

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[3569] Archer, Letter of 17 Feb 2004, cited.

[3570] *Vide*, note on 12 June 1968 in this book for details and sources.

[3571] *Trung Doan 246*[*246th Regiment*], translated in CH. JTF-FA, Honolulu HI 012012Z/Aug2003, in Library of Congress Photoduplication Service, in letter from Michael Archer, 7 August 2004. Note the discrepancy in the number of the regiment. Other NVA documents list it as the 264th, but this message indicates it as the 246th.

[3572] The green jungle uniform obviously soiled with the cream-colored clay of Hill 881-South (not the usual red laterite soil as found on KSCB).

[3573] CH, JTF-FA, Honolulu HI 012012Z/Aug68, cited.

[3574] Email from Robert A. Black to Terry Charbonneau, in letter from Charbonneau, 11 July 2006.

[3575] Statement of CPL Joe L. Maxedon in Library of Congress MIA microfilm, Reel #288, Folder #178.

[3576] Statement of 1/Lt Francis B. Ahearn, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #288, Folder #178.

[3577] Statement of 1/Lt Louis T. Pierce in Library of Congress MIA records, Reel #246. (In letter from Michael Archer, 17 February 2004).

to take B/1/1 to Hill 689 to help out D/1/1.[3578] 3 attempts had been made, and on each attempt, the recovery team, consisting of 4-5 Marines, including Lt Ahearn, a radio operator, and SSGT D. B. Mayotte (the B-1 Platoon Sergeant) had encountered small arms fire and grenades, and on each attempt additional Marines were wounded—16 WIA all together in the attempts. 881-South was also receiving incoming 82mm mortars during this entire time.[3579] Capt Black had been dashing across the open 600-meter space that separated the western knoll of the hill from the main portion of the hill several times while 82mm mortars plastered the area.

It was necessary for 1/1 to exit Khe Sanh, and to avoid a repetition of what happened with 1/9 when 26th Marines had to leave Khe Sanh (also to embark on other operations), the hill outposts of 861 and 881-South were abandoned to provide Marines to fortify "Dying Delta"[3580] on Hill 689. Capt Black received a radio call from Col Barrow: "You will break contact now, you will leave the site, you will leave and go on the choppers and go to the next hill. Period."[3581] Upon leaving Vietnam and during his debrief at Phu Bai, Capt Black recalls being informed that a recon team found a mound, a grave, and had recovered the body. He was therefore surprised that Mahoney was still listed as MIA several years later. He surmises that perhaps the recon team put the body in a body bag and graves registration had no ID tags for it, that it may have become an unidentified body.[3582]

His good friend, Michael Archer laments: "I think the world would be a better place had Tom lived. He was a young man with an already highly-refined sense of duty toward his family, friends, and nation."[3583] "He was outgoing and unselfish. He dressed well, and always drew lingering looks from the girls. He was idealistic, had honor, and was willing to fight for what he believed in. He was loyal to his friends."[3584]

Ironically, the death of LCPL Mahoney may have guaranteed the life of his comrades: "Paradoxically, Lt Frank Ahern and many of his men remain convinced.. that had Tom not walked outside the defensive barbed wire when he did, the close proximity [of the NVA force] to the landing zone would have almost assuredly allowed them to shoot down the evacuation helicopters... Ahern, who, throughout their numerous shared combat experiences, knew Mahoney to be a capable and courageous Marine, had been planning to recommend him for Officers' Candidate School."[3585]

07 JULY 1968

ANTONACE, LCPL John	C/1/1
BATTLE, LCPL William Alfred	H&S/1/1
DODSON, 1/Lt Robert Gerald	C/1/1
HORTON, PFC Robert Bernard	C/1/1
KOPP, PFC Patrick Daniel	H&S/1/1
PINSONNAULT, HM3 Richard Norman	C/1/1
ROWE, SGT Sharber Mayfield	C/1/1
SINGER, PFC Michael Ernest	D/1/1
STROUD, CPL Roger Lee	C/1/1
THOMAS, PFC Joseph Eugene	D/1/1

Co C/1/1 had been on Hill 558 from which it was moved by helicopter at approximately 1300 on 6 July to 689. It had been scheduled to move to Ca Lu, but with the developments on Hill 689, was sent there. The plan was to assemble the entire battalion and use Co B/1/1 (from Hill 881-South) as reserve, Co A/1/1 (from Hill 861) as a blocking force, while Co C/1/1 (from Hill 558) would sweep through the area and retrieve the bodies, then the entire battalion depart the following day. The first chopper to land at 689 received sniper fire, and as soon as Co C/1/1 disembarked from the choppers, 82mm mortars showered the area causing 2 platoons to remain at the base of the hill and 2 platoons on the hill. Divided, the Marines set in for the night, about 4 men to a hole.[3586]

The day began with a low cloud cover which precluded early utilization of close air support to silence the enemy mortars and attack the well entrenched enemy. Furthermore, the location of the enemy positions was such that all but high angle artillery fire could be applied on them. At 1500H, following a 90-minute air strike, Capt Henry J. Trautwein, Jr., CO of Company C/1/1, moved the company through the tactical wire on the southern portion of the perimeter, in front of Company D's lines to recover the bodies.[3587] C-1's 3rd Squad took the point with 2nd Squad in the middle and 1st Squad on the very right flank. C-3 was on line on the left side of C-1 while C-2 and H&S, who brought up the rear, were to retrieve the bodies. The Marines reached the base of Hill

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[3578] Statement of 1/Lt Francis B. Ahearn, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #288, Folder #178.

[3579] Statement of CAPT Robert A. Black, Jr., in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #288, Folder #178.

[3580] "Dying Delta" was the nickname given to D/1/1 by Marines in 1/1, similar to "The Walking Dead" nickname given to 1/9. [Letter from CPL J. C. Scott, undated, but in response to reaching the Khe Sanh *Veteran* (Issue of Spring, 1993, chronology). Scott was with A-1 of 1/1, 3rd Squad and machineguns].

[3581] Conversation with Robert A. Black, Jr., 21 July 2004.

[3582] *Ibid.*

[3583] Michael Archer, letter of 17 February 2004.

[3584] Michael Archer, *Mururms, op. cit.*, p. 32.

[3585] Michael Archer, "To Find a Wandering Soul," essay forwarded with his letter of 2 Feb 2008.

[3586] Comments of 2/Lt Joseph M. Fulginiti; Comments of CPL Stephen J. Dougherty, and Comments of GySgt Kenneth E. David, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081

[3587] 1/1 ComdC July, 1968, Encl (1), p. 1-II-6, Para. (7); 3rd MarDiv COC 090249Z/July, 1968, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #331, Para. 3.C.

689, paused about 5 minutes, and then moved out in wedge formation. 2 or more mortars crashed, and the company paused to check-out the area. A sniper then fired some rounds on the Marines, but their platoon commander, 1/Lt Robert Dodson, said to move on, watching for spider traps and booby traps.[3588] Initially the Marines of C/1/1 were mortared, but maintained their momentum until they were about 100 meters from the bodies at which time they came under intense small arms fire from NVA in spider traps.[3589]

The C/1/1 advanced over 2 fingers and while on top of the 3rd ran into heavy fire—over 70 rounds of 82mm mortars, causing them to halt their advance.[3590] Lt Dodson and 7 other Marines reached an old bomb crater and remained there for 5 or 10 minutes pinned down by mortar and sniper rounds. "We couldn't hardly get up and move. Lt. Dodson said there were too many of us in this hole, it was crowded, and some of us would have to go. So he moved first, over to a bomb crater 15 to 25 meters to the right of us. Then his radioman, Pvt. Brown, moved, then our Squad Leader, CPL Barclay, then I think it was PFC Hinz, our squad radioman. I [LCPL Gerald C. Hardin] got up and moved, and the guy behind me, PFC [Robert Bernard] Russell moved behind me, but he got shot in the head and was killed. We stayed in the [new] bomb crater for about 2 hours, pinned down. We couldn't see anything because of the mortar rounds and sniper rounds.. The rest of the company were pinned down, too. They took a lot of KIAs and WIAs. They couldn't come and help us. So our Lieutenant [Dodson] said we have to get out of the hole some kind of way because if we stay we'll all be killed. So he said he was going to call for some smoke rounds to try to screen us... The rounds came in and he moved out."[3591] The Marines were wounded as they moved. "So our Lieutenant said he was going to see where most of the rounds were coming from. He stuck his head up 2 or 3 feet from the ground and was hit in the head."[3592]

The death of Lt Dodson deeply affected his men. "Lt Dodson first came to us in October of '67, straight out of OCS. He was kind of quiet. He was more of an observer. he listened to his men. When he came, he came to a platoon that had been decimated on Operation Medina, and the ones he had left were veterans. He listened to them and over time he became a good officer. He knew what he was doing out there; we had no fear being with him whatever. He didn't have that proverbial 'chip on the shoulder' that some Second Lieutenants have. He learned from his men and the guys taught him too. He was a nice guy... Lt Dodson was a Marine officer and when the shit hit the fan, he was what you would expect a Marine officer to be. He was professional, knew his stuff, and very competent, and he never got us lost."[3593]

CPL Roger L. Stroud, a squad leader in the Second Platoon of C Company [C-2], continued to move his Marines through the deadly fire and out of the killing zone while assisting the wounded to safety on four occasions. "As the advance continued under Stroud's leadership, he observed a prominent enemy sniper position that was exacting heavy casualties on the attacking platoon. Without a moment's hesitation, Corporal Stroud ordered his men to cover him. Despite fierce enemy fire he advanced within throwing range and pulled the pin on a fragmentation hand grenade. He then prepared to assault the sniper position, but instead observed that his squad's rifle fire had taken its toll by destroying the sniper. While attempting to replace the pin into the grenade, Corporal Stroud was struck by another sniper and mortally wounded. With his squad now advancing in close proximity to him, Corporal Stroud, through greatly weakened and nearing unconsciousness, realized the great danger from the grenade he held. This gallant and fearless Marine fought desperately to remain alert and held on to the dangerous grenade, while calling for someone to assist with it, and he did not loosen his grip until a comrade reached his side and took it from him. Not until the imminent danger to his men presented by the armed grenade was removed, did he allow himself to collapse, unconscious."[3594] CPL Stroud had taken a shot in his stomach and was kneeling as he called for help.[3595] Such wounds are always excruciatingly painful. The man who took the armed grenade from the Sergeant's hand was PFC Michael E. Gott.[3596]

As soon as the first casualties were taken, the Corpsman of C-2, HM3 Richard N. Pinsonnault, went into action. "This gallant, courageous and fearless corpsman, with complete disregard to his personal safety, maneuvered throughout the fire-swept battlefield rendering medical assistance to casualties. On one occasion, Hospitalman Pinsonnault traversed approximately 200 meters, oblivious to the tremendous volume of enemy mortar fire striking all about him, to gain access to wounded Ma-

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[3588] Comments of LCPL Gerald C. Hardin, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081.
[3589] 1/1 ComdC July, 1968, Encl (1), p. 1-II-6, Para. (7); 3rd MarDiv COC 090249Z/July, 1968, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #331, Para. 3.C.
[3590] Comments of 2/Lt Joseph M. Fulginiti and GySgt Kenneth E. David, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081. Fulginiti was the artillery FO with C/1/1.
[3591] Comments of LCPL Gerald C. Hardin, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081.
[3592] *Ibid.*
[3593] Conversation with Ed Yates, 15 September 2003.
[3594] LtCol Archie Van Winkle's Summary of Action in NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 4 August 1968, in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of CPL Roger L. Stroud.
[3595] Statement of CPL William W. Lomen, in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of CPL Roger L. Stroud.
[3596] Statement of PFC Michael E. Gott in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file of CPL Roger L. Stroud; Letter of Michael A. Newton, 4 April 2003.

rines on the front lines."[3597] While helping others, HM3 Pinsonnault was fatally wounded by an enemy mortar round.[3598] "HM3 Pinsonnault not only spared thoughts of what could happen to him, but saved many lives while risking his own."[3599]

SGT Sharber Rowe, who had been an acting Platoon Commander for about a day, "..was killed by mortar fire while looking over the edge of a bomb crater while trying to determine where the NVA were, despite being told to keep his head down... Sharber [Rowe] was an old man at 25 or 26 or so, and had already served a stint with the Army's 82nd Airborne before joining the Marines. He made the mistake of sporting an 82nd Airborne tattoo on his upper arm, which, of course, was the source of unremitting flack from the rest of us. He married just before deploying for Westpac... We also lost LCPL John 'Russian' Antonace."[3600]

Although the Marines of C/1/1 were able to retrieve one of D/1/1's MIA, they left additional dead on the battlefield as they broke contact at 1730H and returned to the wire.[3601] Results of the contact were 7 KIA, 30 WIA (evacuated), and 40 NVA KIA (C).[3602]

"All was quiet and there were no indications of an impending attack. In an instant the silence was shattered by an overwhelming volume of incoming automatic AK-47 and machine gun fire."[3603] At 2245H, 1/1 reported 20-25 NVA inside their perimeter who had broken through the D/1/1's wire.[3604] Capt Robert A. Black (CO, B/1/1) had just previously (and fortunately!) dispatched a platoon to reinforce the main 1/1 position on the hill.[3605] A quick reaction by 1/Lt Larry E. Perry (CO, D/1/1) and Capt Henry J. Trautwein, Jr. (CO, C/1/1), although both companies had been greatly weakened by losses of men as KIA and WIA, succeeded in containing the penetration,[3606] and by 2345H, the situation on Hill 689 improved.[3607] The attack, however, was unrelenting. At 080100H, A/1/1 reported movement continued, and as of 0253H, NVA were on all sides of 1/1. A force estimated to be 3 reinforced platoons attacked at 3 widely separated points of Co B/1/1's position in an attempt to cut Co "B" off from the main position, surround, and overwhelm it. The attack was made following many probes and in conjunction with supporting mortar and recoilless rifle fires which completely covered the position. Capt Black, without regard for his own safety, continually checked his positions and coordinated with his commanders to ensure the situation remained tenable. He called in extremely close-in 155mm artillery and 81mm mortar fires right on to his lines and directed effective fires of his 60mm mortars onto the attacking enemy.[3608]

PFC Michael Ernest Singer, an artillery Forward Observer with D/1/1, had manned an OP of the Co D/1/1 defensive perimeter when C/1/1 patrolled during the afternoon and came under intense fire after moving about 100 meters. He immediately left his covered position, ran across the fire-swept area, and began to assist the WIA to relative safety of the perimeter. He did this repeatedly, although wounded twice. He refused to be medevaced. During the night of 7 July, when the NVA launched their attack on the 1/1 position, PFC Singer again went into action, going to the rescue of the wounded. While he was assisting a casualty to a more covered position, he was mortally wounded by the enemy fire.[3609]

Despite weather that was closing in, emergency resupply and medevac was completed at 0245H and as of 0340H on 8 July, 1/1 was completely reconsolidated.[3610] The enemy withdrew at 0500.[3611]

During the day, LtCol Archie Van Winkle[3612] held a staff meeting in a large hole dug into the northwest side of Hill 689 to resolve what action would be taken to recover Delta's bodies. During the night, the NVA at-

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[3597] Statement of LtCol Archie Van Winkle in NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, 7 Sep 1968, and Statement of PFC Hugh E. Mahoney in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file, HM3 Richard N. Pinsonnault.

[3598] Statement of LCPL Charles B. Wolden in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file, HM3 Richard N. Pinsonnault.

[3599] Statement of CPL William W. Lomen in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file, HM3 Richard N. Pinsonnault.

[3600] Letter of Michael A. Newton, 4 April 2003.

[3601] Comments of 2/Lt Joseph M. Fulginiti, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081; 1/1 ComdC July, 1968, Encl (1), p. 1-II-6; 3rd MarDiv COC Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #334, Para. 3.A.

[3602] 3rd MarDiv COC Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #334, Para 3.A.

[3603] Statement of 1/Lt Dennis J. Curtin in Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file, PFC Michael Ernest Singer.

[3604] 3rd MarDiv COC 090251Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #332, Para 3.E.

[3605] Statement of 1st Sgt Clinton C. Gatewood in Silver Star Medal file of Capt Robert A. Black, Jr.

[3606] Statement of LtCol Archie Van Winkle in Bronze Star Medal file of l/Lt Larry E. Perry; NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, in Silver Star Medal file of Capt Henry J. Trautwein, Jr.; 1/1 ComdC July, 1968, Encl (1), p. 1-II-6. Capt Trautwein had already been wounded in both arms. [NavPers 1650/6, Award Recommendation, Silver Star Medal file, Capt Henry J. Trautwein, Jr.]

[3607] 3rd MarDiv COC 090251Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #332, Para. 3.E.

[3608] Statement of LtCol Archie Van Winkle in Silver Star Medal file of Capt Robert A. Black, Jr.

[3609] Statements of l/Lt Larry E. Perry, 1/Lt Dennis J. Curtin, and Citation, Silver Star Medal (posthumous) file, PFC Michael Ernest Singer.

[3610] 3rd MarDiv COC 091619Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #333, Para 3.A.

[3611] 3rd MarDiv COC Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #334, Para 3.A.

[3612] Decorated with the Medal of Honor for actions as a SSGT on "No-Name" Hill in Korea.

tempted multiple, coordinated assaults, the main effort focused at the WSW point on the wire of the main hill-top position. The first effort was made by NVA as they attempted to reach the top of the ridgeline (from which they could pour fire onto the hill) where Alfa Company was located and, not realizing the company was there, impaled themselves onto the Marines in fighting holes there." Alfa Co. quashed the NVA effort as they moved down the trenchline from NW to SW, killing and ejecting the NVA they encountered. The NVA had not realized the presence of the sizeable Marine force.[3613]

08 JULY 1968

BROWN, PFC Vaughn Lee C/1/1
GALABIZ, LCPL John Rosalez C/1/1

[*The first USMC use of the OV-10 Bronco in combat happened this day at Khe Sanh as a spotter with an airborne FAC in an OV-10 marked targets to the WNW and NW of Hill 689, guiding flights of F4 Phantoms.*[3614]]

10 JULY 1968

HERNANDEZ, PFC Robert A/1/1

On 10 July, 1/Lt Haldon D. Bohlen spotted smoke from one of his M-60 gun positions due to a hit by NVA mortars. He ran down and saw the gun with rounds cooking off. Everything was black from the explosion. The gun position had taken a direct hit. "I ran back up the hill to get some water to put on our guns, and gunner Buckler runs over there and he says, 'Hernandez is down there.' So we run back down there and Doc Allen came running over there like mad. There wasn't anything he could do. He was dead."[3615]

His friend, Robert L. Stewart, remembers: "He had a bunker in the side of the wall in the position next to me.. He seemed like a nice kid, and he had told me at one time he was from Texas. He was very quiet but he done his job, and I have nothing bad to say about the guy, and I feel sorry for him. He was on a working party this date. He went down to the LZ to build a hootch or something for the officers down there, and when he came back from the working detail.. he came walking along the skyline which we were told.. you don't do. When he got to about over my head, everybody started hollering at him to get off the skyline. Well, I guess we all make mistakes. He got off the skyline and walked back down the hill to his position. When he got in there, he just went into the hole of the trench and just passed out because he was tired from working so hard. A few minutes after that, somebody yelled 'Incoming!' I don't know how many rounds we had—3 or 4 rounds.. and the second one went directly in front of his hole. He was dead. He was on fire and his M-60 was on fire. It was loaded. Doc was the first one to holler out for someone to bring some water.. to put him out. Well, he was already dead. I came over there and looked at him. I knew he was dead, no doubt about it. We had a hard time getting any water in. I was drinking iodine water already. I don't know how much I had, but not very much. We got water every 3 days or once a week and that was it because the rest of the time they was bringing in stuff to build bunkers or taking out wounded. After that I felt really bad."[3616]

[*LtCol Archie Vanwinkle had assumed command of 1/1 during July, 1968, having previously served as CO of 2/1, G-3 Operations Officer of 1st Marine Division, and G-3 of Task Force X-RAY during the Hue City Operation.*[3617] *The Battalion Surgeon of 1/1, Lt Stephen Howard, MC, USNR, writes of the time on Hill 689: "..living conditions were unusually bad, even for a unit on operation. There were many times when morale threatened to falter or even be destroyed; it was only the leadership of this man which sustained the spirit and fighting ability of the battalion at a Marine level. LtCol Van Winkle was all over the hill, constantly talking and joking with his officers, staff, men raising their spirits by his presence and example, and giving them the will to continue. He was always present when any man was injured, sustaining and cheering that man and his buddies, frequently at great discomfort and personal danger to himself."*[3618] *Attempts to retrieve the MIA the NVA used as ambush bait had proven nugatory, but LtCol Vanwinkle devised a recovery plan that finally worked. On the night of 11 July at approximately 1930 – 2230, several "body snatcher" teams were dispatched. There were 4 teams of 4 men each, all without flak jackets or helmets, just .45s and K-bars, to retrieve the bodies. Following drops of 550-pound bombs so close they knocked out much of the Marine's wire, the teams departed to retrieve the bodies.*

[3613] Email of Robert A. Black to Terry Charbonneau in Charbonneau letter of 11 July 2006.
[3614] *Ibid.*
[3615] Comments of 1/Lt Haldon D. Bohlen, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081.
[3616] Conversation with Robert L. Stewart, 28 January 1997. Stewart adds that after they departed Hill 689 everyone went to a river to swim, to clean themselves, but that he didn't swim. Several of the men complained that he hadn't cleaned himself. He mentioned the incident of the fire and the water with Doc Pack, the Corpsman. He said, "Don't let it bother you. The guy was dead on impact, before you got there. If I'd of had any water in that situation I probably wouldn't have put it on him either because the guy was already dead, just don't worry about it," but Stewart couldn't get over his guilt of not having poured his precious drops of water on the burning man, to douse the flames, although the man was already dead.
[3617] Bronze Star Medal Citation, LtCol Archie Vanwinkle.
[3618] Statement of Lt Stephen Howard, MC, USNR, in Bronze Star Medal file, LtCol Archie Vanwinkle.

"We found 7 of the bodies. We thought we knew where the other 2 were supposed to be, but there was an air strike just before dusk, and I believe it came pretty close to them, and if not moved them,.. completely disintegrated them, because all the bodies down there were marred and burnt and everything else. But it was the only way we could possibly get to it because there were so many spider holes down there. There was just no other way possibly getting them. After we got these 7 bodies up we sent three more men down.. and we looked over to see where the one of these 2 bodies were missing was moved. They popped illum for us. It was a negative. We couldn't find any traces of the bodies. We came back on up the hill, closed the wires, got inside the trench, and we knew we were on our way out of that crazy-ass hill."[3619] *All the while the "body snatcher" teams were out, friendly 81s, LAWs, everything, was fired continuously, like a "basic mad moment" along with over 300 artillery shells during the 2-hour operation. Cpl Strassburg made 6 trips and Lt Bohlen later commented: "It was a dirty job. They had surgical gloves, but these all tore up, and these bodies were—I smelled them as they went by and it about made me vomit."*[3620]

1/1 was lifted out by helicopter from Hill 689 on 12 July 1968 in 2 stages, the first to LZ STUD and the 2nd to Quang Tri Combat Base.[3621]

Cumulative statistics for Operation SCOTLAND II at Khe Sanh, 16 April – 11 July 1968: KIA (301 USMC, 25 USA), WIAE (1489 USMC, 123 USA), WIANE (242 USMC, 34 USA), MIA 2 (USA), NVA: 2440 KIAC, 152 detained, 56 POW, 644 IWC and 195 CSWC.[3622]]

13 JULY 1968

BIRD, 1/Lt Leonard Adrian	VMFA-115
HURST, CAPT John Clark	VMFA-115

CAPT Hurst (Pilot) and 1/Lt Bird (RIO) were crew aboard a F-4B fighter (#150650) in a flight of 2 aircraft on a combat mission near KSCB. The aircraft was hit by ground fire, became engulfed in flames prior to bomb release, and crashed in an open area which was too close to enemy forces for a recovery attempt. The plane was in the process of conducting an ordnance delivery run in the vicinity of XD834345, approximately 8 KM south of KSCB.[3623] **The target was a mortar.**[3624] **The aircraft was making a second pass over the target at 500-ft. and 450 knots when it was hit.**[3625]

Bird's parents came from Holland and had changed their name from "DeVogel" to "Bird" to conform to the language of their new country. He attended the University of Delaware to study engineering and swam on the freshman swim team. His brother served in the USAF in Korea. He had hoped to attend the Wharton School of Business after his discharge from the Marine Corps.[3626]

While serving with Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 115, 1/Lt Bird flew 253 missions. "In some cfases, he logged four flights within a 20-hour stretch."[3627]

[*Operations in the Khe Sanh area were now completely mobile. CG, 3rd MarDiv Operation Order 23-68 was promulgated 21 July 1968 with the mission of assuming a mobile posture in the SCOTLAND II AO by establishing FSBs [Fire Support Bases] north (FSB CATES) and south (FSB SHEPHERD, XD936409) of Route 9, approximately mid-way between Khe Sanh and Ca Lu, with a battalion normally operating from each. Bn 2/4 remained in the Khe Sanh area, maintaining a platoon on Hill 950 (Plt E-3) and one company on the ridgeline between Hill 950 and FSB Cates, and one company CHOPed to 1/4.*[3628]]

[*There had been several reports of UFOs flying over Khe Sanh. At 0400H in the morning of 25 October 1966, Special Forces on Khe Sanh base received a flare ship between 0335-0340H which they had not requested and sought to determine who sent it.*[3629] *About a year later, on 29 October 1967, at 2145H, an unidentified aircraft dropped a flare directly over the Combat Base. The aircraft would not acknowledge a call from the airfield tower nor did LANDSHARK BRAVO, Dong Ha, hold any aircraft in this area.*[3630] *ENS Martin J. Kux, the Of-*

[3619] Comments of CPL Terry A. Strassburg, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081.

[3620] Comments of Lt Bohlen, HQMC Oral History Tape #3081.

[3621] 1/1 ComdC, July 1968, Encl (1), p. 1-II-9.

[3622] 3rd MarDiv COC 121801Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #346

[3623] Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, Case 1225-0-01 and 02, Narrative, in Library of Congress, MIA microfilm Reel #292, Folder #9.

[3624] LtCol G. W. Vaughan, VMFA-115, letter of condolence dated 14 July 1968, to parents of Bird, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #292, Folder #9.

[3625] Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 154.

[3626] Vietnam Remembrance Committee and Clifton War Veterans Monument Committee, *Program*, Memorial Day, 29 May 2000, p. 35; in Letter from Richard Delotto, 6 July 2004.

[3627] Robert Wahlers, "Wings Over 'Nam'," *Clifton [New Jersey] Merchant Magazine*, 6:5 (May, 2000), p. 26.

[3628] 2/4 ComdC, July, 1968, Encl (1), p. 8.

[3629] Resume of Telephone Call 250400H in III MAF COC Journal and File 24/25 Oct 1966 #J153. The I Corps DASC responded that VNAF did not have flare planes and that none of their flareships were in the vicinity of Khe Sanh the night of 25 October. [Resume of Telephone Call 250915H in III MAF COC Journal and File 24/25 Oct 1966, #22].

[3630] 26Mar 291545Z/Oct67, Opn ARDMORE SITREP #419. Could this be NVA aircraft? SR-71 taking aerial photos for the NPIC [National Photo Interpretation Center] of the CIA? The Red Chinese?

ficer in Charge of the Seabee detachment (CBMU-301, Det B) wrote in his diary during the Siege: "At 1730.. we went into Condition Red because 3 UFOs were headed for us from the DMZ. Dunno what happened there."[3631] *And now, on 21 July 1968, the fourth sighting of a UFO flying over Khe Sanh was reported when at 0245H, the platoon from E/2/4 on Hill 950 spotted one near the western end of the Khe Sanh airstrip. The UFO then proceeded to the Hill 950 area and finally turned and flew toward the Co Roc escarpment in Laos. Shortly thereafter, the platoon observed several "V" formations consisting of 3 crafts generally flying in the same circular pattern and in the same area. The UFO was reported to sound like a fixed-wing aircraft, but behaved like a helicopter. A flareship was called on station, however the UFO was not again seen.*[3632]

30 JULY 1968

ALMON, PFC William Russell	G/2/4
DELANEY, CPL John Patrick, III	G/2/4
GORMAN, PFC Paul James	G/2/4
PATTERSON, PFC Jerry Leroy	G/2/4
SELLERS, PFC Floyd Eugene	G/2/4

During July, 1968, BLT 2/4 (-) placed one platoon on Hill 950 and one company on Firebase CATES (XD927437) in connection with the evacuation from KSCB.[3633] On 12 July, Co G/2/4 was lifted from LZ STUD to Co E/2/4's position on Hill 691 (XD926443) from where they began a tactical movement northwest to a position at XD 893457 (Hill 679). Due to the difficulty of the terrain causing slow movement, Co G only advanced to XD913448 that night and reached their objective area on 14 July, set up a defensive base area from which operations in adjacent territory could be undertaken.[3634] A patrol from this base camp made contact on 16 July and the next day, a helicopter departing from Co G's position crashed but all persons were uninjured and evacuated safely. Again, on 22 July, an ambush from Co G spotted 30 NVA with at least 2 machineguns at XD893456.[3635]

On 30 July, Co "G" [commanded by Capt J. M. Dwyer] saw 10 NVA with automatic weapons at XD883496 who were then taken under fire with small arms and 60mm mortars. While maneuvering to exploit the contact, 2 platoons of the company made contact with a well-entrenched and well-organized NVA force of undetermined size at 1030H. The enemy used grenades and Claymore mines, withholding their fire until the units from Co G were almost on top of them. After the initial burst of fire, Co G attempted to withdraw to make use of supporting arms. From 1400 – 1900H, 8 flights of fixed wing, 4 flights of gunships, and artillery blasted the NVA position. When the patrol broke contact at 1615H, they were unable to recover the point element and 3 KIA were unable to be retrieved until the next day. Poor communications ability plagued the radio net traffic all day between G/2/4, 2/4, and the 2/4 relay on Hill 950.[3636]

02 AUGUST 1968

BLOOM, SGT Ronald Norman	E/2/4
DYE, PFC Ronald Harvey	E/2/4
GOEN, LCPL Richard Dean	E/2/4[3637]
MORTON, LCPL David Eugene	E/2/4
SWAIN, PFC Craig Francis	E/2/4
TRAINOR, PFC Paul William	E/2/4

Hill 950, manned by a platoon from E/2/4, heard movement on their lines at 0230H and by 0330H were under attack, receiving grenades and 60mm mortar fire. The western end of the perimeter, closest to the LZ, was overrun at 0345H. Although the lines were quickly reestablished, the unit was cut off from their LZ. By 0500H the attack began to falter and by 0600, the original lines of the platoon's position were reestablished. The platoon suffered 6 KIA and 11 WIA. A later check determined that the wire had been cut and the illumination devices deactivated.[3638]

At 1330H the next day, CG TF HOTEL assumed OPCON of G/2/9 from 9th Mar and passed same to 4th Mar with plans that G/2/9 to sweep the vicinity of Hill 950.[3639] At 031245H, G/2/9 while arriving at Hill 950 was greeted with 3-4 rounds of 60mm mortar from XD852449 resulting in 7 WIA (evacuated).[3640] On 8 August 1968, F/2/4 was lifted into the Hill 950 at 1300H with the mission of searching, fixing, and destroying the enemy in the area. The lift was completed at 1405. Co B/1/4 had the same mission for the Hill 1015 area east of the 85 grid line.[3641]

[3631] ENS Martin J. Kux, Diary entry for 7 and 8 February 1968.
[3632] 2/4 ComdC, July, 1968, Encl (1), p. 12.
[3633] 2/4 ComdC July, 1968, Encl (1), p. 6.
[3634] *Ibid.*
[3635] *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 12.
[3636] *Ibid.*, p. 14; 3rd MarDiv COC 310706Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #424, Para 3.A.; 3rd MarDiv COC 310704Z/Jul68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #425, Para. 3.A.
[3637] Goen's unit is listed as "III MAF" in the Coffelt database.
[3638] 2/4 ComdC August, 1968, Encl (1), pp. 5, 7; 3rd MarDiv COC 021130Z/Aug68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #433, Para 3.
[3639] 3rd MarDiv COC 021616Z/Aug68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #435, Para. 4.
[3640] 3rd MarDiv COC 030102Z/Aug68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #439, Para. 3.
[3641] 2/4 ComdC August, 1968, Encl (1), p. 10.

SGT Bloom was on his 3rd Vietnam tour and had just arrived in May, 1968.[3642]

06 AUGUST 1968

BAKER, LCPL Bernard Gerald	G/2/4
CHRISTIAN, LCPL Thomas Barry	G/2/4[3643]
RUDD, PFC James Earl	G/2/4
WHITLOW, HM3 Ronald David	BLT 2/4

At 0418H, Co G/2/4 (commanded by Capt J. M. Dwyer) at XD886496 (in the valley north of Hill 950 and 4 clicks east of 950) came under a heavy ground attack from the northwest initiated by the NVA with small arms and RPG rockets. G/2/4 sustained 4 KIA and 6 WIA. A thorough search of the area disclosed miscellaneous NVA gear and ordnance. At 1130H, G/2/4 was lifted to Vandergrift Combat Base (YD0048).[3644]

16 AUGUST 1968

MANSOR, PFC Thomas Nickolas	III MAF
MC JUNKIN, Robert Taylor	III MAF[3645]

Co I/3/4 conducted two platoon (rein) combat patrols on 16 Aug, operating within 1500 meters of their patrol base at XD896376[3646] found various pieces of bloodied NVA equipment including an AK-47, ammunition, and a helmet, at XD884382 at 0830H on 16 August 1968. A squad followed the bloodied trail and soon came under small arms fire from an estimated 6-8 NVA. The patrol observed several NVA at XD894374 between the patrol (XD894373) and the squad (XD897375) and sustained 4 WIA in the initial contact. Sightings continued throughout the day as I/3/4 received 37 rounds of 60mm and 82mm mortar fire, and at 1930H, spotted an estimated NVA company of NVA at XD894380 moving toward the patrol base. Friendly casualties included 2 MIA, 12 WIA (evacuated) and 2 WIA (not evacuated).[3647]

24 AUGUST 1968

LADEWIG, 1/Lt Melvin Earl 8th TFW

READ, MAJ Charles Harold W. Jr. 8th TFW

Two F4D Phantoms of 497 TFS, 8 TFW, USAF, attacked a storage area 17 miles northwest of Dong Ha. The attack leader spotted a large fireball on the ground and realized it was the wreckage of Maj Read's F4. The case remained undetermined but was assumed to be the result of ground fire. Neither of the 2 crew are thought to have ejected from the aircraft.[3648] According to official records, the F4Dwas shot down during a night armed reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam near XD456547 (just beneath the Khe Sanh NVA Front B5-T8 Hq during the siege battle). No parachutes were sighted and no beeper signals were heard, leading to the status of "presume status of dead, remains not recovered."[3649]

[A memorial service was conducted on the remains of KSCB on 09 October 1968 in memory of 3rd Marine Division and 2nd ARVN Regiment men and their supporting units who gave their lives here. The memorial service was preceded by a general sweep of the area under the code name Operation SCOTLAND II—NANKING beginning 04 October 1968 conducted by the 4th Marine Regiment, 12th Marine Regiment, and 62nd ARVN Regiment. Prior to the operation, K/3/4, artillery battery I/3/12, together with elements of 3rd Engineers and helicopters established FSB NANKING at the old Rock Quarry position to provide fire support for the sweeping battalions. The following morning Marines from 4th Marine Regiment heli-lifted to points north and south of Lang Vei, and soldiers of the 62nd ARVN Regiment heli-assaulted Hill 881S. The Marines moved towards Khe Sanh while the ARVNs moved towards Hill 861.[3650] *Numerous old, mass graves, abandoned bunkers, trenches, and gear were discovered.*

CAPT Sid Thomas led elements of K/3/4 from NANKING to the old airstrip. There was no contact.

[3642] Gary G. Mosley, email posted on Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board, 01 Feb 2002, 08:15:52 PM.

[3643] Christian's unit is listed as "III MAF" in the Coffelt database. Since there were 4 KIA and no others listed for that date in the database could possibly relate to G/2/4, his name has been included as a member of G/2/4.

[3644] 2/4 ComdC August, 1968, Encl (1), p. 9.

[3645] Both these men are listed as belonging to "III MAF" in the Coffelt database; there are no others KIA for this date who could possibly belong to I/3/4.

[3646] About 1,000 meters south of Route 9 and 3 clicks east of the junction of the base access road to KSCB and Route 9.

[3647] 3/4 ComdC August, 1968, pp. IV-25 and IV-26.

[3648] Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 160.

[3649] Joint Casualty Resolution Center, Refugee Report & Evaluation T84-134, 26 June 1984 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm

[3650] III MAF News Release No. 3204 by CPL Ken Corbett; *Leatherneck* 52:2 (Feb, 1969) 60; CPL Ken Corbett, "Marines Enter Khe Sanh," III MAF: *Sea* Tiger 4:42 (18 October 1968), pp. 1, 12; SGT Bob Morris, "Taps Play at Khe Sanh Ceremony," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:42 (18 October 1968) 1, 12; 1/4 ComdC Oct 1968, Encl (1), p. 3; 2/4 ComdC Oct 1968, Encl (1), p. 5; FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, October, 1968, p. 18; On 5 October, 2/4 was lifted into positions near Lang Vei (2) (XD805355) without incident or contact. From 6-9 October, 2/4 swept in an easterly direction locating several small caches of weapons and one grave (at XD847394) containing 50 NVA bodies apparently 3 – 4 months old. The Bn then set in as security for the ceremony at KSCB. [2/4 ComdC Oct 1968, Encl (1), p. 5].

An hour later, they had established a perimeter around the western turn-around portion of the airstrip and dignitaries began to arrive by air. It was a desolation that could perhaps best be understood by hearing the haunting soprano voice in Villa-Lobos' Bachianas Brasilerias, *No. 5. One Marine Staff Sergeant who had been at Khe Sanh in March noted the missing features: "Gone are the many bunkers that protected the Marines from constant shelling.. Gone is Charlie Med, command bunkers, the Avenue of the Flags, the trenches, the old messhall and the.. cement bunkers."*[3651]

The 3rd Marine Division band and the Division Chaplain, CAPT John E. Zoller, then arrived. Chaplain Zoller reported:

"What a beautiful morning: brilliant sunshine, azure blue sky, fleecy clouds and breathtaking rugged landscape of mountains and valleys. As we approached Khe Sanh we circled. There it was, a flat plateau scraped bare and scarred by the ravages of war and demolition. The area immediately adjacent in certain directions (of greatest enemy threat) was peppered, literally riddled, with pock marks, bomb craters, where Arc Light and other aerial and artillery assault had rained devastation. Now all seemed bleak, deserted, and still.

"We landed, deplaned, and then I saw our troopers, dispersed in small clusters, crouching in various spots of natural cover. We were the first arrivals by air. They had humped in, arriving an hour earlier, on their assigned mission... Then, abruptly, the air seemed to be ripped, shredded by tearing explosions. The veteran company commander of the sweep troopers, with whom I was chatting, noted my surprise and motioned toward a flanking hillside, perhaps 2 miles away.

"'Suppression fire,' he said, 'Our own. Just to discourage Charlie, if he is there, from trying anything this morning.' Smoke was rising from half a dozen air bursts at tree-top level. This continued intermittently during the 2 hours I was there.

"Soon a crew was busy erecting two flag poles at the west end of what was once the air strip. When all was ready, about 1000, all hands assembled for the service... To the right was a formation of about 40 Marines in combat jungle utilities and battle gear. To the left was a similar formation of 2nd ARVN Regiment troops. Ahead stood USMC and ARVN officers, perhaps 30 in number. Scurrying about were news media personnel and combat photographers..

"General Garretson made a few introductory remarks and traced a brief history of Khe Sanh. I conducted the service up to the raising of the flags, when we all stood at salute as the US and RVN flags were two-blocked, each to the sound of its own national anthem. Nick Hubble [CDR, 4th Marines Chaplain] completed it. Once again, with soaring emotion, we all stood at salute as Taps sounded. Only 15 minutes or so, but never-to-be-forgotten experience it was."[3652]

Also present at the ceremony, a former NVA Sergeant, Nguyen Trong Thuan, raised his hand to salute the Stars and Stripes and Republic of Vietnam standard. Nine months earlier, he had fought here against the forces defending the combat base when he was wounded during an air strike and evacuated to a NVA hospital with severe chest wounds that caused him to bleed from the mouth and nose. Before he was able to recover he had been forced to return to his unit for duty. He turned himself in as a "Hoi Chan" under the "Chieu Hoi" ["Open Arms"] program. "I went on many operations and had many friends killed. I was tired of fighting," he said.[3653]]

[*From 4 October – 10 November 1968, 4th Marine Regiment, operating in the Khe Sanh battlefield, patrolled, occupied, and developed the 2nd highest elevation in the Republic of Vietnam, Hill 1739, "Tiger Tooth," (or "Dent du Tigre"). It was at this location that the wreckage of 2 helicopters were found, a USAF C-47 helicopter with 5 skeletons and an old unmarked H-34.*[3654] *On 1 November, a Spot Report reported a CH-46 wreckage at XD828545 (6 K NNW of FSB Gurkha, XD872482) at 1645H found by a 2-platoon patrol from K/3/4.*[3655] *The wreckage had 3 skeletons, 1 ID card and 1 ID tag.*[3656] *The next day, a patrol from K/3/4 found a H-34 helicopter in three pieces (at XD8254). The aircraft was rusted and there were no bodies around the aircraft.*[3657] *The number on the helicopter was "11-IN."*[3658] *The UH-34 "appears to have crashed a long time ago, was very rusty, no sign of bodies, most instruments missing."*[3659] *On 4 November 1968, E/2/4 commenced construction of FSB ALPINE (XD758528, 11 miles northwest of Khe Sanh), completing it on Marine Corps Birthday, 10 November 1968.*[3660] *Also constructed and occupied was the highest FSB in Viet-*

[3651] SSGT John Conic, III MAF News Release, No. 3245.

[3652] Chaplain (CAPT) John E. Zoller, letter to RADM James E. Kelly, CHC, USN, Navy Chief of Chaplains, 19/JEZ:fdg, printed in Navy Chief of Chaplains, *Items of Interest*, 1 Nov 1968, Memo J111/32/68.

[3653] SGT Robert Morris, III MAF News Release No. 3247.

[3654] Martin J. Sexton, CO, 4th Marines, letter of 7 December 1968, Tab I to 4th Mar ComdC December, 1968, p. 1

[3655] XXIV Corps COC, Resume of Telephone Call, 012035H/Nov 1968, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 01/02 Nov 1968, #154. FSB GURKHA was activated 12 October, 4 miles northwest of FSB NANKING. [FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, October, 1968, p. 18.].

[3656] 3/4 ComdC, November, 1968.

[3657] XXIV Corps COC, Resume of Telephone Call 021945H/Nov 1968, in III MAF COC Journal and File, 02/03 Nov 1968 #131.

[3658] 3/4 ComdC, November, 1968.

[3659] 3rd MarDiv COC 021732Z/Nov68, Opn SCOTLAND II SITREP #797, Para 4.A.1.

[3660] 3rd MarDiv ComdC, November, 1968, Encl (1), p. 33.

nam, FSB ARGONNE (XD678572, at 1308 meters).[3661] *On 05 November, a patrol from C/1/4 found one body at XD931405, completely decomposed and fully clothed with flak jacket, rims of glasses, one Marine Corps gift pen, part of chain from dog tags and one cross, one stamp pad (Marine type) with initials and two letters of last name, and one wrist watch. Body was approximately 100 meters northeast of C-130 wreckage which had been there approximately 5 months.*[3662] *The following day, a C/1/4 patrol returned to the C-130 wreckage at XD931405 and picked up remains found by another patrol on 5 November. The patrol found dog tags of 2 men, one wallet with Geneva Convention Card and Marine Corps ID Card, one prescription label from medicine bottle with name, one map, two wrist watches, 3 rolls of film, 1 cigarette lighter, one empty body bag, one helmet with liner, 1 M-16 rifles, and one flamethrower with nozzle and hose. The following numbers were found on the tail section of the wreckage, "AF/054" in 6-inch black letters, followed by "590" in 12-inch white letters.*[3663]

Perhaps the helicopter wreck relates to activities that occurred about four years earlier. In April, 1964, the Signal Engineering Survey Unit (SESU) was organized with 5 officers and 152 enlisted Marines.[3664] *SESU consisted of a detachment of 1st Composite Radio Company (3 officers and 27 enlisted drawn from the 1st Radio Company, FMFPAC, and Headquarters Marine Corps, and was commanded by Maj Alfred M. Gray, Jr.*[3665]*, augmented by a 76-man infantry detachment from G/2/3, reinforced with an 81mm mortar section (2 mortars) commanded by 1/Lt Raymond J. Otlowski. SESU, designated Advisory Team One, was "..the first actual Marine ground unit to conduct independent operations in the Republic of Vietnam."*[3666] *Their base of operations, Tiger Tooth Mountain (Dent du Tigre, also known as Dong Voi Mep or Hill 1739, XD832543) is the highest terrain feature in northern I Corps, over a mile high at 5500 feet. After some preliminary reconnaissance and operations, on 13 June 1964, MAJ Gray, I enlisted men, plus several thousand pounds of equipment, were transported to Tiger Tooth LZ that had been hacked out of the jungled hilltops by ARVN soldiers. The area was violently inhospitable to the Marines, and as bad weather rolled into the area, despite maximum power, one Marine H-34D helicopter was unable to overcome reverse down drafts and forced into the trees, crashing and rolling over on its side.*[3667]

15 NOVEMBER 1968

[At 2000H, 14 November 1968, D/1/4 at an ambush position at XD754534 had one Marine of the ambush "dragged away by a carnivorous animal. Search was conducted under constant illumination for a period of some three hours with negative results. At 0930H [15 November], Co "D".. found remains at XD753536. Man had been attacked by carnivorous animals. Remains medevaced."[3668]**]**

24 NOVEMBER 1968

LARIMORE, PFC John Richard H&S/1/4

The mission of 1/4 in November, 1968, was to establish Fire Support Bases ARGONNE (XD676575) and ALPINE (XD758528) in the extreme northwest section of the old SCOTLAND AO, to conduct reconnaissance in force from these positions, deny terrain to the NVA, and locate units and supply caches.[3669] **On 21 November, B/1/4 located 5 hootches, a cave (4 ft. wide, 5 ft high and 25 meters deep containing 2500 pounds of rice, 75 pounds of corn, 75 pounds of tobacco, a sword, a spear, 2 crossbows, and 16 knives, at XD688620. On the same date they also discovered 600 NVA uniforms, all packaged, 16 medical units, 7 cases of medical supplies, 850 pounds of TNT, 50 pounds of Chinese C-4, and a case of 81mm mortar rounds.**[3670]

2/Lt Victor J. Ludlum, USMCR, Platoon Commander of B-2 of 1/4, was given the mission to move down a finger on which they had previously found an ammunition supply for bunkers. "My platoon moved out

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[3661] Martin J. Sexton, Letter of 7 December 1968, Tab I to 4th Mar ComdC December, 1968.

[3662] 1/4 ComdC, November, 1968, Encl (1), p. 5.

[3663] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[3664] Asst CoS Memo AO1a (JCSO-kn 001A32564, 13 Nov 1964 to CMC, Subj: USMC participation in Vietnam, Encl (1), p. 2.

[3665] Became Commandant of the Marine Corps some 2 ½ decades later.

[3666] Capt Robert H. Whitlow, *U. S. Marines in Vietnam, The Advisory and Combat Assistance Era, 1954-1964*, Washington, D.C.: HQMC, 1977, p. 139.

[3667] Command Diary, TE 79.3.3.6, 15 Apr – 9 Jul 1964, pp. 10, 11, 12; Whitlow, *op. cit.*, p. 139. In mid-July, a severe storm struck the outpost, blowing away tents and antennas, and on the 17th, an enemy force probed the Marine sector of the perimeter. No casualties were sustained, but the position had been compromised. "The threat really got bad up there, and there were a lot of indications they were going to come after us 'big time'.." [Conversation with General Alfred M. Gray, Jr., 25 April 1989]. MACV ordered SESU to withdraw operations from Tiger Tooth and by 22 July, all SESU personnel and equipment were moved from Khe Sanh to DaNang. [Command Diary, TE 79.3.3.6, 10 Jul-16Oct64, p. 2].

[3668] 1/4 ComdC, November, 1968, Encl (1), p. 7; S-3 Journal for 15 November 1968, Ser #3. The Coffelt database lists no Marine from D/1/4 as KIA on 15 November 1968.

[3669] Comments of LtCol George T. Sargent, HQMC Oral History Tape #3748. Sargent was CO of 1/4.

[3670] Comments of SSGT Paul F. Starrett, HQMC Oral History Tape #3748. Starrett was S-2 of 1/4.

on line with 1st Platoon and we checked out the finger, found several more bunkers and no new ammo caches. 2nd Platoon was on the left side of the trail, 1st Platoon on the right. All along the trail were small fighting holes about 2 x 2 and 3 feet deep covered over with camouflage. Off to the sides were bunkers, larger, fairly old. Some of them were 10 x 15, others 20 by 30 feet, a good 10 feet deep... We moved on down toward the stream bed... As we moved down and got off the finger [we] came into an area that had a high ridge line on the right and a good sized hill on the left.. and were fairly much in the open. We crossed the first small stream, then traveled another 150 meters or so along the stream bed.. At this point we had a S-3 Scout, Marine, along with a Vietnamese scout in the point, checking out the trail for fresh signs of NVA. The Marine scout went across the stream on the trail and found a fresh foot print of a bare foot... We continued to move the platoon across the stream. We had our point across.. which was this Marine scout [and] came to the hill where the trail went right up the side of the hill... The Marine scout was about 10 to 15 meters ahead of the next man in the column, checking out the area. As he moved up this trail, which was very steep, he moved up about 25 meters up this trail with the men following up behind him and all of a sudden the enemy opened up with automatic fire, semi-automatic fire, and threw a good 7 to 10 grenades. We believe the scout triggered this ambush prematurely because the killing zone only had 2 people in it at the time, and if the NVA had waited another minute or two, they would have had a good 8 to 10 people in the killing zone... The scout was killed immediately... He had been shot in the head and in the foot and it looked like he had quite a few rounds—like he had been hit by automatic fire in the back. That's what probably killed him"[3671]

The contact occurred at 1210H and at XD735633.[3672]

30 NOVEMBER 1968

BADER, SFC Arthur Edward, Jr.	**FOB-1**
FITTS, SSG Richard Allan	**FOB-1**
LA BOHN,SFC Gary Russell	**FOB-1**
MEIN, SFC Michael Hammond	**FOB-1**
SCHOLZ, SFC Klaus Dieter	**FOB-1**
STACKS, CAPT Raymond Clark	**FOB-1**
TOOMEY, MAJ Samuel Kamu	**FOB-1**

A CH-34A Vietnamese Air Force helicopter (#144653) in which this SOG team was flying at 4,000-ft. was struck by 37mm AA fire, went into a spin, crashed in a mass of flames, and exploded. From the time they were hit to the time of impact at XD515410 (just one KM north of Route 9), the aircraft was under observation and nobody was seen to exit the aircraft.[3673]

[*On 28 December 1968, Camp J. J. Carroll was deactivated in connection with the 3rd Marine Division's changed tactics from holding static positions to adopting a mobile posture. "The need for security at Camp Carroll would have tied down infantry units that can better operate in the field with swift, bold moves into suspected enemy areas."*[3674]]

01 JANUARY 1969

HALL, SSG James Michael	**RT Diamond Back**
HAWES, SP4 Wayne Lindsay	**RT Diamond Back**
MC KIBBAN, SSG Michael James	**RT Diamond Back**[3675]

"I had three killed west of the DMZ on New Year's Day of '69: SSGT James Michael Hall, SP4 Wayne Lindsay Hawes, and SSGT Michael James McKibban... Hawes was a Canadian. They were killed January 1st, 1969. They were just west of the DMZ right up on that big ridge that goes through there, a real high ridge. We discovered an oil fuel pipeline, and it was one of our real high priority areas. I guess every General in Saigon wanted a piece of the pipe for a paperweight. Before it was over with a lot of people and helicopters and everything else interdicted that pipeline which could have probably been done more effectively with TACAIR."[3676]

[*At the start of 1969, 3rd Marine Division under the command of Major General Raymond G. Davis (who had assumed command of the Division in May, 1968) had adopted a mobile strategy. No longer ensconced in defensive positions, the Division moved from defensive operations to more aggressive operations modeled after the*

[3671] Comments of 2/Lt Victor J. Ludlum, HQMC Oral History Tape #3748.

[3672] 1/4 ComdC, November, 1968, Encl (1), p. 10; S-3 Journal for 24 November 1968, Ser #5; Comments of SSGT Paul F. Starrett, Tape #3748, cited.

[3673] LTG James G. Cole, Letter of 28 June 1991 to Mr. Harve Saal. Remains were returned 26 March 1989 and identified 7 Feb 1990 except for Fitts, whose remains were identified 3 Feb 1990.

[3674] "Marines' Camp Carroll Becomes Deactivated," III MAF; *Sea Tiger* 5:1 (3 January 1969) 1.

[3675] McKibban is not included in the Coffelt database but is listed in the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Directory of Names*, Washington, D.C.: Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., second printing, December, 1982, p. 484. Harve Saal's 4-volume history of MACVSOG indicates "date unknown, January 1969, number and names of personnel unknown. [Saal, Harve, *SOG, MACV Studies and Observations Group (Behind Enemy Lines)*, Vol. III, *Legends*., Milwaukee, Wi: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1990, p. 352.

[3676] Conversation with James Storter, 9 April 1997. Storter was a Captain with SOG, in '68-'69 with CCN and '70-'71 with CCC, Kontum

I Air Cav and extensive use of helicopters.[3677] *The tactics depended on fire support bases (FSB) on key terrain features "..constructed approximately 8,000 meters apart with a 3,000-meter overshoot in order to cover enemy mortars" and provided bases from which infantry troops under the artillery fan could scour the local area.*[3678]

When the NVA planted their "liberation flag" on a flag pole on KSCB on 9 July 1968[3679] *as the Marines departed, only to have it ripped off of the pole by a soldier wrapping it around his arm and yanking it off while in a hovering UH-1H helicopter shortly afterwards. WO2 Thomas J. Harnisher of B Co., 229th Assault Helicopter Bn operating out of LZ SHARON had his planned SOG operation cancelled, but the Special Forces Captain added that the NVA were flying their flag on the KSCB, being the Commander of his section of birds, he launched to steal it. He was only 21 at the time;*[3680] *the actions/reaction became a parable of what was to occur at Khe Sanh in the following years. Within this "no man's land" US forces, NVA forces, US forces, NVA forces, alternatively reoccupied the land.*

On 02 January 1969, Operation DAWSON RIVER WEST was initiated (conducted 020600H/Jan69 – 191600H/Jan69 by 9th Marines together with 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 2nd ARVN Regiment.[3681] *9th Marines Regiment displaced to an area near the Laotian border west of the former KSCB. Teams from 3rd Reconnaissance Bn secured selected LZs and thus eliminated the need for pre-H-hour prep fires. The entire regiment plus supporting artillery made a simultaneous assault into multiple LZs, completing the assault phase in 3 hours, 50 minutes.*[3682] *Minimal enemy contact was encountered. Numerous small arms caches and various NVA munitions were uncovered near Lang Vei.*[3683] *No sizeable enemy concentrations or supplies were found in the Khe Sanh area. Results of the operation: 43 NVA KIA, 1 NVA POW, no friendly casualties.*[3684]

On 07 January 1969, E/2/9 revisited the Lang Vei Special Forces camp and at XD785361 found numerous ordnance along with 1 Army jeep, 2 Army 6x6 trucks and 1 bulldozer, all destroyed.[3685] *Capt J. D. Ward's Marines of E/2/9 thoroughly searched the area for mines and an intelligence team searched the former camp. Marines stacked all the ordnance in two bunkers, cleared the area, and exploded the munitions. Their mission completed, the Marines departed Lang Vei.*[3686]]

03 JANUARY 1969

HOLDER, PFC Carl Lewis H/2/9

At 2230H in the vicinity of XD712388 (about 2 clicks NE of Lao Bao), PFC Holder was accidentally shot twice in his chest in an ambush site and DOW.[3687]

04 JANUARY 1969

ABOLINS, PFC Janis C/1/4

On 03 January 1969 at 1035H, a patrol from C/1/4 was cutting its way through the brush when the point man detonated a booby trap device resulting in 1 KIA and 1 WIA (evacuated).[3688]

14 JANUARY 1969

SHOCK, CPL Jack Dean H&S/1/4

[*During January, 1969, 1/4 suffered 3 KIA and 18 WIA.*[3689]]

[3677] Smith, Charles R., *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, High Mobility and Standdown, 1969*, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1988, p. 15.

[3678] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[3679] *Su Doan 304 (Ky Su) (Tap II)* [*304th Division (Chronology) (Vol 2)*, Hanoi: Nha Xuat Ban Quan Nhan Dan [People's Army Publishing House], 1990, p. 116.

[3680] Thomas J. Harnisher, letter of 4 July 2000 (printed in Khe Sanh Veterans *Red Clay* 47 (Fall, 2000) 17-19; Conversation with Thomas J. Harnisher, 13 March 2005.

[3681] 9th Mar OpO 1-69 (Operation DAWSON RIVER WEST) in 9th Mar ComdC Dec68, gives the task organization as 9th Mar and all three of its battalions plus C/3rd Eng Bn and Dets from 7th ITT, 3rd SP and 1st MP. On D-Day, 1/9 assaulted LZ Bagpipe (XD692445), LZ Copper (XD706440) and LZ Shenandoah (XD688420); 2/9 assaulted into LZ Rick (XD719380) and LZ Crystal (XD754367), and 3/9 provided security for FSB Cates and Hills 691 and 950; 9th Mar ComdC January, 1969.

[3682] 9th Mar ComdC January, 1969, Encl (1), p. II-1.

[3683] Comments of Col Robert H. Barrow, HQMC Oral History Tape #3844.

[3684] Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[3685] Ordnance included 6 RPG rounds with boosters, 1 50mm mortar base plates, 1 3.5 rocket launcher, 2 3.5 rounds, 20 M-79 rounds, 23 60mm HE rounds, 5 60mm illum rounds, 3 82mm rounds, 1000 rounds of .30 cal, 22 106mm RR rounds, 200 .50 cal rounds, 3 ChiCom grenades, 1 NVA hell box. [9th Mar ComdC, January, 1969, Encl (1), p. III-7].

[3686] LCPL Bob Kerr, III MAF News Release No. 120-69, 15 January 1969; printed in III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 5:5 (31 January 1969) 3.

[3687] 9th Mar ComdC, January, 1969, Encl (1), p. III-5

[3688] 3rd MarDiv ComdC, January, 1969, Encl (1), p. 7. The Coffelt database does not indicate any KIA from 1/4 for 3 January but does list 1 KIA from C/1/4 for 4 Jan. The Coffelt database does, however, list a LCPL John Robert Kunkel, KIA 3 January 1969, unit: III MAF. The 1/4 Command Chronology for January, 1969, indicates there were 3 KIA from that battalion during January, 1969. Since the Coffelt database lists several with units of "III MAF," it is not possible to determine which ones were with 1/4.

[3689] 1/4 ComdC January, 1969, Encl (1), p. 25.

08 FEBRUARY 1969

HOWARD, PFC Rodger Dale D/1/4

At 1225 on 7 February 1969, the 3rd Platoon of D/1/4 was inserted at XD864577 and began moving to FSB NEVILLE (XD8257) with power sources. The weather prevented resupply by helicopter.[3690] At 0945H on 08 February D-3 made contact at XD832580 and at 1608 the same patrol made contact with 4 NVA resulting in 1 KIA, 3 WIA and 2 NVA KIA.[3691]

24 FEBRUARY 1968

WEBER, PFC Joseph Alan B/1/4

At 2320H, an explosion of a M-26 grenade in the 1/4 transient area killed one and injured 13 others.[3692]

25 FEBRUARY 1969

BARRON, CPL Jeffrey Michael	G/3/12[3693]
BROGAN, PFC Robert Henry	H&S/2/4
COFFEY, PFC Robert Allen	E/2/4[3694]
DAVIS, HM2 Kenneth	3/12
DICKENS, PFC Odell	H&S/2/4
FLINT, PFC Raymond Lloyd	H/2/4
FORSBERG, PFC Douglas Bruce	H&S/2/4
GARCIA, LCPL Steven Vargas	H/2/4
GASTON, PFC Juan	H&S/2/4[3695]
GILLIAM, LCPL Kenneth Ray	H//3/12[3696]
HUNT, 2/Lt William Howard	E/2/4
JENKINS, PFC Michael Lee	E/2/4
KELLUM, LCPL Norman Wade	B/3/12
LAMARR, PFC Walter Loren	H/2/4
LEWIS, LCPL Donald Randell	H/3/12
LOGAN, LCPL James Dwight	E/2/4
LYONS, PFC Marion Wayne	H/3/12
MACON, PFC Samuel Cornelius	H/2/4[3697]
MC GRATH, LCPL Thomas Howard	3/12
MILLER, CPL Tommy Neal	E/2/4[3698]
PESCHEL, PFC James Douglas	H/3/12
PRZYBLINSKI, LCPL Gerald	H/3/12
RAMSEY, PFC Randolph Raymond	E/2/4
ROE, PFC Royce Evert	H/2/4[3699]
RUTGERS, PFC David Lynn	H/3/12
SAUNDERS, LCPL Bruce Allan	E/2/4
SEEL, HM2 Walter Phillip, Jr.	?[3700]
SHARP, PFC Allen Morris	E/2/4
SIKORSKI, LCPL Larry Joseph	H/3/12
SMITH, PFC Willie Franklin	H/2/4
TRAIL, PFC Robert Hill III	H&S/2/4
TUCKER, PFC James Eric	H&S/2/4
WALSH, HN Donald Kevin	H&S/2/4
WELDY, PFC George W Jr.	H&S/2/4
ZAPPIA, PFC Michael Lee	H/2/4
ZAWADZKI, CPL Gerald David	H/2/4

FSB NEVILLE was defended by three guns of G Battery, 3/12, and Marine infantrymen of G Co reinforced with two platoons of H Co, 2/4.

The Commanding Officer of 2/4, LtCol Joseph Edward Hopkins, described FSB NEVILLE: "NEVILLE is a very rocky piece of ground and digging bunkers down into it is extremely difficult, but through a combination of digging and piling rocks and filling sand bags with rocks, we managed to get enough bunkers which were sunk low enough into the ground so that they offered very poor targets for RPG rounds and for the traditional sapper charges, large satchel charges and quarter and half-pound blocks of TNT with which the average sapper attack wreaks so much destruction."[3701] The surrounding terrain consisted of "high ridges, very sharp ridges with a very small amount of navigable terrain on top, extremely thick brush, and at least double and quite often triple canopy on all the mountains and down in the stream beds."[3702] The weather also played a significant factor; low-lying clouds socked-in NEVILLE much of the time. There were 3 days in which the FSB was completely shrouded by cloud cover.[3703]

3690 1/4 ComdC February, 1969, Encl (1), p. 4.
3691 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
3692 1/4 ComdC, February, 1969, Encl (1), pp. 7 & 17.
3693 The Casualty Card in HQMC Historical Center, Wash, D.C., indicates G Battery, 3/12. Listed as C/3/12 in the Coffelt database.
3694 The Casualty Card in HQMC Historical Center, Wash, D.C., indicates E/2/4. Listed as III MAF in the Coffelt database.
3695 The Casualty Card in HQMC Historical Center, Wash, D.C., indicates H&S/2/4. Listed as III MAF in the Coffelt database.
3696 The Casualty Card in HQMC Historical Center, Wash, D.C., indicates H Battery, 3/12. Listed as 3/12 in the Coffelt database.
3697 The Casualty Card in HQMC Historical Center, Wash, D.C., indicates H/2/4. Listed as III MAF in the Coffelt database.
3698 The Casualty Card in HQMC Historical Center, Wash, D.C., indicates E/2/4. The Coffelt database indicates III MAF.
3699 The Casualty Card in HQMC Historical Center, Wash, D.C., indicates H/2/4. The Coffelt database indicates III MAF.
3700 Indicated in Coffelt database as attached to 3/5. However, the article by Janie Blankenship, "Hell Rains Down on Russell and Neville," *VFW* 95:5 (January, 2008), p. 46, indicates HM2 Walter Phillip Seel, Jr., as receiving a Silver Star Medal posthumously for actions on FSB NEVILLE on 25 Feb 1969.
3701 Comments of LtCol Joseph Edward Hopkins, HQMC Oral History Tape #4341.
3702 *Ibid.*
3703 *Ibid.*

The 6 of Co H, Capt. John Knight, remembers the night on NEVILLE as something "right out of a horror movie with fog drifting through the trees."[3704]

At 1730H on 24 February 1969, H/2/4 (-)[3705] on FSB NEVILLE (XD8257) reported 30 NVA proceeding east towards FSB Neville in the vicinity of XD816572. The NVA appeared to be carrying SKS and AK-47 rifles and light machine guns. At 2330H, H/2/4 reported receiving small arms fire from the southeast of their position on FSB Neville. By 0001H, 25 February, the NVA (from the 246th Regiment)[3706] fired 82mm mortars on the position followed by an assault by an unknown size unit at 0100 firing small arms, RPGs and ChiCom grenades thrown into the Marines' position from the south and east after trying to draw fire by making a great deal of noise outside the perimeter with wooden sticks and metal banging against rocks. At 0215, contact between the Co H CP and the artillery battery CP was lost, and at 0255 the NVA began the brunt of their assault on the western side of the perimeter. As their mortar fire died, ground troops assaulted the perimeter with satchel charges as they progressed. Comm with H-1 was lost at 0300, and at 0325 the action died down until 0400 when Co H began to receive small arms fire which continued until 0700. H/2/4 was able to consolidate, gather its WIA, redistribute ammunition, and reestablish its perimeter. NVA bodies were found with satchel charges strapped to their backs and with opium in their possession, apparently prepared to destroy themselves in suicidal attempts to seize the hill. Two wounded NVA deliberately blew themselves up to avoid capture. The small detachment that used a radio direction finder had destroyed all their gear and equipment with a thermite grenade. At 0855 a medevac of WIA and KIA commenced; Co H had suffered 11 KIA and 42 WIA (29 evacuated).[3707] When casualties of the small 2-man radio detachment (which was overrun by NVA sappers in the initial assault, and other attachments are included, the total is 14 USMC KIA and 29 WIA on NEVILLE.[3708]

During this attack of H/2/4 on FSB Neville, HOTEL Battery, 3/12, on FSB RUSSELL (XD9159) fired in support of FSB NEVILLE. FSB RUSSELL was defended by platoons of Companies E, F, and K of 2/4 and H and mortar batteries of the 12th Marines, plus a detachment of 1st Searchlight Battery. A Navy Corpsman, Rich Woy, attached to E-3 on RUSSELL had just returned to his bunker and recalls Lt. Hunt whispering at the opening of his hooch in the pitch black darkness: "Be quiet, there's gooks right outside the front door."[3709] Then, RUSSELL, manned by Co E/2/4, began receiving incoming mortars at 0350H followed by a sapper attack on the northeastern portion of the perimeter with satchel charges. The enemy swiftly breached the perimeter under cover of mortars and hit all the main CPs simultaneously (Company CP, 81mm mortar FDC, artillery FDC, and the platoon CPs).

Charles R. "Rick" Davis, on FSB RUSSELL remembers the night: "I ended up going into a bunker with a kid ..., a kid I had looked up to—tough, LA-street kid, and he immediately started screaming for his mother and climbed underneath a bottom rack. The only thing that saved me and him was this doorway to our bunker [which] had a blanket over it. They knew we were in there, of course, and they tried to throw these satchel charges in. It was dark. The satchel charge hit the blanket and fell down and blew up. They tried about 3 times, came around the back of the bunker where I was sitting in a corner. I was ready for them. I figured I'd just get a couple. And I heard them digging under the back wall (made of rock and dirt-filled 105 wood ammo crates)[3710], so I got on the other side, and they blew the wall and it collapsed, and they left us alone. Then the suppression fire from the Rock Pile started. They were off a little ways. They got a bunker right next to us, and we took a direct hit with a mortar right on top of the bunker and survived."[3711]

All communication with FSB Russell was lost until 0415 when it was reestablished and the company commander called in a heavy artillery ring of steel around the position. At 0535, the NVA force held half the inside of the position and fighting consisted of hand-to-hand combat on an individual basis. At daybreak, the few surviving NVA withdrew from the perimeter and Co E/2/4 began to consolidate, redistribute ammunition, and gather its 38 WIA and 18 KIA.[3712] Of the 60 Marines of H Battery, 3/12, 8 wee KIA and another 25-30 WIA.[3713] 25 NVA bodies were bound within FSB Russell, identified as members of the 27th NVA Regiment.[3714]

[3704] Quoted in Blankenship, Janie, "Hell Rains Down on Russell and Neville," *VFW* 95:5 (January, 2008), p. 43.
[3705] 3rd platoon of H/2/4 occupied Hill 950.
[3706] Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
[3707] 2/4 ComdC February, 1969, Encl (1), p. 23.
[3708] Blankenship, Jamie, "Hell Rains Down on Russell and Neville,"*VFW* 95:5 (Januay, 2008), p. 46.
[3709] Blankenship, Janie, "Hell Rains Down on Russell and Neville," *VFW* 95:5 (January, 2008), p. 42.
[3710] Conversation with Charles R. Davis, 19 February 1995.
[3711] Conversation with Charles R. Davis, 23 September 1994.
[3712] 2/4 ComdC February, 1969, Encl (1), p. 24. Blankenship lists 24 American KIA (15 infantry of 2/4 and 9 artillerymen of 3/12 and 77 WIA. [Blankenship, Janie, "Hell Rains Down on Russell and Neville," *VFW* 95:5 (January, 2008), p. 43].
[3713] Statement by Ken Heins in: Blankenship, Janie, "Hell Rains Down on Russell and Neville," *VFW* 95:5 (January, 2008), p. 43. Heins is listed as President of the LZ Russell Association.
[3714] Comments of LtCol Joseph Edward Hopkins, HQMC Oral History Tape #4341.

By 0605, as consolidation of the two positions began, there were only 2 officers and 1 Staff NCO left from the original complement.[3715]

Although WIA and KIA were successfully evacuated from FSB Neville on the 25th, the NVA moved in 6 or 7 mortars ringing the position and every time a helicopter attempted to come into the FSB, these placed a heavy barrage of rounds making it impossible for the helicopters to land. There were no additional troops available other than those manning the FSB, now greatly weakened by the attack,[3716] and unfavorable weather precluded resupply. FSB Neville was closed off for ten days, while FSB Russell was relieved by K/3/4.[3717] In order to break the siege, Companies F/2/4 (which had been re-opening FSB Alpine, XD758528) and G/2/4 (on FSB Cates, XD926443) commenced a 6-day overland march up the Lang Ho Valley through "a piece of terrain that was thickly jungle-vegetated, high mountains, negative trails, no LZs, and heavy enemy activity throughout."[3718] They successfully reached FSB Neville, broke a 10-day siege, and then moved out in the offensive.[3719]

[*The battle of 25 February 1969 launched Operation PURPLE MARTIN*[3720] *which commended 27 February 1969 (and terminated 08 May 1969), conducted by 4th Marine Regiment supported by 3/12 artillery and "A" Company, 3rd Engineer Bn.*[3721] *The AO was basically the SCOTLAND AO north of Route 9 and south of the DMZ.*[3722] *The 3 battalions of 4th Marines operated within their own AOs: 1/4, to the west, operated from FSB ARGONNE (XD675572), 2/4 from FSB NEVILLE, and 3/4 operated in the eastern area of the PURPLE MARTIN AO out of LZ MACK and LZ SIERRA.*[3723]

01 March 1969

DELGADO, LCPL Raymond Rodriguez	**C/1/4**
JMAEFF, CPL George Victor	**C/1/4**
MENNINGER, PFC Robert Patrick	**C/1/4**

The NVA had started their Winter-Spring Offensive on the night of 24 February and the 4th Marine Regiment, fanned out on FSBs just under the DMZ to the Laotian border, was deployed to stop their new push.[3724] Action started on 01 March near LZ MACK, an old firebase abandoned for about a month (XD9661, Hill 484), at 0430 as C/1/4 received 4 rounds of 60mm mortar in their perimeter causing 3 WIA (evacuated). The following morning, C/1/4 commenced their assault of LZ MACK. It was known that the NVA had heavily fortified the position and over 3000 rounds were fired in prep for the assault, but as the assault commenced, it was apparent the NVA occupied the bunker labyrinth and was determined to hold. 1/Lt Herron, CO of C/1/4, placed his base of fire on LZ AMY (XD973615) and used 2 platoons in the assault. Enroute, the assaulting platoons encountered numerous booby traps consisting of ChiCom grenades and DH-10 claymores detonated by trip wire; these booby traps were to inflict numerous casualties throughout Operation PURPLE MARTIN. Following a mortar barrage, the platoons of C/1/4 withdrew to LZ AMY for the night and Co L/3/4 was moved to LZ AMY as a reserve force. The NVA 82mm and 60mm mortars continued to fire during the withdrawal, and C/1/4 suffered 2 KIA and 21 WIA (evacuated).[3725]

03 March 1969

ANGEL, PFC Michael Eugene	**C/1/4**
CROWDER, PFC Harold Edward	**L/3/4**
GODING, PFC Robert Earle	**C/1/4**
HEISER, LCPL John Louis	**H&S/1/4**
LANE, LCPL Austin Clifford	**L/3/4**
LYNN, PFC Roy Eugene	**C/1/4**
MANGOLD, PFC Leo Joseph	**C/1/4**
NINOW, HM3 William Charles	**H&S/3/4**
RODRIGUES, SGT Joe G Jr.	**L/3/4**
RUDD, HM2 Donald Lee	**L/3/4**
SCHAEFER, PFC Thomas Koenig	**C/1/4**
SCHULTZ, PFC Gerald Wayne	**G/2/4**
SHAUM, PFC Ray Thomas Jr.	**C/1/4**

[3715] 3rd MarDiv ComdC, February, 1969, Encl (1), p. 10.
[3716] *Ibid.*
[3717] Comments of Maj Larry R. Ogle, HQMC Oral History Tape #4341. Maj Ogle was the S-3 of 2/4.
[3718] *Ibid.*
[3719] *Ibid.*
[3720] Comments of LtCol Joseph Edward Hopkins, HQMC Oral History Tape #4341.
[3721] Comments of Maj George X. McKenna, HQMC Oral History Tape #4341. Maj McKenna was S-3, 4th Marine Regiment. Originally, the operation was named MASSACHUSETTS BAY. On 28 Feb, Opn SCOTLAND II was terminated and SITREPs were prepared on a 4th Marines operation without code name, involving 2/4 and 3/4 while ¼ continued MASSACHUSETTS BAY. On 02 March, 4th Marines was notified that Operation MASSACHUSETTS BAY was changed to PURPLE MARTIN and on 11 April 1969, 4th Marines was notified that the unnamed operation of the 4th Marines was now considered part of Operation PURPLE MARTIN. [CO, 4th Marines, letter of 4 July 1969, to CG, 3rd MarDiv, in 4th Mar ComdC May, 1969, Encl (7), AAR Operation PURPLE MARTIN.
[3722] Map in FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, March, 1969, p. 6.
[3723] Comments of Maj George X. McKenna, HQMC Oral History Tape #4341.
[3724] 4th Mar, AAR Operation PURPLE MARTIN, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[3725] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

TAYLOR, PFC Philip Joseph C/1/4

On 02 March 1969, the action diminished to sniper fire and occasional 60mm and 82mm mortar fire, causing 2 WIA (minor) for L/3/4 and 2 WIA (evacuated) and 50 WIA (minor) to C/1/4.[3726]

At 0430H on 3 March 1969, the perimeter of C/1/4 and L/3/4 received a ground attack at their north and northeast sector. The enemy penetrated their defenses and inflicted casualties from the rear on personnel in their fighting holes. When the firing started, the ambush on the northeast finger tried to return to the lines. However, several NVA had positioned themselves between the ambush and the lines and the ambush was hit with small arms fire causing all members to be either KIA or WIA. The two companies suffered 9 KIA and 6 WIA.[3727]

05 MARCH 1969

BRAKE, LCPL Boyd Lawerence	**C/1/4**
DE WILDE, PFC Peter F Jr.	**C/3rd Recon**
DUSEAU, PFC Richard Frank	**I/3/4**
FERGUSON, 2/Lt David Charles	**C/3rd Recon**
JAY, CPL Robert Vern	**I/3/4**
JENKINS, PFC Robert Henry Jr.	**C/3rd Recon**
LANE, PFC Gerald Bruce	**I/3/4**
THOMAS, CPL Charles Wayne	**C/1/4**

At 051215H, I/3/4 (at XD964627) received 82mm mortar fire resulting in 1 KIA. At 051430H, at the same location, I/3/4 received additional 82mm mortar fire causing another KIA.[3728] At 1500H, following an extensive artillery prep, C/1/4 assaulted LZ MACK with 2 platoons, securing the hilltop with 8 WIA. After the position had been taken, however, they suffered 2 KIA due to RPG fire from several NVA who had slipped into a draw south of the hill.[3729]

Fred Ostrom describes the participation of recon at the battle of ARGONNE:[3730]

"Originally, 2-C-1 was fragged for this mission. P.L. CPL Steve Lowery wanted to take a M60 so he requested additional men. 3-C-1 was selecfdted and Fred Ostrom, Robert Jenkins, Jr., Larry Harrod, and Danny Tirado came along. 2-C-1 included CPL Steve Lowery, Peter DeWilde, Jr., Eddie Bridges, J.J. Jackson, Jr., and Doc Larry Turner. Darrell Eriksen (SGT) caqme along because he was on an earlier team that was shot out of the LZ and Lt Dave Ferguson also accompanied as did Doc "Rock" Bradford. This was an extremely hot location. Prior to March 3rd, three teams attempted to get in but were shot out with heavy SAW. We were supposed to set up on the old Firebase and run patrols off the hill, gathering info on enemy activity—numbers, types of weaponry, etc.

"March 3rd we were inserted onto the hill with no problems in the late afternoon. We set up at the highest point of the hill. They had worked the hill over heavily just before we came in. We had a few hours before sunset and beefed up our positions (fighting holes) in preparation for the night. Lowery set it up like 6 hands on a clock with 2 men per hole.

"Even though Lowery was outranked by Ferguson, Bradford and Ericksen, he was in charge of the mission. Normally I was the primary radioman, Steve used his operator from 2-C-1 for comm.. I was asst. machine gunner with Robert Jenkins, which was kind of funny because I was a 30-day wonder through ITR. I had never fired the M60. I got OJT that night.

"I don't know what month 2-C-1's guys were in country or the guys from H&S, but [of] 3-C-1, I had 7 months in country, Robert had a little under 12 mos., Danny had about 11 mos. and Larry Harrod 9-10 mos. We had been together quite awhile.

"Everythkoing was pretty quiet the first 4-5 hours. But about 2 AM, March 4th, we started getting movement in the wire. The base was basically two tiers. We had jungle on 3 sides with a fair slope and maybe 700-800 yards from the LZ up to our position. We had trip flares going off on 360°. We started taking small arms fire and grenades. We opened up with our weapons, plus M79 and M60 as well as Claymores. We also responded with a fire mission on our perimeter. I can't remember how big the guns were, but I speculate they were 155s, plus we had an illumination fire mission going as well as HE. The firefight lasted about an hour with no casualties to us, and we couldn't confirm any casualties on their side. We later learned we were up against a reinforced platoon of NVA. You could see the Laotian border from our pos and we were 3-4 clicks from the DMZ. The rest of the night was uneventful, and we took turns throughout the night on watch and sleeping.

"We awoke the morning of the 4th at daybreak had breakfast and then started reinforcing our fighting holes. Digging in and piling sandbagts. After lunch we went down into the wire and set up a mess of trip flares and booby traps as well as claymores. Lots of them. The day was very uneventful, although I'm sure there were eyes on us.

"We had dinner and set up watch. We had also built a FO bunker at the top of the hill overlooking the LZ. It was a gradual slope wide open for hundreds of yards. Darrell Ericksen took first watch as FO in the bunker. We had called in the numbers for arty, and settled in. It was extremely quiet through until about 3 AM March 5th. FO came into the main perimeter letting us know of

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[3726] *Ibid.*
[3727] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[3728] 1/4 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 3; 4th Mar, AAR Operation PURPLE MARTIN, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[3729] 4th Mar, AAR Operation PURPLE MARTIN, *op. cit.*, p. 14..
[3730] Fred Ostrom, "Battle at FSB ARGONNE, March 3-5, 1969, in his letter of 29 June 2006.

movement in the LZ, and we again had movement in the wire.

"This time they opened up with CS and started in with SAW and grenades. We started blowing the claymores and boobytraps as the fire escalated. Robert and I were pouring fire down one of the steep slopes and it didn't take them long to zero in on us. We called in arty on the coordinates we called in earlier and returned heavy fire down from all positions. That was when 1 ChiCom came into me and Roberts' position. Robert jumped up, shoved me out of the way, and dovered the grenade with his body. He absorbed the majority of the blast, succumbing from the wounds (heavy) he received from the blast. I was badly wounded in my left arm and hand. It turned out I was the most severely wounded person with my arm broke in 4 places and my hand also torn up from the wrist. Steve called arty in closer and got PUFF going, laying fire in almost on top of us. We were taking heavy fire 360°. Lt Ferguson was killed instantly by a grenade as well as Pete Dewilde who had been lobbing [M]-79 rounds down on the gooks. A NVA worked his way into our perimeter and shot and killed Pete. He also wounded Lowery who was busy adjusting arty and PUFF and had called in close air support still very close to oru perimeter. After wounding Steve, the NVA zeroed in on me, wounding me in my right thigh. I was told he was fixing to shoot at me again when J.J. dispatched him. Eddie Bridges Tirado and J.J. Jackson was also wounded. At the end of the confronteation we had 3 KIA and contrary to the after action reports we had seven wounded. I think they didn't count some of the guys because they didn't go to 3rd Med. Finally about sunrise Steve called in birds to give support as well as medevac birds. The more severely wounded were loaded on ponchos and loaded on the birds. Steve refused to be loaded on until all of the other wounded were on the birds as well as our KIAs and he was loaded last. The medevacs came in under heavy fire and evacuated the whole team.

"38 years later it's still a wonder how any of us survived the battle. Personally I think it was because most of the team had T.I. (time in country) and everyone did their job above and beyond. I still can't understand why they never used their mortars on the medevacs. Or on us. They had us completely surrounded. I think we did a lot of damage to their numbers and they didn't have enough people left to overrun us.

"That night there were heroes all over the place. Later on 1 MOH was awarded, 1 Navy Cross (Lowery). DeWilde and Bradford and Ericksen received Silver Stars. I think 3 Bronze Stars and 12 Purple Hearts. I am extremely pround to have served with this group of guys. For a team that was pretty much thrown together at the last minute, we meshed and we survived.

"There is not a day goes by where I don't think of Robert or my other teammates."

In a follow-up letter, Fred Ostrom also writes:[3731]

"The first thing was: why were they so adamant about putting a recon squad 3 other times when that location was so hot? None of the other three teams (7-man teams) were ever able to set foot on the deck. SGT Darrell Eriksen was in the team before ours who were shot out, knowing the difficulties it seems to me, instead of putting an extended team (ours) they should have committed the grunts in force. By the time we came in I think the gooks saw we weren't going to stop trying to insert, so they laid back, letting us land and then attack us at the weak moments of a recon mission, try to overrun the team at night. I'm sure they had plenty of scouts out to gather information on our strength and weaponry, and of course our set up on the top of the hill as well as our defenses (claymores etc) and the way our positions of our fighting holes. The first night they were just checking our reactions and our strengths and weaknesses. We lost no one to injury or death, but although we really didn't have any confirms, with our support and the way we set up and fought, I'm sure we had inflicted casualties.

"The next day we strengthened our fighting positions, laid out more trip flares, claymores and booby traps, which was done all in the open, so they knew what was awaiting them. They decided to come at us in force. Obviously the M-60 stayed one place too long because they zeroed in close almost from the beginning, especially with the tear gas and ChiComs, as Robert and I were the first to fall.

"One thing that's always bothered me was this was a reinforced platoon, maybe bigger, which as you probably know included mortar teams. They had us pinned on a 360 at the top of the hikll with no escape and they never implemented their mortars. Whether we got them early with our major support of what. They never really put a whole lot of men on the attack after the initial attack, and when we were being medevaced they never uwsed the mortars to stop the birds which would have been the smart thing to do.

"We were given a few confirmed kills, but I think we must have really inflicted great harm to their troops, so much that they couldn't really close the deal and overrun us, because there were only 3 of our men not wounded, and 7 in serious stages of hurt, none of them our corpsmen. We for some reason lucked out, and I had Turner and Bradford, 2 solid battle-tested veteran corpsmen that were not only fighting but looking after the seven wounded. Talk about above and behond!! Obviously they had a lot to do woith 9 of us coming off that h ill alive...

"There are at least 2 givens that night. The first was God was looking after us, because everything that happeneed pointed towards none of us surviving. Secondly, the professionalism and courage of DOCKLEAF that

[3731] Letter from Fred Ostrom, 12 July 2006.

night had everything to do with our survival (as well as our support and medevacs).

"Something that should be remembered is the team was thrown together the night before we left—3 men came from H&S, 5 from 2C1 Lowery's team and 4 from my team, 3C1. None of us ever worked together other than the guys in their own teams, yet we melded together perfectly when the Sierra hit the fan."

Officially, team DOCKLEAF (2-C-1 and 3-C-1 of 3rd Reconnaissance Bn), fought off a reinforced NVA platoon during the early morning hours of 05 March while patrolling FSB ARGONNE. 3 Marines of the patrol were KIA and 2 were WIA (PFC Daniel Tirado, later KIA on 7 May 1969, and LCPL Larry Harrod later KIA from PTSD). The other members of the patrol made it out safely.[3732]

PFC Jenkins was later awarded the Medal of Honor (Posthumous). From his Citation: "PFC Jenkins and another Marine quickly moved into a two-man fighting emplacement, and as they boldly delivered accurate machine-gun fire against the enemy, a North Vietnamese soldier threw a hand grenade into a friendly emplacement. Fully realizing the inevitable results of his actions, PFC Jenkins quickly seized his comrade, and pushing the man to the ground, he leaped on top of the Marine to shield him from the explosion. Absorbing the full impact of the detonation, PFC Jenkins was seriously injured and subsequently succumbed to his wounds."[3733]

Decades past, and Fred Ostrom, who survived this battle, finally visited Jenkins' gravesite, "..a small black cemetery way out in the boonies. I couldn't believe a Medal of Honor recipient was buried in such an overgrown, disheveled dump. When I returned home, I started out with pleas to refurbish his grave and cemetery. With a letter to the Palattea, Florida, newspaper, I started out to shame the local people into helping out, and with the help of fellow reconners, Senator John McCain, the Director of the MOH Society, and the State Director of the V.A., we got the project moving. About 2 years later, I went down to Interlachen, Fl., for the rededication of Jenkin's grave and cemetery. They replaced all of his stones. It was beautiful! We now have a group of ROTC kids keeping it up. You probably wonder why I do all of this? Well, I'm the Marine who was in the machinegun hole with Robert when a grenade came in. He shoved me out of the way and covered the grenade with his body. He is the main reason I'm still around. As a matter of fact, he's also the reason my son and daughter are alive as well as my grandsons and grand-daughter... There isn't a day that goes by I don't think of him... He was a very devout Christian. A nicer guy you'll never know."[3734]

06 March 1969

ACUNIA, LCPL Edgar	A/1/4
WINGENBACH, PFC Glenn S Jr.	L/3/4

At 0930H, L/3/4 had an engineer team on LZ MACK (XD960624). While disarming a DH-10 claymore mine, the mine was detonated resulting in 2 KIA and 2 WIA (evacuated).[3735]

07 March 1969

ARROYO, PFC Ramon Jaime	H/2/3
GREENWOOD, PFC Dale Edward	H/2/3
MC DONALD, PFC Lewis Levi	H/2/3

Co H/2/3 at FSB Cunningham, while boarding a CH-46 helicopter, was hit by an undetermined explosion causing 3 KIA.[3736]

David Brombaugh recalls: "I was in the rear to go home with Peck when this happened. Peck IDd them and I was sent to meds and graves looking for a man named J. Butler who was missing from this 3-7-69 incident. He was blown down the hill from the blast, knocked-out, and sent to an Army hospital as the Army was also on CUNNINGHAM. He made it back to Quang Tri as I returned from the search."[3737]

09 March 1969

FRANCIS, PFC Lindell	H&S/2/3
GONANO, PFC James Martin ?	III MAF
GRASSIA, PFC Joseph Jr. ?	III MAF[3738]
REX, CAPT Robert F.	23rd TASS
WALTERS, SSGT Tim Leroy	MACV

Platoon G-1 of 2/4, searching the area around XD824606 began to take small arms fire and RPGs. Sporadic fighting continued all day. The remainder of the Company (-) reinforced G-1 and attempted to search the area at 1600, receiving small arms fire, RPG rounds

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[3732] 4th Mar, AAR Operation PURPLE MARTIN, *op. cit.*, p. 14, Para. u.; Article, "God Bless Them All," in 3rd Recon Bn Association, *Harborsite*, p. 9. The others who were not WIA or KIA: Fred Ostrom, CPL Steve Lowery, SGT Darrell Eriksen, Doc Rock Bradford, Doc Larry Turner, PFC J. J. Jackson, and PFC Eddie Bridges; Letter from George G. Neville, Jr., 2 June 1998.

[3733] Contained in Jordan, Kenneth N., Sr., *Heroes of Our Time*, Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer Military/Aviation History, 1994, p. 268.

[3734] Letter from Fred D. Ostrom, 29 June 2006.

[3735] *Ibid.*, p. 14; 1/4 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 12.

[3736] 2/3 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 10.

[3737] Letter from David Brombaugh, 3 March 2006. David provided the names of the KIA.

[3738] Although GONANO and GRASSIA are listed as members of "III MAF" in the Coffelt database, they are the only two that could possibly be the 2 KIA of G/2/4.

and mortar rounds, resulting in 1 KIA.[3739] The patrol suffered 2 KIA and 6 WIA (evacuated) in a firefight in the vicinity of LZ CATAPULT (XD825616), a friendly Fire Support Base located 4,000 meters from FSB NEVILLE that had been abandoned earlier in the year, subsequently occupied by the NVA. The NVA used claymore mines with small arms at 10-15 meters.[3740]

On 9 March 1969, CAPT Robert F. Rex, pilot, and SSGT Tim Leroy Walters, MACVSOG observer, were flying an 02A aircraft (#67-21425) on a combat support mission over Laos. Another aircraft (identified only as KNIFE 55) reported that CAPT Rex's aircraft crashed due to unknown causes in the vicinity of XD524658 at approximately 1150H. A ground team inspected the wreckage and reported that both of the occupants were dead. Hostile fire, however, prevented them from recovering the remains. An aircraft engine was on top of SSGT Walters.[3741] The area of the crash is approximately 10 miles west of the DMZ,[3742] the location of the B5-T8 Front Headquarters of the NVA during the 1968 siege battle of Khe Sanh. Remains of SSGT Walters were discovered during JTF-FA investigations in early 1999 and positively identified.[3743]

[*During early March, 1969, reconnaissance teams reported a major increase in truck and tracked vehicle activity along Route 926, a road in the southern portion of the former SCOTLAND AO; these reports were reinforced by electronic sensor reports which reflected the introduction of tracked vehicle units into South Vietnam by the invading North Vietnam Army units.*[3744] *With 9th Marines Operation DEWEY CANYON in Base Area 611 and the 101st Airborne Division's Operation MASSACHUSETTS STRIKER in the A Shau clogging the NVA's primary line of communication to the south, the use of Route 926 was expected. Triggered by these reports, III MAF launched Operation MAINE CRAG.*[3745] *Operation MAINE CRAG was launched at 101610H/March 1969 with the helicopter movement of Bn 2/3 to LZ HAWK (XD895405).*[3746] *Original plans were for a helicopter movement into the salient, but bad weather precluded that and the battalion moved 7 kilometers southwest shanks mare to FSB SNAPPER (XD843345) during a moonless night over area filled with streams and elephant grass as Capt M. J. Reilly led Co F/2/3, the point company, amazingly and professionally advanced and arrived.*[3747] *On 15 March, a battery of 105mm howitzers arrived on FSB SNAPPER and 3 companies of 2/3 commenced an overland move to the south to Route #926 as E/2/3 provided security for FSB SNAPPER. The next day, F/2/3 arrived at FSB SAIGON (XD818275) where they found small bunkers and candles still burning. Meanwhile, Task Force Remagen (from the 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) staged at Ca Lu (YD015455) began to move west over Route 9 on 17 March, opening the road.*[3748] *On 19 March, Col. P. D. La Fond's 3rd Marine Regiment assumed OPCON of TF Remagen under command of Army LtCol Carmelo P. Milia (which consisted of Co B, 1st Bn, 61st Mechanized Infantry; Co C, 1st Bn, 77th Armor; Battery C, 1st Bn, 40th Artillery (105mm self-propelled); 2 M42 self-propelled Dusters (dual mounted 40mm cannon) from 1st Bn, 44th Artillery (AWSP), 4.2 mortars (self-propelled) from 1st Bn, 77th Armor, and Army and Marine bulldozers, all organized into 3 teams.*[3749] *13 bypasses around destroyed bridges were constructed, washouts were spanned, and the road swept for mines, finding them in 2 locations.. Despite all these obstacles, the Task Force arrived by nightfall on 18 March, marking the reopening of Route 9 for armored traffic. C-1-77 Armor began moving west on Route 9 at 190800H and on 20 March moved through the abandoned Special Forces camp at Lang Vei (XD795363) and then turned south along the Laotian border toward Highway 926.*[3750]]

3739 2/4 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 11.

3740 4th Mar, AAR Operation PURPLE MARTIN, *op. cit.*, p. 14, Para. v.

3741 Circumstances of Loss, 3 November 1975, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #328, Folder #93 (Rex); JCRC Biographic Report as of 20 March 1979 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #308, Folder #16 (Walters)

3742 Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 177.

3743 *Ibid.*

3744 Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

3745 FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Force, Vietnam*, March, 1969, p. 7.

3746 3rd Mar, AAR Operation MAINE CRAG (Search and Destroy), p. 11.

3747 Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

3748 1st of the 5th Mech Div, AAR, unnamed operation, 31 May 1969, p. 9, contained in 3rd MarDiv ComdC May 1969, Encl 5B, After Action Reports, Tab A. Phase I of Tack Force REMAGEN (160800H/Mar69 – 111300H/Apr69) was under the control of 1st Bn, 77th Armor and organized into Task Force Control and 2 teams: Team B (B/1-61 Mech (-3rd Plt) and 2/C/1-77 Armor); and Team C (C/1-77 Armor (-2nd Plt) and 3/B/1-61 Mech. During Phase II (111300H/Apr69 – 151200H/Apr69, Task Force REMAGEN was under control of 1st Bn, 61st Infantry (Mechanized), and consisted of Team Armor, Task Force Control, and 3 teams: Team A (A/1-61 Mech (-2nd Plt), 2/A/1-77 Armopr and A Dozer/14 Engr), Team B (B-1-61 Mech (-3rd Plt) and 2/C/1-77 Armor), and Team C (C/1-77 Armor (-2nd Plt) and 3/B/1-61 Mech and Sqd/A/7th Engr). [HQ, 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech), AAR Task Force REMAGEN, 4 June 1969, Para. 6, "Task Organization," Tab E to 3rd MarDiv, ComdC, May69.

3749 Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

3750 1st of the 5th Mech Div, AAR, *op. cit.*

11 MARCH 1969

BAUER, PFC Daryl Charles	H&S/2/4
BROWN, LCPL William Henry	G/2/4
CLEMENCIA, LCPL Jean Roger	G/2/4
DIGENNO, LCPL Michael	2/4
WELD, PFC Julio Cesar	G/2/4

At 0820H, as Co G/2/4 continued their attack toward LZ CATAPULT, the NVA launched a counterattack with a company-size force with small arms, ChiCom grenades, RPGs and RPD machineguns. Fighting was at close quarters, sometimes 5 meters and G/2/4 suffered 4 KIA and 13 WIA (evacuated), including 3 KIAs and 4 WIAs from a 105mm short round. This violent contact which lasted all day broke the NVA's final attempt to hold LZ CATAPULT. The NVA broke contact at 1630H. In 3 days, 6,272 artillery rounds were fired with over a thousand in support of G/2/4.[3751]

12 MARCH 1969

FRANCE, LCPL Ronald Lynn	B/1/4

13 MARCH 1969

ANDERSON, PFC James Theodore	M/3/4
BREWER, PFC Don Raylan	M/3/4
KATZ, SSG Ronald Christopher	M/3/4
MOFFITT, PFC Thomas Carroll D	M/3/4
SMITH, PFC James Lee	M/3/4
STAMPS, PFC Johnny Green	M/3/4

By late afternoon on the 13th, M/3/4 had secured LZ SIERRA but enemy mortar fire had not ceased and the Marines suffered 10 KIA and 35 WIA (evacuated. Continuing inclement weather conditions made medevacs difficult along with NVA anti-aircraft fire directed at the helicopters.[3752]

14 MARCH 1969

CARPENTER, PFC James Alvin	M/3/4
CHUBB, PFC Richard Charles	M/3/4
FALCONBURY, PFC Earl Fern	M/3/4
FRANKS, PFC Ernest Richard	M/3/4
HAYES, PFC Michael John Jr.	M/3/4
HOPE, PFC Samuel Jr.	M/3/4
HOWARD, LCPL Sydney Claude	M/3/4
RUIZ, PFC Antonio Elizondo	M/3/4
SMITH, PFC Richard William	M/3/4
STOLLEY, LCPL William R Jr.	M/3/4
THORNTON, PFC Alan Wayne	M/3/4

On 14 March, I/3/4 assaulted SIERRA NORTH (XD946630). Although a well-executed envelopment to the north of the objective, the NVA apparently expecting an attack from the south, were surprised inside their bunkers. By the end of the day, I/3/4 had suffered 1 KIA and 7 WIA (evacuated). Meanwhile, Co M/3/4 received a ground assault initiated when the NVA downed a CH-46 with a RPG. The helo crashed in flames with some medevacs aboard. Results of the action: 5 KIA.[3753]

On 13 March, CPL Clinton W. Thompson launched a single-handed assault on NVA bunkers, using fragmentation grenades to destroy the positions as the rest of the squad provided a base of fire. During his daring assault, he destroyed 3 bunkers, permitting the remainder of his platoon to maneuver and secure the objective. On 14 March, when the NVA counter-attacked M/3/4, concentrating on CPL Thompson's platoon and forcing his men to withdraw, CPL Thompson assumed the billet of Platoon Sergeant when that leader was WIA, rallied his Marines, and led the assault to recapture the position. When a NVA bunker began to spew fire on CPL Thompson and his Marines, he once again personally assaulted the NVA position with grenades and neutralized the position.[3754]

[*From 14-17 March, 15,595 artillery rounds were fired in support of the 4th Marines with 75% being fired in support of 3/4's assault of SIERRA NORTH and SIERRA (XD946623). Weather precluded fixed wing and restricted helicopter movement and resupply until the 17th, when fixed wing strikes resumed On 18 March, L/3/4 suffered 2 WIA (evacuated) from a booby trapped claymore.*[3755]]

18 MARCH 1969

STITT, PFC Richard Wesley	G/2/3

A Co G/2/3 ambush laid along the road (XD881229, 4 miles east of LZ PARIS, XD807237) spotted 2 enemy trucks heading northeast.[3756] "Allowing the first truck, which was empty, to pass, the ambush opened fire on the second, destroying it and its cargo of rocket and mortar ammunition. The Marines then attacked the security element on the lead truck which had halted a short way down the road.[3757] Results of the action included 1 USMC KIA and 7 NVA KIA.[3758]

[3751] *Ibid.*, p. 15; 2/4 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 13.
[3752] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[3753] *Ibid.*
[3754] Navy Cross Citation on CPL Clinton W. Thompson.
[3755] 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 16.
[3756] 2/3 ComdC March, 1969, p. 11.
[3757] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, March, 1969, p. 9.
[3758] 3rd Mar, AAR Opn MAINE CRAIG, p. 12.

19 MARCH 1969

WESSLER, PFC Daniel Guy G/2/4

During the day, 1st Platoon, G/2/4 began taking small arms fire and RPGs while searching the area around XD824606 in sporadic fighting that continued throughout the day. Co G(-) reinforced G-1 and attempted to search the area at 1600, at which time small arms fire, RPG rounds and mortars were again received. The contact resulted in 2 NVA KIA and one USMC KIA from Second Platoon.[3759]

20 MARCH 1969

BAER, LCPL Max Irwin	D/1/4
BATTLE, CPL Ronald Kenneth	H&S/3/4
CONNELL, WO Vaughn David	B/101st AvnBn[3760]
DAVIS, PFC David Lee	H&S/1/4
EICHELBERGER, PFC Barry Lee	G/2/3
ELDERS, LCPL Ernest Franklin	D/1/4
GORRERA, PFC George Medford Jr.	G/2/3
JEFFRIES, LCPL James Herbert	H&S/3/4
MC CORMICK, 2/Lt Michael P	D/1/4
PETAL, PFC John Darryl	G/2/3
REED, PVT James Clayton	D/1/4

On 20 March 1969, the long anticipated assault on FSB ARGONNE (XD678572) commenced. This area, Hill 1308 (XD675573) offers observation into Laos and parts of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Information from intelligence sources indicated increased enemy activity in this area. The weather had finally cleared and air support was available. The operation had been planned for almost a month, but deteriorated weather along with air assets committed to support the 9th Marines in the A Shau Valley precluded a helicopter assault on this high terrain. The scheme of maneuver called for a 3-company assault of the hill with one company landing on FSB ARGONNE and 2 companies landing in the valley to the north. A recon team would be inserted just prior to L-Hour and guide the assault helicopters into the zone. Bn 1/4 was tasked with the assault and had moved their companies to FSB ALPINE (XD769427)[3761] prior to the assault. At 0930, following extensive artillery and air prep, Recon Team FROSTBURG approached the LZ. An explosion was set off and small arms fire raked the cockpit killing the pilot and wounding the copilot. The helicopter hit the ground and the recon team disembarked and formed a hasty 360 degree perimeter and pulled the wounded co-pilot to safety. Almost simultaneously, the NVA assaulted the recon team. FROSTBURG reacted quickly and repelled the initial charge, killing 3 NVA. The team leader called for an emergency extraction.

Immediately after the extraction, the first transport helicopter landed (at 1030H, having moved from FSB ALPINE) with the battalion commander and parts of Co D/1/4, the assault company. The wreck of the UH-1E precluded use of the upper zone, and the CH-46D transport used a lower zone. As the lead elements of D/1/4 proceeded up the hill they were met with gradually intensifying automatic weapons from a mutually supporting bunker system. Small units of Marines methodically had to destroy each bunker by providing a base of fire as one or two Marines crawled within grenade range and assaulted the bunker entrance. The action continued into the dark and the objective was secured, although some NVA snipers continued to fire on D/1/4 and the Battalion CP. D/1/4 suffered 6 KIA and 11 WIA (evacuated). The helicopter lift of the remaining two companies to the valley north of FSB ARGONNE was cancelled by higher headquarters.[3762]

2/Lt Michael P. McCormick, a Platoon Commander with D/1/4 found himself and his men pinned down by a heavy volume of fire as them debarked the helicopter. "Reacting fearlessly, 2/Lt McCormick moved across the fire-swept terrain from one man to another and, shouting words of encouragement, restored their confidence. Under cover of machine gun fire, he then initiated an aggressive assault upon the bunkers, and charging up the slope, he and his 3-man team stormed and systematically destroyed 3 of the fortifications with hand grenades and close-range rifle fire... Later that day [the point man was wounded].. Unwilling to risk further Marine casualties, 2/Lt McCormick directed his squad to provide protective fire and, with complete disregard for his own safety, maneuvered toward the casualty. He had almost attained his objective when he was mortally wounded by hostile fire."[3763]

To the south, in Operation MAINE CRAG, Co G/2/3 (XD883216) found a bunker complex for approximately 50 NVA which was occupied by 12 NVA. The position was attacked resulting in 2 USMC KIA, 1 USMC WIA, and 3 NVA KIA.[3764] The previous night, G/2/3 and H/2/3 had established night positions on the high ground near Route 926, about 1500 meters apart. About 2300 o9r 2400, G/2/3 called up and said they had 35 NVA coming through the ambush, down the road. Major Donald J. Myers, the Battalion S-3 responded,

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[3759] 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 16; 2/4 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 11.

[3760] The pilot was Army [Comments of COL William S. Goggin, HQMC Oral History Tape #4094].This is the only possible U.S. Army pilot KIA this date, based on information from the Coffelt database.

[3761] Also indicated as XD756532.

[3762] 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, pp. 17-18; 1/4 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 15.

[3763] Navy Cross Citation, 2/Lt Michael P. McCormick.

[3764] 2/3 ComdC March, 1969, p. 11. 3rd Mar ComdC March, 1969, S3 Journal, 20 March 1968, Ser #1 & 4.

"Blow them away." "They reported once again they had 35 Gooks walking through the ambush. I said, 'Blow them away.' Apparently the Patrol Leader got so enthused, he started counting Gooks and didn't pull the trigger, so 35 of them walked right through the ambush site."[3765] The next day, 20 March 1969, both G/2/3 and H/2/3 conducted saturation patrols throughout the entire area. Apparently both patrols were well off from where they were supposed to be,[3766] disorientated in the jungle terrain, and at 1000, Companies "G" and "H" of 2/3 (XD871231) had patrols that made contact with each other. The collision resulted in a fire-fight causing one Marine KIA.[3767] "We didn't have time because of the tactical situation [to determine] who was at fault. Following the 35 NVA who escaped, the 1 Marine KIA, that afternoon, another Marine shot himself in the foot, Regiment ordered 2/3 to move ASAP and attack to the east, "towards what they termed 'a pot of gold.' We were going to head for it, but we were going to search on the way. Regiment said, 'No, get there as fast as you can. We picked up everything, called our patrols in, and started moving once again. Hotel Company stayed on the road; Golf Company paralleled the road to the south."[3768]

21 MARCH 1969

KING, PFC James Michael D/1/4
REGNOLDS, PFC James Randolph D/1/4
RUIZ, PFC Gilbert D/1/4
SARGENT, LTCOL George Thomas Jr. H&S/1/4
THOMPSON, PFC Philip Bruce D/1/4
WILSON, 2/Lt Carl Richard Jr. D/1/4
+ 3 unidentified, H/2/3

At 0800, 1/4 assumed OPCON of M/3/4 when they lifted into FSB ALPINE to relieve C/1/4. At 0820H, the first round of an enemy 82mm mortar attack instantly killed LtCol Sargent, the Battalion Commander and 2/Lt Wilson, the Battalion S-2 officer.[3769] Every member of LtCol Sargent's staff that was present on the position was either wounded or killed.[3770]

At 0945H, the Alpha Command Group on FSB ARGONNE received 10 rounds of 82mm mortars during medevac helicopter operations. The helicopter was able to board 6 emergency WIA before it had to depart. Although counter-mortar fire was fired, the Marines sustained 3 KIA and 11 WIA. At 1540H, all medevacs were extracted except one routine and 5 permanent routines. Four engineers boarded the helicopter without authority and deprived the rest of the medevacs from getting out.[3771]

Third Platoon of H/2/3 had discovered what looked like bunkers, containing 4 or 5 tons of rice in crates about the size of 100-lb. bags just piled up there. The Marines found a nearby river. The Marines were all out of water and, after receiving permission, about 60 Marines went down to fill canteens. "It was kinda messed up because people were just taking .45s and one magazine. Half of them carried a bunch of canteens and no ammo, no flak jackets, helmets. They started going down the trail there. A couple of rounds went off." 2/Lt John E. Butler, Platoon Commander of H-3, went down to the position which was supervised by a LCPL. Marines of various units, no squad leaders, no team leaders, made for a difficult group to establish security while they were seeking water. About 50 or 60 men were bunched up, some in the river, and just as Lt Butler reached the area, "everything in the world came in on us—AKs, rifle grenades, and everybody was getting hit.[3772]
It was 1505, when Co H/2/3 and the 2/3 CP (at XD908233) were under fire while on the water detail. The NVA held the high ground above the security and water party and opened fire with small arms and RPGs, killing 3 Marines and wounding 18 (medevaced).[3773]

22 MARCH 1969

SWISHER, PFC Clifford Lee H/2/3
+2 unidentified from E/2/3

Today, H/2/3 sent patrols to investigate the area from where they received fire on their water detail. Charlie Squad of H-3 spotted someone on the hill and thought it was H-1 since the men wore camouflaged utilities like the Marines. As Lt Butler moved with his Alfa Squad of H-3, Charlie Squad radioed there was nothing they could do; they were pinned down and had taken casualties. One Marine was killed.[3774] It was 0730H, and Co H/2/3 (XD908233) came upon enemy in numerous spider holes and bunkers while attacking an

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[3765] Comments of Maj Donald J. Myers, 13 May 1969, HQMC Oral History Tape #4124
[3766] *Ibid.*
[3767] 2/3 ComdC March, 1969, p. 12.
[3768] Comments of Maj Donald J. Myers, HQMC Oral History Tape #4124.
[3769] 1/4 ComdC, March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 16. Maj Pierpan assumed command of the Alpha Command Group and directed operations at FSB Argonne. LtCol Willcox assumed command upon his arrival at FSB Alpine about 1400H. Accurate NVA 82mm mortar and sniper fire hampered helicopter operations at FSB Argonne.
[3770] Comments of Col William S. Goggin, HQMC Oral History Tape #4094. Col Goggin was CO, 4th Mar.
[3771] *Ibid.*; 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 18.
[3772] Comments of 2/Lt John E. Butler, 15 May 1969, HQMC Oral History Tape #4124.
[3773] 2/3 ComdC March, 1969, p. 12; S-3 Journal for 21 March 1968; 3rd Mar, AAR MAINE CRAG, p. 12.
[3774] Comments of 2/Lt John E. Butler, HQMC Oral History Tape #4124.

enemy position and received small arms and grenades resulting in 1 KIA.

At 1400H, the lead platoon of Co E/2/3 (XD924246) while moving to a blocking position received small arms and automatic weapons fire causing 2 USMC KIA and 15 USMC WIA.[3775] Contact was broken and approximately 440 tons of rice was found plus 100,000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition.[3776]

23 March 1969

BECK, PFC Norman Elmer	**D/1/4**
BYARS, LCPL Steve Eugene	**D/1/4**
OVERSTREET, HM3 David Dewayne	**H&S/1/4**

On 23 March, D/1/4 moved their patrols to an area north of FSB ARGONNE, an area which had been the assembly area for several probes of the D/1/4 lines.[3777] At 1415H, Co D/1/4 at XD676579 found 5 graves with 3 markers. As they checked out the area, they were taken under fire by 7 NVA. The Company withdrew and fired 60mm and 81mm mortars plus 105s and 106s and had 2 air strikes. Results of the contact: 3 KIA.[3778]

A squad from H/2/4 found 5 friendly KIA in a U.S. Army UH-1H which had crashed west of FSB NEVILLE (XD802596).[3779]

In Operation MAINE CRAG, G/2/3 found a supply cache containing 2000 pounds of powdered milk, 5700 pounds of rice, 3853 82mm rounds, and 2500 RPG rounds, while Co E/2/3 found another cache containing 6 tons of rice, 90 individual weapons, 1000 pounds of TNT, and 15,000 small arms rounds.[3780]

24 March 1969

One unidentified M/3/4

At 0900H, a patrol from Co M/3/4 sweeping the area at XD740540 made contact with an unknown size enemy force in newly constructed bunkers in an area from which NVA mortars had been fired resulting in 1 KIA. The activity was expected because FSB ALPINE was providing supporting fires for FSB ARGONNE.[3781]

25 March 1969

BRANNON, PFC James Edward	**A/1/4**
CARTER, PFC Jack David	**A/1/4**
LABOWSKI, SGT Leonard William	**A/1/4**
ORBINO, SGT Dennis Michael	**H&S/1/4**
PRESLEY, PFC Avey	**A/1/4**

On 25 March, A/1/4 continued to sweep toward Hill 1154 near the Laotian border. At 0930H, the point man, a S-2 scout, heard movement to his front. After passing the word to the CO, the scout advanced up the trail into the fire of an AK-47 instantly killing him. The lead platoon killed the NVA before he could retreat.[3782] At 1310H, A/1/4 while moving ran into a multiple bunker complex at XD667574 containing an estimated 2 reinforced squads to a platoon. The Marines assaulted the bunkers and called in air and artillery. One more Marine was KIA and 4 WIA. At 1530H, while calling in artillery, A/1/4 had one short 155mm round killing 3 Marines and wounding 8.[3783]

26 March 1969

BRENNEMAN, CPL Richard Eugene G/2/3

At 1000H, G/2/3 (XD918227) came upon 2 NVA filling canteens, fired on them, killing them. They then received fire from the north resulting in one KIA.[3784]

28 March 1969

BELCHER, MAJ Robert Arthur	**366TFW**
MILLER, 1/Lt Michael Andrew	**366 TFW**
+ 2 unidentified from A/1/4	

At 0220H, A/1/4 at XD665577 had its listening posts and lines probed by an estimated squad resulting in 2 USMC KIA and 8 WIA.[3785]

CAPT Charles D. Lea, piloting SEAWORTHY 98-15 (Callsign SALINAS 62) on 28 March 1969 with Lt HAMLIN, observer, were conducting a VR near XD895647 and located a bunker complex with fighting holes on a ridge running NW/SE with high rising terrain to the W and SW and another ridge running N/S on the eastern side of the target. 1/Lt Edwin C. Hamlin, the aerial observer in SALINAS 62 requested permission to run the air strike and wrote up a brief: "Possible mortar site, approximately 1000 feet elevation, attack heading 180° with a left hand pull, terrain is mountainous will mark

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[3775] 2/3 ComdC March, 1969, p. 12. The Coffelt database does not indicate any KIA from E/2/3 for this date.
[3776] 3rd Mar, AAR Opn MAINE CRAG, p. 13.
[3777] 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 18.
[3778] 1/4 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 17.
[3779] 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 19.
[3780] 3rd Mar ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 8
[3781] 1/4 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 18; 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 19.

[3782] *Ibid.*
[3783] 1/4 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), pp. 18-19.
[3784] 2/3 ComdC March, 1969, p. 14; 3rd Mar, AAR Opn MAINE CRAG, p. 13; 3rd Mar ComdC March, 1969, S3 Journal, 26 March 1969, Ser #8.
[3785] 1/4 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 20.

with W.P. smoke, not ground fire, friendlies about 1000 meters at 11 o'clock our position will be inside your pattern."[3786] Two F4D Phantoms, GUNFIGHTER 1 and 2, checked in approx. 1655H, but had difficulty locating the target due to ground haze. CAPT Lea marked the target with WP. GUNFIGHTER-1 made his run, Capt Lea again marked the target, and GUNFIGHTER-2 (Maj Belcher and 1/Lt Miller in aircraft #66-8764) made their pass but didn't pull-up. Their aircraft was completely demolished upon impact at XD892663.[3787] No parachutes were seen and no electronic beacon signals were detected. Search and rescue forces located the wreckage, but saw no sign of survivors. Ground search teams attempted to reach the crash site but were unsuccessful due to the presence of enemy forces.[3788]

30 March 1969

[One unidentified]

At 1327 a helicopter set off what appeared to be a booby trap killing one man and wounding 6 (evacuated) during Operation MAINE CRAG in the 3rd Marines AO.[3789]

31 March 1969

BRANNAN, SFC James Curtis	D-1-77
PACE, SGT Gary Lynn	B-1-61

At 0615H, Team B of TF Remagen took approximately 100 rounds of 82mm mortar fire causing one KIA. At 1215H, Team C came under mortar and RPG fire and a VTR from D Company, 1-77 Armor took a RPG round making a direct hit and detonating 6 LAWs stored inside resulting in 1 KIA and 4 WIA.[3790]

04 April 1969

BOULE, PFC Thomas Michael	E/2/3
LISLE, PFC Terrill Michael	E/2/3
SLAWEK, PFC Joseph Dennis Jr.	E/2/3

At 0350H, Co E/2/3 at LZ BIG FOOT was attacked by an estimated NVA company resulting in 2 KIA.[3791] "On the 4th of April at 04 in the morning Gooks attacked our lines after killing 2nd Platoon's LP. They had 3 people out and they had been having trouble getting comm. with the LP. Finally at four o'clock in the morning the LP started running in and started yelling, 'LP coming in!' At that point small arms fire opened up. They killed the LP right off the bat, and at this same time we found out that while the LP was sleeping several CHARLIEs had moved right up to our lines with RPGs and one AK-50 and several AK-47s. They hit my gun hole pretty hard with AK-47s and RPG [fire]. Right after they hit the gun hole the 82mm mortars started coming in and the 60mm. They weren't too accurate with those and I think they probably got more of their own people than they did ours. They hit us in squad waves with RPGs backing them up and the AK-50 opened up every once and awhile. I think the most devastating thing was the satchel charges that they had. We only had 4 KIAs in the whole company and about 7 WIAs. My platoon only had one KIA and 4 WIAs."[3792]

06 April 1969

1 unidentified from E/2/4

Co E/2/4 reported that one Marine was killed by a 105mm short round.[3793]

07 April 1969

BATCHELOR, LCPL John Elsey Jr.	F/2/4
PORTER, PFC Richard Lee	F/2/4
STAPLES, PFC James Arthur	F/2/4
+ one unidentified from F/2/4	

2nd Platoon of Co F/2/4 made contact with approximately 4 NVA at XD813644. The NVA detonated 2 claymore mines and fired 10 rounds while throwing Chi-Com grenades. F-2 returned small arms fire and called artillery and mortars on all likely avenues of escape as the NVA broke contact. F-2 suffered 4 KIA.[3794]

10 April 1969

KEITH, PFC Daniel Scott	F/2/4

F-3 of 2/4 made contact with an enemy force of 15-20 NVA at XD854651 who detonated claymore mines

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[3786] Statement of 1/Lt Edwin C. Hamlin in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #406, Folder #87 (Belcher).
[3787] Statement of Capt Charles D. Lea in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #308, Folder #17 (Miller).
[3788] Narrative, Case 1417 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #308, Folder #17.
[3789] 3rd Mar ComdC March, 1969, S3 Journal for 30 March 1969, Ser #5.
[3790] 1st of 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR, *op. cit.*, p. 11; 3rd Mar ComC March, 1969, S3 Journal for 31 March, Ser #7. Team "B" consisted of B/1-61 Mech (-3rd Plt) and 2/C/1-77 Armor; Team "C" consisted of C/1-77 Armor (-2nd Plt) and 3/B/1-61 Mech. [HQ, 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech), AAR Opn REMAGEN, 4 June 1969, Para. 6, "Task Organization," in 3rd MarDiv ComdC, May, 1969, Tab E.
[3791] 3rd Mar AAR Opn MAINE CRAG, p. 14.
[3792] Comments of 2/Lt Dennis R. Tague, USMCR, 16 May 1969, HQMC Oral History Tape #4124.
[3793] 2/4 ComdC March, 1969, Encl (1), p. 8.
[3794] 2/4 ComdC April, 1969, Encl (1), p. 9; 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 21, Para. kkk.

and fired small arms and light machine guns. F-3 returned small arms fire and called in artillery and 81mm mortars and worked fixed wing air strikes on the enemy position.[3795]

11 APRIL 1969

HUFF, PFC Richard Elliott	**E/2/4**
SMITH, PFC Matthew Edward	**E/2/4**
+ one unidentified, E/2/4	

Elements of E-1 reported sighting 10-15 NVA moving west along a stream at XD790640. The enemy was taken under small arms fire and 60mm mortars were called in as the enemy withdrew to a cave complex to the south of the stream at XD789639. E-1(-) joined the element in contact and the cave complex was assaulted without success. Gunships then worked over the enemy position as ambushes were established on all avenues of escape in preparation for the coming night. E-3 suffered 3 KIA and 9 WIA.[3796]

[*Co L/3/9 assumed the defense of FSB ALPINE on 11 April 1969.*[3797]]

12 APRIL 1969

DAVIS, PFC Duane Ross	**H&S/2/4**
LIPTAK, PFC Charles Lewis	**C/1/4**

At 1115H, Co C/1/4 patrol at XD725625, while searching an area for an estimated NVA squad size unit, ambushed the point element. The NVA opened up with automatic weapons and ChiCom grenades and the patrol returned fire with negative results. The contact resulted in 2 KIA and one WIA.[3798]

[*On this date, B-1-61 and C-1-77 were relieved by A-1-61 and A-1-77 in Task Force Remagen.*[3799]]

19 APRIL 1969

ACKERMAN, PFC Rex William	**I/3/4**
ALLARD, PFC Paul Edward	**E/2/3**

A patrol from I-2 of 3/4 tripped 2 claymore mines resulting in 1 KIA and 7 WIA (evacuated).[3800]

20 APRIL 1969

PARKER, SGT George Joseph Jr.	**D/1/4**

22 APRIL 1969

SKIPPER, PFC Michael Ray	**H/2/4**

A patrol from H-3 of 2/4 made contact with an enemy force of unknown size at XD814670. H-3 (-), moving to reinforce the squad in contact, made contact at XD810672. Radio contact was lost with the squad in contact. Artillery, 81mm and 60mm mortars were fired on the enemy positions. As H-2 moved to reinforce H-3 and assaulted the enemy position, it made contact with the squad who had originally made contact. Fixed wing was on run on likely avenues of escape. Co H/2/4 suffered 1 KIA and 3 WIA in the battle.[3801]

24 APRIL 1969

WAGNER, PVT James Joseph	**F/2/4**

Helicopters attempting to resupply F/2/4 (at XD848648) drew small arms fire from the vicinity of XD854651. Artillery and 81mm mortars were fired and small arms fire was returned, silencing the enemy fire.[3802]

25 APRIL 1969

BESSENT, SP4 Samuel Alonzo	**A-1-77**
LACEY, SP5 David Michael	**A-1-77**
VANN, 1/Lt Ronald Bryson	**C-1-44**

At 0330H, an estimated NVA battalion (minus) attacked the 2nd Troop, 7th ARVN Cav which was at XD812410 (about 1 click east of Hill 689). The attack started with a heavy mortar barrage which lasted for about an hour. One mortar round landed near the FDC of C/1-40 Arty killing the battery Executive Officer and wounding every man in the FDC. Following the mortar fire, the enemy attacked the ARVN position using RPGs, small arms fire, automatic weapons fire, flamethrowers and small satchel charges. At 0600 the enemy broke contact leaving behind 33 NVA KIA. Friendly casualties were 8 ARVN KIA, 40 ARVN WIA, 1 Australian advisor KIA, 2 US advisors WIA, 2 US KIA, and 3 US WIA.[3803] The uniforms of the NVA were not only new, but were the same color as those worn by ARVN regulars. Most of the NVA KIAs were young, clean-shaven,

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[3795] 2/4 ComdC April, 1969, Encl (1), p. 10.
[3796] *Ibid.*, p. 11. Note: the Coffelt database only indicates 2 names identified as belonging to E/2/4. It does have several others who are identified as "III MAF."
[3797] 1/4 ComdC April, 1969, Encl (1), p. 4.
[3798] *Ibid.*, Encl (1), p. 8; 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 21.
[3799] 3rd MarDiv ComdC, April, 1969, Encl (1), p. 12.
[3800] 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 22, Para. sss.
[3801] 2/4 ComdC April, 1969, Encl (1), p. 15.
[3802] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[3803] HQ, 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech), AAR TF REMAGEN, 4 June 1969, Tab E to 3rd MarDiv, ComdC, May, 1969.

had short haircuts, were well equipped and, based upon an inspection of the condition of their feet, apparently had not traveled any lengthy distances in the immediate past.[3804]

28 April 1969

DAVIS, SP4 John Clinton	A-1-61
DAVENPORT, PFC John Sanford	A-1-61
TEETH, PFC Austin	H&S/1/4

At 0300H the NVA attacked Co A, 1st Bn, 61st Infantry (Mechanized) at XD845390 (just south of Hill 471). The company was alerted just prior to the start of the attack by a LP which sprang an ambush on the enemy as they moved into position. The NVA attack was supported by RPG, mortar, small arms and automatic weapons fire. Throwing satchel charges and using flame devices, the enemy charged from the southwest but was unable to penetrate the perimeter. At 0540 the enemy broke contact and disappeared into the night. Friendly casualties were 5 KIA and 35 WIA and the enemy lost 34 NVA KIA.[3805] Uniforms were new and the customary khaki/gray color.[3806]

"T-4338 was attempting to commit suicide. T-4338 had a M-16 against lower right jaw. During the attempt to disarm him the rifle discharged killing T-4338. SIR report submitted."[3807]

29 April 1969

FURR, HM3 Frederick Edward	H&S/2/4

Co G/2/4 suffered one KIA and 3 WIA when a M-79 was accidentally discharged at XD827571.[3808]

[*Final casualty figures for Task Force REMAGEN, 16 March – 29 April 1969 were: 12 USA KIA, 8 ARVN KIA, 1 other Free World KIA, for a total of 21 KIA; 70 USA WIA, 44 ARVN WIA, for a total of 114 WIA; no POW, MIA, or captured; 1 non-hostile USA KIA; 76 NVA KIA, no POWs taken.*[3809]]

30 April 1969

One unidentified from F/2/4

F/2/4 suffered 1 KIA and 4 WIA (evacuated) during a brief firefight.[3810]

02 May 1969

BENNETT, SGT Richard Boyce	F/2/4
EAKINS, LCPL Melvin Warren	HMM-262
FUNK, LCPL Bruce Elliott	H/2/4
HOLTZCLAW, 1/Lt Gary Earl	F/2/4
OSBORNE, PFC David Franklin	F/2/4
POWELL, LCPL Troy Everett	F/2/4
PYLE, LCPL Timothy Howard	HMM-262
STOLLAR, LCPL Larry David	HMM-262
SUMNER, 1stSgt James Howell	F/2/4
THOMAS, PFC William Philip	H/2/4
TRIGALET, 1/Lt Robert Ernest	HMM-262
VIX, PFC Stephen August Jr.	F/2/4
WILLIAMS, 1/Lt Thomas Earl Jr.	HMM-262

H-2 of 2/4 suffered 2 KIA and 1 WIA from command detonated mines at XD831627 after which they opened up with small arms fire. H-2 returned fire and called in artillery on the suspected enemy position. 2 NVA were KIA as they were running away.[3811]

Second Platoon, Co. "F," 2/4 landed and established security at XD901598 for a downed CH-46 helicopter. After F-2 extinguished the fire, they began removing 12 bodies and collected all personal effects.[3812]

04 May 1969

PARENT, LCPL Jeffery Mark	M/3/4
+ one unidentified, M/3/4	

On 4 May 1969, M/3/4 was hit by command detonated mines resulting in 2 KIA and 3 WIA (evacuated), and then killed 1 NVA in a brief firefight.[3813]

06 May 1969

BILLIP, 1/Lt Norman Karl	VMO-6
HAGAN, 1/Lt John Robert	VMO-6

1/Lt Billip, pilot, and 1/Lt John Robert Hagan, an AO from 3rd MarDiv, were flying an O1G, SEAWOR-

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[3804] HQ, 1st Bn (Mech), 61st Infantry, Combat AAR, TF REMAGEN II, 29 May 1969.
[3805] HQ, 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Div (Mech), Combat AAR, Operation TF REMAGEN, 4 June 1969
[3806] HQ, 1st Bn (Mech), 61st Infantry, Combat AAR, TF REMAGEN II, 29 May 1969; LtGen John H., Jr., *Vietnam Studies: Tactical and Materiel Innovations*, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1974, p. 59.
[3807] 1/4 ComdC April, 1969, Encl (1), p. 12.
[3808] 2/4 ComdC April, 1969, Encl (1), p. 18.
[3809] HQ, 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Div (Mech), Combat AAR, TF REMAGEN, 4 June 1969
[3810] 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 23.
[3811] *Ibid.;* 2/4 ComdC, May, 1969, Encl (1), p. 7.
[3812] 2/4 ComdC, May, 1969, Encl (1), p. 8. Co B/1/4, while patrolling in the vicinity of XD897613 at noon, found the remains of a Marine MIA as the result of the helicopter crash of 2 May 1969. [1/4 ComdC, May, 1969, Encl (1), p. 17.
[3813] 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 23.

THY-37 (WB-45, #156682) on a visual reconnaissance mission. At about 1420, 1/Lt Billip was called by Vandergrift DASC [Direct Air Support Center] and told to conduct his preplanned mission (#5080) of visual reconnaissance from VCB [Vandegrift Combat Base] to the Laotian border along Route 9 in support of 9th Marines (radio callsign CRYSTAL STAR). This was the last known contact with 1/Lt Billip's aircraft. At 1500H a severe thunderstorm developed in the area in which the aircraft was flying, with electrical and heavy turbulent activity. SEAWORTHY-37 never contacted CRYSTAL STAR. Some 3 hours after take-off, 1/Lt Billip's aircraft was determined to be missing. Immediate search efforts were hampered by severe weather (thunderstorms and gusts). By 9 May, a total of 115 aircraft hours had been flown searching for SEAWORTHY-37. On 9 Nov 1984, a letter was received by the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand: "We were fallen in Lao Communist prison since 27 December 1971.. For God sake! No one can imagine what suffering! How many years we have to get the cruel punishment from the people of hell!.." The letter contained fingerprints of Billip. The FBI was requested to examine the fingerprints and reported that they had no fingerprints on file for Normal Karl Billipp! The incident is plotted at XD919452.[3814]

07 MAY 1969

SHINAULT, 1/Lt John Michael C/3rd Recon
TIRADO, PFC Daniel C/3rd Recon

On 7 May 1969, Recon Team AIR MINDED made contact at XD881586, moved to a LZ for extraction and took additional casualties. Total casualties: 1 KIA, 2 WIA, and 1 NVA KIA.[3815]

[Operation MAINE CRAG concluded on 021300H, May, 1969, with the following casualties: 16 USMC KIA, 103 USMC WIA (evacuated), 10 USMC WIA (minor), 3 USA KIA, 23 USA WIA (medevaced), 6 USA WIA (minor), 3 USA NBC (medevaced), 95 NVA KIA (confirmed), 50 NVA KBA (confirmed), 4 NVA POW.[3816] *Operation PURPLE MARTIN concluded on 082400H May, 1969, with the following casualties: 101 USMC KIA, 336 USMC WIA (evacuated), 91 USMC WIA (minor), 0 USMC MIA; 5 USA KIA, 1 USA WIA (evacuated), 347 NVA KIA, 4 NVA POW.*[3817] *Operation HERKIMER MOUNTAIN commences on 09 May (terminates 16 July 1969) conducted by 4th Marines who remained in place following termination of Operation PURPLE MARTIN. Operation CAMERON FALLS commences 08 June (terminates 15 August) conducted in the southern portion of the Khe Sanh AO by 9th Marines and F/2/12.*]

11 MAY 1969

RYAN, 1/Lt William Cornelius, Jr. VMFA-115

1/Lt Ryan was RIO [Radar Intercept Officer] of a Phantom F4B aircraft piloted by 1/Lt Gary L. Bain. The aircraft, #152988, was hit by ground fire and just after they had released their ordnance on target, the pilot felt an explosion, the aircraft rolled inverted and became uncontrollable. The pilot ejected and the plane crashed at XD456400, approximately 15 KM southeast of Tchepone and 500 meters south of Route 9. Only one parachute was seen leave the aircraft and SAR [Search and Rescue] subsequently rescued Lt Bain. Lt Bain stated he called three times for Lt Ryan to eject before he himself was forced to eject just seconds before the aircraft crashed. It is assumed that Lt Ryan had been knocked unconscious or killed instantly by the initial explosion.[3818]

30 MAY 1969

OLIVER, LCPL Erskine Jay M/3/9
WILSON, CPL Wayne Michael M/3/9

Operation CAMERON FALLS officially commenced at 1000H on 29 May (terminated 0600 on 23 June 1969). On 30 May, a patrol from M/3/9 received small arms fire from their front. In the subsequent fire fight, assisted by Huey gunships, one NVA was captured. As a fire team attempted to move the POW to a medevac position, it was fired upon causing 1 USMC KIA. An artillery mission was called and, while attempting to move to the lines (XD988413), the patrol received small arms fire from 75-100 meters from all sides. Total casualties for the contact: 2 KIA, 3 NVA KIA and one NVA POW.[3819]

31 MAY 1969

[3814] Joint Casualty Resolution Center Biographic/Site Report as of 10 Aug 1990; Circumstances of Loss, report of 22 Sep 1975, I MAW BRIGHT LIGHT Report dated 26 May 1969, Letter from Billip of 9 Nov 1984 with map diagrams; Statement of MAJ A. S. Piper, USMC; COL John R. Oberst, USAF, Memo S-20064/DC-2 of 16 Jan 1985, Subj: Status of FBI Fingerprint Analysis (Billipp); FBI Report of the Latent Fingerprint Section, Identification Division, Case No. C-6903 of 8 Feb 1985

[3815] 4th Mar, AAR, Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 23.

[3816] 3rd Marines, AAR Opn MAINE CRAG, p. 18.

[3817] 4th Mar, AAR Opn PURPLE MARTIN, p. 23.

[3818] Narrative, Case 2000-0-01, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #430, Folder #146. Lt Bain suffered a broken arm and leg, and had already survived the crash of a Phantom on 12 January 1969. [Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 181].

[3819] 3/9 AAR Opn CAMERON FALLS (Search and Destroy), 2 July 1969, p. 5.

TREVINO, PFC Rudolph Robert M/3/9

At 1210H, the point element of a patrol from M/3/9 at XD987408 made contact with approximately 5 NVA 50-75 meters away resulting in 1 USMC KIA and 3 WIA.[3820]

[*3 operations in the Khe Sanh area continued during June, 1969. Operation HERKIMER MOUNTAIN, in the northwestern portion, involved all three battalions of the 4th Marine Regiment with 1/4 operating from FSB Neville (XD8357) and LZ Catapult (XD8261); 2/4 operated from VCB [Vandegrift Combat Base], FSB Cates (XD9243) and Hills 691 (XD9244) and 950 (XD8445) until 5 June when they were lifted to join G/2/4 at FSB Russell (XD9159); 3/4 operated from VCB and Elliott Combat Base. 1/9 also operated out of VCB with two companies operating in the vicinity of FSB Pete (XD9758) until 12 June when they were replaced by 2/9 who arrived at VCB 15 June.*[3821]]

01 June 1969

ABEYTA, PFC Ernest	**G/2/9**
BRACK, PFC David Allan	**G/2/9**
PECK, PFC Darrell Vernon	**G/2/9**

On 010215 June, FSB Whisman (XD9733) defended by G/2/9 was attacked by an estimated NVA company with a volley of machinegun fire followed by a heavy volume of RPG, rifle grenades, and satchel charges. Co "G" returned fire with organic weapons and artillery and, as the contact broke, a platoon from Co "G" pursued the NVA force. Later at 0315, an alert LP opened fire on an estimated 10 enemy who were returning for their dead. The action resulted in 3 KIA and 9 WIA (evacuated) while the NVA lost 19 KIA (confirmed), 1 POW and 1 Chieu Hoi.[3822]

02 JUNE 1969

MC NEILL, PFC Kenneth Rex	**C/1/4**
MONTIJO, CPL Michael	**M/3/9**
RODRIGUEZ, PFC Manuel Jr.	**M/3/9**
TREVINO, PFC Savas Escamilla	**M/3/9**

At 0700H, M/3/9 departed from night positions with M-1 reconning by fire and using 60mm mortars to prep an area approximately 100 meters to their front. At XD988407 (near FSB Shepherd and approximately 4 miles east of Khe Sanh), the point element came under heavy machinegun fire, believed to be 2 .30 caliber along with small arms fire, RPGs and ChiCom grenades. One squad attempted to move up to where the point was pinned down. The point man was KIA and the squad could not find him. He was known to be dead but presumed to be blown or dragged away by the NVA. At 1035H, a medevac bird approached and was shot down by suspected AA fire. PFC Savas E. Trevino had rushed across the fire-swept terrain to come to the aid of several WIA. When the helicopter was shot down, it crashed into PFC Trevino's position, fatally injuring him. The helicopter caught fire and the troops tried to get out. 4 WIAs and 1 KIA were taken from the bird before it became too hot and .50 caliber ammo started to cook off within it. Later, the Marines returned and recovered the remains of another body. (The bird was shot down at XD987411). M/3/9 had 2 KIA, 1 MIA, and 13 WIA; the helicopter had 2 KIA and 4 WIA.[3823]

At 1240H, a platoon from C/1/4 came upon 3 – 4 NVA in the process of setting up an ambush at XD831617. The patrol assaulted and killed 1 NVA. In the process 1 Marine was KIA and 5 WIA.[3824]

04 JUNE 1969

BARNITZ, LCPL Douglas Wanner	**D/3rd Recon**
BUCK, CPL William Andrew Jr.	**D/3rd Re con**
O'CONNOR, 1/Lt Michael Maurice	**D/3rd Re con**
PEARCY, PFC Robert Leslie	**D/3rd Recon**
SKAGGS, PFC Harold Alonzo	**D/3rd Recon**
WELLMAN, CPL William Martin Jr.	**D/3rd Re con**

On 020930H/June 1969, FLIGHT TIME, reconnaissance team 3D3 from D/3rd Recon, was inserted at XD848390 (200 meters directly south of Hill 471). Ten minutes later, the team found cooking gear still hot, helmets and fresh banana peels at their IP [Insertion Point] and 10 meters away, a bunker which could have been an OP. FLIGHT TIME found 2 bags of rice, 2 helmets, 1 cartridge belt, 1 first aid kit, 1 belt, 1 pair of tennis shoes, 6 fragmentation grenades, and various other items. The next day, at 031750H, the team observed approximately 5 enemy in brown utilities and helmets after setting into their harbor site at XD848390. On 04 June, at 0250H, FLIGHT TIME started receiving small arms fire and ChiCom grenades. The team reported 1 KIA and 1 WIA (needing evacuation) and 4 MIA. FLIGHT TIME requested emergency extraction. At 040305H, an AO observed that the enemy was 10 meters from and on all

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[3820] *Ibid.*
[3821] 3rd MarDiv ComdC, June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 13.
[3822] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[3823] 3/9 ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 18; 3/9 AAR Opn CAMERON FALLS, 2 July 1969, p. 5; Bronze Star Medal (posthumous) Citation, PFC Savas E. Trevino.
[3824] 1/4 ComdC June, 1969. Encl (1), p. 14.

sides of the team. The team requested a reaction force. At 0315H, the AO expended ordnance and had a secondary explosion. At 0320H, communication with the team was lost. At 0400H, a helicopter was airborne with a 12-man reaction force. At 0620, a helicopter observed 3, possibly 5, members of the team and reported that the area looked like it had been hit with a flame thrower. At 0700, the reaction force found the 6 USMC KIAs at XD848390; 5 men were in a trench and the 6th was approximately 10 meters down the hill. An on site investigation indicated that the enemy came up the northeast side of the hill, that the team received RPGs, satchel charges, ChiCom grenades, bangalor torpedoes, and small arms fire. The area was covered with powder burns from explosives. The reaction team leader stated that the marks on the ground and the way the equipment was scattered indicated that the team was involved in hand-to-hand combat. The bodies were riddled by small arms fire and torn by explosives. About 15 meters to the north, several propaganda leaflets were found written in English.[3825]

A TRIBUTE[3826]
By 1/Lt D. W. Sipperly

"We are here to pay tribute and honor to the six men of reconnaissance team "Flight Time." These men gave their lives in the complete dedication that the performance of duty requires. [Here names are listed]..were killed when their reconnaissance team was assaulted and overrun by a large enemy force on hill 471, 1 mile south of Khe Sanh.

"Each of us will remember the personal experiences that we shared with these men,. They were Reconnaissance Marines performing their duty; but more important they were friends. They suffered with us the trials and hardships encountered in a combat environment, and they laughed with us in the humor that we found around us. The spirit these men showed, each in his own way, will be remembered. Their determination, courage, and professionalism in the face of great obstacles will also be remembered. For us, the living, there remains only to carry on with the energy, enthusiasm and respect that these men showed for life."

[3825] 3rd Recon Bn ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 13.
[3826] Sipperly, 1/Lt D. W., "A Tribute," printed in Third Recon Association, RVN, *Harborsite*, Premier Issue (Feb, 1992), p. 18.

05 JUNE 1969

BRITTIAN, CPL Charles Henry	**H/2/9**
BROUGHTON, PVT Robert Ballard	**H/2/9**
BROWN, PFC Gerald Bernard	**H/2/9**
COX, LCPL Gary Allen	**H/2/9**
HARAN, PFC Rory Timothy T	**H/2/9**
SALLY, PFC Hank	**H/2/9**
TAYLOR, PFC Dennis Lee	**H/2/9**
TURNER, PFC Brendan Xavier	**H/2/9**

At 1450H, H/2/9 made contact with an unknown size enemy force at YD020364. At 1530, the lead platoon came upon 2 NVA in a bivouac site and, after the contact, searched the area and at 1700 made contact with a large enemy force estimated at company strength. At 2027 a CH-46 was shot down attempting to evacuate medevacs. All were rescued except for a gunner whose body was recovered several days later. After consolidating for the night on high ground, the company was continuously probed throughout the night. Totals for the contact were: 11 KIA, 39 WIA (evacuated), 27 WIA (not serious), and 34 NVA KIA (confirmed).[3827]

08 JUNE 1969

BOWLIN, LCPL Paul Madison	**E/3rd Recon**
LANDI, CPL George Francis	**A/3rd Recon**
MC LEAN, 1/Lt Ronald Walsh	**A/3rd Recon**

At 071220H at XD877665, recon team 1E1 heard voices 25 meters to their east and west moving towards them, and then spotted 12 enemy dressed in light brown utilities, brown bush covers, tennis shoes and carrying AK-47s, new web gear who walked past the team's position. At 1235H, the team observed 2 NVA that moved past them. The NVA spotted the team and the immediate contact resulted in 2 NVA KIA, and within minutes the team received a heavy volume of small arms and automatic weapons fire from their south. The team returned fire and began moving towards a LZ. At 1300, the team was hit by automatic weapons fire resulting in 3 USMC WIA. At 1305, the team called for an extraction force and emergency extraction. At 1430H, the extraction force married with the team and moved to the HLZ for extraction. At 071530H, the helicopter, while attempting extraction, received heavy .50 caliber fire forcing the helicopter to land. Following fixed wing air strikes and ordnance delivered by an AO in a OV-10 on enemy positions, at 1630 the helicopter attempted extraction, but was shot down by heavy fire from a dual barrel .50 caliber. At 080600H, 2 NVA were observed moving up a trail from the north toward the extraction force po-

[3827] 3rd MarDiv ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 14.

sition.[3828] Second Platoon of C/1/9 became OPCON to B/1/4 and had been helilifted at 080930H into LZ Beaver to assist Recon Team BELMONT TONES.[3829] At 090430H, the extraction force married with a SPARROW HAWK reaction force, and at 102020H medevacs were extracted from LZ Beaver (XD862648) as the helicopter took .50 caliber. At 121400H extraction force escorted the team to LZ Catapult where they were extracted at 121700H.[3830]

Team 2A1 had observed bunkers at XD852668, had captured 2 NVA POWs (who later died), and received heavy small arms fire on 7 and 8 June. At 081815H, the team received AK-47 fire resulting in 1 Marine KIA. At 1930H, a helicopter attempting an extraction received heavy AK-47 fire and the helicopter pulled off. Another helicopter extract attempt met the same fate. Then, at 090130H, a gunship attempted an extraction and was forced to pull out by heavy AK-47 fire. At 091130H, a SPARROW HAWK reaction force married with the team and at 110100H, the team was extracted after being escorted by the Sparrow Hawk to a new LZ.[3831]

1/Lt McLean was the stepson of Jimmy Stewart, the famous actor, who served as a pilot of a B17 in WW II and graduated from Princeton University. When he was 41, he married Gloria McLean and adopted her two sons, Mike and Ronald. Ronald was born in 1944, so he was 5 when Jimmy Stewart became his father. The influence on the young Ron must have been profound. When he was 11, his father, Jimmy Stewart made a movie called "Strategic Air Command" in 1955, the height of the "Cold War." (USAF enlistements doubled after the movie was released).[3832]

12 JUNE 1969

LOVETT, PFC Terry Wayne	**D/1/9**
PALMIERI, PFC David Harold	**D/1/9**

At 1000H, 1/9 (-) was lifted from VCB with Co D/1/9 and H&S/1/9 going to FSB Cates (XD927437) and Co C and D to Hill 715. At 2215H at XD920420, D/1/9, while setting in an ambush, exploded a booby trap hung in the trees and suffered 2 KIA and 4 WIA.[3833]

15 JUNE 1969

SHATTUCK, PFC Harold Leon Jr. H/2/4

A LP from H-1 was attacked by 10-12 NVA at XD951629 with satchel charges, ChiCom grenades and small arms resulting in 1 KIA and 9 WIA.[3834]

18 JUNE 1969[3835]

BOYER, PFC Michael David	**C/1/9**
CARR, PFC Robert George	**C/1/9**
CHARLES, LCPL Edward William	**C/1/9**
CRUZ, LCPL Frank	**C/1/9**
CURRY, SP4 Roy Jerry	**B-1-61**
DIEHL, PSGT Harry G	**B-1-61**
DOLVIN, SGT James Richard	**B-1-61**
EMMERT, SP4 Charles William	**B-1-61**
GRAHAM, SGT Robert Lee	**B-1-61**
GRIFFIN, PFC Walter Joe Louis	**C/1/9**
HENNESSEY, SP4 James Dale	**B-1-61**
HODGE, SSG Michael Leonard	**B-1-61**
HUNTER, SP4 Charles Louis	**B-1-61**
LETSON, 2/Lt Gary Wayne	**C/1/9**
MARC AURELE, SP4 Lionel Lucien	**B-1-61**
MIRAMONTEZ, CPL Enrique	**C/1/9**
NAUGHTON, HN Thomas Daniel Jr.	**C/1/9**
NARVAEZ, SGT Paul Reyes	**B-1-61**
OROSCO, PFC Stephen	**A/1/9**
REZENDES, HM3 Paul Allen	**C/1/9**
SMITH, SP5 Joseph Frederick Jr.	**D-1-61**

On 13 June, 2nd Bn, 2nd ARVN Regiment lifted into LZ Cokava (XD9049) and began to operate to the west. On 15 June, D/1/9 moved to LZ Horn (XD8948) to guard the flank of Task Force Mustang, a 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Div (Mechanized) infantry and armor column which moved west on Route 9. By 16 June, TF Mustang, consisting of B-1-61, C-1-61, and B-1-77, was operating from LZ Horn to the area southwest of Khe Sanh. The NVA reacted to this thrust by conducting a series of night attacks against them, the first being on 18 June. Between 0335-0530, B-1-61, in their night defensive position at XD837379 (about 200 meters southeast of the former Khe Sanh ville), was attacked by an estimated 80-100 NVA which commenced with a heavy volume of small arms fire and 60mm mortars from the west followed by RPG fire and a ground attack. The enemy broke through the perimeter and B-1-61 became involved

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[3828] 3rd Reconnaissance Bn ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), pp. 10-11.
[3829] 1/4 ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 15; 3rd MarDiv ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 13.
[3830] 3rd Reconnaissance Bn ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), pp. 10-11.
[3831] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[3832] Information supplied by Richard Delotto, letter postmarked 27 Feb 2007.
[3833] 1/9 ComdC June, 1969, p. 18.
[3834] 2/4 ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), pp. 9-10.
[3835] Although the Coffelt database indicates units for Boyer, Charles, Cruz, Miramontez, Naughton, and Rezendes as either "1/9" or "3rd MAF," a letter from Philip Herrea of 8 June 1998 indicates they were all with first squad, 3rd Platoon, C/1/9. Herrea had been the point man for the unit but had been medevaced either one or two days previously.

in heavy close combat. At 0430, air support arrived and by 0530 the enemy had withdrawn leaving 11 bodies inside the wire and 30 outside. One POW was captured. B-1-61 lost 11 KIA and 15 WIA (evacuated).[3836]

At 0400H, an ambush set by C/1/9 at XD861369 (about 1500 meters southeast of the former Khe Sanh ville) was approached on 2 sides by an estimated 6-10 enemy. The ambush threw grenades at the noise of the enemy and the enemy withdrew. At 0700H, Companies "A" and "D" received small arms fire at XD883383 and suffered 1 KIA and 6 WIA. The area was searched and yielded magazines, grenades, RPG rounds, etc. At 1030H, Co C/1/9 encountered a well-entrenched and camouflaged enemy .50 cal machinegun position with automatic weapons. The patrol aggressively assaulted the position, knocked out the gun, and killed 4 NVA. The enemy then began to outflank the squad which withdrew while the remainder of the platoon retrieved the dead and wounded. Soon the entire platoon was under fire and the rest of the company assaulted the enemy position. C/1/9 suffered 9 KIA and 14 WIA.[3837]

20 JUNE 1969

JOY, SGT Richard Dennis	**B-1-61**
LONG, 1/Lt William Louis	**B-1-61**
PARKER, SSG James Edward	**B-1-61**

B-1-61 and B/1/9 in coordinating operations at XD827385 were hit by 3 ground attacks during the morning hours resulting in 2 KIA, 12 WIA (evacuated), 27 NVA (confirmed) and 2 NVA POW.[3838]

22 JUNE 1969

1 unidentified from H/2/4

2nd Platoon of H/2/4 made contact with an enemy force of unknown size at XD963651 and suffered 1 KIA and 6 WIA (evacuated).[3839]

23 JUNE 1969

[*During the period 23-30 June 1969, 3/9 made very extensive contact. Inserting 3/9 near Huong Hoa (XD864376) and sweeping to Lang Hole (XD871308), extensive contact was made with the 4th and 6th Battalions of the 27th Regiment. Night probes and attacks were common; almost every company was hit each night, and Lang Hole was estimated to be a NVA regimental staging area because of the numerous bunkers and heavy resistance encountered in the area.*[3840] *Operation CAMERON FALLS terminated 0600 on 23 June 1968.*[3841] *Operation UTAH MESA commenced 230700H with 3/9 under OPCON of the Army.*[3842]]

3 unidentified from K/3/9[3843]

K/3/9 at XD868361 (about 1500 meters directly south of "Huong Hoa") was attacked by an estimated force of 2 NVA platoons and suffered 3 KIA and 14 WIA (evacuated).[3844]

24 JUNE 1969

HINSCHBERGER, PFC Lawrence K.	**K/3/9**
JANNETTA, CPL Rodney Alan	**K/3/9**
PEREZ, PFC Jesus Albert	**K/3/9**

At 0123H, K/3/9 at XD868360 received approximately 50-60 RPGs, ChiCom grenades, and small arms fire from the southwest. The Marines returned small arms fire, 60mm, arty illum, and 81mm mortars, but continued to receive fire at 0300. The ambush made contact and had 1 PRC-25 [radio] blown away. All members of the ambush returned. At this point there were 15 WIA; none were serious. At 0425H at XD869361, K/3/9 received 4 60mm mortars from the west. Spooky gave outstanding coverage of the area and 29 NVA bodies were counted outside the wire. K/3/9 searched the area at 0645H found 1 USMC KIA previously listed as MIA, 12 NVA KIA, a RPG launcher, 2 RPD machineguns, 50 ChiCom grenades, and 3 rifle grenades. At 1230H, K/3/9 initiated contact with an estimated 10 NVA. After the contact, a squad size ambush (K2A1) was hit with RPGs from the west and south by an estimated 2 NVA squads triggering an attack against KILO Company which were assaulted by an estimated 2 platoons of NVA. Results of the contact included 3 KIA, 14 WIA, and 29 NVA KIA.[3845]

27 JUNE 1969

3 unidentified

[3836] 3rd MarDiv ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), pp. 15-16.
[3837] 1/9 ComdC June, 1969, p. 19; 3rd MarDiv ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 16.
[3838] 3rd MarDiv ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 16.
[3839] 2/4 ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 10. The Coffelt database indicates 2 KIA from "3rd MAF:" PFC James Edward McMahon and PFC Walter Ray Miller, Jr.
[3840] 3/9 ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 7.
[3841] 3/9, AAR Opn CAMERON FALLS, p. 8.
[3842] 3/9 ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 21.
[3843] The Coffelt database lists 4 KIA with a unit identification of "3rd MAF:" PFC Paul Davis Jones, PFC Charles Edward Kuhn, PFC George Dennis McClelland, and PFC Robert Cleven Williams.
[3844] 3rd MarDiv ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 16.
[3845] 3/9 ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 21; 3/9 AAR Opn CAMERON FALLS, S3 Journal, 240645H-260050H June, 1969, Ser #229-231.

On 26 June, with 3/9 (-) operating east of LZ Snapper, B-1-61 and I/3/9 moved to FSB Tenaru (XD8235) (half-way between the former Lang Vei Special Forces Camp and the former Khe Sanh village). At 170600, FSB Tenaru was attacked from 3 directions by 2 NVA companies using mortars, RPGs, machinegun and small arms fire causing 3 friendly KIA and 17 WIA (evacuated) while the NVA lost 22 KIA (confirmed), 1 POW, 9 RPGs, 20 AK-47s, 1 SKS and 1 Russian radio.[3846]

28 JUNE 1969

CINCOTTA, PFC Thomas Antone L/3/9

At 1115H, Co L/3/9 at XD865322 (about 5 clicks directly south of "Huong Hoa") made contact with 10 NVA. The Company spotted NVA on a hill and opened up with small arms and automatic weapons fire, and the NVA returned fire with small arms, RPGs and ChiCom grenades. The AO on station called in fixed wing. At 1715 at XD866324, L-2 started up the hill to XD866324 and made immediate contact which intensified as they progressed. L-2 and L-3 remained in contact due to closeness of the action, 15-30 meters which precluded use of air on the NVA who were in heavily fortified bunkers and fighting holes connected by trench networks. The Marines withdrew to consolidate but maintained pressure on the area. Results of the action included one Marine KIA (body not recovered) and 10 WIA (all evacuated). At 1715H, at XD865324, L-3 crossed a stream and noticed a hill with fresh steps in a trail leading to the top. L-3 formed a platoon line and crawled to the top and as they reached the summit the NVA opened fire. The platoon dropped their packs and attempted to move forward receiving heavy AK-47, .50 cal machine gun fire and ChiCom grenades. Air and arty were called. K-2 was committed to the attack on the left and became engaged to their front. At this time it became apparent that Co L was engaged on 3 separate hills adjoined by a ravine. Shortly after fixed wing was on station, but could not be employed due to close proximity of friendlies to the enemy, although air continued to strike bunkers on the reverse slope of the hills. The fire fight continued until about 1600H. The aggressiveness of the Marines and the premature firing by the NVA which prevented the troops from complete entry into the complex averted a disaster as the enemy was well fortified and armed in mutually supporting positions. The 1 USMC KIA could not be retrieved since he was positioned in a cross fire between supporting bunkers. 3 attempts to recover him resulted in 1 WIA who managed to get a hand on the body. Results of the contact: 2 WIA, 14 NVA KIA (probably 12 more).[3847]

[*During July, 1969, Operation HERKIMER MOUNTAIN, involving 3 battalions, continued to operate in the extreme northwest portion of the Khe Sanh battlefield (9 May – 16 July), followed by Operation ARLINGTON CANYON, involving 1 USMC battalion (from 3 July), and Operation UTAH MESA with 1 USMC battalion and 1 USA battalion (operated 12 June – 9 July 1969).*[3848] *As of 31 July 1969, the entire western area of the Khe Sanh battlefield was designated "3rd Marine Division Recon Zone."*[3849]]

02 JULY 1969

VORENKAMP, PFC David R. G/2/4

G-2 of 2/4 while on a routine patrol detonated a booby trap wounding 4 Marines. As medevac helicopters attempted to land at XD945632, it came under small arms fire and was forced to land at XD948632 and as the Marines were trying to secure the LZ, they suffered 1 KIA and 1 WIA. G-1, while moving to support G-2 had 3 heat casualties who were medevaced as G-3 continued to G-2's position. All medevacs were moved to a new location and successfully extracted.[3850]

06 JULY 1969

DELISLE, PFC Rodney Jerome F/2/4
LOOMIS, PFC Rickie Allan F/2/4

F-2, while on a routine patrol, entered a NVA "L-shaped" ambush site occupied by 15 NVA who detonated 4 claymore mines. The platoon came under intense small arms fire at XD925626 and suffered 2 KIA and 9 WIA.[3851]

[*Task Force HOTEL was deactivated on 8 July 1969, terminating a 16-month period in which it was the control headquarters for the 3rd Marine Division's mobile helicopter borne operations in the mountains north, south, and west of Vandegrift Combat Base. The deactivation was the result of the President's decision to withdraw the 9th Marines and supporting units from Vietnam to Okinawa.*[3852] *COMUSMACV had directed III MAF to begin preparations for redeployment of the 9th Marine Regiment and other ground and air units and detachments to be completed by 31 August with the first of three increments scheduled for redeployment during 13-29 July. On 23 June, 1/9 "stood down" from offensive*

[3846] 3rd MarDiv ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 16.
[3847] 3/9 ComdC June, 1969, Encl (1), p. 22; 3/9 AAR Opn CAMERON FALLS, S3 Journal, Ser #254 and 256.
[3848] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, July, 1969, p. 1.
[3849] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[3850] 2/4 ComdC July, 1969, Encl (1), p. 9.
[3851] 2/4 ComdC July, 1969, Encl (1), p. 10.
[3852] "Task Force HOTEL," in 3rd MarDiv ComdC July, 1969, Encl (1), Para 20, pp. 62 and 66.

operations and moved to Vandegrift Combat Base to prepare for embarkation.[3853]]

09 AUGUST 1969

DES LAURIERS, LCPL Philip Gene F/2/4

F-1 of 2/4 sent out a squad-sized patrol that initiated contact with an enemy unit of unknown size at XD898618 resulting in 1 USMC KIA.[3854]

12 AUGUST 1969

2 unidentified from E/2/4

E-3 was attacked in their night position at XD855600 by an estimated 15 NVA sappers. The perimeter came under intense AK-47 small arms fire with sappers throwing satchel charges and ChiCom grenades, causing E/2/4 to suffer 2 KIA and 5 WIA (medevaced). A CH-46 helicopter, while attempting to land and evacuate the medevacs came under AK-47 fire as sappers again attempted to penetrate the perimeter using satchel charges and grenades. E-3 immediately took the NVA under small arms fire, called in and adjusted 81mm and 60mm mortars, and caused the NVA force to withdraw. A medevac chopper using gunships and Spooky with illumination landed inside the perimeter and successfully evacuated all casualties. After the medevac was completed, Spooky fired in a 360° pattern around the Marine perimeter.[3855]

20 AUGUST 1969

EVERETT, PFC Bobby Joe	**H/2/4**
GARLO, PFC Michael	**H/2/4**
ORTIZ, LCPL Randall Isaac-Jed	**H/2/4**

H-1, while on a routine patrol, found fresh foot prints and propaganda leaflets dropped by the enemy. H-1 continued to move and was ambushed in the vicinity of XD920626 by an unknown-size enemy unit using claymores and grenades followed with small arms fire. Three Marines were killed and 8 wounded.[3856]

27 AUGUST 1969

MC MURRAY, 1/Lt Peter Hinchman CCN

"While I was on Co Roc[3857] there was a frequency on ourPRC-25 radios that you could hear news on. When the first astronauts walked on the moon, I was sitting on Co Roc. It was a full moon night and it was about two o'clock in the morning and I was sitting up there and switched to that frequency. They were talking about the astronauts being on the moon. I'm sitting on a rock in Laos and these people were on the moon. It was a big, full moon, beautiful!"[3858] 6 men were lost on this patrol. The "Lieutenant was standing on the ground, trying to guide the helicopter in, standing right straight under it. The helicopter backed the tail rotor into a tree and it crashed, killing a couple people in the helicopter and also killing 4 people on the ground. The rotor blade hit them. There was only one American killed; the other five were indigo. The Lieutenant was Peter Hinchman McMurray. It would be right in there, a day or so, that the astronauts landed on the moon."[3859]

11 SEPTEMBER 1969

HELWIG, CAPT Roger Danny	**390th TFS**
STEARNS, CAPT Roger Horace	**390th TFS**

On 11 September 1969, Capt Roger D. Helwig, Aircraft Commander, and Capt Roger H. Stearns, Pilot, were flying a F4D (#66-7530, callsign STORMY 02) in a VR and arrived in the target area approximately 0950H, the target being a camouflaged truck at XD469415. They were joined by LARIAT (2 F-4E aircraft) and briefed on the target (elevation 750 feet, altimeter 29.65, a truck located on a bypass which looked like a protractor just north of the east leg of the horseshoe in the Xepone River). LARIAT had previously expended ordnance on another target and was directed by HILLSBORO (the ABCCC) to rendezvous with STORMY 02. STORMY-02 marked the position with a smoke rocket and immediately thereafter, as the nose seemed to rise slightly, vapor streamers were observed spurting from the top and bottom of its wings followed by bright spots or small pieces coming from both wings. The aircraft rolled to the right and exploded in a fireball as it impacted the ground in an almost completely inverted position in a mountainous and heavily forested area at about 1230H, crashing at XD472415 about 200 – 500 feet be-

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[3853] FMFPAC, *Operations of U.S. Marine Forces, Vietnam*, June, 1969, p. 14.
[3854] 2/4 ComdC August, 1969, Encl (1), p. 11.
[3855] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[3856] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[3857] "Co Roc is a granite ridge in Laos that runs along the border from XD725348 southeast to XD768321 and then south to XD753270. Varying in height from 850 meters to 515 meters above sea level the Co Roc is more than 300 meters higher than the Khe Sanh plain and the crest of the ridge is only one to three kilometers inside Laos." [HQ, 1st Inf Brig, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR Operation TF REMAGEN, 16 Mar 1969 – 29 Apr 1969, 4 June 1969.
[3858] Conversation with James Storter, 9 April 1997. Storter was a Capt in SOG at the time.
[3859] *Ibid.*

yond the target, approximately 15 kilometers east southeast of Tchepone.[3860] In May, 1990, a joint US/Lao team investigating the crash site recovered remains that were identified as those of Roger Stearns; no remains of Roger Helwig have been discovered.[3861]

21 SEPTEMBER 1969

BOWEN, PFC Grover	K/3/4
CECIL, SP5 Alan Bruce	CCN
JACKSON, LCPL James Wesley Jr.	L/3/4
SILVEIRA, LCPL Leonel Mendonca	H&S/3/4

CAPT Stephen C. Rutledge led his 4-man team from CCN, SOG, into Laos (XD414634) and, at approximately1500H on 21 September 1969, made contact. The team consisted of himself as team leader, SP5 Cecil as radioman, and two indigenous team members, Lam Quan Son and Phoung. Capt Rutledge spotted the approaching NVA, warned his men, and the NVA opened fire killing Phoung and seriously wounding him. He noticed Cecil in a sitting position approximately 3 – 4 feet from where he was laying. Cecil had taken a bullet wound one-half inch above his right eyebrow and brain matter and blood were flowing out of the wound. Since Captain Rutledge was seriously wounded and only one indigenous team member was effective, he felt he had no choice but to leave the bodies of the indigenous and Cecil and attempt to escape and evade the superior size enemy force. Phoung retrieved the radio. Shortly after leaving he heard AK-47 rifle fire in the location where he had left the bodies and assumed the NVA fired into them before searching them. Capt Rutledge and Lam Quan Son hid in a rocky cave and Rutledge made contact with an airplane at about 1930H. At 2130H the rescue helicopters arrived and 2 ropes were dropped. Rutledge fell down when the helicopter took off. The helicopters flew to a nearby valley, embarked Son, then flew back and located Capt Rutledge in a LZ.[3862]

L/3/4 was preparing to abandon FSB Russell and the company staged ammunition to be blown.[3863] The subsequent explosion blew out the whole side of the hill and collapsed a bunker.[3864] Two Kit Carson Scouts were totally burned.[3865] The scouts, Kalang and Thong (one was nicknamed "Portugal" by the Marines), were burnt beyond recognition.[3866] 1/Lt M. L. Ogilvie, Jr., remembers the scene: "It was the wreckage of an old hootch that burned down and it was still smoldering. There was wood ready to fall. I looked closer and I saw that one definitely was not a body. I saw more of the one on the other side, and I would say definitely that was one body. Then I looked around the rest of the area, and closer to me than that one was another body lying prone. It looked like the remains of a body to me. I can say I was positive that it was the remains of a body. They were both fairly complete skeletons. The first one I saw [was] a rib cage, just complete bones, nothing else at all. The other one I saw closer to me was lying prone on its back. I don't believe it was entirely complete. I just saw the rib cage, but I could definitely tell that it was a human rib cage. It looked a little jagged on the edges.. It was a form of rib cage. The building was smoldering, and this was an area where rounds had been going off, so I didn't get any closer."[3867]

Two Marines died of 100% burns:[3868] Silveira, a S-2 Scout from H&S Co., and Grover Bowen, a scout-sniper from Hq, 4th Marines.[3869]

LCPL James W. Jackson, Jr., stopped HM3 Lannie D. Gray and said, "My back is hurt." Gray lifted up his shirt, spotted some blood on his back, and applied a battle dressing.[3870] SSGT Blaine Wiltse, the Platoon Sergeant of L-1, helped put Jackson on board the medevac helicopter, noting his back injury.[3871] "We picked him up, carried him inside the helicopter, and put him down on the floor... I tried to talk to him .. but he just didn't seem to be aware of what was going on. He said no words.. Right after we put him aboard, I remember seeing Doc

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[3860] Circumstances of Loss, Case 1488 (data as of 1 March 1976); Narrative, Case 1488-0-01 and 02; Report of Deatgh, Case #10, 8 Sep 1970, USAF Form 484 (Personal Data, Mission Data, Summary); Statement of LtCol Ralph L. Brooks, USAF, all in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #306, Folder #173 (Helwig).

[3861] Hobson, Ralph, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 189.

[3862] Statement of Capt Stephen C. Rutledge; Statement of Lam Quan Son of 24 Sep 1969; Biographic/Site Report as of 25 June 1984; Silver Star Medal Citation (posthumous) for SP5 Alan B. Cecil, all documents in Library of Congress, MIA microfilm Reel #299, Folder #89.

[3863] Statement of SSGT Blaine Eugene Wiltse, p. 39 in Hq, 3rd MarDiv: Formal investigation into circumstances surrounding the fire and premature explosion of alleged artillery ammunition on or about 1300 hours on 21 September 1969, at Fire Support Base Russell, 17/HMH/rar, 5830, 10 Jan 1970, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #301, Folder #119. (Hereinafter referred to as 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970). Wiltse was the Plt Sgt of L-1.

[3864] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

[3865] Statement of MAJ John E. Seeburger, Jr., in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, p. 11.

[3866] Statement of SSGT Wiltse in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, p. 11.

[3867] Statement of 1/Lt M. L. Ogilvie, Jr., in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, p. 57.

[3868] Statement of HM3 John H. Bennett, in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, p. 7.

[3869] Statement of LCPL Michael W. Desmond, in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, p. 19. Desmond was the company radioman of L/3/4.

[3870] Statement of HM3 Lannie D. Gray, in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, pp. 5, 54.

[3871] Statement of SSGT Blaine Eugene Wiltse, in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, pp. 4, 39.

Gray go aboard. Then they raised the ramp and the bird took off."[3872] The other Marine helping Jackson aboard the medevac was LCPL Michael W. Desmond, the company radioman for L/3/4, who testified that Jackson "had a back wound and he was still conscious."[3873]

The 3rd Medical Battalion handled over 60 wounded men on the 21st,[3874] but the triage log did not have the name of Jackson[3875] and HM3 Robert S. Hall, the assistant supervisor of the 3rd Med Triage, was unable to locate any record of J. W. Jackson in any of their files.[3876] HM2 Donald J. Douglas, assigned to the triage on 21 September testified, "Jackson's name would not go on the triage log" until after his dog tags had been removed, and if he had been flown to the hospital ship, no record would have been made.[3877] HM2 Douglas further recalls treating a "Jackson" who had a back injury and thinks he was sent to the hospital ship.[3878]

LtCol W. S. Daniels of the 3rd Marine Division G-1 staff testified at the Investigation: "I will give an opinion. This opinion was based upon having studied this case continually since the 31st of October. My opinion is there has been a very definite absence of any tangible, substantive, information that would support where Jackson might be... My conclusion.. is that he is at large, without authority... If Jackson had changed identities completely with someone, then where did that someone go?"[3879]

All hospitals in the Western Pacific area were queried, but none had admitted or treated Jackson. All commands in Vietnam were advised of Jackson's missing status, his description was broadcast over AFRTS [Armed Forces Radio and Television Network], and numerous bulletins were distributed throughout the Pacific area. None of these efforts yielded any clues as to Jackson's fate or whereabouts.[3880]

03 NOVEMBER 1969

BROWN, SFC William Theodore	RT Maryland
SHUE, SFC Donald Monroe	RT Maryland
WALD, SFC Gunther Herbert	RT Maryland

At about 1500H, Recon Team Maryland of MACV-SOG, a combined Vietnamese/American reconnaissance team, came under fire while in the vicinity of XD643674 (the northern slope of Hill 617 overlooking Route 92 which came from the site of the NVA B5-T8 headquarters for the Siege battle in early 1968 some 8 miles to the west and leads into the center of the DMZ, and the Houei Nam Xe River)[3881], Savannakhet Province, Laos.[3882] The team was waiting in a defensive position with 2 man positions about 3 meters apart in a circle about 7 meters across due to bad weather (raining).[3883] Approximately 30 NVA attacked Recon Team Maryland from the high ground to the east and southeast with 2 machineguns and numerous grenades. The ONE ZERO, SSG Wald, was hit in the chest nd right shoulder by a grenade while he was talking on the radio. The ONE TWO (SP4 Shue) was wounded by the same grenade in his left leg. The ONE ONE (SSG Brown) was hit by small arms fire just below the rib cage in the initial burst of fire.[3884]

The 3 Americans retained their emergency distress radios (URC-10) as well as their red and yellow smoke grenades, pen flares, and signal mirrors. There were no distress signals or calls from this area during the period 3-14 November 1969. NVA activity is extremely high in this area and they were capable of rendering adequate medical care for the wounded Americans if taken alive. Pong believed the Americans could still have been alive when he was forced to escape and evade the enemy.[3885]

Bad weather precluded re-entry of the area for recovery until 11 November 1969 at which time only some web gear belonging to the wounded soldiers was found, but nothing else.[3886]

02 JANUARY 1970

LINDSTROM, CAPT Ronnie George	25th TFS
WEST, CAPT John Thomas	25th TFS

On 02 January 1970, CAPT West, Aircraft Commander, and 1/Lt Lindstrom, Pilot, were flying a F4D Phantom in the trail aircraft (#66-8784) in a flight of 2 on a LORAN navigational aid validation mission from

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[3872] *Ibid.*

[3873] Statement of LCPL Michael W. Desmond, in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, pp. 8, 43.

[3874] Statement of HM3 Charles L. Lee, in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, p. 13.

[3875] in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, p. 12.

[3876] Statement of HM3 Robert S. Hall, in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, p. 13.

[3877] Statement of HM2 Donald J. Douglas, in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, p. 62.

[3878] *Ibid.*

[3879] Statement of LtCol W. S. Daniels, in 3rd MarDiv, Investigation, 10 Jan 1970, pp. 66-67.

[3880] "Summary of the Incident," MSPA-1-6-dns, 3040, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm, Reel #301, Folder #119 (Shue); MIA microfilm, Reel #345, Folder #43 (Brown)

[3881] 652nd Engineer Bn (Topographic), U.S. Army, Map Sheet 6342 IV, Series L7014, 1971.

[3882] Narrative, Case 1514-0-01 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #428, Folder #109.

[3883] Statement of Pong, (one of the team members), in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #428, Folder #109.

[3884] *Ibid.*; MIA Board Proceedings, Special Operations Augmentation (CCN), 29 November 1969, and Narrative, Case 1514-0-0-1, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #428, Folder #109.

[3885] MIA Board Proceedings, Special Operations Augmentation (CCN), 29 November 1969, Para. 9.e.-i., in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #428, Folder #109.

[3886] LtCol J. G. Cole, Chief, POW/MIA Affairs, Dept. of the Army, Letter of 28 June 1991.

Ubon, Thailand. At 13235H, after the lead aircraft, BANYON-01 pulled off target he was unable to make radio contact with Capt West (flying BAYNON-02). The flight leader notified LION CONTROL that he had lost visual and radio contact with his wingman and a search was initiated. At about 1345H, smoking wreckage of a F-4 was located by Maj Robert B. Plowden, Jr. flying a RF-4C (YO-YO-71) and CAPT Donald J. Ryan of 23rd TASS [Tactical Air Support Squadron] (NAIL-41) at XD548329, a densely wooded area, approx. 16 miles SE of Tchepone, Laos. A 100-square meter area was burned clear, and aircraft parts, smoking or burning, were strewn across the site. No signs of life were observed or emergency signals heard, and no parachutes were sighted. The FAC (Capt Ryan) remained in the area for about 20 minutes maintaining an electronic and visual search, without success. An organized search was not conducted.[3887]

12 MARCH 1970

SCULL, MAJ Gary Bernard MACV Advisor

Maj Scull was KIA 12.61 nautical miles from KSCB, MIA reference No. S156.[3888]

[On 18 March 1970, the 26th Marines participated in a farewell ceremony at the DaNang airfield completing a process that had begun in mid-February as 1st Marine Regiment assumed responsibility for portions of the defense of DaNang that had been the responsibility of the 26th Marines[3889] During a ceremony on 5 March, the 26th Marines were presented with the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with palm as a unit award.[3890] The Regiment, assigned to 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade in September, 1966, arrived in Vietnam in April, 1967, and had been presented the Presidential Unit Citation in ceremonies at the White House on 23 May 1968. On 20 October 1969, with the redeployment of the 3rd Marine Division, the 26th Marines became part of the 1st Marine Division and assumed control of the large area around DaNang.[3891] Because of the redeployment of the 26th Marines, the Marine portion of U.S. forces in I Corps now became less than those of the U.S. Army, and III MAF became subordinate to XXIV Corps.[3892]]

06 MAY 1970

BAXTER, WO Roger Bruce	**C-158 AHB**
BENNETT, CPL George Willy Jr.	**A-2-501**
CHAVEZ, SP4 Gregory Anton	**A-2-501**
DAY, CPL Douglas Wayne	**A-2-501**
DENTON, SSG Robert Anthony	**A-2-501**
FOUTZ, SSG Kenneth Lee	**C-2-501**
GORDON, CPL Lawrence Lee	**A-2-501**
HAWLEY, CPT Richard A Jr.	**E-2-501**
HERNANDEZ, SGT Frank Sanchez	**A-158 AHB**
KIER, SSG Larry Gene	**A-2-501**
KINNE, SSG Allen Gene	**C-158 AHB**
KIRK, WO Robert Lee	**A-158 AHB**
OGDEN, SSG David Ellis	**E-2-501**
POE, CWO Clifford Earl Jr.	**C-158 AHB**
REAGAN, SGT Dickie Walter	**E-2-501**
SNYDER, SFC Gary Foster	**A-2-501**
TERAN, SSG Refugio Thomas	**E-2-501**
VAN BEUKERIN, SP4 Ronald Dale	**A-2-501**
VESER, SGT Edward	**E-2-501**
WEISS, SP4 William Conrad Jr.	**A-158 AHB**
WIDEN, SGT John George	**A-2-501**
WILLEY, SSG John James	**A-2-501**
WORTHINGTON, CWO Richard C Jr	**A-158 AHB**
ZIEGENFELDER, SSG Frederick P	**A-2-501**

[All units subordinate to 101st Airborne Division]

[3887] Summary of Facts and Circumstances; Joint Casualty Resolution Center, Case 1543, Circumstances of Loss; Statement of Maj Robert B. Plowden, Jr.; and Statement of Capt Donald J. Ryan, in Library of Congress, MIA POW microfilm, Reel #301, Folder #120.

[3888] Charles W. Henley, Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Office, Dept of Defense, I-95/48170 dated 28 June 1995, providing a printout of all American War Losses within a 25 nautical mile radius of Khe Sanh city, "Analysis Data Report." No geographic location is indicated.

[3889] Melton, Maj William R. and Shulimson, Jack, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, Vietnamization and Redeployment, 1970-1971*, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, 1986, pp. 36-37.

[3890] "Honors Bestowed On 26th Marines," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 6:11 (13 March 1970) 1. Since III MAF also received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm, individuals of the 26th Marine Regiment should have been permitted to wear the fourragere, an ornament of cord worn on the shoulder, because of having received the award twice; however, only one award, that given to III MAF, was "officially" received. The award was received by the Secretary of the Navy for all III MAF units for 08 March 1965 through 20 September 1969. "Although individual unit awards were also presented in the field.. to preclude duplication of awards, SECNAV approved acceptance of only the III Marine Amphibious Force award." [CMC 261139Z/May74, ALMAR 47, Marine Corps Bulletin 1650]. Among the units receiving the award was the 9th Marine Regiment for service Jan-Dec 1968.

[3891] "26th Marines to Leave As Part of Phase III," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 6:4 (23 January 1970) 1.

[3892] "Command to Shift in I Corps Area," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 6:7 (13 February 1970) 1; "Operational Control Shifts in I Corps Tactical Zone," IIII MAF: *Sea Tiger* 6:12 (20 March 1970) 1.

On 06 May 1970, WO Robert Lee Kirk flew as pilot on a UH-1H helicopter (#68-15663) with CWO Richard C. Worthington, Aircraft Commander, SP5 Weiss as Crew Chief, and SGT Frank Hernandez as door gunner, in support of a combat operation. At 1145H, his aircraft and another UH-1H (#66-6706, crew: CW2 Poe, WO1 Baxter, SP4 Kinne, and SP4 Nohl) were in the process of dispensing a protective smoke screen between enemy positions and a formation of troop carrying helicopters which were landing infantry elements nearby. As the two aircraft completed their mission, they were engaged by a heavy volume of enemy automatic weapons fire. Both aircraft veered to avoid the hostile area. #663 hit the skid on the rotor blade of #707 which caused both to crash at XD968382. SSG Arthur D. Neal and his platoon rappelled into the crash site where Neal and his platoon medic, PFC Michael A. Higdon, located a body in a detached pilot seat, an empty chair next to it, another complete body, one half of a body (lower torso and legs), and a large amount of ashes which probably contained the remains of the two other bodies. SP4 Allen H. Nohl was the sole survivor, suffering second degree burns and abrasions.[3893]

At 0500H, FSB Henderson (YD081411) with A/2-501 Infantry defending, received mortars, RPG, small arms fire and satchel charges from an unknown sized enemy force followed by a ground attack resulting in 31 USA KIA, 1 US advisor KIA, 33 US WIA (evacuated), 2 US advisors WIA (evacuated) 2 USA MIA, 19 ARVN KIA, 45 ARVN WIA, 29 NVA KIA.[3894]

SP4 Refugio T. Teran was on the side of an ammunition dump on the side of the firebase which was hardest hit; his platoon was hit from the rear as well as from the front. The ammo dump itself was approximately 25 meters long by 30 meters side and included 3 105mm howitzers. A helicopter LZ was located on the other side of the position. Others in the same guard detail position included SP4 Ronald VanBeukerin, SFC Gary Snyder, and SP4 Dave G. Silva. Van Beukerin and Snyder (the NCOIC) were KIA along with the Officer in Charge, Lt Hawley, a West Point graduate, in a nearby bunker at the end of the ammo dump. SP4 Silva, who was next to Teran when the fighting erupted, ran from position to position, firing at the enemy. Beyond what damage the sappers caused directly, an artillery ammo dump just to the rear of his platoon's positions exploded causing further casualties and making an immediate search of the area impossible. When the search could begin the following day and friendly KIA were recovered, SP4's body could not be identified. Only 5 men out of 37 survived the attack. SP4 Silva stated it was his belief that Teran survived the attack by running into a tree line about 50 meters in front of the position, and states, "I could have reached safety in that manner, but chose to stay in my position."[3895]

23 MAY 1970

BARRY, WO George Francis Jr.	**A-158 AHB**
LANDERSHEIM, WO Larrie John	**B-52, 158**
MILLER, CPT Eugene Stuart	**A-158 AHB**
PERKINS, SP4 Stephen John	**A-158 AHB**
SOLDATO, MAJ Shane Nunzio	**B-52**
VAUGHT, SGT William H III	**A-158 AHB**

Detachment B-52 of 5th Special Forces [Project DELTA] (on Operation DELTA DAGGER) maintained 4 teams which were located at NDPs [Night Defensive Positions] XD881170 (Recon Team 7), XD872357 (Road Runner Team 101), XD952359 (Recon Team 10), and XD768284 (Road Runner Team 102).[3896] The Commanding Officer of Det B-52, Maj Soldato, was on a VR [Visual Reconnaissance] in the vicinity of XD912271 in a UH-1H (Tail No. 628) escorted by 2 AH-1G helicopters (tail Nos. 088 and 103) when his aircraft received unknown type fire at 1655H,[3897] crashed and burned resulting in 6 US KIA and 2 ARVN KIA.[3898] At 1715H, the Strike Recondo Platoon was inserted at XD912271 to secure the aircraft and search for survivors; they reported the aircraft had exploded and was a total loss with just part of the tail boom remaining. After searching, they found 8 bodies and extracted them by 1901H.[3899]

30 JUNE 1970

BELL, SSGT Marvin Earl	**40 ARRS**
DEAN, SSGT Michael Frank	**40 ARRS**
GOEGLEIN, MAJ John Winfred	**40 ARRS**

[3893] 101 Abn Div 070750Z/May70, Subj: Army Aircraft Combat Damage Crash Facts Message Report; DA Form 2496, Disposition Form, from CO, 158th Aviation Bn, to CG, 101st Abn Div, 10 May 1970; Statement of PFC Michael A. Higdon (D Troop, 2/17 Cav); Statement of SSG Arthur D. Neal (D Trp, 2/17 Cav); Statement of SP4 Allen H. Nohl of 19 June 1970; Biographic/Site Report; all documents in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #332, Folder #152 (Hernandez).

[3894] 101st Abn Div, G-3 Daily Journal, 6 May 1970

[3895] Statement of SP4 Dave G. Silva and other documents in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #314, Folder #95 (Teran).

[3896] B-52 LnO (Cpt Honaker) 232035H/May70, Operations/Intelligence Information message to 101 AbnDiv G2/3, in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 23 May 1970.

[3897] B-52 LnO (Cpt Honaker) 231930H/May70, Operations/Intelligence Information message to 101st Abn Div G2/3, in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 23 May 1970.

[3898] 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 23 May 1970. XD9127 is about 8 miles due south of the former Bridge Site manned by C/1/26 in July-August, 1968.

[3899] B-52 LnO (Cpt Honaker) 231930H/May70, Operations/Intelligence Information message to 101st Abn Div G2/3, in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 23 May 1970.

JENKINS, MSGT Paul Laverne 40 ARRS
SANDERS, CAPT William Stephen 23 TASS
SCHANEBERG, CAPT Leroy Clyde 40 ARRS

On 30 June, Capt Sanders, Pilot, and SSG Albert H. Mosiello, Observer, were flying in an OV-10A Bronco aircraft (#68-3807, call sign NAIL-44) on a Forward Air Controller mission. While responding to a call for help from an Army unit, NAIL-44 sustained battle damage and crashed in the area of XD616601. TSGT Mostello was rescued near XD615605.[3900] The aircraft had been hit in the cockpit and TSGT Albert H. Mostello ejected; the pilot did not eject probably due to wounds.[3901] It was while in the process of rescuing SSG Mosiello that Capt Schaneberg's aircraft was shot down.

Capt Shaneberg, Aircraft Commander, with Major Goeglein, Co-pilot, were flying in a HH53C (#68-8283, Call sign JOLLY GREEN-54) on a SAR [Search and Rescue] mission for NAIL-44 over Laos. After a smoke screen was laid, JOLLY GREEN-54 went in for an attempted extraction of one of the downed crew members from NAIL-44. He broke off because the smoke was too thick, but returned over the survivor, and then reported receiving heavy ground fire. As he attempted to climb away from the area, he was seen to burst into flames and crash. No parachutes were observed and no beepers were heard. The aircraft crashed at XD617617 (just south of the DMZ and 4 Km from the Lao/SVN border). Their remains were returned 24 March 1993 and identified 24 March 1995.[3902]
TSGT Mostello was rescued by another HH-3 SAR helicopter after tear gas had been dropped to keep NVA from him.[3903]

[*July, 1970: Franck McGee report on NBC-TV, 6:30PM: "In Vietnam, officials in Saigon claim that at least 358 North Vietnamese have been killed near Khe Sanh in an action extending over several days. The damage was inflicted by helicopter gunships, B-52 bombers and finally, by American and South Vietnamese ground troops.*[3904] *In an article of the time, "A flight of F-4B Phantoms from VMA-314 recently disregarded enemy small arms fire and accounted for 12 enemy dead and 21 bunkers destroyed 8 miles southeast of Khe Sanh." The strike was in support of an ARVN unit operating in the area. There were multiple thunderstorms in the area at the time with poor visibility and low clouds. An aerial observer marked the bunker complex with smoke and the Phantoms dove through a hail of small arms fire to deliver their ordnance.*[3905]]

[*On 10 July 1970, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued the large "Draft MACSOG Documentation Study."*[3906].]

[*On 21 August 1970, C/3-17 Cav, of 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry, engaged an element of the NVA 15th Engineer Company, 246th NVA Regiment, at XD855420 (the former water point site for KSCB during and prior to the 1968 siege battle), resulting in 10 NVA KIA and 1 NVA POW.*[3907]]

[*In response to heavy sensor activations in the vicinity of XD757357 on 07 October, a 3/C/1-11 SPARROW HAWK conducted an air assault on 08 October at 1730H to the vicinity of XD764357 (3 clicks west of the former Lang Vei USSF camp and just above Route 9) and received immediate small arms fire upon insertion resulting in 3 NVA KIA and no friendly casualties.*[3908]]

24 NOVEMBER 1970

MC INTOSH, WO Ian A/2-17

At 1110H at XD928222, a OH6A helicopter of A/2-17 at 25-feet AGL received 15-20 rounds of small arms fire, crashed, and burned.[3909] The pilot was picked up by a UH1H (which received intense small arms fire), but the observer remained MIA.[3910] WO Ian McIntosh was a Canadian citizen.

LAMSON 719

When veterans of the siege battle (early 1968) at Khe Sanh return, they sometimes become disorientated because the apparent runway doesn't correspond to what they recall. The reason is due to Operation LAMSOM 719 in which another, parallel, runway was constructed on the combat base. Mr. Gary Foster, supervising the upgrade of Route 9 in the early 21" Century, discovered the "old"

[3900] Circumstances of Loss, Case 1644, as of 26 February 1976, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #425, Folder #61 (Sanders).
[3901] Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 206.
[3902] 432TRW Udorn RTAFB, Thailand 090455Z/Jul70, 432TRW/OPREP-3/001, "Circumstances of Loss, Case 1643," Narrative, Case 1643-1-01 thru 05, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #336, Folder #194.
[3903] Hobson, *op. cit.*
[3904] *Current News*, 13 July 1970. (*Current News* is a compilation of news articles dealing with the armed forces, distributed within the Dept. of Defense to Public Affairs Officers).
[3905] LCPL Bill McClellan, "Phantoms Strike Near Khe Sanh," III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 6:27 (3 July 1970) 1.
[3906] J3M-1242-70, 16 July 1970, of 16 July 1970.
[3907] 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry, AAR for period 22 July 1970 to 29 Jan 1971, 14 March 1971, appended to 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech) AAR Opn WOLFE MOUNTAIN, 7 Feb 1971.
[3908] TF 1-11 AAR Opn WOLFE MOUNTAIN, 26 Feb 1971, pp. 12, 14.
[3909] 2/17 Cav 241255H/Nov70 Spot Report in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 24 November 1970.
[3910] 2-17 LnO 241128H/Nov70, Spot Report in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 24 November 1970.

runway overgrown with eucalyptus trees and coffee plants, and provided a detailed description of how to locate it.[3911]

Intelligence indicated the presence of a new Corps-level NVA headquarters, the "70B Front," sometime in October, 1970, which planned to launch an offensive with as many as 4 divisions to seize major portions of Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces, including Hue and Quang Tri City.[3912]

During December, 1970, and January, 1971, intelligence indicated a sharp increase in the amount of supplies moved into the southern Laotian areas known as Base Area 604, adjacent to Quang Tri Province. Operation LAMSON 719 was designed to interdict the NVA supply and infiltration route in southern Laos and northern Military Region I (Quang Tri Province).[3913] On 14 January 1971, a small planning group of selected key staff officers accomplished the initial planning for the Operation in a limited access area to prevent compromise of the plan. The XXIV Corps order was received on 23 January, and the Operation Order for 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech) was published on 26 January.[3914]

Operation LAMSON 719 (30 January – 6 April 1971) saw the fulfillment (but launched too late) of General Westmoreland's concept of a movement along Route 9 from Khe Sanh deep into Laos to sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail that had been formulated in late 1967 as Operation EL PASO.[3915] There were at least 4 veterans of the siege battle that participated in LAMSON 719: William Dabney (had commanded Co I/3/26 on Hill 881-S; now as a Major, was Senior Advisor to the 258th Vietnam Marine Corps Brigade[3916]), Tommy Steiner (had landed at the Old French Fort on 21 January 1968 as part of the 282nd AHC (Assault Helicopter Company) and in 1971 was a Major, still flying), Jerry Crews (had been S-2 at FOB-3 and now flew a UH-1H with A/101 AHB), and James White (who had been a Marine crewman with HMM-262 and now flew as a crewman with the 4th of the 77th ARA (Aerial Rocket Artillery), 101st Abn Div). John W. Ripley had served in L/3/3 in 1967, patrolling Route 9 to KSCB, and now was Advisor to the 5th Battalion and Brigade 258 of the Vietnamese Marines.[3917]

Operation LAMSON 719, named after the famous battlefield in North Vietnam were the Vietnamese decisively defeated an invading army from China in 1427,[3918] "was a combined American and South Vietnamese ground and air operation aimed at disrupting enemy troop and supply movement southward through Base Area 604 in Laos, and at achieving maximum destruction of enemy forces and stock piles in base areas within the area of operations. The operational area.. included Quang Tri Province.. and an adjacent area in Laos to the west to include the area around the road junction of Tchepone (XD271477)."[3919] The width of the AO varied from 10-20 kilometers north and south of Route 9 in Laos.[3920] The concept of the operation involved 4 phases. Phase I focused on clearing of Route 9 to the Laotian border and establishment of forward logistics bases at Khe Sanh (XD844417) and Vandegrift (XD998480), accomplished 30 January – 7 February. Phase II involved movement

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[3911] Foster, Gary, "The Khe Sanh Combat Base," Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #48 (Winter, 2001), pp. 23-28.

[3912] Sorley, Lewis, *A Better War*, New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1999, p. 231.

[3913] 101st Abn Div (Airmobile), *Final Report, Airmobile Operations in Support of Operation LAMSOM 719, 8 February – 6 April 1971*, Vol. II, Camp Eagle, Vietnam, 1 May 1971, p. I-1.

[3914] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR, Operation LAMSON 719, 19 April 1971, p. 6.

[3915] For information on Operation EL PASO, *Vide* Collins, John M., *Military Geography for Professionals and the Public*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1998, pp. 367-385. The AO for EL PASO extended further west, to Muong Phine, 20.5 km further west than Tchepone. Planning for EL PASO began in November, 1967.

[3916] Photo in Cosmas, Graham A, and Murray, LTCOL Terrence P., *U. S. Marines in Vietnam: Vietnamization and Redeployment, 1970-1971*, Ed. MAJ William R. Melton and Jack Shulimson, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Div, HQMC, 1986, p. 382.

[3917] Comments of Maj John W. Ripley in recorded tape of 1 March 1978 to Dr. Steven E. Ambrose, recorded tape of 27 July 1988 to Historical Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C.; Taped Comments of 09 Oct 1994.

[3918] Hung, Nguyen Tien, and Schecter, Jerrold L., *The Palace File*, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986, p. 42.

[3919] Hq, XXIV Corps, "An Assessment of the Performance of South Vietnamese Forces During Operation LAMSON 719 (30 January – 6 April 1971), p. 1. Tchepone, which fell 01 May 1961 and which became the occasion for American planning to land in Vietnam during Operation TULUNGUN in 1962 [*Vide*, pp. 9-10 of this book] now was to end American involvement in Vietnam, spelling the inability of South Vietnamese forces to protect the nation. Immediately upon the fall of Tchepone, the NVA began construction of a 80-mile north-south road linking Route 12 with Route 9 near Tchepone. [United States Intelligence Board Memorandum, *North Vietnamese Violations of the Geneva Agreements on Laos*, 24 June 1964, p. II-6. [CIA, MORI Doc ID 13429]. On 02 May 1961, an emergency meeting of the Republic of Vietnam's cabinet "determined that South Vietnam must take emergency countermeasures as a result of the overrunning of the Tchepone area along Route 9 by Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces. A South Vietnamese infantry battalion has been moved to the Laotian border where Route 9 enters South Vietnam, and on 4 May a 150-man special forces group, in civilian clothes, penetrated about six miles into Laos to aid Laotian government troops withdrawing eastward from Tchepone toward the border." [CIA, *Weekly Review*, 11 May 1961, MORI Doc ID 207620]. The South Vietnamese forces withdrew to the border on 23-24 May. [CIA, *Weekly Intelligence Weekly Summary*, MORI Doc ID 207623].

[3920] 101st Abn Div (Airmobile), *Final Report, op. cit.*, p. I-1.

of South Vietnamese forces assisted by American forces into Laos, establishment of fire support bases and the rapid advance to Tchepone, accomplished 8 February – 6 March. Phase III focused on consolidation of positions and systematic searching and destruction of base areas in the vicinity of Tchepone, accomplished 7-9 March. Phase IV was the withdrawal from Laos (10 March – 6 April).[3921]

The South Vietnamese forces included a total of 42 maneuver battalions of which 34 operated in Laos at some time during the operation, plus 15 artillery battalions (11 105mm, 4 155mm), 10 of which operated in Laos at some time, plus an assortment of various support units. The American component of the operation included 11 maneuver battalions with supporting elements under XXIV Corps, including the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) (4 airborne infantry battalions plus one air cavalry squadron); the 1st Brigade of the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) consisting of one infantry, one mechanized, and one armored battalion and one armored cavalry squadron; the 11th Brigade of the 23rd Infantry Division with 2 infantry battalions and one armored cavalry squadron; and other support forces.[3922]

On 29 January 1971, the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), reinforced with elements of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and the 23rd Infantry Division, spearheaded a drive to establish a major supply depot at Khe Sanh and to reopen Highway 9 from Dong Ha to the Laotian Border.[3923] On D-Day (31 January 1971), the 1st of the 5th Div (Mech) attacked into the Khe Sanh plateau and seized and secured Ham Nghi[3924] (XD8441) [the position formerly occupied by CAP O-3 in the summer and fall of 1967 prior to the siege battle, just outside the main gate of KSCB].[3925]

"A" Company, 7th Engineer Battalion (organic to the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (M)) had the mission of providing combat engineer support to the Division, and was also assigned the mission of opening Route 9 over approximately 23.5 kilometers. The road was started by A Co, 7th Eng Bn on 30 Jan 1971 with security provided by the 3rd Squadron, 5th Armored Cavalry Regiment. Equipment included 3 D7E bulldozers. A rough pioneer road named "Red Devil Road" was pushed to Khe Sanh on 8 February 1971, taking a total of 10 days to complete.[3926]

CSM [Command Sergeant Major] Steven J. Rogge described the move to Khe Sanh: "We moved out down route QL-9 towards Khe Sanh. The night was unbelievably dark and all the teams stayed bunched up pretty tight. The road hadn't been used for months so was extremely overgrown. And no one knew if the road was mined or not. Teams of engineer mine detector operators were leading the way and alternating, but we felt no confidence with this method of advancement, which seemed incredibly slow because of the overgrown brush, darkness, and unfamiliar territory. We were all on foot, walking, with the exception of a bull dozer and a APC or two up front. The whole scene was eerie."[3927] At 2130, 31 January 1971, the 27th Engineer Battalion (Combat) and attached units arrived by convoy at Khe Sanh where they immediately joined forces with Task Force 326 and attached units. Work was already proceeding on the sub-base preparation for the assault runway and repair of the existing AM-2 aluminum mat airstrip. Initial reconnaissance of the 3900-foot AM-2 matted airstrip led to the conclusion that it could be repaired quickly. Later photographs and research proved otherwise. The matting had been extensively damaged by artillery and rockets with well over 50 significant holes, along with significant sub-grade washout. Consequently, it was recommended that a parallel assault airstrip, 60-ft. by 3200-ft. be constructed and used until the permanent strip could be repaired.

After mine sweeps had been conducted throughout the entire length and breadth of the runway and EOD destroyed unexploded ordnance, repair of the strip began. On D+4 (03 Feb), the new, parallel 3200-ft. by 60-ft. assault airstrip was completed and ready to be tested. In 10 days, over 15,000 panels of MX-19 aluminum matting were transported to Khe Sanh and placed on the assault runway. On 14 Feb, the Khe Sanh air facility became operational. With the completion of the assault strip, emphasis was shifted to the (older) AM-2 runway. Working from west to east, the soldiers of Co A began removal and replacement of damaged panels and repair of damaged grade. A total of 1226 AM-2 panels were required to repair the AM-2 strip and construct connecting taxiways. The final phase of construction required assembly of a 350-ft. x 850-ft. parking apron. 1/591 Engineer Company (Light Equipment) moved 20,000 cubic yards of

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[3921] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[3922] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[3923] 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (M), AAR, Operation KEYSTONE ORIOLE (BRAVO), Annex K, Historical Synopsis, p. 105.

[3924] 101st Abn Div (Airmobile), *Final Report, op. cit.*, p. I-5.

[3925] The 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) traces its history to December, 1917, when it was organized. In May of 1918 the "Red Devils" saw action in the trenches of France, and in September, 1941, was sent to Iceland to protect that island from invasion. The Brigade arrived in Vietnam on 02 July 1968 at Wunder Beach, moved to Con Thien to conduct operations in "Leatherneck Square" and was placed OPCON under XXIV Corps and its AO encompassed Dong Ha, Cam Lo, Con Thien and Gio Linh with its TOC at QTCB (Quang Tri Combat Base at Ai Tu), Quang Tri Province. In the early part of 1969, elements of the Brigade conducted search and clear operations in and around Khe Sanh and the Laotian border

[3926] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR, Operation LAM-SON 719, 19 April 1971, p. 4, Para d.

[3927] Rogge, Steven J., "A Combat Engineer Squad Leader in Vietnam: A Firsthand Account," *The Army Engin eer* (August-September, 1994) 32.

earth and one platoon of Co A, C, and D, then began placement of 12,325 individual panels of M8A1 steel matting.

Meanwhile, on 01 February (D+2), the 1st and 2nd Platoons of the 591st Engineer Company (Light Equipment) with a squad from Co A, 27th Engineer Battalion (Combat) departed Khe Sanh with the mission of opening QL-9 westward to the Laotian border by D+5 (04 Feb). The mission included clearing a 50-meter width of jungle on either side of the road and construction of a parallel pioneer road whenever possible. The route was completely grown over with vegetation and all bridges had been destroyed.[3928]

Over 400,000 square meters of land were cleared at what was once KSCB (involving clearing over 8,000 land mines), after which defensive positions, helicopter pads, POL areas, refuel-rearm pads, helicopter leggering areas and access roads were constructed at and over 90,000 square meters of helicopter loggering area were constructed and peneprimed. An additional 85,000 square meters loggering pad was constructed at Lang Vei (XD795361). More than 90,000 gallons of peneprime was consumed for dust palliation purposes.[3929]

Co "A", 7th Eng Bn assisted in the construction of a brigade command post near Lang Vei and one near Khe Sanh, along with 4 fire support bases, a 1500 gallon per hour water point at Khe Sanh, and providing nearly 80 kilometers of new road in an area that before the operation had only QL-9 in areas where there had been no previous vehicular traffic, friendly or enemy.[3930]

04 February 1971

SOMERS, PVT Gregory S.	**A/2-17 Cav**

An unknown type mine was detonated at 1120H at XD845423 (1 KM northwest of Ham Nghi, about where the wire of the northwest perimeter of the former KSCB was located) killing one soldier from A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division.[3931]

05 February 1971

PAUL, WO James Lee	**D/3-5 Cav**
WOOD, WO Carl Mitchell	**D/3-5 Cav**

WO1 James L. Paul and WO1 Carl M. Wood of D/3-5 Cav in a AH-1G (#66-15340) flew into the side of a cliff northwest of Khe Sanh (at XD865443, about 1000 meters southeast of Hill 1015 overlooking KSCB). Their bodies were not recovered, but the aircraft was secured.[3932]

07 February 1971

SCHMALTZ, CPL Douglas Ralph	**A/4-3**
TROYANO, PFC Roland Dean	**A/4-3**

While moving to their night location at XD773497 (8 KM northwest of Ham Nghi), the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 11th Infantry Brigade at 1805H received small arms fire and grenades from 15-20 meters west of their location from an estimated 2-4 enemy personnel. Organic weapons fire was placed on the enemy soldiers who fled south. The contact resulted in the death of 2 American soldiers and 2 WIA.[3933]

08 February 1971

BENITEZ, PSGT Rafael Rivera	**C/1-61**
BOBO, SGT Charles Glen	**C/158th AHB**
DOODY, WO Thomas Patrick	**C/158th AHB**
FIRST, PFC Michael Bruce	**C/1-11**
FOX, CPT David Nelson	**B/7-1**
GENTRY, WO Robert Barry	**174th AHC**
ROBERTSON, CPL John Ernest	**B/7-1**
STEWART, CWO Paul Clark	**C/158 AHB**
TWOREK, SSG Gerald John	**C/1-11**

The attack into Laos was initiated on 8 February from bases established on the Khe Sanh plain. The Vietnamese 1st Armored Brigade Task Force crossed the border at 1000H at Ta Bat (XD699382) and advanced 9 KM westward along Route 9.[3934] During the day, 3351 troops were airlifted into Laos from Khe Sanh.[3935] The weather from 0900-1800 was drizzle, 1000-2000-ft. overcast, low scattered clouds, 3-7 mile visibility, and 53° - 63°.[3936]

[3928] Col W. O. Bachus, 27th Engineer Battalion (Combat), recommendation for the Award of the Presidential Unit Citation, 16 December 1971.

[3929] *Ibid.*

[3930] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR, Operation LAM-SON 719, 19 April 1971, p. 4, Para d.

[3931] 1st Inf Brig, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR Open LAM SON 719.

[3932] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994, p. 256); G-2 Ops 051700H/Feb71 in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 05 Feb 1971.

[3933] 1st Inf Brig, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR Open LAM SON 719; G-2 Fwd 080350H in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 08 Feb 1971.

[3934] 101st Airborne Div (Airmobile), *Final Report, Airmobile Operations in Support of Operation LAMSON 719, 8 February – 6 April 1971*, Vol. II, Camp Eagle, Vietnam, 1 May 1971, p. III-1; 101st Abn Div Fwd G-3 081430Z/Feb71, Subj: Summary of Op 08 Feb 71; in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 08 Feb 1971.

[3935] Anonymous, "LAM SON 719, 8 February 1971 to 25 March 1971, A Narrative Description," n.d., copy furnished by COL E. Davis, USA (ret) to Mr. Keith Nolan, 13 March 1984, p. 2.

[3936] G-2, Quang Tri msg 081920 in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 08 Feb 1971.

CW2 Stewart, Aircraft Commander, WO1 Doody, Pilot, SP4 Bobo, Crewchief, and PFC Robertson, Gunner, were flying in a UH1H helicopter (#68-16307, call sign CHALK-3) as the number three aircraft in a flight of 10 UH-1Hs in an insertion mission in Laos. During the mission, Stewart radioed the flight leader, Maj James W. Lloyd (who was leading a flight of 40 UH-1 aircraft on a combat assault into Laos), that his aircraft had sustained damage to the tail rotor controls from hits from ground fire. (His anti-torque pedals were jammed with full left pedal). He radioed that he was returning to the pickup zone near KSCB (along Route 9, XD835381). While enroute, Stewart transmitted, "I'm inverted—going in," and nothing further was heard. The flight leader then saw a column of smoke coming from the crash site (XD582368). A Cobra gunship team escorting the 10 UH-1H helicopters was flying near the tail end of the flight formation when the assault commenced. CW2 Russell D. Capps, flying as Team Lead in one of the 2 AH1G Cobra helicopters, heard that "Double Deuce" (W2 Stewart) had been hit and was returning to Khe Sanh. Then other aircraft reported taking fire and the Cobras suppressed the suspected area. Once again "Double Deuce" called and said he was in a spin and crashed. CW2 Capps was diverted by the C&C [command and control] to the crash site and located the burning aircraft, located in a heavily vegetated area adjacent a large river and approx. 500 meters west of a well-used road. While the wing aircraft (flown by CW2 Webb, Pilot, and Cpt Lopez, Copilot) covered him, Capps made passes over the wreckage until recovery aircraft arrived. While Capps laid down suppressive fire for the recovery aircraft, the crashed aircraft exploded, and Capps returned to Khe Sanh due to low fuel, convinced there were no survivors.[3937]

Stewart had earned the nickname "Mr. Invincible" due to his courage; he had just extended his Vietnam tour.[3938]

On 10 Feb 1971, CPT John A. Bottman, Aircraft Commander of a UH-1H (#611) assigned to Co C, 158th Aviation Battalion (Aslt Helo, Ambulance) received the mission to recover the bodies of the 4 crew from Co C, 158th Avn Bn and flew directly to the crash site (XD5836) after picking up body bags. He dropped the body bags and began directing a ARVN infantry unit towards the crash site, a process which took about an hour as he hovered 100 feet AGL (above ground level) about 20 minutes over the crash. (He was unable to land due to terrain and vegetation). The largest visible piece remaining was half of one of the cargo doors; the rest of the aircraft had been completely consumed by the fire. The bodies appeared to be badly burned; a fourth appeared to be just a lower torso. The ARVN unit reached the crash site and started searching the area. 4 charred bodies were recovered, and then 5 ARVN bodies that w2ere not burned or mutilated, passengers that were apparently thrown clear of the wreckage prior to the crash, were recovered.[3939] The remains of Doody and Bobo were positively identified, cause of death: total body burns. The remains of Stewart were not recovered.[3940]

A B/7-1 Cav command and control UH-1H received 12.7mm machinegun fire and took hits in the right side of the aircraft, caught fire, and crashed at XD583573. The CO of the unit sustained a broken leg and the crew chief was burned; Capt David N. Fox, Co-pilot, and Cpl John Robertson, the door gunner, were MIA, not found.[3941]

WO Robert B. Gentry of the 174th Assault Helicopter Company died while departing LZ HOTEL when his cockpit was hit by machinegun fire.[3942]

C/1-11 at 081145H at XD697395 (5 KM northwest of Ta Kut) received automatic weapons fire and grenades from an estimated squad which was on a hill resulting in 1 KIA and 1 MIA (SSGT Gerald J. Tworek and PFC Michael Bruce First).[3943]

2/C/1-61 received small arms fire and RPG rounds at 1456H while at XD954554 resulting in 1 KIA and 6 WIA.[3944]

09 FEBRUARY 1971

FELTON, SGT Melvin James	**C/8-4**
PAKELE, SSG Fred Dale	**A/1-61**
WHITNEY, PVT Blake Dominic	**C/8-4**

At 1235H, 2/C/1-61 received sporadic small arms fire resulting in 1 KIA and 3 WIA.[3945]

[3937] Joint Task Force—Full Accounting, Biographic/Site Report, as of 6 Jan 1993"Circumstances of Loss," 13 May 1975; Statement of MAJ James W. Lloyd, 20 Feb 1971; Statement of CW2 Russell D. Capps, 21 Feb 1971; and Statement of CPT William E. Lopez, 21 Feb 1971; all contained in Library of Congress, MIA microfilm Reel #425, Folder #63; 101 Avn Gp 081500, Ser #19 in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 08 Feb 1971., p. 257.

[3938] Nolan, Keith William, *Into Laos*, Novato, CA.: Presidio, 1986, p. 115.

[3939] Statement of CPT John A. Bottman, in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 08 Feb 1971.

[3940] AVDG-AGP-L (6 Mar 71) 1st End, Subj: Letter of Transmittal, in Library of Congress, MIA microfilm Reel #425, Folder #63; CDR JCRC Barbers Pt HI 192242Z/Jul91 in Library of Congress, MIA microfilm Reel #425, Folder #63.

[3941] XXIV Corps 081145 in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 08 Feb 1971, Ser #4; Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994)

[3942] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 257.

[3943] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR LAM SON 719; Letter from Keith Short in Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #51 (Fall, 2001), pp. 6-7.

[3944] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR LAM SON 719.

[3945] *Ibid.*

At 1335H, A/1-94 and C Battery, 8th Battalion, 4th Artillery Regiment at XD715375 (2 KM from Lang Ta Kut) received 20-25 unknown type incoming rounds which resulted in 1 ARVN KIA, 2 US KIA, and 5 US WIA.[3946]

Deteriorated weather conditions made flying impossible, forcing the cancellation of all air moves. An ARVN armored column, however, made use of the poor weather to push westward 20 kilometers inside Laos to Fire Base Aluoi (XD526399).[3947]

10 FEBRUARY 1971

BURROWS, Larry	Civilian
HUET, Henri	Civilian
PIETRZAK, SGT Joseph Ray	B/2-17
POTTER, Kent Biddle	Civilian
SHIMAMOTO, Kent Biddle	Civilian
ROBERTSON, WO Mark John	B/2-17

WO1 Mark J. Robertson of B Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division died in an OH-6A (#66-17765).[3948] The OH-6 "Loach" (or "little bird") was used as part of a "pink team" combining the "white" loach which darted over the terrain to locate the enemy, frequently by drawing fire to itself and then mark the target with a smoke rocket as a "red" AH-1 Cobra gunship or USAF fast-mover F-4 jet aircraft destroyed the target.[3949]

The first spot report indicated a flight from an unknown unit of UH1H without gun cover flew over XD565552. The first bird was shot out of the sky by 37mm and the 2nd UH1H had its rotor head blown off. Both aircraft were destroyed and there appeared to be no survivors.[3950]

Killed on the flight were four American photographers: Larry Burrows (44, *Life* magazine), Henri Huet (43, Associated Press), Kent Potter (23, UPI), and Keizaburo Shimamoto (34, *Newsweek*).[3951]

Two days earlier, James Newman, commander of C Troop, 2-17 Cav (call sign "Condor 6") had encountered NVA 37mm fire from a hillside where now he saw 4 UH1E helicopters venture. Newman attempted to warn the birds of the danger they were to face, broadcasting on all frequencies, but was unsuccessful. Other American pilots joined in the warning, but either the chopper pilots didn't understand English or they weren't turned on to the guard frequency. It was 1230 as Newman saw the orange balls of the NVA 37mm antiaircraft fire strike the lead helicopter's fuel tank, resulting in a horrible explosion, disintegrating the bird. Additional rounds tore off the rotor of the third helicopter and it plummeted to the ground. The other 2 choppers escaped and returned to Ham Nghi. Also killed in the choppers were several of General Lam's staff including a Colonel Nhat who carried a map case containing the maps, operation plans, and secret radio codes for LAM SON 719 and SGT Tu Vu, a South Vietnamese Army photographer.[3952]

Ironically, Larry Burrows, whose photographic eyes caught "the cruelty and brutality of war in the faces of his subjects,"[3953] had such deficient visual acuity that the British Army refused him for military service during World War II.[3954] Burrows was born Henry Frank Leslie Burrows on 29 May 1926, and nicknamed "Harry," which was changed to "Larry" by the Americans in London during WW II to which he seemed gravitated. Burrows covered the Vietnam War from the beginning and earned the respect of his peers.[3955]

Henri Huet was born in Dalat, Vietnam, the son of a French father and Vietnamese mother, and moved with them to France when 5. Starting out as a painter, he entered the Army and veered into photography, returning to Vietnam at the age of 22 as a French combat photographer. He remained in Vietnam following his discharge working for UPI and then AP. He gained a reputation as one of the world's best photographers and rapidly gained renown as a fearless-in-combat professional as he covered battles including Con Thien in 1967.[3956]

Kent Potter began working for UPI at 16. He is described as 6-foot-2, dark hair, pale blue eyes, liked cars and speed, and was a better than average student, played end on a football team, ran hurdles and sprints on the track team, and sang in the chorus of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. Then his mother asked him to go to the pharmacy to fill a prescription and she killed herself with an overdose of sleeping pills. The devastating loss of his mother, coupled with his father's undeserved hatred of his unwitting role in it, forced the young Potter into becoming a loner. His father, a pacifist, Kent joined the US

[3946] *Ibid.*

[3947] Anonymous, *Operation LAM SON 719, 8 February 1971 to 25 March 1971, A Narrative Description, n.d.*, p. 3.

[3948] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 259.

[3949] Pyle, Richard and Faas, Horst, *Lost over Laos*, Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003, p. 151.

[3950] Doc #3 in 101st Airborne Div G-3 Daily Journal, 10 Feb 1971.

[3951] Faas, Horst, and Page, Tim, *Requiem*, New York: Random House, 1997, p. 269.

[3952] *Ibid.*, pp. 152-155; Richard and Faas, Horst, *Lost over Laos*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

[3953] Faas, Horst, and Page, Tim, *Requiem, op. cit.*, p. 92.

[3954] *Ibid.*, p. 96; Pyle, Richard and Faas, Horst, *Lost over Laos*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[3955] Richard and Faas, Horst, *Lost over Laos*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-32. An entire book has been devoted to Burrow's Vietnam photography: *Larry Burrows Vietnam*, Intro by David Halberstam, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002. Included are photos taken at Khe Sanh during Operation PEGASUS, pp. 176-185.

[3956] *Lost over Laos*, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-66; *Requiem, op. cit.*, p. 316.

Marine Corps Reserve. Potter, in Vietnam working for UPI was summoned from Thailand to Saigon to cover the invasion of Laos.[3957]

Keisaburo Shimamoto was born in Seoul in 1937 during the Japanese occupation of Korea and returned with his family to Tokyo during World War II. He graduated from the prestigious Waseda University in Tokyo in 1959 with a major in Russian literature. In 1962, he became a photographer with the Pan Asia Newspaper Alliance (PANA) and covered the 1964 summer Olympics in Tokyo and from 1965 – 1967 covered military operations in Vietnam. In January, 1968, he signed on with the powerful French news agency, Gamma, and while on assignment to *Newsweek*, found himself at Khe Sanh as General Lam's helicopters were about to depart on 10 February.[3958]

12 FEBRUARY 1971

ENGLISH, PFC Steve Craig	A/4-3
MCLEOD, CWO Arthur Edward	C/2-17
MORAN, SP4 David Alfred	A/4-3
WILKINSON, CPT Clyde David	C/2-17

1st Platoon, Co "B", 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment was hit by a command detonated mine at 1005H at XD922553 (6 KM west of Combat Base Elliott) followed by small arms fire and artillery fire. 2/A/4-3 reinforced the first platoon and also received small arms fire and grenades, resulting in 2 KIA and 6 WIA.[3959]

WO1 Arthur E. McLeod, Pilot, and CPT Clyde David Wilkinson were flying an AH-1G Cobra (#68-17089) on a "heavy pink team." CPT Gary T. Swift was flying as pilot of a LOH. The mission was a VR [visual reconnaissance] in the vicinity of XD676488 where heavy enemy activity had been encountered the previous day. CPT Swift's first run was met with a large volume of automatic weapons and .51 cal. fire, and he marked the target with smoke to mark the target for the Cobras. WO-1 McLeod made 2 runs and on his second run reported that his oil cooler bypass light had illuminated and that he had felt a thump on his last pass, possibly taking a hit. He gained altitude and started back toward Khe Sanh. About 30 seconds later he reported that his engine oil temperature had gone up to 100° Centigrade. CPT Swift, following him, radioed to him, "48, you are trailing smoke," and there was no reply. Immediately flames started emerging from the pylon, and the nose dipped down into a shallow dive. The aircraft leveled out and entered a flare approximately 100 feet AGL [above ground level], exploded when about 4-5 feet off the ground, and crashed into a small hill at XD676488.[3960]

14 FEBRUARY 1971

COVERT, SGT Richard Dean Jr.	A/7th Eng
RUFF, PFC Ronald Calvin	A/7th Eng

"A" Company, 7th Engineer Bn was engaged while working in a stream crossing at XD8147 (about 2700 meters east northeast of Hill 861 and 2200 meters northwest of Hill 558) by small arms fire and RPG rounds resulting in 2 KIA and 3 WIA.[3961]

[*On 14 February 1971, Gen Abrams, COMUSMACV, sent a TOP SECRET SPECAT EXCLUSIVE message to Adm Moorer (CJCS) and Adm McCain (CINCPAC) giving his personal appraisal of the progress of LAM SON 719. He noted "execution to date has been somewhat more dliberate than originally envisioned. Three reasons appear paramount: first, General Lam considered it prudent to insure adequate flank security including establishment of fire support bases along Highway 9. Second, the roads on the Laotian side of the border were in far worse condition than expected with many erosion cuts twenty feet deep. Third, General Lam is determined to secure his lines of communication on the ground against the contingencies presented in Washington... The objective of the operation remains to achieve maximum disruption of the enemy system within Base Area 604. A prime purpose of the operation was to sever the enemy LOC, and by cutting and controlling Route 92, this has to a certain degree been accomplished as evidenced by the equipment and supplies already uncovered.... The relatively high AAA threat in the AO resulted in certain helicopter losses. However, these losses have been less than anticipated considering the total helicopter sorties flown to date... The deeper heliborne thrusts will be resumed when the ARVN leaders are convinced that their flanks, rear, and LOC are secure and that their forward supply posture is adequate.*[3962]]

15 FEBRUARY 1971

BURKE, WO Joseph Scott	B/2-17
COBB, SGT James Paul	B/2-17
CONCANNON, CWO Richard Neil	B/2-17
CREAR, SP4 Willis Calvin	C/159 ASHB[3963]

[3957] *Lost over Laos*, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-126; *Requiem*, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

[3958] *Lost over Laos*, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-142; *Requiem*, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

[3959] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR Opn LAM SON 719, 19 Apr 1971.

[3960] Statement of CPT Gary T. Swift, 12 Feb 1971 and Statement of CW-2 John R. Shimo in Library of Congress, MIA microfilm Reel #335, Folder #177; Spot Report 121345 in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 12 Feb 1991.

[3961] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR Opn LAM SON 719, 19 Apr 1971.

[3962] MACV msg 141435Z/Feb71.

[3963] ASHB = "Assault Support Helicopter Battalion."

CRONE, SP4 Donald Everett	**C/159 ASHB**
FIVELSON, WO Barry Frank	**C/159 ASHB**
JOHNSON, SP4 Zebulon Murphy	**B/2-17**
LEONARD, CWO Marvin Maurice	**C/159 ASHB**
POWERS, SP4 John Lynn	**C/159 ASHB**
TAYLOR, 2/Lt James Harry	**C/159 ASHB**

2/Lt James H. Taylor (aircraft commander), WO1 Marvin M. Leonard (Pilot), SP4 Donald E. Crone (crew chief), SP4 Willis C. Crear (door gunner), SP4 John L. Powers (flight engineer), and WO Barry F. Fivelson (passenger) were aboard a CH-47C Chinook helicopter (#18506, call sign REGARD 25) on a combat support resupply mission when it caught fire and exploded in mid-air, and crashed in the vicinity of XD528405. Witnesses who observed the incident stated that the helicopter appeared to be disoriented in that it had overflown the nearest friendly location by several miles, and just prior to the incident, began descending into enemy-held territory. During the descent, the sling load apparently exploded causing the helicopter to explode, break into two pieces, and then crash. The cause of the explosion and crash is unknown.[3964]

2/Lt Taylor had just received a direct commission and WO1 Fivelson "was just a kid, a new guy. We had used him as a LNO [Liaison Officer] at Khe Sanh for some time. He was riding on this trip as an observer, getting his feet wet, taking pictures."[3965]

16 FEBRUARY 1971

CARTER, PFC James Basil	**D/4-3**
SIMON, SP4 James Martin	**D/4-3**
STAFFORD, SFC James Hubert	**D/4-3**

At 0715H, D/4-3 at XD920528 was engaged with small arms fire by an estimated 15 NVA as the unit was preparing to move from their NDP [night defensive position] resulting in 3 KIA and 1 WIA.[3966]

18 FEBRUARY 1971

BAKER, SSG Richard Thomas	**HMH-463**
BERG, CWO George Phillip	**A/101st AvBn**
BROWN, CWO Joseph Gordon	**48th AHC**
CRANDALL, WO Gregory Stephen	**C/2-17**
DEMPSEY, SP4 Walter Edward Jr.	**A/101st AvBn**
ENGEN, SP4 Robert Joseph	**C/2-17**
HATTER, CPL Larry Richard	**HMH-463**
HYATT, MAJ Wayne Reuben	**HMH-463**
JOHNSON, SP4 Gary Lee	**A/101st AvBn**
LEWELLEN, SGT Walter Edward	**C/2-17**
LILLIE, SGT Richard Arthur	**H&MS-1**
MARSHALL, 1/Lt Joseph Henry III	**48th AHC**
MCELFRESH, SGT Allen Keith	**HMH-463**
ODOM, SGT William Clinton Jr.	**HMH-463**
SLOAT, SGT Gregory Alec	**H&MS-1**
WOOD, 1/Lt Strather Franklin	**HMH-463**
WOODS, WO Gerald Ernest	**A/101st AvBn**

At 1900H a CH-53D (#15667) exploded in the air and crashed 8 ½ KM northeast of Hue/Phu Bai at YD976184 while returning to Marble Mountain Air Base, DaNang, from support of LAM SON 719, killing the entire crew of 5 and 2 passengers.[3967] The aircraft had taken battle damage earlier in the day while operating in Laos, landed at KILO (XD858387, the site of the Old French Fort) where the damage was inspected and a determination made that the aircraft was safe enough to return to Marble Mountain.[3968] The CH-53D crashed into a rice paddy, "..so it was very difficult looking for the bodies with all the twisted metal and mud and muck. There was no fire."[3969]

1/Lt Joseph H. Marshall took a .51 cal. round in the head and immediately died during a mission in Laos.[3970]

C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cav Regt lost a OH-6A (#67-12528) at XD465415 from ground fire killing WO Crandall, SP4 Engen, and SP4 Lewellen.[3971]

A UH1H from the 158th Aviation Battalion received an unknown number of rounds of small arms fire at 75-ft. AGL while hovering, crashed and burned, resulting in 4 MIA:[3972] Berg, Dempsey, Johnson, and Woods.

[3964] Joint Casualty Resolution Center, Biographic/Site Report as of 2 Oct 1990, Case #1703-0-04 and Circumstances of Loss (as of 29 March 1976), in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #335, Folder #178 (Crear); Statements of LTC William N. Peachey and CW2 John A. Herbold, both 26 Feb 1971, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #324, Folder #47 (Crone).

[3965] Comments of James Scott in Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 260.

[3966] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR Opn LAM SON 719, 19 Apr 1971.

[3967] G-3, I MAW msg 182105H to III MAF in III MAF Journal and File, 9-18 Feb 1971, #43; Cosmas, Graham A. and Murray, LTCOL Terrence P., *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: Vietnamization and Redeployment, 1970-1971*, ed. Melton, MAJ William R. and Shulimson, Jack, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Div, HQMC, 1986, p. 204. [References listed: CG III MAF msg to CG XXIV Corps of 18 Feb 1971; III MAF Spot Rpt, 18 Feb71, both in III MAF Journal and File, 19-28 Feb 1971.]

[3968] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 262.

[3969] Statement of Mike Wasko in *Ibid.*

[3970] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 262.

[3971] 2-17 Cav Fwd Spot Report 181953H in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 18 Feb 1971.

[3972] ADAO msg 181845H in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 18 Feb 1971.

Early in the morning, the 237th Medical Detachment sent a DUSTOFF to RANGER NORTH (XD595515) consisting of CW2 Joseph Gordon Brown (nicknamed "Easter Bear") and Darrell Monteith as the other pilot and medics SP5 Costello, SP5 Fujii and SP5 Simpco, escorted by 2 AH-1G Cobras. Taking heavy fire from NVA in the area, Brown landed and the wounded were loaded. As they lifted off, a mortar round exploded on the LZ and the aircraft crashed to the ground. Brown was KIA and the remainder of the crew were wounded except one. During the mortar attack, a rescue Huey landed and embarked the crew other than Fujii who returned to a bunker and radioed the aviators to warn them to stay clear of RANGER NORTH.[3973]

During the period of 19-22 February, the northern flank of the LAMSON 719 operation came under heavy counterattack by the NVA who concentrated their forces on the RANGER NORTH (XD595515) and RANGER SOUTH (XD581503) firebases. Resupply was hampered by enemy direct and indirect fire on LZs and on 20 February, Ranger North was penetrated by the NVA. Division-sized NVA units surrounded both Fire Bases and applied constant pressure through rocket, mortar and ground attacks in an attempt to overrun and destroy the firebases. The Vietnamese Rangers suffered heavy casualties and ran short of ammunition and medical supplies. On a medical evacuation mission on 18 February, one helicopter had been shot down killing CW2 Joseph Gordon Brown and leaving SP5 Dennis Fujii who, for 3 days directed armed helicopter and air strikes around the position, preventing it from being overrun and destroyed. As the situation became critical, a plan was executed combining all available firepower around the 2 fire bases and the decision was made to resupply and rescue Fujii with one helicopter. Maj Jim Lloyd, Commander of C Company, 158th Aviation Battalion, volunteered for the mission despite heavy rocket and mortar fire falling on the firebase and enemy ground probes breeching the perimeter. As SP5 Fujii boarded the helicopter, the bird received numerous hits causing it to burn and lose altitude. Maj Lloyd nursed the damaged bird to Ranger South for an emergency landing where he and his crew were later rescued. Fujii, however, remained with the Rangers for 2 more days directing armed helicopters and air strikes against the NVA until he was rescued again on the 24th.[3974]

19 February 1971

CARACCILO, CPL Anthony Joseph Jr.	**3/D/1-11**
MARSHALL, CPL Clifford Wayne	**3/D/1-11**
MATTHEWS, SGT Charles Toney	**3/D/1-11**
MONNETT, SP5 Leonard Allen	**173rd AHC**
SMITH, SGT Lyle Elton	**3/D/1-11**

At 1715H, Third Platoon of D/1-11 at XD744493 was cut off from the remainder of the company while linking up and received small arms fire. Returning small arms fire and artillery, the contact remained until after sunset. At 2345H, the unit observed movement 50 meters southeast of their position moving east to west. Friendly casualties were 4 US KIA, 7 US WIA, and 1 US MIA.[3975]

SP5 Leonard A. Monnett was killed in an OH-6A in Laos.[3976]

20 February 1971

ACALOTTO, SSG Robert Joseph	**48th AHC**
GILLILAND, SP4 Dennis Elbert	**498th Med Co**
HUNTER, 1/Lt John Clark	**Bde HHC**
JOHNSON, SFC Randolph Leroy	**48th AHC**
LYONS, SGT Chester George	**C/3-187**
MAY, CPT David Murray	**48th AHC**
NACCA, WO Carl Jr.	**Bde HHC**
RAUEN, WO John Vernon	**498th Med Co**
REID, CWO Jon Eric	**48th AHC**

+ 3 unidentified soldiers from the CP and 2/D/1-11

At 1245H, WO1 Jon E. Reid (Pilot), 1/Lt David M. May (Co-pilot), SP5 Randolph L. Johnson (Crew Chief), and SP4 Robert J. Acalotto (Door Gunner) were crewmen of a UH1C helicopter (#66700) from the 48th Assault Helicopter Company, 223rd Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Brigade providing gun cover for an emergency resupply mission. The helicopter was hit by hostile fire at XD508208 and crashed at XD562198. Although 2 people (believed to be the door gunner and crew chief) were seen exiting the aircraft from the right side and running toward nearby trees, attempts to rescue the downed crew were unsuccessful due to heavy enemy fire. A circling helicopter took fire from all sides surrounding the downed aircraft, and on the 8th or 10th pass sustained numerous hits with the gunner being seriously wounded, necessitating their return to Khe Sanh. The 1st ARVN Division was moving to assist the ground rescue attempt, but the tactical situation changed before the infantry could reach the area and the unit had to be extracted and no contact was made with the downed crew. Rescue attempts were made for several days but were unsuccessful because of heavy weapons fire.[3977]

[3973] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 262.

[3974] Berry, MajGen Sidney, *LAMSON 719—The Assault into Laos 8 February – 6 April 1971*, unpublished manuscript [Copy from files of Keith William Nolan], pp. 5-7.

[3975] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech) AAR Opn LAM SON 719.

[3976] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 262.

[3977] JCRC Biographic Rpt as of 20 Mar 1979, Ref No 1708-0-01 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #143, Folder #651 (Case #02714); Statement of SP5 Gerald F. Winchester, 27 May 1971, and Joint Casualty Resolution Center Narra-

At approximately 2150H WO1 John V. Rauen (aircraft commander), WO1 John M. Souther (pilot), SP4 Dennis E. Gilliland (engineer) and SP4 John J. Levulis (medic) took off in a UH-1H (#69-15273) from the 498th Medical Company, first refueling at the POL and then returning to B Med. While maneuvering, a ground fog intermittently obscured the area, making horizontal visibility from zero-zero to unlimited. The aircraft took off from the POL, entered the fog, and apparently descended while turning. As the aircraft neared the ground, the pilot apparently realized how close to the ground he was and flared the aircraft in an attempt to decrease his rate of descent. The aircraft impacted the ground (aft, left skid) descending at 650 ft. per minute, continued forward approximately 45 feet, made contact with the ground a second time where the right skid made a furrow in the ground 8-ft. 3-in. long, 2-ft. wide, and 8-in. deep. The right skid collapsed and the main rotor blade made contact with 2 55-gallon drums. The bird continued forward in approximately a 30° right bank condition and nomex sleeve was torn off one of the crew members by a jagged edge from one of the 2 55-gallon drums. The head separated from the mast, and as the aircraft rolled, the tailboom separated from the main fuselage which rolled another 250 feet leaving puddles of burning JP4 fuel. The aircraft was completely engulfed in flames. The pilot, WO1 John Souther, was extracted from the main fuselage with the use of a front loader, and died 26 February from 3rd degree burns of the head and shoulders. The crew chief, SP4 De Gilliland, was thrown clear of the main fuselage and landed near the tailboom. The Medic, SP4 John J. Levulis, was extracted critically burned and died 21 February.[3978] John Rauen was still in the left seat as only charred remains. "I could tell it was him from the shape of his head in the helmet. John was a flight school class mate of mine and a good friend. I thought we found Gilliland partially buried in the cabin behind Rauen. I distinctly remember his round wire rim glasses."[3979]

5 soldiers of the CP and 2/D/1-11 were killed as a result of a tripflare and mechanical ambush detonation at XD842469 (off north slope of Hill 950). 1 Kit Carson Scout was also KIA and 7 US WIA in the incident.[3980]

21 FEBRUARY 1971

LEVULIS, SP4 John Joseph 498th Med Co

Died of burn wounds received 20 February 1971.[3981]

23 FEBRUARY 1971

ARMENTROUT, SSG Raymond Lee	D/3-5
BARTON, SP5 James Eugene	173rd AHC
BRUIN, SP4 John William	173rd AHC
FARRIS, 1/Lt Dennis Claude	173rd AHC
HAUSHERR, SP4 Charles Raymond	173rd AHC
HISCOCK, CWO Stephen Mayo	D/3-5
MINER, CWO James Allen	173rd AHC
OGATA, SP4 Terrance Aki	173rd AHC
SHINKAWA, WO Roy Yasushi	173rd AHC
USHER, 1/Lt Terry Maxwell	173rd AHC

A UH-1H (#67-19516) of the 173rd AHC (Farris, Usher, Bruin, and Ogata) was lost in a mid-air collision with a UH-1C (#65-09503) (Miner, Shinkawa, Barton, and Hausherr) while working near a LZ in Laos, killing both crews.[3982]

CWO Hiscock died in an OH-6A.[3983]

25 FEBRUARY 1971

JOHNSON, SP4 Edward A Jr. C/7-17

SP4 Johnson died from injuries while in Laos. A USAF F4 was shot down while making an airstrike and the 2 pilots ejected. A Cobra command and control helicopter went in to rescue the pilots and was also shot down. Another Cobra rescued the crew, but a bullet had cut through a main artery of the gunner on the C&C bird causing him to bleed to death from the wound.[3984]

the 174th AHC lost a UH-1 that crashed and burned near LZ Scotch (XD934585). WO1 Steven R. Burch was evacuated to Japan but died on 5 March of pneumonia. WO1 Patrick D. Erb was also evacuated to Japan and died of pneumonia on 15 March.[3985]

26 FEBRUARY 1971

SOUTHER, WO John Martin 498th Med Co

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tive, Case 1708-0-01 through 04 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #440, Folder #16 (Reid); Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #257, Folder #274.

[3978] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 263.

[3979] Statement of Howard Modjeski in Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 264.

[3980] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Div (Mech) AAR Opn LAM SON 719; Msg 201245H in 101st AbnDiv G-3 Daily Journal, 20 Feb 1971.

[3981] *Vide* entry for 20 February 1971.

[3982] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994), p. 266.

[3983] *Ibid.* There are no references to any KIA listed in the 1st of the 5th AAR for LAMSON 719.

[3984] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994), p. 268.

[3985] *Ibid.*

Died of burn wounds received 20 February 1971.[3986]

27 FEBRUARY 1971

BABCOCK, 1/Lt Ronald Lester B/7-1
MOONEY, SFC Fred B/7-1
+ 1 unidentified from A/8-4 artillery

From 0015 – 0020H, A/8-4 Artillery at XD754352 received an unknown type and number of incoming rounds and from 0310 – 0320H an unknown number of RPG rounds resulting in 1 US KIA and 7 US WIA.[3987]

A heavy "pink team" was conducting a visual recon for the 1st ARVN Division in Laos consisting of Lt Babcock (scout), WO-1 Hummel (low gunship), CPT Jimmie L. Davidson (high gunship), and CPT John Edwin Waters (chase ship). At 1520H, while flying over Fire Support Base DELTA (XD648301), an OH-6A Cayuse observation helicopter (#67-16256) was hit by ground fire. Lt Babcock transmitted words to the effect: "I'm taking fire," as he broke off to the north, and then, "Still taking fire. I'm hit. I can't control the ship. I think they hit my tail rotor. I can't control it. I'm going down. I can't control it. We are going to crash." The LOH-6 swerved as it took heavy fire from several locations, dropped through the trees, and descended to the ground landing on its skids at XD625208 into the side of a small hill. CPT Waters, in the UH-1 chase ship, cropped down to the crash site, attempting to rescue the crew, and the door gunner (Mooney) managed to silence one of the .51 cal positions, but wasn't over the crash site more than 30 seconds before it limped out due to heavy fire. Capt Waters transmitted that he observed that both members of the LOH had exited the aircraft and were laying face down near the aircraft. WO-1 Hummel and CPT Davidson continued to strike the enemy positions, aided by 2 USMC Cobras. A second UH-1 was scrambled from Lang Vei, piloted by Lt. Morgan who was able to descend to within 10 feet of the downed bird. Lt Morgan reported that the 2 crew were laying face up with their eyes open, staring up into space. The bodies were pale and positioned in an unnatural manner; it appeared they had been hit by ground fire after they had exited the aircraft.[3988]

Mooney was not required to fly but volunteered to show the young draftees an older man in his forties[3989] could be as tough as they were. Mooney's tour was to be over in May and his plans were to return to Killeen, Texas, and continue his life with his wife and four children. Ron Babcock graduated from college with a degree in forestry and was anxious to return home and resume his career.[3990]

28 FEBRUARY 1971

SIMPSON, 1/Lt Morris Alfred C/2-17

1/Lt Simpson of C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cav Regiment, took 10 bullets in his head and died while flying a OH-6A in Laos; the observer, who was not a pilot, flew the helicopter back to safety.[3991]

01 MARCH 1971

RAMSEY, MAJ Milton Hardin 21st SOS
TIJERINA, CPT Albert Jr. 21st SOS

Two USAF helicopter pilots of the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 7th Air Force, Maj Ramsey and Capt Tijerina, were killed in Laos due to hostile fire.[3992]

03 MARCH 1971

ANDERSON, 1/Lt Charles Richard A/158th AHB
PADILLA, CPL Gary Teofilio 174th AHC
SGAMBATI, SP4 Paul Anthony A/158th AHB

[*An air assault into LZ LOLA began on 03 March as part of the ARVNs decision to renew their assault towards Tchepone with their armored and air assaulted forces, and then withdraw. As part of the plan, 3 new LZs were designated, named after movie stars: LZ LOLA named for Gina Lola Brigida, XD431372; LZ SOPHIE named for Sophia Loren, XD 498348; and LZ LIZ named for Elizabeth Taylor, XD 383378; all on a southern escarpment, and then one more, LZ HOPE (XD344479) near Tchepone. The ARVN 1st Div, already in Laos, would conduct the assault, replacing elements from the South Vietnamese Marine Corps Division.*[3993]

[3986] *Vide* entry for 20 February 1971.
[3987] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech) AAR Opn LAM SON 719.
[3988] Joint Casualty Resolution Center, Narrative, Case 1711-01-02; Statements of CPT Jimmie OL. Davidson and CPT John Edwin Waters in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #223, Folder #126.
[3989] Nolan, Keith William, *Into Laos*, Novato, Ca.: Presidio, 1986, p. 151.
[3990] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994), p. 268; CO, 2/17 Cav letter to CG, 101st Abn Div (Ambl), 26 Feb 71, 2/17 INTSUM 57-71 in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 27 Feb 1971. [This document lists the crash site at XD626258].
[3991] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994), p. 269.
[3992] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994), p. 269.
[3993] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 270; Location of ARVN Fire Bases in 101st Abn Div, *Final Report, Airmobile Operations in Support of Operation LAMSON 719, 8 February – 6 April 1971*, Vol. II. There is also a "SOPHIA East" at XD 498348.

There was no air cover for the assault into LZ LOLA; the location had been Arc Lighted the previous day.[3994] *Daniel Grigsby recalls his door gunners starting to fire as they approached LZ LOLA. "I was coming in fairly hot and flared, looking for a touchdown spot. The LZ was lousy under the very best of conditions and under fire it was terrible. I picked a spot, brought the aircraft to a hover and when the troops we4re off grabbed a bunch of collective to get the hell out of there. A lot of things happened in those few seconds that are forever burned in my mind. Out of my peripheral vision I saw muzzle flashes to the front, left and right. I noticed NVA running in a crouch to the left front of the aircraft. I also noticed my co-pilot's head bobbing and weaving as if he were dodging bullets. I glanced at the instruments – without really seeing anything and pulled pitch. I don't see any way the ARVN who got off my ship ever made it to the trees.."*[3995] *7 of the first 10 helicopters in the assault were extensively damaged by NVA AA fire and 4 helicopters with 16 crewmembers were down in the LZ. The assault was interrupted as LTCOL Gerald Kirklighter, Commander of the 223rd, directed additional artillery, air strikes and armed helicopter fires around the perimeter.*[3996]]

CHALK-4 (CPT Bishop) had asked for a smoke (grenade) and was heard over the radio to say, "I've got Mellow Yellow," whereupon his aircraft (#68-15639) was shot down by NVA who were obviously monitoring the radio net, and their gunner, CPL Gary T. Padilla, died on his gun. The Crew Chief, Rhodes, survived the landing of the burning bird and remained with the pilot, CPT Bishop. The Co-pilot, LT Carl Flemer, exited the aircraft and escaped and evaded to an ARVN FSB near the border.[3997]

During the afternoon, more Hueys assaulted LZ LOLA with more ARVN troops, one of which was from B/158, the Lancers piloted by WO Manuel Catzoela. "We watched the troops get off this one and a second or two after he started to leave the LZ we heard this big WHAM and he comes crashing to the ground. It might have been an RPG, I don't know. Anyway, the Huey lands in some soft dirt, not far from our trench, and the front of the Huey sinks in. Lt Charles R. Anderson didn't take this into consideration when he got out of the ship and started running toward the trench. He was hit in the head by the main rotor and died on the spot. Their CE [combat engineer], a tall good looking man, had taken an AK round in the head with no exit wound."[3998] (This was SP4 Paul Anthony Sgambati, who did not die on LOLA but at the Evac hospital in Quang Tri after being evacuated.)[3999]

05 March 1971

BURCH, WO Steven Ralph 174th AHC

Died of pneumonia from wounds sustained on 25 February 1971, *q.v.*

06 March 1971

BURGDORFER, SP5 Stephen Walter	C/1-1
BURTON, SP4 Horace Lee	C/1-1
HUMMEL, CWO John Floyd	B/7-1
MILLINER, CWO William Patrick	B/7-1

06 March was a bright and clear day and a planned assault on LZ HOPE (XD344479), consisting of 120 UH-1H helicopters, "was the largest airmobile assault (77 KM one-way) ever conducted by a combined force across an international border."[4000] The assault was launched earlier than planned because just prior to the scheduled departure of the first helicopters,[4001] at 1125H, Khe Sanh received 15-18 122mm rockets causing 2 KIA and 10 WIA from C Troop, 1st Sqd, 1st Cav Regt.[4002] 2 battalions of the 2nd Regiment, 1st ARVN Infantry Division were inserted on the final objective of LAMSON 719 in less than 90 minutes.[4003]

On 05 March, the 174th Co of 14th Avn reported: "UH1H at unknown altitude and speed received unknown type fire and unknown number hits. Aircraft crashed. Crew consisted of 4 crew & 3 riggers. Radio contact was made through survival radio. In attempted extraction, aircraft met with heavy ground fire and pulled out. Darkness prevented additional extraction attempts. Enemy was advancing on downed crew. They sought cover in old bunker & enemy was kept at bay with air support. The radio's power supply was weak and further reports were broken & feeble. Aircraft continued

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[3994] Comments of Daniel Grigsby in Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 270.
[3995] *Ibid.*
[3996] Berry, MajGen Sidney, *Lamson 719—The Assault Into Laos 8 February – 6 April 1971*, unpublished MS [Copy from files of Keith William Nolan], p. 10.
[3997] Comments of William Early in Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 274.
[3998] Comments of Robert Morris in Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 275.
[3999] Comments of John Gale in Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 275.
[4000] Berry, MajGen, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[4001] *Ibid.*
[4002] 1/5 Mech TOC 061125H in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 06 March 1971.
[4003] Berry, MajGen, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

support. Results: 7 MIA."[4004] The downed bird, the maintenance helicopter of the 174th Assault Helicopter Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, was piloted by 1/Lts Ralph Elliot and Richard Gebauer. With NVA surrounding them, they found shelter in a bunker 150 meters from their downed helicopter to await anticipated immediate rescue. Although USAF SAR was initiated, dense NVA AA positions made it apparent that the only way the 7 crew could be rescued was to insert ARVN forces on the ground to fight their way to the downed crew (with a radio call sign of WITCH DOCTOR 5). The ARVN designated the elite Hac Bao (Black Panther) Company of the 1st ARVN Div who were placed OPCON to the 2/17 Cavalry Squadron. 16 of the 17 UH-1 helicopters of 2-17 were successful in inserting the Hac Bao troops under cover of Cav cobras reinforced by cobras from the 4/77th Aerial Field Artillery. 14 of the 17 choppers received battle damage. By 2200, a small team of Hac Bao scouts reached a position 500 meters from the 7 Americans in the bunker but could not proceed further due to the large number of NVA in the area, and they remained at that position for the night.[4005]

About 1730H, 4 AH1G Cobra gunships and 1 UH1H launched from Lang Vei to act as ARA and moved to a position of 7 downed Americans (at XD4741) and report to 2/17th.[4006] The 4 AH1G Cobras were: CW2 James L. Davis (with WO George P. Downing, Co-pilot), CWO Hummel (with CWO Milliner, Co-pilot) as 2nd team, and Mr. Beck and 1/Lt Dickerson (with WO1 James B. Sexton).

Soon after take-off, Mr. Beck suffered a D.C. generator failure and was forced to return to the staging area as Lang Vei. It was getting dark, which forced another AH1G (Dickerson) and the UH1H bird to return since they were not night flyable. Fuel was getting low, and 2/17 directed an air strike just north of the friendly position after which the 2 AH1Gs proceeded east along QL9 towards Khe Sanh. CW2 Davis instructed CWO Hummel to change frequencies. At approx. XD6237 a large cloud bank appeared, running N/S. Davis instructed Hummel to use the Khe Sanh GCA at the big horseshoe bend in the river at the "pink line" (i.e., the Lao/SVN border) and at 1930H, the 2 aircraft, Call signs CHOICE WRITER 25 and 28, broke station to return to Khe Sanh. Gun lead, CHOICE WRITER 28, told WRITER 25 to change to the Ham Nghi GCA. GCA was informed of 2 aircraft approaching 9 miles west. Davis entered the cloud bank on IFR and landed at Khe Sanh only to discover that Hummel hadn't followed him. The unit called ramp checks and contacted different airfields and towers to determine if Hummel had made it to a different field, but no one had any contact with Hummel. The search for his Cobra, AH1G (#67-15464) continued throughout Operation LAM SON 719 and until the redeployment of 2/17 Cav. The last radar contact was at XD6747 (approx. 10 KM north northwest of Lao Bao).[4007]

The 7 downed Americans were finally rescued about noon on 07 March, as the 1st ARVN Div was assaulting their final objective, Tchepone.[4008]

07 March 1971

ARD, CWO Randolph Jefferson	**Bde HHC**
BURNETT, COL Sheldon John	**HHT, 1-1**

On 7 March 1971, WO1 Randolph J. Ard (Pilot), LTC Sheldon J. Burnett (Commander, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Division), CPT Philip G. Bodenhorn (Commander, Co. A, 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry), and 2/Lt Saturnio Castillo, Jr. (Artillery Forward Observer of Battery A, 5-4 Artillery) were flying in an OH-58A helicopter (#68-16814). The Third Platoon Leader, Lt William McConnell, had been wounded and the platoon was having communications problems while they were in contact at XD711412. As the helicopter approached the position of 3rd Platoon, CPT Bodenweiser radioed for the 3rd Platoon to signal with smoke when the helicopter came over their landing zone. Yellow smoke was sighted and the pilot nosed the helicopter down towards the smoke. At about 200-300 feet, a long burst of rapid light machine-gun fire struck the aircraft in the lower front causing it to crash, end over end, upside down at XD653388 (approximately 5 KM west of Lao Bao and the Vietnam/Lao border). They had mistakenly flown past Third Platoon and into Laos. CPT Bodenweiser was able to extract himself from the wreckage and then pulled WO1 Ard from the wreckage. Both of WO1 Ard's legs were broken, his hip was thought to be crushed, and he had several bullet wounds. LTC Burnett, who was injured and bleeding, was pinned in the wreckage and couldn't be extricated. CPT Bodenhorn and 2/Lt Castillo remained at the crash site for 20-25 minutes awaiting rescue while under fire. They continuously signaled for help with smoke and radio. As the enemy was about to assault their position, CPT Bodenweiser and 2/Lt Castillo began to take evasive action. When they left the aircraft, WO1 was alive and armed with a .45 caliber pistol and LTC Burnett was trapped in the wreckage, bleeding profusely from wounds in the head, neck and arms and speaking incoherently. CPT Boden-

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[4004] Msg from G-2 Air Fwd, 060230 in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 06 March 1971.

[4005] Berry, MajGen, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-17.

[4006] Statement of CW2 James L. Davis in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #324, Folder #49 (Milliner).

[4007] Statements of CW2 James L. Davis, WO1 George P. Downing, and Maj Timothy C. Scobie (CO, 2-17); Technical Report of U.S. Army Aircraft Accident, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #324, Folder #49 (Milliner) and Reel #326, Folder #72 (Hummel).

[4008] Berry, MajGen, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

horn and 2/Lt Castillo linked-up with the 11th ARVN Airborne Battalion. The ARVN Company Commander, 1/Lt Pham Hungl, was able to battle his way to the crash site on 18 March and reported that the area was badly damaged from all the fighting and that he saw no remains in the area.[4009]

08 March 1971

GRANTHAM, SGT Robert Eugene	**B/2-17**
HALE, 1/Lt John Douglas	**B/2-17**

11 March 1971

BILBREY, CPT Edmond David	**48th AHC**
EASTON, SP5 David Everett	**HHC, 5th Inf**
LOCKHART, SP5 John Thomas	**48th AHC**

CPT Edmond David Bilbrey was killed in a UH-1C of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company during the withdrawal of the ARVN from Tchepone.[4010]

SP5 David E. Easton was killed in an aviation incident at XD677457 while serving with the 5th Mechanized Division.[4011]

12 March 1971

DANAY, PFC Jerry Lee	**3/C/1-11**

PFC Danay was KIA at XD750489 near FSB Alpine while serving with Charlie Company, 1/11.[4012]

15 March 1971

PECK, WO Steven Russell	**D/3-5**
SEXTON, SGT David Mason	**B/5-4 Arty**
THOMAS, CPL Clyde	**B/5-4 Arty**

At 1720H, an OH-6A received heavy small arms causing numerous hits and crash landed at XD675382. Reaction force was inserted and gunships and artillery were employed. Results of the action were 1 US KIA and 1 US WIA.[4013]

[Beginning on 15 March when 250 rounds of NVA artillery impacted on Khe Sanh until the last units departed Khe Sanh, numerous artillery barrages hampered efforts to maintain the runway. With over 1150 incoming artillery rounds impacting at Khe Sanh from 15 March – 1 April, special trenches were dug along the edges of the air facility to provide immediate shelter to the engineers working on the runway.[4014] *Fortunately, the 27th Engineers did not suffer any KIA during LAMSOM-719.]*[4015]

16 March 1971

ALLEN, CPT Charles David, Jr.	**B/4-77**
MCCARTHY, CPT Loyd Van Jr.	**101st Div**

17 March 1971

ERB, WO Patrick Douglas	**174th AHC**
SCHARNBERG, MAJ Ronald Oliver	**HHC, 3-187**
SCHLUTTER, 1/Lt William David	**Bde HHC**
SUTTON, LTC Bryan James	**HHC, 3-187**

WO Erb died of pneumonia from burn wounds he sustained on 25 February 1971, *q.v.*

At about 1400H, an OH-58 (#68-16884) at XD779438 from the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech) was lost. The pilot was 1/Lt William D. Schlutter, and passengers were LTC Bryan J. Sutton (CO of 3/187 Inf) and Maj Ronald O. Scharnberg (Ops Officer of 3/187 Inf).[4016] Sutton and Scharnberg wanted to be with their troops on the ground. Scharnberg had been wounded and was in the hospital only a few days before he returned.[4017]

[4009] JCRC Biographic Report as of 20 March 1979 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #143, Folder #651; JTFFA Narrative, Case 1719-0-01 and 02 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #513, Folder #20; CG USARV LBN RVN msg 121800Z/Mar71 to C Cas Div DA in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #325, Folder #50; CG 1st Bde 5th Inf Div M Rear QT message 130300Z/Mar71 and Statement of 1/Lt Pham Hungl in Library of Congress MIA Reel #326, Folder #73; 1/5 Mech msg 072230 in 101st Abn Div G-3 G-3 Daily Journal, 07 Mar 1971; Nolan, Keith William, *Into Laos*, Novato, Ca.: Presidio, 1986, pp. 64, 246-247; Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 278.

[4010] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 279.

[4011] *Ibid.*

[4012] Short, Keith, letter to Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.: *Red Clay*, Issue #51 (Fall, 2001), pp. 6-7.

[4013] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR Opn LAM SON 719.

[4014] Col W. O. Bachus, 27th Engineer Battalion (Combat), recommendation for the Award of the Presidential Unit Citation, 16 December 1971.

[4015] *Ibid.*, Incl. (7). Personnel strength of the engineer task force: 359 on 31 Jan, 272 on 20 Feb,l 300 on 1 Mar, 330 on 4 Mar, 231 on 10 Mar, 191 on 19 Mar, 271 on 25 Mar, 196 on 27 Mar, 87 on 31 Mar, and 46 on 1 Apr.

[4016] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994), p. 280.

[4017] Nolan, Keith William, *Into Laos*, Novato, Ca.: Presidio, 1986, p. 327.

18 MARCH 1971

AHRENS, SP5 Russell George	**571st MedDet**
BOFFMAN, 1/Lt Alan Brent	**D/101st AvBn**
BRANDT, CPT Keith Allan	**D/101st AvBn**
ELIZONDO, SGT David	**E/1-11**
+ 1 unidentified from 2/B-101	

At 1445H, 2/B/1-1 at XD736364 received 82mm mortars resulting in 1 KIA and 6 WIA.[4018]

SP5 Russell G. Ahrens of the 571st Med Det was killed at XD578427.[4019]

Following 14 days of continuous combat, only 88 of the 420 men of 4th Battalion, 1st Regiment, 1st ARVN Infantry Division, remained. Unless help came soon, they faced surrender or death. All the officers of 4/1 Bn were KIA, and 61 of the surviving 88 enlisted men were wounded. NVA surrounded their defensive perimeter of less than 60 meters in diameter, and were using loudspeakers to induce the survivors to surrender. Ammunition was low, and only one PRC-25 radio served as the comm. link. The mission of 4/1 was to provide rear security for the extraction of the 1st Regiment, 4 KM to the east. The USAF provided 68 air strikes in their defense.

Capt Keith A. Brandt, D Co, 101st Aviation Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), radio call sign MUSIC 16, piloted an AH-1G Cobra and 3 times between 1300 and 1550 expended all his ammunition in support of 4/1, returning to Khe Sanh to rearm and refuel. He assured the Sergeant in command of the 4/1 Bn, "We're going to get you out of there." At about 1700, the 173rd Assault Helicopter Company ("Robinhoods") began arriving from the east to extract the besieged ARVN. Realizing that the trapped men had no smoke grenades to mark their position, Capt Brandt volunteered to lead the first UH-1H at tree top level into the bomb crater even though he had already expended all his ammunition. Without ammunition, Capt Brandt's AH-1G and the UH-1H approached the bomb crater meeting a heavy volume of enemy fire which hit MUSIC-16. Capt Brandt veered away and radioed toe UH-1H (call sign ROBIN HOOD), "I've lost my hydraulics and my mast is on fire. Follow me ROBIN HOOD 3 and I'll lead you back around to the friendlies—There it is, ROBIN HOOD! Twelve o'clock, 100 meters. I'm going to try to make the river." The next transmission was his last: "I've lost my engine and my transmission is breaking up. Good-bye. Send my love to my family. I'm dead." His rotor RPM slowed and he almost made it to the river. The Cobra exploded just before impact with trees, killing both Capt Brandt and 1/Lt Boffman.

The 88 survivors of 4/1 were rescued. The first UH-1H contained 22, some clinging to the helicopter skids. Many fell, and some were injured. Of the 88 in the crater, only 36 made it back to Khe Sanh. "The international press exploited the photographs of the 4/1 Bn. survivors landing back in Vietnam hanging from the helicopters. They didn't realize that the soldiers had been rescued from certain capture or death.. the direct result of the heroism and sacrifice of one man, 'MUSIC 16', Captain Keith A. Brandt."[4020]

Maj Klose of the "Robinhoods" saw the crash of MUSIC-16 and thought, "My God, that man was a true hero." Capt Brandt had laid down his life so others might live, and Klose thought he should have been awarded the Medal of Honor. Apparently, the only awards given (posthumously) to Capt Brandt were the Bronze Star Medal, 27 Air Medals, and the Purple Heart.[4021]

19 MARCH 1971

CRISTMAN, CW2 Frederick Lewis	**48th AHC**
GARCIA, SP5 Ricardo Martinez	**281st AHC**
SPARKS, WO1 Jon Michael	**48th AHC**

On 19 March 1971, CW2 Frederick L. Cristman (Pilot), SP5 Ricardo M. Garcia (Crew Chief), WO1 Jon M. Sparks (Co-Pilot), and SP4 Paul A. Lagenour (Door Gunner), were crewmen of a UH-1C helicopter gunship (#65-9489) as the trail ship in a flight of 2 UH-1Cs on an armed escort mission involving the extraction of a battalion four miles north Fire Support Base ALPHA (XD597378). Earlier in the day, the extraction attempt was cancelled due to heavy NVA AA fire and at 1335, the mission resumed with a flight of 2 UH-1C gunships launched from Khe Sanh. The lead CH-1C piloted by CW2 Stephen T. Knowles (Co-pilot, CPT James E. Burke, and gunner SP4 Dan A. Enin) took numerous hits, some of which severed its armament controls. During a second pass over the PZ [Pickup Zone], CW2 Cristman's aircraft was hit by enemy ground fire. CW2 Cristman radioed the flight leader that his transmission oil pressure caution light was on and he was making an emergency landing on the PZ. Mortars began hitting around the helicopter immediately upon touchdown, and SP5 Garcia pushed SP4 Lagenour out the right side of the ship. Lagenour heard someone yell, "Get out of the aircraft." He dashed toward a group of ARVN soldiersw who yelled to him to come over to cover and assumed the

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[4018] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR Opn LAM SON 719.

[4019] Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994), p. 281.

[4020] Berry, MajGen Sidney, *Lamson 719—The Assault into Laos 8 February – 6 April 1971*, unpublished MS [Copy from files of Keith William Nolan], n.d., pp. 25-27; Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994), p. 281.

[4021] Nolan, Keith William, *Into Laos*, Novato, Ca.: Presidio, 1986, pp. 279, 365.

remainder of the crew followed him. When he reached safety, all he could see was violet and white smoke emerging from the aircraft. He started to return to the ship, but was held back by the ARVN soldiers.[4022] The landing was at XD585428,[4023]

SP4 Lagenour "..had shrapnel wounds in his left arm. The NVA made an attempt to overrun the pickup zone. He used an infantry radio to direct air strikes and armed helicopter fires against the attackers. Lagenour joined up with 4 soldiers from the 2nd Airborne Battalion as they were forced to withdraw to the east. For 12 days he lived on rice and leaves dodging NVA patrols, traveling at night, sleeping by day. He was almost captured twice, and had to avoid a U. S. armed helicopter strike against a NVA position. On the 12th day, after traversing 30 kilometers Lagenour was found by a U. S. armored patrol just west of Khe Sanh. He was medically evacuated to the united States."[4024]

20 MARCH 1971

BARKER, MAJ Jack Lamar	**B/101st AvBn**
CHUBB, PFC John Jacobsen	**B/101st AvBn**
DILLENDER, SGT William Edward	**B/101st AvBn**
DUGAN, CPT John Francis	**B/101st AvBn**
KARAU, SGT Ronald Dean	**E/3-187**

The mission involved an emergency extraction of a battalion size ARVN force that had been in heavy contact with surrounding NVA for three days and in danger of being overrun near FSB Brown (XD500350). Helicopters from Co B and Co C of the 101st Aviation Battalion encountered murderous antiaircraft fire by NVA forces which surrounded the 3 PZs [pickup zones], despite obscuring white phosphorus which had been laid to conceal their approach. SP4 Dillender and PFC Chubb fired a high volume of accurate machinegun fire that enabled their bird to land twice and embark ARVN soldiers as well as crew from downed American choppers. After return to Khe Sanh, they volunteered to return to Laos to evacuate more ARVN soldiers in an aircraft (#66-16185) piloted by Maj Barker ("Color 6") and Capt Dugan ("Kingsman 16"). Maj Barker was the Company Commander. Now in the lead helicopter, a RPG struck their aircraft on their short, final approach. The helicopter began to disintegrate and fell to the earth where it exploded in a ball of flame, killing all aboard.[4025] The helicopter crashed at XD515352.[4026]

Dillender was only 19 and Chubb a few months older; both had been in Vietnam 28 days. Barker had been flying less than 6 months and Dugan, a 23 year-old, did not yet command his own chopper.[4027]

Barker, the 7th child born to blue-collar Baptist parents in Georgia, grew up as a quiet boy who liked to spend much time outdoors fishing and exploring. With a natural talent for singing, he joined the church choir. He was also academically gifted in high school and later attended college with the goal of being a veterinarian. He spent 6 months in Switzerland with the 4-H Club's International Foreign Youth Exchange, and went on active duty 4 Jan 1962. He then completed Jump School the following year, and arrived in Vietnam, reporting to the 3rd Radio Research Unit in Saigon. While with the ARRU, he flew in the DeHavilland Beavers and earned 24 Air Medals and a Bronze Star Medal. He returned to Vietnam for a second tour, arriving at Camp Eagle 20 Oct 1970 as Executive Officer of an assault helicopter company of the 101st Aviation Battalion, a quiet, religious man.[4028]

Dugan, like Barker, was in his second Vietnam tour, the first as a forward observer with an artillery unit. He was born 10 November 1947 and he and his 2 brothers shared a bedroom in a small apartment above a stationery store, Chinese laundry, and barbershop. Upon return from a vacation, the landlord had taken one of the two bedrooms for use as a dance studio, and his parents slept on a pull-out couch. Dugan married his 15 year-old sweetheart, but her parents snatched her and were working on an annulment. He joined the Army and left for Vietnam in April, 1968, for his first tour. Upon return home, he attended flight school and then eagerly sought to return to Vietnam.[4029]

The 19 year-old Dillender's father served as a firefighter and crash-rescue crewman for the Air Force until he retired in 1960 and settled in Tennessee. His early life is characterized as wild, impulsive, and active. He and a buddy enlisted in the Army and after basic training and airborne school, had orders to Vietnam.[4030]

Chubb grew up in Los Angeles where he played football, baseball, swam at the YMCA, learned judo, and ran

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[4022] Statement of Circumstances (as of 15 May 1975) in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #143, Folder #651 (Case #02714); Statements of CPT James E. Burke, CPT James E. Burke, SP4 Dan A. Enin, and SP4 Paul A. Lagenour in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #328, Folder #98.

[4023] JCRC, Narrative, Case 1730-0-01 through 03, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #328, Folder #98. The location is approximately 5 miles northwest of Ban Houei Sane (XD6337).

[4024] Berry, MajGen Sidney, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

[4025] Statement of Jon F. Evans in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #30 (Dillender).

[4026] Biographic/Site Rpt as of 20 March 1979, in Library of Congress, MIA microfilm Reel #325, Folder #51 (Chubb).

[4027] Swift, Earl, *Where They Lay, Searching for America's Lost Soldiers*, Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2003, p. 17.

[4028] *Ibid.*, pp. 68-88.

[4029] *Ibid.*, pp. 92-95.

[4030] *Ibid.*, pp. 99-101.

track. He was dyslexic, and later worked as a steelworker in L.A. He reported for basic training in June, 1970, and reported to his unit in Vietnam on 6 March 1971.[4031]

Ronald Dean Karau has just passed his 21st birthday one day earlier (born 19 March 1950). While in high school, he was active in Future Farmers of America and 4-H, working with crops and animals. He was called into service on 4 September 1969, attended NCO school at Ft. Benning, Ga., and arrived in Vietnam 14 September 1970. Ronald Karau is described as a deeply religious man.[4032]

21 MARCH 1971

LANCASTER, WO David Clyde	C/7-17
MANTHEI, WO James Walter	C/7-17

Two AH-1G Cobra helicopters from C/7-17 Cav had been scrambled to support an ambushed ARVN armored unit. As David Ferrell arrived on the scene, he saw a RPG or B40 hit a APC "which blew just like in the movies," and another hit a tank, blowing off its turret. There were at least 3 .50 cal. positions, and the Cobras attended to them. Ferrell, who had expended all his ammo, later wrote: "I told Dave [Lancaster] I was out of ammo and wanted to leave. Dave said he wanted to make one more pass. I told him I could not cover his break; but he said he was going in anyway. He made his run and emptied the ship. We watched in horror as he took a full broadside of .50 cal. He called that they had been hit, lost the tail rotor and that Jim [Manthei] was wounded. He continued south looking for any place along the highway to land the Cobra. They didn't get too far when their airspeed went to nothing and they went twirling into the ground. We later talked to the medevac team that retrieved their bodies. They said they believed both men died of broken necks caused by their chicken plates and this twirling fall. I remember being really upset about loosing Dave. We had become good friends. That very morning he had shown me a picture of his wife and the card she had sent him—today was their anniversary!"[4033]

22 MARCH 1971

ABERNETHY, PFC Reginald Joe	C/3-187
CLEVE, WO Reginald David	176th AHC
DRUZINSKI, CPL Karl Walter	HHT/2-17
FELLS, SP4 William Henry	C/3-187
GLENN, PFC William Stuart	C/3-187
HALL, SP4 Walter Ray	176th AHC
KNUTSEN, SP4 Donald Paul	176th AHC
MCLEMORE, PFC John Wilson Jr.	C/3-187
MORIARTY, CPT Peter Gibney	614th TFS
STAHL, CPL Roger William	C/3-187
TRAVER, WO John Grove III	176th AHC

Khe Sanh had been taking artillery fire for over a week, and on 22 March, a UH-1H (#69-15403) was returning after having unsuccessfully searched for NVA artillery tubes. As they landed, a round exploded some 200 yards ahead of them. LTC Archie Rider (who had just taken over the squadron) and Steve Powers, along with the Crew Chief, were able to run from the chopper just seconds before another round made a direct hit on it. The Crew Chief was wounded in his leg and couldn't move, so Steve Powers and LTC Rider dragged him to the nearest bunker. The gunner, Karl Druzinsky, didn't make it out of the bird. All happened within seconds, and when they looked back at the helicopter, it was already completely consumed in fire. All the ammo and grenades aboard the chopper were cooking off. Powers remembers that Druzinsky "..was an interesting guy. In our early days at Khe Sanh we used shape charges to blow our trenches and holes for bunkers and he found an old Marine .50 cal. He cleaned it up and worked and worked on it until it fired again."[4034]

WO Reginald David Cleve (Aircraft Commander), WO1 John G. Traver (Pilot), SP4 Donald F. Knutsen (Crew Chief), and SP4 Walter R. Hall (Door Gunner) were the crew of a UH1H (#68-15759) in a flight of 5 helicopters on an emergency resupply mission when the helicopter burst into flames and crashed in the vicinity of XD666365, in Laos. The aircraft impacted in one piece, exploded, and continued to burn. No one was observed to exit the aircraft and rescue attempts were not made due to heavy concentration of enemy troops and anti-aircraft fire in the area.[4035]

E4 Michael Anthony Mencarelli officially stated: "I saw it because it was on my side and we were in a left hand orbit. One minute the ship was there and then there was nothing. We were at 5000 feet and the cloud of black smoke just hung there in the air.. I lost track of everything as it went behind a cloud. There was no way they could have survived the explosion. Really a bummer. We took fire before they were hit and it was a black puff of smoke under our tail boom on the right

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[4031] *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123.

[4032] "Ronald Dean Karau," in Ward, Don, *The Faces Behind the Names*, Minnesota: The Memorial Press, 1996, pp. 180-181.

[4033] Statement of David Ferrell in Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994), p. 283.

[4034] Comments of Steve Powers in Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (Oct, 1994), p. 283.

[4035] JCRC, Circumstances of Loss (as of 4 March 1976), in Library of Congress microfilm Reel #323, Folder #32 (Hall), Reel #330, Folder #123 (Traver), and Reel #326, Folder #74 (Knutson).

side. They were all very close to me and the whole ordeal was worthless. It really hurt deep down."[4036]

CAPT Moriarty (call sign BLADE 82) departed Phan Rang Air Base in a F100D as part of a flight of 2 aircraft at 1428 on a scheduled mission, and was making his first pass on 3 Russian T-54 tanks when he encountered ground fire. On his final approach, his aircraft impacted straight into the ground at XD634395 and burst into flames. There was no sighting of a parachute and no beeper signals were heard.[4037]

Capt Thomas A. Rodgers, commanding Co "C" of 3/187, led his company up the valley northwest of Khe Sanh, seeking NVA positions that had been firing on Khe Sanh since the 15th of March. The weather, which had been rain all day, deteriorated by night with heavy rains and winds so loud it was difficult to detect any noises, and a fog that shrouded visibility. As the soldiers were shivering under their ponchos and in their muddy holes a burst of fire awakened everyone about 2100 as the NVA assaulted the M-60 machinegun position. CPL Roger Stahl and another soldier moved towards the shooting when the NVA threw satchel charges and grenades on him. Stahl and his comrade had been hit in the chest with shrapnel; both instantly died. The NVA probe continued throughout the night and managed to capture the M-60 machinegun from the perimeter. The 3/187 CP placed a ring of steel in the form of mortar fire around their position during the night, and in the morning, the 3/187 CP on Khe Sanh base itself came under mortar and artillery fire.[4038]

23 March 1971

KEETLE, CPL Jeffrey Charles	**D/2-17**
QUINTANILLA, SGT Jeffrey Iglesias	**D/2-17**
ROBINSON, CPL Lance Allen	**D/2-17**
SCHELL, SP4 William Leroy	**C/1-11**

"SP4 William L. Schell, 194-40-3488 gunshot wound in forehead from .45 cal pistol. Pending investigation by CID 1/5 Mech. Pronounced dead on arrival at 187th Surg."[4039]

By this time, there were only 650 troops defending Khe Sanh base and positions along the perimeter were thin.[4040] Of these, only about 350 were ground combat troops.[4041] "What frightened the tough troops defending Khe Sanh most was not the enemy firepower in the area. Instead it was their own lack of men, ammunition, and operable weapons."[4042] Reminiscent of the early days of the 1968 siege battle at Khe Sanh, when the soldiers arrived their job was "to dig, to start digging our holes; we were going to live underground. So we'd dig and dig and dig all day and fill sandbags, and the faster you could dig your hole and get it covered, the sooner you could be out of harm."[4043] By 23 March, their positions had been well dug-in.

The NVA made their preliminary reconnaissance of Khe Sanh. About the 11th of 12th of March, various units had reported "suspicious looking" individuals lurking in and around the airfield and outlying positions. Those checked out appeared to be civilians seeking to salvage food from the garbage and trash. One, wearing khaki clothing and carrying a clipboard and binoculars, disappeared before he could be apprehended and 2 in ARVN uniforms ran after being challenged near the 101st Div Forward Command Post. Beginning on the 15th, artillery rounds pounded Khe Sanh, mainly at dawn and dusk, and on the 19th of March, increased to 40-60 rounds every few hours during the day and into the night.[4044] "Every day over a hundred 82mm and 122mm rockets and 152mm artillery shells pounded the parallel airstrips at Khe Sanh, and when the blazing NVA guns were slightly off target the shells would rain down on American bivouacs."[4045] By the evening of 22 March, the troops of 2/17 Cav and 4/77th Artillery were receiving continuous bombardments. There had been some direct hits on bunkers causing injury. Fog rolled in about midnight.[4046]

At 0237 of 23 March, Khe Sanh base received 17 rounds of unknown type ordnance directed against the two units (2/17 and 4/77 Arty) accompanied by mortars, leading the soldiers of 2/17 Cavalry to suspect a ground attack was imminent. Supporting artillery with illumination was alerted.[4047] At 0257, 2-17 Cav reported sappers were in and through the wire perimeter, penetrating the eastern part of 2-17's sector. Incoming artillery ceased as mortar and RPG fire continued from a ridgeline north of the perimeter. A total of 120-150 82mm mortars were received during the attack.[4048] In an apparent attempt to broaden the breach between 2/17 and 4/77 Arty, the small sapper force which had penetrated the wires turned and

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[4036] Statement of E-4 Michael Anthony Mencarelli in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #326, Folder #74.
[4037] JCRC, Narrative, Case 1732-0-01 and 35CMBTSPTGP Phan Rang AB RVN 230645Z/May71 to CSAF in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #31.
[4038] Nolan, *op. cit.*, p. 333.
[4039] 1/11 msg 230910H in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 23 March 1971.
[4040] Conversation with Stuart Howe, 24 September 1996.
[4041] Peterson, John, "Khe Sanh II, *The Overseas Weekly (Pacific Edition)*, Sat., 24 Apr 1971, p. 11.
[4042] *Ibid.*
[4043] Conversation with Richard Daeda, 07 April 2002.
[4044] Berry, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
[4045] Peterson, *op. cit.*.
[4046] Berry, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[4047] Summary in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 23 March 1971; Berry, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[4048] CG 101st Abn Div (Ambl) QTR RVN msg in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 23 March 1971, Para (48), p. 6 of 16.

savagely struck into the right flank of D Troop. "Moving into the trench lines which connected platoon positions, the sappers started throwing satchel charges and grenades into bunkers and fighting positions."[4049]

One of the positions that received the satchel charges was manned by SP4 Michael J. Fitzmaurice of 3rd Platoon, Troop D, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, 101st Airborne Division. Three other Army cavalrymen occupied the same bunker. Fitzmaurice picked up 2 of the 3 satchel charges that were thrown into his bunker and tossed them outside. Realizing that the third one might detonate any second, Fitzmaurice threw his flak jacket on top of it and then dove on top of that, to shield his comrades from the blast. He received severe wounds to his upper body and the loss of sight in one eye as metal splinters shot into him. Although seriously wounded, he grabbed his rifle and began to fire at NVA in the trenches. When his rifle became useless from an enemy grenade, he seized a machete and charged through the trench, killing any NVA he encountered—they were in the process of blowing up the American bunkers. He continued wielding his machete with devastating effect until the last of the NVA were wiped out at about 0335, at which time he was evacuated as a result of a direct order. His injuries were so severe that he was evacuated to the United States.[4050] The shy and quiet Fitzmaurice[4051] was later to receive the Medal of Honor.

The NVA sappers also managed to hit 2 ammo dumps causing the area to be illumined like the 4th of July. The attack generated a lot of tension as the soldiers imagined that the NVA were on a roll, causing a devastating rout of the ARVNs who had penetrated into Laos and would now maintain the momentum and roll over Khe Sanh as well. For Richard Daeda, who would turn 19 on 26 March, the thought raced through his mind: "Maybe the NVA wanted to show how good they could kick ass. So we, as 18 and 19 year-olds were sitting in our bunkers, nervous as all hell. We were on full, 100% alert. It was eerie because some of the places where Americans died—like Lance Robinson, who lived a couple of blocks from where I live—I had to go into his bunker the next night. I got taken out of mine because I had to fill in some voids down the line. I had this eerie feeling—my buddy from Brookfield, Wisconsin, died there."[4052]

One platoon sergeant, Terry Stallard, remarked that his platoon had 33 men before the attack, and now had 18, and the platoon medic, PVT Edward White, was quoted, "We are too damned scared to sleep." In addition to 3 KIA, the platoon suffered 15 WIA after the 4-hour fight.[4053]

A NVA POW was captured by the 4/77 ARA,[4054] PVT Nguyen Van Anh of 1/2/2/D15 Engineers (Sapper) who disclosed the mission of the 40-man unit was to destroy Khe Sanh airfield and helicopters, re-arm point, and American tanks.[4055]

Results of the attack: 3 US KIA, 13 US WIA.

24 MARCH 1971

AYERS, SGT Douglas Edward	C/4-3
BECKWITH, SGT Harry Medford III	D/3-5
COKER, CPT David Langston Jr.	D/3-5
NEAL, SP4 William Edward	D/3-5
PICHON, PFC Herman Edward	C/4-3
RAMOS, CPL Bernardo Kealoha	C/4-3
WRIGHT, SP4 Michael Dale	C/4-3

On 24 March 1971, CW2 James P. Ross (Pilot), SGT Harry M. Beckwith, III (Left Front Observer), and SP4 William E. Neal (Right Rear Observer), crewmembers of 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry, took off at 0730H in an OH-58A helicopter (#69-16136) on a VR mission 15 miles NW of Khe Sanh from their squadron forward CP at Ham Nghi. Shortly thereafter, the aircraft was hit by enemy automatic fire and crashed into an enemy-surrounded area at XD668543. Within minutes the aircraft exploded and burned.[4056]

CW2 Ross recalled: "My aircraft became the target of heavy automatic weapons fire, lost its engine and crashed. When the aircraft first came under fire, numerous rounds came through the cockpit, immediately to my front left as we were going down through the trees. I suffered a blow to the head rendering me unconscious. I next remember being on the ground inside the crashed aircraft. I looked to my left for my observer, where Sgt Harry Beckwith sits, and it appeared that Sgt. Beckwith had suffered several wounds. His chest and arms were covered with blood and it didn't appear to be any movement. As I reached out for him, I must have blacked out. My next remembrance was outside of the aircraft. The aircraft burned, the ordnance being carried, approx. 25 fragmentation grenades, 10 concussion grenades, 15 white phosphorus grenades, and 800 rounds of 7.62 ammuni-

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[4049] Berry, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

[4050] Fitzmaurice, Michael John, Medal of Honor Citation; Conversation with Richard Daeda, 07 April 2002; Berry, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

[4051] Nolan, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

[4052] Conversation with Richard Daeda, 07 April 2002.

[4053] Emerson, Gloria, "G.I. Mood at Battered Khesanh: 'We Don't Want to Be Relieved—We Want to Get Out'", New York *Times*, Friday, 26 March 1971, p. 11.

[4054] Base Defense msg 230230H in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 23 March 1971.

[4055] Initial Interrogation Report, 23 March 1971, in 101st Abn Div G-3 Daily Journal, 23 March 1971. Interrogators: Cpt Nguyen Quang Hue and Capt John H. Black, S-2, 2/17 Cav.

[4056] Board of Inquiry, SGT Harry M. Beckwith, III, 17 April 1971 and Statement of Maj Rodney W. Wolfe in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #326, Folder #75 (Beckwith).

tion, began to explode. I do not believe that Sgt Beckwith or his body escaped the fire and explosion that destroyed the aircraft."[4057]

A UH1E helicopter was immediately dispatched to the crash site and a team of aero-rifle platoon members was inserted to secure the area and rescue any survivors. Once on the ground, the infantry unit encountered enemy fire but was able to secure the aircraft. They located the Aircraft Commander, CW2 Ross, near the aircraft, who indicated to Sgt Zamora, section leader of the aero-rifle platoon (ARPS), that both crewmembers were dead and that nothing could be done to help them. Due to enemy in the area and extent of the aircraft fire, a total search of the area was not made. The remains of the 2 crewmen were placed in the extraction helicopter by the infantry. After takeoff, another helicopter came into the LZ about 100 meters behind the body-carrying helicopter. Before he could land he saw something fall out of the departing helicopter which later turned out to be Sgt Beckwith's body wrapped in a poncho liner. The chase helicopter swept in an attempt to fix the location where the body fell, but because of distance and the fact that the poncho liner color blended with the terrain and foliage, no definite fix could be ascertained. On 1 April 1971 another visual search was made over the same area, with negative result. It was concluded that because of wind conditions, the lightness of the poncho liner, and the fact that it just literally became part of the terrain, further attempts would be futile.[4058]

At 0815H, a heavy scout team from C Troop, 2nd of the 17th Cav, contacted a large enemy force in the vicinity of XD6748. An OH-58A (D/8-5), after receiving small arms fire and possible .51 cal fire, crashed at XD668543 (8 ½ KM W of FSB Alpine), causing 2 KIA and 1 WIA. Aero-rifle platoons (ARP) were inserted to secure the aircraft. At 0920H, a UH1H attempting to land elements of the aerial rifle platoon in the vicinity received hits and crashed. 4 personnel in the UH1H were extracted. At the time of extraction a second OH58A was shot down. Eventually all personnel were evacuated to safety.[4059]

While this was happening, a platoon from the 4th of the 3rd encountered extremely heavy contact and it was apparent that reinforcements were necessary to prevent annihilation. Maj Tommy C. Stiner, Brigade Aviation Officer (who had been involved in the opening of the 1968 siege battle at Khe Sanh village on 21 January 1968) directed reinforcements into the area.[4060]

[4057] Statement of CW2 James F. Ross, 24 June 1971, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #326, Folder #75 (Beckwith).

[4058] JCRC Biographic Report in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #326, Folder #75 (Beckwith).

[4059] 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech) AAR Opn LAMSON 719.

[4060] Statement of Maj Tommy C. Stiner in Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), pp. 284-285.

25 MARCH 1971

CALHOUN, SGT Edwin Gerald	B/3-5
GEIGER, SP4 Gary George	B/3-5
MCDONELL, SSG R D	B/1-1
PUENTES, SSG Manuel Rameriz	B/1-1
ROSSANO, CPL Richard Joseph	B/1-1
SIMONSON, SP4 Larry Arnold	173rd AHC
THOMPSON, CPL Randall Alan	B/1-1
+ 1 unidentified from B/1-82 Arty	

1/Lt Jimmie C. Johnson joined his unit on 24 March, and the very next day found himself leading a 12-man patrol from B Troop 1st Platoon (OPCON to B Troop, 3-5) to check out enemy activity in an area near Khe Sanh. Except for his radioman, he didn't know any of the others in his patrol. At 1141, 1/B/1-1 at XD813485 (3.36 miles from Khe Sanh), the unit came in contact with an estimated platoon of sappers as an incoming grenade landed between Lt Johnson and SSGT Puentes. Puentes picked it up to throw it out of the way, but it exploded in his face, killing him but saving several men from injury. Lt Johnson began moving the patrol south to attempt link-up with the rest of the platoon, which was their reaction force. Bringing up the rear while assisting some of the wounded, the Lt sent the Point Man, SP4 John Schmidt, and PFC Rex D. Norman to set up a M-60 machinegun on the other side of a creek bed. As Schmidt crossed the creek bed he heard voices and returned to the Lt to inform him. As the Lt told everyone to spread out, a NVA opened up with an AK-47 and PFC Norman leaped behind a rock. SSGT McDonell was standing in the creek and was shot in the back. Then a grenade exploded between Lt Johnson and SP4 Rossano. The Lt jumped away just as it detonated, but Rossano was covered with blood. PFC Norman was next to the Lt and Rossano when the grenade exploded, and Rossano said he couldn't continue. The Lt tried to push him up the hill and told Norman and the others to continue up the hill. The remnants of the patrol made it up a very steep hill and reached their tracked vehicles as Lt Johnson remained behind to care for the wounded. He found himself cut off from the others as air strikes blasted around him. Immediate results of the contact were 2 US MIA, 1 US KIA, and 2 US WIA. A second patrol (from 3-5) was dispatched to rescue survivors and retrieve the dead. It, too, was ambushed resulting in the death of Sgt Calhoun and a medic. The patrol was able to locate one body and rescue Lt Johnson. Total casualties reported were: 5 US WIA, 6 US KIA, and 36 NVA KIA.[4061]

[4061] Statements of SP4 John Schmidt, 1/Lt Jimmie C. Johnson, and 1/Lt James F. Bartlett in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #326, Folder #76; 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR Opn LAM SON 719.

SP4 Larry A. Simonson was KIA in Laos while serving as a crew member of 173rd AHC,. 223rd Avn Bn, 12th CAG, 1st Aviation Brigade.[4062]

B/1-82 Arty at XD857385 received 122mm rounds at 1005 and 1230 resulting in 1 UA KIA and 5 US WIA.[4063]

29 March 1971

COX, SGT William Gayle	**C/3-5**
PEDERSON, SP4 Roger Allen	**HHT/3-5**

1/C/3-5 while moving west in a M113 on Red Devil Road at XD910495 at 1230H received RPG rounds. The unit then received small arms fire from an estimated 8 NVA approximately 25-30 meters from their position resulting in 2 US KIA and 8 US WIA.[4064]

03 April 1971

TRUJILLO, SGT Felix Marcial	**HHC/1-77**

At 2310H, a team from 1-77 at XD820418 (2 KM north of Khe Sanh) received AK-47 fire and grenades from an estimated 6 NVA resulting in 1 US KIA, 1 US WIA, and 2 NVA KIA. A subsequent search of the area disclosed heavy blood trails and drag marks throughout the area.[4065]

CASUALTY SUMMARY:

XXIV CORPS units:	KIA	WIA	MIA	NVA KIA
by 101st Airborne Division:				
	68	261	17	1949
1st Bde, 5th Inf Division:				
	55	431	3	433
11th Bde, 23rd Inf Division				
	47	256	7	134
XXIV Corps Artillery:				
	9	76	0	1679
Other support forces:				
	36	125	11	600
Vietnamese I Corps Units:				
1st Infantry Division:				
	537	*1607*	*537*	*6622*
1st Airborne Division:				
	455	*1933*	*0*	*2424*
1st Marine Division:				
	355	*770*	*63*	*1188*
1st Armored Brigade:				
	54	*364*	*0*	*418*
1st Ranger Group:				
	93	*435*	*27*	*960*
I Corps Troops:				
	55	*314*	*24*	*3214*
TOTALS:				
	1764	6632	689	19360[4066]

[12 June 1971: The 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) was notified it would redeploy from the Republic of Vietnam no later than 31 August 1971.][4067]

[With ground troops removed, operations in the Khe Sanh area next involved USAF activity. Interdiction of overland flow of supplies from North Vietnam to forces operating in South Vietnam was a primary mission for the 7th AF. The North Vietnamese were building a new road, extending Route 103 in North Vietnam, through the DMZ, and following a route approximately 5 miles east of the Lao/SVN border, continued south towards Route 608 (the base access road from Route 9 to KSCB and then northwest, then west into Laos), towards the area of Lang Ho (XD774567) and Nguon Rao (XD770540), generally following the Khe Ta Bong River.[4068] *The USAF designated this operation as COMMANDO HUNT VI, and it was executed 15 May – 31 October 1971.*[4069] *"Completion of such a road structure would significantly reduce the transit time of supplies from NVN to his forces in the RVN and reduce the exposure to Allied interdiction efforts."*[4070] *By the end of July, 1971, the road was under active construction from the DMZ to Route 608. Beginning in August, 1971, the USAF seeded 300 x 800 meter segments with anti-personnel and anti-vehicular munitions.*[4071]*]*

17 May 1971

DEHNKE, SSG Dale Willard	**TF1AE**
ENTRICAN, CPT Danny Day	**RT ALASKA**
HOLLINGSWORTH, SP5 Gary Lynn	**TrngSuppHQ**
PEARCE, WO Dale Allen	**C/158th AHB**
SOYLAND, CWO David Pecor	**C/158th AHB**

4062 Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn, *1994 Membership Directory*, Vol. 11 (October, 1994), p. 285, indicates a lack of details concerning his loss.
4063 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech), AAR Opn LAM SON 719.
4064 *Ibid.*
4065 *Ibid.*
4066 Hq, XXIV Corps, "An Assessment of the Performance of South Vietnamese Forces During Operation LAMSON 719 (30 January – 6 April 1971), Inclosure 7, Cumulative Results.
4067 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (M), AAR, Operation KEYSTONE ORIOLE (BRAVO), Annex K, Historical Synopsis, p. 1.
4068 Army Map Service, Sheet 6342 IV, Series L7014, 1965.
4069 Layton, CAPT Bruce P., *Commando Hunt VI*, HQ, PACAF, Directorate of Operations Analysis, CHECO/CORONA HARVEST Division, 7 July 1972, pp. 1, 13.
4070 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
4071 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

The Khe Sanh area—indeed the entire western area of Quang Tri Province—while not occupied by friendly forces was nevertheless patrolled by recon teams. Recon Team ALASKA (of Task Force ONE Advisory Element, a successor unit of CCN, SOG) inserted 15 May 1971 and was operating within 2 KM of the Vietnam/Lao border, some 14 KM SW of KSCB. The area contained an important and well-defended Base Area of the NVA Military Region Tri-Thien-Hue with a large concentration of NVA soldiers, including Binh Tram 41, the 66th Regiment, and other elements of the 304th Division. The day after their insertion, RT ALASKA located 3 trails and remained overnight on the southern slope of Nui Giang Gio Mountain (YD042276).[4072]

On 17 May, RT ALASKA moved out of the bush and made contact at YD036214[4073] during which one American and one Vietnamese member of the team were KIA. The team evaded and huddled close together for the night. With darkness nearing and mindful of the danger, WO1 Soyland and his crew[4074] (call sign PHOENIX 22) heroically volunteered to attempt a rescue of RT ALASKA and launched his UH-1H from Camp Evans at 1630H, 17 May.[4075] As Soyland began his approach to the team, his aircraft began banking right and was hit by enemy fire causing the aircraft to bank and start to invert. A RPG [rocket propelled grenade] hit and severed the tail boom. The violence of the explosion threw SP4 Garry E. Allcorn, Door Gunner, out of the aircraft just before it crashed near the top of a very steep slope[4076] about 100-300 meters from RT ALASKA. After the impact, the UH-1H (#65-17607) continued to slide to the bottom of the slope, coming to rest at YD048268, about 300-500 meters south of RT ALASKA.[4077]

The Co-pilot, WO Dale Allen Pearce, was killed in the crash. WO1 Soyland survived the crash with minor, if any, injuries. Only one other crew member remained in the UH-1H, SP5 Harold E. Parker, Crew Chief, who was severely wounded and unconscious. Apparently believing Parker to be dead, WO1 Soyland took the 2 survival packs with emergency radios from the helicopter and moved away from the wreckage, possibly toward RT ALASKA's position. It is believed that NVA troops captured Soyland within moments before he could use his emergency radios to contact rescue forces.[4078]

On the morning of 18 May, the team, out of ammunition, moved into bushes at YD036214. A number of NVA soldiers advanced up the trail and shouted, "You are surrounded, get up, don't follow American." About 10 seconds later, one NVA soldier peered into their hiding place and shouted in Vietnamese, "Who are you?" to Truong To Ha, one of the Vietnamese members of the patrol, and then, in Vietnamese, "First Squad, go through area, capture alive." 1/Lt Entrican was wounded in the back and ordered the remainder of RT ALASKA to go on without him, and they rolled down the hill. A few moments later, a team member heard a frightened yell from 1/Lt Entrican followed by a burst of gunfire.[4079]

Meanwhile, a rescue force inserted at 1930H on 17 May was unable to move to either RT ALASKA or the UH-1H due to darkness. At 0700 on 18 May, as the rescue force was attempting a link-up, it was struck by NVA B-40 rockets killing one man and causing several serious wounded. At 1245H, following 3 air strikes, MLT-2 [Mobile Launch Team-2] inserted a second rescue force including members of RT KRAIT and RT HABU which swept through the area of the contact and crash. About 10-15 meters from their insertion, the force located the bodies of Sgt Dehnke and one SCU from RT ALASKA and one dead NVA. After moving 10 more meters, the body of Sgt Hollingsworth was found. A hundred meters further, parts of the downed helicopter were found strewn throughout the area: 2 skids, 1 M-60 machinegun, 1 tail boom, 1 main rotor, numerous maps and charts, and pieces of Plexiglas. The mutilated remains (waist down) of WO Pearce were found about 70 meters up the hill from the crash along with flight fatigues. Lacking tools, recovery of all body parts was impossible due to parts buried in dirt, trees, brush, and under aircraft debris. He was completely mutilated; it appeared that some of his limbs had been ripped off while falling through the trees. His body was trapped by dead fall and the soldiers were unable to extract him from the debris and trees pinning him without tools. From the waist up, the body was totally mutilated and beyond recognition. The remains of the aircraft were located upside down, laying on its nose at the bottom of a steep ravine. Pieces of the chopper were scattered for about 200 meters down the hill to the chopper. SP5 Parker was found inside, severely wounded (shot in his leg and a fracture in the same place). Speed in extracting him was essential if he were to survive, and Sgt Lemuel D. McClothren, the "One

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[4072] "Case 1748: Entrican, Danny D.," "Warrant Officers David P. Soyland..," documents in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #219, Folder #64.

[4073] "Narrative, Case 1748-0-01 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #219, Folder #64.

[4074] Of Co C, 158th Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter) (Airmobile), 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile).

[4075] HQ, 101st Abn Div (Airmobile) ltr 1 Aug 1971 and Statement of CPT Neil C. Doty in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #264, Folder #557 (IN553, Soyland).

[4076] Statement of SP4 Gary Earl Allcorn in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #264, Folder #557 (IN553, Soyland).

[4077] "Warrant Officers David P. Soyland.." document in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #219, Folder #64.

[4078] *Ibid.*

[4079] Statement of SCU Truong To Ha in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #219, Folder #64.

Zero" put his own STABO rig on Parker and he was extracted by ladder.[4080]

Allcorn woke up, finding himself 25 meters from the tail boom. As he followed the marks downhill made by the UH-1H, he heard movement, thought it was NVA, and hid in the bushes for the night. The next morning at dawn, he heard one rifle shot near the aircraft and moved up the slope, disorientated.[4081]

As RT KRAIT and RT HABU were being extracted by ladder, Allcorn was spotted 2 ridge lines from the crash site in the middle of a field waving his white under shorts, and was rescued.[4082]

Despite extensive search of the area on subsequent days, no trace of 1/Lt Entrican or WO1 Soyland were detected. Loss was at YD048268.[4083]

01 JUNE 1971

MAGERS, 1/Lt Paul Gerald	**D/158th AHB**
WANN, CWO Donald Lynn	**D/158th AHB**

On 01 June 1971, Delta Co, 158th Infantry Battalion (Assault Helicopter), 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) furnished one light fire team of AH-1G Cobra helicopters to 1st Brigade, 5th Mechanized Infantry Division: CW2 Donald L. Wann and 1/Lt Paul G. Magers piloted one helicopter (#68-15002, Oxhorn 22); CPT William D. Loftin and WO1 Nicholas E. Dreessen piloted the other.[4084] Earlier in the day, the 2 birds had supported D/3-5 with a combat assault (0830-1000), with a flame drop (1000-1200), and a sensor drop (1415-1515), and at 1515 were given the added mission to extract a ranger team from FSB Sheppard and insert them on top of Hill 1015, near Firebase Telstar (XD855454).[4085] "Hill 1015 has a very steep rocky slope, yet is highly vegetated. The ranger team had set up their LZ near the top of the eastern slope of the hill. The hill was casting a shadow in a southeasterly direction and an enemy gun emplacement was in the shadow near the base of the hill, approximately 1000 feet from the top of the hill."[4086]

Four UH-1H's successfully extracted and inserted the ranger team, the last of which drew fire. The AH-1G Cobras, low on fuel, returned to Mai Loc for refueling and then were informed that the ranger team was in close contact with enemy in 2 bunkers about 25 meters from their position. The 2 Cobras returned, neutralized the position, and 4 lift ships successfully extracted the ranger team. After refueling, the Cobras returned to destroy some claymore mines and grenades the rangers had left on the hill.[4087]

CW2 Wann and 1/Lt Magers made the first gun run on the position. "Starting from an altitude of 2500 to 3000 feet the Cobra started a run from northwest of the position toward the southeast, breaking off from the gun run approximately 400 to 500 feet above the target. The aircraft leveled off and received fire from the base of the hill. The aircraft then nosed upward and gained approximately 100 to 150 feet of altitude, yet apparently lost power from damages caused by the enemy fire and lost most of the forward airspeed. The aircraft caught fire and began to fall vertically spinning to the right in a level spin. Apparently uncontrolled, the aircraft continued to fall at a faster and faster rate, and spiral in a tight right hand turn until it crashed into the side of the mountain at a rate of descent equal to that of an autorotation, 2000 to 3000 feet per minute. The momentum of the aircraft pushed it about 100 feet through the vegetation on the side of the hill after it impacted and exploded. The ordnance aboard the aircraft then began to 'cook off' tearing what was left of the aircraft apart."[4088]

It was 1855 and the location of the crash was XD855454.[4089] The wreckage and remains were on the southeast slope of the hilltop down from the top about 200 meters in a densely vegetated area.[4090] CPT Loftin, nearby in the other Cobra, observed the crash and concluded that no one could have survived the crash and violent explosion.[4091]

[4080] Statement of Sgt Richard A. Hendrick in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #219, Folder #64; Statements of Sgt Richard A. Hendrick, SSGT Kenneth W. Holmes, SGT Lemuel D. McClothren, and SGT Copy W. Reese in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #264, Folder #557 (IN 553, Soyland).

[4081] Statement of SP4 Gary Earl Allcorn in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #264, Folder #557 (IN553, Soyland).

[4082] Statements of SGT Richard A. Hendrick, SGT Coy W. Reese, SSG Robedrt E. Cook in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #264, Folder #557 (IN553, Soyland).

[4083] JCRC, Circumstances of Loss (as of 31 March 1975) in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #219, Folder 62, Vol. 1.

[4084] Statement of Incident, 16 June 1971, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #33.

[4085] Statement of CPT William D. Loftin in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #33.

[4086] Gouge, 2/Lt Edward M., Letter of 8 August 1971, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #33. (Also in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #34 (Wann).

[4087] Statement of CPT William D. Loftin in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #33.

[4088] Gouge, 2/Lt Edward M., Letter of 8 August 1971 and Statement of WO1 Nicholas E. Dreessen, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #33.

[4089] Statement of Maj Ronald F. Massey, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #33.

[4090] Joint Statement of WO1 Nicholas E. Dreessen and CPT William D. Loftin, 16 June 1971, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #33.

[4091] Statement of CPT William B. Loftin, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #33.

The weather on 2, 3, 4, and 5 June "marginal to prohibitive for flying."[4092]

05 JUNE 1971

JONES, SGT John Robert TF1AE, SOG

The detachment from Task Force One Advisory Element occupying Hill 950, known as "Hickory Outpost," contained 67 indigenous and 27 Americans and had the mission of radio relay for reconnaissance and monitor movement of NVA in the area.[4093] The outpost included Walton, a specialist in reading electronic sensors[4094] as well as the signals intelligence system known as EXPLORER.[4095] Perhaps because of its highly classified equipment as well as mission, worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions, American commanders refused to acknowledge its existence, even as it fell, and consequently, it was not given optimal defensive materiel. One officer was to note, "They didn't even want to acknowledge it was there, so how could they reinforce it? These people were left out there with no defenses at all. Nothing. Not even barbed wire or big guns."[4096]

Defense of the outpost was the responsibility of Jon Robert Cavaiani who was later to be decorated with the Medal of Honor for his heroism in defending the outpost. Adopted in England when he was 7 or 8 months old, he never was able to discover his parentage or even date of birth since a fire destroyed the records. He took his birthday as 2 August, Friendship Day in England, "..because they figure I was born somewhere around that time."[4097] Along with Cavaiani, other Americans on HICKORY included Sgt John Jones (a radioman), Sgt Hill, Walton (the specialist reading electronic sensors), and Lt Valersky (a Special Forces officer present to observe).[4098] One of the indigenous personnel on the position was actually a North Vietnamese Army officer incognito, a spy, something Cavaiani was to discover after he had been captured and was languishing in POW torture facilities in Hanoi.[4099] In the weeks preceeding 4 June 1971, the position was mainly quiet, and Cavaiani collected various insects: "You couldn't believe some of the iridescent colors that you'd get on some of those insects up there—beautiful! I remember the 'borers" The more beautiful ones, the large ones, real long antenna and all that, were actually pone-borers, and they would put off the odor of turpentine."[4100]

At approximately 0600 on the foggy morning of 4 June, a South Vietnamese soldier of the unit defending HICKORY detected Chinese-made claymore mines in their outer perimeter pointed into the outpost. Sgt. Cavaiani determined that the 8 mines discovered had been emplaced during the night. Sgt. Hill and 4 South Vietnamese soldiers went down the hill to the lower helipad to obtain metal culvert halves stored there which had been delivered to improve their position. When Sgt Hill was half-way there, NVA soldiers began firing B-40 rockets from a bunker approximately 75 yards from them. During this initial attack, Sgt Hill was wounded in his knee and returned to the top of the hill and Sgt Cavaiani used a M-60 machinegun to destroy the Chinese claymore mines.[4101]

Walton, the sensor reader technician from the 1st of the 5th (Mech) Div, came over to Sgt Cavaiani, who was firing the .50 "because Charlie had really opened up on us." He crawled over and said, "Why don't you let me take over the .50 and you can check on your people." Cavaiani said, ""Walton, what do you know about .50s?" "Nothing," he replied, "But I figured you were Special Forces and could teach me in two or three minutes!" There was a young Bru Montagnard with him that Cavaiani knew well enough to know that he could set timing and space, so he gave the .50 to Walton who engaged several NVA machinegun positions and knocked them out. A little while later, Cavaiani returned to find Walton standing up on the berm, and with NVA shooting at him, shooting back at them. Cavaiani dove down and knocked him down. "What the hell you doing?" he asked. "I looked at him, because I was laying on his chest. His glasses were just like somebody had frosted them from all the sand when it [the rounds] hit the sandbags, and he said, 'Sarge, I think I'm going blind.' The rest of his face looked like raw hamburger where he had been hit by all the sand, so I said, 'Walton, you got an-

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[4092] Statement of CPT Larry C. Kennemer, Asst Launch Officer, Mobile Launch Team-2, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #33.

[4093] Conversation with Jon Cavaiani, 09 February 1991.

[4094] *Ibid.*

[4095] Gilbert, James L., *The Most Secret War, Army Signals Intelligence in Vietnam*, Military History Office, U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, Ft. Belvoir, VA, 2003, pp. 97-98. The EXPLORER system, controlled by operators at 8th RR Field Station in Phu Bai, faced several logistics problems, the most significant of which was providing adequate supplies of gasoline to power the system. To draw as little attention as possible, ASA soldiers buried all of the equipment minus the antennas, and to cut down on noise, used generators specifically designed for 'whisper' quietness. At 2100 on 4 June, orders were given to destroy the equipment with thermite grenades on Hill 950.

[4096] Unidentified clipping, "Secret Base's Fall Laid to Negligence," copy furnished by Jerry Crews in his letter of 10 June 1996.

[4097] Conversation with Jon R. Cavaiani, 24 March 1991.

[4098] Conversations with Jon R. Cavaiani, 6 August 1991 and 9 February 1991; Agent Report of 9 April 1973 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #423, Folder #35.

[4099] Conversation with Jon R. Cavaiani, 9 February 1991.

[4100] *Ibid.*

[4101] Agent Report of 9 April 1973 in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #423, Folder #35.

other pair of glasses?' He said, 'Yeah, back in my hootch.' I managed to make it back to his bunker, grabbed his other pair of glasses, brought them back and put them on him, and he says, 'I can see!... Walton had turned into a regular 'John Wayne! I loaded that kid on a helicopter 4 times! He'd return and say, 'Sarge, I fell out.! When I put him on the last chopper that was leaving, I had a Bru Montagnard point a CAR-15 at him with instructions to shoot him if he left, and told Walton to get his ass out of here. I wrote him up for the Medal of Honor. He had done some extraordinary things!'"[4102]

The NVA mortarmen were proficient, accurately lobbing over 127 rounds within the camp from a distance of 2600 – 2700 meters away[4103] (a little over a mile) and Sgt Cavaiani determined it was prudent to destroy all the special electronic eavesdropping equipment—"so much for several millions dollars worth of government equipment!"[4104]

At 1615, 4 June, LTC Bobbie B. Fernander, commanding 101st Aviation Battalion (Assault Helicopter) of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) attended a briefing at CCN headquarters discussing the extraction of 6 US and 47 ARVN personnel from Hickory. 9 UH-1H and 4 AH-1G aircraft from the 101st Aviation Battalion (AH), 2 UH-1H and 2 AH-1G from the 158th Aviation Battalion, and 2 medevac aircraft were to comprise the effort. "The flight arrived over Khe Sanh at 1800 hours. The Air Force FAC told me that a 15 minute delay would be necessary in order to employ TAC air. After the air strike, extraction of personnel began encountering a heavy volume of small arms fire, rockets, mortars, and anti aircraft weapons. The first aircraft extracted 8 personnel with the second aircraft extracting 5 personnel. The second aircraft was hit by enemy fire and was forced to make a forced landing at the abandoned Khe Sanh airstrip. At this time I stopped the extraction and requested additional TAC air on the suspected enemy positions and had the flight refuel. At 1845 hours additional TAC air arrived on station and the extraction was attempted while the strike was in progress. The first aircraft, while under heavy enemy fire, extracted 7 personnel; the second made a go around; the third aircraft extracted 5 personnel but was hit numerous times by enemy fire and was forced to shut down at LZ Star for combat damage. The second aircraft, which previously had made a go around, re-entered the landing zone and was only able to extract 3 personnel because the remaining personnel would not leave bunkers during the mortar attack to get on the aircraft. The FAC advised that the next TAC air would not arrive until 1920 hours. I directed all assets to return to CCN and await further instructions due to the non-availability of continuous TAC air and darkness in the area of operations. At this time all wounded personnel had been evacuated and numerous enemy automatic weapons, mortar positions, and .51 caliber weapons had been located. Upon returning to CCN at 2030 hours, commanders at all levels agreed that an extraction would be impractical and that further operations would begin at 0600 hours 5 June."[4105]

By 1700, Cavaiani and Sgt Jones, along with the South Vietnamese defenders, were in one bunker on the northeast corner of the perimeter, and in the early morning hours of 5 June, Cavaiani ran to another bunker to bolster the defense and told the remaining South Vietnamese to flee. They retreated down the hill. Cavaiani received word of Air Force air carrying 250-pound bombs. "I had all my people in bunkers and there were 65, 70 NVA in the camp. He called back, refusing to fire, saying it was too close. "I finally was really ticked off and I told him, 'My Name's Jon Cavaiani. This relieves you of any responsibility of the fire mission. Fire!' They wouldn't fire!"[4106]

At approximately 0400 a hand grenade was dropped through the air vent of their bunker and Sgt Jones was wounded in both legs. "It was at this point that Jones decided to surrender. He left the bunker and handed his weapon and his wallet over to a NVA soldier who then fired six rounds into Sgt. Jones chest, killing him."[4107]

Cavaiani decided to "play dead." A lone NVA soldier entered the bunker and punched him in the chest to determine if he were alive. Cavaiani, covered with blood, played dead. Believing Cavaiani to be dead, he departed and set the bunker on fire. About 16 to 17 NVA watched the bunker being burned and shortly after they left, Cavaiani dashed outside, exhausted, burned, and shortly thereafter, lost consciousness. He moved to another bunker, destroyed all the papers in his wallet other than his ID card, a check for $350.00, and a picture of his daughters, moved under a cot and fell asleep. Waking, he noticed a NVA was sitting on the cot above him, tugging at his boot, but released it and walked outside the bunker. He was eventually captured, taken to Hanoi, and then released 27 March 1973.[4108] He was decorated with the Medal of Honor.[4109]

[4102] Conversation with Jon R. Cavaiani, 6 August 1991.

[4103] *Ibid.*

[4104] Quoted in Halberstadt, Hans, *War Stories of the Green Berets, The Viet Nam Experience*, Osceola, Wi.: Motorbooks International Publishers & Wholesalers, 1994, p. 211.

[4105] LTC Bobbie B. Fernander, Memo of 5 June 1971, Subj: Account of CCN Extraction of Hickory Radio Relay from 1615 Hours 4 June thru 1725 Hours 5 June, in letter from Jerry Crews, 10 June 1996.

[4106] Conversation with Jon R. Cavaiani, 6 August 1991. For a more detailed account, see Halberstadt, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

[4107] Agent Report, 9 April 1971, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #423, Folder #35.

[4108] *Ibid.*; DOD Intelligence Information Report #2 261 0024 73, 18 April 1973, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #423, Folder #35.

[4109] Copies of Citation contained in: Sutherland, LTC Ian D.W., *1952/1982, Special Forces of the United States Army*, San Jose, Ca.: R. James Bender Publishing, 1990, pp. 630-

Hickory was struck by an Arc Light 7 days later.[4110]

15 July 1971

TAYLOR, CAPT Ted James A/2-17

KIA 8.1 nautical miles from Khe Sanh.[4111]

07 August 1971

BERG, SGT Bruce Allan	RT KANSAS
BINGHAM, SSG Oran Lothier	RT KANSAS
HAGEN, 1/Lt Loren Douglas	RT KANSAS

With the loss of HICKORY, the massive construction of extended infiltration roads within South Vietnam in western Quang Tri Province, it became essential to know what was happening near Khe Sanh, and a prisoner-snatch mission was assigned to Recon Team KANSAS commanded by 1/Lt Loren D. Hagen. The plan was to land conspicuously on an abandoned firebase, using the NVA's tactic of providing a lucrative target which would attract and fix enemy soldiers. RT KANSAS would then be extracted, but furtively leave behind half of their team. Then, when the NVA investigated the area to see if any electronic sensors had been left behind, they would snatch a POW and be extracted. Unfortunately, they landed unknowingly near a new 6-inch POL pipeline that had been laid across the DMZ, and after their insertion, the hill became surrounded by at least a regiment of NVA, over a thousand men. The soldiers heard tail gates of trucks drop, bringing more and more NVA that formed into platoons and companies to assault the old fire base. When in place, the position was assaulted by approximately 2,000 NVA infantrymen.[4112]

The bunker holding Sgt Berg was struck by a RPG, initiating the attack which developed into 10,000 rounds per second as a human wave assault by NVA stormed the position. Lt Hagen rushed to check on Berg, but was killed by small arms fire. Oran Bingham crawled out to reposition a claymore, and was killed in the process.[4113]

Following massive air strikes, including napalm, the NVA temporarily withdrew permitting UH-1E helicopters to extract the team with its casualties. In half a hour, 9 of the 14 members of the team had been killed.[4114]

1/Lt Hagen was posthumously decorated with the Medal of Honor.[4115]

10 AUGUST 1971

BATES, CPT Paul Jennings Jr.	220th RAC
DOLAN, PFC Thomas Albert	101 MiCo

Capt Bates, pilot with the 220th RAC, 212 Bn, 11th CAG, 1st Avn and observer, SSG Dolan of the 101st MI Co., 101st Abn Div, were on an O1G (#51-2267) on a VR mission over the southwestern portion of the DMZ when they received hostile weapons fire, crashed and burned at XD829654. A medevac helicopter (CW2 Jerald A. Lee) on the scene surveyed the wreckage and crash scene but saw no survivors on the ground and deemed it inadvisable to risk further loss of life by lowering someone into the area. No ground search was made.[4116]

[*On 09 September 1971, Major John W. Ripley, an Advisor to Brigade 258 of the Vietnamese Marine Corps, flew to Hill 1015 for a preliminary reconnaissance for an operation planned to retrieve MIA casualties from June (1/Lt Paul Magers, MIA 1 June 1971, and some 30 bodies from the attack on 4/5 June). The minute they put a team into Hill 1015, the helicopters came under intense fire. The troops had already debarked and the insertion helicopter was shot down. The bird carrying Ripley and one other were shot up in the process, and auto-rotated, spinning down and crash landed on the old Khe Sanh airstrip. One of the helicopters was able to fly back to Quang Tri and Maj Ripley was retrieved and flown back to FSB SARGE (YD029479, the CP of Brigade 258).*[4117]

The very next day, 10 September 1971, an Army Major, Al Ruschatz (West Point Class of '62) requested a guide back to Hill 1015. They flew over the area without landing and were unable to make contact with the recon team that had been inserted the previous day.[4118]

On 11 September, 8 troop-carrying helicopters, a Command and Control bird and a scout aircraft carrying Ruschatz approached from the north following a zone

631 and Jordan, Kenneth N., Sr., *Heroes of Our Time*, Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer Military/Aviation History, 1994, pp. 340-341.

[4110] Conversation with Jon R. Cavaiani, 9 February 1991.

[4111] Analysis Data Report in letter from Charles W. Henley, Director, Defense POW/MIA Office, I-95/48170, 28 Jun 1995.

[4112] Plaster, John L., "Last Stand of Recon Team Kansas," *VFW* 84:11 (August, 1997) 38-40, 49.

[4113] *Ibid.*, p. 40. The article indicates "Klaus Bingham" but Klaus Bingham was KIA 10 May 1971. The man with RT Kansas was Oran Bingham.

[4114] *Ibid.*

[4115] Copy of Citation in Saal, Harve, *SOG MACV Studies and Observations Group, (Behind Enemy Lines)*, Vol. III, *Legends*, Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1990, p. 533.

[4116] Biographic/Site Report, Report of Casualty, 8 Feb 74 (finding of death), Statement of CW2 Jerald A. Lee and other documents in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #329, Folder #103 (Bates).

[4117] Oral tape made by Maj John W. Ripley dated 01 March 1978 to Dr. Steven E. Ambrose.

[4118] Oral tape made by Maj John W. Ripley dated 27 July 1986, to Oral History Div, Historical Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C.

prep. The skids of Ripley's helicopter cleared the trench, the pilot began turning down the power, and the troops were getting ready to debark when suddenly, from both sides of the trench and all around, the NVA jumped up and began firing at the aircraft from both sides. "It was an incredible sight. Many automatic weapons. Every man in the aircraft was being fired on by automatic weapons. The door gunners were splattered against the fire wall of the aircraft and couldn't move. There was so much fire being pumped into everybody. Bits and pieces [of body were] blown off of everybody—just a shocking sight. I was so mesmerized. Both pilots were hit and founds came up through the deck itself, one of which, as I was kneeling on the deck, hit me—came between my legs and hit me in the magazine pouch on the starboard side of my cartridge belt, and the round literally picked me up off the deck and slammed me against the fire wall directly behind me.. All this happened in less than 15 seconds probably. There was an enormous volume of fire. While the troop ship to my right, just a rotor-blade length away from us, was taking all this fire, the enemy exploded a claymore mine beneath the cockpit—blew both doors off, ripped the chin bubble and caused the aircraft to roll to the right, critically wounding both pilots, in fact, flowing the legs off, parts of them, off the pilot in the left seat... Both aircraft somehow—God knows how—made a controlled descent back into Khe Sanh, reminiscent of the previous one I'd been in the day before. It was absolutely miraculous work by the pilots... All in the aircraft were Killed in Action or Wounded in Action—every single man."[4119] *After checking on everyone and placing all on one of the helicopters, it took off, leaving Ripley alone on the airstrip with the other severely damaged helicopter with its blades still rotating—"burning and turning." Ripley looked around, saw no means to protect himself, looked at the damaged bird, and "..made a conscious decision to take my changes in that aircraft rather than to take them alone at Khe Sanh. So I got in the left seat of the aircraft. I remembered enough from my training at Pensacola as a Midshipman. I had to take my canteen out and splash water on the wind screen which was virtually opaque with the blood of the casualties. I had no communication. Red warning lights beeped continually. The doors were blown off. There was no fuel indication. Suddenly, like a flash of light, a man jumped into the right seat—an Army Warrant Officer—and he began to grab the controls, checking things. He had his pilot's helmet on. He was in the process of trying to get the aircraft airborne when I leaned over and shouted as loud as I could if there was any help I could give him. His response was unprintable, but very memorable, and I'll never forget what he had to say, which amounted to 'Leave me alone!' I did assist by splashing some more water from my canteen on his wind screen so he could see forward instead of hanging his head out the door. He managed to get the aircraft airborne with quite a struggle. It was making all sorts of weird noises. We got airborne and moving along and suddenly a scout returned to escort us. It was Ruschatz, the Airborne Commander, who realized he was missing some airplanes. We moved from Khe Sanh to Quang Tri airfield, approximately 33 air miles by the route we had to take."*[4120]

On the 15th – 20th of September, the Vietnamese 5th Marine Battalion landed on the eastern part of the ridge line overlooking Khe Sanh base at Hill 613 (XD895438) and worked westward towards Hill 1015 (XD854455) on the western end of the ridge to link up with and extract the recon team inserted on Dong Tri (Hill 1015). While walking this ridgeline, Ripley saw the extensive NVA positions that had been constructed, including a continuous, virtually unbroken, trench line over its 5-mile length with intermittent firing positions and fighting positions. As the battalion approached Hill 1015, they established a night defensive position approximately 2000 meters east and the following day an Army Cobra began to transmit to Ripley personally, asking him to investigate the grid of the crash where another Cobra had been shot down (Magers, 01 June). The Vietnamese Marine patrol continued on while a small patrol consisting of a rifle platoon, Ripley, and his assistant, Capt Bob Jassam, eventually reached the crash site on the eastern slope of Hill 1015. Capt Jassam positively identified the remains. The Commander of the Vietnamese Marine unit did not want to divert from his patrol, and the operation continued several days until the recon patrol had been successfully recovered. On the movement back, Capt Jassam was bitten by a snake and became delereious and was medevaced.[4121] *The recon team was located and rescued in what was the last friendly action of any consequence at Khe Sanh. By this time, Route 9 west of Ca Lu (YD013453) had been completely abandoned, un-patrolled, and written-off. Civilians, Bru Montagnards, did not use the road which was virtually impassible and enemy-controlled. "The Vietnamese had absolutely no interest in the western Quang Tri Province which was disappointing especially considering the extraordinary cost and blood, lives, and treasure that had been invested in it. They either did not have the forces to protect that area or perhaps saw it as tactically unnecessary, infeasible."*[4122] *The NVA were present "in abundance, controlled the area, and had every intent to remain there."*[4123]]

[4119] *Ibid.*

[4120] *Ibid.*

[4121] COL J. W. Ripley, letter to Defense Intelligence Agency, 8 February 1990, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #323, Folder #33.

[4122] Conversation with COL John Ripley, 09 October 1994.

[4123] *Ibid.*

30 SEPTEMBER 1971

BOND, CPT Ronald Leslie	**421st TFS**
DONOVAN, CPT Michael Leo	**421st TFS**

Capt Donovan, Aircraft Commander (STORMY 03), and CAPT Bond, departed DaNang Airfield at 0647H on 30 September 1971 in a F-4E with a visual reconnaissance mission in the Steel Tiger area of Laos. Their last radio transmission with another FAC (STORMY 04) was at 1130H having completed aerial refueling and proceeding to their final target, XD619099. At 1215, after they failed to return to DaNang as scheduled, they were declared missing.[4124]

20 JANUARY 1972

BERDAHL, PFC David Donald	**D/3-5**
EDWARDS, SP4 Harry Jerome	**L/75th Inf**
FIGUEROA, SGT Fernando	**D/3-5**
MORAN, SP4 Walter C B	**TRF 95**

[All with 101st Abn Div]

A USAF Phantom had crashed, and a UH1H from 3rd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 101st Airborne Division was sent to scout for it. The UH1H included 4 of its own crew and 3 soldiers from the Air Rifle Platoon (PFC Dennis Trimble, Sgt Figueroa, and SP4 Edwards).[4125] **At approximately 1815, Capt William L. Allen, Pilot, was returning from a rescue mission northwest of Khe Sanh in a UH-1H helicopter (#67-16717) when it was struck (at 4300 feet) by anti-aircraft fire (vicinity of XD853393), probably a 12.7mm machinegun in the vicinity of XD858406. In an effort to save his crew, Capt Allen auto-rotated to the bank of the Rao Quan River at XD883408. The aircraft burst into flames, landed hard, and rolled onto its left side.**[4126] **Capt Joseph C. Hogg, Aircraft Commander of another UH-1H (#70-15708), who followed the burning aircraft down ".. exited my aircraft and started pulling the survivors from the crashed aircraft. The aircraft was severely crushed laterally... I lifted or assisted five crew members from the ship. I saw one body pinned face down under the ship, but the fire was too hot to rescue that person. He was wearing a flight helmet and a body armor vest. He appeared to be pinned under the transmission and I could not see the lower half of his body... I did not thoroughly inspect the ship for other bodies because the ship was exploding and I did not believe that anyone left in the ship was still alive. The stream was very swift. In attempting to bring CPT Allen back across the stream we were washed about 50 feet downstream. A man who fell into the stream would have been washed away and drowned. A quick check of the area around the aircraft revealed one other wounded person on the south bank of the river... There were 8 persons on board the aircraft, 6 of which were rescued and one of which I saw pinned in the wreckage."**[4127]

PFC Trimble recalls that the UH-1H caught on fire from some ground fire. "The pilot informed us that everything was all right, but the flames were spreading to where I was seated, so I got up and moved outside of the aircraft and stood on the skid. Again, the flames were spreading to where I was so I jumped from the aircraft while it was still in flight. This was the last that I can remember until I later gained my consciousness approxi-

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[4124] JCRC, Narrative, Case 1772-0-01 and 02, Document dated 28 April 1972, Intelligence Case File Report of 8 Oct 1971, and Dept of the Air Force, "Continuance of Missing in Action Status Beyond Twelve Months—Case #436," in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #336, Folder #198.

[4125] Statement of PFC Dennis Trimble, 16 March 1972, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #327, Folder #85 (Berdahl).

[4126] "Synopsis of the Crash," in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #442, Folder #40 (Edwards) and Reel #327, Folder #85 (Berdahl).

[4127] Statement of CPT Joseph C. Hogg, Jr., in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #442, Folder #40 (Edwards) and Reel #327, Folder #85 (Berdahl). Rescued and WIA: CPT William L. Allen (Pilot), WO1 Francie L. Angotti, Jr. (Aircraft Commander), SP4 Walter E. Morris (Crew Chief), and PFC Dennis W. Trimble (Grenadier); rescued and DOW: SGT Fernando Figueroa (Rifleman) and SP4 Walter C. B. Moran (Team Leader); MIA: SP4 Harry J. Edwards (Rifleman) and PFC David D. Berdahl (Door Gunner). ["Synopsis of the Crash" in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #442, Folder #40 (Edwards) and Reel #327, Folder #85 (Berdahl). CPT Hogg also stated: "When I first approached the aircraft, one man was standing near it. I took this man and placed him near the large boulder. Then I took 2 more men and placed them next to the portion of the rotor blades, on the bank. CPT Allen walked up to me and grabbed me, put his arms around me. I took him across the river to my aircraft. I saw someone floating in the river and jumped in to get him. SP4 Weiland helped me pull him out. I went back across the river and found WO1 Angotti walking around in a daze. I put him on top of the boulder. I motioned for the aircraft to hover to my side of the river because the other injured were in too bad of shape to swim across. We put them on the aircraft. I then climbed into my aircraft and then we saw a man on the other side of the river. We hovered over and picked him up and departed the area... I think the last man extracted was Trimble." Capt David A. Quimby, Pilot of the aircraft of which Capt Hogg was Aircraft Commander, remained with the UH-1H on the south side of the Rao Quan (the crash was on the north side), about 40 feet from the crashed helicopter, and saw that all survivors were in or immediately outside of the aircraft. "Unable to fend for themselves, they were dragged from and clear of the intense heat and fire by crew members of our own aircraft." [Statement of CPT David A. Quimby in *Ibid.*]

mately 100 yards from my helicopter which was crashed in the side of a hill."[4128]

30 MARCH 1972

CROSBY, SGT Bruce Allen Jr. 8th ARRS
WESTCOTT, SP5 Gary Patrick 8th ARRS

[Full unit: 8th Army Radio Research Field Station, 509th ASA Group, Army Security Agency, US Army, Vietnam]

Fire Base SARGE (YD028478, Dong Toan Mountain), one of two fire support bases (the other, at YD0348, about 2,000 meters away being near Nui Ba Ho, YD015511), perched in the mountains to the east of Route 9 as it wended on a north/south leg overlooking the old Vandegrift Fire Base, was defended by the 4th Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps. Two American advisors, Maj Walter Eugene Boomer and Captain Ray Smith, were present at the positions; the senior advisor, Maj Boomer, on FSB Sarge while Capt Smith was on the Nui Ba Ho mountain. The positions were ineffective against encroaching NVA units since active patrolling did not occur and Route 9 was not visible from SARGE. It was patently clear to Maj Boomer that significant NVA activity to the west was unfolding. He informed General Ghai who visited SARGE, "We would see boxes stacked along the road for a short period of time, and then they would disappear," but General Ghai "felt that he did not have sufficient strength to aggressively patrol to the west. This was a fatal mistake. While it would have been an extremely dangerous operation, had even one battalion been sent out to the west to explore our sightings, it would have revealed the North Vietnamese build up that was taking place prior to their offensive. Such lack of aggressiveness, however, was typical of the Vietnamese military hierarchy, and can to a large degree explain their ultimate loss to the North Vietnamese."[4129]

Abandonment of Khe Sanh portended the fall of South Vietnam. Arnold Toynbee, after extensive analysis of civilizations through the millennia, had concluded that they do not fall due to aggression from without, but from internal flaws, lack of will, moral degeneracy; outside forces simply seize the opportunity. Route 9, the ancient invasion route for Mongols entering what later became Vietnam, along with Siamese armies using the same route, brought in invading forces even as Annamite forces (from what eventually became central Vietnam) moved along the same route westward into what is now Laos. For the North Vietnamese, "Highway 9 was the path to victory in northern I Corps."[4130] Walter E. Boomer notes concerning Route 9: "In 1972 it was a major invasion route for the Easter Offensive. Ray Smith and I did in fact observe supplies being dropped off in broad daylight but were unable to convince our Vietnamese counterparts to take necessary preventive action. The attack against Fire Base SARGE and Ray Smith's position several hundred meters to the north came right down Route 9."[4131]

The attack on FSB SARGE began the morning of 30 March 1972 as NVA units began to shell the position with artillery at dawn. From the quantity and concentration it was immediately apparent that this was no ordinary attack.[4132] Located on the position was a bunker housing a steel CONEX box containing Sgt Bruce Crosby and SP5 Gary P. Westcott, two U.S. Army enlistedmen from the 8th Radio Research Field Station[4133] who had been monitoring the incursion of NVA units by signals intelligence (i.e., determining location by triangulation and determining chain of command by determining who talks to whom and how frequently—a "pattern analysis"). They were ordered to remain in their bunker (containing Explorer equipment) and maintain radio contact with Det Alfa at Quang Tri.[4134]

During the intense bombardment, Boomer was informed of a large fire blazing in the vicinity of the radio research bunker. He ran outside, "..and discovered their bunker had taken a direct hit. The round had penetrated the bunker wall and detonated inside, caving in the roof and causing an intense fire inside. I called down into the bunker but received no answer. No attempt at rescue could be made because of the fire and continuing heavy artillery attack."[4135]

[*Both positions eventually fell, the Marine Battalion was moved to Hue to regroup and reform after having lost about 40% of its manpower during the attack.*[4136]]

[4128] Statement of PFC Dennis Trimble in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #327, Folder #85.
[4129] Taped comments of Maj Walter E. Boomer, 8 March 1983, Oral History Section, Historical Center, HQMC, Washington, D.C.
[4130] Andrade, Dale, *America's Last Vietnam Battle, Halting Hanoi's 1972 Easter Offensive*, Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2001, p. 40.
[4131] Walter E. Boomer, Letter of 22 November 1994.
[4132] Boomer, *op. cit.*
[4133] Gilbert, James L., *Most Secret War, Army Signals Intelligence in Vietnam*, Military History Office, U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, Fort Belvoir, Va, 2003, p. 124.
[4134] CW2 James Leroy Wilson, Statement of 6 April 1972 to MIA Board, in Library of Congress, MIA microfilm Reel #330, Folder #129. For explorer equipment *vide* Gilbert, James L., *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.
[4135] Maj Walter Eugene Boomer, Statement of 6 April 1972 to MIA Board, in Library of Congress, MIA microfilm Reel #330, Folder #129.
[4136] Taped comments of Boomer, *op. cit.*

09 April 1972

KETCHIE, CPT Scott Douglas VMA (AW)-224

At 1811 on 9 April 1972, Maj C. D. Smith (Pilot) and 1/Lt Scott D. Ketchie (Bombadier/Navigator) launched from the USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43) in an A6A Intruder (#155652, call sign BENGAL 505) for a strike mission against lines of communication in Laos. At about 1920, Maj Smith and 1/Lt Ketchie conducted a dive-bombing attack on 5 trucks in Laos. While departing the target area after a second attack, the A6A aircraft (at 12000 feet) was hit in the aft section by AA fire. The aircraft pitched up and went into a spin at 8000 feet indicated. Maj Smith, seeing flames over his left shoulder, hit 1/Lt Ketchie on the arm and motioned to the ejection curtain. As Maj Smith ejected, he saw 1/Lt Ketchie reaching for the secondary ejection handle. Maj Smith landed near the aircraft at XD565572 and immediately went to a hiding place about 40 yards away. Yelling and gunfire was heard throughout the night on the other side of a ridge from where Maj Smith sought refuge, and gunfire, enemy troop movement and truck traffic were heard for the next 4 nights until Maj Smith was rescued on 13 April 1972.[4137]

14 April 1972

GREENLEAF, LT Joseph Gates VF-114
MC KINNEY, LT Clemie VF-114[4138]

[Both are part of VF-114 embarked in USS KITTY HAWK of the US 7th Fleet]

Three F-4J Phantoms launched from USS KITTY HAWK to strike a POL dump just below the DMZ and 17 miles west of Quang Tri. The Phantom flown by LTs Greenleaf and McKinney (#15752) was hit by 37mm AA and crashed near Cam Lo. A nearby FAC saw the plane take a hit in the cockpit and neither of the crew eject. Although the Vietnamese returned the remains of McKinney which were confirmed by the Navy to be his, his family disputes the claim.[4139]

[4137] JCRC, "Circumstances of Loss, Case 1824, 27 January 1975," Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 224, Det "C" Informal Investigation, 4:PCK:wrl, 5830, 21 Apr 1972, Statement of Maj Clyde D. Smith of 21 April 1972, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #331, Folder #132 (Ketchie).

[4138] LT McKinney is not listed in the Coffelt database but is listed in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc.: *Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Directory of Names*, 1982, p. 484 and in Hobson, Chris, *Vietnam Air Losses*, Hinkley, England: Midland Publishing, 2001, p. 222.

[4139] Hobson, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

07 May 1972

CONSOLVO, CPT John Wadsworth Jr. VMFA-212

VMFA-212, the third USMC Phantom squadron to deploy to Vietnam in 1972, arrived 14 April to join MAG-15. On 7 May, the target was a small convoy transporting SA-2 missiles near the DMZ. After a second pass, CAPT Consolvo's F-4J was hit by AAA fire. About 10 miles east of Khe Sanh, Capt Consolvo ordered his navigator, CWO3 J. J. Castonguay, to eject. Castonguay was rescued by a USAF SAR helicopter, but it is not known if Capt Consolvo, who had flown more than 150 missions during 2 Vietnam tours, ejected.[4140]

07 July 1972

ROBERTSON, MAJ Leonard VMA-553

Due to the increasing threat to DaNang from NVA sappers as their Easter Offensive approached, MAG-15 moved to Nam Phong, an air base constructed in 1967 in Thailand that had a 10,000-ft. paved runway. First VMFA-115 arrived, 16 June, followed by VMFA-232 and VMA (AW)-533, later joined by the C-130s of FMGR-152 and 4 CH-46s of H&MS-36 for SAR.[4141]

On 7 July 1972, an A-6A Intruder (#155690) was shot down while conducting a strike on a storage area 5 miles south of Khe Sanh. The pilot, 1/Lt Kroboth, ejected at 600-ft. when the aircraft was hit in the starboard wing and landed at XD831381 (about 1 click due west of the western edge of the former Khe Sanh ville). He was captured and released on 27 March 1973. His captors told him that his navigator had perished in the crash.[4142]

20 November 1972

BREUER, CAPT Donald Charles VMFA-232

At 1440, Capt Breuer (RIO) and Capt W. D. Anderson (Pilot) departed as crew aboard a F4J aircraft (#153849) in a flight of 2 aircraft and was armed with inboard LAU-10s and a centerline with 6 MK-82 bombs. The target, as briefed by NAIL 23, the FAC, and directed by HILLSBORO (the ABCCC) was to be a bomb run on 2 trucks and supplies. Capt Anderson stated his aircraft was struck by AA: "I was already jinking and jinked harder, rolling out just in time to pickle. I began a pull.. At that time I felt something hit us extremely hard, immediately causing large muffled explosions in the rear,

[4140] Hobson, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

[4141] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

[4142] *Ibid.;* JCRC, Refugee Report and Evaluation in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #292, Folder #9.

complete loss of control with regard to the stick, and a negative G condition with accompanying roll to the right. I was thrown up against the canopy, heard an unreadable exclamation from Capt Breuer and said something like 'get out' or 'punch out'.. Immediately after the hit my whole canopy was in a fire ball.. I reached twice for the alternative handle and got it about the third time, the face curtain seeming an impossibility to reach. I pulled it and the plane seemed to be in a semi-one G condition." The aircraft crashed near XD662350, 1 KM south of the Xepone River (the location of the former BV-33 at Ban Houei Sane). Capt Anderson safely parachuted from the airplane and was subsequently rescued. The crew members of the other F-4J did not see Capt Breuer parachute from the aircraft nor did they detect any beeper signals from him. Extensive aerial search and rescue efforts continued for 3 days with negative result.[4143]

[*The Cease-fire became effective 28 January 1973. Photographs of the Khe Sanh base taken on 18 February 1973 revealed that the NVA had emplaced 3 antiaircraft missile launching sites at Khe Sanh which could not have been constructed before the Cease Fire Agreement became effective, and that these missiles were a clear violation of the Agreement which prohibits both sides from introducing war materiel, except to replace equipment already in place. The missiles were identified as SAM-2.*[4144] *By 13 March 1973, Americans declared that if the Russian-made missiles were not removed from Khe Sanh, they would be subject to air attacks, and subsequent reconnaissance disclosed that they had been removed.*[4145] *On 17 March 1973, two International Control Commission Supervision Commission (ICCS) were fired upon while enroute to Lao Bao.*[4146]

On 7 April 1973, the North Vietnamese shot down an official helicopter of the ICCS, killing all eleven men aboard, including two PRG liaison officers.[4147] *The helicopter was enroute to Lao Bao where Route 9 passes on the Vietnam/Lao border. Since Lao Bao was listed as one of 3 ports of entry for replacement war materiel, the ICCS planned to station a team at this location to monitor the supplies, and the helicopter was enroute to Lao Bao to check on the status of the construction of facilities to house them. The 11 included representatives of the 4 ICCS nations, Canada, Indonesia, Hungary, and Poland, as well as Viet Cong and American crewmembers in a helicopter flown under contract with Air America.*[4148] *The anti-aircraft batteries of Division 377 of the NVA intimidated the ICCS into withdrawing, opening the door to North Vietnam's final invasion thrust to conquer South Vietnam.*[4149] *By May, 1973, United Press International reported: "Two Communist SAM2 antiaircraft sites remain manned near the old U.S. Marine base at Khe Sanh and ... At least four missile sites appear to be under construction around Khe Sanh, where the Communists have improved the old Marine air strip, in addition to the two sites reported in that area late in March."*[4150] *Khe Sanh had become a major NVA base. "Engineers and labor gangs have been extending the airstrip at Khe Sanh to more than a mile in length and covering it with steel matting."*[4151] *The U.S. Defense Department complained that the development of Khe Sanh into a major military and logistics base by the North Vietnamese was clearly in violation of the cease-fire agreement. "The base now includes storage and supply areas ringed with Soviet-supplied surface-to-air missiles, antiaircraft guns and heavy field artillery pieces. Some 122mm towed field artillery guns with a range of 17 miles have been spotted in the area. An estimated 8,000 to 10,000 North Vietnamese troops are stationed at the base. On the day of the cease-fire, Khe Sanh's old 3,900 foot aluminum runway was cratered and generally unusable. All this changed once the agreement was signed. Within a month of the cease-fire, the North Vietnamese started grading and clearing the area to rebuild and extend the runway. Photographs taken a month ago revealed that the runway had been lengthened to 5,300 feet... When completed, Khe Sanh will be able to accommodate North Vietnamese MIG21 jet interceptors and IL28 light jet bombers... The Khe Sanh base includes large truck parks, maintenance facilities, a headquarters and communications building complex, large petroleum depots, facilities for troop billets and an expanded road network that has been extended down the rugged western highland corridor including the A Shau Valley.. as far south as Kontum Province."*[4152]]

[4143] JCRC, Narrative, Case 1947-0-01 and Statement of Captain W. D. Anderson in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #430, Folder #144.

[4144] "Red Missile Sites Reported in South," The Milwaukee *Journal*, Monday, 26 Feb 1973, p. 2.

[4145] "Reds Bow to Ultimatum, Shift Khe Sanh Missiles," *Pacific Stars & Stripes* 29:71 (13 March 1973) 1.

[4146] JCS msg 181210Z/Mar73, Subj: Ceasefire Situation Report March 18, in Library of Congress MIA microfilm Reel #59, Folder #8.

[4147] Mather, Paul C., *M.I.A., Accounting for the Missing in Southeast Asia*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1994, p. 8.

[4148] "2 ICCS Copters Lost in Viet," *Pacific Stars & Stripes* 29:98 (Mon, 9 Apr 1973) 1.

[4149] Cawthorne, Nigel, *The Bamboo Cage, The Full Story of the American Servicemen still held hostage in South-East Asia*, London, England: Pen & Sword Books, 1991, p. 44.

[4150] "SAM Sites Spotted," *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Monday, 7 May 1973, p. 6.

[4151] Fred S. Hoffman, "N. Viets Plan to Hold Land?" *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Wed., 22 Aug 1973, p. 6.

[4152] Marc Huet, "Reds Build Khe Sanh Into Fortress," *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, Thurs, 30 Aug 1973.

[Battlefields continue to kill. Munitions become more sensitive, more apt to detonate, as decades pass. The immense amount of ordnance that fell in France in World War I (1914-1918) caused over 16 million acres of farm land to be declared off limits, including 2 million acres that remained such as late as 1996.[4153] *Currently, one-fifth of the bomb disposal technicians are killed every year clearing this ordnance.*[4154] *The French government estimates that more than 12 million unexploded shells from WW I still litter the soil near Verdun, while millions more await discovery in the battle zone along the Marne and Somme Rivers near Verdun. Millions more undiscovered shells remain embedded in the beaches of Normandy and Brittany as do sea-mines off shore.*[4155] *Sometimes, unexploded ordnance from the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 are unearthed. Some shells do not explode, they merely discharge lethal gas.*[4156]

The Khe Sanh battlefield continued to kill. According to Vietnamese officials, since 1975 (the year they give for the end of the war), "at least 5,000 people have been killed or maimed at Khe Sanh.." due to unexploded ordnance.[4157] *The article noted that 2 people were killed in less than a year according to Cao Thi Tien. People stepped on mines or detonated shells while poking in the ground with wire rods to locate American dog tags, helmets, flak jackets, shell casings and weapons, spent bullets, pieces of bomb-pierced steel plating that covered the airstrip, barbed wire, and tank treads, all selling for about 2 cents a kilogram [2.2 pounds] for steel and more for aluminum or brass.*[4158] *Most of the victims are impoverished local farmers searching for whatever they can salvage. Once pocked with craters of exploding ordnance, the barren Khe Sanh landscape soon became laced and pocked with countless freshly dug holes.*[4159] *One scrap metal dealer in Khe Sanh village included in his inventory: defused 500-pound bombs, artillery shell casings, mortar rounds, tank treads, barbed wire, and oil drums."*[4160]

An article in the New York Times *reported: "A quarter century has passed since one of the most costly battles of the Vietnam War raged across the desolate Khe Sanh plateau, but this old battlefield.. is still filling hospital beds with fresh victims."*[4161] *The article notes the immense amount of ordnance used in the 1968 siege battle: "In the battle American forces rained 100,000 tons of bombs (equivalent in destructive force to five Hiroshima-sized atomic bombs) and 158,000 large-caliber shells on the hills surrounding the base, killing an estimated 15,000 Communist soldiers."*[4162] *Many of these were duds which remain alive, still killing farmers and others who, using a metal detector imported from Thailand, "..easily find enough metal around Khe Sanh to make a living," but the results are deadly.]*

[4153] Webster, Donovan, *Aftermath, The Remnants of War*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1996, pp. 12-13.
[4154] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[4155] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[4156] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
[4157] Steve Raymer, (National Geographic News Service), "The Ghosts of Khe Sanh," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Fri, 29 Oct 1993, p. 1.
[4158] *Ibid.*
[4159] Bob Drogin, "The Debris of War Still Kills, Maims," The Milwaukee *Journal*, Sun, 21 Feb 1993, p. J6.
[4160] *Ibid.*
[4161] Malcolm W. Browne, "Battlefields of Khe Sanh: Still One Casualty a Day," New York *Times* 98:49, #695 (Fri, 13 May 1994) 1.
[4162] *Ibid.*

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF KHE SANH KIA

In the following alphabetical listing of KIA, the date is Year/Month/Date and "Wall" refers to the panel and line in the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
ABERNETHY, Reginald Joe	PFC	710322	C/3-187	4W 65
ABEYTA, Ernest	PFC	690601	G/2/9	23W 34
ABOLINS, Janis	PFC	690104	C/1/4	35W 32
ACALOTTO, Robert Joseph	SSGT	710220	48 AHC	5W 122
ACKERMAN, Rex William	PFC	690419	I/3/4	26W 5
ACUNIA, Edgar	LCPL	690306	A/1/4	30W 51
ADAME, Gilbert Jimmie	PFC	680407	2/26	48E 38
ADAMS, Edward Cody	SWF2	680416	CBMU301 DetB	50E 10
ADAMS, Lee Scott	2/Lt	680406	B/2-7	48E 26
ADDICE, Frank Paul	HN	680411	MAG-36	49E 18
ADDINGTON, Zach Taylor	LCPL	680516	M/3/4	61E 7
ADKINS, John	CPL	680407	A/2-7	48E 38
AGUIRRE, Carlos Cruz	CPL	680224	E/2/26	41E 6
AHLMEYER, Heinz Jr	2/Lt	670510	A/3dRecon	19E 77
AHRENS, Russell George	SP5	710318	571 Med	4W 57
AKINS, Ronald Paul	LCPL	680225	B/1/26	41E 15
ALDRICH, David Alan	CPL	680330	B/1/26	47E 7
ALDRIDGE, Herbert Ray	PFC	680306	B/1/26	43E 12
ALENCASTRE, Anthony Albert	PVT	680414	L/3/26	49E 50
ALFANO, Rodney Arthur	1/Lt	680202	37 Sig Bn	36E 64
ALLARD, Paul Edward	PFC	690419	E/2/3	26W 7
ALLEN, Charles David Jr	CAPT	710316	B/4-77	4W 53
ALLEN, Dale Charles	2/Lt	670627	I/3/26	22E 67
ALLEN, Eddie Hugh	PFC	680527	M/3/4	65W 3
ALLEN, Herbert Marshall	SGT	680619	H&S/1/1	57W 31
ALLEN, Kenneth Jeffrey	PFC	680208	A/1/13	38E 22
ALLEN, Paul James	CPL	680411	VMO-6	49E 18
ALLEN, Richard James	PFC	680517	H/2/1	61E 22
ALLEN, Robert Christian	LCPL	680531	B/1/1	62W 12
ALLEN, Terry Lee	CPL	680509	H/2/4	58W 5
ALLERBY, Milton Richard	HN	680611	A/1/4	58W 21
ALMEIDA, Richard Henry	LCPL	670503	E/2/3	19E 20
ALMON, William Russell	PFC	680730	G/2/4	50W 33
ALMONEY, John Stanley	CPL	670503	E/2/3	19E 20
AMESCUA, Steven Epefanio	PFC	680515	L/3/4	60E 18
AMMON, William Resor	1/Lt	680416	M/3/26	50E 10
ANDERS, Richard Alan	PFC	680414	B/1-5	49E 50
ANDERSON, Charles Richard	1/Lt	710303	A/158 AHB	4W 18
ANDERSON, David Bruce	PFC	680330	B/1/26	47E 7
ANDERSON, David George	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 24
ANDERSON, James (n)	PFC	670503	E/2/3	19E 21
ANDERSON, James Theodore	PFC	690313	M/3/4	29W 27
ANDERSON, John Louis	2/Lt	690721	M/3/3	23E 97
ANDERSON, Michael Francis	LCPL	680524	G/2/3	67E 4
ANDRUS, Daniel Francis	LCPL	680611	A/1/4	58W 21
ANGEL, Michael Eugene	PFC	690303	C/1/4	30W 18
ANSELMO, William Frank	SSGT	680306	APS-15	30W 62
ANTOINE, Dennis Lloyd	CPL	670721	M/3/3	23E 97
ANTONACE, John Jr.	LCPL	680707	C/1/1	53W 31

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
ANTRIM, Tommy Edward	SGT	680208	A/1/13	38E 20
APONTE, Edwin	LCPL	670430	K/3/9	18E 117
APPLETON, John Burdette	LCPL	670430	K/3/9	18E 117
ARD, Bobby Joe	CPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 118
ARD, Randolph Jefferson	WO-1	710307	HHC, 1-5	4W 30
ARMENTROUT, Raymond Lee	SSG	710223	D/3-5	5W 131
ARROYO, Ramon Jaime	PFC	690307	H/2/3	30W 62
ARTHUR, Lawrence Kenneth	PFC	680528	F/2/3	64W 4
ASHLEY, Eugene Jr	SFC	680207	A-101 USSF	37E 77
AVERITTE, William Clayton	CPL	680416	D/1/9	50E 11
AYERS, Douglas Edward	SGT	710324	C/4-3	4W 72
AYERS, Leslie Steven	LCPL	680208	A/1/13	38E 20
BABCOCK, Ronald Lester	1/Lt	710227	B/7-1	4W 8
BACON, William Ivory Tenny	SSGT	670629	H&S/3/26	22E 82
BACOTE, Moses June	LCPL	680528	F/2/3	64W 4
BADER, Arthur Edward	SFC	681130	FOB-1	37W 9
BAER, Max Irwin	LCPL	690320	D/1/4	29W 86
BAILEY, Joseph Thomas	LCPL	680219	C/1/26	40E 17
BAKER, Bernard Geraqld	LCPL	680806	G/2/4	49W 18
BAKER, Donald	LCPL	680609	F/2/1	58W 6
BAKER, Richard Thomas	SSG	710218	HMH-463	5W 114
BAKER, Robert Nelson	SFC	680221	FOB-3	40E 51
BAKER, Steven Dewitt	CPL	680528	F/2/3	64W 5
BAKER, Tony Anderson	PFC	680705	K/3/4	53W 15
BALADES, David Zavala	PFC	680228	A/3d ShoreP	41E 58
BALDWIN, Clarence Jay	PFC	680524	G/2/3	67E 5
BALKIT, Donald	PFC	680425	G/2/3	52E 2
BALL, Robert Lee	PFC	680618	K/3/4	56W 17
BANEY, Charles Lynn	SGT	671015	109 QmCo	28E 11
BAPTISTE, Michael Bradford	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 15
BARBER, Ronald Lee	LCPL	670424	B/1/9	18E 79
BARBOUR, James Wesley	PFC	680605	C/1/4	60W 15
BARDET, Raymond Frederick	PFC	680528	B/3d Tk	56W 17
BARKER, Jack Lamar	MAJ	710320	B/101	4W 59
BARMMER, Timothy Michael	LCPL	680130	B/3d Recon	35E 65
BARNES, Donald Joseph	EOCS	670606	NMCB-10	21E 60
BARNITZ, Douglas Wanner	LCPL	690604	D/3d Recon	23W 61
BARRETT, Michael Barry	HN	680208	H&S/1/9	38E 20
BARRINGER, Ardrey Watts Jr	PVT	680609	F/2/4	58W 6
BARRON, Jeffrey Michael	CPL	690225	B Btry/3/12	31W 42
BARROW, Thomas Melvin Jr	PFC	670426	K/3/3	18E 90
BARROWS, Irving Donald	PFC	680421	E/2/1	51E 16
BARRY, George Francis Jr.	WO	700523	A-158 AHB	10W 83
BARTH, Wayne Robert	LCPL	670424	B/1/9	18E 78
BARTON, James Eugene	SP5	710223	173 AHC	5W 132
BATCHELOR, John Elsey Jr.	LCPL	690407	F/2/4	27W 28
BATES, Paul Jennings Jr	CAPT	710810	220 RAC	3W 127
BATTLE, Joseph Chriss	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 15
BATTLE, Ronald Kenneth	CPL	690320	H&S/3/4	29W 86
BATTLE, William Alfred	LCPL	680707	H&S/1/1	53W 32
BAUCHERIO, Harold	LCPL	670820	HMM-164	25E 18

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
BAUER, Daryl Charles	PFC	690311	H&S/2/4	29W 4
BAUER, Karol Raymond	SSGT	670430	M/3/3	18E 118
BAXTER, Bruce Raymond	MSGT	671108	FOB-1	29E 47
BAXTER, Roger Bruce	WO	700506	C/158 AMB	11W 108
BAXTER, Terry Lee	SP5	680404	HHC, 3 Bde	47E 58
BAYES, Thomas Joseph	PFC	680407	G/2/26	48E 38
BEACH, Sam Festis Jr.	CAPT	680117	20th TASS	34E 61
BEALE, George Eugene	PFC	680306	2/26	43E 13
BEAN, Donald Wayne	SGTMAJ	680311	H&S/1/26	44E 13
BEAN, Richard Raymond	LCPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 77
BEAN, Stephen Louis	PFC	680524	G/2/3	67E 4
BEASLEY, Luzon	CPL	680330	H&S/1/9	47E 8
BEAUFORD, Willis Jr	PFC	680306	B/1/26	43E 13
BECK, John Theron	PVT	680224	C/1/9	41E 6
BECK, Norman Elmer	PFC	690323	D/1/3	6E 56
BECKWITH, William Arnold	LCPL	680704	3/4	53W 11
BECKWTH, Harry Medfor III	SSGT	710324	D/3-5	4W 72
BEDDOE, Paul Melvin Jr	PFC	680121	B/3d Recon	35E 2
BEECK, Ronald Marvin	SP4	680406	D/1-5	48E 23
BELCHER, Robert Arthur	MAJ	690328	366 TFW	28W 65
BELCHER, Robert Winslow	CPL	680411	H&S/3/26	49E 19
BELL, Marvin Earl	SSGT	700630	40 ARRS	9W 102
BELL, Ronald Eugene	PFC	680609	58W 6	58W 6
BELLAMY, Paul Robert	PVT	680121	K/3/26	35E 2
BELLER, William Russell Jr	PFC	670430	K/3/9	18E 118
BENGE, Larry Wayne	LCPL	680301	H&S/1/9	42E 15
BENIGNI, Alfredo	CPL	680228	HMM-262	41E 59
BENITEZ, Rafael Rivera	PSGT	710208	C/1-61	5W 86
BENNETT, George Willy Jr	CPL	700506	A/2-501	11W 108
BENNETT, James Harrell Jr.	CAPT	671030	20 TASS	28E 100
BENNETT, Richard Royce	SGT	690502	F/2/4	26W 96
BENOIT, Francis Arthur	HM3	670316	E/2/9	16E 88
BENSON, Robert John	PFC	680406	B/2-7	48E 23
BERDAHL, David Donald	PFC	720120	D/3-5	2W 98
BERG, Bruce Allen	SGT	710807	RT KANSAS	3W 125
BERG, George Phillip	CWO	710218	A/101AvBn	5W 114
BERGENSTEIN, Dennis Paul	CPL	670503	E/2/3	19E 21
BERGER, John Edward	PFC	680227	B/1/26	41E 48
BERNARD, Donald Lee	PFC	670426	B/1/9	18E 90
BERNESKI, Lawrence Augusti	A1C	671015	314 TAW	28E 13
BERTRAM, David Michael	PFC	680615	L/3/4	57W 22
BESSENT, Samuel Alonzo	SP4	690425	A/1-77	26W 46
BETTENCOURT, Daniel Stephen	CPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 69
BETTS, Albert Leon	SP5	680202	362 Sig Co	36E 65
BIEHL, Garry Ladd	LCPL	670503	E/2/3	19E 21
BIERLEIN, Patrick M R	PFC	680412	A/1/26	49E 28
BILBREY, Edmond David	CAPT	710311	48 AHC	4W 36
BILLINGHAM, Frederick A Jr	LCPL	680225	B/1/26	41E 16
BILLIPP, Norman Karl	1/Lt	690506	VMO-6	25W 9
BINGHAM, Oran Lothier	SSG	710807	RT KANSAS	3W 125
BIRCH, Thomas H	CPL	680223	A/1/26	40E 72

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
BIRD, Leonard Adrian	1/Lt	680713	VMFA-115	52W 21
BIVENS, Frederick Wood Jr	CPL	670430	H/2/3	18E 118
BIXBY, Thomas Eugene	PFC	680327	B/1/26	46E 44
BJORKE, Erle Lawrence	CAPT	671015	314 TAW	28E 7
BLAZ, James Lujan	LCPL	670607	B/1/26	21E 65
BLOOM, Ronald Norman	SGT	680802	E/2/4	50E 48
BOBO, Charles Glen	SGT	710208	C-158 AHB	5W 86
BODA, James Albert	LCPL	670429	G/2/3	18E 112
BODDEN, Timothy Roy	MSGT	670603	HMM-165	21E 42
BODZICK, William Joseph	SP4	661202	17th Avn Grp	13E 2
BOFFMAN, Alan Brent	1/Lt	710318	101 AD	4W 57
BOGARD, Jack Crosby	PFC	680205	E/2/26	37E 31
BOICOURT, Jess Burton Jr.	CPL	680311	H&S/1/9	44E 14
BOLGER, Lawrence Joseph	2/Lt	670627	A/1/26	22E 68
BOND, Ronald Leslie	CAPT	710930	366 TFW	2W 31
BOND, Theodore Charles	LCPL	680616	F/2/1	56W 1
BORDUAS, Raymond Arthur	PFC	680604	G/2/4	60W 8
BORRELL, Clifford Glenn	PFC	680224	E/2/26	41E 7
BOSHEERS, James Larry	LCPL	680501	K/3/4	53E 27
BOTT, Russell Peter	MSGT	661202	Det B-52	13E 3
BOULE, Thomas Michael	PFC	690404	E/2/3	27W 8
BOURDEAUX, Lee Joseph Jr.	SP4	661202	17th Avn Grp	13E 3
BOWEN, Grover	PFC	690921	K/3/4	18W 119
BOWERS, James David	CPL	680524	G/2/3	67E 5
BOWLIN, Paul Madison	LCPL	690608	E/3d Recon	23W 109
BOYD, Wayne	PFC	680403	C/2-7	47E 46
BOYE, Henry Joseph Jr	PFC	680531	B/1/1	62W 5
BOYER, Alan Lee	SFC	680328	FOB-4	46E 52
BOYER, Charles Goodhue	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 14
BOYER, Michael David	PFC	690618	C/1/9	22W 72
BOYNTON, Charles B Jr.	HM3	680416	H&S/1/9	50E 11
BRACK, David Allan	PFC	690601	G/2/9	23W 35
BRADLEY, Kenneth Robert	CPL	680228	HMM-262	41E 59
BRADY, John James	2/Lt	680403	C/2-7	47E 46
BRAKE, Boyd Lawerence	LCPL	690305	C/1/4	30W 41
BRANAM, Ronnie Franklin	SGT	680410	A/2-7	49E 8
BRANDT, Keith Allan	CAPT	710318	D/101	4W 57
BRANNAN, James Curtis	SFC	690331	D/1-77	28E 96
BRANNON, James Edward	PFC	690325	A/1/4	28W 33
BRAUN, Harry Walker Jr.	PFC	680519	F/2/1	63E 5
BRAZIER, John Kenneth	SSGT	680606	C/1/4	60W 25
BRELLENTHIN, Michael J	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 17
BRENKE, Frederick Joseph	PFC	670627	L/3/26	22E 72
BRENNEMAN, Richard Eugene	CPL	690326	G/2/3	28W 44
BRERETON, Raymond James	PFC	680226	H&S/1/9	41E 35
BRETT, Robert R	LTJG(ChC)	680222	H&S/2/26	40E 58
BREUER, Donald Charles	CAPT	721120	VMFA-232	1W 91
BREWER, Don Raylan	PFC	690313	M/3/4	29W 27
BRIDGES, Ernest Larry	SGT	680404	C/1/9	47E 59
BRIGGS, Ernest Frank	SFC	680105	176 Avn Co	33E 41
BRIGNAC, Joseph Paul	CPL	680306	B/1/26	43E 14

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
BRINDLEY, Thomas Drew	2/Lt	680120	I/3/26	34E 83
BRITT, Ted Dennis	PFC	680330	B/1/26	47E 14
BRITTIAN, Charles Henry	CPL	690605	H/2/9	23W 78
BROGAN, Robert Henry	PFC	690225	H&S/2/4	31W 43
BROTZ, Danny Ray	LCPL	670430	K/3/9	18E 118
BROUGHTON, Robert Ballard	PVT	690605	H/2/9	23W 70
BROWER, Ralph Wayne	CAPT	671108	37th ARRS	29E 51
BROWN, David Dee Jr.	PFC	680416	C/1/9	50E 12
BROWN, Dennis Lee	LCPL	680629	G/2/1	54W 14
BROWN, George R	SGT	680328	FOB-4	46E 53
BROWN, Gerald Bernard	PFC	690605	H/2/9	23W 71
BROWN, Joseph "L" Jr.	PVT	680606	D/1/4	60W 26
BROWN, Joseph Gordon	CWO	710218	48 AHC	5W 115
BROWN, Marcus Jr.	LCPL	670828	C/1/26	25E 55
BROWN, Richard Samuel	CPL	680705	G/2/1	53W 16
BROWN, Theodore Jr.	PFC	680121	K/3/26	35E 3
BROWN, Vaughn Lee	PFC	680708	C/1/1	53W 42
BROWN, Wilbur Ronald	CAPT	660203	311 ACS	4E 134
BROWN, William Franklin	PFC	680406	D/1-5	48E 24
BROWN, William Leo	SSGT	680210	H&HS-1	38E 65
BROWN, William Theodore	SFC	691103	CNN	16W 22
BRUDER, James Robert	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 17
BRUIN, John William	SP4	710223	173 AHC	5W 132
BRYAN, Charles William	CPL	680120	B/3d Recon	39E 83
BRYANT, James Roy	PFC	680223	K/3/26	40E 72
BUCIOR, Andrew Zbigniew	CPL	680405	C/1/9	48E 15
BUCK, William Andrew Jr	CPL	690604	D/3d Recon	23W 61
BUFFINGTON, Fred	LCPL	680630	I/3/4	54W 25
BUGGER, Curtis Burke	PFC	680121	W/1/13	35E 3
BUMSTEAD, Donald Royce	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 15
BUNGARTZ, Frederick William	PFC	680214	K/3/9	39E 29
BUONO, Matthew Joseph	PFC	680404	B/1-77	47E 59
BURCH, Steven Ralph	WO	710305	174 AHC	4W 23
BURDICK, William F Jr.	PFC	680609	C/1/4	58W 6
BURGARD, Paul Edward	PFC	680606	C/1/4	60W 26
BURGESS, Alex Leroy	LCPL	680219	H&S/3/26	40E 18
BURGESS, Ruben Anthony	PFC	680223	B/1/9	40E 73
BURGESS, Russell David	PFC	680426	F/2/3	52E 15
BURGORFER, Stephen Walter	SP5	710306	C/1-1	4W 27
BURKE, John Roland	CPL	670606	H&S/1/26	21E 60
BURKE, Joseph Scott	WO	710215	B/2-17	5W 105
BURKES, Bruce Wayne	PFC	680606	C/1/1	60W 15
BURKHEAD, Jerry Clark	CPL	680208	A/1/9	38E 22
BURLESON, Michael Finnie	LCPL	680519	F/2/1	63E 6
BURNETT, Sheldon John	LTCOL	710307	HHT, 1-1 Cav	4W 31
BURNHAM, Joseph Francis	PFC	680519	F/2/1	63E 6
BURNLEY, Earl Rosemond Jr.	HM3	680516	M/3/4	61E 6
BURNS, Victor L	LCPL	670627	A/1/26	22E 68
BURROWS, Larry	Civilian	710210	Life Magazine	not on
BURTON, Horace Lee	SP4	710306	C/1-1	4W 27
BUSH, Paul William	1/Lt	680322	C/1/26	45E 54

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
BUTLER, Larry Wayne	LCPL	670426	K/3/3	18E 91
BUTTENBAUM, Gary Richard	PFC	670509	F/2/3	19E 69
BYARS, Steve Eugene	LCPL	690323	D/1/4	28W 17
BYNUM, Franklin Delano	CAPT	670627	L/3/26	22E 78
BYRD, George Benjamin Jr.	PFC	670430	M/3/3	18E 119
BYRNES, Robert Howard	CPL	680515	K/3/4	60E 20
CAHILL, Edwin Lewis	HM1	680609	F/2/1	58W 7
CALDWELL, Robert Edward	CPL	680228	H&S/3/26	41E 60
CALHOUN, Edwin Gerald	SGT	710325	B/3-5	4W 76
CALHOUN, Franchot Tone	PFC	680524	G/2/3	67E 5
CALVIN, Glenn Henry	SSGT	680210	E/2/26	38E 65
CAMPBELL, Thomas Francis	PFC	680409	A/1/9	48E 56
CAMPESTRE, Albert John	PFC	680517	E/2/1	62E 1
CARACCILO, Anthony Joseph Jr.	CPL	710219	3/D/1-11	5W 120
CARBAUGH, Woodrow Franklin	SGT	680605	C/1/4	60W 15
CARMICHAEL, Dale Eugene	PFC	670425	K/3/3	18E 83
CARNEY, Tyrone Edward	PFC	680617	H/2/4	56W 12
CARPENTER, James Alvin	PFC	690314	M/3/4	29W 37
CARR, Robert George	PFC	690618	C/1/9	22W 73
CARROLL, Fergus Joseph	CPL	680618	K/3/4	56W 18
CARSON, John Harvey	1/Lt	680605	D/1/4	60W 16
CARTER, Anderson Jr.	PFC	670502	G/2/3	19E 10
CARTER, Jack David	PFC	690325	A/1/4	28W 34
CARTER, James Basil	PFC	710216	D/4-3	5W 110
CARTER, James Louis	LTCOL	660203	311 ACS	4E 134
CARTER, John Lewis	LCPL	680703	D/1/1	54W 42
CARTER, Ralph Winfield	PFC	670424	B/1/9	18E 78
CASARES, Manuel	PFC	680606	D/1/4	60W 26
CASAREZ, Raul	PFC	670424	B/1/9	18E 78
CASSELL, Kevin Ray	PFC	680421	H/2/3	51E 21
CASTELOT, Robert Sheehan	PFC	680611	A/1/4	58W 22
CASTILLO, George Ralph	CPL	680124	L/3/26	35E 20
CASTILLO, Jose	SGT	670721	H&S/1/26	23E 97
CASTRO-RAMOS, Justino Enri	LCPL	670424	B/1/9	18E 78
CATLIN, Norman Richard	PVT	670316	E/2/9	16E 89
CAUDILLO, Pedro Jaime	WO-1	680519	3d ITT	63E 6
CAVAZOS, Ronald Thomas	PFC	680404	H&S/1/9	48E 1
CECIL, Alan Bruce	SP5	690921	CCN	18W 119
CERVANTES, George Andrew	LCPL	670430	K/3/9	18E 119
CHABERT, Gary August	PFC	680421	G/2/3	51E 17
CHAMBERS, David Wayne	PFC	680403	A/2-7	47E 47
CHAMBERS, John Luther	SP4	680404	A/1-5	48E 1
CHAMBLIN, Donald Ray Jr.	SGT	680308	1/13	43E 52
CHANEY, Arthur Fletcher	WO-1	680503	A/1-9	54E 24
CHANEY, Donald Lee	SFC	680117	FOB-3	34E 62
CHAPP, Robert Anthony	SGT	670414	B/1/9	18E 25
CHARLES, Edward William	LCPL	690618	C/1/9	22W 73
CHASE, John Joseph	LCPL	670607	B/1/26	21E 65
CHAVEZ, Gregory Anton	SP4	700506	A/2-501	11W 110
CHEARNLEY, Joseph Michael	PFC	680609	H/2/4	58W 7
CHEEKS, John Herbert	CPL	670428	B/1/9	18E 110

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
CHERVONY, Eddie Edwin	SGT	680505	A/1-77	55E 6
CHILDRESS, Lewis Clayton	CPL	671116	FLC Air Del	29E 104
CHIN, Alexander Scheleph	PFC	680222	H&S/2/26	40E 58
CHISHOLM, James	PFC	680223	H&S/1/26	40E 73
CHRISTIAN, Daniel Keith	LCPL	680416	A/1/9	50E 12
CHRISTIAN, Thomas Barry	LCPL	680806	G/2/4	49W 19
CHRISTMAN, Ronald S J	LCPL	680228	HMM-262	41E 60
CHUBB, John Jacobsen	PFC	710320	B/101	4W 60
CHUBB, Richard Charles	PFC	690314	M/3/4	29W 36
CHUTIS, John Vincent	SSGT	670430	M/3/3	18E 119
CICIO, Robert Daniel	PFC	680416	C/1/9	50E 12
CINCOTTA, Thomas Antone	PFC	690628	L/3/9	21W 27
CLAIRE, Kenneth William	CPL	680225	B/1/26	41E 18
CLARK, Jimmy Ray	CPL	680504	A/1-77	54E 31
CLARK, John Howard Jr.	LCPL	680306	2/26	43E 15
CLARK, Thomas Osborn	HM3	670721	M/3/3	23E 97
CLARKE, James Phillip	PFC	680418	G/2/3	50E 37
CLAY, Doyle Gregory	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 18
CLAY, Eugene Lunsford	SSGT	671108	37th ARRS	29E 57
CLAY, Ralph Wayne	CAPT	671108	37th ARRS	29E 56
CLAYBORNE, Milton Gay	LCPL	680516	M/3/4	61E 5
CLAYTON, Michael Marshall	LCPL	680420	A/1/1	51E 6
CLEAVE, Lonnie Leonard	PFC	680605	C/1/1	60W 16
CLEMENCIA, Jean Roger Jr.	LCPL	690311	G/2/4	29W 5
CLEMSON, Gerald Richard	PFC	680208	A/1/9	38E 23
CLEVE, Reginald David	WO	710322	176 AHC	4W 66
CLIFTON, Layne Farell	PFC	670509	F/2/3	19E 70
COBB, James Paul	SGT	710215	B/2-17	5W 105
COCHRAN, James Clifford	PFC	680414	B/1-5	49E 51
COFFEY, Robert Allen	PFC	690225	E/2/4	31W 45
COHRON, James Derwin	SFC	680112	FOB-3	34E 35
COKER, David Langston Jr.	CAPT	710324	D/3-5	4W 72
COLEGATE, William Karl	PFC	680208	A/1/9	38E 23
COLEMAN, John Lee	PFC	680421	G/2/3	51E 17
COLEMAN, Lynn Bailey	PFC	680519	F/2/1	63E 6
COLEMAN, Michael John	LCPL	680127	B/1/9	35E 44
COLEMAN, Richard Freeman	PFC	670721	M/3/3	23E 98
COLEMAN, William Frank	PFC	680416	D/1/26	50E 12
COLES, Kyle "J"	LCPL	680228	H&MS-36	41E 61
COLLINS, James Alfred	PFC	680120	I/3/26	34E 84
COMBS, Lowell Thomas	CPL	680214	K/3/9	39E 30
CONCANNON, Richard Neil	CWO	710215	B/2-17	5W 105
CONLIN, Jeffrey Francis	SGT	680306	311 ACS	43E 16
CONNELL, Edwin Douglas	SGT	680408	F/2/26	48E 52
CONNELL,. Vaughn David	WO	690320	B/101	29W 87
CONNOR, Glenn Marshall	PFC	680508	F/2/1	56E 36
CONSOLVO, John Wadswort Jr	CAPT	720507	VMFA-212	1W 14
CONTRERAS, John Jenaro	PVT	680121	H&S/3/26	35E 4
COOK, Ronald John	HN	680524	H&S/2/3	67E 7
COOL, Mark Douglas	CPL	680302	H&S/1/26	42E 28
COOLEY, Ocie Daniel	PFC	670721	M/3/3	23E 98

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
COOPER, Donald Nathaniel	CPL	680228	HMM-262	41E 62
COOPER, James William	PFC	680519	F/2/1	63E 7
CORBIN, Russell B Jr	LCPL	680207	B/1/26	37E 81
CORCORAN, Richard Francis	CAPT	680607	HqCo 3dMarDiv	59W 20
CORLEY, Thomas Eugene	LCPL	680206	C/1/26	37E 52
CORNELL, Robert Leslie	PFC	670430	H/2/3	18E 120
CORRY, Charles Michael	SP5	680415	FOB-3	50E 3
COTTRELL, Darrell Wayne	LCPL	680504	G/2/1	54E 32
COTTRELL, Thomas Lee	LCPL	680122	B/1/26	35E 11
COURTNEY, Allen Wesley Jr	1/Lt	680517	A/1/1	62E 1
COX, Gary Allen	LCPL	690605	H/2/9	23W 71
COX, William Gayle	SGT	710329	C/3-5	4W 91
CRAIG, Bruce Keith	PFC	680416	A/1/9	50E 11
CRAIG, Thomas R Jr	PFC	680208	A/1/9	38E 24
CRAMER, David Arthur	PFC	680222	H/2/26	40E 59
CRANDALL, Gregory Stephen	WO	710218	C/2-17	5W 115
CRANEY, Leslie Lee	PFC	680403	F/2/1	47E 48
CRASE, Lionel Russell	LCPL	680407	H&S/2/26	48E 40
CRAUN, Gale Eugene	PFC	680416	C/1/9	50E 13
CREAR, Willis Calvin	SP4	710215	C/159 ASHB	5W 105
CRENSHAW, William Anderson	CAPT	670504	A-101 USSF	19E 36
CRICKENBERGER, Richard Way	PFC	680526	A/3d Eng	66W 4
CRISTMAN, Frederick Lewis	CWO	710319	48 AHC	4W 58
CRITCHFIELD, Reece A Jr	PFC	680121	I/3/26	35E 4
CRONE, Donald Everett	SP4	710215	C/159 ASHB	5W 106
CRONE, Gary Lee	SSG	680129	FOB-3	35E 58
CROOKS, Ronald Lee	CPL	670607	B/1/26	21E 66
CROSBY, Bruce Allen Jr.	SGT	720330	8th RFFS	2W 125
CROWDER, Harold Edward	PFC	690303	L/3/4	30W 21
CROWELL, Arthur Albert	CPL	680526	D/1/1	66W 4
CRUITT, Michael Douglas	PFC	680121	K/3/26	35E 4
CRUSE, James Dale	HN	680615	M/3/4	57W 24
CRUZ, Frank	LCPL	690618	C/1/9	22W 74
CUNNINGHAM, Bruce Edward	PFC	680208	C/1/26	38E 24
CUNNINGHAM, William L	PFC	680301	D/1/9	42E 14
CURRY, Roy Jerry	SP4	690618	B/1-61	22W 74
CUTBIRTH, Kendell Dwayne	SSGT	670225	B/1/9	15E 89
CUTBIRTH, Richard Eugene	LCPL	680528	F/2/3	64W 7
CUTRI, Michael John	LCPL	680528	F/2/3	64W 7
CZARNY, William Eugene	LCPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 71
DABREU, Daniel John	PFC	680604	F/2/4	60W 8
D'ADAMO, John Jr	MSGT	680210	VMGR-152	38E 66
DAGNER, Carl Richard	CPL	680517	I/3/4	62E 2
DALEY, Michael James	PFC	670316	E/2/9	16E 89
DALTON, Bill Norman	PFC	680208	A/1/13	38E 24
DAMIAN, Allan James	LCPL	670627	A/1/26	22E 69
DANAY, Jerry Lee	PFC	710312	3/C/1-11	4W 40
DANBERRY, Charles Labaw	PFC	680523	K/3/4	66E 8
DARDEN, Larry Euel	LCPL	680401	E/2/3	47E 31
DARNELL, Dana Cornell	LCPL	670426	B/1/9	18E 91
DAUGHERTY, James	LCPL	680509	H&S/2/1	57E 13

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
DAVENPORT, John Sanford	PFC	690428	A/1-61	26W 69
DAVID, Jeffrey Jay	LCPL	670627	I/3/26	22E 69
DAVIDSON, Dennis Robert	PFC	680411	A/3d Tk	49E 20
DAVILA, Jose	PFC	680524	G/2/3	67E 7
DAVIS, Charles Cecil	PFC	670503	E/2/3	19E 23
DAVIS, Clifford Gordon	CPL	670430	H/2/3	18E 120
DAVIS, David Lee	PFC	690320	H&S/1/4	29W 87
DAVIS, Duane Ross	PFC	690412	H&S/2/4	27W 62
DAVIS, Gary Ray	PFC	680518	H/2/3	62E 16
DAVIS, John Clinton	SP4	690428	A/1-61	26W 69
DAVIS, Kenneth	HM2	690225	3/12	31W 45
DAVIS, Randall Mark	PFC	680604	K/3/4	60W 11
DAY, Douglas Wayne	CPL	700506	A/2-501	11W 110
DE WILDE, Peter F. Jr.	PFC	690305	C/3rd Recon	30W 43
DEAN, Michael Frank	SSGT	700630	40 ARRS	9W 103
DEARING, Jerry Wayne	PFC	680126	H&S/3/26	35E 37
DEGNIS, James Edward	PVT	680618	H&S/3/4	56W 19
DEHNKE, Dale Willard	SGT	710518	TF1AE	3W 39
DELANEY, John Patrick III	CPL	680730	G/2/4	50W 34
DELANO, Jimmy Lynn	LCPL	680313	SptCo/3dEng	44E 34
DELAPLANE, James Charles	HN	680417	H&S/2/26	50E 27
DELGADO, Raymond Rodriguez	LCPL	690301	C/1/4	30W 1
DELISLE, Rodney Jerome	PFC	690706	F/2/4	21W 69
DEMARCO, Michael Gregory	LCPL	680411	VMO-6	49E 20
DEMPSEY, Ronald Lee	CPL	680228	B/1/13	41E 63
DEMPSEY, Walter Edward Jr.	SP4	710218	A/101	5W 115
DENNING, Dwight Thomas	PFC	680126	A/1/26	35E 38
DENNIS, Paul Leslie	LCPL	680425	D/1/1	52E 4
DENTON, Robert Anthony	SSG	700506	A/2-501	11W 110
DES LAURIERS, Philip Gene	LCPL	690809	F/2/4	20W 117
DEVIK, David Ralf	LCPL	680210	VMGR-152	38E 66
DEWBERRY, Jerry Don	LCPL	680705	D/1/1	53W 17
DEXTER, Ronald James	SGM	670603	FOB-1	31E 43
DI GENNO, Michael	LCPL	690311	2/4	29W 6
DIAZ, Francisco	PFC	680515	F/2/3	60E 21
DICESARE, Anthony Jr	CPL	670627	I/3/26	22E 69
DICKEN, Perry	LCPL	680411	E/2/1	49E 20
DICKENS, Odell	PFC	690225	H&S/2/4	31W 46
DICKERSON, Bernard W Jr.	CPL	680611	A/1/4	58W 24
DICKIE, Guy Douglas	PVT	680208	A/1/9	38E 25
DICKSON, Eric Voughn	LCPL	680531	B/1/1	62W 8
DIEHL, Harry G	PSGT	690618	B/1-61	22W 75
DIEUDONNE, Carroll Stephen	PFC	680705	K/3/4	53W 21
DILLENDER, William Edward	SGT	710320	B/101	4W 60
DILWORTH, Arthur William	LCPL	680705	D/1/1	53W 18
DISCEPOLO, Anthony Albert	LCPL	680524	G/2/3	68E 1
DISTEFANO, Ferdinando	2/Lt	680224	E/2/26	41E 8
DIXON, Morris Franklin Jr	CPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 70
DODD, James William	CPL	680429	D/1/1	53E 1
DODSON, Jerry Lee	LCPL	680225	B/1/26	41E 19
DODSON, Robert Gerald	1/Lt	680707	C/1/1	53W 34

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
DOLAN, Thomas Albert	SSGT	710810	101 MI Co	3W 127
DOLAN, William John	PFC	680417	D/1/9	50E 35
DOLBY, Melvin Lester	PFC	680407	F/2/26	48E 40
DOLVIN, James Richard	SGT	690618	B/1-61	22W 75
DONOVAN, Michael Leo	CAPT	710930	366 TFW	2W 31
DOODY, Thomas Patrick	WO-1	710208	C-158 AHB	5W 87
DOOLEY, Robert Ellis	PFC	680222	M/3/26	40E 61
DOORNBOS, Don Michael	CPL	680214	D/1/9	39E 31
DOUGLAS, Paul Melvyn	SSGT	680221	FOB-3	40E 52
DOWNING, William Kelly	CPL	670503	E/2/3	19E 24
DOWNS, Jack Dennis	PFC	680406	B/2-7	48E 25
DRAKE, Michael Leon	PFC	680528	F/2/3	64W 8
DRIGGERS, Arthur H. Jr.	PFC	670721	M/3/3	23E 99
DRUZINSKI, Karl Walter	CPL	710322	HHT/2-17	4W 65
DUGAN, John Francis	CAPT	710320	B/101	4W 60
DUNDAS, Jerry Richard	SGT	680505	A/1-77	55E 10
DUNLAP, Darrell Edward	PVT	680208	I/3/26	38E 26
DUSEAU, Richard Frank	PFC	690305	I/3/4	30W 43
DUTY, Charles Howard	PFC	670430	M/3/3	18E 120
DWYER, Matthew Murice Jr.	LCPL	680228	A/3d Eng	41E 63
DYE, Ralph Victor Jr.	CPL	670502	G/2/3	19E 12
DYE, Ronald Harvey	PFC	680802	E/2/4	50W 49
DYER, Irby III	SGT	661202	Det B-52	13E 4
EAKINS, Melvin Warren	LCPL	690502	HMM-262	26W 98
EARLY, William Dail	CPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 121
EASTON, David Everett	SP5	710311	HHC, 5th Inf	4W 38
EATON, Clifford Lyman	PFC	680605	C/1/4	60W 16
EBRIGHT, William Raymond O	CPL	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 1
ECHEVARIA, Raymond Louis	SGM	661003	FOB-1	11E 39
EDIE, Kurt Charles	HM3	670503	2/3	19E 24
EDMONDS, Arthur Lee Jr.	PFC	680213	H&S/2/26	39E 20
EDMONDS, Joseph J	LCPL	680414	L/3/26	49E 52
EDWARDS, Harry Jerome	SP4	720120	L/75 Inf	2W 98
EGGER, Walter Jacob	CAPT	680322	C/1/26	45E 55
EGLY, Shelly	PFC	670426	B/1/9	18E 92
EICHELBERGER, Barry Lee	PFC	690320	G/2/3	32W 97
ELDERS, Ernest Franklin	LCPL	690320	D/1/4	29W 88
ELIZONDO, David	SGT	710318	E/1-11	4W 58
ELLIOTT, George L III	PFC	680306	A/1/13	43E 17
ELLIOTT, Jerry W	SSGT	680121	282 AHC	35E 5
ELLIS, John Patrick	CAPT	680228	MABS-36	41E 64
ELLISON, Robert	Civilian	680306	Photographer	not on
EMMERT, Charles William	SP4	690618	B/1-61	22W 75
ENCLISH, Steve Craig	PFC	710212	A/4-3	5W 98
ENDERBY, Robert Francis	LCPL	670607	B/1/26	21E 66
ENGEN, Robert Joseph	SP4	710218	C/2-17	5W 115
ENIX, Jack Gene	LCPL	680606	D/1/4	59W 1
ENSIGN, Walter Lyman Jr	PFC	680518	E/3d Recon	62E 17
ENTRICAN, Danny Day	CAPT	710518	RT ALASKA	3W 39
ENZINNA, John Joseph	CPL	680324	A/1/9	46E 4
ERB, Patrick Douglas	MAJ	710315	3-187	4W 48

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
ERWIN, Richard Eugene	PFC	680411	H&S/3/26	49E 21
EVANS, Clifford Melvin	SGT	680609	B/3d Tk	58W 8
EVANS, Haydn	PFC	680531	E/2/3	62W 5
EVERETT, Bobby Joe	PFC	690820	H/2/4	19W 78
EWING, Lon Barry	PFC	680519	F/2/1	63E 18
EWING, Michael Lee	PVT	680611	C/1/12	58W 24
FAHRENBRUCH, Richard L	SGT	680403	D/2-7	47E 49
FALCONBURY, Earl Fern	PFC	690314	M/3/4	29W 36
FARRIS, Dennis Claude	I/Lt	710223	173 AHC	5W 135
FAULKNER, Elmer Lee Jr.	PFC	680618	A/3d Eng	56W 20
FEATHERSTONE, Richard H	PFC	680208	A/3d Shore P	38E 27
FEIT, Cristian Franz III	HN	680125	H&S/3/26	35E 31
FELLOWS, Allen Eugene	COL	680320	20th TASS	45E 39
FELLS, William Henry	SP4	710322	C/3-187	4W 65
FELTON, Melvin James	SGT	710209	C/8-4	5W 91
FERGUSON, David Charles	2/Lt	690305	C/3rd Recon	30W 45
FERGUSON, Ralph	CPL	680531	B/1/1	62W 8
FERNANDEZ, Dennis	PFC	680704	I/3/4	53W 9
FERRARI, Arnold Jay	SGT	680331	C/1/26	47E 21
FERREN, Jerry Wayne	LCPL	680301	VMGR-152	42E 15
FERRY, Ray Leonard III	LCPL	680409	A/3d AT	49E 55
FESER, Jeffrey Evan	LCPL	680605	C/1/1	60W 17
FIGUEROA, Fernando	SP5	720124	D/3-5	2W 100
FIGUEROA, Javier Puentes	CPL	680128	H&S/3/26	35E 54
FINLEY, Charles Richard	PFC	680411	M/3/26	49E 21
FIRST, Michael Bruce	PFC	710208	C/1-11	5W 87
FITTS, Richard Allan	SSGT	681130	FOB-1	37W 10
FITTS, Richard Lee	PFC	680615	3/4	57W 25
FIVELSON, Barry Frank	WO	710215	C/159 ASHB	5W 106
FIX, William Leroy	PFC	680426	F/2/3	52E 17
FLAHIVE, William Joseph Jr.	CAPT	680131	MACTU-62	36E 8
FLANNERY, Robert Edward Jr.	PFC	670503	E/2/3	19E 24
FLEMING, Dennis K	CPL	680214	K/3/9	39E 32
FLEMING, Morris Lafond	PFC	680505	A/1-5	55E 11
FLETCHER, David Foster	LCPL	680508	L/3/4	57E 2
FLINT, Raymond Lloyd	PFC	690225	H/2/4	31W 46
FLORES, Felix Frank	LCPL	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 1
FOILES, Francis Ivan	PFC	680527	M/3/4	65W 7
FONTENOT, Chester Joseph C	HN	680517	2/1	62E 4
FORBES, Kevin Lynn	PFC	680518	H/2/3	62E 17
FORD, Clifford Eugene, Jr.	LCPL	680609	1st MT Bn	58W 08
FORDHAM, Benjamin S	2/Lt	680415	K/3/26	50E 3
FORDHAM, Kenneth Charles	PFC	680208	A/1/9	38E 27
FORSBERG, Douglas Bruce	PFC	690225	H&S/2/4	31W 46
FOSTER, James Lester	CPL	680519	I/3/4	63E 9
FOSTER, Julius Cartwright	LCPL	680222	E/2/26	40E 62
FOUTZ, Kenneth Lee	SSG	700506	C/2-501	11W 111
FOWLER, Robert Allen	SMAJ	680504	C/1-5	54E 33
FOX, David Nelson	CAPT	710208	B/7-1	5W 87
FRALEY, David Forrest	CPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 71
FRANCAVILLA, John F	LCPL	680409	I/3/26	49E 1

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
FRANCE, Ronald Lynn	LCPL	690312	B/1/4	29W 18
FRANCIS, Lindell	PFC	690309	H&S/2/3	30W 88
FRANCISCO, Patrick Phillip	LCPL	670426	K/3/3	18E 93
FRANKENSTEIN, Jackie	LCPL	680606	D/1/4	59W 2
FRANKS, Ernest Richard	PFC	690314	M/3/4	29W 37
FRAZIER, Ronald Leon	LCPL	680409	C/1/9	49E 1
FRAZIER, Timothy Joseph	LCPL	680606	D/1/4	59W 2
FROMME, Frederick W Jr	LCPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 71
FUNK, Bruce Elliott	LCPL	690502	H/2/4	26W 99
FURLONG, Edward Francis Jr.	CPL	670607	B/1/26	21E 67
FURR, Frederick Edward	HM3	690429	H&S/2/4	26W 77
FURTADO, Edward Jr.	PFC	680515	E/2/3	60E 22
GAGNON, Patrick John	LCPL	670425	K/3/3	18E 85
GAINES, Allen Joseph	PFC	680407	G/2/26	48E 41
GAINES, Bernard Laverne	PFC	680324	A/1/9	46E 5
GALABIZ, John Rosalez	LCPL	680708	C/1/1	53W 43
GALINDEZ, Manuel Antonio	LCPL	680616	H/2/4	56W 2
GALINDO, Edwin Gene	CPL	680504	C/1-5	54E 34
GALLAGHER, John Theodore	SFC	680105	FOB-3	33E 48
GANNON, Eugene Richard	CAPT	680411	HMM-163	49E 22
GARBER, Charles W Jr.	CPL	680409	C/1/9	49E 1
GARCIA, Joe Cecillo	PFC	670430	E/2/3	18E 121
GARCIA, Ludin	PFC	680701	I/3/4	54W 28
GARCIA, Ricardo Martinez	SFC	710319	48 AHC	4W 58
GARCIA, Steven Vargas	LCPL	690225	H/2/4	31W 50
GARCIA-FIGUEROA, Juan F	LCPL	680605	C/1/4	60W 17
GARD, Danny "D"	CPL	680228	HMM-262	41E 65
GARDNER, John Garrett	CAPT	670603	HMM-165	21E 45
GARIEPY, Robert David	CPL	680504	A/1-77	54E 34
GARLO, Michael	PFC	690820	H/2/4	19W 78
GASTON, Juan	PFC	690225	H&S/2/4	31W 47
GATES, James Wayne	CAPT	660406	20th ASTA	6E 89
GATEWOOD, Charles Hue	LCPL	680531	B/1/1	62W 9
GAUGHAN, Austin Michael	PFC	680315	A/3d Shore P	44E 59
GAYNOR, James Thomas	SGTMAJ	680215	H&S/1/26	39E 47
GEIGER, Gary George	SP4	710325	B/3-5	4W 76
GEIGER, Larry Frederick	PFC	670426	B/1/9	18E 93
GELLER, Charles Gregory	LCPL	680225	B/1/26	41E 20
GEMMATI, Oronzo	CPL	680406	D/2-12	48E 26
GENTRY, Robert Barry	WO	710208	174 AHC	5W 87
GERO, John Anthony	CPL	680629	G/2/3	54W 16
GETTINGS, Guy Clifton	PFC	670426	K/3/3	18E 93
GIAMBRONE, Richard Lawrence	1/Lt	680401	1-7 Cav	47E 32
GIBBS, Michael Gerald	HM3	670426	K/3/3	18E 85
GIBSON, William Terry	PFC	680618	K/3/4	56W 21
GIFFORD, William Gary	LCPL	680531	E/2/3	62W 9
GILLESPIE, Albert Aloysius	PVT	680519	F/2/1	63E 10
GILLIAM, George Harvey	PFC	680403	C/2-5	47E 50
GILLIAM, Kenneth Ray	LCPL	690225	H Btry, 3/12	31W 47
GILLILAND, Dennis Elbert	SP4	710220	498 Med Co	5W 123
GLASPER, William Lawrence	LCPL	680208	A/1/9	38E 28

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
GLENN, William Stuart	PFC	710322	C/3-187	4W 66
GLIDDEN, Arthur	SFC	661109	Det B-52	12E 47
GODINEZ, Alejandro Ray	LCPL	670627	I/3/26	22E 70
GODING, Robert Earle	PFC	690303	C/1/4	30W 22
GOEGLEIN, John Winfred	MAJ	700630	40 ARRS	9W 104
GOEN, Richard Dean	LCPL	680802	E/2/4	50W 50
GOETZ, James Gormon	LCPL	670316	E/2/9	16W 90
GOI, Louis Charles	CPL	680318	B/1/13	45E 22
GOLZ, James Roland	PFC	680127	I/3/26	35E 46
GOMEZ, Armando Abel	PFC	680220	E/2/26	40E 39
GONANO, James Martin	PFC	690309	III MAF	30W 88
GONZALES, Robert	PFC	680403	H&S/2/3	47E 49
GOODMAN, Kenneth Virgil	PFC	680124	K/3/26	35E 21
GOODWIN, Raymond Ray	LCPL	670303	HqCo,3dMarDv	16E 10
GORDON, Lawrence Lee	CPL	700506	A/2-501	11W 111
GORDON, Richard Dale	PFC	680628	H&S/1/1	54W 10
GORE, Harold Douglas	CPL	680531	E/2/3	62W 9
GORMAN, Paul James	PFC	680730	G/2/4	50W 35
GORRERA, George Medford Jr	PFC	690320	G/2/3	29W 89
GOSS, Larry Jo	HM2	680214	K/3/9	39E 32
GOTTI, Gale Edward	PVT	670607	A/1/13	21E 67
GRAFF, Thomas George	CPL	670430	K/3/9	18E 121
GRAHAM, Robert Lee	SGT	690618	B/1-61	22W 76
GRANTHAM, Robert Eugene	SGT	710308	B/2-17	4W 32
GRASSIA, Joseph Jr.	PFC	690309	III MAF	30W 88
GRATEN, Frederick Dunham	CPL	680411	VMO-6	49E 22
GRAVEL, Bobby Joe	SP4	680406	C/2-7	48E 26
GRAY, John Patrick	LCPL	680531	E/2/3	62W 9
GRAY, Michael Douglas	PFC	680306	FLSG-A	43E 19
GRAY, Ruzell	PFC	680531	E/2/3	62W 10
GREB, James J	SGT	680414	B/1-5	49E 52
GREEN, Claude Hewitt	PFC	680409	E/2/1	49E 1
GREEN, Norman Morgan	LTCOL	680109	497 TFS	34E 7
GREENE, Danny Marvin	LCPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 71
GREENE, Kenneth John	SP4	680314	SVC Bty, 8-4	44E 55
GREENIDGE, Michael Rodney	LCPL	680331	D/1/9	47E 22
GREENLEAF, Joseph Gales	LT	720414	VF-114	2W 136
GREENWOOD, Dale Edward	PFC	690307	H/2/3	30W 62
GREGORY, Frank Edwin	LCPL	680606	D/1/4	59W 3
GRIFFIN, Walter Joe Louis	PFC	690618	C/1/9	22W 77
GRIJALVA, David Centeno	CPL	670427	B/1/9	18E 102
GRIMSTAD, Sigard Richard	PFC	680519	E/2/1	63E 10
GRIST, William Anthony	LCPL	680528	F/2/3	64W 9
GROHMAN, John Joseph	GYSGT	680322	C/1/26	45E 56
GROSHONG, Allen Eberly	HN	680408	F/2/1	48E 52
GRZEGOREK, James Andrew	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 19
GUENTHER, Carlyule Lloyd	SSG	680505	A/1-50	55E 14
GUILLORY, Wendell	PFC	680416	C/1/9	50E 13
GULA, Paul Richard	PFC	680330	D/1/9	47E 11
GULLUNG, Joseph Frank III	PFC	680406	B/2-7	48E 27
GUNN, Charley Edward	LCPL	670316	E/2/9	16E 91

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
GUSTAFSON, James Ernest	HM3	680422	G/2/3	51E 30
GUTHRIE, Steven Allen Jr.	SP4	680131	1/44 Arty	36E 12
HABERMAN, David	PFC	680416	A/1/9	50E 14
HACKETT, David Spencer	1/Lt	670430	H/2/3	18E 122
HAEFNER, David Allen	CPL	680505	A/1-77	55E 16
HAGAN, John Robert	MAJ	690506	VMO-6	25W 11
HAGARA, Leslie Paul	SGT	680416	A/1/9	50E 14
HAGEN, Loren Douglas	I/Lt	710807	RT KANSAS	3W 125
HAGEN, Loren Douglas	1/Lt	710807	TF1AE	3W 125
HALE, John Douglas	I/Lt	710308	B/2-17	4W 32
HALEY, Harrison LeRoy	CAPT	680526	D/1/1	66W 7
HALL, Blucher Ray	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 19
HALL, James Michael	SSGT	690101	CCN	35W 15
HALL, Lindy Ronald	CPL	670426	K/3/3	18E 93
HALL, Walter Ray	SP4	710322	176 AHC	4W 66
HALL, William Gardner	1/Lt	680324	VMO-6	46E 6
HALLER, Leroy Clayton	PFC	680531	B/1/1	62W 10
HALLOCK, Douglas Paul	CPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 122
HAMEL, Wayne Douglas	PFC	680205	HQ 26 MAR	37E 36
HAMILTON, Dennis Clark	CWO	680105	176 Avn Co	33E 49
HAMILTON, Douglas Blake	PFC	670424	B/1/9	18E 77
HAMMONS, James Luther	PFC	680506	H&S/3/4	56E 7
HAMPTON, Frederick Jordan	LTC	680306	311 ACS	43E 20
HANCOCK, William Tyler	PFC	680406	D/1-5	48E 27
HANDLEY, Anthony William	CPL	680208	H&S/1/9	38E 29
HANNA, Kenneth	SMAJ	680207	A-101 USSF	37E 83
HANNINGS, William Elwood	LCPL	680606	H&S/1/4	58W 3
HANRAHAN, Jerome M Jr	CPL	670430	H/2/3	18E 122
HANSON, Robert	LCPL	680601	W/1/11	61W 1
HANSON, Stephen Paul	MAJ	670603	HMM-165	21E 47
HARAN, Rory Timothy T	PFC	690605	H/2/9	23W 72
HARPER, Donald Eugene Jr	SGT	670316	B/1/9	16E 91
HARPER, Ralph Lewis	LCPL	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 4
HARRELL, Lenwood Thomas	PFC	680505	A/1-77	55E 15
HARRINGTON, John Charles	PVT	680604	F/2/4	60W 10
HARRIS, Earl Wayne	PFC	680228	E/2/26	41E 65
HARRISON, Donald	WO	661202	381 AHC	13E 5
HARTNESS, Donald Harry	LCPL	680607	M/3/9	59W 26
HATTER, Larry Richard	CPL	710218	HMH-463	5W 116
HAUSHERR, Charles Raymond	SP4	710223	173 AHC	5W 134
HAWES, Wayne Lindsay	SP4	690101	CCN	35W 16
HAWKINS, Don Albert	SGT	671101	FOB-1	29E 3
HAWLEY, Richard A Jr	CAPT	700506	E/2-501	11W 112
HAWYER, Donald Robert	LCPL	680615	L/3/4	57W 27
HAYDEN, Michael Pym	1/Lt	680416	A/1/9	50E 14
HAYES, Michael John Jr.	PFC	690314	M/3/4	29W 37
HAYES, Phillip III	LCPL	680225	B/1/26	41E 21
HEALY, Louis Glenn	PVT	680705	F/2/3	53W 19
HEALY, Richard John	CPL	680114	B/3d Recon	34E 48
HEALY, Thomas Michael	PFC	670607	B/1/26	21E 68
HEATH, Lloyd Lavern	HN	670502	G/2/3	19E 14

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
HEAVIN, Willis Ray	SGT	670503	E/2/3	19E 25
HEDGPATH, William Thomas	PFC	670426	K/3/3	18E 94
HEIFNER, Edward William	PFC	680125	F/2/26	35E 32
HEISER, John Louis	LCPL	690303	H&S/1/4	30W 24
HELGESON, Ellis Eugene Jr.	1/Lt	680306	311 ACS	43E 20
HELLWIG, Steven Louis	LCPL	680121	H&S/1/26	35E 6
HELMKE, Darrel Bruce	PFC	680412	A/1-8	49E 32
HELMSTRETLER, Michael David	1/Lt	680619	HMM-161	56W 31
HELWIG, Roger Danny	CAPT	690911	390 TFS	18W 69
HENDERSHOTT, Thomas Edward	PFC	670521	A/1/26	20E 76
HENDERSON, John Michael	LCPL	670502	H/2/3	19E 14
HENDRIX, John Russell	SP4	680405	B/7th Sq	48E 17
HENNESSEY, James Dale	SP4	690618	B/1-61	22W 77
HEPNER, Stephen Thomas	2/Lt	670502	K/3/3	19E 14
HERNANDEZ, Frank Sanchez	SGT	700506	A/158 AHB	11W 112
HERNANDEZ, Richard	PFC	670430	K/3/9	18E 122
HERNANDEZ, Robert	PFC	680710	A/1/1	52W 10
HESTER, William Walter	PFC	680701	I/3/4	54W 29
HICKS, Norman Edward Jr.	CPL	680531	H&S/2/3	62W 11
HICKS, Paul Everett	PFC	680306	G/2/26	43E 21
HIGGS, Ralph Edward	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 21
HILL, Billy David	SGT	680121	282 AHC	35E 6
HILL, James Edward Jr	PFC	670502	2/3	19E 14
HILL, Jerry James	PFC	680524	G/2/3	68E 3
HIMEBAUGH, Lee Edward	CPL	680527	M/3/4	65W 9
HIMMER, Lawrence	CAPT	680416	C/1/9	50E 14
HINKLE, Jack Lee	PFC	680416	D/1/9	50E 14
HINSCHBERGER, Lawrence K	PFC	690624	K/3/9	21W 7
HINSON, John Robert	PFC	670816	C/1/26	35E 1
HISCOCK, Stephen Mayo	CWO	710223	D/3-5	5W 134
HODGE, Michael Leonard	SSG	690618	B/1-61	22W 78
HOLDEN, John Parker	2/Lt	680411	HMM-163	49E 23
HOLDER, Carl Lewis	PFC	690103	H/2/9	35W 27
HOLDER, Kenneth Leroy	HM3	670509	F/2/3	19E 72
HOLDWAY, David Keith	LCPL	670503	H&S/2/3	19E 26
HOLLAR, Howard Eslie	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 22
HOLLIMON, Billy Michael	PVT	680305	F/2/26	43E 6
HOLLINGSWORTH, Gary Lynn	SP5	710518	TF1AE	3W 40
HOLLIS, Thomas William	LCPL	680128	B/3d Recon	35E 54
HOLLOWAY, James Owens Jr	LCPL	680404	A/1/9	48E 5
HOLMES, David Hugh	LTC	660315	22nd TASS	6E 10
HOLT, James William	MSGT	680207	A-101 USSF	37E 84
HOLTZCLAW, Gary Earl	1/Lt	690502	F/2/4	26W 99
HOOD, Jerry Wayne	PFC	670430	M/3/3	18E 122
HOPE, Samuel Jr.	PFC	690314	M/3/4	29W 35
HOPKINS, Gary Wayne	CPL	680705	H&S/1/1	53W 20
HORNBAKER, Kenneth Eugene	CPL	680219	HHB-2-94	40E 22
HORSLEY, LaMonte Van	CPL	680509	H&S/2/1	57E 23
HORTON, Robert Bernard	PFC	680707	C/1/1	53W 35
HORVATH, Robert John	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 22
HOTTENROTH, James Randall	1/Lt	671015	314 TAW	28E 9

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
HOUSTON, John Davis Jr	PFC	680417	L/3/26	50E 29
HOUSTON, Marvin Lynn	LCPL	680609	F/2/1	58W 9
HOWARD, James Byron	HN	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 5
HOWARD, Rodger Dale	PFC	690208	D/1/4	33W 85
HOWARD, Sydney Claude	LCPL	690314	H/3/4	29W 38
HOWLETT, Norman Locke Jr	LCPL	680330	A/3d Eng	47E 12
HUBBARD, Charles Austin	BUL3	670606	NMCB-4	21E 62
HUBER, Leon Fairden	SP4	680202	544 Sig Det	36E 74
HUBER, Randy "S"	LCPL	680528	F/2/3	64W 11
HUDSON, Roy	LCPL	680131	A/1/26	36E 16
HUET, Henri	Civilian	710210	Photog--AP	not on
HUFF, Richard Elliott	PFC	690411	E/2/4	27W 56
HUFF, William Edward	CPL	680225	K/3/26	41E 22
HUGHES, Samuel Reuben	SP5	680421	FOB-3	51E 21
HUMMEL, John Floyd	CWO	710306	B/7-1	4W 28
HUMPHREYS, Larry Don	PFC	680612	K/3/4	58W 32
HUNT, Joseph Thomas	CPL	680127	B/1/9	35E 47
HUNT, Ralphe Edward Jr.	1/Lt	680607	VMO-6	59W 23
HUNT, William Howard	2/Lt	690225	E/2/4	31W 49
HUNTER, Charles Louis	SP4	690618	B/1-61	22W 78
HUNTER, John Clark	I/Lt	710220	Bde HHC	5W 124
HURD, Roger Michael	LCPL	670521	A/1/26	20E 75
HURLBERT, Roy Douglas	CPL	680416	C/1/9	50E 15
HURST, John Clark	CAPT	680713	VMFA-115	52W 23
HURST, Ronald Lynn	PFC	680504	C/1-5	54E 40
HUSTON, Charles Gregory	SSGT	680328	FOB-4	46E 55
HUTCHINS, Frank John	SGT	680302	D/1/9	42E 33
HUTCHINSON, Paul Lee	PFC	680324	A/1/9	46E 7
HUWEL, Michael Francis	FPC	670503	E/2/3	19E 31
HYATT, Wayne Reuben	MAJ	710218	HMH-463	5W 116
IANIERI, Richard Joseph	LCPL	680609	F/2/4	58W 10
IBANEZ, Di Reyes	GYSGT	670605	A/3d Recon	21E 58
IMPERIALE, Ronald Joseph	LCPL	670316	E/2/9	16E 92
IRSCH, Wayne Charles	1/Lt	680109	497 TFS	34E 7
IRWIN, Robert Joseph	LCPL	680611	A/1/4	58W 28
ISLER, Reid Allen	HM3	680517	2/1	62E 6
IVES, Timothy James	CPL	670430	K/3/9	18E 123
IVES, William Allen	PFC	680324	A/1/9	46E 7
JACKSON, Andrew	LCPL	680306	F/2/26	43E 23
JACKSON, Billy Lee	SSGT	680409	F/2/1	49E 2
JACKSON, Curtis Darrell	HM3	670627	L/3/26	22E 71
JACKSON, James Wesley Jr.	LCPL	690921	L/3/4	18W 121
JACKSON, Leonard Jr.	PFC	680208	A/1/9	38E 30
JACKSON, Nathaniel Earnest	CPL	680416	C/1/9	50E 15
JACOB, Robert Michael	PFC	680404	A/1/9	48E 5
JACQUES, Donald	2/Lt	680225	B/1/26	41E 22
JAGGERS, Thomas Murl	CPL	670504	G/2/3	19E 37
JAMES, Mark Everett	LCPL	680214	K/3/9	39E 48
JANNETTA, Rodney Alan	CPL	690624	K/3/9	21W 8
JANOWICZ, Joseph Anthony	SP4	680414	B/1-5	49E 54
JASNOCHA, Alfred Ladislaw	LCPL	680515	L/3/4	60E 24

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
JAY, Robert Vern	CPL	690305	I/3/4	30W 48
JAYNES, James Oakley	LCPL	680425	C/3d Tk	52E 6
JEFFRIES, Gerrie George	LCPL	680224	E/2/26	41E 10
JEFFRIES, James Herbert	LCPL	690320	H&S/3/4	29W 89
JENKINS, Earl Dale Jr.	PCL	671116	FLC Air Del	30E 3
JENKINS, Michael Lee	PFC	690225	E/2/4	31W 50
JENKINS, Paul Laverne	MSGT	700630	40 ARRS	9W 105
JENKINS, Robert Henry Jr.	PFC	690305	C/3rd Recon	30W 46
JEREMIAH, Randall Craig	PFC	680530	L/3/4	63W 16
JMAEFF, George Victor	CPL	690301	C/1/4	30W 4
JOHNS, Carey Lee	LCPL	680618	H&S/3/4	56W 23
JOHNSON, Charles Timothy	LCPL	680504	G/2/1	42E 67
JOHNSON, Charles William	LCPL	680509	A/1/1	57E 24
JOHNSON, Daryl Linn	PFC	670503	E/2/3	19E 26
JOHNSON, Donald Vern	PFC	680519	F/2/1	63E 11
JOHNSON, Edward A. Jr.	SP4	710225	C/7-17	4W 5
JOHNSON, Eugene Melvin Jr.	LCPL	680407	G/2/26	48E 42
JOHNSON, Freddie Lee	LCPL	670627	I/3/26	22E 71
JOHNSON, Gary Lee	SP4	710218	A/101	5W 116
JOHNSON, George Dennis	PFC	670316	E/2/9	16E 92
JOHNSON, Gerald Lee	PFC	680505	A/1-77	55E 18
JOHNSON, Harrell Wayne	LCPL	680531	H&S/2/3	62W 11
JOHNSON, Havert Earl	PFC	680612	K/3/4	57W 1
JOHNSON, Howard Leon	CPL	680122	HQ 26 Mar	35E 11
JOHNSON, Kenneth Michael	PFC	670607	B/1/26	21E 68
JOHNSON, Kenneth Richard	LCPL	680216	B/1/9	39E 62
JOHNSON, Kim Williams	1/Lt	680223	H&S/1/26	40E 77
JOHNSON, Randolph Leroy	SFC	710220	48 AHC	5W 124
JOHNSON, Terry Melvin	PFC	680121	I/3/26	35E 6
JOHNSON, Zebulon	SP4	710215	B/2-17	5W 106
JOHNSTON, Dennis Neil	HN	680416	H&S/1/9	50E 19
JOHNSTON, Richard William	PFC	680416	C/1/9	50E 16
JONES, Bruce Edwin	LCPL	680225	B/1/26	41E 22
JONES, Clifton Randal	LCPL	680121	K/3/26	35E 6
JONES, Donald Ernest	PFC	680308	K/3/26	43E 56
JONES, Howard Lemuel Jr.	LCPL	680224	FLC POL	41E 10
JONES, Isaac	LCPL	670426	B/1/9	18E 94
JONES, Jack Pahl	LCPL	680705	K/3/4	53W 21
JONES, James	SGM	661003	FOB-1	11E 42
JONES, Jimmie Lee	PFC	680330	B/1/26	47E 12
JONES, John Robert	SGT	710605	TF1AE	3W 66
JONES, Joseph Richard	PFC	680705	D/1/1	53W 21
JONES, Larry Allen	PFC	680424	H&S/1/9	51E 47
JONES, Melvin Lewis	PFC	680214	K/3/9	39E 34
JONES, Sam	LCPL	680611	A/1/4	58W 26
JONES, Terry Agusta	PFC	671230	B/3d Recon	33E 3
JONES, Walter Chapman III	CAPT	680404	H&S/1/9	48E 5
JORDAN, Allan Harold	1/Lt	680406	B/1/13	48E 28
JOY, Richard Dennis	SGT	690620	B/1-61	22W 98
JOYNER, Stephen Douglas	1/Lt	680615	L/3/4	57W 27
KAMINSKI, Kenneth	PFC	680326	E/3-187	46E 36

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
KARAU, Ronald Dean	SGT	710320	101 AD	4W 61
KATZ, Ronald Christopher	SSG	690313	M/3/4	29W 30
KAULBACK, Peter Jon	LCPL	680531	B/1/1	62W 11
KEARSLEY, Ronald Charles	PFC	680421	H/2/3	51E 22
KEEFE, Dennis Michael	CPL	680211	HQ 26 Mar	38E 78
KEEFER, Kenneth Ray	LCPL	670607	B/1/26	21E 68
KEETLE, Jeffrey Charles	CPL	710323	D/2-17	4W 70
KEGLOVITS, Edward Joseph	2/Lt	670330	VMFA-542	17E 72
KEITH, Daniel Scott	PFC	690410	F/2/4	27W 50
KELLUM, Norman Wade	LCPL	690225	B Btry 3/12	31W 51
KELLY, Eddie Jr.	CPL	680517	B/1/1	62E 7
KENNEDY, Larry Scott	CPL	680306	A/1/13	43E 23
KENT, Daniel Wilder	CPL	680124	B/3d Tk	35E 23
KENT, Gregory Patrick	LCPL	680328	B/1/26	46E 55
KERCHNER, Robert Bard	SGT	680406	B/2-7	48E 28
KESSLER, Julius Allen II	CPL	670430	H/2/3	18E 123
KESTLER, Gary Lyle	LCPL	680528	F/2/3	64W 11
KETCHIE, Scott Douglas	CAPT	720409	USS CORAL SEA	2W 134
KIDD, Melton Lavone	PFC	680609	F/2/1	58W 10
KIDD, Phillip Meredith	PFC	680409	C/1/9	49E 3
KIER, Larry Gene	SSGT	700506	A/2-501	11W 112
KILDERRY, Michael Joseph	LCPL	680706	C/1/4	53W 27
KILGORE, Danny Ray	PFC	680416	C/1/9	50E 16
KINCAID, Paul Eddie	SGT	670627	A/1/26	22E 71
KING, DeWayne	LCPL	680414	M/3/26	49E 53
KING, George Louis Jr.	PFC	680605	C/1/4	60W 19
KING, James Michael	PFC	690321	D/1/4	29W 101
KINGSTON, Thomas Lloyd	LCPL	680121	I/3/26	35E 7
KINNE, Allen Gene	SSGT	700506	C-158 AHB	11W 114
KINNEY,Richard Lee	HN	670430	H/2/3	18E 123
KIRK, Robert Lee	WO	700506	A-158 AHB	11W 114
KISSLING, Benjamin Kaon	CPL	680409	D/2/12	49E 3
KLEIN, Joseph	CPL	680605	C/1/4	60W 19
KLEMENCIC, Joseph Gordon	PFC	670509	F/2/3	19E 72
KNIGHT, Hubert Charles	PFC	680516	M/3/4	61E 12
KNOLL, Anthony	PFC	680525	E/2/4	68W 4
KNUTSEN, Donald Paul	SP4	710322	176 AHC	4W 67
KOENIG, David Bruce	LCPL	670503	E/2/3	19E 27
KOMAN, Lawrence Ryland	2/Lt	680330	D/1/9	47E 13
KOPP, Patrick Daniel	PFC	680707	H&S/1/1	53W 36
KOT, Myron	CPL	680207	H&S/3/26	38E 5
KOTIK, Robert John	PFC	670430	M/3/3	18E 123
KRISELL, James Lee	LCPL	680519	H/2/3	63E 13
KRUGER, Robert Henry Jr	PFC	670503	E/2/3	19E 27
KURILICH, Robert Vaso	MAJ	680607	H&S/1/1	59W 25
KURTZ, Lloyd Nelson	PFC	670316	E/2/9	16E 92
KUSICK, Joseph George	SGT	671108	FOB-1	29E 51
LA PLANT, Kurt Elton	LCPL	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 6
LA VIGNE, Steven Bruce	LCPL	680618	K/3/4	56W 23
LA VIGNE, Steven Bruce	LCPL	680618	K/3/4	56W 23
LABOHN, Gary Russell	SFC	681130	FOB-1	37W 13

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
LABONTE, Donald Arthur	HN	680228	H&S/2/26	41E 68
LABOWSKI, Leonard William	SGT	690325	A/1/4	28W 37
LACEY, Davied Michael	SP5	690425	A/1-77	26W 47
LACEY, Franklin D	PFC	680328	L/3/26	46E 56
LADEROUTE, Michael John	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 23
LADEWIG, Melvin Earl	1/Lt	680824	8th TFW	46W 5
LAFAYETTE, John Wayne	MAJ	660406	20th ASTA	6E 90
LAFOND, Roland Robert	CPL	680502	H/2/3	54E 10
LAGENFELD, Charles T	HM3	680417	H&S/2/26	50E 30
LAMARR, Walter Loren	PFC	690225	H/2/4	31W 52
LAMITIE, Tyrone Francis	LCPL	680205	E/2/26	37E 38
LAMON, Francis William Jr.	PFC	680417	G/2/1	50E 30
LAMON, William Charles Jr.	LCPL	670316	E/2/9	16E 93
LANCASTER, David Clyde	WO	710321	C/7-17	4W 63
LAND, Sylvester	SGT	670316	B/1/9	16E 93
LANDERS, Ronnie Ray	LCPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 73
LANDERSHEIM, Larrie John	WO	700523	B52, 158	10W 86
LANDI, George Francis	CPL	690608	A/3rd Recon	23W 111
LANE, Austin Clifford	LCPL	690303	L/3/4	30W 26
LANE, Gerald Bruce	PFC	690305	I/3/4	30W 47
LANE, Louis Michael	SGT	680409	K/3/26	49E 3
LANEY, Billy Ray	SGM	670603	FOB-1	31E 48
LANGFORD, James Minter	SP4	680403	A/2-7	47E 52
LANGLEY, David Francis	SGT	680705	D/1/1	53W 17
LANGSTON, Melvin Doyle	PFC	680606	C/1/4	59W 6
LANGSTON, Michael Gary	LCPL	670505	2/3	19E 43
LAPHAM, Robert Granthan	MAJ	680208	14 ACW	38E 32
LAPORT, Leonard Oscar	LCPL	670426	K/3/3	18E 94
LARIMORE, John Richard	PFC	681124	H&S/1/4	38W 50
LASSITER, John Alfred	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 24
LATSHAW, Harry K	PFC	680306	G/2/26	43E 25
LAVOIE, Gerald Henry	CPL	680615	L/3/4	57W 28
LAVOY, Eugene Louis Jr.	PVT	670303	FLSG A	16E 11
LAWRENCE, Larry Eugene	LCPL	670606	HqCo 26 MAR	21E 62
LAWRENCE, William Aubrey	PFC	680417	G/2/1	50E 32
LAWS, Delmer Lee	SFC	660729	FOB-1	9E 87
LE BLANC, Alfred Leroy	CPL	680416	D/1/9	50E 16
LE COMPTE, John Ault	LCPL	680701	1/1	54W 31
LEAGUE, Roy Barry	SGT	680504	C/1-5	54E 36
LEAHY, Robert Michael	PFC	680607	3/9	59W 25
LEASURE, Delbert Louis	CPL	680223	C/1/13	40E 76
LECASTRE, Kenneth John	CPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 73
LEONARD, Kent Alan	PFC	670424	B/1/9	18E 80
LEONARD, Marvin Maurice	CWO	710215	C/159 ASHB	5W 107
LESAGE, Armand Paul	LCPL	680407	K/3/26	48E 42
LETSON, Gary Wayne	2/Lt	690618	C/1/9	22W 79
LEVULIS, John Joseph	SP4	710221	498 Med Co	5W 128
LEWELLEN, Walter Edward	SGT	710218	C/2-17	5W 117
LEWER, Thomas Charles	CPL	680208	A/1/9	38E 32
LEWIS, Clarence Henry	CPL	680315	B/1/9	44E 63
LEWIS, Donald Randall	LCPL	690225	H Btry, 3/12	31W 52

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
LILLIE, Richard Arthur	SGT	710218	H&MS-1	5W 117
LINDBERG, Brian Victor	LCPL	680404	A/1/9	48E 7
LINDERMAN, Mark Thomas	PFC	670721	M/3/3	23E 101
LINDEWALD, Charles W Jr	MSGT	680207	A-101 USSF	38E 5
LINDSAY, Philip Trieste	PFC	680409	A/1/9	49E 4
LINDSTROM, Ronnie George	CAPT	700102	25 TFS	15W 119
LINK, Frederick Beard	LCPL	680301	C/1/9	42E 19
LIPTAK, Charles Lewis	PFC	690412	C/1/4	27W 66
LISLE, Terrill Michael	PFC	690404	E/2/3	27W 11
LITTLE, Donnie Hugh	CPL	680609	A/1/1	58W 10
LITTLEFIELD, Robert Henry	CPL	680416	A/1/9	50E 17
LIVINGSTON, Billy Dale	LCPL	680226	CAC OSCAR	41E 40
LLOYD, Kenneth Edwin	PVT	680302	D/1/9	42E 35
LOCKETT, Lloyd	PFC	680505	A/1-77	55E 23
LOCKHART, John Thomas	SP5	710311	48 AHC	4W 38
LOFSTROM, Leland Eddy	LCPL	680515	L/3/4	60E 25
LOGAN, James Dwight	LCPL	690225	E/2/4	31W 52
LOHMAN, Herman Augusta Jr.	CPL	680406	G/2/26	48E 29
LONG, Leonard	HN	680326	H&S/1/9	46E 37
LONG, William Louis	I/Lt	690620	B/1-61	22W 99
LOOMIS, Richie Allan	PFC	690706	F/2/4	21W 71
LOONEY, Paul Thomas	CAPT	670510	HMM-164	19E 84
LOPEZ, Jose Angel Jr.	HN	680418	H&S/2/26	50E 40
LOPEZ, Robert Francisco	PFC	680615	M/3/4	57W 29
LOUIS, PFC Robert Youngdale Jr.	PFC	670503	F/2/3	19E 28
LOVATO, Michael Leon	PFC	680209	C/1/9	38E 55
LOVETT, Terry Wayne	PFC	690612	D/1/9	22W 33
LOWE, Barry	PFC	680609	F/2/1	58W 10
LOWE, Louis Cardell	LCPL	680514	K/3/4	60E 14
LOWERY, James Allen	PC	680205	A-1-40	37E 39
LUEBBERS, Ralph Joseph Jr.	LCPL	680528	F/2/3	64W 11
LYNCH, Charles Aaron	LCPL	670627	CAC O	22E 71
LYNN, Roy Eugene	PFC	690303	C/1/4	30W 31
LYON, Donovan Loren	MAJ	680322	559 TFS	45E 58
LYONS, Carl	PFC	680322	B/3d Recon	45E 59
LYONS, Chester George	SGT	710220	C/3-187	5W 125
LYONS, Marion Wayne	PFC	690225	H Btry, 3/12	31W 53
LYVERE, Ronald Lee	PFC	670425	K/3/3	18E 86
MACAGBA, Edilberto Dula	HM3	680313	B/1/26	44E 38
MACMILLAN, Thomas	LCPL	680306	K/3/26	43E 28
MACON, Samuel Cornelius	PFC	690225	H/2/4	31W 53
MAGERS, Paul Gerald	1/Lt	710601	D/158	3W 61
MAHARG, Evert Ralph	PFC	670426	B/1/9	18E 95
MAHONEY, Michael Thomas	SP5	680129	FOB-3	35E 61
MAHONEY, Thomas P III	LCPL	680706	B/1/1	53W 27
MAKIN, Woodrow Jr.	PFC	680528	F/2/3	64W 12
MALONEY, Jeffrey Raymond	CPL	670426	K/3/3	18E 95
MANGOLD, Leo Joseph	PFC	690303	C/1/4	30W 27
MANTHEI, James Walter	WO	710321	C/7-17	4W 64
MARC AURELE, Lionel Lucien	SP4	690618	B/1-61	22W 79
MARCOTTE, Andre Edward	LCPL	670701	3d FLC	22E 92

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
MARIN-RAMOS, Hector Ramon	SGT	680414	B/1-5	49E 53
MARIZ, Robert J	1/Lt	680130	HQ 26 Mar	35E 75
MARSHALL, Clifford Wayne	CPL	710219	3/D/1-11	5W 121
MARSHALL, Joseph Henry III	1/Lt	710218	48 AHC	5W 118
MARSHALL, Roland Trent	PFC	680517	M/3/4	62E 8
MARSON, Rickey Joe	PFC	680407	2/26	48E 43
MARTEL, Normand Richard	PFC	670502	E/2/3	19E 28
MARTIN, Gary Alan	LCPL	680301	C/1/9	42E 20
MARTIN, Harry Pemberton	PFC	680609	H&S/2/4	58W 11
MARTINEZ, Mauro	PFC	680416	C/1/9	50E 18
MARTORELLA, Gary Mario	LCPL	680531	E/2/3	62W 4
MARTURANO, Joseph Anthony Jr.	PFC	680306	G/2/26	43E 25
MARX, Robert Garry	CPL	680527	M/3/4	65W 11
MASSIE, George Edgar	PFC	680524	G/2/3	68E 5
MASTERS, Edward Ulyses	PFC	680406	G/2/26	48E 30
MATHEWS, James Michael	CPL	680618	K/3/4	56W 25
MATTHEWS, Charles Toney	SGT	710219	3/D/1-11	5W 121
MATTHEWS, William Lawrence	LCPL	680415	H&S/3/26	50E 6
MAY, David Murray	CAPT	710220	48 AHC	5W 125
MAYBERRY, Squire Newton Jr.	PFC	680531	E/2/3	52W 13
MAYER, Paul Evans	MGYSGT	680328	MWHG-1	46E 57
MAYSAY, Larry Wayne	SGT	671108	37th ARRS	29E 60
MAZARIEGOS, Francisco Albe	LCPL	670627	CAC O	22E 68
MAZILLO, Peter Jr	LCPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 124
MC CABE, Marc Wayne	SGT	680228	HMM-262	41E 70
MC CALL, Billy Ray	SGT	680222	G/2/26	40E 66
MC CANN, James Kevin	LCPL	680203	B/3d Recon	37E 10
MC CARTHY, Loyd Van Jr.	CAPT	710316	101 Div	4W 52
MC CASKEY, Robert Walter	MAJ	680407	11th GS	48E 44
MC CASKILL, William	PFC	670426	K/3/3	18E 96
MC CLAIN, William David	SGT	680516	K/3/4	61E 15
MC CLATCHEY, Jeffrey Jr.	SP5	680301	FOB-3	42E 12
MC CLELLAND, Aubrey David	PFC	680416	D/1/9	50E 19
MC CLELLAND, George	SSGT	680225	B/1/26	41E 25
MC CLINTOCK, Gerald	PFC	680615	L/3/4	57W 29
MC CLUNG, Ronald Olin	PFC	670924	A/1/26	27E 5
MC COOK, Gregory Madison	SGT	670509	F/2/3	19E 73
MC CORMICK, Michaep P	2/Lt	690320	D/1/4	29W 91
MC COSAR, Winford	LCPL	680306	B/1/26	43E 28
MC DANIEL, Roy Dean	CPL	680208	A/1/9	38E 35
MC DONALD, Henry III	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 26
MC DONALD, Lewis Levi	PFC	690307	H/2/3	30W 62
MC DONELL, "R" "D"	SGT	710325	B/1-1	5W 125
MC ELFRESH, Allen Keith	SGT	710218	HMH-463	5W 118
MC ELRATH, Winston Jr.	LCPL	680531	K/3/4	62W 14
MC GARVEY, Patrick George	CPL	680412	H&S/1/26	49E 35
MC GRATH, Edward	CPL	680406	G/2/26	48E 31
MC GRATH, Thomas Howard	LCPL	690225	3/12	31W 64
MC HENRY, Paul Vincent	LCPL	680615	H&S/3/4	57W 30
MC INTOSH, Ian	WO	701124	A/2-17	6W 79
MC KAIN, Bobby Lyn	CW2	680503	A/1-9	54E 27

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
MC KEE, Julian Allan	LCPL	670316	E/2/9	16E 95
MC KEEVER, Michael E	LCPL	680223	H&S/1/26	40E 75
MC KENZIE, Richard W	LCPL	680225	B/1/26	41E 26
MC KIBBAN, Michael James	SSGT	690101	CCN	35W 17
MC KINLEY, Allen	PVT	680208	A/1/9	38E 35
MC KINNEY, Bernard B Jr.	SSGT	680208	A/1/9	38E 35
MC KINNEY, Clemie	LT	720414	VF-114	2W 136
MC KINSEY, Gerald Leroy Jr.	WO	680121	282 AHC	35E 8
MC LEAN, Ronald Walsh	1/Lt	690608	A/3rd Recon	23W 113
MC LEMORE, John Wilson Jr.	PFC	710322	C/3-187	4W 68
MC LEOD, Arthur Edward	CWO	710212	C/2-17	5W 100
MC MACKINS, Reuben Carl Jr.	CPL	680414	L/3/26	49E 54
MC MANUS, Truman Joseph	LCPL	680605	D/1/4	60W 20
MC MILLAN, Bruce Francis	CAPT	680411	VMO-6	49E 24
MC MULLIN, Charles	PFC	680517	H/2/1	62E 9
MC MURRAY, Fred Howell Jr.	1/Lt	680407	TrpB, 1Sq9Cav	48E 45
MC MURRAY, Peter Hinchman	1/Lt	690827	CCN	19W 125
MC NAMAR, Carl	HN	680417	H&S/3/26	50E 32
MC NAMARA, Donald Woodward	CPL	670721	M/3/3	23E 102
MC NAMARA, William James	LCPL	680527	M/3/4	65W 12
MC NEILL, Kenneth Rex	PFC	690602	C/1/4	23W 46
MC PHEE, Randy Neal	PFC	670430	M/3/3	18E 125
MC RAE, Jimmie Lefon	PFC	680328	B/1/26	46E 57
MEAD, Dennis Michael	PVT	680306	D/1/26	43E 26
MEADE, Thomas Allerton	CPL	680206	D/1/26	37E 62
MEADOWS, Artis Wilbur Jr	CPL	680407	G/2/26	48E 44
MEADS, Kim Elmer	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 25
MEDEIROS, Dennis J	CPL	680306	H/2/26	43E 26
MEDEIROS, William Correia	LCPL	680416	A/1/9	50E 18
MEGGS, Marion Lee	LCPL	671116	B/3d Recon	30E 4
MEIER, Roy Alan	PFC	680302	D/1/9	42E 36
MEIER, Terrance Leo	SSGT	670721	M/3/3	24E 104
MEIN, Michael Howard	SSGT	681130	FPB-1	37W 13
MEISTER, David William	LCPL	680508	H&S/3/4	57E 6
MEIXNER, Edwin George	MAJ	680228	HMM-262	41E 69
MENNINGER, Robert Patrick	PFC	690301	C/1/4	30W 6
MENTON, Charles Russell Jerome	LCPL	680516	K/3/4	61E 13
MERCER, William Ivan	HM2	680615	M/3/4	57W 129
MEUSE, John Richard	PFC	670503	E/2/3	19E 29
MEYSEMBOURG, Daniel L	PFC	680311	B/1/9	44E 18
MIDTHUN, Roger Wayne	PFC	680515	D/1/1	60E 25
MIECZKOWSKI, Joseph	CPL	670430	K/3/9	18E 124
MIKELS, James Herbert Jr.	SGT	680228	H&S/1/26	41E 69
MILES, James Edward	PFC	680306	H/2/26	43E 27
MILLARD, Kenneth Arthur	LCPL	670627	I/3/26	22E 72
MILLARD, Loren Ray	HM3	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 8
MILLER, Charles Claude	LCPL	680404	H&S/1/9	48E 7
MILLER, Charles Wayne	HN	680124	B/3d Recon	35E 24
MILLER, Eugene Stuart	CAPT	700523	158 AHB	10W 86
MILLER, Malcolm Thomas	HM3	670510	A/3d Recon	19E 72
MILLER, Michael Andrew	1/Lt	690328	366 TFW	28W 72

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
MILLER, Tommy Neal	CPL	690225	E/2/4	31W 53
MILLETT, Steven Lawrence	PFC	670607	B/1/26	21E 69
MILLINER, William Patrick	CWO	710306	B/7-1	4W 29
MILLS, Arthur Lee	PFC	680412	C/1/26	49E 34
MINCH, Roger Carl	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 26
MINER, James Allen	CWO	710223	173 AHC	5W 135
MINES, James Jr.	CPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 125
MIRACLE, James Jr.	PFC	680403	C/1-8	47E 52
MIRAMONTEZ, Enrique	CPL	690618	C/1/9	22W 80
MITCHELL, Joseph Robert Jr.	2/Lt	670430	M/3/3	18E 125
MIZNER, Darrell Condie	PFC	680609	F/2/1	58W 11
MOCK, Donald Ray	PFC	680505	H&S/1/1	55E 23
MOFFETT, James Delton	CPL	680604	F/2/4	60W 11
MOFFITT, Thomas Carroll D	PFC	690313	M/3/4	29W 31
MOISE, Herve Jean	PFC	680416	A/1/9	50E 18
MOLAISON, Gordon Thomas	CPL	680519	E/2/1	63E 13
MOLE, Malcolm Geoffrey	HM3	680121	H&S/3/26	35E 7
MOLETTIERE, Joseph Anthony	LCPL	680205	2/26	37E 40
MONAT, Donald Henry Jr.	HM3	670425	K/3/3	18E 87
MONCAYO, Jose Roberto	SGT	680618	M/3/4	56W 25
MONNETT, Leonard Allen	SP5	710219	173 AHC	5W 121
MONROE, Wilber Dean	LCPL	680611	A/1/4	58W 26
MONTGOMERY, Michael Mallory	CPL	680505	A/1-77	55E 27
MONTIJO, Michael	CPL	690602	M/3/9	23W 45
MONTZ, Roger Ellis	PFC	680519	F/2/1	63E 12
MOODY, Charles Wilburn	SSG	680406	D/2-12	48E 30
MOONEY, Fred	SFC	710227	B/7-1	4W 10
MOORE, Dallas Henry	SGT	680306	311 ACS	43E 27
MOORE, Harry Truman	LCPL	680531	B/1/1	62W 13
MOORE, James Ezra	PFC	680306	G/2/26	43E 27
MOORE, Larry Gene	PFC	680416	C/1/9	50E 19
MOORE, Lewis Wayne	PFC	680310	A/3d Eng	44E 10
MOORE, Lloyd Whitfield	HN	680225	B/1/26	41E 25
MOORE, Wayne Paul	LCPL	680330	B/1/26	47E 14
MOORE, William Roosevelt	CPL	670503	H/2/3	19E 29
MORAN, David Alfred	SP4	710212	A/4-3	5W 99
MORAN, Walter C B	SP4	720123	TRF 95	2W 100
MORDEN, Robert Nelson	PFC	680208	A/1/9	38E 33
MORELAND, James Leslie	SFC	680207	A-101 USSF	38E 7
MORELOS, Catarino Jr.	PFC	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 8
MORGAN, Charles Lewis	LCPL	680531	B/1/1	62W 14
MORGAN, Michael Roy	LCPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 125
MORIARTY, Peter Gibney	CAPT	710322	614 TFS	4W 68
MORRIS, Larry Lee	PFC	670607	B/1/26	21E 69
MORRIS, Wayman Dewey	PFC	680531	B/1/1	62W 14
MORRISSEY, Thomas J Jr.	CPL	680605	C/1/4	60W 20
MORROW, Harold Eugene	GYSGT	670621	M/3/26	23E 101
MORTON, David Eugene	LCPL	680802	E/2/4	50W 52
MOSES, Clifton	PFC	680407	F/2/26	48E 44
MOSLEY, Edward	TSGT	671015	314 TAW	28E 10
MOSS, Thomas John Jr.	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 27

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
MOSSO, Robert Bruce	SGT	680326	B/1/9	46E 39
MOTTOLA, Vincent Antonio	PFC	680223	B/1/26	40E 77
MOUNT, John Edward	LCPL	680407	E/2/1	48E 44
MUELLER, Marco Francisco	LCPL	680515	F/2/3	60E 26
MULGREW, Kevin Spear	LCPL	680409	A/1/9	49E 4
MULLET, Steven James	PFC	670721	M/3/26	23E 102
MURDOCK, Carl Thomas	LCPL	680515	H/2/3	60E 26
MURFF, William Edward	PFC	670721	M/3/3	23E 103
MURPHY, David	CPL	680423	D/1/1	51E 40
MURPHY, Patrick Michael	PFC	680208	A/1/9	38E 34
MURPHY, Richard Brian	LCPL	680615	M/3/4	57W 29
MURRAY, James Francis	CPL	670426	K/3/3	18E 95
MUTZ, Dennis Howard	LCPL	680304	K/3/26	42E 69
MUVICH, Dennis Robert	2/Lt	680519	E/2/1	63E 14
MYERS, David Gephart	1/Lt	670608	VMO-3	21E 75
NACCA, Carl Jr.	WO	710220	Bde HHC	5W 126
NARVAEZ, Paul Reyes	SGT	690618	B/1-61	22W 81
NASH, David Eugene	SGT	680609	F/2/1	58W 12
NASH, Thomas Steven	PFC	680407	E/2/1	48E 45
NAUGHTON, Thomas Daniel Jr	HN	690618	C/1/9	22W 81
NEAL, Charles Marion Jr.	LCPL	670425	K/3/3	18E 87
NEAL, William Edward	SP4	710324	D/3-5	4W 73
NEELEY, William Merritt	PFC	680421	H/2/3	51E 24
NELSON, Max Alvin	LCPL	680224	E/2/26	41E 11
NELSON, Roger Miller	HN	680407	H&S/2/26	48E 45
NELSON, Stephen Carl	PFC	670425	K/3/3	18E 87
NEWFIELD, Jimmy Charles	LCPL	680612	3/4	57W 2
NEWTON, Leonard Lee	PFC	680119	I/3/26	34E 80
NICKLOW, Danny Eugene	PFC	670316	B/1/9	16E 95
NIEBUR, Edward Leroy	HM2	680227	H&S/1/26	41E 52
NIELSEN, Charles Joseph	LCPL	680414	L/3/26	49E 52
NIELSEN, Harold Richard	CPL	670721	M/3/26	23E 103
NIGHTENGALE, Timothy James	PFC	680406	A/1/9	48E 31
NILES, Ronald Edward	CPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 73
NINOW, William Charles	HM3	690303	H&S/3/4	30W 28
NIXON, John Arleigh	CPL	680411	VMO-6	49E 24
NOEL, Joseph Paul	CPL	680605	D/1/4	60W 21
NORMAN, Marion Henry	1/Lt	680330	A/1/13	47E 15
NORTON, Kenneth Bradley	CPL	680508	F/2/1	57E 7
NOVEMBRE, Carmine	CPL	680425	D/1/1	52E 9
OBREGON, Raul Albert	PFC	680528	E/2/3	64W 14
O'CONNOR, Dennis Alfred	CPL	670627	CAC O	22E 72
O'CONNOR, Michael Maurice	1/Lt	690604	D/3d Recon	23W 66
ODOM, William Clinton Jr.	SGT	710218	HMH-463	5W 118
OESTERICH, Tilo Rudolf	CPL	680407	E/2/1	48E 45
OGATA, Terrance Aki	SP4	710223	173 AHC	5W 133
OGDEN, David Ellis	SSGT	700506	D/2-501	11W 115
O'HARE, Richard James	PFC	680306	G/2/26	43E 29
OLIVER, Erskine Jay	LCPL	690530	M/3/9	23W 22
OLIVER, Troy Robert Jr.	CAPT	680519	F/2/1	63E 15
OLNEY, Steven Ira	CPL	680602	H&S/2/3	61W 15

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
OLSEN, George Charles	PFC	680501	B/1/1	53E 39
OMMEN, Peter Richard	PFC	670430	M/3/3	18E 126
ORBINO, Dennis Michael	SGT	690325	H&S/1/4	28W 39
ORNELAS, John Carl	SGT	680205	FLC POL	37E 41
OROPEZA, Manuel Garcia	PFC	680702	G/2/4	54W 38
OROSCO, Stephen	PFC	690618	A/1/9	22W 81
ORTIZ, Eliezer	PVT	680605	D/1/4	60W 21
ORTIZ, Randall Isaac-Jed	LCPL	690820	H/2/4	19W 81
ORTON, Kenneth William Jr.	SGT	670426	B/1/9	18E 96
OSBORNE, David Franklin	PFC	690502	F/2/4	26W 101
OSTAPCHUK, Walter Michael	LCPL	680405	A/1/9	48E 19
OUTWATER, Albert Aleya	SGT	670721	M/3/3	23E 102
OVERTON, Doyle Wayne	PFC	680614	L/3/4	57W 21
OWENS, Elwood	LCPL	680618	K/3/4	56W 26
OWENS, Robert Franklin	CPL	680416	D/1/9	50E 19
OWENS, Timothy Eugene	PFC	680416	C/1/9	50E 19
PACE, Gary Lynn	SGT	690331	B/1-61	28W 100
PADILLA, David Esequiel	LCPL	680518	E/3d Recon	62E 22
PADILLA, Gary Teofilio	CPL	710303	174 AHC	4W 20
PADILLA, Ralph Henry	PVT	680612	K/3/4	57W 2
PAGAN, Miguel	PFC	680515	F/2/3	61E 1
PAKELE, Fred Dale	SSG	710209	A/1-61	5W 92
PALACIOS, Luis Fernando	LCPL	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 11
PALMA, Francis Michael	LCPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 126
PALMIERI, David Harold	PFC	690612	D/1/9	22W 35
PAMPLIN, John Mac	CPL	680516	M/3/4	61E 16
PARCEL, John William	LCPL	680422	G/2/3	51E 32
PARENT, Jeffrery Mark	LCPL	690504	M/3/4	25W 1
PARKER, George Joseph Jr.	SGT	690420	D/1/4	26W 15
PARKER, James Edward	SSG	690620	B/1-61	22W 100
PARKER, William Hill	LCPL	680606	D/1/4	59W 11
PARSLEY, Edward Milton	A1C	660203	311 ACS	4E 135
PARSONS, Charles Edward	SGT	680228	5th Comm	41E 69
PATRICK, Albert Earl	PFC	680214	A/3d Eng	39E 37
PATTERSON, Jerry Leroy	PFC	680730	G/2/4	50W 37
PATTERSON, Patrick Chasie	PFC	680415	K/3/26	50E 7
PATTERSON, William Anthony	PFC	680609	F/2/1	58W 16
PATTON, Barry Michael	LCPL	680402	H&S/2/3	47E 41
PAUL, James Lee	WO	710205	D-3-5 Cav	5W 79
PAYNE, Robert Paul	CPL	680318	A/3d AT	45E 24
PAYNE, Troy David Jr.	CPL	670426	B/1/9	18E 97
PEARCE, Dale Allen	WO	710517	C-158 AHB	3W 39
PEARCY, Robert Leslie	PFC	690604	D/3d Recon	23W 67
PECK, Darrell Vernon	PFC	690601	G/2/9	23W 39
PECK, Steven Russell	WO	710315	D/3-5	4W 51
PECKHAM, George Robert	LCPL	680404	F/2/1	48E 8
PEDA, Robert Charles	1/Lt	680407	A/1-9	48E 46
PEDERSON, Roger Alan	SP4	710329	HHT/3-5	4W 92
PEMBLETON, Ronald Lee	PFC	680208	A/1/9	38E 36
PENETTI, Francis	LCPL	680124	K/3/26	35E 26
PEOPLES, Perry Lee	LCPL	670426	2/3	18E 97

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
PEPPER, Anthony John	PFC	680406	G/2/26	48E 32
PEPPLE, Carl Franklin, Jr.	CPL	670505	CAC "O"	19E 44
PERETTA, John Rocco	CPL	680215	I/3/26	39E 52
PEREZ, Daniel Torres	LCPL	670424	B/1/9	18E 81
PEREZ, Jesus Albert	PFC	690624	K/3/9	21W 9
PERILLO, Donald Lee	PFC	680404	G/2/3	48E 8
PERKINS, Charles Harold	GYSGT	680517	K/3/26	62E 9
PERKINS, Stephen John	SP4	700523	158 AHB	10W 87
PERRY, James Earl	PFC	670316	B/1/9	16E 96
PESCHEL, James Douglas	PFC	690225	H Btry, 3/12	31W 55
PETAL, John Darryl	PFC	690320	G/2/3	29W 91
PETERSON, Carl Elving	COL	680210	I MAW	38E 71
PETTITT, James Allen	SP4	680414	B/1-5	49E 54
PHEARS, Ronald Gene	WO	680404	HHC, 2d Bde	48E 9
PHELPS, Randall Carl	PFC	680408	A/3d Eng	48E 54
PHILLIPS, Daniel Raymond	SFC	680207	A-101 USSF	38E 10
PHIPPS, James Alvin	PFC	680611	C/1/12	58W 28
PIAZZA, Robert Gary	PFC	680406	G/2/26	48E 33
PICANSO, Leonard Jr.	PFC	670503	F/2/3	19E 30
PICHON, Herman Edward	PFC	710324	C/4-3	4W 73
PIETRZAK, Joseph Ray	SGT	710210	B/2-17	5W 93
PINALES, Lawrence	LCPL	680704	M/3/9	53W 11
PINATELLI, Thomas Michael	PFC	680209	C/1/9	38E 71
PINO, Alfred	LCPL	670316	B/1/9	16E 96
PINSONNAULT, Richard Norma	HM3	680707	C/1/1	53W 38
PITTS, Freddie Richard	LCPL	670430	K/3/9	18E 126
PITTS, Wayne Monroe	PFC	670607	B/1/26	21E 70
PIZARRO, Vic Manuel	CPL	680306	A/1/13	43E 30
PLANCHON, Randall T II	CPL	680615	H/3/4	57W 30
PLILER, Larry Dean	SGT	680531	B/1/1	62W 15
PLUNCKETT, Raymond Louis	CPL	680330	D/1/9	47E 15
POE, Clifford Earl Jr	CWO	700506	A/158 AHB	11W 116
POILANE, Eugene	Civilian	640420	Coffee planter	not on
POILANE, Felix	Civilian	680413	Coffee planter	not on
POLK, Robert Louis	LCPL	680609	F/2/1	58W 13
POLLARD, William Alfred	PFC	670721	B/1/26	23E 103
POLT, Erwin Andrew	PFC	680324	H&S/1/9	46E 10
POMERLEAU, James Gerald	CPL	670424	B/1/9	18E 81
PONDOFF, John Christopher	PFC	680208	A/1/9	38E 36
PONIKTERA, Stanley F Jr.	LCPL	680528	F/2/3	64W 14
POPOWITZ, Gregory Francis	LCPL	680124	B/3d Recon	35E 26
PORTER, Lawrence Eugene	LCPL	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 12
PORTER, Richard Lee	PFC	690407	F/2/4	27W 33
POTIER, Milton Phillip	CPL	680505	A/1-77	55E 27
POTTER, Kent Biddle	Civilian	710210	Photog--UPI	not on
POWELL, David Lee	LCPL	680623	K/3/4	55W 22
POWELL, John Dee Jr	LCPL	680630	W/1/11	54W 24
POWELL, Peter Earl	SP5	680411	8th Eng	49E 25
POWELL, Robert Clyde	SGT	670503	E/2/3	19E 30
POWELL, Troy Everett	LCPL	690502	F/2/4	26W 102
POWERS, John Lynn	SP4	710215	C/159 ASHB	5W 107

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
PRESCOTT, Milton Emmett Jr.	SGT	670430	M/3/3	18E 127
PRESLEY, Avey	PFC	690325	A/1/4	28W 39
PRESLEY, Ronnie Calvin	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 30
PRESTON, Alvin Lewis	PFC	680508	H&S/1/1	57E 9
PRICE, Dwight Anthony	PFC	680611	A/1/4	58W 28
PRIEBE, James Edward	LCPL	670430	K/3/9	18E 127
PRUIETT, Thomas Pierre Jr.	PFC	680331	K/3/26	47E 25
PRUITT, George Alan	CPL	680408	H&S/2/26	48E 54
PRZYBLINSKI, Gerald	LCPL	690225	H Btry, 3/12	31W 56
PUENTES, Manuel Rameriz	SSGT	710325	B/1-1	4W 78
PYLE, Timothy Howard	LCPL	690502	HMM-262	26W 102
QUAMO, George	MAJ	680414	FOB-3	50E 1
QUATTLEBAUM, John Franklin	PVT	680407	F/2/26	48E 46
QUIGLEY, James Michael	CPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 74
QUINONES, Edward	CPL	680603	E/2/1	60W 5
QUINTANILLA, Jeffrey Iglesias	SGT	710323	D/2-17	4W 71
RAMIEREZ, Juan Jose	LCPL	670503	H/2/3	19E 30
RAMOS, Bernardo Kealoha	CPL	710324	C/4-3	4W 75
RAMOS, George Michael	SGT	680531	H&S/2/3	62W 16
RAMPULLA, Terry James	LCPL	680416	A/1/9	50E 20
RAMSEY, Milton Hardin	MAJ	710301	21 SOS	4W 14
RAMSEY, Randolph Raymond	PFC	690225	E/2/4	31W 56
RANDALL, James Arthur	PFC	670430	M/3/3	18E 127
RANEY, Steven Leon	SP4	680202	362 Sig Co	36E 83
RANSBOTTOM, Michael Lee	CPL	680407	C/2-7	48E 46
RASH, Donald Ray	PFC	680330	B/1/26	47E 15
RAUEN, John Vernon	WO	710220	498 Med Co	5W 126
RAY, Franklin Daniel	PFC	680223	A/1/26	41E 2
RAY, Kermit Anthony	LCPL	670426	K/3/3	18E 97
READ, Charles Harold W Jr	MAJ	680824	8th TFW	46W 7
REAGAN, Dickie Walter	SP4	700506	D/2-501	11W 117
REATHER, Wallace Lee Jr.	PFC	680127	B/3d Recon	35E 50
REDENIUS, David Gary	CPL	680416	C/1/9	50E 20
REECE, Walter James	SGT	680519	F/2/1	63E 17
REED, James Clayton	PVT	690320	D/1/4	29W 92
REED, Larry Bruce	PFC	680606	D/1/4	59W 12
REESE, William Robert	2/Lt	680214	K/3/9	39E 38
REGNOLDS, James Randolph	PFC	690321	D/1/4	28W 2
REID, James Alfred	PFC	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 12
REID, Jon Eric	CW2	710220	48 AHC	5W 126
REVLAND, Rickey Don	PFC	670505	2/3	19E 45
REX, Robert F	CAPT	690309	23d TASS	30W 95
REX, Robert F	CAPT	690309	23 TASS	30W 95
REYES, Ronald	PFC	680330	D/1/9	47E 16
REYES, William	LCPL	680705	D/1/1	53W 23
REYNA, Samuel	CPL	680420	A/1/1	51E 13
REZENDES, Paul Allen	HM3	690618	C/1/9	22W 82
RHOADES, David	PVT	670316	B/1/9	16E 97
RICE, John Climath	PFC	670303	E/2/3	19E 31
RICE, Robert	SGT	680416	A/1/9	50E 20
RICHARDSON, James Douglas	PFC	680407	F/2/26	48E 47

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
RICHARDSON, Scott Douglas	PFC	670430	H/2/3	18E 127
RIDENHOUR, Darwin Bruce	SSG	680401	8th Eng	47E 36
RIEDE, Ronald Edgar	1/Lt	680411	VMO-6	49E 25
RIGSBY, Barry Lane	PFC	680214	K/3/9	39E 38
RILEY, James Thomas	CAPT	680222	HMH-463	40E 68
RILEY, Larry Lloyd	LCPL	680524	G/2/3	69E 1
RIMEL, Melvin Lewis	GYSGT	680121	K/3/26	35E 9
RIMSON, Martin Luther	PFC	680205	E/2/26	37E 43
RIORDAN, Patrick Carlisle	PFC	680519	F/2/1	63E 17
RIOS, Noel Louis	SSGT	680306	APS-15	30W 69
RIPORTELLA, Frank J Jr.	LCPL	670426	B/1/9	18E 97
RIVERA, Arnold Javier	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 27
RIZO, Albert Martinez	CPL	680512	H&S/2/3	59E 12
RIZZO, James Patrick	LCPL	680208	A/1/9	38E 38
ROACH, Terence Raymond	2/Lt	680208	A/1/9	38E 38
ROBERTS, Ben	PFC	670503	E/2/3	19E 31
ROBERTS, Gary Kenneth	LCPL	680606	D/1/4	59W 13
ROBERTSON, Gerald William	PFC	680214	A/1/9	39E 38
ROBERTSON, John Ernest	CPL	710208	B/7-1	5W 89
ROBERTSON, Leonard	MAJ	720707	VMFA-533	1W 54
ROBERTSON, Mark John	WO	710210	B/2-17	5W 94
ROBINSON, Lance Allen	CPL	710323	D/2-17	4W 71
ROBINSON, Lionel Lareau	CPL	680410	A/1/9	49E 15
ROBINSON, Samuel Percell	CPL	680306	2/26	43E 31
ROBINSON, Walter R Jr.	LCPL	670430	H/2/3	18E 127
ROBITAILLE, Paul Edward	GYSGT	680223	M/3/26	41E 2
RODRIGUES, Joe G Jr.	SGT	690303	L/3/4	30W 29
RODRIGUEZ, Domingo Jr.	PVT	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 31
RODRIGUEZ, Manuel Jr.	PFC	690602	M/3/9	23W 47
RODRIGUEZ, Paul M Jr.	PFC	670627	A/1/26	22E 72
ROE, Royce Evert	PFC	690225	H/2/4	31W 56
ROGERS, Douglas Manuel	CPL	680531	G/2/3	62W 11
ROLDAN, William Junior	LCPL	670430	G/2/3	18E 128
ROMANO, August	PFC	680609	F/2/1	58W 14
ROMERO, Manuel Villareal	LCPL	680406	G/2/26	48E 33
ROSA, Juan Antonio	LCPL	680124	B/3d Recon	35E 27
ROSSANO, Richard Joseph	PFC	710325	B/1-1	4W 78
ROTH, Frank Theodore	LCPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 128
ROUNTREE, Ronald Corbin	LCPL	680208	A/1/9	38E 38
ROWE, Arthur Mortimer	PFC	680601	F/2/1	61W 6
ROWE, Sharber Mayfield	SGT	680707	C/1/1	53W 38
ROZELLE, David Thomas	LCPL	680121	K/3/26	35E 9
RUBY, Blane Markwood	PFC	680605	C/1/1	60W 21
RUDD, Donald Lee	HM2	690303	L/3/4	30W 29
RUDD, James Earl	PFC	680806	G/2/4	49W 20
RUDD, Richard John Jr.	PFC	680421	H&S/2/1	51E 25
RUFF, Willie Jerome	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 28
RUIZ, Antonio Elizondo	PFC	690314	M/3/4	29W 40
RUIZ, Gilbert	PFC	690321	D/1/4	28W 3
RUIZ, Jose	CPL	680416	C/1/9	50E 20
RUIZ, Jose Jr.	PFC	680330	B/1/26	47E 16

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
RUIZ, Thomas	LCPL	680701	H&S/2/1	54W 32
RUNKLE, Robert Leslie	LTCOL	680404	1-5 Cav	48E 10
RUSH, Ervin Lee	LCPL	680403	H&S/2/3	47E 54
RUSH, Marvin Gene	PFC	680416	D/1/9	50E 21
RUSSELL, David Adams	SGT	680309	H&S/1/26	43E 69
RUSSELL, James Lowell	LCPL	680311	D/1/9	44E 20
RUSSELL, John Malcolm Jr.	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 32
RUSSELL, Larry Gene	LCPL	680417	L/3/26	50E 33
RUTGERS, David Lynn	PFC	690225	H Btry, 3/12	31W 57
RYAN, Ronald Royce	CPL	680306	B/1/26	43E 32
RYAN, William Cornelius Jr.	1/Lt	690511	VMFA-115	25W 54
RYDEN, Gary Ardean	PFC	680403	D/1-5	47E 54
RYDER, Aldo Eugene	PFC	680604	G/2/4	60W 12
SACHEN, William George Jr.	LCPL	680519	H/2/3	63E 17
SAIN, Don Rue	SP4	660729	FOB-1	9E 88
SALLY, Hank	PFC	690605	H/2/9	23W 79
SAMUELSON, Robert L	SGT	680407	A/2-7	48E 43
SANCHEZ, Javier Arturo "E"	SSGT	670503	E/2/3	19E 32
SANCHEZ, Jose Ramon	PFC	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 13
SANDERS, Gerald Jude	LCPL	680705	D/1/1	53W 23
SANDERS, Glenn Edward	LCPL	670629	A/1/26	22E 85
SANDERS, William Stephen	CAPT	700630	23d TASS	9W 107
SANDOVAL, Daniel Flore	SP5	680415	FOB-3	50E 10
SANFORD, Albert Russell	CPL	680330	B/1/26	47E 16
SANSEVERINO, Anthony	CPL	670429	F/2/12	18E 116
SANTISTEVAN, Benny Manual Jr.	PFC	680402	I/3/26	47E 43
SARGENT, George Thomas Jr.	LTCOL	690321	1/4	28W 3
SATTER, Donald Stephen	PFC	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 13
SAUER, Phillip Howard	1/Lt	670424	A/3d AT	18E 81
SAUNDERS, Bruce Allan	LCPL	690225	E/2/4	31W 57
SAUNDERS, Donald Baron	PFC	680304	HQ/1/13	42E 71
SAXTON, Gary Lee	LCPL	680122	HQ 26 Mar	35E 11
SCANLON, Michael John	CPL	670118	3d FRC	14E 50
SCARBOROUGH, Russell	HM3	680406	G/2/26	48E 34
SCARBROUGH, David Clifton	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 28
SCATES, Charles Edward Jr.	PFC	680518	H/2/3	63E 1
SCHAEFER, Thomas Koenig	PFC	690303	C/1/4	30W 30
SCHAFER, Marvin Albert	LCPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 128
SCHAFER, Marvin Albert	LCPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 128
SCHANEBERG, Leroy Clyde	CAPT	700630	40 ARRS	9W 107
SCHARNBERG, Ronald Oliver	MAJ	710317	3-187	4W 56
SCHAVELIN, Hugh Ernest	LCPL	680416	D/1/9	50E 21
SCHELL, William Leroy	SP4	710323	C/1-11	4W 71
SCHLEY, Robert James	CPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 128
SCHLUTTER, William David	1/Lt	710317	51D	4W 56
SCHMALTZ, Douglas Ralph	CPL	710207	A/4-3	5W 84
SCHMITZ, Richard Travis	CPL	670430	G/2/3	18E 128
SCHNEIDER, David Francis	CPL	680214	K/3/9	39E 39
SCHOLZ, Klaus Dieter	SFC	681130	FOB-1	37W 14
SCHROEDER, Donald Ray	CPL	680407	F/2/26	48E 47
SCHROEDER, Joe Lawrence	PFC	670316	E/2/9	16E 98

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
SCHUCK, Donald Philip	PVT	680528	F/2/3	64W 15
SCHULTZ, Gerald Wayne	PFC	690303	G/2/4	30W 31
SCHULTZ, Sheldon Duane	WO-1	680105	176 Avn Co	33E 53
SCHURRER, Jon Rodney	CPL	680618	M/3/4	56W 28
SCOTT, Edward Drake	LCPL	680612	K/3/4	57W 4
SCOTT, James Frank	LCPL	680208	A/1/9	38E 38
SCOTT, Jeremiah	GYSGT	680201	I/3/26	36E 60
SCOTT, Walter Michael	PVT	680211	H&S/1/26	38E 80
SCRIBNER, Gary David	LCPL	680124	B/3d Recon	35E 27
SCULL, Gary Bernard	MAJ	700312	MACV	13W 120
SCULLEN, Thomas James	PFC	680302	D/1/9	42E 41
SEALL, George Melvin	LCPL	670430	G/2/3	18E 121
SEARS, Michael	CPL	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 33
SEDILLO, Juan Natividad	CPL	680408	H&S/1/9	48E 54
SEE, Otto William	SFC	680407	A/1-9	48E 47
SEEL, Walter Phillip, Jr.	HM2	690225	?	31W 58
SEGINE, Ronald Eugene	LCPL	680529	A/1/1	63W 13
SELDERS, William Dean	PVT	680205	K/3/26	37E 43
SELLERS, Floyd Eugene	PFC	680730	G/2/4	50W 37
SEVELL, Robert Lee	CAPT	680228	HMM-262	41E 72
SEXTON, David Mason	SGT	710315	B/5-4 Arty	4W 51
SEYMOE, Joseph Phillip	LTC	680121	MACV Det 19	35E 8
SGAMBATI, Paul Anthony	SP4	710303	A/158 AHB	4W 20
SHAFER, Francis Leo Jr.	CAPT	680330	D/1/9	47E 15
SHANNON, Stephen Craig	LCPL	680322	C/1/26	45E 60
SHARP, Allen Morris	PFC	690225	E/2/4	31W 58
SHARP, Lufkin Scott	CAPT	680619	HMM-161	55W 2
SHARP, Samuel Arthur Jr.	LCPL	670510	A/3d Recon	19E 86
SHATTUCK, Harold Leon Jr.	PFC	690615	H/2/4	22W 54
SHAUM, Ray Thomas Jr.	PFC	690303	C/1/4	30W 33
SHAVER, Ronald Lee	HM3	680622	BLT 2/4	55W 20
SHELTON, Henry Earl	PFC	680526	M/3/4	66W 12
SHEPARD, James Merrill Jr.	CPL	670627	CAC O	22E 73
SHERIDAN, Phillip Francis	LCPL	680414	C/1/13	50E 1
SHERREL, David Frank	CPL	670606	A/3d Recon	31E 63
SHIMAMOTO, Keisaburo	Civilian	710210	Photo-Newswk	not on
SHINAULT, John Michael	1/Lt	690507	C/3rd Recon	25W 29
SHINKAWA, Roy Yasushi	WO	710223	173 AHC	4W 1
SHIVER, Charles Jr.	LCPL	670430	M/3/3	18E 129
SHOCK, Jack Dean	CPL	690114	H&S/1/4	34W 2
SHOVLIN, Frank Joseph	PFC	670607	B/1/26	21E 70
SHUE, Donald Monroe	SFC	691103	CCN	16W 24
SHULL, Sandy Lee	LCPL	680216	H&S/1/9	39E 66
SIKORSKI, Larry Joseph	LCPL	690225	H Btry, 3/12	31W 58
SILER, Jimmy Louis	PFC	680215	B/1/9	39E 53
SILVA, Rito	LCPL	680618	K/3/4	56W 30
SILVEIRA, Leonel Mendonca	LCPL	690921	H&S/3/4	18W 123
SIMMONS, William	PFC	680606	G/2/4	59W 15
SIMOES, Anthony	SP4	680401	1-50	47E 36
SIMON, James Martin	SP4	710216	D/4-3	5W 112
SIMON, Michael Wayne	LCPL	680605	C/1/1	60W 22

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
SIMONSON, Larry Arnold	SP4	710325	173 AHC	4W 78
SIMPSON, Morris Alfred	1/Lt	710228	C/2-17	4wW 12
SINGER, Michael Ernest	PFC	680707	D/1/1	53W 39
SINK, Melvin Francis	CPL	671013	D/1/26	27E 101
SISSON, Bennie Joe	PFC	680322	C/1/26	45E 60
SKAGGS, Harold Alonzo	PFC	690604	D/3d Recon	23W 68
SKANSON, Louis James	PFC	680704	M/3/9	53W 14
SKINNER, Phillip Craig	LCPL	670503	E/2/3	19E 32
SKINNER, Walter Francis	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 30
SKIPPER, Michael Ray	PFC	690422	H/2/4	26W 27
SKUZA, Arvid Burdeen	LCPL	680208	A/1/9	38E 39
SLACK, Steven George	PFC	680214	D/1/9	39E 39
SLAWEK, Joseph Dennis Jr.	PFC	690404	E/2/3	27W 13
SLOAT, Gregory Alec	SGT	710218	H&MS-1	5W 118
SMITH, Alan Ray	PFC	680205	E/2/26	37E 44
SMITH, Author "C"	LCPL	680330	B/1/26	47E 17
SMITH, Cary Carson	1/Lt	680222	HMH-463	40E 69
SMITH, Charles Daniel	LCPL	680615	L/3/4	57W 31
SMITH, Dennis	PFC	680404	D/1/26	48E 11
SMITH, Donald Lee	LCPL	680606	D/1/4	59W 15
SMITH, Douglas Wayne	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 30
SMITH, Harold Roger	PFC	680403	A/1-5	47E 55
SMITH, James Herbert Jr.	LCPL	680306	FLSG-A	43E 35
SMITH, James Lee	PFC	690313	M/3/4	29W 32
SMITH, Jimmy Herman	LCPL	680610	H&S/2/1	58W 20
SMITH, John Archer	PFC	680208	I/3/26	38E 39
SMITH, Joseph Frederick Jr.	SP5	690618	D/1-61	22W 82
SMITH, Larry Michael	CPL	670430	M/3/3	19E 1
SMITH, Lyle Elton	SGT	710219	3/D/1-11	5W 121
SMITH, Matthew Edward	PFC	690411	E/2/4	27W 59
SMITH, Michael Stephen	LCPL	680528	F/2/3	64W 15
SMITH, Richard John	HN	680408	B/3d Recon	48E 55
SMITH, Richard William	PFC	690314	M/3/4	29W 40
SMITH, Rickey Gene	PFC	670430	M/3/3	19E 1
SMITH, Robert Lee	LCPL	680531	H&S/2/3	62W 17
SMITH, Terrence Glenn	SGT	680121	HQ 26 Mar	35E 9
SMITH, Terry Lee	CPL	680220	H&S/3/26	40E 48
SMITH, Willie Franklin	PFC	690225	H/2/4	31W 59
SNEAD, Bernard James	PFC	680611	A/1/4	58W 29
SNYDER, Gary Foster	SFC	700506	A/2-501	11W 117
SNYDER, John Herbert	A2C	671015	314 TAW	28E 12
SNYDER, John Marshall Jr.	LCPL	680407	G/2/26	48E 48
SOBEL, Irwin Ross	PFC	680327	M/3/26	46E 50
SOLDATO, Shane Nunzio	MAJ	700523	B-52	10W 88
SOMERS, Gregory S	PVT	710204	A/2-17	5W 77
SOUTHER, John Martin	WO	710226	498 Med Co	4W 7
SOUTHERN, Rickey Dale	CPL	670426	K/3/3	18E 98
SOYLAND, David Pecor	CWO	710517	C-158 AHB	3W 39
SPACH, Jimmy Russell	PFC	680406	B/2-7	48E 35
SPANGLER, Larry Keith	CPL	680212	HQ 26 Mar	39E 13
SPARKS, Jon Michael	CWO	710319	48 AHC	4W 58

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
SPARKS, Ronald David	PFC	680406	D-2-12 Cav	48E 35
SPARKS, Steven Lee	PFC	680406	H&S/1/9	48E 35
SPEIR, Dale Lloyd	CPL	670606	A/3d Recon	21E 63
SPICER, Jonathan Nathaniel	PFC	680314	B/1/26	44E 54
SPICZKA, Aloysius Francis Jr.	PFC	680615	K/3/4	57W 34
SPILLMAN, Charles Otto	BU1	680228	CBMU-301 B	41E 74
SPINDLER, John Gates	2/Lt	680421	G/2/3	51E 25
SRSEN, Steve Albert	PFC	670127	A/1/3	14E 89
STACKS, Raymond Clark	CAPT	681130	FOB-1	37W 14
STAFFORD, James Hubert	SFC	710216	D/4-3	5W 112
STAHL, Roger William	CPL	710322	C/3-187	4W 68
STALLINGS, Franklin Delano	1/Lt	670504	A-101 USSF	19E 41
STAMPS, Johnny Green	PFC	690313	M/3/4	29W 34
STANCIU, Kenneth Allan	LCPL	680306	K/3/26	43E 35
STANTON, Emmett Charles	PFC	680228	A/3d Eng	41E 74
STAPLES, James Arthur	PFC	690407	F/2/4	27W 34
STAPLES, Louis Franklin	LCPL	680205	E/2/26	37E 45
STARK, Willie Ernest	SMAJ	661202	Det B52	13E 7
STAYER, Harry Sherman	SP4	680401	8th Eng	47E 37
STEARNS, Roger Horace	CAPT	690911	390 TFS	18W 73
STEDMAN, Paul Francis	LCPL	680226	A/3d Shore P	41E 44
STEFFEN, Frederick George	HN	680524	H&S/2/3	69E 3
STEIN, Ronald Marvin	CPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 75
STENBERG, Jerry Oscar	LCPL	680121	C/1/13	35E 10
STEVENSON, Charles Robert	PFC	680205	E/2/26	37E 45
STEWART, Paul Clark	CWO	710208	C-158 AHB	5W 89
STEWART, Rick James	PFC	670627	A/1/13	22E 73
STEWART, Tommy Lane	PFC	680208	A/1/9	38E 40
STICKEL, Gary Stephen	PFC	671222	B/3d Recon	32E 48
STITT, Richard Wesley	PFC	690318	G/2/3	29W 73
STOLLAR, Larry David	LCPL	690502	HMM-262	26W 103
STOLLEY, William R Jr.	LCPL	690314	M/3/4	29W 41
STOOPS, Jonathan Lynn	PFC	680606	H&S/1/4	59W 16
STORZ, George William	SGT	680308	H&S/1/9	43E 62
STOUDT, Gordon Edward	LCPL	670430	K/3/9	19E 1
STOVALL, Wilbur	LCPL	680309	HQ 1/13	44E 1
STRAUSBAUGH, Howard Albert	LCPL	680309	H&S/2/26	44E 1
STREET, Lenard Jr.	PFC	680403	H&S/2/3	47E 56
STRONG, Gridley Barstow	PFC	680421	H/2/1	51E 25
STRONG, Stanley Grant	CPL	680306	C/1/26	43E 35
STROUD, Roger Lee	CPL	680707	C/1/1	53W 40
STUCK, Ransom Lee	PVT	680226	C/1/26	41E 44
STULL, Jay Webster	CAPT	680228	HqBn, 3dMarD	41E 69
STUPAR, Michael Nick	LCPL	670606	H&S/1/26	21E 64
SULANDER, Daniel Arthur	WO	661202	17th Avn Grp	13E 7
SULLIVAN, Neil Brian	CPL	680518	E/3d Recon	63E 2
SUMNER, James Howell	1stSgt	690502	F/2/4	26W 103
SUNIGA, Michael Edward	LCPL	671222	K/3/26	32E 48
SUTTER, Richard Furlong	CPL	670721	M/3/26	23E 105
SUTTON, Bryan James	LTC	710317	3-187	4W 56
SUTTON, Jack Lenn	LCPL	670424	B/1/9	18E 82

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NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
SWAIN, Craig Francis	PFC	680802	E/2/4	49W 1
SWANGVARIM, Lawrence Alfred	PFC	680406	D/2-12	48E 36
SWEENEY, Thomas James	LCPL	680226	C/1/26	41E 45
SWEET, Jerry Alan	PFC	680416	C/1/9	50E 24
SWISHER, Clifford Lee	PFC	690322	H/2/3	28W 15
SWOPE, Charles Frederick	CAPT	661109	USAF FAC	12E 49
SZMANSKI, Frank Adam IV	PFC	680226	I/3/26	41E 31
TAGLIEBER, Leonard Joseph	LCPL	670705	LSU	23E 16
TALLENT, Gary Glenn	LCPL	670820	B/3d Recon	24E 21
TATE, Lyle Scott	CPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 75
TAYLOR, Albert Russell II	SSGT	680618	K/3/4	56W 28
TAYLOR, Bobby Allen	CPL	680203	B/1/9	37E 14
TAYLOR, Danny Gene	SSGT	660928	5th SFGA	11E 27
TAYLOR, Dennis Lee	PFC	690605	H/2/9	23W 79
TAYLOR, Ernest Vernon	PFC	680205	E/2/26	37E 45
TAYLOR, Homer Jr.	CPL	680218	I/3/26	40E 14
TAYLOR, James	LCPL	680705	G/2/1	53W 25
TAYLOR, James Harry	CAPT	710215	C/159 ASHB	5W 109
TAYLOR, James Otis	PFC	680306	2/26	43E 36
TAYLOR, Louis Gaines	LCPL	680306	A/1/26	43E 36
TAYLOR, Philip Joseph	PFC	690303	C/1/4	30W 33
TAYLOR, Robert L	SFC	680404	FOB-3	48E 13
TAYLOR, Steven Earl	PVT	680414	L/3/26	50E 2
TAYLOR, Ted James	CAPT	710715	A/2-17	3W 108
TEETH, Austin	PFC	690428	H&S/1/4	26W 75
TERAN, Refugio Thomas	SSGT	700506	E/2-501	11W 117
TERHUNE, Daryl Bert Jr.	PFC	680306	G/2/26	43E 36
TERRELL, William Lee	PFC	680306	A/1/26	43E 36
TERRY, Allen Lee	CPL	680430	H/2/3	53E 24
THEYERL, Clayton Joseph	PFC	680225	B/1/26	41E 31
THIBAULT, Jeffrey Allen	PFC	680615	M/3/4	57W 32
THOMAS, Barry Don	LCPL	670507	E/2/3	19E 54
THOMAS, Charles Wayne	CPL	690305	C/1/4	30W 50
THOMAS, Clyde	CPL	710315	B/5-4 Arty	4W 52
THOMAS, Gary Joseph	CPL	680518	E/3d Recon	63E 3
THOMAS, Joseph Eugene	PFC	680707	D/1/1	53W 40
THOMAS, Michael Howard	2/Lt	680120	I/3/26	34E 92
THOMAS, Nathan	PFC	680615	L/3/4	57W 32
THOMAS, William Philip	PFC	690502	H/2/4	26W 104
THOMPSON, Kenneth David	PFC	680411	A/1-8	49E 26
THOMPSON, Louis Kenneth	LCPL	680705	D/1/1	53W 24
THOMPSON, Philip Bruce	PFC	690321	D/1/4	28W 5
THOMPSON, Randall Alan	CPL	710325	B/1-1	43W 7
THORNTON, Alan Wayne	PFC	690314	M/3/4	29W 41
THORPE, Dennis Ray	SGT	680415	FOB-3	50E 9
THORPE, Gary Wilford	CPL	680223	H&S/1/26	41E 5
THOTLAND, John Alfred	LCPL	680228	HMM-262	42E 1
TIJERINA, Albert Jr.	CAPT	710301	21 SOS	4W 15
TILLSON, Cardner Jr	HM2	670509	F/2/3	19E 75
TINGLEY, Thomas James	LCPL	671230	B/3d Recon	33E 5
TINO, John Francis Jr.	PFC	670430	E/2/3	19E 1

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
TIRADO, Daniel	PFC	690507	C/3rd Recon	25W 19
TODD, Robert Jacy	PVT	670509	F/2/3	19E 75
TONER, Louis Joseph	HN	680306	H&S/3/26	43E 37
TOOMEY, Samuel Kamu III	MAJ	681130	FOB-1	37W 15
TORRES, Manuel Prieto	CPL	680208	A/1/9	38E 42
TOTH, John Paul	SGT	680228	HMM-262	42E 2
TOTTEN, Kenneth Romaine Jr.	PFC	680330	B/1/26	47E 17
TOWSLEE, Edward Lawrence	PFC	680404	A/1/9	48E 12
TRAIL, Robert Hill III	PFC	690225	H&S/2/4	31W 60
TRAINOR, Paul William	PFC	680802	E/2/24	49W 2
TRANTHAM, Donald Ray	LCPL	680531	B/1/1	62W 18
TRANTHAM, Raymond Farley	LCPL	680519	F/2/1	63E 15
TRAVER, John Grove III	WO	710322	176 AHC	4W 69
TRAVIS, Edward Burke	CPL	670627	A/1/13	22E 73
TREDENNICK, Charles Nichol	SFC	680129	FOB-3	35E 63
TREVINO, Rudolph Robert	PFC	690531	M/3/9	23W 34
TREVINO, Savas Escamilla	PFC	690602	M/3/9	23W 48
TRIGALET, Robert Ernest	1/Lt	690502	HMM-262	26W 104
TRIMBLE, James Mitchell	CPL	680406	G/2/26	48E 35
TROYANO, Roland Dean	PFC	710207	A/4-3	5W 85
TRUJILLO, Felix Marcial	SGT	710403	HHC/1-77	4W 104
TUCKER, James Eric	PFC	690225	H&S/2/4	31W 60
TURNER, Brendan Xavier	PFC	690605	H/2/9	23W 80
TURNER, Michael Glenn	LCPL	680421	G/2/3	51E 26
TURNER, Robert Lawrence	1/SGT	680211	A/1/9	38E 82
TURNER, William Oliver	CPL	680228	H&S/3d Shr P	42E 1
TWOMEY, Raymond Lee	PFC	670424	B/1/9	18E 82
TWOREK, Gerald John	SSG	710208	C/1-11	5W 90
TYCZ, James Neil	SGT	670510	A/3d Recon	19E 88
TYRCZ, Walter Fred Jr.	PFC	680314	A/1/26	44E 54
USHER, Terry Maxwell	1/Lt	710223	173 AHC	4W 1
UUTELA, Derris Lee	PFC	680605	D/1/4	60W 23
UZZELL, Frank Nelson	PVT	680127	D/1/26	35E 51
VALENTE, Anthony Nicholas	GYSGT	680226	C/1/9	41E 56
VALRIE, Dwight Theodore	PFC	680519	F/2/1	63E 19
VAN BEUKERING, Ronald Dale	SP4	700506	A/2-501	11W 118
VAN DER SHANS, Donald Ed	HN	680401	H&S/1/9	47E 37
VAN DEUSEN, Philip Andren	PFC	670607	A/1/13	31E 68
VAN TASSELL, James Warren	CPL	680705	D/1/26	53W 24
VANCE, Reggie Lee	PFC	680222	A/1/26	40E 70
VANDERHEID, Mark Edward	LCPL	680628	B/1/1	54W 8
VANN, Ronald Bryson	1/Lt	690425	C/1-44	26W 51
VASQUEZ, Jesus Roberto	SGT	680130	EOD	35E 83
VASQUEZ, Patrick John	LCPL	670721	M/3/26	23E 105
VAUGHT, William H III	SGT	700523	158 AHB	10W 88
VEDDER, Richard Jerome	SGT	670316	E/2/9	16E 103
VERCOUTEREN, Edward Arnold	LCPL	670607	B/1/26	21E 71
VERCRUYSSE, Gregory Paul	HN	670607	B/1/26	21E 71
VESER, Edward	SP4	700506	E/2-501	11W 118
VICKERS, Robert Lee	LCPL	680306	A/1/26	43E 37
VIX, Stephen August Jr.	PFC	690502	F/2/4	26W 104

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
VLASAK, William James Jr.	LCPL	670502	G/2/3	19E 19
VOORHIES, Emory David	CPL	680609	H&S/2/4	58W 16
VORENKAMP, David R	PFC	690702	G/2/4	21W 49
VRANKOVICH, Nicholas Samuel	LCPL	680524	G/2/3	70E 1
WAFER, David Earl	PFC	680629	G/2/4	54W 21
WAGNER, James Joseph	PVT	690424	F/2/4	26W 41
WAINZ, Robert Michael	LCPL	670424	B/1/9	18E 83
WALBRIDGE, George Wilcox	SSGT	680210	H&HS-1	38E 73
WALD, Gunther Herbert	SFC	691103	CCN	16W 25
WALDRON, Howard Bert	MSGT	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 37
WALKER, Richard Lee	CPL	670627	I/3/26	22E 74
WALKER, Thomas Edward	PFC	680605	D/1/4	60W 24
WALKER, Tommy Dale	SP4	680410	C/1-12	49E 17
WALLACE, Jackie Elmore	PFC	680615	M/3/4	57W 33
WALLACE, Michael Walter	LCDR	680328	VFP63 Det 14	46E 60
WALLER, Charles Robert	LCPL	670509	F/2/3	19E 76
WALLER, Therman Morris	A1C	660203	311 ACS	4E 135
WALSH, Charles Sumner	PFC	680315	K/3/9	44E 62
WALSH, Donald Kevin	HN	690225	H&S/2/4	31W 60
WALSH, Jeffrey Michael	LCPL	680208	A/1/9	38E 41
WALTERS, Craig Collins	SP4	680505	B/1-5	55E 34
WALTERS, Tim Leroy	SSGT	690309	MACV	30W 97
WANN, Donald Lynn	CWO	710601	D/158	3W 61
WARD, Alexander Kearney	CAPT	680214	K/3/9	39E 68
WARD, Walter Leonard	CPL	670607	B/1/26	21E 71
WARREN, Donald Albert	CPL	680330	B/1/26	47E 18
WASSENICH, Stephen George	CPL	670627	I/3/26	22E 74
WEBER, Joseph Alan	PFC	690224	B/1/4	31W 41
WEED, Donald Edmond	CPL	680127	B/1/9	35E 51
WEINTRAUB, Neil William	PFC	680622	G/2/4	55W 19
WEISS, William Conrad	SP4	700506	A/2-158 AHB	11W 118
WELD, Julio Cesar	PFC	690311	G/2/4	29W 17
WELDY, George W Jr	PFC	690225	H&S/2/4	31W 61
WELLMAN, William Martin Jr	CPL	690604	D/3d Recon	23W 69
WELLS, James Randall	LCPL	680407	F/2/26	48E 49
WELLS, Robert James Jr	PFC	680416	A/1/9	50E 23
WENGER, David Allen	PFC	680609	H/2/4	58W 12
WENTZELL, Jeffrey Raymond	LCPL	680214	K/3/9	39E 41
WESSLER, Daniel Guy	PFC	690319	G/2/4	29W 86
WEST, James Edward Jr.	LCPL	680531	E/2/3	62W 19
WEST, John Thomas	CAPT	700102	25 TFS	15W 117
WEST, Seth Lee Jr.	SSGT	680416	C/1/9	50E 24
WEST, Stephen Alan	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 38
WESTCOTT, Gary Patrick	SP5	720330	8th ARFFS	2W 125
WETHINGTON, David L Jr.	HN	680302	H&S/1/9	42E 45
WHEELER, Joseph Keith	PFC	680331	C/1/9	47E 28
WHISENHUNT, James Henry	CPL	670430	M/3/3	19E 1
WHITAKER, Donald Eugene	CPL	680225	B/1/26	41E 32
WHITE, Charles Clinton	LCPL	680611	A/1/4	58W 30
WHITE, Larry Frederick	LCPL	680121	H&S/3/26	35E 10
WHITE, Michael Matthew	PFC	680612	K/3/4	57W 5

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA				
NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
WHITE, Wesley William	LCPL	680402	E/2/1	47E 44
WHITESIDES, Richard Lebrou	CAPT	640326	19th Tac Grp	1E 48
WHITLOW, Ronald David	HM3	680806	BLT 2/4	49W 21
WHITNEY, Blake Dominic	PVT	710209	C/8-4	5W 92
WHITTED, Joe Ray	SGT	680515	H&S/2/3	61E 5
WHITTEN, Tommie Joe	GYSGT	670509	F/2/3	19E 76
WHITTICOM, Jonathan Charle	LCPL	670627	H&S/1/26	22E 74
WICKLIFFE, Robert Logan	HM3	680122	H&S/3/26	35E 13
WIDEN, John George	SGT	700506	A/2-501	11W 119
WIEDEMAN, Robert Arthur	CPL	680225	I/3/26	41E 33
WIENCKOSKI, David Raymond	PFC	680306	L/3/26	43E 39
WILEY, Gilbert	LCPL	680407	F/2/26	48E 49
WILKINS, Gary Lee	LCPL	680519	H/2/3	64E 2
WILKINSON, Clyde David	CAPT	710212	C/2-17	5W 100
WILLEY, John James	SSG	700506	A/2-501	11W 119
WILLIAMS, Derex Jr.	CAPT	670823	20th TASS	25E 36
WILLIAMS, Dorsey Burwin	PFC	670430	M/3/3	19E 2
WILLIAMS, Douglas Candit	SGT	680219	HHB-2-94	40E 34
WILLIAMS, Doyle	PSGT	680402	1-8 Cav	47E 44
WILLIAMS, Eddie Lee	SGM	661003	FOB-1	11E 40
WILLIAMS, Hollis Jr.	LCPL	680306	H/2/26	43E 39
WILLIAMS, Ira Winard	LCPL	670627	A/1/26	22E 75
WILLIAMS, James	SGT	670804	M/3/26	24E 79
WILLIAMS, James Alec	LCPL	680701	D/1/1	54W 34
WILLIAMS, Kenneth R Jr.	CPL	680309	2/26	44E 1
WILLIAMS, Maxie Raymond	1/Lt	680410	A/1/26	49E 17
WILLIAMS, Nathaniel Mearlo	PFC	680416	C/1/9	50E 22
WILLIAMS, Richard Earl	PFC	680405	M/3/26	48E 22
WILLIAMS, Robert Earl	PFC	670509	F/2/3	19E 76
WILLIAMS, Robert Eugene	LCPL	680705	D/1/1	53W 25
WILLIAMS, Samuel	CPL	680531	B/1/1	62W 19
WILLIAMS, Ted	LCPL	670316	B/1/9	16E 98
WILLIAMS, Thomas Earl Jr.	1/Lt	690502	HMM-262	26W 105
WILLIAMS, Thomas Hansford	PFC	680306	H&S/1/26	43E 39
WILLIAMS, Tommy Dorsey	PFC	680417	L/3/26	50E 35
WILLIAMS, William Jack	PFC	670627	L/3/26	22E 75
WILLIAMS, Woodrow	LCPL	670503	E/2/3	19E 45
WILLIAMSON, James D	SFC	680105	176 Avn Co	33E 54
WILLIBER, Gerald Paul	CPL	680519	F/2/1	64E 1
WILLS, Robert John	LCPL	680615	K/3/4	57W 31
WILSON, Carl Richard Jr.	2/Lt	690321	H&S/1/4	28W 7
WILSON, Eugene	PFC	680606	C/1/4	59W 18
WILSON, Reginald Eugene	PFC	670721	B/1/26	23E 106
WILSON, Ronald Eugene	PFC	680401	2-5 Cav	47E 37
WILSON, Wayne Michael	CPL	690530	M/3/9	23W 24
WILSON, Wilmer Dwayne	HN	680416	H&S/1/9	50E 24
WINGENBACH, Glenn S Jr.	PFC	690306	L/3/4	30W 61
WIRE, Eugene Charles	GYSGT	680223	M/3/26	41E 6
WITHEY, Howarde Hugh	CPL	670606	A/3d Recon	21E 64
WITMER, Omar David Jr.	PFC	670917	A/1/26	26E 86
WOLF, [Monsieur] ?	civilian	640200	pharmacist	not on

Alphabetical Listing of Khe Sanh KIA

NAME	RANK	DATE	UNIT	WALL
WOMBLE, William Thomas Jr	LCPL	670503	E/2/3	19E 34
WOOD, Carl Mitchell	WO	710205	D-3-5 Cav	5W 80
WOOD, James Anthony	LCPL	680225	E/2/26	41E 33
WOOD, Strather Franklin	1/Lt	710218	HMH-463	5W 119
WOODALL, John Braxton	1/Lt	670430	K/3/9	19E 2
WOODARD, Jon Robert	PFC	680705	1/1	53W 25
WOODARD, Paul Leroy	SSGT	680315	A/1/9	44E 63
WOODARD, Wayne Howard	CPL	670430	M/3/9	29E 2
WOODEN, Charlie K	SGT	680411	B/1-7	49E 28
WOODS, Cordell Emanuel	LCPL	680216	H&S/1/9	39E 68
WOODS, David Alexander	SFC	671101	FOB-1	29E 8
WOODS, Gerald Ernest	WO	710218	A/101	5W 119
WOODS, John Kevin	1/Lt	680211	H&S/3/26	39E 1
WOOLSEY, Jack Lee	LCPL	680709	H/2/4	58W 16
WORTHEN, Larry Eugene	PFC	670607	B/1/26	21E 72
WORTHINGTON, Richard Char Jr.	CWO	700506	A/158 AHB	9W 125
WRIGHT, Arkie Junior	SGT	680219	HHB-2-94	40E 35
WRIGHT, Edward Taylor	GYSGT	680611	A/1/4	58W 30
WRIGHT, Michael Dale	SP4	710324	C/4-3	4W 75
WRIGHT, Michael Vincent	PFC	680226	E/2/26	41E 46
WRIGHT, O'Neal	LCPL	680131	A/1/9	36E 44
WRIGHT, Robert	CPL	680416	C/1/9	50E 24
WURTZ, Emil John	HN	680222	H&S/3/26	40E 71
WYMER, William Wayne	PFC	680416	A/1/9	50E 24
YAGUES, Robert Gene	PFC	670503	E/2/3	19E 34
YAMANAKA, Roger Kimo	LCPL	680304	H&S/3/26	43E 2
YBARRA, Ricardo	PFC	680527	M/3/4	64W 4
YEARY, Randall Douglas	2/Lt	680114	B/3d Recon	34E 48
YERION, Jefrfrey Allen	PFC	680504	E/2/3	54E 41
YOHN, William Leon	LCPL	680407	G/2/26	48E 50
YORK, Henry	CPL	680208	A/1/9	38E 42
YOUMANS, James Nelson	PFC	680518	K/3/4	63E 2
YOUNG, James Ray	PFC	680518	E/3d Recon	63E 3
YOUNG, John Curtis	LCPL	680527	M/3/4	64W 4
ZAPPIA, Michael Lee	PFC	690225	H/2/4	31W 63
ZAWADZKI, Gerald David	CPL	690225	H/2/4	31W 63
ZERBST, Gilbert Leroy	PFC	680407	F/2/26	48E 50
ZIEGENFELDER, Frederick P	SSG	700506	A/2-501	11W 119
ZIEGLER, Lawrence Goric	GYSGT	680515	F/2/3	61E 5
ZIMMERMAN, David Paul	LCPL	680421	G/2/3	51E 27

CHISELED MEMORIES (A TANKA)[4163]

Chiseled memories
Granite permanence enshrined
Eternal world touched
Laid down life—no greater love
lives—a bountiful garden.
--Ray William Stubbe, 11 May 2003

BEHOLDING THE WALL BEHOLDING GOD (A Sestina)

O Lord, You search our heart, You touch our hurt;
You lift our sadness, show'ring gifts of goodness:
Your power, presence, promise, perfect peace.
You give so we may live despite our loss.
The burdens borne and prices paid, we see—
Yet know Your constant comfort, kind compassion.

These walls' long arms embracing in compassion—
We gaze at names which peer into our hurt.
We know, behold what others do not see,
While You, O Lord, are reaching with Your goodness,
Your penetrating eyes regard our loss;
Your mighty arms embrace in strengthening peace.

Reverberating terrors cease in peace
Accomp'n'ing Presence of Your own compassion,
While we regarding gravely granite loss,
Un-healing wounds revealing ru'nous hurt,
Enfolded in the greatness of Your goodness,
Embraced by blessing, we Your mercy see.

This wall, an opportunity to see,
A place within our space, a grace, a peace:
Remembrance of our brothers and their goodness
Who live within us, bonded in compassion,
Who hallow hollow heart halls of our hurt,
And fully fill with flow'rs our lasting loss.

Mementos placed as symbols of our loss—
We walk, we move, we search, we stop, we see

[4163] Prayer poem completed 11 May 2003 for ceremony at visiting Vietnam Wall to Veterans Park, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 15 and 16 May 2003. The Tanka, an ancient Japanese poem form, consists of a Haiku of five syllables in the first line, seven in the second, and five in the third, followed by two lines of seven syllables each. It predates the Haiku.

Uncovered chards of broken memories' hurt.
Perhaps another with us hugs their peace
And You, O Lord, contain us in compassion
And hold and hug and help us in Your goodness.

Now may the Lord bless us and all with goodness.
Now may our good Lord's love fill all our loss.
May we receive and live and give compassion,
Your purpose, Lord, within this place to see.
Now may our Lord bless you with healing peace.
Now may our caring Lord heal all your hurt.

All shall see their goodness and compassion
Who pass and pause and touch our hurt and loss;
And may the Lord now bless us with His peace.
--Ray William Stubbe, 10 May 2003[4164]

A PRAYER[4165]

O Lord, our God:
Today we pause, we ponder, we remember
we never walk alone;
You are always with us
no matter where we are in time or place.
Today we see a face—always
yet never now near, a place
at a table, in a room, in a chair
now empty, we
expect to hear a voice,
see a presence we love forever
in the emptiness, in the shadows,
on our cross, You!
stand beside us, with us, near us
always Your strengthening arms
embrace and assure, strengthen, give courage, peace!

[4164] Completed 10 May 2003 for ceremony of the visiting Vietnam Wall to Veterans Park, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 15 and 16 May 2003. The sestina, an unrhymed 39-line, 12th Century poem, follows a very intricate scheme: the last words of each line of each 6-line stanza are repeated in the following 6-line stanzas according to a fixed arrangement. The first line's last word becomes the last word of the next stanza's first line. The second line's last word is the last word of the next stanza's fourth line. The third line's last word is the last word of the next stanza's sixth line. The fourth line's last word is the last word of the next stanza's fifth line. The fifth line's last word is the last word of the next stanza's third line. The Envoy ("send off") includes all six final words, distributed with the first three in the first part, the last in the last.

[4165] Poem prayer completed 23 August 2008 for a ceremony at the Zablocki Veterans Administration Medical Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, correlated with a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D.C., 24 August 2008 as a small team of runners arrived, having began a run on 14 June in California, in remembrance of the fallen from Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Alone we fall and fail;
with You we triumph, hope
in You, the source of love and life
joining us,
an invisible fabric of threads woven in love
a radiant tapestry in heaven above
yet now dimly visible and known.
O Lord, sooth and calm
the troubled waters of our soul that flow
in tears and fear's dark night
Your blessing conveying now
and forever upon us Your life, Your love,
Your Holy Name. Amen.
--Ray William Stubbe, 24 August 2008

APPENDIX

THOSE AT KHE SANH WHO DIED AFTER LEAVING KHE SANH				
NAME	UNIT	RANK	DIED	CAUSE
ADAMS, Larry Earl	D/1/26	LCPL	19680629	KIA
ALAIRE, Richard	A/1/26		?	?
ALBERS, Craig William	CAC O	CPL	19820415	?
ALDERMAN, Harry J	3/26, CO	COL	20070204	
ALLEN, Charles	FOB3	COL	20030424	Stroke
ANDERSON, George	B/1/26 supply		20060510	Died in hospice
ASASAKI, Jerry	Seabees		19910920	Heart attack
AUEN, David Oliver	D/1/26	LCPL	19680607	KIA
BABBITT, Manuel P.	A/3d Ats		19990505	Murdered
BADDGOR, Patrick L	B/3d Tanks		20030504	Agent Orange
BAIG, Mirza Munir	Hq26Mar	CAPT	19710420	Assassinated
BAILEY, Beetle	C/1/9		19981122	?
BAILEY, George	1st Radio Co	GySgt	20041222	?
BALDWIN, Daniel Lord III	CCN	COL	19940601	Cancer stomach
BALDWIN, Donald	1/13		19941113	Heart attack
BANKS, Henry Duane	A/1/9	CAPT	19680714	KIA
BARKOWSKI, William J	A/1/13		19940601	Brain hemmorhage
BASKIN, Richard W	26Mar	SGT	19841118	Suicide gunshot
BENNETT, Prentice J.	B/1/9	CPL	19680717	KIA 52W 40
BERNARD, Robert	HqBn/3dMarDiv		?	?
BOHANNON, Edward J	K/3/9	CPL	19670521	KIA
BRACKMAN, James T. II	C/1/13	?	19930621	Lung cancer
BREWER, Robert	CIA		199612??	Cancer
BROWN, Edward J	F/2/26		1988	Heart attack
BURNS, Edward	A/3d Recon		198908	Cancer thymus
BURNS, Roy T	B/3d Recon		19951014	Alcohol related
BYSTROM, Tom	L/3/26		19921121	Car accident
CAHILL, John H "Blackie"`	1/9, CO	COL	20050714	?
CALDON, David	2/26	LtCol	20071214	
CALZIA, Frank Vincent	B/1/26	HN	19680510	KIA
CAMPBELL, William Roger	E/2/26	PFC	19680606	KIA
CASEY, Thomas E	B/1/26	HM3	19980301	Abdominal aneurysm
CAUDILL, James	A/1/26		19680818	KIA
CAWLEY, Leo	1/1		19910721	Leukemia
CEFAIL, Norman	H&S/1/26	CAPT	?	Cancer
CENISEROS, Frank	H&S 26 Mar		20030402	Leukemia
CERRA, Bernard	HMH-463		19970629	?
CHAMBERS, James Larry	D/1/26	PFC	19690518	KIA
CHAPMAN, Kurtis Nolan	D/1/26	LCPL	19680509	KIA
CHVARAK, Don	108th Arty		?	?

THOSE AT KHE SANH WHO DIED AFTER LEAVING KHE SANH				
NAME	UNIT	RANK	DIED	CAUSE
COATES, Charles Thomas	E/2/9	LCPL	19680527	KIA
COFFEY, Patrick	I/3/9		199504	Lung disease
COLEMAN, Charles L	D/1/26	CPL	19680531	KIA
COLEMAN, William Frank	D/1/26	PFC	19680416	KIA
CONICK, John E	ISO, 3dMarDiv		19990808	Sarciodosis
COPELAND, Charles	A/1/13		19870109	Lymphoma
COTTINGHAM, Duane Roger	D/1/26	LCPL	19680613	KIA
CRAIG, William	A-101 LangVei	MSGT	19990429	
CRUNK, Virgil	B/1/26		2006	
CUMMINGS, James H		COL	20050117	Pulmonary Disease
DABUZZO, Denny	E/2/26	LCPL	19680606	KIA
DAFFIN, Gary	E/2/26	LCPL	19680916	KIA
DAHLHEIMER, Gary	A/3rd Ats		2006 ?	
DAMIANO, James			20010713	
DEARING, Rich	C/1/26		2006	
DEGRYSE, Richard	11th Eng		19891008	?
DESCHAINE, Norman C	D/1/26	CPL	19680607	KIA
D'HONDT, Camille	A/1/9	GySgt	20000113	Heart attack
DONNELLY, Joseph A	1/9, XO	MAJ	20061203	?
DORING, George	H&S/1/26		19900830	?
DOUGLAS, Thomas H.	M/3/26		19980408	Motorcycle accident
DRISCOLL, Fr. Walter	26th Mar Regt	LCDR	20020112	?
DUFFY, Patrick	H&S/1/26	1/Lt	1999	?
DURHAM, James C Jr. "Bull"	E/2/26	PFC	19680916	KIA
EPPS, James	C/1/26	1/Lt	20000118	Lung failure
ERNST, Clayton H.	3rd ForceRecon	SSGT	199502??	Brain stem detached
ESPY, Johnnie Bee	D/1/26	CPL	19680607	KIA
FAUREBRAC, Les	A/1/16		199201	Suicide
FERNANDEZ, Eugenio E Jr	D/1/26	PFC	19680509	KIA
FEYH, William	3rd Force Recon		20051109	
FLOYD, David P	A/1/9		19940411	Brain tumor
FOX, Charles	C/1/26		20050814	?
FOX, Joseph	B/3d Recon		19700611	?
FRANK, Ernie	HQ/1/13 Comm		19970902	Heart attack
FRIEDRICH, John			2005	Cancer
GALBREATH, Bobby Frank	VMO-6	1/Lt	19680216	KIA
GARCIA, Larry	3dEng		199410	Cancer
GASTEN, John	B-52 crew		19990128	Alcohol
GEERDES, Dkonnie Delbert	D/1/26	LCPL	19680613	KIA
GILLASPY, Edward Andrew	D/1/26	PFC	19680509	KIA
GOMEZ, Ernesto			2007	
GREENE, Bruce	B/1/26 CO	MAJ	20021026	?

THOSE AT KHE SANH WHO DIED AFTER LEAVING KHE SANH				
NAME	UNIT	RANK	DIED	CAUSE
GRENAT, Richard	D/1/26		19990226	Cancer
GRIMES, Charles		COL	20080124	ALS
GUM, Edward Sheridan	D/1/26	CPL	19690222	KIA
HAALAND, John "Dutch"	3rdMarDiv, AO		20050226	
HAGGEY, Jim	E/2/26	LCPL	19681206	KIA
HANNAH, Samuel James	D/1/26	2/Lt	19680607	KIA
HARRELL, Robert	3rd AT	?	2002	Liver cancer
HEAGY, James W	E/2/26	?	19681206	KIA
HEINRICH, John	I/3/26		199504	Cancer
HENDERSON, Larry	CCN	?	19951204	Lung cancer
HENNELLY, John	1/13-CO	LtCol	19950605	Heart attack
HENSON, Clark Lee Jr	D/1/26	SGT	19680616	KIA
HERB, Dennis	B/3rd Recon		20011127	Heart attack
HERNANDEZ, Aumont	FLC		19991124	?
HOLLAND, Roger Lee	?		19990219	?
HONN, Jerry	1/26	MSGT	20060503	
HORNE, Thomas M.	SOP Khe Sanh	COL	19951231	Heart attack
HOUGHTON, Kenneth	III MAF G-2	MG	20060327	?
HOWELL, Gatlin	B/1/9	2/Lt	19670707	KIA
HUBER, Charles	2/26		20000211	Heart attack
HUDSON, Jerry	26 Mar S-2	CAPT	20050629	?
HUGHES, Edward John Jr.	D/1/26	CAPT	19680509	KIA
HUSHER, Robert	M/3/26	LCPL	199009	?
ISHMAN, Huey Lee	C/1/26	PVT	19691119	KIA
IZENOUR, Frank	E/2/3	1/Lt	19881216	Heart attack
JABUSCH, William	H&S/3/26		19911108	Brain fungus
JACOBS, Quilles	B/1/26		19950419	Cancer
JARABEK, John J	Hq/1/11		1996	Lung cancer
JENNINGS, Orval	B/3d Recon		19841110	?
JOHNSON, Kenneth	FO		19780209	Heart attack
KERCH, Richard J	MAG-16		19980619	?
KERR, Thomas J	HMM-164		2007	
KILPATRICK, Eldon	C/1/9		19980207	?
KINANE, James	B/3d Recon		19940616	Cancer throat
KNOX, David	D/1/26	LCPL	19680608	KIA
KOSTROUM, Ronald	D/3d Recon		19701215	?
KUCHERA, Gary L	M/3/26		19920404	Alcohol related
LANE, Chris	H&S/2/26 CO	?	20050122	?
LEE, Dale	FOB3	?	20080321	?
LEITCH, David P	Correspondent	Civ	2004	
LEONARD, Arnold Lee Jr		LCPL	19680616	KIA
LOUGHRAN, Joseph M	3/26-XO	MAJ	19680502	KIA

THOSE AT KHE SANH WHO DIED AFTER LEAVING KHE SANH				
NAME	UNIT	RANK	DIED	CAUSE
QUINN, Donald	B/1/26		19980527	?
RAYBURN, Ed	B/1/26		late 70s	Suicide
RAYMOND, John	A/1/26 - CO	CAPT	19870828	Heart attack
RICHARDS, Lawrence	B/3rd Recon		20080218	Heart attack ?
RICHARDSON, Dennis	A/3rd Ats		2006	
ROBERTS, John P.	20th TASS	COL	20010309	Stroke
ROBINSON, Henry	26Mar-Security		19690223	KIA
ROBLES, Joe	E/2/26	LCPL	19680916	KIA
RODELL, David L	W/1/13		19970509	Respiratory failure
ROMAN, Joseph	HMM-265	CAPT	20000111	Heart attack
ROMINE, Richard E	HMM-165	CAPT	19910731	Cancer
ROSE, Harold K	CCN	COL	19900511	Aneurysm
RUSSELL, Verner	CAC O		19730501	?
SAAL, Harve	FOB3	MSGT	19971201	Cancer
SAMMS, Tom	A/1/26		19921122	Heart attack
SANCHEZ, Juan Oscar	E/2/26	SSGT	19680917	KIA
SAYERS, Michael	B/1/9, CO	CAPT	20061122	Cancer
SCARPINATO, John A	D/1/26	LCPL	19680607	KIA
SCHABEL, Kenneth	E/2/26	Cpl	19680606	KIA
SCHAFFENBERGER, Wally	H&S/3/26		19990325	Cancer
SCHRON, Courtney	?	CAPT	19940518	Lung cancer
SCULLY, Robert L	FOB-3		19850525	Hodgkins
SECOR, Gilbert Arthur	FOB-3	MSGT	19680823	KIA
SERMEUS, William	CAC O	CAPT	20030404	Brain cancer
SICKEL, Robert Paul	D/1/26	LCPL	19680509	KIA
SIMS, Rev. Timothy C	M/3/26		20020610	Car accident
SPILLVER, Cliff	E/2/26	LCPL	19680916	DOW
ST. JOHN, David Michael	A/1/26	LCPL	19680818	KIA 48W 49
STAGGS, Dan	E/2/26		19890704	Stabbed in prison
STAMPER, Thomas	CAC O, CO	CAPT	19960904	Cancer
STEPTOE, Billy	A-101 Lang Vei		19930207	Heart attack
STEVENS, Edward L	B/3d Recon		19760629	Suicide
STEWART, Billy Gray	D/1/26	PFC	19680509	KIA
STORE, James	A/3rd ShoreParty		2004	Cancer
STOTT, Fr. James S.	G/2/26		20050118	
STRANDE, Thomas	L/3/26	PVT	19680404	KIA
STROSS, William	G/2/3		19880417	Head injury
SULLIVAN, William	HMH-463		19830717	?
THEIS, James M	D/1/26		19760326	Heart attack
THOMPSON, Floyd James	Special Forces	CAPT	20020716	?
TOLENTINO, Clarence	D/1/26	SSGT	19680617	KIA
TORTI, Joseph	I/3/26		19980415	Auto accident

THOSE AT KHE SANH WHO DIED AFTER LEAVING KHE SANH				
NAME	UNIT	RANK	DIED	CAUSE
LOVETT, Michael Robin	D/3rd Recon		20070312	Automobile accident
LOYA, Paul Nelson	D/1/26	LCPL	19680613	KIA
LUMPKIN, Albert R	B/3d Recon		20001209	Heart attack
MAGILLIGAN, Donald	C Med	LT	19890620	Cancer skin
MARKUM, Robert Bailey	D/1/26	CPL	19681117	KIA
MARTIN, O.K.	3d Tanks	GySgt	20011028	?
MC FARLAND, Forrest Jr	15th AP		2006	
McCAIN, Donald	G/2/26		19810730	?
McCONNELL, Terry	C/1/26		199308	Suicide
McCRACKEN, Jack Hill	HMM-165	CAPT	1967	Car accident
McDONALD, Jimmy L	1/13		19941106	?
McINTYRE, Donald M	EOD		19960606	Colon cancer
McNEAL, Jesse James	E/2/26		19911031	Cancer prostate
MELANSON, James			20071215	
MEREDITH, Douglas	175 Gun Liaison	CAPT	20040101	Confestive heart failure
METTS, Andrew L	A/1/9		19961102	Heart attack
MICKE, Nicholas	B/3d Recon		19710416	Motorcycle accident
MILLER, Carl Robert	D/1/26	LCPL	19680718	KIA
MILLS, Robert	H&S/1/26	?	20021214	?
MITCHELL, Homer Jr	D/1/26	LCPL	19680509	KIA
MORRISON, James	CCN	?	20000811	Lympho Sarcoma
MOUSEL, Thomas	1/1		1974	Snowmobile accident
MURPHY, Robert	VMFA-542		1994	?
NESTER, Gary Stephen	G/2/1		199805	Suicide
O'DONOVAN, Jerome "Chip"	H/2/26		19981022	Cancer bone
ONSLOW, Robert Cranley	H&S/1/26	CAPT	19680510	KIA
PADGETT, Robert C	?		19990123	?
PADLEY, John J	RLT-26	COL	19911206	Heart attack
PARKER, Robert	B/1/26		20011105	Suicide
PARR, Ron	B/3d Recon		19900920	Heart attack
PEGRAM, Richard Epps	FOB-3	SMAJ	19680823	KIA
PENZARA, Donald	B/1/9		20060528	Cancer
PERRY, James	KheSanh ville	(medic)	20060212	Stomach cancer
PETTIT, Stanley Russell	E/2/26	CPL	19680915	KIA
PLESS, Stephen Wesley	VMO-6	CAPT	1969	Motorcycle accident
POILANE, Madeleine	Wife of planter	civilian	20070106	Cancer
POLLAND, Dr. Daniel	1/9	HN	?	?
PORTER, Jack Eugene	D/1/26	LCPL	19680509	KIA
PRADO, Warren T. C.	B/1/26 Wpns		20020219	Agent orange
PRESLEY, James Henry		LCPL	19680602	KIA
PRITTIE, Raymond R.	VMGR-152	?	20060826	Suicide gunshot
PROCK, Danny	E/2/26	LCPL	19680606	KIA

THOSE AT KHE SANH WHO DIED AFTER LEAVING KHE SANH				
NAME	UNIT	RANK	DIED	CAUSE
TURNER, Ellis "Butch"	26th Mar		20060822	
UPHOLD, George	D/3d Recon		19741125	Car accident
VAUGHT, Johnnie L Jr.	A/1/26	PFC	19680929	KIA 42W 44
VINING, Francis E Jr.	B/3rd Tanks		20050908	
WALL, Gilbert	B/1/26, 81s FO	CPL	20040322	Brain aneurysm
WARD, Mark	G/2/26		19990623	Heart attack
WARNER, James W	HMM-364	LTCOL	20070313	
WASHUT, Walter Junior	K/3/9	CPL	19670520	KIA
WATERS, William	I/3/26		19680720	KIA
WATHKE, Michael	C/1/9		1996	Brain tumor
WATSON, Talbot	D/3d Recon	1/Lt	19800512	Suicide
WEATHERS, William B III	B/1/9	CPL	19680717	KIA 52W 47
WEST, James	E/2/3	?	?	?
WHALEN, Harry D	FOB-1	SMAJ	19930514	Cancer
WIGTON, Phillip G	M/3/26	LCPL	19680509	KIA
WILKINS, James Marvin	A/1/26	LCPL	19680731	KIA 50W 40
WILLOUGHBY, Frank	A-101 Lang Vei	CAPT	20000426	?
WILSON, Wm "Woody" A	E/2/1		19960131	?
WOOG, Peter	26Mar		late 1994	Heart attack
WRIGHT, Leo F	L/3/26		19980816	Heart failure
WROBLESKI, Joseph	M/3/26	?	1993	?
YOUNG, Robert William	D/1/26	PFC	19680629	KIA

Terry Redlin is a world renowned artist, and is the most widely collected painter of Nature & Americana. His painting, "His Last Goodbye", captures and tells the story of loved ones being informed that a family member has been KIA. It was dedicated, and honors his Brother-in-Law, Charles Langenfeld, a Navy Corpsman who was KIA, while serving with Echo Company, Second Battalion, Twenty Sixth Marine Regiment.



The picture is a scene of a neighborhood, aglow with lights, as families prepare for the upcoming holiday season. The snow glistens in the moonlight and the stars twinkle in the clear night sky. In the painting, Dad has just finished hanging the homecoming banner, having been busy all day getting ready for his son's return. The cars are washed and the garage straightened. Mom has the tree decorated and lit. From the house wafts the aroma of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies, their son's favorite. From the window, she sees a car slowly pull up to the front walk. As she opens the door, expecting to embrace her son, she is horrified to see a representative from the Navy along with a Chaplain, walking up the snowy steps. Her heart sinks as she realizes it is not her son arriving as they had been expecting, but the devastating news that he has been killed in war. As her body begins to crumble from the inside out, she finds herself unable to speak, unable to even breathe. An old buddy drops the teddy, knowing his friend is never coming home again. "His Last Good-Bye" immerses us in the pain of an American family's ultimate loss.

DUSTERMAN

VIETNAM



STORY OF THE LAST GREAT GUNFIGHTERS

TRANSCRIPTS FROM MY VIETNAM DIARY AND MEMOIRS

JOSEPH M. BELARDO, SR.

DUSTERMAN

VIETNAM

Story Of

THE LAST GREAT GUNFIGHTERS

Transcripts from My Vietnam Diary and Memoirs

Written By

Joseph M. Belardo, Sr.

Military Assignment:

U.S. Army - 1st Field Force
Charlie Battery
1st Battalion - 44th Artillery
Automatic Weapons - Self Propelled
Twin 40mm - Dusters

Mobile Combat Team & Body Recovery
Combat Attachment to:
III Marine Amphibious Force
3rd Marine Division

Vietnam Tour of Duty
August 1967 to August 1968

DUSTERMAN

VIETNAM

Story Of

THE LAST GREAT GUNFIGHTERS

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In Loving Memory
of
My Nephew
Scott Thomas Ribar

Dedicated to the men of Charlie Battery 1st Battalion,
Automatic Weapons – Self-Propelled – 44th Artillery,
Dusters, Quad-50's, and Searchlights,
and all the Heroes who served in Vietnam.

A special recognition to my first Hero "My Father"

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FOREWORD

While I was in the military, I was encouraged by my father and mother to keep a daily journal of my military experience. In each letter home, I included a short story of my daily experience. When I went overseas, a relative sent me a small pocket diary which encouraged me even more to keep writing.

A month after I returned home, I sat with my Father and transcribed all my paper notes and diary into one memoir. As I wrote, I shared my story with my Father. We compared my war experience with his WWII experience. My Dad had been a Sergeant in the Army and had served as General Patton's Forward Infantry Platoon and had experienced a lot of combat. It was the first time in our lives that we shared a common bond-- "WAR". Our talks also allowed both of us to unload a lot of war baggage that only fellow warriors would understand.

Finally, with the invention of the modern day computer, I copied everything that I had written on paper into my Dell. It still took years for me to have the courage to let another read my memoir. I was worried about how or what they would think of me after reading my story. I did not want to re-experience the public stoning that often befalls a Vietnam Veteran. That was another time, another place, and another Joe Belardo. A few years ago, I cut and pasted a few pages and let several of my friends and family read what I considered were my most treasured and secret thoughts. To my surprise, I was not stoned.

This is my memoir and how I saw and felt about my military experience. If you asked another with whom I served, they would either tell the same story or have their own version. It is all in retrospect and what I call "A View From the Turret."
I can only hope and pray that my memoir does these great and valiant men justice. I am proud to call them my friends and brothers. Allow me to introduce you to a group of men who represent the most courageous, brave, and heroic veterans of the Vietnam War.

They were known as Dustermen. Not only did they endure the normal hardships of war but, during combat, were required to man their weapon in the standing or upright seated position, exposing either their entire body or upper torso. There was no room to duck, lie down, crawl, run, or hide. Dustermen were fighting the enemy eye-to-eye, face-to-face; watching every round hit its mark and seeing the enemy shooting back. The troops called it "Dueling with the Dragon". It was more like an old Wild West gunfight. These American servicemen were awarded more than 450 Medals for Valor and earned more than 1,000 Purple Hearts. I am not exaggerating when I say that they earned:

10 - Army Presidential Unit Citations
3 - Marine Presidential Unit Citations
15 - Valorous Unit Awards
11 - Meritorious Unit Commendations
2 - Navy Meritorious Unit Commendations
31 - Vietnam Cross of Gallantry Citations with Palm
9 - Vietnam Civil Action Honor Medals First Class with Palm

I want you to remember where they came from, who they are, and to understand the brotherhood that bonds them.

I want you to picture the DMZ with its high mountains and lush green jungle.

I want you to envision the scream of "INCOMING!", the crack of a rifle, the bang of an RPG, and the sounds and smells of war.

I want you to see the brightness of the Searchlights, the burst of the Quad-50 machine guns, and the rhythm of the Dusters' Twin 40s rapid fire.

I want you to know they were part of the ultimate ground-war fighting machine.

I want you to know that, man for man, they took more ground than they gave and earned the greatest respect of every unit to which they were attached, as well as the grudging respect of the VC and NVA who came in front of them.

The Searchlight crews perched on the perimeter of some nameless camp, exposing themselves to mortars, rockets and sniper attacks.

The Quad-50 and Duster drivers drove down that "Road to Hell", leaving the sanctuary of their Driver's compartment to hand out ammo and retrieve the wounded and the dead, dancing between the AK-47s and hoping not to be kissed by an RPG.

The Cannoneers stood to load their guns, defying the enemy sharpshooters to hit their mark.

The Gunners and Squad Leaders picked targets and gave orders, hoping that their choice was right and would bring their crews safely back to camp.

Returning to camp only meant guard duty, mine sweeps, H&I's (Harassment and Interdictions), search and destroys, sapper attacks, more "INCOMING!", and another convoy in the morning.

I want you to appreciate the support teams: cooks who fed them the best they could with the little they had; mechanics who came out in the field and kept them running at all costs; medics who would give their lives to save a friend; clerks; radio operators; ammo teams; combat chaplains who gave faith, hope and giant shoulders to lean on; and hundreds of others who were all part of the best fighting group in Vietnam. I can't say enough about the NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) and the officers who lived and fought beside them. They directed them with concern, understanding and military professionalism, as proven by the amount of unit citations and minimal number of casualties versus the number of battles fought.

No matter how history was written or what the journalists said, when these men left Vietnam they knew they had militarily won the war. They won all the battles. Then, someone forfeited their war. We Dustermen have a simple saying…

"Always Remember – We Are Somebody".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Simple Thank You

Over the years, I have made many relationships. I thought it was about time that I let the world know about a certain few.

To my wife, Nancy, thank you for being by my side all these years. You have worked hard to make my life simple and beautiful and full of love. We have known each other since we were fifteen. It has been a wonderful life together. I will love you forever.

To my children, Mary, Joseph and Patrick: God could not have given me better children. Thank you for always helping. You have made me the proudest dad in the world. I love you for who you are and the great adults you have become.

To my mother and father: Thank you for teaching me the values of family and friends. Thank you for your patience and love.

To my sister, Brenda, and my brother-in-law, Ken: There is nothing in my heart that can express my appreciation for the love and understanding you both have given me all my life. I will always be there for you, as you have been for me. Ken, thanks for the diary. Without it, this book could not have happened.

To Paul Fusco, my "brother": Since childhood, you have been by my side through all phases of my of life and are part of my family.

To my veteran friends: Chaplain Sam Hopkins, thank you for giving me the courage to finish this story. You are a true friend and gentleman. The world is fortunate to have a person like you. God bless you.

Lieutenant L. Steve Moore, Lieutenant Bruce Geiger, and Captain Vincent Tedesco, your leadership and concern for your men were

superior to all other officers and you gave us courage. To this day you exemplify that spirit and friendship.

Sergeant Chester Sines, thank you for teaching me everything about a Duster and how to stay alive.

John "Tank" Huelsenbeck, Donald Wolfe, Earl Holt, Wally Owens, Roger Blentlinger, Norman Oss, Cleve Lanier and James "Doc" Butler, thank you for your undying friendship, weekly telephone calls, and e-mails. Most of all, thank you for risking your lives for mine.

To my other Duster, Quad-50 and Marine friends, thank you for sharing all you photographs with me. Most of all, thank you for getting me home. We are all true blood brothers.

To the rest of my family and friends, especially my cousin Michael Dellipoali: Thank you for listening to me all these years about Vietnam. Someday, when we all go and meet our "Maker", we will see each other again in heaven. Someone once told me that in the Bible there is a passage that says, "When we go to heaven, we sit at the right hand of the Father". Remember, if you want to find me, look to the left, and I'll tell you another story.

PREFACE

By Chaplain Sam Hopkins

Get ready for an action packed, combat adventure story about a patriotic young man from the loving Belardo family of an Italian neighborhood in New Jersey. This G.I. named Joe served his country with honor and distinction in the most heavily decorated artillery unit in the history of the United States Army. Joe and his buddies didn't plan on being heroes; the fighting was thrust upon them by a savage enemy intent on over running their positions at any cost. If you ask these men about the frequent, memorable battles they fought in Vietnam, they will sincerely and reverently say they were just doing their job and only trying to stay alive. Despite their many decorations for bravery and valor, these mighty veterans maintain that the only heroes they know have their names on The Wall in Washington, D.C. So true, so true.

Joe is profusely modest about his tour of duty. However, the well-known Lieutenant Colonel Ollie North has nationally publicized Joe and his unit's outstanding service record on the Fox TV program Men At War. ABC television has broadcast his combat story too. Those programs were based on this publication's detailed, day-by-day, frontline battle narratives extracted from Joe's combat diary. His fascinating, introspective memoir reveals a sensitive soul's struggle to be physically and mentally strong amidst unimaginably horrible suffering and dying. He always praises the many service personnel who stood fast in the line of duty, and remains mindful of the countless sacrifices they made for God and country. As Joe has often said, "ALL GAVE SOME, AND SOME GAVE ALL." He respectfully disguises or keeps anonymous the names of people who miserably let their buddies down, or whose flawed character crumbled in the crucible of wartime's dramatic life or death struggles. Some servicemen deserve to have medals hung around their necks, and others simply deserve to be hung by the neck. Joe describes in sharp, vivid terms his experiences with the good (family, service buddies and friends), the bad (the vicious enemy constantly surrounding him), and the beautiful (the lush, green paradise known as Vietnam).

America is lucky to have men like Joe Belardo faithfully serve their country in time of war. America has been doubly blessed by his peacetime service to others too. Since his return to civilian life, Joe has unselfishly given time and tangible aid to schools, civic groups, hospitals and homes. Most of all, he helps fellow veterans in need of comfort and emotional healing. In recognition of these many good deeds, the Vietnam Veterans Association, at a national ceremony in Cape May, New Jersey, deservedly gave the prestigious "Four Chaplains" award to my dear friend and brother-in-arms, Joseph.

I should like to add a fifth chaplain's tribute to Joe's work and war record. From the perspective of a fellow combat veteran who served in a Duster unit like Joe's during the same period of time of the Vietnam War, I acknowledge with high admiration that he and his unit saw far more action than most of us. More importantly, Joe and his unit set an inspiring example of devotion to duty for all time. This old soldier salutes you, sir. As an ordained (and now retired) clergyman who has served among men and women in uniform, I am confident that Joe and his kind shall someday enter the kingdom of heaven because they have already served their time in hell. In the mean time, I pray that he and all his buddies will add many more fabulous chapters of living to their exciting chronicles begun some forty-odd years ago. Finally, as a fellow American, I offer these heartfelt sentiments to Joe and all Vietnam veterans: although you didn't hear these precious, long overdue words when you returned to the world, our nation owes you the following tribute

- Welcome Home, G.I. Thanks for a job well done.

Samuel W. Hopkins, Jr.
Chaplain (Colonel), U. S. Army, retired
Vietnam Veteran 1967-68
4th Battalion 60th Artillery, Dusters



Joe Belardo Vietnam 1967 age 20

A SPECIAL THANK YOU
TO SAM, CHRISTINE,
LISA, MIKE,
& NANCY

THIS BOOK WOULD
HAVE NEVER HAPPENED
WITHOUT ALL YOUR
HARD WORK, DEDICATION,
AND LOVE.

THANK YOU!
JOE

Chapter 1: UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU

On October 24, 1966, I was drafted into the United States Army. Because I was from New Jersey, I was sent to Fort Dix. Like all new GIs (Government Issues), I got the standard issue haircut, boots and uniform. To my surprise, we were loaded on an airplane and shipped out to Fort Hood, Texas for Basic Training in Battery C, 1st Battalion, 78th Artillery. After landing, we were then loaded on buses and transported to Fort Hood. As the bus drove through the main gate at Fort Hood, we saw a life-sized statue of Elvis Presley. The bus driver told us that Fort Hood was considered the home of Elvis Presley and that Elvis had donated a lot of recreation and restaurant places for soldiers to enjoy.

When the bus finally came to a halt, we were introduced to the traditional "Welcome to the Military". It was like the bus had been struck by lightning. Drill Instructors jumped into our bus, yelling and screaming for us "termites" to get off their buses. Their language was an assembly of operatic curse words, transformed into a dialogue of songs that only a Drill Instructor after many years of training troops could sing. It was beyond anything any of us had ever heard or experienced. Yet, we all knew exactly what they wanted us to do. As instructed, we emptied the bus in seconds and formed three equal rows of fifteen, twenty feet from the bus. One of the soldiers took out a tape measure and measured the distance from the bus to our first row of men. Holding the tape high in the air, he screamed that we were a bunch of "blind asshole dickheads" and could not measure dog shit. We all laughed and that made him go wild. At the top of his lungs with his eyes bulging out of his head, screaming a slur of profanities, he ordered us to "hit it" and give him "twenty". Only those who had played sports knew that he wanted us to do pushups. I nudged the guy next to me to follow my lead and hit the ground. We gave him his twenty and jumped back up. Those who did not follow his instructions were ordered to run in circles, screaming that they were "assholes" and "pussies", and wanted to live on a diet of shit and used condoms. Finally, after all the yelling and screaming, we were introduced to our personal Drill Instructor or "DI", a soldier named Sergeant Dillard.

Compared to a lot of the other guys, I was in good physical shape. I had played sports in high school and boxed on the P.A.L. boxing team, so I was better prepared for the rigors of boot camp. I thought that boot camp, with all its running, calisthenics, marching, shooting, teamwork and military protocol, was a fantastic experience. We were now soldiers and being retrained to the military way of life, which also included cleaning the bathrooms or as they called them, "latrines". All of us took turns at this job, which included using a combination of mops, brushes, sponges and toothbrushes, making our latrine shine until our DI could see his reflection and be proud of what he called his "girls".

After our graduation from Boot Camp, we were given a two week leave. I flew home and surprised my parents, family and friends for Christmas. While on leave I asked my high school sweetheart, Nancy, to marry me. We agreed that we would get her an engagement ring and make wedding plans on my next leave. Christmas break was great, seeing all my friends and relatives, and especially the Christmas Italian feast. I returned to Fort Hood and was assigned to 1st. Battalion, 16th Artillery for my AIT (Advanced Individual Training). In AIT, I was trained as a rocket assembler for an old surface-to-ground, high-explosive or small nuclear warhead rocket called "Honest John". Our First Sergeant was named Johnson. Sgt. Johnson was quite a character. In our first formation as new AIT trainees, the good old Sergeant did an alphabetical roll-call of names. We were instructed to take one step forward as our names were read. Loud and clear he called: Allen, Allsworth, Bailey, Bardone, Bellarah, Block, Ellis, Grinner, Gunesch, Harris, Raymond, Roundtree, Shapiro, Treemont, Upchurch, Waite and Woods. As he called out each name, he quickly stepped in front of the person, giving each one of us the once over. At the end of roll call, I and two others did not have their names called. What happened next was something totally unexpected. One at a time, the Sergeant went up to us, just pointed at us, and made the following loud announcement, "As long as you are in my Battery, Treemont will be called Truman because he looks like good old President Truman, Shapiro will be called Smith because he looks like Buffalo Bob Smith from Howdy Dowdy, and this

Belardo guy will be called Bellarah because I don't like names ending in "O". Do you understand me, ladies?! Do you get my message?!" To which we responded, "Yes, First Sergeant!" "By the way, Bellarah, you are I-talian?" "Yes, Sergeant!" as I snapped to attention. "I-talians do know how to plant a garden?" "Yes, Sergeant!" "Starting tomorrow, on the left side of my building, you will make me a garden. I want my garden to be fifty feet wide by fifty feet long. I want two rows each of tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, lettuce and string beans. I'll get together with you next week and give you the rest of my list. It's January, so you can work two hours a day getting it ready for spring planting." I just stood there in disbelief. With that he walked to the front of the formation, slowly turned, and in his booming voice said "If I catch any of you Mother Fuckers fuckin' with my garden or giving Bellarah any shit, I'll shoot you myself! Do you fagots understand me?!" "Yes, First Sergeant!" "Formation dismissed."

Army life was easy and my only concern was keeping the Sarge happy with his new garden, as it gave me a few extra privileges. The First Sarge got me my own ¾ ton truck so I could run all his errands. My friends were jealous. Besides my daily chores for the Sarge, I was being trained as an Honest John Rocket assembler. The highlight of our assembling was placing the rocket on a launching rail truck and doing firepower shows for high-ranking officers and state dignitaries at the end of each month. The Honest John launching was the grand finale. Shot without warhead at some unseen target thirty-five miles away, it was so fast that a standard instamatic camera could not catch it in flight. You would hear the launcher yelling the countdown: 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, FIRE! There were a few popping sounds, a flash, then a giant flame out the rear of the rocket that burned all the paint off the launching truck. In a blink the rocket was gone, leaving behind a cloud of dust and a loud explosion as it broke the sound barrier, making everyone jump and scream. It was fantastic!

I liked military life and thought strongly about making it a career. At first I thought of going to OCS (Officers Candidate School). All of the officers graduating from OCS went straight to Vietnam and that

immediately changed my mind about pursuing that path. My goal was to get a college education from Uncle Sam and then, if I had to go overseas, it might not have to be to Vietnam. Through the encouragement of two cousins who were career military, or what they called "Lifers", I then applied for a military appointment to West Point through the Fort Hood Base Commander. After a series of tests, I was put on a waiting list for prep school in Maryland and, if I did well, I'd go on to West Point. Since I was not going to advance with the other soldiers on Honest Johns, I remained a Private E-2, the lowest of military personnel.

Without the advancement of rank, I got all the menial tasks. Weekly, I would have KP (Kitchen Police). KP meant working in the barrack's kitchen and dining area known as the "Mess Hall". I would learn to clean off plates, wash dishes, peel potatoes by the thousands, wash floors, clean stoves and ovens, load milk into the milk machines, clean out garbage cans, and the nasty job of cleaning out the giant grease traps.

Another one of my weekly jobs was GD (Guard Duty). GD was an all night task that rotated on and off every two hours. Most of the time, we guarded military equipment and buildings. Prior to GD, the duty officer of the night held what they called "Guard Mount". The officer inspected your clothes, your rifle for cleanliness, and asked a series of questions. If you passed inspection and answered the questions correctly, the officer named you "Colonel's Orderly." As Colonel's Orderly, you got two days off with no duty. I learned that none of the guys liked KP or guard duty, especially on Fridays or weekends, so we would swap days. Our Duty Sergeant did not mind as long as he had enough soldiers for each duty detail. Each night I studied military handbooks and learned the answers to all the duty officer's questions, hoping to be named Colonel's Orderly. I now had my week planned: Fridays KP, Friday night GD, answer all the officer's questions, and have the weekend off. It was a great plan that would give me the weekends off so I could fish the Texas lakes for bass.

Once a week I demonstrated shooting techniques for the new guys

taking basic training. I had to show them the various shooting positions: standing, kneeling, sitting-cross legged like an Indian, and the prone position. I then took a shot or two at targets set at various distances, so they knew where to shoot. Twice a month I would demonstrate the shooting of a .45 pistol for the officers in training. In July 1967, I was issued orders to go to Vietnam. I thought they had made a mistake because I was still on the waiting list for prep school. Plus, I only had the rank of E-2 and you had to be an E-3 (PFC/Private First Class) to go to Vietnam. The First Sergeant told me that my dreams of going to West Point would have to wait and he instantly made me a PFC. Uncle Sam needed me in Vietnam. He thanked me for the great I-talian garden and wished me well. Smiling, as we shook hands, I palmed his desk memento and placed it in my pocket. It was a small cannon shell casing with our unit crest 1st/16th on one side. My friend, Doug Stamp, took over as gardener. He wasn't even I-talian.

I had come from a long line of veterans and quickly realized the idea of fighting communism and oppression was something that seemed natural. Freedom was the right I was born to defend. I would go to Vietnam and serve my country proudly. As I left Fort Hood, I could hear the new GIs going through boot camp, singing and marching in cadence to "Kill a Commie for Mommy".

The Army gave me a thirty-six day leave. I never told my parents I was coming home or even going to Vietnam. I arrived at Newark Airport about 9:00 p.m. and began hitchhiking to Plainfield. I lived in South Plainfield, the next town over, and knew that, if I got to Plainfield, a friend or cousin hanging out at the local diner would take me home. I was picked up by a kind stranger who told me he could not drop me off where I wanted because he had heard on the radio that Plainfield was in the throes of a race riot. Instead, he dropped me off about a half-mile from the diner. The side streets were barricaded and, as I casually walked down the main street in the center of town, I could hear gun shots in the distance. As the song said, "The Times They Are A-Changin'."

Leave was great. I got engaged to my Nancy. My friends and family

gave me non-stop parties. Inside, I've always felt guilty about how, without warning, without softening the news, I went home and told my parents, sister, girlfriend and relatives that I was going off to war. They were shocked and cried a lot. I pinned a poster of Allen Ginsburg on my parents' living room wall. Ginsberg was dressed as Uncle Sam with his index finger pointing at you, with a caption that read "Uncle Sam Wants You". I told my family "We'll take that down when I come home." On my last day, we all sat in the airport together. We are a close family, giving hugs, kisses, and the reassurance that all would be fine and I'd be home before we knew it. It's only one year. I did not realize how difficult it was to say goodbye and maybe what could be our final farewells. Taking turns, I hugged my mother, father, my sister Brenda and brother-in-law Ken. I saved Nancy for last and gave her a big hug and kiss. I held her face for a brief moment, looked into her eyes, kissed her forehead and told her I loved her. Holding back a few goodbye tears, I slowly turned and walked away. I was really going to miss her. My original intent was to marry her, but I knew better. I did not want her to be a young widow.

As I walked to the plane, my father yelled my name and came running to me. My father, a strong-spirited, hard Italian man, was calling after me, "I have something for you!" I stood there bewildered, not knowing what he was talking about or going to do. He slowly took out his wallet and removed a small square of red cloth and held it firmly in his hard, callused, steelworker's hand. He said, "You can borrow this for one year. My mother gave me this when I went off to war with Patton. I carried it across Europe and it brought me home. Your grandmother gave it back to me when she was dying. When you come home, I'll be the first to meet you and it will be the first thing you give me." He pressed the little red square into my hand and muttered, "Now get out of here." To my surprise, the little red square was an old religious scapular. I placed it in my wallet and held back my tears. At the same time, Louis Block, another local boy and good friend, was saying his goodbyes to his family. We had gone through boot camp together and advanced training, and were now boarding the plane together for Oakland, California and then Vietnam. Lou and I caught up in our own

emotions about leaving our family, said nothing to each other for the first hour of the plane ride. Together in California, we spent our last night of freedom hanging out with the Hippies at the infamous corner of Haight and Ashbury in San Francisco, before reporting to Oakland's debarkation center for Vietnam.

On August 21, 1967, I arrived in Bien Hoa, Vietnam for assignment to an artillery unit in Saigon. The twenty-seven hour flight from California to Vietnam was long and tiring. I thought it was generous that our government had chartered Braniff Airlines to bring its troops to Vietnam. It was a long flight and, after the plane touched down, we all jumped out of our seats readying ourselves to depart the plane. We did not know what to expect. Through the windows, we could only see a few buildings with soldiers and civilians milling around. As the airplane's crew opened the exit door, the noon heat of Vietnam came pouring into the plane. Instantly, the plane went from a comfortable 70 degrees to an unbearable 100 degrees of suffocating humidity. Men at the front of the line started getting lightheaded from the drastic change. Our nostrils perked open to the smells of our new home as we all gasped for air.

After arriving at the Army deportation center in Bien Hoa, we were reissued orders and sent to the seaport town of Nha Trang. A fellow soldier, Steve Harris, and I volunteered for office duty. All we did for three days was sign people in and out of this Army Transfer Center. It was a cake job. We spent the afternoons at the beach. Nha Trang was beautiful and Vietnam seemed like a tropical paradise. The Duty Sergeant told us they were looking for limo drivers for military dignitaries. We all had great hopes of becoming those limo drivers. That evening the Viet Cong hit the airport with mortars. The sound whistling over our heads brought us back to our war-torn reality. It was our first war experience and we had no idea what to do or where to go. Frightened out of our minds, we hid behind some steel storage containers. Our only defense was some giant Jim Bowie knives we had each purchased that day at the local PX (Post Exchange store). We stood there, brazen in the night, thrusting our knives into the shadows and yelling, "Commie Bastards,

try and kill us! We'll kill some of you before you get all of us!" We all laughed, with fear in our voices, as we spoke of holding "the Cong" at bay.

The morning of our fourth day, the Duty Sergeant told us to "saddle up". We were being re-assigned to an Army mobile artillery unit called the 1st Battalion (Automatic Weapons) (Self-Propelled), 44th Artillery (1/44th). Our new unit was attached to the Third Marine Division stationed along the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) in the northern most sector of "I" Corps. We were body replacements for an ambush that had taken place on August 21st. The Sergeant chuckled as he said, "Welcome to the Marines, hope you make it back." There were twenty-four of us from the Honest John Missile Training Unit to arrive in Nam. I wondered how many of us would be going home.

On the way to the 1/44th, we slept on an LZ (Landing Zone) pad in Da Nang. When we awoke, we found the local villagers had stolen my bags and the bags of two others. This was an omen of my tour to come in Vietnam. I was naive enough to have left all my orders, papers, and personnel record information in my bags. I was really mad at myself for being so stupid and trusting.

We finally boarded a C-130 cargo plane and headed to Dong Ha, the most northern airport in South Vietnam. The C-130 was packed like sardines with Marines and us few Army personnel. We sat in rows on the floor, with our backs to the front of the plane. Each row of men sat with the next man between his legs. We all held tight to nylon cargo straps secured to the floor. The rear cargo door was opening as we made our final steep decent towards the runway. The first loud explosion was heard as NVA (the enemy, North Vietnamese Army) artillery tried to blow the plane out of the sky. The plane shook violently as the NVA artillery followed it to the ground. Rays of sunlight peaked through the hundreds of holes made in the plane's skin from the exploding bombs. Men started praying, yelling, screaming, and bleeding. The plane seemed to be heading straight to the ground. I thought we were going to crash and die in a ball of fire. Another explosion was followed by

another and then another. More holes in the plane, more blood, and more pieces of America's Best splattered everywhere. We were covered in smears of red and body parts I had never seen before. My friend, Louis Block, who was sitting between my legs, started screaming, "I'm hit! I'm hit!" As he turned to face me, I could see a long thin piece of shrapnel sticking out of the center of his forehead. It looked like an Indian headdress feather. Head wounds bleed profusely, so his head and face were instantly covered in blood. I started screaming with him. I yelled so loud, it made no sound. Our screams could not be heard over the loud explosions, the roar of the engines, and the crescendo of fellow soldiers and Marines scrambling and praying for their lives. Louis was lucky it had only broken the skin and not punctured his skull. He was yelling, "Take it out! Take it out!" It was terrible seeing him with that piece of shrapnel sticking out of his head, so I obliged him, pulled it out, applied pressure, and we held each other tight. Vietnam had gone from beautiful to ugly in just a few seconds.

On touchdown, the C-130 quickly slowed to a slow roll and we were ordered to jump off the moving plane through the rear cargo door. The excited flight crewman at the cargo door threatened to shoot and throw us off the plane screaming, "My plane is worth more than your sorry asses! Get the hell off my plane, before I shoot you off!" As instructed, we grabbed our bags and jumped out the back of the plane. Holding onto Louis, I made a mad dash to safety, sprinting, stumbling and crawling to a small building on the north side of the runway. For the first time we were running for our lives, frightened beyond anything we had ever experienced. The C-130 never stopped, but did a fast U-turn and hastily flew back to Da Nang, its wheels almost hitting the men it had strewn all over the runway.

"INCOMING!" A volley of enemy artillery shells started landing all around us. Crazy with a new kind of fear, we all dived into a very long trench about five feet deep by three feet wide that was filled to the top with smelly, muddy water. Only moments before, we had spoken of our bravery and how we wouldn't jump into that nasty looking ditch. As I stood chest deep in the condemned water, I could feel something

wiggling under my feet. In my frantic haste to take cover, I had jumped on top of my friend, Frank Bardone. I almost drowned poor Frank. We were all so nervous and jumpy, it didn't matter. Lou pointed to some guys running along the runway and saw them disappear into some kind of underground bunker. Leaping from the muddy water, Lou and I sprinted to the bunker. Finally inside and trembling with fear, we tried to regroup. The other guys in the bunker tried to reassure us. Lou asked me for a cigarette because his got wet. I took off my helmet and reached inside for my Tareytons. My hand was shaking so much, I could not hand Louis a cigarette. They just seemed to be jumping out of the pack on their own and landing on the floor. Finally, we lit up, took a big drag and both exclaimed "Holy Shit!"

We were the new guys they called "Newbees." The experience, natural to war, was only a taste of what was to come. Being wet, hot, cold, or half-drowned would soon be the least of our problems. By the end of our first day on the famous DMZ, we would hide from the enemy artillery five more times. "Welcome to the Vietnam Conflict."



Private Joe Belardo,
Advanced Individual Training Graduate



Honest John Rocket



Nancy and I got engaged before I deployed to Vietnam.



Belardo family religious scapular that was carried by my father in WW-II and me in Vietnam.

U.S. Army "Duster" unit attached to 3rd Mar Div

It's a long way from Fort Bliss, Texas and the Oro Grande, New Mexico desert training area, but the 1st Battalion (Automatic Weapons) (Self Propelled) of the 44th Artillery Regiment made it.

The Army battalion is now settled in the Dong Ha base perimeter and adds its tremendous firepower to the 3d Marine Division. The battalion is unique in that it has the "Ocelots" of Battery G, (50 CAL MG) 65th Artillery attached as a machine-gun element.

The battalion has had a long and proud heritage of the 44th Artillery which it now carries to the DMZ. Twenty-six battle streamers and two presidential citations add body to the battalion colors; ranging from World War I through World War II campaigns and the Korean Conflict. Reactivation at Fort Bliss, Texas, in March 1966 was followed by intensive basic and advanced unit training at Oro Grande Range Camp, neighboring White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, in preparation for deployment to the Republic of Vietnam.

The 44th brings into combat weapons that have been re-established in the Army arsenal; M42, twin 40mm gun, mounted on a light track chassis, with latest modifications, and M55, 50 Caliber (Quad 50) mount machine-gun. The M42 has been known as the "DUSTER" since its conception, and has proved the title well earned in dry weather. The M55 "Quad" type machinegun earned the title "WHISPERING DEATH" from the Chinese Communists during the Korean Conflict. Both have a tremendous firepower as a ground support weapon and still maintain the ability to fire against low level air targets in the Dong Ha base defense.



I had just arrived in Vietnam in this picture.
The next day I was put on a plane like the one in this photo and flown to a place called Dong Ha.



DMZ
(Demilitarized Zone)

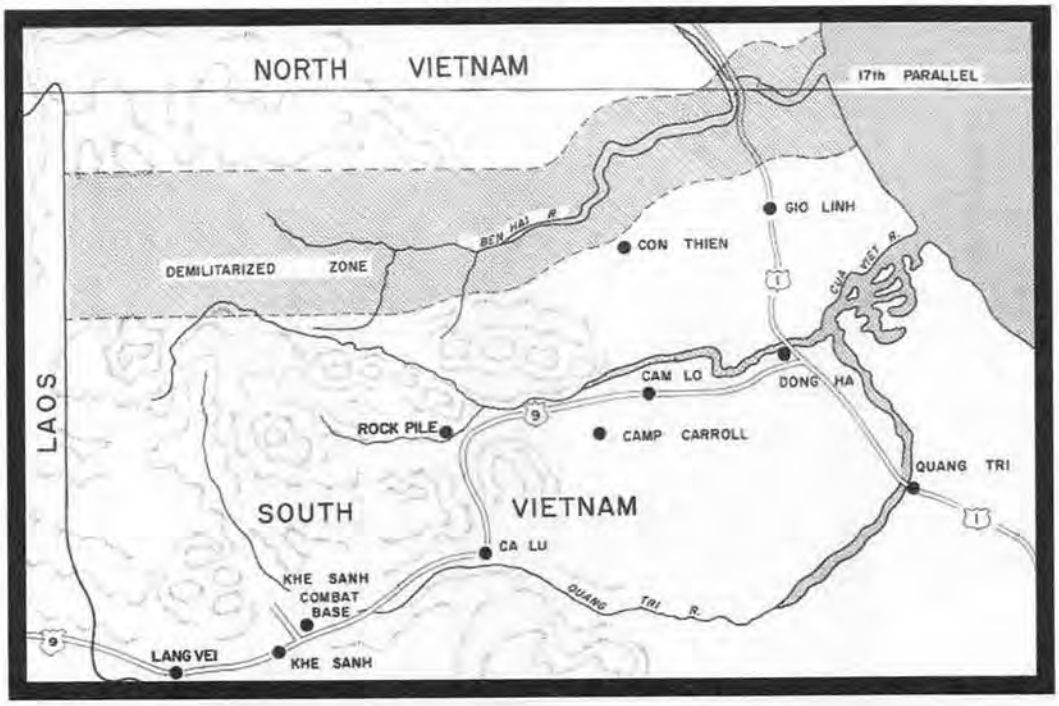

Belardo's deployment area in Vietnam

Chapter 2: THE DUSTER GUNFIGHTER

At 1st/44th Headquarters in Dong Ha, I was told not to worry because all my records would be reconstructed and placed in proper order. I was still concerned that, without my records, I really didn't exist in the military. For some stupid reason, I did not want them to lose me or misplace me.

We all thought we were going to a standard artillery unit on the DMZ to be trained how to shoot some kind of big cannon over a hill at the unseen enemy. I should have known better, since they told us the 1st/44th used some kind of self-propelled automatic-weapon and was attached to the Third Marine Division.

The officer in charge of our training explained to us that the 44th was comprised of Twin 40mm Dusters, an attachment of Quad-50 machine guns mounted on 2½ ton trucks, and Searchlights mounted on the back of jeeps, all incorporated into the Marine Corps as their mobile combat team and body recovery unit. It was our job to provide perimeter and convoy security, daily guard duty, evening firing of Harassment and Interdiction missions, search and destroy missions, body recovery, or anything else the Marines required. All of our group would be trained and shipped to different combat batteries along the DMZ. We looked at each other in wonderment and disbelief. The officer then turned us over to his Training Sergeant.

The Sergeant first introduced us to the Quad-50 machine gun. The Quad had four 50 caliber machine guns mounted on a very small motorized turret that one man, the Gunner, could sit in and shoot. The turret was then mounted on the rear deck of a 2½ ton truck. There were two Loaders and one Driver. The top deck of the truck was loaded with two layers of ammo cans. The Quad-50 shot up to 1,500 rounds per minute. We had a quick four hour lesson on the Quad, each taking a turn loading, unloading and shooting the Quad. I could not believe the firepower this weapon had when you shot all four guns at once. It was a blaze of bullets, ripping the earth to shreds, including anything in its

way. We all hoped that we would be the Gunner, sitting inside the mini-turret, squeezing the triggers and blazing away at the charging enemy. At the end of the four hour training lesson, the Sergeant told us that he just wanted us to be familiar with the weapon in case we had to use them in combat and that we were being assigned to Dusters. We still had not seen a Duster and had no idea what he was talking about.

Instead of being trained on cannons that shot long range over hills at the unseen enemy, we were now introduced to a small tank-like weapon that shot directly at the enemy. This little tracked vehicle had two small cannon barrels (Twin 40s) and was called a "Duster."

After three days of training, we learned that the Duster crew was comprised of a five man fighting team: a Squad Leader, a Driver, a Gunner and two Cannoneers. The Duster had the same Twin 40mm Bofors ack-ack cannons that were mounted on Navy ships and were used to shoot down enemy airplanes. The twin machine gun cannons, with open turret, were re-mounted onto a small modified Walker Bulldog tank chassis and renamed the "Duster". The four men who sat in the small open turret were only protected by a thin ¼ inch thick armor plate that gave no adequate protection from enemy ground forces. The top edge of the turret was only twenty-four inches high and exposed the crew to enemy fire. Their head, chest and arms were totally unprotected. Upper head and chest wounds were quite common. The two Cannoneers had to stand to load the machine gun-like cannon shells into the clip-fed high-speed loaders, or shoot the M60 machine gun or their personal weapon, exposing themselves to increased danger. The Gunner sat to the left of the cannons, with head and chest exposed, and was responsible for raising and lowering the guns and shooting the auto-cannons. The Squad Leader sat to the right of the cannons, with head and chest exposed, traversing the turret left to right and giving target acquisitions.

The Driver sat below the turret and was responsible for daily track maintenance. His responsibilities also included radio communications, calling in and coordinating artillery and air strikes while under attack.

During combat, the Driver was forced to leave the confines of his compartment and distribute ammunition stored inside the track to the men in the turret. It was also the Driver's job to make sure the enemy did not get close to or breach the Duster. The Squad Leader, Gunner, and Driver wore radio-equipped plastic helmets for constant communication. The two Cannoneers wore standard-issue helmets. Because of the lack of officers, the Squad Leaders were totally in command of the Duster with the Driver being second in command. On the Duster, there was no room to hide or run. The crew had to stand and fight, brazenly defying the enemy to kill them.

The Training Sergeant barked, "This, 25 tons of steel is not a tank. It is a track vehicle, type M42A1, better known as a Duster. When some Marine General saw us shoot at Fort Bliss, he had Congress assign our sorry asses to the Marine Corps. The Dusters and Quad-50s are the meanest, toughest, mother-fuckin' killing machines in all Vietnam."

We would soon learn that the crew of a Duster seldom saw their Battery Headquarters or an officer. Because the Squad Leaders were in charge of the Dusters, our trainer called it a "Sergeant's War". We were orphaned out to Marines or other outfits scattered across the DMZ and received most of our orders via radio. Each day started an hour before sunup with a mine sweep along part of the road. Then we would return to base to take a group of Marines on a combat or body recovery mission, or a convoy to an isolated oasis called a "Combat Base".

Convoy duty was dangerous and nerve-racking. During World War II and the Korean War, U.S. convoys operated mainly behind enemy front lines with virtual impunity. Things were different in Vietnam. You never held the ground you fought. You never advanced from town to town as you defeated the enemy. There were no front lines and your permanent base camps were prime enemy artillery targets.

Ambushes were a constant threat along all supply routes. Ambushes posed a serious logistics problem since trucks provided most of the supplies for inland installations and combat bases. Normally, on

convoys or search and destroy missions, the lead Duster (at or near the front) covered the left side of the road while the rear Duster covered the right side. The roads we traveled were usually in the valleys of the mountainous northern terrain where we lived, thus making us easy targets. Convoy duty was like being in a shooting gallery, except we were the targets, "the sitting ducks". Dusters, caught in an ambush, pulled off the road, traversed their guns and provided covering fire. The remainder of the convoy accelerated to escape the Kill Zone. The tactic was effective, but it meant Duster crews spent eternities in the Kill Zone. Sometimes ambushes would overwhelm even the firepower of the Dusters. When this happened, a reactionary force would hopefully roll to the rescue from one of the nearby base camps.

Duster crews from the 1st Battalion (Automatic Weapons) (Self-Propelled), 44th Artillery were stationed at Dong Ha, Gio Linh, Con Thien, Cam Lo, Camp J.J. Carroll, Khe Gio Bridge, Rockpile, Ca Lu, LZ Stud, Khe Sanh, Quang Tri and a dozen other outposts, reaching as far south as Hue. Their total effectiveness was reduced by the vast amount of territory they had to patrol.

The Duster shot two hundred-forty 40mm high explosive cannon shells per minute. It had M60 machine guns, LAW's rocket launchers, hand-grenades and the crew's personal weapons. With a top speed of about fifty miles per hour, it was the perfect mobile ground weapon. It was an awesome weapon for war, fast and accurate, with an effective firing range of three straight miles. Each cannon shell travelled at twice the speed of sound and upon impact had a one hundred foot shrapnel killing field. After three miles, if the target wasn't hit, the warhead would self-detonate into what was called "flak". The Duster was originally meant to shoot down airplanes and instead was used against enemy ground forces. Its firepower was more than two companies of infantry. When firing, it looked like the grand finale at the 4th of July fireworks, but ten times louder and a hundred times more dangerous. It was the Army's gift to the Marines, a mobile five-man combat team and body recovery unit. It meant death and destruction for the enemy and was one of America's ultimate ground weapons. Basically, it was just

two big machine gun cannons mounted on a small, tracked vehicle…a human killing machine.

Dusters and Quad-50s were a lethal combination and were considered the most devastating ground weapons in Vietnam. Because of their fire power, they were hunted by every enemy sharpshooter. Destroying one of these weapons was the dream of every NVA soldier.

After three days of "OJT" (on the job training) on a weapon that none of us had ever seen or used, we were told we were ready for combat and would be assigned to our respective Combat Batteries. We were now official "Dustermen". Our small group of "Newbee0073" was taken to the Chapel for a short church service before departing headquarters and going to our new positions. On the wall of the Chapel was a plaque listing the names of those already killed or missing in action from our unit. The Chaplain slowly read their names: Wright, Ford, Croom, Fox, Teatsworth, Wilkerson, Royster, Thompson, Atkins, Henry, Evans, Lewis, Cribbs, Schneider, Pendergrass, Gerber, Valenzuela, Watson, Weigert, Baldoni……losing track of the names as he read, I prayed he would never have to read my name.

We didn't have to guess to which Battery most of us would be sent. Two of the men went to "A" (Alpha) Battery, one to "B" (Bravo) Battery and one stayed at Headquarters. The rest of us were sent to "C" (Charlie) Battery as body replacements for their August 21st battle.

A guy named John "Tank" Huelsenbeck ordered us to load onto a 2½ ton truck. As we got on the truck, he gave each of us one of the KIA (killed in action) names that were listed on the Chapel wall. He grabbed my arm and told me I was now Billy Watson and I better not let him down. I just stared at him and nodded my head in agreement. Christ, I better live up to this Billy Watson guy's reputation. Without any personal weapons or the knowledge of where we were going, we drove alone without escort down a dusty dirt road called Route 9 to a place someone called "Carroll." This we were told was "SOP" (standard operating procedure) and our initiation to the DMZ. I could

not help but think that this Route 9 looked nothing like Jersey's good old Route 9. I couldn't believe how casually Tank drove down this long dusty road. The soldier who rode shotgun in the cab had handed each of us one hand grenade. He laughed as he told us that, if something happened, to pull the pin and kill ourselves, because if the NVA caught us, they would cut off our balls and stick them in our mouths...another new kind of fear.

Heading west from Dong Ha on Route 9, we passed the Vietnamese relocation settlement of Cam Lo and then slowly ascended into the area called the Dong Ha Mountain ridge line. We finally made a hard left turn and headed up another long winding dirt road to Carroll. They all must have gotten a good Christian education on that ride, as I recited out loud all the prayers I had learned as a young boy.

At Carroll we were finally issued M-16 rifles and ammunition from a guy named Mike Romanski. After inspecting my M-16, I realized that the barrel had a slight bend. I went back to the supply room and asked for an exchange. Romanski just shrugged his shoulders, smiled and said he had issued me a good rifle and, if I wanted another rifle, what did I have to trade. I had to give him a pack of cigarettes to get my choice of rifles. Tank then brought us to the Command Post Bunker where we were introduced to Captain Morgan, Lieutenant Amerman, the First Sergeant Slater, equipped with a handlebar mustache, and our Platoon Leader, Lieutenant Moore.

Captain Morgan welcomed us to Camp J.J. Carroll named after a Marine officer who gave his life defending his Marines. Carroll was centrally located along Route 9 and situated on top of a high, flat-topped mountain overlooking the DMZ and several combat bases in the area. He also told us that Carroll was known as "Artillery Hill" because of all the heavy duty, short and long range cannons located on the base. He told us that Carroll's artillery included 105, 106, 155 and 175 millimeter cannons, 8 inch cannons and an assortment of mortar platoons. Carroll's artillery could protect all bases up to thirty-four miles away. Plus, it was the home and central jumping-off point for all

the Marine units in the area. He then gave us another brief description of Duster life and how we would interact with the Marines. Lt. Amerman and the First Sergeant each gave a short speech and then turned us over to our Platoon Leader Lt. Steve Moore.

Moore now separated us into our respective new MOSs (Military Occupational Specialties). He was shocked and upset that his new men had no formal stateside military training on a Duster. Four of the men were assigned to "C" Battery Headquarters, working in the motor pool or communications. The rest of us went directly onto "tracks" (Dusters). Moore asked if any of us knew how to drive a Duster. I told him I knew how to drive a bulldozer and I instantly became a Driver. I didn't mind and thought it beat being a Cannoneer. Gun Bunnies, as we called them, had to stand and load the cannons. Since the turret was high off the ground, it made them an even greater target. I didn't think being a Gun Bunny would be safe. I would soon learn that no job was safe.

As I listened to Moore give his lecture about what he expected of us and what life would be like in base camp, on the road, and in combat, I could not help but think this was going to be like the gunfight at the OK Corral and that I was going to be another Wyatt Earp. Maybe trying to get from base to base strung out across the DMZ would be more like storming Omaha Beach and Iwo Jima combined. All I knew was this "jungle dirt highway" he called Route 9 sounded real scary. He expressed, over and over, how the Duster was a crew-served weapon and that her crew had to stand to fight the enemy. "Since there is no room on a Duster to duck or hide, you will always see who is shooting at you and you will also see who you kill." At all cost we had to protect ourselves, the troops in our charge, and the Duster's virtues from all enemy intruders. He expected his men to rise to the occasion, stand tall and make Charlie Battery 1st/44th proud and nothing less. I thought it was interesting that he referred to the Duster as a woman. He ended with a prayer. Moore's speech made the Duster come alive and the war a reality.

Of all the officers I got to know, Lt. Moore would earn the most respect from his men. Moore thought like the men who rode the roads. He knew from early encounters with the NVA how to use the Duster firepower to our advantage, what to do and what not to do in a firefight. Getting in too close didn't always mean victory. It always gave me a feeling of relief when Moore was in the TC's (Track Commander's) hatch. The TC hatch was an additional individual seat to the right of the Driver. We all felt Moore was not there for the glory, like some other officers. Moore was there for his men. I would steal knowledge from this man by listening, learning and adapting. The only hard part about fighting on the road with Moore was that we were quite sure we would be the last ones back to camp after a firefight. Moore always accounted for his men and the Marines we supported. Moore never knew that returning back to camp last from a battle meant, to the men at the camp, that we had kicked some NVA butt and were one of "Moore's Road Warriors". Surviving the battles gave us courage and gave courage to the men who never rode the road. It gave us another reason to "saddle up" and escort the next convoy down the infamous Route 9.

To my surprise, I was sent immediately to the First Track Position directly in front of the Mess Hall at Camp Carroll. My new home was a "bunker", a 9 foot cube with only one door, no windows, and constructed from sandbags and old ammunition cans. This hole in the ground had only candles for light and an outside outhouse they called the "shitter." Little did I know, a bunker would be the best home I'd have over the next year. If we didn't have a bunker to live in, we slept under the stars or under the Duster.

I was introduced to my new combat team: Dieter, Lanier, Green, and Musso. Their Driver, a soldier named Louis Calya, who was going home in a few days, would be training me to be the new Driver. The men welcomed me with a traditional hot meal of C-Rations (meals in a can). Stateside, I had only eaten C-Rations once, which we cooked in the can on a tiny field stove. Cleve Lanier insisted on showing me the proper technique in preparing C-Rations. He explained that there were three different cases of C-Rations, each case was marked either, B-1, B-2 or B-3. B-1 had things like Beef Steak, Ham Slices, Fruit, and

Crackers and Peanut Butter. B-2 had Beans and Wieners, Beefsteak with Potatoes, Ham and Lima Beans, Cheese Spread, Pecan Roll, and Pound Cake. B-3 cases contained Boned Chicken, Spiced Beef, Chicken and Noodles, and Bread and Jam. The accessory packs had plastic spoons, salt, pepper, coffee, sugar, creamer, Chiclets chewing gum and cigarettes.

Cleve said, "Joe, we treat all new guys to the best meal in all the boxes…Ham and Lima Beans, or better known as "Ham and Mother Fuckers!" The rest of the crew just smiled and nodded in agreement. Something inside me said I was being setup for a fall. Cleve then took out of his pocket a tiny metal can opener called a P-38. It's a very small piece of metal with a fold-out sharpened claw used to open the cans. He announced that the P-38 got its name because it takes 38 punctures to open a can. He then grabbed an old, used short C-Ration can, which already had the top cut off, and told me he was going to make me an official "John Wayne Boonie Stove." I watched, hoping to learn from these seasoned troops, how to properly prepare and cook these meals in a can. With his P-38, Cleve cut a couple of grooves in the can and pressed the sides in. This would hold up the can you were going to cook and let air in for the compressed Sterno tablet used to heat your meal. Next, he took another empty soup-sized can and told me to wash it out because this was going to be my drinking cup. He took a small piece of wood about four inches long and carved it round like a dowel. At each end he cut a groove. He then wrapped the top and bottom edges of the can with a piece of stiff wire, attaching the dowel. After several twists and turns around the can and dowel, he smiled and presented me with my first "jungle cup." I stared at it in amazement. Instead of using the Sterno heat tab, Cleve grabbed a block of C-4 plastic explosive and ripped off a small piece. He rolled it into a ball, placed it in the can and proceeded to light it. I ran out of the bunker as he struck the match. I thought he went crazy and was going to blow us all up. They all followed me out of the bunker, laughing and screaming at me as I ran and took cover, waiting for the big explosion. Finally, after they stopped laughing, they explained how C-4 will only burn when lit, will only explode with a detonator, and is used all the time for cooking. I

still thought they had all gone a little nutty. To their surprise, I enjoyed the "Ham and Mothers". I quickly learned that "Beanie Weenies" was the number one meal on the DMZ. They became my favorite, but I would have to wait my turn for this meal.

The following morning, my training consisted of driving around the camp three times and becoming rear security on my first convoy, heading to a place called the "The Rockpile". On the way to our destination, we had to cross a river at a place called the Khe Gio Bridge. I still remember Calya yelling instructions, "Keep up the RPMs! Don't go too fast into the water! Stay to the left!" "There's a big concrete block under the water from the old bridge. Stay to the left!" I was more than a little nervous and did all the wrong things, including hitting the concrete block. That was all I remembered. The Driver's hatch, weighing about 100 lbs., slammed closed on top of me, forcing the periscope mount through my plastic Driver's helmet and knocking me out cold. They told me I slid down on top of the gas pedal and the track went out of control. It went down the river, up and over several embankments and into the elephant grass before they finally got me off the controls. While this was happening, the convoy was being shot at by some NVA and we weren't shooting back. I was thankful no one was hurt or killed. A few days later, we were told all hatches had to be tied open. Darryl Hale would always remind everyone how I almost got him killed on that convoy.

I learned there was a great responsibility in being the Driver. In our three-day training period, we were taught only the basic Driver duties: keep the Duster gassed, greased, oiled, and full of ammunition, ready to travel. I thought if there was any chance of going home or getting the crew in the turret home, I'd better learn all I could about this hunk of steel called a "DUSTER." I started asking questions, lots of questions. I asked about "INCOMING!," outgoing, past battles, land mines, Marines, jets, helicopters, medivacs, Army units, first aid, call signs, radio frequencies, convoys, convoy ambush deployment, grid coordinates, and the names of the radio operators from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh. I was shocked how we all learned from my questioning.

As I became a proper, gung-ho Duster Driver, I gave my Duster its own insignia. On the front turret plate above the 40mm cannon barrels, I painted a white skull with the words "GRIM REAPER."

I began ending all radio calls with my track number, followed by "Grim Reaper." I wanted everybody to know who we were and where we were, always. This wasn't radio protocol, but I didn't care who got offended. It was my butt on the line and, when I needed assistance, I could cut out the protocol bullshit and get down to business. The camp's "Office Pogues", shooting from the hip, tried to tell us what was happening on the road. The Duster Crews were the Road Warriors. We knew what was happening on Route 9 and we didn't need some asshole up on the hill telling us what to do. We called ourselves "The Thundering Herd".

I was proud to be the Driver. It taught me the meaning of true teamwork, the value of courage under fire, the commitment you must be willing to give to another human being, and what it meant when they said, "There are those who just drive and there are those who are drivers." You knew when you achieved true Driver status. The crew from the turret would start telling jokes about you. The best joke was, "My Driver's so stupid that, during a fire fight, he will open the front door of the track, get out from the safety of the Driver's compartment, and tap dance around the outside of the Duster, while handing us ammo in tune to the rhythm of the enemy's AK-47s." Jokes about anyone or anything seemed to break the cutting edge of war.

The troops in our part of the war zone often said, "If Hell could be renamed, it would be called Route 9, the Road to Khe Sanh." Route 9 or "THE ROAD", as we called it, was to become my home, my way of life. It was as if only our Duster knew the way to all the other camps. Our track would run the road an average of five to six days per week. If it wasn't what we called "regular convoys", it was a small convoy the Marines called "The Rough Rider". Sometimes we would do area sweeps with the Marines, search and destroy missions or body recovery.

I remember the first time an "RPG" (Rocket Propelled Grenade) was fired at our track. It was my third or fourth convoy to The Rockpile. I was about a half-mile past the Khe Gio Bridge. All of a sudden, an NVA soldier jumped out of the elephant grass, brought a tube-like object to his shoulder, shot, and jumped back in the grass just as fast. Like a giant smoking bottle rocket, it flew at us like a vision from an old Flash Gordon flick, spitting smoke and flying sporadically with the Gook acting the part of Ming the Merciless. The RPG hit the ground in front of us, exploded and sent hot metal and dirt all over us. Like some crazy man, I drove into the tall grass, hoping to run over the little Gook bastard. I was instantly ordered to a slow crawl, and we started shooting into the tall grass. We allowed the first three vehicles in the convoy to pass us. The firefight ended as fast as it started.

When we got to The Rockpile, the only conversation about the incident was among our own crew. They laughed that the Gook had missed us by a mile. If that was a mile, I'd hate to see what they considered close. I guess laughing built courage. We replenished our ammo and took another convoy back to Camp Carroll. I always wondered if I had run over that NVA soldier. The guys in the turret said I got him, but I didn't think so. I thought I should have felt a thump or something as I ran him over. Maybe when twenty-five tons of steel going 40mph runs over someone, you don't feel too much. When we got back to camp, I asked if we were supposed to file an incident report or notify the Captain. I was shocked when I was told that no one cared. We only report the seriously wounded or the dead. They didn't ask and we didn't tell. The only time they cared was if a lifer sergeant or officer riding with us got hurt. We'd then tell them all about the battle. They'd get their medals and maybe we'd get some recognition. Purple Hearts were a dime a dozen and, unless you were really bleeding and needed a medic, we didn't bother reporting injuries. I would soon learn that my first Squad Leader was telling the sad truth. There were only four ways you left our outfit: dead, missing some parts, missing in action, or your tour was over. Army soldiers attached to the Marines had their rules, and I quickly learned what rules kept me alive and what rules would get me killed.

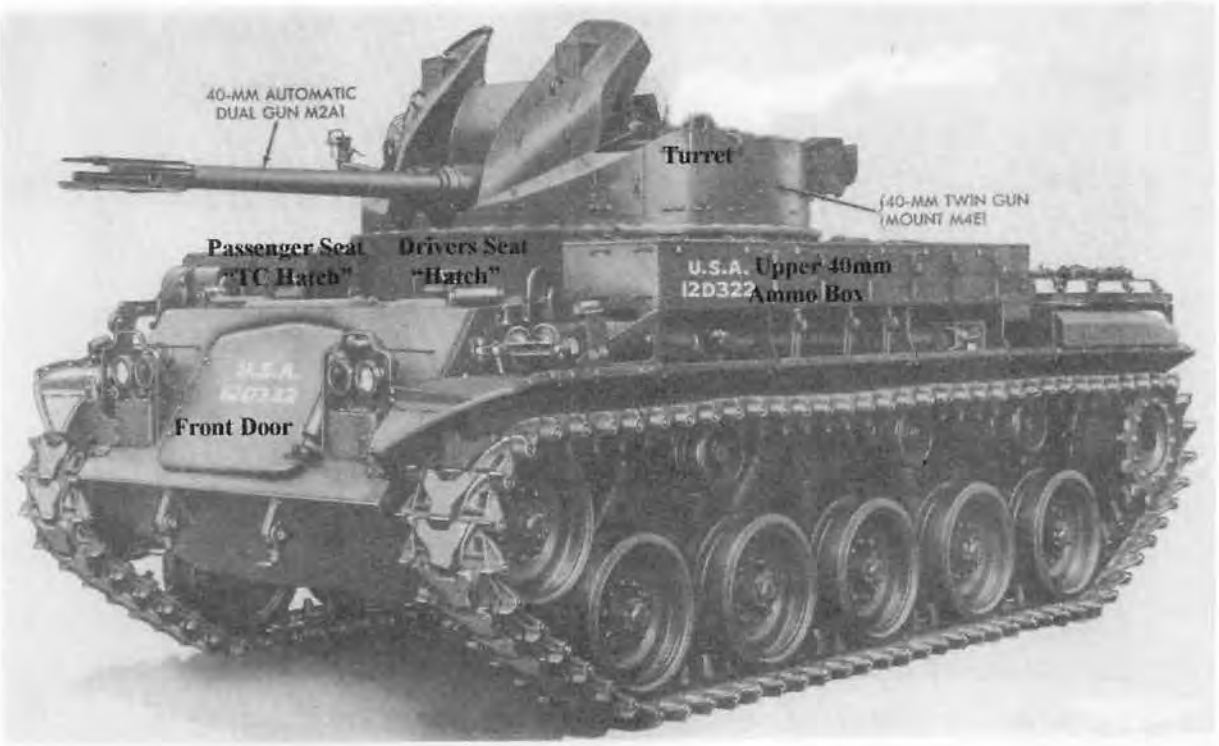

"Duster"
M42 Twin 40-mm Cannons, Self Propelled – Automatic Weapon
Front View

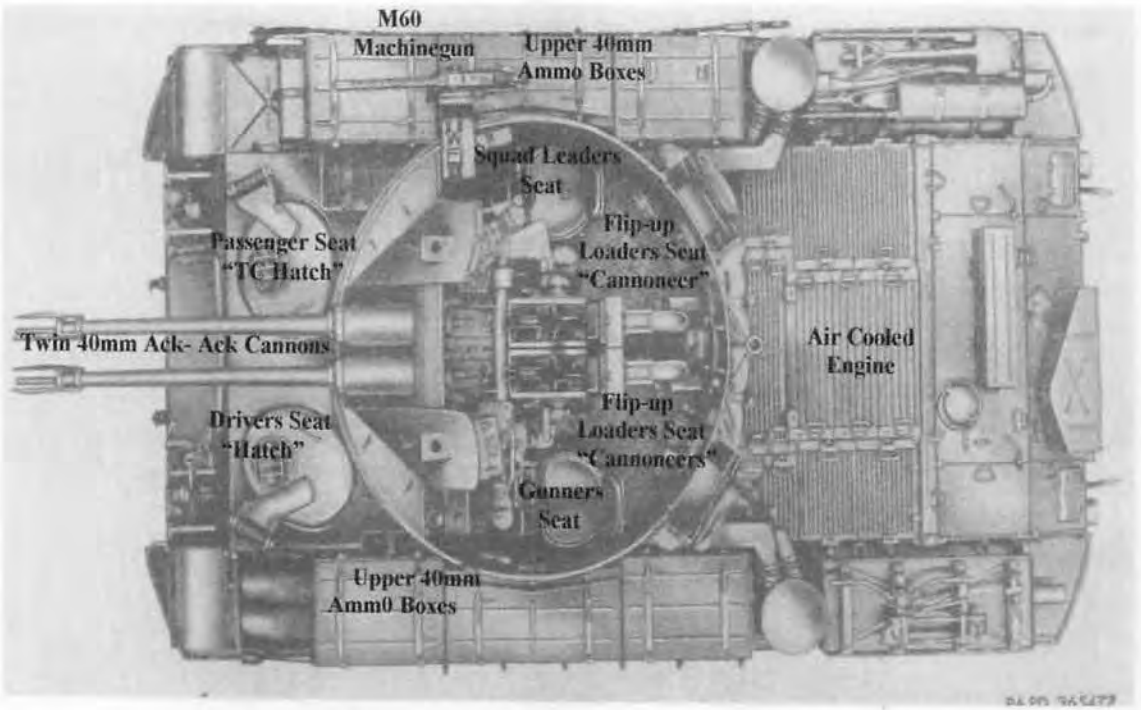

"Duster"
Top View



Duster – Twin 40mm breaches loaded for action.



Standing on my Duster holding a clip of 40mm ammunition.



Manning my Duster's M-60 machine gun.



Claymore Mine



The training sergeant said that anything seen in these sights must "Die."

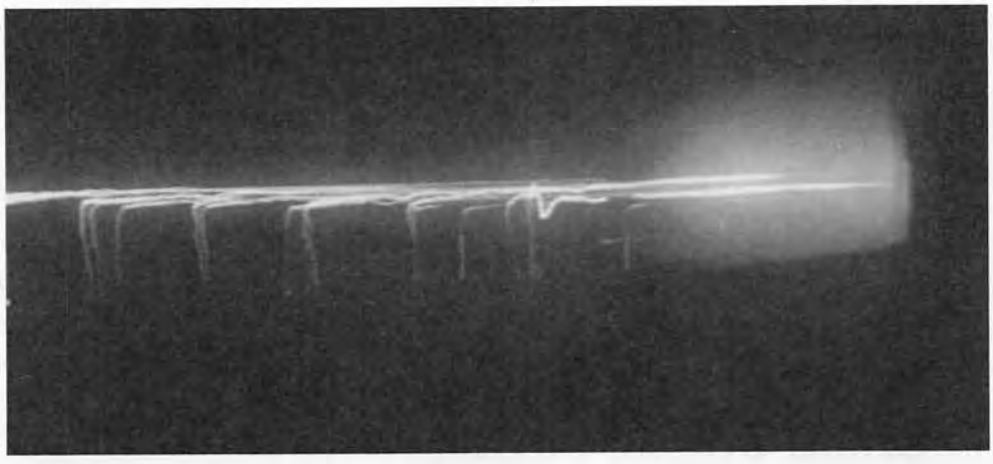

Duster 40mm shooting at night.



Quad 50 machine guns mounted on 21/2 ton trucks.
Note: The nose art on the front shield of the right truck -
"The Widow Maker" was the most famous Quad 50.

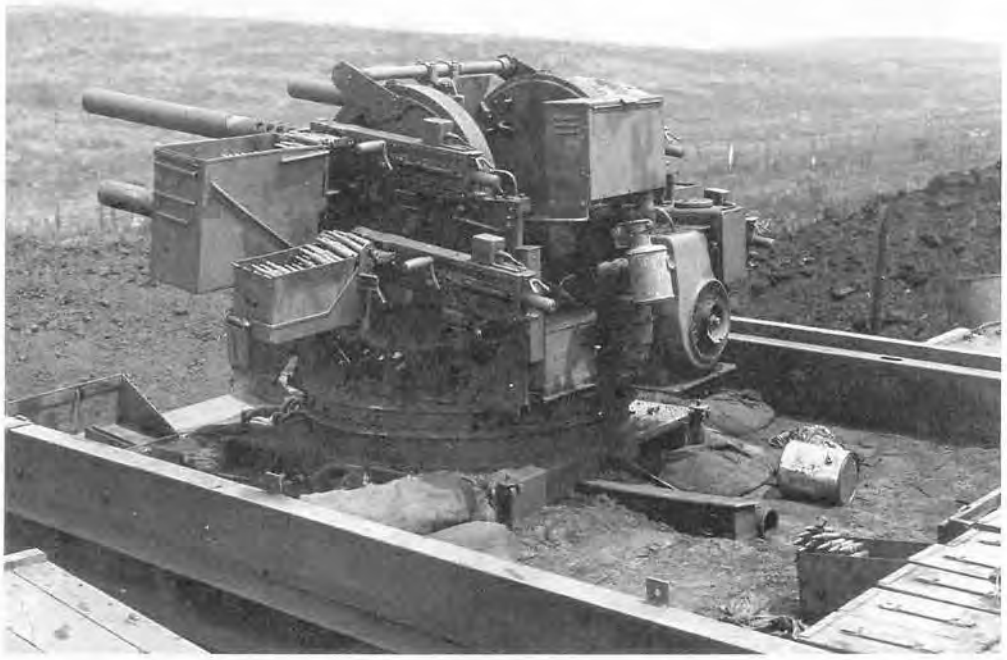

Quad 50 machine guns with special cooling aircraft barrels.

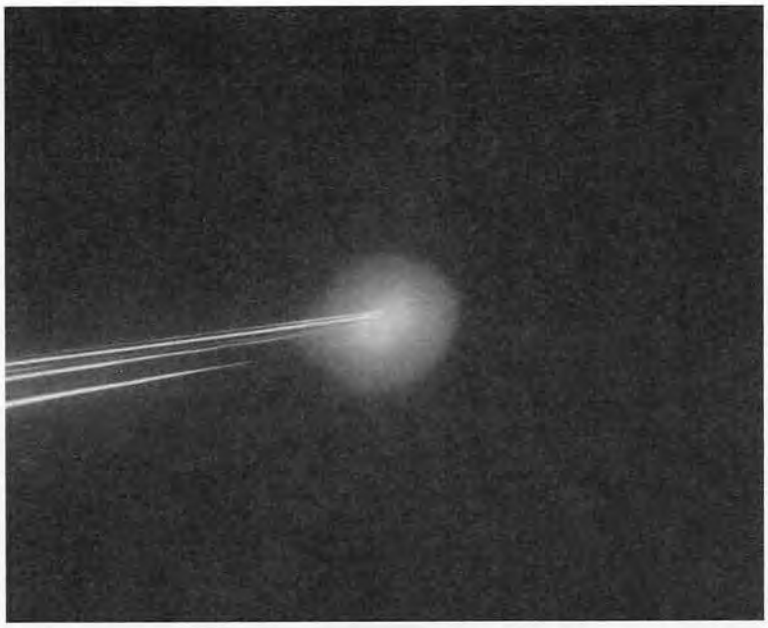

Quad 50 shooting at night.



John "Tank" Huelsenbeck.



Loading the "Newbee's" on the 21/2 ton truck at Dong Ha.



Passing the Vietnamese relocation settlement outside Cam Lo called "Tin City" on Route 9.



Montagnard Village relocated next to "Tin City."



Charlie Battery main area at Camp Carroll.



Dave Woods standing next to Charlie Battery sign at Camp J.J. Carroll.



Lieutenant Steve Moore
Lt. Mitchum can be seen in the background wearing a baseball cap.

Camp J.J. Carroll

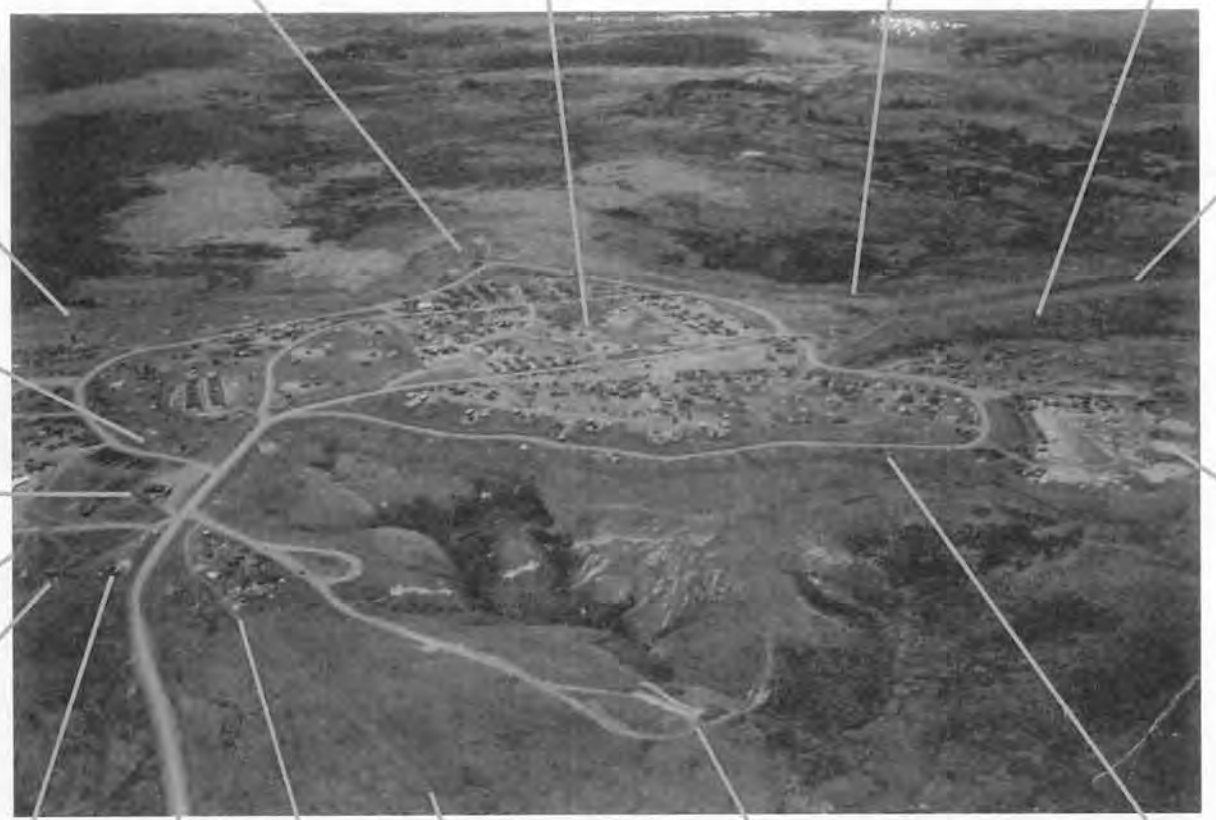



Camp Carroll looking from the South to the North.
Note: The Lookout Tower next to the Waterpoint position in the distance.
Headquarters of Charlie Battery, 1/44 Artillery, is to the right of the Tower.



Duster motor pool at Camp Carroll.



I painted my new call new sign and symbol "Grim Reaper" on our Duster.



Grim Reaper Duster at Camp Carroll waterpoint position.

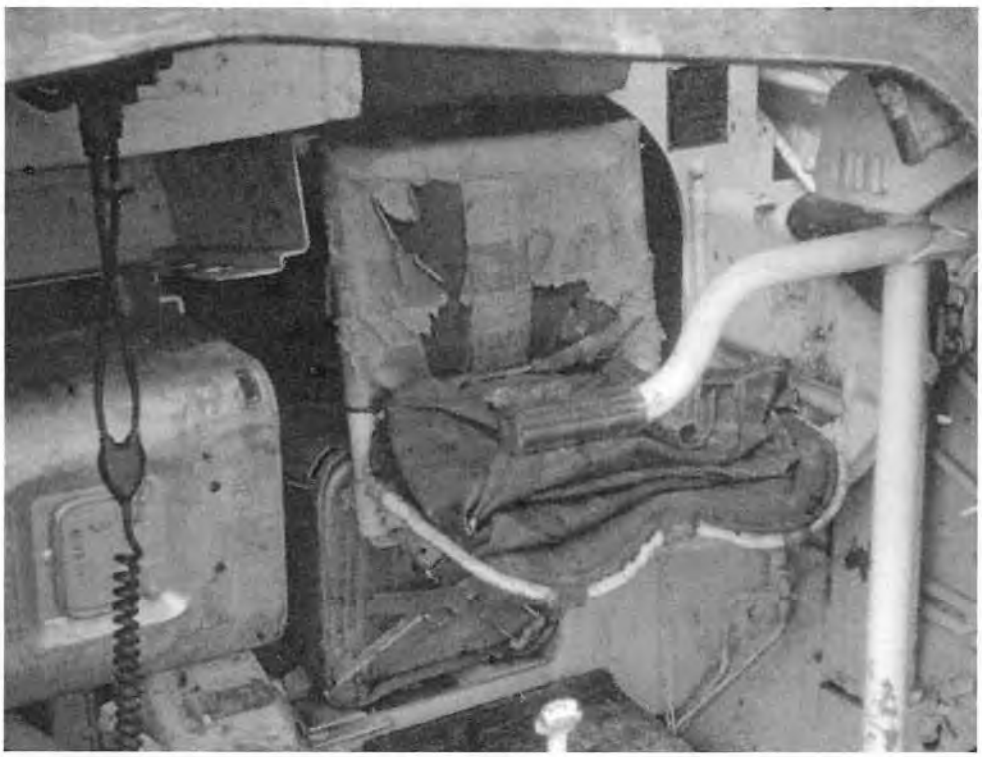

The Driver's seat of my Duster.
The 40mm ammo cans are stored beside the Driver.



2nd/94th Artillery – 175mm Cannon.



Charlie Battery – "The Thundering Herd."



Convoy assembling to travel down Route 9.



The original Khe Gio Bridge lying in the water,
the place where I hit the old concrete piers.

Chapter 3: LOST INNOCENCE

September 6, 1967: I received a small pocket diary from my brother-in-law, Kenny. I now have a place for my thoughts. ***That little book and some treasured scraps of paper would be the safe keepers of my year in Nam.*** If I die, my family will have some knowledge of what I had experienced.

Dear Diary,

BUNKER DREAMS

Uncurling from my fetal position of sleep, I realized I was not alone. To my surprise and pleasure, my mind had brought me a Monk to see me through the night. As he stood there hidden by his majestic raven cloak, I was shamefully reminded of Bela Lugosi. I accepted him wholeheartedly, although he was featureless, except for the outline of a painfully thin person. This apparition waited patiently and finally spoke. The voice, though not lucid, was calm and warm, trained on a thousand rosaries. I sat up, waiting to be filled with his words of wisdom, like a balloon readying itself for a helium trip. I was in the confessional of life. "Please speak,"
I begged him, "I need your words to help me this night." My Monk just stood there, motionless in his stance of prayer. I stood to apologize for something I did not know. Finally, I comprehended why my Monk had arrived. Protruding from beneath his cloak was the skinless bones of a foot and the blade of his Reaper's Scythe swishing through the air screaming..."INCOMING!"

September 7: We were called out as part of a reactionary force to find a missing Marine lost in this morning's firefight. We searched the ambush area with a small squad of Marines. After about an hour of driving through the elephant grass, we found him. He had been tortured by the NVA. His back was broken and his pecker stuffed in his mouth. We all cried and swore our vengeance. I never knew his name, ***may God forgive me***. We could only pray for his soul and hope

someone knew his name. ***Dear God, please don't let that happen to me.*** My innocence was being destroyed before my eyes. I prayed to what I hoped were not deaf ears.

Dear God, I have only been here a few short weeks. There is so much death, especially the enemy. Please make me strong for what I have to do. This isn't football, track, or boxing. Make me quick with no hesitations. I know my job is to kill. I just never knew I would be good at it. I'm afraid this war will make me another type of person, someone my family won't like. God, maybe it's the Duster that makes us kill. We keep her well fed on a diet of NVA. I don't know how to explain it to you, God. I am already caught up in her rhythm of killing. ***Forgive me...***

September 8: I met my first Marine Gunnery Sergeant. They just call him "Gunny". His men adore him. He is like their Messiah. We sat around joking and getting to know each other. The Marines called me a "doggy" soldier and taunted me, saying that Army meant, **"Ain't Ready to be a Marine Yet."** We all laughed and I teased them about being called "Jar Heads". I thought they were from a Marine unit called 1/9 and nicknamed "The Walking Dead". The Gunny was telling all of us how he wished Chesty Puller was here. Chesty would do things right, Chesty would do this, and Chesty would do that. I chirped in and announced. "If Chesty were here, I'd do her right, too." With that announcement, the Gunny attacked me as if I had said something bad about his mother. To his and the other Marines' surprise, I quickly knocked him on his ass several times and almost knocked him out. After all the commotion, they told me Chesty Puller was the most famous Marine that ever lived. I apologized to my Marine friends. I hadn't meant to insult them or Mr. Puller. I had no idea who he was or that he was the greatest Marine alive. The Marines nicknamed me "The General," a reference to when I disrespected their most beloved General.

Years later one midnight, I would meet Chesty's son, Lewis Puller, Jr., at The Wall (Vietnam Memorial) in Washington, D.C. I told him the story about his father and we laughed. I casually pushed him in his

wheelchair along the Wall. Lewis had been seriously wounded in Nam and his wheelchair was now his chariot. It was as if we were the only two men there. We talked easily about our experiences and introduced each other to our friends on The Wall. We had a simple friendship that only lasted a few short years. I still listen to the audio version of his book, "Fortunate Son". Lewis, you are deeply missed.

September 9: I finally began to realize that we had a daily routine. The average day started at dusk. Each night, four of the five-man crew pulled two-hour shifts of Guard Duty. Daily, one man got a turn to get some extra sleep. Our Duster shot all night H&I missions. About an hour before sunup, we would leave camp with a small group of Marines. The morning ritual was called "mine sweeping". Marines walked in front of us with metal detectors. We swept about two miles of the road for landmines. We found them every day and the Marines blew them up in place. I felt sorry for the Grunt whose job it was to use the metal detector. It was sadistically comical when he found a landmine. He stopped real quick, waved his "magic wand" back and forth, and tapped several times on his headset as if confirming his newfound treasure. He stepped back and did it all again, and then waved for help. His teammates joked and told him he was on his own, and then they'd all curse out the landmine and each other...***building courage.*** They blew up the mines they found, and we'd all go back to camp and eat something. Hopefully, we could get a hot meal from one of the mess halls. If not, we ate C-Rations. We would then announce the famous military term "Saddle Up!" and leave the camp on some kind of other mission, either convoys, search and destroys, body recovery or extracting Marines from some isolated area, or hopefully just staying at camp.

September 10: Camp J.J. Carroll was hit by twenty NVA artillery shells. The sound of the shells screaming through the air made my brain cry out in fear. My heart nearly burst out of my chest and my bones ached as the shells exploded all around us. The ground shook and there was a horrible dusty, burnt smell as the bombs exploded and all I could hear was the shrapnel ripping things, and people, apart. The screaming of the wounded and dying could be heard over the explosions. All I could

think of was being hit by one of those shells and my body ending up in thousands of tiny pieces splattered all over the DMZ. Nothing left of me to send home to my family. I don't know if I can ever get used to **"INCOMING!".**

Dear Heavenly Father, How can I explain to you what incoming and body recovery is doing to me, my brain, my heart, my body, my soul... my belief in you is changing. Please do not forsake me. If nothing else changes me in this war, this will...

My tour is now only into its second week, and I am in the Duster doing what we call "the mail run" to Dong Ha and back to Camp Carroll. On the return trip, we were advised by radio to go up the road that led to a place called Con Thien. We were to act as a reactionary force for some Marine tanks hit by the NVA on the road that left Con Thien to Route 9. This was to be my christening into what the Grunts or Infantry called "COMBAT." For some strange reason, I thought I had already experienced combat. Maybe someone forgot to inform me. We didn't travel very far before we saw a tank and some trucks stationary on the road about a hundred or more yards in front of us. It looked like they were on fire. Shooting could be heard everywhere. I was told to stop the Duster. The Squad Leader spoke briefly to someone on the radio. I was sweating and holding tight to the steering bar. Within seconds, the Twin 40s started shooting. The noise of the 40s shooting over my head is always a new experience. Each shell fired hurt my ears and made me twitch in my seat. I was ordered to proceed at a crawl toward the smoking tank and to stop no closer than a hundred feet from it.

As we approached the tank, I could see smoke coming out of the top hatch and engine compartment. Two men, who I thought were tank crew, were lying on the outside of the tank. Behind it I could see a few trucks in the trench alongside the road. About a dozen Marines were scattered along the road. Three or four were still shooting, the others were not moving. It was a horrible scene. Then the order came, but not the one I was waiting for. I was hoping we were going to leave. It was the order I would learn to hate the most, "Ammo up!" It meant my guys

in the turret were almost out of ammunition. If we stopped shooting, we could die. Frantically, I started to open the reserve 40mm ammunition stored in the Driver's compartment. Each ammo can weighed 116 pounds and held 16 shells. As fast as I could hand out ammo was as fast as they shot it. Soon, there was no room to move in the Driver's compartment because I never threw out the empty ammo cans or lids. I realized, for the first time, I had to open the front door of the Duster and get out. Bullets were pinging off the Duster hull like a drum roll. I took what I hoped was not my last deep breath, kicking open the front door and jumping out of the Duster.

Not knowing what to do with the empty cans, I somewhat hastily stacked them next to the Duster as I handed ammo up to the men in the turret. My back was to the enemy. I continually turned around and gave short bursts with my M-16 in the direction the enemy bullets were coming from. Like some kind of wild tap dancer, I followed the back of the turret as it traversed, handing ammo up to the Cannoneers. Above all the noise, I could hear someone yelling for help. I saw a Marine trying to crawl to the safety of our Duster. He was covered in blood and yet was trying to drag a fellow wounded Marine with him. All he wanted me to do was save his friend. I don't know why, but I ran to him. Grabbing his friend and flipping him up onto my left shoulder, fireman's style, I ran back to the Duster, placing him inside my Driver's compartment. As I ran, his blood covered my hands, arms, shoulder and neck. As he bounced on my shoulder, I could feel his warm blood pumping into my ear and running down my back and chest. It made me tremble. Before I knew it, I had four Marines piled inside the Driver's compartment next to my seat, packed so tightly I had trouble closing the door. The Squad Leader was screaming at me to get back in the Duster. He had me "neutral steer" 180 degrees around and told me to "Dee Dee-Move Fast" and drive as fast as I could back towards Route 9 until he told me to stop. As I drove, the minutes seemed like hours. I didn't know what was happening. I could no longer see all the action. I just sat there, holding the steering bar tight, trembling with fear. The Squad Leader chirped into my headset to stop. I could not help but stare at the wounded Marines piled next to me in my small Driver's compartment,

moaning and asking for help. The loud bursts of the shooting 40s reawakened me to the reality of war. Over the intercom, I could hear the Squad Leader screaming at the men in the turret. Patiently, I waited for my next order. Again, the thought of really dying entered my mind. ***Who would tell my parents?*** All at once the shooting stopped.

Reinforcements must have come out from Con Thien or another base, because Marines were all over the place and seemed to be assessing the damage. I advised the Squad Leader that we had four wounded Marines stacked in the Driver's compartment. He started yelling at me and then said something inaudible into the radio. He said "Dee Dee" and we quickly left the ambush site and went to a place called the Cam Lo Compound. We left the wounded at a small medivac station. I was mentally shook up and totally lost and had to be directed back to camp. Two were injured badly. The guy who was crawling had a hole in his face and one through his leg. The fourth guy, I think, was dead. He never moved or said anything. I had no idea what to do for them and feel guilty that I may not have done the right things in my first firefight.

After we got back at Camp Carroll, the crew was very quiet and stayed to themselves. I began to clean the blood out of the Driver's hatch area. I cried as I cleaned, hoping that the crew would not notice. I had to suck up all my emotions if I was to be accepted. Soldiers don't cry. I thought, 'God, we're with the Marines. I've got to suck it up.' I was surprised that the whole incident had taken less than three hours from start to finish. I cleaned up all the blood and was starting to fill the inside of the Duster with new ammo. One of the Cannoneers came out and told me that the Sarge wanted to see me in the bunker. I was shocked at how angry he was with me. He told me to never pick up the wounded or the dead until all the shooting stopped—not even the Duster personnel. My main objective was to keep the track running, help with ammo, shoot my M-16, help with the radio, and make damn sure no Gooks got on or close to the Duster. Dusters are killing machines and it is our job to protect the Grunts and kill the enemy before he kills our troops or us. The Driver is the most important crewmember. If he

didn't do his job, nobody went home. I was determined to be able to do both jobs, keep the crew safe and supplied with ammo, and pick up the wounded and dead.

The Sarge then started yelling at everyone. We all cleaned the Duster and got it ready for the next convoy. After we were finished, he told me I had to burn my fatigue shirt because it was covered in someone else's blood and it was bad luck to keep the shirt. I knew I needed all the luck I could get and didn't argue. I dipped the shirt in the diesel fuel and gas mixture we used to clean our 40mm cannons. In silent tribute to another human's essence, I lit the shirt on fire. The Sarge nodded in satisfaction. Again, there was no official acknowledgement of the day's firefight. At the mess hall that evening, a few of us briefly went over the battle with the men from the camp. My fellow soldiers always wanted to know all about the blood and guts of the firefights. Lt. Moore walked by and told us what a good job we had done. His words of praise were mixed with words of Christianity. We were shocked he even knew of the battle. I should have known better; he was the best officer we had.

Dear Lord, I don't know if I can live up to the Sergeant's rules about not helping the wounded and dying during a battle. Something inside me says I cannot let any of them down. Maybe if I learn more and practice more, I can fight and save lives at the same time. Help me, Lord, this war will test my mettle.

September 11: Between all the convoys we run up and down Route 9, we have to make mail runs all alone to Dong Ha and back to Camp Carroll. Sometimes we bring a small convoy back with us. We notice on each trip back that there are always the same three Vietnamese people standing at the end of the Cam Lo Village, two men and a woman. One of the men holds a pen and clipboard and starts writing as we pass. When we get about a mile down the road, we always get hit by the NVA. We agree that, by the way they are dressed, they are brazen NVA soldiers and are sending convoy info to their comrades. The days they are not there we don't get hit. They are so bold that I was able to take a picture of them. ***Bastards!***

September 12: Besides being a target for every NVA artillery unit, camp life has other kinds of obstacles. My friend, Rodriguez, came to my position on the perimeter of the camp and told me the Sergeant sent him to fetch me for shit burning and piss tube detail. I started laughing, thinking he was joking. "It's your turn. You've been pissing in the tubes and taking a dump in the main camp's shitter for weeks. Now you can clean and burn." "Thanks a lot, buddy." The latrine, or shithouse, is a small wooden structure. Inside there are two wooden planks with four holes cut into each plank for you to sit on and have your moment of peace and comfort. There are no toilet seats, just wood splinters from the rough-cut holes. The only problem is that you can be sitting with seven other guys, knees touching, wanting the same experience and begging for toilet paper. Toilet paper is a prized commodity.

The first thing he showed me was where the lime and window screening were stored. After loading a wheelbarrow with lime and grabbing a handful of window screens, that were pre-cut to about two-foot squares, we started off for my new adventure, "Shit Burning Detail." The first thing we walked to was one of the piss tubes. The tubes were the empty storage cylinders from Howitzer cannon shells. A hole was dug into the ground and the tube was placed at a forty-five degree angle, crotch high. The window screen was wrapped around the open end for you to pee through. The screen also prevented jungle critters from getting in the tube and biting your pecker. He explained that if the screens had holes, I was to replace them. Then I was to throw lime all around the piss tube area. There were six piss tubes spread around Charlie Battery's main area and only one main, eight-seat shitter. Next I was to pull the eight cut-in-half 50 gallon drums full of rank shit and piss out of the back of the outhouse. I was to fill them with kerosene, add a little gasoline, roll up some newspaper, light it, and toss it into the drum. While the shit burned, and between stirrings, I was to finish working on the piss tubes. Rodriguez walked away laughing and yelled, "Have fun and don't get killed!" With the flick of my Zippo lighter, I lit a piece of rolled up paper and tossed it in the can. Instantly, flames started licking at the shit, with lots of billowing black, smelly smoke. In a flash all the cans were lit and on fire, a towering black inferno full

of the nastiest smells on earth. I stirred each can with a long stick as if I were stirring a pot of my favorite soup. It was an easy job. All I had to do was stand there and occasionally stir the brew until it turned to ashes. There was only one problem. It took more than four hours to burn an eight-can shitter. I was covered in what they called "shit ash," plus the smoke was a giant target for all the NVA artillery teams in the area. Burn, stir, and dodge artillery. It was lots of "fun".

I always wondered if I was to get killed while burning shit, would my parents get a letter saying "Your son died while burning human waste" or maybe "in the line of "doodie".

September 14: I was curious about the August 21st battle and the men we replaced because of it. Lt. Moore, John Huelsenbeck and Don Wolfe went into great detail telling me that Charlie Battery was part of Captain John Ripley's Raiders, Lima Company, 3rd Battalion – 3rd Marines, and that, on the 21st , they were involved in another big battle on Route 9.

A super convoy, about a mile long, was traveling from The Rockpile to Ca Lu and got hit halfway to Ca Lu. Reactionary forces from the Rockpile and Ca Lu went to the rescue. Lt. Steve Moore came from Ca Lu commanding two Dusters. With him were Eugene Triola and Joseph Musso. As they approached the ambush, the NVA turned several RPGs in their direction, hitting the Marine M48 Tank in front of them and knocking it out of commission. Moore's two Dusters then started shooting full auto at the rushing NVA infantry. RPGs were flying overhead and exploding all around them. On full auto, they quickly exhausted the 40mm ammo in the turret boxes. As the Driver opened the reserved stored ammunition from inside the Duster hull, Moore ran around the sides of the Duster and tossed them up to the Cannoneers in the turret. Seeing the enemy's .51 caliber machine gun shooting at the piper cub spotter plane, he directed his Duster to take out the enemy's gun. The pilot chirped on the radio a big "Thank You." Two NVA then physically attacked Moore. He shot one with his .45 pistol and dispatched the other in a hand-to-hand battle. One of the

NVA slightly wounded him with a bayonet during their brief struggle. As they advanced forward, enemy mortars exploded all around them, wounding Moore and his crew with splinters of hot shrapnel. Slowly, they fought their way east into the ambushed convoy, knocking out any NVA positions they encountered.

Two Dusters and one 2 ½ truck full of 40mm ammunition advanced towards the ambush from The Rockpile. The two Duster crews were comprised of Lt. Stephen Drennen and Dustermen Sgt. Dailey, Ed Hoffman, Cooper Thomas, Don Wolfe, Joseph Konopka, Buddy Russell, Billy Watson, Roger Lewis, Juan Valenzuela, Larry Wiegert, and Duster Driver Donald Gerber.

Leaving The Rockpile, they proceeded at full speed toward the ambush. Riding on top of their Duster was a squad of Marines and Captain John Ripley, holding tight to the turret and the M60 machine gun. Before they could even approach the destroyed convoy, a second NVA unit, waiting in hiding, sprung a full scale "L-Shaped" surprise attack. Volleys of NVA RPGs began shooting from both sides of the road, flying inches over the top of the Duster. A few of the RPGs hit the ground in front of their moving Dusters and ammo truck. The combat-experienced Drivers accelerated through the maze of explosions which covered them and their crews in red hot metal and smoldering earth. The bullets were so fierce that they shot the tip off of Joe Konopka's M-16 and put a hole through the rifle stock. Captain Ripley instantly grabbed the Duster's M60 machine gun, positioned next to Don Wolfe, and opened up at the rushing NVA, unloading two full cans of ammo on them. As the next volley of RPGs flew over Ripley's head, he turned to Don and his Marines and yelled, "We're getting off this fucking metal coffin. These guys are crazy!" Like human torpedoes, they all dove off the moving Duster into the tall elephant grass and charged the enemy on foot.

John Huelsenbeck, with Steve Williams, drove a 2 ½ ton truck full of ammunition and was positioned between the two Dusters. As their truck rolled forward, one of the enemy mortars landed between

him and the Duster, ripping holes in the truck fenders and hood. Next, the truck windows were blown out and the right side of the truck was riddled by NVA heavy machine gun fire. John, grabbing his M-16 and his Marine grenade bag, bailed out of the moving truck, followed by Williams. Forced to leave the truck, they took cover in an old bomb crater. Hearing NVA talking and shouting, they started to fight their way up the sides of the road, killing any NVA in their path. The second Duster, unable to advance forward, pushed the destroyed ammo truck off the road.

Because of the physical strength of the NVA, it was very difficult to advance forward or backward. To protect their left flank, Sgt. Dailey's Duster positioned itself, alone, in an open flat space of land between the road and the rushing enemy. As both Dusters and Marine combat teams fought off the NVA, John Huelsenbeck noticed Juan Valenzuela slumped over the turret. Quickly, he climbed on top of the Duster and realized Juan had been killed. Placing Juan on the back of the Duster, John started helping load the 40mm cannons and got the Duster shooting again. Dailey's Duster called for more ammo. They were out and being overrun. Steve Williams called John Huelsenbeck and advised him of Dailey's situation. Huelsenbeck and Williams, assigned as the only ammo team for the firefight, grabbed two cans of ammo and ran to their aid. Lt. Drennen ordered John and Steve to go get more ammo. Before they could return, the NVA hit Drennen's Duster with an RPG. The RPG penetrated the Duster turret, fatally wounding Watson, Lewis and Wiegert. Hundreds strong, the NVA then boarded the Duster and shot the men a second time, guaranteeing their kills. Lt. Drennen, now shot through the jaw, escaped being killed by diving head first into the TC hatch.

Don Wolfe's Duster crew, having witnessed their friends being killed, instantly turned their guns on the NVA and killed them. John and Steve, shocked, looked on in disbelief. Billy Watson had been one of John's best friends.

During the entire battle, other Dusterman were trapped on trucks in the center of the ambush. Lindsay Baldoni and Leroy Gerber were killed by the first wave of NVA. Joe Murphy on a Duster fuel truck, along with other Dusterman, fought off the NVA with their M-16 and prayed the truck would not explode and go up in flames. The remaining Dustermen would always thank the Marines for coming to their rescue.

The battle lasted all day and took several days to clean up. After the battle, they loaded their dead and wounded comrades on the back of their Duster and ammo truck and limped back to The Rockpile. Lt. Steve Moore was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" Device. Don Wolfe and John Huelsenbeck were each awarded the Army Commendation Metal for their heroism.

Marine, Leonard Bud, was taken prisoner.

He was held as a Prisoner of War and was not released until 1973.

They then told stories of other similar enemy battles, one on April 25th when Joshua Atkins, Leonard Thomas, and Joseph Royster were killed and another on May 7th when Rhoden Talmadge, Franklin Lewis and Thomas Evans got killed. I was horrified as they told their stories.

They explained to me that nobody really ever talked about the battles or their friends killed in action. They each spoke of an inner hurt and tried to explain that you are given no time to grieve, no day off, and there is no way you can tell their family how you cared. Plus, there was no funeral for you to attend. You just went on as if nothing had ever happened, as though your friends never existed. They then went on to say that I should expect the same scenario during my tour with the 44th.

September 16: We did another mail run today to Dong Ha. I was the lead Duster on our trip back, followed by three supply trucks. As we got to the Cam Lo area, I slowed the Duster down hoping to find and see our three NVA friends. Like clockwork we could see them standing in

their same spot. This time we were ready for them. As we approached them, I shot and killed the guy with the clipboard. The other guy and girl quickly ran and disappeared into the bushes. The guys in the turret opened up on them with their M-16s. We think we got them because we did not get a hit today.

September 17: I received a package from Rome. It was from my Uncle Nick's sister. She was a nun named Sister Mercedes who was stationed at the Vatican and was an emissary to Pope Paul VI. Inside the package were five sets of rosary beads and a dozen small medallions with the picture of the Pope and a letter. The only problem was that the letter was written in either Italian or Latin. Knowing she was multi-lingual, I copied her address and wrote her a letter.

Each month I received a letter from her written in English, along with a few rosary beads and other tokens blessed by the Pope. Regardless of religious belief, the guys cherished the blessed gifts from the Pontiff.

September 21: The NVA blew up the Dong Ha ammunition depot. What an explosion, it could be seen for miles.

September 22: Vietnam is the most beautiful place I have ever seen. Where I live in the north is very mountainous and the vegetation grows tall and green. The mountains are like razor sharp spears sticking out of the earth, looming over giant rolling lush green hills. The dirt is reddish in color. In our area, we have old pineapple, banana, coffee, and tapioca plantations, which were once owned by the French and American produce companies. Every day I see giant wild boars running across the road, and monkeys and mongoose. Occasionally, I see some sort of very tiny deer, no more than two feet tall. Insects are gigantic. There are scorpions and spiders of all sizes and shapes. We have eight-inch long centipedes, green and orange in color with half-inch pinchers. I see all kinds of snakes. The ones I worry about were the Cobras and a snake they call a "Green Bamboo Viper," or the "Step-and-a-Half Snake," because that's all you will take before you drop dead. Before you take a dump in the latrines or the makeshift toilets the Marines

call a "Head", you have to stick your head down in the shitter and look under the piece of wood your butt is about to sit on to check and see what assortment of creatures are waiting to bite your ass.

While digging one of our fighting holes the other day, we uncovered a very large worm about sixteen inches long. We first thought it was a snake, but one of the guys told us it was just a worm. Leeches stick to us like glue and roaches crawl inside our clothes. Rats seem to be the biggest everyday problem while at camp. They constantly crawl on us in our sleep or over our feet while we write letters home. I'm not talking your average size rat, but a rat that's about as big as a rabbit.

September 23: We were assigned a new position guarding the main entrance to Camp Carroll and the western and northern slopes. They call it "The Water Point Position" because all the purified drinking water for the combat bases in the area is made there. Plus, it is the closest Duster position to the main gate for taking out the daily convoys and doing other crazy Marine missions. I don't like how this position is situated. It is away from the main camp and we are sitting at the tip of a long finger, making us an easy three-sided target for the enemy.

September 24: Carroll was hit by 88 NVA rockets. The Rockpile was hit by 21 enemy rockets. We never have body bags and just use ponchos, poncho liners, or pieces of tent to wrap the dead. It is sad that, as the Body Recovery Team, we don't have body bags. Recovery is a job from the bowels of Hell. We drop off the wounded at the medical or medivac areas. The dead are taken to a makeshift location called "Graves Registration". I have become too acquainted with Graves Registration. I taste the stench and smell of death. My insides never stop crying. ***Is this what my Dad experienced in WWII? Suck it up, Joe, suck it up!***

Every time we are at camp, I practice getting ammo out from the Driver's compartment. Never again am I going to let down anyone in my crew or on the battlefield. I learn how to load the 40s, clean the 40s, unjam the 40s, shoot the 40s, call in fire missions, and am determined

that everyone on the crew know each other's job. If one of us gets hurt, the others will take up the slack. I asked the medic for a crash safety course and extra medical supplies.

Eventually, I would demand from my fellow crewmembers their whole-hearted effort in learning everything they could about the Duster. I would hold training classes and, if necessary, become physical to prove my conviction to teamwork and effort. Don Wolfe told me I had a reputation as a badass city kid and that was okay with me. I beat a few asses and thus they all knew I meant business. "Let the training begin," said I.

September 25: At 19:30 hours we were on the receiving end of about 30 NVA artillery shells. Ninety minutes later, we were barraged again by 30 more NVA shells. Diving for cover became a new Olympic sport.

Today we went to the Camp Carroll Mess Hall and we were harassed by one of the Marines. This is not the first time we have had trouble with this particular Marine. He likes to pick on the new guys and spit in their food or stir it with his finger. Yelling that he is trying to make us Army Dogs tough like Marines, I instantly hate this guy and want to punch his lights out. But I am told to "cool it" and to "chill out".

September 26: We luck out and are sent for a week to "Hill 250" just outside Camp Carroll. My new crew consists of Squad Leader Eugene Triola, Gunner Johnny Towns, and Cannoneers James Biers and Dwayne King. I am the Driver. Triola gave me my first .45 caliber pistol. It makes me feel good to have my own personal weapon. I am tired of borrowing one. He told me to just keep it out of sight. It is not considered regular issue equipment.

Hill 250 is possibly the best position on the DMZ. It is a hilltop outpost with a magnificent 360 degree view of the DMZ. On top of the hill is a Ground Surveillance Radar team who help locate the direction of enemy artillery. A platoon of Marines and a lookout tower gives us

an even better view of the area. It is our job to shoot at any enemy movement, shoot any enemy artillery that is in our range, or give our big artillery shooting coordinates.

September 27: I could see, in the valley, a large group of what I thought were NVA crossing the Cam Lo River. The crew confirmed my sightings. I was so nervous giving the 105mm Artillery Unit's FDC (Fire Direction Center) the grid coordinates of their location. Each crewmember confirmed my map grids. I didn't want to be alone in my uncertain decision. I prayed that God would forgive me for killing. Our training seemed to make the enemy less than human and okay to kill. We followed the heavy artillery with a few hundred Duster 40mm rounds and saw some secondary explosions. Later in the afternoon, a Marine officer brought us a case of cold beer, a rare commodity on the DMZ, and congratulated us on a job well done. He drank a cold one with us, climbed onto the Duster, sat in the Gunner's seat, and made like he was shooting the Duster. He shouted, "You guys have to be fuckin' nuts to be in one of these metal coffin-RPG magnets!" He then saluted and left the hill. Our crew sat there drinking beer and praising our kills for the day.

Beer never seemed to taste the same again. A cold beer for taking a life. It's been over forty years and I still won't drink the stuff.

September 28: One of the guys going home gave me his battery-operated record player. It is great, complete with records and a couple dozen batteries. Along with listening to Gunsmoke on the radio, dancing around the bunker to Motown, country, and folk music gives me a taste of home. Now we will be able to listen to Hanoi Hannah spout her bullshit about killing Americans—asshole!

September 29: Tank and the other seasoned Dustermen finally started calling me by my real name. Billy Watson's soul can finally rest in peace.

September 30: We have very little contact with the native people. There seem to be two types of people in this area, the Vietnamese and the Montagnards or "Mountain People". The "Yards", as we call them, are an indigenous group of people, living a lifestyle that reminds me of the jungle natives of South America and Africa, complete with crossbows and blow guns. Their homes are made of thatch and straw. To promote harmony, peace, and trade, our unit has the Vietnamese people in the relocation settlement at Cam Lo do some of our laundry. We very seldom get back the same clothes we send.

My favorite activity is visiting and helping the Montagnards. The children are very pleasant and loved candy. I give them Bazooka Bubble Gum and teach them how to blow bubbles. After a few tries, they swallow the gum. They are very friendly to Americans and support the war effort against the NVA. It is easy to realize why they like us and not the NVA.



Airplanes spraying Agent Orange.
The troops could feel the oily mist sticking to them.



NVA soldiers, two men and a woman,
brazenly standing in NVA clothes, hiding under Cooley hats.



"Burning human waste,"
also known as "Shit burning detail"



The billowing black smoke from the burning shit made a great target for enemy cannons, rockets, and mortars.



Aerial view of a Duster shooting.
In the turret, sitting in the Squad leader's seat is Don Wolfe (no shirt). In the Gunner's seat is Cleve Lanier. Standing on the rear deck are Cooper Thomas (white shirt) and Leslie "Red" Dietze.



Left to right: Cleve Lanier, Donald Wolfe, and Leslie "Red" Dietze.



Billy Watson and John "Tank" Huelsenbeck, best friends. Billy was "Killed In Action" on August 21, 1967.



Left to right: John Gunesch, Noble Grinner, Wayne Bailey, 1st SGT Boone, Steve Harris and Frank Bardone.



Marines mine sweeping Route 9.



Dong Ha ammunition depot blowing up.



New Jersey flag sent to me by Governor Hughes.



Montagnard Village past Ca Lu in the area called Joliet.
The woman pictured is thrashing rice on a bamboo mat. By the
look of the pile of old husks, she has been thrashing in the same area for years.

CHAPTER 4:
TO REALLY LIVE-YOU MUST NEARLY DIE

October 3: We were rear Security on a supply convoy headed for another outpost called Ca Lu. It was eerie how we drove through The Rockpile without stopping. We just yelled hellos and dirty slogans at the troops in the camp. This stretch of the road always made me very nervous. I was driving again into what we called "Ambush Alley – The Road to Hell". As if from nowhere, the trucks in the middle of the convoy were riddled by NVA automatic weapons. Bombs exploded everywhere. Marines jumping out of their trucks were being disembodied by small NVA anti-personnel mines. It happened so fast, I was almost against the bumper of the truck in front of me. I quickly backed up the Duster a good 100 feet and stopped along the right shoulder of the road. Before I finished backing up, the Duster started shooting. Each burst of the 40s' high explosive rounds shredded the elephant grass, trees, and leaves, ripping the enemy to pieces. Debris and human parts were flying everywhere. It was our time to kill. The guys called it "Mowing Grass."

We advanced ever so slowly, shooting in close to the convoy. Then shooting a few hundred yards away, we made our mark of death on Mother Earth in the shape of a giant square with an "X" in the middle. Again, "Joe! Ammo! Ammo! Ammo up!" was screamed into my headset. By now, after several firefights, I was prepared to leave the sanctuary of my Driver's compartment and hand up more ammo to the turret. In the Driver's compartment, I had started carrying a few empty .50 caliber ammunition cans full of hand grenades. Before I exited the hatch, I threw one grenade to the left and one to the right, to hopefully kill any Gooks who had gotten close to my Duster. Then, I jumped out of the track onto the ground and fired a quick burst from my M-16 into the same areas.

Holding true to the typical NVA ambush tactics, two sappers (enemy soldiers, similar to the Japanese Kamikaze) jumped out of nowhere and started running at us, swinging satchel charges (high explosive bombs)

over their heads. The two sappers were the first of many I was forced to kill face-to-face that day. As I handed ammo up to the turret, I had to pick up Marines, dead and alive, and throw them anywhere I could, off the road or onto my Duster. If I didn't pick up and move them, I would have had to drive over them as we advanced. That was something I would not allow myself to do, even if it meant dying trying to move them. The Squad Leaders were always getting pissed off at me for not obeying Duster combat orders about not picking up the dead and wounded during a battle. However, I thought I was quick enough to hand out ammo, advance the Duster, do radio communications, kill the Gooks, and still load the wounded on the back of the Duster and move the dead out of the way of my track. On the other hand, running over "Dinks" was good luck.

The battle was very smoky, extremely hectic, and frightening beyond comprehension. The **"INCOMING!"** and shooting seemed endless. The noise was deafening and droning. Over the sounds of war, I could hear the screams of the wounded and dying from both sides. As I pulled out a can of ammo, there was a loud explosion and I was thrown against the Duster. Everything inside me went into slow motion recovery mode. As they say, my bell was rung (for the first time) and I was on a super adrenaline rush trying to regroup and shake off the cobwebs.

I got wounded for the first time. A long piece of toothpick thin shrapnel was sticking through my left side at my waist, in the area I called my "spare tire". The hot sliver was just under the skin but was too painful to remove when I tried to pull it out. My arms had what looked like hundreds of little needles in them, with small smears of blood everywhere. Death and destruction was all around us. I knew I had to keep humping ammo, driving forward, picking up Marines, and staying focused. We were now all operating on adrenaline and trying to stay alive. Killing the NVA was at another all-time high. I had emptied my ammo can full of grenades into the brush on each side of the road. No Gooks were going to take my track or me, or cut off my balls. Muzzle flashes from some kind of NVA artillery could be seen coming from the surrounding hills. I radioed for our own artillery support. Over the

radio, we heard Wayne Bailey, from our Second Platoon, advising us that he could see with his binoculars part of the ambush from his hill position at The Rockpile. Bailey also advised us he could see the small flags tied to our whip antennas above the elephant grass. I radioed Bailey and asked him to shoot high and over us into the hills. In less than a minute, Bailey's crew, via our Squad Leaders radio commands, swept the ridgeline with effective 40mm counter-fire, hitting the enemy and getting secondary explosions. In a flash, the firefight was over. We sat poised for another rush. I could see dead NVA lying in the grass, and some wounded and trying to crawl away. ***A shot was fired and another NVA soldier stopped crawling forever.***

Marines, trained to perfection, instantly began regrouping. Within minutes the Marine lieutenant in charge had the convoy back on the road to Ca Lu. Vehicles towed vehicles. It was an everyday occurrence to them and they acted professionally. A Marine Corpsman dressed my wounds. He leaned me against the Duster and bent the long piece of shrapnel around my waist. Now at least I could sit in the Driver's seat without pain. The Corpsman hitched a ride on our Duster and told me I was lucky that the shrapnel in me was just under the skin and had stopped bleeding. I wasn't going to die and it was only a flesh wound. He advised me to have a doctor remove it back at Carroll. As I drove, the Corpsman climbed back and forth over the Duster, administering aid to his fellow Marines we carried. The Corpsman's courage and caring was beyond admiration. Medics and Corpsman were the Messiahs of the combat field. I had a saying, "Corpsman and Medic's held two hands, yours and God's." We arrived at Ca Lu about two hours late. As if nothing serious had happened, we exchanged quick firefight stories, said our hellos to the Duster crews at Ca Lu, replenished the ammo, and headed back to Carroll with three trucks.

At Carroll, I was taken to the back south end of the camp to the Medivac Station where a doctor tended to my wounds. It was the area's head Triage Center. They did not ask your name or unit. Like an assembly line, the lesser wounded were bandaged and the severely wounded were airlifted off of the base. I became unraveled when a

Priest approached me and started giving me what I thought were my last rites. "Father, the Corpsman told me I only had a flesh wound and now you think I am dying?" I freaked and told him if he continued I would have to shoot him and wasn't ready to die yet. When the doctor finally approached me, he looked in amazement at the piece of shrapnel wrapped around me. I assured him it was only a flesh wound and was only just under the skin, probably less than 1/8" of an inch. He told some other doctor-type guys or Corpsman to ship me to Dong Ha. That put me over the edge. I told them I was not going to Dong Ha and, after a short but loud argument he agreed they would treat me. Now, totally out of control, I insisted on knowing how they were going to remove MY Shrapnel. The Priest approached me again, trying to console me. "Father, please go the fuck away." I refused to lie down and now stood in the corner. After an hour or so, a guy who looked like a mechanic showed up with a bolt cutter. After a lot of coaxing, I allowed them to cut off the back portion of the shrapnel. The doctor told me he was going to slowly pull out the last piece of metal and for me to stand real still and try to take a deep breath. My stomach turned and I almost passed out. Now on a stretcher, they cleaned out my wounds, used some glue-type substance and butterfly bandages, and sent me on my way. I feel like a real asshole for how I acted.

October 4: We headed out to Dong Ha, one Duster and a truck driven by my friend, Tank. His truck was full of less seriously wounded men who were sitting alongside or on top of their dead friends, just another one of our common medivac runs. It would be a full speed non-stop run down Route 9. We all ran with no governors on our engines. All of the wounded would be checked out, including me, at the main medical station known as Delta Med. The dead would be dropped off at Graves Registration. I think Tank carried more wounded and dead on his truck than any person on the DMZ. He would say, "Joey, this job fuckin' sucks!"

We have a saying, "Who cares?...Only the Rats."

After I got back, I heard that Bailey's crew got a "royal ass chewing"

for shooting without permission to fire. As far as we were concerned, they had saved our butts.

Years later, Wayne Bailey and his wife, Dixie, visited my home. The old "Beetle" (his nickname) glowed as he told my family how he saved my life.

October 5: We returned to Carroll with a truckload of new guys. A new Section Chief named Noel Brown, a transferee from another southern Duster unit, was in charge of the Newbees. They were all given the traditional initiation: one hand grenade for the ride and the customary speech about the NVA cutting off their balls. Now, after scaring them shitless, we took them down Route 9.

October 6: We acquired a new guy named Joe Presley. We are ordered to rebuild the roof of our bunker because some big lieutenant named Mitchum hit his head on the doorway and got knocked out trying to run for cover during **"INCOMING!"** We never have any trouble ducking into the doorway. I guess all the footprints on his back, from all of us running over him when he got knocked out, were too much for his ego. Someone has to pay. He got even. The roof job was a real ball buster. As we finished the roof, we watched the B52s bomb the ridgeline of Dong Ha Mountain.

October 7: We made some mine sweeps in the morning. I paid my last installment to Tyrrell Jewelers in California for some gold four leaf clover good luck pins I purchased for my Mom and Dad. I also got a package of goodies from my sister Brenda and her husband Ken, but there's been no mail from my girl, Nancy, in four days. It was my turn to burn the shitter.

The thought still brings a smile to my face. Burn and stir, until shit turns to ash. What a fucking terrible, nasty job! I hate the smell of gasoline and diesel fuel to this day.

Dear Diary,

UNTIL

I still remember when I first saw the flash of lightning. Heard and felt the roar of thunder. As a little boy I thought there could be nothing on earth as frightening. Hugging the pillow and taking shelter under the blankets. It was the best protection I could get. I always loved those blankets...
Until I went to Nam...Now they cover my lost friends.

October 8: On our way to do a search and destroy mission with the Marines, we dropped off Section Chief Brown and a few new guys at Delta-5 (D-5), an old French Fort south of Carroll. The fort was surrounded by a mine field and a dry moat filled with punji sticks (sharpened bamboo sticks). It had concrete walls to live in. It was a mud hole when it rained. Plus, it was full of rats. When we got back to our bunker, we cleaned our M-16 and I helped build a half-ass door for the bunker. Still no mail from my Nancy, but I got a goody package from my sister, Brenda. I shared it with my friends. Hopefully, they won't tell me I have KP in the morning.

October 9: The day was business as usual with mine sweeps and trips to the old deserted plantations to cut down little green bananas and pick pineapples. I liked to go there. Before we cut the bananas, we have to hit the banana tree leaves with the flat side of the machete to get rid of the hand-sized spiders and green bamboo viper snakes. We were preparing for another visit to D-5, complete with rations, ammo and water. There, I shared some bananas with my old friends, Lou Block, Norman Oss, Don Wolfe, Steve Harris and their crews. The guys loved my bananas and pineapples. We all laughed when they told us how Section Chief Brown found Norman's Spider Monkey, Lester, in their Duster's turret playing with the hand grenades. Norman told Brown it was Wolfe's monkey and he would gladly get rid of the nasty little bastard. Wolfe got an ass-chewing and Norman hid his monkey on the other side of the camp with a Marine friend. Lester is their mascot.

Many years later, at a reunion, we told Noel Brown that it was Norman's monkey and he had Lester until he went home in August. We all had a good laugh. "Lester...You Stinky Little Bastard, thanks for breaking the monotony of war."

After we returned from D-5, they had us take position up on Observation Post Hill 250. We had our nightly H&I fire mission called to us on the lima-lima (land line or telephone) from the Fire Direction Control Center at Camp Carroll. We wrote down the coordinates, elevations, rounds to be fired, and hourly times of firing. Our Duster fired three-hundred rounds at various pre-planned locations.

October 10: At 0200 hours we got a radio call from Steve Harris' track, C132, stationed at D-5. The ARVNs (Army of the Republic of Vietnam), who shared the fort, had fragged (thrown hand grenades at) some of the Marines stationed there. Harris said the Duster crews had placed all the ARVNs in the center of the fort and wanted to open fire, but were awaiting a reply and orders. At daylight our track and another, along with some Marines and ARVN advisers, arrived at D-5. The matter seemed to be quickly resolved and the fraggers were taken away. The compound at D-5 had lots of problems. Sharing the fort with the ARVNs was not what you would call easy duty. There never seemed to be enough trust about on whose side of the war the ARVNs were fighting.

We were informed, when we got back to Hill 250, that we had killed two and seriously wounded eight villagers from Cam Lo. Our butts were on the line and we had to prove to the officer quizzing us that the Fire Direction Control gave us the fire mission. It was easy to prove it wasn't our fault. Duster standard procedure was writing down all night fire missions. ***Sorry, Captain, go hang one of your FDC jerkoffs!***

October 11: Duster C132 broke down on maneuvers. They had to retrieve it and tow it back to Carroll for repairs. Back at camp, my Nancy's letters finally caught up to me.
I am very happy. I sniffed her perfumed letters on and off for hours

before opening them. I love reading them over and over again. They bring me closer to her and home.

October 12: We continued doing what Dusters do best: running convoys and mine sweeps from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh while being mortared, rocketed, and shot at as we killed the NVA along the way.

October 13: The Duster crews are always changing personnel and reorganizing to give the new men experience. Replacements are needed because men are rotating back to the States or because of death, injury or just plain incompetence. I inquired about my missing personnel records and was advised that they had been reconstructed, but payroll still had to be updated. I elected to receive a Quarter Master Allowance of $50 pay per month. They will send the balance home to my family to bank for me, since I have no place to spend money, but they had no idea when I would get paid.

I always wondered how they could reconstruct my files without asking me any questions.

We saw ***Puff the Dragon*** (C147 plane equipped with Gatling guns) shoot NVA all night. What a display of firepower!

While at Camp Carroll, we stopped at the Mess Hall for some hot chow. I can never get all the flour bugs out of the homemade bread. I make them disappear with jelly. That same asshole food-stirring Marine sat across from us and started his usual routine with our food and his wise-ass remarks. Stirring his finger in each of my guys' meals and laughing, my crew just looked at me for some kind of assistance. They didn't want to start anything with their Marine friends. Very politely, I asked him if he would please stop fucking with my crew. "We hardly get a hot meal and just want to eat, leave, and have no trouble. It's not a joke and you're not funny and if you don't stop I'm going to teach you some fuckin' manners." "And what kind of manners are you going to teach me, Pussy?" Like lightning striking, I stabbed his right hand to the plywood table with my good old Army issue heavy-duty

fork. Before he could even react, I quickly reached over the table and grabbed the S.O.B. by the back of his head, slammed his head down on the table, and pulled him real close to my chest. Then I grasped his throat with my right hand and squeezed his larynx real tight with my four fingers and thumb, so he couldn't scream or breathe. I thought for some silly reason nobody would notice me taking out this jerk. I knew I had his sorry ass and it would only take a minute for his lights to be out. He slumped and started to twitch. My crew quickly pulled me off him before he stopped breathing forever. Nobody bitched, complained, or said anything as his Marine friends dragged him out of our Mess Hall. We finished eating, smiling at each other between bites. The other guys in the Mess Hall just stared at us as we slowly walked out drinking chocolate milk. I didn't even get in trouble. It's the Nam.

October 14: We took an empty 50 gallon drum that had contained the defoliant (Agent Orange) we used to keep the weeds down around our position. With an ax and a hammer, we cut the barrel in half long ways. We now have our own little bath tub and a place to wash our clothes. It is great. Lighting a small fire underneath gave us hot water. One of the guys used a small pail and, as we squatted, he poured the hot water over our head. A quick lather of soap, some splashing, another pail of water, and bath time was over. In less than thirty minutes, the five of us had a bath. We took turns being "guy number 5". Then, that same bath water was used to wash our clothes.

October 15: We escorted a truck loaded with medical supplies out to the Ayd Station at Ca Lu. Lt. Moore told us that the medical station was named after the Marine Jacques J. Ayd, who was a Corpsman with Ripley's Raiders and was killed by NVA artillery at Ca Lu. He was right behind Don Wolfe's Duster position when the shell hit. Captain John Ripley had the Montagnards build a thatched building as the medical evacuation center for this area. Besides treating Americans, the Yards could get medical assistance. On June 22, 1967, he had our Dusters escort the Marine Corps Band out to the building for a formal dedication ceremony. He said it was amazing to see the Yards hear a band play for the first time in their lives. He always thought that a few in attendance

were NVA soldiers. Who else but the Marines would send their band into the combat zone? Those poor guys had to be scared shitless.

October 19: I told the guys it is my girlfriend Nancy's 20th birthday. We sang "Happy Birthday" to her. I re-read her letters. I have sniffed all the perfume off of them.

I hope to get a new scent soon. It is funny how we pass around each other's unopened letters trying to guess the name of the perfume. We came up with all kinds of silly sexual names. If you sniffed another guy's letter too long, they'd get pissed off.

October 20: I dreaded body recovery. Being one of the newer guys, I have to pick up all the pieces. The dead have to meet God with all their parts. It is the task from Hell. If the men are severely wounded, I give them morphine to ease their pain. If they are dying and time allows, I hold them and comfort them until the chariot from Heaven arrives. I owe this to their mothers and my own salvation.

October 21: The medic at Camp Carroll had me airlifted to the hospital in Da Nang to get my jungle rot treated. The Mycelex cream ointment he had given me previously was not working and my legs had about twenty oozing holes in them about 3/8" round and a 1/2" deep. My crotch had a purple rash, and the skin was peeling.

October 22: The hospital is great; hot showers, great food, a bed and clean clothes. While the doctors and nurses cleaned my rot, I had to help the wounded soldiers and Marines. I was considered one of the "Walking Wounded". Our tasks included everything from mopping floors to changing bed pans and pushing gurneys.

I cannot believe that they had wounded NVA in the same room as our wounded. The wounded NVA had a military policeman guarding them. The cop never said a thing or even gave a glance as the Marine in the bed next to the Gook pulled out his intravenous lines. I just kept mopping.

October 23: The funniest thing happened today. In the morning they had the entire Walking Wounded stand in formation in front of a nurse. There we were, all in our hospital gowns with our asses hanging out. There were about thirty of us standing tall, ten across and three rows deep. The nurse started telling us about a parasite that was in the river water that could have gotten up into our colon through our anus. She then pointed to a cart full of small soup size paper cups with lids. She announced that she wanted each one of us to label a container with our name and service number, defecate into the container and return it to the cart. We all stood there staring at the cart, thinking "This is nuts." One of the brothers chirped up and said, "Excuse me Mams. Did I hear you right? You want us to pinch one off into that little cup?" Everyone burst into laughter. The poor embarrassed nurse started yelling and handing out cups, screaming if we didn't do what she said we could not go back to our units. That sounded great to us, we all threw the cups in the garbage and walked away laughing. Twenty minutes later we were all back in formation. Standing in front of us was a Colonel wearing bloody surgical scrubs. At the top of his lungs he spoke a language we all understood. "Listen you assholes! You will take one of those fucking cups, write your name and service number on it, and take a shit in it! I don't care if you shit in your hands, or pants, or dig it out of your asshole with a tongue depressor, but that cup will be filled and placed back on that fucking cart! Do you maggots understand me?!" All you heard was a big "Hoo Rah, Colonel," as we all snapped to attention and saluted. The nurse just stood there smiling.

October 25: Before going back to the DMZ, the hospital took us over to a large PX and USO Center. It was a relaxing day of playing games and picking up some needed toiletries. They had a place that sold Zippo lighters and you could get them engraved for a dollar. I bought a new Zippo and had it engraved "To Really Live – You Must Nearly Die". It was crazy, because the guy standing in front of me in line was a hometown friend named Tony Zelec who was in the Marines. As we waited to get our lighters engraved, I told him I had seen John Driscoll, another Marine from our town, playing baseball up in Dong Ha. Talking to Tony was a nice change of pace.

October 26: To forget we are in a war, we are always having some kind of card game, knife throwing contest, shooting contest, or boxing and wrestling. Today, we started a new type of knife throwing contest. Instead of throwing at a small wooden target leaning against or nailed to a pole, we took turns holding the target. What a rush! You just stood there while a guy threw his knife at you and you followed the knife to the wood. If the knife went off target, you quickly moved the target to the knife. If it hit you, so what, maybe you'd go home.

October 27: The crew helped me tension the track treads. We need the Duster to run straight and true. Sometimes we don't come to a complete stop while shooting. I need the Duster to go perfectly straight as I let her chug down the road at a slow jerky pace, so I can hand out ammo from the Driver's hatch.

October 28: After a few days of having lots of fun and laughs, Lt. Moore caught us at our new knife throwing contest. Screaming and yelling, he called us a bunch of sickos and said this was not what he expected of his men. One of the guys laughed and told him it was the Army's new type of agility drill. Moore did not like his humor and told us if he found us doing something crazy like that again, he would ship us off to another unit. We all looked at each other and smiled…No knives?...How 'bout axes?

October 31: Halloween…I cannot help but think of how I survived another month killing all kinds of goblins and scary creatures of the night. Would I make it through this night or would the Devil come calling for my soul? No…The Devil was already here.



Ca Lu



"The Razorback Mountain" part of the mountains made up of "The Rockpile" and "Fish Bowl" area. On top of the Razorback is a Marine lookout position, only accessible by helicopter.



Heading out to the Fish Bowl.



Our bunker on Hill 250. This is where Lt. Mitchum hit his head.



The new bunker Lt. Mitchum made my crew build.



Delta – 5



Delta – 5 Punji Pit



Duster at Delta – 5



Bananas



Norman Oss and Joe Belardo.
Norman was the best driver in the 1/44 Artillery.



"Lester" the monkey

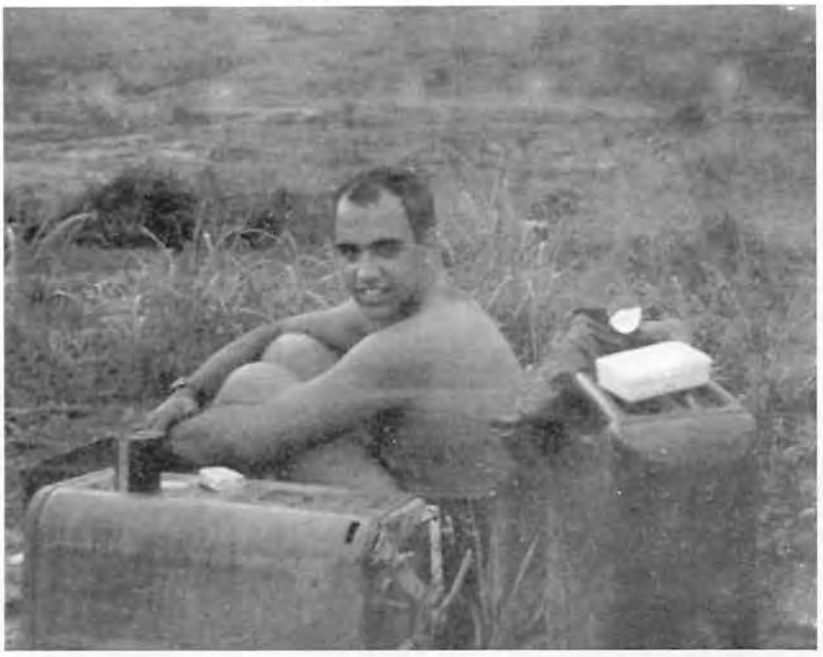

Bath time



The Marine Corps band playing at the dedication of the Ayd Station.



Ayd station dedication – the Montagnard people had never seen or heard a band. The tall guys were suspected NVA-Chinese advisors enjoying the music.



I carried this picture of my fiancée, Nancy, throughout Vietnam.



The spectacular view and firing advantage from Hill 250.



Secondary explosions were seen from Hill 250 after hitting enemy positions on the eastern slope of Dong Ha mountain.



Hill 250 ground-artillery radar surveillance.



A pile of 40mm empty brass ammo casings, lying on the ground
After only one minute of shooting at an NVA position.

CHAPTER 5: AND HELL CAME CALLING

November 1: Sgt. Dieter took Russia Holley and me with him to Ca Lu. After a few days, Dieter will leave to return home to the United States and we will return to The Rockpile.

November 2: Today, our Squad Leader, Eugene Triola, got bitten by a rat. I feel sorry for him because he only has a few days left before he is to return home and he has to get two weeks of rabies shots before he can leave.

His instant replacement is a dumb-ass guy we immediately nickname Dufuss. We are not happy with this sergeant as our Squad Leader. In addition, the LT sent orders to swap two experienced men for two other experienced men. Our crew now consists of me as the Driver, Gunner Joe Musso, Gun Bunnies Cleave Lanier and Russia Holly, and Dufuss.

We started running north of The Rockpile, past our North OP (Observation Post) to a place they called "The Fish Bowl". Our job was to escort Marines to and from this tiny outpost situated between three high peaks, north of the highest mountain peak called The Razor Back, west of what they called Mutters Ridge. It was a shooting gallery for the NVA and a nightmare of a place for anyone. A Marine or two would always get wounded or killed on each trip. When we returned to The Rockpile, we put the KIAs next to the Landing Zone pad situated on the east edge of the camp on a lower flat area just below our Duster position. It was the official ***"Tag and Bag"*** area. I heard the Marine Priest singing "Simeon's Chant" again to the dead. I hated him and his song. It makes the war become a reality; it makes me vulnerable, it makes me think. And that type of thinking will get me killed.

Twenty years passed and, at my Uncle Henry's funeral, a young Irish Priest sang. His words of Simeon were more than a flashback. My mind and soul melted, I cried, sobbed, and shook out of control as the priest chanted. My relatives thought it was for Uncle Henry.

November 3: We all examined the hole in Cleve Lanier's helmet. Cleve told us this horrifying story of how he got shot in the head and how his helmet saved him. "The bullet hit my helmet, went through, and cut my head right here. It continued to travel between the plastic helmet liner and metal outside and exited right here," he explained.
It was a miracle he survived.

Don Wolfe continued the story and told us the battle had taken place on August 30th. A convoy heading back from Ca Lu to the Rockpile was hit by the NVA. Don's Duster, commanded by Squad Leader Sgt. Laurier Derosier, went out to help them. Trying to rescue the Marines, they fought their way into the fire fight. Because of the carnage on the road, they were forced to stop. Their Duster was now stopped on an elevated section of Route 9 surrounded by elephant grass. Because of their position, it was impossible to lower the 40s enough to shoot real close and clear the area of NVA. Cleve said Don grabbed the M60 and started blasting away at the advancing NVA. The NVA then turned their focus on the Duster. RPGs started flying overhead, and enemy automatic weapon bullets began feverishly pinging off the Duster. One of the bullets hit Cleve in the helmet and sent him flying and another hit Derosier in the head, severely wounding him. Because of the ferocity of the battle, they were unable to give aid to Laurier until after the battle. Still alive, he was dropped off at The Rockpile by the crew along with the other wounded and dead. They hope their friend will survive from his horrible head wound.

November 4: The Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel John House, came to Camp Carroll and fired Charlie Battery's 200,000th 40mm cannon shell. The Chaplain, Captain Cecil Lewis, assisted. It confirmed our suspicions that our battery was in deep heavy contact with the NVA. Almost a quarter of a million 40mm cannon shells had been fired at the NVA. ***How many did I help kill?***

November 5: Sgt. Dufuss, our new Squad Leader, always becomes unraveled during **"INCOMING!"** and loses his leadership ability during firefights. We have get to get rid of this guy.

November 6: Lt. Moore was reassigned to Charlie Battery Headquarters. Our Section has been taken over by a new lieutenant named Lt. Hardin. Our Duster crew is not sure of the new lieutenant. He has never been tested under enemy fire. Whatever stateside jungle training tactics he had is a far cry from the Vietnam Conflict and doesn't work. We will try to teach him the ropes and hopefully keep him alive. We also agree that we will override his orders during combat if they jeopardize the mission.

November 7: Two NVA cannon shells landed next to our bunker. What an explosion!
I thought we had taken a direct hit. Debris was everywhere. A few of us were thrown up into the air and flung against the walls by the concussion of the blast. Our ears rang and are bleeding. It shook the hell out of us. Our bodies hurt and we have black and blues all over.

November 8: We escorted a truck full of C-Rations, water, and ammo out to a little outpost north of The Rockpile called the North OP. We have one Duster crew there and a platoon of Marines. My friends Norman Oss, Daryl Hale and Billy Conley were part of the Duster crew. It was good to see my old friends. As I approached Norman, his monkey Lester jumped on my shoulder and as quick as lightning opened my shirt pocket and pulled out my last Tareyton cigarette and ate it. I tried to grab him and he bit me. Then, he reached in my pocket again and took out my last piece of Juicy Fruit chewing gum and ate that. I quickly pulled him by his leash, tossed him to the ground, stepped on him, pulled out my .45 pistol, and was going to blow his brains out. Norman started screaming, "Jooooe! Noooooo! Please don't kill my son! He is the heir to my throne!"
I couldn't help but laugh. I let him go and the little bastard took a quick shit and threw it at me. Everybody became hysterical with laughter. Lester was a hard act to follow.

Years after the war, Norman would settle in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. To promote peace and harmony, Norman hand carves beautiful walking sticks for all ages. He hands out, free of cost, over 1500 sticks per year. The town blog calls him "The Stickman".

November 10: We installed a new engine in C141. The job took about three hours. We then went down to the river and washed the dried blood and parts from the wounded and dead off the Duster. I couldn't help but cry. I am constantly picking up wounded and dead. They call us "The Body Snatchers". The feeling of their blood becoming sticky and drying on my skin makes me unbelievably sad. I can't help but stare at myself as it dries and turns burnt reddish brown on my hands and clothes. My friend's life blood dries under my fingernails. I can't stand how they look and clean them constantly with my knife. ***God, please save me.***

November 11: A Duster crew from the other side of our combat base observed lights from NVA moving along the perimeter. The lights were extinguished with a minute long burst of our 40mm guns.

November 12: Our track C141 was not running well, so the LT ordered us to swap Dusters with Lou Block. We had to keep running the road to Ca Lu or some other God-forsaken place. Lou was not happy.

November 13: Still raining, still eating C-Rations, and we are all still scared shitless. We had to drive through three or four feet of mud to get into Ca Lu. What a mud hole! The mud was so deep, it pulled our boots off as we walked. We took turns with the bulldozer, pushing the trucks and other vehicles through the deep thick mud.

I heard my own confession and gave myself absolution, reciting three Hail Mary's. God won't mind. Some days I feel like the Devil is taking over my body and soul.

November 14: We ran Route 9 past Ca Lu to a place called Joliet. Route 9 was always scary because the elephant grass grew high and thick, right up to the edge of the road. Charlie could just step out of the grass and let you have it. The road smelled from all the dead NVA we killed on our trips up and down it. They keep coming and we keep killing.

November 16: Lt. Hardin had a meeting with our crew. He called our crew "rebels and trouble makers" and is tired of us not listening to him and overriding his orders. We explained to him that we are only trying to stay alive and keep him alive. He does not have enough combat experience yet and should learn to listen to the more experienced crews. We told him not to be drawn into the ambush, stay outside if possible, counter fire, and see if he could get any enemy return fire. Eliminate them and pick other targets. "Remember, Sir, we can't shoot closer than 88 feet. If the Duster is caught in the center of an ambush without first counter firing, it will be destroyed. Under 88 feet you have to use the machine gun, grenades and rifles, and reposition the Duster on the sloped banks of the road to be able to shoot lower and closer." Somehow our discussion, which we thought was going on the positive note, turned into an argument and screaming match. He told us that he was the officer in charge and we had to listen to him. Again he called us "rebels" and told us he was going to give us all the road duty. That's okay with us, because we already do all the road duty. We could not figure what went wrong with our meeting. We were just trying to help the new lieutenant.

November 17: We got C141 back from Lou. The engine now ran great, but the starter was broken. They told us to jump-start it and drive it anyway. What a joke!

November 18: Ambush Alley kept its reputation. The truck in front of us was hit square with an RPG from the left side of the road. Trying to block the road was a typical NVA tactic. The Marines scrambled for the nearest cover, the right side of our now stationary Duster. I could feel the Duster as it rocked from what felt like two explosions. The Duster had not yet begun firing. I thought we were hit, but the Duster was still running. I emptied my M-16 into a few Gooks running at us with satchel charges. The charges exploded and Gook parts flew everywhere. Again, there was another explosion. Dirt, debris and smoke now covered our Duster. Joe Musso started screaming into the headset, "The Sarge is freaking out, won't shoot, and is rolling grenades off the

right side of our Duster, blowing up Marines!" I frantically climbed out of the Driver's hatch and up to the turret. I grabbed Sgt. Dufuss, threw him onto the rear deck of the Duster, and gave him a quick slap to the face that knocked him on his ass. I told Cannoneer Lanier to get the fucking guns shooting. I gave the injured Marines the best aid I could and placed them on the rear deck of the Duster. I told the Sarge to hold on to them and not to fuck up or I'd kill him.

We dropped the Marines off at the Ayd Station. Later today, we heard that two Marines had died in the battle and many others had been wounded. I prayed that our sergeant was not responsible for any of their deaths.

November 20: This evening, Sgt. Dufuss ran his mouth about his triumphs of the other day's battle. I went crazy and wanted what I called "a piece of the Old Sarge". Before I could grab him and kick his ass, he retreated to the confines of our bunker. I started screaming for him to come out of the bunker, so I could kick his butt "Jersey style" all over the camp. The rest of the crew started getting just as crazy. The sergeant wouldn't come out, but continued to heckle us about the battle. We all charged into the bunker. Pushing the Sarge up against the dirt wall, I pressed my M-16 against his forehead and announced that chicken shits, cowards, and assholes had no place on our track and that it was his turn to die. Lanier grabbed the gun and stopped me from killing the bastard.

I quickly hit the Sarge with a few hard punches. He slumped to the dirt floor, lights out. I became hysterical and retreated to the confines of my Driver's compartment, my private sanctuary. We were a team and the team was having troubles. I did not want to die because someone screwed up and I wasn't going to put up with his shit. Back in the bunker I announced, "If the Sarge fucks up again, just shoot him. Only listen to Musso and me." I then proceeded to beat his ass again. Nobody said anything. They knew better.

November 21: Lt. Hardin got us another Duster C131, "The Track from Hell." He told us C141 needed its engine rebuilt again. We needed a good running Duster to keep us running Route 9. The LT asked the Sarge how he got all busted up. The Sarge was smart and told him he fell off the Duster during night Guard Duty and hit his face and head. I just shrugged and smiled.

November 24: We heard that Con Thien was half overrun by the NVA. We continued the run to Ca Lu, the crew praying that the Sarge wouldn't screw up again. I began to hate two things: the NVA, and the Sarge.

Wayne Bailey came back from the hospital after a bout with malaria. Sergeant Noel Brown got bitten three times by a rat. A tiger bit a Marine on the arm. He became a celebrity. Lou Block became the driver of C121. The original men I came to Carroll with are just starting to get a taste of the road.

I finally received my Quarter Master Allowance. I got paid $182.00 and sent $160.00 home to Mom. To get money, I have been selling surgical alcohol mixed with Lemon-Lime Kool-Aid. I call it a Jungle Daiquiri. Unbelievably, some asshole from Headquarters called me on the radio and asked if I knew where my personnel records were, because they are missing. **How would I know, you dumb shit?**

November 26: The Sarge was finally replaced and no one ever said another thing about "Dufuss." Joe Musso has become our Squad Leader. Chester Sines was promoted to Staff Sergeant E-6 and has become our new section chief. I know Chester will make the best Section Chief in the 44th. This is the beginning of the makings of another great fighting team.

The NVA tried to hit the top of the outpost known as "The Razorback". We continue to run the road.

November 28: Battalion announced that we have held our positions on the DMZ for one full year. By now, all of the original party that had come to Vietnam with the 1/44th had completed their tours of duty and were going home. The only year I wanted to celebrate was completing the twelve months I had to serve, allowing me to go home too.

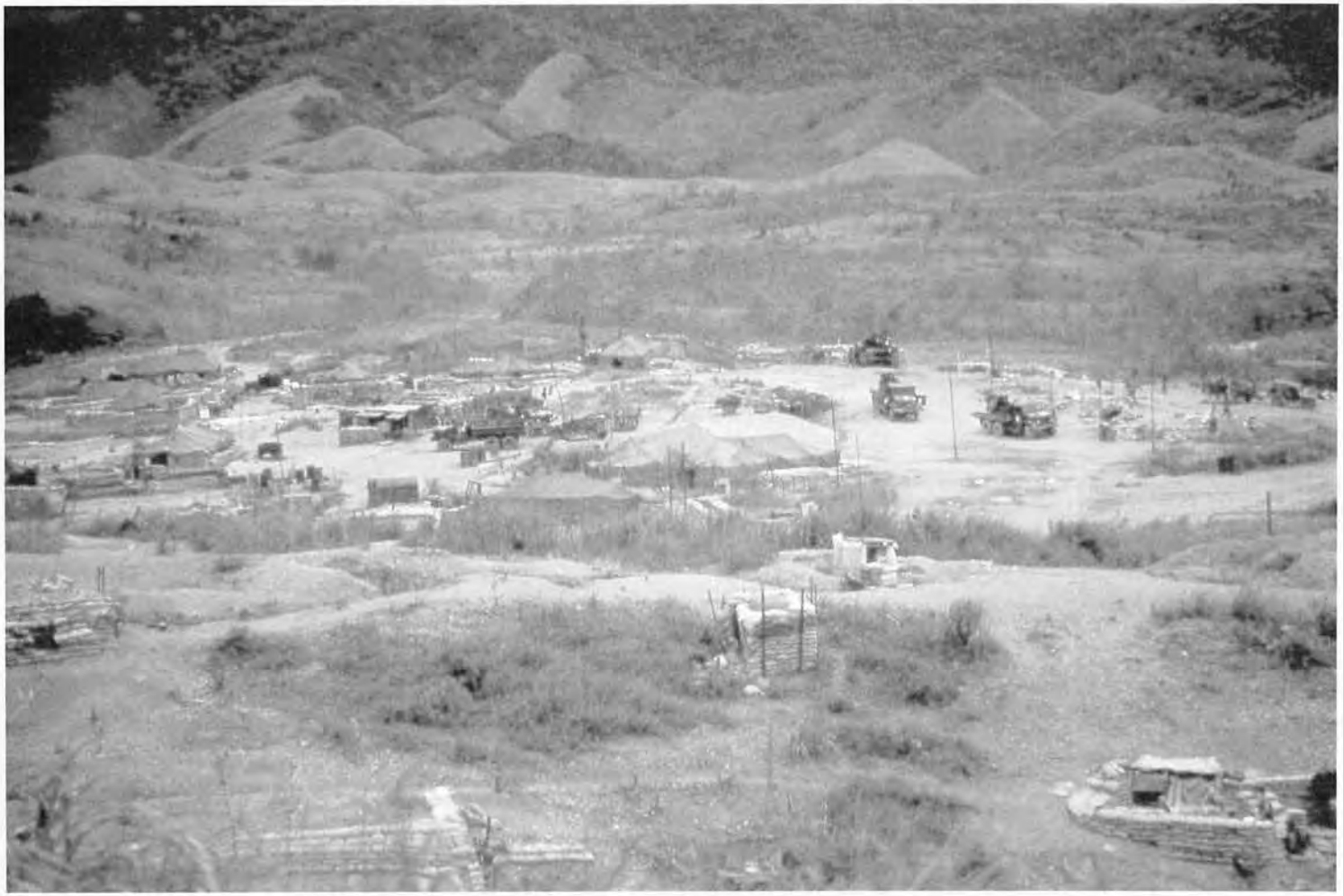

"The Rockpile"
Duster position can be seen in upper right.
Two Quad-50's can be seen driving though camp.

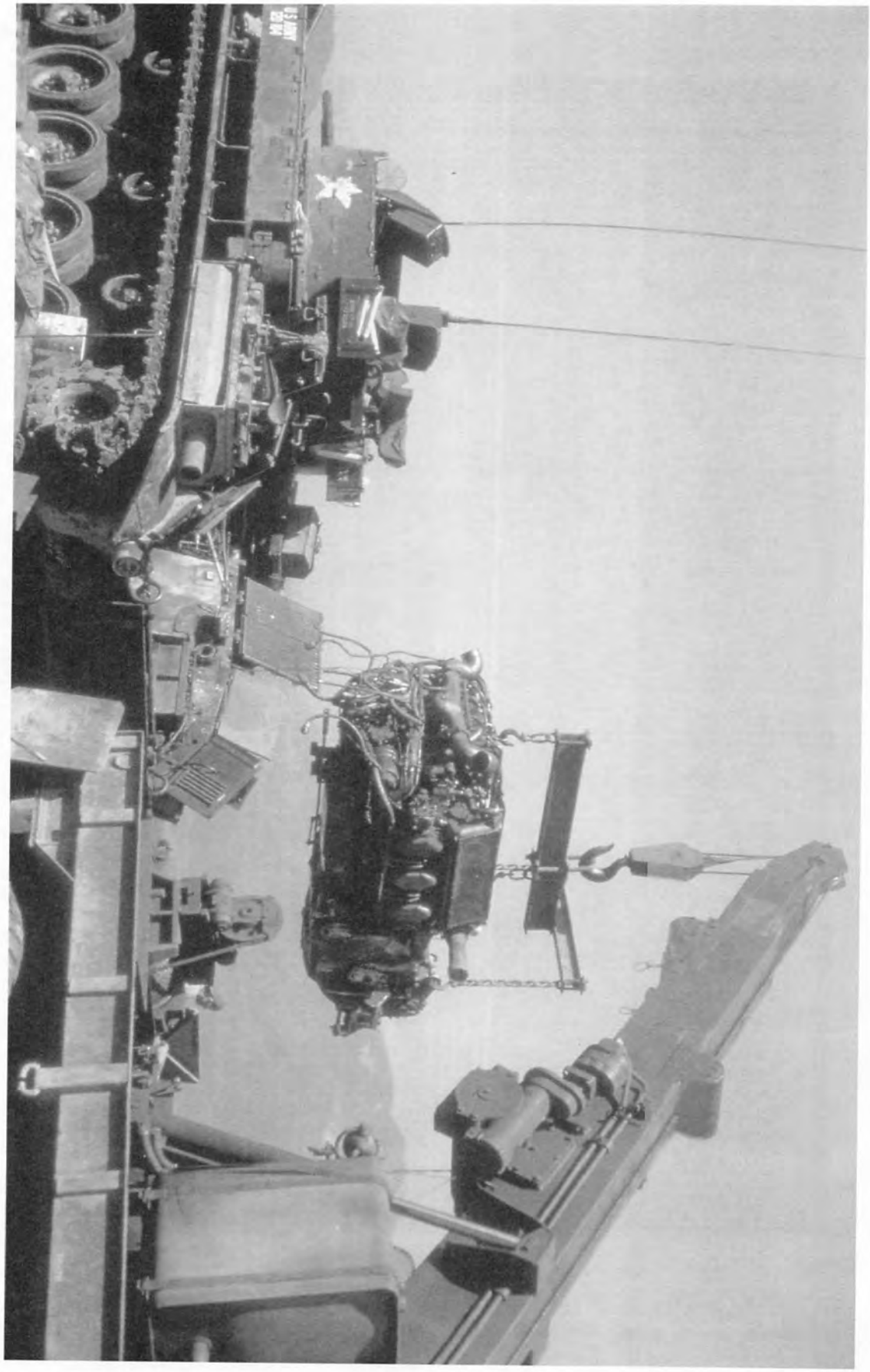

Another new engine for the Duster.



Marine resupply truck heading down muddy Route 9 to Ca Lu.



Bulldozer pushing Duster fuel truck through mud at Ca Lu.



The Rockpile LZ and Graves Registration area.
Marines can be seen waiting to load a helicopter.
The Marines' chaplain would stand next to the Marine guard position in foreground and chant his prayers and song.



Medivac

CHAPTER 6: A DEADLY DECEMBER

December 2: The Dusters and Quad-50s engaged a large NVA unit at Camp Carroll. The Dusters shot over 950 rounds of 40mm cannon shells and the Quad-50s shot 2,200 rounds of 50-caliber machine gun ammo. It was just another busy day at the office for my people. We blew the shit out of the NVA. Parts and bodies were all over the place. It felt good to get even with those little bastards. They were left to rot where they fell.

December 3: We heard that Sergeant Derosier died from the head wounds he had received in the August 30th battle. I prayed that God would rest his soul. He will be sadly missed, especially by Don Wolfe, Cleve Lanier, Cooper Thomas and Leslie "Red" Dietze.

December 5: I was called to an awards' formation regarding the October 3rd battle. After the formation had assembled, I was asked to step out of the awards line. I was told there must have been an error. It was very humiliating. The officer in charge of the awards ceremony made it seem like I was stealing someone's day of fame and glory. I told him where he could stick it. He just smiled. I then told him to get fucked and smiled back.

December 6: We went back to Carroll to pick up our new medic. Via the radio, we were told he was one brave son-of-a-bitch and fearless. His name was James "Doc" Butler. After a brief introduction, Doc gave me another crash lesson on medical aid and treatment on the combat field. After my two hour session, the LT asked me to take Doc to The Rockpile, so he could meet the other combat teams and give them a little extra medical training.

Since Doc had never been in any combat on the road, I went over some basic survival skills with him before heading back to The Rockpile. I wanted Doc to sit next to me on the TC's seat of our Duster. However, I explained to him that I had taken out the seat and replaced it with 40mm ammo cans surrounded by lots of loose ammo. The entire Driver's

compartment now carried ammo and the only place to really sit was my Driver's seat. It was tough sitting for the rider, but I wanted all the ammo I could carry. On top of the can I had placed two flak jackets for the rider to sit on.

I told Doc, that if anything should happen, he should stay real low, with only his eyes sticking out above the rim of his side of the compartment, and to shoot only at confirmed targets. To my surprise, he announced that he was only there to save people and not to kill them and was more than willing to die trying to save lives. Looking into his eyes, I knew he was not lying and had convictions of steel. I quickly inspected the M14 rifle he carried. I wanted to make sure that if I needed to use it, it was loaded and ready to shoot. There was no ammo in it and the barrel was full of dirt. "I just carry it because I was ordered to." Nodding and shrugging my shoulders, I told him to get in the Duster. I did not know what to do, so I handed him one of my hand grenades and instructed him to throw it on my order. In a firm, no nonsense voice I said "Doc, when I say "throw", you throw as far as you can and then get low and out of sight. I don't care if you don't want to kill another human, you're on my Duster and we don't fuck around. If you want all of us to live, you best throw that fuckin' grenade when I tell you. Be careful, the pins are partially straightened, so it will be real easy to pull and throw. Hopefully nothing will happen."

As we road down Route 9 to The Rockpile, we received a few enemy sniper rounds and small arms fire, but just kept riding and only shot back with our M60 machine gun. Doc, ducking from the bullets pinging off the Duster, accidentally dropped his hand grenade into my pile of loose 40mm ammo. He shouted to me that he could see the grenade rolling all over the Duster floor under all the ammo. I started laughing and yelling, "What a fucking way to die! Doc, get down there and find that fucking grenade and make sure the pin does not pull out." I was the lead Duster in the "Rough Rider Convoy" and was traveling at 45 miles per hour down Route 9's winding, bumpy road. Dusters only stop when the convoy gets really hit by the enemy and needs our fire power. Otherwise, we just keep going to our destination, driving through the

shooting gallery like sitting ducks. Doc, screaming and fishing through the ammo, finally found the grenade. Showing it to me in triumph, I quickly grabbed it, bent the pull pin tight and handed it back as if nothing happened, yelling "Keep your head down!"

At The Rockpile, I introduced Doc to the other guys and instructed him that he would be living with them in the small bunker next to our Command Post. In the morning, I will take him to meet the rest of the guys at The Rockpile.

December 7: I told the crew I will be getting married to my girl, Nancy, one year from this day. David Lewis arrived in the morning and became our new Cannoneer. I took Doc around and introduced him to the other guys from the 44th and his counterparts, the Marine Corpsmen. We still run Ambush Alley every day. Death and destruction, living and dying, melts into one everyday occurrence. My God, I have only been in Nam a little more than three months. Will my Nancy think I have changed? Will my family hate me for what I have done?

December 8: Six days a week, I have guard duty and hate every minute. It is lonely and very frightening. Each day before Guard Duty I set up my position, changing the place I sit every night. In the daylight hours, I check out what is in front of my position and make small stone replicas of the trees, brush, and hills. In the dark I can feel the rocks and stare into the midnight shadows hoping nothing has moved. It's amazing how the NVA disguise themselves as trees and brush and move up on me. With just a feel, I can always account for what is in front of me. I keep the safety off my M-16. I don't want the enemy to hear it click on, if I need to shoot. Any added objects to my field of view automatically get shot. I never sit in or on the Duster. It is a prime target. Each night I sneak up to the Duster and place a helmet on the sighting rings. From a distance it looks like you are sitting in the Duster. You just sit, wait, and pray nothing happens. I can out sit a mouse. It's amazing what you hear or think you hear, and when the shadows move...**OOOh, shit!!**

December 10: Joe Musso and I shared a small bottle of Mogen David Wine that my Aunt Margie sent me for Christmas. We sat in our bunker by a Christmas tree his mother sent, sipping the wine and eating the popcorn the wine had been packed in to protect it from breakage on its long flight from home. They tasted great together.

December 11: Joe Musso left Nam for his home in Union, New Jersey. When he gets home, he promised to visit my family and tell them that everything is okay, not to worry, and that I am in a fairly safe area. Only a Nam brother can look into another soldier's mother's face and lie that good.

Today Joe is a firefighter in his hometown. He can't stop saving others.

December 12: Sam Lewis, a very quiet man from Oklahoma, with some combat experience, became our Squad Leader.

December 14: Earl "Tex" Holt became our other new Cannoneer. He was my personal pick out of all the guys. Tex is big, about 6'-2". I told him he will be my main cannon loader and I expect him to load both guns while the other loader shoots the machine gun. I warned him not to disappoint me.

Tex rose to every occasion and never let me down or disappointed me throughout our time together in Nam. He was a Warrior King and is a true friend to this day.

I have begun to worry. We have two new guys and we haven't stopped running Ambush Alley. It turns out that Chester Sines and David Lewis are next door neighbors back in the real world. Chester and I started giving crash combat courses to the two Newbees. We wanted them to quickly understand the life-threatening conditions they are in and that training is of the utmost importance. ***My instinct tells me that they will rise to "Kill the Dragon" and "Duel with the Devil".***

Sam Lewis and I asked Lt. Hardin if our crew could rest a few days before hitting the road again. I don't know exactly what happened but, as usual, our meeting didn't go as planned and I ended up cursing out Lt. Hardin. Sam started yelling at him in some Native American language and I started laughing. I have this loud, wild laugh and get this silly smile and grin. It drives the Lieutenant crazy. We just walked away, cursing him out in Native American and my broken Italian.

December 15: We were ordered to rebuild our dilapidated bunker and live in some little, shitty tent.

December 16: Our assignment was another run to Ca Lu and back. The crew of Sam Lewis, Russia Holley, Earl Holt, David Lewis and I are magically able to work as a team. I am amazed how comfortable we are with each other. The crew removed the front plate with our Grim Reaper insignia painted on it from between the 40mm barrels and replaced it with a plain plate. They thought the logo was bad medicine. The only bad omen they could have would be if they ever hesitated to kill. God didn't plan it that way, but someone has to be the Grim Reaper in war. Uncle Sam and the war have trained us too well. Our surroundings make us rise to the occasion. It is kill or be killed, something we have become real good at...too good.

December 19: Another convoy got hit in Ambush Alley. Three trucks and one M48 tank got hit, two Marines were KIA and four were WIA. John Stokes from Charlie Battery, carrying the mail to Ca Lu, was hit real badly through the upper arm. He came back to The Rockpile screaming and looking for help. A portion of his bone was missing. I thought his arm was going to fall off as it swung like a pendulum from side to side. I dressed his wound the best I could and wrapped his arm in a makeshift sling tight to his body. John just stood there bitching and yelling like a wild hillbilly. Stokes was medivaced and never returned. He got his ticket home. Christmas came early for John Stokes.

We headed back to the ambush site under Lt. Moore's leadership and swept the enemy from the area with a volley of 40mm rounds. The enemy small arms and automatic weapons being fired at us were instantly quelled. We then blew up the two destroyed Marine ammo trucks left at the ambush. I don't know for sure what kind of ammo it was, or if the NVA had planted booby traps in the trucks, but it was one hell of an explosion when the trucks blew up. We quickly tucked our heads down into our flak jackets like turtles, as we got pelted by all kinds of debris (dirt, rocks and metal parts of the trucks) bouncing off us and our Duster.

December 20: We returned again with Lt. Moore and helped drag and push the blown up trucks off the road, bringing back any pieces we could find. This afternoon we took out another convoy to Ca Lu, as though nothing had ever happened.

This was Lt. Moore's last ride down Ambush Alley to Ca Lu. He decided we would leave The Rockpile forty minutes before the rest of the convoy. He ordered us to travel at a slow speed and hammer the north and south of the ridgeline with our 40s, hoping to kill the always waiting NVA before they had a chance to get off a shot. About a half mile out, we both noticed a lone tree about ten feet off the road. The crew, engrossed in their shooting mission, never noticed the tree. Before we could stop or yell into our communication helmets, the turret swung and let the tree have it with both barrels. I quickly stopped the Duster. The pieces of the exploding tree bounced back and hit me and Moore. We looked like two giant porcupines with thousands of tiny toothpicks sticking out of us. We climbed out and up to the turret to show the guys what they had done. They became hysterical with laughter, as Moore and I picked out the toothpicks.

I was hoping Moore would stay with us, but he has been reassigned to Charlie Battery's Headquarters section back at Camp Carroll. We are all happy for him that he is leaving "THE ROAD". He had led us well and taught us much. I hope we will meet again someday, stateside, so I can thank him in person for everything he had done for the men and me.

December 21: Lt. Hardin asked for one volunteer from our track for another one of his suicide recovery missions. We cut playing cards to see who would go. The new guy, Tex, pulled an ace. I looked Tex square in the eye, smiled, and announced, "Sorry Earl, you lose, aces are ones in Nam." I looked around the bunker and we were all nodding in total agreement. We all thought that Earl would not be coming back.

Later, on our radio, we had heard one of the guys got killed. We all thought that Tex had bit the bullet. We went through his belongings and divided up his clothes and personal cleaning items. Hours later, to our surprise, Earl returned, only to catch me writing a letter of condolence to his mother and the guys packing his personals to send back to his family. He was even more upset when one of the guys asked him if he wanted his stuff back. The other guys started laughing. I could not help but raise my eyebrows and smile. Tex is very, very religious and insisted we all pray with him and repent our heathen ways. We said a prayer with Tex and listened as he read scriptures to us---his pulpit, a sandbag illuminated by a candle. ***Reality Check.***

December 22: We shot our way back and forth from Ca Lu. No troops were hit, ***Thank God.***

We dropped off some supplies to the Yards living a little past Ca Lu. My heart was broken when I found out that the NVA practiced genocide on the poor Montagnard people. Because Montagnards took aid from the Americans and did not obey the NVA, they killed a few of their children, beheading them and placed their heads on bamboo pikes. The sight was beyond anything I had ever seen. I cried at the very thought that my gifts of Bazooka Bubblegum and candy got those beautiful children killed! Is there a God?! I hate the NVA. I promised the village chief, through hand gestures and body language, that we will revenge their children's deaths. Another broken-hearted memory is born.

December 23: We escorted another convoy to Ca Lu and back to the Rockpile. At Ca Lu we got hit with seventy NVA rockets. We were lucky none hit the convoy staging area. We loaded the trucks with the

dead first and then the wounded. Live friends were sitting on top of dead friends. My heart never stops breaking.

To this day, I can never understand why we just didn't take and hold all the roads, hills, and mountains from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh. Why weren't we allowed to fight like they did in other wars? Thousands of soldiers and Marines would have been saved, both physically and mentally. We all knew the military was not running this war, but that some asshole politician, with some liberal asshole reporter stuck up his ass, was in control.

We think that either someone has it in for us, or that we are the best crew around, because we still have not stopped running Ambush Alley.

December 24: Lt. Hardin surprised us and gave us off Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We had no bunker and are living in a small tent with a candle for light. Joe Musso has left us his mother's small Christmas tree with a box of miniature Christmas balls. We spent the morning decorating our tree. Since we have no tinsel, we unwrapped my eight packs of Juicy Fruit Chewing Gum and twisted the middle so they looked like little bows and added them to our tree. As we dressed our tree, we all sang Christmas Carols. It was contagious. Before we knew it, we had half The Rockpile singing "Jingle Bells." We played cards for matchsticks and lost at horseshoes to a surprisingly agile old sergeant named Cecil Hamilton. The evening was spent sharing some pepperoni and provolone cheese from one of my "CARE" packages and helping Earl tape-record messages to his mother. We took turns giving his mom pre-planned messages about how great Earl was doing and how wonderful it was where we lived. The rest of the night was spent listening to the taped messages she sent Earl and our crew. Her soothing Texas voice made it a wonderful taste of home and a great Christmas Eve gift for all of us.

December 25: It is Christmas Day. Duster crews took turns running to Camp Carroll for a great hot Christmas meal. We rushed down to the

river and took a quick bath. We didn't have time to wash our clothes and were forced to celebrate the holiday in our dirty, blood-stained clothes. The cooks did a fantastic job in the mess hall. I could not believe the great assortment of food and all the holiday decorations. As the Soldiers and Marines in the mess hall bowed their heads, Earl said grace. We ended our meal trying to sing a few Christmas songs. Our designated thirty minutes of great chow and good tidings was over. It was time to saddle up and head back to The Rockpile and give the next crew their turn. "Merry Christmas".....

December 26: A Marine was riding shotgun on our Duster in the TC hatch (the additional opening and seat to the right of the driver) and stood to get a better look and wave at his buddies in the truck in front of us. An enemy sniper's bullet hit him through his left shoulder, the bullet exiting out his right side. The convoy didn't stop. It was The Rough Rider Convoy. The Marine just slumped back into the TC hatch, asleep forever.

I called the turret and automatically slowed the Duster to a crawl and started shooting a slow rate of counter fire at the ridge line all the way to Ca Lu. We didn't tell the two Cannoneers until we got to Ca Lu. They became very upset. We taught them a new phrase: "It's only a thing, you'll get over it. It don't mean nothin'."

*To this day we have never gotten over **IT.***

December 27: A Marine we called "Chicago", riding on the back of the Duster, got shot through the chest and landed in the turret on top of Earl. Earl kept him breathing and we dropped him off at Ca Lu. Nobody talked about it. I gave Earl a change of shirt, one of our old rag shirts I kept in the side compartment for cleaning the guns. It was better than his blood-soaked one. I was told that the Marine didn't make it. None of us ever knew his real name. Nicknames made it slightly easier for us to accept their fates. We had no words of wisdom for Earl. I just gave him a quick hug, patted his back, and walked away. I lit his blood-stained shirt on fire, but it only smoldered. The glowing embers turned

the green jungle fatigue shirt wrinkly black, leaving the blood soaked areas untouched. The last remains of a friend's life…

December 29: We rotated back to Carroll to the ***Water Point*** position. I was hoping to get back on Hill 250 outside the northeast corner of Carroll. Hill 250 had the best view and firing positions, but the Water Point had hot showers and a great field of fire of the western slopes and road leading to Carroll. Plus, it sure beat the river baths with the leeches. Roger Blentlinger, the Marine combat engineer who ran the Water Point, is one of my best Marine friends. He is my personal hero. Every time a Duster or Marine group gets into trouble, he is the first to volunteer for the reactionary team. Roger would always risk his life for our lives. He helped us and several others out of many bad situations.

We started getting ready for a big inspection. The men started joking, "If they inspect our balls, I bet they'll still find crotch rot."

December 30: Roger showed me how he made the water drinkable. He explained to me that the water we got came from either a water truck or through a pipe that was installed from the creek below. The water was then pumped into large rubber vats that were about ten feet round and four feet deep. He then added a few different chemicals. I could not help but think that this was his personal swimming pool and we were getting ready to take a swim. Next, he took a big wooden paddle and walked around each vat, mixing the chemicals and making a whirlpool. After each vat settled, all the bugs and other creatures were in the middle, making it easier for Roger to scoop them out with his net. He then pushed down the edge of the vat to drain off an oily substance floating on top. He said it was the residue left by the planes spraying the area with defoliant called Agent Orange. Finally, the light colored brown water, "ready to drink," was pumped into a big metal water tank that was covered in layers of sandbags. There was only one problem with The Water Point. Every NVA artillery team tried to hit the water tank.

I cannot help but think of the many trips we make to the river,

guarding the water tanker trucks as they filled with water. In addition, we have the gruesome job of helping the Marines pull out the dead water buffalos or NVA bodies that blocked the big water pump.

December 31: It is New Year's Eve and they gave our crew the night off. Some of the guys from the motor pool and office had to pull Guard Duty for us. I hoped they knew what they were doing. At 03:00 some Marines, from the Listening Post, were coming through the barbed wire. Dave Woods was the soldier on Guard Duty. The Marines had a password and Dave had a password. When the Marine called out "Geronimo," Dave forgot his response, "Indian", panicked, and started shooting. The Marines were lucky that Dave was nervous and a bad shot. At least, we had a few hours off and no one was injured.

Earl shared with me a note his Mother had placed in his pocket bible.

Hello My Baby,
I thought I could write this better than I could say it. Cause I don't want to cry right now. But remember how much I love you, just look around you and see how big this world is and say to yourself my Mama's heart is just this big and she loves me with every bit of it.
I love you, My Baby.

After I read her note, Earl read out loud the 91st psalm and I prayed I could keep him alive.



James "Doc" Butler



Sgt. Laurier Derosier (on left) with his crew.
Laurier died from the wounds he received on August 30, 1967.



Joe Musso and I celebrating Christmas.



Left to right: Sam Lewis, Joe Belardo, Chester Sines, David Lewis and Russia Holley.



Earl Holt



Our Duster returned to the ambush site with Lt. Moore to clear the area of the destroyed trucks.



The booby trapped Marine truck that blew up after we shot it with a volley of 40mm.



The famous tree we shot that covered Lt. Moore and me with splinters.



Duster at The Rockpile.



A Duster crew, with a squad of Marines riding on the Duster, celebrates their safe return through the "Infamous Ambush Alley."



Lt. Moore's final formation with his platoon.



My Christmas tent at The Rockpile.
You can see our Xmas tree decorated with gum wrappers.



Sgt. Cecil Hamilton beat all of us in horseshoes.



Earl Holt (facing forward) waiting for his Christmas dinner. Check out how dirty his Road Warrior pants are compared to his friends.



The Camp Carroll mess hall decorated for Christmas.



The cooks did a great job preparing our Christmas meal.



Joe Belardo and Marine Roger Blentlinger.



Here I am checking out the Roger's rubber vat filled with drinking water.



Shooting at the enemy as they make a daytime assault towards the Waterpoint and Camp Carroll.

CHAPTER 7: JANUARY MEANS TET

January 1, 1968: Today is New Year's Day and, at dusk, Tex and I saw what looked like a panther in front of our position. His cry was like the howl of a woman. More than anything, we wanted to be the first to shoot a panther. Grabbing our M-16 and flashlights, we stalked after the animal. Afraid he would end up behind us, we walked somewhat back-to-back, with our flashlights shining down the length of our barrels. Before we could get a shot off, the fast-moving jungle animal disappeared off into the jungle. All we could hear was his cries.

We now have track C142, and it is our job to get it in good running and fighting condition. It is one of the fastest tracks in our section, but still needs to be towed to get it running.

January 2: The crew awoke to find I had replaced the front Duster plate with our old friend "The Grim Reaper."

We trapped eight rats this evening. This beat the old record of five rats and one rat foot! The rats are so big that I had my father send me some muskrat traps. Ordinary rat traps are a joke to these rabbit-sized rodents. The candy, Chuckles, is the best bait. It gives me the creeps when the rats crawl on me. They like to lick my lips and place their nose in my nostrils. I hate the little bastards. I lay there motionless, praying I won't get bit. I don't want to take rabies shots in my belly.

January 3: The Marines issued us a small potbellied stove which we put in our bunker. The monsoon is wet and cold. One day it is 105 degrees hot; the next day it is 40 degrees cold. But, it feels like 20 degrees. I went from wearing tee shirts to long johns and rain gear. The little stove is wonderful. We stole a fuel drip pot from one of the mess hall hot water heaters. We stoked it with rocks and hard teakwood, and let our dripper drip. Five Dustermen and fourteen Marines are warm and dry as toast in our twelve-foot cubical.

January 4: I cannot believe the bullshit; they gave me KP and shit-burning detail again at the main latrine. What a foul way to get rid of human waste! I didn't think I had pissed off anyone lately. It must have been the silly grin and laugh I gave the officers.

We showed them. Tonight, we robbed all the sheet metal and wood the officers had stored for the roof of their new bunker and day room. We used it for our new bunker roof. After we completed our mission, we covered up the new roof with a layer of sandbags to hide our insubordination.

The short break from convoys is a welcome stand down. The only problem with base camp, living at the four-star resort known as Camp Carroll, is the constant ducking to avoid being hit by the NVA artillery.

January 5: We informed our Section Chief, Sgt. Chester Sines, that our telephone land line (lima-lima) that went from the Command Bunker across the camp to our position had been knocked out by the enemy artillery. The lines where strung across the base on telephone poles the Marine Combat Engineers had installed. Since Camp Carroll was always being hit by enemy artillery, the lines could be broken anywhere or in multiple places. We divided up into two, three-man teams. One team started at our bunker and the other started at the Command Bunker, a distance of about 500 yards. After about a two hour search, we found the broken line lying next to one of the poles that crossed over the road where the convoys assemble to leave Camp Carroll. Chester said he knew the supply room had a set of pole climbing spikes, and he would go get them and climb the pole and repair the lines. Like a professional pole climber, Chester ascended the pole. Holding tight to the top, he pulled up one end of the line and reattached it to the pole. As he started to pull up the other end for splicing, we heard the first volley of enemy artillery leave their gun tubes. Screaming, we told Chester to get down.

As the first round landed, we could see that the volley would be heading straight towards Chester. Screaming encouragement, we waited for him to descend. The spikes slipped and Chester fell flat to the pole.

Unable to help him, we were forced to run for our lives as the shells exploded even closer. The five of us huddled in a nearby bunker. Five explosions, ten, twenty, and then came that terrible quiet as we listened for more incoming and people screaming. Sprinting out of the bunker, we feared what we would find. To our surprise, there was Chester, still up on the pole. He was now at the very top, with his arms and legs wrapped tightly around it. We all looked in total amazement. Chester was still alive. There were hundreds of pieces of shrapnel stuck in the pole all around our poor buddy. The pieces ranged in size from only a few inches long to about two feet long. His climbing apparatus and clothes were literally pinned to the pole by the shrapnel. It looked like every square inch of the pole had metal sticking out of it and yet none of it had hit Chester. To get him down, we had to send for the boom truck that was used to install our Duster engines. Straddling the top of the boom, the operator boomed me up to Chester. After what seemed like hours, we had him back on the ground. Chester said that, with each explosion, he could feel the shrapnel hit the pole and shake it violently. All he could do was pray and hold on tight. We are all thankful, amazed and hope we will never have the same experience. God was with Chester today....

January 6: We caught eight rats and killed three scorpions, two centipedes, and one bamboo viper snake. The crew helped replace another engine for one of the other crews. It's amazing how efficient and quick we have become at accomplishing this chore.

I always dream of all kinds of great Italian food, but for some strange reason I keep dreaming of my favorite "Texas Wieners" and promise myself they will be one of my first meals when I get home.

January 7: One of the Marines taught us how to use our track's radio to get in touch with guys from our home states that were also stationed in Nam. Because this was totally illegal to do, we first had to come up with a fictitious name so the CIA could not trace the call back to us. They call it "Radio-Free Nam". I call myself "Jersey Joe". Tonight, I spoke with a guy from Edison, the town next to mine. He called himself "Thomas Edison".

January 8: They called off the "Big Inspection" until the 18th or 19th. Big deal, I am tired of cleaning that hunk of metal. What a joke, inspecting combat teams on the DMZ…

January 13: We escorted a small convoy of India Company, 3rd Battalion 9th Marines out of Camp J.J. Carroll and headed west on Route 9 with our final destination Ca Lu. Our Duster was rear security. After reaching Ca Lu, we were scheduled to return with another convoy back to Carroll. The convoy was made up of about fifteen Marine trucks and a few Marine tanks. We first stopped at the Khe Gio bridge outpost, dropped off men and supplies, and continued to The Rockpile. At The Rockpile, the convoy regrouped and proceeded to Ca Lu with the remainder of the troops. Our Duster remained as rear security. The Marine mortar ammo truck and a flat bed truck lowboy were positioned in the middle of the convoy.

As the convoy turned into one of the curves in the road, about halfway to Ca Lu (the area known as ***Ambush Alley***), the NVA made their first full-scale attack of the new year. Using command-detonated mines, the NVA blew up the ammo truck and lowboy. Charlie had his shit together and had lined both sides of the road with booby traps and personnel mines. The trucks in front of our Duster came to a scattered halt all over the road. Marines seeking cover started jumping out of and off their vehicles. Landing on personnel mines, they were tossed into the air like rag dolls. It was a terrible sight. It happened in seconds. The NVA soldiers were less than five meters off the road and raked the stalled convoy with automatic weapons, mortars, and RPGs. Our Duster started shooting, but was unable to clear the area close to the convoy because of the mix of NVA and Marines. The Marines, knowing that the land mines and automatic weapons would kill them, were forced to push into the heavy brush and try to regroup. I could see individual and small groups of NVA soldiers moving into the convoy and onto the trucks trying to finish off the survivors and wounded along the road. I shot as many as I could with my M-16 and .45 pistol.

Our Duster's standard shooting and killing routine is to shoot close, sweep quickly out about a 100 yards, mow the middle, start all over, and quickly pick targets. The Marines unconsciously had been drawn into a well-planned ambush. The NVA were shooting RPGs and recoilless rifles from both sides of Route 9. The NVA were so close I could see them throwing satchel charges into the trucks. Our Duster was forced to shoot over the Marines at the NVA shooting from the ridgeline on the north side of the road. Wounded and dead Marines were scattered everywhere. As I drove my Duster slowly forward, I could feel and hear the small NVA personnel mines exploding under my tracks. I feared that the small mines would blow the tracks off, rendering us immobile. Sam Lewis, my squad leader, was screaming in my headset to be careful and not get us killed. We could only advance a few feet before I had to stop and remove the injured and dead Marines from our path. I placed the Marines who were alive on the rear of the Duster. I moved the dead to the side of the road. I felt horrible that I had no time to give them aid. Finally, our 40mm high-explosive shells cleared a path for a group of Marines from the road to the first ridgeline. We positioned the Duster so we could shoot effectively at both the north and south sides of the road. It was important that we suppressed the heavy NVA automatic weapons and RPG teams… or die.

Reinforcements from Ca Lu and the Rockpile were already responding. Our Duster ¾-ton supply truck driver, Spec. 4 John Rowe, a reactionary volunteer from the Rockpile, continually replenished our Duster with ammunition. John and I would first unload the 40mm ammo and then stack his bullet-riddled truck with the wounded from the back of my Duster and the dead off the road. At one point, Rowe was laying between the NVA personnel mines as he emptied his M-16 into the rushing NVA. I lifted him up, dragged him behind the Duster and with a quick burst of my M-16, the landmines exploded. As he pulled into The Rockpile for the third or fourth time, with the last of the wounded we could find, the truck engine seized. The radiator and engine were pierced with bullet holes. Marine reactionary forces from both The Rockpile and Ca Lu saved the day. The Marines regrouped, sweeping both sides of the road, killing and clearing out the NVA.

It was a sad day for "India" Company, 3/9 Marines. We never got to Ca Lu. As we drove back to The Rockpile, our rear deck was covered with Marines, wounded and dead. The Marines had 22 KIA and 60 WIA.

If it weren't for my grenades and another .45 pistol I had acquired from a Marine, I would have been killed today. As I turned to handout more ammo to the guys in the turret, a gook ran up to me and, was so close, I was staring down the length of his rifle barrel. All I heard was a "click". I was lucky, because I think he was out of ammo and I wasn't. Thirteen has become my unlucky, lucky number.

In 1993 at the "Vietnam Women's Memorial" dedication banquet in Washington, D.C., I met former I/3/9 Marine John Lang and he later reintroduced me to Alfred "Flipper" Seals, a survivor of the January 13th battle. That was a day of both tears and joy. They made me an honorary member of their association, "The Flaming I's"...another bond to the Vietnam brotherhood, another toast to the Dusters.

I never understood why we aren't officially allowed to carry side arms. They are confiscated if the Captain finds them. He would have sent me to Leavenworth if he had caught me with all my contraband. We would joke, "Maybe the officers think we will kill someone with a pistol." Wasn't killing the game? I always dreamed of a General driving my Duster and a big NVA Chinese Advisor stepping out in front of the Duster with his AK-47. The old General would be just a little too slow getting his unauthorized .45 pistol out and would catch a bullet smack between the eyes. What a crazy dream, a General driving my Duster!

Back at Carroll, I was running out of shirts to burn. We needed a mail run back to Dong Ha, so we could replenish our clothes from the fatigue rag bin at the motor pool.

Dear Diary:

CRIMSON RED

Nam has four seasons – Living – Learning – Dying – Going Home.

There was a firefight somewhere in Nam. Its exact location could have been anywhere.

Its outcome had been rehearsed a thousand times, as far back as the Crusades.
I could see from my Metal Chariot of Destruction

The Ground Pounders scrambling for cover...
Sniper...Sniper.

I prayed our guns would quell this sniper before his crosshairs found their mark.
Our "Duster's" forty-millimeter cannons blazed as we cleared jungle and tree line.
Like the crack of a whip, a lone shot rang out and one of America's Best flips backwards.

...CRIMSON RED – CRIMSON RED
...CORPSMAN UP – CORPSMAN UP

All guns knew the direction and took aim.
A lone soldier cradles his wounded friend.
...HOLD ON BILLY – HOLD ON
...FOUR HANDS HOLDING – KNUCKLES WHITE
...CRACK – CRACK --- CRACK – CRACK
...HOLD ON, JOHNNY – HOLD ON
...EIGHT HANDS HOLDING – KNUCKLES WHITE

Full auto – Brass a-flying
...A MINUTE DOWN!

Tears now filled this game of death.
A bad omen for America's Best.

Un-heeding the rules of the Dragon's game.
A lone grunt swearing a brother's revenge stood and charged the unseen quest.
...CRACK – CRACK ---- CRACK – CRACK
...CORPSMAN UP – CORPSMAN UP
...CRIMSON POOLS – NOW CRIMSON TIDES
...TWO MINUTES DOWN
...SNIPER GONE
If patience counted, why couldn't he wait?
Now loaded on the back of my "Steel Coffin's" deck.
Standing silently... I apologized for this metal hearse.
...THREE MINUTES DOWN
...AN ETERNITY OF TIME
America's Best withstood another test.

January 14: We returned again to the ambush site looking for a few Marines who were missing. Dead NVA were everywhere. ***What a nightmare!*** The grunts found their missing comrades. I just sucked it up and lit another Tareyton.

January 15: We finally finished recovering all the Marines and equipment from the battle. I have not received mail from home in four days. It is very unusual for them not to write or send a CARE package.

January 16: Still being on someone's shit list, I had KP again. But it sure felt good to get off The Road and get a hot meal.

January 17: The Seabees got hit. Four were wounded. They were working a little past the Sand-Gravel Pit. Now we had to clean up Seabee blood. "God, how much more do you want us to endure?"

January 18: We passed that BIG inspection. The only thing that we

accomplished by having that inspection was that all the Dusters got a good cleaning and the area was policed.

January 19: I received a letter from my Mom telling me all about Christmas. She was going to save my presents for me to open when I get home, ***if I get home***. In her letters, Mom loved to tell me about everything they ate—daily and holidays. She didn't know that we were starving, and I couldn't tell her. I would read her letters to the crew. "We had the freshest Italian bread, the best tossed salad, cold antipasto with everything you like: salami, pepperoni, prosciutto, provolone, olives, artichoke hearts, roasted red peppers plus the seven fishes of Christmas, baked ham, Dad's homemade lasagna, wine and all kinds of dessert from Bovella's Bakery." Our mouths drooled as I read her letters. I then began our time-honored tradition of opening my switchblade and slicing every description of food from my Mom's letter. The guys held out their hands as I filled their palms with the equally shared pieces of paper food. We tossed them into our mouths, a course at a time, moaning in ecstasy and laughing hysterically as we savored the paper meals from home. Dessert was the highlight of our gourmet meal, eating Bovella's famous almond cookies and rum cakes. It was a meal fit for any Warrior King.

January 20: The "B" Battery convoy got hit below Carroll, and suffered two WIA. At 1300 hours, Carroll got hit with another 74 NVA rockets. At 1630 hours, our Duster spotted the smoke from the NVA rocket tube shooting at Carroll. We dueled with the NVA as their rockets burst all around us. The crew cheered when we saw the first enemy secondary explosion, proof of our day's kill. I bitched because it took one hundred sixty-five 40mm rounds to finish off the gook rocket team. ***Thank God the NVA only shot one rocket at a time.*** My crew knew I wouldn't put up with them missing their target, any target. It made me crazy.

January 21: At sunup, the base got hit with more **"INCOMING!"** Earl saw a wisp of smoke coming out of the lower tree line along Dong Ha Mountain and yelled that he could see the location of the Gooks' artillery. Because Holley, our Gunner, was on KP, we told Earl that,

since he was trained on Dusters, he could get himself a few kills. The enemy guns were about a mile away and in range of our 40s. I stood behind the turret and gave Earl some words of encouragement before he pressed the trigger. Sam Lewis, traversing the turret, told Earl he was on target and to shoot the first round high and adjust on target. It took less than ten seconds after the first round exploded for Earl to put our next volley on top of the Gooks' heads. With a quick 120 rounds, we made our square with an "X" in the middle, and the Gooks were eliminated. We all cheered as we got three secondary explosions. We peppered the area with another 40 rounds, just to make sure nobody escaped.

Later this afternoon, the Marine search team told Earl he had seven confirmed kills. By this evening, Earl became very withdrawn and sad. I had a long conversation with him, trying to explain to him that he would be okay. "Joe, I just killed seven men. Even though we consider them the enemy, it was seven men with families. How do I sort this? How will God forgive me? How do you do it?" I did not have a real answer for my friend. "Earl, you'll just get used to it." As I walked away, I could see the tears flowing down his cheeks and I remembered how much it hurts. ***How could I explain to him that it's probably only going to get worse?***

January 22: At 1800 hours, the NVA hit the base by the 175mm cannon area with four shells, wounding soldiers from the 2nd Battalion 94th Artillery.

January 23: We saw three NVA in front of our position and fired at them. Later, we only found traces of blood and some parts. I'm sure I nailed one in the chest. We blamed the Marines for shooting without authorization.



Marines



Route 9 – Ambush Alley



Route 9 – further on Ambush Alley.



Route 9 – Ambush Alley escort duty.



Hand grenade being thrown during a fire fight.



Wounded



John Rowe



Two carrying one

CHAPTER 8: THE MOTHER OF ALL BATTLES

January 24, 1968: We got involved in a large ambush below Camp J.J. Carroll on Route 9. This battle had the fury of a tornado.

Without our knowledge, we ended up fighting against the combined enemy forces of the 320th Infantry Division, the 48th and 52nd Regiments. Being outnumbered and overrun took on a whole new meaning. These events were so remarkable that this battle has entered the annals of military history and comprised the stories featured in LTC Ollie North's program "Men At War" on Fox TV.

THE OFFICIAL MILITARY HISTORIC THIRD PERSON ACCOUNT:

Taken from the After Action Report, Fort Bliss, TX; and from the ADA (Air Defense Artillery Magazine) #HQDA 44-96-2, March-April 1996.

0700 hours: Section Chief SGT Sines had accompanied one of his section's tracks to the Camp Carroll Battery "C" maintenance motor pool for repair. The normal crew of the track consisted of Squad Leader SGT Sam Lewis, Gunner SP4 Russia Holley, Cannoneers SP4 Earl Holt and PFC David Lewis, and Driver SP4 Joseph Belardo. At the motor pool, the crew was to replace both 40mm cannons with new barrels; repair damaged track treads; and replace the starter, since the current way to start the track was by pulling it with another track. After a few hours, the track treads were repaired and re-tensioned; the engine oiled and checked; and both barrels were replaced, but not fully cleaned. The starter was not yet replaced or repaired. In the distance the crew could hear what sounded like a full-scale firefight, a common sound along the DMZ.

1130 hours: A two-and-a-half-ton truck traveling from Camp Carroll to Cam Lo on Route 9 received small-arms fire. The Army vehicle following the truck received mortar fire as well as small-arms fire. The occupants of both vehicles, upon reaching Cam Lo, warned a convoy pulling out of Cam Lo for Camp Carroll that Route 9 had been

interdicted. The Marine Captain in charge of the convoy disregarded the warning. Being shot at on Route 9 west of Cam Lo was a common everyday occurrence. As the convoy approached a small bridge that crossed a minor tributary of the Cam Lo River, the NVA regulars hidden in the hills overlooking Route 9 ambushed the convoy with small arms, automatic weapons, recoilless rifles, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and mortars. The overwhelmed convoy was halted in minutes by the NVA. The troops were shocked by the intensity of the firefight and incoming rounds. Those still alive were forced to take cover along the edge of the road.

1135 hours: The observation post on Hill 250 outside the northeast corner of Camp Carroll (the 4th Marine Regiment's combat base and home of "C" Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery "Dusters") noticed explosions along Route 9. Large numbers of enemy were observed moving along the river and ridgelines north of the ambush site. The Dustermen and Marines manning the outpost (OP) were now aware that an ambush was taking place in front of Camp Carroll. They could see NVA infantry crossing the Cam Lo River in boats. Explosions and smoke were coming from the ambushed convoy. The OP requested permission to fire their Duster at the enemy, and the 4th Marines granted their request. Simultaneously, Camp Carroll was advised that the convoy was being ambushed and prepared for a possible assault on Camp Carroll.

The camp forces were advised that the fight was just below the eastern slope of Camp Carroll. All Dusters in the battery area were instructed to take positions along the northern camp perimeter. All other tracks were to hold position and await instructions. SGT Lewis' track was one of five Dusters that began to shoot more than 8,000 40mm rounds at the NVA that had attacked the convoy on Route 9 in the valley in front of Carroll. Lt. Hardin had taken command of one of the Dusters, comprised of a new inexperienced crew. The only seasoned combat veteran was squad leader Johnny Towns, who had only one week left to DEROS (going home). Towns' crew consisted of Gunner SP4 Jackie Gilbert, Cannoneers PFC Shora Solomon, PFC Townsend, and Driver

SP4 Robert Conley. Lt. Hardin instructed Lewis to saddle up, refuel, replenish ammo and meet his Duster within fifteen minutes at the camp gate as a reaction force for the ambushed convoy. Lewis instructed Lt. Hardin of the Duster's starting problem, but was still ordered to follow, since Hardin needed a seasoned fighting crew. Lewis instructed his crew to return to their position "water point" and re-supply. The crew hastily fueled, ringed the turret with 40mm ammo, restocked upper and side turret ammo compartments, and filled the Driver's compartment with all the extra reserve of loose clips of 40mm ammo. Section chief SGT-E6, Chester Sines went as the extra sixth combatant and sat to the right of the driver in the extra hatch known as the "TC" seat.

1200 hours: The two Dusters met two Marine tanks and a squad of Marines at the main gate. A Marine LT was in command of the first M48 Tank and was followed out the gate by Lt. Hardin' s Duster; next in line was the other M48 tank with half the Marine squad holding on to that tank; and then by Lewis's Duster along with the balance of the Marines sitting on the back of the Duster. The relief force stopped within 100 yards of the ambushed convoy and began to give direct fire to enemy forces along the northern ridge above the convoy. Via radio, Joe Belardo instructed the Driver of the other Duster, SP4 Conley, via radio to keep a fighting distance between his Duster and the M48 tank in front of him and the ambush site. All was now relatively quiet at the ambush sight. Americans could be seen lying in the kill zone, wounded or dead. There was no shooting now from the NVA or the convoy. The only sound was the eerie whistle of hundreds of Duster 40mm shells from Camp Carroll shooting over their heads and exploding into the slopes along Dong Ha Mountain.

Both lieutenants instructed all tracks to proceed forward with caution into the ambush site. Belardo instructed Conley to hold fast and not move. Sines advised both lieutenants that this was not a hit-and-run NVA action, and that all caution should be used and not to advance. Sines advised them to sweep both the north and south sides of the convoy before moving forward. SP4 Belardo advised Conley to drive the Duster to his right and take position on a small, elevated knoll

overlooking the convoy so they could get a better look at the situation. Sines advised Hardin to reassess the situation and to clear the area around the convoy before advancing into a possible trap.

Seeing no NVA, both officers again instructed their drivers to proceed slowly and cautiously along the center of the road. SGT Lewis instructed his Duster and the other M48 to hold fast and be ready to fire. The first M48 Tank had just crossed over the small bridge that spanned a small creek on Route 9. Lt. Hardin's Duster was just approaching the bridge. Both tracks had traveled no more than 100 yards. The NVA, hidden from view, suddenly ambushed the M48 and Duster with volleys of RPGs and satchel charges. Both tracks were instantly out of action. The crew of the M48 were all either seriously wounded or killed. The crew on Lt. Hardin's Duster had four men with minor wounds and two seriously wounded. Squad Leader Towns could be seen standing in the burning Duster turret, shooting the M60 machine gun at the rushing enemy soldiers. Cannoneer Solomon had lost the back of his legs from one of the RPGs. Gunner SP4 Gilbert had lost both his arms from another RPG.

Squad Leader Lewis' Duster immediately opened fire on the RPG teams, killing the first four RPG teams they could see. Caution had to be taken because the remaining RPG teams were within feet of the destroyed M48 and Duster. SP4 Belardo instructed the driver of the other M48 Tank to follow him and take position on that small knoll overlooking the ambush site. Both tracks did figure eights to level any tall grass that would conceal the enemy and to give an area for the squad of Marines to dig in. As they drove up the knoll they were firing at the NVA that were visible and instructed the twelve Marines that came with them to dig in and protect the west and south slopes of the knoll.

1315 hours: Lewis' Duster and the other M48 were now about 100 yards off the road on the south side of Route 9. The ambushed convoy along with the other destroyed Duster and M48 were 150 to 200 yards slightly to the right, at their one o'clock position. Lewis' field of fire

was excellent. The terrain around the knoll was mostly low brush and grass. Directly across Route 9 was an area about 200 to 300 yards wide that went north for about one-quarter mile to a small hedgerow along the Cam Lo River. The area was clear and had small clusters of brush. The small stream at the ambush site ran back north to the river. Its eastern side terrain was hilly and covered with heavy brush. This area was known as Mike Hill because the Marines had lost many men from Mike Company on the hills in a previous battle. The south side of the bridge had similar terrain. At the bridge crossing stood a lone tree about seventy feet tall, later to be known as Ground Zero. The destroyed Duster was in close proximity to the tall tree. At the eleven o'clock position in front of Lewis' Duster was the beginning of a large hill with heavy cover and a steep drop-off. The area behind Lewis' Duster was a sharp steady rise up to Camp Carroll and the Observation Post known as Hill 250.

1330 hours: Sines requested reinforcements from Camp Carroll. Captain Easter, "C" Battery 1st/44th Commanding Officer, advised: "Hold position, recover men, casualties and equipment from ambush, return to Camp Carroll." Lewis' Duster proceeded slowly towards the entrapped destroyed Duster and tank, raking the area with 40mm and M60 machine gun fire. SP4 Belardo repeatedly tried to contact the destroyed tracks via radio, but now only received radio microphone clicking. The other M48 gave rear security as the Marines hastily dug new positions. Lewis' Duster was now within 50 yards of the destroyed Duster. NVA automatic weapons and machine guns now opened fire. RPGs from across Route 9 were fired, falling short of their mark or soaring overhead. A small group of NVA began to rush forward, only to be killed by 40mm fire. NVA 57mm recoilless rifles began shooting at the Duster from the eleven o'clock position. More NVA started rushing from concealed positions along the road. SGT Chester Sines instructed Belardo to return back up the knoll. Belardo was unwilling to turn around and expose the Duster's sides or the engine, fearing a RPG or 57 recoilless hit would destroy the Duster. Holt used inter-track radio communications to verbally guide him backwards and up the hill until they were sure that turning was safe.

Automatic weapons fire was constantly strafing the Duster, and mortars were exploding at close range. Sines again radioed Camp Carroll advising enemy action and requesting backup. Carroll advised him to hold position and sweep the area. The new 40mm cannon barrels, recently installed at Carroll, had not been completely cleaned and began to smoke profusely from the cosmoline oil. The Duster stopped shooting as Belardo and Holt feverishly swabbed the barrels with the little reserve oil left on the Duster. NVA could be seen running out in the open along the small stream and into the heavy brush at the eleven o'clock position, and along the stream that headed towards the ambush site. The Duster again began firing along the stream area, delivering effective fire on the advancing NVA. Large groups of NVA, dead and wounded, were now visible from the river to within 20 yards of the ambushed convoy. NVA mortars once more began landing in the Duster area. NVA automatic weapons and small arms fire were sporadic but heavy. SP4 Belardo was advised to keep his track moving around the knoll and away from the Marine infantry and M48. A moving target was not as easy a target.

The M48 took up position by the path that was made by the two tracks as they went up the knoll. The Marines dug in slightly to the left and rear of the M48. Sines, the sixth man of normally a five man crew, now stood on the back of the Duster giving firing orders, exposing him to enemy fire. Belardo began giving artillery coordinates to the Fire Direction Control at Carroll. The enemy could now be seen dragging their dead or wounded into the heavy brush. Sines, now as the driver, and Belardo in the TC hatch, advanced the Duster towards the destroyed convoy, raking the area with 40mm and M60 fire. The NVA again charged the Duster. Sines stopped the Duster and was holding position. The Duster was now only a few yards from Route 9 and less than 30 yards from the destroyed Duster. The Duster was now shooting direct fire at the charging NVA. Belardo, exposing himself to enemy fire, now stood on the top front right corner of the Duster so he could see the other Duster. Only gunner Gilbert's head was visible and not moving. No other Duster crewmen could be seen.

Sines was now shooting Belardo's M-16 at the advancing NVA from the Driver's compartment. Belardo, now on the ground outside the Duster, had the front main door of the Duster open. This was a common combat practice for Duster Drivers. It was the only way to take the 40mm ammo out of the inside storage area and hand it to the loaders in the turret. Belardo, continually exposing himself to enemy fire, repeatedly climbed in and out of the Driver's hatch, retrieving 40mm ammo and distributing it to the loaders in the turret. Belardo advised Sines that the 40mm ammo was extremely low. NVA RPGs, mortars and 57mm recoilless rifles began hitting close to the Duster. Belardo was instructed by Sines to get back in the Duster as they did a 180-degree turn, and headed back up the knoll. Two helicopters, that had been called to help, began shooting extremely close to the east slope of the Duster and advised them that a very large NVA force had crossed over Route 9 and was advancing towards them from the east and up to Camp Carroll. The helicopters continued to shoot into a small ravine that headed up to Camp Carroll and covered the eastern slope of the knoll. The M48 was now out of 40mm ammo, so its crew began using their rifles. Sitting motionless, the NVA stopped shooting at the M48 with mortars and RPGs, possibly thinking they had already scored a direct hit. The dug-in Marines, almost out of ammo, were using reserve M-16 ammo borrowed from the Duster.

1415 hours: Belardo radioed Carroll that the 40mm ammo was down to 60 rounds and they would not abandon the convoy, expected to be overrun, needed ammo and reinforcements immediately. Jets had now arrived and were dropping bombs and napalm on the north side of the river. The Duster continued to shoot the M60 machine gun at the visible NVA. Sines and Belardo continued to direct air strikes and napalm strikes on the NVA positions. The NVA had now stopped shooting at the Duster. Out of nowhere, a small group of villagers began running across the open combat field between Route 9 and the river, heading west towards Cam Lo. After they disappeared, no other shots were fired from either side. The NVA seemed to vanish. Maybe they were digging-in, out of view in the heavy cover, or trying to avoid the jet air strikes. Camp Carroll had stopped shooting 40mm and heavy artillery

fearing it would hit the helicopters or jets. Sines again radioed Carroll reminding them of the situation and that forty to fifty NVA laid dead on the knoll next to the Duster, and what seemed to be hundreds of NVA lay dead between Route 9 and the river. NVA could now be seen dragging their wounded into heavy cover.

Sines repeated that they needed ammo and reinforcements and would not give up the hill advantage to the NVA. Captain Easter advised that no reinforcements were coming, but a small group of volunteers would try to bring ammo and that the Duster should hold position until they arrived. SP4 Robert Williams was the ammo truck driver along with Duster crewman SP4 Donald Wolfe and four other volunteers. Fearing the ammo truck would run into the NVA and hoping to intercept it before it reached the ambush site, Belardo proceeded alone down the west slope of the knoll to Route 9 about 100 yards from the Duster, on the same path they drove up to get on the knoll. It was the Duster crew's belief that if Belardo reached the ammo truck, he could direct it back up the knoll after which the Duster could replenish its ammo, extract the wounded and dead from the ambush, and return to Carroll. The Marines had been instructed to keep this path open, knowing it was the alternate route back to Route 9 and Camp Carroll. Belardo, armed with M-16 and hand grenades, sprinted down the knoll through the dead NVA, shooting into the heavy brush killing any NVA in his path and throwing grenades at enemy positions. The Marines constantly gave support fire. At the road, Belardo waited and crouched in a drainage ditch. NVA could be seen taking up position across the road. Belardo quickly dispatched six of the NVA he could see and threw the remaining grenades into other NVA positions across Route 9. Belardo, waiting for the ammo truck, could hear automatic weapons fire and explosions from the west on Route 9 in the direction of the ammo truck. The ammo truck was being riddled with NVA automatic weapons fire, wounding Wolfe. Twenty minutes had elapsed and no ammo truck arrived. Belardo began his return back up the knoll, shooting at the enemy from behind the dead NVA bodies as he advanced up the hill.

1500 hours: The Duster crew radioed Carroll that they were almost completely out of ammunition. Carroll advised that they had dispatched a second group of volunteers with a Marine weapons squad. Belardo, in contact with the second ammo truck via radio, advised SP4 John Huelsenbeck and Marine CPL Roger Blentlinger, a combat engineer and volunteer weapons man aboard the ammo truck, as to the road area where he would meet them. Belardo again descended down the hill. The Marines and Duster were not giving support fire because ammunition was very low. They now could see Belardo about halfway down the slope engaging NVA soldiers in hand-to-hand combat. Quickly overcoming and dispatching the enemy, Belardo continued to fight his way down to the road. At Route 9, Belardo now wounded from an enemy bayonet hastily moved west and waved down the second ammo truck with its reinforcements. Belardo, riding on the running board of the ammo truck, directed it and one other truck with about twelve Marines, up the path. About fifty yards up the hill, the ammo truck slid off the path and its front wheel fell into a ditch and was unable to move. The other Marine truck was unable to push it out. Mortars began landing all around the two trucks. Huelsenbeck ordered the Marine officer on the other truck to move his vehicle and have his men dig in and give support fire. Huelsenbeck, exposing himself to enemy fire, positioned the Marines for maximum support. Belardo was now running up the hill through the enemy mortar barrage and heavy automatic weapons fire to get to the Duster. The Duster was now proceeding down the eastern slope of the knoll spraying the ravine that led to Carroll with M60 gunfire. The jets and helicopters had left the area. A lone observation plane could be seen flying on the eastern side of the stream.

Belardo advised the crew what had happened and drove the Duster to the stranded ammo truck. At the ammo truck Holt, using the M60, gave additional fire support for Huelsenbeck and Blentlinger. Exposing themselves to enemy fire, they fastened the Duster tow cable to the ammo truck. The ammo truck, laden with ammunition, was pulled to the top of the knoll. The Marine lieutenant was now assessing the situation with SGT Sines. The officer, after viewing the battle area from on top the Duster, agreed to try to secure the path back to Route 9. The ammo truck was now parked behind the Duster's right south

side. As the reactionary crew replenished the Marines and Duster with M-16, M60 ammo, and a truckload of 40mm ammo, the Duster crew again opened fire on the advancing NVA. The crew, giving each other a needed rest, took on new assignments. Squad Leader Sam Lewis was now the Gunner, seated in the turret on the left side of the twin 40mm cannons. Belardo, behind him as Cannon Loader, stood on the left side of the 40mm cannons. Traversing the turret was SP4 Russia Holly. Holt was behind him as the other Cannon Loader. PFC Dave Lewis, now standing on the outside of the turret, shot the M60. Huelsenbeck and Blentlinger were handing Belardo and Holt 40 mm ammo. A human assembly line was humping shells from the ammo truck to the Duster.

The Duster, now shooting on full auto, first cleared the ravine leading to Carroll and shot as close to the destroyed convoy as possible. The NVA again opened fire with mortars and 57mm recoilless rifles, and again could be seen crossing the river in large groups. Sines, on the ground with another group, was reloading the inside of the Duster with 40mm and giving artillery coordinates to Carroll's FDC. The ammo team was yelling to the crew in the turret, giving them additional NVA 57mm recoilless rifle and mortar targets they could see. Secondary explosions were everywhere. The Duster crew and the NVA were not giving ground. Killing the NVA was again at an all-time high. When fully loaded, the Duster along with the Marines were going to clear a path to the ambushed convoy, rescue the dead and wounded, destroy the damaged vehicles and return to Carroll. The crew had now fired an additional 2,000 40mm rounds. The 40mm cannons, red-hot, began to jam and cook-off without firing. Holt and Belardo repeatedly reached into the cannon breeches with their bare hands to remove the hot 40mm rounds before they self-exploded. The twin 40s now had two 40mm shells jammed half in the breech, not allowing the firing block to move into firing position. Holt stepped out of the turret, hoping to find more oil on the ammo truck or Marine truck. The oil would be used to free the overheated cannon breeches. Belardo continued to reach in the hot breech trying to dislodge the jammed shells. NVA artillery rocked the Duster and ammo truck.

Squad Leader Lewis, seeing a NVA team shoot a 57 recoilless rifle, yelled, "Duck!" The 57s hit the ground a few feet from the Duster. The explosions threw Holt, Huelsenbeck, and Blentlinger over the ammo truck. PFC Dave Lewis was hit in the face with shrapnel and stood frozen with blood running into his eyes and down his face. Two more NVA shells hit the area, the explosions tossing David Lewis between the Duster and ammo truck. Squad Leader Sam Lewis, with bad head wounds, lay unconscious or possibly dead in the Gunner's seat. Belardo was now on his back lying over the 40mm cannon breeches with head, chest and arm wounds. The two 40mm rounds in the breech exploded, wounding Belardo a second time and sending him up and on top of Sam Lewis. Holly, who was sitting on the other side of the turret, was thrown unconscious but unwounded, on top of Dave Lewis between the Duster and the ammo truck. Belardo, still conscious and covered in blood, thought the Duster had been hit a second or third time. The turret was now in flames and filled with smoke. Belardo, seeing Sam Lewis unconscious and bleeding, picked him out of the Gunner's seat Belardo, with Lewis on his shoulder and armed with an M-16 from the turret, held onto the hot 40mm barrels and exited the Duster. Belardo, carrying Lewis and firing the M-16 at the advancing NVA, moved behind the ammo truck.

The event happened so quickly that the Marines by the M48 were now just responding with aid and counter fire. The ammo crew was trying to assess damage and regroup. Duster medic James "Doc" Butler, who was one of the reactionary volunteers, was quickly giving medical aid to the wounded. Belardo, refusing medical aid, climbed back into the turret and used the fire extinguisher on the burning cannons. Grabbing the M60 from its mount, Belardo returned fire, killing the advancing NVA. Huelsenbeck, Holt and Blentlinger joined Belardo in the turret. Holt and Huelsenbeck frantically tried to salvage the cannons and clear the loading magazines of hot 40mm ammo. Unable to fix the cannons, they commandeered M-16 and remained up in the turret giving direct fire at the rushing NVA. The survivors held on, hoping to get relief from a reactionary force.

CHAPTER 9: RESCUE FROM DONG HA

January 24, 1968 at 1600 hours: While this battle raged, Capt. V. J. Tedesco, the 1/44 Artillery liaison officer, was in the Officer's Club at Dong Ha enjoying a cold beer, totally unaware that one of his combat batteries was in a hellacious firefight. Word came from Lieutenant Colonel John House, the Battalion Commander that Charlie Battery and some Marines were in deep contact with the NVA on Route 9 and needed some serious bailing out or would be overrun. As the liaison officer, it wasn't Tedesco's job to take out the Dong Ha reaction force, but the Reaction Force Commander couldn't be located.

1700 hours: Sines advised Carroll of the situation and told them he would try to get back to Carroll. The wounded Duster men and Marines were placed inside the M48 and in the Duster TC hatch. With Marines lying on the top decks of the Duster, M48, and loaded into the trucks, they departed the knoll. Sines drove the Duster with Belardo at the M60. Huelsenbeck, Holt and Blentlinger were shooting their M-16 and throwing grenades. With the two trucks in the middle and the M48 bringing up the rear, they blasted their way through enemy positions and fought their way up Route 9 and back to Camp Carroll.

At Carroll they were advised by Captain Easter to keep the chatter down about all the NVA in the valley. Easter did not want the men to think that Carroll could or would be overrun. The crew was ordered back to the water point position to stand guard duty. The wounded were medivaced to Dong Ha and Da Nang. Sines and his crew were never again asked about the ambush, although their heroic actions were probably the reason Camp JJ Carroll was not overrun.

1730 hours: Tedesco led two Dusters and two truck-mounted Quad-50s to the rescue. The following morning, he described the action in a tape made for his wife, Suzanne. "I don't know where to start to tell you, Suzanne, about what happened yesterday, well last night, to be exact," Tedesco said. "I guess I'll start from the beginning. I was over in the club around a quarter to five when we got word that Charlie

Battery was in contact with the enemy on Route 9 between Cam Lo and Camp Carroll. They had gone to try to relieve a convoy that had been ambushed on that road, and they were in deep contact. They needed help and Rick Taylor wasn't around. He is the Reaction Force Commander; I'm the alternate commander. Rick wasn't around, so it was my job to take the reaction force in there and try to bail Charlie Battery out."

"We left Dong Ha about 5:30, or 1730, and it took us a half hour to get out to the ambush site," he continued. "I had with me two Dusters and two Quads. I was in the lead Duster, the Quads were in the middle, and there was one Duster in back. When we approached the ambush site, I saw a tank off to the side of the road. Apparently knocked out of action; it was abandoned. Later, I found dead lying on the front deck of the tank. There were four trucks and a jeep in the convoy, lined up straight down the middle of the road. Every one of them had been knocked out. The jeep had been knocked out by an RPG, which is similar to our bazooka or 3.5-rocket launcher. The people from the convoy were hiding against the vehicles and against the sides of the road; not doing anything very much, but looking very horrible and scared and frightened. I saw, farther up the road and across a little bridge, Charlie Battery's Duster off to the side of the road. The guns pointed crazily up at the sky, the hatch in front was open, and nobody was visible around the track. I took my track, and we drove past the tank and pulled off the side of the road and proceeded toward Charlie Battery's track to find out what the story was with them and to give them any support we could."

"As we started moving along the road," Tedesco continued, "we had to pull way off the road into the bushes because there were so many wounded all along the side of the road. We moved back on the road and across the bridge, and I moved my track off the road to my right and saw where the fire was coming from. We were receiving sniper fire, and the Air Force was putting air strikes into the area."

Tedesco directed the track commander, SGT Vincent DeSantis, to return the fire raking the column. With DeSantis directing fire and loading the guns, the Duster delivered effective fire against the NVA automatic weapons, recoilless rifle, and mortar positions in the surrounding hills.

Tedesco left the track and ran across the road to Charlie Battery's track, looking for the officer or NCO in charge, hoping to find out what had happened. He found Lt. Hardin and discovered three of Lt. Hardin's five-man crew had been wounded when RPGs had slammed into their track. SP4 Gilbert in the turret had had both arms blown off by the first RPG. The second RPG had wounded the gunner, PVT Solomon. The explosion had ripped the muscles, tendons and flesh from the back of his legs. Then, the track had taken two more RPG hits in quick succession. Marines who had been riding on Lt. Hardin's track were also wounded. Nearby, a Marine lieutenant, who could not speak because his lower jaw had been shot away, was calmly writing down grid coordinates on a piece of paper. He passed the piece of paper to his radio operator, who tried to call in fire missions; not knowing his radio was broken.

Running in a low crouch across the road, Tedesco re-crossed the bridge and made his way past the main body of the convoy, past the knocked-out tank to where he had left the two Bravo Battery Quad-50s and rear Duster. He directed their fire on the hills on either side of the road at the same place the Marines were placing their fire and where the sniper fire was coming from. Satisfied the rounds were on target, he moved back down the line, trying to find the officer in command of the convoy.

"There were two officers, a Marine Captain and an Army Lieutenant present," Tedesco said. "All they could do was hide up against the track. There were wounded all over the place. Suzanne, it was horrible. People were dead and wounded all over the place. The wounded were in a complete state of shock. It was almost impossible to get them to move off the road, set up some security and try to get the convoy functioning. Anyway, when I saw that these two officers weren't very willing or capable of taking command, I took command of the entire convoy. And my first problem was trying to get the wounded out. We got on the horn and notified Carroll what the situation was, the fact that we needed infantry security and needed aircraft in to evacuate the wounded."

While Tedesco was busy trying to reorganize the convoy, the NVA concentrated their fire on Bravo's lead Duster. Seriously wounded in the back, De Santis refused medical aid and continued to direct his crew's fire and load the guns. Then, an RPG struck the rear of the turret, killing one of the Cannoneers and wounding the rest of the crew. Wounded a second time, DeSantis continued to refuse medical aid and, with bullets showering all around him, began evacuating the casualties from the stricken vehicle.

"I moved back down the road across the bridge and headed to my track to try to find out what was going on," said Tedesco, "and I noticed that my track - the track I had come in on - was not firing," he continued. "As I crossed the bridge, someone called to me from the bushes on the bank of the little stream the bridge goes over. And it was the sergeant [DeSantis] who had been aboard the track. He had taken a small arm sniper round in his back and fragments in his arm. Two of the other three people who had been in the tub with the sergeant were both wounded and in the bushes with him. We didn't know where the fourth man who had been up in the tub was at the time. We later found out that the Cannoneer killed was SP4 Billy Strickland."

"The sergeant told me that they had been hit again," Tedesco continued. "I ran around to the front of the track to try to get to the radio to let them know we had lost another track, and I saw a horrible, horrible sight. The driver, the man who had driven me in there, had apparently been sitting with his head out of the hatch when an RPG or an aerial bomb, I'm not sure which one it was, landed near the track: and it just blew shrapnel and debris all over his face and shoulders and neck. I thought the man was dead. As of now, he's still alive. He's still in critical condition, but they think he might pull through now. The radio was out of action and everything was covered with blood. I moved across the road back to Hardin's track again, trying to get medical aid for the guy in the track, in case he was still alive, and for the sergeant and his people."

"Meanwhile, all of this time I ran across more and more wounded, more and more dead, and more and more scattered groups of Marines. I was trying to organize them, trying to move them," he continued. "We had a medivac chopper come in, and we started taking small arms fire all over the place. I ran over to the chopper and got him out of the area before he got downed right in the middle of our area, so we'd never get anything in or out. This went on and on and on, Suzanne, just on and on and on. I kept moving up and down the convoy, kept calling for the infantry. I kept calling for the artillery. As it started getting darker, I kept calling for illumination."

The illumination rounds, bursting high overhead, released parachute flares that bathed the terrain in an eerie orange glow. Tedesco knew the NVA might use the cover of darkness to move in for the kill.

"Finally," he continued, "I decided we were going to load all the wounded on the two Quad-50s, and on the Dusters and make a run for it. Well, we had gotten one of the Quads loaded with wounded when two Seabee trucks came in to help us on their own; and we got the dead and some more wounded loaded. All of a sudden, the choppers started coming in. The choppers started landing all around us, taking out the wounded."

"Now that the wounded were going," Tedesco said, "my main concern was my two tracks that were out of action. I moved back across the bridge. There were at least 50 civilians in the area. I had no idea where they came from. We had fired over their heads to keep them down. We weren't sure whether they were VC – NVA, or what they were doing. We had a Marine sergeant covering them the whole time with a machine gun. We finally got some trucks in and got the wounded moving out on the trucks, and then the helicopters came in and we kept evacuating. We started pulling back toward the main convoy, evacuating all the wounded with us, picking up all the weapons. I left Lieutenant Gregg, one of the officers from Bravo Battery, in charge there, and he saw to it that the wounded were medivaced."

"Lt. Hardin and I returned with a bunch of Marines to secure our Dusters. This was my main concern now. What were we going to do with the Dusters? I didn't want to leave them to the enemy. I requested permission to destroy the Dusters, and battalion denied this permission. They said another relief column was on their way."

A third reaction force commanded by Captain Charlie Vickers, the 1/44 Artillery S-4, roared out of Dong Ha. The reaction force consisted of 1/44 personnel acting as infantry, two Dusters from A/1-44, two Quad -50s from G/65, and four ammunition-laden five-ton trucks from 1/ 44, Headquarters Battery. They reached the ambush site at 1900 hours.

"Well, about 7 o'clock, or 1900, it was getting pretty dark, and I was just about to say "to hell with battalion" and blow them [the Dusters] anyway, when I saw the headlights of the Charlie Vicker's relief column. Once Charlie got there with his extra force and his people, things cleared up pretty quickly. We got the rest of the wounded out and as many of the dead as we could get out. Lt. Hardin started my original track and found it could run, and he drove that out. Charlie brought one of his tracks across the bridge and hooked the Charlie Battery track (Lt. Hardin's original track) up with the tow cable, and we towed that out. Charlie covered my withdrawal with one of his Dusters that were still operational. And finally at 1930, or 7:30, we left the ambush site.

"We moved out to Cam Lo at the district headquarters there," Tedesco said. "There we left the vehicles that weren't operative and, with the help of the Huey gunships, we came the rest of the way back into Dong Ha. We got back to Dong Ha about 10 o'clock, or 2200 hours. It was a very, very horrible -unbelievably horrible - experience. I don't guess I will ever forget the sight of that battlefield, or the look on the face of that poor kid who was driving me after I got back to the track and found that they had been hit. I didn't sleep very much. In fact, I didn't sleep at all last night." The 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines Regiment moved in to secure the ambush site, standing watch through the night over the dead and disabled vehicles.

Following the ambush, the survivors discovered that they had gone up against elements of the NVA's 320th Division's 48th and 52nd Regiment. Total friendly casualties were seventeen killed in action, 42 wounded seriously enough to require medical evacuation, and 13 with minor wounds. The 1/ 44th artillery had committed 11 Dusters, five Quad-50s and 152 soldiers. They had fired over 20,000 40mm shells and 28,000 .50-caliber rounds. The ambush was supported by direct and indirect field artillery, jets and Huey gun-ships. Captain Tedesco, Lt. Hardin and SGT DeSantis were awarded the Silver Star.

After the battle, the Marines placed a dead NVA atop a mile marker adjacent to the ambush site, and then added a helmet, clothes and a poncho and a cardboard sign made from a C-ration box. The macabre scarecrow stood along Route 9 for months, symbolizing the savagery of combat. A single lone tall tree standing on the northwest side of the bridge identified the site. Weeks later, the hundreds of NVA dead were buried in two mass graves on the west side of the stream north of Route 9. A few days later the NVA would attack the Cam Lo Combat Base. Again the Duster reactionary force would come to the aid of the Marines at Cam Lo. The battles at base camps across the DMZ and convoy ambushes along Route 9 never stopped in 1968, the "TET YEAR".



January 24, 1968, Dusters shooting at the NVA from Camp Carroll.



After shooting 5,000 40mm rounds at the NVA, the Duster is covered by smoke.



The "lone tree" that represented the apex of the January 24, 1968, ambush "Ground Zero."



This is the bridge the Marine M48 tank crossed before they were hit by NVA RPG's. The Duster was hit by the RPG's before it got to this bridge.

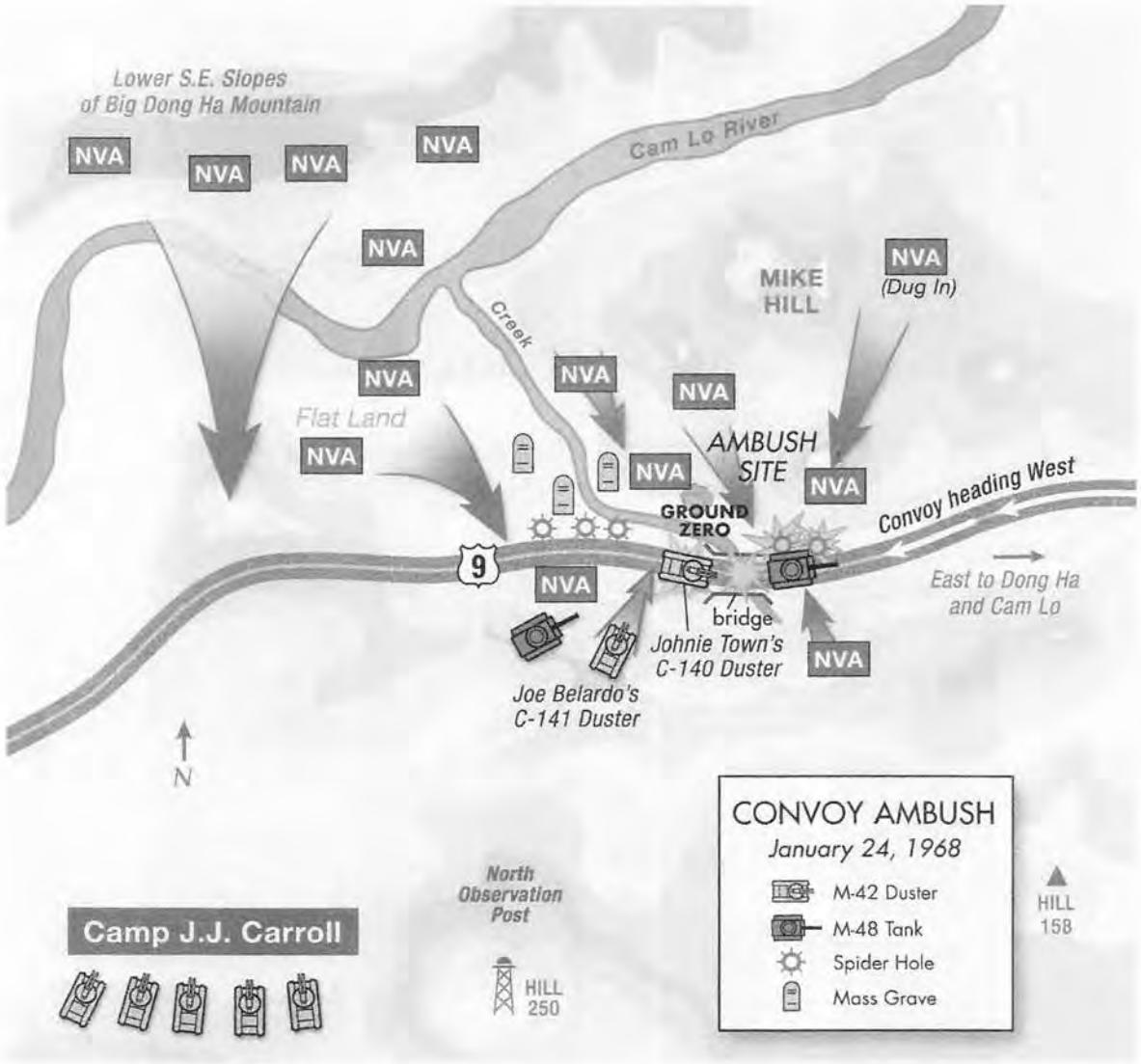
Lower S.E. Slopes
of Big Dong Ha Mountain
NVA
NVA
NVA
NVA
Cam Lo River
NVA
MIKE
HILL
NVA
(Dug In)
Creek
NVA
NVA
NVA
Flat Land
NVA
AMBUSH
SITE
NVA
NVA
GROUND
ZERO
Convoy heading West
9
NVA
East to Dong Ha
and Cam Lo
bridge
Johnie Town's
C-140 Duster
NVA
Joe Belardo's
C-141 Duster
N
CONVOY AMBUSH
January 24, 1968
M-42 Duster
M-48 Tank
Spider Hole
Mass Grave
North
Observation
Post
HILL
250
HILL
158
Camp J.J. Carroll



NVA soldier being taken out of a spider hole.



Billy Strickland "Killed In Action" – January 24, 1968.

CHAPTER 10: RECOLLECTIONS

I've been trying to sort out the events of the January 24th battle and what went wrong. I was part of a seasoned crew, but the other crew chosen to go down to the ambush had no idea what to expect. Their Squad Leader, Johnny Towns, was the only combat-experienced member on the Duster and was scheduled to go home within the week. This alone was unfair to a short-timer. The Driver, Conley, was not the designated Driver for that track, but only a reactionary force volunteer. He had only been in a few skirmishes and was another short-timer. Lt. Hardin had been advised that our Duster had no starter and had to be towed to start. He knew the shortcomings of Towns' crewmembers and took charge of that Duster himself. He was the Platoon Leader. We had no clear plan and all the cards were stacked up against us. Everyone knew that the ambush was big and bad by the amount of firepower the NVA had already expended trying to destroy the convoy. We also knew it was a bad scene by the thousands and thousands of 40mm shells we had already counter fired at the NVA from Camp Carroll. Both Dusters had already fired thousands of rounds at the ambush site from Camp Carroll and should have been quickly cleaned and re-oiled before leaving camp. The 40mm shells were already jamming in the breaches up at Carroll due to overheating. Lt. Hardin said this was not the time to get squeamish and to ***"SADDLE-UP".***

We all proceeded out the gate of Carroll in high gear. When we were about hundred yards from the ambush, we all came to a stop. We just sat there as ordered, looking and listening. The only shooting was the 40s flying over our heads from Carroll, exploding at some unseen targets to our left. I could feel my jaw muscles tighten and taste my own bile. We were sitting ducks for the NVA.

The Marine Lieutenant and our Lieutenant called all the shots. Sergeant Chester Sines, our Section Chief and the extra man on the crew, repeatedly advised both officers about proper ambush deployment. I begged Towns and Conley not to move and start shooting. The two officers issued orders that they were moving forward and would not

chance shooting any Marines who might have taken cover in the brush. Nothing was moving or shooting from the ambushed convoy or from the NVA. It should have been obvious by how quick the enemy knocked out the convoy, that they had a lot of firepower and did not have time to leave the area. They ordered us to hold our positions and await instructions. It was standard combat operating procedure, when in doubt, to shoot the 40s a few hundred yards out past the ambush site and shake up the enemy and see if you got their attention with some return fire. We would put them on the defensive and then assess the situation before committing and moving. Shoot, move, and communicate was our motto. This ambush was too big to be so quiet, and I was very concerned. Sines radioed the lieutenants and suggested we take up position on a small knoll on the south side of the road overlooking the ambush site. It had a small path leading up and down and was wide enough for our track vehicles. This position would give us an advantage if something should happen and still let us be close enough to retrieve the wounded and dead. They were the officers in charge and Chester's suggestions were ignored.

The last radio communication I got from Towns was, "Joe, you guys better cover my ass. I'm short." Towns was referring to his week or so left in country. Screaming into my radio headset, I begged the guys not to advance forward. "Johnny Towns, Billy Conley, what are you fucking crazy? They've never done this before; stay the fuck where you are and start shooting; you know better; we've done this a hundred times together; open up full auto and clear a path and then pick your targets; we will follow your lead and cross over your shells making a big fucking X; you know the drill." The only response we got was from the two lieutenants screaming the words "Move Out". It was the last communication we would ever get.

It was not Americans but NVA who were hidden in the brush. They let the lead M48 tank cross over the small bridge that went over the creek and then blasted it at point blank range with a volley of RPGs (Rocket Propelled Grenades). Before Hardin's Duster could react, the next RPG team blasted them. It was over in less than a minute...the

tank and Duster never got a chance to shoot. The NVA were so brazen, they just stood in full view and fired repeatedly. We looked on in horror. We immediately started killing the enemy we could see. In seconds, it became another full size ambush directed at us. RPGs and automatic weapons were now firing at us from everywhere. NVA, swinging satchel charges, sprinted down the road in our direction. Chester and I dropped them with a quick burst of my M-16. Sines screamed at me to get us up on the knoll "NOW!"

The top of the knoll gave us a clear view of the battle area and the elevated firing advantage we needed. Large groups of NVA were running in all directions. As we fought off their attack, Sines was trying to see what needed to be done to retrieve the men from the ambushed convoy. All we needed was some immediate fire support and infantry.

The NVA should not have been allowed to dig in and take ground. We desperately needed additional firepower and ammunition. Sam Lewis handed me his little green book of secret codes from around his neck. As I adjusted the radio frequencies, Chester Sines made the first calls for choppers and air support. As our Duster shot the first obvious enemy targets, Chester and I quickly made circles on my map of the grid coordinates of all the NVA positions we could see. Chester then climbed up the back of the Duster and stood behind the turret pointing at the NVA positions he could see and screaming verbal commands where the Duster should shoot. I radioed Lt. Moore up on Carroll and gave him the grid locations of the enemy. Moore instructed me to radio the four Dusters, who were shooting blindly over our heads from Carroll, and give them targets. Their lines of fire now adjusted, they could sweep the NVA positions effectively. We then gave the same coordinates to the 105mm and 155mm artillery Fire Direction Control at Carroll. All Hell was breaking loose. Our artillery shells, which now began to exploding everywhere, just made the enemy run toward us even faster. They knew, if they got close to us, our large artillery from Carroll could not shoot without killing us. We were going to die. Our orders from Captain Easter at Carroll were vague and non-committal. Our crew could not understand "C" Battery's thinking, and that no other Dusters were immediately sent to help.

We became infuriated with Easter. It was a hard pill to swallow, knowing and feeling you were left to die. Our crew all agreed that we were not going to leave the ambush site without saving the other Duster crew. We thought, if we could fight long enough, Captain Easter would have to send help or body bags. But we were not prepared for the number of NVA we had to fight. The gooks seemed to be coming out of the cracks in the earth. I am amazed at how easy it was shooting them. It was a slaughter, but they did not give an inch. In all the other firefights I had been in, the NVA would try to hide and shoot, hit and run, killing and wounding as many of us as they could and then disappear back into the jungle taking their dead with them. This fight was completely different. They were well equipped with lots of firepower and were here to stay and fight to the end. All of us knew they were headed for Camp Carroll and we had to stop them. If Camp Carroll fell to the enemy, it would be the end of the war.

Even though we were furious at Captain Easter, we all knew, as seasoned combatants, that Easter could not and would not leave Camp Carroll undefended. He had to do what was best, and possibly sacrifice a few men. ***Us! So, we were pissed off to say the least.***

We knew we were in deep shit when the NVA bugles and whistles started blowing. Any weapon we fired was effective in killing or wounding the enemy. There were so many NVA that firing one to three 40mm rounds would injure and or kill many enemy soldiers. We would no sooner shoot at one group and another group popped up. As we went from group to group, the first groups we shot could be seen dragging their wounded into the cover of nearby brush or dragging them by a short piece of rope tied to their leg. By the time we traversed back, most of the bodies had disappeared from sight. The NVA did not stop coming and we did not stop killing them. If any got below the line of sight of the 40s, I would shoot them with my M-16 or .45 pistol, or Earl and Dave shot them with the M60 machine gun. The crew was in disbelief when Easter repeated he was not sending help or ammo. Camp Carroll had to be held at all cost. Chester got on the radio and was screaming at him. His screams went unanswered. We had killed or

wounded the entire first wave of NVA we could see on each side of the ambushed convoy. As the Duster shot, I just kept doing my job: drive, send radio communications, give firing grids to the artillery, direct the jets and choppers, and shoot my M-16 at any NVA who were getting close to our Duster. It was very eerie how cold and methodical we had become. There were times when we just stopped and waited and nobody was shooting.

Chester or I constantly had to get on the radio and tell the "Bird-Dog" spotter plane that was flying over the area to "go away." We knew he was just trying to help us, but his plane was in the way of the 40s and our artillery shooting at the enemy from Carroll. We were afraid he would be blown out of the sky by one of our shells. Plus, he was in the way of the jet bombing and napalm runs we were trying coordinate. We were glad when he finally left.

There were dead NVA everywhere. It looked like over five hundred, just in the area north of the convoy. Even though the artillery, jets and choppers helped kill the enemy, it felt like just us six and a handful of Marines did most of the killing. I thought we were winning because they had stopped removing their dead from the battlefield. Earl Holt counted 49 dead NVA next to our Duster on the knoll alone. I never counted, but I know only dead NVA were left on that hill. Bodies and parts were strewn everywhere. There would be a pause for a few minutes and then they would start coming again and we would start shooting. With each pause they would rush a little slower, disappearing behind every piece of brush, bush or crevice. It was the most I ever shot my M-16 and .45 pistols. It was the first time I had emptied all my ammo bandoleers of M-16 ammo and had to reload.

To avoid being hit by NVA artillery, we did a sporadic stop-and-go all over the knoll. It was impossible, as we dodged artillery, not to run over some of the NVA bodies. On the east side of the creek, we could see a small group of NVA advancing toward the convoy. We shot at them with our M60 but could not shoot the 40s because the shrapnel from them would hit the convoy. Out of nowhere, a small group of villagers

and Montagnard people started running across the battlefield, heading for their homes at Cam Lo. It was amazing, everyone stopped shooting. It caused a semi-pause in the battle. We screamed and yelled for them to run as fast as they could and get out of the way. Everyone seemed to be regrouping. We were almost out of ammo and still hoped for relief. Because we could not shoot, the NVA began feverishly picking up their dead and wounded, and disappeared with them back into the brush. They had to know we were low on ammo, but they did not risk the test under fire. Our 40mm ack-ack guns had ripped them virtually to pieces. We now just stared at each other and waited. As the NVA ran out from their cover, we shot them with our M-16s. If we had been given the ammo we requested, this would have been the only time we could have evacuated the men trapped in the ambush. As history was being written, the wait for ammo was too long and neither side was retreating.

When Easter finally allowed the first group of volunteers to try and bring us ammo, it was too late. The NVA could be seen regrouping and were advancing very slowly. We had stopped shooting the 40mm, because we were down to only a few clips of 40 ammo. We shot our M-16 and took turns shooting the M60 machine gun. It was an awful feeling, this waiting to die. I began to wonder how I would die and what gook was finally going to kill me. I kept telling myself ***"I'm not going to let them take me alive."*** Our situation was not very good. The phrase ***"Wha'd'ya think?"*** must have been said a thousand times. Nobody really gave a shit what we thought. I thought we were just NVA bait. We were going to finally be overrun, and die. ***"Wha'd'ya think?"***

Lt. Steve Moore was now up on OP Hill 250 with Lou Block's Duster crew. Hill 250 overlooked the ambush site and had the best field of view. Chester and I again coordinated with Moore the counter battery fire against the enemy. Moore knew what to do and would give us all the protection he could. There was only one problem. They could visually see us but could not lower the guns enough to clear the enemy that surrounded our Duster and the convoy area. Like the other

Dusters at Carroll, they could only shoot and cover an area about three-hundred yards from us and out to the Cam Lo River and slopes of Dong Ha mountain. Our crew agreed that we could not let our friends, who were coming to help us, drive the ammo truck into the main ambush area below our knoll and be killed. Plus, we could not risk driving our Duster back down onto Route 9 because we now had no more 40 ammo and could not take or fight back another direct NVA assault. The ammo truck driver, Bob "Willy" Williams, and Don Wolfe, riding shotgun with an M-60, didn't know exactly where we were. One of us had to try to get to them before they drove directly into the ambush site and were killed.

I am not sure how I was selected to run down the hill to Route 9 and ***"fetch"*** the first ammo truck. Some say I volunteered. My crew said they just pointed at me and off I went. I'm not really sure, and it really does not matter. I filled my pockets with grenades, wrapped two bandoleers of M-16 ammo around me, and attached my bayonet before descending down the hill. I thought if I went on an angle, away from the ambush site and yet towards the road, I would go somewhat unnoticed by the NVA and stop the truck before it got too close. As I ran down the hill, my pants were falling off from the weight of the grenades. I guess I was a little overloaded and had to hold my pants up with one hand and hold my M-16 with the other hand. I used all the little things they teach you in boot camp: running in a zigzag, low crawling, rolling, and counting before you throw the grenades, shooting single shots and short bursts, and bayonet training.

I finally had to stop and pull up my pants. I had just killed a handful of gooks and needed to regroup and get my bearings and fix my pants. Lying on my back against a small dirt hill, I pulled up my pants and tightened the belt. I now could hear Vietnamese language, and what I thought was French, being spoken on the other side of the hill I had to go down. Trying to stay unnoticed, I shimmied up under some brush. Straining to get a better look, I could only see legs, boots and a very tall guy in a beige uniform talking and pointing up the hill. I pulled the pin of one grenade and tossed it over the hill. I closely watched the

grenade as it slowly sailed through the air and prayed I had given it a good enough toss and that it wouldn't come back down on top of me. I quickly followed with two more tosses. After the explosions, I quickly crawled up over the hill. A small group of NVA lay dead and wounded in the small depression. Without counting them or searching them, I quickly shot them again and continued my run down the hill to Route 9. Things were so crazy and confusing going down that hill. I could hear NVA yelling and screaming, their whistles and bugles blowing. I would run a few yards and hide behind some cover before advancing again. My heart was pounding out of my chest as the NVA walked past without noticing me. I shot the little bastards in the back. It was too late to change my mind or direction. I was now about a hundred yards from my Duster. I just shot at anything that moved or I thought was moving. To this day, I don't think they were prepared for one Army idiot assaulting them. They were caught completely off guard. Plus, I could run real fast, as it was all downhill. Maybe that helped.

When I got to Route 9, I took cover in the drainage ditch on the south side of the road. I wasn't sure what to do and was exhausted. My mind told me not to make any noise and take time to regroup. This was the first time I was truly ever alone in Vietnam, and the first time I had done anything like this. I was not in the infantry. All kinds of crazy thoughts ran through my mind. Should I advance west towards the approaching ammo truck or wait for it to arrive? I didn't know what to do. How many more gooks could I kill before they killed me? I had a good view up Route 9 and was concealed from view, so I decided to wait, and when I saw the truck coming, I would wave it down.

Within minutes, I saw six NVA soldiers on the other side of the road walking slowly in a crouched position towards my direction. My heart was pounding out of my chest. They had no idea that I was sitting less than a 100 feet from them. Occasionally, they stopped and ducked their heads like turtles and crouched as Moore's 40s from Hill 250 and Camp Carroll hit the areas behind them. They just pointed up at Camp Carroll and again started moving forward slowly, using hand signals. They had grass sticking out of their helmets and waistbands, with bandoleers

around their chests. I held my breath and took aim at the gook in the middle of the group. As the next volley of artillery exploded, I shot. They quickly ducked. I think they thought they were shot at from our group on the knoll or hit by the shrapnel from the exploding artillery. They had no idea how their friend got killed and they seemed not to care. I was amazed that they never ran to or even gave any real aid to their fallen comrade. They were hard Sons-of-Bitches. They never made the next 50 feet or knew who shot them. Remaining in the ditch for what seemed to be an eternity, I prayed that my friends would find my remains if I got killed. Hearing a lot of shooting and explosions from the direction of the ammo truck, I ran down the road a few 100 feet and took cover again in the ditch. I could see the ammo truck being riddled by NVA heavy weapons fire. As Don Wolfe blasted away with his M60, killing the NVA rushing the truck, another group of NVA charged the truck from both sides, wounding Don and a few other guys. All I could do was pick off a few NVA with my M-16 as I looked on in horror, crying and watching from my hiding position, as my friends got hurt and maybe killed trying to help me. Unable to fight their way past the NVA, the truck was forced to turn around and limp back to Carroll. ***I felt totally helpless and ashamed that I could not help them.*** I quickly started back up the hill.

My memory has always been good, but maybe a portion of my brain got fried on the way down or toasted when I climbed out of the ditch along the road and started back up the hill. All I remember are the screams and that horrible silence when their screaming stopped. The only sound I remember hearing was my heart pounding. Everything around me went into slow motion. A feeling of unbelievable loneliness and hopelessness overwhelmed me. Then I finally went into the, "I don't give a shit, I'm dead." mode. We all want to survive and I was in survival mode. Lots of NVA died on my runs down and up that horrible hill, more than I care to remember or want to write in my diary. I made friends and blood brothers with the Devil today and can only hope that God forgives me. As they say, my name wasn't at the top of His list. I hope my Mom forgives me if she ever reads this diary.

I was bloody from what I thought were cuts and scrapes from running through the brush and crawling past the dead NVA. It was more frightening to run back up the hill. The Marines were shooting at anything or anybody coming up that hill. Constantly, I yelled my name, "New Jersey," and any other American name I could think of. As I ran and crawled back up the hill, I rested and took cover next to the dead NVA, using their bodies as a shield and protection from both the NVA and Marine bullets. I could feel the bullets hitting the bodies and feared they would come through and kill me. If I thought they were still alive, I would shoot the NVA again before advancing. It was hard getting back up the hill.

When I was finally close enough for the Marines and my Duster brothers to get a good look at me, I stood all the way up in the ***"I surrender"*** position, with my rifle over my head. I walked slowly up the center of the path, screaming my name and silently praying on the inside not to be killed by my fellow Americans or the NVA. I never held my breath so long. My comrades finally motioned to me and waved me up the hill. I ran like Hell. I told my crew what had happened, swapped positions with Sines, and started driving again around the knoll. I then called Camp Carroll to find out ***WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?***

The Marines, who were with us, wanted to withdraw up the hill, straight to Outpost Hill 250 or Camp Carroll. NVA artillery, RPGs, and recoilless cannon shells were now landing everywhere. Sines convinced them to hold on a little longer. The waiting seemed endless. The radio crackled full of chatter. Duster crews from the Khe Gio Bridge, Rockpile and Ca Lu were calling and volunteering to help their friends. It was pure chaos and had become out of control. Radio language was now on a first-name basis.

Our Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel John House, ordered all radio frequencies cleared and exclusively used for battle communications. Thank God, House's courageous orders brought the battle back to military standards. He was sending reactionary reinforcements from Dong Ha, under the guidance of Captain Easter

at Carroll. We thought that LTC House's brave combat decision was going to save everyone in the kill zone. I gave credit to the Colonel, for a decision that could possibly have saved hundreds of Americans and Camp Carroll.

The Marine from The Water Point, Roger Blentlinger, radioed our Duster to say that another volunteer Reactionary Group was coming from Carroll. I radioed back and gave him a different radio frequency to use. We all knew each other and did not need or want to use proper military radio language. The radio barked: "Joe, this is Roger. Tank and I are coming down with some volunteers, two truckloads of ammo, a squad of Marines, and Medic "Doc" Butler. We're not exactly sure where you are or what your situation is, but we're coming down. Hold tight, buddy, and give us a sign where you guys are." I radioed back and spoke with Tank and told him where I would meet them on the road. He was a fellow Road Warrior and knew the location.

The NVA had now moved really close to the knoll. Because we had no 40mm ammo, we could not stop them. We were saving the balance of our personal ammo for a face-to-face confrontation. We did not want this ammo truck and volunteer rescue team to run into the advancing NVA. One more time, I ran down that Godforsaken hill to Route 9. This time I took one of the small paths back to the road. I was running so fast that my forward momentum was causing me to stumble. As I ran and stumbled down the hill, an NVA soldier out of nowhere attacked me from my back right side. As he jumped on me, he tried to stab me with his knife and ended up hitting my M-16. His next swing cut my left wrist. I quickly let go of my rifle and grabbed his arm. Scared shitless, we went falling and rolling, head over heels, down the hill. I never let go of his arm or the hand holding the knife. Kicking and screaming, we both fought for our lives. I quickly sent him to his maker. Struggling to get back up on my feet, another gook poked at me with his screwdriver pointed bayonet pig sticker and hit me in the right forearm. Kicking him in his knee, he fell backwards. Scrambling for my life, I finally got off a shot with my .45 and sent him flying on his ass. Crawling on my belly, I recovered my M-16 and shot him again as he tried to get back

up. Frightened out of my mind and trying to catch my breath and get my bearings, I got back on my feet and I ran over to the first guy and shot him in the head. The two NVA were either out of ammo or trying to take me prisoner, God only knows. Running like a crazy man, who just escaped from a mental hospital, I continued down the path.

After what seemed like another eternity of shooting, running, ducking, crawling and cursing, I reached the road. In my haste to get away from the enemy, I was nowhere near my original goal on the road. Instead, I was on a ledge about six feet high overlooking my destination. Running full speed downhill, I had no choice and leaped off the ledge like a flying squirrel sailing through the air. I landed on my ass in front of the approaching ammo truck, only to be shot at by Roger. ***Thank God he missed.*** Tank stopped the truck just short of running me over. I directed them back to the top of the knoll, taking the same path back I took on my first run. Getting the ammo truck up the hill was another nightmare. I could not believe the fuckin' truck got stuck in a small ditch. ***I just couldn't believe it.*** I told Tank to take over and get the Marines in a fighting position. I'd be back with the Duster. ***It was a living nightmare.*** Cursing and screaming, I sprinted back up the hill. This time I just ran until I got back to my Duster. After all, it made no difference; we were all dead men walking. If my friends or the Marines shot me, no one gave a shit at this point. Friendly fire or enemy, it made no difference now how I died.

My Duster crew could not believe what had just happened and headed down the hill to the trucks, the M-60 blazing a trail. As we hooked up our tow cable to the truck, Chester quickly explained to the Marine Lt. what the situation was and what needed to be done.

Finally back on top of the knoll, with our new supply of ammo and reinforcements, we started to shoot back at the advancing NVA. As we shot, the reinforcement crew refilled the Duster with 40mm ammo. They could not believe how many NVA we had killed. Bodies and body parts were growing everywhere. Everyone was screaming and yelling and cursing and crying. In true Duster Gunfighter Tradition, our

crew stood brazenly, defying the NVA to kill us, as we humped ammo and fired our guns at the advancing enemy. Enemy bugles and whistles blowing added an eerie soundtrack to the killing of other humans, as NVA bodies were mutilated by our high explosive 40mm shells.

My brain still screams when I think of that horrible day. I still hear the clacking of rifle butts against rifle butts, and butts against flesh, as we dueled for our lives. We just stood there doing our jobs as the enemy bombs exploded around us and endless bullets pinged off the Duster. We all knew this could be our last day on earth as each man made constant eye contact and stood tall to his task of killing. Chester, now on the radio, was informed that a relief force from Dong Ha was being sent to rescue the destroyed convoy, the Marine tank, and Lt. Hardin's Duster with Johnny Towns' crew. But, they never mentioned us. Chester looked at me and said, "I don't think the reactionary force even knows where we are, or even that we are here at all." I got on the radio and asked for another sit-rep and got the same answer. I then called again and tried to get the radio frequency of the approaching reactionary team and their call sign. The radio operator advised us that the Captain Easter's orders were not to communicate with us, because he did not want to compromise the mission. We couldn't believe what we just heard. It didn't matter. We would be dead by the time they got here. All we wanted to do was tell the reactionary force not to charge into the ambush site and where the enemy was now situated. We were never given the opportunity and knew in our hearts that another Duster crew was being sent to their death.

Since this could be our last hurrah, I climbed into the turret behind Sam Lewis and started to load the 40. The guns were really hot and the 40s were self-detonating as they entered the firing chamber. Constantly, Earl Holt and I took turns reaching into the red hot breaches and un-jamming the stuck 40 rounds, the hot shells and loading chambers burning our fingers and arms. Earl said he thought we might have some oil in the outside storage compartment or on the trucks. Giving his loading task to David Lewis, he went for the oil. We continued to pick off enemy 57 recoilless cannons and RPG teams, their shells flying over

our heads like giant smoking bottle rockets. Sam Lewis yelled, "Duck," as he saw another NVA shoot his 57 recoilless directly at us. The enemy shell hit the ground next to our Duster. The exploding shell hit us with hot shrapnel and debris. I thought the skin was burned off my body by the explosion. I stood there frantically patting my chest, arms and face. There were at least three or four more explosions. I remember being thrown on top of the 40mm breach and trying to sit up. Then there was another horrific noise as both our cannons exploded. It was a mess.

I now found myself on top of Sam with a long thin toothpick piece of metal from my own guns sticking out of the right cheek of my ass. It was hard to regroup. My ears were ringing and I was dizzy from the explosion. I was trying so hard to remember where I was and what had just happened. In a blurry daze, I pulled out the piece of shrapnel in my ass. Standing, I felt something hit me in my left underarm, twisting me in a bent position over the edge of the turret. Struggling to stand, I looked around. At first I saw no one and thought the explosions had killed the rest of the crew. Then I noticed David standing there covered in blood with a long piece of shrapnel sticking through the bridge of his nose. He slowly fell backwards between the Duster and the ammo truck. I thought he was dead. No one else was in sight. They had been blown off the Duster and ammo truck. I was still trying to regroup and orientate myself and was really groggy and fucked up. It felt like all my corpuscles were exploding inside me. Everything was going in slow motion. As I bent over, trying to keep from fainting, I noticed Sam slumped over the Gunner's turret crank. Our helmets had been blown off by the explosions. The skin on the side of Sam's head had been peeled to the back of his head. I thought he was dead. Blood was everywhere and all you could hear was screaming and yelling and the faint distant sound of more NVA whistles and bugles. Hot shrapnel peppered us as the NVA shells continued to explode all around us.

I soon realized that the blood dripping on Sam's head was mine. I now thought the enemy had blown out my brains and shot me full of holes, and that I had lost my right eye. Smoke seemed to be coming out of me and my flak jacket. I started patting myself again like a madman,

trying to put out the unseen fire. Frantically, I pulled the long slivers of shrapnel out of my head, the corner of my eye, my nose, and mouth. I then started choking on my own blood. When I felt my face, I thought the hole by my right eyebrow went into my brain. I started screaming and cursing at the fucking gook bastards for blowing my brains out. The turret was swinging wildly and I thought it was on fire, so I pulled the turret fire extinguishers. Yanking Sam out of the Gunner's seat, I jumped off the Duster and ran with Sam slumped over my shoulder, as I shot at the NVA. A Marine helped us and dragged us away from enemy fire to the back of the trucks. Doc Butler quickly revived Sam with mouth to mouth, and the Marine helped him apply bandages to my head, arms and chest. For some reason, I got back in the turret and grabbed the M60 machine gun off the turret mount and started shooting at the NVA. I really was just trying to stay alive.

Earl, John, and Roger joined me in the turret with their M-16. Things were happening faster than most of the guys could react. I think we were all in total survival mode and running on energy from the final fear of dying. We all now fought like wild savages, each of us screaming, howling, laughing and cursing as we fed off each other's courage. As we killed the enemy, Chester Sines ordered the others to collect our dead and wounded and put them in or on the trucks, tank and Duster. ***Sines screamed, "Prepare to fight your way through the advancing NVA; we're going back to Carroll or die."*** Sines radioed Carroll advising them we were hit, out of commission, and were coming back. We had not recovered the other Duster and M48 Tank. To this day, we don't know how we did it. We had cut a path through the advancing NVA and back to Camp Carroll. It was something we all will never forget. Like true Grim Reapers, we harvested the enemy.

When we finally got back to Carroll, the first thing we did was insist that Sam and David get immediate medical help. We then tried to get more Dusters and Quad-50 machine guns to go back down to the ambush and retrieve our friends. We ran around, crazed with the lust to fight and to kill more enemy and save our friends. Sines advised us that we were ordered to stop and stand-down. The reactionary force from

Dong Ha had arrived at the ambush site. **We** all went crazy, screaming and yelling how we wanted to be the ones who saved our men, our friends. The rescuers should have been from Charlie Battery, not some reactionary force guys from Dong Ha. **We** had fought so hard. **We** had killed so many. **We** had shed our blood. They kept insisting I get medivaced, and we insisted on seeing Captain Easter. Finally exhausted, I sat on the sandbag wall by Paul "Boston" Conley's tent and bummed a cigarette and some water. Paul just stared at me and patted my back. I was not trying to be a martyr or a hero. I knew I was wounded, but not bad, and just looked like shit. Doc Butler was now covering my forehead, right eye, and forearms with field dressings and telling me he wanted me medivaced. A bandage was wrapped tight at my left armpit where I was shot by a ricochet or a small piece of shrapnel. One tooth was broken off and a little blood was coming out of my ears, eyes and broken nose. The back of my flak jacket was hanging off, and my clothes looked like shredded wheat covered in blood. My butt felt like a pincushion from my own Duster blowing up and peppering my ass - "the final insult".

I was very lucky that my wounds were not life threatening. I looked a lot worse then I felt, but really was in shock and running on adrenaline. Being covered in an extra layer of dirt and black ash, from the exploding NVA shells and our own 40mm rounds exploding, made me look like someone who just walked out of Hell.

Captain Easter finally met us outside the Command Bunker. He just stood there, staring at us in disbelief. We must have been some sight. I will never forgive him for telling us how to report what we did and saw. He instructed us not to upset everyone and to say very little. He ordered us to say that we had encountered a small group of NVA, and that our guns had jammed and blown up before we could rescue the other Duster.

For some stupid reason, or maybe because of all the confusion, we let him have his way. ***He was the Captain***. The jamming and blowing up of our guns would be our only recognition. We were then accused of abandoning our comrades and running back to camp during a firefight. In the bunker, he interrogated us as if we had done something wrong.

Everybody in the Command Bunker was shooting questions so fast that we could not reply in time. ***My heart was broken***. We sat with our heads bowed in disbelief, giving the tribunal one-word answers we thought Easter wanted us to say. I wanted to explode and beat the shit out of all those guys. I thought they were supposed to be our friends. ***Who the hell did they think they were?*** They had no clue what we had done, what had happened, or what was happening down at the ambush. They were twisting the truth to save their own chicken-shit butts and poor combat decisions. It was now late, so I finally asked to be transported to the medivac station. A chopper took me to Dong Ha.

After arriving at "D" Med in Dong Ha, I could not find my wounded crewmembers and asked one of the Corpsman what happened to the first wave of wounded. He told me they had already been shipped out, either to one of the hospital ships, the Repose or the Sanctuary, or to the hospitals in DaNang. I saw the crew from Johnny Towns' Duster. It was hectic and noisy, doctors screaming orders trying to save lives. Johnny just stood there with powder burns down his side. He looked like a burnt marshmallow. He was trying to get the best aid he could for his injured crew. I assured him that everything was going to be okay. We hugged and he thanked me for saving them. He told me we were the ones who kept the NVA off them. Johnny was a great soldier and a natural leader. He stayed with his men to the end. Wounded and dead soldiers from the reactionary force lay next to Gilbert, who had lost his arms, and Solomon, who had big holes through his legs. Vince DeSantis, a former "C" Battery person, had upper body wounds and didn't look too good. I gave each of them a few words of encouragement and a hug. A few others I did not know were waiting for treatment. I was deeply saddened when I learned that Billy Strickland was killed. DeSantis said that an RPG had smoked their Driver, Carr. I looked around, but could not find him. I then went over to Graves Registration and said a prayer over my dead friends. Standing outside and alone, crying, I was enraged to see all of my friends lying there wounded, mutilated or dead. This would not have happened if Command had listened to us Road Warriors. After a while I was treated and sent to Da Nang and spent a few days in the hospital getting some needed body repairs before being allowed to return to Camp Carroll. I never again saw the wounded guys from Johnny Towns' crew or Tedesco's reactionary crew.

January 24, 1968 was an unforgettable day. I have dreamed a million times about this battle. It seemed that there was no other battle in Duster history that surpassed this tragic day. Yet, it was just another day for the Duster Road Warriors. At all the reunions, this battle is rekindled and the Dragon of War is allowed to breathe flames once more. In the eyes of our crew, someone just waited a little too long to make a commitment to action. The hierarchy seemed to shudder at the mere thought of either screwing up, having death on their hands, or losing more of Uncle Sam's equipment. War is not fair or just and has no conclusion but victory or defeat. Some soldiers never engaged the enemy up close and are curious and eager for the gory details of battle. They don't know how lucky they are. I push right past that memory and on to the rest of the saga. I tell myself, it was just another day in "The Nam". I guess it was so terrifying that my mind protects me from the memory - most of the time. I didn't think I had recovered from the January 13th battle and probably will never fully recover from the January 24th battle.

The smell of the dead NVA still lingers in my nose. How odd.

Twenty years later, in 1988, I finally received the actual Purple Heart medal. I was thankful that the Marines had sent my father a letter attesting to my wounds and informing him that I had received a Purple Heart. It was instrumental in my finally getting the Purple Heart Medal.

In 1998, I saw Johnny Towns for the first time since the war. We hugged and cried and jumped around like two little kids. It was an unbelievably great feeling. I met his wife and other members of his family. His family was curious about Johnny's wild tales of the war. John (Tank) Huelsenbeck and I told them about all the different war experiences the three of us had together. What was once an unreal war story now gave him credibility. Johnny's family beamed with joy, admiration and love. After waiting 35 years to be decorated, Towns was finally awarded his Purple Heart and Bronze Star in November 2003 with the help of Lt. Steve Moore.

CHAPTER 11: G.I. JOE ROLLS IN

February 1: Robert "Billy" Conley was killed today. I became hysterical when I got the call on our radio. I had promised Conley that, on his last day in the combat zone, I would lead his convoy to the safety of Dong Ha and get him home safe and in one piece. His memory haunts me. I wasn't there to lead him home. He was killed halfway to Dong Ha. I blame myself for his death.

Norman Oss, another Duster Driver, and I still cry when we think of him.

I was told Lt. Steve Moore went home, only to be reassigned as one of the officers who knocked on the door to tell the parents that their son died in the war. It was hard enough for him to fight the enemy, get wounded, and lose some of his men, but now this……. Why?!

I guess Uncle Sam thought someone had to do it – why not him?

They told us that Camp J.J. Carroll had been hit by hundreds of NVA artillery shells everyday for the last twenty-eight days. While I was recovering from my wounds, we were given a new Duster called "Float 4." This Duster is completely refurbished and looks brand new. No dents, no holes, engine runs great and there is no play in the turret, making it shoot straight as an arrow. Plus, it is the fastest Duster and can hit 54 mph.

I cannot believe I have survived this long. I've been in so many firefights that I have lost count. One battle just rolls into another. It seems an endless ordeal. How much more do they expect us to handle? How many more do they want us to kill?

Twenty-nine years would pass before a handful of us from Charlie Battery would meet Moore and Amerman in Washington, DC, on Veterans Day at "The Wall." Our meeting was much more than we had anticipated. The hugs and tears allowed our guards to drop for

just a moment. It was filled with deep friendship and a personal bond of mutual respect and understanding. Hand on top of hand, we rubbed our fingers over each carved granite name of our departed friends. As we rubbed each name, we said their names aloud, bringing their memory back to life for just a moment as our minds drifted back to slaying Dragons together in a far away land. The magic of "The Black Granite Wall" reached out to us, making all of us even closer to the covenant called "Nam".

February 2: Cam Lo Base Camp was half overrun by the NVA, proof that they had not left the area. A couple of Quads got hit by RPGs. Again, Duster reactionary forces from Dong Ha helped save the day. My good friends, Hollis Hale and Johnnie Sheares from the Quad 50s, were killed in the battle.

February 5: The Rockpile was hit by twenty NVA rockets. Captain Easter accused me of prematurely pulling the fire extinguisher in the turret during the battle. This was the straw that broke my back. Seven months of blood and guts came to a head. How could I be so stupid as to think the Duster was on fire, when it was only the 40s that were blowing up in the turret and burning?! We still had half a tank of gasoline. What did he fucking think, gas wouldn't burn? I went berserk and totally out of control. As he ran into the command bunker, I was screaming how I was going to kick his sorry fucking ass across the DMZ. I now stood in front of the Command Bunker, screaming obscenities. "You can give me all your shit missions, but I am not going to let you accuse me or my crew of any other wrong doings." I bellowed. "You can kiss my Italian ass. Come out of the fuckin' Command Bunker, you chicken-shit-mother-fucker. We did all your fuckin' dirty work. It's time for you to get a little bloody. No guns, no knives, no sticks, and no stones, just simple hand-to-hand, man-to-man, "up front and personal". I'll show you what it's like to get a real ass kicking. I'll give you a beating that you'll remember for the rest of their lives. Then you can give yourself a Purple Heart." All I wanted to do was what I called ***"play"*** and I am real good at ***"playing".*** I am no longer going to allow them to break our spirit or accuse my crew of something we did not do or deserve.

They sent big Dave Woods out to try to calm me down. Dave and I were friends from boot camp. I told poor Dave I was not in the mood. He did not want a piece of me, not today. After a short conversation, I finally walked back to my bunker, mumbling to myself.

February 7: Dusterman Robert Coates was killed. I feel bad that I didn't get a chance to know him better. He was from one of the other firing Batteries.

February 8: Our crew was called to the CP (Command Post) for another debriefing of the January 24th battle. I thought we were in trouble again. An officer I did not know but had seen around camp did all the talking. To our surprise, the officer reported how courageous we had all fought and how proud he was of us and Charlie Battery. The officer went into some detail about the strength of the enemy we had fought and some battle statistics. He further explained how important our role was in this war, and how he was personally going to see that all of us got proper recognition and medals. We had successfully defended the enemy from taking Camp Carroll. The officers talked to Chester and me for a long time and took notes. We each wrote a story about the battle. Our letter was short and brief. It was a good meeting.

*****I wrote my Dad another letter marked "Personal".**

Dear Dad,
How are you? Fine I hope. I am also fine. I know you are probably wondering how I got wounded again. This isn't the first time things like this happen around here and won't be the last. Well, here goes. January 24th, the convoy got hit going from Dong Ha to Camp Carroll. It was almost here when it got hit. Our track and another were called to go help pull them out. To make a very long story short, we drove up almost to the ambush site. The other track and a tank with us went right into the ambush. Before we knew it, that tank and track got hit with RPGs (they blow tanks apart). It was real bad. Dad, we tried to get them out. The fighting was furious. We were outnumbered and just couldn't get to them. We pulled on top of this small hill overlooking

the ambush. They started hitting us with everything they had: rifles, RPGs, mortars and recoilless rifle cannons. We never stopped trying to save our friends. We finally got hit by a couple of their cannons. That's what wounded most of us. The blast also caused both our twin 40mm cannons to explode, making us useless. Dad, we kept fighting with our rifles and hands, it was tough going. We had to fight our way back to our camp. I wish you could meet my friends. You would really like them. They're a great bunch of very brave guys. As they say, "That's all she wrote." At our last briefing, we were told that, at the end of the battle, there were four hundred of the enemy killed. Half of the Marine unit we were trying to help were wounded or wiped out. Three tracks, a tank, and many trucks were destroyed, and some Army personnel (us) were killed and wounded. Since then, we're running the roads even more, becoming regular roadrunners. We get hit every day at Camp Carroll. Well, that's about all, Dad. Don't worry; I know the ropes of the game. Since I have been here, life has a new look for me. I'm a real lucky guy to have parents like you and Mom. The saying that fits this place goes like this, "To really live, you must nearly die". Thanks, Dad, for everything you've done for me.
Love you,
Your son
xxxxx

February 9: We were one of two Dusters assigned as the security team to guard the Marine engineers who were being sent down to the January 24th ambush site to clean up the dead NVA. As we stood guard, a bulldozer dug two long trenches like a letter "L" on the north side of Route 9. One was parallel to Route 9 just west of the lone tree we called ground zero during the ambush. The other was dug parallel to the small creek north of the lone tree. It was a horrible sight watching the Marines collect the NVA bodies and throw them in the trenches. The smell was disgusting. They dragged one of the NVA out of the ditch that ran along the road and tied him to the concrete road marker that was engraved with the words Dong Ha and an arrow pointing east. I wondered if it was one of the gooks I had shot. They dressed him in

a fatigue shirt and pants, a helmet, and a pair of Tank Driver's goggles. They put a cigarette in his mouth and placed a sign dangling from his neck that read "Fuck with the Marines – Die like the Rest".

One of the Marine units guarded the area for a few months. As the NVA body decomposed, passing convoys would stop and rebuild the "Road Marker of War," keeping the symbol of the carnage from the 24th alive, by using empty brass cannon shells as legs and Vietnamese grass knives as arms.

February 10: An NVA artillery shell exploded next to Earl. Earl went flying and flipping through the air about thirty feet. He was lying there motionless on his left side, knocked unconscious from the blast with a big piece of shrapnel protruding through his flak jacket into his heart. Thinking he was dead, we slowly rolled him onto his back to see if there was anything we could do to save him. After a close examination, and to our total amazement, the shrapnel was stuck through his flak jacket and into his pocket Bible he carried in his fatigue pocket over his heart. He had just been knocked out and was badly bruised. We all stood there in disbelief looking at each other. It took a few minutes before he woke up and regrouped his senses. He never knew what hit him, so we had to explain over and over what had happened, until it finally registered in his rattled brain. We never heard the end of it. God's Bible had saved his life and now we had to pray even more with him. We appeased him by telling him to have his Mom send us a case of Bibles. I am glad Earl survived. We have become great friends. I pray I will never see him get killed or severely wounded.

Dear God, please protect my crew and my friends. Never take them to your palace until they are very old men and have lived a full life. When they come to you, please let them sit in Heaven at your right side. They are all good men, God. They have only disobeyed your teachings because it is war and they live here in Hell with me. If you have to blame someone God, blame me. I have taken them down another path and forced them to obey my rules. God, I promise I will do my best to keep them safe and still believe in you and your teachings. God, please keep a place open for me on your left, we need to talk.

February 11: Dusters at Ca Lu destroyed four NVA bunkers.

February 12: On this day, I was training one of the guys named Danny to be a Driver. I went through all the basics with him. Because the Duster has an automatic transmission, it was easy to drive. It had low, high, neutral, reverse, park and a gear that made the Duster turn 360 degrees in a complete circle. It was not hard to get it going and you steered it with a bicycle handlebar. I explained that, to be a good driver, you must think you are slow dancing with a beautiful girl and push the steering bar real slow as though you were sashaying her across the dance floor. Don't jerk it or you will give whiplash to the guys up in the turret. We decided that we would practice combat conditions and requirements another day. He jumped in the Driver's seat and I sat next to him in the TC seat. We drove around Camp Carroll for about a half hour, practicing shifting from low to high and stopping. He seemed to be getting the feel of the Duster but, like all new guys, was still very nervous. He was used to being up in the turret loading the 40s, not driving. We were driving from the southern back area of Carroll up the long straight-a-way road that lead back to the main gate and our position. I told him to ride on the right side of the shallow drainage ditch that ran alongside the road because there was a convoy assembling and lining up to leave Carroll.

We no sooner crossed the ditch when the first volley of NVA artillery shells hit Carroll, exploding to our far right. As usual, they were trying to zero in on the assembling convoy. I told him to speed it up and get back to our position in case there was also a ground attack. For some unexplainable reason, he slammed on the brakes and jumped off the Duster and into the ditch face down, digging for China with his bare hands. I kept screaming at him to get back in the Duster and I would drive. Frozen with fear, he just laid there. Marines, trying to avoid the flying shrapnel, started jumping out of the convoy trucks into the same ditch. Sprinting up and down the length of the ditch, I was screaming at the Marines to get back in their trucks and get the Hell out of Carroll, because the enemy was trying to hit the convoy. I could see the next

volley hit closer to our ditch. A few of the Marines got their trucks moving and some still lay in the ditch, hoping the enemy artillery would miss them. The next volley sent me flying in the air and covered me in smoldering dirt and black smoke. Landing with a hard thud and out of breath, I saw another shell land on the Marines in our ditch, about three hundred feet in front of me. Everybody started running for their lives in all different directions, as the NVA walked the shells down the ditch. I grabbed Danny by the scruff of his neck and dragged him screaming with fear through the next volley of artillery explosions. I then threw him head first into the TC hatch of the Duster. In high gear, I drove back to our position through another volley of exploding shells and parked the Duster in its three-sided parapet home.

Now totally pissed off and out of control, I yanked Danny out of the TC hatch, dragged him to our bunker and threw him inside, head-over-heels. Our Section Chief Chester Sines took cover in our bunker. As the bombs continued to explode all around us, I screamed that Chester best get rid of this guy or I would kill him. Ranting and raving, Earl held me back from kicking his ass. Still screaming, I told everybody to get on the Duster and see if they could see where the enemy was shooting from and shoot back and kill the bastards. "Chester, Danny stays in the fuckin' bunker and you do his job or else I'll have to shoot him ***and*** you." After the smoke cleared, I visited Roger at the Water Point and told him what happened. Roger just smiled and said "Joe, what-da-ya-fuckin'-expect-from-some-fuckin'-doggie-Army guy?" "Roger, I'm in the Army." "See, what did I tell you in the past – you guys are all fucked up." I just laughed and said "gimme some of that good liquid you Marines call drinking water."

February 14: Lou Block's track C121, while shooting at an NVA rocket position, took a direct hit on the rear deck. Four of Block's crew were wounded. It was Lou's lucky day; he didn't get a scratch.

February 17: Our position was hit by seven NVA rockets. I hate those damn things. The men now had a new saying about the enemy "Kill Them All, Let God Sort Them Out".

February 20: Our new Duster, "Float 4", ran over a mine. The NVA tried to finish us off with some close mortar rounds. They blew some holes through the turret, hitting Earl Holt and Dave Lewis with shrapnel. When we finally got back to Carroll, we had to cut off Earl's boot to fix his wounds. He is okay but needs a new pair of boots. Every crewmember now has a "Purple Heart" or three. Dave Lewis' Purple Heart would be his ticket to a Duster unit in the Saigon area. Damn, I am going to miss Float 4.

February 23: Our crew hitched a ride on a convoy to Dong Ha and got another Duster. At Dong Ha, I inquired about my personnel records and was informed they were not to be found and must have been destroyed ***again.*** Those records would be the only evidence of my service to my country. My father always showed me his from WW-II. I wanted to share the same experience with him and my future children. Plus, I wanted the Army to confirm the day I was supposed to go home. I guessed they'll keep me here until I die.

February 25: I was called to attend an awards formation. Captain Tedesco pinned on our Purple Hearts. Earl Holt received an Army Commendation Medal. We thought we were getting Silver Stars like the other guys or maybe something even better. No other medals were awarded to us. After the ceremony, one of the other officers asked for my medal back, claiming they did not have enough Purple Hearts for the next group. I was only allowed to keep the certificate. All the soldiers getting awards knew each other, and I was the only person singled out. It was obvious that someone was getting even for my defiance. Purple Hearts have your name engraved on them. Who else is named Joseph Belardo in this unit? It probably got tossed in the shitter. My big mouth is always getting in the way.

February 27: Back at Dong Ha with another convoy, we heard they were serving steaks in the Battalion Mess Hall. We never had steaks where we lived. As we waited in a long line to get a hot meal, Dong Ha started getting hit by NVA artillery. Dong Ha had a loud alert siren and everybody ran into their bunkers for cover. The shells were landing by

the airport about a half mile away. It was a rule in Dong Ha that you took cover when the siren blasted. My crew, who was used to being hit on the head by the shells, waited until the line of soldiers had taken cover. Once inside their Mess Hall, we loaded all their steaks and a few veggies into the insulated metal storage containers used to bring food to the men in the field. Hidden inside the Driver's compartment, we instantly took off for Carroll. When we returned, we shared our stolen treasurers with our friends. Steak never tasted so delicious.

March 1: Lt. Hardin informed us that he was restructuring our crew in preparation for Sam Lewis' return home. We would be individually assigned to other Dusters. To my surprise, Lt. Hardin made me the Squad Leader. I knew Sgt. Chester Sines and Sam Lewis had given him the recommendation. After a heated argument with the Lieutenant, I was allowed to keep Earl "Tex" Holt and train him as my Driver.

In the next few weeks, my crew constantly changed. I brazenly demanded to pick my crew from the new men arriving from Dong Ha.

March 2: Vince Tedesco has replaced Captain Easter as Charlie Battery's Commander. Tedesco took the time to visit and get acquainted with every Duster crew in our Battery. Instantly, we all liked this new Captain. All of us knew we finally had a great team leader. He recognized my crew from the awards ceremony and asked how we got wounded. When we told him we were the other Duster in the January 24th battle, he could not believe it. He looked stunned and amazed. He had heard rumors after the battle that there was another Duster in the battle, but no one seemed to be able to confirm the rumors. He had dismissed them, since he did not see us on the battle field, and was only instructed to retrieve the convoy, one tank and one Duster. Because of the awards ceremony, he knew we were wounded on the 24th but thought it was from another fire-fight. We exchanged stories of the battle. Each story filled the mental void of not knowing what really happened on the battlefield after we returned to Carroll.

March 3: Dusterman, Rodrigo Velazquez, was killed. I had only met him once, in Dong Ha.

March 4: I have been training Earl to be a Driver. He is a "natural" at it and got the feel of the Duster after only a few runs around the base. He only has one problem. He is slightly claustrophobic and got a little rattled when he had to crawl inside the hull of the Duster and practice retrieving ammo. I told him I had a simple remedy that would cure his nervousness. As he crawled into the bowels of the Duster to retrieve the last can of ammo, I had the guys quickly close the front door and hatch doors of the Driver's compartment and TC hatch. We then started pounding the sides of the Duster with hammers and fired off a few Duster rounds, simulating combat. After fifteen minutes, we opened up the doors and casually asked Earl if his claustrophobia was cured.

March 5: Tonight, we made camp with a platoon of Marines at the bottom of the hill below Carroll. Supposedly, we are some kind of blocking force. All we know is that we are again left as NVA bait and will be here for about a week. We are alone and isolated. We dug little one-man holes and used the dirt for our sandbags. It was better than nothing. I got tired of sleeping on the ground with the leeches and cockroaches. Our Duster made a run to the black market at Cam Lo. It was amazing what you could buy for an American dollar. We bought cots, sleeping bags, tarps, lawn chairs, and chaise lounges. We are now ready for upscale jungle-life living.

March 8: There were hundreds of dead NVA all along Route 9. You always don't have to see them. Your nose gives their positions away. The bodies turn almost black and swell like a helium balloon, moving as if alive from the maggots eating them. They finally burst and emit an odor that makes you want to throw up. I cannot believe how fast their bodies decomposed. Within a few weeks only their bones and a few clothes remained. It was a sight and smell beyond imagination. I hated running over them when we pulled off the main road.

March 14: We took Don Wolfe to the LZ on the south side of Camp Carroll where he waited for the chopper that would take him to Dong Ha. Don was going home. It was his last day in the 44th. We all wished him well and said the traditional "see ya later". It was getting harder to say good bye to my trusted old friends. Don was one of only a few men who would risk his life to save others. He had gotten wounded trying to save me and my crew. I didn't know how to thank him and just gave him a big hug. I had to compose myself as I turned away and waved goodbye.

As Don Wolfe's chopper lifted off of Camp Carroll, he could see the first of the NVA artillery shells hit Carroll.

I have just gotten a new Gunner, named Wally Owens, from Tennessee. He claims he has the eyes of an eagle and can shoot the balls off a monkey at two miles. Wally was being initiated into Charlie Battery with a fine meal from Camp Carroll's mess hall. As he gulped his first bite, I heard the popping sound of the NVA artillery shooting. Before anyone could hear the screaming and whistling sound of the NVA artillery shell flying through the air, the mess hall started to empty. By the time I grabbed Wally, we were the last to run out of the mess hall for cover. It was too late. As we dove threw the back mess hall door and hit the ground, the NVA artillery shells blew the mess hall in half. Fifteen more NVA shells were fired around the mess hall. Wally and I were really shaken-up. We never made the bunker and just hugged Mother Earth about ten feet from the mess hall. During the enemy artillery barrage, Doc Butler and Paul Conley ran around like crazy men helping all the wounded. Doc and Paul were two very brave people.

After the shelling and the smoke cleared, someone always yelled ***"All Clear".*** I always wondered who the asshole was who decided it was ever ***"All Clear"*** in a combat zone. We began to scavenge for scraps of food, as we bitched at the NVA who had destroyed our beautiful mess hall. Our mess hall was the pride of "Artillery Hill."

Don later radioed me from Dong Ha to see who had got hurt and how bad the mess hall was hit. After a short conversation, we wished each other well and said our farewells.

Dear Diary

On the Outside Looking In

It seemed as a young man I had a special bond with nature. I spent hours exploring her, hiking her and enjoying her. She taught me to be patient, and my eyes and mind could and would be filled with her wonderment.
On the outside, I could look in and see her, like the song, beautiful and spacious skies, amber waves of grain, majestic mountains. I knew she had spread her grace on me.
I began to give my attention to others, by watching their eyes. Their eyes would tell all emotions.
I learned through eye contact, happiness, sadness, confusion, romance and love.
I experienced from the touch of the hand, the hug, that eye contact is what I thought a real man should be about.
Uncle Sam cast his eyes upon me and gave me the look of one of America's best. The new look fit me like a glove.
I enjoyed the hairy eyes the drill instructors could give. The stare-down the officers would try to show. I would return any look required. I knew sustained eye contact would give them away.
This Army Dog was now attached to the Halls of Montezuma. Like most GIs of my era, I was sent to the "Land of the Dragon"
My eyes could not believe her beauty. It was a feast for eye and mind. God didn't make this land for killing or dying, man did.
Uncle Sam sent me north to the ZEE. My eyes became filled with confusion.
I took on another new look, Squad Leader on a M42 Duster, a Twin 40 Millimeter Ack- Ack Gun.
It was our job to give the North Vietnamese Army the look of death. Something my eyes and mind had never seen or experienced.
The Duster separated men from man. There was no room to duck, no

place to hide, nowhere to run. It was straightforward, face-to-face, eye-to-eye dueling; very little guessing of who was killing whom.
While the battles blazed, I could see from my open turret the Marines I supported. My eyes would agonize the feeling of others. Marines running, jumping, yelling, shouting, killing, screaming, wounded and dying. Arms, meant for hugging lovers, were now holding friends, wounded or dying.
All eyes now filled with horror, sorrow, fear, hate and pain.
...eyes screaming at each other for help.
...eyes looking for targets hiding in the shadows.
...eyes unbelieving.
...eyes fixed in stares, glazed by their final journey to their God.
I began to wonder, why my God allowed me to see these atrocities of life...these eyes of others.
The squeeze of the trigger was easy, but the eyes of the suffering and dead were forever
...regardless of who was on whose side.
I will go home a broken warrior.
Eyes and mind spent from too many firefights, too much Incoming.
Eyes being witness to the dark side of life.
My Uncle Sam had completed my training, eyes do tell all.
My eyes now walk this earth, half filled with tears.
Hoping never again to be "On the Outside Looking In".

March 21: Earl's case of Bibles has arrived. He was thrilled as we eagerly took the Bibles. We quickly stuffed them in all our jungle fatigue pants and jacket pockets, and thanked him for our extra Godly body armor. We needed all the protection we could get. Tex dropped to his knees and begged God to forgive us for our heathen ways. We still said our prayers with him nightly, holding our bibles tight.

March 25: Our crew had three Dusters destroyed by the NVA in a one-month period. We now hold the battalion record of five. God was with us again, none of us got a scratch, lots of tiny shrapnel splinters, but no real body damage. We are "Bodacious Bastards", the Marine tank retriever's number one customer. Our new Captain, Vincent Tedesco,

sent Tex and me to Dong Ha to pick up another refurbished Duster. It was Earl's birthday and we celebrated the occasion with two cans of chili and beans, chased down with hot cocoa. I sang him a solo happy birthday song as he blew out a single candle (a match). It was Earl's well deserved few minutes of happiness.

I talked Earl into stealing the Colonel's prized toilet seat. As I played "chickie", Earl low crawled to the Colonel's shitter. It was the best thing we ever stole. When we got back to Carroll, Earl, on hearing that whoever stole the seat was going to get court-martialed, buried the seat in a place only he knew. He is a good Christian and prayed for forgiveness and our redemption.

At our 1990 DQS reunion at Fort Bliss, Texas, I called Colonel House and Earl Holt to the podium. I started telling the story of the Colonel's prized toilet seat. Members of the 1/44th cheered as I regaled them with the story of the precious white toilet seat. The Colonel started yelling. "I knew it was you, Belardo, I knew it was you." Earl had no idea I was going to do this and immediately started blaming me for the theft. It was hilarious. I casually presented the Colonel with a box. In it was a big white toilet seat and a piggy bank in the shape of a toilet with brass engraved plaques dedicated to the Colonel from Earl. I handed it to Earl and said "Earl you can now give the seat back to the Colonel. It's about time you got court-martialed." The place went wild as I held up my arms in victory.

To my surprise, the new Duster we got was one of my old tracks, C131, "The Track From Hell." This Duster has had more engines, transmissions, tension-bars, idler wheels and road wheels replaced than any other Duster in the Battalion. The track is full of bullet holes, dents, dings and two RPG holes in the lower chassis. Past crews joked about all the miles on it and that C131 saw more firefights than anything or anyone else did in Nam. Earl and I looked at each other, laughed, and said, "Wonder if the turret still jerks to the right when you shoot?" It still does.

In her future battles, the enemy would tattoo her beautiful green skin with two more RPG holes, twenty-three more bullet holes, and several more scratches and dents. Her battle scars were many, but we still loved her. This metal woman was still a born-again killer.

March 26: My crew now consists of Driver Earl Holt, Gunner Wally Owens, Cannoneers George Lewis and Benito Sitello. Earl is a big strong Texan over six feet, a kind, religious man whose faith always keeps him steady under fire, my second in command and my right hand man. We know each other well. Wally, a cigar smoking country boy, is steady and calm under fire and the best Gunner in the Battalion. He is always talking about fast cars and running moonshine. Benny is a Mexican who thinks he is Poncho Villa with his crisscrossed bandoleers and bad intentions. He keeps us serenaded us with his guitar, singing Spanish songs (Cielito Lindo being my favorite) with his fantastic falsetto voice. George, who everyone calls "Kung Fu George, is a big Californian, who carries a big 24 inch razor sharp Enfield Bayonet down the back of his flak jacket and is more than willing to demonstrate his martial arts and knife skills.

To my surprise and pleasure, they all rose above and beyond the call of duty. We were a team from the start. They easily learned each other's jobs. We trusted each other's judgment and fighting ability. Each of them possessed the right amount of courage and fear, a mixture in a man's soul that cannot be taught. I trusted them with my life, and they equally trusted me with theirs – a bond and friendship that will last forever.

Wally has the only set of hand-held hair clippers. All of our heads got their first good haircut. Wally should charge for his services; he would make a million. Grunts will buy anything and always need a trim.

Deep inside, I am proud to be their Squad Leader. They really know how to fight as a team. We give each other the needed confidence that each of us will make it home. My crew is unbelievably superstitious.

Again, they removed my "Grim Reaper" insignia from between the 40mm barrels. I just laughed and told them someday it would be back: ***We are the Grim Reapers.***

If we aren't doing convoys, we are doing search and destroy missions behind Carroll deep into the southwest, towards Khe Sanh. We continually see tracks from a suspected NVA PT76 Russian-made tank, which we hope our team will be the first to destroy.



Robert "Billy" Conley
Killed In Action February 1, 1968



Our Duster after it hit a land mine.



1st Sgt Alex Crawford



Camp Carroll Mess Hall blown up by NVA artillery.



Another destroyed Duster.



Left to right: George Lewis, Earl Holt, Wally Owens, and Melvin Hand.



The NVA road marker – symbolizing the savagery of the January 24th battle.



Proudly I stood (second from right), with a big smile, after being awarded the Purple Heart from Captain Vincent J. Tedesco.

CHAPTER 12: RELIEF FOR KHE SANH

March 27: Khe Sanh has been under siege by the NVA since around January 19th. The Khe Sanh area is now engaged in the largest battle we ever have had with the NVA. Our government does not want Khe Sanh to fall. The NVA has already attacked many American bases throughout Vietnam. The only success they achieved was with our newspapers and politicians. The enemy was beaten severely militarily, but that did not count. The newspapers still make us look like some losers. Thank God they did not report about WWII. We would be speaking another language. Why can't they tell the truth or at least back the soldier? We are trying to fight for another person's **Freedom**.

Our Duster was one of two Dusters assigned to meet the Army's 1st Cavalry Unit near Delta-5. The area they assembled in was a large, flat expanse of land we called the "Plains of Delta 5". It seemed like they had more equipment than all of the Third Marine Division. As the sun rose, we could smell food coming from their make-shift mess hall tent. I asked one of their officers if we could eat with their men. The officer rudely replied, "You live with the Marines, go eat with the Marines." I told the cocky Army bastard where to stick it and gave him the finger. I climbed up on the Duster and then pissed in his direction. The crew thought it was great and heckled him as we sat and ate our C-rations. We did our job and escorted the "Cav" up to Route 9 and west to Ca Lu, which was now being transformed into LZ Stud. Stud would be the jumping off point for Operation Pegasus. Pegasus was the name given to the reactionary forces assigned to reopen the road to Khe Sanh and relieve the troops stranded there.

We would fight alongside the Cav for a few days. It was slow going with a lot of shooting from our group and very little return fire from the enemy. I'm sure the Cav had some firefights up in the hill areas, but this particular group of the 1st Cav would brag how they saved the Marines from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh and how they kicked NVA ass. The NVA ass had already been kicked and beaten by hundreds of Marines, jets, and a million pounds of bombs dropped by the B-52s, and Dusters, Quad-

50s. On the whole, the resistance the NVA gave the Cav was minimal compared to the NVA's actual fighting abilities. That "minimal" gave the Cav a lot of trouble. Yes, they saw some action, but nothing like it was in the prior months. Yet the "Cav" always claimed bragging rights and that's okay. Even now, forty years later, they're still bragging.

April 4: LZ Stud was hit by 50 NVA artillery shells. Our job was to help the "Cav" open Route 9 from LZ Stud to Khe Sanh. I ***always*** thought they were supposed to be helping us. The going was slow and the fighting sporadic.

April 8: We finally rotated and got a rest. Our new position is back on top of Hill 250. I must have been back on someone's good list. If I could have chosen a place to spend my tour, it would be 250. Hill 250 is giving us a chance to regroup. But, we miss Roger's hot showers at The Water Point. The view from Hill 250 is magnificent. At daybreak, you stand above the low clouds, and as the mist lifts, you can see the horizon. It is breathtaking, and yet… it takes the breath away from the enemy because of the firing and shooting advantage from that hill. It is a shame how war mixes and twists our emotions… my emotions. I feel safe here, and that alone allows my brain and body to get much needed relaxation.

April 10: My crew got credited for shooting three NVA artillery rocket positions in three days. The secondary explosions were fantastic. We yelled with a madman's joy as the enemy positions were destroyed. Dead gooks meant no Marines would die that night. I enjoyed shooting the Marine .50 caliber sniper rifle from the lookout tower on top of 250. It was an awesome experience.

April 11: The Rockpile got hit by six NVA rockets. One of the rockets damaged a Duster and wounded one of the crew.

April 12: We were on a search and destroy mission with the Marines behind an old plantation slightly southwest of Delta-5. All of a sudden, 30 Viet Cong (VC) walked out of a tree line. They were all holding their

hands and rifles high, yelling ***"Chieu Hoi – Chieu Hoi"*** (I surrender). We expected it to be some kind of trap. Almost all of them were dressed in their traditional daytime white pajamas. The Marines searched them and confiscated all their weapons and we marched them all to Delta-5. We kept them huddled in small groups outside of D-5. It was funny, because when we first radioed Carroll that we had captured 30 of the enemy, they thought we were joking and told us to shoot them. The leader of the VC constantly spoke and caused unrest among the prisoners and had to be separated from the other prisoners. We isolated him and had him stand tall at attention, with the Marines guarding him and orders to shoot if he moved. It took all day before some trucks finally arrived with an interpreter and took the VC away. I always wonder where they take all of the prisoners.

April 13: Along with the Cav, Larry Roundtree's Duster was one of two Dusters to be the first to drive into Khe Sanh after the 77 day siege.

April 14: Another 30 NVA rockets hit The Rockpile. One of our Dusters at The Rockpile spotted the NVA forward observer and hit him with a fast-eighty 40mm rounds. The NVA stopped shooting for the rest of the day.

We got a call on the lima-lima from Lt. Hardin, "Saddle up, you're going to rotate to Khe Sanh in the morning. We are relieving and replacing Duster "A" Battery who have survived the 77 Day Siege of Khe Sanh. Be at the main gate at 0600 hours." I was shocked when he told me to choose the other track that would be sent with me. To this Steve and I had gone from boot camp to Nam together. Steve might have never known it, but he was a courageous soldier and had a good crew. If the Khe Sanh I knew had changed like they said it had, Harris is my first choice. I also knew that Lt. Hardin would love to send Harris. A few weeks ago, Harris and Lt. Hardin had exchanged some serious words about an ambush they were in on the road to Khe Sanh. This was going to be a first; Dusters C131 and C132, sister tracks, would be together, defending one base.

Harris, who was stationed at the Khe Gio Bridge, seriously cut his foot while bathing in the river, and has been medivaced to Dong Ha. Another real good friend from boot camp, Frank Bardone, became acting Squad Leader. Bardone will take Harris' crew to Khe Sanh.

Steve was never told, and I mean never, that he was going to Khe Sanh. He wasn't even told that his track had left for Khe Sanh without him. Rumor had it he was really pissed when he got back to the Bridge and found that his track, complete with crew, was gone. I understand he got very upset with me when he was told I had volunteered him for Khe Sanh. What are friends for? It was a month before he caught up with his Duster. I was told they gave him KP and shit-burning details while he waited to catch a chopper to Khe Sanh. To this day I feel guilty for suggesting Steve Harris' track. I knew he would jump at the request, and he knew I would choose him.

April 15: We met Captain Vincent Tedesco, our new CO (Commanding Officer), at the main gate. He had never been to Khe Sanh and wanted to take the ride in his jeep, driven by his driver, Smitty. I looked around and saw no other vehicles or Marines. "Sir, are we waiting for the convoy to assemble?" "No Joe, we'll pick up the other Duster at the Khe Gio Bridge and then head out to Khe Sanh. Is that a problem?" "No, Sir." My crew looked at each other and smiled. We were not going with another convoy or the security of any other group, just three vehicles: Tedesco and his jeep driver, Smitty, Duster C132, and my Duster C131. Captain Tedesco is the best Commanding Officer we ever had at C-Battery. He leads us with courage and a true understanding of how the NVA fight and how to fight back. However, I thought driving to Khe Sanh with just three vehicles was a bit crazy. But, what the hell, you can't live forever! I am always comfortable when Tedesco is in charge. He treats all of the Duster and Quad crews with respect, asks for our advice and opinions, and listens to what we had learned in combat situations. The Captain and I hoped our little convoy would not become a casualty on the ride to Khe Sanh.

We were the first and, as far as I know, the only idiots ever to make a solo attempt to drive to Khe Sanh. Casually, we drove past The Rockpile, LZ Stud, Ca Lu and Joliet. We were about one third of the way to Khe Sanh when my engine blew. Black smoke was pouring out the engine grates. The Duster, known to be fast, was now reduced to a top speed of less than 5 miles per hour. Our track was now a great target for any decent NVA sniper, RPG team, or satchel charge thrower. We briefly stopped along the road to assess the damage. Tedesco informed us that he and the other Duster would proceed to Khe Sanh, with all due speed. If anything should happen, he would send help and return with all the Dusters and Quads at the base. Earl Holt, who never cursed or used God's name in vain, uttered his first words of profanity ***under his breath.*** Tedesco and Bardone departed for Khe Sanh, assuring us that we were great soldiers and knew how to fight, "You can just radio us for help." Bardone yelled, "Remember, we don't make house calls.

We waved goodbye to each other as the dust from the departing Duster hid us from view. Déjà vu of January 24th and other battles rushed through my brain. We even took pictures of their Duster as it sped down the road on the other side of the valley. I ordered my crew to unlock the turret, open the upper ammo boxes, slowly traverse back and forth, and stay extremely alert. I instructed Owens that, if shit happened, he was to shoot the first minute with both 40s on full auto as I swept the area. Cannoneer Lewis was to remain seated, holding four hand-grenades, ready to pull the pins and start throwing, before he started loading the 40s. The other Cannoneer, Sitello, was ordered to squat and use the M60 machine gun to cover the hill and cliff above our right side, and never stand up. All were instructed to keep a low profile and not talk, absolutely no talking. Talking to each other while on the road or during **"INCOMING!"** was something I absolutely forbid. All attention and concentration has to be on one's job, the enemy, and the direction of any enemy encounters. They are a great crew and knew what had to be done. It was routine business for Road Warriors. The balance of the ride to Khe Sanh seemed to take all day. ***We all thanked God that nothing bad happened.*** Over three hours alone on Route 9 to Khe Sanh was no place to be.

Years later, at a reunion, we joked with Tedesco and Bardone about how they left us on the road that day, and how Frank would not accept collect calls if we were attacked. I told them the only reason the NVA let them through was because they feared my Duster, The Grim Reaper. I guess we really were the only idiots to ever ride that section of road from Camp Carroll to Khe Sanh all alone and not get wounded or killed.

I had not been down the entire length of the road to Khe Sanh in many months. During Operation Pegasus, I could not believe how this once picturesque winding road had changed. The all out American push to save Khe Sanh had destroyed the area. The weeks of artillery, napalm and B-52 strikes had leveled everything. I told my men, ***"Welcome to Death Valley."*** Almost all the trees were gone or splintered, and the terrain looked like the earth was scorched and upside down. It made my hair stand on end. We had already chewed up Route 9 from Camp Carroll to Ca Lu. The area was filled with bomb craters, napalm scars, and dead NVA decaying along the sides of the road. The smell of death burned my nostrils and the rotting flesh upset my stomach. But this sight was like nothing I had ever seen. Our slow crawl to the infamous Khe Sanh changed our souls even more. None of us thought we would make it there alive and were relieved when we finally saw the main road leading into camp.

Our arrival at Khe Sanh turned into a bad omen for my superstitious crew. Captain Tedesco was with Bardone, having him take over the Duster position on the north side of the base at the east end of the runway by the old ammo dump. Our combat section from Charlie "C" Battery was relieving Alpha "A" Battery which was commanded by Lt. Bruce Geiger. "A" Battery had withstood the test of time during the infamous 77 day siege. Tedesco went back to Dong Ha escorted by Larry Roundtree's Duster, the two Dusters from Alpha Battery, and two Quad 50s, one of which was being towed. Also accompanying them was a convoy of Marines.

Our new position was the bunker at the northwest end of the runway across from "Charlie Med.". The "A" Battery Duster was pulling out of

the parapet as we arrived. They expressed their joy about leaving. Two Marines, waving goodbye to them, stood in the mouth of the track's three-sided parapet which was next to our new bunker position. The NVA opened up with a barrage of artillery from Co Roc, a mountain enemy fortification in Laos a few miles away. The first shell was a direct hit on the two Marines. We never heard it coming. They were blown to smithereens. Parts of them were scattered all over our parapet, bunker, and Duster. As the enemy artillery rained down on the base, Tedesco and the convoy left as quickly as possible. We helped the Marines quickly bag as many parts of their comrades as we could find, and ran them across the runway to Graves Registration.

Our new position was still covered with the remains and blood of the two unfortunate Marines. My crew stood there in disbelief. Nobody had ever been killed right next to our bunker. Being killed twenty feet away was okay, one hundred feet away was even better. For some strange reason, anyway or anywhere you died on the road was okay and understandable. We had seen death many times and knew all about dying and suffering and picking up the pieces. But this, a direct artillery hit on a fellow American next to what was our private sanctuary, our bunker, our home, was totally unacceptable. It happened so fast; there was no time to take cover. We did not have time to close our eyes or blink. We just watched in total disbelief.

My crew had done their fair share of what we called "being smoked," a term we used when the 40mm cannon shell hit an NVA soldier. When one of ours got "smoked," it had a whole new meaning. My men would remember this day forever. On our Duster we carried rakes, picks and shovels. As my crew checked out their new bunker, I hastily raked the rest of the Marines' remains into a pile. I then shoveled the pile into an old rusty half of a 55 gallon drum. I had the crew carry the drum about a one hundred feet west of our bunker. I then shoveled dirt on all the blood stained ground around our area. Holt backed up the Duster into the parapet. We were now ready for the NVA. As a team, we quickly finished our task of ***"it's only a thing"*** and went back to business. After we were settled into our bunker, I burned the remains in the drum.

As the ashes rose, Earl walked over and read from ***"the Good Book"***. The five of us huddled together around the drum to give a final salute to America's best. The words of God took the mental edge off what now had turned into a very bad day. Unbelievably, we stood there, stoically, while the billowing smoke allowed the NVA to hone in on our position. Bombs began bursting around us, but nothing or no one could or would interfere with our ceremony. At the end of our ceremony, we casually walked back and entered our new home.

We would find parts from those Marines until we left Khe Sanh. The drum would become our area's crematorium for all the body parts that never made the body bags. We hoped the NVA artillery would not hit our crematorium and kill more of our friends. Empty boots, pairs or singles, some whole, some in pieces would stand guard duty at our crematorium. Body parts were added daily. Earl's words from the Bible continually healed our fragile souls.

Dear Diary:

FEAR

Nam, where lives are lost and saved everyday without thought of its psychological consequence.
I remember the many days of being shot at and the sight and inner fear of seeing a friend shot or dead. Bullets are like something reaching for me, unseen, but heard, unbiased and deadly.
My mind cannot grasp the swift change of events in an all out fire-fight. My trained reflexes have me running, dodging, hiding and returning fire.
The shadow of death is all around me. The sounds of war, the suffering, the dying, is in itself...unbelievable.
The fear of perishing, that struggle for self-preservation, keeps me going. It was just like they said it would be, all blood and guts. The only thing they left out was John Wayne.
The military could train me for just about anything, except the harassment and interdiction of artillery warfare. It was like nothing I could imagine. The sound alone made my heart stop. I can only relate

to this by having you lie between railroad tracks and have the Baltimore Express pass over you.
One artillery shell fired at you isn't too bad. It only lasts for a few seconds and only hits one spot. When the barrage begins, the destruction is devastating. The long lasting artillery attack plays havoc with my mind. If I'm caught in the open, I'm scrambling for the nearest shelter, preferably a bunker. Once inside I'm still not safe. All I have accomplished is the elimination of a lot of shrapnel. We just sit and wait in huddled masses. Listening, wondering, waiting for the one with your name on it. That endless time, working on your nerves. Minutes seem like hours, hours feel like days. Screams from the wounded, sighs of the dying, the helping that never seems to be enough.
I begin to wander, dreaming of home, my loved ones and the things we haven't done, but want to. I begin to pray, praying silently, praying in groups.
Fear has come a-calling and I have to suck up all that is holy to me, all that has made me what I am, all that will show the men around me that I will get them though this and send them home in one piece.
Like the scream of a murdered woman, a shell lands close and reawakens me to my surroundings. A twelve-foot cube, seventeen feet below Mother Earth, totally in darkness.
Finally it's quiet and we crawl from the bowels, the womb of our Mother, exhausted from mental fatigue.
"Thank God I'm alive."

April 19: A Convoy heading to Khe Sanh with Marine Unit G-2/9 was ambushed by the NVA. Dusters provided direct fire support on NVA main positions, enabling the Marines to extract their wounded and dead. Four Dustermen were wounded in action protecting the Marines.

My crew and I hate Khe Sanh. It is a stagnant position and we are road warriors. The siege is over, except for a few snipers that are always trying to kill us. The **"INCOMING!"** never stops, and the big guns from Co Roc, Laos, never stop pounding the base at will. Hundreds of enemy artillery shells hit the base daily. Living conditions

are deplorable. The NVA has blown the base into little pieces. Garbage and debris are strewn all over the place. The only true things that rule the base were the rats. The rats are as big as rabbits. They grow larger by the day as they feast on the dead NVA in ***Death Valley***. We share our bunker with families of rats. A rat crawling on you during your sleep is an everyday common occurrence. Often, a rat sits next to you while you eat your C-rations or write a letter home.

April 25: We have inherited a dog, or should I say a puppy, named "Rex" from a Marine named Bruce. The dog's name was instantly changed to Comanche, the handle given to Dusters from Charlie Battery. The dog breaks the monotony of the constant **"INCOMING!"** and that lonely isolated feeling. He is a good dog and is the mascot of everyone on the northwest end of the runway. Today, Comanche started frothing at the mouth and shaking. We feared he might have rabies. He is still just a pup and likes to gnaw on our fingers. Panic set in. We all thought we had rabies. Rabies meant getting two weeks of shots in your belly, something we all dreaded. We preferred fighting the NVA rather than dying from rabies.

April 27: I came up with this great idea and gave the dog a name, Pvt. Charles Comanche. On the next medivac chopper, we sent George Lewis and Pvt. Comanche to the hospital in Da Nang. We knew George would find a doctor to treat our dog. Avoiding rabbi shots in all our bellies depended on him. Comanche was diagnosed with distemper and was sadly put to sleep.

George was no fool and stayed a few extra days at China Beach. He claimed he could not get back to Khe Sanh. His stories about the USO show were refreshing. We were all jealous.

April 29: Our new Lt., who we call Lieutenant Dan, has arrived. He took up position at the other end of the runway just past the Quad-50s. The Lieutenant doesn't even know George and, therefore, doesn't know that he is gone. Captain Tedesco has placed me in charge of the Dusters

and the two Quad-50s. The poor Lt. is new and the guys just nod their agreement to his instructions and then ask me if his instructions are correct.

It was a very long, life-threatening trek between Dusters, a journey the Lt. seldom made. When he did come, he had collected an assortment of strange souvenirs along the way and sent them back to Camp Carroll on the next convoy.



1st Cavalry, U.S. Army, assembling on the plains of Delta – 5 for Operation Pegasus.



1st Cavalry practicing opening and closing their portable bridge.



Escorting the convoy for Operation Pegasus past the Khe Gio bridge outpost area, then to The Rockpile through Ambush Alley to LZ Stud.



In the convoy the Dusters had the big 175mm cannons of the 2nd/94th Artillery. The Dusters dropped off the cannons at The Rockpile.



Quad-50's covering the rear section of the convoy.



175mm Gun shooting from The Rockpile
in support of Khe Sanh during Operation Pegasus.



Marines waiting to be loaded on CH34's for Operation Pegasus.



Frank Bardone's Duster and crew as they head to Khe Sanh, leaving us behind and alone on Route 9.



"Death Valley" section of Route 9.
It was an area decimated by American artillery, jets, and B-52 bombers.
This eerie place smelled of death and made our hair stand on end.



There were thousands of B-52 bomb craters along Route 9 and in the valleys leading to Khe Sanh.



In Vietnam - church was where the Chaplain stood. His alter a pile of sandbags.



The washed out bridge area leading to Khe Sanh called the "Hair Pin."



A view of Khe Sanh at the west end.



Aerial view of Khe Sanh. Our Duster was in the lower right of the photo, to the left of the runway's square end on the base perimeter.

Khe Sanh Hill Fights

The number of the "Hill" represents the hill elevation in meters above sea level

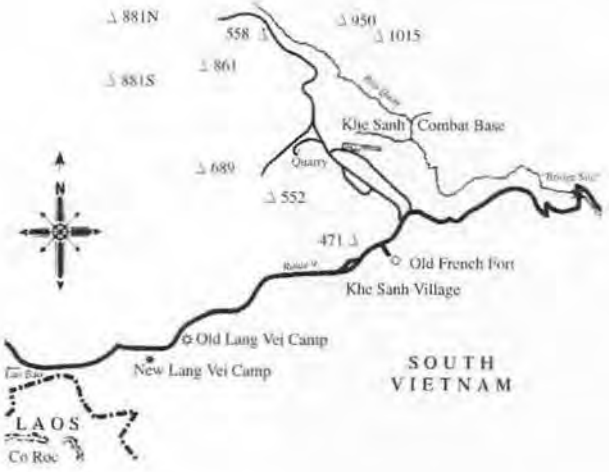

Khe Sanh Combat Base



CHAPTER 13: ABANDONING KHE SANH

May 2: To break the monotony, we are always playing jokes on each other – Army versus Marines. I caught another rat, a nice big two pounder. My crew helped me tie a long rag to the rat's tail. Just before it got dark, we doused the rag with gasoline, lit it on fire and dropped it in the long trench that went around Khe Sanh. Like a flaming bottle rocket, the rat ran down the trench. The Marines, thinking that some tiny flaming gook was running at them, jump out of the trench, screaming and shooting at the rat.

May 4: The Marines got even today and threw a teargas grenade into our bunker. Choking, coughing, gagging, with saliva drooling out of our mouths and snot running out of our noses, we crawled out of our bunker. Our friendly Marines cheered with joy at their victorious payback.

It took about a week for the teargas to disappear. We had no windows to open and only one doorway into the bunker. Since teargas is heavy, it clung to our underground bunker. It was the only time I used my gas mask.

May 8: The NVA artillery from Co Roc seems endless. Huddled in our bunkers, we just take all they can give. After it subsides, we check our area for any wounded or dead. Today, we found two dead black guys, blown to shreds. I told the guys in the area we had to gather them up and bring them to Graves Registration. We only had two ponchos in which to put them. Leaving them with their assignment, I continued on my mission checking out the area. On my return, the men were just finishing up their gruesome task. In their haste to rebuild these two guys into human shapes, they inadvertently mixed parts. One guy was a very light skinned black, maybe even Spanish, and the other guy was very dark. They looked at me in horror when I instructed them to rebuild them properly. ***"They Have Mothers."***

May 10: I played with a rat I trapped under one of the empty ammo

cans. Using the asbestos gloves from the Duster, I tied a wire around the rat's body and then attached a piece of parachute cord to the wire. I then tied my little harnessed friend to a long stick. You should have seen everybody jump when I walked past them with my pet rat.

May 14: Dusterman Jose Diaz was killed today.

May 17: It has been well over a month since our last shower, and sponge baths are few and far between. Earl noticed a gross-looking giant blackhead sticking out of Wally's ear. Instantly, Earl wanted it removed and Wally was not in agreement. George, now in on the removal idea, started chasing Wally all around the base with Earl in hot pursuit, screaming "C'mon Wally, it won't hurt, it'll be a cinch! We're just going to do a little ***surgery!*** After what seemed like a hundred yard chase, Wally was finally tackled and dragged back to our bunker area. There they were, two big guys, pinning poor Wally to the ground. Earl was sitting on his chest, pinning his shoulders down, and George was kneeling on his head so Earl could get a good look in the ear. Like crazed men in a fox hunt, they pulled out their bayonets and told Wally they were going to cut that disgusting thing out of his ear. Wally was kicking and screaming, thinking they would cut off his ear. Agreeing that the bayonets were too big, they decided to use two big ten-penny nails, using them like giant tweezers. After a lot of screaming, the two held up their prized piece of surgery, stuck to the end of one of the nails. They then proceeded to pour surgical alcohol in Wally's ear, announcing "Now it won't get infected." ***Poor Wally...***

May 20: I got a call on the radio. It was Tank. Casually, as if it were a Sunday phone call, his voice chirped with enthusiasm "Joey, this is John Huelsenbeck and I'm going home." We both screamed with joy. John had done his year in Hell. I was happy for him and yet sad that he was going home. We had become great friends and had gone through a lot of terrifying, horrible shit together. John is one of the bravest men I have ever met and I respect him to the utmost. When he was with you, you knew your back was being covered. It gave me and the rest of the men a comfortable feeling. I don't think there's another soldier or

Marine on the DMZ who can fill John's shoes. I owed my life to this man and prayed he would get home safely.

May 22: Khe Sanh has removed what little was left of our shame and modesty. The constant **"INCOMING!"** has blown up almost all the shitters. The empty 40mm cans have become our depositories. The cans, filled with a little kerosene, were placed in the trenches or brought into the bunkers. God, it is embarrassing. The airtight lids keep the smell down. It is only bad when in use. Burning shitters at Khe Sanh has become a no-no. The NVA can see the burning shit smoke for miles and ***will*** put an artillery shell on top of you as you take a crap, a mess that nobody treasures cleaning. Anywhere from five to sixteen guys are crammed into our twelve foot cube bunker. We made bunk beds from old scraps of wood and used an old M-16 ammo can converted into gasoline lantern as light. Opening the 40mm can and taking a shit in the center of our bunker is a nightmare. Jokes are endless, toilet paper is rationed. When the bunker is full of guys, the guy taking the dump is shown no mercy. Nothing is sacred. We all laugh and it relieves the cruelty of war, if even for a moment.

May 24: Our Duster still has a bad engine and is used only to retrieve recon teams and Marines close to our perimeter. I guess that is good for us, because we can't do convoys, mine sweeps, or search and destroys.

Instead, we have other tasks such as digging out the wounded and dead out from the bunkers hit by the NVA artillery. Hoping to hear sounds of life, we dig feverously with our hands. We can't use shovels and picks because they will cut up or kill the friends you are trying to save. The constant body recovery has fried our brains and gives a whole new meaning to brotherhood.

May 25: Water is a prized commodity at the base and we are unable to get our own water, so I got the idea to build a shower. The guys thought I was crazy because we didn't have enough drinking water, no less shower water. We had been taking little baths out of our helmets. I had them cut the lid off an old Agent Orange drum and clean the inside

out with rags and dirt. They then put a hand release fire hose nozzle in the drum's small screw hole. We wedged the drum on top of the bunker and announced to the Marines that we had a shower. My plan is to make a deal with the Marine Lt. who is in charge of the Marines who live in the trenches on our north perimeter. We will provide showers for all his men, if he supplies us with water.

He agreed. Our position, thereafter, always had water, thanks to our shower. We used our gasoline pump to draw the water up into the drum. It was great while it lasted.

May 26: We had been ordered to abandon the KHE SANH COMBAT BASE. This was something we thought would never happen. This must have been another one of Robert McNamara's brilliant ideas. We had kicked NVA ass all over the DMZ. We were winning the war. The troops thought it was time to keep the ground for which we fought and march on Hanoi. Abandoning this base would destroy all the reasons we had fought. It was political suicide and the warrior did not count. So many Americans had died in vain. So many Americans were severely wounded, both physically and mentally. We all knew it was the turning point of the war. Even though I do not like the war, it is not in my mental makeup to give up, quit, retreat, or lose at anything that costs lives. The warrior in me will rise to the occasion, step to the front of the line, face my adversaries head on, and be mentally and physically accountable.

****** Abandoning Khe Sanh was a personal insult to all Vietnam Veterans ******

May 28: One of the other items we never have enough of is C-rations. Our convoys bring us ammo and mail, but always seem to forget to bring rations on their weekly jaunts. I have lost another thirty pounds during my stay at Khe Sanh. I now weigh around 145 pounds and have lost over 60 pounds since I had arrived in Nam. We started to monitor the helicopter drops each evening at our end of the runway. Tonight, after the chopper was gone, Gary Dahlheimer's Marine Ontos crew

and my crew raided the shipment. Our stretcher was used to carry off all usable items and food. This, our best raid yet, yielded dehydrated hamburgers. They looked like little gray cardboard squares. We placed them in our mess kit frying pan, added water and a little heat from C-4 ***--Ole' hamburgers!*** Gary opened a big can of string beans and we all ate like kings.

May 29: It is like the original 77-day siege has never ended. The NVA continually pound the base with heavy artillery. I stopped counting incoming at 250. My brain is beginning to falter. I am losing track of time and dates. I really don't give a shit. I walk the area tall and proud, defying the snipers. My men don't question me.

May 30: The convoy brought me an extra man named Simon. Benny, my Cannoneer, will take Simon under his wing and teach him what is expected and what was happening at this base.

Lt. Dan told me that I was going on R&R to Formosa for five days. I told him I didn't want to go because I was waiting for an opening to go to Australia.

June 1: Before I could fill two sandbags, I found myself landing in Formosa. Bruce, the Marine who gave us the dog, was on the same plane and the two of us teamed up together.

June 6: Bruce and I had partied for five days. The head cook and manager at the hotel had gone to school at New York University. It was like old home week for me, since I came from New Jersey. Bruce and I drank and ate like it was our last meal. We got so drunk that they had to drag us to our rooms. I guess somewhere in one of our drunken stupors we got a haircut and a manicure. As Bruce and I sat in the hotel lobby, I noticed something shiny on my fingernails. Still drunk, it took me a while to realize someone had put clear nail polish on our fingers. Bruce and I started laughing our asses off. Stumbling and crawling, we made our way back to the hotel barber (a woman) and had her remove the polish. God, what would the guys back at Khe Sanh think?

June 7: Bruce and I returned to Khe Sanh. Bruce asked me to hold his Yashica camera and take care of his personals while he went on patrol.

Bruce never returned. I will always miss his crazy laugh and stupid jokes. I still have his camera.

June 8: To amuse ourselves, we have wrestling and boxing matches with the other Duster crews who come in on the convoys from LZ Stud. Our crew, because of our bad ass Kung Fu Master George Lewis, is always the winner. Occasionally, we even have a rock throwing fight. We are totally nuts. Yesterday, I got hit in the face with a big rock and now have a giant black eye. Captain Tedesco arrived out of nowhere on the next convoy. I think he came just to bust my balls and tease me. "Belardo, I heard how you got that black eye, and you're not getting another Purple Heart," the Captain bellowed. My crew thought this was great. We could have all been dead and the Command would not have known or possibly even given a shit. Get whacked in the head with a rock and the whole DMZ knew about it. I was known to have handed out a few black eyes. This must have been God's way of getting even. The joke was on me and that was okay.

June 9: Dusterman Manuel Martinez from Alpha Battery, who survived the 77 Day Siege of Khe Sanh, was killed today.

We all feel guilty that our brothers-in-arms from the 3rd Marine Tanks were killed just outside the gates of Khe Sanh. Marine Sgt. Clifford Evans was killed. He was one of our best friends. I had fought a lot of battles with him on that "Road to Hell". Our engine is now almost completely dead. If they had replaced our engine in a timely fashion, we might have been able to help or save them. Cries for help on the radio will ever haunt me. We questioned everyone, over and over, if they were sure Evans was dead.

June 10: The new guy Simon has rubbed everyone the wrong way. We had a C-ration policy that each person on the crew took turns eating the famous beanie weenies. Simon was left alone today to guard the

bunker while our Duster went to the other end of the camp to shoot at a suspected NVA position. After our return, George Lewis discovered that Simon had eaten his beanie weenies. George is a very large, very strong man, much larger than Simon and a Kung Fu Master to boot. He is truly a real badass man, not someone you want to piss off. George, who carries an old razor sharp "Enfield Bayonet" strapped to the back of his flak jacket, took it out and wanted to carve up Simon. It was amazing how a simple can of food could make a man crack. Simon thought it was a joke, but George went ballistic. If I could not calm George down, Simon was going to die. I had never seen George get so angry with anyone about anything. Simon had crossed the wrong bounds and broken crew trust. Trust in each other is the only thing we have to offer. It is sacred to my men. To appease George and the rest of the crew, I ordered Simon to cover our bunker with a new layer of sandbags. Simon filled, tied, and stacked every sandbag by himself, with George as his personal watchdog.

June 11: I explained the situation to our Lieutenant, and about my fear for Simon's safety. He agreed with my concern and will send Simon back to Camp Carroll on the next convoy.

June 13: The convoy from Carroll was scheduled to arrive at noon. Simon was leaving us but, before he left, I made him empty all the sand bags he had filled, plus a few hundred more. We were taking Khe Sanh apart. Plus, no one fucks with my crew.

June 14: A Douglas A4 fighter plane from one of the aircraft carriers signaled ***"Mayday"*** to the base, indicating that it must attempt an emergency landing on Khe Sanh's short runway. The edges of the runway were already filled with planes and helicopters destroyed during the siege and since our arrival. The base came alive. Men scurried from their holes to get a better look at what might be added to the collection of relics along the runway. Poised with shovels, fire extinguishers, stretchers, and water, we waited with cameras around our necks for the jet's arrival. It was the most excitement we have had since the chopper had left dehydrated hamburgers and grapefruits on the runway for us to steal.

The A4 plane landed with its brakes locked and engines in full reverse thrust. It came to a screeching halt a few feet short of the end of the runway. Everyone ran to its aid. The pilot was a little shaken, but seemed to be in good health. The jet had a small hole in its fuel tank and had run out of gas. The pilot was lucky that the plane's tail hook didn't catch on something as he came down the runway. We were all fortunate that the NVA were not shooting at the base from Co Roc. The fighter plane was dragged off the runway and into an old helicopter revetment for protection.

June 16: This day, the A4 was dragged out from the protection of the revetment and positioned on the end of the runway. With his plane's gas tank repaired and its tail hook strapped to the fuselage, the pilot was eager to take off. As the pilot got into the cockpit, he gave all of us the "High Sign." The "thumbs up" gesture made us all start cheering. We all waved and screamed as the jet roared down the runway, lifted, and was gone from our sight. Minutes later, the pilot flew the jet a few hundred feet over the base, doing victory rolls and spiraling into the sky. It was a good day for all. The monotony was broken with joy and excitement, and no one was injured.

June 19: Eric Metler, one of the mechanics from Camp Carroll, arrived on the morning's convoy, riding shot-gun on the boom-truck with a Duster engine strapped to the deck for our Duster. It was like every NVA artillery piece in the area took aim on his truck and our new engine. We already had prepared for our engine's removal and had disconnected all the connections. I think it was the first time in Duster history that an engine was removed and installed during an enemy artillery barrage. As the driver raised the boom higher to remove the old engine, it acted like a homing device for the enemy artillery. The exploding bombs covered us in hot shrapnel and earth. I felt sorry for Eric, the truck driver, and my crew, but the convoy was only staying for an hour or two and the engines must be swapped. My crew finished the final assembly after the convoy left. I never heard a Duster crew pray and curse out a Duster engine in the same breath. Eric was thrilled when he finally left Khe Sanh. He didn't even wave goodbye. It was great to have Grim Reaper running again.

June 21: I celebrated my twenty-first birthday today. Eric had brought me a care package from my family and girlfriend. They sent me cookies, popcorn, pepperoni and provolone cheese. All of us thought we were at a feast as we celebrated my passage into manhood. I cannot remember when the actual passage took place. It must have happened between the enemy artillery explosions. We ended our feast with our favorite meal from home, Lucky Leaf Baked Apples in a can. I carefully cut each apple so that each of us got the same size piece. We then drank the syrup a spoonful at a time. We finished our delicacy with each of us taking turns putting our tongue in the can and getting those last tasty licks.

June 22: We have been having trouble with a helicopter pilot and crew who get their kicks hovering over our position and causing a dust bowl. This helicopter arrives twice a day to pick up Marines leaving the base. The pilot hovers a few feet over our bunker and has his door gunner point his gun at my men. The red clay dust clung to the oiled 40mm cannons. They make so much dust that we have to re-clean the guns every time he comes. We do not want them to jam when fired.

June 23: I met the helicopter at the runway and advised the pilot that his intentional dusting had to stop. The pilot was an arrogant bastard with a severe attitude problem and told me where to shove it. I told him it wasn't a game and I would love to kick his ass, and that my men would love to shoot his mangy butt out of the sky.

June 24: Today, the same asshole helicopter pilot repeated his routine. As the helicopter was hovering over us, we heard a loud popping noise, and the chopper burst into flames. It crashed just outside our perimeter wire. We ran out and saved the mangy bastard, his crew, and passengers. They were lucky only to have some broken noses and minor cuts.

June 25: A group of officers showed up at our bunker today and accused us of shooting the helicopter out of the sky. I laughed and advised them that if we had shot them, they all would be dead. I told them they should go check out the helicopter. It was located on the other side of the wire and visible from the perimeter. I told the questioning Colonel

that they should give us a medal for saving their sorry asses. *We were never questioned again.*

June 26: I got hit in the left shin with shrapnel. A long piece of thin shrapnel was sticking out my pant leg. I reported to what was left of the aid station, Charlie Med, across the runway from our bunker. I was not questioned as to who I was or what unit I was with and the Marine doctor quickly treated me. After viewing all the Marines with much more serious wounds, I was overcome with shame for seeking treatment for my nicked shin. I spent the next couple of hours assisting as a stretcher-bearer for the wounded and the dead.

June 27: My crew and I helped out at Charlie Med and Graves Registration, a poignant reminder of the small price I have paid compared to so many others. Stretchers, carrying the wounded and the dead, are a daily vigil. My crew helps the Corpsmen with the wounded, separating them in accordance with the severity of their wounds. For moral purposes, those dying are moved away from the aid station and given morphine to ease their suffering. I help administer the morphine shots. When needed, we help Graves Registration clean and care for the dead. We clean their faces, or what is left of their faces, before we load them onto outgoing choppers. It is the least we can do for their mothers. Sometimes the whole crew helps. We called this detail "Cleaning Faces," an ordeal of mixed emotions that, I am sure, will haunt me a lifetime.

Months later, a small rusty spot appeared on my left shin from the shrapnel. It's been over forty years and the rusty spot still appears. Putting on my socks each day is a daily reminder of my stay at Khe Sanh.

June 28: My crew did not get upset when they found out I had added the symbol of the Grim Reaper back on the front gunplate. I had upgraded from my skull painting to a real NVA skull. The hardships of war had collapsed my moral fibers and my Christian upbringing, plus NVA bones were everywhere. To my surprise, the crew thought this was the

greatest. They nicknamed the skull "Ho Chi." Kissing their first two fingers, they each took turns patting the skull for good luck. By now we speak openly of never going back to the real world. Nam is now our home and this is where we will die. My crew and I have crossed over to the dark side of life. It is becoming hard to focus on anything nice or anything real. If it wasn't for our CARE packages, perfumed letters from home, and mail call, I think we would have totally flipped by now.

June 29: As instructed, without haste, we continue to dismantle the base. I had been put in charge of our area and was told not to leave anything standing. All trenches and foxholes were to be filled. All buildings, bunkers and shelters were to be torn down. If we cannot take them down, we were to blow them up. Nothing, not even the garbage, will be left for the NVA. Our bunker and the Ontos crew's bunker next to us will be the last to be destroyed. These bunkers will be used to shelter the remaining clean-up crews from the enemy artillery.

The NVA snipers never stop shooting and the NVA artillery from Co Roc increased their fire missions to well over 300 rounds a day. As trenches and bunkers disappear, our living conditions have become a nightmare. As far as we are concerned, the "Siege" is still on. Hundreds of enemy artillery shells hammer us twenty-four hours a day. I stop counting each time when the hundredth round hits. We strip all the bunkers of their sandbags. As the sandbags are removed, we cut them open and dump out the earth. All metal roof decking, ammo cans and empty brass used for roof artillery deflecting material are gathered, loaded on trucks, and shipped off the base. We use the Dusters to pull the big roof timbers out of the bunkers. Bulldozers fill the empty bunker holes and the area is leveled.

My men and the Marines continually scamper into the few remaining small holes and trenches trying to stay alive. The rats scurry over the debris, men search for cover and their own place to live or die. Rats, our other enemy, have become comrades trying to stay alive. When we awake each morning, there is always a family of rats huddled against

us, seeking our body warmth for comfort. We just look at each other, their little red eyes staring at us for help and food. Each morning I yell "Good Morning, Mr. Rat." "Good Morning, Mr. Belardo." "If you get any bigger I might just eat you." Living under the Dusters has become home to the Marines. The enemy knows we are abandoning Khe Sanh. Some **asshole reporter** had it plastered all over the front pages of every newspaper in the world. **The press has gotten a lot of great young Americans killed.** The enemy continues to increase their daily artillery barrages on the base. Now I stop counting at three hundred. The NVA shelling is unbelievable, killing and severely wounding many of the Marines who live in shallow shelter holes they had dug in front of our Duster. There is no safe place to hide. We stack the dead and wounded by the old "Charlie Med." A small group of Corpsmen assist those brought to this area the best they can. Convoys and helicopters come and go on a daily basis.

June 30: Khe Sanh has all but vanished before our very eyes. We didn't waste time and leveled the Ontos' bunker with the use of C-4 explosives. **"INCOMING!"** was fierce. We took cover in our bunker, the last full standing fortification. As we crowded in this 12 foot cube, 17 feet underground, an enemy artillery shell hit. The bunker buster round exploded and collapsed the left rear corner of the bunker, burying Wally and me alive. The only thing that kept us alive and from being crushed to death was the homemade bunk beds we took cover under. It took the guys about twenty hours to dig us out. When you dig for men, you dig slowly so you don't cut them in half with the shovels and picks. It took hours for them to clear the sandbags, ammo cans, old 40mm brass, and runway matting off our bunker. Wally was lucky and only had small cuts and lots of black and blues. My left leg had been partially pulled out of its hip socket and had turned purple, red and blue. I must have been in shock because it didn't hurt and I don't remember much. At the aid station, the guys held me down as the Doc pulled my leg back into place. It hurt like hell and I passed out. The good old Doc gave me a bottle of that military cure all-pill, the APC's (all purpose capsule – aspirins), and sent me back to my position. Mother Earth under the Duster had become our home. I watched as my men

slowly removed about five feet off the remaining top portion of our bunker. Hundreds of enemy artillery shells pounded the area around our position. Hell would be a better place to live. My men slept in the fetal position as if hoping to return to the womb and get a new chance at life. I couldn't take it anymore, went back to work and ordered the bunker to be leveled by C-4. I don't want any more of my men to die from exposure to the enemy artillery. We all prayed with Earl.

Now, years later, I suffer from circulation damage, a bad back, and numb legs due to this incident.

July 2: The only thing we left was the three-sided earthen parapet for the Dusters, Quad-50s, and Ontos. We slowly moved our clean-up crew toward the east end of the runway. Our Duster accompanied us as a portable artillery shelter and bunker. We eventually rendezvoused with Steve Harris's crew at the other end of the runway. Most of the Marines have already been evacuated from the base. Our Duster crews and a hand full of Marines guarded the entire length of the north side of the old runway area. It is July 2nd and the mighty Khe Sanh is no more, reduced to a flat plateau with a small group of America's Best guarding her virtues.

July 3: I do not want the NVA artillery getting a fix on us, so we frequently move the Duster to different locations around the base. The biggest targets left standing on the base are our Dusters, giant silhouettes on a barren plain. Each evening, to keep the NVA in check, we continue the Vietnam tradition of shooting from the camp perimeter. Some call it "Mad Minutes". I call it "Moments of Madness". The Twin 40s clear the perimeter nightly of any NVA, hoping to get close to the base until we can leave for good.

July 4: The day we celebrate Old Glory was spent watching the choppers speed across the base, trailing different colored smoke grenades. This is hopefully our last night at the infamous base. The NVA, who always seemed to have good intelligence, knew this could be their last chance to shoot at Khe Sanh.

The constant "INCOMING!" had, without my knowledge, fried my brain. July 4th now takes on a whole new meaning. Fourth of July fireworks have become my "Achilles 'heel".

My family and friends joke at my involuntary twitching and my fast departure from our country's yearly display of freedom. My family thinks it's the explosion of the fireworks that makes me anxious. I try to explain to them that fireworks are like Dusters shooting. The attack starts real slow, a few bursts here and a few there. There are lots of white flashing and sparkling lights, as if the enemy is probing the wire and we're popping illumination flares with smoke trails floating away in the breeze. Then come a few bigger explosions, and then a few more, followed by lots of whistling ones and colorful ones. A noise rises from the crowd, screaming their "oohs" and "aahs". Explosion after explosion, momentum builds and builds, to the Grand Finale. Then comes the final push from the enemy, a human wave rushing at you, with guns blazing as if they were special ground effects. The crew of the Duster, holding fast in their turret, waiting, waiting, waiting, anticipating that terrifying moment, the heart stopper of every battle when someone screams ***"Enemy In The Wire!"*** *The Duster, on full auto-fire, becomes the Grand Finale, shooting 240 high-explosive cannon shells a minute point blank at the advancing enemy, producing a kaleidoscope of exploding colors with deadly intentions. Ripping the enemy to shreds, like giant red, yellow and green fluorescent paintballs, each round is followed to its target by a sparkling burning tracer of death in its tail. Explosion after explosion can be heard, followed by the roar of war - giving witness to your day of killing. Like the 4th of July, it ends as fast as it started and the only thing left is the smell of sulfur and that quiet hazy calm.*

July 5: Marine Unit 2/1 departed Khe Sanh in the middle of the night. I was shocked when I checked the perimeter and found no Marines. Nobody told us they were leaving. I radioed the other Duster and Quad 50s to stay on 100% alert. It was eerie to look through our Starlight Scope and see no Marines manning their respective positions. Lt. Dan was radioing everyone for assistance and help. ***Nobody came or helped.***

July 7: Khe Sanh has become a very lonely place. All of our friends are gone. Lt. Dan and I are on the radio constantly, calling and trying to find out why we have to stay here. I think they thought we left with the other convoys. It's like talking to deaf ears.

July 10: We drove around the base today. We had never been to some of the areas. It was interesting. Nothing was left behind, everything is gone.

July 13: The last few troops from Khe Sanh were loaded on trucks and convoyed back to LZ Stud. Steve Harris and our Lt. Dan took out the first convoy. I was asked to be the rear security on that last small convoy. It was a terrible feeling seeing everyone on that last convoy standing in their vehicles, taking that last look at what was once Khe Sanh. A Marine officer asked if we could drive around the abandoned base looking for stragglers. The Marines, who were short on radios, were afraid that all their men did not get the word to leave. As we drove around the base picking up the stragglers, the NVA artillery gave us their final goodbye artillery barrage. So as not to be caught in the NVA artillery, we loaded the last of the Marines on the last truck in our convoy and instructed them to leave the base and that we would catch up.

I told my men to take a good look and say their personal goodbyes, because we are the last Americans to leave Khe Sanh. We were even nutty enough to stop and take a few pictures and make some personal comments about leaving. Standing on the Duster, we each paid a silent homage to our stay at the famous "Red Clay". The NVA artillery was getting closer and heavier. It was time to catch up to the convoy. I told Earl to put it in high gear; it was time to go home. It was going to be good to get back to Camp Carroll, hot food, showers and seeing our old friends. We have been gone for almost four months.

July 14: I forgot that Steve Harris and I were still on the top of someone's shit list. We only got as far as LZ Stud. I guess we will have to wait a little longer to get our showers and real food. Harris took the

north side of the camp, and we had the higher southern slope. We were issued a tent, cots, shovels and picks. An officer I did not know told us to make this our permanent position. The officer ordered us to dig and build a bunker. After we finished, we could get rid of the tent.

July 19: The ground is so hard that, after five days of digging, we had a hole only about a foot deep and ten feet square. My men, who have already helped fill in by hand an area about a half-mile square at Khe Sanh, refused to dig anymore. Instead, we helped each other make shallow, individual little "graves". We surrounded our graves with sandbags and rocks. During **"INCOMING!,"** we would lay in our graves face up trying to see the enemy shells flying over us, laughing with fear, cursing and yelling "Hit me-Hit me" and praying out loud with Earl. We scrounge each day for building material, so we can build our own above-ground bunker. I don't think we will ever build this bunker and I really don't give a shit.

July 20: Today I had a visit from two of my hometown friends, John Paulus and Leon Rejman, who were in the Marines. I knew they were at LZ Stud because I would get calls when I was at Khe Sanh that they were looking for me. It was good to talk of home and see old friends, reminiscing of our youth and growing up in good ol' South Plainfield. John and I had played football and hung out together at the Jersey shore. Our minds drifted back to happier times. Hopefully we will spend the next few days together, before we have to say goodbye and get back to the war.

Years later, Leon died from Agent Orange-related cancer. I recently gave his sister, Stella, some old photographs of us from Nam. John owned a few restaurants in New Jersey, fabulous places with great food and service. He has since retired.

July 21: The Grim Reaper is finally back on "The Road", running daily from LZ Stud to The Rockpile. Ambush Alley is still holding true to its name. The rear deck of our Duster is again stained burnt umber from the wounded and dead. Our hot exhausts smell of burning

flesh and blood. We return daily to our shitty little tent, now riddled with shrapnel holes. It is a different existence because we have no consistent means of illuminating the inside of our tent. We have no burning homemade gasoline lights and no electricity. We only have a few candles to see inside the tent, but someone always yells, "Lights out, keep it low, keep it down." Maybe someone cares if we get killed. We surely don't give a rat's ass anymore. Our inner core is drained, and we are running on a reserve of pure hostility and hate.

August 1: I volunteered our Duster to be security for the Marine Medical Unit that visits the Montagnard Village out past the old base called Joliet. It has been months since I have seen these wonderful people. I remembered the last time I was there we ate with the Chief. Sitting around a communal pot in their customary squatted position, we ate some kind of brown soup mixture which I thought was vegetables, chicken, pot belly pig, dog, monkey, lizard and other nameless ingredients. There were very tiny bones in the soup and God only knows what little animals or creatures we ate. Holding various types of bowls to our mouths, we slurped the concoction and nodded with approval. The children thought it was so funny and screamed with joy as I fell over trying to eat and squat at the same time. Not being accustomed to their food, I spent a lot of time on the shitter following our visits.

After all these months, I was surprised the Chief recognized me and greeted me with their traditional bow and a single quick handshake. It was also very noticeable how small the village had become and how few people were left alive. He was amazed and delighted by the NVA skull on my Duster. His smile was a smile of sweet revenge. Climbing on the Duster, he examined it very closely. I wished I could talk to him in his language. We just stood there bowing, nodding, and smiling. The Vietnamese advisor said something to him and he was even happier. Maybe the skull was the revenge he was waiting for. As the Medical Team conducted their examinations, the Chief signaled for me to follow him. At an old kiln that looked like something from the Stone Age, he hand-forged me, from a piece of 55 gallon drum, a beautiful grass knife with a bamboo handle. I looked on in amazement as he

made the Vietnamese machete. No one would ever guess it was once a piece of drum. Holding the knife sideways, he bowed and handed me this personal gift. With a slow bow, I accepted this fantastic gift of friendship. Even though we could not communicate, we had a mutual respect and understanding for each other.

His gift is my most treasured possession from the war.



Our Duster guarding the northwest side of Khe Sanh.



Khe Sanh was hit by thousands of enemy artillery shells.



Daily, the enemy constantly tried to hit our Duster and bunker with hundreds of artillery shells.



Bomb craters from exploded enemy artillery shells surrounded our bunker.



Front row: Benny Sitello, Simon Garcia, George Lewis, and Joe Belardo.Back row: Wally Owens, Earl Holt. Note how the dirt just clung to us.



A-4 jet that landed at Khe Sanh because of shots in the gas tank. Notice the fuel leaking onto the runway.



A-4 jet taking off from Khe Sanh.



The burning, crashed helicopter that my crew and I were accused of shooting down.



Private First Class Charles Comanche



Food and supplies being dropped into Khe Sanh by parachute.



NVA artillery shell hitting Khe Sanh.



My new "Grim Reaper" insignia. We called the skull "Ho Chi."



Our Duster getting ready for a new engine.



My crew wanted to get even with me for keeping them at Khe Sanh.



To keep my crew happy, I made them club jackets.
On the back of their flack jackets I drew the new "Grim Reaper":
a skull with 40mm barrels in the eyes and their names along the bottom.



My black eye.



Marine "Ontos"- equipped with six 106 recoilless rifles.



Marine Ontos crew.



Troops waiting to leave Khe Sanh.
Remains of their dead friends are wrapped in the tarps.



Burning cargo plane hit by enemy artillery.



Body recovery.



105mm cannon shooting at the enemy.



The last day of Khe Sanh. My crew made sure the last of the trucks full of Marines left the base. Our Duster rode around the base, making sure they had not forgotten any troops.



The final convoys leaving Khe Sanh.



Duster passing burning Marine Amtrack after ambush on Route 9.



Our new home at LZ Stud.



George Lewis backing up the Grim Reaper into the parapet –
"Her new home."



Hometown friends:
John Paulus, Joe Belardo, Leon Rejman



I said my goodbyes to the wonderful Montagnard people in the village outside of Joliet.

CHAPTER 14: THE SHORT TIMER GOES HOME

August 5: We finally returned to Camp Carroll and have been pre-assigned to the "Water Point" position. We arrived just before lunch and headed directly to the Mess Hall. The last time we had a real hot meal was at Carroll, almost six months ago. Steve Harris and I had our Dusters pull up and park next to the Mess Hall. Charlie Battery guys were assembling, waiting for the doors to open. We were away from base camp for so long that we hardly knew anybody. Most of our friends had already gone home or were dead. All the guys waiting to eat walked over to my Duster and stared at the skull. Wally told them we called the skull "Ho Chi." The men explained that Captain Tedesco always told them crazy war stories of the Grim Reaper crew and their skull. They all thought that he was just trying to get them ready for war and that we were not real. But now, there we were, bigger than life, dirty, smelly, unshaven, with pants full of holes, rolled up above our boots. We must have been some sight. I explained to the guys that we hadn't had a hot meal in months and would appreciate it if we ate first. A few guys got a little mouthy until George pulled out his sword and waved it around. Inside, the cook asked us who we were and did not want to serve us. It was starting to get ugly. Thank God, Tedesco came walking in and explained we were part of Charlie Battery and calmed things down. I spent the first fifteen minutes at the milk machines, drinking a glass of white and then a glass of chocolate and then had several helpings of hot chow. By the time our two crews left the Mess Hall, we had drunk almost all the milk.

It was great seeing Roger Blentlinger again. He welcomed us with a hot shower just for my crew. It was a wonderful feeling having the hot water run over our dirty bodies. I had lost sixty pounds since I left Carroll and needed some better clothes. After our shower, we rode over to the Duster Motor Pool and took fatigues out of the rag barrel. Those were the extra clothes discarded by the men going home and were in a lot better condition than our clothes.

August 8: I am now a short timer and scheduled to leave Charlie Battery, 1st/44th on August 10th. Earl, Wally, and I openly discussed having Earl become the new Squad Leader. George would become the Driver, and they would get a new Gun Bunny. I am becoming very uneasy about leaving. I have trained my men to the best of my ability, but I am not sure if that was good enough. I thought about re-upping. My insides churn with mixed emotions about going home. ***Will they all make it home?*** It isn't the leaving that makes me restless. We have lived and breathed and fought as one team, one unit. I only hope that the "Newbee" replacing me will not let my men down.

August 12: My last day at Camp Carroll was spent in the lookout tower next to the Water Point. I could not help but think of the many battles and all the **"INCOMING!"** and the young men who died in my arms. Before God took them, I learned about their family, friends and pets. I was the last person they would see or talk to. One guy told me he had a pet dog, another, a pet pig, another, a parrot and a cow. They would tell me the strangest things. I just held them tight, gave them morphine and promised I would tell their mothers how brave they were. Nam has been a long year and the view from the high tower sort of puts things in perspective. It is my time to leave the DMZ.

To my surprise, my crew had what looked like a new set of fatigues for me to wear home. George gave me a new razor to shave with, Benny handed me a new bar of soap, and Earl gave me some aftershave and deodorant. After one of Wally's haircuts and another one of Roger's hot showers, I felt like a new person. Before I could leave, my men took turns changing the way I looked, first cleaning off my boots, then blousing my pants, then rolling up my pants, then tilting my boonie hat sideways and finally rolling up the hat edges and sitting it square on my head. They were thrilled with my appearance. There I stood looking like some nerdy geek. Roger boomed in his deep voice "only your mother will love you." They could not stop laughing as they snapped pictures of their prized workmanship.

Captain Tedesco, to my surprise, asked me for my personal night vision Star Light Scope. "Belardo, I don't need to know where you got that scope, and I'm not sure if I really want to know how you got it, but I want it," spoke the Captain. Someone was still squealing on me. "Captain, my boys can't shoot gooks in the dark if you take our scope," I replied. We both smiled and laughed. Tedesco joked, "Joe, all of us can now take turns shooting gooks in the dark. You shot your share. It's time for you to go home." Captain Tedesco was a great officer. He made a difference in our lives, through his true leadership, and was the best Captain that Charlie Battery ever had. I knew he would look after my men. I considered him my friend and knew my men could trust him and his combat judgment. We shook hands and patted each other's backs as we said our farewells. Before I let go of Tedesco's hand, I thanked him and reminded him how my crew would follow him to Hell and fight the Devil for him. I thanked him for not sending me on the Dong Ha Mountain missions. ***I always felt that mountain had my name on it.***

I said our traditional "So long, see you later" to all my friends. I was going home. We never said goodbye; goodbye was forever and bad luck. Leaving was an unbearable emotional mental pain. *Part of me has never left my Duster or Route 9.* We would joke and say we knew each other **"When".** You can add a lot of endings to the word **When**. **When**....nothing you held sacred was sacred anymore. **When**....you thanked God you lived when another died. **When**....you stopped thinking about dying. **When**....you stopped thinking of home. **When**...you.....?

In Dong Ha, I was given my unit separation papers and casually handed another Purple Heart with masking tape holding the medal box closed. "We think this is yours, Soldier," the personnel Section Chief said drolly.

Everyone going home from the 1/44th met at China Beach. The officers never knew that we had made arrangements for one of our convoys with about twenty men from Charlie Battery and Headquarters

Battery to meet us at "The Beach." Major parts and supplies had to be picked up at the Da Nang docks. It was an excuse to party for three days. ***China Beach was glad to get rid of us.*** We had taken over the whole place. All of us (Steve Harris, Frank Bardone, Larry Roundtree, John Gunesch, Noble Grinner, Wayne Bailey, Hayden Waite, Paul Raymond and Ray Ellis) were singing, dancing, drinking, eating and acting twenty-four hours a day as if this were our last day on earth. ***It felt great.*** Jim "Doc" Butler was the last to shake my hand. We said our goodbyes because this was a forever farewell. Then we all caught the next plane to Cam Ranh Bay. At the Cam Ranh Bay Departing Center, they gave us a quickie debriefing and shipped us the next day to Fort Lewis, Washington. We left Vietnam singing "Summer Time and the Living is Easy" as Paul Raymond strummed his guitar.

As I flew home in what we called "The Freedom Bird", I could not help but think about my past year: no electricity, limited food (C-Rations), water rationing, hundreds of enemy artillery barrages, occasional bathing, no bathrooms, burning shit, and living with the rats, scorpions and insects. I remembered things crawling on me in our small dark bunker many feet underground, using Agent Orange to defoliate the area around our base positions, friends wounded and dying, taking turns helping at the medical stations and Graves Registration, carrying the wounded, wrapping, tagging and bagging the dead and picking up the pieces, and taking another's life. The small scars on my wrists and on the corner of my right eyebrow would become my daily reminders of extinguishing another human's life. On the plane ride home, I asked the stewardess for a piece of paper and a pen to write my last thoughts of Vietnam.

Dear Diary

My Memories

Zippos, red ants, rubber trees, bamboo, Luckys, Camels, Salems, Pall Malls, Tareytons, Menthols, hedgerow, triple-canopy, re-supply, medic, sulfur, death, mosquitoes, leeches, foxholes, sweating, monsoons, rice paddies, booby traps, elephant grass, trip-wire, fire-support, water

buffalos, B-52's, Tet, perimeter watch, Ho's Trail, search and destroy, ***"INCOMING"!,*** *fire in the hole, dust storms, dust-offs, flares, night vision, infrared, shit burning, outgoing, friendly fire, hot chow, no chow, cold chow, sea-rats, big rats, piss-tubes, chow lines, mail, saddle-up, WIA, MIA, KIA, POW, BNR, corpsman, gunny, mad minutes, spotter round, willy peter, RPGs, AKA's, land mines, toe poppers, punji pits, Montagnards, ARVNS, friendly forces, snipers, sappers, body bags, no bags, green smoke, red smoke, yellow smoke, short rounds, air bursts, diddy bops, real world, my world, short time, long time, no time, make time, medivac, CP, recon, LRRPs, big guns, arc-lights, NVA, Viet Cong, R&R, China Beach, scented letters, mom's cooking, home, live friends, dead friends, no friends, tracers, H&I's, high explosives, full-auto, rapid fire, return fire, single fire, blocking force, L-shaped ambush, malaria pills, Agent Orange, bamboo vipers, cobras, scorpions, spiders, centipedes, rats, Rock Apes, Spider Monkeys, body counts, mass graves, no graves, pieces, 364 days and a wakeup, tracks, trucks, jeeps, Mules, Mighty Mites, wreckers, guard duty, KP, hooch, bunkers, LZ, bros, napalm, 57 recoilless, claymores, choppers, MOS, REMFS, daytime, nighttime, one kill, ten kills, hundred kills, starlight, dig-in, parapets, slit trench, tears, crying, screaming, cheers, joy, laughter, hate, killing, fear, buddies, cold beer, hot beer, no beer, soda, water, hot, dusty, stinky, hot shower, no shower, river bath, helmet shower, no sleep, papa san, mama san, Yards, number one GI, number ten GI, dinky doa, number one boom-boom, Chieu Hoi, ROKs, Aussies, sanctuary, repose, church, prayers, praying, dreams, bugs, darkness, electricity, candles, The Night, C4, lightning, sunsets, mud, red clay, freedom bird, goodbye, later, bouncing betty, .50 cal., bloopers, 175, 155, 105, 106, 40mm, 90mil, 4.2, M60, 81s, M-16, M14, M79, sandbags, ammo boxes, Puff, blood, beetlenut, frag, flak jacket, LAW, flame thrower, rocket launcher, mine sweeps, Dusters, Quads, Searchlights, PRIC-29, PCs, am-tracks, tanks, wire, mine field, nurses, Donut Dollies, round-eyes, generators, lima-lima, SOP, trip flares, convoys, rough riders, make a hole, foul odor, death, lookout tower, we're nothing, they're nothing, ain't nothing, going home,* ***NAM.***

As the plane descended toward the runway in Washington, all the men on the plane started screamed with joy. When the wheels touched down, the screams became a roar. One at a time, as we exited the plane, the men dropped to their knees and kissed the ground. It was an emotional experience. Fort Lewis, Washington was nothing special, old barracks with no hot water, traditional military food and everything "hurry up and wait." The military had it down to an assembly-line process. Thirty-six hours later on August 17, 1968, fitted in a custom-tailored dress uniform, complete with new shoes and skivvies, I received my separation papers from the Army. True to the end, my personnel files were all screwed up. I was discharged from the Army with what they call "Temporary Records and a Soldier's Affidavit".

Adding insult to injury, we all missed the last plane out of Seattle and had to sleep overnight in the airport. Several thoughtful men bought us free drinks and food at the airport bar. My family and girlfriend Nancy had no idea that I was back in the States. At first, I thought I would surprise them and just show up on their doorstep, but my friends all agreed that would be too much of a shock and encouraged me to call with my plans. I held my breath waiting for someone to answer my parents' telephone. It was the first time we had spoken in a year. After tears of joy, I told them to meet me at Newark Airport around 5:00 pm the next day. I would be coming in from JFK Airport on a helicopter.

Ironically, I had to take the last step of my journey home in a helicopter from JFK to Newark airport. On August 18, 4:59 PM, I emerged as a civilian, still dressed in military clothes, from the shuttle helicopter at Newark Airport, NJ. As we approached the helipad, I could see familiar faces yelling and waving from the top passenger viewing platform. My family, girlfriend, and a handful of relatives and friends greeted me. I was surprised about how frightened I was about getting off the chopper. I had changed and did not want them to know. It would break their hearts. I never wanted them to know the other Joe Belardo, the Warrior King. After a few restless minutes in the chopper, the pilot told me it was time to go. Like nothing ever happened, I fixed my hat, straightened my tie and put on my sunglasses. This was going

to be a mental firefight. Frightened and concerned, I took a deep breath and stepped out of the chopper to meet my family. My father was the first to meet me. We just stared at each other. We both knew the price of war and did not need to speak. He extended his one hand to me and just said, "Well." I removed from my wallet his small red scapula and placed it in his hand and thanked him. "You can have this back when I die," Dad said softly. He hugged me tightly and kissed my cheeks and cried. "Now go say hello to your mother, Brenda, Kenny, Nancy and the rest of the family." I was fortunate, my homecoming was wonderful. I was loved and had forgotten how good it felt.

When we arrived at our house, my father had placed a banner on the front lawn that said **"WELCOME HOME SON".**

The previous was the last entry in my diary. I was thankful that my tour had ended and that I was welcomed home with the loving open arms of my family and friends.

My mother and father were thrilled when we took down Allen Ginsberg. I came home in time for the South Plainfield Annual Labor Day Parade. The local newspaper asked to do an article about my tour in Nam. The parade was in my name, and I rode with Mayor Gaynor in his Cadillac convertible. It was a great homecoming. The following month my parents had to change their telephone to an unlisted number. The twenty-four hour a day calls never ended. Nameless voices yelling, ***"Baby burner – child killer – rapist – bastard – village burner – war monger,"*** and a hundred other terrible names. My mother cried, and my father questioned my tour. I was never so sad. The war was bad enough. I thought what we read in the papers was journalistic bullshit. I was wrong. My fellow countrymen hurt me more than I can ever express. For years, if I were introduced to someone as a Vietnam vet, the reply would be a single expressive word "Oh". I always wondered what that "Oh" meant. That little word cut me like a knife.

The 1st Battalion 44th Artillery was one of the most highly decorated combat units in Vietnam. It earned the Army Presidential Unit Citation, Army Valorous Unit Award, Army Meritorious Unit Commendation, Navy (Marine) Presidential Unit Citation, Navy (Marine) Meritorious Unit Commendation, The Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, The Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Honor Medal and countless Battle Ribbons.

It took years of letter writing before I was reissued my Purple Hearts, Good Conduct Medal, and my other Unit Citations.

Nineteen years would pass before I spoke to an officer from 1st/44th. Out of the blue, I had this overwhelming urge to talk to Captain Easter, Lt. Hardin, and Captain Tedesco. I had left Nam and said my goodbyes to Tedesco, but had never said goodbye or apologized to Easter and Hardin for giving them a lot of trouble. I had to tell them I understood and hoped they would understand. They would know what I meant. I wanted to thank them for getting me home. Maybe without any of us knowing it, they gave us that inner drive to make it home. I know they did what they thought was right and I did what I thought was right. I could not find an address for Easter or Tedesco, but Hardin had signed my New Jersey flag and added his hometown to it. After three calls, I was talking to his mother. I was amazed that she knew who I was. She told me the now Lieutenant Colonel Hardin would love to talk with me. I called the old lieutenant the next day, and we spoke on the phone for almost three hours. Like magic, speaking with Lt. Hardin released my mind and soul from years of Vietnam mental confusion and frustration. It was time for my mind to lock the other Joe Belardo deep in the back of my brain and get on with my life. Talking to the lieutenant was great. I still hope someday to find Captain Easter and tell him I am sorry for giving him so much trouble. He was only doing his best.

He told me he did not know what happened to Easter, but gave me the now Colonel Vincent Tedesco's home telephone number at Fort Bliss, Texas. The good ol' Captain couldn't believe it was me. We spoke for hours. He told me that John Huelsenbeck and Hugh Roberts

from the Charlie Battery had started a military club called "Dusters, Quads, and Searchlights".

I went to my first DQS Reunion that year in Indianapolis, Indiana, at Steve Harris' house and was reunited with my "brothers" once again. It had been years since I last seen my friends. I was very nervous and wondered if anyone would remember me. John "Tank" Huelsenbeck was the first Dusterman I would meet from my old unit. Although many years had passed, we did not have to be introduced. It was an amazing "Welcome Home." It was simply "Hi, Tank – Hi, Joey," as we just stood there staring at each other with tears rolling down our cheeks. He turned and introduced me to his wife, Sally, and said, "This is the Joe I've been talking about." Our mental armor fell to the floor unnoticed as we hugged, cried and patted each other backs as Sally wrapped her arms around us, sharing tears with her men finally coming home. The next hugs and tears came from Steve, followed by dozens more as other Dustermen arrived at the reunion. It was as if we had never left Nam.

A few years later, we all gathered at a military reunion at Fort Bliss, hosted by Colonel Tedesco, Colonel House, and Lieutenant Colonel Hardin. The hugs, tears, and stories were the best. The reunion helped us all bury a lot of demons.

In 1989, I started a yearly tradition. Each year on November 10th, we men of the DQS assemble as honorary Marines in front of the Iwo Jima Memorial and participate in the Marine Corps Birthday ceremony. On the 11th we meet at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial ("The Wall") in honor of all our fallen brothers. At the end of the Veterans Day service, we lay wreaths, honoring the men who gave the Supreme Sacrifice serving on Dusters, Quads and Searchlights and as Khe Sanh Veterans. I cannot express the feeling it gives me when we lay a wreath at The Wall. Before the Veterans Day service begins, we leave a small plaque or piece or war memorabilia for our brothers who are inscribed on the wall. Imagine, fifty to one hundred old veterans, standing tall and feeling young, standing in a single line and marching at the half step down the walkway of The Wall. No language is spoken; no calls of cadence are

given. The only sounds heard are the footsteps hitting the walkway. The formation stops and in perfect harmony we do a right face, salute and place our right hands on The Wall. A pre-chosen veteran kneels and places a plaque in memory of a fallen Brother. As he stands, all hands come off The Wall and salute as one. The lead person in the line turns and hugs the next veteran in line and says "Welcome Home - pass it down." The Welcome Home is passed down to the very last man. Our Duster Association also has the honor at each anniversary of the Wall to read the names of those who gave the Supreme Sacrifice. I call these two days "The Gathering of Ancient Warriors".

To my surprise and pleasure, several of my personal items left at the Wall are being used in an exhibit of memorabilia which travels throughout the country.

In honor of my journey as a Dusterman, Diane Evans Carlson, President of the Vietnam Women's Memorial in Washington, DC, gave the DQS the privilege of being the Honor Guard at the dedication of their memorial. Five years later, I was one of the guest speakers at their Candlelight Memorial Service. At the Gold Star Mothers' National Convention held in New Jersey, Gold Star Mother President, Judith Young, gave me the privilege of addressing the Mothers in attendance. It was a very humbling and emotional experience.

In 1996, the Air Defense Artillery Magazine did a feature article about the January 24th ambush. Thanks to this article, John "Tank" Huelsenbeck, Earl Holt, Chester Sines, and I were awarded the Bronze Star with "V" for Valor. I had made a promise never to forget Roger Blentlinger, the Marine who risked his life for mine and every other Dusterman and Marine. We refused the medal unless Blentlinger was also awarded the same medal. It was nice that we all finally got some recognition for our service to our country. It was even a better day when I called Roger and told him he was getting an Army Medal. It made a big impression on my family that I was receiving this medal. I was so proud, and it was finally going to give credence to all the Vietnam stories that I had told to my family and friends.

Vietnam would reaffirm my family's teaching that all men are created equal. It is how we treat each other on this glorious planet that separates man from other beasts. **Where** else on earth could men or women bond in an unspoken brotherhood? **Where** else on earth, regardless of race, color or creed could you share a can of food with one spoon for five people? **Where** else on earth could you share the intimacies of families, friends, religion and politics and be willing to die for each other without question? **Where** else on earth could you share your inner most fears, witness men in their glory, and help them through their deepest sorrows? **Where** else on earth are you stripped of everything you consider holy and do things you never thought you were capable of doing? **Where** else on earth do you really hope God will forgive you? **Where** else on earth do they send you home and have you start your life all over like nothing ever happened? These were the best of "Life's Lessons" you could ever learn and they could only be taught on the combat playing field called "War". Yet, for some strange reason, some people never seem to learn from these lessons.

It was a Hell of a Year and it wasn't until recently that I would admit with great sadness, confusion and pride, the mental cost of being a proud Vietnam Veteran. Maybe it was the year, the time, the turmoil, the homecoming, or the separation from the brotherhood that Vietnam produced. Maybe it was the waiting to be recognized for something that had become a bad dream. Despite all this, and for some strange reason, Nam was **"The Best Year of My Life".**

Life has its ups and downs. Vietnam filled them both. To this day, I tell everyone that I was **"A DUSTERMAN"**, one of the **"LAST GREAT GUNFIGHTERS"** and damn proud of it.

To all of my Brothers in Arms
"Welcome Home"



Charlie Battery at Camp Carroll had built all new hooches since I had seen it on April 15, 1968.



My last view of the DMZ from the lookout tower next to the Waterpoint position.



I said my farewell to my Iron Lady – The Grim Reaper.



My last day at Camp J. J. Carroll.
My crew: Earl, Wally, Benny, George, and my Marine friend Roger Blentlinger, cleaned me up and dressed me like a nerd.
They gave me the look of Innocence, only a Mother would love.



Here I am in the passenger's seat heading to Dong Ha and home. My crew escorted all the way.



The party at China Beach, Da Nang.



My Duster brothers at Ft. Lewis, Washington.
Left to right: Noble Grinner, John Gunesch, Steve Harris, Frank Bardone, Wayne Bailey, Haden Waite, and Paul Raymond.

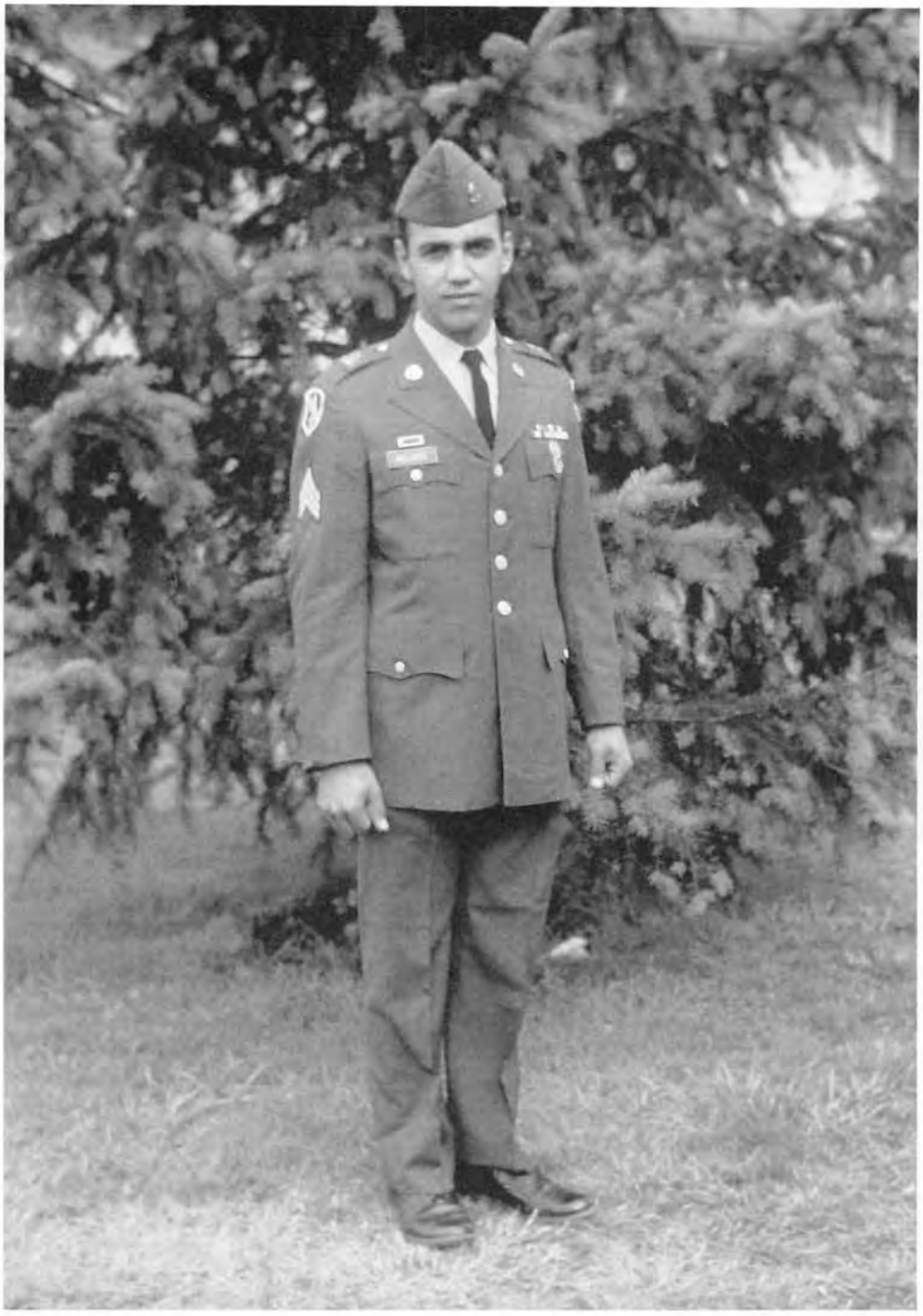

Sergeant Joe Belardo at Fort Lewis, Washington.

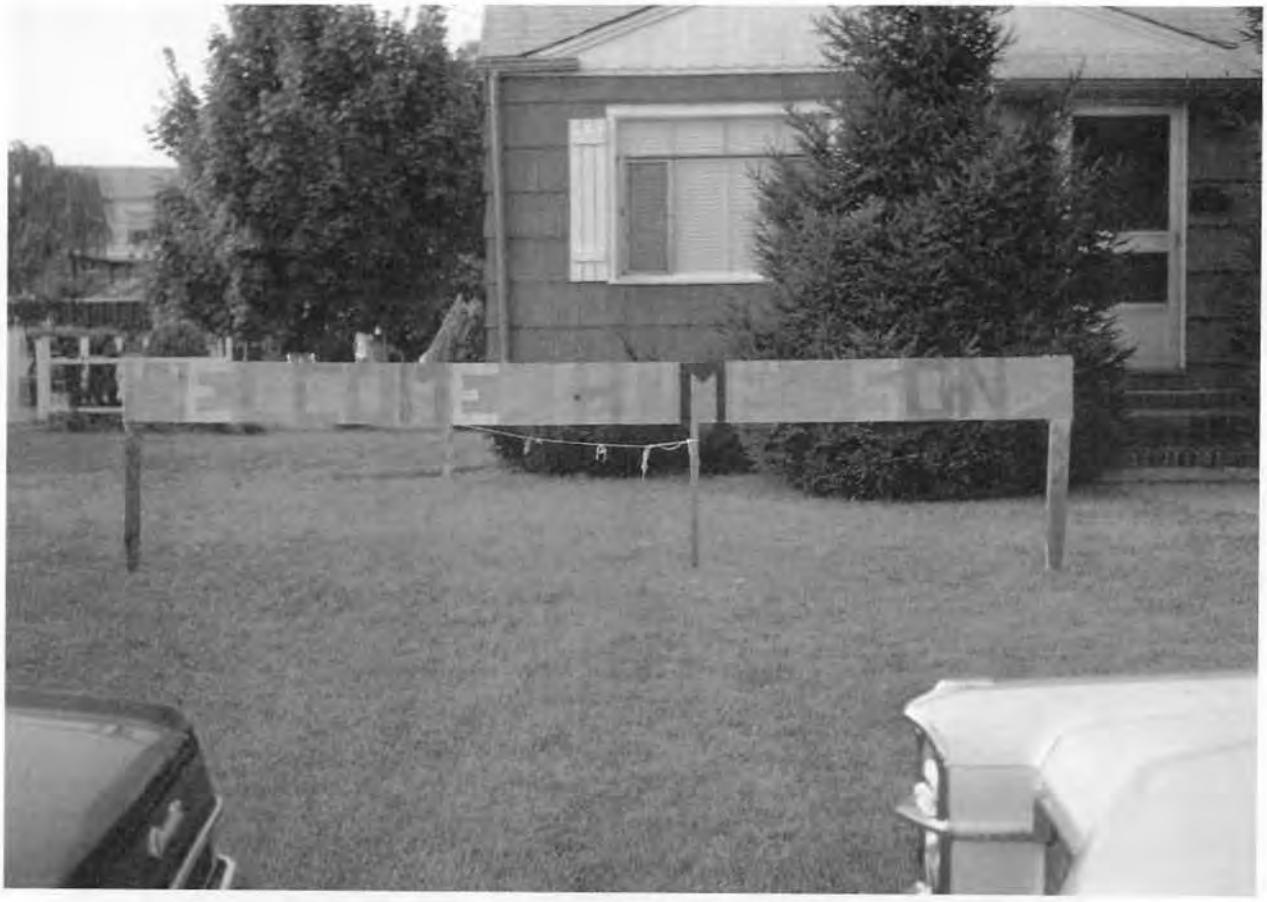

"Welcome Home Son"
To my surprise this sign, handmade by my father, greeted me when I arrived home.
I had forgotten how good it felt to be loved.

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SOUTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY
TEN CENTS

THE **tribune**



Former Army Sgt. Joseph Belardo

His Exclusive Photos

Joe Belardo Comes Home From Vietnam



Two of his South Plainfield Buddies are still there

Joe Belardo was a boy of 19 when he was inducted into the Army and when he came home from Vietnam the other day he was a man of 21.



Joe Belardo and Mayor Harry Gaynor in the South Plainfield, NJ, Labor Day Parade.

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Thursday, August 29, 1968

EDITORIALS

Joseph Belardo

We had the pleasure the other day of meeting 21-year old Joseph Belardo, a fine young man who made us feel that America is not raising a lost generation after all.

Joe just returned from Vietnam after a tour of duty with the Army. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph V. Belardo of 224 Geary Dr. and should be the pride of any family.

If you're as fed up as we are with the hippies and the phony intellects who have been tearing down America at every turn, we suggest you meet this young man and find out about the other side of the coin. It certainly restored our faith.

South Plainfield can be justly proud of Joe Belardo.

EPILOGUE

Veterans Day, November 11, 1997

I was at The Wall in Washington, DC, with Earl Holt, Wally Owens, John Huelsenbeck, Lt. Steve Moore, and a few others from Charlie Battery. As we slowly walked down alongside the Canyon of Heroes, we rubbed our fingers across the names of old friends and told a brief story about each one. Our emotions were full of memories long forgotten, but now rushing to the surface. As we walked, Wally asked if we could stop at Panel 22W. As we stood there, Wally slowly moved his finger to Line 111 and rubbed his finger on the name of Richard Lee Davis. In a soft whisper, he asked if I ever knew what happened to our Duster C131, "The Grim Reaper." Wally explained that on June 22, 1969, the Duster hit a landmine and Richard Lee Davis was killed, with C131 destroyed forever. We all hugged and cried and exchanged over 25 years of stored-up tears. I could not believe the words he was saying, but down deep inside, I knew they were true. The Track from Hell lived up to its reputation.

I could not help but think, June 21st stateside, is June 22nd in Vietnam. As my family and I celebrated my 22nd birthday and the coming of our first child, a fellow Dusterman, halfway around the world was killed on my Duster C131 - "The Track from Hell." Each year since then, as I blowout my birthday cake candles, I think of Richard Lee Davis and say a prayer.

IN MEMORIUM

Richard Lee Davis
Panel 22W – Line 111

About the Author

Joseph Michael Belardo was born June 21, 1947, in Plainfield, New Jersey, to Joseph and Mary (DelliPoali) Belardo. Joe has one sister, Brenda (Ribar). He attended the South Plainfield school system and graduated from the North Jersey School of Design Engineering.

Joe's medals include the Bronze Star w/Valor, Purple Hearts, Army Presidential Unit Citation, Army Valorous Unit Award, Army Meritorious Unit Commendation, Navy (Marine) Presidential Unit Citation, Navy (Marine) Meritorious Unit Commendation, Marine Combat Action Ribbon, The Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm and The Republic of Vietnam Civil Action, Medal.

Joe and his crew of Duster C131 hold the distinct honor of being the last to leave the finally abandoned Khe Sanh Combat Base. Joe was discharged in August 1968 with the rank of Sergeant E5.

Joe married Nancy (Painton) on December 7, 1968. They have three children: Mary, Joe Jr., and Patrick and four grandchildren.

He has been inducted into the Order of the Four Chaplains and his High School Hall of Fame. Joe has received the State of New Jersey's Distinguished Service Medal and the State's Vietnam Service Recognition Medal.

Joe is very active in the Dusters, Quads, and Searchlights Association; Purple Hearts; Vietnam Veterans of America; Veterans of Foreign War; American Legion; and Disabled American Veterans. He is a past trustee of the New Jersey Vietnam Memorial and Education Foundation. Joe was an original member of Victims of Agent Orange, the predecessor of the first Agent Orange Commission.

His hobbies are fishing and bird watching. Joe is the founder of Support Systems, a custom metal fabrication company. He resides in South Plainfield, NJ.

You may contact Joe Belardo about his book at: **Dusterman6768@yahoo.com**



From The Author

I tell everyone that I am a "Blessed" person. I've had a successful career and have a loving family. I have a wonderful wife who has listened to all my stories, over and over again and has given me her love and support since we were high school sweethearts.

Then God honored me by having me meet the most courageous men on earth. Not only were they fearless and brave under the most horrific, terrifying war conditions, but they were also the kindest, gentlest men you could ever meet. They became my best friends. To this very day, we still talk to each other weekly and see each other at our yearly reunions. If something is wrong, we are still there for each other. From our friendship, we now have extended families.

There are a few out there to whom I owe my life, but there are hundreds of Dustermen, Quad-50 Men, Marines, Seabees, Medics, Corpsmen, Soldiers, and Chopper and Air Force Pilots who came to my rescue and to the rescue of my friends and crew. Hopefully, my story has done justice to all these brave men.

I have dedicated part of my life to giving speeches and seminars at high schools and colleges about what it was like being a combatant in the Vietnam War. I explain to them that we believed that we were fighting for another human's freedom and civil rights. My heart has always been broken by the journalistic slanted rhetoric against all Vietnam Veterans. I cannot change how history was written, but I can give young Americans a true accounting of the war. I also tell them what a much better world it would be if wars were solved with thumb wrestling contests instead of weapons. At the end of each lecture, I ask the audience what freedom is worth and how much would they be willing to pay for their liberties.

I can only hope and pray that my efforts as a Dusterman have made a difference in someone's life and that difference has made them a better person.

Thank you all for my life,

Joe Belardo

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Volume 1 Fall 1992

The Khe Sanh Veteran



Members of 81mm plt. 1/26, West of Khe Sanh, April, 1968. Second from left is Bruce "T-Bone" Jones. Can you identify the others?

From the President's Desk

A NEW OPPORTUNITY

Is it possible? A quarter-century since the Siege? For most of us, Khe Sanh, the people we knew there, and what we experienced there is always with us. We were welded together as a large family, in the heat of battle, FOREVER. Those we came to know there are forever significant to us; the experience is etched in our souls.

Our Khe Sanh newsletter gives us: the means to re-connect with lost buddies; a way to complete "unfinished business"; to say "thank you"; find out what happened to so-and-so; a chance to express in story, art, and poetry the feelings we have; a means of remembering our lost brothers so they are not forgotten. Because of our newsletter, many have had their own,

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WORD PUZZLE.....back
by Mannie Babbit

AN APPEAL

I am currently collating reference material for a proposed book to mark the 25th anniversary of the Siege of Khe Sanh. The working title is: KHE SANH, VISIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS.

The proposal is to document the Khe Sanh experience using a manuscript composed of passages of personal recollections and memories by those of you who were there. Aside from a few introductory paragraphs the main body of the text will be stories and anecdotes as told by the Veteran.

In order to further illustrate what life was like for those inside the wire and on the hills, I would like to include a selection of original photographs taken by individuals at the time. Additionally, I am keen to include studio photography of Khe Sanh memo-

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A Message from the Editor

THE OTHER ERNIE

"To all ye present, greetings." I'll always remember that opening line from the Marine Corps promotion certificate. I guess the reason that line sticks in my memory, is because promotions were rare among the Marines I knew. The only silver spoons my guys had, were in their back pockets, along with the jewelry and cash they had stolen. Ah, well, memories, memories.

I now, warily step, into-the-spotlight. It sure is nice, isn't it, folks, to just be able to enjoy our newsletter? I hope I have not bitten off more than I can chew, or you can digest.

I ask all of you to join me in a hearty round of applause and cheer, on a job well done, for our departing editor, Ernie Husted. He has toiled these last seven years, and single-handedly produced our newsletter. I, like many of you, I'm sure, eagerly read it cover-to-cover as soon as it arrived in the mail. No matter what our personal calling since Khe Sanh, we'll never forget that experience, nor those who shared it. We savor any memories or news from that time.

Ernie Husted was recon, I was infantry. You will see our contrasting styles in the newsletters to follow. Ernie Husted relied on individuals who felt motivated to send in their unsolicited, reflective works. I intend to go after you guys. I have no intention of just sitting back and waiting for the muse to blow inspiration in your ear. Being an old infantry type, I intend using all the fire-power I can get my hands on. I will seek out, and extract from our members, their thoughts, ideas, and stories. Talk to me folks. Tell me your lies. Abuse me. Use me. Get it all out. Express yourself. Your feelings and opinions are worthy and valid.

I promise to work with you. If you are self-conscious about your writing, don't worry. I'll turn your writing into a "silk purse." Your experiences and feelings are the stories I want. As your editor, I'll help you present yourself in a moving, intelligent way; that's my job, and challenge. Those of you who know my writing style, know that I don't mess around. I write in a style that Vietnam veterans understand. I've helped many vets with their writing projects. I'll do the same for you, if you give me the opportunity, O.K.?

As to the content of our newsletter, I will try to run articles that will ENLIGHTEN, EDUCATE, and ENTERTAIN our readers. I will follow the mandate of our organization. There is only one, truly unique clause in our Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, it is also the stated objective of our organization, which I quote:

> "To promote renewed fellowship of all who lived and served in the area of Khe Sanh, Houng Hoa District, Quang Tri Province Republic of Vietnam, during the period of 1961 through and including 1971; To locate and account for all who so served; To preserve the memory of those who so served and are now deceased, either while at Khe Sanh or since; To promote preservation of an accurate historical account of such service; To promote research and understanding and healing with a regard to those who so served; and to promote artistic expression of the Khe Sanh experience."

Those of you who share my interest in history have witnessed, first hand, how often our history has been distorted. Our newsletter can clarify and redefine what really happened. Your experiences and feelings in regards to what happened at Khe Sanh or elsewhere in Vietnam and your life before and after Vietnam is the history I'm interested in publishing in our newsletter. Ken Pipes said it best, one day, while he and I shared a beer. "Yah know Spence," he said, sneered, sipped deeply, then continued, "nobody above battalion level, and I mean, rifle battalion, had a clue about what was really going on over there."

The big boys, special interests, and professional writers, who've ripped-us-off, have had their shots at writing history to suit their own narrow agendas. In our newsletter, and with some of the other projects we plan to produce, we can set the record straight. We are a "last man" outfit, guys. Let's preserve the record of that time, our time, on the line, for our children, and grandchildren.

Talk to me, now, you hear?

Ernie Spencer
Editor

A New Opportunity

continued from page 1

private, reunions. Some have embraced friends they thought were dead, and undoubtedly, Ma Bell has made tens of thousands of dollars!

Up to this point, we have scraped by and managed, without dues, unlike most organizations. "We paid our dues," was our refrain. The early lists and newsletters were donated by those who prepared them. Some, like Jim Davis, did the printing at his own expense. This became impractical when our membership increased to over 800.

We then asked for donations. During the past four years, some have been very generous. Two have donated $1,000!, a few $100 or $50. One even donated $8.81—you can guess where he was. But, in all honesty, the number of persons who have donated anything, represents only a tiny fraction of our total membership. As a consequence, we could only issue one or two newsletters per year.

Now, with the explosive increase in membership, nearing 2,000 at last count—and by the way, isn't that really a miracle!—and with the subsequent increase in printing and mailing costs, and our utilization of professional printing services (provided by the Marine Corps Association), it is unrealistic to assume that donations will cover our expenses. In order to keep our newsletter going, and to undertake some of the causes and artistic projects we wish to fund, it has now become necessary to begin charging dues.

Remember, all dues and donations are tax-exempt contributions. We have the IRS letter confirming this.

Ernie Husted has performed a marvellous job of getting the newsletter to where it is now. His contributions—which have included hundreds of man-hours of work—have been a true labor of love. Ernie Spencer—note how the newsletter is remaining with the "Ernies!"—has had experience in other veteran newsletters, is highly motivated, has assembled a group to assist, and we anticipate interesting newsletters that will be valuable to you in the future.

Please know, that we request dues, only as a last resort. We wish we could continue without doing so, but it is impossible. Dues are essential, if we are to keep our newsletter alive. We will request annual dues of only fifteen dollars per year, more if you can afford it. And for those of our brothers who are financially strapped, we will not insist upon payment of any dues. For them, we ask that they give something to show their support. Shortly, you will receive in the mail a formal request for dues. Please take the time to fill out the dues card and mail it in. Remember, you must at least answer the mailer by returning the dues card in the self-addressed envelope that will be provided, in order to continue receiving our newsletter and membership roster. Please know also that your dues not only reflect what you get out of the newsletter but also helps your brothers keep connected in meaningful relationships. Your contribution will provide your brothers the forum, whereby they may freely and fully express themselves through story, art, poetry; and help them to get in touch with their own feelings. Do we not, all, treasure their contributions? The rest of the world will never fully understand or appreciate what happened to us. But we, ourselves, can provide the means for one another to freely express that experience called Khe Sanh.

God bless you all—always.

Ray W. Stubbe, president emeritus
Earle Breeding, president

ANY TIME, EVERY TIME

Hey Ernesto,

Just a short note to see how you are and what's happening. No big changes on the home front.

Have included a flyer from Kevin Lyles, the Brit who did the battle print of the 30 March 68 action of Bravo Co. We passed out the flyer at the reunion. He asked if we could run it in the next issue of the Khe Sanh Newsletter—told him I would pass it on to you. Hope you can work it in.

Give us a call when you can. Hope all is well with you.

Semper Fi, my brother,

Ken, Sharon and the boys

Ed. note: There are only two people I never say no to—my momma and Bubba. The artwork Ken refers to is the piece titled PAYBACK which has previously run in our newsletter. I understand sales have been slow. The limited editions are all individually signed by Bubba (Ken Pipes). The Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. is being cut-in on the sales. This guy Lyles, according to both brothers Pipes and Breeding, is a "good guy," who can be trusted, and cares about us. So read article "An Appeal" that starts on the cover and support the guy, guys. What he's doing is consistent with our ***organization's purpose.***

Letters to the editor are encouraged. Contributors may discuss any subject or issue that interests them. Whether you've got a burr under your saddle that's getting to you, or have a song in your heart you wish to share, tell us about it. Don't worry about what the readers will think. Your feelings are your feelings. However, all opinions and feelings expressed in INCOMING are those of the writer. Readers should not infer that such letters express either the editorial or political opinions of the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. We are a non-profit, non-political organization.

MINI REUNION CHICAGO

Dear Ken and Berniece, and all the KS survivors:

Thank you for allowing us to entertain you. You know, sometimes my life is so empty because of things that happened to me in that war, and being on the road so much.

I wanted you to know, when I left your reunion, I felt filled with things I have not felt in a long time. The best of those wonderful, powerful, positive feelings I felt was PRIDE. You folks have more pride and good feelings for each other than I've seen in any group that I have played for. I've played in Kokomo, Indiana, where there was over one thousand vets. I've played "Rolling Thunder" concerts all over the country. You people are without a doubt, the tightest and best vet group I've ever met. The others don't even come close to matching your good vibes.

Even though many of your people have either physical or emotional wounds, I never heard one person complain. I never heard anyone feeling sorry for themselves. All I saw was positive input. You folks could teach a lot of veterans organizations how to treat a vet. But, then, it all makes sense when you think about it, you folks from Khe Sanh taught the world what it means to be an American.

God bless you all,
Danny Parker
2/3/3

NFG

Dear Ernie:

Thank you for dragging me to the Khe Sanh reunion in San Diego with yourself, Jim Epps and Dick Claire. I was concerned that I would not know anyone and that everyone there would be OLD, tight, friends. I erroneously felt that I would end up being an outsider among a tight group. Well, that did not happen. From the minute we got in the car to go to San Diego (about nine hours away) we never stopped talking—until we returned home five days later! It was amazing.

I met so many people that I became friends with, it would take me a full page just to name them all. I think of them all the time and have talked to many of them on the phone since the reunion. Not one day has gone by that I haven't thought about next year's reunion in Washington D.C. around July 4, 1993. I can't wait to meet more of our brothers.

As you know, I served in C.A.P.-O-1 in Khe Sanh village until Jan. 22, 1968, then spent the next 77 days at FOB-3 with my twenty-five Marines and the Bru. I was sure none of my men were going to be at the reunion, so I did have mixed feelings in thinking I would not know anyone. But, it was not long before I realized that we all experienced a big event in our lives together, which makes us brothers in a very elite fraternity of survivors. Survivors of Khe Sanh!

Thank you for your friendship, concern and thoughtfulness.

Semper Fi,
John Balanco
C.A.P.-Oscar

Ed. reply: My pleasure, brother John. I wish we could convince the brothers sitting out there reading this, who don't do reunions, that they are missing a very, very important event every time they pass one up. I watched a bunch of old, old men, hobbling around at the last reunion (it was the 50th anniversary reunion of the 3rd Marine Division). I watched those guys and thought to myself, my God, next year is our 25th. Twenty-five years will have passed by next year. Twenty-five years, or more, since we stood together at that mystical place called Khe Sanh. I look at our Khe Sanh roster and see all the names of guys who live right around San Diego and were not present. Why weren't they there? Could some of you out there reading this, who do not do reunions, enlighten me? Share with us, if you will, why you stay away? If you "blink," and pass on this next one, in D.C., you'll wake-up and it will be 50 years. By then, a lot of the brothers will be gone.

THANK YOU, GUYS

Dear Ernie:

I attended your July reunion in San Diego for two reasons: (a) to begin to distribute an anonymous and confidential survey of Vietnam Veterans for a research project connected with the University of California at Irvine where I am pursuing a degree in Social Ecology, and (b) to "be there" for the Khe Sanh Vet whose life I share. *(Ed. she talking about Tom Rice, a new member who did the hill fights, 881N. in 67.)*

I enjoyed a courteous reception from all of you, regard-

less of your interest in completing my questionnaire. I appreciate the time and thought of those members who have already sent in completed surveys.

Observing your process during your reunion offered me an occasion for growth that I did not anticipate. Like most people, I've often attempted to skirt around problems rather than dealing with them. You people attended your reunion with abundant knowledge of the pain that you might encounter. I was inspired by watching your outpouring of courage and fearlessness. I'm speaking about all of the members I came into contact with.

The spirit of brotherhood and unconditional acceptance you exhibited towards each other deeply touched me. It seemed especially unusual, considering the amount of time that has passed since you served together. Your love for each other earned my respect for you as individuals and for the military training and experience that generated your ability to love each other.

Thank you, for teaching me more valuable lessons than any available at my University. Thank you, for sharing the wisdom born of the experience you share as Khe Sanh Vets.

Kathy Oliver

Ed. note: I had a chance to visit with Kathy at the reunion. She's for real guys, no B.S. Do us all a favor please, do a survey. The instructions are in the section on HEALTH ISSUES, in this issue. This project is in line with our organization's purpose. You'll get a copy of the survey when it's done. I'll publish the results. Come on! It's not going to cost you anything. We'll learn more about ourselves. Knowledge is a precious thing. Thank you, Kathy.

A HAPPY EVENT

Dear Ernie:

Just dropping a few lines to let you know how much I appreciate the work you have done putting the newsletter together. The newsletter is one piece of mail I always look forward to. Whenever I pick up my mail and find the newsletter, I go outside, sit on a bench, and read it from cover to cover—before I even look at any of my other mail. You have done an excellent job, turning a simple mailing list into a fine newsletter. Keep up the good work.

I would like to let you and all our Khe Sanh brothers know that last year I got married after living the life of Riley for so many years. This year my wife and I were blessed with the birth of our first child, a baby boy. Anthony Joseph Patricio, who reported for duty on January 27, 1992, at 2:50 pm, weighing in at eight pounds-four ounces, and twenty-one inches long. *(Ed. Sounds like some big fish you got, Fish!)*

Anthony has given Lisa and me much joy and happiness. We can hardly wait to show him off at the San Diego reunion. *(Ed. I met little Anthony, and he's just like his dad, feisty, can't sit still, but a real nice boy)*

I have included a list of names to add to our Khe Sanh Vet list, most are former members of Delta 1/26 that I have located recently, and a correction to include my new telephone number. I have sent them (the new members) copies of the last newsletter and informed them of our organization and reunions.

Thanks for doing a fine job and getting us together.

Semper Fi,
Sid "Fish" Patricio
D/1/26

Ed. note: Fish is in charge of the Delta Co. membership. If any of you would like to get involved in our organization, by locating some of your brothers, give Fish a call and he'll tell you how to do it.

Dear Ernie:

Just a note, to let you know how much I enjoyed the latest edition of *Red Clay*. You obviously put a great deal of time and effort into it, the result being a very professional newsletter.

I joined the Twenty-Sixth Marines shortly after the siege at Khe Sanh. But many of the men in my unit were old vets. As a very young and new arrival in Vietnam, I recall being mesmerized by their stories of the battles that took place. Back then, it all had a certain glamour and air of excitement to it. If only I knew then what I learned very quickly, a few months later. I guess there is something to be said for naivete.

I've just recently started making contact with some of the Vietnam veterans in my area. Admittedly, I've always been "turned off" by some of the vets who still walk around in their camouflage utilities, and appear to be caught twenty to twenty-five years in the past. We all have vivid memories of Vietnam, but life goes on. We owe that much to our many fallen comrades. Enough of my rambling.

I'm amazed at how many former members of the Twenty-Sixth Marines live in the Chicago area. I had the pleasure of meeting with Mike Worth (E 2/26) several months ago, and looking at his pictures and scrapbook. I didn't know Mike in Vietnam, but he has a picture which included me. It was taken on the

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COMBINED ACTION COMPANY—
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CAP-OSCAR 1, 2, 3 AND
ALL THE BRU, ARVN, ARMY ADVISORS,
AIR AND ARTILLERY SUPPORT
OF THE KHE SANH VILLAGE
THAT SERVED FROM
JANUARY 19, 1968 TO APRIL 15, 1968.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL.



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U.S.S. Dubuque in August 1968. He also had several pictures of the LZ that I was wounded at on September 16, 1968. Talk about bringing back some memories! Unfortunately, I had most of my pictures in my seabag and someone threw them out when I was wounded. Mike was kind enough to have copies of his pictures made for me.

I haven't found anyone from my gun team in the newsletter, but look forward to that possibility in future editions.

Again, keep up the good work. The newsletter is great! By the way, your son did a nice job on the cover. *(Ed: He's talking about Ernie Husted's son. My daughter buys clothes.)*

Sincerely,
Steve Haisley
H Co. 2/26

A BUDDING BARD

Dear Sirs,

I came across your address in a book on the Vietnam War by Ernest Spencer and am writing in the hope you may be of some assistance to me.

I am currently in the throes of writing a novel, (my first one) which I am basing during the Vietnam War. I have spent the last 9 months researching almost every book I can find in the bookshops here in England—mainly first hand accounts by Vietnam Vets. I am still looking for 2 lots of information which so far, none of the books I've read have covered. 1) Graves Registration and 2) Personal accounts by POWs held in jungle camps (as opposed to Hanoi POWs).

Could you please advise whether you could assist me in this, or else direct me to someone who would be able to assist. The information I require for Point 2 is self-explanatory—I want information on the every-day regime of jungle POWs. For Point 1, I require the following sort of information: 1. Process gone through in graves registration from the time a KIA received to shipping home. 2. Length of time deceased kept before shipping home. 3. Were bodies shipped home in coffins or body bags? 4. Were staff in graves registration transferred in from other units or were they medical people? 5. What was first port of entry for returning KIA in USA and what process had to be gone thru? 6. What was the Presidio? 7. If the KIAs were shipped back in coffins, and not body bags, were the coffins opened by anyone on their immediate return to the States? 8. What procedures had to be gone thru before release of the body to next of kin/friends, etc.?

Any information you could give me pertaining to the above would be appreciated but if you are unable to assist in this matter, please advise me who else I may contact in this regard.

Should you or any of your fellow vets have any other information you think I might be interested in, as well as photos taken during the war, newsletters you produce, etc., all this would be gratefully received.

Yours faithfully,
Sandra Hill
143 Revelstoke Road
Wimbledon Park
London SW18 5NN
England

Ed. note: I sent Ms. Hill a note and suggested she contact the Vietnam Veterans of America via their national magazine THE VETERAN. I know we have members out there who were involved in this very difficult MOS (graves). Though the subject matter is very painful to us all, it is a matter of our history. And Ms. Hill is correct, this matter has not received the exposure it so rightfully deserves. I have, myself, been struggling with my first novel for the past seven years. I've done tons of research and six versions, and it's still not right. I sympathize with her struggle. Should any of you see fit to correspond with her, please share your observations, also, with us.

ALCOHOL OVERDOSE LIKELY CAUSE OF DEATH

April 4, 1992 Lincoln Neb.(AP)- Lancaster county authorities said it appeared that a 43-year-old Vietnam veteran died of an alcohol overdose at his Lincoln house.

Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey said police found Monday afternoon the body of Gary L. Kuchera inside the southeast Lincoln house where he lived alone. The yard was decorated with signs bearing messages on veterans, prisoner of war and missing in action issues.

Kuchera gained attention as a voluntary chaplain for Vietnam veterans. He also gained news media attention when he burned an Iraqi flag in the front yard of his house during the Persian Gulf war.

Dear Ernie:

I'm sending these newspaper clippings so you can keep your files updated, etc. I believe Gary was in M 3/26. We came home from Nam together in 1969. We didn't know each other in country but met on Okinawa after-

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wards. He asked me where I was heading when I got back to the world, and I told him Omaha, Nebraska. He hollered that that was where he was going too! We partied our asses off. He lived about sixty miles from me, but we'd often visit and b.s. at our parents' houses. He came to my wedding (my first one I should say.) He got cut loose from the Corps after that and I still had some time left, so we went our separate ways. We always knew the other one was around and saw each other at Nam reunions, but never talked about our experiences to each other again.

Gary's yard was full of signs about POW-MIAs and about Vietnam vets not getting the treatment they should be getting. His neighbors bitched and the cops would come, but he wouldn't take down the signs. He put the issues in peoples' faces. They were big signs, you couldn't help seeing them while driving or walking down the street. People didn't like it.

When his neighbors didn't see him for awhile, they called the cops—who sent a swat team. The news said it was because of the threats he had made to the police; actually, it was the police who made the threats. He had previously told them to go f— themselves. Anyway, it's pretty sad when they have to send a SWAT team to check on the welfare of a veteran. Two Purple Hearts, PUC, CAR, Navy Commendation, Cross of Gallantry—9 medals and ribbons and all. Khe Sanh, 881 N. and S., Rock Pile, Hue/Phu Bai, Hai Van Pass, Hill 190, Hill 10, Hill 55, An Hoa, and they gotta send a SWAT team?

The more I write the more pissed-off I get. Gary had two sons and an ex-wife. At the cemetery, there wasn't even a color guard. Two of the funeral party people stepped up and folded the flag and gave it to his oldest son. Quite a send off for such a decorated veteran.

I guess, I would think a little differently if Gary was a criminal or something, but all he was was a Vietnam vet, a proud Marine who cared for his country, his fellow Vietnam brothers, and what happened to the POW-MIAs.

Maybe this is what is in store for all of us.

Semper Fi brother,
Don Lacy
H&S 1/26

Ed. note: Let's hope not, brother. Come to Washington next July 1993 for our reunion, and we'll share a prayer and pay tribute to Gary and all our fallen brothers—at the WALL.

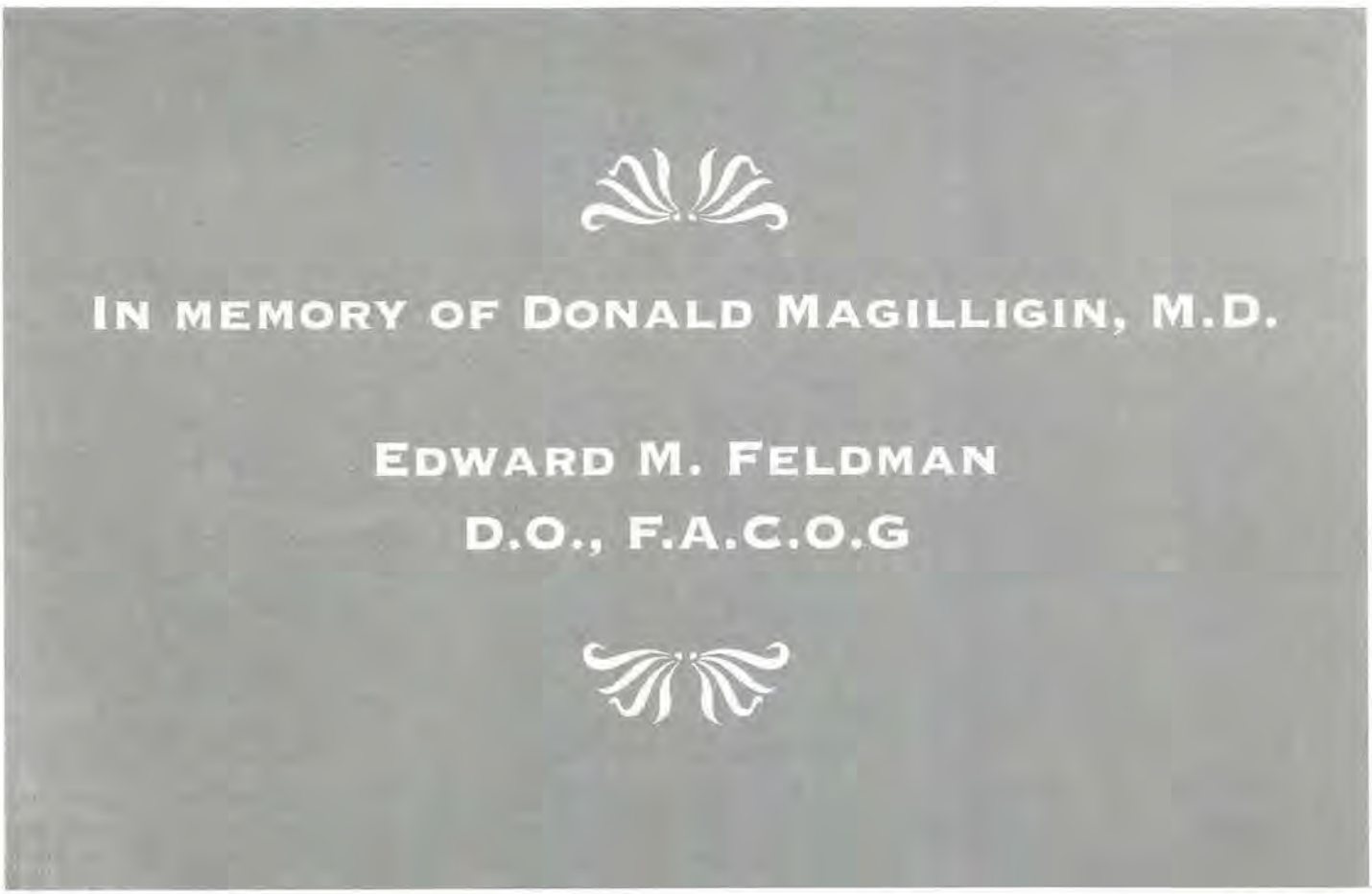

ANOTHER SALVO FROM DON

Dear Ernie:

I'm the guy that asked you about Cpl. Deschaine at Nashville (1990 reunion). It was real nice to see you at San Diego. I like the fact that you and Earle Breeding can find the time to be with your people. I can tell you, it means a lot to them. *(Ed: Far more to us I assure you.)*

The Nashville deal really kicked my butt. I almost left and drove back to Nebraska when you told me about Frenchy. I was about to put my fist through the glass window of that divider in the restaurant but caught myself in time. I have learned over the years that shit like that doesn't change anything, and only gets yourself hurt and in trouble. And, hey, for twenty-two years, at least I got to think that Frenchy was alive, living up in Maine, and having a good time. Like I told you at the reunion, he always rode up front when we trucked somewhere, and he always had a way of making me feel good though I was only a boot PFC. *(Ed: See piece titled FRENCHY in this issue.)*

Also, I wanted to say, I am sure, I was your driver when you went from Quang Tri to where the doggies got their butts kicked, in spite of all that armor and APCs. When I read that in your book (WELCOME TO VIETNAM MACHO MAN in the chapter "Hot Breakfast"), I showed it to my wife, then went and got my journal, and showed her where I had written the same thing. Yeah, I couldn't believe those people could sit there for several days and not dig-in, or put up any wire. I guess they figured that armor would just scare those little rascals into going somewhere else.

I like your idea of trying to get some aid to the Bru. I will help in anyway I can, but I don't know what to expect from the association, as a whole, when most members won't even donate a few bucks to keep the newsletter coming out. A little money in the right hands can go a long way and hopefully, we can fit ourselves in there someplace. Please keep me informed, as I would like to help out. I wish I could have brought back one of those little Bru crossbows. I remember being jealous of the guys that had them. *(Ed: knowing the Delta boys, I'm sure they didn't pay for theirs.)* By the time I got to Khe Sanh, about March 1, 1968, getting a crossbow was not at the top of anyone's list. Thanks for signing my book, and thanks for adopting me into Delta Company—it means a lot to me. Thanks again.

Semper Fi, friend,
Don Lacy

Ed. note: Brother Don was inducted into the loyal order of Delta Company, Khe Sanh Survivors Assoc. non-incorporated at the San Diego reunion. We accept applications for membership in Delta Company—in person only—during our annual reunions from those so inclined and willing to ruin their good name and reputation. We might or might not have been the best rifle company the Marine Corps has ever fielded, but we were its BADDEST. We now openly flaunt our past, knowing full well, the the statutes of limitation have expired.

MORE MEMORIES OF MIKE

Ernie:

First of all, would you please change my unit in the *Red Clay* to read—Mike 3/26 3rd. Plt., not Mike 3/36. Thanks, it's been wrong since the newsletter came out *(Ed. note: probably still is. In time we'll standardize how the unit designations read so that we can group members by units rather then just alphabetically. But, it's a big, costly project, so bear with us. If you guys pay your dues, maybe we can undertake this project. Every change costs money.)*

Second, this June will be twenty-five years since the death of two of my Khe Sanh brothers, PFC James H. Presley (KIA after the siege during Operation Mamaluke Thrust), and PFC Herb Gay (KIA the same day.) I want their families and friends to know that they will always be remembered as two of the finest men God ever put on this earth. I was proud to have known and served with them. I'll never forget you guys. Thanks, for being there so many times, when I needed you. If any of their family reads this, please write me.

Ed. note: We're all family, brother Ken, and we read you 5 by 5.

DOING A GOODBYE

June 1, 1991

Dear Ray:

It was good talking to you on the phone today. You helped me to look at my mom's death from a different point of view—that is absolute love. I was thinking about how I could of done more for her and that bothered me a lot, because she was the most important person in my life, and a perfect mother. I enclose her obituary for you. I also enclose a copy of the letter I got from *Vietnam Magazine*. I don't know why he thought I was a forward observer. Anyway, I wrote him and told him he might be interested in writing to you. I also inclosed an article from John Kaheny titled "LEAD IN HIS PACK." CBS was thinking about doing a TV special about the Patrol, but it didn't work out and they're not going to do it. *(Ed. note. Les is*

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referring to the Bravo Company patrol led by Lt. Don Jaques.)

Hope all goes well with your dad, say hi to your mom for me. Till next time.

God Bless,
Les Faurebrac
Bravo Company, 1/26

Ed. note: Brother Faurebrac ended his life on Jan. 7, 1992. I understand he visited with or called many members of our organization during the last months before he left us. Closures, I believe the process is called. If any of you out there care to, please enlighten us on this subject. I hope brother Les is at peace now with the rest of our brothers who've passed away. What do you think they would say to us if they could share their wisdom? Makes you stop and think, doesn't it? What's really important?

MACV-SOG COMES IN FROM THE COLD

Dear Ernie,

Am enclosing a pittance offering for the Khe Sanh Newsletter. I have received the excellent, definitive history book about our beloved Khe Sanh; co-authored by our renowned Rev. "Sky Pilot" Ray Stubbe. Even though it has been edited from 2,000 pages it stands as an excellent tribute to the men who lived and died for the red clay of Khe Sanh.

My book, *MACV-STUDIES AND OBSERVATIONS GROUP, BEHIND ENEMY LINES, A HISTORY OF THE MEN AND MISSIONS,* was finally compiled on 23 March 1992 and is the definitive history of MACV-SOG. A brief encapsulation:

The men from SOG, while posted in South Vietnam, were sent repeatedly behind enemy lines (North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) by American Presidential order. This unit's guerrilla operations against North Vietnam during August 1964, caused the "Gulf of Tonkin Incident" and led to the build-up of American forces in the Vietnam War. It was the only unit which was directed from the "Oval Office" and its every move was orchestrated by the American President. From this unit, a familiar statement evolved; "if you accept this mission and are killed or captured, the President will disavow any knowledge of your existence" or basic words to that effect.

I am currently, and actively, looking for a literary agent to handle the 1,400+ page book, screenplay rights, and movie rights. I will keep the *Khe Sanh Newsletter* posted on its progress since it covers "the siege" from the FOB's top-secret point of view.

Semper Fi, Ernie...

Harve Saal

Ed. note: I wrote brother Saal and asked him to consider sharing his manuscript or excerpts from his manuscript with us. I used to watch those black choppers lift off from Khe Sanh and fly to Laos and think to myself, "Man, oh, man, I'd sure like to hear those dudes' war stories some day." Any of you others out there sitting on your works, please consider sharing it. Speaking for myself, as one who's been published, sharing your work and having excerpts done, enhances your chances of being published.

THE FIRST MAN OF OUR LAST MAN ORGANIZATION

Dear Ernie:

I want to inform you, and the Khe Sanh vets that Col Jack Padley, U.S.M.C. ret., died of a heart attack at Camp Pendleton Naval Hospital, on Dec. 6, 1991.

As you know, Colonel Padley formed the 26th Marines at Camp Pendleton in the spring of 1966, and took the Regiment to Vietnam and eventually to Khe Sanh.

He returned from Khe Sanh in August of 1967 and retired at Camp Pendleton in 1968.

Jack and I graduated from the University of Dayton in 1940. Jack was a great football player in college.

Enclosed, please find a check to help you with your publication and these wonderful Khe Sanh heroes.

Sincerely,
Shirley W. Padley

P.S. Jack is buried in Arlington National Cemetery

Ed. note: I'm sure many of us will pay our respects to the colonel during our reunion next year in D.C. We would be honored to have you join us, Mrs. Padley. I understand our colors (26th Marines) are stored at Headquarters Marine Corps. Maybe we can get the Marine Corps to unfurl our colors for the colonel, one-last-time.

CORPSMAN UP

Dear Ernie,

The memories of Khe Sanh will never end. But then, who would want to forget good friends? We all survived for a reason. To share the joy and meaning of the season. Merry Christmas.

"Doc" Dave Steinberg
I/3/26

A REQUEST

Dear Ernie:

First, I want to thank you for all your hard efforts in putting together our newsletter. As a psychotherapist who works with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the therapeutic value in knowing that we shared an experience is invaluable.

My request, is that you please ask if there are others who were at Khe Sanh who have had any, or all, of the following health problems: Premature heart attacks (I had one at 40), severe allergy problems, extreme visual sensitivity to light.

Please ask brothers who have such disabilities to either write or call me.

Again, thank you so much for your efforts. I'm sure that there are others who appreciate the work which you do so that we can keep in touch, or find those that we spent so much time with during a difficult period in our lives.

Sincerely,
Anthony (Doc) Edell
Corpsman M/3/26
5460 White Oak Ave. #B105
Encino, CA 91316
Ph. 818/990-4594

Ed. note: Drop the Doc a line or give him a call, guys. Maybe he can share his findings with us.

FAST TURNAROUND

Dear Ernie:

It was nice to get your letter. I am especially honored that you would like me to write for the *Khe Sanh Newsletter*. I enclose a piece you can use for the newsletter on PTSD. (see HEALTH ISSUES) Let me continued on page 12

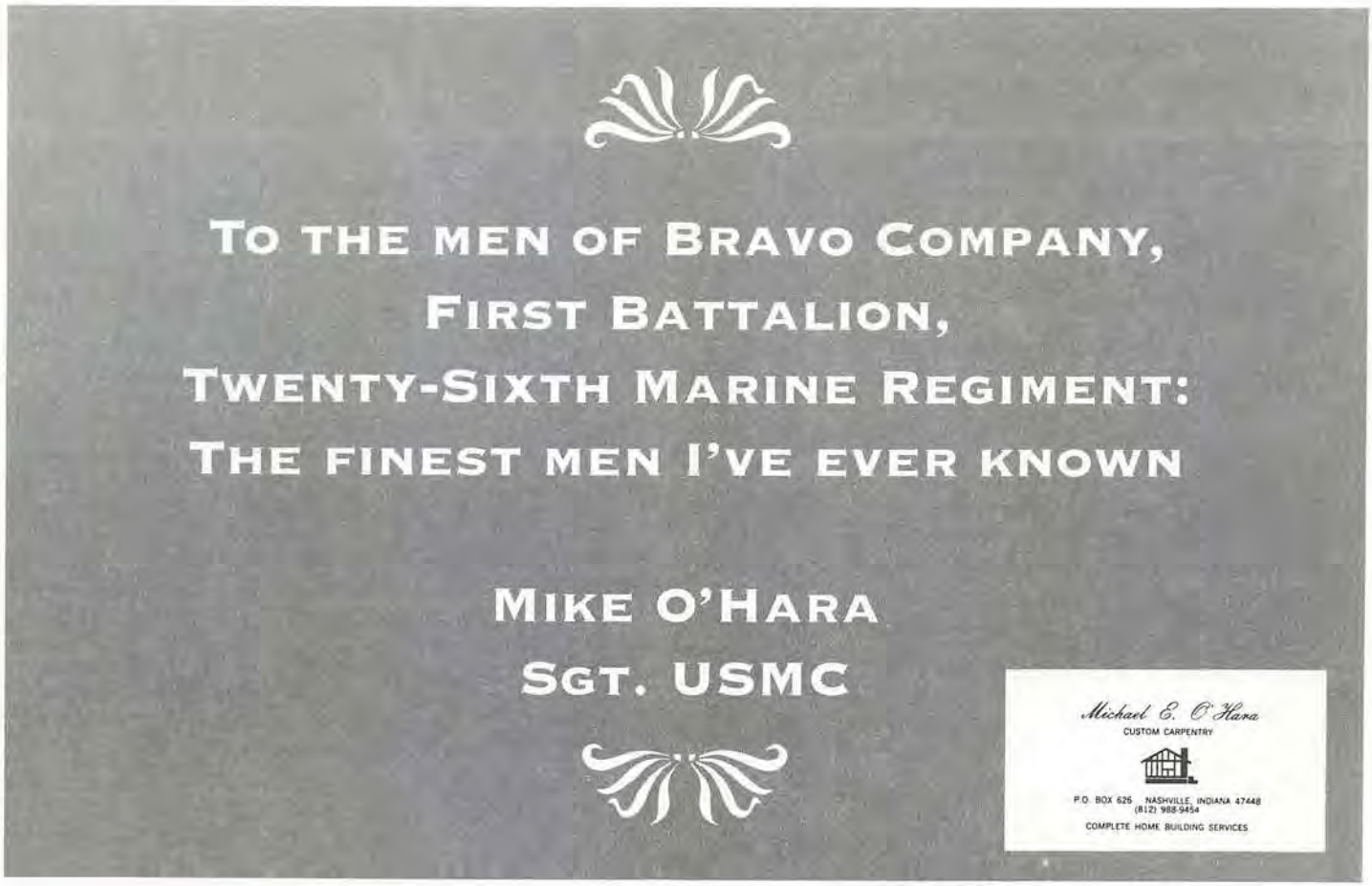

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know how often you plan to publish and I will be sure to get articles to you in plenty of time. *(Ed: the gods willing, we'll have three issues a year, plus an annual membership listing.)* My wife Kathy does all my typing, so she will type everything so you can just use it as it is or if there is a special format, let me know. *(Ed: I just want writings, I'll take it any way I can get it.)*

I am a Marriage Child and Family Therapist, Intern. I am working on finishing my 3000 required hours to be licenced in California. We have the strictest requirements of any state. I want to work for the VA in the Vets Outreach Centers. *(Ed: I use the Vet Centers. It is the best counseling service, by far, of any that I've used, and trust me guys, I've had my head done by a lot of clowns, trying to pass themselves off as shrinks. And, the best part is, its free at the Vet Centers.)*

I got my Master's degree in Psychology, and received financial assistance to do so as part of the VA Education program so that I could work with other veterans. I haven't been able to get a job interview with the VA. I wrote my congressman and senators, as well as Derwinski (Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs), and all they ended up doing was sending my letters which ended up back with the Vocational Counselor at the VA, who was not doing anything to assist me. I will be licensed by next year and am currently working in private practice and at a school with adolescents who have behavioral problems.

I was a corpsman with M/3/9 from Nov. 66 to Nov. 67. I did Hue, Con Thien, Khe Sanh, Dong Ha. I don't remember a lot of the details about my experiences in Vietnam. Kathy has been writing other vets through her computer and a Bulletin Board Service called PRODIGY. She put the word out about the *Khe Sanh Newsletter*. I've gotten feedback from other vets, some who were at Khe Sanh, and their stories have helped me to remember.

It's great that you have been able to work on your PTSD issues. It is amazing, how much just one year in our lives can so influence and can take over our entire life, if we don't work on it. I also read your book. Let me know where I can get a copy.

I look forward to hearing from you and getting the next *Khe Sanh Newsletter*.

Regards,
Tony Edell

Ed. reply: You can get the book by coming to our reunion in D.C. I have donated 200 first edition hardbacks to the Khe Sanh vets. If you just can't wait until then, send $20 to Earle Breeding and he'll send you one. Include $2.50 for postage and handling. If you're cheap, like most Marines, I believe it is still in circulation by Bantam. Ask your local book store, they can tell you. As for your next article, anything you want to do is fine. Readers, see Tony's piece titled "POST TRAUMATIC STRESS SYNDROME" in our section on HEALTH ISSUES.



DOING THE TIME

Hi Ernie,

It's me again, I've stumbled through, yet another week of sleepless nights. I wanted to share with you my word game. I thought maybe, if there's room for it in one of your issues, you could publish it. *(Ed: See Mannie's puzzle in this issue.)* I also sent you a poem awhile back and I'm wondering if you had thoughts of publishing it. *(Ed: I've asked Mannie to consider re-doing it as a prose piece.)*

I hope you all met at the reunion in July 92, Ken Penn too. I can't be there. I'm on California's death row, but I'll be there in spirit.

No excuses, but I sometimes wonder if my PTSD from two tours has anything to do with my present circumstances. I do the best I can to get along with everyone, so far no big problem in my space. I could use visits, but that's a personal problem I'll have to deal with. Ernie Payne used to visit, but we no longer have an out-reach center that gives a damn. It has to do with a shortage of funds.

Could you put my address with this, in case any of the brothers out there would like to write me?

Mannie Babbitt C50400 NSS24
Tamal, CA 94974-0001

GET US OUTTA HERE!

Ernie:

Thank you for the effort that you put into this magazine. The effort is well appreciated by veterans like myself.

I would like to correct my Marine affiliation, which was erroneously published in your newsletter. My unit was HMM 164. I was crew chief of a CH46A, #6, "Charlie's Chopper." My gunners were Jerry Suidzinski and John Berg. We had the dubious honor of flying all day on January 19, 1968. We were pulling bald eagle emergency recon extractions all day long and the following evening. The next morning, I was flying into Khe Sanh with my wingman "ATTA BOY #1", crewed by William "Doug" Landford and his gunner Leland "Jim" Mylander. We joined up with a CH46 Super D that had the purple fox emblazoned on the tail. We were the only three medium Marine helicopters flying during the beginning of the first week of the siege. My hack was Major Ralph Nelson and/or Col. Rick. His right seat was Lt. Tim Timmons. I have vivid memories of the emergency recon evacuations, medevacs, and the re-supplies of 881 and 861.

I recall the early morning of the 20th, flying into Khe Sanh, and seeing the ammo dump go up. I also remember a certain prisoner, that was wrapped in a diaper, *(Ed. It wasn't me, I swear. I was on R&R at the time, on Oahu, doing the hula and hustling tourists)* who I picked up at Charlie-Med. He was placed on my plane by a squad of MPs. It was cold, I gave him my blanket, and I caught unapproving stares from the Marine medevacs I was bringing out with him. When we landed at the Alpha Med. at Phu Bai, there was a squad or more of MPs who picked up this individual. He must have been someone super special.

I stand 6'4" and have retained all my blond hair. Every once in awhile, someone comes up to me and says, "I know you from somewhere." When I tell them I was a Marine crew chief at Khe Sanh, every so often, they say, "That's It! You took me out. You pulled our bacon out of the fire," or something similar. My response has always been, "I was 21 years old. I had no idea what I was doing. I just knew it had to be done and was only too glad to do it."

I'd like to thank Sergeant Jim Kaylor of E 2/26, for it was he who submitted my name to be included in the ranks of the Khe Sanh Vets.

Sincerely yours,
Charles E. Nowotny "Fubis Figmo"
HMM 164

Ed. note: Brother Nowotny, like brother Kaylor, now works in law-enforcement. He included the names and addresses of those he mentioned. They'll be added to our roster. If any of you know of any other Khe Sanh brothers who are not on our roster, please let us know.

LISTENING TO THE MUSE

Dear Ernie:

I have just finished writing a letter to Ray, and I sit here staring at the letter you wrote me awhile back. I had used the back of it to write out some thoughts, a few nights back. It was the handiest thing around at the time, and, as is my way so as not to lose track of my thoughts, I use the nearest paper. Pens are no problem, as I have them laying all over the house, including the toidies. But paper with clean sides is another story. Napkins, newspapers, anything goes. So anyway, I still have this energy to write tonight, so I thought I would go ahead and drop you a few lines or so, just for the bejeebers of it. As with when I write Ray, I really do not know ahead of time, what it is that will end up on paper. My thoughts flow and my fingers follow what I see within my mind and being. Very rarely do I exercise censorship over what comes forth.

So tell me, Ernie, what is a nice guy like you doing in a letter like this? Have you ever, in the quiet of the night, fig-

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ured out what it was that decried the reasons for the roles we now find ourselves in? How much of what we are today was determined by the smallest of immeasurable distances, or a sideward step, instead of forwards? A glance instead of a stare? I do not know much about what your past in Nam entailed except that you served with the 26th Marines, but a long time ago I learned that each path we take is a teacher if we let it be. In a rice paddy, I found within me anger and rage for some who should have been my comrades. They lay, cowering, immobile, while their help was desperately needed. The supplies they carried, so important to the others up ahead. At the time, I could have shot them. Later, I would not associate with them. I still harbor resentment towards them, but it has been tempered with understanding of the awesome effects that war has on each of us. We all react differently to the same set of circumstances. The only difference between a "hero" and a "coward" is perception. Neither one, at the time, is doing anything that they see as being wrong. Both act in the interest of self-preservation, and both act because they find themselves in a situation of violence far beyond their ability to cope.

On the ship heading over to Nam, I often wondered how I would react to the first time. It was a rather perplexing question, one that has been played and replayed, throughout generations.

Since Nam, the world is seen as a different place by me. It took years, and much inner turmoil, to come to this point of view. What I see men strive for seems to make little "real" sense, and is even less important. Fifty weeks of work, and a rushed two weeks of vacation. Forty-plus years on the job, and a retirement, too old to enjoy. A society where we outlive our usefulness when we are perceived as being different. Age, characteristics, race, religion—it doesn't really matter. To those who don't fit the ideological image, society has found subtle means of letting them know they are not conforming to what is "good for society." They are trouble makers without knowing it. They are made to feel guilty, for who, how, and what they are; instead of the acknowledgment that ALL the parts of the world make up the WHOLE world. Without individualism, we would not have the creativity that has brought the enjoyment of the world to us. Even the most pleasurable of all we enjoy grows stale when presented in the same way all the time. A grilled-out hot dog tastes real good after two weeks of filet mignon. Mankind must find within itself, the tolerance of love and compassion, regardless of personal opinions. If my actions do not hurt you, or those around me, what is the need for judgement? Let me express myself as an individual, and let me live as an individual. It has to be one of the most basic of all rights. A right that must extend to all living things. A right transcending man's willfulness to wage war and wreak unwarranted destruction. That from which life has been removed is forever changed. A loss which cannot be measured for the future, is beyond our power to see. Conjecture of what might have been is a ridiculous attempt at appeasing one's guilt. The effects of war are well documented and attested to by millions of graves and countless tears. So to say that we did not expect that to happen, when we pulled the trigger, is a rather naive and absurd declaration. Only the truth of the finality of those actions on an individual basis remains to be resolved.

This is my soapbox this night, Ernie. For better or worse, it goes out to you. I meant what I said when earlier, I wrote that I had no idea what would come down on paper. These are my extensions this night of the world within me. A world that is me, and that is mine. I hope that you find it as fascinating as I do.

Take care and God Bless,
Talis Kaminski
CAC O

Ed. note: Thank you, brother. Being a philosopher myself, by education, I see some Spinoza in your writing. Heavy stuff, man. I hope you're getting some independent head time for it. I get mine done regularly at a Vet Outreach Center. It's the only good thing I feel that our VA has done for us. I find, when I spend too much time talking with my muse, I lose track of the real world, and what's going on around me. No offense intended, brother. You are a very talented writer and thinker. But then, it's not really about reason, is it? It's about pain.

REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE

Dear Mr. Claire:

I got your name and address from the Khe Sanh Vets newsletter. I was the CO of Delta Company 1/26 and also the S-2 (intelligence officer) at Khe Sanh. I remember your brother Kenneth (Tarzan).

There is a reunion in San Diego coming up in a couple of weeks. It is for the 3rd Marine Division, but the Khe Sanh Vets also will be there for their annual reunion. Besides myself, there will also be others who knew your brother. I will be rooming with your brother Kenneth's commanding officer who is also my best friend, Col. Kenneth Pipes. I know this is a late invitation, but I just thought of it. I will be driving down with two other Khe Sanh vets from the Bay Area and you would be welcome to join us if you wish. We will leave July 8 and return July 12. We will spend the evening of July 8 at Ken Pipe's home in Fallbrook and drive on to the reunion in San Diego on the 9th. You could bunk on the floor of one

of the hotel rooms that we've already got reserved. I don't mean to intrude on your life, but thought you might like the opportunity to meet some of the guys who did the siege with your brother.

Let me know.

Regards,
Ernie Spencer

• • •

Dear Ernie:

I have tried to write the perfect paper. Four weeks of trying and I have given up. I talked to John Balanco yesterday and he said, "Stop trying to make it perfect!" I have taken his advice, and here is what I have come up with:

When I received your letter inviting me to the 24th reunion of the Khe Sanh vets, I immediately decided not to go. My wife and I had planned a trip to Canada during the same time period. But, that wasn't the real reason. Ken was my kid brother (7 years younger) and his death was a tremendous loss to our family and our community. Ken's kid brother (the youngest) still hasn't recovered from Ken's death, and my mother still just blanks it out. Our dad died a couple of years ago and he never reconcilled Ken's loss. I still walk downtown and have Ken's football buddies come up with tears in their eyes and talk about the wild times they had together. It had taken me 22 years since my brother Ken's death to come to terms with the tragedy, and I really didn't want to bring back old memories that would upset my family or me.

I also knew a lot about what had happened to Ken on February 25, 1968, because Ken's point man had visited my father and mother a year after Ken's death and had given us an eyewitness account. His point man, Ed, was one of the first men hit in Ken's squad when they attempted to outflank the ambush they were caught in. Ken pulled Ed and another wounded Marine into a trench line. Ed said that Ken was shot three different times in the space of an hour or so while he returned fire at the enemy. Ed, who lost his entire lower jaw and had to talk to my folks through a voice box crawled away after Ken and the other man were killed. He apparently got back to the base the next day, but was unable to communicate with anyone and was medevaced out.

Ernie your letter got me thinking again, about all this, and at first I was very angry with you, for bringing this all back up, but then I started to think. I decided that the only piece of my brother's 20 years and three months of life I didn't know much about was the 11 months he had spent in Vietnam.

I read your letter at least eight times, trying to make up my mind whether or not to go to San Diego. I honestly

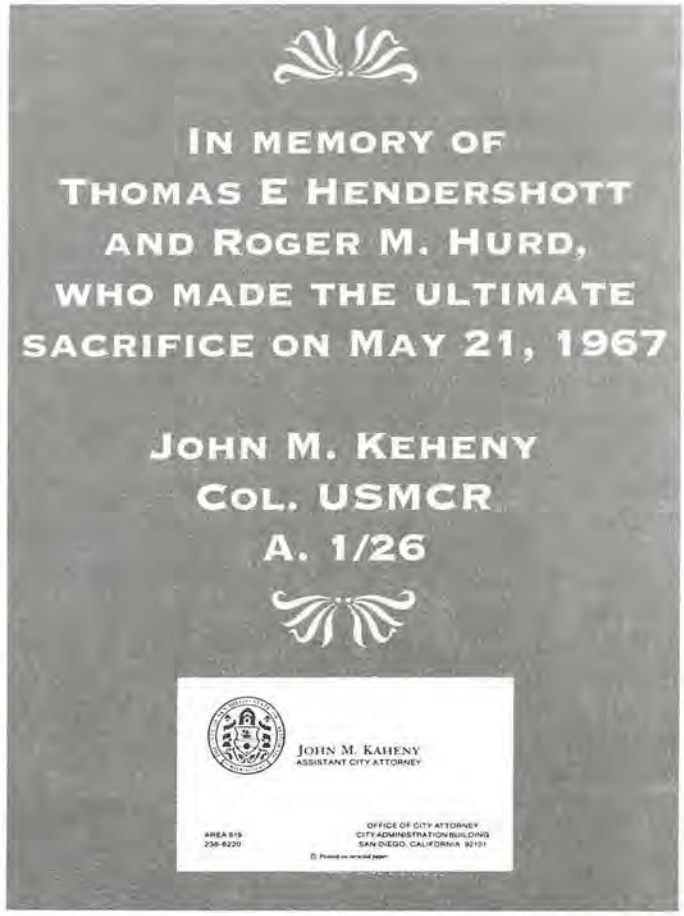

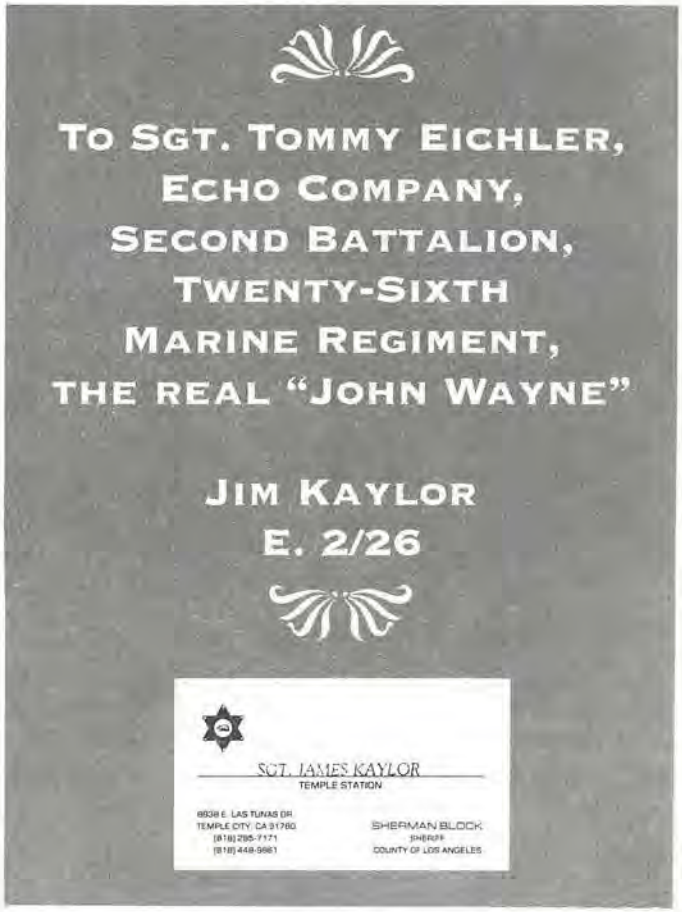

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wondered how I wouuld be accepted by Marine veterans since I was never in Vietnam and hadn't even been in the service. I finally decided to forget my trip to Canada and go to the reunion. It was the best decision I have ever made.

My trip to San Diego with yourself, the "wild man", John Balanco and Jim Epps was a real eye opener for me. I learned just why it is that Khe Sanh was so special to my brother and the rest of the people who were there. You are some of the funniest people I've ever met. And, the craziest. I also learned just why it is that my brother's patrol is of such interest and why "Tarzan Claire" was well known to other people.

At San Diego the learning process continued, and many of the pieces of the puzzle to my brother's 11 months in Vietnam came together. I learned why my brother had so much respect for his fellow Marines and why he joined in the first place. The individual men and women I met not only accepted me, but they helped me to put to rest many questions my family and I had concerning the way Ken spent his last days on earth.

The most important thing I learned, however, was not about my brother. I learned about the incredible togetherness the Khe Sanh veterans have and the warmth they feel for one another and for the families of those men that did not make it. It was one of the most positive experiences I have ever had in my life. And for that, I can only say, thank you, for reaching out to me.

Hope to see you soon,
Dick Claire

A FINAL WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

Dear Ernie:

We have been saddened by the passing of these Khe Sanh brothers:

Richard Romine, HMM-165, born 3 June 1930; died, 31 July 1991. Survived by his wife of 37½ years, and one son. He had been shot down while on a SOG mission, on his birthday in 1967. Through his undaunting courage and leadership, saved over 70 men who were in a desperate fight inside Laos. They had been launched from Khe Sanh.

John J. Padley, who died 6 December 1991 of a massive heart attack. Survived by his wife Shirley. Colonel Padley was CO of the 26th Marines at Khe Sanh, just prior to Colonel Lownds. He is remembered by many as the tall, lanky, grandfather-like officer who constantly visited around the Khe Sanh Combat Base, walking with a slight jerk from an old football injury. He is remembered as one who cared so much for his men.

William Jabush, H&S 3/26, born 01 July 1949; died 09 November 1991, age 42. Survived by his wife and three children, ages, 9, 12, and 14, and a dear friend, Dave Shurter, M 3/26. Bill had advanced leukemia but fortunately was able to receive a bone-marrow transplant from his sister which seemed to take. Unfortunately, he became infected with a fungus that settled in his brain, and died from that. He attributed his leukemia to Agent Orange and was with us at the reunion in Nashville (1990). *(Ed. note: See our article on Agent Orange in this issue.)*

Les Faurebrac, Bravo 1/26, died 7 January 1992 and is survived by his wife. Les attended several of our reunions, and was close to many of our members. He was a good friend who cared very deeply, and was very sensitive to the hurts and pains of many of us.

We are also deeply saddened by the death of the wife and two children (the entire family) of ***Mark Ward,*** Golf 2/26, due to an automobile accident.

We rejoice at the birth of Ryan Eric on 13 December 1991. The third child and first son of ***Paul Dargan,*** Bravo 3d Recon

You are strongly encouraged to either send a cassette tape recording, summarizing your experiences at Khe Sanh, or arrange for a taped interview covering your service at Khe Sanh with:

Mr. Ronald Drez of the University of New Orleans, Eisenhower Center, Metro College, New Orleans, LA 70148, Ph. (504) 286-7110. Many of you have already done this and more are encouraged to do so. The Eisenhower Center has established an archive of materials on the Normandy D-Day invasion of World War Two, and one on Khe Sanh. They hope to preserve the voices of participants, records and photographs so that historians, a hundred or more years from now, will be able to hear the voices of those who were there. Imagine what it would mean today, to be able to hear the stories of those who had been at Bunker Hill, or in the battles of the Civil War? So give Mr. Dres a call and help them with this worthy project. I think we should be very gratified that of all of the battles of Vietnam, we who were at Khe Sanh, should be selected to be the focus of interest here!

Ed. note: This is consistent with our purpose as an organization. Come on, get off your lazy duff and do something worthwhile and meaningful. If you've found the time to read this newsletter, for however many years you've been receiving it, you damn sure should have the time for a little "payback". Besides, you'll feel better about yourself. Get involved, guys. Get involved. We need you. Not him, YOU.

rabilia of any description—as long as the item was genuinely worn/used or otherwise acquired during your tour.

Obviously, the success or failure of this project depends entirely on how much material I can collate and on the willingness of veterans like yourself to participate. To this end, I am seeking;

1. PHOTOGRAPHS:
   Taken by individuals during their tour(s). Color or black-and-white, prints, negatives or transparencies. Quality is not critical though obviously has to be in a reproducible state. Any subject matter—particularly those depicting Marine Corps personnel and Khe Sanh-related scenes.

2. VIETNAM ERA ARTIFACTS:
   Anything of interest—the only proviso is that it must have been genuinely worn or acquired by Marine Corps personnel during their tour. Again Khe Sanh-related items would be especially welcome (e.g., Marine Corps uniform/field gear-helmets, flak gear, soft covers, etc. Captured enemy souvenirs—uniform items, flags, canteen, belts, etc. Paperwork: Medals and citations, maps, orders, letters, etc.)

3. PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS:
   Your stories and anecdoted thoughts and impressions of Khe Sanh in particular and Vietnam in general. Even a few lines would be useful, as would any poems, song lyrics or sketches done at the time.

If you can help with any of the above it would be greatly appreciated. You are requested to send anything of this nature to the address listed below.

Please remember to identify items, so that I can do likewise in print. E.g., 'NVA pack captured on Hill 861A by Cpl.....of Echo 1/26 etc.' Also it would be helpful if you were to describe the circumstances leading to the acquisition of an item or just your thoughts and memories of wearing/using or acquiring it.

Importantly with photographs please identify individuals, exact locations, units and dates wherever possible.

All photographs and other items will be fully credited to you. For this reason, please remember to include your rank, M.O.S. and unit at the time.

I will endeavor to meet any postage incurred and because this is a long-term project, I would have to advise against sending anything of great value.

If enough of you respond, it is realistic to expect publication to be in the early months of 1993, with a percentage of sales going to the Khe Sanh Veterans Association.

I thank you in anticipation and look forward to hearing from you. Address all correspondence to:

Kevin Lyles, 24 Victoria Rd., Berhamsted, Hertifordshire, HP4 2JT, England

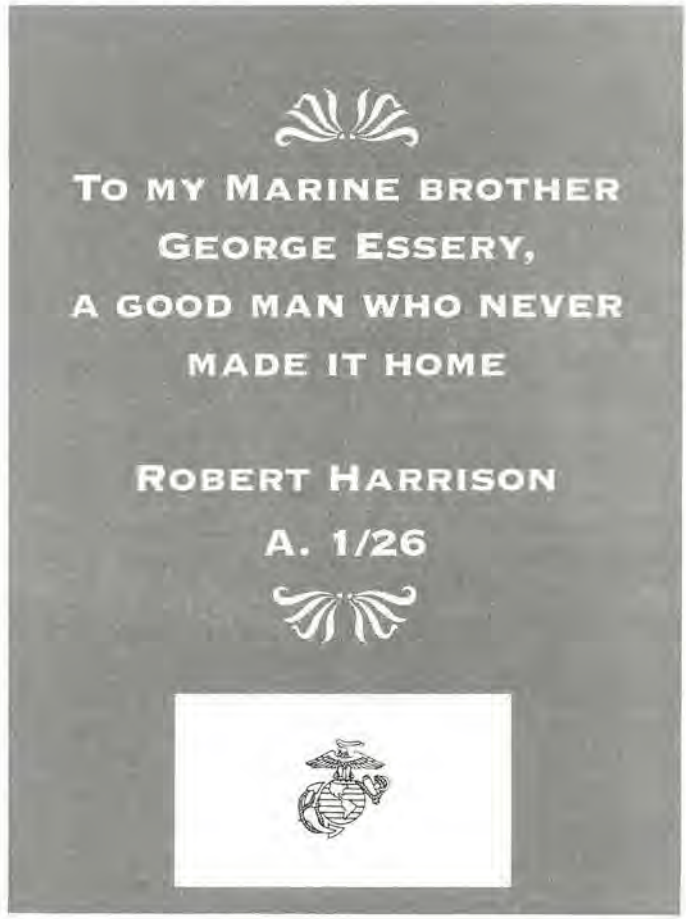



REUNION BRIEFS

THE BRU

As part of our healing process (see our by-laws), we agreed, during our most recent reunion, to try to help the Bru. The Bru are one of the smallest tribes of the Montagnards. We understand some still reside in-and-around Khe Sanh. The Bru were our loyal allies before and during the siege. Our members in CAC worked with them and can attest to their loyalty *(Ed: I'd like some letters from you CAC guys on this!)* The Bru were not allowed on our base during the siege, and as a result, thousands of them were killed. Those of you who know about the psychological process, in healing the wounds of war, will recognize what we're attempting to do in this regard. It's called ATONEMENT. We will attempt to get medicines to them as soon as possible. They are suffering epidemic rates of malaria, TB, and malnutrition. The government of Vietnam has been less than caring, in regards to the Montagnards. Politics and diplomacy come into play in this project. Fortunately, our government will not stand in our way. Humanitarian aid to Vietnam is not only allowed, by the U.S. government, it is encouraged. Any of you who'd like to help, or have ideas on this, please contact the editor in writing *(Ed: Sorry folks, you can attempt to call, but I cannot afford to return calls. I will answer all mail with a note or letter.)*

OVER 100 SHOW

Sixty-three members signed our Khe Sanh roster at the San Diego Reunion. 24 states were represented. AZ-2, CA-26, CO-1, GA-1, IL-6, IN-1, ID-1, KS-1, MD-1, MI-1, MN-1, NC-2, NE-1, NJ-2, NM-3, NV-1, NY-2, OR-1, PA-2, TX-2, VA-1, WA-1, WI-2, DC-1. Not all Khe Sanh members attending signed in. The list does not include spouses or children. Thirty-five filled out a questionnaire. Twenty-five who did, stated that they definitely planned to attend our next reunion in D.C., in 1993. Fourteen of those who did the survey went on Third MarDiv. tours. Eleven felt the tour prices were fair, two felt they were too high, one felt the prices charged were moderate. Seventeen who did the survey, did not go on any Third MarDiv tours. Seven give no evaluation, seven felt the costs were too high, three lived in the area and were not interested in the tours offered. Only nine of those who did the survey, stayed at the Third MarDiv. arranged, Town and Country Hotel. The rest stayed elsewhere.



Official logo approved at San Diego Convention.

SO, SHOW US HOW!

Ken and Berniece Penn, who are doing our reunion bookings, have found that it is common practice for hotels, tours, car agencies, etc., to offer kick-backs or discounts and freebies. You will notice from the prices offered for our D.C. reunion, discounts have been used to cut the price charged for your room. Your president, Earle Breeding, says that our rate of $59.00, for a hotel room in Georgetown, is fantastic. We will also give the free rooms, which the hotel gives for each block of bookings, to our members, in a lottery-type drawing. If you book before the March deadline, you stand a one-in-thirty chance of getting your room for free! All our savings are going back to the members, which is as it should be, don't you think? Our hotel only has 300 rooms, don't delay, or you'll have to book elsewhere.

TELEVISION'S VIETNAM: THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH

That's the title of an hour long video being shown at the American Film Institute Theater in the JFK Center for the Performing Arts, Washington D.C. on November 10, 1992 at 1:30 p.m.; This film is part of the Veterans Week Activities of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. For more info call or write, Peter C. Rollins, Dept. of English, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078 ph. 405-744-9474. Peter is not a Khe Sanh vet, but is a Marine and Vietnam vet, who made this film as a labor of love.

HELP!

We need volunteers. Our reunion in D.C. takes people to make it happen. We need people to help man our registration desk. We need baby

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MAY THE MEMORY OF
THE MEN OF ECHO COMPANY,
SECOND BATTALION,
TWENTY-SIXTH MARINE REGIMENT
LIVE FOREVER.

TO MY BROTHERS WHO FOUGHT
AND DIED WITH HONOR.
TO ALL THE KHE SANH BROTHERS.
BEST WISHES ALWAYS,

JEFF BODENWEISER
CAPT. USMC RET.
E. 1/26



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

(503) 364-6666

Jeff Bodenweiser
Captain
U.S. Marine Corps
Retired

6666 Continental Circle SE
Salem, OR 97306

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sitters (during our banquet and some of our evening ceremonies), to watch the younger children. If you have a teenager who's willing to help—so that mom and dad can enjoy some of our evening activities—sing-out. Give what you can, folks. Ken and Berniece Penn are doing it all as of right now. Give them a break, please! One or two hours is all they ask. Write them at 206 Imperial St., Park Ridge, IL. 60068. Pretty Please?

BRING YOUR PICTURES

When you come to our reunion, don't forget to bring your photos from Vietnam. We will have a special area, set-up in our hospitality suite for people to display/share their photos. Brothers and family members love looking at pictures from Vietnam. You'll have brothers requesting a copy of some of your photos. Many of us (your editor included) had their photos destroyed before we could get them out. We will have envelopes and note pads so that people can informally, work-out the order arrangements with you. Naturally, while you're making a copy, we ask that you make an additional one, and donate it to our archives (see below).

WARNING, WARNING, WARNING

If you have slides taken in Vietnam, you are in imminent danger of losing them. If you have slides, photograph negatives, or audio tapes, it is time to make duplicates. The plastic base or carrier has gotten old and brittle, and will start cracking when handled. The emulsion, whether photo sensitive film, or a coating that receives magnetic audio tracks, has been deteriorating over the years, and will begin losing definition. Color photographic prints have already faded, and will accelerate in aging. You can copy audio tapes at home. A photographic studio can make duplicates of your negatives and copy original prints.

And, while you're making a copy or redoing them, how about making an extra, and donating it to the Khe Sanh Veterans? We want to run your photos in our newsletter. Ultimately, we'll donate the entire collection to the University of New Orleans archives (see Ray's plea, in INCOMING). If you send us a copy of your set, we promise not to use them for any purposes other than artistic projects funded by the Khe Sanh Vets unless we first obtain your written permission. Come on guys, you have to copy your stuff anyway. Make a worthy donation. Don't forget to number your slides, and provide an accompanying directory that clearly identifies each one. State, where the slide or photo was taken, who's in it, and any other comments that are pertinent. Hey, we might print your picture on the cover of the Newsletter, you never know.

WANTED: A FEW GOOD MEN

We want to develop a regular group of writers for our newsletter. You'll notice, in this issue, writers with great promise who I'm working with. More are needed. If you have a buddy you'd like to honor, do a BIO on him. The format is simple: the Vietnam part is your recollection of the guy, the rest is straight biographical data. We want to know who our members were, before Vietnam, and, what happened to them since Vietnam. If you have a poem, share it. If you'd like to do a recap of your tour, like Jug's (in this issue), send it in. Don't demean yourself by thinking that you can't write. Your story is what we want. I'll help you with the writing—that's my job.

THE HILL FIGHTS

A growing portion of our membership is made up of veterans of the "Hill Fights," now called the First Battle of Khe Sanh. This powerful and bloody 12-day ordeal has not yet received the recounting that it deserves. Our newsletter will provide the forum for the accurate, and as of yet, under-reported accounting of that monumental battle. This is an open call to our readership to submit articles, memoirs and poetry about the hill fights. (See Jim Epps' poem, this issue) In upcoming issues, we will publish major works by Dave Rogers, Tom Rice and Jim Cannon, who did the Hill Fights.

BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME?

John "King Rat" Balanco (CAC-O), would like to hear from you. John is in charge of our fundraising and advertising. We need advertising, to help offset the high costs incurred in trying to put out a quality newsletter. Note the "In Memory" advertisements, in this issue. We did not have enough money to print this newsletter, without the ads. A pretty sorry state of affairs, don't you agree? So give, guys. It's your newsletter, for crying-out-loud. If you rate a business card, we ask that you run an add in our newsletter. The rate is minimal. Brothers might give you some business. Come on, Pay-Back time, guys. Contact John Balanco at ph. 510/828-0166, fax 510/828-4793 or write him at P.O. Box 1147, Danville, CA 94526

LESSONS FROM KHE SANH

(From the Chicago Tribune)

> Enjoy the view while it lasts, since the Royal Air Force mercy flight into Sarajevo seems at first to be soaring right over the mortar-pocked runway.
>
> But as he approaches the lip of the concrete strip, British Flight Lt. Chris Ford points the C-130

cargo plane straight down at the runway in a stomach-wringing nose dive that ends only when he yanks the aircraft level just yards off the ground.

It's called the 'Khe Sanh Maneuver,' invented by the American pilots to guard against anti-aircraft fire while resupplying besieged troops in Vietnam.

NAM STATS

More than 2.6 million Americans served in Vietnam from 1965 to 1973. Most were enlistees. The draft only supplied 25% of the total manpower, but most of the Army's combat arms were filled by draftees after the war's first year.

Only 9.7% of draft-age males actually served in Vietnam. Two-thirds of all men of the so-called Vietnam generation avoided active duty; 60% evaded any type of military service.

In Vietnam, the ratio of support to combat troops was 5 to 1. Perhaps 14% of GIs actually fought while another 15% provided close combat support. When American troops were at peak strength in 1969, out of 543,400 troops in Vietnam, only 80,000 were in the field attempting to engage the enemy.

SPEAKING OF HISTORY

There is something very, very wrong with our Khe Sanh history as it is being told by the Marine Corps Historical Center. Get this: according to their Part V of a *Chronology, May 1954–May 1975, The U.S. Marine Corps and the Vietnam War: 1968*, pg. 22 of *FORTITUDINE, Historical Bulletin Volume XX, Fall 1990, No. 2*, it states: "31 Mar—Operation Scotland, codename for Khe Sanh operations, ended in Quang Tri Province with 1,561 enemy dead and 204 Marines killed. The operation, which began on 31 October 1967..." Would not an uninformed reader interpret that statement to mean, the siege of Khe Sanh ended on 31 Mar., and that the total casualties of that siege were only 204 American KIA's and 1561 enemy killed? If you didn't know better, isn't that what you would think?

Ray Stubbe has done, a unit-by-unit count. He has the individual names of those killed, or who died of wounds. To give but one example of the nonsense being published by the Marine Corps Historical Society which, incidentally brothers is the "official" Marine Corps history, Ray's break-down of just Marine KIA's at Khe Sanh from 20 Jan. through 31 Mar. (the Historical Society supposedly counts from 31 Oct. 67 to 31 Mar. 68, and supposedly includes additional Marine Corps casualties in I Corps not directly associated with the Siege), shows 327 Marine KIA or died of wounds from Khe Sanh alone. How is the Historical Society so far off? For one thing, they don't count those who were wounded, medevaced out, and subsequently died from wounds received at Khe Sanh. They don't count our brothers who were shot down or crashed while flying into or around Khe Sanh. It is not, what they (Historical Branch) say that is false, it is rather that they do not tell all. As a history minor myself, it is my understanding that legitimate historians try to be as "inclusive" as possible when reporting historical facts, not "exclusive" like the Historical Branch has been in recording our history. To give the "impression" that only 204 Americans died at Khe Sanh demeans our experience and gallant effort. What about our brothers in the Navy, Air Force and Army who died at Khe Sanh? To exclude them and only report Marines, gives a very distorted view of the Siege. The Siege was, if anything, during the entire Vietnam War, a joint operation of all the branches of our Armed Forces. To have the audacity and arrogance after twenty-two years of information to the contrary, to state that only, 1,561 North Vietnamese were killed during the entire Scotland operation—not just at Khe Sanh—demeans the significance of the Khe Sanh siege. The NVA is now estimating upwards of 40,000 were killed. Incidentally, Ray's count of KIA's for Khe Sanh from 20 Jan. through 17 Apr., 1968, shows a total of 849 Americans. Ray has the names. Names don't lie. Our brothers and their families have a right to have those "not counted" correctly accounted for, don't you think?

I was talking with a Chosin Marine the other night. He said this supposed Historical Branch has done the same thing with the Korean War history. I've heard a lot of speculation as to why they (Historical Branch) keep publishing data known to be patently false and misleading. We don't give two hoots why, we just want it corrected. We're a last-man outfit. If we don't change it, it's going down as the official history.

If any brothers out there, have attempted, on their own to get the Historical Branch to right these errors, please write and let us know about your attempts. Needless to say, guys, our history and its accuracy is vital to our organization. Do we want future Marines to think that Khe Sanh was just some minor, "junk-change" operation?

STAND BY!

To: Commandant of the Marine Corps 28, July 1992

From: Michael E. O'Hara, Sgt., USMC, Bravo Co. 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, Khe Sanh Veteran, 11/67 to 4/68.

Ref: 26th Marine Regiment, TET 1968

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Subj: Official Regimental Colors & Specific Historical Data

Sir:

Having recently mustered a good many men of my beleaguered company, in the past few months, we were able to gather in San Diego recently for a reunion. Next year in July, we plan to meet in Washington D.C. to pay tribute to our fallen Marines. As my company has many names inscribed in granite, it is particularly painful that we have a 27 man block on the wall which represents our so-called, "ghost platoon". It is our wish to go to the Wall, not as just visitors, or ex-Marines. We wish to go as a unit, as we fought, as THE 26TH MARINES! It is our wish to carry with us the official Regimental Colors, with all the correct battle streamers. I am not entirely sure this is allowable under current Marine Corps regulations. However, we feel we are entitled, all things considered.

We respectfully request your help in this matter. We wish to somehow, obtain the Colors w/streamers and staff. Any official insignias etc.

We also, respectfully request, clarification of a historical fact. Did the 26th Marines raise the flag on Mt. Suribachi?

Thank you for taking the time to read this request. Please forward to the proper departments. I anxiously await your reply.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael E. O'Hara, Sgt. USMC ret.

Ed. note: Yes, dear friends, another example of the truth about Vietnam. It was the enlisted who got things done. We in the officer corps, you must realize, had difficulty accomplishing even the most simple tasks such as morning toilet. Many of my brother officers, I'm sad to say, had great difficulty distinguishing between toothbrush and paper. This condition grew more pronounced with each increase in rank.

COURAGE

George, you carried me back
to safety and life
And, now, you are dead
and I am alive...and...
You knew
George
You actually knew,
Beyond the concertina,
beyond the smiles and laughter
It was waiting
and you knew.
And yet, you never wavered
or complained.

Bob Harrison
A. 1/26

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR 25th REUNION

See Hotel Ad on adjacent page

Thursday, July 1

1000 hrs.	Bus trip and tour of Quantico Marine Base. This is the Marine Corps officer school and demonstrations base.

Friday, July 2

1000 hrs.	Business meeting
1800 hrs.	Parade honoring Khe Sanh veterans, at historic Marine Barracks, 8th and I sts.

Saturday, July 3

1700 hrs.	Dinner banquet
1930 hrs.	Candlelight ceremony at the WALL

Sunday, July 4

1000 hrs.	Healing meeting. Parade down Constitution Ave. Khe Sanh vets given a special place of honor in the parade.
	Possible White House reception in honor of the Khe Sanh vets.
2100 hrs.	Fireworks

Holiday Inn

The Holiday Inn — Georgetown

2101 Wisconsin Ave. NW
Washington, D.C.
202/338-4600

Welcome to
The Khe Sanh Veterans

Best rates yet! $59 per day plus tax 1-4 people per room
Welcome cocktail Outdoor pool Free Parking
Non-smoking and handicapped rooms available

Convenient location. Within 5 mile radius of most Washington attractions including the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial. Within 3 blocks in either direction of the hotel are a variety of restaurants to match your taste and budget. Metro bus at the door.

Make your reservations now by calling 202/338-4400 and giving a major credit card number or mail in a check for on night's deposit. You must mention "KHE SANH VETERANS". Rooms may not be available if you wait. And remember: If you must cancel, you must contact us by 27 June 1993 to get a full refund.

Free... FREE... FREE

When the first 35 reservations are in, we will draw a name and the winner will receive 4 free night's lodging. Another drawing will be held when the next 35 reservations come in and a final drawing when the next 35 reservations come in. Be among the first 35, and you will have 3 chances for free lodging. To be eligible, reservations must be in by 1 February 1993. Names of winners and all who reserve their rooms by 1 February will be in our March newsletter. Reserve now — we are expecting a large turnout.

KHE SANH HISTORY
ARMY OF RATS PLAGUES KHE SANH MARINES

(from the Pacific Stars & Stripes, March 28, 1968)

Khe Sanh, Vietnam (AP)—The 5,500 Marines at this U.S. combat base are fighting a losing battle with a foe as persistent as the North Vietnamese battalions surrounding them—rats.

Thousands of rats have moved into the sandbagged base where underground tunnels and plenty of food provide them with a rodent's paradise.

One of the Marines' chief weapons for beating back the invasion is peanut butter fortified with zinc phosphide, a poison.

For some reason, the rats show a marked preference for peanut butter over cheese. *(Ed: If the reporter had bothered to try our cheese-spread, he would not have made such a stupid comparison—Brie, it definitely was not, Amigo!)* And since one out of three C rations contains peanut butter, there is plenty around. *(Ed: unless you were on 881 S. or 861 A, where they were starving and even ate the Ham and Mothers.)* Several thousand traps and globs of poisoned peanut butter are spread over Khe Sanh base. *(Ed: I think the reporter might be confusing our involuntary accidental discharges caused by incoming with peanut butter.)*

A major problem at the base is that North Vietnamese shell fire makes sanitation duty hazardous *(Ed: Here again, the pogue misses the point. Sanitation was not a problem. The "friggen" incoming was the problem.)* Once the Marines carefully dumped all their trash and garbage into a ravine 500 yards outside their base. Plows covered up the piles of trash as they accumulated.

Now with 5,500 Marines opening nine C ration cans a day *(Ed: Man, I know now for sure this clown didn't do time at Khe Sanh. Who ate nine cans a day? See why we've got to set history straight, guys?)* and snipers shooting at the dump, the Marines' trash details have contented themselves with getting most of the empty cans and trash out to the dump where it lies uncovered, the home of uncounted rats and flies.

The refuse is pilling up inside the barbed wire as well, much to the dismay of James E. Dupuy, a Navy corpsman who as preventive medicine technician commands the antirat attack *(Ed: Any of you guys, remember Dupuy? What did he use, a broom? Going, "Shoo!")*

Numerous men have been bitten by rats and the bite is worth a trip out of Khe Sanh. But the trip involves 14 days of painful shots to prevent rabies.

Many men joke about sleeping with their toes out of their blanket and a daub of peanut butter on each toe.

The threat of plague is low, although the disease sometimes sweeps through wide areas of Vietnam. The Marines all have shots to protect them.

Most Marines have learned that the "rats will leave you alone if you leave them alone," as one said. "We're all in this together," another joked.

Ed. note: Everyone who did the siege has a rat story. Send yours in. We'll print them in SHORT ROUNDS. Remember guys, this is history.

CLOUD COVER, ENEMY MORTARS MAKE MISSION ON 881 ROUGH

(from Sea Tiger Feb. 16, 1968)

Quang Tri—Marine resupply helicopters operating from Quang Tri found flying conditions difficult when diverted to pick up a wounded Marine near Hill 881.

Two Ch-46 Sea Knights of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262 flew under almost impossible weather conditions.

Two separate attempts were made by HMM-262 pilots to get into the landing zone. The first was by Capt. S. Dickey (Tacoma, Wash.). "The area we were called into was so cloudy that you could hardly see," he said.

"We made three attempts to get into the zone but just couldn't make it. I brought the copter to the base of the hill and was trying to hover my way up to the landing zone when we started receiving fire. Two mortars went off below us and as we were pulling off, a third just missed," he continued.

After the unsuccessful attempts by Dickey and his crew, another try was made to reach the Marine by another HMM-262 helicopter.

The pilot, Capt. R.F. Yeager (Roslyn Heights, N.Y.) and his co-pilot, 1st Lt. C.L. Corookall [sic]

(Staten Island, N.Y.), under the cover of darkness, tried to locate the landing zone—this time with success.

"By flying at night we had hoped that the clouds would have lifted and we would have no problem getting in and getting the wounded man, said Corookall. [sic]

"When we arrived in the area," he continued, "we found it almost impossible to see. We had some idea of the zone's location but we weren't sure. After making three passes at the area we finally spotted the zone, thanks to the help of a flareship and illumination by Marines on the ground."

The wounded Marine was then transported to Khe Sanh and later taken to Dong Ha for treatment.

A Marine helicopter crew attempted to evade North Vietnamese mortar rounds on Hill 881 to medevac Leatherneck casualties. They ended up displaying more heroics when a round trapped them on the hill, gaining the gratitude of the casualties' friends.

1st Lts. Russel E. Hohman (Colorado Springs, Colo.), the pilot and co-pilot Anthony M. Davitt (Des Moines, Iowa), were flying a UH-34D helicopter while resupplying the Marines at Khe Sanh and surrounding hill outposts.

An emergency medevac call found Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-362 aircraft nearest to 881.

The Marines on the hill advised Hohman of the situation and that every copter that had landed there that day had drawn NVA mortar fire.

Immediately after the copter landed, Marines were lifting one casualty aboard when a well-placed mortar round landed behind the aircraft. It sent fragments into the tail section and wounded Cpls. David W. Routon (Corpus Christi, Tex.), the crew chief, and Ronald A. Johnson (Bow, Wash.), the gunner.

Howman tried to take off but discovered that the controls were damaged. The wounded corporals grabbed the Marine ground casualty and moved him to safety. Johnson collapsed from his wounds and efforts of moving the casualty.

Later, another helicopter was able to safely land to evacuate the casualties, including Johnson.

As the remaining three crew members waited for a third aircraft to pick them up, Marines individually crawled to them to offer thanks for the effort of trying to evacuate their friends.

The three crew members have returned to duty at Phu Bai. Johnson is expected to recover and be on duty within a week.

Ed. note: Brothers Crookall (misspelled in Sea Tiger) and Hohman are members of our organization. Would either of you care to share any additional info on this? Do either of you know what happened to any of the other guys mentioned in this article? Did they all live?

MACHINE GUN FIRE SUPPRESSES ATTACKING ENEMY ON HILL 861

(from Sea Tiger Feb. 16, 1968)

Khe Sanh—"Yeah, it was hell...there ain't no getting around that," said LCpl. Billy R. Moffett (Henryetta, Okla.), describing a battle on Hill 861.

"Everyone may not have been as calm as they could have," he added, "but everyone did their best, and we beat them NVA good."

The battle erupted at 3:30 a.m. when an estimated battalion of North Vietnamese regulars assaulted the positions of the 26th Marines. The Marine rifle company was dug in on the slopes of Hill 861, the strategic ridgeland [sic] northwest of the Khe Sanh combat base.

Moffett was manning a .50 cal. machine gun assigned to his 4.2 inch area hardest hit by the NVA. His assistant gunner was killed beside him, and the NVA broke through and came upon his position from the rear—but he managed to keep his gun in action throughout the battle.

"If it weren't for Billy, things might have gotten real bad," said his platoon sergeant, Sgt. Mike Stahl (Del Rio, Tex.), that big machine gun really held the enemy back."

The NVA had struck with an intensive barrage of mortar and RPG (rocket launcher) rounds directed primarily at a small section of the company's perimeter. The sector was located next to a deep, jungle-covered ravine on the northwest part of Hill 861. Moffett's heavy machine gun was located about 20 meters above the main perimeter on the steep slopes of the hill.

"It was real foggy that night," he said *(Ed. note:*

We all refer to the "fog" at Khe Sanh, actually it was clouds.) "We started firing down along our own lines, over the heads of our troops. The NVA spotted our position right off. They began firing RPG rockets at us. About 20 to 30 landed in our section of the perimeter."

But, the NVA managed to break the lines by concentrating their heavy weapons fire at one point of the perimeter. Moffett kept firing.

Suddenly, his assistant gunner pitched forward after being shot from behind by infiltrating enemy soldiers. Moffett saw the NVA standing a few feet in back of his emplacement, but he couldn't move the big gun, so he grabbed his own rifle and opened up on him [sic].

The Marine returned to the .50 cal. and fired into the breech the NVA had made in the lines. He stayed on the gun until the enemy broke contact early that morning.

In the morning, 14 enemy dead were found and another seven were captured. The break-through had been mended before daylight.

Ed note: Brothers Stahl and Moffett are both members of our organization. Brother Stahl received the Navy Cross for that battle. What did Moffett get? Billy Moffett still lives in Henryetta, Oklahoma. Either of you guys care to add anything? The NVA KIAs (14) sound mighty low to me. [Sic] means error. I employ that editorial devise whenever I can on other publications, since I am notorious, myself, for spelling and grammatical errors.

A MIRACLE AT KHE SANH

(from Sea Tiger Feb. 16, 1968)

Khe Sanh—A well-placed miracle here and there during an enemy rocket attack never does any harm.

One such 'miracle' occurred at Khe Sanh, late January, in the Twenty-sixth Marine Regiment's aid station, according to HM3 Robert J. Topmiller (Cincinnati, Ohio).

An artillery round detonated as it hit (sic) roof of the aid station in which a doctor and six corpsmen were treating three wounded Marines. The explosion knocked down some of the medical personnel and dropped the roof into the room; however, there were no casualties from the blast. *(Ed: but I'll bet there was a lot more "peanut butter" rat bait left on the ground.)*

The aid station had been hit at least twice before. The first time a white phosphorus shell started a fire in a medical storeroom.

A chief hospitalman dashed into the burning room and extinguished the blaze to prevent serious damage to the supplies.

A second round struck a combined living and storage area. The living quarters were shambles but cabinets, built by the Seabees only a week earlier, prevented serious loss to the medical supplies.

Ed note: Brother Topmiller is a member of our organization. Care to add anything Bob?

SPRINGTIME "68"

Mines and booby-traps
Booby-traps and mines
Watch your step
And step lightly,
Remember
You care
But Dexter slipped,
Blown
High and wide
among the trees
and elephant grass.
Hopes and Dreams
absorbed
in sucking red mud
Medevac!
Medevac!
coming over the hill
With it the rain
and
I thought April Showers
Brought
only
Mother Lovin' Flowers

Bob Harrison
A. 1/26

Below is a flight schedule saved by Larry Jividen

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 364

Marine Aircraft Group 36

1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMFPac

FPO San Francisco, California 96602

Flight Schedule for Tuesday 9 April 1968

Operations Duty Officer: CAPT. E.R. Moore Sunrise: 0640

Squadron Duty Officer: 2nd/Lt. BYRNES Sunset: 1903

EVENT	BRIEF	T/O/LAND	PILOT	CO-PILOT	MISSION	REMARKS
10-1	0615	0700/WC	LTCOL GULLING	RUDOLPH	76/79/84	KHE-SANH
10-2	"	" "	WIEGAND	DAVIS	"	"
10-3	"	" "	MAJ REIMAN	SPOHN	"	"
10-4	"	" "	SARLES	KUHN	"	"
10-5	"	" "	MAJ WARNER	PHILLIPS	"	"
10-6	"	" "	BIRT	GARD	"	"
10-7	"	" "	MOORE, R.C.	JIVIDEN	"	"
10-8	"	" "	BLAND	KECKLER	"	"
11-1	1700	1800/0700	ADAMS	GALE	61	BALDEAGLE
11-2	"	" "	MON	DeMARIA	"	SECTION 1

TEST——CHANCEY/TUCKER
TRACK—-SCHIBER
NOTE #1 AOM AT 2000

S.R. GALE
CAPT. USMC
FLIGHT OFFICER

Ed. note: Of the twenty-six Marines listed on this roster, eight are members of our organization. Any of you guys have any memories that this list stirs-up that you'd like to share?

THE COLD WAR IS OVER

Brother Dennis Thayer (A Co. 1/26) is the chief executive officer of an outfit called Global American Medical Relief Services Inc. This non-profit corporation ships medical supplies to Russia. Its purpose is to help support the Russian people develop their health care system. "The work has been incredibly healing for both me and the Russians," according to Dennis. "The friendships and bonding that are taking place are replacing the anger and pain that we have had locked in us for so many years."

We're hoping Dennis' outfit will be able to set up a similar program for the Bru. If any brothers out there are interested and looking for an opportunity to help your fellow man and to heal thy self in the process, contact Dennis Thayer at: Global American Medical Relief Services Inc. 708 Kettner Blvd., San Diego, CA 92101, ph. (619) 5833401, FAX (619) 2325678

PROGRAM IN SOCIAL ECOLOGY

Dear Khe Sanh Veteran:

We would like to inform you of a study of Vietnam Veterans being conducted by researchers from the School of Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine and the University of Massachusetts, over the next few months.

The research study consists of an anonymous questionnaire about your experiences, both at war and since your return. The goals of the study are to gain insight into the ways that people cope with the traumatic experience of war, and to obtain a better understanding of Vietnam Veterans.

War is a major event, experienced by people in this country and others and although some research has been conducted about its impact on military personnel, very little of that work has been done except in hospital settings. This study is not, repeat not, affiliated with the Veterans Administration or with any other governmental agency.

With the cooperation of the *Khe Sanh Vet Newsletter*, we are inviting all members of your organization to participate in this study. Participation would involve completing a questionnaire that we will mail, upon your request, and returning it anonymously, in a pre-addressed stamped envelope that we will provid. Your name and address will not be requested on the questionnaire, and any information you give us will be reported in a statistical fashion which will not identify participants.

Although you have no obligation to participate in this study, we believe you will find the experience interesting and worthwhile, and your help will be of great value to us. We will mail you a survey if you call us at 714/725-2192 and leave your name and mailing address on our voice mail system. Sorry, no collect calls. The telephone company informs us that a one minute call, to leave a message, will cost you less than $1.00, between the hours of 5:00pm and 8:00am. You may also write us: Attn. Roxane Silver, Ph.D., University of California, Irvine, School of Social Ecology, Irvine, CA 92717

Sincerely,
Roxane Cohen Silver, Ph.D., Associate Professor
Jeffrey K. Olsen
Kathleen M. Oliver
Alan W. Forsley

NOT JUST THE PLANTS GOT IT

If you did a tour in I Corps, you were exposed to Agent Orange. They were spraying it north of us at Khe Sanh and inside Laos. Winds blew. That herbicide drifted with the winds. We drank the water it polluted. The Agent Orange Assistance Program gave me no trouble, about whether I was exposed or not, once they saw my DD 214 and the unit I was with.

If you are currently 100% disabled either by the VA, or Social Security, you'll get full funding from the Agent Orange Fund (amount varies). Depending on what happens in the politcal arena, more of us might be granted benefits in the future. It is your right, you paid your dues. File an Agent Orange claim even if they turn you down. When and if our government assumes responsibility for using that herbicide—that they knew was toxic and yet exposed us anyway, and when they agree to assume responsibilty for poisoning us—you'll be on file. The way the system works, guys, if you don't file, they'll never offer to voluntarily help you. When and if the rules change, there will be an avalanche of claims. So don't sit around waiting for a ruling. You've been doused, brother. Stand-up and be counted.

The following is reprinted from the Dec. 91 Free Fire Wire:

> If you want to know if you were exposed to Agent Orange, and/or how to get covered by the Agent Orange Class Assistance Program, here are some steps you can take:
>
> 1. Request a Herbicide Exposure Match by writing to: U.S. Army and Joint Services, Environmental Support Group, Ft. Belvoir, VA

22060-5387. Furnish the ESG with your name and address for mailing, branch of service, service number, military unit in Vietnam (division, regiment, battalion, company, platoon) and list all firebases or commands you were assigned to and the dates you were there. I suggest in addition to firebases, you list provinces, towns, and hills, if known. The more accurate this is, the better.

The herbicide match is done from the "herbs" and "Ranch Hand" tapes. It costs nothing but a letter and a stamp. It is not part of the Agent Orange Program, but is only for your information to be used in conjunction with the following suggestion. (It may also come in handy down the line if the government "loses" the tapes)

2. Request a VA Physical Examination. While it is often called an "Agent Orange physical", it cannot reveal whether you were exposed or not in Nam. However, it may uncover previously undiagnosed medical problems. If you have medical problems, you may be eligible for partial disability payments through th VA. At this time, the only things officially recognized as linked to Agent Orange for which you can receive disability benefits are non-Hodgkins Lymphoma and soft-tissue Sarcoma (both are forms of cancer) and the skin disease, Chloracne. (Soon to be added! Peripheral Neuropathy, a nervous condition that causes numbness and tingling)

3. The Agent Orange Veteran Payment Program is for total disability or death. The Agent Orange Veteran Payment Program will operate until December 31, 1994. In order to be eligible for compensation at any time during the life of the Payment Program, an applicant must meet a number of eligibility criteria. The applicant must complete the various application forms and submit documentation to demonstrate that the applicant meets each requirement.

Service: The veteran must have served in the United States Armed Forces in or near Vietnam at any time during the period from January 1, 1961 through December 31, 1971.

Disability or Death: The veteran must be disabled from or have died from a non-traumatic, non-accidental and non-self-inflicted cause. The death or disability must have occurred before the veteran's 60th birthday. (Long-term total disability as defined in the Social Security Act)

Exposure: The veteran must have been exposed to Agent Orange while serving in or near Vietnam. Exposure to Agent Orange will be determined by an exposure test that compares the veteran's locations and time of service in Vietnam with computerzied records of spraying missions.

To request forms for the Agent Orange Veteran Payment Program, call 1-800-225-4712 or write. Agent Orange Veteran Payment Program, P.O.Box 110, Hartford, CT 06104

4. The Agent Orange Class Assistance Program makes grants to support programs and organizations which address the needs and concerns expressed by Vietnam veterans and their families. A grant of $134,943 was given in April of this year to Florida State University to be used for developmental and diagnostic assessments for children of Vietnam veterans, marriage, spouse and family counseling. The emphasis of the program is specifically directed at the needs of Vietnam veterans' children with disabilities. The telephone number for this program is 904/644-1588. Ask for information and help with the AOCAP program.

and the beat goes on...

From the San Francisco Examiner, Aug. 24, 1992:

SON OF AGENT ORANGE?

Add a new group of veterans—Persian Gulf soldiers—to the thousands of other U.S. vets suffering from health problems that developed after wartime exposure to toxic chemicals and hazardous conditions. Bronchial ailments, skin rashes, night sweats, hair loss, chronic fatigue and bleeding gums are some of the complaints gulf vets are bringing to doctors' attention. Many vets believe their exposure to Kuwait's oil fires—there were over 600 of them—may relate to their current troubles. High levels of hydrocarbons found in a Navy veteran's blood support this possibility.

Some Army specialists say it's probably stress. Sound familiar? That's the same diagnosis specialists initially used to explain the the health problems of our "atomic soldiers"—many of whom developed cancer and leukemia following exposure to radiation during the U.S. occupation of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, where, the United States dropped atomic bombs during World War 11. That's the same diagnosis specialists initially used to explain the chloracne many Vietnam vet-

continued on page 30

continued from page 29

erans developed after exposure to the defoliant Agent Orange, used in the Vietnam war. It took deaths and lawsuits before a bill was passed to give disability benefits to vets suffering from Agent Orange-related illnesses.

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," said the philosopher George Santayana. Luckily, there are signs the government has learned some lessons from the Agent Orange nightmare. Recently, the Veterans Affairs Department asked Congress to create a Persian Gulf Registry to track health complaints of gulf war veterans, give them complete physicals and provide follow-up. The registry is voluntary, but the VA expects around 55,000 gulf war vets (10 percent of all troups) to register. The Pentagon has also created a research group to look into the health effects of Kuwait's petroleum fires and make safety recommendations for future soldiers.

When will we learn? War doesn't end when the last body bag is emptied, or when the last smart bomb is put in storage. For too many veterans, the return home is just the begining of a new set of problems, both physiological and psychological.

Ed note. The government is great at buying studies, isn't it? Too bad they lack the ability to comprehend, or the resolve to act on, their findings.

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS SYNDROME

by Anthony (Doc) Edell, MA

PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) is the mind's way of reacting to a stressor. Because of the wide-spread publicity about many Vietnam veteran's experiences, it is commonly thought of as only being a reaction to being in "Nam." However, victims of violent crime, natrual disasters, and abused children suffer from it. It is defined in the American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder's, Edition 111-R, as: "The development of symptoms following a psychologically distressing event outside the range of normal human experience. It is usually experienced with intense fear, terror and helplessness."

Each of us, in my opinion, will have some symptoms or reactions from the stimuli of having been in a violent environment for an extended period of time. For example, a veteran with mild PTSD, might react in a startled fashion when a car backfires, thus triggering a flashback to Khe Sanh, or his other combat experiences. Another veteran, might have a depressive episode, abusing alcohol (or other drugs), have extreme rage and react with a violent episode. Because we are each, distinct individuals, we react individually, based on our perception of the war, how well equipped we were to coping at the time, and how we adjusted after our return home. We may suffer sleep disturbance. We often deny that we were affected because our society did not encourage feelings in men. Some of us have cut off our ability to feel because it is too painful. Others have been able to talk out their experiences with our brothers, and experience some relief and healing.

Still, some of us have physical challenges that we must face on a daily basis from the war. Agent Orange has also affected many of us. Many are still fighting a war against the VA, or one at home, with their families. One of the first steps to "getting over" PTSD is just acknowledging that it exists. It is a part of us. It is NORMAL for those of us who faced the continual trauma of watching those around us die, being helpless, and out-of-control of our situation. We were proud soldiers, who were told to be brave, to face what was ahead of us, and we did. Then, we needed to hide our fears and anxiety and just try to do our best, and we did. It is not our fault that this thing (PTSD) happened to us. A victim of a crime usually faces that situation only once. We were immersed, for months or multiple tours, in the trauma of war.

What can you do about it? Seek a support group, a therapist, another veteran who understands, or someone who will listen and talk with you about your feelings. We were told when we got home, "Just forget about it." Wrong! It does not subside or go away by trying to forget it. There is "pay-back" due. We need to talk about it in order to heal those debilitating wounds which diminish and threaten our lives. PTSD kills, if left untreated.

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KHE SANH

by Ray Stubbe

Like the American Civil War, the Vietnam War is likely to affect our national life and be the subject of attempts to explain and understand just what happened and why for centuries. For this reason, it is very important to record the real stories, experiences, and persons before they are lost.

In a war such as Vietnam, it was the individual person who mattered, more so than battlefield tactics or overall strategy. Like a tapestry woven of many strands, the overall picture that emerges requires the contributions of countless individuals.

This was certainly the case at Khe Sanh in early 1968. Despite daily shelling, mainly by the heavy stuff—122mm rockets and 130mm and 152mm field artillery, delivering accurate fire of up to 1200 rounds on a base only half a mile wide and one and a half miles long—out of the thousands there, only a handful "cracked-up." During the incoming, artillerymen still manned their guns to fire counter-fire, the wounded were carried to the medical centers or to safety during the attacks. Within seconds after a barrage, senior NCOs were out to see to the welfare of their men—one, the Sergeant-Major of battalion 1/26 who had been a prisoner of war in the Philippines (Bataan) during WWII, and who had volunteered to come to Khe Sanh for his final tour in the Marine Corps before retiring, was killed while visiting his men and seeing to their welfare. Uncommon valor was indeed a common virtue at Khe Sanh.

One saw Shore-Party men moving pallets of ammunition with their forklifts, engineers building sturdier bunkers. One saw corpsmen rushing litter patients to waiting helicopters—all the while mortar and rockets exploded everywhere. One Marine, who had made application to be a Conscientious Objector just prior to the Siege, remained with exposed litter patients, covering their bodies with his own during the attacks until he himself was killed—and posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his bravery.

One chopper pilot arrived around midnight, with little light to guide him, low on fuel, and delivered urgently needed whole blood. Chopper pilots braved almost certain death to remove medevacs from the outlying hill outposts.

On a more humorous side, one corpsman ran to a trench during incoming, breathing heavily, he exclaimed: "My patient outran me to the chopper, I wasn't able to attach his medevac tag on him!" And there was the scout dog who ran into a chopper, cowered between the pilots, and refused to deplane despite coaxing from his handler; he just wasn't going to spend another moment at Khe Sanh.

In those days, we were frequently out of water or chow for days at a time, and when we did have chow, it was usually only two C-rations per man, per day, if that. Yet, it was not uncommon for men to share their last drops of water or bits of chow with someone who had none.

These are the men who didn't collapse under the unrelenting pressure of enemy shelling or the knowledge of being surrounded by thousands of enemy troops who could at any time, mount human-wave assaults against our lines. For the first time in the war, the use of tanks by the enemy was not just a possibility, it had become a reality. The well-respected historian Arnold Toynbee concluded that civilizations do not fall on account of external forces; they first crumble from within and then an external force conquers them. This did not happen at Khe Sanh. It was the men, mostly 19-year-olds, who are the real story of Khe Sanh.

Oh yes, there was massive air support, both tactical and resupply. And yes, there was excellent intelligence due to electronic sensors (first used in a major battle at Khe Sanh), photo, signal intercepts and pattern analysis of enemy radio transmissions, and so on. And yes, there were more bombs (total tons) dropped at Khe Sanh than in the entire Pacific theater of operations in WW11 in 1943 and 1944. And yes, there was massive air resupply. And yes, even President Johnson had his eyes focused on Khe Sanh and the JCS made a statement that it would be held. But, in the final analysis, it was the young men who held Khe Sanh while maintaining their dignity and sense of humor throughout. Napoleon once observed, "In war it is not men, but the man who counts."

Now, almost 25 years latter, we have an organization of Khe Sanh veterans—anyone who served there (1961-71) from all branches of our Armed Forces. I have written a book on Khe Sanh (with co-author John Prados, published by Houghton-Mifflin in December, 1991 called *VALLEY OF DECISION*) which, although it tends to emphasize strategy and the rational aspects of war rather than the individual stories which I would have preferred, it is, I feel, the definitive account of Khe Sanh at this point. We have wonderful, healing reunions. We have our very own newsletter. Hopefully, our stories—which together make "the" story of Khe Sanh—will be preserved. We now have the means to support each other by communicating with those who we know, "know" our experiences. Together, we can fill-in-the-blanks of that experience we shared, called Khe Sanh. We can learn the missing details of what happened to our friends.

THE DEAD AND THE MISSING

My friend was still up there when
the B-52's, Phantoms, Crusaders
knocked the top off Hill 861,
spread it around like a bulldozer.

We celebrated his new son the night
before we left the states;
not three days later he wandered up
that numbered hill on a patrol
stumbled into their positions
from the rear, not knowing until
he was in their center.
Seven out of thirty got back.
They sent out a Company to take the Hill
and found a North Vietnamese Army Division,
poised for attack. More losses.
They pulled back and pounded the piss out of that Hill
for three days, blew 23 feet off the crest,
then sent us in to find the missing,
and the dead who had been sent to find them.

They flew us in to mop up:
to clear bunkers,
blow dead bombs,
stuff dead NVA back into their foxholes
and blow the walls in on them.
Searching out the Laotian border,
fanned out over high hills,
wading in pools in the bottoms of bomb craters,
down in the gullies and creekbeds
the smell of death hung in the air
no stomach for food,
finding rusty M-16's in impossible places
ten days over
and over the insistent
almost a wisper-on the radio:
"Find us the bodies of the missing;
tell us the names of the dead."
At night the outposts
saw the leaves of bananna palms moving,
broad and as long as a man.
I wondered about by friend.

Thunderstorms in the summer monsoon washed
away the bomb-strewn soil
as we set up our patroling base,
digging in, digging a trench line,
digging down through the loose dirt,
down to the jungle floor
that oozes gray in places
when it rains
late at night, deep into the midwatch,
the next day's patrol planned, the night
fires called in, the radio watches set,
digging my own hole, wondering
with each shovelfull if I would
turn over his dogtags,
would find my friend.

Jim Epps
C 1/26

THE REUNION

What is it that binds combat veterans together? It isn't friendship. We all have friends. You can go to a company picnic or a convention, yet you will NOT feel the same emotion, in the air, as when you attend a veterans' reunion.

It is something beyond regular friendship. It is the knowledge that "YOU AND THEY HAVE BEEN TO HELL AND BACK." It is the deep-rooted emotion that brings you together. It is the knowledge that when things were tough, you and your buddies stuck it out and lived through it all.

You can attend high school reunions, and college reunions, company conventions, and the whole civilian works, but there isn't the BAND OF BROTHERS feeling that is felt when combat buddies get together.

You and your buddies may have less hair on top and a lot more inches around the belt line, but deep within all of you is the same comradeship that you had during those horrible days of war. When combat buddies meet, whether it is after ten or even forty years, it seems like, yesterday. The memories assemble in your mind, memories that you thought had been pushed back into the recesses of your memory bank. "WHATEVER HAPPENED TO..." and "REMEMBER WHEN..." You try not to let on that these old veterans mean a lot to you, but by the time the flag is furled, the bills paid, and the car packed, there is a lump in your throat, a tear in your eye, as you part company with the men who once lived and fought beside you.

You tell your wife: "DAMN, IT WAS GOOD TO SEE

THEM AGAIN." And it was! Yes, memories flood your mind as you head for home. No one knows the feelings, except those of us who were there. You wonder if you will see any of them again. Combat was hell, and you may have many terrible memories of death and destruction, but the memory of total camaraderie, with men who shared that hell, will forever be embedded in your heart. There is no friendship like that of combat buddies. It is something that lasts forever.

Ed note: The following piece was written several years ago, when some of us were asked to participate in a TV special to be filmed at Khe Sanh. That deal fell through, but we haven't given up on the idea. Watch for further developments. We'll do one ourselves. It takes money, and it takes connections. We're working on both of those critical components, right now.

THE LEAD IN HIS PACK

by John M. Kaheny
A 1/26

Marines and soldiers who serve in the infantry are nicknamed "grunts." The moniker is derived from the guttural sounds they make while carrying heavy packs, weapons and equipment over unbroken, uneven ground. Grunts who serve in wartime carry two packs. One is on the back and is filled, very carefully, with just enough to survive. The other pack is carried in the heart, and is filled by fate with memories of those who shared the grunt's burden and paid the grunt's price.

Excess weight in either pack is called "lead." Novice grunts soon find out that lead weighs you down and grinds your pack-straps into your shoulders; it makes your skin sweat in the cold and your brain bake in the sun. Some grunts have heavier packs than others. These are the grunts that, on Memorial Day, cannot rid themselves of images of comrades left in uncovered graves upon the field of battle, denied an honorable rest.

And so it was for the surviving men of Bravo Company after Jacques' fatal wrong turn in the foggy dew. It claimed twenty-two of Bravo's best that twenty-sixth day of the siege. The White House ordered no retrieval, at least, not until the more important battle of New Hampshire was over. "No more bad news from Walter Cronkite was needed!", they said. Restrained by orders from on high, Ken Pipes, the stoic but sensitive commanding officer, and his stunned Marines, could only gaze across their parapets, eight hundred yards—out to where their fallen comrades lay. The living stood watch—and waited. Their lead got heavier with each passing day.

For over a month, they thought of their shame and of the honor of their fallen; while finely honing their bayonets and charting the course for their return. Soon, both the impenetrable fog and the infamous orders were lifted. At long last. Forward observer, Hank Norman opened the door for the corpsmen's mission of mercy and the Marines' mission of vengeance. Rolling barrages of sparkling steel cascaded from above. It was the 30th day of March, the second to the last day of the siege, the 33rd day of Bravo's novena. The score was settled fourfold on that closest, most personal of all levels, but Hank and eight more fell into Ken's pack, joining Jacques and his twenty-one.

Years later, a miracle walked off a plane from Hanoi and out of Ken's Pack. Brother Ridgeway—listed as a KIA and supposedly buried in a comman grave back in the world, with six other unidentifiable brothers from Don's patrol—was alive! Rejoice! But, divine intercession is rare, and Ken continues to carry the rest.

It was just a few days past twenty years from that day of righteous revenge when Ken called to say that Walter's old network, CBS, now wanted Ken to go back to the rejuvenated green hill of the valley. "What do you you think?", he asked.

I said: "Go back, Ken. And guard the truth against those who profit from our sorrow." I also prayed, that his trip back will heal his soul, and allow him to leave his lead on that sacred field from whence it came.

Bio. Brother John Kaheny did an extended tour with 1/26 in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968, and a tour in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm. He is a Reserve Marine colonel and a Deputy City Attorney for the city of San Diego.

Brother ("Bubba") Pipes, is a retired Lt.Col. USMC, works for California Edison at the San Onofre, nuclear power plant, just outside the Marine base at Camp Pendleton. He is also a volunteer deputy sheriff.

Brother Bob Ridgeway, lives in Texas, and works for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

REMEMBERING

SOME CALL IT FLASHBACKS, I SAY IT'S MEMORIES OF 68
I'M AT AN AIRPORT WITH SEA BAG, GOING THROUGH THE GATE
WEATHER IS BALMY, NIGHT IS CALM
MIND RACING THOUGHTS OF THIS PLACE, CALLED NAM.

TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-FOUR WALKING IN LINE
THIRTEEN MONTHS TO GO, OF "PULLING OUR TIME"
THE LONG PLANE RIDE NOW SEEMS SHORT
IN THE NAM PLAYING BALL IN THEIR COURT.

SOON WE SEPARATE, SENT ON OUR WAYS
IT WAS THEN I BEGAN, COUNTING THE DAYS
OLD TIMERS GREET US, SHAKE THEIR HEADS
FACES WONDERING, HOW MANY, SOON WILL BE DEAD.

CHECKED INTO OUR UNIT SENT RIGHT TO THE BUSH
I GET KHE SANH AS TET MAKES ITS BIG PUSH
THE REALITY OF WAR, FRIENDS BEGIN TO DIE
HEAVY PRAYING, PLEADING HELP FROM THE SKY

HILLS, STREAMS, EVERY DAY A DIFFENERNT PLACE
I'VE BECOME AN OLD MAN WITH FRAIL BODY, GAUNT FACE
NOT MANY OF US LEFT, WE BOYS TURNED TO MEN
SO MANY LOST BROTHERS WITH NEXT OF KIN

WOUNDED TWICE YET THINKING, HOW LUCKY CAN I BE
WILL LADY LUCK GIVE ME A JODY AND RUN OUT ON ME
WE HAD A SAYING, YOU HAVEN'T LIVED TIL YOU'VE ALMOST DIED
HOW TRUE THIS IS, HOW WE SUFFERED AND CRIED.

YEARS HAVE PASSED, NOW WE HAVE NO SHAME
NO USE IN BITCHING ASKING WHO'S TO BLAME
WE SIGNED OUR NAMES, TOOK IT IN STRIDE
NOT LIKE THOSE CANADA BOYS WHO TRIED TO HIDE.

MEETING AGAIN, HUGS, KISSES, SHAKING HANDS
REKINDLING BONDS MADE IN FAR-AWAY-LANDS
BROTHERS, SISTERS, WE PRAY THIS WILL LAST
A BRIGHT FUTURE, NEVER FORGETING OUR PAST.

HEADS HELD HIGH, MAKING TOASTS
TO OUR FRIENDS, FROM COAST TO COAST
PLANS FOR OUR NEXT ONE, WHERE WILL IT BE
WITH OUR BROTHERS ON THE WALL, 93, IN D.C.

Dave Brombaugh
H 2/3

REFLECTIONS: CONTACT!

by Talis Kaminski
CAC O

Why did we come to this battlefield? What purpose will this patrol of nine men serve? Overhead, the blue sky quietly escorts the floating clouds while here below, men wait to inflict darkness once more on the world. Somehow, it seems that even animals sense the events that are so soon to transpire. Everything is still. An eerie placidity feeds the fear growing within each participant. For some, the waiting is the worst part; for others, it is a dessert for the feast to come. Mental preparations. Rehearsing. Over and over, the mind plays tapes of possible alternatives of what will be. Yet, how often does anything transpire as planned or hoped for? Where battle and war is concerned, the answers to pleadings and prayers is so miniscule, they cannot be measured. The tension increases. The mind pleads for mental release. Strangers we have never met before are held responsible for what is about to occur. We have come here to kill and are ourselves so afraid of being killed. We need someone to blame for our predicament. It is far, far easier to blame an unkown foe than our so-called leaders. They lead us from afar, as though they are too precious to be involved in the carnage. This role is left to us, the expendables, with young bodies, and minds easily swayed to causes neither understood nor honestly explained. Once on the field of battle, they know we will revert to the most ancient of all reasons to kill. "Better you than me." At that point, it will no longer matter why we are here, or what we are doing here. It will only matter, that in order for us to live, the other guy must die. A very simple equation, a battlefield lesson in math, if you will. Soon it will occur. The strange premonition that so often warns the mind is here. No escaping what is about to happen. Resignation replaces desperation and hope. The patrol is turning into emotionless participants. The time of the blood has come. There is no more room to feel. Blazing weapons spew out their power! Speeding missiles cross the distance without warning to wreak havoc on bodies and earth. Screams! Cries ring out but only betray the location of their origin. The peculiar sounds of bullets on flesh punctuate why we are here. It is over. On the ground lay five dead bodies that only seconds before were living, human beings. Now, they are nothing. The instant of death

has removed the definition of life from them. They are not human; they are not life; they are now only statistics, and memories; a bit of history that we have taken part in. A bit of history that will only mean something for the nine of us. And, a memory for someone who will never know what really happened to their loved one.

ONE PILOT'S PERSPECTIVE OF KHE SANH

by C.G. "Jug" Gerard

The *Khe Sanh Vet Newsletter* has done a commendable job of keeping those who participated in Khe Sanh conscious of some of the major events of the Vietnam war. The ground units unquestionably were the major players, as the newsletter interest shows, but the air units also made a big contribution. Our membership carries the names of many Marine pilots, crewmen, and support personnel who I knew and worked with. I would like to provide a few personal observations on the aviation participation during the siege of Khe Sanh as I knew it, and can, after twenty-four years, still recall with some degree of accuracy. I also invite other aviators to tell their stories.

The helicopter squadrons at Quang Tri were the advance units of MAG-36, headquartered at Phu Bai. They provided support for the 26th Marines at Khe Sanh from about January 1, 1968 onward. Prior to that, the Khe Sanh direct helicopter support came from Phu Bai. The Quang Tri squadrons later became Provisional MAG-39. Other aviation support included elements from MATCU-62, the crash crew, and the aviation fuel farm.

Although I had previously flown in-and-out of Khe Sanh, I first joined the Khe Sanh defenders on the last day of 1967. On that day, VMO-6 took over from VMO-3, the UH-1E detachment supporting the 26th Marines. I took the first VMO-6 detachment of two UH-1Es to Khe Sanh on December 31, and relieved VMO-3, headed by Major Joe Sales. The transfer consisted of one, fourty-five minute area checkout flight, and an introduction to Colonel Lownds. We took over a hootch, down the hill from the command bunker *(Ed. note: You can tell it's an aviator talking, "hills"? on the combat base?)* and across the street from the post office. The next morning, support flights began. We got our flight requirements from the S-2 (Major Jerry Hudson), through the regimental air officer, a 1st Lt. We received augmentation support from Quang Tri, on request, to meet any additional requirements the ground units needed. We flew gunship support for the transport helicopters resupplying the hills, 881 South, 861, 558 and 950; reconnaissnce missions, control of artillery, and aerial support for the engineers on Highway 9, based at Camp Carroll.

Three notable events occurred during those flights:

1) In support of the unit at Lang Vei, we surveyed the face of Co Rock mountain, just inside Laos. We were not allowed to cross the river into Laos but unquestionably, we could identify artillery positions that had been tunneled into the face of Co Rock.

2) On another, late afternoon flight southwest of Khe Sanh village, we spotted three elephants out to pasture. A request to destroy these pack animals was denied by the HQ.

3) Two days of "sniffer" flights, conducted by our CO, Lieutenant Colonel Bill White, "painted" a pattern of human enclaves all throughout the areas north, west, and south of Khe Sanh. The sniffer was a probe extended under the helicopter, which during low level flights, chemically detected concentrations of human urine. Supposedly, monkey urine *(Ed. note: might have been Delta Company guys out pissing-around, looking for something to steal.)* also would set off the sniffer sensor but from our previous use, we knew the sniffer was reasonably accurate at its intended design, in detecting people. The siege which followed within a couple of weeks, certainly confirms our sniffer finding that there was, in fact, a lot of humans around Khe Sanh.

continued on page 36

The money was short; the presents few.
I was depressed last Christmas, but changed my view
remembering the Nam, so many years ago.
We had so little then, as we all know.
No presents, just mud, pouring rain,
and those damn C-Rats that made us insane.
Lonely as hell without family near,
the death and dying, the constant fear.
Over and over it ran through our minds:
"Will I live to see my family just one more time?"
Look around, thank God, we've made it home.
We have our families, we're not alone.
Financially, like me, you may not have a lot;
have a Merry Christmas, be thankful, for what you've got.

Loyde P. Arender
K 3/26

continued from page 35

The weather during the first two weeks of 1968 was generally good, and no support flight was postponed or canceled. There were no fixed wing support flights conducted, and no hostile fire was directed at any of our daily flights throughout the Khe Sanh tactical operating area (TOA). After two weeks, we were relieved by Major Dave Workman's UH-1E detachment. My next trip to Khe Sanh was vastly different. Conditions had radically changed.



Flying Crane

After the initial attack by the NVA during the night of January 20, larger and larger numbers of the Marine aviation assets were dedicated to support missions for Khe Sanh. The UH-1Es principal mission became tactical air control airborne (TACA) direction for the fixed wing attacks on NVA positions and escorting the resupply and medevacs of the hills and the combat base.

On the afternoon of the twenty-first, I returned with a two aircraft flight to provide TACA support. We parked on the hardstand near the fuel farm, since the revetments north of the runway were filled. While the crewmen serviced the aircraft, the four pilots headed for the command bunker to get the S-2 briefing. While running down the road to the command bunker, an incoming artillery round hit about 40 feet away, and knocked us all down with its concussion. No injuries to us. We continued on, in a daze, and regrouped at the bunker. We got a hurried briefing and got back into the air as soon as we could. You grunts can have the ground! The rest of the afternoon was spent directing fixed wing aircraft onto targets around the TOA. I remember running several fixed wing strikes on enemy troops in the open around the Special Forces camp at Long Vei. For me, that afternoon was typical of what everyone at Khe Sanh must have been experincing. Fear! Though still shaken from that artillery round, I tried to make every air strike count, and get the battle under control. My copilot that day, was only on his second or third flight in Vietnam. I know he must have been wondering what he had gotten himself into. Twelve more months... of this?

I did a lot more nights at Khe Sanh, over the next few months. We moved into the basement of the leveled Air Force bunker, where the rats joined us at night. The positive side of those nights came from the comforting sound of the arc light drops. When called out on a mission, we were never sure if the UH-1Es would still be intact, or if the fog would allow us to get off the ground. Several times, we had to find our way in very thick fog, by going from one familiar land mark to another. We moved in a hover-like, croutched fashion (the aviator version of the Khe Sanh shuffle) until we reached our aircraft.

Eventually, the loss of helicopters on the ground due to artillery, mortar and rockets, in spite of the revetments, precluded leaving the helos overnight at Khe Sanh. Flights were then provided "on call" from Quang Tri.

I was at Khe Sanh the night of February 7 when tanks were used against Lang Vei. It was noon before the fog lifted enough for us to lift off and do a visual reconnaissance. Three immobile tanks were evident; one, just inside Laos, another, east, near the river, and the third, inside the wire of Lang Vei just west of a bunker. Contact with the Lang Vei force and the HQ confirmed that the survivors intended to stay, and a reinforcement was being sent *(Ed. note: this is a very, very, contentious point, among the higher-ups, and big-time, mucky-mucks)*. My flight was relieved by Captain Ed Kufeldt, who came in with the troop-carrying helicopters. After the troop insert, Ed's flight got caught in a helo trap over an area half way back to Khe Sanh village. An American voice called for an emergency evacuation. There was no corroborating evidence of the emergency, but the voice was convincing—help was needed. Ed elected to approach the LZ to confirm the need for help. On the final approach, his helo was hit by ground fire. The copilot, First Lieutenant George Rosental, was wounded in the arm and leg. Ed barely managed, to get the UH-1E back to Khe Sanh, before fuel starvation from holes in the fuel tank caused him to crash.

Soon, resupply of the hills became too big of a problem. The established practice had been to provide a pair of CH-46s for Khe Sanh support. These crews would conduct repeated flights to the hills from the Khe Sanh combat base until resupply was complete or daylight ran out. But, enemy mortar shelling on each arrival of the helos made this practice increasingly difficult. Adding to the problem, was the difficulty in having to prepare the resupply loads on the airstrip during constant incoming that was aimed at the helos. Lieutenant Colonel White, along with the H-46

COs at Quang Tri, developed a new approach to the resupply problem and came up with the "Supergaggle". It was launched with 1st MAW concurrence, on-or-about Febuary 24. The lifts were prepared at Quang Tri. Upwards of twenty CH-46s would make the resupply, in one simultaneous super-lift. After launch, they flew at high altitude past the Khe Sanh combat base to the hills; then, went in daisy-chain fashion, one-after-another. They would saturate the LZ with enough supplies to last several days. This tactic eliminated the vulnerable target presented when a lone helo or pair of helos made repeated lifts.

Supergaggle flights were escorted by several flights of UH-1E gunships and A-4s. Using his knowledge of the area, Major Bob Neff of VMO-6 did the initial coordination with the fixed wing, while flying in the back seat of a TA-4. An added benefit derived from this approach of resupply was that on many days, the fog and clouds would preclude flying into or out of the combat base, but the hills would be above the clouds. "Supergaggle" worked well. Support improved, and losses to aircraft dropped off.

During a flight back from Khe Sanh to Quang Tri, I came closer to being wiped out in one, quick swipe than during any of my other close calls in Vietnam. It happened after a full day of support work. We were just comfortably, cruising home at 5000 feet and 500 feet above a solid layer of cloud cover. The sun was setting behind us. It was a beautiful, placid setting, at the end of a hectic day. Then, BOOM! A Marine, VMCJ RF-4, punches right-up in front of us, through the clouds, going straight up! It is less than 100 feet in front of us. They never see us. They pass so close, I can see both crewmen looking away from us. I can see the detail, the green and orange pattern on the back and tops of their hard-hats; every word on the side of their aircraft, as well as the after-burner cones from the tail pipes. Almost immediately, we pass through the turbulance from the jet, which pitches, and rolls us, out-of-control. I fight to regain control of my aircraft, and in just seconds, all is quiet, and calm again. No one is hurt. Our helicopter is unscathed, but my flight suit sustains major damage in certain areas. If we were a split-second earlier, we would have been knocked out of the sky.

I always marveled at the 175mm fire missions that I controlled. They were located at the Rock Pile. When a round was "on the way", we would wait, maybe a minute and fifty seconds, then, watch it impact. It was like fire control, in slow motion.

Another time, I led an Army H-54 Flying Crane to Khe Sanh on two successive flights—one, to deliver a back hoe, and the other to deliver a fire truck. The Army Warrant Officer, flying the Flying Crane, seemed shakey. He radioed me and said, "Marine, you let them fire ONE round at me, and I swear, I'll drop this thing." Like, I had some special, personal relationship, with Mr. Charles? Fortunately, we got him in-and-out without incident. That backhoe dug trenches around the perimeter, and the fire truck was used repeatedly, over the next couple of months, at the airstrip.

I was also at Quang Tri the night units of the 26th Marines were relieved, and airlifted out. Some of the Marines were coming out wounded by rocket fire. After all those months of incoming, Marines were still getting hit, right up until the very end.

Although VMO-6's participation was but one small part of the total Khe Sanh effort, we did lose many UH-1Es, as well as several crewmen. We had a real stake in the outcome, from start to finish. I remember a photo, by the photo journalist, David Duncan. It is a picture of a destroyed VMO-6 UH-1E taken in the Khe Sanh revetments. Painted on the nose is the pained-faced of the cartoon character, Wile E. Coyote, with the words: "WHY ME". How apropos.

Bio. C.G. "Jug" Gerard did his initial tour in Vietnam from August 1967 to August 1968 as a UH-1E pilot with VMO-6, and as the CO of H&HS-39 at Quang Tri Airbase. He came back to Vietnam twice for a total of eighteen months, between 1971 and 1973, as the Air Operations Officer, USS Tripoli (LPH-10), finishing up with the mine sweeping operations of Haiphong Harbor. He retired for the Marine Corps, as a Lieutenant Colonel in October 1981, and has worked since then for Sikorsky Aircraft Company in Connecticut. He is a Quality Assurance Chief for Technical Manual development. Jug says: "For anyone who has not already done so, I highly recommend Chaplain Ray Stubbe's book, VALLEY OF DECISION, *which superbly portrays the detail of personal participation, and actions of the Khe Sanh conflict."*

Ed. note: I concur with Jugs' assesment of Ray's book. I also would like to say—Jug, you did good, my man. Your piece is precisely the type of historical memoir we want to publish. S.L.A. Marshal, shmarshal, yours is the history that really tells it like it really was. War isn't about any big-picture. For us, the warriors who did the fighting, war was individual deeds and actions. Good job, Jug. And—you other aviators out there, do what Jug said. Write us.

I'LL REMEMBER YOU
(song title, by the late, Kui Lee)

by Ken Hillard
M/3/26

It's hard to believe...twenty-four years have gone by since TET-68 at Khe Sanh. I close my eyes, and it seems like yesterday. I imagine it's that way with a lot of you. Some of us try to forget. Some try to remember, and some will never forget. However, there were a lot of good times at Khe Sanh.

REMEMBER, the bull-shit sessions and card games in between rocket and artilley rounds from Co Rock? Or, how about sharing, a gallon can of peaches with buddies, after making a raid on the mess tent? And, how about all that runway matting you guys stole, right off the damn runway, at night, and put on your bunkers? And you guys wonder why the KC-130s didn't want to land? Hell, half the runway was stolen. I'm joking, but you get my drift, don't you? Some of you stole for the hell of it. *(Ed: Stand-up and take a bow, Delta.)*

REMEMBER, that letter from home, that you let your buddy read, because he didn't get one that day? You wanted him to stay in tune with the happenings in the real world. Or, maybe you just wanted to help him keep his sanity because you knew he would do the same for you.

How about that case of the "screaming me-mes" you had? Wasn't that a gas? My backside still hurts when I think about that. And you wonder where they get Kendall motor oil from? I don't know about the rest of you, but I went over weighing 190, and came back 135. Lean, mean, with no ass. It took me twenty-five years to gain the weight back, but my butt is still over there, somewhere. Probably, still in some fox-hole full of water, where it fell off during a rocket attack.

How about those ham and mothers? Made you want to quit eaating all together, didn't it? Onions and hot sauce could cut that crud, if you could find any.

How many of you guys still cut your shirt-tails off, and stain your water? Gets pretty embarassing in a resturant, doesn't it? Hey, don't laugh, my wife thinks I cut my shirt-tails off to check the oil in my pick-up.

Ed. note: Oh, mercy, Kennito! I had trouble typing this. I kept falling out of my chair, laughing. Good stuff.

BRAVO REMEMBERED

by Michael O'Hara
B 1/26

When I arrived at Khe Sanh in November of 1967, the first person I encountered was a young second lietenant by the name of John Dillon. He tried to act stern and play the part. Little did I know then how much he would affect my life. Next, I met Jake, my squad leader, and finally, the man himself, Capt. Ken Pipes. When I left in early April, I was glad to get out—but still, it was hard to leave the people who had so changed my life forever.

I remember the day Jake took a round in his back, that took almost 200 stitches to close, but he refused to be medevaced.

I remember the day a pilot punched-out in front of our lines. We were being shelled hard that day. Lt. Dillon was through the wire and had that pilot back to safety before anyone else ever thought to look up.

I remember the day that Captain Pipes got hit real bad, and lost the whole command group, but he stood his ground, didn't flinch, and calmly called in air and artillery. He just wouldn't quit until all of his men were back safe.

I remembered all these men, all these years, and made a vow, to seek them out someday, and thank them, for being the men they were and are. I have always thanked the good Lord for blessing me with excellent leaders, at a time in history when true leaders were very rare.

Two years ago I found Jake (The Snake, Quiles Jacobs) and that led to me going to San Diego. I would have walked from Indiana, if I had to; just for the opportunity to shake their hands, and personally say, thank you.

However, when that moment arrived, I found these people were even *more* than I had remembered them to be. I suppose that is why they have been in my mind all these years. I have never felt such a warm feeling in all my life as during the reunion. I spent three of the most wonderful days of my entire life, with not only my Bravo brothers who I had come to be with, but with everyone there; all the people that were at Khe Sanh who I didn't even know. I simply cannot find the words to express the depth of my feelings, nor can I begin to describe the incredible, positive energy that filled the air.

Ernie, when I told you how much I was enjoying myself, you cautioned me that I might come down off of the high I was experiencing in a week or two, after I returned home. All you did was make me more resolute and determined not to fall; and when I feel I am beginning to lose a little altitude, I do what I have always done, these past

twenty-four years—I think back to Mar. 30, 1968, and the last time I saw my Skipper, who would not give up, despite his serious wounds, because his men meant so much to him, and I just say to myself, "Michael, it ain't never gonna get that bad that you can't handle it."

What I got out of the San Diego reunion was right before my eyes all these years. SEMPER FIDELIS truly means, ALWAYS FAITHFUL.

OLD CORPS

by Wally Persoma
81's 1/9

I did my two weeks active duty at Camp Pendleton again this past spring. I've become "old fashioned." I wore my uniform when I checked in. I always generate conversation when the new generation of Marines see this 43-year-old S/Sgt. with 10 ribbons. This time, I had an E-7, Gunny, ask about the ribbons on my bottom row. You know the ones, ARVN Cross of Gallantry and the standard Nam package. Talk about feeling old! Here's an E-7 that didn't know or recognize Vietnam ribbons. I asked him how many years he'd been in the Corps. He joined in 1977. He should have known better, but his excuse was, "that's an old war and a lot has happened since then." Needless to say, we had some words. It might be an "old war" to that guy, but a lot of us remember it as though it were yesterday. Our war wasn't some 100-hour ground action, and our enemy was very determined and dedicated. Our enemy did not walk around with their hands up, all the time, looking for someone to surrender to. Our time in the bush wasn't some cake-walk in the sand, especially not that time at Khe Sanh. Hey, but whenever I mention Khe Sanh, the kids take a step back, they might not know ribbons, but they know Khe Sanh.

During my summer tours, I've noticed some definite changes over the years. There are now very few mess halls, most have closed. The Marines eat at McDonalds and Burger Kings which are on base, or from their refrigerators. The few mess halls there are, are run by civilians, no more KP. Living quarters have definitely changed. There's very few of the old "huts". All the old roads are now paved. As I roamed the base at Pendleton, I could not help but reflect back to that time, when all those thousands of Marines passed through the base on their way to Vietnam. Many ended up in units at Khe Sanh. Many never returned home alive. Many came back changed forever. I watch the young Marines of today, their innocence, eagerness, and the comforts they now have that we did not. I hope their their youthfull innocence isn't changed forever, like ours was.

My two weeks this year, was spent at Regimental S-3. They were organizing and preparing for a "war game" out at the "Stumps". For our exercise, we set-up camp, first at Pendelton before going out to Twenty-Nine Palms. The modern tents are quick to set-up but weigh a lot. Not like the tents we used to be able to carry on our backs, out in the bush. They've got computers, big map boards, and all kinds of radios. Man, do they have gear. I couldn't help wondering how long that stuff would last out in the bush. The tents would stand-out, computers would not last in the rain, heat and mud. That stuff would be strewn along the trails, if they had to pack it like we did. I guess Regiments today figure they'll always be stationary or have good transportation. Dream on guys. I tried to imagine us, and whether we'd ever pack that stuff. No way. Times have changed!

POLICING UP

by Ron Taylor
1/11

I want to mention a couple of items that some of the Khe Sanh vets may find interesting. These incidents all happened after the siege, when I was there.

On June 1, 1968 we took a lot of incoming. One Marine was killed and three were wounded at Gun 6 of Tango Battery (155 towed) 1/11. That night, an NVA soldier, fully armed and equipped, walked through the lines on the south-west side. He was not challenged at all. The soldier walked over to Tango Battery, and into one of the living bunkers, and gave himself up to the Marines occupying the bunker. The men were already jumpy that day so you can imagine the shock that gave them. This happened during one of those dark Khe Sanh nights, when you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. I understand someone burned over the lax security.

This next incident might also be a first and only for Khe Sanh. On June 9, an A-4 Skyhawk from VMA 211 made an emergency landing on the Khe Sanh airstrip. I saw it come in. One of my buddies took pictures. The jet ran off the end of the runway and had to be pulled back onto the landing matting. The plane had a full bomb load. After it was fixed, it took off and then proceeded to do low passes and barrel rolls. We were firing fire missions at the time. He's lucky we didn't shoot him down. We had to check fire, because of his antics.

We appreciated the strong bunkers left by the guys from the siege. However, we were given the word that the base was being abandoned and were ordered to tear them down. We had no tools other than E-tools and machetes and we had to rip up each individual sandbag and dump everything out. We worked from early morning until long after dark. We got

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a lot of incoming from Co Rock during this time because of all the men that were above ground all over the base, working on destroying the bunkers.

The worst part of that incoming was that the first things we destroyed were the living bunkers. We had nowhere to hide during the incoming. The base looked weird with the bunkers down and gone. We hauled all the torn down material out to the garbage dump. They made the mistake of burning while we were still dumping. I saw trash catch fire to the material still on the back of the trucks. Some trucks were cut-off by fire, and had to drive through walls of fire to get out of the dump. Rounds and grenades were cooking-off in the dump, the whole time. This went on for several days. But, we did get revenge on the rats. There must have been hundreds or even thousands of them killed in that dump during this time. You would hear Marines yell and watch them chase rats around the dump, while trying to bayonet them. It was funny. *(Ed. note: I can just see it now—some fifteen-plus years latter, a kid asks: "did you ever do hand-to-hand combat in Vietnam, daddy?" "You bet," the fat, balding, geezer says, takes a deep drag on his cigarette, shoots the smoke out the side of his mouth in a hiss, pauses, stares hard into his son's eyes, sips his beer, and continues, "I used my bayonet on him. Had to fight the SOB for over two hours, finally got the upper hand, and stabbed him to death. The sucker had buck teeth and long wiskers. Caught him trying to eat our garbage. He was a nasty, filthy little thing! Yep, boy, don't never mess with your old man, he's one, strak Marine." "But, pops," the kid says, "how come the dude just wounded you around your ankles?" "They was just a bunch a dirty, low fighters," his dad says, not missing a beat.)*

Ron Taylor continues: In one of the past newsletters it was mentioned that some brooms were brought to Khe Sanh to clean it up when the place was to be abandoned. I'm here to tell you that it was true. On July 4th, when my unit pulled out, we had to form a line, and just like in the states, police-up the whole area, pick-up all the trash. We could not believe they were making us do this. When we boarded the trucks to leave, one of our guys, who had poured fuel on the trash, lit a match and touched it to the fuel soaked pile. The thing blew-up and burned him so bad that he had to be medevaced. We thought we were being hit by incoming and jumped out of the trucks.

We were surprised that we were not hit on the road outside of Khe Sanh since, just a few days earlier, the gooks were hitting the road one shell at a time, like they were registering their artillery. We also had all our grenades taken away before we left since someone had tear-gassed the Gunny's bunker. I was the only one on the convoy with any frags, because I hid mine until we left.

FRENCHY

by Ernie Spencer
D 1/26

Hey Frenchy! O.K., you win. We quit. You got us good. We admit it. Much as Delta guys hate to admit we were had, we do. I knew it had to be you behind it. Had to be, I got you last.

Remember that time I nailed you with a can of ham fried? We were up in the Ponderosa, early seige in 68. The day before Fish and seventeen other guys were out side



Cpl. Normand "French" Deschaine

jerking around, grab assing, and got nailed by a 61 mortar round. No K's, but that one pop from Charlie, and Delta gets 18 more purple shafts. Typical Delta. Remember Espy, screaming he thought his nuts were gone? Bloods did worry about the important things. Espy was o.k.,that time. You f-----s used to piss me off sometimes. I told you guys to stay in your bunkers. You guys just wouldn't listen to me. Charlie was not going to upset a Delta social hour. You guys liked grab-assing around with each other almost as much as kicking Charlies' ass.

What do I see the very next day? After all that screaming, yelling, and beating on you guys I did, who do I see the very next morning, sunning himself, like a prairie dog, outside, but you. I crawled back up the trenchline to my bunker, got a can of ham, and snuck back up on you. I raised up, aimed for your head, and let fly with all my might. Hit you flush on your shoulder, and you jerked like you were hit. Oh shit, I thought, after I saw your look. I went too far, this time. God, if looks could kill. I just stared you down and pointed to your bunker entrance. You crawled down in, glaring at me. For the next couple of

days, I was real nervous. I thought you'd do me.

I had to do you Frenchy, it was my job. Sure. I loved you something special. You had married a Hawaii girl. "Hey, my kids are going to look just like you, skipper," you proudly said to me the first time we met. You were like that. That's why the guy from motor T loved you. You were always so open, caring, and giving of yourself, and your time. Jesus Christ, Frenchy, what a politician you would have made. Not like these slime balls we've had to endure since we got back. You were the type of politician we Nam guys would have picked, if we could. Maybe that's why we don't have any now, Frenchy. All our good ones, like you, died over there.

Remember how we used to shoot your tonk-gun at the ridge-line, on the west side of 861? You always whipped me. We laughed, bullshit, target shot. You were from Maine, but promised me you'd settle in Hawaii with me, after you got out. We were going to just kick back for awhile, in a cool shade, and see how many six-packs we could do.

We never got the chance. Two days after I got back, June 7, 68, you got it. I'm sorry I didn't go to your wake and funeral, Frenchy. I read your obituary, the open plea from your family, for me to come. They buried you in Hawaii, my home, but I couldn't go. I was in full blown denial then. What let me hang on, over in Nam, was the solemn promise I made, to myself, that I'd forget all the bad shit, when I left. I wanted it all to be over with, Frenchy. I thought I needed for it to be over. I know now, that it's never over with. It should not be. You guys are worth too much for us to ever forget. I know you understand, and that's why were talking now. I remember being so f-----g angry with you, at the time. Late into the night, I sat up, after my wife had gone to bed, with your obituary in my lap. "How dare you," I hissed at your picture on your obituary. "How dare you follow me home this way. "Damn you Frenchy," I said, tears streaming down my face. "I f-----g told you to stay down. I f-----g told you!" IFs don't mean shit, I know. But, you know I wish it could have been different. I know Frenchy, we're Marines, and that's our destiny. It was your turn, and not mine.

What a beauty of a chain jerking you gave me, Dick Grenat and Fish. Chick Kelly also went with us from the reunion to the Wall. Remember, Chick? It was Father Kelly when you knew him. I think he might have done the last rites on you and the other guys, that day you folks got hit. Hannah and his radioman. Espy and Jack. Plus a ton of WIAs. None of these million dollar wounds either. Delta guys were going out gunshot, period. All up close, and personal.

Dick told me about it, the fight. Dick put it to me in simple Delta terms. "It got real hot and heavy, skip. We

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TRIBUTE AND TRIBULATION KHE SANH REMEMBERED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ken Pipes
B 1/26

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was rockin' 'n rollin', with hot lead flyin' everywhere. Jets came in and bombed, right on top of us." How come Dick's got that Southern accent when he's from Indiana? You know Frenchy, when I think about how much gun-time, you and the Delta guys did, and I listen to some of those World War Two guys, talk their macho bullshit, I go crazy.

I was the one, who told Dick you had died, eighteen years after the fact. Grenat was with rockets and was right behind your squad, when you went down. Charlie hit you first, dead on. You clown, laughing and joking with the guys when they lifted you on the medevac chopper. Chest shot, and you're still screwing around. You were macho, Frenchy. That's why Dick and the guys didn't think you died. Somehow, someway, you just suddenly died a couple of days latter. Fitz told me about it when I went to see him at Trippler Hospital on Oahu, a couple of weeks after the fight. Fitz still has a lot of pain about all you guys going down. I saw him again, for the first time in 22 years, at the reunion in Nashville.

The first hint you give, was when that guy from motor T came up to me at the reunion and asked if I knew, a Norman Deschaine. Your ol' sensitive skipper, goes: "Yeah, he's dead." I thought the poor guy was going to faint. Dick latched on to him and filled him in on what had happened that day you got it. This guy drove alone from Nebraska to Nashville just on the odd chance that he might meet you. He said that you were the greatest guy he'd ever met. Remember how motor T was right next to our bunkers during the siege? You left a hell of an impression on him, Frenchy.

You know my love of rain as a metaphor, and you hit us with rain all the way to D.C. It was beautiful. The storms locked the four of us in as we journeyed to you, washing and splashing around us. Tears, you shed, so that we would not have to. You took most of our tears. You wanted our undivided attention for what you had planned.

What a time we had—me, Fish, Dick and Chick in Fish's motor home. You know Dick and Fish, but what's Chick like? I guess Fish said it best. He was filling the gas-tank, during one of our stops. Fish says to me, "Holy shit, skippah, can you believe dis guy? I used to go to confession to dis guy, and now he's asking me about broads?" God, we laughed and reminisced on that drive up to you. We had no idea we were being set up.

The storms lifted just as we pulled into D.C. Perfect timing. It was 0130 hours. All the turistas were in bed. It was hot, still, and sticky, just like back there. You hit us good Frenchy. Fish has been coming to say hi and be with Jack since the wall opened. All these years, all this time, and you stayed hidden on the same panel. You're right above Espy, and Fish missed you. "Look at this, skip!," Dick said, when he noticed your name. He had looked at the pictures of your panel Fish sent him, and only noticed Jack and Espy, before. Now, your name bloomed, new, and fresh, right before our eyes, as we stood there, and all saw you for the very first time. Chuck Norris my ass, you're the star, Frenchy.

We went back in the trees, towards the reflecting pools afterwards, and sat L.P. for you guys. We watched the sun come up. Remember that special feeling we used to get when we went on those long patrols out in the jungle around Khe Sanh? How we'd watch the sun come up, after going from pitch black, still and mosquitoes to morning with a slight breeze? Just another Delta day. We'd saddle up and go get 'em again. F--- John Wayne.

I am really impressed by the show you put on for us, hiding all these years on the WALL like that. Outf—ing-standing! Dick, Fish and Chick were also profoundly moved. So, I'm calling it quits. You win, Frenchy. Hell bro, I can't top your act—EVER.

— Skip

THE KHE SANH VETERAN INC.

is a non-profit, non-political, tax-deductible, 501-C Corporation. Its purpose is to record and preserve the history of the experience known as "Khe Sanh," to promote healing among those who served there, and to encourage artistic projects by its members. Membership is open to any member of our armed forces who ever served at, around or over Khe Sanh, Vietnam, between 1961 through 1971.

Annual dues ..... $15.
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TET Remembered

Last year it was "TET Plus 24". This year it's "TET Remembered".
A mini-reunion and fundraiser. All TET Veterans are invited.

January 29-30, 1993

at

The Blackstone Hotel

636 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois
800/622-6330 or 312/427-4300

January 29 - Entertainment by Britt Small and Festival, 7pm and 9pm
January 30 - Entertainment. And a Memorial Service by
Rev. Jack Heino, Chaplain of 1/9 during the Siege.

$59 per night includes a welcome cocktail and continental breakfast. When reserving, you must mention "Tet Remembered". Nightly entertainment is $5 per night except for Khe Sanh veterans who will be admitted free of charge. There will be vendors displaying various goods and services.

The Khe Sanh Vets will have their own Hospitality Room. Come on in, help out, and have fun.

As an additional fundraiser, we have arranged with the State of Illinois to issue Special Event license plates. Two hundred numbered plates are available for Illinois residents at $50 per set. They may be displayed on your vehicle from January 30 to March 30. For non-Illinois residents and those wishing a commemorative plate, a limited number of license plates are available for $23. These plates cannot be displayed on Illinois vehicles, but can be displayed as a front plate in states not having front plates. Proceeds will go towards a Khe Sanh Living Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery to be dedicated during our 1993 Reunion. A similar plate will be issued for our reunion so we can have a matched set of commemorative plates.

Numbered Plate



Commemorative Plate



We are putting out a call for anyone from the D.C. area who has access to a tree nursery and/or a company that manufactures or sells memorial plaques and granite markers. Please call Ken Penn at 708/825-7085 for information on plates or with questions.

THE ABC'S OF KHE SANH

by Manuel Babbitt

WORDS: LANDMINE, SAND-BAGS, GUNSHIPS, VIETNAM, DOCTOR, DOA, CORPSMAN, FUEL, TOP, RAGS, SCOUT, DUD, AO, POT, AV, LZ, C-MED, CP, B-BAG, ANTS, ARMY, BUSH, PADS, PX, CUP, CO, VC, HIT, JET, PUFF, CIA, HQ, MARINE, NAVY, DUSTERS, STARE, NINTH, BOMBS, SALVO, FALSTAF, PTSD, OILTANK, GRUNTS, C-RATS, MARKERS, TUNNELS, COBRAS, PATROLS, INCOMING, KHE SANH, ANTI-TANK, RED-CLAY, BOOBY-TRAPS, UNDER-SIEGE-BASES, BARBED-WIRE, JUNGLE-BOOTS, TOE-POPPER, BUG-JUICE, RAINGEAR, MAD-MOMENTS, ONE-TWENTY-SIXTY, AGENT-ORANGE

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The *Khe Sanh* Veteran Newsletter
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Volume 1:4 Winter 1993

The Khe Sanh Veteran



25th Reunion of Khe Sanh Vets

Notes on the Reunion

by Ray Stubbe

We are saddened to hear of the death of the father of ERNIE HUSTED who died 05 August 1993.

We are saddened to hear of the death of TERRY MCCONNELL (C/1/26) who died 28 August 1993 at the age of 44.

Congratulations to TIM SIMS (M/3/26) who was recently promoted to Navy commander, Chaplain Corps. Tim had been one of the enlisted Marines to call in helicopters for medevacs while a member of MIKE Company

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To: All Members

From: Michael O'Hara
Vice President Elect

I am looking for a "few good men" and women to help establish a nationwide network of volunteers within our ranks. I need people from each state to step forward and help.

I have been duly appointed by our President, Ken Penn, to set up Regional (each time zone) State and District Coordinators to personally get "in touch" and keep "in touch" with each member in your state or district. I have recently done this in my home state of Indiana and found it to be very rewarding. I recently

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A Message from the Editor

Where Do We Go From Here

Our reunion in D.C. this past July blew me away. The reunion, going to the Wall together, was like being back at Khe Sanh. What was missing was the fear and trauma. It was all so...positive. Ken and Bernice did a Big-Time Reunion essentially alone. To pull off what they did is nothing short of a miracle. Four of us contracted with National Geographic Society to film the reunion. National Geographic loved it. The piece aired on TBS, November 14. Though only a couple of minutes of the 12 hours that we filmed were used, the producers and editors at National Geographic Society praised the power of our reunion story. They regret not being able to use more of the footage. We are in the process of editing and producing our own version of the reunion. Johnny Balanco is putting it together. We'll donate the video sales proceeds from our version to the Khe Sanh Vets to be used for further artistic projects. We have a brother on Death Row out here in California who should have his story told. His story, I feel, should be on film. Dare I dream? Speaking of dreaming...guilty, your honor. You'll notice we're back to the same format that we started with last fall. I wish I could have done more color, but budgets and reality dictate otherwise.

We decided to get real and stop harping on money. The gods will decide. But, please donate what you can (the flyer is on the last page.) Our new president, Ken Penn, as well as Ray Stubbe feel very strongly about holding onto members. It has been and will continue to be our policy to seek new members via any means. If anyone knows of someone who served at, over, or around Khe Sanh between 1961 and 1971, and that person is not on our roster, please let Ray know. We don't ask members to join. We send them the roster, a few back issues, and add them to our listing. We will do what we have to do to not lose track of any members.

If anyone knows of a sugardaddy who might be interested in corporate sponsorship or advertising, please let us know. If we could get a couple of corporate sponsors to buy color ad space, we could fund a more professional looking magazine. We have the content.

Speaking of content, you will notice that the level of dialogue is becoming more personal. There are statements made in this issue that might well challenge your agenda and beliefs. To preserve the Khe Sanh story, whatever it its, we must allow all members and their families free and uncensored access to our magazine. I feel no obligation, however, to print the work or letters of non-members.

I'm sorry that I have not personally responded to all the letters sent me as editor. Excuses are like backsides, everyone's got one, but I had to budget my time. If I plan to use your letter and no clarification is needed, I often do not acknowledge before it appears in the publication. I'm backed up with excellent poetry and memoirs which I hope to give more space in the next issue. The historical *Sea Tiger* and *Stars and Stripes* pieces we ran in the Fall '92 issue generated great interest. When we can, I hope to do more of them.

Ernie Spencer
Editor

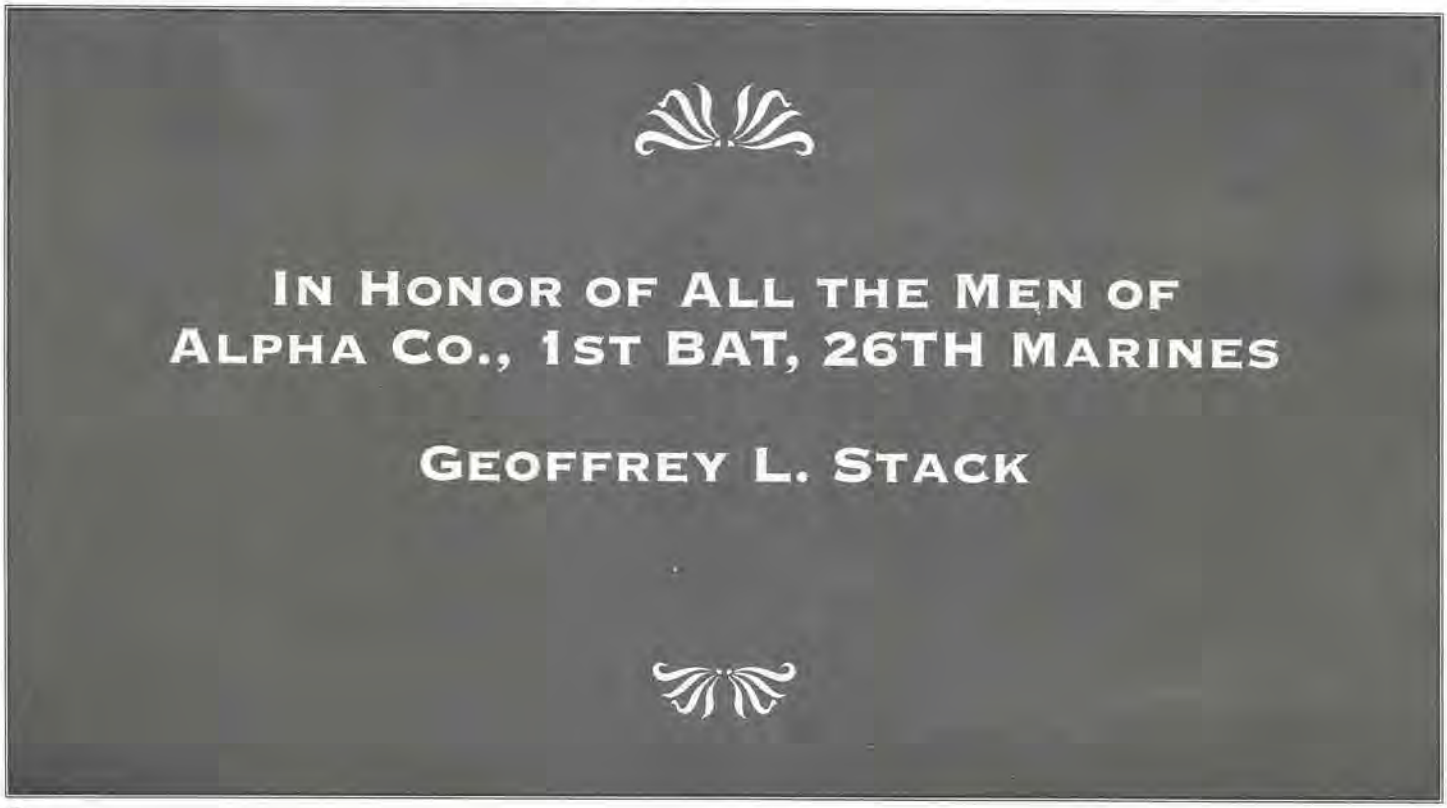

Letters to the editor are encouraged. Contributors may discuss any subject or issue that interests them. Whether you've got a burr under your saddle that's getting to you, or have a song in your heart you wish to share, tell us about it. Don't worry about what the readers will think. Your feelings are your feelings. However, all opinions and feelings expressed in INCOMING are those of the writer. Readers should not infer that such letters express either the editorial or political opinions of the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. We are a non-profit, non-political organization.

Dear Ernie,

With reference to our telephone conversation on March 29th. It was a pleasure talking to you. I certainly appreciated the information concerning the newsletter and the reunion. I have made reservations at the Holiday Inn-Georgetown and my wife and I will be attending the reunion.

I noticed that the Fall issue of the newsletter mentioned the possibility of a trip back to Khe Sanh. I am enclosing an article that appeared in the April issue of "Travel & Leisure" concerning travel to Vietnam, including a day trip to Khe Sanh. I would be very interested in making such a trip with the Brothers (if my "employer" will allow it). Please keep me informed of developments and let me know if I can be of assistance in any way.

Looking forward to seeing you and the Brothers at the reunion.

Jack H. Howe
3/26 (Dec 67-Dec 68)

Dear Ernie,

This is just a short note from a fellow Marine who served in support of you fellows taking the brunt of the action at Khe Sanh in February 1968. I was with India Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines, running interdiction patrols and convoy security for Khe Sanh. Our outfit is the one that disbanded the base in late June and July. We were kept busy fighting off the rats so kindly left behind for us by our predecessors (they proved to be a worthy adversary), while we were trying to avoid the sampling of rockets and artillery that the NVA had saved just for us. It was rather disheartening trying to avoid the incoming while we were destroying the bunkers and trenches designed to protect us from that very thing; we were running out of places to hide fast!

The one thing that bothers me is that I have been unable to locate anything recognizing us for having participated in the events that took place at or around the base, even though we received Commendations for our operation there. We were not as significant as those of you that endured those 77 days of misery, however, we were there and would enjoy and greatly appreciate it it you could possibly make some mention of it in your next edition. I'm sure my Brothers and yours of "I" 3/9 would appreciate the recognition.

I appreciate the effort of you and your courageous comrades while defending Khe Sanh and would be honored if you would allow us to become part of your elite group.

I have sent a check for the membership dues and am looking forward to your next edition.

Semper Fi
Jeff Loomis
I/3/9

Dear Mr Maves,

I am in receipt of the dues notice for *The Khe Sanh Veteran* and am returning the form with a change of address. Also, I felt that you should be made aware of my current situation.

I cannot afford to send any money because I do not have any. For the past 17 years I have been in prison serving a life sentence. If I could send something, I certainly would. However, I have nothing to give.

If I cannot be carried in the organization any longer I will understand, as it is not the first time I will have been dropped from a vets group because I have no money or because I am in prison. I do not mean any disrespect whatsoever. I am merely explaining that I will understand.

When and if I ever come into some money, I will send a donation, but this is merely speculative on my part, based on the total lack of family or resources.

Thank you for your time and please wish everyone at the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc, including their families, a Merry Christmas and joyous New Year filled with peace and happiness.

Semper Fi
Cam Tomarchio
Ely State Prison
Post Office Box 1989
Ely, Nevada 89301
1 MAW MAG-12

Dear Ernie,

Congratulations on producing a truly fantastic newsletter that all Khe Sanh vets can be very proud of. Enclosed please find a copy of some cartoons that I produced for my local VVA Chapter a few years ago. I also have slides that were taken at Camp Evans, Dong Ha, Khe Sanh Combat Base and Hill 881S trenchline (including the American flag flying on top of the hill). As you may know, I was the Corpsman for 3rd Plt. India 3/26. I was with 3/26 from November 67 to June 68 (Khe Sanh, Perfume River Bridge and Patrols, and Leech Valley outside of Da Nang). I also have many slides of my second six months at Third Med Battalion, Phu Bai and Quang Tri, China Beach in-country R & R and Spooky, (C-47 gun ship in its revetment in Da Nang).

Please feel free to request any cartoon and I will do the original in a camera-ready format for your use, and if you send me some experiences of others, I can scribble them into a cartoon as I did for Ray Stubbe. I'm not a good artist and I'm glad I didn't need to make a living from it, but I did these type of cartoons on Hill 881S and hung them across from the trenchline shitter along with my daily commentary.

I am willing to share all my photos and memories. Most are already in the Marine Corps

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Historical Collection, thanks to Ray, but if I can help with this fine publication, just let me know.

See you in Washington DC next week.
"Doc" Dave Steinberg
2413 Lori Lane South
Wilmington, DE 19810
(302) 479-0195
1/3/26

ED. Look out for Doc's work in future issues.

Dear Mr Husted,

I've gained a lot of respect for, and made many friends with, the men who served at Khe Sanh. My book opened doors I didn't even know were there, so I'd like very much to stay in touch through the newsletter.

Please change my address to reflect the Leland P.O. Box as indicated below.

Many thanks.

Robert Pisor
P O Box 1102
Leland, MI 49654

Dear Ernie,

I am a very recent member of the Khe Sanh Vets organization. In fact, so recent that my first year's membership fee is enclosed. I was squad leader of 2nd Squad, 3rd Platoon, Foxtrot Co. 2/26, when we arrived in early January 1968. As I recall, my Platoon leader was Lt. Reardon. I am having a lot of trouble remembering a lot of the guys I served with in 3rd Platoon, Foxtrot. I do remember O.D. (Butch) Karter of Atlanta. We are still in contact on an annual basis. I also recall Corporal Rudy Garza. I was only at Khe Sanh until January 26th. I was due to rotate out on that day. I remember flying out on a C-123 transport, flown by Koreans I think, and I remember we had to jump on as the plane hardly stopped. As we took off, shells were hitting the airstrip only 50 meters behind us.

I was relieved to get out, but I did feel like I was abandoning my squad. I could smell death among them. I remember seeing Captain Divelbiss as I was leaving the field. I was his company driver back in Phu Bai, Sep-Oct '67. He was shot sometime during that span of time and he was returning to the field as I was leaving. I see in Ray Stubbe's book that Captain Divelbiss got into a heap of shit on the 7th April 1968. I would like to hear from anyone who was there (Hill 558) on April 5-8. Sorry I had to leave you there guys, I really wanted to come back and help. Did anyone else feel as guilty as I did about leaving?

I am a Baptist Minister and grandfather now, and I see those days from a very different perspective. But through it all, I AM STILL A MARINE.

God Bless my fellow Marines
Cpl R. Keith Kapple
P O Box 244
Belpre, Ohio 45714

Dear Ernie,

Thank you for your effort in editing the newsletter. I enjoy it thoroughly. I've enclosed an essay I wrote recently. You're welcome to publish it if you like it. I'm working on a collection of essays for possible publication.

I was a Special Forces Medic at FOB 3 during the Siege. I'm sure you'll understand when I say the experience was a pivotal one in my life. I'm currently working as a Registered Nurse in the Emergency Room of our local hospital and enjoying my work.

Russ Mann
P O Box 806
Truckee, CA 96160
(916) 587-7392
FOB 3

Dear Mr Maves,

I've been receiving copies of your newsletter and have enjoyed reading about Khe Sanh and old friends.

I'm enclosing my first dues for 1993 and an additional $15.00 since I think I first received your newsletter last year. Sorry to be so late. Keep up the good work.

Respectfully yours,
Gus Alvarado
Sgt Maj USMC Ret.

Dear Ernie,

Enclosed is a list of paid life members we should be working on getting cards made for — something that won't too rapidly fall apart in the wallet.

The names listed below* have volunteered to be our steering or advisory committee for whatever they may be needed for in regard to reunions, locations, planning or whatever. They all approached me at the reunion and offered their services, this would be a good opportunity to get some more people actively involved. Each one of these guys would be getting feedback from their area of the country.

I'm also enclosing some mail that came with the checks for you and some general interest items. My transfer of funds from Washington DC to Bank One here in Wisconsin is in the process and should be done any day now. Will be getting back to you again shortly Ernie, meanwhile, take care.

Semper Fi
Bill Maves
E/2/26

* Grant Kniedler; Bruce Jones; Greg Feseden; Albert Lumpkin

Dear Khe Sanh Vets,

Last December, after seeing your ad for the 25 year Tet Offensive commemorative license plate in the DuPage County Chapter of VietNow's newsletter, I ordered the plate. Since it was received, I have been displaying it on the front of my car, since the license plate was torn (I have a replacement on order).

I was unable to attend the 25 year reunion in Chicago because of a sales meeting in Miami Beach, but have been proud to display the commemorative license plate.

The other day, after working all day in Peoria, (I sell hospital beds all over Central Illinois), I was driving back to my apartment when I noticed a pink piece of paper stuck under the windshield wiper of my car. It was the flap from a pink envelope. Someone had apparently noticed the license plate and had taken the time to write the note. I am attaching a photocopy of both sides of the envelope but, in case it is hard to read, I also include a transcription on this page:

"Just wanted you to know — I feel this country really gave the Vets a hard time when you returned, taking their animosity of war out on the Vets instead of embracing the Vets for surviving a war of animosity. Although it was a long time ago and I was just a kid, I still thank the Lord for this country I live in and especially for the men and women who served. THANK YOU!"

As a Vietnam Veteran and a survivor of Tet, I accepted this note with gratitude and am passing it along to you in hopes you will share it with others. Often, Vietnam Veterans are overlooked or shown in a bad light. It is heartening when we realize that there are people out there who care, even if they don't remember.

We should never forget. Thanks again for making the license plate available.

Jeff Donohue
403 Greenbriar Drive, Apt 220,
Normal, IL 61761-2262.
(309) 452-1236

Dear Ernie,

I have been getting the magazine and newsletter for a couple of years. I signed up for *The Khe Sanh Veteran* at 3rd Marine Div. reunion in Tampa, Florida. I served with Bravo, 1st Bn, 4th MAR, 3rd MAR Div during 1967. I am sure my 12 months in the DMZ were in the Khe Sanh valley. We were all over.

I work as a Counselor at the Vet Center in White Plains, New York. I was wounded twice and have the Silver Star for action on October 27th, 1967 on Operation Granite.

I am a member of DAV (Life); VFW (Life); Mar. Corp League (Life); Order P.H. (Life) and 3rd MAR. Div. Assc. (Life). I think the reason people don't join organizations like yours is because we live in difficult times. Some people can, some can't. We get copies of your newsletter at our Center and it is displayed for all the Vets.

I am enclosing my annual dues. Thanks.

Vincent Matthews
B/1/4

Hi Ernie,

My fondest thanks to you and all the guys who showed Jessica what Semper Fi is all about at the '93 Reunion. You guys are the best. My prayers are said in your honor.

God bless and keep you all alive and well.

Semper Fi
Manny Babbitt
AT'S

Dear Ernie,

I had to drop you a line and tell you what a great *Khe Sanh Veteran* issue you just put out. It sure has come a long way and you are doing a good job. I enjoyed the Chronology and the list of KIA's to look up people.

One thing that I can't understand is that in all the books I've read and even this Chronology, it says that Khe Sanh was abandoned by the end of June and for sure by July 2nd. I find that odd because my unit pulled out of Khe Sanh on July 4th and there were still Marines there then.

I didn't know that the reporter leaked news that the base was to be abandoned. We did notice the increase in incoming but thought it was because we had so many working parties above ground tearing down the bunkers. Some of the first bunkers we tore down were our living bunkers. We spent all of our time running for cover.

Take care and keep up the good work.

Roy Taylor
HQ 1/11 1MARDIV

Dear Ernie,

I returned yesterday from the wonderful 1993 Reunion "25 years after the siege". I cannot stop thinking about the people and events of the past six days nor can I stop thinking of the people and events 25 years ago. Remembrances, some good and some bad, some ignored and some buried deep in my subconscious have flooded my mind. This was the first veteran gathering I have been involved with and, frankly, I was apprehensive about attending. However, I found the experience to be the most therapeutic and emotionally rewarding experience of my past 25 years.

I met people that I had not seen or spoken with in 25 years. I discovered some persons that I had thought made it out had not, but conversely, I discovered some that I thought had not made it actually did survive. I was able to put faces on people that, 25 years ago, were only a radio call sign to me.

I discovered that everyone is carrying around "baggage" from the war. I further discovered that everyone I had contact with, no matter what they had sacrificed at the time, felt that they should have or could have done more. An incredible characteristic of Marines, or Khe Sanh Marines.

It was an honour meeting you, and I thank you, Ray, Earle, Ernie (H), Ken and Bernice, and the many others for your foresight in identifying the need

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to form this great organization and your courage in bringing us together again for the 25th Reunion.

Semper Fi
Steven Orr
REGT. H & S 26MAR

Dear Sirs,

I saw your advertisement in the Veterans' magazine and I am very interested in joining. I am not a Veteran myself but I am an associate member of the VVA, Chapter 500 in Sacramento. I originally joined the VVA in August 1992. I had an uncle that was killed in Quang Tri on October 5th, 1967. His name and organization was L/Cpl Danny Elie Reid, USMC, H&S CO., 3rd BN, 9th MAR, 3rd MAR DIV (REIN) FMF. I have been trying to locate other people who might have known him over there. I do have a list of names of people who possibly might have known him: Kenneth Birdsong, Frank Breth, Bill Dancy, Harry Hutchinson, Dennis McLean, Toby Hooten and Charles Tisby.

I have contacted the In Touch program and sent them all of the information needed. I have also placed a locator message in The Veteran. I just decided to write to your organization so as to "broaden my horizon" so to speak. I figured the more organizations I contact, the better chance I have of finding someone who knew my uncle.

I don't know if your organization accepts associate members like the VVA does, but I would be interested in joining if you do. This really means a lot to me. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I look forward to hearing from you. By the way, it may be 25 years late, but 'Welcome Home'.

Sincerely,
Beverly W. Brown
7942 Seneca Way
North Highlands, CA 95660
(916) 344-1183

Dear Ernie,

You don't know me but I just wanted to write and say "thanks" for what you did in Vietnam. It's a shame that it's taken so long for people to recognize Vietnam vets.

Until my husband received a thank you letter recently, I've always said thanks, but in a different way. I've done volunteer work at the Vet Center and I've worked at a Vietnam Veterans Reunion. I spoke to a lot of guys at the reunions and told them how I felt about what they did. It made me feel good to finally have a chance to say thanks.

Jack served in Da Nang in 1971-72. He was in Recreations for 6 months then was a door gunner for 4 months. The Army asked the Air Force for volunteers for door gunners and he went. He spent 21 years in the Air Force and retired in 1981.

I've decided to write to as many Vietnam Vets as possible to thank them. It will take quite a while, but it's worth it. I got your name from Manuel Babbitt and the VVA Directory. I would like to hear from you about your tour, if you're able to talk about it. Even my husband of 4 years still has trouble talking about some of it.

Guess I'll close for now.

Take care.
Jane Broderick
211 Sanna Dr.,
Louisville, KY 40229.

Hello Ernie,

How are things with you and yours? Fine I hope. This letter leaves us well. We have some shitty problems but we can handle them. Sorry I didn't make the DC thing — maybe next time.

Colonel Pipes called me and informed me that you requested a photo for film dubbing. I'll send you two of them. Hope you can use them. The newsletter is outstanding — keep up the good work and give 'em hell! Tell John Balanco I said hello when you see him and pass my best on to all our Brothers.

Semper Fidelis
Jim Morris
B/1/26

Dear Ernie,

I was assigned to VMO-2 and flew UH1E and 01B aircraft in I Corp from April '65 thru April '66. I also "drove" C-130's in-country, while TAD to VMGR-152 from my Stateside squadron VMGR-352, October '66 thru September '68. Our mission and operations took me into and around Khe Sanh during that 31/2 year period.

I read the Khe Sanh Chronology, which appeared in the Spring 1993 issue, with great interest. It brought back many memories of flying UH1E's in and around Khe Sanh plus "Gunship Escort" for ARVN (Vietnamese) H-34 aircraft into Laos in support of Operation Shining Brass further South. It also reminded me of operating C-130's in and out of the very short airstrip on that mountain top and of the airdrops (parachute) to resupply the folks cut off near Lang Vei.

It was when I reached the Honor Roll that things went into the toilet for me. I read the names of several friends and past squadron mates that I knew had "bought it" at Khe Sanh but I was both shocked and saddened to see the name of an old friend of mine on page 39.

Captain Lufkin Scott Sharp and I were room-mates while undergoing flight training as Marine Aviation Cadets at Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Florida in 1962. I was not aware that Scott had been killed and I am interested in hearing from anyone that can fill me in on the circumstances of his death on 19th June 1968 while he was assigned to HMM-161.

Also, I believe that the USMC C-130 of VMGR-152 that crashed on 10th February 1968 was piloted by Khe Sanh Vet member Harry Wildfang. My understanding is that they had taken some hits while airborne and were on fire during the forced emergency landing. The fire was being fed by a damaged fuel bladder that was being carried in the cargo compartment. Upon landing, the props were "reversed" causing the loose fuel to unavoidably spill forward, burning most of the crew and killing

Flight Engineer MSGT John D'Adamo and also L/Cpl Jerry Ferren.

Ernie, thank you again for enlisting me into the Khe Sanh Vets. I am proud to have served with all of our Vietnam veteran brothers and sisters and I take great pride in once again being associated with such distinguished Americans.

Semper Fi
Norm Mahalich
P O Box 729
Diablo, CA 94528.

Dear Ernie,

Congratulations on a great edition of *The Khe Sanh Veteran*. You and Ray Stubbe are the greatest! Thank you for reminding us all where we came from 25 years ago.

This year, I celebrated the 25th anniversary of getting wounded outside Khe Sanh on April 8th — the day the Siege was broken by my unit, the 1st Air Cavalry Division. I have had a strong identification with all the veterans of Khe Sanh ever since. You are the best. Let me know how I can ever help in any way.

Most sincerely,
Max Cleland
Secretary of State
Atlanta
2B BDE/1ACD

P.S. You're the greatest!

Dear Ernie,

I've just been through your Spring 1993 Newsletter for about the fourth time — fascinating stuff! There was an awful lot of information which I never knew. I came to Khe Sanh after Hue City — I only spent a few days there but I'll never forget what I saw, and what you guys went through.

I won't be making the reunion but would like to contribute a few bucks to the cause. Please do something special with the enclosed.

Sincerely,
Ernie Harris
Capt. USMC Ret'd
Formerly CO, A Co, 1st Engr Bn.

Dear Mr Maves,

Hi! Enclosed is a check for regular membership, including a small donation. John has missed several reunions since he started working in Saudi Arabia. I expect him to be home the third week of September, around his birthday.

John has received many calls while he's been away working and I've had the pleasure of talking to John's Marine comrades. Some day, I hope to meet you all. I wish we could have celebrated with you good people at the 25th Reunion in Washington D.C.

I would like to share my thoughts about the most recent issue of *The Khe Sanh Veteran*. While reading the summer issue, I realized how important this 25th anniversary was for all who served at Khe Sanh. Of course, I'm especially proud you chose John's photo for its cover! I think the soldiers picture uniquely honors those faces known and unknown and gives the recognition these "great heroes" deserve!

I visualize a friend, a father, a brother, a husband, a lover. I believe most people can make a connection with the soldier. Thank you for allowing me to share my opinion.

In closing, this and all issues are very interesting and thought provoking. I enjoy reading *The Khe Sanh Veteran*. Where can I contact Campbell Buttry for a larger photo to frame?

Sincerely,
Beverley Bersano

Dear Ernie,

I was astounded and amazed when a retired Master Gunnery Sergeant gave me a copy of your newsletter and I learned for the first time of the existence of your organization. Few of the Vets I know in the St Petersburg area are aware of your existence and we will try to get the word out as much as possible.

It was interesting to read the membership rolls and see a lot of the names from the past, learning for the first time that they survived Vietnam and got home. I was pleased to see the name of John Cargile, who was acting Commander of Delta Company and later became Commander of C Co, 1/9. He was a fine officer and it's good he made it. I also noticed Bill Gessner, who was an outstanding medic attached to D Co. and it is my understanding he later became an officer in the Army.

I noticed that some of the casualty figures did not appear to be the same as we were told during the actions taking place, but I guess that sort of thing happens when a variety of organizations are reporting the same incidents. It was my belief that on 16 April 1968, 1/9 took considerably more than the 17 WIA not evacuated and the 15 WIA who were evacuated, but sometimes I guess memory does not always match reality.

I look forward to receiving your next issue and hope to see articles and updates on more of the personnel with whom I served while a Scout with 1/9.

Sincerely,
Carey McGiffin

Dear Mr Spencer,

I must tell you first off that I did not send my dues after seeing the Spring issue of *The Khe Sanh Veteran*. I had been told of your magazine a few months before it came out, so I sent you A LOT of stuff, and had not heard anything, then I got the Spring issue — nothing but names and places, BUT I have just received the Summer issue and was blown away by the intimacy of the letters and all the memories (good and bad) that it brought about. I must say that the 3 poems you printed were great, especially when two of them were mine! ("Then" and "The Vets Hospital"). You've got my check — it's enclosed. I don't know if you want me to send more, or if you copied some of the other stuff?

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Anyway, THANK YOU for caring and putting together a GREAT magazine. If there is anything I can do at my house to help you, just let me know.

Semper Fi and God Bless
Terry Lee Crosby Sr
H Co. 2/9 3rd Mar. Div.

Dear Ernie,

Like so many Khe Sanh vets, I feel ashamed that I have gotten behind in my dues. Just don't tell Ken Pipes or he'll probably fly here to Springfield IL and kick my ass *(Ed: Your secret's safe with me..)*

I was sure wishing I could have made it to the Washington D.C. reunion but I just made a new job change in May of this year.

Enclosed is my check for this year's dues, and last year's. If you talk to Ken, give him my regards and God bless you for all the hard work you have done on our newsletter.

Semper Fi
Tom Quigley
Company Radio Operator
B/1/26

P.S. Khe Sanh Vets: let's all get off our asses and pay our dues!

Dear Ernie,

Thanks for the flick and the note. It's like I told you guys in D.C., whenever I go to my mailbox and there's something there from you guys I am like the cow that jumped over the moon.

I just received info from Ray on the reunion highlights. I know our next newsletter will be "atomic". I'll sell pencils on the corner if that's what it takes! Hang tough, we will make it.

I made a lot of new friends in D.C. and have found 4 new members since returning home. One more from Bravo ha ha!

I wrote Dorothy Norman and have received a warm card in return.

Still, it is you, Jake and Johnny Balanco who I hold so dear to my heart. No man could ask for better friends. Here at my house it is pouring down outside — rain and foggy. Sound familiar? That is why I chose to write to you today.

These are days we stop and think, of other times in a distant place and as I write these words in ink, I hope a smile is on your face.

Have a nice day.

Your friend
Michael O'Hara
B/1/26

Dear Ernie,

While reading Volume 1:3 Summer 1993 of *The Khe Sanh Veteran*, I came upon an article "Fireteam Plus One" written by a former platoon member with India 3/26. I was in the first squad.

My request to you is that you forward the enclosed letter to Mike. I have not had any knowledge of his condition or whereabouts since he was wounded on 10th September 1967, then medevaced. This event occurred during Operation Kingfisher, the statistics of which I never acquired. I was the point-man on the morning the operation started. My squad leader was the first KIA, we walked into a horse-show ambush. This ambush should not have happened. Before it was set off, I had radioed to my squad leader that NVA were in the area and had left signs that they were right in front of us. I was told "keep going, keep going". Finally, my squad leader came up to the point to see what I had been relaying to him. He was shot by automatic fire which was the onset of the ambush, and Operation Kingfisher was underway.

After all this time, (from Nam until now), I am just starting my healing process. This has happened because I read *The Khe Sanh Veteran*.

Semper Fi
Samuel Letbetter
P.O. Box 534
Jessup, Maryland 20794.

Dear Ernie,

I want to thank you for sending me Sam Letbetter's letter. I will definitely write to him. I am, however, extremely sorry to hear of his present circumstances.

Your letter arrived at a time when I was debating when I should contact you. I just couldn't bring myself to address the situation.

My friend, Joseph Wrobleski, died approximately 2 weeks ago. He served with M and H&S 3/26 for 18 months in Nam. He was with 3/26 for the Siege and the battle around Con Thien.

For professional reasons he had changed his name to Chuck Everst, but I always called him Ski. Even when he called me at work the messages always said 'Ski called'.

It is with an extremely heavy heart that I ask that Joseph Wrobleski be listed as a deceased comrade. Also, that the name Chuck Everst be removed from our roster. No one from the Corp has a clue who Chuck Everst is. I am positive more than one will remember Joe "Ski" Wrobleski.

Thank you for the work you are doing. It is appreciated by many of us.

Semper Fi
Mike Padula
I/3/26

Dear Ernie,

Just a short note to thank you for sending me your book. The sad part is that the administration won't let me have it. The policy here is that any book coming in must be sent either from the publisher or directly from a book store. It can't come in from a private residence.

I have talked to the Security Captain and what he suggested was to have it sent back to you at your address and ask that the next time you are in a national chain book store (like in a mall), to give it to them and see if they would send it in as if you had just bought it there. It should then be allowed in without any problem. Sounds strange I know, but then the Department of Corrections' rules aren't meant to make any sense, they're just meant to cause aggravation and humiliation. It normally takes about a week to ship something out of here so you should get the book back pretty soon. I'd really appreciate it if you could get a book store to send it back to me.

I am trying to acquire several books from Vietnam authors to start building up a small library for the Vets in here through our Vietnam Veterans PTSD group. We are trying to start a group of incarcerated Vietnam Vets which in addition to offering PTSD treatment, will also help Vets who are going to be getting out soon by pooling our job knowledge for employment help, disability claim preparation and other positive and constructive efforts. We will also be throwing a little in the kitty so that a guy gets a little kick from us when he leaves. When you get out of here, you are only given $100 from the prison; that doesn't even buy a guy a set of clothes to wear for a job interview, or buy groceries, let alone pay for a roof over your head until you get a job. We have decided to put some money aside to help our own when the time comes and they need it. We would also use it for other things, like flowers for a death in the family, emergency at home, etc. We, as Vietnam Veterans, have been looked at like crazies for a long time, most of you out there know how that goes. Imagine being a Vet coming out of prison. A convict who is also a Vet is considered not only a crook, but a crazy crook, and our group has decided to see if we can start some kind of positive action, both here and in the public community, to attempt to start effecting a change. I myself donate a portion of each mirror I do to the kitty and the starting of the Vet library was my idea.

Other things we are tossing around are a monument here. Doing talks and speeches on Veterans in trouble to schools, groups, social organizations, from first hand knowledge. We, of course, can't leave the prison, but have kicked around the idea of video tape. We would welcome any suggestions that you or any other members may have as right now, this is all still in the planning stage and we need ideas to bat around in order to decide on one or two constructive directions in which to head. It also has to meet the approval of the prison administration, so getting us all together to dig a tunnel is out — so is learning to fly helicopters or entering shooting contests!

Running out of paper here so I'll let you go. Just wanted to warn you about the book and thank you again.

Hoa binh Brother,
Richard Payne
AVCF,
P O Box 1000
Crowley, Colorado 81034
B/1/9

Dear Ernie & Bros.,

It's been almost three weeks since I left you all in Washington and even though I've had some depression and nightmares after leaving my friends, I wouldn't trade my 4 days with you people for anything in the world. My daughter was playing a softball tournament in Boulder Co. that weekend and I missed it to see you.

I am going to the Topeka KS. VA PTSD Ward next Wednesday, 28th July, and I just had to write to thank everyone who had a part in making the reunion a reality. And a special thanks to Gunny Penn! That lady is the greatest and helped me at The Wall. My biggest regret of the weekend was not having more Seabees and Recon people there. If it hadn't been for this reunion, I may never have gotten up the nerve to go to The Wall, and I have wanted to go ever since I found out about it, but I always came up with some excuse not to go, money, time, whatever.

I also found people there who, like me, keep seeing the faces of lost Brothers but can't remember names. It has helped to know that I am not alone with this problem but it doesn't stop the film from running night after night. I may never know the names and may never lose this emptiness I feel inside, but I found friendship and love that I have missed for 25 years.

Captain Pipes and 1/26 Thursday, in the Hall taking pictures. A hell of a racket you set up! I woke up and knew it was Marines or Seabees. I opened my door and it was Marines, wives taking pictures, I didn't know what to say! But Capt Pipes asked me my name, etc., and I replied "Seabees 301". I will never forget his hug and words, that we Seabees were more Marine than the Marines! Thanks Captain: I have always thought of myself as a Marine, not a Squid, your words continued on page 10



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expanded my chest and head size and my love of the Marines!

My closest friends next to Seabees were Recon Marines and Wenger (our yeomen at Khe Sanh), and I found B-Recon and Lost Brothers. I love you guys and will never forget you. Thanks for being there.

Bagpipes at Arlington, in The Bar and at The Wall, chills from head to foot, I cried then and even now remembering that sound. There is no comparison of bugle to bagpipe and both bring tears, but the pipes moved something inside me and I thank Jim Taylor and hope to hear him play again. Thanks Bro!

I am a loner, I don't get close to people and I have to make myself civil in my everyday dealings with people, but that weekend I found myself talking to Brothers and not feeling hostile. I hope to make another reunion and renew friendships and spend more time talking.

Before I close, I want to thank you Ernie for the hard work you put in on *The Khe Sanh Veteran*. I wished we could have sat down and talked, gone through my pictures and other works, but you were so busy and had so many people to talk to. I hope you got to enjoy some of those 4 days!

And one last time — thank you, Bernice Penn!

Always Forever,
Sam Messer
CBMU 301
Marine At Heart

Skipper,

Thanks for the picture of us in front of the "Three Fighting Men". Reading your book has brought back many memories of the Patrol you wrote about. I remember grab-assing and laughing and looking you in the eyes as we crossed the stream that night heading back to base. I guess we were as pissed as you were. We wanted a fight and didn't give a shit. We knew you were pissed — we all were.

The reunion for my wife and I will be treasured in our hearts. It was our first, as it was for many who attended, and was very special. God, how I missed you all through the years. If I keep writing I'll start crying, for my PTSD pain is still very much with me.

Semper Fi
Henry & Donna Gagne
D/1/26

My Dearest Friend,

I'm finally home and made time to get you off a few lines. I really appreciate the photos and your thoughtfulness in sending them.

As we discussed, I am still sorting through the 4th July weekend — what a fabulous 4 or 5 days — all supercharged with emotions. I was at ease with my best friends with me — Sharon, you, Mike, the Snake, and the guys of the late companies "B" and "D". What a time!

I suppose what surprised me more than anything was Sharon: First because she said she wanted to go to the reunion with me and second, that she had a great time and felt at home with all the guys. Each one treated her with a tenderness and softness that still brings tears to my eyes when I think of it. The flowers that she got the night of the "guide on" was so special to her. She is now asking and discussing going to the next reunion.

Ernie, I'll close for now. Thanks for everything — the reunion, the photos, the companionship, the support, but most of all for being a close friend and a shining beacon in the darkness.

We all send our love.

Ken, Sharon & the boys

P.S. Got a card from, and sent a letter to, Gil Wall.

Dear Mr Stubbe,

I got your name and address from a mutual friend, Mr Tom Bystrom of Tower, MN. It is with sadness that I inform you of the death of Tom last November 21st, 1992, in a one vehicle rollover. Tommy was a true friend and an inspiration to all who knew him. I and my family sure do miss him. Tommy told me about you and your presence at Khe Sanh. He also turned me onto your book. Well done.

Several months before Tommy's death, he asked me to write a song about the Siege you all lived through. (I'm a chimney sweeper by trade/songwriter by vocation). He told me there was a Khe Sanh Survivors Association (?) that was tentatively planning on a reunion in Washinton D.C. this coming summer, or perhaps it was the 3rd Marine Div. Association (I'm Army, so please forgive my ignorance of Marine designations!). Anyway, he and I talked about attending together. He was so taken with the song I wrote he wanted to share it with his Brothers. I am enclosing the lyric sheet. You may reprint it if you so desire. I also have a cassette recording of the song plus several others I have written about that period in our history. It's yours for the asking.

Tommy mentioned some of you were working with the Bru back in Vietnam and he himself was dreaming of going back to help. Is there anything I can do in his memory?

Yours in Christ,
Paul Maki

Dear Ernie,

The Summer '93 issue of *The Khe Sanh Veteran* is great! Well done — much to think about and remember, and thanks to your powerful endorsements of my work. I fully expect to be up to my ears in iron before long. That's just the way I like it. I deeply appreciate what you are doing, not just for myself, but for all the guys.

I'll be moving back up to Siskiyou County either the 1st August or 1st September — at this time I'm not sure which. Last month I got permission to put one of our Khe Sanh sculptures at the LMSG, but first they want me to do one called "Hot LZ" involving two helicopters — a Huey on the ground and a Cobra in the air — plus 9 figures (2 pilots, 2 co-pilots, 1 door gunner, 1 crew chief and 3 grunts). The model for that one is nearing completion.

Here's a little helicopter story. Sometime during the summer of '68, we were flown somewhere to begin a sweep and landed on a bombed-off hilltop. The LZ was not contested. I remember jumping out, moving out from under the propwash and sitting down on a rock to check out the countryside. Looking at the ground between my feet I noticed a ladies high school ring just resting there in the dirt. It was from Kailua High School, 1968, had a blue stone with a surfer riding a wave and initials inside the band. I put the ring in my pocket and we moved off the hill. I still have it.

Semper Fi
Dennis Smith
B/1/26-SUPPLY

I enjoyed the recent issue of *The Khe Sanh Veteran* very much. It's very professional.

I took a tour to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in January-February of this year. We (14 of us) flew to Da Nang, got a bus up to Hue then went back to Da Nang. We were scheduled to fly to Nha Trang but the only plane for that flight had been wrecked and so we went by bus (no shock absorbers) down Route 1 with pot holes the size of craters now "surfaced" with crushed rock!

The countryside was green and lush and there were beautiful vegetable gardens and paddies. Saigon was as expected; too much traffic, beggars, dirty, etc. From the remarks of one of the others in the group who had had a regiment at Da Nang in '68-'69, the cities were worse now than during the fighting. Nothing had been rebuilt, hotels didn't have heating (it was cold in Hanoi, Dalat and Hue) or hot water. I didn't see Khe Sanh but I thought of all you men when we were near there.

On the whole the visit was interesting, but for us "Marine Connected" members of the group it was also emotional. Souvenir stands were selling U.S. dog tags in Da Nang and Hue — that upset me.

Thank you for mentioning Colonel Padley being buried at Arlington Cemetery. He's in section 60, grave # 3340. I hope you have a most meaningful get-together over July 4th.

Sincerely,
Shirley Padley

Ernie,

I thought I'd drop a letter to *The Khe Sanh Veteran* newsletter. I'm presently an IRR Marine and usually do my 2 weeks Active Duty time instructing today's "grunts". It's hard to believe we were once that young and "innocent" before Vietnam and Khe Sanh!

Usually, during a break, a couple of Marines drift in my direction to B.S., since I'm "older" and still in the Marines, and have mentioned in classes that I did a couple of tours in Vietnam. They usually inquire into what my most memorable "event" was, and obviously I always state "the Siege of Khe Sanh"! Since most recent wars or combat actions are measured by days or hours of "combat", they are amazed we held Khe Sanh for the 77 days of the Siege. I remind them that all the servicemen at Khe Sanh were dedicated men, mostly Marines, and hopefully in the future, if they have the same situation confront them, they'll do as well as we did.

The present day Marines still remember the history of Khe Sanh Vets and we will be remembered forever in the Corps.

S/Sgt W.S. Persoma
2639 Custer Ave.
Billings, MT 59102
H&S 1/9-81'S

• • •

Ernie,

The July reunion in D.C. is now over and I, unfortunately, haven't yet made one. Being a retired police detective, now County Juvenile Sexual Abuse Counselor and Individual Ready Marine Reservist, with a loving wife, 2 teenagers and living in Montana thousands of miles from a reunion, I hope that some year I will be able to attend one!

Anyway, like many other Khe Sanh Vets, I regularly write to Rev. Ray Stubbe. I also receive my monthly *Marine Leatherneck* magazine and had noticed a small article and photo of Tom Scott in Vietnam this last year. Out of interest, I wrote to Tom to determine if he had a photo he would "share". Tom indeed "shared" and sent me about 50 colour photos of Khe Sanh, the DMZ, Hue, Hwy 9 and many other I Corps locations. Needless to say, I was totally amazed that he was so willing to do this for me and had so many photos he was willing to share at the cost only of reproducing them. I could hardly believe I had recent photos of a country I did two tours in as a "grunt". After showing my two teenagers the photos, to the point where I finally noticed I was talking to myself in the kitchen, I quickly wrote to my old pen pal, Ray Stubbe. Within a few days, I was talking to Ray on the phone. There was no regret by myself to forward the photos to him to reproduce and read Tom Scott's explanation on the back of each photo. The timing was excellent as Ray had the copies in time for the D.C. reunion. If anyone deserved, or was appropriate to have a copy of the photos, it was the Rev. Ray Stubbe! I knew he would insure all Khe Sanh Vets would be able to enjoy them too. I applaud the energy he puts into the Association and his friendships. God holds a special place in heaven for Ray!

25 years after Khe Sanh, I'm still in the Marines, IRR only. I do 2 weeks a year at Pendleton or Le Juene instructing either tactics or the M60 to a lot younger Marines. I was also called to Active Duty for Desert Storm but was assigned instructor duties at Warrior Training BN at Camp Pendleton instead of being assigned to the infantry in the Gulf as I had requested. Instructors always have time to B.S. and the conversation usually ends up on myself, being an older S/Sgt (44 years), asking if I had "combat" experience. I explain my rank, or lack of it, to my being out of the Corp from 1970 until 1990. I had received a Combat Meritorious to S/Sgt with 2 years, 11 months in the Corp, and upon requesting re-enlistment to the Reserves, was lucky to keep my rank at all, so I don't complain!

The subject of combat seems to quieten the "Gulfers" when I respectfully testify that I was with 1/9 at Khe Sanh. Being they ("Gulfers") measure their combat in hours and Khe Sanh Vets by days (77), all the new younger Marine instructors show great interest and respect for the Khe Sanh Vet instructors, who are very few! Even though I was

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away from the Corp for 20 years, now being a Reservist, I feel like I never missed a day. The newer Marines still greatly respect and appreciate what we did for our country and the Corps 25 years ago. Truly, the tradition lives on!

With friends like Rev. Stubbe, Tom Scott and Ric Payne, I appreciate my roots in the Corps, going back to my first year in the Marines at Khe Sanh.

Semper Fi
S/Sgt W.S. Persomia
H&S 1/9-81'S

P.S. I'd be interested to receive a catalogue or info on Khe Sanh T-Shirts or posters.

Dear Ernie,

I finished your book — it's great! "Welcome To Vietnam Macho Man" was a real revelation to me. There are so many similarities between you and me that I had to re-read "Macho Man" to glean more of the facts and recollections. The feelings jumped right out at me where there were similarities, such as wanting to be there, wanting to fight, not believing in rushing your men, top dog pays whether your fault or not — if you want to be a leader, e.g. J.B.'s responsibility when Lt Jacques got it. I remember I was at the wire that day when his troops brought him in through the wire in a poncho.

I guess payback was on a lot of people's minds for a long time. Ken & 'B' Co. got their dead bodies back at the end of February. I was in on that planning along with them, Charlie Davies S-3, Bill Smith — Arty Officer, Steve Longo — Air Officer, all 1/26. We didn't get air that day but arty did good without dropping any short rounds. The NVA were boxed in on both flanks and to their rear, so they couldn't get reinforcements and they had a hard time getting out. 'B' Company troops did a job on the NVA that day. Like you said in your book, they got their dead. That was the main purpose of the assault on their trenches. I had the aid station and doctor move forward to best aid the wounded. Our troops killed a lot of NVA in their trenches — even used flames. I talked to one of the flames at the reunion — what a revelation!

Ernie, there are so many other similarities far outweighing the dissimilarities that I could go on and on, but for that we need to sit down together and drink everything in sight! Right now, you need to be congratulated on a very fine performance as a writer. It's unique, but "Macho Man" is great. I thought my language was bad, but whew! Yours tops mine! I guess you were gone then but Reyes from California, my radio operator, and several other CP troops appeared one morning having printed "McEwans Fucking Bastards" on their helmet covers. I guess it was at that point that I asked the Sgt Major and Corporal — "do I swear a lot?"

You brought back many memories for me, such as the Sgt from 'A' Co. who got killed by his own grenade. Ray Snyder was Co. Cmdr. Jim Champion took Ken's place as C.O. 'B' Co. Jack Eggar, C.O. 'C' Co. got killed right away with that 130 round right into his bunker. If I can find a letter from his wife Jane, I'll show it to you someday. It's a good letter. Jack Daniel took over 'D' Co. — I guess from you. Times were fast Ernie. Later on, Jack saved my life by shooting an NVA soldier who was aiming to shoot me in the back. It was on the road to An Hoa — we were opening it up on a 10-day operation. Whilst walking over some dead gooks in the trenches, one who I'd just passed got up and aimed an RPG-2 at me when Jack yelled out and shot him. I'd thought he was dead when I passed him — but he wasn't. Jack got him.

When I told you to go home, I was concerned about your last few days in-country. I wanted you to be safe in the rear, at least for a few days. You'd earned it. It was the same thing with Ken Pipes a little while later. Ken was ready to go back. He was a great S-3 and a great Co. Cmdr. You too Ernie, you were a great Co. Cmdr., same thing for S-2.

The memories are too many and too great to cover in a letter so I need to hang it up on this note. We need time to talk some day. There are too many good memories in spite of the adversities. All the humor, the troops individual concern and loyalty for one another, their dependability on each other — just being a part of that makes a person feel good.

It was good to see you, to meet your daughter Evie and to have a few moments together with that great group. My wife Gerry and I had a wonderful time. We were with a different group every night and had a ball.

Looking forward to another reunion and a get-together with you.

Semper Fi
Fred McEwan
Blackbud Six
1/26

P.S. Even though you weren't in 1/26 later on, I wanted you to have a copy of this MUC from 7th Marines. Your Delta Company continued to do great in combat. Thought you would be pleased to know.

"The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION to

SEVENTH MARINE REGIMENT (REINFORCED)
FIRST MARINE DIVISION (REINFORCED)
FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC

for service as set forth in the following:

★ CITATION ★

For meritorious service in action against North Vietnamese Army and insurgent Viet Cong forces during Operations ALLEN BROOK and MAMELUKE THRUST in Quang Nam Province, Republic of Vietnam, from 4 May to 6 July 1968. Displaying aggressive, tenacious tactics, the Seventh Marine Regiment (Reinforced) found, fixed, and severely mauled the 36th Regiment, 308th Division of the North Vietnamese Army and various Viet Cong units preparing to initiate offensive operations in the Da Nang and Thuong Duc areas of Quang Nam Province. The demoralizing losses inflicted on the enemy included 1080 killed in action, 14 prisoners of war, significant quantities of weapons and supplies captured and numerous prepared positions destroyed. By their effective teamwork, aggressive fighting spirit, determination and individual acts of valor and courage, the gallant officers and men of the Seventh Marine Regiment

(Reinforced) not only pre-empted the enemy offensive against Da Nang and the Special Forces camp at Thuong Duc, but also decimated a fresh, combat-ready North Vietnamese Army regiment with the con-comitant destruction of irreplaceable Viet Cong Main Force units in Quang Nam Province. As a direct result of the achievements of the Seventh Marine Regiment (Reinforced), the enemy was unable to seriously threaten Free World Military Assistance Forces units or installations for the remainder of 1968. The Seventh Marines' exemplary courage, devotion to duty and performance in the face of a determined enemy resistance were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service."

Col. John B Sollis, Commander,
Marine Barracks,
8th & Eye Streets SE,
Washington, DC 20390

Dear Colonel Sollis:

I am writing, Sir, to point out that you blew an opportunity to do some good at the parade on Friday July 2, 1993. Present that evening, as your staff was well aware, were some 100 veterans of the siege of Khe Sanh with their loved ones. And you ignored them.

I was in attendance that night as the wife of a Khe Sanh veteran, who was Commander of M Company on Hill 881S during the siege. Quite familiar with the format of the parade, having attended every Friday for two summers (1969 and 1970) while my now husband was Commander of the special ceremonial platoon, including the silent drill team and the Marine Corps color guard, I fully expected formal, possibly grateful acknowledgement of the presence of these men gathered together twenty-five years after the siege. I thought it even possible that Viet Nam would be mentioned in the litany of battles represented by the various banners attached to the Marine Corps color. Naive am I, apparently. The veterans of Khe Sanh had learned in 1968 to expect to be let down.

I expected better of 8th and I. It's one thing for civilians, even the Federal Government, to ignore these men who lived through hell for us, but the U.S. for-God's-sake Marine Corps to fail to recognize them? Pathetic!

No disrespect to the distinguished officers who reviewed that parade and accompanied the reviewer, but it did add to the irony that their current job titles sounded a lot more like Admiral-in-charge-of-counting-paper-clips than hero-getting-shot-at-while-desperately-trying-to-medevac-a-dying-Marine.

All in all, your performance that evening managed to fuel the sense of abandonment that many of these veterans have nurtured for twenty-five years. The only thing good about it was that it supplied a new anecdote for those cataloging the snubs that Khe Sanh Vets have received. Surely I don't have to tell you about the lack of support perceived by Viet Nam veterans. Are you aware, as well, that Khe Sanh veterans still feel keenly the failure of the country, the military establishment in general, and even the U.S. Marine Corps to support them — then or now? I wonder. A couple of young Marines milling around the front gate earlier that evening admitted that they had never heard of Khe Sanh. Odd. Our contemporaries had been taught about Guadalcanal — Belleau Wood even.

At this point I respectfully suggest that you send an apology to the Khe Sanh vets. You might address it to Mr Ken Penn, Reunion Chairman and newly elected President, The Khe Sanh Veteran Inc., c/o Ray Stubbe, 8766 Parkview Court, Wauwatosa, WI 53226.

Sincerely yours,
Mrs J Thomas Esslinger
9102 Brierly Road
Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

• • •

Dear Mrs Esslinger,

Thank you for sharing with me your concern and obvious distress regarding our shabby treatment, as you have characterized it, of some very special people, the heroes of Khe Sanh and their loved ones. Rest assured, you have seized my undivided attention!

Most of the personal letters I receive are very warm and effusive in their praise of the young men and women of this barracks who knock themselves out to represent and uphold the high standards of the Marine Corps in general, and Marine Barracks, 8th & I, in particular. That much remains unchanged from your husband's days as an 8th & I Marine. The "noblesse oblige" of being a Marine — of always striving to be a worthy successor to those who have gone before us — is no small "burden". But in my mind, that's precisely what makes a Marine different. Ounce for ounce, we may not be any better than our sister service counterparts — I'm sure we're not, but the mere notion that we're supposed to be better — that we bear the weight of many generations' worth of pride, professionalism, heroic achievement and uncommon valor to live up to — has always animated a higher order of self-consciousness and commitment from Marines, on and off the parade deck, as on and off the battlefield.

Occasionally, as in this instance, someone writes to air a complaint or to offer constructive criticism. Those are the letters I read and regard with greatest interest and attention. Clearly, Mrs Esslinger, the point of the exercise on Tuesday and Friday evenings is to pay tribute — to demonstrate our immense pride, respect and reverence for those who have gone before us — my father, your husband, the heroes, celebrated and unknown, whose example of service and sacrifice each of us has chosen to emulate by our being Marines — certainly not to ignore or offend our Nation's heroes or to "fuel their sense of abandonment".

Your opening salvo is irrefutable: by failing to recognize the veterans of Khe Sanh at our 2 July parade, we did indeed blow an opportunity to do some good. Sadly enough, we blow the same opportunity every Friday night throughout the parade season — not deliberately, with perverse or callous indifference as your letter suggests — but for the simple reason that literally dozens of worthy groups (veterans' groups and Marine Corps reunions, in particular) make the 8th & I pilgrimage every week. In point of fact, they're the ones whose approval and "Old Corps" endorsement we're striving to obtain. But if we were to pay tribute to each of them, (something they arguably deserve as much as the parade itself), the ceremony would last several hours. As a matter of policy, we formally recognize our guests of honor and forego the opportunity to acknowl-

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edge others. That's a calculated choice. The parade is a tribute to all our forebears. Most people asking to be recognized understand, even if they are momentarily disappointed.

I don't know who you encountered "milling around the front gate" before the parade, but I agree that it's a shame our young people — our young Marines and their civilian peers — seem to know so very little about the defining experience of our generation. When your husband was commanding his company at Khe Sanh, I was a freshman in college. I certainly knew about Khe Sanh; we all did. Three years later, when I was on my way to OCS to become a Marine officer — just like your husband — my college classmates thought I was insane. Most of the young Marines at this barracks weren't living during the Viet Nam era. Sadly, the immediacy of that period for us — the flood of conflicting emotions and the yearning for meaning — is beyond their grasp. The "MTV generation" has yet to "discover" Viet Nam. In time, they will. But to most of them, the whole of Viet Nam is essentially indistinguishable from the Korean War, World War II and the Banana Wars.

When I commanded a battalion during Operation Desert Storm, all I thought about was the Marines of Viet Nam and Korea: "How in God's name did those guys do it!" Our vignette was mercifully short. I would never presume to compare the 100 hours I experienced with the protracted hell-on-earth your husband and the heroes of Khe Sanh withstood. But as someone who has cradled a dying Marine in his arms in the middle of a minefield, I can assure you there's a part of me that grieves his loss every day of my life, just as surely your husband grieves the loss of his men. I know what that pain is all about.

Surely, you must understand, Mrs Esslinger, because we certainly did, that the immense outpouring of public support and affection for the men and women of Desert Storm had far less to do with us, with our "mini-series" of the moment, than it did the men and women of Viet Nam — and Korea, "the forgotten war". If there has ever been such a thing as a public apology to the military by the American people as a whole, there it was, for all the world to see and acknowledge. Moreover, our senior leaders were certainly attuned to and shaped by the experience of Viet Nam. None of them was about to let what had happened then — what had happened to many of them — happen to us. And we all thanked God for that! After all, today's commanders-in-chief, and even the generals and admirals-in-charge-of-counting-paperclips, as you dismiss them, were the young officers of Viet Nam. None of them has fogotten Khe Sanh.

You have suggested that I tender an apology to the Khe Sanh vets. I respectfully decline the invitation. I believe I understand your disappointment — even the pain and lingering sense of outrage that the veterans of Khe Sanh have not received just credit and recognition for their heroic service and sacrifice. I quite agree. And should you choose to take a shot at me via Mr Spencer's newsletter, or anywhere else, I'll absorb the full impact. On reflection, I would hope you would accept that where no offense is intended, as in this instance, none should be taken. On the other hand, should you choose to be offended by our failure to acknowledge the presence of your husband's group at our parade, I don't imagine that any explanation I might offer will change your feelings. In my view, your outrage, while entirely understandable, is altogether misdirected.

To your husband and the other heroes of Khe Sanh, I offer my appreciation and deep respect. There's not a Marine alive — those of us who know anything at all about 1968 — who doesn't feel the same. And to you, Mrs Esslinger, I offer my very best wishes. I sincerely hope you and your husband will return to the Barracks. It will always be our pleasure and honor to welcome you home.

Semper Fidelis,
John B Sollis
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding Officer

ED: Thank you so much, Colonel, for reminding me why I didn't want to do more than one tour.

My interest in the Vietnam War was awakened a couple of years ago after seeing two documentaries on British television on the POW/MIA issue, the contents of which were so powerful that I was compelled to read up on the subject. I soon discovered there were precious few books on the issue available in the U.K., so I turned my attention to the war itself. After absorbing my first few Nam books, the floodgates opened and I just got swept along — wanting to learn more and more. I wanted to understand why the American public so vilified the Vets and I tried to see the war through the eyes of the men who fought it. I've since accumulated and read 39 books on Nam to date and am currently on my 40th — Ray Stubbe's "Valley of Decision" — which is excellent (thank you Ray).

With the vast majority of my reading material being Vets' personal accounts of their tour of duty, I've learned a lot about what life was like in the field; the conditions under which men lived, the fear of not knowing what lay around the next bend in the trail, the frustration of facing an adversary which rarely stood its ground to fight, the ever present threat of death or maiming by booby-traps and the amazing camaraderie and indestructable special bond that was forged under such conditions. But I can only begin to understand what it must have been like for the Vets, to have experienced the exhilaration of making it out of the war zone alive, only to be returned to 'normality' back in the world and be expected to pick up where they left off like nothing had happened, having just endured a lifetime's experiences crammed into 13 months. I think one of the most important things I've learned is that war isn't something that can be simply walked away from; those who it doesn't manage to annihilate indelibly carry its scars for life.

My father saw action in WW II, but even though the war in Europe ended in 1945, it kept on going inside him for decades after. I relived his war for the first seventeen years of my life. War does something to the soul, it buries itself deep inside; it's invisible, but its always there. Unlike their American counterparts, the British have never been hot on reunions or Veterans Associations. They certainly don't support each other the way you do — and I think that's sad because I can see what the Vets get out of it.

Having read so much about Khe Sanh, I arranged a special

trip up there during a visit to Vietnam in November '92. The calling card of the B-52's was plain to see alongside Route 9, huge craters gouged out of the rolling hillsides — the scenery was truly breathtaking. The only thing that spoilt the day was the weather. Walking along Khe Sanh's access road, a fierce gale howled across the exposed plateau sweeping a wall of torrential rain ahead of it, making it difficult to even stand up. Whilst the northern part of the base had been overtaken by nature once more, with head high elephant grass, the bulk of the base resembled something akin to a moonscape, pockmarked with excavations where the locals had been digging for metal and with a faded Vietnamese memorial standing on the edge of what used to be the airstrip. Knowing its history, being at Khe Sanh was like walking on hallowed ground, the sadness of the place almost tangible. Compared to other major events during the war, Khe Sanh is unique because it was a triumph of human spirit against seemingly overwhelming odds. The Marine dogma of offense went out the window once the Siege got under way, and it was only on the rare occasion you got 'payback' — like on the 'Plateau Sweep' mentioned in "Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man". Khe Sanh isn't so much what the Siege was about, but more about the men who fought there. After all, three months following the end of the Siege, the base was abandoned. In retrospect, the real estate had little to do with it. It's not the place but the people who are 'Khe Sanh'.

I thought Danny Parker's letter (printed in the Fall issue '92) very insightful when he said that the Khe Sanh Vets were the most caring and tightest group of Vets he'd ever encountered. Wherever you are now, or whatever your present circumstances, never forsake the memories of what you endured, and accomplished. It's an integral part of you. It sets you apart from all others. Khe Sanh will always be wherever all of you are.

Sandra Hill
London, England.

Dear Ernie,

Thought you guys might be interested in some pictures I took at and around Khe Sanh right before the siege. I was a radio operator with HQ BTY 1/13, in the FDC. Sometimes during the siege, we (each radio operator) would be handling as many as four or five fire missions each. It really got hectic at times. A lot of our bunkers took direct hits.

Both me and my buddy, Dan Lipos, are going to try to be in Washington for 4th July.

Semper Fi
Ken Doss
1/13

Dream Peace

Even in my graying years I heard the noise of days bygone,
I cannot shake the tears I have shed while watching my comrades die.
I think of the Blackwall and I miss them all.
So many names a soul for each,
my prayer that they have a place in heaven.

Something I once heard on a distant beach
that should have been said to each.
That too was so many years ago, perhaps seventy or seventy one;
six months earlier I was in the jungle and I carried a gun.

I walked through dense brush knowing Agent Orange had been sprayed,
and even in my dream I see the lives fade.
I thanked God I won; why was I spared? I got away in the hot sun;
I stared, and I still remember being quite scared.

Not a good reward finding myself on death row in this decade;
I still wait for the sad memories to fade.
Dream of peace my Brothers.
We, the living, are the only ones who can make it happen
for all the Brothers and Sisters.

On the Blackwall, who lived and died for us all;
Dream of peace my Brothers.

The ones' missing to get some slack,
dream of peace and let's bring them back.

Manuel Babbitt
AT'S

The Smell

It was Tet of 67-68.
The night patrols of the Marines were being wiped out
on a regular basis.
So we were sent out, mostly to find the lost patrols.
We found that Mr Charles had been stacking the
bodies in piles.
They would booby trap them.
They put traps in open wounds, under and around them.
You had to put your hand in and remove the set grenade.
On one occasion, I lifted a body and I heard the spoon fly!
I slammed the body back down and it blew.
I got a hot piece of shrapnel burnt into my right wrist.
I hope he will forgive me, I can't seem to forgive myself.
But this is not what I wish to talk of.
I wish to talk of the smell.
It never goes away!
I got me a medal for things of that time.
It smells too.

Ralph Takemire
SEAL Team I SLF

Notes on the Reunion

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on Hill 881-S during the Siege. He is currently serving as a Navy Chaplain on USS BEALLEAU WOOD (LHA-3) operating out of Japan.

In addition to Tim Sims, there are several others of our Khe Sanh vet family who are still on active duty — but very few: COL. BRUCE B.G. CLARKE who was the District Advisor in Khe Sanh ville as a young Captain. Col. Clarke currently is an instructor at the Army War College in tactics at Carlisle Barracks, PA. Also, CAPTAIN BERNARD G. COLE, USN, who was the liaison officer for naval gunfire at Khe Sanh during the Siege. He worked in the FSCC. He is now an instructor in the National War College. Also, LT. COL. TOM CZECH who was at our Reunion.

Congratulations to DR. GERALD C. HICKEY on the publication of his new book on the history of the different Montagnard tribes through the period of the war. He has an extensive chapter on the Bru. Dr. Hickey is an anthropologist who spent many years in Vietnam, including many years with the Bru.

On our KIA listing:

- Amend the spelling of KECLOVITS to read KEGLOVITS
- Amend the unit shown for LCPL KENT, which should be B/1/26

The following are additions to our KIA listing:

- WILBUR STOVALL — 1/13: KIA 09 MAR '68 — 44E 1
- LCPL HOWARD LEMUEL JONES JR — FLC-POL: KIA 24 Feb
- SGT JOHN CARL ORNELAS — FLC-POL: KIA 05 Feb

The following note was posted during our reunion:

"Seeking any information on the following U.S. Army Special Forces/MACSOG personnel lost near Tchepone, Laos, on 28 March 1968: GEORGE "RON" BROWN; ALAN L. BOYER and CHARLES HUSTON. These men may have been assigned to FOB-1/FOC-3 at Khe Sanh prior to the mission on which they were lost. Anyone with any information please contact: JACK KULL, 3228 Cambridge Court, Fairfax VA 22030. % (703) 352-2144 (leave message)."

The group called "In Touch" that attempts to put families of KIAs and buddies of the same KIAs together, based on requests from the family to hear from those who knew their loved one, has a list which includes the following who served at Khe Sanh. Anyone who knew these may want to contact Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 2030 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 412, Arlington VA 22201. % (703) 525-1107:

- LCPL Larry W BENGE, H&S, 1/9
- LCPL David Bruce FREED, Khe Sanh
- Gary David SCRIBNER, B/3d Recon
- CAPT Franklin Delano BYNUM, L/3/26 (KIA 27 Jun '67 in the Battle of Hill 689 in June 1967)
- PFC Steven J MULLET, M/3/26, KIA 21 Jul '67
- CPL Vic Manuel PIZARRO, A/1/13, KIA 6 Mar '68
- CAPT Francis Leo SHAFER Jr, D/1/9, KIA 30 Mar '68

We are sad to learn that one of our brothers died 27 Feb 1993: LAGRAND BURKS of Montgomery, Texas, who served in VMO-2.

Manuel Babbitt and John Hargesheimer (both of the ONTOS section at Khe Sanh) would like to locate the following who were also in ONTOS: D.W. SMITH; "GRANDPA" LORENZ; JIM PATTON and the family of RAY FERRY (KIA 9 April at the age of 18). If any of you know, please write to Manny Babbitt or John Hargesheimer.

• • •

The reflection of peace in every letter.
The reflection of peace in every line.
The reflection of peace with each and every memory,
of a face and time that will never age.
A tear finds its way across a very weary face that strives
desperately to prevent betrayal of the emotions that course
within its soul.
In the finger that shakingly points and nears the etched remembrance,
are the thoughts of that last goodbye.
Many times unseen, many times unsaid, many times unable to be mourned.
Many times a singular sad farewell, unwanted to be expressed at the time.
Replaced with a miserly gratitude of still being among the living.
A harsh description for a very hard time.
An instant's separation that only comrades who have lived in that fine margin that war's reality brings, know.
The suddenness of the final parting is a cruel quirk to those who have shared
so much in so little time.
Beyond understanding of the grim finality lies a confusion as to why.
Reach out the helping hand and there is not one to accept its aid.
Bend the elbow and ponder the empty palm, the outstretched fingers,
and slowly it closes into a fist, as the rage builds on the reality.
There has been an emptiness, a loss, a non-replaceable parting of the ways.
Your path has stopped, and mine; mine is still a perceived yellow brick road.
And the wizard I seek is the evasion of your fate.
Down that road I seek an answer to a question that I dare not verbalize.
I cast the shadow of an emotion that I must cut short.
I care for you! I have cared for you! We have shared!
And now - now you have been taken a way I will do all I can to avoid taking.
You have given me cause to feel betrayal.
And I do feel betrayed.
Alone I stand, my finger tracing what others only see as your name;
but I see a place and time that has not ended, nor will it ever end.
Never have I shared what we shared.
It is you, there, and I, here. It is "we" again.
We, who can pass on to the children what we have given so often.
Not the pain, not the hurt, not the anguish of the tortured being,
but the beauty and warmth that only friendship reveals.
The growing bonds of friends that time and distance cannot break.
The true meaning of what sharing a last Marlboro entails.
My comrade, my friend, I share my tear.

Talis Kamiskis
CAC 0-3

ED NOTE: Talis handed me this precious piece at the Wall.



The line at Arlington to witness the dedication of the plaque.



Ray Stubbe



The memorial plaque dedicated to Khe Sanh vets during the reunion.



Echo Company 2/26

Photos contributed by Khe Sanh vets in attendance

LIST OF KHE SANH VETS AND VISITORS ATTENDING
(Does not include the wives, children and guests of veterans)

ARNDT, Terry — F/2/26
BALANCO, John — CAC 0
BALLARD, Larry A — 26th
BARROWS, Frank — H&S, 2/26
BATES, Robert G — W/1/13
BATTARD, Carl — 26th
BEALL, James "Doc" — B/1/26
BELARDO, Joe — Dusters
BLAND, Dave J — H&S, 2/26
BODENWEISER, Jeff — E/2/26
BOZE, Tom — D/1/26
BREEDING, Earle — E/2/26
BRIGHT, Calvin — B/1/26
BROWN, Lawrence N Jr — HMM-165
BROWNMILLER, Susan — Writer
BRUSH, Peter W — W/1/13
BURGER, Lee — H&S, 1/26
CANNON, Carlton L — E/2/26
CICALA, Doc John — B/1/26
CLARK, Larry — 1/11
COLE, B.D. — HQ, 1/13
COLLINS, Mike — H&S, 3/26
COMPTON, Charles — F/2/26
COOK, W.T. "Tom" — 26th
CORBETT, Jack — H&S, 1/26
CORREIA, Bill — L/3/26
COWAN, Bill — I/3/26
CRENSHAW, Carlton B — C/1/13
CREPEAU, Michael — 3d FRC
CRITTENDEN, Steven M — F/2/26
CZECH, Thomas J — A/1/9
DABNEY, Bill — I/3/26
DAHLHEIMER, Gary — A/3dATs
DARGAN, Paul T — B/3dRecon
DAWDY, James H Jr — Seabees
DEFELICE, John — D/1/26
DESCHAINE, Maurice
DIAZ, Eddie — F/2/26
DIGAETANO, John — G/1/26
DOROSKI, "Ski" — 3d FRC
DWORSKY, Dick — I/3/26
EATON, Miriam
EICHLER, Tom — E/2/26
EPPS, James — C/1/26
ERNST, Clayton — 3d FRC
ESPOSITO, Bob — BLT 2/7
ESSLINGER, Tom — I & M/3/26
EVANS, Ed — III MAF
EXUM, Ron — B/1/26
FERGUSON, Daniel R — W/1/13
FESSENDEN, Greg — D/1/26
FINN, John J — D/1/26
FISHER, Dan J — D/1/26
FITZGERALD, Steve A — H&S, 1/26
FIXLER, Barry — E/2/26
FOLEY, Rick — I/3/26
FOSTER, Charles — B/1/26
FROH, Jim — 26th
FROMME, Rick — I/3/26
FULLWOOD, George — D/1/26
GAGNE, Henry R — D/1/26
GIBNEY, Joe — C/1/26
GILLESPIE, Donald J — C/1/26
GOESKE, Larry L — MCTU-62
GREENE, Joseph P — ASRT, MASS-3
GRIFFITH, Vince — E/2/26
GUTTORMSON, Darold L — VMA-311
HAISLEY, Steve — H/2/26
HAMILTON, Richard — I/3/26
HANNA, Bob W — B/1/26
HARGESHEIMER, John — A/3dAT
HARRISON, Bob — A/1/26
HEBRON, James — B/1/26
HERNANDEZ, Nick — C/1/26
HOFFMAN, Vic — A/1/26 81s
HOLLINGSTEAD, Ron — B/1/26
HOWE, Jack H — H&S, 3/26
HUDSON, Jerry E — 26th
HYATT, Claude — C/1/12
JACOBS, Quiles — B/1/26
JAMES, Peter C — A/1/26
JASSO, Anthony
(for Ralph TAKEMIRE)
JAYNE, Bill — B/1/26
JONES, Bruce E — 1/26 81s
JONES, Kathi
KAMINSKIS, Talis — CAP O-3
KAYLOR, Jim — E/2/26
KESEK, Ron S — H&S 3/26
KILBRIDE, Jack — I/3/26
KNIEDLER, Grant — B/1/26
KNOX, Robert J — CNN
KOZICZKOWSKI, David — C/1/26
KOZUCH, Gunny Gerald — A/1/26
KUKURBA, Pete — D/1/26
KUNDRAT, Joe J — K/3/9
KYLLO, Kellan — HMM-262
LACY, Terry — A/1/26
LAFOUNTAINE, Norm — HML-167
LANCASTER, John "Doc" — E/2/26
LARKEN, Brian "Doc" — E/2/26
LEBOLD, Elwood A — M/3/26
LEE, Mike — I/3/26 HST
LERTOLA, Jim — 26th, S-2
LESLIE, Jim -26th, Comm
LOEHRER, Mike C — 1/13
LOGAN, G.L. "Red" — HMM-262
LOKKEN, Brian C — E/2/26-HN
LOLA, Joe — FLC
LONDON, Bob — 26th — MPs
LUMPKIN, Al R. Jr — B/3dRecon
MACIAS, John J — I/3/26
MANNION, Dennis — K/3/26
MAVES, Bill — E/2/26
MCCARTNEY, Larry — E/2/26
MCEWAN, Fred — 26th
MCGREAVEY, Dan — D/1/26
MCGUIRE, Jessica — Lawyer
(for Manuel BABBITT)
MEADE, Alan
MEEKS, Joe R — E/2/26
MEREDITH, Doug E — A/2/94 — 175s
MESSER, Lewis S — CBMU-301
MESSNER, Bill — B/3dRecon
METTS, Andrew L — A/1/9
MILLER, Scott — B/3dRecon
MILLS, Bob — 1/26 81s
MINK, Jim B — G/2/26
MORALES, Carlos — A/3d SP
MORGAN, Robert — H&S, 2/26
MORTON, Dan — B/1/26
MUNDY, Carl E
NEIGHBORS, Wayne — A/1/13
NOONAN, Emmett P — D/1/26
NOWOTNY, Charles E — HMM-164
O'CONNOR, William J — C/1/13
O'HARA, Michael — B/1/26
OKSNEE, Carl — H&S & A/1/9
ORR, Steven W — 26th Comm
PAINTER, Rob — B/3dRecon
PARKER, Gark K — A/3d SP
PARR, Terry L — A/3d Eng
PARSONS, Ron — 15th Aerial USAF
PATRICIO, Sid "Fish" — D/1/26
PELOQUIN, Richard A — I/3/26
PENN, Ken — W/1/13
PETERSON, George — 1/26 Comm
PHILLIPS, Jack — E/2/26
PIPES, Ken — B/1/26
POTTER, John A — L/3/26
PRENDERGAST, Ed — B/1/26
PRICE, Keith — B/1/9-HN
RADCLIFFE, HJM "Mac" — A/1/9
RANN, Louis A — 26th XO
RAYNOR, Ron — A/1/26
REA, Bob
REDDO, Joseph — 154th TransSup
REED, Bob — E/2/26
RIDDLE, Steve — 1/26 Scout/Snip
RODELL, Dave — W/1/13
RODGERS, Dave G — A/1/13
RODGERS, Ken — B/1/26
ROMANETZ, Nick S — C/1/26
RONAN, Edmund T — 1/3
RYAN, Tom — B/1/9
RYMARUK, Ihor — 3d FRC
SALZMAN, Frederick L Jr
SANDERS, Ralph W — E/2/26
SCHWANER, John L — C/1/13
SEAVY-CIOFFI, Larry — A/1/9
SEGURA, Terry — D/1/26
SEITZ, John — A/1/13
SHERMAN, Joe — B/1/26
SHOUP, Allan D — 26th
SHREVE, Larry P — H&S, 3/26
SMITH, Roger — D/1/26

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SNOW, Rick — E/2/26
SNYDER, Jack D — E/2/26
SOTO, Richard — F/2/26
SPENCER, Ernie — D/1/26
SPRY, Dave — E/2/26
STANTON, Henry J — 3d FRC
STEINBERG, Doc Dave M — I/3/26
STEINHARDT, Tom — B/1/26
STREET, Stephen — A/1/26
STUBBE, Ray W — H&S 1/26
SULLIVAN, Daniel P — C Med
SWEARENGEN, Mark A — 2/94 Arty
SWEET, Morley R — 26th Comm
SWETS, Fred — A/3d SP
TAYLOR, George — D/1/26
TAYLOR, F. James — CAP O-2
THOMAS, Doc Jerome E — G/2/3
THORNTON, Charlie — L/3/26
TOMPKINS, Tom — H&S 26th Comm
TRAYNOR, John — H&S, 3/26
TROWBRIDGE, Paul R — C/1/13
UNANGST, Robert — I/3/26
VAUGHN, Richard A — 26th Comm
VENARDOS, Leonard G — A/1/13
WERESOW, Gene — B/1/26
WHEATON, Loren — M/3/26
WICALL, Gary "Doc" — E/2/26
WIEDHANN, Warren H — H&S 3/9
WIELEBSKI, Rev. John T — A/1/26
WILKINSON, James B — 1/26
WOOLMAN, William H II — B/1/26
WORTH, Michael — E/2/26 (3d Plt)
WYSONG, Harvey — 1/9
YATES, Bill — W/1/13

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MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING 01 JULY 1993

Present: Earle Breeding, Ken Penn, Calvin Bright, Ray Stubbe, Gary Parker

Excused: John Kaheny, Jim Wilkinson

A quorum was present.

The Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of 10 July 1992 were accepted and approved.

Old Business: None.

EARLE BREEDING dissolved all standing committees other than the Reunion Committee and noted his desire to nominate KEN PENN as President.

The Agenda of events as determined by the Reunion Committee was approved.

It was recommended that a Budget Committee be formed and that two signatures be required on all checks over $500.00.

A check was made to JOHN O'CONNOR in connection with a letter from the Pope concerning Father ROBERT BRETT. Unanimously approved by the Board.

It was moved, seconded and approved that the Board adjourn. Board adjourned 9.24 p.m. 01 July.

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SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AT DEDICATION OF MEMORIAL PLAQUE AT ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY CEREMONY, 02 JULY 1993

The plaque was set within red Wisconsin granite and also included a ginkgo tree, chosen because for its tenacity of holding onto life despite adverse environmental conditions. It is one of the oldest living things; fossils exist of the ginkgo.

All All-Service Color Guard was posted. Ray Stubbe provided a prayer in the form of a poem.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps, GENERAL CARL E. MUNDY, JR, provided a stirring address, emphasizing the importance of the battle of Khe Sanh and the importance of each individual who served there.

The children and the grandchildren then placed a wreath at the Memorial. KEN PENN said: "In years to come, it will be the future generations that will come here and look at the Memorial and touch the tree and say, 'My forefathers were alive when this tree was planted.'"

Mr JAMES TAYLOR played "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes while the wreath was being placed.

Red clay from Khe Sanh was sprinkled on the plaque.

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EXCERPTS OF SPEECH MADE BY CMC, GENERAL CARL E. MUNDY JR. AT DEDICATION OF KHE SANH MEMORIAL PLAQUE AND TREE,ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, 02 JULY 1993

"I am honored to be here. I am a veteran of Khe Sanh.

"Each of us here has our own powerful set of memories about Khe Sanh; some good, some not so good — some bad. I remember the green beauty of the plateau in June of 1967, when I first flew in there. I also remember how it was when I went back well after the Siege.

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"It's now been 25 years since we fought and won the battle of Khe Sanh. In any war, there are a few battles that are truly decisive; fights that have strategic importance that can end a war if lost, or can let it continue if they're won. In World War II, the Normandy Invasion was such a fight. In Korea, it was the Chosin Reservoir. For the French in Vietnam, it was Dien Bien Phu. And for us, and for the United States at large in Vietnam, it was Khe Sanh. But then all battles are decisive when someone's doing their best to kill you. There were certainly other battles that were equally hard-fought — Con Thien, for example. But the effects of losing Con Thien would have just been tactical; we would have adjusted, we would have compensated, we would have taken it back, we would have continued. I'm not sure if that would ever have happened had we lost Khe Sanh, because only Khe Sanh had strategic importance as a single battle in that war, particularly after the media back here at home began to emphasize the parallels between Dien Bien Phu and the existence of the United States and its effort, and our allies in Vietnam, to that battle. Certainly, General GIAP and the North Vietnamese — to them it was an opportunity to repeat their strategic victory at Dien Bien Phu. And they did their level best to win, bringing in against us, amongst others, the elite 304th Division. That was a Guard's formation. In any nation in the world — Guards are the first-line troops; they are the finest that that nation has to put forth. It had won at Dien Bien Phu. All told, it outnumbered us on the ground by more than four to one.

"The NVA were defeated in the Hill Fights of 1967 and in the Siege of 1968. We took the best they could offer and then we outfought them, face to face, eye to eye, on the ground. That's where battles are won: on the ground, by men who face up to the crucible of conflict, and bear it and win it.

"Our victory at Khe Sanh was the result of a thousand different individual actions; each one here had a part to play in that. Individual acts expressed through team work, not just by Marines, but by all Services represented by our magnificent joint-Service Color Guard brought here this morning — the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. Everyone standing here today, and every Khe Sanh veteran who could not be here today, and those who paid the ultimate price and will never be here to see this monument — everyone's actions were important to the outcome of the battle, to the strategic victory that was Khe Sanh.

"The Marines of today talk about you with the awe that they once reserved for the Marines that went in with the first two assault waves at Tarawa or those cold, frozen warriors at Chosin. Khe Sanh has become a part of the Corp's rich legacy of pride, of courage, of history.

"There are many heroes of that battle. Some are very close to where we stand today. Just across the green hillside that way is the Henderson Hall Memorial Gymnasium named for a Corporal named TERRY SMITH, a Tennessean who died on Hill 881-South. Many here will remember him and what he did there; fighting with Mike Company, Third Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, looking out for his fellow Marines; spirited, daring, a young American like we would like all young Americans to be. Everyone at Khe Sanh was a hero, because survival there required a daily act of heroism, just being there, just surviving. And survival meant more than simply personal survival; it meant taking care of your buddies, it meant carrying out the mission. As our Monument says, 'WE ARE ETERNALLY BONDED". That says it all.

"I believe that so long as this Republic lives, and so long as its citizens honor their fighting men and women, our fight, the good fight, the hard fight at Khe Sanh, will never be forgotten. It is my privilege to stand amongst you here today. Thank you."

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MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING — 03 JULY 1993

EARLE BREEDING called the meeting to order at 0925.

A quorum was present. A sign-in log was distributed and signed by 116 Khe Sanh veterans.

EARLE BREEDING read the Minutes of the annual meeting of the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc., held in San Diego, July 11th, 1992, summarized as follows: Annual dues to be $20.00 and members have the option of stating that they are unable to afford membership. KEN PENN was designated the Reunion Chairman. The place for the next reunion would be Washington D.C. ERNIE SPENCER was also appointed Chairman of the Publications and Fund Raising committees. The "Wreath with Globe and Anchor" logo was adopted. ERNIE SPENCER advised of the situation of the Bru and the possibility of our sponsorship of some activity that would aid them.

EARLE BREEDING entertained a motion to run the meeting by simple majority and to limit speeches to no more than two minutes. All appointments made are hereby cancelled so the incoming President can make his own appointments, with the exception of ERNIE SPENCER as Editor of our magazine.

MAC RADCLIFFE was appointed to audit our Treasurer's books.

KEN PENN noted that he had had a call from DANIEL BALDWIN who was with SOG, who couldn't make the reunion because he had terminal cancer.

BILL MAVES gave the Treasurer's Report noting that we moved from operating on donations to dues, which had become necessary in order to print our magazine. The magazine currently runs about $80.00 per page. For example, the last check to the Marine Corps Association for printing and mailing of magazines was $6,978.00.

Nominations were opened to the membership assembled. KEN PENN was unanimously voted as our next President STEVE FITZGERALD moved to accept all the slate of officers. Motion was seconded and unanimously approved. KEN PENN presented the following candidates for the Board of Directors: JOHN KAHENY, JIM WILKINSON, JOHN BALANCO, JIM DAWD, D.J. BLAND, GARY PARKER, CARL OKSNEE and EARLE BREEDING. The Board of Directors was seconded and unanimously approved.

Officers are:

PRESIDENT, Ken Penn
VICE-PRESIDENT, Michael O'Hara
TREASURER, Bill Maves
SECRETARY, Ray Stubbe
CHAPLAIN, Ron Exum
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS, Ed Diaz

Board of Directors (includes all officers):

JOHN KAHENY	JIM WILKINSON
JOHN BALANCO	JIM DAWD
D. J. BLAND	GARY PARKER
CARL OKSNEE	EARLE BREEDING

One of the members suggested that notices be sent to the VFW, American Legion, etc., to announce our reunions and the fact of our group's existence.

KEN PENN asked for volunteers for assistance in future reunion activities.

ERNIE SPENCER suggested that we not hold formal reunions every year in order to give the reunion chairpersons a break, and proposed they be held every two to three years so that a larger group of members would probably attend. EARLE BREEDING expressed concurrence. He also noted that since we have election of officers every two years, that next year we were free to do pretty much whatever we wanted to do, perhaps just a "fun time", and then two years from now, a formal reunion. He mentioned that the generational gap that exists in the 3d Marine Division Association's association with Vietnam Veterans has been noted by them and steps will be taken to address and close this gap. BILL MAVES agreed with the 2-year plan: it could be better planned, will be less costly to many of our members and membership dollars would go further. GEORGE PETERSON noted we have an affinity with 5th Marine Division more than 3d Marine Division. (NOTE: Historically, the 26th Marines belong to the 5th Marine Division, but was sent to Vietnam where it subsequently came under the Operational Control of both 1st and 3d Marine Divisions at one time or another, but during the Siege was under 3d).

GRANT KNIEDLER moved that we officially meet every two years and leave the Board of Directors to decide the location of the reunion. The motion was seconded.

BRUCE JONES: "My name's BRUCE JONES. I was the 81's FO radio-operator with Bravo Company (1/26) and what I'm seeing in this room is really upsetting. I just spent three days with the men who served at Khe Sanh. They were not just Marines. They were not just Army. They were not just Navy. They were men that served at Khe Sanh! And I'll tell you what: this is a Khe Sanh Vets organization, and we should meet every two years just like the By-Laws say — we should meet as men who served at Khe Sanh. If you people want to hook yourself on to some other association, then you go do it in the off-years! We should get together like we did at Khe Sanh, and we should form in two years again and celebrate the beauty that we've already done for three days." The membership gave hearty applause.

LARRY SEAVY-CIOFFI: FO of 1/9. "He's got a good point. We have a distinct historical definition. We should keep our definition as a unique military organization."

JIM WILKINSON: "What we're seeing here is an organization that started small a few years back, and we've had some great meetings and they're getting better. As we grow, we're getting bureaucratic. Let's not get tied into a lot of By-Laws. Let's just keep what we've got; the comraderie. Let's just plan two years down the road."

BILL JAYNE: "I belong to a lot of organizations. This one is pretty unique. You get a lot of bureaucracy, you get a lot of motions, a lot of going through the motions that don't matter a hill of beans. I feel there's almost unanimity here. What we're talking about is that we're going to meet every two years as a Khe Sanh association."

WAYNE NEIGHBORS called the question. Motion: THAT THE OFFICIAL KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION BE EVERY OTHER YEAR AND THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS DETERMINE THE LOCATION. The motion was unanimously carried.

BILL O'CONNOR: Volunteered to chair the reunion in 1995.

NORM LAFOUNTAINE: "Concerning our reunions — we should keep it fun, keep it camaraderie, keep it simple. (Spoke from his experience with the Marine Corps Helicopters Association). Don't bog it down in bureaucractic bullshit; no one wants to sit through boring meetings — let the Board of Directors meet on their own and do the business."

The meeting was adjourned at 10.40 but continued on an informal basis, with small groups here and there, and general announcements in the room.

BILL JAYNE: "I work for the VA National Cemetery System. (NOTE: BILL is in charge of it). Anybody that's interested in putting a memorial to Khe Sanh Vets in one of the VA cemeteries, we'd love to have it too. It would probably cost a heck of a lot less than Arlington."

WARREN WIEDHANN: "I belong to the 1st Marine Division Association, the 3d Marine Division Association, Vietnam Veterans Association and two small unique organizations called the "Chosin Few" and the "Khe Sanh Veterans Association". Never ever lose your uniqueness! Keep it Khe Sanh! Always keep the Khe Sanh Veterans Association unique."

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CEREMONY AND REMARKS AT VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL WALL

The sun was just setting as we were all bussed to the Memorial. Prohibited from doing anything at the Wall itself that might be construed as a demonstration or ceremony, and through very meticulous prior coordination by KEN PENN with the Park Service, with a letter of authorization from them and personal visits beforehand, we all gathered near the Wall in a circle. It had become dark. Using a bullhorn megaphone, one by one, those gathered there, as they were moved to do so, spoke of those they wished to remember.

KEN PENN: "... joined our battery less than a month before and he was our youngest Marine. We sent him up the hill as a replacement for someone who had rotated. The following day I had to go down to Charlie-Med and identify him. I'd also like to dedicate — HARVEY WYSONG told me something that happened 26 years ago to 1/9 when they got hit particularly hard — and anyone who wants to come down and say anything, we'll have words and then we can go down to the Wall."

RAY STUBBE: "KEN has mentioned 1/9, and learned this evening that 26 years ago this day, 116 Marines died in one day

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north of Con Thien in a place called "Market" I believe. My personal involvement was with many, but my own Clerk was killed there — as were all the chaplain's clerks — I don't know if you know that: every one of the battalion's chaplain's clerks was killed at Khe Sanh. This fellow was a Conscientious Objector and had just arrived, so we transferred him to C-Med to help with the stretchers from one of the line company's supply, and he worked in C-Med to organize stretcher bearers, and JONATHON NATHANIEL SPICER became sort of a "tiger", and he organized. All of the recon people that are here might remember when they were working parties, he'd get them to carry out the wounded. On the 5th March he was doing that when — to a 46 — a mortar round came in and he got shrapnel in his heart and died two weeks later from infection. I tried to contact his mother down in Florida. I wrote to her twice but never heard — I guess it's still too painful for them. There are many."

MIKE LOEHRER: "I'd like to say a word for Corporal REUBEN CARL McMACKINS JR. On April 14th, 1968, he was with Lima, 3/26, retaking Hill 881-North. He was charging the hill with hand grenades when he took a round to the chest. He died immediately. He received the Bronze Star for his efforts that day. He was a dear, close friend and I pay him tribute tonight, and to the other men that died on the hill that day."

JIM WILKINSON: "I would like to dedicate my visit to all the members of 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, in particular Sergeant-Major GAYNOR. Sergeant-Major GAYNOR was at Corregidor when World War II broke out. He was taken prisoner and kept a POW for about four years. Obviously, when he got to Vietnam he was a very senior Sergeant-Major, and he really did not belong to an infantry battalion; he probably belonged in Da Nang. I asked him why he was there. He said he wanted to be with the troops. And he was a fantastic Sergeant-Major. One morning we were checking the lines — pretty heavy incoming. I took the radio operator and said: 'Sergeant-Major, you go and see Charlie Company and I'll go around to the Gray (Sector) side and see Bravo, and I'll meet you at a certain point.' While we were doing this, several rockets came over and one scored a direct hit on Charlie Company's bunker, injuring Captain DAVE ERNST, killing his radio operator and inflicting a very serious head wound on Sergeant-Major GAYNOR. We got him medevaced and they took great care in Charlie-Med but he died on the helicopter. To me, he personified bravery and the dedication of all the Marines and other military forces that gave their lives at Khe Sanh. His wife called me three months ago. I'd not heard from her in years. We had a nice emotional talk and I told her I would visit the Wall and pray for the spirit and soul of Sergeant-Major GAYNOR and all our other comrades. Thank you."

TOM ESSLINGER: "Those of us from India, 3/26, have been talking about MIKE THOMAS and TOM BRINDLEY and the other people who died on the 20th January, the first day of the Siege, and I just want to publicly acknowledge the most painful day for me. It was the 23rd February when, as the Company Commander of Mike Company, I lost two Marine Gunnery Sergeants to one round. They had over forty years of Marine experience between them. Lost: Gunnery Sergeants EUGENE WIRE and PAUL ROBITAILLE."

VOICE: "I would like to say something about a couple of Marines. As Ray indicated, we lost all the chaplain's clerks and one chaplain. Along with the chaplain, who was Father BRETT, we lost ALEXANDER CHIN. The day — a couple of hours actually, before he was killed, he had been asking for the address of my parents so he could drop by and tell them I was in a safe position, a safe area and there was nothing to worry about. I finally gave him the address of my parents who lived in the Washington area. He was from the Baltimore area. Also, unbeknown to me, my next-door neighbor, PFC .., was on the hill adjacent to mine and he was killed on March 30th, 1968. I only discovered a couple of years ago that he was on that particular hill. I dedicate this to all the Marines and everyone who was at Khe Sanh. Thank you."

JOSEPH BELARDO: "I'd like to dedicate this to all the Duster and Quad (.50) units that served with the Marines, keeping the road open to Khe Sanh and at the Combat Base at Khe Sanh."

KEN PIPES: "My name is KENNETH W PIPES. I would like to take this opportunity this evening to recognize, not by name, but by number — from the beginning of the Siege until the end of the Siege, the 65 men that Bravo Company (1/26) lost, both in the lines and outside the lines. I would have to mention the name of Lieutenant DON JACQUES, Staff Sergeant GEORGE MCCLELLAND and Corporal KENNETH KING CLAIRE, who represent the very best of those 65 men that died throughout that 77 days. But more than that, not only them, but all the other men that served with us and aren't here with us this evening, and those whose names are on the Wall, I think would feel glad and happy inside that we're here tonight — those of us who are fortunate enough to be here to honor all of them and the sacrifices that they made for us."

JOHN SEITZ: "My name is JOHN SEITZ. I'd like to dedicate my visit here to all the men whose names are engraved on that Wall, especially to PHILIP VAN DEUSEN, GALE GOTTI, Sergeant TOMMY ANTRIM — all from Alfa Battery, 1/13. Thank you."

ROB PAINTER: "My name's ROB PAINTER. I served with Bravo, 3d Recon. On 24th January, 1968, I was in the bunker that caught the direct hit. I dedicate this is SCRIBNER, ROSA, POPOWITZ and DOC MILLER; to the rest of Bravo, 3d Recon that died at Khe Sanh and the rest of the brothers that are on the Wall."

(At this point one of the women present broke down in loud anguished sobs).

WILLIAM J. O'CONNOR: "I was the Commanding Officer of Charlie, 1/13. I just want to remember all of the artillerymen who served at Khe Sanh. Of course, whenever we got incoming, my troops were the guys who had to get on the guns. And I think they did their job well. And just one other point is that on St Patricks Day, remember that was my Battery, Charlie Battery, that fired the green smoke. So when you're drinking a drink to all the Irishmen in the world, drink one to Charlie Battery!"

JOHN J BALANCO: "My name's JOHN BALANCO. I was the senior advisor with CAC, out in the village. It would be unjust not to mention my Bru (Montagnards). Out of the 225 of us that were up at Khe Sanh, only 25 of us came out. We left 199 there, abandoned. For me, I feel the true heroes of the Khe Sanh battle and Siege were the Bru people. There are no Walls for them. There's not an article about them. There's not a newspaper. There's noth-

ing about them. They lost 80 percent of their race, 80 per cent of their tribe. And we, as Americans, as well as the enemy, participated in annihilating that race. I'd just like to honor them, as well as the Marines we lost, and thank all of you people who supported us out in the ville. Thank you."

JEROME THOMAS: "I'm "Doc" THOMAS. I was with Golf 2/3, and I'd like to make a dedication to my best friend in Vietnam, Lance Corporal MIKE TURNER, killed April 21st, 1968. I'd also like to remember all of the pre-Siege and post-Siege people who died at Khe Sanh. Thank you."

JAMES DAWDY: "On November 16th, 1967, four men from the FLC Para-Delivery parachuted out preparatory to a cargo-drop; as you'll remember, we got pretty much everything by air-drop. During the drop, one of them fell through the other one's parachute and they both hit the ground out in front of our position, out in front of the wire. We went out there. The Corpsman attempted CPR on one of them but it was obvious that that was going to be futile. It was, for me, the time when I felt the most helpless, the greatest despair that I'd felt in my life. And at that time, it occurred to me that somewhere, there was a mother or father, sister or brother, good friend, girlfriend, that in just a few hours or a day would hear that their loved one had died. So there's 50,000-plus names that are on that Wall, but there's a whole lot more people behind those names, and I dedicate my visit to all of those people."

VOICE: "I'd like to dedicate my visit to my good friend, WALT JONES. He was an F-8 pilot and Forward Air Controller, and while calling in airstrikes, he took a round. He was the best pinochle player at our table and we were just waiting for him to come in that evening so we could start our pinochle game when we found out that WALT had taken a direct hit. I'd like to dedicate my visit to WALT."

DALE FERGUSON: "My name's DALE FERGUSON. I'd like to dedicate this visit to all of the Marines and all of the armed service personnel that lost their lives, and also my brother, Second Lieutenant DAVID C FERGUSON, who lost his life March 5th, 1969."

RON EXUM: "My name's RON EXUM, and on March 28th, 1968, in the trenchlines of Khe Sanh, I lost two friends. I found my best friend right here, but I still lost two more. We were in the trenchline; we were digging the trenchline a little bit deeper because they kept sniping at us, they could see the tops of our heads as we moved about, so we had to dig it deeper. That's all we were doing was just digging when a mortar came in and killed both my buddies. The Lord allowed me to be spared. I'm here for them."

CARL OKSNEE: (with great emotional difficulty) "To 1/9."

VOICE: "I'd like to dedicate my visit tonight to a friend of a lot of us named HOWARD JOHNSON of the Communications Center, Headquarters 26th Marines, who was killed just a couple of days after we first started receiving incoming at Khe Sanh. Also, I'd like to dedicate this visit to friends of mine that I graduated from high-school with: JIM PAGE, LARRY BEAUFORD and ROBERT MARLIN, who were also killed in Vietnam."

BRUCE JONES: "My name is BRUCE JONES and I'd like to dedicate my visit today for JOE CASTILLO who was killed on July 21, 1967, on Route 9, and I'd also like to dedicate this for ALBERT R. SANFORD who died on March 30th when he went out to get the bodies from JACQUES' patrol. I've been to the Wall many, many times since 1986, and what I would ask you to do is keep in mind that there are many men, many spouses or significant others that have never seen this Wall, so when we get down there, just remember to reach out if you see a brother or a spouse having a tough time. Don't let them stand there, and don't think it's inappropriate — there's going to be some support needed when we get down there. So, please remember that."

TALIS KAMINSKIS: "My name's TALIS KAMINSKIS. I served with a CAP unit with the Bru at Khe Sanh. Tonight, I want to talk about a Bru Sergeant I shared a bunker with. Unlike most of the guys here, I shared my life with the Bru. As a boy, he started fighting the Japanese. He fought the French. He fought the Americans. Now he's fighting the North Vietnamese. In a conversation one night, he asked me why I was there. And he looked at me and said, 'In one year, you probably will go home, but I am home.' Somewhere in the red clay of Khe Sanh, I hope tonight he is home. Thank you."

QUILES JACOBS: "My name is QUILES JACOBS and I dedicate my visit here tonight to a lot of Marines that died with us. As EXUM said, we lost two buddies. The same two buddies he's talking out — he was just there that day. They'd just left my hooch about five minutes before they were killed. I'd also like to dedicate this to GEORGE ... who died as my Squad Leader. ...was killed on an LP. The way it happened was that two guys were on watch and two guys off watch. He happened to be off watch at the time. He was reading his little hand Bible when a round came in and he took shrapnel right in the brain reading his Bible. I'd also like to dedicate this to SCOTTY, another one of my men that got killed on June 5th — he took two rounds right in the throat. To all of the men of Lieutenant JACQUES platoon: About 13 of my buddies got killed there — we went all the way through Boot Camp, ITR, LeJeune, Cuba; we all went to Nam together. Then, of course, on the 30th — a lot of my friends got killed there. So I want to dedicate this to all of them. Thank you."

BILL DABNEY: "DOC WICKLIFFE, Corpsman, killed tending wounded in a hot zone on 881-South. Through him, all those magnificent Corpsmen, who kept us alive up there."

JOHN DI GAETANO: "My name's JOHN DI GAETANO. I'd like to dedicate my visit here today to all of the men of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, and especially those who went out on March 30th to retrieve the bodies of the men who were killed several weeks before, especially if there's anybody here who is a relative of Corporal WAYNE MOORE, who died that day. I dedicate this to him — he was a fine man."

ROBERT BATES: "My name's BOB BATES. I served with Whisky, 1/13. My dedication would be to all the Marines who made it out of Khe Sanh, but didn't make it back home. One of those was Sergeant ROBERT ARNOLD, who died August 18th, 1968."

ARVN VIETNAMESE: "It's very difficult for me to speak in English. This is the first year of my freedom in the United States after I was detained for 15 years in a Communist re-education camp on the border of China and North Vietnam. As a former

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Captain of Counter-Intelligence of the Republic of Vietnam's Army, I have many, many American friends: US Marine Corps, 101 Airborne, the Rangers and some Air Force pilots. I come here on behalf of myself and on behalf of the Vietnamese people, to dedicate and to express my gratitude to all our American friends who fought in Vietnam, and to all parents of our friends who were there and who are in the United States. I take this opportunity this evening to once more thank you, all the parents who bore the brave sons of the United States. Thank you.

KEITH PRICE: "My name's KEITH PRICE. I was a Corpsman with Bravo Company, 9th Marines, during the early months of 1967, before anybody had heard of Khe Sanh or 881-North or 881-South. On March 16th, the Company from 2/9 got ambushed on Hill 861. They left 10 men there and we left 8. I'd like to dedicate my visit to the men who died March 16th, 1967, on Hill 861."

VOICE: "I'm in Tank Battalion. On behalf of myself, JOHN HARGESHEIMER and GARY DAHLHEIMER, I'd like to dedicate our visit to ROB PAYNE and RAY FERRY who were both killed at Khe Sanh, plus all the other brothers over there.

LARRY CLARK: "My name's LARRY CLARK. I'd like to make this dedication to all the 155 artillerymen that lost their lives during the Siege of Khe Sanh. Throughout the whole Siege, with all the artillery duels we had with NVA 152 artillery pieces, and all my fellow Marines that lost their lives there on the base. Thank you."

LARRY MCCARTNEY: "My name's LARRY MCCARTNEY. I was a PFC with Echo Company, Second Battalion, 26th Marines. I just want to dedicate this to all of those fine Marines — and that includes our Corpsmen — they were just as much Marines as us, that served at Khe Sanh on Hill 861-Alfa — all of those that did not make it off that hill. In particular, I'd like to mention some names of some of the men that did make it off that hill but didn't come home at a later time: WILLIAM ALAN HAYES, ANDY LARSON, ROBERT BRETT, JIM HAGGIE, DAVE DUMAS, JOE ROBLES, WARREN SANCHEZ, STAN PETTIT, BOB MCLAUGHLIN, JIMMY DOME, GARY GAFFIN, CLIFF SPILDER — the list goes on — we haven't forgotten."

FRED MCEWAN: "My name's FRED MCEWAN. I came into Khe Sanh in July, 1967 and I left some time in April, 1968. On the 15th March, JIM WILKINSON showed me around the First Battalion when I joined that outfit. I want to remember four Khe Sanh Marines that were killed after Khe Sanh: BOB ONSLOW, as we were on our way to Con Thien; Staff Sergeant TOLENTINO, who was killed down on Go Noi Island; Staff Sergeant HINSON who was killed on Dodge City/Arizona — Arizona Territory they called it, and I want to remember JOE LOGHRAN from the Third Battalion, 26th Marines, who was killed outside of Quang Tri. We were all real close together when this happened, and it's vivid in my mind, in my memory, and but for the grace of God and lots of luck, there go I. But I also want to remember the Marines that are still alive and continue to fight and win; they won good. Thank you."

DAVID ROGERS: "My name's DAVE ROGERS. I was with Mike Company, Third Battalion, Third Marines, during the Hill Fights in the Spring of 1967. My company suffered 27 killed and 51 wounded, but during the entire Hill Fights, there were approximately 155 killed and over 500 wounded. I'd like to make my dedication to all the Marines who lost their lives and who were seriously wounded during the Hill Fights. I'd also like to say one thing about an individual that I was personal friends with whose name was HANK NORMAN, a real gentleman. He was killed during the Siege of Khe Sanh. Just one other comment. I did get to talk to HANK's mother here this past week, and she really appreciated somebody coming over and talking to her and telling her she had a fine son. If anybody knew HANK, his mother's address is in the newsletter and she would appreciate it if anybody would take time out to write her a letter. Thank you."

MIRIAM EATON: "I'm here because my son cannot be here, and I know he would have come if he'd still been with us. He was a photo-journalist. He was with you for six weeks. He went out, he delivered his pictures and his bosses said 'they're marvellous'. He said, 'I'm going back in because I want to be with those men and come out when they come out.' He would have been here if he could have. Thank you." (The son's name is ROBERT ELLISON, who was killed in the plane crash along with 48 others who were returning to Khe Sanh on March 6th. His photos appear in the March 18, 1968, issue of Newsweek).

MAURICE DESCHAINE: "My name's MAURICE DESCHAINE. My cousin was Corporal NORMAN DESCHAINE from Delta Company 1/26. My reason for being here today is that I served from '67 to '69 in Logistics. I was not part of the Marine Corps but I unloaded all the ammo you guys used. You used a helluva lot! I couldn't get a day off! (laughs). I had a big decision to make. It was my 30th class reunion. When I woke up on Friday morning I told my wife, 'I'm sorry, I've got to go to DC.' All week long I woke up thinking about NORMAN, who I think about every day of my life. I came down here and met ERNIE SPENCER, and that's how I became involved with the Khe Sanh Vets. The reason I'm here tonight is, maybe I lost my cousin, but I found a lot of brothers. I would like to dedicate this visit tonight to all the Khe Sanh veterans, all the Corpsmen and all the nurses. Thank you."

VOICE: "Giving honor to God and to all of those Marines who are living and those who lost their lives in this battle. I just thank the Lord for you. I can remember when I looked at the news and they would say there were 6,000 Marines at Khe Sanh with 40,000 Viet Cong surrounding them. And I'm telling you, I called different places for prayer for you. We were praying for you. And we thank God that He brought some of you back, including my son — I thank God that He brought him back."

RICHARD PELOQUIN: "My name's DICK PELOQUIN. I was India Company's First Sergeant, Third Battalion, 26th Marines. I'd like to dedicate this brief moment in time to friends I had who died from India Company — not only the ones that I knew personally, but to the members of the battalion, the regiment — to all those that were there at Khe Sanh — attachments, ARMY, US NAVY; it doesn't make any difference. We wound up being a part of history. I think we really assisted somehow in the preservation of a civilized society. I just have to say, God Bless Marines! But not to be slighted, not to be left out, please don't forget the Marines that are still alive, those that are still here suffering some degree of mental anguish, some of the wives that are still suffering some mental anguish, some of the relatives, some of the mothers, sisters, brothers, you name it — we all share the same experience."

JOHN MACIAS: "My name is JOHN MACIAS. I was with India Company 3/26, Guns, and I'm here for my best friend (very choked with emotion), ... Jr. 25 years later, I still see his face and hear his voice, and I still love him like a brother."

JACK KILBRIDE: "My name is JACK KILBRIDE. I was with India Company, Second Platoon, Guns. I'd like to remember Lieutenant THOMAS and Corporal ROBERT ARTHUR WIEDEMAN — and everybody else."

VOICE: "I just want to remember: a lot of Marines don't remember the names of the guy that's next to them. We'd only been at Khe Sanh. We got there the day before Christmas. About a month later, the line companies were losing so many people that they came and said that they needed some extra troops from our gun — from our 60 mortars there with Lima Company. I was standing with this one guy. I only knew him as "JJ". He looked at me and I looked at him, and he said, 'Well, I want to go for a hike anyways — I'll see you in a week.' I guess I'll take a walk down there (the Wall) to see his name."

DAVID SPRY: "I'm DAVID SPRY, Echo Company, 2/26, Khe Sanh Combat Base. My best friend, PHILIP GREGORY WIGTON, Mike Company, Third Battalion, 26th Marines, survived Khe Sanh — but only until May 9th. He didn't have very long to brag. The funeral card that his mother sent me reads: 'PHILIP WIGTON, born April 4th, 1946. Died Quang Tri Province, May 9th, 1968.' And a poem:

"Safely home
I am home in Heaven, dear ones
Oh so happy and so bright
There's perfect joy and beauty
In this everlasting light
All the pain and grief is over
Every restless tossing past
I am now at peace forever
Safely home in Heaven, at last"

HENRY GAGNE: "My name is HENRY GAGNE. I was with the Second Platoon, Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, and got to Khe Sanh in June 1967. I left the following March. On January 27th, 1968, a young man from Columbia, Tennessee, arrived at Khe Sanh. He was killed the same day, and I'm here in memory of him. Also, another man from my platoon, who is from my home state of Maine, NORMAN DESCHAINE, whom I thought had made it back from Vietnam, but I just found out three or four months ago that he died five or six months after I left. I'm here for him also."

VOICE: "I'd like to dedicate my visit to someone who isn't on the Wall, but another 'black cloud' that I've been carrying — that's my wife, who died. If I hadn't been so concerned with myself I could have helped her a little more." (great sobs and cries)

BILL DABNEY: "I went back to Khe Sanh in 1971 with the Vietnamese Marine Corps. They moved into Laos and captured Tchepone. Their names are not on the Wall. Out of that Division, 1,640 of them didn't come back out, and I'd like to keep them in mind."

RICHARD SOTO: "My name is RICHARD SOTO, FOX 2/26. I'd like to dedicate my visit here to Lance Corporal JAMES DOUGLAS RICHARDSON. He was my Team Leader. Also to other men of FOX Company and two high-school classmates: JOHN ..., United States Marine Corps and JOE MENDOZA, United States Army. Lest we forget."

LEE BURGER: "My name's LEE BURGER. I was attached to Bravo 1/26 as a flame-throwerman. Of course, I'd like to dedicate everything to the guys who died, but in particular, on the 30th when I was hit and I came back, and I was being taken care of — the man I remember the most that day was Chaplain ... I remember him coming over and praying over me and comforting me, especially when I was rather scared. So I'd like to thank you Chaplain."

MARK SWEARENGEN: "I'm MARK SWEARENGEN. I was in Khe Sanh for about a month and a half — roughly 40 days, and I was responsible for coordinating the fires of the 175 millimeter guns. I have some good friends whose names are on the Wall. I'm here to remember them tonight. I ask you all though, to please remember everyone — everyone; all the men and women who died in Vietnam. Thank you."

KEN PENN: "If that's all who would like to remember their friends publicly, we will take our Wreath down and place it approximately where the middle of the Siege was. Give us about two minutes to get down there and then just come down — you can't march, just come down. There's no smoking at the Wall itself. We cannot have a procession with the Wreath — we just have to be individuals. Come as individuals as best you can, as a band of brothers. Thank you."

NOTE: The Wreath was mounted on a board on which everyone present at the Reunion had a chance to sign. Once in place, F. JAMES TAYLOR, standing atop the section of the Wall where the Wreath was placed, played "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes, followed by one stanza of the Marine Corps Hymn. CALVIN BRIGHT placed a Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart Medal on the Wreath board. ROBERT PAINTER and several from the Recon Company burnt Sacred Sage in the area of the panel containing the names of SCRIBNER, ROSA, POPOWITZ and DOC MILLER. The Wreath was covered with plastic prior to our departure and so was still there the next day, July 4th, the entire day. DAVID G. ROGERS wrote a poem, "RED CLAY" and left it at the Wall.

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RED CLAY

These hills, say the Bru, were a paradise to roam
Alive with cool brooks and wildlife running free
High, very high, they soared into the heavens
Oh, such a beautiful view for the eyes to see!
And the earth therein was free of man's sin
As it bore the wild fruits of the day
These ancient, majestic, green laden hills
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

With rains from monsoons to moisten in winter
The roots of dense flora and canopying trees
Cleansing the good earth season after season
As the rivers briskly flowed to the deep seas.
And in the summer, radiant and abundant sunlight

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Providing a rainbow thru the beam of each ray
In these hills which shared the sun and rain
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

Each hill was high as it pointed to the sky
Many unnamed, whilst others by altitude named
But as sure as the sky appears blue to one's eyes
Still these hills will forever remain untamed.
Three joined hands and their names ended in 'one'
Joyfully greeting each other day after day
And they were steep for the Bru's tough feet
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

Still others soared high seeking their place
Amongst the clouds and streams cascading
They, too, had names as they grew in fame
Standing straight and tall as if parading.
Though not as glorious, they possessed great might
Showing brute strength in the sun as they lay
Humbling those who dared to climb their height
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

So the story is told by the hills themselves
As they speak in jargon unfamiliar today
That a Marine came along stalking the "Cong"
With his rifle to "search and destroy" his prey.
His comrades came too, to render support
Each finding ruggedness causing them to say
These hills are infested with a potent enemy
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

The big guns soon followed, some called it 'arty'
Supporting those in danger by adding to the tally
As incoming showered them, they held their positions
Pinpointing death on hilltops and bowl-shaped valley.
Waiting for the call from a forward observer
Helping the 'grunts' as they hunted their prey
Back in these hills, exploding after shrills
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

The fast jets with big bombs were also there
Carrying napalm to provide close air support
Shrieking high to low like a clap of thunder
Broadcasting "tallyho" in their fly-by report.
As helicopters provided emergency evacuation
Sweeping down from their lofty perches each day
Down onto these muddy, now turned bloody
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

Thus sparkled the prelude to death and destruction
Like a typhoon filled with torment and grief
Striking with vengeance, taking no prisoners
Its forceful, wide path causing much disbelief.
The garrisoned force of thousands of brave men
Held their positions heroically history would say
As the hills bellowed forth as if to retort
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

For 77 days and nights the Siege took its toll
As life turned to death, cut to pieces by steel
Lifeless bodies became burdens to fearful souls
As "The Lord is my Shepherd" many began to feel.
Still all fought on as in these denuded hills
Pitting the NVA against Marines by night and day
Pouring forth by red glare, the curse of death
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

No safe haven would the hilltops or distant valley be
As the combatants emerged from their hidden caves
Only to be repulsed by courageous young Marines
Leaving the unfortunate to rot in shallow graves.
Our "Arrow of Death" declared three of the hills
Is a final resting place for many men to lay
As we live on where gallant people have died
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

As ever so slowly the Siege began to falter
Still skirmishes continued to kill and taunt
Those left in the hills to defend with true grit
Leaving lasting visions of a bloodshed to haunt.
As the foe withdrew and thoughts were collected
Thinking "We have fought a victorious fray!"
In our passage through these perilous hills
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

And so it was in these miserable hills and valley
As human mortality was put to its gravest test
That our comrades served with honor and valor
Only to be returned in a casket to rest.
Back home to be close to loved ones and friends
In graveyards they were destined to eternally lay
After each lost their life in these lawless hills
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

Though the years have passed by ever so quickly
Still the wounded hills stand tall and named
As they heal over time by Mother Nature's hands
Still they remain to the Bru scarred and maimed.
So it is with each other as we join hands together
Asking that the wounds of war be healed as we pray
For all of our comrades who fought in these hills
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

In our remembrance of all inscribed on 'The Wall'
Having shared our comradeship with each name
Let us pray for each soul, immortal may it be
Having laid them to a peaceful rest be our claim.
Remembered, not forgotten; this be our legacy!
For our comrades eternal peace is what we pray
And for the untamed hills may they echo peace always
These hills of Khe Sanh made of red clay.

Dedicated to "The Khe Sanh Veterans"
25th Anniversary of the Siege of Khe Sanh
July 1993 — Washington D.C.
David G. Rogers

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KHE SANH REUNION VIGNETTES

LITTLE SNAPSHOTS OF EVENTS HERE AND THERE

KEN PIPES is staring out of the window of his hotel room, looking at the pool area and talking with a friend. Slowly, silently, men gather in his room. Someone says, "Turn around!" The room is filled with men from Bravo Company that he commanded. Despite the devastating losses of 25 February and 30 March, the room is completely filled. He's choked with emotion. He says, "I couldn't have done it without you." Someone else says, "We wouldn't be here if it weren't for you, Skipper."

A TEAM FROM FORCE RECON that had operated at Khe Sanh in January of 1967 is together for the first time since those days. One man, CLAYTON ERNST tells about a particularly violent experience in which the first Marine to be killed at Khe Sanh was hit. After relating the incident, he admits that he has less than a year to live and wanted to get the story told to preserve the memory of this man.

A WIFE is about to leave the hotel, and her husband. She attends the meeting of the wives, sharing in the telling and emotions, and she remains.

"CAPTAIN" BILL DABNEY (retired Colonel) appears; his first reunion. Those from India Company are beaming to see him there. He brings along the old India Company guidon, full of holes from flying atop 881-South, along with one of the American flags that flew atop that hill during the Siege.

HALF A DOZEN (or more) men bring their precious memorabilia and photo albums and leave them in the courtesy room for others to see.

DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN donates some 200 copies of his book, "I Protest" which were recently discovered in a warehouse, to be given free to the first 200 who registered.

MRS MIRIAM EATON, mother of BOB ELLISON, photographer for Newsweek, meets with ED EVANS and others who knew her son at Khe Sanh while he lived in the trenches with them for some three weeks prior to his death.

THREE FORMER ARVN SOLDIERS who had been imprisoned for 15 years in a North Vietnamese Re-education Camp, one of whom spent five years in shackles, tell of how much they appreciate what we, as Americans, did for them.

CALVIN BRIGHT leaves his Bronze Star and Purple Heart Medals on our Khe Sanh Wreath at the Wall.

JAMES TAYLOR played "Amazing Grace" and the Marine Corps Hymn on his bagpipes at the Wall during the laying of our Wreath.

BILL YATES is getting into an elevator as DAVE RODELL suddenly spots him and yells: "Billy Ro! Billy Ro!" DAVE had pulled BILL to medical help through a mortar barrage whilst mortars were still exploding all around and thought that BILL had died. He didn't know that he had survived.

BERNICE PENN, in the midst of coordinating and supervising, suddenly spotted BILL YATES entering the hotel with bleeding feet from his sandles. She took him to her room and washed his feet with hydrogen peroxide and bandaged them up.

THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS gives a stirring speech — in the rain — to some 200 or so — also standing in the rain, on the occasion of the dedication of a plaque honoring Khe Sanh in Arlington National Cemetery. WE HAVE OUR OWN MEMORIAL IN D.C.!

THE POPE sends a letter. He will be praying for all of us from Khe Sanh during our reunion.

A SPECIAL WALL CEREMONY in which all who are there can spontaneously participate by making testimony to some buddy, is said by one who participates in a lot of these ceremonies to be the "best" one he's been in — and it was not planned!

THE TAPE RECORDING OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM fails, but someone starts singing it at our formal dinner and eventually everyone is singing it with a great spirit, animating everyone present.

There is a COMPLETE LACK OF ANIMOSITY and, in fact, a complete spirit of "family" among the different units and branches of service that are present, despite some heavy drinking in the wee hours of the morning.

Special T-SHIRTS and a PEWTER ANNIVERSARY PIN are available and given out, along with books on Khe Sanh, magazine articles and maps.

ONE MAN calls after returning home a week and says his constant Khe Sanh nightmares have disappeared.

ONE MAN calls after returning home. His fellow workers notice that he has much less anger and bitterness; he no longer flies off the handle.

ONE MAN says that he expected some "heaviness" and some healing. This was there. But what he also received, and didn't expect, was the fun and the warmth.

There are perhaps dozens and dozens of other "vignettes" that could be included as well.

• • •

With thanks...

Just wanted you to know
I feel this country really gave the Vets a hard time
when you returned.
Taking their animosity of war out on the Vets
instead of embracing the Vets for surviving a war
of animosity.
Although it was a long time ago,
and I was just a kid,
I still thank the Lord for this country I live in,
and especially for the men and women who served.
THANK YOU!

Anonymous
(Left on the windshield of a car carrying Khe Sanh plates)

Dear Ernie,

Here is a 5th Marine Directory Handbook for your collection. I kept it from my Camp Pendleton tour. Please note that it was "F" 2/28 that raised the flag on Mt. Suribachi and that 17 men serving with 5th Marine Division received the 'Medal of Honor'.

Semper Fi.
John F Prince
L 3/26

Dear Ernie,

Good to meet you at the Reunion. Man did I need that time! I have been detached from my feelings for a long time. I bought your book while there. It's in our library but it's constantly checked out — apparently a lot of Vets are reading it. Anyway, I read it and was amazed at how open you could be with what you felt and experienced.

I was with 105's down on the east end of the base. I didn't do anything heroic, just did my duty, burned the shitters in the fog, dodged incoming, took some shrapnel like most everybody else and watched helplessly as my friends died. It was hard to sit and take it. I got to know very well a hero at Khe Sanh. Not many people knew him because he hadn't been there very long before he died.

I got to know Mac (Reuben Carl McMackins) at Camp Pendleton. Whenever we got a weekend pass he would come up to my home. He was a great guy! A grunt's grunt. An expert rifleman, machine gunner and weapons specialist. He didn't get to Khe Sanh until March 5th and I only got to visit with him once before I was medevaced out on April 4th. He died retaking Hill 881N on April 14th. Enclosed is his citation for a Bronze Star and a description of how he died. If anyone out there got to know him and was with him that day, I would love to hear from you.

Sincerely,
Mike "Spider" Loehrer
B/1/13

P.S. I'm enclosing a little something for the Bru. Keep up the good work!

★ CITATION ★

"For heroic achievement in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam while serving as an Antitank Assault Squad Leader with Company L, Third Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, Third Marine Division. On 14 April 1968, Corporal McMackins was a member of the lead platoon as his company assaulted the crest of Hill 881 North, defended by an estimated North Vietnamese Army battalion utilizing automatic weapons and small arms fire from well entrenched positions. Unable to employ his rocket launcher due to the proximity of friendly troops, Corporal McMackins completely disregarded his own safety as he armed himself with hand grenades and daringly maneuvered forward to assault the enemy positions. Unhesitatingly exposing himself to the intense enemy fire, Corporal McMackins repeatedly threw grenades into the enemy positions until he was mortally wounded. His heroic actions and aggressive fighting spirit inspired all who observed him and contributed significantly to the accomplishment of his unit's mission.

Corporal McMackins' extraordinary courage, exceptional professionalism and selfless devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the service of his country."

The Combat "V" is authorized.

Dear Ernie,

Thank you for taking the information on Lance Corporal Wilbur Stovall.

After reading the newsletter listing of the names of those killed at Khe Sanh, I noticed "Willie" was not listed. L/Cpl Wilbur "Willie" Stovall, born August 16, 1947, was a tall, thin Marine from Harrisburg, PA. He was one of seven Marines I shared a hooch with while with Hdqs. Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines at Khe Sanh. He was killed on March 9, 1968, during a daytime rocket attack.

Willie was a short-timer, having only about 15 days to go until he rotated back. One of my last memories of him was his statement: "I can't wait to get some of Ma's fried chicken". He was really excited and anxious to get back to his family. Another Marine, Paul Turnbull, and I ended up taking Willie to graves registration and helped to survey his gear.

Years later, I tried to contact his Mom to share memories and a picture I have of Willie, but I learned she had remarried and moved and have been unable to locate her.

Although Willie is on The Wall (44E Line 1), I hope you can include him on your Khe Sanh list. He deserves the recognition for the sacrifice he made.

Bob Holscher
HDQ. BTRY 1/13

Dear Ernie,

I noticed a few members of 3/26 have contributed to recent editions of our magazine. As both a Khe Sanh vet and a former 3/26er, I wish to commend you on the fine work you are doing in publishing *The Khe Sanh Veteran*. I would appreciate it if you would help me publicize the second 3/26 Reunion in a future edition.

Initial arrangements have been made to hold the 2nd 3/26 Reunion at the Sheraton Premiere Hotel in Tysons Corner, Virginia, during 21-24 July, 1994. Tysons Corner is about 15 miles from downtown Washington DC. Although there is no firm schedule yet, attending members and their families can anticipate visiting Arlington Cemetery, the Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima statue), the Vietnam Memorial and the Marine Corps Museum. Additionally, we will attend the famous Sunset Parade at Marine Barracks, 8th and I. For further information, contact Walter L. Whitesides, 10063 Wood Sorrel Lane, Burke, VA 22015. Thank you.

Sempi Fi
Walter L. Whitesides
H & S Co. 3/26

REUNION MEMOIRS

In July, 1993, the Khe Sanh Veterans Association held a reunion in Washington DC to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the 1968 battle at Khe Sanh. I had never been to a veterans reunion before. Over the years I had become more curious, not less, about Khe Sanh. In January, 1993, I had the opportunity to return to Vietnam and to the site of the combat base. Now came my chance to get together with the people who served there. That chance was too much to pass up.

About 300 Khe Sanh veterans from all the military services, plus their supporting personnel, overran the Holiday Inn in Georgetown in an operation that commenced on 30 June 1993. The reunion chairman, Ken Penn, did an outstanding job, thanks in no small manner to the large-caliber backup of Bernice Penn, who manifested the organizational manner (as well as the voice) of a regimental sergeant major.

Ken had served in Mortary Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, my old unit, and I found it disquieting that I could not remember him, could not place him at Khe Sanh. This confusion ended when I heard someone refer to Ken as "Lieutenant Penn". Ah! Light bulb! The Lieutenant! I think it was that fine handlebar moustache that threw me. Ken turned out to be the baby-faced fire direction officer who looked like a college freshman vaguely lost on campus, always searching for the respect second lieutenants found so elusive. I never thought of him as "Ken" and wanted to call him "Lieutenant" throughout the reunion in the interest of continuity.

The Marine Corps was heavily involved in the Khe Sanh Veterans' reunion and their support was impressive. On 1 July, the Marine Corps provided buses and drivers to take our group to the Marine Corps Combat Development Command located at Quantico, Virginia. We spent most of the morning touring a series of museums containing exhibits depicting Marine Corps air-ground operations from 1900 to the end of the Korean War. The collections were all first-class and professionally arranged. The only disturbing thing about the Marine Corps museums at Quantico is that there is nothing devoted to the Vietnam War. The official reason is lack of building space, but it is hard to believe that in its multi-billion dollar budgets, the Marine Corps cannot manage to provide another dilapidated steel building to illustrate its participation in Vietnam, the longest and biggest war in Marine Corps history.

After the museums, we toured the facilities of the Marine Corps Association, publishers of quasi-official Marine Corps magazines such as "Leatherneck", (which all recruits "volunteer" to receive while in boot camp), and "Marine Corps Gazette", the professional journal of Marine Corps officers. The Association maintains an excellent book store of military titles ranging from Clausewitz to the Gulf War.

The Khe Sanh vets were treated to a fine lunch in the Officers' Club hosted by a Brigadier General. The General gave a very emotional speech informing us how grateful the Marine Corps was for our sacrifices at Khe Sanh. The General's version of our sacrifices included the relating of such events as searching through the dump for uneaten C-Rations to ward off hunger and sucking the morning dew off sandbags when water in its more conventional form was unavailable. Once back on the buses, one vet announced that there would be a specific unit reunion for all the Marines that were involved in this sandbag dew-sucking. I don't know how many showed up.

In the afternoon we were allowed to visit Quantico town, a small Virginia ville on the outskirts of the base. Here was a fine opportunity to replace the military clothing we had outgrown since our enlistments' expired. After visiting Quantico town's uniform clothing stores, which it seems to have in lieu of fleshpots and bars, we were bussed to the Basics School, where all Marine officers receive their final infantry training. A lecture on training goals was followed by an exhibition of weapons that are organic to today's Marine infantry battalions. Most of the weapons I recognized. One exception was a slick Belgian-made light machine gun to replace the BAR. The M-79 grenade launcher was gone (known as the "blooper" in Vietnam), but this loss was more than compensated for by a grenade launcher machine gun that fired the same 40mm round, but at a firing rate of several hundred rounds per minute. 60mm and 81mm mortars were on display but not the 4.2" mortars with which my battery had been armed. The only 4.2" mortar I saw at Quantico had been relegated to the Korean War era museum. The active duty young Marines at Quantico seemed to view the Khe Sanh vets as museum pieces as well.

On the third day of the reunion, the Khe Sanh vets travelled by bus to the Arlington National Cemetery. There, in a warm and steady rain, children of Khe Sanh veterans participated in a wreath laying ceremony at the Khe Sanh Veterans Memorial. Indicative of the official support was the presence of Marine General Carl E Mundy Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, as the featured speaker.

In the evening, the rain further dampened the plans of the Khe Sanh vets. On the schedule was the Marine Corps Evening Parade held at Marine Barracks, 8th & I Streets, Washington DC. This is the oldest post in the Corps, occupied since 1801 on a site approved by President Thomas Jefferson. After sitting on Marine Corps buses for over an hour, the Marine Corps decided to take a chance on the weather and proceed with the parade. Although it had rained most of the day, the clouds disappeared as we arrived at the Marine Barracks. A First Sergeant magnificently attired in dress blues assured us that the weather would co-operate for the duration of the program. Within minutes, the moon was visible.

The Evening Parade is an extremely impressive ceremony. The Khe Sanh vets, as guests of honor, were given reserved seating. First up was a concert by the Marine Corps Band, "The President's Own". Second was the appearance of the Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps and near the end, with the sun fully set and the parade ground illuminated by floodlight, was the Silent Drill Platoon Rifle Inspection. These men are truly dazzling and do things with fixed-bayoneted M-1's that I would have not thought possible. At the end of the ceremony, the grounds were plunged into darkness. Breaking the stillness of the moment, a lone Marine appeared bathed in spotlight on the roof of the barracks. The magical notes of "Taps" lent solemnity and dignity to the end of the ceremony. It was impossible not to be proud of being an ex-Marine.

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On the evening of 3 July there was a Banquet at the hotel. The invocation and benediction were given by Ray Stubbe, who had been the base chaplain at Khe Sanh during the siege, as well as co-author of the best history book of the battle at Khe Sanh. The special presentation guest speaker was Nguyen Tuong Anh, Regional Director of the Vietnamese Nationalist Peoples Party. Anh thanked the Khe Sanh vets for their sacrifices and ended his talk with the presentation to the veterans of his party's flag; red stripes on a yellow field (a la the Republic of Vietnam Service medal which we were all entitled to wear).

Following the Banquet was a memorial service at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the Mall. This was the first visit to The Wall for many of the Khe Sanh vets, and given their history, they were certain to find many familiar names. No vet walks away from The Wall unaffected.

Some Khe Sanh vets began to trickle home on the 4th of July. Most stayed. No formal activities were scheduled by the reunion committee but there is always plenty to do in Washington in the summer. In the evening, 450,000 people were at the Mall for a spectacular fireworks display above the Washington monument. This was the best fireworks display I had ever seen, but a vet standing next to me was overwhelmed by it, especially when numerous rockets would go off simultaneously. Fireworks don't particularly remind me of Vietnam, but this vet was forced to turn away, ears plugged, eyes closed tightly and fear evident on the face that pressed into my shoulder.

A good number of the vets I met were involved with police work. The best t-shirt read: HOMICIDE CHICAGO POLICE: OUR DAY BEGINS WHEN YOUR'S ENDS

One of the most satisfying things about this reunion for me was my ability to appreciate the stories I heard. Often, when I talk with vets, the places and events are foreign to me, but not at this reunion. Most in attendance were Marines and most had spent their tours of duty in I Corps in the late 1960's. If I hadn't been to the places they described, at least I had read about them and could find them on a map.

Life at Khe Sanh had been difficult. Often there were insufficient rations. It was impossible to keep clean, and most of our gear had been destroyed by incoming. Hundreds died. I left Vietnam shortly after leaving Khe Sanh, certain that my unit and the others that had experienced the siege would be in for easier times. This, however, was not the case. Virtually everyone I spoke with ran into greater difficulties after departing Khe Sanh.

One former Corpsman, recently retired from the Navy, told me over breakfast of his experiences at a place called LZ Margo. After two days of battle, only two men in his platoon of 58 remained unscathed. An entire squadron of medium helicopters was required to evacuate the casualties.

One individual I knew well in Vietnam receives a 100% disability for PTSD — something I never heard of before. When his unit got overrun by VC sappers on the Cao Doi Peninsula, killing nine Marines and wounding 18, this Marine, a clerk, wound up beating an enemy soldier in the face with his rifle butt. But the M-16 is not as robust as the M-14 we used for hand-to-hand combat training, and it was necessary to use a bayonet to finish off the VC sapper. The VC threw a satchel charge into one bunker killing all the occupants except one. The bodies were badly burned and had to be identified by dental records. The lone survivor was at the reunion.

Some of the best times at the reunion were at the hotel bar. I met a music teacher from upstate New York and a South African journalist who were completely mystified by this strange collection of people. Neither had even heard of Khe Sanh before wandering into the bar. Several vets brought slides from Khe Sanh and projected them onto the wall. It was interesting for me to hear them argue about what these slides depicted. They couldn't agree on much, each sure of his own authority because, you see, each had been at Khe Sanh.

"What do you mean that isn't Hill 861! Right there is where John got hit!"

"Hill 861 is where I got hit! That's not a picture of Hill 861, goddamn it! I oughta know Hill 861 when I see it! I lived there for months!"

And on and on...

I never visited any of the hill positions during the siege. We felt that at some point the NVA would attempt to overrun the base and that the hill positions would be attacked first. Life on those hilltops seemed to be particularly bleak. They were more exposed to enemy fire and clearly at the end of the supply line. I expressed these sentiments to a Marine who spent the siege on Hill 881 South, explaining how badly I felt that they had had to spend the siege there.

"We felt badly for you guys on the base!" he replied with a huge smile. "We could hear the rockets and artillery pass overhead on its way to your position, and see every round impact into the base. We were glad to be on the hills!"

One vet from the 3d Recon Battalion told me of sending home an M-79 grenade launcher, an M-14 capable of firing fully automatic plus several fragmentation grenades in a sea bag. His mother followed instructions and did not open the bag when it arrived home. The thrill of possessing such firepower diminished over the years and he eventually threw the fragmentation grenades into Great South Bay off Long Island, inadvertently killing a sea turtle. The M-79 rounds were placed in concrete when he built an addition onto his house. When I jokingly suggested he might want to sell the M-14 to a drug dealer he admitted that he had been offered 4 ounces of cocaine for the rifle. We discussed the possibility of my acquiring the M-79 grenade launcher but nothing came of it.

This vet also related a story whereby he acquired a knapsack from a dead NVA soldier. The pack contained some clothing items, letters from home, some photographs, two balls of rice and a quantity of marijuana. My experience with marijuana in Vietnam was that it was very strong stuff. My battalion alone fired tens of thousands of artillery rounds into the NVA positions and the airstrikes were continuous. It must have been quite a sensation being caught in a napalm strike whilst stoned on industrial-strength marijuana — especially with nothing to munch on except rice balls.

Many of the anecdotes involved Marines helping each other.

One infantryman told me of being medevaced after being sprayed with shrapnel. He was terrified of riding in a helicopter and quickly became cold as the chopper gained altitude. Recognizing his fear and discomfort, the door gunner covered the injured Marine with his coat and stuck a lit cigarette in his mouth.

Maybe it's the memory of such little things that made these people want to get together again. Men are notorious for their inability to show affection, especially to other men. I don't know why that doesn't seem to be the case in war. In terms of camaraderie, these men lost none of it in the twenty five years since Khe Sanh. Former battalion commanders huddled and talked with former privates. Best of friends who had not seen each other since their Vietnam days spent hours together in the bar, bringing themselves up to date. Men who still had physical problems from their war experiences were helped by men who went home unscathed. The sense of "family" was overwhelming and very satisfying.

At Khe Sanh we mostly lived in bunkers and trenches. I had no occasion to meet people from other units. The marines occupying the hill positions I never even saw. On the combat base we were forbidden to be above ground unless we had a need. Whatever we did at Khe Sanh in 1968, we mostly did in isolation from one another. I, for one, am grateful for the opportunity to meet these people.

At breakfast, one vet greeted a friend from his unit. "Hey dude, how you doing?"

The reply was: "I'm doing just fine. I haven't slept this good in years!"

Peter Brush
MORT/1/13

Dear Ernie,

Sorry for being AWOL for the last few years. In May I got *The Khe Sanh Veteran* spring issue. I was taken back to say the least by what I read. While reading the Chronology and wiping a little moisture that collected under my eyes from old memories, it showed that on April 24th, 1967, 1st and 3d PLTs of B/1/9 made extensive contact with NVA on Hill 861. So that's what they called it. We, K/3/9, arrived April 26th. We were on the N.W. corner of the strip, by the tree stump that Charlie used as an aim stake. Anyway, we left the strip on the 28th to help B/1/9 on 861. When we finally got to the hill, we were carrying wounded and dead off for hours and eventually got to the last of the Company at the 3rd stairstep that afternoon. Where the hell was 2/3?

Then it states: "Hill 881 South captured by 3/3 May 2nd, 1967". A few things seem to have been lost in the shuffle — things like how, the day before, 224 Marines from Kilo Company 3rd BN 9th Marines tried to go up 881 South. That afternoon and early evening, 159 walking and wounded were pulled back down the hill, across that little stream and up on hill 600 for the night. That night, choppers landed by candlelight in B-3 cans to resupply us. The next morning, after the arty and air kicked ass, we went back up the hill. I was the first Marine over the top that morning. I got to find our dead from the day before. If 3/3 was there, they must have been further to the North and closer to 881 North. There are a lot of things we've forgotten in 26 years, but there's a lot we'll never forget either. History may show the victory to 3/3, but for all those killed from 3/9 Kilo, I had to say something.

There is also one more thing, if you will indulge me. Several days after taking the hill, we started looking for our MIA's. We found a Marine who had been dead for some time. Graves Registration was called and the gentleman came out. The reason I'm writing this is one, to say I'm sorry to that man and two, for saying how glad I am that those people existed and did such a great job in finding out who the dead were and seeing to it that they got shipped home. This man came to the site and started collecting the dead Marine's personal effects; rings, watch, and bagging them. I got mad about how he was doing his job and started yelling at him and trying to get him to fight. I was 19 and had never seen such horrors as I had in the last 2 weeks. Now, at 45, and having thought about it throughout the years, I just hope that man has forgiven me for my stupidity. We "Combat Vets" think we had it tough. I haven't read or heard anything about these courageous people. There is no way in hell I could have done their job without going nuts. These men saw more horror in one week than we probably saw in our whole tour.

Sincerely,
John Porter
K/3/9

P.S. Thanks for allowing me to get a few things off my chest. Maybe a few more memories can be softened now.

Dear Sir,

I've read the volume 1:2 Spring 1993 edition of *The Khe Sanh Veteran* and found the Chronology very interesting.

On the 2nd July, 1968, Delta Company hit some shit off 689. Our Commander was Col. Archie Van Winkle (Ole Arch), Medal of Honor winner in Korea. For a while, possession of the hill was in question. At one time the NVA flag was near the top of the hill. On the 6th July, we (A/1/1) left Hill 861 and reinforced "dying Delta" (our nickname for Delta Co. — they were similar in make-up to the "Walking Dead" 9th Marines).

Ole Arch devised his 'body snatcher' teams idea after looking over the area from my fighting hole. He would then head back to his command post on the airstrip side of 689. It was an honor to have him reconnoiter from my position, but it soon grew tiresome. He would be there long enough to draw the NVA's attention and almost enough time for them to set up the mortars and snipers, then he'd leave, graciously permitting A/1/1's 1st Platoon to be the proud recipient of his incoming!

For many years I'd thought I was the very last Marine to leave the valley. I was part of the last fireteam out and was the very last one to leave. We hololifted from K.S. Hill 689 on 12th July. I have mixed feelings now in finding out that some of the 4th Marines remained behind on 950 and the honor of covering our rear went elsewhere, and not to me.

Also, it should be noted that Corpsman Clausen, a Khe Sanh veteran, was killed S.E. of Con Thien a short time later, along with the Platoon radioman and our Lt. Later still, in the Dodge City area south of Da Nang, we lost Billy Pless and "Clancy". (God, I

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wish I could remember their names better — I remember their smiles and every hair on their face, their laughs — they certainly deserve so much better from me). These guys were at Khe Sanh and brought great honor on themselves and us. They never slacked off at all. They gave me my courage and love for all the members of the "brotherhood".

I'm a member of the Boulder Vet Center in Boulder, Colorado, which is where I discovered your newsletter. Like a lot of us vets, I'm only now finding out that I'm not alone. I've endured 25 years of sadness and anger. Thanks to the people at the Boulder Vet Center, and people like you and your newsletter, I and others can come home without abandoning the memories of our times and fellow warriors.

Thank you very much.
J. C. Scott
A/1/1

Dear Ernie,

In the Fall '92 *Khe Sanh Veteran*, there is an article on page 24 about Hill 881. Being part of the Shore Party Helicopter Support Team on 881, I was involved in the medevacs. As usual, the cloud cover was inpenetrable and I had to radio Khe Sanh for the aircraft for the evac. Due to the cloud cover, we used 81mm mortar illumination to try and guide the aircraft in. In the clouds as you know, sound direction is diffused. I recall shooting pencil flares to pinpoint the L.Z. which was on the top of the hill. There were only three L.Z.'s on 881, these being at the east end, the top of the hill and the saddle.

As mentioned in the article, almost every aircraft was mortared. Unfortunately, I can't remember many details — I guess there was just too much shit going on. Captain Dabney wanted to come up with a better resupply plan. This was due to the lack of L.Z.'s. We discussed painting 105mm shell boxes different colors and moving them at night. The super gaggle system took care of that. I can only remember one man who was KIA because I couldn't get him off the hill because of weather. In my opinion, the aircrews have got balls the size of an elephant. To fly at night and with no visibility is incredible.

I also want to inform you of my future trip back to the Nam. I'm going in June. I have previously visited a small village outside of Dalat where the government has moved these hill people (approximately 35-50 people) to work in a chopstick factory! You would not believe the abject poverty there. Anyway, apart from taking clothing and medical supplies over for them, I've also started a collection for a pig fund; this is to buy 2 sows and 10 chickens for the village.

At the February reunion in Chicago, I told Ken Penn that I will bring back 20 Montagnard bracelets for the P.X. at D.C. I'm also going to throw in a couple of 'Apocalypse Now' T-shirts — they are really neat!

Finally, would you put my brother's name on the membership roster. Earl Breeding was his C.O. in 1967. His name is L/Cpl Gerald A Lee, 32810 Sutton, New Baltimore, Mich. 48247. He was in 1st Platoon, Echo Company, 2nd BN, 3rd MAR in 1967. He got hit on 861 during the hill fights. I got hit on 881 in February 1968.

See you in D.C.

Mike Lee
1/3/26-A SP

Dear Ernie,

First of all, let me say that not only have I enjoyed all issues of the newsletter, but I've appreciated them as well. While I've always had contact with one or two of the guys that I served with, it was always a very lonely feeling; just a few of us left. The Organization and the Newsletter helps combat the sense of isolation.

As much as I would like to write some interesting, insightful, thought provoking article that would be a valuable contribution, I am unfortunately unable to do so. You see Skipper, I know my limitations and writing is one of them — that's why I never got past the title for my book, "Lima Papa 3".

I am being somewhat lighthearted in the opening of this letter because I don't want you to take any additional comments in a manner in which they are not intended. You see, I'm not trying to be critical and if it comes across that way, then I apologize in advance. I guess my Vietnam service in general and Khe Sanh in particular just means a lot to me; it's had such a dynamic, positive (despite the setbacks) impact on my life that I refuse to forget it, despite advice to the contrary from well-meaning civilians. Not only do I not want to forget it, but I want to push for preserving accurate memories of the people, as well as the events. Bearing this in mind, here are my comments: In the Honor Roll listing of those killed, you listed Jack C Boggard, KIA 02/05/68 as serving with Echo 2/3. Boggard was Echo 2/26, one of our 7 KIA's when the NVA very unwisely tried to exercise eminent domain on Hill 861-A. If you recall, Echo Company 2/26 decisively instructed the Hanoi government in the legally binding concept of "Squatters Rights".

In the listing of Khe Sanh veterans who were later killed in action, many names were omitted. In the 1991 Fall issue, I made a dedication to ten members of Echo 2/26, "Khe Sanh Veterans All", who were later KIA. I will admit to terrible spelling (how many did we know by nicknames?) and atrocious handwriting, but I was close and I did have the dates correct. Anyway, here is a relisting:

Cpl Ken Schabel	(6/6/68)
L/Cpl Denny Dabozzo	(6/6/68)
L/Cpl Danny Prock	(6/6/68)
PFC Bill Campbell	(6/6/68)
L/Cpl Stan Pettit	(9/15/68)
L/Cpl Gary Daffin	(9/16/68)
L/Cpl Joe Robles	(9/16/68)
PFC J.C. "Bull" Durham	(9/16/68)
S/Sgt Juan Sanchez	(9/17/68)
L/Cpl Jim Haggey	(12/6/68)

In addition, I've since learned of two other Khe Sanh veterans who were killed during later operations. L/Cpl Cliff Spillver was WIA on 9/16/68 and died of his wounds on 9/28/68. The story of PFC Mike Hayes is self-explanatory once you read the newspa-

per articles I've enclosed. One article I took out of *The Toledo Blade* whilst the other articles were sent to me by Mike Worth: It's just like Jim Kaylor not to blow his own horn!

Finally, I am enclosing a name, address and phone number of a new listing. Just found out last week that my current USMCR Commanding Officer (for the past year and a half no less) flew choppers (46's no less) in and around the combat base. I have photocopied the reunion registration and information and mailed it to him, so he should be there.

Thomas J McKnight III
9800 Checokee Road
Richmond, VA 23235
(804) 320-3811

My thanks for everything Skipper. God Bless, take care and see you at The Wall.

Semper Fi
Larry McCartney
E/2/26

P.S. Speaking of The Wall, I won't go into the reasons why, but I will say that I've always had a very bad attitude about The Wall. I've refused to go in the past when I've had the opportunity. I could even be the disgruntled veteran (God, how I hate the word 'disgruntled'; it denotes unjustified, and my feelings are most definitely not unjustified) that Lew Puller refers to in his book "Fortunate Son" after a conversation we had approximately 10 years ago when I was in D.C. and didn't go to The Wall. I'll be there for the 25th because I've decided "to go to The Wall with the guys who went to the wall with me" — the ones who went to the wall with me in '68 when I needed them.

• • •

From *The Chicago Tribune*

23 YEARS LATER, HERO GETS HIS DUE

"On a blistering summer day in Vietnam more than 23 years ago, a 19 year old Marine from Chicago named William Allen Hayes died saving another Marine's life by charging an enemy machine gun, helmetless, bare-chested and with a grenade in each hand.

"On a biting winter morning in McHenry on Friday, Bill Hayes was honored for what he did on June 6, 1968. With the man he saved standing nearby and a Marine color guard behind them, Hayes' surviving brother and sister accepted a Certificate of Commendation from 1st Sgt Randie Scobee of the Marines' Inspector-Instructor staff in Waukegan.

"I'm glad I got it off my chest," said Jim Kaylor, a big man with a mustache to match his size, who is now a sergeant with the Los Angeles County sheriff's Department.

"At least the family knows. That was the most important thing."

Dear Ernie,

I'm trying to locate a buddy from Vietnam. Clarence Carlson and I are trying to get in touch with Stanley Lopez. Carlson thinks he was from San Antonio, Texas.

The three of us were survivors of a recon mission to investigate results of a B-52 bombing of a location some 15 clicks northwest of Khe Sanh. We were in 3rd Recon, Alpha Company at Khe Sanh during April and May of 1967. It is my understanding that our mission started the first battle of Khe Sanh. All three of us were wounded on that mission. Four did not come home on that 10th of May. While I was in the hospital in Japan, I was told by Lopez that there had been 13 attempts by choppers to pick us up. I was also told that most of the pilots and co-pilots were wounded during the extraction attempts. I would very much like to hear from those crews. I want to thank them.

On May 9th, we were to be taken out to a location 15 clicks northwest of Khe Sanh at dawn. In fact, we were actually choppered out there around 4.00 p.m. We found an extensive bunker complex approximately 300 yards from the L.Z. Whilst no one was at home in the 50 or so bunkers, indications revealed that the NVA had been there and had left in many directions. My team leader, Sgt Tycz called in after we had completed our mission but for some unknown reason, we could not be extracted that day. In order to avoid the risk of ambush in trying to get to a different L.Z., we were ordered to set up a small perimeter on high ground among the bunkers. During the night, the NVA returned from all directions and re-occupied their bunkers again. We decided to let them settle down and then attempt to crawl out. However, that idea soon went out the window when two of them walked right up on us whilst crossing their compound. Lopez killed those two but not before they wounded Lt. Ahlmeyer, who was attending our mission to learn the ropes. He was on his first mission in Vietnam. Then all hell broke out. The Lt. and Sgt Tycz were wounded in the opening salvos. The Lt kept groaning and grenades were zeroing in on his moans. Sgt Tycz was in close proximity with the Lt and threw back three grenades before one wounded him in the face. Then he began to moan as well. Carlson treated both men, administering morphine to calm them down. At that point we called in artillery on our own position but it turned out that we were out of range. We called Puff in on our position too.

The closest bunkers were about 10-20 yards downhill from us and we threw grenades at them, returning as many of their grenades as we could find. At that time we were in 3 feet high elephant grass. I remember throwing one back myself. L/Cpl Sam Sharp Jr. was shot through the head right next to me. I saw him fire an automatic burst into the ground. I crawled over to see how he was but he had a hole the size of a silver dollar in the back of his head.

A few minutes later I was wounded by a bullet that I later found out had bounced around my insides, tearing up much of my intestines. But I was still able to fight. Lopez was to my left and Carlson was across the perimeter from us. Sometime, I'm not sure when, the Lt., Sgt Tycz and one other man whose name I can't recall, died.

Not long ago, I found out Carlson was wounded a number of times. Lopez was wounded, I think, four times.

I can recall only three attempts to extract us, when the inbound chopper would turn its lights on about 50 feet above the ground. The NVA cross-fired machine gun fire at them. I got wounded in the back by a concus- continued on page 34

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sion grenade and lost consciousness. The next morning I awoke to dirt hitting me from air strikes. Carlson saw me and told me to grab a weapon, ammunition and canteens and move closer to his position. Napalm was dropped at the bottom of the hill. As the fire from the napalm burned up the hill toward us, we were being fired at by snipers. Two Jolly Green Giants were sent to draw fire on each side of the hill and a Huey swept in to pick us up. I laid down cover fire for Carlson and Lopez as a sniper was firing at me and I had an idea where he was. When I dove for the chopper, I didn't have strength enough to get in and the door gunner grabbed my arm as we took off. We took one round through the chopper as I was pulled in.

Needless to say, I was scared shitless. This was my first and only combat contact while serving with 3rd Recon. Lopez told me that he and Carlson thought I had died. He also told me that between the two of them, 29 NVA fell from their small arms fire. They must have been more interested in getting the choppers than getting us. The NVA also didn't know how many of us there were. Lopez said he and Carlson would cease firing and lay quietly and the NVA would send only a few at a time to see if they were still conscious. He said they picked the NVA off as they silhouetted in the moonlight. He states that of the 29 killed, he can only account for 4 of them. Carlson must have been really busy! I have had contact with Carlson but he is having trouble remembering what happened. Lopez has his perspective of what happened. He was our radioman and was on the radio almost continuously. If the three of us can get together, maybe we can be successful in getting Sgt Tycz or Clarence Carlson the Medal of Honor.

As I understand it, our rescuers that day were Major General Bruno Hochmuth's crew, who volunteered to make one last attempt to extract us and, thankfully, were successful. Unfortunately, later the same year, the General and his crew were all killed whilst attempting to rescue fellow Marines. If anyone out there knows the names of the General's crew, I would very much appreciate this information.

Semper Fi,
Carl (Britt) Friery
9002 Woodgate Cir. E.,
Waco, Texas 76712.
(817) 666-7642
A/3D RECON

P.S. Enclosed you will find a check for my dues. Also, I am in full support of the monument project at Khe Sanh. However, I feel it would be much more meaningful if it could somehow represent both sides. After all — the NVA fought there too.

• • •

Dear Mr Spencer,

A lot has happened since that episode my husband has written about. Britt spent almost two years in and out of the hospital recovering from wounds received whilst in Vietnam. He and I married in November 1971 and he was finally able to get a job in 1974 with the National Park Service. He stayed with the NPS but over the years we have had to move 28 times. In February 1992, Carlson located Britt and called him. That call brought back all the memories Britt had bottled up for the last 25 years. It all became too much and Britt broke. Since that time, he has attended the Waco VA being treated for PTSD and it has not been pleasant.

Britt never talked about Vietnam or associated with anyone who had been over there until he got that call, so all this is new to me and the kids. (The kids are aged 10 and 12 and are adopted. Britt's battle wounds prevented us from having any of our own).

I am very glad he is now opening up. Thank you.

Kathy Friery

VIETNAM DESIDERATA

(Found in an old bunker at Khe Sanh — 1969)

❦ O placidly amid the artillery fire and rocket explosions and remember what peace may be found in body count. As far as possible be on combative terms with all people. Speak your truth with firepower and listen for signs of VC and NVA ambushes.

❦ Avoid loud and aggressive AK-47 fire for it is a vexation to staying alive, and you may likely incur a sucking chest wound. If you compare your M-16 with the AK-47, you may become bitter or vain, for always there will be greater and lesser weapons than yours — namely the damn Soviet B-40 rocket. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans to kill more.

❦ Keep interested in your survival; however humble, it is the only way you will ever get laid again. Exercise caution in your business affairs for the jungle is full of booby-traps, mines and devious eyes with vindictive and malicious inclinations toward you. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is, and to what Phantoms can do. Many people strive for a successful search and destroy mission, but Tac-Air can make it a reality. Especially do not be inhibited about shouting "Medic!" Neither be cynical about war — remember, it has given our girl "Hollywood Jane" an opportunity to exercise her ambition to become a foreign film star.

❦ Be youself — no matter what the Sergeant-Major wants you to be! Avoid altruistic behavior while in the bush, and remember that when you've got 'em by the gonads, their hearts and minds will become very cooperative to your ways.

❦ Nurture strength of spirit and firepower to shield you on those occasions when the defecation hits the cooling apparatus. Do not distress yourself with imaginings; Charlie wants to rip your ass apart with high-velocity projectiles and that's no jive! Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness, but that ain't nothing compared to the fears born in the midst of the mud, and the blood, and the bullets. Take kindly the counsel of years (if you live that long) and gracefully surrender the things of youth, but not your claymores. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with, and protective of yourself; when in doubt you must pull the trigger.

❦ You are an American soldier of the universe — no less than John Wayne, or napalm, or white phosphorous. So, be at war with whatever the hell gets in your way. And remember, with all life's sham and drudgery and broken dreams, there are still awards and decorations. Press on in the

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face of political adversity — some protesters at home will never fathom the philosophical depth of it, but one reason you are in the Nam is to defend their continued rights to disagree with you.

❦ Therefore, step lively in your unselfish and noble purpose to defend the freedom of a struggling country. However cliche, freedom ain't free. Ours was bought, paid for and reinsured by hard-fisted American patriots.

❦ Remember, take pride in America — She isn't without her faults, but She holds the strongest and brightest torch of freedom the world has ever known!

✌

To All Members:

continued from page 1

returned from a Veterans Reunion in Kokomo, Indiana, along with Ken, Bernice and many other Khe Sanh vets. I personally met 20 existing members and signed up another 38. I can remember no time in my life when I was able to make 58 new friends in one day.

That was the "up" side. The down side came when I called a member to see why he didn't make it to D.C. this summer. His widow explained that he had passed away 9 months ago. I sent a card — but nine months after the fact is unacceptable. We need to be there for each other as soon as possible. Had we had this network in place this would not have happened. Communication is the key. It is the key to success in times of emotional need, the key to our growth and stability, the key to accomplishing the ongoing mission of this organization.

We wonder why so many do not attend our reunions or fall off the active membership rolls. My personal experience, having talked to all of my men in Indiana was that many have still not found that personal friend they shared a meal with. Many of my new friends came to Kokomo at my request simply because I picked up the phone and let them know that I cared. They don't realize how good I felt that they cared enough to come and see me. We all survived Khe Sanh because we were there for each other. Do we not all now deserve the fruits of our labor?

I need special people for this project. They need to be compassionate. They need to give of their time and have the ability to withstand the attacks from "MA BELL". They must be able to write letters on occasion and respond with cards when necessary. It will be a very simple chain of command. District Co-ordinators will be appointed by State Co-ordinators. When all State Co-ordinators are in place, I, as Vice President, will appoint Regional Co-ordinators. Each will be responsible for members in their respective districts. We will try to keep each district at no more than 100 members. Each Co-ordinator will keep in touch with his members and seek out new membership whenever opportunities present themselves.

There is no pay or reimbursement authorized. Monies may be donated for flower funds only subject to approval by our President or Board of Directors.

I am also sending out the challenge to all of the wives or "significant others". This is 1993 and although I live "back in the sticks", I am acutely aware of, and very sensitive to the needs of the women. After all, you have put up with us all these years (sometimes I wonder why), and like it or not, you are a part of the experience known as "Khe Sanh".

I have enlisted the help of a very special person, Janet Parker, to head up the "Khe Sanh Women's Network". Some of you met Janet in Washington D.C. I know she is just the right person for the job. This will give everyone the opportunity to write and communicate your own experiences. I know 3 days just doesn't do it.

I have talked with Ernie Spencer and he agrees wholeheartedly that the other half of this organization has more than earned the right to voice their feelings in our newsletter, and has indicated to me that space will be made available to the "Khe Sanh Veterans Womens Network". Letters for now should go to Janet Parker.

Anyone willing to help with this project please contact:

Mike O'Hara
P.O. Box 626
Nashville
Indiana 47448
Vice President
K.S.V. Inc.

Mrs Janet Parker
23 N. Navajo Drive
Waretown
New Jersey 08758
Chairwoman
K.S.V. Womens Network

REUNION BRIEF

While on vacation at Yosemite, one of my colleagues met an ex-Marine, Vietnam combat vet who is now a harbor cop in L.A. My colleague told him about Manny Babbitt and he was very interested in Manny's situation and asked us to send him more information about the case. The network is growing.

For the past four years I have been deeply involved in the case of Manny Babbitt, a Khe Sanh vet who now sits on death row in California. In the course of my representation of Manny, I have sought to reconstruct his life leading up to his commission of the crime for which he has been sentenced to die. Without a doubt, no other event in Manny's life had more significance in terms of shaping his future than Vietnam, and in particular, Khe Sanh.

A couple of months ago, I received a phone call from John Hargesheimer, who served with Manny in the 3d AT's. John, who has been corresponding with Manny for some time, had given us a powerful and moving affidavit for Manny's case about his memories of Manny at Khe Sanh and what they both experienced there. John called me to find out how things were going for Manny, and during our conversation he told me about a 25th reunion of Khe Sanh vets scheduled to take place in D.C. over the 4th of July. John thought he might go and suggested that I might want to go on Manny's behalf as well. I thought it was a great idea. So did Manny.

Before I actually booked a plane reservation, I talked to Ernie Spencer, Ray Stubbe and Bernice Penn, who all responded with enthusiasm to my request to attend the reunion on Manny's behalf. Ray, like John, had already contributed significantly to Manny's case, and Ernie had previously corresponded with Manny and knew him from his contributions to the newsletter. I was quite amazed, however, that Bernice knew who Manny was before I even mentioned his name.

In spite of my conversations with Ernie, Ray and Bernice, I still felt somewhat apprehensive about how everyone at the reunion would feel about my presence, since I was an outsider and a public defender, no less!

Within five minutes of my arrival at the Georgetown Holiday Inn, I knew that everything was going to be just fine. It was 7 a.m. on Thursday morning and I was standing outside the hospitality room waiting for Bernice to open it so I could register. Jack Kilbride and John Macias and their wives, who were standing there with me, turned and asked me who I was. I told them and then braced myself, waiting for them to give me some awkward response and turn back to their conversation. Boy, was I ever surprised when they not only responded with genuine interest and empathy for Manny, but told me how great they thought it was that I had come all that way to attend the reunion on his behalf.

The rest of my experiences over that reunion weekend were very similar to the one I've just described. There were so many people who expressed concern about Manny, as well as gratitude that I was trying to help one of their brothers. The warmth and kindness was simply overwhelming. I never once felt like an outsider. I truly felt like I belonged.

Although I spent time talking to a lot of different people during the reunion, I spent the greatest amount of time with Gary Dahlheimer, Fred Swets and, of course, John Hargesheimer, the guys who served with Manny in the 3d AT's. I had absolutely the best time with those guys and after only four days felt like I had a real bond with them. The only thing that made me sad was thinking about the fact that Manny should have been the fourth member of that quartet, how positive and healing the experience would have been for him and how much everyone would have enjoyed him as well.

When you guys were at Khe Sanh I was just 12 years old. Before I met Manny I had only a vague idea about what a Marine was. I'd never heard anyone say "Semper Fi" or if I had, it made no impression on me. After spending four days with the Marines who were at Khe Sanh, I think I have a much greater understanding of what that motto means. Thank you for including me. I sincerely hope to see you all again soon.

Jessica McGuire
Deputy State Public Defender

Dear Friend,

I am writing to once again ask your assistance with our In Touch program. As you may recall, In Touch is a locator service to connect families, friends and fellow veterans who lost someone in Vietnam. We have found that these connections are very rewarding and help the healing process for both families and veterans.

Originally, it was intended that when a family and veteran wrote in about the same person who is on the Wall, we would put them in contact with each other. However, we have found that by networking we have been more successful and can expedite the process.

Any publication and distribution of the lists of names increases the likelihood that we will locate people that knew the veterans...therefore a match. We have been pleasantly surprised by the number of matches that have been made this way and are deeply appreciative of your help.

You can also assist by spreading the word about In Touch. Anyone desiring to find the family, friends and fellow veterans of a KIA or MIA veteran can participate in the program.

Please call if you have any questions or comments. Any help you can give us in these areas would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Corky Condon
In Touch Director
Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial
2030 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 412, Arlington, VA 22201.
(703) 525-1107

Dear Sir,

My name is Lee Craig and I am the Director of an all volunteer vet for vet outreach center in Redding, California. We call our store-front center L.Z. Dust-Off, a term I became quite used to as an R.T.O. with the 1st Cav Division in 1968. I have just returned from my fourth trip to Southeast Asia to work with Bob Taylor and Mike Harris of World Aid. Mike is a very good friend of mine and we have done a lot of work together over there in the last few years. I put teams of vets together to go over and work with them. While there, he showed me your newsletter. I found it quite interesting. I think it would make a great addition to the literature we make available to the veterans that utilize our center. I would like to know what it costs, or if there is a possibility of receiving a free copy. We operate completely on private donations so our financial base limits us.

Mike told me that your organization has considered doing some work with them to assist the tribals there. It is a great experience and very rewarding. It has been a very positive experience for me and those that I have been on team with. Please feel free to contact me on this matter, or any others. I am usually in the office Tuesday thru Friday. My fax number is (916) 243-8127. If there is a time that you are coming north, please let me know and stop by and see us.

In service to others.
Lee Craig
P.O. Box 990112
Redding, CA 96099.

Aloha Ernie,

I sent you a letter a few months back and you gave it to Ray Stubbe. I received a very good letter from Ray. Thank you for that because I am corresponding with him now. I am still struggling with PTSD and his letter gave me a little boost of confidence which I surely need right now.

Please accept this donation of fifty bucks to your fine organization. I look forward to receiving your newsletter. I flew with VMGR-152, HMM-362 and other HMM's from February '67 to March '68. I was in and out of Khe Sanh many times and flew all over I Corps.

Keep up the good work Ernie. Are you from Hawaii? I married a Hawaiian girl (Makuakane) and live in Keaukaha (Hilo) on the big island. The gentle and caring "Aloha spirit" from my o'hana has kept me sane these many years. I wish all vets could find this peace and forgiveness that I've found here. God bless you Ernie.

Aloha
Mike Buckles
VMGR-15

ED NOTE: I am a Hawaii country boy, born and raised.

Dear Bill,

Sorry for the delay in my response but I have been diagnosed with cancer and all my thoughts and efforts have been concentrated on fighting this illness.

I would like to be able to send more money to support the cause but at this time, I am out of work on disability and only receiving half pay. When I get back on my feet I will try to send an additional contribution, for I believe what Ray, Preacher Husted and the rest of you have accomplished is remarkable.

I would stress that for those who have not done so, they be tested for Agent Orange, as I was recently tested. The probability is quite high that my results will come back positive, because the areas in which I served on my two tours were heavily sprayed with it. I put off getting tested because I guess I didn't want to know. Try and encourage others not to make the same mistake I made. The deadline for testing for Agent Orange and applying for benefits is December 1993. The benefits would principally be for one's surviving children should they incur medical problems.

I have to close now. Once again, sorry for the delay in my response.

Semper Fi and God Bless
Jim Kinaur
B-3rd RECON

Dear Ernie,

Having just finished reading your latest issue of *The Khe Sanh Veteran* newsletter and then pacing the floor for a few minutes, I have decided to write you this letter. I would like to congratulate you and those others who have been responsible for such an important and needed outlet for us Khe Sanh vets.

Now, after those well thought out words of praise, can anybody tell me why in the MMMM it's taken me so long to find out about you guys? For years I have wondered what has happened to all my buddies in 3/26, and especially Hill 881, India Company. Looks like through the Khe Sanh vets, I may now have a chance to find them again.

I stumbled upon your Fall 1992 newsletter while attending a counseling session at our local Vet Center. Unfortunately, PTSD is alive and well in my life but with the help of my counselor here, I think things are going to start having a better outlook.

Ironically, I just began this week to write my own memoirs of my experiences in Vietnam, especially during the TET Offensive. I was in and out of Khe Sanh with 3/26 from September '67 until after the Offensive. The majority of the time I was on Hill 881S with India Company 81mm mortars. I was a 2511 Wireman who spent a lot of time giving that familiar "Incoming Co Roc" warning to my brothers down in Khe Sanh Combat Base throughout the Siege.

I hope to hear from anyone who remembers me. I have needed this newsletter for some time. I do thank you.

Your friend
John A Ortiz
2013 N. Gow
Wichita, KS 67203
(316) 942-2558 / 262-5221
81 Mortar Plt. H & S Co.
3/26

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continued on page 38

Dear Ernie,

Having just finished writing my first letter to you, I thought it was time to write another one! I know — where did this guy come from...did he have just a little too much fruit cake or ham and mothers?

No, the truth is that I am really excited about discovering *The Khe Sanh Veterans.*

Your newsletter has come to my attention at one of the most critical times of my life. PTSD has only recently reared its ugly head in my life and I have spent the last year trying to understand both the condition and myself as well. I have found that I've suffered from this condition since my tour and, of course, it has had profound emotional and psychological effects on my family life and other relationships, as well as other areas of my life like job, social, etc. But enough of that — the real purpose of this is to introduce myself a little more thoroughly.

As stated previously, I am a Khe Sanh vet, having served in Nam from August '67 thru September '68. I spent my entire tour assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines. Shortly after ending my enlistment, I married my wife Pam and we began our life and family together. We have three wonderful children; Mark 21, Marcia 17 and Michelle 10. I have worked in the banking business, owned our own family restaurant and now work for a Native American organization as the Director of a JTPA employment and training program.

Rather late in my career I earned a Masters degree from the Wichita State University in Sociology. I have used both my education and life experiences to help those needing direction and focus in their lives with regard to employment needs. I have developed my skills as a career counselor and in grant management and administration of a non-profit organization. Although not Native American myself (I am Mexican American), I have been able to serve Native American Indian vets on a more personal level because of my Vietnam experience and particular awareness of the difficulties we all endured after our tours.

Despite the influence of PTSD in my life, I am proud of the accomplishments I have achieved and feel compelled to assist other persons, vets or not, who are afflicted by the disorder. I think that *The Khe Sanh Veteran* newsletter may be just the forum to accomplish this. Please send me any registration information I may need in order to be part of your organization. I look forward to a long relationship with your organization and would be honored if the newsletter would consider publishing any material which I might submit in the future. I would like to attempt to offer a sociological perspective, especially culturally, of the Vietnam war. It's more than time to view the war as affecting the lives of millions of individuals, not only the vets but also our families, employers and others

I also have much to share with anyone interested in specific events of the Khe Sanh Siege and especially the 3rd Bn, 26th Marines and Hill 881S. Fortunately, my parents saved the letters I mailed to them during my tour and they have become my most reliable source of reflections from that time. I am also employing these letters and other material I have accumulated in the writing of my own memoirs of those days. I have in my possession mementos such as the battalion cigarette lighter given to us while at Khe Sanh before the Tet Offensive began. I spent Christmas Day '67 on the Khe Sanh base and still remember the helicopter flying around the base with a great big Santa painted on its nose. Also, the light planes which flew over playing Christmas music from their loud speakers.

I knew people who were wounded and died on both the hill and on the base. I have permanently stored all the memories of those days and I feel obligated to share them with whomever is interested. My deepest wish is to communicate with my closest buddies whom I shared bunkers and fighting holes with. I shamefully admit that I can only remember parts of their names. This is something that is difficult for me to admit, but it is true that I can barely remember the names of people who, at one time, my life depended on. Names such as Munday (nickname), Jimmy Jordan, Eddy, Ski, Gion, Perez, Sgt Mac (McClenton), and others that come and go. Possibly the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc will assist me in locating these men and the many others.

Your friend
John A Ortiz
3/26

ED: I'd love to have a peek at your memoirs.

Dear Ernie,

I was recently in the Eugene Veterans Center and came across a copy of *The Khe Sanh Veteran* and think it's a great publication. What do I have to do to get onto your mailing list? I am the Treasurer of the Springfield Chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America and I know we could benefit from the newsletter.

On my second tour I was assigned to A/1/26 and arrived at Khe Sanh on or around January 25th 1968. I wasn't there very long because in late February/early March I was medevaced back to Oakland Naval Hospital and reassigned elsewhere in the World.

There is only one person I remember by name from Khe Sanh. His name was Wilkensen. We shared a bunker for a while that was right outside the company CO's. The day that I was medevaced, 1307 rounds of arty rained down on us. It was truly the end of my sanity for a long time. I still suffer from that bullshit. However, enough of that — now to the point of this letter.

I have in my possession a booked titled "The Battle For Khe Sanh", written by — who else? — the Marine Corps. Captain Moyers S. Shore II, USMC Historical Branch, G-3 Division Headquarters, is the author. It includes maps and aerial photos, and Lt General R. E. Cushman wrote the preface. This book can be purchased from me. I cannot give the book away for obvious sentimental reasons. If it must go, I want it to go to those who will appreciate it.

Once again, I would like to commend you on your newsletter. It is very good and very special. Thanks.

Clark Rabidian
1357 N. 57th Street
Springfield,
OR 97477,
A/1/26

JOHN WAYNE LIVES

Dear Mr Spencer,

This letter is as much intended for President Earle Breeding as it is for you. I hope that he gets to see it.

I have belonged to our group since shortly after its inception. (Ray Stubbe can vouch for my credentials). I await with anticipation each new issue of the newsletter as I thoroughly enjoy its contents. However, excellent as the latest issue is (Vol. 1:3 Summer 1993), there are two items in it which I am compelled to take you to task for.

If we, to whom Khe Sanh has a special meaning, have nothing more in common than a piece of real estate in S.E. Asia, then some of us are sorely missing the point. The word MAN, defines a state of mind more than it does gender, or male sex. The state of mind that identifies with expressions such as "Now, there goes a man..." exhalts virtues such as honor, integrity, courage, loyalty, and the ready willingness to accept the responsibility for ones own actions, not to mention unselfish sacrifice — qualities so sadly lacking in today's society. Khe Sanh to us should mean a place and time where the mettle of men with those values was tested, and they were found "not wanting". Our Khe Sanh experience should be looked upon as the cohesive force that binds men of like ilk together — one of a kind, exclusive, to be remembered and revered.

In Khe Sanh, if you were anti-Communist, then your reason for being there was political. If you were there because you wanted to help an oppressed people come to self-rule and freedom, then your reason for being there was political. If you were ashamed, revolted and angered by the draft card burners, the commune living, the "anything goes, and if it feels good, do it" attitudes of the 60's and early 70's, then your reason for being there was political. If names like Jane Fonda, Ramsey Clark, Kent State and Woodstock made your blood boil, then your reason for being there was political. If you cringed at the words of George McGovern when he said that he would "...go on his knees before Ho Chi Minh and beg if it would save just one American life." (Whatever happened to the spirit of Patrick Henry?) — then your reason for being there was political. If all of us who fought in Khe Sanh shared just one of the above feelings, then a part of our bond is political.

So, to say that as a group we are non-political does misrepresent a major element that sets us apart from the draft dodgers and others who furthered their own, individual agenda under the all encompassing cloak of "the desire for peace". As we who were in Khe Sanh can relate to the comfort of the weight of a .45 on our hip, or the distant chatter of a chopper that you know is coming to extract you after six days out on a four-day patrol, so can we relate to the politics that got us there. As an organization, we can deem it prudent not to support any one candidate or any specific cause. However, to deny us a forum to express criticisms of a morally bankrupt administration takes away from the worth of what we did and sheds shadows of doubt on our reasons for doing it.

As far as Bill Clinton representing the "majority of our generation", again, I beg to differ with you. For a start, all eligible voters did not vote, and of those who did, only 43% voted for Clinton, (hardly a mandate). Of those 43%, many now wish they had voted otherwise and many more will not admit that they voted for him in the first place. This administration of perverts, deviates and delusional pseudo-intellectuals, and its President, were put into office because a majority of that 43% voted their "pocketbook" and not for the political ideology of the party, not for the integrity (non-existent) of its candidate.

Now, about all this "healing" you talk about throughout your articles. Either I don't understand it or I just can't relate to it. Where Vietnam is concerned, and Khe Sanh was a significant part of that overall effort, I have no remorse, no nightmares, and regret only the loss of life and the human sacrifices made by our troops daily which were so misreported Stateside in the media. I did not shirk my duty, I honored my contract and I feel good about what I did. Let the "healing" be done by those who felt impact when we felt recoil — they knew that all they stood for was wrong. Let them heal who turn their heads and avert their eyes, while ours tear up as colors pass in review — let them heal the disease that they carry within, the shame of cowards.

I, for one, strongly urge you not to do the "White House Reception" bit. To meet with Clinton would be compromising a principle that many have died for and some still bleed from defending — that the truth is more important than the feelings of those that exposing it will hurt, be that nationwide.

In conclusion, (here I have a feeling that you must be glad I'm finally ending), I would appreciate it if you were to give this letter to Earle Breeding to read prior to the reunion meeting. I regret that I am unable to attend this year. I hope to meet you at one in the future. Please give my best to Ray Stubbe.

Semper Fi
MSgt Ojars Jurjans
USMC (Ret)

ED: You did your tour and I did mine. When you take over as Editor you can do it yourway. The wonderful thing about the written word is that the reader has the option, at all times, of averting his or her eyes. If you don't like it, don't read it. Simple.

Ritual Cleansing for the Vietnam Veteran

I do not claim to speak for other veterans of the Vietnam Experience, (it seems to me that Jimi Hendrix named it better than those who call it conflict or war); however, I know from contact with other veterans that mine is not a unique perspective of that experience. I also do not claim to speak from the lofty heights of formal education in the working of the mind. I took the minimum course work in psychology and sociology necessary for a degree. I stand upon the ground of experience, unique and personal, just as does any other veteran of that experience. There surely are enough similarities among the experiences of the group to delight the statistics-generating sociologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and any other "...gists" who delight in trying to understand a vicarious experience through objective data in the absence of the subjective experience.

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After the generally derogatory remarks in reference to "...gists", I think it is only fair to say that I stipulate to their overall intentions as not being bad, perhaps even being good and extending from a sincere desire to help. Unfortunately, the "...gists", like most scientific medical doctors are not healers. The sci docs have in the last century or so taken control of medicine and sit in exclusive authority over what is accepted medical practice and the "...gists" covet the approval of the scientific community including the sci docs in order to gain acceptance and recognition. Therefore, the "...gists" are, by training, inclined to scientific approaches to understanding the experiences of others, coupled with a scientific approach to "treating" those whose thoughts and actions are classified as being among the "disorders". Treatment, of course, is aimed at transferring the one being treated from one set of categories to another, i.e. "Abnormal" to "Normal". Now these are broad generalizations and I don't mean to label anyone as abnormal or any other label, after all, I think everyone is normal when the totality of their life experience is taken into account. The point of all this rambling is that the scientific approach is not aimed at healing any more than a mechanic seeks to heal a motor by replacing the alternator.

Despite my unenthusiastic view of the scientific approach to medicine, I have read numerous articles about Vietnam vets, how they are, how they differ from other vets, why they are the way they are, etc., etc. I separated from the Marine Corps in January 1969. I left the Corps a veteran of the Siege of Khe Sanh, Tet Offensive of 1968, Operation Mameluke Thrust and Operation Meade River; I had been wounded and recommended for decorations for actions under fire. I had been a Platoon Leader and a Platoon Sergeant as both an E-5 Sergeant and E-6 Staff Sergeant. I had faced the enemy in close combat and survived. I had performed my duties well and with honor and, by all that I had been taught, my return home would be to the acknowledgement of my service. Instead, I came home and discovered that being a Vietnam veteran was not popular except maybe with other vets. This was a major disruption in my life.

I grew up hearing about my great-grandfather who was a career army officer and his experiences in WW I and the rebuilding of San Francisco after the great quake. WW II experiences and souvenirs from my father and uncles all contributed to the idea that military service was a noble endeavor. All the great adventures and biographies I read had a military involvement and I read the history of the French Foreign Legion, the United States Marine Corps, and the life of Chesty Puller before graduating from high school. When I joined the Corps, I did so as an idealistic romantic who believed that military service was a noble and just cause. After four years in the Corps and twenty years in law enforcement, I continue to believe that service to one's society is a noble cause at whatever level one serves. I have come to see such service as the role of the modern warrior.

Through discussions with others and various articles and books, I have studied warriors of many different eras and societies and found that there are basic similarities among all warrior classes:

- A code of conduct and behavior
- An authority to break certain taboos, chief among them the taboo against the taking of human life
- A charge of responsibility for helping and protecting society and its members against peril
- The undertaking of specialized training and acquisition of skills not generally found among other members of society
- The acceptance of physical death and, therefore, the dedication to living life fully
- The wearing of an uniform or other special attire which sets them apart
- The ostracism of the warrior class by the rest of society members

Among the articles I have read about 'Nam vets and warriors are several in *Esquire* magazine. George Leonard, an author and contributing editor to the magazine wrote an excellent piece on being a warrior in modern times and William Broyles Jr. wrote an excellent piece on why men love war. The pivotal article for me, although I did not realize it at the time, addressed the issue of the taboo against killing and the requisite cleansing that must accomplish that act if a warrior is to be allowed to re-enter society. I wish I could recall the author but I can't, and I'm not sure if the article was in *Playboy* or *Esquire*. I do remember that it was in the early '80's that I read it and it had a profound effect on my way of thinking.

The article explained that a society granted to warriors the special authority to break the taboo against killing and then explained the need for ritual cleansing before the warriors were allowed to return to live among the other members of society. Various rituals were cited, including the sweat lodge ritual used by the Navaho. The victory parades at the end of WW II fulfilled the need for a ritual for returning veterans and military units and allowed their reintegration into society. The article went on to state that returning Vietnam veterans were denied the brass bands and welcome home ceremonies that other veterans had experienced and so were denied their cleansing ritual. This made a great deal of sense to me at the time and I continue to agree with the idea in general.

A simple solution would be to have the parades and ceremonies, albeit somewhat late, and something akin to that happened in the mid-'80's when Oliver Stone and others began making movies about Vietnam. There was some sort of national breast-beating and self-examination about how 'Nam vets had been mistreated. Then with Desert Storm, there was supposed to be a national healing, and returning troops were given their cleansing rituals, but what was extended to 'Nam vets was done out of apparent guilt instead of honest belief in what those vets had done. Many 'Nam vets felt that the attention they received then was not honest and, often, too little, too late.

The point is that there still hasn't been an honest, sincere ritual for those of us who served in Vietnam, and there probably won't be on a national level. Sad though that may be, it is the way things are, and can and probably should be accepted as such. The good news is that a national ritual is not necessary. Really, for addressing many of the memories that plague 'Nam vets, a ritual serving individuals or groups can provide the release of the negative aspects of those memories and the healing that accompanies that release as well as, if not better than, some national action so long after the fact.

Ritual is a powerful tool, particularly in spiritual matters, and I

am talking about the need for a healing of the spirit. The symbolic actions that occur during a ritual act upon, and with, the spirit of the individual who partakes of the ritual. Religions make a lot of use of ritual, whether it is used to outline the form of worship or the performing of sacraments. But ritual is not restricted to religion. The Marine Corps is rich in tradition and rituals and their power is often so strong as to be nearly tangible, so it should be easier for former Marines to experience the power of ritual than for others who have never been a part of such a close-knit group.

Our lives are made up of a series of experiences which shape and mold our very being. I doubt that anyone who went through the Vietnam Experience would dispute that it profoundly changed their life. The effects of that experience are widely varied but even among those such as myself, who feel that they generally had a grand adventure and personally grew and benefitted from it, there are negative aspects of that experience which can be haunting. The other end of the spectrum is grotesquely negative and horrifying. As I stated, my own experience was more along the lines of a grand adventure than a nightmare but still, I had very strong feelings of guilt associated with the death or injury of those under my command or supervision. I was particularly haunted by recollections of sending out a reconnaissance patrol during Operation Mamaluke Thrust and having the entire patrol killed or injured when they tripped a string of M-26 grenades set up above head height in the trees. This occurred less than 200 meters from our company perimeter. I have thought about that patrol, the selection of the personnel and what happened countless times and have never found any significant changes that I would have or should have made. Still, for years I carried a sense of guilt within me for what happened that day. There were other things that happened that I felt responsible for and carried with me, events that happened after I left the Corps, and all events which, in retrospect, were the result of good decisions at the time. The burden of guilt and responsibility associated with events was apparently strong enough to hide itself away, for while I felt discomfort at thinking of them, I still felt generally good about the overall Vietnam Experience.

One night, I was shown the light by Jose Cuervo and a friend who had the good sense to observe and handle me like a seizure victim, letting me go through the event without undue restraint and only a minimum of personal injury. Long story short: I discovered that there were events bottled up inside of me that I did not even realize were bothering me until they erupted like a boil filled with putrescence, and would not have known it then had my friend not discussed it with me and filled in the gaps of what I had said and done. That event, combined with the discovery of the power of ritual triggered, for me, the healing process I needed.

In 1989, I visited the Hopi Indian Reservation in Arizona. I did this out of interest in the Hopis and their culture and out of a wild idea that I might find an acquaintance from 3/26 whose name was Hoapile, but was known as Gunny Hop. Everyone had said he was a Hopi so I thought I'd try and find him. After all, he won a Navy Cross, and I figured that would set him apart and make him easy to find. I didn't find Gunny Hop but I had the good fortune to meet a medicine woman of the Hopi tribe and spent some time talking with her about studying the natural ways of healing. When asked why I wanted to study, I replied that I had a hole in my heart that I wanted to heal and at the same time, help others too. She and I corresponded, and the following year after I retired from law enforcement, I lived with her and her family for a week on a reservation.

I learned many things during that week, mostly about daily living, but I also learned that I was carrying guilt from those past events which were still bothering me and which I had to let go. I also learned that I could do this through a ritual. The beauty of it was that the ritual was largely of my own design: I certainly couldn't learn to perform a Hopi ritual in a week since I did not speak the language or understand much of the mythos. When I returned to my home, I set about conducting the ritual following a very broad outline as to performing some very basic actions and accomplishing some specific goals. The specific contents of that ritual are not important, but the success is.

What I discovered is that it is possible to release the feelings of guilt associated with being responsible when things beyond your control, and probably things within your control, go wrong. Some people have found similar release through therapy or other routes, but I would venture to say that whatever route those who succeeded have followed, there was ritual involved, either overtly or covertly. What I am suggesting is that the overt employment of ritual is a powerful tool which can promote the process of healing wounds which have festered for far too long.

Ritual is particularly appropriate for those with military experience because, as stated earlier, the military has so much tradition and ritual as a part of daily life. Colors is a ritual. I know we call it a ceremony, but there is so little difference as to not matter. Perhaps the most significant aspect of a ritual that is not always present with a ceremony is that with a ritual, there is a desired or intended outcome of a spiritual nature. I suggest that anyone can create and perform a personal ritual that will have a strong healing effect, especially when focused on the kinds of problems that have plagued so many of us who experienced Vietnam.

The beauty of such a healing ritual is that it can be totally private and personal. No one else need know that you are doing it, so there is no fear of looking silly or being embarrassed, therefore, there is virtually no risk, and so no reason not to try. The only investment is some time, and a willingness to face briefly what you haven't been able to successfully dodge anyway. If you are in need of healing and peace, it might be difficult to face your fears and demons, but the fact is that if you don't face them for the ritual, they'll come and get you later, any time they want. In thinking about your experiences for the purpose of the ritual, at least you're doing it consciously and are thereby exerting some control over the situation. I urge everyone who has the need to try this, you have nothing to lose and so very much to gain. Among the gains is the ability to remember friends and comrades-in-arms without the haunting; you gain the ability to remember without the crippling pain, and so you can then give the memory of the fallen the honor it deserves.

The basic form of the ritual is very simple. After looking over the following, think about what you are going to do and what items will be used. I used some items given me by the medicine woman, but that is not a requirement. The only requirement is sincerity. Arrange to have the time and area you will need without interruption; disconnect your 'phone; don't answer the door; have family absent unless you want to include them. Preparation should begin with a cleansing:

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bathe, shampoo and shave. Dress and then settle yourself comfortably in a quiet place and calmly think of the things that you want to release — the actions, the events, the people, the guilt that you feel in association with these things. I suggest that you give this some preliminary thought so that your thoughts are not too scattered when you reach the final contemplation. As you consider these things, tell them and yourself that you are about to release them with your ritual. Once you have your thoughts composed and are focused on what you want to accomplish, prepare a simple meal for yourself and take a pinch of each item and place it on a corn husk, include salt and pepper if you will add that to your meal before eating, and a few drops of whatever beverage you will have with your meal. Fold the husk securely and take it outside to a place of your choosing. Thank the events, the people and the memories that you want to release for being a part of your life. It may sound strange and feel odd or silly, but it is important that you sincerely offer your thanks, release whatever you are dealing with and present the food as an offering. Then go back inside and eat your meal. Results may range from simple enjoyment of a quiet meal to some transcendental event. My personal experience was that I began to feel relief as I ate and that the sensation of relief continued to grow until I found that I was able to do exactly what I had said during my ritual. I had thanked those who had died while under my supervision and said that I was releasing them but not forgetting them. I am now able to recall them with fondness and not guilt. I feel better about them and about me.

I live in Arizona now and am a student of the Hopi medicine woman. I have her permission to share this information and her encouragement to help directly where I can. Individuals or groups wanting detailed information or direct assistance can contact me. I don't charge any fees but can only absorb so much in travel expenses. If you are travelling in Arizona, please feel free to drop by.

J Michael Jones
P O Box 1913
Sedona, AZ 86339
(602) 284-9045
1/3/26

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...

Dear Ernie,

I'm enclosing two items which you might like to feature in the new issue of the newsletter. One is "Home From the Woods" by Bill Stross. Bill was a Corporal in G/2/3 during the Hill Fights of '67. We met while both of us were in the Stress Disorder Treatment Unit (SDTU) of the VA in North Chicago IL., and indeed were in the same small therapy group and shared much.

Bill died on 17 April 1988. Apparently, he had become drunk and while entering the bathroom during the night, fell and hit his head on one of the fixtures, and that's how he died. Just a few months prior to his death, he finally located his father who had been a Marine in WW II, and who was buried in Quantico at a National Cemetery site there.

The attached was read during an "open house" at the SDTU by Bill, as people were milling around here and there, and a small gathering of about ten or so were in the hallway outside his room as he read this. It's really a well-done piece, from the heart. His comparisons of the woods of Khe Sanh and the woods back in the States gives almost a "Deerhunteresque" motif.

The second item is a clipping from our local Milwaukee newspaper which speaks of how the continued presence of the past — in this case the unexploded ordnance — still continues to wreak havoc at Khe Sanh.

See you next week in D.C.
Semper Fi
Ray Stubbe

• • •

HOME FROM THE WOODS

by Bill Stross
G/2/3

As I stood on the hangar deck with its empty spaces that could have held 5,000 strong men — only a wooden crate stood, full of broken equipment, broken dreams and blood-stained web gear, staring out at me.

All that was left of untold numbers of brown haired, sandy haired, bright-eyed, innocent young — oh so young warriors.

I felt compelled to touch and turn over, and hold every piece of metal, every piece of material, trying to feel, trying to bring back, trying to remember the faces, the smiles, the names of the men — the boys, that only a few days before had been my friends, my comrades, my buddies. My point man, my radio man, my tailend Charlie.

I tried to remember what had brought me to this hollow wooden graveyard so cold, with the sweet smell of death still surrounding it. I was numb. I was going back, almost running into the hills — the hills called Khe Sanh. Somewhere else called the foothills of Ohio, or Kentucky, or Pennsylvania, but remember, come back, you are not home. Remember you are in the mountains, the mountains of Khe Sanh, of the country of Vietnam, of the Province of Quang Tri.

This is the season for walking through the woods, dog at my side, rifle at the ready. Keen eyes, alert senses, await the rabbit or squirrel soon to cross my path.

Remember — remember, this is the season for walking in the woods, but these are not the familiar warm woods of Ohio, Kentucky and Pennsylvania. These are the woods and trails of the mountains, the mountains called Khe Sanh.

My rifle is at the ready, my senses are keener and sharper than they have ever been. For no squirrel nor rabbit will this day grace my game bag. For today we are after bigger game, game that is wiser and knows the ways of these woods, the hills called Khe Sanh. They live here, they have lived here for untold thou-

sands of years. These are the men of the woods, the woods called Khe Sanh.

We are the intruder, we are the trespasser, we don't belong, not in these hills, these hills called Khe Sanh.

I stopped by the local grain and feed store to buy my hunting license for a mere fee. For a mere fee, I could be master of the woods I walked.

But remember — remember, these are the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh, and no licence has been issued. You are here, but not invited. You are here, but not wanted. You are here and they know, they know, these men, these men of Khe Sanh.

They watch, and they wait, these men — oh so patiently they wait. They have waited for decades, before I was born, before my father was born. They wait, these men, these men of Khe Sanh.

As I run and hide behind a tree, I lose my breath, in the woods, the woods of Ohio. I can hear my heart pounding, pounding so loud that my friends can hear it, and I will be found, and it will be my turn to find them. But remember — remember, these are not the woods of Ohio, these are the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh.

My heart is still beating, harder, faster. These woods with the silent eyes of the owners — watching, waiting, silently, patiently.

We move, we stop, we look, every head in a different direction, every sense smelling, breathing, a different smell, a different feeling.

We are getting close. The woods are quiet now, the only sound is the perspiration as it runs off the tips of the noses, on the forest floor, and splashes like a giant waterfall.

These young men — the pride of their families.

Fresh from the Prom, and remember the smell of her hair and softness of her cheek, the warmth of her face, the smell that arose from her ivory neck.

Come back, come back, remember — remember, you are in the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh. We are through the field and valley and into a treeline. We stop, almost in unison.

I feel the tension — should we move on line, should we recon by fire, should we throw grenades? Oh God what should I do?

I look to my left, and then to my right. Joe and Ray nod, and John and Bill smile. Yes, it is my decision — they trust me and why not, I have led them through many valleys, and many treelines, through untold streams and hills.

They trust me, they believe in me.

We move closer, the signal is given, the decision has been made, in the time it would take to drop a cigarette to the ground. They were all down, all these fine young men, bloodied and twisted, life being pulled and jerked from their still not grown bodies.

I hear the dog barking and he is excited, a clean shot, he should be running back, through the woods, these warm, pleasant woods of Ohio.

But remember — try to remember, these are the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh.

Their patience and silence had paid off, for the men of the woods, the woods of Khe Sanh.

Twelve young, shiny-faced, unassuming men — boys from the land, the lands of Ohio, Kentucky and Pennsylvania, and everywhere the Stars and Stripes fly.

I pulled myself up on my elbow, can it be, these men of Khe Sanh, with their shoes made of old tires and hats of straw, have beaten and won over our shiny new rifles, our helmets of steel, and our flak jackets of the bullet-proof type.

I am getting tired now, I feel the life running from my body, nourishing the floor of this forest, these woods, these woods of Khe Sanh.

I call out names, but no one answers.

Ollie, Ollie is free, can't you guys find me? I call out the names but these are not the names of my childhood days.

These are the names of my comrades, lost — never to speak my name again, nor I theirs.

I am drifting now, all is quiet and peaceful. I have done my best, I am due for a rest.

My men and I have come home, home to the woods, the woods of Ohio.

• • •

From *The Milwaukee Journal*
Feb. 21, 1993

"Le Dai shuffles slowly down the path carrying a simple hoe and scythe on one shoulder and dragging a left leg made of wood.

"I stepped on a mine," he explains. "I was seeking the steel."

Twenty five years after one of the fiercest and most controversial battles in the Vietnam War, the former U.S. Marine base at Khe Sanh is still claiming victims. Officials say at least 5,000 people have been killed or maimed here and at other battlegrounds near the former border with North Vietnam since the war ended in 1975."

Hello,

I served with Hotel Company 2/3 from February '68 to March of '69. I was an M-79 man until I was made squad leader and had to give my "bloopers" up. I was hit twice, awarded two combat promotions and was an E-5 in sixteen months. From March '69 to October '69 I was a Sgt Instructor for PLC's at Quantico and was then discharged.

I've written several poems. I just start with one line and the words seem to come to me. I guess it's a gift from my late mother. She taught Sunday School and was always good with words. She sent stories out and was asked to write, but never did.

I am a welder by trade, where I have been certified in two inch pipe and above, structural steel and 100% X-Ray stainless steel tig. I've been G.M. employed for the last sixteen years. I was married for twenty-one years and have one son (16) and am now divorced. I then remarried and now have a step-daughter (14). I am very active in a number

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of organizations: I'm a two-time Commander of VFW Post 4986, Vice Commander of American Post 762, life member of the D.A.V., Third Mar. Div. member, Khe Sanh Vet member and on POW-MIA committees.

I am an avid hunter and shooter. White-tail deer and squirrel hunting are my favorite. I pride myself as an excellent woodsman. I use muzzle loaders for deer as I like the challenge of the one shot only and the sporting chance. Weapons and Nam never hurt me enough to make me want to quit the sport of hunting. My late father had me on hunts since I was four and it's in my blood.

Myself and a few others started searching for our brothers from our Nam tour in 1988. We started with seven and as of now, we number fifty-four on our roster. We've had annual reunions since 1988. We are holding our 25th in June 1993 at the Wall. I urge everyone out there to try and locate their brothers. It's an experience that no words can describe and the feelings are unreal.

Brother Ray Stubbe has helped me no end. In my darkest hour, he had me reach up and take hold of my life once again. I regret, and I'm not ashamed to say, that if it were not for our talks on the phone, letters and prayers, I would not be here today. My life and the things that were done to me during my divorce were that bleak. Thank you Ray. I love you for being there for me.

I hope I've made some sense and you can make this out. I appreciate you printing my poem and I'll send you others if you want. I wrote "Remembering" for the guys at this past June's reunion. They all liked it and it made my day.

Take care, and I'm looking forward to the "news" as I always do. God Bless.

Semper Fi
Dave Brombaugh Sr

Vision Home

Grey turns to grey,
until all that is left is the night.
Then once again, all turns to grey...
It was grey, it was shades of grey.
Two carried one,
laden, yet, not burdened.
For two, grey to linger;
for one, a new light.
Holding a mirror to this place;
images of hell itself.
Once virgin, now ever present,
this vision, home.
It was grey, it was shades of grey.
For two, the journey at its end;
for one, so silent, it had just begun.
All pass through the corridor of darkness.
Escape lies beyond the mirror,
but only forty find light.
Grey turns to grey here,
until all that is left is the night itself.

John A Ortiz
81 Mortar Plt. H&S Co.
3/26

We Went Instead

Contentment would have kept us on the farm.
We could not place Khe Sanh on any map,
and war was not a glory that we sought.
But when the politicians called for men,
well, Jack had said to put our country first,
so Lyndon's call and Richard's call were filled.

We had no money on the farm, and that
left Oxford and State "U" both out of reach.
And Canada? We'd too much pride to run.
It didn't matter to the Draft at all;
when someone ducked, another took his place.
The quotas were allfilled by someone's sons.

We didn't have Dan's pull to join the Guard,
nor Bill's connections with R.O.T.C.,
so we were called to take their empty place.
Now Dan and Bill are famous men and powers in the land
We are remembered too.
Our names are on a wall - where famous men may pass.

Robert A Hall
HQ 26th Marine

THE WORST PLACE I EVER SLEPT

by Russ Mann
FOB 3

"To sleep, perchance to dream" as Shakespeare said, is occasionally an elusive goal in our fast-paced, high-pressure society. To the disgust of my wife, I never have trouble sleeping. The U.S. Army trained me in power sleeping. I'm sure that was not their primary intent, but the lesson has stayed with me even though others have faded. The first thing an army private learns is: "Sleep when you can, your next rest may be a long time coming." Sleeping while standing in formation and sleeping in the chow line are small skills, preparation for the real tests ahead.

In early 1968, I was assigned to the Khe Sanh combat base in South Vietnam. The Assignment Fairy must have been in the mood for practical jokes because Khe Sanh was placed under siege by 40,000 North Vietnamese the day I arrived. We were under constant artillery, rocket and mortar fire (and the occasional infantry assault) for 77 days.

The thunder and flash of incoming and outgoing artillery fire was punctuated by the ear-tickling rumble of nearby B-52 strikes. On clear days, the banshee scream of fighter jets delivering rockets and napalm to our front yard added to the chorus. The occasional cries of the wounded completed this devils' symphony. This discord was underscored by the ever present shadow of imminent death.

You would think sleeping would be impossible under these conditions, and so it was for the first few days. As you go longer and longer without sleep, it begins to move up your list of basic needs. Given enough time, the need to sleep eventually becomes more important than the fear of death. You begin by rationalizing, "I'll just close my eyes for a moment," then wake with a guilty start wondering how long you were asleep. These schizophrenic cat naps gradually lengthen until you are able to sleep several hours at a stretch. A month or so into the siege I was able to sleep all night and take an occasional nap during the day.

My subconscious became so adept at filtering sounds that I could sleep through bombs, artillery fire and machine guns, yet awaken instantly at the sound of a stealthy footstep. More than once a soldier crept into my bunker at night to wake me for guard duty and found me wide awake with a cocked .45 caliber pistol pointed at him.

Halfway through the siege an enemy more furtive and elusive than the Viet Cong made their presence known... rats! We were besieged by rats from within and by the North Vietnamese from without.

When the siege began, sanitation measures understandably fell off somewhat (nobody wants to die taking out the garbage). The smell of our mounting trash and unwashed bodies was an irresistable Siren's call to the rats. Our hell was their heaven. They ate, slept and fornicated with no thought of the human suffering that had created their paradise and their next generation grew bigger and stronger on American fortified rations.

We might have coexisted peacefully if it weren't for the rats craving for salt. Because we had been unable to bathe for some time, the salt of our perspiration had accumulated on our skin and especially in our hair. The rats became bold (as is their nature when faced with a weakened opponent) and began nibbling the hair of sleeping soldiers. Even this might have been tolerated were it not for their habit of standing on your face to gain added purchase. The nights began to be punctuated by the anguished cries of soldiers locked in mortal combat with salt crazed rats. This new assault on our sleep was too much to bear. We declared war on the rats.

We poisoned them and trapped them and shot them and stabbed them. Rat killing became an art. Every group of soldiers had a favorite recipe for rat poison or a "guaranteed" bait for traps. We became adept at holding a flashlight in one hand and a pistol in the other as we slept. Our genocidal frenzy was so great it was considered good etiquette to shoot a rat off your sleeping buddy without waking him first. If he startled the rat on waking, it might spoil your shot and the rat would get away.

As all things in nature do, we achieved a balance with the rats. We became minimal irritants to each other. The rats occasionally interrupted our sleep and we occasionally killed them.

The siege of Khe Sanh ended with a whimper, not a bang, as the North Vietnamese gradually faded away, leaving the rats and the Americans in an uneasy stalemate. Soon after the siege lifted, the American forces deserted the once contested ground claiming it was no longer of strategic value. The rats, I'm sure, still control Khe Sanh and tire their children with tales of the great battle they won there. To conclude this somewhat rambling anecdote, I have no patience with, or understanding of, a person who tells me they have trouble sleeping.

PRISONERS OF TIME

I have just finished reading your 'Memoirs' article (last page) in the summer '93 *Khe Sanh Veteran* newsletter. In your article you mention (our) City of Refuge and how sacred places cannot ever be destroyed. How absolutely correct you are.

The Ancients called it "Pu'u Honua O'Honaunau", or "City of Refuge". The Refuge lies on the south side of a small bite along the coast of the Big Island, just two miles or so from Cook's obelisk at Kealakekua Bay. The Refuge is under the protection of the National Parks Service these days.

If you go there, you can stand on a quiet beach, water lapping gently in the sand at your feet. Around you are hundreds of giant coconut palms providing shade from the tropical heat of the day. Beyond lies an ancient rock wall twelve feet high, four feet thick, running a hundred yards or so that demarcates the King's favorite lagoon and brackish fish pond from the Place of Isolation. Within the wall are large thatch huts, built on stilts, elevated by lava rock pyramids where the Kahuna's buried the dead. 'Hieau's' they are called. Nothing is more sacred to the Ohana than their Hieaus.

I stood there alone, looking across the lagoon, then traced the path inside the Refuge, past the towering Tiki's facing the island, standing guard, a post they've

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stood for centuries. I see the long Koa canoes offshore. A man dives into the ocean and swims hard and fast. Moments later six warriors in the canoe carrying 'war clubs' studded with the teeth of the tiger shark (mano paele) dive into the blue water to give chase. They gave the first man, condemned to isolation within the Refuge a head start. If they can catch him before he reaches the shore they will beat him to death with the clubs.

In ancient times there were no minor crimes. Any indiscretion, great or small, was punishable by one means — death! The King pronounced death — sometimes imprisonment within the Refuge. If he did, the condemned had to run a gauntlet of his peers who tried to kill him. If he made it, he was allowed to live. If he left the Refuge, he was subject to immediate execution.

This warrior made it to shore safely. A few yards away lies a large flat slab of pakoehoe (lava) rubbed smooth by the centuries of tidal forces. On it's face, the lucky warrior has inscribed for eternity his petroglyph — the 'stick-man' image of a man, arms raised in victory, feet spread, waving his weapon in defiance to the enemy.

I often come here. I think of 'us', the Marines (even though I was just a lowly 'Doc'). I have never thought of myself as Navy. Hell Ernie, I'm not even a Khe Sanh brother! I was one of those independent kind of guys running amok in the jungles further south — you know the story.

And so, at the risk of sounding like some flaked out 'I Ching' philosopher, we find ourselves, twenty-seven years later, standing in our cities of refuge. For me, it is the isolation of the mountain, Mauna Loa, home of Madame Pele, whose compassion for the 'Aina' is absolute; whose compassion for puny mankind is not so resolute, since she periodically covers all trace of our existence with her molten fires. As though we were never here — as though we were minute fleas on the back of geologic time.

Like the ancient warriors struggling for life, attempting to reach the Refuge, we find ourselves repeating history, as we are compelled to do. Someday, maybe never, the Royal Decree will pardon us for our sins and allow us to re-enter society. Our crime was that we went to war, as we were trained to do. The act of survival was the damning evidence against us. We were allowed to run. We were allowed to reach our Pu'u Honua's. If we made it, we were allowed to live. If not, we perished. Times have changed. We can no longer hope the benevolence of the King's unilateral decision to set us free will be forthcoming. We have no King's anymore. We can't count on Government. Who can? And, it is a foregone conclusion that a collective concensus from society will not be handed down, setting us free.

Those of us who have sought refuge have, in one manner or another, carved our petroglyphs of defiance into our art, our statues, our bodies or journals, our prison walls.

I have lived for over eighteen years out here in the islands. I have assimilated the culture. It is more a part of me than my childhood midwest. I understand the City of Refuge. As you have requested, I have spoken to the Kahunas on behalf of the Khe Sanh brothers and the other warriors who fought and died a quarter of a century ago. They are all there. Their petroglyph just happens to be a large granite wall in Washington, that's all.

Semper Fi
R. 'Doc' Ferrell
RVN 66-67 USMC (KAU, HAWAII)

P.S. Sorry Ernie! Didn't mean to parenthese the Hawaiiana. You know what they mean. You're more of a local boy than I will ever be. This medium apparently is rapidly becoming my petroglyph of defiance. It works for me. Mahalo.

Now and Then

Impressions from Tet Remembered '93

They touched,
they laughed and cried together then,
as boys who must be men.

From here and there,
now far beyond their ken.
Just boys who must be men.

So young, so tough,
proved time and time again,
not boys, but truly men.

They shared,
they fought as brothers, more than friends,
our boys who must be men.

All one, one all,
with courage each of ten,
the boys who must be men.

They touched and laughed,
and now became as then,
for boys who must be men.

Lucille Biscaglio

Tear this page out NOW!

AND send it in with your contribution to ***The Khe Sanh Veteran***. Use the enclosed envelope or be sure to mail this form to:

Bill Maves
8524 North Casey Rd.
Edgerton, WI 53534

The suggested donation is $20. Life members have no obligation. Your name and address label on the other side lets us accurately identify you, so please mail in this form with your donation.

We have included a number of questions for our members and ask that they take the time to answer them. We trust you will agree that the questions asked are a legitimate part of our Khe Sanh history and experience. There is also a space for comments by anyone wishing to offer suggestions.

Questionnaire for Khe Sanh members:

1 What was your nickname at Khe Sanh? .....

2 When were you at Khe Sanh? .....

3 What was your job/jobs (MOS) and highest rank while at Khe Sanh? .....

.....

.....

4 Ever wounded at Khe Sanh? ❑ Yes ❑ No
If so, how many times? .....

5 Ever wounded in Vietnam outside of Khe Sanh? ❑ Yes ❑ No
If so, how many times? .....

6 Total time in Vietnam .....

7 Total service time .....

8 Profession(s) since Vietnam .....

9 Current profession .....

Comments .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Make check payable to ***Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.*** Contributions are tax-deductible.
Please send in this questionnaire even if you do not make a contribution.

Membership Requirements and Dues

The Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. is a non-profit, non-political, non-sectarian society dedicated to the preservation of the Khe Sanh experience.

Regular or life membership is open to anyone who ever served in, around, or over Khe Sanh between 1961 and through 1971.

Associate membership is open to the dependents, parents, or significant others of those who served at Khe Sanh. Annual dues are effective from January 1 through December 31. Subscriptions to The Khe Sanh Veteran are available to the general public.

THE KHE SANH VETERAN INC.

is a non-profit, non-political, tax-deductible, 501-C Corporation. Its purpose is to record and preserve the history of the experience known as "Khe Sanh," to promote healing among those who served there, and to encourage artistic projects by its members. Membership is open to any member of our armed forces who ever served at, around or over Khe Sanh, Vietnam, between 1961 through 1971.

Annual dues ..... $20.
President ..... Ken Penn
Vice President ..... Michael O'Hara
Secretary ..... Ray Stubbe
Treasurer ..... Bill Maves
Chaplain ..... Ron Exum
Sergeant-at-Arms ..... Ed Diaz
Board of Directors ..... John Balanco, Earle Breeding, D.J. Bland, Jim Dawd, John Kaheny, Carl Oksnee, Gary Parker, Jim Wilkinson

Newsletter Editor ..... Ernie Spencer
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Submit all letters, poems, and writing for publication to Ernie Spencer.

The Khe Sanh Veteran Newsletter
c/o Ray Stubbe
8766 Parkview Court
Wauwatosa, WI 53226

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The Khe Sanh Veteran

Ed Evans III MAF Historian
Antioch, Tenn
615/ 399-1342

KHE SANH WOMEN'S NETWORK

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to welcome each and every one of you to the Khe Sanh Veterans Women's Network. This network is for the wives, sweethearts, sisters and mothers of the men who survived the awesome experience that has come to be known simply as "Khe Sanh."

When my husband Gary and I went to Washington in July, I was anticipating seeing friends I had met in San Diego at the Third Marine Division Reunion and four days of male bonding (talking, drinking, laughing and crying.) I came away from that experience with a deeper understanding of both my husband and our relationship, and the meaning of Khe Sanh as it applies to his life. Through his eyes and the eyes of several "new friends," I learned a great deal about friendship and commitment, war and survival. I met several wonderful women who, through their courage, intelligence and sensitivity, have supported their loved ones through thick and thin.

You never know what life has in store for you. When I was asked to say a few words at the banquet in Washington, I informed those present that I had not served in the military and that I was not speaking for the wives of the Khe Sanh vets. Please know that I do not consider myself an expert in counseling or an expert on

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Nelson Jones and Steve Riddle, Scout/snipers. S-2 1/26, at Khe Sanh in 1968.

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...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout the newsletter

RAY'S WORLD

Ray Stubbe

H&S 1/26

Dear Ernie,

I'll try to call you this coming weekend; it's so significant for me to hear your voice and share some of our feelings and thoughts. I get far more out of our conversations than I do in all the various therapy sessions at the VA! You are a very good friend.

Since I last wrote a batch of things for

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A Message from the Editor

Au Revoir

Well, dear hearts, it's time to say goodbye. This will be my last issue as your editor. It is time for me to move on to other exciting projects. Apparently, our magazine is not to everyone's liking. Some of our members are offended by the content and style (or lack thereof) of our magazine. There is a debate going on as to what the editorial content and direction of our magazine should be. I encourage you to voice your opinion. Until a new editor is named, please send your submissions to Ray Stubbe. Doing the magazine this past year and a half has been very rewarding for me artistically, but it was also very time-consuming and emotionally draining. I took risks with our magazine. I make no apologies for the content or style. As for my editorial philosophy, I followed the advice of W.H. Murray.

From the Scottish Himalayan Expedition:

"Until one is committed
there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back,
always ineffectiveness.
Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation),
there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas
and splendid plans:
that the moment one definitely commits oneself,
then Providence moves too.
All sorts of things occur to help one
that would never otherwise have occurred.
A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favour all manner
of unforeseen incidents and meetings
and material assistance,
which no man could have dreamt
would have come his way.

I have learned a deep respect
for one of Goethe's couplets:
'Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.'"

Khe Sanh was a special place. Its magic lives through each and every one of you.

Semper Fi,

Ernie Spencer
Editor

continued from page 1

RAY'S WORLD

possible inclusion in our next magazine, among which was a listing of newly-discovered KIAs, I've come across another batch of KIAs that should be added. I've combined these new ones with the ones I've already sent you and attach them to this letter. They should be included.

The other items that perhaps should be included is a listing of our Life Members. Several of them have contacted either Bill Maves or myself saying they have received no indication they are life members—no card, etc. Perhaps in the future we might have a card for them but in the meantime, perhaps a listing of them would suffice—and more importantly, perhaps encourage others to become Life Members also, and thereby increase our treasury.

Also attached are copies of a Meritorious Unit Commendation to B/1/26 for the March 30th operation, the Meritorious Unit Commendation for 1/13 and a copy of the message from Westmoreland.

✝

ANSELMO, SP4 Walter Harold
06 MAR 68 APS-15 45E 53

BARNES, EOCS Donald Joseph
06 JUN 67 NMCB-10 21E 60

BERGENSTEIN, CPL Dennis Paul
03 MAY 67 E/2/3 19E 21

BRIGGS, SFC Ernest Frank
05 JAN 68 411-TR 33E 41 MIA

BURGARD, PFC Paul Edward
06 JUN 68 60W 26

EBRIGHT, CPL William Raymond O
06 JUN 68 59W 1

FLORES, LCPL Felix Frank
06 JUN 68 59W 1

HAMILTON, CWO Dennis Clark
05 JAN 68 411-TR 33E 49 MIA

HANNINGS, LCPL William Elwood
06 JUN 68 58W 3

HUBBARD, BUL3 Charles Austin
06 JUN 67 NMCB-4 21E 62

MAHONEY, SP5 Michael Thomas
29 JAN 68 FOB-3 35E 61

PALACIOS, LCPL Luis Fernando
06 JUN 68 59W 11

PORTER, LCPL Lawrence Eugene
06 JUN 68 59W 12

SANCHEZ, PFC Jose Ramon
06 JUN 68 59W 13

SATTER, PFC Donald Stephen
06 JUN 68 59W 13

SCHULTZ, WO1 Sheldon D
05 JAN 68 411-TR 33E 53 MIA

STOOPS, PFC Jonathan Lynn
06 JUN 68 59W 16

STOVALL, LCPL Wilbur
09 MAR 68 HQ/1/13 44E 1

WILLIAMSON, SFC James D
05 JAN 68 411-TR 33E 54 MIA

WILSON, PFC Eugene
06 JUN 68 59W 18

(NOTE: The 06 JUN 68 KIAs were from a CH-46 Helicopter that crashed and burned at XD 877334).

✝

LISTING OF LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

KHE SANH VETERANS INC. (As of 01 March, 1994)

Harry L ALDERMAN
Bryson L ALLEN
Philip L AVVAMPATO
John J BALANCO
Daniel L BALDWIN
William J BARTKOSKI
David J BLAND
Alex "Jeff" BODENWEISER
Earle G BREEDING
Kenneth O BREWER
David F BROMBAUGH
Richard CLAIRE
Larry CLARK
W T COOK
Bill CORREIA
Robert M CRABB
Pat CURTIS
William H DABNEY
GEN Raymond DAVIS
Dr Harvey DEMAAGD
Richard E DONAGHY
Ken DOSS
Rev Walt L DRISCOLL
Pierce DURHAM
Thomas EICHLER
Jim EPPS
J Thomas ESSLINGER
Allen FERG
Ronald L GATEWOOD
Bruce A GREENE
William GRIFFITH
BGEN Harry T HAGAMAN
Robert A HALL
Randy D HARDY
Jerome HESS
Victor HOFFMAN
Jack H HOWE
Harry Allen HUNT
James N KAYLOR
Frank J KENNEDY
Duane KEPLER
Lee KLEIN
John King KNOPE
Joseph J KUNDRAT
Donald LACY
Jim LEA
James A LAHR
Jim P LAVERTY
Jim LEA
David J LEIGHTON
G L (Red) LOGAN
COL David E LOWNDS
Albert R LUMPKIN
John J MACIAS
William MAVES
Larry McCARTNEY
Frederick McEWAN
Lewis S MESSER
Lawrence MEYER
W Scott MILLER
Kelley NELSON
Greg E NITKOWSKI
Michael O'HARA
Joseph OLIVER
Michael J PADULA
Ronald PARSONS
1SGT Dick PELOQUIN
George PETERSON
John PETTIT
Gerald Wayne POST
Donald M RAIT JR
Louis RANN
Charles D RUDD
Harve SAAL
John L SCHWANER
Keith SEIBOLD
Don E SHANLEY
Victor B SNIDER
Richard L SOTO
David R SPRY
Steven R STEIGH III
Fr Thomas STOTT
Rev Ray W STUBBE
Mark SWEARENGEN
Ralph TAKEMIRE
Jerome E THOMAS
Charles "M" THOMSON
Charles THORNTON
David F TOMAZIC
Bob TURNER
James E UPDIKE
Leonard VERNARDO
Art WALBROEHL
Kent WONDERS

NOTE: LIFE MEMBERSHIPS ARE OFFERED AT $150.00

☆ ☆ ☆

ZNY HEEE
P 100912Z APR 68
FM TWENTY SIXTH MARINES
TO FIRST BN TWENTY SIXTH MARINES
BF
UNCLAS E F T O
A. CG THIRD MAR DIV MSG 010703Z APR 68
CONGRATULATORY MSG

1. REF A PASSED FOR MSG FM GEN WESTMORELAND: QUOTE, *OFFICERS AND MEN CO B/1/26 USMC DESERVE HIGHEST PRAISE FOR AGGRESSIVE PATROL ACTION NORTH OF KHE SANH ON 30 MARCH. HEAVY CASUALTIES INFLICTED ON BUNKERS AND ENTRENCHED ENEMY FORCE INDICATED TYPICAL MARINE ESPRIT DE CORPS AND PROFESSIONALISM. WELL DONE*, END QUOTE.
2. I ADD MY CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ABOVE WELL EARNED COMMENDATORY REMARKS. COL LOWNDS SENDS.

BT

☆ ☆ ☆

From: Commanding Officer

To: Commanding General, 3rd Marine Division (Rein), FMF

Via: Commanding Officer, 26th Marines

Subj: Meritorious Unit Commendation, recommendation for; case of Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines

Ref: (a) DivO P1650.1C
(b) 26th Marines Msg 100912Z Apr 68

Encl: (1) Copy of Congratulatory Msg from General Westmoreland

1. Section VI of reference (a) sets forth provisions for unit awards. *Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines* is recommended for the Meritorious Unit Commend-ation for its action in a company size assault upon an estimated North Vietnamese battalion on 30 March 1968.

2. The action of *Company B* is described as follows:

a. On 30 March 1968, *Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines* proceeded from the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Under the cover of morning fog, the company moved to the assault position very near to the fortified position of an estimated North Vietnamese Battalion. Immediately upon commencing the assault, the company was brought under extremely heavy mortar, RPG, automatic weapons and small arms fire from the heavily defended and mutually supporting fortified positions. Almost immediately, the company command group was decimated by the enemy fire. The wounded company commander unhesitatingly reorganized the remaining few members of the command group and continued to press the attack. While undergoing withering enemy fire, the company brought small arms and supporting arms fire to bear upon the enemy position while continuing the attack by fire and maneuver. Numerous enemy bunkers were destroyed during the fierce attack mounted by *Company B*. *Company B* rapidly penetrated the fortified positions, killing 115 North Vietnamese soldiers and routing many others, many of whom were wounded, while sustaining only moderate casualties within its own ranks. *Company B* destroyed and captured numerous enemy weapons and items of equipment. During the mopping-up phase, *Company B* recovered the body of one Marine who had been listed as missing in action from a previous assault conducted in the same area by a platoon from *Company B*.

3. A very significant point is that *Company B* consisted principally of new men who had only recently joined the unit and had no previous experience in company size offensive tactics. This fact notwithstanding, the members of the company performed individually and collectively in a manner normally expected only of seasoned troops. This brilliant feat is a tribute to the commander and troops alike and is deserving of special recognition.

4. Enclosure (1) was passed from General Westmoreland and is submitted for consideration.

F. J. MCEWAN

☆ ☆ ☆

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON D.C. 20380

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION to FIRST BATTALION, THIRTEENTH MARINES for service as set forth in the following:

★ CITATION ★

FFor meritorious service while providing close, continuous, direct and reinforcing fire support to Marine, Army, Navy and Republic of Vietnam forces in connection with operations against the Communist aggressor enemy in the Republic of Vietnam from 1 May to 31 August, 1968. Throughout this period, while First Battalion, Thirteenth Marines, displaced in its entirety on four separate occasions, with subordinate firing batteries displacing 22 times, accurate and responsive fire was delivered while all units were critically short of combat-essential equipment that had been destroyed by enemy fire during the siege of Khe Sanh. On numerous occasions, firing units were lifted by helicopter into precarious fire bases deep in enemy-controlled territory with little advanced notice and only minimum opportunity for reconnaissance; however, all deployments were completed successfully and were directly instrumental in the accomplishment of the operational mission. During this period, timely and accurate artillery fire was provided to Marine units being directly supported, to U.S. Army Special Forces and Regular Army units participating in joint operations, to U.S. Navy Advisors at remote locations which could be reached only by long-range fires and to Republic of Vietnam Army and Popular Force units operating within the area of operations. This varied and uncommon support of units with divergent requirements, which were dispersed over wide areas, necessitated exceptional flexibility of weaponry, extreme exploitation of communications facilities, rapid reaction to fire requests and superior coordination of delivery means. While headquartered at Cao Doi Peninsula, Phu Loc, the First Battalion was responsible for the fire support of 41 miles of National Route #1 from Hai Van Pass to Phu Bai. In rendering complete coverage of this area, which included responsibility for the support of vital daily resupply convoys between Danang and Phu Bai, 12 Combined Action Platoons, several Special Forces Forward Operating Base units and numerous reconnaissance inserts, as well as directly supported Marine forces, it was necessary to fragment firing units with only organic command and control resources to constitute the increased requirements of this dispersed deployment. By their effective teamwork and aggressive fighting spirit, the officers and men of the First

Battalion achieved an illustrious record of courage and skill while delivering 64,653 rounds during 12,162 support missions against the enemy. The ability of the First Battalion, Thirteenth Marines, to react rapidly to the hazardous and constantly changing requirements of combat, to maintain a peak of combat efficiency while deprived of essential equipment and provide close, continuous artillery fire while in a repeatedly fluid tactical situation was without parallel and transcended those accomplishments normally displayed by a unit performing similar service. This outstanding record not only achieved significant results, but also exemplified those qualities of professional skill, uncommon initiative, unfaltering devotion to duty and inspiring courage, which were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

All personnel attached to and serving with the First Battalion, Thirteenth Marines, consisting of the following units, during the period 1 May to 31 August 1968 or any part thereof, are hereby authorized to wear the MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION Ribbon.

Headquarters Battery, Mortar Battery, Battery A, Battery C

For the Secretary of the Navy,

L. F. CHAPMAN
Commandant of the Marine Corps

WE WENT INSTEAD

Contentment would have kept us on the farm.
We could not place Khe Sanh on any map
and war was not a glory that we sought.
But when the politicians called for men,
well - Jack had said to put our country first,
so Lyndon's call and Richard's call were filled.

We had no money on the farm
and that left Oxford and State "U" both out of reach.
And Canada? We'd too much pride to run.

It didn't matter to the Draft at all.
When someone ducked, another took his place.
The quotas all were filled by someone's sons.

We didn't have Dan's pull to join the Guard,
nor Bill's connections with R.O.T.C.,
so we were called to take their empty place.

Now Dan and Bill are powers in the land - and famous men.
We are remembered too - our names are on a Wall -
where famous men may pass.

Robert A Hall
HQ 26th Marines

KING OF THE HILL

NVA and Marines playing king of the mountains
in the green hills of Khe Sanh.
The NVA stake their claim,
the bully Marines come in and take it away.
It's just a game, one as kids we played;
then we used sticks and stones,
around Khe Sanh it was bullets and bombs.

I watched these boy-men day in day out,
on my dozer pushing dirt;
they left by helicopter and on foot.
From the quarry my truck loaded with rock,
I pass dirty, ragged men, fresh from the bush.
5, 10, 15 days in the bush,
no cot, no pillow for their body or head.
24 hours a day they hump in them hills,
12 hours a day I sweat working on that strip!

With Recon I sit,
"What's it like in the shit?"
Stories they tell - I soak them up like a sponge!
Jan, Feb, March 1968 I found out,
I was in the middle of a lot of shit!
Who wants to be a Marine?
Hell no, not me!
I'm a fighting Seabee fixing the strip.

You boy-men go ahead and hump those hills,
I'll set on my dozer or drive my truck!
When Charlie shoots at me I'll dig my own hole
in that red clay.
Westmoreland laid claim to this patch of red ground,
he put us here and said, "Don't back down!"
Now you and I are king of this hill.

Some little yellow guy out there is challenging us for the crown.
He's got guns and bullets made in Russia,
mortars and rockets from friends in Red China
and a tank or two thrown in just for fun!
As I sat peeking out from underground,
I remembered another piece of ground,
it was in Korea.
A place called Pork Chop Hill!
Marines held that worthless piece of ground;
history repeated itself again at Khe Sanh!

Lewis S Messer
CMBU 301

KHE SANH WOMEN'S NETWORK

women's issues. You can imagine how shocked I was when our Vice President, Mike O'Hara, called me and asked if I would head up the Women's Network! He promised that space would be provided in the newsletter from now on for us to use as we see fit. In the last issue, Mike issued an open invitation for the ladies to contact either of us for more information on the network. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Ken Penn, Mike O'Hara, Ray Stubbe and Earle Breeding for being sensitive to the needs of the women and for recognizing that we are an important element within this organization.

Many of us have been supporting our men for many years. Now it is time for us to support each other. This Women's Network can serve as a starting point for us to share our concerns, our pain and our joy. It can be a forum for self-expression or a resource for sharing information. Most of all, it is a means by which we can reach out to each other (a theme we've suggested for the 1995 reunion!)

I need to hear from you. Let me know what your needs are and your suggestions for the women/children activities for the next reunion. Let's have some input on how this network should function. I'm open to all suggestions and ideas. Please remember our collective strength will enable us to be strong for those who need us most—the Khe Sanh vets!

Janet Parker
23 North Navajo Drive
Waretown,
N.J. 08758.

• • •

The following is the text of a speech presented at the banquet of the Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion, July 3rd, 1993, Washington, D.C.:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests and Khe Sanh Veterans. Less than an hour ago I found out I'd be replacing your guest speaker, Mr Bresser. I beg your indulgence for a few brief moments; I won't take much of your time.

It's an honor for me to stand before so many heroes. It's been said that there are no American heroes anymore, no real heroes for our children to look up to. Ladies and gentlemen, I am most humbled to be standing before an entire room full of American heroes and I applaud all of you, and all the Khe Sanh veterans who could not be with us tonight.

I am not in the military. I have not served. I am the wife of a Khe Sanh veteran. My husband, Gary, was in the 3rd Shore Party Battalion. He spent some time in a faraway place called Hill 881S, where he was wounded. In the eleven years of our marriage, I have come to know what it means to be the wife of a Marine, the wife of a Khe Sanh veteran.

Each and every one of you is special. You lived through a special time and place. It was a difficult time for you, and for this nation, and I daresay your lives have been forever changed by your common experience. Each of you is at a different point along the long, difficult road of healing. I was not there. I will not stand before you and tell you that I understand your experience. Try as hard as I might, I could read and study for the rest of my life the historical accounts and documents surrounding the siege of Khe Sanh, but I will never fully comprehend your experience or your sacrifice.

I've spent the last 16 years in elementary education. As a teacher, it's part of my nature to look for important lessons of life. As I look over the faces in this room, I see there are many important lessons to be learned. You have a great opportunity here. This is our first reunion by ourselves as Khe Sanh veterans, separate from the 3rd Marine Division. I understand there was discussion in today's General Meeting of holding this gathering every other year. I don't pretend to represent the wives of all the Khe Sanh vets here. I would never be that presumptuous. After attending the Women's Meeting this morning and listening to their experiences as wives of Khe Sanh veterans, the women who were present felt it is important that we meet every year. I'll give you a quick example of why I agree.

Last night I met a gentleman who is on the road to healing. His story touched my husband and I so deeply that I don't want to wait two years to see him again, or see so many of the women here tonight. For many of the veterans and their wives, two years is too long. We simply ask that you consider keeping this an annual event. I know there are many economic and logistic issues involved in this and I don't mean to over-simplify a complex issue. Many of the wives and sweethearts voiced their concerns regarding the importance of our sharing and supporting each other. Yes, this reunion is important for you as veterans because it is a vital part of the healing process. We support that. Please understand that it is important for our healing as wives of Khe Sanh veterans as well.

In closing, I'd like to thank you for being who you are and thank you for your sacrifice and your service to our country. May God bless you."

Janet M Parker

COMMENCE FIRING

Gen. Carl E Mundy Jr
Commandant USMC
HQMC
Washington DC 20380

Dear Sir,

I am a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans. I am enclosing a copy of two letters which appear in the current winter 1993 issue of ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** magazine. The letter from Mrs J Thomas Esslinger to Col. John B Sollis, Commander of Marine Barracks, I applaud. The unapologetic, insensitive, self-serving, long-winded and rambling response from Col. Sollis distresses me greatly!

Col. Sollis takes great liberty in his ramblings to convince Mrs Esslinger of the seemingly well-established tradition and procedure of Marine Barracks ceremonies. I ask you, sir, is Col. Sollis correct or is he the insensitive, self-serving ass he comes out as being?

My basic knowledge of public relations and communications makes it difficult to find an example or reason for such an insensitive and callous response to a letter written with such open sincerity and concern, especially when it comes from a person holding such a public relations sensitive and critical position as Col. Sollis does.

I feel a simple one-liner reflecting empathy and sensitivity would have fulfilled the distressed and concerned Mrs Esslinger. Instead, she gets an offensive, rambling, self-serving and aggressive *lecture* by Col. Sollis and the best example of poor judgment, poor taste and overkill!!

The Marine Corps, we its Vets and all else are in the dawn of the 21st century. Our challenges are great. I refuse to imagine that the poor judgment, insensitivity and LECTURING reflected by Col. Sollis's response to Mrs Esslinger is a model for the kind of leadership needed for facing the new century. We must do better.

Besides expressing my distress, there is little else I can do but mail a copy of this letter to Mrs Esslinger and let her know that she does not stand alone. I also hope ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** will carry it in its next issue as a response to Col. Sollis.

I must tell you that I have held, like many others, supervisory positions and assure you that had anyone under my supervision ever displayed such callous insensitivity in dealing with the public as Col. Sollis did in dealing with Mrs Esslinger, their days on the job would be less than few.

The bullet used by Col. Sollis to shoot himself in the foot is ill-destined and divisive. It is something the Marine Corps Family must never afford.

Semper Fi.

Senico Varela
13 N. Del Norte
Roswell, NM 88201.

Ernie:

Keep up the good work! I have mailed in my membership—would have done it sooner but confusion between me and my wife set in. I guess the letter speaks for itself—you can print it if you want. I will attend the '95 convention. Hope to meet you sometime.

SHOT-OVER, SHOT-OUT

February 10, 1994

General Carl E Mundy Jr.,
Commandant of the Marine Corps
Headquarters,
United States Marine Corps
Washington, DC 20280-0001.

Dear General Mundy,

As a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, I was saddened that my attendance at the U.S. Army War College final phase precluded my attendance at the Khe Sanh Veterans 25th Anniversary Reunion in Washington DC this past July. Having spent eleven of my eighteen months in Vietnam at Khe Sanh with the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, you can imagine my disappointment. I was there from the close of the hill fights in May 1967 until our departure on April 17, 1968. One of my fondest memories involves my time as a liaison to your old unit, the 3rd Battalion upon their return in December of 1967. Then Major Matt Caufield turned it into a very positive learning experience for me about Marine Corps leadership.

Unfortunately, the attached letters indicate to me that we have somehow lost the way from the days of yore. Mrs Esslinger's comments should raise some serious concerns. Regardless of the merits of the issues, Colonel Sollis's response indicates to me that we have somehow failed our senior officers by not providing them with sufficient training and public relations guidance. I am sure that my good friend, Colonel John Shotwell, would not approve of the elitist reference to "noblesse oblige" combined with the lack of even a qualified apology. I am personally offended by the excuse that saying a few words of welcome to veterans who went through at least 77 straight days of hell for our Corps would delay the proceedings for several hours. That is a pretty condescending remark in my book and is not worthy of a spokesman for our Corps.

As a fellow veteran of Desert Storm, I can say with

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certainty that Colonel Sollis has regrettably missed the mark, and in so doing has not only insulted Mrs Esslinger but all of us who served in the V ring of the Vietnam War. I realize that he was acting with the best of intentions and meant no harm, but his remarks indicate that there is perhaps an unhealthy attitude in our Corps in regard to our traditions. As you know, this is no time for that sort of thinking. It is not in the best interests of our beloved Corps to alienate our most fervent supporters in the community.

Thank you for your participation at the Reunion. As I indicated, I am sorry I missed it. I hope my remarks are taken to heart.

Semper Fi

Col. John M Kaheny

c.c. Editor, ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** newsletter

ED: No response yet from the Commandant.

"T-BONE"

Brother Ernie,

I have been meaning to send these photos to you for not more than six months and as usual, it's procrastination...! I don't know if you and your daughter had some photos of you both at the plaque and the ginkgo tree but if not—now you have some. If you already have some—here are some more!

I'm starting 1994 with a little different twist—usually I raise my expectations to an unrealistic level, you know—"this year I'm gonna..." Well not this year. What happens, happens. I was one sick puppy over the holidays; flu man! But now I'm doing better, so I figure it must get better as we move into the new year. I think this is the year of The Dog as Eastern beliefs go, so I'm happy for a New Year.

While I have no reason to complain (living in Wisconsin), the weather has been cold this week! (-15 to -25 below zero). I will be happy if it warms up. Hope you are well and things are OK for you. I'm thinking I might come down to the reunion in Kentucky this year on "my Hog." Make a nice relaxing road trip down to the Kentucky region. After Washington DC, I thought I'd had enough for a while, but here I am already planning next year. It's just not seeing you crazy fuckers that makes me want to go again and again. You guys are the best!

I saw the National Geographic video and it was great. A lot of folks in my family watched it and I think it taught them about the camaraderie all of us feel at the reunions.

Trane Company is still the job I show up for each day but I'm sure sick of the regimen and the predictability of day in and day out. I'm obviously beyond the love part of my job and just earning a living... Oh well, things could be worse.

I'm writing this in bed and I'm starting to nod out, so will close. Happy New Year Ernie. Stay calm and don't be too much of a radical out there in San Francisco.

Love,
Your Brother,

Bruce "T-Bone" Jones
B/1/26

Dear Ernie,

Thanks for returning our tape. I have just received the latest newsletter of ***The Khe Sanh Veteran.*** Unfortunately, we missed the November 14th airing but we hope to see it on a repeat. Remember, nothing could be worse than sweating it out in your foxhole on Hill 861 at night, while the V.C. and N.V.A. are trying to shoot and shell the hell out of you. If I can be of any help, please let me know.

This newsletter is very good. I will pay my dues soon. Take care and wishes for happiness in the future.

Semper Fi

John Finn
D/1/26

Dear Skipper,

Am still "sorting out" the July 4th Weekend Reunion. We felt some very strong emotions during those days.

Enclosed are some photo's for your keeping and sharing.

Semper Fi

Dan McGravey
D/1/26

P.S. Felt the need to write to Walt Chapman—will keep you advised. My compliments on the drive and spirit to keep this experience alive.

Ernie,

Got your note and picture today of our memorial service at the Wall—thanks. It was quite a weekend!

I sent all our "guys" copies of pictures that I took. I think I sent off notes and pictures to Fish, Chapman, Swede, Gagne, Noonan, Bose, Hollywood, Fulwood and Segura—and Pipes too!

Sounds like you made great progress on the Reunion

video. I'll go through some of my photos in the next few weeks and send you copies of the best ones from Khe Sanh area.

This Fall, my goal will be to get some of the guys in Jersey, New York and Penna together for a mini-cookout. I've gotten letters from Swede & Noonan both expressing interest in not waiting for another 25 years!!

Finally, your question concerning whether we (Sherry & I) had a military wedding—the answer is no. We were married after my discharge from the USMC(R).

Best,

Dan McGravey
D/1/26

Sept. 3, 1993

Dear Ernie,

I hope this letter finds you well and all is good with you after our Reunion in D.C.

Steve Riddle called me the other day concerning the pictures I took while I was at Khe Sanh. I feel that they belong to the Khe Sanh Vets more than they belong to me. I do have a project that I have been working on since early 1985 and that is a book entitled *West Dickens Ave.* If you remember when you viewed my pictures, that is one of the shots of my fighting hole in Khe Sanh and if I ever complete the project, I had intended to use the shot of that street sign over my fighting hole as a cover shot and tell the story from there of my experiences. This project will be by no means an in-depth study of details of the battle, it will be more along the lines of one man's outlook during the battle.

I do have many shots of the base. I was fortunate enough to have borrowed that excellent Petri 35mm with a reflex lens for a couple of days and a couple of rolls of film. The limited talent the pictures show is from my father wasting a lot of money on film for me when I was a kid. He let me do my thing with a camera and gradually I developed (at his expense) the knack of what to look for through a camera lens.

The reason the project is taking me so long is twofold. I shelved it for years. My time trying to adjust back to the world as a Khe Sanh Vet and my basic trait of laziness. I will gladly send you copies of all my pictures but I would like to know how you intend to use them and if my rights to them are protected if my script ever makes it to a willing publisher. I had several people want them at the Reunion and one that was bent on taking them up to their room and making a video of them. I am, by nature, a very giving person—but I do have to take into consideration my own goals.

If you could let me know if I will be able to publish them at a later date—and that your use of them won't hinder my ambition to use them in any way—I will send them to you.

God Bless
Semper Fi

Jack Corbett
81's 1/26

P.S.Do you know where I can purchase the Khe Sanh shirts they had at the Reunion?

ED: Jackie, my lad! You are true to your word. As of this time, you have still not sent me your exquisite collection of photos. You own all rights to your pictures unless you ***sell*** *the rights. Anyone who uses them* ***must*** *have your prior permission. I might want to use some of your photos in our magazine.*

Dear Ernie,

Well, you were pretty much on the mark when you told me it would be difficult to send these sketches to the newsletter. In the glow of the Reunion, it's easy to promise anything but a different story when you get back home and start putting everything back in its place.

When we talked at the breakfast table in D.C., I realized you were trying to prod us into expressing our feelings, letting go of what happened 25 or so years ago (not unlike the way you prodded us up, down and around those damn hills!) But just writing this note and sending the sketches is a result of the good feelings the Reunion left me. Since D.C., I've gotten letters from five different Delta guys sharing pictures and memories, so I guess they feel it too.

The sketches represent "mind pictures" I took when either a camera wasn't available or appropriate. Something to do when we came back in from the field when all the paperbacks had been read and the sandbags filled. I folded them up and sent them home in letters. These four I found later, while others were lost or just pitched.

Please use whichever ones you think are relevant to our group and send me back the originals when you're through. Drawing is again becoming an outlet for me and there's a few "pictures" from the Reunion I'd like to try. Thanks again to the Reunion Committee for a GREAT time!

Semper Fi

Dan Fisher
D/1/26



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Dear Beverly,

Ernie Spencer sent me a copy of your letter which mentioned the cover art, which was a piece I rendered from a small photograph. Ernie had a collection of photos which we poured over individually and together. During this time of decision, I had experimented with several photos from which to choose for the cover of ***The Khe Sanh Veteran.***

At a certain point in the process of choosing and creating the final rendering, I was taken with the photo of John Bersano. His attitude and demeanor suggested to me the image of an American hero. Confidence, purpose, pride and good humor were implied in his stride.

Starting with the simple photo, I then used color overlays, experimenting with lighting and textures—pulling the focus close in to the man, his weapon and the long-bladed grass. A little magic happened as I was working. I'm very pleased that the technical tools I use were able to assist me toward completion of an image which became personal and universal at the same time.

Ernie was pleased with the results and I gave the image (on computer disk) to Leo Wong for placement in his final layout of the magazine.

I haven't written before now since I haven't been to the "service bureau" (a place where we artists/computer users rent sophisticated equipment to reproduce our images). The last time I visited my service bureau, I printed out a "color comp" which I am mailing with this letter. Hope you enjoy it.

Campbell Buttry

ED: Campbell did the cover art for the Summer '93 issue.

Bill,

Enclosed is a check for $40.00 which will cover my membership fee and someone else's. The Winter 1993 newsletter was great! I can't tell you how much I enjoyed the Reunion in Washington D.C. I was a little disappointed that I didn't run into anyone from "H" 2/26. Several of the guys from my unit were from the east coast but I haven't been able to track them down. Anyway, thanks for a great newsletter. I'm looking forward to the next one.

Semper Fi

Steve Haisley
H/2/26
211 Alexandria Drive
Vernon Hills
IL 60061

Dear Ernie,

Good to hear from you today. Thanks for the picture. Enclosed is a photo of me as requested. It was taken at KSCB in Nov-Dec '67. When you are finished with it I would appreciate its return, if possible.

I'm interested to see the video of the Reunion you're doing. My pictures came out quite well. I'll have to sit down and organize some extras to send to you, Epps and the others. I found the Reunion a great event, one that left me feeling "good" all over. I will certainly try to make others if I have the money.

I just started working on the Poilane story today. I'm typing it on my computer so I'll be able to send you "neat" copies. I'll try and put it together based upon the number of words per page in the newsletter and will aim for 1-1½



Drawing by Dan Fisher

pages per edition. I also have some insight to include. I don't know when I'll be able to finish this off, but I hope to send the first installment to you by the end of August.

Looking forward to the new issue which will cover our Reunion.

Hang in there!

Semper Fi

Nick Romanetz
C-2, 1/26

ED: Where's the story Nick?

Dear Ernie,

It was great meeting you at the Reunion. It was the first time I've been with that many Marines since I left Khe Sanh. I have remained active with a few Veterans organizations and have met many Marines who served at Khe Sanh with the 26th and 9th Marines. It was like a dream meeting two of the guys from the ONTOS position that was next to my bunker. Brings back lots of memories, some good, some sad, some bad.

I appreciate all the good work you're doing for the organization. I'm the Head of the Board of Directors for my own Battalion—"Dusters, Quads and Searchlights." Keeps you going all the time. This I hope can help with some Marine history. At Khe Sanh, from its original days was a fire battery of two Dusters-Twin 40MM Ack Ack Tracks and two Quad-50 machine guns. The Dusters Unit was 1st Battalion (AW) (SP) 44th Artillery. "A" Battery served from January to March. "B" Battery served for about two weeks in March. "C" Battery served the balance, until Khe Sanh was abandoned. My Track was the last vehicle to leave. The Marine history book only shows "A" Battery. Along with the Dusters was "G" 65th Artillery (Quad-50s). I am presently putting together a listing of all Duster and Quad Tracks and Batteries that served at Khe Sanh from the beginning to the end. I am hoping to also include the names of the individual men.

Enclosed are some pictures you requested. I thank you for allowing me to be included in your video.

I read your book. I can't begin to tell the inner feelings it gave me. It's the first book about Nam I have read cover to cover. It was at times very difficult being attached to the 3rd Marine Div. I always felt that they under-used our fire power. But that was a long time ago.

I also enclose two writings I've done. I must say they were inspired from reading your book.

Sorry for all the bad spelling and bad English, but what can you expect from an old "Doggie". Thanks for everything.

Your new pal and old buddy,

Joe Belardo
"C" Battery 1st/44th

Dear Sir,

I served around Quang Tri in 1967, Con Thien, DMZ, Operation Buffalo with 1st Battalion 3rd Marines, A Company 2nd PLT on my second tour to Vietnam, I served with H S CO BLT 2/7 9th MAB.

I am also a life member of the 3rd Marine Division.

Sincerely,

Bill Fry
B-P 113
Temae Moorea
French Polynesia

Enc: Check for $30

Brother Ernie,

I apologize for not keeping in touch. When the sculpture business is grim I tend to crawl inside my mental bunker. This has not been a great year for my art. We're back at Suzanne's place midway between Yreka and Montague. Great view of Mt Shasta to the Southeast.

Built a small figure this week (dancing figure)—finished the thing, took a good honest look at it, grabbed the cutting torch and cut it into pieces. If it ain't right, it doesn't leave the workbench. I read somewhere that even Michelangelo had his lesser moments of creation! Back to the drawing board. Sometimes I feel like Wiley Coyote, trying to trap that damn Roadrunner—I'll get him one of these days!

Turned on the news yesterday. North Korea is getting belligerent. They want to "bloody the American nose." We've been flipping them off across the fence-line for 40 years, I guess I'd be a little irritated if I were wearing their moccasins.

Rip, from *Easyriders* magazine, came by and did a photo shoot out at the L.M.S.G. in October. Should get some good P.R. from that. He's a Korean war Vet. He gets paid to ride his Harley and write about his experiences. What a job!

Have a good Christmas—next year's got to be better.

Semper Fi
Dennis Smith
B/1/26

Brother Ernie,

You certainly gave my Christmas spirit a boost. I'm about to begin the first large version of "Khe Sanh." I'll keep you informed as it progresses. If the membership is slow to respond, that's OK. The work will take a little longer to complete but the mission will be accomplished.

I've been wondering about Chick myself. Our last communication was last Summer when he sent me a copy of his letter which was printed in the newsletter. Maybe Stubbe has a fix on his position.

I will be ordering at least one of the Summer '93 cover posters (my primary M.O.S. was 0331) and at least one of your Reunion videos as soon as I am able. My plan for this year is to do no travelling, just stay in the studio and work. After 25 years at the workbench, it's about time I really got my act together.

Recently I re-read *Macho Man* again. Of my entire Vietnam library, I feel your book is the most honest—and the one most relevant to my personal experience and feelings.

Thanks for the beautiful card and the encouragement, assistance and inspiration. Hope you have a very excellent 1994.

From a book of quotations: *"There is no way to peace. Peace is the way."*

Peace,

Dennis Smith
B/1/26

Hi Rev. Ray,

I hope everything is fine with you and yours. I'd like to say thanks for the new Vet. magazine—very nice copy, we are getting better and better.

I had a sleepless night so I put my thoughts down once again in a prose more of less. I had a friend type it over for me. I hope it might be worthy for print in a future issue. I'm broke most of the time but I can at least share poetry or stories with a letter now and again.

I know you will be going to D.C. in July so my very best wishes for a very nice trip and hope you meet my lawyer, Jessica McGuire; she will be there. Please give my best wishes to the vets and visitors and my prayers go up for you all to have a very peaceful and fun Reunion.

Semper Fi

Manuel Babbitt
A.T's

Dear Ernie,

I received the winter ***The Khe Sanh Veteran.*** As usual, I can't put it down until I turn the last page. For me, that takes all day. This is the next thing to a best buddy. I seem to relate to almost every article. As I was reading this at 7.00 a.m., tears ran down my face, then the warmth of a passive poem.

It is evening here in New Mexico. I am tired from the gambit of emotions brought forth by the Brothers' articles in your publications. Please don't stop!

I have always wondered what I could do to help fill in the emptiness I walk around with daily. I am a VVA State Council Co-Chair for Veterans Incarcerated. I enjoy talking to the inmates and helping them with any and all forms to help them get benefits for their wives and children. Also, to help them get medical help for PTSD and Agent Orange problems. There are also work programs they can get into for parole. This alone is not enough.

A few years ago I figured out the highest honor and best way to help my fellow Veteran is to build a **Living Wall** for them. The problem was how to get names to put on it. I decided *not* to invade anyone's privacy by using their name without their permission. This **Living Wall** would only have the names of Vietnam era vets. This is for men and women who survived Vietnam and are surviving now. I need to get names, so I thought that by starting a VVA here, I'd get names that way. That, together with flyers at truck stops gave me names and phone calls from all over the United States. I hope that by creating a place, Veterans can bring their families and touch their name embedded in a wall at no cost to the vet. There will be a play area for the kids, shops for everyone and a museum with memorabilia and poems, songs, pictures, etc. Most of all, acres and acres for all the people who are the survivors of the Nam. A place of peace and harmony.

I would like to get more names. There are NO State, Federal, Political or Veterans organizations involved. Please call: Al Logan (505) 546-7984

You're the best,

Al Logan

Dear Ernie,

Thanks for your letter and the cut-out of your logo; are there any particular colors to it, like, is the wreath green with a red bow like a Christmas wreath and the letters could be mirror silver??? I try to stay as close to the original colors and details as possible using mirror accents or in the lettering. I use mirror silver to separate colors also.

I served at Khe Sanh with 1/9. Went in in late Jan. '68 and we were at the Rock Quarry on the NW, outside the base a few hundred yards. I got the feeling we were in the middle between 861 and the base itself. I was evaced out on 26 Feb. and ended up in Hue at the tail end of that one and from there I went on down the highway to CAG. I was the RTO for 3rd Plt Bravo Co. and a grunt with the 3rd squad. I got to go to CAG because that was my second Heart at Khe Sanh and I had the time in to get 'skate' duty. What I didn't know was CAG wasn't skating anymore, except on thin ice.

I came home in Sep '68, stayed in until Oct. '71 and even did a tour on the drill field as a 3rd Bn D.I. I had, before my arrest, been treated for over 10 years off and on for PTSD and am diagnosed as chronic by the DAV, but have been constantly refused disability from the VA. Talk about instilling confidence in authority, you know?

I first heard about your organization back in 1988 from a guy in Florida who gave me Ernie Husted's name. I went to the reunion in Chicago in '89 that was held in conjunction with the 3rd Mar. Div. reunion, as I was then the President of the Rocky Mountain Region Chapter of the 3rd Div. Assoc., which takes in 6 Rocky Mountain states and was there to propose Denver CO. as a possible reunion site for 1991. If you are a member, you know we were successful in that, but I never made it.

As to my story, I don't know. I am not by any stretch of the imagination a writer and wouldn't know what to say. When I was first convicted, I wrote to every person I knew; Vets, friends, the VFW—of which I am a life member, the 3rd Mar. Div. Assoc., even my old platoon company, to try and raise some money to provide me with a defense. I received a grand total of $50.00, and that was from a guy in CAG that while in-country, we didn't get along all that well. Everyone else just turned their back on me and that was it. I grew very cynical with the "Brotherhood" that everyone was espousing and blew it all off.

I will say that I am guilty of committing a crime on the 4th September '89. I committed the crime of Felony Menacing and attempted suicide. I was charged with forcible rape at gunpoint and sentenced on that crime to 30 years here, that makes me eligible for parole in 221/2 years. The rape I was supposed to have committed was against my wife of 7 years. We were going through a divorce and she wanted a bit more than what I was willing to give. She wanted everything and knew just how to get it.

I have spent the last three years fighting my case with inept Penitentiary Dispatchers (Public Defenders) and finally got it together to go to school to become a paralegal. My first customer, of course, is myself, and after months in the law library I have very carefully put together a case that I believe might do me some good. I can and will file on my own behalf but I am still trying to get enough money for a good attorney to represent me in court. The guy I have in mind is number one on my list for two reasons. One, he believes in me and is willing to take the case if I can get his fee and two, he hasn't lost a criminal case in more than ten years as one of Colorado's biggest criminal law firms. He is also interested because of my vet status, but that's beside the point. My problem is raising the ten grand he wants for the job. I do have people on the street trying to get the money together but my mother is all alone and she is 82 years old so it isn't at all easy. She can't get a loan because of her age and my own brother who has all of the money in the world (rich) won't help because we haven't gotten along for years. He was a little old to be a hippy but he was anti-war in '67 and gave me a bunch of shit when I got home. I could take it from strangers and average assholes on the street, but my own family was just too much. Anyway, he didn't get rich by giving money away, if you know what I mean. He has copper stains between his thumb and forefingers.

Back to the mirrors I make. Each mirror is hand etched out of the back by scraping off the silvering then painting in the open areas. It is done with modified dental picks and exacto knives and takes about a week to do an easy one just to the point where I can paint it. I work with another guy in this and we only get three hours a night in the hobby shop if we are lucky. I really have already discounted the military art because some of the mirrors we do go from $65 to $150 each, but that is his baby as I am no real artist. I don't worry about taxes; don't need to with an income of around $400 a year, so I don't need a tax loss. I barely get enough to pay my school bills of $35 a month. If I could, I would pay my lawyer with mirror money, but that isn't even a thought.

What I could use is help, but I tried begging once and it didn't work then, but if anyone wanted to help out, I could arrange to get them paid back if the payments were around the same as a regular loan—$200 a month or so. It is just that my attorney won't take payments. He needs his money in advance—otherwise we could pay him.

Enough of this shit, I have bent your ear and bored you enough with my problems and in these days, you don't need any more out there.

If any of you want a mirror, please make sure you send me the money in a money order only. I can't take personal checks or any other kind of payment or they will send it back. All money orders must be made out to me personally.

Sorry I ran on for so long but yours is the first mail I have gotten in about three weeks and I guess I was getting a little bitter.

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Toi Se Khong Bao Gil Quen (I will not forget)

Ric Payne
B/1/9
63360
AVCF Box 1000
Crowley
CO, 81034.

Dear Mr Maves,

Enclosed are my 1994 dues to the Association. I'm sorry if they are late, but my financial situation has been very tight.

My goal for the year is to become a Life Member. As a Veteran of Khe Sanh; 66-68 with the Marines as helicopter crew-chief; 69-71 with the Army as helicopter pilot (both Cobra's and LOH's), including Lorn Som 719, and as a helicopter pilot for Air America 72-74 in the Northern areas of South Vietnam and Laos—I find this Association as one of great honor.

We, who served at Khe Sanh, know all too well the costs that were paid by our Brothers.

Please extend my membership into the 1994 season and keep up the good work. My current address is listed on the attached page.

Dau Tranh,

James 'Sneaky' White
HMM-262-USMC
E C 1st/6th Inf, 198th LIB—Army
AVN Sec, 108th Arty Group—Army
C BTY 4th/77th ARA (Cobras)—Army
Attached to MLT-2, CCN, MAC-V-SO
C Troop 2nd/17th Cav, 101st ARN Div—Army
Air America, Da Nang, Hue, NKP (Thailand)

Dear Mr Maves,

We are an incarcerated veterans group comprised of members from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam Conflict, the Persian Gulf Conflict and peace time. Our organization is concerned with PTSD Counselling, Agent Orange benefits, reduction of recidivism, etc.

Our purpose in writing to you is to ask for a subscription to ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** magazine. We have fifty members and are growing. It will be a well-read publication.

Enclosed is a package that will explain more about us. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Vets Helping Vets

Charles W Jackson Jr # 116902
Inmate President

Due to institutional requirements, it is requested that when corresponding with V.V.A. 655—Project Base Camp, that you use the below address exactly as listed. We hope that this does not cause any inconvenience on your part and we appreciate your participation.

President
V.V.A. 655—Project Base Camp
Baker Correctional Institution
P.O. Box 500
Olustee, FL. 32072-0500

Greetings from the wilds of Idaho!

Enclosed is a check for my '94 membership. Are you going to offer a reduced life membership on a payment plan? I was looking for my Winter edition of the newsletter since Christmas and I finally received it on the February mail plane. It was awesome! One of the best issues so far. It took me a week to get through the whole thing. I had to stop every few items because of the emotions they caused. Wish you could go to press with it more often.

Even though I've never been able to make a reunion, I'm sorry to hear there won't be one every year in the future. I think I would like to attend one but don't know if I could handle it. Is there a chance that it would be held in the Winter or early Spring months sometime in the future? Like another one in Florida in February, or something like that.

Summer and Fall are a busy time in the outfitting business here at the ranch and I can never get away then. Also, I agree that we are an unique organization and should maintain our separate identity from other service organizations. Keep the reunions fun and simple, save the bureaucracy for the Board of Directors meetings.

Most of all, thank you and everybody else involved in putting together our organization and giving us a vehicle to get in touch with each other through the newsletter. Keep up the good work.

Semper Fi,

Pat Hawn
B/1/13

Pistol Creek Ranch
Air Star Route
Cascade, ID. 83611

Hey Bill!

Nice to know you!! I'm Tom Friel, the gunner on the 60mm mortar from G 2/26 who supplied some of the illumination that dreadful night you guys were being hit Feb/March '68. I served in G company from Nov '67- Dec '68, except for 5 days R&R in Taipei in late October '68.

The Marines turned out to be a good thing for me to join—after it was all over—because being raised in the Bronx, I was constantly in trouble and going nowhere, except to jail. So becoming a Marine taught me a lot of values and self worth.

Don't get me wrong, I lost a lot of good close friends at Khe Sanh—mainly on Operation Pegasus when we swept that Hill 700 down the ridge from E Co. Mainly, it taught me a lot to be grateful for. I have four beautiful daughters (ages 22, 17, 21/2 and 6 weeks), a good job with the P.O. and retired from N.Y.C. Sanitation Department after 20 years. I truly consider myself one of the lucky ones.

See ya around the Base!!

Tom Friel (alias 'Stinky')

Hi Ernie,

While in Washington at the dedication of the Women's Memorial, I was informed that the Khe Sanh veterans had formed an organization. I wrote to the Rev. Ray Stubbe to get some scoop on how to get on board and Ray sent me the Spring and Summer issues—and the fog of time began to lift.

When I arrived in Nam, I joined "E" Co. 2/26 at Phu Bai. In January '68 we moved up to Khe Sanh and wound up on Hill 861A. Our CO at the time is your current President, Earle Breeding. With the constant turnover of men, most with nicknames, I guess the fog of faces and names will never fully lift.

I am looking forward to receiving the next Khe Sanh Veteran and am proud to become a member.

Semper Fi

Chuck Macaluso
154 Mendota Dr.,
Rochester, NY 14626
Tel: 716-225-8288

Dear Ernie,

A few months ago when I wrote to subscribe to ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** you suggested I write a piece about women in Vietnam. Well, I didn't do that, but I did write the enclosed article which you might be interested in. I originally wrote a slightly different version for the Red Cross newsletter but have since decided that I would like to reach a wider audience of veterans by sending it to veterans newsletters and magazines. I particularly thought of ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** since so much of my attention while I was in Vietnam the first time, and so also this time, was focused on Khe Sanh and the Marines.

I am soon going to be leaving Alaska for the winter, first going to Washington for the dedication of the Women's Statue. It's going to be a great gathering! I hope your Khe Sanh reunion in July was wonderful too—I look forward to reading about it in the next issue. I will give you an address where I can be reached in the Washington area as well as my Alaska address in case you want to contact me.

Best wishes,

Nancy Smoyer
Red Cross

Alaska
630 Lowell Road
Fairbanks
AK 99712
Tel: 907/457-8473

Washington
c/o Friends of Vietnam
Veterans Memorial
2030 Clarendon Blvd.,
Suite 412,
Arlington, VA 22201
Tel: 703/525-1107

ED: See Nancy's Memoir in this issue

Ernie,

I am Jerry Kozuch. I was Co. Gy A/1/26 Jun-Nov '67 and I attended the 25th Reunion in D.C. I am sending the

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Steve Street, Pete James, Bob Harrison, and Jerry Kosuch, four members of A/1/26, meet again at our 25th reunion last summer.

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enclosed snapshot of the four from A/1/26 (there were five, but one didn't make this picture.)

Long story short: we all missed the company shots, so I am hoping you will be able to put us in the newsletter photo's. Thanks. (If you have any questions, please give me a call on 703/659-2482).

In the picture L to R: Steve Street, Pete James, Bob Harrison and Jerry Kozuch Co. Gy. (missing from the picture was Terry Lacy). Hope you can fit this in with the rest of the companies that attended.

If you need any help with anything or if you get in a snag on information, I'm here in D.C.—I might be able to help. Thanks again.

Semper Fi

Jerry Kozuch
A/1/26

Hi Skipper,

My fireteam leader and very good friend while on the hills, Wayne Silva, called me recently. It was great hearing from this guy—I've looked for him for a hell of a long time.

I guess that you were speaking at a Marine Corps function Nov. 10. After you talked, Wayne approached you. He tells me he's now a Warrant Officer, in the Corps of course. You guys live in the same town, just a mile apart. Isn't that something—that's great.

Just a short note to thank you for connecting two friends who shared each other's rations.

Merry Christmas to you and your family.

Henry Gagne
D/1/26

Dear Ernie,

My name is Ken Rodgers, and I served with Bravo Company, 1/26, 2nd Platoon from March 1967 until April 1968, including approximately 11 months at Khe Sanh. I have received three newsletters now and have found them to be very enjoyable.

When General Mundy spoke at the Dedication of the Memorial at Arlington Cemetery, I believe that his speech was left with Mr Penn. I thought that his talk was very moving and I was wondering if you might print a text of the speech in an upcoming edition of ***The Khe Sanh Veteran.***

You have stated in past newsletters that if we had written anything on our Khe Sanh experiences, you would consider including them in future issues. I have enclosed two poems that I have written on a few of the things that stand out in my memory. "Red Mud and Rats" was written in February 1993 and "Christmas" was written in April 1993. Please use them if they fit.

I picked up a copy of your book while at the convention in Washington D.C. and found it both entertaining and provocative. Provocative in the sense of the memories that came back based on the incidents you described. I have always tried to make a regular habit of remembering the Khe Sanh experience and your story reminded me of some memories I had forgotten.

Semper Fi

Ken Rodgers
B/1/26, 2nd Plt.

Dear Mrs Norman,

Hope you are doing well as the summer season approaches. My wife is preparing final exams this weekend and completing her 24th year of teaching high school math. Our daughter is attending her school's graduation ceremonies today at the Will Rogers Memorial Auditorium in Fort Worth. Next year she will graduate and is looking forward to attending college, though she hasn't yet decided where. Also, she is going to work as a lifeguard at Wet 'n Wild. I have finally completed my course at the University of Texas at Arlington and will take the summer off from studying. Connie and I hope to attend the 25th anniversary ceremonies of the Battle of Khe Sanh in Washington D.C. during the Fourth of July weekend and then join my sisters and brothers for a family reunion.

The tribute to Hank and picture were submitted to Ernie Spencer, Editor of ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** newsletter. In response, he asked me if I would be interested in doing a series about Hank. In thinking about his request, I thought perhaps you or someone very close to Hank might want to submit to the newsletter for publication a short article, personal profile, letters, additional pictures or transcriptions of the tapes Hank sent home. If you or anybody else would be interested in submitting anything to the newsletter, you could send it either to me or Ernie Spencer, whichever you prefer. We will make sure everything is handled properly and will return anything you might want to keep.

I feel that the above recommended approach is the best way to handle a sensitive matter such as this. Most of what I remember of Hank was brought out in the tribute. However, if you prefer that I write an additional article(s) based on information provided to me, I would be more than happy to do so and then have you review it before

publication.

If you are ever in the area, please give me a call anytime so that we can arrange to get together. Either you could come over to our home in Arlington or we could drive over to Garland or Mesquite.

Sincerely,

David G Rogers
A/1/13

Dear Khe Sanh Veteran,

As a fellow veteran of Khe Sanh, we shared great hardships through our tour of duty and made close ties with many men while we were there. But for most all of us, we watched those men get on a chopper, whether wounded, killed or just rotating back to the States. The moment was fading even as the chopper faded away into the clouds, but even 25 years later, these incredible experiences linger somewhere in the back of our minds and will always be a part of us.

This is why I think our fellowship amongst us is so important. Only another Brother that shared those times could possibly comprehend what we experienced during that short period of our lives.

Your organization and magazine contribute greatly to the effort of bringing those Brothers that once faded away into the clouds back together again. For this, I can't thank you enough.

I am enclosing my membership application and a small donation. I anxiously await my next magazine. Keep up the outstanding work.

Ed Troup
A/1/9 (68-69)

Dear Mr Spencer,

My name is Ronald E Poteat, and I am a new member. I have been working with the POW/MIA issue for a little over ten years now. During this time, I have created a few designs for a postage stamp to commemorate those men and women who are missing from all our nation's wars. I have finally come up with a design which I think is so effective that I had it copyrighted.

I have put together a petition drive and created a T-shirt to further promote this issue. I have pumped a new life into the commemorative U.S. Postage Stamp. I am on the right track and I know in my heart that this time we will be successful and that a stamp will be issued to commemorate those who never came home from all our nation's wars.

To make this into a reality, we must get all the Veteran's groups to stand behind this idea for the commemorative stamp and push the issue until we get honor for the POW/MIAs. I ask for your help on a national level. This is a worthy cause that needs the attention of all us Veterans and the American people. I will enclose a sample T-shirt and petition so that you can see the idea and make up your mind as to whether I can count on the support of the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. on a national level. We can work out the details upon approval of your support.

TO REMEMBER THEM IS TO HONOR THEM. Please pray for them and their families. May God always be with them. God bless America and may she always be free.

Sincerely,

Ronald E Poteat
11 Stanton Street
Dracut
MA 01826
Tel: 508-459-1750

LIFE SENTENCE

"Sam", he said, looking me in the eyes,
"you're a prisoner of your mind.
It's time you broke free; escape!
Don't you know you're in misery?"

Sam, I look at you and my reflection comes back to me.
I look at you and see me!
A prisoner of Vietnam.
A prisoner of Khe Sanh.
Twenty five years a prisoner of my mind.

I look for ways to escape, but none can I find.
For years I tried to escape, two - sometimes three jobs.
A union steward, involved in baseball.
I am still a prisoner, but now I know my jailer,
and I am still trying to find a way out.
A life sentence I have been given,
and if I give in, that life will be short.

In Ward 2-2c at the Topeka V.A.
tools they have given to me.
I will take them as I leave and hope my jailer will not see.
A P.O.W. for the rest of my life I don't want to be.

Lewis S Messer
CMBU 301

Ernie,

How very moving and ironic that today is SOG's 30th Anniversary. I guess I should stand back today and wait this one out—but, as they say in Hollywood, "the show must go on!"

I am frequently asked why I'm not a raving lunatic, after having spent three continuous years in South Vietnam, and all I can reply is that I seldom fought in South Vietnam—more so in Laos and Cambodia. My war was truly a different war than most Vietnam assignees had been accustomed. I think I'd better let the memories flow and not comment or I'll write another novel.

Question Ernie: Did I or did I not propose a deal wherein a set of SOG books was offered for review of the SOG History? We're having trouble with our communications systems in this rather cold weather and have been unable to find a file which indicates this. Please let me know. All other similar offers came back by December last year and had been approved by the membership of each approached association. As I've said, our system is 'too cold' at this time to provide us with complete information.

In the meantime, I have enclosed the latest solicitation for the SOG History [see below]; all four books will be available for shipping in mid-February. A limited, one time special price offer will expire on 1 April 1994—at which time the books will be made available to the US public for the first time—and at full cover price for everyone (it's time for charity to benefit).

Have several other correspondences to prepare today, so Ernie, until later...

Harve Saal
SOG

THE PORTENT OF OFFICIALDOM

In late 1990, in the second year of preparing the history of SOG, I had compiled a sizeable list of SOG casualties—not complete by any means, but more complete than was known to the US Government or any other researcher—and the circumstances surrounding their deaths and disappearances, from eye-witness reports when available.

I was contacted and asked to co-operate and provide testimony in the area of SOG (MIAs) during the Vietnam conflict for the Senate Select Committee on PW/MIA affairs during hearings which were held in 1992. I agreed, and with many other Americans watched the hearings with anticipation and waited to be called to Washington D.C. to testify.

As the hearings progressed, I was unimpressed by the testimony being presented by "higher echelon, desk jockey" bosses. The PW/MIA Committee had neither called nor questioned *one* US soldier who was physically present in Laos or Cambodia—recon men on the ground or pilots in the air—who watched helplessly as US remains were being carried away by the NVA. The NVA had taken SOG bodies and PWs (including pilots) from Laos/Cambodia and had to know where they were—and are—located!

Paranoia and Communist dogma required exacting, extensive reports on anything and everything—the NVA would have recorded precise information about US PWs or US remains in their possession. I felt certain they not only had US remains but had the paperwork which plotted their exact locations. This was something I had yet to hear come out of testifying mouths—but did not.

MACV-SOG	Each	Total Cost
Volume I Historical Evolution	$24.95	
Volume II Locations	$22.95	
Volume III Legends	$25.95	
Volume IV Appendixes	$23.95	
Shipping & Handling please add $3.00 per volume. S & H (Overseas orders must include sufficient postage +$3.00)		
All profits, after expenses, are dedicated for charity. Please allow 8-12 weeks for delivery.	Total:	

as compiled by Harve Saal

the history of MACV-SOG
MACV, Studies and Observations Group

Do not send cash. Make all checks payable to, and mail to:

Janis Jones, Techno-Comm.
P.O. Box 18656
Milwaukee, WI 53218-0656

Very near the end of the hearings, in December 1992, I was notified by an investigative reporter in D.C. that the PW/MIAs hearings had been convened to "whitewash" the issue of possible living PWs in Southeast Asia with the normalization of trade as the driving force. The PW/MIA Committee was finalizing an era and adjudicating all existing cases concerning the status of possible PWs, to be resolved and closed. The only sincere Legislator on the board seemed to be "Smith", who, by the way, is still concerned and involved in the MIA issue.

Three weeks before the PW/MIA board adjourned, they had not yet called for my testimony. It was the second week of December 1992. On the Monday and Tuesday, I made contact with a D.C. reporter/friend (ex-SF) and, over a period of 5 hours, divulged the information I possessed. He took the information to the PW board and because of its significance, they departed for Hanoi the next day (Wednesday). I was telephonically notified to watch the television news closely the next few days. That Friday, the PW/MIA Committee was shown on US television, via satellite coverage, receiving approximately 20 containers of US remains, each in a small wooden box. This action turned a number of US remains over to US control, perhaps the most since US PWs had been released from captivity during 1973 in "Operation Homecoming."

Shortly after the PW/MIA hearings had been closed (4 January 1993), the US Government began a policy, enforced by those such as Ed Ross (Assistant Secretary of Defense), which declared the US would no longer bargain for US remains in Southeast Asia.

It was a while after the PW/MIA hearings had ended that I was again informed by an investigative reporter that the hearings had been held in an effort to "close" the MIA issue and normalize trade relations with Vietnam. I was told that the US politicians owed debts to "selected" US businessmen and the normalization of bi-lateral trade between the US and Vietnam would provide the President with some exceptional bargaining chips to play in the political/international game of reciprocal "favors." It could be very advantageous to the first US businesses allowed free trade between the USA and Vietnam. Resultant US business profits are incomprehensible and unimaginable.

Meanwhile, in the US Labs in Hawaii, while examining the containers of supposed returned US remains, it was determined that only a few of the boxes actually contained human remains—the remainder were animal bones.

Several weeks after the hearings ended, I was contacted by an investigative researcher who had uncovered my PW/MIA testimony, complete with name, address and phone number. He said he'd been researching and gathering facts about the US's deliberate reluctance to acknowledge living US prisoners in Southeast Asia, and in the process he accidentally uncovered my testimony in the Legislative Archives. He related to me that it was possible that someone in Washington did not want my testimony aired or discussed in public during the hearings and that, although retained in the Legislative Archives, my testimony was mysteriously unlisted in the official Senate Select Committee on PW/MIA Affairs testimony "record."

Several reports of US remains were filtering back into the USA. The reports were provided by valid, unshakable, credible sources. The reports were cross-checked for legitimacy; it was verified that the remains of downed US airmen were being hidden, protected and in the possession of persons other than the Hanoi government.

The US Government, nevertheless, steadfastly refuses to attempt recovery of US remains. Opting instead to demand that the possessor of the US remains take and turn them over to their nearest Vietnamese Governmental facility, such as a Police Station. It is known throughout Southeast Asia that any civilian who possesses US remains and turns them over to Vietnamese authorities has suffered an untimely demise. Entire families have been punished and killed for having knowledge of the whereabouts of US remains.

When known to them, it is US policy to notify the Hanoi government of the names of those who are reported to have knowledge of US remains. It is without wonder that no-one is willing to come forward and divulge their knowledge of US remains.

Therefore, in the final assessment of the PW/MIA issue, it is obviously and undoubtedly linked to the normalization of trade with Vietnam, and it can easily be concluded that the final outcome will only benefit US politicians as they provide unfair business advantage and privilege to the political cronies of their choosing. It is political rhetoric, bureaucratic insensitivity and insincerity together with a lack of moral ethics which have denied at least one family of their loved one. It is a deeply embroiled issue which is quickly dissipating within a smoke-screen of trade and profit.

This is seemingly an untenable situation which faces an uneducated, naive American public. "Damned if we let the cat out of the bag and damned if we don't—and still get caught and drown in the spiraling whirlpool."

Skid's down—exfil, lift off—till the flashing sparks of incoming gunfire subside.

Harve Saal
SOG

Dear Bill Maves,

My name is Gary Bartle. I served in Khe Sanh during the siege with India Co. 3/26 on 881S. I was one of the men amongst many on Jan. 20, 1968, who went up 881N and ran into the NVA. That day I thought I would never again see my friends and family, but with the praying I was doing I guess someone heard me.

A few of the guys up there used to call me the quiet one. I usually always stayed in my bunker and very seldom ever came out. If someone talked to me it was like they talked to themselves. I remember one Marine, his name was Jim Payne. We went out to a downed chopper to get supplies when the NVA started to mortar us. We all took off like the devil himself was chasing us. At first, I got caught in the wire, then when I got to my bunker I just sat with my knee's drawn up to my face. Jim tried to talk to me and when I did answer, I found out we were from the same city of Utica, N.Y.

When he left in March '68 to go home I thought I'd lost the one person I could relate to. Well, in 1990, I picked up the Sunday paper and there he was! The paper interviewed him about being in the book *Siege In The Clouds*. If you haven't read it yet, try to find a copy.

I wasn't able to be at the reunion but I'd like to pay tribute to all those who died at Khe Sanh and to say to all who came home that we're all good buddies and we can at least help others know what Khe Sanh means to us.

I find it hard to bring myself to face the Wall. I've lost a lot of my memory of Khe Sanh and other parts of Vietnam I've been too also. In Khe Sanh, I had a mortar go off near me wounding several other Marines, but all I got was a bad headache and no hearing for about a week. All I heard was a lot of ringing and muffled voices. I refused to be medevaced out and stayed. The other time was somewhere outside Quang Tri. A mortar went off again and a piece of shrapnel missed dozens of others and picked me out.

These days I have trouble with names and some places where I was at. If anyone out there remembers me, I sure would like to catch up on some things. I first got on the hill Dec 15, 1968 but was in Khe Sanh Base in Nov. My MOS was 0331. I was on the side of the hill that faced Khe Sanh Base and Hill 861.

I broke my ankle at Khe Sanh when they took us off the hill. I walked around on it for two days before we found out it was broken. I do remember the LT. chewing me out.

I'm unemployed right now but will send in my dues as soon as I get back to work. I hope to hear from someone soon if they can remember me.

Semper Fi good buddies,

Gary Bartle
RD3, Box 420 River Road,
Camden, N.Y. 13316.
(315) 245-5015

P.S. Let me know when the next reunion is and I hope to make it next time. Say hello to Capt. Dabney for me—I mean Col. Dabney (sorry Sir)!

MORE FROM THE DUKE...

Dear Ernie,

From the caption and comment at the bottom of my letter, I'm led to believe that what I said has struck a raw nerve. Also, that you may have taken my comments personally. If that is the case, I'm truly sorry. It was never my intent to criticize your excellent editorial abilities nor your judgment. The letter's sole intent was to oppose, in the strongest way possible short of eyeball-to-eyeball contact, any inference of support by our organization of the present administration or any of its radical policies. A White House reception (I still don't know if there was one) would have meant just that in the eyes of many. The letter was intended as nothing more than a communication between you, Earle Breeding and myself. That you chose to publish it was a total surprise to me. Not that I mind seeing myself in print, quite the contrary. The truth, although it never needs defense, can use all possible exposure and I will continue to stand by everything that I have said. However, it does make me wonder about just what it was that motivated you to print it.

Before I go further, let me make it quite plain that this is a letter from me to you. Publish it if you like but, if you do, please don't edit it. I'll live with my spelling and grammar mistakes as long as the substance of what I'm saying remains intact. Introduction over, I'd like to respond by addressing your "ED" note at the bottom of my published letter:

- *"You did your tour and I did mine"*: Figuratively speaking, that would seem correct. To take it a bit further, however, I extended twice on my first tour and then waived my overseas control date to go back two more times. Draw your own conclusions from that. I'm sure that I would agree, at least in part, with most of them.
- *"When you take over as Editor, you can do it your way"*: Thanks, but no thanks. Everybody's not cut out to be an Editor. For one thing, the job calls for one to be too judgmental. I prefer to stick to the creative part of writing, such as it is.
- *"The wonderful thing about the written word is that the reader has the option, at all times, of averting his or her*

eyes": You really surprised me with that one. You're endorsing the "head in the sand Ostrich act", the "See no evil, hear no evil" bit. How much history does it take to convince you that not speaking out against something is the same as endorsing it? That when someone calls a black person a Nigger and you turn your head and pretend that you did not hear it, it's the same as if you were saying it yourself. That if most of Europe hadn't "averted" its collective eyes when Hitler was a mere upstart, we might not have had to suffer through a World War. As for the "written word", my feeling is that the true beauty of it is that it is permanent. People can be held to account for what they write and so be exposed for whatever they are. Except, of course, if they happen to be members of the Clinton cabinet. Nightline—Lani Guinier: "Most important, I think, is not what I wrote but who I am." Ref. National Review, Nov 15 '93 issue, p.72).

- I won't comment on the *"If you don't like it, don't read it"* part. As for your last word, *"Simple"*, Contraire! Contraire! When emotions tug at mens' hearts strongly enough to cause them to act, what follows is anything but simple.

Now, for the John Wayne part. You may have a slight backlash on that one. Not from me. I like the inference, even though I understand exactly just how it was intended. I'm talking about what if more readers like Leonard Venardos or Mrs J Thomas Esslinger choose to respond to it. Resurrecting The Duke would do little against the avalanche of Woody Harrelsons, Whoopi Goldbergs, Barbra Streisands and left-over Jane Fonda freaks that engulfs us now. Besides, the spirit of John Wayne, or rather that of the characters that he portrayed over the years, lives on. Just listen to some of the folks who call in to Rush Limbaugh. One last thing about John Wayne. He was an actor, a vendor of make believe. His characters, however, are very real to many of us who feel that their values should be ours and their principles are worth fighting for. We, you and I, are the real action figures as were all the defenders of Khe Sanh. There were as many stories left imprinted in that red clay as there were men who slogged through it. John Wayne, I think, would have been proud to act in and to tell any one of them. Again Ernie, I don't mind the John Wayne analogy at all.

Semper Fi!

Your friend,
'George' Ojars Jurjans
USMC (Ret)

(What the hell! It seems that I've already pissed you off, we might as well be on a first name basis)

P.S. That disclaimer at the top of p.3 is a good touch. I like it. I wonder what brought it about?

ED: It is obvious you are very angry. I feel, however, that most of it is misplaced. I sense that you're very hurt about what happened to you. Why don't you share with us what really happened to YOU in Vietnam. Tell us about all your combat experiences during your multiple tours. That's what our readership is interested in, not your political ramblings.

Dear Readership,

Enjoyed receiving my first copy of your newsletter. Although our plates are full of family, work and committees, it's nice to see that most will take the time to come forward to help each other.

I, too, can recall working up near Khe Sanh FSB as a member of the 11th Engineers (Feb 68-69). My return humanitarian trip back to Vietnam in Jan. 85 was a very positive experience for me. We walked all of those far FSB sites to include Khe Sanh. There seemed to be a stillness when we did our prayer for all who lost their lives at Khe Sanh. The American flag was once again raised during this moment in time. I have included a copy of our prayer that was placed at the Wall before we went back.

Our guide in the south was a former N.V.A. Lt "Lham", who was wounded. Can't tell you how respected the Marines are by our former enemy.

Semper Fi.

Lt. Gene T Spanos (Rosemont Police)
Former Sgt USMC
Charlie Co. 11th Engineers/3rd MAR DIV
Feb 68-69

Dear John (Balanco),

Thanks for the very attractive Christmas greeting. It was certainly an appropriate one to send to linguists! We must have just missed you in Khe Sanh since we left on January 8th of that year.

We continue to get letters from Bru friends in the central highlands, in Southern Laos and occasionally from the area around Khe Sanh. Life has not been easy for them but they continue to adapt and go on.

Last year, we had a visit from two young men who had been children when we lived in a village near the border. They are now living in Laos but continue to make visits up to the Khe Sanh area, so we get news from the area. These men are hoping to come back again this year when the border is open for a major Buddhist festival.

You asked us in your note for a suggestion about how the Khe Sanh Vets could do something for the

continued on page 22

continued from page 21

Bru. Recently, we have had letters from several young people (or their families) who are pursuing tertiary education. This is a brand new thing for the Bru. At the time we were there, we never knew of a single Bru person to get beyond secondary education, and only a few who got that far. We are told that there are now a total of twelve Bru students who are in schools throughout Vietnam, either technical or university, or other institutions. It is very difficult for these young people because their families can scarcely come up with the funds needed for school supplies, let alone food and clothing. We have tried a couple of times to help some of them out in a small way but have not worked out a way to safely get funds to them.

If this is something you think the Khe Sanh Vets would respond to, we will try to work out a channel through one of the development agencies here in Thailand which has regular programs in Vietnam to set up a scholarship fund for these Bru students. We know of a couple of agencies which might be able to do this and can check it out with them if you are interested in pursuing this.

Our current research project here in Northeast Thailand involves several small language communities whose languages are closely related to Bru. We are enjoying getting to know these people and to once again be speaking Bru.

Looking forward to hearing from you again.

Sincerely,

John & Carolyn Miller

February 7, 1994

Dear Khe Sanh Board Members,

To tell you the truth, I was a little concerned that I hadn't received any correspondence from our Khe Sanh Veterans organization since the July Reunion. Well—not to worry, the Winter issue of the newsletter just arrived in the mail and I quickly sent out my dues check.

Now, to the reason for this letter to each of the members of the Board of Directors. I would like to get a running head start on planning for our 1995 Reunion. Lots of questions immediately come to mind:

- Where shall we have it?
- Should we hold the Reunion near a military base (Marine Corps or any service) or should we just look for nearby civilian type entertainment, e.g. a Disneyland type theme park?
- What should the theme of the meeting be?
- How long should the meeting be? I would assume 3-5 days and we should probably hold it over a weekend. For those who will be flying, it will be cheaper when you stay over a Saturday plus it is probably easier to get time off work.
- Not everyone brought their family to the last Reunion so a question arises in my mind—should we continue to have this Reunion open to Veterans and their families or limit it to just the Veterans?
- As far as accommodations are concerned—should we continue to hold the Reunion at a Holiday Inn or facility of that caliber or try for something a little cheaper?

That's just a short list of questions to get your creative juices flowing. As we make decisions, some questions may have already been answered by a previous question.

I see my role as Reunion Chairman as the person who is responsible for keeping things organized. This is a Reunion for the members to cater to the members wishes, but I feel it is incumbent on the Board Members to lay the groundwork and give guidance to the members.

Please review the attached questionnaire and let me have your comments. We could send this to all our members as an inexpensive one page mailer and ask them to send it back to me within 30 days. I will then summarize the results and report back to the Board.

I look forward to hearing from each of you.

Semper Fi

W J O'Connor
61 Tucker Lane
N. Dartmouth, MA 02747
508/ 996-5123

Hello Ernie,

A very short note requesting two copies of the Spring '93 ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** magazine. I found two Marine buddies—one in Texas and the other in Colorado.

Please bill me for the above request. I know they would very much appreciate them.

Respectfully,

Ben Goddard

Hello Skipper,

This letter is in follow-up of our recent telephone conversation regarding MCRD San Diego Museum Historical Society efforts to establish a "Navy Medical Support Pers" exhibit at the Command Museum.

It is requested that you enclose the following information in the next newsletter:

NAVY MEDICAL PERS ASSISTANCE NEEDED

Col. Richard Mickelson, USMC (Ret.), Executive Director of the MCRD Museum Historical Society has requested the assistance of all former and present Navy Medical Pers that have supported Marines to assist in the establishment of a permanent exhibit at MCRD. Needed are photos, Field Medical Bags, Unit 1'2, FMF Medical, Dental, Nurses and Doctors period uniforms and insignia from ALL wars. The Col. has also requested enemy related medical gear and equipment for the display. Here's your chance to clean out that footlocker or sea bag and give it to a good cause. Donations are accepted and needed in your name or in honor of another. All gear, uniforms, photos, donations etc. should be sent to:

Col. Richard Mickelson, USMC (Ret.)
Executive Director
MCRD Museum Historical Society
Building 26
P.O. Box 400085
San Diego
CA. 92140

Donations should be earmarked to Navy Med Support Pers Exhibit and checks made out to MCRD Museum Historical Society or contact member, Former HM2 Jim Donady Bigler on 317-472-7067.

Semper Fi and warm regards,

Jim Donady Bigler
D/1/26

P.S. Ernie, please put the Col. on our mailing list at MCRD. You may also want to send some info to them to place in the Gift Shop for the purpose of new members.

Seeking Marines and others who served with, or were attached to 3/9 in RVN during the periods of 1965-69.

I am trying to locate all survivors of 3/9 for a reference network which eventually will be available for all 3/9 Marines. The purpose of the network is to reunite 3/9 Marines with friends and buddies who served with them and to develop a network with 1/9 and 2/9 for future regimental reunions.

All correspondence will be in *strict* confidence and will not be available to anyone outside our own 3/9 network, and then only to people who agree to have their information passed on to their buddies and friends. I am not asking for, or expecting monetary help. If there are Marines who would like to be involved with this project, please print or type on a 5 x 7 index card the following information:

NAME: First, middle initial, last (nickname)
ADDRESS: Street, city, zip
IN COUNTRY: From Mo/Yr to Mo/Yr
COMPANY SERVED WITH OR ATTACHED UNIT

On card please sign that you agree to be listed in future reference guide.

Send index card to:

Nick Hrones
4952 Graysontown Road
Radford
VA. 24141

For those, like myself, who have stayed hidden for all these years, I ask you to join in reuniting lost friends and buddies and to regain the pride we had for our unit 3/9 and the UNITED STATES MARINE CORP. Please phone 703-633-2968.

Semper Fi.

Nick Hrones
3/9 July 67-June 68

At the convention, Jerry Hudson and I got our heads together (thus=1) and came up with the idea of making a plaque for Col. Lownds. I had the privilege of visiting him at his home in Naples, Fl. and ascertained that he has a den and wall, and a plaque would fit right in.

The artist is the same Phil Hardin who did the bolos and buckles I had on display at the convention. He and I worked out an unique, one-of-a-kind design: inlay on German Silver. Believe me, there is nothing but hand work. He sent the plaque or metal work to me and I then had it mounted on the wood in Roswell, trying to keep the wood simple so as not to distract from the beauty of the artist's handiwork. In effect, it is one big flat belt buckle with a flat brass buckle under it as a presentation plate. Keep in mind that even the best photos do not do it justice.

Earle G Breeding
E/2/26

Lonely Soldier

Surrounded by the enemy, with no place to go.
Fists and rife butts, inflicting much pain.
Reality came quickly, how was I to know?
I stand to lose it all, with nothing to gain.

My family flashes, against the terror and fear.
Mom, Dad and Junior, what will they ever think?
Shirley and the babies, what awful news to hear.
Drastic change can come, in just a minute wink.

Forced marches were routine, they became pure hell.
There was no relief, for my wretched burning feet.
Sores gathered swiftly, they oozed a putrid smell.
Malaria and Dengue Fever, tried to hasten my defeat.

Hemp around my elbows, my arms suffering so dearly.
Isolation and hunger, ravaging my fragile soul.
Hope dwindled rapidly, as monthly turned to yearly.
My life seemed to ebb, so living became my goal.

Migrating from cave to cave, always on the move.
Where was I being herded, only God could know.
Resistance became weaker, nothing left to prove.
Who was I to impress, with some big gallant show?

I still cherish that day, when I finally saw Garcia.
Many months of suffering, but he still had a smile.
Silver and Bronze Stars, he had won them in Korea.
A proud old Sergeant, who'd been in for a while.

It still hurts today when I think of his fate.
Infection and diarrhea had taken their ugly toll.
When medicine finally arrived, it was a week too late.
I buried him with honors, upon a rising knoll.

Rumors came filtering down in late seventy four,
of a large prisoner release, northward in Hanoi.
Keen to sights and sounds, I knew there still was war.
I had given up on trust, the enemy was awfully coy.

Then one day came silence, it was early seventy five.
Celebrations of victory, my captors could not hide.
The stillness made me wonder, did anyone know I was still alive?
Great slaughter was to follow, it was hard to abide.

Death was all around me, the "puppets" were being purged.
They told of our withdrawal, it was very hard to believe.
I had to watch my allies, who one by one were scourged.
Life became a thread, my past was hard to retrieve.

Treatment started to improve, a small consolation.
Wounds began their healing, which brought ample relief.
I pray to my God daily with appreciable anticipation.
Hoping he will reward me for my perennial belief.

The war is obviously over, I have no place to go.
Much has been forgotten, when I dwell on my past.
Ma and Pa could be dead, it hurts to miss them so.
Even provided the chance, I probably wouldn't ask.

Shirley's even fading, where could she be today?
She could not be expected to wait so many years.
My heart has become so hollow, what could I even say?
Visions of the children, oh the anguish and the tears.

When will they come a marching, to free me at last?
I'm tired of propaganda, but maybe they are right.
Perhaps I am a criminal, and suffer for my past.
Thoughts I must avoid, if I continue my plight.

Twenty five years have gone, quickly before my eyes.
How slowly they have passed, since that fateful day.
The sun sets each eve, there is no new surprise.
As a scared little child, I have surely lost my way.

My God is my hope throughout this time of pain.
He's met me many a night to comfort my weary soul.
Some villagers he has sent to lift me up again.
They sneak me Bible verses to make my life seem whole.

Although still held captive, my spirit feels so free.
There is a life hereafter, His medicine is my cure.
Even though man's so evil, God's Spirit comforts me.
I know without a doubt that His love is very pure.

Michael A Harris

You Can Make a Difference

ANNOUNCING THE FORMATION OF

The Art and Humanitarian Fund

Using their contract payments from National Geographic Society for the filming of our Reunion in Washington D.C. as seed money, Ken Pipes, Quilles Jacobs, John Balanco, Jim Morris and Ernie Spencer decided to actively support the objectives of the Khe Sanh organization by establishing an Art and Humanitarian Fund.



"Khe Sanh" by Dennis Smith

By-Laws Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.
Article 1 – Objectives
Section 1 – General

The objectives of the corporation are as follows:

- To promote renewed fellowship of all who lived and served in the area of Khe Sanh
- To promote artistic expression of the Khe Sanh experience



The Art and Humanitarian Fund will financially support Khe Sanh artists as well as our allies at Khe Sanh — the Bru.

Won't you please join us in this worthwhile endeavor?

Those contributing $50 or more will receive Ernie Spencer's independently produced video called "Khe Sanh Reunion," an artistic interpretation of our reunion held in Washington D.C. this past July. Those contributing $75 or more will receive the video and an autographed, first edition, hardcover copy of ***Welcome To Vietnam Macho Man*** by Ernie Spencer. This book is out of print.

The first artistic project we will help fund will be the statue "Khe Sanh" by Dennis Smith (B Co. 1/26). We hope to place this original work of art at Camp Pendelton (ultimately at Khe Sanh.) We need approximately $4,000 to build this statue at Camp Pendelton.

Our first Bru project will be a scholarship fund done in conjunction with our dear friends from Khe Sanh, the Millers (see their letter to John Balanco in this issue.) Those who were at Khe Sanh prior to the siege will recall that the Marines and Special Forces personnel held a fund raiser to build a house for the Millers (they were that highly regarded by us.) Former Special Forces and Khe Sanh member, Robert Shippen, has obtained written permission from the district chief at Khe Sanh (a Bru) for us to legally operate in and around Khe Sanh. Robert and his Special Forces brothers, along with John Balanco and his CAC brothers, are developing plans to provide health care and schooling for the Bru. Currently, Bru children suffer infant mortality rates of 50%.

Make your tax-deductible contributions to the Khe Sanh Veterans ABHF. Send your contributions to Ernie Spencer c/o Khe Sanh Veterans, 458 Holiday Hills Drive, Martinez, CA 94553. All monies will be kept and dispersed by our Khe Sanh Veterans office of the Treasurer.

Dear Assoc. Members,

We've all had times when we've felt life has passed us by or wished we had done things differently. Whilst most of us have fortunately been able to live "normal" lives, some of our members aren't able to have the everyday freedoms we share and are in our prison systems. Right or wrong, they're there and I would hope we all wouldn't "condemn them" or forget them just because their address is a state system and their service is now a prison!

Being a retired police detective, I've had to send a few Vets to prison, but I never forgot that the hands I put in cuffs could have very well been the same hands that dug trenches and filled sand bags at Khe Sanh, or helped with wounded in 1/9. Something happened or didn't happen in their lives that took them out of society again – as was the case when they were in Vietnam. Their present situation doesn't change what they did for their country or the Corps in Vietnam. I hope we don't all forget them.

In the last two years, I've been writing to Richard Payne. He had a change of address some time ago to the Crowley Colorado prison system. Being a retired detective I admit, writing to someone in prison, purchasing mirrors made by him in prison and seeing him not being one to feel sorry for himself, I stay in contact with him regularly. He keeps himself busy working in the library and hobby shop, but as expected the pay is obviously quite limited. Having a simple coffee pot is a prized article and a T.V. is beyond hope.

This vet deserves some consideration when you have a few bucks to donate or purchase a mirror via him. Remember that 'Semper Fi' stands for all Marines – in prison or out. The rewards of friendship shouldn't stop at the prison walls. Drop Rick a letter*, order a mirror or send him a donation to show him that even though we're on the other side of the wall, he's thought of as a Viet Marine first and not just another 'number'.

Richard Payne # 63360
A.V.C.F. Unit # 3
P.O. Box 1000
Crowley
Co. 81034

Semper Fi.

Wally Persoma
H&S/1/9-81's

ED: Wally is a regular contributor to our magazine. I, too, have a special place in my heart for our incarcerated brothers. I loved having "Bad Boys" in Delta Company. I'd be a hypocrite if I turned my back on them just because they continued with their behavior when they rotated home. "There but for the grace of God..." applies to me.

To Whom It May Concern

I learned of your organization through John Finn of Rego Park, N.Y. I had an uncle, LCPL Hensley McFadden "Mac" DILWORTH who was KIA in the province of Da Nang on March 30th, 1967. He was with 1st Platoon, A/1/26. I was wondering whether you know of anybody who might have known him, or served with him. I never knew him very well – I was only three years old when he was killed.

I appreciate your help and thank you for your time.

Semper Fi.

Lewis Costley
3/11
406 N. 38th Place,
Rogers, AR 72756

Skip Coggin
National President
Fleet Marine Force Grunt Corpsmen Assn.

To Whom It May Concern

Our new group called *Fleet Marine Force Grunt Corpsmen* are having our first reunion at Jacksonville, N.C., home town of Marine Corps Base – Camp Lejeune. We are having this reunion April 22-24, 1994. Please put a notice in your next newsletter or publication as soon as possible so that your readers will have time to respond. Additional information is available by calling me:

Skip Coggin
(904) 645-8404

or writing to:

F.M.F. Grunt Corpsmen Assn.
P.O. Box 19676
Jacksonville
Florida 32245-9676

Thank you for your assistance.

Aloha! Captain Spencer,

I have just finished reading your summer '93 issue. I was surprised by the article in 'Memoirs' titled "The Big Guns" by Doug Meredith, 175s USA.

By September '66 I had left 1/5 on Hill 54 and joined 3rd MAF. I was sent south. From September through November a small group of us operated off a small LZ near Quang Ngai and Mo Duc. We had one officer, a USMC Captain along with about 15 grunts. I was the token "Doc." The areas surrounding our position were filled with vari-

ous Marine units on varied operations. Our LZ was about one hundred yards long and about forty yards wide, carved out of the jungle 15 years earlier by the French or even possibly the Japanese. There were definite remnants of aircraft berms along the edge of the jungle clearing. Our perimeter guard were two M-60's and 14 Marines – that's it! Our Western approach was loosely guarded by a unit of ROK's (about a click and a half out). Our Southern perimeter and Eastern approach was our responsibility – the other approach was essentially wide open.

One night, Charlie took out the ROK's with mortars. We called for fire support. Huge guns lit up the night, it was like a thunder and lightning show in the Midwest. The ground shook. I asked the Captain, "What the hell was that?" He replied, "175's, I think?" He didn't know we had them. It really wasn't all that surprising since whenever we called for support, we never knew who was going to be the savior. Usually it was the Phantoms or A-4's, twice it was 'Puff' and once it was the New Jersey.

Twenty-seven years later, the answer presents itself in ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** newsletter. Meredith's 175's were probably the source of retaliation upon the V.C. for their attack on our ROKS. Small war, ain't it? I remember passing the ROK contingent at Binh Son as were moved South to our LZ. We passed them by while they were taking their ease in that little ville. Down the road we lost half our convoy in a big ambush on Route 1. What was left of us continued on to our objective.

Two or three days after the ROKS were taken out on the Western perimeter, we found an ARVN garrison completely destroyed—no-one left alive. The bodies were still lying about where they had died. The garrison was still smoldering. Bunkers were blown, a guard tower lay on its side, it's wooden pillars still burning. Many of the ARVN bodies indicated throats cut rather than gunshot or shrapnel wounds. The four of us had walked into a nightmare that had just occurred. We made a hasty didi mau back to our little LZ knowing full well that the force that did this was nearby – and much larger than us.

Following the discovery of the ARVN slaughter, we assumed that we were next. First the ROKS, then the ARVN, then 15 Marines and one scared Corpsman. It never came. We continued to get sniper fire but never had to deal with being overrun.

The force that took our ROKS and then the ARVN must have run into some of the Marine units operating in the area. They had more to deal with than us. We were inconsequential. During those months, I flew an average of 30 or more medevacs out of that LZ per month. The surrounding units were caught up in some heavy shit. I lost track of the Marine KIA's and didn't bother keeping a tally of the WIA's.

Some strange looking Marines showed up one day in their own little Cessna, painted white with black lettering. By strange I mean, how many middle-aged LT's do you see? They took one of the old berms that had caved in and filled it with red mud and water and used it to dump V.C. bodies. They concertina-ed off a small area and improvised an ad hoc screening and ITT for the busloads of prisoners being brought in.

There is much more to this memory, but I just wanted to let you know that the article on the Doggie 175's brought back another hazy memory and dropped another missing piece into the puzzle.

Next time, I'll tell you about the night on the LZ when a screaming spider monkey dragging two hysterical tethered chickens ran across the Captain in the dark while he was sleeping. He came out of sleep blazing away with his .45 and in response, the 60's opened up on the treeline. In the midst of death and destruction there is, incongruously, comic relief.

Semper Fi.

Ron "Doc" Ferrell
1/5 & 3rd MAF

P.S. Congratulations on your 1/26 Reunion. I have decided to attend mine. It is for 1/5 in Houston August 4-8 '93. I have research to do. Aloha!

Dear Mr Spencer,

I am writing to ask if you would please run a request for me in your publication. I am trying to locate anyone who served with and knew the following person:

Cpl. Juan N Sedillo ("Johnny")
Radio Operator
Service No: 2269777
Birth Date: January 30, 1948
Death Date: April 8, 1968 (KIA – Khe Sanh)

1st Battalion, 9th Marines
3rd Marine Division
H & S Co.

Johnny was my fiance at the time. I would very much like to hear from men who served with him and remember him.

Also, I have really appreciated your book, *Welcome To Vietnam, Macho Man,* which I discovered only recently. Since Johnny wrote very little to me about the war, your book is valuable to me for insight into what his experiences in Vietnam were probably like.

Thank you for your assistance.

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continued from page 27

Barbara E Early
8422 Richmond Hwy., # 74
Alexandria, VA 22309.

Dear Ernie,

Finally got my reprints back and have enclosed them along with a letter from Dr Albert Castel – don't know if you are into civil war history or not but his book has received excellent reviews and is now in the bookstores.

I've contacted all of the major newspapers in the area and sent them the press release. All were very receptive to the idea of publishing the information. Like you said, this information needs to be widely disseminated to reach a majority of those who might be interested. I've also sent copies to the Houston and San Antonio newspapers and will send out more.

I apologize for the lack of quality with regard to the pictures. They are a product of the hot, humid, dusty environment we all had to endure at the time. Have a great Veterans Day!

Semper Fi,

Dave Rogers
W/1/13

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Dear David,

Your endowment of a scholarship for nursing at Fairmont State in the name of your mother is a splendid idea that has now been turned into a splendid deed. Nothing could have been more appropriate and I would like to think that Madge knows of what you have done and approves – although, being her, she probably feels somewhat embarrassed (if angels feel embarrassment!)

I read with great interest your letter to Don Hossack and think you are doing a fine thing in compiling a book of first-hand accounts of the "Hill Fights" around Khe Sanh. (Incidentally, "Hill Fights" makes a good title). What you and your fellow veterans are doing along this line reminds me of what Civil War veterans did once a certain amount of time had passed after the war and they began to reach a certain age. Many of them did not even like to think, much less talk or write about their war experiences right after the war and for years beyond that. Then, with the passage of time and increased age, they began to feel that they had seen and experienced things that should be recorded and preserved. In many cases, if not most, they were not thinking about future historians, but I can guarantee the truth of this: a lot of historians, including this one, are very indebted and grateful to them for what they did.



Sgt. Goodrich, 2nd Lt. John Eager, 2nd Lt. Jim Brown, and 1st Lt. Dave Rogers

I doubt if you need concern yourself with copyrights, etc. as regards *Vietnam* magazine. First of all, the article I submitted is an abridgement of your account, and chances are you would want to publish the full version. Second, the article has to be accepted and published first – and so far, I've heard nothing from the magazine. This irritates me a great deal and as soon as I return from the trip to Kansas I am taking next week, if there is still no word I shall send a query to the magazine. By that time, one of its sister magazines, *Civil War Times Illustrated,* will be out with a long excerpt from my Atlanta Campaign book in it, and I'll tell the Editor of *Vietnam* that it is rather strange that at the same time I'm being featured in one of his company's magazines, I cannot even get the courtesy of an acknowledgment or rejection from his magazine.

As you probably know, I went to Fairmont early in September and spent a very enjoyable and profitable day with Mike doing research on the divorce case of Stonewall Jackson's sister. As I told Mike last night when he called, I plan to get to work on that article as soon as I complete another article and the trip to Kansas.

Mike called to inform me that the copy of my *Atlanta Campaign* book I sent him arrived safely. It is for all the Rogers family, and Mike says he will pass it on to John before reading it himself; so if you want to read it – you will have to wait your turn.

As soon as I know the situation with *Vietnam* magazine, I'll inform you.

Sincerely,

Albert Caster

On October 30, Bill Jayne, representing the association, met retired North Vietnamese General Nguyen Huy Phan in Washington D.C. General Phan is a medical doctor who is now recognized as a leading plastic surgeon in Vietnam. He was in Washington meeting with government officials because he is also the leader of an organization called the Vietnamese-American Association.

Bill discussed the possibility of a Khe Sanh veterans trip to Vietnam, our interest in helping the Bru people who live near Khe Sanh and meeting with North Vietnamese soldiers who faced us on the battlefield in 1967-68. General Phan was supportive of our wishes to make such a trip.

Washington sources familiar with travel to Vietnam believe such a trip is feasible. They recommend a trip of about two weeks duration that would include stops in Saigon, Da Nang, Hue, Dong Ha and Hanoi, as well as a side trip to Khe Sanh. Since much of the area around Khe Sanh is off limits because of unexploded ordnance, the Khe Sanh excursion would probably be staged as day trips from Dong Ha. Experts also think we should ask to meet with former South Vietnamese allies who fought with us, such as members of the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion.

Such a trip should probably be limited to approximately 15 Americans: eight or ten would most likely be the optimum number of participants. The cost would be $3,500 to $4,000 each, including approximately $1,700 in airfare. Individuals should also plan to bring ample spending money for incidentals ranging all the way from laundry to possible donations to the Bru.

An interpreter would be provided. The tour costs would also cover all transportation, lodging and food.

Bill Jayne
B 1/26

I joined the Marine Reserves in July 1966 at El Paso, Texas. After my six months active duty, I stayed with the 4th 8" Howitzer Battery until I went active for three years in August 1967. After going active, I was sent back through artillery school at Camp Pendleton to become an instructor. While I was at Schools Battalion, an opening came up for a PFC at Marine Barracks, Subic Bay, Philippines. I signed up for that opening and did not know that the orders I was given were for WesPac Ground Forces. I couldn't understand the orders anyway, I just knew I was to report to Staging Bn after leave. I learned at Staging that I was going to Nam.

I got to Vietnam Nov. 24, 1967, and was assigned to Hq Battery, First Bn, Eleventh Marines in the FDC section. I spent my entire tour with Hq 1/11 except for a two week stint with Whiskey 1/11.

When I was with 1/11, we were used as direct support for 1st Marines and went on their operations. The places we went to are as follows: Quang Tri, Camp Evans, Phu Bai and Hue City during Tet, Ca Lu during Operation Pegasus, Khe Sanh (April 24 until July 4), Ca Lu again, Qua Viet, then ended up south of Da Nang where we were OPCON to Eleventh Marines for the first time in eleven months. One interesting note; when we were at Khe Sanh, we had a total of 13 firing batteries attached to us.

I got out of the Marines in 1970 and after a year of college I joined the New Mexico State Police and have been with them for 21 years, presently holding the rank of Sergeant.

Ron Taylor
1/11

ED: Shame on you Ron! Didn't you know the old saying: Never volunteer for anything?

WILD WEST

Khe Sanh Feb. '68: The fog had just lifted, the incoming had just started. It was relatively light, intermittent and generally scattered throughout the Fire Base. An out of breath runner slid into the bunker to inform me that Major Matt Caulfield wanted me and 1st Sgt Gene Chism (M-Co.) to report to his S-3 bunker for a briefing. We waited for a lull in the incoming then started through the trenchlines toward the S-3 shop when we spotted two so-called repatriated North Vietnamese sons-a-bitches crouched down near the perimeter doing something that didn't appear normal. "Chism, what the fuck are those two assholes doing? Whatever it is, it don't look right – let's check it out."

We both drew our .45's, approached from the rear and laid them alongside their ear. They had their sleeves rolled up and had drawn on their arms the perimeter line to include weapons placement. We knew our immediate thoughts would not be justified under the UCMJ so reluctantly we turned them over to the S-3 who escorted them to the S-2 section for whatever.

That's the last we heard of the incident. Sure would like to know what the final disposition was! Anybody from the "2" shop recall?

Dick Peloquin
I/3/26

I find that my relationship with Khe Sanh is probably a bit strange when compared to most of your other members. I served in/around and over Khe Sanh in three different capacities. First as a Marine, then the Army and then as a civilian.

I started in the Marine Corps as a 0331, but I was able to get into a helicopter unit. I was trained as an Aviation Electronics Tech (Radio-Nav) but after several months in an operating squadron, I cross-trained as a helicopter mech (crew-chief). After a six month stay at Gutmo (Cuba) and then a Veques Cruise, I returned on my 2nd Veques when Dom Rep exploded. Upon returning home, I headed for West Pack.

I spent some time in HMM-263 then joined HMM-262 ("Bill's Bastards") when they came in-country. We were down at Ky Ha for 5 months then moved to Marble Mountain. While at Marble Mountain, we kept four aircraft up at Khe Sanh, usually flying FOB missions. Being up at Khe Sanh was the best part as we were away from a lot of the BS and our time was spent doing the job we were trained for. After 7 months, HMM-262 went back to Oki to have our A model CH-46s beefed up and turned into CH-46Ds. A few of us extended and brought the first D models back in-country.

Tet '68 brought out the heaviest flying and toughest missions we had experienced. The hours were long and the missions were, to say the least, "HOT." I left Nam in April '68 after 19 months. The only reason I left Nam (and HMM-262) was because I received an inter-service transfer into the Army. In April '67 I received the Distinguished Flying Cross while serving as a crew-chief (for the Commanding Officer of HMM-262, "Wild" Bill Shadrick, BGEN Rtd). Because this was the first DFC awarded to an enlisted Marine since WWII, LTGEN Krulak came to Vietnam to present it to me. During the awards ceremony, the General asked if I was going to stay in the Marine Corps. Although I had been a Sgt (E-5) for a year, my goal was to become an aviator. He explained that I only had two years of college and even though I had a FAA Commercial Pilots License, the Marine Corps wasn't going to promote any more "Flying Peons" (enlisted pilots) , though we had one in our unit (an old E-8). The General arranged for me to be transferred into the Army and their Warrant Officer flight program. I transferred into the Army—on Oki—and was sent back to the States to go through helicopter flight school, but as usual, something went wrong with the paperwork and I was sent back to Nam, where I served as an 11B (grunt) for two months before they 'corrected the problem' and sent me to flight school.

Upon completing flight school, I returned to Vietnam as an Army aviator. I reported in at Dong Ha, flying Aero-Scouts and artillery spotting for the 108th ARTY Group. I spent from May '69 to Jan '70 flying out of Dong Ha. Many missions were down QL 9 heading for Khe Sanh, although normally, the furthest we were able to get was just west of Vandy. I also spent many an hour flying low level along the DMZ, especially within Leatherneck Square. I had several crew-chiefs (and aero-observers) get wounded while on these missions.

In January, I went to fly Cobras for C Battery 4th/77th ARA (Aerial Rocket Artillery), 101st ABN Division, based out of Camp Evans. The reason I extended to this specific unit was that the GRIFFINS (C Battery's call sign) were primarily the Cobra unit flying for MAC-V-SOGs CCN missions out of Quang Tri. I flew CCN missions for the Griffins for 13 months until Feb '71. MAC-V-SOGs missions were cross border into Laos and North Vietnam.

I had flown as a crew-chief for MAC-V-SOG out of the FOBs at Dong Ha and, of course, Khe Sanh. The MAC-V-SOGs operations prior to the summer of '68 were known as Shining Brass—for the Laotian operations. The missions into the northwest section of South Vietnam were called Nickle Steel once they crossed over into North Vietnam (just the south west corner of N. Vietnam). After a major changeover in '68, the Nickle Steel and Shining Brass operations were combined into an operation called Prairie Fire. As a Marine, I flew Nickle Steel and Shining Brass operations (inserts and extractions), then with the Army I flew Cobras on Prairie Fire missions. After checking my flight records, I see that I flew at least 426 hours (as a Marine crew-chief) and 1341 hours as a Cobra pilot flying these classified missions.

In February '71 I was transferred back to an Aero-Scout unit for the large push into Laos—called Operation LOM SOM 719. I flew with C Troop, 2nd/17th CAV, of the 101st ABN DIV. I flew in the Scout Platoon until June '71 when I was wounded (my 3rd Purple Heart). For at least three months I was back flying out of Khe Sanh again—and I loved it. I remember a reporter interviewing me (because I had been at Khe Sanh during the siege and hill battles) and he asked me for my feelings about Khe Sanh. Having lost many friends in the hills and air around the Khe Sanh airstrip, including the best man at my wedding—Jimmy Akstin, Khe Sanh evokes strong feelings in me. I told the reporter that although we were there—we were only there as guests of the NVA, for if they could withstand the B-52 bombing, they could sure make life very difficult for us there. An Army Captain (PIO) who was with the reporter tried to cut me off and I quickly reminded him that to the best of my knowledge, at that present time NO-ONE had more time at Khe Sanh than I (meaning in the area at the time.)

While flying for the CONDORS (C Troop 2nd/17th CAV) I was once again living, eating, refueling and breathing the Khe Sanh air. I loved it. I was home in an area I knew and respected, although flying scouts into Laos was

the roughest flying I've ever done. Not a flight went by when we didn't get blasted/took hits, with more wounded than we wanted. LOM SOM will go down in the annals of helicopter operations as one of the toughest battles ever fought. Not only was the amount of enemy anti-aircraft fire accurate, it was the most intense that helicopter pilots had ever seen. The losses were staggering. Every helicopter unit had had its bad days, but during LOM SOM 719, all who flew day after day had nothing but bad days. For many, it was the first time they had flown in the air against 23mm/37mm and larger. It was the first time they had experienced flying in a formation when one—or two—of their flight would be hit by air bursts. This was like what their fathers had flown into over Germany during WWII. The acts of bravery were many and I am sure that very few of them were reported. You just didn't have time—you flew your ass off all day and passed out from sheer exhaustion at night. In 6 years of total combat—LOM SOM 719 was the worst.

Anyway, after getting discharged and after a stay at Womack Army Hospital (Ft Bragg NC), I went to work for Air America—flying back where I was at home—Northern South Vietnam, Laos and over Khe Sanh. There were times when I was tempted to do a low level fly-by of the air field, and once when I took a few extra rounds, I made it back to the Southeast and landed at Khe Sanh where my mechanic quickly patched us up and we proceeded back to Hue. I ended up spending 22 months with Air America.

Khe Sanh is interwoven in my life. I watched the lush, green valley slowly get scarred and pock-marked with bomb craters over the years, with two rapid changes: (1) Fall '67-Spring '68 and (2) Feb-Apr '71. During these two periods the valley, and especially the area around the air field, was able to start it's re-growth back to its green fields. But the push into Laos with LOM SOM 719 did 5 times the amount of damage that had happened when the Marines were there. Also, with the moving of the Yards to Mai Loc (just SWS of Camp JJ Carroll), the plantations and village disappeared and the wild green vegetation took over—even the red roads were quickly erased by the fast growing vegetation.

After I returned as a civilian, I would fly over the area to see how it was doing, though at times this proved to be hazardous, with the NVA moving into the area and no US/ARVN presence. Although my flights with AA were (and still are) classified, I do know that we had operatives working on the ground to the west of Khe Sanh—and from what I was told (in briefings), the area was crawling with NVA.

A little about me. I served in combat with VMO-2, HMM-263, HMM-262, 1stBN/6th INF 198th LIB, HHB (AVN Section) 108th Artillery Group, C Battery 4th/77th ARA 101st ABN DIV, C Troop 2nd/17th CAV 101st ABN DIV and Air America. I've got over 89 months overseas—with at least 68 months in Southeast Asia. I served as a crew-chief/door gunner on the following aircraft: H-34D, UH-1E, CH-46A and CH-46D. I've been a pilot/aircraft commander of the following aircraft: OH-6A, OH-23G, OH-58A, UH-1 C/D/H, AH-1G and Bell 204 (civilian helo used in Nam). All these listed aircraft were flown/crewed by me in combat. I ended up with many awards; from the United States, South Vietnam and yes, even one from the Laotian government! I have two children still in Vietnam (Da Nang area). I have two children Stateside along with two grandchildren. I have three stepchildren (one of whom served in the Navy during Desert Storm.) As you can tell, I am currently serving time in a California State Prison for killing the man who raped my stepdaughter.

I, along with a good friend, Mr Ernie Payne, started Veterans About Face several years ago to help our fellow veterans who have not fared so well since the Vietnam War. Though some of these include those incarcerated, we also have an active program for the men at the PTSD section of the VA Hospital at Menlo Park. We've also been able to help some homeless vets. Although we are not a large organization, we have been lucky enough to have very dedicated people and we don't have the normal politics that are found in groups such as ours.

I know a lot of Khe Sanh vets—both Army and Marine (and a few civilians as well.) I happen to be a member of several other organizations that include Khe Sanh Veterans, such as Special Operations Assn, Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn., Vietnam Combat Pilots Assn., Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Assn., Association of Air America, etc., and I will start making an appeal to these groups to pass the word about the Khe Sanh Assn.

Dau tranh

J 'Sneaky' White
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DALLAS TIMES HERALD
Tuesday, Nov. 27, 1984

by Maggie Kennedy

Dear Dallas Columnist,

You'll never convince Jennifer Young and Gilbert Wall of Dallas or Bruce Jones of La Crosse, Wis., that it's not a very small world.

Jennifer Young worked for the Red Cross in Vietnam in 1968 and '69. Like thousands of other Vietnam veterans from across the country, she donned her old uniform and went to Washington D.C. earlier this month for the dedica-

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tion of the new "Three Fighting Men" statue at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the long granite wall inscribed with the names of those who died in the Vietnam War.

"I stayed one day beyond that intense, emotional weekend," says Young, now a Vice President at InterFirst Bank. "Among the myriad flags, wreaths, letters, flowers and personal mementos placed all along the base of the wall, I noticed a note on colored paper which said: 'Gilbert Wall, F.O. 1st Bn. 26th Marines, Khe Sanh, contact Bruce Jones "T-Bone", in La Crosse, Wis.' There was an address and a phone number too.

"Obviously, it was written by a vet trying to connect with a long-lost buddy and placed at the bottom of a panel of some significance to them both," Young said. "I remembered that 12 years ago, I had interviewed and hired a Gilbert Wall when I worked at Mobil Oil in Dallas. On a whim, I copied the information. My first day back in Dallas I called the Mobil switchboard. Gilbert Wall still worked for Mobil. When I got him on the phone I said, 'Are you the Gilbert Wall who was a Forward Observer at Khe Sanh, 1st Battalion 26th Marines?' He said yes. Then I asked if he had attended the salute in Washington over the weekend. He said no. Then I said, 'Gilbert, T-Bone is looking for you.'

"Gilbert called T-Bone and they talked for two hours," Young continued, "and the note on the wall was taped to the list of 28 men Gilbert served with who were lost in a fire fight near Khe Sanh. Gilbert was one of only two men who survived the fight."

Jennifer Young and Gilbert Wall met for lunch after her phone call and the two talked about their experiences in Vietnam. Young was then a recent graduate of Purdue who wanted some adventure in her life before settling down to a career. In Vietnam, she was a Red Cross recreational specialist who flew by helicopter to secured landing zones and fire bases on the forward front to lead soldiers in playing game shows similar to those on television.

Young called Gilbert Wall "a bona fide hero."

Now a 40 year old accountant with Mobil, Wall lives in Irving and teaches boxing to kids in Oak Cliff. A Blackfoot Indian, he grew up on the reservation bordering Glacier National Park in Montana. He voluntarily joined the Marines in 1968 because, he said, he wanted to go to Vietnam. He spent 26 months there, was shot four times and has a Bronze Star for his efforts to save an officer during a fire fight at Khe Sanh. He also volunteered to be a Forward Observer, a job few soldiers sought due to its short life expectancy.

Bruce "T-Bone" Jones, a Marine radio man, was his best buddy in Vietnam.

"We arrived in Vietnam about the same time, served together for 13 months, got shot together and then lost track of each other when we came home," Wall said. "The last time I saw him was March 8, 1968. When we talked a few weeks ago, he told me he'd been trying to find me for years. He kept writing to the reservation in Montana but the letters never got to me or my family. He had no idea I'd moved to Texas."

Finding each other after all these years was a shock, Wall said. "Jennifer finding that note on the Wall was a one-in-a-million chance."

Now Jones and Wall are planning a joyous reunion. "T-Bone may come to Dallas in January or February on business," Wall said. "If that doesn't work out, we're going to meet in Las Vegas."

A MOTHER WANTS TO KNOW

We have received notice from Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, In Touch program, that the mother of Cpl. Robert Franklin Owens is seeking contact with anyone who knew her son. Robert was with Delta Co. 1st Bn. 9th Mar. when he was KIA at Khe Sanh on April 16, 1968. Robert was a fire team leader with 1st Plt. If anyone out there knew Robert, please contact Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, 2030 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 412, Arlington, VA. 22201, tel: 703/525-1107.

FROM DEEP WITHIN THE HEART

We've been together a long time now.
I know you so well,
and yet there's so much about you I don't understand.
Sometimes when I reach out you withdraw.
When I ask you to tell me about it you can't;
your silence weighs deeply upon my heart.
When I try to understand you push me away.
How can I make you see I really want to help?
Sometimes I just don't know how;
I won't give up;
I'll keep on trying.
Just remember,
the strength to go on comes from deep within the heart.

Janet M Parker

Dear Ernie,

I have been trying to sit down and write ever since I got out of the Topeka V.A. in Oct but I have had nothing but family problems. My Dad spent all of Nov. in the Leavenworth V.A. and I have had a hard time getting my own life on some kind of track. I still go every Friday for out-patient group and one-on-one.

I guess I missed out on all of the issues of ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** and hope I can get any that have come out since our Reunion. I hope I can get back on the mailing list as I really miss my mag. I will be sending my dues as soon as I get my next workers' compensation check. I don't know when I wrote to you last, so I will be sending some names that I found in the book of Topeka P.T.S.D. Unit Grads from or around Khe Sanh.

I feel I found something at our Reunion that I have been missing since my return from Vietnam. I found compassion and FRIENDSHIP, and people whom I can relate with. Although I may never find the guys from B-Recon with whom I identify and call my Brothers, I, with another SeaBee, did find some Brothers from Recon and hope we will see each other again. I also found new friends from Khe Sanh and some women who really care about their Vet husbands and the rest of us also.

Well Ernie, it's now January '94 and I am doing my best not to bunker up as I have in past years. This is my nightmare season—it usually lasts for three or more months, so I have been told not to isolate myself and work on being with people. I really don't get along with people at this time of year; actually, it starts before Christmas. I really hate the holidays—I hate being around large groups of people. I am working on this, but so far no positive results.

I am sure you have tons of mail to sift through from other Vets so I'll close this letter and get it mailed. I want to wish you, your family, and if you print this—all my Brothers out there the best for the coming year. GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

Your Brother

Lewis Sam Messer II
C.B.M.U. 301 ('67/'68)

Dear Friend,

It was so good to hear your voice the other night. It gives me tremendous strength just knowing I have such special friends.

As you know, I chose to seek help within the Church. That was a tremendous step for me. (My Dog Tags from Nam are stamped "No Pref.") I have fought this for years. Guess what? I lost!

Yesterday in Church, the theme was, of course, to ask for "Thanksgiving". How true. I have such a beautiful, healthy family, a new found faith in the Lord and I have something most people never find in life. I have the most special friends in the world. It is such a comfort to know you are there. You must also be assured I am OK and I will always be here for you—anytime.

I have taken your advice and backed off—just a little. I can never quit. I have mailed the tape to Tom Eichler to take to the Penns on Saturday after Thanksgiving. I am going to spend my four days making Molly a cedar chest I had promised months ago and just hang out with Maxine around the house. The last two weeks kind of wore her out too.

Please tell Pat I send my love and I had a wonderful time at your house.

Your friend,

Mike O'Hara
B/1/26

Dear Mr Maves,

I have had correspondence with Brother Ray Stubbe and he was kind enough to send me a couple of back issues.

Your magazine is more than just a publication, it is a living part of our past and a thing we should never forget. Our experiences at Khe Sanh are unique to the Warriors who served there in the 'Hill Fights' of April and May 67 (my time) and the Siege in 68.

I will be discharged from the Miami V.A. Hospital by the time this letter reaches you. I have just completed a three month in-patient program for PTSD. We can never forget but we can learn to cope.

Respectfully,

Richard L Menard Jr
3/9

SOUL SURVIVAL

by Sandra Hill
London

As a 19-year-old in 1938, my father joined the RAF Regiment, an outfit he was to stay with for 13 years. During World War II, the Regiment was assigned to artillery defence of British airfields, and it wasn't until the latter part of 1942 that the Regiment received orders to ship out to North Africa.



Cpl. Len Hill RAF

In mid-December 1942, they set sail on the merchant vessel *"Strathallan"*, the Flagship of a huge 50 ship convoy. Loaded with military stores and 5,000 military personnel, the *"Strathallan"* also carried a crew of 431 and a compliment of 248 Queen Alexandra Nurses. Four days before Christmas, on the 21st, the convoy was steaming through a beautifully moonlit Mediterranean night. My father had gone up on deck sometime before midnight when the tranquility was brutally shattered by two huge explosions which virtually lifted the ship out of the water. Two torpedoes from an Italian submarine tore into the underside of the ship causing extensive damage, and as other destroyers in the convoy wheeled around to hunt down the sub, other ships steamed to the assistance of the crippled *"Strathallan."* In a desperate attempt to keep the ship afloat, within minutes of the attack the order was given to seal the lower decks. This effectively sealed the fate of thousands of military personnel still trapped below deck, including most of the nurses, the majority of whom had been asleep below deck at the time of the attack. Another ship took the *"Strathallan"* under tow but at 4 a.m. on the 22nd, the order to abandon ship was given. Those fortunate enough to have survived the maelstrom below deck clambered over the side into life rafts and shortly after, they watched the ship slide beneath the waves, consigning the majority of its human cargo to a watery grave. The loss of life was immense. In the wake of the attack, wartime censorship imposed by Winston Churchill dictated that the tragedy went virtually unreported, so as not to give the enemy a propaganda victory. "Official" losses were reported as 2 ships engineers, 4 crew and a small number of passengers (the magical numbers game was in play even way back then—"REMFs" playing God with the stroke of a pen). During the course of the ship's evacuation, my father, who couldn't swim, almost drowned. He recalls floundering in the freezing water before sinking beneath the surface and only vaguely recollects someone reaching down, grabbing him by the hair and hauling him back up and into a life raft. The "Strathallan" incident was the one experience of the war which haunted my father more than any other.

My interest in war history started at a very young age, having been virtually weaned on war stories. One of my earliest and most enduring recollections is listening captivated as my father recounted tales of his wartime experiences to visiting friends and relatives. Whilst being too young to comprehend the implication of his narrative, I knew he must have been describing *something* exciting the more animated he got. My father never talked to me directly about his experiences, I only learned about them as an observer. As his stories unfolded, I would turn my inquisitive gaze to his impromptu audience and see the resigned look in their eyes, or catch an exchanged jaded glance pass between them. They'd see me watching them but paid no heed, little realizing that despite my tender years, I'd sussed them. I remember feeling indignant about that—or whatever passed for indignation at such a young age.

In those early days, I remember my elder sister being the apex around which everything revolved; everyone's favourite (first born's are always special aren't they), and I felt pretty much left on the sidelines. So I turned to my father. I recall trailing around in his wake wanting some of the attention my sister was getting, but he was an emotionally distant man who had difficulty displaying emotion of any kind, and I was forever kept at arms length. Most of my young friends' fathers' hadn't been old enough to serve during World War II but my father, being 10 years their senior, did see action, and when I compared my friends' relationships with their fathers' to my experience, as young as I was, I knew something wasn't right. At around the same time, my parents were going through a very rocky patch and they were always arguing. My mother constantly moaned at my father for always recounting his wartime experiences whenever we had visitors—she wanted him to leave it in the past, and that was guaranteed to be the ignition switch for more arguments. Consequently, because I inclined more toward my father and was content to listen avidly to his wartime reminisces, my mother used me as a kind of 'whipping-boy' to get at him.

During those early years, my father was more like an observer than a participant in my life and I don't recall any respite from my mother's sniping—she didn't miss a shot to get at him via me. It was like being piggy in the middle, with no support from either side. In the end, I think it got to be a habit she just couldn't break. After a couple of years of this, things eventually came to a head when my grandparents had a huge showdown with my parents because I

was threatening to run away—I was convinced they didn't want me. I was ten years old at the time. It culminated in my grandparents taking over my upbringing. Whilst I continued to live at home during the week, weekends and school holidays were spent with my grandparents. With them, I got what I couldn't get at home—attention, affection and peace. For my father's part, he buried himself in his great passion of photography. He was sufficiently proficient to be asked to officiate at friends' weddings as the official photographer on a number of occasions. He used to 'escape' into his studio-cum-darkroom at home where he practised his art of portrait photography—using us kids as 'subjects'. We were required to sit for prolonged periods as he set and reset camera angles and lighting, and it got to the stage where I developed such a loathing for the camera that to this day, my automatic reaction is to turn away when faced with one.

Things with my parents never improved, and the beginning of the end came at age 15 (the year of the Siege), when I got a place in college which I was only able to take up through the support of my grandparents. The two years that followed were a personal struggle, during which time things got pretty crazy. With the advent of the psychedelic 70's, I found the ultimate escape from all the trauma going on around me and I drifted off into stoned oblivion. I used to go home some nights totally spaced out and my mother never even noticed. My father did—although I suspect he thought it was booze. He may have kept a low profile but he never missed much. He was a watcher. Shortly after finishing college and starting work, I admitted defeat and threw in the towel. After yet another major confrontation, I went out and didn't go back. At 17 years old I left with my sanity but very little else.

Looking back with hindsight, and by studying war and its effects on its participants, I've learned enough to realise that my father's recollections of his wartime experiences were his therapy. He wasn't blind to the reticence of his sometimes reluctant audience—he kept on going because he needed to—confession being good for the soul. In the absence of Reunions or support groups, which the Brits have never been hot on, his only outlet was to those around him. When that became a problem for my mother, he just withdrew into himself, taking his memories with him. He always gave the impression of being restless, of not being satisfied with his lot, but he never did anything about it. To a great extent, war vets need their own kind. Only those who have shared the war experience can truly appreciate what lies behind the words and memories, and the need to share those memories. A bonding of kindred spirits. When I see what American vets get out of their Reunions and support groups I really feel for my father. He's never had that. He stopped sharing his experiences when he thought people didn't care enough to hear them anymore. There was nobody to say, "Hey! I know where you're coming from—I was there too" or, "Do you remember..."

My father's war experience lasted just over 4 years, at the end of which he came home to a grateful nation and a heroes welcome. In comparison, the Vietnam war rolled on and on, year after year. It was a "hit and run" type of war, where the enemy rarely stood and fought. You had to go in after them, got ambushed, booby-trapped, maimed in body or soul, or both, pulverized with artillery, and for those fortunate enough to make it back to the world, then faced the condemnation of their fellow citizens. That fact alone is almost as appalling as the war itself. When it comes to war, it doesn't all end with the cessation of hostilities or a tour of duty. The small print on the contract says, "We've got you for life".

As one whose outlook on life is that of fatalist, I firmly believe that destiny guides one and all. Those who returned from the war were pre-destined to do so. Those who didn't went on to fulfill their destiny elsewhere. When all is said and done, most war veterans possess restless souls desiring only to find the respect and peace of mind which so often eludes them. Most, unfortunately, have to settle for considerably less. Despite my father's shortcomings in the participation of my upbringing, I've always held him in high regard. In an oblique way, I wouldn't have developed such an interest in war history if it hadn't been for him. Throughout my life he's been like a shadow in the background, yet I've turned out pretty much like him. I've inherited his disregard for life's trivialities; his tendency to stand back and observe; his restless spirit—which is an underlying factor in my life, and of course, an avid interest in war history. I often wonder how different my early life might have been if he'd had support groups the way you guys do. I wonder...

I was watching the video "Dear America" recently, based on the book of letters men and women in Nam sent home to their families. There's a fair sized section on Khe Sanh and the Siege, and it featured a photo of Don Jacques and read out one of his last letters home before his patrol was ambushed and wiped out. It's really something—it's the third time I've watched that video and I've only just made the connection that he was the subject of the "Doomed Patrol" in "Welcome To Vietnam, Macho Man". You hear all these young guy's letters home, reassuring their families they're going to make it; so full of hope—then next day they're gone forever.

The final letter to be read out is one left by a mother at the Wall addressed to her long lost son, in which she told him she was visiting the Wall because she needed to see and touch his name once again, and that alongside his name on the Wall was her heart—which had been broken since he'd lost his life all those years ago in Vietnam. She

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concluded by saying that she would rather have had him for the 21 years of his life, together with all the pain she'd endured since losing him, than never to have known him at all. It's such a heart-rending letter it just demolishes me every time I hear it.

I wonder what people would have done if there'd been nowhere to channel their grief—if there'd been no Wall.

RAGING MEMORY

by Patrick Fitch
B/1/26

Khe Sanh was 59 minutes of abject tedium punctuated by 60 seconds of terror. Film is the whore of terror but a bitch that reviles truth. She genuflects to trauma, disdains the monotonous 59, hyperventilates with the adrenaline of the clash. The truth is, however, sometimes vividly mundane, humorous and unfit for the voracious small screen frothing for more blood. "Give us the 60 seconds!"

No, I won't. What you may have is a segment of the 59, some of the glue that molded the Brotherhood for its final minute. Before the 77 days, we were still Marines, patriots and citizens. Our identity did not begin January 21 at 0535. That was only the opening moment of our 60 seconds. But we were there before then—and so was Tom Meade.

Tom had mesmeric eyes. His "black Irish" features and quick wit were gifts denied an entire generation of young American peers. He was a principled man who truly believed in God and country without affectation. It was my deep pleasure to have known him. Like all deaths, I try not to dwell on the end. He was gregarious and cards were one of our few diversions.

Long before that January, "Saint Thomas" would convene the semi-regular "convocations" in the Delta Company S-1 tent. We would gather around the altar of adolescent greed and play poker. That silly "script" which replaced greenbacks in-country was almost too hideous to handle. It had a shale red tint, akin to bad cabernet. Throwing it away in a poker game seemed a logical pursuit in a place devoid of logic.

My last game with the S-1 troops who worked with Tom was replete with booze. I have no idea how it appeared. The Air Force would procure a "fifth" for any Marine at Khe Sanh for the beneficent sum of only $25. *(ED: $25 was cheap—some paid $100.)* To this day, you Airdales are still pricks. Lownds should have shitcanned your asses sooner. Anyhow...the game was on at Delta Company and there was enough of something that looked like Jack Daniels to make every one of us happy. As I recall, there were always about eight people in the game.

My exit came, however, when Tom asked me how much I'd lost. There was another raise. I passed—then looked at the funny money on the box desk that served as card table. After counting about $980 showing, I turned to Tom. My memory retains the original quote—but I can paraphrase:

"There's enough fuckin" ammo and booze here to stage a major firefight," I said to Tom. We were all so glib. My M-16 had 160 rounds lovingly draped around it with an "H-Harness" that had that reddish dirt that permeated the base. My ass may have been combat ready but I would have been an abysmal inspection piece.

Tom said that a little more booze and one or two frayed tempers might make the game a transition to combat. It's just that the tinted Monopoly money on the desk just didn't seem real. Tom did convince me that discretion needed to prevail when the S.Sgt next to me unhooked the handle strap to his pistol. I left the tent and went outside with Tom, visited the piss tube and felt elated that I had escaped with a mere $60 deficit and all my limbs appropriately attached. Then we laughed.

That's what I still remember about Tom. Not the end, but the beginning and the middle. He was only a Corporal there, but he's a celestial Sergeant Major now.

Semper Fi.

ED: During a taping that Ken Pipes did for National Geographic, he included a segment done at Camp Pendelton. I saw Pat pay tribute to Tom Meade, who was my company clerk (KIA 6 Feb 68). I called Pat and asked him to do a memoir on Tom. I told him that I have a rubbing from The Wall of Tom's name and it hangs over my computer. "Tom is my muse," I said to Pat. I did not realize how unsettling this would be for you Pat. I hope that in seeing this you can see how angry you still are. I hope our Air Force brothers forgive your unnecessary comments. I seriously considered editing them out but realized that to do so would negate your feelings, which are no doubt real.

I end by asking you, Pat, how long do you want to carry this?

Thomas Aloysius Meade

"Hippiecrits" he called them.
Students in 'The World'.
Did they know? Did they care?

His name was Thomas.
Apostle of doubt.
Penultimate Aloysius,
surname Meade.

The rocket round
directly taken.
Chest high - no cry.

He had a name, and it wasn't "Corporal".
Left a twin brother
and a father who asked:
"How did he die?"

But the letter was a lie.
No body bag need apply.
A backpack sufficed.
For the arm and the watch
we tagged remains.

Just another stat.
Body count ours.
On a damp little mesa.

Just a faded memory of the 26th Marines
in a place called Khe Sanh.

His death was obscene.

Patrick Fitch
B/1/26

All For Naught

Do not speak to me of honor;
Do not speak to me of pride;
Do not speak to me of nations;
Where - for naught - our valor died.

What care I for fancy logic?
What care I for reasoned thought?
I have buried the friends of my heart -
All for naught - all for naught.

What care I for politicians
fighting over why we fought?
I have buried the friends of summer -
All for naught - all for naught.

What care I for fancy speeches?
I grow tired of shiny lies.
I have buried the friends of laughter -
All for naught, laughter dies.

Do not speak to me of sorrow;
Give my grief the peace I sought.
You are not fit to speak of men;
Dead in Asia, all for naught.

Robert A Hall
HQ 26th Marines

RETURN TO VIETNAM

by Nancy Smoyer

In April 1993, I went back to Vietnam for a month with the Veterans Vietnam Restoration Project. Our group was small, three combat veterans and myself, a Red Cross Donut Dollie. We spent two weeks renovating a clinic at Cu Chi and two weeks traveling north to Hanoi. We worked and traveled with former Viet Cong and NVA soldiers which added an unexpected, but very welcome and therapeutic element to the experience, especially since I was stationed at Cu Chi during Tet. It was an unsettling experience to be introduced to a fellow worker who was the head of the local veterans group, learn that he had been at Cu Chi during the entire war and realize that this man was lobbing mortars and rockets at me during Tet. However, during the two weeks we worked together on the clinic, we formed a special relationship in spite of our language difficulties. He gave me his gold star pin and I gave him a pin from the 10th anniversary of the Wall; we joked and teased and spoke of friendship and peace. His face became the face which humanized the enemy for me.



Nancy Smoyer on the road back to Khe Sanh

But I'm getting ahead of myself. The most important thing that happened was a process I found myself going through during my first week there which caught me completely by surprise. My primary reason for going back was to get over the feelings of anger and animosity I've carried for the Vietnamese for 25 years. Although I was well aware intellectually that my feelings were for the most part irrational, I also knew that I wouldn't get over them until I went back. From my experience on other trips to Third World countries, I was pretty sure that those feelings would disappear almost immediately, which is, in fact, what happened. However, there were other aspects I hadn't foreseen.

Even as we were driving from Tan Son Nhut to Cu Chi, I found myself thinking, "What are all these Vietnamese doing here; where did they come from?" and "Where are the GIs?" It was so strange and upsetting to see no American presence, nothing to indicate that we had ever been there. It made the whole thing—the war, the losses, the pain, seem even more of a waste. During the first few days I found myself getting more and more depressed as the guys in the group were getting more and more excited about how wonderful everything was. I wasn't interacting with the Vietnamese people on the work site or getting involved the way I normally do when I travel, and I couldn't figure out why I was acting so differently.

Then at the end of my third day I had a revelation. I realized that I was mourning the loss of "my" Vietnam. As I thought about it, I was able to identify the stages of the grief. My denial has been in thinking about Vietnam as being unchanged since I left, complete with GIs and fire bases and choppers everywhere. Instead, I was hit in the face with a completely different country, a new reality which I didn't want and couldn't accept. My bargaining had been that if I kept connected with the vets and activities related to Vietnam, then the experience stays alive and not over. The anger I've felt has been toward the Vietnamese people, the Vietnamese government and the American people and the American government. Those feelings of anger have spilled over in many parts of my life. And then there was the depression which I've dealt with in various forms for years, and which was hitting me full force again, right then and there.

As I understood this, I knew that I had already dealt with the anger toward the Vietnamese people—that left immediately, and after working with the Vietnamese veterans and going into their homes and meeting their families, it was impossible to continue carrying my negative feelings. As I read *The Tunnels of Cu Chi* and crawled through the tunnels, saw pictures in every home we visited of family members who had died in the wars, visited the massive graveyards and memorials to the war dead, heard about the 300,000 Vietnamese who are still missing, I gained a compassion and understanding which I hadn't allowed myself to feel before. I had accomplished what I came back to Vietnam to do.

But even though I now understood much of what I was feeling and had even gotten over my negative feelings toward the people, I was still not at the point of acceptance. As I told the guys, I wasn't ready to give Vietnam back to the Vietnamese. But then, after a week or so of being unable to talk about my changed feelings toward the Vietnamese people without choking up, I realized that it

was over. I was done with Vietnam. Not done with the vets or with the after-effects of the war, but done with the country and with the people. It's their country, they fought for it (on both sides), they earned it, and although I now care for them—whereas I didn't before, that part is finished. I still have all the other aspects of Vietnam (the war, not the country) to deal with, but at least one is taken care of.

Now I have two Vietnams—the one in my memory, in my pictures and in my vets, and the Vietnamese Vietnam. It had been "my" country for a while—my GI Vietnam—and yet it was theirs, and should have been all along. I had been afraid of losing my Vietnam, of having to replace it with the "real" one, but now I realize I can keep them both—different but the same, separate but together, entwined.

So that was my experience. Traveling north after that was almost anticlimactic. It was wonderful to finally see Khe Sanh and other Marine fire bases, to get sand from China Beach, to go to the village near Da Nang where my brother was killed, to search for the Red Cross villa in Da Nang (which I never could find), to look for bullet holes in the Citadel, to visit the fascinating and disturbing war museum in Hanoi where the possessions of the POW/MIAs have been stored, and to just take care of unfinished business.

Other observations. The Vietnamese people really are as friendly toward Americans as I had heard. They carry no grudge that I could see. I asked several of the former enemy why that was and their response was that they had been told by their government, and they firmly believed, that American GIs were not there because they wanted to be but because their government sent them, so that made all the difference in their attitude towards us. After we had seen the museum and site of the My Lai massacre, our Vietnamese veteran guide told us that he didn't like going there because it wasn't representative of the American GIs, that this was an aberration. (His son was killed at Khe Sanh in 1972 and has never been found. The image of him standing on Khe Sanh with a Marine who had been there during the siege I will never forget).

The Vietnamese veterans are very puzzled and curious about Americans' PTSD. When I asked whether they experienced it they said no, because they knew what they were fighting for and their country's response toward them was totally different. However, we did observe some stress-related problems, which is not surprising after 40 years of continuous war.

I recognized nothing. Oh, Marble Mountain looked the same, and I think I recognized a field just before a bridge in Da Nang, but I could have been dropped anywhere for all I knew. The NSA hospital is empty sand dunes, the bomb craters are mostly filled in (especially in the south), the rice paddies are green, cows graze on Khe Sanh (at least inside the perimeter—mines are outside), there are tons of water buffalo, the kids are a joy—and the war is over.

Post script: I originally wrote this about a month after I got back, five months ago. Since the trip, something has happened which I hesitate to identify because I can't believe it's true or real. I had listened skeptically as I heard others talk about a change in themselves after going back to Vietnam, and yet somehow, that change has happened to me. Friends have noticed that there is something different about me—I'm a little more tolerant, a little less impatient, a little more open and less negative. Somehow, the cloud has lifted a little bit—I feel lighter.

I've heard that when one feeling leaves, space is made for something else to move in. I know that a lot of anger has left, but I can't identify what it is that has taken its place. I keep being afraid that the old me will return, and it may, but this reprieve has shown me that there is another side, another way to be. That realization is what makes me want to share this experience with others in hopes that they too might find, or make, the opportunity to let go of some of the pain.

Steve Riddle
1/26 Scout Sniper

Dear Ernie,

I enjoyed our visit at the Khe Sanh Reunion. In many respects it was akin to stepping into a nuclear reactor, the way the energy and emotions were flying around. It certainly triggered a lot of memories ranging from very painful to extremely humorous.

Per our discussion, I have enclosed some photos of some of the members of our S-2 scout/sniper section 1/26. In addition, I have included some recollections of my partner and bunkermate, Nelson Jones.

Nelson and I reported to the scout/sniper section together. He stood close to 6'4" in height and weighed about 230lbs solid. He and the great Cleveland Browns fullback, Jim Brown, could have been related. Sgt Garcia was the chief scout and Lt Sibley was in charge of our S-2 section.

We spent many hours filling sandbags and working together as a team, operating the TPS-6 troop detection electronics device. At that time, we mainly worked at night on Bravo, Charlie, Delta 1/26 and the ARVN Ranger perimeters. We also scouted for patrols once we started operating outside the wire.

When I first met Nelson, he appeared to be quiet,

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introspective and religious. When I got to know him, he definitely was quiet, introspective and religious! Nelson was also a fatalist. If something was going to happen, it would happen. This philosophy resulted in many hours of discourse between us. I never once heard the man curse. During quiet moments, I often observed him reading his military issue New Testament Bible. He told me that he derived a sense of peace and purpose from his religious



Joe Schiller, Mike Jarmon, Kit Carson Hep and Steve Riddle—Scout/snipers 1/26.

beliefs. As we became better acquainted, he would sort of give me the silent treatment if I used blasphemous or foul language. It initially pissed me off, since being scared, under fire, tired, dirty and surrounded in the middle of nowhere, lent to the generous use of profane language as being the most apropos semantics, considering the overall situation. Nevertheless, an inappropriate expletive would cost me a bout of silence from my immense counterpart. This turned into a form of game between us. I, of course, would often slip, particularly with close incoming or unwelcome work details after we had been up most of the night. I usually could solicit a pretty good smile or even a laugh out of Nelson if I would sarcastically on occasion say to him: "Golly! But that was a close one!", then roll my eyeballs. Often, just to gig him, I would say something like:"For goodness sakes Nelson! Do you think that the Gunny figures we're the only two assholes on this whole fucking base that are so adept at digging holes, filling sandbags or burning shitters?" Of course, looking at him quizzically, with a glint in my eye.

One night, on the ARVN Ranger lines, we were taking incoming fire. A round came in real close and the concussion knocked me unconscious momentarily. When I recovered my senses, I was inside the ARVN command bunker. I was laying on the deck and Nelson was trying to get me to talk to him while checking me over to see if I had sustained any hits. I was so stunned that I couldn't even generate some sort of smart-ass comment. A couple of ARVN Rangers explained to me that Nelson had dragged and carried me from the fighting hole in the middle of the incoming fire to the bunker. I looked up at Nelson and told him I appreciated what he had done for me. He was squatting over me looking down with those huge hands of his just hanging there and nodded and shook his head like it wasn't any big deal. Later that night, I went back out and noticed Nelson in the close vicinity bird-dogging me to make sure I was okay. On reflection, it felt like there was a benevolent oak tree shadowing over me. I was very fortunate to have had a partner of his caliber and character working with me.

I separated from scout/snipers a week or two after we landed at Wonder Beach and was re-assigned to the 3rd Combined Action Troop in Phu Bai. Nelson and I lost contact after that. I later heard that Nelson was on the operation with Delta Company 1/26 and was in the close vicinity when Captain Hughes was KIA due to heavy machine gun fire. He may have been medevaced—I never found out.

For me, Khe Sanh represented my first three months in-country. I remember thinking, 'you only have ten months and a wake up to go!' I know Nelson made it back to the world because I didn't see his name on the Wall. I pray that life has been good to him and that he and his family are well.

I'll always remember Nelson as being a physically imposing individual whose quiet resolve far surpassed his physical capabilities, which were considerable.

Like so many others, Nelson and I had seen the elephant together. To have spent my time at Khe Sanh with that gentleman/Marine was a privilege and an honor.

Semper Fi

THE OLD WOMAN

by Talis Kaminskis
CAC-O

She was old and wrinkled. It was easy to see all her features. Her body lay motionless in the grass just a few feet from the hooch she called her home. Only a few nights earlier a meal had been shared there between her and her family and a few Marines who shared the village with her son. The world had seemed such a safe place. A haven far from the violence of war that surrounded the country. The laughter and gaiety of the meal had caused all to forget why they were able to come together. Now the reality was harshly reincarnated. The sound of weapons had echoed from morning till now, and none had really paid attention to their destruction. In the world around it was rather common place, and for those who had lived with it

for an extended period of time, taken for granted. But now, now it wasn't just another nameless casualty. It wasn't a warrior whose job it was to kill and/or die. It wasn't one whose death could be expected in such a place. It was a little old lady. Body aged beyond actual years. Wrinkles a roadmap to the life she had led. The stillness of death betraying the vibrancy she had so recently shown. Had raised a family in a world which had known little peace for generations. Taken pride in a granddaughter to whom she was passing on her ways. Welcomed the young strangers who came to help fight a war she had little patience for. But drawn into by the son who was a village Sergeant. She had chastised their mistakes and laughed at their awkwardness. Had served them food from her kitchen and waited for grimaces as they tasted it for the first time. But she never gave up. They were always welcome to visit. To leave the war behind. To have brief moments where they could escape and find such brief sanctuary. Now it was all gone. An "errant" shell from a friendly gun. A sudden blast. Caught out in the open, away from her bunker. It was all over. A life had been snuffed out. No marks betrayed the cause of her death, but that was of little consequence. The finality of death was all the proof that was needed. The body now being cradled in the arms of a mourning son was just as still. Marked or no-marked. Rocked to and fro in a futile attempt at restoring life, the permanence was non-removable. The Marines witnessing the scene turned away. Some did not know how to handle it. Others were afraid of how they would. None wanted to share the moment with the others. The unexpectedness of the war's latest victim had brought them all closer to a reality they did not wish to confront. The death of warriors was expected. The death of unknown civilians could be tolerated. But the death of one who had shown them kindness and a touch of home was not what was supposed to occur. In spite of all they had already experienced, because of their youthful years, they still had retained a hold on a bit of naiveness. That had been cruelly shattered by the personal touch the violence of war had inflicted on them. No, they weren't men because of it. But just young bodies, that much more tired. That much more aware of it. Knowing that as they stepped away from the scene, they were still part of it, and always would be.

THE MAD MOMENT

Manuel Babbitt
A.T's

Comrades, do you remember what we did with the old ammo? I remember a tree—or just the hint of one. The ONTOS, crosshairs in place, sighted in, one shell in the 50 cal. spotting rifle. One on each top gun 106 shell in each of the six guns waiting for the command. I know to the Grunts it was a sweet sound and often shook the ground when we fired a salvo; "all six at once", nothing alive should survive! Somehow, that tree-stump was not laid waste. Oh—it was dead alright, probably the Agent Orange found its mark. All the plant life around it was dried out. I cannot believe the NVA walked away unharmed—though many died there. I was left with much despair, I found it hard to breath the air. Red dust was everywhere, under my nails, in my pockets and in my close cropped hair. In my skin, I do believe I tasted it in my tears. It was caked in my boots, my cammies were soiled as well, but we all knew water was scarce in hell. It must have tasted like seasoning to the rats we shared our living space with. Some of us settled for sea rats. (one can each) for many days. I filled up on rice cakes I traded the scouts. Once a week I'd visit their camp just to make eye-contact; they were just as close-mouthed as I, but we had a common goal, to survive. They liked the hard peanut butter and cigarette samples. I was happy to see a smile; it was probably the only gesture that kept me sane. But in Vietnam it is wise to fear nature; it is wise never to forget they are home with unwanted guests.

THE COWARD OF KHE SANH

The coward of Khe Sanh - each day you see him rise.
He runs outside to take a pee
then gives the high sign and runs inside.

The coward of Khe Sanh doesn't walk, doesn't run.
He's doing a shuffle, bent forward a bit at the hips.
At the sound of the mortars, rockets or arty
he becomes the fastest man alive!

The coward of Khe Sanh works on the strip.
He hauls ammo from the dump to the pits.
He loads the rounds into the tubes.
He also wants to kill an NVA or two.

The coward of Khe Sanh sometimes leaves a trail -
a trail of shit paper flying behind.
Some asshole yelled "incoming!"

The coward of Khe Sanh, see him run.
One hand on his head, one on his gun!
His weapon is for fighting - his gun is for fun...

The coward of Khe Sanh.
Nowhere can he run; nowhere can he hide.
So each day and each night he stands on the firing line.

The coward of Khe Sanh, he looks at you,
from out of my eyes.

Lewis S Messer
CMBU 301

ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

by Joseph M Belardo
1st/44th—"C" BTRY

It seemed as a young man I had a special bond with nature. I would spend hours exploring her, hiking her and enjoying her. She taught me to be patient, and my eyes and mind could and would be filled with her wonderment. On the outside, I could look in and see her like the song, beautiful and spacious skies, amber waves of grain, majestic mountains. I knew she had spread her grace on me. I began to give my attention to others by watching their eyes. Their eyes would tell all emotions. I learned through eye contact happiness, sadness, confusion, romance and love. I experienced from the touch of the hand, the hug, that eye contact is what I thought a real man should be about.

Uncle Sam cast his eyes upon me and gave me the look of one of America's best. The new look fit me like a glove. I enjoyed the hairy eyes the drill instructors could give. The staredown the officers would try to show. I would return any look required. I knew sustained eye contact would give them away.

Like most GIs of my era, I was sent to the land of the dragon. My eyes could not believe her beauty. It was a feast for eye and mind. God didn't make this land for killing or dying, man did. Uncle Sam sent me north to the Zee. My eyes became filled with confusion. This army dog was now attached to the Halls of Montezuma.

I took on another new look. Squad Leader on a M42 Duster, a twin 40mm Ack-Ack gun. It was our job to give the North Vietnamese Army the look of death. Something my eyes and mind had never seen or experienced. The Duster separated men from man. There was no room to duck, no place to hide, nowhere to run. It was straightforward, face to face, eye to eye dueling. Very little guessing of who was killing whom. While the Marines blazed I could see from my open turret the Marines I supported. My eyes would agonize the feelings of others. Marines running, jumping, yelling, shouting, killing, screaming, wounded and dying. Arms meant for hugging lovers were now holding friends, wounded or dying.

All eyes now filled with horror, sorrow, fear, hate and pain. Eyes screaming at each other for help; eyes looking for targets hiding in the shadows; eyes unbelieving; eyes fixed in stares, glazed by their final journey to their God. I began to wonder why my God allowed me to see these atrocities of life. The squeeze of the trigger was easy, but the eyes of the suffering and dead were forever—regardless of who was on who's side.

I came home a broken warrior. Eyes and mind spent from too many firefights, too much incoming. Eyes being witness to the dark side of life. My Uncle Sam had completed my training, eyes do tell all.

My eyes now walk this earth, half filled with tears—hoping never again to be "on the outside looking in".



Joe Belardo at Khe Sanh, June 1968.



After taking shrapnel soon thereafter.

PAY BACK

by Robert Shippen
S.F. CCN FOB-3

I left the war in December '68 after 12 months in-country as a medic with the Army Special Forces. I went on with my life. For 25 years, Viet Nam continued to surface, usually when I least expected it. Smells, sounds, rain, low clouds, red clay, news accounts of trouble in other parts of the world, often reminded me of Viet Nam. Viet Nam has been like an old acquaintance who drops in to visit at awkward times, uninvited, not welcome. I may have left the war but Viet Nam hasn't left me.

I decided to confront Viet Nam directly. In October of '92 another veteran and I loaded two suitcases with donated medical supplies and returned by commercial airliner. This time we were armed with goodwill, medicines and a list of three medical facilities where we'd deliver equipment. Vung Tau has a clinic built by returning Viet Vets under the direction of Garberville, California Veterans Vietnam Restoration Project. Le Ly Hayslip's East Meets West Foundation has a clinic near Marble Mountain outside of Da Nang. The Medical Director of the regional hospital in Hue City had a need for supplies. These were our destinations to provide "humanitarian" assistance.

Approaching Tan Son Nhut aboard Air Vietnam on a flight from Manila, I felt palpable fear. Our country didn't have relations with the Communist Vietnamese. Would they arrest me? I imagined being shot down by a SAM or a U.S. F-4. Paranoia maybe, but the too-familiar anticipation of my pending death was very real. We landed safely and passed through customs with brusque indifference by young men and women wearing NVA uniforms. No guns visible anywhere. A returning Vietnamese aboard our flight befriended us with a ride to downtown Saigon/Ho Chi Minh City where we got a room at Hotel Saigon.

Dining in elegant restaurants, watching folk dances and ethnic musical performances at Maxim's and the Caravel helped us relax and recover from jet lag and ever-present anxiety. We visited museums and made friends with cyclo drivers, most of whom were former ARVN soldiers. We hired a car and took a day trip to nearby Vung Tau. Here we delivered medicines to the Friendship Clinic built in 1988 by the Garberville, California Veterans Vietnam Restoration Project.

When we left Saigon, we traveled north. My friend wanted to visit the waterfronts at Da Nang, Quang Tri and Dong Ha. He wanted a boat ride on the Cua Viet River where he'd operated small river boats. I wanted to visit Da Nang, Marble Mountain, Phu Bai and Khe Sanh. We booked a five day tour to these places through Vietnam Tourism in Ho Chi Minh City and flew to Da Nang. We were met at the airport by a courteous interpreter and driver with a late model Toyota Sedan. We stayed in first class hotel rooms and ate good food. Bottled water was provided. After delivering supplies to Le Ly Hayslip's clinic at China Beach, we toured Marble Mountain.

During the war, Marble Mountain was used as a field hospital for Viet Cong and NVA casualties. It was in the cavern where enemy patients had been treated that I met a group of about 20 high school students on a class outing. When they realized I was an American veteran I was asked to join them. They sang folk and love songs, shared their refreshments and practised pretty good English with me. I felt as if I was being welcomed home by Vietnamese the same age as soldiers I'd fought and killed not more than 500 meters from this mountain 25 years earlier. It was a homecoming more sincere and warm than any I've received in the USA. It was very emotional. After Marble Mountain I was no longer afraid in Viet Nam.

We drove up and over the Hai Van Pass, stopping at will to explore Japanese, French and American bunkers. We burned incense at a small VC cemetery along Highway 1 just south of Phu Bai. While in Hue, we visited the Citadel, rode a boat on the Perfume River and toured tombs and temples. At Dong Ha we rented a sampan for a trip along the Cua Viet. We then drove to Cam Lo and turned onto Highway 9. We drove past the turnoff for Con Thien and stopped at The Rockpile. We visited a Bru Montagnard village and performed an impromptu Med Cap on a young buffalo girl with severe malaria. We drove across new bridges and stopped to look at the ruins of the old ones destroyed during the war. Bomb craters became evident as we approached the plateau where we'd find Khe Sanh Village. We turned onto the access road leading to the Khe Sanh Combat Base. We were there. From this point on I was the guide as none of the Vietnamese had been there before.

The clay is still red. Low clouds and mist still send a chill along your spine and blanket Co Roc mountain in the distance. Hills 950 and 1015 stand as permanent sentinels over the plateau. The runway is now marked by a monument erected by the government honoring their sacrifices during the war. Many of our trenches have been excavated by people digging for scrap metal to sell. I was able to find my old position along the south and western perimeter of FOB #3. Memories from 1968 returned as if the decades had passed in the span of only a week. I gave private and reverent respects for those, friend and foe, who died or were wounded at Khe Sanh.

I felt depressed and didn't stay long in this place that to me continues to reek of loss, pain, death and war. It is still a very heavy place. Depressing, painful and real. I had confronted Viet Nam head on. Healing from war is a life-

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long process. I know that my memories won't go away, nor should they. I need them to help with my future. Returning to Viet Nam helped me put my experiences there into context with the present. My memories of the war now are more in the context of where I've wanted them to be all along, the distant past. As Vietnamese continually say, "The war ended long ago."

Khe Sanh is still a dangerous place. An unexploded artillery round lay near a hole on the runway, wisely abandoned by whomever dug the hole. Several times a year people or livestock are injured or killed by exploding ordinance. I brought home souvenirs: a handful of spent rounds that littered the old access road, a USMC brass insignia excavated by a metal collector as I stood nearby and a handkerchief filled with dirt from my old position. I also left Khe Sanh with the intention of returning at least once more. My healing had just begun.

I went back in April of 1993 with a small group of American veterans. We went as Team Seven of the Veterans Vietnam Restoration Project to build a health clinic in Cu Chi. We consisted of a Navy vet, a Marine vet, a Red Cross entertainment worker and myself. After two weeks of daily labor building the clinic, side by side with former VC, we toured the country for another two weeks. All of us visited sites where we'd served during the war. We traveled from Cu Chi to the Delta, stayed in My Tho and rode a boat along the Mekong River. One of our group had served several tours as a Navy gunboat pilot in that area. We traveled north along Highway 1 overnighting in My Tho, Saigon, Vung Tau, Nha Trang, Quang Ngai, China Beach (2), Hue (2), Khe Sanh and Hanoi (3). The Marine had served at Con Thien, Khe Sanh and in the mountains along Hwy 9. Our route took us through the following places: Ham Tan, Phan Thiet, Phan Rang, Nha Trang, Tuy Hoa, Quy Nhon, Quang Ngai, My Lai, Tam Ky, Da Nang, China (My Khe) Beach, Hue, Quang Tri, Dong Ha, Con Thien, Mai Loc, Hwy 9 to The Rockpile, Ca Luu and Khe Sanh. We then took the train north to Hanoi where we visited museums and did the general tourist thing. Each of us had a personally healing experience on this journey. We provided one another with support.

This latest trip was booked through CCB Tours with headquarters in HCM City. This company is operated by the Cu Chinh Binh (CCB) or Vietnamese Veterans Association, their equivalent of all our veterans service organizations combined. CCB Tours specialize in taking groups of American veterans to visit former battlefields. If asked, they will arrange personal meetings with veterans who fought against us in specific fights. We met and worked with quite a few men and women whom we'd fought during the war. It was an enlightening and healing experience. We went to their homes, met their families and played with their grandchildren. They are aging veterans living simple lives, trying to get by peacefully. All of their eyes have "The Look" that comes from seeing too much. Some told me that meeting American veterans after more than 20 years has helped heal their psychological wounds. I highly recommend CCB Tours for making in-country travel arrangements, especially for larger groups or film crews.

It was through CCB Tours during our overnight at Khe Sanh Village that I met the Chairman of Huong Hoa (Khe Sanh) District, a member of the Bru Van Khieu ethnic minority. I received a formal invitation to bring teams of American veterans to work with the Bru, providing needed assistance in areas of medicine, agriculture and education. I'm currently trying to raise funds and other resources with which to actualize this venture. I'll keep you and the Khe Sanh Veterans Association apprised of progress in this project.

"He Won't Ride The Horse He Loved— He Was Killed In The War"

by Kay Maddox
Daily News Staff Writer

"In an April 25 letter to his parents, 21 year old Mountville Marine, Mitchell White wrote: 'Do you realize I only have a little over 11 months left over here?'

Young White was a private first class in the Marine Corps and had been in Vietnam nearly a month when he wrote that letter. Six days later, the young private was reported killed in action in the vicinity of Quang Tri, Republic of Vietnam.

He was the son of Mr & Mrs Thomas White of Mountville Road.

The Marine continued, 'The time is passing pretty fast. I wish it could go faster. My rotation date is April 9, 1969.'

In the third paragraph of his last letter, Mitchell asked about Dixie, a quarter horse who is somewhat wild. Dixie was given to Mitchell a year ago by a neighbor, Frank Lewis. The horse had been halter broken by the youth but that was as far as the training got. He told his family, 'If y'all have too much trouble with Dixie and can't get close enough to train her, talk to Dail and see what he can do. I'd hate for somebody to get hurt trying to train her. If I was there, I think I could handle her alright.'

Now Mitchell will never get home to handle Dixie and

the horse will probably continue to roam the pastures. Mr White said the horse only comes down near the family about once a month.

The boy, a 1967 graduate of LaGrange High School was the only son of Mr & Mrs White. He had three sisters; Charlotte, an eighth grader at Hill St. Junior High; Susan, a LaGrange High senior and Gloria, who is married and lives at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Mitchell was a boy who loved the outdoors. He joined the Marine Corps 'to get it over with' and said in his last letter he was thinking of buying some land in Mountville when he got out of the service. He wrote, 'There's not much happening over here now. Anyway, we haven't been doing anything. I like it like that. All we do is go on working parties and so forth'

The Marine was killed when he 'sustained shrapnel wounds of the body from hostile mortar fire while on an operation', according to General Leonard F Chapman Jr., Commandant.The family learned of the death of their only son yesterday afternoon. A Marine Officer from Atlanta, accompanied by the Rev. Buddy York of the LaGrange Dunson Baptist Church, told the family of the tragedy.

The Whites' were members of the LaGrange church but have been attending the church in Mountville since they moved to that community. Mrs White is a senior at LaGrange College and is working in the laboratory at City-County Hospital. The soldier's father is a long time employee of Dunson Mills here.

The family has not yet completed arrangements to have the body sent home."

10 Pages--One Section Full UPI Coverage

He Won't Ride The Horse He Loved, He Was Killed in War

By KAY MADDOX
Daily News Staff Writer

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Dixie was given to Mitchell a year ago by a neighbor, Frank Lewis. The horse has been halter broken by the youth, but that was as far as the training got.

He told his family, "If ya'll



MITCHELL WHITE

COUNTRY BOYS

by Bill Yates
W/1/13

I come straight to Vietnam from Schools battalion. A C-130 put me down in Dong Ha around Feb 26, 1968. We wuz in some stagin' tent when a sergeant come in to give us our orders for where we were goin'. "Yates," he says when he calls my name, "Whiskey One Thirteen."

"Where'bout's that?" I asked him.

"Khe Sanh," he says.

I says, "I better write me a letter home tonight, this might be my last one."laughs. That night at Dong Ha we took incomin'. It wuz my first time bein' fired on. Sounded like a freight train comin' down the line.

I finally got me a chopper ride to Khe Sanh. I jumped out the chopper, left my seabag lay and headed for cover. We wuz takin' incomin', Charlie was hittin' us good. Finally, things settled down to where I could find Whiskey Battery. The gunney showed me where two rounds had just hit inside the battery area. That first night I wuz there, there's supposed to be an NVA assault. They wuz passin' out grenades. I had me my M-14 issued at Dong Ha. He assigned me a position just outside the FDC since I was a new guy and didn't know what I wuz doin' yet. I wuz real scared man! We fired all night from our battery and the next day we got word from the base commander that we'd gotten 71 kills from our battery.

I remember them parachutin' in the supplies. Stuff shook the ground when it landed. You could hear Charlie firin' up at the planes with automatic weapons.

I got ordered up to 861 that had been hit and partly overrun. We had two guns up there. I got up there March 6. You could see Khe Sanh real well from up there. That's the first time I got to fan fire my M-14 wuz up there. We'd shoot out over the wire. We wuz gettin' hit steady by mortars. Some of the guys who got medevaced left their M-16s, so's I took me one of those. One day I wuz on a work party buryin' com cables when Charlie dropped in a coupla rounds on us. It really messed up some of the guys. Next day, some of the grunts wuz outside the wire choppin' down the elephant grass so's we could see 'em before they could get up close. One of the guys hit a booby trapped grenade. The guy laid down there on the LZ for quite awhile waitin' for a chopper. He died 'fore the chopper could get him out. So, after he wuz dead, they didn't need the medevac. He laid out there on the LZ for over four days in the hot sun. He wuz in one of them big plastic bags. I'd have to walk guard every other night and had to walk by him. Made me remember to when I first

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got in-country. I wuzn't in Da Nang two hours 'fore they assigned me to a work party unloadin' bodies. That shook me up. Anyway, you could smell this guy's body clear up on top the hill. He wuz married and had a little girl who wuz five months old at the time.

We wuz bein' given two C rats and two canteens a water a day back then. Finally got to come off that hill April 28 and went down to Khe Sanh. Got to take a shower for the first time since I arrived at Khe Sanh. Felt real good! We wuz jokin' 'bout who we wuz goin' to get to go off with that night. Where we wuz goin' to eat. Go to a show, or somethin'.

From Khe Sanh we went to Ca Lu. Stayed there 'bout two weeks. There wuz a creek to wash in down there—that wuz nice. Then we went to Camp Carroll. It wuz at Camp Carroll that I got the news 'bout Mitch. We finally had a lot of our old mail come in. I see the letter from home with the old post mark. The clippin' fell out. I see Mitch's pitcher. I says, 'I wonder what Mitch done to get his pitcher in the paper...' And then...uh...I looked and saw the headlines and...uh. It wuzn't until after I got to Quang Tri that I found out what happened to Mitchell. He wuz my best friend and uh...well...he did all he could do, I guess.

They had hot showers at Quang Tri. I got me some pitchers from back home while there. We got hungry for some home food. One the men snuck into the ville, killed a chicken, brought it back and we cooked it. See, we do have some good times over here! You people think it's all just war. Most times we try to have good times. When we left Quang Tri we went to Da Nang. They had runnin' water in the bathrooms. Flush toilets and all that. I figured I'd flush them a few times for the guys that didn't have any.

Went out to Hill 85 the next day. 'Fore I left Georgia, I used to read 'bout all this stuff in the papers. Now I'm over here and it's real. I'm glad to be over here, do my part, but...uh...I'll be glad to go home. Get outtah this place.

(ED: suddenly, his voice changes in tone and intensity)

Roger...Roger. Stand by. Son-of-a-bitch! Deflection...zero...one...eight-five.

(ED: another voice goes)

Stand-by...Fire!

(ED: now I'm really confused, until a much older, more gravelly voice of the one I'd been listening to comes on. The tape is now much clearer).

Well...Lieutenant Ernie Spencer, this is William Robert Yates. Bob Yates. They called me Willie Roe for short when I wuz in the Marine Corps. That wuz a tape that wuz made September 2nd, 1968, at Cau Doi. Today is December 31st, 1992, in Franklin, Georgia. I thought I wuz gonna get all that fire mission on the tape but it ran out. I enclosed the old newspaper article and pitcher of my best friend, Mitchell White. It's a copy of the one fell out when I wuz at Camp Carroll. He wuz at Cua Viet, Camp Big John when he got killed. He wuz with weapons platoon 2/4. I thought he wuz a hero. It really shocked me when that pitcher fell out. He wuz such a good fella. Well...talkin' 'bout Vietnam, one thing I remember most when I was on Hill 861 wuz the rats. They wuz huge! In a bunker that another fella and I shared, I guess 'bout 8 by 5 feet, them rats be crawlin' all over you when you'd sleep. Scared to knock 'em off or they'd bite you.

And...burnin' shitters. I remember burnin' 'em, the winds blowin' North, I stand to the South side. Then it'd turn around and the wind would blow south. Didn' matter where you wuz, that wind wuz gonna blow that smoke on you! And...the piss tubes. They were pissin' in piss tubes. They'd be so full that it come out the top! You know, not many people know what I'm talkin' 'bout. Some do...not many.

I remember one night they had a patrol on the ridge next to us on 861. We had an infrared scope and we wuz watchin' 'em when they started gettin' hit. They got hit pretty bad. Medivacs...a few KIAs. One fella I remember particularly. I helped hold him. The corpsmen cut his throat, put the bottom half of an ink pen in his throat and taped it up. I dunno if he lived or died. But, I think 'bout that sometimes. The other time...a chopper come up to drop us off some supplies. It wuz goin' back down...then it went down between us and Khe Sanh. It wuz too far away for us to do any good and I guess too far away from the people at Khe Sanh. We could see 'em. We could see the people. We could see the NVA come outtah the bush, firin' at 'em. And Billy Moffet got on the 50 caliber machine gun and started firin' on the enemy for 'em. Reason I remember that so well 'cos I grabbed hold the barrel and got blisters on both my hands. Dumb boot! Eventually a chopper come got some of the survivors off the downed chopper. Another time I wuz on patrol, a water patrol. We went down between 861A, a little ridge next to us. We each had two 5 gallon cans. There wuz a small LZ over there. It was hot. Chopper come in and dropped off a pallet and left. Some of us went up there to see what it wuz. It wuz full a ice-cream—vanilla ice-cream! It wuz marked to go to a ship. I gathered up all the ice-cream I could hold and went back over to 861. I passed it out as fast as I could 'cos it wuz meltin'.

I had a lotta friends when I wuz at Khe Sanh. I'd like to see 'em. Maybe we can all get together at Washington D.C. Talkin' with you Ernie and all I told you, I don't write well. You asked for the tape, so I sent you this one, and...I got outtah the Marine Corps 'bout the year 1969. And, uh...July, went to go and try to get back in. But at that time

CHRISTMAS

'Twas a Christmas Eve on the Laotian border, twenty-five winters ago.
The air was heavy with fog; a fine mist was blowing,
and the silence was so heavy it could be sliced with a blade.

The young sentry was ending his watch.
All was well on the perimeter in front of his position.
Relieved of his post, he retired to his bunker for a meal of ham and lima beans,
hot chocolate and two camels - unfiltered.

Solitary, in the candlelight he was visited by loneliness,
a haunting longing for home.
On this of all nights, why the hell was he here.
He should be in front of the tree with eggnog,
with parents and sister, with sweetheart.

He knew there was a service at the other end of the line.
Christian, nondenominational, to celebrate the birth of a God.
He wasn't religious; gave it up years ago.
It wasn't reasonable; it was only mythology.

Being alone was ushering in melancholy, that would never do.
Out into the damp he climbed, bundled in field jacket and poncho.
A voice in the night asks, "Who's there?"
"It's Jones."
"What's the password?"
"Gunrunner."
"Pass on."

This repeated for two miles until arrival at the end of the line.
To the tent on the top of the hill.
To the nondenominational service.
The Chaplains were men Jones had learned to detest
because of sermons on warriors dying for a blessed cause.

This one was young.
A Protestant type with a boyish face and naive attitude.
In the stillness of night the sermon was exhorted
about the birth of the Christ child
and how he died for man's sins.

The communion was started.
Men got in line for a taste of the flesh and a sip of the blood.
Not a sound could be heard along the trenches at the time.
The Chaplain led the men in a hymn for the season;
about the soldiers and sailors who had died for the cause
in wars of the past and the wars of the present.
A crescendo of voices, some out of tune, emanating from rapt faces,
ascended to the top of the tent.

they didn't need me. The recruiter told me they had more men than at anytime in Marine Corps history, but I always think it wuz 'cos on Feb 23 I wuz in Headquarters battery 1/13 gettin' ready to come home. My RTD wuz comin' up when they hit us. I got shrapnel in the side of my face. Then I got shot in the hip. Took pretty close to 200 stitches. Tore the muscles loose in my leg. I'll always believe that's the reason they wouldn't let me come back in...

I dunno, but uh, since I got out...I don't like to be around people. I get around people or a crowd and I feel like I don't fit in a lotta times. Strange to me, everybody you seem to talk to, well most times, some a them people like to say they's at Khe Sanh. They get to tellin' their stories—and you know they weren't there. You hear these kinds a people...that's why, you know...that's why I'm a loner. That's one reason I started drivin' a truck, just to be by myself and uh...course, I enjoy it. Nobody bothers me. Huhhhhhhh (long long sigh). Certain days a year it really bothers me...like February 23rd and durin' February, March, April on 861 and Khe Sanh, and we got overrun August 17th out at Cau Doi. Took heavy casualties. Wuz lucky then I didn' get a scratch put on me until I wuz gettin' ready to come home. I can be somewhere...I hear a song, it flows me back. I wanna stop. I can jus' smell it. You know? Vietnam. They play a song, Papa Topa Gen, or Harper Valley PTA or Jack Flash or...I dunno, there's so many of 'em. Puts me right back. I can almost feel like I'm there again. I didn' get married until I wuz 34 years old. And ah...it's been hard on my wife, but uh...sometimes I just like to go up in the woods by myself. Eat some cold pork beans. Sometimes I go up to the trash dump and sit

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Out there in the dark on the Laotian border, the enemy was moving,
and Charley had been spotted.
A Listening Post hidden out in the fog
called for mortars to be dropped on the enemy patrol.

While the congregation sang and exulted in the Christ child,
the mortar battery outside the church tent starting firing rounds
out into the nigh47t,
and after the thunk of the firing, they whistled into the heavy black sky.

As Jones' skin was crawling,
he heard the thunk and the whistle accompany the hymn
as it was sung with fervor.
And he thought to himself sadly,
'No wonder I am lonely'
because existence means nothing if the Christ child shoots mortars.

Ken Rodgers
B/1/26 - 2nd Platoon

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and ...uh...just smell it stinkin'. I dunno...maybe you know what I'm talkin' 'bout.

But nothing's done me any more good than findin' out 'bout this Khe Sanh Veterans. It's really been a big help to me. Run up some hellatious phone bills sometimes callin' people. I wish I could go back sometimes. I wish I could turn back the hands of time and I could do things different than what I did it, but I can't.

I just wanna tell you thank you for everythin' you're doin' for me and the rest of us. I hope I haven't bored you too much. So I'm gonna say, Happy New Year. Semper Fi and I'll be in touch.

ED: Brother Yates sent me this tape some time ago. After listening to it the first time, I set it aside to save for a special occasion. I cannot think of a more fitting way for me to go out than with this piece. I could never have imagined that forty years ago, as I dove in the crystal clear waters and roamed the rain forests of old Hawaii, that someday another country boy like myself from the other side of our country would share his soul with me like this. I say to you my Brothers and Sisters that Brother Yates and his kind are the true John Waynes' of Khe Sanh —we don't need Hollywood images.

THE KHE SANH VETERAN INC.

is a non-profit, non-political, tax-deductible, 501-C Corporation. Its purpose is to record and preserve the history of the experience known as "Khe Sanh," to promote healing among those who served there, and to encourage artistic projects by its members. Membership is open to any member of our armed forces who ever served at, around or over Khe Sanh, Vietnam, between 1961 through 1971.

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The Khe Sanh Veteran



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See You In Las Vegas!

On the Cover ...

American Spirit is the work of the only woman U.S. Marine Combat Artist allowed in Vietnam during the conflict — Trella Chris Koczwara, Professor of Art, Tennessee Technological University.. Her works from that era still carry with them the taste, the feel, almost the sounds of what went on there ... death ... life ... families torn apart ... their's and our's. Fixed forever in the mind, says Koczwara, even after all these years, are the sights and smells and emotions associated with each piece of art from that period. And the faces, she remembers the faces of all those with whom she came into contact, all those so young trying to stay alive in a world working against them at every step. She has since returned to Vietnam, but that's another story.



U.S. Marine Combat Artist Trella Koczwara visited President George Bush while she was in Baledogle, Somalia, Africa during January 1993 as part of Operation Restore Hope.



Bernice "Gunny" Penn discusses with Trella Koczwara (left) one of the many paintings on display at a showing of Koczwara's work. Stretching from Vietnam to the present, the show was held at the historic Parthenon in Nashville, Tenn., from July to August 1994.

The New Guy ...

Since I was appointed editor of the **Khe Sanh Veteran** earlier this year, I've been learning a great deal about what has gone on before my tour of duty began. As far as the magazine is concerned, we have a great deal for which to thank Rev. Ray Stubbe, Ernie "Preacher" Husted and Ernie Spencer. As I became the focal point for many of the letters, poems, photos, and phone calls, a tremendous appreciation grew for what Ray, Preacher and Spencer went through to pull this publication together.

For those of you who have been around a while, you know that it began as a newsletter of just 15 names and addresses, then grew to 100. Preacher volunteered to take it over from Ray and kept it going until he was activated for Operation Desert Storm. Then Ernie Spencer volunteered, developing it into a full-fledged magazine. I understand it was Spencer who introduced black and white photos to the magazine.

For reasons that are quite understandable, Ray Stubbe continues to be the contact point for many of you. That's okay, because Ray forwards your letters on to me so they can be shared with the rest of our brothers. You should know, too, that when you write directly to me, I also send Ray copies of your letters.

You'll find in this issue a message from Ray which discusses his desire to begin to "draw back" from being the focal point of the organization. As you read, you'll see he has his reasons. But don't panic. He'll never get completely away from us. During the annual reunion in Denver, 20 July 1991, Reverend Ray W. Stubbe, founder of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., was designated President Emeritus for Life. So, you see, we own him for life. But read what he has to say. I think you'll understand.

Now, I also need to offer an apology to all those who wrote to me as editor and never received an answer back. I wasn't ignoring you. But getting this issue out has been a little more hectic than I expect it to be in the future. By all means, keep your letters coming. Each one of you has a different perspective on the Khe Sanh experience. Each letter adds a little more wholeness to the shattered images we brought back, each one is an opportunity to help someone else see that another human being understands.

As you read through the letters, you will see we are all at so many different stations of life, dealing with life in as many different ways as it has dealt with us. For anyone out there who thinks they are the only one, that no one else will understand, we have among us others who mirror you. They have felt what you feel, have waded through the mires of disappointments, triggered the landmines of memories and flashbacks, have wondered why just as often. The survivors of Khe Sanh cut across several generations, across race, religion, politics, all the artificial designations. We are executives and artists, homeless and homebodies, time bombs and men of the cloth. We are the men of Khe Sanh, a chapter closed in time. There will be no more like us, no more when we are gone. But so long as we are still here, we know what you did, and we know who you are. Talk to us. — *Ed Evans, editor*



The Covington Reunion

(For more, see page 4)

Following the reunion dinner, Ernie Husted, Jr. (right), known to many through his efforts on behalf of the ***Khe Sanh Veteran*** *newsletter, is presented with a plaque by President Ken Penn, expressing the organization's appreciation for his continuing support and past dedication. For many members, the newsletter as edited by Ernie became the touchstone that melted time and space and allowed them to come home at last. Before the reunion dinner in Covington, Ky., Ernie shared a slide presentation concerning the actual siege of Khe Sanh Combat Base.*

Scenes From The Covington Reunion



The last U.S. flag still flying at KSCB when it was abandoned is held by (left to right) Richard Collier, Ken Penn, Ed Diaz and Carlos Morales.



Richard Collier provided wild memory trips with those long-ago sounds from his CD collection, shown behind him.



Ken Resnick says he can prove he was trained -- he never leaves home without it.



You never know who's still around after all these years, as the men of Whiskey/1/13 found out.



A scouting party of mixed members located a nearby German restaurant just right for chow time.



One of the great aspects of the Khe Sanh Veterans reunions has been that the vets don't come alone. They often bring their wives and significant others in order to share the reuniting experience.

Crosby's Poems

I am once again sending a few poems I have written. I know you're limited in regards to space. If you choose to print any or all of the poems (my preference would be ... *The Gate Before The Wall*), feel free to make your own choice.

I am a 100% service connected disabled Vet. I have lots more stories and poems, let me know if you would like more. I enjoy your letter and support it!

Keep up the good work. Semper Fi & God Bless,

Terry Lee Crosby, Sr.
17889 Birch St.
Hesperia, CA 92345
(619) 956-1241
USMC 1965-69
2/9, 3rdMarDiv Arty F/O

I choose to print whatever you send me, Terry. You're the reason we're here.

The Gate Before The Wall

by Terry Lee Crosby, Sr.

Nineteen sixty seven and nineteen sixty eight,
such a long time ago but I'm still standing at "The Gate."

I missed high school, football and being a kid
and now I'm trying to live with what I did!

It was for God and country and freedom we went
But little did we know it was just lives that were "spent"
for nothing, nothing absolutely nothing at all,
but went "because of the call."

And it wasn't like the movies, no heroes or John Waynes,
just lots of sleepless nights and much, much pain.

And with your buddies you learned not to get too tight
because in the morning you'd find they were lost in the night,
so you walked and walked lookin' for "the Cong"
and occasionally stopped to hit the bong.

And you did your job and did it well!!
Knowing if you didn't Vietnam would be your Heaven or Hell.
Hour's turned to days and daze to endless space,
then came the day you'd leave "that place!"

Back to America, "the land of the free,"
but little did we know how things would be,
signs and bottles were thrown in your face,
no, no hero just confusion and disgrace?

The people, the mood, the songs were quite clear,
Vietnam Veteran, no-no, we don't want to hear.
So you close "The Gate" and keep it to yourself ...
hoping tomorrow it will be on the shelf.

But tomorrow comes and to your dismay ...
Vietnam is still with you
DAY AFTER DAY AFTER DAY!!!

So you go through life doing your thing
but all the while you still "feel the sting" ...
Then many-MANY years later, "out of the blue"
America says "hey, we're proud of you"?

So you try to regroup and hold your head high ...
but it's too late — TOO LATE, the dreams, the shame, all you can do is hang your head and cry and pray to God, why ... Why??

The only monuments to the war are the dead, the maimed, the despairing and the forlorn.

"Ask not what your Country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country"????

Surviving, coming back, that's the real hell!

Terry added that he wrote this "the night I first saw The Wall in Washington, D.C."

The Past Makes Me Gasp

by Terry Lee Crosby, Sr.

When I was in Vietnam
I TRULY believed my actions
without a doubt were right
and I swore to my God
I would pursue my convictions
with "all" of my might!

BUT slowly
reality crept in
regardless how hard
we kept trying
all we were was PAWNS
in a GAME — just men
dying!

Even so "we" never gave up
we took it to the "bitter" end
BUT all it created
was a void
a hole
you can NEVER mend!

During my second tour
the void "engulfed" me
a very RUTHLESS ... space
for the horrid things I did
I'd convinced myself **not** to feel disgrace?

It seemed the less time
I had left — the shorter the days
the fog got thicker
a "blinding" haze

It gave me permission
to do things that felt
uneasy in my ... soul
somewhere during the "body counts"
I lost grasp of
my initial goal

I know **now** — but didn't **then**
it was a HERO I wanted to be
but the haunting wants of the past
has only brought me
to my "knees"!

Now what is needed
is a place to be alone
to cry
to let the pain out
a private place
a needed place
just a place
where I can
"SHOUT"!

You Are

"NOT"

Forgotten

by Terry Lee Crosby, Sr.

There are STILL
many
corpses and MIAs,
my brothers in Vietnam
waiting —
like dormant
temporarily voided
seeds
not sprouting
not sprouting in
the souls of
the "WONDERING"
bewildered and
"WAILING"
wives and
mothers and fathers
daughters and sons
dormant souls —
anticipating minds
"WAITING"
for the government
who are feverously
shining brass
on a sinking ship
a ship that is in debt
WAITING for them to
get
off their ASS
and end it
end the WONDERING
end the WAILING
end the pain!

Recounts Trip Back

Here are some attempts to remember my trip back in Jan92. If these are not usable, it's fine. I also have written about 1968 and want to write more. I'll send more if you want them.

Semper Fi,
Kent Wonders
2941 Plaza Encantada
Tucson, AZ 85718

Send them! Kent added a note: "Because Christians go to jail in Vietnam today, I think it's best to edit out the stuff I've highlighted. If you use this, the Viets will get it." Since I've respected Kent's wishes, anyone wondering what's missing can fill in the blanks by calling Kent at (602) 299-9655.

Bible Rash or Victory in Vietnam

by Kent Wonders

The week I got home from Vietnam, my Dad said, "I have a book you might like. It's *Victory in Vietnam.*" I thought, "oh sure, victory in Europe maybe (my Dad had done that) but no way in Vietnam!" The book was a missionary story which really got my attention when I began looking at the pictures. Some of the pictures were of the leprosarium south of Da Nang where just days before I had spent my last days in Vietnam. The book shocked me. How could I have been so cold to the thousands of Christians struggling in the storm of war that we went through? The seed, knowing that there were Christians in Vietnam, isolated and suffering, was planted in my heart.

While the years of suppressing the memories of Vietnam went by, my wife and family developed a deep love for Christian missionaries around the world and were able to travel to visit and help many. Gradually I started to remember and read books about Vietnam. The missionary stories touched me the most. One book I read and reread was ***(edited out)***. The ***(edited out)*** worked for years living in the Khe Sanh area of Vietnam, translating the Bible into the ***(edited out)*** language, where I spent the most tense part of my life.

A few years ago at a family reunion, an aunt came up to me and asked, "Do you think about Vietnam?" Of course! "Do you ever want to go back?" I had secretly dreamed about going back for years — if it could be more than just sightseeing. I wanted to do something useful for the people, especially for the Christians if I went back, not like the first trip, to break things and ..... She told me about a vet Marine in her church who had been back with a group of Christians. She sent me some speaking tapes of Roger Helle. That was the start of my January 1992 trip to Vietnam.

Bill, our group leader for a tour of I Corps, had called a meeting of 12 of us in his room. We needed to be united as a group and dependent on the Lord for the goals Bill had in mind for the team. I was amazed with some of the things he wanted to do — after all there were always two to four Vietnamese tour guides and officials watching us, except in rooms, and even the rooms were said to be bugged at times. Only the government recognized churches are allowed to function; outside of these, Christians are persecuted.

Bill's luggage was one of only several pieces that had not made it to Vietnam with us. In his luggage were ***(edited out)*** Bibles! We needed his bags. Finally they did arrive before we left and without being opened! We prayed. God delivered. And we were off.

Bill had planted a lot of seeds with the guides about how this group really had a lot of interest in tribal people, especially the ***(edited out)*** around ***(edited out)***, and that we really wanted to visit three or four villages where tours don't usually go. So on the appointed day the guides agreed to go to three or four villages.

The warning the night before the 14-hour day of bus riding (on a Russian-made bus with "I" beams for springs), was that the trip would be a "ride from hell" through mountain roads to the border of Laos. I would have rather walked like my first trip. The goods were spread out between us and the plan was talked over.

The ***(edited out)*** villages were neat considering the steep hills and the partial jungle that was still left. The houses were long elevated communal structures made out of logs and thatch mats. We took turns being interested in the officials while others just spread out and disappeared.

The pig pen under the house was surprisingly clean but interesting to me because the pot belly sow was allowing a small puppy to nurse. The intensity was almost like 24 years ago — stealth, yes — weapons, no — mission, Bibles. Do not leave them with people, we were told, because it might cause a commotion, but leave them where they will be found. I'm walking along this house wondering if anyone is inside.

These Bibles are getting old; two stuffed in my underwear, bouncing on the bus for hours, walking around. I'm wondering how long it takes to get Bible rash?

I peer in through a small crack, trying to get my eyes adjusted to the dark inside, when I realize two children are looking back at me and adult legs are right beside my nose. Grandma is looking out an opening above me. I step back and smile. She stares. I point to a log with notches. Grandpa comes to the door and with time and gesture, I think I'm invited in. Slowly trying to get up the log without losing my Bibles or balance, I enter what smells like the inside of the world's largest Weber smoker. They squat around the open earthen hearth, the area above the flames acts as the chimney. Wow! I'm really squatting beside people dressed in black wrap-around skirts, grinning at me with betal-nut grins ...

To this day my heart beats faster when I see the ***(edited out)*** baskets and heavy wood pedestal sitting in my home. My heart jumps with joy when I think about who discovered the Bible written in ***(edited out)*** above the door lentil. I'm sure God well matched those taught in ***(edited out)*** literacy to the Bibles. I choose to believe that for all survivors of war, God has His plan to reveal Himself, even to the ***(edited out)***.

The primitive subservient ***(edited out)***, without a written language, the Vietnamese, the mountain isolation, Wycliffe Bible translators, the Marines, the NVA, the ***(edited out)***, the apparently "blind" custom inspectors and guides, the burdened hearts of returning vets and more, all by accident! No, I don't think so.

On The Chin

by Kent Wonders

Our guide to Da Nang and north started our tour with some jokes and some "do's and don'ts." One of the "don'ts" was, in effect, "Do not cause a riot." He went on to describe a recent incident where some well-meaning Americans, no doubt vets, threw out large amounts of candy on a street corner. It caused big problems. He described it as a near riot.

When the time came to start north from Da Nang, my heart started pounding. Da Nang had been disappointing because so very little was recognizable, but surely the road north could not have changed too much. It had. The hills, mountains, and bays were just as I remembered but the towns and villages were not recognizable, even to someone who spent weeks walking Highway #1.

I wanted to stop and walk again, and finally we came to a halt in a long line of traffic backed up from a bridge building project. The guide said we could get out, but stay close and "no problems ... OK?"

As soon as I got to the bridge I knew right were I was. The 1968 bridge was gone but the old French tower was still there (I had slept in it the first night with the platoon). The village was now a town but I had to see and remember, so left the crowds waiting at the bridge. I headed along the north bank of the river. This is where we came to buy bread and firewood on those cold rainy monsoon days after all-night ambushes ...

I was so deep in thought that I didn't see the boy following me. Soon I realized he was holding his turtleneck shirt collar over his chin so I took notice. I went over to him and lowered his collar, over his protests, to see a new clean cut, exposing his chin bone for about three inches.

With the boy in tow we headed back to the bus to see if I could scrounge up any first aid stuff. No one had sutures (many of our group had brought medical supplies to give to clinics and hospitals), but several had band aids and antibiotic cream, so we started our little "Medcap." But the situation at the bridge had changed! Schools had let out and the market was closing for noon hour. The road and bridge were packed with people.

While working on the chin, with several vets passing supplies out the window of the bus, we hardly noticed the crowd gathering. Finally, I got the message when I realized I was now pressed against the bus and the guide was yelling for everyone to get in quickly. By the time the two would-be medics got in and the door closed behind us, there were several hundred people all around, not hostile, but curious. The only hostile persons were the driver and guide, probably more worried about their job security than over some cut chin.

Sleepless in Vietnam

by Kent Wonders

After 24 years, the sense of daily anticipation was all around, even at 5 a.m. I couldn't sleep so I left the hotel to listen and watch "Good Morning Vietnam."

I walked to a large market and watched as the merchants prepared their stalls for the day. Many recognized me from the day before and greeted me with happy chatter; most of it I didn't understand but I smiled back with a "good morning."

After leaving the market I went out into the drizzling rain and wandered until, on a narrow side street, I found an open door to a warehouse. The attendant ignored me while he laid on large bags of rice. Feeling melancholy, remembering the past and trying to relate it to the present, I stood there staring at the rain. Soon a little girl walked out of the sole house on the commercial block and just quietly stood beside me. After awhile, she walked back across the street.

The girl soon came back and quietly took my hand and led me across the street to her home. Inside the small main room were two wooden bed frames with a single thin mat for bedding and a small table with two stools. A mother with three more young children greeted me with a smile, pulled out a wooden stool, and put it in the middle of the room for me to sit on. The children all sat on the edge of a bed, legs dangling, eyes wide open staring at me. Not one word in any language was spoken. The woman went to the kitchen, a lean-to at the side of the house, and put on a pot of water. She soon poured me a cup of tea and sat down.

I sat there in deep thought, wondering where I was and what year it was. I remembered the French-speaking train station master not far from here 24 years ago. He was friendly, invited us in for tea several times, until I had some of the men thoroughly search his little station and found ammunition ... No, this lady invited the melancholy traveler in out of the cold rain for a hot cup of tea. The whole trip was like this lady's hospitality, sincerely meant.

Con Thien

by Kent Wonders

Visiting Con Thien was an emotional experience. The memories started to flood back as soon as I saw the gate for the market at Gio Linh. It looked the way it looked 24 years before, one of the few structures recognizable to me.

The road north to Con Thien reminded me of the many battles fought in this small sector by Marines from 1966 to 1969. Over and over we fought for the same ground; now it was all a tree farm, except for a few acres left to scrap metal diggers. The "Hill of Angels" is hardly distinguishable, but reminders are everywhere.

The guide warns when we leave the bus, "Stay on paths. Still mines ..." The hill looked freshly plowed in parts by people looking for metal. I looked closely and soon found many things I recognized, such as a combat boot, with only a quarter inch left above the sole, the stainless steel plate still intact. I wish the boot could talk to me. Where's the Marine? Where is his foot? How many years have you been here? I took it home and it's on my bookshelf. Pieces of dark green sandbags were everywhere. I think I see the trench line in the southwest area and where the battalion command bunker must have been in July 1968.

I would have left feeling empty except for one of the most moving times of the trip — four or five vets holding hands, praying for healing and the spiritual revival of Vietnam.

Sounds To Send Your Head Back When

Chris B. Smoak sent me an audio cassette program with a wild mix of 60's-70's music, RVN atmosphere and some sounds we'd all like to forget. Chris advises, "Wait for the right moment ... fix your favorite drink ... eat a bowl of rice ... and clear your mind to listen to this RVN-1 music program." He's done an interesting job, somewhat like a musical poem, but not a poem. He adds, "Caution, this audio program contains profanity at four different locations ... not suitable for young children."

His tape is the sole responsibility of, concept design of, full arrangement of, and recording, says Chris, of Jampac Productions.

If you'd like a copy, contact Chris at 10238-M Manassas Mill Rd., Manassas, VA 22110. But *please,* don't expect him to crank these out at his own expense. Even cassettes cost bucks. — ***The Editor***

Directory Directions

When you received your new Membership Directory, did you wonder about the abbreviations? They translate as follows: ***PK** = Parent of KIA; **BK** = Brother of KIA; **WK** = wife of KIA; **WD** = wife of deceased; **PD** = parent of deceased.*

Life Memberships Still Run $130

Dues for life membership in the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., are still $130. Our 119 life members are:

Harry L. Alderman
Bryson L. Allen
Philip L. Avvampato
John J. Balanco
Charles Berg
David J. Bland
Alex "Jeff" Bodenweiser
Earle G. Breeding
Kenneth O. Brewer
David F. Brombaugh
Robert Carnahan
Richard Claire
Larry Clark
Keith Cochran
W. T. Cook
Bill Correia
Robert M. Crabb
Pat Curtis
William H. Dabney
Gen. Raymond Davis
Dr. Harvey Demaagd
Richard E. Donaghy
Ken Doss
Rev. Walt L. Driscoll
Pierce Durham
Timothy Dwyer
Thomas Eichler
James Epps
J. Thomas Esslinger
Allen Ferg
Michael R. Fielding
Ronald L. Gatewood
Bruce A. Greene
William Griffith
BGen Harry T. Hagaman
Robert A. Hall
Randy D. Hardy
Ronald E. Harriman
Mike Harris
Jerome Hess
Victor Hoffman
Jack H. Howe
Richard J. Hubbard
Jerry E. Hudson
Harry Allen Hunt
Steve Johnson
John M. Kaheny
James N. Kaylor
Frank J. Kennedy
Duane Kepler
Lee Klein
John King Knope
Joseph J. Kundrat
Donald Lacy
James A. Lahr
James P. Laverty
James Lea
David J. Leighton
G. L. (Red) Logan
Col. David E. Lownds
Albert R. Lumpkin
John J. Macias
William Maves
Larry McCartney
Frederick McEwan
Dennis McNeal
Lewis S. Messer
Lawrence Meyer
W. Scott Miller
Kelley Nelson
Greg E. Nitkowski
Michael O'Hara
Joseph Oliver
Michael J. Padula
Ronald Parsons
Charles E. Patterson
Richard Peloquin
Kenneth Penn
George Peterson
John Pettit
Robert L. Pisor
Gerald Wayne Post
Donald M. Rait, Jr.
Louis Rann
Charles D. Rudd
Harve Saal
Hammond Salley
John L. Schwaner
Keith Seibold
Donald E. Shanley
Mr. & Mrs. Henry Smith
Victor B. Snider
Melvin E. Sopp
Richard L. Soto
Ernie E. Spencer
Gerald Sorensen
David R. Spry
Steven R. Steigh III
Thomas Steinhardt
James Storc
Fr. Thomas Stott
Rev. Ray W. Stubbe
Mark Swearengen
Ralph Takemire
Jerome E. Thomas
Charles "M" Thomson
David F. Tomazic
Robert Turner
James E. Updike
Leonard Vernardos
Theodore M. Vdorick
Art Walbroehl
James Walsh
James B. Wilkinson
Kent Wonders
John Wright

Deceased:
Daniel L. Baldwin
William J. Barkowski

The Time Has Come To 'Let Go'

The following letter is from Rev. Ray W. Stubbe to the KSV, Inc., President, Ken Penn:

Over a quarter of a century ago a very special group of men found themselves in the enchanted place called Khe Sanh, Vietnamese for "green river." For many, it was a place of surrealistic beauty, and for many it had become a place of terrors and devastation so great that one knew they were in the presence of something far more than human. The lush growth, cool air, playful and friendly Bru tribespeople we had promised to protect, all sat atop the crater of an extinct volcano (hence the red clay), an area born in great noise, heat and violence, a heritage we were to know. Those who found themselves there gave everything they had, shared the little they had with each other and for each other were closer than perhaps to other blood family members. That which is best in humanity: caring for each other, dedication to service, standing firm and even defiant in the presence of that which would destroy, all while feeling completely isolated, uncertain of support and survival, cut-off and in another world, became the setting of all who were there at Khe Sanh, whether this was in 1962, in the Hill Battles of 1967, in the Siege of 1968, in the mobile operations of 1969, the large 1971 operation or small outpost later that year, or the plane shot down over the airbase in 1972, or, in fact, any time. We were welded together as brothers forever in the heat of the battle. We learned how life was so extremely precious. Veterans of that battlefield have since contributed much to their communities, and have never forgotten their buddies who didn't make it back home, nor will we ever forget them, for they live in our souls, and we all are, as Kevin Macaulay notes, "better persons because we've known them."

It is now just about a decade since a listing of 20 Khe Sanh veterans became the nucleus of what would become Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Those first 20 were: Harper L. Bohr, Jr., Jeff Bodenwiser, Dick Cruz, David Doehrman, David S. Harrington, Robert Hatfield, Dennis Herb, Ernie Husted, Frank Iodice, Daniel Kelley, Christopher Lane, David E. Lownds, Kevin C. Macaulay, John & Carolyn Miller (missionaries), Scott Miller, Bert Mullins, Rick Noyes, Scott W. Richardson, myself, and James B. Wilkinson. Our group has rapidly grown from the small beginning of a few acquaintances to the approximately 3,000 member organization we now enjoy, which is quite a miracle in itself.

"Pappy" Schlack, XO of the recon company at Khe Sanh (which lost over 80% of its men dead or evacuated wounded during the Siege) was once quoted as saying that upon his return he would open a bar for Khe Sanh survivors, and if ever the crowd became two men deep, he'd know someone was lying!

Now, following a dedicated decade of gathering and nurturing, it has come time for me to "let go," to relinquish my part in the leadership team, and therefore tender my resignation as Secretary and Member of the Board of Directors effective 30 September 1994. (If you wish, I will continue those functions of the Secretary pertaining to membership record maintenance and development, mail our magazines to new members, until someone may be identified who has computer capability and is reliable and interested in doing the job. The parts of the Secretary's job I wish to relinquish are taking Minutes and the expectation of being present at future reunions or Board meetings.

This is in keeping with the gradual "letting-go" I had initiated almost from the beginning, with the giving to Ernie Husted the responsibility of our magazine, the transfer of leadership which Earle Breeding so aptly and with much dedication and effort on behalf of our group took up, and which you, Ken, have continued, during which we have dedicated our own Memorial in Arlington, seen our own group identity emerge as we gathered at two very successful reunions in 1993 and 1994 which were the direct results of you and your wife, Bernice, as great gifts to our brotherhood which have so healed and enriched us all. Despite my efforts to recede into the background, however, there appears to be a certain influence that I have been accorded that is unhealthy for our group. The group must abide by the will of the majority of both the membership and the Board with no single individual wielding undue or disproportionate power if it is to be healthy. The gifts of all members must emerge and be nurtured; this will only occur if members are permitted to contribute their talents and heart to our fellowship. Mike O'Hara's formation of Area Coordinators to keep in contact with members and develop leadership is a stroke of genius. Ernie Spencer has devoted his special artistic ability with the result that we have a first-class magazine. Carl Oksnee has developed a super PX. Janet Parker is beginning a Women's Network that should prove to be as invaluable for wives as our organization is for its members. Bill Maves continues to provide us with dedicated and meticulously executed work as our Treasurer. There are many, many who have provided us with names of new members, have helped at reunions, have shared their expertise and encouragement and vision. We truly have a very, very special family, our Khe Sanh Vets, Inc.! May our gracious Lord continue to bless us all that we may continue to be a blessing to others!

Ray W. Stubbe

Suggestions To Consider

In a letter about marketing and advertising as it pertains to this magazine, Terrence D. Arndt added, "I would also suggest that you consider setting aside 10% of profits to help "Khe Sanh Veterans" in financial need. Many of them have suffered emotionally after the war. It always seems difficult to find an effective way to help our brothers. While there are other organizations, who better than our own. A suggestion for you to consider."

Semper Fidelis!
Terrence D. Arndt
Fox 2/26

Vietnam Friendship Village Project

This poem (see "Vietnamese!" below) was written for the delegation of Vietnamese veterans who attended the International Conference on the Vietnam Friendship Village Project, held in Santa Cruz, Calif., May 10-15, 1994.

The delegation included Sr. Lt. Gen. Tran Van Quang (Ret.), who commanded the patriots in the area we called I Corps; Mr. Chu Do, chief combat engineer for the Vietnamese during the war; Mr. Hynh Van Trinh, negotiator at Paris, and Mr. Nguyen Van Huynh.

The poem was delivered, in English and in Vietnamese, at a luncheon hosted by American veterans of the Vietnam War to honor the Vietnamese, on May 12, 1994, at the El Palomar Restaurant in the Palomar Hotel in Santa Cruz.

I served at Khe Sanh, both on the Parachute Drop Zone and on the Airfield, with "Tailpipe Mike," the USAF Combat Control Team directing the aerial delivery of troops and supplies, in February and March of 1968.

Walter J. Smith

Vietnamese!
Copyrighted 1994 by Walter Jesse Smith

Oh, patriots of Qui Nhon, Hue, Dalat, Khe Sanh,
Every city, town, and village in Vietnam:
We obeyed our rulers as soldiers ought to do;
Lying to everyone, they had us assault you.
Upon retreat from the ruin imposed by their stealth,
We discovered they were in a stupor with wealth.
Now we look to you for leads on how to revise
A moral order shredded by politic lies.

'... 20 feet From The Wire'

A friend I wrote when I got to Oki (from Khe Sanh) wrote back that they were getting tore up. He was with Whisky Battery. I stayed there on Oki for 1-1/2 years. I watched on TV there when the shelling started and I wanted to get back so much but felt there was little chance of getting back to Whisky.

As I remember when I/3/12 got to Khe Sanh at the end of Jan. '67, I don't remember any perimeter wire at all. Because I distinctly remember one time I got outpost duty. It was cold, raining, and we didn't have a fighting hole, no wire in front or nothing. It was already dark when they put us out. Me and my buddy, we sat or laid there all night in the rain trying to be invisible. And I tried to smoke a cigarette with my poncho on as everyone has and it didn't work, that smoke just goes back up in your face and nose. And your imagination runs wild with you.

Later, my (Whisky Battery) gun seemed like it was within about 20 feet of the wire looking down a slope, I think. When the C-130's didn't stop to unload, and the Bru stopped coming to the dump, and rumors about using nukes from the 105's, and I remember being issued a gas mask — well, I think I was ready to go home. Ha!

I remember when we got the Ontos and the Army Dusters with quad 50 calibers and twin 40mm cannon in March '67. They set up close to us and they were awesome. One night I remember them firing down in the valley by the river and hearing somebody screamin' bloody murder. And watching Puff do his thing. I saw the SR-761 Black Bird fly over a few times, too.

It says in the Marines In Vietnam '67 history book that in Jan-Feb. we were first authorized to fire into and across the DMZ. We couldn't reach the DMZ from Khe Sanh with 105's or 155's.

It says "while the allied forces were too small to be a deterrent to major enemy incursions, they did serve as an advance warning unit." Shit! I guess we were just a big LP then, huh?

Sam Rutledge

New Look At Generation X

I felt compelled to write and share with my fellow Khe Sanh veterans an experience I had recently. This experience has changed my opinion of the so-called Generation-X and renewed my faith in the young people of our country.

I was a member of Alpha Company, 1/9 and managed not only to survive the siege but also the battles for Hills 64, 471, 552, and 689. Myself and other members of the old battalion are currently collecting information for a book in progress about Khe Sanh and it was due to this effort that I've enlisted the help of a commercial artist. Although she lives in Georgia, we agreed that our first work session would be at my home in Alabama. She and I spent the better part of this past weekend going over ideas for drawings of certain events and the more she heard about Khe Sanh, the more she wanted to know. We spent many hours looking at photographs and reading through all the sections of each book that had anything to do with the siege. Her interest in Khe Sanh has grown to the point that her local library has limited her to only two Vietnam books at a time.

Since she was due to leave for home early on Sunday morning, she wanted to spend a few hours late on Saturday night going over the books again, alone with he own thoughts. After closing the door to my "office", she didn't come out until it was well past midnight. We said our good-bys the next morning and it wasn't until Monday that I went into my "office" again. On my desk was my cherished copy of David Douglas Duncan's book, *War Without Heroes*. Laying on the cover was a neatly folded piece of paper which I picked up and started to read. I'm not ashamed to say that my eyes welled up with tears as I read what Jennifer had written. It's so powerful in its simplicity that you'd think only a Khe Sanh veteran could have written it. I wanted to share it with all those who survived Khe Sanh and I hope it will mean as much to them as it does to me. It was written by Jennifer Paisley Ferguson, 24-years-old, married with a baby daughter. If only there were more people like her in this world.

Semper Fi.

Dave Ford
1stPlt., A/1/9 (67-68)

I Will Stand
by Jennifer Paisley Ferguson

As the sun sets behind a war-torn hill
I will stand
In the final seconds before chaos
I will stand
Under the red glow of the intruding lights
I will stand
Amidst the thundering quake of my hell
I will stand
With my last stretch of dignity
I will stand.

Catkiller 14: Air Incident

On 24 Jan. 68, a dark, overcast day, I was sitting in the Dong Ha Ready-room. The field phone rank that morning, a convoy had been hit on Route 9 north of Camp Carroll, was topped and needed emergency help. The weather was very bad: low ceiling and poor visibility, but we were undaunted and were off the "rescue." My observer, a major, and I ran to my O-1 named "Twiggy." We took off and quickly found the small resupply convoy, a jeep or two and a half dozen trucks with maybe 45 grunts. The convoy had been hit hard and repeatedly raked with small arms and RPGs.

When we arrived, all the vehicles were knocked out and were being used for target practice by NVA RPG crews. Some Marines were killed and many others were wounded; dead and dying men were in the vehicles, sprawled out on the road and laying in the drainage ditches beside the road where the survivors had congregated and were pleading for help.

The major called for a Camp Carroll — the 3rd MarDiv's artillery base — fire mission but the convoy was so close and below the artillery plateau that the tubes could not be elevated nor depressed enough to hit the enemy. The NVA had hit so close to our artillery that our field guns wee useless. This ambush was an example of shrewd NVA planning and execution that repeatedly cost us heavily in equipment and lives.

When the artillery was determined to be useless, we were far beyond the range of NFG, so we went to our last resort. We requested fighter-bombers, but the clouds were very low and the AF could not get in.

The grunts were pleading for a med-evac. We requested helo med-evac but none were available. I could not believe the Marines had no standby med-evac choppers for the DMZ! Next, we called on the emergency frequency for any helo to come get the wounded out ... none answered. We called again and established contact with a Marine CH-46. It replied but it was unable to come ... I thought the med-evac mission was not to liking of fat and safe transport choppers.

There was no help from the sky but there was a Marine M-48 medium tank with a dozer blade doing road maintenance with an Army 40mm Duster escort a mile or two to the west. The major made radio contact with them and they were told to stay out of the ambush zone but they came in close to look down the road and see for themselves. The tanker flatly refused to obey instructions. He picked up volunteers and with four or five grunts holding onto the side of the tank, dashed into the

teeth of the ambush. The NVA were observed to fire one anti-tank rocket. The RPG hit the tank exactly where the turret turns on the chassis. The men on the side of the tank were blown off. The tank went off the road and crashed into the ditch. The crew crawled out of the turret and jumped into the ditch. The tank, its crew and the grunts never fired a shot.

The Duster crew saw their big buddy take the direct hit. They, too, were told to stay out. "We're comin' in!" was the reply. Seconds later the charging Duster was hit by a well-aimed RPG. The tracked and lightly armored vehicle stopped dead with one tread on the road and the other in the ditch. The crew ran from the vehicle to the safety of the ditch while one brave man fired the twin 40mm guns covering the other men until the loaded ammo was exhausted. The guns were never reloaded. The gunner abandoned the vehicle and hid with his buddies in the roadside ditch.

I overheard the major radio Camp Carroll that all those men should be put in for medals.

We could see the backblasts from the RPGs. The major knew we had to do what we could to help the grunts. I opened my windows and we started shooting our AR-15s. We had our magazines loaded with tracers. We pointed the muzzles toward the RPG nests, walked the tracers into the target area and then let our automatic rifles rip. Hot shell casings piled up and covered the floor.

Within minutes I got a call from Dong Ha Direct Air Support Center and was put in radio contact with a pair of A-4s out of Chu Lai which were holding over Dong Ha full of fight. The weather was a very dangerous 600-feet, ragged overcast. The mountain tops around me were well into and above the cloud layer. The weather was nearly impossible for jet traffic, much less an air strike! I described the mountainous terrain to the Marine aviators, ambush site and enemy situation. The Marine aviators said they were "coming in with snake and nape," and for me to mark the target.

The jets then called for a ground controlled radar approach (GCA) to Dong Ha. When they broke out of the clouds near the runway, they skimmed over the Marine base and picked up Route 9 flying just above it and westbound.

The jets radioed they were about a minute out. I tried to mark the target by diving "Twiggy" and firing my 2.75" white phosphorus rockets but they failed to shoot. I immediately realized in my rush to main the plane at Dong Ha I had not manually armed the rockets. I then did the next best thing. I grabbed two smoke grenades and threw them on the target areas, one on each side of the road.

No sooner was this done than the major and I picked up the jets visually. The small, light grey jets were dragging the road, one behind the other, with black smoke pouring from their exhausts. I had never seen such a low level and dangerous attack. What guts!

The jet jocks reported seeing the smoke and convoy. They broke away from the road with one on each side coming in as low and slow as possible. I observed that they were on a good target heading and radioed to them, "Cleared in hot!"

The first A-4 dropped two large canisters on the north side and his sister ship dropped his pair of canisters on the south side. The bombs broke apart and a hot, orange flame skipped and spread across the rolling, heavily vegetated terrain. The jets poured on the coals and immediately pulled straight up and in a flash they had disappeared into the overcast. They made two more attack runs each by way of the Dong Ha GCA and dropped pairs of 250-lb. bombs on each pass. When the air strike was over, the enemy was quiet but we did not know what would happen next.

The grunts informed us that men were dying of wounds. Something had to be done for them. I did the only thing I could think to do. I called Dong Ha tower and asked for any helo. I was told there was an Army "Slick" (Huey) in the refueling pit. I told the tower to ask him to come.

I made radio contact with the Huey pilot. He informed me he was enroute. I described the ambush site. The Huey was soon in sight, flying low and coming up Route 9 just like the jets had done. The grunts popped smoke. The major said for us to fly low over the enemy positions. "We have to draw the enemy fire!" I flew as low as I could over the enemy positions and was no fired upon. The Huey landed on the road and picked up many badly wounded men that were dragged to the chopper and pushed inside. The Huey lifted off, turned around at a hover blowing road dust and debris everywhere, and flew low level to the east and disappeared.

We told the other grunts including many walking wounded to hold on. There was an armored convoy forming up just outside of Dong Ha. Several minutes later this convoy was rolling like the cavalry coming to the rescue. A half dozen wheeled vehicles were led by a Marine M-48 tank, closely followed by two Army M55 tracked vehicles mounting quad-.50 cal. machineguns. A half mile from the ambush site the quad-.50's were pointed on either side of the road and commenced firing. The roar was loud as red tracers streamed and pulverized the terrain. Branches were snapped

from trees and the beaten ground became obscured by clouds of swirling dust.

As the armored convoy rolled into the ambush site, the NVA never fired. I believe they had pulled out minutes before. Then came choppers, several of them. They landed on the road and more of the wounded and dead were taken away.

We were told to land and report to the 3rd MarDiv HQ bunker. The Asst. G-2 wanted to know from the major and me what had happened. We told him. He said that those grunts and aviators were dam brave soldiers ... but our losses were high, too high and the enemy's loss, if any, was unknown.

Such was life in the DMZ.

Hardy Z. Bogue
"Catkiller 14"

Editor's Note — Hardy Z. Bogue was then a second lieutenant Army aviator with five months in-country. He and other O-1 Bird Dog pilots from his unit, 220th Avn. Co., 1st Avn. Bde, operated regularly over the Khe Sanh area during January 1968 in support of the 3rd MarDiv.

He Was The Ammo Tech In The Ammo Dumps

I volunteered to come up to Khe Sanh at the first opportunity I had. I was an Ammo Tech in the ammo dumps. My father was a career Marine in Korea and Vietnam. Since the age of eight I was going to be a career Marine, too.

I knew this tour was going to be the ultimate in my life, I was not disappointed. There were times of guilt, when I was feeling so good about what I was doing at my job, yet in the hills the grunts suffering miserably.

I was wounded on 9 April 68 at ASP-1. I was drinking some orange juice in my bunker when I heard an explosion that sounded like it was in our dump. So, I ran out to check it.

When I got to the Grade III bunker, I noticed some people walking with a guy who was bleeding on his right side. There was tear gas in the area, so I ran back to my bunker and grabbed my flack jacket, helmet, shovel and put on my dirty gas mask. I couldn't breathe so I ripped off my gas mask. When I got down to the Grade III, I noticed a guy with his chest cavity gone. I didn't realize he was dead, so I picked him up and carried him behind another berm.

I then picked up my shovel and tried to throw dirt on the fire. My buddies were behind another bunker, yelling for me to get out of there, that it was going to blow. I tried one more shovel of dirt, and that didn't work, so I ran looking for shelter. I found some 4.2 illumination pallets. As I was trying to make myself the smallest target possible, I looked up and saw my best friend giving me a thumbs-up, meaning he was okay. I then heard a really loud explosion and everything turned a bright orange.

At this time I didn't realize I was on fire, I thought that it was a direct hit on my friend so I worked my way to where he was, still not realizing that I was on fire. I tried to breathe, but the air was all gone, and that was painful. I then got knocked down another time to my knees, and all I kept thinking was that I didn't want to make my wife a young widow.

I headed towards the Arty Bttry 105mm. While walking over there I tried to think of first aid for burns, shock and infection, now noticing that my right arm was melting. When I got closer to the gun park, there was a sentry wearing a gas mask. He told me to follow him, and he took off running. I was exhausted at that point so I went to the closest bunker which happened to be the Command Post.

As I was walking in their headquarters, there was a Major looking at me, still smoldering. He said, "My God, son, were you in all that?" He yelled for his corpsman and they took off my flack jacket, it was melted in the back. The corpsman said he couldn't help me. I told them to put some water on my butt, because it was still smoldering.

They asked me if I wanted to go to the Battery Aid Station, or wait until the smoldering was out. Another round landed close, so I said, "Let's go."

I was amazed how big it was underground. They cut my boots off, which had melted on my feet. The next thing I remember is I woke up in Charlie Med with a TV, and my Platoon Sergeant came up to see how I was doing.

I asked about Cpl. Charlie Stephens, and had been told that he got burned on his hands with WP that was on my shovel. I asked him to send him to see me and he said he was too busy. I thought that he was dead. A couple months later I received a letter along with some pictures of what happened to us. I really cherish those pictures.

However, HQMC Historical Branch says it never happened thus, no Purple Heart, all these years! But thanks to ***Khe Sanh Vet*** newsletter, the most recent edition was an article by the senior corpsman during the siege at Charlie Med, "Doc" Robert J. Topmiller. He just happened to receive a medal for that day, treating casualties from the ammo dump explosion from hostile fire.



This is what was left of the PC in the Grade III area where it all started.



The 4.2 illumination pallets where Tom sought shelter; note the PC bumper and powder cannisters.

I am going to send you three pictures. One is what is left of the PC that was in the Grade III area where it started, another picture is the 4.2 illumination pallets. If you can look in the center, you can see the burned area where I was seeking shelter, if you look close you can see the bumper from the PC, and some of the powder canisters.

The third picture is my favorite. The red flag was a red nylon seat out of the C-130 that was shot down near us. Whenever they would shoot at us and obviously miss, I would wave old "Maggie's Drawers" at them. The phrase was on a c-ration case, shall and will was mixed up not intentionally. I understand that no one was able to claim it, so he must be another name on the wall.

Semper Fi,

Tom Winston
644 East Cottonwood Dr.
Brea, CA 92621

3/26 Reunion News

During the period 21-24 July, former members of the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines and their families and friends met in the Washington, D.C. area.



'For those who fight for it ...'

There were over 100 people attending the various events over the four-day period.

On Thursday the 21st, there was registration and a welcome reception.

On Friday, attendees took the bus tour of various sites of interest to the military in the D.C. area. The tour included stops at the Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima statue) in Arlington, the Arlington Cemetery (where we had the opportunity to visit the Khe Sanh vets plaque among the other sites), the Navy and Marine Corps museums and the USS BARRY at the Washington Navy Yard, and (finally) a trip to the Wall. Later that evening, after a short return to the hotel, we went to Eighth and I where we had a tour of the Commandant's house and observed the parade. The tour of the house was courtesy of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. General Mundy, a former S-3 of 3/26, was unable to attend since he was on an overseas trip to Guam and Hawaii.

Saturday was a day of rest and recuperation with no scheduled Activities other than the banquet. Major General Matthew Caulfield (Ret.) gave a moving and emotional speech at the banquet.

On Sunday morning, after a memorial service held by Chaplain Moore of Quantico, the members met for a brunch prior to departing. A drawing for membership in the Khe Sanh vets was held during the brunch and 10 annual memberships were presented.

The "organization" is planning to meet in the San Diego area in 1996. At that time we hope to elect officers and become a non-profit organization.

We are trying to expand our mailing list and welcome any additions.

Semper Fi,

Walter L. Whitesides
10063 Wood Sorrel Lane
Burke, VA 22015
(703) 250-5571

Khe Sanh Veterans Women's Network

Dear Friends,

I regret not being able to attend the gathering this past summer in Covington. Professional duties as well as personal responsibilities made it impossible for me to join you. I certainly missed being with you.

Now that summer is over, I hope you look forward to autumn feeling refreshed and renewed from time spent with family and friends during vacations, picnics and barbecues. In nature, autumn is a time of preparation for winter. This is a good time for the Women's Network to begin preparing for next year's reunion in terms of our special needs.

What are your concerns regarding having a special meeting of our own, childcare, activities for the youngsters, etc.? I need your ideas and suggestions so that I can work with the convention chairman to make the next reunion an opportunity for us to see old friends, make new ones, spend quality time with our families and to support each other. Please send your comments, ideas and suggestions to me at: 23 North Navajo Drive, Waretown, N.J. 08758; (609) 698-7120 (after 7 p.m.).

In the next issue, I hope to share with you plans for the next reunion and outline some goals for the Women's Network. In order to do so, I need to hear from you.

The following is more from my darker, brooding side. For now, take care and be strong.

Janet M. Parker

Trying To Keep Your Dreams Alive
by Janet M. Parker

The first order of the day
is simply to survive,
just to keep your heart and soul intact
and your mind a fertile field.
Trying to keep your dreams alive
in a world often unforgiving
is like trying to catch a rainbow
in a war zone called society.
Reaching out to one another
is our anchor in the wind.
It's the tie that binds us close
when adrift in a sea of pain.
And each day it gets harder
to stand against the tide.
We're just searching for an answer,
trying to keep our dreams alive.

Howdy, Brothers

Sorry it took so long to find you all! I want to let you all know I've been searching for the last 25 years. Trying to locate someone I was in Khe Sanh with, also for the last 14 years I've been trying to prove a "stressor factor" during the March 30, 1968 battle to the VA to help support my PTSD claim.

I received my benefits before I found you all, but I have a reevaluation coming up in August 1994. I've received support letters from several of my partners and CO's to help prove my PTSD claim and the "stressor factor" and eyewitnesses.

We need to unite together again and stand with one another and help carry our wounded in America. We need to go on another operation to find our dead and wounded in America. Civilian life to some of us was not favorable! In fact, life was F____D and there are still brothers out there that are wounded. They are out of ammo, and surrounded by PTSD! I know, I was there, but got med-evaced! Now that I survived it I'm trying to bring awareness to all of you that we need to carry an extra round, we need to hump another hill! I would like to call it Operation Scotland III! Come on, men, I have PTSD, too, but I will persevere. I was also on Operation Scotland I and II. We were already picking up our dead and wounded at age 18. Semper Fidelis must be living inside all of us.

Lt. Dillon, you were always the man! Thanks for helping carry my 60 mortar tube and base plate for me during Khu Bon 4 or Phu Loc 6! Can you help me again? Take care, I've never forgotten you, in fact, I haven't forgotten any of you.

Well, I could write forever to all of you. I just received info of the Khe Sanh reunion. I'm in Oregon so that's a long drive for me (I don't fly anymore). I am trying to figure out a way. So hope to see you there.

Semper Fi,

Joe Van Eeten, B/1/26,
60 Mortars, Mar68-Apr69
P.O. Box 333
Yamhill, OR 97148

Put Me On The List

Recently found out about this and want very much to be on the mailing list. I was with H, 1/13 during the Siege.

Thank you so much and Semper Fi,

Pete Hightower
704 Lee St.
La Grange, GA 30240
(706) 845-8595

Hill Fights

Have been up to Khe Sanh for the "Hill Fights." We walked from KSFSB to 881 North and beyond. Saw the elephants, the flies and the B-52's giving close air support (God bless the USAF). Had we (2/3, 3/3 and 3/9) not met the NVA in those hills, the siege of Khe Sanh would have been nine months earlier, in late spring 1967. We of 2/3, 3/3 and 3/9 would have gotten more of them and lost less Marines if the XM-16E1's had worked.

I was released from active duty 2Feb68 and followed the siege on TV, in *Life*, *Newsweek*, etc. and etc. I knew you could hold out but the news media really thought they had an upcoming story as their mouths watered to report the NVA overrunning KSFSB and headline the story — "Dien Bien Phu Two."

Charles Patrinos sent me a few issues of the Khe Sanh Veteran. Now I want to sign aboard, so please sign me up to a regular subscription to your outstanding magazine and survivors' club. Check enclosed for $20.

Semper Fi,

Fred Monahan
E/2/3, Apr-May67
20-16 Beacon Hill Dr.
Holland, PA 18966
(215) 579-7985

Notes On A Few Who Are Missing, But Accounted For

Rev. Ray Stubbe sent in some information about several of our number who have died recently:

Daniel Baldwin — died 11 June 1994 as a result of stomach cancer. Daniel was the Commander of Command and Control North, the headquarters for the four FOBs in I Corps, and was at Khe Sanh in the beginning of the Siege as part of a force that re-entered Khe Sanh village after it fell and was evacuated in order to destroy classified information and food supplies and determine the activities of the NVA there. A very large amount of NVA armament was captured during this action. Daniel and his wife, Angelica, lived in Fayetteville, NC.

James Kinane — died 16 June 1994 as a result of cancer to the throat. James was shot in the throat in Vietnam, and possibly as a result of the effects of Agent Orange, later developed a severe cancer. Jim was a member of Co. B, 3rd Recon, at Khe Sanh. Jim and his wife, Peggy, lived in Long Island.

Robert L. Murphy — died, was a member of VMFA-542.

William J. Bartkoski — died 1 June 1994, had diagnosed leukemia as of last fall, but died as a result of a brain hemorrhage — possibly stress and high blood pressure. Was a very good friend of Tom Bystrom, who died recently as a result of a car accident.; William was a member of Alpha Battery, 1/13, and was a Life Member of our Khe Sanh Vets — actually, contributed over and above the Life Membership.

Road Honors POWs, MIAs

John Seitz, A/1/13, from Babylon, Long Island, NY, wanted us to know that, according to the newspaper article he sent in, "Long Island now can boast what is arguably the largest memorial to prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action in the state, perhaps the nation."

It came about when Gov. Mario Cuomo signed into law a bill renaming 109-mile Sunrise Highway as POW-MIA Memorial Highway. It runs from Long Island to the tip of Montauk.

The Case Of Joe Yandle

The following letter was sent to Bill Maves, who shares it with us:

Enclosed please find my check for enrollment of Mr. Joseph Yandle in the Khe Sanh Veterans organization. Joe served at Khe Sanh during the Siege as a member of A/1/9. Joe is presently serving a life sentence at the Massachusetts Correctional Facility, Norfolk, MA. His address is:

Bay State Correctional Facility
c/o Mr. Joseph Yandle
P.O. Box 73
Norfolk, MA 02056

Joe was arrested in July 1972 for his part in a liquor store robbery in Medford, MA. Joe drove the getaway car and while he never even entered the liquor store, his accomplice shot and killed the

Khe Sanh

Veterans, Inc.

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PX Order Form
Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc,

Quantity	*Price*	*Item Descriptions*
_____	**$8.00**	USMC Caps — All Colors
_____	**$9.00**	Khe Sanh Veteran Cap (red, white, blue, black; one size fits all)
_____	**$2.00**	Bumper Stickers - Khe Sanh logo
_____	**$1.00**	Window Stickers - Khe Sanh logo
_____	**$3.75**	Khe Sanh Veteran's Pin, 25th Annivesary
_____	**$10.00**	POW/MIA Windsocks, 56"
_____	**$4.50**	Bullet Key Rings — .45, .38, or .35 cal.

Shirts: (In sizes L, XL, XXL & XXXL. Add $1 for XXL & XXXL Sizes. See next page for descriptions)

_____	**$18.00**	The Title, Polo, Any Color
_____	**$18.00**	POW/MIA, Polo, Black
_____	**$15.00**	The Title, T-shirt, white
_____	**$15.00**	Vietnam Vet Statue, T-shirt, white
_____	**$15.00**	Vietnam Picture, T-shirt, white
_____	**$15.00**	Khe Sanh Picture, T-shirt, white
_____	**$15.00**	Khe Sanh Map, T-shirt, white
_____	**$11.00**	USMC, T-shirt, red
_____	**$15.00**	POW/MIA, Sweatshirt, black
_____	**$13.00**	Wife's Shirt, T-shirt, any color (M, L, XL, XXL)
_____	**$23.00**	Khe Sanh Sweatshirt, any color
_____	**$48.00**	USMC Jacket, red satin
_____	**$20.00**	Khe Sanh Duffle Bag (11"x23"), any color
_____	**$38.00**	Warm-Up Suits, nylon-lined, any color
_____	**$45.00**	Khe Sanh Windbreaker, any color, (L, XL, XXL, XXXL)
_____	**$20.00**	USMC Gold Necklace
_____	**$38.00**	Vietnam Khe Sanh Wall Clock (Personalized, add $7.00)
_____	**$35.00**	USMC Wall Clock
_____	**$23.00**	"POW/MIA" & "The Rifleman's Creed" Plaques
_____	**$8.00**	Khe Sanh Patch, embroidered with six colors
_____	**$8.00**	25th Anniversary Photo

PLEASE CIRCLE SIZES

✔ ***Make Checks Payable To:***
"Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc."

Please fill in:

Name:_____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Phone: _____

Mail To:

Carl Oksnee
6317 72nd Street
Kenosha, WI 52142
Tel. (414)694-8512

Description of Shirts

☐ The Title Shirt — *On the back is written the following:*

It cannot be inherited nor can it ever be purchased.
You or no one alive can buy it for any price.
It is impossible to rent and it cannot be lent.
You alone and our own have earned it with your Sweat,
Blood and Lives
You own it Forever
The Title
United States Marine.

☐ Warrior Shirt — *On the back is written the following:*

Warrior by day,
Lover by night,
Drunkard by choice
Marine by God.

☐ Vietnam Vet Statue T-shirt reads:

VIETNAM VET and PROUD OF IT

☐ Wife's T-shirt reads:

If you think being a Marine is tough,
Try being married to one.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall Disk

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., has purchased the last 6,000 disks cut from the panels of India Black Granite used for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The disks are available either blank or engraved with one of three styles:

Blank — $10.00
Standard Engraving — $25.00
Personalized (with standard engraving) — $40.00
(All prices plus shipping & handling)

Order Form

(Please Print)

Name: _____

Address: _____ ***City:*** _____ ***State:*** _____ ***Zip:*** _____

Phone: ( ) _____

Design Choice:

☐ _____ A. Khe Sanh

☐ _____ B. Lest We Forget

☐ _____ C. Remember Their Sacrifice

☐ _____ D. Blank

Personalized Info: _____

Total Quantity: _____

Offered by:

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.
6317 - 72nd Street
Kenosha, WI 53142
(414) 694-8512

Price _____
Applicable Sales Tax _____
Shipping & Handling _____
Total _____

A.



B.



C.



Khe Sanh

Veterans, Inc.

PX

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clerk — Mr. Joe Reppucci. According to the law they were both sentenced to life imprisonment without parole.

What initially got me interested in this case was a segment on *60 Minutes* which aired a few months ago. During that show they compared Joe's case to that of Katherine Ann Power who had driven a getaway car in the holdup of a Brighton bank in which a Police Officer was killed. Ms. Power went into hiding for 24 years and recently turned herself in and received only a few years in jail. Joe has been in jail for 22 years.

I have researched Joe's case and met with him personally. I have also met his wife and his attorney. Joe was discharged from the Marines honorably and had not been in trouble prior to one week in July 1972 when he and his accomplice pulled a string of robberies which ended in the death of Mr. Reppucci.

I am convinced that Joe should have his sentence commuted and that he could again be a productive citizen and a credit to his community. I have written to Governor Weld of Massachusetts encouraging him to commute Joe's sentence.

I am also enclosing additional information on Joe's case *(**Editor's Note:** The letter was accompanied by six newspaper articles relative to the Power's and Yandles' cases, and copies of letters written to the headquarters of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., and to Governor Weld from VVA and the legal firm of Williams & Grainger regarding a commutation petition on behalf of Joseph R. Yandle.)* and ask that we please publicize this case in our next newsletter. I would really like to see all of our members take an interest in this case and write to Governor Weld in support of Joe's petition for commutation. The Governor's address is:

Governor William F. Weld
State House
Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

A fellow Marine and Khe Sanh veteran needs our help badly.

Semper Fi,

William J. O'Connor
61 Tucker Lane
N. Dartmouth, MA 02747
Former CO, C Bttry, 1/13

20 Years Trying To Forget

My wife and I just got home from the Khe Sanh reunion. It was a good experience for both of us. I spent twenty years trying to forget Vietnam and now find that getting together with other Khe Sanh veterans gives me a good, positive feeling about life.

I had sent Ernie Spencer a copy of my book when he was editor of the *Khe Sanh Veteran* magazine, and he used several of my poems in the magazine. I'm also sending you my book to read and enjoy, and if you choose to publish any of my work, feel free to do that. *(**Editor's Note:** Got it, thanks! Will share some as we go along.)* Also included is my last poem, "Retirement", which, for me, gives some resolution to the Vietnam experience.

Hope this finds you in good health.

Kellan Kyllo
HMM-262

Retirement
by Kellan Kyllo

When the emotions
of war
finally started to slow down inside him
he
sold his guns,
and then soon after that he began
to forgive
all the people who had ever
done him
wrong,
and he prayed for each of them
daily.
The next Spring
he went into his backyard
for the first time
in twenty-five
years
and
planted a garden.
He grew tomatoes and gave them away
to
everyone.

Explore Vietnam By ... ... Sea Canoe?

An outfit by the name of Myths and Mountains is advertising a $4,900 per person, 16-day tour departing Bangkok, to explore "expansive inland lagoons and largely unexplored tidal caves." Led by a John Gray, "ecological pioneer," the tour will visit "the Vietnamese people who live on boat houses." If you're interested, they're at 251 Cheswold Land, Haverford, PA 19041. Ask if they'd like to advertise in the *Khe Sanh Veteran*!

Recognizing Khe Sanh's Veterans

Those who missed out on the reunion in Covington, KY, also missed out on meeting Constance Menefee, ad hoc historian for the CAP Unit Veterans Association and recent returnee from a trip to Khe Sanh, Vietnam. The following is a guest column she wrote for ***The Kentucky Post*** *on Saturday, July 9, 1994, and reprinted here with her permission:*

Members of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. are meeting through tomorrow at the Quality Hotel Riverview, Covington. Throngs have not clogged the streets to welcome them. As a matter of fact, few tri-state residents know they are in town. And, sadly, fewer still will care.

After all, Khe Sanh was no D-Day.

And, unlike knowledge about D-Day, most Americans know little or nothing about the battles in Huong Hoa District, Quang Tri Province, Vietnam. The historically astute may know that the 77-day siege at Khe Sanh was William Westmoreland's battle — "I don't want any damn Dien Bien Phu." Some may recall the bloody fights on Hill 861 and Hills 881 North and South. A few may remember the famous "tanks in the wire" cry over the radio that marked the beginning of a terrible struggle for the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei down Route 9 from the combat base.

Most do not know that the official count of American casualties at Khe Sanh has been disputed. And, certainly, if many do not know that the count of Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force dead and wounded has been questioned, they do not know how many thousands of our civilian and military allies — the montagnards (primarily Bru), the Lao and South Vietnamese — were killed or wounded on that remote plateau.

As with many battles, during many wars those who survived remember it was both thrilling in a way never again matched in peace and hell on earth.

The stench of diesel fuel and burning feces clung to every breath. Heavy fog and cold rain sapped strength and hampered air re-supply and casualty evacuation. Defenders still speak of the thirst and rats that were numerous enough to be standard issue equipment (more numerous, maybe, because they were not brought in by air). Awesome B-52 bombing raids shaking friend and foe alike punctuated the unrelenting din of incoming and outgoing artillery.

And who could forget the ubiquitous red clay?

Today, the laterite plateau is still ringed by misty, forest hills — once the site of unremitting ambushes and death. The airfield is a sterile red gash running generally west to east. Clumps of elephant grass, with the tough, saw-toothed blades that stymied every patrol outside the perimeter, struggle to survive. New thatched houses skirt the former combat base. Their inhabitants eke small gardens from the red clay.

Teen-aged scrap metal hunters wait at the abandoned air strip for vans of former American servicemen to pull in, accompanied by the requisite official guide acquired in Dong Ha. The boys eagerly show off the "real" dog tags found at the site. The cottage industry that keeps entrepreneurs well supplied with counterfeit war memorabilia is a sign of burgeoning capitalism.

The village of Khe Sanh is being spruced up. In April of 1994, there was evidence of major renovation. New orange tile roofs replace corrugated tin, and verandahs have blue, white and orange tile work. A journalist commented that in 1985, Khe Sanh was "... a gulag for recalcitrant Bru tribes people ... prisoners in a town constructed out of recycled airfield plating, beaten out oil drums and bunker sections."

If it is a gulag, villagers await the arrival of former American servicemen who come looking for some sign that the price they paid was not too high.

When the former defenders of Khe Sanh go back, they may stand on the remnants of the airfield, surreal ripples of forested mountains surrounding the plateau, and wonder if, many years ago, they were actually here, at war. They will probably think it was someone else, more certain, in another place, more awful.

When the former defenders of Khe Sanh are here, in our community, let us assure them that we understand and appreciate the sacrifices they made on that remote plateau.

George Walbridge

by Ed Evans

One of the advantages of being editor is that now and then you get to print your own stuff. There are at least two of mine in this edition, and I'll try not to abuse the privilege. But this one is about my friend, Staff Sergeant George Walbridge, USMC (KIA). I wish you had known him.

I came off the moving helicopter ramp running, but warily, as mortar blasts punched through the sounds of the CH-53's deafening engines. Ahead of me I could see the French paratrooper coat of Major General Rathvon McC. "Tommygun" Tompkins, commander of the Third Marine Division.

Figuring he must know where he was going, while I certainly didn't, through the fog and cordite stench, I ran across the clanking marston matting after him. I almost ran up his backside when he stopped on the runway to shake hands with David Douglas Duncan. With my cameras, tape recorder, camera bag, canteen, and 20 other necessary field items swinging off my offending frame, I made my apologies and headed for a line of buildings.

CRASH! The enemy had found the range of the turn-around ramp. Fragments of mortar shell and marston matting shredded the air. I hit the deck, rolled and was up running again. Two mud-smeared Marines carrying an occupied body bag laughed as they ran by me, headed for the chopper. Welcome to Khe Sanh, I thought.

Once away from the runway, I gained directions to the "public information office" bunker directly alongside the middle length of the runway. As I approached, my attention was held by the burned out hulk of what had been a C-130 Hercules, still resting on the edge of the runway about 50 yards from the PIO bunker.

"Fast Eddie!" I turned from the C-130 and saw Gunnery Sergeant Chuck McCormick climbing out of the bunker. After a few pleasantries, Chuck said, "You know George Walbridge burned up in that." He looked toward the C-130. I hadn't known. I had not even known George was in Vietnam. I dropped my gear where I stood, left Chuck and walked toward the wreckage, slowly. After a few minutes, carefully facing toward the plane so that if Chuck were still behind me he wouldn't see the tears, I pulled out my tape recorder and began to speak into it softly. Later, I would treasure this moment, painful as it was, as the last time I felt close to George.

I first met George at the U.S. Navy "Journalist B" School, Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois in September 1964. Somehow we became fast friends, battling our way out of many a bar along the strip out the gate, and the nightclubs across the county line — Ruby's, Sugar Shack, Shallimar, Ace In The Hole. Often we had to fight out way out because George would tell somebody he was a judo expert, which he wasn't. But I once saw George take on eight bikers in Ruby's one night because they were mistreating the waitress. Luckily for us, five Marine brig guards walked in about that time, took one look at our haircuts and the odds and proceeded to clean house. ARRRRRRUGH! It was great!

George was a real clown most of the time, a con artist, but he had a good heart and if he had something you needed, it was yours. Several times it was George's alliances with the Marine Detachment clerks that kept me from being shipped out of school; not because I couldn't pass the course, but mainly because George and I thought that as Marine Sergeants we were big and bad and had an obligation to prove it to the world. But the world didn't have much of a sense of humor in those days.

But none of that has nearly as much to do with why I feel as I do about George Walbridge, as the fact that he introduced me to my wife. She was then a Navy WAVE in my class. I had tried to get to know this beautiful young lady with the biggest, bluest eyes I'd ever seen, but it got me nowhere. She was driving me nuts. Then, one night George fixed me up with a blind date. He and his latest girl were going to a drive-in movie, and he asked if I'd come. First I said no, but George wheedled me into going. When he picked me up in front of the Marine Barracks, there she was in the back seat, the blue-eyed vision. Next February we'll celebrate 30 years of wonderful married life.

What is so poignant about all this is that big, bad George had one real weak spot. He wanted desperately to be loved. He would do anything for a girl, and often did. But they simply took what he offered them and ran off with somebody else. George's broken heart was a regular item. It seemed he was never destined for love and happiness.

I saw George a few times over the years, and he was always ready with a new "this is the girl I'm going to marry" story. But they always just broke his heart.

In 1967, as I went through the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Orientation Course at Camp Pendleton, Calif., I ran into George again. But it was a new George. You could see it in his manner, his walk, the way he talked. He was married, and he was very much in love with her. I had to meet her, he said, and he was no more anxious than I.

That night, at his house, we reminisced into the wee hours. His wife, a very pretty Woman Marine with a hard look now and then, sat quietly through most of it. When it came about time to go, George left us for a moment to go to the head. She came over to me and fixed with a look like a bayonet. She let me know George meant a great deal to her, and if I had any ideas about taking him out and getting him into trouble like most of his old cronies, well, what she promised isn't found in anybody's book of etiquette. She said he'd been through enough, too much. She let me know he'd tried to go to 'Nam and they wouldn't let him, but I better not try to make George feel guilty about that. I loved her for that. She didn't know it, but I'd have

decked any mother's son that said a word against her. George had found his jewel.

I thought about her as I stood in the wind, gazing at the burned-out hulk where George died, hoping she had family nearby, hoping it would go down easy. Knowing it wouldn't.

George had apparently been in country only a few days, but he wanted to be where the action was. He wanted to make up for lost time. As a new guy, without his buddies around him, he never really had a chance.

David Douglas Duncan took pictures of the burning wreckage, the attempt to get people out. He later published them in a book. I saw them and wept for George. I went to the Wall in Washington, D.C., in 1990 after avoiding it for so long. I found George's name there, touched the inscribed letters, and thought about him some more. I've never been able to listen to whatever is on that tape recording. Hell, buddy, what were you doing on that plane, anyway?

Hill 881, Khe Sanh

The following poem is reprinted from the 1st Marine Division's newsletter, ***The Old Breed News,*** *June 1994.*

Hill 881, Khe Sanh
by John Culbertson

In trenches on vine covered emerald hill,
M-14 rifles faced cloudy morning's chill.
Under camo-netting sentinel muzzles thrust,
Toward communists — no Marines dare trust.
Slanting mortars salute the hazy sky,
No man hesitates to wonder why,
One man will live while another must die.
They fight as a unit trained from birth,
To give no quarter, to seek no mirth.
Their commander speaks, all troops listen.
Fix Bayonets, see razor edges glisten.
Charge the bullets into the breach.
Time for action too late for speech.
See the dark green shapes bend the grass,
Climbing our hill they cannot pass.
Aiming stakes define our fields of fire,
Machine guns track, gunners hands perspire.
Forty weapons aim as green silhouettes fan out,
Opening volley slams attackers, forcing doubt.
Could the defenders be forced to the rear?
Forty Marines well trained, fight without fear.
In trenches fierce Leathernecks silently kneel,
Wait to serve the enemy a taste of steel.
North Viets slipping through verdant grass,
Fight into oblivion, they shall not pass!

Enemy Intel Print Block

I was first informed about your newsletter when my friend Pat Hawn sent me a couple of copies of your newsletter. I read them both cover to cover but I took a couple of weeks. I had to stop occasionally to compose myself and sort out fragmented memories.

I've very seldom talked about my experiences in-country and I've only encountered 2-3 Khe Sanh vets and everyone has their own.

Pat has subsequently written and reprimanded me for not joining. So here's a check for dues. Please add me to your list.

I am enclosing a piece of history some of you may not have seen, and I would like to share it with you.

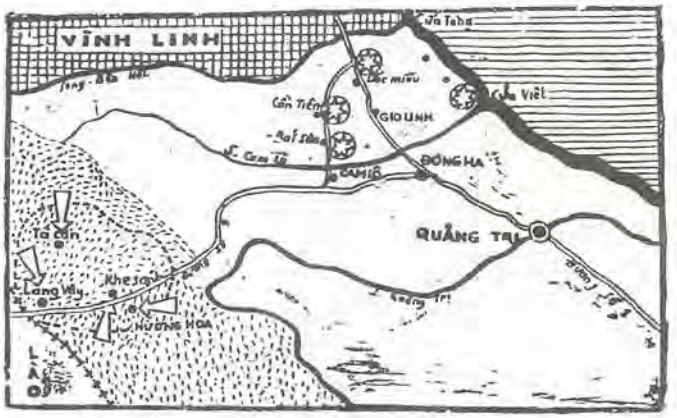

Captured Print Block

The original print block was found by me when I was attached to 3rdFRC during an insertion in the Ashau Valley. A team had found a command bunker complex. Two teams and a lieutenant and two engineers were sent to probe it and destroy it and blow an LZ so we could get out. Some of us did. I've had this print block over 20 years and shared copies with only a few. Now, I feel here's a fine place.

Larry Garcia
(former Cpl L. L. Garcia,
3rd EngrBn.)
4283 Dry Bed Ct.
Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 988-1292

Consider This ...

It's the land of the free
<u>because</u>
it's the home of the brave.

After Action Report Of The 1994 Reunion

by Ray W. Stubbe

Once again Ken and Bernice Penn have gifted us with a reunion filled with renewed friendships, time for thanking others, camaraderie, time for listening and appreciating, embracing, healing, sharing stories, answering "whatever happened to —," and just a lot of fun and feeling good for having been there.

Meeting in The Quality Inn, Covington, Kentucky — just across a river from Cincinnati, 7-10 July 1994, some 80 Khe Sanh veterans together with family and friends, proved once again that we are a distinct group, within which there is an absence of need to prove "I'm better than you," as Army Special Forces of the special SOG unit and Marine recon, and as infantry and arty and "air" units, and as Navy and Air Force, officers and enlisted realized again we are all family, we are brothers, not necessarily agreeing on everything, but still as though we were on the same fire team or team.

There were many special re-connections: four Shore Party Marines who had been on 881-South sequentially during the Siege recounted how each relieved the other. Four men from SOG recounted how two were carrying a stretcher when a round exploded, severing one's leg — he was there at the reunion on one leg — and wounding the other, while a third attended the wounds of both; all three of these were here, together. One recon Marine met his Team Leader for the first time since '68. There were five from the ONTOS section — quite a good showing from a small unit.

The following attended all or part of the reunion *(listing compiled from the official registration, those who signed the attendance log at the annual meeting, those who signed the sheets on the walls of the hospitality room, and personal contacts)*:

David Assum, A/3dSP
Phil Ball, F/2/3
Bob Bates, W/1/13
Thomas Boze, D/1/26
Earle G. Breeding, E/2/26
Billy Burnett, D/1/26
Denis Chericone, FOB-3
Rodney D. Collins, H&S/1/26
James Colstello, B/3dRecon
Gary Dahlheimer, A/3dAT
Rodney De Moss, D/1/26
Tim Duffie (Friend)
Dan Ferguson, W/1/13
Richard Friend, A/1/13
John Balanco, CACO
Moe Bartoldta, H&S/3/26
Charles Berg, FOB-3
Larry T. Brady, L/3/26
David Brombaugh, H/2/3
Richard Camp, L/3/26
Rick Collier, 1/1
W.T. Cook, 26Mar
Danny Crawford, MCB-1
John DeFelice, D/1/16
Ed Diaz, F/2/26
Ed Evans, 3rdMarDivG-3
Gred Fessenden, D/1/26
Dave Given, 1/3/26
Charles Goodman, H&S 1/26
Charles Guerity, 1stMAW
John Hargesheimer, A/3dAT
Ernie Husted, Jr., B/3rdRecon
John Kaheny, H&S,1/26
Dave Koziczkowski, 1/26
Kellan Kyllo, HMM-262
Fred Lucero, A/1/13
Gerry March, G&F/2/3('67)
Lawrence E. McCartney, E/2/26
Jim Melcher, H/2/26
Andrew Metts, 1/9
Jim Mink, G/2/26
Carlos Morales, A/3rdSP
Rick Noyes, B/3rdRecon
Carl H. Oksnee, H&S/1/9
Marshall Parker, A/3rdAT
Ken Penn, W/1/13
Ken Resnick, I/3/26
Tom Rottinghaus, I/3/26
John Seitz, A/1/13
Steve Shupp, HMM-364
Ray Stubbe, H&S,1/26
George "Buddy" Taylor, D/1/26
James Wilkinson, CO,1/26
Rev. Michael J. Woodman, Pilot
Michael Worth, E/2/26
Dick Grenat, D/1/26
Larry Haas, Searchlights
Jim Howze, FOB-3
Bruce E. Jones, B/1/26
Talis Kaminskis, CACO
Pete Kukurba, D/1/26
Mike Lee, A/3rdSP
Russ Mann, FOB-3
Bill Maves, E/2/26
Floyd McCulley, 1/26
Connie Menefee (Friend)
Joe Miller, F/2/26
Robert L. Mongold, (?)
Ronald B. Mudd, H&S,1/26
Michael O'Hara, B/1/26
Gary Parker, H&S,3rdSP
Robert Parker, B/1/26
George Peterson, H&S/1/26
Scott Richardson, B/3rdRecon
Bruce Saffel, A/3rdAT
Robert Shippen, FOB-3
Stephen Street, A/1/26
Fred Swets, A/3rdAT
John P. Williams, CO, B/1/9
Willie Roe Yates, W/1/13

While an adjacent, quaint, antique, German-style, shopping center attracted some, and a series of exciting baseball games less than a mile away attracted others, there were no planned activities or tours as such to detract from the primary emphasis of providing the opportunity to share pictures, stories, experiences and memories and life since and life now, with long lost — or recently gained — friends, who appreciate and who understand.

A significant meeting of the Board of Directors, and a general meeting of about half business and half introductions and telling stories, together with a banquet (with informal dress), were the only scheduled events. There were slide presentations by Connie Menefee who recently revisited Khe Sanh, by Ernie Husted of photos before and during the Siege, and by David Given of photos which reflect the effects of war as seen through the spiritual journey of one person. The banquet was especially blessed by a great gift of a special piano rhapsody composed and played by a SOG medic, Denis Chercone, on the battle of Khe Sanh, weaving the Marine Corps Hymn within rushing arpeggios, reflecting the rushing and running during incoming or to

rescue someone, explosions, and the sweetness of sharing and caring for each other, all expressed musically. Larry McCarney has since written: "My congratulations to the piano player ... The man is a genius and I believe that it was a stroke of genius having him. That number he played went a long way toward soothing the savage beast in me."

A hospitality room in which one man brought a computer to help locate people, and Rick Collier provided music from an awesome collection of CDs, soon became the nerve center for gathering and sharing, as did a nearby PX providing T-shirts, patches, books, caps — all on Khe Sanh.

Just prior to the banquet, Bernice Penn played recordings of all the different military service songs. From her vantage point facing everyone, she couldn't help but see how, as each service song was played, those there from that service stood taller. We are not a Marine Corps unit as such; we are Khe Sanh vets, composed of all branches of the service, and all times at Khe Sanh, 1961 - 1972.

The reunion also reemphasized what had been learned at D.C.: that we can stand quite well on our own feet, don't need affiliation with a larger reunion to provide planning and activities, and that we have our own very special bond. We were all forged together forever in the heat of that great battlefield caldron. Khe Sanh, after all, sits atop the crater of an extinct volcano. Heat, violence, explosion are the birth and legacy of the area.

We learned that local publicity is an immense asset, and must especially thank Connie Menefee for her articles in the local newspapers which drew at least a dozen local Khe Sanh vets — who had never before heard of our group. One was John P. Williams, former CO of B/1/9 and now President of the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce. He had never before attended a military reunion, but felt right at home now with his brothers from Khe Sanh.

What happens at a reunion? Our Khe Sanh reunions are not a drunken marathon, not a war-story rehash, not a therapy session, but rather are an opportunity to renew friendships with those who truly understand what we have experienced, a safe place to touch heavy and terrifying memories — if one wants to, an opportunity to say "thank you" to others for what they did — and to receive a thank you, too, and to realize we all participated in something very significant, a time to recount — and realize — that there really were some humorous times within all that desperation. Many have commented, after returning home, that their nightmares have lessened or disappeared, that they have become changed persons — not as violent or edgy; some have actually met others they were close to and thought were dead. (These latter are the legacies of our Washington, D.C., reunion.

The following are some excerpts from the business and comments made at our annual meeting:

Finances: We have both a savings account (where life membership dues are kept) and a current checking account. The savings account has approximately $5,700, and the checking account approximately $7,800. A PX was begun with Carl Oksnee in charge to generate more funds. Individual issues of our magazine cost from $3,200 to $5,600 each issue, depending on color and length. Ed Evans is our new editor.

Newsletter: The magazine is dependent upon people submitting poems, articles, pictures; it only consists of what is submitted. Members are strongly encouraged to send things in to the Editor.

Membership: A new membership Directory is forthcoming *(Editor's note: Everyone should have their copy by the time you receive this.)* We have gained several hundred during the past year due to the PX at different veterans' functions, and also mailing to the different VA Vet Centers. An ad will be placed in *Vietnam* magazine and other service-type publications.

Next Reunion: The Board voted to have our 1995 reunion in conjunction with the Third Marine Division's reunion in Las Vegas — if we can have our own Friday evening banquet, our own hospitality and meeting rooms, and gain the free rooms that are given dependent on how many register. We will have our own registration and maintain our own group identity, but simply will be having our reunion at the same time so that any of our members who have friends in the Association may meet them, and take advantage of any tours or activities of the Association. It was noted that in a survey most of our members, more than 50%, had suggested Washington, D.C., as our place for reunion.

Survey Results: A survey had been mailed out to the membership in order to obtain a description of our membership that might help in obtaining advertisers in our magazine. More than 265 had been returned, more than 10% of our membership. Results: our age is 46, 47, 48; income is pretty close to $50,000; solidly middle-class, mostly married. We have many police officers. Khe Sanh veterans, as a whole, seem to have done quite well.

Comments (Just a very few from the many made):

Robert Shippen, FOB-3 medic ... "I went back to Vietnam twice since the war ... both times I went to Khe Sanh ... It was very healing for me to go

back and to see this place which for 25 years had represented the war, and see life ... people living their lives. They are very gracious, very polite, very courteous. I felt more welcome in Vietnam — several times I had an experience that brought tears to my eyes — I felt more welcome by them, even former enemies, than I have felt here at home. It was very moving and touching ... I met the Bru chairman of the Huong Hoa District ... and asked him: what are your needs? He said: malaria and goiter ... I've started to raise funds and know there's a format within this organization to raise funds to do work with the Bru. Malaria can be addressed by simply getting cheap mosquito netting ... we can get some wells dug there."

Ken Penn, W/1/13 ... "About three weeks ago I was asked to address a Vietnamese assembly ... I can tell you that the Vietnamese think that the Khe Sanh Veterans 'walk on water.'"

Russ Mann, FOB-3 medic ... "I would occasionally get the detail to drive the water truck. It was a dangerous mission because it was a large vehicle and it was moving so it became a target. When I got to the water point there would be a man there who was a water point guy, a special MOS. Next week, there'd be a different man; the former one was killed or wounded. Next week, another new man. So I asked: 'Why are you here? This is insane! You might be dead in three or four days!' And he said, 'Hey, it's my job. They need water.' I've always found that very impressive and an indication of the dedication to duty that Marines have, and am very appreciative of that."

Larry McCartney, E/2/26 ... "I was 18 when I joined the Corps in July of '67, landed in the Nam in December of '67, and was in Khe Sanh a month later. I had probably the best initial training I could of gotten in the Marine Corps from the Skipper, Earle Breeding, and the rest of Echo Company. I got off active duty in '71 and joined the Reserves. I've been hanging tough in the reserves ever since, a little over 27 years now, and without people like the Skipper, Mike Worth, and a whole bunch of the others, I just wouldn't of made it. I come here just so I can see people and pass back some of the good that I got when I was a kid." [Ken Penn noted: "Six months ago, Larry was promoted to Master Gunnery Sergeant!"] Larry continued, "To give you an idea of just how good a company the Skipper had, I'm the third E-9 and there's also one Major that were all PFCs up there on 861-Alfa."

Ernie Husted, B/3rd Recon ... "...I think what helped me more than anything is I've been to a couple of reunions. And I remember talking at one of them about a radioman who had been hit — had his legs blown off. 'PJ' [Pagano] — and how much I missed him. And I heard this voice in the back, said, 'I didn't die, dammit!' 'What!' It had been 20 years, and I didn't know he was still alive. We're all there is, folks. We share a very unique experience that will never be recreated ... I don't know everyone to thank, but if we didn't work together, we all wouldn't be here. So thanks to everybody!"

Gary Parker, A/3rd Shore Party ... "I was in the saddle of Hill 881-South in a hole about six-foot deep with Carlos Morales. I want to apologize if we kept anybody awake one night. We were told that the stuff was going to hit the fan, and they were coming over the side. Between Carlos and I we had about 35 hand grenades. They had come in and we never distributed them to the troops. We started throwing these hand grenades over the side, but mine weren't going off. I figured, there must be something wrong with these things. [Then I remembered] I had taped all of my grenades — because I was told if you're walking through the bush the spoon might get caught and they'd go off, and you're blown to shit. Anyway, I stayed up all night with my eyes wide open, waiting for these things to come back — without the tape on them!"

Mike Lee, A/3rd Shore Party "... If anybody knows any helicopter air crewmen, tell the dude that if he ever shows up, they don't buy no beers, 'cause they had more balls than anybody else up there. We had to stay around and take the shit, but they couldn't move. These guys, they came in to pick up bodies for medevacs, and there's no place for them to go."

Earle Breeding, E/2/26 ..."We're talking about about thanking people, and I often wonder if the family — the mothers and the fathers of the veterans who came back — ... realize they had a PFC fire team leader. He's come back — he's alive today — because of small unit leadership by 18, 19 year-old kids, and yes, some 17 ... They got back because of the ability and the expertise that were given to them by the small unit leader. That war, probably more than any war that we've ever fought in the United States, was a small unit war ..."

Carlos Morales, A/3rd Shore Party ... "I was on the hill with Gary Parker, and one night I'm sitting in the hole, and he's at the opposite side. I hear [he makes sounds of flying and snapping]. What the hell is going on? So I look over and I see Gary. I said, 'Gary, what are you doing?' He said, 'I'm eating flies!' Now, if he caught them and ate them, he marked down 'Killed in Action,' and if he just hit them with his tongue, they were 'Wounded in Ac-

tion!' I still, to this day, laugh at that, and I thank him for my sanity!"

Stephen Street, A/1/26 ... "John Kaheny — I was his radioman for a few hours when we got hit, and if it hadn't been for him I wouldn't be here today. I haven't seen him for 27 years. Sometimes I get a phone call, a card from Khe Sanh people, and it just means everything!"

Earle Breeding, E/2/26 ... "I was invited to a Vietnam Motorcycle Club in Georgia. I went. We're talking black boots and black leather and tattoos. I strolled around and, since I was obviously not a motorcycle person, I was not greeted too fairly. I had not realized that to get into this place you needed to wear something to indicate you were in Vietnam. So I went back and put on a Khe Sanh t-shirt. And I was walking down this path where there were quite a few hard-core bikers there — and not all my stories are true, folks, because I'm a Marine — but this is a true story. I was walking down this path, and it was totally blocked with bikers. They saw me coming. And the path opened up [he chokes with emotion]. And I walked through there and I heard one of these biker's ladies say, 'Why did you let him through?' And he said, 'Khe Sanh.' Let me tell you something, we are a very unique group, and we must maintain our uniqueness."

A summary of the meeting of the Board of Directors, voting to:

- Approve the establishment of an Arts and Bru Humanitarian Fund, to accept monies already donated for this purpose; that no membership fees accepted would be transferred into this fund, and that it would only consist of donations made to it specifically and that it would be administered by five individuals (specifically the President, Vice-President, Ray Stubbe, Ernie Spencer, and John Balanco) who could expend up to $500, and the Board of Directors would authorize any expenditures over $500.
- To conduct an audit by an outside, non-Khe Sanh vet, CPA, of our Treasury within 90 days of this meeting and at least annually thereafter, with a Financial Statement made public to the membership, the initial publication not later than March 31st, 1995. That there be a three-person finance committee to oversee the finances of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., to include the annual audit.
- Express our deep appreciation to Carl Oksnee for what he had done with the PX for our organization.
- That Carl submit his expenses for approval by the three-man Finance Committee.
- That both the PX and the Reunion funds be transferred by 15 July to the Treasurer to form one account for Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and that the Treasurer provide checks to both for their expenses as required. That Carl Oksnee be given a $500 cash box to function.
- To form a By-Law Committee, chaired by John Kaheny, with Jim Wilkinson and Ray Stubbe as members.
- To form a Finance Committee consisting of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary.
- To form a Publications/Editorial Committee responsible to the President to oversee the content and publication of the Khe Sanh newsletter, consisting of Earle Breeding, Gary Parker, and Ray Stubbe.
- To follow through with Ed Evans and Jon Dodd of Marine Corps Association to determine feasibility of publishing our magazine six times a year with the Marine Corps Association paying for it by means of advertising.
- That the Editor of our newsletter be determined by the President upon recommendations of the Editorial/Publications Committee.
- That the Board formally go on record expressing its very deep appreciation for the highly dedicated and professional work of Ernie Spencer in producing our Khe Sanh Vet newsletters for the past two years.
- That Life Member cards and certificates be made as per those who have volunteered to make them.
- That an ad be placed in *Vietnam* magazine for six issues at $47 per issue, advertising Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. The Editorial/Publications Committee will do this.
- That our next reunion would be in conjunction with the Third Marine Division Association meeting in Las Vegas in 1995, if we can have our own hospitality and meeting room, our own Friday night banquet, and free rooms associated with the numbers of those who register.
- That our membership should be informed of the need for additional State Coordinators (who maintain contact with Khe Sanh vets within their own state, contact new people, contact those with very serious illnesses, etc.).
- That our membership should be informed of the Women's Network which is chaired by Janet Parker (wife of Gary Parker).

- That Ken Penn contact those who have volunteered to do our next reunion, review the reunion situation, and put it in a written form to the Board to vote on it.

And two additional notes:

First, the Board was informed of the deaths of three of our members: **Colonel Dan L. Baldwin**, former CO of CCN; **James Kinane**, B/3rd Recon; and **William J. Barkoski**, A/1/13, Life Member.

The Board was notified that the maintenance of our historical files does not cost the organization a penny. Ray Stubbe is currently maintaining these files including putting all diaries, letters written home, logs maintained, comments and reminiscences now — on microfilm which has been deposited in various archives throughout the country in order to maintain the accuracy of our Khe Sanh history, what individuals did. This is an on-going project, and more materials are solicited by Ray Stubbe. So far, approximately 55,000 pages of documents on 11 reels of microfilm have been so distributed — all at no cost to our organization.

Notes From All Over

Keep Those Copies of Citations And Awards Coming In, Folks!

From Rev. Ray W. Stubbe ... While doing research for the writing of the book on Khe Sanh, one of the elderly (and perhaps former senior Marine Corps officers) that passed me one day at the Historical Center in the Navy Yard in D.C. said, "Have you looked at the Award Citation files on microfilm?" and added that they were a great source of information, not only on the individuals who did heroic actions, but also through the supporting statements, on details of actions and operations. I learned at the time that the originals had been destroyed after the microfilms had been made.

Unfortunately, many of the microfilms were not made correctly: some had a whole streak of black running the entire length of the film that blocked out half of the documents, and some were made six pages to a single frame, which on 16mm makes it almost microscopic! Nevertheless, I did manage to copy several hundred of these. Finding them was also a problem since there was really no order, it seemed, in how they were filmed. While we met in D.C. in 1993, I wanted to make more copies, and was then told that all the microfilms had disappeared! Therefore, what I was able to copy may very well be the only documentation left!

If any of you have copies of your own citations or letters that you wrote to support the recommendation for someone else to receive an award, please send me a copy. We need to preserve these sort of things! (I put all our Khe Sanh documents on microfilm of an archival quality — should last at least 300 years — and distribute them to the various archives throughout the country, to ensure that our story is never lost.)

Note From A 3rd MarDiv. Corpsman

Jim Armbrust, Corpsman, HM3, 3rd Marine Division, I Corps, 1967-68 ... One of the hardest things that I have ever done, was to watch a young man die before he had a chance to make love to a woman, play golf, hunt deer, or join the rest of us with what we are doing now.

It was hard for us, the doctors and the corpsmen. Chasing you guys around was a pain in the butt, but every one of you were worth it.

Ray Stubbe said that I could write a short article about what I think of Marines, but I am going to do him one better. I am going to write about the Marines at Khe Sanh:

There were no Marines that had greater courage, or more valor. There were no Marines that showed more than you did in the interest of the true spirit of Semper Fidelis.

Call me anything: an old anchor clanker, or any other of a bunch of silly nicknames. But, I just thought you might want to hear from a corpsman. I may be whatever you call me. But, as long as I am alive, I will be there for you. And so will Ray Stubbe. With respect to the proud, the few, the brave.

The Hollowing Out Of The American Armed Forces

by Congressman James M. Talent (R-Mo.)
Member, Armed Services Subcommittees on Manpower; Subcommittee on Research and Technology

The following are excerpts from an article published in the September 1994 issue of the The ROA National Security Report.

I have addressed on the House floor, on no fewer than three occasions, this subject of the hollowing out of America's armed services. In fact, in the middle of last year I formed an ad hoc committee on the hollowing out of the armed forces with Congressmen Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), Curt Weldon (R-Pa.), and John M. McHugh (R-N.Y.). Since then, we have done special studies on the general issue of the hollowing out of the forces, on the collapse of modernization programs in the United States Army, and on the terrible situation we have with the shortage of ammunition all throughout the services. My remarks here address the subject of military pay, and, specifically, what happens when military pay lags behind civilian pay and also behind inflation.

History Shows What Happens

What would you expect under those kinds of circumstances? Well, you would expect that it would become more difficult to recruit high-quality people who are already serving there. My points are threefold. First, history shows that does happen. In fact, it did happen in the 1970s, when military pay lagged way behind inflation, and when we had great difficulty retaining the high-quality people we had in the services, and recruiting others.

The second point is that military pay is again falling behind inflation, to approximately the same degree it did in the 1970s.

The third point is that the force is again hollowing out in the sense that we are losing quality people from the services, and are finding it more and more difficult to recruit the kind of people we need to staff a high tech, modern American military.

. . . . .

... if you had served in the American armed services in 1975, and had stayed in the services through the end of that decade, you would have suffered, in real terms, a 15 percent cut in the compensation that you received.

Did this hurt the quality of the force during that period of time? There is no question that it did. This is documented, it is accepted by everybody.

. . . . .

The military gives tests to new recruits to determine how difficult it is to train them for military occupations. After those tests are given the recruits are placed into four different categories. Category four is very low trainability. People in category four are very difficult to train for any kind of a sophisticated occupation. In 1976, none of the recruits were placed in category four. So zero percent of the recruits were considered to be very low trainability recruits. By 1980, ten percent of the recruits were in category four. One out of every ten recruits in the American military in 1980 was considered a very low trainability recruit.

Skipper Refused To Shove Off

The quality of the force in those days got so bad that by early 1981, when the USS Canisteo went to the Brooklyn Naval Yard to be overhauled, the captain would not take it to the high seas after it was refitted because he refused to certify that there was an adequate number of skilled sailors for that ship to go on its mission. His decision was reviewed by higher level authorities in the Navy and was upheld. He acted correctly in that decision. It was the only time in the history of the US Navy a naval vessel was unable to take to the high seas because it did not have an adequate number of skilled sailors on board. That was the result of the 15 percent real cut in military pay that had occurred in the US Navy and the other

Sooner or later America's military is going back into battle. If it goes back hollow, without quality people, without high-maintenance units, without adequate ammo, without modern weapons, without spare parts, without adequate training, if it goes back hollow, a lot of people we send someplace around the world are not going to return. And it will not be because it was necessary for them to die.

services from the years 1975 to roughly the year 1980.

. . . . .

Unless Congress acts, or the Administration changes its budget projections, military pay will be cut in real terms by ten to 12 percent by the end of this decade, from where it was at the beginning of the decade. The impact of these pay cuts is already evident.

In 1989, 100 percent of the recruits in the American military had high school diplomas. In the first six months of 1994, only 94 percent of the recruits had high school diplomas. We are already moving down in terms of the quality of the new recruits

This at a time when the technologies that the military must use are growing ever more sophisticated.

. . . . .

Many times in my service on the Armed Services Committee, I have heard admirals and undersecretaries say you cannot keep sailors away from the "homeport" and their families, in peacetime, more than six months out of the year. If you do, they will leave the Navy.

You can do it in war, because the sailors will sacrifice almost anything for America's vital interests, but they are not going to stay in the Navy if you make them do it in peacetime.

. . . . .

Paying Less And Asking More

So we are paying these men and women less, asking them to stay away from their homes longer. As we experienced in the 1970s, they will not stay in the Navy if we continue to ask them to do that. It is unfair, and if the trend continues many high-quality people will get out of the service.

. . . . .

When you have fewer people and more duties away from home, the remaining troops must stay away from home longer.

. . . . .

Recently, the Marines have experienced a classic example of this problem with extended deployments aboard. It is the kind of thing that destroys morale in the service.

It Happened To 24th MEU

It is what happened to the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The 24th MEU had been stationed in a support role, or had been at sea in a support role, in Somalia and in Bosnia. They were at sea for six months. They came home very recently.

The typical procedure would be they would have a ten-day period completely off, when in essence they could take a vacation. And then they would have an extended period of time working at homeport and living with their families. Halfway through the first ten days home, they were redeployed and reassigned to ship and sent out to Haiti. They came home for five days. Their families expected that they would have a vacation of an additional five days, and then be home for months at a time. But they were put back on board ship and sent to Haiti because we do not have enough people to cover contingencies abroad.

That incident is going to ricochet, is ricocheting through the Marine Corps. What it says to the Marine Corps is that the Administration and Congress do not care about them, about their families, or about their expectations. To do that to those people at the same time we are reducing their pay is criminal.

. . . . .

This is not an academic debate or a political game. Sooner or later America's military is going back into battle. If it goes back hollow, without quality people, without high-maintenance units, without adequate ammo, without modern weapons, without spare parts, without adequate training, if it goes back hollow, a lot of people we send someplace around the world are not going to return.

And it will not be because it was necessary for them to die. It will be because Congress did not live up to its responsibility to adequately prepare America's military for battle.

The fault is going to lie at the door of the institution which is assigned the constitutional responsibility of maintaining the armies and navies of the United States. That is the Congress of the United States.

To hollow out the military, to make a mistake of that size once in a generation is a tragedy. To make it twice is unforgivable.

Worth Repeating

"A brave man may fall, but he cannot yield." — ***Latin proverb***

"Life happens at the level of events not of words." — ***Alfred Adler, Austrian psychiatrist***

"I was too weak to defend, so I attacked." — ***Robert E. Lee, Confederate general***

Marines Deactivate Legendary Battalion

The following article, brought to our attention by Charles "Doc Chico" Garcia (C/1/9 & Charlie Med) is reprinted with permission of ***The Orange County Register****.*

by Jeff Kramer

CAMP PENDLETON — In the end, it wasn't an enemy ambush that did in the 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment. It was a bureaucratic directive.

Yielding to the realities of military downsizing, the Marine deactivated the legendary "Walking Dead" battalion at an emotional ceremony here Friday, dealing a bitter blow to survivors of some of the worst fighting of the Vietnam War.

"I'm trying to temper my disbelief with my love for the Corps," said Dave Mora, 45, a Los Angeles carpenter who saw his best friend killed in a firefight in Vietnam.

The unit, first activated in 1942, earned the nickname the "Walking Dead" as it was losing 604 Marines in Vietnam, roughly one percent of U.S. casualties there. The battalion is viewed with reverence within the Marine Cops.

But tradition was not enough to save the 1/9.

With mortars from nearby practice ranges thundering in the background, current members stood at attention as the battalion's colors were lowered for the last time. They will be placed on permanent display here, and the unit's 800 active Marines will become part of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment.

About 70 battalion veterans, many from out of state, attended the redesignation. Some wore business suits, others wore fatigues, jeans, beards and ponytails. Whatever they wore, they greeted each other like long-lost brothers.

"My highest of highs and lowest of lows were in my 13 months in Vietnam," said Pete Meade, a sales manager from Irvine.

Miraculous tales of survival were as commonplace as burgers at a barbecue.

During an ambush on April 15, 1967, Dave "Beetle" Bailey's left arm was shattered by a bullet and his chest was hit by shrapnel. He called for a medic, who arrived just as an enemy soldier lodged a rifle against the back of Bailey's head. The medic pushed Bailey's face into the ground and shot the North Vietnamese just as the enemy soldier fired. Bailey was hit in the side of the face, but he lived.

"I would recommend him (the corpsman) for a medal if I knew who he was," said Bailey, who lives in Anaheim.

He has made it a point to track down "1/9ers," living or dead.

Last year, he and Dan Baldwin of Fullerton collected from the Vietnam War Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., tracings of the names of 500 fallen 1/9 vets and placed some of the names in an ammunition box as a tribute.

On Friday, the designees put the last of the names in the box. Lee Burns of La Puente, now a field supervisor for a security-guard company, cried afterward.

"Hopefully, this will be the end," he said.

Somebody Made A Mistake -- Please Return Photos

I attended the reunion in Covington, Ky., back in July. I put some pictures from Vietnam in the Hospitality Room for all to see.

The pictures had been enlarged on a color copier and measured 11" x 11". I also had one 11" x 17" map picture of the Cam Lo area. I probably had 12 to 15 pictures altogether.

After the dinner on July 9, I went to get the pictures, but they were all gone. I thought surely the Penns picked them up for safekeeping, but that was not the case. I talked to one other member, Rick Collier, and he said all his pictures were missing, also.

I would appreciate it in the next newsletter you could put a notice where all will see and maybe someone picked them up accidentally.

The only identifying mark I had on my pictures was "E/2/26" written on the back with a black Magic Marker. Thanks a million.

Semper Fi.

Michael Worth, E/2/26
815 E. Oakton St., L-159
Des Plaines, IL 60018

A Letter To CMC On Behalf Of Tradition

The following note, and letter to CMC, were sent to Bill Maves, Treasurer, who shares it with us.

Enclosed is a check for life member with the Khe Sanh Vets. It is indeed an honor for me to be associated with an organization such as yours. I find your magazine to be very honest and to the point. It gives our Vets a forum to express their feelings and experiences. Your organization should be highly commended for this. Their stories indeed need to be told. I know. I have been touched by many of the articles myself. Even though I did not know the people writing the letters, I could relate to what they were saying. I'm sure many of us can.

I am also enclosing a letter I forwarded to General Mundy, Commandant of the Marine Corps. I think the letter is pretty self explanatory.

I would like to especially thank Mrs. Esslinger for taking the time to write such a touching letter for us Vets. I think the fact that the wife of a Vet was the first to respond to our Corps' poor judgment says something about the Veterans of Viet Nam. I believe most of us were just too proud to rattle our sabers. They have also become used to a Country that has great difficulty in showing it's gratitude. Apparently, our Country and Our Corps has failed to see the value of such a special breed of men.

I wish you and the Khe Sanh Vets much success in all your efforts.

Semper Fidelis,

Ed Troup
1stBn., 9th Marines
Khe Sanh '68

. . . . .

General Carl Mundy
Office of the Commandant
Arlington Annex
Washington, D.C. 20380-0001

Dear General Mundy,

I am the son of a career Marine that reached the rank of Master Gunnery Sergeant. My father was a professional not only in his field of Motor Transport, but also represented our Corps as a distinguished marksman on both the Marine Corps Rifle and Pistol Teams. The list of his other accomplishments over his 28 years service to the Corps before he died are much too long to mention. I will just say he was one hell of a Marine.

The reason I mention all this is because the way he held the Corps to the highest ideals of military professionalism is probably one of the greatest reasons why I chose to be a Marine myself. I might add I carried that same professionalism and esprit de corps throughout my four years of service.

My brother, now a staff sergeant in the Marine Corps is no different. He was named Plane Captain of the Year for the entire Marine Air Wing just a year ago.

As a young boy growing up at Camp Lejeune, I delivered the *Washington Post* newspaper on streets named after places where Marines had fought and died. Places like Tarawa, Inchon, Bougainville, and Iwo Jima, to name a few.

Tradition. It was all around me. I was raised with it. As a result, young men like my brother and myself have performed our duties for the Corps to the very best of our ability.

Tradition. Pride in the Corps. Pride in oneself. Three very important ingredients in the making of a Marine. If a man has these, you can teach him the rest. In the class of shooters my father shot with, you didn't shoot for the bullseye. You shot for X's and V's. I have applied this principle in many areas of my life since.

I remember the targets. I remember the scores. I remember the trophies he brought home. I took great pride in his achievements as a young boy growing up. It was like John Wayne living at my house.

It must be very difficult for parents to make such impressions with their children today, with the strong influences from the media and peer pressures. It must be especially difficult to make impressions of devotion to Country, duty, honor, courage, and of the price we and so many of our forefathers have paid for freedom. The stuff that real heroes are made of.

We live in a time when the family structure is disintegrating. Here in L.A. where I live, many kids resort to joining gangs for self preservation. Their heroes are either some rock group, sports, or movie star. These people do nothing but entertain and feed off the public as well as steer our children's minds down some blind alley.

Actually, we have many men who know these qualities of leadership well. They are men that gave more than most Americans will ever know. These weren't men that said, "What's in it for me?" They were there because our Country told them the Communists were out to destroy us and our way of life, and something had to be done about it. They weren't asked to do a rap, sing a song, or play a game of ball. They were asked to put their lives on

the line and many did. The Wall is a testimony to that.

Most Vets I've met since coming home do not find it easy to speak of their experiences in Viet Nam and many are only now beginning to deal with this period of their life. I believe most of us experienced and learned more about life in general in that 13 months period than we probably have with the rest of our lives.

The significance that these men place on their military experiences and how their children perceive this information from their fathers and others around them is so important. If these impressions are positive they can instill those qualities I wrote of earlier. If they are negative or even indifferent, what sort of impression do you think they would make?

Whether these children go on to pursue a military or civilian career as they grow older is not important. What is important is the positive impressions that these children will carry with them the rest of their lives.

As a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans, I have had an opportunity to read two letters directed to your office by Mrs. Esslinger, and a Mr. Varela. Both letters touched me deeply because they were full of truth. I also read Col. Sollis' poor response to Mrs. Esslinger's letter.

His letter reminded me of a time when I stood guard over a fallen Marine's body during his funeral in New Jersey. I performed at many such burial details during my three years with a Marine Guard detachment at Lakehurst. On this occasion another Marine and myself were standing at parade rest on each side of the closed casket. They were playing the Marine Corps Hymn to a slow solemn beat as his mother entered the Chapel. We immediately snapped to attention. As she approached the coffin sobbing, she moved towards me saying, "He looks so much like my son." She wrapped her arms around my rigid body and cried her eyes out until someone finally pulled her away from me. I wanted so much to put my arms around her and console her over her loss, but I followed protocol. She deserved so much more. She would never embrace her own son again. I live with that memory along with those that I experienced in Viet Nam, but I will always regret not returning that woman's embrace.

Yes Sir, I have a heart and I would hardly call myself a wimp. I, like so many of my Veteran brothers have met the enemy in battle. I have taken his blood for my country. Life has taught me that there are times to be tough and strong, but I think it is our heart or spirit, or whatever you want to call it, that gives us the wisdom to know when, and when not to use this strength. I believe this is a quality that separates us from the rest. Only Col. Sollis knows whether he has a heart, but he sounded like that Marine I knew 28 years ago standing rigidly at attention.

I was not at the Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion in July '93 when they attended the ceremonies at 8th and I, but I was there when my unit, the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines had its own reunion over Memorial Day '93. As you are probably aware, my unit did not get the nickname "The Walking Dead" for nothing. Those grunts truly have been to hell and back. I must say, I was upset just as my fellow Khe Sanh Veterans were at our Corps' lack of recognition for a unit that on so many occasions had given beyond the call of duty.

They gave to the Corps and Country. When we came home, our country, tired of war, gave nothing in return. Twenty-five years later, we came home again, together. To the home you now occupy at 8th and I. Many of the men had their wives and children with them, the evening we attended the ceremony. There were also two large sections of bleachers filled with school children. Our Corps could have made a lot of good impressions that evening, General. Not just the kids in the bleachers, but what about the young Marines standing on the parade deck. They might one day stand where we stood that evening.

Tradition. Pride in the Corps. Pride in oneself. It's the glue that holds us together. I don't believe every Veteran attending the ceremony expected his or her unit announced, but how much time does it take to give recognition to a large organization? If nothing else, I believe that all Veterans that have served their country could be asked to stand and then a moment of silence dedicated to those who paid the ultimate price.

This may seem a big too symbolic for you. But, if your son or daughter had been away for some time and arrived home while you had other guests, would you not acknowledge them before your guest as your own? Well Sir, in essence we are the sons of the Corps and we deserve no less.

The 1st Battalion, 9th Marines Network suffered another blow a couple weeks ago. We indirectly found out that our reunion plans to have our 1994 Marine Corps Ball with the active duty 1st Battalion, 9th Marines have been canceled because the unit is going into mothballs in September,1 two months before the Marine Corps Birthday.

At this late date, I don't even think the Commandant could change our Battalion's orders, but you could sure go to bat for us and see that acknow-

ledgment be given to our unit's organizations when advance notice is given. If not for us, for the Corps itself.

Two years before I joined the Marine Corps a retired General attending a change of command ceremony at Camp Lejeune autographed a program for me. Along with his signature he wrote, "Live by the Tradition of the old breed." His name was Lewis B. Puller. I've always taken that message to heart. You could say it was one of those lasting impressions. Once a Marine, a part of me will always remain a Marine.

I salute you and our Marine Corps.

Semper Fidelis,

Ed Troup
1st Battalion, 9th Marines
Khe Sanh '68

Needs Info On F/2/3 Of Foxtrot Ridge At Khe Sanh

I am a combat Viet Nam Marine still suffering from PTSD. I recently learned of your publication, *Khe Sanh Veterans* newsletter, and would like to subscribe.

A particular issue I am most interested in, is "Spring 1993" in which an article about the battle of Foxtrot Ridge on May 28, 1968 is published.

As a grunt in F/2/3, I was on Foxtrot Ridge. I've been researching F/2/3, 1968-69. I've been very disappointed that I have been unable to find anything on my old unit, or Foxtrot Ridge. I only heard about your story.

I arrived at Khe Sanh Combat Base April 28, 1968. Although the siege was over, F/2/3 remained in that general area most of my tour. We encountered many NVA between Route #9 and Laos, and from the DMZ on south of Khe Sanh. We spent time in and around Mai Loc, Ca Lu, Cam Lo, and all through those mountains.

I need all the information I can get about this place and time, so that I might better my PTSD. I'm not sure exactly what I'm looking for and why I'm looiking. But I know it is important.

Your courteous attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Phil Ball
Cincinatti, Ohio
(513) 481-7203

David P. Floyd, 44, Is Gone

I attended the funeral of a fellow Khe Sanh vet today *(April 15, 1994)*. Dave Floyd was a friend of mine I met through our VVNW Post. I know he will be way missed by his family and friends. But lately I've been able to find some good in even the worst situations. Dave's funeral was no exception.

I met a man at the funeral by the name of James J. Rampulla, father of LCpl. Terry James Rampulla, A/1/9 KIA 16Apr68. It seems that Dave was with Terry when he was killed at Khe Sanh and Dave carried Terry's body back to the helicopter to be flown out. Somehow Mr. Rampulla and Dave met and Dave filled him in on some of the facts surrounding his son's death that he hadn't known before. Now today, Fred Salzman and I both talked to him and told him about the Khe Sanh Vets. So I told him I would write you and tell you about him and that I would write him and give him your address.

Isn't it amazing how things like this come together after all these years? I'm looking forward to the next reunion close to this area.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Parr

His name and address are:

James J. Rampulla
2723 Northampton St.
Easton, PA 18042

(Editor's Note: According to the news clipping Terry included, David P. Floyd died at 5:45 p.m. Apr. 11 after a lengthy illness. He was the husband of Betty Jane (Runkle) Floyd. The couple would have observed their 19th wedding anniversary Aug. 11. Dave was a retired machine operator from Caterpillar, Inc. He was a member of Faith United Methodist Church in Hallam, the York County Veterans of the Vietnam War Post 35 and its color guard, the Red Lion American Legion Post 543, the Red Lion Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1146, the York County Purple Heart Association and a life member of the Disabled American Veterans. The clipping noted, "He was a U.S. Marine Corps combat veteran, serving in Vietnam for 13 months and the recipient of the Purple Heart Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with one star and numerous other medals and citations.")

Whose Copy Of This Magazine Are You Reading?

If you would like to have your own personal copy everytime we publish, just turn the page, fill in the Membership/Subscription blank you will find at the top of the page, and mail it in. We'll do the rest. ... *The Editor*

Membership Requirements And Dues

The Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., is a non-profit, non-political, non-sectarian society dedicated to the preservation of the Khe Sanh experience.

Regular or life membership is open to anyone who ever served in, around, or over Khe Sanh between 1961 and through 1971.

Associate membeship is open to the dependents, parents, or signficant others of those who served at Khe Sanh. Annual dues are effective from January 1 through December 31. Subscriptions to the Khe Sanh Veteran are available to the general public.

Membership/Subscription Application

Please print or type, and provide all information requested.

Name _____ Date _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

Current profession/position _____

I served at Khe Sanh with (Unit: Company/Battalion) _____

Branch of Service _____ Years(s) at Khe Sanh _____

My check for $ ..... is enclosed for:

- ☐ Life Member ($130)
- ☐ Regular Member ($20)
- ☐ Associate Member ($20)
- ☐ Non-Member Subscriber ($20)
- ☐ Donation to assist with expenses for those members unable to pay their own way to KSVI reunions.

Mail this application and check to:

William Maves, Treasurer
25 Montgomery Ct.
Evansville, WI 53636

The Khe Sanh Veteran Newsletter

c/o Ed Evans
3148 Country Meadow Rd.
Antioch, TN 37013

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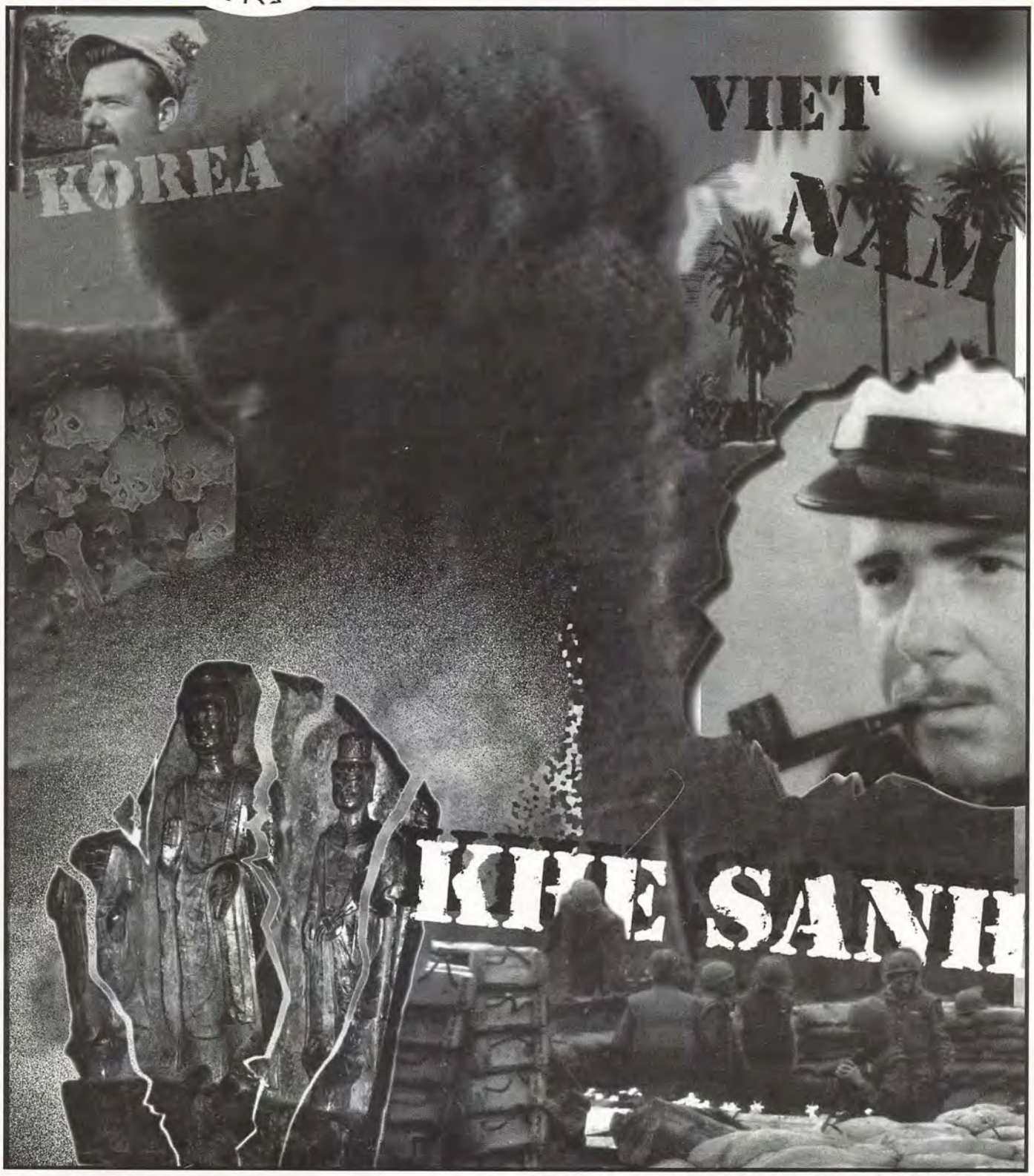

Sgt. Major James Gaynor, 1/26 USMC, KIA 2/15/68

John Kaheny

A Message from the President

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



John Kaheny, Khe Sanh 1967

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

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

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

John Kaheny
1/26

Notice to All Contributing Writers

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

With this issue our known backlog is current, except for poetry and longer memoirs. Those who wish to have their memoirs published will have to cut them down to no more than two thousand words, or make special arrangements with the editor to publish in parts. Those memoirists who wish help in editing their work may contact Ernie Spencer the editor of The Khe Sanh Veteran and author of Welcome To Vietnam Macho Man. Those who do not feel comfortable writing, may; with prior arrangement, send their taped memoirs to Ernie. Write to Ernie Spencer at 458 Holiday Hills Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 or call him at 510/228-4756.

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

The Khe Sanh Veteran

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Hey guys!

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

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

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

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

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

Semper Fi,

Doc Swanson

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

Dear Editor:

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

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

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

Aug. 29, 1995

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

Mr. York wrote a letter to the editor back in January in response to Phil Ball's request for information on F/2/3 of Foxtrot Ridge in the November, 1994 issue. He and I are concerned that maybe his letter got lost in the shuffle, so enclosed herewith is a copy of that letter in the hopes that you can publish it and that Phil Ball will be able to read Asberry's reflections on Foxtrot Ridge.

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

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

Thank you very much for your work.

Sincerely,

Chaplain Roland Schaedig

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

Semper Fi

Sam Rutledge

W 1/13

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

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

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

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

Respectfully yours,

William Prescott

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

My Sergeant Major

by Jim Wilkinson
CO 1/26

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

James A. Wodecki

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

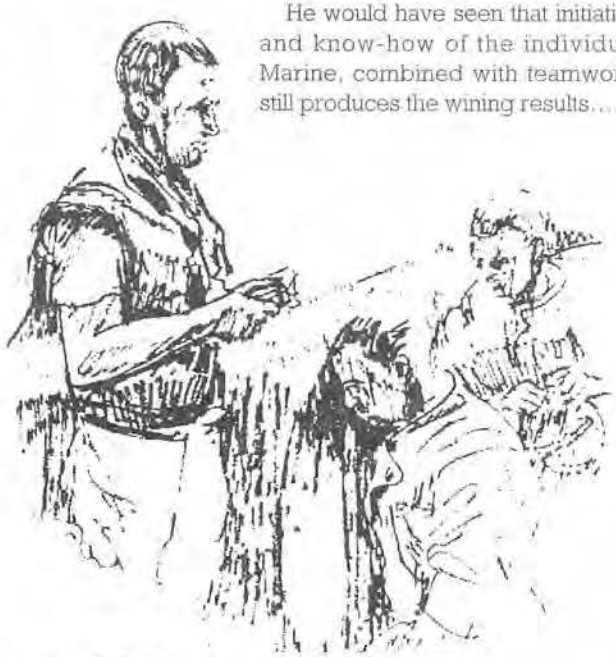

Rev. Charles Kelly from Sea Tiger, 1968

Return to Khe Sanh

by Robert J. Donoghue
SF, 27 October, 1994

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

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

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

Rucked to the Bru community of Thon Cheng, in grid XD 836362 and linked up with my interpreter Tu. Tu's 3 year old son was very sick and near death. I arranged for a Viet with a Russian dirt bike to transport Tu and his son to the Khe Sanh hospital. Bac Si Thien treated Tu's child. The boy had a high fever and fluid in his lungs. The doctor prescribed antibiotics, high-dose vitamins and a calcium supplement. These items cost $4. The doctor did not charge for the hospital visit. He was very supportive and impressed me. This is a far cry from last May when we tried to have some Bru treated there. We were told that our May trip really embarrassed the local government and that they were trying to treat the Bru better.

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

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

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

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

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

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

continued on page 6

continued from page 5

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dear fellow Khe Sanh veterans:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

dated 16 April 1994

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

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

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

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

A Hawk battalion landed at Da Nang just before the 3rd Mar Div arrived. VMGR-152 kept four or five KC-130Fs at Da Nang from March 65 on. I flew over Khe Sanh a lot in 64 making air drops. My first landing in 64 was on a dirt runway. We moved a lot. No messhall. No showers. No water. We had four tents off the South end of the Da Nang runway. We stole food, etc. from our

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continued from page 7

cargo, C-rats, two, three meals each, per day. The Special Forces had an A team with a heavily barb wired compound. Some of us with VMGR-152 would be invited by the Green Berets to drink with them at night. To get into their compound you had to go through two gates guarded by Nungs. Their wire was 8-10 feet high. Their club had two airconditioning units, hard liquor and ice. I drank a lot of their special called a "14." Actually it was more like two, three, or four 7 and 7 shots into a big goblet. Whenever we were scheduled to fly to Khe Sanh, the Green Berets asked us to fly a "load" for their guys up there. With what they were giving us, their requests were always granted. If they had a big load, they sometimes took days assembling it. They always established radio contact with their team at Khe Sanh before we'd load their stuff. They'd verify the weather. It usually cleared in the early afternoon over Khe Sanh, if it cleared at all.

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

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

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

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

Enough of my rambling on,

Jim Veletto

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

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

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

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



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

Dear Ray:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dear sir:

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

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

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

The Quintessence of Deceit

by Richard A. Goodwin
HM2 1/9

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

continued from page 9

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

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

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

Dear Ray:



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

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

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

Mike Dagner
F 2/26

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



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

William R. Yates
W 1/13

Dear Ray:

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

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

Semper Fi,
Mel Sopp
K 3/26

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

PTSD

By Joe Van Eeten
B 1/26

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



JOE WANTS YOU!

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

VVRU BASE CAMP BRAVO



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ray Stubbe

World Aid

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

From June 1990 through June 1992, we worked in the Sepone (Tchepone) District of Laos adjacent to Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam. While there, we helped our beloved Bru with medical help from various volunteers from the states. We had been given a contract by the government of Laos to operate in this area. When our contract expired in June of 1992, the Laotian government refused to renew our contract. Only recently were we able to prevail upon the government and renew our contract to serve the Bru in the Sepone area. The contract is for three years. We were also successful in obtaining a three-and-one-half year contract with the government to provide a 30,000-40,000 word English/Lao medical dictionary as well as a three year contract to provide ophthalmology services in the infamous "Golden Triangle" region of northern Laos. The government of Laos does not pay us for any of this work. Their contract with us merely gives us permission to operate in the areas they agree to, and we are only able to perform specific tasks which are spelled out in the contract. We focus on medical services since there is such a great need in this area.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PX Order Form

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

SHIRTS:	SIZE	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
Khe Sanh Picture (T Only (Lg, XL Only)			15.95	
Khe Sanh Map (T Only)(Lg,XL,2XL Only)			15.95	
Title (T Only)			13.95	
Git Some (T Only			13.95	
USMC Emblem (T Only)			13.95	
Khe Sanh Logo (T/Sweat)			13.95/19.95	
Warrior (T Only)			13.95	
Clinton (T Only)			13.95	
Marine Wife - Tough Job (T Only)			13.95	
Husband Normal (T Only)			13.95	
POW/MIA Emblem (Sweat)			19.95	
Warning - PTSD (T Only)			13.95	
Warning - PMS (T Only)			13.95	
Why Waltz (T/Sweat)			13.95/19.95	
Flag (T Only)			13.95	
Wife - Semper Fidelis (T /Sweat)			13.95/19.95	
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Marine Corps Golf Shirt (Polo Only)			19.95	
POW Names - March For Freedom (T Only)			15.95	
Marine Tradition - Wife (T Only)			13.95	
Postage Stamp (T Only)			13.95	
HATS:				
Khe Sanh Veteran (Red, Black, Blue, White)			8.00	
Khe Sanh Logo (Red, Black, Blue, White)			8.00	
Marine Corps (Red, Black, Blue, White)			8.00	

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

Windbreaker: Khe Sanh Logo				
Marine Corps				
Vietnam Vet: Lest We Forget				
POW/Mia				
They fought for Your Freedom				
Loved One's Jacket				
LICENSE PLATE FRAMES:			5.95	
The Khe Sanh Veteran, Eternally Bonded				
POW/MIA, Bring them home				
Semper Fidelis, U.S. Marines				
World's 911 Force, U.S. Marines				
BUMPER STICKERS: (ALL)			2.00	
Khe Sanh Veteran				
My girl said she'd leave me if I joined the Marines, (Sure am gonna miss her)				
MARINES, How's my driving? Call 1-800-USMC				
MARINES , America's 911 Force				
MARINES, America's Force of Choice				
MARINES, The World's 911 Force				
No God, No Peace - Know God, Know Peace				
WARNING, I brake for flashbacks				
Friends don't let friends ride Jap bikes				
American Flag window sticker.				
BOOKS:				
Valley of Decision (Hardcover)			25.95	
Forced Recon (Softcover)			5.95	
One on One (Softcover)			15.95	
Where Light is of Darkness			8.95	
Macho Man			20.95	
Flags (American, Marine, Army, Navy, Air Force, POW)			12.95	
	SIZE	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL

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

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

PX Order Form

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

TOTAL____

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

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

ADD $1.00 FOR 2XL SIZES.
ADD $2.00 FOR 3XL SIZES.
ALL PRICES INCLUDE SHIPPING AND HANDLING

PLEASE READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY
BE SURE YOUR SIZE IS MARKED.

FOR UPDATED CATALOG PLEASE SEND $1.00

Make Checks Payable to: Khe Sanh Veterans PX
6317 72nd Street
Kenosha, WI 53142
PHONE: (414) 694-8512 FAX: (414) 694-8330

SEND TO: NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
_____
PHONE#: _____
REMARKS OR SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Notice From The Publication Committee

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

For more information on ads call Mike O'Hara at 812-988-9454. Make checks for memorials or ads to *Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.* Mail to Publications Committee c/o Michael O'Hara, P.O. Box 626, Nashiville, IN 47448

Mail your dues donation to our Treasurer Vince Griffith at 27280 Jefferson St. #200, Temecula, CA 92590.



When did you last see the Marine Corps Association's monthly flagship magazines?

MARINE CORPS GAZETTE
Professional Journal of U.S. Marines

Keep Up With Issues Facing the Corps

Written by Marines, thought-provoking and frequently controversial articles focus on leadership; physical and mental fitness; education and training; discipline; ethics; theories and concepts of land, sea (amphibious), and aviation operations; new weapons systems; national security issues and history of Marine Corps involvement.

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duty, honor, fate

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

bill cowan
3/26

Khe Sanh

by Robert Ratkevich
DET A 5COMM

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

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

Doc Dave Steinberg
I 3/26

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

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

William R. Yates
W 1/13

Why I Am Who I Am

by Richard A. Goodwin
HM2 1/9

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

The Souvenir

An aviator friend of mine
gave me a pair of sunglasses
standard issue pilot's type
M1A1
He had four kids
was the flight leader
would stop and shut down in the LZ at Dong Ha
he didn't really want to fly
there just weren't any joy rides to Khe Sanh–
only artillery rounds and land mines
under fire
touching down an extra time for the wounded.
He took in whole blood.

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

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

Jim Epps
C/1/26

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

The Other War

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Charles Patterson
HQ 3rd MarDiv

Listen
Listen close
there is a voice for each and every name
a silent picture for a distant friend
a memory shared with subdued words
timeless conversations easing the pain of loss
left behind

yet carried where weary feet drag
through the passage of time
And its sudden stopping
imparting a message to the stunned
the living those stumbling for meaning
crying in their relief
mourning the loss
Avoiding the answer
of when
of who
of why
Tomorrow or today
for some even yesterday
And then there is the future
the utterance of all
Of companionship

And Love

Talis Kaminskis
CAC-O

Dear Editor:

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

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

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



Swede and Hung

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

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

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

For me this was to be my ultimate act of reconciliation, I would climb this mountain with my former enemy. Nguyen Thien Hung was a tank commander with the 12th Regiment, 312th Division. He had fought us and the ARVNs and was now my guide and partner for my ascent of Fan Si Pan.

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

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

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

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

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

Beyond The Call Of Duty

March 1968, Khe Sanh

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Brew," I said.

"Montagnards?" he responded.

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

"How you gonna make it?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Why should they promise," I rejoined.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mike "Spider" Loehrer
B/1/13

A FEW MOMENTS OF JOY WITH HIS NEW BOOTS

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

By John Randolph, The Los Angeles Times

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

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

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

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

Unusual

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

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

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

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

The Boots

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

It happened this way:

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

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

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

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

For Friendship

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pure Joy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* * *



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

Oct. 4, 1995

Dear Ernie,

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

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



Back at Khe Sanh

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Khe Sanh will always be more than a place. It was an experience like no other in the annals of the Vietnam war. Forgive me for rhetorically including myself but the Khe Sanh experience may have scarred us (literally for some) but in a profound sense it also transformed us, and every now and then, I think, especially after Las Vegas, even enriched us. And I'll repeat what a nurse said to me when I asked her if she regretted having gone to Vietnam. And she said it took a long while for her to reconcile it all but now she's glad she was there. "Because," she said, "Vietnam made me who I am today and I like who I am today."

What a legacy of war!

Love,
Jurate Kazikcas

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



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

REMEMBERING, NAME BY NAME

By Ray Stubbe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JAKE



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

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

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

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

Kenneth Pipes
CO., B 1/26

The 'Snake'

by Michael O'Hara
B 1/26

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

Clarence Tolentino
S/Sgt. D Company
1/26



Killed In Action
6/17/68

The Khe Sanh Veteran Newsletter
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Volume 2:2 Spring 1996

The Khe Sanh Veteran



Special Forces, Khe Sanh 1968
SP4s Fulton Moore,
Bob Donoghue,
Robert Shippen.

In this issue...

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...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout the newsletter

John Kaheny

A Message from the President

For a number of reasons, The Khe Sanh Veterans Association is a very special organization. One of the most obvious reasons is that we are the survivors of the longest single battle of the war in Vietnam. I am reminded of a remark made by Ken Pipes some years ago when we were talking about increasing our rather small membership. He stated, "Look, there just weren't that many of us to begin with!" The bottom line is that ours is a small but very unique group. Although our members have much in common, I am always amazed at the variety of the experiences described by our members in our newsletter.

The Khe Sanh experience cannot be evaluated in the traditional terms. Length of time spent at Khe Sanh varied, individual by individual, from a single day to almost a year, yet even one day could bring you the experience of a lifetime. It was a battleground without a front line or a safe area in the "rear." We had trench lines, but it wasn't at all like the fields of France in World War I. We had tremendous bombing and shelling but it wasn't at all like Iwo Jima. We were cut off by road but it wasn't at all like the Frozen Chosin. Depending upon where and when you served at Khe Sanh, your experience probably reflected a little bit of all those wars plus a whole lot more.

Khe Sanh possesses a haunting beauty, but there is a great deal of blood in that red clay. Perhaps what really binds us together are the things we all share in common. All of us experienced the knowledge that, although we were surrounded by nearly 40,000 NVA soldiers, we would never yield the field. No matter how bad the situation got, we did what needed to be done. While many on the home front worried about our survival we had tremendous trust in each other. We never doubted our resolve. Unfortunately many of our compatriots proved our resolve by contributing their own blood to the red clay of Khe Sanh.

We stand today with the knowledge that we are still a special group, sharing today the friendships that were formed by fire and steel so many years ago. Come to Philadelphia and renew those friendships and learn more about your organization and its future.

John Kaheny
1/26

A Message from the Editor

Moths to the Flame

I'm pleased with this issue. The Fall '95 issue was a rushed job but with this one, I feel I got it right. I'm also pleased to welcome aboard David Rogers as an Associate Editor. Dave will do articles on the history of the different units that served at Khe Sanh. In this edition, he writes about Echo company 2/26. Earle Breeding provided the information on E company. If you would like your unit profiled, contact Dave at ph. (817) 460-7706.

I'm sure some of the articles or poems contained in this issue will provoke intense feelings in many of you. This is not by design on my part. I essentially print everything that comes in. If you are moved by an article or work of poetry, why not share your thoughts with us. I ask that you do not attack the writer, for he is only sharing his personal feelings on the subject of his choice. There are instances of factual inaccuracies. This is the way the writer remembers it, and therefore a legitimate part of our history. If you are moved by an article or poem, why not contact the writer and share with him. Writers are very insecure and need encouragement. If you do not have the will or where-with-all to write, at least you can encourage our writers to continue. Which brings me to the title of this piece.

It is very difficult for many of our writers to commit themselves, to expose themselves, "for all to see." I accept the fact that I must beg, cajole, and harass our writers to "put your story down on paper." Brother's have no problem telling me all over the phone, but freeze-up when it comes time to do the writing. This is due, in my opinion, to the fact that the subject of Khe Sanh and Vietnam are "tapes" that we're used to playing in our heads, but the written expression of those thoughts and feelings is something we're not used to. Speaking for myself, it was not until I wrote about my experiences in Vietnam that I began to really understand the enormity of that time and its impact on my life. Someone once asked me flippantly how much of a difference Khe Sanh made in my life. I responded: "Sine qua non." (Latin—without which nothing).

There was an error on the reunion notice mailed to you. The Zip code for our Treasurer is 92590.

This might well be the last magazine that you will receive if you have not paid your dues. We have struggled as long as we can to give this out to everyone on the list, but as you can see from the size of this one, it is unrealistic to expect generous donors to keep covering our shortfall in membership dues. We have always allowed those who cannot afford dues to obtain a waiver simply by sending in their dues notice to our Treasurer with the statement that they cannot afford dues at this time. There are a number of generous brothers who specifically make added donations to cover those in need. But, if you cannot even take the time to write to our Treasurer we can only assume that you are not interested.

Ernie Spencer
Editor

Ernie and Family:

Salutations to you and yours my friend. May the season enrich your life and may you win the day and every day throughout the year! Cheers!

And, to all the brothers, I'd like to say:

My heart goes out to all of you. May you all have a bright future with the KSV. I'm broke most of the time, but I can from time to time send poems. I remember those nights I stood watch at Khe Sanh, on nights when I can't sleep. I will send what I can to make us stronger as a unit. I know it will get better. Thanks for remembering us who are locked in. I miss my KSV magazine and pray that we will once again have it. Yes, I know it takes MPC for it. Marines never did get much pay. Right now I'm getting even less. Please remember that my prison no longer uses the name Tamal. It's not easy getting mail into prison. Sure wish I could get Ernie's book "Macho Man," but, unless it goes from a book dealer, I don't get it. Anything you can do for me, Ernie?

Manny Babbitt
San Quentin, CA
3rd ATs

P.S. I've got two nephews in the Marines, one a PFC on the USS Wasp (Bosnia mission) and the other a LCPl at Lejeune NC.

Ed note: I'll see what I can do about the book, Manny.

I am sending some long overdue donations. I was at Khe Sanh April, May and part of June 1967. I was a section chief CPL with F/2/12. In May of 1967, 3 of our 105 MM howitzers were helilifted onto Hill 881S. I was with one of them. Consequently, I spent my last 3 weeks in country on 881S. I rotated to the World mid-June 67.

Keep up the good work.

Semper Fi,
Robert M. Forsythe

The Khe Sanh Veteran Inc.

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Editor: Ernie Spencer, 458 Holiday Hills Dr., Martinez, CA 94553
Associate Editor: David Rogers
Layout and Design: Leo Wong

Dear Vince:

Here is my money for my 1996 dues and an extra $10 for a special entry in the directory for my friend Frank Nelson Uzzell, Delta Co. 1/26. KIA 1/27/68 at the Water Point outside Charlie Co. lines while taking out a 50. cal. that was shooting at the aircraft that landed at the Khe Sanh airbase. Frank was from Columbia, Tenn., 718 Woods Dr. 38401-4938

Thank you and Semper Fi
Henry R. Gagne

Dear Ernie:

I received my copy of the latest KSV newsletter and spent an enjoyable evening reading it. Campbell Buttry did a great job on the cover. I was really sad to hear of Jake's passing. One thing's for sure, his memory will live on long after the days of all those who served with him by way of the interview you taped with him and Mike O'Hara on your reunion video. Jake's just moved on to the next phase of his being—who knows where. But, it'll be suffering-free, wherever it is.

With regard to Mike Harris' letter asking for financial support (he of the World Aid charity), I intend to take the magazine into work and show Mike's letter to Craig, the Operations Manager and brains behind our Indochina Travel tour product. Our company not only takes tours to and through the various cities and provinces, but we support a few charities over there, e.g., the street children's orphanage in Saigon, which is run on a shoestring budget by an Irish lady. We've only just added Laos to our tour (Vientiane), and it might be that Craig will be interested in Mike's request. No guarantees—but it's worth a try.

When I was sifting through my things last weekend, I came across a folder with all your letters—which go back some three years (and letters from Ray Stubbe and Talis Kaminskis) and I spent a few hours reading through them all again. I ended up laughing, because in some of your letters you were very obviously suffering from chronic question-answering fatigue, from the barrage of questions I used to throw at you! And it was really something reading through Talis's writings again—God, some of his work is just so moving. What a talent that guy has. His PTSD has certainly been a mixed "blessing"—whilst he's obviously laboring under its great weight, it's given him a gift he might not otherwise have had. He writes straight from the soul. Anyway, I'll sign off for now. I hope you and Pat had a cool Yule and a Happy New Year.

Sandra Hill
London, England

Dear Mr. Griffith:

Please find enclosed a cheque in the amount of $40 to cover my membership dues plus an additional donation. The balance can be used as you see fit, perhaps to defray the additional postage costs of sending your excellent newsletter to the United Kingdom. I look forward to receiving another year's fascinating reading.

Yours Sincerely,
JMcNeill

Vince:

I have read ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** cover to cover. Thank you. Being one of five Army Airborne guys there during the siege, I appreciate the effort of keeping the memory alive.

Roger Mountain
Commander VFW # 1614

Dear Sir:

My brother Max Nelson was killed at Khe Sanh in February 1968. I got a lifetime subscription in his memory a few years ago. I am impressed with the quality and appearance of the new, improved newsletter. Enclosed is a donation in hopes you can continue to publish it.

I've thought about taking a trip to Vietnam someday. Do you know of anyone who has gone back to see the place? If you know of anyone that could offer advice or assistance about this, I'd appreciate getting their name and address.

Thank you,
Kelly Nelson
Nelson Drive
Box 112
Walker, MN 56484
ph. (218) 547-2222

Ed note: Ok guys, this is a chance to do a favor for a family member of one of "ours" who paid the price for us. Many of you have gone over. Please call or write Kelly. Max will appreciate it.

Vince:

I recently visited Philly—stayed at the Franklin Wyndham or Wyndham Franklin Plaza. Easy to get to by vehicle ($8) and close to the heart of town. Good prices. Say hi to Jim Wilkinson, Ray Stubbe and Ernie Spencer when the board meets. I was XO 1/26 with Jim. July 67 to Jan. 68. Our mutual friend Jim Nash decided I should be re-assigned and I departed Khe Sanh just before TET.

Warm regards,
Bob Otteraaen

Dear Ernie:

I enjoyed our telephone conversation last week and I will contact Jim Epps and Ski about an anthology of Khe Sanh Vet poetry. I'd be happy to put some money toward it and see any proceeds go to the organization. I'm also enclosing a check for $250 for help with the cost of publishing ***The Khe Sanh Veteran***.

I have also enclosed the poem about Hank Norman we discussed and some recollections about Hank and Kim Johnson. I am sending a copy of both to Ray for his archives.

I'll call when I hear more about the poetry. Thanks for your help and the tough duty in taking up the Editor's job.

Semper Fi,
Chuck Patterson
3rdMarDiv

MARION HENRY NORMAN KHE SANH-1968

by Chuck Patterson
3rdMarDiv

Ca Lu, March 1968

They took your life
As if it belonged to them.
If only they had told me
They needed a life,
I would have given them mine.

I wonder
What they did with your life?
Perhaps,
If they don 't need it now,
They'd give it back.

The World, 1983

I saw you dead
But never buried.
In my heart you've lived,
Laughing, smiling Hank.
I would keep you there forever,
In a memorial more perfect
Than hands could build.

Finding an end to my war
I can mourn you now,
And, in sadness, leave
This loving, painful
Magic caretaking.
So I may live
At peace.

To celebrate your death,
To elevate your life,
And its conclusion,
Which was neither sweet
Nor fitting.
Duty's harshest price
For which the consideration
Should have been honor.

Ernie:

Received my Khe Sanh newsletter on Wed. 6, Dec. When I saw it, I was pleased for 2 reasons: 1) to get the newsletter 2) I knew you were "back". Without reading the contents, I could tell by the cover, print, etc. that you were back in charge. Thanks.

As soon as I saw the newsletter, I said to myself that I have to get the Poilane papers to you, and I will. On Dec. 8, I got your note inquiring as to the papers. I will have it to you by January. I'll probably finish it over my Christmas vacation.

I'm also happy to hear that the reunion this year will be in Philadelphia. I plan to attend and look forward to seeing you and many others.

I have a kid in school named Khe Sanh Burch. His dad was with 1/9. Spoke to the father a couple of times. He shows no pride in being a Marine and shows no interest in our organization. His kid gets in trouble a lot.

One of our English teachers has a remedial reading class for special education kids. They found Ray's "SIEGE IN THE CLOUDS" in our library and got interested in reading it since I was mentioned in the book. I gave your book "WELCOME TO VIETNAM MACHO MAN" to the teacher as possible reading material. The teacher has chosen (edited) several passages for use in class. She loves it, and the kids love it even more. The good thing is that a reading specialist who works with a few of the kids said she could never get them to read anything—and now she can't get them to put "MACHO MAN" or other related Khe Sanh stories down. I've brought in the *LIFE* and *NEWSWEEK* magazines from 68. The kids have read articles and written papers about their readings. The teachers are just amazed at the response of the kids to the Khe Sanh experience. In a week or so, I'll go in with my slides and Duncan's "I PROTEST" and "WAR WITHOUT HEROES" to wrap things up. Khe Sanh is still working its magic.

Semper Fi,
Nick Romanetz
C 1/26

Dear Ernie:

Many thanks to you for dropping me a few short lines. It's good to know that someone still cares. It's been 28 years and you are still concerned. Most people seem to give up and forget. But, you are still "Semper Fi." It's been very uplifting to visit with some of the guys by phone. As you know I was with Delta 1/26 as a squad leader in 1st Plt. My radio call sign was "Lone Star." In June 1968, I was medevaced after being wounded by machine gun fire near An Hoa. In the future, I plan to contact all of them who served their country with Delta company.

I am a custom farmer and commercial cattle rancher. It's a full time job tending to business. However, come hell or high water I will be in Philly come July of 96. I'm looking forward to meeting with all the men who fought at Khe Sanh. Keep in touch.

Respectfully and fraternally,
Bill Seiber "Tex"

Greetings:

Wish there was a larger amount I could donate to a worthwhile cause such as our newsletter—for now the amount included will have to suffice.

I served as Arty F.O. 6-2 Actual attached to the 9th Marines and 26th Marines at Khe Sanh. At this time I would like to extend an invitation to a complimentary meal to any Marines that may happen to pass through our town. Identify yourself to our hostess, she will notify me and I'll come out to "shoot the bull." Sorry no Ham and Mothers.

Thomas "Ken" Soerensen
3295 Hildale Ave.
Oroville CA 95966
ph. (916) 534-3506

Ernie,

I don't know if you ever received the report from Ken Penn. I assume not. If possible maybe you could put it in the next newsletter. I will be going back this spring to meet with them again and do more for the Khe Sanh combat base's future. I believe I could get funding to get some of the members there in 1998. I have some ideas for corporate and military donations. I'm glad you're back and realize that your job can be very depressing. When so, think of the good your efforts do for so many others and feel the pride you are entitled to.

Dave Spry
E/2/26



David Spry at Lang Vei 1995

Dear Brother:

I write to send a poem. John Pointer was at Khe Sanh and elsewhere in Nam. He worked as a deputy sheriff in San Diego and was at my corrections facility. I have made him aware of us and hope he will join. He has buried much of the past. He shared with me the poem I enclose and has given his permission to publish it. Can you see to it?

Best,
Jim (Bagpipes) Taylor
CAC

Dear Sir:

Enclosed is a donation. Keep up the good work. One suggestion: Perhaps every issue you could include an historical segment describing in detail perhaps several happenings simultaneously. Example;

March 1 through March 10th: in the US "Love Is Blue" is the hit record while...in Vietnam, the following occurred countrywide...At Khe Sanh, the following occurred...Obviously, the Khe Sanh piece would be the most detailed, drawing on both Ray Stubbe's remembrances, other written material, after-action-reports, personal remembrances, etc. After the first period is highlighted, you could ask for other personal remembrances for a specific period that will highlight the next issue.

The Vietnam countrywide part would be needed to give Khe Sanh some bigger content while the "what was happening in the States" part will serve to remind everyone of the whole period.

This type of historical piece along with some elementary sketches will probably encompass at least one page in each issue and I believe will both serve to educate and broaden everyone's experience and knowledge, as well as encouraging members to contribute in a more focused way.

It is important, I believe, to get the history out and to continue to build upon a historical content. After all, what has drawn us together is the history we shared.

That historical legacy should remain a centerpiece of the magazine and both the factual information as well as the personal, emotional remembrances should be co-mingled.

Hope these ideas help.

Name, unintelligible

P.S. You should also include some type of bibliography on books, articles, etc. to keep the history before people.

Ed note: Why don't you submit something for publication.

VIETNAM DAZE

We were all in vietnam for a year or more,
some for love of Country, some for love of war.
Nobody knew for sure the reason for the fight,
some were defending home or their concept of right.
We knew nothing of the greed and the money politics.
We were just dub-ass city kids and green country hicks.

Time either passed slowly or lifetimes went in a single day.
In your mind's eye you saw yourself from very far away.
Attitudes were always changing; you laughed, but often wept,
it depended on the action or the company that you kept.
There were things you did; things which you want to hide.
It was hard to accept when values, as well as people, died.

The war affected us all, no one escaped the change,
relationships never the same again, forever a little strained.
Many came back with wounds not always evident or readily seen.
It's easier to see a limb that's gone, than a mind trying to flee.
There are family get-togethers with the always empty chair,
as they grieve for their losses of sons no longer there.

The war, for some, was over years ago,
while others can't seem to ever let it go.
They have memories which continue, hurts which linger on,
when all the visible scars have healed, the limp all but gone.
Will their minds gradually withdraw, slowly begin to unbraid?
Will the unknowns they face always make them afraid?

John Pointer
Feb. 1982 (revised 1985)

It is good to have an organization of Veterans such as the Khe Sanh Vets. The Khe Sanh experience is unique in the annals of Vietnam history.

I qualify to be a Khe Sanh Vet but barely. While with 1/9, I saw more in a day than I saw in my six months of Khe Sanh. As a clerk with 1/9, I earned a Purple Heart yet I was in more imminent danger nightly on the lines of Khe Sanh.

The Vet groups such as the Marine Corps League don't seem to understand that we want to get together. While I can find some of my 1/9 buddies, there is little chance of finding my 1/26 friends. I wonder if it possible to break down the list by company and year served.

It would be nice to see a reunion in DC of all the Marines who served in Vietnam and to account for them. This could be a project of the Khe Sanh Vets.

At a 2/9 reunion, I met the man who had the serial number after me. We had entered Parris Island the same day to be split up into different platoons. We were both amazed to find each other.

I once talked with Ray Stubbe about forming a 1/26 network such as the one I belong to with 1/9. He thought it would be a good idea. I wonder if you could not promote this for at least all the battalions of the Khe Sanh Vets?

Semper Fi
William J. Weidenbacher

Ed note: A lot of people in our organization have suggestions that, while worthy and valid, require a substantial amount of time. I will say it one more time. Unless YOU are willing to carry the ball it will not happen.

You featured a story in ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** newsletter (Fall '95) and it referenced my husband Asberry York, Jr. The error in your story is you put Asberry York, Sr. and not Jr. Since my father-in-law is still alive, this can be confusing. My husband would appreciate a correction. My husband is extremely offended if his name is not spelled correctly.

Thank you,
Pamela York

Hello fellow Khe Sanh Veteran,

I was in 3/26 K Co. on Hill 861 most of the siege. I was a squad leader with the 3rd. Plt. Please memorialize my friend L/Cpl. Francis Pennetti. I am including a donation. I have already paid my dues. I am enclosing three poems I wrote. Please send me a copy of the honor roll issue. Someone borrowed it, and I did not get it back. I am drawing 100% from the VA for a combination of both ears and PTSD.

Sgt. Cecil Young

Ed reply: Sorry, I am unable to keep up with people who want back issues.

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midday war

by bill cowan
3/26

the sweetened air of morning calm
and sun's rays on the loom
foretell the heat of midday war
and shout the sense of doom

for men who know not what they do
for whom, for what, for why
but give their soul its last hurrah
last breath, and then to die

in midday war, past morning calm
when death some had not spared
and heart's lone dream of going home
was all that each had shared

Dear Vince:

For the past year, I've corresponded with Ray Stubbe, who has been sending me complimentary copies of ***The Khe Sanh Veteran.*** I finally decided I ought to pay for it, and wish to join the Vets.

Some stats: USMC from 8/65 to 6/69, honorably discharged as Sergeant (E-5). Vietnam Service from 12/66 to 1/68 Crew chief, Marine Observation Squadron Three (VMO-3), homebased at Phu Bai I manned detachments at Dong Ha and Khe Sanh throughout 1967. Flew Huey slicks the first half of my tour and pulled medevacs from 881 and 861 during the Hill Fights in May. Crew chief of the Huey slick that extracted the survivors of Recon Team Breaker from Hill 665 on May 10, 1967. Flew Huey guns the second half of the tour, running fire and support for inserts and extracts, and medevacs out of Khe Sanh during the second half of '67. Escaped to the World a few days before Tet.

Semper Fi,
Ron Zaczek

Major Quamo
by Robert Cavanaugh
FOB-3

I received a call one night and was asked if I had ever worked for a man named George Quamo while in Viet Nam. The person calling was the editor of the KHE SANH magazine, and he asked if I could put something on paper about the man. I said I would try.

I was on my third and last tour and had volunteered for SOG and assigned as a recon team leader for a team called Oklahoma. There were two other teams Wisconsin and



Major George Quamo, USA – K.I.A. 4/14/68

Pennsylvania, our little group was called Special Projects. Each team had three U.S. and between six and eight BRU. When I arrived on site, I met my boss, MSG Minnicks, who was by far one of the best combat soldiers that I had ever served with.

Within a month we received a message that they were sending an officer to command our little group and he would be arriving within the week. Needless to say, we were quite upset and couldn't understand why the Army was fixing something that wasn't broken. Major Quamo arrived on site about three days later, and you can believe that he was not on friendly ground. Before the year was finished, I truly believe that every American on those teams would have followed him to hell to put out the fire if he asked. But, to get back to what I remember, the day before he arrived we had another meeting about what we were going to do. That was when I gave my little speech, I said what we were doing was wrong, that threatening to ask for reassignment and not giving the man a chance was not right, and for Uncle Sam to think that he had to put a Field Grade Officer in charge of nine enlisted men was either an honor or that he was such a screw up they were trying to get rid of him. (It was an honor.)

It is going on thirty years so I cannot remember everything he did except put total trust in all his team leaders. He was the only Field Grade that I know that was allowed to cross the line, which is what we called the border of Laos, where we ran most of our operations. I remember that he and I went to Lang Vei just before it was overrun to debrief the Lao Commander who was forced out of his camp in Laos and reported that it was tanks that made them abandon it. While we were there, Major Quamo begged him to work on his defensive positions—they were really in bad shape. But he seemed more interested in when the next rice supply was coming in. He would regret not listening to us.

A week later, Major Quamo was leading a relief force back to Lang Vei to rescue any men that were still alive. I still remember SFC Secor dueling an NVA position with a Korean-era bazooka that had us under indirect and direct fire. They stopped shooting first and Secor won a Silver Star for shooting longer and straighter. SFC Secor was also KIA on another operation.

I read in a report after the war that the CO of Lang Vei said that if it wasn't for George Quamo there would not have been any survivors.

After Lang Vei, Skip Minnicks' tour was over and I more or less became NCOIC of our group, our original mission of Recon had been forgotten as like everybody else we ran local patrols and George became more like the XO of our base working with the CO Major Smith, another good man.

The last time I saw Major Quamo he was talking to a lady reporter as I was passing by. He asked me where I was going. I told him I was getting ready to go on an early warning patrol that night. He said to be careful. Two days later, he was MIA and a little while later it was confirmed that he was KIA.

Dear Mr. O' Hara:

I read with interest about your research and association with the Battle of Khe Sanh in the the Veterans of Foreign Wars Magazine.

I am still on active duty as a US Army Special Forces, Major stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. I spent 2 tours in Viet Nam as a US Marine Corps Sergeant and served with Company F, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment for the entire siege of Khe Sanh.

I never speak much of those days, due to the fact there are few left who actually know the meaning of being in hand-to-hand combat with a determined enemy soldier. I would be interested in learning of old comrades in arms from this era and corresponding with others who are knowledgeable of the facts and meaning of a soldier's sacrifice.

Yours truly,
Major J. Lynn Cooper

Dear Mr. Spencer,

We are two ninth grade honors students competing in National History Day in March. History Day is an academic competition in which students submit historical research projects and present them in front of a panel of judges. This year's theme is "Taking a Stand in History?" We felt that the Siege of Khe Sanh fit well with this theme. We are in the process of creating a documentary video on the Siege of Khe Sanh. We've spent the last four months doing "traditional" style research on this subject, but we feel it's important to obtain the accounts and opinions of the people who were there. We found your organization while researching on the Internet, and also read your book, "Welcome to Vietnam Macho Man," and found it to be extremely helpful.

Being able to interview veterans from the Siege of Khe Sanh would be a major advantage to our video. Mainly, we are interested in information on how to contact Khe Sanh veterans so that we could possibly do either phone or mail interviews with them. Also because we are creating a video, we would like to use as many photographs and video footage as possible.

Any information that you could provide would be greatly appreciated. We would be more than happy to talk with you at your convenience, and to send you a copy of our final video.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Ann Mooney Nathan Cover
23215 N. Perry Rd.
Colbert, WA 99005
509 467-2269
e-mail: XCover@aol.com

Mr. O'Hara:

Got word about The Khe Sanh Vets from the Nov. 95 VFW magazine. I served as the BN. M.T. Chief, H.Q. Btry, 1/13 with the 26th Marines from July 67-March 68 at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The M422s, M-37s, M-35s, M543 Wrecker were operated by my unit at the west end of the runway. I had a sign over a small gate next to the road that said: WE MAY NOT BE THE PRIDE OF THE BN. BUT WITHOUT US THE PRIDE DON'T RIDE.

Semper Fi,
F. D. Drake Sr.
MSgt. USMC (ret)

E/2/26: A Commander's Reflections

by Dave Rogers

Unfamiliar names of topological features such as Hills 362A and 362B, along with Nishi Ridge, were the sites of bloody fighting for the 26th Marines during World War II as they advanced northeastward on a tiny Pacific island called Iwo Jima. This Fifth Marine Division regiment, activated on 10 January 1944, suffered 650 men killed and 2,025 wounded during the 26 day campaign, and was deactivated after the war on 5 March 1946.

The 26th Marine Regiment was reactivated 1 March 1966 at Camp Pendleton, California due to the Vietnam War. The 1st and 2nd battalions landed at Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam, in August 1966 while the 3rd battalion arrived in October. Some 20 years after the battle for Iwo Jima, the 26th Marines, commanded by Colonel John J. Padley and later by Colonel David E. Lownds, found itself once again in terrain identified on topographic maps in meters above sea level. Numerous newly named hills, including Hills 881 South, 881 North, 558, 861 and 861A, near Khe Sanh in western Quang Tri Province, along with the Khe Sanh Combat Base, became a memorable part of the unit's history before it returned to Camp Pendleton in the fall of 1969. Although the losses suffered by the unit in this area were not comparable to those suffered at Iwo Jima, the same valor with which the Marines fought was not uncommon.

Echo Company of the Second Battalion, Twenty-sixth Marine Regiment was one of the rifle companies within the regiment challenged by enemy forces during its tour of duty in Vietnam, and particularly so at Khe Sanh. The company had moved to Khe Sanh on 16 January 1968 when the entire battalion, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Francis J. Heath, Jr. was ordered there from Phu Bai to link up with the remainder of the regiment. Prior to that time the company had served mainly in and around Phu Loc, located within the Phu Bai TAOR in Thua Thien Province, after arriving from Da Nang on 11 October 1966. It had also participated in Operation Hickory, which was conducted in May 1967 in the area just south of the DMZ known as "Leatherneck Square."

Captain Earle G. Breeding became the commanding officer of Echo Company in September 1967 after serving shortly as the battalion S-3 for 2/26. He remained the company's CO until 9 March 1968 when First Lieutenant Joseph R. Meeks replaced him after Breeding was assigned as the S-4 for the battalion. Prior to joining the 3rd Marine Division in July 1967, Breeding had formed companies B and C of the 5th Antitank Battalion at Camp Pendleton. He entered the Marine Corps in 1952, served with the 1st Amphibious Reconnaissance Company, then as Chief Scout with the 9th Marines under then Major David E. Lownds, during the Korean War, and was discharged in 1956 with the rank of Sergeant. Thereafter, he attended college under the GI Bill, and re-entered the Marine Corps in 1960 as a "Mustang" infantry officer.

During Christmas of 1967, Breeding found himself on R&R in Hawaii with his wife and daughter thinking, "This Vietnam thing ain't too bad." Upon returning to the Phu Loc area from R&R, Breeding learned that the tactical situation had begun to change dramatically as the Tet new year, beginning January 30, approached. Intelligence reports indicated that the North Vietnamese had begun encircling the Khe Sanh Combat Base, and a major confrontation was imminent for the 26th Marines. Breeding recalls the events of mid-January 1968 after arriving at Khe Sanh.

A day or two later, Echo company was ordered on a company size patrol a click or so north of Hill 558 where 2/26 was located and was to spend its time during the siege. On about the 26th, Echo was ordered back to Hill 558 and ordered immediately to go up on Hill 861A. This was a grueling task. We had walked, cutting every foot of the way with machetes, since early in the morning, and Lieutenant Colonel Heath ordered us up to Hill 861A as soon as we reached Hill 558. This was late afternoon of the same day. We were not afforded the time to eat, resupply, plan a route, plan fire support or air cover, for our unreconnoitered single file climb up Hill 861A. All we had going for us was the cover of darkness. Additionally, there was no way to get off the "trail"—no way. One machine gun would have decimated us if positioned properly. But Mars, Zeus or whoever smiled on us.

About midnight we reached the top and radioed 3/26 that we now belonged to them. I set the platoons in a circle more or less using a watch for sectors, told the platoon leaders to set security, etc. It was necessary to give them some orders, but I knew damn well nobody could remain awake after what we had been through the last several days. I also knew that one round of rifle fire close by would start the adrenalin on a high rush. Such always did.

Our supply, or resupply—whichever—was scant. For three days in the beginning, we had no water or food. We were not

continued on page 10

continued from page 9

allowed outside the wire, which gave me great latitude since we had little wire, no sledge hammers or wire working gloves, you name it. But we did have ingenuity, bamboo and a little stream down the hill the Gunny found, somehow. Gunnies are remarkable! The stream turned out to be a small muddy pool but we did fill a canteen or two, and if you let the muddy water sit long enough you could drink more or less clear water off the top. How you got the sediment out of the canteen was not up to the Gunny.

Things went along normally with almost constant incoming mortar fire and no resupply until the powers that be decided we needed food. Then we had pallets of C's all over the LZ, then we got air drops of water. Smart, real smart. That finally resolved itself and the choppers, more or less gently, set pallets of containers (in every imaginable form) of water on the LZ in the daylight so we could be mortared getting it off the LZ. If we waited a while to go get it, the NVA waited (were we being watched?). The same for any supplies.

Anyway, trenches, pits for our 60's (we had no 81's), machine gun emplacements, auxiliary and supplemental positions prepared, the company CP and aid station fortified as best as possible (hey, I'm no fool). Actually this turned out to be a good move as the CP was hit several times with no internal damage, and later when the NVA attacked us and penetrated the company area, the CP was used as an adjunct to the aid station for housing flash-blinded Marines until they could regain their eye sight enough to be effective combatants.

This leads us to five minutes after three of the morning of the fifth of February. We were not permitted to have any Marines in front of the wire. A listening post from Don Shanley's first platoon, which I had placed on the north side in front of the wire at a distance of about ten meters, rather anxiously reported in words unfit to print that there were quite a few stalwart individuals very close and moving south, obviously intent on contesting ownership of our hill. Since the good citizens of the Polite and Demure North would have been better brought up than to come a'visiting unannounced at that time of morning, I decided to role play. I became a general in the Kanh's Hoard, a Tartar madman, a Saxon, a Teutonic Knight, a Moor in Spain, not to mention a great German general minus only his panzers. What the hell, if you gotta go (and there was no getting off the hill), you might as well go out in Semper Fi Glory. Those of us who were there the morning of 5 February 68 only know what we experienced, much of which was related to Captain Moyers Shore for the G-3 Historical Publication on the Battle for Khe Sanh, so there is really no point in being redundant here.

The bottom line is we held (any company of Marines would have). The platoon commanders, NCO's and troops were great. They did what they were trained for—what they were supposed to do. Some were outstanding, especially in the NCO positions, which were actually PFC's, LCPL's and junior NCO's filling billets of much higher rank. One acting platoon commander was a Platoon Sergeant.

One significant factor was that the shooting stopped about 7:30 A. M., and as soon as the extremely dense fog lifted we did start getting replacements and resupplies. Now recall we were OPCON to Lieutenant Colonel Harry Alderman's (another great leader, truly) 3/26. They and Colonel Lownds, the CO of the regiment, took good care of us and we got many replacements: cooks, MT types, and others of varying MOS's who turned out to be Marines as Marines should be. MOS's meant nothing. Even the 03 dirty laundry sent from some other rifle companies was great—we had good NCO leadership. Discipline was never a problem—good leadership at the small unit level regardless of the rank of the small unit leader.

A note about Colonel Lownds: I personally have the greatest respect for him. He was commanding a reinforced regiment with attachments from every service except the Coast Guard, and I don't know if there wasn't one or two of them around. There were ARVN, civilian, and who knows, probably NVA spies—for sure, in that combat base.

The days following 5 February 1968 Echo Company continued to take heavy mortar fire. For the NVA, it was like shooting ducks on the water; we had no place to go and you can only dig so deep. You can't stay in your hole all the time. Things were better at night, especially when fogged in, though when they hit us the fog was thicker than San Francisco ever had it. They didn't often mortar us at night, so we surfaced and used the "facilities," and socialized a bit, or whatever.

And that's about the way it went, day in and day out. No, it wasn't fun, but we never had it as bad as Echo did on Iwo, or Marines did at the Frozen Chosin, or Belleau Wood, or on and on. Nor did any other unit at Khe Sanh—we only had it longer.

The battle of Hill 861A is well documented in numerous books, including David Douglas Duncan's "War Without Heroes." A former Marine officer turned combat photographer and foreign correspondent, Duncan just happened to arrive at the Khe Sanh Combat Base the day before the NVA launched their pre-dawn attack on Hill 861A. He later went up to the hill and took pictures for his book of photography. He states in another one of his books, "I Protest," that E/2/26 suffered more than twenty dead and wounded, while more than fifty North Vietnamese lost their lives.

Captain Moyers S. Shore's book, "The Battle for Khe Sanh," describes the fighting that took place in great detail. He reported that seven men were killed while another thirty-five were medevaced. The attacking North Vietnamese, members of the 325C Division, lost 109 known dead and an unknown number were killed by mortar, artillery, air strikes and supporting fire. Similar casualty figures are mentioned in Ray Stubbe and John Prados's book, "Valley of Decision: The Siege of Khe Sanh."

In reflecting on the events which occurred during his Vietnam war experiences, Breeding believes that there are some inaccurate statements of facts, both written and oral, that he has read and heard in years passing. Says Breeding, "Point is: it's in a book, therefore, it's true. Mythological History. Many years from now, some worthy reader will believe what he reads, ergo, as we say, it is important for the true, unembellished facts to be in print. How nice it would be if one of our members could somehow get our newsletters into the Library of Congress and other libraries throughout the country for posterity before it's too late."

Several survivors of E/2/26 are members of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., including:

Jim Appleman, Bill Aylward, Al Baker, Dan Barnett, Jeff Bodenweiser, Jerry Lynn Callaway, Carlton Cannon, Jim Carmichael, Richard Clawson, Billy E. Drexel, Jr., Stanley Dudzik, Thomas Eichler, Nick Elardo, Barry Fixler, Michael D. Fleming, Bob Giles, Eddie Ginn, William Griffith, Vincent Griffith, Brien A.

Hayes, William Hubbard, Larry E. Jackson, James N. Kaylor, John Lancaster, Carl Lerose, Bruce S. Lewy, Jeff Lloyd, Brian Lokken, Michael T. Lucas, Chuck Macaluso, William Maves, Larry McCartney, Stephen McDonnell, Robert McGillin, Terry Meek, Joseph R. Meeks, Charles Mercurio III, Merle W. Moritz, J. T. Nangle, Vincent Ortiz, Robert Pope, Robert M. Reed, Ralph Wayne Sanders, Don E. Shanley, Clyde R. Snow, Jr, Jack D. Snyder, David R. Spry, Jim Terry, James Toye, Stephen D. Treat ,Jerry A. Waxer, Gary Wicall, Jimmy Williams, Billy D. Wise, Mike Worth, Donald M. Wyatt.

Profile: Earle G. Breeding left the Marine Corps in 1971 with the rank of Major. His decorations include the Silver Star, Purple Heart and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star. He worked as a special agent for the FBI from 1971 until 1991. He is a member of the Society of Former Special Agents, FBI, Fraternal Order of Police, Roswell Sertoma Club, Marine Corps League and American Legion. He was the founding Commander, Department of Virginia, Military Order of the Purple Heart and is a member of the Roswell MOPH. He currently serves as president of the All Saints Education Foundation, and is a member of the board of directors of the Third Marine Division Association. He was the past founding treasurer and past national president of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and currently serves as a member of the board of directors. He is an investigative consultant for the National Center for Misssing and Exploited Children.

Dear Ray,

I've enclosed an article that I'd like to share with our fellow Khe Sanh veterans who may be contemplating a return visit to Vietnam. I am sharing this information in the hope that no other veteran or family of a veteran finds themselves in this situation. I would also urge everyone who sees this to pass this information on to other veteran organizations.

Dr. Barry Booth and David R. Ford thought they were doing something good that could bring closure to a fallen Marine's family. And the two Mobile area veterans still may have done just that in their effort to bring one of LCpl. James Caudill's military dog tags from Vietnam to his still-grieving family in Ohio. Their noble gesture, however, still may have been in vain. Though the identification tag may indeed be the real thing, so many bogus dog tags have flooded Vietnam that even Booth and Ford now question its authenticity.

The making of fake dog tags is a "cottage industry" in Vietnam, said Mike Nash, chairman of the Vietnam Veterans of America's POW-MIA Committee in Washington. He said he has heard of "Mom and Pop" outfits making American dog tags in Vietnam. "The dog tags are showing up hundreds of miles from where the American GIs were killed.

Booth,a Spanish Fort dentist, bought the single dog tag stamped "J. Caudill" in July 1994 while visiting his old combat base at Khe Sanh. Booth, who served as a Navy lieutenant and dentist in Vietnam, said several Vietnamese children approached him and offered to sell him dog tags belonging to American servicemen. "I bought the dog tags they had, and they had five," Booth said. The tags bore the names of four Marines and one Navy corpsman who served in Vietnam nearly 30 years ago.

"I brought them back with the intention of trying to get them back to the GIs or their families," Booth said, adding that the dog tags "looked authentic to me."

Caudill's dog tag even appeared to be blood-stained, Ford said.

But appearances can be deceiving, said Nash of the POW-MIA Committee. He said lists of American servicemen killed in Vietnam or missing in action are "available in the United States—available to anyone." He said entrepreneurs easily get the lists and sell them.

John Webb, deputy commander of the U.S. Army Central-Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, said in a recent telephone interview, "I've got 1,400 phony dog tags laying in my lab now. They were purchased by an American who was visiting Vietnam. It's very common. There are bogus dog tags turning up all the time."

Believing the dog tags he had bought were real, however, Booth returned home and asked fellow Vietnam veteran Ford if he would like to try to locate the owners or their families and give the dog tags to them. Ford, 46, a former Marine who served for a year in Vietnam, also was at Khe Sanh, a combat base in northern Vietnam near the demilitarized zone in 1968. He was there when the base was under siege by the North Vietnamese Army for 77 days. Now a chemical operator, Ford placed advertisements in veterans magazines trying to locate the servicemen. "I was hoping everybody was alive," he said. He also searched lists of Americans killed in action at Khe Sanh, but to no avail.

Finally, after seven weeks of searching, Ford contacted Wayne Welchel, a former fellow platoon member in Vietnam. Welchel—through a computer—had access to a list of those killed in action in Vietnam. "The only J. Caudill on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a James Caudill," Ford said. He said that—as a result of Welchel's help—he learned that Caudill was from Marion, Ohio. Ford said he learned that Caudill was 23 when he died In Vietnam on Aug. 18, 1968. Ford contacted *The Star*, a newspaper in Marion, and it ran a story. Almost immediately, Caudill's sister, Carolyn Avila of Galioni Ohio, responded and Ford gave the dog tag to the family. Ford said he learned that Caudill was killed at Danang and not at Khe Sanh where Booth purchased the dog tags. But, he said Caudill had been wounded earlier at Khe Sanh, and he could have lost a dog tag there. According to his brother, L/Cpl James Caudill served with Alpha Co., 1st Battalion, 26th Marines at Khe Sanh. Anyone who knew him is asked to contact: Everett Caudill 634 Cherry St. Galion, Ohio 44833

David R. Ford
A 1/9

Melanie Gentile had gathered materials for a book on "Graffiti of Vietnam" which had been placed in temporary storage. When she was unable to pay the storage fees, the contents of her locker were auctioned off or disposed of. She lost 25 years of research. She asks for "Graffiti of Vietnam" that you wrote or remember reading and stories of tragedy surrounding the "Third Hole on the Left." (She hasn't elaborated on this). "This was to be my way of trying to thank you for all of your bravery and suffering." And she intends to donate most of the profits to Vietnam veteran organizations. Contact: Melanie, PO Box 588, Cornwall NY 12518, Tel: (914)534- 5856.

Dear Sir,

This letter has reference to the November 95 VFW magazine and the article regarding your organization. I am formerly USMC Corporal P. N. Greene 2218486, VMO-6, MAG 36, 1st MAW. I was a crew chief on a Huey gunship. I arrived in Viet Nam in December, 66 and returned to the States in January '68. During 1967 our gunships were in and out of Khe Sanh daily. Our call sign was Klondike, and later in the fall of '67 we changed it to Cadaver. Most of the missions that I was associated with were working with US Army Special Forces on SOG missions in Laos and North Viet Nam. During the battles of 861 and 881, we were there with ground support and directing air strikes. Also, numerous insertions and extractions working with USMC Recon around the area.

If you might be interested, I have numerous color slides (35mm) of Khe Sanh and surrounding area, both on the ground and aerial.

Very truly yours,
Peter N. Greene

Dear Dave:

Your letter in ***The Khe Sanh Veteran***, Fall 1995 issue, requests information on all types of support provided at the KSCB during February 1968. I am enclosing copies of my flight log for the period of January through March of 1968. When I checked the log for 8 February I found that the dates 6-14 February were not recorded. The reason for this was that while you were doing a great job on Hill 64, I was on R&R. (Someone had to go.) However, after talking to you on the phone, you stated that you would like the flight log copies anyway.

The flight log is a record of my flights as a pilot in Marine Attack Squadron 311. The remarks in the right column contain the map coordinates of each mission. TPQ indicates radar controlled bombing. CAS is Close Air Support. LZP is Landing Zone Prep. DAS is Direct Air Support. AR is Armed Reconnaissance. Other items are probably self explanatory.

VMA-311 was attached to MAG-12 at Chu Lai and flew numerous missions in support of KSCB. Two members of our squadron, Major Loftus and Capt. Dowling, were shot down over KSCB. These incidents were previously reported in ***The Khe Sanh Veteran***.

Sincerely,
Darold L. Guttormson
Lt. Col., USMC (Ret)

Michael:

I noticed your note in *The VFW*, November Issue, regarding some details of Khe Sanh. I served in Viet Nam for one year as a Catholic Army Chaplain (Caps) from 1964 into 1965. I was with MACV, based in Hue. Because of the shortage of Chaplains however, I traveled out of Hue to Khe Sanh, to Quang Tri, to the Ashau Valley, to DaNang, Tam Qui and other outposts as well. Many times I simply hitched a ride with some aircraft going out into the outlying areas, often spending the night with the troops. In this manner I covered quite a number of Special Forces Outposts. For example: I was one of the first going into Nam Dong when it was overrun—where Capt. Dondlan received the Medal of Honor. Sometimes I had a Vietnamese driver or drove myself (jeep) to closer points along Highway #1 like Phu Bai or Quang Tri. When I came to Khe Sanh I would offer Catholic Mass as well as Protestant services for some of the men who so desired. At times like this, I often accompanied the medics out into the Montagnard villages where medicines and varied pills were dispensed. In 1967 when my tour of duty in Korea was ending, I was scheduled for transfer back to Viet Nam but about that same time, my Bishop in Wichita, Kansas contacted the military and said that he needed me back in the Diocese, so I had no choice but to return. I am now retired in Hot Springs Village and enjoy the peace and quiet here.

Sincerely,
Name unintelligible

Mike:

I served with Army artillery unit 2/94th B Battery from April 67 until just after Tet 68. Our base camp was J.J. Carroll, but we also were at Gio Linh, Con Thien, Cam Lo and the Rockpile. We fired support for Khe Sanh with our 175mm guns on numerous occasions.

Mike Jacobson

Dear Michael,

A recent announcement in the VFW magazine about the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. has prompted my letter.

I served with the 240th. FA, 108th. Artillery Group at Khe Sanh from March 5, 1968 to June 1, 1968. Although an Army unit, we were attached to and under the operational control of the 3rd. Bn, 12th. Marines, 3rd. Marine Div.

Our mission was to provide support for the 3/12 firing batteries by providing coordinates for enemy mortar, rocket and artillery positions. This was accomplished with a Counter Mortar Radar set which we operated and maintained. Whenever Khe Sanh or the surrounding areas were fired on by NVA or VC, our radar would pick up the source of the firing and we were able to immediately call Fire Direction Center for a fire mission on these coordinates. I recall that in one month we observed and called for fire on over 300 locations. On many occasions, secondary explosions were noted after counter battery fire was ordered.

I would be interested in learning more about your organization.

Sincerely,
Dick Kilian

Dear Mr. O'Hara:

This is in response to your article in the VFW mag. Yes, I was in Khe Sanh. I served with the 1st Air Cav. 1/77 F.A. We were in Khe Sanh for about 3 weeks. We supported the Marines when they were pinned down. This was in 1967(9?). We were all over Quang Tri. I have pictures and newsletters. Please write back.

Welcome home,
Fred Kinford

Dear Mr. O'Hara:

I am writing about the ad in the VFW magazine. I joined the USMC in 1967 and was discharged in 1969 honorably under medical conditions. I was in F company 2/1. I was wounded twice near Khe Sanh while with the 1st Marines. I was wounded in an ambush near Khe Sanh on May 19, 1968 and received the Purple Heart. I was a PFC 0311 rifleman in a foxhole with PFC Al Gillispie from Ohio, Akron, I believe. He was shot in the head and then I was hit with a grenade and shot in the right shoulder. I was taken to different hospitals. I remember being in Guam and then shipped to Chelsea Naval Hospital. I am sending a copy of my DD-214.

Thank you,
Albert Licciardone

Mr. Michael E. O'Hara

I read your article in the VFW with great interest. I served with the 3rd Shore Party Battalion, 3rd MarDiv. from Feb. 1968 to Mar. 1969. I served with various grunt companies as an H.S.T (Helicopter Support Team). My company was called up to outpost Ca Lu in March 1968 to prepare LZ Stud for operation Pegasus to lift the siege around Khe Sanh. The outpost was moved and later named LZ Vandergrift. I also worked the LZ in Khe Sanh for a short time, but mostly worked fire support for Hills 861, 881S and 471.

I was very pleased to read your article as I'm very proud of serving with the Marines in this area, as it is a part of history and I was there. If I can be of an other service, I'll do what I can or remember.

Thank you,
John F. Locke

Dear Mr. O'Hara:

I recently became aware of your new organization dedicated to researching the battle and the veterans of Khe Sanh, RVN. I served as a Navy Hospital Corpsman with the U. S. Marine Corps in Viet Nam in 1967-1968. I am a veteran and survivor of the entire period of battle that took place in that remote corner of South Viet Nam. I arrived in Khe Sanh in late December of 1967, prior to the onset of the battle. I was the senior corpsman of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, 3rd Mar. Div. (Reinforced) and we took our position on hill 861 on the 26th of December. Our position on Hill 861 was the initial target of the NVA Tet Offensive on January 21, 1968. We took considerable casualties during this attack, and our position was nearly over run during the early morning hours. The next morning began the "siege of Khe Sanh" that lasted through late April. I survived this period (wounded slightly), but as the senior medical representative, I medically evacuated (WIA or KIA) nearly all of the members of Kilo company that originally arrived on Hill 861 the previous December. Hill 861 was strategically positioned, and we experienced continued aggression and, from our excellent vantage point, witnessed the siege actions on the surrounding hills and the actual combat base through April.

Upon leaving my four-year tour of duty as a regular member of the U.S. Navy, I joined the Naval Reserve. I retired last March as a Master Chief Hospital Corpsman (E-9). My memories are very vivid of the Khe Sanh siege period, and I would be glad to contribute in any way to your organization and research. Please contact me at your convenience.

I have only been in the Cincinnati area for a little over a year after spending several years in the San Francisco Bay Area. I'm not sure where Nashville, IN is, but perhaps we are in close proximity.

Sincerely,
Rod Lyons

Ed reply: Rod, now that you're retired, why not do a more detailed piece on your experiences on 861, or, your career in the Navy.

Fire Mission

by Robert Mclane
F-2/12

I recently saw for the first time a copy of ***The Khe Sanh Veteran***. I spent 45 days there in the late spring of 68 with a 105 battery. Enclosed is part of a chapter of a book I recently wrote about my year in the DMZ. Feel free to use it if you like.

The Lieutenant yells "Fire mission!" Does that make three this morning or is it four? This fever just won't go away. It's not any worse, but neither it nor the diarrhea will let up. There are no chills, it's not malaria, but I feel like I'm awake in a dream as I go into the bunker and walk over to a table. I set down my jug of Kaopectate and pick up a slide rule and wait...Crunch the numbers...Give the data to the fireteam leader...Wait for new numbers...The bunker shakes as one of Uncle Ho's jumbo economy sized artillery shells slams into the ground less than a hundred feet away. The next minute seems to take forever as the dust tumbles and dances like red snowflakes, covering the field radios, maps, log books, and faces of the officers and men of Fox battery. If the shell has a delayed fuse, we will know it in the next thirty seconds. It doesn't. "Azimuth!" Sergeant Medford shouts. I look at the slide rule..." Seven...four...two...three!"

"Negative Sergeant!" a voice from the secondary fire team calls out. "Work it again gentlemen," Sergeant Medford replies. I run the numbers one more time. I look up at Sergeant Medford.

"Seven...four...niner...six..."

"Affirmative Sergeant." The secondary team concurs. Lieutenant Adams gives the command to fire. Sergeant Medford walks over to me. "Are you OK?" he asks. "I'm fine." I smile. A few minutes later, the forward observer ends the fire mission. It is almost noon. I walk outside and lean against some sandbags. I take a shot from the Kaopectate. Sergeant Medford walks up beside me.

"How's your fever?"

I look at him. "About a hundred and one today." I grin. "Does it show?" He spits on the ground then lights a cigarette.

"Look Buddha, why don't you go to Dong Ha for a couple of days? Get rid of that fever. Catch up on some sleep. You can be back here next week, good as new." I bend over and start to open a can of C's.

"We're short-handed enough already. If I'm not here, that just

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means the rest of the guys will have to pick up the slack. They're stretched thin enough as is."

"Dammit Buddha! It's not worth the risk of getting our own people killed." I light a heat tab and set a can over it.

"Look Hal, our system's working. That's why we have a secondary team. They caught it. I've had this fever over two weeks and this is the first time I've made a mistake. Let me eat this can of ham and limes, and I'll be good as new." Sergeant Medford shakes his head and finishes his cigarette. "I want the Corpsman taking your temperature twice a day." I hold up the gallon of Kaopectate.

"He's already on top of this, Hal. Relax." My beans were ready. I find some shade and sit down to lunch. Rail walks over.

"I hear we're getting out of here," he says with a smile.

"Yeah, we're going to France," I reply. Since I have no use for them, I give Rail the small box of cigarettes that came with the box of C's.

"No man, everybody's leaving. They're shutting Khe Sanh down, dude. I heard it from some engineers. They're bringing in extra C-4 to blow all the bunkers. I'll bet you a hot beer on it."

"Bet," I reply. The rumor is true, but they take their sweet time about it. We spend the next two weeks shooting and ducking before the engineers finally start blowing up the bunkers. Fox battery is one of the last units out. A plywood shitter is the only visible structure still standing, as we hump our gear down to the LZ. A lone bulldozer is filling in collapsed bunkers. Enemy shells continue to fall. Nobody tells Charlie it's over. Koontz's folks had sent him a Monopoly set. He hadn't had time to play his first game with it. I don't think Koontz wrote his family very often. I'll never understand how they thought he had the time to sit around playing Monopoly. He carries it along with the rest of his gear. As he ducks and runs for the waiting helicopter, the box holding the game falls to the ground.

The prop blast scatters all the money, hotels, board, and every game piece including the little Scottie dog, into a huge swirling cloud of red dust as the twin blades wind-up to take off. The place looks like the set of a Fellini movie as the play money scatters in the wind. I stare out the window and say a silent goodbye. A lot of good Marines have died here and now we were leaving. Historians in tweed coats will argue about whether the blood sacrifice at this place was worth it. For my money, it is a senseless waste.

Fellow Khe Sanh Vet:

My memory is hazy at best. My recollection of the morning of 8th of Feb. 1968, there was a hell of a bunch of firing on OP Hill. All members of Alpha Company 2nd Platoon, everybody, fell out into the trench line. From the trench line I watched the battle rage.

As I recall, I never started toward OP Hill until after daylight. Me being a PFC, I didn't understand the strategy, except we probably would have been ambushed in the dark. Once there, me and a squad of Marines were on flank. I held a position next to the road at the bottom of the hill. I didn't get on OP Hill until mid-morning.

It's hard for me to recall names, but there was a red-headed lieutenant named Lovely running around with a 45 crying and screaming. I found out years later the reason being was his eardrum had been perforated by concussion.

There were three Marines dead in a shallow trench. I was ordered to check bodies. They were dead and rigormortis had already set in. When trying to convey this to the red-headed Lieutenant, he told me to check them again.

As for the NVA prisoner, I recall he had his lower leg from calf down nearly blown off and a Corpsman had applied a tourniquet. I think he was too weak to answer questions. Myself and a small group of Marines stood over him as he died. I can't recall how many of my fallen brothers I helped carry off OP Hill, at least 3 or 4. The hill was very steep and rugged, one of the hardest things I've ever done in my life.

I can't recall if we were mortared that day but at the end of the day after counting heads, we were Marines short. To the best of my recollection it was 2-3 days later when we went back to look for more bodies. We were mortared then. The dead NVA soldier was still laying by the path. I can't recall how many bodies we recovered, but I personally found a Marine in a caved-in bunker at this time.

To the best of my recollection, that's all I recall. The carnage of it all is hard to bear 28 years later.

Semper-Fi,
Andrew L. Metts 2nd Platoon Alpha Co. 1/9

P.S. Sorry I couldn't recall more.

Dear Ray:

I am so pleased that I found out about ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** newsletter. I sent in my dues immediately. For the past 28 years, I've been trying to hook up with my brothers who served with me in the "Nam." I've only been able to contact a few Marines who were members of 3/26. One of the vets whose letter appeared in the Fall issue of the newsletter mentioned he was at a 3/26 reunion in Tysons Corner, VA.. I sure would like to attend the next one.

I joined 3/26 on Okinawa Sept. 1966. They had floated there from the West Coast. For the most part, they were green as grass. We floated to Nam and landed at Phu Bai/Hue around Nov. 1966. It wasn't long before we started Operation Chinook, north of Hue. Our first KIA was a 3.5 rocketman named Paul Evans. The Operation Chinook perimeter was named Camp Evans. We were relieved at Camp Evans around April 67. We convoyed up to Dong Ha on Hwy 1 then took a left onto Rt. 9. Our destination was Khe Sanh. After passing The Rock Pile, we came upon a blown bridge and had to be heli-lifted into Khe Sanh. We relieved the battle-worn troops who fought the initial battle for 881N and 881S. I remember the Frenchman who owned the coffee plantation. We ran sweeps and patrols around the area. Many of the original members of my outfit were transferred to other units. In Aug. of 67, I was pulled out of my line company. I had 30 days left on my tour. I was reassigned to Hill 950 for the remainder of my tour. I remember flying up to Hill 950. I was in the company of a sergeant and private. They filled me in on what had happened earlier on Hill 950. The hill was overrun by sappers about a week earlier. These two guys were the only survivors. The sergeant was from Philadelphia. I remember him

telling me he was sent to Nam and he had only 9 months on his enlistment. He was a FNG. He'd only been on the hill a few days prior to it being overrun. I remember him still wearing stateside starched utilities and leather boots. When I was relieved on Hill 950, I started bugging our chief corpsman to let me catch a flight to Danang. I had 4 days left on my tour. As I was boarding the Chinook helicopter in Khe Sanh, a bunch of Hueys were delivering stretchers full of dead grunts. Within a few days, I was home attending a birthday party for my one-year-old niece.

Over the years that followed, I've made many attempts to contact former members of 3/26. I look forward to hearing from members of my old outfit. If any of what I mentioned is familiar, please contact me at 1156 Kingsley Rd., Camp Hill, PA 17011

Thank you,
William P. "Doc" MIller Sr.
Hm3 L company, 2nd Plt. 3/26

Hi Mike:

I was the OpSgt of Special Forces FOB-3 from Sept. 67-May 68. Started at the old French fort and moved Nov. 68 up to be a bubble on the airstrip perimeter. We tied in with 1/9 Marines at the road that led to Khe Sanh ville. We accepted the Bru and ARVN of the CAC units and Khe Sanh ville into our perimeter when they were refused access to the base. I still have some air photo shots of the Marine Plt. that was ambushed on the road N. of the French coffee plantation. I flew long range LLRP cover (air) over teams that managed to get out of the base during the siege. We have many Special Forces (ret.) who were there and at Lang Vei.

Jim Moore
CSM USA (ret)

Ed note: Jim why don't you send the list of names to Ray Stubbe for inclusion on our list.

Khe Sanh Crash Crew

When I arrived at Khe Sanh on a medevac chopper, the base was receiving heavy incoming and the pilot had to circle the base for about 30 minutes until it was safe enough to touch down. Watching everything for 30 minutes in 3-D and Living Color didn't do much for my nerves, and when we finally touched down I was out of that chopper running along the runway trying to find Crash Crew's bunker. I finally found the bunker and was greeted by the crew who gave me some c-rations. As a Crash Rescuman at Khe Sanh during the siege, things always worked in reverse for us. When we were being shelled, which seemed like constantly, and everyone was taking cover, we were being called out to perform crash rescue duties, and to fight fires.

As I look back, I can't remember anyone ever complaining about taking risks—we complained about everything else like rats, dirt and food, just like everyone else, but risks were part of the job, and just like everyone we had to take them. When we weren't doing Crash and Rescue, we helped with wounded, did runway damage reports for MATCU Co. Capt. Preston Haynes, often while under heavy N.V.A. fire. I remember Capt. Haynes taking my good buddy Gary Lebanc and me out on the runway while under fire to unload supplies from chute drops and that impressed me to see him taking risks right beside us. When we were on red alert, our guys did perimeter duty. We also fought fuel bladder fires and the dreaded ammo dump fires. Everyone in Crash Crew was tight, no rank, we were on a first-name basis. Our lives depended on it. I liked and cared for everyone, and they were the same.

I also liked the guys in the 26th Marines that we were detached to—M.A.G. 36. I don't remember names but I remember their faces. There were a lot of incidents. These guys stand out in my mind most clearly: Ralph Beck, Jerry Kunkel, Gary Leblanc, Carl Lewallen and Cecilio 'Yogi' Ybarra.

We got word on the evening of the 22nd of March that we were in a Red Alert condition. We immediately made preparations for a ground assault by the NVA. forces. At approx. 18:30 hours, heavy incoming started and at approx. 19:00 hours, Major Havlik contacted our bunker and asked for volunteers to fight ammo dump fires at the east end of the base that had been started by enemy artillery—damage unknown. Crash Crew immediately responded with six volunteers. Our Navy structural fire fighting truck was down for repairs so although our M.B.5. crash truck was used, it was not adequate for fighting ammo dump fires due to the fact that it did not have enough water pressure. It was painted a bright red,which made it easy to spot by N.V.A. gunners. As we started for the ammo dump, the east end was under intense enemy incoming and was lit up from flares that were being used to light up the eastern and southern perimeters. The fires were approximately 25 meters from the perimeter and the N.V.A. had seen us. As we proceeded to the fires, I could see that we were the only thing moving above ground on that end of the base. Every thing was lit up from the flares. The N.V.A. Gunners began firing directly at us with a recoilless rifle. We were fired on many times that night going to and from the base's water point. When we finally reached the ammo dump, it looked like a disaster. There were fires in the berms and rounds were cooking off as we fought the fires. We were forced to take cover several times when the incoming became too heavy. We made three trips that night between 19:00 hours and midnight to recharge the truck with water and drive the half mile back to the ammo dumps. Each time the enemy gunners fired on us trying to stop our progress. We finally managed to extinguish the fires and return to our bunker. Our truck had sustained heavy damage and was barely serviceable. We again got word on the morning of the 23rd that the dumps had reignited and were on fire from the heavy incoming. We made two more trips to fight the fires in the same area as the previous night. We were again pinned down by enemy incoming after we reached the ammo dumps. At this point, the berms that held the 105 bee hive rounds began exploding and we were caught in the open and showered by debris including the flechettes from the bee hive rounds. At this point, our whole crew was pretty badly beaten up, but we had once again extinguished the fires and B and C batteries were back in action and able to perform fire missions again. I was hit but never received a Purple Heart. Jerry Kunkel had to be medevaced out.

On April 9th, we responded to an ammo dump fire at A.S.P.1# with our Navy fire truck after it received enemy incoming that caused a huge explosion. We drove directly into this area until we reached a point where we could go no further due to the various ordnance that had been blown onto the access road. We had to remove the hot 155mm rounds that were blocking our way to the fires in the dump before we could proceed. This part

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of the ammo dump was still on fire and contained 4.2 illumination rounds, 81mm and 60mm white phosphorous rounds, Law's, 155mm illumination rounds and C.S. cannisters. It was extremely difficult to position the fire truck because of the live ordinance that was strewn about the area. We also had enemy incoming to contend with, and we had to fight this fire with our gas masks on due to the toxic fumes from burning magnesium, white phosphorous and C.S. gas.

On the final run of the third trip to the ammo dump, I removed my gas mask to better see what I was doing, I don't remember very much after that for a couple of days, except that I could not breath very well and I had a lot of chest pain.

I have been diagnosed as having reactive airway disease and asthma, I believe that this is the incident that it initially began, due to the fact that I breathed burning magnesium white phosphorous and C.S. gas that day. I never received the Purple Heart Citation for this wound.

The third incident involved a crash by Air Force Mission 603 on the afternoon of 4/13/1968. I was still feeling pretty bad from the ammo dump fire of 4/9/1968, but I was still fully involved in this crash and rescue. We reached the crash site in approximately three minutes. The aircraft was completely engulfed in flames. We managed to get the crew and passengers to safety with one exception. The civilian coffee farmer Felix Poilane, had been killed on impact. This was an extremely difficult situation because our M-B 5 crash truck was now inoperable due to the damage it had sustained during the ammo dump fires of 3/22 and 23/1968. As a result we were forced to use our navy structural fire truck, and we did not have any foaming capacity to fight fuel fires. As a result, we were forced to fight this fire with handheld fire extinguishers and water from our fire truck. We completely exhausted the K.S.C.B. water supply. There was a great deal of burning magnesium from the structure of the aircraft, and I was again affected by the fumes from this fire but was never treated.

Myself and my buddy Mike Haggerty were finally extracted in May exactly the same way we came in, under heavy incoming and by another medevac chopper.

I've been trying to verify my health problems for my V.A. claim. I have severe problems with my lungs and my eyes and hearing but without success, since my records were destroyed by fire.

If any one remembers any of these incidents, please write to me. I'd like to hear from you.

Semper Fi and God Bless You All
Adolph (steve) Novotny
3190 Bookcliff Ave.
Grand Junction, Colo -81504
970- 434-7403

Ed note: It is indeed a small world. I was across the airstrip on the C company side when the crash of the plane that killed Felix Poilane took place. I remember a fistfight between one of the Air Force crewman and, I believe, some people from the crash crew. It was at the back of the plane while it was still smoldering and before it burned. Anyone else have any recollection of this or any of the other incidents brother Novotny mentions?

Dear Michael:

Saw your notice in the VFW magazine. I was in the Marine Corps and was at Khe Sanh in 67-68 during the Tet offensive. I commanded Alpha Battery 1/13. If I can furnish any info for your research, I'd be glad to.

Semper Fi,
Dennis L. Pardee
Former Captain USMC

Ed note: Now that you've offered, Dennis, how about doing your memoirs as a battery commander. We have not had any writings by former battery commanders.

Quacks At Khe Sanh?

by Ron Parsons
15 APS

While at Khe Sanh, I was Airman Second Class Parsons, who was one of the crazy guys who used to dodge artillery fire on the runway when the C-130s would come in. This letter is long overdue. I was a little disappointed when I went to the 25th reunion in July of 93. Have I procrastinated that long? I actually had a fantasy that I was going to be reunited with one or more of my brothers from Khe Sanh. Although I met some of the greatest guys in the world and I had time to share some laughs and some tears, I felt a loss because I don't know what happened to those guys. Maybe some of you can help me locate them. They were from either 1/26 or 3/26, and they lived on the northeast perimeter to the east of the water point. To this day I can't remember their names, but I got to talk to them almost every day of the three months I spent at Khe Sanh. One of the guys, the most outgoing of the two, was medium height and stocky. He had a large scar across one of his shoulder blades that he said he got during an ambush. His sidekick was short, thin and had curly hair. The most notable thing was that he had been bitten by a rat about April 1968. I think he had to get the shots. These descriptions could probably fit most of the guys at Khe Sanh, but this may help jog some memories. One day the ABC News reporters were around and they needed a guitar player so my buddies came over to the bunker and got me. Fifteen Marines and I sang: "WE GOT TO GET OUTA THIS PLACE" by Eric Burdon and The Animals. This played on coast to coast TV on the 11 pm news. Now, another memory jogger, one of the the guys sitting in the front of the group had a pet duck!! A duck at Khe Sanh? Yes, he did. Surely there weren't many guys who had ducks around.

I heard someone talking about a pet duck at the reunion, but I wasn't able to get any more information. That is why I wrote this letter. If you are one of the guys in the video or know one of the guys I'm talking about, please give me a call @ (508) 947-2276. If you can't afford it, call me collect. I sure would like to fill in some of the blanks in my memory.

If I didn't get a chance to say thanks for protecting my butt while serving with you guys, I'm thanking you now. Hope to hear from someone soon. I may have been in the Air Force, but Semper Fi sure has a special meaning to me.

God bless.

Ed note: Ron continues to serve us. He is a psychiatric nurse with the Department of Veteran Affairs as well as a Captain in the Army

Reserves. And, Ron, if you do hear something about this duck, please share it with us.

Publication Committee:

I would be more than happy to send my dues on an annual basis, but this Fall 1995 issue is the first time I have received a newsletter since the winter of 94. As I don't see another amount in the notice from the pub. comm. I am enclosing a check for another $20.

On page 7 top left, list of units at Khe Sanh, it was the 20th TASS (Tactical Air Support Squadron) that was at Khe Sanh (USAF) not the 23rd. This is important to me as I was there from 12/26/67-March or April of 68. I was a radio operator with 20th TASS. We were the FAC's ,Birddogs or Coveys, whichever name you use. When all our aircraft pulled out, a couple of us remained there with you guys. Me being one of them and and E-6 named Red. We stayed to man the radios and keep the generators running and whatever else we USAF ground troops could do to assist you Marines. For most of the time there, you did not like us but after you saw that we were just as dirty, thirsty, hungry and, well, you know the story, you accepted us. We did not always stay in that now so famous bunker. I have never heard from anyone that was there except one Marine named Bill and I have not seen nor can I locate him now. I do have something that you guys have, everyday Khe Sanh takes up the biggest part of my thoughts, and I never get more than 3 or 4 hours sleep. And that is not sound sleep but one-eye-opened sleep. Anyway, 20th TASS, Tigerhounds, Birddogs, Covey, FAC's, at least give us that.

Gene Patterson (Pat)

Jim Epps
1315 61st Street
Emeryville, CA 94608

Talis Kaminskis
22497 Fireside Drive
Goshen, IN 46526

Dear Jim and Ski,

As I told you in our phone conversations, Ernie Spencer suggested that the three of us take a shot at putting together an anthology of poetry by Khe Sanh vets. Ernie's thought was that this would be a benefit to the membership and perhaps something to give to new members. If we can put together the poetry, Ernie thought he could find appropriate photos or other art.

I would suggest that each of us do the following. First, look back through old issues of ***The Khe Sanh Veteran*** or other sources for poems that we like. Second, put together some of our poetry about the war. Finally, exchange what we have found and what we have done and then try to pick the most meaningful ones for an anthology. There is a lot of good stuff here and it should be collected. The number of selections and types of subject matter will probably becomne clearer as we look at what we jointly come up with.

Thank you both for agreeing to help so promptly.

Chuck Patterson

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed please find my check for membership in The Khe Sanh Veterans. I served at Khe Sanh with Sub Unit #1, 1st Radio Battalion USMC from Aug. 67 to late March 68. Our unit was a small unit (usually less than 12) and generally operated independently from the main line units. I believe officially we were attached to the 3rd Bn. 26th Marines at Khe Sanh.

I just received your impressive-looking newsletter with my membership application. I have not yet had a chance to read it, but I do hope that its publication will continue and also that I will be able to receive the membership directory.

Back in 1969 I read the Marine Corps publication "The Battle For Khe Sanh." That book, a few casual bar conversations and an occasional question from one of my five children seems to be my only contact with Khe Sanh these past twenty-eight years. Hopefully, your directory may help me to contact some of the men I served with those may years ago.

Very truly yours,
Robert Schirtz

Dear Sir:

I am writing in response to your ad in the VFW magazine. I arrived at Khe Sanh in early summer of 67. I was a member of the Scout Snipper Plt. attached to Regimental Headquarters Company 26th Marines. My rank was corporal, and it was my second tour. My first tour was in Sept. 65 to Sept. 66 with the 2nd Bn. 4th Marines, 81mm mortar Plt.

I have no idea what you are after or what to include in this letter. Suffice it to say it has never bothered me to talk about the war. After the siege started, I was mainly attached to Hotel Company on base and spent a couple of months with India Company on Hill 881S with Capt. Dabney. I had a 3-9x Weaver mounted on an M-16 A1. It was rather unique and some others may remember it. Feel free to keep in touch.

Sincerely,
David E. Steller

Ed reply: David, since it doesn't bother you to talk about the war, why don't you? We'd love to read your memoirs about your first and second tours.

Dear Mr. O'Hara:

I am writing in response to the article I read in the Nov. 95 issue of my VFW magazine. I am interested in the details of this new organization. I served in and around Khe Sanh with the 1st. Bn. 26th Marines. We rotated from Hill 881N to 881S and back to the air strip. I received 2 Purple Hearts.

I am a VFW life member and past Post and District Commander. I have worked for the U.S. Postal Service for the past 25 years.

Sincerely,
Tony Stephens

Matt Syrajanen, a new member who served with the Seabees in late 1968 seeks anyone who might remember him. His nickname was 'Mad Marr."

Write or call Matt at 5229 Peabody St., Duluth MN 55804, Tel: (218) 525-3617.

Dear fellow 1/9 Khe Sanh Vet,

In response to the article about the assault on Alpha company's outpost on Hill 64, I would like to give my account of what occurred that day. I was the Platoon Sergeant for Weapons' Platoon Bravo 1/9. We occupied the top of the hill at the rock quarry. I was called Sergeant "T" short for Thibault. On the particular morning I heard small arms fire from your side of the quarry. All of a sudden they were asking for volunteers to get the NVA out and off of Hill 64. My Platoon Commander immediately was on his way. He was a young "surfer dude" from California. He had a thing about getting a Heart. Well, he must have gotten what he wanted because I never saw him again. While he was out there, he called in a fire mission for my 60 mortars. I threw in a couple of H.E.'s and he told me to keep it coming, so I let them fly. (All 300 rounds I had in my bunkers.) The Battalion Commander was not too happy about all of those rounds being fired, because it was too dangerous to resupply us. I just took my orders and the H.E. flew.

After a while I became curious to see where my rounds were impacting, so I crawled up the the very tip of the quarry. Unfortunately, the first thing I saw was my first dead Marine. He was a big Marine, sprawled out in front of an NVA bunker. I could see two NVA jungle hats with their little red stars moving around from my vantage point. It was impossible for me to stay any longer because of incoming rounds. Of course, you know we had a lot of incoming on our little hill.

I have PTSD and I have thought of the Marine many times. I would like to know if my supporting fire had any affect on the NVA.

Yours truly
Sgt. T, Bravo 1/9 Semper Fi

Dear Mike:

Found your ad in the VFW magazine. My name is Jim Zikaras. I served in Nam 68-69 with Lima 3/9 and HQ Company. My rank was Cpl.. We were at the Rockpile, Ca Lu aka Vandergrift, Khe Sanh, Quang Tri, Dong Ha, etc. Many of my brothers from 1/9 (The Walking Dead) were at that miserable dump during the siege, as well as a few from 3/9 and of course those poor bastards from the 26th Marines.

I have a friend who flew the Big Ugly Fuckers (B-52s) who would also like info on the organization. He wasn't on the ground during the siege, but if it wasn't for him and his friends dropping all that shit for us, not to many people would be writing to you now. His name is Bill Fox. He was an E-6 with the 4133 Bomb Wing (P) Utapao, Thailand.

Semper Fi,

Ed reply: Certainly, we welcome the Big Kahunas (B-52s) into our organization. We are open to all; civilian and military, who served at, over, or, around Khe Sanh between 1961 and 1971.

FOR WHAT I'M WORTH

by Manny Babbitt-10/17/95

This may go out as a fond prayer
That you who stand at my side be always there
I'm just a man with a good side and a bad
I came into the world like everyone else
With what I had

Lots of bumps along the way may not have been in my favor
Whatever keeps me alive besides this human form I'm in
I'm sure words spoken will play a great part in it
For those who speak the words
Let them come out in truth
And not things that were said somewhere in the past
And no one wants to come forward and prove I did or said these things

Whatever the future brings
I'm here to face that reality
And my heart is very sure it will fly off to a better place
Semper Fidelis
And who knows what it's about

TERROR

by Cecil Young
K 3/26

He maketh me to lie down in the trench of blood
He leadeth me into the trenches of hell
He maketh me throw out my family and friends
He taketh my soul
He leadeth me along the path of poverty
Yea, as I walk through the trenches of
Mental institutions
I constantly fear the unknown
For there is only pain for me
Darkness and depression is eternal
Surely, shame, disgrace and madness
cannot follow me forever

Another Casualty of War

by Kellan Kyllo

Sat up in bed early one morning
his sleepy fingers
wrapped
around a mug of warm coffee
closed his eyes
inhaled the freshness
sipped it slow
quiet,
while she slept on the far side of the bed
turned away
so careful
not to
touch
him
as she had done for so long.
Deepened anger
hard words
old pain
had shot back and forth loud between them
all day everyday
every day,
silenced
only
by their exhausted sleep.
He reached out his hand and touched her smooth
shoulder
felt her warmth,
soft tears remembered the good-ol'-days
when they
used to
smile at each other so easy.

A MARINE'S THOUGHTS

David Sanders
Jeff Sowers
K/3726

I'm just nineteen, not much of a man,
But yet I'm old enough to go to Vietnam.
Is there a reason to fight) a reason to die?
I think there is, but most people don't know why
They go on burning their cards, and carrying signs
While our young men are getting shot, blown up by mines.
Picture in your mind a small child crying,
Lost, hungry, and alone, watching her mother dying, Shot through the head, stabbed in the side.
Imagine your father, tortured and blood soaked,
Because when his home was burned, he mistakingly spoke.
Picture your mother—molested and raped'
Her hands and feet tied, her mouth and eyes taped.
Your wife or your girlfriend laying lifeless and nude,
Murdered for no reason, robbed of their food.
Imagine it now, think about it while you can,
Because if we quit fighting, they'll set foot on our land.
Keep protesting in the streets, don't let us bomb,
Withdraw our troops, get out of Viet Nam.
If you continue these demonstrations, I'll promise you
That all of the above will eventually come TRUE.
Should we give up our flag, freedom, and choice of profession
Simply because we ignored communist agression?
I don't want to die, but I'll carry the torch,
I'll give up my life to keep them off your front porch.
Heaven forbid, but if I'm slain,
I beg of you fellow Americans, don't let me die in vain!

Hello Michael:

While having my morning coffee this Veterans Day and reading the new issue of VFW magazine, I noticed the information about your organization in the "NOW HEAR THIS" page.

While I was awaiting the start of our annual Veterans Day parade later that day with my two younger children, I had time to reflect on reading the magazine and seeing the news brief about The Khe Sanh Veterans. I am not much of a joiner, but I felt maybe there was a reason, as yet unknown, as to why today of all days I just happened upon your organization. I felt compelled to reply in the hope that I might someday be glad that I did respond.

I served at Khe Sanh, Hills 881N and 881S with 3/26 in the 81mm platoon. I arrived in country in 67 and was twice medevaced out of country before I completed my 13-month tour. I'm still somewhat disabled from my second injury. Please drop me a line if I can be of any help to promote your organization here in upstate New York.

Semper Fi,
Del Chamberlain

Ed note: Del, I offer you a possible reason why you felt compelled. I quote Ray Stubbe, who said: "We are all pieces of a mirror that was shattered at Khe Sanh and by coming back together we can, once again, become whole."

Dear Sir:

Please take my husband's name, Patrick Coffey (India 3/9), off of your mailing list. He suffered with emphysema for several years, probably caused by Agent Orange. He passed away in April of 1995 during surgery to remove bad lung tissue to hopefully help him breathe better.

Thank you,
Judy A. Coffey

The Earthstewards Network

Hi Ernie:

Ray Stubbe suggested we contact you to tell you about an upcoming project we will be conducting in Quang Tri Province to remove mines and unexploded ordnance. Our second phase will entail planting a Friendship Forest Park with trees where the mines and bombs had been. We in Earthstewards Network have done 18 similar projects throughout the world. If any of your members would like to contribute to this project or be a part of it, please contact us. The Vietnamese government insists that their people remove the mines and unexploded ordnance, but we can participate in the planting of trees for the park. We are planning this phase for November or December of 1996.

Danaan Parry
Earthstewards Network
P.O. Box 10697
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
ph. (206) 842-7986 fax (206) 842-8918
email: earthsteward@igc.apc.org

I am a Ph.D. candidate in American History at Boston University. I am writing to you because I feel that my project might be of interest to your readers. It deals with the experiences of American women on the "homefront" during the war in Viet Nam. In my dissertation I will explore the effects the conditions of dissent and division over the war had on the lives of the wives, mothers and girlfriends of American men who fought in Viet Nam.

Much has been written about the Viet Nam era. Yet the perspective of women who sent their loved ones to fight is glaringly absent. I believe that for many women whose husbands, sons and boyfriends fought, and were perhaps wounded or killed in Viet Nam, the war was a pivotal experience in their lives. I would like to hear from women who would be willing to share their experiences about their lives on the "homefront." I welcome all letters from women describing any aspect of their experience, no matter how seemingly insignificant. I am very excited about hearing from them and hope you will find space in your publication to post this query.

Author's Query:

For a study of women's experiences during the Viet Nam War, I would appreciate hearing from the mother's, wives and girlfriends of men who fought in the Viet Nam conflict. Please include memories about the period your loved ones served overseas, including (but not restricted to) strategies for coping, networks of support, and attitudes of the population at large. Please also include a brief description of your background, including age, race, ethnicity, and the area of the military with which your loved one served. Send responses to:

Virginia Laffey –
P.O. Box 2052 Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
ph. (617) 522-2048

Ray Stubbe responds: Your focus of research will definitely be a major contribution by considering a facet of the total Vietnam War experience that has hitherto been neglected. I might also suggest contact with servicemen who received "Dear John" type correspondence from wives and sweethearts unwilling to maintain a relationship during the year of service in Vietnam. Some of these were absolutely devastating to our men. In some cases, they repeatedly extended their periods of service there, perhaps as a sort of death-wish. Along the same lines were the POWs returned in 1973 whose wives had remarried. Another facet were the increased stress that resulted in devastating medical conditions to the wives (and, of course, parents): cancer, heart attacks, strokes, etc., which is also a possible aspect to research. I wish you the best in your pursuits to research and record this vital aspect necessary for a total understanding of what our experience has been.

Another Khe Sanh Veteran Troubled with PTSD

PTSD is a psychological disorder that will drive a man into a point of total extinction or very close to it. Being at Khe Sanh from the beginning to the end of the siege has left a horrible memory within me that is very difficult to erase. It is very hard to cope with society at times. It seems that at times there is a block between me and the outside world

You would never expect people that you worked with for many years trusting and faithfully would ever say and do things that brought tears to your eyes. A grown man crying because of the comments made about your race. These are people that were never there.When your are told that the reason so many Mexican-Americans were killed in Vietnam was because we looked the same as the enemy—that digs the PTSD deeper into your thoughts, nightmares and flashbacks. It doesn't matter how hard you try to forget—flashbacks,nightmares and these denigrating remarks about your race will always be there. It does not matter how hard you try to forget, there will always be something to bring back flashbacks and nightmares.

I have had many guilt feelings because I could not bring young men back to life again. I had many fears about not coming back alive. There are many days and nights that I sit on my bed and cry because I failed to do what I was supposed to do. When I go to an appointment with the Veterans Administration there are many times that I feel we are treated as guinea pigs.

To forgive and forget is something many of us try to do but in some cases, you cannot do either.

Sincerely,
A.F. Lucero, A proud American
HM2 1/13

Dear Ray Stubbe:

I should have wrote you sooner, but things have been so messed up the past two months. Roy T. Burns died this past Oct. 14th at the V.A. hospital in Mississippi. We all miss him. He has lived in my house for the past 6 years, so I knew him quite well, but he could not or would not quit drinking and it cost him his life. It is such a shame that he wasted it that way. He had a lot of good in him. His children and I tried to help him, but it all boils down to he had to do it himself.

Please take care and may God bless you.

Peggy M. Nock

Ray Stubbe note: Kevin Macaulay once told me that Roy Burns was the "premier point man" for their recon team at Khe Sanh. In conversations with Roy, I learned that he had grown up in the swamps of Florida and thus was very aware of things in nature that might indicate dangers. He prided himself that no one ever was killed on a recon team on which he was the point. Some of these patrols did involve collisions with NVA soldiers, but he was able to spot signs of their presence and move the patrol away from danger. I forget now just how many patrols he was on, but it was MANY. For the past year or so, he moved a disabled Vietnam vet who was in a wheelchair to live with him and his "significant other" in Florida. The note tells it all. Roy had a very bad drinking problem even at Khe Sanh. He was so good in the field that he was meritoriously promoted on numerous occasions, but upon return to the base, he'd get drunk and do something stupid and always get busted again.

Hank Norman

The poem I've enclosed, "Marion Henry Norman", has a story of its own. Much of that story, of course, has to do with Hank.

Hank and I shared a locker together at The Basic School. Both of us were older than the other Lieutenants in our class and married. Those coincidences alone might never have made us friends, but as many of you know, Hank was a hard guy not to like. There were six of us, including Kim Johnson and Dennie Peterson, the subject of the poem in the last issue, who became close friends, as did our wives. The knowledge that we would be going to Vietnam infused those friendships with an unusual intensity and immediacy. By March 1967 when we graduated, we were closer than brothers.

Hank was the warm one. When the group of us would get together at someone's apartment, Hank could always handle the small problems, like making a barbecue sauce from Karo and catsup or snow ice cream with a little vanilla extract. He always had that dry Texas smile that radiated a quiet confidence.

Kim as quieter than the rest and I did not see as much of him. He and his beautiful wife had the strength their Mormon faith brought them, but the tolerance to accept those of us who did not. I felt better about myself knowing that they were my friends. When we got to Vietnam in the summer of 1967, we were scattered throughout I Corps but tried to keep in touch. The first of the six, Steve Muller, was killed near Camp Carroll in the fall of 1967 and then Dennie Peterson near Quang Tin.

Kim was killed, if I remember correctly, early in the Siege. I had been in and out of Khe Sanh a number of times and the pain of hearing of his death after seeing him was great. With Hank it was even greater. I was in Khe Sanh at the end of February, a few days before he died. We spent some time in the ARVN Rangers area, and I think that was when I met Ken Pipes and some of the other Marines of Bravo. Before I left, we put a camera up on some sandbags and took a picture of the two of us. When I had the film developed a few weeks later, everything in the photograph was in clear focus except Hank's face. When I was back in the states I took the film to a developer and asked for another print, because I thought the print had been smudged. They told me it was in the film. His face was out of focus. No other print on the roll was out of focus..

I was at Ca Lu when I heard Hank had died. I wrote the first part of the poem then. It was fifteen years before I wrote another word. When Hank died, there were only two of us left and two of my cousins had died in that year. From that time I went numb. There wasn't any pain anymore. I came to believe that the only thing in life was death.

When I got back to the world, I told the last of those six friends that I felt that I had died in 1968, and I was just marking time until I was buried. I couldn't talk about Vietnam because I couldn't talk about death. At the same time I missed it, because it was the

only time I'd really felt alive. In 1983, it all came rushing back (I don't need to explain that to you) and after awhile I was able to finish this poem and write the others. I still miss my friends.

Chuck Patterson
HQ Bn, 3d Mar Div

Ray's World

by Ray Stubbe
1/26

Dear Ernie:

A few things for the next magazine:

NOTE: Anyone who recalls SGTMAJ Donald BEAN (H&S, 1/26), KIA on 11 March 1968, Khe Sanh Combat Base, please contact his daughter, Nita, at: 390 7th St., Taneyville MO 65759, tel: (417) 546-3368.

I just read in the Retired Officers Association magazine that JOHN HENNELLY had died. I called his home, talked with his wife, and discovered that he died 5 June 1995 from a very sudden heart-attack. He had been working on the roof, was very active right to the end. He was sitting in a chair and just fell over, dying before he hit the floor. He was the Commanding Officer of I/13, the artillery unit at Khe Sanh, and was in charge of the FSCC.

NOTE: Many telephone Area Codes have recently been changed or are in the process of changing. If yours has changed, please send in your new phone number to: Ray W. Stubbe, 8766 Park View Ct., Wauwatosa WI 53226.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., is offering a book which will contain a listing of the 1675 men KIA in the Khe Sanh battlefield area listed both alphabetically as well as by date. The listing by date includes unit, and in many cases, a brief description of the circumstances surrounding the casualty—how it happened or a little note about the person. There are also listings of those who were at Khe Sanh but who died after leaving Khe Sanh. (This listing needs much input from you, the readers, in order to be more complete.) There is a description of how to get to the two Khe Sanh Memorials (the one in Arlington and the two at Jefferson Barracks, MO), a summary by operations of casualties, notes on the civilian and NVA casualties. The book is 210 pages long. One of our Khe Sanh veterans donated $5,000.[00] to cover the costs of publication of 1,000 copies. These will be for sale at $12.[00] each. All proceeds from this sale (minus the shipping costs) will go to our treasury. Hopefully, we should make a good boost to our treasury through this sale. As of 29 February, the books have been printed and are in the process of being bound. Please submit requests to: Ray W. Stubbe, 8766 Park View Ct., Wauwatosa WI 53226, with checks made out to: KHE SANH VETS INC.

Hopefully a new Membership Directory should be forthcoming soon. We've added at least 500 (that's a conservative figure) since the last Directory, perhaps dropped about 40, and there've been perhaps 200 address changes. So we really need one, not only for these corrections and additions, but so that the many new men can have one.

Mike O'Hara had a note placed in the VFW national magazine about our organization which generated well over 100 responses from new men!! I just finished sending out letters to each of them together with a copy of our new magazine.

The month of February is finishing its days, and the Siege is winding down, although a few more days of terrific shelling and devastating personal loss remain, Ernie. Hope all is well with you. I definitely need to call you soon; we haven't really talked in some time, although I've been sort of "bunkerized" for the past several months.

I had a dream a couple of nights ago in which I was in a bunkered-kind of room—lots of timbers on the walls and ceiling. All at once everything is starting to collapse, and I am running here and there among all the timbers to avoid being crushed. I guess there is a feeling of the collapse of everything around me, perhaps tied in to the memory of bunkers being hit at Khe Sanh—mine, by the way, was indeed struck by a rocket, which penetrated the wall, but didn't explode. Several men have commented through the years about that—the ones that had come there to remove the round. Oddly, at the time, although the wall bucked, I was sitting there eating my C-ration and just continued as though nothing had happened! Anyway, you are one of the reasons the bunker doesn't completely collapse!

While talking to a psychologist the other day, I was telling of a helicopter on one of our ships being commissioned in Bremerton/Seattle in 1970. I got in it and they asked me to fasten my seat belt, and I remember how surprised I was to have to fasten a seat belt—in a helicopter! Then I remarked that it had windows—and then said, without even thinking, "This helicopter really isn't safe at all; it has no bullet holes in it!" The psychologist was shocked. I didn't even remember what I had said—although he promptly reminded me! I guess it was that the pilots hadn't been through the skirmishes, how could I trust them!

I realized that Sunday the 21st of January 1996 is the same as 1968—both being on Sundays, and have become aware that I am reliving each day more intensely than I have in times past! Even to the point of the "enemy" and the danger by venturing outside. Then it was, of course, the shelling and snipers; now it is the extreme cold. A couple of years ago, my car conked out and I was stranded in extreme below-zero weather for several hours waiting for assistance. Now I realize that every time I venture out I may experience the same thing, and so do not venture forth! I guess it's a kind of PTSD, but even knowing that really doesn't seem to help. One of the most difficult parts of this PTSD is that I just simply know that each day is my last. I "finish" things (like doing my income tax—which is really a joke anyway since my line 31 is usually around 10K or 12K, in the lowest 20% of the population) before I get all the information simply because I don't want others to do my tax forms when something happens to me. I need to get letters answered, bills payed—it's desperate—for the same reason. I can't have any long-term commitments or projects, because I just know I'll never complete them. Oh well, even knowing this doesn't permit me to escape it. Sometimes I think it's even a desire or hope that this will be my last day! Isn't it interesting how we all have PTSD in different forms?

Take care, my friend.

The Associated Press

LONG BEACH—Twenty-seven years after Tom Winston was burned in a munitions dump explosion in Vietnam, he has received a Purple Heart. The La Habra man was honored Saturday in a ceremony at Long Beach Naval Shipyard during a graduation ceremony for the South Bay Young Marines, a Corps-sponsored youth program.The 45-year-old retired Marine master sergeant blinked back tears as the medal was pinned to his chest. He blamed a recordkeeping mix-up for the delay.

Winston, a Bakersfield native, is dying from Huntington's disease, a brain disorder.

Winston was 18 when enemy fire struck his unit at Khe Sanh on April 9,1968. The ammunition technician raced to fight a fire that threatened a munitions dump, which exploded. He suffered burns over 35 percent of his body but recovered and served three more years in Vietnam. He retired from the Marines about 12 years ago.

Wearing a black baseball cap and a black jacket bearing the Brothers of Vietnam logo and motto, "Lest We Forget," Winston received a standing ovation from several hundred people attending the combined ceremonies.

Winston's father, Willard Winston of Norwalk, a retired Marine, and his 18-year-old son, Thomas, of Minneapolis, attended the ceremony.



Tom Winston

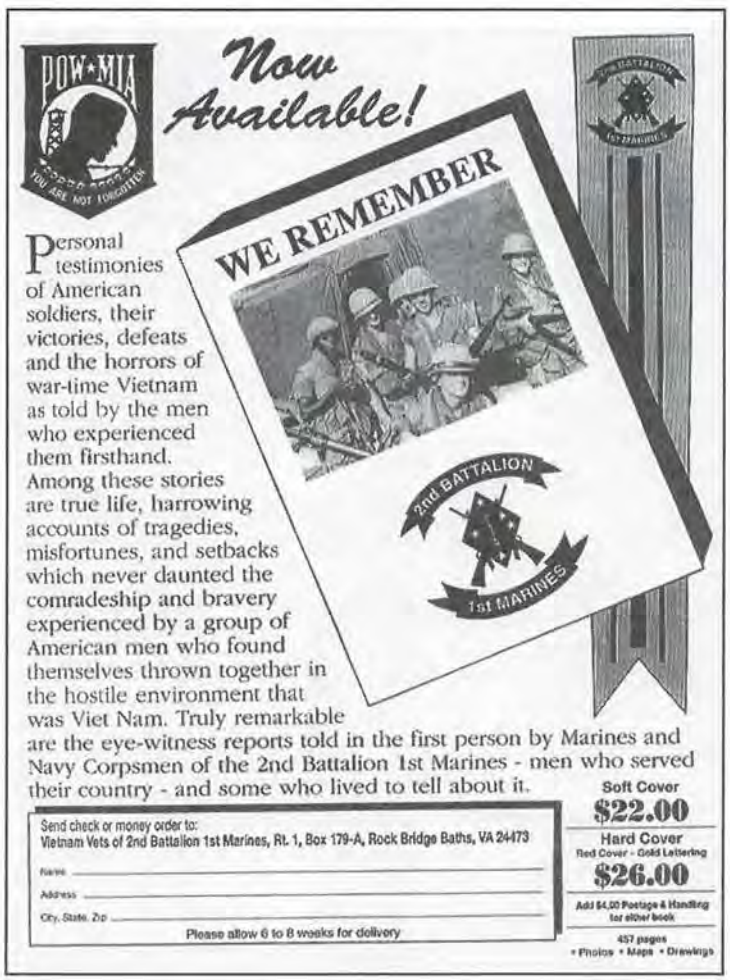

Researching Your Memoirs, eh?

by R. "DOC" Ferrell
1/5 & 11MAF

I began my journal in 1973 on a whim, to pass time. I was bartending in a hustle bar in Waikiki. By 1980 the document had taken on novella proportions. I gave it a title. By 1979 I was back on the mainland finishing university in Nebraska. Then one bright morning television announced a new movie soon to be out in a theatre near me. My title was stolen. The new flick had my book title! In a fit of depression, I tossed the entire work in the trash, finished school and returned to Hawaii in 1983. In 1992 a VA counselor asked me to rewrite the whole thing from memory. All those years of notes, maps, and photos were gone.

I started over. It was a confusing, incoherent pile of paper no one, including me, could decipher. Choosing an outline format saved my work. It was rather simple actually. I spent 13 months in Vietnam. I simply divided my journal into 13 monthly sections or chapters. At that point, I painstakingly went through all my work and put it in the appropriate time frame. Within each monthly time frame, I tried to put entries in chronological sequence. Now I had something to work with. I could take each entry, expand on it, rewrite it, work with it until a somewhat more cohesive story began to immerge. Still something was missing.

Details! Details were missing! I'm talking about the itemized fabric of my memory over the last 28 years. Memories lost, hazy, distorted. More importantly, there were the details (events) that I knew nothing about in those days. Why I was in a given sector, why I was doing this or that? What was the overall mission? These were things I did not know then, nor was I privy to. How could I fill in these glaring gaps? In 1973, remembering 1966 was like yesterday. I could still clearly see the faces of the dead. By 1992, things were a bit fuzzy. Memories were no longer clear images but rather sounds, smells, small flashbacks of recollection generated by something as common as a look on someone's face or a sudden noise. Random access memory seemed only to apply to my computer. Mine was in the crapper. Then one day it hit me. The solution!

It was easy! I used the Internet. Finding the home page for the U.S. Marine Corps was a snap. I e-mailed the highest ranking officer who had the temerity to list his/her name on the home page asking the question: "Ah...do you guys keep any kind of archives? Did anyone take notes during the war? Where are they?" Bingo! Everything you ever wanted to know about the "green machine" is kept in archive at the Washington Navy Yard. Well, actually, it's not a yard, per se, lest they have to detail a bunch of E-1's to mow it but rather an impressive group of old buildings dating back to the King George III administration. I think it houses the JAG Corps if I'm not mistaken, but that's another story.

All units within the "crotch" keep what are known as A.A.R.'s (After Action Reports), be it a firefight or notes on a memorable night at the O-Club in Da Nang...you know, where officer pogues swilled beer, ate steaks, and generally toughed it out for an RVN ribbon while you and I humped the bush looking for little guys in tacky black pajamas.

These reports begin at the squad level, to platoon, to company, to battalion (kind of like whispering to a line of people relaying a message, hoping like hell it comes out at the end in it's original context.) Some poor E-1 prick got to type it up on a 20-year-old Army hand-me-down typewriter, where it was sent on through channels (yes...channels, whatever those are?), until it found its way to the Washington Navy Yard. At that point it was copied, and recopied until it's barely legible—marked over, deleted, retyped, folded, stained with Spam grease and coffee until at long last, it is photographed.

See, in those days the military did not have scanners and computers. The "crotch" still does not have scanners and puters. "Oh yeah? You say, How did you access the Corps' home page then?" Actually, the Commandant USMC bought his daughter a PC, the Corps uses hers until the Army gives us theirs. I digress. So what we have at the "yard" is our memories, our history, our lives on microfiche. Yes! Vintage celluloid. Miles of it rolled on little wheels like old movies.

Don't panic! Oh what the hell! Panic for christ's sake. Microfiche, while outdated, can be converted to hard copy or converted to a computer-ready page. You thread the microfiche wheel/tape on a special viewer (any library has one), then you scroll through the photographed pages. See one you like? Just drop a coin in the slot, and a Xerox machine attached to the viewer produces your hard copy of the film. For you puter geeks, just put the hard copy on a scanner. Note: You better have damn good OCR (Optical Character Recognition) software. Remember the way the original was typed? Old machines, damaged keys, typeface filled with the red dirt and sand of southeast Asia. Blotchy, smeared type and ink. Frequently unreadable in the original, I let my OCR have at it, and it was so confused its deciphered response looked like Russian 101. Go figure.

In reviewing the archives, after all these years you will still find records "blacked out" CIA style. Why? Who knows. I have actually seen the weather for a particular day blacked out. As we all know, meteorologists are never correct. What is the big secret? Another thing you will find are V.I.P. lists. Score upon score of politicians and general officers who dropped in for a visit to collect their ribbon or political brownie points. It's the who's who list of officers, representatives, senators, cabinet officials and military contractors who had a vested interest in our "cannon fodder" butts. You gotta love'm. Some of these pricks are still alive!

One other little item you will discover in the archives is that a particular event, as you remember it, is recorded somewhat differently for posterity. Ernie Spencer suggests I be a little less critical about such things. Strive to forgive the little mistakes concerning events I have or had no control over. He has no idea what he is asking of me. Nevertheless, when you discover your little piece of rewritten history—these convenient errors—try not to lose it completely. You will scare the crap out of the librarian. Remember her only defense is a glaring, puckered 'Shoossssh!' in reprimand. After that she faints, and you have to call 911.

For you Khe Sanh Veterans of a different persuasion, i.e., Air Force, Navy, Army, et al, you will have to locate your own archives. I have no idea where they are. However, a good place

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to start is the the Commandant of your service. Just ask to see his/her kid's PC. WHO TO CONTACT?

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL CENTER
BUILDING 58, WASHINGTON NAVY YARD,
901 M STREET, S.E.,
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20374-5040

Address your request to: Mr. Frederick J. Graboske, Head, Archives Section. Fred is a very accommodating kind of guy. He is extremely helpful and considerate. Tell him why you want the films. He can't send them to you personally. He will send them to you in care of your local library, so give him the head librarian's name and the library's address. In the meantime, let the head librarian know personally, from you, that these films are coming. The librarian will be very intimidated by the fact that you are getting this material, and will in all likelihood guard it like her virginity. Be so advised. Be prepared to show 3 forms of I.D., your library card, a note from your wife or girlfriend, your DD214, your FBI file, vaccination record, shirt size, your tax returns for the last 3 years, a picture of your first lover, a ham sandwich, and an autographed picture of the Honolulu Boy's Choir (Just kidding of course...the sandwich is optional).

So, if you're looking for the lost details of your memoirs, get these tapes. Read them, remember the events, the sounds, the smells. Let them transport you back to a time when you lost your innocence. It is your history. The Corps kept your memories for you. After all this time you can recover them and remember.

As for me, I ordered all the film files on 1/5 for the months I was with them. Fairly straight forward A.A.R.'s. My other search was when I was with III M.A.F., a substantially larger organizational hierarchy to sift through. I began by requesting the pertinent months. The reports were archived according to TAOR (tactical area of responsibility)—in this case, Provinces. I selected those two provinces from Chu-Lai to Quang Ngai city. From there, I scanned for reports on operations I was involved in. One thing leads to another. I began making copies. Sixty dollars in dimes later, I had a stack of paper. I had my research.

You get only two weeks to use them. After requesting them, they arrive in about a month unless your films are out on loan.

Some of the files have photographs. I have one taken at Chu-Lai—you can see the pogue in charge of frozen foods filling requests for the Chu Lai supply depot in front of the tent, while his assistant sells food to combat troops out the back door. It was the only way one could get food or ammunition it seemed. Actually, we obtained many needed items from the ROKs (Korean Marines) who were eager to please, no paperwork, and quicker then the supply personnel.

Then there was the time when we "borrowed" a jeep from a CIA field operative to steal ice for our hot beer ration, but...

Ahhhh the memories.

Brief Synopsis of My Khe Sanh Experience

by CPL Tim Haley
"C" Company 1/9 60 MM Mortars

We were leaving peaceful Camp Evans, which was a wonderful place with small brief encounters with the enemy compared to Con Thien and the DMZ. We had real food somewhat regularly, cots to sleep on and a relatively normal existence.

Packing up and moving out to the makeshift L.Z., boarding the big Chinook helicopters for a ride to some other unknown place, another battle, another Hell.

Up through the clouds heading west the jungle below giving way to huge mountains—mountains we had fought in before near Ca Lu and the Rockpile. Looking down, we could see the destination—an air strip, roads, bunkers.

January 21, 1968. The crew chief comes to me and yells above the roar of the motors, "They are taking incoming now. When we land, we'll let down the ramp and you guys haul ass." This was something we all had come to be pretty good at, hauling ass and finding cover. I passed the word in an attempt to get everyone ready. So what happens when we finally touch down? No ramp comes down and these guys leisurely taxi to a parking space!

Finally, we are off our rolling target and manage to find some relative cover but we are all bunched up and anxious to get moving. Once someone figures out what to do with us we are humping down a small road with waves of departing civilians and Arvns (the Arvns were always leaving.) We're going in and these people are all leaving.

Finally, we, 1/9, are settling in to the daily routine of constant enemy incoming, probing and spend most of our time being resupplied, reinforced and improving our defensive positions.

Significant recollections of encounters are of Lovato being killed on an L.P., Gook sappers getting in Bravo Company's trenchline, the ammo dump being blown up and CS gas blowing over us.

As the 60 MM mortar section leader, who now had 17 men I was responsible for, I began attending meetings with all platoon commanders and our C.O. for daily briefings as to our status and that of the NVA who had us zeroed in and surrounded. We were always surrounded.

The night Alpha Company's outpost was attacked and overrun, our mortar section was the only available immediate support. 81's were too close so for hours, our 3 tubes provided all we could to help those guys out. We were congratulated and told what a good job we had done. One lieutenant at our next meeting asked if he should now salute me and I was told I was to be promoted to E-5 meritoriously.

We pulled security on the drop zone several times The huge C-130, dropping their cargo with parachutes attached, was something to see.

Lang Vei had been overrun with NVA driving tanks. We were issued 3.5 rocket launchers, AWS'50 caliber machine guns and told where to aim at to knock them out. The worst part was being issued bayonets for the anticipated hand-to-hand combat that

was inevitable with the pending human wave attacks that were to come at anytime.

Mid- or late March, there were 17 of us; by April 8th there were only 4 of us left.

Leaving our perimeter for Hill 471 was somewhat uneventful until we got closer to our objective. Coming around the side of a hill, there was a bridge-like finger that crossed directly in front of the NVA machine guns and their fields of fire. To get to the other side, one had to cross this individually, running like crazy. One guy was blown up right in front of us and tumbled down the hill. Alpha and Delta Companys were in the assault. Now, it was my turn to cross. Well, what do you know, I made it! Of course, the other side was no better, more incoming. We must have dug in 6 times that day, very hastily, shallow holes.

We kept setting up to support the assault of Hill 471, but amid all the confusion were never used. These guys were throwing grenades at the gooks on top as fast as they could. Very close fighting—a very surreal picture.

A newsman came to us for directions and the next time we saw him, he was blown to pieces, his chest and face blown away. The hill was now secure. We climbed up and were in a bomb crater planning our defensive positions and boom! incoming right in our bomb crater. The concussion was pretty intense. When the smoke cleared, there was lots of screaming wounded. Tom Allen, one of the best mortarmen in Nam was hit in the elbow and casually asked me if he could be medevaced. He had been standing about 3 feet from me. To my left about 5 yards away was Sergeant Bridges and the weapons platoon commander. Both had been blown up. We got the corpsman who took one look and declared them both dead, but we insisted Bridges was still alive and got him to the L. Z. I read his name among the dead, later, at a memorial service. We dug in, ate and settled in and by God if we weren't attacked that night, hundreds of NVA assaulted the hill. I had a 45 in one hand, grenade in the other. Bergland and all the guys on the line held them off and reports were 300 NVA didn't see the sun come up. We gathered up some prisoners, some wounded, and I'll never forget seeing DEATH looking back at me through the eyes of one NVA we were treating. Taking him down to the L.Z., there was a crater full of dead NVA from the night's fight, so for cover we put him in the hole until he was to be medevaced. There was in his eyes a living dead man. He ultimately was medevaced out.

This next event was the real icing on the cake. I look up at the sound of a jet and see all these projectiles falling toward us. At first we thought a whole bunch of NVA had fired RPGs at us. We dove in our holes. Then there were these loud thuds all around the hill. All duds?

All bomb duds! We had been bombed by our own plane. 20-25 bombs and not one went off. If they had, they would have wiped out what was First Batallion Ninth Marines.

The Army was coming up to relieve us. As we were going down the hill and passing each other, I actually believe these First Air Cav guys held us in awe. Here we had been surrounded, isolated for nearly four months, no real food, no showers. We broke out. Took a hill, defended it and were moving out to take Hills 558 and 689. We were red, our clothes were red. Our pants were torn. There were dead NVA everywhere. These Army guys had new clothes that were still actually green and instead of small tools for digging they had real shovels. One said, "Looks like you guys had a hell of a party last night, MARINE." This may sound corny, but for an instant I wasn't so afraid, I was not so disgusted and I felt a little prouder being a Marine. Please understand that 25 years have tempered a lot of my feelings and misgivings. And FEAR!

So onto Hill 558. By now, I have lost 3 of the mortar section. The assault began early. We set up to support the advancing platoons and at first light they had reached the top. All of a sudden artillery came screaming in from behind us. For 5 to 10 minutes, the grunts who had taken the hill unopposed were bombarded by our own guns. The Army was to prep the hill before the assault and were late. Unbelievably, no one was even scratched. This was amazing. Usually, one Gook mortar round would mess up plenty of guys.

Later, we moved onto Hill 689 which had also been abandoned. Perimeters were set up and I busily placed my gun squads in strategic locations with instructions to dig in and dig in fast. Secure in the knowledge that this was being accomplished, I jumped into an NVA gun pit and was eating a can of chicken and noodles when we were mortared with BIG STUFF. Still, unconcerned, I continued to eat. Next thing I knew, Applebaum from weapons platoon was leaning over my hole crying that I had to come quick. I had just lost my whole section. My reply was, "BULLSHIT! They're all dug in." He said 'no', that I had to come quick! I left the safety of the hole to view a sight of wholesale carnage. Wounded were everywhere. Garber's squad. Garber dead; 2 to 3 more wounded. Frazier's squad. Frazier dead; Gilliam badly wounded and Doc torn up bad. The X.O. was hit, the Gunny was hit, (he passed the company ledger to me) the Captain was hit. My last squad was decimated. Some officer had moved them from where they had dug in and now they were all wiped out. Four of us are left and now we move again, dig in. No food for 3 days, drinking the water out of the bottom of the bomb crater. I cried harder than I ever had. I was responsible for these guys, and they were all gone.

There was talk of going to Laos and Co Roc Mountain. While in my hole a big rat flops in and bites me on the hand.

I leave Khe Sanh and go to the rear. This is April 8th. At Dong Ha, I get rabies shots for 14 days. I serve as company supply Sgt. for 30 days. Charlie 1/9 suffers more bitter fighting in the hills around Khe Sanh during my rear position experience. I finally bid them farewell at their position at Cam Lo, depart for Okinawa and on to home. Their names are on the wall.

Foxhole Atheism—AMEN!

by Robert Shippen
c 1981-1996

Toward the end of the siege of Khe Sanh in May of 1968 the cloudy sky cleared for several days, allowing F-4 Phantom jets to give close-in support to the besieged American and Vietnamese allies. The Phantoms targeted gun emplacements set into the granite caves of Co Roc Mountain eight miles to the southwest in Laos. The enemy withdrew their heavy artillery into the caves on



Robert Shippen, Khe Sanh 1968

railroad tracks, unable to shoot at us while our planes bombed the entrances.

At Khe Sanh combat Base we cautiously emerged from trenches and bunkers to stretch in the sunlight. The Phantom bombing gave us a temporary break from the 152 millimeter artillery, rockets and mortars with which the Communist gunners relentlessly pounded us. Surrounded, dug in, and cut off from support, for months we had held on against continuous bombardment and almost certain ground attack by multiple divisions of NVA troops and tanks. Carnage rained on us day and night like a torrent from Hell.

I had arrived in Viet Nam in December 1967. As a very green 21-year-old Special Forces medic, my attitude was that we were helping the South Vietnamese people in their struggle against the Communist Viet Cong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA). I was idealistic and filled with enthusiastic trust in the righteousness of our mission. I was willing to die if necessary for the Vietnamese people.

Assigned to the I Corps area in the northern part of South Vietnam, I worked in the Special Forces field hospital near Danang where we took care of seriously wounded and sick Vietnamese soldiers and their families who worked at our A sites throughout I Corps. Here we treated gunshot wounds, blast and burn victims, set broken bones, amputated limbs, and practiced internal medicine with cases of malaria, dysentery, bacterial and viral infections. It was a regular rock-and-roll field hospital with a laboratory and well-equipped operating room.

Aside from working there, I had gone on several patrols into the surrounding countryside. I had participated in a Med Cap to Thuong Duc village to the east of Danang. I also had helped transport and store dozens of bodies of dead U.S. and Korean Marines. The nearby Naval Support Activity (NSA) hospital had more killed in action (KIA) than they could handle.

So many Marine KIAs were being brought in from the battles around Khe Sanh, Con Thien and the DMZ that helicopters bringing loads of casualties to the NSA hospital could no longer land to unload wounded or more dead. Body bags filled with remains covered the hospital landing zones and nearby parking lots. Several of us medics were tasked with driving down there to stack as many bodies as possible onto our trucks. We took them to our compound and stored them in large reefers for a day or so, returning them when the NSA Graves Registration called to say they could now process them.

I was adapting to Viet Nam as the war accelerated. I anticipated being assigned to an A team of 12 Special Forces soldiers at one of the camps. Many of our camps were being hit or overrun in January and February of 1968. It was only a matter of time before I would receive a field assignment.

Though inexperienced, I had been shot at several times, once by our own men mistakenly, and another time by Viet Cong during the early hours of Tet 1968. I had not yet been in what I thought of as a "real" firefight. Nevertheless, working on casualties and having several close calls did impress on me the fact that war is deadly serious and very ugly. I was afraid yet determined to face any foe, meet any challenge, and do my absolute best during my tour of duty in the war zone.

In early February a Special Forces A camp was hit very hard by enemy troops using tanks and flame throwers. A-101 at the village of Lang Vei, near where the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North from South Vietnam intersects with the Laotian border was the the site of a horrendous and bloody battle. A-101 Lang Vei was overrun and lost to the enemy. Scores of Americans and allied Vietnamese soldiers were killed, wounded and captured. Hundreds of civilian refugees and families of our Vietnamese allies made their way to and were taking refuge at Forward Observation Base #3 (FOB 3), a Special Forces outpost about six miles to the east, near the village of Khe Sanh.

The fall of Lang Vei was part of a major enemy offensive. U.S. Marines, South Vietnamese Rangers, U.S. Special Forces, Laotian allies, Montagnard refugees and others—altogether about 5,000 people in that section of Viet Nam—were forced to consolidate in one location. A defensive perimeter referred to as the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) is where they dug in and where we were sent. The ferocious SIEGE OF KHE SANH had begun.

Four of us, my two friends Dale Lee and Willy Cripps (also green S.F. medics) and a lieutenant (whose name now escapes me) were assigned to catch the next available flight up to Khe Sanh. My initial understanding of our mission is that we were to go to KSCB and organize the Lang Vei survivors into assault elements. Then, using Khe Sanh as a base of support, we would fight our way into and reclaim the now destroyed camp at Lang Vei. So here we were, three Spec/4 medics with little or no experience and a lieutenant with even less, gearing up to take on a well-seasoned enemy army on the offense.

I know for sure that Lee, Cripps and myself were scared shitless as we packed up and waited for a chopper to take us to the airfield. Air transport to KSCB was difficult to arrange. Planes and helicopters were running a gauntlet of hostile fire as they landed and took off from the short runway at Khe Sanh. Most were hit and some crashed. We were ready and waiting.

Repeatedly postponed, we hung out in the bar at Danang headquarters. Entertainer Martha Raye was there and helped cheer us up. Drinking, talking and joking with us, she was great. Cripps played his guitar and he and Martha sang us songs, "The Ballad of the Green Berets" and others. It was surreal, as if we were characters in an old Bogart movie. Fear hung in the atmosphere like stale smoke and quietly scorched the lining of my stomach.

Someone crashed through the bar door on a run, yelling for us to "GO NOW!" As the chopper began winding up, Martha Raye gave us a quick last toast and we downed our drinks. She hugged us and invited us to visit at her home after the war, as if she had no doubt we would be okay.

We flew to Danang airfield, boarded a C-123 (a medium-sized plane used to transport troops and equipment) and took off. The cargo bay was filled with large metal Conex containers that were lashed to pallets and rigged with drag parachutes. The Loadmaster strapped the four of us into seats of nylon webbing near the ramp in the rear.

After gaining altitude we were able to walk around the plane and look out the windows. We spoke to each other energetically and casually with practiced bravado. We were high on adrenaline, adventure, danger...and fear. For me this was a new kind of fear, anchored deep in my solar plexus, with a strange texture and taste, sickening almost to the point of pleasure.

Our stomachs sank as the plane banked steeply to the left with a deafening roar. The Loadmaster pointed down through a small window and shouted "Khe Sanh!" We circled for a long time, waiting for an opportunity to descend through the clouds.

I got glimpses of the runway and the base perimeter. I saw wrecked aircraft on the ground and watched as a large crane helicopter, with a bus slung below, was shot down and crashed near the edge of the runway. Later, I learned that it was a hospital bus loaded with wounded casualties enroute to safety.

Tangible fear now turned to unreal terror as the Loadmaster screamed, "Hang on, here we go!" and, like it was all a bad dream, the plane dived almost vertically through the clouds. The G-force was so intense I thought the massive Conex containers would break loose and crush us. Over the roar of engines, enemy bullets slamming into the fuselage sounded like we were being hit by sledgehammers. Finally, we leveled off just a few feet above the runway and the ramp was lowered. The Loadmaster released a drag parachute which then pulled the entire chain of cargo pallets to the ground. Relieved of this weight the plane lurched upward until the pilot leveled it out and we touched down. Small puffs of grey smoke kept appearing on the runway just behind us. I heard the loadmaster yelling to the pilot through his headset and then realized that the puffs were exploding mortars barely missing us. The plane swerved in a powerful zig-zag, speeded up and then suddenly slowed. The loadmaster shouted, "RUN NOW!" The plane slowed just long enough for the four of us to run off the tail ramp and for a group of refugees to run on. Confused and terrified, the mountain people almost ran smack into the whirling propeller blades. A Marine in flak jacket and helmet frantically waved for us to run towards him. I lost sight of the other guys as I ran and took cover under the first thing I came to, rows of green bundles on the edge of the tarmac.

The plane turned for takeoff amidst a hailstorm of incoming rounds and roared into the clouds with jet assist rockets boosting the propeller thrust. When the mortar barrage finally ceased, my sense of smell was brutally assaulted by an overwhelming stench coming from these bundles. I had covered myself with body bags filled with dead Marines awaiting shipment to Graves Registration at Danang.

When I asked the Marine where the Special Forces were, he pointed towards an open field to the southwest. He said they were in that direction and, as an afterthought, added that he thought mines were between us and the FOB. I walked carefully around Marine bunkers and through trenches, generally towards the southwest. When artillery shells impacted I would simply lie down and then resume my journey when the explosions stopped. Then, I saw clods of dirt flying out of the ground and into the air with a rhythm. Walking in that direction I was reminded of the way doodle bugs kick sand out of the traps they dig.

I came across a trench line with two guys in it fervently tossing shovels full of red dirt onto a growing berm as they burrowed deeper. SFC Chaney and SSG McGovern were surprised to see me standing there. At first they joked about fresh cannon fodder sauntering up alone like he was looking for the best place to lay out a picnic. I was relieved to have safely found my unit. They took a quick break to wipe sweat from their brow and to orient me to the trench lines with directions to the headquarters bunker where I was to check in.

Chaney and McGovern feverishly returned to their digging. In fact everyone I encountered was digging, enthusiastically. I was beginning to catch on. Ever deeper was the theme here. Ever deeper consumed the time and consciousness between bodily functions and regular duty. Leisure activity consisted of refining the just dug, deeper. The more depth your hole had the more status you had. Everyone was getting down, ever deeper down. The underlying awareness that permeated this place was an immediate, passionate, incentive-driven desperation to get, to be, deeper.

At the FOB I learned that the attempt to retake Lang Vei had been canceled. I can't tell you how glad I was to hear that. The senior medic, SFC Scully, was glad to see me. He showed me around the medical bunker pointing out the various supplies for treating trauma cases. Scully showed me a large group of Laotian and Montagnard refugees for whom I was to provide medical treatment until their evacuation could be arranged. Women, infants, children and a few old men, they huddled together in shrapnel-shredded tents, the only ones without at least a hooch of sandbags to protect them.

I was assigned a place on the trench line with Chaney and McGovern who welcomed me into their underworld labyrinth of red clay. From them I learned the art of building grenade sumps into which we could immediately toss enemy grenades thrown at us. I learned to listen for enemy sappers digging beneath us by putting my stethoscope onto an engineer stake driven deep into

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the earth. And, I learned that divisions of well trained, well equipped enemy infantry surrounded us, dug beneath us, bombarded us and fully intended to kill us. They could overrun us at will. They could cut off our only source of water. We couldn't leave and reinforcements couldn't get to us. For now, the enemy seemed content to pound us with artillery while massing its troops for the big kill.

It didn't look good. One way or another we were done for. It was just a matter of when and they controlled that. U.S. air power provided tactical support, dropping supplies for us and bombs for them, but this was contingent upon clear skies. Khe Sanh was often so overcast that planes couldn't land or bomb the enemy. Here we sat in candle-lit bunkers waiting to die while preparing to kill as many of them as possible before giving up our ghosts. In these holes, we were living what was left of our lives to the hilt. No doubt about it, this was war and I had finally arrived. As the months wore on, war continued to rage in this place.

Sometime in April a rumor circulated that the siege was over, reportedly because American infantry units had fought their way to our location along Highway #9. Aircraft were landing with supplies and replacements. Familiar faces were no longer around and new people arrived. NVA troops had withdrawn from their trenches but were still nearby in force. Artillery continued to effectively blast us, although with less intensity. More selectively. A jeep here. A man walking there. The shower. The shitter. The water truck again. The four corners of the FOB. Targets chosen to remind us they could and would kill us at will.

Officially, the siege had ended. But, had it really? The NVA were still calling the shots, playing with us like a cat with a wounded mouse. Why had they still not cut off our water supply? Marine and Army units engaged in combat within sight of our trenches and on the surrounding hills. Artillery, rockets and mortars continued to fall on us. We couldn't afford to slacken our vigilance just because President Johnson had officially declared the Siege of Khe Sanh ended, an American victory.

After three days without incoming artillery a formation of our Bru Montagnard allies was ordered, above ground, on the berm of the perimeter, out in the open. This scared me because I thought it was unnecessary, a reckless gesture. An orderly group in plain sight was a flagrant challenge to the enemy artillery spotters. You can declare the siege ended if you want to but this wasn't a good way to test the theory that it was really over. Following orders though, we formed a platoon of extremely anxious men, totally exposed on the crest of an embankment.

My task was to present a class on emergency medical procedures to about 30 Bru soldiers and several Americans. I lectured and presented hurriedly, demonstrated the basics of stopping bleeding, clearing airways, positioning bodies and splinting broken bones. I didn't have with me the equipment need to teach administration of intravenous fluids in cases of shock and heavy bleeding. They lit cigarettes and relaxed while I ran forty yards to the medical bunker for IV sets, tubing and needles with which to demonstrate.

While walking back I heard a distant, muted and ever chilling sound...*Puunhh*. This is the first warning that an artillery round has left its distant tube and is incoming towards you. Running to the nearest trench I heard a spine wrenching. *WhaWhuWhoosh*. Too late. I should already be on the ground. The shell was piercing air nearby, fractions of an instant from impact. In seeming slow-motion, I threw my body with a final leap and floated through space towards safety as gravity prolonged its sluggish pull. Inches below, hard clay was plowed by shrapnel. I thudded into a hole as the blast showered debris around me.

Three large chunks of a Bru's body mark where the formation had been. I recognize him by teeth on a mangled head/shoulder segment. Earlier he had been appreciative after receiving dental work. I put the bulk of his remains in a body bag and zip it shut. The men carry it away. One more accurate and grim reminder that they will continue to kill us at their discretion.

The class is over. The Bru disperse to their fortified holes. A singing buzz emanates from a cloud of flies gathering to take advantage of fresh blood on the red dirt. Flies relish laying eggs in bloody mud. I clean the area and pick up a discarded piece of my friend's liver before kicking dirt over the bloody ground. Watchful Bru see me toss his liver into a 55-gallon trash barrel. Because of my apparent disrespect for death and this small part of a man's body, they keep their distance and lower their voices when I am near. Spooky!

It is now dusk. The western sky is breathtaking, filled with streaks of vivid crimson, orange and gray. A canopy of low clouds blanket somber mountains. Jungle greens accent ashen radiance of the red clay of Khe Sanh. Alone in a sandbagged position above the medical bunker, I am saturated with unspeakable contrasts. My senses voraciously absorb everything. Puffing thoughtfully on a Lucky Strike, I listen to a song by Edith Piaff on a small transistor and broadcast by Radio Hanoi. Not understanding French, I take momentary refuge in the life-affirming passion of her voice. Occasionally a tremendous explosion punctuates the atmosphere with a guillotine of sound. The vibrating after-slice of the blast fades, seeming to linger as an insidious *hummmm*. Mosquitoes mass for attack in their blood-lusting frenzy.

I feel the cosmic beauty of light and sound in this setting of grisly human slaughter. The terrain as far as I can see has been, is, the churning rip-apart death location for hundreds of North Vietnamese soldiers. The combat base has been, is, the end-life, begin-eternity, DEAD-SPACE for scores of young Americans. The sweet smell of burned human flesh wafts on the gentle and welcomed breeze. It blends with and is almost as appetizing as the hearty aroma of hot C-rations mixed with well-stewed rat meat. Shit-mixed-with-diesel burns steadily. The fumes drift my way on occasional eddies. This gentle shit-fog also wafts the mosquitoes away, temporarily.

My being quietly brims with sensory stimuli and philosophical cognition. I AM ALIVE as I quietly take in sight, sound, texture, odors and pensive feelings, as much as any being can absorb. Blood pulsates through engorged vessels. Hot liquid courses through my too alive self and seems to stop in my head. My head is compacted with sensation. It's as if my heart is being drained of feelings that pump into my head and merge, knowledge with pathos. And stop. And throb. Senses confirm existence. I AM.

My being is EXPANDED WITH KNOWLEDGE. Whore-war has had its way with me in the sump of mortal nature. We've had lethal intercourse in the dank pit. Seductive as gravity it smells like burnt sweetmeat and tastes of bile. Through my consciousness streak vivid images. War. Carnage. Death. Beauty. Egocentric power plays. Desperation. Terror. Life. Color. Sound. Smells. Shit. Mosquitoes. Trenches. Flies. Bunkers. Rats.

Concertina. Phantoms. Antennae. Existence and God. I KNOW the horror of what happens among humans.

I finish the Lucky. With the last puff a sensation of power surges through my legs, up my spine and fills my chest. I erupt in a cascade of omnipotent rage. I run to the western trench. Fully exposed again on the blood wet berm facing Co Roc Mountain, I scream towards the setting sun, to the universe and to God. I shake my fists, middle fingers extended, at God in Heaven. From the marrow of the bone of my soul, I curse God with the most vile, profane, insulting, contemptuous and demonic words I know. I damn God for allowing ALL OF THIS to happen. Enraged, on the berm, I scream and sling rabid obscenities with body language. Americans look at me aghast and yell for me to shut up before I bring down the wrath of God. I scream at them. "This IS God's wrath! Look around you with the guts to see what you're looking at. As far as my eye can see we're already Damned. FUCK GOD!" They move down the trenches putting distance between themselves and me.

I don't know if God gets my message. But, there is no doubt that the enemy's artillery spotter reads me loud and clear. As I fall to the ground hoarse and exhausted, my body is compressed in a cocoon of hot air and violently rattled. A 152 mm round lands several feet away and does not kill me. Luck? Miracle? Shattered back into present time/space with ears clanging and all senses vibrating, I curse an AMEN to the heavens and slither to safety along a slit trench.

Deep in the bowels of the medical bunker, I rage at God. Images of people mutilated in a chaos of dread fills me. Ghosts of thousands blasted from their bodies, now bewildered and afraid, haunt me. Their presence feels excruciating. I empathize with the angst of their lives unfinished, yet ended. I visualize mutilated bodies and almost imagine that I hear them. Sobbing anguished tears for my fellow human critters, I pass the surreal hours of darkness with rats keeping me close company.

Distant booms herald first light as Phantom jets spook the NVA artillery deeper into Co Roc's caves with bomb strikes. Dawn. Sunlight. Bodycounts. Sick call. Rat bites. Rabies shots. Dysentery. C-rations. Parachuted supplies. A new day. Another chance to live. Life is acute when energized by intimacy with profuse death. This day of new life for me is lived on the run. I have THE RUNS. My shit is a putrid oozing discharge. Sitting for a long time on the dugout latrine, surrounded by plywood walls, I reflect on the day and night just passed. It's then that it hits me abruptly. I'm overwhelmed by the clear realization of how mistaken it is to blame God for all this horror. The concept that God wasn't directing this atrocity shocks me. Soon, I am laughing at myself and can't stop. My sides ache. I can hardly breathe.

Shrieks of screaming shrapnel drown my laughter as jagged metal rips holes in the plywood leaving ragged gashes of sunlight. Deafening sound accompanies waves of exploding dirt. I slide onto the muddy floor still discharging uncontrollably. The thought of how I must look, lying in the mud laughing and shitting on myself as artillery explodes, makes me cramp with more laughter. The explosions stop, and I regain my composure. A little dingy, but alive, messy, but emptied. I clean myself with my fouled trousers. Naked except for boots, helmet and flak jacket, I crouch there waiting, thinking. Again, the mystical universe seems to be in synchronization with my inner process. Saturated with new awareness, I feel as if the core of my being has passed through a permeable psychic membrane, leaving me exposed and vulnerable. Something profound has just happened. Purged of self-righteous holy rage, I pardon God for allowing war.

My consciousness has traveled at exponential speed from the beginning of life on earth through eons of our history to the present. A flash of truth with ultimate implications now fills me. Never again can I take comfort in the wishful illusion that previously shielded my psyche. I have changed and cannot go back. These blasts of insight become the genesis of an endless struggle...THE defining struggle of my life.

From the dugout shitter near the medical bunker at FOB 3, Khe Sanh, I am launched on the longest range cross-border mission of all, searching out and controlling self-destructive tendencies in myself. God has not orchestrated us to kill one another in a frenzied dance of inhuman insanity. We humans, taking human action, doing humane deeds cause whore-war. We create our reality on earth. We generate our Hell on this planet.

When God was to blame for war, I wasn't responsible. It was out of my hands and up to a higher power to stop. I no longer have the comfort of that illusion. Sensing a fatal flaw in the evolving development of the human species, my being feels hopelessly immersed in more dread than ever before. While our civilized technical expertise increases, we continue to operate on an outmoded, yet seemingly insatiable band of self-predatory genetic coding. God wasn't doing it to us. I was. Billions like me have fervently destroyed one another since the beginning. Are we, with self-righteous and oblivious arrogance "advancing" toward self-extinction?

INCOMPREHENSIBLE SPIRIT OF GOD, MERCIFULLY HELP WE HUMANS. SHOW COMPASSION AND EMPATHY FOR OUR OWN, FOR OURSELVES. AMEN.

My Brother's Keeper

by Talis Kaminskis
CAC O-3

His arms wrapped tenderly around it, the young Marine carefully cradled the dirty and bloody head to his chest. It belonged to a stranger, a new guy, one who had just joined their unit, one whom nobody had an interest in knowing. He did not even know his name or anything about him. A brief while ago, there had been a battle. As with most battles, it had not lasted very long. Matter of fact, it could hardly even be classified as a battle. A few shots had rung out, the veterans of the Marine patrol scattered, returning their own fire. Some more rounds directed at them, and then there was silence. Almost!———almost! Laying on the path where he had fallen, the new addition to the war guttered forth with sounds betraying the wounds inflicted on his body. Blood seeped through his clothes, and one of his arms tremored uncontrollably. With the intuition born of too long in combat, the remaining members of the patrol knew what his fate would be. They stood there emotionless, seemingly non-caring at this stranger in their midst. Over him a corpsman did what he could, knowing that his efforts could not overcome the inevitable. The flow of the blood stemmed, he too stepped back. Watching. Waiting. Knowing. This would not be the first, not the last—more he would treat in the future. All was accomplished without the

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continued from page 31

appearance of rushing, without the need of verbal communication. As if granted an answer to the silent prayers all present shared, yet none had dared to scream, the wounded soldier quieted his grating sounds and with conscious effort, slowly opened his eyes. They seemed to seek something, to find an answer in the waiting group. Some, blankly returned his look. Others, fidgeted self-consciously. None yearned to make the commitment that they knew he sought. At least not until they passed the face of a young Marine. Already his eyelids were starting to droop in resignation over his eyes. Overwhelmed by the pain and the effort. But in the young Marine, their message stirred something. Long ago, he had known pain. In another world, he had known what love and kindness were. From a deep recess of his being, emotions surfaced. Slowly he moved close to that pleading look. From it, the pain of the effort evident, the wounded warrior raised his good arm the small distance that he could, and it hung in the air motionless, wordlessly asking. The young Marine looked down at it, striving to find some excuse to avoid the request of it, yet knowing that he would, and could, not. With a deliberate movement, he slowly knelt to the side of the dying Marine, touching him tentatively, as if to verify the reality of the situation. His weapon laid aside, carefully he took the outstretched hand in his. As if he was still afraid of what this all meant. Fingers closed partially over his, their clasp a message to him. In return, his hand answered, giving to the one in need. Motionless, he caressed what he held. Withholding the tears that none need know about. Slight returning pressures shared the moments of pain as they intruded on the scene, washing through the being laying on the ground before him. From somewhere, a lit cigarette was passed to the samaritan, who gratefully accepted it with his free hand. Without any lessening of his hold, he further extended the smoke to the Marine on the ground, who gazed at it with seemingly thought, and then with a strained motion, just moved his head side to side, in a negative fashion. Saying no to the smoke, but yes to the kind offer. The young Marine kneeling over him saw and understood, and returned the cigarette to his own lips, using that as an excuse to turn his head momentarily away, gazing at the others, waiting for a reply that none would give. A moan, a wince, a sudden tightening of the grip, and his gaze went to the injured soldier's face. In it, he had seen the fear and resignation, especially the message conveyed by the fleeing eyes. Quickly he strove to avoid looking into them any longer than he had too. Minute distractions a welcome excuse to focus his look elsewhere. But he could not ignore what was happening, and he knew that this gaze had to return, to look with feeling directly into those tortured features. Thus it was he saw the spasm of pain coming, and the hold on his increased for just a moment, and then it weakened. Unable to resume its former strength. Much weaker, with a greater pleading. With both hands now, he held the wounded Marine's hand, but still could not satisfy the silent cry that was there. And he knew——— aaannnddd he knew. He knew what was the only thing he could do. From a recess far within him came the strength once again. With it the knowledge and hope that it would be enough. All he had submerged to survive this long, he would have to let go of. To make himself vulnerable, to shed the iron wall. With his available hand, he pried lose the seeking fingers of the wounded Marine, shifted position ever so slightly, he took the weight of his fallen comrade on his lap, and with both hands, cradled him to his chest. Imperceptibly, his body had begun to rock. Just enough to convey his new feelings, not enough to cause any pain. Sharing and giving the only thing he had left. Soft, soothing sounds issued from his mouth, betraying not the helplessness and frustration of all that he felt. In the face of the inevitable, nearing end, they gave the peace and tranquility the moment needed. His eyes rose from the face pressed to him, and fled away into the distance, letting only his touch be the communication between them. The only sense allowed. No rage, no anger was in his being at this unwelcome predicament. Permeating the scene was only the sense for a quiet, peaceful end. He produced what he could, oblivious of his surroundings, letting his feelings now guide his actions. And the two were as one. Life was life; and death was death; —— and here, in their mutual presence, the meaning was clear. He waited with a patience that he knew otherwise he would ever possess. Untiring were his arms, infinite motion of a yielding body, giving love that could never be repaid. In those moments, he was not aware of how unselfishly, completely and totally, he gave of himself. Never betraying externally the waves of emotion washing throughout him. Something seemed to warn him that the final breath was near. Just a mite tighter he held the dying body. Hugging it, loving it, making sure that the one he held knew that he was not now, nor would he ever be, alone. Ever so slightly, the head slumped against him, and then he knew that the need for his services was over, still he held the quiet body. An instant more did not matter to him, he did not want to abandon too soon, one with whom he had given the utmost, intimate, part of himself. His need for a sudden, deep breath, brought him back to the world that he lived in. Picking up his weapon, he rose, turned, and left. Not daring to look back, and with each step, the need not too, growing.

MARINE KNIVES

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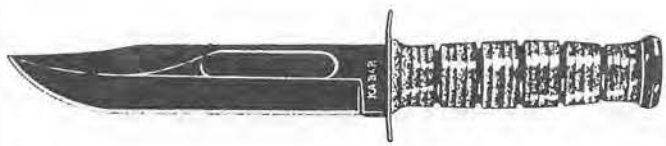

Jim Veletto proprietor

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

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

PX Order Form

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

SHIRTS:	SIZE	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
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Khe Sanh Logo (T/Sweat)			13.95/19.95	
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Marine Tradition - Wife (T Only)			13.95	
Postage Stamp (T Only)			13.95	
HATS:				
Khe Sanh Veteran (Red, Black, Blue, White)			8.00	
Khe Sanh Logo (Red, Black, Blue, White)			8.00	
Marine Corps (Red, Black, Blue, White)			8.00	

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

Windbreaker: Khe Sanh Logo				
Marine Corps				
Vietnam Vet: Lest We Forget				
POW/Mia				
They fought for Your Freedom				
Loved One's Jacket				
LICENSE PLATE FRAMES:			5.95	
The Khe Sanh Veteran, Eternally Bonded				
POW/MIA, Bring them home				
Semper Fidelis, U.S. Marines				
World's 911 Force, U.S. Marines				
BUMPER STICKERS: (ALL)			2.00	
Khe Sanh Veteran				
My girl said she'd leave me if I joined the Marines. (Sure am gonna miss her)				
MARINES, How's my driving? Call 1-800-USMC				
MARINES , America's 911 Force				
MARINES, America's Force of Choice				
MARINES, The World's 911 Force				
No God, No Peace - Know God, Know Peace				
WARNING, I brake for flashbacks				
Friends don't let friends ride Jap bikes				
American Flag window sticker.				
BOOKS:				
Valley of Decision (Hardcover)			25.95	
Forced Recon (Softcover)			5.95	
One on One (Softcover)			15.95	
Where Light is of Darkness			8.95	
Macho Man			20.95	
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	SIZE	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL

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

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

PX Order Form

Poncho Liners	24.95
NECKLACES:	
Marine Corp Emblem (plain)	20.00
Marine Corps Emblem (encircled)	15.00
POW/MIA dogtag	8.95
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Khe Sanh Window Decal	1.00
Khe Sanh Anniversary Pin	3.00
Khe Sanh Anniversary Picture	7.95
POW Windsock	10.95
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Grenade	18.95
Vietnam Wall Clock/with personalization	35.00/42.00

TOTAL____

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

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

ADD $1.00 FOR 2XL SIZES.
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Tell them you are with the Khe Sanh Veterans to get room rates.



REUNION REGISTRATION: (PLEASE REGISTER EARLY)

Registrations must be made no later than **June 21, 1996 .**

Name/s: _____ Phone: ( ) _____

Address: _____ No. attending in your party: ____

City/State/Zip: _____

Served with: _____

(Company) (Battalion) (Regiment) (Other)

Indicate any special needs we may be of help with

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REUNION REGISTRATION:

	Price	Number
Registration Fee (Per Participant) (Non-Refundable)	$15.00	_____
Banquet (Sit Down Dinner) (per person) includes all gratuities	$25.00	_____ *

*Indicate choice of entree and number of each (All entrees include salad, rolls, potato choice and dessert)

___Chicken Cordon Bleu

___Sirloinof Beef in Bodelaise Sauce

___Shrimp and Chicken Combo with Lobster Cream Sauce

I am also submitting my membership dues at this time:

☐ $20.00 - Annual Dues

☐ $150.00 - Lifetime Membership

Please check over all Information

Make checks payable to: **Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc**

No Refunds can be given after June 21, 1996

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Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.
Vince Griffith
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Temucula, CA 92590

or Call: Vince - 909-676-6047 or Carl- 414-694-8512

Let's have a GREAT reunion!



Special Operations Group FOB 3 Khe Sanh 1968
L–R: Sfc Cavnaugh, MSgt Minnicks, Sfc Sherron, Sfc Secor (KIA), Sp5 Harris, Sfc Baker (KIA), SSgt Mocabee

Membership/Subscription Application

Please print or type, and provide all information requested.

Name ..... Phone .....

Street Address ..... City ..... State ZIP .....

I Khe Sanh Vet? ❑ Yes ❑ No If YES, ... (Branch of Service/Unit) What year/s did you serve there? .....

❑ Annual Dues ($20) ❑ Life Member ($150) ❑ Non-Khe Sanh Vat subscription ($20)

Mail this application and payment to:

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THE KHE*SANH VET

ISSUE 7-NOV-H Newsletter

Founder · RAY STUBBE Editor · ERNIE HUSTED

RAY'S WORLD

News from the Founder

Several important events have occurred recently. The book on Khe Sanh which I have been writing for several years, and which has involved many contributions from many of you (diaries, letters written during your time there, memories on cassettes, etc.) plus a thorough research of all official documents of the USMC, Army, USAF, CIA, DIA, has finally been completed and accepted for publication. A contract with Houghton-Mifflin Co., a very prestigeous publisher for some 200 years in the U.S., was signed in July, 1988. Publication will probably be in 1990 or before, in hard-cover. (VALLEY OF DECISION: The Siege of Khe Sanh)

The second item is the rather large gathering of Khe Sanh vets during the Tampa 3dMarDiv Reunion, two absolutely super slide presentations by Ernie Husted, and the decision by those there that we should formally organize by incorporating as a non-profit organization (for purposes of reduced postage, ability of companies to make contributions to us and write it off on their tax, etc.), and that we should continue to meet annually under the umbrella of the 3dMarDiv Association, letting them do all the planning (hotels, events, etc.) but having a night set aside just for us. By meeting with them we can get the best rates possible on hotels and airlines. With the stirring words of Earle Breeding (former CO of E/2/26), a collection of funds was made at the slide presentation to ensure the continued publication of our Newsletter. The next reunion is in Chicago, 12-16 July 1989. The following persons volunteered to be on a "Committee to Organize:" Calvin Gright, Earle Breeding, Bob Hanna, John Kaheny, Jack Kilbright, Ernie Husted, and myself. (Editor's Note: I was out of the room when I volunteered?)

A presentation was made by Mr. Ron Drez of the Eisenhower Center of the University of New Orleans. They have already established an archive on the Normandy D-Day landing which has been of great benefit to those participating in it: to hear the voices of their buddies, to fill in missing parts of their memory, etc. Now the archive is focusing on Khe Sanh, and asking for your stories on tape (can be done over the telephone). By being connected to a university, these materials will be available for hundreds of years in the future so the true story of Khe Sanh will be preserved. Mr. Drez was in intelligence in Viet Nam and also a company commander in the battle of Hue; his helicopter was shot down, broken in half, and he was one of the few survivors. Out of this he resolved to serve his brother Nam vets in this way. The director of the Eisenhower Center, Dr. Steven Ambrose, has published over 20 books, is a world-renowned scholar, perhaps the expert on Eisenhower. This is a worthy project, one which certainly serves us well.

For those who are not aware of some 3dMarDiv Assn. programs: any vet 100% Service-Connected Disabled can get a free life-time membership in the Association by providing proof of the 100% status. The Association maintains four humanitarian funds, the largest of which is the Memorial Scholarship Fund. Established in 1968, this Fund provides tuition assistance of up to $2,000 a year for four years to qualifying dependents of 3dMarDiv members who died as a result of combat service in Viet Nam. The "Lucy Caldwell Fund" provides limited financial assistance to Marines and corpsmen who served in Viet Nam, as well as to dependents of Marines and corpsmen killed in Viet Nam. Financial need is the main criterion.

Gen Westmoreland spoke at the banquet, saying that we at Khe Sanh prevented a major introduction of NVA units from assaulting and supporting fighting in the cities of Quang Tri, Da Nang, etc. He noted two items that are usually not discussed: the US armed forces had left Viet Nam two years before it fell--thus the military didn't lose the war (that was lost in Washington), and, he added, the Americans never lost a major battle during the entire course of the war.

With the republication of this Newsletter, let me add my personal request and encouragement that you submit your poems, stories of what happened to you, your impressions, anecdotes, etc. These are important to you (to get them out, to preserve any important expressions of "thank you" to someone you never got to thank) and they are important to others who may have missing blank spots in their memories, to help people realize that they are not alone in what they feel. Think in terms of images, what certain events and places and things meant to you--rains, rats, helicopters, desperation, frustration, some heroic things others did, etc. These are important to share in our Newsletter.

Finally--and I really didn't want this to get this long! (but preachers are notorious for length!) I want all of you to know you are important, that many of you are in my daily prayers and thoughts, and God bless you all.

Last-minute addition: The progress on incorporation: I visited the lawyer last week and signed the final papers. They were sent to our state's Secretary of State, and we should be getting the final incorporation letter in a week or so, and will be incorporated as a non-profit organization.

RAY

EDITOR'S DESK

News from the Editor

Well, I sure am late this time. Matter of fact I am so late it bothers me more than you all will ever know. No matter what my good intentions and how I plan ahead, life and its many responsibilities once again have put me so far behind the power curve that this is the only newsletter I've been able to get out in an entire year. From the phone calls and letters I receive I am reminded of how much this means to us all. Here are some examples from letters I have received, showing the good things that have happened because of the newsletter:

Without y'all's hard work and many hours of sweat we would not be able to reach our fellow vets from Khe Sanh. A couple of weeks ago all of y'all's work answered a prayer of mine. I thought I had lost a close friend of mine from Khe Sanh. He was hit March 1968. I had heard he died in April of 1969. Because of the Khe Sanh Vet someone saw his jacket with Khe Sanh on it and gave him a copy to look over. Well, Buddy called and we are keeping in touch with each other. Even after twenty years. I only hope that more of our brothers will reach out and just say "hello."

I am a Khe Sanh Vet and a member of a V.V.A chapter here in Chicago. At a recent meeting I struck up a conversation with a fellow Marine who was also in Khe Sanh, and he told me about the Khe Sanh Vet Newsletter. He loaned me his copy of Issue 3. In it I found the name of a buddy of mine whom I haven't seen or heard from in 20 years. From the head injury I received my memory is very bad, but I remembered this name. I have since called him and we are now back in touch again. It was a wonderful feeling. I think this organization is great. Thank you very much.

When I get letters like these it heaps the guilt onto me even more about not getting the newsletter out in a more timely manner. I realize part of the problem is we have grown over 400 percent since I turned the listing into a newsletter. Still, I apologize to all of you and hope you realize that I do care about all of you and hope you know that.

In this issue we have:

Copies of the original M16 manual which we were given while in Viet Nam (comic book form).

A reprint of one of the many short-timer calendars that were floating around during our time there. I hope that no one takes offense at the one I selected. It is intended to bring a smile to your memory and not to offend.

The last installment of the Marine's Vocabulary In Viet Nam by Ray Stubbe. If you have any additions please send them in and I will start a new list.

The new list of Khe Sanh members. PLEASE HOLD ON TO THIS LIST. THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL ONLY HAVE THE CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS, NOT AN ENTIRE NEW LISTING. THIS HAS BECOME NECESSARY, TO KEEP EXPENSES DOWN. ANY NEW FOLKS COMING IN WILL RECEIVE A COMPLETE LIST.

In the reflections section there is a good selection for you to read containing a short story, a poem, and thoughts and feelings. Keep the material coming guys.

Advanced information on the next 3rd Marine Division Reunion during which the Khe Sanh folks will meet and vote on our charter, and also have the great fellowship we always have when together.

(Editor's note: The folks at the reunion, on the whole, went out of their ways to make us feel welcome. There was a bit of a gap between some of the folks there and the Khe Sanh guys. This was not because they were WWII and Korea vets and we were Viet Nam vets, but more of a basic age difference. There are twenty years or more between our age and theirs. The special discount advertised for plane tickets turned out to be a real bummer for some who took advantage of it while many of us were able to get much better rates and straight-through flights on our own. Next time, I suggest everyone check several sources on his own. The last complaint was that we had to try to schedule our reunion in between the events the Division had already established. We will work hard with the planning committee to ensure these issues are addressed so we can have more time together to rap, hang out and generally enjoy visiting.)

The next issue will have copies of the general by-laws and purpose of the now-official Khe Sanh Vet organization. Look them over and please attend the next reunion or fill out the questionnaire I will be sending, and get it back to Ray. This organization is you all--not us. Let us know what you feel about things.

SITUATION REPORT

We currently have contact with 820 people who shared the experience we know as Khe Sanh, with another 38 people on the list who have a common bond with us; 12 of them are new. There are 326 new names on the list and 49 corrections. The biggest news is of course our incorporation. Another major factor that must be dealt with and addressed is our printing. Thanks to the unselfish efforts of Jim Davis using hours of his own time and his employer permitting him the use of a copier, our printing for several issues has been FREE. This has enabled us to get some money saved in our account. Jim has gotten a much better job and won't be able to help us with the printing any more. Until I started checking on estimates of what it would cost to print an issue, I never realized how much he had saved us. I realize now that Jim has saved us over two-thousand dollars. The biggest expense of the newsletter is the printing. If anyone out there has any ideas or is able to help with the printing, please let me know.

PASS THE WORD

CLASSIFIED

When you send in a request I will run it for two issues. The addresses of the people and the units they were with

can be found in the listing. This will save space.

NEW REQUESTS

For those looking for back issues of Leatherneck contact: Marine Corps Association, Box 1777, Quantico, VA 22134.

I am looking for one of my buddies: Richard T. Miller. Last address was in Phil., PA. John Martin Wertz M/3/26, A/1/26.

WE THE PEOPLE - Country and Western cassette tape of songs with a Viet Nam theme. Cost is $10 (includes shipping). The lead song is entitled AMERICA, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD (about Khe Sanh). (Editor's Note: My taste in music doesn't drift towards C&W but I have played the tape quite a few times and like it.) Daniel Parker was at Khe Sanh with 2/3 and 3/3. Cornerstones, Daniel Parker, 2938 Strathmoor Road, Smyrna, GA 30080 (404) 436-3425.

Dear Ernie, We enjoyed the slide presentation you gave at the reunion Saturday the 23rd. When we got home we decided to form our own chapter for West Palm Beach area. Now we are placing notices around town trying to get in touch with other survivors that were there during the siege. In doing this we will be getting others back together again as one. Khe Sanh Survivors, C/O Robert Elder, 373 Farmdale Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33406 (407) 478-7915. Robert was with B/1/26.

There have been several requests concerning the Khe Sanh T-shirts several of us were wearing at the reunion. Here it is: One of the group has designed a quality shirt for those interested. This is the shirt many of the guys were wearing at the Chicago parade in the Khe Sanh Section as well as at the reunion. For those of you who haven't seen it, it is an O.D. green shirt with the words KHE SANH at the top and VETERAN underneath. A map of Viet Nam is in the center. The map has Khe Sanh marked as well as the hills. The letters are black outlined in yellow. The map is yellow with the locations shown in black. The cost is very fair. Send $5.50 (that includes shipping and handling) to Tom Eichler, 3221 N. Opal, Chicago, IL 60634.

THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE THE FOLLOWING REQUESTS WILL APPEAR:

My friend, L/Cpl Samuel A. Sharp Jr., served with Alpha Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, in Phu Bai and Khe Sanh from 12 August 1966 until he was killed in action (remains not recovered) on 10 May 1967. I would like to hear from anyone who knew him or has information about him. Kelly West, 1658 Fremont Street, Santa Mara, California 95050.

THIRD MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION

Bill Krueger, 7622 Highland St., Springfield, VA 22150 / Membership Team.

1989 3d Marine Div Assn Reunion Information:

Our 1989 family reunion will be held July 12-16, 1989 at the downtown Chicago Marriott Hotel, 540 N. Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL 60611. Doubles: $74. Interesting and well-known banquet speaker. Full reunion schedule will appear in APR/MAY 89 Assn Newsletter. Contact Bill Krueger, 7622 Highland ST., Springfield, VA 21150 - Tel: 1-703-451-3844.

INFORMATION ABOUT KHE SANH

This is an ongoing list of publications available about Khe Sanh, as well as related information. I have gotten several of these and am pleased with them. This list includes some new ones.

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The Illustrated History of The Vietnam War - KHE SANH - is a small paperback, published by Bantam Books as part of a series on Viet Nam. It is written by Michael Ewing who reported the war for the London Daily Mirror. In the acknowledgements there is one section I want to mention and I quote the author, "Finally, I am specially indebted to Lieutenant Commander Ray W. Stubbe, who was a chaplain at Khe Sanh and is now writing the definitive history of the combat base, for his guidance and comments on the manuscript and his help in accessing rare and hitherto unpublished photographs." I really enjoyed the book and it is now part of my collection. The cost is $6.95.

The Illustrated History of the Vietnam War - MARINES - is another of the small paperbacks published by Bantam Books as part of a series on Viet Nam. It is written by Edwin Simmons who was a Brigadier General serving in Viet Nam with the III Marine Amphibious Force and later as commanding officer of the 9th Marine Regiment. The book only touches on the siege of Khe Sanh but covers the Marine role in Viet Nam quite well. Because of the format and detail of this book I have added this one to my collection also. The cost is $6.95.

MARINE CORPS HISTORY: Viet Nam Veterans who served in 1967 in Northern I Corps can now read about themselves in Volume IV of a projected 10-volume operational and chronological series covering the U.S. Marine Corps' participation in the Viet Nam War.

Volume IV is titled: "U.S. Marines in Vietnam Fighting the North Vietnamese 1967." For your FREE copy write to: Reference Section (Code HDH-2), History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 20380. Volume V is now in preparation. It covers the period 3 Jan to June 68.

"The Battle of Khe Sanh," in the small paperback, The U.S. Marines in Action, published by Villard Books, New York, 1986, pp. 43-46. There is one chapter written by Colonel Dabney, mainly about 81IS during the siege. The cost is $4.95.

The magazine Vietnam Combat, Vol. 2, No. 2, Fall, 1986 has several articles and quite a lot of photos on Khe Sanh, the hill outposts, and Lang Vei during the siege. Does not, however, contain anything new that isn't already covered by

Shore's book on Khe Sanh.

An article by a retired senior official aerial recon and photo interpreter of CIA, Dino A. Grugioni, "The President, Khe Sanh, and the 26th Marines," in Leatherneck 49:9 (Sept, 1986), pages 22-25. Contains an interesting aerial photo of the Khe Sanh area and tells of President Johnson's personal interest and involvement with the siege.

As you may remember from the last issue, Ernie Spencer, the former Commanding Officer of DELTA Company, 1/26 in 1967 and 1968, had written a remarkably realistic and highly interesting book, Welcome to Viet Nam, Macho Man. The book is now out. Ernie has sent us an order form for those interested in buying the book. Not only has he reduced the price; he will also be contributing five dollars from the sale of each book to the Khe Sanh Newsletter to help us continue our work.

VIETNAM WOMEN'S MEMORIAL PROJECT

We need your help. For more than a decade some 250,000 women who served our country during the Vietnam era have gone unnoticed. The Vietnam Women's Memorial Project plans to remedy that with a program to recognize and honor America's female Vietnam-era veterans.

Since 1984, project staff and volunteers have conducted research, made presentations and written articles to encourage Americans to take notice and appreciate the contributions of the women who served during the Vietnam War. A nationwide grass roots network of volunteers has emerged - many of them Vietnam veterans, male and female, who have raised over $445,000, on our way to a $1.2 million goal which will cover the costs of research, education and recognition.

One of our fiercest hopes is to erect a statue of a woman on the 2.2 acres of the the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.--a memorial dedicated by Congress "to recognize and honor the men and women of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam war." The project is well on its way to making the Memorial complete; however, it has met with deaf ears.

In October 1987 the statue proposal was rejected by the Fine Arts Commission after receiving an approval from Secretary of the Interior Donald P. Hodel, as well as endorsement from 25 national veterans, professional and civic organizations, including the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. Congress has come to our aid and introduced bills that would allow the statue to be erected. Hearings on the bills are being held over the next few months.

Support for the project is enormous. The American people are speaking out through petitions, letters and phone calls to Capital Hill to make their voices heard; but to be heard they must first be informed. Won't you please spread the word about the VWMP? With your help we can give female veterans of the Vietnam War the recognition they so assuredly deserve. FACTS:

* Some 10,000 women were stationed in Vietnam during the war in military and civilian capacities.

* Women served in a number of positions that included doctors, nurses, officers, administrators and volunteers in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Red Cross, United Service Organization (USO), U.S.A.I.D., and CIA.

* An estimated 250,000 women were involved in the war in Vietnam and stateside.

* About ninety percent of the military women who served in Vietnam were nurses.

* The names of eight women are listed on the wall of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; those names do not include non-military women who lost their lives, of which there is no accurate record.



☐ *Yes, I want to help honor America's women Vietnam veterans. My tax-deductible contribution is enclosed.*
☐ *Send me more information about how I can help make this dream a reality.*
☐ *I am a woman who served during the Vietnam era.*

NAME_____
ADDRESS_____
CITY_____ STATE_____
ZIP_____ PHONE_____

Clip and mail along with your contribution to:
VWMP
Box 45, 511 Eleventh Avenue South,
Minneapolis, MN 55415

VIETNAM WOMEN'S MEMORIAL PROJECT

WHO BETRAYED THOSE WHO DIED IN VIETNAM?

James Reston of The New York Times has suggested that it was the reporters and cameramen who forced the withdrawal of American power from Southeast Asia.

Robert Elegant, who covered the Vietnam War for the L.A. Times, says that the fate of Vietnam was determined "on the printed page and the television screen."

Reed Irvine, chairman of Accuracy in Media, says our military victory in the 1968 Tet Offensive, was transformed by our own media into a defeat, with tragic results. How this was done is graphically shown for the first time in "TELEVISION'S VIETNAM: THE IMPACT OF MEDIA." Brilliantly narrated by Charlton Heston, it shows how the billions of dollars we spent to defend South Vietnam from communism were nullified by the irresponsibility of our own media.

"TELEVISION'S VIETNAM: THE REAL STORY" exposes the lies some media are still telling about Vietnam and those who fought there.

Shown on public TV and now available on one 2-hour cassette for only $29.95 plus $3.00 for mailing. President Reagan said these are films "all Americans should see." Order now from Accuracy in Media, your media watchdog. Money back if not fully satisfied.

3059

To: Accuracy in Media
1275 K St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005

( ) Send me a videotape of "Television's Vietnam"
Format: ( ) VHS ( ) Beta $29.95 plus $3.00 handling

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For additional information call AIM (202) 371-6710

Announcing,
New for 1989

The Last Patrol March to the Wall Calendar

In September, 1987, The Last Patrol marched from San Antonio Texas to the Wall in Washington D.C. to draw attention to the continuing plight of our POW's. This Calendar shows that march.
Includes four extra pages of photos of The Last Patrol
(total of 28 photos)
$7.00
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ATTENTION

VIETNAM

VETERANS

If you served with the 2ND BN, 1ST Marines either as a Marine or attached to the 2nd BN 1st Mar Reg 1st Mar Div in the NAM, we, the Vietnam Era 2/1 Veterans, are looking for you. We have yearly reunions, a mail-list of 400, and a quarterly newsletter.

--PLEASE CONTACT--

ROBERT T HUGHES
PO BOX 10
Cape May Court House
New Jersey 08210
609-465-8429

OR

DAVID "Doc" JOHNSON
218 10th St. SE
Jamestown, ND 58401
701-252-6800

REFLECTIONS

I was a Marine with 2nd Battalion 26th Marines during the height of the Vietnam War in 1968. As a child I attended church and trusted Jesus Christ. My combat experiences deeply strained my relationship with Him and the church. I have learned, over the many years that have passed, that Christ had profound purpose in what I did and saw. I know now that all I needed was faith that He was leading the way. This is a short story of a combat experience at Khe Sanh, Vietnam, April 6, 1968. It may give some help in believing that Christ does give his angels charge concerning us.

Scotty was gone for a long time. It must be something big! Here he comes now. Ok, here's what it is: There is an N.V.A. regiment, possibly more, on hill 700. That is down the ridge from 861 south. We will be moving out at 0500 and expect to reach the hill by noon. Gulf Company and Fox Company will be used in the assault. Gulf will take the lead with 3rd platoon walking point. "That's us!"

I felt my stomach tighten into knots. Why did I ever join the Marine Corps? To serve my country, of course. To ask not what my country could do for me, but what I could do for my country. My country, yea! Right now my friends are back home at the drive-in movie while I'm being eaten alive by mosquitoes. I shouldn't complain because I volunteered for this, but I could die tomorrow and no one would ever know how or why.

"Woody, you and Don get the gun cleaned and pick up your ammo at the C.P. Take two cans each, six frags, and a couple extra magazines for your forty-fives. The grunts will be loaded with gun ammo. The captain said we are going to need it. Oh yeah, he also said there will be a lot of casualties; some of us won't be coming back tomorrow. All right, get busy. I'll be at the C.P."

Woody and I stared at each other for the longest time. Woody was a good Marine, stocky-built, dark brown eyes, and light hair. He also had a little mustache that he kept neatly trimmed. His muscles were toned from the long months he had spent in Viet Nam. He was a good, honest, loyal friend and an expert machine gunner. Woody taught me how to survive this place, something I was very grateful for.

As we stared we were asking, "Will we be coming back tomorrow?" We were both afraid, but we were seasoned Marines. Fear was a subject no one ever talked about, an emotion the Marine Corps trained us to suppress, and an ungodly pain we constantly lived with.

Soberly I asked Woody, "How are you feeling?"

"Sick! This dysentery is killing me!"

"You really don't look good. I don't think I've ever seen anyone as pale. Can't the doc give you something?"

"No, they're all out of pills. I guess I just have to suffer with it."

"Why don't you sit down and take it easy? I'll get the ammo." I wanted to talk to Scotty anyhow.

It was a relatively short walk to the C.P. C.P. is an abbreviation for Command Post. This is the center for an infantry unit. The captain is there, along with the lieutenant, radio man, corpsman, a few 60 mm. mortars and usually a gunnery sergeant or staff sergeant. All orders are received at this point and filtered down through the chain of command, captain to lieutenant, lieutenant to sergeant and so on to the private, the backbone of the Marine Corps. It was all neatly arranged and organized for maximum effectiveness. As I got closer I was glad I could get up and move around; my stomach was jittery and sour.

"Hi, Scotty. Hey, I'm worried about Woody. He's had dysentery for a long time now. Yeah, I talked with Doc Scarborough about it. He said Wood can stay here tomorrow if he likes. Down there in the bushes. He's real sick, but he insists he's going along."

"Well, not much we can do now! Let Woody take the first watch so he can sleep straight through the night. You take second, and I'll take third. Come on, let's get back to the gun position, it's getting dark."

I liked being with Scotty. He'd been my squad leader for the last five months. Even though he was only a year older than I (nineteen), he seemed much more mature. He was tall and thin, had dark hair and a thin mustache, and always wore a smile. Scotty didn't look as though he worried much. Something held him together. I guess it was because he would be going home soon. What would I do without him?!

When Scotty and I arrived at the gun position, Woody had come out of the bushes and finished cleaning the gun. We talked and laughed about our many childhood experiences. It was something we found great comfort in. Tomorrow was hard to to think about.

Woody took the first watch. He would wake me in a few hours to listen and wait for the enemy. I folded my shirt and laid it on an ammo can. It made a nice pillow. I pulled my poncho liner over me to stop some of the mosquito bites.

The night was calm and quiet, except for the incredible variety of insects. Bugs! I've never seen or heard so many bugs. Half awake and half into a dream, I thought of home. The comfort of a warm bed, clean sheets, the indulgence of a Lebanon bologna sandwich with potato chips, cheese, and mustard, the kindness of my mother and father. Oh how I missed them. I tried to picture their faces, but it was becoming hard to remember what they looked like. I felt far, far away in another world. I slowly sank into a deeper sleep wondering if I would be coming back tomorrow.

We reached hill 700 around 1300 (1:00). The place looked deserted. Hill 700 was located on a long range of hills

that rose and fell like a roller coaster. The hill had no trees, only tall elephant grass. The only sign of anyone being there was a well-worn path to the top. It was uncomfortably hot and we were tired from the long march. For a few moments I though we were lucky and the enemy had moved on. I would soon be disappointed. We were at the base of the hill kneeling, trying to be quiet. The lieutenant gave the point man orders to walk to the top. The point was a young, handsome Marine. He was terribly nervous and hesitant to go. I could feel his tension. Walking point was probably the most dangerous job in Vietnam. After some deliberation, he started up. We all watched and waited.

As he reached the top, there was no gunfire. I thought, "Great. Let's get out of here!" He yelled to the lieutenant, "All clear, sir!" I was very relieved. He turned to start down when suddenly all hell broke loose. Machine guns, mortars, and small arms fire opened up on us from all over the hill. In confusion, we started to run up the path to reach the top. The platoon sergeant screamed at us to get on line and lay down the fire. Woody and I jumped into a huge bomb crater to take cover.

The noise was maddening. It was like a large pot of popcorn popping, which got hotter and hotter. There were explosions everywhere. To our front, we saw the muzzle flashes of rifles and machine guns. Dirt was blowing in our eyes from the explosions. Bullets ripped past our ears. There were Marines getting shot with bullets and hit with shrapnel on all sides of us. The platoon sergeant continued to yell, "Get on line, get on line!"

Woody suddenly ran to the right and started firing the M-60. Before I could get to him, he was hit with shrapnel from an explosion. Scotty immediately jumped on the gun. He was hit with shrapnel. I finally reached the gun! Pulling the trigger in small bursts, I aimed at the muzzle flashes in front of me. The intense firing continued. Dirt clouded my eyes. Burnt powder from the explosions, and gas from the machine gun burned my nose. Screams from my friends caused me to step up my pace. I squeezed the trigger with longer bursts. We were somewhat of a line now and moved forward. I saw hands in the grass throwing grenades. They were going past me.

The battle raged out of control. We were taking a terrible beating when suddenly, from behind, I heard Marines yelling, "Pull back, pull back! We've called an air strike!" To my left a Marine was weeping, saying, "Somebody help me with Ski." Ski lay on his back with his eyes wide open. There was no movement. I grabbed him by the foot and started to pull back.

We reached the middle of the hill and waited for the planes. I looked at the machine gun and there were only four rounds left. My 45-caliber pistol was my only protection. I looked around, dazed and exhausted. Medivac choppers were landing at the base of the hill. Wounded and dead Marines were being boarded. For a moment I prayed that I would be leaving for safety.

The planes arrived, making three or four passes. The explosions rocked the hill. We hugged the ground, praying for our lives. The enemy mortars continued. A rifleman was now my A-gunner.

I had two cigarettes in a C-ration pack. We each took one and tried to enjoy a moment of pleasure. I took my canteen out and wet my mouth. In an instant I was thrown through the grass. When I sat up, my ears were ringing. My nose was filled with burnt powder. I felt that something had gone through my arm. As I looked, my long shirt sleeve was saturated with blood. It was dripping off my fingers onto the ground. My first thought was, "I have a Purple Heart"; my second, "Maybe my arm is blown off."

In a panic, I yelled corpsman; there weren't any. Another Marine ran to me and took my battle dressing out of its pouch. He wrapped my arm as tight as he could. I tried to get to my feet, but my legs were wobbly. I put my good arm around his neck and he helped me to the base of the hill.

The A-gunner, Curtis, was being aided by two other Marines. Some of the fingers on his right hand were blown off, and he also had two sucking chest wounds. They carried him to the L.Z. The enemy continued to mortar us while we waited to fly to safety.

In the distance I heard the chopper. My heart began to pound as it got closer. I waited and prayed that I would soon be safe. The chopper suddenly landed, firing a fifty-caliber machine gun at the enemy. The enemy returned fire with machine guns and mortars. In a burst of energy, I ran for the rear ramp. Wounded Marines were being carried and dragged inside. In seconds the crew chief gave the pilot thumbs up. As the chopper gained altitude, I knew I was safe.

At that moment I had a deep conviction that Christ does give his angels charge concerning us.

Sgt. Don Eutzy Jr. 3rd Platoon, Weapons, G/2/26 Hill 558

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This is dedicated to P.F.C. Authur Lee "Skip" Edmonds Jr. (American Indian) 2nd Batt. 26th Regiment H & S Co. (81 Mortars). He was killed in the Khe Sanh Base Camp February 13, 1968.

I am but one man. I am the voice of my people. Wherever their ears are, I talk. I want no more war. I want to be a man. You deny me the right of a white man. My skin is red; my heart is a white man's heart; but I am a Modoc. I am not afraid to die. I will not fall on the rocks. When I die, my enemies will be under me. Your soldiers began on me when I was asleep on Lost River. They drove us to these rocks, like wounded deer. I have told the white man heretofore to come and settle in my country; that it was his country and Captain Jack's country. That they could come and live there with me and that I was not mad with them. I have never received anything from anybody, only what I brought and paid for myself. I have always lived like a white man, and wanted to live so. I have always tried to live peaceably and never asked any man for anything. I have always lived on what I could kill and shoot with my gun, or catch in my trap.

Kintpuash (Captain Jack)
Tribe of the Modocs
Found at the Viet Nam Memorial Wall, Washington D.C. -1968

A MARINE REMEMBERS ON MEMORIAL DAY
By John M. Kaheny

For most of us it is the first sure sign of impending summer and it is filled with parades, picnics and beach parties. Children, enjoying the day with their friends, may occasionally ask why a tear forms in their father's eye at the sound of Taps or the sight of Old Glory waving in the wind. It is difficult for the young to truly grasp why we set this day aside to honor those gallant veterans who fell at Lexington and beyond defending our freedom and protecting our lives. So far they have been spared the terrors of the night and the arrows that fall by day. Not so for the aging warrior whose memory on this sacred day leaps time and space to find a a grassy knoll four miles from Laos on another day in May of 1967. Marines on patrol, forty-three strong, are just five miles from the safety of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Alone, they are the last free men between Hill 881S and the Canadian border. Suddenly, the Cat of Death leaps from a treeline on the exposed flank of the platoon. Two young riflemen, each but eighteen years old, shun available cover, stand up, stand fast and fire into the charging horde. Taking the full force of the enemy's assault, they purchase with their blood a precious gift of reaction time for their fellow Marines. Helmets fade slowly into chest-high grass and soon disappear from view. Eventually forty-one make it back to safety but the two go on home to rest forever beneath silver crosses. Their names, Private First Class Thomas Edward Henderschott and Lance Corporal Roger Michael Hurd, are now etched in stone on the Wall beneath Lincoln's watchful eye. The years have passed but every day I see their sacrifice reflected in the smiling faces of my children. For had not these two brave men held their ground with everything they had, Coleen, Meghan and John Peter simply would not be - - because one of those they saved that day was me. And now you know why Taps brings it all back and makes me think of those young heroes and where they are today and why I know all too well the meaning of the epitaph:

And when he gets to Heaven to St. Peter he will tell,
"One more Marine reporting Sir,
I've served my time in Hell."

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The following was written by David Barnhart. David is no longer with us. He served with H&S Co. 106's, 3/3 from 68-69. His sister gave me the poem and permission to have it printed.

An angel named Tuc-Fien called out my name last night; he said to me, "Do you remember the thirteen eves ago the loneliness and fright of the night outside the wire? You and seven others, forgotten until twilight, praying to your God to get you through the night."

Year in, year out, I remember that night so well. We were deep inside the land of the Dragon. Who could tell what would happen?

Three hundred and eighty-five days and nights living the life of a grunt. Sure, we all had a lot of spunk. To survive in the land of the Dragon. You more or less had to if you were going to cope with living the life of a grunt.

I can recall every day the smell of death. It isn't easy to put my war to rest. I'm reminded about it with my spirit of Christmas past every year around this time while I'm out spending my last dime.

Freedom has its flavor for those of us who fought for it; living is a sacrifice until death. Everyday I put myself to the test, knowing I've been over the crest.

The Tet Offensive of 1968 is a reminder to a lot of us of the real meaning of the cherished word, "FATE."

Halfway around the world in the land of Viet Nam, day in and day out people are reminded what life is all about, or the soldier's unsung song will be carried on and on.

All you people that I see on my everyday stroll, I want to shout at you. (I'm no fool for I'm an instrument of America's finest tool. I'm proud to say I'm a retired United States Marine, and you don't know what or how it feels to be part of America's team.)

I salute all my fellow soldiers and grunts who gave their lives to keep what we have, and I pray and hope you'll never forget Christmas Past.

Nguyen Charlie — **By Corky Trinidad**



A MARINE'S VOCABULARY IN VIETNAM
Compiled by Ray Stubbe
Part III

DON'T CUT ME NO SLACK - For example, I've been working my balls off on a fighting hole and you come to me and tell me to start filling some sand bags also; I might say, "Man, you don't cut me no slack! How about a huss?"

HUSS - A favor, a slackening in work.

HOOTCH - (Pronounced "who-ch") Where people live.

BEAU COUP - Much, many. (From the French via Vietnamese.)

SCOCHE - Few, little, small.

NON-HACKER - One who can't take it (as humping or other work). "I can't hack it."

PUSH - The radio frequency. "Come up on my push."

SAY AGAIN - Please repeat.

DINGED - Injured, hit.

ZAPPED, ZOMPED - Killed.

THERE IT IS - Yes, that's true. "The way they bust my balls in this f_cking place, I might extend!" Someone else standing by will say, "There it is!"

SKATE - (verb or noun) To have things easy. "I'm going to skate the bush for another week." "Yea, you're just a skate." "There it is!"

BUSH - Used especially by recon. Marines to denote going out on patrols. "Just got in from 5 days in the bush!"

CLICK - One grid, or 1,000 meters. 4 clicks = 4,000 meters = 4 grid squares.

THERE'S A MESSAGE ON THE BOARDS - We have received a message that sets forth some policy; read it.

HE'S A BAD MOTHER F_CKER - Someone with no scruples, a bad killer, etc.

IT SUCKS - It's absolutely revolting, no good, etc.

HE'S GOOD PEOPLE - One of the guys.

TIGHT - Close. "I thought I was in tight with you." "We're up tight."

MAN, THE DAY WE LEFT THEY STARTED POURING THE SHIT ON OUR ASS - (self-explanatory).

TRACE - The stretch from Con Thien to Gio Linh which was bull-dozed clear of vegetation.

McNAMARA LINE - The imaginary electronic barrier consisting of several outposts desigated as A-1, A-2 (Gio Linh), A-3 (between Gio Linh and Con Thien), A-4 (Con Thien), C-4, C-2, C-2 Bridge, D-5, etc. Also referred to as the "Dye Marker project."

GREASE - To kill, as He greased five of the enemy.

HE HAS HIS SHIT TOGETHER - He's organized; he has a proper memtal attitude; etc.

SADDLE UP - Get all your gear on; we're moving out.

DINKY DOLL - A Vietnemese girl (actually, "Dinky Dau" -"Dau" in Vietnemese is "head".

HANG LOOSE - Don't get flustered, disturbed, "shook up".

SHIT ALL OVER - Mistreat, e.g., "They continue to shit all over the men." - Make them do things that are over-trying them, petty things, etc. Usually refers to how superiors treat their men without regarding them as persons, etc.

MR. CHARLES - The enemy, the NVA (North Vietnemese Regulars).

VICTOR CHARLIE - Viet Cong.

SHACKLE CODE - A series of letters used to encrypt the numbers one through zero. Sometimes this is a series of words, as, e.g., FRENCH LADY. Using "F" as "1", "R"R as "2". "E" as "3", etc., the number "81" would then be "AAF".

Examples of Shackle codes actually used:

QUIET WORLD	WALT DISNEY	THE COMPANY	DOG WHISTLE
BLUE SHADOW	QUIET WORLD	AFORESHIGHT	SQUAD FORCES
FLY QUICKER	PEARL S BUCK	BLACK SHIRT	STOMPED BUG
TEN OF CLUBS	TURKEY LOAF	FRUIT CAKES	BLUE MONDAY

HURRY HOME
IAM COUNTING
THE DAYS.....



SOUTH VIET NAM

SHORT TIMERS CALENDAR

Why Do You Keep Your M16 Rifle Clean Inside and Out and Lubed with LSA?

The M16A1 Rifle OPERATION AND PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

DO ME A FAVOR, TIGER... DO A QUICK BEFORE-OPERATIONS CHECK ON YOUR RIFLE BEFORE WE COUNTER ATTACK.

HEY, SARGE! GET THIS COPY TO THE MAN WITH THE RIFLE

Will Eisner

BECAUSE- YOU BET YOUR LIFE ON IT!!

CLEAN AND LUBE

DISASSEMBLY		ASSEMBLY
13 Remove extractor and spring assembly for cleaning only. Remember not to lose, damage or separate them.		If you goofed and separated the spring from the extractor, insert the large end of the spring in the extractor and seat it. 6
14 Remove the sling.		Install the sling. 5
15 Take handguards off by first pulling down on the slip ring.		Install by first putting handguards in place, then push up on slip ring. 4
16 Use the firing pin to release the receiver pivot pin.		Engage the receiver pivot pin. 3
17 Separate the upper and lower receivers.		Join the upper and lower receivers. 2
18 Push the buffer assembly in about ¼ inch, press in on the buffer retainer, then release the guide.		
19 Take out the buffer assembly and spring.		Insert the spring and buffer assembly. 1





WHAT TO DO IN A JAM

If your M16A1 rifle refuses to pop off—or quits popping sudden-like—you've got a stoppage that needs immediate action.

Immediate Action: Instinctively doing the right thing to clear your weapon and get it firing again, soonest!

Here's a slow motion of the procedure you'd best make second nature:


1 Tap upward on the magazine to make sure it's seated right.

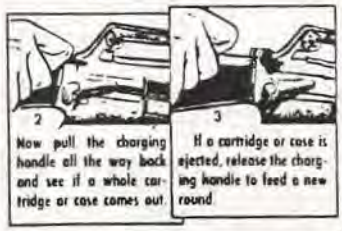
2 Now pull the charging handle all the way back and see if a whole cartridge or case comes out.

3 If a cartridge or case is ejected, release the charging handle to feed a new round.

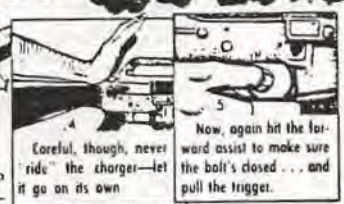
4 Careful, though, never "ride" the charger—let it go on its own

5 Now, again hit the forward assist to make sure the bolt's closed . . . and pull the trigger.



If she won't fire, now look for the cause . . . a bad round, busted firing pin or hammer spring, or whatever. Table 3-3 in your -12 TM covers causes and cures.



If no cartridge or case ejects, first look for a round in the chamber. If none's there, once more release the charging handle to feed a round. Next hit the forward assist and again pull the trigger.

If she still won't fire, do what your TM says on trouble-shooting.

However, if you do find a cartridge or case in the chamber, be sure you remove it before you try to reload and recycle your weapon.

Now, remember, get these steps down pat.

CUES



If you really know it, respect it and treat it right, it'll be ready when you need it.

Here're some reminders from combat veterans—ideas they'd like to pass along to you to keep your M16A1 battle-ready. Learn 'em—use 'em—and you won't get caught short!

FROM GUYS WHO KNOW!



TIPS THAT'LL KEEP IT YOUR EVER-LOVIN...

SWEET 16



Here're a few cleaning and operating tips that'll help you get best results from your weapon. Some of these tips sort of put the accent on stuff you'll find in the rifle's bible—TM 9-1005-249-12 (1968) with Ch 1. Others are hexes and fixes direct from guys who've been living with this light-weight terror.



TIP...

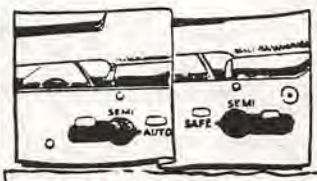

Here's something you want to be real careful about. Don't—like Never!—close the upper and lower receivers while the selector lever's in the AUTO position.

Always—like Always!—point the lever to SAFE or SEMI before closing the receivers.

Here's why. If you jam the receivers closed while the selector's in the AUTO position, you'll force the automatic sear down and damage the automatic sear, and the sear pin, and will likely rough up the bottom of the bolt carrier.

That's 'cause when the selector lever's *in* the AUTO position, the tang of the automatic sear moves to the rear. You can see how it works by opening the receiver and turning the selector to AUTO and watching the movement of the tang of the automatic sear.

So-o-o . . . do it right . . . every time. Point the arrow to SAFE. Then the receivers will close without any interference.

TIP...

Speaking of magazines . . . every guy has his own idea of how firm or loose he wants the holding action of the magazine catch to be. Which is A-OK as far as it goes. But remember this: The tighter the mag's held in the receiver, the more pressure it takes to release it. And this: The farther the shaft of the catch sticks through the catch button, the tighter the magazine's held in the receiver.



So, take a cue from experience. Adjust the catch button so's it's just about flush with the inner groove or just sticks out a tiny bit. This'll make the catch firm enough to prevent accidentally bumping the button and letting the magazine drop out—yet it won't be so tight that you can't pull the mag out for a quick re-load.



No sweat adjusting the catch the way you want it, either . . . and you're authorized to pull this deal. Just press the button on the right side of the rifle with the nose of a cartridge far enough so's you can turn the catch on the left side of the weapon. You turn the handle clockwise to tighten it and counter-clockwise to loosen it. Best of all, you don't have to take the weapon apart to do this.

TIP . . .

You won't have any trouble with the new-type swabs listed in your new TM (FSN 1005-912-4248).

O'course, some guys've been complaining about old-type, big-size cleaning swabs jamming in the bore—and breaking the cleaning rod. You won't have this trouble if you cut 'em all into four equal squares before using 'em. Your bayonet will do the job if you don't happen to have a knife or a pair of scissors handy.

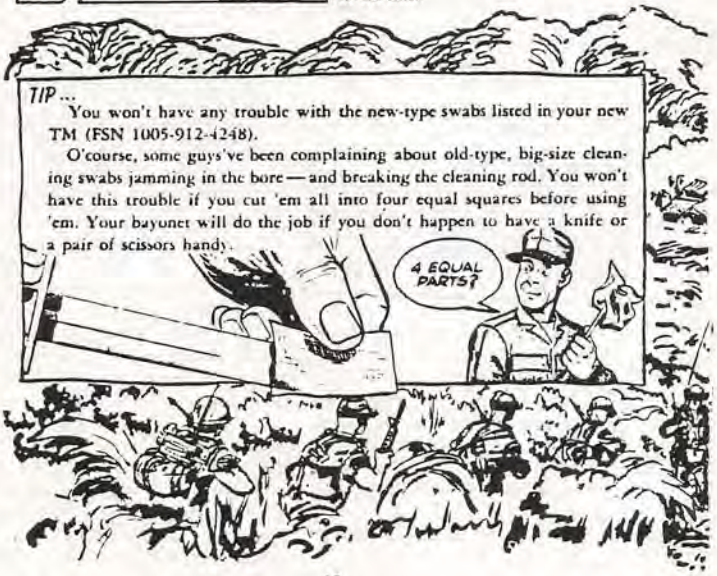

YOUR M16'S MAXI-SKIRT . . .

ALL THE WAY WITH NÉGLIGÉ



Now that you've got a plastic coverall bag (FSN 1005-809-2190) to protect your M16A1 rifle against dust, sand, mud, water and such, here's how to use it in good health—yours and your weapon's.

First, make sure your rifle's cleaned and lubed before you bag it. This cover's an aid to PM, but it'll never replace the cleaning and lubing you'll always have to do regularly. In fact, with a rubber band closing—not to mention rips and tears—the bag's not guaranteed watertight, so-oo-o. . . .

Second, if you're gonna keep it bagged more than 24 hours, be sure you eyeball the weapon every day for signs of corrosion from any moisture or condensation that might form in the bag.

Putting it on—Stick the rifle in the cover, muzzle first. Then fold the cover end over the butt stock and slip the rubber band on.



Taking it off—Slip the rubber band off and unfold the cover end. Then slide the rifle out.



Put it on and off gently and you can use the cover several times.

IN A FIREFIGHT

Comes a sudden opportunity to bag an enemy, here're 2 ways you can work it:

1. Quick-rip the bag off with one steady yank. The bag'll come apart at the tear-line.



2. If absolutely necessary, you can fire right through the bag. You can operate the selector lever and trigger easy with the bag on. But, remember this: Ejected cases will be trapped in the bag and could cause a malfunction after the first round. So get it off as quick as you can.

Natch, after "emergency" use, you'll need a new bag.

TOOLS FOR YOUR M16A1

For Touch-Up Painting (See Change 1 to your -12 TM)

Solid Film Lubricant... 12-oz spray can FSN 9150-142-9309

Dichloromethane... 5-gal can FSN 6810-244-0290

Here's a round-up of the cleaning-lubing equipment you had better use to keep your M16A1 battle-ready.

About the only things different are the M11E3 cleaning rod and a PLASTIC BOTTLE for holding your LSA.

The big deal is to use this equipment every chance you get.



- **Case, Maintenance Equipment** FSN 1005-781-9564
- **Cleaning Rod**—Any one of these:
  M11E1 FSN 1005-903-1295
  M11E2 FSN 1005-999-2035
  M11E3 FSN 1005-089-3994

- **LSA** FSN 9150-935-6597
- **2 oz. PLASTIC BOTTLE**

- **Bore Brush**—FSN 1005-903-1296

- **Chamber Brush**—FSN 1005-999-1435



- **Pipe Cleaners**—FSN 9920-292-9946



- **Cleaning Swab**—FSN 1005-912-4248



- **Bore Cleaner** FSN 6850-224-8656
- **2 oz. PLASTIC BOTTLE**



NEW CLEANING ROD

The M11E3 cleaning rod is a 5-piece affair (counting the swab holder as one piece), as compared to 4 pieces for the M11E1 and M11E2. Its over-all length is the same, though. Each section is shorter, that's all.

The threads on the E-3 are the same as on the E-1 and E-2, which means it takes the new bore and chamber brushes.

Don't sweat it, though. The new E-3's probably won't make the rounds till supplies of the E-1's and E-2's are gone.

BEWARE: DIFFERENT THREADS

Could be that some time you might have to use other cleaning tools in a pinch. If you do, here's what to look for: Different threads.

Your M16A1's own tools—cleaning rods and brushes alike—all have real fine threads . . . 36 to the inch.

But, if you're ever in a spot where you have to use any other rod, like the M11 (FSN 1005-070-7812) or any other bore brush like the one that carries FSN 7920-205-2401, or any other chamber brushes, like the M1 (FSN 1005-691-1381) or the M14 (FSN 1005-690-8441), watch this:

Their threads are coarser (32 to the inch). They won't match up with your authorized equipment. Don't try to screw 'em together. Won't work!

No sweat, though, on swabs. If you have the 30-cal type (FSN 1005-288-3565), just cut these big ones into 4 equal parts . . . and go ahead with your cleaning.

WHY RISK THE DAMAGE?



Your M16A1's the spunky teenager of the small arms field, sure, but it's doing a man-size job. So it deserves reasonable treatment—especially in cleaning and lubing its lower receiver area.

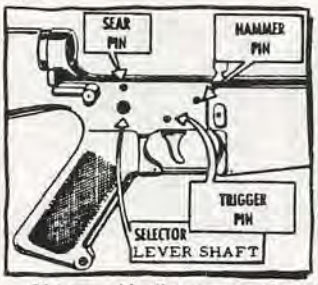

Of course, this all centers on removing or not removing the components of the lower receiver to do the servicing job.

It's a fact. The 5.56-mm rifle doesn't like having its lower receiver taken apart for cleaning — and for good reason.

The lower receiver's made of aluminum to keep the weapon lightweight. But the pins that hold the automatic sear, the hammer assembly, the trigger and the selector lever are all made of steel.

So, if you keep taking the lower receiver apart, these pins'll bye-n-bye make the holes they go through bigger and bigger. First thing you know, the pins fall out and get lost — or the parts they hold won't line up right and your firing's 'way off.

Truth is, you are not authorized to remove the lower receiver's parts at all. You can do a good cleaning job, if you do it this-a-way — and do it every day.

1. Soak your artist brush (FSN 8020-244-0153) or other similar type brush real good with bore cleaner. Then scrub all the parts like there's no tomorrow to get off all the dirt and carbon you can.



2. Tip the lower receiver sideways to drain the excess bore cleaner from the cavity and then wipe it dry.



3. Wrap a piece of clean cloth or cleaning patch around the brush handle and poke it into the hard-to-get-at places. Do the best job you can to get rid of carbon and gook that could keep the parts from working right.



4. When you're all through — and the lower receiver's dry — put a generous coat of LSA (FSN 9150-935-6597) on all of the insides of the lower receiver and on all of the parts.

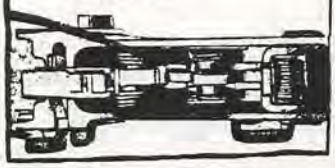

A cleaning job like this will get rid of all the carbon and dirt that might keep your weapon from shooting right. Any stuff that's left after you do your level best won't make no never-mind. Of course, if the lower receiver ever gets so fouled up that the rifle won't fire right, then you let support have a whack at it.

Now you can understand why TM 9-1005-249-12 (1968) with Ch 1, does not authorize disassembly of the lower receiver group for cleaning by riflemen and armorers. Parts replacement and extra-tough cleaning jobs are for direct or general support only.

But, please don't miss out on that lubing job. All components of the lower receiver — as well as the bolt carrier group — must wear a coat of LSA at all times. No "buts" about it. Your rifle can't perform without it.

That's why "white-glove inspections" are too risky for this baby. There's always the danger that some guy might be tempted to give his weapon a shower or tub bath before inspection to get rid of dirt and lube.



Anybody who bathes his rifle is doing it dirt two ways: First, he's robbing it of the lube protection it needs. Second, he's liable to let water seep into the lower receiver extension. This could cause corrosion of the extension and rusting of the action spring — or it might result in a short recoil of the bolt carrier group, thereby preventing the bolt assembly from retracting far enough to strip a cartridge from the magazine.

When you consider that all this has a direct bearing on how well your M16A1's going to fire and protect your hide in a showdown, these angles make real good sense, don't they?

MORE POINTERS TO PONDER





Another thing: When you're crawling or walking through the brush, make a mental note to make sure you don't get the flash suppressor caught in a bush. It catches easy, y'know.

All the way . . . Educate your sixth sense to flip the selector lever all the way across to get from Safe to Automatic. In an ambush situation, you just might flip it only halfway — to Semiautomatic — when you'll need all the fire you can get.

You might practice flipping it all the time till this becomes second nature.

All in all, this M16A1's a real sweet number. It'll stay that way as long as you treat it like one.

Combat types can't emphasize this enough: Clean the gas port in the bolt carrier group every day — and take it real easy with the lube. Dirt and powder-fouling — plus an overdose of lube oil — will give you a sluggish rifle. . . . Numbah 10 Thou' in a combat situation!

So, when you get your baby stripped for cleaning, like it says in para 3-9 in TM 9-1005-249-12 (1968) with Ch 1, take an extra 5 seconds to get at the port hole down there in the front end of the gas tube. Like so:

1. Work a worn bore brush full of bore cleaner around inside the key.



Make sure you get the metal end of the brush in all the way — right into the bottom of the hole where the gas tube is seated in the carrier key — and then turn it to loosen the crud. That last 1/16-in in there is the most neglected part on most M16A1 rifles.

2. Then use a pipe cleaner or the like to poke the gook out of the port. Don't use wire, though, or you might scratch the tube and set up worse trouble later on.



FSN 9920-292-9946
PIPE CLEANER
NOW IN YOUR TM

3. Use another pipe cleaner — or air-dry it by waving it around — to dry the tube as well as you can.

4. Now doublecheck your job. Remove the bolt. Then stick the carrier body into the receiver slideway and push the carrier back and forth slowly to check that the carrier key and gas tube line up OK. The carrier should move freely . . . and should go all the way without friction. If it won't go all the way without a struggle, you've got some more cleaning to do. But, if it binds, turn the weapon in for repair.



Here's the Pitch: The front end of the gas tube is self-cleaning, thanks to the hot gases and high pressure from the barrel. But, if you don't keep the other end clean — the gas tube area where it mates with the carrier key inside the receiver — brother! You've got to clean this area with elbow grease to prevent stoppages. Hear!

Now, when you come to lube-preserving, stick to the dope in the lube guide pages 22-24 of this pamphlet.

NOTICE

For the past five years, the Khe Sanh Vet Newsletter has been published by donations from a few. With the rapid expansion -- fortunately!! -- of our listing (now some 1,100 names), the quantity of pages printed and sent has resulted in a cost of approximately $1200.00 per issue! The cost of the last 3 or 4 issues has been paid from numerous donations received in past years. The last issue (No. 8) was only made possible because of a $500.00 donation from DELTA Productions and a like amount from a retired member living on limited, fixed income. Even with this, it was not possible to print the listing of those killed at Khe Sanh, as we ran out of funds.

To help cut costs, we have decided to print the listing of our Khe Sanh brothers only once a year and only print additions and corrections in each issue. Issues will be devoted to sharing experiences of Khe Sanh, items of interest to Khe Sanh vets, and announcements of reunion, etc. Perhaps we might also consider including advertising as a source of payment for printing costs.

Right now, however, we desperately need more funds if we are to continue printing our Newsletter. We have no dues, but everyone who benefits from our Newsletter -- locating old friends, calling them when we want to and receive letters and Christmas cards, sharing exeperiences, getting the word on upcoming events, might want to consider sending in some support to help.

NOW IS THE TIME to dig deep into your pockets! Now is the time to see if your business or corporation where you work, or charitable groups to which you belong, might consider a donation to us. REMEMBER, WE ARE TAX-EXEMPT. All contributions are charitable deductions on your tax. For those who are working, a tax-deductible donation of $25.00 or $50.00, and for those in higher positions, a donation of $100.00 and more, and for all the rest, even a donation of $1.00 or whatever you can spare, will ensure our continued publication.

All contributions should be sent to our Treasurer, Mr. Earle G. Breeding, 529 14th St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

THE KHE SANH VET

A NEWSLETTER OF KHE SANH VETERANS, INC.

President - Ray W. Stubbe, 8766 Parkview Ct., Wauwatosa WI 53226
Treasurer - Earle G. Breeding, 529 14th St. S.E., Washington DC 20003
Editor - Ernie Husted, Jr., P.O. Box 2036, Springfield OH 45501

[Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., is a non-profit organization incorporated 01 Sept 1988 under the laws of the State of Wisconsin, consisting of all who lived or served at Khe Sanh 1961-71].

ISSUE NUMBER 9 **Summer, 1989**

CONTENTS:

After Action Report, Chicago, 1989
By-Laws as adopted 13 July 1989
"Our Brothers Forever" - List of those killed because of Khe Sanh
1:50,000 map of Khe Sanh area (reduced)
Diagram of Khe Sanh Combat Base and key to locations
Khe Sanh Chronology
Additions and Corrections to Khe Sanh listing

This Newsletter contains some very special items of interest to all Khe Sanh veterans, including the Minutes of our first annual reunion which include some very heartfelt and significant "reflections" made during the introductions of those attending; the current By-Laws (which have been simplified); the list of those killed because of Khe Sanh--giving dates and units as well as location on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.; a map of the Khe Sanh area and a diagram of the Combat Base (as of the beginning of the Siege); and a Chronology of events at Khe Sanh. These should help those who are experiencing "gaps" in their memory, who want to put things in some order, and a help towards viewing the "big picture" of Khe Sanh.

There are some very important actions you, as Khe Sanh veterans, can now do:

* Although we have no dues, we very definitely do need money for printing our Newsletters. Because of our Newsletter, some have indicated that they located a buddy they thought had been killed, and many more have renewed contact with some they had not heard from in over 20 years. Some have even travelled across the nation to visit with each other. If you find these Newsletters to be of value, please send your **tax-deductible** contribution to our Treasurer, Mr. Earle G. Breeding at the address at the top of this Newsletter, and make out the checks to: "Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc."

* We do need a symbol that could be the basis of a Khe Sanh patch - for caps, T-shirts, etc. If you can come up with a suitable design, please submit to Ray Stubbe at address on top of this Newsletter.

* Ernie Husted, our very dedicated Newsletter Editor, needs stories--reflections, poems, pen-and-ink sketches, cartoons, etc., for our Newsletters. Please submit these to him at address at top of this Newsletter.

* Write or telephone a fellow Khe Sanh vet.

AFTER ACTION REPORT
CHICAGO 1989

MINUTES

The First Annual Meeting of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., was held Thursday, 13 July 1989, during the annual Reunion of Third Marine Division, at the Marriott Hotel, Chicago, Illinois.

The following were in attendance: **Thomas Boze, Tom Ryan, Randy Hardy, Fred Swets, John Hargesheimer, Kenneth W. Penn, Earle G. Breeding, Quiles Ray Jacobs, Michael R. Fielding, Dave Doehrman, Richard Granat, Peter Kukurba, Ernie Spencer, Dave Koziczkowski, Thomas Eichler, Skip Wells, George Peterson, Buddy Taylor, Michael Lee, Lawrence N. Brown Jr., Bob Harrison, John Healy, Arthur Walbroehl, William W. Maves, Christopher Lane, John Kovaka, Larry E. Emm, Jerry Honn, Sid Patricio ("Fish"), Tom Quigley, Mike Madden, Bruce Jones, Calvin Bright, Richard R. Darling, Steve Johnson, James B. Wilkinson, Robert J. Whistler, Dr. Harvey Demaagd, Kenneth Pipes, Tom Borjas, Ray Stubbe** and many visitors including John Wright, Duon Rose, and many wives and girl friends of Khe Sanh veterans in attendance. Other Khe Sanh veterans in attendance during the days of the reunion but not at the meeting included: **Mike Barnerd, Rich Bryant, Tim Dwyer, Gary S. Davis, Lawrence N. Brown, Jr., and Dino (Lemus) Rivera.**

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag led by Fred Swets, and with Ray Stubbe reading Psalm 91 as an opening prayer.

Each Khe Sanh veteran present was then asked to stand, give his name, his unit at Khe Sanh, and when he was there, and then mention someone who did something special for him. This evolved into one-and-a-half hours of highly moving testimony which included some tragedy, some humor, much interchange of gratitude between those in attendance. Some in attendance had not seen each other since Khe Sanh.

Mr. Earle G. Breeding provided the Treasurer's Report as of 12 July 1989, as follows:

Cash on hand as of last balance sheet (6 March 1989)	136.45
Deposits since last balance sheet	1660.00
Sub-Total:	1796.45
Expenses since last balance sheet:	
Minute Man Press (for last Newsletter)	1275.00
Amity Rubber Stamp Co. (for check endorsing)	14.58
Sub-Total:	506.87
Deposits in Transit	105.00
Total on Hand:	611.87

Mr. Jim Wilkinson was appointed to audit the Treasurer's Report. Motion was made by Fred Swets and seconded by Tom Boze to accept the Treasurer's Report. Unanimously accepted.

OLD BUSINESS:

Newsletter. Cost of the last issue was $1275.00. The list of names has increased to over 1,000; the pages have increased, and this is what it costs to print. We were unable to include the list of those killed in our last Newsletter because we ran out of funds.

NEW BUSINESS:

Dues: There are no dues. But we do need money in order to publish and mail our Newsletters so we can keep in contact with each other and share our experiences. Contributions are tax-exempt: they may be written off on tax as you would contributions to church or other charitable groups. **PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR TREASURER, MR. EARLE G. BREEDING, MADE OUT TO: "KHE SANH VETERANS, INC."** Our Newsletter is very important! Almost everyone says they read it from beginning to end; some have saved all of them. Several have said they thought their buddies were dead, looked on our Newsletter and found they were alive! Some have travelled across the country to visit their old buddies, and undoubtedly "Ma Bell" has made thousands of dollars from all the telephone conversations that have resulted from these listings! (Perhaps AT&T ought to give us a tax-exempt contribution!). One man here has forgotten almost everything, looked over the Newsletter and found one name, a little thread, to that reality, that he could begin to remember. If you know of any companies you work for or other corporations that might want to donate and write it off on their tax, please suggest they do so.

Adoption of By-Laws. These are very short, even shorter than the version that appeared in the last Newsletter (Issue #8, June 1989). Ray Stubbe read and explained the meaning behind various parts of the By-Laws.

Motion was made by Ken Pipes and seconded by Skip Wells to accept the By-Laws as presented (and published in this newsletter). In Discussion, Earle Breeding noted that he will keep a very confidential record of who contributes what (should a member need verification of donations for tax purposes). He said we're going to need alot more money. He suggested that any money we might obtain in excess of operating expenses be invested so interest may be generated to support our newsletter expenses. All donations will remain within the purpose of helping our Khe Sanh veterans since even if we dissolve, our treasury then would go to the 3d Marine Division Association's Scholarship Fund. He said: "Dig as deep as you can!"

Vote: The By-Laws were unanimously adopted.

Resolutions of thanks: It was moved by Earle Breeding and seconded by Tom Boze that we adopt resolutions thanking the following:

* **MR. JAMES DAVIS:** for having donated the printing of our early Khe Sanh Veteran Newsletters.

* **MR. ERNIE HUSTED** for his dedicated efforts to ensure the Khe Sanh Veteran Newsletter was prepared, printed, and distributed, an effort that has meant literally hundreds of hours on our behalf and which we very deeply appreciate.

* **MR. JOHN WRIGHT** and Delta Productions, Inc., for their gift of $500.00 to our Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

* **MR. CHARLES HUBER** for his tireless efforts to locate Khe Sanh veterans.

* **MR. ROBERT ELDER** for his tireless efforts to locate Khe Sanh veterans.

* **MR. ROBERT PISOR, MR. MICHAEL EWING, MR. DAVID STOCKWELL, MR. ERNIE SPENCER, AND MR. ERIC HAMMEL** for their positive writings about our Khe Sanh experience. Their books assist towards a better understanding of our experience to the general public and help ensure preservation of our experience of Khe Sanh.

* **3d MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION and CONVENTION PLANNING SERVICES, INC.** for making this meeting possible.

The Resolution commending all these people was unanimously adopted.

Special thanks are also extended to **MR. TOM EICHLER** for arranging our Khe Sanh room in this hotel and especially for stocking it so well!

Money-making projects: Mr. John Wright has volunteered to offer the use of his high-quality equipment to make videos of pictures of Khe Sanh such as those being passed around, plus maps and other materials. The profits from this will help our treasury. A show of hands from those present who might be interested in having such a video was almost unanimous.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Mr. John Wright of Delta Productions, working on a TV program called "Vietnam, the Second Tour," addressed the group: "We thought the way to talk about real Vietnam veterans was to take them back to Vietnam. And all of a sudden we find there is another set of real Vietnam veterans--the North Vietnamese, who know more about Khe Sanh than we do. That's going to come out.

"As soon as the program comes on the air, we'll make a $5,000.00 donation to Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

"It should be going in September (of this year), during the monsoons, and the air-date, we're looking at March (1990) on CBS with Bill Kurtis as narrator. And the important thing about the money and the contribution is very important because there would have been no TV program on Khe Sanh and all the good things that may come of it, without the Khe Sanh association. That's what put it together. That's what put alot of people together--put history together, so future generations are going to realize what went on, and the individual things we did.

"The thing that is happening at Khe Sanh this very moment is that the Vietnamese are pulling out of Cambodia. At this very moment there's 5,000 troops rebuilding Khe Sanh! So when they pull out of Cambodia, guess where they're going? I guess it was important!

Comments by Duon Rose. "I'm part of a Public Broadcasting System special that will appear next April on Khe Sanh and some other battles. I'd like to add my thanks to what's already been said, especially to those who have helped us today, some very powerful interviews that we did, and to everyone here and for those who will allow us to video tape in the future."

[Mr. Duon Rose is developing a TV program for WFUM (University of Michigan). If you are interested in being interviewed, you may contact him at home (313) 686-4263, and a 24-hr. hotline at (313) 762-3909].

Eisenhower Center at University of New Orleans is developing a Khe Sanh archive so that people a hundred or more years from now may be able to hear participants of Khe Sanh tell their stories. The man in charge, Dr. Steven Ambrose, is an internationally respected historian who has written on Eisenhower and American history. His assistant,

Ron Drez, a Vietnam veteran of the Battle of Hue, is collecting interviews which may be conducted over the telephone. If you are interested, contact either at The Eisenhower Center, University of New Orleans, New Orleans LA 70148, telephone (504) 286-7110. It is really signficant that of all of Vietnam, the 7 years, that there's going to be an archive on Khe Sanh in an academic situation and it will be preserved. If you want a cassette copy of your interview, they will provide you with one

Microfilming project: Diaries, maps, letters written while at Khe Sanh, transcriptions of tapes you might send giving memories of Khe Sanh: these are being microfilmed with copies deposited at the Marine Corps Historical Center and other places such as the Naval War College, so that our people and what we did will not be forgotten. If you are interested, send documents (which will be copied and the originals returned to you) or tapes of your experiences to Ray Stubbe. (A typed transcription of what you send will be sent to you).

Newsletter: Please submit your stories, memories of incidents or people, poems, recollections, reflections, to our Newsletter Editor, Ernie Husted. (Useful ways to recall and write are to complete sentences beginning with: "Khe Sanh, it was a time when..." or "When I think of Khe Sanh I feel..." or "Someone who was special that I knew at Khe Sanh was..." or "When the attack began I was..." or, tell a story about a bunker, or about a typical day, a humorous incident in the midst of terror, etc.

Symbol: We need a design that might symbolize Khe Sanh so that we can have patches, caps, T-Shirts, and perhaps pins made. Someone suggested that the slogan "For those who fight for it life has a flavor the protected never know" be on the back of the T-shirt. (This slogan was first publicized due to a cardboard sign in a bunker during the Siege). If there are any of you who might suddenly get some inspiration or have some artistic talent (or even if you get an idea, but can't put it into a drawing), please submit to Ray Stubbe -- soon! We have a volunteer who will make these things for us of high quality, and the profits going to our organization.

GREETINGS:

The following are unable to attend our Khe Sanh Vet Reunion, but have sent us messages of greeting and well-wishes: Ed Prendergast, Dick Blanchfield (who called during our actual meeting from Alaska!), John Kaheny, Bob Hanna, Ernie Husted, Mike Guess, and Harry Lavan. Gilbert Wall had made reservations but was unable to attend due to work commitments; Ted Golab, John Kaheny, and Ernie Husted were all involved with reserve weekends.

Khe Sanh Vet Room: There is a courtesy room in this hotel, Room 3406, stocked with refreshments through the dedicated efforts of **Tom Eichler**, where we can gather for meeting with each other during the days of this Reunion.

NECROLOGY:

The following Khe Sanh veterans have died:

BILL STROSS, a Marine of G/2/3 during the 1967 Hill battles (born 24 July 1948, died 17 April 1988) was buried in Quantico, Va., with his father, also a former Marine. Ray Stubbe conducted a Memorial service for Bill at the chapel of the North Chicago VA Hospital on 26 Apr 1988. (His essay "Home From the Woods" was printed in our Newsletter No. 6).

JOHN RAYMOND died 28 Aug 87 at the age of 48. He had just retired from the Marine Corps in May where he served as military assistant to the Assistant Commandant as a full Colonel. After serving as CO of Co A/1/26, he departed Khe Sanh to form Co E, 3d Recon Bn. He was buried in Arlington.

ELECTIONS:

Ray Stubbe noted that the present officers were merely chosen in order to facilitate incorporation out of those who volunteered to get our group organized. Special thanks must be extended to these, who included: **John Kaheny** (Vice-President), **Earle G. Breeding** (Treasurer), **Ernie Husted** (Secretary), **Jack Kilbright** (Sergeant-at-Arms), and **Calvin Bright** and **Bob Hanna** (Members of the Board); these have the distinction of being on our Incorporation papers forever. Ray Stubbe noted that he did not particularly desire to be President, but would continue one year if necessary in order to ensure our group continue. He also noted that others should think in terms of whether they would like to hold an office or know of others who should be considered. Elections for a 2-year tenure will be held at our next meeting (if current officers are re-elected, since terms are 2-years). Ernie Husted, designated Secretary since he was handling all the correspondance, has said he really didn't want to be Secretary (take minutes, etc.) but definitely wanted to continue as Editor of our Newsletter. Earle Breeding works with the FBI and has repeatedly said, "Anyway I can help, just let me know". He has opened up a bank account for us, got checks printed, and should continue as Treasurer. Our current Vice-President is John Kaheny, a City Attorney for San Diego and a reserve Colonel in the USMC. He said he'd be willing to continue as VP, but did not want to be President since he is President of the Reserve Officers Association of America. Our Sergeant-at-Arms is Jack Kilbright, a policeman in New York City.

Jim Wilkinson nominated Ray Stubbe as President; several dozen seconded. There were no further nominations, and he was unanimously elected.

Earle Breeding then addressed the group.

John Kaheny was nominated and seconded for the office of Vice-President. There being no further nominations, he was unanimously elected.

A motion was made that all the current officers be nominated to hold their current offices and seconded. The motion was amended that John Kaheny also serve as Secretary and that Ray Stubbe serve as Chaplain. The motion was unanimously approved.

The offices of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., for 1989-1990 are:

President:	Ray Stubbe
Vice-President:	John Kaheny
Treasurer:	Earle G. Breeding
Secretary:	John Kaheny
Sergeant-at-Arms:	Jack Kilbright
Chaplain:	Ray W. Stubbe

Ernie Husted will continue to be Editor of our Newsletter.

Ray Stubbe noted that as we continue to grow that we do need to keep rotating leadership and have as many people involved in the leadership of the organization as possible. He suggested to start thinking if you would like to be an officer or serve in some capacity, or know of somebody who would or should.

Jim Wilkinson said: "Don't get the feeling you had to be a platoon leader or company commander to be an officer. Next year, let's broaden it out and get some people that were still young. Don't be shy; if you want to be an officer next year, then let people know about it."

CLOSURE:

There were no further comments, reflections, business, or second-thoughts. Motion was made by Cal Bright that we adjourn and have a good evening. Seconded. Unanimously approved.

[Note: In telephone conversations with Jack Kilbright and John Kaheny on Monday, 17 July 1989, both noted they were willing to hold the offices to which they were elected and eagerly looked forward to attend next year's reunion].

NEXT YEAR'S REUNION: 18 - 22 July 1990, in Nashville, Tennessee. Word should be published on details next year. In any event, you may contact Ray Stubbe (who is on the Board of Directors, 3d Marine Division Association).

OTHER REUNION NOTES:

The Treasurer's books were audited by Jim Wilkinson on 14 July 1989 and found to be in order.

Although no monies were solicited at our meeting, several made donations, including one former enlistedman, now retired, who donated a check of $500.00.

Several of our group accompanied Mr. John Wright Saturday, 15 July, to practice rappelling as part of preparations to re-visit Khe Sanh, where it may be necessary to rappell in order to land on some of the hilltops. These brave souls included: **Ken Pipes, Ernie Spencer,** and **Quiles Ray Jacobs.** Following the "terror by height" we were treated to lunch at a Vietnamese restaurant, Le Bistro, where the owner, Dung (pronounced "Zung") Dao told of how he, as part of a Project DELTA Special Forces group, in 1974 placed cratering charges in the Khe Sanh airstrip to make it un-usable for the North Vietnamese.

During the Reunion, both John Wright and Duon Rose were making video tapes of interviews of Khe Sanh Veterans in attendance. Much of this helped to bring things out, to be recognized as important, and helped those who were there to appreciate each other.

There were hours and hours of individuals talking with each other throughout the days and nights of the Reunion. Special thanks again must be given to **Tom Eichler** for arranging the Khe Sanh room for us. Although there were quite a few from Co D/1/26 present, there were some who were the only ones from their unit--A/1/26, some platoons of 1/9, and two from ONTOSS (who, by the way, hadn't seen each other since Khe Sanh!), and two from recon. All, however, noted that they found the Reunion to be a great time. One rather quiet man at the meeting who did not say much later said: "I probably should have said that I felt right at home in this room with these people."

One of our Khe Sanh vets happened to find himself alone one night, found an old WW II Marine from Iwo Jima, and they went off to eat together for the evening, exchanging their experiences, and had a wonderful time. No generational gap where sharing or honest feelings is concerned!

EXCERPTS FROM COMMENTS MADE DURING INTRODUCTIONS AT OUR MEETING:

CALVIN BRIGHT: "There is one incident--if it was not for him, I would not be standing here today. In fact, he would be in my place and I would be in his place. This man's name is **CLAYTON THEYERL.** I was point man on that patrol [25 Feb 68 - Jacques], and about 2/3rds of the way out he stopped me and said, 'This is your first patrol, and I think you and I ought to switch.' And probably 20 minutes to a half an hour later he was laying on the ground and I was still standing. And I think if it wasn't for him I'd be in his position and he'd be in mine right now."

RANDY HARDY: "I remember this guy that I've been looking for for a long time - still haven't found him. His name is **TERRY RAYBURN.** We were tight over there in the battery [B/1/13], and we were on Red Alert for about two or three nites. We were staying awake, constant firing. We thought one time that the base was going to get overran. We loaded up the guns, put the muzzle at point blank, and loaded up Beehives. And Terry got hit. And he saved me from getting hit. We had incoming. The shrapnel got him. And myself. I think it took his left foot off. Then we took a direct hit on the gun. I got concussion, lost my hearing."

FRED SWETS: "In December, 1967, a couple guys came in and said they'd been to a place called Khe Sanh, and 'Man, the one place you don't ever want to go to is a place called Khe Sanh because they can cut you off real quick. There's only one road in and one road out.' So I made it a point that I was never going to go to a place called Khe Sanh. And I think within 24 hours I had orders for Khe Sanh, and I was up there until they closed the place up...The one event I remember is getting lost in the fog up there. Communications got kinda messed up on the lines, and we had to pass communications by messenger, so somebody came to my bunker and gave me a message to go to the next bunker. I went to the next bunker and gave them the message. And on the way back I couldn't get back to my bunker. And I realized that the bunker I left had been built at an angle and I couldn't remember if it angled towards the lines or away from the lines, and if I was behind somebody's bunker or in front of somebody's bunker, and I didn't want to make too much noise! I remember creeping around and going [loud whisper] 'Don't Shoot!' And while doing that I heard somebody else going [loud whisper] 'Don't Shoot!' It was the guy who had come to my bunker; he had gotten lost too! Now both of us are out there. But somehow someone managed to not shoot and get us back to our bunker, and I sure appreciated that!"

JOHN HARGESHEIMER: "I was with ONTOSS--first time I've seen Fred in 20 years!.. The one kid--and he was an awfully young guy--he just turned 18. His CO got mad at him and as soon as he turned 18 he got orders. That was his birthday present; so they sent him up to Khe Sanh. And when the ammo dump went off in April, I was down in the ammo dump. And this kid, named **DENNIS McKEEVER** from Marine City, Michigan; he was just a little skinny--I don't know how he ever got in. But I got knocked semi-conscious, and Dennis picked me up. He came down and he picked me up and carried me out, and in a few minutes later the ammo dump really did go up. I think alot of Dennis. I haven't seen him. He got wounded about a week after that. And the last time I heard from him, he sent me a fifth of Kentucky Bourbon. And that was after we pulled out and we was down at Quang Tri. I don't know how he got it through the postal, but he did. He got it through. He was then in the hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia."

KEN PENN: "I was with the 4.2" mortars..I guess what I remember was the first night and our guys on 861. We had an 18-year old who got sent up there. We hardly ever knew him because he got to the main combat base and we needed somebody up on the hill. We sent him up there. And a month and a half later he got killed, so we had to go down and identify him. And while waiting around, the doc and I and the gunny-'WHOOP.' Before we could even duck, it hit. We got up. I looked. And the doc got hit, and I said, 'Where's the gunny?' The doc said, 'Where's the gunny?' I said, 'He's got to be here somewhere.' All of a sudden, from one of the bunkers comes this Marine. I just remember the look on his face. He had made it and we just got out of there and made it back to our position."

EARLE G. BREEDING: "I'm going to single out Tommy first [**TOM EICHLER**]. I probably wouldn't be here today if it weren't for him. You talk about cool, courageous leadership of a young corporal..While we're getting hit..and nothing above ground is really growing anymore, old Tommy Eichler is walking around from gun to gun, carrying ammunition, seeing how things are going... I want to single out one other group of people. One night, 5th of February 1968, when the entire North Vietnamese Army decided that they wanted to contest the ownership of the little hill we had. And we were drawing fire support from 5 separate locations.. There was a lull, and I decided that there should be more artillery fire coming in than there was at the moment. So I got on the radio. And I'm not known for proper radio proceedure, so to say, and since there's ladies present, I won't go into exactly what I said. But I assured the artillery folks on the other end that it would be to their benefit to continue firing, if they didn't want to meet my wrath when I did get down from there. And very calmly and cooly, I heard this voice from the other end of the radio say, 'No matter how many guns we loose, we will support you!' I found out later that in support of us, it was necessary to divert other guns..Now the point of this--and this is a choking experience everytime I think of that--.. as long as we have the youth of the nation today becoming the leaders of society and become our NCOs and officers of the caliber that we had in Vietnam, we're a safe nation. In my opinion, as long as there's one Marine alive on the face of the earth, the United States will stand."

QUILES RAY JACOBS: "I got shot the first time on March 21st, 1968, on a patrol out of Khe Sanh. There wasn't very many patrols that went out of Khe Sanh. But I came in, and Dr. Demaagd sewed me up, gave me 106 stitches in my back. And I was very fortunate and blessed because the bullet came into the right side of my back, hit my flak gear, and spinned inside my flak gear, over my spine, and out the other side of my back, and then came out. After that day on the 21st I was at the Battalion Aid Station for a few days. And then we were taking some incoming rounds. When the rounds would come in the doctors would run out and get in the holes and the patients were still stuck [laughs]. So I asked Dr. Demaagd if I could go back down to my lines, and he let me go back. I was there a couple days with the stitches in my back, ace bandages. And a couple of my buddies came to my hootch to see me, see how I was doing. They got called back to their lines. Right after they left my hootch, a round came in right between them, Kent and McRae. The round killed Kent, and I went down there with McRae, and he died on the table holding my hand. Two days later [30 Mar] we had another patrol. We ran into a big fire fight that day, and Dr. Demaagd was out there with the Battalion Aid Station... he was trying to save lives and patch up lives. And at the end of that fire-fight that day--I wasn't supposed to have gone out with them because I was all stitched up and ace bandages, but after my two buddies got killed two days before there was no way in hell they were going to keep me from going out on that patrol. At the end of that fire-fight, myself and another Marine--the last 2 Marines off the hill. I think I was carrying 2 or 3 different weapons in my hand. And we got down to the bottom of the road and turned around to Dr. Demaagd who was trying to save some of the guys. Some of the guys he wasn't able to save were just laying on the side of the road. The [Otter] came out and picked them up. It was just a real dramatic experience. It really threw me for a loop, that particular situation. But I feel blessed that all I have gone through I come back and can be here today to share this experience.

DAVID DOEHRMAN: "I remember a seriously wounded Marine that I found in the Triage on a stretcher, couldn't move. Artillery started to come in from Co Roc. I was sitting there with him. And he asked me if it was incoming or outgoing. And I lied, lit up a Marlborough [for him], and sat there holding his hand. And at that point I realized it really didn't matter what happened as long as we all stayed together through Khe Sanh."

DICK GRANET: "I don't really have one instance that I could mention. But I would like to say thanks to all the fellows that I was there with, the brotherhood and the relationships that we developed, and the things that we shared such as canteens, boxes from home, and taking leeches off of each other. And we gave each other alot of support through alot of tough times. And some of the fellows that I done that with are here tonite. And I really appreciate that.

PETE KUKURBA: "There was one individual: I bless him. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be here today. That was Tom Boze. My gun jammed; he was right behind me."

DAVE KOZICZKOWSKI: "I was an ammo humper, then a gunner, and had all sorts of experiences and have a hard time dealing with it. I am just really proud and thankful to be here so I can share this great experience."

TOM EICHLER: "I have to mention Cpl Billy Drexel. He was severely wounded, lost both his legs. He probably saved my life. Right after we got overrun [on Hill 861-A, 05Feb68] Billy had a premonition of death or being gravely wounded. He did not want to go up on Hill 861. We weren't up there 4 hours before a mortar round came in and took off both of Billy's legs. He said in his southern drawl, 'Ike, kill me; I don't want to go home this way.' I said, 'No, you're going to make it.' And he thought for a minute, looked down and said, 'Do me a favor, take a peek and see if I can still do it.' I reached down in his shattered legs and said 'It's still there!' He said, 'Well, the hell with it; I'm going home!' That was a Marine! Earle Breeding invited me to a 20-year reunion in Washington, D.C., of their officers. I was only an enlisted man there. While I was sitting there at the table, there were alot of our platoon leaders from Vietnam, and one of them had just received a letter from one of the men who had served under him, and he was just taken aback by the feelings that this sergeant had wrote about how he felt about him. And to me, I was amazed that he was surprised about it. I took it a point to get up and talk to all these officers, and I told them the same thing I'm going to tell you now: that it's ashamed there's not more of them come to these reunions, because they don't know how we felt about our platoon leaders--we loved you as much as these other guys, and to me there's no finer thing in the world than a Marine officer."

"SKIP" M.R. WELLS: "I remember alot and then sometimes I don't. I remember the people most, those that made it and those that didn't. And the thing I remember the most is that officers and enlisted--they pulled together. When you look back at it now after all these years, it doesn't really seem that bad. But it really <u>was</u> pretty bad. And what I do remember is that each day, every hour of the day, just drawing strength from each other, corporal-lieutenant, lieutenant to captain, corporal to corporal. That's what I remember."

STEVE JOHNSON: "I remember specifically my Platoon Commander, **LT PHELTZ**, who I have not seen since that time. But he was one of those officers that inspired the best in everybody. My corpsman, **DOC MILLER**, he did not make it. There were a couple of others. Since that time, after I got out of the Marine Corps, I was a police officer for 20 years, and just retired last August, but in the meantime, I really did miss the Corps. In 1982 I got back in the Reserves, probably the world's oldest E-5. I am now probably the world's oldest E-6!"

JIM WILKINSON: "Most of my time was with 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, as the Commanding Officer, and it was the proudest 8¼ months in my life... There's two events that sort of symbolize the bravery that took place on a day to day basis.. My first little story's about 5 real young Marines that had a 106 recoilless rifle in the lines. And they built their little bunker-bless their souls--with the limited material that we had available, scraps from the runway, sandbags, we tore the messhall down.. And they were very proud of this little bunker and they camouflaged the apeture. Unfortunately it was not camouflaged enough, because as we know now the NVA were looking right down the gun. Probably one round came in, and all 5 of those young Marines were casualties. And that symbolized to me the day to day bravery of five 18-year old Marines. The next story is about my Sergeant-Major. It was a tough war on 2d Lts, PVTs, PFCs, CPLs, SGTs, but the Sergeant-Major's--not all were in the rear. We lost several Sergeant-Majors at Khe Sanh. And when I got a replacement, I was sent one of the senior Sergeant-Majors of the Marine Corps. He had been taken prisoner at Corregidor. He had spent over 3 years as a Prisoner of War in Japan. And he volunteered to come to Khe Sanh. And we had many conversations. And we used to go out and visit the troops along the perimeter. And one day we went out, one afternoon. And I said, "Sgt Maj, some incoming rounds; we'd better split up: you go around Bravo and Charlie, and I'll go around this part of Bravo and hit the ARVN Ranger Bn, and we'll come around and we'll meet.' So I was on one side of the perimeter; he was on the other side. At that time he was at the Charlie Company Command Post with **DAVE ERNST**, which was a CP built above ground. One rocket came in. Dave Ernst was wounded. His radio operator was killed, and the Sergeant Major was seriously injured. I heard this on my radio; I had my radio operator with me. I immediately went to the Battalion Aid Station. The Sgt Maj was there with a very grave head injury. I held his hand while they patched him up. We got a helicopter. In fact, I was so insistent, I ran down to Regiment and said, 'Colonel Lownds, you got to get a helicopter in here; we're having trouble getting a medevac; my Sgt Maj's wounded.' Col Lownds got the helicopter in. They flew the Sgt Maj out. He died enroute... As I look around here, I'm like you. I wish we could look every one of those young and old Marines and corpsmen in the eye, shake their hand and say, 'Thank God you gave everything you had.' I just wish they were with us today."

TOM QUIGLEY: "I [remember] being badly wounded on March 30th with Bravo Company. We went out on the last revenge raid. I was Captain Pipes' radio operator. I was hit again when our CP got hit. Several mortars landed on top of us, killing our artillery FO, Lt Norman, who was also one of the finest officers I ever met, a super family man and just a terrific officer. We were all hit that day. My senior corpsman who was hit helped me get through the trenchline. My hands were bleeding real terrible, and I thought I'd lost a finger. Didn't even know I was hit in the back. And the senior corpsman who was hit in the butt put a battle dressing on me, and I asked him how bad I was hit. He told me, 'It's not that bad; don't worry about it.' Later on in the hospital, we were together in the same ward, Yokosuka Naval Hospital, he told me then that it was pumping out of me quite rapidly, but he didn't tell me because I'd of gone into shock. Going back to the bomb crater, Dr. Demaagd had his hands quite full. Dr. Demaagd came over to me. He remembered me--I was also trying to clean up my complexion and he used to use a pin on me. I might have shot him! He came to me and he said, 'Quig, you don't seem to be hit that bad.' I said, 'Doc, I'm fine. Do you have a smoke?' He reached down and gave me a full pack of Pall Mall cigarettes... And Captain Pipes was my CO. We shared a bunker together. We shared alot of things together--our moods... Sometimes he'd break out a bottle of Seagrams that I believe he stole from the Air Force, and we would have a couple of shots of Bourbon during the night. He didn't let me drink too much because I was on the radio watch. He was one of the real heroes of Khe Sanh for me. It's good to be here with you, and I've got to go over now and see a man I haven't seen in a long time. [Hugs].

KEN PIPES: "I bring--though I don't know everyone here--from my wife, Sherry in Fallbrook, and our 2 sons, their thanks. Because directly or indirectly all of you in the room today are responsible for letting me share with them an additional 22 years, the main reason being the people you have talked about tonite, made references to and remember so fondly. And of course Jacobs said it best when he said, I have come back to be as best as I can be, and to do everything that I could the best that I could do for all the folks that never had the opportunity... I'm just so thankful to be able to be here with you all tonite.

CHRIS LANE: "While I was sitting at the Phu Bai airstrip waiting to get out [to Khe Sanh], alot of the old 'salts' seen all my green, brand-new shining uniform and stuff like that, and they were telling me what was going to happen up there, that half the airstrip was held by the NVA, and I was going to have to fight hand-to-hand to get to my position [laughs]. Well I didn't want them to know just how frightened I already was, knowing I was going to Khe Sanh, let alone I was going to have to fight hand-to-hand 24 hours after getting in country. So I said, 'Well, that's OK. No problem with this.' [laughs]. I got aboard this transport. It had a pallet on the back that had 'Mother's Cookies' among other things. And we touch down and the parachute comes out and goes flat. the load is standing there. And the Loadmaster is shouting: Start plushing that sucker off! And we're all looking like this, and I'm thinking: I'm going to die for Mothers' Cookies right here! [laughs]. We fortunately got it off, but I was petrified about getting that off because I was wondering: when's this human wave assault going to take care of me? So for any of you that may have been in the trench when this green, boot Marine came running in with a fixed bayonet [laughs]--as soon as I got off the plane I fixed bayonet and I think the people in the trench were more frightened of me than any NVA in the area. [laughs]. Unfortunately the story did not end at that point. There were a couple of guys on the same flight with me. I was going to 1/26 and they were going to 2/26, I believe... They sent me to Charlie Med because I had to turn in some records. And they started yelling, 'Gangway, casualties coming!' And they brought in this guy, and he's got a pretty good stomach wound. He's not looking real good. And I took a look and he looked like the guy who came in on the plane with me. And they weren't able to help him, and he died. And I started thinking: I've got 395 days to go!.."

[NOTE: REMARKS MADE BY OTHER ATTENDEES AT OUR REUNION WILL CONTINUE IN FOLLOWING ISSUES OF THIS NEWSLETTER. SHOULD ANY OF YOU WANT TO SHARE THESE KINDS OF COMMENTS, PLEASE SEND THEM TO RAY STUBBE. THESE KINDS OF THINGS ARE GOOD TO PRESERVE, AND ARE VERY HELPFUL TO OTHER KHE SANH VETERANS WHO HAVE "MISSING PIECES" IN THEIR MEMORIES. IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO SAY "THANK YOU" TO SOMEONE ELSE—IT MAKES EVERYONE FEEL SO VERY MUCH BETTER!]

BY-LAWS OF KHE SANH VETERANS, INC.

ARTICLE I - OBJECTIVES

Section 1. General. The objectives of the corporation are as follows:

To promote renewed fellowship of all who lived and served in the area of Khe Sanh, Huong Hoa District, Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam, during the period of 1961 through and including 1971; To locate and account for all who so served; To preserve the memory of those who so served and are now deceased, either while at Khe Sanh or since; To promote preservation of an accurate historical account of such service; To promote research and understanding and healing with a regard to those who so served; and to promote artistic expression of the Khe Sanh experience.

Section 2. Non-Profit. None of the aforementioned objectives shall be construed to authorize the corporation to conduct activities for monetary profit or financial gain or to attempt to influence legislation.

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Criteria. Any and all persons who lived at or served in the area of Khe Sanh, Huong Hoa District, Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam, during the period of 1961 through and including 1971 shall be eligible for membership in and affiliation with the corporation.

Section 2. Associate Membership. The corporation shall provide for associate members. An associate membership may be granted to any parent, wife, child or sibling or any person set forth in paragraph one above, alive or deceased. Associate membership shall be limited so that at least 90% of the general membership remains military veterans.

Section 3. Deceased Veterans. All who meet the qualifications for membership as specified in Section 1, above, and who died either while at Khe Sanh or since, shall be carried on the membership rolls as they become known.

Section 4 Dues. There shall be no dues. However, all members are expected to make donations to defray the cost of publication of the Newsletter of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

ARTICLE III - MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Meeting. There shall be an annual meeting of the membership for the election of officers and such other business which shall be held and conducted during or immediately prior to the annual meeting of the Third Marine Division Association or at such other times as may be determined by the general membership. All members present shall be eligible to vote on any matter. In order to conduct business, there shall be present a quorum of no less than ten members.

Section 2. Committees. Committees shall be appointed by the President from time to time, and may include the following: Audit of the Treasurer's Report; Nominations; Convention; Newsletter.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

Section 1. Number. The officers of this corporation shall be the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Sergeant at Arms, and Chaplain.

Section 2. Election, Term of Office and Removal. The officers of the corporation shall be elected by the general membership for a term of two years. Any vacancy in any office caused by any reason whatsoever may be filled by temporary appointment by the President with concurrence with the other officers in writing until the next annual meeting when the office shall be filled through election. Any officer may be elected to succeed himself.

Section 3 President. The President shall preside over all meetings of the membership. He shall have charge of the affairs of the corporation and shall see that all orders from the membership are implemented. He shall execute contracts, documents, checks, bonds, or other instruments as authorized by concurrence of the President, Secretary, and Treasurer in writing, and by resolution of the membership. The President shall represent the Khe Sanh Veterans, inc., at all meetings with other civic, political and/or other veteran organizations where the representation of this organization is desired, requested or deemed necessary. The President shall direct the annual audit of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

Section 4. Vice-President. The Vice-President shall have such powers and duties as may from time to time be delegated by the President. In the absence or disability of the President, the Vice-President shall perform all the duties of the President. The Vice-President shall also perform such other duties not inconsistent with these By-Laws, as may be assigned to him from time to time by the President or the membership.

Section 5 Secretary. The Secretary shall attent all meetings of the general membership and record all proceedings. The Secretary shall be the custodian of the records of the corporation and shall affix the seal to all such documents as may be required. He shall perform all duties pertaining to the office of Secretary and such other duties, not inconsistent with these, as may be assigned to him from time to time by the President. The Secretary shall maintain the current official roster of all members of the organization. In addition, the Secretary shall prepare, post and disseminate all legal notices, correspondence and other materials as required by laws, statutes and regulations. The Secretary shall make certain that the minutes of all meetings are properly prepared and filed.

Section 6. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall receive and collect all moneys payable to the corporation and deposit the same in such banks or other depositories as may be chosen by the Membership by resolution at its annual meeting. he shall make all lawful payments of obligations. He shall have custody of all securities, valuable papers and documents of the corporation. He shall keep or cause to be kept a book or books that contain an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements, and shall, when and as required, render a statement of the financial condition of the corporation. he shall perform all duties incident to the office of the Treasurer, and have such powers and duties as may from time to time be delegated to him by the President. In general, the Treasurer shall perform all the duties pertaining to the office of the Treasurer and such other duties not inconsistent with those, as may be assigned to him by the President of the corporation. The Treasurer shall prepare a financial report for the annual meeting and such other records which may be required by law.

Section 7. Sergeant-at-Arms. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall be responsible for maintaining order during all meetings. The Sergeant at Arms shall lead the annual meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall maintain sign-in sheets for recording attendance at all membership meetings. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall collect and count any and all written ballots when secret elections or other secret votes are conducted.

Section 8. Chaplain. The Chaplain shall open and close all meetings with prayer, shall correspond with all surviving next-of-kin of members who may die, and shall conduct or cause to be conducted memorial services as necessary.

Section 9. Compensation. Officers shall not receive any salary or other compensation for services rendered as an Officer.

Section 10. Authorization to expend monies. Monies shll be expended as determined by the membership at the annual meeting. For such expenses that may occur between meetings of the general membership, upon written concurrence by the President, Secretary, and Treasurer, funds may be expended in any amount necessary to ensure printing of the Khe Sanh Vet Newsletter and to defray expenses in connection with legal requirements of the corporation or any other expenses necessary that will benefit the membership as a whole. Monies may be temporarily lent to the corporation without interest to ensure payment of expenses.

ARTICLE V - AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These By-Laws may be amended, supplemented, or repleased from time to time by a two-thirds of the membership at the annual meeting.

ARTICLE VI - DISSOLUTION

Section 1. Proceedure. This corporation may be dissolved at any annual meeting upon a 2/3 vote of all members present provided that an announcement of such intended action has been published to all members at least three months prior to the intended act of dissolution. In the event that the corporation is dissolved, then the assets shall first be transferred to the Third Marine division Association Scholarship Fund provided that such fund qualified as exempt from Federal taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended, or any successor statute thereto.

Section 2. Alternative Distribution. In the event that the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. shall be dissolved, all of its remaining assets and property, less outstanding valid debts, accounts, claims and the necessary expenses of dissolution, shall be distributed to such corporations, associations, trusts, funds or foundations as are selected by the membership at meeting, which are then exempt from Federal income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended, or any successor statue thereto.

THESE BY-LAWS WERE ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE MEMBERSHIP OF KHE SANH VETERANS, INC., AT ANNUAL MEETING, 13 JULY 1989, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

NOTES CONCERNING THESE BY-LAWS

1. The membership provisions are such as to include all who served or lived at Khe Sanh. This includes all branches of the American and Vietnamese armed forces, the civilians (French coffee planters and missionaries), and any enemy personnel.

2. The provision concerning "Associate Membership" so limited that 90% remains military veterans is necessary in order to qualify as tax-exempt under provisions of the IRS.

3. Although there are no dues, members are expected to make regular and significant donations as they are able. The intent on not having dues was to ensure that all who were at Khe Sanh are members. It should be noted that all donations are tax-exempt (if one lists contributions on income tax forms, or for corporations to make contributions to us). Our major, single expense is the Newsletter through which we keep in contact with each other and share experiences.

4. Our meetings are during the 3d Marine Division Association Reunion so that we may take advantage of reduced hotel accommodations and perhaps reduced air fares, take advantage of the other events of the Division Association's Reunion, meet other veterans and share experiences with them. The Division Association benefits by having increased attendance and input of membership. We are part of the 3d Marine Division Association eventhough 26th Marines is historically part of Fifth Marine Division since those who served at Khe Sanh were under the operational control of 3d Marine Division.

5. All provisions for an Executive Board (as in previously printed By-Laws) have been omitted since they are, at this point, unnecessary due to the small amount of business and number of meetings.

6. Provisions concerning the officers are standard.

7. Compensation not being given to officers is necessary in order to maintain our tax-exempt status.

8. Authorization to expend monies is necessary to ensure continued printing of the Newsletter. It enables a member or members to deposit funds temporarily to guarantee printing of the Newsletter.

9. The Dissolution provisions are necessary in order to obtain reduced mailing expenses from the Post Office. They are a prudent proceedure so that members know that any funds they donate will always be for good purposes that benefit the membership.

OUR BROTHERS FOREVER

A LISTING OF THOSE WHO DIED BECAUSE OF KHE SANH - (Those who died on the battlefield, those who died as a result of wounds received at Khe Sanh, those who died while enroute to Khe Sanh and in close proximity of the battlefield). The listing is based upon Memorial Service Bulletins, upon verification through the 3dMarDiv G-1 Casualty Section Logbook in May, 1968, upon the weekly listings of those killed as compared with the Casualty Cards in the HQMC Historical Division Library (to determine units that were operating at Khe Sanh when the casualty occurred). The listing is not complete since it does not include names from FOB-3, the Special Forces at Lang Vei, the Joint Technical Advisory Detachment, 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, or various support units except as reflected in various Award Citation files or Oral History interviews. A complete listing of friendly casualties would be well over 1,000 names, perhaps approximating the Jean Dixon prophecy in August, 1967, of 1,200 killed at Khe Sanh. It does not include those killed subsequent to 16 April 1968.

There are several known additions that are not listed. 13 are listed from 1/13 in this listing; however, the 1/13 After Action Report for SCOTLAND notes 18 KIA and 2 DOW. 38 were killed from MACV Det 19 on 21 Jan, but only 4 are listed. 219 were killed at the fall of Lang Vei (10 USSF, 5 VNSF, 165 CSF, 34 MSF, and 5 interpreters); only 5 are listed. 59 US Army and 33 ARVN were killed during Operation PEGASUS; none are listed. 5 men from 1st Radio Battalion and 5 USAF crewmen were killed in the plane crash of 06 March; none are listed. In addition, only 30 of the total 44 Marines embarked on that plane are listed. 3 US Army Signalmen from 37th Signal Battalion were killed 2 Feb, but only one is listed. 5 Marines from 1st Marine Regiment were killed during Operation PEGASUS; none are listed. 326 USMC were killed during Operation SCOTLAND II (16 Apr - 11 Jul 68); only 54 are listed. Therefore, at least 650 more names should be included on this list up to 11 July 1968.

In addition, there were approximately 12,000 Bru tribespeople in the area. Only approximately 5,000 made it safely to the Cam Lo Refugee Village. It is a very conservative estimate that over 7,000 Bru were killed in the Khe Sanh area during the early months of 1968.

Intelligence reports confirmed that at least 10,000 North Vietnamese soldiers were killed during the Siege, and MACV estimated 15,000 based upon 2 killed per secondary explosion and other mathematical models. The Vietnamese government now notes and admits that 40,000 of their soldiers were killed Jan-Mar, 1968 at Khe Sanh. In addition, during the Battle of the Hills, Apr-May 1967, 824 were confirmed killed with another 551 probably killed; 206 were killed during Operation CROCKETT and another 417 probably killed; 113 were killed during Operation ARDMORE with another 210 probably killed.

ADAME, PFC Gilbert Jimmie
2/26 07 APR 68 48E 38

ADAMS, SWF2 Edward Cody
CBMU-301 16 APR 68 50E 10

AGUIRRE, CPL Carlos Cruz
E/2/26 24 FEB 68 41E 6

AHLMEYER, 2/Lt Heinz Jr
A/3dRecon 10 MAY 67 19E 77

AKINS, LCPL Ronald Paul
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 15

ALDRICH, CPL David Alan
B/1/26 30 MAR 68 47E 7

ALDRIDGE, PFC Herbert Ray
B/2/26 06 MAR 68 43E 12

ALFANO, 1/Lt Rodney Arthur
37th SignalBn 02 FEB 68 36E 64

ALEXCASTRE, PVT Anthony Albert
L/3/26 14 APR 68 49E 50

ALLEN, 2/Lt Dale Charles
I/3/26 27 JUN 67 22E 67

ALLEN, PFC Kenneth Jeffrey
A/1/13 08 FEB 68 38E 22

ALLEN, PFC Richard James
17 MAY 68 61E 22

ALMEIDA, LCPL Richard Henry
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 20

ALMONEY, CPL John Stanley
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 20

AMMON, 2/Lt William Resor
M/3/26 15 APR 68 50E 10

ANDERSON, PFC David Bruce
B/1/26 30 MAR 68 47E 7

ANDERSON, PFC David George
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 24

ANDERSON, PFC James (n)
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 21

ANTRIM, SGT Tommy Edward
A/1/13 08 FEB 68 38E 20

APONTE, LCPL Edwin
K/3/9 30 APR 67 18E 117

APPLETON, LCPL John Burdette
K/3/9 30 APR 67 18E 117

ARD, CPL Bobby Joe
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 118

ARTHUR, PFC Lawrence Keaneth
F/2/3 28 MAY 68 64W 4

ASHLEY, SPC Eugene Jr
A-101 07 FEB 68 37E 77

AVERITTE, CPL William Clayton
D/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 11

AYERS, LCPL Leslie Steven
A/1/13 08 FEB 68 38E 20

BACON, SSGT William Ivory Tenny
H&S/3/26 29 JUN 67 22E 82

BAILEY, LCPL Joseph Thomas
C/1/26 19 FEB 68 40E 17

BAKER, CPL Steven Dewitt
F/2/3 28 MAY 68 64W 5

BALADES, PFC David Zavala
A/3dShore P 28 FEB 68 41E 58

BAPTISTE, PFC Michael Bradford
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 15

BARBER, LCPL Ronald Lee
B/1/9 24 APR 67 18E 79

BARMER, LCPL Timothy Michael
B/3dRecon 30 JAN 68 35E 65

BARROW, PFC Thomas Melvin Jr
K/3/3 26 APR 67 18E 90

BARTH, LCPL Wayne Robert
B/1/9 24 APR 67 18E 78

BATTLE, PFC Joseph Chriss
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 15

BAUCHERIO, LCPL Harold
HMM-164 20 AUG 67 25E 18

BAUER , SSGT Karol Raymond
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 118

BAXTER, MSGT Bruce Raymond
FOB-1 08 NOV 67 29E 47

BEAN, SGTMAJ Donald Wayne
H&S/1/26 11 MAR 68 44E 13

BEASLEY, CPL Luson
H&S/1/9 30 MAR 68 47E 8

BEAUFORD, PFC Willis Jr
B/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 13

BECK, PVT John Theron
D/1/9 24 FEB 68 41E 6

BEDDOE, PFC Paul Melvin Jr
B/3dRecon 21 JAN 68 35E 2

BELCHER, CPL Robert Winslow
H&S/3/26 11 APR 68 49E 19

BELLAMY, PVT Paul Robert
K/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 2

BELLER, PFC William Russell Jr
K/3/9 30 APR 67 18E 118

BENCH, Sam P
20th TASS 17 JAN 68 (not on wall)

BENGE, LCPL Larry Wayne
H&S/1/9 01 MAR 68 42E 15

BENIGNI, CPL Alfredo
HMM-262 28 FEB 68 41E 59

BENOIT, HM3 Francis Arthur
E/2/9 16 MAR 67 16E 88

BERGER, PFC John Edward
B/1/26 27 FEB 68 41E 48

BERNARD, PFC Donald Lee
B/1/9 26 APR 67 18E 90

BERRI, LCPL Garry Ladd
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 21

BERLEIN, PFC Patrick M R
A/1/26 12 APR 68 49E 28

BILLINGHAM, LCPL Frederick A Jr
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 16

BIRCH, CPL Thomas H
A/1/26 23 FEB 68 40E 72

BIVENS, CPL Frederick Wood Jr
H/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 118

BIXBY, PFC Thomas Eugene
B/1/26 27 MAR 68 46E 44

BLAZ, LCPL James Lujan
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 65

BODA, LCPL James Albert
G/2/3 29 APR 67 18E 112

BODDEN, MSGT Timothy Roy
HMM-165 03 JUN 67 21E 42 MIA

BOGARD, PFC Jack Crosby
E/2/26 05 FEB 68 37E 31

BOHANNON, CPL Edward Jean
K/3/9 30 APR 67 30E 71

BOSCOURT, CPL Jess Burton Jr
H&S/1/9 11 MAR 68 44E 14

BOLGER, 2/Lt Lawrence Joseph
A/1/26 27 JUN 67 22E 68

BORRELL, PFC Clifford Glenn
E/2/26 24 FEB 68 41E 7

BOTT, MSGT Russell Peter
Proj DELTA 02 DEC 66 13E 3 MIA

BOYER, SFC Alan Lee
5th SFGA 28 MAR 68 46E 52 MIA

BOYER, PFC Charles Goodhue
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 14

BOYNTON, HM3 Charles B Jr
H&S/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 11

BRADLEY, CPL Kenneth Robert
F 28 FEB 68 41E 59

BRELLENTHIN, PFC Michael J
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 17

BRENKE, PFC Frederick Joseph
L/3/26 27 JUN 67 22E 72

BRERETON, PFC Raymond James
H&S/1/9 26 FEB 68 41E 35

BRETT, LTJG Robert R. (Chaplain Corps)
H&S/2/26 22 FEB 68 40E 58

BRIDGES, SGT Ernest Larry
C/1/9 04 APR 68 47E 59

BRIGNAC, CPL Joseph Paul
B/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 14

BRINDLEY, 2/Lt Thomas Drew
1/3/26 20 JAN 68 34E 83

BRITT, PFC Ted Dennis
B/1/26 30 MAR 68 47E 14

BROWN, PFC David D Jr
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 12

BROWN, SGM George R
5th SFGA 28 MAR 68 46E 53 MIA

BROWN, LCPL Marcus Jr
C/1/26 28 AUG 67 25E 55

BROWN, PFC Theodore Jr
K/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 3

BRUDER, PFC James Robert
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 17

BRYAN, CPL Charles William
B/3dRecon 20 JAN 68 39E 83

BRYANT, PFC James Roy
K/3/26 23 FEB 68 40E 72

BUCSOR, CPL Anthony Zbigniew
C/1/9 05 APR 68 48E 15

BUGGER, PFC Curtis Burke
W/1/13 21 JAN 68 35E 3

BUMSTEAD, PFC Donald Royce
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 15

BURGESS, LCPL Alex Leroy
H&S/3/26 19 FEB 68 40E 18

BURGESS, PFC Ruben Anthony
B/1/9 23 FEB 68 40E 73

BURKE, CPL John Roland
H&S/1/26 06 JUN 67 21E 60

BURKHEAD, CPL Jerry Clark
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 22

BURNHAM, PFC Joseph Francis
F/2/1 19 MAY 68 63E 6

BURNS, LCPL Victor L
A/1/26 27 JUN 67 22E 68

BUSH, 1/Lt Paul William
C/1/26 22 MAR 68 45E 54

BUTLER, LCPL Larry Wayne
K/3/3 26 APR 67 18E 91

BYNUM, CAPT Franklin Delano
L/3/26 27 JUN 67 22E 78

BYRD, PFC George Benjamin Jr
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 119

CALDWELL, CPL Robert Edward
H&S/3/26 28 FEB 68 41E 60

CALVIN, SSGT Glenn Henry
E/2/26 10 FEB 68 38E 65

CAMPBELL, PFC Thomas Francis
A/1/9 09 APR 68 48E 56

CARMICHAEL, PFC Dale Eugene
K/3/3 25 APR 67 18E 83

CARTER, PFC Anderson Jr
G/2/3 02 MAY 67 19E 10

CARTER, PFC Ralph Winfield
B/1/9 24 APR 67 18E 78

CASAREZ, PFC Raul
B/1/9 24 APR 67 18E 67

CASTILLO, CPL George Ralph
L/3/26 24 JAN 68 35E 20

CASTILO, SGT Jose
H&S/1/26 21 JUL 67 23E 97

CASTRO-RAMOS, LCPL Justino Enri
B/1/9 24 APR 67 18E 78

CATLIN, PVT Norman Richard
E/2/9 16 MAR 67 16E 89

CAUDILLO, WO-1 Pedro Jaime
3d ITT 19 MAY 68 63E 6

CAVAZOS, PFC Ronald Thomas
H&S/1/9 04 APR 68 48E 1

CECIL, SP5 Alan Bruce
5th SFGA 21 SEP 69 18W 119

CHAMBLIN, SGT Donald Ray Jr
I/13 08 MAR 68 43E 52

CHASE, LCPL John Joseph
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 65

CHEEKS, CPL John Herbert
B/1/9 28 APR 67 18E 110

CHILDRESS, CPL Lewis Clayton
PLC ParaDel 16 NOV 67 29E 104

CHIN, PFC Alexander Scheleph
H&S/2/26 22 FEB 68 40E 58

CHISHOLM, PFC James
H&S/1/26 23 FEB 68 40E 73

CHRISTIAN, LCPL Daniel K
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 12

CICIO, PFC Robert Daniel
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 12

CHUTIS, SSGT John Vincent
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 119

CLAIRE, CPL Kenneth William
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 18

CLAY, PFC Doyle Gregory
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 18

CLEMSON, PFC Gerald Richard
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 23

COLEGATE, PFC William Karl
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 23

COLEMAN, LCPL Michael John
B/1/9 27 JAN 68 35E 44

COLEMAN, PFC William Frank
D/1/26 16 APR 68 50E 12

COLES, LCPL Kyle "J"
H&MS-36 28 FEB 68 41E 61

COLLINS, PFC James Alfred
I/3/26 20 JAN 68 34E 84

CONTRERAS, PVT John Jenaro
H&S/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 4

COOL, CPL Mark Douglas
H&S/1/26 02 MAR 68 42E 28

COOPER, CPL Donald Nathaniel
HMM-262 28 FEB 68 41E 62

CORBIN, LCPL Russell B Jr
B/1/26 07 FEB 68 37E 81

CORLEY, LCPL Thomas Eugene
C/1/26 06 FEB 68 37E 52

CORNELL, PFC Robert Leslie
H/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 120

CORRY, SP5 Charles Michael
FOB-3 15 APR 68 50E 3

COTTRELL, LCPL Thomas Lee
B/1/26 22 JAN 68 35E 11

COURTNEY,1/Lt Allen Wesley Jr
A/1/1 17 MAY 68 62E 1

CRAIG, PFC Bruce Keith
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 11

CRAIG, PFC Thomas R Jr
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 24

CRAMER, PFC David Arthur
H/2/26 22 FEB 68 40E 59

CRASE, LCPL Lionel Russell
H&S/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 40

CRAUN, PFC Gale Eugene
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 13

CRENSHAW, CAPT William Anderson
A-101 04 MAY 67 19E 36

CRICKENBERGER, PFC Richard Way
A/3d Eng 26 MAY 68 66W 4

CRITCHFIELD, PFC Reece A Jr
I/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 4

CROOKS, CPL Ronald Lee
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 66

CRUITT, PFC Michael Douglas
K/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 4

CUNNINGHAM, PFC Bruce Edward
C/1/26 08 FEB 68 38E 24

CUNNINGHAM, PFC William L
D/1/9 01 MAR 68 42E 14

D'ADAMO, MSGT John Jr
VMGR-152 10 FEB 68 38E 66

DALEY, PFC Michael James
B/1/9 16 MAR 67 16E 89

DALTON, PFC Bill Norman
A/1/13 08 FEB 68 38E 24

DAMIAN, LCPL Allan James
A/1/26 17 JUN 67 22E 69

DARNELL, LCPL Dana Cornell
B/1/9 24 APR 67 18E 91

DAVID, LCPL Jeffrey Jay
I/3/26 27 JUN 67 22E 69

DAVIS, PFC Charles Cecil
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 23

DAVIS, CPL Clifford Gordon
H/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 120

DEARING, PFC Jerry Wayne
H&S/3/26 26 JAN 68 35E 37

DELANO, LCPL Jimmy Lynn
SPTCo/3dEng 13 MAR 68 44E 34

DELAPLANE, HN James Charles
H&S/2/26 17 APR 68 50E 27

DEMPSEY, CPL Ronald Lee
B/1/13 28 FEB 68 41E 63

DENNING, PFC Dwight Thomas
A/1/26 26 JAN 68 35E 38

DEVIK, LCPL David Ralf
VMGR-152 10 FEB 68 38E 66

DEXTER, SGM Ronald James
FOB-3 03 JUN 67 31E 43 MIA

DICESARE, CPL Anthony Jr
I/3/26 27 JUN 67 22E 69

DICKIE, PVT Guy Douglas
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 25

DISTEFANO, 2/Lt Ferdinando
E/2/26 24 FEB 68 41E 8

DODSON, LCPL Jerry Lee
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 19

DOLAN, PFC William John
D/1/9 17 APR 68 50E 35

DOLBY, PFC Melvin Lester
F/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 40

DOOLEY, PFC Robert Ellis
M/3/26 22 FEB 68 40E 61

DOORNBOS, CPL Don Michael
D/1/9 14 FEB 68 39E 31

DOUGLAS, SSGT Paul Melvyn
FOB-3 21 FEB 68 40E 52

DOWNING, CPL William Kelly
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 24

DUNLAP, PVT Darrell Edward
I/3/26 08 FEB 68 38E 26

DUTY, PFC Charles Howard
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 120

DWYER, LCPL Matthew Murice Jr
A/3d Eng 28 FEB 68 41E 63

DYE, CPL Ralph Victor Jr
G/2/3 02 MAY 67 19E 12

DYER, SGT Irby III
Proj DELTA 02 DEC 66 13E 4 MIA

EARLY, CPL William Dall
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 121

ECHEVARIA, SGM Raymond Louis
FOB-1 03 OCT 66 11E 39 MIA

EDMONDS, PFC Arthur Lee Jr
H&S/2/26 13 FEB 68 39E 20

EDMONDS, LCPL Joseph
L/3/26 14 APR 68 49E 52

EGGER, CAPT Walter Jacob
C/1/26 22 MAR 68 45E 55

EGLY, PFC Shelly
B/1/9 26 APR 67 18E 92

ELLIOTT, PFC George L III
A/1/13 06 MAR 68 43E 17

ELLIOTT, SSGT Jerry W
MACV DET-19 21 JAN 68 35E 5

ELLIS, CAPT John Patrick
MABS-36 28 FEB 68 41E 64

ENDERBY, LCPL Robert Francis
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 66

ENZINNA, CPL John Joseph
A/1/9 24 MAR 68 46E 4

ERWIN, PFC Richard Eugene
H&S/3/26 11 APR 68 49E 21

FEATHERSTONE, PFC Richard H
A/3dShore P 08 FEB 68 38E 27

FEIT, HN Cristian Franz III
H&S/3/26 25 JAN 68 35E 31

FERRARI, SGT Arnold Jay
C/1/26 31 MAR 68 47E 21

FERREN, LCPL Jerry Wayne
VMGR-152 10 FEB 68 42E 15

FERRY, LCPL Ray Leonard III
A/3d AT 09 APR 68 49E 55

FIGUEROA, CPL Javier Puentes
H&S/3/26 28 JAN 68 35E 54

FINLEY, PFC Charles Richard
M/3/26 11 APR 68 49E 21

FITTS, SSGT Richard Allan
5th SFGA 30 NOV 68 37W 10 MIA

FLAHIVE, CAPT William Joseph Jr
MACTU-62 31 JAN 68 36E 8

FLANNERY, PFC Robert Edward Jr
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 24

FORDHAM, 2/Lt Benjamin S
K/3/26 15 APR 68 50E 3

FORDHAM, PFC Kenneth Charles
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 27

FOSTER, LCPL Julius Cartwright
E/2/26 22 FEB 68 40E 62

FRANCAVILLA, LCPL John F
I/3/26 09 APR 68 49E 1

FRANCISCO, LCPL Patrick Phillip
K/3/3 26 APR 67 18E 93

FRAZIER, LCPL Ronald Leon
C/1/9 09 APR 68 49E 1

FURLONG, CPL Edward Francis Jr
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 67

GAGNON, LCPL Patrick John
K/3/3 25 APR 67 18E 85

GAINES, PFC Allen Joseph
G/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 41

GAINES, PFC Bernard Laverne
A/1/9 24 MAR 68 46E 5

GALLAGHER, SFC John Theodore
FOB-3 05 JAN 68 33E 48 MIA

GARBER, CPL Charles W Jr
C/1/9 09 APR 68 49E 1

GARCIA, PFC Joe Cecilio
E/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 121

GARD, CPL Dany "D"
HMM-262 28 FEB 68 41E 65

GARDNER, CAPT John Garrett
HMM-165 03 JUN 67 21E 45 MIA

GAUGHAN, PFC Austin Michael
A/3dShore Party 15 MAR 68 44E 59

GAYNOR, SGTMAJ James Thomas
H&S/1/26 15 FEB 68 39E 47

GEIGER, PFC Larry Frederick
B/1/9 26 APR 67 18E 93

GELLER, LCPL Charles Gregory
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 20

GETTINGS, PFC Guy Clifton
K/3/3 26 APR 67 18E 93

GIBBS, HM3 Michael Gerald
K/3/3 26 APR 67 18E 85

GLASPER, LCPL William L
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 28

GODINEZ, LCPL Alejandro Ray
I/3/26 27 JUN 67 22E 70

GOETZ, LCPL James Gormon
E/2/9 16 MAR 67 16E 90

GOI, CPL Louis Charles
B/1/13 18 MAR 68 45E 22

GOLZ, PFC James Roland
I/3/26 27 JAN 68 35E 46

GOMEZ, PFC Armando Abel
E/2/26 20 FEB 68 40E 39

GOODMAN, PFC Kenneth Virgil
K/3/26 24 JAN 68 35E 21

GOTTI, PVT Gale Edward
A/1/13 07 JUN 67 21E 67

GRAFF, CPL Thomas George
K/3/9 30 APR 67 18E 121

GREENIDGE, LCPL Michael R
D/1/9 31 MAR 68 47E 22

GRIJALVA, CPL David Centeno
B/1/9 27 APR 67 18E 102

GROHMAN, GYSGT John Joseph
C/1/26 22 MAR 68 45E 56

GRZEBOREK, PFC James Andrew
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 19

GUILLORY, PFC Wendell
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 13

GULA, PFC Paul Richard
D/1/9 30 MAR 68 47E 11

GUNN, LCPL Charley Edward
E/2/9 16 MAR 67 16E 91

GUTHRIE, SP4 Steven Allen Jr
1/44 Arty 31 JAN 68 36E 12

HABERMAN, PFC David
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 14

HACKETT, 1/Lt David Spencer
H/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 122

HARARA, SGT Leslie Paul
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 14

HALL, PFC Blucher Ray
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 19

HALL, CPL Lincy Ronald
A/3dRecon 26 APR 67 18E 93

HALL, Lt William Gardner
VMO-6 24 MAR 68 46E 6

HALLOCK, CPL Douglas Paul
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 122

HAMEL PFC Wayne Douglas
HQ-12th Mar 05 FEB 68 37E 36

HAMILTON, PFC Douglas Blake
B/1/9 24 APR 67 18E 77

HANDLEY, CPL Anthony William
H&S/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 29

HANNA, SMAJ Kenneth
A-101 07 FEB 68 37E 83 MIA

HANRAHAN, CPL Jerome M Jr
H/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 122

HANSON, Maj Stephen Paul
HMM-165 03 JUN 67 21E 46 MIA

HARPER, SGT Donald Eugene Jr
B/1/9 16 MAR 67 16E 91

HARRIS, PFC Earl Wayne
E/2/26 28 FEB 68 41E 65

HAWKINS, E-5 Don Albert
FOB-3 01 NOV 67 29E 3

HAYDEN, 1/Lt Michael Pym
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 14

HAYES, LCPL Phillip III
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 21

HEALY, CPL Richard John
B/3dRecon 14 JAN 68 34E 48

HEALY, PFC Thomas Michael
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 68

HEAVIN, SGT Willis Ray
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 25

HEDGPATH, PFC William Thomas
? 26 APR 67 18E 94

HEFNER, PFC Edward William
F/2/26 25 JAN 68 35E 32

HELLWIG, LCPL Steven Louis
H&S/1/26 21 JAN 68 35E 6

HENDERSHOTT, PFC Thomas Edward
A/1/26 21 MAY 67 20E 76

HEPNER, 2/Lt Stephen Thomas
K/3/3 02 MAY 67 19E 14

HERNANDEZ, PFC Richard
K/3/9 30 APR 67 18E 122

HERNANDEZ, PFC Robert
A/1/1 10 JUL 68 52W 10

HICKS, PFC Paul Everett
? 06 MAR 68 43E 21

HIGGS, PFC Ralph Edward
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 21

HILL, SGT Billy David
MACV Det 19 21 JAN 68 35E 6

HIMMER, CAPT Lawrence
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 14

HINKLE, PFC Jack Lee
D/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 14

HINSON, PFC John Robert
C/1/26 16 AUG 67 25E 1

HOLDWAY, LCPL David Keith
H&S/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 26

HOLLAR, PFC Howard Estle
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 22

HOLLIMON, PVT Billy Michael
F/2/26 05 MAR 68 43E 6

HOLLIS, LCPL Thomas William
B/3d Recon 28 JAN 68 35E 54

HOLMES, LTC David Hugh
TIGERHOUND 15 MAR 66 6E 10 MIA

HOLT, MSGT James William
A-101 07 FEB 68 37E 84 MIA

HORVATH, PFC Robert John
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 22

HOUSTON, PFC John Davis Jr
L/3/26 17 APR 68 50E 29

HOWLETT, LCPL Norman L Jr
A/3d Eng 30 MAR 68 47E 12

HOOD, PFC Jerry Wayne
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 122

HUBER, LCPL Randy "S"
F/2/3 28 MAY 68 64W 11

HUDSON, LCPL Roy
A/1/26 31 JAN 68 36E 16

HUFF, CPL William Edward
K/3/26 25 FEB 68 41E 22

HUNT, CPL Joseph Thomas
B/1/9 27 JAN 68 35E 47

HURD, LCPL Roger Michael
A/1/26 21 MAY 67 20E 75

HURLBERT, CPL Roy Douglas
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 15

HUSTON, SFC Charles Gregory
5th SFGA 28 MAR 68 46E 55 MIA

HUTCHINS, SGT Frank John
D/1/9 02 MAR 68 42E 33

HUWELL, PFC Michael Francis
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 31

IBANEZ, GYSGT Di Reyes
A/3d Recon 05 JUN 67 21E 58 MIA

IMPERIALE, LCPL Ronald Joseph
E/2/9 16 MAR 67 16E 92

IVES, CPL Timothy James
K/3/9 30 APR 67 18E 123

IVES, PFC William Allen
A/1/9 24 MAR 68 46E 7

JACKSON, LCPL Andrew
F/2/26 06 MAR 68 43E 23

JACKSON, PFC Leonard Jr
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 30

JACKSON, CPL Nathaniel El
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 15

JACOB, PFC Robert Michael
A/1/9 04 APR 68 48E 5

JACQUES, 2/Lt Donald
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 22

JAGGERS, CPL Thomas Murl
G/2/3 04 MAY 67 19E 37

JEFFRIES, LCPL Gerrie George
E/2/26 24 FEB 68 41E 10

JENKINS, CPL Earl Dale Jr
FLC ParaDel 16 NOV 67 30E 3

JOHNSON, PFC Darly Linn
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 26

JOHNSON, LCPL Eugene M Jr
G/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 42

JOHNSON, LCPL Freddie Lee
1/3/26 27 JUN 67 22E 71

JOHNSON, PFC George Dennis
E/2/9 16 MAR 67 16E 92

JOHNSON, CPL Howard Leon
HQ-26thMar 22 JAN 68 35E 11

JOHNSON, PFC Kenneth Michael
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 68

JOHNSON, LCPL Kenneth Richard
B/1/9 16 FEB 68 39E 62

JOHNSON, 1/Lt Kim Williams
H&S/1/26 23 FEB 68 40E 77

JOHNSON, PFC Terry Melvin
1/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 6

JOHNSTON, HN Dennis Neil
H&S/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 19

JOHNSTON, PFC Richard William
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 16

JONES, LCPL Bruce Edwin
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 22

JONES, LCPL Clifton Randal
K/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 6

JONES, PFC Donald Ernest
K/3/26 08 MAR 68 43E 56

JONES, LCPL Isaac
B/1/9 26 APR 67 18E 94

JONES, SGM James
5th SFGA 03 OCT 66 11E 42 MIA

JONES, PFC Jimmie Lee
B/1/26 30 MAR 68 47E 12

JONES, SGT John Robert
CCN 05 JUN 71 3W 66

JONES, PFC Larry Allen
H&S/1/9 24 APR 68 51E 47

JONES, PFC Terry Agusta
B/3d Recon 30 DEC 67 33E 3

JONES, CAPT Walter Chapman III
H&S/1/9 04 APR 68 48E 5

KAMINSKI, PFC Kenneth
B/1/9 26 MAR 68 46E 36

KEEFE, CPL Dennis Michael
HQ-26thMar 11 FEB 68 38E 78

KEEFER, LCPL Kenneth Ray
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 68

KENNEDY, CPL Larry Scott
A/1/13 06 MAR 68 43E 23

KEGLOVITS, 2/Lt Edward Joseph
VMFA-542 30 MAR 67 17E 72

KENT, LCPL Gregory Patrick
D/1/26 28 MAR 68 46E 55

KESSLER, CPL Julius Allen II
H/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 123

KIDD, PFC Phillip Meridith
C/1/9 09 APR 68 49E 3

KILGORE, PFC Danny Ray
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 16

KINCAID, SGT Paul Eddie
A/1/26 27 JUN 67 22E 71

KING, LCPL DeWayne
M/3/26 14 APR 68 49E 53

KINGSTON, LCPL Thomas Lloyd
1/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 7

KINNEY, HN Richard Lee
H/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 123

KISSLING, CPL Benjamin Leon
D/2/12 09 APR 68 49E 3

KOENIG, LCPL David Bruce
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 27

KOMAN, 2/Lt Lawrence Ryland
D/1/9 30 MAR 68 47E 13

KOT, CPL Myron
H&S/3/26 07 FEB 68 38E 5

KOTIK, PFC Robert John
M/3/3 03 MAY 67 18E 123

KRUGER, PFC Robert Henry Jr
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 27

KURTZ, PFC Lloyd Nelson
E/2/9 16 MAR 67 16E 92

LABOHN, SFC Gary Russell
5th SFGA 30 NOV 68 37W 13 MIA

LABONTE, HN Donald Arthur
HUS/2/26 28 FEB 68 41E 68

LACEY, PFC Franklin D
L/3/26 28 MAR 68 46E 56

LADEROUTE, PFC Michael John
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 23

LAGENFELD, HM3 Charles T
H&S/2/26 17 APR 68 50E 30

LAMITIE, LCPL Tyrone Francis
E/2/26 05 FEB 68 37E 38

LAMON, LCPL William Charles Jr
E/2/9 16 MAR 67 16E 93

LAND, SGT Sylvester
B/1/9 16 MAR 67 16E 93

LANE, SGT Louis Michael
K/3/26 09 APR 68 49E 3

LANEY, SGM Billy Ray
FOB-3 03 JUN 67 21E 48 MIA

LANGLEY, SGT David Francis
D/1/1 05 JUL 68 53W 17

LAPORT, LCPL Leonard Oscar
K/3/3 26 APR 67 18E 94

LASSITER, PFC John Alfred
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 24

LAWRENCE, LCPL Larry Eugene
HQ-26th Mar 06 JUN 67 21E 62

LAWS, SFC Delmer Lee
FOB-1 30 JUL 66 9E 67

LEASURE, CPL Delbert Louis
D/1/13 23 FEB 68 40E 76

LE BANC, CPL Alfred Leroy
D/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 16

LEONARD, PFC Kent Alan
B/1/9 24 APR 67 18E 80

LESAGE, LCPL Armand Paul
K/3/26 07 APR 68 48E 42

LEWER, CPL Thomas Charles
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 32

LEWIS, CPL Clarence Henry
B/1/9 15 MAR 68 44E 63

LINDBERG, LCPL Brian Victor
A/1/9 04 APR 68 48E 7

LINDEWALD, MSGT Charles W Jr
A-101 07 FEB 68 38E 5 MIA

LINDSAY, PFC Philip Trieste
A/1/9 09 APR 68 49E 4

LINK, LCPL Frederick Beard
C/1/9 01 MAR 68 42E 19

LITTLEFIELD, CPL Robert H
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 17

LIVINGSTON, PFC Billy Dale
CAC OSCAR 26 FEB 68 41E 40

LLOYD, PVT Kenneth Edwin
D/1/9 02 MAR 68 42E 35

LOHMAN, CPL Herman A Jr
G/2/26 06 APR 68 48E 29

LONG, HN Leonard
H&S/1/9 26 MAR 68 46E 37

LOONEY, CAPT Paul Thomas
HMM-164 10 MAY 67 19E 84

LOPEZ, HN Jose Angel Jr
H&S/2/26 18 APR 68 50E 40

LOUIS, PFC Robert Youngete Jr
F/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 28

LOVATO, PFC Michael Leon
C/1/9 09 FEB 68 38E 55

LYNCH, LCPL Charles Aaron
SUS,3dMarDiv 27 JUN 67 22E 71

LYONS, PFC Carl
B/3d Recon 22 MAR 68 45E 59

LYVERE, PFC Ronald Lee
K/3/3 25 APR 67 18E 86

MACAGBA, HM3 Edilberto Dula
B/1/26 13 MAR 68 44E 38

MAHARG, PFC Evert Ralph
B/1/9 26 APR 67 18E 95

MALONEY, CPL Jeffrey Raymond
K/3/3 26 APR 67 18E 95

MARIZ, 1/Lt Robert J
HQ-26th Mar 30 JAN 68 35E 75

MARCOTTE, LCPL Andre Edward
3d FLC 01 JUL 67 22E 92

MARSON, PFC Rickey Joe
2/26 07 APR 68 48E 43

MARTEL, PFC Normand Richard
E/2/3 02 MAY 67 19E 28

MARTIN, LCPL Gary Alan
C/1/9 01 MAR 68 42E 20

MARTINEZ, PFC Mauro
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 18

MASTERS, PFC Edward Ulyses
G/2/26 06 APR 68 46E 30

MATTHEWS, LCPL William L Jr
H&S/3/26 15 APR 68 50E 6

MAYER, MGYSGT Paul Evans
MWHG-1 28 MAR 68 46E 57

MAZARISOOS, LCPL Francisco Alberto
8U5 3dMarDiv 27 JUN 67 22E 68

MAZELLO, LCPL Peter Jr
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 124

MC CABE, SGT Marc Wayne
HMM-262 28 FEB 68 41E 70

MC CALL, SGT Billy Ray
G/2/26 22 FEB 68 40E 66

MC CANN, LCPL James Kevin
B/3d Recon 03 FEB 68 37E 10

MC CASKILL, PFC William
K/3/3 26 APR 67 18E 96

MC CLAIN, SGT William David
K/3/4 16 MAY 68 61E 15

MC CLELLAND, PFC Aubrey D
D/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 19

MC CLELLAND, SSGT George
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 25

MC COSAR, LCPL Winford
B/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 28

MC DANIEL, CPL Roy Dean
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 35

MC DONALD, PFC Henry III
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 26

MC GARVEY, CPL Patrick G
H&S/1/26 12 APR 68 49E 35

MC GRATH, CPL Edward
G/2/26 06 APR 68 45E 31

MC KEE, LCPL Julian Allan
B/2/9 16 MAR 67 16E 95

MC KEEVER, LCPL Michael E
H&S/1/26 23 FEB 68 40E 75

MC KENZIE, LCPL Richard W
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 26

MC KINLEY, PVT Allen
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 35

MC KINNEY, SSGT Bernard B Jr
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 35

MC KINSEY, WO Gerald Leroy Jr
MACV Det-19 21 JAN 68 35E 8

MC MAKINS, CPL Reuben Carl Jr
L/3/26 14 APR 68 49E 54

MC NAMAR, HN Jim Carl
H&S/3/26 17 APR 68 50E 32

MC PHEE, PFC Randy Neal
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 125

MC RAE, PFC Jimmie Lefon
B/1/26 28 MAR 68 46E 57

MEAD, PVT Dennis Michael
D/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 26

MEADS, Thomas Allerton
D/1/26 06 FEB 68 37E 62

MEADOWS, CPL Artis W Jr
G/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 44

MEADS, PFC Kim Elmer
C/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 25

MEDEIROS, LCPL William C
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 18

MEGGS, LCPL Marion Lee
B/3d Recon 16 NOV 67 30E 4

MEIER, PFC Roy Alan
D/1/9 02 MAR 68 42E 36

MEIN, SSGT Michael Howard
5th SFGA 30 NOV 68 37W 13 MIA

MEIXNER, MAJ Edwin G
HMM-262 28 FEB 68 41E 69

MERCER, HM2 William Ivan
M/3/4 15 JUN 68 57W 129

MEUER, PFC John Richard
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 29

MEYERMBOURG, PFC Daniel L
B/1/9 11 MAR 68 44E 18

MIECZKOWSKI, CPL Joseph
K/3/9 30 APR 67 18E 124

MIKELS, SGT James herbert Jr
H&S/1/26 28 FEB 68 41E 69

MILES, PFC James Edward
H/2/26 06 MAR 68 43E 27

MILLARD, LCPL Kenneth Arthur
I/3/26 27 JUN 67 22E 72

MILLER, LCPL Charles Claude
H&S/1/9 04 APR 68 48E 7

MILLER, HN Charles Wayne
B/3d Recon 24 JAN 68 35E 24

MILLER, HM3 Malcolm Thomas
A/3d Recon 10 MAY 67 19E 72

MILLETT, PFC Steven Lawrence
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 69

MILLS, PFC Arthur Lee
C/1/26 12 APR 68 49E 34

MINCH, PFC Roger Carl
H&E/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 26

MINES, CPL James Jr
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 125

MITCHELL, 2/Lt Joseph Robert Jr
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 125

MOSSE, PFC Herne Jean
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 18

MOLE, HM3 Malcomb Geoffrey
H&S/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 7

MOLETTIERE, LCPL Joseph Anthony
I/26 05 FEB 68 37E 40

MOORE, PFC James Ezra
G/2/26 06 MAR 68 43E 27

MOORE, PFC Larry Gene
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 19

MOORE, PFC Lewis Wayne
A/3d Eng 10 MAR 68 44E 10

MOORE, LCPL Wayne Paul
B/1/26 30 MAR 68 47E 14

MOORE, CPL William roosevelt
H/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 29

MORDEN, PFC Robert Nelson
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 33

MORELAND, SFC James Leslie
A-101 07 FEB 68 38E 7 MIA

MORGAN, LCPL Michael Roy
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 125

MORROW, GYSGT Harold Eugene
M/3/26 21 JUL 67 23E 101

MORRIS, PFC Larry Lee
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 69

MOSES, PFC Clifton
F/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 44

MOSS, PFC Thomas John Jr
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 27

MOSSO, SGT Robert Bruce
B/1/9 26 MAR 68 46E 39

MOTTOLA, PFC Vincent Antonio
B/1/26 23 FEB 68 40E 77

MULGREW, LCPL Kevin Spear
A/1/9 09 APR 68 49E 4

MULLET, PFC Steven James
M/3/26 21 JUL 67 23E 102

MURPHY, PFC Patrick Michael
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 34

MURRAY, CPL James Francis
K/3/3 26 APR 67 18E 95

MUTZ, LCPL Dennis Howard
K/3/26 04 MAR 68 42E 69

MYERS, 1/Lt David Gephart
VMO-3 08 JUN 67 21E 75

NEAL, LCPL Charles Marion Jr
K/3/3 25 APR 67 18E 87

NELSON, LCPL Max Alvin
E/2/26 24 FEB 68 41E 11

NELSON, HN Roger Miller
H&S/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 45

NELSON PFC Stephen Carl
K/3/3 25 APR 67 18E 87

NEWTON, PFC Leonard Lee
I/3/26 19 JAN 68 34E 80

NICKLOW, PFC Danny Eugene
B/1/9 16 MAR 67 16E 95

NIEBUR, HM2 Edward Leroy
H&S/1/26 27 FEB 68 41E 52

NIELSEN, LCPL Charles Joseph
L/3/26 14 APR 68 49E 52

NIELSEN, CPL Harold Richard
M/3/26 21 JUL 67 23E 103

NIGHTINGALE, PFC Timothy J
A/1/9 06 APR 68 48E 31

NORMAN, 1/Lt Marion Henry
A/1/13 30 MAR 68 47E 15

O'CONNOR, CPL Dennis Alfred
8U5 3dmarDiv 27 JUN 67 22E 72

O'HARE, PFC Richard James
G/2/26 06 MAR 68 43E 29

OMMEN, PFC Peter Richard
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 126

ORTON, SGT Kenneth William Jr
B/1/9 26 APR 67 18E 96

OSTAPCHUK, LCPL Walter Michael
A/1/9 05 APR 68 48E 19

OWENS, CPL Robert Franklin
D/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 19

OWENS, PFC Timothy Eugene
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 19

PALMA, LCPL Francis Michael
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 126

PAMPKIN, CPL John Mac
3/4 16 MAY 68 61E 16

PARSONS, SGT Charles Edward
5th Comm Bn 28 FEB 68 41E 69

PATRICK, PFC Albert Earl
A/3d Eng 14 FEB 68 39E 37

PATTERSON, PFC Patrick Chasie
K/3/26 15 APR 68 50E 7

PAYNE, CPL Robert Paul
A/3d AT 11 MAR 68 45E 24

PAYNE, CPL Troy David Jr
B/1/9 26 APR 67 18E 97

PEMBLETON, PFC Ronald Lee
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 36

PENNETTI, LCPL Francis
K/3/26 24 JAN 68 35E 26

PEPPER, PFC Anthony John
G/2/26 06 APR 68 48E 32

PEREZ, LCPL Daniel Torres
B/1/9 24 APR 67 18E 81

PERETTA, CPL John Rocco
I/3/26 15 FEB 68 39E 52

PERRY, PFC James Earl
B/1/9 16 MAR 67 16E 96

PETERSON, COL Carl Elving
1 MAW 10 FEB 68 38E 71

PHELPS, PFC Randall Carl
A/3d Bag 08 APR 68 48E 54

PHILLIPS, SFC Daniel Raymond
A-101 07 FEB 68 36E 10 MIA

PIAZZA, PFC Robert Gary
G/2/26 06 APR 68 48E 33

PICANSO, PFC Leonard Jr
F/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 30

PINATELLI, PFC Thomas Michael
C/1/9 09 FEB 68 38E 71

PINO, LCPL Alfred
B/1/9 16 MAR 67 16E 96

PINSONNAULT, HM3 Richard Norma
C/1/1 07 JUL 68 53W 38

PITTS, LCPL Freddie Richard
K/3/9 30 APR 67 18E 126

PITTS, PFC Wayne Monroe
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 70

PIZARRO, CPL Vic Manuel
A/1/13 06 MAR 68 43E 30

PLUNKETT, CPL Raymond Louis
D/1/9 30 MAR 68 47E 15

POLLARD, PFC William Alfred
B/1/26 31 JUL 67 23E 103

POLT, PFC Erwin Andrew
H&S/1/9 24 MAR 68 46E 10

POMERLEAU, CPL James Gerald
B/1/9 24 MAR 67 18E 81

PONDOFF, PFC John Christopher
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 36

POPOWITZ, LCPL Gregory Francis
B/3d Recon 24 JAN 68 35E 26

POWELL, SGT Robert Clyde
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 30

PRESLEY, PFC Ronnie Calvin
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 30

PRIEBE, LCPL James Edward
K/3/9 30 APR 67 18E 127

PRUIETT, PFC Thomas Pierre Jr
K/3/26 31 MAR 68 47E 25

PRUITT, CPL George Alan
H&S/2/26 08 APR 68 48E 54

QUAMO, MAJ George
FOB-3 14 APR 68 50E 1

QUATTLEBAUM, PVT John F
F/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 46

RAMIREZ, LCPL Juan Jose
H/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 30

RAMPULLA, LCPL Terry James
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 20

RANDALL, PFC James Arthur
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 127

RASH, PFC Donald Ray
B/1/26 30 MAR 68 47E 15

RAY, PFC Franklin Daniel
A/1/26 23 FEB 68 41E 2

RAY, LCPL Kermit Anthony
? 26 APR 67 18E 97

REATHER, PFC Wallace Lee Jr
B/3d Recon 27 JAN 68 35E 50

REECE, SGT Walter James
F/2/1 19 MAY 68 63E 17

REDEMIUS, CPL David Gary
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 20

REYES, PFC Ronald
D/1/9 30 MAR 68 47E 16

RHOADES, PVT David
B/1/9 16 MAR 67 16E 97

RICE, PFC John Climath
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 31

RICE, SGT Robert
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 20

RICHARDSON, PFC James Douglas
F/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 47

RICHARDSON, PFC Scott Douglas
H/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 127

RILEY, CAPT James Thomas ("Rex")
HMH-463 22 FEB 68 40E 68

RIMEL, GYSGT Melvin Lewis
K/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 9

RIMSON, PFC Martin Luther
E/2/26 05 FEB 68 37E 43

RIORDAN, PFC Patrick Carlisle
F/2/1 19 MAY 68 63E 17

RIPORTELLA, LCPL Frank J Jr
B/1/9 26 APR 67 18E 97

RIVERA, PFC Arnold Javier
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 27

RIZZO, LCPL James Patrick
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 38

ROACH, 2/Lt Terence Raymond
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 38

ROBERTS, PFC Ben
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 31

ROBERTSON, PFC Gerald William
A/1/9 14 FEB 68 39E 38

ROBINSON, CPL Lionel Lareu
A/1/9 10 APR 68 49E 15

ROBINSON, LCPL Walter R Jr
H/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 127

ROBITAILLE, GYSGT Paul Edward
H/2/26 23 FEB 68 41E 2

RODRIGUEZ, PVT Domingo Jr
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 31

RODRIGUEZ, PFC Paul M Jr
A/1/26 27 JUN 67 22E 72

ROLDAN, LCPL William Junior
G/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 128

ROMERO, LCPL Manuel Villareal
G/2/26 06 APR 68 48E 33

ROSA, LCPL Juan Antonio
B/3d Recon 24 JAN 68 35E 27

ROTH, LCPL Frank Theodore
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 128

ROUNTREE, LCPL Ronald Corbin
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 38

ROZELLE, LCPL David Thomas
K/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 9

RUFF, PFC Willie Jerome
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 28

RUIZ, PFC Jose Jr
B/1/26 30 MAR 68 47E 16

RUIZ, CPL Jose
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 20

RUNKLE, LTCOL Robert Leslie
1/5 CAV 1 ACD 04 APR 68 48E 10

RUSH, PFC Marvin Gene
D/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 21

RUSSELL, SGT David Adams
H&S/1/26 09 MAR 68 43E 69

RUSSELL, LCPL James Lowell
D/1/9 11 MAR 68 44E 20

RUSSELL, PFC John Malcolm Jr
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 32

RUSSELL, LCPL Larry Gene
L/3/26 17 APR 68 50E 33

RYAN, CPL Ronald Royce
B/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 32

SAIN, SP4 Don Rue
FOB-1 29 JUL 66 9E 88

SANCHEZ, SSGT Javier Arturo "E"
? 03 MAY 67 19E 32

SANDERS, LCPL Gerald Jude
D/1/1 05 JUL 68 53W 23

SANDERS, LCPL Glenn Edward
A/1/26 29 JUN 67 22E 85

SANFORD, CPL Albert Russell
B/1/26 30 MAR 68 47E 16

SANSEVERINO, CPL Anthony
F/2/12 29 APR 67 18E 116

SAUER, 1/Lt Phillip Howard
3d AT 24 APR 67 18E 81

SAXTON, LCPL Gary Lee
HQ-26th MAR 22 JAN 68 35E 11

SCANLON, CPL Michael John
3dForReconCo 18 JAN 67 14E 50

SCARBOROUGH, HM3 russell
G/2/26 06 APR 68 48E 34

SCARBROUGH, PFC David Clifton
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 28

SCHOLZ, SPC Klaus Dieter
5th SFGA 30 NOV 68 37W 14 MIA

SHAFER, LCPL Marvin Albert
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 128

SHAVELIN, LCPL Hugh Ernest
D/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 21

SICKLEY, CPL Robert James
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 128

SCHMITZ, CPL Richard Travis
G/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 128

SCHROEDER, CPL Donald Ray
F/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 47

SCHROEDER, PFC Joe Lawrence
E/2/9 16 MAR 67 16 E 98

SCOTT, LCPL James Frank
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 38

SCOTT, GYSGT Jeremiah
1/3/26 01 FEB 68 36E 60

SCOTT, PVT Walter Michael
H&S/1/26 11 FEB 68 38E 80

SCRIBNER, LCPL Gary David
B/3d Recon 24 JAN 68 35E 27

SCULLEN, PFC Thomas James
D/1/9 02 MAR 68 42E 41

SEALL, LCPL George Melvin
G/2/3 30 APR 67 18E 121

SEARS, CPL Michael
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 33

SEDILLO, CPL Juan Natividad
H&S/1/9 08 APR 68 48E 54

SELDERS, PVT William Dean
K/3/26 05 FEB 68 37E 43

SEVELL, CAPT Robert Lee
HMM-262 28 FEB 68 41E 72

SEYMOE, LTCOL Joseph Phillip
MACV Det-19 21 JAN 68 35E 8

SHAFER, CAPT Francis Leo Jr
D/1/9 30 MAR 68 47E 15

SHANNON, LCPL Stephen Craig
C/1/26 22 MAR 68 45E 60

SHARP, CAPT Lufkin Scott
HMM-161 19 JUN 68 55W 2

SHARP, LCPL Samuel Arthur Jr
A/3d Recon 10 MAY 67 19E 86

SHEPARD, CPL James Merrill Jr
BU5 3dMarDiv 27 JUN 67 22E 73

SHERIDAN, LCPL Phillip Francis
1/13 14 APR 68 50E 1

SHERRELL, CPL David Frank
A/3d Recon 06 JUN 67 31E 63

SHIVER, LCPL Charles Jr
M/3/3 30 APR 67 18E 129

SHOVLIN, PFC Frank Joseph
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 70

SHRIVER, MSGT Jerry Michael
5th SFGA 24 APR 69 26W 41 MIA

SILVER, PFC Jimmy Louis
B/1/9 15 FEB 68 39E 53

SINE, CPL Melvin Francis
D/1/26 13 OCT 67 27E 101

SISSON, PFC Bennie Joe
C/1/26 22 MAR 68 45E 60

SKINNER, LCPL Phillip Craig
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 32

SKINNER, PFC Walter Francis
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 30

SKUZA, LCPL Arvid Burdeen
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 39

SLACK, PFC Steven George
D/1/9 08 FEB 68 39E 39

SMITH, PFC Alan Ray
E/2/26 05 FEB 68 37E 44

SMITH, LCPL Author "C"
B/1/26 30 MAR 68 47E 17

SMITH, 1/Lt Cary Carson
HMH-463 22 FEB 68 40E 69

SMITH, PFC Dennis
D/1/26 05 APR 68 46E 11

SMITH, PFC Douglas Wayne
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 30

SMITH, PFC John Archer
1/3/26 08 FEB 68 38E 39

SMITH, CPL Larry Michael
M/3/3 30 APR 67 19E 1

SMITH, HN Richard John
B/3d Recon 08 APR 68 48E 55

SMITH, PFC Rickey Gene
M/3/3 30 APR 67 19E 1

SMITH, SGT Terrence Glen
HQ-26th Mar 31 JAN 68 35E 9

SMITH, CPL Terry Lee
H&S/3/26 20 FEB 68 40E 48

SOBEL, PFC Irwin Ross
M/3/26 27 MAR 68 46E 50

SOUTHERN, CPL Rickey Dale
K/3/3 26 APR 67 18E 98

SPANGLER, CPL Larry Keith
HQ-26th Mar 12 FEB 68 39E 13

SPARKS, PFC Steven Lee
H&S/1/9 06 APR 68 48E 35

SPEER, CPL Dale Lloyd
H&S/1/26 06 JUN 67 21E 63

SPICER, PFC Jonathan Nathaniel
B/1/26 08 MAR 68 44E 54

SPILLMAN BUI Charles Otto
CBMU-301 28 FEB 68 41E 74

SREEN, PFC Steve Albert
A/1/3 27 JAN 67 14E 89

STACKS, CAPT Raymond Clark
5th SFGA 30 NOV 68 37W 14 MIA

STALLINGS, 1/Lt Franklin Delano
A-101 04 MAY 67 19E 41

STANCIU, LCPL Kenneth Allan
K/3/26 06 MAR 68 43E 35

STAPLES, LCPL Louis Franklin
E/2/26 05 FEB 68 37E 45

STARK, SMAJ Willie Ernest
Proj DELTA 02 DEC 66 13E 7 MIA

STEDMAN, LCPL Paul Francis
A/3d ShoreParty 28 FEB 68 41E 44

STENBERG, LCPL Jerry Oscar
C/1/13 21 JAN 68 35E 10

STEVENSON, PFC Charles
E/2/26 05 FEB 68 37E 45

STEWART, PFC Rick James
A/1/13 27 JUN 67 22E 73

STEWART, PFC Tommy Lane
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 40

STICKEL, PFC Gary Stephen
B/3d Recon 22 DEC 67 32E 48

STORZ, SGT George William
H&S/1/9 08 MAR 68 43E 62

STOUDT, LCPL Gordon Edward
K/3/9 30 APR 67 19E 1

STRAUSBAUGH, LCPL Harold A
H&S/2/26 09 MAR 68 44E 1

STRONG, CPL Stanley Grant
C/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 35

STUCK, PVT Ransom Lee
C/1/26 26 FEB 68 41E 44

STULL, CAPT Jay Webster
3dMarDivHqBn 28 FEB 68 41E 69

STUPAR, LCPL Michael Nick
H&S/1/26 06 JUN 67 21E 64

SUMIGA, LCPL Michael Edward
K/3/26 22 DEC 67 32E 48

SUTTER, CPL Richard Furlong
M/3/26 21 JUL 67 23E 105

SUTTON, LCPL Jack Lenn
B/1/9 24 APR 67 18E 82

SWEENEY, LCPL Thomas James
C/1/26 26 FEB 68 41E 45

SWEET, PFC Jerry Alan
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 24

SZMANSKI, PFC Frank Adam IV
1/3/26 25 FEB 68 41E 31

TAGLIERRE, LCPL Leonard Joseph
LSU 05 JUL 67 23E 16

TALLENT, LCPL Garry Glenn
B/3d Recon 20 AUG 67 24E 21

TAYLOR, CPL Bobby Allen
B/1/9 03 FEB 68 37E 14

TAYLOR, SSGT Danny Gene
5th SFGA 28 SEP 66 11E 27

TAYLOR, PFC Ernest Vernon
E/2/26 05 FEB 68 37E 45

TAYLOR, CPL Homer Jr
1/3/26 18 FEB 68 40E 14

TAYLOR, LCPL Louis Gaine
A/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 36

TAYLOR, PVT Steven Earl
L/3/26 14 APR 68 50E 2

TERHUNE, PFC Daryl Bert Jr
G/2/26 06 MAR 68 43E 36

TERRELL, PFC William Lee
A/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 36

THEYERL, PFC Clayton Joseph
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 31

THOMAS, 2/Lt Michael Howard
1/3/26 20 JAN 68 34E 92

THORPE, CPL Gary Wilford
H&S/1/26 23 FEB 68 41E 5

THOTLAND, LCPL John Alfred
HMM-262 28 FEB 68 42E 1

TINGLEY, LCPL Thomas James
B/3d Recon 30 DEC 67 33E 5

TINO, PFC John Francis Jr
E/2/3 30 APR 67 19E 1

TONER, HN Louis Joseph
H&S/3/26 06 MAR 68 43E 37

TOOMEY, MAJ Samuel Kamu III
5th SFGA 30 NOV 68 37W 15 MIA

TORRES, CPL Manuel Prieto
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 42

TOTH, SGT John Paul
HMM-262 28 FEB 68 42E 2

TOTTEN, PFC Kenneth R Jr
B/1/26 30 MAR 68 47E 17

TOWSLEE, PFC Edward Lawrence
A/1/9 04 APR 68 48E 12

TRAVIS, CPL Edward Burke
A/1/13 27 JUN 67 22E 73

TREDONICK, SFC Charles Nichol
POR-3 29 JAN 68 35E 63

TRIMBLE, CPL James Mitchell
G/2/26 06 APR 68 48E 35

TURNER, ISGT Robert Lawrence
A/1/9 11 FEB 68 38E 62

TURNER, CPL William Oliver
H&S/3dShoreP 28 FEB 68 42E 1

TWOMEY, PFC Raymond Lee
B/1/9 24 APR 67 18E 82

TYCZ, SGT James Neil
A/3d Recon 10 MAY 67 19E 88

TYRCZ, HM3 Walter Fred Jr
A/1/26 14 MAR 68 44E 54

UZZELL, PVT Frank Nelson
D/1/26 27 JAN 68 35E 51

VALENTE, GYSGT Anthony Nicholas
C/1/9 26 FEB 68 41E 56

VANCE, PFC Reggie Lee
A/1/26 22 FEB 68 40E 70

VANDERSHANS, HN Donald Ed
H&S/1/9 01 APR 68 47E 37

VAN DEUSEN, PFC Philip Andrew
A/1/13 07 JUN 67 21E 68

VASQUEZ, SGT Jesus Roberto
EOD 30 JAN 68 35E 83

VASQUEZ, PFC Jose Maria
M/3/26 21 JUL 67 20E 79

VEDDER, SGT Richard Jerome
E/2/9 16 MAR 67 16E 103

VERCOUTEREN, LCPL Edward Arnold
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 71

VICKERS, LCPL Robert Lee
A/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 37

VLASAK, LCPL William James Jr
G/2/3 02 MAY 67 19E 19

WALBRIDGE, SSGT George Wilcox
H&HS-1 10 FEB 68 38E 73

WALDRON, MSGT Howard Bert
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 37

WALKER, CPL Richard Lee
1/3/26 27 JUN 67 22E 74

WALSH, LCPL Jeffrey Michael
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 41

WARD, CPL Walter Leonard
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 71

WARREN, CPL Donald Albert
B/1/26 30 MAR 68 47E 18

WASHUT, CPL Walter Junior
K/3/9 30 APR 67 20E 70

WASSENICH, CPL Stephen George
1/3/26 27 JUN 67 22E 74

WEED, CPL Donald Edmond
B/1/9 27 JAN 68 35E 51

WELLS, LCPL James Randall
F/2/26 07 JUN 68 48E 49

WELLS, PFC Robert James Jr
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 23

WEST, SSGT Seth Lee Jr
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 24

WEST, PFC Stephen Alan
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 38

WETHINGTON, HN David L Jr
H&S/1/9 02 MAR 68 42E 45

WHEELER, PFC Joseph Keith
C/1/9 31 MAR 68 47E 28

WHISENHUNT, CPL James Henry
'/3/3 30 APR 67 19E 1

WHITAKER, CPL Donald Eugene
B/1/26 25 FEB 68 41E 32

WHITE, LCPL Larry Frederick
H&S/3/26 21 JAN 68 35E 10

WHITESIDES, CAPT Richard Lebrou
Advisor 26 MAR 64 1E 48

WHITTICOM, LCPL Jonathan Charle
H&S/1/26 27 JUN 67 22E 74

WICKLIFFE, HM3 Robert Logan
H&S/3/26 22 JAN 68 35E 13

WIEDEMAN, CPL Robert Arthur
I/3/26 25 FEB 68 41E 33

WIENCKOSKI, PFC David Raymond
L/3/26 06 MAR 68 43E 39

WILEY, LCPL Gilbert
F/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 49

WILLIAMS, CAPT Derez Jr
20th TASS 23 AUG 67 25E 36

WILLIAMS, PFC Dorsey Burwin
M/3/3 30 APR 67 19E 2

WILLIAMS, SGM Eddie Lee
5th SFGA 03 OCT 66 11E 40 MIA

WILLIAMS, LCPL Ira Winard
A/1/26 27 JUN 67 22E 75

WILLIAMS, SGT James
M/3/26 21 JUL 67 24E 79

WILLIAMS, CPL Kenneth R Jr
2/26 09 MAR 68 44E 1

WILLIAMS, 1/Lt Maxie Raymond
A/1/26 10 APR 68 49E 17

WILLIAMS, PFC Nathaniel M
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 22

WILLIAMS, PFC Richard Earl
M/3/26 05 APR 68 48E 22

WILLIAMS, LCPL Robert Eugene
D/1/1 05 JUL 68 53W 25

WILLIAMS, PFC Thomas Hansford
H&S/1/26 06 MAR 68 43E 39

WILLIAMS, Ted
B/1/9 16 MAR 67 16E 98

WILLIAMS, PFC Tommy Dorsey
L/3/26 17 APR 68 50E 35

WILLIAMS, PFC Jack
L/3/26 27 JUN 67 22E 75

WILLIAMS, LCPL Woodrow
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 45

WILSON PFC Reginald Eugene
B/1/26 21 JUL 67 23B 106

WILSON, HN Wilmer Dwayne
H&S/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 24

WIRE, GYSGT Eugene Charles
M/3/26 23 FEB 68 41E 6

WITHEY, CPL Howard Hugh
A/3d Recon 06 JUN 67 21E 64

WITMER, PFC Omar David Jr
A/1/26 17 SEP 67 26E 86

WOMBLE, LCPL William Thomas Jr
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 34

WOOD, LCPL James Anthony
E/2/26 25 FEB 68 41E 33

WOODALL, 1/Lt John Braxton
K/3/9 30 APR 67 19E 2

WOODARD, SSGT Paul Leroy
A/1/9 15 MAR 68 44E 63

WOODARD, CPL Wayne Howard
M/3/9 30 APR 67 19E 2

WOODS, LCPL Cordell Emanuel
H&S/1/9 16 FEB 68 39E 68

WOODS, E-7 David Alexander
FOB-3 02 NOV 67 29E 8

WOODS, 1/Lt John Kevin
H&S/3/26 11 FEB 68 39E 1

WORTHEN, PFC Larry Eugene
B/1/26 07 JUN 67 21E 72

WRIGHT, PFC Michael Vincen
E/2/26 26 FEB 68 41E 46

WRIGHT, CPL Robert
C/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 24

WURTZ, HN Emil John
H&S/3/26 22 FEB 68 40E 71

WYMER, PFC William Wayne
A/1/9 16 APR 68 50E 24

YAGUES, PFC Robert Gene
E/2/3 03 MAY 67 19E 34

YAMANAKA, LCPL Roger Kimo
H&S/3/26 04 MAR 68 43E 2

YEARY, 2/Lt Randall Douglas
B/3d Recon 14 JAN 68 34E 48

YOHN, LCPL William Leon
G/2/26 06 APR 68 48E 50

YORK, CPL Henry
A/1/9 08 FEB 68 38E 42

ZERBST, PFC Gilbert Leroy
F/2/26 07 APR 68 48E 50

KEY TO MAP OF KHE SANH COMBAT BASE

1 - Water Point Road
2 - C/1/26 CP bunker
3 - BLUE Sector trench, C/1/26
3A - Portion manned by A/1/26
4 - Helicopter revetments
5 - Flashlight personnel
6 - GRAY Sector, B/1/26
7 - 27th ARVN Ranger perimeter
8 - ASP #1
9 - "C" Battery 105s, 1/13
10 - H&S, 1/26 & line Co. offices
11 - ,26 CP messhall
12 - 1/26 COC
13 - CO, 1/26 bunker, "Womb"
14 - Co B, 3d Recon living area
15 - Base Post Office before seige
16 - Base PX before Siege
17 "Fort Hester" RLT-S-5 offices
18 - S-1 & S-4, RLT26 offices, RLT 26 Comm across street
19 - General's hootch
20 - RLT 26 COC
21 - RAS (Regiment Aid Station)
22 - USAF bunkers
23 - Air Force area
24 - FSCC
25 - FOB #1
26 - Base EM Club
27 - CBMU-301 hootches
28 - Sub Unit #5 messhall
29 - Officers' Club
30 - Water tower
31 - CBMU-301 work area
32 - LSU
33 - USAF Casualty evac tent
34 - C Med supply tents
35 - 17th ITT hootch/bunker
36 - ITT POW compound
37 - Dr. Farber's hootch/red shutters
38 - Protestant chaplain's hootch
39 - Triage of C Med
40 - C Med living tents
41 - Seabee tent for rock cruchers (Driscoll tried to make into chapel]
42 - S-5 Staging Area
43 - Graves Registration
44 - Post Office during siege
45 - 106mm hootch that took direct hit
46 - GRAY ALPHA Sector
47 - 1/26 Co supply hootches
48 - RLT26 Motor Transport
49 - 1/26 BN supply tents and area
50 - Aviation POL bladders
51 - Tar dump and POL storage
52 - Airstrip
53 - Co A, 3d Shore Party Bn
54 - 3d Engineers area
55 - 1/26 BAS
56 - 1/26 Motor Transport area
57 - ASP #2
58 - A Battery, 1/13
59 - A Battery 1/13 Club House
60 - FOB-3 area
61 - FOB-3 perimeter
62 - Area of perimeter manned by Marines of CAC O during siege
63 - FOB-3 medical bunker
64 - FOB-3 operations bunkers
65 - FOB-3 supply tents
66 - FOB-3 hardbacks
67 - FOB-3 helo pad
68 - FOB-3 pig and other animals pen, food for indigenous personnel
69 - CAP O-3 area
70 - CAP O-3 perimeter
71 - Ta Cong ville
72 - Mr. Onya's residence
73 - French concrete house owned by French priest
74 - Concrete school house
75 - HQ Battery, 1/13
76 - P Battery, 1st Prov 155s
77 - 3d Tanks and Anti-Tanks (ONTOSS)
78 - 2/26 rear
79 - Rock Crusher
80 - 3/26 BAS
81 - 3/26 chaplain's hootch
82 - 3/26 COC
83 - RED Sector
84 - LSA of Shore Party
85 - Coffee trees of Mr. Poilane
86 - Mr. Poilane's private road
87 - Military road (never used)
88 - Trash dump
89 - 1/13 Motor Transport
90 - O-2 and O-3 aerial revetments
91 - MAG and MAB hootches
92 - RLT-26 supply
93 - Recon perimeter
94 - "Ponderosa" area, D/1/26
95 - 3/26 Field mess
96 - CP bunker for 1/26 manning perimeter
97 - RLT-26 comm tech shop
98 - RLT-26 CO & XO living hootch
99 - 1st Radio Bn Det bunker during siege
100 - Air Control Tower, Crash Crew


881 NORTH
881 SOUTH
881-A
COMBAT BASE
KHE SANH VILLE
LANG VEI
CO ROC
Scale Échelle Tỷ-lệ 1:50,000
3 Statute Miles
4000 Meters
4000 Yards
3 Nautical Miles

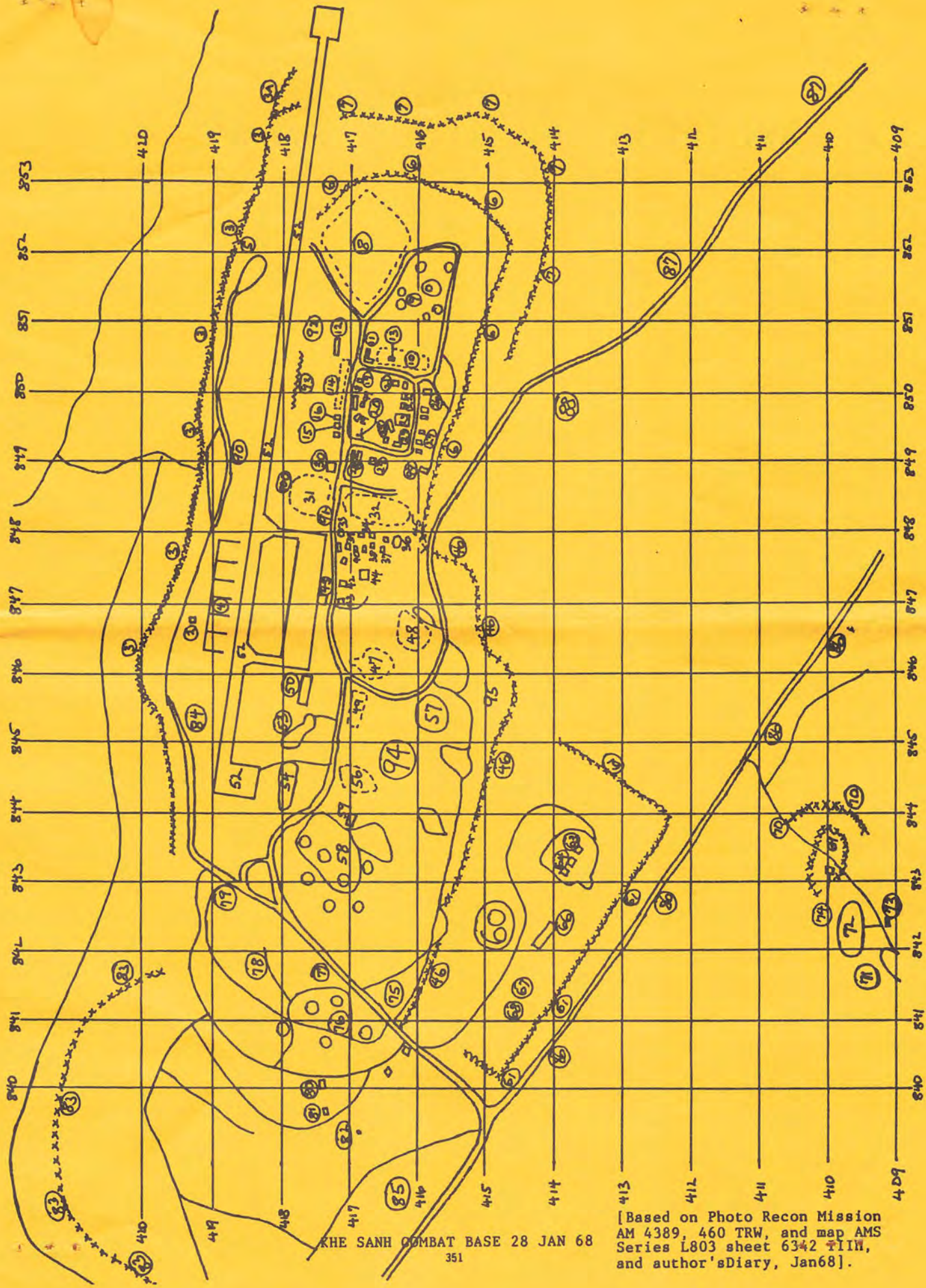

KHE SANH COMBAT BASE 28 JAN 68

[Based on Photo Recon Mission AM 4389, 460 TRW, and map AMS Series L803 sheet 6342 I IN, and author'sDiary, Jan68].

KHE SANH VETERAN

For those who fight for it, life has a flavor the protected never know.
(From a sign in the recon command bunker at Khe Sanh originally the thought of an unknown recon Marine)

Issue No. 37, Fall, 1996. Published by Khe Sanh Veterans, inc., a non-profit incorporation registered in the State of Wisconsin 01 Sept 1988, and tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(19) veterans organization by IRS letter of 10 Feb 1989, consisting of all who lived or served in the Khe Sanh battlefield area. Purposes of the organization are: To promote renewed fellowship of all who lived and served in the area of Khe Sanh; To locate and account for all who so served; To promote preservation of an accurate historical account of such service; To preserve the memory of those who died there; To promote research and understanding and healing with a regard to those who served there; and to promote artistic expression of the Khe Sanh experience.

PHILADELPHIA REUNION 1996

Kevin Macaulay (B/3dRecon) was sitting in the small dining area of the hotel with some of his friends the last day of the reunion. "We come to reunions to find some friends; what we discover is more of ourself."

194 Khe Sanh veterans gathered at the Ramada Inn near the Philadelphia airport 24 to 28 July 1996, finding many friends and touching again the joy of comradeship we learned so well so long ago. Some were there for the first time, including Kenny Thompas who was the Marine at Khe Sanh who put out the sign in front of Fred McEwan's Regimental S-4 bunker: "Home is Where You Dig It," and Charles Lopez who was the pointman of a patrol of DELTA, 1/26, Marines who captured a NVA machinegunner just outside the northern perimeter in the opening days of the Siege. Bill Frye came all the way from Tahiti! Those from recon, DELTA 1/26, the Ontos section, and ALPHA 1/9 got together, and many one-on-one friendships sere renewed. A former platoon commander later mentioned that the reunion was a God-send, that he was hugged and given admiration from his men that he never expected.

Carl Oksnee's dedicated efforts to provide us with the lowest room rates in the area, a very adequate PX to purchase Khe Sanh and other kinds of memorabilia, and an excellent sit-down dinner (which emphasized a party; it was not necessary to dress-up) were the reason so many enjoyed so much. THANK YOU CARL! Some were amused at how much we've changed over the years. Is it really true, Carl, that your son, presently in the Marine Corps and seen wearing the impressive Dress Blue Marine Corps uniform, was actually wearing your uni-

(Continued on page 2)

NOTICE

If you are not a Life Member, and if you have not paid dues this year, send your $20.00 (for annual dues or subscription) or $150.00 (for Life Membership) or a note that you want to receive our magazine but are not able right now to pay for it to:

Mr. Vincent Griffith
27280 Jefferson St #200
Temecula CA 92590

Ray Stubbe, who prepared this issue, is our temporary Editor. Send poems, stories, memoirs, comments, letters to him at:

Ray W. Stubbe
8766 Park View Ct.
Wauwatosa WI
53226-2729

form?

Actions taken at this reunion included:

- *Relation to Third Marine Division:* We are unique; merging might destroy our identity. it was decided we would remain separate but maintain a relationship. It was decided not to accept an invitation to join the Association as a non-geographic chapter.
- *Ring for Khe Sanh Vets:* Carl Oksnee will pursue this matter.
- *Our Khe Sanh Memorial Plaque in Arlington Cemetery:* The black laquer facing is damaged. Ken Penn will contact a company to make repairs.
- *Erecting a Khe Sanh Memorial at Khe Sanh, Vietnam:* No action will be taken now.
- *Next reunions:* The 1997 reunion will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, in July (when 3dMarDiv is not meeting). Part of the program for the reunion will be a trip to Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery where two large mass graves contain the remains of unidentified KIAs at Khe Sanh: one for the men of the patrol on 25 February and the other for the place crash of 6 March. It was felt that St. Louis was a central location, east and west, north and south, and has offered special incentives for meeting there. It is anticipated that the 1998 reunion, being the 30th anniversary of the Siege battle, will be held in Washington, D.C., or perhaps some nearby location (e.g., Quantico) and will include observances at the Khe Sanh Memorial plaque in Arlington and the Vietenam Veterans Memorial in the mall.
- *By-Laws Committee:* was formed with John Balanco, chairman.
- *Khe Sanh Veterans magazine*: Ernie Spencer has brought our magazine to first-class status, comparable to the best of glossy magazines and with professional and artistic expertise. A problem developed in connection with the cost of the publication (due to its professional appearance, dramatic increase in cost of paper this year, and nonpayment of dues by a significant number of those receiving the magazine). It was decided that a mailer would be sent to request dues or a reply that dues could not be paid right now but that a person would still like to receive the magazine. With the printing and mailing costs for three issues at approx. $15,000.00 and Ernie's request for approx. $5700.00, it was decided that Ernie would be given a contract, that we would determine anticipated fund receipts based on replies to the mailer, review our distribution list to remove those who apparently do not wish to receive the magazine, and proceed with payment to the Editor according to his request as we were able. Ernie declined and submitted the following:

KNOWING WHEN TO FOLD EM

I made what I felt was a just and fair offer that your Board declined. I am grateful to them for their decision. Now, I no longer feel any guilt in leaving. With the exception of one issue, I've been doing the magazine since 1992. That's long enough. If you the reader are concerned, get involved. Stop the blaming before it starts. We are a fraternal organization. We are about respect not dominance. We are about honor not control. This is YOUR magazine. Write in and say your peace. But please, let us not become divisive."

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE FOR US, ERNIE! No one fully realizes all the work of soliciting, the many phone calls and letters asking people to send in their poems and articles, all the work in typing and composition and page layout, not to mention the emotional toll that working with these memories and stories creates in the one working with them! Ernie, you've given us a very great gift from your love, and these things are never forgotten. Many dozens of our Khe Sanh vets have remarked that our magazine is a life-saver in a very, very real sense. The main editorial policy Ernie promoted was to make this magazine a forum, a sort of bunker after a patrol, a camp fire scene in the evening, where those who have experienced the things that are so difficult to verbalize could talk things over, fill in missing details, honor and spotlight a very special person, contribute their poetry and other artwork.

- Larry McCartney noted that the armed services have given until 19 February 1997 to resubmit recommendations for any personal decorations for heroic actions. This is especially significant for those whose recommended awards were lost. It would be necessary to obtain eye-witness statements, and preferrably to submit via a platoon or company commander.
- Mr. Vincent Griffith, our Treasurer, noted that during this past year we took in approximately $37,000.00, and expended approximately $30,000.00. Life Membership fees are placed in time certificates from which we are able to draw interest. In our operating funds, as of 30 June, we had $6590.00 in the bank and owed $6300.00.
- Mr. Mike O'Hara noted that in the past two years we have added approximately 500 new members.

BANQUET

John Kaheny pointed out two men sitting in a far corner, RUSSELL TURNER and NICK NICORVO. Had it not been for the heroic actions of these men, John said he wouldn't be here tonight.

The opening prayer was based on how we lived in the Siege battle where so many shared their last drops of water or last can of C-ration, even if it were a can of peaches, because we loved each other that much:

As we care and we share, we feed and are fed;
This is, O Lord, our Daily Bread.
For when we share what's even least
We taste of Your eternal feast.

(Continued on page 3)

From the seeds of our love in actions sown,
The bread that nourishes all is grown.
So bless this food, this night, we pray,
That those we meed be fed today
By life, our life, which we do give
Through loving living many live. Amen.

Medal of Honor recipient, Harvey Barnum, gave the main address covering his return trip to Vietnam and holding the Marines present at the banquet in the highest regard. (He had not been briefed that we have a significant number of Army folk there, including a considerable number who had served in FOB-3 and the Dusters). Reflecting the great man that he is, after being "ambushed" by John Balanco to meet with the former CO of FOB-3, he went to the table in the bar where he was, took off his MOH medalion, and the two had a very significant conversation for several hours!

Three former South Vietnamese Marines, in uniform, whose presence was arranged by DAVID SPRY, addressed everyone with the following:

Dear Friends,

This is not a speech but only a letter of a Vietnamese Marine writing to the US Marines, to you, the heroic soldiers in the Battle of Khe Sanh. You were in Khe Sanh in 1968. I was there in 1970. Nearly 28 years have elapsed, but the best memories I still retain of my soldier's life remain the indelible recollections of my deep feelings, of my pride in, and my admirations for the officers and men in the USMC and VNMC. These heroic soldiers have demonstrated the courage and exemplary fighting spirit in the battlefield. As a Marine I have to admire the courage and the discipline of the US Marines. You have done your job successfully. The Vietnam War has ended, but the spiritual and material losses have been heavy for the US and many American families. Many of your friends have left parts of their bodies on the Battle of Khe Sanh. On this occasion, I would like to express my gratitude to you and your families for the fine sentiments they have reserved for the Vietnamese for many years now, in the struggle for freedom, Democracy, and human rights of my country. On behalf of the National Association of the Vietnamese Veteran, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all of you for the nice invitation. Thank you and best wishes." TRAN THIEN HIEU, LTCOL, VNMC, Retired.

An active duty Marine Color guard presented the Colors during a very impressive ceremony, and TOM WINSTON, who is suffering from the terminal Huntington's Disease and who briefly addressed everyone, gave the command to Retire the Colors. It was most impressive to see TOM and to witness this ceremony.

CARING SESSION

A significant number of reunion attendees gathered in our general meeting room to share some of their memories of men that are no longer with us. We were introduced to special persons in a setting that enabled us to touch some of our special and tender areas of memory. The group was reminded of a very ancient statement in the Gospel of Thomas (a very old Christian document dating from the time of the New Testament, but not given the status of those books which were included in the Bible), where Jesus teaches: "If you bring out what is inside of you, what is inside of you will heal you, but if you keep what is inside of you inside of you, what is inside of you will make you sick." We all have pieces of the battle in us. Some of these pieces are extremely painful, just like jagged pieces of shrapnel, shaped like pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. If we bring them out and share them with each other, we are better able to form a whole picture, and this will help make all of us whole. The American Indians made sand paintaings and wove rugs to tell the story of their experiences, to put all the parts into a greater whole. Ancient peoples gathered around camp fires to retell the stories of their experiences, and thus developed many long epic poems and legends and stories.

BOB DONAGHUE PRESENTATION

Mr. Robert J. Donaghue gave an enlightening and motivating slide presentation and talk of his fifth trip back to Khe Sanh, 6 - 29 April 1996. Accompanying him were Charles Berg, Bruce Johnston, David "Bulldog" Smith, and Robert Shippen. Bob is helping the Bru tribespeople in the Khe Sanh area who were so close to so many of us, and whose needs are literally a matter of life and death. His accomplishments and projects include digging of water wells for the remote Bru villages, bringing medical supplies and developing a dispensary for the Bru, buying cows, etc. The hundreds of smiles on the faces of children pictured in his slides of the Khe Sanh area reflect the gratitude of those there. In many ways so many of us who served with the Bru continue to live under a guilt of having promised to help these people only to abandon them when our American interests became too costly or not in our selfish interests. They served us even to the point of laying down their ives, in many cases; we abandoned them. Now, Robert and others have returned to repay debts of love and gratitude, and, from the hundreds of photos Robert showed, this is being done. (NOTE: Several others in our membership have returned to Khe Sanh in recent years: Peter Brush, Mike Lee, Robert Shippen, Connie Menefee, Jurate Kazickas, David Spry, Larry McCartney, and Robert DeStatte. Any others?). Robert, your actions are a great inspiration to all of us! Trip #6 leaves in April, 1997.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The ninth annual meeting in Philadelphia was a great success due to the efforts of Carl Oksnee and many others. Robert Donoghue's presentation on his trips to Khe Sanh was quite impressive. Of particular note was the announcement that Khe Sanh is on the internet. Robert and Mike

(Continued on page 4)

O'Hara both have established home pages which can be accesssed through the Vietnam Veterans home page. We were honored to have at the banquet as our guest of honor, Col Harvey Barnum, USMC (Ret). We had quite a large gathering, perhaps the biggest yet.

The president of the Third Marine Division asked the Board to recommend that we become a chapter of that fine organization. The Board recommended to the general membership that we table that recommendation as many felt such a move would cause us to loose our special identity. If you have any thoughts on this issue please contact me or any member of the Board. In the meantime, I would encourage you to join the Third Marine Division Association, if you have not already done so. It is a fine organization with many benefits and worthy programs.

We have been very successful with our membership campaign. As a result we will have to be more selective with the mailing list for the newsletter. The cost of mailing simply has exceeded our current capability. You will soon receive a note in the mail regarding this situation. I ask that you read it carefully and respond accordingly.

As the general membership meeting, it was decided to hold next years meeting in St. Louis. This will give us an opportunity to visit Jefferson Barracks where many of our fallen brothers lay in rest. We will also be honoring those who fought in the Hill Fights of April and May, 1967. We also will soon be observing the thirtieth anniversary of the Siege. Your Board of Directors are interested in hearing from you about special ways to commemorate these historic events.

As usual it was good to see old friends and to share fond memories. Don't miss out on it next year.

Semper Fi, John M. Kaheny, President

THOMAS STAMPER

Born 26 October 1934, died of cancer-related illness 04 September 1996. Tom was Commanding Officer of CAC OSCAR in Khe Sanh ville arriving 27 December 1967 to replace CAPT Ernest L. Elmore who had been wounded with three Purple Hearts and rotated. Tom enlisted in the Marine Corps, went up through the ranks, was a Drill Instructor at Parris Island, and commissioned in 1966. Tom had been a Platoon Commander with 3/3 at ALPHA-3, overrun the night before he arrived with every officer killed. During the Siege, Tom relocated his unit from Khe Sanh ville to the FOB-3 compound. He retired in 1975 and worked with the Navy at a ROTC unit of a high school, after which he became a lawn mower salesman. The following are some comments made during a conversation

CONVERSATION WITH TOM STAMPER

STUBBE: I remember you saying to me while we were at Parris Island together in 1969 that Colonel Lownds actually had tears in his eye.

STAMPER: He did! That old man cried. When we got out of that village and I went to his bunker, he looked at me and he said: You know, I would have lost that company [D/1/26] if I would have sent it in. He had tears in his eyes. He didn't let me down. he did all that he could possibly do in that position.... We were trapped in that village. We were completely out of ammo. And the Colonel told me that he was going to get us out and that we would be taken out by air. It would be a short-notice-type of thing. he says, Be ready to go when I pass the world, when the helos arrive. I had CAP OSCAR-2 standing-by [at the western edge of Khe Sanh ville]. So they came up the street and we evacuated that ville.

A POEM

Gentle person
thy concert is there
Who took your brothers life
Music was made
by men who know
How best to write the notes
A shot, a shell
a burst and sound
Whistle the song of death
The Chorus is sung
by men who never
Could carry a tune before
Conductors appear
to lead the parade
But only from afar
Lest they be touched
with the notes of the song
That they themselves have wrote.

—Talis Kaminskis, March, 1989

MOYERS S. SHORE, II

The author of the first book printed on the battle of Khe Sanh, issued by the Marine Corps in 1969 and written by Marine Corps pilot, Moyers S. Shore II, *The Battle for Khe Sanh*, was killed 11 June 1974 when his plane crashed off Hawaii in one of the deepest areas of the Pacific Ocean. Only a few pieces of balsa wood were recovered.

KHE SANH LOGO?

The following logo is submitted as a possiblity for pins, patches, letterhead, rings, etc.:



The "V" stands for: "veteran," "Vietnam," "victory," "valor" (as in the small brass "V" in medals for heroic action in warfare), and the "V" in all the Tactical Marks on all supply Mount-out boxes in the 26th Marine Regiment (which has a blue "V") since the 26th Marines is a historic part of the Fifth Marine Division.

The "K" and the "S" emphasize sharpness, twistedness, the pain of the terrain: mountains, rivers, valleys, pathways, the geography of our patrols and the geography of our life ever since Khe Sanh. Khe Sanh's terrain and experience is sharp, painful, twisting within memories, difficult to discern where one is at any one time.

The nine-sided polygon (a nonagon) represents the multi-faceted nature of our organization, which includes all branches of the armed services, local people, civilians, and the nine or so years in which Americans served at Khe Sanh.

The design avoids extraneous details. It is not "busy" (or complex). It is meant to be universal, applicable to all who lived and served in Khe Sanh. It was completed 7 August 1996 by Ray W. Stubbe.

THE SOUL MATE

By Ray W. Stubbe

The blood on his hands
So alive
with death
Gripped
Drying, dying, contracting, squeezing
Suffocating, suffusing,
Penetrating, transforming
So alive, so real, so near
So always
The brother's cry from his clay
in violent shouts
in words what is not said
in feelings what is not felt
in actions what is never accomplished
in passing time what always is
No washing of hands removes
The pain stain interpenetrated
soul
Within: always
present, always
shedding, always
staining.
Red clay born
in violenced mud
New birth bourn
in sacrificed blood:
Unseen on green
uniforms darkened;
Unseen in gleam
glowed brass, colored
medals - ribbons - rank - flags:
the rust of battle's reality
stored in time capsule's self.
Living blood within
retained
in black hole unremembered memory
unseen, unknown, pulling within
released
in lacerations by those who don't know
in unhealing wounds that heal:
oasis of life in the valley exceedingly dried
dismembered bones and body parts
The blood of God.

1967 HILL FIGHTS

Next year will be the 30th anniversary of the famous Hill Fights for 861, 881-South and 881-North at Khe Sanh in April and May. We are planning to do a special edition of our magazine to focus on this. If there are any veterans of those battles who would like to submit stories, memoirs, poems, either written or on a cassette tape (sometimes it's much easier just talking on a tape), please do so NOW and send them to Ray W. Stubbe ASAP.

HISTORICAL NOTES

Much of what happened subsequently in Vietnam may possibly be traced to roots in the thinking of President Roosevelt. The following is a quote from the Conference at Yalta (dialogue between President Roosevelt and Marshall Stalin, 8 Feb 1945):

THE PRESIDENT said he had in mind a trusteeship for Indochina. He added that the British did not approve of this idea as they wished to give it back to the French since they feared the implications of a trusteeship as it might affect Burma.

MARSHALL STALIN remarked that the British had lost Burma once through reliance on Indochina, and it was not his opinion that Britain was a sure country to protect this area. He added that he thought Indochina was a very important area.

THE PRESIDENT said the Indochinese were people of small stature, like the Javanese and Burmese, and were not warlike.." [From *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1955, p. 770].

The following appeared in the KSVT NEWSLETTER put out by our Secretary, Mike Loehrer, for Khe Sanh vets in Texas, May, 1995:

"I've been working in China the past five weeks. I was amazed to see what is going on in the Orient after 25 years. You've heard from McNamara, and you've heard the media's report of Vietnam 20 years after the fall of Saigon. Let me give you a report from one Marine's perspectives.

"Our purpose, plain and simple, in Asia after WW II was to check the spread of Communism from Russia and China. Korea was threatened. Vietnam was threatened. So was Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. We stemmed the tide in Korea. our purpose was the same in Vietnam; namely, to keep other countries in Asia from falling to Communism.

"In failing to confront the early spread of oppression prior to WW II, the US had to pay a high price later in fighting Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperialist Japan. Our purpose in Korea and Vietnam was to pay a lesser price earlier. We did. I'm sorry, I don't think Reagan's efforts, no matter how important, caused the collapse of Communism. It seems to me that it was checked in Korea and it was checked in Vietnam until Russia and China were left weakened.

"At home, during the Vietnam War, after so many years of fighting, many lost sight of our purpose. Due to confusion of purpose, lack of resolve, the failings of a self-limiting strategy, South Vietnam was handed to the North. They did not win anything. But the war in Southeast Asia to check Communism was won. Evidence: Vietnam is now rapidly moving toward independence and free-market prosperity. Evidence: Other countries have not fallen. Evidence: China is opening up to the West.

The lives of American servicemen in Southeast Asia were not lost in vain. I don't care what anybody says, and I don't care if they say it with tears! I saw with my own eyes the new found freedom and love of liberty in the East among the young. As we say in Texas, 'The price of freedom is not free.' We paid the price, lest we forget."

In response to this newsletter, Mr. Walt W. Rostow (who is on our Khe Sanh roster as one who championed our situation to President Johnson as one of his closest advisors) wrote to Mike Loehrer: "In your newsletter of May 1995 you wrote a superb statement of what the war in Vietnam was all about—better than the enclosed which I wrote to clear my mind before a CNN interview.." [The following is what he wrote]:

VIETNAM

"The difference in perspective on the Southeast Asian experience can be simply stated: One group of Americans regard it as a war in Vietnam; from which we gradually withdrew; and which was won by the Communists who unified the country as the last Americans left Saigon in helicopters in great disarray.

"The other group of Americans included Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. They believed it was a war about the balance of power in all of Southeast Asia—from the South China Sea down to the critical Straits of Malacca including Thailand and Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. While, in the short run, the war in Vietnam was certainly won by the Communists, they did not conquer Southeast Asia.

"This view of the war in Vietnam against the background of all Southeast Asia is not taken with benefit of hindsight. Winston Churchill suggested SEATO to Dwight Eisenhower in the Waldorf-Astoria, before he took office in 1953, thinking of Singapore, and the two British battle cruisers lost to Japanese planes flying from a Cambodian airfield. We in the Kennedy administration inherited SEATO Plan 5, which was a plan for defending all of Southeast Asia from the anticipatged blow to the South from Hanoi. In 1965 Sukarno of Indonesia left the UN to join Communist China. He confronted Malaysia. It took 80 Commonwealth ships to contain that confrontation. Lee Kwan Yew at that time said, 'It looks as though we will again go through the meat grinder.'

"It was against the background of this crisis throughout Southeast Asia that Johnson made his reluctant decision of July 1965 to put American troops in large numbers into Vietnam.

"Southeast Asia doubled its income per capita between 1965 and 1975; found its feet and its confidence, creating along the way the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Lee Kuan Yew's April 1973 prediction at the National Press Club in Washington proved true. He said that even if the Communists took over in Vietnam, it did not follow that the region would fall, as it would have done earlier. American intervention and the conflict that followed had, in his phrase, 'Broken the hypnotic spell on the other Southeast Asians that communism is irresistable, that it is the wave of history.' Twenty years after the fall of Saigon, Vietnam is an associate member of ASEAN.

"In short, we certainly lost the battle—the test of will—in Vietnam; but we won the war in Southeast Asia. And that was what it was all about.

"*I repeat this point of view in part because I am thinking of the men lost in Vietnam and their families. This was surely not simply a pointless, lost war. I am sure the families and the veterans have suffered from this narrow view of the war in Southeast Asia.*

"But I also do so because we are entering a century in which the South China Sea, the Malacca Straits, and the countries of ASEAN may again be at the center of diplomacy and strategy. We cannot afford again a split American perspective."

FIRE MISSION - BATTERY ADJUST

By Bill O'Connor

In the Spring 1996 issue of the Khe Sanh *Veteran*, Ernie Spencer responded to Capt Pardee (former CO, A/1/13) that he would like to hear his memoirs as he had not heard from any other Artillery people. Well something got to me recently that didn't sit well with me so now you are going to hear the Artillery's side of the story.

I came back home from Vietnam right out of Khe Sanh as one really angry Captain with a Regular Commission who thought the higher ups were a bunch of ———. I got out after eight years of service.

Let's set the record straight. The men of Charlie and Bravo Battery (I commanded both Batteries at Khe Sanh - we referred to ourselves as Charlie Battery Reinforced) were on the guns whenever the Command BATTERY ADJUST was sounded. it didn't make any difference that they were getting shelled by the 152s out of Co Roc or NVA mortars closer in. If you grunts think incoming artillery or rockets is a frightening experience when you are diving for a bunker try it one time running out of a bunker to man a 105 Howitzer. Let's also discuss the short round problem. LtCol Hennelly would have come right down my throat for a friendly fire incident and I do not remember that ever happening.

My Cannon Cockers stayed on their guns throughout the whole time of that first attack on the Combat Base and the surrounding hills. I had 3 guns on Hill 881 South, commanded by Lt. Biondo, and 3 guns at the Combat Base located next to the main ammo dump. That first night the ammo dump blew sky high but my troops stayed on their guns and returned fire even when their wire lines were knocked out. When we reported our ammo count that morning we only had one green smoke round left. They stayed on their guns and fired everything they had at Charlie. It takes a lot of balls to stay out in the open in the midst of a tremendous pounding of incoming artillery and rockets to return fire on an unseen enemy. What happened to that one green smoke round? Well I fired it off on the afternoon of St. Patrick's Day to wish Lt. Biondo - ERIN GO BRAGH YOU GUINEA BASTARD. Col. Hennelly chewed my ass out for that one but it was worth it.

I had a deal with my guys that if the grunts needed Artillery Support we would man our guns no matter what. On two separate occasions that I can remember we were taken under fire by NVA mortars which were in sight of the grunts on the line but no one took them under fire. I settled the problem by blowing the mortars positions away on both occasions with direct fire — on one occasion we actually pulled the gun out of the parapet, rolled it up to the wire and sent a couple of NVA to meet their maker.

On many occasions my guys had to clear live ammo out of their gun positions by hand in order to be able to continue firing. They also had to drive to the airstrip to pick up ammo resupply and drive back to the Battery position, while being shelled by the NVA artillery. Without ammo resupply we were out of luck.

Well, I think I have now worked a lot of my anger out of my system. Just do me a favor, every March 17th. St. Patrick's Day, think of the guys of Bravo and Charlie Batteries and raise a glass to toast to their bravery and then say a prayer for their souls both living and dead. God bless.

THE GUNNER ON HILL 881-SOUTH

(A Conversation with COL Bill Dabney, 29 Aug 1993)

DABNEY: It was one of those periods where we had very heavy mist, and we had had it for two or three days, which meant that we were getting no helicopters and we couldn't see a 'diddly.' I'm not sure if Khe Sanh was socked-in, but at 3,000 feet up, we sure were! So it was a period of very high alert. But at the same time a period of relative safety for us because it meant that we could work in the daytime, which we rarely could do, because the snipers couldn't see us. Yeah, they could pop their 120s at us, but we could hear those, especially in the quiet of a mist; you could hear the tube pop and get out of the way in time. And that made it a reasonable thing to do in the daytime. In that environment, one of the artillerymen—either on his own initiative or on orders from his NCO—I don't know—was up, swabbing out the bore on one of our guns. Now this gun had been on the hill from the beginning. And it had flat tires, as all of them did, from all the shrapnel. Once, I think I told you, they brought all the tires—and they bounced, and the things went rolling down—caused all sorts of hate and consternation—. We never got good tires! I don't think the fellow 'spooked,' because these were the 'PURPLE FOXES,' and these people didn't spook too much. But my suspicion is that anti-aircraft fire cut the sling—cause there was always stuff flying when they came in. I think one of the rounds just got lucky and cut the

sling. The tires went bouncing down the hill. They must of bounced 200 feet in the air when they hit! They were inflated.

Well, as you know on the 105, the tire—the pneumatic tire is part of the recoil mechanism, which meant that its recoil mechanism was attenuated substantially anyway. The other thing you need to understand is that we used those guns on our own recognizance in the direct-fire mode. What I'm saying is: that when they fired indirect at distant targets, they were controlled from Jack Hennelly's bunker, but since I had operational control of everything that I could see, if I had a direct fire mission, I didn't ask for permission, I just notified that I was doing it. But in advance there was no need to do it. It was a straight shot from where I was to the target, and we often had targets. And what people would ask me is: Why don't you use the 106? We had a couple up there. The problem was that the target wasn't always where the 106 was sighted. We used the 106s on the two main avenues of approach, loaded with BEEHIVE, so that if someone came in at night, we could [?] em. But that was on the two ends of the hill. Well, humping a 106 through a trenchline is about impossible. In the first place the damn thing weighs 600 pounds, and takes six men or so to do it. In the second place, we could not make the trenchline straight, because then if a round landed in the trenchline, it wiped out a whole platoon. So the trenchlines had alot of kinds in them. And that meant that you had to carry the 106 over the top. Well, that was a very dangerous proposition: to put six men up there humping a 106 on top. Which is to say, only in extreme circumstances or when we had reduced visibility or at night did we try to move those 106s. I tried once, and lost most of the crew in the process. Well, that left us with the 105s, which were sitting right on top of the hill so they could fire 360. I hadn't sighted them there; Jack Hennelly's people had. That's where they were. Over the course of time those guns took a lot of shrapnel. And one of the results of that—we always had them up there with the sights off, because those guns are pretty tough, but the sights aren't. So we only brought the sights up when they had a mission to fire. The guns never had sights on them.

The other thing that happened, maybe a week before—a round had landed right in the berm with the gun, a big round, a 120, and it had put a hole in the right trail, a big hole. The trail was slightly bent and about two-thirds of it was severed, cause the round landed fairly close by, and that's a big round. Didn't hurt anybody, because at that point there hadn't been anybody firing a fire mission. It was just a stray round that they sent in and it happened to land in the berm with the gun. Luckily it landed in such a way that it did not ignite the rounds in the ready-box; it destroyed them as far as their usefulness was concerned, but it didn't ignite them. We always kept rounds in the ready box just because the missions were so quick...The 120s were aweful. I mean, they had a super-quick fuse, and the shrapnel was lethal to 40 or 50 yards. Any man in the open was 'dead duck' when that stuff came in.

Anyway, this guy was up there alone—which was my Standing Operating Procedure: if it didn't take two men to do the job in the open, only have one man doing it; send the other guy up after he comes down and check on it, if that's what you need to do, but don't put two or three men in one place unnecessarily because you just become a 'mortar magnet.' So anyway, this guy's standing up there, and he just finished swabbing the bore of the gun out. I'm walking around checking the troops down along the edge of the trenchline some ways, and it's pleasant, because I don't have to walk *in* the trench for a change. The snipers can't see me. And it's quiet, so we can hear their tubes pop. No airplanes around because it was zero-zero as far as the aircraft. All of a sudden there's sort of a valley in the clouds, looking straight towards the south, straight towards Lang Vei... Same ridge that we went out towards Laos on before the Siege started. [Note, 3/26 made a battalion sweep to Hill 918 just after arriving in mid-December, 1967]. So I've been over that ridge and I know it pretty well. It was a ridge where Tom Brindley got temporarily blinded. He walked into a VC bees nest! He was the point platoon for the battalion, and he and the pointman both got stung so badly that their faces swelled up and their eyes swelled shut and we had to medevac them. I think the point man hit it with his machette, and everything went downhill from there.

STUBBE: You could die from that.

DABNEY: You could, but Brindley tough boy and he was back in three or four days. Anyway, this guy sees this valley in the clouds, and he's finished his job and he's putting his swab away, and the breech is open, and this valley in the clouds drifts across. Well, it happens to be the gun was oriented towards the south, just by happenstance. And he glances over that way, and this is how it's described by himself and by a machinegunner on the same side of the hill who happened to be awake. Was just out watching. it appears to him that there's a little column of figures coming up a trail on the north side of the south ridge, in other words, exposed to us. And it looked to him, as he described it later, like they were carrying logs or something—the two of them, at least, were. These were images rather than definite sightings. All this is happening pretty fast. As best we could tell, it was possibly a section of 82millimeter mortars humping up the hill. The NVA was obviously using the cover of fog to move their troops around to redeploy in some manner, and we think it might of been a 82 mortar section.

This kid realizes this break in the clouds isn't going to last very long. And the time it takes to get a real fire mission going was an exercise in futility. So what he does is lean down and look right through the bore. It so happens that the trails are set well enough so he can bring the bore right to bear on these guys. And he can look at them through the bore of the gun by turning the wheels a little bit. So he does this,

and immediately he grabs a round out of the ready box, fuses it—which doesn't take but a couple of seconds for a trained man, and slams it in and closes the breech. Well of course it's got Charge-7 in it; that's the way they come. And in a direct fire you usually want to fire with a Charge-7. He puts the first round right in the middle of them. He doesn't have his sights. And in quick succession—of course that startles the whole front line—with Charge-7 going right over their heads. The muzzle is probably twenty feet from this machinegun nest this other guy's—if he wasn't real alert before, he damn well sure was now! And firing a direct fire, Charge-7. In quick succession he put maybe four more rounds out, quick as he could load it. Of course by that time everybody's pouring out of bunkers and wondering what the hell's going on.

The machinegunner picks up on it cause he looks out the same way where the rounds landed. He sees the first one impact, and he sees the NVA out there. So he cuts loose. Now he's got it on a tripod so he'd fairly steady, although at 762—that's a fairly long shot. But still he gets 'clenching' fire on them. About the time the guy gets maybe his fourth or fifth round off, the cloud cover, the valley drifts back. For two more days we can't see diddly-squat, just mist. I'm talking about the kind of mist where you could put a trip flare fifty feet from you and you couldn't see the trip flare.

The point was—it's his gun, that's why he was cleaning it—and he knew damn well the trail was cracked. And firing direct-fire, Charge-7, *standing between the trails on that gun, was an incredibly dangerous thing to do, and he was enough of an artilleryman to know it, because if that trail had broken with a Charge-7, that gun would probably have spun 360 and taken both his legs off.* Because it had no other recoil except for the hydraulics. The tires were gone. One trail was three-quarters of the way cut through by a 120 round. The gun would have spun 360. That's a heck of a charge! And he's firing flat, so the ground didn't take any shock, remember. The tube is horizontal to the ground, probably, as a matter of fact, below horizontal, because he's shooting from 881 down to 764. That means without the tires, the trail has to take the full shock. You can imagine what would have happened if that trail had broken: everything would of been gone from the hips down, instantaneously....

WHO HAS THE PLAYBOY MAGAZINES?

I had returned to the States and sat glued to the TV nightly while you guys were surrounded and we feared another Dien Bien Phu. During that time period, Americans were asked to make various contributions to the 'cause,' such as 'letters to the guys,' etc. With tongue in cheek, I made a supreme sacrifice and shipped some twenty of my 'collector' issues of *Playboy* magazines c/o Khe Sanh Base, Vietnam. This seems silly, but for almost thirty years I have wondered if those *Playboy* magazines reached the guys and hopefully brought some distraction and reading pleasure from the war?

If any readers recall receiving this 'care package,' I look most forward to reading about it. I appreciate you printing this letter for me.

In the meantime I wish to take this opportunity to thank all of you who ever served at Khe Sanh or in Viet Nam. Here is a correspondant that is proud of you and what y ou did for freedom and the people of Vietnam. Thank you.

Jerry Jackson

A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE

He had memorized
The muzzle velocity of the M16 rifle;
The effective casualty radius
Of a fragmentation grenade;
The elements of a five paragraph order; and
The Marine Corps Hymn

He understood the importance
Of maintaining
A proper interval on patrol;
Of accurate coordinates when
Calling in fire;
Of dry socks; and
Keeping his weapon clean.

He knew the secret
Of how men die
On fog covered hills,
The secret
Of what they say
In that last flake
Of their time.

He had learned
The necromancy of the odds
And the spells that might cure
Their randomness.
He had learned
He was tired of the war.

Perhaps the weight
Of all that added knowledge
Was just enough
To trip the Bouncing Betty
That killed him near Khe Sanh.

—Chuck Patterson

RED CLAY ON MY SHOES

By Robert Topmiller

I stepped off of the bus and looked down. My shoes had faintly familiar red tint to them. I knew I had returned to Khe Sanh.

During the summer of 1996, I travelled to Vietnam to conduct research on my doctoral dissertation. While I spent most of my time in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), I decided to schedule two days in Hue in the hopes I could make a day trip to Khe Sanh. Upon arrival at my hotel, I asked the young woman about the DMZ tour and she told me to be in the lobby of the hotel the next morning at 6 AM. I spent the rest of the day touring pagodas in the Hue area while my excitement and apprehension grew about my next day's activities. The evening before I found myself slamming beer with gusto.

Finally, morning arrived. I got up at 4 AM and hurried down to the lobby by 5 AM, waking the desk clerk. After sitting in the lobby for close to 50 minutes, he asked me casually if I had a ticket for the tour. When I said no, that I planned to purchase it from the driver of the bus, he ran outside and quickly hailed a cyclo. I took a very fast and nerve racking ride across the city as I realized that I might literally miss the bus. When I arrived at DMZ Tours and told the manager what I wanted, he promptly barked out orders to two young men who jumped on motorcycles and sped away from the office. Only then did I realize that they were going after the bus. After an agonizing 15 minutes, the bus returned to the office and I filled the last seat. The irony of my position struck me hard. This represented my only chance to visit Khe Sanh since I had to leave the next day for Hanoi. I had come thousands of miles only to come within a whisker of not making it to Khe Sanh.

As we started up the road towards Dong Ha, I observed the pastoral scenes I remembered about Vietnam: old women carried improbably heavy loads on their shoulders while small children sat astride huge water buffalo as the expanding countryside filled with rice paddies.

I also began to realize that the Vietnam I once knew no longer exists. I first encountered this when I flew into Phu Bai airport, which n ow serves as the airfield for Hue. I associated Phu Bai with the huge base that resided there in 1968. Instead, no sign of the American presence remains except for a few deserted guard towers off in the distance. The Vietnamese Army has a garrison there but, like all of PAVN (People's Army of Vietnam) bases, it remains completely hidden from view except for the sign at the front gate. As we drove north along Highway One, I encountered the same conditions. I will always associate Dong Ha and Quang Tri with the airfields and hospitals there. Yet, they are gone. It seems as if the Communists determined that by eradicating the last vestiges of the US presence, they could claim complete victory.

One thing in plentiful supply, however, were graveyards. The further north we went the larger they became, always adorned with large monuments commemorating the sacrifice of the NVA and VC soldiers who fought there. Across the old DMZ, a huge cemetery holds the graves of over 10,000 North Vietnamese soldiers killed along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Seeing the monuments called to mind some of the extreme ironies of the Vietnam War. The VCP (Vietnamese Communist Party) struggles with the realization that over 50% of the present population of Vietnam, born after 1975, cares little about the war and that young Vietnamese mainly emulate American values and cultural norms. American students, on the other hand, remain extremely eager to learn about the US experience in Vietnam. In the same manner, I have never met an adult Vietenamese in the US or Vietnam who did not know about Khe Sanh while I have seldom met an American who did except for veterans.

In Dong Ha we stopped and picked up our guide. A young, intense man who displayed a remarkable knowledge of the DMZ area, Le Duc Hoang, presented the history of the struggle for the DMZ in an even handed and well reasoned manner. he seemed quite familiar with the USMC side of the war and I detected a trace of admiration in his voice for the combatants on both sides....

We then traveled back down Highway One to Dong Ha and started up Highway Nine to Khe Sanh. I had never been on Highway Nine before since I arrived at Khe Sanh nine days before the start of the siege and the road remained in North Vietnamese hands at that time. As we moved down the road, settlements and people again thinned out considerably, but not the North Vietnamese army presence. I noted several large installations including the biggest base I observed in the whole country, just outside of Khe Sanh.

Our first stop was the Rockpile. As I looked over the landscape where so much fighting occurred, I was shocked to discover that it had completely recovered. It seemed as if the war had never happened and our involvement constituted more an illusion than reality. Vietnam, in its interminable history had again recovered from another foreign iinvasion. For my part, I suppose it was foolish to expect to return to a Vietnam as I remembered it. Nevertheless, I remained unprepared for such a drastic change.

After the Rockpile we proceeded up the road to a Montagnard village where Hoang carried on a conversation with several women who had been digging for American scrap metal. Think of it. Vietnamese and Montagnard women, some using metal detectors, dig in the ground around old military bases, an incredibly dangerous task, just to gain a little money in a Vietnam that remains desperately poor.

Hoang told us the government wants to alter the Montagnard practice of slash and burn agriculture and replace with permanent settlements. So far, they have only been moderately successful.

From the village, we drove to Khe Sanh. As we followed the curves in the road to climb the last hill to Khe Sanh, I saw a stunningly beautiful panorama of the valley that falls away from the Khe Sanh plateau. Entering the village (I had never been there either), I was impressed by the relatively n ice homes I observed. But, then I surmised that most of them probably had been built or rebuilt after the war. Suddenly our bus stopped and I saw Hill 1015 out of the window. I stepped on the ground and noticed it was made up of red clay.

We walked up a trail to a bare spot of earth where Hoang announced that we stood on the old airstrip. Hoang said nothing will grow on the strip, a statement that did not surprise me. As we approached the strip, a local man offered to sell me various American insignias he had dug from the ground. I was repelled by the thought, just as in Ho Chi Minh City when I saw displays of American dog tage in many souvenir stores.

Standing on the airstrip at Khe Sanh, as so many memories flooded into my consciousness, I again realized the value of my research topic. My main purpose in going to Vietnam was to conduct research for my doctoral dissertation on the Buddhist movement in South Vietnam from 1964-66. I believe that the Buddhists represented the last opportunity to prevent the unfolding catastrophe that became the Vietnam War. As I stood on the strip and remembered all of the young men who died—Vietnamese and American—over what is now a coffee plantation, I felt overwhelmed with sadness.

To my absolute astonishment, I realized that the land had reclaimed Khe Sanh also. The base is a huge coffee plantation with the exception of the air strip, which exists as a long red scar on the land. The pockmarked hillsides had also regained their lushness. It is hard to describe my feelings standing on the Khe Sanh airstrip after so many years. I realized with stunning force, for the third time that day, that the Vietnam I remembered, the place that resided so firmly in my psyche and has ruled much of my life, simply no longer exists. It is as if the land reclaimed its right to be Vietnam. I felt robbed and cheated. Surely there should be amemorial, some kind of reminder of the bloodletting that occurred here. Alas, I realized that the Khe Sanh we all share exists today only in the history books and our memories. I later mentioned this feeling to Ray Stubbe who pointed out that people who live in the past, which I suspect many of us do, live in the past alone. To Ray, the answer is that we have to depend on each other since all we have is each other. Perhaps, but for me the visit to Khe Sanh did not represent the liberating experience I anticipated. instead, if left me confused and full of ambiguity as I struggled then, and now, to come to terms with the reality of Khe Sanh. It is as if the land and the people are telling us it's time to move on. They had no choice, they had to adapt or perish. What about us?

Fortunately, my fellow travelers interruptged my revierie. An eclectic group of European young people, they crowded around me when one of the students asked if it was true that I had been at Khe Sanh. My reminiscing turned into a 'History of the Siege of Khe Sanh class' as I pointed out the various landmarks and I tried to explain what had occurred here 28 years ago. One young Irish woman asked me 'was it bad?' while a Dutch woman asked me if I felt strange being back here. Yes. Yet, I could not express in words to a bunch of strangers what Khe Sanh meant to me. I felt like a relic of the war, like the airstrip.

I wanted to walk around and perhaps locate some familiar landmarks, but our guide remained absolutely adamant that no one go off the trail. Only a month before a local villager died no more than 30 yards from where we stood as he dug in the ground. Amazingly, many Vietnamese worked in the field digging and hoeing, seemingly inured to the dangers lurking beneath their feet.

As I briefed the Europeans, I mentioned the persistent fog of Khe Sanh. Just then, Hoang said, 'Here it comes.' Sure enough, it started to roll in from the northwest and Hoang said it was time to go. As we walked down the trail, I noticed a color television in one of the Vietnamese houses in the village. One of my traveling companions said they were probably watching 'Little House on the Prairie,' one of the most popular shows in Vietnam. Despite the poignancy of the moment, I laughed uproariously at the irony of it all. It was a long ride back to Hue.

"Everything flows and nothing abides; everything gives way and nothing stays fixed."

"You cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters are continually flowing on."

—Heraclitus, 500BC (or so)
Fragments #20 and 21

RETURN TO KHE SANH

By Donald M. Rait

I have just returned from a trip of Viet Nam. The highlight of my trip was a return visit to Khe Sanh.

After 28 years, much has changed in Viet Nam. The population has doubled to over 72 million (the huge majority are under 30 years of age). The areas along Route 9 from Dong Ha all the way to the Laotian border are *full* of cheerful, enthusiastic and productive families. The areas we knew along the DMZ are now rubber tree plantations and there's even a road between Gio Linh and Con Thien now. Electrification and TV have come to those areas with nearly every 'hootch' sprouting an atenna.

My desire in returning to Viet Nam was a very personal one. I, like most of the former Marines on the trip, was looking for 'closure.' After only several days there, I can honestly report that I felt what most describe as 'closure.' The simple and compelling fact is that the Vietnamese people have, for the most part, rethought, rebuilt and gotten on with their daily lives with great industry and an astonishing amount of energy. Seeing this in living color encourages me to do the same with my life.

All of us remember I Corps in particular and Viet Nam in general as it was nearly 30 years ago. For me it is pock-marked, scarred, smelly, red, brown and forever wet clay. Today, many areas have been reforested with a form of fast-growing eucalyptus tree. I thought the terrain features wouldn't have changed much after 30 years. Boy was I wrong. Camp Carroll is now a pepper plantation. Con Thien is covered with acre after acre of coffee plants.

I'll never for one second forget the horror and the honor of my Marine Corps experience of 1967-1968. Now I have an additional picture in my mind: that of a new vibrant, happy, energetic and growing Viet Nam to add to my forever frozen-in-time mental picture of the dismal and gut-wrenching times. For me that's enough to call it 'closure.'

For anyone considering a trip back to Viet Nam I say DO IT. For those who have no desire for a return visit, that's fine too, just realize that time hasn't stood still for those who have remained. Take it from one who returned slightly more than a week ago, it's a great place to visit and the real payoff is to put some very positive thoughts into place. Somehow the frequent horrible memories are now softened ever so slightly.

"The map is not the terrain."
—Ludwig Wittgenstein

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

(From a letter from Bob Koury, 2 Jul 1996)

Bill Ring and I both served in and around Khe Sanh in early 1968. We were with D/1/1. I was a platoon and company commander. I came to Khe Sanh on Pegasus after being in and around Hue City during Tet. I spent about a month on 881 and more time on 558, 689 and 861. Bill and I revisited Khe Sanh, Hue City and most of Route 9 to Laos a few years ago. Couldn't get up on the hills, but humped in a bunch of beer to celebrate my birthday at Khe Sanh. nice place to visit, but you wouldn't want to live there. For all the bleeding hearts, the areas we defoliated with agent orange are now full of crops (mostly cashews) and doing fine, thank you. However, many of the hills have been clear cut to trade hardwood through Laos avoiding our embargo. After just a couple of slash and burn planting seasons, the soil runs out of nutrients, is abandoned and erodes into the valley streams below as mud and silt. They are also contaminating a number of the rivers while mining for gold with quicksilver—mercury poisoning for generations to come. Quite a mess.

BENEDICTION

The deafening guns are temporarily
silenced.
We hear
birds
and the soft breeze of refreshment
We smell
fresh waters we touch
our family and our friends.
The battlefield of horrors
and terrors we have known
is replaced
by fields of grass and trees and art and
the beauty of these people here
assembled
Yet
in the silence we hear
ever ever still
the guns and cries
And in the meadows
we still behold the unspeakable
still within us.
For we are the living
memory of human failure of justice
and understanding
We are the living memory
of our friends so violently
taken from us.....[*more follows*]
—Ray W. Stubbe, Memorial Day 1993

[The following memoirs of experiences at Khe Sanh are included not only for their intrinsic value—they are direct from the heart, precious as rare jewels—but also included to perhaps motivate you, the reader, to make your own memoirs. In the first one, Gary Parker simply sat with a cassette tape recorder and let the thoughts just flow. He later said that he really didn't recall what he had even said. Carlos Morales, at the Philadelphia reunion, shared the cassette since he found so much value in playing it with his family. Jim Griffin wrote a letter to two highschool teachers. Coincidentally, the daughter of Sergeant Major Bean contacted us for information about her father who was KIA at Khe Sanh. She and Jim have since talked at length, to the great benefit of both. Kevin Macaulay writes in a different literary style indicating what happened and his thoughts and feelings about it. These writings are precious transformations which heal others and even the one writing them.]

TAPE FROM GARY PARKER TO CARLOS MORALES

My name is Gary K. Parker. I was born March 22nd, 1949. I joined the Marine Corps December 25th, 1966, and had the opportunity to serve in Vietnam. I arrived in Vietenam the 27th of December, 1967. When I got there I was stationed in Dong Ha, Vietnam. I was told I was going to be going up to a place called Khe Sanh a week, week and a half, after I got there. I had no idea what Khe Sanh was or what was going on up there. I'd only been in country for about a week and a half. I was working with Third Shore Party Battalion, which is what I was assigned to my entire 13 months there. Shore Party Battalion consists of groups of individuals who work with helicopters. They bring in supplies. They take out the dead and wounded. They resupply outfits that are out in the field.

When I got to Khe Sanh—I got there about the 15th of January, 1968, it wasn't all too bad the first week or so that I got there. After awhile they started getting incoming artillery which came in to the extent of a couple hundred artillery rounds a day. They set me up—I guess the second day after I got there—to one of the hills. They told me I was going to be going up and replacing a 'teamy' (which is someone who works with a Helicopter Support Team) who was killed up there; they needed a radioman. I went up to the top of the hill. I can remember my first impression getting there: the helicopter landed, I remember looking out the door, and just like watching a movie—you see people covered in ponchos and laying all over the hill—you knew that there was something going on.

I jumped out of the helicopter, took off. There was a radio at the Command Post for me which they told me had belonged to the person I was replacing. I had no idea what I was to do up there, being new in country. After about six hours I kinda got the hang of it real quick. The job of a support team person, HST Team, 'teamies,' is to go down every morning, find out from the Commanding Officer exactly what it is that they need for the day—ammunition, food, water—and then to get on the radio and call for those supplies and make sure that they're brought in. We were also used in evacuating MEDEVACs, people who are seriously or not seriously wounded, also evacuating the dead. I would have to say that it seems like every hour, we'd be bringing in helicopters to take out the wounded. Wounded were 'priorities;' the dead people were 'routine.' They could wait; there was no real need to get them to any kind of medical facility. We would just cover them as best we could and wait until the time cleared so we could get them out. It was a routine that went on, day in and day out. You have to worry about covering your own butt. At the same time you had to worry so much about taking care of other lives. You were so responsible for getting these helicopters out of there, or getting them to come in to take away the wounded. There'd be many a times when the incoming would be so bad that helicopters just couldn't get in to a zone and you'd be sitting there with one, two, three, or four seriously wounded people who were actually dying, and you felt almost as though you were God. You had the ability to get on the radio and get those people in. And you just feel so bad to watch these people—just—die—and not being able to get them out in time. Of course, the majority of them, we did get out. But there's always those cases where the overcast or the incoming would be so bad we couldn't get them out. You'd just sit there and you'd watch them die. It was an awful feeling.

There have been times up on Hill 881 in January and part of February where I would have done just about anything to get off that hill. We had three Landing Zones up there. Every one of the Landing Zones were zeroed in. I knew that if I were to bring a helicopter in I could get the first two of maybe five without any incoming. Anything after that, there was nothing that you could do; you had to continue to bring them in, no matter what type of artillery or rockets or small arms fire was coming in.

I can remember many a times standing underneath the helicopter directing them in. The only thing that you can hear is the dirt flying around the scream of the turbines on the chopper and yelling on the headphones to the pilot or copilot. You cannot hear the incoming. You don't know what is being thrown up from the blades and what's the incoming flak. All you know is: the life of these people is in your hands. Those that are rotating, those that are coming and going out, they have got to have that helicopter hover for so long before they can drop it off or before they can come down and load up. You can't hear anything. You're underneath there. And we lost so many Helicopter Support Team personnel just standing there talking to the helicopters, not being able to hear anything. I used to hate that. I used to hate having to go out there. Once a job gets started you can't

turn back; you have to go straight through it.

I can remember I had a 'teamy' up there with me who was on the radio, and I could see him waving at the helicopters and I seen his fingers get blown off. Turn right around and put him on the same helicopter that took the other people, and work it solo until you get a replacement. Like I said before, it was just 'day in and day out.' It was hell.

I was on that hill for almost three and a half weeks. I thought I was going to go crazy. I finally got somebody to replace me. And I remember the person's name, Mike Lee, a very good friend of mine now. He came up to replace me. I can remember when the helicopter landed, that look in his eyes, and he got off, I gave him my radio and I got back on and went back down to the bottom of the hill. It was just as bad [on the combat base] as it was on the top of the hill.

Sometime in the middle of February after being at the basecamp for a couple of weeks, I was told I was going up to Hill 861-Alfa. I was going up there again as a Helicopter Support Team radio operator. I was told that I was to hook-up with somebody up there, that there was going to be someone there already to give me a hand. And I remember landing. There wasn't anything going on at the time, and I checked with the Commanding Officer and the XO up there and he told me to go down to the 'saddle' which connects the two parts of the hill and that I would find my compadre or my friend there. I can remember walking up to a foxhole or a fighting hole right there in the saddle, looking down and saw the red patch on the guy's hat and said, 'Are you a Shore Party guy?' and he said, 'Yeah, come on,' and he said, 'Yeah, come on, jump in.' It was Carlos Morales. What a guy. I can remember that first night that we were together there, stuck in that hole, and talking about different excitement and things that have gone on. And I'm not sure if it was the first night or the second night, but I remember one time we were in that hold together and we heard an explosion. Didn't think much of it because explosions were going on all the time. As long as you don't stick your head up over the hole, you're all right. The next morning, I remember somebody coming up to us, telling us we had to get a helicopter in for two people that were killed. They were about 35, 40 feet from us. They were in a shelter-half, playing around with a hand grenade, something to do with killing time, I guess, and the thing went off and killed them both. I remember we couldn't get them out for a couple of days. We had them wrapped up real tight. We had to worry more about the routine supplies—getting them in and out, and the Priority MEDEVACs. They went out in a couple of days.

I also remember a time in the hole—we'd be talking about trading each other's sisters: I told him I had a red-headed sister and he told me he had a sister. We were talking about meeting each other—each one of them as we got out of the Service and went back to the States. Just about that time (I believe) there was talk of being overrun on the hill. We got our hand grenades out of our pouches, and there were tracers flying all over the top of the hill. I can remember grabbing a bunch of hand grenades that I had, grabbing these things and throwing them over the side of the hill. We were right on the edge of the hill. Carlos and myself were throwing these fragmentation grenades off the side, and I could hear his exploding, but mine didn't seem to be going off. I couldn't figure out why. I thought every time you throw them you got five seconds and the stupid grenade's supposed to go off. Well after tossing about five or six of them things off the side, I looked down. We had a little candle in the hole there, and I realized, being the safe guy that I am and only being in country a couple of months, I had put electrical tape on the spoons of the hand grenades and was so afraid that I'd get it caught in a bush and it would go off and kill me, so I threw these grenades out there and had the tape on them. Well, needless to say, neither one of us slept the rest of the night because we figured the North Vietnamese were going to discover this little 'foulaw' here and take the tape off and throw them right back at us. Don't believe they did, though. We just did not sleep too good for a night or two. You could see shadows of people running over the top of the hill, and you don't know who'se who. All I knew was: I was not an infantry-type person, so I didn't worry too m uch about getting up there and getting into the thick of things.

That next morning, we discovered that we did have a slight overrun on the base area, and there weren't too many casualties. The next morning we had shipped out about a sozen dead and wounded on the choppers. It got to the point to where all you're dealing with is death. It was just mind-blowing. Here I am, 18 years old—Carlos same age—and didn't need that shit—really didn't need that at that age. We're supposed to be going out with girl friends and going to drive-ins and not really worried about getting somebody out before they bleed to death or reattaching a hand.

I guess what I'm trying to say here is that we were dealing so much with life and death that nothing else really seemed to matter. Personally speaking, I have probably been touched by the fact that when somebody is dead, it was just something that was there. It was just a thing on the ground. I really could not get attached to it. There was just so much of it that—well, I always thought that a dead person was supposed to be a scarry thing, supposed to be something that people felt bad for. I didn't. It's the wounded people you got very, very close to, especially those that didn't make it that you were talking to and those people that told you what nobody else heard and you heard the last things that these people ever had to say, the last requests that these people had. So many of them calling for their mothers, girl-friends—please tell my mother this or tell my wife that. Every single day. It just—you're not the same person when you come back.

I have been back 26 years and even sitting down doing a tape like this is very hard. I can't talk to anybody else about this but other guys that have gone through this. I feel very, very close to Carlos; we're like brothers. We may have only met for two weeks in an entire lifetime at the first meeting; in February of 1968 two people couldn't get much closer. And I know that he felt exactly what I felt. To this day, I know we both have those problems. You put up a real good front. You try to put up a shield or barrier. People talk to you—they weren't there. There's an old saying: If you weren't there, shut your mouth. That's pretty much the idea. It would be nice if I could talk to other people in the same way that I talk to other veterans—and again, when I say 'other veterans,' I do feel close to other veterans, but I don't feel any closer to any people than I do [as with] the people that I spent time in a hole with for two weeks, learned everything about somebody, and they learn everything about you; you have nothing more to talk about but your family and back home, cause you don't know if you're going to be there tomorrow. You don't know if you're going to be out there. You have a job to do. If the call comes and you have three people to get out, you've got to jump up there—I don't care—and you do. Nobody stays hidden. You go out there and you jump right in the middle of it, cause you've got your job to do first. I don't know what comes over you. We would jump right out of a hole, there'd be tracers going right over the top of your head—that's the last thing you think about because you know there's a job to do. You're out there. You bring that helicopter in. And those guys in those helicopters: sometimes I don't know how they did that. We can duck and hide; they gotta stay right out there and hover, and they got to hover the entire time—that somebody's got to jump in or jump out. They must be going through a lot of stuff too.

After 26 years I still keep very close with Carlos and his family, eventhough I've still never met his sister. You do stay close. And we both have problems. We try to work them out. We call each other if something's not right. But I could not talk to him for maybe five weeks, a month, two months, and it would be like I was talking to him yesterday. It's something that the normal person will never understand, and I really don't ever want anybody else to understand: I think it's a very personal thing that you go through in war. You hold the lives of other people in your hands, and they hold your life in their hands.

Khe Sanh was a bad place! There's not a day that goes by that I don't think about it. I look at life a lot different now than I ever did before. I never want to go through that again, but I'd never give it up for anything, and I'd never give up any of the friends that I've ever met. And I just hope in time that me and all of my friends, Carlos included, can come to grips with what happened and put it past. I'm waiting for that time I can wake up some morning and not have to think about this. There's not a day that goes by that I don't think about this. Every single day, dealing with death and destruction. 77 days of this.

I was there until the 13th of March when I was finally MEDEVACED out and could not be sent back. I was standing in the Drop Zone, the second time that I was wounded, and a mortar landed right in front of my face. And I remember seeing the flash. I said, well, 'good night, Irene!' This is it. And went out. Woke up, and I was in a hospital, but at the same time I was so glad that it was all over and I wouldn't have to worry about that anymore. All that in a split second. It's a very hard thing.

It's easy to cover it up. You can always put a shield on and pretend like nothing's wrong but deep down, inside, it just seems like there's something burnt and imprinted in there. It's never going to go away. I don't know what it is. I think until the day I die, I'll carry these 77 days with me. I don't think I'll ever, ever come up to anything that was even close to that. It's just a very hard thing to live with. But my shield still works, and I seem to be doing very well. It's just something that I hope sometime is going to heal itself. One thing that won't heal itself, and that is that Carlos and I will always remain very, very good friends, and we want that to stay that way, so if healing means not being friends anymore, I don't ever want to heal in that way. I guess that's about it. I can't think of anything else.

EVERYONE THOUGHT HE WAS OKAY

He kept a steady job,
paid
all his bills on time,
nice to his wife,
played with the kids.
But every night in his sleep
he trembled,
covered with a sticky sweat.
—Kellan Kyllo

FRIENDS NOT TO BE SEEN AGAIN

Dead and wounded
medi-evaced on the same helicopter
sometimes
only seconds apart.
—Kellan Kyllo

LETTER TO TWO HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

By Jim Griffin

Dear Brenda and Christa,

Thank you for inviting me to your class. Talking about Khe Sanh is much easier now than it was two years ago when, for the very first time, I spoke of my experiences in Vietnam and of my return to the 'world.' Even so, I lost it a little bit yesterday when I told the story of Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer and, because of the emotion, I omitted many details that are important. Spicer volunteered to coordinate the stretcher bearers whose job it was to ferry the dead and the wounded from the medevac choppers to Charlie Med when they were brought in from the Marine outposts in the surrounding hills. He was also responsible for coordinating the loading of the dead and wounded from the base and the hills when they were sent to Phu Bai and Dong Ha where the hospitals were better equipped and more secure, or, in the case of the dead, they were to be processed to begin the long journey home. His position on the airstrip was perilous because the NVA gunners always unleashed a withering barrage of mortar, rocket and artillery fire whenever helicopters and planes tried to land at Khe Sanh. Spicer's largely exposed position between the landing zone and Charlie Med (distance between your class and the cafeteria) was unspeakably dangerous. According to Ray Stubbe, our chaplain at Khe Sanh, Spicer often refused to take cover when we were under attack, choosing to remain on the exposed airstripa longside the wounded. And this he repeatedly did until, in early March, he was mortally wounded while he was helping to load onto a helicopter a large number of wounded Marines.

Spicer was a small, gentle boy of 19 or 20 with indomitable spirit and courage. If there is a heaven I know he is there.

I am also sending a picture of me and two friends, both killed in Khe Sanh, taken probably in early February 1968. I would like to tell you their stories. Corporal Gary Thorpe (on the left, wearing helmet) was from Montana. He was a gunner with a 106 recoilless rifle team whose position was on the l ine near the junction with the trash dump road, not far from Charlie Med, our field hospital. I got to know him while delivering water and sandbags to different points on the 1/26 line. An affable, seemingly carefree and fun-loving redhead, Gary was the kind of person everyone enjoyed being around. From time to time I would visit Gary in his 'sleeping bunker,' a grave-sized hold, only deeper, that could accommodate maybe three or four people sitting on the sleeping ledge but only big enough for one person to sleep. We would sit there talking, laughing at twice-told jokes, wondering how wonderful life would be when we got back to the 'world.' It was there one night that Gary told me and another Marine why he was ready to die. This is his story:

Gary was about 20 but he was on his second tour in Vietnam. I do not remember which unit he served with on his first tour, only that, as with so many Marines, he immediately volunteered to go back. Anyway, it does not matter now. During that first tour Gary was called on to fire in support of a squad of Marines that had been ambushed and pinned down. Close to the ambush site on the slope of the hill theere was a shallow cave and the surviving Marines had managed to scrabble into this cave and it was from there that they were desperately radioing for fire support. According to Gary, the NVA soldiers were almost at the mouth of the cave, lobbing grenades and firing almost directly into it when he was given the order to open fire. He said he remembered what happened in slow motion, that he could see it in his mind in great detail, that since that day he had seen it over and over and over again. The first round took out the NVA soldiers attacking to the right of the entrance and the second round was aimed at those approaching the mouth of the cave to the left. Gary said he knew as soon as he had fired that the second round was going into the cave, that he could see it, that he could see the faces of the Marines in the cave and that he knew they knew that they were going to die and that it was Gary Thorpe who was going to kill them. There were no survivors.

Gary Thorpe was killed on February 15, 1968, during an intense NVA artillery barrage. A shell, the kind we called a Co Roc Freight Train, scored a direct hit on his gun pit. There were no survivors. Sometimes, when I imagine everyone else in the world to be sleeping peacefully and dreaming sweet dreams I see myself huddled in that cave, reflected in Gary's pale blue eyes, awaiting the shattering onrush of deliverance.

I do not believe that Gary and Spicer ever met but I am certain that they are good buddies by now. I can hear Gary laughing, yelling at Spicer: 'You stupid -ucking shit, why did you do it, why are you still doing it?' And Spicer, embarrassed by the profanity, responds with a gentle smile: "It's okay, somebody had to do it and it still needs to be done and I'm here' as he sorts and sends off the dead and wounded souls of some other war.

The other man in the picture—who is not wearing his helmet—is First Sergeant Donald Bean—'Top,' as First Sergeants were and are known to all Marines. In a USMC infantry battalion there are five companies, four line companies and one headquarters and service company. Each company has a 'top,' and if God shined His grace on you, you had a Top like First Sergeant Donald Bean. Top Bean was First Sergeant for H&S, 1/26, and he was my Top and we all loved him dearly. This is his story:

I do not think I ever knew how old he was then, but he had the kind of youthful face you see in the photograph, that you would like to have when you are that old. Husband and father of two young children, he was also father and friend to us all. Like any good father or Top, his only

concern was for the well-being of his boys, his Marines. Oh, he could lay some shit on you if you screwed up and he pushed us hard at times but we understood and rarely complained because we knew that he was always there ready to work with us.

In the afternoon, when the fog or clouds lifted, Top would come out of the bunker where he and four or five of us lived and fill sandbags with us and watch the airstrikes that were taking place just beyond the trench line. And when a sniper's round came whining by he, like we, would just laugh and duck and keep on filling those sandbags. We did not have much respect for snipers; afterall, a bullet was small and it had to hit you to hurt you, unlike those other things we had come to know too well. We did not laugh, though, when we thought about the NVA soldier in the hole with the .50 machine gun at the end of the airstrip. That was quite another matter, although he almost never shot at us but rather at the planes and choppers that tried to get in or leave when the clouds lifted in the afternoon. We all knew exactly where he was and while we filled those bags we watched, day after day, as our gunners directed a withering barrage of shells on his position. And after each Marine fire mission, we would hear the bloodcurdling thunk-thunk-thunk-thunk of that .50 and see those green tracers he used to let us know we had not killed him yet. And in time we began to call him not 'charlie,' not 'gook' or 'slope' nor 'zipperhead,' but 'Mr. Charles,' and in our own way we began to love him, to depend on him, even though he too was a killer and sooner or later we would have to kill him. One afternoon, as Top and I were filling sandbags, the powers that be in regimental headquarters had had enough. They called in an airstrike, a flight of three Marine phantoms to end once and for all our romance with 'Mr. Charles.' I see them now coming up the valley, east to west, rising high to form for the attack, then one by one swooping like a swallow, searching for, finding, then hurtling towards that soldier with the .50. On the first pass each dropped the 500 pounders, so close that blast and concussion and sound were one, and as always some of the fragments came whining and whirring into the base; on the second pass each phantom let tumble his load of napalm onto the soldier's position, and as we watched the roll of flames turn from white-hot to pink to blood-red, we knew that now there could be no living thing left at the end of that airstrip. And then the part we liked best, that we knew would come last, because these were Marine pilots, they were our brothers, and they were going to do it for us just for the hell of it. They formed high above the valley and one by one began their screaming, squirming swoop until they were parallel to the line about thirty or forty feet up. We stood there and watched as each Phantom passed through that sheet of NVA rifle fire, that unbearable ripping, rattling sound of popcorn popping on a hot burner, until there were no more shells to fire, and it was time for them to go home. When the third and last phantom cleared his guns we all just stood there and waited because in our heart we knew that the pilot would say goodbye with that Marine victory roll we had come to love so well. And as the pilot wrenched it up, jinking and rolling and reaching for safety we heard it, over and above the echo of the rifle and cannon fire and the roar of the phantom, the thrilling heart-throbbing fire-beat, thunk-thunk-thunk-thunk, of that murderous .50 and we watched, frozen in time, as those lovely green tracers rose into the afternoon sky to sting the tail of that phantom. We stood there, seeing it all for the longest time, until all at once Top and Gary and Funk and Snyder and I and every Marine on the line began to scream and cheer and weep for the absolute, magical, beauty of life.

I like to think that Top and I were very close. Maybe that is because I felt such a terrible loss the day he died washing clothes almost where you see him in the picture. He always had a smile for everyone, a kind word of encouragement when the going got tough. In the morning he would sometimes say 'rise and shine boys, pat your ass because we made it through another night,' and that was enough to get the day started on a note of hope. At night or early in the wee hours of the morning when I was on radio watch, sometimes he would get up and join me by the radio, our knees almost touching, and we would make hot chocolate or coffee and chat, not much, but a little. One night we even listened to Hanoi Hannah on a portable radio but not for long because she played 'Yesterday' by the Beatles and said things about the Marines at Khe Sanh that made us sad.

From the beginning Top would ask me to go here, go there, take this or that message to so-and-so and when there was a lot of incoming and someone had to go he knew I knew that he was going to say 'Griff, get your helmet on' and later when I made it back to the bunker wild-eyed and out of breath he would say, 'Took your time, didn't you?,' but I could see the smile in his eyes and I knew that he was pleased. Sometimes he would ask someone else in the bunker to go but usually he would ask me. I guess that is why I think Top and I were close, and because I think I was the only one in the bunker to see the sadness in his eyes the last few days of his life. The night before he died he was sitting on his cot looking at some pictures when I got off radio watch. He asked me to sit down, to keep him company while I drank my coffee. We did not talk much but I know he was thinking about his family, thinking of the things he would like to say to them, as we all so often did. I believe that Top knew that soon it would be his time to go home and this was his way of letting me know so that I would remember.

Now, you and your students can remember with me.

Thanks again for inviting me to your class.

Jim Griffin.

27 JAN 68 — JUNIOR — RIP

By Kevin Macaulay

THOUGHTS: Gotta get us, gotta fill more sand bags. Has it really been three days since the bunker got hit? It feels like a lifetime. This shelling is really getting to me. I think the gooks are just tossing some of these rounds in to mess up our minds. With the weather so screwed up, they can't see shit and neither can we. I wish the Captain would send us out on working parties out of the company area. This place is starting to look like a garbage dump; the tents and hardbacks are all blown away. All of our gear is just lying out in the open. Shit, this pair of utilities that I have on are my last pair. I'll be pretty ripe soon. There goes Pappy [Slack, XO of recon], maybe he's got some new scuttlebutt.

CONVERSATION: Hey, Lt., did we get any mail in yet? I didn't think so, the bags that I brought up to the post office the other day are still there. At least it didn't get blown up with that C130 yesterday. Do you think that the Col. will put us on the lines with the grunts? I hope so, this area is getting a little too dangerous for my liking. With the COC across the street, the airstrip just north of us, and the ammo dump just down the road, anytime the gooks miss the important stuff, the rounds fall in our area. Goddam rockets are the worst, you don't know where they're going to hit. Listen, doesn't that sound like a couple of mortars going off? I hope it's outgoing. INCOMING! INCOMING! Here we go again.

THOUGHTS: O God, those landed where the guys are filling sand bags. I hope we lucked out this time...

CONVERSATION: Corpsman. CORPSMAN! Come here Purefoy, come here man, stop running around. I'll help you. Where are you hit? Hands? Shit, your fingertips are all gone. Sgt. Wilder throw me your first aid kit. No, he's not too bad. His fingers are messed up. Pvt. Penny will help get him over to Charlie Med. I'm going to see if anyone else is hit. Someone is calling for stretcher bearers.

THOUGHTS: Ah, shit, more wounded. Doc Turner's hit too. He's still working on somebody, though. Who's he working on? Oh, good Lord, that looks like...

CONVERSATION: JUNIOR! No! Please, dear God, don't let it be Junior! Hey, Doc, how is he? How bad is he hurt? He don't look too good, Doc. He ain't breathing. Doc, you gotta make him breathe. Come on, Junior, breathe. Come on, buddy, you gotta help us help you. You gotta breathe. JUNIOR! LISTEN TO ME! BREATHE! COME ON, BREATHE! let's get him on a stretcher and get him over to Charlie Med. No, wait a minute. BAS is closer. Don't tell me it's too late. The doctors will help him. He can't be that bad. There ain't too much blood on him. Come on, Preacher, give me a hand with this stretcher. Get out of the way. Let's go. Hurry up. He's turning blue.

THOUGHTS: Come on, Junior, just hang on for awhile longer till I get you to the Aid Station. O God, why does it seem so far? Hang on, Junior, I'll take care of you. Just hang on. OK, Junior, we're almost there. Just around the corner. O Lord, let him live, he's got a wife and kid at home. He's my best friend over here. Please, God, let him live.

CONVERSATION: Hey, Doc, we've got a badly wounded man over here. OK, Preacher, put him up on the table. Doc, you've got to help him, he can't breathe. He's got just a little blood on his forehead, that's all. Oh, shit, I didn't see that. Junior, what did they do to you? It was only a lousy mortar, shit, they can't do that much damage! Doc, don't put him in the corner to die. He's only eighteen years old. He's got a wife and daughter home waiting for him. He's going home in sixty seven days. Doc, I can't leave him in a corner to die by himself. let me stay with him until he's gone. I'll be out of the way.

THOUGHTS: Junior, what's going to happen to us? I can't think of this place without you and me together. Junior, you taught me how to survive over here. If it wasn't for you I would have been blown away long ago. I should be the one lying there, not you. I'm the clumsy one, not you. Remember the first patrol I went on with you, I kept falling on my ass; you must have picked me up a hundred times on that patrol. The time I got separated from the team by the gooks? You and Preacher were the ones who came back for me. You saved my life too many times. I can't even save yours once. I can't even thank you. All I can do now is sit here and hold your hand and wait for you to die. This ain't the way that friendships should end. I was going to kick you in the ass as you got on the bird to go home. This don't make sense, buddy. I gotta go now, Junior, they say that I'm in the way here. Goodbye, Junior. I'll never forget you. I loved you, Junior. You knew that, didn't you, you were my best friend. This is for you then. *Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

CONVERSATION: OK, Doc. I'll be going now. Yeah, I'll notify his company commander. Bravo Company, 3rd Recon Bn., Doc. Yeah, we have taken a lot of casualties lately. His name? Junior, Don't let these grunts drop him on the way over to Graves. Thanks for trying, Doc. I guess he was gone from the time the mortar hit. No, I'm sure that I'm OK. No, I ain't crying, just some dust in my eyes from the explosion.

THOUGHTS: O God, where the hell am I? I should have gone right instead of left. There's the old "E" Club. Just walk a little while longer and I'll be on the road by the messhall. There it is, so the COC bunker is right over there and there's our company office. Goddam it, why can't I stop crying? We've lost people before, you're bound to lose people in a war. People, yes, but not your best friend. I just gotta get into my bunker. I'll be safe in my bunker. Yeah, sure I will. Just as safe as Scrib and the other guys were when the rocket came in the door. Ain't no safe place in Khe Sanh. I'm going to stay in here until it's time for me to rotate home. I gotta think what I am going to do. Think about what, though. Think about home and Ann and Mom and Dad. Can't think about that. I ain't going to make it home. I'm going to get blown away just like Junior did. I'm going home all right, going hom in a body bag, all blown to shit. Can't think about getting blown away. It'll drive me crazy, just like ——. Can't get medevaced for being a psycho. I can't think straight any more. I'm all confused. I don't know what to do next. if only I could stop crying. I'm acting like a little kid, sitting in the corner, hiding, and crying. I am a little kid, trapped in a man's body and playing war. Well somebody's playing with a different set of rules from what I remember. After somebody said Bang, you're dead, you could still get up and go home for lunch. God, I'm so tired. I wish I was still at Niagara. I'd be sitting in the student center with Ann, having a Coke or some fries. I'd even take a greasy hamburger. I can't remember when I ate something other than Cs. Goddam it, Junior, why did you have to die? I got nobody now to show me what to do. What's going to happen to your family, Junior? Who's going to break the news to them? Who's going to tell them that you're coming home in a box? God, how I miss you already. You and me shared some good times, Junior, didn't we? I wanted so much see Arkansas after we both went home. I ain't never been out of New York in my life. I don't even know where Arkansas is. Now I'll never get the chance. This ain't fair, Junior, you leaving me all alone like this. Who am I going to talk to? Who am I going to fool around with? Who's going to watch my back out on patrol? Junior, I was just getting good enough to watch out for you the way that you took care of me. I gotta get out of here or I'm going to go crazy. Someone's coming.

CONVERSATION: Who's there? Pappy? No, Sir, Junior didn't make it. They've already brought his body over to Graves Registration. I was supposed to report his death to Capt. Reynolds but I had to try and pull myself together first. Sorry, Sir. I ain't doing such a good job of it. I can't stop crying, Pappy. He was my best friend and now he is gone and I don't know what to do other than sit in this lowsy bunker and cry like a little baby. What can I do to make it hurt less, Pappy? I can't sit in here and cry on your shoulder for the next four months but I don't want to come out just yet. I feel like an old man now, we all have had to watch our friends get blown into hamburgers for this lousy piece of shit base. What are we doing here? The gooks are going to come in through the wire some night soon and blow all of us away. This battle is not going to look too good in somebody's memoirs. Aren't we the good guys? Aren't we the ones who are supposed to win? God is supposed to be on our side, isn't He? Then how the — do good men like Junior and Bryant and Tallent have to die? Shit, we ain't helping the South Vietnamese. All we are doing is ruining his rice paddies. This place looked like a park when I first got here last June. We would see elephants, tigers, deer, rock apes whenever we went on patrol. There are some places in the hills around here that the scenery takes your breath away. Now it's all messed up. Bomb craters all over the place, blown up trees, dead animals. And all the dead people. All the dead people with their neverending stares and their frozen smiles. What are they smiling about? Maybe, because they don't have to worry anymore. Their problems are over and ours are going to continue, if we survive this place, for the rest of our lives. How are we going to forget what it feels like to wipe your friend's brains off your hands? How are we going to forget how we lied to buddies when we told them that they'd be OK when they were cut in half? How can I forget the futility that I still feel having just held my best friend's hand until he died? I'm only twenty years old, but I feel like I'm sixty. I'm all burned out. God help me! I'll never be the same. Pappy, do you understand what I'm feeling now? Happened to you, too? God, what a brotherhood war creates. if you're not wounded physically, you're bound to be wounded psychologically. How do we go on? Yeah, I guess you're right, what with the gooks pounding on the door, we have to go on just to try and survive ourselves. Thanks for not telling me to forget about what happened to Junior. I don't ever want to forget him. He and I shared too much for me to forget. I've got to remember as much as I can about him so that I can continue our friendship. I'll be out of the bunker in a couple of minutes as soon as I write a letter to Junior's family.

TIME WARP

When tears gush from deep, deep springs unstoppable
when now is then
and the nightmares hang
in the galleries of our soul
Then I know that what was, still is
One never leaves the battlefield
of terrors which never pass
of griefs and guilts that never sleep
The old LP record repeatedly plays the annoying
same song snippet
needle stuck in its scratch woundedness
Until a friend picks up the arm
and life's song continues to sing
its melody in the chorus of
humanity.

—Ray W. Stubbe, 28 May 1996

CARETAKER

When they died
Vietnam had petrified his heart
And all he had
Was a little time
To borrow words
From the worn libretto
Of death in war.
Words that would never fill the holes
Of mothers, wives and other friends
Much less his own.
They were gone, you see,
Every one of them.

Later,
When they came to him
In nightmares like flocks of crows
Bits and pieces, sounds and smells
Of blood and flesh
Or cold and silent as marble statues
From a Roman frieze,
He pleaded with them,
Wrote them poems,
And cried their names
In a hundred therapies,
Hoping his epitaphs, like headstones
Would hold them in their graves.
They would not leave.

Later,
When he came to understand
The gift that he'd been given
At the beginning of each day,
He began to mourn them.
He'd talk about them to his wife
And other friends,
He wanted to "make his peace with them,"
To "lay them all to rest."
He closed his eyes and prepared
To forget.
But they,
They were as clear, as young
And alive in him
As ever before.
They would not leave.

Now,
He waits for them to come,
Sometimes they surprise him
As when he found them
Sitting at a table in the sun.
Six brave men
In short cut hair.
But, when he rushed to join them
They broke into bits and pieces.

A smile, a laugh
A well remembered gesture,
The color of an eye,
The way the sunlight caught one's hair.
Or they surround him softly.
As when they sit beside him
As he watches a sunset
Or a river as it flows among the trees.
But, especially
When they come together
When he meets someone
Who knew them too
And they resonate full fleshed
Between the two.
And he prays
They will not leave.

—Charles E. Patterson

A THANK YOU LETTER

[From David Carrasquillo to Ernest Spencer, 30 July 1996]

I do hope that by the time you get this letter, that you've had a safe and pleasant trip home. Before I go much further, please let me extend to you my heart felt gratitude and my appreciation for extending to me the privilege of being included in the company of yourself and the men of Delta 1/26, at the get together at the home of Dan and Mrs. McGravey during this reunion of the KHE SANH Vets. That wonderful gesture on your part touched me very deeply. So please accept my thanks for this. I would also like to personally thank you for the note of pride in your voice when you introduced me to Colonel McEwan and his lovely wife Gerry and the group of assembled guests and told them about my brother Angel's Navy Cross award as a member of Delta 1/26. On behalf ot the Mendez family and this Marine in particular, we thank you for that tribute to my brother Angel. I'm also very grateful to your men who were present at the reunion from Delta 1/26 in that they welcomed me not only as a fellow Marine, they also welcomed me as a brother. And this endeared them to me very much. These men are not just outstanding individuals, they are 'Good People' in my book and they and you I now consider members of my extended family. You all will be in my prayers for your good fortune and continued success always. I would also like to say that I was very moved by the comraderie and brotherhood that each and every one of you extended and shared with me as well. ... For my part, I was not only awed by being in the company of you and your Marines from Delta 1/26, I gained a new insight and a very real sense of comfort that my late brother served with men of your caliber and professionalism in Vietnam. And that he is remembered with pride by you and your Marines means a lot to me as well. I know now that his sacrifice was not in vain. In closing, again I thank you all for the brotherhood and fellowship and the comraderie that you all shared with me. God bless you and yours.

THANK YOU, MEL

In the book, *The End of the Line* by Robert Pisor, he describes the assault on Hill 861 on Jan 20, 1968. He states on page 95: "Captain Jasper's radioman, blinded by an explosion, relayed target coordinates to gunners on 881S as calm, cool and collected as a telephone operator in New York City." The radioman was Mel Sopp of California. Like many Marines of the Siege many heroic acts went unawarded. Therefore, I'd like to take up a little space in the KSV to say: GREAT JOB MEL, WE'RE ALL PROUD OF YOU!! Thanks. Wally Schaffenberg.

THANK YOU, IKE!

[Letter from Michael Worth, 23 June 1991]

I joined E Co almost immediatley when they were in Phu Bai. This is where I met IKE (Tom Eichler). He was a little older than the rest of us and seemed to be attached to the CP. He sure knew his stuff and all of us guys really looked up to him and respected him. He was a little crazy but the kind of guy you would like to have by your side if the tough times came.

I remember flying to Khe Sanh in C-130s and landing at the main base. We did not stay there long and were saddled up headed somewhere outside the wire of the main combat base. When I saw IKE a few months back he told me that the original mission was to take Hill 881 South. I guess E Co got lost in the unbelievably tall grass and somehow ended up on Hill 861-A. The hill was in a totally natural state. We had to start from scratch and cut all the trees and grass down in order to dig trench lines. After awhile we did not have any water and were licking leaves in the morning and cutting bamboo in order to drain the liquid. We strained it through a helmet liner and drank it with halogen tablets.

On the 5th of February with our trench lines about two feet deep and one layer of sandbags on top of them and one fence of wire surrounding the hill, the enemy attacked around 3 AM easily blowing up what little wire was there and setting a machinegun up inside our own perimeter.

They came up on the knoll of the hill where 1st Platoon was spread out in different areas along the trenchline. They killed all the Marines at the point where they came through the wire in no time at all they were in our trench lines and beyond. I was in 3rd Platoon about 3/8 the way around the hill. IKE was in the CP and immediately went down to where all the action was. I was in a fire team chosen to go down to the point and help counterattack.

My memory is somewhat fuzzy after this. Me and my best buddy Joe Roble (who was killed 7 months later Sept 16, 1968, at a place called LZ MARGO) and a guy named Wayne Sanders worked our way down the shallow trench line encountering some resistance from theenemy. I remember stepping on top of dead bodies and we reached the point where the enemy was coming through the wire.

The hill at this point was like daylight cause of all the illumination. When we reached the point where the enemy was coming through the wire, IKE unbelievably was standing above the trench line with no regard for his own life throwing one grenade after another and screaming at the enemy. The rest of us were trying to keep low. IKE was a sitting duck since the hill at this time was like daylight with all the illumination. There must of been an angel of the LORD protecting him. It was a miracle he was not killed. His continued grenade attack plugged the hole up where the enemy were coming through. This enabled the hill to finally be secured. The rest of us felt like if IKE had not plugged the hole up the enemy would of kept pouring in and eventually conquered the hill. We were only a company size unit not really fortified at the time of this assault. The enemy could of been battalion size or larger. I am not really sure what IKE did before this but I heard stories that he dragged wounded Marines out of the trenchline to safety and helped call in fire support. There was mass confusion during the initial attack, and some Marines killed other Marines not knowing who was who.

We all felt like IKE deserved THE MEDAL OF HONOR for his uncommon valor and bravery up and beyond the call of duty. His leadership and coolness under fire cannot be put in words to justify what he did. To me and all the other guys on the hill he will always be our hero.

When I think back the enemy must of been watching us when we first moved on the hill and thought what are these guys doing? When they saw us start to dig in they probably figured they better hit us before we get too fortified but did not know a guy named Tom Eichler would put a stop to their plans.

The days after the battle when the hill became more fortified IKE would always come around to each hole and talk and joke with all of us. I remember we were all talking about why we joined the Marine Corps and IKE said the judge said he had two choices: jail or join the Marine Corps. We all got a great laugh out of this.

If you have not seen it there is a great picture of IKE standing on the knoll of the hill the morning after the battle in the book called *I Protest* and *War Without Heroes* by David Douglas Duncan.

Your friend and Khe Sanh Vet, Michael Worth.

GLENN RAPPOLD AND HIS VIETNAM MEMORIAL

[In the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* for Monday, May 27, 1996, front page, are two large colored photos. One shows a large granite memorial with a bronze plaque of art work showing some Marines in tall grass carrying a rifle, four plaques of the seals of the different armed services, and a plaque of words. There is a rifle stuck in the ground next to it with a pair of jungle boots at the base and a helmet on top. Three children are pictured looking at it. Above the photograph are the words "Veteran Keeps Memory Alive." The other colored photo is of Glenn in Marine Corps Dress Blues with white gloves, large medals, holding a Marine Corps flag. An extended story by Mr. John Sonderegger follows. A letter from Glenn accompanies the clipping in which Glenn writes: "It was a beautiful day. It was 90 degrees and sunny all day. The good LORD made that day. I thank GOD all the time for being with me and my buddies in Viet Nam. I thank God for my good help after my quadruple heart bypass 3 1/2 years ago. I don't work anymore. I got 100% disability from the VA, 100% Social Security and a check from the company I used to work for 19 years... Please pray for me and my family." Excerpts from the excellent story in the paper article by John Sonderegger follow.]

"Glenn Rappold has two Purple Hearts and 152 pieces of shrapnel in his body. He is disabled with battle fatigue and sees a psychiatrist every four to six weeks.

"The Vietnam War is something he doesn't try to forget.

"Rappold, 48, wears Marine caps and T-shirts. His Missouri license plates proclaim that he earned the Purple Heart.

"And he has built an eloquent Vietnam Memorial—in his back yard at 1 Inverness Court in St. Peters. When he dies, he wants the memorial moved to the City Centre area of St. Peters.

"Until then, anyone can come see it. Many already have.

"Some visitors have been so moved that they knelt and prayed.

"Rappold was a promising baseball prospect in high school. He wanted to be 'the next Stan Musial,' as his high school yearbook had forecase.

"'That was my first dream,' he said.

"An outstanding hitter, he tried to turn around and hit left-handed so that he could be a switch-hitter. Then he suffered an elbow injury while swinging from the left side and couldn't play his senior year at Affton High.

"With that dream shattered, Rappold did what he thought was the next-best manly thing. He enlisted in the Marine Corps.

"Four months after graduating from high school in June 1996, he was a Marine. He landed in Vietnam in May 1967. He was 19 when he began serving in Khe Sanh....

"In March 1968, Rappold was hit by mortar fire. 'It blew me 15 feet in the air, and I almost swallowed my tongue,' he said. 'Two days later, I was hit again in my left knee.'

"The only thing the medics could do was take him to a bunker and give him morphine to kill the pain.

"Before he was hit, Rappold fired a 105mm howitzer. he says the rounds took out two Russian-made tanks. He was presented two Purple Hearts for his service at Khe Sanh and nine medals, altogether, for his time in Vietnam.

"Before he left Vietnam, Rappold saw many of his friends die in battle. He made a promise to them that he would build a memorial to honor their memory....

"He says that coping with what happened during his 13-month tour of duty in Vietnam has been a lifelong challenge. Flashbacks, nightmares, cold sweats and seeing the faces of his young dying friends have never left him.

"Three years ago, at 45, Rappold suffered chest pains while cutting his grass. He underwent open-heart surgery, a quadruple bypass.

"He thought a lot about dying then and wondered what he would say when he saw 'my buddies up in heaven. They'd ask me about that memorial that I promised them.'

"So nine months ago, Rappold went to work on his last Vietnam mission. Everywhere he went for help, he ran into Vietnam vets who wanted to pitch in. A construction company donated a 3,300-pound piece of granite that became the memorial's centerpiece. The granite piece has a plaque that reads:

"'In Memory of All Vietnam Veterans. This memorial was erected in memory of the young individuals who went to war as kids and lost their youthful dreams, and some their lives, for a cause—freedom and honor—and came back as men with the horrors of war instilled in every fiber of their being and were never given the respect and honor they so dearly deserved from the public or United States government.

"'God will one day judge our actions. Until then, He will shine on the lives of each vetgeran now and forever more because He was with each of them in Vietnam. he is the only One that truly knows what they went through and are living with every day.'

"Another plaque, on a smaller stone, contains the names of 52 Missourians missing in action in Southeast Asia. Asterisks mark four of the names because those men's remains have been recovered and returned home.

"The 'living memorial' also includes a walkway and garden. The burning bushes stand for the blood spilled in Vietnam. Red, white and blue flowers bloom nearby.

"On Armed Forces Day, May 18, [1996], Rappold held a dedication ceremony for the memorial. Mayor Tom Brown of St. Peters was among the 275 people who attended...

"During the ceremony, two F-15 fighers from the Air National Guard at Lambert Field swooped down near the treetops on Inverness Court. A 21-gun salute was fired. A buddy played taps.

"Rappold embraced fellow Marines and friends, old and new. He said he was too emotional to speak that day..."

THANK YOU, GLENN !! GOD BLESS YOU !!

LETTERS FROM VIETNAM

[The following are some letters written home by Cpl Tim Haley from Vietnam. Perhaps we could make this a permanent part of our magazine. Would you, the reader, like to submit some of yours? Since they are so precious, I would suggest you send xerox copies of them rather than the originals]

2-12-68
"Mom, how about getting that group of yours to send us some packages? Sure would appreciate it. I know all the 'grunts' would. These guys haven't had hot chow or a soda in two months. I haven't either. We sure will be grateful. Okay, Mom?

2-20-68
"We are still waiting for the big day, which is a hell of its own, **waiting.** The longer they wait the better off we will be. I'm still trying to be optimistic about the whole thing and keep hoping they never come, but we keep getting told that attack is inevitable and that they will come.

"If they do come, the big siege is to last four days and three nights. Wow! That is a lot of time without sleep. I have a hard time making it through one night, let alone three.

"I'll be sure to keep you posted as to what is happening here.'

2-24-68
"Took all kinds of incoming yesterday, rockets and mortars all day long. Thought they were going to attack for sure. But it never came, thank God.

"They still haven't been able to get our mail out to us, but they say they are trying. This place is worse than Con Thien was; we get more incoming. It all seems to come from Laos.

"I am anxiously awaiting the arrival of your packages and letters. Hope we get some today." Love, Tim.

PURPLE HEART

[Tom Winston, who addressed us at our reunion, and who is presently suffering the ravages of Huntington's, was recently given his Purple Heart—from wounds at Khe Sanh! The following are excerpts from a newspaper story by Natalie Shore]

"Tom Winston was barely 18 when enemy fire struck his unit at Khe Sanh. It was April 9, 1968. The Marine Corps Private, an ammunition technician, rushed out to fight the fire, which was threatening a munitions dump.

"The last thing he remembered was a huge explosion. Everything turned bright orange.

"The intensity of the blast melted the skin on his right arm, along with his flak jacket and boots. He was left smoldering with burns over 35 percent of his body.

"Winston recovered. In fact, he served three more years in Vietnam.

"But Winston, a native of Bakersfield who now lives in La Habra, didn't get his Purple Heart.. It was some kind of bureaucratic mixup, he said..

"On Saturday, the nation did right by Tom Winston.

"In a ceremony at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard, the 45-year-old retired master sergeant received his Purple Heart. The medal was pinned to his chest during a graduation ceremony of the South Bay Young Marines, a Corps-sponsored youth program, at the shipyard's Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Readiness Center....

"Clad in a black baseball cap and a black jacket bearing the Brothers of Viete-Nam logo and motto, 'Lest We Forget,' Winston received a standing ovation from several lhundred people attending the combined ceremonies. Among his supporters were his father, Willard Winston of Norwalk, a 65-year-old retired Marine serveant major who inspired his son's military career, and Winston's own 18-year-old son, Thomas Anthony Winston, who surprised his father by flying in from Minneapolis for the ceremony...

"But no one is more honored by the medal than Winston himself, said friends and family. Ten years ago, he was diagnosed with Huntington's disease and is dying from the irreversable, degenerative brain disorder."

God and the soldier we adore

In time of war, and not before;

The battle ended and all things
righted,

God's forgotten, the soldier
slighted.

—Francis Quarles, 1880, quoted by President John F. Kennedy at Fort Stewart, Georgia, 26 Nov 1962. Also was written on a sleeve of C-ration carton cardboard and appeared in the bunker of CAPT John Raymond on Hill 861 (CO, A/1/26) in July, 1967.

STANDING FIRM AT KHE SANH

[The following is an excerpt from a letter from Ann Mooney and Nathan Cover, dated 21 January 1996. *The date, 21 January, is perhaps not without significance. Note that all the dates and days were the same this year, 1996, as they were in 1968. 21 January was a Sunday in both, for example*]

"We are two ninth grade honors students competing in National History Day. History Day is an academic competition in which students submit historical research projects and present them in front of a panel of judges. This year's theme is 'Taking a Stand in History.' We felt that the Siege of Khe Sanh fit well with this theme. We are in the process of creating a documentary video on the Siege of Khe Sanh...."

[The following was written in response to this letter]

"Dear Nathan:...You have focused on one of the more neglected aspects of the experience of those who were at Khe Sanh, Vietnam: TAKING A STAND. Many veterans of that incident tend to look at 'Siege' or 'sacrifice' or even 'daily survival' while the obvious point to emphasize is the determination and dedication to duty that this position would not fall, that the enemy would be blocked from a massive onslaught to the more populated areas further to the east, and that our 'flag would still be there.'

"Despite the ravages of incoming barrages of rockets, mortars, and heavy artillery, and despite the daily devastation in which friends became wounded and even killed, and despite the loss of even such necessities as water and food for prolonged periods of time, and despite much uncertainty of resupply and enemy tanks and our isolation, our men never gave in, never cowered in the trenches. Although we'd take refuge in a ditch or a hole during incoming, all would spring back into life and action within a few moments after the shelling stopped, moving supplies, digging trenches, filling sandbags, repairing severed communications wire, moving medical casualties, checking on the welfare of troops, repairing what needed to be repaired, and so on. Except for less than half a dozen—and I was all over the base and was aware of the thousands of troops there—all maintained a sense of humor, a sense of not being deterred from doing one's job. Moreover, there were constant instances where one would dash through the incoming (which may be likened to going through a space of whirling lawn-mower blades and knives moving in all directions at once) to rescue a wounded buddy, or even someone wounded that one did not know. There were instances of people sharing their last drop of water in a canteen or their last bit of food from a C-ration, even a candy or a can of fruit.

"On the various outposts of the base, this was even more evident. Assaults against our fixed positions on Hills 861, Khe Sanh ville, Hill 861-Alfa, Hill 64, three assaults against the lines manned by the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, and Lang Vei, were defended with fierce dedication. Only Lang Vei and Khe Sanh village were abandoned, and that due to overwhelming odds, while the other positions held.

The theme of your presentation, 'Taking a Stand in History,' is thus most appropriately congruent with the incident at Khe Sanh.

A LETTER FROM GEMANY

[Written by Mike Fielding]

I am writing in response to a lette published in the Spring, 1996, issue (Vol 2:2) on page 18. The lette was from Segeant 'T', BRAVO, 1/9. I am the 'Surfer Dude' to which he refes in his lette about the counteattack against the NA on Alpha Company's position, Hill 64. I did get my [Purple] Heart that day, my fist of two. I want to let him know, that thanks largely to his accurate and timely 60mm work, we accomplished our mission that day. Although I was still only a Second Lieutenant, I had been the acting XO for a few days, but was still responsible for the Third Platoon as well (which I had been since October 1967). At the time of this action, Khe Sanh was still an ugly struggle — limited amounts of concertina and sand bags, incessant incoming, NVA tunnels and trenches, NVA convoys (with their headlights on!) moving near Lang Vei. There were demoralizing rumors that [President] Johnson was stopping bombing below the 17th parallel; and, of course, the U.S.S. PUEBLO had just been seized by North Korea. Next stop for 1/9, Korea? I had come through Con Thien, Camp Evans (where we were strung out from Hue back north to the Rock Crusher near Evans, and where we were the first U.S. forces in the AShau (just prior to Tet) and found tunnels, full underground aid stations and the latest issues of *Playboy*, probably delivered by the likes of Hanoi Jane) and now Khe Sanh. I had seen my fellow Platoon Commanders all killed or med-evaced out at least three times over, so I had no illusion about escaping such a fate. Back at Con Thien I had been through a quick leadership lesson by my First Platoon Sergeant and one of our squad leaders (SSGT McGuigan and SGT Anderson) that I followed througout my Viet Nam tour. In my first fire right near Mortar Church, I had hit the deck at the first small arms incoming. Pieces of tree bark and limbs and bushes were alternately falling and jumping as the incoming cut them free from the foliage. In the midst of all of this, I felt a tap on my shoulder and heard some cutting words, 'Hey, Leiutenant, can't see much from down there, can you? You know, you can't hide from them rounds. If they're meant to find you, they will. In the meantime, shouldn't you be tellin' all these guys what to do?' From that day on, I gave up on trying to 'make yourself small' as we used to say. At Khe Sanh, I had the privilage of leading a 'suicide squad' outside the wire eventhough we were 'officially' bottled up. So, I knew the NVA trenches and tunnels around us better than anyone on the Rock Quarry. I volunteered to take the Third Platoon, reinforced with the suicide squad members (all volunteers,too) and

remove the NVA from Hill 64, but, the Battalion Commander and Company Commander (LTCOL Mitchell and a Captain we called 'Hot Stuff' because of a Red Devil tattoo he sported) thought it would leave the company in a real mess if we failed. Hill 64 literally looked down our throat. If we failed, it would allow the NVA to walk right over us and on down the hill into the Combat Base itself. However, if we did nothing, Alpha was on its way to being totally wiped out and the NVA would have the key terrain dominating the Rock Crusher anyway. The solution, take two squads and only volunteers; I had the volunteers in ten minutes. We quickly coordinated radio freqs, some hasty On-Calls (only 60s and 81's), and got four M-60 and four M-79'ers 'even the odds;' the reports said an NVA battalion was the unit size of the attack on Alpha Company's position. We took the Hill but lost ten or twelve Marines KIA/WIA out of the approximately twenty we started with. I know we killed in excess of fifty NVA. I saw two 'clumps' of six to eight in two separate trenchlines and several two's and three's in fox holes as well as about twenty on the reverse slope as we consolidated the hilltop. Those dead didn't count those we had to kill one by one going up the hill as we alternately cursed God for the steepness of the hill, and thanked Him for it as ChiComs bounced off our helmets and bodies and rolled down the incline. For Sergeant 'T,' my thanks, and the thanks of all of us who survived Hill 64—both from Alpha and Bravo companies. Your rounds were on target and more than 'danger close;' just what we needed. I got hit badly enough that I spent a few days having little pieces of metal extracted from various parts of my body, then got an R&R in Hawaii, with little plastic tubes sticking out of shrapnel holes in several places, I didn't spend much time laying around the beach. i did however get to see my son who had been born in January. I rejoined 1/9 outside Hill 474, and we moved/fought our way back to CHARLIE 3. I lasted about two more months then got wounded again, this time as we moved with Task Force ROBIE, an Army unit. By then I was the Assistant S3, but since 1/9 was hard on company commanders and platoon commanders, I alternated between grease pencil and rifle. I preferred the rifle since as an 0302, it put me closer to men like Sergeant Thibault.....

To Dan Hudson, a former machinegunner of mine—where are you? I can be contacted at my residence in Germany:

MIKE FIELDING
Heidegruen 34
30179 Hannover
GERMANY

My prayers and thanks. Mike Fielding.





MORTARS ON HILL 861-ALFA

[From a letter from Michael B. Delaney, 29 July 1996]

I was stationed in Khe Sanh on Hill 861A and 861 from about January 16, 1968, until we walked off in mid-April. I was assigned to Weapons Platoon, ECHO Company, 2nd Bn, 26th Marines, a crew member on a 60mm mortar.

I remember the morning of February 5, 1968, very well. I was awakened to the sound of weapons fire and the sensation that I was not breathing or unable to do so. This was brought on by the CS gas being used as the attacking NVA entered our wire. our 60mm mortar was positioned just behind the CP, kinda in the center of 861A. The battle seemed to last forever, never ending. Hand to hand fights were common, we had lost our north perimeter early on, and all of our initial rounds were fired in that direction. High Explosives followed by illumination at a rate that blistered our fingers. After a time it was apparent by the number of NVA running around within the perimeter we had lost or had little control of the wire. We shifted our tube straight up in an effort to reduce greatly the number of NVA that were fighting to control and overrun 861A. Our mortar crew lay as flat as we could around and in the gun pit so as to still operate our weapon, praying we could survive our own rounds. The spectacle and thought of what we were doing was beyond comprehension. The result was very gratifying. Our crew survived with only minor injuries noted while producing substantial casualties for the NVA. Our action was appreciated as we were thanked by many Marines in the early hours and days following the battle. Our tube was very instrumental in denying the hill to the NVA.

I would like to thank and applaud my 60mm Mortar Squad, who choose to make the difference:

Squad Leader - Billy E. Drexel, Jr., Cpl.
Gunner - James Appleman, LCPL
A-Gunner - J. T. Nangle, LCPL
Ammo-Humpers - James Carmichael, PFC; Donald M. Wyatt, PFC, Michael Roberts, PFC, and myself Michael B. DeLaney, PFC.

OF NOTE

One of our members recently sent in a check for $150.00 anonymously for Life Membership for another member. (It was so anonymous, that the man receiving it was at a complete loss as to who had done this for him). That one would care for another to this degree only reflects the degree of caring that we all saw as men dashed through incoming explosions to rescue an exposed wounded man and bring him to safety or medical attention while risking serious injury or death.

9th MOTORS ON ROUTE 9

I served with CoA/9thMT from 4 Sept 67 to Nov 68. I started out years ago answering a request from Ray in the VFW magazine for photos and the like from those who served at Khe Sanh. First it was a note from time to time, then a newsletter. The group has really grown from that time. Not being a member of the 26th Marines, I don't know many of the members but I enjoy the stories in the magazine.

I was with the 9th MT Bn which was attached to the 3rd Mar Div at Dong Ha. We were not the Division MT but because the 3rd MT Bn was in Hue we did all of their work up North. A and B Co. each had a truck that was left at Khe Sanh after Route 9 was closed so each company had to provide a driver for the trucks for 30 days at a time. We supplied the bases north of Dong Ha (Cam Lo, C2, Con Thien, Gio Linh, A3, Camp Carroll, Rockpile, and Ca Lu). Our Bn along with 11th Eng. trucked in most of the supplies used to build up Ca Lu for Operation Pegasus.

Once Route 9 was reopened the 9th MT Bn trucked in ammo and supplies to Khe Sanh on a daily basis. The trip was not an easy one and took a convoy from 10 to 12 hours to make the round trip each day. It was even harder on the men who had to keep the road open. Made our last run the first week of July 68. —Mr. Lynn W. Dornan

RESUPPLY

[Letter from Michael A. Garoutte]

I thought you might like to see my perspective—I think it's considerably different from anything you've published so far. You see, I was a USAF C-123 pilot, stationed at DaNang AB, and my tour of duty included Tet '68.

During the tour, I made airdrops of supplies into both Con Thien & Lang Vei, and I landed at Khe Sanh about 40 times between March 67 and March 68. We were always warned, 'Don't fly WEST or NORTH of Khe Sanh!'

During the Tet offensive, Khe Sanh, Hue, and all of I Corps took the brunt of the attacks. The Air Force realized that attempts to supply Khe Sanh had become extremely dangerous to their aircraft and crews, so they issued an order that prohibited any further landings by USAF C-130s.



Henceforth, there would be only three methods of airborne supply: landings by daring MARINE C-130s; USAF LAPSE (Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System); and landings by USAF C-123s and C-7s.

Luckily, my unit, the 311th Air Commando Squadron, had a number of crews with solid experience in landing on Khe Sanh's tricky metal runway. When wet, its surface was compared to 'greased owl shit.' Our approach was always [from the east] to the west, landing uphill. We would turn off left at the first taxiway and start lowering the back ramp.

As we continued taxiing up the parking ramp—never coming to a complete stop—men would run on and off the airplane carrying baggage and supplies on litters! I was always amazed at HOW MUCH material could be transported in this manner. Departing passengers would 'hit the deck' as soon as they got on board. Two right turns would bring us back onto the runway, now facing east and ready for acceleration and a downhill takeoff. Total time on the ground was usually less than six minutes.

Because Charlie owned the hills to the north, we assumed they had pre-positioned mortar tubes that could pinpoint any spot on the ramp. We realized that at any moment it might simply come down to 'his timing *vs.* ours.' Of course, our arrival was also the most dangerous period of time for people at the base. Charlie knew that there would be alot of personnel moving around, and he wasn't aiming to just take out a plane but rather mess up your operations any way he could.

In the less-hectic months leading up to Tet, I had several occasions to sit and talk with our support staff at Khe Sanh. There were Command Post personnel who directed our takeoffs and landings, and there were Aerial Port personnel who controlled our cargo and passenger manifests. Once, I volunteered to bring in some of their favorite liquor. They stopped me cold with 'NO BOOZE ON BASE! That's the rule, and we strictly abide by it. Every man here has to be fully alert at all times!' Their next choice was Coke, and I brought two cases on my next trip! To all of you who were stationed there, I raise a toast—non-alcoholic if you insist—THANK YOU FOR YOUR SACRIFICE. It was NOT in vain.

HELO MISSION

[Letter from Peter N. Greene]

During the fighting for Hills 861 and 881 at Khe Sanh, our squadron (VMO-6, MAG-36) had four 'Huey'gunships assigned TAD at Khe Sanh working on SOG missions with US Army Special Forces. (Actually, VMO-6 had gunships in and out Khe Sanh almost daily for various reasons).

During one of these missions we were diverted to escort the insertion of USMC Recon. Our mission was to escort two CH-46s which would insert two recon teams into areas northeast and northwest of Hills 861 and 881. (Each 46 carried a 6-8 man recon team).

The four gunships and 2 CH-46s departed Khe Sanh flying directly north. After several minutes we arrived at the first recon team's designated drop site. VMO-6's call name was KLONDIKE, and the four gunships were KLONDIKE 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, and 4-4. I do not recall the call sign for the 46s. My plane was KLONDIKE 4-1. We were the lead gunship, and the pilot (I think) was Capt. Fairfield, who was the senior pilot.



Like most insertion/extraction missions, the gunships usually go into the proposed LZ first to examine the area. After arriving at the first recon team's site, we (KLONDIKE 4-1) go in first, followed by 4-2, and then 4-3 and 4-4. Gunship 4-1 swings left, 4-2 swings right. Both circle around and fly back into the LZ to cover 4-3 and 4-4, and so on.

With the first recon team on the ground, without incident, the first 46 climbs and joins the second one, both leave the immediate area while we (the gunships) hang around in case the recon team comes in contact with the NVA. After a short while the team leader reports that they have faded into the jungle and are alright. We join the 46s and depart for the second drop site.

After flying 5-10 minutes west, which would be northwest of Khe Sanh, we arrived at the second team's designated landing site. Again, KLONDIKE 4-1 and 4-2 drop down to ground level to scout the LZ. Unlike the first site, this area looks fresh with enemy activity. Crew Chief Cpl. Evans (I think), looking through binoculars spots newly dug trenches and foxholes. The drop site is a side of a mountain. The LZ is the south side which is covered with tall elephant grass; the north side is trees and jungle. A ridge running along the top of the mountain separates the grass from jungle, and a freshly dug trench had been dug there.

Capt. Fairfield called the second team leader, advises that an alternative site be found as this LZ does not look good. The team leader, a Lieutenant, declines and insists that they be inserted there as planned.

Again, we (4-1 and 4-2) make low passes over the LZ; then we make a fake landing with 4-3 and 4-4 covering us, still no fire.

Then came the time for the insertion of the second team. Gunships 4-1 and 4-2 lead the way, followed by the 46 carrying Team #2, with 4-3 and 4-4 bringing up the rear. As we were circling around the come in behind 4-4, and as the 46 was about to touch down, the trench line became alive with NVA fire. The 46 immediately creamed in on its left side, rotor blades breaking off, flying, and rolled on its side (downhill) and at once was afire. One after another the gunships strafe and rocket the NVA in the trenchline and surrounding area; the trenchline is only 50 yards from the downed 46.

On this day, we were carrying small rocket pods, but each VMO-6 gunship carried 14 rockets, had 6 or 8 M60 machine guns, as well as other personal weapons. I always had a M-79 grenade launcher with two cases of grenades. And, although it was prohibited, most of the crew chiefs had 5-6 fragmentation grenades (wrapped in duck tape) stashed in our planes, just in case. And, I had a M-16 in the event we went down.

Firing relentlessly and non-stop while trying to suppress ground fire, we could see the occupants of the downed chopper helping each other, crawling and stumbling out of the helicopter, to get to the down hill side of the 46, and away from the NVA. The fire and smoke from the burning 46 provided them their only cover.

And to make matters even worse, before long the voice of the pilot of the second CH-46 (which had been staying out of range nearby) came over the radio to announce: 'Okay, guys, my fuel warning light (20 minutes fuel left) just came on, and if we are going to get those folks out of there, we have to do it right now!' With that announcement, suddenly, we realize that we are just out of ordnance, and are getting real low on fuel.

As the pilots maneuvered the planes for the extraction, we frantically searched through the empty ammo boxes and canisters looking for and piecing together all leftover short belts of 7.62 for one final assault.

The pilot of the second 46 flew straight in, from east to west, and landed just below the burning 46, and as they

gathered up the survivors, we expended every last round we had. All the rockets were gone, 15,000 rounds of 7.62, two cases of M-79, all the hand grenades, our personal weapons were empty, even my .38; no ammo left. Finally, the 46 is up and off the ground, all five helicopters make a bee-line for Khe Sanh. We don't even dare climb too h igh to stay out of range, because of the fuel problem; and I remember thinking: God help us if we go down.

There is a good ending to this story, at least as far as I know. On that return flight to Khe Sanh the pilot of the 46 called and informed us that all the crew of the downed 46 and the recon team were alive. Unfortunately, all missions did not turn out the same.

Thinking back to that day, I remember that we had to fly almost directly above 861 at low level, and taking fire almost all the way. I remember after we had sat down on the runway at Khe Sanh 4-3 ran out of fuel several feet off the deck and had a rough landing. And, after cleaning out my plane of all the empty ammo boxes, debris, and spent rounds I found one last M-79 round. A short time later, having refueled and re-armed our birds, and having chowed down on C-rats, we were ready to return to the SOG missions. I don't know the fate of the people who were on the downed 46.

I didn't know, nor meet any of the crew from the CH-46 squadron, either before or after this mission; nor the two recon teams. After almost 30 years I regret to say that I don't remember too many names of the guys in my squadron, but I do recall this particular mission like it was yesterday.

One last thing to say: there were sixteen members from VMO-6, eight crew from the CH-46 squadron (probably MAG 36 also), and 12 to 16 Marine Recon who were involved with this mission; perhaps their recollections may differ somewhat from mine, but I don't think that the USMC could have performed any better than we did on that day at Khe Sanh. Semper Fi!

—Peter N. Greene, USMC #2218486

A LAWYER IN KHE SANH?

By Chuck Patterson

"Hell, we got rats, it's no surprise to find a lawyer here." The Gunny who said that in November, 1967, when I first came to Khe Sanh made little effort to keep me from hearing as he went to get someone to help me find the witnesses I hoped to interview for a court martial which I was going to prosecute in the next month. It wasn't the first time someone had made similar comments and it wouldn't be the last.

Unlike the other services, the Marine Corps did not have a Judge Advocate General until late in 1968. Prior to that officers with law degrees were told that they would be used as lawyers secondary to 'the needs of the Corps.' Since non-lawyers cold try cases (and were sometimes preferred), 'the needs of the Corps' were sometimes bizarre.

In 1967 and 1968 the ordinary assignments for a lawyer would be as government counsel or defense counsel for formal investigations or courts martial, legal assistance officers and foreign claims officers. Of course government and defense counsel dealt with criminal charges, legal assistance officers prepared wills, advised on what to do with threatened divorces, unexpected children, marriages to Vietnamese women or women met on R&R, purchases of bars in Bangkok (a popular investment) and advice to the lovelorn. Foreign claims officers dealt with reparations paid for damage, injuries, or death caused to the civilian population by friendly fire or other actions by USMC personnel. Interspersed with these duties were the other 'needs of the Corps.'

I had come in country in July, 1967, and by the time I first got to Khe Sanh in November, I had been: the XO of First 155 Guns; in firefights with the Combined Action Company south of Phu Bai, particularly HOTEL 8; mortared at numerous locations; at Con Thien in September of 1968 during the heavy action there; all while a government counsel responsible for investigating and prosecuting charges.

Although trained as infantry officers and, at least in my case, having served as an EM, we were fully aware that we were considereda nuisance, no matter how necessary, to any combat command we joined. In short, we were poages, and we felt frustrated even when we occasionally became involved in an action, because we weren't making the kind of contribution the rest of you were. So most of us hitched rides everywhere we went. (I walked into Con Thien from Highway 1), asked for the Ham and Mothers when there were Cs, and generally tried to do our job with as little inconvenience to the unit as we could.

And that's how I ended up in Khe Sanh, trying to do the work at the unit level instead of at the division. I was at the base in November and December, 1967, for investigations and again for two stretches of four days each in February, 1968, again for investigations into different crimes. If any of you remember some lawyer questioning you about things that had occurred before the siege it was probably me. Other lawyers: Harry Shorstein, Phil Keith and Bob Wachsmuth were also at Khe Sanh during February and tried a Special Courts Martial. Eventhough I added only a little to the base by helping to dig some holes and fill some sand bags, I remember coming in (especially the last time when there were mortars impacting the strip), the time I spent there, and leaving.

A NEW MEMBER

[Letter from Robert J. Sullivan, A/1/13]

About a year and a half ago I first came across the Khe Sanh *Veteran* (Winter '93).. Inside were names (Wayne Neighbors, Dave Rodgers, John Seitz, Leonard Venardos) which I had forgotten but probably werre men with whom I served at Khe Sanh in Alpha Battery, 1/13. I would be interested in exchanging letters and photos, etc., with these men if that is possible.

I can best remember the faces, especially those of the grunts coming in from the field. I will never forget their haggard expressions and appearances and it would make me feel fortunate (albeit a little guilty) to be in artillery instead.

I had some regrets about rotating back to the States just days before the siege began but my time left in the Corps did not allow me to extend. Back at LeJeune I learned the fate of guys like Sgt Tommy Antrim and others who had stayed. Seven months before, two men (Rick Stewart and Bill Travis were killed [*KIA 27 June 1967*] by incoming mortars while we slept in a tent only several feet apart. I've often wondered why fate has dealt so kindly with me.

Recently I started working as a volunteer at a veterans hospital in Bedford, Mass, helping other veterans. Enclosed please find my application..for menbership with your association. Sincerely, Robert J. Sullivan.

THE LAST SURVIVING CHAPLAIN'S ASSISTANT

By Joseph P. Gibney

Reading the 1995 Fall edition of the Khe Sanh *Veteran*, I came across the article, "A Few Moments Joy With His New Boots." This article talked about Pvt. Spicer being a conscientious objector but with the help of Ray Stubbe and the Lord he marched to the same beat but took a different path that won him the respect of all who were wounded and dying. I too was marked with a scarlet letter and was accused of sleeping on post by my squad leader and platoon leader. Of course these two leaders had guard duty at night right after my watch and they refused tocome out of the bunker to stand their watch. This happened during the whole siege. From there on, I had the water pump house, listening post every night, point man every time, on ambush every time and was busted to Private. Spicer and I had a lot in common, and I do remember Spice on a few occasions. It appears that I am the only survivor of the Chaplains' Assistants. Father Driscoll, who was also a stretcher bearer, was a sight to see riding his motorcycle at Khe Sanh, dodging incoming. It just happens that Father Driscoll was a pastor at St. Patrick's grammar school, Lynn, Mass, where my brother, sister, and I attended. By the time I found out that it was Father Driscoll who was riding the motorcycle, I knew that I also was following the I was one of seven other Chaplains' Assistants on the Blue Sector side while thirteen Chaplains' Assistants volunteered on the Gray Sector side. Stretcher bearer was one of many responsibilities that we shared along with giving out Communion. It was Father [Charles] Kelly who sent the word out that he was looking for volunteers for Chaplains' Assistants. I was told that I was the only Chaplains' Assistant left on Blue Sector side and that a Special Forces at the beginning of the air strip (east side) hadn't seen a Chaplain in quite a few weeks since snipers were picking off our men. So I took a direct route, a straight line on top of the plateau instead of walking the trench line, gave Communion, and returned by the trenchline. I informed Father Kelly that the Special Forces were being interviewed by a French television crew for an hour special program and that the unit requested me to say Mass and give out Communion. At this time Father Kelly had just received notice from the "Archbishop" (I think), informing him that Chaplains' Assistants can no longer say Mass or give out Communion. Father Kelly and I went to the Special Forces area, Mass was said, and I became an altar boy. The last time I said Mass was on Easter Sunday 1968 right after we left Khe Sanh.

Like Spicer the word (scuttlebutt) got around but the truth finally surfaced that I had been framed and that my respect and credibility were finally restored. I would like to bring to all of your attention the day that the artillery round landed in Charlie Company's trench line which came from Laos. This was the same round that killed a Chaplain [Bob Brett, 2/26, and his assistant, Alexander Chin] and killed and maimed the replacements who were going to be choppered to the hilltops. The only thing that survived the attack unscathed was the chalice which had been used by the Chaplain. It was also during this time that the Chaplains' Assistants were used as stretcher bearers and had the task of cleaning up the trenchlines of bodies that were missing limbs, heads, and sometimes just the remains of a uniform as the body had been disintegrated. One of the hardest tasks was giving the Last Rites. We were told to say a special prayer over and over while not listening to the dying comrade's confession. Pvt. Spicer might not have been in the bush to experience life and death and all that we were trained for, but he did experience war from the inside (Khe Sanh) looking out (into the bush).

It was men like Pvt. Spicer who brought hope, faith and God to each bunker, foxhole, nook and cranny at Khe Sanh.

[*Note: The Chaplains Assistants that were killed were those of Chaplains Brett (2/26), Heino (1/9), Hampton (3/26), and Stubbe (1/26). The assistants Joe notes were men appointed by Chaplain Kelly (who replaced Chaplain Stubbe in March '68) to distribute consecrated communion hosts since he knew he couldn't possibly cover the entire base. Although church officials forbid this, it has now become common practice.*]

REQUESTS

Anyone who recalls Sergeant Major Donald BEAN (1/26, KIA: 11 Mar 68] please contact his daughter, Nita, at: 390 7th St., Taneyville MO 65759, tel (417) 546-3368

Many telephone Area Codes have recently been changed or are in the process of changing. If yours has changed, please send in your new phone number to Ray W. Stubbe.

Matt Syrjanen, a new member of our group who served in Seabees in late '68 (probably in the building of Fire Support Bases in the Khe Sanh area) seeks any who might remember him. (His nick name was 'MAD Marr'). Please write him at: 5229 Peabody St., Duluth MN 55804, Tel: (218) 525-3617.

If you served with Platoon 1005, Company "D", 1st Recruit Training Battalion, at Parris Island, June-August, 1966, please contact Bill Ehrhart, 6845 Anderson St., Philadelplhia PA 19119, Tel (219) 848-2068.

Anyone who knows how to find Master Sergeant Samuel D. Pearson, please write: J.J. Lambert, E-7 Glenhollow Dr., Holtsville NY 11742.

Charles E. Patterson asks that any of our members who have written poetry about Khe Sanh, the war, friends they knew in Vietnam or what's happened since the war, to send copies of their poems to him for a book of poetry by Khe Sanh vets that he is putting together. Send to: Chuck Patterson, 6081 Cavalleri Road, Malibu CA 90265, or FAX them to him at: (310) 589-5056.

Johnny Chavarria writes: "Though we don't know each other, I'm going to ask a favor of you. I served in Vietnam in 1968 in the Marines with Corporal Thompson. We served with Bravo Co. lst Battalion 3rd Marines, 3rd Marine Division. Corporal Thompson was our platoon's radioman and before joining the Marines and landing in Vietnam, I believe he lived in Spokane, Washington. In late July or August of '68, I got malaria and was taken out of the field. It was during this period that my unit came under fire and Cpl Thompson was hit. When I recovered from malaria and rejoined my unit, Cpl Thompson was gone. My memories of our friendship are in my heart, my scrapbook, and a picture that hangs on my livingroom wall of two young combat Marines. I need your help in my search to find Cpl. Thompson or his family. I'm working with a Spokane telephone directory. I hope that I will be able to find someone who can bring an end to my search. Today Cpl. Thompson would be about 48 years of age. Thank you. Johnny Chavarria, 10 Lafayette Circle, Salinas CA 93906, Tel: (408) 442-5342."

Bill Krueger writes: "Seeking former members of the First Battalion, Third Marine Regiment, Third Marine Division, Vietnam years 1967-69, for an anniversary celebration in conjunction with the [Third Marine] Division Association family reunion, July 19-23, 1997, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Attached units and personnel welcome. Contact: SGTMAJ Bill Krueger, USMC retired, 7622 Highland St., Springfield VA 22150, Phone (703) 451-3844.

Ron Parsons, attached to 15th Aerial Port Squadron, USAF, at Khe Sanh during and after the Siege, would like to locate some of the Marines he came to know (probably after the Siege, in May 68, and writes: "Maybe some of you can help me locate them. They were from either 1/26 or 3/26 and they lived on the northeast perimeter to the east of the water point. To this day I can't remember their names but I got to talk to them almost every day of the three months I spent at Khe Sanh. One of the guys, the most outgoing of the two, was medium height but stocky. he had a larfge scar across one of his shoulder blades that he said he got during an ambush. His sidekick was short, thin and had curly hair. The most notable thing was that he had been bitten by a rat about May '68. I think he had to get the shots. These descriptions could probably fit most of the guys at Khe Sanh but this may help jog some memories. One day the ABC news reporters were around and they needed a guitar player so my buddies came over to the bunker and got me. Fifteen Marines and I sang "We Got to Get Outta This Place" by Eric Burdon and the Animals. This played on coast to coast TV on the 11 o'clock news. Now the memory jogger, one of the guys sitting in the front of the group had a pet duck!! A duck at Khe Sanh? Yes, he did. Surely there weren't many guys who had ducks around!

If you are one of the guys in the video or know one of the guys I'm talking about, please give me a call at (508) 947-2276. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

If I didn't get a chance to say thanks for protecting my butt while serving with you guys, I'm thanking you now! Hope to hear from someone soon. I may have been in the Air Force, but Semper Fi sure has a special meaning to me. God bless.

From Bill L. Graham: I spent 2 tours in Nam. I am working on several service connected disability claims, one of which is for a hearing loss. I would like to find out if the Marine Corps kept records on Seabees who were TDY and worked with their units. If you have any information on any other Seabee of MCB-10 that might of had a hearing loss please let me know. You can contact me at: Bill L. Graham, 415 H St., Aurora NE 68818-2245, Tel: (402) 694-2712.

ANNOUNCEMENT

A special publication, *The Final Formation*, has been printed, listing those who were KIA at Khe Sanh. Following ten pages of tactical maps of the Khe Sanh area (with grid coordinate references, and one map showing the NVA headquarters area during the Siege), and an opening essay on the purposes of the book, the first part, pages 6-152, lists the KIAs by date and incident, with a little discussion about who they were or the circumstances surrounding their death. The period covered is 1963 - 1972. Then follows a summary of casualties: American, NVA, and Bru civilians. Pages 157-173 lists sources of information concerning the losses. Page 173 provides directions to the two Khe Sanh memorials (the one in Arlington National Cemetery, and the one at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery). Pages 174-176 lists our brothers who served at Khe Sanh and died after leaving Khe Sanh (with unit, date, and cause of death). Pages 176-206 is an alphabetical listing of all KIA in the Khe Sanh area (with date and location on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall in Washington, DC).

1,000 copies of this book were printed in order to preserve the memory of our KIA brothers (and those who died since Khe Sanh) and to help those who are still alive with the details of name, location on the Wall, the circumstances, as a way of helping with some closure. The entire cost of the printing of the book (about $5,000.00) was donated by an anonymous donor. It is being offered for sale by Khe Sanh Vets, Inc., as a way to help us generate funds for our Treasury while at the same time fulfilling the two main purposes indicated. The cost is $12.00 per copy (which includes First Class postage of $3.00, giving our organization $9.00 for each copy sold).

For your copy, please send a request and check (made out to: Khe Sanh Vets., Inc.) to:

Ray W. Stubbe
8766 Park View Ct.
Wauwatosa WI 53226

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KIA BECAUSE OF KHE SANH

PERIOD	USA	USMC / USN	USAF	CIV	TOTAL
1963-1966	9		18		27
1967 Jan-23Apr		25			25
1967 24Apr-13May	2	170			172
1967 14May-16 Jul	2	53			64
1967 17Jul - 31Oct		17	6		23
01Nov67 - 19Jan68	10	10	3		23
1968 20Jan-31Mar	26	352	9	1	388
1968 01-15Apr	51	99		1	151
1968 16Apr		43			43
1968 17Apr-11Jul	27	316			343
12Jul68 - 28Jan71	37	71	14		122
1971 29Jan-06Apr	253			4	257
07Apr71 - 1973	13	6	2	11	32
TOTALS:	**430**	**1171**	**52**	**17**	**1670**

"I am rent to the core by this single one's suffering;

you pass with a carefreeness over the fate of

thousands." –Goethe, *Faust,* Part 2, 4398

KHE SANH PX

Be proud you were at Khe Sanh: show others you were there. For list of T-shirts, pins, caps (covers) etc. contact: Carl Oksnee, 6317 72nd St., Kenosha WI 53142, Tel: (414) 694-8512.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please print or type, and provide all information requested.

....
Name *Phone*

....
Street address *City* *State* *ZIP+4*

Are you a Khe Sanh vet?..... *IF YES:*..... .....
Branch of service *Unit*

What years/months were you at Khe Sanh?.....

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

THE KHE SANH VETERAN
8766 Park View Court
Wauwatosa WI 53226

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KHE SANH VETERAN

"For those who fight for it, life has a flavor the protected never know.

(From a sign in the recon command bunker at Khe Sanh originally the thought of an unknown recon Marine)

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QUICK NOTES

NEXT REUNION: Will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, 09 - 13 July 1997. Details will follow. Our Reunion Chairman, Mr. Carl Oksnee, has already visited St. Louis and obtained bids on several hotels. Carl saved considerable money for those attending the Philadelphia reunion. The rate for the 3dMarDivAssn, also meeting in Phily, was $89.00. The first offer made to Carl was $79.00, and after telling the manager that we were not unruly Vietnam veterans, the price was reduced to $52.00 per room per night! Multiply that savings times the 192 attendees and the number of nights, and the savings are in the thousands!

THE KHE SANH *VETERAN* is printed three times a year and is the official publication of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Subscriptions are available at $20.00 a year and should be sent to the Treasurer, Mr. Vincent Griffith. Stories, poems, letters, should be sent to the Editor, Ray W. Stubbe.

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OOPS!! The dues mailer which went out in November was sent to ALL who are on our mailing list. In order to mail this as soon as possible and to save expense in handling, those who are Life Members, those who had already sent in dues during the year, and the half dozen or so who receive complimentary copies thus also received the dues mailer. The idea was to encourage those who have been receiving our magazine, but who have NEVER sent in anything to support us, to send in a contribution. The response was overwhelming, for which we thank you. Please excuse us if you received a dues mailer and are a Life Member, one who already sent in dues, or receive complimentary copies.

In the future, dues should be sent to our Treasurer by Veterans Day (11 November) of each year, which will cover the following year.

AREA CODES: Numerous telephone area codes have changed recently. Please send our Editor your new phone number if it has changed.

IN MEMORY: The dues mailer included the possibility of making a donation "in memory." Several took advantage of this and sent in a special contribution. These are indicated in the center of this issue in the form of the Vietnam Memorial Wall. If you would like to make such a contribution, please send it (along with the "in memory" name or unit or cause indicated) to our Treasurer, Mr. Vincent Griffith.

HELP!! Please send the Editor poems, stories, letters of what you remember about a person, event, or situation at Khe Sanh, or letters you wrote while at Khe Sanh, diary entries, logs, etc. These are very, very important for several reasons: they will help you, they will very probably help someone else, and there will be a permanent record made for the future. What you write may jog someone else to write down something also. We have so little time in which to say "Thank You" to another, to record our experiences before they are forever lost so that an accurate record is preserved and the many good men who did so much good are not forgotten, and help others with details that may help their VA claims or simply to put things to rest, reconnect with a buddy, and clarify what may be a fuzzy memory.

A REACTION FROM A NON-KHE SANH VET: "..I had to take my wife to the hospital yesterday morning for a gall bladder operation and picked up the Khe Sanh newsletter on the way. I was reading the thing while waiting for the operation. My wife is OK and I will pick her up today. ... This is some powerful stuff.. This is not a newsletter. I don't know what you would call this but the word newsletter certainly does not do it justice. I have not finished it yet because I decided to go back over what I read and highlight certain things.. I can never hope to understand what it was like at Khe Sanh but this collection of stories has given me some idea of it. This is so powerful!"

A CREATIVE CONTRIBUTION: Mr. Charles Fox recently sent a check to our Treasurer with the following letter explanation: "I was the 2nd Squad Leader, 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, and was at Khe Sanh from November, 1967, until we got out of there. I have enclosed a check for $29.75 and it is broken down in this way: $20.00 general dues; $9.50 for that bastard of a hill I had to climb and spend Christmas on, eating peaches in my turkey topped with ice cream and cranberry sauce; $.25 for December 25, 1967, when Lt Wells put a CS grenade down the garbage chute on 950, pissed the gooks off, and they threw a CHICOM back."

"HOME IS WHERE YOU DIG IT" : Kenneth R. Thompas, who located us during the reunion in Philadelphia, is the Marine who made the sign "Home is Where You Dig it" which hung outside the bunker housing the S-4 of Regiment, Fred McEwan (who later became CO of 1/26). He writes: "I received my issue of Khe Sanh Veteran and I was so thrilled to see my name, but not only that but to see Colonel McEwan whom I spent my time with, and by the way, requested a sign be made for the bunker.

You guys really made me feel special for that. Who would ever think it would be used for a logo. I wish I could remember alot of things but things happen over the years your memories start to fade.

I didn't have to know you personally but I know if we hadn't gotten our backs against each other we would have someone else writing these letters.

Special thanks go out to the recon boys whom I would talk with alot before they went out on recon patrols. I don't remember individuals, just events. But just knowing all of you Khe Sanh veterans is good enough for me past and present."

THE SHARP EDGE OF LIFE & DEATH
Gentlemen:

Sorry that I have been so negligent in compensating for your excellent magazine.

I was with Bravo Co. 3rd Recon and living in the bush with nothing between llife and death but your M-16 was a lot like living on the edge.

When the siege came we lost a lot of men (I lost a lot of friends).

It is hard remembering it. It is even harder talking about it.

I tell myself it didn't affect me but I know I lie.

As you can imagine I have a love/hate relationship with your magazine.

I love the articles, the poems, etc. and I read it cover to cover.

But it makes me remember and it still hurts." Richard W. Morris.

THE BEES!
"In the last issue, the Khe Sanh logo..conjured up some slightly different imagery for me. As soon as I saw it on the page, the 'V' became the valley of the Khe Sanh river. I tried to see the symbolism you use for the nine-sided border but all I kept seeing was the mountainous horizon that surrounded our little Asian resort. The 'K' and 'S' works for me. I've tried to describe the terrain around Khe Sanh to people in the following way. Take the Adirondak mountains in New York State, double them, and then cover them with everything from knee high elephant grass to triple canopy jungle. Of course, they don't understand.

Second thing. In the narrative..there was a mention of an attack by bees. That reminded me of an incident that occurred in, I think, June of 1967. Bravo, 3rd Recon had just moved from Phu Bai to Khe Sanh. I had only about two weeks in country, and as a fresh meat corporal, team leader-in-training, I had maybe two patrols under my belt and I knew next to nothing. Despite very good training in Recon school at Camp Horno, I was green as grass. I had just come from two years of Sea Duty so you can imagine the culture shock when I went from dress blues to camy sticks and bug juice.

Anyway, we were on a patrol west of the hills and on this trip I was tail end Charlie. Ahead of me in the patrol column was a guy from Noo Yawk City, whose name completely escapes me. He 'tawked loik dis' and at times was unintelligible to me. We were wading through chest high elephant grass near the top of a ridge when I noticed that up ahead there was considerable flapping of arms and general flailing about. It seems the patrol had blundered into a NVA bee ambush and was being cut to ribbons. 'Noo Yawk' and I stopped, pondering our options. The bees hadn't found us yet but there was no way to detour around the kill zone. 'Noo Yawk' turned to me and said in total seriousness, 'Maybe if we wuz ta buzz loik dem bees, dey'd tink we wuz bees too.' It took me a moment to realize he meant it and, since there didn't seem to be any alternatives, I said 'OK.' We proceeded slowly through the area, all the while quietly making buzzing sounds. The bees strafed and dive bombed all around us and even landed on us but WE WEREN'T TOUCHED! Not one sting! I swear on a stack of Marine Corps Guide Books! The rest of the team couldn't believe we had come through unscathed because most of them had hands and faces that were blown up like beach balls. Fortunately nobody was MEDEVAC material but there were some pretty sore puppies for a couple days." Steve Johnson.

"WINDS OF WORDS"
BY
JOSEPH G. CREED

The 'Winds of Words,' will bend the vision of the mind. When people lack the strength to weather lifes experiences, they become permanently bent from experiences of life's winds. If we accept this as being numerically commonplace by 'accident' within our fellow, everyday human kind, a feeling truth arises. We've become bent also. Rather than to tackle the task at hand, we reach for the easy 'sign' of prejudice to classify them. A 'sign' telling us to go around them by using a path of avoidance. As we accept this, we acquire an institutionalized way of thinking, becomeing a 'round about person.' 'Round' is the succession of many bends with connecting points. We actually become worse than what we're trying to avoid. We begin to enclose our minds! There are no doors to the inner circle of 'Round,' nor windows of light to illuminate the snare of our mental steps. We then become a food using ethnocentric bias as social transcendence. We

become blind, mentally! The encircled mind loses the ability reason, falling victim to everyday fervors of hysteria and fear."

BREAD, MAN!

[A letter from Mr. Robert Pisor, the author of *End of the Line*, one of the first books on the Siege of Khe Sanh].

"I knew when fourteen North Vietnamese from Hanoi walked into my bread shop in Leland, a town of 250 souls in northern Michigan, that the world had surely turned. Animated, cheerful, curious, they talked about their months at the University of Michigan graduate school of business, and the work they do as middle and upper-level executives at various industries, utilities and monopolies in their home country. One of the women got up from the table at one point, walked back into my production area, and within minutes was operating an old molder-sheeter. Minutes later she was rolling out classic baguettes by hand—a unique skill that the French left behind when they left Vietnam. I sat and listened to the glottal music of that unique language and remembered 500 days and nights of a tad more tension.

"Two days ago I celebrated my first year as a businessman, running Stone House Bread in Leland, Michigan (stonebread@aol.com or 800-252-3218)—my penance after more than 30 years as a newsman. I'm kidding. I loved my work as a newspaperman, radio reporter and television anchor and analyst, but the news business has changed profoundly, and rather than sit there and whine I decided to strike off in new directions. I now make the best sourdough bread in North America (haven't lost any of that journalistic arrogance now, have I?), and I ship it to bread fanatics in nearly all of the fifty states (plus Puerto Rico, the Cayman Islands and Canada). Don't sit down to Thanksgiving Dinner without a sturdy loaf of North Country on the table.

"I keep in touch with some of the men I met while working on *The End of the Line*, I read nearly all the fiction and nonfiction that continues to come out of the war, I keep my vow never to speak in public without talking about Vietnam (it's rarely at the heart of my speeches, but it's almost always the most heartfelt—and I've surprised the Christian Women's Club of Traverse City, the Rotary Club of Suttons Bay, a dozen high school graduations and a whole lot of other audiences with thoughts I believe they should hear, and ponder), and I read the newsletter with passion. ..

"I'm working on a new military history in my spare time—this one set in the 4th century B.C. I'm finding it a little tougher to find eyewitnesses.."

Bob Pisor
407 South Main Street
P.O. Box 955
Leland MI 49654
(616) 256-2577

I WONDER

"I wonder if the guys I knew so well still have their nicknames. A lot of them I've forgotten over the years. I remember Pee Wee. He was short but never a tunnel rat. he fancied the .50 caliber. We had P from the meadowlands. He was P.R. I called him Primo meaning CUZ. The Grit was a countryboy from ALA, Griffith, he was old or it seemed so. The first guy I saw get hit in the neck. Then we had a Georgia Museil head. Don't even remember his real name. I know he got hit in the head too and never left the unit. Saw him the next day with a bandage still yelling at everyone. I use to call one Gomer. He was a Second LT. Had his nose shot off on a patrol. Never saw him after that. Still there were many more from the unit 3ATs. We patched up the pigs [NOTE: slang for the Ontos] as best we could to see if at Khe Sanh we could do any good. Now I can not remember my nickname. Was it BABS, Rabit, Shruggs? Everyone knew I was from Cape Cod. I spoke English that sounded very strange and often got teased about it. It wasn't nutin! If you the reader remember me write a letter or spring for a 'cheep' CARD!! Semper Fi. Mannie"—Manuel Babbitt.

RETIREMENT

"At the 1993 Khe Sanh Reunion held in Washington, D.C. I heard you say that God's grace was in Vietnam. Until then I was only aware of the suffering that was so rampant in that war; it seemed to me that Satan had been given full control over our lives. But now, when I consider that so many men freely gave their lives to save others, do I realize how much love there was between all of us. Those who were not in combat in Vietnam will never understand how much love there is in a war.

My poem 'retirement' is about how I began to resolve my Vietenam War experiences and how I am now continuing to live the rest of my life..."

RETIREMENT
By Kellan Kyllo

When the emotions
of war
finally started to slow down inside
him
he
sold his guns,
and then soon after that he began
to forgive
all the people who had ever
done him
wrong,
and he prayed for each of them
daily.
The next Spring
he went into his backyard
for the first time
in twenty-five
years
and
planted a garden.
He grew tomatoes and gave them
away
to
everyone.

A TRIBUTE—DOUBLED

"This letter is to ask you to mention ALLEN FERG in *The Khe Sanh Veteran*. His birthday is October 16th. he will be 56.

"Allen is a Marine who was in Khe Sanh during 1967-68. He was a Lieutenant. I can't find out other information such as company name without asking him and I want this to be a surprise tribute and a delayed *thank you.*

"Allen was moved by your book [Ernie Spencer's book, *Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man*] which he picked up at the Philadelphia reunion in July of this year. You autographed it for him. He read it in a few nights then lent it to me. I admit - only another soldier who was there could possibly understand your experience.

"I went with Allen to the Wall in D.C. several years in a row over Memorial Day weekend. We went together to the NJ Vietnam Vets Memorial dedication and on a Harley 'Rolling Thunder' run on our motorcycles this past weekend and alone on our bikes several other times.

"Allen is lost in Vietnam sometimes now. He can speak about what happened there only for a minute or two at a time and becomes overwhelmed. He lives with Khe Sanh every day, every hour, and his pain has not evaporated, but has only covered over by the passing years.

"I was only 14 years old when Allen went to Vietnam. He joined the Marines for an adventure. He is a big man - 6'7" - and he came home in one piece. The wounds to his heart and soul are invisible, and his scars are deep and permanent.

"On his birthday, October 16th, I want to honor him for what he did and what he sacrificed. I want to thank him because he deserves my respect and gratitude. I am so proud of him - to know him was shown me what 'hero' means.

"Please tell him HAPPY BIRTHDAY in your magazine and thank you." Cynthia McNeill.

[Note: The above was received just as the last issue of our magazine was being printed, too late to be included. The following was received from Mr. Ferg in a card dated 8 Nov 1996:

"Thank you, belatedly, for the birthday card you sent. It was much appreciated.

"I know that Cynthia McNeill wrote to you hoping that her 'message' to me would be published on my birthday. That's of little moment. What really counts is the sincerity of her thoughts and that she took the time to express them. She is very special.

"Now I am grieving terribly for her as she died on Sunday, Nov. 3. ..She is the love of my life and I know that I will never experience again anything as wonderful and special as she..." Allen]

WHAT REMAINS

[In a card received from David M. Steinberg]

Khe Sanh was so very long ago to me
They now even have tours there for all to see.
No incoming, no trenches,
no body bags at all,
Not even brave warriors who would not let it fall.
Time passes, we get older,
memories begin to fade.
Unfortunately, the ghosts stay
with us every day.
—"DOC" Dave Steinberg
3rd Plt., India 3/26
Hill 881S Jan-Apr 68

LARRY GARCIA

Please be advised another one of our brother Khe Sanh Vet members, Larry Garcia..passed away in Oct. 1994 of Agent Orange related cancer. He was an engineer attached to one of the companies on one of the hills during the Siege. He is survived by his wife Cindy and son David.

[Sent by Pat Hawn, B/1/13]

ANDREW METTS

Andrew L. Metts suddenly died on 03 November 1996. Andy was with many of his friends, veterans of "A" Co., 1/9, at a Marine Corps Birthday celebration aboard the USS YORKTOWN in Charleston, SC, at which the guest of honor was their former Company Commander, H.J.M. "Mac" Radcliffe. The Colonel's remarks ignited those there into numerous "aarughas" as he recounted the history of the Marine Corps, of Vietnam, of Khe Sanh, of Alfa Company. Suddenly, he turned, saluted, and declared, "And here are the Alfa, 1/9 men!" It was one of those moments that will always be remembered.

Andy was with his wife, Patty, when he suffered a heart attack in the early morning hours after the celebration. Carl Oksnee and Leonard Cosner attempted CPR and later, Carl assisted Patty in making arrangements for the funeral attended by over 600.

The following are Carl Oksnee's remarks at the funeral: "I'm proud to say: Andy was a Marine, and most of all, Andy was my friend. Three of us were wounded in 1968 on the same hill, at the Battle of Khe Sanh, while serving with Company A, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines (The Walking Dead).

Almost 29 years later who would have believed that the three of us would be getting together again for a weekend to help honor our former Company Commander, Col Mac Radcliffe.

Leonard Cosner, Andy and myself did exactly that last weekend. it was a weekend which highlighted all the years—past, present and future. It brought back to us memories of where we had been and how far we have come, and how lucky we were to be here, together. It was a truly glorious weekend.

Andy was a proud Marine, as we all are. He loved the Corps, but like many of us, still had a lot of left-over scaring from Vietnam. His

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real healing began about the time we reunited at a Khe Sanh Veterans reunion in Chicago a few years ago. We became very close. We laughed and cried many times together. We talked extensively about what had happened to us and about our brothers who didn't make it back. We've shared a lifetime of thoughts and feelings.

When Andy passed away last Sunday, Lenny and I were still beside him, trying without success to bring him back and keep him with us. It was like Vietnam all over again—the 3 of us—but this time only 2 of us walked out. Andy died the way he would have wanted to. He was surrounded by his brothers, celebrating the Marine Corps Birthday, and honoring Col. Radcliffe, the man whom he had so much respect for.

Andy, I just want you to know, brother, that you will always be a part of us. The bonding that began many years ago in a strange land will remain forever strong. I'll miss you, brother, as we all will. Semper Fi, Andy.

MONUMENTS

PARRIS ISLAND: While the Alfa Co., 1/9, Marines gathered to celebrate Marine Corps Birthday, they visited MCRD, Parris Island, and noticed a special KHE SANH MONUMENT at the Rifle Range. It is a bronze plaque on a column of red bricks with 'KHE SANH' prominently on the front. The plaque reads: "KHE SANH, VIETNAM. During January-February 1968, the 26th Marines (Rein) successfully defended the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Attacked daily by hundreds of rounds of intense enemy artillery and rocket fire, the 6,000 men commanded by MGEN Tompkins and Colonel Lownds held their ground. Marine tenacity and combined arms firepower inflicted 12,000 enemy casualties and destroyed two NVA divisions."

Monuments were erected in certain areas used in recruit training so that recruits are constantly reminded about the Corps' heritage, and were dedicated by Major General Jarvis D. Lynch on 9 October 1990

(The monuments include: the Electric Pistol Range renamed Pusan Range; the Close Combat Pistol Range renamed Naktong Range; Range A renamed Khe Sanh Range; Range B renamed Hue City Range; Range C renamed Chosin Reservoir Range; Range D renamed Starlite Range; and Range E renamed Inchon Range).

MONUMENT ON KHE SANH BASE: A concrete monument was erected on the airstrip of Khe Sanh Combat Base with the following inscription. (Translation furnished by Mr. Peter Brush):

"LIBERATED BASE MONUMENT
The area of Tacon Pont base built by US and Sai Gon Puppet. Built 1967, air field and well constructed defense system. Co Luong Dong Ha Quang Tri. U.S. and Army puppets used to monitor the move movement and tried to stop assistance from the north into the battle of Indo China. After 170 days and nights of attack by the surrounding Liberation Army, Tacon was completely liberated. The Liberation Army destroyed the defense system for the Battle of Indo China. 112,000 U.S. and puppet troops killed and captured. 197 airplanes shot down. Much war material was captured and destroyed. Khe Sanh also another Dien Bien Phu for U.S."

ARLINGTON CEMETERY:
The Khe Sanh Memorial bronze plaque and ginko tree dedicated during the Reunion in Washington, D.C., July, 1993, is located in Section 2. It was the idea and result of the effort of Ken and Bernice Penn. Directions to it: From Main Gate, take Eisenhower Drive to McClellan Drive; take McClellan to Roosevelt Drive; go down Roosevelt to the Memorial.

JEFFERSON BARRACKS, MISSOURI:
Two group graves of remains which were not able to be individually identified are located in this National Cemetery near St. Louis. Both are located in Section 81. Graves 289, 290, and 291 contain 8 remains from the 25 February 1968 patrol, and Graves 327, 328, and 329 contain 35 remains from the 06 March 1968 plane crash. The cemetery is located 31 miles southeast of Lambert International Airport: Take I-270-South from the airport, make a left on Telegraph Road exit, travel north to first traffic light, turn right on Sappington Barracks Rd. 1/2 mile, cemetery is on right.

During our 1997 reunion in St. Louis, we plan to have a group visit and ceremony at this location.

MANNY

The following e-mail was received by Ernie Spencer from Bruno Bougie who recently visited Ernie and Manny Babbitt from the Netherlands: "... A sunflower bloomed in my garden, last summer. The fact itself is not so extraordinary, even not in Holland where I live, but the sunflowerseed was sent by Manuel Babbitt, a Khe Sanh Vet and for me: a penpal. He has been for 16 years already on Death Row in San Quentin Prison in California. I have visited him in October, 1996. As I told, I'm from the Netherlands, I'm married and have 3 children. The law-system in Holland is quite different from the American system: we don't have capital punishment; we consider death penalty as controversial with human rights, as inhuman and cruel. There exists a Dutch organization called 'Inside/Outside' who looks after penpals for American Death Row inmates. That was the way how I got Manny's name and address, years ago. I never have regretted one second that I've got his name. He became a good friend of our family, through the mail. Out of all his letters it became clear to me that his time as Marine and his time in Vietnam, and particular in Khe

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Sanh, have had a very big impact in his life. He always signs with 'Semper Fi' and I'm sure it means a lot to him. I only knew the Vietnam war from long ago and from a distance; protest demonstrations in Holland at that time. So I started to read about it. I came in contact with Rev. Ray Stubbe and he was so nice to send me his book *Valley of Decision.* I've read other books, e.g. *Born on the Fourth of July, A Fortunate Son, Hamburger Hill, Nothing and So Be It, Sorrow of the War* and I saw some movies, but I'm convinced the reality is far much worser as it came to me in books and movies.

I planned to visit Manuel in Fall 96, and it was Ernie Spencer and his wife Pat who invited me to stay in their home in Martinez for the time I stayed in California. During one of Ernie's visits in the prison, Manuel told him about me. I was welcome immediately. Of course I was a little bit nervous: it was the first time I went to the USA, my host family was unknown to me and Manuel, the reason for my trip I only knew from mail. But no reason to panic: I felt familiar and at home from the first hours with Pat and Ernie. They are absolutely great, and I was overwhelmed by their hospitality, their friendship and support, and when I left I felt both sad and happy for I left not only one friend in San Quentin, but also two in Martinez. Of course Ernie told a lot about Vietnam and he showed me the video he made from the Khe Sanh reunion in 1993. He also showed me the pictures of the many sculptures made by Dennis Smith in the neighborhood of Mount Shasta. They impressed me very much and I hope to visit that memorial park in a next visit. When I left, Ernie gave me his book, *Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man.* I was very honored by this.

During 8 days I went to the prison, the maximum time that was possible, San Quentin, the 'fortress of horror' like Angela Davis describes it in her book *With My Mind on Freedom,* if you approach from the San Raphael Bridge it looks like a conference centre. A broad complex with white, cream and pastel coloured buildings, palm trees, flowers, and what we call in Europe, 'a Greek-blue-sky' above it. When you enter the prison your first impression is: rather relaxed atmosphere. At the different checkpoints they proceed me quite correct and friendly. Officers in the visiting room are nice and correct and they behave almost like good acquaintances of visitors and inmates.

That's, by the way, my general impression of California. Everybody is so nice, so polite and helpful, atmosphere seems so relaxed, the climate is so wonderful and San Francisco is a marvelous city. California could be a country that I might love and where I should like to live. But they have that horrible Death Penalty. Here the Government kills people to show that killing people is wrong. I can't understand that.

When I see all these men, on death row, I realize they are all here to be killed by State, in the Name of Justice. Lots of them carry the heavy load of remorse and even after living so many years on death row there doesn't seem to exist any forgiveness for them. 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.'

Manuel: In reality he is as friendly and nice as in his letters. And he looks like the picture which I have from him. In spite of the many letters we often wrote to each other, there is still a lot to tell during these 8 days. We never were at a loss of words. he tells about his childhood, his parental life, the poor circumstances in which they lived, the Marines he joined. About his first and second tour of duty in Vietnam, the wounds he got there, physically and mentally. About his wife who could not deal with his strange behaviour after Vietnam, about his desperation, loneliness and misery. How he tried to survive and how he had sometimes two jobs at the time to feed his family after he left the Marines. He also told about his fatal night and what brought him in here and that he never wanted to hurt people. How it turned out that he suffered from a severe PTSD, but these facts were never represented to court by his first lawyer and how they sentenced him to death. He never had got adequate help to overcome this PTSD. He tells about life in prison, about the few friends who visit him, about the mail which is such an important part in his life, the poems he writes to express his feelings and about his hope that his death sentence will be overruled. I share this hope and I feel so very sorry for him and about all the misfortune in his life. Some of the fellow inmates in the visiting room come to me to tell that Manuel is very happy with my visit. All his relatives are living far away and there are only few visitors. They also tell me they don't consider Manny as a criminal. He doesn't belong there. Even one of the officers I spoke with had his objections about this sentence. How is it possible he is still in there? I wonder. I remember Matthew 5:38 and next verses. Why is there no forgiveness in several situations in the USA? Punishment in Holland is different too. People who commit crimes have to be punished, they have to realize what they did is wrong. And they have to know that they have to behave better. They can change their minds and they can get help. And when they changed their minds, they get a new chance. I'm convinced this is a human attitude.

I have very ambiguous feelings about California. I like it and I don't like it because of the death penalty. They punish people by killing them. And they also won't hesitate to kill Manuel. The same country, America, which he loves so very much and which he served in Vietnam, will kill him. I guess I'm not allowed to give Manny's address here. But if somebody can offer some help, if somebody wants to encourage him or to support him, I

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think the Editor of this magazine can help you. Else Bougie, the Netherlands.

RAT STEW

Brother Shippen [See Khe Sanh *Veteran,* Spring, 1996, pp. 28-31 made reference to my only hot meal that I remember from Jan. 21 to March 28, '68: Rat Stew. one day in late Feb. or early March while staring out of our fighting hole we saw momma-sans catching rats in the dump. I'm here to tell you Marines didn't have a corner on being crazy. We Seabees had a nut cake nick-named Frenchy and upon seeing the momma-sans heading back to the FOB, he said it's time for a hot meal. So four of us moseyed over and got an invite to share a hot meal. I was so hungry I didn't care what was in that stew. I ate the best meal I had the whole time I was there during the Siege...

I have a question for our Special Forces bro. Did any of you know a Green Beret by the name of John Bash? He is my cousin and he was here for awhile and then just up and left. Supposedly he did a tour in '65 and two in '67 and '68 and was in and out of Lang Vei and Khe Sanh, and at Khe Sanh on and off during the Siege. I would like to know what anyone can tell me about him. I am sure he is suffering with P.T.S.D. but I couldn't reach him. I couldn't get him to open up and get rid of some of his guilt. He's gone and says he will never come back. But I am still interested if anyone can tell me about him.

If anyone out there knows a white dude nick-named 'Lucky' who was in Recon at Khe Sanh Jan-March maybe longer please drop me a line on him. I would like to contact him if at all possible.

Lewis S. Messer II (Sam)
1628 W. Wabash
Olathe KS 66061.

SIEGE KHE SANH SACRIFICE

By
Joe Lola

I was only 18 when I was sent over seas
10,000 miles and rough terrain.
Then, all at once, came the monsoon rain.
I had orders to go to a place called Khe Sanh;
to serve with the few
the proud, the Marines
I went to Khe Sanh and I found pain.
The names I've forgotten
in the monsoon rain,
But Khe Sanh was home of the 26th Marines.
It was not so long ago
25 years or more
But, I still feel the pain.
Not in my wounds that healed long ago,
but in my mind,
where it can't show.
The N.V.A. knew that we couldn't leave.
We had orders to stay,
come what may.
We caught hell from the N.V.A.
And we paid them back
every single day,
but more were wounded than I care to say
It's there in my mind
and there it will stay.
77 clays into the fight,
I didn't last but 35.
I was hit and sent away
to heal my wounds
But, it's there in my mind
and won't go away.
The name of a place far far away.
It was called Khe Sanh.
And to this day the names are lost
But the faces are the same.
It's still far far away
But the name of Khe Sanh
Will always stay.

GET ME OTTA HERE!

By
Chuck Dahm

Getting into Viet Nam was easy. Getting out was expected to be the same.

The red clay of the area in and around Khe Sanh gave everything we had a red bronze tint to it. Clothing, gear, and even our skin had the reddish hue that made us an indigenous part of the very land we hated. Whether we liked it or not we were Khe Sanh. We made it what it was, we made it exist, we and only we would allow it to die.

The NVA could not take Khe Sanh away from the Marines. Maybe during the siege the enemy limited us to certain areas or for our own safety we placed certain restrictions on ourselves. Under no circumstances did they ever have us 'pinned down' as the media would have it. Daily patrols outside the wire were conducted, some lasting weeks at a time. I was in a special weapons platoon attached to L/3/26.

It's April '68 now and the enemy has relaxed a little, hitting us only every two or three hours with rockets. They continue their efforts on some of the larger cities south of us defended by the US Army and the South Vietnamese Army. The shelling, snipers, and raids in the wire will soon be of no concern to me because I have just received orders to rotate home. It just doesn't get any shorter than this. The five of us leaving together have orders to report to DaNang, to catch a flight home. Of course the only way out of Khe Sanh is by cargo plane.

All Marines will be leaving in the next few weeks as we are turning the defense of Khe Sanh over to the Army's First Air Cavalry. hearing this brings a strange feeling to us all. We're glad to be leaving but we have an attachment to this place in that it was paid for with our blood and energy and now we have to just give it up. According to Recon reports the enemy is regrouping in the southern areas and is planning

major offensives and it's natural that Marines go where the fun is. I give some of my combat gear to my friends and say 'get some' for the last time.

The pace to the airstrip is fast and we discuss the first thing each of us will do upon arrival home. We can see the airstrip is cratered so badly that it can not be repaired fast enough. The constant bombardment of the rockets has taken its toll. Supply planes can not land to replenish food, ammo, and personnel, but American ingenuity will prevail. The Air Force devised a way of pulling the pallets out of the back of the aircraft with a drag chute as they slowed and skimmed the runway. The big cargo planes would land occasionally but only for medevac or to bring in troops. Taking troops out of Khe Sanh was number ten on the list of their priorities.

We were all exactly thirteen months and even a day or two over our required time in this tour and very anxious to leave. No amount of persuading including begging or bribing the traffic officer could get us on a plane that day. We scavanged food from somewhere and shared it with all. Then we waited. The next day, two or three planes actually land, now that the strip is repaired. They are unloaded in a few minutes and take off immediately, but not all are going to DaNang. We slept next to the control shack sandwiched between sandbags and our seabags full of clothes. Why they made us bring one hundred pounds of summer and winter dress uniforms to a combat zone I'll never know.

Dawn brings the same bad news: 'no authorization of troop removal from Khe Sanh Combat Base at this time.' All we can do is hang around the airstrip and wait. We really feel we're going to get out of here today; the traffic officer says there is a transport coming in about 1300 . One of the Marines, Corporal Flowers, has a camera so we walk to the rear area and I buy some film for it to take a few last minute pictures. As 1300 rolls around the plane lands, is unloaded and a few officers get off and it heads for the end of the runway. We ask when we are supposed to get on and are told there has been a change of plans: it's not going back to DaNang.

Sgt Marshall Jesperson of San Luis Obispo, CA, consoled us with his anger. I had been with Sgt Jess about eight months and I knew when he was determined to do something, it got done. He talked to the traffic officer for quite a while, being very animated with his gestures, pointing toward us, the airstrip, DaNang, and probably making some pretty strong statements for an enlistedman to an officer. All the time the officer was shaking his head no, only frustrating him more. It seems we are stuck here another day.

The morning of the third day we knew we were going to leave regardless of any consequences. The first plane landed early. Our only concern now was to determine where it was going from here. This one and each succeeding plane had a destination other than ours. Finally around noon, a camouflage C-130 cargo plane landed, was unloaded and was heading for the end of the strip to take off. Sgt Jess was talking to the traffic officer when I saw him abruptly turn toward us and said, 'This is it, come on.'

We grabbed our bags with one hand and M-16s in the other and ran across the airstrip towards the plane. By now it was at the end of the strip and was revving its engines getting ready to take off. The traffic officer was yelling we couldn't get on that plane and to get off the runway. I turned around to see him rip off the headphones and start chasing us. We never even broke stride. We fought for thirteen months for our country and now it's our turn and we will not be denied. The desperation has gone beyond worrying about any non combat traffic officer screaming commands at us. In a pure Marine style we are about to move forward against all odds.

At this point everything seemed to be in slow motion. I just can't run fast enough. The props are revving even faster, driving every piece of dirt and sand into my eyes. My chest is at the point of exploding. Pain shoots down the shin of my left leg. Sgt Jess is scraming 'c'mon, c'mon, we can make it.' His voice inspired us to ignore the pain and press even harder. The plane is moving down the runway now with the bottom of the back door almost all the way closed and the top starting to close. The plane is picking up speed and we are having a hard time keeping up with these heavy bags slamming into the back of our legs. We were due, we have taken fate into our own hands by disobeying an officer. There can be no turning back, no stopping. We must reach this plane. We're so close now I can see inside the back of the cargo hold. The door operator has his hand on a control box closing the rear doors and is motioning for us to stop and get back. Sgt Jess is closest and with a final effort swings his bag and gets it across the closing bottom door. This must be what scoring the winning touchdown at the Super Bowl feels like with one second left in the game.

The rear door controller seeing this talks into his microphone and the plane slows. The bottom door drops open slowly and we all throw our bags on, shoulder our weapons and climb in. I feel the rush of the plane as the engines reach maximum speed and in seconds we are airborne. Nobody talks, we are all too winded and the noise inside the back of a cargo plane is deafening. Even if we could talk we wouldn't have to. Our faces tell it all.

From here the trip home is easy. One day in DaNang, one day in Okinawa and on to California. In a matter of hours I'm in Wisconsin thinking three days ago this was only something I could dream about.

HOME !

THE WALL

By Sandra Hill

[The sections in italic represent those souls within the Wall—the past looking out onto the present—while the sections in ordinary print portray those in the present drawn back to the past]

Panel 33E

Piercing, watchful eyes radiated out of the gloom like a beacon. He stalked her every step until she stopped not three feet before him. Stealthily he moved forward, wanting to be near her. Raising an unsteady hand she slowly traced her fingers across the etched name—and she touched his soul. Like a lost and lonely child she sought solace, but sanctuary he could not give her. Destiny drew her to the threshold of his world—from where he stood watching—and waiting.

His name was just above eye level on the black granite Wall. To fellow veterans he was just one of the many lost brothers in whose honor the memorial stood, but to her his name masked a time and a place from where he looked out onto her world and she into his. The hollow thud of an approaching helicopter pierced the meditative tranquility of the warm afternoon, and she raised her eyes skyward as an olive drab Marine Corps Sea Knight thundered overhead with a deafening roar. Poignant memories stirred within her at the evocative sound of the chopping rotors; a sound which had been the lifeblood of all who had known combat in Vietnam, and which for many was to be the last thing they would ever hear.

Soulful, dark eyes scrutinised what had once been his. Her spirit had sustained him on every nerve-tingling night ambush; she was never far from his thoughts when he'd humped the treacherous booby-trapped trails and paddies, and her name was the last utterance to slip from his lips as he fell beneath a hail of withering gunfire. The mind-numbing suddenness of their parting had exacted a heavy toll. Their mutual grief had been and still was profound; one not whole without the other. They were—and always would be—inextricably linked, eternally bonded.

Panel 36E

The object of his attention held him riveted. Just a babe-in-arms when he'd gone to war but now sculpted in his own likeness, his son was now a man. Time the great healer had done little to quell the tears of sadness which both now shed. Beneath his wistful gaze his son's embrace gently wrapped around another, and there before him writhed an infant of some twelve months—a grandson! Held aloft its tiny palms flailed a greeting. Wide, inquisitive eyes gazed intently into his own. Pursed lips mouthed words not yet learned. The need to reach out overwhelmed him. To hold, to be held; to love, to be loved. Instinctively he knew the child bore his name. What greater love than to be so honored. Gone—but not forgotten.

Panel 28E

Eyes that held a world of hurt gazed into the reflective blackness of the Wall. He stood alone but surrounded, a myriad lost souls reaching out from within. Mesmerised by the hypnotic gloom, its dark folds closed around him like a second skin, absorbing him, reeling him in. The stench of rotting vegetation permeated his

[JAMES] ROBERT HAMMONDS [KIA 01 May 68] remembered by John P. Bosley *

ARNOLD L. LEONARD, JR., B/1/13 [KIA 17 Jun 68] remembered by Michael P. Haight * *CAPT RICHARD COCHRAN* remembered by Tom O'Toole *

senses. Steaming, oppressive heat took his breath away. Voices long since departed grew more distinct—until once more he stood amongst them. As they started down the jungle trail, something impalpable unsettled him; like a hungry shark it stalked the shadows waiting to strike. And there was no escape.

Deathly silence screamed a warning. No melodious birdsong resounded through the jungle canopy; no screeching monkeys crashed through the treetops in playful abandon. Somehow they knew. He could almost taste the danger. Like a well-oiled pendulum his wary eyes swept the trail seeking out the fate that awaited them. And too late he heard it. Death was dispatched with a tell-tale 'thunk thunk', but barely had the warning cry fallen from his lips than the mortars were amongst them. Sprawled face down on the red earth his head reverberated with the screams of the injured, not comprehending the screams were his own. Consciousness came and went in a morphine-dulled haze; air-conditioned cool swirled around the medevac's deck soothing his fevered brow. He savored the pleasure of waking between crisp, white sheets. But then they told him about his leg—which was gone, and about his buddies—who were gone. And then he was gone—back to an alien nation they called the world. Cast adrift on an ocean of indifference, the best he could manage was to keep from going under.

'Time is a great healer,' said the optimistic

Half a lifetime later and he was still trying to figure it all out.

'Seek and ye shall find,' said the well intentioned.

He was no longer sure what he was even meant to be looking for.

'Forgive and forget' said the misinformed.

Forgiveness he could contemplate, but to forget—. To have been spared the fate of those whose lives had touched his but were no more, what right had he to forget! There but for the grace of God—.

Panel 31E

He wasn't sure how he knew—he just did—for in his world there were no secrets. The look of resignation and the pull of his buddy's restless spirit did not escape him. The gaunt shadow across the upturned face bore testament to what he already knew. The unspoken truth known to each. Eyes that now pleaded for release had once danced with mischief. Best buddies from boot camp through to the Nam they'd been through it all together—bar brawls, whorehouses, baiting the MPs—and that was just their first month in-country. But then reality kicked in. Humping the boonies and one too many nights on LP quickly put paid to their innocence; from FNGs to old men in just four months.

The manner of his own demise, so long ago, was still vivid. It came and went in a heartbeat. It had been one of those days when the air held its breath. A steaming, sultry hot. Out on his own walking point, his trigger finger poised, he was primed. Like a predator homing in on its prey,

ARNOLD JAVIER RIVERA, KIA 25 Feb 68 remembered by Jim Convery * NORMAN C. DESCHAINE [KIA 07 Jun 68] remembered by Maurice Deschaine * LT ALLEN COURTNEY [KIA 17 May 68] remembered by Mike Fielding * JAMES M. THEIS remembered by Dan Fisher *

JOHN HEINRICH and *GARY TRAVATELLO* remembered by Dick (Skip) Unangst * *USA SF* remembered by James E. Garvey * *JOHN R. HEINRICH* remembered by Christine Heinrich * 1/3/26 remembered by Thomas Mansbach * *DI R. IBANEZ,* MIA 05 Jun 67 [A/3d Recon BN] remembered by William J. Messner * *LCPL ALLEN E. WHITE* [KIA 30 Nov 68] remembered by David F. O'Toole *

his razor-sharp eyes willed the encroaching jungle to give up its ghosts. As if on cue, a startled bird suddenly crashed through the undergrowth sending a shockwave down the line as the Platoon hit the deck. His heart pounded in his throat as he waited for the opening burst of gunfire that never came. Ripples of nervous laughter fused with heart-felt curses elicited a swift rebuke from the LT. Momentarily distracted, he never did hear the fateful click underfoot.

The explosion hit him with the force of an express train. No whispered last words, no dying breath, no nothing. Just a vortex of burning, lacerating shrapnel which sucked him in and spat him out. Instant annihilation. But what had been torn asunder so long ago was about to come full circle. Karma stood set to play its final hand. Soon—very soon—they would once more stand together again. Brothers-in-arms, best buddies, reunited.

O-DARK-THIRTY

Night-time—his very own reflecting pool. Nothing stirred. Transfixed by the power of his surroundings he sat in solemn vigil; a captive audience of one. Beneath a starlit sky he watched over his charges protectively; or was it them watching over him? He sometimes wondered. He liked to think they were all looking out for each other—just like they'd done back in Nam. He felt at home here; a place where he could think, laugh, cry, be angry—be anything he wanted to be. Amongst his own. No explanations necessary. The only thing that fazed him was the profound silence; it was *too* quiet, *too* pure. Not like the in-your-face silence of Nam, where the cicadas hypnotic drone pulsated through the long, lonely nights way out in the boonies, and where the resonant thud of outgoing merged with the booming momentum of B-52 five-hundred-pounders, delivering their nightly sermon along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

His recollections ran hot and cold. The Vietnam recently re-visited welcomed him with open arms and a ready smile. The Vietnam he *remembered* was where light and dark collided. Routine patrols run through countryside whose beauty could distract yet kill with impunity; erdant, rolling hills veiled in opalescent mist raining grim projectiles of death; lush tropical forests laced with exotic blossoms and trip wires; smiling, faithless mamasans propagating paddies by day and punjis by night. Death suffused the land. He walked over it, round it, through it; he breathed it, gagged on it, inflicted it. But ultimately he cheated it. It was denied. He had seen the elephant and heard its roar. He had answered the call. And now he answered the call once

MAJ JESSE BENNETT remembered by Richard Blair * LT JOHN HARVEY CARSON, CO—E/2/9 [KIA 05 Jun 68] remembered by Tim DeWolf * 2/LT FERDINANCO DISTEFANO [KIA 24 Feb 68] remembered by Michael D. Fleming * AQUILLA BRITT, Ton Son Nhut [KIA 25 Oct 67] remembered by Harvey E. Britt * TOMMY SAMMS, A/1/26, remembered by Ed Pershing * THE DEAD & WOUNDED OF BRAVO, 3d Recon BN remembered by Kevin C. Macaulay *

FOR THE DECEASED MARINES OF G/2/3 (1967) remembered by CAPT A. B. McFarlane * *CPL ENRIQUE BERNAL* [KIA 07 Mar 68] remembered by Roberto Pachecano * *MARK COOL* [KIA 02 Mar 68] remembered by Jack Corbett * *THE BROTHERS, THEIR FAMILIES, AND ALL AFFECTED THEN AND STILL* remembered by Gene Patterson * *PVT DONALD PHILIP SCHUCK*, KIA 28 May 1968 on FOXTROT RIDGE remembered by Phil Ball * *ECHO CO ON 861-A (2/26)* remembered by Michael T. Lucas *

more—pulling duty at the loneliest LP in the world.

Reflections...

He was 19 going on 47. Free to roam at will, time no longer a factor in his being. Many times he'd gazed upon familiar faces touched by age in a way that had bypassed him. He watched them trace every centimetre of every letter of his name. He reached out to them, and they to him. He cried their tears, felt their anguish, so desperately wanted to heal their pain—but it was out of his hands. So much to tell but no-one to tell it to.

They'd shared the best and the worst times together. He missed their camaraderie, their scuzzy jokes, the made-up R&R stories that grew more sensational with every telling. But when the incoming started, all they ever talked about was getting out and going back to the world. And one by one they climbed the steps and took their seat on the freedom bird home. But not for him the air-conditioned bliss of the passenger cabin, or the roar of elation as they climbed into the azure skies over the South China Sea, or the ministrations of pretty flight attendants. The cargo hold held so such attractions.

But there was no end, just a new beginning. A starting over of sorts. Inextricably bound to this place by virtue of his destiny, he had only to reflect to find himself back where it all started. With the big guns now silent, the hills echoed with an eerie peace. Many times he'd walked the barren plateau; a moonscape of red earth all that remained where bunker-city had once sprawled. Time-worn memories seemed but a few hours old. Hunkered down with his buddies amidst the incoming, just a transistor radio for their entertainment pleasure—'Coming at you from the Delta to the DMZ this is AFVN...this next one goes out to Penicillin Pete up there in the Dong Ha pleasure palace...I can't get no satisfaction...have any of you short-timers considered the benefits of extending...we gotta get out of this place...for all you gyrenes up there around the DMZ...born to be wild...and the beat goes on...Hill 861-A at Khe Sanh was attacked by an unknown number of enemy last night; NVA body count was 109 with 7 US KIAs...the hits just

W. O. HOLYCROSS remembered by Bud Webster * *HENRY MUCHA, JR.* [KIA 21 Jul 67] remembered by Joe Bispo * *TOM STAMPER* [CO—CAC "O", *d.* 04 Sep 96] remembered by Robert W. Carswell * *LCPL TERRY RAMPULLA* [KIA 16 Apr 68] remembered by James J. Rampulla * *TOM KENNEDY*, KIA [12 Jun] 1966] remembered by COL Warren H. Wiedhahn * *FALLEN RECON BROTHERS AT KHE SANH* remembered by Leland Upshaw * *SGTMAJ "TOP" DONALD BEAN* [KIA 11 Mar 68] remembered by Christopher Lane * *109th QUARTERMASTER ARMY AIRDROPS* remembered by R. M. Mountain *

CPL JOHN BECKER, KIA [27 Aug] 68 remembered by Peter N. Greene * *RAY FERRY* [KIA 09 Apr 68] and *ROBERT PAYNE* [KIA 18 Mar 68] remembered by Gary Dahlheimer * *FRANCIS ZAVACKI*, CAPT, USMC [KIA 15 Nov 69] remembered by COL Michael Little * *ROBERT E. MONAT* remembered by David M. Steinberg * *HOTEL 2/1* remembered by Jay Vincens * *SGT ROBINSON*, M/3/26, remembered by Lee Klein * *GEORGE LONDI* remembered by Joseph A. Demeo, Jr. * *LES FAUREBRAC* [d. Jan 92] remembered by Bill and Kathi Gonzales * *WILLIAM S. SMOYER* [KIA 28 Jul 68] remembered by Nancy Smoyer * *LCOL JOHN HENNELLY*, HQ 1/13 [d. 05 Jun 95] remembered by Mark Swearengen * *B/1/9* remembered by Patrick Devine *

keep on coming...you just heard The Animals...a delegation of U.S. Senators arrived in-country this morning on a fact-finding mission...and whilst we're on the subject let's talk about rats; man there's some big suckers out there...run through the jungle with Credence...you got soul brother...I have a dream..."

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"LAMENTATIONS" AND ITS UNKNOWN AUTHOR

By
Dave Rogers

Lamentation means the outward expression of grief, usually by weeping or wailing. One normally associated this word with death or the imminent threat of death. The loss of a loved one would result in grief, while a slow, mournful musical composition would serve as a fitting lament for a loved one's funeral.

Lamentations is also a book of the Old Testament in the the Bible, which was composed by Jeremiah as a funeral dirge over the desolation of Jerusalem by Babylon. Jeremiah records his sorrow after the burning of Jerusalem in five poems. Tradition says that Jeremiah wept bitter tears and composed his mournful elegy in "Jeremiah's Grotto," near present day Golgotha.

The poem "Lamentations" addresses the issue of self-preservation amid environs filled with violence during the Vietnam War. Its author finds himself communicating with the surrounding hills near the Khe Sanh Combat Base in an attempt to interpret his destiny, perhaps prophetically, because he has sacrificed himself for an understandable cause—resisting "the boot and foot of oppression." His cause is noble; freedom is at stake. His concern is genuine; it is heartfelt. His fate is predictable; he may soon die for his "friends at home."

I became interested in the poem for two reasons. The first being its source, and secondly, because of where it was written. The poem was provided to me by Hank Norman's mother during a visit with her and members of his family in the summer of 1993. Hank was killed on March 30, 1968, during "The Siege," and we had known each other from our days together at the "Rockpile" and Khe Sanh. Mrs. Norman explained to me she understood that Hank had not written the poem. Rather, it was written by somebody he knew and was with while on Hill 881. Supposedly, he had copied the poem and mailed it to his family. The poem that I viewed was written in Hank's handwriting.

The fact that "Lamentations" was written on Hill 881 in

JIM RUSSELL [KIA 11 Mar 68] remembered by Jim Sinor * ED RAYBURN [d. late 1970s] remembered by Tom Winston * KIAs of KILO Co., 3/26, Hill 861 remembered by Peter B. Brown * ROBERT J. ELLISON, Photojournalist killed at Khe Sanh [KIA 06 Mar 68] remembered by Miriam K. Eaton * ROY T. BURNS [d. 14 Oct 95] remembered by Mrs. Peggy Nock * KILO + MIKE COMPANIES, 3d BN, 9th MARINES, 861-881 remembered by Dave "Smilie" Martin * LCPL WILLIAM EUGENE CZARNY [KIA 09 May 67] remembered by Watson T. Mosebay, Jr. * FRANCIS M. TILLEY remembered by David T. Kramarczyk * THOSE WHO DIED SERVING WITH E/2/26 remembered by Earle G. Breeding * ALL USMC SURVIVORS remembered by Andrew J. Blossy *

CAPT [ROBERT C.] ONSLOW [KIA 10 May 68] remembered by R. D. Collins * *FRANK WEBER* remembered by Pete Morakon * *FRED BENIGNI* [KIA 28 Feb 68] remembered by Kellan Kyllo * *CPL MICHAEL J. SCANLON*, 3d Force Recon [KIA 18 Jan 67] remembered by LTCOL Gregory K. Manary * *MAX NELSON* [KIA 24 Feb 68] remembered by Kelly Nelson * *RICHARD HEALY* [KIA 14 Jan 68] remembered by Vic Hernandez * *PVT AUDIE MURPHY*, USA, WW II MOH remembered by Neil McCrossen * *ALL KIAs of 3/26 in VIETNAM!* remembered by COL Kurt Hoch * *WILLIAM JOHN GASCOYNE TURNER* remembered by Robert K. Turner, III *

November, 1967, was another item of interest to me, for I, too, had penned a poem in the same locality during "The Hill Fights" in Spring of the same year with the lamenting theme, "Death At My Door." As the unknown poet sits and writes, he finds himself in a similar situation, questioning why life, why death. Near the end of the poem, he finds solace by concluding that he must perform his duties with pride and honor, "Now I've found my reason: It's for those guys who've gone before."

I tried to find the author of this poem by writing the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, thinking it might have been published. However, in a letter from them dated March 7, 1995, they advised me that they had searched their newspapers printed during that period and were unable to find any such poem.

Does anybody know who wrote this poem?

Written on Hill 881
Nov. 1967

LAMENTATIONS

Whenever I'm feeling really low
and can't seem to place my thoughts
I try and talk to these mountains
or understand the fertile valleys below

Conversation with Robert Painter

[*HN Charles Wayne Miller, KIA 24 Jan 1968*
LCPL Gregory Francis Popowitz, KIA 24 Jan 1968
LCPL Juan Antonio Rosa, KIA 24 Jan 1968
LCPL Gary David Scribner, KIA 24 Jan 1968]

STUBBE: You were part of DOCKLEAF, weren't you?

PAINTER: Yes.

STUBBE: That whole bunker that was hit on 24 January was DOCKLEAF, I guess.

PAINTER: Yes.

STUBBE: You had been shot out several times just trying to get into your zone. I remember baptising POPOWITZ: his face and the faces of his team mates that were with him, standing beside my bunker in the C Med area, were all camouflaged.

PAINTER: Trying to get water: just trying to get water we were shot out several times. We were trying to get water for ourselves because they wanted us left out there. We were spotting artillery. We got word Khe Sanh was being kicked with both feet. "We need you guys to stay." At that point we had already been four days without food and two days without water! And then they extended us to the 20th, and then the 23rd we were hallucinating for lack of water...

STUBBE: It was obvious that there were bad guys all around?

MICKEY RANSBOTTOM [KIA 07 Apr 68] remembered by Kenny Queen * *THOMAS MOUSEL* remembered by Bob "Doc" Adams * *SGT WALTER WARD*, 1/26, KIA [07] June 1967 remembered by Barry W. Taylor * *ALL VETERANS* remembered by John F. Locke * *CAPT [FRANCIS LEO] SHAFER [JR.]* [KIA 30 Mar 68] remembered by Ted Vdorick * *1/LT ROBERT GERALD DODSON*, C/1/1 [KIA 07 Jul 68] remembered by Ernie Buckley * *ALL OF US* remembered by William H. Mead * *JOHN HEINRICH* remembered by John Covino * *JOHN A. DENNIS* [KIA 31 May 68] remembered by Stephen D. Haisley *

DONALD J. MAGILLIGAN, JR. [d. 20 Jun 89] remembered by Danette Magilligan * B/1/26 remembered by Thomas B. Steinhardt * *HOWARD VAUGHN* [KIA 20 Dec 68] remembered by George Peterson * *MIKE WARREN*, XO, H Co., 2/26, remembered by Ralph Aye, Jr. * *MERLIN ALLEN*, KIA 6/30/67, "A" Recon, Team STRIKER, remembered by Jeff Savelkoul * *CPL SULLIVAN*, USMC, KIA 1968, remembered by Bryan Rabbett *

PAINTER: Yeah. They were just bounding—

STUBBE: How did you ever avoid them?

PAINTER: We crawled on our hands and knees everywhere we went. We didn't dare stand up in the daylight. And when the sun went down, then we were standing up, and we were trying to spot gun flashes and rocket flashes and trying to direct. And we had two different fire missions going on at once.

STUBBE: So you were forward observers?

PAINTER: They had us out there as long as we could, and then finally—MARTIN was out there with us, SCOTT MARTIN. He was with DOCKLEAF.

STUBBE: How did they get you all back?

PAINTER: They just sent the choppers out, because we said we're hallucinating. Doc said: They're hallucinating; they're out of water. We seen the bad guys everywhere. I was second point because I was the grenadier. RICK NOYES was point. And they pulled us in on the 23rd, and we spent the night down in that big Air Force bunker where the dentists were. A big bunker. We spent the night down there, and they kept hydrating us. They were feeding us water loaded with electrolytes because we we so dehydrated, and they sent us back on light duty. GUNNY says: There ain't no damn "light duty! You gotta dig holes!" So the morning of the 24th we were digging holes and eating C-rats. And I remember coming back in. They said: Painter, your camera is all messed-up. I said: Hey—I think that's where I started using 'shit happens.' It was real strange that day. All day long we were digging, and then they started hammering at us. And we're diving into different bunkers along the runway there. And that whole day, Ray, I just had this feeling: "Man, I'm going to get it!"

STUBBE: You just felt it?

PAINTER: Yeah.

STUBBE: That was not uncommon.

PAINTER: All day long we were laying there and the guys were—guys that had been there when they first started—were in the holes, and they're doing this [motions arms embracing one's own body] everytime one of them went off. And they went: "Painter, you ain't—how come you ain't jumping?" And I go, "I don't know, I guess I'm just used to it by now." I mean, there ain't nothing you can do about it. All we can do is just lay here in the hole—and—wait!

It was towards the end of the day. We secured from work detail. And I was walking back with a bunch of stuff, and they started right in on us again. And I'm caught out in the open! And everywhere I turn, something's going off—over there, something's going off over here. And then Scribner yells, "Hey, Painter! Get your ass over here!" And I went—three, four more guys, into the bunker.

Now Scribner was at the far end, close to the runway. And I went down a little bit. And I said, "Wait a second, I got something here for us." Aha! I had my little stash up there. And we fired one up. We were laughing and giggling. And stuff was hitting around us, and we're going, "Whew! That was close!" [pause]. And [pause]... We heard a loud THUMP! And zzzt! [pause...] That was a delayed fuse in that rig. It came in the door, hit the deck. Went, zzzzt! And at that same time, Scribner goes: "Shit!" [very loud]. And then it was like a fly: you know how that fly feels or that mosquitto that you slap between your hands? Everything went *black*! It just went black. And I—heard it go off. I actually heard the blast. So for me, the one that got me, I heard it; I heard it go off.

STUBBE: No blinding light, just the opposite: real

CHARLES COLEMAN, D-1/26 Guns, remembered by John DeFelice * *SEABEE CHIEF [DONALD J.] BARNES*, KIA at Khe Sanh [06 Jun 67] remembered by COL John C. Zeitts * *DANNY ENGESSER* [KIA 31 Aug 67] remembered by Daniel Allen * *ANDREW METTS* [d. 02 Nov 96] remembered by Carl Oksnee * *"DOC" ALLEN GROSHONG*, F/2/1 [KIA 08 Apr 68] remembered by Lynn Witt *

LOYD KINSWORTHY, I/3/27, KIA 27 Apr 68, remembered by Stanley Kerlin * *STEPHEN HELWIG* [KIA 21 Jan 68] remembered by Dennis McNeal * RONALD FRAZIER [KIA 24 May 68], MIKE LAVATO, and PHILIP KIDD [KIA 09 Apr 68] remembered by Mike Molliver *

dark?

PAINTER: Knocked my ass right out. Knocked me cold with the concussion. And I actually—then, some time passed. I have no idea. Some time passed, and I had a conscious thought: So this is what it's like to be dead? It's not so bad. And then, slowly, sounds started coming to my ears—screaming. And I realized it was me doing the screaming. I was screaming real loud. And I stopped, and I said to myself: I'm screaming! I'm alive! And at that point—I, then I actually stopped. My head was like this—this weight was on me. I was pushed down—. Because I was standing up in the bunker. The bunker went this ways, and I'm standing cross-ways in the bunker.

STUIBBE: So all the roofing and everything else—

PAINTER: The sandbags, just sandwiched me down. I was turned this way. I was ninety degrees to the blast, and I was facing the blast when it went off. And it turned, it spun me—and why I didn't have anything in—I had an abrasion across my stomach because my flak jacket was open.

STUBBE: Maybe the force of the concussion turned you before all the—

PAINTER: Shrapnel reached me.

STUBBE: Right.

PAINTER: And it just peppered my back.

STUBBE: I know, because I saw it!

PAINTER: And my neck. But I was saying: If you're screaming, you're alive! Some of the guys stated settling down. And I could hear someone coughing, "I can't breathe! I can't breathe!" Later on, I found out who it was—just recently; it was Ken Martin. He called me from Oregon because he read the ad. His wife prompted him into calling me. And he called me late at night, and we talked and cried for two hours on the phone.

STUBBE: Was it all the dust?

PAINTER: He was along full of cordite! Because he was on the far end. His ears were gone. My ears were bleeding too. I think I was bleeding from my eyes, my ears. Then somebody said, "They're coming to get us; they're going to get us. They're going to get us out of here." It was just until recently, I remember calling out: "Scribner! What happened? Scribner!" Because it was on his end. He took the full—right in his lap! ... MACAULAY—

STUBBE: Was digging you out.

PAINTER: Yeah. But the first person I saw was Gunny, our little bitty gunny,. And he was digging us out. And I saw his face as the light broke through, and I went: "Gunny!" [loud]. And he jumped! He thought I was a dead man. "You're still alive! There's some live people in here!" And Kevin—

STUBBE: Was digging. And Rick [Noyes] was OK.

PAINTER: Yeah, he was down there at the same end as—I don't know who else was in there; I have no idea. That's why I have the ad. I'm desperately searching. I want to find all of us...

STUBBE: Do you remember anything right after that, like at C-Med or anything, or were you just really out of it? In shock—probably hear anything?

PAINTER: I was in shock. I remember you talking to me—but very vaguely.

STUBBE: And then they evacuated you right away?

PAINTER: They evacuated me the next morning. I spent the night in CHARLIE MED. I don't know whose care I was under. But I remember waking up during the night—OH! just the pain! in my back and my neck! Just constantly ached—for *months* after that.

STUBBE: It's amazing nothing got into your spine.

PAINTER: The surgeon that did the work on my back feels that there were two vertebrae that were cracked.

STUBBE: From that weight and crushing.

DEWEY [GEORGE] CONRAD [KIA 02 Aug 69] remembered by Marty Comer *
SGT DAVID GONZALES [KIA 21 Mar 70] remembered by Thomas S. Strain *

JOHN CULLEN TATE, KIA 05 May 67 remembered by Gerald "Doc" March *

PAINTER: Kevin Macaulay was under the impression that I was slammed into the roof before it came down. But, yeah, I remember CHARLIE MED, and I remember the ride up to CHARLIE MED in the jeep.

STUBBE: They took you in a jeep!

PAINTER: They took me in a ride—they took me in a jeep—and shit was still coming in! [laughs]. We were still being hammered and they're running me—I don't know who drove me up; I have no idea.

STUBBE: Were there others with you?

PAINTER: That I really don't remember. I remember Gunny saying, "Careful! Careful! Don't step on the guy below you!" And—this actually is one of the easiest times I've ever talked about it. .. As they were pulling me out they go, "Damn, Painter!" And I go, "All these months in the bush—43 days left to do in-country, and they had to bang my ass in the hole!" They had to beat me up in a hole!

STUBBE: 43 days.

PAINTER: It's all I had left. March One; I was out of there. ...

[NOTE: the story of this incident continues with the next item, from taped comments of Kevin Macaulay]

When Rosa and Popowitz and Miller and Scribner were killed, I went over and I started working on the bunker after it was hit. We were going to destroy the bunker because nobody wanted to stay in it. And I think we found Popowitz' body and part of his boot and part of his foot was still inside. And we found Scribner's helmet with part of his head still inside. And I started to shake, and he [1/Lt Carl J. Schlack, the XO of the recon company, called "Pappy" because he was older; he had been enlisted] grabbed me by the stock and swivel and pulled me over and said, "I want you"—Schlack, he says, "I don't want you to go near there again." He says, "You can't handle it."

I said, "Pappy, I *can* handle it; I've got to handle it. if I don't handle it I won't be able to handle anything. I've got to prove to myself."

And he respected me. he said, "All right. Just go over and sit by the side. There's no reason why you have to wade about through the gore of battle." He said, "You just sit there for awhile and reflect on these four men and think about these four men." And he snapped me out of it.

Miller—he had been wounded out on patrol two weeks before Christmas or a week before Christmas in '67, and he went down, I guess, to DaNang, and then they operated on him there. And he wasn't that seriously wounded. He took a round through the scrotum, and he came back about a week before we were hit in January. And he was one of the four that were killed when the 122 went in the door of the bunker..

We had so little over there, but the little that we had we shared with everybody.

We were rough son-of-bitches, I remember that. A fellow would show us a picture of his wife and we'd look at it and say, "Boy, is she a dog, how did you ever marry such a beast?" And we would joke back and forth, but the joking meant so much to us. It would take the edge off. Sitting in the bunkers, listening to the rounds impact—maybe three, four, maybe five minutes before a bunker took a direct hit we had four guys killed and—we were terrified, but the way we showed our terror: we would joke back and forth: "O listen to that one,that sounded pretty! Listen to that one coming in!" And then somebody would say that a bunker got hit. And we'd run over, and all the joking would stop, and we'd rip the bunker that had taken us five days to build; we took it apart in 30 seconds to get out the guys who were inside.

There were 22 men in the bunker. Four were killed and the rest of them were wounded. I remember pulling a fellow by the name of Painter out. He was covered with blood from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet, and he was in bad shape. But poor Scribner, of them, well, Doc Miller was in bad shape also. But Scribner looked like the rocket went off right in his lap...He was married to an airline stewardess.

..We shared, and I live better today because we shared. I learned a lot...

[*The following is an excerpt from the diary of Ray W. Stubbe for 24 January 1968*]

24 January 1968

PFC Robert C. Painter walked over to C-Med in complete shock, shrapnel wounds all over his back and face—little holes with small burn marks and blood dripping out of a few of them. Then more—Velardi, Noyes, others. My friends. We went into my bunker [in C Med] for safety, to wait in case we had another barrage of incoming. Five recon men in all. Then an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel who had minor shrapnel in his lower buttocks hobbled into my bunker. He removed his flak jacket and we all noticed immediately a tiny piece of shrapnel just below the neck, in the middle, where his spine was. Had he not been

wearing his flak jacket, he would have been killed or paralyzed. Then a postal clerk arrived, shell-shocked. These seven, in addition to Dr. King—who had just moved in, the corpsman who has been staying with me the last several nights—"Goober" [Richard Heath]—and myself. It is now 2125 as I write this in my diary. No one talks; everyone just sits in silence.

Cpl Daniel F. Velardi had just returned from a recon patrol. There actually had been a small Marine patrol out during the past several days! Team FROSTBURG was near Hill 222, near Lang Kat (1) and (2) south of Route 9. Although scheduled for extraction on the 21st, they had to wait until today, the 24th, to return to the base. During their three-day delay, they spotted NVA with packs walking down Route 9. They had to wander around in the area north of Route 9 until they were extracted today by chopper.

PFC John M. Tighe crawled out with the bright day-glow orange cloth air panel into an open area to signal the choppers—and, fearfully perhaps, any enemy snipers that might be there. The choppers radioed that they could not spot the panel, to put it out further. Tighe's heart was pounding, he said, ready to explode with contained fear. Then the helicopters said they wanted smoke! As the choppers approached, one of the recon Marines fired! This usually scares the choppers away, or causes them also to fire! Cpl Velardi hit the man and knocked him out. He later said he thought he had seen something.

During the patrol, the Marines had to pass through some of the Bru villes. The Bru offered them sanctuary all during this time.

Now five of these men were sitting side by side on my metal frame rack in my bunker. The Air Force Colonel, sitting on the wooden palletted deck with his back against the wall then departed, perhaps to a more comfortable accommodation than just sitting on the deck all night. Rick Noyes was dabbing his head every now and then with a roll of toilet paper, causing a large pile of crumbled white paper died red in blood to accumulate on the deck. We all assumed, as did he, that he had a head wound. (Later, at daybreak when the corpsmen examined him, he was found to be only slightly wounded; the blood on his head was that of his dead buddies). Rick Noyes is only 19. On his helmet is written: "God walks with me."

Those sitting on my rack fell asleep during the night in their sitting position. I was curled upon the top of my field desk, an area about three feet square—if that. The surgeon, Dr. King, was lying on the floor as was the shell-shock postal clerk. Incoming kept pounding all night—a few rounds every now and then.

THE PATROL

By
Talis Kaminskis

The emotions of the night surged through the two young Marines. They sat together, the morning light now invading the outside darkness. On opposite sides of the table, each treasured his private space, avoiding any semblance of a glance. Except for military rank, there was very little difference between them. But it was that difference that hours earlier had started the problems between them. In a little while the Sergeant had to lead a patrol. And the other, one who had in the past accompanied the Sergeant without question, has said, "No, I will not go!"

The day before orders had come through that a patrol was to go and climb a mountain. Among those directly and indirectly affected by those orders, a somber and harsh discussion had ensued. All were aware of the fact that what was being asked was suicide for those who would go. Already their native counterparts had reported the presence of a large and heavily-armed enemy force that awaited any and all foolhardy enough to challenge that hill. But the powers to be would not accept the word of any but their own soldiers. So the word had been sent to the Marines that lived in the closest village to the hill.

Thus the night had been spent in deep argument over what to do. Some wanted a "ghost patrol:" go out, say they are there, and come back. Others insisted on just flatly saying No. To die as a soldier was one thing, but to die a sacrificial lamb was not. But the Sergeant said he had no choice but to do. And his friend—his friend who had walked with him through hell and high water, said, No.

As the conversation from the others quieted down, theirs increased. Harsher and harsher were the words exchanged between them. And over the mention of a female, a blow had been thrown. Quickly separated and calmed by their comrades, the two had resorted to sitting in silence on different sides of a table. Every so often a bottle that had appeared without asking, was passed between them. A means of communication that avoided the need for words. Cigarette after cigarette was lit and consumed. Thus the hours of the darkness, both outside and inside, passed.

The time of the patrol grew closer. Each in his heart knew that the patrol would bring death. They knew their village militia. They lived with them, ate with them, laid their lives on the line with them. Thus they had no doubt that the message they brought was true. On that hill an enemy far greater in power than the patrol that would seek them, awaited. The Marine who would not go glanced at the light outside and acknowledged that the time was near. His gaze sought out the Sergeant's face for the first

time since they had sat down, and from his eyes unpreventable tears rolled forth,. It was evident that the emotions were mutual.

From their seated positions, both rose; and moved to an embrace that both sensed would be their last. The closeness told all. They had shared so much together; and each in his own way was to share what was about to happen. In spite of the previous hours, their friendship was still true, and each understood the reason for the other's actions.

For one it was the refusal to attend certain death; and the other, a letter from home saying his wife no longer needed him.

Not a word passed between, nor would there be. Outside noises of preparation interrupted their needs, and they quickly parted. One to attend to his final patrol, and the other, to sit and wait. In silence, alone, waiting for the sounds of violence that would signal the happening in the distance. Over the radio the last desperate plea for help, and in his mind, the turmoil of this decision.

"The tomb of a hero is in the hearts of the living."

—an inscription found on a stone wall of the marketplace where Joan of Arc was burned.

POEM

By Talis Kaminskis

Desperately seeking,
my eyes are searching
waiting
for a war without end
to end
Nights lay waking,
heart is trembling
waiting
for a war without end
to end
In darkness are fought,
battles of hope
waiting
for a war without end
to end
Daylights fleeting,
hopes and dreams are seeking
waiting
for a war without end
to end
On time worn faces,
familiar tears leave traces
waiting
for a war without end
to end
Arms held empty,
rock their loads gently
waiting
for a war without end
to end.
Alone I do last,
living a long past
waiting
for a war without end
to end.
I'm waiting, I'm waiting,
Still I am waiting
waiting
for a war without end
to end.
For a war without end to end.

CONTACT

During the Khe Sanh reunion in D.C. (1993), two veterans kneeled at the panel of the Wall and pointed to the name of their best buddy. Tears flowed. Two women stood beside them. The older said, "Did you know him?" "He was our best buddy." "He was my son; this is his sister."

JANUARY, 1966

By Ray W. Stubbe

On 03 January 1966 a company of Nungs arrived at Khe Sanh Combat Base to augment the camp's strength. At this point, the camp was only a small Special Forces camp. Also arriving were two US Air Force Bird Dog observation planes to begin the operations of Project TIGER-HOUND, flying 12 miles into Laos from the border to detect enemy supply routes, support the Special Forces operations of FOB-1 (which used Khe Sanh as a launch site for ground recon operations into Laos), and conduct visual recon.

Just at dusk on the 3d the evening formation was breaking up. It was the usual evening harrangue right before supper that had become a pattern over which the "A" Camp Commander, Capt John D. Waghelstein had become increasingly apprehensive. Without success he had attempted to convince the LLDB commander [the Vietnamese Special Forces] to cease these formations at such regularity.

Suddenly three rounds of 120mm mortars exploded in the midst of the formation, causing almost all of the casualties that were to be sustained during the ensuing battle. Khe Sanh had become the place where the NVA introduced 120mm mortars, his heaviest ordnance of the battle in Viet Nam to this point. [The 120mm M38 Soviet mortar can fire 12-15 rounds per minute, each round weighing 15.4KG. max range is 5700 meters; minimum range 460 meters. Weight of the weapon in travelling position is 500KG (1100 pounds)]. The newly-arrived Bird Dog planes had not yet been placed in large underground revetments that were to be dug by the engineers, and were severely damaged in the attack before they were put in operation.

The defenders scrambled to underground shelters and, once underground, took no further casualties. The enemy began shifting fires attempting to hit the bunkers. They did

strike the team house where, because it was the coldest part of the year, there was always a fire. The fires from the bruning team house provided all the necessary illumination in the darkness of the night. The antennas began collapsing and the Communications Sergeant, McFadden, continued to maintain communications until he was eventually pulled out of the burning rubble and taken to the bunker in the center of the compound.

A large underground bunker in the center of the camp which had been used to store ammunition had earlier been cleared for use as an operations center and now, as a medical bunker. [This was later the 26th Marines COC during the Siege]. There were now 13 killed and some 50 to 60 wounded, some critical with traumatic amputations. Doc Cobb, the senior medic of the team, was unfortunately in DaNang, so Doc Robinson, the junior medic, the local missionaries (Nancy Costello and Eugenia Johnson—the Millers were temporarily away), and four Bru girls that the Army had been training as nurses, attended and saved the wounded. As a result of their work, of the 12 or 14 that were medevaced as critical, only one was lost.

Counter-mortar fire was impossible. The 120s were fired just outside the range of the camp's 81s but, although within the range of 105s, there were no recoil pits to allow 105 high angle fire. The enemy moved into this "dead space" with their tubes and fired unmolested, a tactic that was to be repeated at Khe Sanh during the 1968 Siege when the enemy moved into an area where they would be safe from B-52 strikes, but far enough from the perimeter to avoid fire from those manning the trenchline of the perimeter.

About midnight the "Ridgerunners"—Marine Corps medevac helicopters, landed inside the camp without assistance other than the light from the burning camp, and the critically wounded were lifted out as the enemy continued pounding the camp until about 0300.

There had been a rather strange CRUMP explosion, maybe one round out of ten. It was nowhere as loud as the other 120s and it was first assumed these were 81s. They were actually 120s with a delayed fuse, a round that would cut through 12-feet of the laterite soil and detonate. Those that landed on the PSP sheets of the runway only penetrated 6 feet. The enemy was obviously aiming for the bunkers, attempting to annihilate the camp. Fortunately they never hit the medical bunker in the center of the camp.

The next morning brought clear skies. The remainder of the wounded were evacuated, and fixed wing continued airstrikes that had begun during the night. The NVA forces had already departed from their mission to make recon of their activities in eastern Laos too costly for us (as well as holding the base at Khe Sanh which was the launch site for those operations). Another company of Nungs arrived, giving the camp commander a total of five companies: two Bru, one Vietnamese, and two MIKE forces of Nungs in addition to the Nungs already assigned to the camp.

The combined effects of this operation, together with B-52 strikes in the Khe Sanh area during the first two weeks of January, 1966, resulted in a report of a NVA unit moving some 200 wounded from a point six miles south of the DMZ to a tunneled area containing a hospital about six miles to the west. Project TIGER-HOUND commenced operations. FOB-1 continued operations which proved so valuable that in the summer of 1967, FOB-3 was formed at Khe Sanh along with a "Special Project" to create an indigenous guerilla force with the nearby BV-33 Royal Laotian battalion, "Elephant," to operate near the Chinese border, under the leadership of Major George Quamo.

JANUARY, 1967

By Ray W. Stubbe

On the night of 17 January 1967, Sergeant Thomas Dean Willson of the detachment of 3d Force Recon Company at Khe Sanh led a 7-man force recon patrol deep into enemy territory, some 14 miles north of Khe Sanh, far outside friendly artillery support range, near the DMZ. Their mission: locate enemy infiltration routes.

Although being fired upon during their insertion, the team made their way out of their IP [Insertion Point] and moved some 400 meters to a harbor site for the evening. During the night they heard shooting and chopping sounds, and at first light on the 18th, moved to an OP [Observation Post] to locate the source of the sounds. At 1220, while on this OP, a NVA patrol estimated to be 30-40, began moving towards them.

[The following is a conversation with Clayton Ernst of 02 July 1993 at the Khe Sanh Reunion in Washington, D.C. Clayton was most insistent that the record of this patrol, which involved the first Marine KIA at Khe Sanh. Clay was dying. He had been told he had about a year to live. He had been the Chief of Police of a large city in Florida. He died in January, 1995, spending his last months visiting his old buddies from force recon and bringing them together].

Ernst: Bessent—he was my radioman on that last patrol.

Stubbe: By "last patrol" you mean—

Ernst: When I got wounded and Scanlon killed.

Stubbe: That was—

Ernst: The 18th of January [1967], the first KIA.

Stubbe: He was a wrestler in high-school, and a short fellow, I was told.

Ernst: 5-foot. Senator Dodd of Connecticut put through the bill to get him admitted into the Marine Corps because he was only 5-foot.

Stubbe: And I guess he was—

Ernst: Everybody's "little brother."

Stubbe: The unit mascot almost

Ernst: He was the unit virgin. We tried to alter that... First the mission was screwed-up—to my way—I didn't like it. Lieutenant Schmidt came to me, and Tommy Willson. It was about two o'clock, and they told us to get a team together. We were going in. Bessent had never been with us. And the dog-handler's name was Boucher. And a PFC Thompson—black kid from "A" Company, 3rd Battalion Recon—he'd never been out with us. He didn't have much recon experience. And the rest was Tommy Willson, me, Scanlon, Doc Feyh, and Bessent the radioman.

Stubbe: Who was the Patrol Leader?

Ernst: Willson was the Leader; I was the Assistant.

Stubbe: And the communicator was Bessent?

Ernst: Yes, and Doc Feyh was the Corpsman, and a Dog Handler and two Scouts. So we went in a little past three. And as soon as the chopper cleared the area there was sound of wood chopping all the way around us, lower down on the mountain.

Stubbe: Was this close to the Khe Sanh Combat Base, or far?

Ernest: Well, the report says 14 miles north, but Tommy Willson was taken aside and briefed by Lieutenant Schmidt and given the only map. Later, in the hospital, a Major from G-2 came in, and I was a little drugged-out. And he told me: When you get back to the States, don't tell anybody where you were! When we got hit—when I got back up to the top of the hill and I said: Where's arty? And Tommy, laying next to me, says: We're out of range. And we were out of the 175s at Camp Carroll. I knew we were "out" somewhere!

Stubbe: Of course it's Force Recon's mission to be outside the artillery fan.

Ernst: Yeah, but there was no briefing on this patrol. Tommy and I usually took an overflight before we went out on a mission. Because Tommy Willson and I had made almost all our patrols together, as Leader and Assistant. We worked real good together. So as soon as the chopper was out of there, we heard the sounds of chopping and what sounded like a rifle range down in the valley below us somewhere. So we moved, O, maybe 500 meters to setup Harbor Site for the night, sat in for the night. And first thing in the morning, wood-chopping and shooting started again. So I took Scanlon. It was, O, about eight o'clock in the morning, and we went west on the ridgeline, checking out the ridgeline. It looked like a farmer once had tried to clear the land. It was about three-foot high elephant grass, and tree stumps all over the place, three foot-high.

Stubbe: Did you think this was a training camp, then?

Ernst: That's what it sounded like. There was 2, 3 shots, silence, 2 shots, 1 shot, silence—sort of like a training rifle range. We had a ridge, and it had a treeline running down the center. And they were set-up.

Stubbe: "They" meaning—

Ernst: The rest of the team we left as an OP here. And we headed west. And this was dotted all the way through with tree stumps. We got about five, six hundred meters out—just at eyesight until the ridge started bending off. Then we turned around and came back. The only outstanding thing about it was: all the wood was old and dry. We got back and set up for lunch. And then in the afternoon we were going to go to the east, and then come back and decide where we were going to move for the night. So, while I'm sitting here, Willson signals me from the top of the ridge that there's Gooks on the other side of the ridge, and coming over. So I told Scanlon to go and set up in a position behind me, behind a wooden split-log fence, like Abraham Lincoln used to build. This was all in three-foot-high grass.

Stubbe: So you could take cover?

Ernst: Yeah. There was a tree stump that he got behind, and I was behind one. I couldn't see anything yet. I turned around, and three times Scanlon was trying to stand up. I kept waving him down.

Stubbe: Using hand-and-arm signals?

Ernst: Yeah. And he was about twenty feet away from me, and I was about fifteen feet away from the fence. At that time I heard the voices and forgot about Scanlon. I was looking around beside the tree stump I was behind. And there werre three North Vietnamese with helmet on, with AK-47s at sling arms, walking down the trail.

Stubbe: Close together?

Ernst: Close together, just strolling—

Stubbe: Like—no cares in the world.

Ernst: They weren't patrolling. They got down past me. And I'm still watching behind the tree stump. All of a sudden I felt something. I looked up, and Scanlon had got up, ran around behind me, jumped over the fence, ran out about a yard towards the trail, and yelled, Halt!

Stubbe: O, I bet shivvers ran up your spine!

Ernst: I was just struck. What's he doing!? Then he opened up. At this time all I could see was the head and shoulders of one and the head of the other. But they went down. I don't know if he hit them or not. They were over the edge of the ridge. So—he stopped firing—he didn't reload or anything. He was just standing there, looking down towards the trail. I started to stand up, and I was about half-crotched, trying to think: What do you say? when it was a blast of fire like on the rifle-range. These three were a point for a company!

Stubbe: They were coming over?

Ernst: Yeah. They were coming over and the thing that struck me right off was: Who was firing? The next thought was: They are good! My quick reaction: I just hit the ground. So I crawled over to the fence, and Scanlon had been blown back against the fence and was laying flat on the ground. I counted five hits on him—his legs, his hip, his shoulder, and his chest. And I got up to reach over the fence to pull him over to my side and I could pull him up to the top of the hill. And as I got about half-way up to the fence, they opened up with automatic weapons on the top of the fence and just splintered.

Stubbe: Were you getting any support from the rest of the team?

Ernst: Yeah. They were firing up there and throwing grenades. So I hit the ground and I tried to pull a couple of the logs loose from the bottom of the fence—as a way to get him to my side. But—well-built fence. So I started throwing grenades and firing my weapon. And I had a M-79. And where the path crossed the ridge, I was firing the M-79 into the trees, letting them burst off the trees—.

Stubbe: Like an air-burst—

Ernst: Because some of the firing was coming from there. So while I was doing this from down the finger, they were sliding down the finger and below me. So down in here I saw about three of them crawling through the grass. And I pulled out a grenade and let the spoon go and counted two, and on "three" I was throwing it out, and I got hit in the right arm, through the elbow, and it snapped the grenade out of my hand—and I was still counting! I counted all the way to "eight," and said: You're a dud! And I turned around. And there was a North Vietnamese standing right over by the treeline looking at me. Later on I figured he had fired at my chest the moment I had swung to throw the grenade, and hit the arm instead of the chest. So I reached down and I just—didn't like him looking at me—so I reached down and grabbed the M-79, pointed at him and fired—caught him in the chest. And he ended up doing cart-wheels down the side of the hill. So I put my arm in my jacket, and I kept firing the M-79 single-handed, because that's all I could do anymore. And then four grenades came in on us. I looked up, and there's four ChiCom grenades arcing through the air. The thing that hit me is: They definitely know where I am. So I yelled at Scanlon, for some stupid reason, to lay flat. And I flattened out. And one went over my head and exploded, and one landed by my feet, which I kicked away. The third one I don't know about, and the fourth one landed on the other side of the fence.

Stubbe: Where Scanlon was.

Ernst: That's what I—. It sounded a little muffled. I'm the one who reported the muffled grenade. Cause the guys on the top of the hill by this time thought we were both dead. Because there hadn't been any real activity down there. So—

Stubbe: Now were they hit at all?

Ernst: No

Stubbe: The North Vietnamese probably didn't know they were there, probably.

Ernst: O, yeah; they were firing on them. And here you got that Bessent and Willson were wounded [referring to the book]. Doc Feyh was also wounded. He was manning the machinegun and got shot in the arm. And when the four grenades went off—and I didin't think anything of the funny sound. I said: They got me pinned; they know where I am. I can't do any fighting with one arm. So I jumped over and reached over the fence real quick and grabbed Scanlon and jerked him up. And as I jerked up, it felt like he grabbed my arms and squeezed my arm. And I looked down, and there's a big bone—the bullet hit the bone and blew out three inches of the arm. And I looked at him, and his chest was blown open, and blood all over him—which it hadn't been just a couple of minutes earlier.

Stubbe: From a burst of fire?

Ernst: I assume that was from the grenade that landed over there. So I just dropped him and I took off to the top of the hill.

Stubbe: So you had both arms out—

Ernst: Yes. Both were broken. I got to the top of the hill and just dove over the fence. And I landed at Doc Feyh's feet. And I spent the rest of the fire-fight laying there. We had air support in immediately, no artillery. We heard the choppers with the SPARROWHAWK coming, land beneath us, and we heard them fighting their way up to us. I could hear their voices shouting.

Stubbe: Yeah, infantry is noisy!

Ernst: And they got close, and fire

was suppressed. And Willson had taken his sox, his spare sox—he made into a battle dressing. He tied those together and put them around his forehead—he was hit in the forehead with shrapnel. And I remember him bleeding and just tying the sox around his head to keep the blood out of his eyes. So, he told me and Doc Feyh to take the first chopper to get in. So we got up and we ran toward the chopper. That's when I got the leg—

Stubbe: The chopper landed—

Ernst: It couldn't set down because of the tree stumps. So we ran down there. And I didn't know about it until later, but I got hit in the leg while running to the chopper. We got to the chopper. And it was a CH-34. The step was right at my eyes [level]. All of a sudden I remembered I didn't have any arms [that worked]. So Doc Feyh—we're getting potted at—he kneels down—he's holding his bad arm. He wraps his good arm around my knees and lifts me into the chopper, and the Crew Chief finished pulling me in. The Crew Chief was white [with fright]—I don't know if it was his first hot mission or what. But he was as terrified—Doc's down there splattered with blood. The chopper got hit a couple of times and then pulled out. And I didn't know until they got—. Then they flew me down to Dong Ha. They cut off my uniform and told me I had been shot three times and had six pieces of shrapnel in me.

..

Stubbe: Then did Willson and the rest of them leave and the infantry just—

Ernst: The infantry got there within 10 to 15 minutes of my being evaced. They tried to drag Scanlon's body all during the firefight. It lasted about two hours. And—we had a tug-of-war with them. Bessent grabbed ahold of his harnass and they had ahold of his feet—.

Stubbe: "Them" meaning the NVA?

Ernst: The NVA! And Bessent's out there having a tug-of-war with Scanlon's body in the center. And they let go of the body and Bessent dragged it far enough back to our perimeter that we could keep an eye on him, because they took it out on the chopper with them.

Stubbe: What happened to Willson?

Ernst: He got commissioned in late '67, cause I went over to Camp LeJeune when he got commissioned and went out and partied. And then he was killed in a helicopter training exercise.

Stubbe: You were out for—

Ernst: I was in the hospital for ten months, and then in recuperation for another six. ... When I was in the hospital, the only people I saw was Lieutenant Capers—who came down to get the story, and this Major from G-2—"Don't say where you were." I was wondering: Does he mean Vietnam? Southeast Asia? How specific does he want me to be? And I spent 60 days out on narcotics, and they got me back. There were four major surgeries altogether, repairing my hip and my arms. It was funny: when I got shot in the elbow, I thought somebody had kicked me. The second time, in the left arm, I thought Scanlon had grabbed my arm and squeezed it. And when I got hit in the side of the thigh, I thought that was a muscle cramp. I had a big piece of shrapnel take off part of my hip, and I thought my weapons belt was pinching. It took a big chunk of bone out of the hip bone.

That about covers it. It says here [in the book, *Valley of Decision*] I threw a grenade and it was a dud: I didn't throw it; it was shot out of my hands. And Scanlon didn't shout a warning to us! A warning to them! He sprayed part of that magazine; that's all he sprayed. Then reloading he killed two more.

Stubbe: How was Capers when he visited? Besides getting information, he must of been devastated: he once told me that Scanlon had been his barber and like a son to him.

Ernst: O, he was upset! He was on the verge of crying; I was too. The one thing—he had somebody with him that I did not recognize. But there was a wounded Marine who was next to me who was weakly calling for a Corpsman. And the Corpsmen would ignore him for some reason. And Capers had just made Lieutenant. And all of a sudden he exploded, yelling: Get over and take care of this wounded Marine, now! And I was on Demerol and my memory's a little bit hazy on it, but I think the Marine that was with him restrained him to make sure he didn't punch out the corpsman.

Stubbe: He really cared for his people.

Ernst: Yeah, that was one of the big things. For years I've been trying to figure out what that man's got and how I can get it. I was Police Chief, and I wish I had his leadership ability. There wasn't a man in the platoon that wouldn't have died for him. We were asked to do alot of stupid things, but if it came from Capers and we knew that's the story, we did it. You knew he cared. If you had a problem, it was his problem. Nobody messed with you; you were his people. It was just his personality...He was my Troop Handler when I was in ITR, so he and I go back when I was right out of bootcamp. Then I spent a year in the infantry and two years on sea duty, and then I volunteered for Force Recon....

I got out of the hospital after ten months. Had a good CO down there in Key West, and gave me all the time I wanted to recuperate. then I reenlisted—the Marine Corps tried to

say fradulently: instead of going to the hospital for my reenlistment physical I went to the Navy Base, to the Sickbay, told them my medical records had been lost. So, if you don't tell the doctor, he's not going to find it, and reenlisted, and went on embassy duty. While on embassy duty I was put up for commission. All the paperwork went through and they needed a physical. So I went to the Air Force—I was in Norway—took a physical, passed, no problem. But I didn't know that they pulled your whole record and sent it to the commissioning board. So about two weeks later I got orders—I had orders to Quantico—I got new ones to report to Naval Air Station, Jacksonville Naval Air Station for medical evaluation. The doctor said: You might as well retire or give me a [medical] profile. I was a Staff Sergeant by this time. A profile meant no sea or combat duty. And I said: I can't spend another 12 years in the Marine Corps, watch my battalion go off, and every time we go to war, so I got out.

The doctor's give me only about a year or so [to live] so I wanted to tell someone the story. I have a brain lesion, and I'm loosing everything over to the right. I can't feel my arm or leg and the side of my face no more, and the more it tears—it's just tearing a few thousandths at a time. I've told Capers about two weeks ago. I've seen four different doctors. My kidneys are failing on top of it, and they wouldn't recommend me for a transplant because I probably won't live long enough. So Capers is on his horse and charging off to do battle with the VA doctors—to get a new brain stem!

[*MGySgt Tom Nicholson recalls: When Scanlon went to SCUBA school he was almost dwarfed by the air tanks. A red-haired kid, short and stocky, Mike was a high-school wrestling champion. Very mild-mannered, nearly timid, but extremely strong physically and with alot of energy. He was the victim of many practical jokes.*

Mike Scanlon was recommended for a Silver Star Medal. His citation reads that as he started firing, approximately 20 additional enemy joined the first group on the Marine's left flank, laying down a base of fire and attempting to envelope the Marine patrol. Cpl Scanlon charged the enemy, killing two immediately and, changing magazines, killed or wounded two more on his second burst of fire as he held off the enemy troops at less than 15 meters. Outnumbered considerably, he valiantly held off the enemy as the Marines maneuvered to their defensive perimeter, although hit twice, once in the leg and once in the shoulder.

From all the blood plus a large hole, Sergeant Willson believed Corporal Scanlon had jumped on the grenade that caused the "muffled explosion" or pulled it under him to keep the other Marines from harm.

It was said that Sgt Willson had always anguished over a fear that it was his grenade that killed Scanlon, thinking he may have blown Scanlon away during the exchange of grenade tossings during those frenzied battle moments. This was in spite of others who were on the patrol convinced it was an enemy grenade.]



THE GALLERY

By
Ray W. Stubbe

Faces
etched in memory
framed by embracing love
always remembered

Portraits
tatooed on the heart
by needles of piercing pain
forming
tapestries of stitched grief
seared soul
by sun hot branding irons
of
abrupt nothingness
sculpting
lasered holograms moving
with one's gaze

Collections of portraits
hung in soul rooms
between walls of dark
theater curtains
momentarily opened
illumined in dreams
nailed on heart hall walls
occluding passage of life
constricting nearness to others
always never past
sometimes suddenly present
never without future

Visions
arresting
imprisoning
invoking attraction
evoking trembling
Numinosum Fascinosum
transforming
rewiring all hippocampus
brain circutry

Icons
drawing us into what was
which always is
dancing massless photons
emitted
from eyeballs
penetrating appearances
of hardness, of material
to behold

Faces
of God.

—25 August 1996



Aerial photo showing bomb craters of area about 1,000 meters north of Khe Sanh ville (XD 840388). The NVA forces encircling Khe Sanh Combat Base received far more ordnance than did we who were on the base.

Courage

By
Betty Anderson, 1989

There is a courage
A courage to live unafraid,
tho tormented,
Counting coup on my last enemy,
death..
Tearfully free from the bonds
of others.
A leaping forward into the melee
of struggle,
Undaunted
Rearing with the knowledge
of pre-ordained hope!
I have come
I have waged battle
and loved
Fiercely,
Silently keeping vigil
with Jehovah.
I live—yet, I die
I weep, yet rejoice.
It is all gloriously terrible.

[From a letter from David Anderson: "I'm sending my mother's poem...She wrote this out of her love for me, to try to explain what she see's happening to me with my struggles against the PTSD that is so much a part of my life."]

Three Poems

By
Talis Kaminskis

When the light that one turns to
for help
Is actually darkness of a different tint
What recourse can an anguished cry
Resort to find the peace
it so desperately
Left buried on a distant shore
In a distant time that never has aged
Controlling so completely that life
is a fleeting
Glimpse of reality spread sparingly
For a cause beyond comprehension
of a
Mind that has never departed from
The spawning grounds of eternal
despair
All for the purpose of a forgotten
Task laid before those whose youth
Would not permit the maturity
needed
To preserve life as it once was and
Never will be again for those chosen
To fulfill that chore that could not be
FULFILLED.

*

Hush, hush
Quiet time is near
Sound
so alive and vibrant today
Has fled
Leaving the field to one
you will not hear
Without noise
It has come
Already it's leaving
Silent journey
Passing
through time
Eternal
Sparing
Not
one

*

Oh if the sky would only bring a
traveling cloud to me
I'd dream, I'd fly, I'd soar
No place be safe from my approach
I'd find, I'd see, I'd know
The sea would wash my traveling
feet
I'd sink, I'd rest, I'd sail
To depths of earth that few men see
I'd stop, I'd climb, I'd find
My heart would beat a million times
I'd feel, I'd give, I'd bind
Till ends of times would swallow my
way
I'd hasten, I'd speed, I'd go
But in the end it still be thus
I'd freed, I'd need, I'd heed
The epitaph of the final trip
I'd hide, I'd go, I'd keep.

Three Movements

By
Ray W. Stubbe

Garden so lush, body so young
Beauty and joy, people all one
Exuberant living, extravagant
blessing
Intimate sharing, infinite caring
Enchanted place where spirits grew
Primeval peace here is all we knew
Tigers, pythons, ocelots, rats
Elephants, centipedes, deer and cats
Playfulness, simpleness, innocence,
unity
Breadfruits and fish and bananas on
tree
A magical glen, mystical delight
A mythical realm in night and in
light.

Night and fog and jungle shrouding
High above hearing, not knowing,
not seeing
Suddenly moonscape and red dust
now lay
All life expunged, day after day
Flick of the switch: destruction
unleashed
Wreckage now wreaked, Hell's
scenery peeked
Pieces of body: an eye, leg, or brain
Redness of blood sprayed,
effusion as rain
No food and no water, no light in the
night
No future to plan for, no tears, no
more fright
Constant sound of incoming round
Animal and plant no longer are
found.

Cast from Eden the fruit now eaten
Knowledge gained that can't be
unlearned.
Good and evil by high powers of ten
Kept from reentry by sword of
flames turned
Burnt by flames to dust brought low
Sliced by sword from weal and from
woe
Tree of life eternal and healing
Food for all from battle still reeling
Together forever, forever made
whole
Cleansed into *humus*, humanity's
goal. (28May96)

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d. Khe Sanh Polo (Embroidered "Home is Where You Dig it")			$32.95	
e. Khe Sanh Reunion, 1996, Philadelphia			$10.95	
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g. Warrior (T Only)			$15.95	
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i. Marine Wife - Tough Job (T Only)			$15.95	
j. POW/MIA USMC Emblem (Sweat)			$20.95	
k. Why Waltz When you can Rock 'n Roll (T/Sweat)			$15.95/20.95	
l. Marine Tradition - Wife/Mother (T Only)			$10.95	
m. Postage Stamp (T Only)			$13.95	
n. Proud Veteran (Eagle Shield over American/POW Flags - 6 Colors)			$15.95	
o. Proud American (Eagle shield over American/POW Flags - 6 colors)			$15.95	
p. Only God looks Down on Marines			$15.95	
q. Semper Fi			$15.95	
r. POW Cross			$15.95	
s.POW Bracelet			$15.95	
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FLAGS: (American, Marine, Army, Navy, Air Force, POW			$12.95	
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			TOTAL:	

DESCRIPTION OF SHIRTS LISTED ON ORDER FORM

a. **Khe Sanh Map**
Actual photos taken in the Khe Sanh area

b. **Khe Sanh Eternally Bonded**
Khe Sanh Eternally Bonded Logo on front of shirt

c. **Home is Where You Dig It.**
Logo taken from a sign which was standing the Khe Sanh area during the Siege

d. **Khe Sanh Polo**
Heavy double knit polo shirt with the Home is Where you dig it logo on front pocket 2 colored

e. **Khe Sanh Reunion, 1996**
Commemorates the 1996 Philadelphia Reunion. Red lettering on Ash colored shirt.

f. **Title**
It cannot be inherited nor can it ever be purchased
It is impossible to rent and it cannot be lent
You alone and our own have earned it with your Sweat Blood, and Lives
You own it Forever.
The title, "United States Marine".

g. **Warrior**
Warrior by Day
Lover by Night
Drunkard by Choice
Marine by God

h. **Clinton**
"Only in America can a homeless vet sleep in a cardboard box while a draft dodger sleeps in the White House"

i. **Marine Wife - Tough Job**
If you think being a Marine is tough, try being married to one

j. **POW/MIA USMC Emblem**
POW/MIA Emblem on back with small Marine Corps Emblem on front

k. **Why Waltz When you can Rock 'n Roll**
Pictures an M-60 Machine Gun

l. **Marine Tradition - Wife/Mother**
Marine Wife
Marine Mother
Marine Tradition
PROUD!

m. **Postage Stamp**
POW/MIA emblem appearing in a stamp form with the words "It's worth a lot more than 32 cents"

n. **Proud Veteran**
Eagle and American Shield Flying the American and POW Flags. A 6 Colored shirt

o. **Proud American**
Eagle and American Shield Flying the American and POW Flags. A 6 Colored Shirt.

p. **Only God looks down on Marines**
Clouds and lightning bolt over a Marine Corps Emblem with a group of people looking up.

q. **Semper Fi**
"From the outside you can't understand it,
From the inside, I can't explain it
SEMPER FI"
Has a large Marine Corps Emblem in the middle.

r. **POW Cross**
Pictures a POW encaged in a thorned cross.
"Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray my brothers' soul to keep...I living memory of more than 58,000 of my brothers who never returned....Vietnam 1959-1975

s. **POW Bracelet**
Pictures the Vietnam Wall at the top. Below are POW/MIA bracelets inscribed with the names of each state, commemorating lost brothers.

PLEASE READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY
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	_____	_____	____
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	_____	_____	____

PRICE: $65.00 per jacket (2XL and larger add $5.00)
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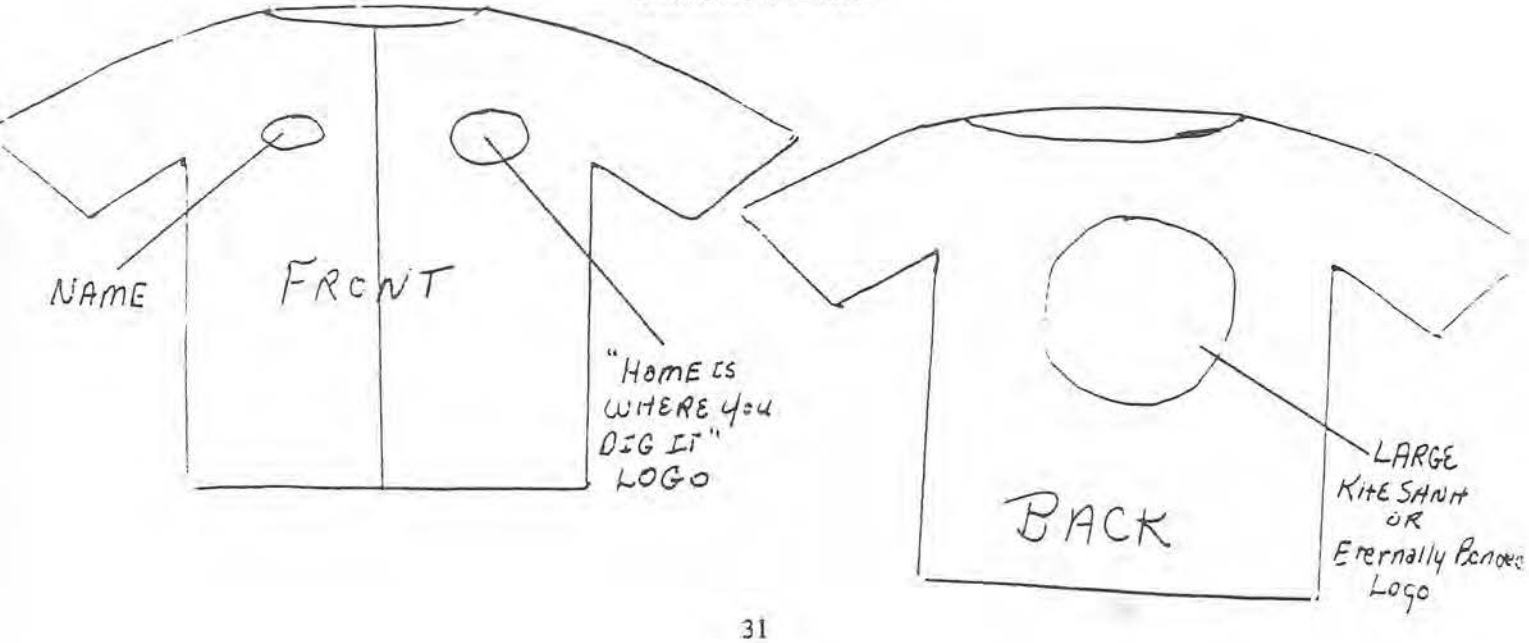

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please print or type, and provide all information requested.

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Name *Phone*

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Are you a Khe Sanh vet?..... *IF YES:.....* .....
Branch of Service *Unit*

What years/months were you at Khe Sanh?.....

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



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RED CLAY

A Publication of

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

Issue No. 40 (Fall, 1997)

Published three times a year by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a non-profit incorporation registered in the State of Wisconsin 01 Sept 1988, and tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(19), veterans organization, by IRS letter of 10 Feb 1989, consisting of all who lived or served in the Khe Sanh battlefield area. Purposes of the organization are: To promote renewed fellowship of all who lived and served in the area of Khe Sanh; To locate and account for all who so served; To promote preservation of an accurate historical account of such service; To preserve the memory of those who died there; To promote research and understanding and healing with a regard to those who served there; and To promote artistic expression of the Khe Sanh experience. Explanation of Logo: The 9-sided polygon suggests the multi-service, multi-year service at Khe Sanh; The "V" suggests Veteran, Vietnam, Victory, valor (as in the small "V" in medals and ribbons for heroic action) and the blue "V" on all 26 Marine supplies since 26th Marines is a historic part of the Fifth Marine Division; the sharp "KS" suggests the rugged, sharp, and painful Khe Sanh hills, and the twisted paths of the Khe Sanh experience then and since. "Red Clay" refers to the red ground of Khe Sanh, the result of weathered rock from an extinct volcano which formed the area of Khe Sanh Combat base in heat and violence, penetrating our skin to our souls.



Ken Pipes (former Commanding Officer) and Mike O'Hara, both from BRAVO, 1/26, placing wreath and saluting the mass grave of unidentified remains of eight Marines from the patrol of B/1/26 on 25 Feb 1968. Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, 12 July 1997, during Khe Sanh Reunion, St. Louis, Mo.

AFTER ACTION REPORT: ST. LOUIS

When it was all over, "Doc" Jim Armbrust [C-Med corpsman] was telling others: "This is the best thing that's happened to me in thirty years. I've slept better than I have in the last thirty years. I had forgotten what a secure feeling it is to be surrounded by Marines, that somebody else is on watch. I'm just amazed that we can all get together in a camaraderie that we haven't had since Khe Sanh. This is the best therapy in the world. It's like we're one big family. It isn't a Khe Sanh reunion as much as it is a family reunion. There's not one person here that wouldn't sacrifice his life for you. There's a lot of love at this reunion."

Mr. Paul Schramm, a former law professor at Harvard University—a kindly, old gentleman—sat down in a small room to brief our

(Continued on page 3)

SCENES FROM THE ST. LOUIS REUNION

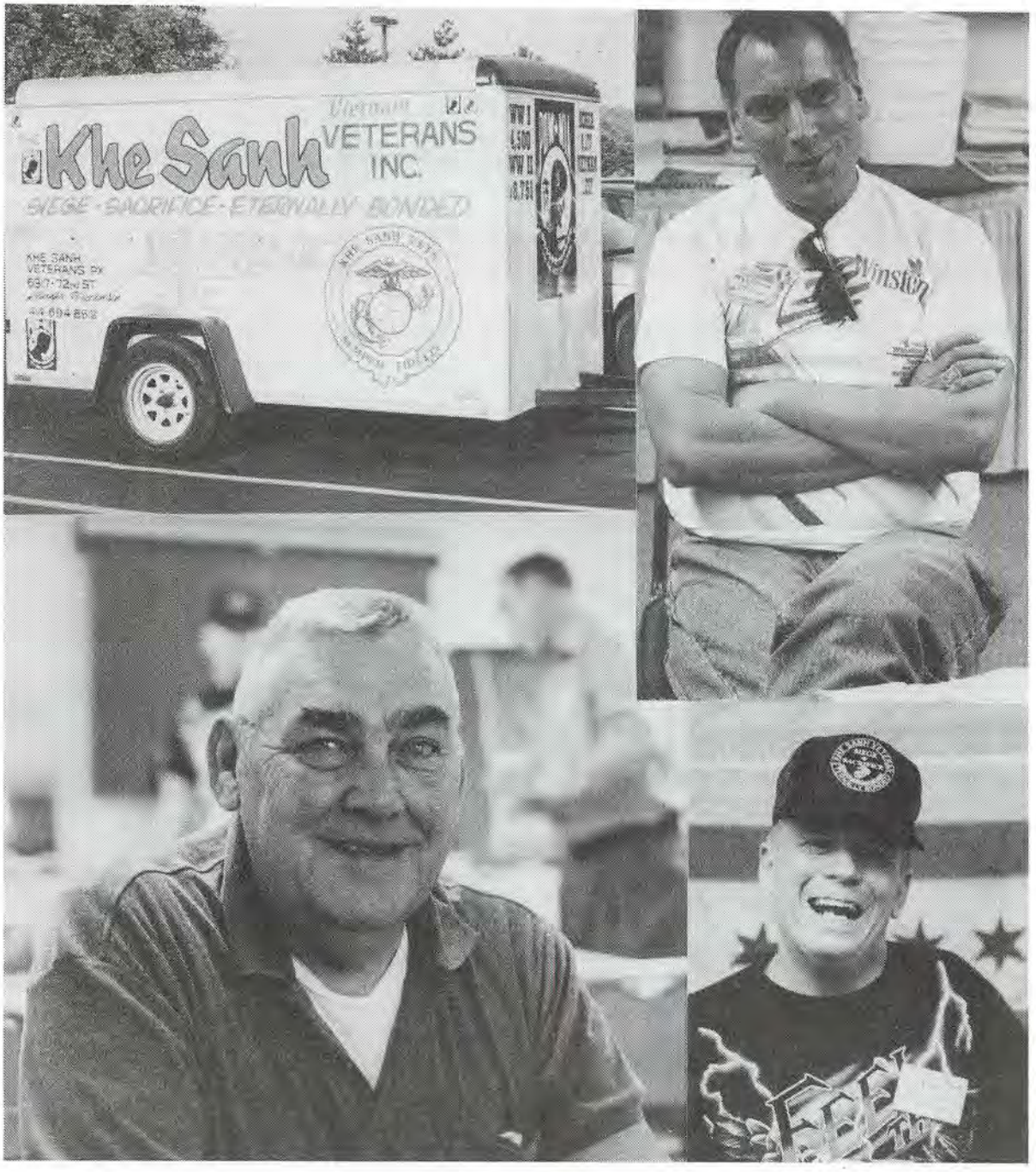

Top left: Khe Sanh PX van. Top right: Charlie Huber (H&S/2/26, 81s). Bottom left: First Sergeant Dick Peloquin, our new Khe Sanh Vets, Inc., President (I/3/26). Bottom right: Tom Winston (Ammo Plt.)

(Continued from page 1)

leadership on our By-Laws and said: "I've never been around a group of people who have had visited upon them what each and every one of you have had visited upon you at Khe Sanh and in other parts of Vietnam. I have a deep respect for each and every one of you, and I tell you that it's an honor and privilege to be in your midst—and I really mean that." When he concluded his presentation, and as he was walking out, there were tears in his eyes.

The Gathering

Some arrived with great difficulty or at great expense. Charlie Huber (H&S/2/26, 81s) recently underwent a heart and lung transplant operation. Glen Rappold (B/1/13) recently had a quadruple heart bypass operation. Bill Fry flew in from Taihiti for the second year in a row. Tom Winston, (Ammo Plt), ravaged by the fatal Huntington's Disorder and barely able to speak anymore, beamed as he met with old friends. Charles Berg (FOB-3) didn't let the fact that he has only one leg—as a result of an explosion during the Siege—bother him.

There were Khe Sanh vets from almost every facet of service and MOS: Wayne Magee and Don Cleveland from the Air Force, Lewis Messer from the Navy Seabees, Marion Sturkey—a helicopter pilot from the '67 Hill Battles, Navy Corpsmen (Jim Armbrust, Dan Polland, Bob Topmiller), Army (the advisor to the 37th ARVN Ranger BN, Walter Gunn; the 175mm liaison officer who was on the Khe Sanh base during the Siege, Mark Swearengen; soldiers from SOG—Charles Berg, Ron Miller, David "Bulldog" Smith, Grenville Sutcliffe, and one from the 1971 LamSom-719 operation, Barry Buckley, who was in awe at the presence of what he had learned to be a "legend" in the Army, "Bulldog" Smith); there were 9 Marines from the ONTOS unit and 7 from the Ammo Dump section; there were men from Comm, from recon and Force Recon, from CAC OSCAR, and, of course, the infantry. There were three who were family of Khe Sanh brothers who no longer are with us (Nita Brown, daughter of SgtMaj Donald Bean; Patty Metts, wife of Andy Metts who passed away last November; and Bill Robles, brother of LCPL Joe Robles). There were former Commanding Officers: Earle Breeding (E/2/26), Ken Pipes (B/1/26), Mac Radcliffe (A/1/9), "Bulldog" Smith (FOB-3), and, for his first appearance at a Khe Sanh reunion, Colonel David E. Lownds. There were Marines from the '67 Hill Fights (Tom Rice, H.L. Brasher, John P. Colvis).

However, as several observed, former unit identification did not result in cliques. What we had in common as veterans of Khe Sanh broke down all barriers of service branch and unit and MOS, officer and enlisted, as those there sat together, hugged, laughed, shared their stories and scrapebooks, and realized once again our common brotherhood.

There were 46 first-time attendees out of a total 161 (121 of which were Khe Sanh vets, 3 were family of Khe Sanh vets who have died, and 37 family and friends).

What we had in common as veterans of Khe Sanh broke down all barriers of service branch and unit and MOS, officer and enlisted, as those there sat together, hugged, laughed, shared their stories and scrapebooks and realized once again our common brotherhood.

An active duty Marine, 20 years old, lean and short hair cut, PFC Adam Wade, was on his way to El Toro to his new duty station when he spotted our Khe Sanh PX van in the parking lot. He decided to stop and see who these men from Khe Sanh were, having learned in his training about Khe Sanh. He arrived in the early morning and was immediately "adopted" by everyone there. He was given a Khe Sanh T-shirt, beers, and shown scrapebooks, talked with Colonel Lownds and many dozens of other Khe Sanh veterans, and was still in the Hospitality Room enjoying our fellowship as of 10:30 in the evening—which is 2230, for those whose mind is still operating on a military program.

The Place

The Best Western West Port Park, where we met 9-13 July 1997, made everyone feel at home. A large sky-light atrium room provided an informal place to sit down and relax, either as a group or individually. A PX room, managed by Terry Wilson [1/3], managed to sell all of its reunion T-shirts along with other Khe Sanh materials. The hospitality room walls were covered with historic flags and penants—the last US flag flown at Khe Sanh, the Chicago City flag from 881-S, a Canadian flag signed by members of one of the past Khe Sanh reunions, unit guidons donated by Cynthia Soto, and a US flag sent by US Senator Max Clelland who lost his legs 8 Apr '68 during Operation Pegasus at Khe Sanh. Tables were filled with scrapebooks and memorabilia, and two tubs were kept well stocked

(Continued on page 5)



Left to right: Jack Corbett and Bob Mills (both 81s, 1/26)

Left photo, family of George "Buddy" Taylor (D/1/26)

Right photo: Glen Rappold (B/1/13)

Bill Fry (1/3) with tub of refreshment

(Continued from page 3)

with beer and sodas—gifts to us—along with snacks and other eats and coffee, all maintained through the effortts of Russell Turner and Gary Vonderheide. The hospitality room became a place where some showed their slides, some shared their clippings and photos, and many just sat and talked with each other in groups of 2, 3, 4, to share stories of what was then or what is now. Glen Prentice showed photos of a recent trip back to Khe Sanh with his wife in which they climbed around Hills 881 and 861 by themselves. They didn't meet any NVA—just two cobras!

As the reunion progressed, it was apparent that nothing negative could spoil our party; things that started out causing much concern were soon transformed by love and camaraderie, hugs and good will, swallowed up and dissolved or made better.

One of our members who attended eight of the previous nine reunions, Ken Penn, our former President, was unable to attend. The day the reunion began, he had a stroke and was hospitalized. During the few days of the reunion, Ken was in our prayers, and made a rapid and remarkable recovery, regaining most of his mobility.

During the reunion, Tom Winston received word that Ross Perot would pay the expenses of an experimental brain surgery to cure his Huntington's. Tom and all his friends were ecstatic. This meant that not only would he be given a chance to live, but also that others with Huntington's might have hope, including Tom's son, who already shows signs of the dreaded disease.

The Pilgrimmage

Four bus loads departed the hotel to make a pilgrimmage to the nearby Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. It is at this old—and large—national cemetery that many mass graves of unidentifiable remains have been buried, many from World War II plane crashes or POW mass deaths. For Khe Sanh vets, two such graves became the focus of our concern: one held remains from the patrol from B/1/26 on 25 Feb '68; the other, remains from the C-130K crash of 6 Mar '68.

As the buses proceeded on an interstate entrance, Tom McIntyre [81s, 1/26] stood at attention beside his motorcycle alongside the road, saluting those in the busses.

We were fortunate to have Mr. Bill Jayne with us. Bill, a veteran of B/1/26, is currently the head of the VA's State Cemetery Grants Service of the National Cemetery System in Washington, DC, and gave us a brief of the mass graves which we were to visit.

Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe led a memorial service of prayers and a devotion based on Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones [Ezek 37:1-14], relating this vision to the body parts and pieces at Khe Sanh, the fragmentation of hopes and dreams and future, the broken relationships of family and friends, and the healing that comes from God being with us in the valleys of the shadows of death, the sheer gift of calling to all the bones regardless of worth or status, the ever-present means of healing through the four winds, and the coming together into wholeness of individuals and the entire group.

After reading the names of those buried in the two mass graves, other present were welcomed to speak from their heart. Many (who later said they wanted to) were too choked with emotion to speak. There were sights of tears and sounds of sniffling in the small, modern chapel where every seat was taken and men stood along the walls. It was a profound moment.

"William Terrell was, like many of those young men up there, a fine young Marine," noted John Kaheny. "I wouldn't be here today if it hadn't been for him and another Marine from Third Platoon, Alfa Company, 1/26, by the name of Vickers, who was also on that plane ride. They were both incredibly fine people. And on a certain date in May of 1967, they saved my life, and I'll never forget it."

Ernie Husted [B/3dRecon] recalled "..listening on the radio transmission the day the platoon got in trouble and was later killed. And being in recon I was listening to this transmission and thinking how many times we had felt like that. I listened to the radio transmissions until there were not any more that day, and I felt so helpless.."

"..if you don't think a commander suffers when he loses people, you're sadly mistaken, because it goes deeply into your heart. It never leaves."—Colonel Lownds

---

Colonel David Lownds walked to the lecturn and said: "I speak for no individual. As a Commanding Officer, I speak for those who have no one to speak for them today. I want you to know—that although I don't know any of them personally—I may have patted them on the back, I may have shouted at them—but they were my brother, and they will always live within my heart, regardless of their name. And if you don't think a commander suffers when he looses people, you're sadly mistaken, because it goes deeply into your heart. It never leaves. The loss of one, single individ-

(Continued on page 8)



Top: Memorial grave marker for the C-130K plane that crashed 6 March 1968 at XD933404, Khe Sanh.
Bottom Left: grave marker for the patrol from B/1/26 that was ambushed 25 February 1968 at XD848407, Khe Sanh.
Bottom Right: Memorial in back yard of Glen Rappold.



Top: At Glen Rappold's Memorial, left to right: Ernie Husted, Ken Pipes, Ray Stubbe, Col David Lownds, Earle Breeding, John Kaheny, Glen Rappold, William Griffith.
Center: Closeup of Glen Rappold's Memorial
Bottom left: Scene at Jefferson Barracks graves
Bottom right: Portion of Glen Rappold's memorial

(Continued from page 5)

ual is more than enough. When it gets into a hundred, that's almost unbelievable. There are battles where thousands are lost; I can't imagine what the commanders of the units must have felt. So I speak for all the brothers who died, and I know that they are in all our prayers."

One after another spoke—Tom Winston, Wayne Magee, a man from the ammo dump. Someone spoke for a civilian who was on the 6 Mar plane crash and who had a connection to the patrol of 25 Feb, Robert Ellison: "Robert was the one who did the cover photo on the March 18th, 1968, issue of *Newsweek* of the ammo explosion, "The Agony of Khe Sanh." Robert had been a photographer in the Civil Rights marches with Martin Luther King, and his photographs appeared in *Life* magazine. He had done all the photos in the *Newsweek* issue on Khe Sanh that I'm sure all of you have seen. His mother, Miriam Eaton, says that she was told he lived in the lines with BRAVO Company, 1/26 and became real close to the Marines there. He took all those photographs from the 25th of February patrol, and he went to Saigon to his bosses who told him they were good photos and to take some time off. But, he said, my brothers, my friends, are still up there; I'm not leaving Khe Sanh until they do. So he went back to Khe Sanh. He was heading back to Khe Sanh—on that plane—that crashed. Being a civilian, he's not on the wall in DC, but he is one of us.

But, he said, my brothers, my friends, are still up there, and I'm not leaving Khe Sanh until they do. So he went back to Khe Sanh. He was heading back to Khe Sanh—on that plane—that crashed. Being a civilian, he's not on the wall in DC, but he is one of us.

The day was bright and sunny as the busses moved from the small chapel through areas of land blanketed with small white crosses and arrived at the two mass graves. After all moved around to pay their respects, Ken Pipes [CO of B/1/26] and Mike O'Hara [B/1/26] placed a wreath at the graves. Everyone moved onto the busses which departed and next arrived at the home of Glen Rappold (B/1/13) who had built a Vietnam Memorial in his backyard [See article on him in issue No. 37, Khe Sanh *Veteran*, pp. 22-23]. By now tears in the chapel had washed away a great burden for many, and what could have become a "downer" became transformed into a renewed community of brothers caring for one another.

The Hill Fights
By
John P. Colvis

What day is this?
A yesterday that doesn't go away!
A day of honor and deep sorrow dipped in
blood to bond us all together.
A day whose sights and sounds and odors
grabbed our souls and won't let go.
Who amongst us would not lay down his life
for his friend?
Or go through hell to save one of our own?
Indeed, we've been there.
This is who we are.
Our covenant was written and sealed in blood
on and around the hills of Khe Sanh.
Was it 30 years ago?
Today we live our lives—to each his own.
But on this ground we all agree:
Our hearts will not forget what took place
at Khe Sanh.

The evening of 12 July was the time for our dinner together. Colors were posted by a multi-service Color Guard (to represent the multi-service composition of our group). Mrs. Pat D'Hondt, wife of the Gunny of A/1/9, shared a letter she had received and said, "Two weeks ago we received a telephone call in the afternoon from a gentleman who went on to explain that he is married to a lady whose father was killed in Khe Sanh...The reason I want to share this letter with you tonight is to encourage all of you—if you come across sons and daughters [of Khe Sanh KIAs], open your hearts and your homes. These loved ones of ours need healing..if you have an opportunity to meet the young people, remember they're your children." She then read the letter that had been addressed to the Gunny: "Dear Camille. Hello. It's been a wonderful feeling with me ever since I talked with you. I've waited for a very long time to find someone who knew and remembered our dad...We are all so happy. You can both write to me and tell me anything; we all would love to know more about our dad. We want to keep in touch with you always. I am very happy to know now I have two new members to my family...When you see Henry

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Top Left: Col Henry JM "Mac" Radcliffe and the Reunion Chairman, Carl Oksnee, both from A/1/9
Top Right: Col David Lownds (CO-26th Marines) and Capt Earle Breeding (CO-E/2/26); Breeding had been one of (then) Major Lownds' scouts in the early 1950s when Lownds was the Regimental Intelligence Officer of 9th Marines. When 2/26 officers and staff arrived at Khe Sanh and were briefed in the regimental CP bunker, Col Lownds suddenly turned to Breeding and said, "We will hold, won't we, Captain Breeding," much to everyone else's wonderment.
Center: Robert Mills looks at the "last flag flown at Khe Sanh" donated at a previous reunion.
Bottom Left: Ted Szczesniak (left) and Ernie Frank (both of 1/13-Comm)
Bottom Right: Calvin Bright (B/1/26), one of the original incorporators of Khe Sanh Vets, Inc., who was on the patrol with Don Jacques on 25 Feb and the "revenge/retrieval" patrol of 30 March, very miraculously receiving no wounds on either, but was slightly wounded a few days later.



Top: Family of John P. Colvis (M/3/3, Hill Fights, '67)
Middle: Henry Gagne (D/1/26) and his wife, Donna
Bottom Left : Lavonne and "Doc" Jim Armbrust (C-Med)
Bottom Right: Michael E. O'Hara (B/1/26) and his wife, Maxim

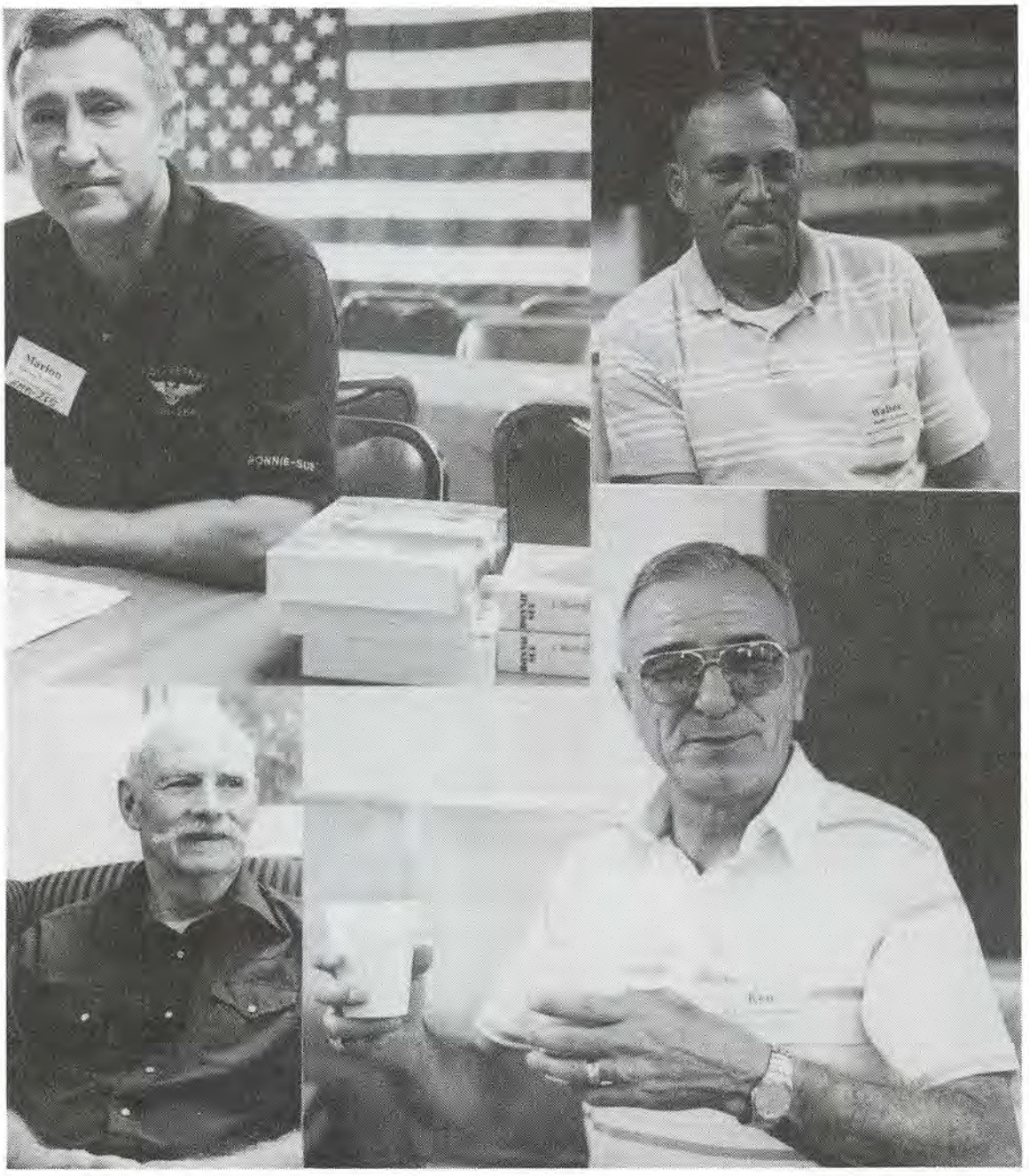

Top Left: Marion Sturkey (HMM-265, Hill Fights, '67), radio call sign, BONNIE SUE in Hospitality Room with his books, Bonnie Sue.
Top Right: Capt Walter Gunn, Advisor to the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion
Bottom Left: Col David E. Lownds
Bottom Right: Col (then Capt) Ken Pipes (CO-B/1/26)



Top Left: Robert McLane (F/2/12) and Wayne Magee (309th ACS, USAF) in hospitality room.
Top Right: Larry McCartney (E/2/26) and Col David E. Lownds, at Glen Rappold's back yard memorial
Bottom Left: Grenville Sutcliffe (FOB-3)
Bottom Right: Gunny Camille D'Hondt (A/1/9)

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[MAC] Radcliffe, give him my address and phone number and have him contact me. It would be wonderful to hear from him...Love, Anna Marie Turner Leahy, First Sergeant Robert Turner's daughter."

A message from General Ray Davis was read: "Greetings to all you heroes from the battle for Khe Sanh. I am convinced from my visits with many of you while there that you endured one of the most serious challenges of the Vietnam War. And I heard not one concern or doubt that you would prevail. Your staunch, heroic defense inspired warriors everywhere. I was proud to observe your gallant actions and to know that you were a key part of our 3d Marine Division effort. Congratulations! Have a good reunion! Semper Fi!"

The staff of the hotel and the local Chamber of Commerce were recognized for their part in making this reunion so successful—Jackie McCormack and Leon.

Col HJM "Mac" Radcliffe (CO, A/1/9) brought up the other Company Commanders present—Earle Breeding and Ken Pipes—and made some introductory remarks about Colonel Lownds: "I remember on the 8th of February—I was going to say something today at Jefferson Barracks, and I just couldn't do it—I took a helluva hit—as did my fellow Company Commanders here. I lost 50 some Marines that day, about 30% of my Company...When Colonel Lownds made his comments today about what it means to loose one Marine, how it hurts—you can't show that when you're in command because you think you have to stand tall and not waver, and not be brushed aside by the horror of combat. You need to lead by example. Let me tell you something nobody has ever heard. After Alfa got hit, two days later, after we reconstituted and tried to rebuild the Company, coming into my perimeter is some unknown individual with a radio operator. I told my troops: Nobody gets into the Company perimeter I don't know about it. They called down and they said, We got somebody coming into your area. I said, Stop him! We had a lot of press people and others coming in. I said, Who is it? They said, I don't know who he is, Sir. They said, He has a moustache and a cigar and has his radio operator with him. Well, I knew right away that was Colonel Lownds. He looked at me and he said, How you doing, Captain? I said, Fine, Colonel. He said, No. He pulled me aside away from the radio operator, and he said, Mac, how you doing? And I said, I'm hanging in there. And he said, I know you will. And he gave me a cigar.

Just that touch, folks, just that touch. I knew what I'd known before, but reinforced the fact that we had a caring, concerned, intelligent, super Regimental Commander, who knew what the hell it was to 'take it,' 'take it,' 'take it,' and bounce back to be a Marine. Colonel, God bless you!"

"Your courage, your determination, your fortitude, your obedience—everything about you, is outstanding. I think I could stand up here for a week and I could never tell you what you have meant to me."

Colonel Lownds:

"You know how to bring a grown man to tears, that's for sure. I've known these three men for many years now. They're all outstanding figures as everyone else in the Regiment is, as far as I'm concerned.... Your courage, your determination, your fortitude, your obedience—everything about you, is outstanding. I think I could stand up here for a week and I could never tell you what you have meant to me.

"You're a band of brothers. Well, in my case, I guess you'd say, A band of sons. I don't know that people ever really realize that if you're in command of a group of Marines, not necessarily in combat, when you go home at night, they really all sit down at the table with you. I mean, you can't take them out of your mind. You're always thinking of them... You take those people home with you at night. They're yours and you love them."

Colonel Lownds then told of some incidents before and during the Siege, reflecting on the life and the humanity of the people that were there.

"My sister, Pat, when she was a youngster—my dad served in World War I in the Army. At Christmas time he'd always tell the story—or used to start telling the story, and say, Pat, did I ever tell you about the guy in the Army that I served with? And she'd say, Dad, don't do it. And he'd say, Well, let me tell you this; I'll tell you once more, Pat. He said: The mail call'd come and they'd call out the names—Lownds, here; Majorsky, here; Smith, here; Jones, here. And this poor old Corporal or PFC, with tears in his eyes, would say, No mail for me? He'd say, No. My sister—well, that was the end. She broke up.

"Well, just to show you how things come around—probably none of you know this, or maybe the gentleman's in the room today. I went out on Christmas Day and was walking the lines and I come beside this Marine who was sitting beside the road,

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crying. I asked him what was the matter? What is the matter, son? He said, Colonel, I just got here a few days ago, been in country now for about a month, and I haven't got any mail. And I said, Where have you been? He said, They keep transferring me.

"Well, right away, tears came to my eyes, because I knew what in the hell he was talking about because I had watched my sister cry many Christmasses. So I went back to the CP and said, I don't care what happens, I don't care if you move heaven and earth, this man gets mail today! Not tomorrow, today! They came back, Bad weather for helicopters. I said, I don't care whether the helicopters are flying or not flying, bring it up by carrier pigeon. [They said], Well, they can't find it. [I said], Find it! Find it! Or I'm going to see the General.

"And eventually the young man got his mail. The story has always stuck with me...

"I said I'd had about enough. I want something. How about you patch me through to the President."

"I don't know whether it's true or not, so I'm not going to state it unequivocably, but I'd have to guess that you people in this room came the closest to B-52 strikes as anybody. The JCS at the time of Vietnam had a restriction that said you can't come within a thousand meters of the troops [Note: a little over half a mile]. And that didn't quite satisfy me because I knew—or thought I knew—I guess I did, as it turns out—where their jump-off point would be. So I went to General Tompkins and said, I want a B-52 strike. He said, Well, they're already in the air. I said, I don't care. I had talked to the Air Force people to make sure that, Number One, they were accurate within 250 meters, and Number Two, that they could change it in the air. And he said, I'm sorry, Dave, I can't do it. He said, You're welcome to talk to General Westmoreland. He had a helluva Marine General down there [in Westmoreland's staff]. I don't know whether any of you ever served with him or knew him—John Chaisson. He was kind of the "3," the operations guy and a helluva officer, a Harvard graduate, intelligent as they come—rough as they come. I don't know it to be true, I understand that somebody gave him a bunch of sass at school when they were going to junior school, and he laid him out low, and kept his promotion down one year. And John said, I'll talk to General Westmoreland again. I said, I'd had about enough. I want something. How about you patch me through to the President. Oh! That shook them! So, to make a long story a little shorter, they finally said, OK, we'll change it; we'll put it where you want them. So I told them: 250 yards in front of the front lines by the early dawn. "Oh! Can't do it!" Said, How 'bout 500. I said, No, I want them 250. Said, We gotta go back to Washington. So they went back to Washington and Washington eventually gav e us permission, so we got our B-52 strike. Incidentally, I'm told that that B-52 strike wiped out two battalions or the better part of a regiment..."

Col Lownds then mentioned some stories about the Bru. [Note: *Col Lownds had been known to walk the area around Khe Sanh by himself or with a radioman or one or two others on a frequent basis before the Siege. He gained much awareness of possible assembly points, places for strongpoints, mortar sites, etc., so that when the Siege began, he had a very good feel for the land. During this time, his S-4 (later CO, 1/26), Fred McEwan, relates how the two of them swam across the Rao Quan River by themselves one day to determine crossing points. Bill Craig from the Army Special Forces at Lang Vei once remarked how critical they had been of what they regarded as wreckless walking that the Colonel did. During the Siege, Colonel Lownds was frequently walking the Combat Base. Tom Buono [S-4 Regimental Supply] was the Colonel's driver when the Siege began and relates: "The morning the Siege started, Colonel Lownds was out and I had a hard time keeping up with him. We had mortars walking up main street right in front of Regimental Headquarters at about nine in the morning, and we had two guys hit. And he went out after them, and I followed him. The mortars were still walking towards us. And he grabbed one guy, and the other guy was limping towards him, and the other guy made it around the side of regimental headquarters along the wall. And the last of the mortars hit. Luckily it stopped about five or six feet short of the edge of that wall, or else we would all have been fragmented that day. He was out moving around the base very, very quickly that morning and all the rest of that day. And the following two weeks that I was driving, he was out and about. As a matter of fact, we were dodging sniper fire on the west perimeter of the base to check on the Forward Observers that were out there, so at one point we just abandoned the jeep; we crawled from bunker to bunker. At that time he had a handlebar moustache." George Myrick (D/1/26, and at his first Khe Sanh reunion) related how Lownds was visiting the "D" Company bunkers one day and the men were getting raggedy. He told them to get clothes where they could. A day or so later, he again visited their area, walking around. One of the Marines was wearing one of his shirts; it had his name*

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on it! He had stolen it from a clothes line near the regimental CP. The Colonel saw it, but said nothing—at the time. Returning, he simply said, "You didn't take my sox, too, did you?" and walked away.

During his frequent walks through the area before the Siege, he came to know the Bru people, and like all who came in contact with them, felt deeply for them. There is official message traffic that relates how disturbed he was when the I Corps Commander, General Lam, permitted the 1200 Vietnamese in Khe Sanh Village to depart when the Siege began—on aircraft that had delivered many tons of ammo, but refused to permit the Bru to leave the area, saying "There's no place in Vietnam for them," voicing the racism between Vietnamese and Montagnards. So they were forced to stay. Neither could he permit them inside the perimeter—for several reasons: he couldn't provide shelter for them or food (we were frequently down to one C-ration a day ourselves, and without water for several days at a time) and it would have made for an insecure situation. Lang Vei had been attacked during the Battle of the Hills on 4 May when four Vietnamese, who posed as CIDG recruits but were actually NVA, and who knifed the sentries on duty, permitting a larger force to enter and kill the CO and XO. Captain Willoughby, CO of the Special Forces at the new Lang Vei camp, constructed in November-December, 1967, boasted how the new camp could take a regiment, and that there were no indigenous within the inner perimeter, only Americans. This explains why the Vietnamese and Bru from Khe Sanh Village were not allowed in the Combat Base perimeter, why the 37th ARVN Ranger Bn lines were a separate perimeter in front of our own lines, and why we had machineguns and perimeter facing in to the FOB-3 compound; in case the 15,000 NVA made a "human wave" attack and put the local Bru in front of them as a "human shield" the question always was: would the Bru fire on their own people?

It must have therefore been a most agonizing and heart-wrenching decision for Colonel Lownds to keep the Bru he had come to love so deeply and respect so profoundly, outside our wires.]

Col Lownds:

"I think that one thing that really impressed me: took the driver and the radio and went back in the hills to a village—a little boy standing there, naked, and he couldn't speak any English and I couldn't speak any Bru. But he held up something. Now this was way back in the woods. He held it up. And as you know there's plenty of clay there. He made himself a clay helicopter to proportion. And he had even gone on to the point of having the machineguns come out of the helicopter at the right spots. I got a picture at home. It's always impressed me that people say they were dumb. They're not dumb, they just never had the chance to have an education...

"There was an old man—and everybody knows my cigar; I got one right here...Way back, I had taken a box of cigars and gave them to the S-1 and said, Put these cigars so when I run out, I got a box to fall back on. We got a bunch of incoming. I was out of cigars. I needed a cigar to relax my nerves a little bit, so I said, Send me the '1'. The '1' didn't come in because, unfortunately he had been killed by that blast. But the Top Secret Clerk said, Your cigars were in the Top Secret safe, Colonel, and I hate to tell you this, but that blast took the Top Secret material out and took your cigars out. So I didn't have any cigars. Well, the people in the hills—on 881, if I'm not mistaken, sent me down a box.

"It had been my habit, when I went down to Khe Sanh Village—there was an old Bru man—he must have been 70, 80, and he would be sitting on the front porch, and we'd stop the jeep, go in and light up a couple of cigars. We'd sit down. I'd give him one, I'd have one, and we'd smoke together. I got an awful lot of information from him. He couldn't speak any English and I couldn't speak any Bru, but he had ways of transmitting stuff to me and he was really a big help. He was a grand old guy, and I always wonder what happened to him—I coud never find out. ..

As Colonel Lownds returned to his table, with the assembly standing and applauding, someone began "He's a Jolly Good Fellow," and the thunderous singing continued. "T-Bone" Jones won the 50/50 raffle and donated the $186.00 he won back to our organization.

Business

The following are the officers and members of the Board of Directors for Khe Sanh Vets, Inc., for the next two years:

President	Dick Peloquin
Vice President	David "Bulldog" Smith
Treasurer	Vincent Griffith
Secretary	David Doehrman
Sgt at Arms	Tom Eichler
Chaplain	Jim Epps
Other members	Michael Worth
	Larry McCartney
	Russell Turner

NEXT REUNION: Washington, DC, July, 1998, will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Siege battle.

A letter from Best Western Hotel to John Kaheny and Carl Oksnee states: "..The staff here at the hotel and restaurant are still buzzing about what a great group of people you are."

IN MEMORIAM

HANK NORMAN [KIA 30 Mar 68] remembered by Michael F. Barber * CPL JAMES THOMPSON and CPL GEORGE PACE remembered by Francis Delaney * BILLY RAY LIVINGSTON [KIA 26 Feb 68] remembered by Freeman Taylor * RANDY STUCK [KIA 26 Feb 68], T.J. SWEENEY [KIA 26 Feb 68], and TOMMY SHANNON remembered by Timothy Dwyer * JOE MCELROY [S4, 2/26] remembered by Alec Jeff Bodenweiser * DONNIE GEERDES [KIA 13 Jun 68] remembered by Robert J. Green * LCPL FRANK L RIPORTELLA, Jr. [KIA 26 Apr 67] remembered by Walter Scott Johnson, Jr. * PAUL FREDRICKSON [KIA 9 May 68] remembered by Charles M. Rost * GORDON RAY RUSSELL remembered by Diane Russell.

If any wish to remember someone in this manner, please send a donation and the information to our Treasurer, Mr. Vincent Griffith.

THE NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM

By William Jayne

In the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln, on July 17, 1862, signed legislation which authorized the creation of national cemeteries "..for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country." During the course of that year, fourteen national cemeteries were established including battlefield cemeteries such as Antietam in Sharpsburg, Md., and several near troop concentration points in the north like Cypress Hills National Cemetery in Brooklyn, NY.

Today, more than two million Americans are buried in 130 national cemeteries in 39 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. They are the military veterans of every war and conflict in American history, from the Revolutionary War to the very latest times. Some veterans who served before the Civil War are buried in the National Cemetery System because some Army cemeteries that had been in use before the Civil War were later made part of the National Cemetery System. Two veterans of the Revolutionary War, for example, are buried at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, MO.

The spouses and children of veterans are also buried in the national cemeteries. The infant son of Colonel Zebulon Pike, the explorer of the Rocky Mountains, is buried at Jefferson Barracks...

I've worked for the VA since 1984 and for NCS since 1990. For six years I had the challenging task of public affairs officer of NCS. The primary mission was to communicate a sense of the historical and cultural significance of the system and to inform veterans and their families of their entitlement to burial benefits through NCS.

Who May be Buried in National Cemeteries

Members of the Armed Forces who die on active duty and most veterans of active duty service in the Armed Forces are eligible for burial in a national cemetery. In addition, the spouse or dependent child of an eligible veteran or armed forces member may also be buried in a national cemetery. There are some additional restrictions on eligibility for burial in Arlington National Cemetery [which is administered by the Army].

VA also provides headstones and markers for the unmarked graves of veterans throughout the world, regardless of whether they are buried in a private cemetery or a government-operated facility. Family members and friends of honorably discharged veterans may request a memorial certificate, bearing the President's signature, expressing the nation's recognition of the deceased veteran's service.

There is no charge for opening and closing of the grave, the headstone or marker (including the setting of the monument), or for perpetual care. Private cemeteries normally charge for all these services. On the other hand, a veteran's family cannot reserve a particular space before the need arises. A space is assigned at the time of death.

During the Persian Gulf War, I had the difficult task of dealing with macabre stories in the media

aroused by fears of heavy casualties in the ground war. Thankfully, such fears proved unfounded. In the months before our forces attacked, however, such fears were real and they generated some unbelievable stories. Many reporters, for example, questioned me with the premise that the Department of Defense was buying up the supply of caskets and that VA was setting aside space for a huge influx of KIAs. Controlling my disdain, I tried to answer in such a way that reassured all the families who would read the newspapers that we would be able to discharge our duty to provide an honorable burial if necessary while at the same time absolutely quashing such irresponsible rumors.

Some of the national cemeteries have a structure called a "columbarium," an above-ground vault with niches for the placement of urns containing cremated remains. Arlington National Cemetery, although not a VA national cemetery, has such a structure. Any veteran with an honorable discharge is eligible for "inurnment" in the columbarium at Arlington. For in-ground burial at Arlington, however, the veteran must be retired from the military or have a valor award, Purple Heart or be 30 percent or more disabled. Most Khe Sanh veterans are probably eligible for an in-ground grave site at Arlington. If you chose to have your remains cremated, you can still be buried in an in-ground space if that is your choice. The columbarium, where one exists, is simply another option that can be chosen by the family.

The Future of the Cemetery System

While I was public affairs officer for NCS, the most consistently newsworthy topic I dealt with was the question of whether the cemeteries were "running out of room." The answer is "yes and no." Seventy-three of the 130 national cemeteries date back to the Civil War. More than half of them no longer have available grave space. VA maintains six national cemeteries in the vicinity of Richmond, VA, for example, all of which have exhausted available space. In most cases, these Civil War era cemeteries were able to provide service, at least for those who died on active duty, up through the Vietnam War. While honorably discharged (US) veterans have been eligible for burial in a national cemetery since 1873, burial in a national cemetery was not viewed so much as an entitlement, a veteran's benefit, as an honor offered by the nation especially to those who died on active duty.

With the mass armies of the 20th Century (some 26 million veterans plus their spouses and dependent children are now eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery), however, the benefit aspect of burial in a national cemetery has become more significant. In response to this trend, Congress transferred most of the cemeteries from the Army to VA in 1973 and instructed VA to expand to meet the needs of veterans and their families. VA has added 12 new cemeteries to the system, effectively doubling the acreage available for burials. So, while space may not be available where you want it, it's available on a nationwide basis.

The "inventory" of available grave spaces is augmented every year by expansion and phased dedvelopment of existing cemeteries even as new burials use up available spaces. Inevitably, older cemeteries such as Wood National Cemetery in Milwaukee finally exhaust all possibility of expansion and must close their doors to new burials. To deal with the challenge, VA has a three-pronged strategy: build new cemeteries where appropriate and when feasible; expand existing cemeteries when possible; and, third, encourage states to develop state-operated veterans cemeteries with the help of a VA grant that pays half the cost of development.

VA is now building a new national cemetery, called Tahoma National Cemetery, in Kent, Wash., near Seattle. Design is under way for four additional national cemeteries in Saratoga, NY, Joliet, IL, Dallas, TX, and near Cleveland, OH. Major expansion projects are nearing completion at Houston National Cemetery in Texas and Willamette National Cemetery in Portland, OR.

In January of this year I received a promotion to the post of Director of the NCS's State Cemetery Grants Service. This program provides half the cost to develop a new state veterans cemetery or expand or improve an existing cemetery.

"I was a typical sort of grunt with Bravo Company from October of 1967 through February 25, 1968."

We are currently helping to build several new cemeteries across the country including one near Milwaukee, one near Richmond, VA, and one in Fayetteville, NC. Several states including Indiana, Missouri, California, Massachusetts and Montana are moving toward development of new state-operated cemeteries.

Service and Memorialization

I was a typical sort of grunt with Bravo Company from October of 1967 through February 25, 1968. The story of Bravo Company and the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines in general on that day is well known to the readers of this magazine. Miraculously, I emerged from the battlefield of the Grey Sector with nothing more in the way of a physical souvenir than a small piece of shrapnel in my heel. I had no way of knowing that the memory of that day would become an integral part of

my life from that point forward.

As I write this at home, a framed 1:50,000 map of Huong Hoa, Vietnam, holds a central place in my comfortable library. I know right where the Grey Sector is. The bookshelves contain a copy of Captain Shore's *The Battle for Khe Sanh* signed by Col. Lownds. One of my most prized possessions is Valley of Decision with Ray's inscription, "Bill—my good friend, God bless you always." How much healing is in the simple words of this wonderful man! My desk at work has a picture of me, my wife and Joe Sherman, my best buddy at Khe Sanh, at the dedication of The Wall in 1982.

After graduating from college (the University of California at Berkeley!) in 1973, my wife and I moved east and I found work in the suburbs of Washington, DC, writing about heavy construction projects such as new highways and the Metro subway system. It was a great introduction to working journalism but after a while, one runs out of ways to say, "dirt." After the fall of Saigon, I began reading and studying about the Vietnam War. I was astounded that, as screwed up as things were, it could ever have come to the point of people hanging on the skids of a Huey taking off from the roof of our embassy in Saigon. How did it happen? I read to try to figure it out.

When Jan Scruggs, the man most responsible for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, called me at work in 1979 looking for volunteers to help him memorialize Vietnam veterans, I was ready to try. That fortuitous phone call ultimately led to a career in VA and with the National Cemetery System.

I think it's important work. The urge to memoralize, to remember the dead in some material and public way, goes back at least to the dawn of Western Civilization. As the built environment of every Civil War battlefield attests, no one feels the need to memorialize as deeply as the surviving comrade. We, America's Vietnam veterans, are lucky to have The Wall. Yet, all the hometown memorials, and all the cemeteries, like Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, are perhaps more important. They are more accessible to people, both located closer and less encumbered by the baggage of national debate and national expectations. We should put memorials like our Arlington memorial in every national cemetery where Khe Sanh dead are buried. So those who come after us will not only remember the dead but also remember the bonds that strengthened and sustained us, the veterans.

The Bravo Company Group Burial

At 1100 on 10 September 1968, the commander of a joint services burial escort detail called his troops to attention at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, to begin a solemn committal service marking the burial of 21 men in four caskets in two separate graves. One group consisted of the remains of one US Army soldier, one airman, one sailor, six Marines and three Vietnamese civilians who lost their lives in a helicopter crash near DaNang on 19 February 1968; 12 dead in all. The marble stone ordered to commemorate the second group listed nine names, all members of Bravo Company, 1/26, who were lost on 25 February 1968 at Khe Sanh. The names were: PFC Michael B. Baptiste, LCPL Frederick A. Billingham, Jr., PFC Michael J. Brellenthin; PFC James R. Bruder, PFC David C. Scarbrough, LCPL Jerry Lee Dodson, LCPL Bruce E. Jones, PFC John A. Lassiter, and PFC Ronald L. Ridgeway. Their mothers and fathers came from as far as Massachusetts, Florida and Houston, Texas, to witness the unusual burial of the remains of nine Marines in two separate caskets laid to rest in a common grave with one monument to mark the grave.

The band played "Nearer My God to Thee" and the hymns of all the military services. Three chaplains conducted religious services. As the flags were folded, the band played "America the Beautiful." Pictures of the event give the impression of a hot, steamy day with the threat of rain. The families and friends of the dead, about 100 in all, were seated under several large tents. The ceremony's planners distinguished the two groups as "the crash" and "the patrol." The families and friends of the patrol faced the ceremonial flagpole of the old, historic military cemetery. The families and friends of the crash faced a large floral display. All around, the backdrop was a sea of orderly, identical headstones. The headstone of the patrol group was different, an oversized, scalloped marble stone placed on a granite slab. It listed the nine names along with the explanation, "Ambushed Patrol Died in Vietnam Feb 25 1968."

Group burials are not unusual in military cemeteries. Cold Harbor National Cemetery near Richmond, VA, contains one group burial of nearly 1,000 Union soldiers killed at the Battle of Cold Harbor in June, 1864. As medical and military technology evolved along with cultural sensitivities, however, individual identification of the dead became both a higher priority and more practical. Today, DNA testing could theoretically identify the remains of virtually any one killed in action. Yet, 29 years ago, and even in the Persian Gulf War, it has not yet proven practical or possible to identify all those killed in the myriad, destructive ways of war.

Because of its central location, the Army has often chosen Jefferson Barracks to be the final resting place for group burials of service members who died in a common event but whose remains could not be differentiated. More than 100 American POWs were

massacred by the Japanese on the island of Palawan in December, 1944. Most were burned to death in a covered trench they had built to protect themselves from American air raids. Their remains are buried at Jefferson Barracks. The remains of many aircrews from World War II are also interred in common graves at the cemetery. It is a fitting location. Two veterans of the Revolutionary War are buried at the historic burial ground high above the Mississippi along with the dead of every war in American history. Six recipients of the Medal of Honor are buried there.

Ron Ridgeway

But, something went wrong with the burial of the Bravo Company dead. Today, the stone at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery contains the names of eight Marines, not nine. After more than five years of captivity, Sergeant Ron Ridgeway came home from Hanoi on March 16, 1973, to a family that thought he had died on February 25, 1968. A new stone was ordered and placed on the grave without Ridgeway's name.

Ron Ridgeway is a remarkable individual. Today he works for the US Department of Veterans Affairs in Houston, Texas, his hometown. He is a veterans benefit counselor for the VA, and specializes in helping his fellow former POWs. Ridgeway was just 18 when he joined Bravo Company on Hill 881S in November, 1967. Like the rest of us, he saw relatively little action until 21 January 1968 when the NVA hit the ammo dump at Khe Sanh and began the "siege." Ridgeway spent a little bit of soft time in DaNang in early February when he was evacuated to have his broken nose fixed, a result of diving into a trench. (What a great idea!) (Pardon another parenthetical remark, but I've always thought it was a strange siege that allowed us to rotate people home at the end of their tour, send them out on R&R, escort them to the brig, etc.) Anyway, Ron Ridgeway hurried back and he was right there in the middle of the events of 25 February 1968. His story of that day and his subseqent honorable service while a captive in Hanoi is well worth telling and he should tell it. A rifleman in Lieutenant Jacques' Third Platoon, he found himself one of four wounded Marines left alive but cut off from help. As Chaplain Ray Stubbe wrote in *Valley of Decision* (pp. 401-402): "[Then-PFC] Ronald L. Ridgeway, Lance Corporal Charles G. Geller, a radio man, and Private First Class James R. Bruder all made a dash to the trench at the edge of the wood. When they looked back, nobody was following. They shot several incautious North Vietnamese, but Bruder took a chest wound and Geller one in the face. Ridgeway was hit in the leg and shoulder and broke an arm, as did Private First Class Willie J. Ruff, whom Ridgeway reached in the field just before collapsing. A jet struck the trench the Marines had left, spattering them with some napalm they managed to brush off. Drifting in and out of consciousness, Ridgeway was finally taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese." The battlefield was subjected to intensive U.S. shelling and air bombardment on the afternoon and night of 25 Feburary. We have been told, and we must accept that in the murderous logic of war, it was the tactically correct decision once it was decided that we could not mount a combat operation to recover the missing. The campaign went on with all its "Niagara" of bombs of shells. The remains of some 19 Marines were recovered more than a month later.

In the aftermath, those remains were identified and shipped home for burial in various national and private cemeteries around the country. It was different with the group burial. In essence, the Army mortuary command and the Marine reporting process had evidence indicating that they had the remains of nine individuals. Nonetheless, the anatomical evidence gave them a count of eight as the "minimum number of individuals." A member of the Army mortuary command explained that "they always tried to identify the greatest number" of individuals. It stands to reason. Their mission was to identify remains so they tried hard to identify all they could. Yet, even though the anatomical evidence indicated eight sets of remains, they had no evidence that would allow them to rule out any of the nine identified by other evidence. They were faced with a dilemma: Name all nine or leave all unknown. The decision was made to name all nine. Military and civilian professionals knowledgeable of the case still talk about it. My source says it was the only case in the Vietnam War in which the military made such a mistake of identification. Another distinction for Khe Sanh.

A LETTER

(From Mike O'Hara to Ken Pipes)

Dear Ken and Sharon:

What a joy it was to have you both in our home last week. It was a time that will not be forgotten I assure you. Maxine and I enjoyed your company so much.

Hopefully we will be able to get together here again in the future. Maybe then we both can simply spend our time along the banks of the White River "wetting our lines" like "Ole Huck Finn." Lazy and carefree finally at peace with the events of nearly 30 years ago.

Although our trip to the cemetery at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis was emotional and heartwrenching, it provided us with the knowledge that "the circle remains unbroken."

When Jake [Quilles Jacobs, died 19 Apr '95] and I put out the call five years ago to all the men from Bravo Co to "Saddle Up," all responded in the affirmative.

By 1993 we had crossed the "line of departure" and were engaging in "fire team rushes." Our patrol posture was formed in classic textb ook fashion. We were determined to be successful in our mission.

By the time we had gathered in Las Vegas in 1995 we had begun to take casualties with the loss of our Squad Leader, Jake. [*In a separate note, Mike writes:* I talked to Jake only hours before his passing. He made me promise to always take care of the Skipper]. Being dutifully reminded of his previous instruction when he was wounded in 1968: 'Just take the point O'Hara, we need to complete the mission,' we forged on seeking victory at the summit.

But it is time to let them go. To do so is to pay them great tribute, for in so doing we have released them, finally, into the Hands of God Almighty.

As we were sitting in the chapel there were many thoughts which I did not have the strength to publicly share that morning. I had come to realize that although the men in that common grave were from Bravo Co., they represented so much more. Their loss transcends Bravo Co., even Khe Sanh.

That Marker which overlooks the Mississippi River represents the loss of a dream, a dream of a whole generation.

That Marker represnets the whole notion of "Camelot," of what might have been or what could have been.

That Marker represents—"The Best and the Brightest" this nation had to offer.

Is it any wonder why we have spent our lives grieving their loss?

It is certainly my prayer that as you approach your sixtieth birthday you have finally come to terms with our shared experiences of 1968, and can begin to be at peace with it all.

I know all concerned would agree when I say:

'No Marine ever had a finer Skipper
No man ever had a finer friend
No commander ever gained the love and respect of his men as you have done.'

"Now you are one with us, you know our tears,
Those tears of pride and pain so fast to flow;
You too have sipped the first strange draught of woe;
You too have tasted of our hopes and fears...
Must we not love you more, who yearn to under stand"
—E.M. Walker, "To America, on Her First Sons Fallen in the Great War" [A World War I poet]

A LETTER FROM WILLIAM CRAPSER

I hope this letter finds you and all our brothers and their families in the best of health and happiness. The Hill battles and siege of Khe Sanh, well, honestly men, how can I possibly, as a point man recon grunt of late '68 and all of '69..know that terrible combat you men were enduring during that period. That was the supreme moment of all the heightened awareness and truth of the Vietnam War coming together in the great cataclysmic battle that is the titans struggle in any war. All of you are the veterans of Iwo Jima, of the Chosin Reservoir, of the Battle of the Somme in World War I; you are the veterans of Gettysburg, you are the veterans of the great titan struggles of any war, when it hits its absolute fever pitch, and, with both armies massed to their absolute largest and strongest, clash together in horror and slaughter in the massive battles that have shaped our history before (but not since, thank God) all the way back to Thermopyle.

I feel great humility in your presence even here on paper...and a deep prayer... pray with me now for all the brave men, living and dead, suffering still and some still dying of their wounds, all the veterans of the battle of Khe Sanh. May those harrowing and deadly eternal moments that they lived through during the Hill Battles and Siege, that those moment by moment eternal deep recesses of their hearts find peace, there in the fog-shrouded valley of Khe Sanh. That through their uniting suffering, they have united again, that through their pain, the pain may be lessened by the larger hug of great brotherhood, that they all know in their own eternal moments the feeling of accomplishment..."

William Crapser has written a published book, *Remains*, a very moving account of his tour in Vietnam. He was involved in operations in the Khe Sanh area—Nanking, Dawson River West, Purple Martin, Maine Crag, Herkimer Mountain, Utah Mesa, Cameron Falls, and writes: "I have 16 other combat operations listed [in my SRB]. I don't know where the hell they were though my recon team was overrun Feb 17, 1969, on FSB Cunningham in the Ashau Valley, during Operation Dewey Canyon. We were with Lima, 3/9. I'd like to meet some day with a "Lima" who was on Cunningham with us that night.

I was assigned first to 3rd Marines, then to Ground Seismic Intrusion detectors school at Dong Ha. Then sent to A Co, 3rd Recon. I had three main jobs while there. I walked point on 37 of my 41 patrols, so I was a pointman first, plus I was the NCO in charge of running the patrols that implanted these Top Secret sensor devices, plus I was the Platoon Sgt of 3d Platoon. I'd run sensor patrols with teams from 1st

and 2nd platoons. Always deadly patrols—80% contact rate, no boredom that I remember—then have to immediately turn around and run patrols with my 3 teams in 3rd platoon. Went crazy after 10 months, wasted by the 11th. I had my first flashback *in the bush* in Nam if you can imagine that...

Again, my deepest and sincerest hopes and blessings to all you brave men of the Hill Battles this year. If that damn Viking Boat, with all them banshees don't pick me up for Valhalla, I'll see you all next year, and, I hope, all of us, together, will see each other for many years to come. Thanks for listening.

THAT RED DUST
(Memorial Poem for the Khe Sanh Vets)
—By William Crapser, A/3dRecon 68-69

That red dust duller colored
Than red blood just shed
That red dust lightens
Where the last man
Ran past
And dove headfirst
Into the bunkered siege
At Khe Sanh.
That red dust brighter colored
Than Vietnam's red-sun mornings
That blood dust rises
Where the last man
Ran past
And dove headfirst
Into the bunkered siege
At Khe Sanh.
That red dust now all shines
Blood red, traces of
That dead dust dulls
Where the last man
Ran past
And dove headfirst
Into the bunkered siege
At Khe Sanh.
That red dust duller colored
Than red blood just shed
That red dust!

—06/27/97

THE LOCAL PEOPLE

[Section on Vietnamese, Brou, Laotians. Note: The local Montagnard tribe in the Khe Sanh area call themselves "Brou" (pronounced by taking the "bro" from "broken" and adding the "oo" from "ooze", two syllables. American military in the area shortened it to "Bru", one syllable. Also, the name "Khe Sanh" is pronounced, in Vietnamese, "K" and "Schan", the "Sch" like the "sh" in "shop" with a "n". It literally means: "Green river."]

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

BY BOB "DOC" TOPMILLER
[CORPSMAN AT REGIMENTAL AID STATION, 26MAR]

During the Fall of 1994, I entered a Ph.D. program at the University of Kentucky under the guidance of the renowned Vietnam war historian, Dr. George Herring. As part of the requirement for my doctorate, I had to study Vietnamese in a summer language program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Upon starting the language course, I soon discovered that one of my instructors, Dr. Dinh Van Duc normally taught at the University of Hanoi and had earned his doctorate in linguistics at the University of Moscow. Naturally, as a veteran, I was concerned how I would react to a professor from the other side.

Despite his impressive academic credentials, I found Thay Duc to be a warm, caring individual and an outstanding teacher. It was not very long before we had a discussion about the war in Vietnam and, to my utter amazement, Thay Duc told me that his younger brother had served as a medic with the NVA at Khe Sanh during the siege. Since I served as a Navy Corpsman at Khe Sanh during the siege, I was astonished over the coincidence. Further surprising me, Thay Duc told me that his brother, just like me, has had problems with his hearing ever since leaving Khe Sanh. Thay Duc urged me to come to Hanoi and meet his brother when I went to Vietnam to conduct research on my dissertation. Thus, I found myself earlier this month sitting in the lobby of the Viet-My Hotel in Hanoi wondering how I would react to meeting my former adversary. At the appointed hour, a small, very well dressed Vietnamese man walked into my hotel and introduced himself as Dr. Dinh Van Toan. He told me that he went to Khe Sanh at the end of 1967 and stayed there for a year. After one more year in the south, he

returned to North Vietnam for demobilization, later earning a Ph.D. in Geology at the University of Moscow. Now he works as head of the Geophysical Department at the Institute of Geological Sciences in Hanoi.

A very kind soft spoken man, he seemed genuinely delighted to meet me. 16 years old when he joined the army and 18 when he got out, Toan said Khe Sanh was very terrible for the men in his unit, especially when the B-52s struck. Nor has he been able to completely recover from the war. He had me feel pieces of metal still in his back while he and Thay Duc said he could not hear anything for a year after his return to the north and only gradually regained partial use of his hearing. Often hungry at Khe Sanh, Toan and his comrades frequently captured American C-rats that had missed the drop point. He told me the rations tasted good, a potent indicator of the quality of meals the NVA had during most of the siege. When I told him about American casualty figures at Khe Sanh, he said that the NVA sustained far worse losses than ours, a statement that did not surprise me, although I did not press him for numbers because I thought it would be in bad taste.

I gave him about six pictures of Khe Sanh from my recent visits to the area which he really seemed to appreciate. He also loved my Khe Sanh T-shirt and I promised to send him one when I returned to the US. I told him about our Khe Sanh vets group and he said that NVA vets have an overall organization but not for Khe Sanh alone. We concluded that a joint reunion would be a good idea and I think it is something we, as an organization, should really consider. I envision a reunion where vets from both sides could come together and reminisce on our shared experience leaving behind much of the hostility that has separated us. Since my return, I have learned that at least one veteran's association is planning to have a reunion in Vietnam in the future.

During dinner, Toan asked me how I felt about the people of Vietnam. We both agreed that it is good that the war is over and the Vietnamese and American people are no longer enemies. Toan pointed out that most of us are alive mainly due to good fortune and the bitterness between American and Vietnam veterans should go away since we were subjected to the whims of politicians who used us as pawns in a larger game. When I told Toan and Thay Duc about my work on Vietnamese Buddhism, they became very excited and interested, agreeing that it is important to show how the conflict could have been prevented so future generations could escape the scourage of war.

Finally, we talked about our families and our dreams for their future. This mundane conversation represented the most important part of our meeting because we talked about the things that are common to all human beings leading us to understand that the things that unite us are far more important than those that separate us. As we left the restaurant, Toan turned and hugged me in a gesture of kindness, shared pain and understanding. At that moment, I realized that if every vet could do what I have done and connect the Vietnamese with their humanity and put a human face on our former enemies, much of the hostility between us would fade. What a terrible tragedy this has been: 20 years of bitterness and enmity between people who should have been friends.

For many years, I have felt a need to atone to the Vietnamese people for the horrors my country visited upon them. My dinner with Toan was another step in that process. Yet, my two recent trips to Vietnam have convinced me that most Vietnamese have forgiven us far more than we have forgiven ourselves. I entitled this piece "Friends and Enemies," to describe my changed feelings towards the people of Vietnam, but, in truth, I am not sure which is which anymore. My onetime enemies in Vietnam greet me with open arms while former ARVN hail me on the street everywhere I go in the south and tell me how much they still like Americans. At the same time, I abhor the actions of my government that stands by silently as Chinese and Vietnamese Communists trample on the human and religious rights of their people so that Boeing can sell more aircraft while men like Robert McNamara tell Vietnam vets to "sit down and shut up" when they question how any man could be so monstrous to continue a war for so long that he knew was so clearly wrong. I feel like the character in a movie who Robert Duval accuses of being the most pitiful of all creatures "you don't hate who you are fighting against and you don't love who you are fighting for." Like William Broyles, I have come to realize that I have far more in common with the people of Vietnam, on both sides, than with most of my fellow citizens.

Most Vietnamese seem to understand the nature of the war far better than us. What I find most galling in all this is the realization that it was not the Vietnamese who tried to ruin my life, it was my own government and people. On top of that, most Vietnamese do not even hate us. In fact, they like and admire Americans. What a stunning revelation to realize that all of the years of rage, hatred and resentment were wasted on a people who do not hate me in return. Yet, I think I knew all along who the real enemy was, but now I am sure. How could a country and its veterans ever get to this point? What a sorry state of affairs and a sad commentary for our time.

LETTER FROM COLONEL SOULANG ("Elephant")

[Note: Colonel Soulang Phetsomphou was Commanding Officer of BV-33, located in Laos at the Ban Houei Sane airstrip, on Route 9, approximately 12 miles west of Khe Sanh Combat Base (at XD 625379). 26th Marines had assigned as one of its missions, artillery support of this position. It has been supplied by Air America aircraft flying from KSCB. Pilots from Operation TIGER-HOUND, the O1s and O2s at KSCB as well as patrols from FOB-3 often visited this position. The position was overrun by tanks on 25 Jan 1968 and its defenders—who were like a local militia with wives, children, chickens, pigs, all streamed for refuge to Lang Vei Special Forces Camp. The tanks continued their progress eastward, and overran Lang Vei on 7 Feb 1968. Refugees of BV-33 were not permitted inside the KSCB perimeter; however, a message from the American Ambassador directed that they be flown to DaNang from where they would be flown to Savannakhet—but that the huge amount of "press" at Khe Sanh at the time was to be kept unaware of the presence of Laotians! (As though we could do almost any kind of miracle!). Col Jack Roberts, one of the pilots with TIGER-HOUND, had a very close relationship with Col Soulang, and on one occasion brought him serum to innoculate his people who were experiencing a disease. Col Jack enlisted the help of a medic from FOB-3, SFC SECORE (who later became the Army's first Physicians Assistant), dressing him as an Air Force Captain. The innoculations went as planned. Then Col Jack was ordered to DaNang and "stood tall" before half a dozen USAF Colonels who wanted to know who the Air Force Flight Surgeon was that conducted an unauthorized visit to BV-33, that they had looked through the entire western Pacific area and could account for all Flight Surgeons. He was severely reprimanded for giving unauthorized assistance to the Laotians. Col Soulang later returned to Laos and became the Chief of Staff of MR III and is presently living in the Las Vegas area and is a member of our Khe Sanh Vets organization]

Thank you for your interesting letter in which you are pleased to promote renewed fellowship of all who lived and served in the area of Khe Sanh. I will be glad to furnish you the additional information about Khe Sanh battlefield, especially from the time H. Sane and Lang Vei had been attacked.

Background: Tchepone is situated at 60 kilometers from the Laotian-S. Vietnamese border, along a French colonial road called Route No. 9, which was running East-West and extending from S. Vietnam through Laotian border. As you know as well than I, all branches of Hochiminh Trail passed through the Tchepone area, and BA [Base Area] 604 was the encompassing NVA group—South-east of this grouping, and closer to the border, was BA 611, another major storage area along the trail. It was the main areas of communist concentration in Laos. I had the opportunity to fly over this zone, along with LtCol [Jack] Roberts (USAF); the zone that we suspected the location of the NVA Headquarters just to the north of my position. Yes, I was aware of the presence of this location when it was signaled by Khesanh base Headquarters. *[Note: CIA memo of 13 Mar 68, "The Continuing Communist Military Threat in Northern South Vietnam" has a map in which the top, left-hand corner indicates the 'Khe Sanh Area Front HQ' as being 9 miles directly west of the DMZ. This was the headquarters of the NVA for directing the siege battle at Khe Sanh (a subdivision of the B5 Front designated 'B5-T8'). It is located in an area indicated on Sheet 6242-I (Series L7015) as a series of highly-fortified cave areas in small very steep hills which are located on a road that begins just east of the BV-33 area (and before the border), from whence it goes north to a point directly west of the DMZ, then proceeds east into the DMZ. In late 1967, the S-2 of 26th Marines used to refer to this area as the "Santa Fe Trail" portion of the Ho Chi Minh network. It paralleled the Lao/S Viet border. This was later the NVA headquarters that directed the counter-offensive against LAMSOM-719 in 1971. It was this location that Col Soulang had been asked about]*

The town of Tchepone on the route No. 9 was overrun in May, 1961, due to the heavy attack by NVA forces. Before 1961, BV33 was known as Battalion Infantry [BI] No. 12, based at Thakong, a former French camp. As development of political situation in Laos changed, the 12 BI became BV33 and Tchepone subdivision for awhile, when it withdrew to locate at B. H. Sane sometime in 1961. Here, the BV33 was assigned to the new missions:—Territorial defense, to retake the control of population, to provide information about the activities on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and to cooperate with US and SV forces in this area.

The position of BV33 was included in the perimeter of Khesanh base defense.

Composed of 4 companies from 60 to 70 men each, most of them were Bru or Khas and Phoutai people. The BV33 was articulated as follows: company one at 3 Kms west of my CP (post central), 2 company at 4 Kms SE of my CP, on the sky hill called Phou Kiou Lam (Hill of Heavy Wind), 3 Company at 2 Kms south of my CP, 4 company at 3 Kms south of my CP.

I was the last Commander of this battalion. Attacked at B. Houei-Sane and, later, at Lang Vei, the BV33 was evacuated first at Xom Cham Airfield *[Note: this is Khe Sanh Combat Base. The name "Xom Cham" literally means "village of Chams"; the Chams were fierce pirate peoples that inhabited most of the coast of what was northern South Vietnam until they were wiped out, with*

refugees scattered—perhaps to what became KSCB area!], then to Danang, and finally to Savannakhet, Laos. Later BV33 needed to be reformed due to the heavy loss in material and personnel from the time it was attacked at Tchepone, H. Sane, and Lang Vei.

[Col Soulang was asked about Lao Bao, where the Xepone River makes a bend, just north of Lang Vei, one of the very few mountain passes through the rugged mountain range that separates Laos and S. Vietnam, called the D'Ai Lao. (The other two passes, to the north, are Mu Gia (WE8153) and Ban Karai (XE262117)). In 1282, the Chams attacked the Mongols, moving westward through Lao Bao on what is now Route 9, and in 1666, the Vietnamese extended their influence into Savannakhet, Laos, by moving through the D'Ai Lao at Lao Bao. In 1827, after their capture of Vientiane, Laos, Siamese armies moved against the Vietnamese and moved through the D'Ai Lao forcing the Vietnamese to retreat to Cam Lo by 1830. Soon thereafter, the Vietnamese reasserted authority over the D'Ai Lao and many Christians were exiled to Lao Bao or pressed into military service. In 1834, Vietnamese continued their persecution of French priests, and at the prison at Lao Bao, Father Odorico died of hunger in prison on 25 May. No one had been allowed to bring him anything to eat or drink. The prison at Lao Bao was visited in the 1920s by the American author, Harry Hervey (who wrote about his visit there in his book, King Cobra*). Between 1930 and 1932, Giap, his brother Nho, and several other influential Viet Minh were imprisoned at Lao Bao. It has been said that many of those sent there never returned, and even prisoners able to deal with the rigors of prison discipline at Lao Bao often succumbed to sickness due to the presence of malarial mosquittos and other diseases. Bill Colby (later head of CIA) writes about his visit to Lao Bao when he arrived in Vietnam, perhaps to make liaison with South Vietnamese guerrilla forces who were then operating in eastern Laos from Khe Sanh. The French fought a desperate battle at this location, and when the Viet Minh came through, the French planters in the Khe Sanh area took refuge in the prison there. Felix Poilane was wounded in his leg at this time at this place. Just before the 1968 Siege, FOB-3 had contemplated building its camp here, but opted, instead, to build it as an appendage to Khe Sanh Combat Base. POW/MIA records indicate that this was a holding prison place for Americans in the late 1970s and 1980s. The question to Col Soulang was whether the location was regarded as Lao or Vietnamese territory, since the name "Lao Bao" seems to indicate Laotian]*

For Lao Bao Village, it was and is at the present time considered to be part of Lao territory. "Lao Bao" means "Lao people," "Ai Lao" means "Lao brother". Under French colonial administration, Lao Bao was held by 7 Commando Company. This position represented a very important strategic point, not only it opened the access to South Vietnam, but also it formed a natural boundary between Laos and South Vietnam. By holding this position, we could control the whole pocket of Lao Bao where the NVA activities were intense.

BRINGING LIFE ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Mr. Bob Donoghue (FOB-3), a policeman in Springfield, MA, has made six annual trips back to Khe Sanh starting in 1992, the most recent being 16-30 April 1997, to assist the local tribespeople of the area, the Bru. Operating and motivated completely out of his own good will along with donations of money and supplies from others, he has been able to accomplish amazing results for a people who live on the edge of life and death.

[For those who are not aware of it, the various people who live in the western part of South Vietnam, in the mountains, and called Montagnards, are completely different racially from the Vietnamese, who probably pushed southward from China, driving the original inhabitants, who are more like the Polynesians of Taihiti and Malayans, into the mountains. Vietnamese speak on a "tonal" language of seven tones which give a word a meaning depending on which tone it is uttered, whereas the Montagnards, like us, have a non-tonal language. Montagnards are stocky, muscular; Vietnamese are more fine boned. There is intense racial hatred by the Vietnamese towards the Montagnards, and the Vietnamese have recently all but exterminated the Rhade tribe. There are 31 tribes of Montagnards in South Vietnam, all with different languages. The tribal area of the Bru extends deep into Laos, into the DMZ and North Vietnam, and far south of Khe Sanh.]

The average Bru family has about seven members and lives in a house constructed of wood, bamboo, and thatch. Medical problems include worms and diarrhea, malaria, dysentery, malnutrition, TB, and infections. For every 10 babies born, 7 will die during their first year of life. (Babies are not usually named until age 2-1/2 or 3 because so many die). The nearest hospital is located in the town of Khe Sanh. However, most Bru avoid it due to distrust of the Vietnamese as

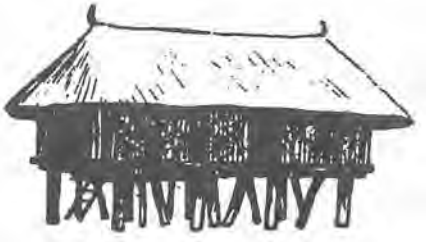

well as a lack of money to pay for treatment and prescribed medications.

Bob's work is in five Bru villes. Bob—and those sending donations to support his efforts—has managed to pay for and build four water wells in the villes. For the first time villagers do not have a water storage problem and can begin limited irrigation projects. Two pregnant cows were purchased in 1994. There are now 6, with one more pregnant. Since Bob brought vitamins for prenatal care to one ville, no infant has died (five had been born in the last year). This has eliminated the 70% infant mortality rate completely. It is hoped that the intestinal worm problem will be solved when the village is finally located to a more permanent location and latrines can be built. Bob started a school in 1994, now growing rapidly. School supplies have been donated by classes taught by Keith Gum [corpsman from C/1/26] at Homosassa, Florida. For his 1997 visit, he brought 500 pounds of supplies, mainly medicines.

Bob's work is life and death, not simply making life a little better. Some may question: Why should we do this? The answer may be that those who worked with the local Bru (CAC OSCAR, MACV Team 4, FOB-3, medcaps from the regiment and 1/26, etc.) came to love and respect them so deeply. They stood by us. Some hid our recon teams escaping from NVA during the opening days of the Siege. Many more fought heroically by our side and would not forsake us. The Bru had been resettled from distant hills as part of the Strategic Hamlet Program in the early 1960s. This was to deny their availability to carry supplies or as a source of food to the NVA, as well as to provide them security. We, the Americans, promised to take care of them. They were peaceful, hadn't even learned how to steal, had a child-like innocence, and early Special Forces researchers questioned whether or not they could be trained as soldiers due to their childlike and peaceful nature. When the Siege came, the Vietnamese General (General Lam, the I Corps Commander) permitted the 1200 Vietnamese in Khe Sanh village to depart, but forbade the Bru, saying there was no place in Vietnam for them. As a result, up to 12,800 Bru perished during the first three months of 1968 from NVA advancing into the area, or from our own artillery and airstrikes. Those who were fortunate to make it to the Cua Refugee Center, just south of Cam Lo, were dying at the rate of 50 a day in April and May of '68, from malnutrition, according to Dan Kelley, a Marine from CAC OSCAR at Khe Sanh who, with the Army medic, SFC Jim Perry, lived with the Bru for a year following the Siege.

Basically, while they didn't abandon us, we abandoned them—just like we did our own MIA, and just like most of American society did to returning Vietnam veterans. We know what it means to be treated thus! We said we'd protect and take care of them, then broke our word, our promise.

Guilt? Certainly. Anger? Some. Disillusionment and discouragement? Of course.

The significant thing is that people like Bob Donoghue don't simply criticize or stew in a boiling pot of anger, but do something. Bob—and those who accompany him and those who support and contribute to his work—present a sign of hope, a ray of light in a dark world, life in the midst of death, caring in a world of greed, power seeking, control seeking, and self-interest, love in terms of actions and not just feelings, and love in terms of what people really need, not what we think they should have.

Those interested in Bob's work may contact him at 100 Westbanks Court, Springfield MA 01118-1867, tel (413) 782-8265, e-mail BobDon911@aol.com.

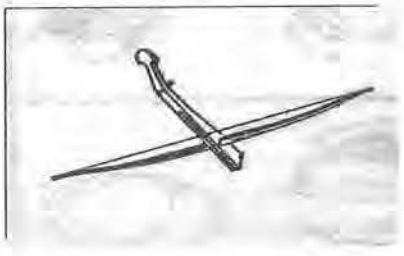

OTHER SERVICES

A LETTER FROM BRUCE B.G. CLARKE

[Note: Colonel Clarke was an Army Captain in Khe Sanh Ville during the Fall of '67 , Officer in Charge of MACV Advisory Team #4. After the fall of the Seat of Government for Huong Hoa District, located in Khe Sanh Ville, the opening days of the Siege of '68, he relocated to FOB-3.]

This letter is in response to several articles in selected publications. My hope is to correct several misstatements of fact and thereby start the process of correcting the popular record (as distinguished from the actual record) about the siege of the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

There are two mistaken perceptions about the battle of Khe Sanh—the struggle there was either an Air Force victory or another example of Marine valor. It was truly the later.. However, in this whole process the role played by the U.S. Army gets forgotten. The five American advisors who were with me in the village of Khe Sanh when the fight began with simultaneous

attacks on the hills and our district compound are forgotten. So are the Vietnamese Regional Force (RF) company and Popular Force (PF) platoons along with the [Headquarters and one platoon of the USMC unit, CAC OSCAR] that stood the brunt of the ground attack on the District Headquarters on 21-22 January. They subsequently occupied a critical part of the perimeter of the combat base with other Vietnamese and Montagnards and Army Special Forces soldiers in Forward Operating Base (FOB)-3. Also overlooked are the brave soldiers—Vietnamese, Laotian, and U.S. Army, who were at the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp. CPT (now Major) Dave Stockwell, in his book about Lang Vei, *Tanks in the Wire*, has captured the valiant exploits of these soldiers.

Suffice it to say the soldiers of the U.S. Army also played a critical role in both the actual siege at the combat base, the events surrounding the siege and, of course, Operation Pegasus when the First Cavalry Division (rein) attacked to relieve the siege. To be exact the lifting of the siege contained one of the more poignant examples of the interplay of military strategy and politics that was the Vietnam War.

On 1 April 1968, as the helicopters of the 'First Team' were beginning the relief, then Major Paul Schwartz began a briefing to Major General Tolson (CG of the First Cav) on the Division's next mission—an attack into the Ashau Valley west of Hue. Major Schwartz's concept was to pursue the North Vietnamese into Laos, turn south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and enter the Ashau from the rear. The idea was to use the existing stocks in the Khe Sanh area of operations, gain operational surprise, maintain the momentum, and to not allow the NVA to escape. General Tolson applauded the plan's audacity but cut the briefers short by saying: 'Didn't you hear the President last night? He announced a partial bombing halt of North Vietnam. In that light, what you are proposing is politically impossible!' The political approach of alternating violent action and concessionary political proposals had made a sound military approach and the destruction of major NVA units, that had already been badly hurt, impossible.

The doctrine of overwhelming force that was espoused by General Powell has its roots in situations similar to the one above. What Khe Sanh in particlar and the Viet Nam experience in general should teach us is not necessarily the criticality of overwhelming force. They should teach us the importance of military objectives being a clear translation of the conditions that a politician seeks for the U.S. military to achieve at the end of the conflict. There are three critical pieces of guidance that need to be developed during the policy making process before hostilities begin:

* A clear statement by the political authorities of the desired situation in the post-hostility and settlement phases of a dispute—what the area should 'look like' following hostilies.
* A clear set of political objectives that when achieved will allow the above vision to become reality; and,
*A set of military objectives that will, when achieved, allow/cause the above to happen.

Had the above guidance been developed it is likely that the Vietnam War would have been conducted differently and possibly the agony that was Khe Sanh might have been avoided. Obviously, we will never know, but we need to learn from our mistakes and ensure that we don't repeat them. We owe it to the next generation of brave soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. They should not have to endure similar tests of their courage and determination.

[Note: It is planned that the next issue of this magazine will have extensive treatment of several US Army activities at the beginning of the Siege: the multi-team patrol on top of Co Roc Mountain in mid-January just a few days before the Siege, the three patrols to Hill 471, the action in Khe Sanh ville, and the activities of Captain Walter Gunn and the 37th ARVN Rangers, of Captain Mark Swearengen who was Liaison Officer for the 175s, of the 37th Signal Battalion detachment, and a discussion of the continuing controversy over Lang Vei.]

AIR FORCE AT KHE SANH

A Letter from Wm L Smith USAF

I read with interest the letter from Michael A. Garoutte ["Resupply," Issue No. 37]. I was one of those Aerial Port personnel he spoke of. I was in the 14th Aerial Port Squadron out of Cam Ranh Bay, on TDY to DaNang, when Tet '68 started. I was sent the next day to Khe Sanh to help with the loading and off-loading of the C-123s and C-7s. I spent the next 77 days there, mostly sitting in the trench line at the west turn-around ramp or filling sand bags at the east turn-around ramp, as that was our command bunker.

There were three of us on the crew and every time a plane started to circle, we knew we were going to catch a ton of incoming. We would crouch down low in a mortar or rocket hole that was at the south side of the ramp and watch as the plane landed and approached us. The rear cargo door would already be down as the plane entered the ramp. Guys and gear came spilling out of the plane as it was still turning around and that was the worst time, because we had to see if there was cargo on board that the Load Master needed help with. If there was, then we went to the plane and off loaded the contents and then back to the

hole usually to find the new Marines had found it was the closest cover and were there before us, sometimes it was pretty crowded in there. If there was no cargo for us to help with, we kept low as the incoming was at an all time high as the plane began to take off.

The days were long for us as we waited for the planes to come, but those minutes of exhilaration, as the plane turned and we didn't know if we were needed or not, if we would make it back or not, those minutes are what I think about every time I hear the name "Khe Sanh." It became a game with us, but not the one that has a Game Over, Reset Button on it. We knew what could happen to us every time we left the security of that hole to go out to that plane, and honest to God, we never hesitated once. We were there when the C-`123 was hit on that ramp, first in the tail and then in the cockpit. Sometimes as we ran and dove into the hole we would sit and laugh hysterically for long minutes on end, for again having cheated the Devil out of our souls. What a RUSH!!! Too much for the fifty year old man that I am today.

I spent my 21st birthday at Khe Sanh. The guys got together, and believe me I have no idea where they got them, but they came up with new sox and shorts for me to change into and some hot water for a stand up GI Bath. A better present I couldn't have asked for.

I have been a member of the Khe Sanh Vets since I first heard about the organization and I marched with the Khe Sanh Vets in Chicago in 1986. I have not had the opportunity to attend a reunion, but maybe I can make St. Louis, definitely DC in 1998. Since I was not in the Marine Corps, but proudly wear the Marine Corps PUC for being attached to the 1/26, I am glad we did not become part of the 3d Marine Division [Association]; we are our own group, with our own experiences, Marine, Army, Navy, or Air Force.

Whenever I find a new issue of the Khe Sanh Vets Magazine in the mailbox a smile comes over my face as I know there are still people out there that share some of the same experiences I have and think of us now and then.

A LETTER FROM JOE A DERIAN, JR.

On February 22, 1968, I was waiting for a chopper to Hill 558 along with Pat Brophy of North Hampton, RI.

There were many other Marines there in the trenchline. As usual when a plane or chopper came in, the air strip got shelled. I called the air strip the V Ring. One round landed very close. There was a loud noise and dust and a shock wave that came down the trench. I said to Pat that seems like it landed in the trench., Then we hear corpman-up.

Pat and I and some other Marines ran over to see if we could help. We only had to go about forty feet. We helped pull a couple of the wounded out of the trench. There was a small bunker over the trench in there where the chaplain [Bob Brett] and his assistant [Alexander Chin—who, by the way, had already been wounded three times]. Pat and I helped remove the bodies from the trench and got them up on ponchos. I didn't get out of Khe Sanh that day. I have never forgotten that day.

A LETTER FROM TOMMY TOMPKINS

When I read about the mass grave for the 44 vets who lost their lives on 3-6-68 it sure brought back some old memories... I arrived at Khe Sanh in Dec. 67, stayed for a few weeks and was sent to Camp Hanson, Okinawa, with a Capt. Skinner to pick up some radios or something. The battle started and no one seemed in a hurry to get back.

Finally, in early March I was sent back to Vietnam. I was with the group sitting beside two C-123s in DaNang. The group was divided in two smaller groups. I remember a black Staff Sgt. walking through the middle of the large group counting heads and moving people around. When he divided us up he said the group to his left go get on the first C-123. He told my group we would be taken back to the R&R Center and would fly in the next day. A few hours later we were told the plane had been shot down!

The following morning my group boarded our C-123 and took off. We flew a short distance and started our approach, but I knew it was not Khe Sanh. We landed at Phu Bai. The pilots parked the plane and walked away. The crew told us the pilots were buddies with the guys that flew the other plane. We hung out for a couple of hours and finally two other pilots showed up and off we went.

We arrived that afternoon and I stayed at Khe Sanh until we all left in mid-April.

I've tried to find some other guys who were in my group, but no luck. I don't mind telling you I broke out in a cold sweat when I read about the mass grave. How easy it would have been to have been sitting to that Staff Sergeant's left insgtead of right. Or, why didn't he say the group to his right get on the plane!?! Who knows. But sometimes I sure feel guilty. I'm so sorry those guys died, but I'm so glad to still be alive.

FROM A LETTER FROM STEVE HECKNAUER

You mentioned that you suggest that others write their memories. I too wasn't sure that I wanted to do that and wasn't sure I could. Then one day it all started to flow. I would write pages and pages and then stop for a long period of time. Later it would hit me again and I'd dive back into it like I had to hurry before some type of deadline was reached. Many nights I didn't want to put the pen down at night. Once I completed my memoirs I felt a tremendous relief, like I had finally reached the summit of Hill 950. Please continue to recommend to others to write their memories. Khe Sanh will always live in all of us that walked her red surface, but we cannot live each second trapped by her memories.

[An excerpt from his memoire concerning time on Hill 950]:

The next month of so we did the usual crap—ran patrols that netted nothing—set in ambushes that only cost us lost sleep—standing fighting hole watch only to watch the rain—spent many days digging mud from our trenchlines which kept caving in due to all the rain. We were notified that our next duty station was to be hill 950. Hill 950 was a very steep hill that seemed to be cloaked in fog most of the time—we would make Hill 950 our home for a month. We were carried by choppers from Khe Sanh over the river (Rao Quan) and told to jump-off—they had this strange idea of not wanting to ground their bird—we flew in above the site of whipping elephant grass and jumped. What we didn't realize was that the damned grass grows six feet high or more. What a drop! With the load we were packing on our backs—the freakin' steel pot and all the other military necessities—when you hit the ground it was like a ton of bricks. Gear, helmets and other irtems scattered in all directions—but what the hell we have to save the damned choppers! What crap we kill ourselves to save their damned equipment. We humped our asses off!—Straight up—grabbing trees to pull ourselves upward. Leeches everywhere, one guy had a leech fall down inside his tee shirt and attached itself to the guy's chest. After we crawled, climbed, and pulled upward he bumped himself and squashed the leech—when he looked down he thought he had been hit in the chest by a sniper for blood was everywhere. We convinced him he wasn't hit and when he pulled up his shirt he discovered the leech. As we moved upward using the trees to pull-on you could hear them snap and guys would go sliding down the rain slick mountain a lot faster than they had been crawling up. Sure was happy that we weren't sneaking up on anyone! If we were we'd all be dead meat. The word was passed up the column that we had rock apes walking with us in our column. Lt. Wells sent word back down that if that SOB was in our column count em as part of our platoon. That gave us a little comic relief under such trying circumstances.

The sounds of falling, crashing and cursing filled the rainy, foggy air. After what seemed forever we finally made it to the summit, what a relief! Was assigned a bunker position, set up our watches, checked our fields of fire, set out claymores, attemprted to clean our equipment paying special attention to our weapons—everything in order and time to settle in for our month stay on top of the world. Our bunker was on the NE side of the hill and we had the exit gate to our Lighthouse [*Note: Listening Post*] area and the ridge to 1015 to the right of us. It seemed like we were all alone in this war so far removed from everyone else that it was our own country up here. I remember standing night watch many times and seeing into the darkness seeing nothing but darkness, often the fog would settle in and your visibility was measured in feet, not yards.

During the day we would sent out or go ourselves on patrols around this big tit. We'd exit on the south side—work our way down the mountain around to the east up a ravine and back thru the east gate. Sometimes we'd go out the east gate cross the ridge to 1015 work around the summit and back to 950. It was a rugged area and not easy to negotiate with trees, vines, rocks, undergrowth, all woven to prevent a casual walk in the woods.

I believe the origins of the Rock Ape Saga began with C/1/26 that December. As the facts are stated is as so. While on patrol to 1015 one of our guys happened upon a rockape—he decided that the ape would be an excellant platoon mascot so he reached out and took the ape by the hand. As they followed the ridge back to 950 a break in the fog allowed visibility of the bunker laden hilltop. Apparentkly the ape came to realize that he was in jeopardy so it swung the guy around—punched him dead in the mouth sending him sprawling over the steep side of the ridege—the ape then scampered back to 1015.

LETTER FROM JIM GRIFFIN

To be remembered and to remember, as you know so well, is particularly important for so many of us. My way of doing it is to write stories and poems and to give presentations to young people and teachers at the local high school and at the college where I teach. There is still such profound ignorance of the war in Vietnam and often an unwill-

ingness to discuss it with those who experienced it. Perhaps that is why, even after so many years, some feel so duty-bound to pass on to another generation the memories of those whose lives and dreams so often seem to inhabit us. Perhaps through the medium of memory we somehow restore life to those who lost it and dignity to those for whom life in 'the world' has all too often been a struggle for survival. You and I have been blessed, but to be deserving of that blessing we must shoulder the burden of memory that our brothers have entrusted to us. You have borne it with grace and love for so many years and continue to do so...

A LETTER FROM CRAIG SWANSON

[B/3d Recon]

I read with great interest the interview between you and Robert Painter in the Spring, 1997, issue, regarding the shelling at Khe Sanh on Jan. 24, 1968. I did not remember the date, but I certainly remember the day.

I remember that whole period very well—that period when the NVA encroached around Khe Sanh, we stopped making patrols, and lived in bunkers—that period that we all came to know as the siege. I was platoon commander of 3rd platoon, Bravo Company, 3rd Recon Battalion at that time, and although I don't remember if Robert Painter was in my platoon, I do remember his name.

Reading the interview, I was reminded of another time during the siege when a Marine of mine was killed because he saved others. He was Lance Corporal [Timothy Michael] Barmer [KIA 30 Jan 68]. I'm not sure how many are aware of this story and I'm not sure if Corporal Barmer was ever recognized for his bravery, but I was moved to write about him after reading Mr. Painter's interview.

Those of you who were there remember that we could hear very clearly when the incoming was on the way. There was a distinct 'thunk,' which we all learned to identify very quickly, whenever a shell left the tube. As I remember, we had about 5 seconds to find cover whenever we heard that dreadful sound.

On a day like any other day during the siege, Corporal Barmer and a handful of other Marines were standing around outside their bunker, when they heard that familiar sound. Barmer quickly started hustling all the Marines around him into the bunker. The entrance to the bunker was small, and only 1 man could go through it at a time. While Barmer may have been the closest to the bunker, he insured that every other Marine in his group got into the bunker before him—grabbing them, pushing them, pulling them. Every one got into the bunker in time, except Lance Corpral Barmer. The shell hit near him killing him, before he could get in.

I'm sure the other Marines who were part of that group remember the situation well. But I'm not sure who else knows about it. And after almost 30 years it hit me that others need to know about it. I pray that if Lance Corporal Barmer's family does not know about his bravery, that this story might somehow find its way to them.

God bless all you Marines and Corpsmen who served in Khe Sanh. And thank you.. for continuing to put out the publication.

LIFE'S TIME AND SHAPE
By Michael F. Patton

Young boy so good in heart, staying in line, living his part, thrown out of school, no one understood his dream, no one took the time to listen, locked him up and threw away the key.

Scar's on his heart, fame on his mind, tear's down his cheek's no one took the time to listen, poor boy with a free soul down in the gutter shoveling coal.

Light from above overtake him now. Open his heart. Take away his frown. Love is all around him guide the boy to shore. Take away his gun that was given as a toy.

Time moved on, all his friends moved away, he was left all alone to find God's Light, and he didn't go astray. Now his words are listened to, he'll fill your heart with Love, he flashes goodness like a light bulb, he'll tighten your soul like a rubber glove.

His music is his weapon, like a saber it cuts so deep, his words are Heaven sent, and they can knock you off your feet. If you look deep into his eyes you'll see him at total peace, now see if you can find yourself before we all die from the evil disease.

LETTER FROM H. TOM HAMILTON

As far as C Med is concerned I am more than willing to discuss anything about it. I got to Charlie Med in November 1967 after coming back from R&R in Hawaii with my first wife. The site consisted of three tents, a chief's bunker, and a doctor's bunker lined up in a row. The first tent was triage, the second was surgical, the third was enlisted quarters with a stove to take the bits off the air. It also had a parachute strung from the rafter (thanks to the SeaBees). Chief Duschane had the first bunker again with a jerry-rigged oil stove. The walkway in front of the tents consisted of wood pallets to keep us from sinking in during rainy season. In front of the tents (the doors or entrances were 90 degrees from the taxi strip facing the Regimental C.P.) was a bunker and slit trench. All the tents had a two foot high wall of sandbags around them. As we found out later the only thing they would protect was from your knees down!

One of our better series of humorous incidents was our raid on the logistic group beside us. We accomplished this by putting a 2 x 4 across the concertina wire and pilfering a few cans of C-rats. We always took just a few so the loss wouldn't be noticed.

In December, 1967, Dr. Mercer and others decided a liquor run to DaNang was necessary. Since I was on my second tour (extension) the logical choice was me to make the run. I was told to be inconspicuous as possible on my return. Off I went with ration cards and a signed note by Dr. M., who was OIC [Officer in Charge], to purchase and transport the booze. MCB 7 helped me to get a pallet of beer to 15th Aerial Port where John Beaton, a grade school friend of mine disguised the pallet with heavy plastic and boarded aboard an Air Force Caribou for Phu Bai. At 3rd Med I picked mail for Charlie Med. On arrival back at Khe Sanh, Danny Sullivan [the Marine ambulance driver assigned to C Med] brought the "cracker box" ambulance up to the pallet. Quickly he, I, and HM2 Ebert stashed the contraband into vehicle. I believe I arrived back on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Needless to say, I had presents for everyone. New Years Eve was a blast.

I'll end right here and write about my experiences during the siege later. By the way, on the front piece of Michael Ewing's *Illustrated History of Khe Sanh*, I am right in the middle of the picture with a work detail of Recon Marines!

LETTER FROM DR. BATES NOBLE, MD

I was a general medical officer assigned to the First Marine Air Wing and served in Danang from November, 1966, to December, 1967.

A special unit had been formed in the Wing designated as the "First Marine Air Wing Reaction Force." I was the Medical Officer for the unit.

We were mobilized for the first (and only) time to be sent to Khe Sanh when the base came under fire following a misdirected Air Force bombing strike that hit a Montagnard village named Lang Vei near Khe Sanh. [*Note: this was on 02 Mar 67*] Lang Vei had served as a base of operations for a Special Forces unit. The wounded and some of the dead Montagnards were brought to Khe Sanh.

We went into Khe Sanh at first light following the strike and helped to reinforce the Marine unit at Khe Sanh which at the time only amounted to a reinforced company [*B/1/9*] and a Marine recon unit [*Detachment of 3d Force Recon Co.*]. I'll never forget the controlled crash landing we did in a C-130 to get in there and looking over the edge of the cliff at the end of the runway at the remains of aircraft that *hadn't* stopped in time!

My short stay on that strange mountain top surrounded paradoxically by even *higher* positions was one of the most memorable experiences of my life.

A LETTER FROM DAVID BROMBAUGH

My wife and I went to the Khe Sanh Veteran reunion in Cincinnati two years ago. It was so good to meet... after years of writing and phone calls. We presented him with a Bible to show appreciation.

I looked around but failed to see anyone that I had known from Khe Sanh and the hills. It was also great to meet Earle Breeding after hearing a lot about him and reading some of his work.

We ran into a couple when we sat down for the meal. I told him I was with HOTEL 2/3. To my surprise, he said 'Where the hell was 2/3?' It really bothered me. To those that don't know.

We were trucked north as far as Rt. 9 was open, and told to fight our way to Khe Sanh via the hills which we did. [*Note: This was during Operation PEGASUS in Apr '68 when battalions 1/1, 2/1, 2/3, and 3/4 began to move into and occupy positions in the Khe Sanh area, displacing the 26th Marines and 1/9. Battalion 2/4 operated in the Khe Sanh area 31 May - 15 Oct '68 and Bn 3/9 04 Jun - 06 Jul*] We were stranded too. We went seven days without food and four days without water. A CH-46 crashed on our hill bringing in replacements while we were burning a field of fire and no other choppers would come in.

We were the ones who went up Hill 689 and

recovered the 1/9 bodies. We went up to recdover 49 and found 46. They were KIA April 16, 1968. We took the hill April 21 at a great loss of men. They only let us take our weapons and one E-tool per fourth man. They didn't give us much of a chance. 1/9 was caught in a U-shaped ambush and wiped out and they figured we were headed for the same fate. All our gear was left behind as they said they didn't want to give the gooks anymore gear than what they got from 1/9. We walked into Khe Sanh two days later. We were told we were the first to walk into the lines after the Siege.

We ended up at LZ HAWK in the sidees of Rt. 9 outside of Khe Sanh. I've asked Brother Ray about this other incident that bothers men. They had a rat patrol that ran from LZ HAWK to Ca Lu as it was called then at night to keep the gooks from mining the road. It was a tank with a squad of Marines riding on top. The tank was hit with sappers with satchel charges and blew off the road down a ravine. They sent my squad from H/2/3, second platoon, to go get them.

This is what bothers me. We got to the tank with another tank we came out with for the rescue. The tank was in the ravine and burning. I helped pick a Marine up and it was so dark and he kept saying how his leg hurt. I laid him up on our tank and doc had a red lens light he shined on him. His leg was a mess. I had blood all over me and it was all over the tank. It looked like he was thrown from the tank and it ran over his leg. I think of him and wonder to this day if he made it. I felt so sorry for him and doc was doing all that he could. If you are out there, Marine, I hope and pray that you are alright and would like to know. This was probably around April 25, '68. I never heard his name. The tank coming back to LZ HAWK kept jumping out of gear and we figured we'd have to push it. At daylight we went back and found the rest of the squad and tank crew alive. They had hid when we were picking up the wounded. They thought we were gooks messing with the dead. The tank driver was killed and never got out of it.

Semper Fi.

[*NOTE: At 9 PM, 25 April, Tank C-21, accompanied by a squad of infantry from G/2/3, was on a road patrol heading east on Route 9 in the vicinity of Lang Kat (XD904398). The night was extremely dark, and after moving not more than 300 meters, the patrol was ambushed with satchel charges, RPG rockets, and grenades. The first round, a RPG, hit the tank, which caught fire and veered off the road down into a ravine. A relief force sent by Co H/2/3 recovered all the infantry personnel, but the fire and exploding ammo prevented the extraction of the tank crew. At that point, the casualties were: 8 Marines wounded and 4 MIA (the tank crew). (This is according to the 2/3 Command Chronology). The following morning, at 7 AM, Co H recovered 3 of the tank crew, 2 with minor wounds, one unhurt. The driver of the tank was dead, and the tank was a total loss. One dead NVA was found with a RPG launcher and rocket at the side of the road, apparently killed by a 90mm cannister tank round. (This is also according to the 2/3 Command Chronology). Gradually the three survivors were able to relate what had happened. A RPG round had struck the turret and was deflected off the front and down on the driver, killing him. The tank commander, Cpl Garry Hall, began firing the .50 caliber and machinegun and was radioing for help at the same time. When the .30 caliber machinegun jammed, Cpl Hall had the loader, PFC Charles Wilson Tucker, Jr., load cannister round after cannister round. Then the enemy began throwing grenades and a satchel charge at the crew, and the tank began to roll, went out of control, left the road, and plunged down a steep embankment. When it finally came to a halt in a ravine about 100 meters from the road, it burst into flames. While PFC Tucker and LCPL John Rodriguez sprayed the area with the .45 Grease Gun, grenades, and .45 caliber pistols, Cpl Hall attempted to make radio contact for help, but all the radios were out. He then worked to shut off the engine since it had already started to spread fire along the suspension. When small arms rounds began to cook off, Cpl Hall moved the remaining tank crewmen to a foxhole as he attempted to recover the driver's body from the burning tank. When the 90mm rounds began to cook off throwing debris throughout the area, Cpl Hall estab lished a watch until first light when they were rescued by the friendly troops. (Source of information: Bronze Star Medal files on Cpl Garry Lee Hall, PFC Charles Wilson Tucker, Jr., and LCPL John Rodriguez).*]

A LETTER FROM GENE WERESOW

[*NOTE: Gene's father, a classical music composer, composed Symphony #7, "Khe Sanh," Opus 57 for full orchestra*].

As always, the KSV newsletter rekindles a lot of suppressed memories, and as I was reading, I started to think of the time I spent in Khe Sanh. I got there in the middle of May, 1967. I was with Bravo Co., 1st Platoon, 1/26.

One of the major memories for me was the day in June we got ambushed while on patrol off hill, I think it was 861 or it could have been 881. Anyway, we got hit and as I recall most of my squad was KIA and I think 2 were WIA. I walked out without a scratch that time. We were on patrol in a southwesterly direction. As we approached a knoll we were in a

V-formation and my squad was on the left flank. They hit us with mortars first, then small arms fire. Our position was overrun. Most of the platoon fell back to the right side and I was stuck on the left side of the knoll with a wounded Marine, and gooks running all over the place.

We got immediate support from some 105s which were on the hill and they started pouring in rounds right over my head. Then Huey gunships came in and sgtarted pounding a tree line near me. Man, I thought I was gone at that point! In short order the gunships were followed by two F-4 Phantoms. By this time the NVA were in full retreat. As I ran back to the top of the knoll, I saw a M-60 gunner trying to pump out rounds and feed the ammo at the same time. I ran over to help him and as we lay there a NVA comes running across, about 50 yards out, in clear view. The gunner put out maybe 50 rounds and never touched him. We just looked at each other in amazement. By this time the 2nd platoon was on its way to assist us. I remember going b ack up the hill feeling disgusted and defeated, and a General, I think it was Gen Walt, said to me, "Good show, Marine." Who knows where he came from? At that point I was so disgusted all I could say was something like, "Yeah, sure."

As we got back into the perimeter, I remember watching the 2 F-4s do a couple of low passes over the hill. They came in so low that I had to look down the hill at them. This Captain was standing next to me taking videos of the planes. They passed so low that all ponchos and other shelters were blown all over the place. It would be interesting to see those videos. Anybody out there know where these guys with the video equipment came from? It's interesting that a General and a video crew suddenly shows up out of who knows where! What is your take on that?

I guess we did put on a show that day. But it was not without cost. The next morning I was sent down to KSCB to identify the bodies of most of first squad. I remember praying for them, but did not expect what I saw. Some had half a head missing. Others had limbs blown off. God what a bad scene! I think we lost about 15 that day. It was another bad day in the Nam.

Sure would like to hear someone else's recollection and thoughts osn that day. Anyone out there remember it? May help me to put that day together better. The worst thing is I can't remember the names of the guys who died that day. Why is that? I feel bad about that. I guess it's because I was fairly new to 1/26 at that time. I was with MIKE, 3/26, prior to that.

[*Note: This action occurred 07 June 1967 when a two-platoon patrol from B/1/26, moved from Hill 881-South to Hill 800 (XD75944). Results of the contact: 18 USMC KIA, 16 USMC WIA, 63 NVA confirmed killed*]

Then there was the day in July, 1967. We were doing a sweep down Hwy 9 south of Khe Sanh. Our mission was to secure the road for a convoy. My squad was walking flank security on the left through the hills overlooking the highway. There was a river to the right. We came to a valley and had to work our way back down to the road to cross a bridge and then work our way back up the hill.

As I was crossing the bridge our point walked right into an enemy position and the first two or three guys got hit. At that moment an enemy machinegun which was across the river opened up and I could see the wood splinters flying off the bridge at my feet. The guy in front of me got hit. I remember he was a black guy. As I dove off the bridege into the gully below, the gooks let go. I guess it was a RPG, and blew the bridge. At that moment our point man, the squad leader, and the radioman came rolling down the hill, both were hit badly. I remember administering first aid to one man who had a nasgty stomach wound. At this point there was 5 or 6 of us who were at the lead element and were pinned down by the machinegun and gooks on top of the hill. The rest of the company was on the road back around the bend.

I had never called in a fire mission before, but I took a stab at it. We had no other choice. I got the radio and called in the coordinates of where I thought the machinegun position was. A smoke was sent—looks good to me. "Fire for effect." God was on my side again. The far side of the river erupted. The machinegun fell silent.

In order to shoot back at the NVA on the hill we had to run out to the road to shoot up. The embankment was just too steep. We threw all we had at them and were down to throwing smoke grenades and a few rounds of ammo. I recall one of the guys melting down the barrell of his M-16 in the process of trying to gain fire superiority.

I went to the radio again. As I was looking at the map I heard the foliage rustle above me and saw a ChiCom grenade emerge out of the bush. As it hit the road I watched it spin and all I could manage was to staqrt ducking away. As it exploded I felt something hit me in the chest. I put my hand to my chest thinking I was hit, only to discover the plug from the grenade laying in the palm of my hand. God was good to me again.

As the dust cleared and the ringing in my ears subsided, I got back on the radio, a PRC-25, to call in another fire mission. After all, I was well qualified by this time. I already had one fire mission under my belt. Call in grid coordinates. "On the way. Wait." Hear the round. Run out to the road to spot. Puff—smoke. Looks good to me. "Fire for effect." Oh, jeeze. Wait

a minute; it's too close! Too late. Rounds are on the way. I hear them coning. This is not going to be good. "Everybody take cover—duck!" A series of ear shattering explosions. Oh, I pray they hit the right place. Dirt, trees, branches, rocks, and miscellaneous jungle parts come flying down. We are buried. Dust fills the air. Thank you, God; we are in one piece. No more grenades, no more AK-47 rounds. The gooks are dead or gone. Regroup and sweep the area. Found bodies—a number of them, ammo and weapons, food and lots of claymore mines along the embankment. An ambush in place for the convoy? How did they know? Someone said, "You'll get a medal for this." I think, three or four Marines KIA, 3-4 WIA, another bad day in the Nam. Thank you, God. I don't need another medal!

Anyone out there who was with me on that day, I sure would like to hear another version of that day. Again, I can't remember the names. Maybe someone out there can recall. I often wonder what happened to the guy with the stomach wound that I patched up. He was medevaced and I never did find out how he made out. I think he was from Florida?

[*NOTE: The day of this incident was 21 July '67. 175mm guns, along with a convoy of land mines, C-4, and other ordnance, had departed Camp Carroll for Khe Sanh Combat Base when patrols from M/3/26 and B/1/26, moving along Route 9, detected and sprung the ambush. The convoy and 175s immediately turned around and returned to Camp Carroll. Evacuation of the NVA presence by commanders at Khe Sanh at the time was that it was not to ambush this convoy, but to sever Rt. 9 during the rainy season and isolate Khe Sanh Combat Base for a possible attack. Col Lownds, who became CO, 26MAR, on 12 Aug 67, does not recall the incident, and Col John J. Padley, CO prior to that, during a conversation prior to his death, while recalling the incident, did not recall the reason for the 175s coming to KSCB. Two possibilities are: to provide the artillery support for BV-33, "Elephant," in Laos, which was part of the mission of Regiment; or, to provide support for the newly-forming FOB-3, whose patrols would be operating in the eastern Laotian and DMZ areas, to call in fire on large enemy units, supply, headqurters, communication facilities, oil pipe lines, etc.*

Concerning Mr. Weresow's Symphony: a letter from a music reviewer notes: "..the Symphony is a work of considerable merit, great professional skill and high artistic content. One of those commenting ont he work is Mr. John Duffy... His organizagtion funds and receives grants for new compositions of a serious nature by new and unknown American composers. Mr. Duffy has carefully examined the score and reported to me that the work shows a degree of musical accomplishment beyond that of many composers who have established reputations. He informs me that this is a remarkable work.."

Think of it, men! We have a symphony! An examination of the score reflects that the music captures the Siege times and how life was for those of us who were there, in all its multi-faceted variations].

NOTE FROM LARRY MC CARTNEY

On July 1, 1997, I will finally retire from the United States Marine Corps Reserve after thirty years, one month, and ten days of service. No one can serve a successful career, six months or thirty years, officer or enlisted, active or reserve, without the positive influence of others, and I am no different. Actually I am most fortunate. I enjoyed serving with some remarkable people. As a young man I was rather hardheaded, luckily most recognized that as a positive trait in a Marine. Men such as Captain Earle Breeding, Lieutenants Joe Meeks, Fred DeSteffano, Nick Elardo, Don Shanley, Bruce Lewy, Jeff Lloyd, Jeff Bodenweiser, SSGT Merle Moritz, Sgts Vince Griffith and J.J. McDuffy, Cpl Tom Eichler and LCPLs Bob Reed, Jack Phillips, and Gary Daffin, all left their mark on me. Likewise positive peer influence was critical to my personal and professional growth. Men such as Eddie Ginn, Mike Worth, Joe Roble, Wayne Sanders, Matt Welsh, and Jim Kaylor to name just a few. Some of those men are gone now, gone for many years. Others continue to provide a positive influence just by continuing to maintain despite the difficulty involved. Not gone are the lessons I learned. Lessons of responsibility, respect, dedication, perseverance, and professionalism. I was not always a receptive student. Actually, in some instances I was a very difficult student, but learn I eventually did. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to those Marines and the many others who had such a profound and positive influence on me; it is a direct result of your teaching while accomplishing a most difficult mission that I have been able to learn, grow, and continue on. Some of the people and incidents that come to mind include the non-judgmental, astute, advice of Lt Don Shanley, the quiet dignity of Lt Jeff Lloyd, the professionalism of Cpl Tom Eichler, the aggressive, mission-first, spirit of LCPL Bob Reed, and the leadership by example LCPL Gary Daffin consistently demonstrated. Gary had to know that his last act would lead to his death, but he didn't let that stop him from trying. He saw something that had to be done so there was never a question that he would do it. With leadership like that one can never fail. It is my sincerest wish that you all believe your efforts have been worthwhile. I hope I have achieved a degree of success in passing on to our youth of today that which I learned from you those many years ago. Semper Fidelis!!!

THE BULLETIN BOARD

KHE SANH VETERANS HOME PAGE

David Doehrman has set up a web site dedicated to all who served and died at Khe Sanh. In the six months after he set it up (23 Feb 97) he has received over 3,000 visits and over 80 Khe Sanh vets who were unaware now know of us.

If you haven't found the web site yet, the address is:

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

SURF ON IT !!!

The widow and parents of PFC Ronald David Sparks, US Army, Co. D, 2nd of the 12th CAV, who was KIA during a rocket and mortar attack during the early morning hours of 6 Apr 68 on LZ WHARTON, seek to locate and contact anyone who knew or served with him. Contact his widow: Carolyn Sparks Edwards, 1010 Vatient Ln, Martinsville VA 24112. Tel (540) 632-2857

My high school buddy, PFC Wody Cronkrite, was KIA on 10 Sep 67 near Con Thien while with India-2, 3/26. I would like to hear from anyone who knew him then, or while he was with MAG-16, ZULU Co (Nov 66 - early 67), or MAG-16 Forward, Khe Sanh, MACTU-62 (about May 67 through Aug 67). Mike Rummel, 841 La Strada Dr., Fallbrook CA 92028.

KHE SANH T-SHIRTS, JACKETS, PATCHES, CAPS ("COVERS"), ETC. ARE AVAILABLE!! CONTACT OUR PX:

CARL OKSNEE
1768 21st AVE.
KENOSHA WI 53140

A 210-page book, *The Final Formation*, listing KIAs of Khe Sanh, both alphabetically and chronologically, with descriptions of the incidents and the persons (where available), and a partial listing of Khe Sanh vets who died after serving in Khe Sanh, is available for $12.00. Make checks to: Khe Sanh Vets, Inc., and send to: Ray W. Stubbe, 8766 Park View Ct., Wauwatosa WI 53226. All money collected goes to the treasury of Khe Sanh Vets, Inc.

We are interested in generating funds to help pay for printing and mailing of this magazine (in addition to dues), and offer to place a business-size card advertisement (or the card itself) in our magazine at $10.00 per issue. If you are interested in advertising your business or simply to help us, please send your card, how many issues, and the fee to our treasurer, Mr. Vincent Griffith, 27280 Jefferson St., Temecula CA 92590.

Teri Thiel is searching for information on her uncle, Stephen Joseph Nelson of I/3/26, KIA 7 Sep '67. If you recall him, please contact Mr. Larry Luther at: 9115 14 Dice Rd., STE #14, Sante Fe Springs CA 90670-2538

Anyone knowing 1stSgt Robert Turner, A/1/9: his daughter would like very much to hear or talk with you about her dad. Contact: Mrs. Anna Marie Turner Lahey, #1 Clock Tower Place, Apt 409, Nashua NH 03060, phone: (603) 881-7102.

I'm looking for information about a close friend, [HM3] Frank Calzia..In 1966 Frank and I had been out of school for a year and we were 19-1/2 years old. Frank and another pal joined the Navy and I went in the Army just to be contrary to my all Navy family. By the summer of 67 were both going overseas and spent our last leave together. When we got incountry we wrote and planned to meet on R&R... Frank and I wrote to each other and confided our fears and hopes. When he didn't show up on R&R it seemed that another plan had run aground. After I got back to Kontum his sister wrote to me that Frank had died on 10 May ['68].

I must be looking for a sort of the closure on his last days as he was the kindest and most gentle of men and no matter how bad my own life seemed it was put in perspective by the letters of Frank.... He died in a mortar attack covering a chaplain with his body receiving a head wound. There just has to be more to this man's life. I'm sure he was loved by many... He must have stood out among his peers at least I want to think so. I hope that if you knew him or of him your life and others were made richer. Contact: Jack Mahan, 188 Live Oak Rd., Watsonville CA 95076.

[*Note: Frank Calzia was a corpsman in B/1/26 and was in the 30 Mar '68 patrol*].

KHE SANH POETS

Four issues of *Incoming!,* collections of poems and art work by Vietnam Vets have been successfully printed. Issue No. 5's deadline for submission is 31 Dec 97. You are invited to submit up to 5 poems (30 lines or less), up to 2 short stories (250 words or less), up to 5 pieces of art work (slides, not originals), up to 5 photos (copies, not originals), for consideration. You must be a Vietnam vet, combat, combat support, nurse, Red Cross, correspondent, or in-country civilian. You must include your name, address, branch of service and years in country on each piece submitted. Work may be submitted on cassette tape. All rights revert back to Author upon publication. Enclose a $10.00 reading fee. This is applied to the production of the book and is nonrefundable. Submissions must include a self addressed stamped envelope. Payment will be two copies of *Incoming!* Contact: Barbara Menghini Whitmarsh, Hawk's Nest Publishing, RR1, Box 204, Aurora MO 65605.

NEXT REUNION!!

Washington, DC
July 1998 (30th anniversary of Siege). Tentative dates: 21-26 Jul. Definite dates in next magazine.

THIS MAGAZINE IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THE STORIES, POEMS, LETTERS WE RECEIVE! Please send them to our temporary Editor: Ray W. Stubbe, 8766 Park View Ct., Wauwatosa WI 53226.

REMEMBER TO SEND IN YOUR DUES!

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Please print or type, and provide all information requested.

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Are you a Khe Sanh vet?..... IF YES:..... ....
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Mail this application and payment/subscription ($20.00 for one year, or $150.00 for Life Membership) to our Treasurer: Mr. Vincent Griffith, 27280 Jefferson St., #200, Temecula CA 92590.

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RED CLAY

A Publication of

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Issue No. 41 (Spring, 1998)

SPECIAL ISSUE: ARMY ACTIVITIES DURING THE SIEGE

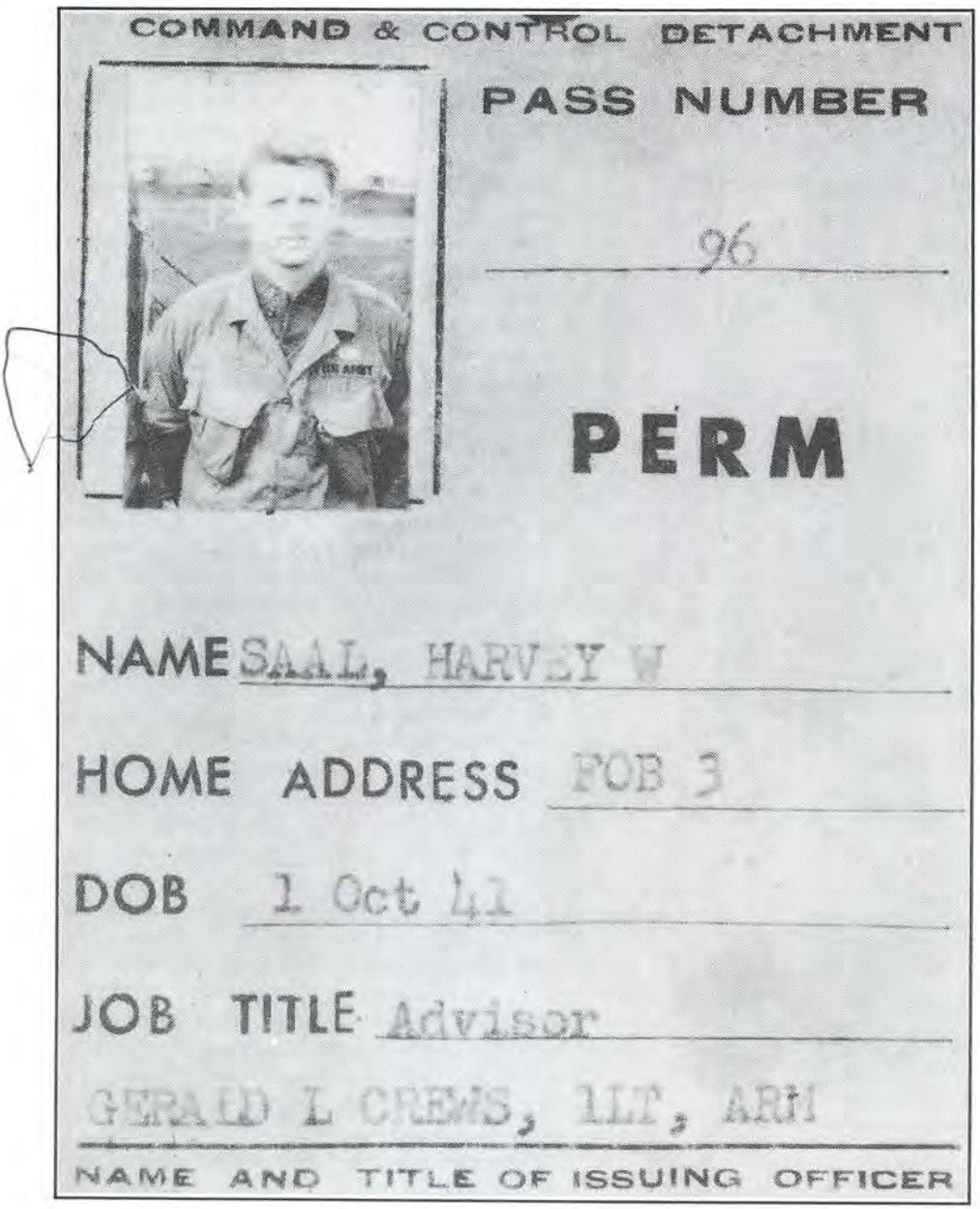

HARVE SAAL

01 Oct 41
to
01 Dec 97

Dedicated Soldier

Author of SOG History

Loyal Friend

A man with a big, big heart

[Front of FOB-3 pass for Harve W. Saal who was team leader of Recon Team BEAR. This is an enlargement. Actual size of pass is 3-1/16 x 4-1/2"]

RED CLAY is a publication of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a non-profit veterans organization. It is issued three times a year (Fall, Spring, and Summer). Non-Khe Sanh veterans may subscribe. Information on membership and subscription is found on the back cover.

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THE ARMY AT KHE SANH

By Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe

The last issue of our magazine was to have been the last that I did as Temporary Editor, having done Issues No. 37, 38, 39, and 40. However, I had promised that there would be an issue devoted to the Army at Khe Sanh and knew that I was the only one who had much of the information that could be used to prepare such an issue.

I want to tell you a story. It is a story of people you probably don't know, eventhough they were at Khe Sanh. Like so many individual Marines who did so much and received so little recognition for what they did, those who served Army units have not received much publicity or acknowledgment. The reasons are varied: their classified missions, focus on major events and units to the neglect of smaller units and unreported events, the small numbers of personnel. In many ways this is a story of camaraderie and humanity, of actions of caring and commitment to serve and care for others. This is a very human story of strong heroes who cared tenderly without recognition or reward. Here are Khe Sanh vets we need to know better and appreciate; like all of us, they and their actions must never be forgotten.

There are some personal reasons for writing this story. Prior to the Siege battle, FOB-3 was a "mecca" for the Marines of the Combined Action Company platoon that was located just outside the perimeter of the Combat Base who came over to obtain various pieces of gear since the FOB-3 supply seemed virtually inexhaustable. They even had a large wooden box containing bottles of hard liquor! And they willingly shared it! One of the FOB-3 soldiers wanted to give me a Swedish K-gun; he explained that I was out with Marines on the hills and on their patrols and was in an unsafe area! Marines from the recon company on base would come with sandbags of broken K-bar knives and, in exchange, obtain some of the latest "hot dog" stuff. When LCPL Marion Lee Meggs of the Recon Company drowned in the Rao Quan River (16 Nov 67), I visited FOB-3 to ask for some nylon mountain line since all the Marines had was some parachute shroud line, and Major Lucius Campbell, the CO, gave me an entire spool of the nylon line saying, "Take it all, take anything, just get the Marine back!" I recall one very senior FOB-3 soldier, hard-looking with an animal's tooth hanging from a necklace, saying to me as we looked at the Laotian refugees from the fall of Lang Vei outside the wire: "Chaplain, I'm not a religious person, but please say a few prayers for those people outside there. I know quite a few of them." I looked into his moist eyes and beheld the goodness of humanity beneath all the mud, dust, battle, and hardness. I recall holding a worship service at FOB-3 during the Siege. The men seemed abnormally intense and intent with their eyes wide open, looking at me, almost in awe—until after I finished and, while leaving, gazed at a wood beam above me on which was tacked a large centerfold from a *Playboy* magazine!

Some of what follows may be some of the

stranger aspects of the war and of what was going on at Khe Sanh, and it is time that their story is told.

JTAD

Americans walking the jungles of the Khe Sanh area and neighboring Laos in civilian clothes, former NVA now loyal to us reporting on NVA units operating in the area, reports of NVA regiments and battalions and of Russian advisors which made the Khe Sanh area—seemingly so serene, even a Garden of Eden—to be the playground of lurking demons of destruction which suddenly devoured life: this was the world of JTAD, the Joint Technical Advisory Detachment.

In mid-October '66 III MAF reported JTAD bilateral collection capability, and soon thereafter a JTAD Station was located at Khe Sanh. By the Hill Battles of '67, reports from JTAD began pouring into the command at Khe Sanh. For example, on 13 May, JTAD reported a long established NVA bivouac area at Co Roc (XD 741317) into which two battalions of the 95C Regiment had moved. On 27 May, capitalizing on agent reports from JTAD of 15 May, an afternoon of air strikes against a trail complex, harbor site and supply area, produced a virtual 4th of July fireworks display when, at 1305, jet strikes in an area 8 - 9 clicks directly south of Khe Sanh village produced one large secondary explosion and five secondary fires. Subsequent air strikes during the next two hours produced several additional large secondary explosions and fires. JTAD reported Russian advisors entering the Khe Sanh area accompanying NVA units. JTAD continued to report caves, 130mm mortars on rails, large troop concentrations, and logistic activity on the Co Roc area throughout the summer and fall of '67.

III MAF's G-2, MGEN Kenneth J. Houghton, was cautious, however: "They were a funny outfit," he noted, "They worked on turning prisoners around. In other words, we'd capture somebody, and then [we would] turn them around. We'd tell them about how great we were...They [the enemy soldiers] would be indoctrinated all their 18, 20 years on earth, and we'd get them for two months! And then, these people [JTAD] were 'undercover'. When I inspected them and took over as G-2, they were wearing civilian clothes! I said, 'Why are you wearing civilian clothes?' They said, 'Well, we're under cover!' Well, you know anybody who wore civilian clothes stood out like a sore thumb!"

Nagging concerns by those in the "2" shops who received their reports varied from "Are they saying this because this is what they think we want to hear?" (which is a typical Oriental propensity) to "Is their loyalty still to North Vietnam, and they're feeding us information to divert our resources or disregard a major enemy activity." Furthermore, the information was usually many days old by the time it was received, and then, there was no way to evaluate the information since the track record of individual sources was unknown. Their reports were always F-6.

Col Daniel Lord Baldwin, III (the SOG OP-35 desk at CCN, DaNang) when asked once if one could really turn the loyalty of a North Vietnamese or if they simply reported what we wanted to hear, said, "They brought back ears. They brought back some fantastic photos too."

Capt. Wayne Long, who flew in to brief Col. Lownds and his S-2, Maj Jerry Hudson, during the Siege during the last week of Feb '68 and the second week of March on what had been coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos and what targets he could utilize, felt that the JTAD was quite successful: "I think that by the time the Siege started, the Regiment had a pretty fair intelligence picture that we updated and kept fairly accurate. I don't think there were any surprises in terms of forces." Col Lownds, nevertheless, would ask him, "Was this seen by a round eye" [an American]? (1Lt Wayne Long (later Col) operated out of Pakse, Laos, for a unit headed by Ray Gonzales which consisted of Road Watch teams observing the Ho Chi Minh Trail. "We were primarily working in the 'denied areas' with some indigenous assets. We'd set up a little base camp, sit beside the road for about 20 days, sometimes with an American, more often without one, and then we had a thing called a 'HARK' radio which had counters—a different frequency for each counter—for trucks, for weapons of various sizes, for people, and even for armor. A convoy would come by and one of our indigenous would just punch every time he saw one. The radio signalled up to a C-130 that orbited—had a succession of 130s that orbited 24 hours a day.)

JTAD was actually part of Company C, 519th Military Intelligence Battalion (and previously SMIAT, Special Military Intelligence Activities Team), which was part of the 500th MI in Japan. The Vietnamese counterpart was the 924th Support Group. The Combined Action Company OSCAR at Khe Sanh was tasked with the responsibility of feeding and housing the Americans of JTAD Station co-located in the MACV District HQ compound in Khe Sanh village.

From late '66 to mid '67, JTAD at Khe Sanh included a Sergeant James Turner and Sergeant Ed Bowman (known to the Vietnamese as "Mr. Ed"); but both wore civilian clothes, had civilian ID, and their cover story was that they were drawing maps of the area for *National Geographic*. They used a light blue truck at Khe Sanh with a STP sticker on the side door.

One of their informants was the Vietnamese official in Khe Sanh ville from the National Police. (This was a powerful person who had been seen, on occasion, torturing Bru with electric generators by Cpl Daniel R. Kelley who, when he reported it, was promoted to Sergeant, but transferred from the CAP in the village to the CAP just outside the main gate of the Combat Base). The National Police representative was known to be feeding information to the North Vietnamese and became a channel to feed false information to them.

Another contact was a coffee planter, not the Poilanes, but the Basque named Llinares (referred to as Leinterest in a III MAF area study of Khe Sanh) who was located southeast of Khe Sanh village near Lang Kat (1) and (2). It had been rumored that he had killed a Bru

woman with an ax, and perhaps was connected with the death of Eugene Poilane in the 1964 ambush on Route 9. Llinares had been with Eugene when the Citroen car they were driving came under rifle fire, mortally wounding Eugene (who had arrived at Khe Sanh in 1918 following his WW I service in Vietnam, and who, because of his coffee plantation, is responsible for the origins and development of Khe Sanh village). Llinares had been very wealthy in North Vietnam, lost everything, and settled at Khe Sanh at the former plantation owned by M. Rome. During WW II, the French planter, Monsieur Rome lived here with his Japanese wife and a Japanese gardner. When the Japanese arrived at the end of WW II, they lived "pretty high," but then mysterious disappeared. According to Madame Madeleine Poilane, she spied both for the Japanese and the Viet Minh on French positions and was killed—some say by the Viet Minh, others say by the French. Her body was never found and the property reverted to the government.) It was here that Llinares had contacts with the Viet Cong; a network of VC was discovered in the village at the bottom of the Llinares plantation. Following this, the Bru were resettled, and any pro-VC Bru departed into the hills. Following a double assassination of two workers of Llinares in his house, his wife departed, demanded protection from the Province Chief of Quang Tri, and never returned.

James Turner recalls the Marine Force Recon detachment at KSCB in early '67, and the LtCol at the Combat Base who, when informed of NVA units operating in the area, responded, "O, these numbers—they can't be right." Turner replied, "I'm telling you, we checked them pretty good; they're right." The information was disregarded. The Special Forces also disregarded their reports "until they were nearly overrun one time [04 May 67] and we had given them the coordinates where the mortars were set up b efore they even started shooting. After that, they listened to us pretty well."

Ed Brown and James Turner frequently would go out for a week or so, no radios, perhaps deep into Laos. "We carried United Nations Non-Combatant cards. Supposedly you had two of them, duplicates, and if you got captured, you gave one to the enemy, kept the other, and they'd let you go!" Yeah! Sure!

"We'd just go out, and there were a couple of times we went out to learn the territory. We went around with the Montagnard troops that were stationed there in the village. We had one guy that went with us all the time who knew the area really well. We'd tell him where we wanted to go, and he'd take us there.. He knew where the North Vietnamese walked and he just took us. Sometimes we'd set up in the hills there and watch a battalion go by—it would be just tons of equipment. But it was kind of a crazy operation because we had no radios, they didn't know where we were, they didn't even know where we were going. If we turned up missing, they wouldn't have any idea what happened to us."

Just before the Siege battle commenced, the JTAD Station at Khe Sanh suddenly disappeared from the CAC OSCAR area in the District HQ compound, but reports from them, concerning NVA units and activity at Khe Sanh continued into the early days of the Siege.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

1. ELEPHANT

"Where are they?" They could only feel the reality of what was to unfold: we know they're everywhere, but we do not see them. In the eerie, silent, depopulated jungles of eastern Laos near the Co Roc Massif, the three Americans with their Bru soldiers of FOB-3 team PENNSYLVANIA waited, watched, wondered. They knew the NVA were there—and in large force. Patrolling this area was like moving on the surface of an enlarged, great hornet's nest: suddenly, without warning, they could suddenly, violently, be lethally stung. Vietnam was that way: you could be in peace and tranquility and then, like throwing a light switch, suddenly be in the clutches of terror.

They had visited the nearby camp of a Royal Lao volunteer battalion, BV-33, located (at XD 625379) astride Route 9 at the Ban Houei Sane airstrip, some 22 clicks due west of Khe Sanh village—roughly 13 miles, which may seem far except for the fact that the assigned mission for Operation SCOTLAND included artillery support for BV33.

BV-33 (or "ELEPHANT" as Americans referred to it), was a CIA-supported unit with drug-trafficing as a "cover"; North Vietnamese Army units supposed it to be simply a Lao group running drugs which obviously would have no connection to the Americans, and passed it by—until 25 January 1968 when they overran it with tanks.

The 500 soldiers of BV-33 were a sort of home guard or militia and lived at this location with some 2300 dependents, chickens and pigs, in an austere area offering no food other than fish and frogs from the nearby Xe Pone River, wild vegetation such as bamboo root, and an occasional deer or wild buffalo. The camp was resupplied by the CIA's Air America flights, originally from Savannakhet, Laos. On 05 Sep 1963, a CIA C-47 flight using Chinese National registry, made three resupply flights to BV-33, some 200 kilometers east of Savannakhet but less than eight from South Vietnam. The aircraft was piloted by Americans Capt Joseph C. Cheney and Co-pilot Charles G. Herrick. The radioman was Y. C. To, a citizen of Hong Kong, and the "kickers" (who threw out the supplies) were Eugene H. DeBruin (a former smoke jumper for the US Forestry Service), and three Thai nationals: Pisidhi Indradat, Prasit Promsuwan, and Prasit Dhanee. On their third trip, while passing over the major NVA logistics center at Tchepone at 4,000 feet, the C-47 was struck by 37mm antiaircraft and crashed at XD2748. DeBruin is still MIA. As a result of this incident, the CIA Air America flights to resupply BV-33 were subsequently launched from Khe Sanh, and then, mainly DaNang, though using Khe Sanh occasionally.

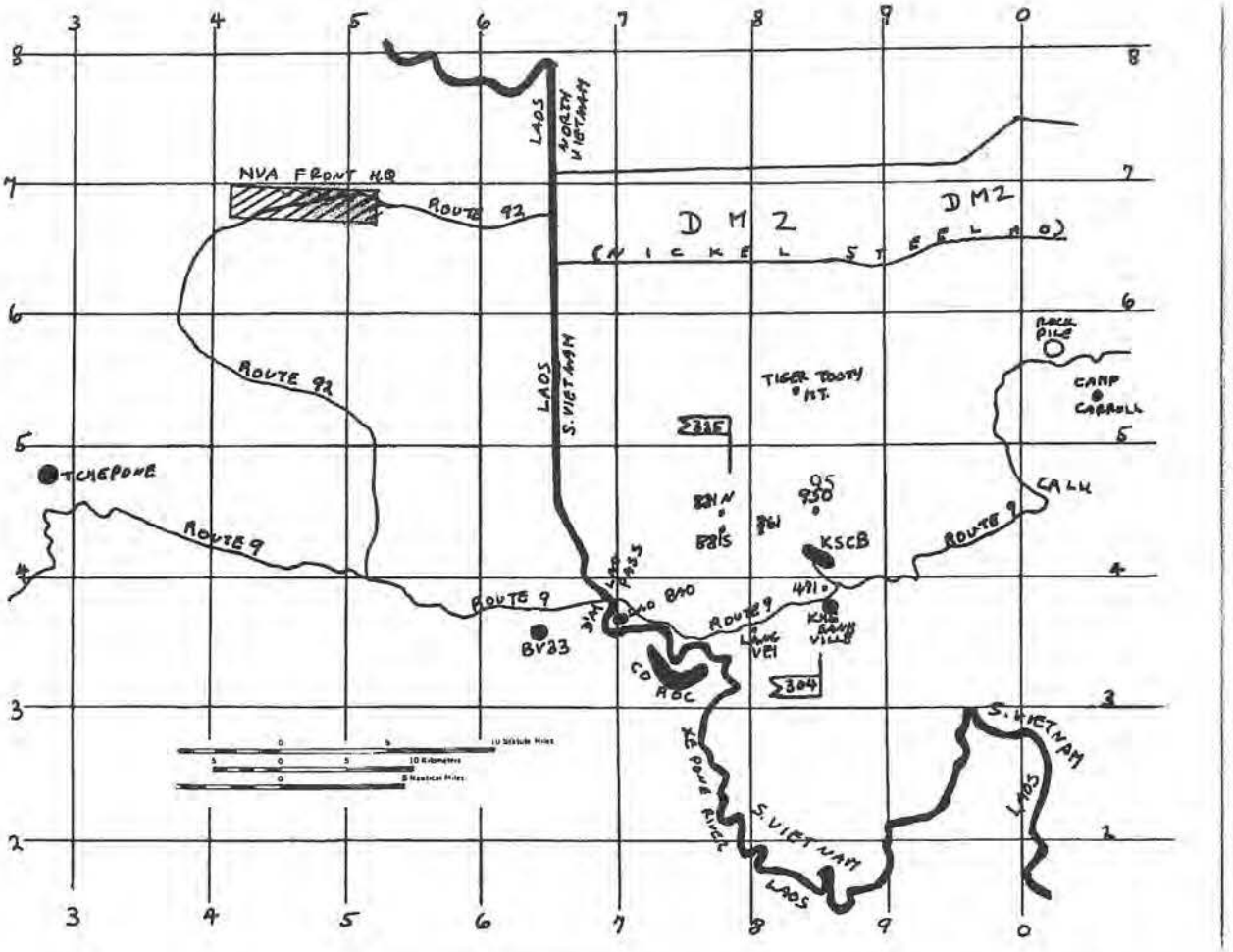

KHE SANH BATTLEFIELD AREA

The CO of BV-33 in 1967-68, Col Phetsomphou Soulang, had briefed team PENNSYLVANIA of NVA positions near the Lao/SVietnam border, including the newly-developed road, Route 92 that wended through some karst limestone spire-like formations full of caves some ten miles west of the DMZ, which American signal intelligence had indicated to be a suspected Front Headquarters controlling two NVA Divisions that were encircling Khe Sanh, not moving through the area, but remaining. The S-2 of 26th Marines, Maj Harper Bohr, Jr., referred to this trail and its associated network going into S. Vietnam as the "Santa Fe Trail." Col John Roberts ("Col Jack") of the USAF 20th TASS detachment at Khe Sanh (operation TIGERHOUND), was a good friend of Soulang and had flown over this developing route on numerous occasions, spotting "pink elephants" colored because of the red clay, along with numerous NVA. On one occasion, he had obtained the assistance of "Doc" Secor [MSGT Gilbert A. Secor] from Team PENNSYLVANIA to administer shots to the children of ELEPHANT during an outbreak of a disease. Wearing the uniform of a USAF officer provided by Col. Jack, he was flown by him to give the shots. A few days later, Col. Jack was called "on the carpet" to DaNang to appear before half a dozen Colonels to explain why he violated orders from Ambassador Sullivan by having an American Air Force "flight surgeon" in Laos! They asked who the Flight Surgeon was (since they had contacted all USAF flight surgeons in all of WESTPAC and could account for all of them).

2. WARNINGS

The information PENNSYLVANIA obtained only confirmed what had already been reported. The Khe Sanh Station of the JTAD had reported on 25 Aug 67 a NVA company camped in stone caves at the foot of Co Roc. Another JTAD report—this one dated 30 Sept—placed a 800-man NVA unit just inside the Laotian border, 16 clicks south of Route 9 (at XD687547), the eastern part of the NVA Front HQ (noted in a CIA report as 9 miles directly west of the DMZ).

A document captured 06 Nov 67 providing the NVA plans for the Winter-Spring Offensive, listed as its first objective: "the annihilation of a major U.S. troop unit and inflicting heavy casualties, to draw U.S. troops away from populated areas." By Dec., a CIA report warned "..the VC/NVA are undertaking something very much like an all-out punch.." FMFPAC's estimate of enemy capabili-

ties (written in Dec 67) noted: "That the enemy would plan a major offensive in the western DMZ region was logical., and the Marine combat base at Khe Sanh would appear, to him, to offer some hope of military advantage."

Col Lownds, speaking to a group of Marines of B/1/26 in the chilling fog enveloping Hill 881-South on Marine Corps Birthday of '67 said: "We here at Khe Sanh are going to be remembered in our American history books!" making the scene even more chilling to those who heard him. Ironically, Lt Don Jacques had volunteered his platoon that day to do the patrol; he and his men were slipping through the muddy, slippery slopes and slushing in treacherous streams, bamboo thickets and razor-cutting elephant grass while Col Lownds spoke to the rest of their Company.

The day before, Gen Starbird visited the hill. Gen. Starbird, head of Defense Communications Program Group (DCPG), a CIA-front research agency at the Pentagon, was in charge of developing the electronic sensor program. Gen. Starbird and Maj Bruce Greene, CO of B/1/26, walked apart from everyone else and sauntered to the north side of the hill where the General pointed north, an omnious visual signal portending conflict.

During August and September, the rumor among the troops was a prophecy by Jeanne Dixon of "1200 American dead at Khe Sanh." [Note: During the period Jan 67 - 11 Jul 68, official records indicate 1232 American KIA at Khe Sanh].

Detachments from 1st Radio Co built strange huts on Hill 881-South and elsewhere, and reports from the "People Sniffer" missions gave literally hundreds of indications during October, 1967, when they first started flying these missions in the immediate area around Khe Sanh. The acetate overlay covering the tactical map, a red dot for each sighting, appeared to be solid red to those sitting in chairs for the briefing. [Note: Signal intelligence can easily be flawned by a transmitter placed here or there, broadcasting to resemble a regimental or Bn headquarters, even coordinated by having one transmitter respond to another, to reflect a "chain of command;" people sniffers (a device mounted on UH-1E choppers which fly 50 feet above ground level to detect ammonia smells given off by people) can detect the urine smell of families of passing monkeys or other animals; electronic sensors might detect noises from our own exploding rounds. (USAF numbers on NVA casualties, based on secondary explosions from most close air suipport strikes, are erroneous since, unknown to them, artillery at Khe Sanh fired into their boxes. It is only when all are integrated that the emerging picture of an enemy presence unfolds—and, at Khe Sanh, it was unfolding on a grand scale during the last few months of 1967!]

Those in command could only reflect on what was happening, waiting orders to withdraw or to be reinforced. The decision "on the top" (actually, all the way to the White House), was to reinforce Khe Sanh, make all of us there into a lucrative target, a bulls-eye, or fly-paper, to take advantage of the approaching large NVA force, engage and fix them and, like a wrestler, use their strength against them, destroying them.

3. "SKIP" MINNICKS

PENNSYLVANIA observed units of NVA in khaki and units of NVA in olive drab. "We knew that there was a huge, strong force." Part of the NVA plans included preparation of Co Roc, that massive dark theater-curtain-like sight one could see from Hill 861 that made one wonder when the curtain would be pulled back and the tragic play commence.

But now, Co Roc was shrouded in an eerie silence. It was mid-January, 1968, and no NVA were here! (Actually, as signal intercepts later confirmed, they had already moved most of their units into positions to attack Khe Sanh).

Among those standing atop Co Roc was Master Sergeant Charles "Skip" Minnicks and Maj George Quamo. At 38, Skip was the oldest SOG team leader; Maj George Quamo was probably the youngest SOG Major. Both were members of "Special Projects," an effort to develop a guerrilla force to operate in Laos in the area of Mu Gia Pass to Tchepone, the first leg of the Trail in Laos.

Overhead, a Birddog aircraft circled with its passenger, Col Harold K. Rose, that Skip recalls as "a wonderful, wonderful man." [Note: Col Rose died suddenly on 11 May 90 from an aneurysm]. Col Rose radioed to Quamo: "I want you out of there. I want you out of there now!" Quamo, in his black uniform—he had all his team dress in black—simply responded, "To my knowledge, I am in command at this location. Out."

Skip Minnicks stood in awe of this man—as did everyone who came in contact with him, a sort of "Lawrence of Arabia" of Vietnam, handsome, brilliant, forceful, charismatic.

It hadn't always been that way. The arrival of George Quamo to the small (one-half of an A-team) unit which was then located at the Old French Fort on the eastern edge of Khe Sanh ville (also called "Fort Dix") was not a happy event. Skip Minnicks recalls, "Here comes this new Captain. He looked like a kid I resented him! And I made it apparent." As deeply as he resented him, however, his admiration for this new officer would eventually know no limits, and Minnicks was not alone. Robert Cavanaugh recalls: "We received a message that they were sending an officer to command our little group.. Needless to say, we were quite upset and couldn't understand why the Army was fixing something that wasn't broken. Quamo arrived on site about three days later, and you can believe that he was not on friendly ground. Before the year was finished [the 3 months remaining in 1967] I truly believe that every American on those teams would have followed him to hell to put out the fire if he asked."

When Minnicks reported to the Sergeant-Major of CCN [Command and Control North, the SOG Hq in the northern part of S. Vietnam], he was told to report to FOB-1 (at Phu Bai) to become the temporary Sergeant-Major there since the SgtMaj was rotating back to the States. "I said, 'No, let's talk. This is my fourth trip. I didn't have to make any trips. The only reason I came here was because I was allowed to volunteer for this outfit. I

want a team.' He said, 'You're too old. You can't keep up.' I said, 'Give me a shot. If I can't keep up, I'll be the first one to come to you.' So he begrudgingly gave it to me. I had team PENNSYLVANIA.'"

When he first arrived and took over a small detachment, there were three or four teams of Bru in the beginning of their training phase; the officer in charge, Maj Patton, had already departed.

4. FRED PATTON

Maj Fred Patton had preceeded Skip Minnicks here. First by himself, and later together with Charles Berg and James Hetrick, the Special Projects effort was launched at Khe Sanh.

Patton's arrival had been the result of a meeting in early October, 1966, attended by Secretary McNamara, accompanied by Nicholas Katzenbach (Attorney General of the US), Robert Komer (CORDS), Gen Wheeler (Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff), General Westmoreland (COMUSMACV), and Ambassador Lodge with Premier Nguyen Cao Ky. During the course of the meeting, Ky emphasized "his belief that a secret base of non-Communist Vietnamese should be established in the mountains along the Laos border in the southern part of North Vietnam; specially trained teams operating from such a base could do a great deal through sabotage and other methods to work against infiltration."

The problem of the "porous border" had been recognized and identified by the American Ambassador as early as Dec 1960, with the warning that if the border could not be closed, all our efforts would be in vain. In 1963—and, we may assume, years earlier—Vietnamese patrolled into the eastern Laotian area up to 15 KM.

[It should be of interest—although no one to my knowledge has yet written about it—that the borders near Khe Sanh, both the DMZ and with Laos, were highly in dispute—not simply "porous"—, and may have prompted subsequent conflict. Concerning the DMZ: The Potsdam Conferences of 1945, discussing arrangements for the Japanese surrender, divided Indochina at the 16th parallel, having the Japanese surrender to the Chinese (Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek) north of that parallel and surrender to the Brittish (Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten) south of that parallel. (The 16th parallel runs just south of DaNang.) At the Geneva Conference, however, the Demarcation Line (DMZ) was placed at the 17th parallel. The Vietnamese representative, Dong, insisted it be at the 16th parallel; Mendez-France insisted it be at the 18th, and Molotov said, "Then we agree that the split should be at the 17th parallel." Bernard Fall (in a very difficult to locate printed study) explains the 17th parallel as the result of "the conciliatory role played at Geneva by the USSR which in 1954 was trying to induce France not to join the European Defense Community." (The events in Europe were casting long, dark shadows as far away as Vietnam). The Khe Sanh area, as with all of Northern I Corps Tactical Zone, was thus an area of contention even before hostilities erupted. (Frances FitzGerald, writing in 1967, noted that when the French departed from Saigon in 1955-56, they left behind a "regroupment zone" just beneath the 17th Parallel, "..a political jungle of sects, local warlords, Viet Minh, partisan troops, and Saigon politicians, all of them rooted in provincial issues and family feuds." He writes that this Parallel, by including the southern half of the ancient empire of Annam, exposed the South to the larger political passions of such Central Vietnamese as Ho Chi Minh. During the 300 days of regroupment ("Passage to Freedom") nearly a million Northerners, mainly Catholics, moved south, but the former Viet Minh cadres waited to begin hostilities). Concerning the Lao/Vietnam border, a survey team investigating MIA sites discovered on 31 Oct 1992 that the border had been moved from just west of the 66 North/South line to the 63 line. Moving in the opposite direction, many Laotians regard Lao Bao as Laotian territory]

On 24 Jan 1964, MACSOG was organized, and in March, 1964, the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised the Secretary of Defense that the time had come to lift restrictions on any Americans accompanying patrols into Laos. In May of '64, JCS (along with the Dept of State and SecDef) authorized COMUSMACV to begin planning for limited patrols "..for the purpose of gathering information on VC logistic activities in the area of Laos between Route 9 and the 17th Parallel adjacent to the border," but no Americans were initially authorized to accompany these patrols.

As a result, Operation LEAPING LENA was conducted 24 Jun - 1 Jul 64. Five teams were inserted by parachute into Laos along Route 9 east of Tchepone. It was a dismal failure: only five survivors returned to Vietnam. They did detect, however, a NVA battalion crossing into Vietnam west of Khe Sanh.

In Mar 65, COMUSMACV assigned responsibility for operations into Laos from Vietnam to MACSOG, and a 3-phase plan was developed. Phase 1: 10-man teams penetrate Laos for up to 10 days to collect intelligence and acquire targets; Phase 2: duration is extended to 3 weeks and the quantity of missions increase; Phase 3: deep penetration for periods up to 12 months and "in specific areas, mission includes organizing indigenous into resistance and intelligence nets, physical destruction, sabotage."

In Jul 65, cross-border ops were to be conducted from the Forward Operating Base (FOB) at Kham Duc, and were given the nick-name SHINING BRASS. The first mission was 2 Nov 65.

By Apr 66, use of helicopters for insertion was approved. SOG teams were authorized to patrol up to 5 KM inside Laos and, in Jun '66, up to 10 KM with teams having no more than 3 American advisors.

It was during June '66 that Col Charles Norton arrived at the Special Forces Camp, Khe Sanh (later KSCB) and developed a launch site for FOB-1 (campsite located at Phu Bai). [It was important that the Launch Site be different than the camp site to have a minimum number of people at the launch site and, for security, to prevent conversations with Special Forces, natives talking with natives, etc.]. Billy Waugh also worked at the Khe Sanh Launch Site.

On 1 Mar 67 the nickname SHINING BRASS was replaced with PRAIRIE FIRE, and the main mission was: "to conduct special operations to counter enemy infiltration through Laos and into South Vietnam."

To implement Phase 3, and the concept of Ky, MACV in Mar '67 proposed that a guerrilla force be organized from the hill tribes of the Annamite mountain region. Training in South Vietnam, the force would then establish contacts with village leaders in Laos. PRAIRIE FIRE teams, accompanied by these trained personnel, would enter an area, establish contact and proceed in the classical role of developing a guerrilla force and conduct guerrilla warfare.

The American Ambassador in Vientiane, Laos, proposed in September, 1967, that the force train in Laos, operate under the Laotian Army, and that American personnel would not participate in ground combat operations with them. His suggestion was too late, however; Maj Patton had been with the Bru to determine whether or not they could be organized and trained for such warfare, and had started training them. The Bru tribe was optimal since its tribal area covered both eastern Laos and northwestern South Vietnam; they freely travelled back and forth as though the artificial national boundary didn't exist. The force being dedveloped was to operate in the area between Mu Gia Pass and Tchepone, but, as James W. Moore notes, "Now that was day-dreaming if there ever was!"

Maj Patton had determined that the Bru were especially good in the jungle, detecting the presence of others—almost magically attune were they to scents, noises, visual signs that they knew when someone else was nearby. Also, they had a mechanical ability: "They learned how to drive and take care of weapons faster than any group I've ever worked with."

The local missionary family at Khe Sanh who were involved with developing a written Bru language, making the Bru literate for the first time in their tribal history, and translating the Bible into Bru, provided a Bru boy to assist Patton who reciprocated by providing building materials to refurbish an old, abandoned French house to be their home. Mr. John Miller recalls that Patton said he was writing a history of the Bru tribe. Gradually, more and more Amereicans arrived for the "history" project, notes Mr. Miller, "but just how many people do you need to write a history?" The American group then gathered a dozen Bru to work with, then 20, then 40, and located at the Old French Fort.

The first arrivals from SOG temporarily ruined the local economy, paying an extravagant rent of 20,000 to 24,000 P [Piastres] per month! The Bru were very disturbed; it wasn't "right." When Mr. Miller informed the SOG officials that this was gross inflation, they replied that this was what they were required to pay. Some Bru received more pay than their village chiefs, the salaries ranging from 8,000 to `18,000 P per month. In addition, some Bru received "hazardous" pay for going on patrols, and could not understand why some should be paid more for doing that.

Skip Minnicks remembers the honesty of the Bru: "They didn't even have a word in their language for 'theft' or 'steal' or 'rob'. Here we come. The first thing we did—because we thought we were being generous—we gave them three uniforms, two pair of boots. Well, they found out immediately that they could trade, barter for food and necessities, and so they became capitalists like us. They began to steal from each other, and I thought, O my God!"

Maj Patton sought a location for his proposed Bru guerrilla force and focused on the abandoned prison site at Lao Bao where Route 9 passes through the Lao/Vietnam border. Located on flat terrain mostly surrounded by a loop in the Xe Pone River, the area afforded fields of fire of at least 1500 feet and contained an abandoned airstrip. Walls of the abandoned prison/fort were mostly intact except for one corner, and the interior walls were concrete several feet thick.

A Bru named "Onya" [pronounced "on" + "yah"], while not a "chief" in the Bru tribe (which was hereditary) was nevertheless a spokesman and representative for the Bru. Onya had been educated in Hue with Felix Poilane, the son of the original French coffee planter, Eugene, who had established his plantation here in 1918. It was said by some that Onya was actually Eugene's son by a Bru woman. (He did father ten children, five born after he was 60). Onya said he had been a guard at Lao Bao while Giap was imprisoned there. (There were many legends about Onya, who was a man shrouded in mystery. During the Siege, Dan Kelley of CAC OSCAR noted that he would disappear for several days at a time, and then reappear in the FOB-3 compound).

Onya promised Maj Patton 1500-2000 Bru to form a camp at Lao Bao. The plan was shot down, however, by the SOG HQ who noted it "was within mortar range of surrounding territory!" One might ask: what area in Vietnam wasn't? It is interesting to speculate what may have happened during the Siege with the force occupying massive bunkers that they had at FOB-3 if they had, instead, been situated at Lao Bao on the border.

Although much of the initial training was conducted in the Khe Sanh area itself, many of their initial efforts involved contact with BV-33 in Laos. On one "visit," Berg and Hetrick, together with about four "yards" drove from Khe Sanh to Ban Houei Sane in a jeep. Patton had ordered them, "Do not take any weapons." It was a direct order from Ambassador William H. Sullivan.

"Do you have a weapon," asked Berg.

"Yeah, I got two 9mm in my belt, grenades in the pocket," responded Hetrick.

Berg looked over to Hetrick, "Why are we doing this? O God, I don't believe all of this is happening! It's amazing how many grenades and how many magazines you can get for a 9mm underneath the top jacket or in baggy clothing—the baggiest ones you can find!"

One of their first missions involved working with a Special Forces A-Team on the Vietnamese side while the Special Projects team went over into Laos as a blocking force for their flank. A young Special Forces Captain who asked to accompany them as a "strap-hanger," started up a hill by himself during a break, triggering a battle which seemed like "the world opened up." Charles Berg was hit in both legs; he couldn't walk.

"Roll me down in the ditch here and cover me up in this gully with enough stuff and give me a weapon and ammunition and come back tomorrow," Berg told his Bru. "They'll just pass over it."

"Nah, I'm going to take you with me," said the short Bru soldier, who carried Berg on his back. Berg carried the weapon.

The two men got to the middle of the river. "Stay here!" yelled Berg.

Hetrick, on the other side, looked incredulous. "What the —— you doing?"

"The cold water feels so good in these bullet holes in my leg!"

"Get outta that water! Git!"

Berg was medevaced 14 Feb '67.

During the Battle of the Hills, Patton attempted on several occasions to tell the Marine staff where his training patrols in country had fixed NVA positions. In one case, a patrol near 881-S had located a cave in which the NVA force was staging. At one point, six Bru "dragged" Patton to a hill to show him. But the Marines wouldn't "buy it." "What cave?"

5. CODES & THE BRU

Fred Patton had been at Khe Sanh some six months when he departed to take over FOB-1, and Skip Minnicks arrived. Skip moved the cadre to the Old French Fort position (from the house directly across from the MACV District compound, referred to as the "Howard Johnson's"), an abandoned French military position on the eastern edge of Khe Sanh village. Frequent visits were made to BV-33 and from them, much was learned of the NVA activity in the area. Skip Minnicks was able to run 19 missions until the Siege abruptly stopped the development of their guerrilla force.



OLD FRENCH FORT (Photo by James H. Whitenack)

On one mission, he found his team being chased by a large NVA force. "I didn't know how large; I just knew it was large. We got too close and couldn't get out. They were actually looking for us with flashlights; that's how confident they were that they were strong enough. The next day, help came and I completely disregarded the KAK code—everything. I said, 'Birddog, this is me.' He said, 'You go ahead, me!'"

There were several expedient Shackle Codes, of course. [Shackle Codes are a word or two with ten non-repeating letters in which each letter is assigned a number. For example, using "CHAPEL FUND", C=1, H=2, A=3, etc., or, A=1, P=2, E=3, and C=9. Shackling the numbers of a grid coordinate is simply a matter of giving the right letters. Numerous shackle codes are possible, for example:

QUIET WORLD	WALT DISNEY	CHAIN SMOKE
BLUE SHADOW	QUIET WORLD	VIOLET RAYS
DOG WHISTLE	FLY QUICKER	PEARL S BUCK
COUP DE GRAS	SQUAD FORCES	TEN OF CLUBS
TURKEY LOAF	THE COMPANY	STOMPED BUG
WHITE VODKA	JOURNALIST	AFORESIGHT
BLUE MONDAY	REPUBLICAN	BLACK SHIRT
FRUIT CAKES	BASILONE RD	DIRTYWOMAN
BLUE SHADOW	BRICK HOUSE	BROWN CHIEF
TWO NUMBERS	PHONY FEAST	SHACKELING
CHARLESTON	WASHINGTON	ENGLISH BOY
CRIMSON TAP	BALTIMORES	HEAVY DRINK
TWO QUAKERS	VOLKSWAGEN	SQUARE MIND
BLACKSTONE	FIVE CLOCKS	QUADRICEPS
QUALIFY NOW	LONG SQUEAK	BRIGHT POLE
WRONG BLAST	BEAUFORT SC	HYDRAULICS

One shackle code used by SOG teams operating out of Khe Sanh was "TIGERHOUND," the name of the USAF operation of 20th TASS flying the Bird Dog aircraft. Another was "the famous word." If the shackle code was lost, the team would be asked to remember "the famous word," and give their location by shackling the coordinates using it. [The "famous word" is "MOTHER- - -K"]

Under Skip Minnicks, the guerrilla unit trained, conducted missions, and a very close rapport developed between him, the other Americans in the Special Projects unit and the Bru. "Once I got very ill while I was at Khe Sanh. I had black water fever. I wouldn't eat. I'd quit eating. And they brought me their food, knowing that I could not honorably refuse it. Twice a day they brought it, and then they would stand there. They brought me out of my illness."

6. MAJ GEORGE QUAMO

Captain George Quamo arrived around August/September, 1967, and was promoted to Major 01 Oct. He was 27. His mission was to move the "Special Projects" effort from the initial planning, conceptual phase, to an operational phase (training and then conducting a long-range UW role in the Mu Gia/Tchepone area). Strikingly handsome, brilliant and fluent in several languages, including Vietnamese (he even was an instructor in Vietnamese at the school in Monterey, California), charismatic, Gunny George Bailey (of the

Marine 1st Radio Bn Det at Khe Sanh) referred to him as "the cat;" others thought he was the kind of person who might disappear and ten years later reappear having led a guerrilla force in some remote region of the world. He was a kind of "Lawrence of Arabia" of Vietnam. Capt Jerry Hudson, S-2 of 26th Marines during the Siege, remembers George sharing information he probably was not authorized to divulge, and yet it was the right thing to do under the circumstances. He notes:

"He was one super man. He and I spoke from the same 'Bible.' He had so much credibility; if he said it, I didn't care what somebody else said. Quamo was Special Forces to the heart. When Special Forces started I was a recon instructor at [Naval Amphibious Base], Little Creek, Virginia, and we got a message one weekend: we'd like you to train 50 Special Forces in submarine lock-in/lock-out. [Note: a technique for moving in and out of submerged submarines near a shoreline, day and night, to enter or depart for recon, involving use of special light signal devices, use of tanks, etc.] It was difficult to obtain a submarine—on a weekend—but I replied, 'Submarine will be available. Create curriculum. Be prepared to go.' This was in 1950 or so. We put 300 of them through there, 50 a week. And so we had very close ties with those people, and Quamo respected me because I knew alot of people he knew from back when that 'club' [of Unconventional Warfare types] was very small." He continues:

"Quamo wasn't directed by Lownds to come over; he came over on his own initiative. Quamo really saved us during the first few days of the attack by giving us all sorts of significant information—instead of simply forwarding it on to Saigon and then receiving, via Saigon, digested abstractions much later." [when the NVA units had long ago moved. The headquarters and units of the NVA were exceedingly mobile—even mortar positions. A Battalion or Regimental or Divisional Headquarters could be fixed in a specific location only to relocate very soon thereafter. There were so many NVA positions (sometimes manned, sometimes not), in fact, that the Target Information Officer in the FSCC, Mirza Baig, had over 3,000 targets within a 15 KM radius of KSCB (positions of anti-aircraft, automatic weapons, mortars, artillery, bunkers, fortified areas, trenches, logistic dumps, camp assembly areas, truck and track vehicle parking, rocket launchint sites, headquarters).

Quamo "..would sometimes talk in riddles: 'If you're looking for H&I fire, I would suggest this area here might be one super great area to concentrate on,' or 'If you're just not sure where to put your sensors and your other assets, this area over here seems to me to be alot of activity and you'll probably get some good target information if you concentrate in that area,' and that type of thing."

George Quamo had been an exceptional athlete in Averill Park, NY, high-school: he was either MVP or Captain of football, basketball, and baseball teams. He was Class President as a Junior, and the students wanted him as President the next year, but he declined in order to let someone else have the limelight. Colleges attempted to recruit him, but he enlisted in the Army on 23 Oct 1958, and trained at Ft. Benning, GA, and later attended the Officers Candidate School where he graduated as a 2Lt. (He subsequently attended Jump School, Ranger School, Vietnamese Language School). In Dec, 1959, he was assigned to Ft. Riley, KS, where he served as a Platoon Leader, XO, and Company Commander of infantry units on the post. Bob Stevens, his first commander, later wrote of George:

"I rode him hard and put him up wet every night. He spent a great deal of time at my house. I was a First Lieutenant and not making very much money but we enjoyed many a bologna sandwich together and he would fall asleep on our couch while watching TV.. My wife taught him how to dance and one lnight he was embarassed when my daughter kicked him as my wife was pregnant at the time. We both ended up in Special Forces with me joining first...

"We were assigned together almost continually. We were together at language school with George studying Thai and I had Korean. We met each other coming and going in Okinawa. It seemed that either one or the other was always off on mission. I had my car shipped over so he was never without transportation.. He used the car to cat around.. and people began to see the car parked in front of all the lively night spots.. When I was in Korea, George received orders for Vietnam. He bummed a flight over and we spent one hell of a week together. When I arrived in Vietnam we got together in DaNang for a weekend. George spoke fluent Vietnamese and was quite an operator.. The last time I saw George, he appeared concerned that he was predestined to die on that tour. He told me that he expected to go out in a big way and specifically mentioned an airplane crash. It worried me but both of us were doing a great deal of flying over enemy controlled territory and such a worry would only be a bit natural.

"We were close enough to embrace each other at departure and greeting times and did not give a damn who saw us or what they might think. Once we were walking in Carmel, CA, when we approached a group of hippie looking characters. I started to move aside when George said, 'Steve, this is our damn sidewalk and if it wasn't for guys like you and I these hippies wouldn't have a sidewalk to be on.' They moved aside very quietly. We were much closer than my brothers are to me... I am afraid that many men will go through life never knowing that kind of friendship and camaraderie. For that, I am truly sorry... Knowing that I had that type friendship made me much stronger as if I had a tremendous power base from which to operate. God, do I ever miss him."

Quamo was awarded a Silver Star for gallantry in action on 27 Mar '63 while moving through heavy enemy fire to put a friendly machinegun back in action and rallying the Vietnamese troops he was advising.

Then, when George Quamo reported as Team Commander of a SOG team in Mar '64, Don Koch recalls that Les Mason, the XO of the team, was several years older and a West Point graduate. George "..was absolsutely fantastic! He said, 'You guys all know what your job is; I don't have to tell you what your job is; let's go do it!' I mean, he didn't command that thing; he led it... He was brilliant. If they would have sent him to college, he would of got through college in a year and a half. The

people around him were just magnetized by him, and if you didn't have the magnetism, he somehow transferred it to you.

Quamo received a 2-year college equivalency in '66, completed Advanced Officer's Infantry Course the same year, and returned to Vietnam, arriving at Khe Sanh a few weeks prior to his promotion to Major 6 Oct '67.



GEORGE QUAMO (Photo from James Quamo)

7. ON THE PRECIPICE

George Quamo, Skip Minnicks, Doc Secor, and the remainder of Special Projects unit, having made contact with Col Soulang at BV33 now moved east to scour the Co Roc Massif. Formed when the Kontum Massif collided into the Southeast Asia mainland, lifting up an ancient sea bed of what is now Laos (like shoving a hand under a stack of newspapers), this sheer cliff of the limestone sediment from that sea bed, doused with monsoon rains over many millenia, had formed numerous caves where the water trickled into cracks. Caves, in ancient myths, are openings to the realm of demons of the deep, an entrance to the underworld; evil beings bent on destruction dwell here. [Co Roc, located at XD 741316, is a boomerrang-shaped mountain 14.8 KM southwest of KSCB, just inside the Lao border. It rises dramatically out of the Xe Pone Valley to 825 meters (2,706 ft.) with precipitous east (facing KSCB) and south slopes. The entire area is covered by forest and laced with trails and streams.]

Special Projects had developed to include three teams: PENNSYLVANIA, OKLAHOMA, and WISCONSIN. [The Americans in Special Projects had sent off to obtain an engraved Randall knife for Maj Quamo with the teams' names engraved as the Bru pronounced them: ST WISSICON, ST OKLAHOME, and ST PENNSYLVANE. The knife was never presented, however, due to what happened to Quamo]. Each team had three Americans and about seven Bru.

SFC Robert CAVANAUGH, Team Leader of Spite Team OKLAHOMA, had enlisted in 1953 at age 17, and become a communicator. He reenlisted to become a CW operaqtor, trained at Ft. Gordon and, upon graduation, was "drafted" into Special Forces at a time when they lacked qualified CW radio operators. [Note: these are those who are trained in Morse Code; "CW" = "Continuous Wave"]. He had served in Laos in 1961 during Operation WHITE STAR with Bull Simon and then transferred to 1st Special Forces Group on Okinawa from where he served in Vietnam part of every year from 1963 to 1968. He always volunteered for these missions, was never ordered. He also served in Project Delta with Col Beckwith.

Operating 07-17 January, the Special Projects unit, led by Maj Quamo and SFC Minnicks, discovered extensive NVA positions in Co Roc. On 11 Jan, a team found a 50-man foxhole complex right on the top of Co Roc. Two days later, a patrol observed 75 NVA soldiers and sighted heavy ground fire, including .50 cal machine-guns, firing at an airplane. On 15 Jan, a team observed long wire antenna adjacent a hut with indications of heavy foot traffic in the immediate vicinity.

Then, on the 14th, SFC Cavanaugh—along with Harlan "Rip" Van Winkle, landed atop Co Roc in a H-34. As the chopper approached, just as it sat down, the entire left side of the chopper suddenly exploded seriously wounding the pilot, the helicopter door gunner, most of Cavanaugh's team, and Rip's platoon leader, Lua. Rip was on the skids at the time, ready to leap. When he hit the ground, he started to stand up "..and something just told me to get down again, and I started to duck. As I ducked, the blade of the helicopter flopped around and knocked my helmet off! It just did a 360! I said, God, if I'd of just stood, it would of taken my head right along with it.'"

From the top of Co Roc, one could view KSCB and Lang Vei, but not Khe Sanh ville. Cavanaugh said "What are we going to do with this thing?" and "Rip" replied, "Go ahead and burn it." Cavanaugh reponsed, "I hate to tell you this, but it's going to take more than an O-2 to tell me to burn this chopper," and called Maj Campbell at the FOB who gave permission to destroy the bird after the wounded were extracted. It was burnt by thermite grenades.

Sgt Fusco had been carrying an American flag for five-and-a-half months, looking for the proper place to put it. The top of Co Roc Moujntain seemed appropriagte to him, and there it was planted.

On the 16th, SFC Cavanaugh happened to peer over the edge of the cliff and spotted a peculiar object sticking out of the face of the sheer cliff. It was man-made, not natural. "I hit one of my Bru and pointed down there. O they got excited! Then we found a little trail—you could hardly see it—a little trail that went down this

cliff face right there, and that's when we found the first of the big caves."

One cave contained two tons of rice. Three enclosed structures were located nearby which could house 30 men each. Approximately 900 meters southeast of the caves, an extensive bunker complex was discovered. The team counted 500 bunkiers and reported that many were of 10-man capacity. One large bunker was estimated to be a regimental command post.

Cavanaugh's team proceeded to burn everything. No NVA were encountered, but everyone knew they were there—somewhere. Donald Rumph later recalled: "Thaqt mountain top was unbelievable—the positions they had up there. It was just amazing. There weren't any troops there; they had gone some place else—didn't hurt my feelings at all!" The "missing NVA," however, did concern them: "..we talked about it afterwards; all of us knew that had there been anybody at all there, they would have eaten our lunches."

The three Special Projects team leaders (SFCs Skip Minnicks, Bob Cavanaugh, and Bob Baker) were reconning the area, came to a clearing near a river, and still hadn't made any contact. Cavanaugh said, "I'm going to check over the top of this rise—see if there's anyting over the top. You guys wait here." Skip and Bob Baker said, "No, we're going to go with you." "OK."

SFC Robert Baker was on SFC Cavanaugh's left; SFC Minnicks was on his right. The scene of what happened next is branded upon Cavanaugh's memory:

"We had maybe ten yards between us as we're walking up there, and to this day, I can still hear 'CLICK CLICK,' which is Bob and Skip taking their weapons off 'SAFE' and putting them on 'FULL AUTOMATIC.' I can hear that to this day. So we're going up there. As soon as we got to the hill, this guy jumped up out of a hole to shoot me, and when he did that, Bob was no more than three to four feet away from me, and the NVA swung his weapon away from me, and hit Bob."

SFC Baker took three very serious shots to his gut. Doc Secor went right to Baker and miraculously—considering the wounds—kept him alive. "I remember Bob kept hollering, 'I gotta take a crap! I gotta take a crap!' and Doc was saying, 'Don't do that! Don't do that! Just be good! Stay in there!' Doc told me later he didn't want Bob to take—it was something that was keeping him alive, giving him something to think about, keep his mind on something else."

SFC James W. Moore, at the FOB-3, heard Maj Quamo request the evacuation aircraft. "We were supposed to have our standard mission complement: 3 slick Hueys and 2 Cobras, and they pulled that off. So we had to ask the Marines—purely in asking, because their mission does not entail crossing that mythical border. When Maj 'Bulldog' Smith asked Col Lownds, Col Lownds said, 'I can't do that without permission from III MAF, even if I wanted to.' So, Maj Quamo, when he heard the answer: 'there will be no air extraction with the Marine helicopters at Khe Sanh—' he lost his temper and he became very profane; he came up on the Marine command frequency and he called some people a series of very bad names. Now some Marine pilot—a very large guy—in those H-34s—heard this, and he went up and got in his H-34."

A 200-ft. overcast and ground fog completely obscured forward visibility. The H-34 (Maj Charles R. Upshaw, Capt Bradford Jealous, Sgt. J.E. Johnston, Cpl Jesus L. Mena, Cpl Santiago Villarreal, and Cpl C.D. Chester), and a UH-1E (of FMO-3: Maj Charles R. Upshaw, Capt James H. Knox) proceeded at extremely low altitude, in and out of clouds, dodging mountains and hill masses, while also fully exposed to possible enemy ground fire.

SFC Baker was hoisted by the H-34 which then made the equally hazardous return trip to KSCB.

"..the weather was absolutely horrendous! A decision was made to try to get the whole team out, so we attempted to launch with 2 or 4 gunships and a number of transport helicopters—I forget how many., We didn't even make it to the end of the runway; we almost ran into one another. It was just an impossible weather situation to control that numb er of aircraft. So we all got back down on the ground—fortunately without a midair collision, and there was a debriefing. The Army people were screaming at us that we had to get this wounded guy out of there. An extremely gutsy guy named Charlie Upshaw, a Major, said that he would take a H-34 and go out and hoist this guy out if we would send one gunship to give him a little cover. Charlie led the flight over the treetops, up and down, in and out over the treetops. On at least one point I saw a guy run out of a hut, stand there in front of the hut, and opened up on us with a machinegun. All I did was give him 'the finger' as I went by—because if we turned around to go after the guy, we'd loose the H-34. We got to the zone, a depression, and Charlie found the team. He lowered his hoist and hovered motionless over this cliff situation—had to have been for 15 minutes—in this absolutely steady hover. They got the kid up in the plane. We made it back to Khe Sanh and all changed our underwear." [Note: the wounded man, SFC Robert Nelson Baker, died of wounds 21 Feb '68].

SFC James W. Moore recalls the Marine command at KSCB was extremely angry with the Marine pilots for the Co Roc rescue. [Note: Marine helicopters, unlike Army helicopters, are almost as rare as hen's teeth in combat, and this asset is very tightly controlled]. "But we told the Colonel—because we record everything that happens on the radio; we put it on tape: 'I don't know what you're going to do with the men, court-martial them or whatever, but we're going to put them in for a DFC for flying that kind of condition and making a rescue of a man under that circumstance.'"

The evening before the extraction, Maj Quamo had an early version of a "smart bomb" strike from Navy aircraft, and the morning of the extract, he fired a "mad moment," and the force departed with a bang by helicopter to Lang Vei (to brief them) from where they were trucked back to FOB-3 to brief both the Marines and FOB-3. SFC Cavanaugh's truck broke down shortly after departing Lang Vei, however.

"It's a funny feeling. When you run missions over into Laos, you always think when your plane picks you up and brings you to South Vietnam that you're safe. Our truck breaks down. I set out security. My guys were out dancing

in the road. They had the booty that we got out of the caves. I'm sitting on top of my truck, and about an hour later, another truck comes down there. It's almost dusk. The only thing that I can think of that might of saved my butt out there from that stupidity was that the next night Khe Sanh was attacked." [The NVA obviously did not want to show their hand by triggering prematurely their attack].

THE VILLAGE

1. WEAPONS CAPTURED

The District Headquarters in Khe Sanh ville (MACV Advisory Team #4, Captain Bruce B.G. Clarke, and the Vietnamese government, Capt Nhi) together with the co-located CAC OSCAR abandoned their position in the ville the afternoon of 22 January following a ferocious battle leaving some 200-300 NVA KIA and an immense amount of weapons.

Col Daniel Lord Baldwin, III, the chief of SOG's Op-35 (Ground Studies Division) in DaNang (in charge of all the four FOBs in I Corps) learned of the weapons and was determined that the NVA would not regain possession of them to use against us.

The bearing, voice, and actions of Col Baldwin might easily remind one of Patton: audacious, bold, and very direct. He had been in Vietnam two-and-a-half years, attended Army Staff College as a Captain in 1960 from where he worked in the Pentagon as a junior member of the Army Chief of Staff office. Promoted to Major, he volunteered to go to Vietnam in 1962 and served as an advisor to a Vietnamese Ranger unit and then a Vietnamese Airborne unit until he was shot and received his seventh Purple Heart (he had three from Korea). He then started to work for the Agency. Now he was at FOB-3, Khe Sanh:

"I happened to be there at the time, so I made the decision to go in there [in Khe Sanh ville]. Singlaub and people down at Saigon were at my neck telling me I should get out of there, and I quoted a thing from the Manual: A Commanding Officer should be where he can best influence actions of his command. I called up Lownds and said 'make it a "No Fire Zone".' I was going to go on the ground, but they said, 'Sir, we need you in the air. Can you fly as Gunner?' I said, 'Asshole, let me tell you, I qualified as Gunner in 1964.'" And off he went into the wild blue yonder.

Lt Thomas Simcox, a OCS classmate of George Quamo, led SFC Bruce R. Pross' team as the ground element into Khe Sanh ville. Capt Bruce B.G. Clarke accompanied them. The weapons were loaded aboard helicopters because they had not brought enough C-4 to destroy them in place. GySgt Max Friedlander [17th ITT], upon seeing them, was in awe: "They had a whole row of captured weapons out and I remember how awe-struck I was by those weapons that I saw—how modern. I couldn't believe that they had that kind of weapons, some pretty potent stuff in there."

2. ODA-221

Lee Dunlap had grown up in Wyoming, attended Jump School at Ft. Campbell in 1959 and then had been an instructor in Jungle Warfare School in Panama. He served three tours in Vietnam starting in 1962-63 when, as a buck Sergeant, his mission (operating in III Corps) was "to go to the hamlets and villages wherever there was a Regional or Popular Force unit stationed. They were still equipped with French weapons, and we'd re-equip them with American equipment, remain with them a couple of weeks to train them to do basic maintenance, clean rifles, fire mortars, do ambushes." Upon his return, he attended Officer Candidate School at Ft. Benning, and then returned to Ft. Bragg where he was Officer in Charge of the HALO Committee [High Altitude Low Opening parachute operation] and Skyhook Committee [a device used to snatch up personnel from the ground by a C-130 aircraft in which the ground personnel send up a balloon which trails a line to which the personnel are attached. The plane has a U-shaped fork in front which swings forward, snatches the line, and pulls up the personnel who, by air movement, are swung into the rear of the aircraft and reeled in. Originally developed by the Navy to retrieve scientists in remote islands, it was picked up by the CIA and then by the unconventional warfare units such as Marine Force Recon, Special Forces, and SEALs]. He then attended language school at Monterey for Thai for a year and went to Okinawa.

First Special Forces Group on Okinawa was assisting the effort in Vietnam along with 7th Special Forces Group at Ft. Bragg by sending TDY [Temporary Duty] units which wer mainly border surveillance efforts to deny enemy infiltration [rather than the true mission of a Special Forces A-Team in which the 12 members develop an indigenous division-sized unit]. The augmentation effort was known as SNAKEBITE.

Captain Lee Dunlap led Operational Detachment A-221, 1st Special Forces Group, to Vietnam in July, 1967, reporting to Col Harold K Rose in DaNang who gave him orders to support the effort of FOB-1 at Phu Bai. The other team leaders, John Corley and John McClasky, were to report to FOB-2 at Kontum, and Joe Bain, to FOB-3 at Khe Sanh.

Although FOB-1 had been conducting operations into Laos from a Launch Site at Khe Sanh since the summer of '66—a fact of which he might not have been aware—Dunlap was delighted, as were his men: "Already the word was out that Khe Sanh was not the best place in the world to go if you really valued your life. I went back and briefed the team we were going to Phu Bai, and everyone went 'O whew! Thank the Lord!'"

Some two hours later, Col Rose sent for Capt Dunlap. "On second thought—and after discussing this issue with Capt Bain—I've decided to send your A-Team to Khe Sanh and Capt Bain's team to Phu Bai."

"Well, Sir, would you explain to me the reasoning

(Continued on page 15)



WEAPONS CAPTURED IN KHE SANH VILLAGE BY SGT BRUCE PROSS' TEAM ***[Photos from Jerry Crews]***



(Continued from page 13)

behind that?"

"Well," said the Col, "Capt Bain has a pretty good argument. He just graduated from the Defense Language Institute in Chinese and the majority of the recon team and Hatchett force at Phu Bai are Cholon Chinese [They were not Nung]. And so we feel because of his language ability, he'd be much more—"

"Sir, you know that's a bunch of crap! That's just a bunch of bull. He's just trying—this is not fair."

"Well, I've made the decision."

Dunlap returned to his team who probably thought, he felt, "this is some Captain we got as a team leader!"

Operational Detachment A-221 was issued weapons—but no ammo—and departed for Khe Sanh to become one of the three basic components of the FOB -3 (the other being the nucleus MACSOG, CCN, soldiers, and secondly, George Quamo's Special Projects group. Of interest, the nucleus group included Charles Berg who had been medevaced on 14 Feb 67, and, four months later, the FOB-3 Sergeant-Major, Dick Pegram, saw him in DaNang and said, "Come on up with me to 'Camp Yuk'!" Camp Yuk referred to Khe Sanh). SOG was one of those clandestine units that reminds one of the "Mission Impossible" TV series where "the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of you." They were told, "If you get caught, you're on your own. We're going to deny your presence."

There were no ID tags or Geneva card for these folk. Weapons were not US; it was all foreign weapons and indigenous clothing. Recon teams were called "SPIKE" teams, normally composed of 3 Americans and 9 indig. Maj Lucious Campbell was in charge and a Maj White was there for awhile as his XO. FOB-3 officially became operational on 01 Nov 1967.

Arrival at Khe Sanh would have made anyone feel unwelcome. The XO of Det A-221, Harlan "Rip" Van Winkle, recalls: "We hadn't even spent the night in DaNang when we flew in from Okinawa. We flew into Phu Bai on a Caribou and spent the night there. The weather was so bad, we couldn't get up to Khe Sanh until late the next afternoon. A big Marine helicopter brought us there about three o'clock, 3:30, in the afternoon. There wasn't anybody there at first to meet us. We called up the Old French Fort, and Sergeant First Class Walt Hetzler, who had been my Squad Leader back when I was in the 503d Airborne Combat Team in Okinawa back in 1962—he shows up with a sawed-off M2 Carbine and 2 20-round magazines taped back to back in an old, beat-up deuce-and-a-half.

"You got any ammo?" asked Rip.

"Nah, we don't need no ammo," replied Hetzler.

Thoughts raced through Rip's head like bullets from a sprung ambush he anticipated: five of the new team had been to Vietnam previously and the other seven Americans had read enough After Action Reports to make them true believers about the evils lurking in old French plantations. The monsoon season was pouring its misery and it was four days before the national elections (when one would expect enemy activity to attempt to disrupt elections). The area surrounding Khe Sanh was by no means pacified. And there were no damn bullets!

The men loaded everything into the vehicle and went down the dirt road from KSCB to Route 9: "We skidded into a hole that must of been 3-ft. deep, got stuck, and all of us piled out. Lee and I just got everyone off to one side of the road, set up a perimeter and said, 'Well, we'll throw rocks at 'em or something if we get attacked.' "Three of us had been in country before: Lee Dunlap, Chuck Treddenick, and James Fusco, nobody else."

Eventually the truck started up and all drove to the Old French Fort. It, too, was unwelcoming, not having been prepared. "The main building—the kitchen/operations room was best, and the rooms for Capt Wayne Snow and Lt Cripes and Tony Di Bello were decent, but as for the rest—we ended up building hootches outside."

They were soon briefed by Skip Minnicks, Bob Cavanaugh, Capt Wayne Snow, and Tony Di Bello: "..it was just solid 'red' around us. Well, I think we put the Marines in 'blue,' but other than that, I think there were 5 or 6 NVA Divisions that were damn near shouting distance, identified. [Note: on tactical maps, "red" indicates enemy positions and units; "blue" indicates friendly positions and units]. That had a tendency to get your attention in a hurry."

The unit began recruiting and training. Not all Bru were non-Communist. (A considerable number, in fact, were Communist and had fled to the hills back in 1962 when the Strategic Hamlet Program resettled most of the Bru near Route 9 and Khe Sanh village—to provide them with security. Following the Siege battle, the Bru were resettled at a refugee camp at Mai Loc, just south of Cam Lo, and a considerable numb er of the Bru refugees were "now-former" Communists that had previously fled to the hills and now fled to safety.)

Rip Van Winkle feels "we really thought that we were probably getting about one [Communist] out of four [recruits]. Certainly they weren't hard-core Communist, but they leaned that way. We ended up with what we thought was a pretty good nucleus. We never got as large a unit as what we were supposed to get, however. The mission was to develop a kind of "haymacker" force, a battalion of 250 Bru broken down into companies led by American NCOs. They would exploit targets detected by a Spike Team or a small "hornet" team, such as a motor park. [Note: A "hornet" team was a platoon of 35-40; a "hatchett" force was company-size, 80, up to a whole battalion, 250]. The Spike Teams were permanent party. The operational mission was to emplace electronic sensors across Laos as part of the "McN amara Line" electronic barrier project, IGLOO WHITE.

Marine recon teams occasionally stopped by the SOG unit at the Old French Fort. "Sir, if we find ourselves in a hum, can we count on you?"

The very seasoned soldiers looked at the 19-year-old recon team members: "You got it. By the way, it looks like you're a little over-loaded. Wanna leave a little bit of that crap here?" [I recall a soldier at Lang Vei telling me that it was a good idea to carry a belt with nothing but a

knife on it, along with everything else. If you have to run, shed everything except the b elt with the knife so you can move faster and maneuver better].

Marine recon were familiar with the SOG soldiers. As the new FOB-3 was being constructed, the men regarded it as a gold mine of new equipment.

The SOG team continued to improve their Old French Fort positions and Bru and American soldiers filled sand bags. Capt Dunlap woke up one morning, lifted the tent flap, "..and there, squatting down on their haunches, were about a hundred Bru Montgagnard wives!"

"Hey, what's this?"

One of the Bru replied, "They here fill sandbag."

Every morning they arrived and were put to work, paid from a footlocker full of money—for intelligence purposes or whatever, avoiding the requirement for tons of paperwork.

3. FOB-3 AT KSCB

It had become evident, however, as early as late July '67, that enemy forces were moving in the area, and the SOG unit would have to relocate to the main Marine base for security. "We told III MAF there's a bunch of bad guys out there and they're going to come and jump on your bones, and they ignored us."



FOB-3 PLAQUE ISSUED TO STAFF SGT HARVE W. SAAL

The 65 Seabees of Detail JULIETT, US Naval Construction Battalion TEN (NMCB-10) arrived on 11 October from GiaLe to begin construction of FOB-3. That this was to be a major installation is reflected in the description of the work order: 54 underground bunkers, 16' x 36'; eight standard 16' x 32' tin-roofed huts; six underground bunkers, 32' x 36'; 10 standard burn-out heads (4-hole); one Strad building, wood 40' x 100'; 3 lounges, wood frame 20' x 60'; one wood frame vehicle repair 20' x 40'; 3 standard 250-man messhalls; 3 standard 400-man showers, 16' x 32'; one wood frame dispensary, 20' x 72'; one wood water tower; 3 electrical and water distribution systems, and 16 helo pads with revetments and matting. All material to be provided by the Special Forces. Of course, the proposed cost of $370,000. is only material and does not include labor! Phase I ended 28 Dec 67 when 11% of the project had been completed.

Maj Lucius Campbell, CO of FOB-3, ensured the construction effort proceeded despite the rains of Biblical proportions from the days of Noah. "If it hadn't been for Campbell, that place probably wouldn't of got built. He was dead on anybody who took one piece of material to build a creature-comfort thing. He understood that if we're going to get this place built, we need all these materials; we don't need guys building their own personal hootches. The other thing he was death on—he said: we only have so many trucks up here, and if I find you guys didn't pull maintenance on those trucks! Campbell was a super-duper manager."



AERIAL PHOTO OF FOB-3 (USAF PHOTO OF 28 JAN 68)

Although still attempting to fill the teams and train them, commanders and their staffs in DaNang needed information on the rapidly evolving enemy encroachment and encirclement of Khe Sanh. Operational requirements were not lessened.

One of the first missions run by FOB-3 was a disaster, not because of unqualified or untrained men, but simply due to the overwhelming presence of NVA. Eastern Laos and the "Trail" were strategic areas for them, and they were not about to permit us to work that area; their counter-recon screen was highly successful.

On 05 Jan 68 SFC John T. Gallagher of FOB-3 launched in a UH-1D of the 176th Aviation Co. (Crew: Aircraft Commander CWO Dennis C. Hamilton, Pilot WO-1 Sheldon D. Schultz, Crew-chief SFC Ernest F. Briggs, and Crewman SFC James D. Williamson).

As Hamilton's aircraft approached the LZ (at 3,000 ft. AGL, Above Ground Level) it was struck by anti-aircraft fire, immediately entered a nose-low vertical dive, and crashed at XD701021 where, upon impact, it burst into flames that were 10-20 ft. high. Four attempts to get into the area of the downed helicopter failed due to intense ground fire. During the next two days more attempts to reach the wreckage failed.



JOHN GALLAGHER *[Photo from Harve Saal]*

4. PATROL TO KHE SANH VILLE

Once the Siege was triggered and General Tompkins laid the restriction of no Marine patrols (other than local wire checks), Col Lownds asked FOB-3, in effect, "Do you think that some of your folks would be willing to do some of the local patrolling?" It was not a tasking, simply a suggestion—for everyone's benefit, including FOB-3! The response: "I don't see why not. Right now we're in a pickle and we'd like to see what's out there too!"

When the Khe Sanh District HQ (along with MACV Advisory Team 4 and CAC OSCAR) relocated to FOB-3, debrief of Capt Bruce B.G. Clarke and discussions with FOB-3 staff raised a question as to what kind of a force had attacked the District. Indeed, a JTAD report had indicated that it was a NVA battalion which had attacked while two regiments lay in ambush to annihilate any who might attempt to reinforce or rescue them.

As a result, on 26 Jan, Maj Lucius Campbell, the FOB-3 Commander, at the request of Col Lownds, tasked HF DENVER to dispatch a patrol to determine the status of Khe Sanh ville, whether it was occupied by the NVA.

On 26 Jan, Capt "Rip" Van Winkle led the patrol (which consisted of six other Americans and 24 Bru) through the east gate of KSCB, through the garbage dump, and proceeded southeast along the ridge line through Poilane's coffee plantation to Route 9. At that point the patrol turned southwest, following the "highway" into Khe Sanh ville.

Meanwhile, MSGT William S. Wood, whose Spike Team (TIGER) had recently been filled with new Bru due to losses in connection with his team's involvement in the Gallagher recovery attempts, decided that he needed to train his team as well as find out what was in Khe Sanh ville, and proceeded out FOB-3, past the house of the Millers, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, to warn them of the NVA, but they had already departed. [Note: On Fri, 05 Jan, Col Lownds had "strongly suggested" to John and Carolyn Miller that they leave the Khe Sanh area with their children for their safety, but to do it in such a way to avert panic. Since there was a scheduled Bible Conference, there was a legitimate reason for them to leave, and they did. Amazingly, on 20 Jan 68, John Miller reappeared at KSCB, much to the chagrin of the regimental command. It was a day of Lt Tonc's appearance and of INDIA Company's contact on 881-North. The MACV J-2, LtGen Philip Davidson was visiting. Mr. Miller returned in order to rescue his Bru helper, and both safety departed].

Rip's team moved without incident the 2 KM to Route 9, another 1.5 KM northeast of the Old French Fort and another 2.5 KM to Khe Sanh ville. Later he noted: "In retrospect I feel rather foolish that we by-passed the fort and proceeded directly to Khe Sanh. For the next three days it was obvious the NVA had fortified the French Fort with anti-aircraft positions." Cautiously, the team proceeded on the south side of Rt. 9 to the east side of the village until they were approximately 150 meters east of the MACV compound. TIGER had tagged on to the rear of Rip's force just prior to reaching a small cement bridge. Rip was beginning to think that if NVA were there, they weren't there in strength.

SFC James Fusco, leading the point element, signalled Rip forward, and the decision was made to advance the point element up the highway to the MACV compound. Rip would move the first squad through the houses on the north side of the highway; the other squads would move through the houses on the south side of the highway. The point element would be 50 meters to the front.

The point element proceeded with SFC FUSCO number two in the order of movement, and the lead Bru made it to within 20 meters of the compound when heavy fire broke out, especially from 2 machineguns inside the compound. Miraculously, no one was hurt, but the point element became pinned down in a shallow ditch between the road and the compound.

Rip, meanwhile, together with four Bru, moving through houses on the north side of Rt. 9, had reached a position directly across the road from Fusco when the fire broke out, and was able to spot at least two NVA positions in the compound.

"Then occurred a humorous, albeit black humor, incident that I recall with great clarity. I'm not sure how funny Fusco thought it was, as he was on the receiving end. The only weapons immediately available were four M-16s and one M-79. The M-16s were not making much of an impression so we decided to try the M-79. The problem was the high fence running past the compound and less than 20 feet from Fusco and one Bru. I was about 20 yards from the fence. The gunner was unable to lob rounds over the fence and effectively bring fire on the NVA positions. Fusco was beginning to feel the heat and said he would appreciate more appropriate action. I took the M-79, told

Fusco to get his butt down and attempted to fire directly through the fence. The round didn't make it through, detonating in the wire. The next instant Fusco is cussing and saying, 'Damn it! Captain, you shot me!' The next round made it through the fence and took out the enemy position. Within a minute SP5 John Frescura had commandeered a M-60 machinegun and charged up the middle of the highway laying down a solid base of fire. Under cover of this fire and some belated gunship support we were able to extract Fusco and the rest of the point element."

Meanwhile, TIGER fired into the back (south side) of the compound and received no return fire. When the gunships were called in, TIGER fell back to the ditch along Rt. 9 and worked his way up to the west side of the first road into the compound. Wood recalls "the loud, outraged yells of accusation from those across the driveway" when the M-79 round detonated in the wire fence. Wood obtained a M-60 from a Bru and fired a burst. SSG Gary Lee "Doc" Crone came up with Xom (Wood's 01) and Tu (interpreter) and the two Bru got inside the fence along the highway into the yard just east of the compound while Crone stood straddling Wood next to the fence. Wood shouted while all fired, enabling those on the west side of the driveway to dash back, one at a time.

Capt Lee Dunlap, meanwhile, had gone to the Marine COC on KSCB to request artillery support for the engaged patrol. Several Bru were dead, one of the medics was shot in the leg [Crone], and a Weapons Sergeant was shot—had a AK-47 bullet sticking out in the bump behind his ear [Fusco]. There were, quite obviously, no "friendly civilians" in Khe Sanh town!

The Marine Major replied, "I can't fire any artillery in there; there might be friendlies in the town." [Note: Remember, many, many rounds of artillery had already been fired into Khe Sanh ville in support of the District/CAC OSCAR on 21/22 Jan].

"There are no friendlies! My people are under fire!" replied the astonished Dunlap.

"I'm not going to help," was the response from the Major.

Dunlap walked over to the Air Force TIGER-HOUND shop. "What do you need?" asked the USAF LtCol. Dunlap explained, and within a few minutes of declaring a "PRAIRIE FIRE ALERT" "..had more jets than I could handle and they went down there and just blew the hell out of the place." [Note: SOG teams could do that. They had first priority on all air support and could declare an alert and receive aircraft from all over Vietnam within minutes]. A Marine FAC reported all that was happening to the regimental command, and Dunlap was summoned to report to the regimental commander ASAP. He expected he would meet with Col Lownds, be ripped, and he would say, "Well, Sir, I just had to use my best judgment as a commander."

Instead, as he entered the command bunker, he encountered the Major—Col Lownds wasn't aware of what had happened, having taken a rare break to catch a few Zs. When Dunlap explained what he had done, the Major became livid. "That was dereliction of duty! Consider yourself under arrest!"

Dunlap responded, "Well, Sir, fine. We will have to sort this out later. Now I got lots of stuff to do. My team is coming out."

"Marine! Restrain that person!" The Major's voice had become loud—arousing the sleeping Lownds.

Col Lownds, now awake, walked over, "What's going on here?"

Dunlap explained and Lownds said, "Captain, why don't you go on over and check on your men, and I'll take care of this."

Back at the MACV compound in Khe Sanh ville, Wood managed to cover the men coming back. A Bru crawled up with another couple belts for the M-60 and with a few bursts, everyone was back across the driveway. Tu and Xom left, being out of ammo, and Wood told Crone, the medic, to care for the wounded man (Fusco). Wood continued firing until he realized he, too, was very low on ammo, looked around and discovered he was alone.

"Cursing mightily, I started to pull back, and as I got up I noticed the muzzle flask from an apparent machinegun that was firing from a bunker where Hwy 9 bent to the left, about 600 meters to the west. By the time I'd moved 150-175 meters back, I'd started down the slope to the bridge, and he couldn't see me anymore. But I was also out of ammo. and became aware of someone moving among the houses on the south side of the Hwy, back about 12-15 meters from the road. What's worse, they were shooting at me. I took to diving across the remaining driveways, but still whoever it was (I think there was only one, or at most, 2 of them) put a bullet through my boot, just above the sole at the instep. Fortunately I was wearing a thick, Army issue arch support, which the bullet destroyed. Hurt my foot, too, but didn't break the skin."

Grenville Sutcliffe jokingly recalls that one of the reasons he specifically went on this patrol to Khe Sanh ville was to retrieve some bagpipes left there by PFC Taylor of the Marine CAC OSCAR Platoon O-2; Taylor's Scottish flag had been rescued, and was atop one of the main bunkers at the FOB, until it became a NVA aiming stake, but his bagpipes had remained in the ville, Sutcliffe thought. Actually, they had been retrieved!.

Sutcliffe recalls the scene of pandemonium of the tense withdrawal: "By this time the North Vietnamese were getting really hostile. They were coming back on us as we were withdrawing from the village. We started by laying down helicopter gunfire to keep them down. That was followed up by A1Es, propeller aircraft. They were able to shoot the NVA up enough that they stopped coming back after us. As we withdrew, we were going into houses to destroy rice and other things that would be beneficial to the NVA.

"The North Vietnamese started coming back pretty heavy. By this time we had the F4s coming over dropping cluster bombs. At this point one of the fighters was screaming overhead dropping cluster bombs. Instead of the bomb hitting the ground, the bomblets bouncing out and detonating, the main pod hit, bounced up in the air and the cluster bombs flew toward us and detonated. Fortunately no one was injured. My CAR-15 submachinegun

(Continued on page 20)

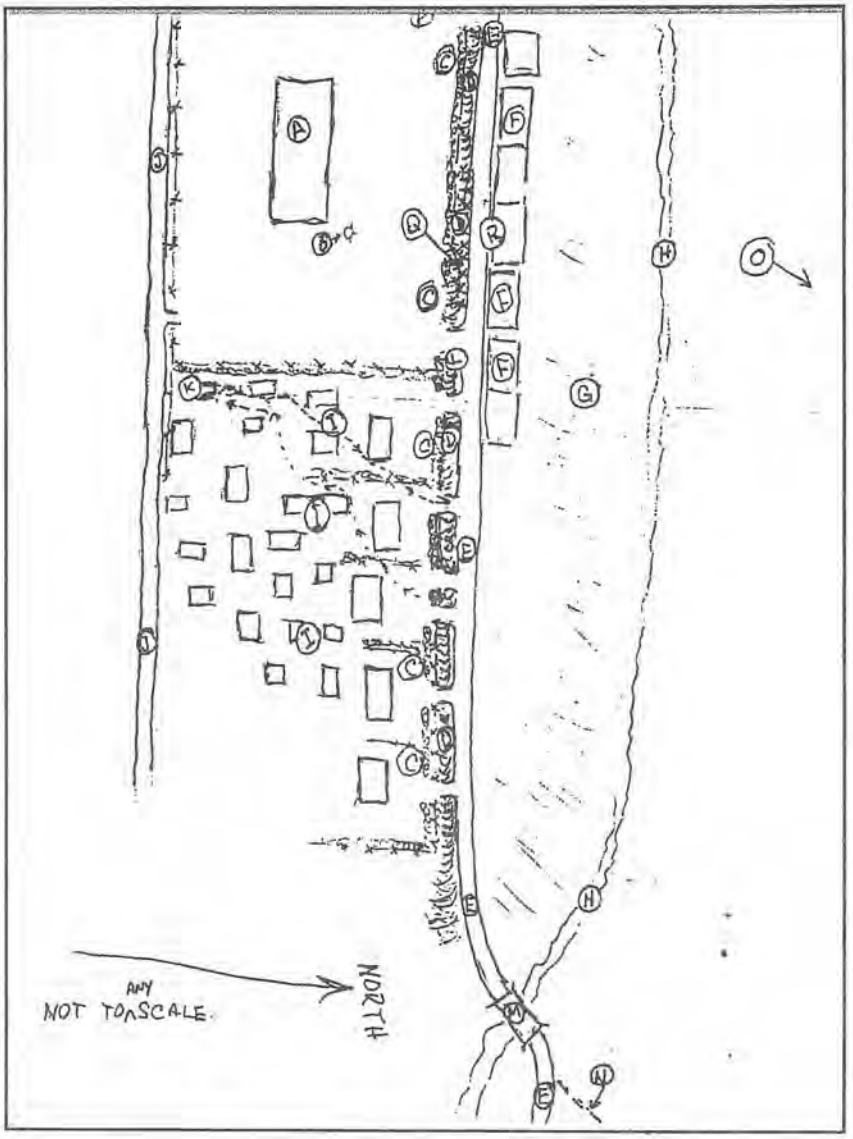

DIAGRAM OF ACTION IN KHE SANH VILLAGE (By William Wood)

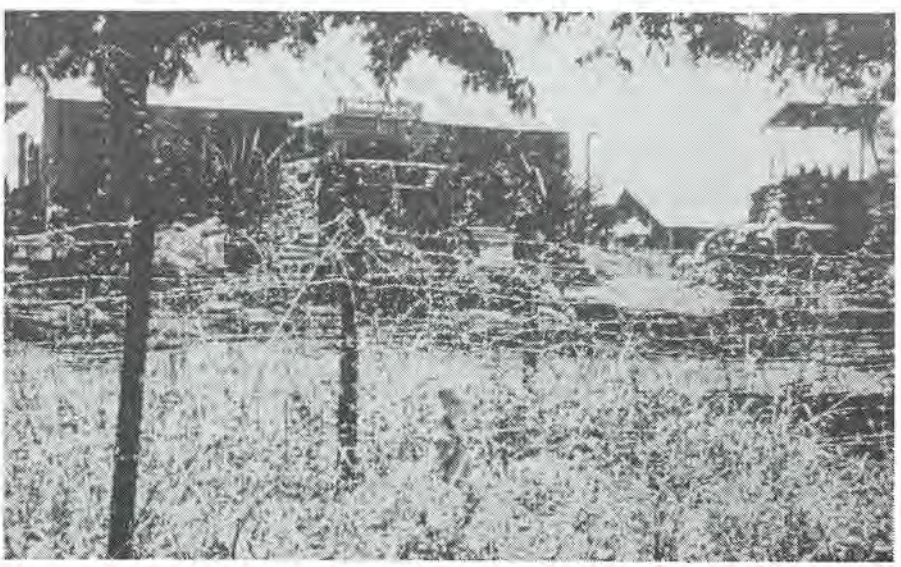

WIRE FENCE IN FRONT OF DISTRICT HQ (Photo by author, Aug/Sep 1967)

LEGEND

A District HQ. Large, hip-roofed stucco or cement bldg., 1-1/2 stories with all fire coming from ground-floor windows which were maybe 1 ft. from ground. Surrounded by clear yard. 75-100 meters wide on all sides. A few tall trees, no brush or low cover.

B Bunker, 10-15 meters from corner of bldg.

C Wire 3 or 4 strand cattle fence about 3-4 ft. tall with thin hedge growing in it. Cut by driveways.

D Shallow ditch, 1-1/2 to 2 ft. deep, cut by driveways runnint over culverts maybe 1 ft. in diameter.

E Route 9

F Row of buildings. All shops closed, all people gone.

G Steep slope

H Small stream maybe 3-4 ft wide

I Bldgs, flimsy.

J Lane or alley behind HQ

K Where my Spike Team moved to initially to put flanking fire. (Routes to and from indicated.

L After being recalled so gunships could fire, I took psn here with Crone standing above me. Most of Bru spread down the ditch to my rear.

M Railless cement bridge; a good chopper pad for medevacs.

N Path to access road to KSCB

O Hill 471 and pimple

P Bunker 500-600 meters to west from where fire was taken

Q Approx. location of those stuck west of the driveway.

R Approx psn of Rip and party, behind 4x4 posts in front of a shop.

(Continued from page 18)

jammed. I grabbed Sgt Fusco's M16. We were able to get a chopper in and get him medevaced.

"We continued our withdrawal under fire back toward Khe Sanh. We were being shot heavily, green tracers ripping in on us at one point and I returned a lot of fire. I'll never forget this green tracer coming straight at me. I kind of rolled to my right and that tracer ripped just above my shoulder and to the left of my head as I rolled down. It was really strange because everything was in slow motion.

"We continued to work our way back toward Khe Sanh. Just as we approached the outer perimeter next to the drop zone the NVA started dropping artilery on us. I was still pretty green and dove into a drainage ditch that was filled full of mud, which jammed my submarine gun. Everyone had a big laugh as the new lieutenant.

"As the artillery barrage continued a Sergeant and I started joking with each other. I got out of my ditch, ran over to his crater and jumped in. Artillery was blowing off all around us. Not to be out done by a Lieutenant he walked over to another crater holding his hands up as if it were raining. We should have both been killed."

SFC Fusco had been evacuated to C Med where a surgeon removed an AK-47 round from his neck, much to the relief of "Rip" who had assumed—as did Fusco—that it was fragments from the exploding M-79 round, never considering the possibility of him being shot by a NVA rifleman at the exact moment Rip fired the M-79. [Fusco survived, only to die of a heart attack while hunting shortly after his retirement]. A Den, the Bru platoon leader who had replaced Lua, had been killed, along with two other Bru.

Majs Campbell and Quamo told Rip that FOB radio intercept operators, who had been monitoring the NVA radios, determined that the NVA leaders were concerned about still holding Khe Sanh village, and a larger force was being dispatched to reinforce. Rip commented, "They're welcome to it. My mission was to confirm they were there. They are."

That evening, a delegation of Bru soldiers approached SFC Wood wanting to know if he could get the camp truck and return them to their villages—which were west of Lang Vei. They said they hadn't been home in two or three days. "Sometimes I wasn't sure the Bru were real," notes Wood.

5. HILL 471

[The following is written by William Wood concerning the incident on Hill 471 involving his team, ST TIGER]

"On 29 January 1968 we left the camp later than I would like to have, and later than I'd planned. As I recall there was no one big delay, but several small, annoying ones. Among other things we had to turn in all our emergency radios: they were in short supply and another team was to launch that day. It must have been 0830 or later, and I was irritated, when we walked out the gate: me, Don Voorhees, Gary Crone, Xom, To, Tu, and 7 other Bru whose names I can't remember, and Mike Mahoney as a straphanger. Mahoney was new to the FOB and wanted to gain experience. I think he and Crone had known one another somewhere before, because I seem to remember Gary asking if his coming along would be all right. Maybe that was one of the things that held us up, getting Mahoney integrated into the patrol. Voorhees and 6 of the 7 Bru were new on the team. This would be their first patrol out of the FOB.

"There was a heavy fog that morning, which was one of the reasons I was hurrying. The fog at Khe Sanh usually lifted between 0900 and 0930, and I wanted to be close up under the hill mass before it did. We were going to the 'pimple' southeast of Hill 471 to look down into Khe Sanh town and, if necessary, up onto Hill 471 to take a look around.

"We moved directly toward the hill, across the shallow valley that exgtended west and southwest from our perimeter. Tu (the point man) chose a path where the weeds were shorter (avoiding the taller weeds where some others and I had spread the gasoline before) and we moved right along. Still, we were too slow. The fog lifted while we were in the middle of that open area, still 900 meters or more from the foot of 471. We continued to the hill and mounted it sorta diagonally, up across Hill 471 to the saddle. I noted the grass, which was everywhere about 2-1/2 to 3 ft. high, had been moved in a swatch 300 or more meters wide on the east slope of 471 itself. The fire lanes I had experience with were usually from 1 to 3 ft. across, so I ignored the short grass. There was plenty of evidence that the AF had bombed hell out of the general area in the last couple of days. Those bomb craters hadn't been there two days before.

"Upon reaching the saddle between Hill 471 and the "pimple" we stopped, or rather the Bru stopped so the rest of us, perforce, stopped too. The Bru could best be described as agitated, saying 'No! No! Beaucoup VC!' I motioned toward the top of 471 and agreed. They were all huddled together. After some minutes of talk I said something like, 'Well, come on,' or 'Well, let's go and started walking toward the pimple. In the saddle and on the nearest slope of the pimple the grass was normal length, 2-1/2 - 3 ft. The crest of the pimple was only 6 or 8 ft. higher than where we were, but that ridge got higher to my right front. And (this occured to me in the Casualty Clearing point at the airstrip) I was walking on a path. Not a bare-earth path but a trace where the grass had been worn down and beaten off by passing feet. At that time I never thought anything of it. It was not my most perspicacious day.

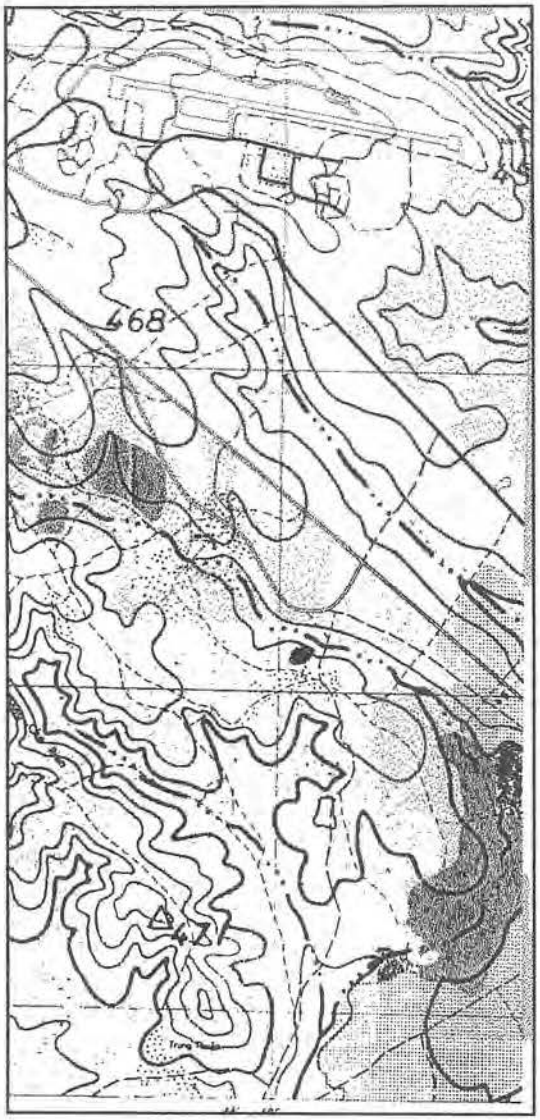

KSCB TO HILL 471

"About 12 or 15 meters along something caught my attention and I took a couple steps to my left for a closer look. All the grass on the front (east) of the pimple was mowed, too. This was a fleeting glimpse because as I stepped aside, we took fire from directly ahead of us, from a range of about 5 meters. I returned two magazines full auto but don't think I hit anyone, as the 5.56 bullet was notorious for its poor penetration in grass or weeds. About the time I finished firing a few (3 or 4) M-79 rounds hit the top of the pimple. I looked back to find that I was alone again. Crone lay face-up some 3-4 meters behind me and I could hear a lot of firing back about where we had stopped to talk. No more M-79 rounds came past me. I scrambled back to Crone to find he'd been shot in the right cheek, the right eye, and the right forearm, which was broken. He may have had other wounds, too. As I tried to find signs of life I noticed that his head was intact: the bullets hadn't exited although there was a large pool of blood under the back of his head. It causes me some embarrassment to admit that what distressed me the most at that moment was not Crone's death (we were good friends) nor the manner of it, but the fact that the cord to the PRFC-25 handset had been shot in two, and we had no other radios.

"While trying to get Crone up into a fireman's carry his .45 fell out onto the ground. I picked it up, finding I couldn't carry him; he was a big man, 6'1" or 2" and 200 lb. or more. Movement caught my eye from the grass on the near slope of the pimple. It was a soft cap (I think). I fired 3 or 4 shots from the .45 at it and it disappeared, and when there was no more movement there, I fired the rest of the clip into the radio. (Note: I am not that good of a pistol shot. Maybe I scared him, or maybe what I saw was a waving tuft of grass. If I hit him, with a .45 at a range of 10 meters, it would have been a miracle as great as any sanctified by the Church). Firing from the pimple had stopped. Maybe, in a crouch I was in defilade.

"Started to drag Crone back to the rest of the team, but a grenade came in and knocked me loose. I scuttled back to where the rest of the team was to find Xon wounded in the ankle, one Bru dead (the M-79 gunner) and only Voorhees and 3 Bru firing at the top of 471. Voorhees greeted me by asking: 'Did you see that wire?' I had not. It ran in the grass beside the trail and led to the pimple. It looked like the heavy WD-1, not WD-110. Now we were taking fire from the pimple, too. I counted 2 MGs and a couple of AKs there. I told Voorhees that Crone was dead and asked after Mahoney and the rest of the Bru. He replied while changing magazines that he didn't know. They had disappeared when the shooting started, presumably downhill, back to the east or northeast. He sounded a bit upset about it. Then (he was on the other side of a grass clump from me) he announced that Xon was killed. I remarked that in my opinion it was about time we left, and suddenly I was alone again. Not for long, though. After a hurried scan of the area (during which I spotted not less than 4 auto weapons on the military crest of 471) without sign of Mahoney or the other Bru, I was gone too.

"Caught up with Voorhees and crew in a bomb crfater 20 or 25 meters from the crest of the saddle. We may have been in defilade again, as the NVA had stopped firing. I mentioned that a bomb crater, unless you could see out, was a poor position. They scrambled out and we ran the roughly 50 or 60 meters to the foot of the hill, across the small dry stream bed there, and continued across the flat for 75-80 meters to a thin hedgerow at the foot of a fallow field. Voorhees and 2 Bru, in the lead, got through this hedgerow but Tu, apparently beat out, slowed to a walk just before reaching it. I slowed, too, put my hand on his shoulder (he was on my right) and was saying something like: Let's go, Tu, when more than one auto weapon opened fire behind us. I think we had come out of defilade, and one weapon was aimed directly at Tu and me. I could see the bullets striking just ahead of us. I think one or more rounds went between my legs and a couple between Tu and me. One went through my knee (it felt like someone slapped me with a ruler) and several hit Tu in the abdomen and chest. I pushed Tu through the hedgerow while screaming the oldest cliche in war movies, 'I'm hit!' and dived through myself. The firing stopped again. The burst that hit Tu and me was an almost classic example of

what they used to teach in MG or BAR classes of what happens if you fire a bipodded weapon with your shoulder high. The bullet stream travels from lower left to upper right, where there is a cluster of holes.

"After ascertaining I couldn't help Tu I took out my CAC pad from the last mission (the only paper I had) and printed on the back of it: 'In deep trouble. Team split. Some wounded. Need out. Wood.' This I gave to the Bru and in my best pidgin Bru, mangled English, and hand & arm signals, told them to take it to camp and give it to an American. They left, moving carefully along the hedgerows and not hurrying.

"At that time I was wearing tiger stripe trousers and carried 3 field dressings and 2 cravats in my right hip pocket. I pulled up my trouser leg and checked the wound. It wasn't bleeding very much but from the position of the exit hole, square in the middle of my kneecap. I didn't think I wanted to try any marathon runs. I dug in my hip pocket for a dressing and in 5 tries produced 5 cravats. On the 6th try I gave up and tied a cravat around it.

"Turned out sending the message was unnecessary, as someone in the FOB had heard the firing and launched a gunship to see what was going on. By the time Voorhees had cached Tu's body under the hedgerow and I had bandaged myself (and given me a shot of morphine: I anticipated some strenuous activity) the gunship found us. We both frantically popped panels and tried a mirror flash, but there wasn't enough sun. Neither of us was willing to give away our position with smoke. The gunship overflew us and dropped a smoke grenade, which unfortunately landed about 500 meters south of us. Not being sure what he was doing, both Voorhees and I expended a couple magazines in that direction, then fled.

"We moved generally north under cover of the hedgerow, eventually arriving in a field of elephant grass north of a chain of the small triangular rice paddies that the Bru built in the ravines in that country. I don't know how we got there: we must have gone around them. For sure I wasn't wading any rice paddies. (One thing Voorhees said bothered him during this hegira: He was running along in a crouch and every time he looked back I was keeping up with him—crawling! If he'd slowed down even a little, I think I'd've passed him.)

"We weren't long in the elephant grass when Lt. Thieu (don't know if he was related to the President or not) appeared overhead in his raggedy old H-34. I scooted up to the edge of the rice paddy and popped a panel. Voorhees was popping another from the middle of the elephant grass and shouting: 'Why doesn't he come down?' with profane embellishments. Being more familiar with the way Viet pilots operated, I said: 'He's looking us over. He'll be down in a minute!' Sure enough, in about that time he 'dropped it on a wing' (if you can do that in a helicopter) and down he came, like those Viet pilots did—like a rock! Just before he hit the ground he pulled pitch and RPM. The airframe shuddered, the engine screamed, the rotorblades groaned, and he hovered 3 ft. above the rice paddy. From some part of 471 someone shot out the left windshield (so I was told) and the rest of the bird began to grow holes. I pointed at my knee and motioned him toward me. He came, sideways across the paddy. Scully jumped off, Voorhees came up, they threw me onto the chopper and scrambled on behind me. Scully asked about the rest of the team and I told him: we're it, meanwhile shouting for Lt. Thieu go Go! Go! Go! He looked down between his seat and the driveshaft housing and grinned at us, and flew away. I think at least one gunship was making runs on Hill 471 at this time, but I was busy with my own affairs. Also, I don't remember anyone on the chopper except Scully and the crew chief.

"Scully had a PRC-25 with which he talked to the FOB, so on our landing (very close to the aid station bunker) there were people there with a stretcher. Someone helped me shift my butt from the chopper to the stretcher and someone else grabbed my shoulders and laid me down. I bounced back up to a sitting position. He laid me down. I bounced back up, screaming, 'Wait a Goddamn minute!' and took off my belt. One cannot lie comfortably on loaded canteen covers. Besides, they should have been grateful. Without the belt I was 75-80 pounds lighter.

"They carried me down into the aid station bunker, and God knows how they managed the corners. After bouncing me up and down and flopping me from side to side to see if I had any more holes (they did me almost as much damage as the bullet had), Scully slit up my trouser leg, cut off my cravat, and said, 'You're going out,' and put a new dressing on the wound. Then he took off my boot and sock, cut my pants leg off, slit up my trouser leg into my pocket, took my lighter and put it into his own pocket. I protested. He said, 'You're gonna be evacuated and can get another one. I lost mine day before yesterday.' He gave me 2 books of matches and some kind of soul brought me my billfold, my checkbook, and 2 packs of cigarettes. Some others carried me up the stairs (there was a Bru involved here, because he held my hand as they put me on the Huey) put me on a gunship (I think. A Huey, anyway) and flew me to the Casualty Clearing point [C Med] near the airstrip.

"An hour or so later someone from the TOC came in to find me writing citations for Voorhees and Crone. He said, 'You are nothing but Hard Core,' and took my citations and the 4 syrettes of morphine I had left back to the TOC. Maybe an hour later word sorta drifted around about a heavy contact on Hill 471 with several wounded Americans, as well as at least 1 KIA. There was no clear info., only rumors. A bit later they brought in a couple more stretchers, presumably with Grenville [Sutcliffe] and someone else on them. They were in no condition to talk, and trying to learn anything from the Marines was an exercise in futility. Shortly after that a C-130 drove up, we were loaded on, and flown to the 3dMarDiv hospital at Phu Bai."

[The following was written by Harlan "Rip" Van Winkle, and continues the story of what happened subsequently as another FOB-3 team attempted to retrieve Crone and Mahoney]:

"About 1000 hrs on 29 January, a helicopter picked up a wounded American in a field about 1200 meters from the combat base. He had been shot through both

knees and was in a bad way. As it turned out he was the team leader of the recon team that had inserted with us on 26 January. He stated his team had been ambushed while moving through a saddle on the east side of Hill 471 which was only about 2500 meters from the FOB, that one American had been killed and one captured and to the best of his knowledge he was the only member of the team to escape. I was not present when he was questioned but he evidently said he thought they had been hit by a reinforced squad of enemy soldiers. It was decided that an attempt would be made to recover the bodies and if possible, to locate and/or rescue the missing American. HF DENVER was selected for this mission. The fact that I was unable to speak directly to the wounded team leader prior to his medical evacuation left a large gap in pertinent, first hand information. This lack of information proved very critical in all of the decisions leading up to our departure on the mission. I knew there was the possibility, even probability, of trouble, but the way the enemy situation was explained to me, it sounded as though the recon team had walked into a hasty ambush and the chances were good the enemy had already vacated the area. Based on the available air assets the decision was made to go in with eight Americans and sixteen Bru. Names are important at this point to pay tribute and to clarify who was on the mission:

CPT H.E. "Rip" Van Winkle	XO, A-221
1LT Grenville Sutcliffe	FOB-3 S-3A, being groomed to replace Cpt Van Winkle
SFC Robert Scully	Senior Medic, FOB3
SFC Charles N. Tredinnick	Senior Combat Engineer of A-221
SGT Dennis C. Lansing	Junior Communications NCO, A-221
SGT Donald R. Rumph	Junior Medic, A-221
SP5 John L. Frescura	Junior Combat Engi neer, A-221
PFC James Taylor	USMC, Member of CAC OSCAR

"Following the evacuation from Khe Sanh the Marine Combined Action Company OSCAR moved onto the FOB and took up positions near the northwest corner. PFC Taylor happened to be in the area where we were preparing for the mission, stated he was familiar with the area where the ambush occurred and volunteered his services. I was never one to question why someone volunteers to perform a dirty job, all I asked was could he operate a radio? He said he could and that was all I needed to hear. In retrospect he probably got a lot more than he bargained for, I got more than I expected and am sure glad he decided to go along for the ride. We lifted off at 1135 for a short ride and insert onto the southeastern most point of the ridge line that makes up Hill 471.

"The insertion went off without problems. Cover on the ridge line was non-existent and concealment was limited to a stand of elephant grass that averaged less than three feet in height and a few scraggly bushes. We could look to the north and see people moving at the FOB. There was certainly nothing to indicate imminent trouble. We set up a hasty defensive perimeter with SFC Tredinnick, SP5 Frescura and four Bru focusing basically east. SGT Lansing, SGT Rumph, and four Bru were covering to the north; 1Lt Sutcliffe, SFC Scully, and four Bru covered west, while PFC Taylor and I with the reamining four Bru covered to the south. The saddle where the bodies were supposedly located was directly to the front of Tredinnick and Frescura.

"Tredinnick took three Bru and moved forward, all the way down into the saddle and up to the top of the small peak on the other side of the saddle, a distance of perhaps 150-175 meters. At no point was he ever out of my sight. They did not locate the bodies or make any enemy contact. However, Tredinnick did relay to me that he had spotted a large force of enemy ground troops attempting to encircle us from the east. I instructed him to return to the ridge line and reestablish the perimeter. This move was made much quicker than the move over but again there was no evidence of any bodies.

"Upon his return he moved to my position and we were discussing our next move when we both heard and spotted movement in a small bush directly to our front, probably less than six feet away. Tredinnick had just enough time to ask 'What was that?' before we were fired upon by an enemy rifleman from a well concealed fighting position. I had the distinct impression the rounds passed between us and how they missed hitting at least one of us I'll never know. We both returned fire and I dropped a M-26 fragmentation grenade into the hole. To my recollection that action initiated the fight. I have been told since that our entire perimeter had been receiving sporadic small arms fire for several minutes prior to mine and Tredinnick's up-close and personal encounter.

"It was only a few minutes later when 1Lt Sutcliffe received a wound in the throat. Tredinnick and I both went to him. He was such a mess that I sensed it was a mortal wound. [Sutcliffe recently wrote: "I'd just been promoted to company commander and that fool shot me through the throat and shoulder. Obviously he didn't realize it was Grenville Sutcliffe."] SFC Scully was already working on him and Tredinnick started back to his position in the perimeter and I turned my attention to getting us some type of fire support. We began receiving fire from every point of the perimeter except the north, with the heaviest coming from the west and southeast. What occurred next could only be called a thunderstorm of enemy hand grenades being thrown into our position. Some later After Action Reports stated the sky literally turned 'black' with grenades. PFC Taylor shouted the warning and in his words 'gave me a friendly shove.' I recall thinking that for as many as had been thrown, there seemed to be a lot of 'duds' and several that did not explode with near the force characteristic of US grenades. Thankfully it was one of the weaker ones that went off between my legs and all I received was a dozen or so very painful, but not disabling, fragmentation wounds. It was at that point when I heard the distinctive sound of a bullet strike someone behind me. I turned and saw Tredinnick lying still on the ground. SGT Rumph, PFC Taylor and I converged on Tredinnick. He had been wounded low down on the left side of his chest. The entrance wound was very small but the exit

wound was massive. [Donald Rumph wrote in his report of this action: "SFC Tredinnick was unconscious at this time and breathing very irregularly. I cut off his web gear and shirt and finished applying the dressing., His pulse was very weak, and 4 or 5 times stopped breathing."] His last words to me were 'It hurts real bad, Sir.' Rumph and Taylor were performing immediate first aid and I put all of my effort to moving us some place reasonably safe to call for a medevac.

"It would be safe to say the crescendo of enemy fire was such that I felt we were in danger of being overrun at any point. What little fire support we had received was limited to our helicopter gunships and they were unable to do much because of the close proximity of the two fighting forces. During one of the gunship runs, the door gunner, firing a M-60 MG, missed Taylor and I by less than six inches and shot Lao, the Bru platoon leader, in both legs, shattering both of them. I don't fault the gunner. He was doing his best to provide needed support under very trying circumstances.

"We had not received any fire from the north and SGT Rumph, SFC Scully, and PFC Taylor were already hauling wounded down the steep north slope of the hill. SGT Lansing had turned his attention and that of his men to the threat we faced from the south and west, focusing on a small gully that led from the south slope directly into our position. While positioning his Bru machinegunner, Pa Lang, to cover this approach, Pa Lang was shot dead and the entire element was pinned down. By then, the only Americans still on the hill and carrying on the fight were SGT Lansing, SP5 Frescura and myself, the others were either wounded or assisting with the wounded. We also had perhaps ten or eleven of the Bru. I managed to get everyone focused on the south and west and started to ease back from the south slope trying to put a little distance between us and the enemy. The width of the ridge line where we were was less than sixty meters and the enemy owned at least a third of that. By finally getting my force down below the crest on the north side, I was finally able to call in some air strikes.

"B y now we had been on the ground over an hour and the fight itself was about 45 minutes old. The Forward Air Controller (FAC) that had been on hand when we inserted had to leave us to refuel. He was replaced by a USMC FAC with the callsign of 'AMERICAN BEAUTY DELTA.' "This gentleman deserves a lot of credit for getting the rest of us off the hill with little further damage though it took awhile. The manner in which he was able to coordinate (that's a fancy word for juggle) all of the various air support into that one small area without doing us anymore damage was nothing short of phenomenal. Not only did he have to worry about our immediate situation, he was also having to deal with two battalion size enemy units that were trying to get between us and the FOB. These were enemy troops spotted moving in the open within 400-500 meters from Hill 471 where we were holding forth.

"We were finally able to gain some fire superiority with the help of US Army and USMC gunships and some pinpoint bombing from whatever USAF 'fastmovers' were in the area. There was at least one instance when a USAF pilot stated his ordnance consisted of napalm and cluster bomb units (CBUs) and that we were much too close to the impact area for him to consider dropping it. I recall telling AMERICAN BEAUTY DELTA not to concern himself with us, that without the support, we were subject to have severe problems with the 'bad guys.' The airstrikes came in on target. I couldn't begin to estimate the amount of ordnance expended in our behalf that afternoon. I just know it was all considered 'Danger, Close!' and that even with all the helicopter gunship rocket runs, numerous 250 pound bombs all followed with CBUs, the enemy pressure was still very intense. Not until I practically begged them to drop the napalm did the close-in enemy fire disappear.

"Somewhere during all of this time we were finally able to get two medevac helicopters on the ground. Actually one was a US Army medevac and the other was one of MACVSOG's King Bees (H-34), one of the helicopters on which we had inserted earlier. SSG Sweezy, the Senior Medic on A-221, had offered his assistance and came in with the US Army medevac ship. He stated later that he couldn't understand why we were having such difficulty loading the wounded. When the medevac ship in which he was riding had to crash-land at the FOB it had over 200 bullet holes in it. Sweezy was oblivious to it all.

"I'm not sure where the enemy strength estimate originated but without doubt it far exceeded a reinforced rifle squad. I would estimate the unit which initiated fire on our perimeter at the outset was at least a reinforced platoon and as stated earlier there were much larger units seen during the right in the near vicinity. SFC Tredinnick was mortally wounded about 20 minutes after contact was made. He was awarded the Silver Star for his actions that day. We lost one Bru KIA and had two Americans WIA and six Bru WIA. Following the final medevac and seeing all survivors were off the hill we finally moved by foot back to the FOB. We were met about 600 meters from the gate by a rescue unit led by SFC Robert Cavanaugh. He gave me the word that Tredinnick had died. All of that and we did not accomplish what we set out to do. SGT Gary Crone was the American radio operator on the recon team ambushed earlier in the day. He was listed as KIA and his remains and that of one of the montagnards on his patrol were located and identiried in April, 1968. They were located on the north side of the saddle, within sight of the FOB. I can't believe they were there all of the time as we would have been stumbling all over them while trying to disengage from our predicament. I can only assume they were moved later, perhaps for sanitary purposes. SP5 Robert T. Mahoney and the remaining montagnards of the patrol were all listed as MIA. The initial story was that Mahoney had been captured and later executed. I did not see nor have I any later evidence to confirm or deny what happened to him.

"Looking back, I'm sure we were victims of a classic NVA ambush designed to take advantage of our desire to recover the bodies of Americans killed in action. I think perhaps, we surprised them with the speed and the manner in which we reacted. Maybe they expected us to walk out from the FOB rather than insert on the hill by

helicopter. I don't really know even now. The only question remaining in my mind that leads me to believe we didn't react in the way they had anticipated is why did they wait until we were on the ground and set up before springing the ambush? The most logical time would have been as we were getting off the helicopters. With the fire power that they had they could have easily destroyed at least two of the insert ships and mopped up the survivors without much problem. I look back at all of the very close calls that I had and one has to believe in Divine intervention."

[Epilogue]

Hammond Saley and a FOB-3 Medic named Denis Chericone later retrieved the remains of Gary Crone. Salley writes:

"I arrived at Khe Sanh and FOB-3 on/about 6 March 1968 from USARV to work for Major Quamo in Special Projects. However, as the Siege was continuing, Major 'Bulldog' Smith, the FOB Commander at the time, decided to use me as his S-2 instead. I learned about the ambush on Hill 471 from FOB-3 colleagues and reports on file in the S-2 section. On 1 April 1968, Operation PEGASUS commenced with the siege being lifted several days later. The morning of April 1st, [Battalion 1/9] passed through the FOB-3 wire to attack the NVA to our front and on Hill 471. Shortly after Hill 471 was taken the FOB received notification that several bodies believed to be FOB-3 members were found on Hill 471. As I recall, LTC Roy Bahr, our new commander, asked me to retrieve the bodies.

"Accordingly, one of our Medics, Denis Chericone, and I departed on a Huey from the airstrip for Hill 471 with several body bags. We arrived on Hill 471 and were greeted by the Marines now occupying the hill. One of them escorted us about 30-40 meters down the FOB side of the hill where we were shown two bodies: one American and one Bru Montagnard. The bodies were intact with equipment, less weapons and ammunition, still with them. A radio with several bullet holes in it was still on the American's back. There was also a sheath knife on the American which Denis regonized as belonging to a Sgt. Crone whom he knew. There was no appearance of any type of molestation to the bodies. However, the stench was awful as both bodies had been out in the elements for over two months."

Denis Chericone recalls: "About five or six Marines greeted us. They brought us over to the bodies and then wouldn't come near the bodies with us. So we walked over and we turned one guy over. And I remember turning him over, and he was a friend of mine. And the flies all flew in my face, and the smell got on me, and I peuked really quick."

Hammond Salley: "When we picked up the American, his body was so deteriorated that his head fell off. I retrieved it and placed it in the bag with his body. We brought the bodies and the radio back up the hill and put them inside the helicopter. We returned to the Khe Sanh airstrip, placed the bodies on our jeep and took them to the CHARLIE Med. The attendant would only take the American. He checked the pockets and found an ID card in the left breast pocket. I believe the identification was for Sgt. Crone. We then took the Bru body back to FOB-3 to turn over to the Montagnards for burial. I gave the radio to our communications section in the TOC. Both Denis and I smelled terrible. We were asked to take showers before going back into the TOC."

Denis: "When we got back, I burned my uniform right after I got off the helicopter. I just took everything off and threw it in the trash-burner, becaused it had that smell on it. Then I went down in the medical bunker and drank. I remember! I drank a half a bottle of whisky straight down, Bourbon straight down. It didn't even touch me. It didn't even touch me. Stone-sober. I remember one of the Sergeants standing there and going, Wow, kid, what happened to you? And I told him about the thing. He was amazed a 21 year-old kid poured this bottle of liquor straight down."

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

Capt James H. Knox, one of the pilots involved in the Co Roc operation, recalls a briefing for a mission in the spired karst cave area just west of the DMZ where the NVA Headquarters controlling the Khe Sanh Siege battle was located:

"We were engaged in an absolutely insane mission that was fortunately finally aborted. We were going to try to kidnap General Giap! It led to a really ugly scene during the briefing. The guys from the CIA or wherever were there in their short-sleeved white shirts looking like IBM execs, and they had the briefing. An Army Special Forces LtCol was there. We were going to put a team up in that very severe geological karst formation. There was a discussion on how big the team would be—I can't remember all the details, but I think it was a fairly good-sized team. A decision was made—not by us, but basically by the Army—that we would not try to extract them at night: due to the terrain there would be no possible way but to make a bad situation worse if we tried to go in there with a bunch of helicopters at night and get this team out. The team wasn't hot about going anyway. At that point, an Army Lieutenant, who was going on the team, said, 'You mean, if I'm in there at night, nobody's going to come and get me?' And we said, 'Look, we'll do whatever we're told to do; we'll try to get you'—and the Colonel is saying, 'Don't do it.' And I said, 'We'll come up there if you want and try and get an airstrike' and that kind of thing. And around and around we went. Finally, this Lieutenant told the Colonel he wasn't going, whereupon the Colonel arrested him on the spot, put him on a helicopter, and said that he was going to be court-martialed! Right on the spot! Right in front of me!"

Deep in the bowels of the specially reinforced command bunker of FOB-3 (the TOC), in the communications area, four North Vietnamese Chieu Hois were moni-

toring radios, and they picked up information of a high-level conference that was to include what seemed to be Vo Nguyen Giap.

This target was subsequently saturated with several B-52 strikes which some staff at Khe Sanh initially felt—hoped—may have killed Giap. It didn't, of course, but it probably caught many other headquarters types. This particular B-52 strike did not escape White House scrutiny. In a memo by Walt W. Rostow to the President of 7:50am, 30 Jan 1968, he reports: "Herewith Westy reports an extremely successful use of intelligence to identify and attack with B-52s the new, recently established senior headquarters west of the DMZ. (Some of our best analysts suspect Gen. Giap may have taken personal command at this installation). Westy believes the attack may 'at least delay' the major offensive in Northern I Corps."

The strike, however, went unknown to the American public. Gen. Westmoreland sent the following to General Wheeler (CJCS) on 01 Feb: "Any public statement about successful B-52 attack on the major enemy headquarters would certainly compromise the source of the information, enemy corrective action could diminish our intelligence effort country-wide. No valid cover story can be developed. We have no ground reconnaissance resources which could be admitted to be in that area. While photographic interpretation could confirm a possible logistic complex, it could not support identification of a major headquarters.. It should also be pointed out that any such statement would be an admission of our [*here two lines are not declassified*]. Additionally, approval for the strike was granted by American Ambassador, Vientiane upon condition that no publicity would be given to the strike."

During an interview with BGen George J. Keegan, Jr., Director of Intelligence, 7th Air Force, on 14 Jul 68, the General noted: "On 21 Jan 1968, MACV had become so overextended in the ground war, that General Westmoreland assigned General Momyer [Commander, 7th Air Force] a principal role in the defense of Khe Sanh... The Air Force thoroughly reconnoitered I Corps using special sensors plus ARDF [Aerial Radio Direction Finders, in EC-47 aircraft].. The reconnaissance effort produced 2000 targets around Khe Sanh."

A USAF report later noted: "On 30 January, the largest B-52 strike of the war to that date was flown against a command and control center in Eastern Laos, 36 sorties in the morning and 9 at night. There were 85 secondary explosions and numerous cave-ins. These attacks greatly disrupted the enemy's plans."

However, General Giap was not killed and, Gen Westmoreland reported "..some elements of the headquarters is back in communication with Hanoi after 38 hours of silence."

Charles Berg of FOB-3 was scheduled to launch into this area following the B-52 strike (probably for a BDA—Bomb Damage Assessment), and had done a VR, got back with SgtMaj Pegram, and exclaimed, "Whew! That's a bummer!" He had been scheduled to launch the day before, but had insisted on his VR 24 hours before an insert, and the VR was approved. He recalls:

"We were just north of ELEPHANT, and I'm in an O-2 with an Air Force guy. I turned over and looked, and right in front of me, 300 yards away, was a 4-prop wing transport aircraft, brown color. I looked at him [the pilot] and I punched him and said, 'Look!' He banked and looked at it. It was a Russian plane! And I said, 'Go in on him!' I had a CAR-15. I had a bunch of rounds. I said, 'Go on top of him; I can shoot him down.' The guy went, 'No!' He flipped the bird on the other side and he started talking. He forgot he had his intercom on. He's talking to one of the C&C [Command and Control] ships up there [Note: the USAF C-130 ABCCC, Callsign "HILLSBORO"]. He started making a SITREP, and he said, 'Yes, again in the same area,' and I said, 'What?' He said, 'O shit!' and got me off the comm.

"When we got back, I said, 'Why didn't you come up on top of him? I could of shot him down! I could of dropped that airplane.' And he said, 'Well, it really wasn't what you thought it was.' I said, 'Yes it was! It was a Russian transport plane. I think I even know the kind if I see the images again.' And he said, 'Well, we see them quite a few times up here. We just report them.' So when I came back and I was supposed to insert the next day, they gave a delay on it, and that day is when they put the B-52 strike in. I went back down and got the folder—the area studies folder, and that was the Headquarters area. And I asked, 'You're going to put me in there—in the Headquarters area!' And they said, 'Well, we'll get you in and get you out.' I said, 'Yeah!' You gotta realize: those people up there are not the home guard or the 'fourth line;' they're the real crack troops, like the same people that are running around with Westmoreland."

On 28 March, SOG team ASP was inserted just south of this Front Headquarters on a wire-tap mission, came under fire, requested extraction from XD434574. A H-3 helicopter attempted a ladder extraction,but it broke, and the three Americans of the team are still listed as MIA (SFC Alan L. Boyer, SGM George R. Brown, and SFC Charles G. Huston).

LANG VEI

[*The following discussion focuses on the rescue of the brave defenders of Lang Vei. Much has already been written concerning the actions of those at Lang Vei, including a book by William R. Phillips,* Night of the Silver Stars, The Battle of Lang Vei, *published November, 1997, by US Naval Institute Press*].

BACKGROUND

Support (or lack of support) of Lang Vei when it was attacked by the Marines has been a vexing contention that has plagued both Marines and Special Forces as much as the entire Vietnam War's complexities continue to perplex all. Because of the fall of Lang Vei, many Marines have expressed guilt for not having rescued them, not an uncommon sequential condi-

(Continued on page 28)

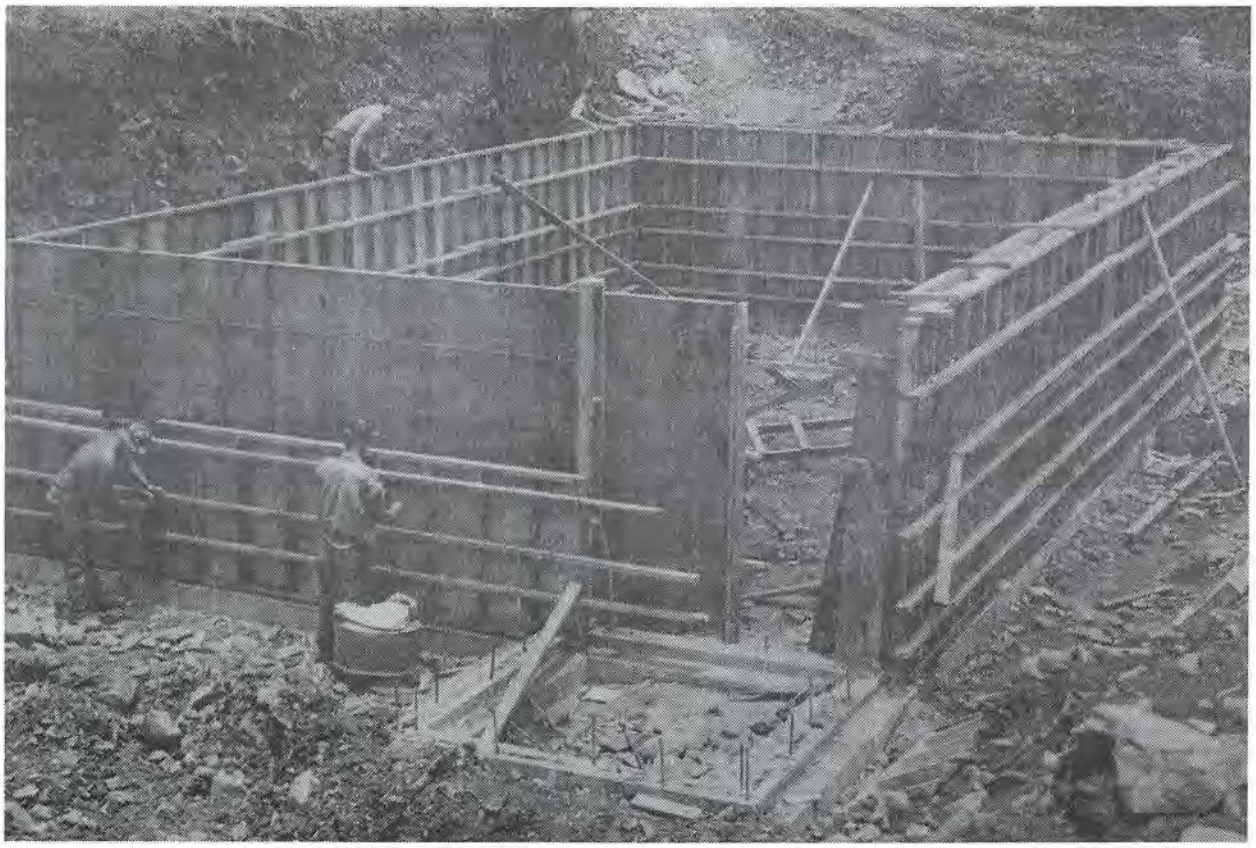

ABOVE: Navy Seabees of NMCB-11 in process of construction of the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) (Official US Navy photograph)

BELOW: Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe conducting worship services on beams and edges of Lang Vei TOC. ("You'd better not fall asleep in this worship service, or you'll fall!")

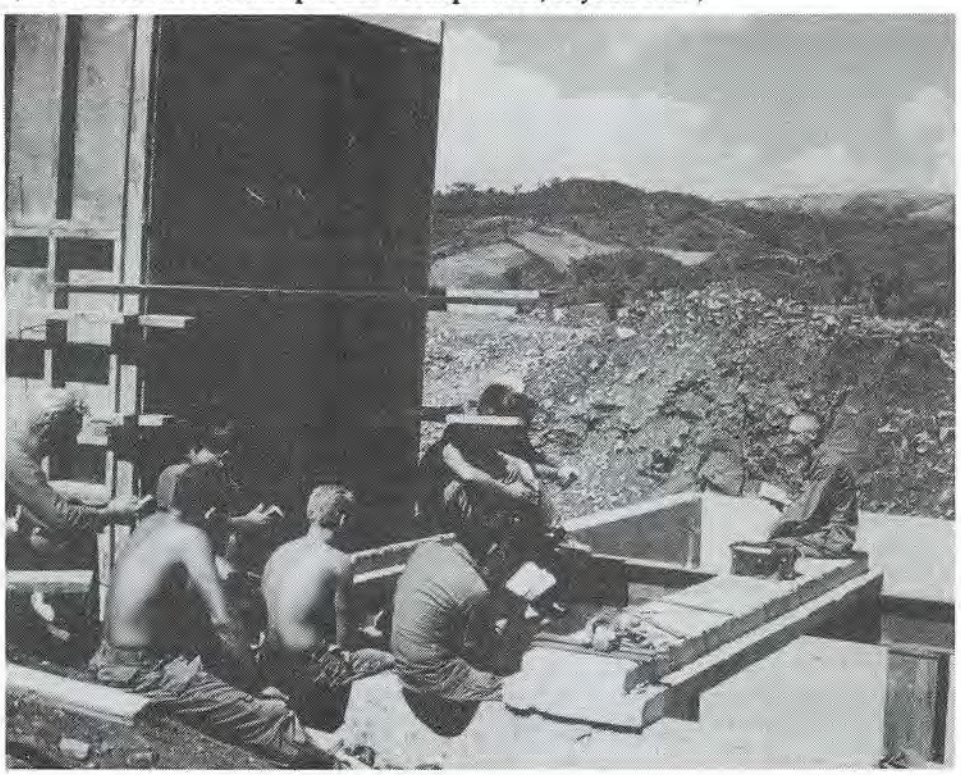

(Continued from page 26)

tion of almost all Vietnam veterans who experience guilt over "not having done more" even after they gave all in a war lost by the politicians in Washington, DC, several years after all major battles had been won militarily. Many Special Forces soldiers feel anger and betrayal at having been abandoned. How could they not? Perhaps an understanding of the facts and the conditions of the situation (which are rarely, if ever, indicated) may serve to ameliorate such pain and help heal wounds of the soul.

Lang Vei (XD 795361), a Vietnamese military outpost with American Advisors of Team A-101, had been overrun during the Battle of the Hills on 04 May 1967. NVA posing as PF recruits had killed several sentries in the camp and then guided in the outside force which subsequently killed both the CO and XO. From that time, a new camp site was developed (at XD 78443573) in which no indigenous troops would be in the inner perimeter of the American advisors (other than Vietnamese Special Forces, LLDB), to preclude that from being repeated.

A detail from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) ELEVEN arrived in early July to begin the work on the new site. Work progressed rapidly. By 25 July 1967, ground clearing for the new site was 75% compolete and two of three unmarked old French mine fields wre cleared. By 25 August 1967, foundations for nine primary and secondary bunkers had been poured and the foundations and walls for the TOC [Tactical Operations Center, "same same" COC in Marine language] were completecd. The new camp was occupied 21 Sep 1967 with minor construction work still in progress. Captain Frank Willoughby, the CO (and former Marine Sergeant), was showing the progress of the construction to the author and remarked that "it could take a regiment."

On 20 Jan 68, the SOG teams that had been on Co Roc reported their findings to Lang Vei, and on the same day, GySgt Max Friedlander (of 17th ITT) flew from KSCB to Lang Vei to brief them on what Lt Tonc, the NVA rallier, had disclosed. The BV-33 position, nearby in Laos, had fallen to NVA tanks on 25 Jan, and refugees from that position flocked to occupy the former Lang Vei campsite, assuredly disclosing what had happened to them. Lt Miles Wilkens, XO of A-101, notes, "They would hardly set up their own perimeter. They seemed to have less interest in their own welfare than we did. They weren't even setting up the tents."

In mid-January, Max Cottrell (Asst S-3 of Co C, CCN, in DaNang, of which Col Schungel was Commander and Maj Edwards was S-3) flew to Lang Vei to inform them of the tank threat. "We sent a [SOG] team over there and actually took some pictures of the tanks—there were several of them." The response was: "No, we have good intelligence too; there aren't any tanks!" They added, "These pictures are doctored up to make it look like there were tanks there."

Col Jonalthan Ladd (Commander, 5th Special Forces Group) had visited the Lang Vei camp on 6 Feb (along with Col Dan Baldwin and LTC Schungel) in connection with attempts to obtain anti-tank mines for them. Sounds from moving tanks could even be heard while he was visiting them! He then departed, leaving LTC Schungel ("CROSSBOW") to remain there. His efforts had been most frustrating: "I went to DaNang to see the Marine General, General Cushmen. He was all for helping me but the people down in Saigon wouldn't believe that there were tanks up there; they said we didn't need them [the mines]. Besides, they couldn't gtive them to the Special Forces. They went through all kinds of reasons why we couldn't have them... I was furious that they wouldn't give us any damn antitank mines. The Marines were perfectly willing to give them to us."

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

05 Feb - Co E/2/26 on Hill 861-Alfa received a very heavy NVA ground attack which temporarily penetrates part of the defensive position before the Marines regain control. Results: 7 USMC KIA; 109 NVA KIA.

06 Feb 68:

2255 - Light ground attack on E/2/26 on 861-A, evaluated as a diversion (which it turned out to be). KSCB receives incoming 82mm mortars and 122mm rockets and a light ground probe against ARVN lines. Lang Vei receives incoming (type and number of rounds unknown). ARVN at Lang Vei report "many, many VC in the area, NVA also."

2325 - Attack on E/2/26 ceases; KSCB still receiving ground probe.

2355 - FSCC of 3dMarDiv reports 175mm batteries at Camp Carroll and Rock Pile are firing one gun, 4 rounds, every 4 minutes in support of Khe Sanh. [Note: The 175s at Camp Carroll, with a range of 32,800 meters, reached just short of Lang Vei, and those of Camp Rock Pile just short of the Laotian border. 90mm tanks could fire 11 miles, and therefore all the way to Co Roc. Range probable error for 175mm guns average range of 20,000 meters is 65 meters and deflection probable error is 10 meters. Assuming four probable errors in relation to point of impact, the projectile could land 260 meters over or 260 meters short of computed point of impact and 40 meters right or left of the gun target line.]

07 Feb 68:

0045 - Weather report for Khe Sanh: From 1200-2000 on 06Feb, the weather presented generally good flying conditions with ceilings of 2500-4000 ft. and good visibility. From 2000, 06 Feb to 0100, 07 Feb, it was marginal with clouds at 1000 ft. Flying conditions became poor at 0100 and continued through 1200 with visibility one and one-half miles or less. The forecast was for marginal to poor conditions in the afternoon of 07 Feb with ceilings at 1500 ft. [Note: this is the height of Khe Sanh!] and visibility for one to five miles in light rain and fog. Flying conditions were predicted to become poor to 1800, 08 Feb.

0045 - Lang Vei received heavy ground attack, some enemy are inside wire, and enemy supported by tanks. KSCB at this point is firing all available supporting

fires in support of Lang Vei, all batteries of 1st Battalion, 13th Marines.

KSCB is receiving heavy incoming.

0054 - S-2, 26th Marines, reports interception of NVA radio transmission that indicated NVA artillery would increase shelling of KSCB. (Throughout the attack, this proved to be true).

0105 - III MAF reports 7 tanks in wire at Lang Vei. 26th Marines receiving SPOOKY to support Lang Vei. Heavy incoming at KSCB.

G-2, 3dMarDiv, reports that a Command and Control element, presumably controlling the attack on Lang Vei was located fairly precisely and passed this information to 26th Marines who immediately targetted the installation.

0121 - CO, 26Mar sets RED ALERT

0130 - SPUNKY HANSON [Lang Vei] requests VICTOR TANGO [VT fuse arty] at XD785359.

0135 - KSCB is averaging 6 rounds incoming per minute. Ground troops are approaching wire at Lang Vei: Col Schungel radios: Tanks are on hill; they were hit from two sides. They need air right away or there will be nothing left. Tanks not accompanied by substantial size infantry. [Note: While those at Lang Vei requested air, the Marines at Khe Sanh were anxious to fire artillery according to Col Kent O.W. Steen, Fire Support Coordinator in the Khe Sanh FSCC. Due to SAV-A-PLANE doctrine, no artillery could be fired from the time of launch of aircraft. This left Lang Vei without any supporting fire].

SPUNKY HANSON reports the VICTOR TANGO arty fire is impacting in his position.

0140 - III MAF reports 9 tanks in wire at Lang Vei (1 tank knocked out; 7 inside position on hill, 2 in wire).

0148 - SPUNKY HANSON requests VICTOR TANGO fire and flares all over his area.

0150 - MGen Tompkins directs CO, 26Mar, to use COFRAM against enemy tanks at Lang Vei. [COFRAM was a TOP SECRET class of munitions—Col Lownds had to receive a special clearance for this—which had been kept in reserve as a way of stopping large masses of troops, "the great hordes." Also referred to as M444, or "Improved Conventional Munitions," or "Firecracker," this munition (if delivered in aerial bombs or artillery) exploded by sending out numerous ping-pong ball sized mini-grenades whose inner surface was pressed in such a way to cause the surface to break into many thousands of tiny bits of metal. Clearance for bringing COFRAM into Vietnam was requested by Gen Westmoreland on 12 Jan to the JCS for use in unpopulated areas of I Corps, and was controlled on the highest levels—CINCPAC. Once used it lost its security classification, and there was some discussion whether or not Tompkins had the authority to direct its use; he undoubtedly wanted to give the best he could to support Lang Vei in this unusual and desperate situation, whether he had the authority to do so or not].

MGen Tompkins asks 3dMarDiv DASC if any air is over Lang Vei. It is determined a flareship, SPOOKY1, and fixed wing are now working targets in and near Lang Vei. [Note: SPOOKY "wasn't satisfied with the weather, targets or conditions (he had all sorts of reasons why he couldn't) and so he did not fire—however, he did drop flares for the camp." The OinC of the Khe Sanh DASC relates, "I got the impression that SPUNKY HANSON did not or was not able to really adjust the air strikes very effectively. The COVEY spent much of his time trying to determine location of friendlies."

0154 - SPUNKY HANSON requests a Check Fire on VICTOR TANGO.

0200 - III MAF Air Officer asks how much air is on station. 26MAR reports 2 flights there now running TPQ-10 attacks every 15 minutes.

0210 - The amount of air increases to 4 flights, directed by COVEY.

0215 - 5thSF reports 5 tanks knocked.

0220 - SPUNKY HANSON reports troops hitting both ends of his compound.

0225 - AO over Lang Vei requests flights armed with ZUNI rockets [more effective on tanks]; present flights are out of rocket ordnance. Flights will be scrambled in DaNang.

0240 - 26MAR reports troops inside wire at Lang Vei. At the request of CO, Lang Vei, firecrackers are not used because "he wants to use air on them" and if Firecrackers are used, air will be called off [due to SAV-A-PLANE doctrine].

0243 - 26MAR expects KSCB will be attacked at any minute with these circumstances occuring so close. MGEN Tompkins is concerned Firecrackers are not being used, and speaks with Capt Mirza Baig, 26MAR Target Officer, asking him to pass the message: "suggest CO Lang Vei check air bring in Firecracker then air be brought in again." Shortly after this, and before any decision on what was to be done about Firecrackers, at 0245, Tompkins receives word from III MAF that everything above ground at Lang Vei is enemy. So, with this news, Gen Tompkins says, "Let's use Firecrackers, then HE, then air."

0250 - 5 tanks reported destroyed.

0255 - Two large secondary explosions at XD770418 [6 clicks due north of Lang Vei, 7.5 clicks due west of KSCB] and 2 additional large secondary explosions at XD753412 [approx. 6 clicks NW of Lang Vei].

0257 - 13th Marines fired 28 rounds of Firecracker ordnance at XD786357. [THIS IS THE FIRST USE OF FIRECRACKER IN BATTLE]. The cycle of fire in support of Lang Vei is: 5 minutes of Firecracker, 5 minutes of mixed HE and VT, followed by 10 minutes air strikes on the perimeter.

0300 - KSCB still received heavy incoming mortarsw and rockets, mostly rockets.

0310 - 26MAR reports loss of comm with Lang Vei.

0320 - Gen Tompkins asks Lang Vei via III MAF relay "if they at Lang Vei have gas masks, do they want CS on position?" Response: "Do not want CS on position." No explanation is given.

0325 - III MAF reports tank on top of comm bunker. Special Forces have deliberately destroyed primary means of communication and are using secondary freq.

Air strikes resume.

0343 - S3, 26MAR, reports incoming C-130 with approx. 100 men aboard.

0345 - CO, 26MAR, calls Tompkins expressing concern over condition of runway—that it is probably pitted and cratered, that there are tanks running around between KSCB and Lang Vei, that enemy infantry abounds in the area. Gen Tompkins calls Col Smith [G-3, III MAF] and registers a complaint about the proposed empoloyment of troops moving into the area since it would inhibit use of supporting arms. Further, Gen Tompkins inquired how the forces thus introduced would make their way to Lang Vei. Gen Tompkins also registered a complaint with Gen Cushman [CG, III MAF] who said he knew nothing about the C-130, but would check.

0350 - AO spots flame throwers. USSF has no flame throwers.

0400 - Conference with Col Smith [G-3, III MAF] and Capt Edwards and Maj Salmon of USSF. USSF requests relief force be sent to Lang Vei at first light.

0400 - KSCB taking heavy rockets and mortars.

0405 - CG, III MAF, radios that C-130 will not proceed to KSCB. Tompkins tells Cushman that his G-3 is requesting a ground relief column to go to Lang Vei at first light. "I told CG that we had no troops to send to Lang Vei and he agreed that no troops should go, and said to tell G-3 that he said no. I said I had no intention of sending troops unless he (Gen. Cushman) so ordered me." Gen Tompkins felt that this was precisely what the enemy was expecting us to do and that they would ambush the route from KSCB to Lang Vei, convinced that we would dispatch a relief column down there. [Note: This was a typical NVA tactic used on small and large scale: wound a man and kill off all those that come to rescue him; disable a recon team and ambush all infantry coming to rescue them; fix an outpost and lay in ambush to engage all who would rescue. In the attack on Khe Sanh village, one battalion attacked the District Headquarters, but two regiments were in ambush positions to destroy those who would come to rescue or reinforce them]. Gen Tompkins had planned a "set piece defense," not venturing out too far and falling into traps that the enemy may have set in the area, but rather force the enemy to come to us. Gen. Cushmen concurred that such a move to Lang Vei would be exceedingly unwise; in fact, it would be stupid.

Col Jonathan Ladd, meanwhile, asked Col Lownds to execute the contingency plan to get his people out, and reported that Col Lownds responded, "No, it would be a suicide mission." Ladd, however, who had just visited Lang Vei the day before, felt that because he had been there, it would not be a suicide mission. [Note: the general impression seems to be that those at Lang Vei were somewhat oblivious to the threat even after Khe Sanh village fell and KSCB was being attacked. They continued patrolling the area, for example]. Ladd: "apparently nobody in any strength was around there." Col Ladd flew from KSCB to DaNang and contacted GEN Westmoreland who was there in connection with a Marine Civic Action matter. Col Ladd's frustration is reflected in his memoir of that meeting (which occurred shortly after noon and was attended by Gen Chaisson [Chief COC, MACV], Gen Cushman, Gen Tompkins, Gen Anderson [CG, I MAW], and several other officers, including LGTC Hassinger [DCO, Special Ops], and Col Baldwin. "When I finally got his attention long enough, I told him, 'We have to do one of three things. We either stay there and just hold Lang Vei; we "DD" out and abandon the place; or the Marines execute their contingency plan. We can hold for probably another 3 or 4 days." [The Official AAR for the Battle of Lang Vei notes: "There was considerable argument against implementing the plan because of the possibility of loosing more men as well as the helicopters."] Col Ladd recounts: "Well, he couldn't make up his mind. Meanwhile I kept getting these radio calls from out there, telling me 'the Goddamn people are dropping charges down our air holes.' So I called Gen. Abrams on the phone and told him what was happening and I said, 'I just can't get Westmoreland's attention long enough to do anything. He is putting it off.' So, he called a General Anderson.. and told him that he was telling me to go ahead and evacuate the camp at the earliest opportunity and for the Marines to help us, which they did. Now in Westmoreland's book, he said that he did all that, but he didn't. Abrams did it, because he, Westmoreland, kept going back to those civic action meetings. Anderson was a great help; they dropped these CBUs all over the top of the camp and the people got out."

[Note: The Contingency Plan, "Relief of Lang Vei Special Forces Camp," OpOrder 5-67 of 18 Sep 67, called for a reinforced rifle company from 1/26 against an estimated enemy attack by a NVA force of a battalion of troops. On 14 Jan, MACV had requested this plan be carefully reviewed. On 16 Jan, CG, 3dMarDiv reported, "Plans written Sep 1967 remain valid." Given the scenario (attack only on Lang Vei, attack by a NVA battalion of troops) this seems plausible. But the situation had rapidly become significantly worse: there were tanks, the entire area contained two divisions of NVA, and it was an all-out attack. A patrol from A-101 moving east toward Khe Sanh village was ambushed on 31 Jan and Sgt John A. Young was captured.

No company size USMC infantry units were available for deployment due to what had unfolded since mid-January. (Apparently LtCol Mitchell, CO, 1/9, was willing to commit a company from his defensive position, but this may have been based on information he did not possess and would have become wreckless in view of the attack on 09 Feb on the Hill 64 position. It is tantalizing to speculate that the NVA may have assumed 1/9 would commit a company to relieve Lang Vei, weakening the 1/9 position, the NVA could attack the outpost and it would fall, they would push through 1/9 and through FOB-3—would the Marines fire into the American/indigenous base, and then push into the Combat Base.

Overland movement to reinforce Lang Vei was impossible. In November, 1967, Col Lownds directed 1/26 to determine an overland route between KSCB and Lang Vei with the time/space factor for moving a rifle company on a tactical mission. Capt John W. Raymond (A/1/26—

an experienced officer who later formed E Co, 3d Recon) "determined that a rifle company, avoiding well-used trails to preclude ambush, could move by foot from KSCB to Lang Vei in approximately 19 hours."

Maj Matthew P. Caulfield [S-3, 3/26, and later Commandant of the Marine Corps] noted that MIKE Company, 3/26, was regimental reserve when it arrived in mid-Dec 67, and that he, together with the Battalion Commander, conducted a reconnaissance down the road (Route 9) to determine an approach route to the camp, and determined that the only way it could be reinforced was by air since the road presented numerous ambush sites.

Helicopter Landing Zones had tanks in them, according to Col Lownds

KSCB was taking very heavy incoming, making assembly of troops to embark helicopters impossible.

Aerial photo imagery disclosed numerous NVA bunkers, foxholes, supply areas, fortifications, between KSCB and Lang Vei, including places along Route 9 that had been "piano-cut".

Col John J. Padley, who departed as CO, 26Mar in July '67 in his Debrief of 17 Aug 67 stated: "..if we were to reinforce Lang Vei, naturally we'd reinforce it with troops. But we have to be very leery because the enemy know we're going to defend that place and if they attack, their attack may be for us to come down the road so they can amb ush us.. In fact, when they attacked that one lnight [04 May 67] we did shoot artillery and there was no problem stopping it with artillery. The next day the word came through the grapevine: where were the Marines? Why didn't they reinforce? Most likely they wanted us to come down that route to ambush us. Maybe that's why they attacked Lang Vei, to try to have us come down that road."

0410 - KSCB has gone for 45 minutes without incoming.

0412 - Gen Tompkins orders Firecrackers to be fired ASAP on Lang Vei and kept up.

0415 - Gen Tompkins instructs S3, 26Mar, to fire two more 28-round Firecracker packages as fast as possible. One package of 36 rounds was shot out at 0421. Tompkins orders a schedule of: 5 min. Firecrackers, 5 min. HE/VT mixed, then direct air support from 2 aircraft, then repeat the cycle.

0421 - Shot out second package.

0423 - Lang Vei is apparently impressed with the effect of Firecrackers and radios: "Firecrackers right on target. Keep it coming."

0428 - COC, 3dMarDiv, obtains secondary freqs of Lang Vei and passes them to 26Mar so they can communicate directly with Lang Vei and not depend on relaying through III MAF to 3dMarDiv to 26Mar.

0432 - Air on station: 2 F8, 2 F4, 2 A4

0440 - Incoming rockets at Khe Sanh CP. 26Mar told to keep continous packages on Lang Vei. When low on Firecrackers switch to VT. Save some Firecrackers for our own hill positions. Report received of intense activity north of Hill 881-South, 861, and 950 [probably by electronic sensors].

0443 - KSCB begins taking rockets again.

0449 - S3, 26Mar reports that extra air strikes are being run on Lang Vei. Tanks are off Lang Vei and have moved to a position east of Lang Vei moving towards Khe Sanh. AO to determine enemy tank strength and disposition.

0500 - 1/26: KSCB reports receiving 38 rounds of rocket.

0520 - Aircraft attacking tanks remaining in Lang Vei camp.

0533 - 26Mar reports 1 tank burning on road, 1 vehicle burning in Lang Vei compound, tanks no longer in sight of road.

0540 - S3, 26Mar, reports aircraft are striking tanks. Marine aircraft have hard ordnance—500-pound and larger bombs. One flight every 20 minutes. USAF B-57s [YELLOWBIRD], armed with napalm and snake-eyes, are striking camp. 26Mar have been asking for half and half: half napalm and snakes, half delay and quick fuse 500-lb bombs and larger. AO feels that BV-33 (at XD794357, lear old Lang Vei camp) are apparently the target of approaching enemy infantry.

0600 - Gen Cushman asks if the artillery is still working on Lang Vei. 26Mar reports that they are presently running air on Lang Vei, to be followed by artillery. KSCB is still taking heavy incoming.

0615 - KSCB still taking incoming. SPUNKY HANSON ONE FIVE ALFA [SFC Ashley at the old Lang Vei site] reports a great deal of movement to his front. Air is still working Lang Vei.

0630 - 15A reports that all above ground at Lang Vei is totally destroyed.

0700 - KSCB continues to support Lang Vei with air and arty.

0740 - 15A is in contact with Lang Vei TOC and reports about 15 Americans still in compound alive. He intends to move to rescue them using SPOOKY for cover.

0835 - 15A still has comm with Lang Vei.

0900 - 15A trying to get closer. SITREP at KSCB: runway is expecteed to be closed to fixed wing until 1030. AO on station reports 2 stationary tanks 500 meters south of Lang Vei.

0930 - KSCB still receiving incoming. Incoming was the heaviest NVA bombardment of the Vietnam War up to this time. Between 0045 and 0800, KSCB received 100 rounds of rocket fire and approximately 450 rounds mortar fire. The majority of the incoming impacted in the 1/26 area (at XD849417) and 3/26 (at XD837417), perhaps to preclude assembly for possible reinforcement.

1000 - (about). 15A radios PIEDMONT [FOB-3] that he was with some 200-300 Lao soldiers 2-3 miles east of the overrun camp and was attempting to come to the aid of the Americans trapped there.

Maj Goddard [DASC] recalls that during the morning, PIEDMONT had requested an emergency medevac from ELEPHANT. 2 gunships and 2 46s attempted to insert in ELEPHANT's position "but the ground fire was too intense and the helos couldn't get in."

Maj George Quamo went to 26Mar

COC and, in a conversation that lasted about four minutes, is told by a Major there, "We won't lose an American for those people." Quamo had been up all night, listening to the radio traffic, talking with Skip Minnicks, and had talked to Maj Campbell, the CO of FOB-3, who told him "Don't get involved." Maj Quamo told the Marine Major, "I need to talk to Col Lownds," and the Major said, "He's not available; what can I do for you?" Quamo said: It's your responsibility to go in there and get these guys and we want to know what you're going to do." The response from the Major was, "We're not going to do it; we're not going to risk one life for those guys."

Quamo became livid. Returning to FOB-3, he was yelling, "We're going to do something. We're going to get something done! Whether this guy likes it or not, we're going to do something!" He said that he was going to tell the pilots to get ready to fly "on the order of Col Lownds." Soon thereafter, the helicopters appeared at FOB-3, and Quamo's driver, Harve Saal, believes "George had just simply 'scalliwaged' those guys and told them: You have to do it because your boss said so."

[Note: While a large force of a company of Marines might not be available or optimal, perhaps a small, highly-trained force accustomed to this kind of operation, would be better able to accomplish the mission]

Skip Minnicks recalls: "Maj Quamo came back, asked me if I'd go in. I said 'Sure.' He said, 'You know we probably won't come out of there.' I said, 'Yeah, I'm aware of that.' He said, 'Ask for volunteers.' I asked for volunteers. The Sergeant-Major [Pegram] volunteered. At the time I was a Master Sergeant. I said, 'Look, Sergeant-Major, by your very presence, you would be in charge. 'Hey, Skip, I'll go as a rifleman. I'm going with you. You're running this operation. All I am is one of your grunts.' And we went in and got those people out. Honest to God, I thought that Quamo should of got a Medal of Honor for what he did at Lang Vei. He coordinated all of it."

1100 - (about) Maj C.D. Goddard [DASC] is informed by a Col Palmer "that a Mission 87 was being prepared which would involve 4 Hueys and 4 46s along with a 'HATCHETT' force of 50 to rescue the people rlemaining in the Lang Vei TOC bunker." Maj Goddard passed this to the FSCC, but they were unaware of it. Maj Goddard then went to INTRIGUE-14 [26Mar Air Officer] who was in the process of briefing the pilots of the resupply to the hill outposts and asked him if he were aware of "Mission 87." He replied that until he received further word, he would proceed with the resupply mission. Further discussion with the FSCC indicated that Gen Tompkins had said that no force could depart the Khe Sanh perimeter for any reason. Col Palmer gave Maj Goddard the final details of Mission 87. Col. Daniel L. Baldwin was arriving in a U-21 to lead the rescue operation and give the rescue brief. In addition to the 8 choppers already committed, there was to be a flight of A-4s armed with DELTA-9s [MARK-77 500-lb. napalm bomb] to hit the old Lang Vei camp immediately prior to the assault. Maj Goddard found INTRIGUE-14 and convinced him Mission 87 was a "go" and he agreed to suspend resupply at 1530 and assemble the pilots for a mission brief by Col Baldwin.

1200 - SITREP at KSCB of friendly casualties from the shelling: 2 KIA, 11 WIA (evac) and 6 WIA (minor). Evaluation by 3dMarDiv (to III MAF): possibility exists that enemy may now be ready to follow through with significant attack on the Khe Sanh complex Present poor weather conditions favor enemy operations and hamper friendly air support. Information from various sources [namely, signal intercepts] indicate hill outposts west and northeast of Khe Sanh may be initial objectives in attack, followed by main attack on KSCB proper. If enemy recon is complete and his forces have had opportunity to prepare and occupy satisfactory attack positions, he may launch attack at any time."

2476 rounds of arty fire had been fired in support of Lang Vei. USMC aircraft fixed wing flew 67 sorties in support of Lang Vei.

1300 - An over-flight by Lt Davis: There are 4 other Americans with 15A [Ashley] along with 100 unknown friendly; there are people inside the TOC; 1 tank is on top of TOC and 2 on road south of camp are disabled; there is still fighting inside the camp.

1430 - KSCB receiving sporadic incoming mortars. KSCB has 1000 refugees outside west end of perimeter. (This increased throughout the day to approx. 6,000. They moved to XD825422 for the night. Refugees included BV33, CIDG, PF and their dependents. CG, 3dMarDiv requests instructions from CG, III MAF, on handling of refugees. CO, 26Mar decided not to integrate refugees into perimeter defense.

1505 - KSCB receives 122mm rockets.

1530 - 15A reports that survivors from the TOC had broken out and linked up with 15A. The COVEY laid a couple of napes right on them before someone in the group identified themselves as friendlies.

1600 - KSCB still receiving rockiets. TPQs are being run in Lang Vei area with numerous secondary explosions.

1600 - The following are located at Lang Vei: 3 companies of CIDG (324); 1 company MIKE Force (130); Regional Forces (17); Vietnamese Special Forces (12); US Special Forces (20).

1600 - A monitored NVA radio message stated that a field grade Special Forces officer was CIA [Captured in Action] and LTC Schungel was the only field grade officer known to be in the area. (He was in Lang Vei since there was a Lao field grade officer, LTC Soulang, present). This created quite a turmoil back at the C Co in DaNang since LTC Schungel had a SI clearance and was not supposed to be in a situation where he could be captured. Max Cottrell, Assistant S3 of Co C, recalls "we got a message from III MAF early in the morning and I had to take our S2, which was Capt Stevenson (if I remember right) over to III MAF because he was the only other person in the unit that had a SI clearance." [Actually Schungel had not been captured. LTC Schungel had abandoned Lt Miles Wilkins, the XO of the Camp (who had a piece of shrapnel in his hip when he was shot by a tank): "..he twice left me for dead, and he was awarded a bunch of medals, but he just walked off and left me behind. I got

out of there on my own—on two occasions actually. I was with him when we got shot by the tank, and he was about to leave me. Then the two of us spent the night on the floor of our medical building while the NVA were walking around above us. In the morning we headed for the old camp, and he just walked off and left me. Then we got strafed by our own aircraft. Then somebody came out and got me. He got back to the camp and—one of the guys later told me—said that I was dead."

1625 - An A-6 made 5 or 6 passes, using his rockets since the ceiling was too low to use his DELTA-2s [Note: MK-82 500-lb. General Purpose bombs]. As soon as the A-6 completed delivery of its ordnance, the transport choppers arrived.

1630 - A 50-man C&C Det (14 Americans, rest Bru) launched rescue operation on Lang Vei. The intent was to join with and rally BV-33 into attack. WIA were to be medevaced by the C&C Det; remaining personnel to move to old Lang Vei (XD794361). First Marine Air Wing fired suppressive fire on the TOC of the camp in preparation of the raid. Under cover of this fire, the friendly soldiers on site took escape and evasion action. The relief force put down near the old Lang Vei, at XD 794357, and moved to the new Lang Vei site, XD 786356. Enroute, the relief force encountered 13 of the 20 US personnel who were in the camp at the time of the initial attack. One additional man was subsequently recovered, making a total of 14. 6 remained unaccounted. Also, 80 CIDG and MIKE force were evacuated out of 500 indigenous personnel. A Vietnamese Special Forces officer captured who later escaped stated most of the indigenous troops who made it out of the camp were captured.

The C&C Det determined that SFC Ashley led 4 assaults on enemy dug in and around the Lang Vei TOC and was KIA on his 5th attempt. (He was subsequently posthumously decorated with the Medal of Honor, the only one to receive this award during the Siege battle).

One UH-1E and 2 CH-46s received fire in extraction resulting in one co-pilot and 2 crewmembers WIA. (The Co-pilot, 1/Lt G. E. Rosental is presently 100% disabled from wounds received during this rescue operation; other pilots participating include the following Marines: Tyler Alexander, Ed Kufeldt, J.J. Hanley).

1645 - A4s arrived on station.

1730 - A station came up on the FOX MIKE which identified himself as 'ELEPHANT' and requested extraction helicopters. He said he had 15 men with him. COVEY, overhead, spotted about 50 people gathering at the old campsite. Maj Goddard expressed reservations, feeling that there were Lao who had abandoned their own wounded but, having seen the successful extraction, were now trying to get out themselves. However, 2 46s and the sole remaining Huey launched and extracted about a hundred in 2 loads apiece. As the 46s returned, it was apparent that one American was still at the helo strip. The Huey made several passes in an attempt to retrieve him while COVEY ran some ADs [slow movers] with napalm on either side of the airstrip. However, the ground fire was so intense that the Huey took several hits and was barely able to return to Khe Sanh.

The helo pilots told Maj Goddard "that the last extraction was a mob scene in which the Laotians tried to mob the choppers in an effort to get aboard. He also said the majority of their hits were from the Laotians who realized that they were being left behind. He also said that the only reason the choppers had launched was that they were given the word that fifteen Amerficans were left at the strip."

Ed Kufeldt, piloting the Huey gunship, notes the pandemonium: "The 46s landed at the far end of the landing strip because they knew they were going to be rushed with the people, and they, in fact, were: people were trying to get on the airplane, falling off of the airplane as it was taking off because the airplane was obviously overloaded and couldn't take any more—people hanging on wheels, falling off."

Skip Minnicks recalls that the Lao officers were evacuated, as were the Lao NCOs. The others had thrown down their weapons. "They had quit. They had surrendered, but the North Vietnamese had not come into the camp. So we got everyone out except the Laotian enlisted. The chopper came in and asked, 'Is the LZ cleared?' And I said, 'Yeah," and he told me later that his idea of a cleared LZ and my idea were different when the first round went through his windshield!"

"When we got to Khe Sanh, the Colonel from the 33d ran up—actually, he was crying, hugging, and kissing us, telling us we saved his life. Then later, a message camedown [from the Ambassador]. The message said [long pause]: 'No American officer would be embarassed over this action.' We didn't know what the hell they were talking about. It wasn't long after that that Major Quamo got killed."

1850 - KSCB continues to receive sporadic incoming; BV33 survivors made it to KSCB by foot.

2130 - Gen Tompkins, following much discussion regarding NVA use of the 6,000 refugees as a possible human shield, pushed in front of their human wave attack on KSCB, sent his direction in the event this happened, to be executed in three steps: (1) Fire CS; (2) Fire over their heads if they kept advancing after the CS; (3) fire on the crowd.

COL Baldwin was given the order to evacuate the Lao to DaNang, and "to move them out without anybody seeing them." [This was at Khe Sanh at a time when there were literally many dozen reporters and photojournalists present!] "I laughed and said, 'General, what do you think I am? a magician? In the first place, the Marines won't even let them in! How do you evacuate 500 soldiers and their families without anybody knowing about it?" But it was done and the Lao of BV-33, after flying to DaNang, then were flown to Savannakhet.

[Note: Det A-101 relocated and officially opened a new camp at Mai Loc (YD 089512) on 24 Jun 68].

08 Feb:

0520 - A/1/9, at XD 831419, started to receive RPG and 60mm mortar fire followed by a ground attack (which continued to 0645). Enemy troops penetrated wire but were repulsed by the defenders of the platoon from

A/1/9 manning the hill. Enemy broke contact by 0730, and at 0900, a USMC element moved into position of the outpost.

LIFE AT FOB-3

When the FOB-3 camp was occupied adjacent KSCB, that portion of the KSCB perimeter next to the FOB-3 compound did not disappear. Much to the vexation of American soldiers and Marines inside FOB-3, who daily saw Marine bunker positions, machineguns, and even tanks pointed into the FOB-3 camp, this common, shared portion of both perimeters reminded one of Frost's poem that there is something that doesn't like a wall. Originally the Marines even had claymore mines pointed into FOB-3, but the FOB-3 Sergeant-Major, Richard E. Pegram, told the Marines, "This is not acceptable! We don't care what you say that you're concerned about, claymore mines is not acceptable!" They were removed.

From the Marines' standpoint, the memory of what had happened not only at Lang Vei on 4 May 67 (when NVA, posing as PF recruits, had killed perimeter guards and led sapper squads inside who killed both the CO and XO as well as wreaking general havoc), but countless other experiences of Special Forces units where indigenous troops had so many turn-coats and spies that turned on the Americans in the middle of a battle, dictated extreme caution, if not a barbed wire barrier!

Lt. Thomas Simcox, S2 of FOB-3 "talked to Col Lownds about it a couple of times, and after he explained, I could understand their reasoning. To be really honest, I don't think we really knew what we had either." [i.e., if NVA were amongst them].

To those American soldiers of FOB-3 and Marines of CAC OSCAR (who were placed in the FOB-3 camp for several good reasons: the FOB-3 needed the additional manpower to man their large perimeter; the Bru could remain with their American counterparts since no indig could be inside KSCB for security reasons; there was little turf remaining that could accommodate them) such action was regarded as nonsense, folly, and abandonment and rejection. After all, they reasoned, these indigenous troops have fought valiantly by our side, and in numerous instances, saved our butts, or the lives of our buddies, sometimes at the loss of their own. Furthermore, how does this square with "winning hearts and minds of local people, and aren't we here to protect them?" On an even deeper level, there was a deep love for these simple people who were so honest, loyal, trustworthy, playful, innocent, and brave.

But the barrier remained, and while it may have been easier—and certainly less dangerous because of the incoming—to have had an opening in the fence to permit water trucks from FOB-3 to get water at the waterpoint, and to permit officers attending briefings, access through the Ponderosa area of KSCB instead of moving the extra half mile around the perimeter, the fence remained—with no openings.

A need for additional manpower to man the FOB-3 perimeter resulted in 22 extra American soldiers brought in from 5th Special Forces, Nha Trang. Most of these were "candy stripes." [This refers to the yellow cloth bar on their green beret to indicate that although they were attached to a Special Froces unit, they had not received Special Forces training. These were mainly cooks, clerks, supply, riggers, crypto techs, etc., which were required by the units].

James W. Moore (Operations section of FOB-3) recalls a clerk who typed reports deep inside of one of the large FOB-3 bunkers: "His name was [SP5 Daniel F.] Sandoval. He asked me if he could go out to the line and see his buddies [SP5 Charles M.] Corry and [Sgt Dennis Ray] Thorpe. [It was 15 April 1968 when this incident occurred]. So I said, 'Nah.' I was 45 then and already had three tours in Korea, during the War. So I said, 'Son, I'm going to tell you right now, you'd better stay here in this bunker where you got 12x12s between you and the rounds coming in.' 'O, I wanna go see my buddies!' I said, 'OK. If you get out of the trenchline, if you don't have on your helmet, or if you take off your flak jacket, I'm going to fine you a hundred dollars if I catch you.' So anyway I let him go out there, and a round came in. The three of them had jumped up on the side of the trenchline, and were sitting side-by-side, with Sandoval in the middle. It blew out a 20-ft. chunk of our trenchline. We had smoking legs and boots, pieces of torso, and hamburger meat. All three of them were just annihilated. They're listed as being from FOB-3, but they really weren't. They were highly-misplaced people stuck into a position that they shouldn't of been allowed to be in. I look back on it now and I wish that we'd never asked for them; we could of handled it with our combat troops."

As of mid-March, 1968, FOB-3 was manned with 20 Army officers and 105 Army enlisted, one Marine officer and two Marine enlisted, three Navy enlisted [the three Navy corpsmen from the 3 CAPs of CAC OSCAR], no USAF, and 2 ARVN officers and 455 ARVN enlisted. [Actually, the "ARVN" consisted of a variety of indig.] ["Doc" John Roberts, the corpman of CAP O-2, recalls, "I served with the Army Special Forces there that whole time during the Siege after we got out of Khe Sanh village"]. In addition, also inside FOB-3 was CAC OSCAR with one USMC officer, 31 USMC enlisted, and no Navy [the 3 corpsmen having been transferred to FOB-3]. CAC manned the portion of the perimeter facing the access road.

Maj David C. "Bulldog" Smith relieved Maj Lucius Campbell as CO, FOB-3, in early February. "Bulldog" was a mustang, having enlisted in 1949 and served in a Ranger company during the Korean conflict. He was named "Trooper of the Year" for the 82nd Airborne and made Master Sergeant "when you couldn't make it," and then was commissioned a Second Lieutenant after attending OCS at Ft. Benning.

"Bulldog" had been in Saigon during Christmas of '67 with George Quamo in the SOG war room preparing for a mission in which the two of them would disappear in Laos, be declared MIA, and run a guerrilla force for a year or more. They were plotting Landing Zones, Drop Zones, and other logistics, when Col Dan Baldwin came by with a fifth of Red Johnny Walker. It was ten o'clock in the morning, and he was wishing them a Merry Christmas. "Well, before we finished, he said, 'Have you wished General Westmoreland Merry Christmas yet?' And of course, here we are, dumb Privates really. We said, 'No.' 'Come on!' cajoled Baldwin. We got in the SOG Commander's car (he was on leave), go clear across Saigon to General Westmoreland's headquarters, went into the secret entrance (or the General officer's opening, or whatever it was), the MPs all watching us and everything because we're in field gear. George and I had pistols. We had harnasses on, and we looked kinda grubby anyway. And we walked right up to the General's secretary.

"Dan said, 'We want to see Gen. Westmoreland! We're from SOG!' Just like that. Said, 'OK,' and we went in there and we started to sing, 'We wish you a Merry Christmas.' Well, the General listened to us. He was very nice. He said, 'Thank you very much' and shook our hands. We walked out. We got back in our car and went back to where we were supposed to be, and by the time we arrived, the word was, 'Get those three hoodlums out of Saigon—before another sunset!'

"George and the Colonel were going to DaNang and got right out, but I was going to Kontum and nobody was going there. So I called over there and said, 'Col. Johnson, I can't get out of here, so I'm going back to the Rex Hotel—or whatever the name of the hotel was. He said, 'Wait a minute. Don't you move! I'll call you right back. What's the telephone number?' He called back in about five minutes and said, 'A C-130's on the way!' They diverted a C-130 from Hue, down to Saigon to pick me up, drop me off at Kontum, and then let them land in Hue. They wanted me out by sundown!"

"Bulldog" was XO at FOB-2 at Kontum and came to FOB-3 as CO after Lang Vei fell. Shortly thereafter, Gen Rosson, the Army Commander, came up to KSCB with Gen Tompkins, and was being briefed by Col Lownds. Col Lownds put in a request for bunkering materials, fresh fruit for the troops, etc., and Rosson's Aide, a buddy of "Bulldog" later introduced him to the General. "The General turned around and I saluted him. He said, 'What do you do up here?' I said, 'Well, I'm from SOG, but I'm part of the line now.' He said, 'I didn't even know any Army was up here.' Just like that. He said, 'What do you need?' I couldn't think of a thing, and all I said was, 'Dog tag chains, sir.' Two days later, here comes a little plane over and they threw out a thing full of dog-tag chains!"

"The General said, next time—he didn't have the time just now—he wants to see what we're doing. All of a sudden—one day out of the blue—I got a call that General Rosson was there and he wanted to see my operation. I went over myself [to pick him up]. I had the jeep. I had Rosson, Lownds, Tompkins, and Johnson, the Aide, on the back tire, and brought them over to my compound. I made the General put on a steel helmet and flak jacket; he came up without one. One of my indig stood up, saluted, and yelled, 'Airborne!' as we came through the gate, and the General turned to Tompkins and said, 'Ah, we're in Army territory now!'

"As we were going into the bunker, the General's Aide, who was a friend of mine, said, 'Hey, Bulldog, do you have a C-ration or anything? The General hasn't eaten this morning.' I said, 'O, we'll get something.' I looked at Sergeant-Major Pegram, gave him a nod, and he gave me a nod back. So we went down into the bunker and proceeded to brief the General. Two Sergeants, dressed in whites, appeared. We had home-baked bread, turkey with mayonaise and asked the General if he wanted a sandwich, so of course, he took one—and then Tompkns and Lownds. Then they came in with some milk, and it was cold. So they asked the General if he'd like some milk. 'Yes!' And he asked Tompkins, and Tompkins said, 'Damn milk's for babies!' Just like that. General Rosson turned around, grabbed his milk and said, 'Well, I'm the biggest baby in this outfit!' And then he went out and looked at some of the lines."

Such moments of levity made the insanity of the horrors of the battle from making one insane—taking into one's self what was outside. The S-4 of FOB-3, Lt Terry Garrett, was summoned to report to Bulldog one day. Bulldog chewed him out for being out of uniform—he was wearing LTs bars, and then proceded to pin on his Captain's bars. A few seconds after departing the bunker, an incoming round struck him, very severely wounding him. The round had ripped off his helmet and bore into his skull, causing him to be subsequently confined to a wheelchair.

About a month after becoming CO, Gen Irby, ADC of 1st Cav, was visiting the FOB-3 camp. As he departed in his chopper, the General said, "OK, you can put your little Girl Scout hat on." (Bulldog and the General knew each other from many years before— "he used to call me 'blind,' but I had the best eyes in the world!") I said "OK" and took off the steel pot and put on the beret. An incoming round struck just as the helicopter lifted off, putting a piece of shrapnel into his scalp, and he was medevaced.

LTC Roy W. Bahr became CO of FOB-3 effective 25 March 1968, and used to joke around with his Adjutant: "Hey, Almy, OK, look over here: I think I want the 9-hole golf course there." Almy replied, "No, Sir, we can't do that over there." "Why not?" "Well, Sir, that's where the tennis courts and swimming pool are going."

Soon after becoming CO, Gen Westmoreland landed in the FOB-3 compound—perhaps it was safer than landing on KSCB proper, and Almy drove him to see Col Lownds in perhaps one of the very few jeeps that hadn't become a combat loss. Bahr told Almy, "You tell Westmoreland I want to talk with him when he gets back." It was a joke—he thought, until the General returned, steps out of the jeep, and says, "What did you want to see me about, Bahr?" "I almost died; A Lieutenant Colonel doesn't tell a four-star General, 'I want to see you.'"

Standing next to Bahr was Maj Quamo, and it was apparent to Bahr that there was an intensity on the part of the General at the sight of Quamo, but he didn't know why.

George Quamo was Bahr's XO at this time, and Bahr thought the world of Quamo: "I only knew him less than a month, but that man impressed me! He was only about 25 years old. I was 37, going to be 38, and I see George Quamo: he's a Major and he's 25 years old. And this guy is sharp! I mean he was outstanding. I walked around—I'm the new boss, and this guy, he's almost God to these people, because he was such a good man. He had gone into Laos and brought out a whole bunch of Bru just as the Siege began. He had such empathy with all the Montagnards, particularly with the Bru people. I was the last person to see him alive. I drove him over and put him on back of the aircraft, and handed him a very Top Secret report—so Top Secret that I had my S-2, Hammond Salley, personally type it. You don't ask Captains to type, normally. And I gave George my dirty laundry to take to DaNang." The text of this historic document follows:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
FOB3 HHC (C&C) 5th SF Gp (Abn) 1st SF
APO US Forces #96337

13 April 1968

SUBJECT: Study of Khe-Sanh Situation

To: Commanding Officer
Command and Control Detachment
5th Special Forces Gp (Abn) 1st SF
APO US Forces 96337

1. Lack of significant enemy contact; discovery of cache sites with abundant weapons and ammunition; failure of enemy to employ AA against friendly forces; non-identification of "hard-core" troops; continued enemy rocket and artillery capability; and continued high utilization of FM radio communications; all tend to indicate that the enemy has been merely "pushed-out" of the AO or has faded into unoccupied areas in small groups which can be reformed into fighting forces within a short period of time.

2. It is believed that once the enemy becomes aware of the evacuation of the Khe-Sanh area by the 1st Air Cav Div, the enemy will, once again, close on the Khe-Sanh Combat Base with the intentions and capability of denying the use of the airfield and attempting to defeat friendly forces found here. This belief is based upon the indications stated in paragraph 1 above.

3. There are numerous advantages which could accrue to the enemy if he were to once again concentrate and attack Khe-Sanh. These are as follows:

a. The enemy could "prove" that Operation Pegasus did not really hurt him.

b. The enemy would have an opportunity to destroy the force which prevented earlier victory (i.e., the 26th Marines and FOB #3). This would "save face."

c. The enemy realizes that the name of Khe-Sanh still holds considerable world attention which gives it a psychological and political value, even though its military value is negligible.

d. An attack on Khe-Sanh could relieve military pressure on other forces presently engaged in other AO's or planned for in future offensive operations.

e. The Provincial area in which Khe-Sanh is located can serve as a future guerrilla base area south of the 17th Parallel.

f. Khe-Sanh Combat Base will provide him with equipment, spare parts, demolitions (explosives) material and other "raw" materials which can be effectively utilized in future operations.

g. The realization that maintaining sizeable forces at Khe Sanh are extremely costly for allied forces due to dependence on air resupply.

4. These advantages could prove to be of significant value to be worth an inexpensive gamble which would be of high overall value if successful.

5. The area occupied by FOB 3 is considered untenable unless: (a) Friendly forces occupy flank positions and (b) sufficient artillery fire support is readily available and responsive. Minimum forces required are judged as: (a) One reinforced regiment and (b) one artillery battalion consisting of two (2) 105MM batteries and one (1) 155 battery. In addition, engineer, quartermaster and medical units would be required to support the troops in Khe-Sanh Combat Base.

ROY W. BAHR
LTC, Infantry
Commanding

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE

George Quamo flew off and was never again seen. Most people (such as Jerry Hudson, S2 of 26Mar) who knew of his activities and his personality thought he had gone into deep cover and would reappear some ten years later having organized and led a clandestine army in some remote place on the earth. Bulldog Smith became angry, thinking that George had independently executed the planned operation in which the two of them would go into Laos, disappear, he declared MIA, and organize a friendly guerrilla force in Laos, not taking Bulldog along. Spooky people (CIA?) in civilian clothes arrived at FOB-3 to go through all of George's effects and said he may have "gone north," a story with no basis whatsoever that infuriated Skip Minnicks and all who knew George and admired him so much.

Lee Dunlap recalls that around the first of February, a strange-looking cylinder was found in the FOB. Quamo looked at it, "What do you think that is?" Dunlap,

noticing the Chinese markings, said, "I have no idea." Quamo: "Do you think it might explode?" So they put a rope around it, backed off, jerked it around a little. It didn't look explosive; it was a strange object. Quamo said, "I'm going to have this assessed immediately, and took it with him on his flight to DaNang. Dunlap assumed that was the reason he flew to DaNang. (It is tempting to speculate that it may have exploded as they neared DaNang, and be the cause of the crash).

Thomas Simcox, S2, recalls that Quamo communicated with DaNang by the radio teletype, and "they just wanted to talk to him, so they called him back," concerning something about Lang Vei. James W. Moore (Ops section) recalls that he was summoned to DaNang because of what happened with BV33. The Laotians had blamed him specifically for evacuating across the border to Lang Vei and for not choppering all the Lao troops to safety from Lang Vei. (Apparently the complaint had been made to the American Ambassador personally).

Why Maj George Quamo was travelling to DaNang has many answers: to deliver the Bahr report, to deliver a strange cylinder with Chinese markings, to be admonished or simply asked to explain. Then he just disappeared. It was 14 April 1968. The plane was a U-17, a fixed-wing aircraft with a wing so large it could fly at about 5 miles an hour, an aircraft that belonged to the Agency. Contact with the aircraft was lost at 1645, and it was initially assumed the aircraft had been lost at sea off the coast of DaNang as it circled for a landing.

In June, 1974, some Vietnamese woodcutters discovered the plane wreckage at AT968927, and the remains of the two Chinese pilots and one American who was subsequently identified as George Quamo.



37th RANGERS

[The insignia of the ARVN Rangers—a snarling panther with whiskers partly obscuring the five-pointed star of the nationalist government of South Vietnam].

Cpt. Walter A. Gunn, Jr., was Senior Advisor to the 37th ARVN Ranger Bn. How he arrived is told in his own words:

"I arrived in Vietnam in the last week of December 1967 at Saigon, and had no idea that I would ever end up assigned to the Vietnamese Rangers or would ever be attached to the 26 Marines at Khe Sanh. I had trained at Ft. Bragg, NC, to be an Advisor to a Regional or Popular Force unit. I knew these type units would stay pretty well around their home village. After 3 days in Saigon I received my orders that I was being assigned to I Corps. I arrived in DaNang on 1 January 1968. I recall reporting to Corps Headquarters G-1, and being asked if I would like to be assigned to a Vietnamese Ranger unit. I remember telling the Colonel that was asking me this question that I thought I was trained to work with RF or PF units. He told me to think about it over night and give him my answer the following day.

"I remember the following morning being awakened by the detachment 1st Sgt and being told that I had to get my gear together and board a helicopter for transport to Quang Tri Province to join the 1st Ranger Group. I asked the 1st Sgt about what the Col had said; I thought I had a choice. He told me that I was the only Ranger-qualified Officer replacement for an officer killed in the past few days. After a week or two in Quang Tri Province, the Ranger Group returned to DaNang to recuperate and conduct small unit operations around their base camp. I was then assigned to the position of Senior Advisor to the 37th Ranger Bn.

"On or about the 25th of January 1968, I was informed that I and the 37th Bn Commander were to take a trip to the Marine Combat Base at Khe Sanh and make coordination for our move to the base. Grabbing a map of the area of Khe Sanh and locating where it was lcoated made me aware for the first time of its isolated position in Vietnam. I recall my helicopter flight to the base and talking to my Counterpart in route about the area. He was not excited about the place nor about deploying there, which in turn gave me thoughts to think about concerning the place we were going. I remember upon the approach to Khe Sanh the pilot told us that the base was receiving incoming artillery and rockets and, as soon as he touched down, that we were to get off quickly or we would be returning immediately back with him to Dong Ha. After 3 to 4 hour reconnoiter of the Combat Base, and coordination with members of HQ 26th Marines concerning the move there, and the location of the perimeter we were to occupy, I thought then: 'what in the hell was I getting into.'

"Upon returning to DaNang, I guess I did not show a great deal of enthusiasm toward the move. I had never worked with or been attached to another unit outside

of the Army. I was not sure about how this operation was going to be, being attached to a Marine command. I guess at that time I was not really sure of myself, being an advisor to an ARVN unit, and working under the command of the Marine Corps, and not knowing what I would carry away from Khe Sanh after the Siege.

"When I left the base in April, 1968, I only had the deepest respect for the Marines, especially the 26th. I had the pleasure of knowing the 26th Commander, Col Lownds, and his staff. Col Wilkinson, Ken Pipes, and Hank Norman, who was with us a brief while as Arty. F.O. until he was pulled to go with Bravo Company on an operation in which he was killed. Hank was a fine officer, a fine Marine, a fine person. I am proud to have known him. And to all other Marines in the trenches that I met on a day to day contact, names and faces I can't recall. I gained a lot experience and knowledge from my tour in Vietnam, the respect towards other combat units, and I put to rest the things I had heard about the ARVN units. I found myself proud of the ARVN Ranger units, their history, and their ability to do their job. These Vietnamese units were a proud lot, and a source that I could learn from. I am to this day proud that I was picked to be a Ranger Advisor, and proud that I had a chance to work with the Marines, and to be part of the Battle for Khe Sanh."

The NVA officer who had surrendered on 20 Jan, Lt La Thanh Tonc, revealed that the NVA plan was to seize Hills 861 and 881S as fire support bases from which troops would push against the northern and western sections of the KSCB perimeter as a diversion. The main assault was to be a regimental-size thrust against the eastern sector, and thus collapse the entire defense.

Col Lownds was therefore especially concerned about that sector, especially since it did not enclose the eastern end of the runway and had planned for positions to be manned 200 yards further out from the existing KSCB lines. It was here the 318 men of the 37th would be placed. (The 37th was some 100-150 men short of full strength).

The 37th arrived by C-130s 1400-1530 on 27 Jan and began preparing defensive positions in front of the KSCB perimeter manned by B/1/26. The next day two rockets landed in the Bn area resulting in one ARVN WIA and evacuated. Another was evacuated the next day from a mortar. As soldiers were evacuated, no new replacements arrived until 6 March, thus gradually depleating their strength.

Lt Hank Norman and PFC Peters were permanently assigned from 1/13 as arty FOs on 30 Jan. On 31 Jan a Ranger was bitten by a snake and evacuated to Phu Bai. By 3 Feb, tactical wire was completed. The positions received 17 rounds of mortar and artillery but there were no casualties and no damage.



Ted Golab (center, back) with group of 37th ARVN Rangers

Di Uy Pho, the Commander of the 37th, was beginning to exhibit indications that he should be relieved. There was a machinegun atop the CP bunker, and when Pho attempted to ring up the Commander of First Company on the LIMA-LIMA and he didn't answer the phone—nor the radio either—Pho, attempting to get their attention, went to the machinegun and fired a burst towards the First Company bunker. It just so happened the Company Commander was in the door. He was killed by the burst. As early as 4 Feb, Capt Gunn discussed moving the Bn CP bunker out of the front lines, but Pho didn't concur. Capt Gunn also discovered the tactical wire in 3d Company area was too close to their trenchline, but Pho was unconcerned.

Eventually, he would not accept Col. Lownds being his commander and said he would only take orders from the Vietnamese chain of command, and then it got to the point where he refused orders from them, and he was recalled, and the Bn XO, LOt. Troung, was in charge of the 37th for most of the Siege.

When the ARVN lines were completed, the lines manned by B/1/26 had not altered. Specifically, there were still Claymore mines: "I'd get up every morning and I'd look at all those two, three hundred claymores looking at me! So I mentioned it right at the

beginning. I said, 'Hey, I can't live like that! I went to Ken Pipes and he talked to the Colonel and they agreed to pull them. And Ken Pipes is the one that got that worked out for me and also built a little trench so myself and the other Americans could get out along with the two from the Marines there that were FOs."

Another ARVN Bn, their sister unit, the 21st Rangers, were due to arrive at Khe Sanh also,but the Battle of Hue City diverted them.

After receiving 700 incoming rounds on 7 Feb 68 (the day Lang Vei fell) and 400 incoming rounds on 8 Feb (the day A/1/9's Hill 64 outpost was assaulted), one of the ARVN soldiers was evacuated with a heart attack, making a total of six now evacuated.

On 12 Feb, the 37th lines received fire from two recoilless rifles. The next day the Rangers dispatched a six-man patrol to the NVA position (XD859410) and Capt Gunn awaited anxiously:

"Approx 1000 hours, we heard a great deal of firing, and there was a lot of fog. We couldn't see what was going on at the time. Around 1030 hours the fog lifted. We saw our patrol. They had caught a two-man recoilless rifle team and captured the 82 recoilless rifle. At first they thought it was a 57 recoilless, but when we got it back here we found out it was a Russian-built 82mm. They're real proud because as far as I know this is the first one captured in Vietnam."

A young ARVN Lieutenant, seriously wounded during this action, killed himself to prevent further casualties to his troops as they attempted to rescue him and were picked-off by NVA snipers, one by one. Later in the day, Gunn requested an indirect weapon from Regiment, and was issued a 106 recoilless rifle.

On 16 Feb, a patrol by the 37th Rangers engaged a company-size NVA unit at XD849409. During the skirmish, a well-developed and elaborate bunker complex capable of supporting a regiment was discovered, orgtanized according to the terrain and not readily visible from the KSCB perimeter. Capt Gunn suggested that the only ordnance effective against this bunker complex would be D-2B (M-117, 750-lb. bomb), D-9 (Mk-77, 500-lb. napalm bomb), D-10 (?), or D-26 (M-117, 750-lb. bomb with a 1-second delay enabling 16-ft. penetration before detonation).

On 21 Feb, the 37th Rangers spotted a hundred or so NVA moving toward them. The enemy force was probably battalion size since the ARVNs monitoring the NVA radio net heard them talking over four or five diffrerent radios. KSCB received 250 rounds of mortar, 50 rounds of artillery, and 70 rounds of rockets in connection with this attack. At one point, there were 75 incoming rounds in one five-minute period.

The Rangers halted the advance some 50 meters from their lines, and an aircraft was called to deliver bombs. The TPQ-10 strike came in on the wrong heading and dropped the bombs between the ARVN and B/1/26 lines, collapsing the Ranger CP bunker and making a 40-ft. crater. Huge clumps of mud began to fall from the sky, one of which broke the arm of a Marine of B/1/26 who huddled in the trench for protection.

Cpl Ted Golab, a Marine enlisted FO detailed to the Rangers from 1/13 had been on top of a bunker—to adjust fires on the approaching NVA when the incoming barrage struck. Fortunately, none of the Rangers were seriously injured. One had been thrown up against a wall and broke his wrist. Another came running to Golab crying like a baby. Golab assured him he was OK, put a battle dressing on his bleeding head, and gave the Ranger his own steel helmet (—which, in that situation, was a gift of life—an ordinary act of heroism exposing himself to injury). In the days that followed, that Ranger never removed Golab's helmet. Golab received a Ranger beret, a shirt with the Ranger patch [pictured on p. 37 of this magazine], and a purple scarf, and wherever he went, a Ranger rifleman now always accompanied him. "Them guys," he says, "were great. They'd be eating our food and I'd be eating their food."

Capt Ken Pipes (CO, B/1/26), interviewed while still at KSCB, noted a high regard and deep respect for the Rangers: "We shared ammunition, food, and many difficult experiences. They were professionally and ably led. Their junior officers and NCOs were of the highest caliber. The individual men were brave, dedicated, and fearless combat soldiers.. The Tet Offensive was centered around towns, villages and hamlets from which most of the Rangers were recruited. They did not know the effect that the NVA Tet Offensive had on their families and loved ones. Could we have done as well under those circumstances? Marines and corpsmen would voluntarily make almost nightly trips to the ARVN lines to carry wounded rangers to the Regimental Aid Station.."

Ray Strischek [a communications man with First Marine Air Wing detailed to KSCB] once recalled his meeting with an ARVN Ranger:

"Food got scarce and for three to five days (I can't really remember) we went to one C-rat per day. Well, I with my telephone and pliers and a Vietnamese Ranger with his carbine and floppy shower shoes aspied some fool dumping what looked like hundreds of cans of C-rats into a barrel. Me and the Viet Ranger eyed each other, eyed the barrel and ran for it. We were running along, elbowing each other and laughing. (We didn't know each other). Apparently neither of us could really believe someone would throw food away. When we got to the barrel, it was full of C-rat cans alright. The Viet Ranger picked up a can, I picked up a can. All the cans were the same. All Ham and Lima Beans. The Ranger grunted, cursed and spat, and said 'Chit numba Ten Thou.' (Word gets around, you know!) We walked away from Ham and Lima Beans. He pulled out some Viet rations: a clear plastic bag, I guess of fried fish eyes and minnow like parts. I had a can of fruit cocktail. We shared. Couldn't understand a word he said and vice versa. Whatever it was tasted pretty good. We parted friends."

During the night of 29Feb/01Mar (it was Leap Year this year, thus 29 Feb), a regimental-size (or greater) assault was made by the NVA against the eastern perimeter, just as Lt Tonc had indicated, although not timed to correspond to the assault on Hill 861 (the assault on 881-S was probably preempted by the movement of I/3/26 to

881-N on 20 Jan). Maj Mirza M. Baig, the amazing Pakistani-born genius serving as TIO, later noted that this attack reflected the NVA's rigidity and inflexibility of mind, not altering his plan or tactics from the original plans, and might indicate that the huge B-52 strike on the NVA Front HQ, while not killing Gen. Giap, did manage to catch senior commanders and their staffs "..for if anyone could have changed the attack master plan, these officers could. Since the plan was never changed, perhaps they died in the bombing."

The brunt of the attack was directed against the 37th Ranger lines. It was to be the deciding engagement of the Siege battle of Khe Sanh, spelling the NVA defeat at Khe Sanh. Many of the defenders at KSCB never fired a shot, and the main NVA assault "passed with a whimper instead of a roar." [Moyers Shore, *Battle for Khe Sanh*, p. 125].

FOB-3 possessed a captured NVA codebook containing all their operational codes, cyphers, and frequencies for the entire Siege. Since most of the artillery was fired by command over radio nets, those in the FOB usually had advance warning. Harve Saal recalls that a NVA message intercepted and decrypted described the large ground attack and indicated the use of hand-held pyrotechnics as signalling for it, including "cease fire" and "retreat." [Note: on 28 May 68, during a very ferocious attack on F/2/3, the acting Co CO, 1Lt James L. Jones, Jr., later Major General, together with his company Gunny decided to shoot some green pencil flares, the signal that had launched the attack against them, and the NVA temporarily retreated] During this night, when the major attack was mounting, he fired the appropriate signal for "cease fire/retreat," and suddenly, in the darkness of the sky, numerous other flares suddenly exploded—flares fired by other SF in the FOB-3 also! Undoubtedly the confusion in the NVA ranks was an additional factor against them.

Strings of electronic sensors announced the assembly and assault as NVA troops moved towards KSCB from Route 9, and the mass was decimated by Firecracker munitions, 175s, TPQ-10s, and two diverted Arc Lights which dropped their ordnance only 750 yards from the ARVN positions. The official record of this attack describes the gristly scene of the battlefield when a patrol from the ARVN rangers examined it soon after sunrise:

"A physical reconnaissance of the area later that same morning revealed 78 NVA KIA with numerous bangalores [bamboo filled with explosives that are shoved under the barbed wire and detonated to make an opening] and satchel charges, indicating a major effort to breach the wire had been planned. The dead were still huddled in trenches, many in the kneeling position, in three successive lines, as if they had been caught in the assault position. The devastating effect of the 'FIRECRACKER' round was apparent."

Maj Mark A. Swearengen, the Liaison Officer from 2d Bn, 94th Artillery, at KSCB to coordinate 175mm gun fire from Camp Carroll and the Rockpile, made the interesting observation that the attack occurred about 40 days after the first ground attack. This is the length of time feudal armies usually besieged, and the soldiers then were only paid for a 40-day commitment. Failure to fell a fortress within 40 days, the attacking forces simply departed the siege.

The Rangers were to expeience additional probes on 18 and 29 March as well as a loud speaker propaganda effort calling them to surrender, but the main NVA effort had been made and had been defeated.

Capt Gunn had arrived with 425 men, and 65 more arrived on 6 March, for a total of 490 brought to Khe Sanh. When the 37th departed during Operation PEGASUS, they had sustained 12 KIA and 61 WIA.

MACV ADVISORY TEAM #4

The accidental bombing of Lang Vei (02 Mar 1967) became the occasion to establish the MACV Advisory Team in Khe Sanh Village. Capt James Whitenack had already learned of Khe Sanh since his OCS classmate, James Thompson, had been captured and, while in the career course at Ft. Benning the summer of '64, word was received that Thompson had been killed at Khe Sanh. Whitenack abruptly departed his duty station in Germany and reported right after Christmas '66.

When the two USAF F-4s bombed Lang Vei, LtGen Walt said he wanted an advisory team at Khe Sanh. Prior to this, the CO of the Special Forces "A" Camp at Khe Sanh, the tall, dark-haired Duffy, also served as District Advisor. Whitenack, together with Sgt Humphrey (Ops Sgt), was given 2 carbines, a radio, a case of C-rations, and arrived at Khe Sanh on an Air America helicopter about 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

"We opened the Sub-Sector with basically the clothes that we carried, 2 carbines, 60 rounds of ammunition apiece, a radio, a case of C-rations. It took about 2 months to make up the complete team. I had an Australian Warrant Officer initially as my assistant. Then 1Lt Bruce B.G. Clarke came in, and we had a full team."

A message came out from 3d MAF about not supplying/supporting anybody or any forces outside the perimeter, probably meant for Vietnamese, but the CO at the KSCB suddenly stopped supply of water, food and other supplies. "I got on the radio and I called my people in Quang Tri and said, 'Friday, when the Air America chopper comes in, I'm loading my people up and pulling out.' They said, 'You can't do that!' I said, 'O yes, I can!" They said 'Why?' I said, 'We've been cut off.' That lasted about two days, and all of a sudden the order got lifted real quick like."

SFC James Perry, the Medic of the Team, conducted frequent medcaps in the local villages with supplies that he basically had to steal, assisted by a nurse, Coh Dung, and her three assistants, Coh Ninh, Coh Chew, and Coh Liol. Perry recalls that each member of the Team had varying prices on his head: Maj Whitenack—150,000 Pias-

tres; SFC (E-7) Humphrey, the communications specialist—50,000 Piastres; SFC (E-7) King, the village and hamlet security advisor—75,000 Piastres; Capt Clarke—100,000 Piastres. No one ever collected, of course.

After Maj Whitenack departed, Capt Bruce B.G. Clarke became the District Advisor, Huong Hoa Sub-Sector, and was in charge of the District when it was attacked 21 Jan. [The story of that heroic stand, the participation by Marines of CAC OSCAR, the daring stand and dash to safety by Marines of CAP O-2 (isolated at the western edge of the village when the attack erupted), the attempted reinforcement by the senior CIA officer in the region with disastrous results when they landed on the Old French Fort position, the departure from Khe Sanh and subsequent moving of the Seat of Government to the FOB-3 camp, all requires extensive coverage and should be the subject of another special edition of this magazine. Suffice it to say that the estimated NVA KIA from this brave stand numbered 200 - 300].

37th SIGNAL BATTALION

Operating a TRACK-129 mobile tropospheric scatter terminal for radio link between KSCB and Phu Bai as well as a teletype circuit to NKP, Thailand (for a link to Task Force ALFA, the electronic sensor headquarters), the 544th Signal Detachment from the 37th Signal Battalion, arrived at KSCB in mid-January. Being unannounced and unexpected, the TROPO van was set up without bunkering on top of the grounhd. The antennae wer prominent and made it a good target.

The Officer in Charge was 1Lt Rodney Arthur Alfano, from Boston, married. Marines of Co D/1/26 enjoyed a special relationship with these Army signal types, and Lt Alfano readioly shared what special foods he had with them. He even prepared a special meal of shrimp and a home-made cocktail sauce for the officers of Co D.

A few minutes before the barrage that was to be so deadly struck, SP-4 William Hawkinson of this unit had drifted away from the others, and when the rockets exploded, dove into a Marine bunker. A few seconds later, another Marine dove into the bunker; he had seen something terrible, "The whole Army bunker got wiped out, what a mess!" A 122mm rocket had entered an opening in the bunker and detonated inside.

Hawkinson immediately rushed outside to see to his friends—friends who were no more, but was restrained by the Marines who began to console him as only in brothers in battle can.

Two Marines of Co B/1/26, Johnny Belina and Dick Cruz, were in their trench during the incoming, about 30 ft. from the Army van. Johnny Belina recounts:

"It was coming in hot and heavy and I guess I got rescue stuff in my blood, but I ran up there and their bunker had caved-in, and I was digging them out during that incoming and dug one of them up—got his head out, started to give him mouth to mouth. And then found another man. Then when it slacked up, others came to help. One of them was definitely dead. I'll never forget: I saw his hand sticking out of that red dirt and he had a wedding ring on. I will never forget that.

One of the Marine officers desperately fought to keep back his tears; he knew the Army officer as a friend. "I will write his wife," he muttered.

The three Army signalmen in the struck bunker all subsequently died from their wounds. There were 4 KIA, 1 WIA. Specialist Hawkinson, together with the assistance of two Marines, kept the system on line for 40 hours until replacements arrived.

ARTILLERY UNITS

DUSTERS AND "WHISPERING DEATH"

Navy weapons manned by Army soldiers on a Marine combat base: these were the "Dusters" and the "quad 50s." First arriving in connection with the re-opening of Route 9 on 27 March 1967 to KSCB (since they were ideal for escorting convoys), the units at Khe Sanh during the Siege battle occupied positions on the northern ("Blue") sector, facing the mountain range containing the radio relay outpost on Hill 950, the inverted coffee-cup hill called 1015 (some others referred to it as the "witch's tit"), and infested with numerous NVA FOs.

The twin 40s, old WW II cannons mounted on ships as anti-aircraft weapons, were mounted on a light track chassis which could travel up to 55 MPH, and designated M-42A1, or "Duster." The Duster was capable of firing 240-300 40mm rounds per minute. When Hill 950 was almost completely overrun on 6 June 1967, in the dense fog that shrouded the hill, Sgt Richard W. Baskin, one of the defenders on that hill, remarked that the rounds of the Dusters, "..were like eyes coming out of the fog. You could see them, and they were all over the place. It felt good to have this artillery. I felt as though it wouldn't hurt us, because, you know, we were on the same side."

The four .50 caliber machineguns mounted on a 2-1/2 ton Army truck ("Quad 50" or M55) could fire 2,700 rounds per minute either manually or electrically. The weapon earned the title "Whispering Death" from the Chinese Communists during the Korean War. Should a mortar or sniper position be spotted, it would not take long to silence it with this weapon!

During the Siege battle at Khe Sanh, the Quad 50 unit was a squad from "G" Battery of the 65th Artillery Group, and the Dusters were a Light Section, designated ADA (Air Defense Artillery), AW(SP) (Automatic Weapon, Self-Propelled) from "A" Battery, 1st Bn, 44th Artillery. "C" Battery arrived during Operation Pegasus and remained on KSCB through the final destruction of the base in early July. There was also a section from "B" Battery, 29th Searchlight Group, 1st of the 44th.

COUNTER-MORTAR

Following a strong suggestion from the 175 LnO, Capt Mark Swearengen, a det, 238th Field Artillery (Radar), 1st Bn, 40th Artillery, arrived on 22 Jan and began operations with their AN/MPG-4, counter-mortar radar. This radar could pick up and track an incoming round and compute the location from which it had been fired. It could also track our own rounds, such as those of the 175s to determine exactly where they "splashed" so that "fine tuning" corrections could be made to firing data to increase the accuracy of our own fire.

175s

The artillery assets at KSCB at the beginning of the Siege battle consisted of 46 artillery pieces. 1/13, in direct support, comprised 3 105mm howitzer batteries (A, B, C, of 1/13) for a total of 18 tubes (range: 11,000 meters), one 4.2-inch mortar battery (W/1/13) of 6 tubes (range 6,000 meters), and one Provisional Battery (P Btry) of 6 tubes of 155mm (range 15,000 meters). In indirect support were 5 90mm tanks, 2 ONTOS Platoons (10 vehicles) and with single 106s, a total of 92 106mm recoilless rifles.

In addition, KSCB received the significant support 16 175s of the US Army's 2nd Bn, 94th Artillery (12 at Camp Carroll, 4 at Thon Son Lam or "Camp Rockpile"), with a range of 32,800 meters (almost 33 clicks or grid squares!).

Capt Mark A. Swearengen was the 175 Liaison Officer who, along with his enlisted assistant, SP-4 Winnen and later, Dennis Berg, brought the 175s to bear on targets during the Siege. 1Lt Doug Meredith replaced Capt Swearengen in late February as the 175 LnO.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect was the inability to bring the strength we had, to bear on specific targets. This was one of the great frustrations of the Vietnam War in general: various Rules of Engagement (ROE), political considerations (international boundaries), lack of unified support in the States before committing troops overseas, lack of a clearly defined mission, all made the Vietnam conflict similar to a well-trained boxer boxing according to the rules of Western boxing with one arm and glove tied behind his back, not wearing a protective cup, and wearing headgear that obstructed part of his vision in the ring, boxing with an Oriental kick-boxer opponent!

Swearengen kept thinking: we're Americans, we have all this power and force, and we can't use it! The specific cause was the doctrine of SAV-A-PLANE, where artillery can't be fired if there is aircraft in the area—or even if the aircraft has not yet arrived but has been launched, especially high-performance ("fast-movers," jets). At the time, there was a lack of a DASC to coordinate both: "We were the United States! All this fire-power is available to us! We had the capability to do mean things—to really do things! And we couldn't get it coordinated so that it would all be dumped and applied at one time. We had to shut-off the artillery for the high-performance aircraft, stacked-up in the air ready to come in and drop bombs."

This was specifically the tragic case of Lang Vei: "My battalion could of dropped in a lot of 175 rounds on Lang Vei easily. The battery at the Rock Pile could of hit Lang Vei, and they were ready to go, ready to fire. I kept saying, 'Listen, we can do it. We can do it.' And we were never allowed to shoot because of the aircraft they wanted to bring in the area." 175s are an area-type weapon, designed to put down a heavy fire of steel on an area, and it does this very well. It would have, therefore, been ideal in the initial moments of the tank assault on Lang Vei.

Swearengen worked in the FSCC with the amazing "Harry" Mirza Baig: "If you ever met him, you'd never forget him. He was hard to describe. He was very enthusiastic about unfortunate situations. He'd talk about being surrounded by thousands of enemy troops and this and that, and he'd just bubble with enthusiasm! It would scare the daylights out of most people, but he sounded enthused about it!"

Those in the FSCC naturally listened with focused concern to the radio traffic of the ground controller (Bill McEwen) guiding the TPQ-10 aircraft to their targets at night, telling them when to release the bombs. There were normally two or more F4 or A6 aircraft flying at a fairly high altitude guided by the TPQ-10 radar. Swearengen suggested to Kent O.W. Steen (Assistant Fire Support Coordinator) and Jack Hennelly (CO, 1/13, Fire Support Coordinator) that an even greater effect would result if all the artillery could be massed on the same targets the planes were hitting, and that with fairly simple coordination, the artillery would be TOT ("Timed on Target") simultaneously as the bombs exploded. Steen did the computations and worked out the details of Swearengen's suggestion, and thus was born the "Mini-Arc Light," saturating an area 500x1000 meters, and the effect was devastation to the NVA.

Doug Meredith had a platoon of 175s which he took to Camp Rockpile so the range of support by 175s could be extended to the Lao border. He arrived at KSCB via CH-53: "I remember looking down on the base. It looked like a moonscape with puffs of smoke where incoming was landing. What was I getting into? The landing was quick. They said to get the hell off and get in a hole."

He recalls his impression of the 26Mar staff in the COC and the 13Mar staff in the FSCC: "Everyone talked and listened. No one ever laughed at or belittled a suggestion. When we asked 'Why?' many times history was made.

We asked why the firepower of artillery and bombs couldn't be combined, and came up with the 'mini-arc light.' We asked why the B-52s had to have such a long lead time in planning, and found they were able to plan a mission almost overhead. We asked why napalm could only be dropped in the day, and saw it dropped at night. When we asked why the B-52s had to drop their load so far from the perimeter, they moved in closer. I only wish there had been a way to get a battalion of 175s into Khe Sanh. We could have closed down some of those long shooters in Laos."



NOTICE

THE NEXT ISSUE OF *RED CLAY* WILL BE A SPECIAL ISSUE COMMEMORATING THE 30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIEGE BATTLE.

IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS SPECIAL, YOU, WHO WERE THERE, ARE ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE A SHORT POEM OR A COUPLE OF SENTENCES WHICH MAY BE USED IN THE ISSUE CONCERNING KHE SANH: WHAT OUGHT TO BE REMEMBERED BY FUTURE GENERATIONS, WHAT YOU REMEMBER THAT IS SO IMPORTANT, A PARTICULAR INCIDENT, A SPECIAL PERSON, A "THANK YOU," SOMETHING THAT COMES FROM THE HEART AND IS IMPORTANT TO YOU. REMEMBER TO KEEP IT SHORT. HOPEFULLY, WE'LL GET MANY CONTRIBUTIONS, AND THEN WILL HAVE LIMITED SPACE.

SEND TO OUR NEW EDITOR:
MR. RAY TRUELOVE
2984 55th Terrace SW
Naples FL 34116

A PERSONAL NOTE
From your Temporary Editor

This magazine is perhaps the backbone of our organization: the means of keeping us in contact with each other; the vehicle for expressing our feelings, thoughts, hopes and hurts; the forum for exchanging information that may promote healing and resolution of concerns by providing some of the "missing pieces" in our experience since we all have the pieces of the whole that, together, will make us whole; the opportunity to make a permanent, historical statement for future generations; the unexpected gift of finding a long, lost buddy, and renewing some of the nourishment to our spirit that comes from a connectedness that affirms each other's basic humanity.

Various Editors have contributed their "labor of love" to make this magazine the much appreciated gift it is to so many. Their efforts are, indeed, works of love—love, not as an emotion, but as an action, an action which gives life to another without expecting any reward or recognition on the part of the giver. (What great lovers so many we've known at Khe Sanh were!). Ernie Husted, Jr., first started to add articles, print requests, poems, memoirs, and emphasized the fun, joy, things that would bring a smile. Ed Evans sought to make it more readable and include the "heart and soul" of those who were at Khe Sanh. Ernie Spencer made it a first-class, professional magazine, and created a forum for exchange of communications, a dialogue, not unlike the campfire groups of warriors who would recount their experiences and feelings. He strove to make it a healing vehicle by being honest with our feelings and hurts which once recognized, can be dealt with. Ernie knew that the emotional and spiritual scars of war are best dealt with by means of artistic expression—such as poetry. I have emphasized the things that hopefully will make us proud to have been at Khe Sanh as well as recognizing the lesser known people and units so that we will all appreciate our common brotherhood. We have always avoided political or specifically religious statements. My own hand was simply a temporary one, and I had planned to step down as soon as another Editor could be found. At the last reunion, one of the Board members stated that my efforts reflected my own "agenda" and that this may have caused many of our brothers to drop from our membership. I sincerely hope not, but if I have offended anyone by how I have written the past five issues (No. 37, 38, 39, 40, and 41) I sincerely apologize to you.

Our new Editor, Ray Truelove, is a Khe Sanh vet, has served as the Editor of the 3d Marine Division's *Caltrap* magazine, is currently the Editor of the Florida state Vietnam Veterans of America newspaper (which

received the VVA's 1997 National Award for the best VVA magazine/newspaper in the country). Ray will be doing all of his work as a donation to our organization! He is professionally competent. He knows in his heart what it means to be a veteran of Khe Sanh. And, he obviously has a great first name!

I will continue to maintain our Khe Sanh archives. We currently have approximately 100,000 pages of letters, diaries, memoirs of Khe Sanh vets, copies of official reports, etc. If you desire to contribute any of this, please consider doing so. This information is very helpful when calls are received wanting to know some detail about some action.

We deal best with the past by taking the energy we have from it—angers, depressions, intensity, and using that to motivate us into serving the living. The motto for our Milwaukee County War Memorial is apt: "Honor the dead by serving the living." It is then we are able to be pulled into the future instead of being pushed by the past. Robert Penn Warren's poem "When the Tooth Cracks—Zing!" has these lines which are so appropriate:

> "Must we totally forget a thing to know it?
> Perhaps redemption is nothing more than the way
> We learn to live with memories that are no longer remembered."

Khe Sanh will always live with us who were there to experience what happened there, but not only as a place of sheer terror or overwhelming beauty or desperate isolation or feeling abandoned; it is also and more so the place where we looked into our brother's eye and beheld the presence of God.

The Hebrew word "Adam" refers to red clay used to make pottery. Isaiah 64:8 may thus be translated: "We are red clay; you formed us. The work of Your hands all of us are." Red clay is, of course, the laterite soil of Khe Sanh formed by millenia of rains weathering the volcanic eruptions of the crater on which Khe Sanh sits, a place born in violence, with violence a lingering spirit of the place, a place of lush life because life feeds on life. This red clay penetrated our skin to such a degree that I recall that after departing from there, I would take showers and for several weeks, the white towel would have a brownish red that looked as though I had wiped another place of my anatomy. In some ways, I feel that the physical substance of this red clay carried a spiritual reality that penetrated into my very being, and the spirits of so many who lost their lives there are dwelling within me. (This is a sort of primitive understanding that touches very ancient religious concepts of "taboo" and "defilement" and "uncleanness" as well as more developed religious concepts of "sacramentalism". Perhaps it is more akin to what we actually feel than what the modern mind permits us to "see" as reality).

So I depart as your Editor, knowing that this magazine will be in very good, competent and caring hands, and that the contents will always be of great significance, for they will come from you, the readers, you, those who are veterans of the Khe Sanh experience: the gifts are in all the people, and just need to be drawn out.

The Brittish in India used the term "So long" as a farewell. It is an abbreviation of "Salaam" which is derived from "Shalom," a blessing of peace, strength, confidence, the opportunity to live and grow and flourish. SO LONG!

—Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe

TAPS

Ernie Frank (HQ/1/13) d. 02 Sep 1997

David L. Rodell (W/1/13) d. 09 May 1997

Harve W. Saal (FOB-3) d. 01 Dec 1997

Red Clay **is published by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a non-profit incorporation registered in the State of Wisconsin 01 Sep 1988, and tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(19), Veterans Organization, by IRS letter of 10 Feb 1989, consisting of all who lived or served in the Khe Sanh battlefield area.**

Purposes of the organization are: To promote renewed fellowship of all who lived and served in the area of Khe Sanh; To locate and account for all who so served; To promote preservation of an accurate historical account of such service; To preserve the memory of those who died there; To promote research and understanding and healing with a regard to those who served there; and To promote artistic expression of the Khe Sanh experience.

Explanation of the Logo: The 9-sided polygon sugbgests the multi-service, multi-year (1972-1973) service at Khe Sanh; the "V" suggests Veteran, Vietnam, Victory, and valor (like the "V" on a Bronze Star Medal); the sharp "KS" suggests the rugged and sharp, painful, Khe Sanh hills and twisted paths of the Khe Sanh experience then and since.

THE BULLETIN BOARD

LCPL Talmadge Thomas Hatcher, Jr., a M60 machinegunner with C/1/9, 1st Plt, was wounded 16 Apr 68 near Hill 689 with shrapnel to his face making him unable to see. His A-Gunner, Kilpatrick, was hit first and paralyzed. Tom remembers two men trying to help him out of the area and both were killed in the process. Finally someone came and told Tom to hold onto his boots and dragged him out of the area to a bomb crater. He would like to find out who helped him out of the area and saved his life and who lost theirs trying to save him. If someone has the missing information, please contact him at: 4025 NE 28th Terrace, Ocala FL 34479.

Ernie Frank (Comm, 1/13), who attended our St. Louis reunion, died of a heart attack on 02 Sep. His widow and 4 children (ages 9-16) want to know all they can about Frank's past. Write her at: Mrs. Caroline Frank,
407 W. Jefferson
Martinburg MO 65264

Membership cards are available on request from the Treasurer. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request.

I would like to contact someone who served with my brother Cpl Charles Coleman. Charlie served as a machinegunner with Co D, 1/26. His tour of duty began 16 Nov 1967. He was killed in action 31 May 68 in Quang Nam. Please contact: Sandy Hodak, 457 Oak Meadow Dr., Pataskala OH 43062-8733. e-mail address:

Raymond C. Nicol (B/1/13) was recently operated for a brain tumor which was malignant. He has known two other Vietnam vets who have died from brain tumors. "The information I am seeking from our brotherhood is how many more of us are dealing with the same disease and how many already died from it. I am convinced this condition was brought on by Agent Orange exposure. I would appreciate any documentation from any vets who have suffered with this disease. I intend to take it to the VA for a disability hearing."
Contact Raymond Nicol
781 Clark Rd.
Hale MI 48739-9124

*

Khe Sanh T-Shirts, jackets, patches, caps ("covers"), etc. are available. Contact our PX
Carl Oksnee
1768 21st Ave.
Kenosha WI 53140

NEXT REUNION will be in Washington, DC, 01-05 July 1998 at the Crowne Plaza, 14th & K St, NW, Tel: 1-800-227-6963 at $84.00 per night plus tax and occupancy rate. A separate brochure will be sent early next year with agenda and other details.

To help us get funds to pay for printing and mailing of this magazine (in addition to dues), we offer to place a business-size card advertisement in our magazine at $10.00 per issue. We also will include an "in memory of" notice in group form (see facing page) for those who make a donation in an amount that their heart indicates. Please send your advertisement, your "in memory of", and your contribution to our Treasurer, Mr. Vincent Griffith. (Address on back cover)

IN MEMORY

SSGT GARY DOOLEY remembered by Erskin Taylor * PFC JOHN MC MONEGAL (KIA 29 Aug 67) remembered by John Locke * MARINE DEAD ON MAY 3, 1967 FIGHT remembered by Jim Mason * ARNOLD JAVIER RIVERA (KIA 25 FEB 68) remembered by Jim Convery * CAPT DONALD G. BALDWIN (Deceased 13/11/94) remembered by Mrs. Connie L. Baldwin * 3rd PLATOON, FOXTROT, 2/26, remembered by C. McEver * MIKE DAILY (3/16/67) remembered by Patrick Devine * 81's, 1/26 remembered by Robert L. Mills * W.O. HOLYCROSS remembered * THOMAS BIRCH remembered by Robert Harrison * CHARLIE LINDEWALD (SF, MIKE FORCE) remembered by Paul Longgrear * SSGT WAYNE V. WILSON (MIA July 2, 67) remembered by John A. Moore * CPL CHARLES COLEMAN (D/1/26 guns) remembered by John DeFelice * SGT DANIEL H. BROWN remembered by Frank H. McCarthy * IRV POLT (H&S/1/9, S2 Scout) remembered by Carey W. McGiffin * QUANTICO TBS 5-67 CLASSMATES (2nd Lt LARRY BLEEKER, KIA OCT 67, 2ND Lt TOM BRINDLEY, KIA 20 Jan 68, 2nd Lt DON JACQUES, KIA 25 Feb 68, 1st Lt ALLEN COURTNEY, KIA 17 May 68) remembered by Terry Charbonneau * ERNIE FRANK remembered by James D. Armbrust * NORMAN DESCHAINE (KIA Jun 1968) remembered by Maurice Deschaine * ALL OUR FALLEN BROTHERS remembered by Ray Kelley, Jr. * HANK NORMAN—A GOOD FRIEND remembered by M. F. Barber * "LUCKY" (E/2/26, Scout) remembered by Harold Smyle * SPECIAL FORCES A DETACHMENT 101, LANG VEI remembered by Lawrence Cooper * ALL WHO DIED remembered by Jim Wodecki * GARY LINDSAY remembered by Charles A. Bennett * MYSELF (KIA MENTALLY FEB 68, Hill 861) remembered by David F. Tomazic * 1Lt MICHAEL HAYDEN (A/1/9, KIA 16 Apr 68) remembered by Robert Wilk * A/1/13 KIAs remembered by Dennis Pardee * CPL REUBEN C. MCMAKINS (L/3/26, KIA 14Apr68) remembered by Thomas A. Pierce * B CO, 3rd RECON remembered by R. W. Morris * 109th QMC AIR DELIVERY remembered by R. Anderson * EDWARD CODY ADAMS remembered by Lawrence W. Kubley * JACK SCARPINATO and ALL MY BROTHERS FROM DELTA 1/26 remembered by Sid "Fish" Patricio * BUTCH CORSETTI (G/2/9 & 3dForce) remembered by Joe S. Deer * ALL OUR FALLEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS remembered by Robert O. Croft * ALL OF US remembered by Carl Campo * CPL SULLIVAN (KIA 1968) remembered by Bryan Rabbett * LCPL RUSSELL "HOSS" CORBIN (B/1/26, KIA 7FEB68) remembered by G. Steven Hecknauer * LOYD KINNESWORTHY (I/3/27, KIA 4/68) remembered by Stan Kerlin * GARY TALLENT and CHARLES "DOC" MILLER remembered by Steve Johnson * LIMA 3/26 AND THEIR DEAD remembered by ? * LARRY FIELD - RICHARD DEVORE remembered by Lynn Brown * ANYONE WHO CAN'T remembered by Brian Prochaska * JOE (REB) ROBLE remembered by Michael Worth * SGTs CONE and MAHONEY (29JAN68) remembered by Grenville Sutcliffe * EDWARD TOWSLEE & MIKE KILDERRY remembered by Terry Tillery * ALL THE DEAD, WOUNDED, AND SURVIVORS remembered by Robert ("PJ") Pagano * JOSE CASTILLO remembered by Bruce E. Jones * MAJ GEORGE QUAMO remembered by Tom Simcox * ERNIE FRANK remembered by Ted Szczesniak * 2ndLt JAMES DREW BARRETT III (KIA 28FEB69) remembered by Loyde P. Arender * J.B. MCINTOSH remembered by Kenneth Maynor * ALL WHO SERVED remembered by Len Arbour * A/1/9 remembered by HJM Radcliffe * THE MARINES WHO DIED ON 881N, 1/20/68 remembered by Theodore C. Hartung * SGT JOE YEAGLE (A/1/9 FO 81s) remembered by G.H. Carlson Jr * DET A101 remembered by William T. Craig * ALL THOSE WHO GAVE ALL AT KHE SANH remembered by Leland S. Upshaw * LCPL JOSEPH A. PACHECO (KIA 13APR66) remembered by Charles Luhan * RAY FERRY remembered by John Hargesheimer * PFC WOODY CRONKRITE (I/3/26, KIA 10Sep67) remembered by Michael P. Rummel * OUR BOYS THAT DIED AT KHE SANH remembered by Herbert Marshall * LCPL PATE (H&S/1/9) remembered by James M. Best * MAJ DOYLE R. SPRICK remembered by Col John Clark * THOSE UNABLE TO PAY remembered by Sealy C. Nicholson * LT BILL THORNTON (1/5) remembered by Horace E. Roland * WM EUGENE CZARNY (5/9/67) & MARCUS C. JONES (9/28/67) remembered by Watson T. Mosebay Jr * 1st PLT, 3rd FORCE RECON CO remembered by Ski Doroski *

RED CLAY

ALL WHO LOST THEIR LIVES AT KHE SANH remembered by Bill "Tex" Seiber * JOHN R. HEINRICH remembered by Christine Heinrich * NORMAN C. DESCHAINE (KIA 7JUN68) remembered by James C. Oyster * HENRY MCDONALD (B/1/26) remembered by J. Riddle * WITH THANKS TO YOU GUYS WHO ARE DOING THIS remembered by Bill Cowan * CPL LAWRENCE LIVINGSTON remembered by John Roberts * TOMPKINS FOSTER & STEPHEN HELWIG remembered by Dennis McNeal * MICHAEL G. TURNER (KIA APR68) remembered by "Doc" Thomas * THOSE WHO DIED ON HILL 861-A remembered by Earle G. Breeding * THOSE WHO SERVED AT KHE SANH remembered by Jeff Bodenweiser * 881 remembered by C. T. Anthony * MANY COMRADES remembered by Billy D. Martin * ALL MY BROTHERS I LEFT WITH 1/12 ARTY BAT) remembered by Marco A. Coronado * PFC JOHN A. DENNIS remembered by Stephen Haisley * LT DISTEFANO remembered by Fred McGrath * CAPT P.T. LOONEY remembered by David J. Leighton * AUSTIN GAUGHAN (A/3d Shore Party) remembered by David Assum * RICK RAMSEY & JOHN KOPFER (KIA FEB68) remembered by Rick Fulton * LOUIS GOI remembered by Philip D. Mineer * MY FELLOW 3dRECON BN & 3d FORCE RECON WHO GAVE THEIR ALL remembered by Francis J. Delaney * 1/9, 3rd MARDIV remembered by Rev. Joseph F. Shea * TIM BARMER & JIM MCCANN remembered by Roger Alan Howes * ALL KIA AND MIA from "Doc" William R. Hartnett * LCPL ROBERT D. CICIO remembered by Mrs. Nellie Cicio * PFC BRUCE EDWARD CUNNINGHAM remembered by David T. Kramarczyk * WES FLANNAGAN remembered by Clark Wylde * KIA & WIA OF DELTA 1/26 remembered by J. Finn * G/2/3, 3d RIFLE PLT, "HILL BATTLES" 1967 remembered by Andrew B. McFarlane * MAJ JESSE BENNETT (L/3/26) remembered by Richard R. Blair * ALL OUR BROTHER MARINES WHO HAVE FALLEN ON THE BATTLEFIELD remembered by Jim Nangle *

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Khe Sanh

The Siege



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The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the TWENTY-SIXTH MARINES (REINFORCED, THIRD MARINE DIVISION (REINFORCED) for service as set forth in the following CITATION: For extraordinary heroism in action against North Vietnamese Army forces during the battle for Khe Sanh in the Republic of Vietnam from 20 January to 1 April 1968. ...the 26th Marines was opposed by numerically superior forces...The enemy...was determined to destroy the Khe Sanh Combat Base...The 26th Marines, occupying a small but critical area, was daily subjected to hundreds of rounds of intensive artillery, mortar and rocket fire. In addition, fierce ground attacks were conducted by the enemy in an effort to penetrate the friendly positions. Despite overwhelming odds, the 26th Marines remained resolute and determined, maintaining the integrity of its positions.... inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. .....the men of the 26th Marines stood defiantly firm.....Through their indomitable will, staunch endurance, and resolute courage, the 26th Marines contributed substantially to the failure of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army winter/spring offensive. The enemy forces were denied the military and psychological victory they so desperately sought. By their gallant fighting spirit and their countless individual acts of heroism, the men of the 26th Marines (Reinforced) established a record of illustrious courage and determination in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service

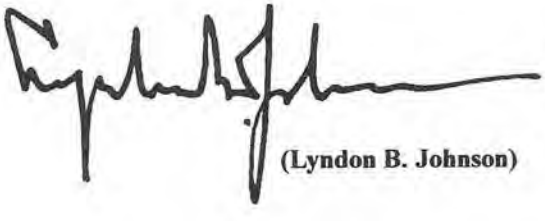

(Lyndon B. Johnson)

RED CLAY

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



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

Arnie -3: par 72

Welcome Home G.I.!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ray Truelove
Home-941-352-2886 Fax 941-352-7142 Office 941-352-1494 E-mail InfoMan@aol.com

RED CLAY

Red Clay is a publication of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a nonprofit veterans organization. ***Red Clay*** is issued three times yearly (spring, summer and fall).
Non-Khe Sanh veterans may subscribe. A subscription form is printed in this publication for your convenience. Information on membership and an application is also included herein.

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COVER PHOTO CREDIT:

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

President's Message

Gen. Al Gray to be Speaker at Reunion

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

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

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

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

As you know, this is our 30th Anniversary of Khe Sanh, the Hill Fights, and all the Special Operations (CAC-FOB) etc., surrounding Khe Sanh. DC is the appropriate place to properly commemorate and pay due respect to those who didn't make it back - and those that did. They will never be lost, that are remembered.

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

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

Dick Peloquin

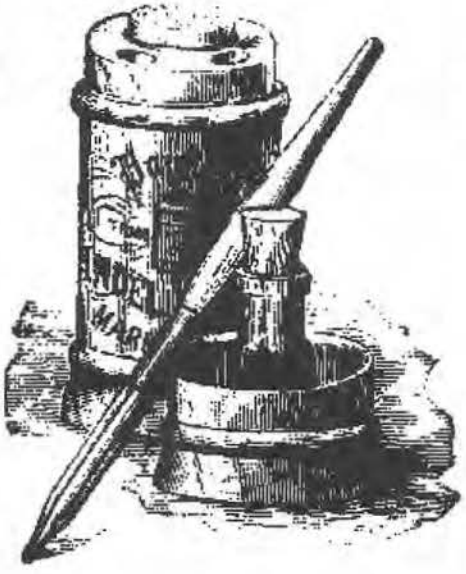

Editor's Ramblings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Together then, together again.

Semper Fi! and Welcome Home!

Ray Truelove

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

P.T.S.D.

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

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

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

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

Christmas 1967

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

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

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

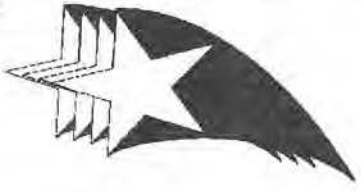

A truce was declared for Christmas Eve,' but, as usual, the enemy did not honor the truce and we were forced to return fire with our 105mm howitzers that evening. Christmas day was uneventful, and exceptional given that there was nothing to put us into the Christmas spirit. There definitely weren't any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

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

Christmas was a very depressing time for us since we were half a globe away and an entire world away from our loved ones. This was not the first time I had been away from home for Christmas. As a young Second Lieutenant, I had spent my first Christmas abroad in Hong Kong. However, on that accasion, I was in a decidedly less perilous situation.

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

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

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

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

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

Khe Sanh Remembered...

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

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

2. The Fact Sheet makes these two significant points:

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

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

John B. McPherson, Vice Dir. JCS

FACT SHEET

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

a. Friendly Strategy

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

b. Enemy Strategy

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

c. Strategic and Tactical Geography

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



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

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

Resources

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

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

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

Khe Sanh Remembered...

Continued from previous page

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

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

b. Intensity of Conflict

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

2. In support of Khe Sanh, U.S. forces fired a total of 117,643 rounds of artillery. Only 14,786 rounds were fired prior to 20 January 1968. Most of the total was 105 mm and 155 mm howitzer fire; however, 12, 441 rounds were from 175 mm artillery pieces.

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



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

c. Results

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

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

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

Conclusions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Continued on next page

Khe Sanh Remembered...

Continued from previous page

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

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

Significant Observations

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

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

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

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

The following is an account of a church service I conducted during the siege at Khe Sanh on a Sunday in March 1968.
By Chaplain Wm. R. Hampton
3/26, 3d MarDiv.

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

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

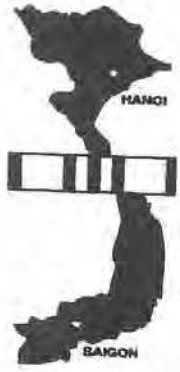

A young man was called out of the group and presented himself before the table. On his forehead the leader signed a cross, the symbol of his new loyalty. Using the phrases of the Creed of the Apostles, the leader asked him questions about his faith. The young man answered with a serious, 'I believe!' When asked if he promised to remain true to this faith, he answered, 'I do, by the help of God!' The signs of emotion were obvious. The young man then knelt, and while the leader applied water and spoke the baptismal words, the concussion of a great explosion above ground shook loose some of the dirt wall. The worship continued with the Prayer of Thanksgiving and the newest member of the Sacred Body of Christ joined the others as they came to the table to receive the Holy Sacrament. The leader gave the final blessing and the worshipers began to file out one at a time, with a deliberate time interval between each person's leaving.

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

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

I Wonder

(But really don't want to know)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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



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



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



Incoming on Khe Sanh Combat Base.



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



Welcome sign at Khe Sanh airstrip - photo by Ray Stubbe



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



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



Brou mother and child - USMC photo A191149



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

Tribute and Tribulation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Capt. Ken Pipes, B Co. 26th Marines

Things Remembered

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vince Gable
Sgt. 1/26 Snipers

I'm Proud to be a Khe Sanh Veteran

By Neil Mc Crossen



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The officer chewing on me was, I

Cont'd on next page

Khe Sanh Remembered...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Semper Fi!
Neil Mc Crossen

Photo Caption for photo below

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

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



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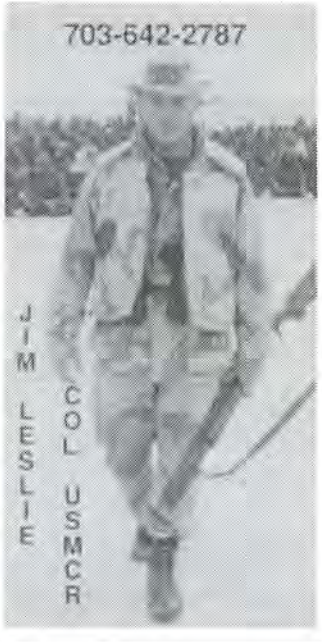



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Facts Concerning the 1968 Battle To Defeat the Enemy's Tet Offensive

A report compiled by Richard P. Fulton

31 January - 30 June 1968

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

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

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

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

On the credit side for the enemy, the bombing of the north had been curtailed. The political scene in the US had been thoroughly jumbled. The pacification program in the Republic of Vietnam had reduced emphasis and negotiations to end the war were being planned. There were many thousands of refugees created and the economic situation of RVN was critically impacted, and physical damage within metropolitan areas and down through the hamlet level was unusually severe.

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

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

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

Gettysburg:

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

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

Guadalcanal:

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

Specifics about the Enemy's 1968 Tet Offensive:

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

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

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



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

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

Continued from previous page.

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

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

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

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

The attack the communists made against the ancient imperial walled capital city of Hue began on 31 January and the enemy held entrenched areas of the old city for 26 days before being thrown out of the area. It is estimated that 142 Marines were killed in the fighting and 857 were wounded. The American Army lost 74 soldiers KIA and had 507 members wounded. Military forces of South Vietnam lost 384 personnel killed and had 1,830 wounded.

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

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

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

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

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

Continued on page 20

KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION
30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEIGE

1968 TOGETHER THEN TOGETHER NOW....KHE SANH VETS ARE ETERNALLY BONDED **1998**

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VISIT THE WALL - ARLINGTON NATIONAL (TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN, KHE SANH MONUMENT, AWARD CEREMONY FOR A FALLEN BROTHER) - THE IWO JIMA MEMORIAL & THE SUNSET PARADE AT 8TH & I
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Mail To: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc, co/Vince Griffith, 27280 Jefferson Ave., Suite 200, Temecula,CA 92490
For More Info: Call Russ Turner : (314) 282-2263 Vince Griffith (909) 676-6047 Mike Worth (773) 763-5415

.....

REUNION REGISTRATION

NAME_____PH: Day_____Eve_____

ADDRESS_____CTY/ST/ZIP_____

SERVED WITH (Branch, BTN., REG., CO., etc._____WHEN_____

NAMES/RELATIONSHIP OF OTHERS IN YOUR PARTY_____

_____TOTAL PEOPLE IN YOUR PARTY_____

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

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

Total Reunion Package only $59.00/Person **TOTAL REMITTED** $_____

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

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1 July - Wed **1200** **Check-in - Hospitality Room Opens**
PX opens
No group events scheduled. Free time, sightseeing, unit or committee meetings.

2 July - Thu 0900 Board of Directors Meeting - Old Business *

1800 **Group Visit to Vietnam Veterans' Memorial (The Wall)**
The wall is close to the Korean Memorial, Lincoln Memorial , Womens Memorial, etc.
1800 - ** Depart Hotel and travel 3/4 miles on foot, as a group, to the Wall .
1900 - Service at The Wall
- - - - Return from The Wall recommended in groups - shuttle/taxi times to be decided

3 July - Fri **0830** **Arlington National Cemetery** (Bus Transportation)
0815 Buses depart hotel
0905 Full honors Wreath laying by KS Vets at Tomb of the Unknown
1000 Posthumous combat valor award presented to Family of Khe Sanh Vet, Joseph Roble, E 2 -26, for actiions later at LZ Margo, where he was KIA
1100 Assemble at Khe Sanh Monument for Wreath laying, Service & Reflection
1145 Assemble and board buses
1200 Stop at Marine Iwo Jima MemoriaL (visit and group photographs)I
1245 Board buses for return to hotel

1400 Board of Directors Meeting - New Business *

1900 **Sunset Parade , 8th & I,** (Bus Transportation)
1800 Buses depart hotel
- - - - Parade begins at Sunset

4 July - Sat **0900** **General Membership Meeting**
Next Year's reunion sight is an agenda item.

0900 **Women's meeting** (Hospitality Room)

1700 **Cocktail Reception and Banquet** (All Service Color Guard)
1700 Attitude Adjustment Hour, No Host cash Bar
1800 Invocation - Dinner
1900 Speaker, General Al Gray, USMC retired, Khe Sanh Veteran and former Commandant of the Marine Corps - Awards and Recognition

5 July - Sun **1000** **Healing Meeting** (Hospitality Room)
Hospitality Room Open - Closing time TBD
Check out and/or Free Time for sightseeing

6 July - Mon - - - - No Scheduled Events. Check out Day or Free Time

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

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

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

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

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

Continued from page 17

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

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

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



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

A little known civil affairs contribution the Air Force made during the campaign was support of a Vietnamese Air Force program established by the 41st VNAF Wing at Danang Air Base which involved delivery of food and medicine by USAF C-7 Caribou aircraft to the refugee camps of Hue. The flights were made at a time when the central government mechanism in Saigon was stoutly in opposition to such an effort, fearing the supplies would fall into the hands of the communists. The first flight, launched from Danang, carried rice and American medical personnel. A public affairs photo team was aboard to document the event. This aircraft landed in Hue when the sound of hostile small arms fire was still a routine fact of life in that city. In fact, it was the first fixed wing aircraft to land at Hue City Strip, after the attack.

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

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

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

Continued on next page

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

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

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

The questions about why victory became defeat are many:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Was this a planned propaganda action?

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

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

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

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

Continued on next page.

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

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

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

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

IN MEMORIAM

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

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

Notices Bulletins and More

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

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

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

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

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

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Veterans Benefits News

VA Pushed One Step Forward; Takes Two Steps Back

CUE PASSES

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

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

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

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

ATTACKS COURT

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

In a year when the BVA churned out 5,000 more denials than in 1996, and the rate of vets who could not find an attorney to help them file their appeal at the court reached 73%, more attorney involvement is called for -- not BVA actions that will lessen the chance to find help with appeals.

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

Eligibility Verification Reports

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

Discharge Exam Made Claim Well Grounded

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

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

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

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

Survivor Could Not Prove VA Did Not Send Application

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

Benefits cont'd next pg.

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

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

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

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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Khe San Veterans, Inc.

Name_____ Phone_____

Street add_____

City, State, Zip +4_____

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

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

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Mac, you knew you weren't coming home.
I didn't believe it when you told me.
Maybe the death in war was meant for some,
but not for you Mac, not for you.
Why didn't someone prepare me for death?
Who prepared you Mac, God?
Maybe He's using your death to prepare me. Thanks, Mac.
I miss you.

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

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

1998 C&P Rates

SERVICE-CONNECTED COMPENSATION

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

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

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

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

NONSERVICE-CONNECTED PENSION

Rates effective Dec. 1, 1997.

MAXIMUM RATES FOR: VETERANS

	annually	*monthly*
single veteran:	$8,665	$722
with one* dependent:	11,349	945
Housebound		
single veteran:	10,591	882
with one* dependent:	13,275	1,106
Aid and attendance		
single veteran:	13,859	1,154
with one* dependent:	16,542	1,378
*each add. dependent:	1,476	123

SURVIVORS

	annually	*monthly*
surviving spouse	$5,808	$567
with one* child:	7,607	633
surviving spouse:	7,101	591
with one* child:	8,895	741
surviving spouse:	9,288	774
with one* child:	11,082	923

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



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



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

ASIAN NEWS BRIEFS

Hanoi Hannah' Has No Regrets Over War Role

By David Lamb
Los Angeles Times Service

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

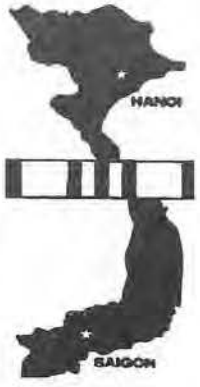

Mrs. Ngo smiled as she recalled the activists she had befriended, among them the one-time student radical Tom Hayden and the actress Jane Fonda, who was married to Mr. Hayden for a time.

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

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

Ten years ago, Ms. Fonda made a televised apology to Vietnam veterans and their families for her 1972 visit, during which she was infamously photographed at a North Vietnamese gun emplacement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

San Antonio Reunion After Action Report

By Dave Rogers

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

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

FRIDAY

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

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

SATURDAY

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

The first person introduced was Chaplain LCDR Paul Worley who started the memorial service with a prayer. Chaplain Worley prayed that all of those who had lost their lives in Vietnam be remembered as "true Americans." Near the end he prayed that God "bless our gathering as we celebrate camaraderie that is found only in the fighting force that has been tested and found worthy. We celebrate the spirit of the man, even in the worst times."

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

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

The person whom most people would agree was responsible for the monument being located in San Antonio, John Baines of San Antonio, was then introduced. John stated that, "approximately fifteen years ago, a very good friend of mine, Bill Stencil, who is here today, and I conceived an idea. And even though I get a lot of credit for this plaza, the

Continued next page

Continued from page 29

idea that the memorial is here, I have to share that will Bill because he was with me when we conceived the idea and was with me throughout the process. And we developed a long-standing good friendship with Austin Deuel, the gentleman who created the memorial that we have here today, "Hill 881 South."

Austin Deuel, former Marine Combat Artist, then came forth and added, "As John was saying, there are a lot of good friends here, and we go way back to the beginning of this thing. And Major Bill, good friend and good Marine, was contacted by actually an Army Captain, who happened to see this small piece that I did for a show I did, called "Vietnam Experiences," in 1981 in Minneapolis. He and John Baines took it to heart and went to work. You can see the final results. I want to tell you that the survivors of this battle have lived with it every day and I'm proud to be with them. It was as horrific of a battle as any Marine company ever fought. And it will live with us until the day we die. I'm glad to be here. Thank you."

Joe Cialone then introduced out of town guests, including veterans of the battle, Ray Calhoun from San Diego, Don Hossack from Montana, and John Colvis from Colorado. Laurie Mitchell came from North Carolina while her mother Paulette Mitchell Freeman traveled from Alabama. Paulette was the wife of 2nd Lt. Joseph Robert "Bussey" Mitchell, Jr., and Laurie was their ten month old daughter at the time of his death on Hill 881 South.

Doug Campbell of a local Vietnam Veterans organization said the following as his concluding remarks, "I cannot speak for Brother Randall or Private Kotik or the rest of the soldiers who didn't come home. But I think if they could, they would say to you, the ones who made it home, thanks and welcome home brothers."

John Colvis and Dave Rogers were then asked to read their poems titled "The Hill Fights," and "Death at My Door" respectively. Both of these poems were published in the Spring 1997 edition of the Khe Sanh Veterans Newsletter, which was dedicated to veterans of "The 1967 Hill Battles."

Joe Cialone announced that the names of persons on the Honor Roll would be read. Dave rogers and Ray Calhoun were selected to read the names of those from M/3/3 and K/3/9 respectively. During the reading of the Honor Roll, Don Hossack and John Colvis transported the wreath from the podium area and placed it in front of the statue title "Hill 881 South." Joe Cialone then asked Chaplain LCDR Paul Worley to close the memorial service with a prayer. After the prayer, a bugler from nearby Fort Sam Houston Army base played taps.

Joe Cialone once again thanked all of those who had attended and helped to make the memorial service a success. Everybody was then invited to attend a reception back at the command post. Several people remained in the area to take pictures, reminisce and talk to others, including news reporters. Later on local veterans and others visited with former members of M/3/3 at the Sheraton. In mid-afternoon, a call was received from MajGen John Admire, USMC, located at Camp Pendleton, CA. The speaker phone was turned on and everybody in the room was able to talk to the General. He had been a former platoon commander and executive officer of Mike Company in 1966 before joining the 3/3 battalion staff in December 1966.

The day was capped by dinner on San Antonio's famous Riverwalk, and one last gathering in the Governor's Suite. It goes without saying that everybody had a wonderful time and is now looking forward to the 40th anniversary!

Personnel Attending:

Lee Ashburn.....North Carolina
John Baines.....San Antonio, Tx.
Merv Benson.....Navasota, Tx.
Cheryl Burnam.....Mesa, Az.
Ray Calhoun.....San Diego, Ca.
Joe Cialone.....Houston, Tx.
Brenda Cialone.....Houston, Tx.
Joseph Cialone.....Houston, Tx.
John Cialone.....Houston, Tx.
Jacey Cline.....Kalispell, Mt.
John P. Colvis.....Littleton, Co.
Barbara Colvis.....Littleton, Co.
Rebecca Colvis.....Littleton, Co.
Luis de la Garza & family...San Antonio, Tx.
Austin Deuel, Scottsdale, Az.
Paulette Mitchell Freeman... Wetumpka, Al.
Christine Guykens.....Houston, Tx.
Col. Michael H. Harrington, USMC (Ret).....Houston, Tx.
Donald Hossack.....Kalispell, Mt.
Lt. Col. Michael Kachilla, USMC San Antonio, Tx.
Laurie Mitchell.....Banner Elk, NC
Ron Rismon.....Kent, Wa.
Terry Rismon.....Kent, Wa.
Constance C. Rogers.....
David G. Rogers..... Arlington, Tx.
LCDR James P. Worley, USN San Antonio, Tx.

We never lose the ones we Love
For even though they are Gone
Within the hearts of those who Care
Their memory will always Live On

VA HEALTHCARE ENROLLMENT

Reprinted with permission from the Florida Recon Report Magazine

WHAT IS VA HEALTHCARE ENROLLMENT?

The new VA healthcare enrollment system will provide access for veterans to a comprehensive package of healthcare services tailored to individual needs. Enrollment is the new annual process of accepting veterans for one year of care in the VA healthcare system. Veterans applying for enrollment (see details below), will be assigned by VA to one of the newly established priority groups. VA will send a letter confirming each veteran's enrollment for healthcare according to their assigned priority group.

VA will extend enrollment to every group for which resources are available. The enrollment process began in October 1997 and will be repeated every year.

AM I REQUIRED TO BE ENROLLED?

You must be enrolled to receive healthcare after October 1998 unless you are in one of the following categories:

* You are rated by VA as having a service-connected disability of 50 percent or more
* It has been less than one year since you were discharged from military service for a military determined and rated compensable disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, and which has not yet been rated by VA
* You are seeking care from VA only for a service-connected disability. VA encourages veterans in the above categories to also apply for enrollment so we can better plan for your healthcare needs.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR ENROLLMENT?

If you have received VA healthcare services after January 1, 1996 you do not need to apply. In this case VA will process an application on your behalf. When your enrollment is confirmed, VA will notify you in writing. Starting in October 1997, all other veterans may apply by contacting the nearest VA healthcare facility. You can apply for enrollment anytime during the year.

HOW LONG WILL I REMAIN ENROLLED?

You will remain enrolled for one year. Your enrollment will be reviewed and renewed each following year depending upon your priority group and available resources. If VA cannot renew your enrollment for another year you will be notified in writing 60 days before your enrollment expires.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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PRIORITY GROUPS

Priority Group 1
* Veterans with service-connected* conditions rated 50 percent or more disabling

Priority Group 2
* Veterans with service-connected conditions rated 30 or 40 percent disabling

Priority Group 3
* Veterans who are former POWs
  Veterans with service-connected conditions rated 10 or 20 percent disabling
  Veterans discharged from active duty for compensable conditions
  Veterans awarded special eligibility classification (38 USC, Section 1151)

Priority Group 4
* Veterans who are former POWs receive a VA pensiuon plus aid and attendance or housebound benefits
  Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled

Priority Group 5
* Non-service connected veterans and service connected veterans rated zero percent disabled whose income and net worth are below the established dollar thresholds

Priority Group 6
* All other eligible veterans who are not required to make copayments for their care including
  World War I and Mexican Border War veterans
  Veterans receiving care for exposure to toxic substances or environmental hazards while in service
  Compensable zero percent service connected veterans

Priority Group 7
* Non service connected veterans and noncompensable zero percent service connected veterans with income and net worth above the statutory threshold who agree to pay specified deductibles and copayments

*The term service connected refers to a VA decision that your illness or injury was incurred in or aggravated by military service and resulted in some degree of disability. Generally, we will pay compensation to you if your service connected disability is determined to be at least 10%.

For more information contact your nearest VA healthcare facility or visit our WEB site at www.va.gov.



The Marine Prayer

Almighty Father, whose command is over all and whose love never fails, make me aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will. Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and deed and helping me to live so that I can face my fellow Marines, my loved ones, and Thee without shame or fear. Protect my family. Give me the will to do the work of a Marine and to accept my share of responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. Grant me the courage to be proficient in my daily performance. Keep me loyal and faithful to my superiors and to the duties my Country and the Marine Corps have entrusted to me. Make me considerate of those committed to my leadership. Help me to wear my uniform with dignity and let it remind me daily of the traditions which I must uphold. If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith; if I am tempted, make me strong to resist; if I should miss the mark, give me the courage to try again. Guide me with the light of truth and grant me the wisdom by which I may understand the answer to my prayer. Amen.

1965



The photo above, titled *"hands of the brothers"* was taken in Orlando, Florida at a Moving Wall Ceremony sponsored by a local chapter of Vietnam Veterans. More than 20,000 people viewed the wall during its week-long stay on the hospital grounds. Photo taken by Ray Truelove, Red Clay Editor - October, 1997.

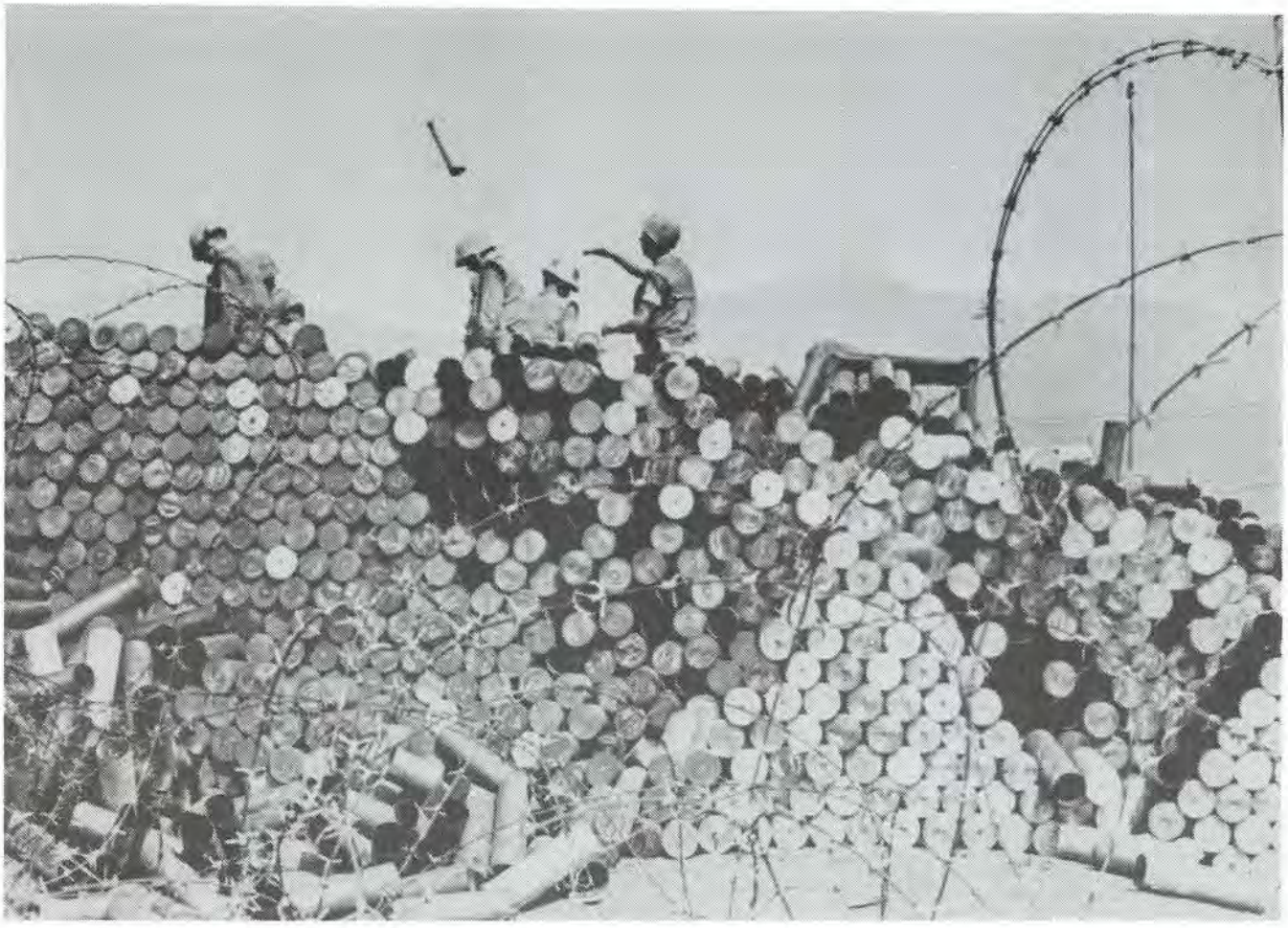

105 MM artillery casings being stacked - tossed during the Khe Sanh Siege. This photo was taken on 29 January 1968 - Hill 950 is hiding in the background. USMC phto A190802 taken by Sgt. T.H. Nairns

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30th Anniversary Reunion Edition

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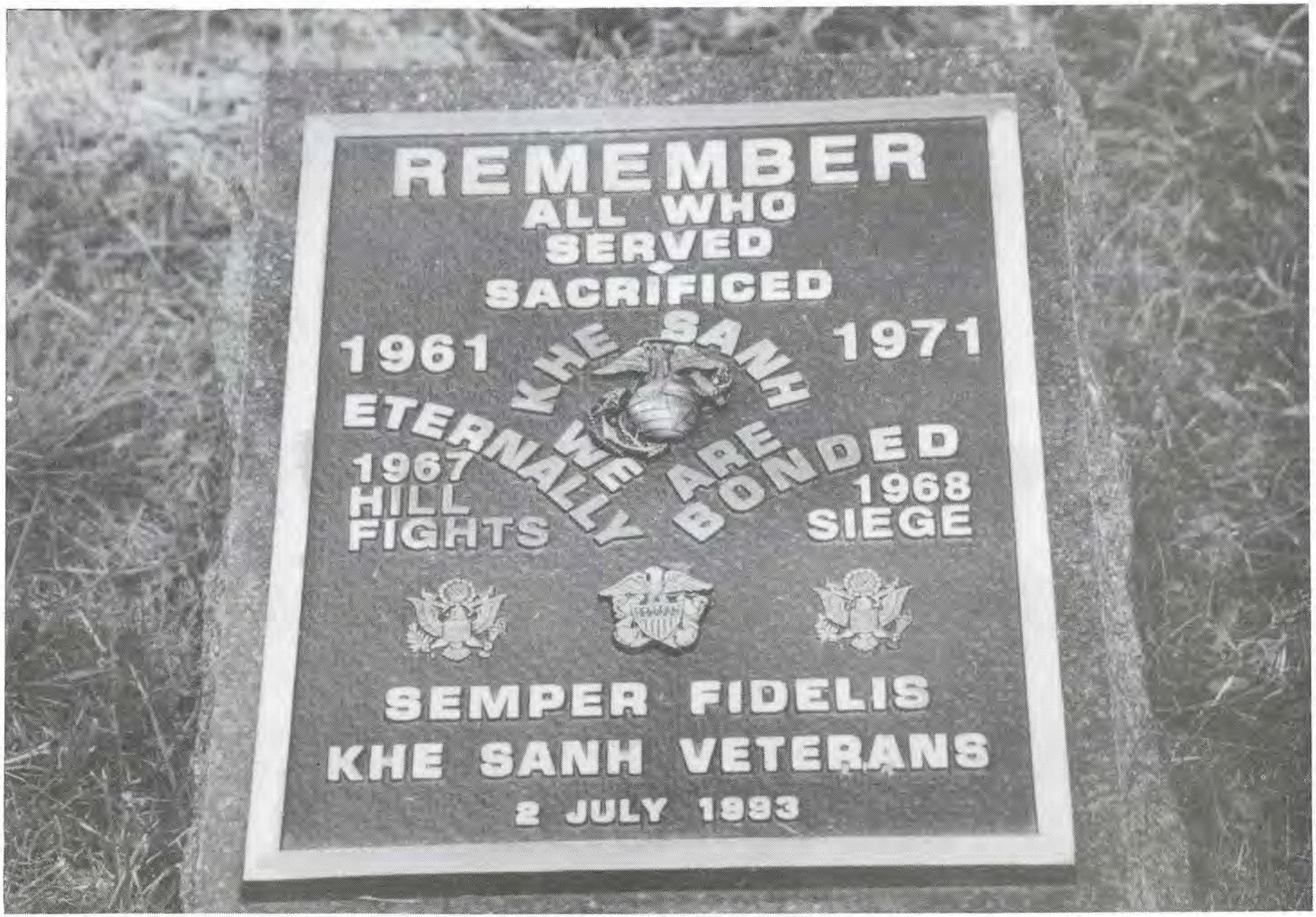
REMEMBER
ALL WHO
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KHE SANH
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SEMPER FIDELIS
KHE SANH VETERANS
2 JULY 1993

RED CLAY

Red Clay is a publication of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a nonprofit veterans organization. Red Clay is issued three times yearly (spring, summer and fall). Non-Khe Sanh veterans may subscribe. A subscription/membership application is printed on the outside back cover of this edition for your convenience.

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Memories of Khe Sanh 28
By Anthony Borja

COVER PHOTO CREDIT:

Photo taken by Red Clay Editor Ray Truelove



A Message From Your President...

Our 1998 30th Anniversary Reunion at the Crowne Plaza Hotel at 14th & "K" Streets in Washington, D.C. was a well paid tribute to our fallen comrades of all of our armed force veterans of the Khe Sanh Experience, to include the vicious hill fights, the sea and air battles, the courageous "Chopper" pilots and crews, the defenders of the Khe Sanh Combat Base who were constantly striving to avoid the "incoming" while keeping "charlie" from getting through the wire.

Our visit to "The Wall" was as always a somber remembrance of those that were not physically with us. I watched as many reached out their hand to touch the name of a long lost, but obviously not forgotten warrior friend, a reuniting of a soul. All with sorrow, some with unashamed tears, all with dignity and respect. A reflection of togetherness once again for a brief time. Bernice Penn took the initiative to make an appropriate plaque which was laid at "The Wall" in remembrance for those never to be forgotten. A healing session followed; personal remembrances and releasing of pent up emotions. A good healing session.

Bill Jayne took the responsibility of obtaining a permit and a wreath for an appropriate ceremony at the "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier", a tribute to all of those warriors of all wars and conflicts of the past.

Immediately following was a presentation (posthumously) of the Bronze Star Medal to the mother: Mrs. Anna Roble of Lance Corporal Joseph E. Roble, USMC. LCPL Roble was a KIA in Quang-Tri province, Vietnam, while acting as point man as a member of E/2/26. Earl Breeding acted as Master of Ceremonies with the assistance of Vince Griffith. Tom Eichler, Larry McCartney and Mike Worth. Appropriate remarks were made by MajGen Patrick G. Howard, USMC. A full Marine color guard rendered a proper salute. This finely coordinated presentation was primarily due to the dedicated hard working efforts of our fine lady committee member, Lucille Biscaglia.

Our smooth and efficient reunion was due to the arduous hours and efforts of our reunion chairman, Russ Turner, his hard working assistants; Cathy Turner, Mike Worth, our Sgt-at-Arms (Hey you-all over the place guy--Tom Eichler,) our fantastic DC coordinator (permits, schedules, getting our plaque cleaned and replaced, etc) Bill Jayne -- and not to be forgotten, our two fine perpetual motion ladies, Lucille Biscaglia and Bernice "Gunny" Penn. The "BOD" and General Membership give each of you a Standing "O"!!!

Cal Bright was voted in as our new Secretary, Tom Eichler as our Membership Committee Chairman and Bob Reed as a new Member at Large.

Gen. Al Gray (he prefers Al) was our outstanding Guest Speaker. He paid high tribute to the Warriors of the Khe Sanh experience and how those actions would have Marine Corps influence on doctrines and philosophies of the future. He also spoke of current and future threats of terrorism regarding the possible use of chemical and biological warfare here within the United States. Al Gray is truly a "Warfighter", leader and a Marine that remembers.

Russ Turner, our Reunion Chairman for 1999 and his same outstanding committee are way ahead of the game. The General Membership unanimously voted to return to St. Louis (same hotel) next year. Russ already had the contract and had negotiated for the same price plus other "bennies". I signed it before we left DC, so we are on the way.

Vice President Dave "Bulldog" Smith in conjunction with Mike O'Hare and Bill Jayne are working on a plaque for placement at the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery at St. Louis. If all goes well it will be in place on time.

John Kaheany has volunteered to be Reunion Chairman for the year 2000 - San Diego will be the place!

I would like to particularly thank our Board of Directors and Committee people for all their hard work and successful accomplishments for this past year and for their dignified maturity in getting a job "well done". I would like to thank all of our General Membership for sharing this camaraderie with all of our members regardless of branch of service or units, and too for the proper decorum of all of our members. A proper reflection of dignity for an outfit named "The Khe Sanh Vets".

As an ending note: our thanks to our new Editor, Ray Truelove, a dedicated professional hard worker who is giving us a class "A" publication. Ray Stubbe's Dad has shown considerable improvement - send Ray a note. Semper Fi! Dick Peloquin, President

Souvenir Pullout
Photo Album



Khe Sanh Veterans
30th Reunion
Washington, D.C.
July, 1998

The Story

In Photos

All photos By Red Clay Editor Ray Truelove

Photo Section

Remembering Khe Sanh - 30th Anniversary Reunion
Washington, D.C., July, 1998

All photos this section taken by Red Clay Editor, Ray Truelove

Welcome Khe Sanh Vets!





The Board Meeting



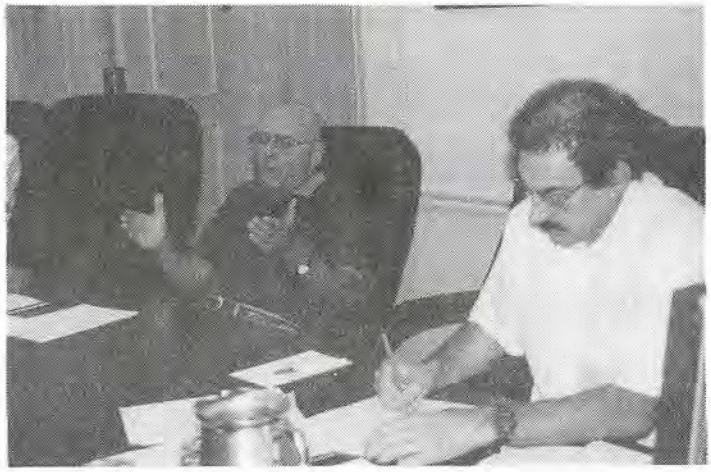



The Washington D.C. Reunion was a Fabulous Event - more than 265 attended! Many salutes to everyone involved!

Be sure to check out pages 18 & 19 for the Registration Form and information on the 1999 Reunion planned for St. Louis



(L) General Al Gray was Guest Speaker at this year's reunion in Washington, D.C. At his right is his wife, Jan. This photo was taken at the dinner - banquet on Saturday night.

Our Visit to the Memorial Wall Was One of the Highlights of This Year's Reunion. Photos on This and Following Pages Attempt to Capture the Essence of That Visit.





Memorial Wall Visit







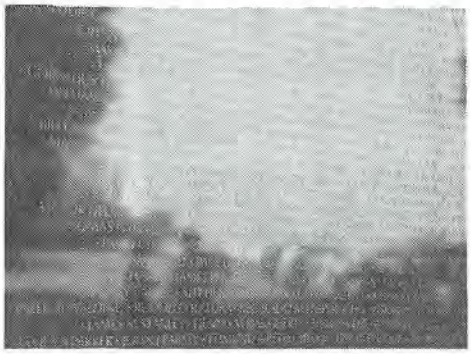

















Photos below and on next page were taken as members reflected on their Vietnam and Khe Sanh experience







Visit to the Memorial Wall - continued







On the Mall in D.C.







A reflection from the Korean Memorial

Sunset Parade at 8th & I



General Charles C. Krulak, Commandant U.S. Marine Corps





(L) General Krulak allowed me to photograph him just prior to the evening Sunset Parade - Upper right photo is a general crowd shot of the Khe Sanh Veteran group in attendance. Photo just above was take during the ceremonies and the photo below taken prior to the beginning of the Sunset Parade, in the "warm up" area to the east of Marine Baracks. At bottom is an additional photo taken during the Sunset Parade. Editor.





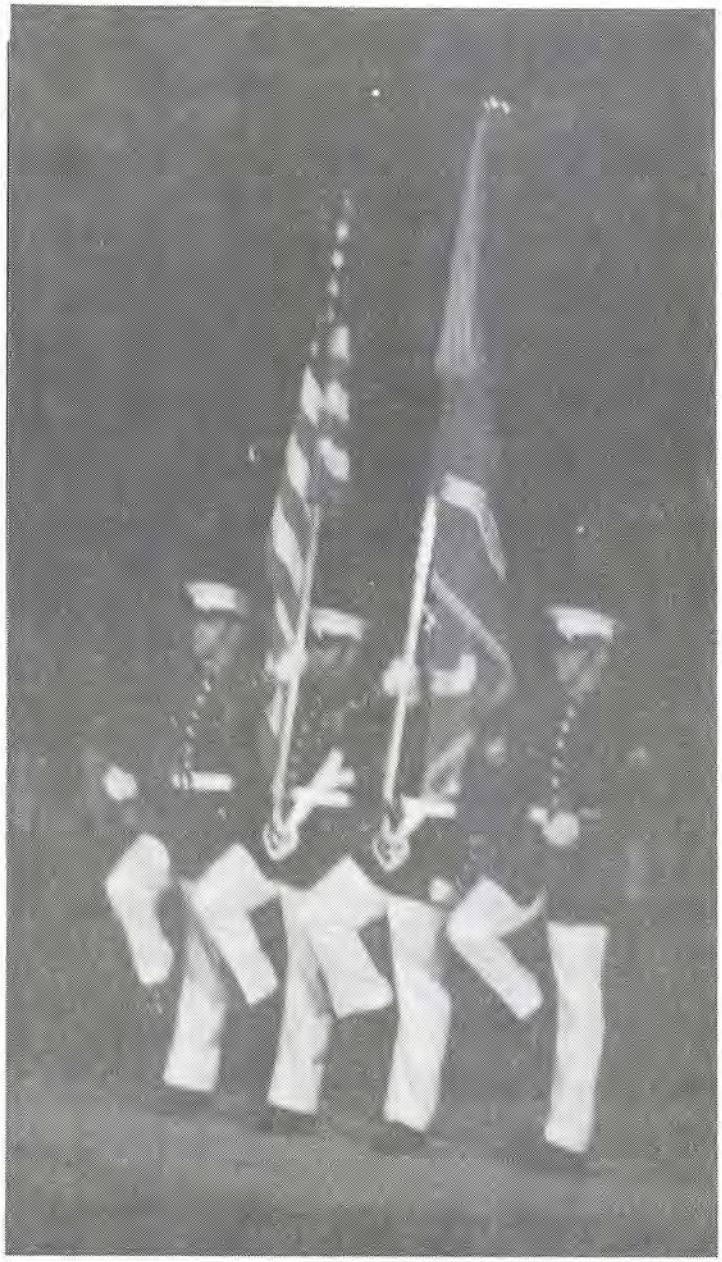

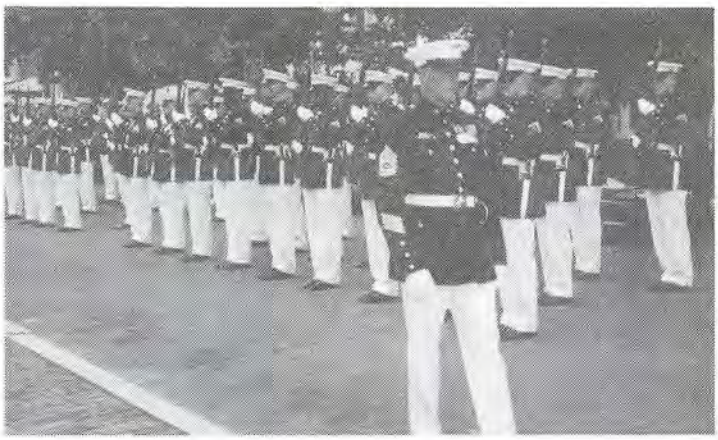

A small contingent of Khe Sanh Veteran supporters...wives, friends and other significant ladies in our lives...



The Nurses...Where Would Most of Us Be Today Without Them? Their Memorial Truly Represents What They Were To Us - Angels of Mercy.



Laying of the Wreath Arlington



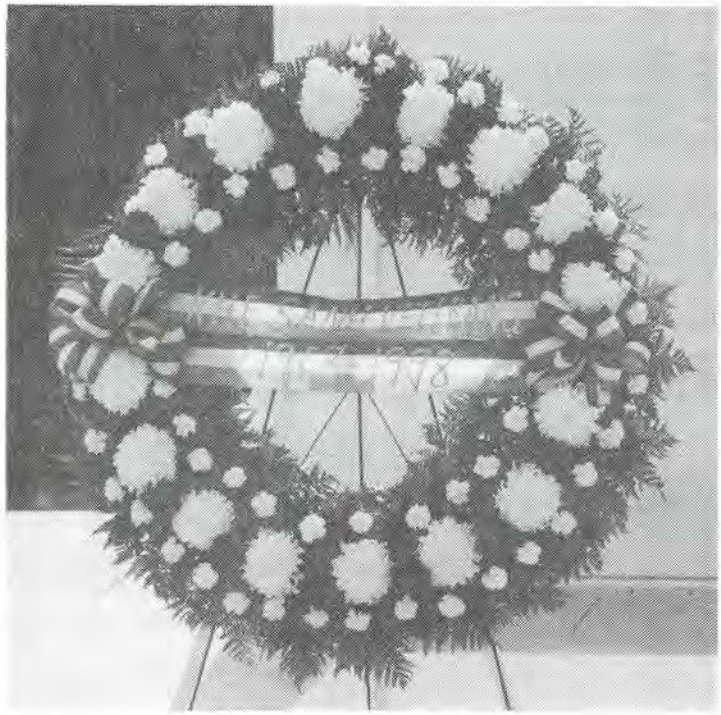



Bronze Star Medal Presentation at Arlington. Award given posthumosly to LCpl Joseph E. Roble, KIA at LZ Margo. Accepting is his mother, Anna Roble. The rest of his family was in attendance. Photos below and on next page.

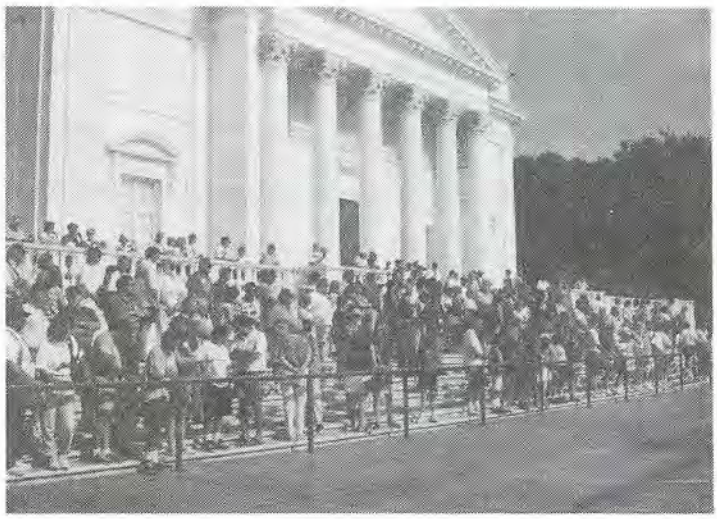









Arlington Cemetery









The General Membership meeting and other miscellaneous photos







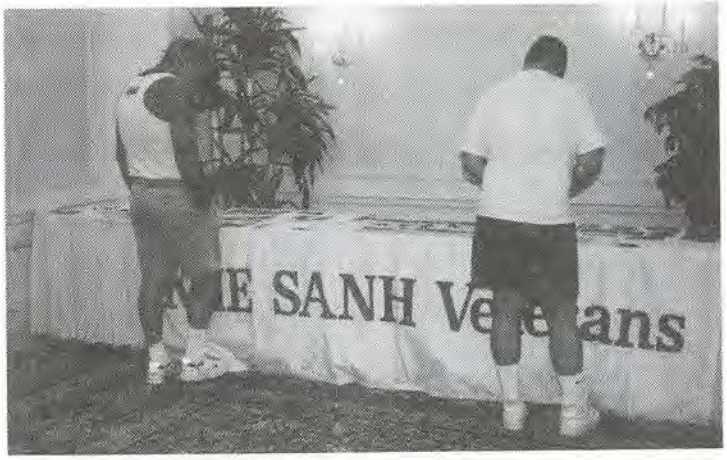

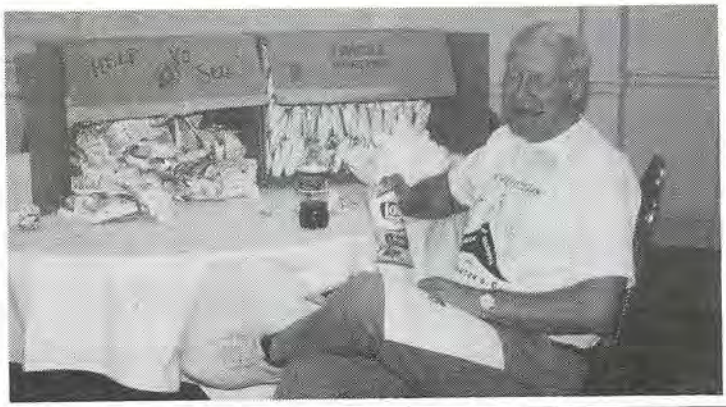



Iwo Jima Memorial

Reunion Keynote Address of General Alfred M. Gray

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thanks to Ray Stubbe for his transcription of the Generals' banquet night speech. I misplaced my audio copy of the remarks, but with the help of a video - transcribed to audio and then typeset, Ray "saved the day". Thanks! Editor. Places in the copy with *(?)* indicate the audio could not be made clear as to what was said.

"Thank you for that very kind introduction. It is a distinct honor and privilege to visit you this evening and to have an opportunity to spend some time and chat with some soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, who have banded together under the banner of the great Battle of Khe Sanh. But it goes above and beyond that -- a lot of great spirit, and the reason you're here says a great deal that we're still the greatest nation on this planet. (*Mentioned a few things concerning the introductory comments).*

"What you accomplished during the Battle of Khe Sanh needs to be said one more time. There's some who perhaps are still not healed from their time in Vietnam, and we've heard a little bit about that already this evening: the idea that some of our veterans were not treated as they should have been. But you need to know that all of you, and those who served with you in Vietnam, regardless of service, regardless of what Corps area: American warriors fought with dignity, they fought with honor, they fought with a great deal of courage in a faraway land, they did so much for all of us to be very proud of. They never did loose a skirmish during the war in Vietnam. We came out of there with our head high, as well we should. The war was lost in a geopolitical context. It was, in my judgement, fought in the wrong place. It was not just a 'civil war' as some believe; it was an invasion of the North Vietnamese Army. You and you alone really fully understand how well the North Vietnamese can fight, because that's what was around Khe Sanh when you were there. It wasn't one division, or two divisions, or three regiments' it was four-plus divisions. I know.

"You see, there was another battle of Khe Sanh, in 1967, not as big as the one you participated in, but big enough. And when we did an analysis of that battle, when we looked at the patterns that emerged -- it took three of our months, mainly at night because during the day I got to operate. And when we saw what was beginning to happen in the fall of 1967, a small group of Marines said that there was going to be a real fight at Khe Sanh -- soon. This was interesting because the Third Marine Division said No; General Westmoreland and his J-2, Lieutenant General Phil Davidson, said No; the Central Intelligence Agency said No; the Defense Intelligence Agency said No; the National Security Agency -- the people that monitor communications -- said No. They all said it was going to be at Camp Carroll. We already had two-plus North Vietnamese divisions in and around the Khe Sanh area, between Lang Vei, the *Sai Mui Lang (? Spelling)* Complex, Dong Voi Mep, or Tiger Tooth Mountain, Hill 1701. And they had used the Northwest Frontier or corridor for infiltration and came down north and south of Co Roc from Techepone. And they had been active there for many years.

"In 1964, when we stumbled in a North Vietnamese Command Post, we were fortunate enough to kill their Commander, and he had the plans on him for that whole region. They had already taken over 44 villages in that northwest corner. And that was in 1964. And the orders said: build so-many punji stakes, do-this, do-that, etcetera. So it was a mix of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese influence.

"So when these two divisions-plus were located within ten to twenty clicks of Khe Sanh, we believed that was serious. And then on Thanksgiving Day of 1967, one of our intercept units picked up a message from a AKA Major (an acronym for the intelligence business) who was the reconnaissance commander of the reconnaissance company with the 29th NVA Regiment -- yet another unit entering the area. And he said -- with his coordinates and the like -- we're down by the river and we have linked-up with the 304th. So we had about four (Divisions). As I mentioned, everyone's still believing that the battle is going to be at Camp Carroll.

"So General Westmoreland sent everybody who was anybody, regardless of rank or anything -- Sergeants, Lieutenants, whatever -- anybody from any service who knew anything about intelligence, and particularly the Ho Chi Minh complex, and they all went to Phu Bai. They argued all day long. And about ten minutes to five on the 27th (of November, 1967) this little group of Marines won the argument. And Colonel Houghton, who was the G-2, the Intelligence Chief of III Marine Amphibious Force at the time, went back to DaNang, went in and saw General Cushman at about ten o'clock in the evening, and that's when he made the decision, really, to reinforce Khe Sanh with four battalions. The argument, though, continued, and there were many thoughts that)?). You had to be very careful not to put too many people out there. (?).

"But we had, at the same time, a large amount of information from Special Operations, from Special Intelligence, from Counter-Intelligence, from Chieu Hoi (North Vietnamese that had returned) and the like. And you may not know this -- I don't think we've every mentioned this -- is this thing being taped? (pause) Well, I'd better slow down a bit. At any rate, we had sources of information from Western Quang Nam that was most believable. And I won't tell you how we did that, but the point being that we knew all about Tet except for the hour. We knew where the (?) where they were going to hit; we knew the whole plan.

"I left on the 8th of January, 1968, when my father passed away suddenly and I went on back to take care of things. I was stunned when I read in the paper that they had any success at all in the Tet Offensive. I understood how they came into the Citadel at Hue; I knew that area very well. But I couldn't believe elsewhere in Vietnam (?). It was, as you know as warriors, a resounding defeat for the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong. More North Vietnamese and Viet Cong leaders alone were killed in I Corps, in the five northern provinces. It was all over. It broke their back. There was no more leadership. And yet we, in our infinite wisdom, turned this tremendous victory into a psychological defeat (?), and as you

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recall that's about the time when it really turned in the United States and turned the public opinion. So the rest is history. But through all of that, those who were exposed in Khe Sanh -- you and the warriors that you honor this week, your fallen comrades, again, fought with great dignity, with courage, with selfless courage. No war in the long history of our proud country since the Revolution or even before, in the Colonial Wars, no warrior in American history fought with greater courage than you did at Khe Sanh. And I wanted to come here tonight simply to tell you that. (Applause)

"(?) the Corps of Marines and the other services tonight. (?) a little bit more about the future. Your legacy will live on. And the future is very complicated, very uncertain. We as a nation don't deal with uncertainty very well. Our military grew up with a very defined threat called the former Soviet Union, when they could count things; count tanks, count planes, count ships, count battalions; they could quantify the threat. The scientists and the elite Harvard-types like that. Now, you see, we're dealing with uncertainty. Now, for example, you'd be a lot better off if you spent some time on 881-South, or 861, or 950--or like I did, 1701, the one that's not on your map. There was a lot of uncertainty out there then. So, today it's different. Yet our great nation has a huge challenge throughout the world. We don't need to be the world's police officer, but we lead, whether anybody likes it or not; there's no alternative. It has nothing to do with Administrations or anything like that. Every President since the founding of the Republic has committed warriors to different kinds of tasks. That will continue. If you recall the last four years before the Soviet Union went away -- you know as well as anyone (?) to blow up the world, economics, and all that. But even more important, there's many people in this great world of ours, and most of them are like you, they're very good. There's a few that aren't here and there, but most of them are pretty good, and believe it or not, regardless of what the media may portray or not, most of them look up to our great country, and they look up to people like you. Maybe a little like history where they talk about the 'beacon on the hill'. They know what we stand form, and they know in their hearts that we'll help when we can.

"We did a study last summer on the Defense (?) Board. General Krulak -- thinks I'm on active duty, and he's given me all this stuff to do, and one of them is the Defense (?) Board, another's the National Security (?) Board, and a third is the National Reconnaissance (?) -- I could go on and on. But at any rate, last December we did the (?) Threat Study. But we really do have some unique challenges in this uncertain future as we get ready to steam into the next Century. For the first time, Home Land Defense is beginning to be discussed in strategic circles in the Pentagon and elsewhere. We've got a lot of scenarios already, and some of them are pretty gruesome. If you take the most probable threats -- still the high-explosive threat -- what you saw in the World Trade Center and the like -- but if you tie it together in a campaign plan. (?) If you take high explosives and you introduce some chemical threats, and you follow it up by some biological agents -- and they're different: they don't do the same things. At Atlanta, for example, when they found that bomb, they did the right thing: they scattered everybody. That's just the wrong thing to do if it's a delayed biological agent. So we have these challenges. And we have scenarios where they're going to kill half a million people very quickly, make Pearl Harbor look not so bad. How do you educate American people how to (?) with that: that's one of the challenges. We have veterans and we have concerned leaders needing to understand more about these challenges. Your Marines are again in the forefront with the chemical/biological response force which our Commandant, General Krulak, has established. They've already been in many cities around the country, training persons, working with fire departments, working with hospitals, working with the police, providing equipment, etcetera. We also have some (?). There's a lot of activity. Our own Special Operations Command is very deeply involved in a whole host of selective training efforts to help prepare for these kinds of contingencies. And so I predict in the next several years, you're going to see a different civil/military relationship evolve again with much more team work (?) the states, the local and county and other authorities in a different kind of relationship. These are truly challenging times for our leadership because the commitments don't go away, as you know. The (?) doesn't stop at Kosovo or all of that, but all the commitments. Today the American forces are deployed approximately 34%; 25% is the goal in the Navy and Marine Corps, and you're beyond that. And you read about people being stretched thin, and you keep cutting force-structure, which is stupid, because people think technology is going to replace warriors. They're wrong! They got to 'bottom' that thing out! People are more important than ever. And by the way, 'operations other than war,' as they label these type of operations, are manpower-intensive. That's like when one reporter said to me one time: Why worry? Most of this stuff is 'low-intensity conflict'. I said: 'I've never been around 'low-intensity ' violence!' (laughs).

"So the challenges remain, the needs are great. The most important source that we are privileged to have in this great country is that young soldier, airman, sailor, or Marine. And I want to report to you today my own view of just how good they are. Yes, they're over-deployed; yes, they're overtaxed, and yes, they're stretched-thin. But in my view, they have the potential to be as great as any we've ever had, if not greater. They're smart, they're quick, and they get it done. Back at Camp Pendleton about a year ago at one of General Krulak's advanced war fighting experiments called (?), they introduced NT-95. It took the officers about a week; it took the Corporals a morning -- to handle that software. (chuckles). In Quantico, today, you'll find sergeants who are being specially trained and educated on critical thinking. We got Sergeants down there doing things that we wouldn't allow Majors to think about in my time. Great stuff! They got a Ph.D. in psychology who leads this effort, along with General (?-steel) retired and some good, young Captains. This Ph.D. didn't want to deal with Sergeants at first because of the academic; now you can't get him away from them. (?) (Applause) You didn't tell the real story how I made Second Lieutenant, did you? In those day, you recall we had to take two tests to make Staff Sergeant -- a technical test and an operational test. I was in Recon on the Submarine Perch. I passed the operational test, but I failed the technical test miserably, so they made me a Second Lieutenant (laughs and applause). I'm real proud of the young men and women that I see in our Armed Forces in our country and overseas. We need to continue to

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provide whatever support is necessary to see to it that they're taken care of. They face (?) challenges, but I think when 'push comes to shove' they'll do what has to be done.

"And so, for all of you at this great reunion, thanks again for allowing Jan and I to be privileged to see you and to have the conversations and the like. And for those who are not here -- when you see them from time to time or communicate with them - tell them that Al Gray says they're to hold their head high. Everything that's good about our Armed Forces today is a little bit better because of what all of you and your 2400 colleagues who are not here this evening. And it doesn't do any harm to tell them that one more time. Your fingerprints are all over -- for example, 18th Airborne Corps. They're all over in Amphibious Ready Group VI, that are (?) around the world. They're all over (?). They're certainly all over the basic Corps of Marines.

"We even made an impression on the Air Force. Don't ever sell them short. They did a helluva job in the first battle of Khe Sanh. (Applause). In the first battle, for example, I had just been replaced at Gio Linh, and I was supposed to go back to Third Marine Division Headquarters, and I was supposed to take command of an infantry battalion. And they had me back there for a ceremony. Anyhow, to make a long story short, the Commanding General said, No, you're not going to an infantry battalion. I'm sorry, General Cushman wants you back in DaNang for other kinds of things. So I said, well with that I'll go on R&R. And I went back up to Dong Ha where the 12th Regiment was located, and told them I was going on R&R, and they said, Not yet. We need you to do some AO work again. So we got to fly a number of missions in support of that first battle of Khe Sanh. The Air Force had five layers of tactical aircraft stacked up out there, just waiting to shoot on call. That's the kind of support we got. Then I'm well aware of what they did for the tough fight during your time.

"Team effort. Individuals, courageous, smart, quick, working together as a team.

"I don't know how many of you've been back. I know a number of you've been back to Vietnam since, but I think that you can see some good there too. We may not have won the "strategic battle," if you will, but I believe that over time what you tried to do over there will come home in spades. Someday, indeed, they will be free. (Applause). Sorta like Korea in a way. Remember when we came home from Korea, and they said, well, we really didn't win that; you go visit there today and you see the victory there. I believe they will be free. And I'm glad that it was mentioned already a little bit about our South Vietnamese allies and friends. We Marines in particular had great relationship with our South Vietnamese Army colleagues to include the Vietnamese Marines, to include the South Vietnamese Airborne organization which (?) in I Corps many times, to include the Regional Forces and Popular Forces -- those little PFs -- who stood their guard on bridges, trying to protect a hamlet. We shared great days with those warriors, and we shared tough days with those warriors. Some people believe they don't know how to fight. I know better! I was privileged to fight with them. I was privileged to have a Vietnamese regiment under me. One of the toughest warriors I ever saw anywhere in the world was Captain Nhi, the District Chief of Khe Sanh in 1964, who later commanded a regiment, who later commanded a Division during the Dong Ha Offensive of 1972. I am here today because of the courage of three Vietnamese soldiers: one a Lieutenant, graduate of the French military school in Saigon; one a Second Lieutenant Combat Engineer, and one old-timer who in 1962 was a machinegun company commander in the North Vietnamese Army, and he saw through Communism and threw his weapons over to the other side. All three of those warriors are gone now, but I like to remember them in occasions like this. And for me, I can't come to grips with the idea of all this trade, all this, all that, until we do something about our South Vietnamese comrades-in-arms, to see to it that they're getting the kind of treatment-. (Applause).

"Independence Day tends to remind us of something, and you all remind me -- that are here this evening -- that old saying, that as long as we are the country of the brave, we indeed will be the land of the free. So take care of yourselves, take care of each other. God bless all of you." (Applause).

OUR NEXT REUNION
IS IN
ST. LOUIS, MO.

JULY 14 - 18

SEE PAGES
18-19
FOR
THE REGISTRATION
FORM

AND

INFORMATION

DON'T MISS OUT ON
THE FUN!

REGISTER EARLY!

Your 1999 Runion Committee is already hard at work, planning for another great reunion. We're putting together a reunion plan that has all the elements of a successful event and we're hoping for the largest turnout ever. The St. Louis location is great as the area has a little something for everyone. There's everything from breweries (offering samples) & casinos to the milder sports of sightseeing from the "arch", shopping or antiquing and Six Flags theme park and Grant's Farm for the whole family.

The Best Wester, Westport Park has offered us a reasonable nightly rate, and a facility with the best of amenities such as an indoor swimming pool in a beautiful domed atrium, Joe Hanon's (fantastic) Restaurant & Bar with entertainment, and a friendly, accommodating staff to name a few.

The schedule has plenty of free time built in so members will have ample time to spend reuniting and it is an important reunion for a number of reasons. First, Khe Sanh Veteran's will be remembered forever in St. Louis with the dedication of a monument at Jefferson Barracks that is an exact replica of the one in Washington, D.C. "Bulldog" Smith, Bill Jayne & Mike O'Hara have done and impressive job of coordinating this project which is soon to be literally set in stone. And voting members will decide the location for the 2001 reunion, as well as choosing the organizational leaders that will serve into the next century.

With the dedication of this monument, we "REMEMBER" that all who served at Khe Sanh formed a bond that is eternal, while we honor heroes, the families of all Khe Sanh Veterans, as well as the founders of this organization. May this reunion memind us that this is an annual opportunity to renew that bond with our brothers, the families of fallen comrades and say a special thank-you to those who in 1988 re-opened the door. Be there and bring someone with you!

KHE SANH VETERANS' REUNION - HONORING HEROES, FAMILIES & FOUNDERS
JULY 14-18, 1999, BEST WESTERN, WESTPORT PARK, MARYLAND HEIGHTS-ST. LOUIS, MO.

ABBREVIATED SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - MORE DETAILS IN THE APRIL 1999 RED CLAY

14 July	**Wed**	**1200**	**Check-in Registration Desk, Hospitality Room & PX Open****
			No group events scheduled. Free time for sightseeing. unit or committee meetings
15 July	**Thu**	**0900**	**Hospitality room, Registration Dest & PX open**
			Board meetings* & a Women's Welcome Meeting will be held on Thursday
			The balance of the day & evening is free. Possible group outing to the
			Funny Bone Comedy Club, depending on member interest, and club availability
			Free Transportation & Admission, Two Drink Minimum.
16 July	**Fri**	**0830**	**Dedication of Khe Sanh Veterans' Memorial Monument at Jefferson Barracks**
			A full size replica of the Khe Sanh Vets' Monument in Washington, D.C. will be dedicated
			at Jefferson Barracks with a visit to the mass grave site. A trip to see a
			special private residental Khe Sanh Memorial Site is also planned.
		1800	**Welcome party hosted by Best Western Hotel (until 1900)**
			Evening free time. Possible group trip to Players' Island Casino, depending on
			member interest. Transportation is free, but bring your own cash to gamble!
17 July	**Sat**	**1000**	**General Membership Meeting**
			Attendance and participation by all voting members is strongly recommended
			Election of Officers & Board Members for July 1999-July 2001 term
			Choose location of Khe Sanh Vet's Reunion for 2001
		1800	**Cocktail Reception and Banquet**
			All service color guard, installation of new board members and officers, awards & recognition
			Special guest speaker(s) now being finalized. A delicious meal, with choice of 3 entrees and 4-hr open bar
18 July	**Sun**	**1000**	**Healing Meeting**
			Some free transportation will be available for sightseeing, etc.

*Interested General and Associate members are welcome and enocuraged to attend all board of directors meeting

**Daily operating hours for Registration Desk, Hospitality Room & PX will vary.

VOLUNTEERS WILL BE NEEDED IN VARIOUS CAPACITIES AT THE REUNION
IF YOU ARE WILLING TO HELP, PLEASE NOTE ON THE REGISTRATION FORM OR CALL
WE ARE SEEKING PRIZES FOR OUR ANNUAL RAFFLE
PLEASE LET US KNOW IN ADVANCE IF YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW, CAN CONTRIBUTE

Khe San Veterans, Inc., is a not-for-profit organization, and all contribution are tax deductible.

For more infoCall: Russ & Kathy Turner 314-282-2263; Ken & Bernice Penn 847-825-7085; Mike Worth & Lucille Biscaglio 773-763-5415. 1999 Reunion Committee: Chairman, Russ Turner, Tom Eischler, Bill Jayne, Mike Worth; Associates: Lucille Biscaglio, Bernice Penn, Kathy Turner

KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION

HONORING HEROES, FAMILIES, AND FOUNDERS

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Visit Jefferson Barracks, where you'll be part of the ceremony dedicating a monument honoring all Khe Sanh Veterans, their service and sacrifice. Exercise your privilege of choosing our organization's new leaders. Enjoy extra special guest speaker(s). By popular request, a reunion without a lot of structured activities, designed to allow plenty of time to connect with each other. Bring family & friends! Encourage first timers, those we haven't seen for a while & loved ones of lost comrades to attend.

Complete the bottom of this form, cut at dotted line and **mail with your check payable to: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Mail To: Mike Worth, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., c/o 6487 N. Northwest Highway, Chicago, Il. 60631. For more info call:** *Russ & Kathy Turner 314-282-2263; Ken & Bernice Penn 847-825-7085; Mike Worth & Lucille Bascaglio 773-763-5415.*

REUNION REGISTRATION FORM - PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name_____ **Ph: Day**_____ **Eve**_____ **Fax**_____

Address_____ **City/St/Zip**_____ **E-mail**_____

Served With (Branch, Btn, Reg, Co, etc._____ **When?**_____
Names/Relationship/others in your party_____
_____ **total in your party**_____ **Adults**_____ **under 18**_____
Please indicate any special needs with which we may help_____
Number of adults interested - Thursday Comedy Club Trip_____ **Friday Casino Trip**_____

	COST	NO. PEOPLE	TOTAL
Registration Fee (per person over 18 - non-refundable	**$15.00 x**	_____	**$**_____
Banquet - Choose one entree per person - Roast Top Sirloin or includes tax - gratuity & 4 hour open bar - chicken breast, sautee	**26.00 x**	_____	**$**_____
or filet of sole	**26.00 x**	_____	**$**_____
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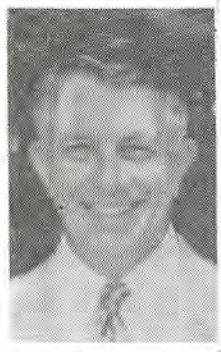

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TAPE NO. 6 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

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Notes, Poems, Letters to the Editor



Dear Ray:

I wrote the first draft of this poem long ago, in 1972, I think. Obsiously, it's about PTSD, which did not have a name when I first tried to capture this memory.

As I told you on the phone, I was a rifleman with "B" Co., 1/26 and never saw Con Thien. After Vietnam, I was stationed at the MCAS Beaufort, SC base, in MABS 31. my unit was a security detachment comprising, mainly, former grunts just back from Nam with less than a year of service left. A buddy of mine at Beaufort was the model for "Lance Corporal Martin."

Lance Corporal Martin

Bravo Company, One-nine,
4th of July '67,
By signless Con Thien, ground confouded red.

The air cracked and burned,
The road broached sick for breath.
Martin returned to walk the empty trench, to stare.
A hundred lay startled by eternity.

Solitary, the Parris Island EM Club,
A year -- after Tet, after Khe Sanh and Hue City,
Martin poured beer on some sloppy PFC
Fists and curses, fighting to stand before Iron Mike
in the sticky sweetness of a Carolina night,
Mouth brimming blood, Martin howled.

His skin surged in ripples
For the desire to murder the sea.

Bill Jayne
10000 Boxford Ct.
Fairfax, Va. 22030-2005

1-703-352-1534 - home
wjayne@erols.com

OWED TO A LANCE CORPORAL

In Loving Memory of
Lance Corporal James W. Heagy, USMC

You, the proverbial tall, dark, and handsome at age 17. Me, the acne faced, chubby romantic at age 15. We were the perfect complement to each other. (We both loved you) I memorized you, your face, your walk, your smile, your voice. Your first effect on me was incredible. You must have wondered how I always happened to be where you were. Radar. (My heart was on your frequency.)

I responded to your voice with utter joy. Moments of bliss when you would say my name. Heart-rush when you would casually call me "Babe." (You called everyone Babe, but my radar tuned that out.)

Baby-face, how I loved to look at that face. No work of art compared to its exquisite form. Not yet spoiled by even a hint of a beard, it was perfect. Love reflected beauty and I was your willing looking glass. (Did you ever catch me staring?)

You had a distinctive swagger-and an attitude to match. It was part of your teenage charm. You were tough-tender and sarcastic-sweet. I never knew which side of you I would meet on the street. (You brought the poet out in me.)

Brown eyes-they were so deep. I think I fell in a couple of times. I managed to read their fluid depths and survive. Barely. They caught me and held me under until I had to catch my breath. (no life preserver needed, thank you.)

Did you touch me hand or did I take a short ride to the stars and back in the space of a moment? You created me with a touch and formed me with your smile. Slow motion, stop action, instant replay. (Personal fantasy now playing...)

King of my dreams, you starred in every one. Directed by me, produced by me, co-starring me. You entered stage right to thrill my soul. Cut. Print. Award winning. You always got the girl. The reviews were superb. (I was the consumate critic)

A nineteen-year-old soldier, you never returned from that long, and sad war and you didn't say goodbye. I cried. Because my prayers couldn't keep you safe and they couldn't bring you back. There was no comfort but a stack of letters in my drawer. (They live there still).

First love, your memory is my delight. I call it to my heart for a gentle dose of youthful longing. To remember the sweetness of its mystery, the innocence of its desire. (I leave out the painful parts)

Sometimes a song, sometimes a place. Your ageless spirit appears in curious response. It warms me when my thoughts are cold. What-might-have-beens arrange themselves in patterns in my mind. A puzzle never solved. (Who held the missing pieces?)

When I see myself reflected in the granite wall behind the etching of your name, I think about how you are now the mirror. Reflecting a woman who remembers her first love.

RoseAnn Opferman

This tribute to Lance Corporal James W. Heagy was left at the Wall on July 3, 1998, by Mr. & Mrs. Heagy at the request of RoseAnn Opferman. Jim served with "E" Company, Second Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines and was KIA on December 6, 1968, just weeks before he was to rotate back home. His parents attended the KheSanh Veterans 30th Anniversary Reunion in Washington, D.C.

More Notes from the mailbag

***Lieutenant Dick Dworsky** could not make it to the reunion in Washington, D.C. Dick received a Bronze Star in January for his Khe Sanh participation (only 30 years late).*

Dick says that everyone who was there deserves this medal.

Dick is in alaska. His fax is 907-349-0965, and phone 907-344-7870. He planned to make this reunion, but at the last minute couldn't. He sends his best to all of you heroes.

Dear Ray:

I recently joined the Khe Sanh veterans (organization) thanks to Ray Stubbe, who not only sent me an application, but also a copy of Red Clay that features the 30th anniversary of the siege.

I served with "G" 2/4 from Oct '68 to March '69. I was WIA March 6, 1969 about 4 clicks south of the Rockpile and med-evaced to Guam Naval Hospital.

The only time I can remember being at and near Khe Sanh was on Hill 471. I remember a company from 1/9 and a company from the Army 1st CAV. We made a lot of contact with NVA in the outlying areas around Hill 471. I can't remember the exact month that we were working around Khe Sanh but it seems like it was December '68 or January 69. Maybe you know more about our unit's involvement around Khe Sanh.

I've enclosed copies of pictures that I thought would interest you and possibly some of our members. Would you please send me Ray Stubbe's address so I can thank him for sending me the application and magazine? I must have thrown away the mailer he sent those items in which had his return address on it.

If you have any spare time in you busy schedule, please drop me a line.

Semper Fi!
Bob Chatigny
1816 Pamela Ln.
Weatherford, Ok 73096-2318

SEE PHOTO NEXT COLUMN



Dear Editor:

Please find enclosed a letter that I would like to have published in "Red Clay".

LETTER:

I I served in 3rd Recon in Vietnam in 1966 and 1967 from DaNang to Khe Sanh. I have been a member of this organization for several years. Through the newsletter, I have been able to locate some of those that I served with. After 30 years I was finally able to go to Minnesota to visit one of my friends, Ed Warmka, who was our Radio Man. I also located another friend, Pete Amancio, in San Diego.

The purpose of my letter is an attempt to locate Earl Cannon, who was wounded in Phu Bai, while on patrol in 1967. He was our Point Man at that time. If there is anyone out there that knows of him or where he can be located, please let me know.

Also, in the Red Clay issue Number 40 (fall 1997), there was a letter from Craig Swanson, and he wrote about a fellow Reconer, Timothy Barmer. I served with Timothy Barmer at Khe Sanh in 1967. We became very good friends at that time. I remember well when I left, he carried my bags to the chopper pad when I was leaving as I had done with my friend Ed Warmka when he left. At that time, he told me it was time for me to go home and I made it, I gave him a big hug and it never crossed my mind that I would never see or hear from him again. I found out about his death, through another Reconer that served in Khe Sanh, Richard Valentine. He told me what happened to Barmer.

I was at work when I read the letter. The letter from Craig Swanson about how Barmer died took me by surprise. I came home and told my family about it. I located Craig and was able to speak to him on the phone and told him that I knew Barmer.

The last time I saw "Timmy" was at the chopper pad and as we lifted out, I remember seeing Khe Sanh fade into the clouds because it was during the monsoon season. I had this feeling that something bad was going to happen there and it did. The letter brought back that memory of the clouds and the feeling that I experienced.

I hope that whoever reads this letter may give me some insight on how to reach Barmer's family. It would be greatly appreciated. I have attempted to call directory assistance in the Conneticut area and there are Barmer's there, but it is possible that the phone number that I may have needed was unlisted.

Semper fi!

Louis WJ. Ike, Sr.
1725 Buckskin Dr.
Elko, Nevada 89801
1-702-738-4232

Dear Mr. Truelove:

My name is Ron Ruther and I served in Alpha Co., during 1967 - 68. I was reading Issue No. 41 (Spring 1998) of Red Clay and took notice in the "In Memory" section of the name of Edward Towslee remembered by Terry Tillery. I was a friend of Ed's and was there the day that he was killed during our assault of Hill 471. I have a picture of Ed and myself taken at Camp Evans by Walter Ostopchek, another good friend who was severely wounded the same day Ed died, and died the next day.

Terry is more than welcome to a copy of this picture of us. She can contact me at 239 Fifth Ave., Greenport, NY 11971 or 1-516-477-0187.

More Mailbag Items

The letter below was originally sent to Dick Peloquin by Ray Stubbe and eventually forwarded to me for publication. Editor.

Dear Dick:

One of our Khe Sanh Vet members, Bill Fry, who has been with us for the past several reunions, traveling all the way from Tahiti, should probably be recognized sometime -- during the dinner, at the annual meeting, or some special place, for his dedicated presence at our reunions, traveling so far, at such an expense. He was present during the Board of Directors meeting in St Louis, he brings much happiness and comradeship.

The special recognition, however, should be for his gift of 500 France ($100.00) as a gift on behalf of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., to a French Colonel, Jack Bonfils, who is a POW from the French Indo-China War of 1952-54, and who is soliciting contributions to rebuild a Catholic Church in North Vietnam at Phu-Oc, that was destroyed in 1968 by the US Air Force. His letter to Col. Bonfils is quoted, in part: "In behalf of the veterans of KHE SANH, I am sending you a cheque of 500FF for the reconstruction of the cathedral of PHU-OC that was destroyed in 1968 by the US Air Force...Our area of operations was principally situated along the 17th parallel which was named "the graveyard"... In July we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the siege of KHE SANH that Giap wanted to make a Dien Bien Phu, he made a mistake. Battalions of Marines under the aggressive leadership of comminding officers Earl Breeding and David Lownds destroyed completely divisions of the North Vietnamese Army in 77 days of siege. We remember KHE SANH as a big victory of the free world against the Stalinist Communists."

Bill took the initiative to do something very positive on behalf of our organization.

He also brought some Khe Sanh T-shirts to one of the three French coffee planters in the Khe Sanh village area, a Monsieur Raymond Simard, whose plantation was on the western edge of Khe Sanh village, opposite the road from the small CAP OSCAR-2 position. Simard had settled there following the first French Indo-China War, and fled the day the base was hit, along with the Poilane family, one of the other planters, whose plantation included the coffee trees on the western part of Khe Sanh Combat Base. Simard resettled in French Polynesia and is a bee-keeper and maker of honey. Anyway, Bill Fry presented Monsieur Simard with our Khe Sanh T-shirts. In a letter he writes, "...this morning we met in Noumea. He had tears in his eyes when he saw the Khe Sanh T-shirt. It really gave him a lot of joy."

There is a photo of Bill Fray in the Khe Sanh magazine issue from the St. Louis reunion (Issue 40, page 4).

Thought you might want to say a few words to thank Bill sometime during the reunion. He is certainly deserving of special recognition.

Dear Editor Truelove:

I am trying to place THEORDORE FOLKERTH, USN at Khe Sanh at the time of the incident (Tet).

At that time the DMZ was about 500 yards north of my position.

The only thing that is sure is that he was USN, possibly a Corpsman or Battalion Surgeon.

Theodore Folkerth is now a Doctor, - a Heart Surgeon here in the San Diego area.

Dr. Folkerth did an excellent 'job' R&R my heart valve. Money will not satisfy my indebtedness to this man.

My only hope is that some of those that he cared for at KHE SANH might want to establish contact with him.

Please contact me by mail at:
EDWARD J. HERTERICH
GY SGT USMC Retired
PO BOX 714
SAN MARCOS, CA. 92079-0714

GREETINGS to the heroes of Khe Sanh. I am a former Lt. in the US Marine Corps (1977-81) and I am the nephew of Chaplain Brett who died in the line of duty on Feb. 22, 1968 while serving with 2/26. On September 11, 1998 Chaplain Brett was reinterned in Arlington Cemetery with full military honors. The Navy and Marine Corps also announced that the Chaplain's School in Newport Rhode Island will be named in his honor. A dedication ceremony is scheduled for the summer of 1999. I would like those Marines who knew him to attend. Please contact me (next column).

Edward M. Rouse, CPA
4304 Evergreen Lane #203
Annandale, Va. 22003-3219
703-354-3948 - voice
703-354-3987 - fax
edrouse@comm-plus.net

There is a monument at Khe Sanh that someday I will tear it down.
Blood Oath
Semper Fidelis

Ed Rouse

PLAYBOY FOUND!

Dear Ray:

My sincere thanks go to Neil McCrossen for his story "I'm Proud To Be A Khe Sanh Veteran", and his acknowledgement that he had read one of my "Vintage" Playboy magazines. See Pg 12, Issue #42, Red Clay.

To refresh your readers memory, I was the former War Correspondent (1965-66) that returned home and became emotionally drawn into Khe Sanh siege and your struggle for survival while viewing it on TV.

Each night I would sit there watching TV, feeling so helpless - then one evening I decided, well, maybe I could bring you some reading and viewing pleasure from home.

I had collected and saved twenty of my favorite Playboy magazines from their earliest day of publication when I was younger, and one evening I boxed them all up and sent them off to you - all 20 of them!

Its probably silly, but through the years I have often thought about you guys, those magazines and wondered if you'd ever received them....or even had the opportunity to enjoy them. And then, along came Neil Mc Crossen's story. Thanks Neil! I really needed that, and thanks guys for Khe Sanh.

Jerry Jackson
Malibu, California

LOST IN D.C. - One Hallmark Rosewood ballpoint pen. Contact:
Earle Breeding
PO Box 8122,
Roswell, NM 88202
505-623-9345
REWARD: ONE BEER IN ST. LOUIS!

IN MEMORIAM

ALL MARINES & CORPSMEN KIA/WIA KHE SANH - REMEMBERED BY DANIEL W. POLLAND * ALL MY BROTHERS AT KHE SANH - REMEMBERED BY DAVID J. TONICK ROBERT BELCHER - REMEMBERED BY JOSEPH D. GAVIN * MAJ. J. BENNETT - REMEMBERED BY RICHARD R. BLAIR * PAT DUFFY - REMEMBERED BY A FRIEND * ROG BURNS - REMEMBERED BY KENNETH G. SMITH * "FALLEN COMRADES" - REMEMBERED BY MSGT D.E. PETREE * PVT. MC HANEY - REMEMBERED BY FRANK LA FONTAINE * MIKE CLAYTON & BILLY PLESS REMEMBERED BY J.C. SCOTT * KHE SANH VETERANS SUFFERING PTSD - REMEMBERED BY JOHN F. LOCKE * KEVEN KASSEL - REMEMBERED BY DAVID F. BROMBAUGH * AUSTIN SAUGHAN - REMEMBERED BY DAVID P. ASSUM * 1ST PLATOON BRAVO CO 1/9 - REMEMBERED BY DENNIS WHALEN * STEVE NESTOR - REMEMBERED BY MICHAEL P. MATEY * IN MEMORY OF US ALL - AND WHEREVER WE END UP - BY GENE PATTERSON * JAMES M. THEIS - REMEMBERED BY DAN FISHER * DECEASED BROTHERS FROM CHARLIE COMPANY 1/26 - REMEMBERED BY DONALD J. GILLESPIE * ROBERT J. DARLING - REMEMBERED BY RICHARD R. DARLING * PAUL DOUGLAS - REMEMBERED BY ROBERT L. STRANGE * JOHN DENNIS - REMEMBERED BY STEPHEN D. MAISLEY * LEO WRIGHT - REMEMBERED BY KENNETH MAYNOR * ROBERT D. CECIO - REMEMBERED BY VITO & NELLIE CICIO * ALL MY BROTHERS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES AT KHE SANH - REMEMBERED BY THOMAS CORCORAN * JOHN ARTHUR HOOKER - REMEMBERED BY JAMES DAMIANO * H. J. "BUTCH" FORSETTI - REMEMBERED BY JOE S. DEER * "J.J." - REMEMBERED BY JOHN A. POTTER * CAPTAIN FRAN ZAVACKI - REMEMBERED BY COL. MICHAEL J. LITTLE * CPL RUBEN C. MC MACKINS - REMEMBERED BY THOMAS A. PIERCE * FRANK DISTEFANO - REMEMBERED BY MIKE FLEMING * W. "WILLIE" STOVALL - BY BOB HOLSCHER

LIFE MEMBERSHIP ROSTER KHE SANH VETERANS, INC.

(As of July 1998)

ALDERMAN, Harry L - 3/26-CO
ALLEN, Bryson L - 26MAR-HQ
ARMBRUSTER, Lou - 20TASS
AVVAMPATO, Philip L - 2/26-81s
AYLWARD, Bill - E/2/26
BAILEY, James D - I/3/26
BALANCO - CAC O
BALDWIN, Mrs. Daniel - (CNN)*
BALLARD, Larry A II - H&S/2/26
BARBER, Michael F - C/3dEng
BARKOSKI, Mrs. William J - (A/1/26)*
BEALL, James "Doc" - B/1/26
BENNETT, Charles A - I/3/26
BERG, Charles - FOB3
BEST, Jack L - C/1/9
BEST, James M - 1/9
BLAND, David J - H&S/2/26
BODENWEISER, Alex "Jeff" - E/2/26
BOOTH, Dr. Barry L - NSA
BOURNE, Frank L Jr. - 3/4-CO
BOZE, Tom - D/1/26
BREEDING, Earle G - E/2/26
BREWER, Kenneth O - I/3/26
BROMBAUGH, David F - H/2/3
BROPHY, Michael - 26MAR-HQ
BROWN, Carlyle A - VMO-6
BROWN, Jim - H/2/26
BUSSE, Sherman "Sam" - H&S/2/26
BUTTS, Gary W, 6606040
CARNAHAN, Bob - C/1/13
CLAIRE, Richard - (B/1/26)*
CLARK, Larry - 1/11
COCHRAN, Keith - D/1/9
COLLIER, Rick, 1/1
COLLINS, Michael F - H&S/3/26
COOK, Michael "Cook'er" - H&S/2/26
CORBETT, Jack - 1/26-81s
CORREIA, Bill - L/3/26
CRABB, Robert M - G/2/26
CURTIS, Pat
DABNEY, William H - 1/3/26-CO
DAHLHEIMER, Gary - A/3dAT
DARLING, Richard R - 1/3/26
DAVIS, GEN Raymond - 3dMarDiv-CG
DAWDY, James H., Jr. - NSA-runway
DELAO, John - A/1/26
DE MAAGD, Dr. Harvey, MD - 1/26
D'HONDT, Camille J - A/1/9
DOEHRMAN, David - B/3dRecon
DONAGHY, Richard - 26MAR-ALO
DORNAN, Lynn
DOSS, Kenneth - HQ/1/13
DREXEL, Billy B - E/2/26
DRISCOLL, Rev Walter L - 26MAR-Chap
DUNLAP, Lee - FOB3
DURHAM, Pierce - FOB3
DWORSKY, Dick - I/3/26
DWYER, Tim - C/1/26
EICHLER, Thomas - E/2/26
EPPS, James - C/1/26-XO
ESSLINGER, J. Thomas - I/3/26
FERG, Allen - 26MAR
FIELDING, Mike - B/1/9
FINN, John - D/1/26
FLEMING, Allan F., Jr., - FOB3
FORD, Tom - F/2/26
FRANK, Ernie - HQ/1/13
FRY, William H - A/1/3
GALLEGOS, Richard - I/3/26
GATEWOOD, Ronald L - HMM-262
GERARD, C G "Jug" - VMO-6
GIBNEY, Joe - C/1/26
GRAY, GEN Alfred P - SESU, Commandant
GREEN, Robert J. - D/1/26
GREENE, Bruce A - B/1/26-CO
GRIFFITH, Vincent - E/2/26
GRIFFITH, William - E/2/26
HAGAMAN, BGEN Harry T-VMFA323-CO
HALL, Robert A - 26Mar-Comm
HAMILTON, H. Tom - C Med-HN
HAMILTON, Richard L - I/3/26
HARDY, Randy D - B/1/13
HARRIMAN, Ronald - 279SptBn
HARRIS, Ernie
HARTNETT, William R - C/1/26-HN
HEBRON, James J - B/1/26
HERMANSON, Rodney - B/3dRecon
HESS, Jerome - VMFA-323
HOFFMAN, Victor - A/1/26
HOWE, Jack H - H&S/3/26
HUBBARD, Richard J - 1/9
HUBBARD, William - E/2/26
HUDSON, Jerry F - 26Mar-S2
HUNT, Harry Allen - HMM-263
HUSTED, Ernie - B/3dRecon
IODICE, Frank - CAC O

LIFE MEMBERSHIP ROSTER CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

REUNION REGISTRATION AND INFO ON CENTERFOLD PAGES OF THIS EDITION MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW TO ATTEND OUR 1999 REUNION IN ST. LOUIS

JAYNE, William - B/1/26
JIVIDEN, Larry B - HMM-364
JOHNSON, Hal - D/3dRecon
JOHNSON, Steve - B/3dRecon
JONES, Bruce - H&S/1/26-81s
KAMINSKIS, Talis - CAC O
KAHENY, John M - 1/26 -S3A
KAYLOR, James N - E/2/26
KEATON, Thomas
KENNEDY, Frank J - HMH-463
KEPLER, Duane - H&S/1/26
KLEIN, Lee - 3dMarDiv S-2Rep
KNOPE, John King - VMGR-152
KOURY, Robert C Jr. - D/1/1
KUNDRAT, Joseph J Jr - K/3/9
KYLLO, Kellan - HMM-262
LACY, Donald - D/1/26
LAHR, Mrs. James A (H/2/3)*
LAMBERT, John J - ASP-1
LAVERTY, Jim P - F/2/26
LEA, James - A/3dAT-CO
LEIGHTON, David J. - HMM-164
LEITCH, David Paul - *London Times*
LOEHRER, Michael C - B/1/13
LOGAN, G L - HMM-262
LOLA, Joe - FLC
LOWNDS, COL David E - 26Mar-CO
LUKEMAN, Anthony - 1/3
LUMPKIN, Albert R - B/3dRecon
MACIAS, John - I/3/26
MANNION, Dennis - K/3/26
MAGEE, L. Wayne - 309 ACS
MARTINEZ, David A - HMM-262
MAVES, William - E/2/26
MCCARTNEY, Larry E - E/2/26
MCELROY, John - 3/26-Chap'67
MCEWAN, Frederick - 26Mar-S4
MCINTYRE, Charles M - 1/26-81s
MCLANE, Robert E
MCNEAL, Dennis - H&S/1/26
MEREDITH, Doublas E - A-2-94 FA
MESSER, Lewis S - CBMU-301 Det B
MEYER, Lawrence - B/3dRecon
MEYERS, COL Bruce F - 26Mar-CO
MILLER, Fred
MILLER, W. Scott - B/3dRecon
MILLS, Robert - H&S/1/26
MITSUDA, Masato - H/2/3
MONK, Marcus - HMM-364
MOORE, Bill - A/3dAT
MORITZ, Merle W - E/2/26
MOYAR, Charles W - D/1/9
NANGLE, James T (E/2/26)*
NAZZARIO, Anthony J - MACTU-62
NELSON, Kelley - (E/2/26)*
NITKOWSKI, Greg E - H&S/2/26
NOYES, Rick C - B/3dRecon
O'DONOVAN, Jerome - H/2/26
O'HARA, Mike - B/1/26
OLIVER, Joseph - HMM-163
OLSON, Charles E - D/1/9
OWEN, Albert A - A/3dAT
PADLEY, Mrs. John J (26Mar-CO)*
PADULA, Michael J - I/3/26
PARSONS, Ronald - 15APS
PATRICIO, Sid - D/1/26-Wpns
PATTERSON, Charles E - 3dMarDiv
PATTERSON, Gene - 20TASS
PAYNE, Richard - B/1/9
PELOQUIN, Dick - I/3/26
PENN, Ken - W/1/13
PERSHING, Edward P - A/1/26-HN
PETERSON, George - H&S/1/26
PETTIT, John - 3/26
PISOR, Robert L - Author of *End of Line*
POLLAND, Daniel W - B/1/9-HN
POST, Gerald Wayne - H&S/1/9
POST, Peter A - G/2/26
POTTER, John A - L/3/26
RAIT, Donald M Jr. - M/3/4
RANN, Louis A - 26Mar-XO
RAYNOR, Ronald - A/1/26
ROBERTS, COL John P - 20TASS
ROGERS, David G - A/1/13
ROMANETZ, Nick S - C/1/26
ROY, Roger
RUDD, Charles D - C/3dRecon
RUTLEDGE, Samuel L D - I/3/12
RYAN, Tom - B/1/9 '67
SAAL, Mrs. Harve (FOB3)*
SALLEY, Hammond - FOB3
SALYER, Rick - 101stABN Div
SAN MARCOS HIGH SCHOOL - Organiz.
SCHWANER, John L - C/1/13
SEABOCK, Walter - G/65 Arty
SEAVY-CIOFFI, Larry - A/1/9

LIFE MEMBERS CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

SEGURA, Michael Terry - D/1/26
SEIBOLD, Keith - 1/11
SERAFIN, Alfred - 281Avn Co
SHANLEY, Don E - E/2/26
SHIPPEN, Robert - FOB-3
SHOUP, Allen P - 26Mar-HQ
SHUPP, Steve - HMM-364
SHURTER, David "Niki" - H&S/3/26
SMITH, David "Bulldog" - FOB3-CO
SMITH, Mr. and Mrs. Henry(A/3dRecon)*
SMITH, Kenneth G - 3dRecon
SMOAK, Chris B
SNIDER, Victor B - A/1/13
SNYDER, Ray G - A/1/26
SOPP, Melvin E - K/3/26
SORENSEN, Gerald R - 9th MT
SOTO, Richard L - F/2/26
SPEAR, Jeffrey T - C/1/13
SPENCER, Ernie E - D/1/26-CO
SPRY, David R - E/2/26
STACK, Jeff - A/1/26
STEGICH, Steven R III - HMM-262
STEINBERG, David M - I/3/26
STEINHART, Tom - B/1/26
STORC, James - A/3dSP
STOTT, Fr. Thomas - G/2/26
STRANGE, Robert L - FOB3
STRASNER, L.T. -
STUBBE, Rev. Ray W. - 1/26-Chap
STUDT, John C - 3/26-CO
SWEARENGEN, Mark - 175 Arty LnO
SZCZSNIAK, Thaddeus "Ted" - 1/13
TAKEMIRE, Ralph - SLF-ALFA
TERRELL, James A - A/1/26
THOMAS, James E - B/3dRecon
THOMAS, Jerome E "Doc" - G/2/3-HN
THOMSON, Charles "M" - H&S/2/3 '67
THORNTON, Charles - L/3/26
TOMAZIC, David F - A/1/26
TONICK, David - A/1/26
TORONTO, Wesley P - B/3dRecon
TRAUM, Gerald T - A/3dEng
TROUP, Ed - A/1/9
TURNER, Bob - A/3dAT
UPDIKE, James E - H&S/2/26
VALDES, Sherrill
VDORICK, Theodore M - D/1/9
VELETTO, Jim - Seabees
VERNARDOS, Leonard - A/1/13
WALBROEHL, Art - M/3/26
WALSH, Jim - B/3dRecon
WALSH, Matthew - E/2/26
WARD, John F - 27thEngBn
WEBBER, Lee P "Doc" - B/3dRecon
WELDEN, Max - B/11thEng
WEST, Antonio T - Civilian friend-England
WILKINSON, James B - 1/26-CO
WINSTON, Tom - Ammo Plt
WONDERS, Kent - F/2/26
WRIGHT, John - Video producer
YATES, William "WillieRoe" - W/1/13
YORK, Asberry Jr - F/2/4

* indicates a close relative of a Khe Sanh vet who was KIA or is otherwise deceased (parent, widow, brother, etc.). The unit of the vet is in parenthesis.

The list includes one organization and four non-Khe Sanh civilians.

TOTAL LIFE MEMBERS: 251

BECOME A LIFE MEMBER OF KHE SANH VETERANS, INC.

CONTACT OUR TREASURER FOR DETAILS - SEE ADDRESS FOR TREASURER ON PAGE 3.

Feature Article

Khe Sanh Memories

By Anthony C. Borja, Jr.
(Cpl. UMSC # 2312219)

Khe Sanh Memories was originally written to aid my daughter, Elizabeth, in preparing her IB Extended Essay for her senior year classes. Her essay dealt with the comparisons and differences of the siege of Dien Bien Bien Phu (1954) and Khe Sanh (1968)

I joined the Marine Corps in June, 1966 prior to graduating from high school. I did my basic training at MCRD Parris Island, S.C. (August to September 1966). After ITR (Infantry Training), I attended Basic Radio School at Norfolk, Va. and following radio school, I was then assigned to the 1st LAAMB (light Antiaircraft Missile Battalion) at MCAS, Yuma, Arizona. It was there at Yuma, in October of 1967 when I volunteered for duty in Vietnam.

I was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division (1/9) as a headquarters radio operator with H&S Company, Radio Platoon after arriving in Vietnam on 12/07/67. 1/9 was then on a rest break at Camp Evans about 20 miles west of Hue/Phu Bai on the infamous Route 1 corridor, known as the "Street of No Joy", made famous by Bernard Fall, who was killed in 1966 with 1/9 in that same area.

1/9 was a well known Marine unit with the nickname "The Walking Dead", with a reputation and history of hard fighting with heavy casualties. About three months before my arrival, Bravo (B) Company had been decimated by a NVA regiment while on operation Buffalo, just west of the Con Thien combat base. 1/9 suffered 25-40% casualty rate with "B" Company being almost wiped out.

This set the stage - a hard fighting unit and me - a FNG. Although being a FNG, I was assigned to Bravo Co - the real hard-luck outfit - for my combat seasoning as a company battalion radio operator.

In mid-January 1968, I volunteered to act as the battalion radio operator for a platoon sized patrol that was to recon some 10 clicks (kilometers) west of the base for signs of NVA movement. There were bucoo (much) signs of small sized units moving east towards Hue. We took a number under long range artillery fire with unknown results.



Anthony Borja at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., July 4th, 1999. (Photo by Ray Truelove)

It was also on this patrol that I had my first brush with death and saw my first casualties. I was almost killed by none other than another Marine's stupidity. This Marine chose to ignore the warning of a Kit Carson Scout, a former VC/NVA, who advised that we should climb over a large thorn tree that blocked a trail. This Marine chose to follow the new path around the thorny obstacle and stepped on a 105mm artillery round booby trap. By doing so, he blew himself to pieces and one other Marine behind him. I was merely blown back a dozen feet and splattered with their blood and gore. WELCOME TO NAM!!

After the dead were evacuated by helicopter, we got an urgent radio dispatch to abort the remainder of the patrol and to quickly proceed to the highway at a specific location for immediate truck transport back to Camp Evans. The dead flew; the living humped and trucked out.

When the platoon arrived at Evans, the battalion area was in utter chaos with men rushing about, loading and unloading gear. The battalion was "mounting out" to some unknown place where there was big trouble.

Bib CH-53's (long range heavy transport helicopter) were flying into Evans empty, and then flying out platoon sized (40-50) Marines. I just had enough time to grab what gear I had left in the tent area and hook up with the Bravo command group, which was boarding a chopper. I had no idea where we were bound for and there was too much noise to talk to anyone to find out - if they even knew. The company command group boarded the bird and when it took off, it headed west. What seemed like hours but turned out to be only an hour and half, the chopper began to orbit a rather large combat base perimeter with long green metal plated airstrip. The place looked like it had been pounded to pieces.

I still didn't know where we were. There were air strikes going on all around the base and our arty was firing outgoing. Through all this activity, 53's were dropping off loads of 1/9 Marines.

It was close to dusk around 1800-1900 hours when we unloaded from the chopper. As we did so, the skipper said, "Welcome to Khe Sanh, men!!!" our first inkling of our location, which was followed by our humping by a sign saying "Khe Sanh -- Home of the 26th Marines".

I had heard of Khe Sanh while in book camp--The Hill Fights for 881 and 861 and the infamous "M-16 Rifle Fiasco".

1/9 headed down the main road past the 26th Marines CP to what appeared to be an ammo dump, which had been hit and blown up the previous day. I do not recall the exact date, either January 21st or 22nd, 1968 -- the books indicate 1/9 landed on the 22nd. That night, I fell asleep to the sounds of air strikes and out-going artillery fire, using a dud 105mm round as a pillow.

Our first morning at Khe Sanh was chilly and foggy. Around 0600 hours we awoke to the sounds of silence -- no air or artillery. The battalion began to form up and proceeded back up the road towards the

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northwest -- heading for a gray colored hill, which stood out from the soon to be famous or infamous "red Khe Sanh mud", our new home known to us and the world as "The Rick Quarry".

Marines gathered off to the sides of the road looked at us like we were men from Mars and would ask our unit/s number. With pride, the reply would be "f...g 1/9" to which we'd hear "The Walking Dead" or some would add, "Just what we need!! 1/9!!!".

Our long column came to a barbed wire gate. Once out of the gate, there was just the road which went straight toward a grove of trees and a section of road which bore down a grade and up a hill that appeared flat on top with two excavation areas cut into the east side of the hill.

"A" Co. proceeded toward the grove of trees -- "D" and "B" Co's began to head toward the hill. Delta peeled off to the right side of the hill and Bravo to the left. The battalion command group and H&S Co headed for the top level cut off and myself and the Bravo command group to the lower cutoff -- a very intricate military ballet.

By the time the fog lifted, each company had hooked up and 1/9's first day of the "Siege of Khe Sanh" had begun -- an understrength rifle battalion minus one rifle company, Charilie Co. Our perimeter had to be built from scratch on virgin ground and under enemy observation and fire. We never even hooked up with the main base perimeter or the 26th Marines.

My first foxhole home at Khe Sanh was dug into the side of the lower excavation cut and was just like a cubbyhole with no overhead cover. My area was just about ten meters from the company CP and near the soon-to-be battalion aid station.

The first day was to be uneventful and for some reason, the NVA left us alone and did not bring our rudimentary perimeter under any artillery or mortar fire.

This all changed on the second or third day. I was assigned a work detail at the first level cut off, which was being used as a staging/supply area and the battalion CP was being dug into the hillside. This area was shielded from NVA observation positions located to the west at Co Roc Mountain in Laos (a black colored massive with numerous NVA artillery positions in caves) and from "Rocket Valley" located northwest of Hills 861 and 881 (an area full of 122 & 152mm artillery and 120 & 140mm rocket positions).

There were twenty six of us from various units within the battalion assigned to move boxes of ammo and food around. We were into our first hour of work in the heat (80's). Without warning, our morning became deadly, for a 82mm mortar round (mortars have a high trajectory and could easily reach us) landed in our midst. I heard the explosion and then lost consciousness. When I came to, my eyes came upon a ghastly sight -- Marines all over the area lying in pools of blood or worse. With my head aching and ears still ringing from the concussion, I yelled for a corpsman and rushed to the nearest wounded Marine.

Within minutes all the dead and wounded were being attended and it was time to get back to the boring job of moving boxes -- myself and three others were left to complete the task. The others were either KIA or WIA. WELCOME TO KHE SANH, MAC!!!

There was a small position designated "Alpha Outpost", a platoon-sized outpost about 300 meters northwest of 1/9's perimeter. About ten days after our arrival, a NVA battalion attacked this position around 0400 hours. Half of the outpost was overrun almost immediately. Those remaining Marines began to fight back and continued to hold.

Usually the fog would burn off around 1000 to 1100 hours. On this particular morning the Lord was with the Corps. The fog burned away early, around 0800 to 0830 hours. The NVA were now fully exposed to our perimeter's direct fire, tank, recoilless rifle and small arms fire. Artillery fire could now be directly called in for the attacking NVA could be seen.

We could see without the use of binoculars the actual fighting which now was mostly a grenade battle. Due to baseball experience and more effective grenades, the Marines were more accurate and were able to hold their own, despite being outnumbered.

The NVA were now hemmed in for A-4 Skyhawks began to saturate their staging areas with napalm and other bombs, and their escape routes were under direct fire from artillery. The NVA began to withdraw into a large ravine which could only be hit by mortar fires' high trajectories. The jets were too fast for accurate bombing, so ARVN A-1 Spads, prop-driven WWII fighter bombers, were called in. These South Vietnamese pilots were great with 90% of their ordnance dropping in on the ravine.

Using this support, A and C Companies struck the NVA still on the hill, driving them off and relieving the outpost.

I ate my c-rat breakfast and watched the "war movie" in real life. 300 to 400 NVA were killed - 20+ Marines were killed and 30+ wounded, most of the casualties suffered by the outpost's platoon. The A company 14 (TAC) man won the Medal of Honor for bravery in this action. After the siege, I was made the NCOIC of TAC Party, serving with "Dying Delta" company from late March to mid December 1968 as 14 Delta (my radio call sign).

By this time, the NVA knew that 1/9 now occupied the "Quarry" and began to direct various forms of fire, artillery, rocket, mortar and recoilless rifle on our perimeter. 1/9 would also catch the numerous "short" rounds that were meant for the main base.

On February 13th, in the early afternoon, I was on radio watch at the Bravo CP when I heard the roar of a 140mm rocket (we had been at Khe Sanh long enough to be able to tell the caliber of rounds by their sound). All of a sudden, the rocket struck the dirt wall near me. I saw and heard the explosion. Instinctively, I ducked and was knocked out. After gaining me senses back, the company radio frequency was going crazy with the platoons checking in. From the rest of the company area, it appeared that the CP had taken a direct hit. I assured all that the CP was secure. The company commander came running up for he had been out checking the lines. He looked at me and then said, "You've been hit and it looks bad." I then felt a stream of blood roll into my eyes and then nothing.

When I awoke, I found myself in the battalion aid station, with a corpsman looking down at me holding bloody bandages in his hands. I received a number of stitches to an 8" inch laceration across the very top and middle of my skull. My right hand, which had been on the parapet, was covered with cuts as a result of shrapnel, rocks and dirt. After the corpsman finished, I had a reverse Mohawk -- a bald strip with bandaids covering the wound. My right hand was bandaged up with my middle and trigger fingers exposed, thus enabling me to use a radio mike and my rifle. Due to my

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injuries, I was transferred back to H&S company, radio platoon where I began to work at the battalion command post.

Three days later, Khe Sanh was hit by close to 1400 rounds over a 24 hour period -- most of these rounds struck the base and the Quarry in a two hour period in the early afternoon. I was at the time on a work detail digging trenches with a black Marine from Washington, D.C., whom I called "DC" and he called me, "MD". We communed with the ants as the rounds pounded our perimeter area for 10 to 15 minutes and then switched to the main base. We had front row seats and watched the NVA artillery at Co Roc Mountain and from "Rocket Valley" pound the main base. (DC, I never knew his real name, was killed a week or two later by a direct hit from a mortar round while he sat on watch in the Bravo Company trench lines.)

Now for a few details of my daily life at Khe Sanh. My days consisted of four hours on radio watch with eight hours off. My duty hours were mid-watch, 1000-0400 and mid-day, 1200-1600. The alleged off-time was usually spent on work detail - digging an interior trench system for what I called "Our Last Stand", digging the tunnel system for the battalion command post or filling in countless thousands of sandbags for bunkers and when those details were done, what time left over was mine and I usually napped, wrote home and read.

My new home was in the middle of the Last Stand area and consisted of a 6-foot long and deep ditch about 4 feet wide, covered with a 4-layer sandbag roof and then a couple feet of dirt over the sandbags with a piece of nylon parachute for a door. There was a small circular porch area that was 3 feet deep rimmed with sandbags for sitting and resting stuff. This was my living/dining/rec room where I would write and read letters and any other fun stuff.

Some of the other Marines dug complex multi-leveled bunkers and tunnels. Some went down 20 feet. One friend died in his multi-level hole for an NVA round landed in the first level and buried him. He was dead long before we could reach him.

Fun consisted of shooting the breeze with the guys in the next bunker that had a large blast wall facing Rocket Valley, affectionately known as "The Whiskey A-Go-Go". Behind this six foot high rickety wall, we would heat up our c-rats, which varied from very lousy to poor. We'd listen to AFVN Radio -- Chris Noel, a gorgeous blonde -- and listen to the latest tunes from the "World" or to Radio Hanoi (Hanoi Hannah). She would regularly advise us of our "deaths". She had 1/9 wiped out at least twice during the siege. We'd get a good laugh or two. Most of the time, we'd talk about girls, food, girls, real food and home and how we would love to be back in the World.

As the siege grew longer and as time slowly passed, we began to get annoyed and frustrated about being "surrounded" and being pounded with no real opportunity to hit back. We began to discuss what would happen if and when the NVA would try to take our perimeter. Our Marine "esprit de corps" then kicked into full blast.



Though we complained and griped about the Corps, the Crotch, we were basically volunteers, either forced to join to avoid the draft or jail or joined freely -- like I had. We were Marines, members of the "Green Machine". We'd definitely kick some NVA ass before they got us. Our DI's would have been proud of us.

We grew sick of the newspaper articles and what our families feared that Khe Sanh was about to fall to hordes of NVA. We would have loved to have seen one of those hordes so a 5.56mm round could be placed between their running lights. It was also implied that our morale was low as were our spirits. I can't speak for the 26th, but the men of 1/9 were mad and ready for a good knock down fight.

It was also rumored in the press that we feared our South Vietnamese unit at the FOB (Forward Operating Base -- CIA, SOG area), the 37th ARVN Rangers, more than the enemy. True, this unit was of an unknown quality but after the NVA attacked their section of the perimeter and their butts handed to them, the 37th became accepted.

The newspapers were full of articles comparing our position with the French at Dien Bien Phu of 1954. I was the only one who had read anything about the French debacle. True, as at Dien Bien Phu, Khe Sanh was at the outermost region, deep in the mountains; we were never left unsupplied or unsupported. Supply choppers, C-130's and the like came in regularly either dropping supplies via parachute or LAPES at the airstrip. We never went hungry or thirsty and mail came in regularly. We all were much appreciative of the efforts and sacrifice of those guys and pilots of the supply units.

At Dien Bien Phu, the French artillery was nullified and eliminated by that of the Viet Minh. The 13th Marines of the 5th Marine Division were excellent. No matter how heavy the NVA fire, 1/13 and its tubes put out rounds day in and day out.

The biggest and main difference supportwise for us, that comforted us was our overwhelming abundance and availability of tactical and strategic air support from Marine, Navy and Air Force commands. The French never had the quantity or quality of air support that we Marines had. While on radio watch, I would listen to the 14 freq and the Marines would have almost an instantaneous response. A flight of one to four aircraft from A-1's, A-4's, F-105's, F-4's to B-52's would roll in and pound the NVA.

I can recall that on several occasions the ground rolling and shaking from and "Arc Lite" (B-52 strike) within 3 to 4000 meters of our positions - normally the B-52's would have a danger limit of 10,000 to 12,000 meters. I recall watching a perfect Arc Lite go up and down the Hill 689 ridgeline.

Our air support, both tactical and supply, paid a price. I observed a F-4 shot out of the skies as it made runs on a NVA position southeast of the airstrip below Hill 1015. It made a number of passes parallel to our perimeter; it had that deep throaty roar unique to the F-4. As it made its last pass, its' engines began to sound like that of an overloaded washing machine, full of metal. The pilot did two great things then. He headed the aircraft away from our positions and when he ejected, he did so that he landed just 100 meters short of the northern perimeter wire. His disabled aircraft crashed and exploded on top of the NVA position. ***CONT'D NEXT PAGE***

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A C-130 provided us with one of the biggest scares in March, 1968, comparable to the Lang Vei tanks in the wire incident. A C-130 was dropping pallets of supplies at the drop zone. Nothing unusual until puffs of exploding shells began to follow it, - antiaircraft fire. We could hear the AA gun, a 37mm, and we could observe the plumes of the concealed battery, firing some 2000 meters away to the south-southwest, from out western lines. The 14 and 24 (artillery) knocked it out within minutes. We were shocked and in awe over the NVA's ability to place and conceal such a weapon so close to our lines. Another sign that our enemy were hard-core, tenacious soldiers that we could hate for their predilection to disfigure our dead, and yet respect for their bravery and other soldierly abilities.

Another aspect used to compare Dien Bien Phu to Khe Sanh was that the military units deployed were elite troops -- the French employed elite airborne units, French, Foreign Legion and Vietnamese -- Khe Sanh, the United States Marines and the 37th ARVN Rangers. Yes; a similarity did exist but not really. At Dien Bien Phu, those elite units only made up to 30-40% of the total force. Intermingled with these units were French Colonial troops, Algerians, Thais, Moroccan, Somalian and Sengalese. All of these "native" troops came from French colonies, many of which were demanding their independence or already in open revolt. The Viet Minh used this to their advantage from a propaganda standpoint. As the siege grew in length and the Viet Minh artillery began to lay waste to their positions, whole units of native troops, companies to whole battalions, would desert, leaving gaps in the French lines that purely French units would have to fill.

At Khe Sanh, our "native" troops were small, specialized units of the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force -- fellow Americans. The 6,000 man force, other than the 600 man ARVN 37th Rangers, were one homogenous unit and nationality -- American, but most importantly, United States Marines with the history, tradition, and I must admit one hell of an ego, to boot.

We were of a one mind set -- MARINE!!! We were the first to fight, and during the Vietnam War, we did the "mostest with the leastest". Our supply system was inadequate and our equipment antiquated; our helicopter support was inadequate, but the best. Some of our leaders were still waging World War II.

Despite all of that, Marines were assigned the roughest area in Vietnam to handle -- Corps -- the DMZ to Chu Lai, Leatherneck Square to Da Nang -- 86,000 Marines covering all of the northernmost provinces of South Vietnam, facing the nonexistent NVA, VC Main Force units and your part time VC guerillas.

The Corps had done the job well, although outnumbered by enemy forces. It takes 5 men to support 1 infantryman, therefore only 18,000 Marine Grunts faced the enemy and handled the manning of many combat bases, the sweeps, the patrols and the daily combat.

Marines are trained to be aggressive assault troop, s and to be stuck, tied down to a defensive position under orders to remain tight to the perimeter was against our grain -- not of the Marine spirit. We were eager for a knock down brawl with out tormentors -- a chance to strike back.

Working in the battalion command center, known as the COC had it distinct advantages. There, one was able to hear and see firsthand what was going on all around the area, thus gaining a look at the larger picture. When Hills 861 and 881 were heavily assaulted, I was on watch and remained at same, so the CO could be kept up to date without any hassles. 1/26 did one hell of a job that day and night -- one could step outside the COC, the "Cave", and watch the battle flashes through the clouds and fog.

Earlier in my narrative, I mentioned that 1/9 had to construct its perimeter from scratch. Just before 1/9's part in Operation Pegasus, I was privileged to see photos of the Rock Quarry before and then the present. The battalion had built and dug miles of trenches, numerous bunkers, and had encircled our perimeter with miles of barbed / concertina wire. I don't recall if these aerial photographs have ever been published. They are probably still in the USMC Archives. I also had the opportunity to observe and plot the ever encroaching NVA trench system -- again, a tactic straight out of General Giap's Dien Bien Phu strategy book -- some within 300 meters from Delta Company's western lines. "Dying Delta" lost its respected and dynamic commander on a trench raid that he led. Once or twice a week we'd hit the most advanced trenches, kill all the NVA and fill in the trench. They would be back that night digging.



In reference to the question of relief versus withdrawal, I never heard of any active plans for a "Chosin Reservoir" style of withdrawal. We did not hear much about relief plans until the middle of March, when 1/9 was advised of Operation Pegasus.

The 1/9's role in the relief plan called for 1/9 to assault Hill 471, which overlooked Khe Sanh village and the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp. The Corps, in its infinite wisdom decided to relieve our battalion commander just before the assault. LtCol "Blackjack" Cahill, a Korean War Navy Cross winner, took over and two days later, 1/9 began its phase of the operation.

Prior to jumping off, I gave my Yashica 35mm camera, along with over a dozen rolls of exposed film (pictures taken from day one) to a friend, who was a "Remington Raider" -- Cont'd NxtPg

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a rear area clerk typist who had brought up some papers/files for the CO's signature. He was going back to the safety of the battalion rear, now at Dong Ha. I had just discovered that I had been assigned to be LtCol Cahill's radioman; the Colonel had talked to me saying we'd be in the thick of things and that I would be expected to stick to him like glue. He said when he stuck his right hand out, the radio mike should be there. Anticipating some heavy fighting, I gave my friend the camera with the many rolls of film. The photos would have been fantastic -- B-52 raids, the F-4 incident, views of the main base being shelled, my home and my friends. Unfortunately, I forgot he was at Khe Sanh. I found out much later that he was killed by a direct hit while at the airstrip waiting for a flight out. So much for my ideas of safety and security.

On April 4, 1968, at 0500 hours, 1/9 with Bravo Co. left to hold the Quarry went on the offensive on a cold, foggy morning. In the dark, we quietly slipped out and headed toward Hill 471 using the fog and dark to shield our advance.

The landscape was unreal--Khe Sanh, being up in the mountains, got quite cold in the winter monsoon season. The temperatures dropped down to the 40's and 50's at night. The fog would roll in in the early AM and with the moon backlighting the fog, an unearthly scene was developed. Add to this the area was carpeted with bomb craters that a small home could sink into for added flavor, add the sickly smell of death -- bodies of NVA dead exposed or buried.

When we reached the first ridgeline a few hours later, the fog lifted. We were now fully exposed to NVA observers. Within minutes of the fog lifting we came under fire from two sides. We were receiving artillery and rocket fire and could actually see the plumes of smoke from a battery of 122mm mortars as NVA gunners began to drop round after round into their tubes. The gunners walked the rounds down the saddle, then up our side of the ridge and then all over the CP group.

I watched the explosions as they crept up the saddle and up towards us. Since we did not have time to dig in, we had no place to hide. The next think I knew was hearing an explosion and then I was airborne, then I crashed to the ground. I had flown some 20 fee down the hillside. There was the smell of cordite, smoke and dirt in the air, plus the sounds of more impacting rounds, a regular Dante's Inferno.

The Colonel was nearby bleeding from a wound to his right hand. I placed a field wrapping on his hand. He said he was okay and told me to get the PRC-25 (radio), which was not on my back. I returned to the radio and found that the 14 ALO (Air Liaison Officer) was dead and his radioman wounded -- both the 24 (arty) the FO (Forward Observer) and his radioman were also wounded.

The 24 radioman was a friend, for we had spent many hours in the COC on radio watch together. His name was "Chico" Gonzalez and he was a "short-timer" and he wore a raggedy flak jacket with a drawing of Snoopy on the back which he used as a calendar, coloring in portions as his time in country grew shorter -- Snoopy was almost fully colored.

Chico was on his back, gasping for air and crying out in Spanish for his mom. I went to his left side and began to check for injuries, none were visible. I rested his head on my lap and as I did, he gave me a look that I can't describe and mumbled something in Spanish. His body convulsed and shuddered. He then died as I held him. I remember feeling so helpless and afraid; I had never been so close to death. I put his head down on his radio and pack. A corpsman ran up and I shook my head. I then grabbed my weapon, helmet and radio pack and went back to work.

All during this time, the 122mm mortar battery was still throwing round after round down their tubes, still walking the rounds up and down the saddle and all over us. I then heard and saw two explosions go off over the enemy position which was then followed by the sounds of numerous smaller detonations, similar to that of a string of firecrackers. I had just observed one of the first uses of a new artillery round aptly called "firecracker". The rounds were designed to explode 20-30 feet above the ground, thus releasing a large number of bomblets, which hit the ground, bounced 6 feet high and then explode. The 122mm mortars position was destroyed by two firecracker rounds.

After the 122's were eliminated, Alpha Co. conducted a two platoon frontal assault up the east side of Hill 471. Fifteen minutes later, Hill 471 was in Marine hands.

It was later determined that the battalion had been hit by some 400 rounds but somehow our casualties, despite our lack of cover, were extremely light - 5 dead and 20 wounded. Alpha's losses in the assault were light as well.

I was not feeling too well; my ears were still ringing and my head felt like it was going to explode. The Colonel decided to go over to 471 and another radio operator accompanied him. After digging a two-man foxhole, the corpsman gave me two Darvon and told me to get some sleep. I still had to finish my radio watch and had the sad duty of notifying Regiment of Alpha's discovery of an American body, one of the Special Forces troopers that had tried to escape and evade from the Lang Vei Special Forces camp when it fell to the NVA, using tanks.

Around 0200-0300 hours, I was awakened by the sounds of mortar, artillery and small arms fire. The NVA wanted 471 back and hit the Marines there with a battalion. Alpha Co. held, killing almost 200 NVA in the process with the aid of our organic mortars and the 13th Marines. Alpha lost 1 KIA and had only a couple wounded.

We remained on site for a couple of days. During this time, the only helicopters observed were 1st Air Cav birds. On April 7th, a battalion from the 1st Air Cav relieved 1/9.

The differences in supply, gear and equipment were quite evident. The number of Huey and Chinook (CH-47) choppers and gunships used in the US Army's movement were unbelievable. The soldiers looked fresh, clean and healthy. Compared to them, we looked old and filthy -- pure raggedy assed Marines. Despite their obviously better situation, all they did was complain.

1/9's battalion command group was one of the last Marine units to be relieved. A young Army trooper, carrying a new PRC-25 with a speaker, fresh and clean, walked up to me and said that the Army sucked. When I asked him why, he complained that their unit had not been supplied with "hot chow" for a couple of days. I was amazed and asked what he meant by " hot chow" -- he said regular food from a mess hall. He looked at me in amazement when I told him that our unit had not had regular food for four months. We Marines had been on c-rats for the entire siege.

Still bewildered, he then asked if our birds were enroute to lift us to our next

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objective. I told him no, we were going to hump to Hill 689 and I then pointed to the cloud-covered ridge some six klicks away. Once again he was shocked to hear that plus were expected to be there in the next few hours. I told him he had it too easy. Minutes later, I waved goodbye and three hours later, the command group was on Hill 689 with the rest of the battalion.

There was a large bomb crater; the 14 radio operator, an American Indian nicknamed "Chief", another radio operator and I used as a ready-made foxhole. We were lounging and enjoying the break when I suddenly got that "itch" , an urge to move -- something bad was going to happen.

I obeyed that kind of feeling, so I climbed up the side of the crater and sat down along its rim. The two down below said I was crazy and remained in the crater.

As I yelled down, the whooshing sounds of two 82mm mortars could be heard from the west. I flattened myself and then heard the sounds of incoming rounds. There was silence followed by the sounds of exploding rounds. The bomb crater was filled with smoke and a cloud of dust.

As the dust and smoke cleared, I slid back down into the crater to discover that an 82 round had hit almost directly in the center of the crater. The shrapnel flew up at such an angle as to catch both Chief and the other radio operator in the head area. The other radioman was headless and at first glance, Chief appeared to be unhurt-but he was not.

As I crawled over to him, I could see him gasping for air and then I noticed that the right side of his head was bloody with the brain fully exposed. I immediately slapped on his field dressing and yelled out for a corpsman. I recall hearing similar calls going out all around the area.

Chief then grabbed my hand and asked if he was going to die - his last coherent words. His grip was unbelievably strong, like that of a vise. He then began to mumble in Spanish.

It seemed like hours later when a corpsman slid down into the crater. He took one look and shook his head. He then began to leave, but I yelled at him. He told me my buddy was dying. I said I did care but that he was going to help my buddy or die. I prefaced that with my M-16 pointed at his head. The corpsman knew I meant business. He gave me some dressings and a shot of morphine for my buddy. He then patted me on the back and told me to stay with him saying that he would be back later with more help.

For the next forty five minutes, I sat by him as he talked nonsense, crying and mumbling. I placed dressing after dressing on his wound as the brains began to slowly ooze out.

During this time, the tubes continued to keep up a steady one to two round cadence. Our artillery whooshed over our heads, seeking the elusive tubes to no avail for they continued.

Chief, despite his horrendous injury, was still alive, holding my hand and mumbling. I soon ran out of dressings, but after what seemed like hours, the corpsman showed up as did some other Marines.

Using ponchos, they loaded up the one dead Marine, then we loaded up Chief and manhandled him up the steep side of the crater. We carried the two for about 100 meters to an awaiting CH-46.

Chief was still hanging in there. The corpsman had to pry his hand from mine -- I neither had the strength to do it, nor the heart. He looked up at me and I at him; he was then loaded up with the other wounded and dead.

As the chopper flew off, I just stood there, looking at the bird fly off towards the base. The corpsman shook me and helped me back to my gear.

SSgt Mac, the radio platoon Sergeant, a person I couldn't stand because of his use of favoritism, ran up to me and told me to snap out of it and get back to work. He then asked me if Chief would make it - to which I replied no. He slapped me on the back and said the only kind words he ever said to me - "Tony, don't let it get you down. Get back to your job--communicate!!!!!". To which I replied in true Marine fashion, "Aye Aye, Sir!!!!" I then got my radio pack and followed him. The remainder of the day was a blur. I do not recall when the mortars stopped or whatever occurred after that chopper leaving.

We later got the word that Chief died on arrival at Charlie Med at Khe Sanh combat base. It is unbelievably what damage the human body can endure and suffer. I have seen Marines and NVA still alive despite horrible and horrendous injuries. Yet, I have seen others with minor wounds die. It is only one's desire and spirit to survive that really counts.

Remember back near the beginning, I mentioned the "Whiskey A-Go-Go" bunker with its six foot high, two layered sandbag blast wall. My first "itching" incident occurred there sometime in early March, 1968.

I was enjoying some off time during the day by "airing out" my feet, cleaning my rifle and writing some letters on a warm afternoon on my foxhole's veranda.

While sitting on the parapet with my back to Rocket Valley, I began to fidget and felt a terrible urge to move -- an itching feeling. Although I hated being behind that rickety blast wall, I specifically moved to that location, carrying my boots and writing materials with me.

No sooner after sitting down, I heard the screaming sound of an incoming mortar round and then the sound of an explosion. The next thing that occurred was the damn blast wall tumbled down on top of me.

After hearing the explosion, my friends rushed out of their bunker's safe confines and ran over to my hole -- all they saw was a smoking, dust-covered hole where my veranda was. They knew I had been outside on the veranda, so they thought I had been blown to pieces. I heard them, so I began yelling and cursing for I was being crushed by the weight of the sandbags. They got me out and were shocked to find me alive and especially when I told them why I had moved.

A mortar round had landed directly in the middle of my veranda. I lost everything I had left out to include my M-16 rifle. Since my "authorized" weapon was a .45cal pistol, not a rifle, I had picked up my weapon from a KIA. I had to do the same to replace the destroyed one.

Based on these two incidents and others during my tour of duty, I follow my instincts, and when I get the ominous itch, I go with the flow, even today, as I work the streets of Montgomery County as a police officer.

The battalion remained on the 689 ridgeline and began running company-sized sweeps in all directions. Alpha company began a sweep to a ridgeline west of our positions. It walked right into a "U" shaped

Continued on Next Page

Continued From Previous Page

bunker system. The NVA had turned the area into a meat-grinder with Marines as the meat.

The Colonel took two more companies in a vain attempt to retrieve our dead and wounded from the fire swept ground. they ran into another mutually supported bunker system. The fight went on for hours. The Colonel was almost relieved from command for he refused to leave our dead and wounded -- a Marine tradition.

We were forced to leave our people behind. All through the night, we were forced to listen to our wounded asking for help.

The next evening an Army hunter-killer chopper team consisting of Hueys and Cobra gunships came up on our 14 frequency and said they would like to try and pick up any survivors. Their teamwork, dedication and guts resulted in the rescue and safe pickup of one Marine left in the kill zone.

Like hawks, these choppers would swoop down and blast the area with machinegun, 40mm grenades and rockets and make an attempt at landing near one of the few living wounded exposed in the killing zone. This went on for a few minutes as the choppers came in from various directions. Suddenly one Huey landed with a crewman jumping out and picking up a wounded Marine. This lucky Marine was the only survivor of thirty three men left behind.

It was about this time that the battalion received the word that the 26th Marines were being relieved by the 1st Marines. There was no word of 1/9 being relieved. We were stuck on the 689 ridgeline just a click away from our "shame" -- our dead.

Most importantly, we heard through the grapevine that the Khe Sanh combat base was going to be abandoned. This came as an utter shock to me and my comrades. I felt as if MACV had kicked me in the teeth. We all said inwardly and outwardly, "Why?" Why had we gone through all this anguish, pain and torment just to have the "BRASS" kiss it all off, especially since the official word came down a few days later after the Alpha company debacle -- an extremely costly sacrifice -- all for naught.

1/9 remained on the 689 ridgeline for three weeks after the 26th Marines were evacuated. We of 1/9 felt like a bastard child, lost and forgotten by headquarters. Our morale was very low. Our ambush MIA's were retrieved by 3/1, after we were gone -- a month after we left.

During this time, I was assigned as the radioman for the battalion Executive Officer. The major was an older, morose Marine, who had been passed over for Lieutenant Colonel. His attitude stunk and all around him felt his ire -- especially me. He was never satisfied. I hated him and he knew and made me pay.

Finally, in early May, we got the word, we were being relieved. We were airlifted by choppers to Leatherneck Square, C-5 and C-3 fire bases, south of Con Thien. It was there I was promoted to Corporal and made the NCOIC of TAC Party.

This brings my tale of Khe Sanh to an end. There are other incidents that happened, but this is enough for now. Some of my story proved to be very easy to write; other incidents proved to be very painful to "re-live" as I wrote about them even after twenty seven years. All I have written about I can still see clearly and vividly in my mind -- the smells, sounds and feelings.

Semper Fidelis!

PHOTO NOTES:

The three photos below were taken in the DongHa & J. J. Carroll areas during Tet Offensive of '68. The pics were furnished to Rec Clay Editor Ray Truelove by Duke Bischoff of Austin, Texas. Thanks Duke!







30th Anniversary Reunion Photo taken at the Iwo Jima Memorial Washington, D.C. - July, 1998



Reunion Photo by Ray Truelove

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Issue No. 44 (Summer, 1999)



Khe Sanh Combat Base, aerial photo taken 28 January 1968 by 460 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, USAF (Mission AM 4389). Identification of units and items depicted is on pp. 26-27. Note C-130 on airstrip. The airstrip is approximately 1/2-mile wide and 1-1/2 miles long. Compare with photo on back cover taken near end of Siege battle.

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Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., consists of anyone who served at Khe Sanh, all branches of service, during 1961-1973. Missions of the organization include: To promote renewed fellowship of all who lived and served in the area of Khe Sanh, Vietnam; to locate and account for all who so served; to promogte preservation of an accurate historical account of such service; to preserve the memory of those who died there; to promote research and understanding and healing with regard to those who served there; to promote artistic expression of the Khe Sanh expeience.

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TOP SECRET UMBRA
TOP SECRET TRINE
TOP SECRET SAVIN
TOP SECRET SPOKE

There are documents that bear security classifications far above "Top Secret." (In the past, these have always been blacked-out by declassifiers). Recently a batch of documents were declassified by the National Security Agency bearing these original classifications dealing with Khe Sanh and Tet. They reinforce comments made at the last reunion by General Alfred M. Gray concerning the crucial importance of SIGINT (signal intelligence) at Khe Sanh. *We probably would not be alive today were it not for the work of these men intercepting NVA radio broadcasts and analysing them! As a result, Khe Sanh was reinforced. One can only wonder what would have happened to those at Khe Sanh had not more reinforcements arrived!*

The Generals, knowing by November, 1967, that the NVA were about to wage a major offensive around the end of January, 1968, has assumed Camp Carroll to be the target. At a gathering of Generals and intelligence staffs and technicians, the technicians from SIGINT convinced the Generals that the main target would be Khe Sanh.

General Starbird (Head of DCPG, Defense Communications Planning Group, a CIA-funded component of the Department of Defense formed to develop electronic sensors as part of the "McNamara Line") visited Hill 881-South on 9 November 1967. By this time a small detachment from the III MAF 1st Radio Co. had erected a small tent near the western edge of the LZ, and inside was a lone Marine with the loop RDF [radio direction finder], yelling—but not heard above the noise of the choppers on the LZ—"you're really not supposed to be here, Sir!" The General and Captain Bruce Greene, CO of B/1/26, walked to the northern edge of the LZ and the General pointed omniously to the north. The next day, Marine Corps Birthday, Colonel Lownds addressed the Marines on that hill with the even more ominous words, "You all will soon be in the American history books."

On 13 Dec 1967, reinforcement of Khe Sanh began with the arrival of 3/26. Reinforcement could not progress too quickly lest the NVA be aware we knew their intentions. Accordingly, 2/26 didn't arrive until 17 January.

In the meantime, knowing Khe Sanh would be hit, the first phase of Operation NIAGARA was launched on 5 January. (Operation NIAGARA was to be a saturation by B-52s of the area around Khe Sanh set to commence, interestingly, on 21 January, and Phase I, beginning 5 Jan, was for target-selection). The Operation was approved by the American Ambassador to Laos (Sullivan) on 16 Jan and by CINCPAC on 17 Jan. On 10 Jan 68, CIA concluded Khe Sanh was to be the target of a major NVA attack. On 12 Jan, Gen Westmoreland requested JCS declassify COFRAM munitions [Controlled Fragmentation, also known as "Firecracker"] for use in non-populated areas of I Corps (i.e., Khe Sanh). On 13 Jan, a portion of the ammunition dump was relocated. On 14 Jan, III MAF was directed to review the plans for support of Lang Vei should be be attacked. On 16 Jan, ASRAT BRAVO arrived at Khe Sanh. On 18 Jan, Gen Westmoreland diverted electronic sensors to the Khe Sanh area (from their intended Ho Chi Minh Trail targets); they were seeded at Khe Sanh on 20 Jan. On 21 Jan, the base was hit—as all of us who were there will never forget!

The documents recently released by NSA bring the following to light:

A SECRET SPOKE document states: "Preparations for the Tet Offensive of 1968 got underway in some areas of South Vietnam during October 1967, about the time that the Communists were preparing for more

pointed activity in three widely separated areas of the country—Khe Sanh..Dak To..and areas of Military Region 10.

In a SECRET SAVIN report of 25 Jan 68, NSA reported: "During the past week, SIGINT has provided evidence of a coordinated attack to occur in the near future in several areas of South Vietnam...Many of these messages have referred to an impending 'N-Day' (the Vietnamese equivalent of 'D-Day')...SIGINT has revealed a major buildup of PAVN forces in the vicinity of Khe Sanh...Since October, an influx and massing of PAVN units in the Khe Sanh-Laos border area has been evidenced."

The following are from Daily Tactical SIGINT Summaries from the NSA (National Security Agency), All TOP SECRET TRINE. A developing and impending threat to Khe Sanh is reflected by introduction of new infantry units ("terminals"), by splitting of divisions, by "resubordination" of divisions and regimentsw under a new Khe Sanh Front Headquarters to coordinate units of the 304 and 325C Divisions, radio silence during movement, units were alerted to adhere strictly to established communications regulations, etc.

"The first indications of the deployment by the ..NVA Div was in late Oct67. This was evidenced by the loss in comms of the possible..Bn on 30 Oct 67 and two terminals of regimental echelon on 31 Oct and 10 Nov..At this time the use of a broadcast suggested that the..Div was deploying in radio silence. Facility HQS located 12 Dec at XD6992 maintains light communications with the following five subordinates...During Oct a split occured in the Div HQS, which in communications appeared as a new terminal simply replacing the 'old' Div HQS terminal...Since 10 Dec 67 eight separate radio terminals have been located by ARDF [Aerial Radio Direction Finding] in a rectangle bordered by the fol coordinates: XD4060, XD7060, XD4020, and XD7020...In summary the present known immediate threat to the Khe Sanh Combat Base consists of the regt loc vic XD6325 on 28 Oct 67, the regt loc within meters of XD657288 on 10 Dec 67, two U/I poss regt sized units subord to .. Div loc within 1500 meters XD 419468 and within 2500 meters of XD425467 on 11 Dec 67 and one U/I poss regt size unit of unk subordination within 4500 meters XD540495 on 13 Dec 67."

"During the past week, SIGINT has revealed a concentration of PAVN radio terminals immediately west of Khe Sanh—in the vicinity of the Laotian-Qujang Tri Province border."

"DRV communications DMZ area: the Major PAVN Headquarters in Laos, just northwest of Khe Sanh, has been identified as a Front Headquarters.

"Traffic-passing communications serving the new major PAVN Headquarters northwest of Khe Sanh have been isolated in SIGINT. Since at least 18 January, this headquarters—last located on 27 January at XD 498674—has been noted in traffic passing communications with three unidentified subordinagtes. One of the subordinates, located at XD 714422 on 28 January, also communicates with the DMZ Front. The two other subordinates were located at XD 631276 on 28 January and XD 638490 on 26 January. In addition, since at least 25 December 1967, communications have been noted between this new major PAVN headquarters and the PAVN..Division and the DMZ Front were last observed on 31 December thus reflecting the resubordination of the divison to the new major PAVN headquarters."

"Identification of the major PAVN headquarters northwest of Khe Sanh as a Front Headquarters—arbitrarily designated the Khe Sanh Area Front—highlighted SIGINT in the DMZ area during the past week."

During 16-23 March, 1968, the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board sent investigators to Vietnam to determine the causes of an "intelligence failure" which allegedly occurred. A TOP SECRET TRINE report notes: "As early as 10 January, General Westmoreland had canceled certain planned operations in northern III CTZ in order to reposition US forces nearer to Saigon. In subsequent days he issued a series of warnings to his commanders, and to the US Mission, that the enemy was preparing to attack...The urgency felt in Saigon was not, however, fully felt in Washington in the immediate pre-attack period. As a result, finished intelligence disseminated in Washington did not contain the atmosphere or crisis present in Saigon...atmosphere is not readily passed over a teletype circuit. Although senior officials in Washington received warnings in the period 25-30 January, they did not receive the full sense of immediacy and intensity which was present in Saigon...General Cushman stated that he expected to be attacked during Tet, and enemy activities in northern I CTZ had prompted higher authority to cancel the Tet truce in I CTZ."

A TOP SECRET UMBRA interview: "In March 1968..when the President's Board came over to Saigon to investigate and look into the Tet Offensive, they asked him what were the shortcomings in intelligence just prior to and during the TET Offensive. General WEYAND told them that he didn't really know what they were referring to as a shortcoming or shortage of intelligence...LTG Weyand did use SIGINT and was a terrific tactician. Needless to say, today he is a four-star General and now COMUSMACV."

SIGINT is as old as World War I. Interception of Russian messages containing the tactical plans of their field forces contributed to the German victory at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1914. On another occasion during World War I, the Brittish sent decoy messages causing a German zeppelin enroute to Africa to return to Germany.

During World War II, the Germans used both airborne and ground radio direction finding equipment to track down partisan forces in occupied areas such as Norway. The French apparently used some form of this technique during their struggle in Vietnam. A captured VC document called for radio discipline to counter detection techniques such as the French had used against them. In 1961, the Army experimented with Aerial Radio Direction Finding in Vietnam and by 1 Jan 66 had 15 aircraft to satisfy a weekly requirement of 240 hours of coverage of enemy operations, using on the "aural null" technique: when an enemy signal is detected, the pilot maneuvers his aircraft until he obtains an aural null (he hears nothing on that aircraft heading). The

aural null means that the aircraft is heading directly toward or away from the enemy transmitter. The aircraft's heading can be plotted as a line of position (LOP). The crew repeats this aural null procedure until several widely spread LOPs are obtained. The LOPs cross at a common point, or fix, which is the location of the enemy transmitter.

An improved equipment later introduced, the AN/ALR-34, obtained the Phase Angle Discrimination (PAD), angle measurements on an incoming radio signal, in one second. This equipment established the direction of the enemy signal and, as a result of computing through a complex process, the time of arrival of the target signal at the three antennas on the aircraft wings and nose. By late 1966, the C-47 was equipped with ARDF with side angle calibration, which made it possible to fix enemy transmitters in any direction without turning the aircraft, reducing the possibility of compromise and enabling a fix in only short bursts. The AN/ALR-34 locks on the target, and then the Doppler data on the position of the aircraft and the C-12 compass (giving an instant readout of aircraft heading within a tenth of a degree), are integrated and displayed on paper tape—all in a process taking less than one second after a lock-on.

So significant was the work of EC-47s and their ARDF during the Siege battle at Khe Sanh that 90% of the total B-52 strikes were targetted through ARDF data.

Brigadier General George J. Keegan, Jr., Director of Intelligence of 7th Air Force (and later Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency), wrote: "On 21 January 1968, MACV had become so overextended in the ground war, that Gen Westmoreland assigned General Momyer a principal role in the defense of Khe Sanh...To meet this problem, General Keegan interrupted all his normal functions at 7AF to mobilize an intelligence exploitation effort....The Air Force thoroughly reconnoitered I Corps using special sensors plus ARDF data supplied by Army analysts. The reconniassance effort produced 2000 targets around Khe Sanh...The result of all this was that the Air Force showed it could do 'in two weeks what had not been done in two years.'...The experience at Khe Sanh, where 7AF integragted all sources of intelligence with a massive targetting program, showed how much more influence the Air Force could have on the conduct of the ground operations."

By 29 January, the I Corps TOC [Tactical Operations Center] sent URS ["Usually Reliable Sources", i.e., SIGINT] in their SPARS Reports listing 32 FRED locations, two FRED locations changed to Regimental CPs, and four FRED locations to read FRANK. (Although "FRED" and "FRANK" are not otherwise interpreted, it is easy to assume "FRED" stands for "Foreign Radio Emission Detected" and "FRANK" "Foreign Radio Analysis Not Known" since FREDs are changed to FRANKS, not *vice versa*, and also changed to read REGT CP or BN CP or DIV CP].

The 8th Radio Research Field Station at Phu Bai (USM-808), the largest intercept site in Southeast Asia, controlled 30 mobile units known as Direct Support Units (DSU), was a detachment of Marines from 1st Radio Battalion, located on the Combat Base and, at least before the Siege, in a small tent just off the LZ on Hill 881-South.

Of course, it's always possible to set up transmitters in remote hills someplace and transmit, making it appear as though the lone transmitter is actually a headquarters. In a memo of 27 Feb 68, David Y. McMahis, White House Liaison Officer of the National Security Agency, prepared a report for Mr. Bromily Smith who, in turn, sent it to Mr. Walt Rostow with the note: "Here is the evidence on which NSA bases its conclusion that the North Vietnamese are not 'spoofing' us with their communications."

Vietnamese deep inside the massive bunkers of FOB-3 translated NVA radio traffic. In some cases, this provided instant targetting, as, for example, when one excited voice said, "Our headquarters is being hit by rockets from a helicopter!" All that was required was to determine where the helicopter was then firing to determine the location of the headquarters!

In another instance, it was determined that General Giap himself might be present at the Khe Sanh Front Headquarters, and that location was immediately targetted with numerous B-52 strikes. Since the area consists of numerous caves set inside spires of stone, NVA radio broadcasts resumed after only a few hours; the headquarters had not been destroyed.

It is to these Marines—and to the Air Force and Army personnel involved in the SIGINT business of listening in on NVA broadcasts, transcribing them and translating them, fixing their locations, determining the chain of command by determining who reports to whom ("pattern analysis")—it is to these that all of us owe a very big THANK YOU! I doubt we'd be here were it not for your efforts!

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AT KHE SANH

The following is an excerpt from *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1960-1968* (Part III, 1967-1968), pages 48-25 and 48-26:

"The possibility of using nuclear weapons at Khe Sanh, to retrieve the situation if it should become desperate, had already been considered. On 1 February 1968 General Wheeler asked the advice of COMUSMACV and CINCPAC about the advisability of doing so, though he considered it unlikely that the necessity would arise. Two days later he informed General Westmoreland that the President had made it clear that he did not wish to be placed in a position in which he would have to decide whether to use nuclear weapons.

Gen Westmoreland thought it unlikely that such weapons would be needed, but that if the situation in the DMZ area should change 'dramatically,' the United States should be prepared to introduce 'weapons of greater effectiveness against massed forces'—either tactical nuclear weapons or chemical agents. Admiral Sharp reported that contingency plans for using nuclear devices were being prepared at Okinawa, though he did not expect them to be required. General Wheeler directed that these plans

not be forwarded to Washington until the Joint Chiefs of Staff asked for them or until a critical situation should make it necessary (in CINCPAC's opinion) that they be considered by the Joint Chiefs.

When the President heard that these plans were in preparation, he ordered them discontinued. Already there had been speculation on the subject in the news media, and he wished to make certain that allegations by the opposition would have no foundation. Accordingly, by direction of CINCPAC, this planning program (FRACTURE JAW) was at once terminated."

The late LtGen Phillip B. Davidson, General Westmoreland's J-2 (Intelligence Officer) during 1968, wrote in his book that President Johnson leaked news of the possibility of use of nuclear weapons at Khe Sanh to the press on 9 Feb. The furor this raised forced the president to instruct Gen Wheeler to tell Gen Westmoreland to suspend all planning immediately. Mention of the possibility of nuclear weapons must have aroused in General Giap a great fear since the Americans were proposing use of atomic bombs in 1954 to break his encirclement of Dien Bien Phu. [See 1954 JCS Study by ADM Radford in the *Pentagon Papers*]. Davidson feels that Giap's fears may have been accurate since the loss of Khe Sanh "..would have sparked within the United States a political and psychological explosion of massive proportions. President Johnson knew this, and for this reason in early 1968 the fate of Khe Sanh became and remained his primary concern." The situation at Khe Sanh was ideal for employment of nuclear weapons—remote and free of noncombatants with pinpointed enemy targets. To add to fears, if the United States used nuclear weapons at Khe Sanh, the door would be opened to use them at choke points along the Ho Chi Minh Trail as well as dikes along the Red River. The date of 9 February is significant, Davidson argues, because during 10-12 February, he decided not to overrun Khe Sanh and dispatched a regiment from Khe Sanh to reinforce Hue while, simultaneously introducing a new artillery unit in the Co Roc area to harass the Marines with large caliber artillery.

THE ONE-TIME PAD

Lawrence T. Cooper arrived in Vietnam in March, 1967, contracted malaria, and was released from the hospital in November, 67. His roommate was SP5 William McMurray. When a new radio operator was needed for the new Lang Vei camp, McMurray volunteered, having been at Lang Vei twice previously. Cooper was on watch when Lang Vei was attacked by tanks. "Their callsign was 'SPUNKY HANSON' and their Morse Code callsign was '5NNP.' We were 'INDIA CHARLIE ZERO CHARLIE,' 'BOLO BOB CAT'." The next afternoon, Cooper boarded a helicopter with SgtMaj Harvin D. Hodge as a reaction force of several helicopters to rescue those still in Lang Vei.

"Sergeant-Major Hodge and my Team Sergeant, Leland M. Harris, had both served with the 187th Airborne in Korea. Colonel Schungel had been an enlistedman in the Philippines; he was highly decorated. When we got back to Fort Bragg a year later, he had a big party at his house for all the guys of Company "C" and Lang Vei, and I remember going to his house and Sergeant-Major Hodge yelling at me, telling me to get a haircut! Hodge—he was the most unbelievable soldier in the world. He and my Team Sergeant had both received a Silver Star because they had made the night jump in the Pusan Perimeter to relieve the 1st Cavalry Division that had been surrounded by the Chinese. The Division was overrun and they were bayonetted and left for dead, and had crawled to an aid station, got in an ambulance, and as the ambulance was taking them to the rear, the Chinese overran their position again, and they were shooting Chinese and North Koreans out of the back door of the ambulance—with IVs in their arms! These people were unbelievable."

By the time they arrived, Maj Quamo's reaction force had already rescued the Lang Vei survivors, and Cooper landed at the FOB-3 compound. In his rucksack were a large quantity of "One-Time Pads." Cooper remained at FOB-3 for a few days to augment the lines. He had no flak vest and, on 12 Feb, received multiple shrapnel wounds in his back. "What really protected me was a PRC-25 on my back. It totally destroyed the radio, and of course it blew my pants off—literally—it must of been from a rocket. The flash of it blew my pants off—the back of my legs, the backs of my arms, blew the helmet down over my face, and burned all the hair off the back of my neck, and all the hair off my butt too. All that was left was the shreds of material to my pants in the front of my pants! I was a helluva-looking mess!" [*Very fortunately, he was not facing the blast!*]

Upon evacuation he soon discovered his wounds were to be the least of his problems! "The Lieutenant Communications Officer there at DaNang came over to see me after I got off the USS REPOSE and there was some big damn investigation on what happened to those one-time pads. "I said: I was at Khe Sanh. They cared less about the fact that I was wounded—it was those one-time pads! I thought they were going to court-martial me. I had stitches in my back and everything and they're worried about those damn one-time pads!"

The one-time pad, first used by the German diplomatic service in the early 1920's, is the only code that is unbreakable. There are two—and only two—identical pads of pages of letters on easily-destroyed paper. Each page contains random letters, for example:

Q D T E G T W C M P J A X U

Above these letters, one writes a message, for example:

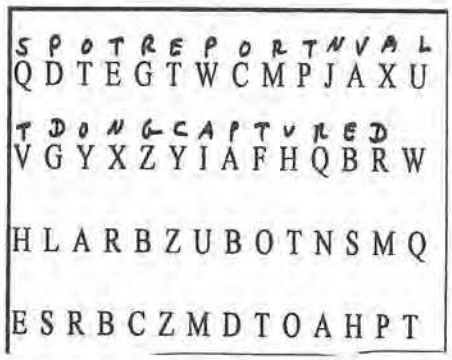

Using a "trigraph", the communicator looks at S + Q to arrive at the code

letter, ""R". Likewise, "P" + "D" = "H". The communicator receiving the coded message then takes his one-time pad, and combines the first coded letter, "R" with "Q" to arrive at "S", and thus reverses the process. *(The "trigraph" is to the right).*

Amazingly, most Special Forces communicators didn't need to consult such a "trigraph," but had memorized all the possible combinations of letters. This may not be as difficult as it might seem; all one need do is memorize a list of 126 three-letter combinations *(see below)*:

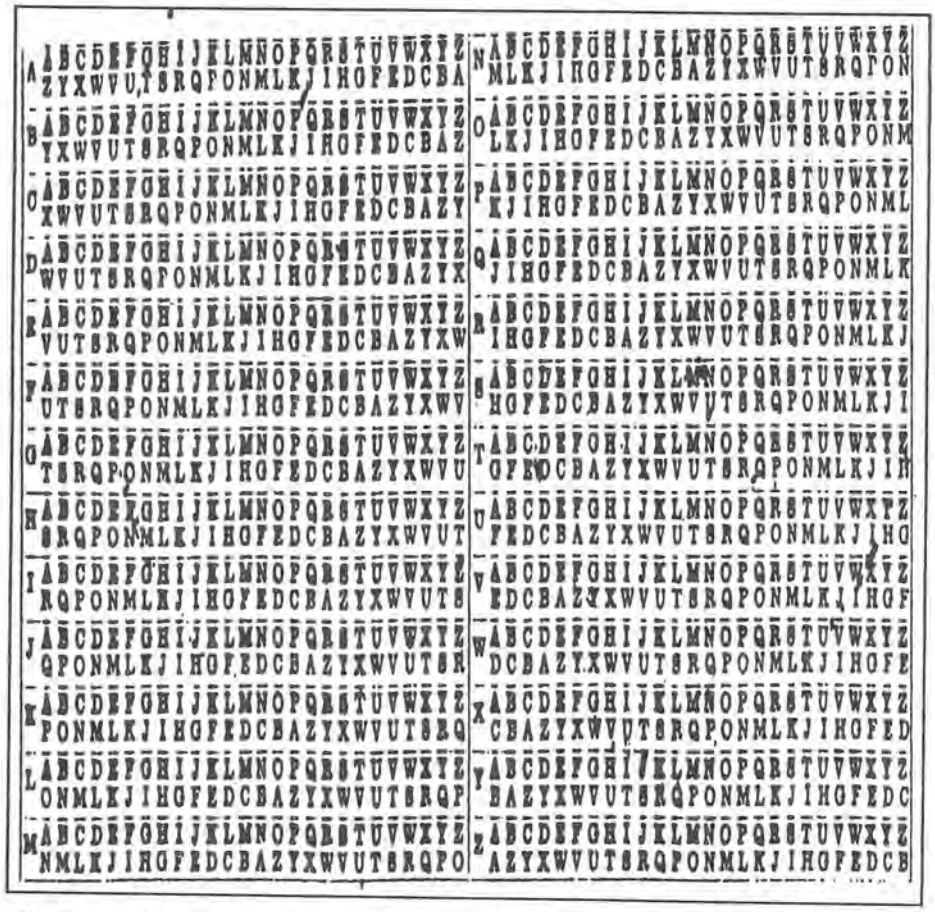

MEMORIZE THESE

Five minutes daily spent studying these combinations will pay dividends in the time saved in encoding and decoding.

AIR	FOG	SOT
BAY	HAS	SUN
CUD	HOE	TAG
ELK	MAN	WAD
EBE	OUR	YON
EVA	PEG	
AFU	JOC	QUP
AZA	JUW	SED
CAX	KAP	SIZ
ENI	KOB	TUM
GIL	KUV	UBE
GUZ	MIY	ULU
HIK	MOZ	WEZ
IDO	OLA	WIV
IJI	OXO	YEX
JEM	PIC	YIT
		YUH
BBX	KKF	QRS
BVD	LLD	RFD
CCV	MMB	RPT
DDT	NNZ	RRR
ETC	PHD	TNT
FFP	POW	VVJ
GGN	PPV	WWH
HHL	PSS	XXF
JJH	QQT	ZZB
BCW	FHN	KWT
BFT	FJL	LCM
BGS	FVZ	LYQ
BHR	GHM	MQX
BIQ	GJK	MRW
BJP	GWX	MSV
BLN	GYV	NQW
CFS	HTZ	NRV
CGR	HVX	PLZ
CHQ	IUX	PXN
CKN	JAQ	PYM
CYZ	JRZ	QEF
DGQ	JTX	SLW
DJN	JYS	VLT
DKM	KQZ	VOQ
DXZ	KRY	WYF
DYY	KSX	XLR

The foregoing account on "one-time pads" not only reflects the outstanding mental capabilities of communicators who would, as a matter of course, write the plain-text message on the pad and then, without consulting anything, send a coded message in Morse Code using the above system, but also presents an interesting possibility for those who wish to toy with such encoding today. While not really secure, if the sender and receiver have the same edition of a book, using every third or fourth letter could serve as a "one-time pad."

RADIO CALL SIGNS

Can you identify the following radio call signs of units at Khe Sanh?

INTRIGUE
BLACK BUD
HASTY FOOT
DUNBAR COUNTY
GARDEN VALLEY
JACKSONVILLE
PIEDMONT
SPUNKY HANSON
MUTTER
ELEPHANT
KLONDIKE
CADAVER
SEAWORTHY
MOLLY PITCHER
ACTIVATOR
AIR-MINDED BRAVO
BARKEEP
CANDLESTICK
CARSTAIRS BRAVO
CHATTERBOX
DAGMAR
HILLSBORO
LANDSHARK BRAVO
MOONBEAM
PINEFOLD
PURPLE FOXES
SANTA ANA BRAVO
SMITTY
SUNRISE
TEMPLE LAKE
VESPER BELLS
YELLOWBIRD
ZORO
MORRAY

Answers on p. 10

THE BULLETIN BOARD

PHONE AREA CODES

We are planning a new Membership Directory (the old one is very much out of date). Dozens of new Area Codes have changed. Please send your new phone number—if it has changed—to:

Ray W. Stubbe
8766 Park View Ct.
Wauwatosa WI 53226

If you didn't get a copy of the last magazine, Issue No. 43 (Has photo of Washington Monumemt on cover) and want one, please contact Ray Stubbe for a copy.

1999 Third Marine Division Association Reunion will be held 14-18 Jul in Spokane WA. For information contact SgtMaj Bill Krueger, 7622 Highland St., Springfield VA 22150, phone: (703) 451-3844.

1999 Reunion of D/1/26 will be held at Marine Corps Base, Quantico VA during the summer. Contact Alan Knight
6628 E. Wakefield Dr.
Alexandria VA 22307
(703) 660-6554.

From WillieRoe Yates: "I am trying to locate a fellow former Marine who was at the DC reunion. He was in 1/9 and from Austin TX. It was his first reunion. I called him Duki, but misplaced his address along with his last name. Is there anything I can do to locate him?"

Lost at DC Reunion: One Hallmark Rosewood Balpoint pen. Contact: Earle Breeding PO Box 8122 Rosewell NM 88202 (505)623-9345. Reward: One beer in St. Louis, 1999

Video Cassette Tapes of the 1998 DC Reunion are available at a cost of $3.00 ea plus $4.50 shipping (one up to six tapes).

Tape #1	**- The Wall & Tomb of Unknown**
Tape #2	**- Arlington, Roble Ceremony, Iwo Jima**
Tape #3	**- Banquet**
Tape #4	**- Board of Directors Meeting, 2 July**
Tape #5	**- Board of Directors Meeting, 3 July**
Tape #6	**- General Membership Meeting**

Order from:
Dick Peloquin, Jr.
c/o Advanced Electronics
107 N. Spencer Rd.
Spencer MA 01562

If anyone has pictures of Max Nelson of E/2/26, KIA 24 Feb 1968 on Hill 861-A, his brother would be most interested to receive them and make copies. Contact

Kelly Nelson
Box 112 Nelson Drive
Walker MN 56484-0112
Tel: (218) 547-2222

Looking for H. Witiker, W/1/13, last location Bronx NY—perhaps now in North Carolina. Contact: Jim Mooney, (H&S/2/26)
356 Airport Rd.
Liberty NY 12754

In Memory

ANTHONY GARY TATE remembered by Don Ener * ALFREDO (DOC) LUCERO, A Btry 1/13 remembered by John Seitz * Di R IBANEZ remembered by William J. Messner * JOHN D'ADAMO remembered by Percy C. Albritton * ECHO 2/3 remembered by Tom Rice * THOSE WHO CONTINUE TO PAY THE PRICE remembered by Joe Miller * VICTOR DRISCOLL, GARBER, FRAZIER remembered by Tim Haley * H Btry 3/12 remembered by Dick Davis * LT KIM JOHNSON, Supply Officer of 1/26 remembered by Jim Wilkinson * THOMAS BYSTROM remembered by M. Syrjanen * MICHAEL MARSHALL CLAYTON remembered by Charles Bunner * SGT EUGENE CASTANEDA of A Co Recon remembered by Karel J. Muns * "FREDDY" FREDERICKSON remembered by Charles Rost * SAM SHARP remembered by Dale Sare * LT FRANK DISTAFANO of E/2/26 remembered by Michael D. Fleming * 30 YEARS AGO, 81s of 2/26, Nov '67 - Nov '68 remembered by Bruce Pilch * MARINES of 3/26 remembered by William R. Wildprett * ALL DUSTER & QUAD 50's MEN WHO DIED TO KEEP RT. 9 TO KHE SANH OPEN, C-1-44 ARTY remembered by John F. Huelsenbeck * SGT EUGENE CASTANEDA of A Co, 3d Recon, remembered by Karel J. Muns * POW/MIAs remembered by Rodney D. Collins * CARLTON "FRITZ" COOK & LYMAN W. WEBER remembered by Michael M. Cook * HOWARD JOHNSON, 26th Marines Comm KIA remembered by Steven W. Orr * J. BOOGER (PFC CURTIS BURKE BUGGER), W/1/13, remembered by Harvey E. Sullivan * STANLEY WEST, PAT MURPHY remembered by Jeff Thomas * ALL THOSE THAT DIDN'T MAKE IT BACK remembered by Rene Garcia * ALL THOSE WHO NEVER CAME HOME remembered by James Frederick * LT KIM JOHNSON remembered by Rob Parker * CPL MICHAEL J. SCANLON, 3d Force Recon remembered by LTCOL Gregory K. MANARY* SP5 McCLATCHY remembered by Russell Mann *

DELTA Co. 1/26 remembered by J. Finn * MIKE KILDERRY C/1/4, ED TOWSLEE, A/1/9 remembered by Terry Tillery * FALLEN MARINES OF DELTA Co 1/26 remembered by Lt Daniel L. McGravey * "HOSS" CORBIN B/1/26 7 Feb 68 remembered by Steve Hecknauer * CPL MICHAEL JOHN SCANLON remembered by Walter J. Doroski * MICHAEL SCANLON (first casualty of Khe Sanh, 3d Force Recon) remembered by William Crapser * INDIA 3/26 remembered by Skip Unangst * ALL OF US! reembered by Glenn Chandler * ALL THOSE THAT SERVED remembered by Wayne Silva * CPL FRED B. LINK, KIA AT KHE SANH (C/1/9) remembered by Eric O. Bergland * DONALD J. MAGILLIGAN, JR. remembered by Danette Magilligan * THE MEN WHO DIED ON OPERATION BUFFALO remembered by Pat McKenna * Di R. IBANEZ, A 3d Recon MIA 6/5/67 remembered by William J. Messner * LT LARRY BOLGER, LT DALE ALLEN, LT STEVE JOINER remembered by J. Fred Cole * MAX NELSON KIA Feb68 remembered by Kelly Nelson * KENNETH W. CLAIRE remembered by Richard Claire * GEORGE QUAMO remembered by Denis Chericone * CPL RANDY VAN NORMAN III remembered by Marcus Fussell * NORMAN C. DESCHAINE KIA JUNE 7, 1968, remembered by Maurice Deschaine * HOTEL Co 2/1 remembered by Jay Vincines * ADRIAN BRITTLES I Co 3/26 KIA 9-21-68 remembered by Chester Wilson * THE SEABEES AT KSCB remembered by Raymond Cruz * DALE CARMICHAEL remembered by Donald G. Bigler * HARRY BEATLE remembered by C. Lannutti * TOM STAMPER CO-CAC "O" remembered by Mark Swearengen * DENNIS MARSHALL GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, USMC LCPL HCS Co 81s remembered by Howard E. Geiogue * 3rd ENGINEERS remembered by Gerald Traum * MGEN HOCHMUTH, USMC, KIA 1967 remembered by BGEN Jacob E. Glick * LOUIS GOI MARINE B/1/13 remembered by Phyllis Mineer * ALL WHO DIED IN HILL BATTLES '67 remembered by Jim Wodecki * LEONARD ROBINSON SGT USMC remembered by Lee Klein * (GREGORY F) POPOWITZ remembered by Kenneth G. Cope * 1stLt JOHN MEYERS remembered by Norman T. Kirk * LT DI STEFFANO remembered by Fred McGrath * JOSE A. PACHECO LCPL 04-13-66 remembered by Charles Luhan Jr * ALL WHO SERVED remembered by Bill Cowan * ECHO Co 2/26 MARINES remembered by Michael T. Lucas *

CPL ENRIQUE BERNAL, USMC 2/3, KIA 3/68, remembered by Roberto Pachecano * SAM SHARP remembered by (someone in Reno NV) * ALL WHO DIED AT KHE SANH remembered by Charles Bennett * THE MEN FROM 2nd PLATOON MIKE CO, 3/26, remembered by David M. Anderson * MY FALLEN FELLOW MARINES OF Co B, 3rd Recon remembered by Al Nosal * LT JOHN H. CARSON, E/2/9 KIA 6/68 remembered by Tim DeWolf * CHARLES N. TREDINNICK SFC A221 remembered by Lee Dunlap * 3d RECON DECEASED remembered by Chuck Rudd * LARRY GEIGER BRAVO 1/9 '67 KIA remembered by (someone from Medford OR) * A/1/13 AND ALL KHE SANH VETS remembered by Robert J. Sullivan * ALL THE MARINES THAT SERVED IN THAT HELL HOLE remembered by P. C. Albritton * MARK D. COOL KIA 3-68 Semper fi remembered by Thomas B. Steinhardt * POW, MIA, KIA and FAMILY remembered by Robert O. Croft * ALL OUR FALLEN BROTHERS remembered by SgtMaj T. Curtis* ALL KSV & FAMILIES remembered by Mike Collins * ANYONE YOU CHOOSE remembered by Mark F. Tierney * A/1/13 USMC KIAs remembered by Dennis Pardee * MICHAEL JOHN LADEROUTE KIA FEB 68 remembered by Tom Laderoute * BILL FLAHIVE KIA 1968 KHE SANH remembered by Richard D'Ambrosio * ALL MARINE KIAs remembered by COL Kurt L. Hoch * CPL SULLIVAN KIA 1968 remembered by Bryan H. Rabbett * MICHAEL B. SHUMAN (AUS) remembered by Ronald Parsons * ALL THOSE THAT DIED ON HILL 861A remembered by Thomas Eichler * ALL VETERANS OF KHE SANH remembered by Lawrence E. McCartney * THE SHEPPARD/SHEPHERD TWINS OF E/2/26 remembered by A. J. Bodenweiser * ROBERT JACKSON ELLISON remembered by Miriam Eaton * A/1/26, 1st PLATOON remembered by Rev. John T. Wielebski * FRANK NELSON UZZEL KIA 1/27/68 remembered by Henry R. Gagne *

DECEASED KHE SANH VETERANS remembered by Daniel F. King *

To include someone in this section, please make a donation (the amount determined from your heart) to our Treasurer, Mr. Vincent Griffith, and indicate who is being remembered. Proceeds, along with dues, will greatly help continued publication of this magazine.

TAPS

JOHN GASTEN (B-52 crew)
28 Jan 1999 (Alcohol)
DICK GRENAT (D/1/26)
26 Feb 1999 (Cancer)
JEROME 'CHIP' O'DONOVAN
(H/2/26)
22 Oct 1998 (Cancer)
LEO F. WRIGHT (L/3/26)
16 Aug 1998 (Heart failure)

THE BUNKER

Editor's Note:

The heart of this magazine is "The Bunker," a section for sharing—as we once did in the bunker at night or during incoming. This is the place to share stories, poems, letters, memories, and react to what has been sent in by others to this section. Red Clay is only as good as your inputs to this section.

Please remember that this magazine is read by dependents, that it is sent to schools, and therefore the "dialect" known as "salty" (or any offensive expressions that put-down others, other services, other nationalities, races, national origins, religions, and purely political statements), are not appropriate, and will be expunged.

While the opinions of those who make written contributions to our magazine are those of the writer and not those of Khe Sanh Vets, Inc., it is suggested in the very strongest of terms that great care be taken to avoid any criticism of any individual by name or reference by which he could be identified. We have all suffered enough! Sure, some mistakes may have been made, and sure, we may still carry bitter memories caused by one person or another. Maybe someone was a big hunk of gluteus maximus! We may never know why they acted as they did—perhaps they knew more or something different, perhaps they "didn't know", perhaps they "snapped" due to overwhelming problems they were unable to make sense of or deal with, perhaps we just "read" them all wrong. We are getting much older now, and we only have a few more years left of life in which we still have the opportunity to say "Thank You," or express our gratitude, our caring, our appreciation, our enjoyment of another brother—or family member or other friend, for that matter.

Recently, one of our Khe Sanh vets wrote to take issue with another vet's criticism of two other Khe Sanh vets, writing how admired they really were. In one case, a SSgt Mac was a dedicated and competent career Marine who was later seriously wounded at Camp Carroll, losing a leg and his career. The other person mentioned, a battalion Executive Officer, was a dedicated Marine who was respected by both his peers and subordinates. In the future, if something is submitted that contains words critical of another Khe Sanh vet that can be identified, this will simply be deleted by the editor and will not be printed in our magazine.

Our magazine is an opportunity to relate stories of what happened so that people and what we lived through is not forgotten, and perhaps what we write will also help someone else make contact with their feelings, promote healing, as well as put things in a larger context, and heal unresolved memories. The Native Americans used sand-painting, the Norsemen used sagas, other warriors told stories around a camp fire: in other words, the best way to deal with hurt, pain, and especially memories of combat, is through artistic expression—telling stories, writing poems, songs, painting, perhaps even dance.

Such sharing can have profound consequences: one suddenly locates the one who literally saved him! One discovers so-and-so really didn't die! One hears that someone else also knew our buddy and friend.

Another starts to make contact with a memory long forgotten but which has controlled life and emotional outbursts. One of our Khe Sanh vets tells of his return from Vietnam. He was home, in a family gathering, and told of how he lived in the large trench that those in recon made. (Recon took over 80% casualties during the siege, sandwiched between the airstrip and the regimental CP, prime targets for incoming, and therefore built a very large trench, even containing what the French call a "pissoire." During shelling, a Marine jumped into this trench and just at the last minute saw the buried 55-gallon drum used as the "pissoire" and fortunately was able to spread his legs!). He was telling of "life in the trench under shelling." All at once his old uncle, who was a veteran of World War I and had never talked about his experiences, suddenly started to talk of World War I trench warfare experiences he had. Telling our stories have that effect: they open the frozen sea of ice within us so that flowing waters emerge to satisfy the thirst of others.

We all express our deep appreciation to Mr. Ray Truelove for his very competent and dedicated work as our Editor for the last two issues of our magazine. After the last reunion, he suffered a death in his immediate family, was informed he possibly had cancer, and was struck by lightning destroying his computer files. He had just received an award for the best newspaper in the Vietnam Veterans of America organization, and felt he was unable to continue as our Editor. He gave all his work to our organization gratis, free. We wish him our best and thank him for his work on our behalf.

I have temporarily inherited the work of editing this magazine as a result of an anxious phonecall from our President to get out a magazine before our next reunion. As all of you know, even-though I am the Founder of this organization, it has been my continual desire and action to avoid positions of influence and leadership, and so I view this as only a temporary position on my part. We have received an indication from one of our members who is an expert on type-setting and layout that he, following some major surgery he will receive, will pick up the job as Editor.

Unless otherwise noted, all writings in this magazine are by Ray W. Stubbe and are his personal opinions.—Ray W. Stubbe, Temporary Ed.

KHE SANH REUNION

By Steve Riddle
(H&S Co., 1/26, Scouts/Snipers)

Memories evoked from so long ago are
Mirrored in the knowing eyes and crows feet
of fellow Marines who survived.
We laugh at recalled wacko situations
And tease one another with understood
Love and affection.
Invariably, a name will be attached
To an event.
A Marine, friend, son, husband, went down
His buddy was with him when he died.
We listen and nod and shiver then tears flow.
God, there just wasn't time back then,
For such moments.
Recalled pain and fear and sorrow diminishes me.
It's a blade thrust into my soul
Instead of flowing blood
It is bright red anguish...
It was never forgotten.
It was simply locked away.

DESCENT INTO THE CATACOMBS

By Chaplain William R. Hampton
(Chaplain of 3/26 during the Siege)

They descended the dirt stairway quietly and cautiously, taking great care not to be noticed. They were not an impressive group by typical standards. Their appearance was that of a group of laborers coming in after a hard day's work, with dirty clothes and dirty bodies. One thing did stand out however, and that was their youthfulness.

Only about a dozen could gather at one time in the underground cave-like chapel. Their surroundings were starkly simple and earthy—a makeshift table, a plate of bread, a cup of wine, worshippers and a leader. The atmosphere couldn't help but remind one of the stable-cave in which the Son of God became human flesh. And now in this small, underground assembly, he promised to be present again with his glorified humanity, under the forms of bread and wine.

A young man was called out of the group and presented himself before the table. On his forehead the leader signed a cross, the symbol of his new loyalty. Using the phrases of the Creed of the Apostles, the leader asked him questions about his faith. The young man answered with a serious "I believe!" The signs of emotion were obvious. The young man knelt, and while the leader applied water and spoke the baptismal words, the concussion of a great explosion above ground shook loose some of the dirt wall. The worship continued with the Prayer of Thanksgiving and the newest member of the sacred body of Christ joined the others as they came to the table to receive the Holy Sacrament. The leader gave the final blessing and the worshippers began to file out one at a time, with a deliberate time interval between each person's leaving.

Another celebration of the Holy Eucharist had brought the peace, joy and strength of the forgiving love of God into the lives of that community. For not knowing what lay in the future, they were now prepared to face another period of days.

Although this could almost be the story of a group of Christians worshipping in the catacombs so long ago, it is the story of a group of Marines meeting to celebrate the Eucharist at Khe Sanh.

THANK YOU

A 'ThankYou' for the Khe Sanh 'experience'; when I need to reflect back to help keep my life's priorities and values in order.

- SGT Bruce M. Pilch
81s, 2/26, Nov 67 - Nov 68

ANSWERS

[Answers to quiz on radio call-signs on p. 6. Note: when some are indicated for the same unit, they are for different times]:

INTRIGUE [26 Marines regt]
BLACK BUD [1/26]
HASTY FOOT [2/26]
DUNBAR COUNTY [3/26]
GARDEN VALLEY [1/9]
JACKSONVILLE [1/13—artillery]
PIEDMONT [FOB-3]
SPUNKY HANSON [A-101, Lang Vei]
MUTTER [CAC OSCAR]
ELEPHANT [BV-33, Laos]
KLONDIKE [VMO-6]
CADAVER [VMO-6]
SEAWORTHY [VMO-6]
MOLLY PITCHER [1/26]
ACTIVATOR [CAC OSCAR]
AIR-MINDED BRAVO [Recon]
BARKEEP [1/1]
CANDLESTICK [C-123 FAC/Flares]
CARSTAIRS BRAVO [ASRAT]
CHATTERBOX [HMM-262]
DAGMAR [3d Shore Party Bn]
HILLSBORO [the daytime ABCCC]
LANDSHARK BRAVO [DASC]
MOONBEAM [nighttime ABCCC]
PINEFOLD [1/26]
PURPLE FOXES [HMM-364]
SANTA ANA BRAVO [recon]
SMITTY [1/4]
SUNRISE [26Mar regimental air]
TEMPLE LAKE [3/4]
YELLOWBIRD [B-57 aircraft]
HOBO [A-1 aircraft]
ZORO [T-28 aircraft]
MORRAY [26th Marines Regt]
PERSEVERE DELTA [Division AO—sometimes written in official SITREP messages as "PERVERSE DELTA"!]

Do you know of any others? Please send them to Ray W. Stubbe.

AMERICAN BEAUTY DELTA

This letter is really intended for a CPT Harlan E. "Rip" Van Winkle, who wrote the continuation to the piece entitled "Hill 471" on pp. 22-25 of your Spring [1998, No. 41] issue.

On page 24, CPT Van Winkle describes the battle in vivid terms, and the work of a USMC FAC, callsign: AMERICAN BEAUTY DELTA, who helped sort out the good guys from the bad, and lend a little fire support in the process.

Well, CPT Van Winkle, this is AMERICAN BEAUTY DELTA checking in loud and clear!! After 30 years I never expected to hear those words again (God, how I hated that callsign!), but I looked in my flight log for that incident, and there it was.

Like all of the Marine FACs, I was equipped with two VHF and one UHF radio to be able to simultaneously work artillery, naval gunfire, and tactical aircraft. This happened frequently over on the coast where we had a lot of ships at our disposal.

A little history: I had just returned from Thailand, where I had been flying with the HILLSBORO crews on another assignment. Immediately upon my return, I was sent to Khe Sanh, to augment LtCol Hennelly's FSCC. Since I had been working in the Dong Ha FSCC, and flying every day, the assignment fit nicely.

At Khe Sanh, I arranged for my Dong Ha pilots to come out on a rotational basis, and we tried to fly about 8 hours a day. I had the luxury of working as an FSCO with Harry Baig, Jerry Hudson, and Kent Steen at night, then seeking out our targets and hitting them with the Khe Sanh artillery and air strikes during the day.

On Hill 471 that day from my position, it looked like the NVA were nose to nose with the Army folks, and I had little to discriminate except the color of the uniforms, but once I got someone to throw some smoke at the NVA, or pop a panel, I could sort things out a little better. I now have a better understanding how close they were to each other. We were always reluctant to use napalm in Danger Close missions, but obviously you talked me into it.

I do not recall, nor does my logbook support my working any Air Force planes, but since I usually called the Dong Ha and Khe Sanh DASC for help, they sent me anybody who was loitering within their area of control, which could have been USMC and/or USAF aircraft.

This I remember vividly: I was so concerned with the fate of the engaged Americans, that I went over to the FOB/SOG bunker and inquired about them as soon as I landed. My old memory is hazy, but I think I either talked to one of the men from the patrol or some other officer. I wrote up my pilot, 1/Lt Pete Kreuger, for bravery that day, but never knew what happened to it.

Thank you for bringing back the memories. I mourn the good men you lost, but I am glad you made it.

Jim Stanton
COL (Ret) USMC
American Beauty Delta

[*NOTE: Since the time of writing of this letter, we have lost track of the whereabouts of Col Jim Stanton. It would mean very much to Rip Van Winkle, Lee Dunlap, and the entire patrol involved in that Hill 471 patrol if they could locate him, to express their gratitude and also welcome him into their renewed fellowship. Does anybody know the current whereabouts of COL Jim Stanton?*]

ASRAT

I have seen very little published regarding ASRT "Bravo" and its accomplishments at Khe Sanh. As a former Marine officer, I have never taken the opportunity to write and to share the ASRT's contribution in protecting that beleaguered base during the siege of 1968. Perhaps the following brief synopsis would be of interest to some of your readers.

Lieutenants Tim Allen (OIC), Howie Thompson, and myself were assigned to oversee the deployment of our ASRT from Chu Lai to Khe Sanh on or about January 15, 1968. In addition to the three above mentioned officers, our team was composed of approximately sixteen enlisted Marines. Without the competence, loyalty, courage, and dedication of these Marines, our ASRT could have never accomplished its mission. That mission, simply stated, was to provide high altitude, radar controlled, voice vectored air support to all units around Khe Sanh, specifically the 26th Marines and other 3rd Marine Division units. Except for close coordination (sharing of targets, enemy troop movements, etc.), we were not involved with the B-52 strikes (arclights) and other low altitude close air support.

"Bravo" was physically located on the western edge of the perimeter adjacent to the four deuce mortar battery and just north of the original ammo dump. Our system was operational at Khe Sanh on January 21. From that day until I departed around March 15..the system was operational almost continually on a twenty-four hour basis. That is a miracle in itself considering the almost constant enemy rocket, mortar, and artillery bombardment. (Especially after the ammo dump was hit!).

After looking back in my original controller's log, I found some interesting figures. I'm sure that both Lt. Allen and Lt. Thompson's logs would reveal similar notations. From January 21 to March 15, I dropped over 3500 tons of ordinance and controlled over 1,300 voice vectored bombing missions. On the average, we were completing a sortie every 10-15 minutes. (A sortie being positive radar lock on the aircraft, initial attack heading, time over target, all ordinance expended, etc.) In one eight-hour stretch on February 18, I directed 38 sorties and expended 166 tons of ordinance. (Note: This was eleven days after Lang Vei had been overrun). When one considers that these missions were done on a twenty-four hour basis, that translates to tremendous fire power. In addition and after the air strip was destroyed, we did several low altitude radar controlled parachute re-supply missions for the base.

Our busiest twenty-four hour period was 450 tons expended with 100 sorties run. Due to the critical and precise nature of our missions, it was not unusual for us to drop within 300-500 yards of friendly forces. We got regular feedback from aircraft,

reconnaissance units, etc., as to the accuracy and effectiveness of our bombing. During the month of February alone, we had 2500 confirmed NVA kills, not to mention the ammo dumps we hit and convoys we destroyed.

In conclusion and during the time frame between January 21 and March 15, ASRT "Bravo" was responsible for over 4200 sorties and 20 million pounds of ordinance dropped. After the initial team members rotated back to DaNang, "Bravo" continued to play a vital role in the defense of Khe Sanh.

Finally, I had the distinct privilege of serving with some of the very best people who gave everything of themselves. We must never forget the lessons which we learned in VietNam nor must we ever forget those men and women who sacrificed everything by giving their lives.

—William E. McEwen II

[Maj Matthew P. Caulfield commented: "It was so professional, so fantastic. They were really good—all day long and many times in bad weather. That ASRAT was a superb one."

On 23 Jan, ASRT BRAVO set a new MASS-3 squadron record by controlling the delivery of 210.75 tons of bombs. The record was again broken by ASRT BRAVO on 27 Jan with 247.37 tons. On 18 Feb, in a 24-hour period, ASRAT BRAVO controlled 99 missions involving over 275 aircraft. 486 tons of ordnance was delivered on 105 targets, establishing a new squadron record. By this time ASRAT BRAVO was directing TPQ-10 strikes within 500 meters of the perimeter. According to the 26Mar Command Chronology for Feb, the ASRAT team controlled 1,959 flights of fixed wing using TPQ-10 radar. Total fixed wing ordnance dropped visually and by TPQ-10 was 16,584,350 pounds.

At his debrief, Col Lownds said, concerning the ASRAT BRAVO team at Khe Sanh: "..anything but the highest priase would not be enough. The accuracy of those things was phenomenal. I know at one point—every once and awhile they rotate people and when they'd rotate these people then we'd run a strike on a hilltop somewhere near us to find out how these new people and how accurate they were. And I remember it now, the first time we ran an accuracy check I think they were 40 meters off. And a couple of times after that the error was practically negligable...I called in the Air Force Liaison Officer..and said, 'Hey, Major, how close would you let ASRATs bring in strikes to your front lines?' And his comment to me was, 'I'll be honest with you; if I were in a hole and were in a spot,' he said, 'with this particular ASRAT, not with any ASRAT, but with this particular ASRAT, I wouldn't hesitate to come within 30 meters."]

NOTES FROM INTERVIEW OF BILL McEWEN, 06 June 1994:

Question: How would the thing work?
McEwen: The Navy, the Marine Corps, the Air Force—they were throwing so much Air up there—they would get on our frequency and say, "We're CHAIN TWO FOUR ZERO," or whatever, and say what ordnance they had. And we'd say, OK, we'll take you, and here's what we do. We'd have all kinds of targets. We'd tell them we want them to fly at 15,000 feet, and we'd give them a TAC heading. We'd "lock on" the aircraft and then we knew exactly—once we got a lock-on the aircraft, we knew exactly where he was, we knew exactly how fast he was flying, we knew exactly his altitude and everything.
Question: The computer—
McEwen: We had what's outdated now; we had the analog computers. We'd give him a vector toward the target, and then we'd get him down to within 8,000 meters and if he was flying—we had a needle that was tracking him, and if that needle were running true and he was within a degree, port or starboard, of the target, we would drop. If we were going to drop all ordnance, a salvo, we'd say, "Armstrong all ordnance." If we were going to make two or three runs—if we had the liberty of the time to do that—we'd tell him to arm, like, two 500-pounders. Or, I can remember many times where we set it up to be a "ripple," where we would just start out and ripple them over 500 meters. Once I did this to within 400 meters of where I was sitting: An A-6 came in while the 37th Rangers were being attacked, and I had him do a 500-meter ripple. I think he had 26 250-pounders.
Question: Do you release the bombs or does the pilot?
McEwen: He releases them on our command. I would say, "CHAIN FOUR FIVE, this is CARSTAIRS BRAVO, ARMSTRONG all ordnance." He'd say, "Roger, Armstrong," and then he would get down to about 2,000 meters. I would say, "CHAIN 24, standby, standby. Mark, Mark." When I'd say "Mark, Mark," he'd turn them loose.
Question: What does Armstrong mean?
McEwen: It means all the ordnance on the aircraft is armed. He'd flip the little switch that arms the bombs, and I would not give him that until he was about 8,000 meters to go. Or, I might say, "YELLOWCAT 25, Armstrong two DELTA-5s" or whatever type of ordnance he was carrying. When he would come up, he would say, "CARSTAIRS BRAVO, this is...and I've got 15 DELTA-2s on board tonight." I would look in my ballistics chart and I would dial al this into the computer to get the amount of trail and the time to splash-down because every bomb was different."

TPQ-10 TOO CLOSE

Intense incoming on 21 February was the result of the second (and final) daytime attempt by the NVA to assault our base perimeter. This time it was an estimated NVA battalion attacking the lines occupied by the 37th ARVN Rangers.

The 37th ARVN Rangers, spotting the NVA moving towards them, estimated the force at battalion strength since the ARVNs monitoring the NVA radio net heard them talking over five different radios.

The Rangers immediately engaged the enemy force, halting their advance. Meanwhile, the KSCB received 250 rounds of mortar, 50 rounds of artillery, and 70 rounds of rockets. At one point, there were about 75 incoming rounds within one 5-minute period.

A TPQ-10 strike accidently

pickled its bombs about 40 meters inside the base perimeter, making a 40-ft. hole and throwing dirt all over the hootches. The bomb exploded between the B/1/26 positions and the ARVN lines.

Gilbert Wall recalls the moment: "We all laid up in the trenchlines and my radioman hit the deck. It sent mud hundreds of feet up into the air and then my radioman was laying flat in the trench and this big piece of mud came [down] and gave him a compound fracture. They took him to the Aid Station. They sent him down that night. They said that anybody that can walk had to go back."

The radioman, Peter Manovich, a German national, tall and muscular, had attended Northwestern University and joined the Marine Corps as "training" and planned to return to Germany and become an officer in their armed forces.

Gilbert Wall and the radioman were friends: "We used to sit there and talk. There was a German in Delta Company 81s, and they used to talk German to each other. I liked old Peter. We used to sing 'Snoopy versus the Red Baron' and he got mad and said, 'How would you guys like it if I put down Babe Ruth?' That was the last thing he should have said because those Marines never let up on him."

For all the NVA incoming, there were no friendly fatalities. Cpl Ted Golab, a Marine FO sent to assist the 37th Rangers, had been sitting on top a bunker when the incoming started. The ARVNs rarely wore helmets, and following the initial blast, many were laying about the area. No one was really badly injured. One Ranger had been thrown up against a wall and broke his wrist. Another came to Golab crying like a baby. Golab assured him he was OK, put a battle dressing on his head and gave him his own helmet. In the days and weeks that followed, that Ranger never removed Golab's helmet. Golab was given a Ranger beret, a shirt with the Ranger patch and a purple scarf, and wherever he went, a Ranger rifleman now always accompanied him. "Them guys were great. They'd be eating our food and I'd be eating their food."

The attack was repulsed, leaving some 20-25 NVA killed.

Another friendly wounded, Joe Lola, went to C Med with shrapnel in his leg and was evacuated on a CH-46. The chopper, however, took fire, wounding Lola again, again in his leg. He yelled, "I'm hit!" But no one could hear him above the noise. Everyone returned to C Med, and Lola told the corpsman there, "I'm hit!"

"I know you're hit."

Lola took down his blanket—he was nude except for the blanket—to show the corpsman his second wound, and there was blood from his belly button on down.

"O my God!" shouted the corpsman.

Lola was given some morphine and told, "You're going out on the next chopper!"

"No! I don't want to get into another chopper! I want to stay here!"

"You can't!"

A MEMORY REVISITED

Dear Dr. DeMaagd

I am at a loss as to how to begin this, so I guess I'll just get to the point.

I was with 3rd Recon at Khe Sanh during the "siege." As you probably remember, recon was pretty much shut down as far as patrolling after 21 January. Because of that we were sent on various work parties around the KSCB. One of the jobs I seemed to get quite often was the aircraft loading area and Charlie Med carrying stretchers.

You may not be the doctor I remember from 8 Feb 1968. (I just learned the exact date in July '96) or you may not remember the particular incident or Marine involved, but if any of this should ring a bell I just wanted to let you know how things turned out.

On 8 Feb 1968, I and others were carrying wounded to and from Charlie Med and the helipad. Sometime during this (I don't remember the time of day) a Marine was brought in from one of the arty batteries. Their gun pit had taken a direct 122 rocket hit and this kid was quite literally blown up as I remember so many being.

I helped get him down into the Charlie Med bunker and started to turn to go get another stretcher when the doctor on duty asked me to give him a hand as there were no corpsmen left. It was a very busy day. This kid's left leg was practically gone, right leg not much better and among the many other holes he had in him, one could see his heart beating through the gaping hole in his chest. There was only one other time that I checked the name on dog tags during my entire tour and I remember both names to this day. This fellow's name was Robert Flaherty. His name and that vision have stayed with me for almost thirty years.

Last July I spent some time in the VAMC Roseburg, Oregon, and through a quirk of extreme chance (or a higher authority) I met Mr. Flaherty. Although obviously scarred and beat up, he was doing very well. Although he left the hospital just shortly after I met him, we have stayed in touch.

If you are not the doctor I remember from that day, I apologize for possibly dredging up bad memories. If you are he, I thought you might like to know."

—Hal C. Johnson

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Thank you for your letter of..in which you shared your amazing experience during the Khe Sanh siege. It is a great story, one that is eloquently expressed. I have reread your letter, awesomely, now at least five times!

Unfortunately, I was not the doctor that shared this impressive event with you. I was in Khe Sanh during the siege attached to 1/26 Marines. Our battalion aid station was located in the above ground bunker across the road from the artillery battery near the turn-around end of the airstrip. My daily excursions took me by Charlie Med, but I never worked there doing patient care.

I have many valued memories of those years spent serving in Vietnam! I am extremely proud of the performance of my Corpsmen and the Marines there. If only I could relate the events of those times with the clarity of recall and the expressive skill you possess!

Thank you again for your letter. — Harvey De Maagd

A TRIBUTE

In memory of Reuben Carl McMackins, Jr. L/3/26, KIA during the fight to retake Hill 881N at the Battle of Khe Sanh, 14 April 1968:

Mac, you knew you weren't coming home. I didn't believe it when you told me.
Maybe death in war was meant for some, but not for you, Mac, not for you.
Why didn't someone prepare me for death? Who prepared you Mac, God?
Maybe He's using your death to prepare me. Thanks Mac. I miss you.

—Michael C. Loehrer

A CHRISTMAS LETTER

"1998 was a year of blessings—as I survived lung cancer!! Discovered in February by the Fargo North Dakota Veterans Medical Center. We were told that I had at the very most, a year, but more likely four to six months. We decided to forego the Veterans Hospital and opt to utilize local medical services and our family doctor, who dealt with this as a well trained combat unit commander! First, I was in the Park Rapids hospital, getting my lung drained of fluid, and repaired so no more fluids would develop. They also took samples of the four masses/tumors. I spent eight days in the hospital, six of these days in the ICU, where I was given the nickname of 'Mr. Independent' by one of the ICU nurses. After the surgery, it wasn't much time before I started the four Chemo treatments, followed by a total of 33 radiation treatments. This resulted in the unexpected. I am and have been since July, 'Cancer free.' We worked with two cancer doctors, neither one of them giving me much hope. In fact, none. I have always been aware and never forgot how lucky I was to survive the war 30 years ago. This allowed me to except my death sentence, knowing that I got a thirty-year bonus, with a wonderful wife of 26 years and great kids. Plus I had many outdoor adventures during those 30 years, the type that most people dreamed of. Our family doctor, the two cancer doctors, and the surgeon, all agreed it was my positive attitude that brought me to my present stage, but it was the prayers of all of you—my chaplain from the war and his congregation prayed every Sunday, along with many local churches..It was amazing the support we received during this. It will never be forgotten."

—Wally Schaffenberger

CLOSENESS

It doesn't seem possible that it's been thirty years since we left Khe Sanh. I know that life must go on—but there will always be a place in my heart for the men in 1st Bn. 26th Marines. Having retired 24 years ago, I have yet to find in civilian life the closeness that I had while in the Corps.

—Jerry Honn

CONGRATULATIONS

Huey Guillory (CAP OSCAR-2 at Ta Cong, just outside the KSCB) is the new Chief of Police, Port Barre, LA.

THE 'TOP' GIVES THE WORD

To all my Marines and Corpsmen whom served in K/3/26 since 1966-67-68: I as your Company First Sergeant thank you for your loyalty, dedication, extreme hardship and pride. Forever grateful. Ben Goddard, 1stSgt K/3/26.

[*Ed. Note: During the early morning attack on Hill 861 on 21 Jan 68 in which the Company CO was severely wounded, the Co Gunny (Rimel) was KIA, Ben Goddard was wounded in his neck, and pressed his finger against the bleeder all night until evacuated in the morning so he wouldn't bleed to death*].

THE 109th QM

The 109th QM AES (Air Equipment Supply) lost one member, Charles Lynn Baney, killed in a C-130 crash during the unit's re-supply of Khe Sanh on 15 October 1967.

I was one of several members of our unit who went to Khe Sanh. The unit's efforts successfully air-dropped over 8,000,000 pounds of supplies, maintaining a unit capability of 250 tons per day.

—Roger Mountain

[*Ed Note: SP4 Baney was remembered in a Memorial Service 18 Oct 67 at Cam Ranh Bay.*

He was born 12 Nov 1946 in Warsaw, Indiana and entered the Army 7 June 1965. During August-October 1967, the 109th was delivering AM-2 matting for the reconstruction of the airstrip as well as bunkering materials to construct the new Lang Vei camp and FOB-3. During this period they accomplished a LAPES [Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System] which was then still in experimental stages, and delivered 567.41 tons of construction materials. This technique was to be a life-saver during the Siege. By the end of Oct 67, the 109th had delivered 2,883.95 tons of supplies to Khe Sanh.

BLOOD

An emergency request from III MAF to First Marine Air Wing was made the evening after Khe Sanh was attacked to helo-lift 8500 pounds of whole blood at Khe Sanh. At 2200 the evening of 21 Jan, Capt Frank James Kennedy and his co-pilot, 1/Lt Paul H. Ellis, departed Marble Mt. DaNang on mission LUMINOUS 51, to transport whole blood, morphine, and other medically essential items to Khe Sanh.

Due to existing weather at Khe Sanh (1/4-mi visibility and fog), the aircraft loaded with medical supplies returned to DaNang and the one carrying the whole blood was diverted to Quang Tri to wait a break in weather. Upon touchdown at Quang Tri, they discovered no facilities were on hand to store the precious cargo of whole blood, and because it was imperative that the cargo reach its destination unspoiled they departed Quang Tri rather than wait for weather to break.

They were unable to receive navigational information: a positive lock-on with the TACAN, and were

forced to navigate by dead reckoning above a thick cloud layer over the hazardous terrain below them.

When they arrived, they were informed that due to the attack during the day, the medical supplies were not expected until the following day.

The GCA controller vectored an initial approach fix, but at GCA minimums, Capt Kennedy still didn't have the field in sight, so he requested and was cleared for an extended low approach down the runway in an effort to break out of the cloud cover. This proved futile, and Capt Kennedy executed a missed approach and climbed to VFR on top.

Realizing that low fuel would permit only one more approach, Capt Kennedy conferred with the Khe Sanh tower and GCA operators and established a system where the tower operator notified the GCA when a break in clouds was approaching. The GCA controller gave the CH-53 step-down altitudes and set them up for the approach.

There was no break over the field, but there appeared to be a clear area off their starboard side. Capt Kennedy flew to the area, identified their position, and advised the tower to standby with an Aldis Lamp to orient them over the field. Using an autorotative approach with a 270° spiral, they descended beneath the cloud layer and broke out over the perimeter of the base, landing at approx. 0130. The green signal flashed from the Aldis Lamp was the plane's only ground reference.

The cargo was off-loaded, and as they taxied to the runway to take-off, there was a bright flash in front of the plane. "It looked like they were walking rockets right into our cockpit. They hit all around us. We got out safety, to return to Marble Mountain."

A REAL "CUT UP"

A recon team leader at Khe Sanh was briefing his team, concluding with the requirement to synchronize their watches. He said, "Gentlemen, circumcize your watches!"

We Can't Forget - A Sister's Prayer

[Written by the sister of Cpl David L. Rodell, W/1/13, died 9 May 1997 of respiratory failure.]

Lord, we can't forget how we used to play as children,
Building go carts, walking on stilts, going to the beach, building snow mountains in the yard;

And Lord, we can't forget how he always included us,
He never ditched us, like some brothers would.
He treated us with so much kindness.
He protected us, He watched out for us.

We can't forget, Lord, how he made us laugh;
He was so funny, always telling us jokes,
and acting so silly.
Once we got laughing we would laugh so hard,
we thought we would never stop.

We can't forget, Lord, how our girlfriends used to come over
and ask, "Where's your brother—is he home?"
And all those phone calls from admiring girls at school.

And Lord, we can't forget when he went to Vietnam.;
He always wrote us letters and
we would write him back.
He saved every one of those letters.
We were so proud of him!

We can't forget, Lord, the day he came home,
and how thankful and excited we were to run and greet him at the airport.
We were also a little confused by the look in his eyes, as though a part of him had been lost forever.

We can't forget, Lord, when he moved to Arizona,
How strange it seemed that we would not be near each other any more.
He always tried to make it home for Christmas and we always kept in touch through letters and telephone calls.

But most of all, Lord, we can't forget that smile,
those bright blue eyes, his wavy hair,
the sound of his laughter,
his kindness, his sweetness,
his childlike ways.

O Lord, Thank You! Thank you that we can't forget these memories and so many more. Our hearts will be forever grateful that we had the time we did with this wonderful, kind, loving person - *our brother*!

2/Lt Joseph R. Mitchell M/3/3 KIA 30 Apr 67

[A poem by his mother, Florrie Mitchell:

Where are you now
Soldier Boy of mine
you with the Pied Piper laugh
that even the smallest child would try
and follow in your footsteps.
Where are you now
Soldier Boy of mine;
whose life was made known
by your courage and your dreams
of the unbelievable made known
by the believable.
Wipe the tears from my eyes,
Soldier Boy of mine;
so they will not blur the vision of you
drenched in God's glory.

[A poem by his widow, Paulette Mitchell Freeman:

My Only Love
His laughter filled my empty heart,
His love bound my heart to his—
He walked in life so straight and tall
Not one phase of life did he miss.

He loved his friends and family
His first-born—small and fair,
He loved his flag and country,
For all these he took the dare.

He fought for all he felt for,
His valor exceeded all,
He fought for faith and freedom,
Until his last fatal fall.

So rest now—my weary soldier—
I'll love you till I die,
You meant all the world to me—
And will—till by your side I lie.
—July 27, 1968

RETURN - I

I got out of Vietnam 31 years ago without the slightest desire to return. Yet there I was, stepping off the plane in the stifling heat and humidity of May at the Ton Son Nhut Airport in Ho Chi Minh City. The city is still referred to as Saigon by virtually everyone except the tour guides and the government.

Although my experience as a Vietnam War-era Marine occurred in the former demilitarized zone area, far north of Saigon, the mystique of the city drew me. After all, the U.S. Embassy in Saigon was bombed, badly wounding my travel companion, retired Ambassador Jim Rosenthal. South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem was overthrown and murdered here in 1963. And several Buddhist monks self-immolated here in protest of government policies.

And to those of us who fought the war in filthy clothes and subsisted on C-rations at ill-defined front lines, the Saigon-Gomorrah lifestyle of the starched and polished headquarters pukes has been burned into my memory with disgust, although I know many resented such rear-area duty assignments.

I still shudder to think that the majority of these men received combat awards for their tours, which included cold drinks in the evening, wine with meals and bounty for the prostitutes who provided fodder for news photographers to capture on film the great moral damage America was causing in Vietnam.

Ultimately, it was the vision of a North Vietnamese tank bursting through the gates of the presidential palace, followed closely by the helicopter evacuation of the American Embassy, that best depicted American involvement gone bad.

In Saigon, I saw the Museum of American War Atrocities, the unclaimed property that was once the American Embassy, the presidential palace of the 'deposed puppet government'—all in a sprawling city with people seemingly living in every square foot, a smell that is unmistakably Vietnam and graphic evidence that communism doesn't work.

Yes, I wanted to see Saigon. I did, and I'm not impressed.

My real purpose for making this trip, though, was to visit the areas where my fellow Marines and I fought, and fought well. Such places as Dong Ha, Hue, Khe Sanh and the Leatherneck Square area of the former DMZ are embedded in the history of this war.

To me and others who were there, they formed the arena where dramas unfolded—dramas that had a monumental impact on our lives. I wanted to see them as they look now. To stand on the ground again. I wanted to see Vietnam as a country rather than a war.

Let me first make something clear, though. I am not one of those people who carries a heavy emotional load as a result of my experiences in the Vietnam War. I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to have served with exceptional Americans. But I, like most of my peers, am one of the Vietnam vets who, according to the department of Labor and Veterans Affairs statistics, are 'better educated, more emotionally adjusted, enjoy a more stable family life and a higher income' than those of our age group who didn't go to Vietnam.

We're all over the place, but don't tell Oliver Stone.

It was in the DMZ area that I saw what I came to see. Another member of our small group and I both had an inexplicable, almost surrealistic feeling as we wandered the ground, now quiet, where so much chaos once reigned.

I had been the officer in charge of a Marine force recon detachment. My small band of reconnaissance Marines operated out of Khe Sanh Combat Base before its historic siege. Indeed, we verified the intent of the North Vietnamese Army to attack the base in strength, so we knew the terrain well.

I stood on the stunted growth that outlined the site of the mile-long airfield at Khe Sanh. Hills 881 and 861, where the Marines and the North Vietnamese Army had fought furious battles, were clearly visible, as were the sunken depressions that represented the trenches where the Marines of the 26th Marine Regiment seemed to spend half of their time—either waiting for or experiencing an enemy attack.

I gathered a few samples of the fine red dirt that dominates the area to send to some of my former Marines. This soil, as fine as cosmetic powder, seeped into the clothing, eyes and mouth of every Marine at Khe Sanh. During the rainy season, it turned into a gooey bog, exacerbating the misery and discomfort of Khe Sanh. Understandably, the Khe Sanh Veterans' publication is titled '*Red Clay*.'

Some decision-makers far from the red dirt battlefield intentionally placed Marines in this war, in this

place, in a doctrinaly unsound position, and I will never forgive their stupidity. The decision to isolate a proud regiment of Marines at Khe Sanh is one of a long series of poor decisions made by our government in waging the Vietnam War.

A quote from Sir William Francis Butler comes to mind: 'The nation that will insist on drawing a broad line of demarcation between the fighting man and the thinking man is liable to find its fighting done by fools and its thinking done by cowards.'"

—Ken Jordan

RETURN - II

Michael J. Madden (I/3/12) visited Khe Sanh 12-31 May 1998 and observed things that weren't there previously—something very new, that will be of interest to all our members.

There is now a museum and a series of monuments at Khe Sanh. One monument is of a C-130 propeller mounted on a concrete base, and another is a howitzer mounted on a base. There is also a professionally-done monument with Vietnamese on one side and English on the other (to replace the rather shabby and greatly exaggerated propaganda statement of a monument that had been there previously). The English side reads as follows (*Note: Vietnam refers to the airstrip at Ta Con*):

TA CON IS AN IMPORTANT MILITARY INSTALLATION AMONG KHE SANH MILITARY BASES ESTABLISHED BY THE AMERICAN AND SOUTHERN VIETNAMESE TROOPS IN EARLY 1966 TO WATCH THE STRATEGIC CORRIDOR OF ROAD NO 9 AND CONTROL HO CHI MINH TRAIL.

WITH A LARGE MILITARY AIRPORT AND MANY SOLIDLY BUILT SURROUNDING INSTALLATIONS TA CON WAS GUARDED BY THE AMERICAN 26TH REGIMENT OF MARINES, A BATTALION OF HEAVY ARTILLERY, A COMPANY OF TANKS AND EIGHT COMPANIES OF SOUTHERN VIETNAMESE SECURITY TROOPS.

FROM FEBRUARY 8 TO JULY 9, 1968, THE REGULAR TROOPS OF THE DIVISIONS NUMBERED 304, 308, 302, 325 ETC. TOGETHER WITH THE PEOPLE AND ARMED FORCES OF HUONG HOA, BRAVELY AND DAUNTLESSLY ATTACKED AND LAID SIEGE TO THE REINFORCEMENT AND RETREAT TROOPS TURNJING THIS INSTALLATION INTO A HELL ON EARTH AND A TERRIBLE OBSESSION FOR THE AMERICAN TROOPS IN THE VIETNAM WAR AND FORCING THE AMERICAN FORCES TO RETREAT FROM KHE SANH AND COMPLETELY LIBERATING HUONG HOA DISTRICT WITH 10,000 PEOPLE.

There is also a large, new monument at Lang Vei consisting of a tank (with number "268" in white letters on its turret), sitting upon an immense reddish concrete base surrounded by two concentric concrete rings.

There is also a museum at Khe Sanh with rifles, wall photos, pilot's helmet, LAW, claymore, PRC-25, and various other items.

RETURN - III

Glenn Prentice (C/1/13) writes of his return:

Close to 30 years now visions of people, places, road and jungle trails have been permanently etched in my mind, not knowing if it was real or simply a dream. I shut my eyes and see Captain Dabney in Phu Bai, in Khe Sanh, and of course, 881-S, along with Lt Snyder, Smitty, Fred Fine, Sgt Whitenight, Steinberg, Parker, Captain O'Connor to name a few good men, along with all the rest of INDIA Company 3/26 and CHARLIE Battery 1/13. I can see all the places and trails we humped. I know the memories came from Lt Snyder and Smitty constantly showing me where we were! And the fear I might be called upon to take the place of the Lt or Smitty if they were KIA or wounded to call in arty. But who really knows? I do know the damn radio was heavy!

After I came home, I worked near Camp Pendleton for a Water District in 1975. I volunteered to work on the Vietnamese resettlement program just after Saigon fell. When I was on the base, I sought out Marines that were at Khe Sanh with no luck. In 1982 I became the Public Works Director for the City of Oceanside adjacent to Camp Pendleton. Every time I had a business meeting with the Marines I asked if anyone was at Khe Sanh—still no luck. I needed to talk with someone to confirm if my experience was a dream or in fact true. I felt somewhat disconnected, and had very different views of life compared with the rest of my family and friends! Pride kept me from seeking any help from the VA, and still does.

[*Note, several pages of Glenn's memoire which do not pertain to Khe Sanh have been deleted in the interests of saving space*]

The next day we are on the road to Khe Sanh. We make it to Dong Ha turn left onto Highway Nine. I point out the road to Camp Carroll and the "Rock Pile." We stop and take some flicks. We start to see the Bru people walking along the road. We pass the biggest army base in that part of the country.

Just below Khe Sanh we stop at the bridge leading to the Ashau Valley (or the Ah-Shit Valley). It hits me. All of a sudden I become overwhelmed with emotion, memories start to flood my brain. I breath deeply and continue the journey. Driving up we run into more Bru. This time they're carrying M-16. My guide tells me they hunt with them and the military seldom comes this way. We turn on the road to the base. There is no mistake I am back! The red Clay, the mud, the smell. I see [Hill] 1015, or the Witches...t.

We park the car a 100 meters from the base and start to walk in. The locals mob you and try to sell live shells, dog tags, boots and other "stuff" to you. I found out that the average incoming in Vietnam is about $30. a month. In Khe Sanh it's less because of the government dislike of the Bru.

The locals dig up rounds from what's left frfom the old ASP-1. Remember, we buried remains of the dump before we left. The locals open the rounds with hacksaw and scrape out the explosive material and sell the metal for scrap. Needless to say it's not good when they cut into a WP round! Through my guide I spent some time with them how to identify the different kinds of rounds.

After a few hours I'm drawn to the Hills. I ask my guide if we have time to climb 881S. He nods, but says, I never been there. I said, no matter; I

remember how to get to the hill. (about 8 clicks to the Hill). We hop in the car—hit the road, make a right turn, drive down about a mile and I look to the west and recognize a group of huts! We get out and talk to an old woman. We ask her if there are any land mines in the area. She said you should be safe if you stay on the cattle trail. She confirms that some American used this trail on the way to the hills. I ask her if any other Americans have been up this way. She replies no, not since the war!

I start to change into my jungles—only to have about 20 villagers staring at me. I put on my jungle greens, jungle boots—some old 782 gear with canteens, rain gear, compass, camera, ass pack, flash light and some dried food. My guide starts out with us but I send him packing when he only had street shoes on. As I was tying my boots a tremendous lightning and thunder ring out. What did it mean? We start the ascent on the route I remembered from Capt Dabney's old patrol route down through some huts, along the foot hills. I find a new road built by a lumber company. I notice most of the jungle area we knew is gone. We link up to the ridge line where we run into a cobra (just a small one), a few leeches on the way.

Suddenly, I hear the rain coming from Co Roc. I turn to Lynell and say: You will soon experience the stinging rain! It hits. We keep on going, like a mad man on a mission. I think to myself and say out loud to Lynell: "I can't believe how easy this is without my pack and that damn radio!!!!" Lynell hangs back. A few leeches appear. Another cobra comes out of the tall elephant grass. Daylight is running out. I push Lynell harder.

Finally we reach the top of 881S just over head a strike of lightning and deafening thunder! It seemed to welcome us! A torrent of rain comes down, taking flicks becomes impossible. I scout around and find some barb wire, half-filled-in trench lines, old shell casing. I spot where the old Charlie Battery gun emplacement, the old CP. It's covered with jungle now. It's time to go down. Sundown in a few hours. I look up and see 881-North (The Evil Place). A flood of memories abounds.

The time just before the Siege, on patrol when Lt. Ski (Weapons, India 3/26) broke out some pudding from home, he offered a bite to me. I in turn offered to Smitty (Arty FO Scout), Smitty in turn offered some to Senior Doc (Wickliffe). We eat it all. Lt Ski was pissed!!!

The fire fight of 17 Jan 68, the patrols into leech valley, the bad times on the hill, I could almost recall every day and relate to Lynell. I did tell her about Doc Wickliffe and how he died loading WIAs on a CH-46 when rounds came in. How just before the push onto 881N in April 68, I was getting my gear together to go back up the hill with Kilo Company, how LCPL wanted to take my place (I let him) only to be KIA the next day on 881N, and much more.

I point in the general direction of Lang Vei and on the 7th of February early in morning I was on radio watch taking a fire mission from Spunky Hanson-6 hearing the fighting in the background, learning of the tanks in the wire. Every time Charlie Battery fired the NVA gunner hit our guns, but the guns kept up the fire to support Lang Vei. Most of all we felt shame in not attempting to rescue Spunky Hanson.

The rain eased a bit on the ridge line on the way down. We pick up the pace to make back to the car before sunset. Just as the sun set we hit the small ville and made to the car. We drove back to Dong Ha, ate dinner at a local restaurant with our driver and guide. That night we stayed in large Russian-built hotel that looked 30 years old but only built in 1990. The cost was only $25. a night, we were one of the only guests in this large hotel (this was a government run hotel I recommend that you stay away from anything owned or run by the government; they are not very friendly).

The next day we departed Hue and drove down Highway One.....

The trip was well worth it to me. It helped me deal with the past better. The question is where do we go from here, what obligations do we have to ourselves and others. In my view we need to help one another improve the quality of life by dealing wiht the past and moving on. I am not saying forgetting the past, but to take action, like "Bulldog" helping Khe Sanh Village; help one another with jobs, PTSD issues, or just talking with each other to help with every day problems. My goal is not just talk about what we went through, but to accomplish something, to make a mark in this world, to make a difference. I went back partially to find forgiveness from somebody. I found it within myself. I also found help from members of this organization. One thing that I learned when I was at Khe Sanh (67-68) is: life is too short, make every day count, do the right thing and have fun with life no matter what is dealt.

...travel light. Use no suit cases, only back packs. You'll have a better time. You'll need a car or guide. I needed them to go where tours won't go and talk to the people. If you want any information you can call me at home 619-484-1974 or at work 909-279-3590 or write 8988 Ellingham St., San Diego CA 92129.

—Glenn E. Prentice

RETURN IV

Bob Donoghue and "Bulldog" David Smith (formerly of FOB-3) made a return trip to Khe Sanh 5-30 November 1998. It was Bob's Trip No. 7.

Starting with a return trip in 1992 on a visitor's visa, Bob Donoghue had brought life to the Bru via digging of wells, construction of a dispensary and stocking it with supplies he carried, and was convinced that even very small efforts could reap significantly large results. Focus on things like mosquitto netting, soap and elementary hygiene, teaching first aid, were some of the things Bob accomplished.

Finally, after his 6th trip to Khe Sanh in May, 1997, the Vietnamese government no longer permitted Bob to return unless he was granted a NGO [Non-Governmental Organization] status. It was also at this time that Bob, while engaging in National Guard training, sustained a major parachute crash that left him physically disabled.

In the meantime, Cedar Point Foundation was established as a non-profit to provide medical, educational and other humanitarian assistance to the Bru to improve their quality of life. This will enable medical assistance,

clean drinking water, agricultural aid and increased educational opportunities. All money raised by Cedar Point Foundation is for exclusive expenditure in Vietnam and will continue to be used for medicine, doctors, construction of wells, purchase of live stock and hybrid seeds for farming.

Mr. David Smith and Bob Donoghue met with the American Ambassador to Vietnam and other officials, and, after a very long and tedious process, obtained the necessary permission to provide assistance to the Bru officially.

Bob's report of the area includes the following:

"From the coastal town of Dong Ha to the Laotian border and across the Mekong River runs Highway 9. From the time that Bob first traveled it in the 1960s, to the present, this road has always been a narrow dangerous road. The road surface is mainly gravel with some parts only dirt. The area from Dong Ha to Cam Lo is paved. There are numerous bridges to cross. Some are narrow crumbling concrete structures while others are made from remnants of the Bailey type bridge left over from the war. During the rainy season the mountain streams wash out parts of the road while sections of the steep hillsides break off blocking traffic.

"Several years ago negotiations were held between Thailand, Vietnam and Laos regarding the highway. Laos is land-locked and has no seaport. The closest port is located in Dong Ha via Highway 9. Additionally, if one wanted to drive from Thailand to Vietnam, Highway 9 is the only route. An agreement was reached where Highway 9 would eventually become a major land route, the Trans-Asian Highway. The Asian Bank provided loans for improving the highway, which will eventually become a four-lane high-speed road.

"Last year, the first part of the project was completed within the city limits of Dong Ha. Buildings along the highway were moved back away from the road, which was widened to about six lanes. West of Highway 1, the major north/south coastal route, a bridge is being constructed to allow Highway 9 to cross over the railroad tracks that run parallel to Highway 1. Presently, barriers are wheeled across the road whenever a train travels through the area; traffic comes to a halt until the train clears the area, disrupting the traffic flow. From Dong Ha to Cam Lo the highway is now four lanes wide. All the bridges and culverts are being widened and dump trucks continuously deposit fill on both sides of the road to facilitate the construction.

"The old route from Cam Lo to Khe Sanh is also getting major attention. The winding road through the hills and mountain passes is being straightened out. Hills are being blasted away and new larger bridges will allow for higher speed, shortening the drive time.

"In the town of Khe Sanh buildings have been moved back to allow the road to be widened and a new market place was built, however not everyone is using it yet. The highway from Khe Sanh to Lao Bao (at the Laotian border) has yet to be upgraded.....

"The local government's priority was to construct roads into the Bru communities of Thon Pa Nho and Thon Cheng. The Bru, however, need more cattle and coffee trees, health care is also important, much more so than roads. It was clear that the Vietnamese government's idea of what the Bru needed was much different than what the Bru themselves felt they needed. We told the district government that all projects depended on available funds. The district also requested that we fund a school for the village of Thon Pa Nho.

Ms. TRAN THI MAI

"In 1968, during the 'Siege of Khe Sanh,' a young girl was inside her home when there was a loud explosion. The young girl looked down to see that both her legs were gone. Today she owns a small shop in Khe Sanh and sells general merchandise.

"Mr. Charles Berg, who himself lost a leg at Khe Sanh, first met Ms. Tran Thi Mai in 1996. During his visit she was intrigued with his lightweight wheelchair. Charles told her that when he completed his trip to Vietnam he would send her the chair. Due to a shipping problem, she never received the wheelchair. When we visited Khe Sanh in 1997 Mai asked us to check with Charles on the status of the chair.

"In September, David Smith had located the $2,000. chair in Nha Trang still waiting to be shipped...A carpenter was contracted for $13. to build a crate for shipping. It took several attempts with different box configurations before the post office would accept the chair. Finally the $12. shipping fee was paid and it was on its way. Ms. Tran Thi Mai should receive her wheelchair about a week after it was shipped."

Another Cedar Point Foundation project is to fund the purchase of stethoscopes and blood pressure cuffs for 21 mobile medical teams that will regularly visit each Bru community, working out of the Khe Sanh hospital. They will also fund the purchase of five microscopes for the hospital. With them, on this visit, they brought several donated digital thermometers, 40 pair of reading glasses and several cases of acetaminophen.

Eight cows (at $280. each) were purchased during the visit for the Bru community of Thon Pa Nho...

"Coffee is the Bru's cash crop. It is important for their survival that they incr3ease their yield as much as possible. The average Bru family in Thon Cheng makes about $100-#150 US dollars a year growing coffee...The community's goal is to plant a total of ten hectares of coffee (25 acres)...The Cedar Point Foundation contracted to buy 13,500 coffee seedlings and plant 7.5 acres of land for $1000.

If anyone wishes to make a donation to Cedar Point Foundation to help bring life to the Bru people that we had pledged to protect and then left them, donations may be sent to:

Cedar Point Foundation
c/o Mr. Robert J. Donoghue
100 Westbanks Ct.
Springfield MA 01118

"We believe that our future trips to provide humanitarian aid will proceed smoothly and allow us to continue with our past projects. Fund raising will have to increase significantly if we are to fund projects requested by the Huong Hoa District People's Committee and continue with those already started. It is imperative that everyone who has an interest in the Bru tribe assists us in obtaining additional funds and contributors."

The Athenian Oath

[Said by the young men of Athens some 2300 years ago]

We will never bring disgrace to this, our city, by any act of dishonesty or cowardice; nor ever desert our suffering comrades in the ranks.

We will fight for the ideals and sacred things of the city, both alone and with many. We will revere and obey the city's laws and do our best to incite a like respect and reverence in those above us who are prone to annul or to set them at naught; we will strive unceasingly to quicken the public's sense of duty.

Thus, in all these ways, we will transmit this city greater, better and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

A LETTER HOME

Enclosed last letter my precious, Heroic Son, L/Cpl Robert D. Cicio wrote to his brother. He gave his life Easter Monday after being sent on a search & destroy mission, the day he & his company were due to leave Khe Sanh, April 16, 1968.

His grieving mother,
Nellie Cicio

Dear Victor,

I'm writing this letter, brother, to tell you about the fighting force of the Marine Corps (in reference to you saying the Army saved our day).

On January 22nd 1968 our Bn (1/9) received orders that we were to be a buffer against a massive ground attack by the Army of North Vietnam. We took helicopters into Khe Sanh and worked outside of the lines. There amidst attacks by arty, mortars and rockets and losing men all around us we built our defenses while being probed by NVA troops during the night. Once we started building our defenses we wee told that we were going to get hit by a huge ground force. The battle would last for 3 to 4 days, and 3/4's of us would be killed. To tell you, I was scared would be the half of it. The gooks has 152mms, 120mm mortars, 82 mortars, 60 mortars, R.P.G's, 120mm rockets, 50 cal's, 37mm anti-aircraft guns, S.A.M.'s, Russian tanks with flame and 120mm gun on its turret, trucks and tracked vehicles. We had 2 tanks and a couple of batteries (6 guns in a battery), the gooks had 36.

We lost alot of men including 2 of my best friends here. But we didn't stay cooped up in our trenches all day. We had ambushes, patrols, L.P.'s, O.P.'s. Once a nighttime L.P. spotted 6 gooks on a hill right in front of our lines. We sent 2 squads to get them. They went on line to assault the hill. They were met by more troops and hit by R.P.G.'s (a sort of rocket like our 3.5), Chinese grenades (called gycomes). They lost alot but kept advancing because retreat would mean sure death. They took the hill and the NVA troops fled away.

On Feb 10, 1968, elements of "A" Co. were hit [*ed. note: this should be 8 Feb*] by a Bn of suicide gooks. They were hit by everything imaginable. But they held the hill although gooks wee in the bunkers with them. On April 1st our Bn was down to half strength. There's hardly anybody here that doesn't have a [Purple] Heart. My helmet has holes through it and I had alot of close calls. (I'll tell you about them when I get back). Then we were told that we were to go on the offense and take Hill 471. All of us were beat we've been in the field since Jan 6th and had hardly any sleep or good chow. On April 3d we moved out with all our gear and trugged up and down these torn hills. In the afternoon we assaulted up the hill. The hill had machine guns, 4 120 mortar tubes and a gook arty officer who called the stuff on Khe Sanh.

If you can imagine the picture "Pork Chop Hill," well this was worse but we hit the top and wiped an entire gook Bn off the face of the map. We also had 30 prisoners. That night our squad saved the hill by repulsing an attack by a Bn trying to retake the hill. We killed over 170 N.V.A. The next day we laid wire and policed up the area so we could make a good impression on the 1st Air Cav. They came in on choppers and we walked off. I had no trousers left and I was so hungry and tired but felt good inside to know I was still alive. We then took Hill 552, secured it and then took Hill 689 which I'm now on. We found (yesterday, Easter Sunday) on a patrol over 100 82 rounds and 120mm rockets and captured a W.O. arty F.O. Today the 26th Marine Regiment and A.R.V.N. and Army are leaving we will be the last to leave to guard the rest. Our Bn 1/9 has hardly anybody left. D Co has 1 plt left out of their Co. Our company C has 126 left out of our 300 when we first came. "A" Co. is almost completely gone and "B" is about in the same shape as us. But us and B has about 80% casualties we've been lucky by the grace of somebody that the hits haven't been more direct. Well I only get 1 meal a day. We could get more but we have too much pride to take from the Army and we are walking out in 5 days. I feally feel I helped to defend Khe Sanh which will end the war sooner. Love Bob.

WELCOME TO KSCB

A Few issues back someone asked if anyone received or knew of the Playboy magazines he shipped to KSCB. I can only testify to the fate of one month and I don't recall which month it was—but I'll get back to that later.

I arrived on 16 Jan 68 from Phu Bai with Foxtrot 2/26. As soon as I deplaned I knew the party was over for me. I has 'skated' into a world of shit. My MOS was 0141 (Clerk) and thqat was alright with me. I had been stationed at Marine Barracks, Boston, and had been on many funeral details and saw many heartbroken relatives and friends of Marine KIA. At one of these funerals the mom broke away from the people trying to console her and rushed by me to embrace her dead son in his coffin. That memory remains strong and probably always will.

Anyway, by the time I arrived 'in country' and sent to Phu Bai I had no thoughts of volunteering for the 'grunts' as I had back at Camp Geiger after being assigned to Boston as an 0141. Hardbacks and no 'incoming' suited me by then. But then, the Corps doesn't ask if it's a suitable assignment, does it? So after two months of comparatively easy duty, I, along with the grunts, was told to 'saddle up' and be ready to

move out to a place which nobody seemed to know the name of. Even if the name was known it probably wouldn't have meant anything to most of us. The name of that place means a great deal to us all now, doesn't it?

We boarded transport and landed after an uneventful flight of an hour or two. I really don't remember much about the flight but I'll *never* forget the feeling I got when I stepped off the plane and into a nightmare. We marched outside the KSCB perimeter and 'dug in' right away. Shrapnel from previous fighting was all around and the fog was pretty heavy. After awhile the grunts set out for the hills around the base and the rear echelon moved back to KSCB presumably to set up our rear area. Things were a bit uncertain it seemed at the time but one thing was certain: 'this is for real!'

That night I slept near the tank (I think) and we received no incoming. As a matter of fact that night I had, for some reason, good dreams and slept through the night.

We set up our tents and dug holes on each end although we had nothing to cover the hole. I'm not writing to complain or point fingers at anyone but there should have been material to roof our holes with. Weather the timber was prioritized to build the McNamara 'Barrier' on the DMZ or sitting on a runway in DaNang doesn't matter now. I've read the books on Khe Sanh and I know I wasn't mistaken. Somebody could have made the timber a priority for KSCB and a lot of lives would have been saved. Cringing in an open hole for hours during incoming was the closest I came to breaking and it could have been prevented.

My first taste of incoming was the night of 21 Jan 68 when the NVA rocket attack destroyed our main ammunition dump. I didn't like it and with no sleep added to the fear I was starting to lose it. Next night on perimeter I kept hearing things during my watch. I woke the man with me once too often and he questioned my courage. He was on his last minth and was waiting for a plane to DaNang but wasn't thinking that far ahead. Instead he told me that he hoped the NVA did try to penetrate us so he could kill some more before he left and that I *better* be thinking the same as he was. At the time I didn't want to hear it but I had a long talk with myself later and calmed down a bit. When I accepted the probability that I would die here and vowed to hang tough but do whatever I had to or could do to stay alive without shirking. The Marine who questioned my courage in the hole the night before probably saved my life. No way I could have continued running scared without something going bad to myself and/or the Marines with me. I have no idea what his name was but I think he was from Oregon or Washington State. If you read this, brother, thanks for the ass-chewing cause I needed it.

My first mission to improve my and our rear position was to scout around for some timber for bunkers. I took a 'Mule' on my search and when I rode by the airstrip I came across a pallet of timbers along the side of the road. I couldn't believe it. There was enough wood for myself and the others back in the company office. I loaded as many pieces as the 'Mule' could hold and took off toward home. Me and my wood got about 3 or 4 feet when someone yelled, 'Halt! Halt you @#$%&*. The voice commanded respect and right away I knew that when it seems too good to be true, it usually is. I braked the vehicle and turned around to see a group of 4 or 5 men coming toward me with fire in their eyes and officer rank on their collars. The lead man was especially pissed and ordered me to attention right there by the airstrip and proceeded to ask me if I knew that the wood I was trying to take was to be used for the underground hospital to treat my wounded brother Marines. The Marine doing the ass-chewing I believe was General Tompkins who had been discussing (I surmised) plans for the underground 'C' Med with the other officers when he spotted me.

My reply to the General's question went something like this: 'With all due respect, Sir, I had no idea what this wood is intended for. All I know is there is nothing to build bunkers with and I don't want to be one of the Marines being treated underground.' The General seemed to mellow a bit but still ordered me to put the timber back on the pallet. I turned and began unloading the 'mule' when I heard the same voice say, 'Marine.' I straightened and turned around. The General said, 'You may take one piece of timber.' 'Yes, Sir, Thank you, Sir.'

I wouldn't have traded that one piece of wood for anything. It was my main roof support for my bunker. I'm just glad its strength never had to take the 'direct hit' test.

To get back to the 'playboy' magazine story: Part of my vow to try to stay alive was never to get lax when I even thought I heard 'incoming.' I learned to do the Khe Sanh shuffle very quick and in a hurry. Toward the end of the 'sieve' one sunny morning I sat at a field desk in our company tent and started writing a letter. It was the first and only time that I left my guard down. I had never exposed myself to 'incoming' unnessarily. Carrying the wounded, work detail at the ammo dump while still popping, perimeter duty at night, digging the big hole for the company office all left me exposed but that was duty calling. I had written a few lines when I heard the first incoming of the day and I ran out of the tent and into one of the holes. I waited awhile and went back up to continue my letter. I also noticed a 'Playboy' on the drawer side of the desk. I heard another 'incoming' and ran to the hole again. I waited again then back up to finish my letter and check out the new magazine. Almost finished writing when I heard 'the sound' again. Only this time I broke my vow and said 'Screw it' and kept on writing. I heard the rocket whistle overhead and hit far from me. However, I soon heard a 'thud' sound coming quickly through the air when suddenly the sound came through the tent canvas.

The 'Playboy' went flying across the tent and the lone piece of shrapnel hit one of the tent poles and landed. Only 10-20 inches to the left and I would have been hit chest high. Another member of my company had gotten complacent also and we bumped into each other going opposite ways for cover after we saw how close it was and how foolish we had been. We tried to laugh it off but when we saw what the 'Playboy' looked like we stopped laughing. The shrapnel had ripped through its

entire thickness and about 3/4 from the top towards the bottom. I tried to salvage it but the girls were too far gone. Anyway, I'd like to thank you for thinking of us. From time to time I have thought of the 'Playboy' magazine and wondered where it came from. Now I know.

—Neil McCrossen



[*Drawing by Scotty Husted, son of Ernie Husted, Jr., from 1989 when Ernie Husted was the first Editor of our Khe Sanh magazine*]



[*Logo for our Khe Sanh magazine drawn by one of Earle Breeding's staff when he was with the FBI station at Buzzard Point, Washington, DC, first used on our magazine cover for the Christmas issue, Dec, 1989.*]



[*Magazine logo composed by Mike Delaney, E/2/26, first used for the Spring, 1991, issue*]



[*"Home is Where you DIG IT" logo used by Editor, Ernie Husted, 1992. Ernie was with Bravo Co., Recon, which was located just across "the street" from Regimental HQ where the S-4, Fred McEwan's clerk, Kenny Thompas, has erected this sign*]



[*Logo devised by Mrs. Bernice Penn for the 25th anniversary of the Siege reunion in Washington, DC, July, 1993. Bill Griffith claims authorship of the "Eternally Bonded" phrase while a group in Penn's home were discussing the logo. Bernice also drew up the design for our Khe Sanh monument in Arlington Cemetery, using the configuration of Gionko leaves. There is a Ginko tree next to, and part of, our Khe Sanh monument, as a symbol of the "persistence of life despite adversity" since the ginko tree has survived numerous extinctions and is one of the oldest living things.*]

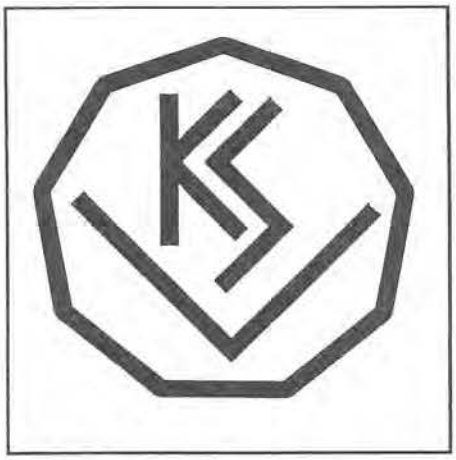

[*Logo first appearing in our magazine, issue No. 37 (Fall, 1996). The "V" stands for "veteran," "Vietnam," "victory," "valor" (as in the small "V" on medals for heroic action in combat), and the "V" in all the Tactical Marks on all supply mount-out boxes in the 26th Marine Regiment (from the Fifth, V, Marine Division); the "K" and "S" emphasize sharpness, twistedness, of the terrain: mountains, rivers, valleys, pathways, the geography of our patrols and the geography of our life ever since Khe Sanh. Khe Sanh's terrain and experience is sharp, painful, twisting, difficult to discern. The nine-sided polygon (a "nonagon") represents the multi-faceted nature of our organization which includes all branches of the armed services that were at Khe Sanh together with the nine or so years in which Americans served at Khe Sanh.*

The design avoids extraneous details and is not "busy" or complex and includes no words or motto-yet. It was completed 7 Aug 1996 by Ray W. Stubbe].

Any other artists out there that would like to submit a possible logo for pins, patches, etc.?

CLOWNING AROUND IN THE KHE SANH MUD

[*From a conversation with Mike Scharfman and Phil Wright, 19 Aug 1993. Phil had his helmet from the siege—complete with a large hole—and explained:*

Phil: Lt Reeves and I were in a mule we had comandeered from the Air Force contingent up there and went over to check the perimeter on the Hill 950 side [*the Blue Sector, manned by C/1/26*]. A mortar hit and the jeep went almost over on its side and blew the Lieutenant out. When it landed back on its wheels, I bounced out, and the trenchline was maybe 20 yards away. I just dove into the trench. And I saw—there was another mortar that splashed off to the side and I curled into the trench, and that's when it happened. Shrapnel went through the outer steel pot and hit the inner fiberglass liner. The concussion was hellacious, but it was a good thing that I was curling into the trench at the time. But my little story is nothing compared to what happened to so many. I had written on the helmet a quote from Dylan, "When you ain't got nothing, you ain't got nothing to loose."...

Mike: One day Phil and I were near C Med, making an inventory of the ammo pallets—we had to determine how much ammo came in, what made it in, how much we were receiving—when a barage of incoming hit and I dove into a nearby culvert half full of mud along with Fred McEwan, the Regimental S-4.

Phil: I dove under a nearby jeep with a guy named Bob Weber. He made a remark about "what a way to die." I started to laugh—hysterical laughter, during the incoming. I said, "What are you worried about? They aren't going to find our dog tags!" Because he and I were hiding behind—there had to be 30 pallets of '55' and '05' sitting there that we're hiding behind, under the jeep!

Mike: And, when it was over, Phil gets up out of the culvert. He had been laying on his side, in the mud, so he was half red and half green, head to boot, like a clown! I was yelling for him when he same out, and he said, 'Here!' And I turned around—and—you had to laugh! Like Bozo!...

Phil: My friend, Howie Jones, ended up dying. If he would of stayed in the culvert, he would of been fine. Here's the kid that had probably one of the most dangerous jobs up there because all of those pallets that came in full of ammo—he was the one that had to take them off the helo pad or wherever they landed. He drove a fork-lift. And you couldn't imagine a more dangerous job—he was just riding out there with a helmet and flak jacket on a forklift bringing these pallets back to where they gotta go. And he took it on the 24th of February. His nerves had to be shot. He's perfectly safe laying in that little culvert up there by the POL dump, but he just couldn't take it anymore, and he broke and ran, trying to run to a bunker, and that's when a big piece of shrapnel ripped his neck out...

MY COMRADE

[*The following was sent in by Ken Lord (C/1/13)*]:

My Comrade was born June 14, 1777. He lived a hard and tattered life. My Comrade was at Ft. McHenry on April 14, 1814. We still sing his praises, because he showed us that no matter how dim the chance of success, there is always hope.

My Comrade was a fighter who didn't know the meaning of the word surrender, because he knows how much his comrades looked up to him.

He was with General Washington on the cold waters of the Potomac.

He was there in World War I, when the cannons glowed red, and good men died in muddy trenches.

Then, when he heard man had finally learned that war was not the answer, he had to leave for the South Pacific, Italy and eventually all of Europe. He didn't say I don't want to go, or I'm too tired, OH NO—He went!

My Comrade was in Korea. He was at Chosin Reservoir and at the Inchon Landing (the day that good men on both sides died, the same day that God cried).

And just when he thought that he could come home with honor, he had to go to a far away place called Vietnam. He thought after all this time he had seen it all, but what he saw was pure hell. He was there at Marble Mountain. My Comrade stood tall at Khe Sanh, but the tears and blood stained him and all those around him.

He came home, even more tattered and worn, but his spirits weren't broken. For he had gone to do a job that his Commander in Chief had him to do.

He was spit on, cursed, tramped on and yes even set on fire. But he shrugged it off because he knew his tour of duty was not over.

My Comrade was the first one called to go to the hot sands of Kuwait. He stood tall in the smoke of burning oil, and he went side by side with his comrades as they beat back the advancing enemy.

And now, some want to persecute my Comrade. Why? He never ran. He fell at Iwo Jima, but his comrades came to his aid, they risked their lives to see him stand tall again.

Well, now my tour of duty is over, but my Comrade is by my side. For you see, my Comrade is my Flag. Now he warms my body, and he drapes my heart. But please don't cry for me. It's not my death, it's just our start.

—Wayne A. Lewis

Capt American Legion Color Guard Post #136, Mulvane KS 67110.

HONORING THE FLAG

[*The following was sent in by Jim Turner (JTAD at Khe Sanh), condensed from a speech by Leo IKl. Thorsness, recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor*]:

You've probably seen the bumper sticker somewhere along the road. It depicts an American Flag, accompanied by the words "These colors don't run." I'm always glad to see this, because it reminds me of an incident from my confinement in North Vietnam at the Hao Lo POW Camp, or the "Hanoi Hilton," as it became known. Then a Major in the US Air Force, I had been captured and imprisoned from 1967 to 1973. Our treatment had been frequently brutal. After three years, however, the beatings and torture became less frequent.

During the last year, we were allowed outside most days for a couple

of minutes to bathe. We showered by drawing water from a concrete tank with a homemade bucket. One day as we all stood by the tank, stripped of our clothes, a young Naval pilot named Mike Christian found the remnants of a handkerchief in a gutter that ran under the prison wall. Mike managed to sneak the grimy rag into our cell and began fashioning it into a flag.

Over time we all loaned him a little soap, and he spent days cleaning the material. We helped by scrounging and stealing bits and pieces of anything he could use. At night, under his mosquito net, Mike worked on the flag. He made red and blue from ground-up roof tiles and tiny amounts of ink and painted the colors onto the cloth with watery rice glue. Using thread from his own blanket and a homemade bamboo needle, he sewed on stars.

Early in the morning a few days later, when the guards were not alert, he whispered loudly from the back of our cell, "Hey gang, look here." He proudly held up this tattered piece of cloth, waving it as if in a breeze. If you used your imagination, you could tell it was supposed to be an American flag. When he raised that smudgy fabric, we automatically stood straight and saluted, our chests puffing out, and more than a few eyes had tears.

About once a week the guards would strip us, run us outside and go through our clothing. During one of those shakedowns, they found Mike's flag. We all knew what would happen. That night they came for him.

Night interrogations were always the worst. They opened the cell door and pulled Mike out. We could hear the beginning of the torture before they even had him in the torture cell. They beat him most of the night.

About daylight they pushed what was left of him back through the cell door. He was badly broken; even his voice was gone. Within two weeks, despite the danger, Mike scrounged another piece of cloth and began another flag. The Stars and Stripes, our national symbol, was worth the sacrifice to him. Now whenever I see the flag, I think of Mike and the morning he first waved that tattered emblem of a nation. It was then, thousands of miles from home in a lonely prison cell, that he showed us what it is to be truly free.

BILLY & JOE

For those who don't know me, my name is Billy Roble and my brother Joe (E/2/26) endured the entire siege on Khe Sanh, but, died on September 16, 1968, in a hellpit called LZ MARGO. I was four years old at the time. For years I tried to learn more about my brother, but, was restricted to Vietnam era correspondence and news clippings, all of which praised my brother. Around approximately 1990, Michael Worth and his dear friend, Lucille Biscaglio, contacted my family. Knowing my mother was not the type to correspond immediately, I seized the opportunity to learn more about my brother and wny everyone thought so highly of him.

Corresponding with Mike was easy, but I had no idea what I might say if we were to speak on the phone or in person. Then one day Mike called me. I was dumbstruck, but fortunately Mike wasn't, and we slowly eased into a pleasant conversation.

Mike spoke highly of my brother and my regret at never having the opportunity to know my brother increased. Shortly after this conversation I planned a trip to Pennsylvania to visit my family. Coincidentally, my flight stopped in St. Louis to change planes, but I was unable to obtain a layover without paying a substantial fee as I made my reservations before knowing of the reunion. With the help of Lucille Biscaglio's persistence and the kindness of Kelly Wyvell at TWA I was afforded a free ticket and was able to attend the reunion.

Prior to the reunion, I spent three and half weeks speaking with my family to gather information for a book I plan to write about my brother Joe. During this time I cried the first tears I ever cried as a result of Joe's death while holding my sister Ann's hand. She was a year older than Joe and as well as being siblings, they were best friends. His death was a crushing blow to what was once a person billowing with happiness. As we cried together, she said in regards to Joe's death, "No matter how difficult life's problems may be, they become insignificant in comparison."

This way of thinkng my mother instilled in all of us as children. Though she may never have said it the message was clear in her eyes; pick up the pieces and go on. And amid the tears of loved ones, I went on to St. Louis to meet the men who would adopt me as an honorary member of ECHO 2/26.

While there, Joe's friends couldn't emphasize enough what a great man my brother was and I could not have been treated better if I were a king. I had the time of my life and was sad that we could not spend more time together. Before I knew it, I was on my way back to California with a treasure of memories more valuable than gold. Upon my return I tried several times to write my reflections of the time I had passed in Pennsylvania and St. Louis to no avail. Suddenly, it all came to me and the result is the letter you are now reading. And now I will reflect what I truly feel and have always felt in my heart.

I grew up thinking war was a glorious event and that I would have a chance to demonstrate the valor that my brother and so many like him demonstrated. My tour as a Marine was very different from my brother's and at some point I came to a realization which I feel was similar to my brother's: to keep those around me in high spirits and just get through with my duty. Seeing my siblings, my mother, and the different people I encountered at the reunion and the many tears shed, I realized war is something I hope future generations will not have to endure.

I salute all Vietnam veterans, my brother and all those who lost loved ones to war. All of them fought for a freedom they believed in. As one who lost a loved one, I believe that instead of rehashing our losses we would do those we lost greater honor by educating future generations of the cruelty of war. We all need to say our piece and et the world know what we have been and are going through.

I have enclosed two pages from a letter my brother wrote home from Vietnam to try and help those who may be a bit confused as to what their mission was in Vietnam. Fighting for a peoples freedom is always a worthy cause and every American in Vietnam fought that mission. Every Vietnam

vet has the right to hold their head high in regard to that mission.

After I left the Marines there were two words I thought I would never say again until I attended the reunion: *Semper Fidelis*. Those words have much more meaning to me since the reunion. I remembered what my mission was in this life and will do my utmost to bring peace and happiness to those I encounter. I have said my words for now and encourage all those affected by their wartime experiences to say theirs and let the world know your story.

—William A. Roble.

[*The following, on letterhead "Hospital U.S. Naval Support Activity, Danang, Vietnam, are the two pages of the letter from Joe Roble*]:

When I came over here in November, it was because I wanted to play John Wayne for awhile and also to get some first hand knowledge of how the war was going for us. That seems like a long time ago; I have grown up quite a bit since then. I kept wondering if we were doing any good by being here and are we the ones that should be doing this job. I say *yes* to both questions.

Why shouldn't we do the job? We're the best equipped to do it. And it is a job that has to be done. If we quit now, the only ones who will gain anything are the Communists.

About two weeks ago, I picked up a personal reason for fighting. I was on a convoy going back to my outfit and I saw this little boy standing alongside the road. For some reason he reminded me a lot of Billy. For awhile, I just thought and stared. Then I said to myself, why shouldn't he have the same rights and privileges that Billy has? I am prepared to give my life trying to get him these rights.

If anything happens to me over here, I don't want a lot of crying and blaming someone for my being here. I want to be here! I would much raqther yiou be proud that I died for a worthwhile cause that I understood and finally believed in...

Till later, Reb.

PRIDE

I've been a member of the Khe Sanh Vets since its inception...Like everyone who was at or around Khe Sanh, I still retain vivid memories over the past 30 years.

I arrived in Nam Dec 8, 67. Assigned to "C" Co., 2nd platoon of 1/9. I was seventeen when I enlisted, turned 18 on the day before I graduated Parris Island. To put it mildly, I was not exactly the second coming of Chesty Puller. I barely made it through Boot Camp. I was one unmotivated young Marine!

From the time I entered boot camp, through infantry training at LeJeune, jungle trainint at Camp Pendleton, even while our unit was at Camp Evans through December and January I never felt any Esprit de Corps.

I believe the day it all changed was the 21st of January '68. Our platoon was on a daylight patrol off hill 64 (outside Camp Evans) when we were suddenly called back. My squad leader, Jim Murray, called a meeting and told us to pack our gear, clean our rifles and be ready to move up to a place called Khe Sanh the following morning.

The next day, our entire battalion formed up on the LZ at Camp Evans and, after what seemed like an eternity, our squad was loaded onto a CH-46. A short while afrter take-off, I remember looking out the window of our chopper and all I could see was a sky full of CH-46s. I had never seen so many choppers in all my life! I sat there, thinking of when I was a little boy. My father would tell us about the invasion of Normandy in 1944. He told us of the awesome sight of all of the American and Brittish ships filling the horizon.

I never really appreciated fully what my father was trying to describe until that 21st day of January 1968. I can honestly say it was the first time in the seven short months I had been in the Marine Corps that I was proud to be a Marine. I was so darn proud!

After landing on the strip, our battalion quickly formed in a column of two, and headed out on the long trek out to the Rock Quarry.

I was wounded March 13th. My life was saved by three Navy Corpsmen (all of whom were killed on April 16th), and a tremendous triage team down at Charlie Med.

I spent another two years in the Corps, including a second tour in Nam, a "Med Cruise" and various stateside assignments. In addition, I've been a Police Officer for the past 26 years. You know, I have never, ever felt that sense of pride—in myself, my comrades or my country—as I did on that 21st day of January 1968.

—William Biolsi

AN EARLY VISITOR

In your recent issue #42, *Red Clay*, "The Siege," brought back memories of my tour in the I Corps area.

Arriving in country Nov, 1965, orientation, shots, to supply room and a plane trip to Phu Bai and to Hue, eventually to Quang Tri. Assigned to MACV Advisory Team #3, later to Adv Tm #4, I helped keep radio operators at Gio Linh, Cam Lo, Hue, Quang Tri, Lang Vei, several check-points along Rt. 9. I trudged quite a bit in I Corps area to deliver SOI & SSI to our units in the field, this included river patrol and Khe Sanh.

In July 1966, the 1st ARVN Div, with MACV personnel along with heavy support from the Marines started an operation at Cam Lo. Army called it LAM SOM 289, the Marines called it HASTINGS. I think these joint operations eventually moved CPs to Dong Ha and under Gen Walt's command, the Marines took full charge.

The First ARVN Inf. Div. was not capable to handling the hard core NVN divisions they met, 808, 806, I think, there were more, but age has dimmed my mind. I do know when I left Dong Ha in Nov 1966, things were not looking so good for either side...

—Cecil Cumberland Jr.

"Let us honor the dead by serving the living."

(Motto of the War Memorial, Milwaukee, WI)

RED CLAY

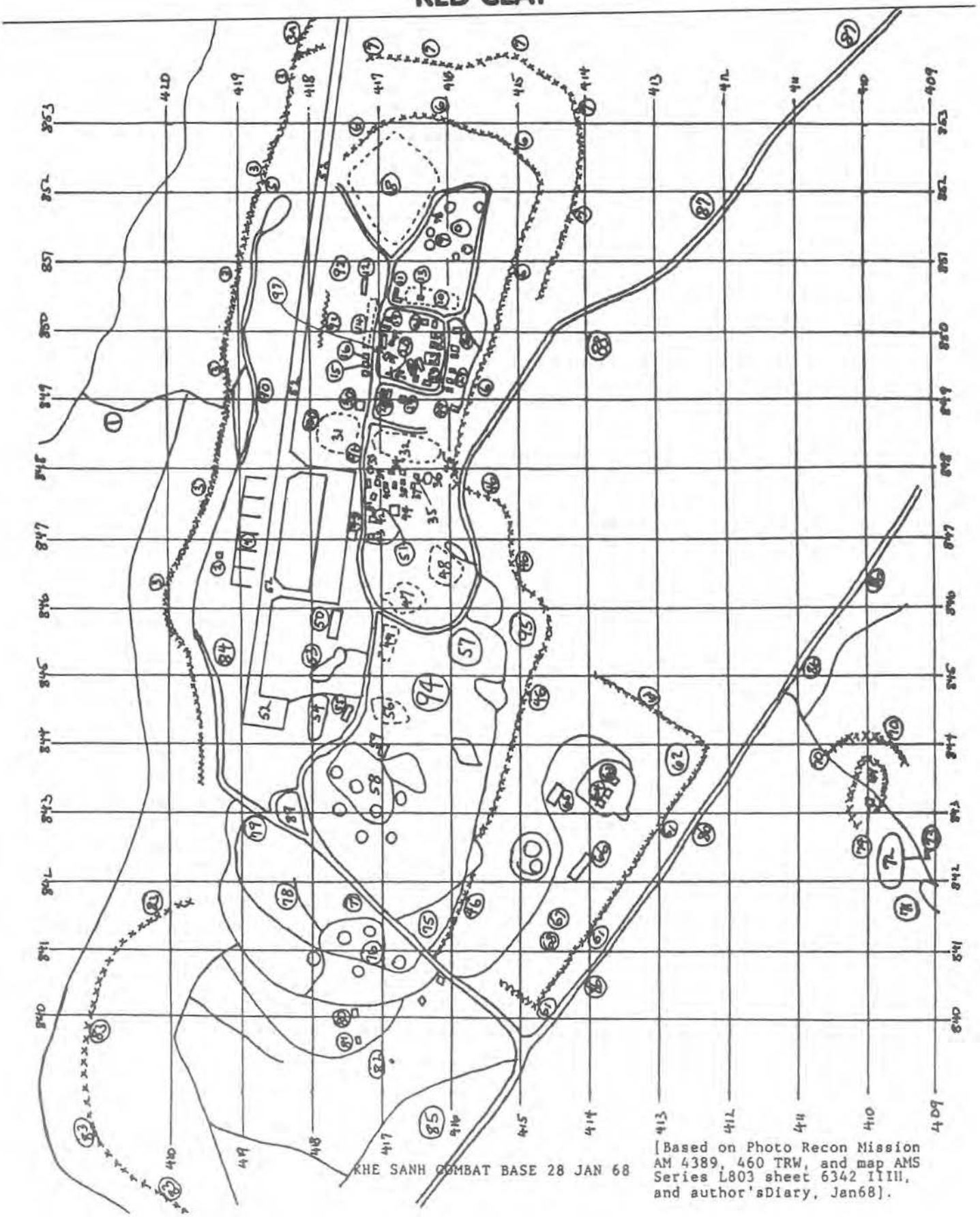

KHE SANH COMBAT BASE 28 JAN 68

[Based on Photo Recon Mission AM 4389, 460 TRW, and map AMS Series L803 sheet 6342 IIIII, and author'sDiary, Jan68].

RED CLAY

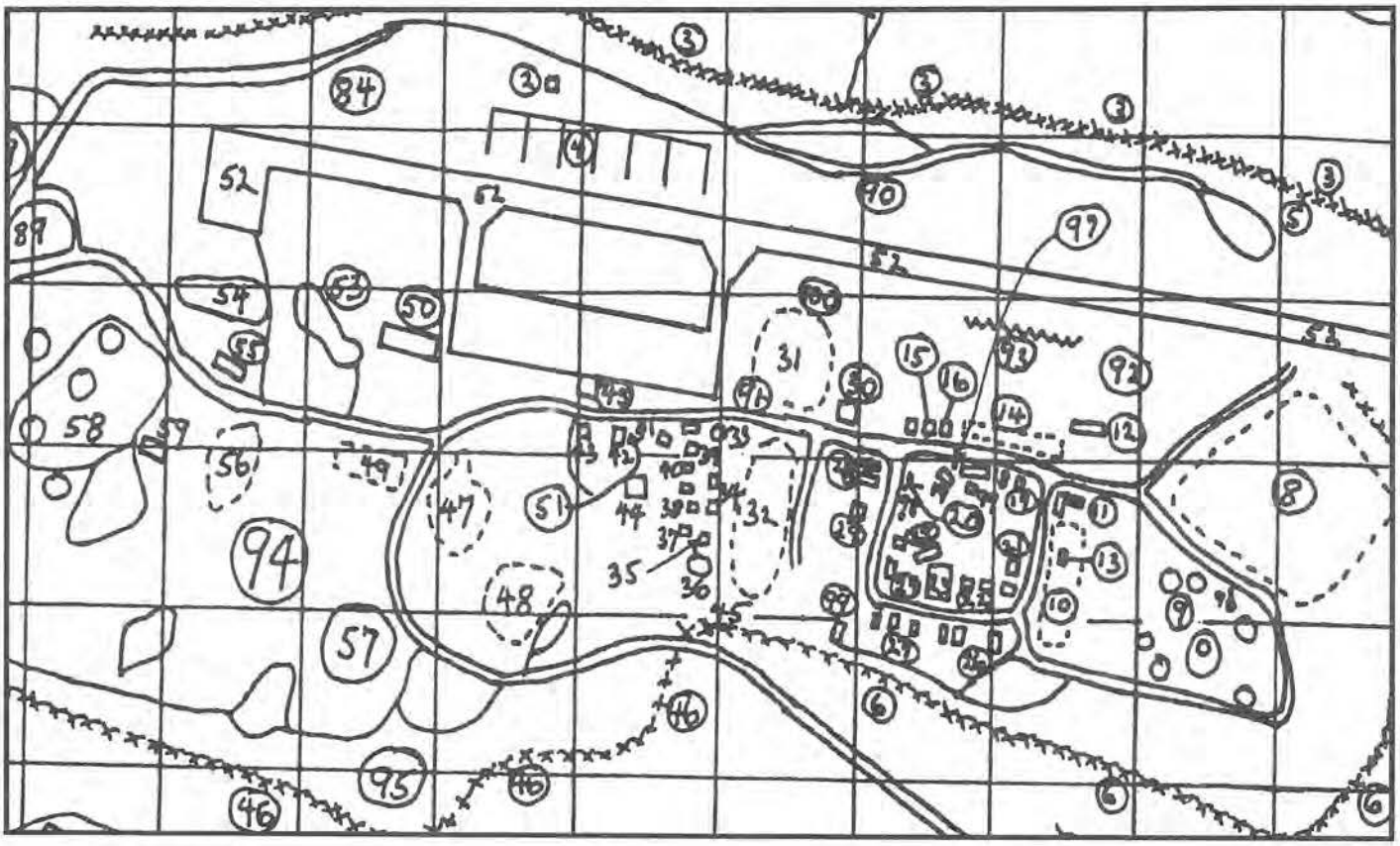

1 Water point road
2 C/1/26 CP bunker
3 BLUE Sector perimeter, C/1/26
3A Portion manned by A/1/26
4 Helicopter revetments
5 Flashlights personnel
6 GRAY Sector, B/1/26
7 37th ARVN Ranger Bn trench
8 ASP #1
9 "C" Battery 105s, 1/13
10 H&S Co, 1/26 and line co offices
11 1/26 CP messhall
12 1/26 COC
13 CO 1/26 bunker, old concrete BRAVO Command, "Womb"
14 Co B, 3d Recon living area
15 Base Post Office (before siege)
16 Base PX
17 "Fort Hester" had sign "Home is Where you Dig it"
18 S-1/S-4 of RLT 26, comm across
19 General's hootch
20 RLT26 COC
21 RAS
22 USAF bunkers
23 Air Force area
24 FSCC
25 FOB #1 Launch Site
26 Base EM Club
27 CBMU-301 Det B hootchs
28 Regimental messhall
29 Officers' Club
30 Water tower
31 CBMU-301 work area
32 LSU (Logistic Support Unit)
33 USAF Casualty Evacuation tent
34 C Med supply tents
35 17th ITT hootch/bunker
36 ITT POW compound
37 Dr. Farber's hootch
38 Chaplain Stubbe's bunker
39 Triage of C Med
40 C Med living tents
41 Seabee tent, rock cruchers
42 S-5 staging area
43 Graves Registration
44 Base Post Office during Siege
45 106mm hootch that took direct hit
46 GRAY ALFA Sector perimeter
47 1/26 Co supply hootches
48 RLT-26 Motor Transport
49 1/26 Bn supply tents & area
50 Aviation POL bladders
51 Tar dump, POL storage
52 Airstrip
53 Co A, 3d Shore Party Bn
54 3d Engineers area
55 1/26 BAS
56 1/26 Motor Transport area
57 ASP #2
58 A Battery, 1/13
59 A Battery, 1/13, club house
60 FOB-3 area
61 FOB-3 perimeter
62 Area of FOB-3 manned by CAC OSCAR during siege
63 FOB-3 medical bunker
64 FOB-3 operations bunker
65 FOB-3 supply tents
66 FOB -3 hardbacks
67 FOB-3 helo pad
68 FOB-3 pig pen, food for indig
69 CAP O-3 area
70 CAP O-3 perimeter
71 Ta Cong village
72 Mr Onya's residence area
73 French concrete house owned by Fr. Poncet
74 Concrete school house
75 HQ Battery, 1/13
76 P Battery, 1st Prof 155s
77 3d Tanks and ONTOS
78 2/26 rear
79 Rock crusher
80 3/26 BAS
81 3/26 chaplain's hootch
82 3/26 COC
83 RED Sector, 3/26
84 LSA of Shore Party
85 Coffee trees of Mr. Poilane
86 Mr. Poilane's private road
87 Military road (never used)
88 Trash dump
89 1/13 Motor Transport
90 O-2, O-3 AO revetments
91 MAG and MAB hootches
92 RLT-26 supply
93 Recon perimeter
94 Ponderosa area, D/1/26
95 3/26 field mess
96 CP for 1/26 co manning perimeter
97 RLT-26 comm tech shop
98 RLT-26 CO/XO living hootch
99 1st Radio Co det during siege
100 Air Control tower and crash crew hootch, MACTU-62

YET ANOTHER MEMORY FROM TET 68

They filled the skies with smoke and a high pitched sound
upon impact they shook the ground.
If you were in your bunker just trying to get some rest, their
on the hour incoming test would
have you at your best to keep from dying.
Still no one to shoot at!
Even the hardened rats would scatter,
they'd run over you just as brave as a two year vet.
Some of us would smoke to forget the day before
when we saw a friend end his tour.
R&R was somewhat of a relief, so I've been told, I thought
it best, I'd stay, didn't want to leave my Ontos in others'
hands. I took pride in how I kept it up and running.
The fog in the mornings were most refreshing, after a night
of incoming their favorite time to harass. Oh, don't try
to take a shower. I did, embarrassing to me I tell ya!
The hard hat and flak jacket slowed me down, not a lot of
room in the "Pig" so as long as I could get away with it
I wore a cover (green cover) and black T-shirt or field jacket
with my grease gun (.45 cal.) close by, sighting-in the 106s
was a must every morning. Cleaning and maintaining the 4-50
cal. spotting rifles too. Then I'd dust off the 60 cal. We
each had our own .45 cal. pistol also. You can see even
though the Ontos was on its way out, we had great fire power
and could hold our own in a fire fight and gave support to the
grunts, when called to the line or the end of the air strip to
fire on a suspected enemy trench or position, I'd be among the
first to be at their beckon call. Anything to help the time
pass faster and stay away from the CP and air strip their
favorite place to shell. Then learning of the hill fights
and other areas of KSCB that enemy fire and we were kept on
the alert.
The red dirt got into all my stuff even letters sent home. I
believe I felt it even to the bone. All my hopes for you who
survived, to be in a much better place than I. Enjoy the
moment and remember that there's a song for every mother's son.
Semper Fi, my brothers and sisters.
—Manuel P. Babbitt

CANNONCOCKERS

I am writing to add my two cents worth to the comments submitted by our CO, Bill O'Connor, and printed in the Fall '96 issue of *Khe Sanh Veteran*.

I was new in-country when assigned to "Charlie" Battery, 1/13. I landed at Khe Sanh during a mortar barrage on what I believe was the first helicopter bringing replacements that made it into the base. I had been assigned "temporary additional duty" at the Defense Language Institute for three months in Monterey, California. Just prior to flying to the 'nam, we used to watch the news on T.V. and wonder about the fate of the 5,000 "beleaguered Marines" at the cut-off Khe Sanh base.

At any rate, I will testify to the veracity of Captain O'Conner's remarks about the "gun grunts." During the "Siege" and for months after Captain O'Connor left, I observed the gun grunts setting fuses, loading charges, and returning fire during intense incoming. I did not see one man falter or hestitate to carry out his duty.

I was in the FDC section and helped "work up" the mission. *Many* times, after the missions wee "worked up" and the "poop" relayed to the guns, we ran out of the bunker and set fuses, loaded charges and passed ammo to the gunners.

At Khe Sanh, I remember the sound of enemy rounds going off in the air; the sound of thousands of "darts" hitting the canvass sand bags outside, and the "CS" gas lingering in the air at dusk just over the heads of the gunners as they returned fire...The job was "Well Done."

—David D. Moody

NEVER

HAVE SO FEW
GIVEN SO MUCH
FOR SO MANY
FOR SO LITTLE
THE
KHE SANH VETS
—Tex Seiber D/1/26

IN MEMORY OF TWO FALLEN FRIENDS

The years others knew as youth, I spent learning the meaning of death. The times others spent learning to live, I passed hoping to live through endless nights. The moments others remember as laughs in the classroom, I remember terror in the jungle. The instants of pleasure taken for granted by others, I remember as forgotten hopes:

Long ago, crushed by the reality of war,
The unfulfilled dreams of others are yet to be thought by me.
Since I am in search of my elusive youth,
Looking for years lost in combat,
Which are no more—and will never be—
Why do I walk with the shadows of my past?
Because of my fellow veterans, still fighting the war for inner peace.
I also have experienced that war
You can never be closer to a man
Than when you struggle with him—
Either to kill him, or help him overcome death.
—Stan Olenjack [C Co., 3d Recon]

THE BAIG LETTER

[Mirza M. "Harry" Baig was the Target Intelligence Officer (TIO), born 13 Jan 1932 in Panchgani, India, and educated in England, he will always be remembered for his distinctive accent and his unusual sense of humor by those who remember seeing this strange man in the COC with his Boy Scout pack. He is one of the main players in the Khe Sanh siege battle, but little known. It was his great intelligence and, even more so, his creativity, which contributed so much. Devising artillery strikes to be "timed on target" during air-strikes (the "mini" and "micro" arc-lights), creating pre-arranged artillery strikes so infantry on patrol would only have to call "Grapes," or "Apples," to obtain a pre-arranged set of targets struck, first interpreting the confusing signals given by the newly-seeded electronic sensors (MUSCLE SHOALS "Spot Light Reports") so they made sense, his genius ensured that the NVA never were able to "mass" into a sufficient force to overrun any of our positions.

Following his participation in the Siege, he briefed Mr. George Allen of the CIA who recalls the hair-raising account of the siege battle that he related.

He was then sent to Bangkok, Thailand, for duty with the MAG. Along with his wife, Diane, and daughter, Cecil, he was assassinated on 20 April 1971 while in the fourth floor of the Imperial Hotel where a fire was caused by a grill unnoticed by a dozing cook. Some knew that the fire exits had been locked from the outside making escape impossible.

The following are some excerpts from a letter he wrote to the Historical Branch, USMC].

My duties, in detail, were as follows:

a. Target Intelligence and Information: Plotting and recording all known enemy positions—automatic weapons, mortars, AA weapons, artillery, bunkers, fortified areas and trenches, logistic dumps (by type), camp and assembly areas, truck and track vehicle parks, and rocket sites and launch areas...There were over 3,000 separate targets within a 15 kilometer radius of Khe Sanh—that I knew of.

b. Muscle Shoals: Plotting the sensor strings, receiving, recording and responding to an average of 40 spot light reports a night, determining the types of fire to use against these targets, analysing the reports and determining their meaning in light of other intelligence, taking the proper action (in a community which knew nothing of sensors, this caused some near violent discussions).

c. Arclights: Targeting and initiating strike requests for 95% of all B-52 missions in the Scotland AO at the rate of 8 per 24 hour period; deciding when to recommend a diversion to an emergency target; convincing the Division Air Officer of the same.

d. Fire Planning: Preparing the nightly fire plans which included the attack capabilities of everything in the air or on the ground larger than an 81mm mortar; planning and targetting all TPQ-10 radar controlled air strikes in the Scotland AO; preparing the schedule for Mini and Micro Arclights, CBU misions, and "time on target" artillery fires; planning the fires of each artillery battery (and sometimes each piece)....I read the writings of General Giap and I am a student of 18th century siege warfare and First World War artillery tactics and techniques....

INTRODUCTION

... a 3d Marine Division G-2 augmentation team was flown to the Combat Base for the purpose of assisting in the development of intelligence and target information. It consisted of myself and Major Robert B. Coolidge. A third member, Major Jerry E. Hudson, had arrived earlier and had been appointed S-2 of the Regiment. Major Coolidge became the Division G-2 Representative and Special Intelligence Officer (SSO) and I became the Regimental Target Intelligence and Informatgion Officer (TIO). Together, we developed the intelligence and target information, which helped deny the ambitions of General Giap and destroy the best part of the two enemy divisions....

ASSUMPTIONS

I went to Khe Sanh with four assumptions in mind:

a. That the enemy would conduct the investment of the base in accordance with a master plan, prepared and promulgated by a headquarters other than that of the Field Force conduclting the siege.

b. That, because of this, the PAVN commander in the field could not and would not alter the battle plan to any significant degree, irrespective of the facts bearing on the subsequent situation on account of doctrinal requirements—other than to retire from field.

c. That the *modus operandi* was predictable and the general concept determinable once the opening moves had occurred (or revealed—as in fact it happened).

d. That the plan encompassed classic, siege tactics as practised and studied by General Giap during and after the siege of Dien Bien Phu and as modified by experience gained at Con Thien in September 1967.

INITIAL REMARKS

The actual battle plan for the reduction of KSCB and its surrounding outposts was revealed by Lieutenant La Thanh Tonc, PAVN, on 20 January 1968. The enemy never deviated from that plan. Tonc's revelation of the concept of operations, prior and detailed knowledge of NVA methodology, the requirements of siege warfare, and the lessons of Dien Bien Phu and Con Thien, gave the intelligence and targets team all the information we needed to plan the nature of the supporting arms countermeasures. ... events tended to prove that we were correct. The manner in which Colonel Lownds assimilated his intelligence and welded together his fighting assets, from private to pilot, speaks volumes of how effective was the Marine response to General Giap. In a sentence, Colonel Lownds employed traditional Marine tactics and doctrine of the 20th Century against an enemy who chose to put his faith and fortune in the usages of the 18th....

DETAILED DISCUSSION

The battle plan for Khe Sanh, as revealed by Lieutenant Tonc, had a complementary plan, which was to have taken effect in the Eastern DMZ..at the same time and on the same night as the commencement of the overture to Hills 881S and 861. Until that time, I was the Division G-2 clandestine, intelligence coordinator for military intelligence agencies in the Division TAOR. The 15th Marine Counterintelligence

Team and U.S. Army intelligence units had established collection nets far across the Ben Hai River. These nets had penetrated several NVA headquarters and other organizations. One of the tasks of the nets was to report the movements of the 4th Battalion, Van An Rocket Artillery Regiment, and of the Vinh Linh Rocket Battery, together with those of their escorting infantry. These units had caused much damage to the Dong Ha and Cua Viet bases earlier during the summer and autumn of 1967. Close surveillance by a process too complicated to explain herein and rapid counterfires by artillery and naval gunfire had subsequently prevented them from reaching their firing positions during the late fall and early winter of that year. On the night of the 19th-20th January 1968, the rocket units moved south once more. Reported and traced along their route by the agents of the 15th Counterintelligence Team, the batteries and their escort were caught and trapped against a bend in the Cua Viet River. Prisoners taken reported that their mission was to rocket the airstrips at Dong Ha and Quang Tri on the early morning of the 21st to prevent helcopters from flying in support of Hills 881S and 861. So this part of the enemy's plan also failed. (On the 23d of January, I went to Khe Sanh)...

ARCLIGHTS

Our entire defense philosophy was to allow the enemy to surround us closely, to mass about us, to reveal his troop and logistic routes, to establish his dumps and assembly areas, his truck parks and artillery positions, and to prepare his siege works as energetically as he desired. The result was an enormous quantity of targets, located in dispersed but common areas. Such complexes wee ideal for heavy bombers...Once the enemy had firmly embraced us, we had him fixed. His siege doctrine and battle plan (prepared at a headquarters other than Khe Sanh) forced him to stay; and the facts of military circumstances and logic bound him to perform foreseeable and determinable functions. He had to do certain things and to be in certain places because, given the situation, there was little choice open to him. Arclights were dropped on all the places where the enemy was known or estimated to be. Bombs were not cast into the jungle just for sake of doing so. The vast number of secondary explosions and the considerable quantity of casualties, reported by the Bru, which friendly forces discovered later, clearly indicated that our concepts were correct and the targeting accurate. The point ot emphasize here is that the principles applied were those of normal Marine supporting arms doctrine, which has guided us for three wars. 95% of all Arclight strikes were targeted and requested from Khe Sanh—*NOT* Saigon as certain authorities would have us believe. Without the Arclights we would have been hard pressed; and, to my mind, no praise is high enough for the men who flew those missions.

ARTILLERY

..Our motto was, "Be generous." The artillery initiative was ours; and we held it throughout the siege, despite the worst croaking of sundry, inexperienced correspondents...Later, as we learned finesse, air was given the targets south of the base and west of the maximum range of the 175mm guns; 1/13 was given any target, whose range required a maximum ordinate of less than 14,000 feet (altitude of TPQ run); and the 175mm guns were assigned targets to the north, northwest and east of the base. Such were the pre-planned fires....Newspaper correspondents never knew of the total weight and effectiveness of our artillery. Inexperienced as they were, they magnified the volume of the enemy incoming rounds and disregarded the relative ineffectiveness of the enemy artillery. Had the NVA been capable of our artillery techniques, they could and would have blown us out of Khe Sanh. The siege clearly established not only the bankruptcy of the NVA master plan, but also the ineptitude of their vaunted artillery. And the Press never saw this clearly.

INTELLIGENCE

...Intelligence conceived that the NVA would conduct a formal siege in the best traditions of the 18th Century. They had learned these tactics at Dien Bien Phu. At Con Thien, they had learned something else; namely, that we never conducted B-52 strikes at ranges less than 3,000 meters, rarely made TPQ runs at less than 2,000 meters, and hardly ever fired unobserved, unadjusted artillery missions less than 1,000 meters from friendly positions. We knew these things, too. It was obvious, therefore, that General Giap would attempt to tuck himself as closely about us as possible for safety's sakd (and to facilitate his construction program). A siege campaign involves three distinct phases: arrival on the scene and investment of the fortress; construction of siege works and preparation of supporting facilities; "T-ing" the sapheads and the final assault.

The S-2 Section, through intelligence channels, used every discovery system to develop a picture of enemy activities...When compared against the target map and reasoned against known enemy doctrine in like cases, the Khe Sanh intelligence community was able to estimate to a high degree of accuracy the intentions of the enemy on a day to day basis. Colonel Lownds' intimate knowledge of the terrain around Khe Sanh put a final filip to the dish that was served to him daily. Except for the attack on Hill 861A, the enemy never surprised us—and he should not have done so then....

In late February, Majors Coolidge and Hudson discovered the exact locations (6 figure grid) of twelve artillery positions and two major ammunition dumps.. These were concentrated in two general areas to the south. Two arclight strikes, already airborne, were diverted to these two target areas. After the bombers had departed, the ground erupted for some forty minutes on account of the secondary explosions, observable from KSCB. Two weeks later these officers repeated their performance in another area...

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

There is no question that to Col Lownds goes the credit for the successful defense of Khe Sanh and for the destruction of two NVA divisions. To my mind, his greatest gift lay in his ability to use his staff. Recognizing that his offensive capability lay with his supporting arms, Col Lownds called upon the FSCC for more and greater efforts. Given enough supplies, he could have held indefinitely.

But, some of the credit must go to General Giap and the NVA. They have us a good fight; and in the

process they destroyed themselves. A man and a force, both known as past-masters of guerrilla warfare, infiltration techniques and siege tactics, were finally revealed as stolid, rigid, inflexible and unbelievably foolish opponents. Our experience, during those 77 days, legitimately raises the question, "Who besieged whom?" For a man, who in civil life was alleged to have been a teacher of mathematics, General Giap had not studied his "Vauban" very closely. Had he profited from the teachings of that 18th Century French master of siegecraft, Giap could have caught us in the 'toils of Euclid'—to our possible discomfort.

—Mirza M. Baig, Maj, USMC

REVIEW OF TV PROGRAM: " Vietnam: A Soldiers' Story" (Khe Sanh segment)

Finally, someone focused on what is the true story of Vietnam, and Khe Sanh in particular: the individual person on the ground and how life was in those times and places, rather than on the tactics, strategies, and questions which are attempts to make sense of what is essentially human (which is far greater than the mind can grasp) and what is essentially irrational. Debates will continue for centuries, as they do regarding the Civil War, as to interpretations. But the conditions of life for the average trooper tells the real story—at least "real" for those of us who were "there!" In this sense the existentialist philosophers have it right: "existence is prior to essence," or, better, "what we experience in life is always so much greater than anything we can say about it or any attempt to understand it."

This program got that part of the story right. It tied for viewership with a previous TLC release on sexuality, and undoubtedly many now have a better appreciation of what "Khe Sanh" means for those of us who were there.

As with anyone doing something on Khe Sanh who wasn't there—even the "technical advisors" to the program who reviewed it—there were several criticisms marr an otherwise excellent presentation that will do much to promote a better understanding of how things really were. The following corrections must be noted in a program that is 99% excellent.

(1) Commencement of Operation Niagara. The program states that this B-52 campaign began in early Feb as a result of the NVA's attack. Actually, it began 6 Jan with the commencement of the target acquisition phase. It was approved 16 Jan by the American ambassador to Laos, and was scheduled to be implemented 21 Jan.

(2) The program stated that a "Marine" reconnaissance team went out during the Siege. This never happened, although there were several teams out when the Siege began. (NURSE was boxed-in with arty and extracted 21 Jan; team PISTON ROD managed to evade, was protectively "housed" by Bru, and returned 23 Jan). The only recon teams that were dispatched were Army soldiers from FOB-3, ARVN Rangers of the 37th Bn, and a few CAC OSCAR patrols into nearby Ta Cong ville in the opening days of the Siege.

(3) The program states the official American KIA count as 195. The 26th Marines Command Chronology indicates 204, a figure also reported to Congress during testimony on sensors. However, if one consults the various unit Command Chronologies and After Action Reports, one obtains the following: 1/26 (Jan: 5, Feb: 44, Mar: 47); 2/26 (Jan:1, Feb: 25, Mar: 16); 3/26 (Jan-Mar: 46); 1/9 (Jan-Mar: 72); 1/13 (Jan-Mar: 18), for a total of 274. It would appear that if 1/9's total (72) is subtracted from the total (274), one arrives at 202, very close to the 26Mar total (204); perhaps 1/9 was not included since 1/9, while OPCON (under operational control) of 26th Marines, was not ADCOM (under administrative control). Of course, these totals do not include the various support units (recon, engineers, shore party, Seabees, etc.), nor the Army or Air Force (Lang Vei, FOB3, 37th Signal Bn, etc.). We have an accounting with names, units and dates of 388 KIA (20 Jan - 31 Mar), plus 151 KIA (01-15 Apr) and 43 (16 Apr) for those units that were at Khe Sanh. Isn't it time that these casualty figures were finally resolved?

(4) Gen Westmoreland seems to have an inappropriately large credit for "calling the shots" (literally) at Khe Sanh, and Gen Tompkins, Col. Lownds and his staff aren't even mentioned who, in fact, controlled most of the air, arty, even B52s, as well as the tactics (limiting patrolling, etc.)

(5) There is a complete lack of any mention of Army forces or the attacks or life on the various outposts. Of course, in only 60 minutes, it is difficult to cover such a complex battle. But there surely is an injustice to those very brave men who fought at the battle of Khe Sanh Ville (21 Jan), the battle of Hill 861 (21 Jan), the Battle of Hill 861-A (5 Feb), the battle of Lang Vei (7 Feb), the battle Hill 64 (8 Feb), and the ARVN engagements.

(6) The statement that the 175s at Camp Carroll were ineffective due to their distance, aside from being inaccurate, is a slam against those dedicated artillerymen who gave such needed support as during the Battle of Hill 861-A and general target coverage around the base. While we did have artillery batteries at either end of the base to support the other end should it receive a human wave attack, we would need to depend on the 175s.

(7) There is a statement that the anticipated asssault never occurred when, in fact, during the night of 29Feb/01Mar, a regimental-size force of NVA approached the 37th ARVN lines. They were detected by the electronic sensors and decimated by COFRAM munitions, but a recon of the area later showed wave after wave of NVA, poised to attack. The assault did occur, but never penetrated.

(8) Photo coverage of bunkers gives the impression that all of us lived like those who were fortunate enough to have specially-made bunkers lived. It fails to reflect the abysmal living condition that we really endured.

Overall, however, the video is a major accomplishment, and by imagination, one can easily transfer what happened on the Combat Base proper to some of the outposts. Life there, however, was even more extreme—like Hill 950 being out of water 7 days!

BOOK REVIEW

Ghosts and Shadows by Phil Ball, 216pp., published by McFarland & Co., $24.95 (plus $4.00 shipping/handling). Orders: 1-800-253-2187.

Ever wonder what happened after the Siege battles in early '68 at Khe Sanh? Actually, quite a lot happened! In fact, there were more American casualties at Khe Sanh during April-July than January-March. There was a tank ambush, there was another attempt to overrun the combat base itself, there were ferocious fire-fights, there were stories of battlefield heroism that continue to inspire, and there was the same tragedy of war that we all know who were there in it.

Phil Ball has written a complete account of his Vietnam tour, starting with bootcamp experiences, going through his entire Vietnam tour, and concluding with the aftermath: what the war did to him, his life now. This is a "Must Read" book. The language, feelings, and facts are all here, along with well-illustrated diagrams, photos, index, in a book that is captivating, evocative, and for those who were there, so very, very real.

Of particular significance is Phil Ball's treatment of the Battle Foxtrot Ridge on 28 May 1968, just east of Khe Sanh Combat Base, on Route 9. Like all of us who were "there" in a particularly horrific combat event, in which we want to account for all the men who were there, all the things they did, all the details to get the whole story, Phil has re-examined this nightmare battle in which Fox Co., 2/3, was almost annihilated atop a hill outpost, was supported by napalm strikes that were too close and almost wiped out the defenders, where it was "touch and go" all night long. It is the kind of account that someone who was on the Jacques Patrol (25 Feb), on Hill 64 (8 Feb), at Lang Vei (7 Feb), on Hill 861-A (5 Feb), on Hill 861 (21 Jan), in Khe Sanh Ville (21 Jan), on the "Revenge Patrol" (30 Mar), and so many others, might very well identify with. Phil Ball has compiled an outstanding account, detailed and factual, full of the fury of the battle and the feelings of the men. It is not just a "war story" but a human story of desperation, courage, sacrifice, and everything else that reflects the "true" story of what happened.

Phil Ball's book is a great tribute to the many brave individual Marinjes who gave so much, not just in heroic moments, but in just managing to live through days in the Nam. His book will be a lasting historical record of great significance to those in the future who want to know "what it was really like," not just the distorted images from movies or books mainly from non-Nam-vet sources. Hopefully, his very well-written, captivating book will encourage others to write down their memoirs also.

Phil Ball has been a member of our Khe Sanh Vets organization for several years and is currently struggling with a major physical illness.

BOOK REVIEW

Night of the Silver Stars, The Battle of Lang Vei by William R. Phillips, 208pp., published by Naval Institute Press, $29.95, order: 1-800-224-2406. Also available through the Military Book Club.

Mr. William R. Phillips, who served nine years active service in the US Marine Corps, has written the definitive account of this very significant battle in which the NVA first introduced tanks to their war in South Vietnam, a battle that continues to evoke strong passions among soldiers and Marines, and a battle in which so much heroic action was displayed. The first of four Medals of Honor for those in the Khe Sanh area was awarded here.

Mr. Phillips relates the story in crisp, chilling detail. His account is comprehensive and a great, great tribute to those very brave defenders who miraculously survived the ordeal they experienced. Mr. Phillips also provides very useful background information on participants and events that sculpts a living, human situation.

This is a "Must Have" book for anyone interested in Lang Vei—about which much has been written, generally in articles, interested in Khe Sanh, or interested in Special Forces, or just wants to read an inspiring book about heroes—of which, contrary to the belief of many civilians, there were actually many in Vietnam.

There are a few errors, but they do not detract in any way from this excellent presentation.

On p. 14, the limits of the TAOR for Lang Vei are said to limit patrolling. Actually, the TAOR was some 7 miles wide from the border, and eleven miles long:

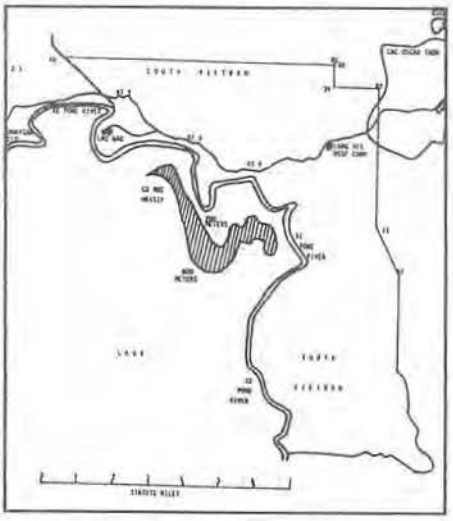

The note on p. 16 concerning the convoy of 175s coming to Khe Sanh on 21 July 1967, that the enemy knew we were bringing the convoy, is probably not reflected by the examination of the NVA positions following the engagement with patrols—not only from 1/26 (as indicated), but also from 3/26. Examination of the NVA positions reflected they were preparing to be emplaced for some time, and that their plan was most probably to sever Rt. 9 during the up-coming monoon season, perhaps in conjunction with the major attack on the combat base.

The animosity by Marines over timbers seen arriving to Lang Vei is perhaps a bit exaggerated since most timbers came via convoy on Rt. 9. The Marines, other than the company manning the "Bridge Site" just east of the Combat Base, would not have noticed these. The air-drops are made at sufficient altitude, especially given the surrounding terrain, that those on the Combat Base would not have seen them. Of course, timbers for the construction of FOB-3 did arrive on the airstrip.

On p. 61, the city of Tchepone is mentioned when it should be Ban Houei Sane. Tchepone (XD3244) is considerably west, some ten miles,

whereas Ban Houei Sane (XD625379) is the location that fits the description. Tchepone fell in May, 1961. Also, BV-33 fell on 25 Jan following an attack by tanks, not 22 Jan, as indicated.

The delay of artillery support for Lang Vei (p. 79) is due to the SAV-A-PLANE doctrine which prohibited artillery fire from the moment air was requested (so rounds don't hit the aircraft). This is usually coordinated by a DASC, but the DASC at Khe Sanh was not yet operational.

Concerning the patrol to Lang Vei before the Siege (p. 114), Capt Raymond made the patrol. Col Lownds may have recalled a sweep by 1/26 the last week of December, 1967 and the first week of Jan, 1968. It could not have been a battalion-sized operation in November since there was only one battalion at Khe Sanh at that time (1/26), manning the hill outposts and the base perimeter. 3/26 didn't arrive until 13 December.

The above are very small details that have little to do with the overall excellence of this significant book, well-written, well-documented, well worth the time to read.

Recommended highly.

BOOK REVIEW

Lead, Follow, or get the Hell out of the Way! by Ron Yerman, 156 pages, published by Vangtage Press, $16.95, 516 West 34th St., New York NY 10001.

Third Force Reconnaissance Company was formed at Camp LeJeune on 4 Oct 1965 as part of various reinforcing units destined to serve in Vietnam. Formed mainly from personnel of 2nd Force Recon, the unit subsequently underwent a long and thorough training, making it one of the most highly-qualified units at the time.

Unfortunately, the unit was sent to Vietnam piece-meal, and part reached Khe Sanh in January, 1967, to replace the long-range recon asset that had been operating there, Project DELTA. Senior Officer Present, Khe Sanh (Col Horne) had been disappointed that DELTA was unable to field an optimum number of patrols adequately to cover the area, and had requested teams from the force recon company. While at Khe Sanh, 3d Force Recon Detachment soon found itself entangled in some ferocious firefights, sustaining the first Marine KIA at Khe Sanh.

One of the legendary characters of 3d Force was Jimmy Capers, a black Marine who had been part of 1st Force Recon Company, now a part of 3d Force, and eventually retired as a Major and XO of 2d Force Recon Company, perhaps the only Marine to have been a member of all three active duty Force Recon Companies.

Jimmy Capers has never received appropriate recognition commensurate with the admiration of the men he served with. This book makes a partial contribution towards that end.

Basically a memoir of Ron Yerman's experiences and impressions, the book is easy to read and provides an insight into how one force recon Marine experienced his tour as well as an insight into just who force recon Marines are.

Those in the business of first forming First Force Recon Co., while putting all applicants through a Herculean application test, demanding the utmost of physical conditioning, always emphasized that it was not the physical prowess that really mattered; it was really a matter of mental strength—which caused the determination to get them through the demanding physical "entrance test." It is the mind that wins battles. Thus, many of these exhibited an inventiveness that is uncanny. An example is indicated on p. 44 with authenticating a radio transmission.

Unfortunately, there are numerous misspellings throughout the book. There is "Way Phu Bai" which gives the correct pronunciation, but should, of course, be "Hue Phu Bai," and there is "Kasan," which should be "Khe Sanh." People's names: "Fey" should be "Feyh;" "Ernest" should be "Ernst," "Wilson" should be "Willson," and there is an officer "Sordan."

Yerman writes of a patrol to rescue POWs. Appearing towards the end of the book, it would seem to have occurred in 1967. Actually, Operation DOUBLETALK (as the patrol was known) inserted 1705, 14 Jan 67 (into YC883795) and made contact with a Montagnard VC. They were able to locate the camp, now deserted and no longer being used, and were able to operate under the nose of the VC, in some cases at 15 meters or less, while remaining undetected up until the time they had actually found the camp and were in the process of searching it.

Yerman is generous with his opinions of others in this book, at times critical. It is a book that provides an insight into the perspective a trooper might have viewed what was happening, and thus gives insight into what happened that will never appear in official histories.

THE STORY OF "LITTLE ONE"

[*In late July, 1984, James E. Schemelia made a series of tapes of his experiences, mainly on Hill 881-South during the Siege. The following are excerpts from those tapes*].

Both my twin brother, George, and I joined the Marine Corps on 19 June 1967, both graduated from Parris Island where both of us were housemouses. We enlisted on the buddy plan and went to Vietnam together, reaching Vietnam November, 1967. From DaNang we were trucked up to Camp Evans. A few of the sick bodies had come out with wet feet. George and I had spoken to a few of them, and they said the company was up at Con Thien and that they were suffering heavy casualties. So at that time, George and I, didn't feel it was a good idea for both of us to stay in India Company. So we went over to the S-1 and had a talk with him and decided it would be best if one of us left India Company, and my brother George agreed he should go back.

Several days later the company came back out of the field and they were about 50% strength. We didn't like the looks of the Company when it came back out of the field—tired, ragged, some were wounded. It didn't even look like a Company; it looked more like a couple of platoons. It was about that point I got a little bit worried and that's when I started talk-

ing to George about the possibility of one of us going back.

The next day George got on a convoy and headed back towards DaNang. I recall going down to the ammo bunker and getting him some fresh ammo for his rifle, some dry ammo and about half a dozen hand grenades and I tossed them up to the truck and the truck pulled out, the company pulled out, and that's the last I saw him. I was assigned to India Company, 2nd Platoon, and I was pretty much relieved when I saw him pull out, although I hated to see him leave.

After the company had regrouped we saw a few patrols out of Camp Evans...

From Camp Evans, we were helilifted up to Khe Sanh and of course none of us knew where it was. When we got there it looked pretty well established. There was bunkers, an airstrip. Of course it was raining; the mud was dark red-orange, very thick. We took five steps and you had to take a knife out and scrape it off your boots so you could walk again.

The way I'd describe Khe Sanh at the time: it was very peaceful. We did run some short patrols out of Khe Sanh. We didn't make any enemy contact. We'd return, eat chow. India Co didn't have any manned bunkers. We just set up our ponchos. We stayed inside the ponchos, out of the sun, in the daytime. At night time we took up two-man fighting positions. Our fighting positions were somewhere in the RED Sector, in the northern part of the combat base.

We were heli-lifted to 881-South at night time or in the very early hours of the morning and I can recall my first glimpse of 881. Choppers touched down on top of the LZ and we had all gotten out of the helicopters and were just standing around the bunkers. At that time I can recall alot of the bunkers had lights on and there wasn't any real sense of feeling that the enemy was anywhere in the area because of the way the Marines who occupied the hill before us were behaving.

As soon as all the helicopters had dropped the entire company off, we single-filed off the side of the hill and we went several days—we headed out towards Laos, to Hill 918. We found some old NVA fighting positions. We sat on the ridgelines at night and sent out ambushes. We made no contact. Then we returned to the hill and helicopters picked us up and took us back to the base.

I look back now and reflect how crazy it was for just a company to be haded that far out of Khe Sanh and knowing later that there was just thousands of North Vietnamese just hiding there, just waiting, not wanting to make contact with us. It's amazing that any of us came back off any of those patrols.

...On Christmas Day at Khe Sanh it was sort of special for all of us. Marine Corps takes care of its servicemen, its Marines, on its holidays—Christmas Day, Marine Corps Birthday, that sort of thing, and they had everything from soup to nuts up there for Christmas dinner—hot turkey, cranberry cause, mashed potatoes, gthree or four other kinds of vegetables, fruits and nuts and cakes, cookies, and there was more than enough to eat for everybody. We got a beer ration. Of course the beer was warm, pretty hot—there wasn't any ice. We all sat around drinking a warm can of beer. Then we all got the word that there was a C-130 coming in from Japan carrying ice-cream. I thought it was strange how a plane could land in a place like that, as hot as it was, and distribute ice-cream to 5,000 Marines.

At night time, Christmas night, that's the first time I really got a good feeling that I was part of India Company. I didn't feel like a stranger anymore. We sat around a camp fire at night time which even that was kind of unreal—there were alot of camp fires around Khe Sanh that night. I hadn't received any Christmas packages from anyone and alot of the other guys, they had, and we sat around the camp fire with Lt Thomas and he'd gotten a package from home and he had all sorts of things in his package and he just passed it around the camp fire and everybody else had gotten packages—some had gotten cookies, fruit and Christmas cards, and everybody was sharing whatever they had with everybody else. That really made my Christmas. That was really important to me and I don't ever think I'll forget that.

Many a night standing bunker watch on Hill 881 during the siege, I would look down at Khe Sanh, see the fires burning—of course, they were different fires then—they were fires from bunkers that were being hit, ammo dumps and things being blown up. It was hard to believe that Christmas I had been up there sitting around a camp fire singing Christmas carols with a bunch of my buddies, and how it all changed.

On December 26th, in the very dark hours of the morning, the entire Company saddled up and single-file headed out the north gate of Khe Sanh, down the road, through the trees, down through a stream and not even knowing where we were going. Our final destination was Hill 881-South. We left—it was, I think, four or five in the morning, and we didn't reach Hill 881-South till sometime late that evening. It was a very long march. We were weighted down with alot of equipment. We carried approximately 75 to 100 pounds of equipment. It was long, hot, treacherous. The terrain from Khe Sanh to Hill 881 is dense. I walked up through some streams, through some dense underbruch, through the jungle, then through the valley part. We followed alot of streams. The hills would be way above up and the thick growth, banana trees, brush, leeches, mosquittos. It was a very hot, tiresome march.

We were pretty relieved when we got to Hill 881-South because there was another company up there, and as soon as we got there we knew what our role was: we were there to replace another company. For the first time for our company we were going to get a fixed position and I think we were relieved about that. We were tired of running out on patrols, ambushes, and never being in one spot for long. At that time we kind of had a feeling we were going to be there awhile, so I think we were kinda relieved about that....

Our duty at that time was to occupy this hill and run patrols off 881. We ran several, sometimes two platoons at a time, sometimes only one platoon. We didn't realize how dangerous it was at the time, but when we'd go out on a platoon-sized patrol, sometimes we'd even break up into squads. One squad would take a small hill and one

squad went over and checked out another hill.

The bunkers at the time were about 10 feet down from the LZ, all around the hill, and they were fairly large. They held anywhere's from 5 to 7 men to a bunker. They were plainly visible from the ridge-lines. One of the ridgelines that ran parallel to 881—I can recall being over on that ridgeline and looking back at Hill 881 and plainly seeing the bunkers and a few personnel walking from bunker to bunker. On top of the LZ itself we had three 105 howitzers looking toward Hill 881-North. That's where we had our supply tent and that's where all our supplies were stored and it was a very large tent, and our C-rats were stacked up to the ceiling in our supply tent.

We had another tent which was on the south end of the hill used as a sort of warming tent because it had a pot-bellied stove in it. The recon teams would come up from Khe Sanh and they would sleep in the warming tent overnight and they would leave from the warming tent in the morning.

From where Captain Dabney's command bunker was, right near "Washington Square" or the saddle, First Platoon extended from the position all the way around the hill on the north side, about 2/3rds of the way, and Third Platoon picked up from there, and came all the way around towards the south side, and on the south side, looking towards Khe Sanh, Second Platoon, my platoon, took up those positions from the south side which swung all the way around the hill to Captain Dabney's bunker.

At the time mail had caught up to us and I started receiving letters from home. My mother, instead of writing a letter and putting it in a white envelope, would put it in a large brown envelope and along with the letter would put kool-aid, slim-jims and something you couldn't get in C-rats: tea bags. So what I would do, I'd take my canteen cup, and I'd get up very early in the morning, I'd walk over to the warming tent, put my canteen cup on the stove and put the tea bad in it and wait for the water to boil and talk to the recon team that was getting ready to go out on patrol. No one else was up. It was very early in the morning, and I figured if I got up very early I could get my tea made on the stove because it got crowded a little bit later on. Everybody else would bring their C-rats over and try to cook it on the stoves. It got kinda congested. I didn't realize it at the time, but when I spoke to those men, I would be the last one to ever speak to them again, because it was two days later, the third platoon went out to the ambush site and they ran into some heavy fire—about 25 North Vietnamese troops, it was learned, and they returned fire. They broke off and came right back to the hill. It was the next morning, January 20th, the entire company saddled up and we returned back to that area, and we started up Hill 881-North and the order of march that day was First Platoon up front, Third Platoon in the middle, and Second Platoon brought up the rear.

By the time that I had reached the base of Hill 881-North and we started up the hill, a few trees, that's when the North Vietnamese opened up on us. They opened up on the First Platoon first. They had already gotten up 2/3rds the hill and all hell broke loose.

What I do recall is hitting the ground and there were bullets flying around overhead. That struck me peculiar at the time. When you hear a rifle go off, of course you hear the rifle itself, but being on the other end, you don't hear the rifle. You hear just like as though you were taking a leather belt and snapping it, snapping two parts of the leather belt gether and you get this snapping sound and that's all you hear, just hundreds—literally hundreds of these snapping sounds over your head and alot of screaming.

Seconds later, most of First Platoon came literally crawling down the hill. I didn't see any of them come down walking. They were all crawling. Many of them were soaked in blood. There was a bomb crater just near me, and the corpsman was just pulling them into the bomb crater, and trying to do the best they can to bandage them up and try to keep them calm. One helicopter came in, a CH-46, and there was no place to land to try to evacuate any of the wounded, so what the pilot did was taxi up the hill, and while in flight, just drop his ramp. I was nearest the helicopter and so without hesitation I just grabbed the first wounded Marine that was in the bomb crater, put his arm over my shoulder.

He had been shot in the leg. He took some shrapnel in the face, and I took him over to the ramp of the helicopter and walked him all the way into the front of the helicopter. I'd assumed that by the time I'd gotten him all the way to the front of the helicopter—I looked back and there wasn't even another casualty ready to be brought on the helicopter because they couldn't reach the helicopter. No sooner did I get to the front of the helicopter when machinegun rounds came just ripping through the walls of the helicopter and severing the electrical wires and hitting one of the fuel lines and aviation fuel just came just pumping out of the line and burst into flames, splashed onto the crew chief and he ripped off his flak jacket and threw it out of the helicopter. At that time the helicopter was waving uncontrollably, trying to hold its position, and it couldn't, and it was then I realized we were headed down, down into the valley.

I looked over to the Marine that I had taken and I said, "Come on, we're getting out of here." I picked him back up and it was like trying to climb back up a mountain because the helicopter was headed down into the valley and it was hard trying to walk to the rear of the helicopter. The ramp was still down. I looked out. We were about 30 feet from the side of the hill and I just pushed him out. By the time that I had jumped, it was alot further down the hill and when I jumped out I landed into some brush which broke my fall, and I climbed back up the hill about another fifty feet from where the Marine was, and I picked him up. I took him back up and put him back in the bomb crater. There was nothing else that could be done.

The helicopter—I looked back—it just went down into the valley and it crashed into flames. The Marine that I had picked up and put on the helicopter was Richard Darling.

I'd gotten together with "Gums," Charles Reed, and another Marine by the name of John Bryce from Long Beach, California. The three of us,

without hesitation, just went down the hill, down to where the helicopter had crashed into the valley and while I stood watch and put out suppressive fire, all around the helicopter, Gums and Bryce got the pilot and co-pilot out of the helicopter and they were both wounded—broken legs, broken ankles. And we got them out of the helicopter and we started back up the hill. We used Reed's rifle and Bryce's rifle as a chair and we carried them up that was, up into the bomb crater where all the casualties were being placed. I was the last one back up. I looked back and saw a H-34 very slow-moving, and saw him moving, drop a sling in the vicinity of the helicopter and he picked usp the crew chief and he didn't even get him inside the helicopter, just grabbed on to the sling and picked him and up and flew away with him hanging in the air.

Second Platoon then moved around to the right side of Hill 881-North where another H-34 landed to pick up some casualties. It was at that time I learned that Lt Thomas had been killed and the way I felt about that at the time was: Here I was, a young 19-year-old Marine, just got to Viet-Nam and here I'm alive and my platoon commander, my Second Lieutenant, he was dead.

The Second Platoon moved up into a treeline where we could get a good view of Hill 881-North. We were on a ridge line that was kind of a crooked ridge line and we could get a good view of the hill, and we just opened up with everything that we could. We were running out of water. Our ammunition was low. I thought at the time how long we were gonna be there, whether we were going to break off the fight or dig in and stay the night and perhaps fight again in the morning.

It didn't turn out that way. Captain Dabney was ordered to withdraw. As we withdrew, we came back down the pathway and I was picking up every rifle that was in sight and putting it on my shoulder and when I got back down off Hill 881-North, I had about eight rifles and about half a dozen LAWs. I carried those all the way back over to the hill.

It was pretty late in the evening by the time we'd gotten back to Hill 881-South and there was alot of people back up there that wasn't there when we left. They'd brought in some 106 recoilless rifles from Khe Sanh and there was some other artillery units up there and they were pounding the hell out of Hill 881-North and we just came up onto the hill and just lined up, everybody that was left in the company, and looked on like it was a movie or something. It was very strange. Jets flew in..over Hill 881-North, dropping bombs and rockets and napalm just all over the hill, just saturating the hill. It was a real spectacular sight to see...

Later we went to our bunkers and learned about the casualties that we had suffered and of course, Lt Thomas, and our senior corpsman, he was killed—they were the only two casualties in Second Platoon. Third Platoon was fairly well chewed up and First Platoon—they really got hit very bad, very bad.

Sort of a silence came over the hill and it lasted several days. It was very difficult to explain the mood. The men were very quiet, sort of in mourning for the buddies that didn't come back that day....

The mood coming back: the men were mad, angry that the fight had been cut short. I think in spite of our casualties, we'd rather stay there and fight. But we were ordered back and kinda mad about that. The trip back, all up and down the column, what was left of India Company, guys were moaning and groaning, yelling obsenities. When we finally did get up on top the hill, which was very hard and a tiresome climb—you probably recall as you're going up that side, you just can't walk up on your own two feet, you have to grab ahold of trees and pull yourself up one tree and grab ahold of another one and pull yourself up further...

At that time we had no fighting positions on the hill. We just had our sleeping bunkers. The bunkers were located higher up, around the high part of the hill, just below the LZ. The order was given that we were to abandon these bunkers and move down to where the trenchline was, which was only about 2-feet deep. This trenchline wasn't dug by us or the previous Marine unit that occupied the hill before us. This was the existing trenchline the North Vietnamese used as fighting positions during the previous battle. [*Ed Note: this was the original trench built by Marines upon capturing the hill who were ordered to occupy positions closer to the top of the hill by a visiting General*]. We dug the trenchline 5 and sometimes 6 feet deep and placed and filled alot of sandbags and placed four layers of sandbags on each side of the trenchline on top. We paired off in two's and dug into the side of the trenchline. They were to be our sleeping quarters for the remainder of the siege. After we had dug into the hill, the roof of our sleeping bunkers consisted of running laterally, 7 or 8 engineer stakes. We placed 8 layers of sandbags on top of the stakes and then we placed the wooden boxes of the 105 artillery full of rocks and stones on top, and then we placed gravel on top of that to conceal the boxes....

The inside of the bunker was very small. Most of them wasn't even high enough to stand up. If I sat down inside the bunker and put my helmet on, it would just barely scrape the top of the bunker. John Bryce couldn't sit up inside the bunker that we had built, so on his side, where he slept, he just took an E-tool and shoveled out some more dirt on the floor so he would be able to sit up inside the bunker...Fighting holes were dug into the outside of the hill and they had step-ups to them—sandbags and we had taken some of the 105 arillery shell boxes and dug the dirt out of the wall of the trenchline and placed the boxes in the cut-out that we had made. We filled the boxes—some with handgrenades. Other boxes contained LAWs. We had trigger mechanisms inside some of the boxes and the wires went outside the trenchline, up over the sandbags, and down over around the hill, and these were the trigger mechanisms for the claymores that we had placed outside the perimeter....Of course we had heard the enemy took claymores and turned them around. What we did, before we put our claymore mines down, we dug a small hole and placed one of the large C-rat fruit cans in the hole and pulled a pin on a hand grenade and took in a piece of wire and connected that to the claymore so when they picked the

claymore up to turn it around, they pulled the hand-grenade out of the C-rat can.

[*While water wasn't a problem at first, the water buffalo soon was filled with numerous holes. Then water was delivered in dairy cans, but these would spill and rarely was a full can received; usually they were empty*]. Someone at Khe Sanh came up with a very ingeneous idea. They brought us canisters , large cylinders to hold tank rounds. When I opened one up there was a plastic bag in it that had a sort of long plastic nipple—it was the same type of bag they put in the machines in the messhall that held milk, only these bags were full of water. And this made it very easy and practical to bring water.

January 23d was the date that 1/Lt Allen S. Matthews was brought up from Khe Sanh to replace Lt Thomas. I recall standing up on the trenchline filling sandbags when he came walking down a trenchline. We or course hand't had a bath since mid-December and at that time we were all scraggly and dirty and smelly and he apparently had a bath just down at Khe Sanh and looked clean and fresh and his utilities were very clean and the cuffs were squarred away. He looked at us kinda strange but didn't say anything. Little did he know that he would look just as bad, if not worse, than us in the months to come...

I believe I mentioned about the scarcity of water. We did not use any water for bathing whatsoever...

Gums and I came up with an idea. We took some of the clear plastic that the 105 artillery rounds came in and in the evening, when the sun went down, the fog rolled in very thick. We stretched out the plastic, put a hole in the center, and put a clean stone inside. We'd check on it every 3 or 4 hours and get us a small portion of water that way. It wasn't very much, but it was better than not having any, and there were times when we didn't have any water at all....

Harmonizing in the trenchline. Gary W. Saddness and myself would pass the time in the trenchline filling sandbags—and we filled plenty of them. He had a portable radio—a small transistor radio. But the battery had gone dead, so we'd taken one of the PRC-25 batteries which is a very big battery, a powerful battery. But when they become too weak to transmit, they become of no use and are discarded. So we got one of the batteries and were going to hook it up to the radio. I told Gary, This is too much power; it will probably blow the transistors in the radio. So we took a K-bar and sliced the battery in half, very carefully, so as not to damage the wires inside the battery, and when we'd cut the battery in half and exposed the black and red wire, we connected this to the radio and then sealed off the top part of the battery. It was a dry cell battery. Then we taped the entire transistor radio and just wrapped black tape around it and carried this brick-shaped object around with us and we had a workable radio. We used it in the trenchline and listened to alot of music. Alot of the songs we would listen to and harmonize with were mainly Diana Horwick songs and that helped us pass the time alot we enjoyed it and were glad to have that. It made things alot easier. The radio was one of the only means of entertainment we had.

We'd be standing in the trenchling filling sandbags and the radio played the song "There is a House in New Orleans they call the House of the Rising Sun," and we'd get about halfway through that. A few mortar rounds would come in, hit pretty close. We'd hit the deck, and just get back up, like nothing happened and start singing all over again, as though it didn't even bother us. Alot of times we didn't even pay attention to the mortar fire. You had to get your mind off it, and this helped.

Many of us literally flirted with death. We got tired of being shelled, mortared, artilleries. We would just defy it all. Sometimes we would just forget. Either we just forgot or either we just didn't care anymore. We'd just sometimes totally defy the shelling. Rather than just safely walk around the trenchline, you'd say, The Hell with it. Got up out of the trenchline and walked straight across the hill. If one went off nearby, you just ducked or hit the deck and then got right up and walked to the other side of the hill. That's just the way it was for many of us. I did it many times, and Gary did the same thing. Reed did the same thing. Brice did the same thing. I watched many Marines just do the same thing. We just got tired of it. It just became part of our daily life. If it was your turn to get it, it was your turn. Of course, many of them did get it and you look back on it today and it's really hard to believe you lived that way....

Many times you just didn't pay any attention to the artillery and the incoming coming in and the sniper fire. Some of the rounds hit very close and then there was the sniper down at the treeline: he'd be zinging at you. One of his rounds would hit real close and you'd yell some obscenity at him or call him some dirty name and, you know, you can't hit anything, and just go about your business.

"Going to the John:" We had these out-house contruction-type Johns, which had a flat door in the back, and a half of a 55-gallon drum slid inside, and a corpsman would drag these out and burn it off with a mixgture of gasoline and MOGAS. Of course, this became sort of an aiming stake for the mortars. I recall going to the John one day. I'm sitting inside with the door closed and it was like sitting in a square piece of cheese. I picked the shrapnel right out of the wood and it was very shiny metal, and there was plenty of it. I couldn't wait to get out of there. It was the last time I decided to go up there and use the John. It was just outside the trenchline, up on top of the hill, half-way between the LZ and the trenchline, so the Gunny came up with a very good idea. The cannisters. The gunny took these and placed them inside the trenchline. The earth was very hard and crusty and you could dig a nice round hole on an angle into the trenchline, and this is what was used for the John. When they became full, you screwed the cap back on, the star-type cap, and you just picked it up, yelled a few obscenities at the North Vietnamese, and tossed it down the hill at them....

Our supply tent became an aiming stake for the North Vietnamese, and we tore that down shortly after Cpl Johnson was killed. He was in charge of supplies. When we were issued our chow, in the beginning we would get two boxes of C-rations per day—one in the morning and one in the evening. Later on, through March and

mid-April, we'd get one box per day. As the food went down, so did the protection around Captain Dabney's bunker. It was very common to get a box of C-rats, and if you were fortunate enough to get the A-1s that had the fruit in, you'd open it up and find it all dried out. There was shrapnel in the C-rats and if it was a fresh artillery round that struck it, it was still wet, of course, you ate the food, and you picked the shrapnel out....

The top of the hill started to look like a graveyard for helicopters. It was impossible to land anymore. The supply runs were made at night. There were some attempts during the daytime, but choppers did not land, they just flew over the hill, very close. Everybody got inside their and they released the cargo nets and the supplies just dropped all over the hill. That was food, water, ammunition, building materials, timbers...

Many times in the dark, the helicopters missed their target and some of the vital supplies that we needed went off the side of the hill. We had to get working parties together, go down at night and scavage for it. We looked in the trees, everywhere we possibly could, to find where the supplies had dropped [and] try to get back as much of it as we could.

In India Company, I'm not known as Lance Corporal Schemelia. John Emroe down at Khe Sanh—all during the siege—he called me "Little One," and I was known throughout India Company as "little one," and of course, Charles Reed, he was known as "Gums." Together we made a pretty good pair. I had a hard life growing up and so did Gums. Together, we were scavengers. We tried not to let the mortar rounds and artillery get us down and we would go out together during the bombardment and some of the heaviest bombardment, and we would scavanage. We would go up to some of the old bunkers—abandoned bunkers that were occupied before the attack on January 20th and we would dig for food...

"Maggie's Drawers." Every morning we'd come out of our bunkers. Some of us were taller than others, and of course our heads could be seen over the trenchlines. That idiot down there in the trees—he would spot one of us and would snipe. Sometimes we would get right up outside of the trenchline and just hold our hands out and say, "Here I am; take a shot," and he would. And he'd miss you a mile. So me and Reed said, "We'll fix 'em!" We went over to where one of the old tents had been torn down and came back with a section of tent pole. I had my little water-proof duffle bag which I kept some personal things in and I was looking for something to tie on to the top of the pole and the only thing that I could find—and I thought it was very appropriate because of the color, was a pair of 3d Marine Division swim trunks which was issued down at Khe Sanh when we first got down there. So we'd taken a few nails out of the 105 artillery boxes and nailed my trunks to the top of the pole and every morning, the same thing would happen. We'd get up out of the trenchline. They'd take a pot-shot at you. He'd miss, so we'd jump back down in the trenchline, only this time we'd give him the "Maggie's Drawers." He'd fire a few more shots. We'd look up, pull the flag down and see if there were any holes in it, and we'd lean up against the trenchline and start all over again the next day...

Candles were very scarce on the hill. The only candles that I can recall were in Captain Dabney's bunker. As far as lighting for our own bunkers—our main source of light, we used the plastic spoons that came with the C-rats, and we would burn these like candles. Of course, the spoon, as they burn, put off a black residue and the interiors of the bunkers became quite black. We also used peanut butter. I can recall the best edible peanugt butter out of the C-rats was called Cinderella peanut butter. This was, of course, not the peanut butter that we were interested in. In the early C-rats, dated 1956, '57, '58, I don't recall the name, but when we opened up the peanut butter, the peanut butter itself was all dired out and cakey and the oil from the peanut butter was floating on top. And we would take the peanut butter oil and collect it in a can. We would take a larger can and poke a hole in the bottom of it and take a piece of cloth, twist it up tight, make a wick out of it, and when the cloth became saturated, we would light it, and this provided the light, and to my surprise, it burned very well. The interior of the bunkers became quite pitched, and once in awhile Brice and myself would clean house and we would take our knives and our E-tools and scrape the walls of the bunker until new, fresh dirt appeared and this gave the bunker a more cleaner look....

We raised the Colors on Hill 881 every morning. We tried to do this as expediently as we could. Before the North Vietnamese caught wind of it, possibly they heard it, we would get it over as quickly as possible before the artillery came in and dive for the trenchline and get back to our bunkers as quickly as we possibly could. Our bugler was our very own First Lieutenant Matthews. Of course, when we did this we just annoyed the enemy that much more, and they hit us with a little extra artillery.

One afternoon I was lying in my bunker half asleep and heard a strange engine. I couldn't quite make it out. So I got up out of the bunker, went out into the trenchline and there was this Bird Dog flying about. He'd tip his wings. He was an Air Force light observation plane, and I was the only one out in the trenchline. He saw me, and when I acknowledged to him by waving my hand. I thought he'd just flown by to observe the hill. And I saw his arm come out of the aircraft. There were two in the aircraft, and he dropped a bundle. The bundle came down and hit about 30 or 40 feet in front of me. I raced for it and grabbed it. It was wrapped up in brown paper and tied with string. I ran back into the trenchline. A few mortar rounds hit in the vicinity of where I'd picked the parcel up. There was nothing on the package. I ripped it open, and it was two cartons of cigarettes. I ran back outside the bunker, and the aircraft was still circling. I held them up to him. He again acknowledged by tipping his wings, and flew off.

I didn't smoke; Brice did, so he kept a few packs, and I took the rest of them up to Lt Matthews and gave them to him so he could distribute them to the rest of the men in the platoon. Receiving these cigarettes certainly did make everyone's day...

Most of the activity on the hill took place at night time. We had alot of working parties. Choppers would

come in, drop off the supplies, and the hill would suddenly become alive with men hustling and bustling through trenchlines taking the supplies up to the command post, carrying timbers, barbed wire, ammunition, water, food, medical supplies. It was one of the very few times we got to see one another—other men from other platoons, from the other side of the hill...Of course during the daytime, other than the shelling, it was total silence. It was very hot. The men in the company were totally exhausted. The order of the day was: sleep, get plenty of rest, and hope that more supplies would be dropped at night time, and it would begin all over again.

One morning I became very restless. I couldn't sleep, so I got out into the trenchline and decided to take a walk around the other side of the hill and get a glimpse of Hill 881-North. I walked around the hill and I just stood there in the trenchline, gazing over the sandbags, looking at the hill.

Everyone was asleep in their bunkers, and I heard some voices coming from the direction of the CP, and I saw two men carrying something. They were moaning and groaning, sounded like complaining or even arguing. As they came closer, it became evident as to what they were carrying and were having a difficult time. As they came down the trenchline, they passed by me, and they were carrying a body. Apparently, one of the men in Mike Company on the knoll had been hit and they were carrying his body around to the body bunker.

At that moment, when they passed by me I never felt so alone, being there, all by myself. At that moment, it struck me that I didn't want to be there, all by myself. I didn't want to get hit and be away from my platoon. I don't know if anyone else had the feeling, but ever since that day I wanted to stay around on my platoon side. And I believe alot of the other Marines did the same: they didn't wander out of their section of the trenchline. I think it was probably because of this reason: they were going to get hit, I suppose they would want it to happen in their platoon area with the buddies that they knew and associated with. It was a very frightening feeling at the time, and I got back to that platoon area as fast as I could. It was something that really to this day has really stuck in my mind.

"The Body Bunker." This was located between two machinegun positions over on our sector of the hill, the Second Platoon sector. It was a bunker that was located between two machinegun bunkers and had been abandoned because of the poor construction. It was narrow, and it was too high. The peripet of this bunker just wasn't made properly to house a machinegun. The peripet was located too close to the roof of the bunker, and for this reason, it was abandoned and not used for a machinegun bunker. We had no other facilities, or no other bunkers, in the trenchline in which to put our dead. And this is what became known to us on the hill as the body bunker. We would stack them up, in some cases—later on, apparently, it did become full. When the chopper would come in, at the time that they would land, we would try to get one or two out at a time, and this often wasn't the case. We couldn't get any out at all, so we stored them in the body bunker.

Later, when the body bunker became full, we started stacking them in the area where the water buffalo was, behind the warming tent. And this was a small, flat area of ground they had placed a cargo net in this area, and we would stack them in the cargo net sort of in the fashion that you would stack logs for building a log cabin. We would run three or four bodies in one direction, and three or four or five in the opposite direction, and a helicopter would come in. They would hook up the hook on the rings of the net to the bottom of the helicopter and the bodies were taken down to Khe Sanh that way....We'd of course hadn't had a bath in quite a long time and men were beginning to have problems with lesions and certainly didn't want to have any remains in a close contact with the men in the company.

The body bunker had become full and what we had done was fashioned a door and this was nailed across the opening of the bunker, and it was totally sealed. It wasn't opened, and the bodies were taken out—it must of been more than 35, 40, and 50 days later. No one was ordered to help clean out the body bunker. It was strictly volunteer. Gums and myself, along with John Brice volunteered to clean out the body bunker. The three of us all during the siege, we'd always come forth and go get the bodies, and take them to the body bunker and I guess we felt it was our duty, a moral obligation, to take the bodies out of the body bunker and see that they were taken care of.....

Our hair and our beards became quite long, and I'd borrowed a pair of scissors from a corpsman and I cut John Brice's hair and then he cut mine, but we left our beards alone. That was a rare opportunity to grow a beard and I guess we got a kick out of it. Everybody else had a beard so I guess nobody else wanted to cut theirs....

We ran out of heat tabs to cook our chow with, so I'd gotten ahold of an empty machinegun box and took the lid off and laid the machinegun can on its side and I poked alot of holes in the top and a few in the sides with my knife, and then I would splinter some dry wood from the ammo boxes and make a small wood fire inside and in the morning—at that time we were only getting one box of C-rats a day, and Brice and I would cook our food on this little stove in the trenchline. We'd try not to make any smoke. Before you know it, Sgt Mosley, John Emroe, and Reed, and a few others came down the trenchline in the morning and everyone would be fighting for space on top of the ammo can. Why they didn't make one of their own, I'll never know, but I guess it was for the conversation. You know, get a few people together in the morning and cook our food over the fire....

Getting out the mail. Most of us had paper, a pen. If we didn't have paper, we wrote on the cardboard from the C-rats and just made a little square on the top and put the word "Free" on it and wrote on that. The problem was getting it off the hill. The choppers wouldn't land anymore. They just flew over and dropped supplies. Nothing was returned anymore. It just wasn't worth landing a helicopter and getting it chopped up on the hill, so the hill became pretty cluttered. It still left the problem: how to get the

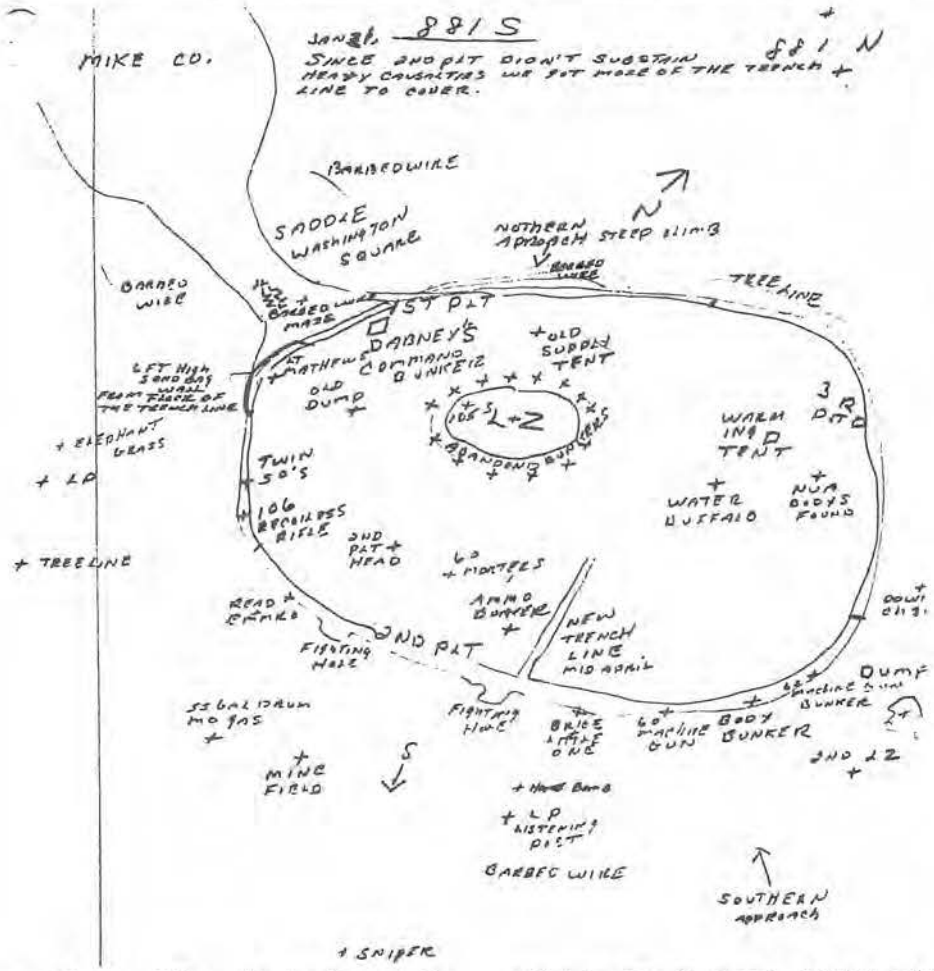

mail out When the bodies, at the water buffalo area in the nets were enough to warrant a helicopter to come in and take them out, we'd go up to the net and place the mail inside the shirt of one of the bodies. We knew that they would be searched when they got down to Khe Sanh and the mail would be discovered and forwarded.

The weather during the daytime was extremely hot. It cooled down some in the evening, and toward midnight and on through the morning hours it became bitterly cold. The fog rolled in. It was very thick, very damp, and it was extremely cold. It had nothing other than our green shirt, our flak jacket. Some of us had poncho liners and we would stand our trench watch with a poncho liner around us....

It only rained once during our stay on the hill. One afternoon to our surpirse we got a down-pour. One thing we didn't anticipate during the construction of our trenchline was rain, and we failed to make any sort of outlet in case it rained. It had only rained 10 or 15 minutes, but the rain water would wash off the top of the hill down into the trenchline and didn't take very long before we had about 3 feet of water in the trenchline. This, of course, flooded our bunkers. During the rain—it would let up for a few minutes, and then we would get large hail stones about the size of golf balls, and it was definitely necessary to put our helmets on! After the rain ceased, we put some holes in the trenchline to the outer wall and allowed the water to drain. Brice and I got a few canisters and filled them up with the rain water which, of course, was very muddy and we planned to use this for drinking water. We couldn't find the lids to the canisters, so we left the canisters in one of our fighting holes. We came out the next day—and of course we had an ample supply of Halizone for water purification—and our intention was to allow the water to sit over night so the mud would settle to the bottom. But we had a big infestation of rats on the hill and they must of had a field day during the night because the canisters that we had filled had several drowned rats in each one of them, and we decided not to use this for drinking water...

Of course we had no soap..At that stage we had—our skin was very dry, very tough, and sort of scaly and patchy with black patches on our skin for lack of a bath. Many of us had festered sores. What I did—our corpsman didn't have any medication for our skin or for sores; he had ran out of cremes and ointments. I took the Halizone tablets, put a few of them in a spoon and crushed them up and then poured them into a small C-rat can, and added a few drops of water and made a paste. To some degree this paste did some good. I don't really know what the composition of Halizone is, but while mixing the paste it did smell "mediciney."...

Adjacent to our hill there was a ridgeline that ran parallel with Hill 881. A Navy jet came in, low level, and dropped several large white canisters. Before they reached the ground they burst open, and out of the canisters were literally thousands of these little silvery projectiles, and they scattered all across the ridgeline. Some of them, immediately as they hit, exploded, about the same impact as a hand grenade. Then after the initial explosion, minutes later, others started going off. I suppose each of these had their own fuse, and for the next several hours, this entire ridgeline became sort of a death trap. Explosions took place for a period of several hours....

[*Ed.Note: The foregoing is about half of what Jim Schemelia related in his tapes, but what we have here quoted gives a flavor about life on the hill outposts that has really never been expressed before or as well.*

"Gums" got his name when his dentures fell out of his mouth upon landing on 881, were crushed, and he went the entire Siege on 881 without teeth. He later retired as a First Sergeant.

Does this account of life on 881-S during the Siege prompt you, the reader, to do the same? If so, please send you story to the Editor!]



ABOVE: Aerial photo of Hill 881-South taken as part of the same photo run as Khe Sanh Combat Base on the cover of this issue. BELOW: Hill 881-South (lower left) with Hills 950 and 1015 and 861, looking east.



New monuments at Khe Sanh. Propeller, howitzer, and monument (with Hill 1015 in background) on Khe Sanh Combat Base. Tank (with number 268) at Lang Vei. *(Photos by Michael J. Madden).*

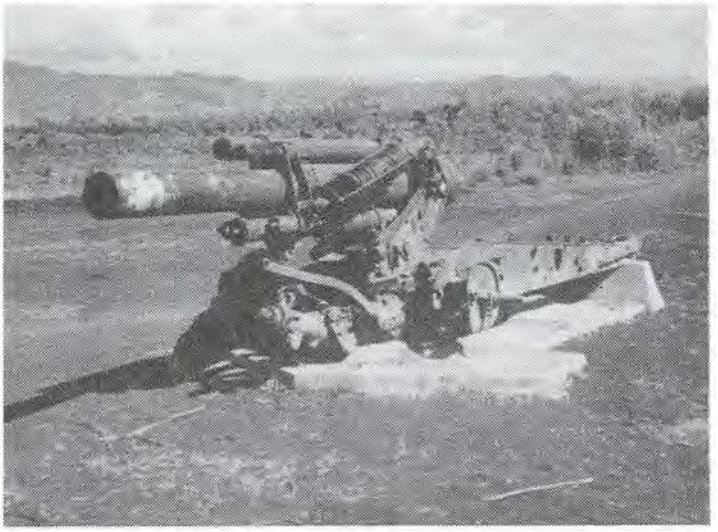



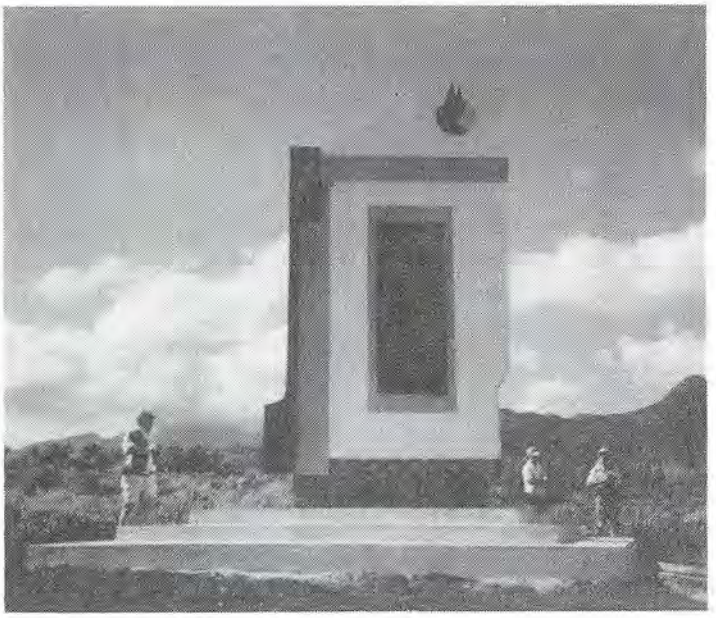



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are well into the "Approach March" toward our objective—Reunion at St. Louis. Several members have already sent their registratioin forms. Russ Turner, our Reunion Chairman, has the situation well in hand. Dave "Bulldog" Smith, Mike O'Hara, Bill Jayne and Russ have all worked together to procure and arrange for the placement of our Khe Sanh plaque at JeffersonBarracks National Cemetery. Details are still being worked on for speakers to dedicate them.

The guest speaker for our banquet night will soon be determined.

Ray Truelove, our Editor, has reluctantly had to resign due to poor health, an ailing father and an overloaded work schedule. We will miss him. Ray Stubbe will carry on temporarily until we can find a new Editor.

Our "Memorabilia Sales Committee:" Russ Turner, Mike Worth, Lucille Biscaglio, and Bernice "Gunny" Penn, are busy putting together a registration package. There will be surprises for an auction and raffle. If you have an item of significance that you would care to donate, please call Russ at (314) 282-2263.

NOMINATIONS TO THE B OARD OF DIRECTORS:

All positions for the BOD will be open for nominations! Elections will be conducted on 17 July 1999 at the General Membership meeting. In accordance with our by-laws, nominations must be made to the nominating chairman (Dick Peloquin, 15 Seconset St., Worcester MA 01602) 90 days prior to elections. However, due to the schedule of our *Red Clay* publication, I will accept nominations up to and no later than 31 May 1999.

The following from our By-Laws pertain:

QUALIFICATIONS FOR POSITIONS ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

1. Candidates for a seat on the Board of Directors shall be General or Associate Members of the association who have attended at least two of the prior five annual meetings.
2. Candidates for a seat on the Board of Directors must have previously demonstrated leadership qualities, and established a history of achievement for service to their community. Additionally, any candidate must have demonstrated high standards of personal and professional integrity.
3. Candidates for President or Vice-President of the association must have previously served a minimum of two years as a member of the Board of Directors.
4. Candidates for Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, Sergeant-at-Arms, or Member-at-Large must have a minimum of two years membership in the association.

NOMINATION FOR A SEAT ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The President of the association shall chair a Nominating Committee which will seek qualified candidates for all positions on the Board of Directors. However, any qualified candidate may be nominated by any General or Associate Member of the association if that nomination is presented to the Nominating Committee ninety days prior to the election.

ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

A candidate for any position on the Board of Directors is elected upon receiving the highest number of votes cast for that position. A tie vote is resolved by a majority vote of the undisputed newly elected members of the Board of Directors. Elections shall meet the following criteria:

1. Open on 1 January of the year in which the election is held (odd numbered years).
2. Afford all General and Associate Members of the association the opportunity to seek a position on the Board of Directors. At a minimum, candidates will be able to submit a b rief; one hundred words or less; statement of qualifications. Such statement may include:
   a. Any prior office in the association.
   b. Any prior committee participation.
   c. Any vlunteer activity.
   d. Number of years of association membership.
   e. Any other information the candidate deems pertinent.
3. The Nominating Committee shall review all applications, verify the eligibility of candidates for office, and certify all qualified candidates seeking election to the Board of Directors.
4. The Nominating Committee shall notify candidates of their approved candidacy not less than sixty days prior to the election.
5. All candidates shall be afforded the opportunity to present a five minute statement to the General and Associate Members of the association prior to the election.
6. Voting shall be by a secret ballot of the General and Associate Members present at a meeting of the association. At a minimum all elections to the Board of Directors shall:
   a. Authorize one ballot to each General and Associate Member of the association.
   b. Publicize the number of General and Associate Members needed to establish a quorum.
   c. Publicize the percentage and number of votes required for election to each office.
   d. Publicize the date, time, and location of the election.

Copies of our current Byu-Laws will be available at check in! In the meantime, if you have any questions, call Dick Peloquin at (508) 752-0340.

See you in St. Louis—Louis!

Semper Fi!

DICK PELOQUIN

GARY PLACE

There is a growing effort in New Hampshire to petition the Executive Council and Governor to grant a hearing for a conditional pardon on behalf of Khe Sanh veteran, Gary Place. Mr. Place is currently serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole in New Hampshire for the 1983 death of his then girlfriend, who was killed in the heat of an argument over their pending separation.

Mr. Place served in A Company, 1st Platoon, 3d Shore Party Bn in Khe Sanh. He was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps on June 10, 1970, as a Sergeant, E-5.

Gary's prison record and commitment to personal growth and rehabilitation has been exemplary and a model for all inmates to follow. He has also taken extraordinary efforts to share his experience and the knowledge he has gained with others. He has co-founded and implemented various self-help groups within the prison to expand inmates' self awareness, their insight, and to hopefully facilitate them on their own path to rehabilitation.

Due to Gary's impressive record and progress, and willingness to help others, he became involved in counseling and lecturing adolescents on the verge of incarceration to change their self-destructive behavior patterns. He was selected by the prison to speak with law students, Chambers of Commerce, the NH Clerks of Courts, and Shock Incarceration graduates due to his credibility and honesty.

It is also important to recog-

nize Gary's service to our country as a Marine Corps veteran and a survivor of the battle of Khe Sanh in Vietnam. His efforts to address the problems of fellow inmates was equaled by his efforts to help fellow Vietnam veterans. He was a co-founder of Chapter 161 of the Vietnam Veterans of America and an originator of the Post-Traumatic Stress Rap Group in prison. There is no one who has dedicated himself more wholeheartedly to rehabilitating and demonstrating worthiness for consideration of a conditional pardon than Gary. His efforts continue today.

Place is hoping for the support of the Khe Sanh Veterans association. In this regard, President Peloquin has traveled to New Hampshire to meet with Gary to see for himself Gary's sincerity, genuiness and dramatic transformation. Gary is reaching out to fellow Khe Sanh veterans for support for his struggle. It cannot be understated how significant a letter from fellow Vietnam veterans on his behalf would be for Gary. His supporters have been told time and time again that the Executive Council and Governor of New Hampshire are more persuaded by the support of those who have come to know Gary from various walks of life than by almost anything else. Written support for Gary from fellow Khe Sanh veterans will go a long way in convincing the Council and Governor to hold a hearing on his behalf.

Gary would like to hear from any of you who would be interested in communicating with him. You can address correspondence to Gary Place c/o Phyllis Rockwell, 23 Ashland Street, Nashua NH 03060.

If you would like more information about Gary Place, please feel free to contact Phyllis Rockwell at the above address or (603) 595-1383, or Mr. Place's attorney, Paul A. Maggiotto at 58 Pleasant St., Concord NH 03301 or (603) 225-5152.

Gary has the support of people throughout New England who have come to know him from various walks of life. He has the support of politicians, current and former prison guards, former counselors, and most importantly, the support of the victim's family who have written letters on his behalf and have offered to testify at a conditional pardon hearing for him.

If you would like to forward a letter on behalf of Gary, please address it to Governor Jeanne Shaheen and/or to the members of the New Hampshire Executive Council. The letter can be forwarded directly to Mr. Place's attorney at the address given above.

Gary has already served sixteen years for his crime. If released from prison, Gary hopes to continue his efforts incounseling youth and others to avoid the mistakes he has made. Incarcerating him for the remainder of his life, despite his remarkable efforts at rehabilitation would simply be to waste the success of his efforts and the good he can perform for others outside the prison walls. There are prisoners throughout this country who have committed far more egregious crimes and have served less time, or are at least eligible at some time for parole. It is clear that Mr. Place will never be released from prison unless he is granted a conditional pardon (similar to what is commonly known as parole). Your support, in any fashion, would be greatly appreciated.

For further inquiry, please contact Phyllis Rockwell or Paul A. Maggiotto, Esquire at the above telephone number and address.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(May also be used for subscription)

Please print or type, and provide all information requested

....
Name *Phone*

....
Street address *City* *State ZIP+4*

Are you a Khe Sanh vet?..... IF YES..... ....
Branch of Service Dates at Khe Sanh Unit

Mail this application and payment/subscription ($20.00 for one year, or $150.00 for Life Membership) to:
Vincent Griffith, Treasurer, 27280 Jefferson St., STE #200, Temecula CA 92590

***** KHE SANH VETERANS' 1999 REUNION *** HONORING HEROES, FAMILIES & FOUNDERS *****
JULY 14-18, 1999, BEST WESTERN, WESTPORT PARK, MARYLAND HEIGHTS / ST. LOUIS , MISSOURI

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

14 July - Wed	**1200**	**Check-in - Registration Desk opens - Hospitality Room - PX Opens *** No group events scheduled. Free time, sightseeing, unit or committee meetings.
15 July - Thu	0900	Hospitality Room / Registration Desk / PX Open
	1000	Board of Directors Meeting - Old Business & New Business **
	1100	**Women's Meeting (Welcome, Refreshments & Discussion)**
16 July - Fri	**0830**	**Jefferson Barracks - Dedication of Khe Sanh Veterans' Monument** (Bus Transportation) 0830 Buses depart hotel, 0900 Assemble at Monument Sight, 0915 Dedication Ceremony
	1045	Assemble to board buses -- Go to St. Peters, MO, Visit Private All Service Monument
	1145	Assemble to board buses -- Return to hotel
	1300	Hospitality Room / Registration Desk / PX Open
	1800	**Welcome Party Hosted by Best Western (Until 1900)**
17 July - Sat	0830	Hospitality Room & PX open....(note: Closes at 0945)
	1000	**General Membership Meeting** Attendance and participation by all voting members is strongly recommended ...Election of Officers & Board Members for Term, July 1999-July 2001 ...Choose location of 2001 Khe Sanh Vet's Reunion
	TBA	Transition Board Meeting **(Outgoing & Incoming Officers & Board Members)
	1800	**Cocktail Reception and Banquet** (Open Bar 1800-2200) 1800 Cocktail Reception 1900 All Service Color Guard - Invocation - Dinner 2000 Program: Awards, Recognition & Special *Guest Speaker*
18 July - Sun	**1000**	**Healing Meeting** (Hospitality Room) Hospitality Room Open - Closing time TBA --- Check out and/or Free Time for sightseeing

* Operating hours for Registration, Hospitality Room and PX will vary.
** Interested General and Associate members are invited and encouraged to attend all board of directors meetings.

Thursday Evening: Possible Funny Bone Comedy Club. Transportation Free. Show is free, but 2 Drink Minimum.
Friday Evening: Possible Trip to Players' Island Casino. Transportation Free, but bring your own cash to gamble.
St. Louis Cardinals vs. Chicago White Sox are in town. Possible group trip to the ball game.
Sunday: Some free transportation will be available for sightseeing, etc.

WE NEED **VOLUNTEERS** AT THE REUNION AND **PRIZES** FOR OUR ANNUAL RAFFLE.
PLEASE NOTE ON THE REGISTRATION FORM OR GIVE US A CALL IF YOU CAN HELP.

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization, and all contributions are tax deductible.
Registration Fee incorporates expenses for transportation, registration package, & supplies. Every effort was made to keep costs to attendees low.

HONORING HEROES: A *very* special dedication ceremony is being planned for Jefferson Barracks. We assure you that we are not trying to be mysterious, it is just that we cannot announce the names of the **key participants** until all arrangements are final. You will be pleased with the high regard and recognition of all who served at Khe Sanh, as the service & sacrifice of the living and the dead, is REMEMBERED at this event.

HONORING FAMILIES: The families and friends of many Khe Sanh Veterans are expected to attend this reunion either with or in honor of their loved ones. Please join in reaching out to encourage spouses, children, parents, siblings, other relatives and friends of Khe Sanh Veterans, to attend this reunion and share the bond.

For More Info Call: Russ & Kathy Turner 314/282-2263 Ken & Bernice Penn 847/825-7085 Mike Worth & Lucille Biscaglio 773/763-5415
1999 Reunion Committee: Chairman, Russ Turner, Tom Eichler, Bill Jayne, Mike Worth
Associates: Lucille Biscaglio, Bernice Penn, Kathy Turner

Registration Form is on next page

KHE SANH VETERANS' REUNION

HONORING HEROES, FAMILIES, AND FOUNDERS

TOGETHER THEN - TOGETHER NOW - KHE SANH VETERANS ARE ETERNALLY BONDED

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ATTENTION EARLY BIRDS !!! ONE OF THE ***FIRST 50 KHE SANH VETERANS*** TO REGISTER WILL WIN A TWO-NIGHT FREE, DELUXE ROOM PACKAGE WITH BREAKFAST FOR TWO.

****

*** **REUNITE WITH PRIDE. LAUGH - TALK - SHARE - HEAL - RENEW YOUR BROTHERHOOD** ***
Visit Jefferson Barracks, where you'll be part of the ceremony dedicating a monument honoring all Khe Sanh Veterans, their service and sacrifice. Exercise your privilege of choosing our organization's new leaders. Enjoy extra special guest speaker(s). By popular request, a reunion without a lot of structured activities, designed to allow plenty of time to connect with each other. **Bring family & friends! Encourage first timers, those we haven't seen for awhile & loved ones of lost comrades to attend.**
****

Complete the bottom of this form, cut at dotted line and **mail with your check Payable to: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.**
Mail To: Mike Worth, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., c/o 6487 N. Northwest Highway, Chicago, IL 60631
For More Info Call: Russ & KathyTurner 314/282-2263 Ken & Bernice Penn 847/825-7085 Mike Worth & Lucille Biscaglio 773/763-5415

.....

REUNION REGISTRATION ... *PLEASE PRINT*

NAME_____PH: Day_____Eve_____FAX_____

ADDRESS_____CTY/ST/ZIP_____E-MAIL_____

SERVED WITH (Branch, BTN., REG., CO., etc._____WHEN?_____

NAMES/RELATIONSHIP OF OTHERS IN YOUR PARTY_____

_____TOTAL IN YOUR PARTY: ADULTS____UNDER 18____

PLEASE INDICATE ANY SPECIAL NEEDS WITH WHICH WE MAY HELP _____

NUMBER OF ADULTS INTERESTED: • THURSDAY COMEDY CLUB TRIP: ____ ♣♦♥♠ FRIDAY CASINO TRIP: ____

		Cost	No. People		Total
Registration Fee (Per Person over 18, Non-Refundable)		$15.00 x	_____	=	$ _____
Banquet Choose one entree per person includes tax,gratuity & 4-Hour open bar	Roast Top Sirloin **or**	26.00 x	_____	=	$ _____
	Chicken Breast, Sautee **or**	26.00 x	_____	=	$ _____
	Filet of Sole	26.00 x	_____	=	$ _____
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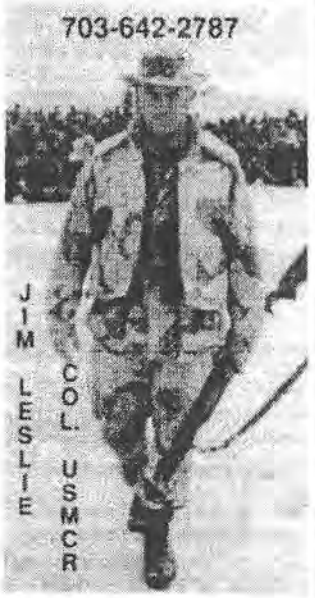

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B.J. "Bill" Seiber
Godley, Texas

"Tex"
DELTA 1/26



Khe Sanh Combat Base, photo of 22 March 1968, towards end of Siege battle. Note differences (addition of craters and elimination of some structures) from photo on front cover. This photo, submitted by Nick Romanetz, is now in the possession of Historical Division, HQMC.

THE KHE SANH VETERAN
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The Khe Sanh Veterans' Red Clay Issue 45 Autumn 1999



PFC Curtis Bugger
KIA, 1/21/68

In this issue...

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MEMOIRS 10

...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

A Message from the Editor

We are trying a theme approach in this one. At our reunion in St. Louis it was announced that the theme for the next two issues would be REUNION. You will see that we have some really good stuff here. We will repeat the theme REUNION in our next issue, due out February/March of 2000. Your story or tidbit need not match the theme exactly. Even oblique reference to the theme is fine. If a memory or thought is triggered, go for it. You do not have to write about Vietnam or Khe Sanh. We want stories from your entire life. What happened before and after Vietnam is just as important and interesting. Try keeping your theme piece as short as possible so that we can accommodate as many members as possible. I will let the writer have their full say, but I also bear a responsibility to the readers. If I edit it is because I am trying to help you get to your essential points in an understandable manner. We will run by you any significant deletions or changes. If you have submitted something that was not published, please resend it to Paul Knight and it will go into the hopper for consideration. Our plan is to acknowledge and confirm before publication when your work is scheduled for print. Please give us an issue to get up to speed. There have been so many editor changes that your work might have gotten lost or set aside. Our goal is to publish as much of our members' writings as we can. Our only constraint is a limited budget and what we can publish. We are specifically a non-sectarian, non-political organization. Please do not waste your time and effort in submitting anything that advocates or rags about politics or religion. If your religion or politics is part of your life story, then, of course, it has relevant historical value. None of us would dream of trying to tell Ray Stubbe to stop being who he is, or Max Cleland to stop being himself. What we won't do is publish their personal religious and political beliefs.

There are many volunteers involved in putting out this magazine. Tom Eichler is the chairman of the publications committee. He gets the complaints. The praise goes to our wonderful writers and poets. Paul Knight is the managing editor. He gets all submissions except poetry. Chuck Patterson gets the poetry. Poetry submissions have been greater than we are able to publish. This is a problem some of us hope to rectify by publishing a book of poetry by Khe Sanh members. We prefer that all submissions be sent via email. This saves Paul Knight the input time. Trust me, even with a scanner, input is a real chore. If you cannot manage email we will take your submissions in whatever form. I will even take audio tapes but, please, no drunken babbling ones.

Ernie Spencer

Future Themes

Winter 2000 — REUNION
Summer 2000 — No theme
Fall 2000 — HONOR
Winter 2001 — DANGER CLOSE
Spring/Summer 2001 — No theme
Fall 2001 — MY BUDDY

Note: Spring/Summer issues are small and go out to the complete roster.

✵

Gentlemen: Further to the recommendation I made at the Board meeting in St. Louis, I have taken the liberty of ordering a Khe Sanh Veterans wreath to be placed during the annual Veterans Day ceremony at "The Wall" in DC. A number of Khe Sanh Vets from the Dusters and Quad 50's, and any other KS Vets planning to be in DC are welcome to participate in the wreath laying. This has been a very rewarding experience for all who have participated in the past.

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

David "Bulldog" Smith .....President
Tom Eichler .....Vice President
Vince Griffith.....Treasurer
William Jayne .....Chaplin
Russ Turner.....Sgt. At Arms
Dick Peloquin.....Member At Large
Lawrence McCartney .....Member At Large
Bruce Geiger.....Member At Large
Charles Berg .....Member At Large
Mike Worth.....Member At Large

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All submissions go to:
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824 NW 104th Loop
Vancouver WA 98685

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email: espencer@veriomail.com

Chuck Patterson .....Poetry Editor
email: CPatter276@aol.com
725 So. Figueroa St. Suite 1200
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Tom Eichler .....Chairman Publications
email: teic1448@aol.com

The Dusters, Quads, and Searchlights, a not-for-profit veterans organization, is seeking sponsorship for "Operation Gold Star." "Operation Gold Star" is a DQS project escorting Gold Star Mothers to Viet Nam where they can visit the Area of Operations (AO) of their child's demise.

If you would like to sponsor or make a donation pledge to "Operation Gold Star" please contact our Project Coordinator Mr. Louis J. Block at (503) 252-8826.

Please email any comments, concerns, or suggestions to Bruce Geiger at: BMGeiger@aol.com

❋

San Diego is the reunion site for 2000. It will be from September 14-17. John Kahaney is working with the Hanalaya Hotel for a rate of around $89 per night. Firm info by the next issue. Chicago will be the reunion site for 2001. This will be the location for a special tribute to Ray Stubbe. Dates and hotel not firm as yet.

Parts of our By-Laws were found to be in need of legal re-writing. The Board voted to go with the By-Laws as is until our attorneys Padway and Padway can confirm the new wording. New By-Laws will be ready for the 2000 reunion.

A special thank you to Russ Turner for all his effort in putting together our St. Louis reunion. The trip to Jefferson Barracks went with military precision.

Thanks to Dick Peloquin Jr. for recording all of the minutes and the countless hours doing other video camera work for the organization.

Respectfully,
Cal Bright
Recording Secretary

❋

Revising our By-Laws continues. Anyone wishing to review our current By-Laws, or the proposal when they are ready can visit our Web Page at http://www.max-pages.com/khesanhveteran. If you don't have access to the Internet, contact Larry McCartney at P. O. Box 132, Stevensville, Maryland 21666-0132.

Membership Application

Name

Address

City State Zip

Phone number

email

fax

Are you a Khe Sanh vet? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Branch of Service

Unit (be specific)

Service #

Subscription category (check one):
- ❑ Regular member
- ❑ Associate member
- ❑ subscription only

Send completed information and dues/donation of $20 per year to:

Vincent Griffith, Treasurer
27280 Jefferson St. #200
Temecula CA 92590

The Chapel of Four Chaplains

Dear Rev. Stubbe:

We are pleased to inform you that you have been nominated by Messrs. David C. Smith and Robert M. Reed, Sr. to receive The Chapel of Four Chaplains Legion of Honor Award.

Shortly after the Chapel's dedication in 1951 by President Harry S. Truman, the founders established the Legion of Honor Program to publicly recognize persons who have rendered selfless service to humanity without regard to race, religion, or creed. We believe the service you have rendered to others is worthy of recognition, and are pleased to invite you to become a member of the Chapel's Legion of Honor. You will receive an Award Certificate which depicts, in symbolic form, our interfaith credo.

This award will be presented to you on Saturday, July 17, 1999, at the Best Western West Port Park Hotel, 2434 Old Dorcest Road, Maryland Heights, MO. Once again, congratulations on your nomination.

Sincerely,
Kimberly T. Pierce Executive Director

History of the Khe Sanh Monument

Ken Penn established the concept for a monument and tree to be placed in Arlington National Cemetery in 1993, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the siege of Khe Sanh.

Ray Stubbe was instrumental in selecting an appropriate tree. The ginko tree is a symbol of eternal perseverance despite adversity. It has endured the past, is withstanding the present and will survive the future.

Ken and Bernice Penn did fundraising in the Chicago area, with an event called TET REMEMBERED. Some of the local Khe Sanh veterans assisted in this fundraiser. No funds from the Khe Sanh organization were used. 95% of the monies raised for the purchase of the monument and ginko tree came from outside of the organization. The first and original monument was dedicated on 2 July 1993, in Arlington National Cemetery. Bernice Penn designed the memorial. The design includes much symbolism pertaining to REMEMBER as a command. All those who were at Khe Sanh were commanded to hold the base and hills at whatever cost The cost was great, many were lost, and those who survived still recall the horror of it all. REMEMBER is a forceful statement for civilians. It is for those who happen to cast their eyes upon this monument. Maybe they'll get a book, find an article and discover what our brave and courageous warriors had accomplished and the extent of the cost. They held the hills, the base, they won.

The diamond shape dividing the words "Served-Sacrificed" represents the symbol on the Vietnam Veterans Wall for those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The curving words "KHE SANH—WE ARE ETERNALLY BONDED" represents the hills, the rising sun, (which was used on several issues of the KSV magazine) and the leaf of the Ginko tree.

William Griffith was the originator of the phrase "Eternally Bonded. Hill Fights 1967, Siege 1968, the renowned battles in the Khe Sanh area." As Khe Sanh was a Marine Corps combat base, the Marine Corps emblem is predominant. It is strategic on the monument, as was the area of Khe Sanh a strategic position for the NVA to try and capture.

The Army, Navy and Air Force emblems depict the base itself and extend to those military services that were also at Khe Sanh. The unity of the four military branches is of utmost importance as they were there together, fought together shared together the horrors of war and brotherhood.

Semper Fidelis, "Always Faithful," applies to all those who were at Khe Sanh, Remember all those who served at Khe Sanh are Eternally Bonded.

The survivors of Khe Sanh, have much work to do. They have stories to tell, books to write, and lives to live; they can affect the world once again.

This can only be accomplished by one thing. They must start taking better care of themselves. Go to the doctor, get a complete check up (physical) and follow the doctors' advice. It really is not that hard. It might save your life. Ken is in critical condition in I.C.U., as I write this. He had a stroke only one and a half years ago. He failed to take proper care of himself.

Bernice Penn

Dear Ernie,

I am writing to clarify some of the actions of Delta 1/26. I also seek more on the history of Hill 950. It is my understanding that after the June 6, 1967 attack of the small relay site, two platoons of D 1/26 outposted the hill to develop stronger defensive positions. After Delta developed the site, 1/26 would rotate a single platoon to 950 on approximately a 30-day rotation. So far I have pinned down the following on Hill 950: Lt. Long, Bravo 1 1/26 10/67 Delta 3, 1/26 11/67-12/67 Lt. Wells, Charlie 3 1/26

10/12/67-25/12/67 Lt. Williams, Alpha 3 1/26 25/12/67-07/04/67 Co ?, 5/7 Cav 4/68 Plt H&S, 1/1 Apr to June Plt, E/2/4 Aug 68

Army Sgt. Cavaiani earned the Medal of Honor up on 950 in 1971. In June '67 John Burke (original member of 1/26 formed at Camp Pendleton in April '66) earned the Navy Cross. Both Skip Wells and Maxie Williams earned their first Purple Hearts on 950.

Who was Delta 3 Platoon Commander during Nov - Dec '67? Was it Walt Chapman? *(Ed. yes)*

I came to the 26th Marines from a Med Cruise with A/1/6. It appears that a disproportionately large number of both 5-67 TBS (The Basic School) officers and A/1/6 enlisted, ended up at Khe Sanh. In Delta 1/26, Lt. Dan McGravey was from TBS 5-67 and both Lance Cpl. Bill Purdy and Lance Cpl. Carl Goff were from A/1/6. Goff was wounded in the action where Bill Purdy snatched the SKS away from an NVA and clubbed him with it in a late December '67 operation into the valley north of 950. Any further recollections on 950 or about Purdy and Goff or awards given? *(Ed: What I remember is that night after things settled down, puking my guts out. Is that an award? For more on 950 see the piece on Buffalo Belt.)* After Maxie Williams' death on 10 April, the next Alpha officer to fall was Lt. Paul McGrath who joined Alpha as weapons platoon commander on 6 May '68. Before that, from Dec '67 to May '68, he served as the 106RR Platoon Commander. He fell on 7 June '68 along with his TBS 6-67 classmate Sam Hannah, Delta 3, 1/26. Both at Christmas Tree Hill/ My Loc.

Semper Fi,
Patrick Wayne

J.L. Stanton — Where Are You?

Re: Red Clay Issue #44 (Summer '99)

Thirty-seven years ago while I was a Desk Sgt. with Shore Patrol Headquarters, Santa Ana (El Toro) California, I reported for duty and found a small box of clothing and a swagger stick.

The owner never claimed the items. I still have the swagger stick. The name on the stick is "J.L. Stanton. Page 11 of the aforementioned Red Clay has an article written by a Jim Stanton. There is also an inquiry by the editor, wanting to know the whereabouts of Colonel Jim Stanton. I am sorry I don't know his whereabouts either as I would like to return the swagger stick to him if it is his. The stick however is an enlisted stick, having brass tips. If I can get this to the rightful owner I would be glad to do so.

Ewing E. LaPorte Sgt. Major USMC (RET)
1969 NE 12th St., Hickory, NC 28601-1602

Andy DeBona is chairman of the Veterans Memorial in Ennis, Montana. The memorial is dedicated to all who honorably served, living or deceased. The center piece will be a 60 foot flagpole flying 20x30 foot national colors. The cost of construction is being financed by the sale of tax deductable commemorative bricks. For further info contact: Andy at P.O. Box 995 Ennis, MT 59729 ph. (406) 682-7337

Memoriam

William Adams remembered by Allen L. French

Paul McGrath remembered by Jurate Kazickas

Taps

Wally Schaffenberger – 25 May 1999, H&S/3/26, cancer

Thomas E. Casey –1 March 1998, B/1/26, abdominal aneurysm

Manuel P. Babbit – 4 May 1999, A/3dAts, executed

Mark Ward – 23 June 1999, G/2/26, heart attack

Bill Craig – 29 April 1999, A-101 Lang Vei

Death of a Cannoncocker

He did not hear them coming,
With the shrieks of death they made,
He was busy on the gun.
Sending out his own fusillade.

The last thing he remembered
Was sailing high up off the ground,
Landing face up with eyes wide open,
He couldn't hear or make a sound.

As he lay there bleeding,
He wanted very much to say
"Please Lord, I'm too young to die this way."
He passed on, Bled his Life out,
ON KHE SANH'S BLOOD RED CLAY.

Raymond C. Nicol

Reunion

One cannot attend one of our reunions without being aware of being with very special people. I have told anyone who would listen that as a group, I have never been with men who exhibited greater humanity, greater caring for others, greater dedication, greater moral fiber, than those I knew at Khe Sanh.

Share your stories. Share your life. Write down your experiences. Get it out of your system. Your children and others will be happy you did so. This will also help to provide a more accurate historical accounting about what it was really like there. Like the controversial Civil War, Vietnam will be studied for centuries. Help future historians understand what our experience really was by writing down your story or stories. We can never forget our past — we are unable to do so. actually. The well wishers, those who tell us to, just don't understand. How could they?

Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe

Names Remembered

I want to tell you about the wonderful Marines who kept the faith with my son. I now know them after wondering for 30 years if they had all been killed. They love him still in their precious memories.

On Easter Sunday, a soft southern voice on my phone asked if my name was Bugger. I hesitatingly answered "yes" and he continued, "Did you have a son named Curtis?" I wonderingly said, "Yes, he was killed in Viet Nam 30 years ago." This soft southern voice began to cry and chokingly said, "I was in his Battery when he died and so were some others. My name is Willie Roe Yates." My heart stood still. He was crying and trying to tell me about a reunion in July and would it be all right if he sent some papers about it and also an article from a newspaper. He kept saying that he hoped that he had not upset me but that it was very important to him that he had found me. I told him that I would be very pleased to read about the reunion, as I didn't know that there even was one. I also told him that I really didn't know if I could come or not as I had recently remodeled my home and used up most of my money doing so. I was also wondering why it took so long to find someone. I was getting emotional. He apologized again and he assured me that I would hear from him again. We said goodbye.

After we hung up I cried so hard my 92-year-old Mother was concerned that someone in the family had died. Eventually I reassured her and told her of the strange phone call. From then on I was beginning to live in a world of hope. I had not heard from anyone since Curtis died when 3 people wrote scarce details immediately after his death. Their names were Gabrys, Kendall and Hulbert. I think I was so traumatized that I could not think of anything or anyone. Just that I could not let that happen to any of my other children. And so the years passed.

Within a very few days of Willie's call I had a letter and the papers from him. I really couldn't consider going to the reunion. I knew that I had spent most of my savings and knew that I could not get that many funds in such a short time to make the trip. I wrote Willie Roe back declining the invitation and sent some pictures of my family and a little family information. I heard from Willie Roe again and also from Ray Moffatt who was with Curtis when he died. I talked to both of them declining the offer. Then I heard from Billie Joe Hill. He too was crying and so happy to talk to me and he said, "There is no excuse good enough. You will be coming. I will send your flight tickets and your room will be paid for and waiting." I couldn't believe there was such kindness and love in the world. I have always been loved by my family and church but for total strangers to do this for me after 30 years was more than I could have imagined.

My daughter was anxious to come also and when we arrived four big Marines were there waiting at the airport. I gained four sons right there in five minutes and as the reunion proceeded I gained at least four more sons and many beautiful faithful friends that will make my heart sing forever. I would like to pay tribute to these good and faithful men and their wives who once more served beyond the call of duty. Their names are: Willie Roe Yates, Billie Ray Moffatt, Billie Joe Hill, Ken Penn, John Wright, Howard Whitaker, Virgil Porter, Bob Bates.

I can assure you that I will never be lost again. I congratulate you on a very successful reunion. And to all those that were there, I thank you for your love and friendship. You are my Pride and Joy forever. God bless you all.

Semper Fi,
Wilma (Willie) Bugger

NVA In U.S. Hospital

Last year I was assessing a new patient for a vascular problem. The patient was male, early 70's and of Oriental persuasion. I'll call him Nguyen X. In listening to his account and by the spelling of his name it became obvious that he was Vietnamese. During the exam, he cautiously raised the right sleeve of my scrub top, just enough to expose the USMC tattoo. I raised the sleeve up further to sate his curiosity and allowed him to see the Bulldog with the WWI style helmet. He stated "Marines, huh?"

"Yes sir, a long time ago."

"Did you have to be sent to Vietnam?" I replied in the affirmative and told him when and where I had served or seen action. He smiled up at me and said, "Very strange that we meet like this. I was a Medical Officer in the North Vietnam Army" He went on to tell me his outfit and how he ended up here. He made a point about how "bothered" the NVA soldiers he knew would get when they had to move out against Marines. "We were told many things about you Marines and about your history and especially how stubborn you would fight. We weren't so worried about the Army soldiers, but we were very respectful of you Marines."

"We knew we could win our war against America by just wearing the soldiers down, but we sometimes made jokes about maybe not being able to hold out too long if all Marines were in Vietnam. This was a very unhappy thing to think of. We did not like to have to fight Marines. Marines don't run, America is very honored to have Marines."

I thanked him and continued with his assessment. He shook my hand and said, "I'm very sorry Marines had to die for Vietnam. All Marines are good and honorable. All Marines are heroes. Marines made my job very difficult."

Semper Fi
Ambulatory Care Coordinator (name withheld for patient confidentiality purposes.

Buffalo Belt

You asked me to write about the belt I sent to David Buffalo and the incident leading up to it. As I remember, David Buffalo joined the 26th Marines when they were reactivated in April of 1966. I did not meet David until we were in country in October. When we relieved the 9th Marines on Hill 55, they left us with very few defensive positions or anything else. I had Staff Duty and was checking the lines, such as they were. I was stumbling around when this Marine came out of his defensive position with his weapon at the ready and pointed at me. I pulled my .45 and announced who I was. We exchanged a few words and went our separate ways. That was my first and last meeting with David until he was on a medevac helicopter out after he was shot and bayoneted on Hill 950.

After we evacuated our wounded, they brought the dead and wounded NVA down to the aid station. One of the dead NVA had a nice belt on. For some reason I took it off of him. Why, I have no idea.

Thirty years later, I signed a guest book from a guy who was looking for Plank holders from the 26th Marines. Somehow, I got the address of one of the mailmen from 1/26. I wrote him and asked him about David Buffalo. He wrote back and informed me that, in fact, Buffalo was his name and gave me his home address and phone number.

I called David and we had a long conversation. We emailed back and forth and I am glad he is still alive, even if he did almost shoot me. We laughed about that. He told me about his three years of convalescing. I was setting up my Marine Room when I found the belt I had taken from the dead NVA soldier and realized why I had taken it. I called David and told him that I had it and that it was his if he wanted it. He said he would like it very much. I mailed it the next day.

Semper Fi, stay off the sky line,
Russell H. Evans S/Sgt. USMC (RET)
evansrf@worldnet.att.net

Deja Whatever

My current dilemma is caused by a long turbulent past and hard knocks taken dead on. You play. You pay. I am becoming increasingly nostalgic in my waning years. My always restless, wandering mind repeatedly lobs me back to our Officer Club at Khe Sanh. Jim our CO, Ken with Bravo, Mike our Communications Officer and I. We stand close to one another in a gentleman's semi-circle just outside the club's entrance. The sun is going down over Laos. A radiant-red sky lights the dusty, red dirt beneath our nylon sided boots. We are laughing and downing the latest Marine Corps-issued grog.

It was so easy and natural being macho, then. Those days of October and November 1967. Before the Furies came. Unquestionably, they were the most memorable and exciting times of my life. I was confident and comfortable in my job. I worshiped my company and loved my battalion. My childhood dream had come true. I was twenty-four.

You bet your sweet petunia I exceeded the daily allotment of two beers, on occasion. I justified my behavior by averaging. I never drank out on the hills or in the bush. Delta spent most of its time outside the base. So...whenever I'd get stuck at the base overnight, with my company out on one of the hills, I'd let my hair down a notch. Ken, Mike or some other brother 1/26 officer would always prevent me from making a complete fool of myself and embarrassing the regiment.

That old tape played again during our last reunion in St. Louis. I'm going up the stairs just off the main lobby. Backwards. Hal's got me in a headlock. Ken's got me under an arm. My feet are bouncing off the steps. I'm

going: "Whud I do, huh? Just tell me, whud I say?"

"Shut-up," Ken says matter of factly. "You're going to bed. Right now." My problem is I've got a 24-year-old spirit in a 56-year-old, long ago burned-out, gunfighter's body.

Ernie Spencer

VO-67 REUNION

With anxiety and reserved feelings, I went to the first ever reunion for the unit I served with in Vietnam. VO-67. I wasn't sure what to expect and didn't understand what might happen. It had been 31 years since most of us had seen or talked, due to the secrecy of our unit.

Upon seeing some of the members of my squadron, there were smiles and tears of joy. We realized that only time had passed. As members of the families of shipmates that had been KIA or MIA started showing up, feelings of sadness began to engulf me. It brought back many memories of camaraderie, good times, and sad times. This was one of the fears that I had. That I wouldn't know how to cope with these feelings. But I think that between all of us, we managed to find some sort of closure and understanding.

At the dinner banquet I was afforded a very great honor. I was asked to give the invocation. I had asked Chaplain Ray Stubbe to write one specifically for us since he had extensive knowledge of who and what VO-67 is. He did so graciously. I was very nervous, being an E5 enlisted man, to stand before everyone and give the invocation. As I started to speak, I felt a hand on my shoulder. I looked over and no one was there. I knew that the Good Lord was telling me that everything was alright. Later in the dinner I was called up to the podium. This time I was to receive an Air Medal for the combat missions I had flown, dropping sensors to help track NVA movements around Khe Sanh in Nov 1967-June 1968. This medal should have been awarded 31 years ago but I felt very proud to receive it now. We also had a bell tolling ceremony to honor our KIA and WIA crew members. We lost 20 crew members, 25% of our combat air crews.

I am proud to be a life member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association. I have become very good friends with Ted Szczesniak who served with COMM 1/13. I am looking forward to going to the Khe Sanh Veterans reunion in the year 2000.

Semper Fi,
Kerry Bignall VO-67 Navy 1967-1968

An ESP Experience

Sgt. George William Storz, 1st Bat. 9th Marines, H&S Co., Platoon 106 arrived in Vietnam about November 22, 1967 at Camp Evans where he was stationed on Hill 51 until 1/9 was sent to Khe Sanh in late January, 1968. There, he was stationed at an outpost on the Rock Quarry, one-half mile northwest of Khe Sanh base. A conscientious Marine, George had written in a letter to his family, "My main job now is to save my men's lives no matter how much they dislike it." He was cautious, also, writing, "I take good care of myself, always in my hole and I'm armed to the teeth, knives, pistol, rifle, grenades, everything." One day, the top bed, made of 300 pounds of dirt weakened by tunneling ants, fell down on him as he lay on the bottom bunk. He wasn't hurt because he was wearing his armored vest and helmet. He wrote, "So there I was on the floor with big chunks of dirt pinning me down and about a million ants crawling all over me. All we could do was laugh."

George and Jim, a corporal in his unit, were bunker mates and shared many night watches, talking through the hours. They talked about new recipes for c-rats, cars, and family. George had his eye on a new Bonneville when he got home. He was excited about the new baby expected in May and couldn't make up his mind if he wanted a boy or girl. "I'd like a boy," he said, "to carry on the family name. But, if it's a girl, she'd be beautiful and she'd never have to go to war." Scheduled to be discharged from the Marine Corps on May 15, he was to leave Khe Sanh for the rear on March 8. On that Friday morning, Jim took him around in the supply vehicle to say goodbye to his men at their positions and then down to the helicopter at C-Med.

Able-bodied men served as stretcher bearers to load wounded onto the aircraft, so George and Jim were pressed into service. At about 10:30 a.m., as they were carrying a stretcher, the airstrip came under heavy mixed artillery, rocket, mortar and machinegun fire. George was hit, suffering penetrating wounds to his head and left arm. He died without regaining consciousness, although Jim said George knew he was there. I am thankful to Jim for having been with him and to the corpsmen who tried to save his life. The helicopter received 50 shrapnel holes, causing minor injuries to two crew members and substantial damage to the aircraft although it was able to take off later.

His body arrived in the U.S. on March 25 and he was buried at Tamalpais Cemetery in San Rafael, California on March 29, 1968. He is survived by his wife, Kitty (Carla); children George Brian, Ursula, and John, born seven

weeks after his death; parents George and Betty; brother John; and sister Ellen.

George had written about the time at Khe Sanh when a buddy had shared his bottle of wine with him. He wanted so badly to reciprocate, asking at the end of every letter, "Where's my wine?" His wife was afraid to send it for fear he would get tipsy and get hurt, and I knew it was illegal to send anything alcoholic through the mail. Finally, she bought the wine (Paul Masson Burgundy, I remember) and gave it to me to mail. It was very late at night when I popped some popcorn to cushion the bottle, so I went to bed intending to finish the package in the morning. That night I woke up about 12:30 and tossed and turned the rest of the night. I felt terrible in the morning, put some cheese and crackers in with the wine and took the unsealed package with me when I left to go to my teaching job. As I was driving to work, I listened to the radio as the announcer told about the fierce shelling that had gone on at Khe Sanh during the night. I was overcome with emotion and, crying, pulled over and waited until I could continue.

When I got to the classroom, I put the package on my desk and left the room for a minute. I returned to find that kids had gotten into the popcorn. I rescued the package and hid it until after school, when I sealed it and mailed it on the way home. Not wanting the package traced to me, I did not include a return address. The next day, I wrote to George telling him I had sent the wine on March 8. On the 26th, we got the word that George had been killed on March 8 at about 10:30 A.M. Vietnam time, 12:30 California time.

Betty Storz

Mission

- *Some chose.*

  They knew by instinct, had known always,

  that they would, no, must accept the mission.
- *Some were chosen.*

  They learned by lesson, by example

  to accept, try to survive the mission.
- *Some chose*

  First forward, "Hey, I'll go. See you guys."

  "No problemo." "Piece of cake!"
- *Some weren't chosen.*

  We need four more. "I'll go next time."

  "Man, I'm tired. Let me sleep."
- *They were ambushed!*

  Should have been there, could have helped them.

  God, why those guys? Why not me ??
- *Some chose*

  and some were chosen. What's the mission?

  "I'll go right now! Please, choose me !"
- *Some were chosen*

  to survive it, to return and

  wonder why and what's their mission.
- *Tell the story.*

  Some will choose. Choose not to listen.

  Some will choose. They'll choose to hear.

Lucille J. Biscaglio, 1 Aug 1999

Fox 2/3's Foxtrot Ridge

28 May 1968
by Phillip Ball
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After three days of inactivity, we were beginning to think the report of a large NVA unit headed in our direction was just another false alarm. We had a lot of those in the bush — "hurry up and wait" was often times the order of the day. It was extremely rare for a Marine rifle company to stay in one position as long as this, but the Battalion Commander was calling the shots from LZ Hawk, and he felt strongly about the information he had. Rumor was, if nothing happens tonight, we move out in the morning.

We were 3000 meters southeast of the Khe Sanh Combat Base and 1200 meters south of Rt.#9. Our ridge line position seemed to be a good one. With LZ Hawk and its artillery battery only 2000 meters to our northeast, fire support would be swift and accurate. With vertical slopes on all sides, surrounded by thick jungle and very heavy underbrush, some of us felt the enemy would lose far too many men to risk a ground attack so each day there, we simply dug our holes deeper and reinforced our positions. My squad-leader woke me up shortly after midnight, by whispering the one alarming word that immediately shocks the most sleepy-eyed grunt into action, "MOVEMENT!" One of our LP's (4-man listening post outside the perimeter) using a star light scope, spotted a few NVA on the southern-slope of the smaller piece of high ground, east of our ridge line positions. Because of its higher elevation and its excellent vantage points, we called this 13-man outpost the Crow's Nest. Manned by a squad of grunts, an M60 machine-gun team, and our artillery FO (Forward Observer) team, the small outpost had to be defended at all cost. Should the enemy ever gain control of the high ground in battle, they would gain a distinct advantage.

Our 60mm mortars began firing on the NVA, who immediately began to attack the Crow's Nest. Artillery from LZ Hawk began pounding the key areas that had been previously registered as likely avenues of approach. Utilizing heavy small-arms fire, grenades and satchel-charges (blocks of TNT, wrapped with detonating cord and stuffed into a satchel of some kind), a platoon-size NVA unit attacked from the tree line. Bloody, close-in fighting took place for nearly 30 minutes, but the marines proved to be too much for the NVA. After losing the majority of their platoon, the enemy pulled out and dispersed back into the trees. Once again the countryside was graced with silence. The smell of smoke and burned gun powder lay heavy in the night air, and I heard the moans and cries of wounded NVA at the bottom of the hill. Waiting and wondering was the hardest part, we had no idea how many more gooks were out there, nor did we know how willing they would be to die. They had come a very long way on foot, through some of the most hostile terrain in the world, with a single purpose in mind. I doubt that they had had much time to rest before the attack, and perhaps that is the reason they were permitted to smoke marijuana and opium. We smelled the stuff early on. It was as if they were burning it on a fire for our benefit, trying to get us stoned so we wouldn't fight.

It wasn't until 0245H before they were once again ready to fight. This time they came up the opposite end of the ridge — the western slope was a more gradual incline than any other side. Like a giant finger, it rose from the heavy jungle, approximately 100 meters before leveling-off to an open summit, covered with chest-high elephant grass. We smelled the drugs they were smoking, but we also smelled their rotten body-odor. They stunk up the whole place with their lack of hygiene. We were all reporting sounds of enemy movement, but nobody had actually seen a target until the 4-man LP, 20 meters down the finger, called in and said, "We got bookoo gooks comin' straight up the trail at us."

I was a PFC with just one month in-country. I didn't know too many guys outside my own squad yet, but the excited whispers of the grunt from the LP were very familiar. It was my best buddy Private Donald P. Schuck, a tough country boy from Indiana who I had first met back in boot camp. Don was as tough as nails, thus the nickname Nails suited him well. Immediately after reporting that NVA were approaching his position, Don requested permission to bring the 4-man LP back inside the perimeter, where he could find cover in his hole in 1st platoon's sector. I was shocked and angered when I heard someone tell him, "Just sit tight; do not move until I get down there for a closer look-see." Out there without a fighting hole for cover, the LP did not stand a chance if they were spotted by the enemy, and I hoped Don disobeyed the ridiculous order to sit-tight and was headed back in. Neither of us any longer wanted to be heroes, we only wanted to survive. We talked about it often, if given an order that might get us killed, we would not hesitate to do what we thought was right. We felt that too many officers were in it for the glory, and they did not care how many grunts had to die to get them the recognition they wanted. Of course all officers weren't bad, but you always have that 10 percent.

I began passing the word myself "Watch out for the LP coming in. Don't shoot, 4 man LP comin' in." With my head sticking above the rim of the hole, I whispered loudly to the position 10 meters to my right. It was in mid-sen-

tence that I was stunned by three, practically simultaneous explosions that rocked the entire west end of the ridge. The blasts occurred right where I believed Schuck's LP was supposed to be. I had no idea what happened at the time, only later did I find out that 3 NVA with satchel charges, leaped into the 4-man LP position, killing themselves and 3 of the 4 marines. Private "Nails" Schuck miraculously survived the initial attack. Disoriented and possibly in shock, he struggled to get back to 1st platoon's lines.

The blasts triggered an all out attack on the western finger, and again up the eastern slope on the Crow's Nest. The Crow's Nest machine-gun team of L/Cpl. Bob "Hillbilly" Croft and his A-Gunner PFC Julio "Mouse" Espejio, had expended a huge portion of their belted ammo during the first attack and were in desperate need of an emergency resupply. Hillbilly asked that someone bring him all the ammo we could afford. This request immediately became top priority.

PFC Avan Lampkins, from Alabama, was the third man in my hole. He was a big, strong black marine who was openly prejudiced against all whites. 3-Alpha squad-leader L/Cpl.Fred "Chico" Rodriquez recently made Avan his assistant, because there was no other place to put him. He refused to get along with the whites in the squad, and the one fire team that was all black didn't want him either. Avan was not a team player, he did not take orders well, but only through Chico's keen sense of fairness and diplomacy did Avan become a valuable asset to the squad. He was like a one-man-army, in the tremendous loads he could carry. He humped more weapons and ammo than any two grunts in the field. Only because I was 3-Alpha's radioman and he was forced to share a hole with me, was I tolerated; grudgingly perhaps, but just the same, we were a team, 3-Alpha CP Group. Avan Lampkins never volunteered for anything in his entire, selfish life. That's why Chico and I were both so surprised when he stepped up and volunteered when Sgt. Pressller called over the hill without using the radio, "We need one, warm body up here, Chico. On the double."

My biggest fear at that point was that someone would tell me I had to get out of my hole for some reason, but Avan jumped up right away and scrambled to the Company CP as if he had no fear in him whatsoever. I admit, I was scared to death but because I was a Marine, I was not afraid to die. Actually, I planned on it. I just did not want to suffer. I did not want my body to be so torn up no one would recognize me at the funeral. I especially did not want to be burned.

With the NVA ground attack in full swing, came a relentless barrage of RPG's that pounded the entire length of our position. The somewhat crude 40mm Rocket Propelled Grenades were fired from various hills adjacent to us, making a blood-curdling, scream-like whistle as each one approached. It was only a split second warning, but by listening to the intensity of the whistles, we could sometimes judge approximately where they were going to hit. Our own artillery pounded at targets all around the ridge line, but nothing seemed to stop the human wave of NVA, especially up the western finger, where Schuck was still trying to get back to the perimeter, and where 1st platoon's lines were beginning to crumble under the pressure. After 1st platoon's machine-gun was knocked out by an RPG direct hit, killing both the gunner and a-gunner, things really went downhill fast. The mortar-pit, next to the gun-hole was next, when a chi-com grenade bounced into their position. The four mortar-men leaped out at the last instant.

Several NVA breached 1st platoon's perimeter and attempted to find Lt. Jones and the Company CP. PFC Allen "Chief" Walker, while fleeing the mortar pit, ran headlong into 2 of those NVA. He shot one in the head with his .45 automatic, while he struggled with the second. More and more Marines were being forced from their holes in 1st platoon's sector as some 60 to 80 NVA rushed up the finger, eager to occupy the abandoned positions. It was one of the Marines who spotted Chief fighting the hard-core gook, and he immediately rushed over to help.

Lt. Jones ordered 1st platoon to pull back, twenty meters inside the perimeter and to stretch out across the ridge, tying in with 2nd platoon on the north and 3rd platoon on the south. He ordered them to bring all the wounded and the dead out with them. 1st platoon suffered approximately 6 to 9 KIA's and 20 or so WIA's, in the first 5 to 10 minutes. That only left about a half dozen grunts that weren't killed or wounded, but not all WIA's were totally disabled and many continued to fight.

One was PFC David Kinsella, who was the last man out of the mortar pit before the enemy grenade exploded. The blast caught him in the soles of the feet and shrapnel penetrated his boots. He made several trips back and forth from the newly formed secondary line of defense, to within five meters of where the NVA were setting up their lines, and managed to help the WIA's back to a more secure area.

The NVA looked to have the strength and the momentum to overrun our entire company position. They had just gone through 1st platoon in 10 minutes, like a hot knife through butter. There seemed to be no letting up on their part. We had no chance of receiving reinforcements before sun up.

The enemy was using pop-up flares to coordinate their attack. I saw a couple of their green pencil flares soar into the night sky, but I didn't know what they were for. Lt. Jones and Gunnery Sergeant Larsen knew exactly what they were, and just to see what would happen, they fired a few of their own. What unfolded next was perhaps the very last thing anyone might expect. The enemy troops misunderstood our flares to be their own, they immediately stopped fighting, and started celebrating. They thought we left the hill, forfeiting a victory to them. They were really whooping it up, shooting into the air and yelling praises to themselves. They went through 1st platoon's abandoned packs and equipment, scavenging American cigarettes and C-Rations. It was this brief pause in the action that gave us the time we needed to regroup, and with all of 1st platoon's people pulled back a safe distance, our artillery was called in on the western finger. Swift, accurate and very deadly, the big guns at LZ Hawk fired a mission that fell as close as 35 meters at times from our own people. We all understood it had to be close to be effective, so we buried ourselves in our holes and toughed it out. The concussions were bone jarring, and I thought for sure one of those 105 rounds was going to land right in my hole, but it didn't, and we made it okay.

The NVA on the other hand, lost a hell of a lot of men, but they still didn't quit. They simply moved around the ridge and continued to attack wherever the artillery was not hitting. Using the same, familiar human-wave type tactics, they charged up at various places hoping to find a weak spot where they could breach our perimeter again. We all had our chance; they tested everyone, but we all held our ground, repulsing one attack after another. The ground attack was bad enough, but the unprecedented number of Rocket Propelled Grenades this reinforced NVA Battalion brought to bear was devastating us. It was estimated that more than 500 RPG's exploded on our small position between 0415H and 0600H. That comes out to one every fifteen seconds. It was during those two hours that the fighting was obviously the heaviest; and for me it seems like one big blur. Chico and I took turns sticking our heads up, a very dangerous proposition in itself. We had to quickly locate any immediate threat, and then attempt to dispose of it. Thanks to Avan's generosity, or rather inadvertent mistake, he had left a sack of a dozen or more of his grenades behind, and it was with those grenades that we were able to defend our position without the enemy locating us. We waited until we absolutely had no other choice before either of us fired a single round from our M16s. A muzzle flash at night was a road map to your position. We also used the three Claymore mines we set up in our field of fire. One extremely effective, catching about 5 NVA in-line.

At some point, radio silence had to be ordered, because the enemy got their hands on one of our radios. It wasn't that we were afraid they would listen and learn of our strategy, they were playing with the damn thing like school kids on a telephone. I heard them laughing and cutting up; they kept us from transmitting messages because they kept the microphone keyed. Radio silence added another dimension of fear and confusion; not knowing what was going on was troublesome. After a while, Chico decided that Avan had been gone too long plus we were hungry for information concerning the status of the rest of the company. Hell, we didn't know how many of us were still alive. Was a plan to retreat an option? It was shortly after O6OOH, that the RPG bombardment let up a bit. Chico scrambled out of the hole to go to the CP for info. I wasn't a bit happy about being left alone, but I knew my squad-leader would be within hearing distance if I needed him. All I had to do was holler. I remember sticking my head up and seeing a half-dozen NVA running up the hill toward me. One of them appeared to be waving a handgun as if to lead the charge. I had been waiting anxiously for just this scenario, so I could fire the claymore I had so meticulously tied up in the one tree between me and the tree line. The squad of NVA were literally cut to ribbons by the claymore. As I stood up to fire my M16,I felt something hit me squarely in the right side of my head. I thought Avan had clumsily kicked me, returning from his mission, but in fact it was a satchel charge, blocks of TNT they used so frequently that night as concussion-grenades.

The blast blew off my helmet and slammed me hard against the far side of the hole. I ended up at the bottom, twisted like a pretzel, lying on my back. Both my arms were bent around underneath me and my shoulders were tightly wedged between the front and backsides of the hole. I couldn't move anything but my legs, so I started kicking and digging my heels into the clay, desperately trying to free myself. It took several, long seconds to regain my senses. At first I could not figure out where I was, or why I was there. My mind flashed back to a childhood memory of my mother and me, during more carefree times. I oh-so-yearned for those times again, when my mother's touch could solve any problem and sooth any pains. It was only because of my youth and my excellent physical condition that I was able to recover from such a devastating blow to the head as quickly as I did. I feared the enemy would jump into my hole at any second, and the only thing that mattered at all was that I get to my feet. There was no need to consider anything else at this point. If chewing off my arm would have freed me, I think I would have tried it. I arched my back and twisted around and I got my left arm free. I reached across my chest to remove a sharp object that had been sticking me

in the side, and found it was my M16. I immediately raised the barrel to aim it straight up at the smoke filled sky. Suddenly the sweaty, distorted face of a young North Vietnamese teenager was looking down at me. I guess he couldn't see me in the dark, and he was reluctant to jump into the deep hole, because he just froze in that position for a split second. Time enough for me to positively identify my target, and pull the trigger with my left, index finger. A long burst of automatic fire erupted from the MI6 muzzle, illuminating the surprised expression on the unsuspecting youth's face. Several rounds hit him in the chest, then, more walked up and splattered his face. It all happened so fast, it was over before I realized it had actually happened. When it did sink in that I had just killed a gook, a very strange feeling came over me. I felt the victim's buddies would come after me in retaliation. It became real personal at that point. Using the M16 as a crutch, I grabbed hold of the warm barrel with my left hand and I raised my upper-body enough to free my right arm, twisted behind my back. I then struggled to my knees and began to stand up. Still a little woozy, I reloaded my weapon.

Just as I was throwing the M16 muzzle over the rim of my hole to fire, I was blind-sided from behind POW. Something very heavy came crashing in on top of me. I felt a sharp blow to the head, just behind my right ear. I collapsed to the bottom of the hole out cold. I don't know how long I was out, but when I started coming around there was someone or something stepping on me. It was Avan and Chico, they both came running back to the hole when they heard me shooting the gook. The first words I remember hearing were, "You alright ? Damn Butterball, we thought you wuz dead, man."

Avan tried to take credit for my "kill, saying that he had saved my life in the nick of time. I remember arguing with the big, soul brother about it. "You might have shot him after he was already dead," I said."But I got him square in the face first."

Not long after that the sun came up behind the mountain. Hueys (helicopter gun-ships) began arriving. A half dozen machine gun shooting, rocket firing choppers circled the ridge line, picking off the now fleeing NVA. Those Huey door-gunners are a breed to themselves. They say you have to be half crazy to do what they do, and ice water in your veins. Tree top level at 120 mph, tethered only by a thin, leather strap, these courageous gunners hung outside the aircraft and fired down at the horrified enemy, who in turn were shooting back at the Hueys. The Hueys gained altitude and moved away to the north, giving plenty of space to the 500 mph jet Phantoms. F4s could carry 5000 pounds of high explosive, dumb bombs. Aimed entirely by gravity, and the direction of the aircraft, it was exciting to watch our Marine Corps pilots at work. Us grunts on the ground cheered loudly when our pilots risked their own lives to dive dangerously low in order to hit enemy targets for us. These jets dropped 92,000 pounds of ordinance that morning, rearranging the surrounding landscape in a big way, and saved our asses once again.

It was going on 1100H and there was still a handful of determined NVA holed-up in a large bomb crater on the western end of the ridge. Echo Company had arrived and was pursuing the fleeing enemy troops to the south and southeast. We had hoped they would come up the hill and flush-out these gooks who virtually had our whole company pinned down, but it was not going to happen. Instead of mounting an assault and possibly losing many more of our men, it was decided to drop napalm bombs on the NVA in the crater. We had approximately 40 WIA's on the ridge, who unless they were lifted out very quickly, were going to be KIA's. We had to get them choppers in ASAP.

We were all told to stay in our holes and cover up with whatever we could find, "It might get a little hot," a voice on the radio stated. Mine must have been one of the only working radios on the southwestern portion of the perimeter, because I was instructed to switch over to another frequency and assist the pilot in any way I could. By the time I found the right radio frequency, someone from above was already talking to me."3-Alpha what is your location?-Over. Come in 3-Alpha." The voice was so cool and calm, not at all what I'd been hearing all night. I missed his call-sign, so I simply called him Phantom.

"Phantom this is 3-Alpha. Be advised we are on the south side of the ridge,20 meters above the, about 35 meters east of the big bomb crater. Do you want me to pop smoke?-Over." Just as I finished my transmission, the high-speed Fast Mover streaked past at eye level, dipping into the valley and then pulling up hard at the last second.

"Negative on the smoke, 3-Alpha. I think I've got a visual. Is that you in front of that clump of brush?-Over?" Again his tone of voice was so relaxed I felt like I was talking to a commercial airliner back home. I turned around and saw a big bush I never even knew was there, then I confirmed his visual, "That's us. Over."

The Phantom pilot went on to say something to the effect that by the looks of things on the ground, we must have had "one hell of a party last night." He also apologized for taking so long to arrive. He told me he could see "a dozen or more bad-guys in the crater, and several more moving up and down the west finger."

One Phantom F4 circled high above, while another came in from the north. It really looked as if he was using

me as an aiming stake, the crater target lined up between him and me. The big jet came screaming in over the top of us with a thunderous, bladder-emptying roar. I didn't think he dropped his bombs, but the records indicate he did. They exploded further down the hillside so I couldn't see them from my position. I did see the NVA's green tracer rounds erupt from the crater as the jet passed over, spraying the belly of the brightly polished aircraft, but doing no damage. The noise alone was enough to make me feel like the world was coming to an end, my body felt like it was going to explode from the high pressure, vibrating and tingling from the inside out. An awesome, terrifying experience indeed.The second jet immediately followed the same flight path as the first, diving at the ridge from a Khe Sanh approach. Everyone around me was yelling and screaming, "Get down. Everybody get down." Something was drawing me to watch the whole thing, I didn't freeze up. It was more like being mesmerized by the sheer power of it all. The Phantom came in just slightly over my shoulder. I saw two bombs released, one from under each wing. The one underneath the starboard (right) wing, must have hung up in the release mechanism for a split second, because while the first bomb fell directly into the crater, the second one soared past it altogether. The long cylindrical napalm canisters tumbled end over end, just once or twice before slamming to the ground. Reddish-orange flames nearly 100 feet tall enveloped everything. Black smoke as thick as paint rolled from the fire and blocked out the late mourning sun. Directly on target, the first bomb killed nearly all the NVA still on the ridge. I watched that second, slightly delayed canister sour past the target and disappear over the side of the hill right in front of my position. It must have exploded down near the tree line, about 20 meters away, because the flames rose so high as to come back down on top of us. The heat was immediately unbearable and it forced us to abandoned those positions that had served us so well to this point.

The NVA were on the run, but were still fighting as they fled. We didn't realize it at the time, but the majority of the gunfire and explosives that suddenly increased significantly after the napalm was dropped, was dud and unused ammo and ordinance on the ground that cooked off in the napalm. It wouldn't have made any difference to us if we had known, because this stuff will kill you just as fast as anything else will. Spinning and twirling in all kinds of haphazard directions, small arms rounds, grenades, mortars, RPG's, the whole" 9 yards" seemed to be happening all over again. In fact, we thought the NVA was coming back for another fight.

It probably wouldn't have been half as bad if the winds from the south hadn't all of a sudden started blowing and pushing the flames across the ridge in our direction. The tall elephant grass and heavy underbrush caught fire and quickly raged out of control. We tried to put it out, but at no avail. There was nothing left to do but jump ship. I grabbed my radio, which was still inside my pack, my M16,and a bandolier of magazines. I followed Chico and Avan up and over the ridge line, but I lost track of them in the smoky confusion on top. I was running so hard anyway, my momentum carried me down the steep, North Slope, past 2nd platoon's perimeter line. I couldn't get enough traction to stop myself in the loose, barren soil, until I grabbed a hold of something sticking out of the ground and I hung on for dear life.

2nd platoon was shooting at gooks in the deep gorge below, and the gooks were returning fire at 2nd platoon. I was out there in the middle, with absolutely no cover whatsoever. After being cramped up in the fox hole all night long, my legs felt weak and stiff. I tried with all my strength to climb back up that near-vertical cliff, but for every step up I took I would slide back down two. When enemy bullets began whizzing past my ears, and the high-powered rounds of AK47's started cracking all around me, the situation quickly escalated into sheer panic. I did not want to be the last Marine killed in a battle I believed would go down in history as one of the most significant, company size firefights in the Vietnam War, especially not after all I'd already been through. I wanted to live to tell my kids about it someday.

I said a quick prayer and asked God for the strength to get me out of this mess. I think I might have promised to turn my life over to serving him, perhaps become a minister. My prayer was answered immediately, and certainly none too soon. I couldn't even feel my legs as they catapulted me up the hill, back through the fire, and into the foxhole I wished I had never left in the first place. The flames were not as high as they were earlier, but I'm sure they came up to my chest or more. I did get a pretty good sunburn out of it, but no serious burns at all. Indeed another miracle. I saw small groups, 10 to 20 NVA running over the ridge south of ours. It also was covered with elephant grass on top, and we could clearly see them as they ran over the crest. A couple of Hueys were pursuing them all with fire, but I felt the need to keep shooting too, as long as I could still see them. At 500 meters, they were pretty much out of range for an MI6, but I tried to compensate by elevating the muzzle and leading each target a little bit. When Chico and Avan returned to our position, they too joined in on what was basically just target practice. That's when my hearing was first, permanently damaged. All night long my ears had suffered some pretty severe stuff, they were both ringing pretty badly, but now with Chico on my left, firing right-handed, and Avan on

my right firing left handed, both their chambers were only inches from my ears. I knew damn well that my hearing was being damaged, from the painful, static that accompanied each discharge, yet my eagerness to kill one last gook prevented me from moving away. It got to the point where all I could hear was muffled sounds that cracked like a speaker with a loose wire. The static got worse with every shot, until the speaker itself broke all together. Like a sharp, ice pick piercing my eardrum, the pain was deep, and quite severe. It was only then that I decided to scramble out of the hole to lie down beside it, continuing my long range target practice.

All fighting on the ridge finally stopped around noon. We could still hear sporadic small-arms fire in the distance from Echo Company. The LZ was finally secured and the medevac choppers began arriving. 44 Fox Company casualties were taken out first. An emergency resupply of ammo and drinking water was brought in. As soon as I could slip away from my position, I walked down to the western, 1st platoon machine gun position and the 60mm mortar pit felt like "ground zero." The destruction and devastation perpetrated on the finger was unbelievable. It looked like a bull dozer had come through and scraped the once fertile ground bare, pushing the trees and brush down the hill against the tree line, An impenetrable wall of twisted, broken debris, fifteen feet high, was piled up where Don's LP was once sitting. Dozens upon dozens of dead gooks were strewn all over in every conceivable position of human distortion. I started looking at their faces for signs of life, but there were none. Some grunts were going through pockets and packs, searching for valuable souvenirs. Angrier Marines shoved bayonets deep into soft bellies, apparently feeling the need to kill the enemy more than once. I saw one grunt who was digging out gold teeth with his large, Bowie knife. A small crowd was beginning to gather. When I went over to investigate further, I saw that he had cut the ears off several dead NVA and was displaying them on his belt. I thought they looked too much like old, onion rings that had been smeared with a little catsup. I didn't feel well and I thought I might pass out. I got real dizzy and threw up. My head was pounding from a severe headache and both my ears were ringing loudly. I sat down next to a few Marines who were very quietly staring at the ground, but there was nothing there that I could see. I asked if anyone knew Private Don Schuck. When they all replied negatively with a subtle shaking of the head, I asked if anyone knew what happen to the 4-man LP that had been left out in this very position the night before. Again they all answered "no" in silent ways. None of them wanted to talk, understandably shaken from the night's events, but I was persistent, having recognized one of the mortars guy from the night before.

When Don had led the 4-man LP down the trail, shortly after dark the night before, I watched him leave, and before heading back to my own hole I stopped to warn the marines in the mortar pit to be careful. "We've got a 4-man LP out there right in front of you guys," I said. "Be careful not to blow them away if they come running back in, in the middle of the night."

When I started feeling a little better, I stood up on top the pile of dirt in front of the mortar pit and looked back down the finger again. The dead NVA were dressed in green, or khaki uniforms. The green uniforms were not that much different from our own (camouflage was not issued to grunts until later that summer 1968). I thought Don could be anyone of those dead gooks so I started looking at faces again. There was one body right at my feet that I looked at several times and assumed it was a gook. Something about that long, clump of coal-black hair made me examine it closer. I couldn't believe my eyes, nor would my brain register the fact it was my buddy lying there. I wanted so badly for it to be a dead gook and not Don. I nearly turned and walked away. But I looked over at the mortar man I recognized from the night before and saw he was looking up at me with the sorriest pair of eyes I'd ever seen. I thought I saw him nod at me, and then at the corpse, but no words were spoken at all.

The body was lying face down and I could see the huge opening in the back of the skull, obviously the fatal wound. I knelt down and saw the inside of the head was completely empty of brain matter or blood. I believed then that I was staring at the inside of Nail's face, yet it still was not fully registering in my mind. How could it be? All that young life, full of energy and hope only a few hours earlier, was gone. I had a very hard time dealing with the loss of my friend, especially so early in my tour. I still had 12 more months to serve. I was left with a lonely feeling of vulnerability. If Don could be killed so quickly, then I didn't stand a chance.

I never learned how Schuck was killed until my very last day in the bush almost a year later. I was waiting for the chopper to pluck me off the top of a mountain somewhere near the Laotian Border and take me back to the rear in Dong Ha where I was to prepare to go home. It was one of the happiest days of my young life, until that mortar man from Foxtrot Ridge approached me with tears in his eyes and told me there was something he had to get off his chest before I left and we would never see each other again. By this time we had become friends, but we rarely had the chance to spend time together. He told me that he had been sitting quietly the past 12 months, agonizing over Schuck's death every time I mentioned his name. I didn't realize that I had been talking about my lost buddy as much as he said I had. He told me I would probably

hate him after he told me what he needed to say, and the reason he waited until now to tell me was that he expected me to, at the very least, hold a grudge against him.

I still wasn't sure what he was going to tell me that could possibly be that terrible, but judging by his obvious state of high emotion, I could tell it meant an awful lot to him. He said it was him and another marine in the mortar pit who accidentally shot and killed Schuck. He began apologizing and he was very upset, but he forced himself to tell me more. He said the NVA were coming so fast and furious, all they could do was keep shooting as fast as they could. "Schuck came running up right behind a bunch of gooks, and we thought he was one of them." He told me Dan fell right outside their hole and that's when he knew they had made a very big mistake. "He wasn't wearing a helmet and that long, straight hair made him look like a gook." He said he heard him yelling something when he was running toward them but could not tell what. "Now I realize he was probably saying "LP in. LP in." The sobbing mortar man told me he saw the outline of the weapon Don was carrying and it did not look like one of ours. The hand guard/heat shield around the barrel was blown off during the battle. It was an awkward moment for both of us. I think he was waiting for me to get mad at him, but I was in shock. This devastating news came out of nowhere and I really didn't know how I felt. My own emotional state was not really all that stable either, having been in the bush so long, but still the most important thing to me was to go home at this point and I did not want to deal with anything else. I boarded the chopper when it arrived and didn't see that mortar man for 25 years.

I was diagnosed with PTSD in 1991, the year after I stopped drinking and drugging. I discovered I had some "baggage" that needed to be dealt with, and my combat experiences had to be recalled in order to distinguish between my re-occurring nightmares and what really happened in Vietnam. At first it was a very painful process, but the more I learned the better I felt. My perspective began to change, from not being able to talk about Vietnam without crying, to not being able to shut up about it. Armed with the proper information and maps, I was literally able to trace my footsteps through nearly every single day I spent overseas. It was a very eye opening experience for me, and it helped greatly to deal with some of those PTSD issues I'd been avoiding the past 20 plus years.

(Ed note: Lt. Jones, the Foxtrot company commander referred to in this memoir is the Commandant of The Marine Corps. It's a small world if you're an old gunfighter.)

Impact Point

by Walter J. Smith

(Author's note: This story is based on an actual event. Names and minor details have been changed to protect the innocent from any of my errors.)

I functioned on adrenaline around the clock at Khe Sanh. I was happy to help old Sergeant Mantrell with his bottle of bootleg vodka at night. The constant incoming bombardment, combined with the huge rats in the bunkers, made sleep impossible. I knew I would never come out of that place alive, for every minute was pregnant with explosions of incoming rounds delivering death all around. I didn't even try to count the wounded or dead Marines passing before my eyes. Daily. I kept my eyes peeled for every possible barricade behind which I could dive, my ears attuned to the tone and volume of the incoming rounds, my nose twitching away at the smells — burnt gunpowder, fuels, decaying flesh. I was earnestly trying to team with the three men I went there with on how to handle the intensity and fury of battle. I wanted to survive this mission. I knew too well that I had more than eleven months remaining in this war, and this experience following my previous training told me I would see much more combat. Yet in all that deathly seriousness, a very humorous moment emerged. An incident so funny that it

Lance Corporal Martin

Bravo Company, One-Nine, Fourth of July, '67
By signless Con Thien, ground confounded red.

The air cracked and burned,
The road broached sick for breath
Martin returned to walk the empty trench,
To Stare. A hundred lay startled by Eternity.

Solitary, the Paris Island EM Club,
A year after Tet, after Khe Sanh and Hue City,
Martin poured beer on some sloppy PFC.
Fists and curses, fighting to stand before Iron Mike
In the sticky sweetness of a Carolina night
Mouth brimming blood, Martin howled.

His skin surged in ripples, mad
For the desire to murder the sea.

Bill Jayne - October 1998

dangerously diverted my attention completely away from the constant explosions all around.

During the siege of Khe Sanh, we Combat Controllers, aka "Tailpipe Mike" stayed very busy. We were operating flights, keeping the American commanders abreast, via radio, of which aircraft succeeded and which ones failed to arrive, deliver goods and troops, and depart from Khe Sanh. Controlling the drop zone was a vital role in the re-supply effort. The runway was so hot with incoming artillery, mortars, and rockets around the clock, that the aircraft landing there couldn't deliver men and supplies fast enough.

Aircraft that did land had to taxi in, off-load, upload and takeoff, all in about sixty seconds— the approximate fatal time for an aircraft to be on the ground. It was fatal because the incoming artillery, rockets and mortars were so thick and intense that the average time it took one of those rounds to hit an aircraft while it was on the ground was about sixty seconds. The price for a ticket out of Khe Sanh on one of these aircraft, when you were properly relieved from duty, was that you had to drag a stretcher with a filled body bag onto the aircraft with you. No one ever objected. We took pride in helping those pilots land, off-load, upload, and depart as rapidly as possible. We only lost one C- 123 and crew during the ten days I was there; and they got hit with Automatic Anti-Aircraft fire by that famous "Luke the Gook" after takeoff. We knew where Luke was dug in, a quarter of a mile from the approach end of the runway. We knew this because we had taken fire from him on our arrival, and also because he saw every aircraft we had come in as a target of opportunity and shot at it for all he was worth. We put air strikes on him daily, only to watch the tracers from his weapon fly back up at the Phantoms, Thunderbirds, and the other Fastmovers. He just kept shooting back, and no matter how many times we thought we had finally put him out of business, he proved us wrong. We had another motive for keeping our aircraft moving while an aircraft was on the ground, the barrage of incoming fire was most intense.

The drop zone also had a pair of fatal points for us controllers. First we had to get the mine sweeper, a Marine whose name we didn't know and whom we dubbed 'Peter Sparks,' to sweep the road out to the drop zone's impact point. This was necessary to avoid getting ourselves killed by stepping on or driving across a mine before we arrived at the impact point. I imagine we gave him that name for two distinct reasons: the shape of his tool and our fear of the way he used it. The minesweeper he used vaguely resembled a long penis with a fat head, extending from his waist out to the ground in front of him. He dutifully waved it back and forth as he swept along, reminding us of the little boys we once were, discovering that we could draw pictures on the ground by spraying urine around in patterns. We also feared that the rapid pace at which he moved was sure to result in the accidental hitting of a mine before it was detected. 'Sparks' was our name for this fear. The second most threatening area on the drop zone was the impact point, the point from which we controlled the drops, and the ideal arrival point for each drop. We had to rapidly dig out and crawl into a spider hole from which to work relatively protected from the Vietnamese who were shooting at us constantly — snipers, mortars, artillery, rockets. We were proud of the speed with which we could dig these little holes out of that clay with our military-issue entrenching tools. Those entrenching tools hanging from our web belts were unique for Air Force personnel; a symbol of our superior combat status among Air Force peers who rarely heard the crack of a rifle off a training range. But we were also somewhat put to shame by the Marines recovering those loads we parachuted into the drop zone. Those Marines were never allowed to stop moving long enough to dig their own spider holes.

One morning Dave McGuire and I took the radio jeep, leaving Sergeants Tom Mantrell and Rusty Forte at the airstrip, and headed out for the drop zone. It was still very foggy, but we knew the weather pattern fairly well, and anticipated the fog would lift within an hour or so. I liked that fog. It prevented the Vietnamese from seeing into our camp and improving the precision of the artillery they were shooting at us. But the fog also made parachuting supplies into the base impossible. We couldn't keep eating or drinking water if the fog didn't lift. Surviving on a pint of water a day already, I found the fog as much a threat as a cover. We (actually the Marines and the Vietnamese allies and their Special Forces advisors) also couldn't keep shooting back at the North Vietnamese without the air-dropped re-supplies of munitions. Dave and I drove over to Peter's foxhole, as was the routine, to get him to sweep the road for mines. As was his custom, Peter had his poncho covering his foxhole. Dave called out to him, "Hey Sparks, how about sweeping the road so we can open the drop zone?" We both noticed a slight hesitation in the answer but soon enough the response came back. The somewhat breathless voice was nevertheless clear.

"Fuck your goddamned drop zone road." I was perplexed by that answer, and the near-breathlessness was downright weird. This was the first time I had encountered full-fledged insubordination in the military. It was also the first time I had noticed someone who was breathless in a foxhole that wasn't hit with live fire. But almost everything at Khe Sanh perplexed me, so I looked up to Dave for the explanations. Dave had a wild-eyed, wide and devious grin on his face. That grin was hardly influenced by the endless stream of incoming mortars and artillery popping into the camp all around us. Khe Sanh

taught me to distinguish between types of incoming as well as the likely fatal zones of each type. Dave, having already spent three months in this war, and much of that time in combat, was very keen on these things. I knew there was a laugh in the works, but Dave wasn't saying anything so I didn't know where the laugh was. I even feared it might be on me. I felt unsure of whether to smile as if I understood or just try to remain poker faced, so I opted for the latter, implicitly denying that I saw something curiously strange here.

Dave drove our radio jeep over to a nearby bunker and yelled inside, "Hey, lieutenant, we need your help getting the road out to the drop zone swept for mines." That statement was obviously true enough. But it wasn't enough of an explanation for that wild-eyed, toothy, frolicsome expression still on Dave's face. Nevertheless, Dave still wasn't saying anything more. I began to get somewhat self-conscious as a curious sensation came over me, the feeling that I was merely an appendage to Dave who was in the middle of the action. How could he know so much and me so little? How could he carry that huge, lighthearted smile while the artillery was screaming in on us non-stop? I had spent days and nights within arm's reach of him, yet at that moment I felt as different from him as a finger is from a whole body. I kept an eye on him.

Peter's platoon commander came out. It was the first time I had seen this guy, but that wasn't unusual since second lieutenants are about the most expendable commodity above the rank of corporal in the Marines anyway. The lieutenant, with a cleanly shaven, boyish face like my own and a clean but wrinkled uniform and shiny boots, unlike my own, leads us back to Peter's poncho-covered foxhole and yells down at him "Marine, get your ass in gear sweeping that drop zone road." I said to myself, "God, that oughta get him moving." I also found myself feeling contempt for those shiny boots.

How could shiny boots be a priority when you are getting shot at around the clock? I could only speculate — he obviously was either stupid or had a bunker deep enough under ground to protect him from the artillery. I knew that artillery could penetrate through eight feet of Khe Sanh's clay, because our sleeping bunker had taken a direct hit two nights before, startling the rats as well as the rest of us. One of those rats the size of a small cat landed on my chest and ran up across my face. I was so terrified by that rat that it took me a few minutes to recover enough to realize it wasn't a piece of shrapnel from the artillery that hit our bunker. I slowly began to notice the stars shining through the dust and the eight feet of clay that until a few minutes before had been a roof held up with railroad ties. Then I slowly began to hear again the cursing voices of men exclaiming relief at living through it. The first voice I made out was old Mantrell calling out our names in the dark, taking a roll call to see who was still alive. In that environment, who had time to waste shining boots?

I also knew that shine off those boots would reflect sunlight across the mountains to wherever the North Vietnamese spotters and snipers were, viewing our camp, making adjustments on their sights. It all of a sudden struck me that the reason second lieutenants were called 'mortar magnets' was so obvious this one deserved the worst of fates. I resented the lieutenant for that shine on his boots, and briefly hoped he would get his comeuppance right there in front of me. But the poncho-covered foxhole with the mysterious character inside was more commanding than that resentment. As with many other feelings, rather than resolve it, I stuffed it.

Following the lieutenant's command, there was the same hesitation, and the near breathless, yet clear response, "Fuck you and your goddamned drop zone road." The mirthful expression on Dave's face got wilder, his eyes sparkled wider, and now he was visibly having difficulty holding down a full-bellied guffaw. I was at a loss. What the heck is going on here? And what is going on here that is so obvious to Dave yet so unimaginable for me? All I could do was follow Dave's lead. I smiled as if I understood, but I suspect that by this time Dave knew I was hardly cognizant of what seemed obvious to him. Dave looked over at the lieutenant who was clearly unsatisfied with his unruly charge. Dave then looked back at me, leaned his head over and said softly into my ear, "Just keep quiet and watch." Well that is exactly what I was doing, so it was pretty easy to keep on doing it. But I admit the suspense was eating me up so that I was almost oblivious to the steady stream of incoming artillery. Almost, but not quite. I was also getting antsy about sitting above ground in a radio jeep parked next to a pair of sparkling boots that seemed to beg for pot shots. We made an obvious target of opportunity. This moment was simultaneously more fascinating and fearful than anything else I had thus far experienced at the carnage factory called Khe Sanh. And the audience was growing. A squad of twelve Marines approached us, the squad leader speaking to the lieutenant. "Sir, we are assigned to drop zone recovery detail today. Are you the Drop Zone Controller?"

"They are." The lieutenant speaks distractedly, keeping his eyes on the poncho, jerking his thumb toward the two of us. We are still sitting in our radio jeep, the engine idling, "white noise" coming from three of the four radios filling the back of the jeep.

Turning toward me, the squad leader says, "Sir, the recovery detail is prepared to move out to the drop zone." Perhaps he took my slick sleeve as sufficient evidence that I

was an officer, and therefore Dave, with his three stripes, was my driver. My sleeve was slick because I had not yet had enough time at Tan Son Nhut to put on the double stripes of my actual rank, Airman Second Class. This was my third mission and I had been in Vietnam for just over two weeks. I was amused at the thought of being taken for an officer, but Dave didn't let me remain amused for long.

"Just hang on until we get the road swept for mines." Dave had an unnerving capacity for being as casual as a teenager parading his cool during high school recess, even in the midst of the unimaginably terrifying constant eruptions of the earth in every direction around us. The Squad leader responded to this with a jerk of his head and a puzzled look, as if to say, "Don't bullshit me, flyboy." But he quickly recovered his wits and before turning to his men, responded, acting convincingly like he meant it, "Yes, Sir."

He then commanded his squad "at ease," supposing such a thing possible here. Their eyes turned to the poncho-covered foxhole as if every one of them immediately sensed a drama unfolding. A few of the Marines lit cigarettes, but they all remained silent and poker-faced. Every one of them was covered red-brown with the thick clay dust, which, mingled with their sweat, formed a moist, featureless cast upon the molds of their angular bodies and made their eyes all look particularly bright against the remainder of their bodies which looked pathetically dull.

The lieutenant strutted off quickly, contempt dominating his face, and returned almost immediately with his gunnery sergeant. The Gunny was a small, wiry, crusty-looking character. He might have been twenty years old, had enough fire in his eyes to burn off the fog that day, a face so dust-covered it revealed a dozen or so new, deep wrinkles reaching out from each of those black-ringed eyes, and two parallel, deep creases parting his brow. Those eyes were focused with such intensity that I was afraid he might look at me and pierce holes right through my flesh. I was relieved that he kept them aimed at that foxhole. He said nothing at first. He walked directly over, grabbed the head-cover, jerked the poncho, stakes and all, off Peter's foxhole and threw it into a heap at his feet. There before all our eyes was the full explanation for all the exuberant expression on Dave's face for the last fifteen minutes, for Peter's breathless insubordination, and for the rest of the curious confusion in this little scenario.

The foxhole was typically rectangular, about three feet wide and six feet long and maybe four feet deep. The walls are completely covered with Playboy centerfolds. Each one held into the clay bank with grenade pins. The olive drab, wooden framed cot in the bottom has a sleeping bag on it. On top of the bag is a completely naked, except for the dog tags on his neck, Peter Sparks. The sweat cuts squiggling trails down across the dusty paste covering his muscular back, which is partially turned toward us. His eyes are tightly closed, teeth gritting, a well-toned body curling in near convulsion, his right hand pumping madly on his full erection.

We had plenty of time to observe this scene as Peter was so devoted to the task in hand that he didn't seem to notice either the disappearing poncho or the audience. Dave turns his head as if to hide the visible mirth if not the sounds erupting from his throat. I am so stunned I can hardly turn my head away. I cannot imagine the courage to commit such an act so close to constant battle and so near to visible exposure. The lieutenant seemed at a loss for figuring what article of the Uniform Code of Military Justice of 1947 this act, in addition to the insubordination, might be violating. Several of the Marines burst into loud jeers, mockingly, cheering Peter on. Only the Gunny was unmoved. He immediately roared, with a cyclopean voice that drowns out all the other noise, including the exploding artillery, "GET YOUR PECKER OUT OF YOUR HAND AND YOUR MINE-SWEEPER IN GEAR, MARINE, NOW! MOVE IT!!"

Without waiting for a response, the Gunny turns on his heels and moves out. This, it seemed, was the only language to which Peter could, at that particular moment, effectively respond. He immediately jumped up from the sleeping bag, simultaneously pulling on his fatigues and lifting up the minesweeper. He jumped, sockless, into his boots, which he didn't bother to lace closed, and was out of the foxhole in an instant, his helmet landing on his head as he leapt up to where we were. He moved directly down that road, quick time, sweeping rapidly but carefully, as if nothing unusual had happened. I can still see the laces of his boots leaving tiny trails in the dust alongside his footprints. My eyes were glued to that road because the minesweeper was moving so rapidly I simply couldn't trust it to do its job. Dave and I followed him in total silence as he swept the road out to the Impact Point of the drop zone. The Marines assigned to the recovery detail followed along behind our radio jeep. We scraped out our spider holes, and controlled the Container Delivery System parachute drops for the day. We recalled the story for Rusty and Mantrell that night, the latter man rewarding us with slugs from his vodka while we sat in the bunker and watched the B-52 bombers deliver their arc-light strikes across the hills within a kilometer of our bunker.

Dave insists to this day to tell that he instantly knew what was going on in that foxhole. I cannot forget how astounded I was by it all. For the remainder of the time I spent in combat, every time I felt tempted to fondle myself, the image of that hardy young Gunny snatching the poncho cover from that foxhole would pop into my head, and the urge wilted.



Curtis Bugger

Thousand Yard Stare (The Siege of Khe Sanh)

Iron falls like rain, day after day of earth slamming, bone ripping indifference as I watch one boy after another being smashed into hash by jagged chunks of death; waiting my turn — it's been falling for weeks.

Mirror images: red shadows, filthy, intimate with rats, hollow eyes, thousand-yard-stare. Gaunt, beyond terror, no black, white or brown, just sick down to the marrow. Heroes are for myths.

Rockets slam as I run zigzag playing tag with death trying to escape the unending barrage of hatred that leaves meat parts strewn over the landscape without even a "by your leave."

Six Marines huddled close for safety in their own coffin dug in red earth. I scramble to get in but come up short; one hundred-and fifty-two-millimeters of revenge with a debt to pay slams home-all died but me; all died but me.

I am running, running, running looking for cover, any womb, any hole big enough for an empty shell to escape from insanity or into insanity of dying, dying, dying boys. I've finally come home.

Joseph Greene

The Khe Sanh Veterans
27280 Jefferson St. #200
Temecula, CA 92590-5648

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The Khe Sanh Veterans' Red Clay Issue 46 Spring 2000

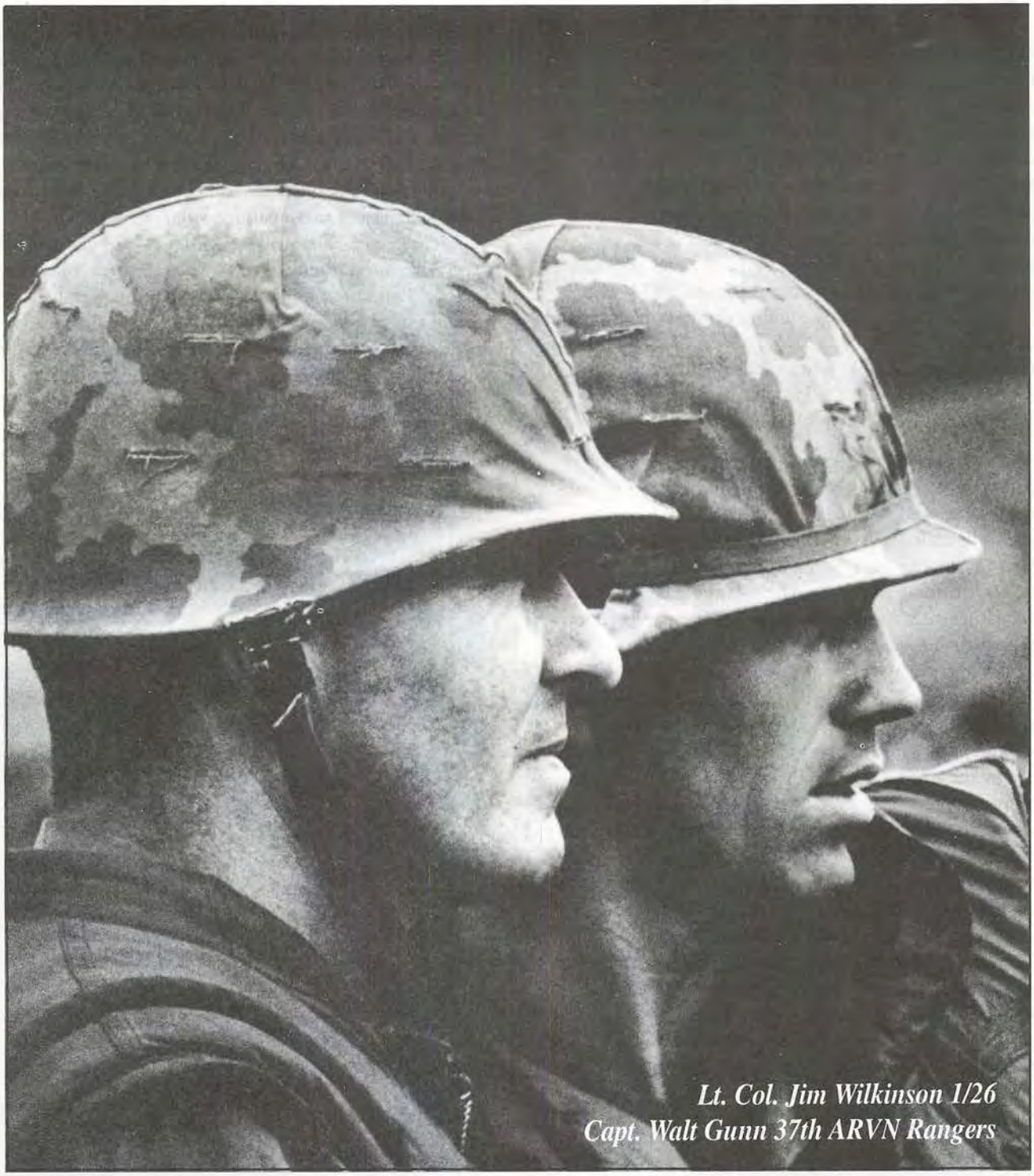

Lt. Col. Jim Wilkinson 1/26
Capt. Walt Gunn 37th ARVN Rangers

In this issue...

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...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

A Message From The Editor:

Our theme approach seems to be working. Note the many articles which deal with REUNION. The theme for our next issue will be: "RATS/RED CLAY." The submission deadline is July 31, 2000. We received over $3600.00 in donations for the REMEMBERANCES section. Outstanding! We invite those who took the time to remember someone, to write about that person. Let us all know why that person is special to you. It is also our intention to memorialize as many of our KIA's as possible. If you have a picture of someone who was a KIA who served at Khe Sanh, please send it in for consideration and possible use.

Future themes will be: Winter 2001 "DANGER CLOSE" and Spring 2001 "HONOR."

✵

Dear Member of Khe Sanh Veterans:

At the request of many members, we are going to publish a Directory of Members of the Khe Sanh Veterans. The last directory was published in 1996 and is very inaccurate. In order to provide a Directory completely up to date, we are going to need the help of the membership. I have just recently completed a new Computerized Data Base, which still needs work.

Regardless if you pay your dues or not, you will always be carried on the Khe Sanh Veterans Roster and included in the new directory. This is why it is so important to have complete, accurate information. This Data Base is kept solely by the Khe Sanh Veterans and is only available to three persons. No information will be released to any outside organization for any reason. If your telephone number is unlisted it will be confidential. Put down as much information as possible. When the category calls for Unit, be complete, not 2e Marines or 1/9. List the whole unit such as B Co. 1/9, or HAW-262 not just Helos.

We want to keep our organization going for a long time and want to keep in contact with the members. If the yearly dues are not paid, you will only receive one Khe Sanh Veteran Magazine a year instead of the three we mail out. We must do this whether we want to or not. We do not advertise or send our magazine to anyone but members. We have a strict budget and the cost of printing and mailing is very expensive. We can only provide this service through the generosity of our membership.

Thomas Eichler
Vice President KSV
Chairman Publishing &Membership Committee
EMAIL TEIC1448@AOL.COM
Ph: 1-773-625-2101 or 1-773-625-2102
Fax 1-773-625-8021

✵

Note From Mike Worth Chairman, 2001 Reunion:

Just a few words regarding the 2001 Reunion, honoring founder Ray Stubbe, which will be held in Chicago. The committee has been working on the sight selection and has it narrowed down to a few hotels with which we are negotiating. The best room rates are coming up in midsummer. The hotel chosen will be the one offering us the most reunion-friendly services and amenities, at the best price.

Please consider this a call for volunteer Reunion Committee members. Anyone who wants to get involved, especially, but not limited to those in the area, please contact me. I would also like to hear from the Membership during this planning stage with questions, comments and suggestions. We have some ideas and a few things in the works, but your input and ideas are most important.

Mike Worth
815 East Oakton, #159
Des Plaines, IL 60018-2089
847-296-5979
mw861-a@msn.com

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

David "Bulldog" Smith ..... President
Tom Eichler ..... Vice President
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Russ Turner ..... Sgt. At Arms
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Charles Berg ..... Member At Large
Mike Worth ..... Member At Large

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Vince Griffith ..... Treasurer
7280 Jefferson St. #200, Temecula, CA 92590

Taps

NAME	UNIT	DATE OF DEATH	CAUSE
ALAIRE, Richard	A/1/26	?	?
BAILEY, Beetle	C/1/9	22 Nov 1998	?
BERNARD, Robert	HqBn/3dMarDiv	?	?
BRACKMAN, James	C/1/13	21 Jun 1993	?
CERRA, Bernard	HMH-463	29 Jun 1997	?
CHVARAK, Don	108th Arty	?	?
D'HONDT, Camille	A/1/9	13 Jan 2000	Heart attack
DUFFY, Pat	H&S/1/26 (S-2)	1999	?
EPPS, James	C/1/26	18 Jan 2000	Lung Congest.
GRENAT, Richard	D/1/26	26 Feb 1999	Cancer
HERNANDEZ, Aumont	FLC	24 Nov 1999	?
HOLLAND, Roger Lee	?	19 Feb 1999	?
KERCH, Richard J	MAG-16	19 Jun 1998	?
KILPATRICK, Eldon	C/1/9	7 Feb 1998	?
PADGETT, Robert C	?	23 Jan 1999	?
SCHRON, Courtney	?	18 May 1994	Lung cancer
TORTI, Joseph	1/3/26	15 Apr 1998	Auto accident

Those Remembered and Remembered by:

LT. Col Jack Hennely, CO 1/3
Col. William Dabney CO India 3/26

All my brothers and sisters who died and suffered at Khe Sanh
Thomas J. Corcoran III

"Red" Johnson KIA Con Thien 7/25/67
Dave Martin

Bill Wood USSF FOB-3
Jim Morrison

Joseph N. Pacheco KIA 04/13/66
Charles Luhan, Jr.

Bill Flahive Lt. USMC 12/69
Capt. Rich D'Ambrosio

All Marine Corps. Veterans of Khe Sanh
Thomas B. Eusanio

Cpl. Reuben C. MacMakins Lima 3/26 KIA 4/14/68 881N
Thomas Pierce

Lloyd Kinsworthy India 3/26 KIA 04/27/68
Stan Kerwin

All who help the Khe Sanh Vets
Stuart G. Howe

Walter Sobel Mike 3/26 KIA on 881S
David M. Anderson

Mark David Ward
Dean Shanklin

Juan N. Sedillo
Joseph A. Donnelly

Gunnery Sgt. Rimmel KIA 861 01/21/68
Norman J. Jasper Jr. CO Kilo 326

Our comrades
G.E. Rosental

Jesse Bennett
Richard R. Blair

Charlie Company 1/26 - 3rd Platoon
George S. Hecknauer

Kenneth W. Orton KIA 4/26/67 Khe Sanh
Russell Schaeberle

All my Friends
Billy D. Martin

Lt. Brindley
Robert "Skip" Unangst

Lance Corporal Samuel A. Sharp
Nellie I. Sharp

All those who served
Jim Fredrick

Men of Echo 2/9 and Bravo 1/9 KIA 3/16/67
Robert J. Slattery

All who served at Khe Sanh
John W. Wright

L/CPL. Adian Brittle India Co. 3/26
Tom Hunke

Richard and Mike Blanchfield KIA
Richard Blanchfield B/1/26/"Doc"

Wilbert Stovall
Bob Holscher

Lt. Walt Jones F-8 Pilot and pinochle player
Col. Jim Lesley HQ 26 Marines Comm-O

Capt. Mike Piper
Charles O. Broughton

Sgt. Maj. James Gaynor
Charles H. Fetter

Howie Markum
William H. Latour

Gary Lindsay USMC India 26th Marines
Joe Bristol

All Marines F 2/3 66-67
Joseph A. O'Connor Jr.

3/26 Marines "I" Company
Richard Gallegos

Michael J. Scanlon
Ski Doroski

Robert Nelson Morden
Eddie Marshall

Robert Baker Special Forces
RL Cavanaugh

George Lanoi "A" Co., 3rd Recon
William Leeds, New York

India 3/26
Robert D. Tipton

Sgt. David Gonzales
Thomas S. Strain

Harry "Butch" Corsetti
Joe Deer

861 A 2/26 E-Comp
Robert W. McGillin

My brothers in arms
Glenn Chandler

All fallen comrades
Robert E. Hood

Billy Livingston
Lisa Taylor

Melvin Clayborn
Norman L. Bagant

Lt . Larry Bolger
Paul G. Lojkovic

Sgt. David A. Russell KIA 1/26 Marines 3/9/68
Ron Mudd

1st Lt. John Harvey Carson CO Echo 2/9 KIA 6/5/68 Khe Sanh
Lt. Col. John Carson (father) USAF retired and Lt. Col. Gene Carson USA Retired (Uncle)

Don Rash Bravo 1/26 KIA 3/30/98
Wayne Morrison

"Flight Time" Recon Team: L. Cpl. Douglas W. Barnitz, Cpl. William Buck Jr., Pfc. Robert L. Percy, Pfc. Harold A. Skaggs, Cpl. William M. Wellman Jr., Lt. Michael M. O'Conner
Stan Kozlowski, President 3rd Recon Association

Cpl. - Enrique Bernal - USMC - KIA 3/68
Vincent J. Griffith

2Nd Plt. "C" Co. 1-26 KIA's
Donald Gillespie - C/1/26

Edward "Cody" Adams CBMU 301 Detp. B
Lawernce W. Kubley

Ronald Fasier

Paul F. Stedman KIA 26 Feb. 68
Claude T. Green

My Men
Andy Sibley 26 Marines

All who served at Khe Sahn
Unknown S. Easton, Mass.

William Williams
Enriquez Sanchez

All my fallen brothers
Robert S. Esposito BLT. 27

All 3/26 KIA'S
W. R. Wildprett 3/26

George Walbirdge Staff Sgt. USMC KIA
Ed Evans

Jim Theis
Daniel J. Fisher

Richard DuBois' Scout Sniper 26th Marines
Jeff Martin

Delbert Leasure & Jerry Stenburg
Larry Haus

All my brothers still there
Lucien T. Rankin

John Heinrich
John Covino

Dave Meyers VMO-3, MAG-16 KIA 7-67
Dick Ceresko

Major Joesph M. Loughran JR. XO 3/26 KIA
Lt. Col. Aubrey L. Lumpkin

Thanks giving everyday!
Gary E. Baum DC

John A. Dennis
Stephen S. Haisley

Dave Dumas
Michael Worth E/2/26

Sgt. E. Castaneda "A" 3rd Recon
Karel J. Muns

All who died in and around Khe Sanh
James R. Velcheck Delta Co. 1st Ptn. 1st Marines 1st Mar Div

In memory of all who serve
Bill Cowan

Francis Pennetti
Cecil Young K/3/26

Don Weed , Mike Coleman, Joe Hunt KIA 2nd Plt B/1/9
David Granger Bravo 1/9

Arnold J. Riveria KIA 2/25/68
Jim Convery

Jack Scarpinato & Richard Grenat
George M. Hearn D/WPNS/1/26

Lt. John Bobo
R. H. Anderton

Curtis Bugger
Harvey E. Sullivan

Thomas Hendershot, Roger Hurt, Alexander Hugh
Dennis Thayer A/1/26

Cpl. Lewis Goi B/1/13
Paul Elkan

Marines of A/1/13
Dennis Pardee

All KIA's from H/2/1 681
Peter Hoban

Phillip Francis Sheridan L/cpl C/1/13
Glenn Prentice

Austin Gaughan "A" Co. 3rd Shore Party
David Assum

Cary Smith
Steve Brown HMM/164/262

David W. Meister
Robert Menzel

Marines and Corpsmen I/3/26 1967
Lt. Col. C T Anthony (Ret.)

William J. Williams Marine - My Son
Beatrice S. Williams

LCPL Robert Cicio C/1/9
Biolsi

2nd Lt. Frank Vistefano
Michael D. Flemming E/2/26

Edward Towslee A/1/9, Mike Kilderry C/1/4
Terry Tillery C/1/4

Donald J. Magilligan Jr.
Unknown

Doc Turner G/2/26 KIA 5/18/67
Frank L. Thompson G/2/26

LCPL. Allen E. White
D. F. O'Toole B/1/13

Glenn Close
Ray Kelley Jr. D/1/3

Fred B. Link
Eric Bergland C/1/9/3

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/Khe San Veterans, Inc.

Name: .....

Street: .....

City, State, Zip: .....

Phone / EMail: .....

Are you a Khe Sanh Vet?

❑ YES Branch of service, unit, & when you were at Khe Sanh:

.....

❑ NO, I am not, but I would like an associate membership.

Mail this application and payment/subscription ($20.00 for one year, or $150.00 for Life membership) to the Treasurer: Vincent Griffith, 27280 Jefferson St., #200, Temecula, CA 92590

Khe Sanh Vets Reunion San Diego 2000

Dates: 14-17 Sept 2000 – Come early and stay late

Site: Hanalei Hotel, Mission Valley, San Diego, CA 1-800-882-0858

Room rates: Single, double, triple, quad — $89.00 + tax

Transportation from Airport: Cloud 9 shuttle, about $7.00

• Free transportation to Old Town, The Trolley, and nearby shopping centers • Nearby to Zoo and Sea World • Tour of MCRD Fri AM to include parade, colors, shopping in the PX and a great lunch in the mess hall of your dreams! ($10.00) • Tony Anthony, 3/26, volunteers at the museum at MCRD and has offered to be our contact • Padre Game on Sat night w/indoor tailgate (still working on this one) • General membership meeting Thursday PM • Banquet Sat PM ($30) • Poolside hospitality suite (We get to supply the goodies if we want. It will be a lot cheaper and we have good sources.) • Memorial service Sun AM •

• San Diego Downtown Gas Lamp District is booming for those who want to venture into the night. There will be several Irish Pubs in general support if we need them.

• The Weather Channel has set the high to be in the low 70' and the ocean temperature to be 63 degrees. No guarantees.

• Registration fee will be $15.

Fill out the Registration Form on page 35 now.

✵

3rd Recon Reunion information:

Anyone interested in 3rd recon's reunion should contact Ray Raymond, 105 Asphodel Dr., Luling, LA 70070 (email: rraym58413@aol.com dates are November 8th to November 12th 2000 in New Orleans LA. More information is available at http://www.3rdrecon.org

3rd Battalion 26th Marines Reunion Information:
Walter L. Whitesides
10063 Wood Sorrels Lane
Burke, Virginia 22015
(703) 250-5571
wlwhitesgerols.com

Friends and Members of 3/26:

1 February 2000

Bill Sigafoos, formerly of Lima Company, has updated me on the reunion plans. The reunion will be held from 3-6 August 2000 in Dana Point, California. For those of us who remember Camp Pendleton, Dana Point is a few miles north of the base. Bill has arranged for us to stay at the Dana Point Quality Suites. We have a block of rooms available at $79 per night. For those of you who don't get to southern California very often, that is an extremely competitive rate. The hotel is located at 34208 Pacific Coast Highway and you may reserve rooms by calling (800) 232-3262. When making reservations, please mention hotel code CA540, package code L26MAR to get the special rate. Please make reservations soon as this is not a large hotel.

Semper Fi,
Walt

Why Are We Here — Reunion '99

Why did we come and why are we here?
It is a question that we all may hear.

We came by train, plane and car
What causes us to travel so far?

It's not just to meet and remember when
But more to reflect on how it was then.

We look at the pictures - and stories we tell
And we all remember our time in hell.

We look at each other as we grow old
and reminisce about how we were so bold.

Just to live in that dirt, grit and grime
How did we do it all the time?

So long ago, but the memories vividly clear
It seems that I will never forget the fear

The shells a flyin' with no place to hide.
One reason we are here is the pride

Many were wounded and their brave blood spilt,
We are here now with a monument built.

I'll tell you why we come back each year
It's to honor those brave souls no longer here.

So pause and reflect and let out a sigh -
REMEMBER them ..... Semper Fi

Unknown Author

Handicapped Handball

By Joseph Olszewski
Alamo, California

In late February 1968 I stepped on a mine on Hill 558 near Khe Sanh. That evening my left foot was amputated on the USS Repose. The doctor who performed the surgery said he could have saved my foot, but I would probably walk better and be more active with a prosthesis as every bone in my foot was shattered. I was twenty-four years old at that time.

That year I was also married in Arlington, Virginia and my wife and I flew to Northern California that same evening to begin our married life.

After all the Physical Training (PT) in the service and all those long patrols in 'Nam, I did absolutely nothing exercise wise between the ages of twenty-five and thirty. During this time period, I concentrated on my family, my career and my sixteen-year-old house.

By the time I reached thirty, however, I began to feel the physical effects of non-exercise. I was gaining weight, I was frequently tired, my career was growing and so was the pressure. At the time, I remembered how good I felt after running those three-mile treks through the woods at Quantico, Virginia during my OSC/Basic School training days. So I began to jog down Danville Boulevard in Alamo, California. At first, not very far. Just a block or two every other day or so. Then I began to count the telephone poles that I passed. Today ten poles passed, tomorrow fifteen, next week twenty. Pretty soon I was driving the distances I jogged so I could track the mileage I was covering. From Arbor Lane (where my now forty six-year-old house is located) to Rudger Road is exactly one mile. From Arbor Lane to Entrada Verde is exactly a half-a-mile. Thus, this loop from Arbor Lane to Rudger Road to Entrada Verde was a three-mile jog.

I ran this route for a good ten years. Then I started to get cocky. First, I started timing these runs always trying to cut a few more seconds. Then I started training for and running in the various 10K races that became so popular throughout the country in the 80's. At first, I didn't want other runners to know that I was an amputee, so I always ran in sweat pants or jogging suits. Soon I didn't care what I looked like or what other runners were thinking and I would run in shorts, a knee wrap to hold my prosthesis tighter and long knee-length socks. By the time I reached my early forties, running in 10Ks just wasn't challenging enough. I thought about marathons, as that was becoming popular. I watched a few and even began training for one, but I knew I didn't have the time to devote to it and my body started telling me something once again. In short, it was telling me if I trained for a marathon either my knees or hips were going to pay a big price.

At that time, I belonged to the Big C Health Club in Concord, California. It's a great club with great guys. "Boots" Erb was one of the managers. Both he and his father were starting quarterbacks for the University of California at Berkeley. The owner was Ken Hoffman who was a homebuilder and at one time was co-owner of the Seattle Seahawks. Both "Boots" and Ken were avid handball players. I watched a little, but at first it didn't interest me since you have to be ambidextrous. Until you get your off-hand as coordinated as your right hand, you're dead meat on a handball court. Thus, my workouts consisted of lifting weights, doing sit-ups and light running on treadmills.

One day I was sitting in the steam room with my wrapped leg (water does tremendous damage to prostheses, so I always sat in steam rooms with my knee-length sock and a knee wrap on my left leg) when one of the premier handball players in the club asked me what was wrong with my knee. I said my knee was fine, but my left foot refused to grow back. He laughed. I laughed. The next evening I was learning handball. This great handball player, Kit Davilia, who I met in the steam room, was a former Army airborne trooper. On one jump he broke his right foot and had to have some of the bones fused. He could identify with me and we became immediate friends.

He talked me into trying handball. It's hard. It's real hard. You have to be able to use both hands as effectively as your strong hand. This alone takes about a year. Then, there's great pain in your hands as the ball is hard and it takes forever to toughen your hands to develop calluses to absorb the punishment. When you're a new player, nobody wants to play against you. You get good at handball by playing against players who are better than you. That's how you improve. So, everybody looks for somebody better to play with. I could only get games with "Kit" and the sixty-year-olds who didn't care who they played against. Little by little, I improved and started getting games with some of the better players.

Clubs like The Big "C" sponsor both racket ball and handball tournaments. After two years of being a novice player, I decided to try playing in tournaments. In tournaments you play at your level. The lowest is "C" level, the next is "B" for the better-than-average players and finally "A" level where the real men live. I played in "C" level tournaments for years. I actually won one or two games, but never could improve enough to be the best "C" level player. One problem I had is that with the prosthesis I never had that quick last-minute adjustment to the ball. When handball players are good they can hit the ball with a little flick of the wrist, which causes the ball to hop to the left or the right when it hits the floor. That little hop is hard to adjust to when you don't have one ankle.

All these tournaments have awards and perks associated

with the event. There's t-shirts, free beer served after an evening's rounds and at the end of the tournament there's an awards party. That's when they hand out the trophies to the winners of each level. For about five years I played in a lot of tournaments, but only for the camaraderie. The guys I played with regularly were big party types and always encouraged me to play in tournaments even though I could never improve. I played, got my T-shirt, got beat and went to the post-tournament party. This went on for a good eight years.

After one tournament the great guys I played with felt sorry for me. They always admired my devotion and would kid me about my prosthesis. If I missed a shot, for example, they would shout: "Hey, Joe, you were a foot short on that shot." I remember one tournament game that I won. They gave the loser a T-shirt with wording on the front that read: "I lost to a one-footed handball player." It was great fun and the camaraderie was similar to what I remembered in the Corps. After this one tournament, however, they had a little surprise for me. They made a special presentation to me at the awards party. They waited until all the "A," "B" and "C" players received their awards and then they called me to the podium. "Kit" gave a little speech about how I always kept playing, but never won anything. Therefore, he and "the guys" thought that it was about time I received something to recognize my devotion. It was small, wrapped in a nice package and somewhat heavy as it was in a silver frame. When I opened it and read it, I laughed. Everybody laughed. It was a cartoon and the message they were trying to tell me was: "Keep trying, at least you're good entertainment." I loved it. I've always kept it in my office.

Recently, my company moved its headquarters from San Francisco to Pleasanton, California where most of us drive to work. Since I have handicapped license plates, I'm one of the few employees who use the handicapped parking slots. Whenever one of my fellow employees asks why I'm parked in the handicapped slots, I just show them this cartoon. Some laugh, some just walk away and a few need a little "hands on" feel-up to be convinced. It's great. I love it.

Today, at the age of fifty-six I no longer play handball. It punishes your wrists and forearms and after time it's simply too painful. I also never found that quick step. I still jog, but only on a treadmill.

What do I do now for entertainment and challenge? Well, I write articles for Red Clay. This is one sport that you get better at with age and nobody cares if you're an amputee.

No more T-shirts,
No more beer,
All I want is a Red Clay cheer.

Agent Orange Update: Prostate Cancer

There are several medical conditions determined to be related to Agent Orange exposure. Congress has declared that any service member who served in Vietnam during the war time era (February 28, 1961 through May 7, 1975) was exposed to Agent Orange, and such exposure may have caused several types of cancer. Diagnosis of any of these conditions will be considered "service connected" by the VA.

Veterans and survivors may be entitled to compensation for such diseases as lung cancer, multiple myeloma, Hodgkin's disease, lymphoma, and as of November, 1996 prostrate cancer. If a Vietnam veteran is ever diagnosed with prostrate cancer, even if it is many years after service, it will be considered a service connected disability and compensation may be paid. Compensation can range from $0 (non-disabling) to around $2,000 (totally disabling). The degree of disability is determined by such factors as urinary frequency, leakage, and impotence. For example, daytime voiding interval of less than one hour or awakening to void five or more times per night will result in a rating of 40%. Awakening to void twice per night is rated 10%. Continual urinary leakage or incontinence requiring the wearing of absorbent materials, which must be changed more than four times per day will result in a 60% rating. If the pad must be changed less than twice a day, the rating is 20%. A small special monthly compensation is paid for impotence. The symptoms must be medically documented — usually by a physical examination at a VA medical facility. The veteran files a claim on VA Form 21-526 (Claim For Compensation Or Pension). It must be accompanied by DD Form 214 showing Vietnam service and any medical evidence establishing the diagnosis of prostate cancer.

If the veteran has already completed that form in the past, it is not necessary to do so again. A brief letter requesting reopening the claim will suffice. Here is a suggested format for that letter: "This is to amend my original disability compensation claim to include prostrate cancer as per new Agent Orange regulations. Medical records showing the diagnosis are attached." The claim should be submitted to the VA Regional Office serving the area where the veteran resides. To obtain a claim form or to get the address of the VA, call 1-800-827-1000. Help in completing the form is available from many veterans' service organizations or from the VA. Other veterans' benefits may accrue as a result of a finding of service connection. They include insurance, medical treatment, and vocational rehabilitation. Survivors of Vietnam veterans who died of prostate cancer may also be entitle to benefits from the VA. An un-remarried surviving spouse may be entitled to a monthly payment of Dependency and Indemnity

Compensation (DIC). The current rate is $861. Dependent Educational Assistance may also be available for college attendance. The rate for full time attendance is $485 per month.

VA Response to November 24, 1999, "20/20" Segment on PTSD Ratings:

On Wednesday, November 24, ABC's newsmagazine *20/20* broadcast a story whose premise was that veterans lie in order to receive benefits for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). VA Undersecretary for Benefits Joe Thompson and Dr. Laurent Lehman, the associate chief of psychiatry and PTSD programs, were interviewed for the story.

The story had a definite slant, and the interviewer, Jay Schadler, had a definite point of view. During an interview of more than an hour — taped in March in Mr. Thompson's office — Schadler asked over and over about the appearance that veterans are on a VA "gravy train." The implication is that a number of veterans have discovered ways to cheat the system and fraudulently receive benefits for PTSD, "up to 3,000 per month tax free" (his words).

To be fair, *20/20* acknowledged that PTSD is real, and that thousands of veterans are receiving benefits legitimately. But Schadler insisted on what he called the "common sense" approach that far too many veterans are receiving benefits in error. He even went on to question why Vietnam veterans are still coming to VA for PTSD claims 25 years after the war.

Throughout the interview, Mr. Thompson and Dr. Lehmann tried to educate Schadler about the claims process, and about how PTSD affects veterans, but Schadler stuck to his premise that this was an enormous rip-off. He even interviewed a VA claims representative who indicated that he had personal knowledge of hundreds of claims that had been allowed improperly.

PTSD is a medical condition. We know that Dr. Lehmann was interviewed, and we know he gave compelling information about the nature of PTSD and other mental health issues VA deals with. Nothing he said made it to broadcast.

VA's Position:

20/20 managed in this shoddy piece to undo years of hard work by VA and by veterans' advocates to recognize PTSD and to encourage veterans to come to the VA for help. With this one story, ABC may have re-stigmatized veterans and scared them away from the help they need. That is tragic, and the network's news division should be ashamed. Dr. Lehmann patiently explained the diagnosis and treatment of these veterans to the interviewer, but to no avail.

Mr. Thompson explained that the process of reviewing claims for service-connected disability does not encourage a situation in which lying is rewarded. He was ignored.

Near the end of the interview, Mr. Thompson summed up his concern. He said that as a Vietnam veteran he had seen a number of negative labels unfairly assigned to Vietnam veterans. "Please don't add 'charlatan' and 'fraud' to the list" he said. Unfortunately, that plea never made it on the air.

The resulting story showed what can happen when a producer and a reporter are closed-minded and care only about how a broadcast can be made to fit their pre-conceived notions.

The VA assures all veterans, their families and their advocates that its commitment to the treatment and compensation for PTSD is ongoing. We encourage all veterans who need help to come to the VA. We will continue to process all claims for disability in accordance with the law, while showing the measure of concern and compassion the American people expect to be afforded the country's defenders.

(From Tundra Tom) .....
* 5th Rounds On Me * Tracer
One Of The Original FNG's Guns Alpha 1/9 1965

CANTICLES FROM KHE SANH

In addition to the poetry that will be published in each issue of Red Clay, I will bring you, in a little more depth, the poetry of one or more members. In this issue we will be looking at poems by Kellan Kyllo and Talis Kaminskis.

Kellan was a crew chief and gunner on a CH 46 heli - copter with HMM 262. During the siege he flew resupply missions to companies on the hills and medevacs back to the base or to Dong Ha. He had never written poetry before the war. Upon return to the world, he got a degree in Animal Sciences from the University of Minnesota and worked a dairy farm for ten years until he was forced to deal with PTSD. It was at the VA hospital that he first started writing. Those poems resulted in a book of poetry, "Where Light is Darkness" which was published by the New Sweden Press in 1991. Poetry was his catharsis, a way, as he says, to "get out the feelings."

His poetry is characterized by deep emotion and an ability to write a short, direct strike to the truth. In "Morning Chow" and "The Vietnam Obstacle Course," he brings us right back to those sudden moments of terror and the ironies of the deaths of friends.

Morning Chow
A sniper bullet
came through the mess tent.
Someone from Indiana
was hit in the temple and died.

The Vietnam Obstacle Course
The first week
Some guys got killed.
Others waited
Until
They were ready to go home.

In a later poem, "They Watched Television Together," Kellan gives the reader some idea of PTSD. All of us have had a friend like this.

They Watched Television Together
Late at night
The house was still and quiet.
His best friend,
Killed
In Vietnam
Sat on the sofa with him
And shared
Only a glance and a few words.

My favorite poem by Kellan is "Retirement." In the poem he manages to truthfully and powerfully express his coming to terms with the war and his life today. He is one of the lucky ones: married for twenty-nine years with four children.

Retirement
by Kellan Kyllo
When the emotions of war finally started to slow down
inside him he sold his guns, and then soon after that he
began
to forgive
all the people who had ever
done him
wrong,
and he prayed for each of them
daily.
The next Spring
be went into his backyard
for the first time
in twenty-five
years
and
planted a garden.
He grew tomatoes and gave them away
to
everyone.

Combat Buddy

A "Combat Buddy" is what you are
Our Friendship was Forged during War
I watched your back and you watched mine
In battle each day with our lives on the line
A Trust developed that only we know
You're my Combat Buddy from a long time ago
Someday soon, we'll meet again
My Combat Buddy, My Faithful Friend

Lloyd P. "Snake" Arender and dedicated to the Marines and Corpsman of Kilo Company 3rd Battalion 26th Marine Regiment

Talis Kaminskis started writing prose and poetry the day he got out of the Marine Corps. He had been wound - ed in Vietnam and spent time with his wounds and PTSD in a VA hospital. He got his college degree at Goshen College after his hospital stay. After Vietnam, he met his wife and they have been married twenty-six years and have two boys. He was with CAC Oscar 3 when he was at Khe Sanh.

Ski's poetry is not as direct as Kellan's. It is more subtle in its approach and is characterized by visual, as well as poetic, effects. It has a power all its own which is wrapped in a dreamlike gentleness. This first poem expresses that.

Gentle person thy concert is there
Who took your brothers life

Music was made

by men who know
How best to write the notes
A shot, a shell
a burst and sound
Whistle the song of death
The Chorus is sung
by men who never
Could carry a tune before
Conductors appear
to lead the parade
But only from afar
Lest they be touched
with the notes of the song
That they themselves have wrote

In the next poem we can see a picture of Ski's vision of PTSD.

Desperately seeking, my eyes are searching
waiting for a war without end
to end

Nights lay waking, heart is trembling
waiting for a war without end
to end

In darkness are fought, battles of hope
waiting for a war without end
to end

Daylights fleeting, hopes and dreams are seeking
waiting for a war without end
to end

On time worn faces, familiar tears leave traces
waiting for a war without end
to end

Arms held empty, rock their loads gently
waiting for a war without end
to end

Alone I do last, living a long past
waiting for a war without end
to end

I'm waiting, I'm waiting, Still I am waiting
waiting for a war without end
to end

For a war without end to end

And finally, we can see his version of the resolution of the war and his life.

Listen Listen close there is a voice for each and every
name a silent picture for a distant friend a memory shared
with subdued words timeless conversations easing the pain
of loss left behind

yet carried where weary feet drag through the passage of time
And its sudden stopping
imparting a message to the stunned
the living those stumbling for meaning
crying in their relief
mourning the loss
Avoiding the answer
of when
of who

of why
Tomorrow or today
Tomorrow or today
for some even yesterday
And then there is the future

the utterance of all

Of companionship

And Love

Both Kellan and Ski have found writing a way to dispel the inner demons. In talking with them I was struck by how gentle each of them is and how much they find of value in their lives today. Ski loves to watch the wild birds that come to his fields and Kellan loves to walk the out - doors. Two fine poets among our brothers.

PFC Spicer

By Earl Clark

I am writing now while my thoughts are fresh. I will try and remember, to the best of my ability, the events of that morning, in which Pfc Spicer reported for duty with Bravo Company1/26.

Companies Alpha and Bravo happened to share command posts in the same tent prior to the attack on Khe Sanh. I was present on the Alpha Co. half of the tent the day Pfc Spicer reported in. It was either the day he reported in or it was the first day he was able to speak to Capt. Pipes. Pfc Spicer was accompanied by another Marine, most probably the Gunny. There were a handful of Marines in the Bravo Co. section, as well as a few on the Alpha side.

There was normal conversation at first, business as usual. After a few moments, however, we heard a raised voice or two. If my memory serves me well, it was Capt. Pipes that was speaking at the time our attentions were drawn to their area of the tent. He was not yelling at Pfc Spicer, as such. I think his voiced raised out of frustration more than anything. He asked Pfc Spicer how in the world he managed to get into a combat infantry unit if he was a bonafide Conscientious Objector. Pfc Spicer explained to him his various stops along the way, mentioning that all had been documented in his service record. I remember Capt. Pipes looking repeatedly at the record book and looking up now and then, asking a question from time to time. I think the longer Capt. Pipes read the contents, the more frustrated he became. He was well aware of how the military bureaucracy worked at times. We are talking passing the buck here. Let someone else take care of this sticky problem. If there is accountability to be held in this situation, it is the manner in which Pfc Spicer, and his beliefs, were handled by commanders down the line. In my opinion, Capt. Pipes handled the situation admirably and honorably, to the best of his ability.

It seemed to us, on the other side of the tent, that for each question Capt. Pipes had for Pfc Spicer, the Marine had a reasonable and honest answer for it. Pfc Spicer kept his composure at all times. Things were pretty quiet in between questions and answers. You could cut the air with a knife, it was so heavy. We all became very still on our side, as not to interfere. If I were able to read Capt. Pipe's mind I would say that he waffled between anger and frustration at the events that brought these two together.

After a few minutes, Pfc Spicer was dismissed; along with other Marines that were in attendance, without knowing what disposition would be taken in the matter. I cannot recall what happened immediately after these events.

I too believe in my heart that Pfc Spicer was a CO. When he was explaining to Capt. Pipes his predicament, his expressions were those of sincerity and honesty. To this day, I believe Pfc Spicer's statements were valid and spoken with the utmost integrity.

A few days into the siege, we heard that Pfc Spicer was assisting with Charlie Med. The scuttlebutt was that Spicer was performing heroically, extracting the wounded from the area, giving cover to Marines as they were being carried to Charlie Med. Eventually, we heard that he was wounded severely and had been Medivaced out. We also heard that he had been put in for the Navy Cross.

I did not know, until a few months ago, that Pfc Spicer had contracted an infection while in Japan and died. My heart sank when told this. I was deeply saddened and hurt. I feel this way even as I write this.

I anguish over Pfc Spicer's death. I try not to question God's plan, but sometimes I wonder at the price that is paid. I do know that Pfc Spicer was so special that the Good Lord needed him for something very important.

Many times through the years I have wished that I had known Pfc Spicer personally. I believe we would have gotten along quite well.

In my life I have had two role models, one is my Father and the other, my Brother. I have also had heroes. In fact, I have 58,000 of them. They are on a wall in Washington D. C. He, Spicer, is at the top of that list. Not only is he a genuine hero, but also a hero in the sense that he stood up for his convictions and would not compromise his beliefs. His parents must be so proud of him.

The following was submitted by John Kaheny:
Chaplain Roland Gittlesohn
14 March 1945

This is perhaps the grimmest and surely the holiest task we have faced since D-Day. Before us lie the bodies of comrades and fiends, men who until yesterday or last week laughed with us, trained with us, men who were on the same ships with us, went over the sides with us as we prepared to hit the beaches on this island, men who fought with us and feared with us.

Somewhere in the plot of ground there may lay the man who could have discovered the cure for cancer. Under these Christian crosses or beneath a Jewish Star of David, there may rest a man who was destined to be a great prophet — to find the way, perhaps, for all to live in plenty. Now they lie here silently in this sacred soil, and we gather to consecrate this earth in their memory.

To speak in memory of such men as these is not easy. Of them, too, can it be said with utter truth: "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here. It can never forget what they did here."

These men have done their job well. They have paid the

ghastly price of freedom. If that freedom be once again lost, as it was after the last war, the unforgivable blame will be ours not theirs. So it is we, "the living," who are here to be dedicated and consecrated.

We declare ourselves, first, to live together in peace the way they fought and are buried in the war. Here lie men who loved America because their ancestor's generations ago helped in her founding. And other men who loved her with equal passion. Because they themselves and their own fathers escaped from oppression to her blessed shores. Here lie officers and men; Negroes and Whites; Protestants, Catholics and Jews, together. Here no man prefers another because of his faith or despises him because of his color.

Any man among us; "the living," who fails to understand that, will thereby betray those who lie here dead. To this, then, as our solemn duty, do we, the living, now dedicate ourselves: to the right of Protestants, Catholics and Jews, of White men and Negroes alike, to enjoy the democracy for which all of them have here paid the price.

To one thing more do we consecrate ourselves in memory of those who sleep beneath these crosses and stars. This war, with all its frightful heartache and suffering, is but the beginning of our generation's struggle for democracy. When the last battles have been won, there will still be those at home, as there were last time, who will want us to turn our backs in selfish isolation on the rest of organized humanity and thus to sabotage the very peace for which we fight. We promise you who lie here: We will not do that!

When the last shot has been fired, there will still be those whose eyes are turned backward, not forward, who will be satisfied with those wide extremes of poverty and wealth in which the seed of another war can be sown. We promise you, our departed comrades: this, too, we will not permit. This war has been fought by the common man! We promise, by all that is sacred and holy, that your sons; the sons of miners and millers, the sons of farmers and workers; will inherit from your death the right to a living that is decent and secure.

When the final cross has been placed in the last cemetery, once again there will be those to whom profit is more important than peace. Those who will insist with the voice of sweet reasonableness and appeasement that it is better to trade with the enemies of mankind than by crushing them or lose their profit. To you who sleep here silently we give our promise:

We will not listen! We will not forget that some of you were burnt with oil that came from American wells, that many of you were killed by shells fashioned from American steel. We promise that when once again men seek profit at your expense, we shall remember how you looked when we placed you reverently in the ground.

Thus do we memorialize those who have ceased living with us. Thus do we consecrate ourselves; the living, to carry on the struggle they began. Too much blood has gone into this soil for us to let it lie barren. Too much pain and heartache have fertilized the earth on which we stand. We here solemnly swear: this shall not be in vain! Out of this, and from the suffering and sorrow of those who mourn, this will come, we promise, the birth of a new freedom for the sons of men everywhere. AMEN

Ray Stubbe notes:

Those on the lines who looked out at the great unknown, especially at night, and wondered, "when are the NVA going to rush us with those 40,000 soldiers?" never knew. Actually, we had a brand-new set of "eyes" (or, in this case "ears") in the form of electronic sensors that illuminated the battlefield. In fact, these sensors saved those on Hill 881-South from being assaulted by a regimental-size force in early February, and those manning the eastern perimeter of the Combat Base itself (37th ARVN Rangers and those from B/1/26) from another 28/29 February. In both cases, these large forces were detected by the electronic sensors, and annihilated by our supporting arms. These sensors were diverted from Laos to support us, at Khe Sanh, on an emergency basis as the Siege started, and one of the main units to deliver and "seed" them in the areas around Khe Sanh was a newly-arrived Navy unit, VO-67, operating out of NKP, Thailand. Two full crews were shot down and became MIA during this effort.

Remembering Jim Epps

Jim Epps, chaplain of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association from 1996 to 1999, died on January 18, 2000. He was a thoughtful, supportive member of the association. Over the years, he attended many of our reunions and his kind words touched many members of our association. He will be sorely missed.

Following Jim's death, Mike Worth, a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Board of Directors, noted that Jim had often expressed the wish that his legacy could be a perpetual care fund for the memorials we have established at Arlington National Cemetery and Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, as well as any memorials the association may establish in the future. The Khe Sanh Veterans Board of Directors is investigating the establishment of such a fund. "Jim, all of us wish you Godspeed."

Bill Jayne
Chaplain, Khe Sanh Veterans Association

The Stoddard Bunch

By Jack Stoddard

In January of 1985 I retired from the Army at Fort Hood, Texas at the age of thirty eight, being separated from my first wife and with nothing holding me back, I accepted my first civilian job in the Windy City, better known as Chicago. I was going to manage a large fleet of limousines and within three months after my arrival I had accomplished two major events. One was that I had successfully implemented a military style maintenance program thereby putting all eighteen vehicles on the road at any given time. The second and most important event was the fact that I had fallen in love with a young girl who worked in the dispatch office. Her name was Sue, she was the boss's sister, and she was also only twenty-three years old. I know what your thinking! And yes the words "robbing the cradle" were spoken amongst the in-laws more than once. But for Sue and I, love had no age. The sixteen years that separated us didn't seem to matter at all and we were married a year later.



Sue had already signed up to join the Air Force and was waiting to be called when we met. One week after we were married, Sue departed for boot camp and I became a camp follower for the next few months until we ended up at our first permanent duty station, Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, Nevada. We had our first child, Christopher, in 1990. Billy arrived thirteen months later. Needless to say, Chris and Billy were our pride and joy and, of course, our world revolved around their every need.

While Sue was pregnant with Billy, we were getting concerned that Chris had a problem. Something was just not right. He was not meeting his milestones on time and was still having problems holding his head up. The base doctors kept telling us that he was just a little slow and that he would catch up. Finally Sue had enough and said, "no he's NOT just slow" and she demanded an evaluation. After being referred to Early Intervention (EI) services it was determined that Chris was slow. The therapists at EI suggested we see a neurologist to see if we could find out what was wrong. That's when all the blood tests and an MRI came. Our Chris had low CO2, elevated alanine, lactic and pyruvic acid levels as well as lesions (brain damage) in the Thalamus. What all that means is there was something going on inside Chris' body that prevented him from metabolizing or using his food properly and giving him the energy he (and his brain) needed to run at peak efficiency. It's kind of like an 8 cylinder engine running on only 5. Of course at the time we didn't know all that. Chris was given a label of Cerebral Palsy (CP) and the possibility of a metabolic disorder was discussed. Because there was no specialist here in town no further testing was done and Chris went on with his therapies and did fine.

When Billy was born he seemed just fine. He did everything a baby is supposed to do on time and was growing like a weed. That's when he was given the name Billy Goat because he literally ate all the time! By 10 months old he weighed near 30 pounds! At that time Sue had orders for Iceland so I brought in a nanny for the long year that she would be gone. Everything went well for the first six months. Chris could not talk or walk on his own, but he was the fastest crawler on the block. But then I noticed that Billy who had been walking and talking was starting to slow down. By the time Sue got back from Iceland, Billy was a mirror image of his brother Chris. He was having trouble walking and talking. Even worse then that was the fact that he could hardly crawl. He just seemed to lose all his energy. I was scared, to say the least. Here I had the two best kids in the world and all I could do was watch as they both just kept getting weaker and weaker.

We made an appointment with the neurologist again and ran all the same tests as with Chris. The results were exactly the same! Now I knew this wasn't just Cerebral Palsy. This was the day that our war began! I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I had always thought that at least Billy would be able to protect his big brother Chris at school. Now that wasn't going to be.

We were referred to a geneticist and it was she who came up with the suspected disorder of Pyruvate Dehydrogenase Deficiency (PDH). Sue read every medical book she could get her hands on doing research. This disease was an awful one and we were just hoping maybe the geneticist was wrong.

We were then referred to one of the best metabolic doctors in the country and had every blood test known to man taken. It took us six hours to drive from Las Vegas to Children's Hospital in San Diego. The doctor took less then thirty minutes to confirm our worst fears...our two precious boys had a 99% chance of having Leigh's

Disease, a degenerative (fatal) mitochondrial disorder (PDH can fall under the Leigh's Disease umbrella of disorders). Thank you, good-bye! Well, it wasn't THAT bad, but at the time it sure seemed like it! I don't even remember the drive home; Sue and I were in shock. I hadn't been able cry since I left Vietnam, but we both did the whole way home. Our boys were going to die and there was nothing we could do about it!

We tried denial, but that did no good. Sue blamed herself while I blamed Vietnam and Agent Orange, but that also did no good. Sue was fighting in her way, while I was fighting in mine. I just couldn't come to terms with this. I'm the Dad. I'm the protector. If this war was like Vietnam then the answer would be easy...just kill the enemy or fall on a grenade. What ever it took to protect my kids I'd do.

After a while everything sunk in and we vowed to treat the kids as normal as possible. Sue continued to research metabolic disorders and within a few months she knew as much as any doctor. She sounded like one too! We stopped all testing since what we had so far had turned up nothing concrete. It didn't matter what the exact name of the disease was, the outcome was the same. Why put the kids though all that. Our thoughts were just let them have a happy life, however long it lasted.

Eventually Sue was more or less forced out of the Air Force after 9 years of service because it was too hard to juggle TDYs and the kids' needs. Instead of working on airplanes, she works with handicapped kids in the school district. She is a substitute teacher right now, but is pursuing her teaching degree in special education. She also does respite care for other parents with handicapped kids. Respite care is another name for babysitting, sort of. I mean parents of medically involved kids just can't leave them with any teenage babysitter. She also helps other families negotiate the medical, social services and school mazes. Those can be quite daunting! Me? Well, I help as best I can.

That trip to San Diego seems like such a long time ago, but we've learned a lot in the past few years. One thing is to take it one day at a time. Remember that's how we did it in the 'Nam? We try to make each day a special one. Both of the boys have a great sense of humor and there's a lot of joking going on around the Stoddard house. While Sue is off doing her teaching, I'm the guy who stays at home and watches for the school bus.

In general, Chris and Billy Goat are doing fine. Billy is fed through a tube surgically placed in his stomach, and as I'm writing this, Chris is getting operated on for the same thing (they cannot eat with their mouths anymore). It's no party, but this operation will help them live a lot longer.

The boys go to their regular school and are in the regular 3rd (Billy) and 4th (Chris) grades. Their minds are pretty normal. They each have an aide to help them with schoolwork and Billy has a nurse available to take care of his tracheotomy (a hole in his throat so he can breathe) needs. Both boys are in wheelchairs with Chris' being a power one. He loves to fly down the school hallways. They each have their own computer, but Billy needs help with his as he can't move his arms around much. We go everywhere as a family and try to take at least one vacation a year. Even our yearly trip to San Diego is packed with Sea World or Lego Land or even Disneyland! The winter months are still the worst for us. With Billy's respiratory problems we usually plan on at least one hospital stay for him.

I'll be honest with you, taking care of the kids and their needs is a LOT of work and takes a LOT of time. It gets tiring looking at people (especially adults) rudely staring at you. It gets tiring fighting with the insurance company for basic medical supplies and needs. It gets tiring getting up 3 and 4 times a night, every night (Sue does) rearranging the kids or making sure the machine Billy uses to help him breathe isn't blocked or disconnected. It gets tiring fighting with the school district to get what normal kids get automatically. It gets tiring not having anyone to give you a break so you can see a movie with big people in it instead of the Rugrats. But you know something? We love our kids just the way they are! They're perfect to us and we wouldn't trade them for the world. When I hear people complain because their kid ripped his pants running and sliding on the grass, I want to yell at them to appreciate that they CAN run and slide on the grass! We're not jealous of non-disabled kids or anything like that. Hell, there are many advantages to having handicapped kids. One is we don't have to wait in the long lines at Disneyland!! Teachers love Billy because he doesn't sass back (he doesn't make any sounds with the trach) or get out of his seat. (Yes, we have a strange sense of humor!!) It's just that parents don't always understand what they have and they need to appreciate it more. It's the little things that are important. Like when you've had to sleep over at the hospital and you look like hell the next morning, but when you ask your child do you look beautiful he smiles and say yes. It's those smiles that make everyday special. It's worth all the hard work. The Stoddard Bunch plans to be together for a long time.

Primary Selection — February 2000 Doubleday Military Book Club

"Unheralded Victory" is an important book dealing with one of the most difficult and controversial periods in American history. It is a perspective on the Vietnam War that has almost been totally eclipsed in the cacophony of "instant history" presented on television. In Unheralded

Victory, American-born Australian author, Mark Woodruff presents a clear and compelling case detailing the overall tactical victory of the allied military over the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army throughout the war. Far from the commonly seen portrait of allied forces as dispirited, drug-ridden, and self-defeated, the author points to victory after victory by the allies. He shows the allied forces as well trained, well equipped, and generally well led.

From small engagements to main force battles, the author paints a picture of consistent allied victory over the forces of the North. The author acknowledges that these victories were costly and bloody for the allies, but he emphasizes they were even worse for the North Vietnamese and their allies. He also investigates the myths and popular stories that over time have grown into unchallenged fact, and finds that much of the commonly accepted folklore of the war and its aftermath has little or no basis in reality. Unheralded Victory does not seek to rewrite history - the allied forces did leave, senior American political leadership did make mistakes, South Vietnam did collapse under the onslaught of the North Vietnamese forces after the Americans were withdrawn — but the author challenges the popular concept that the conduct and performance of the allied troops on the ground was substandard. Well written and complete with maps, diagrams, and illustrations, Unheralded Victory is a book not to be missed by the thoughtful and serious reader.

About the author:

Mark William Woodruff was born in Omaha, Nebraska. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in July 1967, completed his Boot Camp at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego and took Infantry and Advanced Training at Camp Pendleton. He served in Vietnam with Foxtrot Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment from December 1967 to December 1968, where he took part in Operations Scotland II, Pegasus, Ford, the Tet Offensive, and others. After his Vietnam tour he served with the 5th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton.

After leaving the Marine Corps, he graduated from Pepperdine University (Los Angeles) in 1970 with a B.A. in Psychology, receiving his M.A. in Psychology from Pepperdine in 1971. In 1973 he moved to Australia and began a career as an Educational Psychologist in Western Australia. In 1991 he began working as a psychologist with the Australian Navy. He currently holds a reserve commission with the Royal Australian Navy as a Psychology Officer. He also works with the Australian Vietnam Veterans Counseling Service in Perth. He is a member of the Australian Psychology Society, a Life Member of the 3rd Marine Division Association, and a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, the 2-3-3 Vietnam Era Association, and the Marine Corps League. Previous Publications include a psychology text in 1989 and various published magazine articles on Vietnam. He lives in West Perth, Western Australia.

We hope that you will to find "Unheralded Victory" to be as valuable and important as we have, and that you will agree that it is worthy of the attention of your readers, viewers, or listeners. Please feel free to call us at (703) 538-5750 if we can be of any additional assistance.

Unheralded Victory
The Defeat of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army, 1961—1973 by Mark W. Woodruff Foreword by James L. Jones, General, U.S. Marine Corps
ISBN 0-918339-51-0 M, 352pp, 6x9 Hardcover
Illustrated, $24.95

I NEED IT BY FRIDAY (This is Wednesday)

Hello Sir. My name is Jeff Hancock and I am in 9th grade and I want to know youre opinion on Vietnam. And if you could find the time i really need this info...thank you for your time!

Jeff Hancock
P.S. i need it by fri

*

Jeff,

I'm really not sure what you are asking for. If you could be a little more explicit, I will try and help you out. In other words "my opinion of Vietnam" is too general in nature. Many large books have been written trying to answer this question, without much success. Try narrowing the focus of your inquiry to a more specific aspect of the war.

Thanks for your interest,
Paul Knight

*

Sir,

Well i just wanted to know what it was like and how you were treated when you returned...i mean, were u respected, were u able to get a job....what?

ED NOTE: I was unable to get an answer off to young Jeff as his deadline had expired....

The Fight for 881 North

We left Khe Sanh for the first time in a long time. We had just given our fighting position over to the Army. I was amazed when the soldier made a statement to his team "Hey this is just a little hole in the ground." I was also amazed at seeing so many staff sergeants and sergeants in an Army platoon. My squad leader was a

Corporal as were most of the others. The only sergeants we had were Staff Sergeant James, the platoon sergeant and the platoon guide I believe it was Sergeant Whitman and Sergeant Ernest a squad leader. All of these sergeants were tough, kind and knew the job. Our platoon commander, as we called all platoon leaders, was Lt. Madison a fine officer. As we were leaving to go fight in the hills an Army Huey came down and dropped off one case of C-rations and left. Here we were ready to go fight and couldn't get a chopper. But a Huey (we thought all Huey's were gun ships) was hauling chow. At this point some obnoxious Army second Lt. came up to our platoon group, and we heard him say where is the "O" club? This I am sure was supposed to be some type of humor. We did not think it was funny.

The choppers came and whisked us away to hill 881 south. From this point a guy directed us to fighting positions on the opposite crest of 881 North. We were looking down a steep draw and the guide from Mike Company told us that earlier a group of Rock Apes had settled in and that they had been very active. At one point people thought that an NVA probe was coming up at them. The 81mm FO, a staff sergeant, came by because we heard movement. The FO let Chief Rodriguez, Barry Miller and I call in the 81's. He made it seem easy. He probably had to make many corrections but he kept telling us that we did a good job. We would meet this FO again and thank God for that. We sat in for the night and split the watch. We were up before dawn and were moving our company. Lima company was going down the slope around the base to our staging area for the attack. While we were waiting to move out I saw our company command group and was impressed that the CO and the company Gunny were carrying M60 ammo. I did think it strange that they were not carrying any rifles but what does a Marine PFC machine gunner know. The commander opened the ammo can. He had dirty laundry in it. All of us had been wearing the same stinkin' rotten clothes and that bothered me.

Barry was my ammo bearer. I was the gunner and Chief Rodriguez was the team leader; the other teams were in the same shape with people being medivaced. While we were in the staging area reports started coming back that the enemy was dug in and was going after machine gun crews. I am sure rumors were saying the same about everyone else but at a time like this you just zone in on your team. Barry and Chief, who did not smoke, and I smoked a pack of cigarettes in about ten minutes. Shortly after this we formed an online company abreast, High Diddle Diddle, right up the middle. The company fixed bayonets. Some of us "Not so bright guys" dropped off our packs. The red smoke blew and away we went. We screamed obscenities at the NVA. I guess we were just tired of being pounded, pounded all of the time; just sitting.

I came upon a huge log hut above ground. I ran in shooting and screaming and ran out the same way. I have no idea if I hit someone or something. I do know that I have never liked or trusted someone from the Air Force reconnaissance imagery since they had told our commanders that there were no built-up bunkers. We went up two ridgelines and over the crest when we were ordered to halt. The CO selected 3rd platoon to go up the last knoll and secure it. This was an honor. The other platoons were more than happy not to have that honor. The CO was up front with the platoon leader. The Platoon was formed in an online assault and they charged. It was on this knoll the NVA had decided to stand and hold. The enemy just rolled down ChiComms, the ridge was so steep. The Commander we thought went down, the Platoon sergeant and most of the leadership as well. A Private took charge and rallied the platoon, Lt. Abrams and Lt. Madison led the first and second platoons, to the aid of the third platoon. The Corpsmen were just magnificent going from wounded to wounded even as the NVA were shooting at them and the wounded. One corpsman had a rifle shot out of his hand twice but not the third time.

The 81mm FO was calling in fire that was devastating and effective. We charged up the slope and joined the remainder of the platoon. On the ridgeline crest, Lts. Abrams and Madison prepared us for our counter attack. Lt. Madison had me lay suppressive fire at a position at another hill across the gully. During this time we consolidated the positions, passed ammo and cared for the wounded. The platoon leader of the third platoon came up from the last crest and said no one but third platoon was to get survivors. At that time, I did understand why he said it. He stabbed a very dead NVA who I was using as a shield. The NVA soldier had been killed by a very well placed M79 or mortar that took off the crown of his head. The next thing I see is the Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Studt, who had been in the middle of the heaviest fighting and had seen the actions of all of Lima company. Lt. Col. Studt made a believer out of me that day. He said something to the CO and the third platoon leader and they left with him. I don't recall ever seeing them again. Lt. Abrams and Madison got with the NCO's including our squad leader Nick Dunbar, a very good marine.

We sent people to get the packs we left at the beginning. Well, God bless the NVA they stole our packs. The joke is that all we had was mostly C-rations in the packs. They probably had more personal effects than we did. The FO had just finished the medivac when he flopped down in exhaustion on a blown up bamboo stick and it went right up you know where. He then called in his last medivac of

the day and swore above the roar of the chopper that he would be back. We were then ordered to saddle up and hump back to 881 North for the night.

I write this as best my memory can recall after all these years. As I look back over the years there will be more Fire Fights and God knows many more operations and bad times that I will remember. I was with the finest that day; to all my old friends, Col. Radcliff, V.D. Itchy brother, Price, Dan, Bill, Hughes, Al and all the rest.

Respectfully submitted,
William P. Aiello
2nd Gun Team 2nd Squad
2nd Platoon Lima Company
3rd Battalion 26th Marines

Dear Editor;

RE: Red Clay #44, Radio Call Signs at Khe Sanh

I was one of the Air Force Combat Control Team members at Khe Sanh in February and March of '68. We were using the call sign "Tailpipe Mike."

The Combat Control Teams traveled all over Vietnam, and some of us pulled duty in Laos and other places. I spent six months in Laos. Needless to say, we never did control any combat. Like many other military unit names, ours came from on high and God only knows why we had it.

What we did at Khe Sanh, was provide Air Force aircraft with control and guidance into and out of sticky tactical situations. We operated the Drop Zone at Khe Sanh. We kept a station operating beside the runway, sandbagged in front of the Charlie Med tent, to provide air traffic control when a Marine unit was in operation, to provide flight following and other info as required by our control center in Tan Son Nhut. When we couldn't secure a FAC, we called air strikes.

"Tailpipe Mike7' remained at Khe Sanh until early May, and then the call sign was retired for a while. The call sign stayed there even though the team members rotated in and out from time to time.

Thanks for putting out a fine journal, I hope you can add our name to your list of call signs.

Dear Editor,

I wanted to write and tell you very how much I enjoyed reading and appreciated receiving the Summer, 1999 issue of Red Clay.

I thought THE BAIG LETTER, Page 29 was just extraordinary!

For Years, General Giap has been made a legendary military strategist, war hero and the darling of the liberal/leftist American media. The Baig Letter reverses that myth and our Khe Sanh boys and the other American support services can take credit for sending Giap into early retirement. What a revelation! Great stuff Ray!

I know you won't publish the following opinion unless insisted upon, but this issue, its glossy paper stock, content of articles etc. was very professionally done and I want to personally thank you for the time and effort that went into it. Great job and thanks Ray.

I look forward to receiving every issue of Red Clay.

Sincerely,
Viet Nam War Correspondent, 1965-66 and provider of the Khe Sanh Siege Playboy Magazines Malibu, California

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Dear Ernie,

I enjoyed your piece about having a beer in the "Officers" Club! I wish I had a copy of Buck Owens and his Bakersfield Boys music, which I first heard in our so-called club!

Jim Wilkinson

I'll go next time!

By: Dan Beckham
6680 Groton Circle N. W.
Canton Ohio 44708-1015

You could have gone to that reunion but put it off. I've done the same thing, sat at home, and wondered what it was like. I knew there was probably a group of Vietnam veterans getting together for perhaps the last eight years. I had seen a couple of things here and there in the past years, but never went. I knew of a reunion in 1998, but didn't go. I made excuses up for myself on why I didn't need to go.

I joined the Marine Corps in July 1967 and by January 1968 I was in country. My time in 1/9 started at Camp Evans where I arrived about January 15, 1968. I spent the next week getting accustomed to the heat and the equipment and meeting all the guys in 81 mortars, my MOS. Everything was pretty quiet until about noon on January 21st, when the word went out to get ready to move out. We were headed to Khe Sanh.

The helicopters dropped 1/9 off on the runway and the next morning we marched out to the Rock Quarry. The next 2-1/2 months would be filled with work details, fortifying our position, watching the jets and artillery work, all the while constantly looking out for incoming. There were nights assigned to perimeter duty.

Around the middle of March, I volunteered to go with the 81 Forward Observer team that was with Alpha Company. I was introduced to the Sergeant and his radioman Charles Miller and we hit it off right from the start. I spent the next few weeks learning how to read a map and call in supporting fires from the 81 mortars. The team went out with Alpha Company a couple of times in March and each time ran into stiff resistance from entrenched NVA.

Operation Pegasus geared up in late March. 1/9 was assigned the job of taking hill 471 about two clicks south west of the quarry. By late in the afternoon Alpha Company had maneuvered to the base of the hill and was ready to attack up the slopes of the hill. Hill 471 had a main hill and an adjoining knoll with a saddle in between. On the top of this knoll were two large bomb craters. Almost all the forward observers and radiomen were in the left bomb crater (facing hill 471) knoll calling in supporting fires and firing our rifles at the NVA on the hill. As Alpha Company attacked, the NVA starting pouring on their own supporting fire. They blasted us with 122mm rockets and a mixture of 82mm and 60mm mortar fire. A radioman and myself had moved to the right crater leaving the rest of the group of 5-6 Marines in the left bomb crater. As the incoming landed, shrapnel flew everywhere. You could hear it hitting the dirt everywhere. Then one round hit really close. Although we were hit with hot pieces of metal, the radioman and I were unscathed I flew over the rim of the bomb crater to check on the other group. What I saw I still remember vividly today. There was a cloud of dust hanging in the bomb crater. Everyone was hit. I could see the Sergeant and everyone else and called out for the corpsman. I ran to Miller, the FO radioman, and grabbed him to check his wounds. He was still kneeling on both knees like I had left him a few minutes ago, but slightly bent over. The radio that he had fastened to his pack on his back was now gone. As I looked down it was apparent that the round had hit just behind him, the impact crater was visible on the ground. As I pulled him back, I yelled his named and realized he was dead. The shrapnel had cooked off the bandolier of ammo he carried across his chest. I let him go and went to help the others. The Captain had a neck wound and everyone helped to cut off the flow of blood. The Sergeant just lay there moaning, he was in a great deal of pain. His flak jacket was nowhere in sight and shrapnel had hit him quite severely all over his back. I tried to talk to him and comfort him, but he was in shock, and moaning. It's a horrible feeling seeing your buddy's hurt'n real bad and you just can't do much about it. The corpsman eventually got an IV started and we got everyone on stretchers to carry them out. On the way out, the Sergeant's IV came out and I tried to reinsert it. I remember I thought I was hurting him because of all the moaning he was doing. Within minutes all of our fallen comrades were taken off the hill. The wounded were taken to Charlie Med at Khe Sanh. One rocket had wiped out almost the entire command group. The last I remember of that Sergeant was the sight of him being carried off to a waiting helicopter. I never saw him again. Of all the things I experienced in Vietnam, that day is probably the most intense in my memories.

I continued as the Forward Observer for Alpha through the rest of my tour. In February 1969, after 13 months in Vietnam, I rotated back to the world and was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps. I returned home, went to work, raised a family, and let the war fade into a memory. Over the years I kept in touch with a couple of guys from the FO team, but I always wondered about the Sergeant who was wounded on Hill 471. I thought of him often, wondering where he was, even what his name was, I had put everything so far back in my mind that I had forgotten even his name.

In the early Eighties I watched the television series "Vietnam, the 10,000 day War." The memories that I had buried for so long seemed to rise. I had a new urge to read all I could about the Vietnam War. By the late Eighties I was into reading every book on Vietnam I could get my hands on. All this time I continued to think of that Sergeant, if he had made it and if so where he was today.

By the mid-nineties I had a computer and earnestly tried to find guys from my unit, but to no avail. I searched lists and even e-mailed a few guys, but I couldn't find anyone I served with. I had over the years kept in touch with my assistant and radioman, but I was on a quest to find that Sergeant or his fate.

In late 1998, I heard about a 1/9 "Mini Reunion" in April 1999, at Parris Island. I wasn't really sure I wanted to go, never having been to one before. I didn't know what to expect and thought my wife (Susan) would be bored stiff.

On March 20th I called and made my reservations for the reunion and on April 15th, my wife and I left for Parris Island. I told her that if things didn't go well, we'd just leave and go onto our final destination Hilton Head Island our planned vacation site.

We arrived at PI about 5:30 p.m. and went to the Osprey Inn to check in. Well it wasn't three minutes before a couple of guys came back from a golf outing for 1/9. I asked where everyone was at and they told me the Frogmore Inn, so Susan and I proceeded to the Frogmore to see what was happening.

Arriving at the Frogmore the ice was broken very quickly when Roger Liggon grabbed and hugged both my wife, and myself. Right away we felt at home. In fact everyone there was welcoming us like we were lost relatives or something. The night went very quickly and we met everybody at the Frogmore and had a few beers. We got back to the Osprey and crashed onto our beds. Things seemed to going pretty good and Susan said that all the ladies were real nice. She had made more friends than I had. I thought to myself, well it's ok, but I didn't really see anyone I had served with. I still had reservations about staying for two more days.

Friday April 16th there was a full schedule of events starting with breakfast, morning colors, a graduation, a tour of Parris Island, and finally a dinner.

Friday morning reveille was at 5:00 a.m., with breakfast scheduled for 6:30 a.m. at the Weapons Battalion Mess Hall. A bus arrived to pick us up and off we went to eat breakfast. I thought I was at a Perkins or Bob Evans, the food was that good. As we left to get back on the bus, my wife started to talk with Charles Evans (Doc) and his wife Sue. Well, in about a minute my wife is calling me over and saying, "You won't believe this, this is Bill Pearson's sister." You see I had worked with Sue's brother Bill in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania about 20 years ago. A small world indeed. I couldn't believe we had met Bill's sister, here of all places. We continued to talk as we boarded the bus to morning colors ceremony.

Morning colors was really a show. The Marine Corps Band played and Mike the mascot was in his finest dress blues. The colors were raised and then there was an introduction and short story of both the Monfort Point Marines and First Battalion Ninth Marines and then we all had our pictures taken together. Then it was off to Peatross Parade deck, "The Grinder," to see 2nd Battalion F Company and 4th Battalion P Company (WM) graduate. The graduation was impressive, with the playing of the band, the entrance of over 400 new Marines, and the ceremony itself.

After the graduation it was off for a little sight seeing around the base. Sights included Elliott's Beach, the Rifle Range, and a movie and tour of The Crucible complex. The Crucible is a 54-hour training mission the recruits go on during the 11th week. After this grueling test of endurance and problem solving the recruits receive the globe and anchor. They are pinned with the globe and anchor at the Iwo Jima memorial at Peat Ross parade deck. Well after another tremendous lunch it was off for more sights and then a couple of hours at the Museum or shopping.

Friday night the entire group mustered at the Officer's Club for dinner. Naturally everyone bellied up to the bar and got to talking over old times. Col. Radcliffe gave the invocation and opening speech and then everyone feasted. After dinner it was more old stories and even some news movies about Delta from May of 1967. It was a grand night and slowly the old soldiers drifted off by ones and twos to rest up for the next day's maneuvers.

Before dinner my wife and I chatted off and on with different guys that happened along, but nary a soul I had known in the Vietnam. We had sat there maybe 20 minutes when this guy comes down the bar looking for a spot to sit. My wife tells him to take the chair next to mine. Naturally I introduce my wife and myself and start to ask questions on when and where he was in Vietnam. In reply to asking him when he was in Vietnam, he said, "1968" and I said, " me too." I said I was with 81's, and he said same here. I said I was the FO for Alpha Company and he responded that he was also. At that point I just looked at him, and said, "It's me Carl, Dan." I told him the story of Hill 471 and what happened after the incoming. I could not believe it. Standing before me was the man who I'd been wondering about for 31 years, Carl Oksnee. We hugged each other and began to reminisce; it had been a long time. We sat there and talked for the next four hours.

Saturday morning was a free day until the barbecue at 2 o'clock. Some of us decided to attend the Crucible graduation at 7:30 am, so it was up early again and off to Peatross parade deck. At about 7:30, 400 or so tired recruits marched onto the parade deck, dropped their gear and formed up around the Iwo Jima memorial. After morning colors and a stirring speech, these recruits were pinned with the Globe and Anchor and were Marines. It was a really stirring ceremony to say the least. The rest of

the morning was spent just hanging out, or shopping at the PX for those essential Marine Corps souvenirs.

The barbecue was great, there was plenty to eat and drink, and everyone took a turn at burning a couple of dogs and burgers. Carl and I got together again and tried to reminisce, but it was hard. We had only been together for about one month before he got hit, and after 31 years memories fade away. Later a fellow named Larry Kumm came up to me and said I was his FO for 81 mortars. I was in amazement, I just found Carl, and now another Marine is standing in front of me saying he served with me. Well needless to say, I took him over to Carl and all three of us talked for a few hours. At the end of the barbecue I said my good-byes to Carl and we promised each other that it wouldn't be 31 years before we talked again. We had a lot of ground to cover, to get to know each other again. Sadly, we remembered very little of our experience together except for that fateful day in April on Hill 471. It was sad to see this reunion come to a close, as it had been a wonderful three days. But alas it was the end of the barbecue and the start of the final party at the Donnelly's.

Col. Donnelly and his wife Cathy had invited everyone over to their house for shrimp and a little beer. They were excellent hosts. They had two huge boats of shrimp set up on a table and more food. Everyone gathered in the back yard for more story telling and a final wind down to the festivities. There was even an impromptu dance by all the wives present. No telling how many dollars were thrown their way, but if they had kept dancing, people would have been looking for the ATM machines.

Well all things, must come to an end. Groups gathered for those final photos and those final good-byes, and slowly we all went our separate ways. We had come literally by car, plane and train, enjoyed great camaraderie, shared some old stories, cried on each other's shoulders and now it was time to part. I hope it's not a long time before I can see my friends again. Some old, some new. All great. This had been my first reunion and it really renewed me and gave me strength to face the future. It also gave me resolve to try and find more of our old friends. If you read this and haven't been to a reunion or rally, go, it is a good time, believe me...31 years is a long time not to see your friends.

That reunion was in April 1999, since then Carl and I met again at the Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion in July 1999. We are still trying to piece things together and remember what time has made us forget. Our time together was short, about three weeks and it's hard to remember the short period we shared so many years ago. Now we have made a pact to correspond and help one another to heal those wounds of so long ago.

Welcome Home Brother!

Till next time old friends
Lurch
FO-1 Alpha Company
Jan 68- Feb 69

A Golf Reunion

Joseph Olszewski
Third Platoon Commander, Golf 2/26, '67/'68
Alamo, California

During the past thirty-one years, all I remembered about Golf, 2nd Battalion 26th Marine Regiment was in the form of names, pictures and dates. For more than three decades, copies of the names of the KIAs resided in one of those plastic picture cubes, that I have always kept on my desk at work. It's real easy to find amongst the desk-top clutter, as it's covered with those "Buddy Poppies" handicapped veterans sell on the streets of San Francisco on Veterans' Day. The pictures have always been either in my head or the few that I took with my cheap instamatic are in binders and fading by the year. The dates are repeated every Sunday at Mass when the prayers for the dead are offered.

For thirty-one years, military magazines and telephone books were my required reading. There was The Retired Officers Association Magazine, the Semper Fi newsletter for retired Marines, and throughout the 70's and 80's, the active duty magazines, that I routinely "borrowed" from California PX barber shops, always looking for articles or references to Khe Sanh or Marines who I once knew. I even studied the San Francisco Marines Memorial Club Membership lists for any Veterans names that I could recognize.

Whenever I traveled across the country to some awful locations and spent countless nights in dull motels, and even in 1989 when my son, Chris, started visiting colleges, I would open the local phone books and look for names. All of these paper patrols netted the same results: Nothing learned, nobody found.

Then in November 1998 I read a short article that appeared in The Retired Officers Association magazine about a new web site called The Virtual Wall. I was new to the Internet and this site absolutely riveted my attention. Once I learned my way around it, I discovered that, just as you can leave physical "remembrances" at The Wall in D.C., you could leave written or pictorial "remembrances" for any of the more than 58,000 names listed in http://TheVirtualWall.org web site. I immediately opened the files on The Virtual Wall of all the KIAs that I knew. In my plastic picture cube, I have the seven names of Golf Marines from my platoon who were KIA on April 6 and 7, 1968; as well as, the names of many Marines and Navy personnel I knew either from my training days at

OCS/Basic School at Quantico, Virginia in 1967 or from my short 'Nam tour.

One by one, I opened each of their files on The Virtual Wall and found that there was not a single remembrance for any of these heroes. So I began loading anything I could remember from the pictures I have in my mind about each of them. One was Father Robert Brett, who was the 2/26 Battalion Chaplain, who was KIA on February 22, 1968. Father Brett tried to arrange a wedding in Hawaii for one of my Marines who left his girl friend with a "bun in the oven" before he left for 'Nam. I left that story.

After leaving all these remembrances, I began reading the "guest book" for any names or events I could recall. Again, I found nothing.

Then on March 8, 1999, I received an e-mail message from Mike Worth, former Echo, 2/26 Khe Sanh Veteran, and he had read my remembrance for Father Brett. Mike knew Father Brett at Khe Sanh and his brother, Father Frank Brett, was one of Mike's high school teachers. Mike subsequently informed his friend Lucille Biscaglio, that he found another 2/26 KSV, and she called me to make a "recruiting" call for the KSV organization and at the same time told me about the KSV web site. I began checking KSV Guestbook, as well, and found Ed Rouse (Father Brett's nephew), Eric Smith (G 2/26 & 81s) and James Everley's (G, 2/26) message center comments. One by one, I started contacting them. Through them I learned phone numbers or addresses for Pete Post, Golf's Executive Officer at Khe Sanh, Lee Overstreet, Golf's Company Commander, and Reverend Ray Stubbe. I've since had phone conversations or exchanged letters with all of them. Then, I began receiving e-mails from Marines or relatives of Marines that I knew or didn't know — such as, "Doc" Dan Manley, Ed Matta, Bill Wentworth and Abe Moore — all Golf, 2/26 veterans. I even received an e-mail from Julie Boroff, who is the daughter of Jim Alexander, WIA on April 6, 1968 while attached to Golf, 2/26. Julie's on a mission to find the corpsman who saved her father's life.

One day, on one of those never-ending streams of e-mail jokes, I noticed that James Everley's distribution list had a name of "Jacob Krygoski." I knew that I had a Marine name Krygoski in my Platoon, but I never knew his first name. I sent him an e-mail on May 9, 1999 asking if he was in the Third Platoon, Golf, 2/26. He replied: "I can't remember what I was doing yesterday let alone who my Platoon Leader was 30 Years ago. I'm not even sure which Platoon I was in." I replied, "I thought you were in my platoon, in the third squad and your Squad Leader was Rick Lammers." Instantly, there was an avalanche of names we each knew and two e-mails later we had figured out we knew each other for six months between Phu Bai and Khe Sanh. After that, we started exchanging the entire inventory of 'Nam pictures we both had. I mailed him mine and he scanned all of his and sent them to me. Once he received mine, he scanned all of those and sent them to all the other Marines that he knew. At one point about a year ago, I typed all the letters I had written to my fiancée during my tour in my WORD processor. If you print it on a laser printer, it totals sixty-six pages! I sent Jacob aka "Ski" the entire file. Between our pictures and my letters, it was like being stranded on an island for thirty-one years and suddenly finding a five-gallon bottle floating in the surf with an encyclopedia about 'Nam inside.

"Ski" lives in Palmdale, California, and one day he asked if I ever traveled to Southern California. I replied that I passed through on my way to Phoenix, Arizona to visit with my mother and my dreaded In-laws. He asked if I could stop by on my next trip for a quick visit. Since my wife would be away on a business trip in October, I was planning an Arizona visit and asked "Ski" if that would be a good time. Again, an instant avalanche of information, ideas and common knowledge flooded the e-mail circuits.

"Ski" said that Richard Ross, who was Golf's Company radioman at Khe Sanh and who lives in Venice Beach, California, had visited him once, and would try to contact him to see if he was interested in joining us. I mentioned that James Everley, radioman for the Golf's First Platoon, was interested in traveling from Wichita, Kansas to Lake Tahoe for a gambling vacation and he and I had discussed meeting in San Francisco.

Before long it was arranged — it had taken Thirty-One Years — that on October 9th and 10th of 1999, four members of Golf, 2/26 Marines would meet for a mini-reunion in Palmdale, California.

James, Richard and I all arrived at "Ski's" home in Palmdale at different times on Saturday. I arrived first at around 10:00 AM. I guess, being a former officer, I had to set the example. I had a little trouble finding the right street, but once I turned the corner there was no doubt in my mind which house belonged to Jacob Krygoski and his wife, Leslie. You see it's more than just their home, but it is also the best Marine Corps museum you ever set eyes on.

"Ski" had decorated his home for our reunion. On the outside he had huge USMC and POW flags. On the lawn he had a big white sign on a stake which read "Golf Co. CP." And, are you ready for this? He even had a minefield outlined in the front lawn with little signs on stakes which read "mines." This latter home improvement warrants further explanation. On February 24, 1968, I stepped on a mine on Hill 558 while checking a map of the field that I had previously submitted to the Battalion CP. Between the time the minefield was established and when I checked it, several barbered wire fences were installed around it. Once I entered the minefield on that eventful day, I had gotten confused about the location of the mines in relation to the

fences. To make a long story short, one of the fences obscured where the minefield began and instead of walking toward a safe position within the field, I actually headed for the first cluster of mines and I hit the first one in the pattern. This event had been the previous subject of many humorous e-mails and phone conversations between me and my new KSV core group, who have labeled me "directionally challenged." I've never been bitter about my left-foot amputation and, to be honest, it probably saved my life or my sanity as Golf Company suffered heavy casualties in a bunker ambush on April 6th and 7th of 1968.

By the time I rang the doorbell, I was bent over from laughing about the mines in the front lawn. "Ski" answered the door and it became immediately apparent the neither of us recognized each other.

By noon James and Richard had arrived. Richard remembers both my name and my face, but I only have a vague recollection of him. Richard and James knew each other well as at one time both of them were in the first platoon and they even had pictures of the two of them together in '68. "Ski" and Richard knew each other at Khe Sanh and they both "rotated" home around the same day in late March 1968. We shared stories about Phu Bai and Khe Sanh that only the storyteller could remember. We looked at pictures "Ski" had scanned on his PC and couldn't believe how young we looked way back then.

Richard, James and I were amazed at the computer room that "Ski" had built. It was full of USMC memorabilia. He had large caliber ammo, a full-scale picture of him crossing a bridge at Phu Bai in his 782 gear, all his battle ribbons enclosed in a glass case, every book and magazine on Khe Sanh and, you'll love this, when he "boots up" his PC it plays the Marines Hymn.

On Sunday, the four of us met for breakfast at an International House of Pancakes in Palmdale. It was crowded and we sat in a tight booth. James and Richard were interested in exactly how I screwed up in that minefield. Therefore, being the resourceful Marines we were trained to be, we used what was available. Using salt & peppershakers, forks, spoons, knives and a few napkins, I outlined how the minefield looked and how I misread it. Between setting all this up and the crowdedness of the IHOP, patrons near us were curious and were watching me with great interest. I'm certain some of them overheard my description, as they watched with mouths and ears agape. It was my finest hour.

James had to leave after breakfast, but Richard and I returned with "Ski" to his home where had several conversations about KSV and our combat experiences. We ate steaks that Leslie BBQ'd for us, drank beer and finished the day watching the great Marine recruiting film "DI" that Jack Webb starred in during the mid-fifties. By five PM our mini-reunion was over and we vowed to meet again in San Diego in September for the KSV Reunion (James has attended past reunions, but "Ski", Richard and I will be reunion rookies in September).

As I began to drive off, "Ski" stopped me as he had a gift for me. Since I was in my car and it was wrapped, I didn't want to open it in front of him. When I stopped that night at a motel on my way to Arizona, I opened it. It was a heavy cardboard box, which read:

MEAL, COMBAT, INDIVIDUAL
Beans W/Meat Balls
In Tomato Sauce
B-2 Unit

Once again, I was doubled over with laughter. Here's a quiet Marine we called "Ski" in '68 who could complement a reunion thirty-one years later for three of his combat brothers with flags, signs, a minefield and gifts of C-rations!

What did we learn from our Reunion? We learned that we all had a tremendous strength of loyalty that DIs worked so hard to instill in us, even though we never appreciated or knew it. We learned that we over-identify with our past adventurous youth. We learned that movies produced in the 50's and early 60's had a great deal to do with our combat performance and our identity as Marines in the late 60's. We learned that we all carry names, pictures and dates in our minds. Most importantly, we learned that we are all hungry as Hell for any piece of information or common Vietnam experience that we cannot wait to share with each other.

I suppose these learning points are common in some form or manner amongst all Vietnam veterans. But, somehow they seem even more important to those of us who lived in the Red Clay. See you in San Diego — trust me — but if we meet don't call me "Ski." That name is reserved for a special KSV who created new pictures and dates for my mind to remember.

Khe Sanh Brothers

"I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted their best, men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw, right down to their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the U.S. Marine Corps. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another.

"I cannot say where we are headed. Ours are not perfect friendships; those are the province of legend and myth. A few of my comrades drift far from me now, sending back only occasional word. I know that one-day even these could fall to silence. Some of the men will stay close, a couple, perhaps, always at hand.

"As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades...such good men."

Semper Fi
Jim Wodecki

Reunions

By Tom Ford
72 N. Jefferson Ave.
Lindenhurst, NY 11757

My name is Tom Ford and I was a member of Foxtrot 2/26 Hill 558.

In 1985 I came across an announcement for a veteran's parade that was to be held in New York City. It was a Welcome Home parade for Viet Nam Veterans sponsored by the City of New York and the Honorable Mayor Edward I Koch. For quite some time I lived with the inner turmoil of should I or shouldn't I go? This went on for sometime until a local social event brought me into contact with a lifelong friend, Dan Gardner. Dan served with the Dusters in Viet Nam and had been attached to the Marines somewhere up around Cua Viet, after Khe Sanh. It was Dan who turned the tide within me, by agreeing to go with me to the parade.

We took a train from our hometown, Lindenhurst, Long Island, and after an hour ride we were in the Big Apple, Penn Station, New York. It had been a quiet ride in, with only some casual conversation about Viet Nam, being in the service. What the heck was this parade going to be like? Will we be the only one's dressed like this (camo/green utilities)? Could we ever find anyone from our old units? From Penn Station we hopped a subway for a quick ride downtown. It was then that we realized that we weren't alone. As we looked around the subway car, and later the subway stops, there were more and more people in and around us who were wearing some sort of unofficial uniform to show that they were Viet Nam Veterans. It was the first time since coming home, 2/69 that I ever recalled feeling so proud. The further the subway went the more Vets got on. Eventually everywhere you looked on the train there were Veterans. They were all greeting each other as if they had known each other for a lifetime. What a great feeling, beginning a day that would have a resounding effect on the rest of my life.

This subway ride to the staging area was 20 minutes. We had a choice of stops to get off because the staging area was so large. Not knowing exactly where to go we randomly selected a stop and got off. I still can't believe what happened. As we came up out of the subway we crossed the street, which by now was nothing short of a sea of green utilities from all branches of the service, and we continued on for about a half a block when I spotted a large mass of people who were assembled inside a city park with a very large banner flying overhead and I couldn't believe my eyes. It was a white banner with green lettering and it read "**KHE SANH VETERANS.**" I remember approaching cautiously and I walked around the whole perimeter of these guys with Dan studying them and trying to figure this out. I eventually went inside the park and wound up talking to some of them, but unfortunately I don't recall who, and after a few conversations I remember the Hueys flying overhead. The parade was starting and I asked Dan if it was ok to march with this group. He said "sure." This was the beginning of my first reunion.

The parade kicked off and we all marched as a group. I will always remember the feelings of closeness and togetherness that I felt that day as we marched down the "Canyon of Heroes" as it is referred to in New York. Just think, famous movie stars, baseball players, astronauts, presidents and now me, with the Khe Sanh Vets. It was an awesome parade from start to finish. The spectators were lined up along the whole route and they were stacked from the curb straight on back to the buildings and they were screaming "Welcome Home" all the way. We marched past bands too that were all playing military songs and there was also a reviewing stand with a lot of dignitaries, including General William Westmorland, who I believe was the guest of honor or Marshall. Dan loved it too. The emotions were flowing.

Along with the parade there was a party on the deck of the Intrepid, which I was told was a WWII aircraft carrier docked on the West side. Dan and I discussed this and I decided to stay in the city while he departed for a prior family commitment back home. After he left I just milled around at the end of the parade route just savoring the good feelings that had come over my entire body. It was awesome, green utilities, jungle hats, combat boots, full dress uniforms, flags, music, singing. Parade. My parade. I am Home!

Being a loyal Marine, I went from bar to bar, which were all overflowing with Vets. In hope of finding someone I knew from Khe Sanh I had to consume a untold quantity of Lager. Wherever I went someone was handing me a beer. After realizing what a short day it would be if I continued with this search method, I walked around outside just taking in all the people. Then I saw a guy with a sign that read 2/26. I met none other than Ed Diaz, in the

middle of millions of people. While we hadn't known each other in Viet Nam, we had a good conversation, which lasted sometime. I remember how great it was that I had met someone. Poor Dan.

Ed and I parted company and I proceeded to the Intrepid, which was another great time. They had several bands playing all the tunes that were popular back in the sixties. It brought back a lot of memories, and tears. At one point I found myself just standing at a solitary location on the flight deck, facing South, just listening to the music and crying my eyes out. It just happened. But, it ended, as did the party and I happily walked around New York for awhile just taking in the whole day and trying to decide if I should extend my stay. I learned that there was a "gathering" going on at the Penta Hotel for Khe Sanh Vets.

Inside the Penta Hotel I immediately found what would later become known to me as the hospitality/PX room. It was an awesome display of memorabilia. I scouted the perimeter just taking it all in and trying to figure it out. After purchasing a few items I then noticed a message board, which had a message inviting all to a slide show of Khe Sanh that was being held in a suite that belonged to one of the Khe Sanh Vets. I overcame my reluctance, mustered up all my courage and went up to this room full of strangers. I met Ray Stubbe and a former Marine Ernie Husted who was putting on a slide show of all the photos he took while at Khe Sanh Combat Base. I will never forget it. I was welcomed like a long lost relative, invited to drink as much as I wanted. I sat down in awe of these guys and what they were doing, watched a great slide show and found myself listening and laughing, all the while fighting back long lost emotions. The slide show was great. I finally witnessed the magnitude of what had been going on back at the combat base during the siege. The hospitality and slide presentation was great. Perhaps too great. To this day I have always wondered if I had overstayed my welcome because I found myself getting onto a train back to Long Island at 0310hrs. It had been a long day, and night...my first reunion.

I apparently put my name down on a roster while I was in the Penta Hotel, the following February I received an envelope in the mail with a return address that read The Khe Sanh Vet Newsletter. It was, I believe, to be the First Issue of the magazine that we now read today. It was five pages, printed on both sides with the first two dedicated to articles and the last three a listing of all the Khe Sanh Vets that had been located, 350. That's a lot of people, I thought, and I read my own name on that list. What a proud feeling. The phrase "WELCOME HOME" took on a new meaning.

The publications continued and the Chicago parade was promoted, scheduled for 1986. I was unable to attend, but sent in a donation to KSV just to keep the newsletters coming and eventually I started reading about the reunions that were taking place in California, Florida, Tennessee. Great articles about all the guys getting together. I really wanted to go to one, but, I was unable to work it in at the time, or was afraid. I don't know.

All that changed in 1996. The reunion was scheduled for Philly and all my internal excuses of "too far away, I live on Long Island, NY" were not holding up. They fell apart the day I got a telephone call, about 1 week prior to the reunion, from Ed (Zimmo) Zimmerman (Fox 2/26) who was a guy I served with at Khe Sanh. The last time I saw him was on the evening of April 7, 1968, when he put me on the last medivac chopper off of "hill 700." He was calling from his home in Pa. Also on the line was Ed Sanchez (Fox 2/26) a guy I bunkered with on hill 558 who was visiting Zimmo for a camping vacation prior to attending the reunion. I don't have to tell you what a great phone call it was. I put plans in motion immediately to go to Philly and in a matter of two hours I was a go.

I drove down to Philly and had no trouble finding the hotel, all the USMC flags flying from the balcony railings. I remember going in and registering too. It was a very strange feeling not knowing anyone at the time. I kept walking around from room to room, hospitality to the PX to the bar to the pool back to my room (bunker), all the while fighting the urge to flee. Get the hell out of here I thought. Glad I didn't cause then it happened...Sanchez, Soto, Zimmerman, Collins, McCrossen, Diaz, Brohy. "Fox Company present Sir!" I'm home.

Twenty-Eight years after the fact I found myself in the company of those that I had served with in Viet Nam, at Khe Sanh. What a comfortable feeling. We had a great time together and I also met a lot of other wonderful caring people; odd description of former Marines who still had a place in their heart for each other. Looking back, these reunions can be somewhat of a scary ordeal the first time around. But, it doesn't take long before you settle in and start to feel comfortable and have a good time until it's time to go home. Then you can't wait for the next one.

The '97 reunion at St Louis, which was too far too soon. I didn't make it. Then it was Washington in '98 and although I could only go for the first three days it was a very touching reunion what with "The Wall" being right down the block. Then there was St Louis last year, gave it a lot of thought and then just picked up and went, even though I didn't know anyone else who was attending. Here we go again, I thought. Boy was I surprised. I met a whole bunch of new people from other aspects, areas, functions and branches of the service. There was the guy from Golf Co who was on the other side of the hill on 4-7-68 when we got into the shit, a C-130 pilot, SOG guy, Air Force FAC, Marines who were there before Khe Sanh

became famous (pre-siege) and a Seabee. Talk about seeing the war from a different perspective, it was there, and I hope to always be there.

SEE YOU IN SAN DIEGO IN 2000.

Corporal Manuel Pina Babbitt – May 5, 1999

by Charles Patterson

He suffered their cage
With the dignity of vigil,
And graced them with his forgiveness
In the dying language
That they will never speak.
And in return,
They strapped him down,
The only living thing within
Their warm green room.
A green untinted by sunlight.
As fecund as the fifteen greens
Of Vietnam.

While he listened
For that last beat
Of his heart,
Justice scurried off
Leaving behind
A broken scale and bloody sword.
Then death crept in the opened door,
And took him
With the gentleness
Of a pickpocket's caress.

For those in the hushed semicircle
It was not what they thought
It would be. No one saw justice,
No one found satisfaction;
No sanctuary; no salvation.
Just a good man dead,
A long drive home,
And a cold, wet night outside.

ED Note: Chuck Patterson was Manny's attorney who witnessed his execution. Two nights before his death, Manny called and asked that I apologize to the brothers for putting a dark cloud over the brotherhood. Ernie

The Threshold of Hell

They climbed to fight their way to fame
Upon a hill that bore no name,
And won the tough and deadly game,
Though many had died to stake the claim.

Old Lucifer himself was there
Amidst the death and much despair
To fan the smoke and caustic air.
This place to hell would compare.

Evacuation choppers soared
Above the guns that loudly roared
So close to steel and lead that poured
From weapons of that VC horde.

The tired Marines dug in and stayed
To hold that hill against the raid,
Heroic roles they often played.
The price in lives was highly paid.

The Devil grinned because he knew
His share for hell would be a few.
He waited as the battle grew
Then watched it die and start anew.

A Chaplain came upon the scene
And knelt beside a still Marine
Who looked no more than seventeen?
The youngest one he'd ever seen.

The Padre saw the bitter light,
Blessed countless souls and gave last rites
He followed those who scaled the heights,
Barring Satan from the tragic sites.

Some say Marines serve time in hell
While still on earth, their legends tell.
And the Devil knew it all too well
So he tried recruiting when they fell.

But the fearless Padre held his ground
And whipped the Devil round for round
Atop that shell-pocked bloody mound,
And salvaged every soul he found.

When tales are told within the Corps
they'll talk about the Padre's chore,
And how the Devil ran on before
Through the threshold of Hell
...and closed the door.

Harry A. Koch

Black and Yellow Dog

My ass is cold and wet the rest of me I warm as I sit on the just thawed mud bank of the Potomac, just south of Great Falls, just north of Chain Bridge, after a mid-winter heat wave, watching billions of gallons of dirt brown water flowing over, under and through at the Chesapeake then on to the Atlantic unstoppable.

Garbage and debris, a sea of shit, floats by cradled
as if it belonged, not wrenched from the surrounding forest, not dragged unwillingly from some farmer's field or barn, or swept from a country road built on the flood plain: an uprooted sycamore tree, a section of a wooden fence painted green, a -bloated black and yellow dog. Is it still a dog?

I sit and watch intensely, mentally noting everything that passes, without grasping, only wondering what action to take if a human body floats by out of reach, beyond saving, beyond redemption, cradled, as if it belonged, belly down and bloated like the black and yellow dog. Is it still a human? Should I interfere with the river?

Up and down the Missouri, the Arkansas and the Des Moines and every tributary in between, all draining into the Mississippi, I've roamed making maps of wetlands, sucked dry by stupidity, and-not once have I ever seen a river that had the same color, the same level, the same temperature, the same smell the same taste from moment to the next.

All bodies flow like rivers; none are the same from moment to moment. The perception of permanence is an illusion empty. A sucking chest wound on a dying nineteen year old gurgles like Goose Creek after a spring rain before his last breath is taken through the wrong fucking hole. All illusions of permanence vanish when the, last red bubble, sopped in blood, pops.

The river gives birth to all things and the river takes them away, an eternal cycle of creation and destruction. In a season of consonance my son was conceived on the banks of the Atchafalaya River wetland pregnant with life. In a season of chaos I hunted down and terminated life on the banks of the Rao Quan.

I dumped their bodies into the river that drains the eastern slopes of the Annamites just shy of 17 degrees north latitude, light years from home, flows south then east to the Mien Giang, which turns slightly north of east just before depositing my sins into the South China Sea at Cua Viet. Waters from the South China Sea and the Atlantic must mix somewhere.

I trust the river to do its job as it's done since before my birth,
without interference, without consulting me-ignoring my dreams of glory and my fears of suffering which are swept away in the current with the bloated black and yellow dog and merge somewhere with the blood red waters of the Rao Quan washed clean now by thirty summers of torrential rain.

Joe Greene

Sadness

By Talis Kaminskis

Allow yourself the sadness. Reach down farther into the dark of emotions than ever before. BE YOURSELF! The creature of anger and rage that your life has lived. The young Marine's soul heard and cried. And cowered once again at the reality of having to confront himself. Repeatedly, it was built on all he had ever dreamed for. As a child, it brought a parent's warm arms. Growing into the teen years, the attention of young ladies. Now, in a land that held all that he knew, it portended to bring despair. He strove to avoid the forlorn emotion, but with beastly independence, it rose and rose, and it breached his private little world. From eyes that had learned to have only one look, rolled forth the merciful plea for tears. Pressure releasing, sin washing, guilt ridding tears. Strong, descriptive, communicating fears. Lied, cried and begged for them; Oh how he cried for their need. His mouth open, gasping for the breath needed to replenish the tremendous energy now pouring out of his soul. How grating were the screams resonating with his plea. His arms heralded the trembling and shaking that was to come, and with unintended actions, dropped from his grasp the constant weapon. Not laying it down with the care and importance it deserved, but casting it from his grip, in direct denial demanded by his experience. An act of defiance, letting it fall, into the dirt, into an area beyond reach. Quickly his arms wrapped tightly around his chest. Gripping, squeezing, giving the illusion of companionship. He needed to be held, to feel the touch, to acknowledge the truth governing the momentum beyond his control. Desperation was the master of the moment and, in his mind he cried. Cried to overcome. Cried to hold himself. Cried to let himself go. The visions of blood and pain flitted through his mind. His heart pained as he visualized the still bodies. Past their violence he walked, kept walking, until now. The river washing his being stopped flowing. Its current parted and, lying on the revealing shore, laid one who had been his friend. So close had been their bond that sharing had become a commitment. Sealed with an unspoken pact that each could depend on the other. Such frailties of men did not take into account the power of time and circumstance. His friend died. Whatever they possessed lay fallen with him. "I WILL NOT FEEL" echoed through the young Marine. Had risen from the ashes and proclaimed his escape from beyond the power. Clutching at the reality of the situation, the young Marine drove deep the bonds that could cause such pain. Shoulders and chest tightened; a prelude to the clenching of the jaw. Who now had the power to be a part of him? Were there any worthy of his love? Could there be one who could walk his path and not be weak enough to fall victim to war's tribulations? What made him think that he was so mighty? That he could challenge death on its own terms and come out the victor? Who in the hell did he think he was to be such a self-appointed judge, jury, and executioner? And it came. The one word came.

Why? Why? why? WHY??????? The word that let himself feel. A word that brought pain. Yes, there was pain in his world. AND HE FELT IT. LET HIMSELF FEEL IT.PAIN THAT WAS A PART OF HIM. If he had any inkling of what the tears would bring, surely he would not let himself be subjected to this. But he had too. He had to let himself be. An island he had become, and an island he could not remain. No matter how enticingly it appealed to him. His body existed in a physical world. One where somewhere there was life. Where a hand was still held out and a body caressed in love. Where a smile was not cynical and a face possessed a name. He cried for himself and he cried for them all. Rising above the punishing shame. Surging past its restraints. His oath was again silent. But it was strong. A vessel for more tears. An endless supply. Rolling down a mountain that no one had climbed in a long time. He collapsed to his knees, trembling and sagging. A body tired and drained from feeling confronted. Stretched to physical limits not meant to be tested. Nothing could have prepared him for this. It had to be his. Unbidden. Unplanned. Unasked. Revelation was a master not to be trifled with. It scoured the essence of those whose needs drove them to enter its realm. And yet it accomplished nothing more than to act as a mirror to its invader. Existence was a harsh teacher and, the tears drove the lesson deep. Ahead still lay more of the reasons for there being Footprints would disappear, but they could not be erased. His path would test again and again.

Passing Time

Memories of the D.C. Reunion July 1-5, 1998
By Ernie Spencer

The precise symmetry of chalk white stone captures my gaze as I travel from a pleasant morning visit at Arlington. My eyes stare out a tinted picture window at row upon row of white gravestones. I reflect upon this final place through which I wind. These fellow warriors. All their lives. All their stories. I feel at one with them. To see them I need only look in a mirror, or, glance across the aisle of our air-conditioned bus at a somber, Khe Sanh brother. He gazes outward, engrossed in his own personal world of lonely-contemplation. "Cogitate'n," Pipes calls it. Memories, I prefer. I had witnessed a beautiful, touching, ceremony beside the flagpole adjacent to the Tomb Of The Unknown Soldier. Large trees and fortunate location hid the ceremony from the bright rays of cloudless sun. The guys from Echo Company, Second Battalion, Twenty Sixth Marine Regiment, got the United States Marine Corps Awards Branch to reluctantly give up a Bronze Star. Heroic actions thirty years ago are fondly remembered during their chanted, often choking-back-tears recollections by Echo company brothers. One after another they step forward. Middle aged men in suits and ties speak of a time from their teens when they knew this man. They recall a brave, funny, good-hearted buddy who was killed in-action, one day and another firefight after the award date. His beautifully aged mother and middle-aged siblings stand in awe by all which goes on around and for them. There is a magic at such times. An enveloping air which binds together the participants. The ceremony breathes through and for those present.

We go out for pizza at one the next morning. We run the one block gauntlet of hookers, pimps, and late-night panhandlers along L Street. The pizza joint is the only thing open. Cheap pizza, sandwiches, and, beer by the pitcher. From 10 am until 4 in the morning. Seven days a week. The stink of nicotine and yeast of beer and pizza hits me going through the glass front door. Some real old, stooped, wrinkled, withered guy with a cigarette hanging out one side of a pouting mouth sets down a couple of pizzas within twenty minutes after we order. "We were here yesterday," Paul says. "That guy," he nods towards the old dude as he shuffles off, "that guy works the whole time. Ten in the morning till four the next. No breaks." Better him than me, I think.

Met a classmate (same platoon) from Officers Basic School 1965 at the reunion. Served with this guy in the same battalion at Khe Sanh in 1967 and a little of '68. This guy is now some businessman. Owns his own company and does not remember me. He says he's just fine.

Finally got to meet Ernest Jones after thirty years. Ernest was platoon sergeant for Delta weapons. I had a four-thirty wake up so I didn't hang out after the banquet on the Fourth. From my bed I watch the televised World Cup Soccer match between Holland and Brazil. Fireworks a few miles away send booming shock waves right through the walls and closed windows of my corner room. I look out the large windows that rattle and creak. White, red, green and other radiant colors spray outward in blooms come alive. My stomach is calm. The sounds do not send me off on another trip down memory lane. I pass unaware into sleep.

There are persons whose voices are distinct if not unique. Some say mine is one. But there is, and can only be, one Fish. The ringing phone wakes me. The clock says well after 11 pm. "Eh Skippah, Jooones is fanahly heah." Fish says "Jones" like he's chewing—on a large piece of sausage and onion pizza. My meeting Ernest after thirty years is electrifying. I see his back as I enter the hospitality suite.

There is a good crowd both standing and seated. Beer flows in the corner Delta occupies. Jones has a Delta company red ballcap, unadjusted for size, precariously perched on his George Foreman-styled head. I walk up behind him. He's tripping, shouting and bouncing, recounting Delta memories. "Sergeant Jones," I say, matter-of-factly,

like I used to when we ran together. He spins around. Starts shaking. "Ohhh... Man... Skipper," he goes, then leaps and grabs me. Jones still works out. I don't. He's not just hugging. This guy squeezes me so hard I feel my lower colon start to emerge. He lifts me off the ground despite being considerably shorter than me. I believe he is going to crush me to death. Damn, I think. I survive Khe Sanh and Vietnam only to die at the hands of one of my own guys. After extricating myself from his death grip, I hold him at arms length while trying to recover my wind. "It's good to see you again, Ernest," I say in a noticeably higher octave, breathless voice. He moves again to embrace me, but my arms remain locked at the shoulders, elbows and wrists. Grinning panic on my face. We Khe Sanh vets are if nothing else, survivors.

My calm demeanor at the reunion is due to my own family situation. Since April I have been flying continuously to Hawaii while tending to dad's cancer surgery, moms stroke, Dads heart attack and another stroke for mom. I felt like I was in a ring, on the ropes, while the Furies pounded me. I did what I always do during such times. Click it down a few notches. Shut it down until the incoming quiets. I keep reminding myself that it is my mom and dad doing the dance with death, but I still have to watch and listen. In the space of several months I see mom and dad go from being loving parents, to very unhappy children. Five days after the reunion my parents leave Hawaii for probably the last time.

I put mom in a nursing home and dad in an assisted living center. Alameda where they reside is forty-five minutes from me, each way, in light traffic. Perhaps in time I will relocate them closer, but for now, I want the best nursing home in the Bay Area and it is supposedly the one at Alameda where mom resides.

On the fifteenth of July I leave for what I hope is a final trip to Hawaii. Until this savage bout of illness in my family I had harbored a dream of someday returning to my childhood home. But, now, I am physically sickened by the site of Oahu. The plane descends on its final approach. I look out the left window at the subdivision where my folks' home is up for sale. Check. Check. Check. Dad wanted me to do a final check. That's how dad is. I feel sad as I walk the empty Ewa Beach home my folks had custom built. Throughout their sixty years of marriage they have accumulated a fair net worth by investing exclusively in real estate. My parents have owned and lived in over forty homes. This empty one I walk, the last. I stop at Punchbowl National Cemetery Of The Pacific for the first time since Vietnam. Frenchy Deschaine and Jim Littler are just four graves apart. Punchbowl is an ancient volcano that overlooks Honolulu and Waikiki. It was more than rude, I knew, them being there since 1968 and me never paying my respects. I'm a Khe Sanh guy. We do some things only when we're ready. Frenchy was a Delta company squad leader. Died like a Delta guy of the times. Gunshot. Saw his obituary in the Honolulu paper. I'd only been home from Vietnam a couple of days. I needed to get a job. I didn't have the time for it and all "it" involved, then. Jim Littler and I were two of the original six, PLCs (Platoon Leaders Class) from Hawaii in 1963. The other four DORed (Dropped On Request). Becoming a Marine officer is all about playing macho. I often wonder about those other four guys. How their quitting affected them. If you dropped out of the Marine PLC program, you were not subject to the draft. Jim and I were commissioned at graduation in 1965. Jim was older. He'd done a tour as a Mormon missionary before college. Jim went to the Mormon, Church College at Laie. I went to the Catholic, Chaminade College domiciled on a hillside with a seaward view of Diamond Head, Waikiki and Punchbowl. Jim made the mistake of trying to convert me to his religion during a lay-over at Treasure Island, San Francisco. We had just successfully completed the first of two, summer boot camps at Quantico. It was the summer of 1963. I cannot recall my exact words, but I remember that Jim did not take kindly to my extemporaneous tirade on organized religion. He had been talking religion and his faith non stop since we left Hawaii over a month and a half earlier. I felt that I had to stop him. He was driving me nuts. What really did it was when he arrogantly asked me if I ever "truly" had a religious experience. One where I felt the "spirit." I was laying on my bunk with my hands behind my head. Jim sat on a bunk across from me. "Yes," I yelled and sat straight up. "I often do while I'm doing it in the back seat of a car or on a blanket at the beach with some sweet thing." I recall that sarcastic line of mine as I stand beside him. His cement grave stone seems much older than its thirty years. The cement is pocked and seems unvisited, like Frenchy's. The stones of Punchbowl do not stand like those at Arlington. They lie flat upon the ground. Jim was a CH-46 helicopter pilot and went down with his entire crew. "I'm sorry guys. Please forgive me," I say, glancing between them. Tearing, I turn and walk the short incline on the southeast side. I look down into the crater that helped build Oahu. Now, dull white stones on rich green lawns have claimed its interior. A circular road wanders the lower portion like a casually tossed, black lei. Punchbowl is full. Only cremations now allowed. Who will remember any of this a hundred years from now? I turn, and gaze outward at Waikiki. My old college and Kaimuki lay hidden behind towering concrete structures, thrust up, like surreal, tombstones. I hear laughter from the gods on the breeze that sweeps by my face and ear. Playful, songful laughter. I turn, and look down into the crater at Frenchy and Jim. There is no past or future. Only this moment. Mamma

died three months after the reunion. We'll place her ashes at Punchbowl to wait for dad. Dad was Army. I'm toying with the idea of going there myself, when the time comes.

Going to See Chris

By Jack Stoddard

I'm writing this story in memory of my friend Chris Cordova and for all of us who were privileged to have known him during his short life. It's three o'clock in the morning, Friday July 3, 1998. I just opened the garage door of my home in Las Vegas and I'm on my way back into the house to get my coffee. I can hear the deep mellow sound of the dual exhaust on my restored classic, a 1960 Chevy El Camino, echoing off the garage walls. I'm going to visit the final resting place of Chris Cordova with whom I served some twenty-eight years ago in Vietnam.



After many hours of research with the help of my wife, Sue, we were able to locate Chris's hometown and with Sue's magic fingers on the keyboard of the computer, we even had a phone number for Robert Cordova who turned out to be the younger brother of Chris! After talking with Robert and finding out exactly were Mosquero, New Mexico, was, I decided that I needed to go and say a final goodbye to my young friend. I needed to close that door as I opened some new ones. Some 750 miles and fourteen hours from now, I'll finally be with my friend again.

The traffic was light as I drove over Hoover Dam, navigated the steep canyon, and headed for Kingman, Arizona. The trip was nice and it stayed cool all the way to Flagstaff before I rolled down the windows to pick up a breeze. I love driving across I-40. Being a classic car buff, I really enjoy going seventy-miles-per-hour and looking into the backyards along the way to see what kind of old cars were parked there. On this trip, I didn't hear the normal, "stop looking around and keep your eyes on the road," that Sue would constantly be telling me. This journey was on my own. This was my quest, something I had wanted to do for a long time.

Around three o'clock that afternoon, I pulled into Tucumcari, New Mexico, and started on Route 54 toward the town of Logan. It was nice to get off the interstate and travel on the back roads again. The weather was great! Hot, but still very nice with white clouds cutting off the heat of the sun every so often. When I arrived in Logan, I followed the old Main Street through the city. You could see that at one time it must have been a busy place, but now a lot of the stores were closed and boarded, just as in many small towns across the country.

As I kept going north, the road seemed to be getting smaller and smaller until I finally turned on Route 39 and headed into the tiny town of Mosquero, my final destination. Now the road was a narrow, two-lane highway that seemed to be darting out into nowhere. There were nothing but green-rolling hills all around with only a few ranch houses scattered about to interrupt this gorgeous land.

By now, I was starting to get really nervous. I kept thinking about all the things that I wanted to say to Chris. And I was also nervous about meeting the Cordova family. Did they want to meet me? Had they put everything in the past or would they want me to tell them everything I remembered from all those years ago? I guess I really didn't know what to expect.

After going about twenty miles, I approached the base of a beautiful mesa. I was sure it would drop off toward the right side and go into a valley where Mosquero would be found but instead, as I reached a fork in the road, I started to climb right up the side. It was very steep and I was just hoping my old car would make it up through the steep sharp curves.

As I slowly maneuvered my way through this wonderful mesa, I came upon a huge wall of rock and saw it was covered from top to bottom with names and dates. I wondered if Chris had put his name there when he was a boy. Finally reaching the top, I saw nothing but hills covered with juniper trees about as far as you could see. It was nothing like I had expected the top of a mesa to be. I thought it would be flat and rocky. I was hoping there would be a gas station in Mosquero as I was down to a quarter of a tank and still had to travel the thirty miles back to Logan later in the day.

I soon approached the town of Mosquero and luckily saw a gas pump on the right side of town with a big sign reading, "Open" leaning against it. As I pulled toward the old-fashioned gas pump, I couldn't help but think, why would anybody want to live in this little spot in the road? I stopped my car. As I started to get out, an older man approached and asked how I was doing. I returned the greeting as he was removing the front cover on the pump so he could reset the meter by hand (he told me the old pump had broken three years earlier). I asked him if he could answer a couple of questions for me.

First I asked him where the cemetery was located and then I asked if he knew where Robert Cordova lived. "Oh sure, that's easy," he replied and offered to call Chris

Cordova (Robert's son who had been named after my friend). Chris Cordova was the local marshal and was usually around.

As he was filling my tank, I was looking over the town. I could see a volunteer fire department building with a "Closed" sign in the window and next to it was a small market with an even smaller bar attached to the side of it and the town's post office. That was downtown Mosquero, New Mexico.

A few minutes later, a pickup truck pulled into the station and a young man walked up to me. I assumed it was Chris and put my hand out to introduce myself, "Hi, I'm Jack. You must be Chris."

"Yes, and I would be happy to take you to the cemetery as soon as you get your gas, sir."

A few minutes later, I was following him down the dusty road to the cemetery. We had only gone a short way before we turned off on a gravel road. Soon my car was covered in a great cloud of white dust. I remember being upset about this and at the same time feeling a little ashamed of myself. Here I was about to see my friend, Chris, and I was worried about a little dust. That was really stupid.

It wasn't long before we were pulling into the small cemetery. It was on about a quarter-acre of land with a fence around it. I guessed there were about thirty graves altogether. I was really nervous now. There were so many things I had wanted to tell Chris.

As we approached the first grave, I could see a headstone engraved: "PFC Jose Cordova Died In Germany World War II." That was the grave of Chris's father who had been killed in action in 1945. I got a lump in my throat. All of the sudden, I thought, "His dad was also here and taking care of him." That meant Chris would be all right.

Then came the real hard part. I walked up to Chris's grave. There was a small stone just like his dad's. It had his name, rank, and where and when he died. There was a small American flag made of flowers in front of the headstone, but the flowers had long since wilted. But you could tell Chris was remembered and not forgotten. His nephew put his hand down and moved the wreath so I could see the complete marker.

As I knelt down, something very strange happened. It was as if Chris had heard all my thoughts about him during the last decade and I really didn't have to say anything because he already knew. With tears in my eyes, all I could say was, "It's good to see you again, old buddy."

I sat there touching the headstone for about five minutes as Chris's nephew backed away to give me some privacy. Finally, I said one more time, "It's good to see you, Chris," and I stood up and walked a few steps backward still looking at the grave. I really felt a sense of peace as I turned and walked back to my car, wiping the tears from my eyes. I didn't want to break down and cry since I still had to meet the rest of his family in a few minutes. The tears would come later when I was alone driving out of Mosquero.

Shortly we were pulling into the Robert Cordova's front yard. His was a large wooden house with new and old cars scattered through the yard. Robert walked out to meet us. For just a moment, I thought it was Chris, they looked so much alike. We shook hands and I could tell this was as awkward for him as it was for me. He introduced me to his sister and then his wife, Francis, and their oldest son, Floyd. I was then invited into their home and offered a beer that I gladly accepted. I'm not really much of a beer drinker any more, but it was really appreciated!

We all sat around in the living room making small talk and I was trying to figure out how to give them a copy of the story I had written about Chris. I decided to pull it out of my pocket and handed it to Robert. I watched as he took the two-page story out of the white envelope. I was scared at that moment. I took another large gulp of beer while wondering if they would like my story or not. How would they act? Did I do the right thing? I just waited.

The story was passed from one member of the family to the next with only a few nods of their heads as any sign of what they read. I could see Robert's eyes were a little red but other than that, not a word was spoken.

I was offered another beer and after some prodding, accepted a plate of homemade enchiladas. While we were all sitting around the table, Robert's daughter-in-law entered the kitchen. "That was a really nice story you wrote about Chris," she said. "We all liked it very much." That was all that was ever said about it, but it did make me feel much better and a little more at ease.

After I had eaten a few more bites of dinner, out came the photo albums. There were lots of pictures in various sizes already in the living room with a separate special area for each one of the sons and cousins who had served in the military. Chris had his spot with his medals hanging next to his basic training picture and next to him was Robert's son, Floyd. Floyd had served in the Persian Gulf, but was now on disability from a back injury.

After a couple of beers, things started to get better. The family shared stories about the two brothers, Chris and Robert, as we sat in this small room on the top of this beautiful mesa in New Mexico. Robert told me about a doctor who also had lost a son in Vietnam and who had built a memorial and chapel in the little town of Angel Fire, eighty miles northwest of Mosquero. All the boys from the surrounding four counties who had died in Vietnam had their pictures and some personal effects placed in the memorial building. Chris's pictures, along with his dog tags, were there. Every week a different pic-

ture was placed in the chapel and that family was notified. Robert called this place "holy ground." A lot of the conversation was centered on the brothers and how their Uncle Joe had taught them to swim in the local swimming hole, to hunt, and to fish.

Soon, with a third beer in our hands, Robert, Floyd, and I headed out the door and on our way "cruzin," as Robert put it. I was no longer a stranger. I had been accepted as a friend. There couldn't have been more than thirty houses in this small town. Many of them had been boarded up as the people who had lived there were now long gone. I was told that when Chris was a boy, there were probably 300 people living in town, but the population had now dwindled to around a hundred. Three of the largest ranchers in the area had bought out most of the small ranches.

As we left the house, we went about a half block away and saw the small, white buildings that were the elementary and high schools. Robert told me a picture honoring Chris was in the main hallway of the high school. We then drove by a church and the little hospital that had closed over ten years ago and was now the school superintendent's house.

Every time we drove past a house, everybody would wave and I would wave back. I could imagine what they must have thought at the site of this strange gringo riding around in Robert's green pickup truck! Everybody knew everyone else in this town. It was like one huge family. You just couldn't help but fall in love with Mosquero.

Robert drove us down Bell Ranch Road for about forty miles. As we drove, more stories came out about Chris's funeral and how Robert was on his senior class field trip to the Lake of the Ozarks when he was notified of his brother's death. The class, all five of them, cut the trip short and returned home. He said the whole town turned out for Chris's funeral, as well as the honor guard from the Air Force National Guard in Clovis.

Robert told me about the wild elk that roamed the area and Floyd directed my attention to the local sights such as the Indian caves. When we got to the end of the mesa, they pointed to an area across the valley where dinosaur footprints had been discovered. We had a really nice talk as we returned to their home and I felt I now knew more about Chris than I had known during that whole year we served together.

Robert wanted me to spend the night and kept asking me over and over again, but I didn't feel right about staying. I didn't want to ruin their Fourth of July weekend. Deep inside, I really liked these new-found friends and could easily have stayed longer, but I knew I had to get home to my own little family. It took me nearly thirty years, but I finally was able to close the door on Chris. But, I also knew it could be opened again and his family and friends would welcome me.

I departed at dark and as I was driving out of town, the full impact of what had happened hit me. I had to wipe the tears away as I drove off the mesa and headed for the busy world below. I couldn't help but think of the past and how my wife encouraged me to write this book about the way Vietnam really was. About good men doing an impossible job as best they could. Not killers, but boys who became men long before their time — some who came home and some, like Chris, who didn't.

When I wanted and needed to go see Chris, my wife told me, "Go do what you have to do." Sometimes, I think she must understand me better than I understand myself. Thank you, Sue, for helping me close those doors.

The preceding piece is an excerpt from the book "What Are they Going To Do, Send Me To VietNam?" Written by Jack Stoddard. If you enjoyed this chapter you can purchase the entire book from Jack at: Sunrise Mountain Publishing, 5397 E. Washington Ave., Las Vegas, Nevada 89110. Phone: 702-459-4233. E-Mail jscb@lvcm.com. The price is $16.00 which includes shipping and handling.

Return to Khe Sanh

By Col. Bruce F. Meyers USMC (Retired)

I have now had the chance to return to Khe Sanh twice. In March 1998, I took my wife Jo and we accompanied some forty plus former and active duty Marines plus Army Special Forces Rangers. The March 1998 trip was thirty years almost to the month from when we of the 26th Marines left Khe Sanh. I have just now returned from my 2nd "Returned," this time taking my son age forty-three, who was previously a Marine. Too young at the time for either the service or Vietnam. Both trips were great.

Vietnamese security persons were always with us in the background, never intrusive, but we always knew they were they're observing our return. For whatever reason, general Mundy and myself seemed to be followed more than others. I had brought several St. Christopher and St. Michael medals (patron saints of "Grunt" Marines) with me to bury as a private memorial for lost friends at Khe Sanh. It had to appear that I was going over to relieve myself next to a coffee tree. Only then did the NVA security people turn away. I slipped my metal down my leg and had to bury them with my boot, so as not to call attention to the security or the many small Vietnamese or Bru children who followed us everywhere.

Only when we walked out to where our perimeter (1/26 as I remember) was located on the north side of the airstrip could you find foxholes and individual emplacements. I found scraps of the green plastic sandbags and

pieces of barbwire that brought memories flooding back. One of our MHT tour directors retired Sgt. Major Len Koontz (Navy Cross as Lance Cpl. At Khe Sanh) had wire cutters which we used to recover small two inch sections of the barbed wire to bring home. I later made up small plaques with a piece of barbed wire, a scrap of sandbag and a small bottle of the red soil of Khe Sanh.

In March 1999 I went back to Khe Sanh again for a more in-depth look. Five of us stayed overnight in Khe Sanh village. I was the only one that had been in on the 800 series hills in 1968. I recommended long trousers and light shirts with sun hats and light packs and plenty of drinking water. We hired a Bru woman accompanied by her teenage children, to guide us up to 881. Wading through four streams up to our waist, none of us had any problems with leeches. Climbing up through the elephant grass was tiring in the 107-degree heat and 100% humidity. We took our time and by late mid-morning we had reached the spur just east of hill 881S. We confirmed our position with GPS and taking compass bearings on surrounding hills. There is still considerable live ordinance throughout this area. Use extreme caution. Coming down the trail that we were ascending, bumping rocks along the way, were two Bru's with a water buffalo hauling a two hundred and fifty pound bomb casing and a 155 mm shell! We about dove off the trail. Later we determined that they had been defused and we were glad.

My memories of April '68 came flooding out. One of my battalions (3/26) under Lt. Col. John Studt, with Maj. Matt Caulfield, and Capts. Harry Jenkins and Bill Dabney and 1st Lt. Tom Esslinger, among many others, participated in the retaking of hill 881N. I spotted the place where Bill Dabney and I urinated on the 106 tubes, to cool them from cherry hot. They were firing overhead direct fire as the attack elements of 3/26 retook 881N. I had flown up from the Combat Base with my air and artillery officers and we spent that day with 3/26 during the attack. Later that day I flew a wounded NVA officer and enlisted man back on my helo for medical care and interrogation. Intervening years stripped away and I could almost smell the cordite and winced at incoming. It was total recall. It lasted but a short time, but some how made me feel better that we had made this effort to come back. Some how it put much of Vietnam behind me. My son and the others could tell how much it meant to me to get back up there. Running out of time, we beat a hasty trip down the hill, back through the streams to our bus, for the nearly two hundred-mile drive south to Da Nang.

The country is friendly. More than 85% there have been have been born since the US left VN. The scenery is beautiful. It will become a destination resort in a few years. If you get the chance go. It is a decision I know that those who have done it have no regrets and only positive memories.

Crash of a Pilot

Now they are reconstructing it,
Putting the fine sticks of fate together
As if they were tinker toys.
Man has never come to terms
With accident, his own birth;
Or its antithesis.
Surprised at miracles, he lives,
Thinking that Order,
Explains everything;
And that Reason is why
Men fly into the trees,
Or sink at sea, or die of disease.
It is difficult to think Nothing.
We grow up thinking our ways
Out of jungles, and often survive
To reinforce thinking Something.

And so, while the crews work
Cleaning the site, I fly
Among fog-caressed valleys,
Forging the wild rivers of faith;
Knowing the chances are
Reasonably on my side.

If I should die in flight today
By some malfunctioning of skies
Will there be peace before I cease to be?
Or shall I terror stricken, cling to fear
And wail until this tumbling craft
Defines my destiny?

I can but contemplate how I'll respond
And I'll define that now,
Because I've treated death before:

In truth I do believe that in a tumbling craft,
I'd try to analyze its path
And chart its twisting course.

When fury waned
I'd soar as Angels have for centuries past,
Then seek a lofty plain and cling to it
Until I'd journeyed Home.

Jim Dykes
1013 Kitsap St.
Port Orchard, WA 9836

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Complete the bottom portion of this form and mail it with your check made payable to Khe Sanh Veterans Association to Vince Griffith, 27280 Jefferson Ave. Suite 200, Temecula, CA 92490. Be sure to call the hotel with your room reservation. For More Info contact John Kaheny 619-282-5211, jmkaheny@home.com or Vince Griffith 909-296-0180

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Others in your party? Adults ..... Under 18 ..... Total .....

Their names .....

Please indicate any special needs you may require .....

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Cost	Number	Total
Registration fee ($15 per person over 18 non-refundable)	..... X $15	= .....
Banquet ($30 per person)	..... X $30	= .....
Beef ..... Chicken ..... Fish ..... Veg		
MCRD Tour with Lunch ($10 per person)	..... X $10	= .....

Cost of Padre Game will be based on final number attending.

Total Remitted .....



Section Eight: The Babbling of Bug-Out Billy

I used to deem and dream myself
A beam-lean moustached warrior,
Shining in the armor of godsped glory,
Wielding the flamethrower of the just cause,
Screaming Geronimo and parachuting:
A pragmatic Prometheus bringing
Frightful firepower to a shrinking
Enemy, serenaded by a blatant brass band.
Then I woke to the haunting hounding human sea,
The raddled rattle of trumpet going to battle
Infinitesimal cotton-padded infiltration,
Moans of men mourning their mutilation,
Frostbitten feet in a festering foxhole.
I could not beat or bring myself to live like that.

In memoriam

Jim Epps
July 2, 1944 • January 18, 2000

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...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

A Message From The Editor:

We failed to get permission or credit the cover photo in our last issue. The photo was taken by David Douglas Duncan, a photo journalist, who went through the Siege with some of us. I first saw the photo at Jim Wilkinson's home in Memphis in 1987. I was meeting him for the first time since Khe Sanh. I thought it was his personal photo. I asked if I could use the photo for our cover and he obliged. After we had gone to print, he mentioned it was a Duncan photo. Jim said he didn't think Duncan would mind. Little did I know it was used by David on a cover of one of his books. Tommy got quite a scare when David called him from France and pretended he was upset at his photo being used without his permission. He then laughed it off and said he thought it was a great cover. His photo on last issue's cover is a segue between what Jim and Walt are looking off towards, and the NVA on this issue's cover. Paul mentioned that the wearing of the green pith helmet is akin to the brothers in America wearing their "colors." While it is common in the North, it is looked down upon in the South. Paul caught the guy's look using a telephoto lens. He was not posing.

We bombed with the Rats/Red Clay theme for this issue. One submission. You guys cannot tell me you did Khe Sanh and don't have any stories of rats or red clay. There's a big difference between mind stories and writing, huh? The submission deadline for our next issue is November 31.

❋

KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION

2000

SAN DIEGO, CA

September 14-17, 2000

Hanalei Hotel, Mission Valley

www.hanaleihotel.com

Toll Free Reservation line 1-800-882-0858

This is a great location for a reunion. Many other military groups have chosen this hotel. Close to MCRD, Sea World, The San Diego Zoo, Sea World, and the beach. Free transportation to Old Town, the Trolley and nearby shopping centers. Poolside Hospitality Room!!! Tailgate at Qualcomm Stadium for Friday Night's Game against the San Francisco Giants. Downtown Gaslamp District and Certain Marine-Owned Irish Pubs Standing By.

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Vince Griffith
27280 Jefferson Ave. Suite 200
Temecula, CA 92490.

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Be sure to call the hotel with your room reservation. For more info contact John Kaheny 619-282-5211, jmkaheny@home.com or Vince Griffith 909-296-0180

Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion Registration Form

Name .....

Phone [day] ..... [eve] .....

Fax ..... email .....

Address ..... City/St/Zip .....

Served with (Branch, Bn, Co etc.) ..... When .....

Others in your party? Adults Under 18 Total ....

Their names .....

Please indicate any special needs you may require .....

.....

Interested in attending a Padres v. Giants game Friday night? How many? .....

Cost	Number	Total
Registration fee ($15 per person over 18 non-refundable)	X $15 =	.....
Banquet ($30 per person)	X $30 =	.....
Beef Chicken Fish Veg....		
MCRD Tour with Lunch ($10 per person)	X $10 =	.....

Cost of Padre Game will be based on final number attending.

Total Remitted .....

BOD Messages

As the chairman of the publishing committee I want to personally thank every member of the organization who responded to my request for articles for our magazine. Your response is going to make this issue one of the most diverse and interesting we have ever published. Along with this issue you will also receive a copy of the 2000 Directory. Please check your personal information and correct any errors on the form provided in the newsletter and return to me ASAP. I will be making corrections and additions, which will be mailed to you in each forthcoming edition of the KSV magazine. The directory has a binding that can be removed with a little practice and you can replace the pages with the corrected ones. I am debating whether to change the front and back cover, once a year. I would like to hear from the membership on this idea. James Wodecki (Jimbo) has done a magnificent job of recruiting new members and designed the covers for the 2000 edition.

I have one more request to help us keep our magazine one of the best published of any organization. We know and understand not everyone owns or has access to a computer. Paul Knight, along with Ernie Spencer and the rest of their staff, spend endless hours retyping and editing submitted material. They would be able to accomplish much more if we could have the materials submitted to Paul Knight, electronically. If at all possible, once you have written your story and do not have access to a computer,

maybe you could have it done at your local library, or have a friend who has a computer, help redo the material. I do not wish to, in any way, discourage any one from writing, especially after making a plea for more articles. It is just a suggestion that will help the editors and save a lot of time and work. All materials for the newsletters should still be sent directly to Paul Knight. I again welcome any suggestions or criticisms. This is the only way I can judge our progress with the magazine, which will continue to grow with your help. Keep those articles coming.

Tom Eichler
VP & Chairman Publishing &
Membership Committees

❋

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has been my pleasure to serve you, as your President of the Khe Sanh Veterans, for the past year. Since I spoke to you last, I have made two trips to Vietnam and have been in the village of Khe Sanh. I have worked with the Bru and the local Vietnamese. They appear to be, outwardly, pleased to make contact once again with Americans. There is no animosity among the people of Vietnam towards the Americans. On one of my trips I was able to find some of the Strikers that had served with us at Khe Sanh Fire Base and Khe Sanh Village. I just wish you could have felt the joy that radiated when we were together. The Mountain People are still as poor as sin, yet are eager to share with their visitors anything they have. English appears to be their second language now. When you walk through the streets of Khe Sanh young people and children all want to practice their English.

I hope we have a tremendous Reunion at San Diego in September and I want to talk with everyone of you. I know you did your job in a far superior way than we can ever give you credit for.

Your Faithful Servant,
David "BullDog" Smith,
President Khe Sanh Veterans

❋

Founder's Corner

March 24, 2000
Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe

These are indeed times that become increasingly difficult. I had always assumed, when much younger, that the transitions and the issues that would be faced as one got older became less and less burdensome and difficult—that all the major ones (like a life's work, partner, etc.) were all done early in life. I'm finding that the issues, however, have a sort of accumulative force to them. Issues of grief, of loss, of death, etc., are especially in this category—they seem to grow by adding what has been, with what is, and even anticipation of what will be!

Thus, I heard recently of the loss of Tommy Eichler's mom.

In my own case, my dad's condition has remarkably deteriorated so quick. He was placed on Home Hospice Care about a week ago—meaning that his condition is regarded as terminal within 6 months. He doesn't sleep well—and I'm up with him most of the night, and now he doesn't eat either. He's mostly in a wheelchair so that I can move him to the bathroom in a hurry to assist him while he sits on the pot-clean him up afterwards, etc. Getting him dressed in the morning, taking care of the urine bag (he has a permanent catheter now), and so on have made me appreciate in much greater degree those who have done this sort of thing in the past for others.

•

I received another letter from Ines S. Kerch. (I think I sent you a letter from her before concerning the advisability of autopsies so that surviving next-of-kin might get compensations from the VA.) She writes in her recent letter something that you might consider putting in the next issue of our magazine: "I wonder if other veterans may have revealed a problem with 'bumps' forming on the body? Apparently, it is accompanied by some itching and, when scratched, there is flaking of the skin. One Vietnam member at our VFW Post served in the Army and has such a problem. According to the veteran, it affects his back, legs, and arms. He stated no doctor has been able to identify what it is, nor the cause. Has anyone revealed such a problem to you? I would appreciate your response." (Mrs. Ines S. Kerch, 1918 Storm Drive, Falls Church VA 22043-1413, widow of Richard Kerch, Khe Sanh vet.)

April 17, 2000
Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe
8766 Park View Ct.
Wauwatosa, WI 53226-2729
(414) 771-9987

Taps

NAME	UNIT	DATE OF DEATH	CAUSE
COSTELLO, GARY M	D/1/9-XO	9/3/97	LUNG CANCER
FRANKLIN, FR. ROBERT	4TH MAR	10/2692	?
GARRISON, DANNY	A/1/26	1/1/00	?
HALL, W.C.	VMO-6	1/97	?

[1/Lt Hall was co-pilot in an aircraft involved in 1/9's patrol action on 24 March during which his aircraft crashed and he sustained 2d and 3d degree burns over 60*/ of his body]

HAVLIK, JOHN	MACTU-62	1/97	?

[Maj John Havlik reported to KSCB 27 Jan 68 to organize the various detachments of Marine Corps units from 1st Marine Air Wing and coordinate their support and activity].

HENDERSON, LARRY	ARMY INTEL.	?	?
HENNELLY, JOHN	HQ/1/13-CO	1996	PLANE CRASH
LUCERO, ALFREDO	A/1/13	?	?
McGEE, RICHARD L	H&S/1/9	?	?
MUMMERT, JOHN E	?	1998	?
NEFF, ROBERT L	VMO-6	5/16/96	?

[MAJ R.L. Neff was section leader of a flight of two UH-1E gunships, SEAWORTHY 422 and 4-23 involved in 1 /9's patrol action on 24 March

PELLETTER, P. A.	H&S/3/26-81S	6/27/96	?
PIPER, MICHAEL	2/26-CAPT	5/7/99	CANCER
PORTER, JOHN	?	?	?
RAMSEY, LARRY	11TH ENG	11/20/95	?
SEARLE, HENRY	VMA-211	6/99	PLANE CRASH

[Flying an A-4, Major Searle supported the recon team that was surrounded on 26 Jan 1967 in which PFC Steve Albert SRSEN of A/1/3 jumped on a grenade to protect others. The grenade detonated and he was put in for the Medal of Honor. CG, 3dMarDiv, recommended the MOH and General Walt concurred, but it was denied by General W.C. Westmoreland, perhaps because the incident occurred just within the Laotian border.]

SILVA, VICTOR	A/1/26	?	?

[Diary entry for 22 Jan 68: Gunny Silva of the S-3 shop in the 1/26 COC bunker, asked that I send the Catholic chaplain to visit him. He showed me a large quantity of religious items he had with him: a plastic prayer card, a Christmas card from a Franciscan brother, and the mass for each Sunday.]

SYLVA, DAVID	USAF	5/23/99	?
TOYE, JAMES	E/2/26	5/11/98	?
WALTERS, FRED M "CHIP"	A/1/9	2/14/94	?
WEDGE, JAMES	B/1/13	2/2/99	?
YOUNG, JAMES R	M/3/26	?	?

Hi. My name is Diane and I found a copy of The Khe Sanh Veterans' **Red Clay** at the Vet Center in St. Petersburg, FL. I know it is last year's issue, but I found it to be the most fascinating reading I have found in a long time. I was married (many, many years ago) to a career Marine (Air Wing) and have always had a lifelong interest in the military and battle strategies. Living on Okinawa for close to three years let me study the battle up close and personal. Otherwise, I have had to keep it to Civil War sites, like Gettysburg, Chattanooga and New Market. I had great success with Dien Bien Phu when I found a survivor from the French Foreign Legion who was willing to talk to me. Language was a bit of a problem but we managed fairly well.

Khe Sanh seems a bit overwhelming at the moment, but I thought you might be able to point me in the right direction. Is there perhaps a book that you find to be an accurate account? Or do you know of someone who would be willing to email me about it? I would sincerely appreciate any help you could give me. And feel free to forward my email to anyone who could help me with this. I know this is many years too late, but no less sincere. Thank you and WELCOME HOME.

Diane Wearins
13366 Cockle Drive Apt-221
Port Richey, Fl 34668
Email: dianenprfla@aol.com

ED NOTE: "VALLEY OF DECISION" by John Prados/Ray Stubbe is an excellent choice.

By Command Sargent Major Ballogg – JTF 6

May 6, 2000

There are less than 2000 active duty military with RVN service in uniform today. All of us are senior enlisted/officers. On the eve of the fall of Saigon, I feel compelled to talk about the soldiers who served during that conflict. The barrage of misinformation about the war and who fought it is a national disgrace. For example, the B.S movies—"Rambo," "Apocalypse Now," "Deer Hunter" and "Platoon," Oliver Stone's rendition of guys in the same unit killing each other, smoking dope on patrol. The sad thing is, Oliver knew better but wants to be one of the Hollywood insiders. Some of the things portrayed in these movies did happen, as they happen in all wars, but they are portrayed as everyday occurrences in Viet Nam, as every man's experience. Why? My guess is that those in Hollywood and the media who avoided service have this need to reinforce their decision not to serve by vilifying those who did. This continued effort to disgrace those who went saddens me and makes me furious.

I am going to compare two conflicts: "The Greatest Generation" and Vietnam as a vehicle to define the RVN combat soldier. My intent is not to denigrate any other veteran but to shed some light. WWII was "The Good War," there was an evil foe bent on conquest and the destruction of the world as we knew it. Our whole society was galvanized behind the war effort. Every organization supported the war and total victory. There was every reason to fight and no excuse not to. The 60s generation and Viet Nam was the not-so-good war. The American public initially supported the war, but it was a side bar. The Reserves and National Guard were not mobilized. There was no societal effort. The goals were ambiguous and the threat undefined. The only reason to fight was a sense of service to the Nation. And yet during WWII, only 33% enlisted, 67% were drafted. Initially, only 21- to 35-year-olds were to be taken but not enough volunteers came forward, so the draft was lowered to 18.

Compare RVN 65-73: 67% enlisted and 33% were drafted. Of the draftees 10% volunteered for the draft.

In WWII during a 4 year period, there were 350,000 draft evaders. In RVN during an 8 year period there were 500,000 draft evaders. Developed to a fine art by some we know well.

WWII desertion "in the zone" Europe and Pacific theaters: 20,000 convicted prior to D-DAY. The British jails were full of US deserters who were brought to dockside in handcuffs. RVN desertion in country—250. WWII units surrendered to the enemy from Bataan to Europe. Many units with the ability to fight surrendered without one. Platoons, companies and in the case of the Battle of the Bulge, regiments with the ability to fight chose not to. RVN: not one platoon in 9 years of fighting surrendered. Some were overrun, but chose to fight to the death. LTG H. G. Moore, when revisiting his battlefield 20 some odd years later, was told by the North Vietnamese officers that they were astonished at the American soldiers "fanaticism" to fight to the end.

My unit was the 3rd squad C Company 2nd Bn 14th Infantry of the 25th Inf. Division (Tropic Lightning) or the "Electric Strawberry" as we called it, with pride. The Division fought in RVN from

early 66 to late 71(?).

The Division had a little less than 17,000 assigned. During its tour the 25th had over 5,000 killed in action and just under 25,000 wounded in action. That's about twice the Divisions rolls. The 25th never lost a position to the enemy. Never had a unit overrun. Never had a soldier surrender under fire.

I am proud to have served as a grunt in RVN and have never served with finer men.

ED NOTE: Too bad Tom Brokaw doesn't read our magazine.

Dear Editor,

I've been a member since around 1991 (my name is included in the Membership Directories of 1994 and 1996). Ray Stubbe and I have corresponded for quite a number of years, and I've also exchanged correspondence with Talis Kaminskis, whose written work I greatly admire.

What initially led me to become interested in the Vietnam War itself was the POW issue. I think it was during 1989 that British television aired a documentary on the POW/MIA issue, which made an enormous impact on me, the sort of impact where you lie awake at night and can't get it out of your mind. Then about 9 months later another TV channel aired a documentary called "We Can Keep You Forever," and the evidence they put forward was so overwhelming (set against the skeptics, who also had a fair hearing in the program) that it compelled me to go out and start reading up on the issue. From then on I got swept away and read just about everything I could lay my hands on. Books on the war aren't easy to come by in the UK, but over the years I've collected around 70 books on the subject, some of which I've had imported from the US. It was this accumulated knowledge that made me want to visit Vietnam, which I did in the early 90s and since then I've been working on a writing project (a novel) set during the war.

My first ever contact with the KSV Organization was when an enquiry letter I'd sent to another vet's organization for some information was redirected to Ernie Spencer. He then responded to that letter. By pure coincidence, I had literally just finished reading Ernie's book (WELCOME TO VIETNAM MACHO MAN) which I'd picked up in a book store over here. We just struck up a regular correspondence for quite a number of years after that. At that time I was preparing to visit Vietnam, including Khe Sanh as a result of his book. Ernie asked me to write a piece on my travels for inclusion in the newsletter which I did, and, which he published (article title: "Stop the Plane I Want to Get Off"). During the early 90s Ernie was working flat out on preparing the newsletters all by himself. There was no team of editors helping to sift through and type all the submissions and prepare them for printing, etc. One day I volunteered my assistance, which fortunately for me he eventually accepted, and I think I helped him on about 3 or 4 of the newsletters. Ernie would send me a package with all the letters/articles/poems in their original format (often handwritten) and I typed them all up, sectionalized the various items, put it all onto a disk and mailed everything back to him in time for his deadline. Ernie then took over through to the final process of it going to press. When Ray took over Editorship of the newsletter, he printed an article I wrote on the Wall in issue no. 38 (Spring '97).

Ernie sounds like he's having a busy time of it at the moment—give him my regards when you next see him. Also, I hope you have a memorable visit back to Vietnam next month. It is, without doubt, the most amazing country I've ever visited and I would really love to go back some time. The poverty we saw in the south was truly humbling, both inside and outside the cities, but the southerners' friendliness was one of the major high points of the visit for me, and, alongside my visit to Khe Sanh, it's something that I'll never forget.

Sandra Hill

ED NOTE: Please see Sandra's poem about homeless Vets on page 43.

Dear Editor,

My name is Charles Kelley and I was with the 2/94th Arty on Carroll from Sep 67 to Sep 68. After looking for over a year for something on the 94th or Carroll on the Internet I finally signed in on the Khe Sanh web site asking if any one knew of Carroll or the 2/94th. I never expected the response I got from the Marines that were in the hill battles, Khe Sanh, Con Thien, Gio Linh etc.. Long story short, we now have a 94th sign-in sheet at http://www.willpete.com/2nd_battalion_94th_artillery.htm.

I have written the history of the 94th in Vietnam for 6 years. I tried to write it as a history, but also with the personal accounts of the Marines and Army personnel. The 2/94th supported from Carroll and

other places along the DMZ. History is under my name on the sign-in sheet along with the 94th MIA, KIA, WIA. Not really a web site yet but we have added a few pictures.

The 94th was assigned to the 3rd MAG from Oct of 66 to 1968 when the unit fell under the newly formed 108th Arty Group. All fire missions went through the 3rd Division. After the 3rd was stood down, the 108th went under the XXIV Corps arty. The 94th did not leave until 1972.

The 94th supported most of the hill battles for 861, 861a, 881s and the KCB perimeter itself. When the KCB was being hit by NVA Arty from Laos, the 2/94th moved a couple of guns at night out to LZ Stud to shoot over into Laos, which was not in vogue at that time. The enemy was allowed a safe area. The NVA Arty was knocked out and the guns withdrew to Carroll. The 94th also tried to send four guns to Khe Sanh but the 9th Marine convoy was turned back. The higher ups had waited too long.

The Service battery at Dong Ha delivered to C/1/12th Marine Arty ammo and powder during the arty duels at Gio Linh in 67 when their supply was hit. The convoy was ambushed just out side of Gio Linh. Also the Service Battery delivered much needed supplies to Khe Sanh in the Pegasus operation, while their guns fired a corridor for the lead elements of the Marine break out as they left Ca Lu towards Khe Sanh.

I know the 25 guys that have signed in on our 94th site are very appreciative of the Marine comments in the history. Made their trip over worthwhile finally after 34 years.

The 94th was awarded a PUC by the Navy for its support of the Marines.

A Battery in 66 was sent down to Chu Li to support the 1st Marines down there.

See you in September. A couple of us are going to try and make the reunion.

I lost my youth at Khe Sanh along with so many other young marines. We were so wide-eyed and proud, and we had every right to be; we are the nation's best, as all our brothers who joined us in that battle from all services were. We left damaged, but not defeated. We left proud, yet lost in our own anonymity. We are the defenders of our country and the conscience of the future. Let all who fell there know we hold those truths and their story will be told.

Semper Fi
Thomas S Buono USMC, Khe Sanh Vet

Dear Editor,

Just to let you know that I received the new **Red Clay** today and read some of it, and so far not only so good, but so Great!

One thing of note, re: "Why Are We Here—Reunion 99" is shown as "Author Unknown." I'm the one who sent it to you. It was written by Cmdr. John "Doc" Lancaster, USN Ret. (Corpsman with E 2/26) John wrote it in honor of and read it at the Jefferson Barracks KSV Plaque Dedication Ceremony. He is a very self-effacing man, but I respectfully request that you assure he gets due credit in the next issue as well as any other use of the poem.

I understand the Ernie Spencer is on and off line. Please convey my special thanks to him for his beautiful words regarding the Echo ceremony for Joe Roble at ANC in 1998. His words and heart's recollection of this event brought it back again for me. As did the ceremony, Ernie's telling brought a lump to my throat and tears to my eyes. Since I love all these guys and this special family, for me, it was a reunion of a different sort.

Bless you all for the good stuff you do.

Lucille Biscaglio
Email: EasyEcho@webtv.net

Dear Editor,

I was stationed in Khe Sanh in August and September in 1968. My bunker was right on highway 9. I caught malaria up there and then they pulled us out of there and sent us down south near Da Nang to guard some NVA prison camp and patrol the area. We ran into an ambush and I was shot and blown up by a land mine.

I never found out what happened to anyone after that. But maybe I might find someone who was with Gold Company, 2nd platoon in the newsletter.

Thank you,
Roger D. Hildreth

ED NOTE: What unit are you talking about? Gold Company? Boy, that's a new one on me.

Dear Editor,

My husband Richard (Dick) was diagnosed with cancer resulting from exposure to Agent Orange. Had it not been for his colleague who persuaded me to permit an autopsy, it would have been impossible to prove since Richard also suffered from another type of cancer. The cancer in his spine, which caused his hospitalization, radical treatment, and subsequent death, had settled there from an unknown origin. The results of the autopsy permitted his colleague to submit a successful claim in my behalf for DIC.

Richard was an employee of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and he was its appointed representative to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA). His colleague and dear friend, Robert Rhodes was, and continues to serve, as the MOPH appointed representative to the Court of Veterans' Appeals.

I hope that this will be persuasive in convincing other wives of veterans of the benefits from having an autopsy performed, where there is reason to believe death resulted from a service connected illness.

By the way, both my husband and I come from Fond du Lac, WI, where most of our family members continue to reside.

Sincerely,
Ines S. Kerch
1918 Storm Dr
Falls Church, VA 22043-1413

May 18, 2000

From mid-January through early April of 1968, I was the commanding officer of a surgical team in Khe Sanh. We were known as Charlie Med and occupied a small piece of red clay in the middle of the base just next to the airstrip. Over the years, very little has been written about Charlie Med. There were three other physicians with me, Ed Feldman, Joe Wolfe, and Donald J. Magilligan, Jr., who amazingly was listed on page five of your Spring issue in the Remembrances section. Unfortunately, the individual who submitted his name preferred to remain anonymous. There were also twenty-six corpsmen assigned to Charlie Med. During the siege, we all lived under nearly constant incoming barrages of artillery and mortar fire. One of the most difficult aspects of providing care for the Marine casualties during that siege was the need to move the wounded, after they had been stabilized and treated from the Charlie Med bunkers out to the helipad where they could be medivaced. The helicopters were always magnets for additional incoming and many of the corpsman and physicians who were wounded at Charlie Med sustained their wounds while loading and unloading choppers.

On page twelve of your Spring issue, there is a remarkable (to me) article about PFC Spicer written by Earl Clark. Jonathon Spicer was indeed a conscientious objector and was indeed assigned to me at Charlie Med. He was a very brave young man and as Earl Clark points out, he was severely wounded while moving wounded Marines to a helicopter. The corpsmen brought him back into our bunker and Don Magilligan (the same Donald J. Magilligan, Jr. mentioned on page five of your Spring issue) and I operated on Private Jonathon Spicer, repaired the hole in his heart, stabilized him and put him on the next available helicopter out of Khe Sanh. I never knew what happened to him until I saw his name on the Vietnam wall a few years ago. I was fascinated to learn from Earl Clark's article that he apparently made it to Japan but died of an infection. I do not have any verification of this but like Earl Clark, I am deeply saddened to learn that information.

PFC Jonathon Spicer was very special to all of us at Charlie Med. Even though he refused to bear arms, he was nonetheless a true hero. He constantly ran out under enemy fire to move Marine casualties with no regard whatsoever for his own personal safety. When he took a piece of shrapnel in the heart, it seemed for a little while as though all of us had been wounded. Don Magilligan and I were overjoyed when we were able to repair that heart wound and send him on his way and prayed fervently that he would survive. It was not to be.

After leaving Vietnam in September of 1968, I spent approximately thirty "quiet" years practicing surgery in the greater Philadelphia area. Aside from a close personal friendship with Ed Feldman, it seemed that there was very little other discussion about Vietnam or Khe Sanh in particular. About a year ago, things began to change. I discovered that LaSalle University here in Philadelphia has a very special Vietnam collection, which contains many volumes of poetry, books, movies, scripts and artwork all describing personal recollections of Vietnam. It is a fascinating collection, which I recommend to anyone who can get to see it.

I also became aware of the fact that there were three or four men in my age group who work in my

health system who were all Vietnam vets and we now get together three or four times a year to have a beer and reminisce.

LaSalle University actually has a senior honors course devoted to discussions of Vietnam and I have been privileged to sit in on a small portion of that. It amazes me how senior college students who average about twenty-one years of age are so vitally interested in what happened in that tiny country thirty years ago. I believe that the process of vindication for all of our Vietnam veterans is happening as we speak.

The appearance of the remembrance of Don Magilligan and the article by Earl Clark on PFC Jonathon Spicer in the same issue of the Khe Sanh Veterans' **Red Clay** has evoked an energy that I think has been dormant for many, many years. I have started writing the history of Charlie Med in Khe Sanh. I know nothing of military strategy and less about combat statistics. I do know that the physicians and surgeons of Charlie Med cared for nearly three thousand casualties during that siege. I think it is time that their story is told.

James O. Finnegan, M.D.
516 College Avenue
Haverford, Pennsylvania 19041
Email: CEF1738@aol.com

Dear Editor,

In June 2000, Sons and Daughters In Touch celebrated its 10th anniversary as the nation's first organization formed to locate, unite and assist the children of fallen American servicemen. In the 1960s and 70s, an estimated 20,000 children lost their fathers in the Vietnam War. Today, SDIT has grown to have active members in every state, it reaches new members every day, it has an all-volunteer staff, and it has forged a lasting emotional bond with America's Veterans.

In 1990, SDIT was formed by the grown-children of two American servicemen lost in the war in Southeast Asia. In uniting these sons and daughters, SDIT was committed to honoring the legacies of their fathers; teaching the public about the true cost of war and providing educational assistance to its members. SDIT has given the United States a shining example of the resilience that this generation of young Americans offers.

SDIT celebrated its 10th anniversary by holding a four-day National Father's Day convention in Washington, DC. More than 1000 sons and daughters attended, along with an equal number of supportive military veterans. Throughout the weekend, themes of honor, respect, education and optimism were spread among attendees. In keeping with tradition, the convention culminated with the highly visible SDIT Father's Day ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the Capitol Mall. Should you have questions please me at 858-271-6312. Your time, attention and consideration are greatly appreciated.

Patricia Lee
Member SDIT Board of Directors
Daughter of SFC D.C. Totty
B/1/26th KIA 31 Mar '67
PO Box 1596 Arlington, Virginia 22210
Ph: (800) 984-9994
SDIT Website: http://www.SDIT.org

From Charles Kelley

I was contacted by Paul Knight a few months ago before he made his return trip with fellow Marines to Khe Sanh. I finally met him and the others at their hotel lobby in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) during July. Paul asked me if I could write up a short introduction about what I've been doing over here.

Like some of you, I started having a strong desire to return to Vietnam and stand on the same ground where the war existed many years ago (I was a Seabee). I came back over two years ago and after I updated some of my personal memories and sorted things out as best I could, I decided I wanted to do something for the kids in need over here. After a lot of thinking, planning, and effort SEACAP (S.E. Asian Children's Assistance Project) was born. SEACAP was registered in the State of Washington as a non-profit corporation in April, 1999. We are also an IRS, tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) organization. If any of you have access to the Internet you can view our website at www.seacap.org

I spend most of my time here in Vietnam with a few folks holding down the fort back in Ellensburg, WA. We have several Vietnamese volunteers helping out here; I couldn't do it without their big-hearted assistance.

Our main project is near Can Gio, just across the bay, to the west from Vung Tau. We are taking care of all the basic needs of over 65 poor kids there, over 20 are orphans. These kids come from very poor and isolated homes out in the mangrove swamps in this tidal marsh area. The kids spend weeks at a time at

the shelter because it is too difficult and time consuming to get them home on a regular basis. We've been helping these kids since September, 1999. They are very respectful and actually bow to older visitors (you would be hard-pressed to find that in the U.S.). They're good kids and we are doing our best to give them a helping hand to succeed in life.

They all work together like a big family, several are brothers and sisters from the same family. Because they spend so much time together-even if they are not related—they tend to teach and help the younger ones whenever there's a need.

We have several other projects going. If any of you would like to help us out financially or if you are coming back to Vietnam for your first time, here is the contact information:

Contributions can be sent to:
SEACAP
503 N. Sampson Street
Ellensburg, WA 98926
www.seacap.org

Mailing address in Vietnam:
Dennis Koselke, president
68/14 Huynh Thuc Khang St.
District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Vietnam

Lam Hoang Thi Oanh, Vietnam Coordinator
Same office address as above
E-mail address:
dkoselke@hotmail.com

SEACAP News and Updates

Sometimes we can make a very big difference in someone's life for a small amount of money. Here's Oanh's report:

Thanh (our volunteer SEACAP Project Manager) and her group of volunteer university students have started a new project to assist older children, 14 years and above, with vocational training and other supplemental needs. The volunteers (some with a solid background of social work) will approach street children in the evenings with advice and assistance. These young people will be given directions to first-aid stations, free hospital care, contacts for safe shelter and protection when needed and many other basic needs. The primary goal is to find young people who are genuinely striving for a better life and are stuck in a cycle of poverty and sometimes a dangerous life on the street.

After years of social work and teaching experience, Ms.Thanh is very good at interviewing these young people to determine their most important and pressing needs, and their particular circumstances (how they came to be in a difficult situation). Thanh is also skilled at understanding the attitude and intent of the young person in need and their determination to work for a better life, and follows up on their progress.

Here is an example of how this program works. Two sisters, aged 14 and 17 were struggling to go to school and also work part-time. They had virtually nothing. They were selling lottery tickets on the streets (a very common practice here to make a little money, it is considered respectable compared to some alternatives). They had no transportation in this city of millions. One of the girls said "she did not even dare to dream of a bicycle." When Thanh was able to present them with a new bicycle she must have looked like an angel as she handed the "miracle gift" to them. The poor girls were shaken by emotion when they first touched the bicycle. And you know how much it cost SEACAP? About US$22.

We will keep track of their school records and as they make progress we will be helping them more, especially for this coming school year-starting in September. SEACAP will not cover full expenses, they will have to work to earn their way—but we will cover what they cannot afford. It is our policy to help the young people to achieve independence without them knowing too much about our "safety net" in the background.

Others are being helped by this new project; the two sisters are only the beginning. Ms. Thanh has also assisted a young lady in a similar situation with a good, used sewing machine that allows the girl to earn extra money by doing part-time sewing and tailoring work. Additionally, Ms. Thanh has found a very inexpensive room for five young men (older boys) all about 17 years old (the older kids about 14 years old and up tend to "fall through the cracks" of the charitable support systems, because they are no longer cute little kids and are transitioning into adulthood.) These five teenagers are working hard with their studies and vocational training. They are close to making it on their own, but they had need of a safe place to live. The room costs 300,000 VN Dong, about US$22 per month. They sleep on mats on the floor, cook in their room, and share bathroom

facilities with a few other families. But they are safe and are progressing toward living independently and becoming contributors to their society. More about them later.

EDITOR'S NOTE: In the last week or two the older sister (of the two who received the bicycle) applied for and was interviewed for a job at a well known local hotel. She was accepted for the position. This was a major step forward—we were all very pleased to hear about her successful transition to a "regular" job. It is exciting to have such a positive impact on the lives of these young people—for so little money. Thanks for this report, Oanh.

Update on Thao's Progress:

Many of you are aware of little Thao's story. During October of last year, about ten months ago, he was found near Can Gio close to death and had lost both his parents. Ms.Thanh and Ms.Oanh intervened and brought him up to a hospital in Ho Chi Minh City. Since that time he had had several ups and downs in his short life. He was placed in a government boarding school and had recurring severe health problems. I will only say that it was extremely difficult for him and many days he would have preferred not to live any longer.

I am happy to report that he has been out of that "school" thanks to the diligent efforts of Ms. Thanh and others. He is living with his new foster family, Mr. Xe and Mrs. Nam. They have one child of their own, a daughter, and are proving to be just what Thao needed. They love him, have nursed him back to health and Mrs. Nam's renowned cooking is putting some weight on his young bones. I saw him a few days ago at their little home. You can see life in his face now, a little sparkle in his eyes, and a shy smile. In the recent past—during his severe ordeal of losing both parents, and nearly dying on more than one occasion—he had a "thousand-mile stare." He had a blank, hopeless, and lifeless look, as if he were just waiting to die and be released from the emotional and physical pain of life. NOW he is alive and thriving! What a change! His hair is even beginning to grow out and his skin disease is nearly cleared up. He is making excellent progress with the love and care of his new family. A BIG THANKS to all of you who have shown an interest in this boy's life and progress.

Handicapped Swimming

by Joseph Olszewski,
Golf, 2/26 Third Platoon Commander

Being a below-the-knee amputee is generally not a serious mobility problem. I've written previous articles about playing handball, running 10Ks and going on hikes. However, there's one sport where being a leg amputee is a problem, swimming. While you can have a prosthesis with a fin attachment made for swimming, they are expensive (typical below-the-knee prosthesis will cost between $2,500 to $5,000) and I don't believe Uncle Sam will pay for one for veterans. When you swim without a prosthesis and with just your stump, it's similar to rowing a boat with one oar and not switching the oar to either side of the boat. In other words, you start to drift to the side of the amputation. In my case, me left foot was amputated and, therefore, as I swim I start drifting to my left. In open water this is not a major problem. Where it is a problem is in swimming pools, particularly those you find in health clubs with those floating lane dividers. When I swim in one of those I can never make it from one end of the pool to the other without hitting one of those dividers or turning over and swimming on my back to compensate for the drift. It's a great sight for bystanders to see me flipping from my stomach to my back and zigzagging my way through a swimming lane. Once in Hawaii, I swam the Maui surf late at night so nobody would see me taking off my prosthesis and jumping into the surf. The problem with swimming in Hawaii is that the surf and undercurrents are so strong that it's difficult to stay in open water. The surf just tosses you back on the beach and, in my case, it's hard to stand up on one leg and get out of the water. The few times I've tried this I had my wife holding my prosthesis and running up and down the beach to meet me when I run out of water to swim in. This is another great scene to watch and I'm telling you only a great wife like mine would put up with this.

Cedar Point Foundation

The Cedar Point Foundation was established for the funding and provision of medical, educational and other humanitarian assistance to the Bru Montagnard tribesmen of Vietnam.

Our objectives are to provide medical assistance, agricultural aid and improvements on educational facilities and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

The Cedar Point Foundation raises funds by various means including grants, foundation and individual support and periodic fund-raising activities.

Donations can be sent to:
Cedar Point Foundation
2 Cedar Point Rd.
Durham, New Hampshire 03824

The Cedar Point Foundation continues to provide the Bru with assistance as we have in the past; improving water production, increasing farming efficiency, expanding educational programs and continuing to work with the Huong Hoa Health Center.

In January, I contacted by email a Vietnamese man named Doan Quang Hien, who lived in Saigon and had contacts with the security police. It was at this time that he suggested that we send him and his friend, Nguyen Van Hoai, whose father was connected with the Quang Tri Province government, up to Dong Ha during the Tet holiday to present some gifts and make clear our plans for our upcoming trip. Hien emailed me an itinerary which we approved and he was given the go ahead to begin negotiations on our plans.

Within a month I had received my visa approval number and a tentative okay to prepare to make the trip. Reservations were made on Korean Airlines and letters were sent out to members on our mailing list requesting donations. One week before we departed, Cedar Point sent me a check for $6,000 USD. This was the usable amount that we had collected since trip number 8 in 1999.

David "Bulldog" Smith and I departed JFK International Airport, New York, New York on 14 March 2000 aboard Korean Airlines to Seoul, Korea. The Boeing 747-400 was only half full so we had 3 seats each to stretch out on for the long 16-hour flight. In Seoul there was a 2-hour layover before our flight to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam. This leg of the journey was on an Airbus A320, which took a little over 5 hours.

We arrived at Saigon's Tan San Nhut Airport at 11:45 PM. Over the past few years the Vietnamese have been continuing to improve this airport. On this trip the big change was that there are now jetways to serve the international flights. Gone are the days of deplaning the aircraft, getting on buses and then getting off the bus after a one minute trip. The terminal building is now air-conditioned and there is a new security checkpoint that will be opening shortly. Our friend Nguyen Van Loi met us outside the terminal building and we were soon on our way to Mogambo's, a mini hotel operated by Lani and Mike Ahlmark, at 20 Thi Sach, in District On the 20th of March David "Bulldog" Smith and I flew on Vietnam Airlines from Saigon to the Hue/Phu Bai airport. Our Fokker 70 was one of two owned and operated by the airlines. The twin-engine jet aircraft was full for the flight, which lasted one hour and twenty minutes. We were met at the terminal entrance by Doan Kim Cuong, who was to be our driver for the next six days. In Saigon we had called Hue and contracted to rent a van from the same company that we used last year, ATC. From the airport at Phu Bai we drove past the old FOB-1 compound and drove to Dong Ha in Quang Tri Province. The trip took two and a half hours traveling up Highway One. We departed Dong Ha early in the morning and headed west on Highway 9. Construction on the new and improved road is completed on the Eastern part of the road. From Dong Ha to Cam Lo the road is almost 4 lanes wide. From Cam Lo to Khe Sanh the road narrows to 2 lanes. Shoulder work is still being improved however all the bridges and curve straightening has been completed. The stretch from Khe Sanh to Lang Vei has not been worked on lately. The rest of the road from Lang Vei to the border post of Lao Bao was unobserved, as the area is closed to foreigners.

We arrived in Khe Sanh approximately 12 noon on Tuesday, March 21, 2000 from Dong Ha. A construction boom was continuing with new buildings going up throughout the town. A very large cultural building had just been completed and a new district headquarters building was in the middle of being constructed. Most if not all of the work were government buildings.

There is only one place to stay over night in Khe Sanh now and that is the government guesthouse that has been there since our earliest trip in 1992. There are nine rooms that have ceiling fans. The rooms are small but adequate. After checking in, Hien called the People's Committee for Huong Hoa District to set up a meeting for us. We were asked to come over to the office where we met with Secretary Thanh of the People's Committee for Huong Hoa District (Khe Sanh). We outlined our proposal after which he agreed to set up a meeting on Wednesday with the People's Committee of Huong Hoa's Vice Chairman, Nguyen Thi Ninh.

Wednesday's 9 AM meeting was attended by Nguyen Thi Ninh, Vice Chairman of the People's

Committee of Huong Hoa; Vo Thanh, Deputy Chief of Office of the People's Committee; Phan Trong Dai, Vice Chairman of the People's Committee for Tan Lien village; Ho Vi, Assistant Leader for the Bru community of Thon Cheng. In addition, Doan Quang Hien, Coordinator for this trip, Nguyen Van Hoai, son of influential government official in Quang Tri Province; Nguyen Van Loi, volunteer assistant; David "Bulldog" Smith and Bob Donoghue.

Presented during this meeting was our proposal to provide the following financial assistance to the Bru community of Thon Cheng and the Huong Hoa Health Center: $1,000 USD for coffee tree seedlings; $1,000 USD for hospital equipment (10 blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes, and a microscope); $3,000 USD for house repairs Thon Cheng; $350 USD for school equipment; $60 USD for volleyball equipment and 10 uniforms; $25 USD for school supplies (paper, pens).

Madam Chairman Ninh accepted our assistance. We also presented two sets of blood pressure cuffs designed especially for children along with a stethoscope with each kit. We discussed getting approval and how best to carry out these trips.

During our discussion for continuing our assistance to the Bru, Madam Chairman Ninh stated that there were 14 Bru communities within Huong Hoa District and that they all were in need of various types of assistance. She also felt that if only we assisted Thon Cheng there would develop bad feelings within the different communities, as their standard of living would rise while others stayed stagnant. We agreed with her and pointed out that we were trying hard to increase our fund raising efforts and that with the Committee's guidance we would gladly help any community that need our help. We also pointed out that if the district gives us a "Request for Assistance" that it would help with obtaining visas and getting supplies and equipment through customs. She agreed to work with the province in trying to obtain that document for us.

Xa Lun

In the Bru community of Thon Cheng lives Ho Xa Lun. She is the 16-year-old daughter of Ho Tu, who was my interpreter/squad leader at Khe Sanh in 1968. It was during our 1996 trip that it was brought to our attention that she was having medical problems. She was complaining of dizziness, headaches, and ear problems. Robert Shippen and Bruce Johnston, both ex-Special Forces medics, examined her in '96 but without proper equipment they could not make a proper diagnosis. Now, four years later she is still having the same problems. Last year after only a few months of being married her husband returned her to her family because he didn't want a sick wife on his hands. This brought dishonor to their family. To have her properly examined she needs to travel to Hue where there is a large hospital with all the necessary equipment to examine her. The cost for her and her father to travel by bus to Hue stay in Hue for a week, and the week long stay at the hospital while they conduct all the tests is expected to cost up to $1,000 USD. It has been decided to fund this with leftover money from trip number 8 and hope that we can put some closure to the episode.

During a lull in our meetings with the government officials we decided to visit the old site of the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei (A-101). On the South side of Highway 9, about 5 kilometers from Khe Sanh, The Vietnamese have recently added a small monument there that has a PT-76 tank located on the top. Most of the site is now covered with banana trees. While taking pictures of the tank, three Bru children approached us on their bicycles. They told us that they lived in the Bru community of Lang Vei and that their families were living there in 1968, relocated to Cua valley (Mai Loc) by Special Forces during the siege, and then resettled back to Lang Vei after the war. This is one of the 14 communities that we have been asked to help.

The old Khe Sanh Combat Base has had a few changes since we last visited there. A new monument has replaced the frequently vandalized old one. A small building now houses a little museum, which has pictures on the walls and two small piles of weapons on the floor. Outside there are several beat up pieces of military equipment. An M-48 tank, 155 MM howitzer and the propeller from a C-130.

Cedar Point Foundation was contacted by Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Dennis Thompson, (1968 Lang Vei) POW 61 months, to see if we would be able to assist him in his desire to return to Lang Vei and visit the POW sites where he was held.. Charles Berg contacted Jim Hetrick (MSG-SOG OP 35 & 34) (1966 to 1972) for his return visit to Khe Sanh also.

CSM Thompson was returned to US Army control with the other POWs and after the necessary medical processing set about to restart his military career. He attended college to get his degree and then went back into the military school system to "catch up" and

after all the standard schools, attended US Army Ranger School and was the first former POW to attend and complete the school. After his completion and attendance at the Sergeant Majors Academy he was assigned to 2nd BN, 75th Ranger Regiment and became 1st SGT HHC, then, CSM before retiring. Dennis spent many long nights on the email discussing his return trip with both Charles Berg and Jim Hetrick.

The trip started in Saigon and went to Hanoi and visited the "Hanoi Hilton" and the "Plantation" and a full day trip to locate the camp at Dao Tru (Farnsworth) (D-'1). The lodging arrangements were made via a friend in California and they stayed at the Hanoi Towers ($350.00 per night) and it was like a bit of America. Incidentally, the luxury facilities are located on the old grounds of the "Hanoi Hilton" and a bit of the old POW compound remains as a museum. Dennis Thompson and Jim Hetrick were clearly grateful, for the assistance of Cedar Point Foundation for the logistical coordination.

Everyone returned to the village of Khe Sanh and Lang Vei for the emotional returning to the site of his point of capture by CSM Thompson. Jim Hetrick's last trip to Khe Sanh was in 1968 and everyone was amazed at the physical, social and cultural changes in the area. Charles Berg reported that the return trip was as fulfilling as the initial trip with Cedar Point Foundation, and felt that this was a unique opportunity for CPF to provide assistance to a fellow warrior that experienced the trauma of Khe Sanh and Lang Vie.

We rose early on Friday and packed our bags and loaded the van in preparation for our departure from Khe Sanh. In the Guest House office we paid our lodging bill and our passports were returned to us. At 08:00AM we arrived at the People's Committee building to inform them that we were leaving and to leave word with Madam Chairman Ninh that we would call her from Saigon referencing our contract paperwork. Our last stop before heading down Highway 9 was to say goodbye to Miss Mai, the lady that had lost her legs in 1968. We gave her $100 and told her to continue to help the Bru who stop at her shop but might be a little short of cash. She promised to provide assistance this she can and to write Loi in Saigon regularly to keep him informed. With that task done we all got in the van and headed east, to Dong Ha. We arrived in Dong Ha about an hour and a half after leaving Khe Sanh. After we dropped Hoai off at his parent's house, the driver gassed up the van for our 2-hour plus drive to the Imperial City of Hue.

Immediately upon returning to Saigon we set up a meeting with PACCOM and also contacted the US Embassy to inform them of our progress. Charles Ray, the Consul General in Saigon was out of the country so we emailed a report to Hanoi and agreed to send copies of the trip report to those whom we are in contact with.

On Monday afternoon we had a meeting with the People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM). Their Project Coordinator at the Saigon office is Mai Phuc Tien. Tien had accompanied us on our 1998 trip to Khe Sanh to inspect our projects and assist in obtaining NGO status.

The next day we meet with Hien again to outline our goals for the next trip and to try and clear up some of the barriers that we kept running into with the security police. In addition we had a critique of the trip and reviewed every detail to see where we could improve our performance for later trips.

The final task that had to be done before leaving Vietnam was to deliver a package to a family in Nha Trang, whose son lives in Springfield, Massachusetts. In addition, since Dennis Thompson, Jim Hetrick and Charles Berg would be returning to Nha Trang from their trip to Kontum, we all decided to meet again. Loi and I took Vietnam Airlines, on the afternoon of Thursday, March 30th. The ATR 72 turboprop was one of 6 owned by the airline. The flight from Saigon to Nha Trang took about an hour. After landing and collecting our bags we headed over to the Sailing Club at 72-74 Tran Phu where we met with Charles and the others.

On Sunday afternoon, David "Bulldog" Smith, Charles Berg, and I decided that we would spend the afternoon in Charles' hotel room at the Saigon Hotel working on part of this trip report. During this work period there was a knock on the door, which Charles answered. It was the maid that was assigned to Charley's room. She was frantic as she tried to explain in broken English and Vietnamese that she had lost some of Charley's laundry. She explained that she had searched the entire floor of the hotel and the laundry room looking for the lost clothing items. She continued to explain that she had lost or misplaced one of Charley's socks. It was at this time that Charles explained that since he only has one leg that he would only have one sock. The maid looked down at Charley's leg and then a sign of relief swept across her face. David and I were laughing so hard

we had to sit down.

This trip was a lot more rewarding than last year's. For one, the Vietnamese government, especially in Khe Sanh, seemed a lot more appreciative of our assistance. That made it easier to sit through numerous meetings and lengthy negotiations. Being able to assist Dennis Thompson and Jim Hetrick return to Vietnam for the first time since the war and to share their adventurous experience with them was priceless.

Cedar Point's Vietnamese contacts are continuing to work with the People's Committee of Huong Hoa District and Quang Tri Province to get a 3 year contract signed that would allow us easier access into the 14 Bru communities and government approval to continue with our projects. Fund rasing for this phase has already begun. In addition, Cedar Point has put into place a plan to obtain a large shipping container that will be filled with medical equipment and supplies in Detroit and shipped from the West Coast to Da Nang harbor in Vietnam. The ocean-going transportation is being paid for by an NGO in Hanoi called Counterparts.

Bob Donoghue, FOB-3
June 2000

The Truth

by Steve Riddle, Scout/Snipers 1/26

Years have passed
Elation and adrenaline have ebbed
Once again sitting quietly in the darkness
Only now, sipping scotch
Still absorbing the night
rejoicing in my solitude
The Big Dipper stationed overhead
Thank you God
for not making those jungle boots
be mine hanging from that poncho
in "68"...

A letter from Talis to Ray Stubbe written in 1993

Dear Ray,

A short letter to cover the enclosed writing I am sending you. For a long, long time, it has been within me, unable to put down in words the images that are its background. I have talked to "Charlie" quite a bit over the years. Some of it I know comes from a guilt trip but part of it, too, I feel comes from what it all represents. It was the end of an era for me, and the beginning of another age. One in which I would struggle just as hard to sort out all the confusion and questions. It is awfully easy to say I saw death, or, I experienced the violence of it. To proclaim that one is a veteran of war. To be knowledgeable of the whims of battle. But, too often many of us let it end there. We hide behind the pain and anger of it. Not willing to take that one anguish filled giant step that will begin the very slow ascent into not just being veterans of it, but being veterans of what it means to us; our comrades; our whole way of life. We are scared, and deservedly so, of the process of transfusion from that old to our new selves. Unresolved conflicts, personal in nature, litter the domain of our inner beings. To reach them, we must sort through so much "clutter"—much of it that we wish better left undisturbed. Disturbing them disturbs us. Causing much mental turmoil in the process. We are forced to relive much that we thought we had left behind. Unfortunately, many times it is the down side and not the upside that is remembered.

The overwhelming nature of war is thus. Even the happy times with a lost comrade, are translated into sadness. His passing seems to have cast a pall of gray over all that is related to him. And yet, it should not be so. This is the clutter, the mayhem, the relegated trash that must be sorted through. The good times were good. The happy times were happy. The laughter genuine and real. A treasure of sharing and bonding. We must not let the loss offset or overburden that. We cannot surrender to war's circumstances the true memories and experiences of it. They are buried; buried deep and buried strong. We have a fear that somehow if we consider what happens good, then we are letting those who did not come back, down. But those of us who came back, we must force ourselves to suffer a little more. Overcome the hurdle, take the initiative to start a new push. Learn and grow from the tears of the heart. No greater pain is there, than the pain of the soul. No greater love is there, than the love from that pain. The bonds of war are like a marriage—"till death do us part." And many times that is the way of those who do battle. But parting should not mean separation. Physically the loss is there, but in the mind, there is so much new source of inspiration, that separation need never occur. Most of those who I saw in their final stillness, I never knew, nor ever will I. Most were not combatants, but civilians whose presence in a war zone was the only reason that that was their home. Age, sex, religion, meant very little. The NVA and Viet Cong occupy the same niche in my being that Marines do. War's effects bring great equality to all those that suffer. This past weekend I watched a special on the Beirut bombing that caused a cynical smile to cross my being. The act of driving a truck loaded with 8 tons of TNT into the Marine Barracks was continually referred to as a terrorist act. My mind went back to the continual bombing from high altitudes by B-52's in and around Khe Sanh. Perception and so-called patriotism, provide how you perceive each action. To me there is no difference. Whether 241 Marines died, or 8000 Bru, they died needlessly. Victims of indifference on the part of those who could make a difference. And that is a role I see for a lot of us who have survived war. If we look to the real meaning war has left within us, are willing to endure the pain to let others know, then all of us can make some minute difference. Over the course of generations, the minuteness might grow, so that one day it will overwhelm those who have not learned, and refuse to learn, and the world will live in peace.

I should have known better when I sat down just to add a few personal notes to the enclosed writings. The mind is unpredictable, and sometimes just doesn't know when to stop. Thanks for letting me unload on you. I do not mean to cause you any pain by it. The world of thought can be a very lonely world at times, and it helps when there is someone who it can be shared with. Makes the endurance a mite easier.

Talis Kaminskis

First Cavalry Troopers Steal Flag from Khe Sanh

Thomas 1. Harnisher US Army, B CO 229th AHB
1st CAV & C Troop 1st CAV
29 West 17th Road
Broad Channel, NY 11693
t.harnisher@excite.com

I remember the first time I landed at Khe Sanh during the siege. I contacted the Tower (actually a man with a radio in a hole in the ground) and received clearance to land and refuel. As we started to refuel the enemy started walking mortars towards us. I started to depart, calling the tower and got the reply, "YES, EVERYTIME ONE OF YOU ASS-HOLES FLIES IN HERE, THEY START SHELLING US."

I replied, "You could've said something else, THIS IS MY FIRST TIME HERE."

B Company of the 229th AHB 1st CAV Division (Killer Spade) had been tasked to supply helicopter support to Special Forces (actually SOG) at Khe Sanh. The mission required two lift ships, one to do the mission and the second to rescue the first. Two gun ships would supply close gun cover during the missions. These were usually from D Company/ 229th (Smiling Tigers) but were sometimes from other units. The missions were usually to insert and/or extract six man teams into and out of Laos.

Shortly after the Khe Sanh Combat Base had been vacated, I arrived at the relocated Special Forces camp for a SOG Mission. A Special Forces captain informed me that the scheduled mission was canceled but that the NVA were flying their flag off the main flag pole at the former Khe Sanh Combat Base and then added. "What do *you* think of that?" Naturally, we would task ourselves with a new, self-appointed mission to "capture the flag." I was happy to be flying this day with a good pilot, Mike LaPierre. He was a new pilot and as he was flying enroute I would roll up the chart and hit him about the head to simulate stress. In the chase ship was another new pilot, Bob Hicks, who later became the unit safety officer. For some reason, we seemed to always have a high turnover rate for these missions.

Our gun team was Two Cobra AII-1G attack helicopters from the Smiling Tigers. As we approached Khe Sanh we could see the NVA flag. The gun ships started firing rockets, then 40 mm grenades hoping to destroy or detonate any booby traps. Unexploded ordnance could be seen lying on the ground. As we came closer, we started to orbit around the flag with



Second from left, CW2 Thomas J. Harnisher (Air Mission Commnader); third from left, CW1 Bob Hicks, pilot of 2nd helicpoter; lower right, CW1 Mike LePierre, pilot of lead helicopter

our door gunners spraying the area with M-60 and the Cobras spraying miniguns. Just as I was about to nuke my move for the flag, My wing man broke the orbit first and hovered next to the flag. One of his door gunners reached out and wrapping the flag around his arm, pulled the flag from the pole with a sharp tug. I immediately thought of "trip wire." I pulled in full power trying to put some distance between us and the upcoming explosion. No explosion came and we made it back to the Special Forces Camp with our Prize.

I am very proud to have flown into and out of Khe Sanh during the siege and to have helped in some way the many brave individuals who gave so much in the service of our country.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Sunday, 21 January, 1968
6:30 AM

South Vietnam

Enemy contacts in the Khe Sanh area, 58 miles west of Hue, have increased and the intensity of the fighting appears to be increasing. US Marines engaged an enemy force near Hill 881, seven miles northwest of Khe Sanh and Marine reaction forces; moving toward the area of contact, engaged another enemy force. There was intermittent fighting for about four hours. The Marines killed 103 of the enemy while losing one Marine killed and 22 wounded.

In another sector of Khe Sanh, a US Army Special Forces patrol observed 30 to 35 enemy in a stream and called for artillery fire which resulted, in 10 enemy killed.

Yesterday a Popular Force platoon made contact with an estimated 200 enemy employing small arms and automatic weapons fire about 40 miles north-northwest of Hue. The Popular Forces were reinforced by an ARVN battalion and US Marines in amphibious tractors. Friendly casualties were five killed (2 Marines and 3 ARVN) and 28 wounded (17 Marines and 11 ARVN). The enemy lost 123 killed.

In Operation Saratoga, 18 miles north-northwest of Saigon, a US Army battalion received small arms, automatic rifle and rocket fire from an enemy force. Artillery and armed helicopters supported the friendly force and the enemy broke contact. Eight US were killed and 15 wounded. Enemy losses are unknown.

In Operation Mac Arthur, nine miles west of Dak To, two US Army companies made contact with an enemy force using recoilless rifle and mortar fire. Friendly forces were supported by artillery and tactical air strikes. Twenty-one of the enemy were killed and 26 US Army personnel were wounded.

North Vietnam

US Tactical aircraft flew 123 sorties over North Vietnam yesterday. Due to poor weather in the target areas, the strikes of special interest scheduled for last night were cancelled:

One US Air Force F-4C on an armed reconnaissance mission was downed by suspected ground fire approximately 15 miles north-northwest of Dong Ho. No chutes were sighted but search and rescue is in progress.

A US Marine A4E aircraft was downed by ground fire near Khe Sanh while flying close air support. The pilot has been picked up and is reported in good condition.

White House Situation Room
Charles E. Hayden
Briefing Officer

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Monday, January 22, 1968
6:30 AM

South Vietnam

Sharp fighting broke out near both ends of the DMZ over the weekend, with the heaviest action taking place around Khe Sanh.

On Saturday a US Marine rifle company in a defensive position on Hill 861 near Khe Sanh came under attack by an estimated 300-man enemy force. The enemy attack was repulsed, but sporadic enemy fire continued for about 12 hours. Fourteen enemy were killed during this action.

At about the same time the Khe Sanh combat base received a mortar attack. Enemy mortar fire continued for about seven hours. The ammunition dump was hit, but the extent of damage is presently not known. The airstrip was also cratered and one helicopter was destroyed and five others received damage. Repair of the airstrip is underway and at least 2000 feet is serviceable.

Then early yesterday morning the enemy began probing the perimeter wire defenses to the south and west of the Khe Sanh airstrip. A Marine rifle company in a defensive position in the area repulsed the attack, killing 14 of the enemy. Marine losses for

these actions were 14 killed and 43 wounded.

US Marine aircraft flew 211 sorties in support of the base, accounting for 104 enemy killed.

We have just received a cable from Gen. Westmoreland giving his assessment of the situation at Khe Sanh and the actions he is taking to meet the enemy threat—cable attached.

On Saturday morning, a South Vietnamese sub sector headquarters seven miles southwest of Khe Sanh came under an enemy ground attack. During the attack 12 ARVN were killed and 25 wounded. The enemy lost 92 killed in this battle.

North Vietnam

US pilots flew 175 sorties over North Vietnam yesterday but poor weather hampered operations. No major targets were struck nor were any aircraft lost.

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Tuesday, January 23, 1968
6:30 AM

South Vietnam

US Marines in the Khe Sanh area continue to receive sporadic artillery, mortar and rocket fire from the enemy as the ground action has diminished. As a result of the fire, five marines were wounded.

Civilians are being evacuated from the village of Khe Sanh: 412 have been air-lifted to Da Nang; 300 to the refugee center at Camp Evans, 16 miles west-northwest of Hue; and 400 to Quang Tri City.

A US Marine battalion near Con Thien received 100 rounds of mortar fire and at the same time one-mile north two Marine companies made contact with the enemy. After a brief fight the enemy withdrew leaving 3 killed. Marine casualties were 4 killed and 32 wounded.

A US Army company made contact with an enemy force 25 miles northwest of Saigon. After one hour of fighting the enemy withdrew leaving 12 dead. Two US Soldiers were wounded.

An observation post 10 miles west-northwest of Can Tho was attacked by the enemy using small arms and 82mm mortar fire. At the same time the district town of Phong Phu received 20 rounds of 82mm mortar fire. One ARVN was kille: and nine were wounded.

A US Marine F-4B aircraft was shot down by ground fire near Khe Sanh. Both crew members were recovered in good condition. Also an A-4E was hit by ground fire in the same area and the pilot landed inside the defense perimeter.

North Vietnam

Air activity over North Vietnam yesterday was limited to 148 sorties due to adverse weather. All Rolling Thunder strikes scheduled for last night were cancelled due to poor weather in the target area.

White House Situation Room
James L. Brown
Briefing Officer

The Rats of Khe Sanh

by Bob Donoghue, FOB-3

As 1968 began to unfold, SOG's Forward Operating Base #3 (FOB-3) located on the Southeastern perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, began to switch from offensive to defensive operations. As the enemy intensified their indirect fire into the base, more and more time and effort was spent digging and building extensive trench and bunker complexes. Constructed of sandbags, lumber, and aluminum pallets these semi-subterranean complexes soon became home to two kinds of rats. Two-legged fatigue-wearing men known as bunker rats and the four-legged hairy rodents known as "The Rats of Khe Sanh."

Khe Sanh's rats lived in the sandbagged bunker structures feeding off the remains of food found inside discarded C ration cans. As nighttime approached they would emerge from their nests to scurry about the area. Anyone trying to get some sleep at one time or another, had one of these critters run across their body. During this time period several people were bitten and had to undergo an extremely painful series of rabies shots.

The tide slowly turned against these rats due to the deteriorating weather conditions and the North Vietnamese Army. The only way to supply the troops with food and ammunition was by parachute drops. After several days of heavy enemy fire and lousy flying weather, the resupply drops tapered off creating a shortage of rations.

Our indigenous troops, the Bru montagnards, soon devised a plan to supplement their meager rations. First, they would take a small individual equipment net and stretch it across the bottom half of a trench. They would then have two other men start beating on the bunker sandbags with pieces of 2x4's. The rats, being startled by the banging, would scurry out of the bunker and down the trench line only to be

entangled within the net. A short time later the Bru would be heating up the water in a #10 can with pieces of C-4 explosive and throwing the captured rats into the can to cook them. These Khe Sanh rodents provided fine dining at a time when rations were limited. As the siege progressed it became harder and harder for the Bru to find these fine tasting rodents.



Photo by Bob Donoghue

While the parachute re-supply is cancelled due to the cold fog, the Bru montagnards of SOG's Hatchet Force El Dorado dine on Khe Sanh's abundant rat population

Dave "Doc" Steinberg
3rd Plt. India 3/26
Hill 881S Jan-May 1968

I enlisted in my junior year of college and joined the U.S. Navy, as my father did in WWII. I was named after his brother 1st Lt. David Steinberg USMCR, assigned to 1/13 as a spotter pilot and based off the USS Saratoga. He was high in the sky spotting for his troops all through Days 1 & 2 of the Invasion of Iwo Jima.

At the end of Day 2 he was to land on the carrier Saratoga but could not land due to a Kamikaze hit on the deck of the grand ole' lady. Instead he safely landed on the smaller carrier the USS Bismark Sea. The planes were quickly taken below still fueled and armed, to make way for additional craft off the burning Saratoga.

My Uncle David Steinberg was lost that day as the Bismark Sea took a direct Kamikaze hit mid-ship and sunk with many souls aboard. His remains lost at sea. His name-sake joined the Navy and ended-up on another Hill, this one called 881S. I survived the entire siege with him looking down from the heavens, which it seemed sometime those of us on that 3,000 foot high hill could just reach out and touch.

And by the way, the brave weapons platoon assigned to 3/26 on Hill 881S, manning the 3 105's and the mortars, were from 1/13, the same unit my Uncle Dave served with so many years before.

Charles Kelley

2nd Bn 94th Arty

The 2nd Battalion 94th Artillery arrived in Vietnam on 18 October 1966 and was under operational control of the Third Marine Amphibious Group. The 2/94th provided artillery support for the Third Marine Operations from Laos to the South China Sea.

Article from USARV-IO: Camp J.J. Carroll, U.S. Marines are fighting three North Vietnamese Army (NVA) divisions in Quang Tri Province with the aid of the Army's 175mm guns.

This camp, just six miles from the demilitarized zone (DMZ), is the base for the big guns of the 2nd Battalion 94th Artillery. Since the battalion fired the first rounds on Oct. 21, 1966, over 70,000 projectiles have been fired.

The artillery unit is the only Army unit of its type supporting the Marines. All fire missions in the area go through the 3rd Marine Division.

The battalion including Operations Hastings and Prairie and the recent fighting in the DMZ has supported ten Marine operations.

The 175's move around the province so that their 22 mile range can support the Marines, Special Forces, or the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) as they are needed.

Batteries have gone to Con Thien and Gio Linh to fire deeper into North Vietnam.

The big guns have fired across the DMZ since February 22. The targets are given by forward observers in Bird Dog spotter planes flown by Army, Marine, or Air Force pilots and by ground combat forward air controllers assigned to the line companies. Targets have been SAM missile sites, anti-aircraft emplacements, staging and assembly areas of troops, and convoys.

Information Office, US Army Vietnam: "U.S. Army Units in Vietnam Back the Marines with Action. The artillery men of these units along the

DMZ don't talk much about how they live in mud-filled bunkers and brave the incoming rocket and artillery rounds. They are too busy keeping the enemy busy ducking the shells and small arms fire they throw at him day after day." Actual accounts from Marines on 861A report that an undersized company of the 26th Marines (E/3/26) had not been set up long enough to have their defenses the way they wanted them to be. Early in February 1968, about 3:30 AM, two battalions of NVA regulars contested the Marines for the hill. 175mm supporting fire was called in immediately and continued until 7:00 AM. The 175mm fire support broke up the attacking Battalion and in the words of one of the Marines describing the action stated, "A bunch of pissed off young Marines took care of the rest." In addition to the attacking battalion the Marine FO then turned the fire to the reserve battalion of NVA and all but destroyed them. This combination of devastating 175mm fire support and bravery of the young Marines on 861A preserved the integrity of the hill so important to the defense of Hill 881N and Hill 881S and the Khe Sanh Combat Base. If 861 and 861A had fallen this would have left both 881 hills totally isolated.

A Marine FO from Kilo/3/26: Actual account about 861 and the 175's from Carroll is as follows: On 18 or 19 January 1968 (a day or two before the siege started) my Commanding Officer asked/ordered me to register targets in the ravines and likely approaches around 861. I registered and got target numbers from the 105's, 155's and the 8 inch guns at the base. In addition, I registered some targets on the northern slope of 861 using the 175's at Carroll. To this day, I still remember their call sign Colorado 1/9 and I never did speak directly to them because of the distance 18+ miles. My words and theirs were relayed from the base.

We got all friendlies out of the northern end of the trench line and then I registered the targets. Must have been three or four targets in all. In each case, the final rounds hit less than 50 meters outside our last strand of wire and that's when I cease fired and asked for Target Numbers. Man, those bad boys certainly crunched into the hillside less than 75 yards from my position! I knew the rounds were on the way from the "shot" and "splash" calls, but they still made my teeth rattle.

They fired in support of us again on the night of 20 or 21 January 1968 and I remember 861A using the 2/94th in that early February NVA attack. One night in mid to late March, the NVA launched rocket after rocket into the base. These 122's were fired from behind 881N and they had to travel almost directly over 861 on their way to the base. I called Colorado 1/9 (through the relay) and gave them the grid squares of the two launch sites behind 881N. My request was that they saturate both grid squares in order to stop this huge, on-going barrage. These grid squares were 1000's of meters from us and would have been max range for the 175's but I felt that just reaching out there would cause the NVA to stop.

Less than three minutes later I was told that the first rounds were on the way. Within seconds, WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! Three or four rounds impacted less than 50 yards outside our wire! Scared the living hell out of all of us in the bunkers and the trench line. We even had a Listening Post right outside the last strands of wire, and those three guys must have shit their pants. Immediate "Check fire" on my part...one more round hit...then all was quiet.

Somehow, the 175mm people thought I had called for my target numbers to be fired, and they responded. Imagine, two and a half months after they were registered, and with no adjustments, and with cold tubes, and from over 18 miles. Those shells hit right outside our wire! A phenomenal display of shooting that I have never, ever forgotten even 32 years later. We got the Check Fire, corrected by a half a dozen grid squares, and they resumed firing. That's my memory of the big guns at Camp Carroll. I just realized that it was 32 years ago today or tomorrow that I registered those guns.

Actual accounts from Marines posted on the East Perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base document a heavy ground attack that was turned with 6 rounds from the 175's on Carroll and Rockpile. Unconfirmed body count was 76. The Marines that were under the attack report smiles on their faces when they saw the 175's heavy destruction of the NVA Regulars that were trying to over run their positions.

Army perimeter defense units at Khe Sanh also report the importance of the 175mm perimeter support when needed expeditiously and were relied on heavily. "We relied heavily on the big 175mm guns at Camp Carroll and the Rockpile to lay in their fire missions at predetermined coordinates and suspected NVA positions."

Actual account of a C Battery 2/94th gunner: "We were always in a rush when we had a fire mission for

Khe Sanh. We knew that they were in a very bad spot when they called for us to help them out. That was our job, and we knew that if we were in their place that we would want the most help possible as quick as we could get it, so we always pushed ourselves to see just how fast we could get the rounds out and on the way."

Actual account of a Marine that was around Carroll and Hill 881: "I was an 0311 with 'F' 2/3 from 11/66 to 10/67. I was at Carroll from 11/66 to 3/67. My company would rotate between Carroll and the Bridge down on Highway 9, I don't know if you remember the Bridge? On Feb 28,1967, we were involved in a battle at Cam-Lo. My squad became surrounded and we had to call for fire support from Carroll. I don't know if you were there then or you may have heard that we had to call the 175 rounds on our own position. The guys up at Carroll laid those four rounds right between us and the NVA, which was only a matter of 20 feet or so. Laying on the ground and hearing Carroll launch those 175's knowing they were coming right at us makes me numb to this day. Having those shells rip through the trees and impact right in front of us was the most amazing, scary, bone chilling experience you could imagine. I guess the NVA figured we were crazy because they broke off from us. There is no doubt in my mind that without those well placed rounds my name would be on the Wall. We depended on you guys at Carroll many times to get our butts out of a jam and you were always there."

Excerpt from the S&S Vietnam Bureau: A Marine convoy carrying supplies from Carroll to Khe Sanh was hit three miles from the Rockpile by 200 to 300 NVA Regulars. Many of the 109 communists that were killed were hit by air strikes and 175mm artillery fire.

By reports from supported troops, the NVA hated the big guns at Carroll, Rockpile, Gio Linh, Con Thien and any other places the big guns were assigned in the I Corps area. The big guns could target anti-aircraft firing on U.S. planes, fortifications, and infiltration routes in North Vietnam.

Account from a Marine that was part of the Marine contingent on Carroll during TET: "You may recall a situation where a Marine recon patrol ran into big trouble one late afternoon (March 5, I think). E/2/9 was pulled off the front of Carroll's line to go fetch the dead officer who had been left behind when the patrol was extracted out. But darkness fell before we could lift off the LZ. You guys fired all night to keep Uncle Ho's Finest away until morning. You guys on the guns were always Johnny-on-the-spot when it came to fire support. Thank you very much."

I recall a day when my squad escorted a FAO out northwest of Cam Lo. He called in an air strike up in the DMZ and then we just cooled our heels awhile. His radioman carried 2 PRC-25s (wow!) so he could hear both sides of a conversation. Somebody who was awfully excited called in a fire mission. He really rattled it off fast. The FAO said his call sign put him in Khe Sanh. He had to say it all over again because he spoke too fast to get it all. He was asked what his target was and he said, "I got a battalion o' gooks in the open and running." When asked how far away they were, he said, "Fifty meters and closing!" It seemed like only a second before we heard guns open up and the FDC announced, "They're on their way!" Now that's service.

There was one night, though, that y'all really annoyed me. We got the word that Carroll was going to be overrun. So we were pulled back from our front line and placed in a tight perimeter along a dirt "road" directly in front of the 175s. I mean directly in front of the muzzles, about 20 feet!

Every time a gun captain would yell "Stand by!," I'd cover both ears, open my mouth wide, and lay flat on the hard-packed adobe. Then the damned thing would explode, scooting me back 6-8 inches, knocking all the wind out of me. And of course the first gasp only sucked in burnt cordite. Gag a maggot! Even my helmet, set alongside me, would tumble a foot or so. The ground was so hard it broke our E-tools trying to scratch its surface. No joy there. I must have dozed and missed a warning order because one cannon went off without my preparations. I think it popped my eardrum, 'cause I got a little blood from it. At that, I just picked up my gear, sat behind the gun, and the NVA and USMC be damned! Of course, nothing happened that night. All plans and intelligence must first be cleared through Hanoi!

The Original KA-BAR®

United States Marine Corps
World War II Fighting Knife
"An American Legend"

The U.S.M.C. Fighting Knife is famous in its own right, and has an historical background behind it

that is an exciting adventure story and is now an American Legend!

Ask some World War II Marines what kind of knife they depended on during the war and you will get only one answer: a KA-BAR! Back in 1941, after the start of World War II, KA-BAR submitted a Fighting-Utility knife to the United States Marine Corp that was accepted as the standard issue for the Corps.

KA-BAR started supplying these knives and they soon became the prized possession of every fighting Marine. They depended on it for a combat weapon and for such every day tasks as pounding tent stakes, driving nails, opening ration cans or digging foxholes their KA-BAR was constantly at their side.

During World War II, the KA-BAR Fighting Knife earned the greatest respect, not only of the Marines, but also of those who served in the Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Underwater Demolition Teams, who were eventually issued the U.S.M.C./KA-BARS.

Years later, during the Korean, Vietnam and Desert Storm conflicts, many KA-BARS were reactivated into military service, as World War II veterans, remembered how well the knife served them passed their personal KABARS along to their sons.

The dependability and quality of the wartime KA-BARS weren't the result of just a casual approach to the production of these knives. In addition to the constant quality control procedures of the U.S.M.C. Marine Corps and Navy Supply Depot inspectors, Dan Brown, then President of KA-BAR, and the entire KABAR Company was dedicated to making this knife their contribution to the war effort. As a result of this personal involvement, quality went into the knife that assured its meeting all types of tests without failing. Even tough Marine Corps and Navy tests were supplemented by additional trials, such as driving the knife deep into a 6" x 6" timber and straining the blade back and forth at extreme angles, constantly testing edge retention in cutting through all types of materials and submitting the leather handles to severe atmospheric and corrosion tests to be sure they would hold up under all conditions of cold, heat or jungle rot without loosening or decomposing. As a result, the many thousands of KA-BARS produced during World War II performed so well that the people at KA-BAR were very proud of the reports that came back from all areas of operations and the excellent reputation they had earned. World War II ended and KA-BAR Fighting Knives went out of production until 32 years later when the original KABAR factory in Olean, New York and some of the craftsmen who worked on the original knife began production again to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps. KA-BAR wanted to recognize this great milestone in U.S.M.C. history by issuing a "full dress model" of the original KA-BAR—a limited edition that would be most meaningful to the Marines.

Throughout the production of the Commemorative a few KA-BAR senior employees proudly performed the same tasks they worked on during the years 1942 to 1945 when KA-BAR was making its contribution to the war effort. As a result the completed knives were a true "work of art," but retained the look, feel and performance of a battle ready combat knife. KA-BAR was proud to present Serial No. 1 to the Commandant of the Corps destined to be displayed in the U.S.M.C. Museum at Quantico.

The U.S.M.C. Commemorative was so enthusiastically received that it became obvious that the old KA-BAR Fighting/Utility Knife had retained its notoriety throughout the years. The limited production Commemorative was very quickly taken up by Marines, knife enthusiasts and collectors and KA-BAR knew that it should now be returned to production, in its standard issue form, with all of the original specifications. Fortunately, they were available because the original blueprints were found in the company archives. So the "fighting KA-BAR" got back into its original gear and today it continues to be a favorite among Marines who adopt them as their own personal option knife and carry them into active service. But it's also a favorite of adventurers, survivalists, outdoor sportsmen and, of course, knife collectors who know that this knife—this "American Legend"—above all, deserves a place in their collection. And so it is, not only in America, but throughout the world.

When the name goes on the blade, it's not just called a "kabar", it is a KA-BAR.

ED. NOTE: Reprinted from "Ka-Bar Was There," Ka-Bar Knives, 1125 East State St., Olean, New York 14760

Dear Editor:

My wife and I will not be able to attend, due to how close it is to my recent back surgery, but I want to wish all the best to those who do. Maybe we can catch you at the next one. I would appreciate you sharing some of my thoughts to all the guys who do

get to go.

I'm still not allowed to ride in a car or an airplane at all, so travel is out for me right now. I am looking forward to meeting some of those whom we had to evacuate out of Khe Sanh Combat Base. I will be particularly interested in what they've done with their lives since.

You know, when we Air Evac'ed someone, most of the time we only had a very brief contact with them. I usually don't remember anyone's name or face, but I can remember their wounds, and what I did to treat them. I remember calling in the C-123's and C-130's that it took to get them out, and I remember setting up a system that was unique to Khe Sanh. While I was there, our aircraft could still land, but due to enemy artillery fire, they had to keep taxiing very slowly while they off-loaded supplies. We had pre-positioned an Aero Med Evac Crew on the aircraft, and as soon as the cargo pallets were off-loaded, this crew would swing down the litter stantions, and stantion straps to be ready to receive the incoming patients. What we would do then is place up to 18 patients on the ground at about the position where the airplane's wing tip would pass over us as he taxied by. Since there were only 4 of us Air Force Medics there, we had to find volunteer Marines to help load the patients. The correct litter carry was to use 4 men, one on each handle. Then they would all start off in step, but for Khe Sanh we had to use only two men per litter because we had to run with them in a dead run. Our timing had to be close to perfect. When the wing tip passed over us, each litter team had to pick their patient up and run directly at the airplane fuselage. By the time we intersected with the path of the airplane, the back end was just passing us. Then we had to make a banking left turn with our litter and jump up on to the tail ramp, as it was still moving. The guy on the front of the litter had the advantage in that he could see the ramp as he jumped up the nearly 18" to get on the ramp. He knew if he missed the step, the guy in back was going to ram that litter right up on him. But the guy in back had the tougher job, because he had to give that litter a real hard shove to help the guy in front get up on the ramp and less than a second later he had to jump up on the ramp himself. If the guy in front made a mistake, and missed the ramp, he would crash down on the ramp and the litter would be driven right up his back. Although we wore flack vests, I still have scars on the back of my neck where the bar underneath the litter hit me in the back of the head. I also have scars on both of my shins where I missed the step up onto the ramp and hit it. That was in our learning stage, but we finally got to where we could hit the ramp at full gallop and run our patient all the way to the front litter tier. We would set him down in the stanchions, while the on-board medics would snap them in place. Then we would make a U-turn and run back out and jump back off onto the ground, before the airplane made the turn at the far end of the ramp. When he made that turn, the loadmaster was closing the door, and as he entered the active runway, he was picking up speed for the takeoff. I am sure that this system of getting patients loaded onto a moving airplane has never been done before or since.

We could usually get about 18 wounded on the aircraft if our timing went well, and we were able to keep up with the pace of the number of wounded we had to move. We weren't too picky though, if an Army or Marine helicopter had room on it, we would send as many patients as possible out on it. The C-123's and C-130's were able to carry so much more that we welcomed them and the opportunity to move the bulk of our patient load. At one point while I was there, our bunker took a direct hit, but as I recall we didn't loose anyone. It just scared the hell out of us. But the entire bunker had to be rebuilt. It seemed like we spent as much time refilling sand bags as we did taking care of patients.

By the way, I met Chaplain Stubbe several times when he came over to our bunker and visited our wounded. I have a picture that I think is of him riding on a captured motorcycle. If you see him there, I'd like to know if that was him. The picture is just from the back, but I think I was taking it of him.

Hope you all have a great reunion, and that you'll remember all the ones we didn't get to save. They and their families are the ones that I have the most feelings for, because we didn't have a chance to bring them home. Although most of us didn't get decorated for just doing our job, I believe that every man there was a hero. Even though at the time, nobody wanted to be called one, and maybe most of us still don't, but we did our jobs under very difficult circumstances. We few are a precious band of brothers. I know one thing from all this, my experiences at places like Khe Sanh changed the way I look at life. I treasure every minute of it now. I love being with my two sons and their wives, and especially my grandkids. I love most of all being with my sweet wife, who stood by me all those 13 years I was flying

patients around the world. A lot of the guys weren't so lucky. Our divorce rate was astronomical. Most wives couldn't take all the absences. So I'm glad I married an Air Force Nurse, who at least understood what I was doing while I was away. I lost my right lung, and it knocked me off flying status, or I guess I would have still been in AeroMed Evac Units until I retired. Sometimes God just has different plans for you than you do for yourself. Now, I try to go with His flow, and not mine. May God richly bless each and every one of you who attends this reunion.

Semper Fi,
Ira D Wilson

No Small Things

by Mike Worth

Each year around Mother's Day, I try to visit my Mom in Asheville, North Carolina. Mom, the one who worried as she watched the nightly news, while I was in Vietnam. Wrote faithfully, sent "care" packages, and prayed for my safe return. As she counted the days, she also wrote condolence letters to other parents; those of my boyhood friends and those of too many Echo Company brothers. She said it was just a small thing and the least she could do.

This year I arranged to take a little side trip to Simpsonville, South Carolina to visit with one of my personal heroes, John "Doc" Lancaster, Echo 2/26. Some may remember Commander John Lancaster, USN (Retd) from the dedication at Jefferson Barracks last year—but he is always " Doc" to me. "My" Doc, who when I was wounded on 27 October 1968, ran through a hail of bullets to get to me and patched me up. We spent a day at Laurens High School where Doc Lancaster is now the director of the JROTC program. In his classes, Vietnam became the lesson of the day. The scars from where the bullet went through my arm (having fortunately missed my head) and Doc's fancy patchwork became the "show and tell" for these interested, pulled together and well mannered young people.



Stan Pettit. 3rd Sqd., 3rd Plt., Echo Co., @nd Bn 26 Marine Regt, 3rd Marine Div
June-July 1968, Con Thien area near the DMZ

Part of our plan was to also visit the parents and the grave of another Khe Sanh Veteran, Stan Pettit, E 2/26, who survived Khe Sanh, but was Killed in Action later at LZ Margo. Stan was our friend and brother then, remembered still—and John is the Doc who tended to Stan when he was killed by machine gun fire as he walked point on 15 September 1968.

And so, we traveled along Liberty Highway to a sleepy rural area between Easton and Liberty, South Carolina to visit Stan's parents, Paul and Colleen Pettit. Stan's brothers, Ray and Eddie and sisters, Paula and Kathy, were at a family wedding rehearsal this day, so maybe next time.

Mrs. Pettit is ill and confined to her bed, but we hoped the flowers brought a touch of cheer and a splash of brightness to her day. Sadly, Mr. Pettit tells us that Mrs. Pettit has never quite gotten over the loss of Stan, their oldest boy.

In a devastating set of circumstances, the Marine Corps failed to inform the Pettits in a timely manner of the death of their son. The Pettit family first learned of Stan's death when they received a letter of condolence from a Marine in Stan's squad. Hoping it was a mistake, it was only after Mr. Pettit asked his Congressman to investigate that they finally received the heartbreaking confirmation.

Mr. Pettit, a WWII Marine, who worked in Naval Intelligence and took jungle training in Panama, Central America, is a very warm and most engaging guy, with strong political views and an acute and accurate memory. Paul Pettit is also a loving father whose son fought and died for this country. This father's deep love is evident in the accompanying poem, inspired by a photo of Stan that was sent to the family by a buddy, and was written two days after he buried his eldest son, Stanley.

When we visited Stan's grave, which is in the very center of a small church cemetery near the Pettit home, the roots of the patriotism and sense of duty that was so obvious in Stan, were movingly clear. Rising to nearly 15 feet above the grave with the simple bronze headstone reading Cpl. Stanley R. Pettit, E Co 26th Marines, is a flagpole bearing an American Flag. This powerful symbol of freedom and sacrifice, standing vigil in remembrance of one brave Marine, has flown there for 32 years. For 32 years, Paul Pettit has maintained the grave, reinforced the flagpole, and replaced each fading or tattered flag with a new one. For 32 years, Stan's father has ensured that anyone who visits or drives by this humble churchyard will see this flag—and know that it proudly waves over the resting place of one who gave his life for his country. He says it is just a small thing and the least he can do.

For 32 years this flag tells of duty, honor and sacrifice. May it always fly. May Stanley R. Pettit and so many other brave hearts always be remembered. It is just a small thing and the least we can do.

Author's Note: The Pettit Family would like to hear from anyone who knew Stan or even has memories of those times to share. Stan's youngest sister, Kathy Pettit Finley, will be the Pettit family point of contact and will distribute to all. PH: 864/843-6556, email: TREBKathy2@aol.com Poem used by permission.

Armed and Ready

by Joe Olszewski

I stepped on a mine in late February 1968 on Hill 558. My medivac route was from Hill 558 to Dong Ha to DaNang. Each stop included various medical procedures to ensure that I wasn't in pain, the bleeding was controlled and fresh bandages were applied to prevent infection. At Dong Ha, they took off my uniform as added protection from infection.

At DaNang I remember being placed on a stretcher, carried into a building and being set down on a table. I don't remember why. Shortly a rocket attack hit DaNang and they took all the wounded and placed us on the floor. I remember the corpsmen saying that we were probably more used to "incoming" than they were. At DaNang the doctor who examined me took one look at my shattered foot and said, "this one goes afloat." This meant I was headed for the USS Repose, where my foot would be amputated.

For some reason the chopper flight to the Repose didn't take place until nightfall. It was very dark and the flight was crammed with wounded troops. I was placed on the floor and I remember feeling the cold of the steel beneath me, as all I was wearing was a blanket and a huge bandage on my foot. The flight seemed to take forever and once we were over the Gulf of Tonkin, the cold air also entered the cargo (or I should say the meat locker) area. It was so cold I was shivering.

We landed on the Repose on the stern where a landing pad had been built. It took some time to unload the wounded and in my case, since I was targeted for surgery, I was sent immediately to the "pre-op" (pre-surgery) room. Again all I had on was that blanket. One corpsman took off my bandages and

after receiving my approval took pictures of my foot, I guess, for medical textbook purposes. After he was gone I was alone for a while and began to warm up, as I was finally indoors and out of the cold air.

After several minutes a Navy nurse came to see me to prepare me for surgery. She was the first Caucasian woman I had seen in five months and beautiful. I was at least on morphine and probably something stronger by then, but my male senses said this was a gorgeous creature that was about to examine and prepare me for surgery.

In a quick movement she undid the blanket I was wearing and there I was—ARMED AND READY. She took one look at me and said with a smile: "Well, there's definitely nothing wrong with your reactions." I don't remember my response, but I'm sure it was something cute. That night I had the surgery and spent three more days on the Repose recovering before being flown to Japan for additional rest. During those three days on the Repose, I never saw that nurse again as the Navy obviously had separate personnel for separate duties and the nurses who worked pre-op and surgery did not work the recovery wards.

I do remember being out of bed for the first time in a wheel chair and having dinner. After eating I was playing chess or checkers with a "candy striper" who were young teenage girls that were there for comfort purposes. I guess I was too weak to be up so soon, as after about a half-hour I promptly threw-up in the candy striper's lap. But, that's another story for another time.

Sure wish I could find that nurse today in my old age. I still have my reactions.

ED NOTE: Joey, Joey, Joey. Be careful about what you brag on in front of these strange fellows. Some of 'em are liable to call you on it.

Ambush

by Steve Riddle

Lying on the ground
Motionless
Searching into the night
Listening to the darkness
Its raining again
Soaked to the bone
Hours have come and gone
It seems like centuries
God, just to close my eyes
for a moment
Fighting to stay awake is agony
If I fall asleep
I might not wake up
I don't feel the insects biting anymore
just their buzzing in my ears and nose
as they suck my blood
I slide my tongue slowly over my swollen lips
Having to be so still for so long
Amid such intense misery and torment
Leaves me numb

Messages to the Khe Sanh Vets home page

I am Mike Castle, 2/4 Gulf Company May 68 to June 69. From Dia Do to Khe Sanh Hills. To all of you I wish you well. I will never forget where we dug it! I carried a Hog and a Few Wraps (M-60) up and up and down the hills most of my tour. I am in touch with the 2/4 site and a member. Wounded a few times still kicking. I hold Vietnam close to my heart the rest in my mind. This site is awesome; it is about time I found it. I have many of our brothers to send it too. I hope we are welcome.

Semper Fi, Your Bloody Brother, Mike Castle

Had a can of c-rat ham slices and someone had a can of c-rat grape juice and shared it. Just like home—ham and a glass of make believe wine. But it was Easter Sunday, and it was special.

Don Lacy

There is not a date or a place that has as much meaning in my memory as that of tomorrow when the first Battle of the Hills began at Khe Sanh in 1967. The epic struggle over 881N/S and 861 rank among the most significant in all of Vietnam's actions, but for me, it was a personal and deadly struggle just to do my duty and stay alive. It was nearly a disaster for those manning the base then, and a prelude to the more notable siege in 1968. But for those of us who fought that first battle, it was time never to be forgotten. May God bless all who served and stood their ground during this desperate time—and bring them peace in all things. Kimo Andrews

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Five long years ago today this nation watched in horror at the tragedy in Oklahoma City when the federal building was bombed killing so many innocent people, including a couple of Good Marines. But my eyes were fixed elsewhere that day farther west. While most folks were glued to the TV sets watching one tragedy unfold, I was on and off the phone throughout the day with my dear and precious friend Quiles Ray Jacobs and his beautiful wife Naomi. Those of you who had the privilege of knowing him he was simply "Jake the Snake." Jake was a Warrior in the truest sense of the word. First as a young Marine, who led our squad through much tragedy and triumph throughout his tour of duty, he earned two Purple Hearts, one Navy Commendation, one Bronze Star, and one Silver Star for his valor on the field of battle. Jake was a good Christian man and for sure one of the finest human beings I ever had the honor of knowing. He cared a great deal about his family and his friends and this organization as well. Jake had quietly been battling Agent Orange related cancer for over three years and had very nearly concealed it from me up until his last year. It was a Thursday, I believe, 19 April 1995 when I had my last conversation with him. True to form he just laughed at death as he had done so many times in the past, assured me he knew exactly where he was going to be when the sun went down and promised he'd prepare the way and wait for us all at a time somewhere in the future. Yes it was true. The mighty man I loved so much for so many years had fallen at last. I just know the ground rumbled and roared that afternoon in Southern California. Jake was a giant of a man and he had to make the earth shake. I thank you my good friend for all that you gave me. I still miss you dearly, as if you were my own flesh and blood. Each year when I see the magnolia blooms I think of the good times we had. They were so beautiful here in Indiana when we last spoke. I guess that was God's way of telling me you were OK now. 19 April 1995.

Godspeed and Semper Fi Jake.
Love ya Bro
Michael E. O'Hara Bravo Co 1/26

The sniper and his 50 cal. kept me and the other trench troops hopping throughout our 77 days and nights (we owned the nights since the clouds settled below our 3,000 ft elevation). We would egg the poor bastard on by waving MAGGIE's Drawers whenever he missed one of us running through the shallow in the trench line. That sniper did get more than a few of my HST buddies and, of course, your choppers. He also caused us to look at that big damn box you guys dropped on top of Hill 881S. By the time night fell and we could check it out we found the ice cream! Damn, I medivaced 95% of our troops on the Hill, lost 60 pounds as we were down to one c-rat meal per day between 3 of us and you deliver ice cream that baked in the sun until nightfall when it was safe to retrieve.

YES! We loved the melted goo and we all had the shits for days and days, not having had dairy products since January 21, 1968. We had a great time

despite the SHITS and we thank you for improving the morale, even though you upset our stomachs. We will always remember the ice cream in the big box on top of the Hill. Dave

"DOC" Steinberg

• • •

reply: Hi Doc Gary here.

Don't remember much of the ice cream, but I do remember the sniper. I remember wondering what to worry about more, the sniper or the incoming rounds that always followed the choppers in. I believe we had only about two minutes to get things done before they came in. Now the sniper never had to wait, he just did his thing and you couldn't figure out if it was the dirt and rocks flying around you while under the birds or the snipers rounds. I do remember one of the 26th guys getting his finger blown off while waiting to get on a 46. I believe you picked up the finger and put in a wet rag and put him and the finger on the bird. Now could that sniper have been that good?

I also remember spending many an hour on the side of the hill putting a lot of fire power on his position. We even called in "Scarface" (gunship) to work over the site. Be good doc. See you this summer...Gary (Shore Party Gary Parker)

I was with 2/94th arty. We made a night convoy to your humble abodes and as usual were greeted with fireworks. From all the guys that made that trip I want to thank you for keeping us, our trucks and ammo safe until we left. You guys did one hellava job up there with very little thanks.

So on behalf of the 2/94 at JJ Carroll and Dong Ha thanks and Welcome Home.

Duffy 2/94 67-68

At 1:30 P.M. on Saturday, 3 June 2000, a park atop a hill in Closter, New Jersey, will be re-dedicated. Schauble Park was named to honor the memory and the sacrifice of one of our own, Corporal Kenneth W. Schauble. Ken was a Squad Leader with the 2nd Platoon, "Echo" Company, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines. He served at Khe Sanh on Hill 861-A during the 1968 Tet Offensive, and he was later Killed in Action on 6 June, 1968 during an intense battle in "Leatherneck Square" near Con Thien. The date of the ceremony closely coincides with the 32nd anniversary of the day he and 13 other Marines died. On the day of his death, the 2nd Platoon of "Echo" Company was on a security patrol when they engaged a large North Vietnamese Army force concealed in a bunker complex. After a pitched battle which lasted several hours and resulted in numerous casualties on both sides, the 2nd Platoon was cut off, nearly out of ammunition, and had only sporadic communication with one remaining radio. Realizing the only hope was to break out, Ken gave the order to "fix bayonets" and he led 2nd squad "over the top," on line, into the enemy bunker complex. While Ken was killed instantly when struck by a machine gun bullet, the 2nd squad pressed the attack suffering near total casualties while pressing the attack into the enemy bunker complex, killing numerous NVA. Jim Kaylor, the only survivor from 2nd Squad, said "Ken was one of the many brave hearts who died that day; 14 Marines were killed and 11 wounded. He was always one of my heroes because he was a bright and very brave man. Ken Schauble was a strong leader, tough as hell and he loved the Marine Corps!"

The Closter, New Jersey Parks Service Director, Jim Oettinger, and his staff are committed to assuring that the proper respect be made in Ken Schauble's memory, and have gone to great efforts to make sure the citizens of Closter are aware of Ken's sacrifice. Mr. Oettinger and his staff are determined that Ken, and the heroism he displayed, will not be forgotten.

All of Ken Schauble's surviving family is expected to attend the rededication. We are hoping that many Khe Sanh Veterans and Ken's other combat brothers will attend as well. He's not just a home town hero .. he is a true American hero.

The details are as follows:

Schauble Park Dedication Saturday, 3 June 2000, 1:30 PM Closter, New Jersey Point of Contact: Jim Oettinger, Park Service Director Phone: 1- 800/795-3663 ex 325

Email: JOtto98@aol.com

I came across your site last week while I was searching for resources with which to teach my 11th graders the Vietnam War. Since then, and especially as today approached, you have been on my mind. I want to take this opportunity to tell you who made it home, and those who did not, "Thank You!" Thank you for myself, and thank you for my children. We will reserve a special place for you in our

hearts and prayers.

We love you.
D. Benthall & sons

To all, Thanks to Dean Caton, formerly of Golf/2/3 Marines, I am finally able to put a name on the Marine casualty in the famous picture taken by Catherine LeRoy of Corpsman Vernon Wike on Hill 881, taken on April 30, 1967. The Marine was LCPL William Junior Roldan, of Philadelphia, PA. Dean related that he knew LCPL Roldan when they were stationed in Okinawa with the bulk of the 3rd Marines, prior to deploying to Khe Sanh. Roldan was killed by machine-gunfire directly in front of the Platoon Commander 1LT Peter Hesser during the assault on Hill 881. His name is found at Panel 18E 128 on the Wall.

Steve D

It was 32 years ago today that pilot, Captain Luke Sharp and copilot, 1st Lt. Mike Helmstetler (HMM 161) lifted off of LZ Robin with a load of Marines and a Corpsman from Kilo 3/9/3 for a troop delivery to Khe Sanh. Not more than 20 minutes later they would be dead and the lives of the passengers and crew would be forever changed. They will not be forgotten.

Ray (Doc) Felle

On the morning of June 7, 1967 Hill 950 was attacked and overrun at the same time the KSCB was under rocket attack. As memory serves there were 18 to 22 Marines on the hill. Of that number 5-8 were KIA and 6 were WIA. The next morning those Marines who managed to evade the NVA retook the hill. Reinforcements arrived from the base by chopper under a huge fog. I was the Pinefold radio operator who called for an arty strike on top of the hill. Thanks God it wasn't done.

I want to say to the Marines who were on the hill that night it's been 33 years since that encounter I haven't forgotten you! We have lost a few since then for different reasons but all of you are always in my prayers.

S/F David Buffalo

I was with 1st BTN 13th MAR, "A" BTRY. I arrived early March until we convoyed out. Sometime in April. I would like to here from anyone from this BTRY. or from anyone in the time frame above.

Raymond Weaver

Thank you to the 'Nam vets who have come forward with information regarding mass or individual burials of NVA soldiers. I promise that this information will be utilized towards a full-accounting for all our POW/MIA's. All reports will remain confidential as promised (except for vitals such as incident date, location, etc.) and I will share any progress made on this message center. I will be leaving for my second trip to Vietnam on July 5th. For those of you who don't know me, I search for my brother, Army SSGT Jerry W Elliott. Details to be published in the next issue of Red Clay. Thank you, my other brothers!

Donna E Elliott

I was with I company 3BN 26th Marines in 66 &67 got to Nam in Spring of 67 just in time for monsoon, serve with a lot of brave guys. Wish I could talk to all of them again, and personally thank every one of them for a job well done, and thank the ones that paid the big price to help keep us free. Was up at Khe Sanh for the hill battles and saw a lot of buddies fall to enemy fire and some of our own from short rounds. Would like to hear from anyone that was there.

James H. Fritz (Baby Huey)

"A" Co. 1/26 finally! I have found the Mother-Of-All-Sites!! (Opinion of a MARINE who happened to be at KHE SANH—Before, DURING, and After the "SIEGE"). Although I know we have tried to convey to others: Marines and civilians alike, what the experience of Khe Sanh was all about ONLY those of USMC who was there can re-live its terrifying, surreal, adrenaline pumping, heart-racing, sweat-flowing, finger-shaking, eye-popin, income-hating, arclight-loving, NVA spotting, NVA removing, red clay-hugging, non-bathing, cussing, preteen, living in a hole Leatherneck-Experience and More. I believe that this site and the "Khe Sanh Veterans Org." that exists, is paying tribute to ALL of us who are part of Marine Corps history via the experiences of the Khe Sanh combat base saga. I joined "Alpha" 1/26 in November, 1967 (Company HQ). Stayed with A 1/26 for the duration, until rotating back to "The World"

in December of 1968. Chances are, if you reported for duty with "A" either at Danang, Phu Bai, Quanq Tri (White Beach) or at the place (Khe Sanh). I signed you on and escorted you (all) to your platoon commander. So if you are all reading this, you are OK. SEMPER FI!

Thomas Edghill

To all of you guys that fought along side of me at Khe Sanh I think of you ever day and I hope your life is good. I wish I could find you guys and talk to all the parents, wives and other relatives of the ones who died at Khe Sanh I wish you peace and love. And to the ones that died on April 24,1967 on hill 861 our blood is on that hill we own it god I wish I had you guys back. I miss you all so very much I love you.

Dennis F. Blodgett

I was with B co 1-26 Nov 67-Dec 68 when I got in country I was on Hill 881S OR N. I can't remember. I remember the ammo dump being hit early that morning this is the first time I have even tried to contact other Khe Sanh vets

Lloyd Scudder

Served at Khe Sanh in the Dental Clinic Nov. 67 Looking for Docs Janowski, Birtcill and the Irish Chaplin from Boston.

Dan Donahue, DT3/USN

Looking for anyone who served with Bravo Battery 1st Battalion 13th Marines. I was wounded on Mar 11, 68 while unloading my truck full of ammo. Those that I have talked to said it was reported that I was dead. I am very much alive and living in Pennsylvania. Would like to hear from anyone who served with B-1-13 from June 67 until Mar 68 in Khe Sanh. Would especially like to hear from Cpl. Dave Cook from California. He was wounded just before I was. I have a lot of pictures from Phu Bai to Khe Sanh. I plan on coming to the reunion and I will bring them with me. I have some good pictures of some incoming. I am trying to get them all put on a CD so I will be able to e-mail them.

Clifford Treese Jr.

Would like to hear from anyone who knew Richard E. Williams, who was killed on April 5 (4?), 1968 on one of the Khe Sanh hills 861, I believe. Mortar round I think. Rich and I were homies, boot camp buddies, and as close as brothers. I went to Golf 2/4 the Magnificent Bastards (Dai Do); choppered to Khe Sanh on June 1, 1968, and then to 861. Thank you, and Semper Fi.

Tom Couillard

My name is Ricky West I am the son of Gary M West LCpl C&D company 1/26 Marines 1966-67 he was wounded April 19 1967 by sniper he never talked a lot of his time their and I would like to know from anyone who might have known him we are from north Carolina and my mom and sisters would be very grateful for any information I lost my dad a Cpl. Years ago he made it home after being wounded but he never totally came home I miss my dad desperately he was my best friend and if anyone knows his platoon or squad he was with my email address is rnrwest@primeline.com any info would be deeply appreciated.

My brother, Thomas J. Sweeney was killed in Feb.1968. I was born in Dec. of that same year. Tom was in Unit C 1/26, 5th Marine division. I do not know much about him, only what I have seen in photographs and what friends may had said about him. Twice a year the Boys and Girls club in Mckeesport. PA. have a memorial for the fallen members. My brother is one of those. I go there for all the ceremonies on behalf of my family. The services that are held there are very touching, and it is there that I get to meet some of my brothers friends and discuss the kinds of things that Tom liked. I am looking for anybody that may have served with him or new of him while in the marines. I would love to hear his courageous story. I would also like to share this information with the veterans that attend the ceremonies each year at the Boys and Girls Club.

Thank you, your help is greatly appreciated

Tim Merlin

Would like to hear from anyone who was stuck with D company 1/9 at op-1 in Khe Sanh. We were the lucky ones that got to do all of the retrieving of goods dropped by parachute after the airstrip was

blow up. I was there for the entire Tet offense and managed to get wounded two times by incoming. I've got a ton of slides from there and a whole lot of shots of buddies that never made it back. This is the first time I've tried to make any kind of contact in over 33 years and am still a little skeptical about talking about it.

Ron Garner from Gary, IN

Looking for anyone that served with me in Golf Co, 2nd Bn, 26th Marines, 3rd platoon on hill 558 in Khe Sanh in March of 1968. Especially anyone who participated in the last battle on one of the ridges that led to hill 861 south on April 6th & 7th. It's been a long time and a hard shell to crack but this site has helped allot. I believe 2nd Lt. Combs was out platoon Comdr. at the time. I remember LCPL. Ray Burrell, LPL. Pete Yovine, Cpl. Ski, Cpl. Wormy. It's funny, the faces are so fresh but a lot of the names are so distant!!

Joe Mannone

My name is Teo. I'm looking for the U.S.Marine Corp 1st Bn, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine division. My first husband was one of them. He passed away Jan.11,1984 at the young age of 34. We had 3 small children at the time. He was 80% disabled. Not until my youngest child was entering college, and we tried to apply for some help through the VA did we discover that his death was indeed service connected. I'm now 49 yr. old, remarried and my children are grown.

TeoAndBob@aol.com

Did anyone serve with Jim Tucker in 1968 in Khe Sanh??? He is my dad he was hit on 881 North. also with him was Dr. Adams navy corpsman. Also a man named zulo?

Kolpfjager@yahoo.com

"Look Homeward"

© Paul R. Pettit, 1968

Look homeward my beloved son
Across the misty sea
Out past the blue horizon
Beyond this galaxy;
Out past the fading sunset
Beyond the moon of gold
Look homeward my beloved son
No one your dreams can hold.

Look homeward my beloved son
Up, o'er the rolling swells
On, past the muddy rivers
High, o'er the jungle hells;
Up, o'er the raging monsoons
Beyond the rattle of the gun
Forget hunger, thirst and misery
Sweet victory you've won.

Look homeward my beloved son
Above life's rugged sea
Hark! A gentle Voice is speaking
Yes, the Master calls for thee
"Come out My blessed loved one,
depart earth's dismal scenes;
Come quickly, I have need of thee
in My 26th Marines."

In memory of my son, Stanley

Returning to Vietnam with my Dad

by Tara Ford

As a young girl growing up, I used to thank God in my prayers for making me a girl. As a child, my perception of reality was that all boys went to war when they grew up. Both of my grandfathers had fought in WWII and my father was a Marine in Vietnam. Although no stories of the wars have been passed down, I instinctively knew that war was Hell. When my grandfather, Gerard "Rocky" Ford, suddenly passed away in 1995 I realized that I didn't know much about him. I didn't know much about the WWII Marine whose picture was on the cover of the NY Times in 1943. I didn't know much about his life experiences, which undoubtedly shaped the man he became. And when he passed, I realized that I didn't know much about my own father's history. My quest to unfurl my father's past began at that moment. My father never spoke about Vietnam. I only knew that he had enlisted in the Marines, received 2 Purple Heart Awards and that a bullet still remained lodged in his leg. I also had no idea the depths of which Vietnam still haunted our society. I didn't know about Agent Orange, B-52s, Napalm, Ho Chi Minh, POWs, My Lai, TET Offensive, Khe Sanh or even which side the Americans were fighting for. All I knew was that Americans didn't like to talk about the Vietnam War, nor did they like to teach it in school. Unfortunately, all I learned was that Vietnam was something you didn't talk about.

In 1998, I accepted a teaching position in Japan which brought me closer to Vietnam. Vietnam was now my neighbor and not some evil secret. I wanted to visit Vietnam but I couldn't imagine going with friends. I wanted to see my father's Vietnam. I knew I had to go with my father. Asking my father to return took a lot of courage. I was nervous about how he would react. But I was encouraged by the strides he was taking on his own in rediscovering his past. He had begun attending Khe Sanh Reunions, which enable Veterans to rekindle ties with the brothers they fought so valiantly to protect. It was at a reunion in 1996 that he met Ed Zimmerman. "Zimmo" was awarded a Bronze Star for his bravery in saving my father's life the night he was shot. That was the first time the two had met since April 7th 1968, the day he was shot.

During a conversation with my father while I was in Japan, I asked him if he'd ever want to return to Vietnam. It was then that he told me about his desire to return to Vietnam and more specifically Khe Sanh during peacetime. I was elated to hear this response and then asked him to accompany me. We were both overwhelmed at the possibility and the uncertainty of planning such a trip. For Father's Day last year, I sent him a Vietnam travel book. We began planning for our trip the very next day.

We arrived in Vietnam on March 18th, 2000. In the following two weeks, we traveled from Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) up North to Hanoi. Along the way we met many curious and friendly Vietnamese people. Some took us into their homes and others shared their life stories with us. All of them had stories about the "American" war. All of them continue their struggle to survive in a country marred by poverty and corruption. All of them touched our hearts in a way that will never be forgotten.

During those two weeks we visited Saigon, Danang, Hue, Dong Ha, Khe Sanh, Lang Vei and Hanoi. After spending three emotionally and physically challenging days in Saigon, we escaped from the city and arrived at the beautiful beaches of Danang. My father didn't realize we were staying on China Beach until he looked out of our hotel window and instantly recognized Monkey Mountain to the North, where he had done many patrols. It was hard to believe that 30 years earlier, this same beach was littered with armored tanks and overflowing with American soldiers. The pristine coastline is now littered with hand-woven, circular fishing boats, although my father did find a rifle butt lying in the sand.

While sitting on China Beach, I was approached by an amiable looking, broad-grinned Vietnamese man. He politely inquired about our travel plans and offered his services in helping me accomplish them. His knowledge of the area was impressive and his sincerity was refreshing. He thought we were traveling alone. When he met my father he was impressed that we had traveled to his country together and that my father was sharing his past with me. After spending one day with Van, we hired him to drive us all the way to Khe Sanh. We were together for the next 6 days.

During those days I learned more about Vietnam than I had ever hoped. Van is an honest, hard working, intelligent man who was prohibited from attaining a salaried position because his father was an officer in the South Vietnamese Army. Both he and his father had been imprisoned in "Re-education camps." Van was imprisoned for 3 years because he

tried to flee Vietnam by boat at the age of 16. Van's presence was a blessing and our friendship continues through letters since leaving Vietnam.

The same night that we met Van, we met three other American Veterans who had just come from Khe Sanh. Charles Berg, Jim Hettrick and Dennis Thompson were all friends from their days in the US Army Special Forces. Charles Berg was a Sergeant in FOB-3 at Khe Sanh and has been returning to Vietnam for years. He helps the Bru tribe, a minority tribe located near Khe Sanh and the Laos border, in digging wells and education. My father had already met him at a Khe Sanh reunion and I remembered reading about his efforts in a magazine. I was shocked though, when I realized that he was missing a leg. Jim Hettrick is a retired Army Master Sergeant and Dennis Thompson is a retired Sergeant Major in the Army. Dennis Thompson was captured in the battle for Lang Vei and was a POW for 61 months. He had been captured 4 times yet managed to elude his captors for 8 days, living without food and suffering from septic wounds while trying to make it back to the Khe Sanh base. Coming across Veterans on the same mission as us was a shock, in and of itself. But after hearing their stories, I realized that I was in the presence of true American HEROES. For the first time, I was able to see my father as a soldier. I looked at these great men before me and I was overcome with a feeling of pride. A pride so thick, causing a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes. I watched these men as they embraced like long lost brothers with the moonlight dancing in the tears in their eyes.

At that moment I wanted to reach in and wipe away their memories of the war. I wanted to take away their anger, guilt and pain. For in those brief moments, I was able to see the young, frightened soldiers they once were and the hardened, mature men they have grown to be. Through the tears and the pain, I still felt their PRIDE. You saw it in their eyes and you saw it on their faces. They believed wholeheartedly in fighting for their country. The character amongst them was powerful and it was a moment that I will never forget. After meeting these men our spirits were boosted. And the goal of reuniting my father with Khe Sanh was in sight. On March 28, we finally arrived. It was hard to imagine that 32 years earlier my father was living in the hills that now looked so beautiful and peaceful. Nothing is left of the combat base except for a small building which serves as propaganda-filled museum. The information depicted was so disturbing that I was moved to tears. For my father's blood was spilt on this land and everything written in the museum was nothing more than Communist lies. We left the museum quickly and my father pointed out the remains of the airstrip, which was vital for the soldiers survival in 1968. On January 21, 1968, a week before the TET Offensive began, the siege on Khe Sanh started. My father arrived about a week after the siege had begun. Khe Sanh was in such a precarious situation that convoys weren't able to re-supply the men with food or ammunition. Their only means of survival was from the sky. Cargo planes carrying men, food and weapons often came under fire and airdrops were sometimes all that could be done. The Marines had no choice but to "dig in." Unknown to my father at the time was how dangerous a predicament he was placed in. President Johnson followed the developments at Khe Sanh closely and vowed never to lose the combat base. At one particular time it is estimated that more than 30,000 North Vietnamese Army Regulars had surrounded the American base of only 6,000 Marines. In order to defend Khe Sanh, the US mounted the most intense bombing in the history of the war. The equivalent of 5 Hiroshima-sized bombs were dropped within a mile radius of Khe Sanh. General William Westmoreland even considered the use of tactical nuclear weapons. The siege lasted 77 days and in the end, the combat base was still under American control. It was near the end of the siege that my father was shot while trying to rescue a corpsman that lay wounded in the enemy's lines. After 6 weeks of operations and physical therapy in Japan, he was back on the front line where he remained for the rest of his 13-month tour. Thirty-two years later, I stood on the hard red clay earth with my father trying to imagine the chaos that once enveloped the area. None of the stories my father had been telling me before our arrival seemed plausible for the mountainous area is serene and peaceful now.

Moments after leaving the museum, my father pulled out an old map of Khe Sanh and with his compass we headed into the coffee plantations that now surround the area. When we emerged from the plantations we followed a dirt road that split the mountain range. We followed this road, which didn't exist 32 years ago, as my father pointed out the different hills that he remembered and the numbers that were used to identify each hill; 950, 1015, 558, 861, 861a, 881 and hill 700. We also passed a schoolyard

and met up with a group of 15 middle school students who were walking home for the day. Our methods of communicating were restricted to sign language and gestures. It was quite easy for them to understand that my father was a GI. We walked for over an hour with the students following our every move. When my father stopped to tell me stories about the different hills or to take pictures, the children would stop and giggle. It was quite a moment when my father pointed out hill 700, that was the hill that he was shot on. It was mid-afternoon and the sun was glaring down on us. The heat was oppressive and the air was stagnant. As he recounted the story, I closed my eyes and tried to imagine the horrifying scenario. The way the hills bled into one another enabled me to picture the constant danger that lay beneath the thick brush. But I couldn't imagine the sheer horror and terror felt by all that were there. Neither one of us could believe we were there. Nor could we comprehend the entourage that now followed us. The children's nervous laughter was infectious and their curiosity was becoming. Their presence was comforting to me as it was a constant reminder that life in the barren area did go on.

We stopped our trek once we reached their village. The children were part of the Bru tribe, the people that Charles Berg helps. Their tiny houses are made from bamboo. There was no electricity nor was their running water. We stood in the ville and received curious smiles from small children and older folks alike. My father paused and stared off into the hills. I knew that he was tempted to run back into the hills to reclaim apart of his youth that he had tried hard to forget. As I stood there watching him a wave of emotions came over me. I was so proud of my father for returning to the land that took the lives of many of his comrades and nearly his own. I also felt extremely lucky to have a father so willing to share such a painful part of his life with me. We stood there for a few minutes then wiped away the tears, said goodbye to the children and headed back to the base.

From Khe Sanh we drove out to Lang Vei where Dennis Thompson was captured. Bomb craters pockmark the earth and banana trees thrive next to crumbled bunkers. My father told me the story behind Lang Vei and again I was moved to tears. In the final days of our trip, we visited the infamous Hanoi Hilton where Dennis Thompson was imprisoned as well as Sen. John McCain. We also visited Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum. It is here that the embalmed former Prime Minister of VN has rested since his death in 1969. Hordes of Vietnamese people flock to his tomb on a daily basis. It was strange walking by the man who was once at the center of the Vietnam conflict, but died before witnessing his dream come true of Vietnam as one country. I couldn't help but wonder if the dire straits many Vietnamese live in now is what he wanted for his country.

Vietnam is a beautiful country with a fascinating ancient history. Although extreme poverty and corruption hinders its beauty. There is no animosity held towards American tourists or returning American Veterans. POW Dennis Thompson remarked, "Everyone and everything in Vietnam has moved on, but us. They have gotten over it, so why can't we?" This statement struck a chord in my heart and made me wonder- why we (Americans) can't get past the Vietnam War.

From my travels and research, I feel I can understand the fear that communism created in the 1960s and the political reasons why we entered the war. I can also understand why many Americans protested against the war. But I cannot, nor will I ever, understand why America's bravest were spit on, defamed and deemed morally bankrupt by their peers upon returning to their country. For there is nothing immoral about standing up to serve for one's country. Three million brave men and women returned from Vietnam to have their character questioned and their voices silenced. Thirty-two years later, my father is finding his voice, as many other veterans are too. Vietnam Veteran Association memberships are rising. Enabling veterans from all over the country to come together to find long lost comrades; to laugh, to cry and most importantly, to remember.

On behalf of my generation, I would like to support Veterans in sharing their stories and experiences with others. America needs to hear about the individual sacrifices that each soldier made in his life. The heroic stories about young men and women risking their lives to save others are inspirational.

Vietnam will always remain an integral part of my life as well as the lives of many other Veteran's children. However, many of "us" haven't learned about Vietnam. We are curious about our fathers' experiences and their lives, but we don't know enough to ask. I urge educators to find the importance of teaching this chapter of American history. I am lucky that my father has broken his silence. I am inspired by his life and by the lives of other Veterans we I have met. For I have learned the value in teamwork, persever-

ance and strength. For standing fast in the face of adversity, fear and pain. And for knowing that 1 need not be ashamed of fighting for what I believe in. That is what I've learned from my father, a Vietnam Veteran. For better or worse, his experiences in Vietnam have influenced my own life. Rediscovering his past together has helped me discover my own future. Those are the lessons we've learned from Vietnam.

Thanks Dad and WELCOME HOME.

ED NOTE: Tara Ford is a 23-year-old Lindenhurst (New York) native and graduate of the State University of New York at Albany. She is currently teaching English in Japan. Her father, Tom Ford of Lindenhurst, served in the Marines in Vietnam for 13 months.

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From left to right: Tom Ford, Tara Ford, Dennis Thompson (POW Lang Vei, Sgt. Major USA Ret.), Charles Berg, Jim Hettrick (M/Sgt USA Ret)

Of Madness and Meaning

Jim Carmichael
60 mortars Echo, 2/26- 861 Alpha

It is rarely comforting to recognize that the dubious distinction of participating in the entire siege fell to our lot. Those were the most desperate days of my short life, up to that point. Presently, I feel ancient. I have become a pastor by trade in the ensuing years. I am currently unemployed because the war has invaded me to the point of ministerial distraction and dysfunction. Thus, this sabbatical "year" has left me with time to ponder, to muse over the concept of meaning and the war for me personally.

Much of the human philosophy that is penned in the pages of the **Red Clay** magazine leaves me cold or puzzled and especially saddened. I move away from too many of the articles and poems more hurt than before I mentally entered them. Many of us are left to the questions of what do I make of those days, now? What did they really mean? Was the death and destruction really worth the effort expended in the larger scheme of things? Why is my life coming unglued after so many years? I'm sure none of us would have retreated an inch looking at the small picture we were given of things then. On my own, I come to confused reasoning; muddled thinking or no "comment." I feel incapable of discovering "true, truth" as Francis Schaeffer called it. My unexpected and unscheduled sabbatical has shown me who I really am, as a person. I do not like what I see. I am left staring at the effects of my falleness[?] and Khe Sanh upon me. Nothing outside of Scripture that I read satisfies my soul, and I read voraciously as I am able. My studies in Seminary and out have proved vastly "thin." So I am left to find meaning for that year of unorganized chaos as I can.

I am trying not to speak as a professional clergyman. I am speaking as a human being, hurt deeply as a former Marine. I desperately need answers; real "meat" for thought that feeds and fuels my inner man. "Textbook" answers leave me flat because textbook writers seldom "lived" as we did. None of my school mates, almost all younger than I, or my fellow pastors know anything of how to respond to my desperation. And my fellow Marines are often as confused as I am in these weighty matters. In other words, shut up. Eat, drink and be merry because there are no real satisfying answers out there. There is no unguarded truth to be had except as you make it yourself. Please don't bring your dead Marine buddies in here." I recoil at that. I found it waiting for me in the church as well as grad school as well as at work.

Now, so no one will wonder if my search is purely existential and vastly unintelligible, I believe there is an answer for "those days." A meaning, if you will; true truth. I stumbled across it in conversation but

left it alone to stew on its own, in its own juices. But I keep returning to it. "If I make my bed in Hell, You are there." David, Israel's warrior King, penned those words. Having studied the subject for years, I am convinced that Biblical Scripture is inerrant truth. So I can trust its words. Not everyone is so inclined. I would ask you to hear me as a man who is hurting, in need of a healing salve. This is what I believe I have found.

I return to those words because they tell me that my God, Jesus Christ, went before me to the hell of my war. Let's settle there for a moment. I did not realize that for some 30 years, I believed that God was absent from the Vietnam I knew and was avoiding. He wasn't there. Why would He want to be in Hell? All those years I thought I was alone with 5500 Marines. Where did I think God was? I thought He was at least on R & R. Hell is no place for Deity. That's only logical but it's not good theology. God, the True God, says He was there on all those rainy ambushes; all those days of incoming; all those days of hunger and sleeplessness and so much more. We made our beds in Hell and He was there or He's a liar. So, if God was there, Jesus Christ, by reason of His Personal Presence, was there.The place has meaning because God has meaning or He isn't God. I have to deal with that. Vietnam had meaning, not because of who died, but because of who was there. Logic? Biblically so. That means I find truth where I didn't look. I kept looking at the pain and death for meaning. Not in a Personal Person.

Now, just set all the terrible things that we experienced aside for a moment. Someone in time-space-history said that God was where I was convinced He wasn't; didn't want to be; had no place being. Is that possibly true? Was He there in Vietnam? With me? I'm not asking you the question. I'm asking myself the question. I desperately need to know. Was I left hanging; all alone? Or was there some reason why I got out, alive? The questions won't go away. I can't defer to why someone else didn't make it, but was God possibly there so that He is the Personal reason I made it? I am perplexed. Either I have to alter my preconceived ideas about God and Vietnam or remain rigid and my existence sadly meaningless.

If God was actually there on the battlefield, then the killing ground, the place of unspeakable terror and horror, was of necessity, holy because God is Holy. It was a place set apart, conquered, if you will, by the very presence of God. Christ sanctified or set apart Vietnam for me to redeem me from it via His Personal incarnation there. What a mouthful. I have trouble with a place of death being holy; holy to anyone, much less God. But I still have to deal with the implications of the statement, "If I make my bed in Hell, You are there." That is to say, without Vietnam, I would not have come to put my trust in Him as the personal God of the battlefield as I did in 1972. Now, that is not a leap. Such truth doesn't make God a monster, it simply gives the place of madness real, true meaning. Doesn't it?

Do I still hurt? Yes. Do I still have bad days? You bet. Too many of them. Is life still a kind of hell? Well, I went to 4 years of college, 4 years of Seminary, 8 years of pastoral ministry and 3 years of Campus Crusade for Christ. Now I'm sitting on the bench. I've been in the hospital 3 times, all PTSD related. You tell me if life is still a kind of hell? My wife wants to do me in some days the way I act. And yet, it has meaning. God is still the God who is with me when I make my place in hell. Semper Fi.

My Buddy Kenny

Kenny Orton and I had lived in the small summer resort town of Guerneville, California. Guerneville is located on the Russian River seventy miles north of San Francisco. We weren't real close friends like my buddy George and I were, but we always seemed to be hanging around with the same crowd of kids. Kenny had been raised around Guerneville all his life, but I'd only lived there during seventh, eighth and ninth grades. We had moved there shortly before my Dad retired from the Army. He had been stationed at Fort Mason in San Francisco.

Kenny, George, Jessy, Steve and I were the local terrors of the seventh grade. We all hung out together, and would for the next few years. One good thing about living in a place like Guerneville was there was always something to do and ways to get into trouble! The bad thing though was everybody always found out when you did something wrong. You couldn't get away with anything in that small summer resort town!

Kenny was a short skinny kid who was pretty much a follower. If a group of kids were hanging around Kenny would always be there, but he'd be standing back just a little. He was never the kid in charge. Kenny's father owned Johnson's Beach. It was a small section of sandy beach located on the Russian River and was directly across the street from my house. That's where I met Kenny in the summer

of 1961. I knew some local girls who worked in the snack shack at Johnson's Beach and I'd spend a lot of my time there trying to act cool. Kenny was always running up and down the beach yelling and complaining about having to load little kids into paddle boats his father rented or about having to unload supplies at the snack bar. He just wanted to hang around the girls visiting his father's beach. Work was the last thing on his mind!

It was a known fact that Kenny was always about one step away from getting into trouble. I was usually only one step behind that! While in the eighth grade, Kenny, Steve and myself got caught borrowing our elementary school's pick up truck. They always left the keys in it so we would take it out for a joy ride on the many back roads around town. We got away with this for many a Friday night until one time we forgot to turn off the headlights. By Monday morning the battery was dead! To this day I don't know how we got caught, but by ten in the morning we were all standing in front of the principal. Punishment was swift in those days. Within the hour we were all bending over holding our ankles as the giant wooden paddle with the holes in it rang out in the name of justice!

Freshman year found us at Analy High School in Sebastopol, twenty-seven miles from Guerneville. Kenny would always show up at my door looking for a ride to school. It wasn't cool to ride the bus. Kenny never had his own car, but could always be found sitting in the back seat of someone else's. Every morning it would always be the same. Kenny would start with, "Where are we going today?" Not, "lets go to school," or "hurry up, we'll be late!" It was true, most of the time and for sure on Fridays, my old blue 1951 Ford (it had "Mr. Blue" written on each front fender) just couldn't seem to head in the direction of Analy High. Instead it headed toward the ocean, fifty-miles in the other direction, stopping in Guerneville only long enough to pick up more kids. That was the Kenny Orton that I knew!

I left high school in 1963 during my junior year. I was so excited about joining the Army, I don't even think I said good-bye to Kenny. Joining the Army was something I had always dreamed of doing that I didn't even think of my school or childhood friends.

The next time I saw Kenny was six-years later in the summer of 1969. I was standing in the motor pool in a place called Xuan Loc in a strange country called Vietnam. I was watching my crew changing a worn out road wheel on our tank when I heard, "Jack? Jack Stoddard, is that you?"

I turned around to see a young skinny soldier who was about three inches taller than me just smiling. I knew that smile! My mind searched all the faces from my past. Then it clicked! "Kenny, you old son of a bitch! What are you doing here?" It was great to see him. I couldn't even remember the last time that I had run into anybody from home. And to find an old friend in Vietnam was twice as nice.

After work we spent most of the night drinking beer and talking about the good old days on the Russian River. Kenny updated me on the happenings of all our friends. It seemed like most of them were in college trying to avoid the draft. That kind of upset me, but at least my friend Kenny was in the Army. It felt great that he was here with me. We spent a lot of time together and soon became even closer then we had been back in the world. I think the 'Nam had a way of doing that.

We were in different units, me as a tanker, and Kenny working in the Chemical Corps. His job was to help purify the drinking water for our whole base camp. Kenny wanted to be a combat soldier like me, but I told him his job was even more important then mine. A lot of men counted on that water and without it we couldn't do our jobs. I joined the ARPs about three months later. Kenny also tried, but his commander wouldn't let him go from his unit. It really upset Kenny as he wanted nothing less than to get into the action. He still wanted to become a combat soldier! He wanted that first fire fight.

We still remained good friends and would get together about once a month. I was now stationed out of Bien Hoa and Kenny was still at Xuan Loc. Six months later I would leave Vietnam and once again I didn't get to say good-bye to my old friend. It was December 1969. Merry Christmas, Kenny. A soldier like me didn't last long back in the world and by March 1970 I was once again riding a tank through the rice fields of Vietnam. This time I was way up north in a place called Quang-Tri.

About halfway into my second tour our unit was working around Khe Sanh. Just holding onto this piece of land had a reputation of being hard and dangerous work. Myself and my crew were just about worn out from the long hours, lack of sleep and constant off and on contact with the enemy. It had been a really long two weeks and we had just pulled back into the base camp and parked the Double Deuce next to the shower point. I was in the process of getting my shaving kit from the bussel

rack of the tank when I heard, "Jack? Jack Stoddard, is that you?"

Right away I recognized the voice and turned around expecting to see the same old friend I had left in Xuan Loc nine months earlier. What I saw sort of looked liked Kenny only much older, tired and scared looking! I was taken aback by my friend's appearance, but I still managed to jump off of my tank and give this stranger a big and long hug. My awaiting hot shower no longer seemed important to me. I yelled up to Jim, my gunner, to throw us down two cold beers from our Mermite can.

Kenny and I sat on a large boulder and sipped our beers in silence for what seemed like an eternity. Then Kenny started to speak. He explained that he had finally become a combat soldier. He also had extended in Vietnam and had volunteered for sniper school. You could hear the excitement in his voice as he slowly started to sound like the Kenny I had always known. He told me all about the special weapons he so proudly carried and the training they had to go through. Then he started to shake and turn away from me as he started to tell me his terrible story.

My dear friend Kenny had just returned from the worst mission in his life. I really don't want to tell you his story. I can't, not even today. But what I can tell you is that four snipers had left Khe Sanh the night before and early this morning only Kenny had walked back in. He was now crying and asking for my advice on what he should do next. Should he quit or go back out? I took a long drink from my now warm beer. I told him if it was me I'd have to go back out at least one more time. Kenny just sat there nodding his head, yes, as if in agreement. We talked for a while longer, but I could see that my friend was far away in a different place and time. Soon Kenny, without saying a word, stood up gave me a long hug and walked away. I never saw or heard from him again.

In 1998 while doing research for my book, I found the phone number of my friend George and decided to call. After a while the conversation turned to Kenny. George said that Kenny had called him the year before around Christmas time. Kenny had made it home from Vietnam and graduated from college four years later. He became a successful design engineer. George said everything was going well for Kenny until he started getting flash backs of Vietnam, then everything fell apart. He had become an alcoholic and lost his job, home and money. George thinks Kenny lives with his parents somewhere in California. He wouldn't leave his address or phone number with George.

I miss that skinny kid, even if he did manage to keep me in constant trouble! I'd give anything if it could be the way it used to be. Kenny and I skipping school, laughing and telling jokes as old Mr. Blue carried us off to the ocean.

The preceding piece is an excerpt from the book "What Are They Going To Do, Send Me To VietNam?" Written by Jack Stoddard. If you enjoyed this chapter you can purchase the entire book from Jack at: Sunrise Mountain Publishing, 5397 E. Washington Ave., Las Vegas, Nevada 89110. Phone: 702-459-4233. E-Mail jscb@lvcm.com. The price is $16.00 which includes shipping and handling.

The Bond

by Talis Kaminskis

On a night quite dark, I sat and waited your coming. Who you were, I didn't know then, and I don't know to this day. Although since our meeting that night, you have been quite a part of my life. Many a time I have sat and talked to you; invited you into my home; shared the tales from that long ago past. I had you at quite a disadvantage that night. Waiting for you wasn't an accident, or a chance occurrence. You had done everything but issue me a written invitation, complete with road map. Broadcasting your coming appearance, we were well prepared to take you up on your offer. As I sat and waited, I gave very little thought to you at the time. Part of my thoughts drifted to my far off home. A home alien to the lifestyle I now led. Changing to memories of childhood friends whose antics seemed more like fairy tales. All the while though, a part of me kept attune to the serenade of, the night all around me. Taking nothing for granted, experience had given insight as to what belonged and what didn't. What didn't; did not necessarily mean danger, but it did bring instantly a return to complete alertness. Erasure of all non-vital senses. Quickly the mind went to work evaluating the intruding clues. What is was; how far away; the duration of it; the direction; the possible relationship of what I was doing out there. Without words everything was gathered, sifted, and rated. Wordlessly shared with the companion by my side. Thus it was the barking of dogs let us know you were on the move long before your

arrival. Very soon, I knew with a certainty that my wait wound not be in vain. What little alterations needed to be made to my position, I made, and then settled down for the final wait. No more letting the mind drift; no more movement. My comrade and I were as still as the night had become around us. In the darkness not ten feet away, I watched the first of your party pass silently by. Armed and dangerous, we were not concerned with him. We had come here for you, and patience gained from many other nights like this, kept our growing highs in check. And then—then it was your turn. Very close, carrying rice, you and your remaining comrades, made your last fateful steps. They brought in range of two M-16's. Lightweight, deadly, you had no inkling they were there. Both sighted, so that their paths of human destruction would cross just where you happened to be. I imagine that a few of the people with you were also your friends, but that, like so much of your life, is only conjecture on my part. Your small party crossed into our established killing zone. I knew I had you. No doubts, no qualms, no misgivings. It wasn't hard at all. The squeeze of the triggers made no sound, and by the time any reaction on your part was possible, the first magazine was empty and the second finishing the task. The joint effect of our actions was devastating. I was entranced by consequences of what was happening. The bullets swept your group like a tractor at harvest. Only you were caught in the criss-cross of our two weapons. Like a puppet on a string, your body jerked and danced. A slow motion performance, the bullets keeping you up. Unable to fall, my fascination grew. Never had I been privy to such a private and intimate occurrence. The rice you had carried, pitched and flew to fall; again and again. A pseudo snowlike vision to blanket your diminishing stage. I saw and remember quite literally everything that night. Everything but your face. Everything but who you were. But then again, maybe I did not want to see it. I didn't hate you. I didn't even know you. Up until that time, you were a nobody to me. I had no regard for your emotions, your feeling. No respect for the same fear that you and I probably shared. Never thought about your home and family; the love that ended for them that night. No, to me you were only a job that had to be done, a stranger who had come a calling. And I had answered in a very deadly way. Much more deadlier than I had planned. Somehow with the passing of your life, I realized the futility of mine. A year and a half of my young life, I had spent seeking to end the lives of others. I had seen blood run like water from a spring. Listened to the sounds of the maimed and the scared. Walked many a step hoping each would not be the last. And now, this night, with the chance meeting with you, it all reached my own private crescendo. I knew inside that my usefulness in this game was over. Just as it was for you, it now was for me. In that instant I lost the edge that had protected me for so long. My mind, my body were tired. Slowly I stood, holding my empty weapon in one hand, a full magazine that would never be loaded in the other. With a resigned relief I faced in the direction of your point man. Already I could see the evidence of the gun he carried. The tracer rounds gave his position away, but I no longer cared. Closer and closer, the points of light came. There was no fear, no anger, no pleading to keep on living. Just a waiting release from all the pain and anguish. A rest from the strain that had so long been kept in check. But alas my dear friend, your destiny was not to be directly mine. The bullet I sought, came and went. And I still stood. Stood shocked that I lived, stood shocked at my wait. A hammer blow had hit me, and brought me back to the living. The suddenness and force of the blow, a message to run and live. And so I ran, a fist sized hole in my back. A permanent reminder to carry, to remember you by. Ran with the vision of our meeting, with the thoughts of my deed, ran with my blood watering the ground. Seeing you now, as I saw you that night, you have not aged, neither have you changed. We have become good friends discussing so much. Many a night we have shared without light. So come in and enter, any time that you wish, my house is yours, and the bond between us means so much.

Vagabond

by Sandra Hill
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His crumpled form was huddled seeking shelter from the cold,

with heavy heart and soulful eyes he watched the night unfold.

The city folk just passed him by, oblivious of his plight,

and as the rain began to fall he settled for the night.

He wondered how things got so bad and where it all would end,

his past just full of broken dreams, the future not his friend.

A vagabond they called him, a rogue, a rolling stone,

unfettered by convention with no place to call his own.

He dreamed of places far away, strains of a lullaby,

precious moments long since gone just made him want to cry.

Reality was far too stark, its price too high to pay,

he yearned for a release from life, with no desire to stay.

"You're a derelict! A down and out!", they shouted in his dream,

recollections of a time when he was warm, secure and clean.

To when his body didn't ache, before he got this old,

to cherished aspirations of a life yet to unfold.

Sometimes dreams collapse, fate intervenes and plays its hidden hand,

the sudden spiral downwards can be hard to understand.

Just a fugitive from life itself, in search of peace of mind,

tethered to a pipe dream which long since he'd left behind.

A vagabond they called him, a rogue, a rolling stone,

he finally surrendered, took the hand which led him home.

As the stars receded heavenwards he did not greet the dawn,

just a solitary silhouette, a soul forever gone.

"Untitled"

by Timothy Pipes Bravo 1/26

The Siege——What is it? What was it? How, O Lord can I comprehend?

I wasn't there, but I was literally dying, six month old, at the beginning; desperate,

cold and hungry just the same! But, why 0 Lord can't I comprehend?

I have listened and I have read; I have seen the "thousand yard stare!" Why can't I

comprehend? I wish I knew, but I don't, in a way you Khe Sanh Veterans couldn't

comprehend! Why? Because I wasn't there and neither were you all here; here

in my shoes and my shoes are heavy! Heavy with the burden of trying to understand!

Oh, why can't I comprehend? I wish I could——maybe it wasn't meant for my eyes

and my heart——But, why can't I comprehend; I wish I could!

Lord, I was lying near lifeless while you had my Dad at the land of Khe Sanh——

But, I don't understand why my Dad was in a lifeless land!

What you all went through I pray I never can comprehend; but please, O Lord, help me

understand!

Semper Fidelis

Tim is the son of Lt. Col. and Mrs. Kenneth W. Pipes, USMC, (Ret.). Tim was six weeks old when his dad went to Viet Nam; his brother, Dan, was $2^1/_2$. Their mom and dad will celebrate their 39th Wedding Anniversary December 9, 2000.



Alpha – 1/9. From top: Cpl. Robert H Littlefield [KIA, Khe Sanh Hill 689], Issac Lunke [w/a], George Eihorn [w/a]

Cpl. Robert H. Littlefield KIA Tues. April 16, 1968

by Suzi Littlefield

Bobby
I was so blessed to find you
The person I was born to love
The special kind of love we shared
If only for a short time

You changed my life with just one kiss
You surpassed my everything
You gave your all in life and love
If only for a short time

You were all I ever wanted
You are all I'll ever need
I wish everyone could know this kind of love
If only for a short time

Life is not forever
Love is
Your wife
If only for a short time

Suzi








Of those left behind
By those who remain
Memories of comrades
Of blood, and of pain.









Mothers look for peace of mind in Operation Gold Star.

You can help. See page 7.

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Notes from the Editor

A legitimate question asked is why expletives are allowed in our publication. Our publication is now going beyond just our members.

Family members are now active readers. Some find the use of that one "word" offensive. We agree. It is.

It is for that reason that we carefully judge each time that that "word" is submitted for publication. We do not allow the gratuitous use of that "word." If it has an historical relevance, it goes. We allowed Dick Peloquin to use "it" in his article because it was a direct quote of what he said to another First Sergeant at Khe Sanh. The same with allowing Nick Romanentz's picture of him holding a flag, at Khe Sanh with that "word" used as a verb in regards to our enemy. In this issue and subsequent issues you will see that "word" and others even more offensive in the writings of Toby Rushforth. It took me sixteen years before I was ready to write my book. When I read parts of Toby's journal, I thought I was reading *Macho Man* in real time.

When visiting recently with a dear brother from Khe Sanh, he solved my dilemma by recounting an actual story from Vietnam. It was after Khe Sanh and he had just made a beer run with a jeep and trailer and returned to Vandergrift. There was a steep dirt road to the O club that the jeep could not climb. Ed was carrying two cases of beer up a wet, slippery, red clay road, when; heading down hill, a Marine in helmet, flack jacket, rifle slung, barrel down, head down, reading a letter close to his face, totally engrossed, stumbled by. As he passed he blurted out: "That f---king f---k, f ---ked me!"

That Marine summarized his feelings in five words, using "that" word as an adjective, noun and verb. We do this magazine for our members and hope our members understand that sometimes nothing can say it better than the actual words. We are an historical society. We talked that way back then. I know my momma wanted to know the whole truth about what happened to me. She was not offended by my writing the truth.

❋

Message From The President

I am both proud and happy to inform the membership that on 04 Apr 2001 in a service held at Fort Bragg, NC, members of SOG, many belonging to the KSV, including myself, were presented the Presidential Unit Citation for service in the Republic of Vietnam. Due to the very nature of their classified operations, the very existence of SOG was denied for these many years, thus the reason for the long delay. Operating deep behind enemy lines in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, the unit called in B-52 strikes, conducted search and rescue of downed pilots in the jungle and

(continued on page 4)

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

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Tom Eichler	Vice President
Vince Griffith	Treasurer
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Remembrances/Memorials

GYSGT John E Conick, ISO 3RD MAR DIV .... Passed Away, 08 Aug 1999
George Lenhart, MACTU-62 1ST MAW ..... Passed Away, Jan 2001
Roger Skinner, B CO 3RD RECON ..... Passed Away, Summer 2000
Dave Forner, CO 1/26 ..... Passed Away, Summer 2000
John West, H&S CO 1/26 ..... Passed Away, 2001
John K O'Neil, 4/11 HILL 55 ..... Passed Away, Summer 2000
John Fedyszyn, C/BTRY 1/12 ..... Passed Away
John P Evans, E CO 2/9 ..... Passed Away, 27 Dec 2000
Al Brune, L CO 3/3 ..... Passed Away, 11 Dec 2000
LT COL Jack Roberts, 20TH Tass Tigerhounds... Passed Away, March 2000
Tim Curtis, L CO 3/3 ..... Passed Away, Feb 2001
Gail E Kasson, 57TH TRANSPORT BN ..... Passed Away, 13 Mar 2001
Cecil Cumberland, MACV TM 3&4 ..... Passed Away
Richard Grenat, D CO 1/26 ..... Passed Away
James G Morrison, USSF (Author) ..... Passed Away, 11 Aug 2000 [Wrote *Shadow War, Feet to the Fire, The secret War in Laos]*

Those Remembered					Remembered by:	
L/CPL	Phil Sheridan	USMC KIA	14 Apr 68		Glenn E Prentice	C BTRY 1/13
MAJ	Jesse Bennett	USMC			Richard R Blair	C/O 3/26
Sgt Maj	Donald "Top" Bean	USMC KIA	11 Mar 68		Christopher Lane	H&S CO 1/26
IST LT	Walt Jones	USMC KIA	04 Apr 68		Bud Cole	HQ BTRY 1/13
Sgt.Maj	James T Gayner	USMC KIA	25 Feb 68		Charles H Fette	VMF 314
Capt	Francis Shafer	USMC KIA	30 Mar 68		Jerry R Jones	D CO 1/9
CPL	Luzon Beasley	USMC KIA	30 Mar 68		Jerry R Jones	D CO 1/9
CPL	Loyd Kinsworthy	USMC KIA	27 Apr 68		Stanley Kerlin	D CO 1/26
L/CPL	Gerald Clemson	USMC KIA	08 Feb 68		Edward W Welchel	11TH ENGINEERS
1STLT	Paul Bush	USMC KIA	22 Mar 68		Charles E Davis	C/O C CO 1/26
PFC	Daryl B Terhune Jr	USMC KIA	06 Mar 68		Mark Terhune	BROTHER
CAPT	Bill Flahive	USMC KIA	31 Jan 68		Rich D'Ambrosio	MACTU
PFC	Donald R Rash	USMC KIA	30 Mar 68		Richard Rash	BROTHER
L/CPL	Terrance Picciano	USMC KIA	06 Jun 68		Eric L Edward	1STCAV(AIRMO-BILE)
MAJ	Pat Duffy	USMC KIA	09 Dec 67		Larry Luther	I CO 3/26
1STLT	John H Carson	USMC KIA	05 Jun 68		John W Carson	LT COL USAF FATHER
CPL	Delbert Leasure	USMC KIA	23 Feb 68		Larry Haas	C BTRY 1/13
PFC	Joseph E Roble	USMC KIA	16 Sep 68		Anna L Roble	MOTHER
1ST LT	Robert G Dodson	USMC KIA	07 Jul 68		Ernie Buckle	C CO 1/1
L/CPL	Phil Skinner	USMC KIA	03 May 67		Tom Rice	E CO 2/3
L/CPL	Robert D Cicio	USMC KIA	16 Apr 68		Nellie Cicio	MOTHER
PFC	Dale Carmichael	USMC KIA	25 Apr 67		Thomas Vineyard	K CO 3/3
LCPL	Timothy Barmer	USMC KIA	30 Jan 68		Roger A Howes	B CO 3RD RECON
L/CPL	James McCann	USMC KIA	03 Feb 68		Roger A Howes	B CO 3RD RECON

(continued on next page)

Those Remembered					Remembered by:	
2NDLT	Michael Thomas	USMC	KIA	20 Jan 68	Arthur R Brooks	1STFORCE RECON
L/CPL	Jerry O. Stenberg	USMC	KIA	05 Feb 68	Larry Mager	F BTRY 2/12 & 3/9
CPL	Thomas H Birch	USMC	KIA	23 Feb 68	Robert Harrison	A CO 1/26
L/CPL	Wilbur Stovall	USMC	KIA	09 Mar 68	Robert Holscher	B BTRY 1/13
L/CPL	Fred Billingham	USMC	KIA	25 Feb 68	Ed Prendergast	B CO 1/26
L/CPL	Frederick B Link	USMC	KIA	01 Mar 68	Eric Bergland	C CO 1/9
CPL	Ruben C McMakins	USMC	KIA	14 Apr 68	Thomas A Pierce	L CO 3/26
PFC	Gary Dudley	USMC	KIA	14 Jan 69	Erskin A Taylor	H&S CO 81MM
CPL	Steve Foster	USMC	KIA	24 Aug 68	Roland Schaedig	CHAPLAIN
L/CPL	Allen E White Jr	USMC	KIA	30 Nov 68	David O'Toole	B BTRY 1/13
CIV	Robert Ellison	CIV	KIA	06 Mar 68	Ms Miriam Eaton	MOTHER
S/Sgt	Karl G Taylor	USMC	KIA	08 Dec 68	Michael Jones	I CO 3/26
PFC	Arnold Rivera	USMC	KIA	25 Feb 68	Jim Convery	B CO 1/26
CPL	Robert Littlefield	USMC	KIA	16 Apr 68	Maylene Littlefield	MOTHER
2ND LT	Michael H Thomas	USMC	KIA	20 Jan 68	Tom Esslinger I&M	CO 3/26
All From Alpha Co 1/9					Mac Radcliffe	C/O A 1/9
All From E Co 2/26					J.A "Doc" Waxer	E CO 2/26
All From K Co 3/26					William Wildbrett	HQ CO 3/26 S-3
All Who Served					Billy D Martin	HQ BTRY 1/13
All Who Served					Doug Armstrong	1ST FORCE RECON
All Who Served					Frank & Alice Faur	HQ CO 26TH MAR
All Who Served					William Cowan	I CO 3/26
All From 1/9		USMC	KIA	02 July 68	Patrick F McKenna	B CO 1/9
Marines From Hill 881					Theodore C Hartung	I CO 3/26

(Notes from the President – continued from page 2)

destroyed and recovered sensitive equipment. Their operations were credited with tying down thousands of NVA, searching for unit members.

SOG members received more than 2,000 individual awards for heroism, including 10 Medals of Honor. Unit members also received 23 Distinguished Service Crosses, the military's second highest award for valor. Their service was not without cost. SOG had a very high casualty rate, having more people killed than it had positions. Ten teams were lost. Fourteen teams were overrun or destroyed. Fifty members of SOG are still considered MIAs. In addition to the PUC, all members were presented with a special commemorative coin minted just for this occasion.

David "Bulldog" Smith
President, KSV

Notes from the Publisher/Membership Chairman

I want to thank the entire membership for their response to my request for an early payment of dues. Not only did you respond to my request for dues, many of you were very generous with cash gifts to support the organization and their fellow Khe Sanh brothers who had fallen on rough times. Just as you looked out for each other in Khe Sanh, you continue to do so with this organization. We have straightened out the problem and from now on, dues will be paid prior to 31 Dec of each year. Dues will only be sent to the Membership Chairman, who will in turn send them to our Treasurer. This is to avoid sending payment to two different persons which caused the recent mix-up. I apologize for any inconvenience this might have caused you.

I am also publishing a list of our members who have given additional funds to support our organization. I cannot possibly print them all in this issue, which will be at press prior to all dues being paid, but they will all be printed. The second list will appear in the next issue.

ALBRITTON, Percy C
ALLEN, Lewis J
ANDRES, Richard D
ANDREWS, James W
ARMSTRONG,Douglas
ARNDT, Terrence D
AVERY, Terry E
BACON,Elwin
BAEHREN, Stephen
BARNWELL,Ray
BEIDLER,Robert A
BERAN, Robert J
BERGLAND, Eric O
BERSANO, John J
BISCHOFF, Duke
BLAIR,Richard R
BLETZ, Fred
BROOK, Arthur
BRYANT, Richard H
BUCKLEY,Ernest W
BURGESS, Michael S
BYRNE, Fredrick J
CAMPBELL, Richard F
CAMPBELL, R.W.
CAMPO,Carl C
CARSON, John W
CHAMBERLAIN,Del
CICERO, Joseph R
COLE,Bernard D
COMPTON, Rick
COPE, Kenneth G
COWAN, Richard V
CREWS, Gerald L
CROTEAU, John H
DAKIN, William E
D'AMBROSIO, Richard
DAVIS, Charles E lll
DEER, Joseph S
DOBBRATZ, J.R.
DUBOIS, William H
DUNPHY,Terrence
EATON, Miriam K
ECHOLS,Ronald E Sr.
EDGINGTON,Joseph
EDWARDS, Raymond E
ENDRES, William D
ENSIGN, Gerald F
FAMIANO, Louis V
FETTER, Charles H
FINNEGAN, James O
GIACCHETTA, Peter A
GOWER, Lloyd R
GREEN, Richard
GREENE, Joseph
GREENE, Donald R
HAAS, Lawrence
HALL, Robert A
HAMPTON,Randolph
HANSEN,Ronad R
HARRISON, Robert A
HARTUNG, Theodore C
HICKS, Kenneth L
HOBART, Daniel L
HOLSCHER, Robert J
HOLTHOUSER, L
HOOD,Robert E
HOWE,Stuart G
HOWES, Roger A
HUDSON,Jerry E
HYDE, Tristram T
JENKINS, Stephen M
JONES, James
JONES, Jerry A
JORDAN, William H
KANE, William J
KAZICKAS, Jurate
KEITER, Eugene L
KELLY, Charles T
KERLIN,Stanley
KERN, Louis T
KING,Robert
KOLLMON,Albert L
KOURY,Robert C
LAHREN,Lacey W
LALIBERTE, Daniel
LAMAR, Alphonso R
LANE,John C
LEFEVRE, William R
LEMIEUX, Douglas R
LEON, Lawrence R
LESLIE, James L
LESLIE, Phillip D
LITTLE, Rodney C
LOGAN, Roy D
LUMPKIN,Aubrey L
LONGAWAY, Russell B
LUTHER, Lawrence A
MAGER, Larry
MAHONE, Michael
MAKANEOLE,Kawelo
MALONE, George M
MANSBACH, Thomas
MAPEL, Randall D
MARTIN, Billy D
MARTIN, Jeff
MOUNTAIN, Robert M
McCROSSEN, John P
McDONOUGH, Frank
McFARLAND,M.F.
McKENNA, Patrick F
McKINNIS, Howard
McNEELEY,Michael J
MENZEL, Robert
MILES, James J
MOORE, Fulton
MORIARTY,James
MORRIS, Drewry H
OHRT, Leonard M
O'NEIL, Michael
O'TOOLE, David
OWEN, Kenneth A
PETERS, Thomas R
POINTER, Dennis S
PRENDERGAST, Edward
PRENTICE,Glenn E
PULEO,Joseph W
PURRO,Robert J
RADCLIFFE,Mac
RANKIN,Lucien
REES, Ronald M
RICCI, Dominic G
RICHNER,Raymond G
RIOS, Frank
ROBBINS, John R
ROBERTSON, William A
ROBLE, Matt
ROESSEL, Henry F
ROSENTAL, G.E.

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(Notes from the Publisher – continued from previous page)

SAYERS, Michael W
SCAPEROTTA, Lawrence
SCHAEDIG, Roland
SCHULTZ, Russell
SCOTT, J.C.
SCUDDER, Lloyd W
SHEEHAN,James P
SHIMER, Wilbur
SIERRA, John
SMITH, Richard H
SNELL, Timothy F
SOTO, Marco A
STEWART, Robert
SUTCLIFFE, Grenville
SWETS, Fred W
TALONE, James R
THEURER, Thomas J
THOMAS, F.A.
TIERNEY,Mark F
TORONTO, Wesley
TOURTE, Craig W
TURNER James H
TRAISER,Martin H
VALENTE, Peter J
VALENTINE, Robert A
VANWINKLE, Harlan E
VENABLE, Wesley C
VINEYARD, Thomas
WALTON, L.G.
WAXER, Jerry A
WELCH,Larry C
WELCHEL, Edward W
WILDPRETT, W.R.
WRIGHT, John W
WURTH, John N
YOUNG, Cecil R

Editorials

The 2001 Reunion is right around the corner. You will find here reunion details, a schedule of events for your planning purposes and another registration form. It is called "Chicagoland." If you enjoy food and fun, the arts, music, museums, sights to see and places to be seen, Chicago is your kind of town. You will have the opportunity to say "thanks" to Ray W Stubbe, Khe Sanh Veterans' Founder and President Emeritus, who we honor at this year's event. There is also important business to discuss at the annual BOD meeting. We will be voting on the new by-laws, electing new Board Members, and planning for the 2002 & 2003 reunions.

Michael Worth
Reunion Chairman
Chicago 2001

❋

Elections

At the July 2001 reunion, a new slate of Officers and Directors will be elected. Anyone interested in running for office please contact one of the following members of the Nominating Committee.

Dave Smith.....336-475-3908
Vince Griffith..... 909-296-0180

There is a particular need for someone with an accounting background to fill the office of Treasurer, as our current treasurer will step down at the end of this term.

❋

Memo: All Khe Sanh Members

I spoke with our attorney, Mr. Padway and our new By-Laws our complete and will be presented to the membership at this year's reunion in Chicago. After a review by the Board of Directors and By-Laws Committee. They will be published in the following Newsletter and on our official Web Site. We have invited Mr. Padway to attend this years' reunion and annual Board Meeting to answer any questions from the membership, and he has accepted.

Lawrence McCartney
Director at Large
Chairman, By-Laws Committee

❋

Operation Gold Star

I've often dreamed of seeing where my Billy died. If I could only feel that close to him one more time before I pass on... I've long felt the need to visit where Franklin was killed and to feel his spirit. Maybe then I'd be able to feel at rest... I've often wondered what my Arthur saw and where it was that we lost him. Maybe, if I could be there, I would be able to release him and free this pain from my heart... Mother is always saying that if she could only be there and see that place she might be able to let go of Danny... Mom has told all of us that before she died she felt a deep need to be where Antonio was KIA.

We have heard many such statements from the mothers and families of the soldiers that we, and our country, lost in Vietnam. We have heard them at "The Wall" in D.C. and at various gatherings around the country. We, individually and in groups, have wondered and struggled with "what could be done." At times we felt inadequate and at a loss as to "how to do this" or "who could do this." We knew that it should be done! Therefore Operation Gold Star was born.

The men of the Dusters, Quads and Searchlights have answered the call of those Gold Star Mothers and families. As they did in Vietnam, they came to the aid of others. Providing support and protecting the safety of others. Therefore, The National Dusters, Quads and Searchlights Association (DQS), a non-profit organization comprised of US ARMY ADA – Air Defense Artillery - Veterans with service in Vietnam, in cooperation with American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. (GSM) is honored to announce the following undertaking.

Under OGS, DQS members will raise the necessary funds and make the necessary arrangements to allow the Gold Star Mothers that wish to travel to Vietnam to fulfill their dreams and desires. DQS members (at their own expense) will escort these Gold Star Mothers to Vietnam and to the Area of Operations in which their sons served and where their sons died. Gold Star Mothers have told us how they have longed to travel to Vietnam to see and experience the land that their sons knew and to visit the areas where their sons walked their last steps and took their last breath. They yearn for the peace of mind and closure that has eluded them all these many years.

Khe Sanh Members are invited to join DQS in this worthy effort. Your contributions are needed! DQS cannot do this alone. We have faith in you and your generosity. The Gold Star Mothers are counting on you. Your $$ will go directly to fulfilling the Gold Star Mothers' dreams. DQS & DQS members are covering the administrative cost of OGS.

Theses ladies have heard many stories, read many books and articles and viewed many pictures; yet none of these have fulfilled their longings and dreams or answered their prayers and needs. They feel the need to see, hear and smell, that which is Vietnam; that which their sons experienced and took with them when they left this world. Your Contribution can help fill these voids. Send it now!

You may make a direct contribution to the account that has been set solely for the support of OPERATION GOLD STAR. A receipt will be issued for income tax purposes upon request.

Send a check or money order made payable to Operation Gold Star, and send it to:

National Dusters, Quads & Searchlights Association
C/O Mr. Clyde Larsen
353 Dartmouth
Elgin, IL 60123



The first Mother is the National president of American Gold Star Mothers (AGSM), Inc 1999-2000. She is Mrs Mary E Wheeler from Utica, N.Y. Her son, Marine PFC Joseph Keith Wheeler, was killed in March 1968 at Khe Sanh while fighting with 2/9 Marine 3RD Marine Division. In her letter dated 04 Dec 1999 Mom wheeler wrote about traveling to Vietnam with DQS: "I am just so excited that at times I cannot believe it could happen to me. I wanted to so often be able to go to Khe Sanh and see where he spent his last full days on earth."



The second mom, Mrs. Valerie May from Midland, MI is Past National president (AGSM), Inc. Her son, CPL Rollie M. Northouse, was with the "Black Knights" of C Troop 3/5 Cav.9TH Inf. Div. Rollie died on 30 April 1968 in the Khe Sanh Area of Operation.

Mrs. May wrote to us: "I have had the dream of going to Vietnam, but I guess that is just what it is, a dream. Social security does not go far enough to cover this, and my little savings had better stay where it is for emergencies!" Then talking about Gold Star Mothers traveling to Vietnam with DQS, Mrs. May wrote, "As we are not getting any younger and age of course brings on health problems, the sooner this could be arranged the better."



The third wonderful woman, Mrs. Theresa O. Davis of Holbrook, MA is also a Past National President of American Gold Star Mothers, Inc (1997-98). (AGSM) Her son, SP4 Richard Shirley Davis Jr., was with the Army's Special Forces in Vietnam. He died near the Cambodian Border outside Moc Hoa and earned the Silver Star for his heroic actions in June 1968.



Our Fourth mother Mrs. Irene Tschan is living in Temple Terrace,.Fl. Her son, Marine PFC Ryland W. Drawdy, served with Company E, 2/4 and died near Chu Lai on 18 August,1965 when a mortar exploded, fatally wounding him in the head and chest.

Mrs. Tschan has turned her son's death in Vietnam into a blessing for many of America's Veterans. She volunteers four hours a week as a greeter near the emergency room at the James A Haley VA Hospital in Tampa, Florida. Mrs. Tschan is also the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. National Hospital Chairwomen. She is their Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services (VAVS) Representative and the National Certifying Official for Volunteers.

Ladies of Gold

They are stars that shine so bright
But they don't shine just at night
For they are mothers — from near and far
Who have lost a son, in a war

They shine as does a loving smile
And as does the glint of a tear
For they gave the gift
Of one they held so dear

Their dearest treasure was snatched away
So that, in liberty, others might live today
The pain in their hearts; it does ache
They are proud of the stand, their sons did take

To fight for freedom
And to dash tyranny
They did this for you
They did this for me

I, for one, stand ready to do my part
And take each mother into my heart
And let her know, that it is a lie
For not in vain, did her son die

And these ladies
Be they young or old
Are truly worth
Their weight in gold

I'll take them in my arms, their tears on my chest
I'll tell them, he was America's best
My hope, if I may be so bold
Is for the light from their eyes, to shine like gold

A Gold Star Mother
They'll always be
We owe them plenty
Everyone... you, you and me

Ed Allen
A-4/60 70-71
10/99

God, How Could You Let That Happen?

Our battalion is extremely fortunate to have an outstanding Chaplain to minister to our spiritual needs. Each infantry battalion in Vietnam has an assigned Chaplain to provide religious service to the men. The assignments are not done by religious denomination, rather on who is available at the time of a billet opening. Therefore, a unit could have a Methodist, Baptist or Presbyterian minister, a Jewish Rabbi, or Catholic Priest- whoever is due for assignment. They are a special type of religious leader- usually very down to earth, realistic and straightforward men, as they would have to be to reach men in wartime circumstances, yet, still very spiritual.

We happen to have a very personable Catholic priest, Father Robert Brett. He identifies with all the men and ministers to them constantly. On Sundays he holds mass on a makeshift altar and attendance is quite good. We obviously have to hold several services so we do not weaken our overall defenses. The large attendance doesn't surprise me, since every man feels threatened and seeks divine guidance and favor. My constant prayer, since even before I arrive in Vietnam, asks the Lord to grant safe return to my family. I ask that he give me a future with my $1\frac{1}{2}$-year-old son. It will be tragic if he grows up without a father and I have missed some of his early years. I happen to be Catholic so I attend all of Father's service whenever possible.

Father Bob is totally dedicated to his job and truly wants to be there to watch after his community of men. He walks around our positions on Hill 558 with a small placard on the side of his helmet that says, "Some men wait to the 11th hour to believe, but they die at 10:30!"

On 5 Feb, he demonstrates just how far and at what risk he will go to perform his duties. Echo company on Hill 861A is heavily attacked at 3am, suffering numerous casualties. After both of the NVA assaults are repulsed, we know we have to send replacements via choppers to Captain Breeding. At around 7am, a couple of choppers arrive at 558 to pick up the replacements. One of the people already aboard one of the choppers is David Duncan, a civilian combat photographer, who is the only journalist to ever visit our forward positions at Khe Sanh. His photographs become famous. Just as the last replacements board, Father Brett runs up to a chopper and tells the pilot he will be accompanying the replacements. He never bothers to ask permission or seek approval; he just feels he is needed on Hill 861A after their ordeal.

When he arrives on the hill, Captain Breeding spots him and blurts out, "Who's that SOB walking around without his weapon?" When told it was the 2/26 Chaplain, he adds, "That's great, I don't need to baby-sit any more people on this hill." That doesn't faze Father Bob; he just continues to talk to as many men as possible. The men are deeply impressed and appreciative of his commitment and presence.

He spots the Marine positions on Hill 861, K Co 3/26 and tells one of the senior NCOs that he wants to visit those men too! He is told that it is impossible, as there is a minefield between the two positions 300 yards apart. The good padre is very serious and insists, so they walk over to Hill 861 trying to avoid the mines. After a brief visit, he returns to 861A and then back to 558 by mid-day. I would not have let him go if he had bothered to tell me of his intentions. In his mind, his desire to be of service and to administer to those men superseded any need to seek permission. Who can argue?

A few days later, he approaches me as I am traversing the perimeter to inform me that he is short of religious supplies. He requests permission to chopper back to Khe Sanh Combat Base for one day and then return the next with his supplies. He also wishes to touch base with a friend and counterpart at Regiment. I tell him that it is too dangerous to chance the trip and besides he had tempted fate once already. I ask him to do the best he can with what supplies he has left.

Within a week Father returns with another request for a chopper trip back to the base. He tells me he has a job to do, just as I do, and he can't do it properly without the requisite supplies. What is your call? Should you let him go back to serious danger? His sincerity and impassioned plea are too much for me, I call for the helicopter.

He departs our position with no interruption and arrives quickly at the base. I make further arrangements for his return the next day. My gut feeling is that a man of the cloth surely would be granted special protection.

The next day a chopper arrives at the combat base runway to pick up Father Brett, his enlisted assistant,

Corporal Alexander Chin, and a few other individuals. As they approach the chopper, the NVA begins shelling the base with 122mm rockets. Father Brett tells another Marine to take his place aboard the aircraft, and he and Chin run back to a trench alongside the airfield. The helicopter takes off and heads for our position. The shelling continues and one rocket round finds the trench immediately killing several Marines. Among the dead are Father Brett and Corporal Chin. The Corporal, an African/Chinese-American, already possesses two purple hearts for wounds previously sustained. He also had been one of my S-3 jeep drivers during our operations in the Hue/Phu Bai TAOR.

I cannot express adequately my shock and regret when I receive the message informing me that Father Brett and Corporal Chin had been killed in the rocket attack, just moments ago. At this point I'm not sure about your total reaction, but let me assure you it immediately changes my attitude and belief in divine intervention and/or involvement. How can a merciful God allow this kind of tragedy to a man of the cloth, a good man, a dedicated minister to his people? How could you deal with such an obvious inconsistency? It took me awhile following this event to return to a religious posture, and I still can't purge it from my mind. I also deal with the guilt that if I had allowed him to go the day of his first request or not at all, he would not have been at that locale on the first day he was killed. The total shock extends to every Marine who knew him.

Man's nature is to search for reason, yet he is incapable of answering the big questions and must rely on fate, not understanding. When we become too self important and think we should know all the answers, all we need to do is sit in the field and gaze at the multitude of stars and planets in the night sky in just this galaxy alone. We then realize how small we are in the grand scheme. Without faith, we become even more insignificant.

Shortly after this tragic loss, I prepare an award recommendation for the Legion of Merit. Lt. Col Heath signs the recommendation and it is forwarded to 3rd Mar Div and approved. Father Brett is posthumously awarded that medal. Small compensation, but extremely well deserved. If anyone deserves burial at Arlington Cemetery, it is Father Brett.

PUBLISHERS NOTE: Father Brett was later buried at Arlington National Cemetery, in the Chaplains Section. His assistant Corporal Chin, in an unprecedented move, was also allowed to be buried in the Chaplains Section with Father Brett. A building at the Chaplains school in Newport, R.I was recently dedicated to Father Brett in August of 2000.
I was also on Hill 861A, when Father Brett and David Duncan visited after we had been over run on 5 February 68. Their presence did have meaning to all of us who participated in that battle. A little belated "Thank You" is in order.

* * *

The preceding piece is an excerpt from the book Walk With Me: A Vietnam Experience, *written by Lt Col Jerry Kurth S-3 2/26. The entire book can be purchased from Leathers Publishing, 4500 College Blvd, Overland Pk., KS 66211, or from Jerry at 209 Hemlock Lee's Summit, MO 64064 or Amazon.com. Price: $ 17 for one $ 16 & $ 15 for two and three, respectively.*

Jerry Kurth
26th Marines S-3

A Tear on Veteran's Day

Veteran's Day, 11 November 2000, dawned bright and clear. The mountains to the east were framed in the deep orange of a spectacular sunrise. The early morning air was cool and crisp, but the warmth of the sun's rays hinted at another perfect day along the coast of Southern California. There was nothing to indicate that this Veteran's Day would be special. It would be no different than any of the thirty-three I had observed since my return from a war in a far off land called Vietnam.

In the years immediately following my return, there was a lot of hostility shown toward me and my fellow veterans. Some veteran's organizations even made us feel unwelcome. The men that went to Vietnam were not what the news media portrayed them to be. As a rifle platoon leader, I watched these young men grow old in the crucible of war.

In keeping with my normal routine for this holiday, I put on a t-shirt depicting four combat men carrying a fifth man on a stretcher. The words are, "ALL GAVE SOME ... SOME GAVE ALL!" My holiday attire always includes a cap with a Marine emblem.

Having dressed for my quiet and personal observance on this very special day, I drove to a nearby cemetery. I always enjoy watching the small flags as they flutter on a gentle breeze. I spent a few quiet moments remembering friends who are gone. Friends with whom I shared a common love—the Marine Corps. I thought of the young men who had died before I knew their names. I thought of the young men who had died displaying bravery beyond their years, of young corpsman who risked their lives to save a wounded Marine. I remembered the men of my platoon. Yes. They had human weaknesses, but they were giants when compared to the protesters and draft-dodgers of their generation. I loved them in a way that only those who have shared combat can love one another. Strangely enough, the most vivid memories were the humorous things that happen when men share danger. I said a short prayer, rendered a snappy salute, and I was off to my favorite place to socialize.

I knew several of my fellow veterans would be there, and we could reminisce. It was a daily meeting place, where we solved the world's problems without the help of lawyers or any other government agency. Our solutions were often impractical, but that didn't matter. They were our solutions, our answers. We had solved the election mess two days ago. As I entered the donut shop, I acknowledged several friends and proceeded to the counter. I noticed a young family at one of the tables, but I didn't know them. I stood at the counter while my coffee was poured. From the conversation behind me, I heard a soft voice say, "I'm sure that man is a veteran." I became aware of a young girl standing next to me. Smiling, I turned toward her. She looked up at me and asked, "Excuse me, sir, but are you a veteran?" I replied that I was, and she said, "Thank you for doing that for our country!" I stood there, tears welling up in my eyes and managed to tell her that she was very welcome. By this time, the tears were freely running down my cheeks. I have never felt more appreciated and after recovering a little composure, I walked over to the table where the young family was sitting. I thanked them for teaching their daughter the meaning of Veterans Day. They told me that her teacher had explained why we celebrate Veteran's Day and that they should thank the veterans that they know or meet, that their grandparents and even some of their parents could very well be veterans. To all the teachers and parents who take the time to explain why we observe Veteran's Day. I would like to extend a very warm, heartfelt "Thank You!"

I've shared this story with many people—veterans and non-veterans—and the reaction is always the same. They get choked up and tears can be seen in a few eyes. For a brief moment, all veterans are honored by a genuine show of emotion from a fellow American. The memory of this young girl's "thank you" will always be a part of my private remembrance on Veteran's Day.

Ronald R Burton
D CO 1/3 2ND PLT

LZ Margo?

It is late at night and I have just finished reading the Fall 2000 edition of **Red Clay**, the Khe Sanh Veterans' newsletter. I have been a subscriber since the late 1980s. When I receive my newsletter, I cannot put it down until I have thoroughly read it cover to cover. It always seems to pick up my spirits but then again, I am always brought back down when some of the articles hit home. It is like a double-edged sword. This time last year, I was enrolled in the PTSD stress unit at Montros N.Y. V.A.

This is the first time I have written to the **Red Clay** magazine. Many times I have wanted to write but could not gear myself up to do it. Please be advised, I am not very good at writing down my thoughts, but here goes. Before I begin I have a question. What is the significance of the guy wearing the NVA helmet on the cover? There was not an accompanying article with an explanation. It actually gave me the creeps. A lot of the guys at the VA Center wanted to Xerox it and make a dartboard. My personal thought was that he had done his duty, as we had, serving his country, and we should not feel that much bitterness. There were just as many people back in the World who were worse enemies.

But what really garnered my attention was the article written by Michael Worth (Short Rounds: No Small Things) when he spoke of his buddy Stan Pettit, who was KIA at LZ Margo. Although I did not know Stan Pettit personally, I lost a lot of good friends there as well. When the action incurred, I was on R&R. I did hear it was real bad for the troops.

Over the years, I have attempted to learn the facts of that action. These attempts met with failure. Although I am not yet computer literate, I did obtain a copy of the official Marine Corps action in Vietnam from Headquarters, Washington D.C. There was no mention of the action that occurred at LZ Margo in that report. There is something not right here. If any one of our brothers can share their memories regarding LZ Margo, it would be much appreciated.

I also have something of interest to the family of Stan Pettit. When I returned from R&R, there was a small ceremony held on the USS Princeton for the 46 Marines and Navy Corpsman who gave their lives in defense of LZ Margo. I am enclosing a copy. Please see to it that it gets to the Pettit family. It isn't much but it shows there was a service held for these brave Marines and Navy Corpsman. Most of the time this was not the case. God Bless them all.

Semper Fi
Jim Mooney H&S CO 2/26

PUBLISHERS COMMENT: The picture of the cover was taken by our managing editor Paul Knight, during a trip back to Vietnam. It is of an old NVA soldier wearing what we refer to as "our colors." He did not pose for it; Paul captured him in that pose with a long-range lens. The copy of the memorial service, which included Stan Pettit, has been mailed to his Father as you requested.

Ambushed

We flew to the Khe Sanh Combat Base and started humping as soon as our feet hit the pierced steel plank runway. We followed the narrow foot path to the hills heading west, passing many other units along the way. We were to check out the hill in front of us to see if the enemy still occupied it. With Hill 881S to our backs, we headed toward Hill 861. I was radio man for Lt. Kresty 2nd Platoon. As we came to the crest of the burnt, blasted hill, we all felt the tenseness in the air. As I stepped over the bloated body of a three-days-dead Marine, I was thinking, there is something seriously wrong with this picture.

The initial burst of automatic weapons fire hit L/Cpl Chapen (in front of the Lt. and me). The man in back of me had his left arm shattered by the same burst. The lead elements of our unit were out of sight in a deep, steep ravine dividing the two hills. SSgt Livingstone had organized an assault. They all had pulled pins on their grenades. VanDerhoof fired his 3.5" rocket until he was out of ammo, then yelled to Chapen, "I'm coming to get you out of there." Chapen was fully exposed to the well-concealed bunkers facing us across the draw but had remained motionless so as not to draw additional fire. We all provided covering fire with our rifles and all three of our machine gunners stood shoulder to shoulder blasting away with smoke and brass flying, as VanDerhoof came back with Chapen in his arms. This is the most beautiful sight anyone could ever hope to have etched in his memory. After he got Chapen to a Corpsman, VanDerhoof yelled at one of the machine gunners, accusing him of almost shooting him. The machine gunner explained that he was shooting the NVA soldiers about to overtake VanDerhoof as he carried Chapen.

I was still pinned down, talking on the radio behind a "log" about 8 inches in diameter. Woodie piled in on top of me wanting to get into one more good fight before he left for home in two weeks. I described to him what he would see when he looked up and that the most accurate fire was from the bunker just to the right of the one small tree across from us. Not realizing that the gunner was still trying to take me out (since I had the radio) and that he was sighted in on my radio antenna that stuck up from my position, Woodie raised his head to have a look. Three shots from that automatic weapon hit him in the forehead about an inch below the front rim of his helmet.He fell lifeless onto me. Woodie saved my life with that move. I was just through talking on the radio and was getting ready to do exactly what he had just done. It cost him his life. I had filled out a lot of WIA and KIA reports and sent them, but something just took the heart out of me right then. I couldn't write up Woodie's report. Such a full-of-life, enthusiastic man dead, two weeks before he was scheduled to leave VietNam. I didn't know him well, but I wish I could tell his family that he was a brave and good Marine.

I hope that they have peace with him gone. It has to be a big hole in their hearts. I talked to VanDerhoof in 1999. He's doing fine. Talked to Lt. Kresty too. Can't find Chapen's name on the wall, but it doesn't make sense that he lived. Woodie's

name is there. I wish that it wasn't. I've found 18 men from Mike Company, Good men all. God Bless you, Woodie, Semper Fi. (Woodie was Cpl Wayne H. Woodard from Philadelphia, age 20)

Rick (Ira) Johnson.
M Co 3/9 2nd Plt

Fond Memories

Lt. Col. John "Jack" Roberts, USAF, passed away a few weeks ago in March of 2001 from a stroke. Jack was 81 years old and served in the USAF for 32 years. His career started during WWII where he flew a B-24 Bomber. He continued his service, fighting in Korea and Vietnam. In Vietnam, Jack flew many Puff missions and piloted Birddogs. At Khe Sanh, Jack served with " 20th TASS TIGERHOUNDS," his call sign was "cubby 50."

Last time I saw Jack was at the Las Vegas reunion in 1995. He was there with another Birddog pilot, Lou Armbruster, who also served at Khe Sanh. Both Jack and Lou are Life Members of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association. Jack was a real gentleman who could tell interesting stories of his service in Vietnam and WWII.

In Vietnam, Jack saved many lives, even having to resort to disobeying orders when told to leave children behind or refusing to bomb a village which he knew to be friendly. Jack's commanding officer did not appreciate bad landings by his pilots. On one occasion, Jack did in fact make a bad landing, damaging his aircraft. Not wishing to face the wrath of the C/O, Jack asked his mechanic for a screwdriver. The mechanic asked, "What size?" Jack replied "about the size of your pinky finger." Jack then proceeded to punch holes in his plane as if hit by small arms fire. Years later, Jack confessed to his C/O, and they both had a good laugh.

It is strange. I was going through some old photos of reunions past and Jack's picture fell to the floor. I picked it up and memories of him compelled me to call him. I got his answering machine and left a message to return my call. Lou Armbruster called instead informing me of Jack's death. I felt sad but I remembered him and his stories and decided to share them with others. Which brings me to a point—this is why we should attend as many reunions as we can. Experiencing the joy of meeting old friends, looking at pictures, listening to stories past. Sharing experiences with our brothers from other branches of service—it can do nothing but change your life for the better. I hope I meet more "Jacks" and "Lous" at future reunions.

His wife and 3 sons survive Jack. It would be appropriate to send a card or a letter, if you knew him. His family would most appreciate the remembrance of him by his fellow brothers from Khe Sanh.

Mrs. John Roberts
22558 Vought St
Moreno Ca 92553
Semper Fi
Jimbo

Norm Mahalich, my good friend and fellow member of the First Marine Division Association, Northern California Chapter, and fellow member of the MCL, Lt. Frank Reasoner Detachment, Hayward California and member of the USMC/Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, were the principle organizers of the pilots' August "ReUnion 2000" at the Town & Country Convention Center in San Diego.

Norm got the brilliant idea that I should attend his pilots' reunion as his guest and possibly as a speaker. There was also the hope I might find the helicopter crew that rescued me after I was severely injured, losing three limbs to an enemy mine. I liked the idea, and agreed to attend, also hoping to locate the actual helicopter I was rescued by. My son, who is a helicopter pilot stationed at the Marine Corps Air Station, New River, NC, informed me that most of the "CH-46's" (like the one that rescued me) are stored there. And as a long shot, I hoped to find Rich Bianchino, my wardmate at the Oaknoll Naval Hospital in Oakland, CA while recovering from my wounds in the spring of 1969.

Well, two out of three isn't bad. I did find Rich Bianchino and Ned Dautriel, the crew chief of the helicopter that rescued me. What a reunion it was! I was so extremely happy to see them both alive. The last time I saw Rich, he was in traction covered from the neck down in gauze bandages from burns he sustained when his helicopter crashed and burned. Ned Dautriel also surprised me by remembering the extent of my wounds and quoted statements I had made while en route to the hospital at Marble Mountain. Sadly, he informed me that the helicopter I was looking for was shot down and burned. I laughed and cried at the same time.

Nevertheless, I was grateful for the opportunity to convey my gratitude to the fine Marines who saved countless lives, that without their help, would have certainly perished. I know I can only speak for myself, but this was a catharsis long overdue. Everyone who has seen combat should experience it.

Vincent Rios
A CO 1/1



Vincent Rios and corpsman Marty Blesky

Headquarters

3rd Battalion, 9th Marines
3rd Marine Division (Rein) FMF

From: Commanding Officer

To: The Officers and Men of:
H&S Company
"I" Company
"K" Company
"L" Company
"M" Company

Subject: Operation DEWEY CANYON

1. One month ago today we completed OPERATION DEWEY CANYON. This was a bold operation into an NVA sanctuary heavily defended by anti-air-craft weapons, far from our support base at Vandergrift, and undertaken during the worst part of the monsoon. We were the first US troops ever to enter this area. We were also the first troops ever to pursue the enemy into Laos. The fire support base we constructed and defended at Cunningham, was the biggest ever established by the 3RD Marine Division. We captured for the first time in this war, Russian-made 122mm field guns with a range of over 13 miles.

2. This operation was originally planned to last only 3 weeks. We were delayed many times due to bad weather, once for a period of 9 days. During these cold, wet periods of limited supply and short rations, your spirits never failed and you continued to aggressively accomplish your mission despite the trials of weather and a fanatic enemy.

3. Enemy losses during this period were staggering. Over 500 tons of enemy ordinance transported down the Ho Chi Minh Trail was seized before the enemy had an opportunity to use it against us, or against Quang Tri, Hue or Danang. This was the largest arms capture so far in this war! In addition, the enemy lost over 1500 troops making this operation the largest and most important undertaken by the regiment during the past year. NVA Route 548 was occupied and cut, thus denying the enemy his main supply route into the Ashau Valley. His radio and telephone communications were tapped and exploited to an extent that greatly damaged his ability to hit us.

4. Our success on DEWEY CANYON was not at all a small cost to us. Our Battalion had 48 men who paid the supreme sacrifice. We will always honor their deeds and cherish their memory. Also over 240 Marines and Corpsman from 3RD Battalion, 9TH Marines, were wounded in action; some for the second or third time. We wish them a speedy recovery.

5. Your outstanding results have not gone unnoticed. The corps Commander, Lieutenant General STILLWELL, has recommended the regiment for the Army Presidential Unit Citation for this action. Recently, Major General Davis received for the 3RD Marine Division, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm (a unit citation) that covers the period of DEWEY CANYON.

6. I wish to commend each member of the Battalion for this unselfish devotion to duty and his untiring efforts. Congratulations on a job well done, best wishes for success in the future!

E.R. LANE JR.
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding

Going Home

I feel that one of the most profound feelings was the thought of going home and the mystery about it. There were two things that weren't talked too much about in a boasting way: when you were leaving, (short timer), and premonitions about dying. I have seen it come true for a few and even made it more mysterious. Many would say, "I will believe it that I'm home when I'm sitting in my living room." The flight home I feel was really emotional, looking out the plane windows and watching Vietnam disappear behind you, the anticipation of what to expect arriving in the states. I got out in August 1970 in Philly Naval Base, where Tun's Tavern is located. I felt at the time it was a neat place to be released.

I read with interest the letter from Gary Foster in which he points out that folks are having trouble finding the USMC airstrip. I was at Khe Sanh in early February 1968 until I was wounded, at which time I was sent to Hill 881 South with three 105 Howitzers to help defend Khe Sanh. When it was time to evacuate the Hill, they took us off under fire and as we went over Khe Sanh, we circled, as we had all come from there. I took the attached photo of the base. The second is me at Hill 881South and the third is a map of the base at the time the Russian tanks were after us.

I was a Cpl. with Charlie 1/13 at Khe Sanh and at Hill 881South in 1968 during Tet

Jeffrey Spear
jspear@ix.netcom.com

ED NOTE: Sorry, didn't get the attached photos.

Batcats at Work

By Bill Person

Excerpt from BATCATS: Sensors Go to War

The Air Force had purchased 60 converted Navy Willie Victors to use in a MacNamara Priority One Project called a lot of names. Many are not listed here, and rightfully so. In early 1967, nine college professors were invited to a Pentagon-funded think tank. Their objective was to devise a plan to "impede the flow of men and materials down the Ho Chi Minh Trail." America, regardless of Robert Strange McNamara's insistence to President Johnson, was not winning the minds and hearts of the Vietnamese people in the south.

The supreme Perfumed Prince, General William C. Westmoreland, was not "being all you can be" Army's idea in the Vietnam War. Operation Rolling Thunder, originally intended to last only a few weeks, was still in progress. The Rules of Engagement that prohibited actually inflicting injury to North Vietnam, served to stir the people against us, not dishearten them as Secretary of Defense RSM claimed.

The nine professors did propose a cheap method (a relative term for merely a billion tax dollars) of "impeding" Hanoi's waging a war against South Vietnam. They recommended using Navy C-121 Super Constellations as an airborne platform to detect movement with sensors that were seeded along the trail in the Laotian panhandle by modifying radio receivers, ARR-52s, with also modified submarine sonobuoys as sensors, all in-house available items.

This was then renamed "Practice Nine" and ordered into R&D. Apparently, the Pentagon knew that LBJ was not going to employ their plan to bomb 94 strategic targets within three weeks of the real Rolling Thunder. McNamara convinced LBJ not to focus on an outright total devastation-type bombing of North Vietnam but rather hit more inoffensive obscure targets with the intent of demonstrating our capability. It failed, of course, and the Pentagon did not bother to use "halt" because that was not a possibility—"impede" was.

By June 1967, the Defense Communications Planning Group (DCPG), an offshoot of the Navy at Washington, took charge and initiated testing and developing the now dubbed "Muscle Shoals" and "Dune Moon." Forty-one crews were amassed and processed, and training commenced along with testing.

A huge Air Defense-type blockhouse was constructed at Nakhon Phanom along with four massive rotating framework-type dish antennas on derrick mounts. The 553rd Reconnaissance Wing with its two Squadrons, the 553rd and 554th deployed to Korat (Nakhon Ratchasima) Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand before the end of the year. A crew consisted of 19 members, an aircraft commander, a co-pilot, two navigators, an electronics warfare officer, EWO, two flight engineers, a radio

operator, a Combat Information Control Officer, eight Combat Information Monitors and two electronics technicians. A plexiglass plotting board was positioned across the aisle from the CICO's position in the back.

As the CIMs called in "hits" on their radios, indicating activity down on the ground, this movement was plotted on the board. The CICO had an encrypted radio, an ARC-109 with a KY paddle set scrambler to communicate with other Batcat aircraft and Task Force Alpha at Nakhon Phanom. The CICO panel also had other UHF, VHF and HF radio capabilities. The plane employed, in addition to the CIMs who were considered as merely backup, an "X" band transmitter to relay all the sensor beeps on to NKP. At TFA's blockhouse, giant computers processed the signals and plotted them on a printer.

Once a truck convoy was determined, as programmed by the computer, a report was generated. TFA was staffed by civilians, highly overpaid, tax-deferred who sent off a "Spotlight Report." TFA members had gone to 7th AF and most of the bases, 7/13th AF at Udorn to sell the importance of these reports. The Airborne Communications and Combat Control ship, ABCCC maintained two orbits in the Laos panhandle around the clock. "Hillsboro" day and "Moonbeam" night flew "Barrel Roll" and "Cricket" day and "Alley cat" night in the south part. Forward Air Controllers (FACs) were assigned a sector and when they had targets, ABCCC sent them fighters to strike them. The computer at NKP (Naked Fanny) was programmed to detect movement of trucks going past four sensors placed along a road on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. TFA erroneously thought truck convoys formed up at Hanoi and drove down close to Saigon. In fact, it was a shuttle/relay type of supply system designed to dodge our bomb-laden jets.

Sold on the importance of "Spotlights," ABCCCs sent FACs to check on the high priority targets. But, as it turned out, the trucks never responded as TFA's computers thought. When the FAC got to the predicted location indicated in the "Spotlight," nothing was there. The trucks had pulled-up and stopped or else turned off the road but did not get to the place predicted by TFA. After a while, ABCCCs and FACs stopped responding to the urgent "Spotlight" messages. Again, TFA would make the rounds selling the importance of their highly prized "Spotlights."

I knew about this and back during the last of January 1968, I punched in the illuminated on/off button to listen in on one of our Accubuoy sensors. I heard the unmistakable squeaking sounds of a tracked vehicle moving down the road. Curious, I began to punch buttons to hear several more of these tracked vehicles. I consulted my detailed map of the area to see that a lot of bomb craters were blown in that section of Route 9 of the trail. These vehicles were going around them and proceeding on down the trail. This old Texas boy knew the sounds of a bulldozer from growing up in the oil patch and also in ranch and farm country. The powerful diesel engine is left at a high rev while the gears are changed to move back and forth while working the blade to do the dirt moving work. This was not the case here, and I heard more and more of the tracked vehicles move down the trail in a widely spread spacing. I kept notes and when I got back to Korat, I insisted our Operations Center fire off a message reporting tanks moving down the trail towards South Vietnam.

I will never forget the enthusiasm I generated at the newly constructed 553rd RCW Ops Center when we sent out that message and waited for an answer. In fact, I had served in the additional duty special project as Wing Beautification Officer. I had driven a pick-up truck into Korat and instructed some airmen with me to dig up banana plants and a bunch of other flora to plant around the new headquarters buildings. I was kind of thought of as something special by my fellow Batcats. When the message came in from 7th AF at Ton Son Nhut, it stated that Air Force estimates did not assess NVA with possessing tanks. It went on to suggest what I had heard might have been bulldozers doing repair work on bomb craters on the trail. I fumed and exclaimed that this Texas boy sure as hell knew what a bulldozer sounded like, and these were tanks.

A little more than a week later, on February 7, 1968, the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei reported tanks. As a matter of fact, it was at 0035 hours, Sergeant Nikolas Fragos in the Tactical Observations Center tower reported, "They've got tanks!" He went on to say, "I don't know how many, but they have tanks out there!" Captain Frank C. Willoughby asked, "Where the hell are they?" "We have two tanks in our wire!" Fragos shouted. An unknown station then added, "We've got five tanks on line right at our wire!" Then the same voice said, "We've

got tanks inside our wire! I said inside our wire!"

When our headquarters did acknowledge this fact, they said that these were 11 Soviet-built PT76 amphibious type armored vehicles, not tanks. Whatever they were, they sure as hell kicked the hell out of our Army Special Forces at Lang Vei and the Marines at Khe Sanh. That was the start of the infamous Tet Offensive and the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh. My brother-in-law, Marine 1st Lt Marion Henry (Hank) Norman was killed there on March 29th. Because of the technicality, headquarters never admitted to my correct assessment about tanks, not bulldozers.

Some time later, I was watching the lights go on and off on the CICO panel display and checking the activity on the plotting board against my map. I noticed that a truck with a rather loud exhaust would go past some of the sensors but never get to the fourth one in a string of four. Then, a bit later, it went back north again. This was just south of the Ben Hai River on our Blue Orbit, which was up near the DMZ and above the Rock Pile and Con Thien, all just south of the river.

I began to observe a repeating event of the truck and I just employed my old Security Service creative thinking process. It occurred to me that this was where the NVA brought supplies and ammo down Route 1 to the DMZ, then west to a point where their sampans ferried the stuff across the Ben Hai River. I managed to imagine that there were storage parks on both sides of the river. Running south a short way, the road had a spur back to the west and I imagined that there under a grove of trees, was another ammo dump. I got the timing down for the repeating trips of the truck and then called Alley cat. The ABCCC answered, and I asked him if he could go secure voice with me. He said he could and we made contact via scrambler on a different frequency from TFA. I didn't want them to hear me. I told Alley cat about my suspicions and that I had heard the jet jocks screaming for targets, not wanting to drop their ordnance on a harmless disposal area. They were running low of fuel and wanted the mission to count for something. I gave Alley cat the coordinates, and he sent Covey in to check it out. I had timed it so the truck would be back at the river taking on another load.

Covey, a FAC, spotted what he thought might be something under some trees. He marked it with a Mighty Mite smoke rocket and two F-100s were cleared in hot. Luckily, they were spread and two barely veered off because Lead's bombs set the entire grove off in a tremendous series of explosions. I could hear him on the other clear frequency. "My god, watch it, Two! Looks like the whole world blew up!" Lead shouted.

Two broke it off and barely missed the billowing fireball. Alley cat got a bomb damage assessment (BDA) of an estimated 270 secondary explosions from that ammo dump. Alley cat relayed, as I heard also, a call for another target like that one. I gave him the spot I was sure was the place where the truck might be loading up again. This time, Covey marked it and F-100 Two, the wingman delivered his load. "BOOM!" Another estimated 270 secondaries. And probably a truck too.

From the illumination of the explosions, the FAC could see activity across the river. This was called Tally Ho. When Covey swooped over to mark it with another Mighty Mite white phosphorus smoke rocket, he accidentally ignited that ammo supply dump, too.

Needless to say, Alley cat and a bunch of jet jocks got all enthused about the Batcats from Korat. However, like all good wars, fun is the first casualty. TFA also learned of this inter-unit unauthorized communication and all future such direct contact with ABCCCs were prohibited. I tried it directly with FACs and jet jocks too but that, too, was banned. So, it was back to ignoring Spotlight reports, gaining a term for a Lamar Cranston, or the Shadow Reports.

I did get a chance to officially pose the question, "since the TFA complex was just across the Me Kong from Takhet, Laos, a known VC town, and in range for a mortar barrage, who would serve as back-up to TFA?" TFA proudly announced a planned solution. They were simply going to build another complex down south of there on the Me Kong.

They say, "Never stand too close behind a high-ranking civilian. You might get beat to death when he pats himself on the back."

Searching for Information

Hi, My name is Georgia Watson, daughter of William Allen Thomas. I am searching for other Marines who were his friends, fought with him, etc. I

am desperately searching for information in order to get to understand the experiences he went through and maybe find his buddies. He was killed in Jan 1970 after returning home from Vietnam. He was killed in an auto/train accident, I was 6-months-old at the time, and my mother was 19-years-old. Allen was 23. He spoke very little of his times in Vietnam, so I am unable to get any info from my mother.

He was in the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines, "L" company from 12/1966 to 11/1967, as a 0311 Rifleman.

He arrived in Vietnam in Dec 1966 via USS Lenawee into Dong Ha. He participated in Operation Prairie in Quang Tri as his first combat. He remained with the 3/26, L Company through Sept 1967. He suffered two sniper wounds and was taken to Okinawa out of Danang via Govt Air. He was wounded a total of three times, and awarded three Purple Hearts. At the end of his service, he was in H&S Bn, 8151 Brig Guard, in Camp Lejeune, NC. He came home in Jan of 1968. Two years later, he was killed.

My greatest wish is to find men who knew him well, and could teach me of the times in Vietnam. If you knew him, please respond. I would love the opportunity to speak with you. I have his service number and Social Security number, so if you know of a way I can locate men who served with him, please let me know... God bless you and all you have endured.

Thanks so much,
Georgia Watson (813) 994-6245

I participated in operations at Khe Sanh & Hill 881 when the shit hit the fan. My part was a very small one, and my memory of the specifics related to that and other battles is even less impressive. I served as a helicopter door gunner with Medium Marine Helicopter squadron 163 (HMM-163). We were the guys that had very large "evil eyes" painted on the nose of our choppers. During the battle of Hill 881, we were involved in missions such as insertions, extractions, medevacs, and re-supply. It has definitely been a long time.

Semper Fi
Aaron (Shakey Jake) Carter

I was assigned to the Army's MACV-SOG operations in 1968, and I flew to Khe Sanh on the day the base was to be closed out by the 26th Marines. It was a simple admin mission for me to go to the SOG Camp at Khe Sanh. The Army helicopter pilot carrying me (I did not know his aviation unit) received an emergency medical dust off mission for a wounded Marine and deposited me (he ordered me off for good reason) on the nearest "safe" place on Hill 861. I spent what seemed like several hours there waiting for him to come back. I was never certain of where I was deposited until I read your description of those Hills (Jim Wodecki's). God bless the Corps! When I saw those young, brave and drawn faces on Hill 861, I knew why God made Marines.

Hugh Cox
hughcox@hughcox.com

I had the privilege of serving at Khe Sanh, TDY to the 903rd Aero Medical Evacuation, Casualty Staging Unit from the 23rd of November 1967 to early on the morning of 29 January 1968 when I flew a load of patients out to Danang with a stop at Hue-Phu Bai. We moved all the patients out of Khe Sanh that got moved. At the time, there were some 5,000 Marines there and us 4 Air Force people. I still have a lot of pictures I took there. I guess we were too small a unit to ever get mentioned when it comes to Marine history. And since we were Air Force, I guess we didn't count, but I know in my heart that if it hadn't been for us, many Marines might have died or suffered unnecessarily. We did a good job, and I'm proud of my service there. May God bless all the men who served there, and long may Old Glory wave.

Semper Fi!
Ira D. Wilson, Major, USAF, MSC, Retired
Austin TX

ED NOTE: You just made "our" history. And, thanks.

I was with Alpha Company, 3rd Recon BN in the spring of 1967 at Khe Sanh. I recently was amazed to read a fairly accurate description on this Website of a Recon Insertion on 27Apr 67 in which I was WIA and our CH-46 crashed and burned after being hit by small arms fire. I was a member of Team BREAKER along with Cpl. Bob Guerra, "Doc" Miller and others. "Doc" was KIA just a couple

weeks later when team BREAKER was ambushed on a Recon patrol near KSCB by a company of NVA. Also KIA during that action was L/CPL Sam Sharp from San Jose, CA. Sam and I shared the same hooch at Phu Bai and his loss, as well as that of the other members of that patrol, are detailed in a book entitled *Never Without Heroes—A History of the Third Reconnaissance Battalion in Vietnam* by Lawrence Vetter. I first went in-country with India Company, Third Battalion, 26th Marines. I haven't had contact with anyone from that unit in over 32 years. I also lost good friends from my platoon from I/3/26 at Khe Sanh including Big Tony DeCesare, Alexendar Scottie Chisholm and others. Not many knew this but "Scottie" was actually a citizen of Scotland who became subject to the draft when he entered this country in the mid '60s. I recall him telling me aboard the APA USS Lennewee on our way over that there were always two places he wanted to travel to from Scotland—the U.S. and Australia. He never made it to Australia and was drafted into the Marines in 1966. God Bless all these guys! If anyone wants to visit, I would be glad to hear from any old Mud Marines or Reconners.

Semper Fi
Richard Naske
Omaha NE

Hello my fellow brothers! I spent time on 881 and 861 and then came down to KSCB later on. I was with B/1/26 and was ambushed and wounded 25 Feb 68 and medevaced out. Spent almost a full year in the hospital (age 18). Fun stuff! I don't remember too much, only the many patrols off the hills and many night ambush set-ups (so dark, couldn't see your hand in front of your face). It's a miracle we didn't get our clock cleaned sooner. We were out so far and with such small teams. You get so close to your buddies, just to have them either get wounded or die, and then never hear or see them again. I guess that's why I don't remember too much. Oh well, that's war and thank God its over! I really love the Corps and would not have missed it for the world, really believed in what we were all doing and that makes it right (we all did). Hope this message finds all you guys doing well. Take care.

Johnny Bellina
B CO1/26

From: Joseph Scholle

<jasch@toad.net>

Yes Ernie, that was I, Basic School Class 1-66. Got a new nickname in Vietnam at the start of Tet, "Crazy Joe." Started flight school in Pensacola Feb '66 and became an H-34 pilot. Flew with HMM-363 in-country Oct 67-68. Got "dinged" twice for my efforts but nothing serious, thank God. I just joined the Khe Sanh Veterans. I'm guessing that's where you got my E-MAIL address from since I just looked through the directory that arrived today and found your name, Sacramento, CA. How have you been doing? I hope that you made it through Nam without getting beat up, that you have a nice family, and the years have been kind. When were you at Khe Sanh? I flew there for the 1st time in late '67—even got to the outer hills a few times—and into early '68 when the siege was lifted. HMM-363 flew H-34's with a Red Lion in a white four-leaf clover. Maybe you remember seeing some of our "birds." Do you remember our Platoon Commander, then 1st Lt. John D. Carr of Maine? Believe it or not, I talked with him on a field phone at Dong Ha in 1968. I was in a bunker and heard a Major refer to a Major Carr at Cam Lo. I asked if that was John D. Carr and got an affirmative. Got him on line for me and we talked for few minutes. He remembered me for some reason. I just retired from DOD on Dec. 31, 2000. Counting my USMC time I did 33 years in DOD. If you ever get to the East Coast, be sure to give me a call or e-mail. I'm sure I can find a few cold beers somewhere!! Severna Park, MD is about 8 miles from Annapolis. Have you tried the USMC Vietnam Helicopter Assn website?

If you want to see a picture of old "dirty Joe" in-country a little thinner than I am now and with more hair, click on Combat Photos, than scroll away down near the bottom to 2 Red Lion Pilots, click and there I am with our squadron OpsO, Major Salter. I'm sure you remember Tony Scenna from the Bronx, NY. He was in the next BOQ room from me; he flew a tour in Nam as a Bombardier Navigator in A-6's and then went to flight school and became a C-130 pilot. Great hearing from you!! Keep in touch from time to time.

Semper Fi
"Crazy, Dirty Joe"

I was in the ABCCC, the Air Force Airborne command post, Hillsboro, which coordinated air support in the free fire box drawn around Khe Sanh from 0600 to 1800 each day. ("Moonbeam" worked the night shift.) I have never thought that I was really at Khe Sanh since we flew from Udorn, but have always had the greatest respect for those who were. We simply drew circles in the sky in our C-130 and talked to all the Tac Air that came to that neighborhood trying to hook them up with Forward Air Controllers who claimed to have targets. Our radio contact on the ground at Khe Sanh was "Jazzy." Anyone know anything about who did that job???

Thanks to all for what you did.

BWB
Bruce W. Bean

Thank you for making this information available. It's nice after 32 years to confirm some memories and fill in some blanks for others that aren't so clear. I was in Mike 3/9 and engaged in fighting on 881S, 861, as well as occupying 881 for 40 days following our taking the hill and patrolling that area. I remember B-52 raids—they were so high that we never did see or hear them, but we watched as they accurately worked over the next ridgeline. I remember watching air strikes to the north so intense that it created a huge cloud that covered the horizon. I remember carrying the dead and wounded and intense small arms fire, etc. etc. I still have souvenirs from 881, a cartridge belt with the communist star on the buckle and a two-grenade pouch as well as an NVA entrenching tool. I took them from the bunker in the center of the top of the hill where the round trench was dug around a small tree that had been cut down and notched to accept their machine gun that they fired at our fighters coming in. I found the body of Cpl Robert Schley of Mike 3/3 up there. He was from Oregon, Wisconsin. I was in boot camp with him Plt. 360, San Diego, March of '66. I was beside Woody of Mike 3/9 when he was shot in the forehead on 861. I carried the radio for Lt. Kresty of 2nd Plt. I would like to hear from you if any of this is familiar.

(Ira) Rick Johnson M/3/9

The Power of Prayer

A Mother sits quietly in her chair
As the evening sun goes down
Casting its lengthy shadows
Like ghost upon the ground.

Though her thoughts are not of the sunset
Nor the twilight calm
But oh, so many miles away
To her son in Vietnam.

Over there its monsoon season
On the ground the mud so deep
As she lifts her eyes toward heaven
She prays to God her son to keep

In her lap, worn hands lay folded
As she rocks there to and fro
A tear slips slowly down her cheek
While on her face there is a glow.

Outside, the shadows deepen
As the twilight turns to night
And as she prays, God seems so near
She knows her son's alright.

This Marine's prayers are of his loved ones
The girl who wears his ring
And the little son or daughter
They're expecting, come spring.

Then his thoughts turn to his Mother
Sitting quietly in her chair
As her eyes lift up to Heaven
While on her lips, there is a prayer.

As he thinks of all his loved ones
The sun comes shining through
Suddenly the mud isn't quite so deep
Nor was ever the sky so blue.

For he knows his mother's praying
As he stands guard tonight
He feels God's presence with him
And knows he'll be alright.

The enemy, with all their guns and missiles,
All the planes that fill the air,
Have not the power to win a war
As a Marine's faith in God and Prayer

Written by Louise Smith
Mother of Billy Hill, W/BTRY 1/13,
while his youngest son was on his way.

From November of 1965 thru November of 1966, I was with MACV-Advisory Teams 3&4, stationed at Quang-Tri. I was a SSG E-6, in charge of radio communications from the DMZ to Danang. The unit operated 19 radio sites and had 51 radio operators. Those sites included Gio-Lind, Cam-lo, Con Thien, Dong-Ha and Khe Sanh. My assignment required that I visit all of these sites. Like many soldiers did, I took along my trusty camera. I took many pictures, including several outstanding pictures of the layout of the KSCB. Unfortunately, on April 19, 1966, a flood destroyed 14 rolls of film and many notebooks, which contained a daily diary of my tour. I also lost personal items including my military medals, which I have since replaced. I did rescue some pictures and am reasonably sure that they are from the KSCB in May or June of 1966. I hope they can be printed in the next edition of Red Clay.

In August or September of 1966, the 1st ARVN Infantry Division mounted an operation, from Dong-Ha, Con-Thien, Gio- Linh, Cam-Lo, Long-Vei and Khe Sanh. It was intended to clear the area where Laos, Vietnam and the Ho-Chi-Mein trail joined. For awhile, the ARVN held their own. The G-2 section saw a different trend developing. Several weeks into the operation, a meeting was held between General Westmoreland and General Walt. They decided the ARVN forces had taken on way more then they were capable of handling on their own.

Two crack units of regular NVA soldiers, the 802 and 806 Division, were decimating the ARVN troops. General Walt committed 10,000 Marines in less than 72 hours. This was the start of the operations at Khe Sanh that lasted well into the siege. We are all aware of what occurred after the Marines were committed.

One of the pictures shows the many weapons the Marines had seized during operations around Cam-Lo. I sure hope you can use the few pictures I managed to salvage; I wish I had more to share. After being replaced in October of 1966, I returned to the States and served 14 years, 9 Months and 27 days. One of these days I have to make a reunion.

Semper Fi
Cecil Cumberland
MACV ADV TM 3&4







We Cared

It is really difficult to express how much we, in aircrew, cared about the grunts that we put in and carried out. We were all to well aware that often we were the only ones that stood between them and death. It was a very individualistic feeling, that if *my* aircraft isn't ready, and *I'm* not there, the grunts die. I never felt, "Screw it, if I don't do it, somebody else will." There was never someone else, only little old me. Quite a load of responsibility for a 19-year-old to carry. It certainly explains the mania for perfection and intolerance over simple human mistakes and foibles that PTSD victims show to their families, friends and at the job.

Ron Zaczek
VMO-3

Looking for Friends

While at Khe Sanh in 1968, serving with Golf Company 1/26, I contacted malaria. When we were finally relieved, I was sent to Danang and assigned to an NVA prisoner camp. While running a patrol out of that immediate area, we were ambushed and I was wounded. I never knew what happened to the rest of the patrol and would love to have anyone who was there contact me.

Roger Hildreth
G Co 2/26

While serving with H&S Company 1/26 at Khe Sanh in March or April of 1968, Cpl. Carl Bogley and myself were heading to Charlie Med to see what sort of goodies we could scrounge up. New 782 gear, food, water—whatever we could find. While approaching the last bunker leading to Charlie Med, we were approached by a new 1st lieutenant. This was not a guess, he was wearing brand new utilities, flak jacket and 782 gear. It was obvious he had just gotten off the C-123 that had landed.

The lieutenant began to question our military bearing. We were about to inform him that this was not the time or place to discuss anything after a plane had just landed. We usually took incoming mortar fire. Bogey and I ran to the closest bunker. As I turned in the doorway to tell the lieutenant to do the same thing, I saw him get hit by incoming mortar fire.

Both Bogey and I ran to him and saw he had numerous wounds to his upper body. We began to apply pressure to his wounds to stop the bleeding as best we could. The wounded lieutenant kept yelling "I'm dying," Over and over. We told him that he would be okay that his wounds were mostly from concussion. We kept talking to him to help prevent shock and put a helmet under his head. While applying pressure to his wounds, his head slipped off the helmet and hit hard against the ground. This really made me feel bad. It caused him additional pain. His bleeding began to slow and we knew he was going into shock. Fortunately, a corpsman arrived and began giving the lieutenant medical attention.

I did not know what unit the lieutenant was going to be assigned to, or, if he even survived his wounds. He had previously inquired as to the location of battalion supply, if that is a helpful clue.

Lieutenant, if you are alive and read this article, please contact me. If anyone else knows of his fate, please contact me. It has been haunting me since 1968 and I need some closure.

R.D. Collins
H&S CO 1/26

I, too, was a part of the "Hill Fights" of April 1967. I flew a "huey" gunship (Klondike) of VMO-6 and was the flight leader mentioned on 27 April 1967 who tried to cover the insertion of two CH-46's with recon teams west of Hill 881N. I have been haunted for 32 years by the memory of that flight leader getting hit from only 10 meters away by a 12.7 mm bunkered gun in the tree line, causing it to crash. I have since talked to the pilot of the second CH-46 and his kinds words have been a closure for me. There is nothing in my life that has meant more, nor will there ever be, than the bond of brotherhood forged in the fires of my tour in 1967, especially at Khe Sanh. I have wanted to someday simply stand at the site of the former base, and just listen to the quiet, without fear of dying. Maybe some day I will. Semper Fi from one who knows each one of you, my brothers, was worth giving my life for. May God give you peace and rest?

J.W.P. Hawaii

Cam Lo Battle Won Despite Odds

It should have been an impossible battle, an understrength Marine rifle platoon against a reinforced North Vietnamese Army battalion. But the Leathernecks won.

They not only bettered the enemy at Cam Lo, but also severely mauled the battalion while killing 111 NVA regulars and capturing 31. The NVA abandoned more than 100 weapons on the battlefield and also left quantities of explosives and other equipment.

The fighting erupted at 0215 hours on 2 February 1968 with an NVA mortar and recoilless rifle assault on the Cam Lo district headquarters. One day earlier, two squads of the Fourth Marine Regiment had taken over the defenses of the small outpost.

Intelligence reports indicated an enemy unit of unknown strength might attack the headquarters during the TET holidays. "We took about 100 to 120 rounds of 82mm mortars right off," said Capt. Raymond E. McMaken, of Macon, Ga., the deputy senior U.S. Army advisor in the Cam Lo District. "Then the communications bunker took a direct hit." The round that pierced the communications bunker killed the senior Army advisor. McMaken made his way to the bunker to adjust the artillery fires around the compound. "I worked the arty right up to our wires," said McKaken. "We ringed the compound completely with fire. "Between those tremendous Marines and the artillery, the compound was saved," he said.

Two Army quad-50 caliber machine guns on the southern perimeter were destroyed in the initial outburst of NVA fire. Then the Marine lines to the northwest were hit hard by rockets, recoilless rifle fire, heavy machine guns, and small arms, then by NVA human wave-type assaults. "The Marines just stacked them up on the wires," said McMaken. "They were magnificent, they held the line and stacked the NVA in piles." When one sector of the compound seemed certain of being overrun, five Marines rushed across the compound and took over a machine gun bunker. They got a .30 caliber gun into action and killed 15 NVA on the wires in front of them. An enemy round struck their bunker, wounding all five, but they held their positions.

A Marine in the observation tower on the northwestern perimeter was firing into the massed NVA when an enemy bullet hit the barrel of his weapon. Another bullet pierced his flak jacket, but failed to harm him. Lance Cpl. Lawrence M. Eades, of Portland Ore., a company clerk with Combined Action Company Papa, at Cam Lo, demonstrated he was an excellent machine gunner as well.

When the headquarters was attacked, Eades stacked 24 NVA on the wires in front of his gun position before the battle was over. "When we were hit, I grabbed my M-16 and an M-60 machine gun and ran to my position on the northwest side of the perimeter," said Eades, "You could see NVA all over the place, running back and forth along our defensive wires. Many were carrying crude Bangalore torpedoes or satchel charges. I sat down the machine gun and began firing."

The enemy managed a 20-foot path through the wire. They were within 15 meters of the Marine lines, and threatening to overrun the perimeter. According to Capt. Peter D. Haines, of Columbus, Ohio, the CAP company commander, Eades jumped upon the parapet and began firing into the enemy who had crept up to the Marine lines. "I thought sure he'd be hit," said Haines. "He was silhouetted against a burning building. He stood right out there in the open and stacked the enemy on the wires."

Eades was wounded by enemy grenades but stayed on the machine gun until a relief force arrived the next morning. Before dawn he had fired nearly 3,500 rounds of ammunition. During lulls in the fighting, he carried bandages and ammunition to other Marines. According to Eades, the enemy had crept so close that he couldn't depress his gun sights enough to hit them. They had crept into a small hollow a few yards in front of him. The only way he could shoot them was to climb up above them and shoot down into the NVA.

Lance Cpl. Richard C. Wall of Pleasant Grove, Utah was another stalwart in the Cam Lo defense. He ran among his men, exposed to enemy fire, shouting orders to the fire team while firing into a hedgerow to his front and pitching grenades at the enemy. When the firing slackened near daylight, the Marines redistributed their ammunition and patched up their wounds. Then, a reaction force arrived, supported with tanks to begin mopping up the battlefield.

Outside of a few Army advisors, some Marine engineers and the headquarters personnel of CAC-Papa, the platoon had been the only defense for the

district headquarters. The Cam Lo defenders had practically annihilated a company of North Vietnamese regulars. According to Haines, the North Vietnamese had plans for a big celebration following their ill-fated assault. "We captured an enemy flag with all the unit officers' names penned on it," he said, "We also found a bugle on the battlefield."

Captured equipment included ten machine guns, two recoilless rifles, nearly a hundred individual weapons, several hundred pounds of explosives, hundreds of Chi-com grenades and numerous intelligence documents.

Kelley
2/94

I just wanted to write and say thanks for sharing your photos of Khe Sanh Valley. I enjoyed reading your story about Khe Sanh. The photo titled "Khe Sanh from Dong Ha" shows the road I was traveling when the VC ambushed us, and I was critically wounded on March 25, 1967. I was a Marine Sniper headquartered out of 3/3 stationed at Camp J.J. Carroll. At the time of the ambush, my partner and I were attached to the 11th Engineers who were building bridges back that the French had blown up when they pulled out of Vietnam. We thought we had it pretty good with the Engineers. Two hot meals a day and camping along the river where we could bathe every evening. Since we were both short timers, we wanted to stay attached to the Engineers until our time to rotate. Our only duty was to go up in the hills above the engineers while they worked, and observe the area for any VC activity. Everything was pretty quite until the morning of the 25th. We were riding out to the worksite on a twin forty who was doing a mine search of the road before the Engineers came out with their equipment. After just a few miles out, we were ambushed by a large number of VC. I think the 3 crew members on the twin 40 were killed, my partner was shot one time through the stomach, and, when I attempted to go to his aid, I was hit seven times by rifle fire and received some wounds from grenades. I was in critical condition on the USS Sanctuary for over nine weeks.

The bridges they were building back were just outside of Khe Sanh a few miles. I was on a convoy two or three times that came into Khe Sanh. It was pretty rough traveling, the best I can remember, without the bridges being completed. I heard from some of my buddies several months later and was told that the ambush was the beginning of all the fighting that took place the last of April and May 1967. I thought I would never see that place again until I found your pictures. I showed them to my son and family and they, too, saw approximately where I was wounded. Thanks again for sharing them with me and glad you made it home.

Conley E. Bailey
603 Old Stage Road
Church Hill, TN 37642
Ph. (423) 357-4194
E-Mail; cbailey@chartertn.net

I was a Navigator on the Marine C-130's coming into Khe Sanh in '67 and '68. First landing was May 8, 1967. We took a body bag out from a shed at the end of the runway. Seems no plane before us wanted to carry the body out, but my Navy instructor at the time was a Master Sgt from WWII and many island invasions. He wouldn't let our Plane Captain refuse to carry the body out. I wasn't on another Khe Sanh trip until Dec 67. We had lots of landings, most of them hot, medevacs, and lots of incoming. January was the same. It seemed we were constantly going into Khe Sanh. We took two 155 Howitzers out and thought we would never get off the ground. We had an after-dark landing to bring in gas masks late in January. Did it all with no lights. Feb 10, 1968 was when 813 was shot down. We lost most of the crew, four passengers and didn't go back in after that. The radio operator was my roommate. We should never have stayed after the Tet of 1968. I always say there were three wars. 1959-1965, 1966-1968 and 1969-1973. I have some pictures somewhere of coming into Khe Sanh from the air.

Russ Tucker

I served as a Medic with the Army 1st Bn., 61st Bde. 5th Mech. Inf. Div. in Khe Sanh just shortly after Tet in 1968 and throughout 1969. I fondly remember the tall elephant grass, the sign someone left behind which I believe stated "Chicago 9,000 Miles." A waterfall, I believe, just entering the Khe Sanh area. The concrete bunker was still there as late

as August 1969.

On February 27, 1969, I remember being in a B-52 AF customized "foxhole" with 38 casualties half of them burned by sapper squads which had overrun our eastern flank, and if it had not been for Snoopy and its awesome firepower, I and those 38 casualties would certainly have been listed along with those brave heroes on the Vietnam Memorial. We were planted on Hill 881, and I remember how scared I felt when we left the last village. Vandergrift and we took that long winding road up the Mountain, into Khe Sanh. The mountains were black with death, and we had orders to shoot anything that moved. I remember the road up the mountain was also strung with destroyed military vehicles everywhere one looked.

The night of February 27, after 6 hours of battle, we suffered 6 KIA's and the enemy 247. The next morning there were bodies everywhere, and we just gathered those closest to the base camp, and piled them into a PC. I was so exhausted that I went to sleep face down in the red dirt, and was awoken just as we were about to depart the area. We had captured what appeared to be three giant mounds of enemy weapons. As we traveled out of the area each mound was ignited into a huge fireball that was observed several miles down the road. That was not the first nor the last of the NVA that we were to experience, but it was the closest to hand-to-hand combat I have ever come to, and I can tell you truthfully that the infantry training I received in basic training would not have meant a hell of a lot! I am probably the luckiest Medic you will ever know. I can count 18 times that I know of where a projectile of some variable type either was within a second or a fraction of an inch from killing me. My other best friends, John E. Lutze, Flint, MI, and Michael H.Flood, Toledo, IL, both Army Medics are listed on the wall. I congratulate all of you on your return home. I am most grateful to God that we made it home safely. Thank you.

Douglas R. "Doc" Haney
HANEY.COM@worldnet.att.net

I was in the 1st MOB outfit that installed the TACAN and Beacon. My home base was in the Philippines, but we spent all our time in the field. I remember when the First Marines came in to start taking over from the Green Beret A Team in September 1966. We Air Force guys stole a case of steaks that the Marine Corps used to send to you guys in the field. Nine of us ate 48 steaks. This is the first time I can thank some Marine for that great meal. While we were pigging out right next to the perimeter, some poor grunt was marching his post, Just outside the wire bitching about the good food we flyboys get. I felt like a bastard then and worse now. If we had owned up to it then, we would have been fragged.

Our 20-man tent was right next to the wire on the side opposite the runway. The really ironic part was we flyboys were in a tent while the Marine air controllers lived in a hooch built by the Seabees right next door. They had a great dog who used to keep the rats out of their hooch but chased them next door to you know who. I guess that was fair justice for the steaks. We tried everything to kill those huge bastards. Nothing worked until I got a care package from Grandma with homemade Pepperoni. The skins would be so taut the rats would fight like hell to get it out of the traps. We would line the dead bodies up for the Marines to inspect the next morning. One night, I heard a scraping noise next to my cot and put the light on a huge rat dragging a C-rats carton across the wood floor. Just like he was going to take it to his house and sit down to a great meal. I bet the bastard had a can opener waiting.

Michael Losquadro

ED NOTE: Mike If you got steaks from Marines, it wasn't theirs to begin with.

Ontos

I was in Khe Sanh from May 1967 until the end of November 1967. I was an Ontos crewman. My unit was 2nd Platoon, "A" Company, 3rd Antitank Battalion, 3rd Marine Division. I came into country October 28, 1966. I was assigned to Charlie Company, which was stationed on "Finger 5" next to Hill 55, in the Danang area. I was assigned to 2nd Platoon which was at An Hoa, where there was a small airstrip that could handle planes up to the size of C-123's. Monsoon season made the roads a mire of deep mud that only Amtrak's could easily traverse.

For those who don't know what an Ontos is (or should I say was, as they are no longer in service),

it's a nine-and-a-half-ton tracked vehicle armed with six 106mm recoilless rifles, four .50 caliber spotter rifles, and a .30 cal (Browning) machine gun. Ideally, a crew of three manned each vehicle; some vehicles only had two crewman. The Ontos has half inch thick armor, that will stop .30 cal. and below. The Ontos has a top (governed) speed of 25 mph. It was highly maneuverable. It was originally designed as a tank killer.

In 'Nam, we use HEPT (High Explosive Plastic Tracer) rounds mostly, and some HEAT (High Explosive Antitank) rounds. When we got the Beehive rounds, they were very effective for clearing out tree lines of enemy snipers. The 106mm Beehive round contained 9500 flechettes. There was a variable fuse on the nose of the round that let you set the detonation from "M.A." (Muzzle Activating), where the fired round would go out 75 meters and then detonate, or the fuse could be set to detonate the round at different distances up to 3300 meters. The M.A. setting was reliable. The other settings were not always as reliable.

We had trouble getting parts for our vehicles, especially the hard, rubber-tired steel "road wheels" that rode on the tracks. Chunks of rubber would break off these road wheels. In monsoon season, we would take 30-weight oil and paint it all over the 106's, .50's, and the .30 cal. to keep them from rusting.

At Delmar in Camp Pendleton, we went through Ontos Crewman School. They told us that the word ONTOS is Greek for "Thing." After humping hills at San Onofre at Pendleton in ITR, (Infantry Training Regiment), I was glad when they pulled a group of us out after the third week of ITR and put us in the Ontos school. It sure beat walking, and you could carry more personal items with you in 'Nam.

The one big drawback is that we tended to draw heavy fire. Fifty-calibers would go through the Ontos easily, and several Ontos were taken out with RPG's. (We lost one Ontos with two crewman in late 1966 [November] to a "wooden shoebox" mine in an area that had been already swept for mines by the daily morning mine sweep. I believe this was Highway 1, "Freedom Road." It's been a long time since I talked about this, so excuse the lapses in memory.) There were five Ontos in a platoon, a platoon commander, a platoon sergeant, a mechanic, and the crewman on the Ontos.

We went to the Bob Hope Christmas Show in Danang in December 1966. In January 1967, we went on a BLT (Battalion Landing Team) with 3/9 (Third Battalion/Ninth Marines) to Camp Hansen in Okinawa via ship. We left Danang Harbor at 2:30am when the Marines on board were sleeping. The next morning, out to sea, 90% of the Marines were seasick. Most had never been on a ship before. The "green" Marines were using the heads, sinks, showers, and any other available receptacles. The sailors were not very happy about this. I'll never forget that first morning breakfast on that ship—"creamed eggs!" (I declined.) To this day, I have never heard of "creamed eggs."

We refurbished our vehicles and equipment in Okinawa and after five weeks, we headed back to Vietnam on another ship. (I believe the first ship was the AKA-106, [Attack Cargo Transport?]) maybe named the USS Cabildo? The ship we took back to 'Nam was an LSD (Landing Ship Dock)? The 3rd Mar. Div. had moved up north to the DMZ area, and the 1st Mar. Div. moved up to the Danang area. Our platoon was then attached to "A" Company, 3rd Antitank Battalion. We were in Camp Carroll for a short time. One vehicle and crew went to another unit, supposedly temporarily, but we never saw them again. Two vehicles and crew went to Gio Linh, and two vehicles and crew, with the platoon commander and platoon sergeant, went to Khe Sanh. I was in Gio Linh.

Gio Linh was 2100 meters from the DMZ. Con Thien was seven miles east of us. At Gio Linh, everything was dug down in holes and bunkers as every night between 11:00am and 1:00am, the VC would drop mortars on our small firebase—average 20-30 a night. They were close enough that you could hear them dropping them in the tubes with the "cadunk" sound, then the whistling as the round came in, and then the explosion of detonation.

One afternoon, we mounted up, and a large entourage of grunts, two tanks, two Dusters with their twin 40mm's, and our two Ontos, left the perimeter of Gio Linh and went out to the fire break to await large helicopters bringing in large wooden towers. The firebreak at this time was 200 meters wide and was bare dirt. (Many years later I found out how this was cleared—Agent Orange.) The firebreak was ultimately supposed to be 800 meters wide, going from Gio Linh to Con Thien, and was to have a series of manned wooden towers along its border. The

idea was to keep the NVA from filtering down from the North through this area. I believe they gave up on that project. That day, when we were all on line sitting in the scorching sun on the bare dirt of the fire break waiting for the choppers with the wooden towers, we were told it was 140 degrees.

We started taking mortar fire from the north. After numerous close rounds to our troops and vehicles, the enemy ceased firing after artillery from Gio Linh fired on their positions. Finally, a large chopper brought in a wooden tower and placed it on the fire-break. At Gio Linh, the Army had four 175mm artillery pieces. They had very long barrels, and were on tracks. These were on the north perimeter. The Marines had five 105mm towed units, set up in the usual large circle-shaped battery position.

One day, we took a couple of incoming enemy rockets. That was odd, as we were only used to the nightly mortar attacks. And then one evening around 6:30pm when I was going to late chow after my two fellow Ontos crewman (Sgt. Mac from Chicago and L/Cpl Reavis from Indiana) returned from chow to relieve me from our position on the south perimeter, I was in the large GP (General Purpose) tent that was dug down into a large three foot deep hole. I was in the process of declining the slop that was being served, figuring I'd go back and eat some "C Rats," when what sounded like a screaming Phantom jet with its afterburners on, went over my head, and exploded out in the minefield and wire on our perimeter. Another Phantom jet went screaming over my head and exploded. I then realized it wasn't a Phantom—it was enemy artillery. I expected them to drop several rounds on us and then stop, but it just kept coming and coming. I had been shot at with small arms, mortared, and been in rocket attacks, but this was the worst. The incoming scream of those rounds was terrifying and something I shall never forget, because you know they are either going to get you, or they are not, and there isn't much you can do to prevent it except pray.

During one lull in between rounds, there were about four of us hunkered down in a corner of that big, wide hole of the mess tent—we heard a Marine calling for help. We looked up, and saw a Marine that was not hit, but obviously suffering from shell concussion. He was in a daze. We told him to get down in the hole with us, but he either couldn't hear us or was just too dazed to understand. We grabbed his hands, and just as we pulled him down into the hole, a round came in, and exploded behind us about fifty feet away, fortunately above ground, and not in the big wide hole we were in. The concussion slammed us down into the corner of the hole and temporarily deafened us for a few minutes. It was like two giant hands coming together on your ears. When rounds hit close, the shrapnel sounded like it was ripping the air. The shelling stopped for a short time. I ran back to my vehicle and fellow crewman. There were craters and shell diameter-sized entry holes in the ground all over. My small bunker and two crewman and Ontos were okay. The only damage suffered to our Ontos was shrapnel cut off the two metal radio antennas, and the ammo can and its belted .30 cal ammo on the machine gun was pierced by a large piece of shrapnel.

I sat on the front of the Ontos that was sitting in a hole dug out by a bulldozer, with the loose dirt pushed up behind. I had the dry heaves as I tried to regain my composure. As a grunt Lt. and Sgt. were checking the lines, the heavy shelling started again. Instead of taking cover in my bunker that was about forty feet away, I opted to take cover underneath my Ontos. I don't know how I got under there wearing my helmet and flak jacket, but I did. (I was a lot slimmer back then.) The grunt Lt. and Sgt. took cover on the ground in the hole at the rear of the Ontos. And the artillery shells kept coming and coming. After awhile, you could just about tell where they were going to land, if they were going to be short or long. They say you never hear the one that gets you. Well, I don't know if you hear it explode, but I heard this one coming. I think my heart stopped for a second, as I stiffened up waiting for the impact, as this round sounded like it was going to be a direct hit on us. It came in screaming, and then their was a "wump" sound, and the ground shook. I held my breath, waiting for the explosion. It didn't explode. The grunt Lt. asked the grunt Sgt. where that round hit. The Sgt told him, "Don't move, I must be sitting on it!"

After another long duration of incoming artillery rounds, it stopped for a few minutes at which time I ran to my bunker, and the two grunt NCOs went back to their positions. We saw that that one incoming round landed in the soft bulldozed-up dirt on our side of the slope, less than ten feet from where we had taken cover. There was a nice round neat hole

where it had cut a path downwards into the loose pile of dirt. If that round had gone off, we probably would have been scattered over the countryside. We later learned that there was an NVA artillery battery (or two) which dropped approximately 2000 rounds on our small firebase in a 10-hour attack. They were dropping point-detonating and delayed fuse shells on us. The first rounds made direct hits on three of the Army's 175mm guns, and the fourth 175mm's powder pit was on fire, taking it out also.

Those extremely brave Marines in that 105mm artillery battery kept firing and were basically out in the open in the waist-high sandbag wall of the large circle containing their guns. One by one, the NVA artillery took them and their guns out. When everybody else was hunkered down, these guys were standing at their guns firing back as fast as they could. Those were some brave guys.

Both of our ammo dumps had been hit and were on fire, with our own ordnance detonating. It was pure hell that night. All our artillery was gone. We had two Ontos, two tanks, two twin 40 dusters, and on 81mm mortar. That was the extent of our heavy weapons. Our wire and large minefield on our perimeter was pretty chewed up with some of the rounds landing there, and detonating out mines. We expected a ground attack during the darkness. All the other firebases were getting hit at the same time, so they could not support us with any artillery fire.

A couple hours after it started, we got a couple of Bird Dog spotter planes coming in from the south but when they got close to us, the NVA were shooting air bursts at them and coming close. After midnight, we got two Phantoms in that dropped their ordnance but when they came into the area, the NVA stopped shooting. When the Phantoms left to rearm, the NVA started on us again. The Phantoms were never able to locate the exact position of the NVA artillery. We had heavy casualties. We did get a medevac chopper in for some of the wounded. Heat tabs that burn with a very low blue flame, were arranged in a large circle to mark the LZ (Landing Zone). Just after the medevac took off, and cleared the LZ with the wounded, the NVA zoned in on the LZ and dropped several rounds on it, but didn't get the medevac.

All night, the artillery continued. It was constant. My Ontos Commander, Sgt. Mac, who was on his second tour, was a tough, lean, black Marine. He told me he had been raised Catholic but wasn't very religious. Sgt. Mac was even praying that night! Just before daylight, the shelling stopped. We came out of our holes. It seemed like almost every square yard of the ground was covered by jagged pieces of metal shrapnel, like leaves on the ground in the fall. Everything was blown up. I was so happy just to be alive. We were at Gio Linh for two months. That morning we left, and went to Camp Carroll.

A short time later, we were informed that our Platoon Commander was killed on Hill 861 while he was in a five man recon team. This was the precursor to the "Hill Battles." Our Platoon Commander was 1st Lt. Phillip Sauer. When I first came into the unit, he was a 2nd Lt. He was a gung ho Marine. He always wanted to personally get into the action. I was told that when he was going to go up Hill 861 to see if he could get the "pigs" (Ontos) up there, they tried to talk him into taking an M-14 or one of our "grease guns'" (.45 cal. submachine gun). He declined and took his beloved Colt .45 auto that he had the armorer tighten up in Okinawa. You know the rest of the story—he covered the escape of the Marines left alive in the five-man team with his .45. I was told that he was cut in half by a .50 or .51 caliber NVA machine gun, and that they recovered half his body eight days later. He was put up for a Navy Cross. His family was from the East Coast.

Anyway, I ended up at Lejeune for a couple of months after getting back to the world, and then got orders for HMX-1, Marine Helicopter Squadron One (Presidential Helicopter) as a Marine Security Guard. I flew with the Vice President (Spiro Agnew) twice. After 17 months in HMX-1 at Quantico and the subunit at Anacostia (U.S Naval station Washington D.C.), I got orders for NSA (National Security Agency) at Marine Barracks, Fort Meade, Marylan where I finished my four years in the USMC, April 28, 1970. The names of some of the guys in my 2nd Platoon, 3rd A.T.'s: Cpl Yates, Snead, Reavis, Sgt. Mac, Bosman (or Bozeman) (Saul Bozeman and another), our mechanic Chapin, Cpl Wright, Peterson, Rupert from California, Pucci from New York, and Ray Updyke from Pennsylvania.

R. Scott Berry—SEMPER FI

I was one of the first dozen or so to arrive at Las Pulgas that day and be notified that we were forming a new unit to be designated 1/26, 5th Mar Div—the

old Iwo Jima Regiment. Gee, I thought we were going to form the 3rd MP Battalion! You mean we're going to be grunts? The humping never stopped. BLT 1/26 on the Iwo Jima, Thomason and Vancover. Jungle training in the Philippines.

No one who was there will ever forget that morning. A "now hear this" called us on deck in full 782 gear. We stood silently at attention as our BLT steamed slowly by on a sea flat as glass. Only the sound of utilities and colors rustling in the light breeze. Towering over us was Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima. Everyone understood.

And life would never be the same again.

Here's to my brothers from D 1/26 and to 3rd squad third platoon. For Dexter, Bell, Anderson, West, Backburg, Miller KIA. To Stoddard's and Lenor 3/5 KIA. To Sgt Smith, Sgt Hall, Cpl Gunzell, Doc Curtis, Lawson, Chance, Starnes, Ebson, Ponce, Lynn, Taylor, Wyatt, Godfrey, Bell, Baxter, Bieleski, "Lurch" Hill, Doc Donady, Doc Evans. And to my friend Cpl Harold V. Armour C 1/26, we left that old high school and our friends to finish growing up in Vietnam. I love you all.

SEMPER FI.
Gregg Arthur /Peabody
2123421@msn.com

I took part in Lam Son 719 as a loadmaster on C-130's. Not a pretty sight. Many of the Viet regulars wanted to be run over by vehicles to avoid being ferried by Hueys into the battle to cut the trail. We worked long and hard to get the units in place. I think we lost 78 hueys on the first day. Kinda made me glad I was in the Air Force. We saw action all over the country but it was pretty tense in the north and in Cambodia. Thanks for the opportunity to say something.

Gary W. Finch
Lam Son 179

Valentine's Ridge

By Ray (DOC) Felle

This is my account of the battle on Valentine's Ridge, which started on 14Feb68 and continued to 15Feb68. In this report there has been input from the Battalion Surgeon, first platoon commander, first and second platoon members, S-3 reports and family of the KIA.

We left Ca Lu on 13Feb68 for what was soon to be known as Valentine's Ridge. This is a small 200-meter hill approximately one mile west of Ca Lu combat base and 8 miles east of Khe Sanh combat base. The coordinate is XD990445 to XD978455 running North and South terminating at the Quang Tri River. At 1600 on 14Feb68 all three platoons and the command group started up the side of this hill with first platoon on the southern flank (nearest the river). Shortly after leaving a groomed trail second and third platoon received 50 cal. machine gun, automatic weapons and mortar fire. We received rocket, mortar and small arms fire, wounding several men. This was an NVA blocking force set in place to prevent tanks and supplies traveling up Rt. 9 to the besieged Khe Sanh. At this time we were isolated from part of our platoon (first) and could not see second or third. Our actions involved calling in fighter jets, destroying a rocket launching position, caring for the wounded, and securing our area. Contact was lost with the command group early in the battle. They had taken a direct hit killing or mortally wounding our CO, XO and Chief Corpsman, Capt. Ward, Lt. Reese and HM2 Goss. Under the leadership of our platoon commander, Lt. John Holladay, we moved off the hill and to a secure location on Rt. 9, waiting for reinforcements and tending to the wounded. At 0200 on 15Feb68, first platoon moved down Rt. 9 towards Ca Lu collecting men separated from second and third platoons and meeting up with India company. What was left of first platoon made it back to Ca Lu at 0300 hours. At daybreak, I took 8mm pictures of fighter jets dropping high explosives and napalm on Valentine's Ridge.

India and Kilo companies moved off the ridge by the end of that day with a loss of 11 Marines and many wounded. This is part of the story about that day and each has his own. I wanted to tie together all that lost their life and to say that I'm sorry for them and their families. The names below are the ones that I have researched and believe to be correct.

Capt. Alexander Ward
2nd Lt. William Reese
HM2 Larry Goss]
PFC Fredrick Bungartz
CPL Lowell Combs
CPL Dennis Flemming
LCPL Mark James
PFC Melvin Jones
PFC Barry Rigsby
LCPL Jeffrey Wentzell
CPL David Schneider

A Payment at The Wall for the Debt Owed

Frequently through the tears and always through a veil of tears, I've thought of those brave men who set aside their life so that others might have an opportunity to know freedom and peace. In seeing my own children being born grow and now having my grandchildren, I often think of the children who never came to be because so many young men bled out their lives before their time. Their children would be the same ages as my children, but they are not present. I see kids in a classroom or in a children's choir or playing soccer or going to the prom, and I can see the ones who are not there, as if they too shared the desks and the uniforms and laughter and joy of life. I thought of them again when my sons took wives for themselves and there, too "they" were among the missing in the rehearsal dinners and the beautiful wedding parties.

Then came the grandchildren (and I thought children were a blessing). To see youth again, what a joy. My wife's eyes are warm and tender and encouraging. Is she trying to see in there, into that secret place that even I don't know? Dear God, how many wonderful ladies waited and had no one to come home to them and take up where they left off? Do they now sit at tables alone and imagine what it would be like to share with their lover the excitement of the kids and birthdays, the new house, and anniversaries and...? How big a hole can an empty heart support, anyhow?

Of course, there are Moms and Dads whose "kids" lie in graves marked with military information—all too neat and all too uniform and all too final and all too early. Over the years, my tears have fallen freely but only on the inside. For two years now (after 31 years had passed), I have started to find enough courage to allow those tears to flow on the outside where they can be seen. I even have been brave enough to look at my official documents and records and, for the first time, allow others to see that I was awarded the Bronze Star for valor.

I never have felt like a hero, then or now. Why is this courage so needed? It's not because I still think I'm bulletproof; my Purple Heart and my limp testify that I'm not. I think maybe it's because we were one, even though we were in different branches, doing different jobs, in different parts of the land and in different years, and yet we were one. The pain comes from having such a huge piece of our innocence ripped away, and the intense pride is from the same wound, causing us to stand tall enough to easily see over the tallest trees and look deep into our collective soul.

My wife surprised me last Christmas with a set of U.S. Marine Corps Dress Blues. I sat on the floor and cried quietly, not wanting to spoil the festive time for all the family. This is the first set of "Blues" I have ever had. I'm sure she cannot comprehend how great a treasure she placed in my hands that day. I've had them tailored, and the bright, colored chevrons put on, and purchased my medals, and tried it on a piece at a time. What an honor to have the right to wear this uniform. I feel unworthy, it mystically transports me to 1775, Tun Tavern, PA, when the Marine Corps was born. It joins me with the newly graduated recruit who woke up this morning to hear his drill instructor address him for the very first time as "Marine."

The entire uniform is striking and carries a great dignity. But, it's that long, blood-red stripe on the trousers that starts at the waistline and runs all the way down that grabs my heart and makes me feel like it has been jerked out all the way down to my socks. This too, is a unique honor, knowing that this represents your blood and mine mingled together with every Marine's blood-shed in violence while searching for peace.

Today, I arrived at The Wall. Alone. My first visit. I think it was good to come alone this time. My wife really wanted to come along but couldn't, and, my oldest son and youngest also couldn't come. I think this was in a much greater plan than ours. This is a day filled with simultaneous joy and pain, pride and grief. I can only think of 10 of the names I want to look up. I forgot my list and left it lying at home, perhaps because I was a little too anxious about coming here. There are clear images of friends who are gone (since 1966 and 67) as well as merciful brain fog that allows me not to have to think. Much of my time has been spent biting my lip and hoping that I wouldn't completely dissolve with my tears and painful labored breathing.

I'm thankful for the goodhearted volunteers who try to help where there is no help, making the hurt a little less painful with a touch or a smile or a kind word, or, sometimes a tear of their own. Perhaps,

they have their own ghost to deal with. How brave of them and kind. I've gone away and came back four times today. Spoken with other "blood brothers" and was doing pretty well until I saw a pretty white vase stuffed full of beautiful American flags and colorful roses with neat writing on the side that said, "Robert F. Coady, Grandpa, from Scotty, 9 years, and Alex 7 years." I never new him, but I found his name on panel 34W Line 31. Wow! Is this going to start all over again, seeing those kids with no grandfather to know or touch or laugh with or be proud of them? How extraordinarily close we all came to occupying an assigned place on the wall with them. Knowing this makes each simple joy in life even more sweet and a greater treasure.

The terrible truth is, it will never end. It is part of the price. Each time a person in uniform gives up his or her life, it's like a huge down payment with regular installments to be paid from now on in missed memories at holidays, birthdays and special occasions and, just regular days when it would have been fun to have them present to enjoy living with. Payments are made by those who knew them and loved them and by those who should have had the opportunity to.

With a heart full of gratitude and thankfulness for giving up your lives, I salute you, all my fallen brothers and sisters. You could never know how desperately we miss you and how much we long to just spend another hour with you, to touch you again at least for a moment, except we would never want to let go. Thank you for the huge down payment you made. I just stopped today to make another installment payment because I want to, even though it is costly. I'll come back when I get another payment together. Oh yes, our men and women in uniform are doing a great job. I've been to see them, you'd be proud. God bless you, weary warriors: at ease, rest in peace. WE REMEMBER!

Ira Johnson
M CO 3/9 2ND PLT

I have many memories of fear, confusion, and the bravery of young, dedicated friends...

Crouched in a ditch by the revetments, briefing a medevac mission, watching our '46 take holes from small arms; wondering if it will be safe to fly... Running like hell towards the command bunker entrance... dodging rounds from snipers... Getting grateful looks and thumbs-up from troops "in the back" after a rescue or a re-supply... Watching our crew help to load body bags with dead Marines "in the back"... waiting for the mortars to hit the matting, praying...a lot. Crying often and without embarrassment...

In the cockpit
Michael R. Mullen
Orange County, CA

ED NOTE: There it is.

I wanted to comment on a letter you printed from Robin Morgan about the KC-130 that crashed at Khe Sanh on Feb 10, 1968. He had a few small errors in his memory of the incident. I am a member of your Association and was assigned to VMGR 152 in 1968 as an aerial navigator and was at Danang when the news came in that our plane had been shot down at Khe Sanh. From my archives I have recovered the following information: The plane tail number was BH813, not QV897. As a matter of fact, I flew on 897 a year later at Cherry Point after I returned. The pilot, CWO Henry Wildfang, the co-pilot, and navigator survived. The co-pilot was Major B. White, and the navigator was Cpl. Stan Rank. I saw Stan with his ears burned off towards the end of 1968 in Okinawa when he returned on a flight from El Toro. The radio operator, LCpl. David Devik, was killed in the crash. Also the first mechanic, LCpl. Jerry Ferren, was killed. There were also several passengers that did not make it, but I failed to record their names.

Henry Wildfang is living in Oklahoma now and very active with the Marine Corps Air Transport Association of which I am also a member. He is one hell of a guy. My first flight ever on a C-130 was with him as the plane commander. I flew with him often, both before the shootdown and after. A side note: 813 was one of 3 C-130's we lost in Vietnam. The first was lost on Feb. 1, 1966—it disappeared and was believed shot down over Hainan Island, then 813, and then 814 was lost in a mid-air collision near Phu Bai on May 18, 1969 when it went down with 3 F-4's during a mid-air refueling mission. I lost several friends on that one too. From a book called *The End of the Line* by Robert Prisor in 1982,

I found that General Westmoreland banned C-130's from landing at Khe Sanh on Feb. 13, 1968. On February 17 and 18 in poor weather, eighteen C-130's parachuted 279 tons of supplies into the base. NVA artillery knocked out the ground control radar system on Feb. 19 and thus no deliveries were made that day.

Amazingly, I vividly recalled making an attempt to land at Khe Sanh in rotten weather sometime in February after 813 was shot down. We were all scared shitless because no C-130 had gone in since that day. We were ordered to make an attempted landing on the base, and were told that the radar had been knocked out. We got to the base, made two approaches with instruments in thick fog and got to 1/4 mile and still had zero visibility, so we had to turn back. The date was Feb. 19th. No other C-130 landing was ever attempted at Khe Sanh by the Marine Corps. To this day, I cannot remember what it was that we were carrying into the base that was so important that they would have risked it under those conditions. They could have landed a C-130 the day before when the radar was working had they wanted to, but they didn't. I have a sense that we were carrying bladders of AVGAS, but I am not certain. My pilots on that flight were Major Aschenbeck and Major Clayson, and it was the last flight of the day as we had made 10 take-offs and landings that day from Da Nang. Two to Dong Ha, two to Phu Bai and one to Chu Lai. It was getting dark by the time we got to Khe Sanh.

By the way, if that is a Marine C-130 propeller they have exhibited at Khe Sanh, it will have 4 blades and be silver with white and red wing tips.

Semper Fi,
Don Diamond

Closure After 33 Years

Many of us may believe that we are put on this earth by our Creator for a purpose. ALL of us are aware of the impact Ray Stubbe has had on our lives because of his spiritual guidance at Khe Sanh and in establishing The Khe Sanh Veterans Association. The Creator has given us a special human being in Ray. Because of his efforts and the dedication of those who have toiled to make our association what it is; because of the current technology that allows us to communicate via The Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page (a labor of love and a first class operation), we are able to bring understanding, fellowship, and closure to each other as needed. But greater yet, we are able to help the friends and relatives of our brothers better understand our Khe Sanh experience and, when appropriate, bring understanding and closure to their lives as well. I recently had the opportunity to communicate, via the internet and our home page, with relatives of a Marine KIA at Khe Sanh 33 years ago.

While checking the home page message board, I found the following posting dated 10 Jan 01:

> "I would be interested in finding more about 'the ghost patrol.' My father was very close to his cousin, Randy Stuck, who was KIA on February 25, 1968. Our family would appreciate any information.
>
> Thank you and God Bless, Rose."

As you can imagine, several responses were sent to Rose by the likes of Dan Burton, Sandra Hill, John Kaheny, Tom Laderoute, Larry McCartney and myself. Most encouraged her to find a copy of *The Final Formation* in that it may have some information. As it turned out, I was the only one that had the "real story."

My response dated 16 Jan 01:

> "Rose– I was Randy's platoon commander at the time of his death. The circumstances surrounding his death are as stated by others. During the sometimes sporadic and sometimes intense incoming artillery, you never knew for sure where the rounds would land. As I recall, this was such a day when we got barrages of incoming, and then nothing for a while. As Randy was walking in the trench line with his helmet and flack jacket on, a round landed quite close to him. Since our trenches were not too deep at the time, he was hit about chest high and probably killed instantly. I'm sure he never heard the round until it was too late. Had he lay down in the trench, he would have survived but as I said, the rounds often came out of nowhere and this was the case. I last saw him moments before his death. Although I did not witness the removal of his body, I do recall he was serving 'bad time' and was talking to Rev. Ray Stubbe about it. His infraction causing the bad time

happened before I took over the platoon and I never knew what the cause was. I do remember his being upset about having to stay in RVN longer and that, at least, he could be sent to the rear to finish his time. He was real upset about that. However, he was liked by the other men and got along well with them. He was also a good Marine and not afraid of combat. There isn't much more to say. If interested, I have a photo of Randy and some of his friends taken in January 1968. Would be happy to have a print made and send it to you. We lost too many young men. My condolences albeit 33 years later."

In a response dated 17 Jan 01, Rose emails:

"I cannot express how grateful I am for your reply. I am very interested in the picture you have of Randy. I would be more than happy to pay for any of the expense for this too. Thank you for clearing up our assumption that Randy was KIA on the ghost patrol. Since I began to investigate the circumstances concerning his death, we were starting to draw the conclusion that the ghost patrol was a different incident. I never met my cousin Randy—he died about 6 months before I was born. But he was close to my dad and so Randy is special to me. My Dad has often wanted to try and contact Rev. Ray Stubbe, but I think he has been reluctant to have someone go back to those memories in Vietnam. This is why I am so grateful to you for sharing your information. Thank you again. I look forward to hearing from you. Sincerely, Margie Rose."

In a related email dated 17 Jan 01, Randy's cousin and Margie Rose's father sends:

"I am writing after reading your reply to 'Rose' on the Khe Sanh message board. Rose is my daughter, Margie, who through her caring about her Dad, began an inquiry about Randy Stuck's death in Vietnam. Margie was born the year Randy was killed, and she only has the stories of the family to know about him and some of the tears of her Dad who loved Randy as a brother, but we were really first cousins. Randy and I were both simple country kids raised in a small town of 1,000 people in Southern Indiana. The town is named Farmersburg. Randy's people still live there, although his mother and now father have passed away.

"I deeply appreciate, and in no small way, your response to Rose's inquiry in this matter. I am sure it is not and has not been an easy thing to respond to such inquiries. God Bless you.

"In March of 1968, approximately two weeks after Randy's death, our family related details of his death, which would have indicated that he was the point man for what we now know is B Company. It was not known that he was at the north perimeter. I have been under the impression that his company had been on patrol under Lt. Don Jacques.

"A major had delivered the news to my family and may have either received some erroneous information or either the family, due to shock,



Left to Right: Eardly, Tim Duyer, George Tate, Tom Sweeney KIA Feb 26, Randy Stuck (holding stick) KIA Feb 26, Steve Shannon KIA Mar 22, Doc Croslin (sitting on helmet with face covered)

may have assumed a difference. At this time a news story had played on the news and it was of the account of what we now know was Don Jacques 'Ghost Patrol.' Regardless, your account does make a difference. A heartfelt thank you."

(The next section of the email explained Randy's bad time. I do not feel it necessary to share the details in this writing.) Randy had two scholarships awaiting him when he got out of the service (basketball).

"You have given me peace of mind, that he was a good Marine and did his duty in combat. I can tell you Randy was not a coward and as a 'kid' would stand up to face any bully. I appreciate your offer to send photos of Randy and his friends to my daughter. When they arrive we are going to forward them to Randy's sister who lives in Farmersburg. She and her brothers will be touched, especially coming from you, Nick."

"On a final note, I would like to tell you that Randy's Marine escort and honor guard detail were beautiful and something that simple people from a small town will never forget. I recall the day as a young beat policeman in Indiana. The sun was shining as the whole town walked to the cemetery, and those Marines in green stood tall as Private Ransom Lee Stuck was laid to rest. God Bless you. Terry Stuck, Ocala, FL."

In an email dated 21 Jan 01 and posted on the KSV Home page:

"Thank you again to all the kind folks that have helped our search. Our family now knows that my cousin, Randy Stuck, was not a part of the ghost patrol. This is what we were told 33 years ago and have always believed. The posting by Nick Romanetz is what really put all the pieces together for us. Thank you Nick. I have been able to locate two books, *The Final Formation* and another book by Eric Hammel which my Dad was unaware of. This Friday, the 26th, marks the 33rd anniversary of Randy's passing. That day will be a final conclusion to our search. We can now put this to rest. Thank you and God Bless. Margie Rose"

The following are excerpts from an email sent to my home by Randy's cousin Terry Stuck. The posting is dated 25 Jan 01:

"Glad to hear from you. Thanks for the response to my daughter and myself. I have called Randy's sister in Indiana and told her of the response you made. She was really deeply touched Nick. She is now 50 and married to a minister. She is just recuperating from a suspect lung surgery. This news came just at the right time to lift her spirits.

"Randy was given an open casket funeral. He was reconstructed by an absolute artist. Marines presented him in dress blues which was very touching. I know of the injuries he sustained. However, as I would say again he was reconstructed and presented almost as if he was merely asleep. Amazing.

"Hard for me to now believe that he would be almost 54. I noted that your birthday had just occurred and when this was all going on you were only 23 as a 1st Lt. Now at 56, and a lifetime on the police force, which I retired from after 32 years, I realize what a terrible responsibility both he and you had, for being such kids. I guess it took my retirement to help me get some of the answers I wanted, and of course a loving daughter. If there is anything I can ever do for you, please do not hesitate to contact me. You're a special person to my family and me. God Bless You."

Terry Stuck and his daughter, Margie, received pictures of Randy and other members of 2nd Plt C CO 1/26 on February 5th. A copy of that photo and identification of the men are included with this article. The photo was taken in our old sector behind the ARVN lines, near the ammo dump. We were staging to move to our new position north of the runway in the Blue Sector. On about 14 February, I received a card from Margie Rose

"Thank you for the picture, your time and your memories. Your kindness has been a true blessing to my family. I know that Randy's sister and brothers are grateful, as well. As I had mentioned earlier, Randy and my dad were like brothers. I believe now that there is peace now for my dad concerning cousin Randy."

As a postscript to this story, I received an email at home from Margie, Posted 15 Feb 01. It brought to closure a story within a story. Margie stated that her dad was in Vietnam with the Air Force as an MP about four years prior to Randy's service. Margie writes: "My dad was a person who can express his feelings, but he has chosen not to discuss Vietnam with me... Our search about Randy and hearing from you and receiving the picture has been a positive ground to speak about Randy and Vietnam between my dad and I."

My closing thoughts on this event go back to Ray, our association and web page. Where would the Stuck family and other people be without what Ray and many of you are responsible for? I felt honored to share information with Randy's family. Fortunately, after 33 years we had an opportunity to share the truth and bring closure for family members because of the tireless work and dedication of a few. To all of you, this is what we are about. Semper Fi...

Nick Romanetz
C CO 1/26 2ND PLT

The US Army Quartermaster Air Delivery Units and the Defense of Khe Sanh

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In 1993 a monument was dedicated in Arlington National Cemetery to the Marines who fought at Khe Sanh, arguably the longest and most bitterly contested battle of the Vietnam War. This formally acknowledged the enduring relationship between Khe Sanh and the Marine Corps. However, it was not only Marines who faced the North Vietnamese Army. The defense of Khe Sanh was very much both a joint and combined effort by various American and South Vietnamese forces.

The combination of air support and firepower provided the key to the defense of Khe Sanh. Before the siege was over, aircraft of the U.S. Air Force, Navy, and Marines, as well as planes of the South Vietnamese Air Force dropped over 100,000 tons of bombs. To the forces on the ground, however, air support meant more than the massive numbers of B-52 and tactical bomber sorties. Aerial supply was crucial to the defense of Khe Sanh. This article describes how U.S. Army Quartermaster Air Delivery (AD) units played a vital role in the defense of the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

The mission of the AD units was to provide parachute packing, storage, and rigging of supplies for drop by aircraft of all services as well as assisting in loading and ejecting of these supplies. In 1955 personnel of the 109th QM participated in the development of a new air delivery technique. This low-altitude parachute extraction system (LAPES) required cargo planes to fly a few feet above ground level. A parachute was released, pulling the palletized cargo out of the aircraft and onto the drop zone. A related system was the ground proximity extraction system (GPES) in which the cargo was yanked from the aircraft by a hook, which snagged a cable traversing the runway.

In 1965 General William C. Westmoreland, the commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam requested the deployment of an air delivery unit. In May 1965, 64 men were assigned from the 109th QM (Air Delivery) at Ft. Lee Virginia to form the 383rd QM Detachment. The 383rd was sent to South Vietnam and the 109th QM was sent to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, under the operational control of the 101st Airborne Division. LAPES/GPES training continued.

In June 1966 the 109th QM received overseas movement orders. On July 23, the unit embarked onboard the USNS General John N. Pope at Tacoma, Washington. The main body arrived at Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam, on August 12 1966. By November 7 the 383rd moved from Saigon to Cam Ranh Bay and was attached to the 109th. The 623rd QM Company with resources to repair air delivery items also shared the 109th QM Company facilities. The establishment of the 109th's operational area was complete; General Westmoreland now had the air delivery assets in place that he requested the previous year.

* * *

The summer and fall of 1966 saw the buildup of large North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units in the area along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). In response, General Westmoreland ordered Marine units northward to meet this threat. Positions were established just south of the DMZ to act as blocking forces to impede NVA infiltration. Khe Sanh was the western anchor of this defensive line.

General Westmoreland stated, "There is no more important airfield in Vietnam from a tactical standpoint than Khe Sanh." Navy Seabees were ordered to undertake a crash program to upgrade the base's airstrip. Still, Khe Sanh was proving difficult to resupply. During December and January there were only six days when the weather was good enough for aerial re-supply. Rations and fuel occasionally were reduced to less than one day's needs. Rain made road travel almost impossible. April 1967 saw bitter fighting around Khe Sanh between the Marines and NVA forces, illustrating the seriousness with which both sides viewed the area.

In the second half of 1967, American Intelligence learned that large numbers of NVA were deploying into the A Shau Valley and the area around Khe Sanh. To help meet this threat, a heavy drop platoon composed of men from both the 109th and 383rd AD units stationed in Danang men undertook airdrops to supply the Navy Seabees at Khe Sanh with materials to rebuild the airstrip.

To meet the threat in the A Shau area an offensive into the valley was planned for early 1968. The plan called for the 1st Calvary division to be supplied by airdrops for the first three days of the offensive. This operation would require seven hundred short tons a day of air delivered supplies. To accomplish this more riggers were needed. In December 1967 the 1st Logistical Command ordered the 383rd QM Detachment to Bien Hoa to establish another separate Air Delivery Unit.

Since the 383rd was but a single platoon, it was augmented with a platoon of riggers from the 549th QM Company (Air Supply) in Japan, a platoon of riggers from the 173rd Airborne, and another platoon from the 101st Airborne. An additional platoon of 101st airborne riggers joined the 109th to replace the 383rd platoon of men lost during their move to Bien Hoa.

General Westmoreland estimated the forces size around Khe Sanh at between fifteen and twenty thousand men. This buildup caused the U.S. command to conclude that reinforcing Khe Sanh was the only feasible alternative to abandoning it. Westmoreland ruled out abandonment because a presence at Khe Sanh blocked the ability of the North Vietnamese to circumvent the DMZ barrier and bring the war into the populated coastal plain.

In fact, General Westmoreland wanted to fight the North Vietnamese. The area around Khe Sanh was relatively unpopulated by civilians. This would allow unrestricted use of U.S. firepower and further the U.S. strategy of attrition by killing large numbers of enemy soldiers. By January the allied force at Khe Sanh totaled about 6,000 men.

Before the offensive into A Shau Valley could be implemented, the siege of Khe Sanh and the 1968 Tet Offensive began. The large number of riggers accumulated for the A Shau offensive soon became fully engaged supplying Khe Sanh and other isolated outposts. Consequently, the offensive into the A Shau Valley had to be delayed until April of 1968, after the end of the siege at Khe Sanh.

On January 21 1968, the NVA began their attack of Khe Sanh. At approximately 0530 hours that morning Communist gunners scored a hit on the main ammunition dump. Ninety-eight percent of the dump's mentions (1,500 tons) were destroyed in the ensuing explosions. This caused an immediate request for emergency air supply. Available U.S. aircraft included C-130's plus smaller C-123's and C-7A's. The C-130's were the logical choice to quickly replenish ammunition stocks. However, the fact that shrapnel from the ammunition dump explosion covered half the runway precluded their use. C-123's delivered 130 tons of supplies in the next 36 hours, even flying and unloading at night by the light of Marine artillery flares. By January 23 the runway was cleared of debris, permitting the return of the C-130's.

* * *

Through February 10, gunfire or shrapnel hit seven Air Force C-130's. Air Force commanders felt these airplanes, at $2.5 million each, were too valuable to risk unnecessarily. C-123's and C-7A's were used instead, but proved unable to deliver a sufficient volume of supplies. Enemy gunners and bad weather simply would not permit a sufficient number of landings of these aircraft. In order to survive, the Marines would have to be supplied in the same manner as the French at Dien Bien Phu by parachute. Initially, bulk cargo such as ammunition, rations, and fuel was delivered using the container delivery system. A C-130 could transport 14 to 16 of these loads. At a height of 600 feet over the drop zone the restraints holding the loads were cut. The pilot raised the nose of the plane and applied power to the engines. The cargo moved rearward on floor rollers

and then out of the plane. A large cargo parachute carried the one-ton bundle to the ground. Riggers often flew with the cargo planes to ensure proper delivery. Several 109th personnel landed at Khe Sanh in order to retrieve parachutes for future use.

The 109th was rigging supplies at Danang and Cam Ranh Bay. The 383rd and its attached platoons were rigging supplies at Bien Hoa. Cam Ranch Bay was the safest of these locations, as Danang and Bien Hoa were frequently under rocket or mortar attacks. Riggers often worked during the night, using floodlights in order to rig loads for aerial delivery. The 383rd rigged CDS (Container Delivery System) while the 109th rigged both CDS and extraction systems (LAPES and GPES). The riggers of the 109th QM geared up to meet the challenge posed by events at Khe Sanh. Initially, riggers at Cam Ranh Bay worked three days and two nights continuously without rest. This was followed by shifts consisting of 24 hours on duty followed by a six hours rest break. Similar schedules were followed by the 383rd.

These loads were not dropped within the main base perimeter. To do so would necessitate the complete closing of the airstrip during drops. The area chosen for the drop zone (DZ) was a small area beyond the end of the runway. Supplies were parachuted into this DZ with good accuracy. Still, some drops missed the DZ and drifted into enemy territory. These loads were destroyed by air strikes or Marine artillery to prevent their utilization by the enemy.

The constant enemy shelling forced the Marines to dig underground for protection. To further this move, the Marines requested an emergency supply of large timbers for bunker construction. Because of the size and handling difficulties involved, low level extraction was chosen over airland or container delivery.

On February 16 a C-130 loaded with timbers flew down the long axis of the Khe Sanh runway. The pilot maintained airspeed of 130 knots at an altitude of five feet. A parachute, constrained to a 48" diameter, was attached to the load and projected out the rear of the cargo door. Upon reaching a precisely calculated point, a crewmember fired a device that allowed the parachute to open to a diameter of 28 feet. This sudden force broke the restraints attaching the timber load to the floor of the aircraft. The plane continued, essentially flying out from underneath the palletized timbers, which coasted to a stop close to the proposed bunker construction sites. This was the first of 52 LAPES missions as perfected by the 109th QM. Larger scale use of LAPES was not possible due to the lack of sufficient LAPES components as well as concern over damage to the runway by the heavy LAPES pallets. Logistics specialists then turned to the ground proximity extraction system.

* * *

On March 30 a C-130 began rolling down the runway at Khe Sanh. Attached to the cargo pallet was a boom with a hook at the free end. The rear cargo door was open. The airplane rolled across the arresting cable, which traversed the runway and was moored to the ground at each end. The cable rose, engaged the hook, and yanked the cargo out of the plane. The pilot applied power and took off. In all, 15 loads of cargo, mostly construction materials, were delivered to Khe Sanh using the GPES.

* * *

American logistics personnel showed impressive ingenuity and versatility in accomplishing the airlift to Khe Sanh. The combination of airland, container drop, parachute and ground extraction delivery techniques meant the garrison could hold out indefinitely. Large-scale Communist infantry movements were constantly disrupted by allied air and artillery firepower.

During the period from January 21 until April 8, 1968, Air Force C-130's made 273 landings at Khe Sanh, 496 container drops, 52 LAPES and 15 GPES deliveries. These accounted for over 90 percent of the 12,430 tons of supplies delivered by the Air Force. Over 8,000 tons of the total amount were delivered by parachuting, as early as March 15 the number of supply drops into Khe Sanh exceeded the total for all of Vietnam up to that time.

On April 1, Army airmobile units working in concert with Marine infantry and engineers began Operation PEGASUS to reestablish the overland supply link to Khe Sanh. This force linked up with the base on April 6. The Marine logistics support area was allowed to deteriorate. By July 1968 the base has dismantled and abandoned.

Army riggers continued supporting U.S. military operations in Vietnam. The 109th supplied the Cambodia invasion and also rigged the extraction of captured enemy supplies and weapons. The 109th

QM rigged 350 tons of fuel, rations, and ammunition for the 1971 invasion of Laos. The 549th Quartermaster Company, by now in Okinawa, sent 76 men TDY (Temporary Duty) to Vietnam to aid in dropping 4,853 tons of supplies in 369 sorties into An Loc during the 1972 Easter Offensive. Like Khe Sanh before it, the defenders at An Loc held their ground. The US Army riggers pioneered the use of fuel air explosives by rigging 55 gallons drums of aviation fuel onto skids of which were then loaded onto C-130's. Each of the 16 skids consisted of two barrels of aviation gasoline (AVGAS) and two barrels of jet fuel (JP4) The skids would free fall with smoke grenades attached to assured they would ignite upon ground impacted. In terms of destructive power, these drops compared to napalm drops but at one-tenth the expense. The 109th and 383rd both rigged the famous 15,000-pound "Daisy Cutter" bomb used to clear helicopter landing zones.

In general, the Army favored delivery by helicopter over delivery by parachute. But Khe Sanh was a special case. The advent of cheap surface-to-air missiles meant the situation would not repeat itself. Before 1968 the Communists had never concentrated their forces to the degree they did at Khe Sanh. The base garrisoned a large number of U.S. personnel. The siege lasted eleven weeks. It would have been impossible to re-supply the base solely by using slow-moving helicopters. Once encircled by the North Vietnamese, there was nothing the Marines could do except dig in and fight. Certainly there was no quick way out: the overland supply route was cut again in mid-1967.

Supply levels at Khe Sanh are better described as adequate for survival rather than abundant. The Marines sometimes went weeks without hot meals. Rations were frequently limited to two meals per man per day; some Marines ate one meal per day for several days at a time. Artillery firing patterns were also affected. Initially, the Marines tried to prevent NVA forces from getting too close to the base. Overwhelming volumes of artillery could have blocked them. It was not possible to air deliver this volume of artillery shells. Consequently, the enemy was allowed to move in close to the base in order to provide more concentrated targets for the shells available to Marine artillerymen.

It would not have been possible to evacuate the American garrison overland. According to General Philip B. Davidson, Jr., Westmoreland's intelligence chief, a single reinforced Marine regiment cannot fight its way on foot through two or three

NVA divisions when the latter have the initiative, superior numbers, and every terrain advantage. Emergency evacuation by air would have resulted in a sacrifice of half the garrison. It was the flexibility, technical expertise, and untiring efforts of aircrews and logistics personnel such as the Army air delivery units that enabled the Marines to successfully resist the Communists' best efforts: the ongoing attacks against the Khe Sanh Combat Base during the Tet Offensive of 1968.

As the defense of Khe Sanh was a joint effort, so too is the writing of this article. Ray Anderson, who served with the 109th Quartermaster Company in Vietnam, provided much of the research upon which this article is based. Peter Brush was with a Marine heavy mortar battery on the ground at Khe Sanh during the siege. Versions of this article previously appeared in Army and Vietnam magazines.

Vietnam Journal

By Toby Rushforth

30 October 1967, at 2145:

Took off at 1215. John Egger was lead (and I was no. 2 in the flight.) We started NW of Con Thien (just south of the DMZ.) I had a photographer with me. We were looking for NVA field artillery (FA) pieces that have been firing at the Marines at Con Thien, Gio Linh and Dong Ha. Weather was from 200′ to 2000′ ceiling. Just as we arrived in the area where the NVA FA seemed to have been shooting from... Bam! Bam! "F--k me!" Not again, and really close on the first volley? (Anti-aircraft guns, AAA, firing at John and me.) We got out of there. The weather was too bad. We couldn't have worked fighters or artillery in that weather anyway.

We went over to Mui Lai Point on the NVN Coast;—about 12 miles North of the DMZ where the weather was better and put in two flights of fighters on NVN field artillery positions, no AAA. Ahh, there's another good "spot" (target) that looks like an FA position. Chain 149, a flight of A-4s, was on station, John marked with smoke rockets... "perfect hit 'one' "(first A-4). "Two is in" (second A-4 beginning his attack) "Here it comes." (37mm AAA

tracers and airbursts fired at John, the A-4s and I.) So many rounds were fired that it looked like sheets of red rain coming up at us. Airbursts formed an extensive white cloud well above us. "Shit, there they are in the tree line, take 100 (meters) right #2." Bluey! Just a tad right, man are they hosing us down! The tree lines are clouded from the smoke of the many 37mms firing at us. None of us hit! A-4s or us. A-4s made two more passes and got a bunch of them, great work. Coveys 64 and 67 took over for us. We're out of gas and have to head back to Danang.

* * *

3 November 1967 2120:

John Egger was shot down this afternoon off Mui Lai Point. The plane exploded on impact with the water. He never had a chance. Lt. Col. Hall was up with him and saw it all. John was on a rocket-marking run on an AAA site. He received heavy automatic weapons fire from a village we've been avoiding (trying to avoid killing innocent civilians.) Lt. Col. Hall shouted three times, "63 you're on fire pull off!" John finally answered, "No I'm not, I can't see it." The radios were then quiet for a short time as John turned his aircraft to head out to sea and survey whatever damage Lt. Col. Hall was talking about. Lt. Col. Hall explained that at that time, John was trailing smoke and flames from his right boom. After John got out over the water, maybe a half mile, he seemed to lose control of the aircraft (flight controls probably destroyed), as it entered a nose low spin and crashed into the water, seeming to explode upon impact. It sank immediately. In a very short time, there was little sign it ever happened except a small "oil slick" that was visible for about 15 minutes then "no sign of anything at all."

Paul Martel and I relieved Lt. Col Ward on station, looking for signs of life, anything, it all looked the same as yesterday, except for that weird and dread knowledge that John and his twisted aircraft lay on the bottom of the rolling green sea, right there under my left wing.

Sorrow, tears, hate, so many things churn inside you at a time like this. "Those innocent villagers!" We put 5 flights of fighters on the village—bombs—cluster bombs rockets—20mm strafe. Jerry Sellers (killed 25 Dec. '67) and Cooper continued with 5 more flights on it and another nearby "village." They no longer exist. I have no remorse about that. I hope we killed everyone in the place. They had to be military. That's where the shooting came from. No one else would be living on that terrain. War rears its ugliest face in front of me. This is the beginning. Play fair? Be nice? Bull Shit! We'll either kill them or break their spirit.

* * *

9 November 1967 2215:

At 1515, took off with Lt. Col. Hall (Covey 75) and went up the coast to Mui Lai Point again. Signs of lots of activity. Got some F-4s with cluster bombs to go after NVN in general area where John was fired at and hit on the 3rd. All of a sudden about 18 37mm AAA guns opened up on the fighters and us. Got six more flights to go after them. "Misty 31" was a great help. Man! Were they shooting! There were about 100 tracer rounds, then air bursts on just one fighter's pass. Then 75 said "watch it 65, they're coming after you." The tracers were sweeping back and forth in front of my windscreen. I jammed the nose down hard to begin evasion from that one volley, then pulled into a hard diving turn, everything in the airplane flew all over the place (camera equipment, rifle, 200 rounds of ammo, grenades (smoke/frag), etc. What a mess! They missed! I was badly shaken, then angry! Two 750 lb. bombs obliterated that one site of 4 guns. What a hit! I figure we got about 10 sites, killed 30-50 of the bad guys. Don't know how they missed, but neither of us FAC aircraft nor any of the fighters got a scratch. As the sun went down through the clouds in the west, we disengaged, things got quiet again. All of the cloud layers which had formed above us, were probably made in the USSR. The number of 37mm and probably some other AAA we couldn't see so prominently were truly awesome.

The flight back to Danang was not a time to relax, bad via enroute, and back at the field had to fight vertigo radar vectors lost briefly, then broke into the clear for visual landings, strange elation at the club that night. Felt exuberant to the point that I had an impulse to break something, things, anything. Nervous energy. I must've had a year's worth of adrenaline to burn off and here I was at the Danang club bar having a couple of drinks.

I carried a Nikon with telephoto on most missions. Most hot missions, I didn't dare pick it up for fear I'd be preoccupied whilst someone, like a fighter or me, got their butt shot off. It was 7 Feb 68, the night

and morning that the Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei (on the Laos Border west of Khe Sanh) was overrun. It is quite a long story and a number of books have featured the battle (latest I read was *Night of the Silver Stars.)*

About the "photo " part of the story:

Covey 688, from Ubon I think, was running A-1s under the low overcast to blow the NVA off the Tac Ops Center containing about 11 Special Forces survivors. What a sight. I circled overhead getting up to speed, because 688 was low on gas and would have to leave soon). A number of PT-76 tanks (first time use in Vietnam) had been used in the attack and air and defenders killed some. As the clouds broke open to reveal the smoldering Camp—the TOC containing the survivors and the dead tanks—I shot a roll of film from about 2000 ft. (just above 688's and A-1's maneuvering space.) I did take over when 688 left and worked the situation for a couple of hours, as did some other FACs. In the end and not without some acrimonious events, the TOC survivors were rescued (though some others were not). As I just read recently, the 24 Special Forces (with some CIDG) troops on the ground were awarded a total of 1 Medal of Honor, one Distinguished Service Cross, 19 Silver Stars and three Bronze Stars with Combat V. Members of the rescue force received one DSC, two SSM, seven BSM w/V device. But I digress.

I flew back to Danang and called in my report to 7AF operations. I reported that the tanks we had been reporting for over a week (they were used to overrun a Laotian outpost as well on 25 Jan) had indeed been key factors in the fall of Lang Vei. The Colonel on the other end of the line said incredulously, "Tanks! They don't have tanks out there!" He was acting as though he, or I, had just landed from Mars? I tried the logic about the tracked vehicles with the turret on top with the long tube sticking out of it. He refused to believe me? And now to the point: When I, with great satisfaction, told that @!! %&** that I had photos to prove the point, he said: "You've got pictures? Get them over to the photo lab right away! We'll have a T-39 diverted in to pick them up within the hour!" And there you have it. I did, and he did. The T-39 was there just as the pictures were done and away they went (but not before I got copies, heh, heh)! They probably had the pictures at 7AF Ops at about the time the rescue operation was kicking off.

Post log—Think any of us FACs ever saw or heard about those pictures again? Not to my knowledge. We supposed that they made some staffer's day, the one that got to show them to some real important folks.

Post-post log—I got to share the pictures and some of my diary info with one of the survivors from the Camp recently (who had spent 6 years in the Hanoi Hilton.) It was a special time and special thing to do.

Cheers,
Toby Rushforth
Trail 67, Covey 152/252/65
Hue Citadel, Danang '67–'68

The Pat Brady Story

I served honorably in the US Marine Corps (1967~1970) when placed on the Temporary Disability Retired List. The story begins when I was blown off a mechanical mule by incoming enemy artillery shelling near Da Nang. The force of the blast threw my body against a tree. I was evacuated to the Da Nang site hospital where a series of diagnostic exams were performed. Sometime during my stay I lost consciousness and awoke to the sound of the hospital being bombed. Next stop, the orthopedic ward in Guam.

The stay in Guam is a bit hazy, with actions attributed to me that to this day I do not recall. I somewhat recall speaking to a psychiatrist and being accused of striking someone and the words *court martial and options*. The end result being that it would be in my best interest to let the psychiatrist handle it and being diagnosed as having a *conversion reaction*. It was later that I learned that this diagnosis had two different meanings (one within the military and something completely different in the civilian world). Needless to say, what began as an orthopedic related injury turned into one with psychiatric connotations.

I remember calling my folks to let them know I would be at the Oak Knoll Naval Hospital, but experienced what they called a "black out" and came to the psychiatric ward of the Long Beach Naval Hospital in leather restraints. I don't know how I got there or what happened that caused me to be there, I only remembered fighting the war.

I was placed in group therapy sessions and after being there for a month I was transferred to the Oak Knoll facility, awaiting discharge. Seven months later I was placed on the Temporary Disability Retired List and was prescribed daily medication (a mild tranquilizer).

My introduction to the VA began with a trip to the Wadsworth VA Hospital. I remember that Friday night well. We had been dropped off at the emergency room waiting area and after waiting over two hours, the twelve of us were moved to a lockdown ward where we were forced to take medication, supposedly prescribed by the resident/intern on-call in the ER. Later that night, two of the men went into convulsions. When we tried to assist them, leather restraints were used to secure us to our beds where we stayed until morning. Medication was again dispensed. When we asked to speak to the doctor, we were told we were being unreasonable and that if we wanted to eat we would have to take the medication. When we again insisted on seeing the doctor, we were told he was on vacation and would not return for a week and a half.

As time went on, I became adjusted to the routine. I was later transferred to Long Beach VA, as an outpatient. I soon took advantage of being out, returning to the less medicated days and just trying to get normal again, with a night or two of getting drunk, having fun and going out dancing. This behavior was discouraged when I began living at home.

I took a civil service job with the government and worked as a driver for the next ten years. The reviews came and went, and I was eventually dropped from the Temporary Disability Retired List and given 10% service connected disability for anxiety disorder which is where it is today.

I got married in the 70s. The marriage lasted two years, my wife couldn't take the nightmares. I transferred to El Toro Marine Air Station after completing a voluntary paramedic training program. I remarried in 1981, had two children and had the opportunity to start a business. We bought a house in Mara Loma, and it turned out our next door neighbor as the President of the local chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America. I soon became a member and was encouraged to participate in the Agent Orange registry which required a physical at the local VA hospital in Loma Linda.

This physical was to later prove important. I was diagnosed with a back problem by the administering orthopedic specialist. These results were concurred by an examination with my private physician.

During the Christmas holiday season, I spilled my medication, losing most of them. I was experiencing a lot of pain and muscle spasms, and so I tried to get an appointment with the VA. I was informed by the service officer for the VVA that my doctor was on vacation and I should try the emergency room after hours. I was abused during this examination when two VA residents decided to have some "fun." While examining me, they grabbed my legs and swung my upper torso around till I fell unsupported from the table. With my head inches from the floor, my back snapped with a loud pop. I was in severe pain. The residents taunted me stating, "Come on, Marine,

that doesn't hurt!" Hearing my cries for help, my wife entered and put a stop to it.

My wife hurried me from the emergency room although I was only half dressed. As I limped out wearing only one boot, I was in agony from the pain in my back. In the following days, my doctor had my medication refilled. I filed a complaint over my treatment the very next day. I later learned that one of the tormenting residents had been reprimanded. I was not impressed, I was still in pain from the abuse. As the holidays ended, I had to go to the Long Beach VA for an examination. I was admitted due to an inability to urinate and ended up having emergency surgery on my spine that February.

In August, a second surgery was performed which resulted in an extended recovery period through April with a diagnosis of paraplegia etiology uncertain. This began my dependency on a wheelchair. I was paralyzed from the waist down. The condition could not be explained, and this was one of the best civilian hospitals in the area. After consulting with the Chief of Neurology at the Long Beach VA, the final diagnosis was paraplegia post-traumatic. However, my benefit level did not increase. I continued receiving treatment at the Long Beach facility and was later transferred to the spinal cord injury service soon after my discharge from neurology. But when I appeared to receive treatment, the outpatient physician informed me that I was not a spinal cord patient and refused to treat me. This began the runaround between the two units, which resulted in no alleviation from pain and a bad bladder infection.

Through intervention from Senator Alan Cranston, an ambulance was sent to my house to return me to the Long Beach VA facility, for further evaluation and admission. The Chief of the Spinal Cord Service stated that there was enough pathology to warrant future treatment from the spinal cord service. Upon discharge, I was set up with a prescription allowing me to use that facility's personal care clinic on a regular basis.

I continued as an outpatient managing only periodic visits to the VA until 1991, when I was hospitalized for the evaluation of problem occurring while transferring from my wheelchair. I was having trouble lifting my body due to the onset of arthritis in my neck. I left the facility with a lift to get me to the wheelchair, and a new wheelchair with a tilt-back system. In April, I experienced an accident after leaving a personal care appointment in the facility parking lot. The back of the wheelchair broke, and I was secured to its back as it bounced, a spreader bar striking my neck every time it hit the ground. I never made it to my van, I became paralyzed from the neck down (quadriplegia).

The VA has their own version of malpractice—"1151 Claims." I filed two 1151 claims. The first against the residents who abused me—this was denied because I left the emergency room walking *"in a normal gait."* No acknowledgment was made that the resident had been reprimanded or that my wife stopped the abuse and my state of "undress" as I exited. The second claim was for the accident in the parking lot with the wheelchair.

I went through a magnetic resolution imaging (MRI) exam that concluded that the herniation had increased in size and was now moderate to severe, establishing that I had received further damage to my neck. Now a quadriplegia, they issued me a wheelchair that cost more than my van with all of its handicapped equipment. They wrote in my discharge summary that...at the time of discharge I refused to move my upper body. I still do not know how after all the medical exams, procedures, hospitalizations, etc., that the VA could still refuse the claim by stating that it didn't happen on VA grounds.

Today, I am a quadriplegic requiring 24-hour care, trying to live on the VA's version of welfare. My wife left, taking the children, unable to deal with the VA. I await an appeal by the Board of Veterans Appeals—the outcome will determine my future quality of life. I am still only 10% service-connected, and the VA had only seen fit to grant me their version of welfare 100% non-service connection.

I just wish there was someone out there who could help.

PTSD From England

I am a British combat veteran of the Falklands War and have suffered with chronic PTSD for the last 18 years. My Government will not recognize that this condition exists and treats its veterans with this illness like traitors. As a demonstration of my contempt for this left wing Government, I became the first British soldier to return his Decorations. I did this for all my brothers who are dead and dying and

rotting in the prison system. I have found many friends in the US who were in Vietnam and suffer the same as my brothers and I. Even though I am not American I do feel the bond between Combat veterans, and my American brothers have helped me out when I have been going through some black times through my PC and the PTSD 101 site. Knowing you people are here for me means a great deal to me. My country looks me at as some sort of outcast.

I salute you all,

Mack

Glimmer of Hope in the Heart of Darkness

How ministry to children is making a difference in Asia

by Richard Botkin

Phnom Penh, Cambodia—I do not know why but when I think of Steve and Jill Fisk, I think of the Willie Nelson song, "My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys." Except my heroes—pretty much until I met the Fisks—were men like George Patton, Bull Halsey, Chesty Puller, James Webb, and the everyday Marine I knew in my own life—the regular guy who did his duty and served honorably whether it was at Iwo Jima, the Chosin Reservoir, Khe Sanh, or during peacetime, simply making the world a better place by that service.

My own Marine Corps service included active duty as an infantry officer with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines and 1st Reconnaissance Battalion in the 1980-83 time frame. I continued in the Reserves for another 11 years, serving in Force Recon and Combat Service Support units. I left the Reserves, as my duties there took me away from leading Marines and into staff work, which I hated. As my family and professional responsibilities increased, being in the rear with the gear no longer was enough to keep me involved. These annual trips to Cambodia as part of a dental mission have brought back the same zeal for serving that I felt as a young infantry lieutenant. Our dental team first met the Fisks briefly one November Sunday between church services in Phnom Penh in 1998. We chatted with them for a few minutes and were off—our group to pull teeth for indigent people and the Fisks back to the new orphanage they had begun in town. We were all moved by their faith and their pluck.

They had recently come over from Colorado with three children in tow, their oldest being son Elijah, who was barely three with a nascent vision now called "Asian Hope."

Cambodia literally became the Heart of Darkness in the last quarter of the 20th century. Between 1975 and 1979, the communist Khmer Rouge murdered an estimated 2 million of the country's 7 million people. That period was followed by a short war with, and a long occupation by, Vietnam, and finally capped off with the United Nations stationing troops there in the early 1990s. Stability was marginally restored, and the wholesale genocide by the Khmer Rouge ended but other problems surfaced. The placement of international troops brought with it the introduction of AIDS. Cambodia has now become the AIDS epicenter of Asia.

Perhaps the biggest societal casualty in Cambodia has been the traditional family unit. In a culture that generally has accepted a man's dalliances outside of marriage (various sources estimate that between 70 percent and 90 percent of all Cambodian men frequent prostitutes, and 60 percent of Cambodian prostitutes are HIV-positive), the widespread presence of AIDS is effecting deadly consequences that will be felt for many years to come. It is not at all uncommon for a man to father children with several women and demonstrate no involvement or responsibility. What is also becoming more common is the outright abandonment of children by their mothers or the attempted sale of those children by relatives. Add to that the deaths of parents caused by AIDS, crime, land mines, etc., and the picture becomes grimmer.

The number of homeless and abandoned children in Cambodia cannot be counted with any accuracy. Into this horror and deprivation step intrepid men and women of boundless faith and hearts as big as Texas—like Steve and Jill Fisk. What sane man would leave the relative comfort and safety of Westminster, Colorado and a successful landscaping business to live in Cambodia? Why would a man risk not only his own life, but also that of his wife and three children? A chance meeting at church with a Cambodian Christian piqued Steve's interest in opportunities to serve. Making two quick reconnaissance trips in early 1998, Steve convinced his bride

that Cambodia was where God wanted them. The rest, you might say, is almost history. Asian Hope began life on Oct. 3, 1998.

Discovering that Cambodia's adoption laws were, at best, onerous, burdensome and bureaucratic, the Fisks shaped their vision for taking in whatever children they could and simply raising them as their own. One particularly reassuring aspect of Asian Hope is reuniting brothers and sisters and keeping family units intact—something not always practical or possible in this very poor country. Jill Fisk is the passionate young matriarch whose faith and love for these children knows no bounds. "We want to raise these children as our own," she states with a radiant energy evident in her eyes and body language. They have started their own school in town and are exposing the children to a classical education as well as to the Bible. The children learn not only in Khmer, the local language, but also in English. "Our hope is that we will build strong Christian soldiers, able to provide leadership for their own families and for Cambodia."

Their ranging home on Rue 592 in downtown Phnom Penh, large by Cambodian standards, sleeps 36 snugly, which includes the Fisk family, a three-person staff and 28 once-orphaned kids. The entire operation—housing, clothing, feeding, educating, and loving the kids--runs about $4,000 a month. Who are these children and what are their stories? My own favorites include brothers Tuen and Tia, 13 and 11, respectively, as they reminded me so much of my own sons at home in California. All of the children are in one way or another victims of the endless string of horror still prevalent in Cambodia today. Fathers shot and killed in desperate acts of crime and passion, mothers dead of AIDS or malaria, children abandoned or severely abused by dysfunctional parents or family members—the stories are legion. Nah Vee is a pretty 12-year-old girl. By American standards, she looks more like an 8-year-old. Her father was murdered when she was 3, and her mother, a young illiterate girl, quickly remarried. At age 8, Nah Vee was sold for the first time to an old Khmer man for $100. She managed to run away, but her mother found her. Bringing her home, she systematically starved Nah Vee until she sold her again at age 10. Nah Vee ran away once more, this time to her grandmother's home. After awhile, the grandmother was unable to continue caring for her, and NahVee found her way to Asian Hope.

During our own two-week stay in-country this year, our mobile dental team traveled extensively around southern and central Cambodia working in concert with local Christian missionaries performing basic tooth extractions for hundreds of people, many of whom had never seen a real doctor or dentist. They were the poorest of the poor. All over we worked with children and adults, most of them underfed, undernourished and under-stimulated. Even through the use of interpreters, it was difficult to find common ground with those we served. They appeared sullen, fearful, and reluctant to speak, almost shell-shocked. Then there was our day working with the children of Asian Hope. These kids WERE different. An oral surgeon with the group, Steve Brown of Sacramento, CA, observed, "The Fisk kids seemed like my own. They were animated, excited, and happy. You could see the light in their eyes." Kelly Crider, a Folsom, CA dentist, echoed in agreement, "There was something different about these children compared to almost all of the others we worked with. These kids seemed full of joy." Indeed. Asian Hope is where the rubber meets the road in practical Christianity. The life stories of 28 boys and girls that would certainly have ended in chapters one or two, now hold so much promise and opportunity. Taking to heart the call to disciple the nations, the Fisks have transferred from God's army to His Marines. Assaulting deeply into unknown, unfriendly territory and securing a sizable beachhead, the ground has been made ready for follow-on troops to occupy and expand. Every day, they fight the good fight, gaining victory, at heavy cost, one little boy and one little girl at a time. I am reminded one last time of remarks made by Marine Col. David Shoup, who commanded the 2nd Marine Regiment as it invaded Tarawa in November 1943 when he radioed his situation report at the peak of the battle to his division commander aboard ship: "Casualties many; percentage dead not known; combat efficiency: We are winning."

Psychiatric Casualties
(Contributing Factors)

During the Siege battle of Khe Sanh, there were approximately 6,000 Americans on the small base

(which was about a half-mile wide and a mile-and-a-half long) and on several nearby outpost hills and positions. We were surrounded by at least two North Vietnamese Divisions (numbering some 20,000) reinforced with various other units (artillery, antiaircraft, support units, etc.) We were shelled with up to 1200 rockets and artillery rounds in one day, but usually averaged about 400 a day. Everything above ground was rendered a shambles after the first two or three days. Casualties were common. It is estimated by the doctors at Khe Sanh that there were over 2500 evacuated wounded, and I have a listing by name, unit, and date of 475 Americans killed. Death was a given. Most men (including myself) were unable to take a shower or wash during those days and our clothes rotted off while other portions of the cloth became stuck to the skin. There were times in which the water point was pierced by shrapnel from exploding incoming rockets, artillery, and mortars, leaving us without water for three days at a time. Most men were down to one C-ration a day. Very little mail was delivered or distributed during this time. The days were spent running constantly for cover in a road culvert, a nearby trench, or bunker. Everyone was constantly aware—and continuously voiced this to me in my constant moving about the base at this time—that it was only a matter of "when" not "if" the North Vietnamese would mount a "human-wave attack" in which thousands would close in on us.

This was especially a concern after the nearby Lang Vei Special Forces camp was overrun with tanks—the first time these were used by the North Vietnamese Army in the war in Vietnam, showing how determined they were. Furthermore, they unrelentingly constructed a maze of trenches and saps approaching the base perimeter, following the same pattern used in their assault at Dien Bien Phu. We were unable to patrol outside the lines to locate enemy snipers or supply points by orders. (The plan by our General was to have the North Vietnamese close in on us—we were a sort of bulls-eye or target—and then be destroyed by our bombs such as those from the B-52s.) The weather was mainly fog in the morning during which our aerial observers were unable to detect any enemy movement, and we were unable to re-supply or evacuate casualties since helicopters required visibility to land and could not land by instrument. About noon, the fog burned off and re-supply could resume, but also incoming rockets, artillery, and mortars were common.

The emotional dimension of all of this involved a constant awareness of imminent personal danger and death, an awareness of abandonment felt by many, a deep awareness of vulnerability, an inability to do anything and the frustration of helplessness, continually seeing buddies injured and killed (mainly grotesquely—a very common occurrence was decapitation.) Emotional numbing (inability to cry, express anger, etc.) was common after the first day of the shelling. There was a very common bravery in which men would be seen—it was a common occurrence—dashing out during incoming to rescue someone wounded, in which it was very possible that they themselves might be killed. It is my personal belief that this is the result of having concluded one is going to die anyway, and one might as well do something caring for another. Some hugged each other during the shelling. Most shared the little bit of water or food they had with others.

In Lt Col Dave Grossman's book, *Killing* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co.,1995,1996), where on pp. 43-44 he writes: "Swank and Marchand's much cited World War II study determined that after 60 days of *continuous* combat, 98 percent of all surviving soldiers will have become psychiatric casualties of one kind or another. Swank & Marchand also found a common trait among the 2 percent who are able to endure sustained combat: a predisposition toward "aggressive psychopathic personalities." Please feel at ease, feel free to contact me should you desire further amplification on anything I have said.

REV. Ray W. Stubbe
Founder KSV
Chaplain 1/26 Marines

Excerpt From Letter of Support for Khe Sanh Veteran *by Rev Ray Stubbe*

2001 Khe Sanh Veterans' Reunion & Important Web Sites

The firm and developing details concerning Our Khe Sanh Veterans 2001 Reunion are online on it's very own multi-page web site. You will find much information being regularly updated. Here's how to get there:

Address is CASE SENSITIVE: http://comunity.webtv.net/KheSanhE2-26/KheSanhVeterans

KSV Home Page has a link to the Reunion site on the front page, as well as other info and a message board: http://khesanh.com

Khe Sanh ❁ The Odyssey ❁ 2001 ❁ The Reunion
Honoring Khe Sanh Veterans' Founder, Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe
He Brings Us Together - "We are Eternally Bonded"

C H I C A G O
July 5 - 8, 2001

Reservations: 1-800-333-3333
Radisson Hotel O'Hare
6810 N. Mannheim Road, Rosemont, IL 60018

ROOM RATE: Only $69 per night + tax (currently 12.5%), Single- to quad-occupancy
This rate is available 1-8 July! Register by June 5, 2001 for Group Rate

❁ When registering, mention "Khe Sanh Vets." Ask for a "TOWER ROOM" ❁
FREE Parking! FREE SHUTTLE to/from O'Hare Airport, Public Transit & Area Businesses

Special Notes: Poolside rooms are available but they are somewhat smaller and further from the main KSV areas. If you want a room designated as "smoking" it is best to reserve early. However, the hotel advises that if you are told they are out of Tower smoking rooms, it is OK to accept a TOWER room listed as non-smoking and they will "accommodate."

Radisson Hotel O'Hare Amenities:

* Minutes from O'Hare & a short free shuttle to Public Rapid Transit to downtown Chicago.
* Walking distance to Fine and Casual Dining; Walk or short shuttle to area entertainment.
* Rooms have: TV, coffee maker, blow dryer, data ports, iron & board... Handicapped-accessible rooms available, request when registering.
* Large registration area & hospitality room; Exceptionally spacious common areas with lots of quiet areas to talk, share photos and memories. Also Handicapped accessible.
* Outdoor Pool/Courtyard Indoor Pool/Fitness Room - Walk to 9-Hole, or use short shuttle to 18-hole Par 3 Golf Courses.
* Restaurant serves in or out on Courtyard patio~ REDUCED prices for length of our stay
* Two (2) Lounges, one opens to courtyard & pool area.

We hope you will plan to come early and enjoy the many things "Chicagoland" offers. Sample the Taste of Chicago; shop the magnificent Mile; Visit Navy Pier, the lakefront, World Class Museums(Including the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum)

A Reunion registration form is included and a mail form is available on the web-site. We are still working on events that could not be finalized in time for this magazine's deadline. Complete schedule of events will be on line soon, and in the next issue of Red Clay.

The total 2001 Reunion Package has been held at the roll-back price of only $55 per adult attendee ! Those Khe Sanh Veterans who register earliest will be eligible for a special prize drawing. (Must have completed both Hotel Registration and Reunion Registration to be eligible for prizes. So have faith and send them in early.

We are very pleased that Delta 1/26 Association will be holding their 2001 Reunion with us and look forward to meeting those we've not yet met and their families.

While plans continue to develop, your suggestions and ideas are still most important and appreciated. We also need raffle prizes and volunteers, but most of all we need YOU to BE THERE.

Contact us:

2001 Reunion Committee
Chairman, Mike Worth
Details Chairman, Russ Turner
Associates, Kathy Turner, Lucille Biscaglio

2001 Reunion Committee email address:
khesanhreunion@yahoo.com

Direct Contact

Mike.....847/296-5979 .....mw861-A@msn.com
Lucille.....773/763-5415 .....easyecho@yahoo.com
Russ & Kathy.....636/282-2263 .....rkt88@prodigy.net

Make your hotel registration NOW, send in your registration soon, and we'll see you in July!

Reunion Schedule of Events

1 July *(Sun)* & 2 July *(Mon)*		Many are taking advantage of the excellent room rates and arriving early to enjoy "Chicagoland." A Reunion Committee Board of Directors Member will be on hand to welcome early arrivals.
3 July *(Tue)*		Preparation & Set-Up: digging the trenches, filling sandbags, putting up wire. Starting today for KSV Attendees only: special price Breakfast Buffet & Dinner in Barley's; reduced prices in Maxie's (beverages & food) & Lobby Bar (beverages)
4 July *(Wed)*		No group events scheduled. Free time, sightseeing, unit or committee meetings. The Taste of Chicago will be in full swing, or visit the National Vietnam Veteran's Museum. Chicago, as well as communities near the hotel, have excellent fire-works displays
	1330	Board of Directors Meeting #1 (time is approximate, observers welcome)
5 July *(Thurs)*	1000	Check-In. Registration Desk & Hospitality Room opens.
	1030	Board of Directors Meeting #2 (time is approximate observers welcome)
	1400	Welcome Party Barbeque in the Courtyard (poolside) until dark.
	1600	Women's Get-Together (informal)
6 July *(Fri)*	0900	Honors Event. Valor Awards Presentation (Note: Hospitality open at 0830 for coffee
	1200	Lunch (Location TBA)
	1330	Hospitality & Registration Desk re-open. PX opens.
	1500	"Vets Get Together." Healing through humor, Red Clay writing, sharing. Facilitators, Jim Wodecki, Ernie Spencer, Ray Stubbe.
	1500	Women's Get-Together (Suggested as tentative)
	1730	Hospitality Room; Liberty Commences
7 July *(Sat)*	0900	Coffee Available-Hospitality Room (Note Hospitality Room Closed 0945-1300)
	1000	General Membership Meeting commences. Attendance and participation by KSV members is recommended. Subjects of concern: by-laws, election of officers and board members for Term 2001-2003, planning for 2002 & 2003 reunions.
	1200-1400	Unit or Group activities, on- or off-site
	1400	Workshop: Your concerns. Questions answered about: PTSD, medical; VA, Claims and more. Facilitators: Bob Shippen, Charles Berg and a panel of experts.
	1800	Khe Sanh Veterans Annual R&R. Reception & Recognition Banquet. 2001 Honoree: Reverend Ray W Stubbe, Khe Sanh Chaplain, Association Founder, Guiding Light
	1800	Cocktail reception. Cash bar.
	1900	Banquet Dinner. Featured Speaker: Reverend Ray Stubbe, Guest Speaker TBA. Raffle, Live Music Dancing & Hospitality Room until???
8 July *(Sun)*	1000	Healing & Remembrance service: Ray Stubbe & Guest
	TBA	Transition Board Meeting
	1200	Check Out (Hospitality Room closing time TBA)
		Free shuttles to public transportation. Some free transportation will be available for sightseeing.

KHE SANH VETERANS ASSOCIATION
Membership Application

Copy, Print & Fill out form. Submit completed form to the address below.
Check: ❑ New Member ❑ Renewal ❑ Change

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

Nickname: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip + 4:** _____

Home Phone: _____ **Work Phone:** _____

FAX: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Are You A Khe Sanh Vet? Check one: ❑ YES ❑ NO

If YES, when were you at Khe Sanh? (Please be as specific & complete as possible.):

_____

Service Branch at Khe Sanh, Check applicable:
❑ Air Force ❑ Army ❑ Navy ❑ USMC ❑ Civilian

Your Unit: _____

If NO, tell us your association with Khe Sanh Vets:

_____

Membership Type (check one & write in amount enclosed):
❑ Life.....$150 ❑ Regular.....$ 20 ❑ Associate.....$ 20 $ _____

Unable to join at present, but list my name in the Membership Directory: ❑ YES ❑ NO

Please make check(s) payable to: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. If New Member Application or Renewal*, mail completed form with dues payment to:

Tom Eichler
3221 N. Opal Chicago, IL. 60634
Phone: 773/625-2101 Fax: 773-625-8021
Email TEIC1448@AOL.COM

On renewals, circle any items to be changed. If a Request for change to current directory information, please complete the form, circle the items to be changed, and mail or fax a copy of your completed form.



C-Med, Khe Sanh, 1968

Who else is in this picture? Help me out here.

Standing on the far right in the back row is Dr Wolf. Next to him was our rat exterminator. Sorry, name escapes me. Dr. Feldman is next and behind him is Dr. Magilligan. Fourth corpsman to the left of Magilligan is corpman Roberts.

Down to the first row—On the far left is a marine ambulance driver (unknown name). Dan Sullivan (ambulance driver) is next followed by Commander Brown. The remainder of the people not identified in the picture are all corpsman. Sorry, best I can do with the names.

Dan Sullivan
USMC, C- Med, ambulance driver



The C-Med drawing was done in early February 1968. The original was drawn with a ball point pen on three sheets of paper and was three feet long hanging in the main triage bunker until we left in early April 1968.

I came across the drawing this year and noticed that it was showing signs of age. Time had done a number on the original so I decided to clean it up.

To explain some of the notes on the drawing: Peanut Butter was the call sign for Charlie Med to get Medivac wounded out. Nat Spicer had his girlfriend's name Carla on his helmet. Ted Hampton was the guy on the toilet. To the left of Ted was Carl Ebert smiling. The Boss was Commander Brown. Dr. Wolf is in the top row on the immediate right.

Time has done a number on my memory, so I'm sorry if I can't remember all the faces in the drawing. But what I will never forget is the dedication of these doctors and corpsman.

Dan Sullivan
USMC, C- Med, ambulance driver

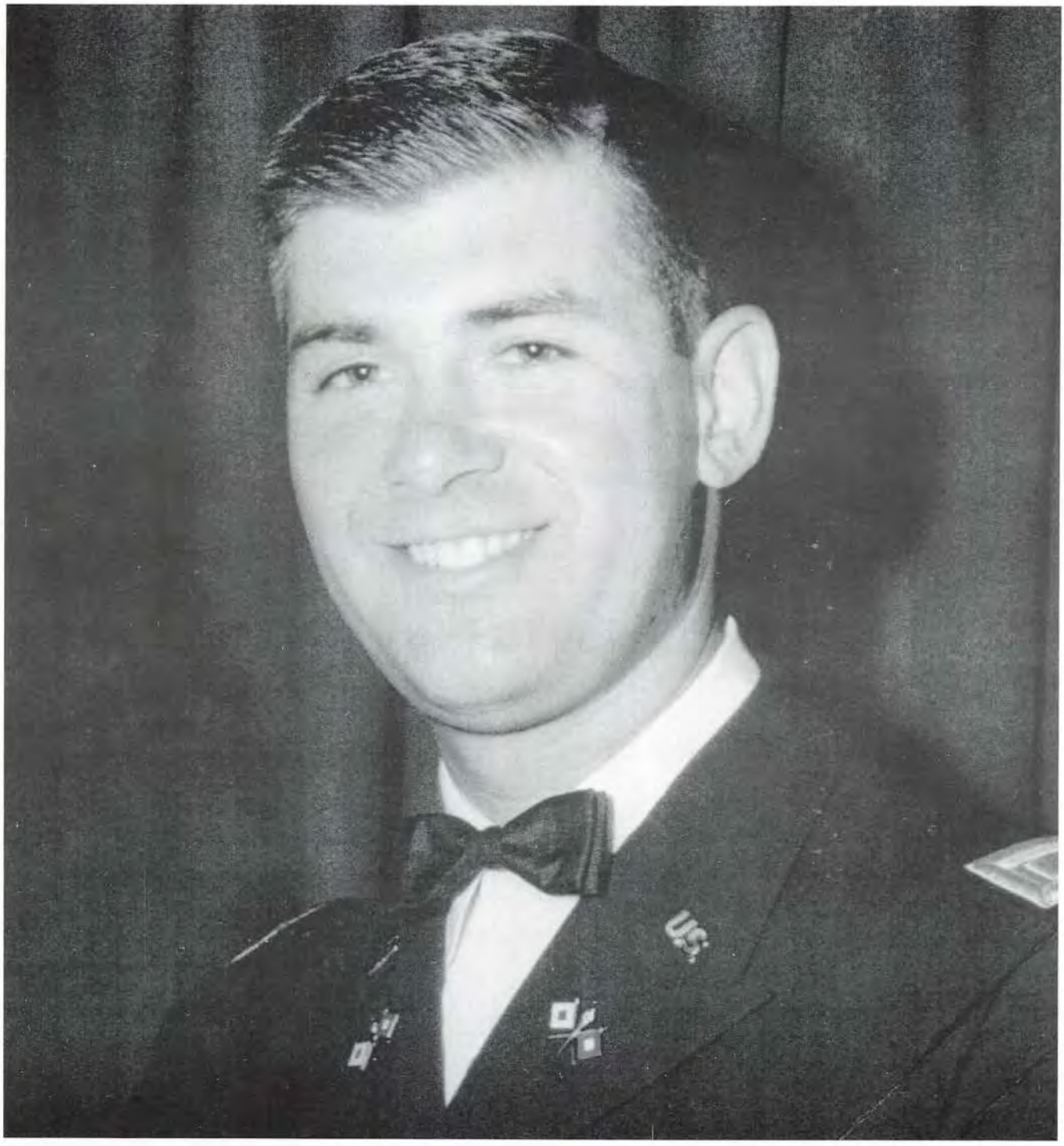

1ST LT. RODNEY ALFANO
KIA, 2 Feb 1968

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Publisher's Comments

I hope we all have recovered from the reunion. I have just started working on the new KSV membership directory for 2001. I originally thought the 2000 edition would suffice for at least three years. As it is, we have signed up almost 600 new members since the last reunion in San Diego and have almost 500 personnel changes for members. I have the membership cards almost ready, and they should go out with this issue or shortly thereafter. I, Ernie Spencer and Jim Wodecki (our new secretary) are looking at plans for the issuance of past KSV newsletters in a series of ten to be issued in five volumes. With the printing cost of setting up 50 issues we would have to meet a certain quota to make it feasible. So we need input from the membership if there is any interest. Please drop a note, email, phone call, etc., to any one of us.

As I promised in the last edition, I am publishing the names of those members who have contributed additional funds to the organization:

BAILEY, Thomas
BAUM, Gary
BLESSING, Gerald
BOLTON, Steven G
COLLINS, Rodney D
COX, Hugh D
DELANEY, Michael B
DIFOOT, Roberto
ELMORE, Ernest M
EUTZY, Donald Jr
FERGUSON, Daniel R
FESSENDEN, Gregory L
FILNA, Jon A
GUSTAFSON, Carl L
JONES, Bruce E
KUBLEY, Lawrence W
KULL, John F
LOERSCH, Phillip E
MANSON, Thomas C
MARTIN, David P
McELROY, John W
McGIFFIN, Carey W
MESSNER, William J
PILCH, Bruce
RAWLS, Stephen P
SALINAS, Mike
SOERENSEN, Thomas K
STOTT, Thomas D
TIERNEY, Mark F
WERESOW, Eugene
WHITENACK, James H

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Tom Eichler.....Vice President
Vince Griffith.....Treasurer
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William Jayne.....Chaplin
Russ Turner.....Sgt. At Arms
Dick Peloquin.....Member At Large
Frank Taggert.....Member At Large
Bruce Geiger.....Member At Large
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Michael Worth.....Member At Large
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Editor's Comments

About the Cover

Dear Ernie:

Read your most sobering book on Khe Sanh. All of the men who served there, both alive and dead, are truly American heroes. I cannot thank you enough for your honest description of Rod's character in your book. At the Providence College Vietnam War Memorial Dedication, they honored three men from his class of 1966 who were killed in Vietnam. Father Cullinane, Rector of Raymond Hall, described Rod as a very gentle person and one of the best-liked students who ever attended Providence College.

I did hear from two persons after Rod's death, regarding his service at Khe Sanh. The first was Lt. Dan McGravey's father. He sent me a picture of five Marines in front of a bunker with his son in the center. I never heard from Lt. McGravey himself. The second was from the wife of Rod's commanding officer, Sue Crawford; I was always puzzled why he never wrote himself.

I have the Khe Sanh pictures of Rod with Larry Brogdan; I will mail that picture along with others which I received from Rod's mother. Rod is depicted in various stages of his life, including his wedding picture and those of him in his uniform. His wife remarried an Air Force Pilot a year after his death. I am happy that you are honoring him in the Khe Sanh Newsletter, sharing his short life and heroic death. He was an outstanding young man, and a very good athlete, playing baseball in many different leagues until the age of sixteen.

Rocky Alfano

❋

Remembrances/Memorials

King Durr, A CO 3RD SP BN . . . . . Passed Away, 26 Dec 2000
Phillip Ball, F CO 2/3 . . . . . Passed Away, 05 July 2001

Those Remembered					Remembered by:	
PFC	David Cramer	USMC	KIA	22 Feb 68	Joseph & Donna Cramer	PARENTS
CPL	Jessie Cunningham	USMC	KIA	24 Jun 68	Steve Haisley	H CO 2/26
PFC	Robert D Cicio	USMC	KIA	16 Apr 68	Dan Maguire	C CO 1/9
SW2	Edward Adams	USN	KIA	16 Apr 68	Larry Kubley	CBMU 301DET B
CPL	John S Wiseman	USMC	KIA	23 Apr 68	George Curtis	HMM-363)
L/CPL	Michael S Smith	USMC	KIA	28 May 68	Ronald Whitlock	F CO 2/3
L/CPL	David Devik	USMC	KIA	10 Feb 68	Jon Filina	VMGR-152
PFC	Erwin A Polt	USMC	KIA	24 Mar 68	Carey McGiffin	H&S CO 1/9
CAPT	Thomas I Ledbetter	USA	KIA	20 Jan 65	James Whitenack	MACV
1STLT	Rodney Alfano	USA	KIA	02 Feb 68	Rocco Alfano	FATHER
	Wally Schaffenberger	USMC			Walt Whitesides	H&S CO 3/26
	Albert S Lumpkin Jr	USMC	09 Dec 00		William Messner	3RDFORCE ECON
	Karel "Lurch" Beijen	USMC			Tom Allen	C CO 1/9
					Robert Appleman	C CO 1/9
					Eric Bergland	C CO 1/9
					Henry Castenada	C CO 1/9
					Tim Haley	C CO 1/9
					Don Meyer	C CO 1/9
					Bill Rider	C CO 1/9
					Stephen Rawls	W BTRY 1/13
					Jack Kull	SUBSCRIBER

All Who Served
All who served, SOG Spike Team ASP

Ernie:

I have finally made contact with Rocco Alfano. He has sent me the three letters that my dad wrote him when his son, Lt. Rod Alfano, was killed in action. As I now recall, I did mention Rod in my letters home to my father, and sent him the photo of Rod and the other four Marines in front of the bunker. My dad took it upon himself to search out the family and share their grief along with his picture. The following letters speak to that subject. Mr. Alfano is in failing health suffering from colon cancer but did remark that the letters and photos from my dad gave him much comfort during his time of grief.

Dan McGravey

❋

Feb 24 1968

Dear Rocco:

My Wife and I wish to offer our sincerest sympathy to you and your daughter-in-law for the deep loss you suffered on Feb 02, halfway around the world. I am writing this letter because my son, Lt. Daniel L. McGravey of the USMC, is serving at Khe Sanh and had previously wrote to us of his meeting with your son.

Danny told us of talking to Rod about things at home in Massachusetts. They were together about an hour before a 122 MM rocket made a direct hit on the bunker where Rod and five other Marines were huddled. My son says he was impressed with your boy, whom he described as a real nice guy. He recited a Rosary for him and is as sure as we are "that he has it made where he is now." My purpose in trying to contact you is to put you in communication with my son, if you would like to meet him, when he returns from Vietnam. That is a day all our family is praying for and hope to see very soon. I am also appealing to you to join us in praying that we may be spared the great grief you have suffered.

My son has about eight months to serve before his tour in Nam is over. You can write to him but please understand if he is not able to find time to answer your letter. You can call us by phone here in Lawrence almost any night around supper time if we can tell you anything that may help you know how Rod was and what he most talked about, before he left us forever. Please accept our condolences and believe that your boy will be remembered in our prayers, as we hope you will remember our son when you pray for all the sons and Fathers who are fighting in that far off hellhole of Khe Sanh.

Sincere Sorrow, I am
John P. McGravey

❋

Feb 26, 1968

Dear Mr. Alfano,

I am sorry as heck, there was a slight delay in sending this, but here it is. Danny's mother said she would like to get the negative back on one of the prints if you get some developed. I am sure the photo can be blown up to a much larger size. Since my Danny is in the center of the group of five, it will be easy for you to remember. That will do until you meet him, which I am sure will be arranged before long. Again, my deepest sympathy to you and all Rod's friends and relatives. Hope this will give you some small measure of comfort.

Sincerely,
John P McGravey

❋

March 1, 1968

Dear Sir,

My wife and family wish to emphasize how deeply we feel for you and every member of Lt Alfano's family. As I told you in our phone conversation, I feel we are only doing what I would wish would be done for us if our positions were reversed.

Before attempting to contact you, I asked myself if my intentions would be understood and now that I have spoken with you, I am convinced I did the right thing. I am very sincere when I say we, as a family, feel very close to you, as we have such a great common interest in our sons who went halfway across the world to meet, enjoy each other's acquaintance even for a short time, and then be so tragically separated. I read the letter from Danny to you on the phone, but please understand that we want to keep it with all our memories of him. God willing, some day you will be able to talk to our son, and he will recall

to you his hours with Rod that terrible day.

Sincerely,
John P. McGravey

❋

Dear Dan,

Thank you very much for the **Red Clay** magazines and the history of Delta Company. I know the wonderful feelings one gets when attending these reunions. In WW2, I served on a Signal Center Team which consisted of three officers and 18 enlisted men. We have had reunions since 1946. Our ranks are dwindling rapidly, but we will have this year's reunion in Saratoga, NY. I will mail in my application for the magazine this week. Again, many thanks.

Rocky

PUBLISHER NOTE: I think this article says it all, and goes to the very heart of why the Khe Sanh Association was founded.

From the Office of the Secretary

Reunion July 3-7, 2002 — Irving Texas

Saddle up partners — its time for a Texas-style hoedown! We do things a little different down yonder. So dust off that cowboy hat, shine up them spurs and break out the cowboy boots. Wranglers and casual clothes are in order. We're going to be boot-scootin' at the Circle R Ranch (http://www.circlerranch.org) for a night of Western Fun: hay rides, horseshoe pitching, calf ropin', quick draw, (horse trail riding extra upon request) Texas-style Bobby-Q and vittles, then some down home Country and Western band music to Texas 2-step to, and even do some line dancing. If you don't know how to line dance, we will have an afternoon of practice by a beautiful cowgirl. Yippie-Ki-O-Ki-A. I may even give some bull whip lessons for the real men and ladies who attend. So bring them youngins with you 'cuz we got swimming and swings and plenty of fun and grub for all. We're also just a few miles from Six Flags over Texas and Water World for the children and grandkids.

Next year's reunion theme will be honoring Corpsman, Medics, Doctors and Aero Medical Evacuation Technicians. If anyone knows of any who served there, please email me their names. Jim_pj_texas@mindspring.com. There will be a special ceremony thanking them.

There are trips planned to the City of Dallas highlighting Texas Stadium and the Mustangs of Las Colinas. At the sixth floor museum, learn of the life and death of President JFK. Enjoy lunch on your own at the West End Historic District for whomever would like to attend.

There will be a Ladies' Breakfast at the hotel and a trip to a Ladies' Spa for those who wish to attend. There will be free trips to the Grapevine Mills Mall, which is the largest in the world, and for the men a free trip to the "Outdoor World Pro Bass Shop." Included in next year's raffle will be a $100.00 gift certificate to the ProBass Shop. The Texas State Flag will be flown on Veterans Day 2001 over the capitol in Austin, Texas and presented as a prize at our raffle. There will be some other great surprises this year in our raffle. We will be sending out a complete list of prizes and tickets ("you need not be present to win") but who would want to miss all this Texas fun? So Giddy Up and Get Away to Texas for the West of the story.

Jim "Jimbo" Wodecki

❋

From the Secretary and Membership Committee:

It seems that only a few people in the Association can find hundreds of new members. In fact, there were 600 new members last year. If everyone could find just one new member we could double our roster to 6,000 — amazing isn't it? So look around at your VFWs, American Legions, Veterans' Centers and of course, the neighborhood bars, and let's get these brothers to bond with us. Ask them for their name, address, telephone number, unit, and time served there. We will send them one of our **Red Clay** magazines with an application in it. Have them call Tom Eichler at 773-625-2102 or Jimbo at 972-727-2997, and we will fix them up. We need to find more of our Marine, Army, Navy, and Air Force brothers, as they're out there just waiting for us. So get with it and help us find our lost brothers.

Now to all you members who moved, please let us

know where you are at, so we can send the magazine to the right place. If you have a new address, send it to us so the magazine isn't returned. We will be getting out the Khe Sanh bumper stickers real soon to put on our cars again. It is a great way to find new members.

Jim "Jimbo" Wodecki

Visions
Of loved ones,
Emerald lawns and a cracked white table.

Images
Suspended within the flow of time
live again behind my half closed eyes.

Grandmother
And the aunts spreading their fare
beneath bowing trees. Once more
scolding, laughing, offering acceptance.

Country
Quiet shattered by delighted cousins
scattered by laughing old Uncles.

Childhood
Framed by the fragrance
Of untethered freedom.

Memories
Called back from my dimming youth.
Glimpsed again through
iced tea in a Mason Jar.

Cheryl A. McIntosh

ED NOTE: Cheryl is the Sister of Ken Pipes, C/O B CO 1/26

Reunion Committee:

Thought I would take this opportunity while continuing to unwind from a very successful reunion to comment on a job well done. Yes, I am a "cherry." The reunion might have been my first but will not be my last. Jack and I were extremely impressed with the professional way in which the program of events had been put together. As a matter of fact, the content and sequence of events at the Khe Sanh 2001 reunion were nothing less than poignant, touching, and stirring at times. Personally, it was unquestionably emotional and moving for me.

The committee had done a tremendous job in orchestrating such a monumental program. The wives, girlfriends, companions, friends, volunteers, and supporters alike who assisted were just as valuable in making the event a memorable occasion. I met old friends, in particular "John Kenny" whom I served with on both Hill 55 and Khe Sanh. I made new friends as well, and shared some unbelievable reflections of our Vietnam experiences. Thank all of you for making my attendance, along with all who attended, a memorable and inclusive one. It was an experience I shall never forget.

The added presentation, which recognized Marine Captain Alex Bodenweiser and Marine Corporal Ronald Hickenbottom for heroism against the NVA for which they received the Silver Star Medal, is a reflection of the professional caliber of men who are members of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association — an association that anyone would be honored and proud to be associated with. In reference to a stirring moment during the banquet...I would be remiss not to mention and acknowledge the children of Khe Sanh Veterans KIA, MIA, WIA, POW, etc., who so eloquently, with pride I might add, casually moved through the audience, gifts in hand, thanking the Khe Sanh Veterans for their Courage and Sacrifice. This unusual task was emotional and certainly remarkable. If you get the opportunity during your busy schedule, please share my thoughts and remarks to your committee members. Again, thanks to all of you for an unbelievable and exciting time.

Jim Collins
A Co 1/26
Ibpo378@aol.com

What a rush this year's (Chicago) reunion has been.

First, let me say thank you to all who volunteered and worked long hours to make it all possible. From the folks manning the registration table, to the young men and women who laboriously filled all the sandbags that were strategically located (two steps away in case of incoming) throughout the hotel, and to folks who made sure provisions were never depleted.

Thanks to all the brave men who "volunteered" and stood "fire watch" all night and made sure there were no surprise attacks on the beer coolers, while the rest slept peacefully in their individual bunkers. Many thanks to Tom "Ike" Eichler and his fellow Chicago Police Officers for putting together the BBQ by the pool (even though "Ike" was a bit slow flipping them sausages, ribs, and skirt steaks.) Thanks too, Ike, for the luncheon that you and your fellow Chicago Police Officers put together at the Chicago FOP Hall, to honor Delta Co 1/26 and my friend and Brother, Sgt. Richard Grenat, who passed away Feb 26, 1999. The luncheon was a big surprise to the entire family of Dick Grenat.

Present at the luncheon were 35 members of Delta Co. along with Delta 1/26 officers and Battalion Commander Col. Jim Wilkinson. Col. Wilkinson made this special trip to honor Delta Co and Sgt. Richard Grenat. There were many other representatives from Army, Navy, and Air Force Units. Thanks to the Gold Star Mothers for being there. It was a pleasure to meet those beautiful ladies. Thanks to all the other beautiful ladies who made the reunion more pleasurable to attend. It made looking at all them old Khe Sanh vets' "mugs" bearable; our eyeballs were clicking every minute.

Thanks to Ms. Sharon Pelon-Babby and the beautiful children of the Khe Sanh Vets who passed out gifts to all the vets at the banquet. A Thank You to the Marines who put up the static display of the world's finest crew-served weapons, from the M-16 to 81MM Mortars and every weapon in between; it made all the grunts salivate.

It was a pleasure to meet all the individuals who regularly post messages on the message board, who for the first time made a reunion. Guys like Joe Amodeo, Wayne "Shu" Shumaker and his lady who made the trip on their bikes all the way from Pennsylvania. But best of all was meeting old friends from Delta Co. who I have not seen since Khe Sanh.

Delta Company was well represented with over 35 members in attendance, by far outnumbering any other group. So to Charlie Fox, the bet still stands for next year's reunion, better get on the phone now and "bribe" your Charlie Co. brothers to show up.

To all who made it possible,
Merci infiniment de tous que vous avez fait
Semper Fi
Fish D 1/26

Wow! It's over, can you believe it? Had a wonderful time and met a lot of "new" guys and gals. Thanks to all who contributed, it was a great time. It was such a great time I could not leave, so I stayed on for Sunday and went down to "Taste of Chicago" fair that was in progress. Tom Eichler was right — we did not belong there in a large group, and it was a madhouse with wall-to-wall people. We (my wife and daughter) fought our way through the crowds and had a wonderful time, only to return to a hotel full of kids. There was some sort of dance contest, and they were all over the place. I was lost. The hospitality room was locked and the ballroom foyer was empty and devoid of any life. It was an eerie kind of quiet! However, there was still life in the bar. Don Lacey, "Casper" and "Turtle" were there when I arrived. So, I settled down to have a nightcap at 2015 hours. But then others began arriving, Frank Ceniseros, Ken Pipes and Joey "O" along with Jim Hebron. Counting the ladies, we now had a reinforced squad, counting the barmaid Linda. We dubbed our little group "Chapter #1 of the Khe Sanh Vets." Had my last nightcap at 0315, what a wonderful time! Again, thanks to all who contributed.

I would be remiss if I did not comment on the wonderful time my wife and daughter had. They both commented, separately, on what a kind, polite, friendly and caring group of men were present. My answer to them, "They are Khe Sanh Vets." The next scheduled meeting of Chapter #1 will be July 08 2002 — be there or be square.

Tom Ford
BOD KSV

I am new to this fine organization and want to thank all those responsible for its creation. My military nickname while in Vietnam was Spanky. I was the platoon radio operator. Anyone out there from Hotel 2/1 67/68. To "Ski" Sucharski, I think from the Chicago area, where are you!? I have been searching for you for 20 years. Your name is not on the wall, so I know you are out there somewhere. Please contact me.

Semper Fi
Stephen Coldwell
H Co 2/1

Tom,

Just a quick note to say hello and to tell you that we, the members of Delta Company Association, 1ST Battalion 26TH Marines, enjoyed the Chicago Khe Sanh reunion very much. We look forward to attending many more Khe Sanh Veterans Association reunions in the years to come. We would like to thank you for inviting us to participate in your reunion functions. We thought the Friday afternoon lunch at the Chicago Fraternal Order of Police Lodge was very nice. Please extend our thanks to all the members of your lodge who made this luncheon possible for us. I especially enjoyed visiting with the members of your lodge who assisted with the lunch.

On a personal note I would like to compliment the Chicago Police Department on their professionalism and helpfulness. When attending the Taste of Chicago event on 05 July, we were terribly lost and disoriented when trying to motor out of the Loop. We asked a police officer for directions and he said, "Follow me, I'll get you on the freeway." We were very appreciative of this officer's assistance.

Semper Fi
Robert "Doc" Whitman
Delta Co 1/26

I served with Alpha Company, 2ND Platoon, 3RD Anti-Tank Battalion, (Ontos). I was at Khe Sanh from May to Nov 1967. My wife and I attended our first Khe Sanh Veterans reunion in Chicago, July 6-8, 2001. We had a great time. It was a very moving experience, and we met some very fine people. There was seven other Ontos crewman at the reunion. Congratulations to those who worked on the reunion. I cannot think of anything that would have

made it better. I wish I had started attending these reunions years ago. I will not miss another one.

Semper Fi Porto Bello Alpha two four Sitrep all secure.

R. Scott Berry
A Co 3RD Anti-Tank Bn (Ontos)

Reunion Reflections

By Rev Ray W. Stubbe, Founder KSV

Every little detail was perfect, especially the colored ribbons on the posts in the registration room, and the hundreds of filled sandbags; many commented very favorably on them. The little slotted boxes to hold the plastic name tags, the set-ups for the Awards ceremony, Church outside, the barbecue, the little cherry on the name tags, the grand piano being there for Denis Chericone to play (perhaps that was just accidental, but it was wonderful), the spread-out nature of the rooms, the active duty Marines and their weapons, Sharon's displays and work, the superior Great Lakes band and everything connected with the banquet was great.

The day I arrived, a fruit basket was brought to me in my room! I thoroughly enjoyed the fruit over all the days I was there, but even more impressive was its special consideration and thoughtfulness. Everything the hotel did was superior.

There were a couple of very humorous incidents that members did not hear about. I think it was Friday night about 10, and Denny Chericone was playing the baby grand piano in our hospitality room. There were about 20 others nearby. As always, his playing is so very, very good, accomplished, and refreshing to hear. I was in the process of raising the large wooden lid of the piano to set the upright spoke to hold up the top, when all of a sudden the entire top of the piano slid off onto the floor with a loud crash! Denny was still playing! No one said anything, but I turned to the people and said, "Now isn't this a great, duet?" (The hinges of the top were not screwed in).

Then, on Friday morning, I was sitting in the restaurant eating breakfast and overheard (one couldn't help but overhear!) some loud voice telling stories about Khe Sanh. I looked and saw a table of four of our people. After eating my breakfast, I pulled up a chair and joined them. The one who had been talking very loudly walked away, after ten or fifteen minutes, and one of the others said to me: "He came down here earlier with no shoes or socks. In fact, all he had on was a T-shirt and some very abbreviated bikini shorts. When he walked up to the hostess and asked, 'Is this open?' She said yes, and he said, 'Well, I'll go up and get dressed.'"

I was very impressed with Sharon Pelon-Babby, her care of the children, and the variety of important information she shared with so many. She shared the appropriate spice or herb in menus to add just the right seasoning, and provided little ginko pins for the children and helpers. There were sample "care package" lists and even a static display of the items for those currently on active duty. There were packages for those who want to help our children become more patriotic, letters of appreciation from her students to veterans, and interesting displays. She kept children occupied, interested and hadn't left her area even to eat at times, or go outside, because she felt she was needed there.

The active duty Marines and their various weapons impressed me. Many questions were asked of them. While many of us relived memories (in a good sense) of our time in Vietnam, the active duty Marines, on the other hand, were interested in what our veterans might tell them about Khe Sanh and experiences there. It was a mutually beneficial presence.

I was so impressed by the Color Guard, especially the small but very proficient contingent of the Navy Band from NTC Great Lakes. The quality and depth of the prayers and comments of Bill Jayne at the Awards Ceremony and Banquet, in addition to those of Dick Peloquin and the two chaplains present, greatly moved me. Words from Chaplain Tiernan Cash expressing how I was respected in the Chaplain Corps were most healing to me. I always suspected an adversarial view of my time in Vietnam. I had gotten so close to the men that it may have seemed to them, at times, to be to the degree of loss of dignity as a chaplain!

Chaplain Cash even had the Church Pennant that I flew from my bunker in Charlie Med. I had sent it to the Chaplain School in 1969, and was the only item I brought back with me (or sent home) from Khe Sanh which I let go of, feeling it might be an inspiration to those at Chaplain School. There was some

initial publicity about the Pennant but never any mention of the chaplains at Khe Sanh. I suspected they had put it in a closet or that it might have even been discarded. When they rededicated the Chaplains' School last summer, I spoke with a junior chaplain at the School whom I asked about the Pennant. He had no information. To see it once again, relive its many memories, and then to hear of its prominent placement were reconciling to me.

When I saw what was happening at our reunion, I became intensely happy that something moved me to originate it. It took our coming together of everyone to have found the great value in reconnecting with those we knew or to meet other comrades who served there. This momentum of mutual interest is what is really responsible for our organization. I began with less than 20 people, yet how grand our organization has become.

I was proud to have passed control of leadership to Earle Breeding, Ken Penn, John Kaheny, and Dick Peloquin, with the magazine to Ernie Husted, Ernie Spencer, Ed Evans, Ray Truelove, and Ernie Spencer again. Withstanding some brief periods when I assisted to ensure continuity, I realized that if an organization was to be strong, I needed to pass it on and let others develop the necessary leadership. We affirm and bring out the gifts in others by needing them. Visiting the active participating board meeting of meaningful discussion and decision-making fills me with privileged pride.

A climate of positive, pleased, and happy people prevailed. I met several people I had not seen since Khe Sanh (Ed Feldman, Paul Lojkovic, Bill Gay, and Hal Johnson, for example), several others who had not been to our reunions for some time (Skip Wells), and many that I had only known through telephone calls and letters (Donna Elliott, Jim Carmichael). I saw Joe Lola again, and felt what a miracle to see him doing well again. I was very happy to see Carl and Jan Oksnee, with their feeling of reconciliation. My interviews with two TV producers were stressfully moving to the point of tears, yet a service to have shared informative knowledge. One of the interviews was to be used for a video to be shown in schools for students to appreciate what we did in Vietnam. Several of our vets were there listening during the interviewing, and also had comments.

There were some very special and significant events that I personally was aware of. (I'm sure there were many others, yet I'd like to mention these in case you hadn't heard about them.) One involved Bob Shippen and Donna Elliott who have been in contact with me for a long time. I knew that Donna (who had been on active duty in the Army in Public Affairs and has had an article published in our **Red Clay**) lost her brother at Khe Sanh and had returned there twice to see if she could pick up any leads among local people and to see for herself the area in which her brother was lost. I know that Bob Shippen had a photo of a dead American that he photographed in early April, as units began to leave the base to scour the surrounding area. I had seen it at a previous reunion. It is grotesque in some ways, showing teeth and missing torso. But there is also a sense of serenity, of the man sort of "melting into" the earth in peace. His face has been sort of mummified. A few weeks ago, Bob called me to say that he suspected that this might be her missing brother! However, he was ambivalent about sharing that information or showing Donna the photo — it might not be her brother, she might get very disturbed by it, and so on.

At the barbecue, Donna came up to me to say hello, and I took her right over to Bob Shippen who was sitting with some others from FOB-3. After they left, I had an uneasy feeling, but then felt that all would be well. In fact, all was well, very well. Donna wasn't disturbed, Bob was greatly relieved, and one of our vets with ties to the local Police Forensics Lab immediately forwarded Bob's photo and that of Donna's (she had brought one of her brother, evidently) to the lab for analysis.

Another incident involved Cal Bright and Ken Penn visiting the Chicago Vietnam art museum. As they were departing, Cal said, "That's my picture!" The director of the museum said that it was taken by Bob Ellison (as part of that Newsweek spread in one of their March 1968 issues.) Ken said, "We have a mother at our reunion who is looking for anyone with photos of her son." The director said he, in fact, had some of Bob Ellison's photos and almost immediately located them in his piles of paper. So Miriam Eaton now has photos of her son in Vietnam.

Our worship service went so well on Sunday. The two chaplains who sat on either side of me at the banquet, Chaplain Tierian Cash (in the Marine uni-

form from Washington, DC) and George Cooper (in the Navy uniform from Great Lakes) along with Chaplain Lasello, who had said Mass for Roman Catholics, assisted me in the service by each reading one of the Bible readings. We had about a hundred attending I think, and the service took about 35 minutes and was very spirited in terms of singing of the hymns and the reciting of the responses. Two of the three Gold Star Mothers (May Littlefield and Lucille Payne) who were there and one of my good friends Bill Messner were in tears at the end and told me that he had bottled up all those tears ever since Vietnam. He had not even done so at the funeral of his good friend, Al Lumpkin, late of last year.

The reunion afforded me the opportunity to spend significant time with Ernie Spencer, Earle Breeding and his wife, Pat (whose marriage service I performed in DC), and many dozens of others. The mother and father of one of our men who died at Khe Sanh drove in from Ohio to be at our banquet (Mr. and Mrs. Healy) at the prompting of Rick Noyes, my very good friend. I mentioned him in the banquet remarks as the man who dabbed blood off his head in my bunker one night.

At the Awards Ceremony, Miriam Eaton was asked to come up in connection with the unveiling of the plaque for O'Hare Airport. I had spoken with her on several occasions but had not previously met her. Following the ceremony, I went to her, giving each other a big hug, bringing tears. We are in the same metro area and hadn't met each other until the reunion in Chicago!

I had a wonderful time and want to personally thank all of the wonderful people for everything, and for the Lighthouse built by Frank Taggert, the plaques, the Praying Hands and all the other beautiful gifts. I will cherish them and will find a suitable place of honor in my home for each of them. God bless you all.

Reverend Ray W. Stubbe



Dear Khe Sanh Veterans,

The children and I thank you for welcoming us as part of the 2001 reunion. The children and grandchildren of Khe Sanh Veterans who were at the reunion were honored and happy to be able to participate in activities, and give a gift to you to show their appreciation. The children of Lincoln Avenue School Kids Care in Milwaukee will be so pleased that you liked your gift they made. I will certainly share your messages of thank you with them.

Thank you to those who signed up to receive our exhibit, and to those who signed up to receive our letters during this coming school year. I think it is so important for our youth to learn about the work and sacrifices that have been made by veterans, such as all of you. That is what "We honor through learning, We honor through sharing" is all about. Sending good wishes and heartfelt gratitude to you.

Sharon Pelon-Babby



The kids getting ready





Sharon Pelon-Babby and Kathy Turner



Russ Turner and his daughters



Megan Wodecki and Sharon Pelon-Babby



Childrens' Exhibit

I served at Camp Carroll with the 2/94TH & 8/4 Artillery during the siege. Both units consisted of the 175mm Guns and directly supported Khe Sanh. I also visited the 8/4 Artillery Website and found it very interesting. They have a lot of great photographs which will bring back a lot of memories to all who served there. One of our members recently visited Vietnam during Memorial Day, and I would like to make the next trip.

Robert Matlock
2/94TH Arty

I take my hat off to all who served at Khe Sanh. I served with 3/4 along the DMZ from Nov of 67 till Spring of 68. Places like Gio-Linh, Cam-Lo, Dong-ha, and Camp Carroll etc. When the C-130 crashed on the runway rendering it inoperable, we resupplyed Khe Sanh by convoy. As bad as the shelling was, I think my worst fear was of the rats that were as big as a cat. To all those that endured, my heart goes out to you.

Semper Fi
Eddie Young "Yogi"
K Co 3/4

I served as a flight engineer on C-130s with the 35TH Troop Carrier Squadron. I flew many missions in and out of Khe Sanh.

Ed Evers
35TH TCS

Imagine my surprise, while surfing the Internet seeking information on what role the 315th Air Division played in the Vietnam War, I came upon a photograph taken by my father at Khe Sanh. It was on the C-130's web site. It depicted a C-130 taking off, shielded by a defensive smoke barrage. I sure wish my dad were alive to see it — he would have been real proud. He passed away New Year's Eve 1999. As a writer and photojournalist, I am currently putting together an album based on his time in Vietnam. His name was Marion Lee Ray IV. If anyone has additional information, please contact me.

Samantha Wales

I served with I Co 3/26 3RD Platoon as a Squad Leader. In December of 1967, I went to Danang to attend Interpreter School. Upon completing the course, I returned to my old company. Just three days later, we made contact with a large NVA unit on our way to Hill 881N. During the fierce action, my Platoon Leader and Platoon Sergeant were KIA. As a Squad Leader, I had to take command of the Platoon until they were replaced. I am currently a member of the 3RD Mar Div, Lone Star Chapter and am looking forward to meeting old friends at the 3/26 reunions.

Rayford " Big D" Addington
I Co 3/26 Hill 881S

Glad to be with my comrades again. I served with C Btry 1/13, from Sept 67 to June 69 as a F/O, attached to the 26TH Marines. In December of 1967 I was with M Co 3/26 on Hill 881S.

Juan Earl Miles
M Co 3/26

I served as a radio operator with C Btry 1/13. I have been looking for Henry L Davenport and Tim Holt for years. If anyone has information where they may be located, please contact me.

Darrell Hill
C Btry 1/13

I served with G Btry 12TH Marines and D Co 1ST Battalion 4TH Marines at Khe Sanh. We were one of the last units to pull out of Khe Sanh. It was ironic that we then shelled the very places we had been living. If anyone has information concerning Cồ Mountain in Laos and Hills 861 and 881, please contact me.

Larry W. Deason
G Btry 12TH Marines

I was a member of the 515TH Transportation Company, 36TH Battalion, under command of the 3RD Marine Division. We were charged with supplying all outpost and firebases located in the DMZ, Khe Sanh and other Northern Provinces. We lost

many of our trucks and men to NVA ambushes. Our main base camps were located at Dong Ha and Quang Tri. Anyone from the 515TH can feel free to contact me. I was there from March 22, 1967 to March 15, 1968.

Jim Reeves

Thanks to Jim Reeves for telling me about this site. The 515TH Transportation returned to Khe Sanh during operation Lam Son 719. Our APC "The Cracker Box." I, Pete, Joe and Mike, our driver, were the last to leave Khe Sanh. We could feel the earth move as the Air Force began massive bomb runs to destroy what was left behind. Our brother Kenneth Jones lost his life on the road between Vandergrift and Khe Sanh, may he rest in peace. Let us never forget our fallen brothers.

Mike Boatwright

Like Mike and Jim, I served with the 515TH Transportation Company. We were the first Army Unit to be attached to and under the command of the 3RD Marine Division. I drove an ammunition truck and supplied all outposts along the DMZ. My prayers go out to all those fallen Heroes and their loved ones. I will never forget the loss of our brothers and sisters to a war that never really ended.

Tom Kaecher

When I arrived in Khe Sanh in March of 1967, I was assigned as a radio operator to the village of Khe Sanh, Lang Vei and the Rock Quarry. In April of 67, I was reassigned to the Combined Operations Center. The center was located in an old French underground bunker. I and Cpl. Kipp Melchoir Webb each worked a 12-hour shift, plotting troop movements, H&I hits by C Company Artillery, and Air Strikes for CAP units and other bases. I also served as an interpreter for the COC. Our senior officer was Lt. Col. Reider, Operations Officer Major Fogo, and NCO was Gysgt. Buchanan.

I served in this capacity during the Battle for Hills 861 and 881 with the 3RD Marines, B Co 1/9, and with the 26TH Marines during the Siege. I participated in closing out the 3RD Mar Div Headquarters, Sub Unit #5 and relocated to Dong-Ha as the Radio Chief for TSC-15. Cpl. Melchoir and I were assigned to several other locations, and each time we came under attack. We did not realize that it was the Tet Offensive and everyone was under fire. When I attempted to return to Khe Sanh, the incoming enemy fire was so heavy we had to turn back to Phu-Bai. I returned to Dong-Ha until the end of my tour in April 1968.

S/Sgt Revis E. Wilson

Hello to Ray Stubbe. The best to you and all you fine Marines. I have been out of touch with you for so many moons. I have traveled to some Mideast places from which contact was impossible. Just wanted to congratulate those responsible for this website. Made a Halo jump at Fort Bragg on Memorial Day with other former SOG members who had made combat jumps along the Ho Chi Minh trail. Take care, Ray, and Semper Fi to all you Marines.

William "Billy" Waugh
SGM Recon CCN, SOG

Read some of the guest book, really enjoyed it. I am a former Marine S/Sgt. Who worked on C-130s during my tour September 66 to July 74. Lost many good friends over the Tonkin Gulf and on the runway at El Toro. Any other wing wipers out there, please give me a shout. Our squadron flew many missions in support of Khe Sanh, and I feel a personal bond with those who served there. I am proud to have been a part of the Birds (C-130s, C-54s and C-47s) that flew out those who survived and those who did not. Once a Marine always a Marine.

Elmer Mansfield

I was on Hill 881S during the Siege of Khe Sanh. I was a Radio Operator for M Co 3/26, 2ND Platoon. I was wondering if anyone had any photographs of Hill 881S during that time. Unfortunately, my friend Moose and I left our camera at Khe Sanh when we were sparrow-hawked out. I never saw our equipment again.

David Anderson
M Co 3/26

Served as a corpsman with L Btry 4/12. We arrived at Khe Sanh at the end of the Siege and closed some of the enemy gun caves in the Co Rock Mountains with our 155s. Still remember those early morning "rocket" wake up calls.

Bob "Doc" Eddy

Tom,

I have wanted to write for a long time. I served as a corpsman with 3RD Platoon of B Co 1/26. My tour started in an area around Hill 55 shortly before we were ordered to Khe Sanh, just in time for the Hill Fights. With all the fighting that took place, there was still time for a little humor. While on Hill 881N, we received a bunch of replacements. One of them inquired where he could relieve himself. I pointed to an empty 105 or 155 canister sticking out of the ground. He proceeded to utilize the same, which for him was not a good start since it was the vent for the Lieutenant's bunker. Lieutenant Pete Guy was a great guy who later transferred to 3RD Recon. I would like to know if he made it home.

I remember Hill 821 where the 2ND Platoon ran into an enemy ambush. We ran off 881 to help them and the company lost many good men that day. One of them was Bob Enderby, one of my best friends who was going to spend time with me when we got back to the world. Gerry Ensign and I were assigned to the 3RD Herd for a considerable time. We took care of each other, splitting time on ambushes or listening post. He would always have a hot cup of coffee or bit of food waiting for me whenever I returned from a mission. I say, Thanks, old Buddy.

I remained with the third platoon even after my time had expired, not wanting to leave my buddies. Finally, I was ordered off the Hill, back to KSCB, which was under rocket attack every day. The Hill was a much safer place to be. Shortly thereafter, the remainder of B Co left the Hill. Finally, I would like to apologize to whomever owned the case of San Miguel beer I stole out of the hooch next to Headquarters.

Al "Doc" Winney
B Co 1/26 3RD Plt

3/26 To Hold Reunion

3/26 will hold their 5TH reunion in Ennis, Montana from 12-15 June 2002. The events planned include a trip to Yellowstone National Park, a comedy show, a tour of historic Virginia City, and a memorial service. Friends and former members of 3/26 are cordially invited to attend. If you have not received the Travel Montana Package from the Governor and wish to attend, contact :

Andy DeBona
Box 995
Ennis, Montana 59729
Phone: (406) 682-7337
Email: cnausmc@3rivers.net

PS. I tried to contact Georgia Watson, page 20 of the latest issue of **Red Clay** in regards to information on her father, a former member of L Co 3/26. Her phone number had been disconnected, so if anyone can help I would appreciate it.

Andy DeBona
M Co 3/26

Intrusive Thoughts

The headlines in *Stars and Stripes* would read, "TWO KHE SANH MARINES KILLED BY FRIENDLY FIRE. ONE MARINE CHARGED." I had had several hours to create, ponder and embellish my predicament. I was now in full-fledged dread of what lay ahead for the coming night. I was going to kill our own people, and I couldn't see any way around the inevitability.

My predicament came from the top of the chain-of-command structure to the low man on the food menu. The Captain told the platoon sergeant. The platoon sergeant told the section leader. The section leader told the squad leader. And the squad leader told me. It was my night to fire H & I's. And now this burden had been placed squarely upon my scrawny shoulders. I had rediscovered a formerly forgotten simplistic youthfulness that lay willingly buried within me. I was too young to be here, to live like this, to be doing these kinds of things. Being responsible was and wasn't my thing. I was responsible when things went wrong. I was not mature

enough to be responsible to make things go right.

The sun was busy lowering itself behind the surrounding hills farther to the west of the Khe Sanh region. I was busy becoming more anxious. My mind was in frenzied disarray at creating a carefully worded "excuse." I mentally rehearsed how I would have to tell my immaculately dressed, court appointed accusers that I had tried my best to ensure such a terrible event as this short round I had fired on that ill-fated night, had come to be. I would be forced to relive the grotesque horror of the mortally mangled bodies I had killed with my mortar tube. I would have to look square eyed into the faces of the parents whose sons I had placed into body bags. Life was droning to a morbid, simplistic conclusion. I was a murderer, albeit an unintentional one.

The shadows that the sun was creating were long, bony fingers pointed in mock accusation at me. In the back edges of my head, my trial had begun in earnest. The Judge was at his workbench. His gavel had come down hard with a solid slap on the hardwood in front of him. "Guilty," read the head juror. I was taken away, led by two, armed Military Policemen. I could hear, even from this distance, the terrible clang of the Iron Gate of my 8' x 5' jail cell shutting hard and sure behind me, sealing my eternal fate.

The smell of sandbags surrounding me brought me back to the present. They smelled of an earthy mustiness. The steel runway matting above my head reassured me that there still might be some form of reprieve from my prison residence in Portsmouth. I had wondered since the first time I heard that name, where specifically in the States Portsmouth was. If it wasn't in Texas, it might as well have been in Antarctica. Anyway, I could get used to making "little ones out of big ones." The sergeants always hung that one maxim over our heads when we even made the appearance that we were going astray. Hard labor could be got at if I kept at it. And I could live in solitary confinement, couldn't I? But alas, I would be as morose a prisoner as I was an inept mortar man.

These lurid thoughts ricocheted off the sides of my mind like pool balls off the side rails of a billiard table. Were all my hidden sins coming home to roost? Here was a thought with needles. I didn't want to kill anybody. Just put me on working parties. Let me fill sandbags all day. But don't give me high explosive responsibilities. See where it had gotten me? I had killed the wrong people. I was the worst of the worst.

The sun was becoming my enemy with every passing minute. It had presently cleared the point of no return. I could not bring it back. I could not force the earth to move backward and retrieve the irretrievable. Blast! I was doomed. I hated my life. Wasn't it all funny? I hadn't lived enough yet.

The darkness crept further upon me like some skulking thief. It was stealing what little life I had left. My thoughts were transfixed upon my one AM appointment with destiny. That's when it would happen. That's when I would kill them both. I had not met these two men I would kill. Already I did not like them. They should have been poor excuses for Marines as I was. They should have been out of position or visiting their buddies. They were becoming objects of my derision. I was beginning to hate them, these men I had not known whom I would soon enough blow apart, concluding so abruptly their disgusting lives.

I wore the darkness like one wears a coat. It wrapped itself fully around me and made me terribly aware of my vulnerability. Vulnerable. I was actually vulnerable. The word had an unzipping effect. Up to this very moment in time I had possibly conceived of, or perhaps deceived myself, into believing that I was in some way or manner in control of my life. And now the world was spinning outward and off balance.

As the evening wore on, my conversations were of a more strained nature. The men in the mortar squad appeared zombie-like. Their motions were exaggerated. Their words were inaudible or unintelligible. They moved as shadows move, following but removed from my perplexity. Their banter was not playful tonight. It was all so wearying. Their comfort was heavy. Exhaustion was thick, and it hung about me like a pall.

Eight-thirty. There was no light in my bunker by which I might read to alleviate the pressure smothering my mind. I would lie down. I would try and sleep. No, I would go out to the gun pit and begin the process of gun drill in the darkness. There was no moon by which I could see the range card. How would I discover what information to put on the gun sight? How did Jimmy do this? I was trained on the

.81 mm mortar. Why did they put me in .60s? I knew the .81. This little sight was worthless. There was no light to see, to make choices.

I eased into Jimmy's bunker. His Spartan living accommodations were replete with radio and lantern. I gave no hint at my internalized agony to the men chatting and smoking before me. I would not give these men the satisfaction of seeing me terrified, of knowing that my future would be prison. I would go about my business, this deadly business of keeping Charlie at bay. I looked at the yellow range card with the neat black printing as if it had been an old friend. I found what I was looking for. Here was the elevation and the deflection that would have to be registered on the sight. I already knew I would have to remove all the increments. In my mind I also knew the gun would be pointing nearly vertical. The trajectory too, would be almost vertical. I would kill those men, and they would not know who had snuffed out their lives. They would be dead. What would they care? Dead is still dead no matter how one arrives at it. How much was my life really worth now?

Nine o'clock. I sat in the gun pit to see if my eyes would adjust to the blinding darkness. Time. I had hours, days, months, and years until I would slip that five-pound rocket-shaped projectile, fin first, up to the lip of the mortar tube and purposefully release it. And I would hear it slide, metal scraping against metal, down and down and down until it exploded angrily within the base of the tube forcing it skyward in an instant. Up and up and up it would go until its inertia had peaked and then it would begin its descent. It would sound like an object way up in the night sky hissing and the sound would grow full until it reached a crescendo, and then it would kill those two men.

I had to stop this. I had to quit thinking negatively. I had to make certain I didn't kill those guys. But how could I? I would go over this entire procedure as I had practiced it so many times before. I would make myself see the numbers on the sight. I would will it so. I would adjust to the circumstances. I would not kill them. I was not going to jail. If anyone were going to die tonight it would be the enemy.

I squinted, straining at the diminuitive sight upon which my fingers were fumbling. Jimmy pulled back the flap on his bunker. He said something and extended his hand. In it was a round and long hard object. It was a flashlight! My salvation had come from behind door number two. I eagerly snatched it from Jimmy's grasp and very carefully clicked it on with one specific purpose in mind. I wanted to know that the dope on the gun was correct. I looked again at the range card. I looked at the numbers on the sight, then back at the range card. It was right. Even in the dark I had been correct. That cold tubular flashlight made my heart leap. I would not kill those men after all.

Ten o'clock. I could hear the faint sounds of music coming from the transistor radio inside Jimmy's bunker or someone's. How long had it been playing? The song was "Green Tambourine." I hated that song. It was so full of everything that reeked of ignorant America. It was so stupid. Could you imagine a grunt with a green tambourine instead of his M-16?

Then it was The Temptations turn. My whole body began to move with the beat. The time was passing now. More music paraded before my ears and with the music came the memories of dating and drinking and football and... The Beach Boys did their thing. The Beatles performed just for me. And then silence flooded the crest of the hill once more.

Eleven o'clock. Jimmy and the other guys must be going to sleep before it's time for their watches.

Now I was terribly alone with myself. There was no one with which to check about this H & I. Waking someone out of my abject fear was now beyond thinkable. Exposure was not an option. My relief would come after I fired my H & I. I reached for the mortar round. It was encased within a black, tubular, thick cardboard cylinder approximately 3" in diameter and about 9" long. Two thirds of the way up the canister, black tape was wrapped several times around the neck of the cylinder separating the top from the bottom. I pulled the tape circling the canister until it was lying limp in my hand. Casting it aside, I separated the top part and set it on the sandbag-lined parapet surrounding the lip of the mortar pit. The four slender fins of the round were now exposed along with the compressed ballasite packets, held by a wire between each fin. These four packets were designed to propel the deadly device for a certain, measurable distance. The range card identified the distance with the specific number of packets. If one packet were removed the round would travel less far. Remove a second and the results would become more visible because there would be less distance the

round could travel, and so forth.

I would be firing this round with all four of the packets removed. My fears began to play upon my mind once again. I was back to reading those awful headlines. I slipped the round completely out of its canister and held it in my hand. My hand examined its features closely. It was heavy. It was barrel chested and narrowed at the top and bottom. As I could not see it clearly, the touch of my hands and fingers became my eyes. With my left hand, I held the small rocket shape snugly. With my right hand, I placed my trigger finger gently on the flat tip of the fuse. I found the curved safety wire firmly imbedded in its place. I tugged on it slightly. The wire moved grudgingly. I eased my pull. The spring-loaded screw, the second safety measure, was also where and as it should be. Since the round was painted olive drab, I could not see its contour well. The slightly visible yellow markings informed me that I was holding a high explosive round. The bursting radius was five meters. That meant that when it landed and detonated, anything living within that five-meter radius would probably be killed or maimed for life.

Facts. So many facts buzzed around my wide-awake mind. Mortar school flashed before me. The daily gun drill became a grind. Setting the aiming stakes in their proper alignment was critical to the success of every fire mission. How many times I misaligned them in school I can't remember. Stop thinking so much. I suppose any memory that took me home and away from this place was good time.

All of a sudden I could smell myself. I smelled awful. It might be because I hadn't taken a bath in over a month. I had not removed my boots in a week. When had I brushed my teeth last? The gods of war knew. I was fully cognizant about how dirty I was. I could feel the grime. My tongue tasted the salty, food crusted corners of my mouth. I breathed into my cupped hands and inhaled. My breath could melt steel. I was rancid from top to bottom, inside out. I had forgotten what toothpaste tasted like. Why was I thinking of personal hygiene now? None of the last few moments mattered because tomorrow there wouldn't be any more water to drink than there was today, and none with which to bathe.

Twelve o'clock. I was starting to feel stiff, sitting there exposed to the hilltop elements. The dew was settling on everything. I re-holstered the mortar round in its canister, placed the top back over the fins and just sat there. One more hour and my life would be justified. There was no motion in any direction. The clouds were intermittent.

The moon must have been clinging to the horizon, but I could see only a slight spectral light between the clouds. The tall grass swayed and brushed against itself in the gentle wind. And there I sat. I had never been this alone in my life. All the hubbub of high school did not make sense here. All the commotion of my entire life seemed senseless here.

I was suddenly hungry. But could I sneak back into my bunker without waking up both Mikes? My hunger overrode any reticence I displayed. I knew where my few remaining crackers were. I saved them at my evening meal for this specific time. Yet crackers without something with which to wash them down made for a mouth full of dry crumble. Swallowing was interesting, if not difficult. Now I was thirsty, very much so. Knowing my growing girth as I did, I was not really amazed that my stomach's needs were powerful enough to override my fearful thoughts of court-martial.

Twelve fifty. In the faint half-light given off by the shy moon, the mortar tube looked vertical, absolutely perpendicular to the ground. The ink of the headlines was almost dried as it rolled off the presses. It was hard to breathe. Thoughts of murder, unintentional as it would be, were once more fresh. Five minutes to go. I switched on the flashlight very carefully. Any sudden light at night made one a specific target. The sight had not changed. The bubbles were level. I could fire at any time now. My hesitancy was overwhelming. I had wanted to go to Vietnam and fight. Now my genuine cowardice was appalling. Firing H & I's was fighting, sort of, wasn't it?

The top of the canister was wrung off and laid aside once again. I slid the round slowly out of the dark cylinder, cradling it firmly in my right hand. I removed the packets one by one until they were lying in the canister and out of the way. I pulled the safety wire completely out of its position, laying it, too, aside. Now, this "thing" was armed and dangerous.

One o'clock. I suddenly noticed that the end of my tongue was sticking out of my mouth. I was using all the body English I could muster to complete this unwanted task. Get it over with I thought. If I kill them, I kill them. Just put an end to it.

With the care a mother lavishes upon her newborn child, I placed the fins over the lip of the tube and

dropped the round. It didn't go as I had planned. It didn't fall down and down and down. In an instant it hit the firing pin at the bottom of the barrel and exploded right back out of the muzzle. I could not stop it now and up it went. I could hear it straining for the sky. I heard it reach its peak and arc over. And I heard it begin its descent. Now it was falling down and down and down. It sounded like it was coming right back into the gun pit. Oh Lord, help me. I'm going to kill myself!

The explosion was terrifying. I pursed my lips. The next sound I would hear would be "Corpsman up!" I had done it. I had killed those Marines after all. I knew I would. I was a murderer. Still silence. Nothing. No movement. No scurrying about.

Had I done it right? No one was more relieved than I, when after a few intensely emotional moments were passed, everything remained as it was prior to my tiniest of artillery experiences. I just sat there, amazed. I had actually fired my first live high explosive round in a combat area and not killed anyone on our side.

The world moved off of my shoulders and thudded deftly upon the ground. Still, there was no movement, no screaming, and no sound of any kind except that of the rustling grasses swaying in the breeze. It was funny in a warped sort of way how no one knew the past hours of imagined terror I had been living. The war had gone on. Men were still doing what they do in the night watches. The world was still in its orbit. The world's tides were moving into shore in the great oceans. The wind was blowing and the grasses still rustled in protest.

I quietly opened the flap on Jimmy's bunker and laid the flashlight near where he was sleeping. Quiet snoring could be heard farther in. I walked through the open trench line to the entrance of our pitch-black bunker and wearily climbed in. Stumbling a bit, I awakened Mike for his watch. I could now lie my exhausted body down and go to sleep for a few short hours until this whole nightmare started all over again when the sun announced its routine appearance. For a few hours, I could forget why I was here.

Jim Carmichael
E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

Once a Marine, Always a Marine
(Oklahoma City, April 1995)

Two United States Marines were among the 168 people killed by the terrorist bomb that destroyed the Alfred P Murrah Federal Building. The Federal Emergency Management Agency deployed teams of firemen and police officers from New York City to help search the rubble for survivors and recover the dead. Several of these volunteers were Marine reservists or former Marines. Police officer Michael Curtin, a Marine First Sergeant in the reserves, discovered a body pinned in the wreckage, wearing the blue trousers with the distinctive "blood stripe" of a Marine. He knew he had found the missing remains of Captain Randolph Guzman, executive officer of the recruiting station.

Curtin asked permission to retrieve Captain Guzman's body — dangerous laborious work. He found three former Marines to lend a hand. Manny Hernandez, another police officer, said, "It was something I had to do. I had a squad in Nam, and whenever we lost a Marine, he was never left behind. We take care of our own." The Marines' worked five hours with electric jackhammers to free the Captain's remains. Someone provided a body bag. Hernandez knelt and closed the dead Marine's eyes, "For the Glory of God," he said, "and the Glory of the Corps." The word somehow passed around the site that the Marines were bringing out one of their own.

An Air Force officer provided an American flag. Officer Curtin draped it over the body, and the men worked their way clear of the building with their burden. Curtin was stunned at what he saw outside. "It was completely quiet, cranes stopped, rescuers stopped, people lined the street. Everyone was watching in silence as we brought our Marine out." The workers formed a corridor, removed their hard hats, bowed their heads. The veterans in the crowd saluted, tears in their eyes. Said Officer Hernandez, swept with emotion, "We are a band of brothers." Captain Guzman was in good, ever faithful hands. Semper Fidelis.

No matter what you do, you will always be a Marine. Watch out for each other and always remember who you are and what you have become...a Marine for the rest of your life.

Jim Wallace Vietnam 66-68
UAW National Veterans Advisory Committee

Dear Ernie:

I recently received your Spring 2001 **Red Clay** Magazine. I had sent in money and a "Remembrance Memorial" for 2ND LT Michael Thomas, my dear friend in OCS, Quantico 1967, who was KIA Jan 20, 1968 (Navy Cross Recipient). Thomas Esslinger, I & M Co 3/26, also remembered him. I am writing to see if you can find an address for Tom, and send it to me. I have located Michael Thomas's brother Steve, who would like to hear from those who knew Michael.

Art Brooks
1ST LT 1ST Force Recon

Dear Ernie,

Just received the latest issue of **Red Clay**, thanks. You guys do a great job, please stick with it. I ~~am~~ writing in reference to the Editor's note on page four. The Editor takes exception to the spelling of "Khe Sahn" as shown in the photograph taken at MCRD. Well, personally I think they are the ones who actually have it spelled right. Until about 10 years ago that is how I always thought it was spelled. The current "Khe Sanh" spelling, I think is the Americanization of the proper spelling, so I also just went along with it. I even had California License Plates made up with the Khe Sanh spelling.

None of the above is to say who is right or wrong, just thought it was interesting. I seem to recall maps from our time during the Siege that showed it spelled "Khe Sahn." Keep up the good work.

Semper Fi
Tim Haley
C Co 1/9 60 MM

Everything I Need to Know, I Learned in Bootcamp

By Robert A Hall

Robert Fulghum's inspirational essay, "Everything I need to Know, I learned from Kindergarten," is one of the most read and reprinted articles of our time. Though I admire Fulghum's insights, I must have been a late bloomer. Everything I needed to know, I learned at Parris Island from three leather tough Marine drill instructors. The lessons taught by Sergeants William Harris, Michael Martin and Ezekiel Owens while training platoon 273 in the summer of 1964 have carried me through rough times, and led to what success I can claim in life. In college, in my earlier political career, and in my current job as an association manager, my DIs were always with me, guiding me, helping me, urging me on and kicking my tail when I need it. I may not think about them daily but for over 35 years, their training and spirit has been an inseparable part of my life. Schools, colleges, and even the other services educate the brain. Marine training burns deep in the heart and the bone.

I would like to share some of the lessons they gave me:

- Challenge yourself, as you can always do more than you think you can.
- Balance physical and mental activity. You need both to succeed.
- Individual effort is important, but teamwork wins battles.
- Courage isn't the absence of fear; courage is being afraid and still doing what needs to be done.
- It's what you do when you just can't do anymore that determines the outcome.
- The great creations of the human race aren't buildings or machines, but the concepts of duty, honor, loyalty, teamwork, and freedom.
- Learn to laugh at discomfort and trouble, it makes misfortune lighter, and annoys your enemies.
- Without pride, you don't have anything.
- Honor those who went before and set a standard for you.
- Always give more than you expect to get.
- Real discipline comes from within.
- When you let the team down, you let yourself down.
- Make your mom proud.
- The people around you are entitled to your best; so are you.
- Properly motivated, even the weakest will make a contribution.
- When you go out in the world, it's good to have Marines at your side.
- Respect has to be earned.
- A vigorous attack is usually more effective and safer than a plodding approach.

Space will not allow all the lessons learned by Robert Hall; the above is an excerpt of many more.

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TartanMarine@aol.com
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Former Staff Sergeant Robert A. Hall served as a Marine from 1964 to 1968, and was a radio relay team chief at Khe Sanh in 1967. He later served five terms in the Massachusetts State Senate. While a Senator, he rejoined the Marine reserves, serving from 1977 to 1983. Currently, he manages associations and is a part-time freelance writer. He lives with his wife, Bonnie, in Oaklyn, NJ.

Cedar Point Information and Status Report

By Bill Donoghue

There continues to be sporadic uprisings by minorities in Vietnam due to their treatment by the government. As a result, internal security police severely restrict movement of foreign visitors to many areas that need our assistance. Our efforts continue to be a protracted battle convincing officials that the Cedar Point Foundation has no political or religious goals.

The Cedar Point Foundation's continued persistence does pay off. Government officials do remember us. Most non-government organizations come into an area, throw around a great deal of money for projects and then leave, never to return. Quite often these projects have no real impact on the minority people, but merely serve to line the pockets of officials, leaving behind nothing more than an empty shell of a building for some program (i.e., AIDS education) with no funding to actually run the program. And so it sits, an empty reminder of yet another unfulfilled promise.

We continue to listen to the village elders' concerns and needs. We continue to chip away, year after year at these problems; water wells, medical aid, education opportunities for the children and now the latest problem, repairs to homes. In an effort to stop slash and burn destruction of the tropical forest, the Vietnamese government has prohibited cutting down trees. Unfortunately, typhoons in recent years have severely damaged most Bru homes. These homes are constructed of indigenous materials, thatched roofs, log support columns and wood floors and walls. It's illegal to cut trees to repair the damage. The Bru now have to use concrete support columns and fiber or cement tile roofs. The problem is that the average Bru makes only a few hundred dollars per year; barely enough to feed their family, there is simply no money (government or otherwise) to repair homes. Housing continues to be a problem that needs to be addressed. As the materials necessary to construct or repair their houses becomes sparser and scarcer, the Bru must turn away from traditional materials. The large logs that support their stilted houses need to be replaced with cement columns. The thatch roofs, which need to be repaired often, need to be replaced with sheets of tin or fibro cement panels.

The cost to do this does not come cheap, especially if your yearly income is just a few hundred dollars. The 12 concrete columns needed for a home cost about $35 each for a total of almost $500 when everything is figured in (transportation of materials, etc.) Another $500 is needed for the fibro cement roofing panels and a final $500 for lumber to construct the floor and walls.

The village elders are concerned that if just a few houses are upgraded at a time, that jealousies could develop that will divide the community. A typical Bru community consists of 20 to 30 families. With one home costing $1,500 USD, then $30,000 to $45,000 will be needed to rebuild each community. If we can find the money, we will be able to provide a low maintenance house that does not require the continual destruction of the rain forest. Bru time is now spent searching for scarce materials to cut down, and could now be redirected towards cash crop production. Use of non-indigenous materials to repair homes would just about eliminate slash and burn activity in the area.

This trip was one of the most successful, even though we were not allowed into Thon Cheng. We were allowed into a new community (Lang Vay) and in front of village elders, were allowed to outline our plan for present and future assistance. It was quite apparent that money speaks and that a prime reason for success was the amount of this trip's assistance. Cedar Point must continue to search out new sources of funding and funding in greater amounts. It is extremely important that anyone with a vested interest in helping the Bru explores his or her personal contacts and determines if there is someone who is affluent and willing to assist us. Possibly, there is a silent donor out there who would provide substantial funding for each trip, which could make a difference.

Our Khe Sanh Brothers Are Still Seving Their Country

Hi Jim,

Sorry I haven't been keeping up with my e-mail. I took a new job since we last corresponded. I am now the only Aero Medical Evacuation Consultant to the USAF. I work down in San Antonio at Brooks AFB. I am trying to build a new system for the Air Force. Since I left Aero Medevac about 25 years ago, it has gone down the tube. We are in really bad shape when it comes to moving our wounded. I'm sure you will recall when the U.S.S. Cole was hit last November. Well, the USAF is so low on cargo/AE airplanes that we couldn't get to those guys in time, so we had to ask the French Air Force to fly their airplane over from Djibouti, Africa, and pick our sailors up. I'm doing my best to fix this as fast as I can.

During the last administration, the USAF budget was cut by a total of 47%. Our AF generals did the best they could, but they had to maintain what we call the "Tooth to Tail Ratio." Tooth being our fighters, bombers, and tankers. Tail being our cargo or airlift aircraft. So they cut the tail off. They did not fund the repair and replacement of any of our cargo aircraft for 8 years. It almost makes me cry to think that the United States cannot even move our own wounded people. We are currently moving over 10,800 patients a year out of the Pacific Area.

We are rapidly coming to the place where we will have to use an even older airplane that has been maintained for airevac. We will start using the KC-135 soon. It is a tanker but has room on its upper deck for patients, if we do it right. The KC-135 is one of the oldest airplanes in the USAF inventory. You may recall it's civilian version, the Boeing 707, the first U.S. jet Airliner. It was maintained because it's part of the "tooth."

Still we are not allowed to modify this aircraft in any way, so I am trying to build a system that will not require any aircraft modifications. I'm calling it Roll-on/Roll-off. I'm using the 463L Cargo Pallets to haul our patients on. To do this, we have to have the pallets re-built so they will hold two litter stanchions and three seats. I've got those being built right now. I also am trying to build a system so I can roll-on our medical oxygen system with the patients, since these airplanes have no oxygen for the patients in the back. They also do not have any electricity in the back, so I am trying to buy fuel cells to generate all the electricity we need. I am buying several other items, so I haven't let my shirttail hit my back since I took this job.

I hope that I can get some sort of a system cobbled together before we have another war because if I don't, we will have a disaster on our hands. As you know, I live in Austin, and Brooks AFB is in San Antonio, some 87 miles away. So I am commuting back and forth every day and it doesn't leave me much time to eat and sleep, much less to answer my e-mail. So please forgive me for not writing more often. By the way, I quit a job that was paying me nearly twice what this one pays, because of the real need to fix the Aero Medical Evacuation System. I could not live with myself if our young troops had to die overseas because we couldn't get them moved back home. I could use a prayer or two if you have time.

Semper Fi,
Ira Johnson
M/Co 3/9

PUBLISHER NOTE: Letter from Ira Johnson to our secretary, James "Jimbo" Wodecki

A Battery Commander Remembers

When I first arrived in Vietnam in 1967, I was assigned to HQ 3RD Marine Division. I was the Combat Operations Center G-3 Watch Officer on the midnight to 8 AM shift, and also briefed the CG at his Staff meeting every morning. My supervisor was a Lt. Col (don't remember his name but he was a cool guy) who told me that when he was out in the field commanding a battalion, he used to cut the tops off the C-rations packages and send them home as postcards. I did that at Khe Sanh with the notation, "Greetings from the underground paradise of the Far East."

When I arrived at Khe Sanh, it was late November 1967, and everything was pretty quiet. The first task at hand was an inspection of the Battery area. First Sgt. Keith had the troops dig bunkers for housing instead of living above ground, so they were ready for any attack. The Battery was split up with 3 105s at the Combat Base, and the other 3 guns on Hill 881 under the command of 1ST Lt. Biondo. We also had 155 howitzers, 4.2, mortars and a search light platoon in the Battery area. The area was surrounded by barbed wire to keep the locals out. That proved to be a great idea as during the siege we never took a direct hit on the guns because the locals never could survey our locations.

Shortly after taking command of the Battery, I held an inspection of the Battery and found that the living conditions in the bunkers was deplorable. I found we had a dog as a Battery mascot that had mange. We also had two ducks in an outdoor pen. The troops did clean up the dog and their area. Later, during the first night of the Siege, I found myself in a bunker with the dog. When the tear gas in the ammo dump blew, I found myself sharing my gas mask with the dog. Later, one of the troops rotating to the states took the dog home with him. The ducks took a direct hit that first night and that was the end of them. The inspection was timely because a short time later, Lt Col Hennelly took command of the Battalion and held a full-scale inspection of the Battery area.

Christmas was not a very cheery time. The NVA broke the truce on Christmas Eve, and the traditional Christmas meal at the mess hall was typical of their terrible meals. I've had bad food before, but never any as bad as the food served in the mess hall at Khe Sanh. I want to point out that the mess hall was run by the grunts and not by the artillery. During the first morning of the Siege when the NVA was throwing everything they had at the Battery position, I heard a loud cheer go up from the troops. I looked over to see the mess hall burning down to the ground.

Later in the Siege, the 13TH Marine Battalion Mess Sergeant cooked up some sort of hot chicken stew type meal for the Battery. I sent someone to the Battalion HQ to pick up this culinary delight. We had the troops straggle up to a central location to get some of this hot chow. Due to snipers from the hills and incoming hitting at a moment's notice, I wouldn't allow large groups to gather in the open except when we were returning fire. The first guy on the scene for this special meal looked at me and asked how it tasted. I replied that Officers always ate after all the troops were fed. His reply was "You eat it first. If you aren't poisoned, then we'll try it." It was terrible. From then on we ate C-rations and loved them. One of the troops gave me an egg one night. They said they traded with the Air Force for the eggs. They probably stole them. First Sergeant Keith came upon the scene as I was cooking that egg, so I ended up with only half the egg.

I thought I would go back and read the letters I sent my wife while in Vietnam to refresh my memory about the events leading up to the Siege. During the Siege, we received orders to burn all personal items, letters, etc., because they expected us to get overrun and they had evidence that the NVA was sending items like personal letters to the American Peace Movement through Jane Fonda. They would then harass the families back in the States. Whenever I visit a VFW post, they usually have the urinal target with Jane Fonda's face on it. Now that's a great way to take a leak. I noticed that the last time I started reading those letters was about ten years ago, and I had stopped with a letter written on 18 January 1968. Well, I didn't get much further today.

Before the infamous attack on the Combat Base on 21 January, I thought it curious that continual requests from the grunts for artillery fire on NVA in the open were denied clearance. I became convinced that we were being set up as bait. I repeatedly requested that Regiment relocate the Ammo Dump,

or at least split it up into various locations. The Ammo Dump was located between C/ 1/ 13 and the airstrip.

Battalion sent Mark Swearengen, Liaison Officer from 2ND Battalion 94TH Artillery USA to my battery position. They didn't have any living quarters for him, so I had him bunk in with me. When the shit hit the fan, he headed to his post in the FSCC, and I didn't see him again until 25 years later at our reunion in Washington, DC. We started returning fire, but then they hit the Ammo Dump and the whole world was blowing up around us. We lost our wire lines, so we reverted to radio contact with Battalion and used runners to send commands to the guns. Some of the runners were wounded, so I went to each gun and told them to fire their final protective fires, and when they ran out of ammo to hit their spider holes. We had them dig those spider holes to protect against a direct hit on the gun. Unfortunately we lost L/Cpl Jerry O. Stenberg that first morning. He jumped into a spider hole and landed on top of another Marine and took a piece of shrapnel in the head which killed him immediately. The other Marine, whose name I don't remember, never got over that. Later, we sent him on R&R to China Beach where he was wounded and medevaced to the States. Great R&R that was.

One thing that always sticks in my mind was the picture of two grunts walking to Graves Registration the next morning with the body of their buddy wrapped in a poncho. The dead Marine's arm was hanging out of the poncho and dragging on the ground. I stopped them and realized they were both in shock, so I just put his arm back in the poncho and let them continue on their way.

Once the smoke cleared that morning, I was called to Battalion HQ for a meeting. The first thing the Bn C/O wanted was a casualty report and an ammo count. I remember we were fortunate enough to have only one KIA, but I don't remember the actual wounded count. As far as the ammo was concerned, we had only one green smoke round left. When I told the guns to fire until they were out of ammo, they really took me seriously. We probably really confused the gooks by throwing smoke and illumination at them. The Bn C/O briefed us on the situation with the news that 50,000 pissed off NVA surrounded us and there were only 5,000 of us. The airfield was no longer operational and we were out of food, water and ammo. I replied by asking that now that we had them where we wanted them, what the &%%# were we going to do with them?

The decision was made to form a complete 155 Battery and 4.2 Mortar Battery, so that they were moved out of C Battery area. My three guns were then moved into A Battery area to allow EOD time to remove all of the unexploded ammo that had fallen on us when the ammo dump blew up. I left Glenn Prentice and a few other guys behind with a 50 cal. Machine gun and a radio to guard the area. He is still pissed to this day that I left them behind, but they must have been quite effective because the gooks never tried to break through the lines. EOD never did show up to clear our area, so we moved back and did the clean up ourselves. Fortunately, none of us were injured due to exploding grade 3 ammo. Shortly after moving back to our area, they sent B Battery in to reinforce us, and we became a 9-gun Battery which I renamed C Battery 1ST BN 13th Marines Reinforced.

Battalion had a supply of green smoke sent to us for our St. Patrick's Day celebration. The only problem was that the order to fire the green smoke came down early the morning of March 17, and we were still surrounded by dense fog. We fired the green smoke but never got to see it. Some years later I ran into some of the grunts who said they saw it and really enjoyed our St. Pat's Day celebration. I still held on to my one last green smoke round and later that afternoon, I fired it north of Hill 881.

We were under orders not to fire small arms over the heads of friendly troops and not to return fire without clearance. I remember seeing large-caliber machine guns firing from the hills to the north of the runway at C-130s trying to land at KSCB. We kept reporting it, but no action that I knew of was ever taken. One morning one of the gun crews called into the Exec Pit to report an NVA mortar team setting up just outside the wire. I was sure that the grunts would take them under fire but nothing happened. I called in a fire mission from Battery A, then I was going to adjust them onto the target. I waited for what seemed like an eternity for the first round. Well, the first round arrived but it wasn't from A Battery — it was from the NVA mortar, and it landed in the Battery position. I remember yelling over

the wire line "What the hell was that?" and the answer came back from one of the troops, "That's your asshole NVA buddies dropping a round on the battery position." I called Battalion only to find that they were still waiting for clearance. I went out to the gun position, and we rolled the 105 out of the gun pit and down to the wire and blew them away with a direct fire round. That was just the first of many occasions when we took targets under direct fire with a 105 howitzer and also the first of many an ass-chewing from Lt Col Hennelly for opening fire without waiting for clearance. I told him that when we started to receive incoming fire, my guys were always on their guns firing their missions. Unlike A Battery whose wire lines always seemed to go down when incoming was hitting. My theory was that we were surrounded by unfriendly not friendly and that anyone who was shooting at my troops deserved to die quickly.

I never could get Regiment to move the ammo dump from the crazy position it was in, right between the airstrip and my battery. On a clear and sunny day, I watched some Army troops throwing ammo from the back of a truck when one of the rounds went off wounding the two of them. I went in there with my two corpsmen to pull these guys out when the whole ammo dump blew up for the third time. I thought for sure that I was dead. My corpsmen got those guys out and made it back unhurt.

Well, my tour finally came to an end. I left the Battery before they were to drive east out of Khe Sanh. I jumped on a helicopter and headed to Dong Ha. Unfortunately, I had to then take a convoy to Camp Carroll to report into 1ST BN 12TH Marines because the battalion had administrative control of C Battery. I finally got through that chicken shit meeting and headed back to Quang Tri to say goodbye to the Battery. On the morning I was leaving for Danang and my journey to CONUS, the NVA hit us again with rockets. I had the Battery open fire on the position which we could see, and we were able to knock it out. They tried to get us to cease fire; why, I'll never understand.

I still have the plaque that the Battery personnel presented me at Khe Sanh. It reads "Capt. William J. O'Connor, the Best Battery Commander in Vietnam, from the men in Charlie Battery 1/13." That's something I will always treasure.

Always remember in your prayers, our departed Marines: From C/1/13, Phillip F. Sheridan, Delbert L. Leasure, and Jerry O Stenberg, from B /1/13, Allan H. Jordan, Louis C. Goi, and Ronald L. Dempsey.

Captain William O'Connor
C/O C Btry 1/13

The Economic Development of Quang Tri Province — The Khe Sanh Plateau:

The Combined Role of The Economic Free Zone and National Highway No.9

By Gary W. Foster

Located in the narrowest part of Vietnam, Quang Tri Province sits astride north/south and east/west national economic trade and development and will play an important role to the overall future development of the Republic of Vietnam. Primarily an agrarian based economy, western Quang Tri Province has been designated as an economic free trade and development zone. From Lao Bao in the west to Hoang Hoa 25 kilometers farther east, the region is developing into a commercial, industrial, and agricultural economic area.

National Highway 9 will be the springboard for this development, because it will improve access to and from Laos, Da Nang, and the Cua Viet Port. Hotly contested during the Vietnam War, the highway today is uncongested and quiet and continues to serve as the only corridor in an area once referred to as "Eye Corp."

At present, as was the case in the late 60s and early 70s, National Highway 9 is a two-lane road crossing about 45 streams and rivers over reconstructed bridges of varying configurations. The alignment of the road today exists as it was then. The road is dangerous in places due to narrowness, blind curves (as at the Rao Quan river crossing), near proximity of villages, and diverse types of vehicles. Although the road is not as heavily traveled as Highway 1, which Highway 9 intersects at Dong Ha, it is nevertheless of major importance, especially to cross-border trade with Laos and Thailand. Its rehabilitation and upgrade will clearly reduce travel time,

enhance road safety, and provide a strong foundation for the economic development that is planned in Quang Tri Province. Furthermore, it will provide improved travel times to Hue and Danang for commerce originating in Laos, thereby providing an efficient opening to new market opportunities.

Spending any time in western Quang Tri Province, it is inescapable for one not to note that the major item of trade on a continuous basis is lumber, through the harvest of large trees, which originate in Laos, and, some say, are illegally transported across the border into Vietnam . The harvested lumber is transported across the border at Lao Bao to the Cua Viet Port where the timber is loaded on to large barges for further transport to future end-users. Another product of the area includes coffee, which has a pronounced history in the region since before the war and which continues to this day. Though rice is grown in the narrow valleys, rice from this part of Vietnam contributes little to the economy of the country. Other products include fruit and vegetables, but again like rice, these are of little economic consequence outside the immediate region.

Khe Sanh village or Hoang Hoa hasn't changed much in physical presence. It is a narrow village which straddles Highway 9 and has grown in length along the corridor. The village has undergone some upgrades with a slight increase in population in the last year as economic activity has increased incrementally. This activity has occurred, more importantly, because it has become clear that western Quang Tri Province will realize an economic boom within the next year; and more so over the next three years when the upgrade and re-construction of Highway 9 will be completed.

As many USMC vets who have returned to Quang Tri Province have observed, Khe Sanh today is a serene town that contains small roadside restaurants, a few hotels, and small shops. There is no major industry. Although there is hardly a sidewalk, one can walk the length of the town in less than 30 minutes. Once off the highway to either side, there is no real physical depth to the town. Obviously, maintaining a close proximity to Highway 9 is the key to the sustained livelihood of Khe Sanh's inhabitants and represents the thread supporting the small town's tenuous economy. One would also note that the townsfolk are receptively welcoming and friendly. One is never hounded in the town, but clearly any westerner, ostensibly assumed to be American, is a curiosity.

Cottage type industries are beginning to be introduced to Khe Sanh, and these are typical of those found in more accessible Vietnamese villages, especially along Highway 1. However, there is little to export from them. The scrap metal trade, once reported to have thrived after the evacuation of Khe Sanh towards the end of the war, no longer exists. In fact, unless one knows what to look for, there are hardly any noticeable remnants of the conflict that ensued there 30 years ago.

Small villages and localized micro population centers have sprung up in the valleys around Hill 861 and elsewhere. The villages are served today by the narrow road that accesses the old Khe Sanh combat base from Highway 9. The road leading to the combat base and to the hills beyond is now under construction at certain points. Plans are being developed for this road's future upgrade to a national standard that will require minimum maintenance. This improved road will provide access to an area beyond the surrounding hills heretofore inaccessible. Agriculture will be the primary focus in this rural area.

Further east of Khe Sanh and to the right of the highway is a large development that has taken place only within the last year. This development serves as a reinforcement of the serious commitment that the Vietnamese government has made towards the development of the region through the use of an economic free zone and improved highway. The development includes all the elements of a large scale commercial or industrial park found throughout the United States today. Large flat concreted areas, tilt-up type construction for warehouses and manufacturing plants, and sophisticated grading and drainage and lighting are characteristics of the development. The development sits in stark contrast to the surrounding area, rendering other business establishments archaic and seemingly redundant. The current and future development will induce people from Dong Ha and beyond to move to the Khe Sanh Plateau because of newly created employment opportunities.

There appear to be no plans for the development of the Khe Sanh combat base at this point in time. It is apparently considered a "vestige" (historical site)

by the Vietnamese government and this may preclude any development. However, on the Khe Sanh plateau in general, agriculture is prolific. The area is covered with coffee plants, all being tended to by local farmers. The eastern end, and parts of the western end of the combat base, true to the surrounding area, are planted in coffee plants. Otherwise, the area of the base itself, excluding the exposed laterite area around the museum building is overgrown by trees and elephant grass.

The Khe Sanh plateau itself represents important potential for economic development much like the lower part of the plateau east of Khe Sanh village, which is now under major development. There is plenty of room on the overall plateau for development. This continued development would induce further residential growth and migration of people from the outlying villages and from the larger commercial areas of the region.

Highway 9, once reconstructed, will provide reliable service to nearby Laos and distant Dong Ha in the opposite direction, and to Hue and Da Nang further south, and will provide the residents of the Khe Sanh plateau with new access to commercial trade and destinations. Sleepy Khe Sanh village, once the intense focus of two opposing armies with diametrically opposed agendas, is about to awake to a new type of turmoil, a turmoil that promises economic prosperity for the region. While few inhabitants of Khe Sanh have funds sufficient enough to travel even to Dong Ha, in time, with the combination of the enhanced commercialization of the economic free zone and improved road transportation, all of Vietnam will be open to the residents of the Khe Sanh Plateau.

Gary Foster is a Vice President with Stanley Consultants, headquartered in Muscatine, Iowa. He travels often to Vietnam and currently serves as Project Principal on the rehabilitation and upgrade of National Highway No. 9 in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam. He can be reached by telephone at 563-264-6305.

5/20/2001

The following are the facts surrounding an engagement that occurred between U.S. Marines and Army of North Vietnamese forces in the former Republic of Vietnam, near Con Thien, on June 6, 1968.

By James Kaylor

On June 3, 2000, the City of Closter, New Jersey, will rededicate a park named for a fallen Marine who was killed in action in the former Republic of Vietnam. Corporal Kenneth Schauble was the squad leader of Second Squad, Second Platoon, Company E, Second Battalion, Twenty Sixth Marines, Third Marine Division. I was a Private First Class assigned as a grenadier with Second Squad, Second Platoon. The Second Platoon was assigned to perform a security sweep to the southeast of Con Thien. These sweeps were done daily by each rifle company assigned to the base to preclude North Vietnamese forces from encroaching on our position.

On June 6, 1968, the platoon leader was Staff Sergeant Allen J. Baker. Company E had a shortage of officers at the time, requiring enlisted men to perform their duties. On this day, we moved out southeast along a dirt road that intersected the main road to Con Thien. This road was about one kilometer south of the main base. The area was relatively flat and open. It was formerly rice paddies, as it appeared hedgerowed into about one-acre block parcels. There were three old, bombed-out, Catholic church structures along a dirt road that were significant landmarks. We proceeded southeast with first and third squad on line. Second squad was in a staggered column, following behind, where first and third squad intersected. Our crew-served weapons (machine guns & mortar) were with the second squad.

At about 1100 hours, we were east of the third church by about 500 meters when our right flank erupted in a heavy volume of enemy automatic weapons fire, interspersed with rocket-propelled grenade fire. Our entire right flank from our lead element to our rear element was under heavy fire. The squad that had been on line on our right flank was in the midst of a hidden enemy bunker complex. Second squad returned the enemy's fire as we moved to our left flank. We found cover in a sunken trail that extended parallel to the enemy's positions. First squad, which was on our left flank, now moved into the sunken trail and engaged the North Vietnamese with us.

The exchange of fire was very intense and somewhat confusing, especially for some of our newer Marines. I remember having to tell a couple to fire at the enemy. We, in the sunken trail, were unaware of the plight of our right flank. We were unable to contact them via radio, and the enemy fire was too heavy to move near them. We continued to engage the enemy positions that were south, east and west of us. Our 60mm mortar was deployed and supporting our effort along with our 3.5 inch rocket launcher. Leldon D. Barnett detached the mortar from its bipod. He then utilized the weapon in the "lever fire" mode while aiming the tube with his hands. Members of the mortar crew later told me that L/Cpl. Barnett struck a fleeing enemy soldier directly in the back with a 60mm high explosive mortar round at a distance of less than 50 meters. L/Cpl. Barnett fired the mortar in much the same manner I was firing my M-79 grenade launcher until he exhausted his supply of mortar rounds.

The engagement continued in various states of intensity. We learned that our platoon leader, Staff Sergeant Baker had been killed when the action began. Whoever the platoon sergeant was now, we were unaware, so we were without leadership. Second squad leader, Corporal Kenneth Schauble, assumed command of second platoon. He tried to call in artillery and gunship support. Our artillery forward observer Lance Cpl. Steve McDonell indicated that we were too close to the enemy for support. Cpl. Schauble and I discussed firing artillery to the enemy's rear to preclude their withdrawal; I believe L/Cpl. McDonell, who was with artillery, did this. The battle then stalemated, as the enemy did not advance or attempt to disengage. We were unable to receive helicopter support, as they were all engaged elsewhere.

Cpl. Schauble sent a fire team north to locate an avenue for a flanking movement. This team was immediately taken under small arms fire and forced to return to the sunken trail. We knew we were completely surrounded! The sunken trail we were defending was approximately two- to three-feet deep and six- to eight-feet across. The vegetation produced sparse shade, as the day was very hot and humid. We had many near heat casualties, as the midday sun went overhead.

At one point, we had one of the last M-72 LAWS, which we wanted to use on an enemy position locat-

ed in a large clump of bamboo about 50 feet to our front. We were all reluctant to fire the launcher, as its use required too much exposure to enemy fire. After a brief discussion with the Marines around me, I came up with a plan. I extended the LAW and removed the safety clip while pointing the launcher in the general direction of the target. I squatted on my haunches and told the other Marines to give me suppressive fire, which they did. I sprang to my feet, a la "Jack-in-the Box," discharged the rocket launcher and then fell on my back. I remember hearing the enemy rifle bullets cracking where I had just stood to fire the rocket. We all kind of laughed as the rocket hit the center of the base of the bamboo clump.

As the hours wore on, Cpl. Schauble was concerned with the fate of the rest of the platoon on the right flank. He was concerned that we were low on ammunition and water, as well as the breakdown of communications equipment. The North Vietnamese engaged us with ferocity, determination, and duration, all in daylight; that was unusual for them. After four hours, we were still locked in a stalemated action with regular North Vietnamese army troops. They were in no hurry to disengage or conclude combat with us. Another concern was the lack of reinforcements from Con Thien itself, considering our close proximity to that base. We did not know the size of the force we engaged, other than it was larger than our platoon. Cpl. Schauble was worried that any rescue force from Con Thien may have also been ambushed.

We continued to exchange sporadic fire with the enemy until late afternoon. We had nearly exhausted our small arms ammunition and much of our water. Our mortar, rocket, and machine gun ammunition, had long been expended. Because we had not been rescued and did not know if help was responding, Cpl. Schauble decided that time had come to aggressively challenge the enemy and consolidate with our right flank. At this point, we were unaware of their circumstances. Echo Company Marines prided themselves on never leaving anyone living or dead, ever. We were not about to leave anyone on this battlefield.

Cpl. Schauble deployed first squad to our right flank to provide cover for second squad, which would press the attack in a skirmish formation. First squad successfully moved into position supporting us with grazing rifle fire. Schauble positioned most of the remaining Marines with second squad for the assault. We were all positioned and looking at Schauble who was in the middle of the skirmish line. I was to the right side of the line. Directly to my left was PFC Richard Eemisse; we were all waiting anxiously for the command to attack. Schauble raised his right hand motioning forward and verbally gave the command to attack. The entire line leaped to its feet as one, yelling and firing their weapons as we ran forward. I had the platoon's remaining five or six M-79 rounds in my possession and fired sparingly as we ran forward. While attacking, my M-79 became inoperable. Our first objective was a hedgerow about twenty meters to our front. This hedgerow concealed many enemy positions, and we easily took it with only two or three casualties.

First squad maintained a steady flow of grazing fire from our right flank in their effort to suppress enemy fire. The momentum of the attack carried us through the first hedgerow into another field that was approximately fifty meters across, bordered by another hedgerow. At this point, the man to my left, PFC Eemisse was throwing a hand grenade when he was struck by enemy gunfire. The grenade he was throwing squibbed about ten feet directly in front of me and exploded. It surprised me that I was not wounded.

We continued about half way across the second field approaching Cpl. Callaway's position, when my attention was drawn to my left front along the forward edge of a very large bomb crater. I saw a very extensive defensive position that was not well concealed. The North Vietnamese had dug trench lines connecting their positions. I could see several enemy troops moving from position to position. There was an extensive amount of fire coming from these positions. Two enemy soldiers were operating a light machine gun (RPD type), and several more were firing AK47's. They were firing at the Marines to my left without let up.

Private First Class William A. Hayes was to my right a few feet away. We looked at each other without saying a word; the expression on his face told me that he was thinking the same thing. If we're caught in the open, we are dead! If we tried running back to the hedgerow we would be shot in the back, as it was at least 20 meters. Dropping to the prone would have left us in the open field, in plain view and exposed to their fire. In the split second it took for

PFC Hayes and me to look at each other, we had the same idea. Knowing we were going to die, we both changed directions and sprinted directly toward the light machine gun. PFC Hayes was helmetless and bare chested, he held a hand grenade in each hand as he sprinted toward the enemy. The North Vietnamese manning the bunkers must have been concentrating on their front as they only began moving to fire at us when we were about twenty- to twenty-five feet from them. The enemy RPD began firing on PFC Hayes, as he was the closest. I was firing my .45 pistol while at a dead run directly at the enemy. Our close proximity and being at a dead run, put us on top of the enemy in short order.

PFC Hayes tossed the grenade in his left hand, underhanded, toward the machine gun. The grenade he had in his right hand, he raised over his head to throw straight down into the enemy position. He was killed by the machine gun, which he was attacking. At that instant, PFC Hayes' second grenade sailed over the bunker. They both exploded within moments of each other. The North Vietnamese in the bunker appeared frantic. PFC Haye's body fell headlong into their position. The enemy soldiers pushed Hayes' body to their left, as the gunner tried to bring the machine gun to bear on me. I remember looking down at four enemy faces as I fired my pistol. The enemy gunner continued firing the machine gun, but could not quite turn the gun on me quick enough. His bullets were all fired to my right. I quickly adjusted to my left, dropping to my right knee to avoid being shot. I was muzzle-to-muzzle with the RPD.

I remember at this point thinking, "This is it!" I could not tell what affect my pistol had on the enemy soldiers. As I fired, the muzzle of the machine gun was blasting near my face. I turned my head to the left in a grimace as the air turbulence and muzzle blast of a bullet slapped me on the right side of my head. When I did not die, I looked back forward and saw the muzzle of the machine gun point straight up in the air, still firing. It and the four North Vietnamese faces disappeared below the forward edge of their bunker, and their firing ceased. I determined that to continue the attack into the enemy position with three rounds left was not practical. This action all took place in the duration of the time it took Bill Hayes' last grenade to detonate. Approximately 4 to 5 seconds.

I threw a grenade at the enemy bunker. For the next few moments, there was no activity on either side. I did not know how many casualties the enemy sustained, if any, and visually surveyed my surroundings. I was unable to detect any signs of life anywhere on the immediate battlefield. I yelled out several of my fellow squad member's names. There were no response of any kind. Looking to my left, I saw the bodies of at least two dead Marines. I yelled a few more times, trying to find any live souls. I thought this would be my last day to live. I then heard a voice way behind me; it was PFC James M. Terry. He and Private Brien A. Hayes, were pinned down approximately 30 meters to my rear. They were the only other two Marines that were uninjured in the charge, other than myself.

I told them to throw me some grenades so I could continue the attack on the enemy positions. PFC Terry responded that he and PVT Hayes were out of grenades. I instructed them to move around and retrieve the ammunition and grenades from our casualties. PFC Terry threw about four hand grenades toward me, but they did not land in my crater. They landed to the right and left and somewhat to the rear of my crater. I was angry and frustrated at not having the grenades in my possession. To try and get them would have been fatal, as I would have been exposed to the enemy.

I had them throw me a smoke grenade, which I used to blind the enemy. When I thought no enemy soldier could see me through the smoke, I jumped from my crater running, picking up the fragmentation grenades that Terry and Hayes previously had thrown to me. The last grenade I tossed, took one bounce and went right into the enemy bunker. When it exploded I remember seeing items of enemy uniforms and equipment blown skyward. I was once again out of grenades and had only my pistol left to defend myself. I was aware of PFC Hayes' body lying in front of the enemy position. PFC Terry and PVT Hayes continued to locate our casualties and strip them of their armament. They were able to locate and throw me a couple of more grenades, which I threw into the enemy position. I asked them to find me another smoke grenade, which they did. Again, I used it to blind the enemy's position. I then ran back to Terry and Hayes' location and learned that we were the only ones left from the charge who were not wounded or killed.

We discussed what to do next as we had no leader. I decided not to give up what we had gained, so I told Terry and Hayes to remain where they were, while I obtained more ammunition. I took an empty claymore mine bag and ran the distance back to our original starting point in the sunken trail. I prayed with all my being that an enemy sniper would not kill me as I ran. When I arrived back at the sunken trail, I was met by our forward observer, L/Cpl. Steve McDonell, who asked what was happening and where everyone else was. I told him, they're all dead except for three of us! I could see the look of desperation and a sense of very real concern on his face. McDonell said that he had the only operable radio of the six we started with. I told him the enemy was stronger than we anticipated, and a secondary defense line decimated us. Cpl. Callaway was the only member of our right flank that I saw, and he was pinned down among the enemy's positions. I did not know if he was still alive. We still did not know the fate of the rest of our right flank. I distributed the ammunition evenly, giving each of us about three magazines apiece. With our rifles charged, we walked on line, directing slow deliberate fire at the enemy's positions. PFC Campbell's rifle jammed. I removed the magazine and discarded the useless rifle. I immediately located another dead Marine's rifle, loaded it with my magazine and continued in the advance. When we were about twenty feet from the enemy bunker line by the crater I used earlier, we stopped in our tracks! During this final assault, we had not received any enemy fire from the bunkers. Directly beyond the bunkers at about two- to three-hundred meters, we could see at least fifty or more men approaching us being lead by a man waving a pistol.

PFC Terry and I looked at each other — we each knew we were in serious trouble. We thought that this was an enemy counter-attack, as this force was coming from the southeast. Terry took a prone position and said he was going to shoot the leader. I was curious as to why we were not being fired upon in our exposed position as we watched them advance. At this point I was demoralized and made no effort to hide from their view. I was waiting for us to be cut down in a hail of gun fire as we watched them approach. Terry was aiming his rifle when I pushed his rifle barrel down. Terry then recognized, as I had, that the advancing troops were Americans. A great sense of relief came over us as we waited for them. They entered the enemy bunker complex from the rear. This was done without incident. The fighting was over for this day.

The leader of our rescuers was Lt. Rudd, an officer of Hotel Company, 2/26. His troops performed the task of cleaning up after the fight. I went along our line of attack and found many of our casualties. I heard groaning near where I emerged from the first hedgerow when second squad attacked. I found my friend, PFC Rick Ernissee, gravely wounded. I could not see his wound, but when I tried to roll him over, my fingers went into his head. A bullet entered the top of his helmet, striking him at the forward scalp line. The bullet split his cranium all the way to the back of his head. The wound was about two inches wide and brain matter exposed. He was evacuated immediately. We found Lance Cpl. Ronald Kalblienn, at the extreme left flank of second squad's attack. He had been driven to cover at the first hedgerow and was forced to remain there until the battle was over. We found Cpl. Schauble's body near the first hedgerow. A bullet entered his open mouth, exiting near the back of hishead. I found the bodies of PFC Dennis Lobbezoo and PFC Walter Seawright lying in the field in front of the enemy bunker complex. They were killed during the attack on the bunkers by the second squad.

We then discovered the grim reality of the right flank's fate. Most of them were killed in, and among, the enemy's hidden positions. Our Platoon leader, S/Sgt Baker was also found among this group with his radio operator, L/Cpl Daniel L. Prock. After the dead and debris of battle was cleared away, the numbers I recall in this action were about fourteen Marines killed in action and a lesser number, about eleven or twelve, wounded in action from small arms and were taken to hospitals for treatment. I do not remember the exact numbers, but the number of North Vietnamese dead we recovered was the same as the number of Marines killed.

James Kaylor
E Co 2/26

Philadelphia Naval Hospital

By Joseph Olszewski, Alamo, California

On Saturday, June 9, 2001, I heard on the radio that the Philadelphia Naval Hospital was destroyed to make room for a sports complex parking lot. I believe the hospital had been closed for years, as it was first opened during World War II and was already past its prime in the late 60s.

On March 6, 1968, I was admitted to the Philadelphia Naval Hospital as a foot amputee. I stepped on a mine on Hill 558 in late February 1968, was medevac'd to the USS Repose where my foot was amputated and was later transported to a naval hospital in Japan for several days of rest. In the Navy and the Marine Corps if you became an amputee in the 60s you were sent either to the Oakland, California Naval Hospital (called "Oak Knoll" at the time) or the Philadelphia Naval Hospital, depending on your home town. Since I was born and raised in Chicago, I was sent to Philadelphia.

My first day at the hospital was a shock, as the first patient to visit me was Lieutenant Paul Barentz who had lost both legs at the hip. I knew him in USMC Basic School, and we were both Platoon Commanders for 2/26 at Phu Bai. One night in November 1967 he got turned around on an ambush and one of his troops shot him in both legs. I was discharged from the hospital in September 1968, and Paul was still a patient.

I spent seven months at the hospital, as I needed additional surgery. When you have an amputation, the blood vessels on the end of your stump shrink, and it takes time for your blood circulation to improve. Until that circulation improves, doctors will not perform additional surgery, even though in my case it was strictly for cosmetic purposes. The end of my stump had too much side flesh and the doctors wanted to hone it down so it would fit better in the prosthesis, which would give me more mobility. I believe that surgery took place in July, and it took me a few months to get through the therapy and to begin walking with the aid of the prosthesis.

Throughout the seven months of my stay, I experienced both joy and pain. The pain was seeing all the casualties from the Tet Offensive streaming into the hospital, including those who were already experiencing psychological problems. I remember going to the dining room once on crutches and seeing all the patients from the mental ward being lined up in the hallway with corpsmen stationed every ten yards or so to control them. I met one of those patients once at the Naval Base Officers Club bar, and I was shocked to learn that he was a Navy brain surgeon who just performed too many surgeries for his nervous system and "lost it." Other painful experiences were talking to patients who were so badly mutilated that they were dead set on committing suicide once they were released from the hospital and no longer under the care of the staff. I remember one sad experience when Veterans Administration officials had to tell patients suffering from schizophrenia that they were unfit for active duty and had to leave the Marine Corps.

But there were also great times. Since we were all on one ward on the twelfth floor, all of us officers used to party big-time at the Naval Yard Officers Club (the hospital was next door to the Philadelphia Navy Yard where the battleship USS New Jersey was retrofitted and eventually sent to 'Nam for sea duty.) The nurses who cared for us during the day would show up at night at the officers club, and we would party until they closed the place. I remember one nurse who taught me how to dance on crutches before I began wearing a prosthesis. Considering that we were both "polluted," it was one great show. On other occasions, all of us would pile into cabs and head for New Jersey, as that's where all the good restaurants were located. Once I remember we had about six nurses with us, and most of the officers were either amputees like me or had other serious conditions that were obvious. We all entered one restaurant and promptly announced that only those who were drunk or crippled were allowed to eat here. Since no other customers left, I guess we plain scared the death out of them.

Every Tuesday morning, there were exercise sessions for the amputees in the hospital, which included stretching and strengthening your weak limb. Being smart-ass Marines, we amputees called these exercise sessions "Stump Rounds." It caught on and even the hospital staff used that phrase. If you had a prosthesis, there were also lessons on how to use and care for it and how to walk properly, as some of us hadn't walked for a long time.

There were also lessons on how to handle crutches. I still have the pair they gave me at the hospital. I once bruised the bone of my stump so badly in the 80s that I was back on crutches for a week. I remember the personnel manager of the company I work for saw me in the elevator one day with these old wooden crutches that had heavy bandages wrapped around the handles for cushioning so I wouldn't bruise my hands (something we learned in "Stump Rounds.") He took one look at those old crutches and called them my "Gouaches."

In between meals, exercise sessions, and doctor appointments, however, there was a lot of downtime, which was boring. Knowing that I was going to be medically retired and married soon, I began working on my résumé and starting sending out letters to corporations in California (my fiancé and I had already decided that California was to be our future home.) That took up time for a while, but soon there wasn't much to do except play cards, watch TV, and continuously check the time to see how much longer it was until breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Of course, there were always new patients to welcome; I also had the honor of assisting the liaison officer with awarding Purple Hearts.

Some of the patients who arrived during my stay were those I had known from either USMC Basic School or from my unit in 'Nam. Lieutenant Clebe McClary was one of the fellow officers I knew in Basic School who had since lost an arm and an eye to a "Bouncing Betty" booby trap on a recon patrol. In the 70s, I read a book about Third Recon, and there was a chapter about Clebe and how he gave motivational speeches for a living in places like state prisons. At the KSV San Diego Reunion last September, I met an Air Force Chaplain who also hires Clebe for his speaking ability. Ron Vivona was another new patient who was one of the Marines from my platoon. He lost both legs on April 6, 1968 in a bunker ambush on Hill 700 near Khe Sanh. One of my roommates on the officers' ward was a Navy Pilot named Terry Gomer. He was in jet training at Corpus Christi, Texas, when the controls of the plane he was flying jammed, and he ejected. The problem was he was already going so fast that the wind broke his thighs across the seat when he bailed-out. He said he was awake as he parachuted down until he saw the plane crash. That's when he blacked out and the next thing he remembered was a farmer trying to help him in the field where he landed on two broken legs. The doctors inserted metal rods into his thighs to help heal the broken bones. At that time, he was my roommate for about four months. Terry later married one of the nurses we partied with, and he later became the best man for my wedding in October. Last that I heard he was still married to that nurse and living in Atlanta.

During my seven months being hospitalized, either my fiancé would come to Philadelphia to visit me, or I would take the train from Philadelphia to Washington, DC to be with her on weekends once I became proficient with crutches and later, walking with a prosthesis. My 60-year-old mother flew out once in March to visit me. It was the first time she had ever traveled on a plane. This was during the beginning of my stay when I wasn't even strong enough to have meals in the dining room. When my mother saw the food I was served in my room, she asked me if there was something else I wanted to eat that she could bring to me the next day. I said "a pizza and a chocolate shake," and sure enough, she brought that meal for me. The next day my in-laws-to-be also came to visit me. It was the first time I had met my father-in-law, and I remember not liking him. Today I'm 58 and he's 90 — I still don't like him.

After I married and relocated to California, I had some hospital appointments at the Oakland Naval Hospital and at the Martinez Veterans Hospital. I had new prostheses made at Dan Muth & Company located in San Francisco (which had a VA contract to make prostheses for veterans which lasted twenty years.) None of those facilities came close to the camaraderie and experiences I had at the Philadelphia Naval Hospital. Still, it was a historic place, and I was sad to learn that the building no longer exists.

Type II Diabetes Covered

About 200,000 Vietnam Veterans nationwide now qualify for Veterans Affairs disability benefits since Type II diabetes has become a covered condition. The anticipated rush of applications comes at a time when the Veterans Affairs Department is coping with a backlog of claims. More than 500,000 claims are awaiting decision across the country.

"We're already making plans to deal with the increased work load," said Dean Tayloe, director of public affairs for the Denver regional office. To qualify for diabetes benefits, veterans must have served in Vietnam between Jan 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, and must have been honorably discharged from military service. The VA will review medical records of those who apply and when appropiate, approve the claim without requiring a separate medical exam," Tayloe said.

"Applicants can expect to wait three to six months for a decision," he also said. Veterans whose claims are approved will receive $101 to $2,100 in monthy disability benefits, depending on the severity of their illness. The VA estimates 9 percent of the nation's 2.3 million Vietnam veterans have Type II diabetes. About 16 percent of veterans receiving care from VA medical facilities have this type of diabetes.

The disease, believed to be connected to Vietnam veterans' exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange, derails the body's ability to process hormonal insulin, resulting in high blood sugar levels. Vietnam veterans with questions about Type II diabetes benefits can call the VA at 800-749-8387.

Chicago Sun-Times, 10 July 2001

Khe Sanh

Purple mountains ringed the forlorn outpost. Mud, red, stinking, and sucking at ya boots clinging to every niche of man and machine. 20 January, monsoon comes with a hot breath of brim-stoned war. Southward it slammed careening headlong pounding the Khe Sanh with one five twos. They howled from dawn till dusk and past the divide from night to day. Their incoming lethal whine cut a wide swath through our Marine ranks.

It was the beginning of the saddest of days when the sun broke over those eastern peaks dragging with it the swelter of Nam. For the fallen warriors could only hear the song of Valkyrie, calling them to the great hall of Odin. For those fallen warriors, who were not Marine, Odin awaits. However, combat Marine dead are ushered through the gates of heaven in a column of files, to stand their eternal guard. For all who know the hymn, know that if you ever look towards heaven's gates you will see that the streets are guarded by United States Marines. For only the few and proud rate.

A 'Bama spring will not pass my way again. Ahhhh, to see the Crimson Tide, and the War Eagle, tuck and roll and make for a goal, now that, I'll miss. Memories of my childhood are fading as if vapors in the wind. A passing shower reminds me of ole Dixie. Now I lay here, in this bag o' rot my corpse stacked at the tarmac edge, I'm registered and awaiting transport to my home. An H-34 blades yet turning now lay crumpled burning. I heard my mother's gentle payers comfort me and caress my now vanquished brain, For Jehovah has just called roll. Saying arise Marine thou hath thy duty unto me. I call back with. "Ay Ay sir!" and I looked about and to see our solemn ranks, then the order was given "Report!" And I being of rank I called back once more, "All present and or accounted for, sir!"

How odd, an azure sky, with monsoon in full flight. My fellow brothers yet grieve for me and others like me. 'Tis a useless endeavor, for God has interviewed me, and has fetched me up, from ol' beelzebub. Now lain delivered from that fiery hearth. For my fitness reports are now, of worth.

Hell, I sure picked a fine time to die. I was just gettin my groove on. For just two days ago the T-shirt said I was selected even with my dearth. Damn, ole Gunny was right. "Any day above ground is a good day." But he also said "Stop ya bitchin worms gotta eat same as you n me, and besides you wanna live forever?" I wonder how that sanctimonious old bastard likes them worms chewin on his ass.

This red plateau is worse than ten hells I know, but take heart
My brothers your respite is not far off. So it seems that human folly stalks its prey and in its short memory, parts its prey from a families May Day parade.

Ferocious dragon, bearing south from north commanded a
Begrudged report. The N.V.A pounded the Khe Sanh without requital despite a pounding arclight that rendered the ring of purple peaks a terrific clout.

Such a thing a siege, Genghis Khan, purveyor of wholesale death.
A siege artist was he, how proud he would be of the N.V.A. Embolden by 20,000 yet to peak until 43,000 but held in check by 6,000 of the 260 and S.A.C. 77 days was the count, no more, no less, yet there is no rest. For it 'was onward, to ambush valley, Mr. Charlie had hell to pay, and well let's just say the 26th, made him pay. For it could be said of the character of Marine. "Ye though I walk through the shadow of the valley of death, I shall fear no evil for I am the baddest motherf---er in the valley. Such was their disposition."

The enemy, poor bastard that he was, it seemed as though he was damned if he did and damned if he didn't. Like scythed at harvest time, he fell grievously in that battle. Bold he may be, but foolish is more like it. Folly swarmed into his ranks as if he dashed his own brains out upon our hearty breastworks, built so stout to stand even a demon war god should one issue forth from the gates of hell.

My regret is, the sorrow my demise will visit upon my mother's brow. For my father, did take his leave of us during the last conflagration. The silence, which befalls the dead, will betide my lineage. I'm the last who will bear this moniker. There will not be another son to spring forth from these deposed loins. For this warrior stock is done with L.B.J's and McNamara's fun. For I have done what warriors do, as is their wont, and that is die. I have, in place of a Vietnamese son. Well, there you go, so much for not sending U.S. troops to fight and die in this lost war of reason, known only to L.B.J and R.S.M alone. For it pulled him to his grave as surely the one-two-two rocket blasted me to mine. For me getting dead was just a mere happenstance of some bad damned luck. But his, well his, was preordained by the natural law of what goes around comes around. May that son of a bitch rot in hell and that "Boy Genius" not yet gone. Well, I have had my say and to all my brothers here at this red veldt in hell, Semper Fi, "do or die," "all the way, and then some." Dedicated to those who served and those yet serving and whose lives are scattered like splinters.

John R. Dade
former Sergeant of Marines, Dec '81 -Jan '94

He taught me how to climb a tree, and he'd
never refuse to play catch with me. Guess I,
was always pestering him. He was older,
but he was my friend.

He was a quick and strong tight end, and I was so
very proud of him. I'd never miss a single game,
and would cheer, when they called his name.

He looked like a giant, when he came home,
standing in the airport, tall and alone. He had all
those ribbons on his chest, Said he was merely
doing his best.

We talked a lot that first night. Said he believed
that the cause was right. Said it was tough to serve
in the Corps, and he understood what we were fighting for.

I was too young to understand, but could see he was
now A different man. Asked about those ribbons
they pinned on Him, he lowered his head, then quietly
said, one was for Saving a friend.

He was so much different than before, Guess you could
say, he'd been to war. He said that the war was
damn near won, and he was going back to help get the job done.

We'll go to see him this afternoon. The flowers should
still be in bloom. A thousand times we've said good-bye,
yet every time, my dad still cries.

At last I can see your job was well done. Johnny, you're
the price our family paid for freedom. Johnny was two
years shy of twenty-one. Johnny is my father's son.

Copyright Q Lee Baker
May 28, 2001

Written on Memorial Day, May 28, 2001. I had read a *Parade* magazine article written by James Webb about a father, Troy Liverman, who tended the grave of his son, John C. Liverman, a Marine who received four purple hearts in Vietnam in '68. John Liverman was assigned to 1/9 in January of '68, which meant that he was most likely at the north lines of the Khe Sanh Base during the 77-day siege. He would have been about a block away from my position, although I'm sure we never saw each other, as it was extremely risky to show yourself in the open. 1/9 saw a lot of action during the Siege and was given the nickname "The Dying Nine." John Liverman went back to Vietnam after his first two purple hearts and was assigned to 2/4. This was a legendary battalion, even by Marine Corps standards. A book was written about them and was titled *The Magnificent Bastards*. After reading the article a second time, it dawned on me that John Liverman and I had served three months together during the siege. Then the article grabbed me, and I began to hear the verses, "He was not yet 21, he was my father's son, he believed in getting the job done." Soon a poem began to flow.

KHE SANH VETERANS ASSOCIATION
Membership Application

Copy, print & fill out form. Submit completed form to the address below.
Check: ❑ New Member ❑ Renewal ❑ Change

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

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City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip + 4:** _____

Home Phone: _____ **Work Phone:** _____

FAX: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Are you a Khe Sanh Vet? Check one: ❑ YES ❑ NO

If YES, when were you at Khe Sanh? (Please be as specific & complete as possible):

_____

_____

Service Branch at Khe Sanh, Check applicable:
❑ Air Force ❑ Army ❑ Navy ❑ USMC ❑ Civilian

Your Unit: _____

If NO, tell us your association with Khe Sanh Vets:

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Membership Type (check one & write in amount enclosed):
❑ Life.....$150 ❑ Regular.....$20 ❑ Associate.....$20 $ _____

Unable to join at present, but list my name in the Membership Directory: ❑ YES ❑ NO

Please make check(s) payable to: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. If New Member Application or Renewal*, mail completed form with dues payment to:

Tom Eichler
3221 N. Opal
Chicago, IL. 60634
Phone: 773/625-2101 Fax: 773-625-8021
Email TEIC1448@AOL.COM

On renewals, circle any items to be changed. If a Request for change to current directory information, please complete the form, circle the items to be changed, and mail or fax a copy of your completed form.



Left ro right: Lt. Simpson [WIA], Lt. Asmus [WIA], Lt. McGravey [WIA], Lt. Alfano [KIA], Lt. Sharples [WIA]

Publisher's Comments

I hope we all have recovered from the reunion. I have just started working on the new KSV membership directory for 2001. I originally thought the 2000 edition would suffice for at least three years. As it is, we have signed up almost 600 new members since the last reunion in San Diego and have almost 500 personnel changes for members. I have the membership cards almost ready, and they should go out with this issue or shortly thereafter. I, Ernie Spencer and Jim Wodecki (our new secretary) are looking at plans for the issuance of past KSV newsletters in a series of ten to be issued in five volumes. With the printing cost of setting up 50 issues we would have to meet a certain quota to make it feasible. So we need input from the membership if there is any interest. Please drop a note, email, phone call, etc., to any one of us.

As I promised in the last edition, I am publishing the names of those members who have contributed additional funds to the organization:

BAILEY, Thomas
BAUM, Gary
BLESSING, Gerald
BOLTON, Steven G
COLLINS, Rodney D
COX, Hugh D
DELANEY, Michael B
DIFOOT, Roberto
ELMORE, Ernest M
EUTZY, Donald Jr
FERGUSON, Daniel R
FESSENDEN, Gregory L
FILNA, Jon A
GUSTAFSON, Carl L
JONES, Bruce E
KUBLEY, Lawrence W
KULL, John F
LOERSCH, Phillip E
MANSON, Thomas C
MARTIN, David P
McELROY, John W
McGIFFIN, Carey W
MESSNER, William J
PILCH, Bruce
RAWLS, Stephen P
SALINAS, Mike
SOERENSEN, Thomas K
STOTT, Thomas D
TIERNEY, Mark F
WERESOW, Eugene
WHITENACK, James H

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I am the flag of the United States of America. I fly atop the world's tallest buildings. I stand watching America's halls of justice. I fly majestically over institutions of learning. I stand guard with power in the world. Look up at me and see me. I stand for peace, honor, truth and justice. I stand for freedom. I am confident. I am arrogant. I am proud. When I am flown with my fellow banners, my head is a little higher, My colors a little truer. I bow to no one! I am recognized all over the world. I am worshipped – I am saluted. I am loved, I am revered. I am respected, and I am feared. I have fought in every battle of every war for more than 200 years. I was flown at Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Shiloh and Appomattox. I was there at San Juan Hill, the trenches of France, in the Argonne forest, Anzio, Rome and the beaches of Normandy. Guam, Okinawa, Korea and **Khe Sanh,** Saigon, Vietnam know me, I was there. I led my troops, I was dirty, battle worn and tired, but my soldiers cheered me and I was proud. I have been burned, torn and trampled on the streets on countries I have helped set free. It does not hurt, for I am invincible. I have been burned, torn and trampled on the streets of my country. And when it's by those who I have served in battle, it hurts. But I shall overcome, for I am strong. I have slipped the bonds of Earth and stood watch over the uncharted frontiers of space from my vantage point on the moon. I have borne silent witness to all of America's finest hours.

Concept by Tom Eichler

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But my finest hours are yet to come. When I am torn into strips and used as bandages for my wounded comrades on the battlefield, when I am flown at half-mast to honor my soldier, or when I lie in the trembling arms of a grieving parent at the grave of their fallen son or daughter, I AM PROUD.

Author unknown

Notes from the Editor:

Some of you might think that D 1/26 and E 1/26 are getting a majority of the air time in our magazine. This is not our wish. We want articles from the entire membership. Everyone has a story, or stories to tell. We want them all. We will help you if you do not feel confident about yourself as a writer. Please send us your writings. We are exhausting our resources.

Remembrances/Memorials

John Thomas . . . . . USMC, A CO 3rd SP BN . . . . . Passed Away, 26 Dec 2000
James A. Jones . . . . USA, 101st AB 2/17 CAV . . . . . Passed Away, 08 May 2001
Walter T.Cook . . . . USMC, 26th MARINES S-4 . . . . . Passed Away, 30 Oct 2001
Robert A.Parker. . . USMC, H&S & B CO 1/26 . . . . . Passed Away, 05 Nov 2001
Ornan K. Martin . . USMC, B CO 3rd TANKS . . . . . Passed Away, 28 Oct 2001

Those Remembered
Paul Frederickson, USMC, KIA, 09 May 68
James Neil Tycz, USMC, KIA, 10 May 67
Walter T. Cook, USMC

Remembered by:
Charles Rost H&S CO 1/26
Sharon Pelon-Babby
Jim Beall B CO 1/26 & Linda

The following contributed funds to the KSV:
Michael A. Garoutte
Hugh D. McCracken
Steven S. McGuirk
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Michael Worth.....Member At Large
Thomas Ford .....Member At Large
Frank Ceniseros .....Member At Large

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Old Soldiers

On September 13th, two days after the plane attacks into the World Trade Center and Pentagon, an email appeared on our web site. A young man named Steven asked an age-old question of all of us who served at Khe Sanh... Would we serve again?

PUBLISHERS NOTE: We have no way of knowing if Steven is what he says he is, and is seriously considering military service, or is a college student writing his term paper. The answers he has provoked from our members are from the heart and express the feelings of many of our members. I feel they are worth sharing with our entire membership, and hope Steven is what he says he is and was honest and truthful in his response to their answers.

❋

Hello, name is Steven:

My question I would like to ask to those of you who have served in the military and have engaged in combat is, "Would you do it over again?" Would you go through all that you did, or if you had the chance again if you knew what you were getting into, would you have done something differently in life so that you wouldn't have had to go through hell? I keep thinking about the men who are laying in the VA hospitals every day of their lives, who only hold memories of their past lives. I wonder if they have any regrets of serving. People are Gung-ho, but then reality sets in, life is short.

I know most of you will say that Freedom is always worth it, and it means a lot to those who cherish it but for others, it is something they see as a duty left to others to fulfill. Does it really make a difference? Do you feel of your sacrifices for your country that it made a difference? If there was a war today, right now, this minute, would you give up everything, leave your wife, your family, your home, everything that you have built over the years and place yourself in a war once more and risk losing your life? Would you volunteer for it, or would you only go if there were a draft in place?

I welcome your thoughts and opinions. I am no way trying to offend anyone of your service. Given the events that have transpired in New York, it is just some thoughts that I am having as a young person of whether this country declares war, if I should volunteer for it. People see TV that glorifies war, but I see the reality of the hurt, pain, problems, tears, and fears that remain for years. I need to know if it is worth it. I just need to know how all of you feel. This has been my thought today.

Here is an edited version of the original answers to the question asked and responses.

"War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse."

Ray Prittie

❋

"Simply, we made a decision to volunteer based upon the events, circumstances and my patriotic beliefs back then. We can't turn back time and remake those decisions. We must live with those decisions the rest of our lives with the outcome of those decisions."

Nick Romanetz

❋

"Yes, after more then 33 years of very deep lost feelings and pain of what we went through, I would still have to go back. Freedom is something we all need to fight for. Even if it's at the gates of hell."

Hank Melanson

❋

"Like all the others, I think that I would go, remember the very essence of America is at stake here. In Vietnam we were helping those of another country, as there was no direct threat to the US. So it was a much different situation. We did not have the support of our own people then."

Gene Weresow

❋

"Steven, To answer your questions more specifically, I'd serve today, not out of duty to my country (we don't have our backs to the wall as we did at the beginning of World War II), but out of respect for

my family and friends. Good luck to you in your life. I don't have any idea where this conflict is headed, but it's going to need competent, dedicated Americans — like you"

Joseph Olszewski

❋

"The people whose very freedoms are being attacked here at home. Yes, I would join today if it meant I could keep the enemy away from my family's front door."

Ray "Big D" Addington

❋

"My son is 21 years old and the thought of him going to war is more than I can bear. While I prepared to sacrifice myself, sending him off is worse than death to me. I think that most of the Marines that read this board will somewhat agree with me that they would gladly give of themselves but not their children."

Don Meyer

❋

"Yes, I would absolutely do it again! So follow your heart and do what you think is best. Semper Fi"

Wayne "Shu" Shumaker

❋

"I was not a draftee. I watched the news. I can think of no greater moment in my life than leading a squad of Marines in battle. The only thing I would want to change is the good men I lost. Not only would I go, if I could, but I would hope my children would go."

Charlie Fox

❋

"I was ready for combat before the WAR...I was a MARINE before birth...YES, I WOULD DO IT AGAIN...Semper Fi!"

Joe Amodeo

❋

"If they could find boots big enough to fit these ugly feet of mine, I'd be marching on Mecca right now. Why do we always see photos of terrorists shooting up into the air, are they afraid something is overhead? You better believe there is, the Eagle, Anchor and Globe. When the Eagle ####s he really ####s! Hell, forget the boots, I'll wear my shower-shoes."

Bruce Lewey

❋

"When it's in your heart, you just go as most of us went — to fight for Our Country and to stop communism, we went with pride and most of us would go again (especially if we could all be 18 again)."

James "Jimbo" Wodecki

❋

"Steven, you have asked for advice and opinions from the gray-haired veterans of the battle of Khe Sanh. In considering a decision on whether or not to enlist you want to know, would we do it over again? It is a good question and an old one. Listen to the Bard of Avon. "To be or not to be. That is the question. Whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or by taking up arms, end them." That was a question asked by Shakespeare in the fifteenth century, and you have enough doubts about your country today to wonder if it knows the right answer. My son, I have doubts too.

The voices that the nation listens to have declared that we are unified in our resolve. I fear that the resolve will be short lived. The country is united by a fever of patriotism but cooler heads will soon prevail. It has become the nature of things in our confused culture to question our national values. Soon we will be asked to look at ourselves and the terrorists as victims of a common evil. That will be the first healing step in the stumbling plod back to the politically correct attitude of self-recrimination. We are conditioned to believe it. We love to be victims. We cry war, but half the nation is waiting for more rational minds to direct us. An eager element of our society is prepared to declare that we brought this upon ourselves. They will remind us that "it takes a village" and in the interests of our world community

we must negotiate with understanding and an appreciation for other cultures. Our economy and world peace depend on it.

It doesn't matter that the terrorists have slapped America. Our national conscience, which resides in Berkley, California, will tell us that we have made the world hate us because we unilaterally support oppression of ethnic peoples. If we resist change, we deserve more of the same. That irrational logic is not new. Neville Chamberlain believed he had negotiated peace with Hitler. In our time we have seen a revival of sympathy for the devil. Ho Chi Minh City is named after the most odious terrorist of the last half of this century. Will Kabul be renamed Bin Laden? So what will become of our national resolve? It will be guided by television, the same as it was before. The media will fuel the current fever only until the time when it becomes more lucrative, more newsworthy, to oppose it. This will happen when the military denies correspondents access to mission critical information, ergo no news. As before, the talking heads will have to create attention to keep their ratings up, something with shock value. They will focus their cameras on the fluttering white tags tied to the body bags of Americans. When they think it is profitable, they will fawn on the enemy. Who the enemy is will become blurred and then they will release the politically correct winds and the winds will blow anti-American. They will write books about their unbiased coverage of the war to prove that they were right. Past is prologue.

My son, can you handle the truth?

We were the sons of the greatest generation, and we walked a path that we couldn't follow, and we were handed a torch that we couldn't carry. Our frustrations made us bitter and truculent. I call my generation, Oedipus Americanus. I leave that obscure reference to you to think about on your own time. It is appropriate if you enlist you are an American Fighting Man. No hyphens, nothing comes before American, American comes first, as in American eagle. If you enlist in the Army, Navy, or Air Force you will find that those who would not serve have defiled them. They are now a kinder, gentler military that does not threaten Oedipus Americanus. There is however one dinosaur lurking in the arsenal, with vengeful eyes.

I know those eyes. Those were my eyes when I was a Marine. Those are the eyes of my brothers who still return to help the villagers in Vietnam. We were men who were deployed in twelve-man units to rid our territories of communists and to protect and hold our villages. We stayed there until we were told to leave by the more enlightened. The enlightened that had the courage to stay home. All we dumb grunts knew was the meaning of — it takes a village. It is a Marine rifle squad. To answer your question, would I go again? Absolutely, I would go now if they would have me. Through the last thirty years I have never forsaken honor, and I have never bowed my head. Never. I say my prayers with my eyes wide open, looking straight at our God. Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Protestant, Animist, Catholic, Jewish. I am my brother's keeper. Now my son, you have to answer your own questions. You have no choice in who your contemporaries are, but who do you want your peers to be?

Best of Luck,
Lacey Lahren

❋

You got it right Lacey. Just wished you had been in my squad. S/F

Lighthouse Mike

❋

Edited version of Steven's reply to the responses from our Khe Sanh Veterans.

I am the only member of my family that has not served my country. There is huge guilt on my behalf — a guilt that I haven't earned the right to live here, despite the sacrifices given before. The way I see it is that my previous family members earned their right to this country, but I haven't. My father earned his right by serving as a Marine in Vietnam. I also sought his experience and thoughts as I asked for yours as well.

When I told my father of what I wanted to do, I was discouraged in all aspects. He said to me, "You will get yourself killed." He told me he was lucky to have not got killed. In his voice, I could tell he was upset with me. He spent his time discouraging me during my entire conversation. He said for me to go down to the VA hospital and talk to the guys with

their legs and arms blown off, that can't get out of bed, who missed their children growing up, and growing old together with their wife. He told me to look at his life, the years of alcoholism trying to forget, and his condition of being contaminated with Agent Orange. I told him that I have something to prove and to do. He said, "What is that? To prove to me you know how to get killed? That you can have a flag over your casket and be buried six feet under?" That left me with a lot to think about. I then told my girlfriend who I plan to marry next year of what I wanted to do, and she also said, "You will get killed," and left her crying for a week. She saw all of her dreams with me gone. I was torn. That is why I asked many of you if you were willing to give up your life, to give your wife, your children, everything, to go serve your country, and all of your dreams. I asked, "Is it worth it?"

The weekend passed, and I called and talked to my father again. He is my best friend in all ways, and we needed to talk. I approached him again about it. He said he wanted to talk as well, and we did. He said, "I discouraged you that day, because I wanted you to think." He has always wanted me to think before doing something, rather than acting on impulse. He then answered my question that I asked of so many of you. Would he do it again? He said yes, he would go back. But like one person posted, he would go back as well but brings tears and pain to think of sending his children. He said to me that he would go back before I would ever go. Although I know the government wouldn't allow that, it is in his mind that he will. I can understand where he is coming from as a father. Ever since I was young, he always told me he would go and die for me, so that I wouldn't have to experience what he went through. It was something he never wanted me to know. It is only natural for him as a parent and loving father to feel this way, and for that, he has my admiration and respect.

So at this time, I will continue with life, but I told them both, if I was needed, if I was called, if the Country asks one day, then I was to go, as it is my duty. I will answer as previous members of my family did. The responses that all provided confirmed that at least if I am needed, then I need to answer that, as you have done. Again, thank you for so much input and thought. I hope that none of you think less of me of this decision but at this time, it is the best one till another one must be made.

Thank you, Steven

I was M/T Chief for H&S CO, 2nd BN 26th Marines, from January 1968 to January1969. I was wounded at Khe Sanh, Feb 23rd, 1968. I have "Good and Bad memories" of Khe Sanh. However, there will never be a "Better group of Marines" in my life than those Corpsman, Chaplains, and Marines that stood "Side by Side" at Khe Sanh in 1968.

Semper Fi
John R. Cowan, Sr. USMC-Retired

Welcome Home Brothers, great Website. I was with C Company, 1/11 Inf. 5th. Inf. Div. out of Quang-Tri. Pick a spot in I Corps and we were there. I have just started making contact with my Brothers in the last year, and it feels great. Thank you for all you have done. I am the National Sgt. At Arms for Combat Veterans International. You can check out our web site at: combatveterans.com.

Take care, My Brothers...
Brian "Bent" Bentley,

I would like you to add some of our KIA to your list. Lost a few good ones from the 1st Platoon of C CO, 1/11 at XD696394, north of QL-9, at the Laotian border on 8 Feb 71: SSGT Gerald J. Tworek, SGT Donald R. Coleman, and PFC Michael B. First. We were OPCON to Sheldon Burnett's 1/1 Cav at the time. Lost Jerry L. Danay from 3rd Platoon of Charlie Company 1/11 on 12 Mar 71, at XD750489, near FSB Alpine, N/W of Khe Sanh. I see you already have Burnett and Randy Ard as MIA's in Laos. We left Khe Sanh for the Laotian border in early February with several reporters. If I remember correctly, Burrows, Huet, Potter and Shimamato were with us. Last I saw of them then was on QL-9 west of Lang Vei. I remember when they went down in Laos a little more than a week later. I would like to hear from the grunts in Charlie

Company.

Keith Short

I served as senior corpsman for I Co 3/4, 1968-69. We were in and out of Khe Sanh and many of the surrounding hill battles — 689, 552, 600, Phoui Noui, and Fox-Trot Ridge — right after the Siege in 1968. A Shau Valley, Con Thien, C-2, Cam Lo, Gio Lin, and Alfa 3. I sure would like to hear from some of the old unit. Some of the names that I do remember, Capt. Sexton, Gysgt. Basham, Cpl. Hopkins, Cpl. Bryson, Cpl. Golden, Doc Lea, Doc Fair, Sgt. Jarworski, SSgt. Holley, preacher, and Dirty Frank. Welcome home to all of you. I served with the best of the best.

Bill Wilke "Doc"

Looking for anybody from M CO 3/9, 1966-1967. Welcome home to all my Brothers and Sisters, who served our country. Keep looking up; someone up there does care for us. God Bless everyone one of you.

Ray P. Holden: RPHOLDEN@AOL.COM

I served in Vietnam with Kilo Company 3rd Battalion 26th Marine Regiment as an 0311 infantryman, from January 1967 to January 1968. While in Vietnam I served at several places, such as Khe Sanh on Hill 861 and Con Thien. We stayed a while at Dong Ha and visited Hill 56, Phu Bai, Da Nang and the hills close to Laos. I would like to hear from anyone that might have been there during this time.

Juan F. Rivera

Gentlemen, I just recently received word from a Khe Sanh veteran of D CO I/26 that my cousin, 2Lt. Samuel J. Hannah served at Khe Sanh. Lt. Hannah was KIA June 7, 1968 at My Loc (2). I am very pleased to see such a fine website dedicated to the veterans of the terrible Siege at Khe Sanh. May we never forget? Thank you for your service to our country.

Ed Enslinger: ee1957@yahoo.com

I had the privilege and honor of serving with the best, B Co 1/26, wounded Mar 30 1968.

D.J. Pawkett E-5

I was in Bravo Company, 1/26 during the siege of Khe Sanh in 68. I would like to here from others.

Dennis R. Crosby: cardenn@mediaone.net

I served with D Co 1/26 3rd Platoon and was in country from 11/67 to 12/68. I was at Khe Sanh during the Siege. Not many made it without being wounded. I was luckier than most. God bless America.

Semper Fi
Mike Beauregard (BEAU)
mailto: mbeauregard@citycollege.edu

I served with 3rd BN, 26th Marines in Vietnam Sept. 66 to Sept. 67. I was at Khe Sanh from June 1967 until wounded in September of 1967.

Thomas D. Warren: melissa3260@home.com

I served at Khe Sanh in 1968, with Golf Btry 3/12. My friend Sandy Shull was with 1/9 and was killed there. Just wondered if anyone might remember Sandy. He was a radio operator for an 81-mortar FO team. Sandy was from Nashville, TN.

Larry Deason: ldeason@mindspring.com

To Ray Stubbe,

My dad served in Khe Sanh with you. His name was Richard "Dick" Grenat. If you have any stories about him in this period in his life I would greatly appreciate them. Thanks.

Richard Grenat
Colbysred_red@thingfind.com

I am looking for Clyde Phillips and Oliver Owens from A Company, 3rd Engineers, 67-68, during the siege. If anybody knows where they are, please let me know.

Semper Fi
"Big John"
John Pessoni: johnpessoni@hotmail.com

What Other People Say

On August 31, 2001, a large granite memorial with bronze emblem was placed at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery, Minneapolis-St. Paul, to commemorate the 5th Marine Division and honor all the Marines and Navy Corpsmen that stood in its ranks. This stone was the final in a series honoring all 6 Marine Divisions. Many attended this dedication including former Marines from numerous veterans' groups, the local Marine I&I staff, a nearby reunion of Marine tankers and the VFW cemetery honor guard. A Marine officer read aloud the battle history of the 5th Marine Division from the famous assault and flag raising on Iwo Jima to the deployment and actions of the 13th, 26th and 27th Marines throughout I Corps, Vietnam. He described at length the 26th Marines' successful defense of Khe Sanh and it was good to see many in the crowd, veterans of other wars, other campaigns, nod in approval. All in all, a fine ceremony. Several sections away, in a far corner of Ft. Snelling rests my good friend Jim Theis, also a veteran of the 26th Marines. I do believe that his spirit and others unnamed stood tall that day as honors were rendered to the 5th Marine Division.

Dan Fisher D 1/26

British Vet, Vietnam Vet, WTC Vet (Hero)

After a lifetime in which he cheated it many times, death caught up with Rick Rescorla halfway up the south tower of the World Trade Center. But like a good soldier, he didn't sell his life cheaply. Death took him only after he had cheated it again, helping to save 2,700 lives by relying on the instincts and the preparation that had served him well in battles on two continents. Rescorla was a retired Army Reserve colonel and the head of security for Morgan Stanley's Individual Investor Group at the World Trade Center. But many readers will be more familiar with him as Lt. Rick "Hard Core" Rescorla, one of the heroes of the 1965 battle of the Ia Drang Valley in Vietnam. "Rick was the best combat leader I ever saw in Vietnam," said Pat Payne, the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment's reconnaissance platoon leader in Ia Drang.

Rescorla's role in that battle is recounted in detail in the book "We Were Soldiers Once...And Young," a searing account of the action by retired Lt.Gen. Harold "Hal" Moore and Joe Galloway. In 1965, Moore was a battalion commander in the center of the battle, and Galloway was a UPI reporter who covered the entire engagement. Even those only vaguely familiar with the book have seen Rescorla's image (he is the gaunt soldier on the cover with the 2-day old beard and the bayonet fixed to his M16.)

When Rescorla showed up for Basic Training at Benning in 1963, he'd already seen more adventure than most soldiers do in a lifetime. Born in Cornwall, England, he joined the British army's Paratroop Regiment as a teenager, then became a military intelligence warrant officer. He served in that position in Cyprus during the violence that racked that island in the 1950s; then, left the British Army for a London police job in Scotland Yard's famous "Flying Squad" of detectives.

He left England for another military job, this time as a commando in the Rhodesian Colonial security force in Africa. From there he came to seek his fortune in the United States. After breezing through basic training, Rescorla was picked up for Officer Candidate School. Last year, he was inducted into the OCS Hall of Fame. He graduated as a second lieutenant in 1965, just in time to ship out to Vietnam with the 1st Air Cavalry Division. In November of that year, still a British citizen, he would draw on all his youthful experience in the battle of the Ia Drang. Heading the "Hard Corps," Ia Drang was the Army's first major battle in Vietnam, and one of its bloodiest. The battle claimed 305 American lives, soldiers who died in fierce combat with a North Vietnamese regiment that also took heavy losses. Rescorla commanded 1st Platoon, B Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, and was almost worshipped by his soldiers, who called themselves the "Hard Corps" after his nickname. But his courage and infectious optimism resonated beyond those under his immediate command. Payne remembers Rescorla "leaping off [a] chopper and strutting into our small, very beat-up group of survivors" during the night. After placing his men to fill the gaps in Payne's line and pausing to speak quietly to each soldier, he walked toward Payne. "I was so amazed to see him walking around because we had all been crawling on our stomachs for eight hours," Payne said. Speaking in a low, confident voice, Rescorla complimented Payne on establishing good fields of fire. "Then he looked me in the eye and said, 'When the sun comes up we are going to kick some ass!'"

I will never forget his words or the look in his eye. He said it in a confident, matter-of-fact way. He was not boasting — it was resolve. Rescorla earned a Silver Star for his actions at Ia Drang and, in Moore's words, "went on to establish himself as a living legend in the 7th Cav in Vietnam." But behind the swagger and the self-confidence, Rescorla hid a keen intellect, according to Dan Hill, a former captain who met Rescorla at basic and remained his best friend. This fine mind served Rescorla well when he left the Army in the late 1960s and put himself through college and law school, before going on to establish himself as a specialist in security for financial firms. His will to live came to the fore again three years ago, when he was diagnosed with inoperable cancer and given six months to live. Against the odds, he beat the disease into remission. As Morgan Stanley's security chief, Rescorla brought his belief in the "seven Ps" to bear — proper prior planning and preparation prevents poor performance — to the immense good fortune of his co-workers. Morgan Stanley was the largest tenant in the south tower,

with about 2,700 employees in 20 floors. But incredibly, only six, including Rescorla and two security folks who worked for him, are still missing. Everyone else made it out alive.

Obsessed with preparation, those survivors owe their lives in no small part to Rescorla's quick thinking at a time of crisis, and his obsession with being prepared for every eventuality. "He'd take every possible contingency that could happen, and he'd come up with a plan for it," Hill said. When the first plane hit the north tower, the Port Authority told workers in the south tower to stay put. But Rescorla disagreed and immediately executed an evacuation plan he had made the employees rehearse twice a year. The plan worked, and when the second plane hit the south tower, almost all Morgan Stanley employees were on their way to safety. So was Rescorla, who made it to the ground floor singing "God Bless America" to calm the nerves of the evacuees. But he insisted on going back upstairs to check for anyone left behind. He was probably still climbing when the building collapsed. His wife Susan and his two children likely will remember Rick Rescorla for his generosity of spirit and his dry English wit. But middle-aged veterans of a hellish battle long ago in the sun and the elephant grass are more likely to remember Rick Rescorla as Bill Lund, another second lieutenant in that battle, does: "This was the bravest man I ever knew."

Source: Editorial, Army Times
Author: Sean D. Naylor

There was a Wild Colonial Boy
Rescorla was his name
He was born and raised in Hayle, Cornwall
Just east of ol' Land's End
He joined the British Army when
A lad of just 16
Became a brave, young soldier then
As good as ever seen
He joined the U.S. Cavalry
To fight in Vietnam
And he killed the Cong at the Ia Drang
With bayonet and gun
He saved three thousand people when
The terrorists struck home
But lost his life when he went back
To rescue seven more
So lift a cup to our dear friend
Remember him with joy
How dearly do his brethren love
That Wild Colonial Boy

posted by lexington green

Above and Beyond the Call

A Story of Caring

PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

When Chaplain Ray Stubbe founded the Khe Sanh Veterans, he had several goals in mind. One of the goals of the organization was reaching out to the loved ones of those who died, so that they may better understand the nature of service and sacrifice at Khe Sanh. The following story told through a series of emails between men of D CO 1/26 exemplifies their caring and personal sacrifice in bringing closure to the family of one of their own, in keeping with the goals of this organization.

At the reunion in Chicago in July of this year, George Myrick, Dan McGravey, and Jack Daniels, former members of D CO 1/26 had a conversation regarding the death of Lt. Sam Hannah, also a member of Delta CO 1/26. George Myrick had made a promise 33 years ago that he would visit the family of Sam Hannah and at the reunion, he made the decision to fulfill that promise made long ago. While driving back home from the reunion, he made arrangements to visit with Sam's family.

George finally met the whole family and thought the meeting went well and felt great about fulfilling his 33-year-old promise. He sent the following email to Dan McGravey regarding his visit:

> Dan, I made contact with Sam Hannah's family on the 20th of August, and Joann and I visited them. Sam's Father and Mother live in Lincoln, Arkansas. Sam's little sister lives across the road from his parents, and she made a wonderful dinner that evening. The people present were: Mary, Sam's sister, and her husband Bryan, and two grandchildren; Alan, Sam's brother, his wife Lisa, and baby, Sam Hannah; Sam's son and wife and Sam's two grandchildren. They all had lots of questions that night and I tried to answer them the best I could. It was quite a night for them and me, and it only took 33 years to do it. Sam's wife is remarried and lives in Indiana. She still keeps in contact with Sam's family. Sam also has two other sisters, one in Tennessee and one in Georgia.
>
> Jack Daniels is going to fly into Tulsa, Oklahoma around the 14th of October, and I am going to pick him up and take him to see Sam's family. I think the whole family will be there. It would be nice to also have you along. I could have used your help last time I was there. The family knows nothing except Sam is dead. They think he was killed at Khe Sanh; I had to do a lot of remembering that night. If you want to see the Hannah family, I will take you. In fact, anytime you and Sherry want to head west, you have a place to light here as long as you want. Dan, we went through a lot of shit together, and you are one hell of a man.
>
> Semper Fi
> George Myrick

Dan McGravey then receives an email from Ed Esslinger, a cousin of Sam Hannah and KSV. He also sought the true circumstances on the death of Sam, since George Myrick, during his visit, had related information which differed from that given the family by the USMC. When George hears that Sam Hannah's family is disturbed by the differing versions, he is upset and sends the following email to Dan McGravey:

> Dan,
>
> I'm sorry to hear that Sam's family is disturbed. I did not go there to upset them. I guess my biggest mistake was, I did not know what they had been told, and they never said anything about me saying anything different than what they knew, and I never asked. His sister Mary Freeman did give me the impression that the family thought Sam was KIA at Khe Sanh. I told them that Sam and I were at Khe Sanh in the beginning and were Sparrow Hawked to Hill 861 where we stayed till the Siege was over. At that time, we left the firebase for Wonder Beach, where we patrolled one hot spot after the other. We were in the area of Hill 55, southwest of Danang, near the village of My Loc. I had 1st platoon, you the 2nd and Sam the 3rd. I started moving into the village and two Army gun ships started making strafing runs at my platoon. They made two runs before they were called off. We moved into the village. Sam was on a ridge to my left flank and you were on Sam's left flank. The NVA started for the village

that I was in, and Jack Daniels fired the 60s over my head — the first round was a short round landing in the center of a squad from B Co. that had come to reinforce my platoon, wounding all of them.

That evening I was pulled up on the ridge with 2nd & 3rd platoons. That was when I was told that Sam and a Corpsman were killed. I never told them about the gunship or the 60s — that is to refresh your memory. I was asked several times if I was there when Sam was killed, and I said no, I was down in the village and Sam was gone when I got to the ridge, he had been Med Evaced. Mary asked me two or three times why was only Sam killed. I told her that when Sam was hit, the others got down. She said with all those people there, why was Sam the only one to get killed. I told her that the others were spread out and not in a bunch. The men from 3rd platoon knew that Sam and I were friends. Just as soon as I got to the ridge, they told me Sam was dead and showed me where he was killed. They said he was hit in the head. Sam's Dad said he opened the casket and Sam was hit in the head and kidneys. I told him that the head wound was all I knew about. The men at 3rd platoon also said that Sam died quick. Now that I think about it, while I was standing looking down at the pool of blood, Jack Daniels came up to me and we talked. If I am not mistaken, Jack said Sam died instantly. Dan, I need your help. This is the way I remember that day. Am I wrong? I need to know. Sam's family said the officers who notified them, Jack Daniels' letter, and myself were the only contacts they have had regarding the death of Sam. They made several comments about some books they have, one of which concerns Khe Sanh. Sam's Dad said he still has Jack's letter, but he never offered to let me read it, and I never asked. I wished they had told me that my recollection was different than what they had been told. Yes, Jack Daniels will get into Tulsa, Oklahoma on Oct. 14 at 1800 and was to fly out at 1200 on the 15th. I ask him to try to stay longer. He was going to try to change his departure to 1200 on the 16th. I have not heard if he got it changed or not. Dan, think about that day and let me know back as soon as you can. Am I wrong? Got to know!

George Myrick

Dan McGravey, knowing how badly he feels, sends him the following email:

George,

First thing is in no way what you did or say was wrong. The fact that you cared enough and completed a promise made years ago was an act of love and caring bestowed upon Sam's family. Of course, the family cannot put this to rest because of their suspicions. They are confused because of what the Marine Corps told them at the time. I cannot understand, if Jack Daniels wrote Sam's father a letter (which he told me he did) and Sam's father remembers the letter, why would they believe Sam was KIA in Khe Sanh? Also, a letter as life changing as that should be in Hannah's Family possessions, right? Their suspicion and confusion is justified because everything I have read about death, people want to know, "How did they die?" If it doesn't coincide with that "official information" from the government, flags go up! As for my part in this, I am going to search my brain as well as letters I wrote home to my family for information, I spent a lot of time writing, so I kind of have a semi-journal, but it's in New England with my parents. I'll get them sent. Secondly, I think I can get on the internet with Fish because he has unbelievable information that may help. If we could ever find and contact Sam's radio operator or Squad leader, it would open up the sequence of events as they unfolded.

Looks like we now have a mission to unburden this grieving family from any confusion. My recollections are limited, but I do remember all the events you relayed to me and they are accurate. I even remember the position we took that evening, and moving out the next AM, and making new contact after only a few hundred meters. Things were happening so rapidly and the events of that day kind of melted into weeks and months of just total blur and haze. You know a day doesn't go by without my thoughts going back to my other warrior life, and I know

you are in the same boat. We need to live in the moment and be comfortable with ourselves that what you did for his family was good, right and an act of kindness, after all you told me you lived with not making contact with the Hannah's for over 30 years...That speaks loudly to your character and human qualities.

The Hannahs have a difficult situation, and quite honestly I don't know if even an eyewitness to the tragedy can change what they perceive really happened! I'm not yet in a position to see whether I can make it out in Oct. or if I'm really needed, I will have to think on it. Thanks for the update on the story. I will contact Sam's sister this week.

Semper Fi
Dan McGravey

Mary Freeman, Sam Hannah's sister, then emails the first of two letters to Dan McGravey:

Mr. McGravey,

I am Sam Hannah's sister. Edward forwarded your response to his letter to my parents, Sam and Nell Hannah. Yes, George Myrick contacted our family and took time to come and visit with us. It was a very considerate thing to do. We were all very surprised and a little confused. It was very disturbing to us to hear that his account of Sam's death was not the same as we had been led to believe. I was wondering what your remembrance might be. I know it is not a pleasant subject, but it might be of benefit to my parents, especially my dad. He is retired Air Force, and it disturbs him that the stories are apparently very different. He's 80 this year and to be honest we do not talk about these things much. It may be some parent's way of dealing with grief but not theirs. So, if they want to talk about it now — well, it better get talked out because there isn't that much time left.

Thank You.

Mary Hannah Freeman

Dan Then replies to Mary Freeman with the following email:

Received your email today. This issue surrounding Sam's passing bothers me too — absolutely Sam was not killed at Khe Sanh. I was with Sam for a long period of time after Khe Sanh fighting down south (Danang Area). After 33 years or so, the details get fuzzy but not a day goes by that I do not think of my time in Vietnam. I received a note from George Myrick concerning his recollection of the events that transpired that day. I told George I would start searching my sources to get more detail that I can share with your family. I kept somewhat of a journal (letters sent home to my family.) I have called my mom to have them sent to me. From those, I may be able to refresh my memory. Those days in that area were pretty hellish. I do know my 2nd platoon was to the left of Sam about 400 meters away. All of us were under heavy fire. As you can imagine, chaos prevailed.

We have a tremendous amount of information that men from Delta Co have maintained and preserved — now we need to find out the details. Today I sent emails to key people that will join me in the search. Sam was one of us and if you and your family are not at peace, then we all need to help you get there.

We hear so much about "closure" with regards to death but let me tell you, I have no closure with any of the Marines lost with me in my time there. I can still see Sam's face as I type this email to you. I put Vietnam behind me for 20 plus years until I was contacted via internet by the Khe Sanh Veterans group. They have helped in my healing, and now I hope we can give you the details that your father and mother especially need. I will try my best to help. Talk to you soon. Is it possible for you to share with us the exact correspondence (Marine Corps or Dept. of Defense) sent your family? Also if Sam's dad has any names of Marines that Sam may have written home about, we can see who was with Sam that day. Marine records are probably unavailable. Thanks.

Semper Fi
Dan MGravey

Mary Freeman's response:

I have spoken to Dad about the description of how Sammy died. He doesn't know exactly where he got some of his information. (This has been buried for 33 years.) However, he thought 8 men were killed at the same time as Sam. But George said Sam was the only one killed besides the medic. I know this isn't much of a discrepancy, but it bothered Dad. He also didn't really understand why Sam would have gotten the Silver Star from the description of the circumstances surrounding the way Sam died. He, being a military man, would understand that better than I. So, it isn't really a huge difference because a lot of what George told us, we just hadn't heard at all. It's old wounds opened after 33 years and with that comes questions. Thank you for your time and efforts. I apologize for not answering you right away. I have to approach Mom and Dad gently, and I really just got the nerve up to tell them that I had contacted you. They are old and very active for their age, but fragile in many ways. I sometimes think there is a reason for this to be opened up after all these years, but I also just want to protect them from the pain. I will keep in contact with you and let you know when I receive your information. Sam's widow, Ruby, will be in from Indiana this week. I will ask her if she can tell us what she remembers about the incidents around Sam's death. Also, Major Daniels (ret) and George will be here on the 15th. Again, I thank you and appreciate your time and effort in helping us with this.

Always,
Mary Hannah Freeman

Dan McGravey then seeks the help of Jack Daniels, the former Commanding Officer of D CO 1/26, and sends the following email to bring him up to speed on their quest for the true story of the death of Sam Hannah.

Hi Jack, It was great to see you in Chicago for our reunion. I know you mentioned that you were planning a visit to Sam's parents and family some time soon. This email has to do with that visit. Some background first, I received an unsolicited email from Sam's cousin Ed Essingler about two weeks ago. He had heard that I had served with Sam up until the time of his passing. He probably got my name from George Myrick during his visit last month with Sam's Father, Mother and other family members. He wanted to know more about the men who served with Sam and the circumstances surrounding his passing. I emailed him back and said I would be happy to help. I sent him to the appropriate web sites (Khe Sanh Vets, Delta Company etc.) and said I would do whatever I could to give any information I had. Approximately a week later I receive a new email from a Mary Freeman that identified herself as Sam's sister. I will forward her letter on to you for more background. She clearly is suspicious and confused because of conflicting information received from probably the Marine Corps, maybe a letter that you may have sent, and George Myricks visit.

Sam's father and mother are obviously pushing for the truth. I never thought that we were dealing with anything but truth. Something has gotten into their heads about his passing that has raised concerns. I want to also send you Myrick's letter to me and my response to him. George has, from his letter to me, expressed a real hurt. He feels badly and feels he has done something wrong. I wrote back to him and tried to affirm what he did was correct. All this background stuff is meant to prepare you for what you may run into at your visit. I told Mary Freeman I would get onto the internet to see if we can find more eyewitness accounts of what happened that day over 30 years ago. Obviously, the driving force behind this is Sam's mom and dad wanting to hear what happened. Please let me know what your assessment of the situation is. I would consider joining you if my business plans and your scheduled visit can come together; that is, of course, if you feel I could be of any comfort and support for the family. I hope we are not overreacting to this issue but in reading her correspondence, she clearly has doubts. I have no doubts of what happened in this tragic day over 30 years ago, but I am not in the Hannah family shoes. Please

give me you feelings and comments.

Semper Fi
Dan McGravey

Jack Daniels responds to Dan McGravey:

Dan, thanks for all the information. I will try to clear this all up, so that we can all have the same information to share. You are certainly welcome to travel with George and I, if you can. We will help their family come to grips with the absolute truth and clear up any mysteries that may have been incorrectly communicated many years ago.

Sam was killed southwest of Hill 55 on a ridgeline that we had moved down a few days earlier without any contact. We were on search and destroy missions, searching for elements of two NVA divisions who had come out of the triple canopy and planned to hit the Danang Airfield. 1/26 minus Bravo Company, was sweeping terrain between Hill 55 and An Hoa. This was a few days after Clarence Toltino had been hit, and George Myrick had 1st Platoon. We stopped the night before and received helo resupply and I ordered the same formations to move over the same ground that we had been across a few days earlier. Therefore 3d Platoon was on the point of a wedge formation moving up a ridge, with second platoon on the left and first platoon on the right. The company Command Post was behind 3d Platoon, and all units were physically tied together. We were moving up the ridgeline about a mile from our overnight position, when the point came under heavy fire. Sam's lead squad had gotten inside an enemy position before the enemy realized they were there. Sam and his radio operator were right behind the lead squad and when the NVA began firing from their holes, Sam and his radio operator were the first casualties, both KIA by a full automatic weapon. I put our weapons into action but when our 60 mortars fired a short round, I pulled them out of the fight and we suffered no friendly fire casualties.

We soon had artillery and air support on target. I requested that Alpha Company move through Charlie Company to seal off the NVA who were fleeing the position. Jeff Stack got hit and Alpha had no officers in the field for a short period that day, as Ray Snyder was on R&R. We had Charlie Co on our immediate right, Alpha on their right on the high ground, and the enemy trapped between us. 2nd Platoon assaulted through the tree line and relieved the pressure on 3d Platoon. The rest of the day we called in artillery and air strikes. We had suffered several casualties, I remember specifically. Other than Sam, Cpl. Harold Deschaine, and HN Rockefeller were KIA. Another radio operator, L/Cpl Scott was hit and Med Evaced. Later, after I became the S-3, Dan took over Delta Co, and Freddie Mac and I were heloed to Hill 55, where the 7th Marines had more than 30 weapons, including .50 cal machine guns and RPG captured by Delta and Alpha companies on that day.

Sam received a Silver Star posthumously, and Dan, I recommended you for a Silver Star that I believe was awarded as a Bronze Star, for your actions in relieving the pressure on 3d Platoon that day. If you didn't receive it, let me know, and I will reinitiate the paper work, because you did a very gutsy thing in assaulting through the area where 3d platoon was in deep distress with a number of casualties down. You called me on the radio, and asked permission to make the assault, and while I was talking to battalion on the other net, you decided that there wasn't time to wait for coordination and you moved out on your own. I had to shut down an 81mm mortar mission to the left of 3rd Platoon, as you moved right through that area to get into position in front of 3rd Platoon so that we could get to our casualties. You saw the need for action, and you took it. What guts, I am still proud of you and remember the moment 33 years later! I remember writing sitreps and thinking that Delta had inflicted great harm against the enemy, but what a terrible price we paid in the loss of our brother Marines and Corpsmen. Sam's family should know that the NVA unit he attacked was totally defeated in their efforts to move heavy weapons into the flight path of Danang and that his bravery saved many lives by not allowing the enemy to reach a place

where they could wreak havoc on other US units. He did not die in vain. Just as the firemen and police of New York City who died recently, he gave his life for the good of others, when none of us can know why some must die and others in the same situation are spared. I hope this info will help us to allow Sam's family to gain closure. Both of you guys, Dan and George, are caring and compassionate people who still care for a guy who made us better for having known him and served with him in a place that was hell on earth. I believe this to be truthful and if I have any details out of sync don't hesitate to let me know. I remember these events very well, because you guys were willing to give your lives, and we were a team that worked together and I remember, because you did as I asked of you.

Semper Fi,
Jack Daniels

Dan McGravey's final letter to Ernie Spencer regarding the visit with the family of Sam Hannah by Jack Daniels and George Myrick.

This family meeting was held this past Monday in Lincoln, Arkansas with George driving in from Oklahoma and Jack flying in from his home in Williamsburg, Virginia. This expression of caring is "above and beyond the call" in my opinion. I talked to George last night to see how it went and thanks be to God, it was great. I've asked George to write the Khe Sanh Veterans about those present and the discussion, so you can get a sense of how healing this meeting must have been. I think you may also want to contact Jack Daniels for other details. These two guys are Marine Class in my opinion. The emails that I'm sending along to you can be shared at your discretion...both George and I have no restrictions.

Semper Fi
Dan McGravey

In a final email to the Khe Sanh Veterans concerning the visit of Jack Daniels and George Myrick to the Hannah family, Jack Daniels writes:

Dan, thanks for the note. George and I had a day that was important to the two of us as well as the family for a number of reasons. First, we met a family that was just outstanding. No wonder Sam Hannah was a good Marine — he came from a great background. Secondly, they received a lot of information that helped them understand what happened and what we were trying to accomplish. Thirdly, they were warm and receptive to George and me. I learned that based upon official communications, information received by the family is often sketchy and they naturally conjure up different scenarios that may be far from the truth. George had a 1:250,000 map, and we were able to trace the locations of the battalion during the 7 months that Sam was in country. We also told them of the search and destroy mission we had, and the weapons and commanders notebook that we captured that indicated the NVA we met on 7 June were headed to the Danang Airfield. So we were able to explain to them that Sam's platoon was inside the NVA position and that he was heroic in leading his platoon in close hand-to-hand fighting.

The day was important to us, because we could pay tribute to a fallen comrade these many years later. My wife met a young woman at a meeting while George and I were at the Hannah's, whose father in 1st MAR DIV had been killed about the same time, and she remarked how little information her family had, so that underscored the importance of our being able to share with the Hannah family. No problem sharing this with Ernie Spencer. Hope to see you in Dallas next summer, thanks for your help and communication on the Hannah visit.

Semper Fi,
Jack Daniels

A Birthday Message from the Commandant of the Marine Corps

As we commemorate the 226th anniversary of the founding of our Corps, Marines everywhere can take pride in their contributions to our great nation. We are a Corps born of an act of Congress, consecrated

in sacrifice, steeped in tradition, and tested in battle. Our earned legacy is filled with the names of many great Marines — Lejeune, Vandegrift, Puller...Butler, Bestwick, Daly — who fill the annals of our lineage with their inspired acts of vision and gallantry. Heroic actions on the battlefield are a hallmark of our legacy. Equally compelling are the countless heroic deeds of many other Marines who exemplify the virtue of placing the needs of others above their own. Whether it be a Marine saving an Okinawan child from drowning, or pulling people from a burning wreck, or a family extending itself to provide a safe, nurturing home for disadvantaged children, our lives are indeed full of heroism. Today, we celebrate these deeds, not as exploits, but as contributions to the greater good — circumstances where Marines take care of not just their own, but reach out to care for others.

A lone Marine standing vigil on a dark night in Kosovo; a Marine Reservist serving as a firefighter or police officer who responds to an emergency in his community; a civilian Marine working alongside his counterparts in uniform who shares the perils and realities of a terrorist attack; and a committed spouse who finds the time to serve as an advocate for family programs in addition to making a home and supporting the family — all are among the heroes of all generations. We are indebted to them for their example of strength and their presence of character. They embrace our core values and live them to the fullest. They inspire us to do the same. We admire and appreciate their example as we celebrate the birth of our Corps and our rich heritage. As our motto enjoins us, let us always be faithful, to our God, our country, our Corps and to our families. Let us also resolve to be always faithful to those Marines who have bestowed upon us our proud legacy of sacrifice, courage, and victory against any foe. To all Marines, past and present, who uphold the finest traditions of our Eagle, Globe, and Anchor, Happy Birthday and... Semper Fidelis,

J. L. JONES
General, U.S. Marine Corps

The Debacle at LZ Margo

On the afternoon of 16 September 1968 the carnage known as LZ Margo began. While several fine United States Marines gave their lives in the service of their country during Operation Lancaster II – Trousdale North prior to 16 September, that day is the anniversary of the real toll in terms of lives and dreams, lost or forever shattered. More than a few of those who gave their lives that day were Khe Sanh veterans. The toll on Echo Company was particularly heavy — L/Cpl Gary R. Daffin, L/Cpl Joseph E. Roble, L/Cpl Clifton Spiller, and PFC James C. "Bull" Durham Jr., were all veterans of the epic battle for Hill 861-Alpha that occurred on the morning of 5 February 1968. In addition, SSgt Juan O. Sanchez and Sgt Billy G. Strickland, also veterans of that battle, would lose their lives on 17 September 1968. L/Cpl Stanley R. Pettit, yet another such veteran, gave his life the day before the bloodbath began, and another fifty to one hundred of us were wounded.

Many other companies of the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment also lost veterans who had served at Khe Sanh. It is only within the last few years — after nearly three decades of intense soul searching — that I have finally come to realize that our leaders betrayed us. I have been researching the record of what I considered a disastrous event long forgotten by many, except by those who experienced the horror. I am nearing the end of that journey, a journey one of our former "leaders" referred to as "just opening old wounds." Little does he realize that many of the wounds his Marines sustained have not and probably never will heal. Mistakes happen in war, hiding those mistakes is evading responsibility. We who believed, trusted and willingly obeyed, only to be taken advantage of by those who evaded responsibility for their actions (or lack thereof) is an insult to those who survived LZ Margo. When my research is complete, I will make it available to all those who seek the truth of the Debacle at LZ Margo.

Fortunately, some good did come from LZ Margo. The unrecognized heroism of TRUE LEADERS, such as L/Cpl Gary Daffin and L/Cpl Cliff Spiller who gave their lives rescuing fellow Marines, is forever etched in my mind. The lessons I learned and the

bravery I witnessed, I have passed on to others. These men and women have gone on to accomplish much, passing on the lessons of LZ Margo, so the story lives on. As we stand on the edge of yet another struggle for the survival of the American way of life, let us not forget the true heroes and the legacy they left us, who blazed the trail that we follow. May God bless and keep you always my brothers.

REST-IN-PEACE

Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines
PFC Edward Cunningham (9/16)
LCpl Gary Robert Daffin (9/16): KSV
PFC John Martin Donohue (9/16)
PFC James Claude "Bull" Durham, Jr. (9/16): KSV
PFC Delon Hunter (9/16)
Cpl Stanley R. Pettit (9/15): KSV
LCpl Harry E. Rivers (09/16/68)
LCpl Joseph E. Roble (9/16): KSV
SSgt Juan 0. Sanchez (9/17): KSV
LCpl Clifton Spiller (WIA 9/16: DOW 9/28):KSV
Sgt Billy G. Strickland (09/17/68): KSV

Foxtrot Company, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines
Cpl R. Bradford (09/16/69)
LCpl D. B. Freed (09/19/68)
LCpl J. D. Rinehart (09/19/68)

Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines
PFC G. A. Cabano, Jr. (10/03/68)
Cpl R. L. Knisely, Jr. (10/01/68)
PFC G. L. Kunshier (10/04/68)
Cpl D. Moore, Jr. (10/03/68)
Cpl V. Perez, Jr. (10/01/68)
LCpl M. D. Personette (09/23/68)
Cpl T. M. Phillips (09/13/68)
PFC M. R. Ross, 11 (10/03/68)

Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion,26th Marines
PFC D. L. Adams (09/16/68)
LCpl G. A. Bond (10/08/68)
PFC M. H, Deschenes (09/16/68)
PFC D. G. Impson (09/15/68)
PFC L. E. Kizzie ((09/17/68)
PFC J.L. Marcum (09/17/68)
PFC D. L. McDonald (09/16/68)
PFC R. J. Pointer (09/17/68)
PFC S. J. Reichardt (09/17/68)
Cpl W. E. Wyrosdic (10/08/68)

H&S Company, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines
HN W. M. Brees, Jr. (10/08/68)
LCpl L. Brown-bey (10/01/68)
LCpl L. G. Bryan (09/16/68)
PFC P. F. DeFazio (09/11/68)
HN D.L. Eisenbraugh (09/17/68)
PFC M. Henderson, Jr. (10/01/68)
Cpl W. J. Moore (09/16/68)
LCpl W.J. Oskilenick (09/16/68)
CPL W.T. Parker (09/17/68)
LCpl D. Pollastro (09/17/68)
PFC C. E. Peden (09/26/68)
PFC F. A. Skocich (09/17/68)
HN D.L. Songe (09/17/68)

Mortar Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines
HM 3 C. W. Carothers (09/11/68)
2/Lt W. C. Herndon (09/11/68)

PFC Lawrence E McCartney
2nd Plt, Echo Co., 2nd Bn., 26Th Marine Regiment, Master Gunnery Sergeant (Retired): 1967-1997

A Special Flag

Sharing (with permission) this beautiful little well written and meaningful story, which was sent by one of our own. Former Marine Billy Roble is the youngest brother of Marine Khe Sanh Vet Joseph E. Roble, E 2-/26. In 1998 at the Khe Sanh Veterans' Reunion, Joe was awarded the Bronze Star Medal W/V Device posthumously for heroic action on 15 September 1968. Joe was KIA 16 September 1968 at LZ Margo.

I'm not sure if you know that I am living at my old place again and the family that I rent a room from is of Spanish decent. In some regards they are like my own family. With the whole country being so patriotic, their father, now a proud citizen, rushed out to buy a flag for the house. All he could manage to find were some little flags and one slightly larger, plastic flag.

Before he did that, I thought of hanging a flag that my mother gave to me. It was one of the two flags she received at Arlington in July 1998. I had read somewhere that once a flag is folded for a fallen soldier, it should remain that way, but when he could

find no suitable flags to show his patriotism, I felt obligated to help. To me, he is a true symbol of what this country stands for — life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. He came from a poor background and was not even able to go to high school. Earlier this week, we admired his last son's diploma, and I could almost see tears in his eyes.

I immediately called my mother and asked if it would be appropriate and she said that the flag represents the sacrifice of many and the symbol of freedom worldwide. That being said, I carefully unfolded the flag and marveled at its beauty. The colors contrasted so beautifully with one another and just holding it in my hands gave me such a sheer feeling of joy that was indescribable.

I've seen many flags, but under the present circumstances, this particular flag seemed to emanate power. I walked into the house and the whole family was surprised that I managed to find a flag. I quickly told them where and why I received it and they understood the meaning by which this flag would now be flown.

Their eldest son, my friend of 14 years, helped me place the flag in front of their garage. As many times as his family have and myself have probably seen the American flag, on this occasion, we all stood back admiring it. It has conveyed a feeling to the world in these recent days and knowing today is the anniversary of my brother's death in Vietnam, I'm sure he would be proud to see that flag fly.

Semper Fidelis
Billy Roble

Recently, I was asked to look at the recent events through the lens of military history. I have joined the cast of thousands who have written an "open letter to Americans."

Dear friends and fellow Americans,

Like everyone else in this great country, I am reeling from last week's attack on our sovereignty. But unlike some, I am not reeling from surprise. As a career soldier and a student and teacher of military history, I have a different perspective and I think you should hear it. This war will be won or lost by the American citizens, not diplomats, politicians or soldiers. Let me briefly explain. In spite of what the media, and even our own government are telling us, this act was not committed by a group of mentally deranged fanatics. To dismiss them as such would be among the gravest of mistakes. A ferocious, intelligent and dedicated adversary committed this attack. Don't take this the wrong way. I don't admire these men and I deplore their tactics, but I respect their capabilities. The many parallels that have been made with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor are apropos. Not only was it a brilliant sneak attack against a complacent America, we may well be pulling our new adversaries out of caves 30 years after we think this war is over, just like my father's generation had to do with the formidable Japanese in the years following WWII.

These men hate the United States with all of their being, and we must not underestimate the power of their moral commitment. Napoleon, perhaps the world's greatest combination of soldier and statesman, stated, "the moral is to the physical as three is to one." Patton thought the Frenchman underestimated its importance and said moral conviction was five times more important in battle than physical strength. Our enemies are willing — better said, anxious — to give their lives for their cause. How committed are we, America? And for how long? In addition to demonstrating great moral conviction, the recent attack demonstrated a mastery of some of the basic fundamentals of warfare taught to most military officers worldwide; namely, simplicity, security and surprise. When I first heard rumors that some of these men may have been trained at our own Air War College, it made perfect sense to me. This was not a random act of violence, and we can expect the same sort of military competence to be displayed in the battle to come.

This war will escalate, with a good portion of it happening right here in the good ol' USA. These men will not go easily into the night. They do not fear us. We must not fear them. In spite of our overwhelming conventional strength as the world's only "superpower" (a truly silly term), we are the underdog in this fight. As you listen to the carefully scripted rhetoric designed to prepare us for the march for war, please realize that America is not equipped or seriously trained for the battle ahead. To be certain, our soldiers are much better than the enemy, and we have some excellent "counter-terrorist" organizations, but

they are mostly trained for hostage rescues, airfield seizures, or the occasional "body snatch," (which may come in handy). We will be fighting a war of annihilation, because if their early efforts are any indication, our enemy is ready and willing to die to the last man. Eradicating the enemy will be costly and time consuming. They have already deployed their forces in as many as 20 countries, and are likely living the lives of everyday citizens. Simply put, our soldiers will be tasked with a search and destroy mission on multiple foreign landscapes, and the public must be patient and supportive until the strategy and tactics can be worked out. For the most part, our military is still in the process of redefining itself and is presided over by men and women who grew up with and were promoted because they excelled in Cold War doctrine, strategy and tactics.

This will not be linear warfare; there will be no clear "centers of gravity" to strike with high technology weapons. Our vast technological edge will certainly be helpful, but it will not be decisive. Perhaps the perfect metaphor for the coming battle was introduced by the terrorists themselves aboard the hijacked aircraft — this will be a knife fight, and it will be won or lost by the ingenuity and will of citizens and soldiers, not by software or smart bombs.

We must also be patient with our military leaders. Unlike Americans who are eager to put this messy time behind us, our adversaries have time on their side, and they will use it. They plan to fight a battle of attrition, hoping to drag the battle out until the American public loses its will to fight. This might be difficult to believe in this euphoric time of flag waving and patriotism, but it is generally acknowledged that America lacks the stomach for a long fight. We need only look as far back as Vietnam, when North Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap (also a military history teacher) defeated the United States of America without ever winning a major tactical battle.

American soldiers who marched to war cheered on by flag waving Americans in 1965 were reviled and spat upon less than three years later when they returned. Although we hope that Osama Bin Laden is no Giap, he is certain to understand and employ the concept. We can expect not only large doses of pain like the recent attacks but also less audacious "sand in the gears" tactics, ranging from livestock infestations to attacks at water supplies and power distribution facilities. These attacks are designed to hit us in our "comfort zone," forcing the average American to "pay more and play less," eventually eroding our resolve. But it can only work if we let it.

It is clear to me that the will of the American citizenry — you and I — is the center of gravity the enemy has targeted. It will be the fulcrum upon which victory or defeat will turn. He believes us to be soft, impatient, and self-centered. He may be right, but if so, we must change. The Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz, the most often quoted and least read military theorist in history, says that there is a "remarkable trinity of war" that is composed of (1) the will of the people, (2) the political leadership of the government, and (3) the chance and probability that plays out on the field of battle, in that order.

Every American citizen was in the crosshairs of last Tuesday's attack, not just those that were unfortunate enough to be in the World Trade Center or Pentagon. The will of the American people will decide this war. If we are to win, it will be because we have what it takes to persevere through a few more hits, learn from our mistakes, improvise, and adapt. If we can do that, we will eventually prevail. Everyone I've talked to in the past few days has shared a common frustration, saying in one form or another, "I just wish I could do something!" You are already doing it. Just keep faith in America, and continue to support your President and military, and the outcome is certain. If we fail to do so, the outcome is equally certain.

Dr. Tony Kern, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

New York City Visit: WTC

On 11 September 2001, I sat in horror and watched the Attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. It was beyond belief! When the entire nation learned the responsible parties were from the Middle East, I like many others wanted immediate retaliation. I have been a police officer for 33 years and work in an area where many of the businesses are owned by Arab Americans. I wanted to forget the oath I had taken when I became a police officer and seek revenge in any non-violent way I could.

However, as I did in Vietnam, I forgot my personal feelings and protected all those I had taken an oath to protect, regardless of personal feelings. I could not get it out of my mind that over almost 400 hundred of my fellow Police Officers and Firemen were still buried in that burning wreckage that used to be the WTC. I and hundreds of other police officers wanted to go there and help dig them out. I could not leave the TV — as they broadcast the rescue efforts, we relayed information over our police radios when a police officer or firemen was rescued. Unfortunately, this good news was short lived.

I had to go there. To be close to them. To help in any way we could. So with 20 other Police Officers, we packed up and drove to New York. Upon arrival at the volunteer center, NY Police and Firemen, and civilian volunteers greeted us with open arms. Although we were not needed at the sight of the WTC Disaster (known as Ground Zero), there were plenty of other things we could do to give the over-worked NY Police Department Members a little break. Most of them had worked without days off, since the day of the bombing. At first, it was strange walking a beat in Greenwich Village and Times Square in the uniform of a Chicago Police Officer. After a few days, it became commonplace to see Police officers in the uniforms of dozens of Law Enforcement Departments, patrolling along with us.

The citizens of New York, who some say are not the friendliest people in the world, would stop you on the street, shake your hand and say, "Thanks for coming." Just the thought that hundreds of Police and Fire Agencies had volunteered to come to New York to help, buoyed the morale of the NY Police Officers.

Then it was off to "Ground Zero." As everyone who has been there has said, you have to see it in person to actually understand the total devastation. Just imagine 110-story buildings being reduced to a pile of ruble 85 feet high. We spent the time at the WTC escorting victims' families around the site, and escorting people who had been displaced from their homes and offices while they retrieved a few personal items from places many will never return to.

I would personally describe the site as looking at a city after a nuclear explosion struck it. They have over a mile square area cordoned off, and all the buildings were deserted. There were over 6,000 abandoned vehicles parked on the street and in garages. Every street, building, office, and apartment we saw was covered by that gray, filthy, acrid matter created from paper, building walls, plaster, etc. when the buildings collapsed. Although I sought closure from my visit, it still haunts me. Even though I know there is nothing else I could do, I want to go back.

Tom Eichler

Looking Back Forty Years

I attended my high school 40th reunion this past October in Manhattan Beach, California. My school at the time was inland from there; fifteen minutes by freeway. Mount Carmel opened in 1934 and closed in 1976. Demographics did it in. A casual friend from those high school days, took me there in a new, black Jaguar. He had done well for himself. After graduating from USC with a degree in accounting, he moved right up the business ladder. He did not serve in the armed forces. He retired a couple of years ago. Avis bought out the franchise that he owned a part of. Also in the car were another classmate and his wife. He went to Annapolis and got into nuclear subs, did his five, got out and went to Stanford. Got a Ph.D. and is now a big boy with GE.

We walked our old school grounds. The buildings and the gym are gone. The one city block that was once Mount Carmel is now a playground and youth center. Black and Hispanic kids were playing soccer when we arrived. Some of the concrete and asphalt that was our commons remains. Several other car-loads of classmates met us there. We stood out now. The kids and their parents ignored us for the most part. Half of our class of 129 made it to the banquet that night. Fifty-two filled out bios that I read later after I got home. I felt nothing at that reunion. It was nothing compared to what I feel at a Khe Sanh reunion. I did three years at that school and hated it. I was reluctantly dragged from my home in Hawaii in 1958 and went there so my older sister and brother could go to universities on the mainland.

Mount Carmel was a Catholic boy's school with only 600 students. It was famous for its football team. Several grads went on to play pro ball. I was on the swimming team but was remembered more as a fighter. That's what many of those in attendance

remembered me as — a quiet guy who could box. We were a mixed middle-class school. Mostly white, but all races. Our fathers were WW2 guys with skilled trade jobs, or merchants and small businessmen. It was an Italian guy with a Fonzi hairdo who made me famous. He played up his rep as a mob guy's kid and was a bully. He played with the wrong guy one day during lunch out on the commons.

I did get to meet the three guys I hung out with. One's a rich dentist in Bel Air. Another, an Irish immigrant, jokester, is a Private Investigator. The third; the genius of our class, a real math whiz, is still a fat guy but bald now. He lives in the same house with his mom. Carmel was a school of small cliques. Tom the Dentist always wanted to be a dentist. Jim the guy who still lives at home had access to beer his dad brewed which Mike the PI and I drank. Tom missed getting drafted. Jim the fat guy got 4F because of his fat. Mike got drafted and served with the Americal Division as an RTO. Tom looks real good and prosperous. Jim is fat, bald and still lethargic. Mike has hard lines on his face like some of the arroyos at Pendelton.

I drove from that dull event down to Fallbrook to hang out for a couple of days with my Khe Sanh bro. I always feel at home with him and Sharon. How different, I thought. I come from seeing guys I spent three years with and couldn't wait to get away from. I went to that school to get an education. But the real education I got was in Vietnam. I noticed when I read the 52 bios that 15 served stateside. Eight went to Vietnam. Only three were combat guys. I wonder if that has anything to do with my feelings?

Ernie Spencer

This Is What The Corps Is All About

John-Boy,

Good to hear from you. Imagine current events are a hot topic in your classroom. As you can imagine, your brother Marines at Camp Lejeune are biting at the bit to receive a mission in the first war of the 21st Century. It will come but not until around Thanksgiving/Christmas time from the tea leaves I'm reading. It will kill me to see them go, leaving me back to guard my driveway! Went to New York City on Friday, 26 September for a Memorial Service for my college roommate (Joe Zucalla) who was lost in the WTC. You should remember Joe coming to the house with Sal Lentene to pick me up for the drive to the University of Dayton. An extremely moving and profound day.

Denny and I walked from Penn Station up 5th Avenue to 50th Street to get to St. Patrick's Cathedral. From the "Missing Posters" everywhere to the letters from school children all over these Unites States, it was the most emotional "hump" I was ever fortunate enough to participate in. The change in the people in the "Big Apple" is simply amazing. Red, White, and Blue everywhere with everyone being courteous and polite, not knocking anyone down as they walk the Manhattan sidewalks. I had to keep looking around to assure myself I had not been transported to Dublin or Madrid! The cathedral was packed with fraternity brothers, the gathered 'Familia de Zucalla', friends of Joe from all over the city and Long Island, and just good Americans who did not know Joe but wanted to show one of the many aggrieved families that they care.

After the funeral mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, about 20 of the fraternity brothers went to "Callahan's Irish Pub and Grill" for a DGO wake. After two hours of liquid courage and intelligence, Denny, 4 other fraternity brothers and I went down to pay our respects at Ground Zero. One of my frat bros, Jerry Sampson, is a retired Nassau County Police Officer. He tried to use his badge to get us through the barriers but no joy. I then decided to use my only trump card. Broke out my retired military ID and went up to the cop and said, "I'm Colonel Williams of the USMC, and my old friend who was a soldier died in there. I'd like to go in to pay my respects!" The cop read the ID Card and then snapped to attention, saying, "Semper Fi, Sir!" Turns out he was in 1st Marines. The cop next to him turns and says, "Joe, I didn't know you were a Marine. I was a Marine too, in 2nd Tanks. Semper Fi!"

Joe then takes me over to his Watch Sergeant and tells him who I am while handing over the ID Card. The Watch Sergeant reads the card, looks at me and says, "Semper Fi, Sir." After shaking hands and finding out he was in 9th Marines in Vietnam, he hollers over to a young cadet, "Hey rookie, get over here. Take the Colonel and his men anywhere they want to go." After clearing the barricades and acknowledging the salutes of the National Guardsmen who have now figured out who/what is going down, the rookie looks at my US/USMC Flag lapel pin and asks me if I was a Marine. When I answer in the affirmative, he says, "Semper Fi, Sir." Turns out he was in 6th Comm Bn up until a year ago. As you can imagine, my normally over-inflated Marine ego was even more inflated given this most recent affirmation of the power of the Marine Corps Mafia and a simple phrase that means so much to a very special band of brothers.

To sum up this event, being at the WTC with the smoke, acrid smell, and total devastation, and looking in the thousand yard stares of the rescue workers who refuse to give up — all of this imparts a entirely new appreciation for humankind and a total revulsion for the damage that was done to our fellow citizens and country in the name of God. It also fills your eyes with tears and your heart with pride to see how the New Yorkers and so many other volunteers from all around the nation have joined together and refuse to be beaten. Finally, it makes you appreciate even more the true meaning of our beloved Corps. It is a family, and the words "Once a Marine, Always a Marine" are as valid today as they were when first spoken. My best to Kerry and the kids. Rest easy tonight John, your brother Marines are on the watch and ready as always to serve.

Love and "Semper Fidelis,"
Mike

(The author is a retired Marine General.)

How I Avoided the Draft

On the day after my 18th birthday, a couple of my friends and I drove the 12 miles to Carthage, Missouri where our county Selective Service office was located and signed up for the draft. Pauline, who had been the secretary of the board since at least World War I, took us through the process and thanked us for being so prompt.

Six months later, I enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve. Notice was sent to the Selective Service and I should have been reclassified 1D. At the same time, I received a scholarship to college. The Marine Corps agreed that we could delay active duty and if I was doing OK in school, I could enter the PLC program and get a commission. The university sent a notice to the draft board that I was enrolled. I got a draft card that said I was 2S (Student deferment) not 1D (member of the Armed Forces) Of course, being 18, I didn't know the difference.

I went to my first summer of PLC in 1962 and returned for the second six weeks in the summer of 1963. About three weeks into the cycle, my folks sent me a draft notice from Pauline and the Selective Service Board informing me to report for induction. Of course, I did the worst thing possible. I went to see my DI for his advice. It was succinct and to the point. "Get the %$% out of my office, maggot! I have pissed on ants who had more brains than you do. You %$%$ this up. Now, un%$%$ it!"

Fortunately, the platoon commander heard about the problem, called me into his office and told me that the Corps would advise the draft board that I was in the Marines and stood a 1% chance of becoming an officer. I thought that all sounded pretty good and I forgot about it.

At the end of that summer, I entered law school on another scholarship and they sent a notice to my draft board. I got another draft card with a 2S deferment. I didn't question it. In my last semester of law school, I received another induction notice. This one ordered me to report for a pre-induction physical in Detroit. I sent a copy of my ID showing that I was a 1st Lieutenant in the USMC to the draft board but got no response. I tried calling but didn't get through. I went to Detroit and gave my ID to one of the Army NCOs who were running batches of draftees through the physical exam process. He was not impressed. About an hour later while I was turning my head to cough while some doctor was probing my privates, an Army officer appeared. He allowed as how there had been a mistake, gave me back my ID and told me I could get dressed and go back to school. He said they would correct my records with the Selective Service.

Two years later, during the Tet offensive in 1968, the gunny came in with the mail and said "Skipper, it looks like you've been drafted." He handed me another notice from my draft board which my folks had forwarded. This time I wrote a letter to Pauline the secretary, enclosed a photo of me in the Nam, a picture of my ID card, and told them that if they wanted to order me to return to The World for induction, let me know and I'd be on the next plane.

A month later I got another letter from Pauline. She apologized for herself and all the Selective Service Board in Carthage, Missouri. It seems, she said, that there was another Charles E. Patterson, born the same day in our little county of about 10,000 souls. The other Charles E. had been living on my 1D deferment for the past 9 years, and they thought I was the one who had stayed in school and then out of reach to avoid the draft. She said they were going to see to it that he became a member of the active duty Armed Forces.

I never knew what happened to the other Charles E., but his name is not on the wall, so maybe he made it. But given his luck, I'd guess he probably skated.

Charles Patterson

The Sanctuary for Unloved Heroes

I see by your gravestone that you were only 19
When you joined the dead heroes
in Leatherneck green.
Well I hope you died quick
and I hope you died clean
Or Lance Corporal Wynn
was it slow and obscene?[1]

The Morphine Dream

For some, it was the time of their life; and for some, the time of their death. There were a hundred

[1] Paraphrased from "The Green Fields of France" by Eric Bogle

ways to kill in that place, and killing begets killing, so you could end up on either end of that deal. The time of their life was a year and a month and in that short but interminable period, young men died or grew old. We who grew old remember our dead.

The dead waited with infinite patience, while we wounded and not yet dead flew away in a morphine dream. It was triage at the Khe Sanh airstrip. It was January 1968.

He didn't know he was between deaths. He squinted in the harsh light that burned through the ribbed glass diffuser of a surgeon's overhead lamp. The glare contracted the surgeon's pupils and made them look like the tips on a dentist's drill. They bore down on the boy, penetrating the morphine fog. He said, "Hey Doc, will you save the bullet for me? I lost the other one that they took out of my leg this morning." Above the gauze mask the doctor's eyes crinkled at the corners. The boy had made this very busy man smile, and it was a kindly voice that answered, "We'll do our best son. Now try to relax. We are going to put this rubber mask over your face. Breathe deeply and count backwards from ten."

He wanted to watch, so he fooled them. He counted forwards. He made it to about four and he thought that was pretty funny. They were murmuring and clinking steel tools in kidney-shaped pans, and they didn't know that the boy could hear them. It didn't hurt when they cut him, but he could feel it and he could hear the scalpel slicing the flesh on his shoulder. It was the sensation you would feel if your lip was numb and you slit it with a razor blade. He frowned under the ether mask and then...he was sucked down into darkness. All in a dream. He was back home on the prairies, and he had fallen into a creek full of chocolate pudding, his favorite. He was on his back, pinned down like a butterfly, his wings stuck to the tacky dessert. Along the bank of the chocolate stream he heard groans.

The boy opened his eyes and looked down a row of lumpy cots, barely visible in the greenish gloom of a Quonset hut. There were four lines of occupied bunks in the deep room. Stainless steel rods with curved necks holding intravenous bags hovered by each bed like glimmering skeletons on wheels. The head of his bunk was against the wall, his covered feet facing a pathway between the rows. Shadows patrolled the aisles and periodically shined flashlights on the metal cots and read charts on clipboards. Light, dark, light, dark. Cannon were booming in the distance.

His drugged mind kaleidoscoped in the half-light, mixing cause and effect and past and present. Had it been hours or days since the firefight? It was a good fight and a good day to die. He didn't because Lt. Grenville Sutcliffe used an M79 grenade launcher to blow away the gunman that was throwing down on Sgt. John Frescura. The Green Beret Sergeant was making the machine gun charge that gave the boy the cover he needed to get away from the next bullet. He was expecting that third bullet, that third one with his name on it. And three is a charm. Every grunt knows that.

From Khe Sanh to this murky room with his two lucky wounds. He lay there unable to move, inhaling the pukey odor of ether mixed with whiffs of aromatic antiseptics. In the temporal confusion, he thought, Man I got it made. I got in under the wire and I beat the odds. John Wayne wounds, groovy. I'm OK here, this is a safe place, a safe place to sleep. He wanted a safe place to sleep more than anything. A spidery trickle of blood leaked of his bandages and ran along his arm. A second later another dribble scurried down to his elbow and added itself to the growing puddle. He was afloat in the stuff and he was cold. He could see the Corpsmen walking by the foot of his bed. He strained to call out but the sound wouldn't go past his throat. Not even a whisper. It was like trying to shout away a nightmare to wake up. It never works.

Then he realized that he was the only one that knew. This was the way he was going to die. He was going to quietly bleed to death. Dark figures wandered back and forth, oblivious to him as though he were already a corpse, while his soul ran screaming around his body and the devil sat on his chest. He thought, if I go to sleep I'd die. If I die, they will think I'm just sleeping. It's the same thing. Sleeping isn't what kills you, so I should be able to sleep just a little. That seemed to make sense. The devil nodded and grinned. A Corpsman shined a light on his face and asked, How ya doing guy? The boy didn't answer. The Corpsman pulled the sodden blanket back and then looked at the wet sheen on his fingers. He clamped a hand on the shoulder and said, What's your name? The boy could feel the answer lurking in

his mind but it wouldn't come out. He thought, I'll tell him tomorrow. The voice said, where are you from? He knew that one. He said, South Dakota...in his head. The bed started to drift down the long room and came to rest under the surgeon's lamp again. Then...the darkness again.

The Sanctuary

The next morning I woke up outdoors to a sunny day and a pleasant temperature. I could hear the sounds of Danang in the background. Buses, trucks, children, boat traffic, and jet afterburners kicking in— the usual stuff. I was alive and the first thing I tried was my voice. I said, Damn it. I liked Danang. I had been AWOL here a few times, checking out the skivy houses and getting a hot meal, even steaks and ice cream from navy people at this same Naval Support Activity Base. Hell, just yesterday I had been able to walk into this place looking forward to walking out again. I was sort of shot up and limping a little, but I was full of youthful enthusiasm and a few jabs of morphine. Now I was strapped to a stretcher and two Corpsmen were carrying me to a helicopter. I said, Where are we going? They told me I was going to the USS Sanctuary for recovery. As we bounced along, I was reminded of the wagon rides my mother used to give me when I was a kid. I could lay back and watch the clouds floating by and feel the gentle vibration as the little wheels bumped over the dirt road. Vibrating helicopter, Navy Corpsman holding I.V. bags, horizontal bodies on stretchers, the smell of hydraulic fluid and chopper fuel, whop whop whop, and a gentle thump as we landed. The South China Sea was the bluest blue, and the USS Sanctuary was sparkling white. They pulled my stretcher off the helicopter and set me on the deck. I felt like a speck of dirt on a wedding cake.

On a gurney and into an elevator, long and narrow, built to hold stretchers. Nearly dark after the morning sun, a light bulb on the ceiling had wire mesh over it. The elevator driver turned a wheel on a panel and then turned to look at me. He said, We are going down to x-ray, and he smiled. Later I sat on a stool and Lt. Cmdr. Hartzog pulled stained gauze out of my shoulder. Dried blood was caked and flaky down to my elbow. It seemed like he pulled yards of salve and antiseptic saturated cloth from the wound. I looked at the open gash, shaped like the number seven, and saw the layers of my own body. Pale epidermis, a yellowish layer of fatty tissue, lightly marbled raw meat and a small ooze of blood. I said, using a few expletives, Did you mess up my leg like this too? He reminded me that I was no longer in the field, that I was an enlisted man on his ship, and that I would watch my language. I said, Aye, aye sir, with as much humility as a Marine is allowed to show to the Navy. I asked, Did they save the bullet? He showed me the X-rays. The bullet was still in my shoulder, in two pieces. He told me to take a shower and to run hot water into the wounds for as long as I could stand it — and then a little longer. Afterwards, he repacked the wounds. We did this for a couple days and then he left the gashes exposed to the air to cure like beef.

After the first session a Hospital Corpsman took me to a bunk in a recovery ward. I had a sling on my arm and a bandage around my thigh. He told me to take a top bunk. Bullshit. I was a Marine, wounded in combat, in pain, and this non-combatant was telling me to climb a ladder. A guy in a bunk against the bulkhead said, Hey doc, cut that Marine some slack. He's been hit in the leg and arm. he shouldn't have to climb a ladder. Get him a lower bunk. I thought, Damm right, and looked over to see who was talking. He was a good-looking kid. My age. Blond curly hair. Blue eyes. He was lying spread-eagled on his bunk. Both of his legs were slit open to the bone from the inside of the knees to the groin. His testicles had been blown away and a plastic tube was draining his urine. He nodded at me and smiled.

Indescribable embarrassment and shame hit me like a chill, and I wanted to hide my face. I sat on the floor and cried. The Corpsman said, What's the matter with you. Are you hurt? I didn't care. I didn't care what anybody said about me. They couldn't have thought less of me than I did anyway. They put me in a bottom bunk next to a guy that had plastic tubes plugged into his chest. The tubes went to an electric pump on the floor. The transparent tubes had little clots of stringy blood trapped in the loops and whenever he breathed the pump would whirl and the clots would wave like seaweed. He had seven entry wounds and I asked him what had happened. He wheezed out the story. He was a Corpsman and had been trying to save a Marine. He and the Marine

had been pinned down on an open paddy and he said that every time he moved, a sniper would shoot him again. He said he had to stop moving for a half a day before they could come to get him.

The guy in the bunk on the other side of me was a Korean Marine. His right leg was wrapped up like a mummy down to the knee where it ended. He would look at the stump and bang it against the side rail and swear under his breath. His life had been in the ROK Marines and that had ended when they threw away his leg. He was mad as hell, and everybody was afraid of him. They said he was suicidal. There were row upon row of stories like that, and they came and they went over the twelve days that I was there. Thankfully, I can't remember most of them. I remember the nurse. I bet we all do.

My therapy routine changed on about the third or fourth day. They numbed the wounds and sowed them shut with piano wire. The wire poked through my clothes and hung up whenever I moved. I moved around quite a bit after a few days. I stood on the fantail and watched Vietnam go by as we sailed toward Chu Lai and back again. I walked the main deck and took the elevator to the decks that I was allowed on. Mainly, I went to the ice cream machine and filled a Dixie cup with the swirl stuff and went outside and ate it with a little wooden spoon. I met a Marine there with the hair shaved off the top of his stitched head. He was carrying a helmet that had a bullet hole dead center in the forehead. He said the round had punched through, hit him in the forehead, traveled under his scalp and lodged in the back of his neck. He said he had been knocked unconscious but had kept hold of the helmet and was never going to let it go because it was a sign from God. He said there was no way he was going back ashore either and that was also a message from God.

I met two Marines with drawn .45s on the elevator. They had a guy with them that had a block of C4 and a detonator. I didn't have time to get off the elevator, so I asked the guy what was going on as we went up. He said they had sent him out here to see the shrink, and he had brought the C4 with him. What's the big deal? They walked him to the fantail and he threw it overboard. He asked me if I would come to see him once in awhile down in the cage. He said it was pretty groovy, but everybody down there was nuts and he didn't have anybody to talk to. I went down there a few times, the guy with the helmet and I, and we watched these guys wander around in the cage. It was scary as hell and it is as close as I ever want to get to true madness. I never did see the C4 guy again. When the sling came off my arm, I was assigned to operate the elevator. The Navy works in four-hour increments and working to a routine was a comfort. Every day I heard, Now hear this. Sweepers, sweepers, man your brooms. Give the ship a clean sweep-down, fore and aft. Now sweepers, sweepers. The announcement was preceded and followed by a funny little whistle.

On the elevator, you see the casualties as they first arrive. Tet was a very busy time, and they started coming in directly from the field. No intermediate stops at Danang. A guy shot in the chest was rolled in and his blood splattered Corpsman ran beside the gurney with his hand over the wound. His young eyes were scared as he fought to breathe, and I put my hand on his shoulder and said, We're going down to X-ray and it will be all right now. He died looking at my sorry face. I wept again. A sailor swabbed the blood from the elevator floor. The Corpsmen and doctors and nurses lived with this horror day after day, every day.

Lt. Commander Hartzog cut the wire stitches with a stainless steel snipper and then pulled them out with a pair of pliers. He swabbed away the beads of blood and said it looked pretty good. He said he could keep me on board the ship for another week, maybe two, at the most. He stood up to go and I said, No, Sir. I want to leave as soon as possible.

He sat back and shook his head. Why Son? Why do you boys do that? We talked for a while and I explained that my buddies were back there, and they might need me. He signed my release and told me to take care of my wounds and wished me good luck. I hope he knows I made it.

They go unsung, those good people of the Sanctuary, those people who cared when the rest of the world wanted to forget us.

We were their special children, and they loved us all. We torn and mangled boys from the War Without Heroes.[2]

Lacey Lahren

[2] "War Without Heroes," by David Douglas Duncan

The following is the first part of a two-part series of the memoirs of Madame Poilane, who with her family ran the Coffee plantation at Khe Sanh.

Memories of Vietnam, 1957-1968

Khe Sanh village came about as a result of the arrival of the planters. Before, there were only the Montagnards of the "Bru" tribe who were dispersed in the villages that were accessible only by the back roads. There was a French woman living, I believe, with a Vietnamese man. Since the development of the plantations, the Vietnamese population came about slowly and one could be able to figure between 1,500 and 2,000 inhabitants in 1968.

The planters were five in number:

- Monsieur Eugene Poilane, remarried to a Vietnamese woman who managed the plantation from 1964 until the death of her husband. She also possessed a plantation bought for Monsieur Poilane's sister (former Lecas plantation). Madame Lecas died of cholera, and she is buried on the plantation at Khe Sanh.
- Monsieur Felix Poilane, my husband and manager of his mother's (Madame Bourdeauducq) plantation since December 21, 1957, the date on which I arrived with him to Vietnam. We stayed there until January 22, 1968 — the evacuation before the Viet Cong offensive.
- Monsieur Simard (former Laval plantation) owned a plantation starting from Khe Sanh and continuing on the road to Lao Bao. Another part was found at another section. Monsieur Simard was married to a Eurasian.
- Monsieur Rome (deceased) rented the plantation to Monsieur Llinares, married to a Vietnamese woman.
- And finally, the plantation of the Benedictine Fathers whose monastery was at Hue. When my mother-in-law, Madame Bourdeauducq, had to leave Khe Sanh and Vietnam, she gave them our plantation. But the Fathers, in addition, had asked for more land. She gave them 9 Hectares (equivalent to 22,239 acres.) of land planted with productive coffee trees and the possibility of expanding, which they did.

Upon our return in 1957, the Fathers, having been notified, constructed a building for themselves and gave us back the plantation as agreed. One French Father (Father Corentin who since died in France) and some Vietnamese brothers stayed to help with the plantation work. When I arrived on December 21, 1957 in the middle of the monsoon season, I was a little afraid to see the state in which the plantation was — especially the big 16-room mansion which was uninhabitable. The Fathers had to cultivate and harvest the plantation, and that's all — no reparations, since we did not know what would become of Vietnam. Father Roman, another French Benedictine who accompanied us, did me the honor of showing me the plantation. He told me, "You will be a queen here." I held back my tears, for all I was seeing there were holes in the ceilings and in the floors.

There were no more doors or windows. The wind could easily come in. In the first floor room, which was our bedroom, the ceiling was held up with branches from the coffee trees. As there was no bed, my father-in-law gave us two iron beds, and we set up mats on them. The main part of our luggage had not arrived yet from Saigon, and we only had a few things with us.

Our first meal consisted of bread with salted "bridel" butter and bananas. There were only two bowls and very few plates and dishes, some canned food that was barely edible, especially the peas. In view of this lack of supplies, we went to have our first meal at my father-in-law's at Khe Sanh. The chauffeur came to pick us up with an old winded T23 Citroen automobile. Encountering the little comfort that existed at my father-in-law's home, we had our meals at our own home with the arrival of our *thi ba* named Ninh. Father Corentin had hired her for us. She was clean and honest which was good for us.

Our first Christmas was very simple and rather sad for us who just made the trip from France to Vietnam on the boat *Le Laos* and then stayed at the Hotel Majestic in Saigon. This was too much of a change for us. Thus, we found again the poverty of those who were around us.

It was necessary to go down to the Province of Quang-Tri, 77 kilometers (almost 48 miles) from Khe Sanh to shop and to buy the minimum to live in a more decent manner. My husband did not dare to venture out too much; he managed the plantation alone for the first time. It was necessary to work for

a year to see how it would turn out. We were to show Vietnamese identification papers in order to go about. From Dong Ha to Khe Sanh there were no less than 14 barriers to cross, showing these papers. Most of the time, soldiers would look very seriously at the reverse side of these papers. They did not want to show that they did not know how to read. We said nothing and tried only to stay calm. Later on, the name Poilane served as our passport.

Before going any farther I would like to say that Khe Sanh is connected to town — that is to say Dong Ha — by Route 9 which was constructed by the French Military Corps of Engineers. The road went as far as Lao Bao, but before the events of the Viet Cong and the Japanese, it went as far as Laos. When it was impossible to come down toward Dong Ha, the coffee was sold at Savannacket in Laos. When my father-in-law arrived for the first time, he was able to come as far as 41 kilometers (about 25 miles) by the river, then on foot along the path that existed then, having been cut out by the Montagnards who went to visit each other from village to village.

I am going to continue to enumerate the important people who were with us: the Vietnamese Protestant minister who was there before 1955 without having any followers. He came back in 1958 and wound up having a beautiful house for prayers and meetings with the Montagnards. No Vietnamese joined him again. Then the American Protestant linguists arrived around 1960 or 1961. They did a tremendous job and began to transcribe the "Bru" language that was never written down. With the Bru, they began to make little elementary books for teaching the Montagnards to read and write their language. Then they started translating the books. Our relationship excelled with this young American couple (the Millers) who lived in a straw hut constructed in a village. They had much courage since this was just about complete destitution for them. The Fathers of Foreign Missions of Paris arrived March 3, 1964. First was Father Poncet who was named parish priest (he was later killed February 13, 1968 at Hue during the Tet Offensive in the middle of a road by the Viet Cong.) Next was Father Mauvais who came to replace him, and in May of 1967 the nuns of Saint Paul of Chartres moved in near the priests. They, too, came to take care of the Montagnards.

For us, rather for me, I was beginning a completely new life. My husband, Felix, who was born in Khe Sanh and had always lived there, was happy to meet his father again and also to see his plantation and country once more. The Montagnards had been informed of the return of the "boss" and for those who knew him, it was a great joy because with his return, there was also the promise of steady jobs. Visits were numerous. One often came to see the wife of the *cau,* a Vietnamese word meaning "young man of good family." Numerous gifts, in the form of new rice, were offered to us. I remember a nice gesture: upon my arrival at the plantation house (named *Petite Fleur),* I found a pretty bouquet of flowers. The young boy in charge of watching the house knew that the wife of the master was arriving. In my distress, this gesture moved me very much.

I had a lot of trouble getting used to this new life in the middle of the underbrush. Above all, it was the lack of even the slightest comforts that left me unable to adapt. In this large house full of holes, one could not consider anything to do in such conditions. And furthermore, there was the food to which I had trouble adapting. We had a very clean cook who did her best, but I simply could not stand eating rice at every meal. She tried to prepare rice for me in the form of bread, but nonetheless, it was still always rice! Each night I would cry and ask my husband to leave again; I said that I would not become accustomed to this life. Felix used to say to me then that it was necessary to make a harvest, and then we'd see about it. The trip would be expensive; it would be necessary to make the harvest and then sell it. We would see then if we would return. He knew very well what he was doing. He knew well what the country did to each person. In such a paradise, because that is what this land was, he knew that I would let myself be taken by the enchantment and would stay. It was true.

The first harvest of coffee was a little Arabica and weighed 800 kilos (about 363 lbs) then came several tons of the Robusta. And around April 15, good weather had arrived and the harvest of the Chari was going to begin. Before explaining how the harvest of the coffee went, I would like to describe it. The Arabica is a real little shrub, not more than two meters in height. It is very fragile and was destroyed by a disease called *leaf blight.* This disease showed

itself by the appearance of tiny mushrooms under the leaves. When this was discovered, the damage was done since we did not have the products to take care of this disease. The plantation produced, before the onset of the disease, 25 tons a year. This coffee was harvested during the monsoon and thus did not have the sun to dry it. It was prepared by the "wet" method. It was placed in large cement basins full of water and left to swell with water and to ferment. Then, it was shelled and the beans could dry in a room known as the "hot room." The heat did the rest in thoroughly drying it. The coffee could then be put in bags before preparing it to be sold, removing the outer skin and sorting it so that there were only perfect beans being sold.

The Robusta was just as the name indicates, a more robust coffee. It was bigger, as it was already a small tree and the harvest took place at the beginning of the month of January. It was not prepared, however, by the wet method. Instead, we dry it by leaving it first to ferment, then putting it in the hot room to dry it. Once dry, it is placed sideways until the time comes to prepare it to be sold. We produced 2-3 tons of this a year. The hot room is a large room with trays on which the coffee is placed for drying with long dug-out galleries which are covered with sheet-irons to conduct the heat. A large furnace in which wood is burned produces this heat. The furnace runs day and night. The coffee is turned at least twice a day so when the upper layer dries, we can continue to dry the rest.

Next is the Chari. It was my father-in-law who brought back nine beans of this coffee from Tonkin, and with those nine beans, started this plantation. As its name indicates, this coffee originates in Africa in Oubangui Chari. It is a tree with a rather fat trunk and long branches with large leaves of a beautiful dark green. It can reach three to four meters in height. It is a very robust coffee and it adapts well to the red earth of Khe Sanh. Generally, the coffee tree grows in red earth.

The harvest of Chari is done from the 15th of April to the end of September. It is our largest output as we produce about 20 tons a year. The harvest is done on the spot by the Montagnards — those here leave in the morning and return in the afternoon. Starting at about 3:30 in the afternoon, I begin to measure the harvest of each coffee. A starting price is set: $10 a touque (a Vietnamese measurement). A touque of petroleum is 20 liters. The coffee bean has the form of a red cherry, which is picked bean by bean as to try not to scratch any little pieces of wood from the coffee tree, because the tree would then suffer. It is an art to pick the ripe coffee. It takes a lot of time to gather each bean but the Bru are very gifted for this type of work. I watch only to make sure they don't pick any green beans. They must mature, and then they will be gathered later. In the middle of the harvest, we have 120 to 150 workers and this gives an enormous amount of work, not just in measuring, but in the payment and sale of rice and other products: salt, dried fish, and a shrimp paste called *jourc* which smells rather bad. It is necessary to get used to the smell in order to eat this product, but it is otherwise very good. However, it exists in different levels of quality.

After the payment for the daily harvest, I begin to nurse Montagnards who have numerous sores on their legs. Much conjunctivitis occurs at the time of the sale in Laos, the *io nam*. The dust is responsible in most cases, and it is easily cured with eyewash. There is also a lot of dysentery for which sulfamides and other medications are given, depending on the severity of the case. I am anticipating a little; I want to speak again about the coffee, which is our principal activity, not counting all the fruit of the country that we were introduced to by Monsieur Eugene Poilane.

The coffee, once picked, is left on a cement surface. It remains in a heap for the fermentation of the beans, which resemble a fat cherry in which the pulp is very thick. When the mildew forms very lightly, it is time to put the coffee on the surface and, several times a day, our Vietnamese workers rake through the coffee, using rakes and their bare feet, to aerate the coffee, which will begin to dry, becoming black. Each night, it will be put back into piles based on its degree of dryness and covered with corrugated iron to protect it in case of a sudden storm. When it is dry, it will then be grayish in color. The coffee will be placed in bags in a room, waiting for the time to be prepared to be sold.

One cannot imagine the work that is required to prepare the coffee before it is poured in a cup to enjoy! The harvesting of Chari is the highpoint of the year on the plantation, because it is then that we

have the most workers. These Vietnamese workers coming from the plains, generally from Dong Ha and the area surrounding the plantation and who live on the premises with us, did all of the work drying the coffee and taking care of the plantation. Actually, the coffee trees require having their highest and dead branches removed, as well as little branches called "gourmands" which exhaust the tree. Each day the workers would be on the plantation with Felix to see what had to be done on such and such a section planted with coffee trees. The plantation was divided into planted hectares, separated one from the other by wide alleys for easier access by car and foot.

They would look to see if there were any trees that were too old or unproductive that had to be replaced. For that, we would have a nursery for young plants and each year in May the young plants would be put into prepared holes at least one month in advance to allow the soil to be aerated. The planting of young coffee trees required a lot of work and care, and it was necessary to survey their progress. In general, everything grew well in the rich soil of our plantation, but it was just as possible that a more robust tree would replace a vegetating plant.

Two times a year, the Montagnards would weed the whole plantation. This work would be done bit by bit, and then the price would be discussed according to the number of trees to be cleaned and the height of the plants. It is necessary for me to say that in periods of monsoons one saw vegetation grow right before one's eyes and I experimented with banana trees. We had many fruit trees: orange and mandrian trees of many species and banana trees with many different types of bananas. There were avocado trees, mango trees, persimmon trees of many species; one of which, a royal persimmon tree, had a little stem of green leaves. The *jacquiers* could be eaten as vegetables. There were *jacquiers* with wet fruit and *jacquiers* with dry fruit. I liked this fruit enormously and the Montagnards, knowing this, asked me if they could pick these fruits. They would come and together we would enjoy this delicious fruit. There were papaya trees, lychee trees of very different kinds; also juicy limes and durians, fruits well liked by the Chinese. This fruit smells very bad, and it is necessary to hold one's nose before eating it. I never succeeded in being able to endure that odor and because of this, I deprived myself of a very delicious fruit. If you have a durian or ducian (the two words are interchangeable) in the house, it is impossible to sleep because the smell takes your breath away. The Chinese buy these fruits at the price of gold. There were longanes, kola nuts very prized by the Sengalese, and areca-nuts, which are used to prepare betel with the coca leaves we also had. We had superb mango trees, but alas, they did not bear any fruit.

Felix succeeded in growing a pepper plant. This little plant is a type of parasite since it needs support for life and bearing of its fruit. The pepper is gathered in red grains and comes in two forms, white pepper and black pepper, the better of the two being white. The majority of tea plants served our own purposes; we sold very little of it. My father-in-law had succeeded in acclimating prune trees. The fruits were sold green because the Vietnamese would like to eat them in this fashion with salt and *nuoc-mam* (briny fish). We used to sell mandrian and oranges by the piece and there were an enormous amount, but one of every two years of harvest was even more abundant. While descending towards the streams where we used to get our water, there were superb mandrian trees. Our children, accompanied by the Montagnard children, would amuse themselves the moment harvest came by picking the green fruits to include oranges. Seven per cent of these fruits were truly delicious and gave a lot of juice. We also had large fruit trees called "abrasins" which bore nuts that were sold to make oil. We did not sell these nuts often because the people were not interested in these fruits. This was very unfortunate for us.

In thinking about this tour of the fruit trees, I forget undoubtedly about how the red soil was so rich that everything could grow. The French and Japanese species of plants and trees, introduced into the country by my father-in-law, were observed in his experimental garden at Land Tram. The President of the Republic, Ngo Dinh Diem, came to visit this garden in July 1959. That day, I had in my hand a notebook containing all the species and the observations made by my father-in-law. This manuscript was sent to the Museum of Natural History of Paris.

Our copy was lost at Khe Sanh at the time of the offensive in 1968. I regret this because in it were numerous species of trees listed along with useful observations. The museum did not want to entrust

me with a copy with which I could make another copy. It's a shame that the manual could not have been printed or published!

During my pregnancy, I saw a gynecologist twice since I spent nearly all of my time at the plantation. I gave myself urine analysis, and everything went as well as could be. I continued to work on the crop harvest without further problems. The plantation and the harvest continued at its rhythm; the maintenance was taken care of as usual. I had begun to look after the Montagnards and to manage things well. In addition to that, I had also begun to learn from their children, using hand signs, how to speak their language. I wrote, as I understood them.

But in July, I was expecting once again a second child, which was very comforting. That year, on September 16, 1962 we had a very violent typhoon. This date is carved in my memory because I had never before seen such a destructive typhoon. Our house survived the storm, but all the roads to the plantation were cut off as the trees lay across them. We had to disentangle them, all which was an enormous job. In Khe Sanh, my father-in-law's house no longer had a roof and the rain and wind came in everywhere. But in these tropical regions, one is used to such violence in nature and quickly restores whatever is damaged or destroyed. That is what happened and life went on.

However, it was decided for my safety that I should wait to give birth in my stepfather's house at Hue. The workers came to arrange things. The gynecologist gave me shots to take every day during the first five months. Then it was blood tests every month because Felix and I had different RH factors. We had discovered an abnormality only thirteen days before the birth of Francoise. One took blood samples from me just for precaution.

This worried us a little because doctors in Vietnam were not properly equipped. Since we were so concerned, they gave me four tests instead of three to reassure us at the blood bank in Hue. Felix then started to come each weekend, generally from Saturday afternoon at noon to Monday morning. Thus, in this way, he spent the weekend with us. I had with me the wife of our cook and my little sister-in-law, Pierrette, to keep me company. Without any abnormality, we were overjoyed to have a very big boy weighing 5 kilos (11 lbs), Jean-Marie. I quickly returned from the clinic to stay a few days at Hue and to prepare for our return to the plantation. I nursed my two children for only a few weeks as I did have milk, but it was not substantial, so they had to have their bottles.

It was at this time that the attack (supposedly by the Vietnamese) against the Buddhists took place following false rumors that they shot into a crowd gathered to celebrate the feast of Buddha. This caused a big commotion in Hue and in other cities. In Saigon, there were a few Buddhist monks who burned themselves in the public squares to show that the Catholics (represented by the President of the Republic and by his brothers) persecuted them. One of the brothers of President Diem was Archbishop of Hue. Someone spread a rumor that he had buried Buddhists alive in his garden. People were actually gullible enough to believe these tales and went there to see if it was true. This, for a very long time, made life in Vietnam very disturbing and annoying.

Afterwards, they discovered that among the Buddhist monks, there were parties of Viet Cong hidden under the orange tunic. In this way, they could be informed of everything that happened in the southern part of the country. We had returned quickly to the plantation to flee from these fanatics who became dangerous. Public opinion quickly becomes crazy with such storytellers. Once at our land at Cu-Bach (such was the name of the plantation), we were very peaceful and far from this turmoil. The harvest of the Chari had begun, and there was plenty of work to be done. Pierrette came to the house to help me, since I was still tired after giving birth to a big baby.

We took in a young girl who helped us as well to replace our cook's wife who felt too old. Life returned to normal at the plantation. Many friends came to visit and experience a little coolness, especially during school vacation. We also had friends who came up to hunt deer, tigers, and also the wild boar, which had caused a lot of havoc when it had gone into a section of coffee trees. It was worse than a tractor. There was also hunting for wild rooster and pheasant usually toward the end of the day. I would drive and my husband would be next to me, ready to shoot if he saw a rooster or a pheasant. In order to hunt at night, it was necessary to trace the animal's tracks before setting out on an expedition. A person would hold a light out at front and others

would follow quietly behind the one who held the rifle. I went hunting at night once when Felix killed a civet cat. It made me so sick to my stomach to see it in its last throes of life.

But for us, however, hunting deer was a necessity if we wanted to have fresh meat. Furthermore, the deer spoiled the coffee trees. When scratched between the deer's two horns, the tree could decay and it was necessary to remedy this. It also gave Felix pleasure, as he loved hunting although he never abused it. If he killed one animal, he returned, as that was sufficient. The workers who went with him were happy, since for them there was also meat to garnish their meal consisting of rice, herbs, local vegetables, pimento, shrimp paste, and *nuoc-mam*, if they could get it. One must not forget while they were alone on the plantation that they had a family to feed in the plain.

I felt that I was rewarded, since if I liked these native people they would welcome me. This contributed a lot to my adapting. There was so much to do for these Montagnards who were so poor and lived in such backwards conditions, they didn't even realize it.

I spoke a lot with the women when it was possible for me to maintain a conversation. They were very natural with me and I with them. They spoke to me freely about their problems. I knew about their life and that became even truer gradually through the time I lived on the plantation. The principal problem of the women was to not have too many children and also how to take care of them. This was easy for me to explain to them after the birth of my daughter, Francolse. From the time of her birth, the women made a habit of saying "before Francoise or after Francoise." I wound up knowing the ages of the children from Ta-Con, the oldest and closest village to our plantation.

I continued my learning of the language. I also had a Montagnard named "Counta" who spoke French. He once jumped on a mine at Lao Bao during the time the French were there and had his leg cut off. My mother-in-law always took care of him at the hospital, and he was always grateful to us. He walked on crutches that we had made for him at Hue. He came in each day to help me write and speak "Bur." which was very helpful to me and in this way I progressed faster. I must admit that I was very attracted to these primitive people who were so very close to us. This influenced my desire to stay at the plantation. I felt that we could help them so much in every way.

In 1961, we returned to France. Francoise wasn't two years old yet. The plantation was once again put in the hands of Father Corentin and also of our overseer Anh Thu, who was very informed. With the help of Father, we were able to take two months vacation in France near the family. We planned on staying until Christmas, but we were called because Father had to go to the monastery at Hue to meet with Father Superior of the Benedictines. When we left, saying good-bye was painful for all of us.

Upon our return, we had found everything in perfect condition. It is true that we had as well a Vietnamese cook who spoke French and knew how to do French cooking. We also took in his wife as a *thi ba* for Francoise. With the work on the plantation, harvesting and the counting, etc., I found myself pretty busy and it was necessary to have someone to look after Francoise when the two of us were occupied.

At the beginning of 1962, I had a miscarriage, and not knowing what had caused it, I became very depressed. I returned to the plantation somewhat distressed and had trouble recovering. End of 1961. I omitted telling of one of Felix's successful hunting expeditions. The Montagnards of Ta-Con had had a young buffalo that a tiger had gotten. They came to ask Felix to help them to attract the tiger towards the spot where he was going to set the trap. It was an accessible place (and tigers like clean places) where he set up the infamous trap.

All this was an art. It was necessary to dig a hole and cover it with bush as nothing was there, since the tiger is a mistrustful animal. Near the trap, meat was half hidden. The night went by and then very early in the morning the workers told us that they had heard a roaring, the tiger must have gotten caught. Felix, accompanied by the workers, left with his rifle and indeed, the beast was there, her paw caught in the trap. She was struggling to try to free herself as it hurt her so. That is when one must have courage and know how to shoot at the right moment. There's no question of misfiring and that would be rather unfortunate. But Felix was a fine marksman, and he killed the tiger. Then, he sent the

workers to find me so that I could bring the camera and take pictures right there on the spot in the middle of the bush. Then, it was the triumphant return with a very beautiful animal. He left the trap there, however, well camouflaged. Once again, two days later, a second animal was caught. That occurred between December 19th and December 21st, 1961. Felix was very happy with this ending as two beautiful animals were captured. We were going to eat them, of course! It's not bad at all when it's well prepared.

Now I'm going to speak a little about the events on the outside of the plantation — actually, the war that was there. At the former French fort, there were at first seven American advisors who settled in there, without any well-defined mission except to observe what was happening in the region, which had been so calm. They put the fort back in shape after it had been abandoned for so long, so they would be able to live a little better rather than in tents. It was in February 1964 that an event occurred on Route 9. A French pharmacist from Dong Ha, a Mr. Wolff, was coming to visit Mr. Llinares who had been ill. Going down with his car, he was killed. One had taken him for an American, we thought. There also had previously been the discovery of a network of Viet Cong in the village situated near Mr. Llinares's fields (at the edge of the river Rao-Quan in a sort of deep ravine). Following this discovery, the Vietnamese authorities decided to regroup Montagnard villages that were inaccessible to the road into places where the jeeps could have access. At that time, a lot of Bru went over to the VC, several thousand, no doubt.

However, we weren't worried despite the death of our friend Mr. Wolff. A little while later, I went down with Father Poncet to have our car repaired. Everything went well, and we came back on Friday. Felix had to go down as far as Quang-Tri and returned without being worried. But on Monday, April 20, 1964, while we were going to the market as we did each day, we stopped at my father-in-law's at noon. His wife told us that he had left for Quang-Tri that very morning. She was worried following the death of the pharmacist. Felix reassured her by telling her that we just came down and went back up, first him and then me. He hadn't even finished his sentence when a Vietnamese soldier we knew well, rushed in and told us screaming. In Vietnamese, "Mr. Poilane is dead. He had been killed by the VC in his car." We were stunned and very strained by this news.

My husband brought me back to the plantation and asked Father Poncet to accompany him. He also asked for the presence of the Americans who were at the fort. They accepted and thus left under safe escort. I had said to Father Poncet, "Come to get me if my father-in-law is disfigured." We didn't know what we were going to find, alas.

While waiting, I took the hundred steps on the trail, and the Montagnards, seeing my sorrowful demeanor, asked me what was wrong. I explained, then, without having a lot of details. I waited more than two hours before Father Poncet came back to get me. Then, he told me, "You can come. He had been killed in his car by three deadly bullets close to his heart." The Viet Cong had thrown a grenade in the motor of the car. The body had thus been brought under good escort, one never knew. The car stayed in place, one serviced the hauling later.

It was then a Monday, the day of departure to the province of Quang-Tri's chief administrative office of Khe Sanh, and it's the first car that had been pulled, the soldiers in ambush didn't know who was going to come *(ED. I believe that Madame Poilane is trying to say that the VC were waiting to ambush Quang-Tri's administrative chief but her father-in-law rode into the ambush site and was killed instead.)*

I was going then to my father-in-law's house there in Khe Sanh accompanied by Father Poncet. I was helping my husband to groom his father. We put him in the kitchen and began. The coffin was ordered, a big one made of good, exotic wood not at all eaten by termites. We then decided to bury him close to his sister on the plantation and close to the house. The children at Hue were expectedly angry and were arriving just at the moment of burial. He was buried with Buddhist rights. We hadn't kept the body two days and already there were little lines in the wounds from the gunshots — it was completely hot already! We got together with the Fathers at our plantation — Father Lefas, Father Petijean, Father Neyroud and Father Vincent, not to forget Father Corentin and Father Poncet.

Papa was 76 years old and he had to go get himself killed on the road just as he had regained his

health, and his coronary thrombosis was cured. This experience we did not understand. Why would he be killed when he was known and liked by all? This ambush wasn't for him, but it is he who had been a victim unfortunately. The Fathers left for Hue, and life renewed at our home. The harvest didn't leave us any leisure, which was good.

After this discovery of the network of Viet Cong, the Americans did not stay at the fort. They asked us if they could occupy a small piece of land used by the French for aviation. This land was found at the end of the track at the boundary of our plantation and Papa's. We accepted, of course, and an air base was built starting there. Then, this land was expanded to about 30 hectares. The situation began deteriorating. The bridges on Route 9 began to get destroyed, and we could not travel this way anymore. It was a hard blow to the planters. How to sell the coffee and supply ourselves with rice and other products necessary to life in the bush. The Americans were equipped during this time and began to construct a lot on this base, which was a strategic point for them not far from the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This was hardly reassuring to us; we were thinking that with this installation we would have an inevitable less calm life at Khe Sanh and at the plantation.

One time Felix descended to Hue, and during this time I felt cold and I realized I had a strong ear infection. Impossible to find a Vietnamese nurse, Father Poncet was staying at the house doing everything possible to find who could take care of me. It was about 4pm when he succeeded at finding the American nurse. The latter spoke French and that made it easier. He gave me an injection of a sedative so that I would not suffer and gave me medicine for the ear infection. At the same time, Jean Marie was also sick with diarrhea. Felix returned in the evening and immediately left to ask if a helicopter could take us to Hue. The captain accepted, and at 8pm that evening we landed in Hue. I liked the helicopter as our means of transportation; it was very nice and practical.

In Hue, I saw the doctor and found out that the eardrum of my left ear had ruptured and that I would remain deaf for many months. As for Jean Marie, we tried many X-rays and types of examinations, but we didn't find out what he had. I still felt his burning forehead against mine. It all finally ended when we found out he had tonsillitis and his health improved. He was 16-months-old, and he started to walk. That set him back a bit.

We stayed in Hue to recover ourselves and then returned to the plantation. The weather was very bad since a typhoon had come from the Philippines. A little eight-seat plane took us in its care. There was an American on board who took us back to the base along with our little dog Thai Dong. I had never been so afraid in my life. The plane dropped in air pockets. It was frightening and all of us were vomiting tripe. Felix and Jean Marie were stoic. The pilot shocked us when he told us he had plugged up the plane with rags; we were hysterical! But the most upsetting thing was that the plane could not cross the mountain despite several tries, and it turned back. We found ourselves again in Hue in a very sorry state. The Vietnamese soldiers seeing us like this took a jeep and brought us back to the Joan of Arc School. There, with a cup of boiling tea, my spirits lifted and I fell asleep.

It became important, however, to think of returning. The next day, Father Neyroud accompanied by Father Suval, took us by car. The weather didn't permit us to think once again of a plane. The route for going to Quang Tri and Dong Ha didn't present any difficulties. It was on Route 9 that a bridge had collapsed. We knew that it was not possible to pass and on the other side there waited a 1,400 kilo Renault that would take us to Khe Sanh. Having arrived at the spot of a blown up bridge we were terrified. It was necessary to descend into the deep ravine (there was water) and remount on the other side. Oh, with the children and baggage it was expected that we would make a lot of trips and in what conditions! With the help of the two priests, we crossed all the same and found a truck awaiting us. It was already quite full, but we got inside and fit rather well. My knees were folded because there were bags of rice on the floor.

We started moving, and I noticed a lady who remained on the stepladder. It was, in my opinion, a sign of gratitude for the V.C. for they were at least letting civilians pass with supplies. One had to make concessions. At KM 51, everyone got in the trailer as the danger zone had passed. It is necessary to explain that on Route 9 the places were distinguished by the number of KM, thus the plantation was at KM 51.

These are little details, but they had their importance in the mountains where it was easy to be attacked at will.

The return was not a burden — a bit tiring, but we were lucky and happy to be back at the plantation, and all was quickly forgotten. Father Petitjean was waiting for us, and this was a great surprise. He had come before the typhoon and, with luck, had made it. He had gone to spend a few weeks in the cool weather, and it was always a pleasure to find our friends again in the bush. If one does not know, he can imagine how lonely it is to live alone in the wilderness. The Marines who had known the base and also our plantation were happy to see a house of blond-haired children. It reminded them of their home far away in the USA. How many visitors we would have from the Marines, from soldiers to the Captains and Colonels.

One day, we had a visit from a four star general, who I believe came directly from the U.S. He stopped at our house simply to get the news. We had, at that time, problems with the leaves falling from the trees, caused by the wind sent from Laos. None of our durian trees that were more than twenty-five years old produced any longer, having lost all their leaves and their fruit. That made so much damage on the plantation that the trees looked funny. Upon leaving, he said goodbye to us and tapping on Felix's shoulder, said to his men, "Attention, when you go to Laos, be careful of the wind when you throw defoliation products." That is a true story!

Following this defoliation, we filed a damage claim at Quang Tri Province. We never received anything in return. We found out that the Americans had given aid, but the Vietnamese had to keep these subsidies for their side. These products had to be pretty toxic to have been able to kill trees like the durians, which are very strong. We surveyed the rest of the plantation because there were some coffee trees coming up. They were able to resist, or else we'd have replaced them, so the native population remained untouched by the consequences of this defoliation. Often, we used to see the planes go by that were going toward Laos. They were, of course, to defoliate the places that were too dense and also to always survey the territory of this cursed war.

For us, life continued to be pretty calm, but we were at present cut off from everything. The bridges on Route 9 had tumbled. That was, for us, a big handicap because it was necessary to live on the plantation. The Marine Base expanded itself, and the planes were landing on the runway that was lengthened for the circumstances. Felix spoke English well and continued to perfect it. It was necessary for our subsequent relationship with the Marines. They occupied our land and were kind enough to assure us of their help for all that we would need. And we were going to need their assistance to sell the coffee that formerly would have been sold on the premises and bought by merchants, who would come up with their trucks. The Marines then put themselves at our disposal when it was an absolute necessity for us to have planes to carry several tons of coffee to Dong Ha, Hue, or even Danang. In return, we were able to bring up rice and as many provisions as they needed. With our planter friends, we grouped ourselves together to avoid too many requests of our neighbors. A plane just for us, that was already too kind. In order to go down to Hue, it was the same thing — planes or helicopters took us in their charge. From that time, I didn't have to go down to Hue more than once a year. It was a little hard for us all. However, our friends were able to come up to see us and to say thanks to the kindness of the Americans and their planes. They never refused to be of service to us which was vital for us all at Khe Sanh.

The time passed despite the impossibility of going by our own means to Hue or elsewhere. The harvest was done as in the past and the coffee sold well. It was necessary only to leave with the plane to accompany the coffee and sell it oneself on the spot. The same for the supplies — there was an airplane for us alone and for our planter friends. It was necessary to ask, but we did not suffer too much. Everyone had to leave their coffee in the same way and bring back the provisions for everyone. Even Father Poncet acted in the same manner and brought back provisions as well for everybody. In the meantime, Father Mauvais had come to join him to help him in the apostleship. The coming of the nuns in the beginning of the year 1967 was not delayed for that, as one didn't know how long one could last and each got accustomed to it. The Vietnamese saw there a free means of bringing up the merchandise to Khe Sanh, and this side of things would please them well enough.

Our friends continued to come to spend their vacations and to visit us. I omitted to speak of the visit of a French friend who came to spend two months with us on the plantation. This was a friend from the region of Tours where I am from. She was a nurse who brought back from each trip a very profound and lasting memory. We write each other still to this day when I'm writing these lines.

I resume then with the nuns of St. Paul of Chartres moving in. There were four. The mother superior was a French woman whom we liked a lot, and Sister Paul Xavier had already been in Vietnam for a very long time. She lived very close to the house that the Fathers had constructed facing the village of Cu-Bach. We had given them some land on the plantation, one hectare or more. The house was strong, that is to say concrete blocks and a roof of corrugated iron. There were two bedrooms, a little shower — very rudimentary — fed through a big pond, and a little kitchen.

For the nuns, it was a house on piles that was constructed with wooden walls and an iron roof. Four big rooms, one for cooking and another that would serve as the chapel and the oratory. The Fathers said the mass every week in the little oratory and on Sunday in Khe Sanh for the Catholic population. The work of the Fathers and the nuns was to take care of the Montagnards. It was necessary to explain to the latter why the nuns were dressed with their habit and the veil, and finally their kind way of life. The Montagnards were dumbfounded while listening to us.

The nuns after having settled in already began to take care of them. There was much to do on this side. When they went into the village, I used to go up with them, as there was the language to learn. During this time, our two fathers did not remain inactive. They laid out the land of the plantation — the old abandoned pastures, a big school with a residence for the girls and boys of surrounding villages, a big kitchen and other necessary buildings, if one seriously wanted to take care of these people and to try to do a good, apostolic job.

Before the nuns arrived, Felix had built a large hut in front of our house so that I could have class with the children, and also with the Montagnard children who wanted to attend. I taught them "Bru" and also French. We had with us for about a year a little "Bru" girl named Tiou who lived totally with us. We treated her like our two children. She was five or six years old. A boy, named Plengue, was also with us. He was around twelve. He didn't want to have his meals with us but instead, he ate with the staff in the kitchen. He helped me by watching the children while I measured the coffee. I taught him how to clean house well, how to clean the bricks, how to wipe the furniture, and I might say that he turned out to be very skillful. Several times we took him to Hue. His eyes opened wide, he who left the bushes of his village!

To lay out my school, the Marines brought ammunition boxes to us that our workers had quickly transformed into benches and tables to furnish the school. We also found a dark green blackboard and a large desk for me made out of the same materials. To complete the furnishings there were notebooks, pencils,and chalk. Thus equipped, I was able to have class every morning. I had a correspondence course from Paris for Francoise. She would study seriously, and the other students profited from this teaching in addition to their "Bru." This gave me a chance to learn new words with the correct pronunciation. I taught them the rudiments of catechism in order to prepare them for the nuns and priests who would soon take over.

Next issue the Marines arrive,
and the Hill Battles soon commence.

KHE SANH VETERANS ANNUAL REUNION 2002

July 3-7th 2002

Marriott Hotel • Las Colinas, Texas

223 West Las Colinas Boulevard, Irving Texas 75039
(972) 831-0000 for Reservations
Guest Fax: (972) 831-8861 ⁜ Web site: marriotthotels.com

Located in the prestigious Las Colinas Center, 10 miles west of Dallas/Ft Worth airport (DFW)
Free shuttle service, 8 miles from downtown Dallas and Love Field airport.

DIRECTIONS: From DFW, Highway 114 East to O'Conner Boulevard exit. Turn left onto O'Conner Boulevard. Turn left onto Las Colinas Boulevard. The HOTEL is on the right. This Marriott was just built last summer and is a wonderful and clean hotel with outside area to drink beers, whiskey, and cokes. There is a nice breeze from the canals a few feet away from the Hotel. There is in-room coffee and tea, hair dryer and ironing board.

ATTRACTIONS: Texas Motor Speedway, Texas Stadium, Ball Park at Arlington, Six Flags over Texas, Water World, Grapevine Mills Mall and Bass Pro Shop/Outdoor World, Irving Mall, JFK Memorial, West End Market Place, Cotton Bowl, Galleria Mall, Ft. Worth Stockyards, Mesquite Rodeo, Movie Studios at Las Colinas, South Fork Ranch, Dallas Museum of Art and Las Colinas Mustang Bronze Horses. Indoor pool and spa; fitness center and whirlpool; waterfront sun patio; golf and jogging trail nearby. You can make reservations anytime. Early birds (before May 2002) - Chance for free 2 nights at raffle.

COST OF ROOMS: $73.00 per night plus tax.

COST OF FUN: Priceless

Remember we will be going to a RANCH on Friday for our BANQUET. I don't have the cost just yet on this event. Then on Sat., we will have a BUFFET in the late afternoon and have awards and presentations to all our beloved CORPSMAN. Can't miss this one, ya'll. We will have more details and a website up soon. We will also be mailing out Donation Raffle Tickets at $5.00 each – we will mail out five to each member. We are going to limit the prizes to 4 or 5, but they will be big prizes and you need not be present to win.

We now have large 4-inch window stickers on Vinyl with UV ink for sale as a fundraiser for the reunion. It is a diamond box with blue in the center, red around the box with all four branches of service in the red. Inside the blue square are the words KHE SANH in green – also a Vietnam ribbon in the square and the words *Fratres Aeterni* (Brothers Forever). The top of the diamond represents the Mountains and the bottom the Valleys there. It is pretty simple yet says a lot about us. They are $6.00 each 2 for $10.00. They will be for sale at the reunion also. Bumper stickers are in the works and will be ready soon. Cost will be $3.00 each, or 2 for $5.00. They read, "Home is where you dig it." Khe Sanh was home.

If you want to buy a window sticker, send money to Jim Wodecki, 2200 W. McGarity Ln., Allen TX 75002, (972) 727-2997.

Semper Fi
Jim Wodecki Secretary, KheSanh Vets

KHE SANH VETERANS ASSOCIATION
Membership Application

COPY, print & fill out form. Submit completed form to the address below.

Check: ❑ New Member ❑ Renewal ❑ Change

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____ MI _____

Nickname: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip + 4: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

FAX: _____ Email Address: _____

Are you a Khe Sanh Vet? Check one: ❑ YES ❑ NO

If YES, when were you at Khe Sanh? (Please be as specific & complete as possible):

_____

_____

Service Branch at Khe Sanh, Check applicable:

❑ Air Force ❑ Army ❑ Navy ❑ USMC ❑ Civilian

Your Unit: _____

If NO, tell us your association with Khe Sanh Vets:

_____

_____

Membership Type (check one & write in amount enclosed):

❑ Life ($150) ❑ Regular ($20) ❑ Associate ($20) $ _____

Please make check(s) payable to: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. If New Member Application or Renewal*, mail completed form with dues payment to:

Tom Eichler
3221 N. Opal
Chicago, IL. 60634
Phone: 773/625-2101 Fax: 773-625-8021
Email TEIC1448@AOL.COM

On renewals, circle any items to be changed. If a Request for change to current directory information, please complete the form, circle the items to be changed, and mail or fax a copy of your completed form.

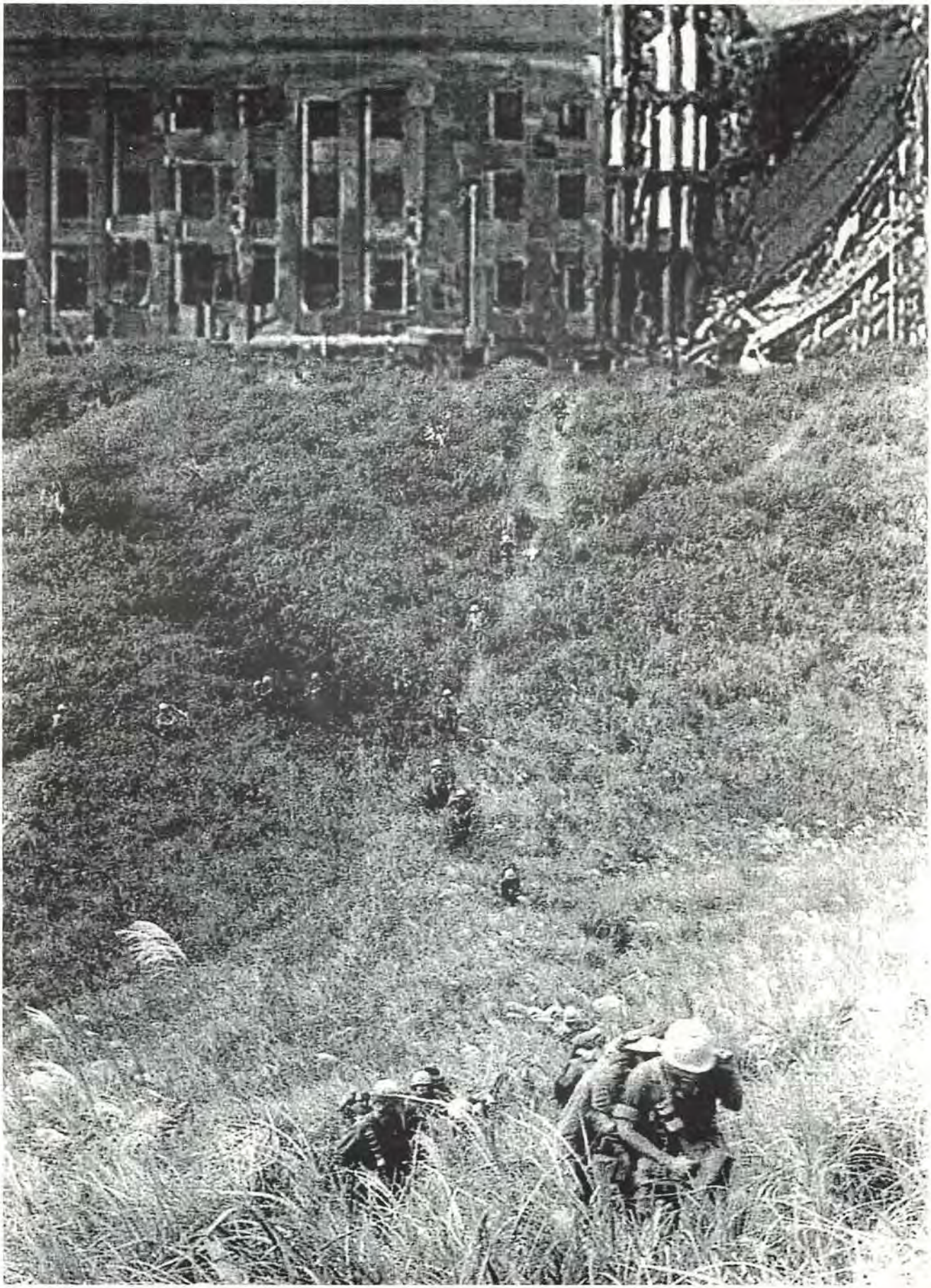

by Tom Eichler

Out of the womb of the Pentagon — WE NEVER QUIT. NOT THEN. NOT NOW.

Honoring Our Beloved Corpsmen, Medics, Doctors, and A.E.T.'s

"The noblest fate that a man can endure is to place his own mortal body between his loved home and the war's desolation." — Khe Sanh Vet



Our Corpsman

Our corpsman is going home today, He came through our aid station. We carried him slow, our heads bowed low, For ours is a lost sensation.

The burial bag he is wrapped in, it's dark, it's damp, it's cold. He's not a hero, just a Doc, but his story must be told.

He came to this land months ago, His determination strong, to treat the wounded Leathernecks that fight the Vietcong.

His only job was to treat the wounds. His mission to save a life. His tools weren't the tools of death, the bomb, the gun, or knife.

A mission of mercy they called it, this sailor in camouflaged greens. No hospital ship or dispensary, just sharing a hell with Marines.

Some complained of climbing mountains, they're commonly seen in this land. Where the life or death of a comrade Is the fate often held in his hands.

But fate is not always there with them, this corpsman, his future denied. Over a wounded Marine he was treating, on the soil of Vietnam he died.

Yes, he came to our place today, Tonight he's crossing the foam. Beyond the call, he gave his all, Our corpsman is going home.

DOC G ©2002

Lt. Edward M. Feldman, USNR

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...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

Khe Sanh Veterans Annual Reunion

July 3rd through 7th of July 2002

Place: Irving Texas

Well, folks, it's about time to saddle up and get ready for the Texas Reunion, bring your partner and your friends. This will be the last posting in our magazine, so fill out the registration form in the back of magazine and send it in. If you send it in before May, you will be eligible for two free nights stay at a drawing on Sat. — that's $150.00 you could save by getting registered early. Don't forget the Donation Raffle Tickets — the whole trip could be free if your ticket is drawn. Plus, the other prizes are well worth the money. Plus, if you send back all five tickets you will receive the collector's Khe Sanh Coin free. The other prizes are listed in the magazine on the registration form.

On our web site at www.khesanh.com is our link to all the attractions and events for Reunion 2002. Hotel information for those who don't have, or care to have is:

Marriott, Las Colinas ($73.00 per night)
Irving, TX 75039
Telephone: 972-831-8861 for reservations
Mention the Khe Sanh Veterans Group.
Call me, Jim Wodecki at 972-727-2997
for more information

Wednesday, July 3rd. Early registration.

Thursday. We will sit out on the Patio by the canal and eat hot dogs and barbeque sandwiches and watch the fireworks display just for us by the city of Irving ($10.00 each).

Friday evening, we head out to the Ranch ($45.00 each person).

Hay rides, horseshoe pitching, calf ropin', Quick Draw, (horse trail riding extra upon request), Texas style Bobby-Q and vittles — all you want to eat. Then, some down home Country and Western Band Music to Texas Two-Step to, and even some Line Dancing too. If you don't know how to Line Dance, we will have an afternoon of practice by a beautiful Cowgirl. So, bring them youngins with you 'cuz we got swimming and swings and plenty of fun and grub for all. For the children, we are also just a few miles from Six Flags Over Texas and Water World!

Saturday morning, there will be a Ladies Breakfast ($10.00) at the Hotel and a trip for those who want to shop at the Grapevine Mills Mall, the Largest in the World and for the men, a free trip to the "Outdoor World Pro Bass Shop." Included in next year's Raffle will be a $100.00 gift certificate to the Pro Bass Shop. A

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

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Frank Ceniseros .....Member At Large

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Texas State Flag flown over the Texas Capitol in Austin, TX last Veterans Day 2001 will be presented to a lucky person who attends all the events.

On Saturday at this year's reunion, the theme will be "Honoring Corpsman, Medics, Doctors, and Aero Medical Evacuation Technicians." We will have a afternoon buffet lunch ($15.00 per person) with speakers and Colors presented. There will be a special ceremony thanking them with a Commemorative Medal [idea] by Bill Jayne, presented by Ray Stubbe and others, just for this reunion.

Sunday morning service will be held by Rev. Ray Stubbe as we end our great reunion. Rest up for the trip home.

Jim "Jimbo" Wodecki
Secretary and Reunion Chairman

Closure

Dale E. Crick
Killed in Action February 11,1969

Saw your name on TV awhile ago
what a surprise don't you know.

You were young and so was I
the night you fell with a sigh.

Twenty-eight years of nightly
dreams and silent screams.

Now your name on TV has
helped to end my insanity.

One less nightly dream
One less silent scream.

Just peace in mind and soul
that can come from closure
to a tragedy that happened
so very long ago.

Jack Neeley

Itinerary for 2002 Reunion

Wednesday, July 3rd

10:00am	Early registration begins. Mingle with old friends and relax the rest of the day, or do a tour of Dallas area on your own.
10:30am	Board of directors meeting.

Thursday, July 4th

9:00am	Registration ($20.00 per person) till 5:00 PM.
9:00am	Board of directors meeting. Tour the local attractions. Visit with friends.
6:00am	Sit out on the patio and watch fireworks and attend the Hot Dog and Barbeque Party on the Canal. ($10.00 per person, see registration form)

Friday, July 5th

9:00am	Registration till 5:00pm.
9:00am	Board of directors meeting.
Noon	Dance lessons for ranch, OR, do any local tours, visit the Horses of Las Colinas and take picture of the Million Dollar Bronze Horses (walking distance), or visit the local restaurants in the area.
3:30pm	Departure. Stay till 8pm. Buses for the RANCH ($45.00 each, all you can eat). Style of dress is up to you, but cowboy and cowgirl outfits are best for this one. We will have buses leaving at earlier times for the hotel, if priceless fun is too much for you. Hayrides, gunslinger quick draw, and horseshoe pitching, Country and Western Band to listen or dance to.

Saturday, July 6th

9:00am	Registration till 12:00am.
8:00am	Women's breakfast. Leave on shopping trip to Grapevine Mills Mall; return is at 1:00pm.
10:00am	GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
2:00pm	COLORS, "DOCS" AWARDS CEREMONY ($15.00 each) Presentations, guest speakers. Take a half hour break, then Buffet Style dinner — all you can eat.

Publisher's Comments

by Thomas Eichler

By this time, every one should have received their new membership cards. Life members should have also received a new certificate. If any one did not receive their card or I have made an error, let me know and I will make corrections. The new Membership Directories should have been received by those who paid in advance. Again, if I missed you, let me know. The Directories for the rest of the Membership will soon be ready. I print and put them together myself; thus, it is not a fast process and should take me approximately one month. Your Newsletter also contains Raffle Tickets and Registration forms for the Reunion. Please submit them ASAP, so "Jimbo" can get an estimate of the turnout. Also included are color brochures for Khe Sanh Items, such as Jewelry, Belt Buckles, Pins, Hats, Patches etc., designed by one of our members for all the service branches. He is donating a portion of the profits to the KSV. There has also been an interest in a KSV Ring and Membership Pin, in addition to an official patch — we also need your ideas on this.

❋

Reunions:

DELTA CO 1/26 will hold their 2002 reunion in conjunction with the Khe Sanh Veterans
Date: 3-7 July 2002
Location: Marriot Hotel, Las Colinas Texas
223 West Las Colinas Blvd.
Irving, Texas
Contact: Daniel Fisher Liaison with Khe Sanh Veterans for details
6050 52nd St.
North Oakdale, MN 55128
Ph: 612-777-2406
Email: djfisher1@mmm.com

3RD BN 9TH MARINES: H&S, INDIA, KILO, LIMA & MIKE CO
Date: 11-14 June 2002
Location: Walt Disney World Resort
Hotel Royal Plaza
1905 S Hotel Plaza Blvd.
Lake Buena Vista, Florida 32830
Contact: Stew for details
Ph: 727-581-5454
Email rssusmccpa@cs.com

3RD BN 26TH MARINES
Date: 11-15 June 2002
Location: Ennis, Montana
(6) Hotels
Contact: Andy Debona
78471 Indigo Dr
La Quinta, CA 92253
Ph: 760-345-1245
Email edebona@verizon.com

Book Reviews

We must support all the Brothers that put pen in hand, that pour their very soul into memorializing those with whom we served, that leave a part of themselves on each written page and, in the final analysis, become "SPEAKERS FOR OUR DEAD!"

1. "PETRIFIED HEART"
by Charles "Chuck" Patterson

John Kaheny wrote: "Charles Patterson, an LA attorney and member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, has published a book of poems based on his Vietnam experience. It is available on Amazon.com. The title is ' PETRIFIED HEART.' I recommend it highly, especially to those who know and love Marines." S/F John Kaheny

Kenny Pipes Wrote: "'PETRIFIED HEART' is the title of a just published book that I strongly recommend be added to your Khe Sanh collection! It is Vietnam poetry at its absolute best! As an added bonus, it is written by one of our own, Chuck Patterson. It is not exclusively about Khe Sanh. It covers a variety of people, places and subjects and tells a powerful poet's story of experiences that will be familiar and deeply moving to all of our members and to the public at large!

"This is a powerful book that drives to your heart. It ranks up there with Ernie's book, 'Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man' and the other classics that have been penned in honor of those that served with us."

"PETRIFIED HEART" can be ordered from the Amazon website by special order, from all major book stores, or directly from: Signal Tree Publications, PO Box 551, Livermore Maine, 04253. Buy it, and read it in a quiet place, and

remember! It is an absolute bargain at $15.00.

2. "GOD IN THE TRENCHES"
by Lakin Spivey

In "GOD IN THE TRENCHES," Spivey shows when the nation's survival seemed uncertain — even doubtful — Fate seemed to turn America's way, giving way to mysterious, if not miraculous, events. These events altered the course of history, leading to victory for the American Military and enduring freedom for America's citizens. In his book, Spivey leaves no doubt that the History of the United States was swayed many times by a hidden hand. Will the hand of providence help America once again?

"GOD IN THE TRENCHES" can be ordered from Allegiance Press or from blspivey@aol.com.

Remembrances/Memorials

James Damiano	USMC, A CO 1/1 1ST PLT	Passed Away, 16 Jul 2001
Donald Magilligan Jr	USN, C CO 3RD MED BN	Passed Away
Dennis Herb	USMC, B CO 3RD RECON	Passed Away, 27 Nov 2001
Walter L. Driscoll (Rev)	USN CHAPLAIN 26TH	Passed Away, 12 Jan 2002
Albert R. Lumpkin	USMC, B CO 3RD RECON	Passed Away, 09 Dec 2001
Nellie Cicio	Gold/Star Mother (Robert)	Passed Away, 26 Jan 2002
Leo Cohahan	4TH MARINES EOD	Passed Away, 04 Sep 2001
Thomas E Hoody	USN B CO 1/26 HN	Passed Away, 09 Oct 2001
Merlyn Taylor	USAF C-130's	Passed Away, Oct 2001
Warren Prado	USMC B Co 1/26 Wpns Plt	Passed Away, 09 Feb 2002
Arthur W Corbin	USMC D Co 1/9	Passed Away, 19 Nov 1998
Gerald Canatsey	USMC Co 2/26	Passed Away, 24 Mar 2002

Those Remembered

Charles L Baney, USA, KIA 15 Oct 67
Hank Norman, USMC, KIA 30 Mar 68
Kim Johnson, USMC, KIA 23 Feb 68
Robert Eaton, CIV, KIA 06 Mar 68
Richard Healy, USMC, KIA 14 Jan 68
Robert Baker, USA, KIA 21 Aug 68
William E Wyrosdic, USMC, KIA 08 Oct 68
Douglas Impson, USMC, KIA 15 Sep 68
Ruben "Mac" McMackins, USMC, KIA 14 Apr 68
Troy D Payne, USMC, KIA 26 Apr 67
Robert H Littlefield, USMC, KIA 16 Apr 68
Robert H Littlefield, USMC, KIA 16 Apr 68
Joseph J Hunt, USMC, KIA 27 Jan 68
James Neil Tycz, USMC, KIA 10 May 67
Joseph Molettiere, USMC, KIA 05 Feb 68
Max Nelson, USMC, KIA 24 Feb 68
Eldon W Smith, USMC, KIA 06 Oct 68
Robert Mendey, USMC, KIA 22 Oct 68
William M Thomas, USMC, KIA 28 Jan 69
Joseph E. Roble, USMC, KIA 16 Sep 68

Remembered by:

Raymond P Anderson, Jr, 109Th Qrtrmstr A/D
Mike Barber, 3RD ENGRS C Co
Mike Barber, 3RD ENGRS C Co
Miriam Eaton, Mother
Richard Noyes, B CO 3RD RECON
Charles Minnicks, SOG
John Laibinis, H Co 2/26
Joseph Ballentine, H Co 2/26
Thomas Pierce, L Co 3/26
Lucile M Payne, Mother
Suzi Littlefield, Wife
Maylene Littlefield, Mother
Dennis J Lynch, B Co 1/9
Sharon Pelon Babby
William Hubbard, E Co 2/26
William Hubbard, E Co 2/26
Donald Kuehn, HMM-262
James Heath, C Co 1/26
William Kane, G Co 2/26
Matt Roble, Brother

Those Remembered	Remembered by:
Paul L. Frederickson, USMC, KIA 09 May 68	Charles Rost, B Co 1/26 FAC
Lindy Hall, USMC, KIA 24 Mar 67	Thomas Vineyard, K Co 3/3
Maxie R. Williams, USMC, KIA 10 Apr 68	Patrick Wayne, HQ Co 26TH Marines
Walt Cicchiani, USN, KIA 30 Apr 68	John Wurth, L Co 3/9
Sam Lusk, USMC, KIA 30 Apr 68	John Wurth, L Co 3/9
Michael Diggs, USMC, KIA 30 Apr 68	John Wurth, L Co 3/9
George Gregorius, USMC, KIA 30 Apr 68	John Wurth, L Co 3/9
Thomas Ledbetter, USA, KIA 20 Jun 68	James Whitenack, MACV
Terence R. Roach Jr, USMC, KIA 08 Feb 68	Terry Charbonneau, A&C Co 1ST MT
Gerald Baldwin, USMC, KIA 07 Jul 68	Gary Hamilton, H Co 2/3
Allan E. White, USMC, KIA 30 Nov 68	David F. O'Toole, B Btry 1/13
Daryl B. Terhune, Jr, USMC, KIA 06 Mar 68	Mark Terhune, Brother
Greg Weaver, USMC, KIA 26 May 66	Robert Heppner, 309TH Air Commandos
Donald M Cuff, USMC, KIA 07 Jun 68	Edward Pershing, A Co 1/26 HN
Di Reyes Ibanez, USMC, KIA 27 Aug 68	William J. Messner, B Co 3RD Recon
Donald J.Barnes M/Chief, USN, KIA 06 Jun 67	Joel West, MCB-11
Loyd E. Kinsworthy, USMC, KIA 27 Apr 68	Stanley Kerlin, D Co 1/26
Jerry Stenberg, USMC, KIA 21 Jan 68	Larry R. Mager, F Btry 2/12
Delbert Leasure, USMC, KIA 23 Feb 68	Larry R. Mager, F Btry 2/12
Arnold J. Rivera, USMC, KIA 25 Feb 68	James Convery, B Co 1/26
Gary W.Lindsay, USMC, KIA 07 Sep 67	Stephen S. McGuirk, I CO 3/26
Kenneth L. Johnson, USAF, KIA 26 Apr 68	James T. Brosius, 29TH TASS
Lee C. Arnold, Jr, USMC, KIA 16 Jun 68	Michael Bohringer, B Btry 1/13
Ray L. Gribble, USA, KIA 17 Oct 67	David Hall, G Co 2/26
Louis C. Goi, USMC, KIA 18 Mar 68	Paul Elkan, B Btry 1/13
Louis C. Goi, USMC, KIA 18 Mar 68	John Conley, B Btry 1/13 FSCC
Ronald L. Frazier, USMC, KIA 09 Aug 68	Michael Molliver, C Co 1/9
Terry A. Hoffman, USMC, KIA 19 Aug 68	John Keehn, HMM-262
Andrew Z.Bucior, USMC, KIA 05 Apr 68	Frank A. Bucior, Brother
Erwin A. Polt, USMC, KIA 24 Mar 68	William Lanier, H&S Co 1/9
Phillip C. Skinner, USMC, KIA 03 May 68	Thomas E Rice, III E Co 2/3
Thomas J. Tischler, USMC, KIA 22 Apr 69	Danny Crawford, MCB-5 Seabees
Ezekeil T Exum, USMC, KIA 22 Feb 68	Eugene P. Lessman, Jr, FLSG-A
Gerald H. Sampson, USMC, KIA 28 Aug 69	Raymond L. Page, H&S Co 1/3
Walter Ensign, USMC, KIA 18 May 68	Michael F Yurek, B Co 3RD Recon
Neil Sullivan, USMC, KIA 18 May 68	Bryan H Rabbett, HQ Co 1/9
William "Doc" Mercer, USN, KIA 15 Jun 68	John "Doc" Nunn, K Co 3/4
Andrew C Rabaiotti, USMC, KIA 07 Jul 67	John A Pastuszka H&S Co 1/9
Richard Cutbirth, USMC, KIA 28 May 68	Kevin J Henry, F Co 2/3
Richard Healy, USMC, KIA 14 Jan 68	Victor Hernandez, B CO 3RD Recon
Edward L Towslee, USMC, KIA 04 Apr 68	Charles W. Kelley, 2/94TH Arty
Charles T Belasco, USMC, KIA 18 Aug 68	Howard L. Whitaker, W/Btry 1/13
Gale E Gotti, USMC, KIA 07 Jun 67	Thomas K Soerensen, A Btry 1/13
Curtis Bugger, USMC, KIA 21 Jan 68	Harvey Sullivan, W Btry 1/13
Edward Towslee, USMC, KIA 04 Apr 68	Terry Tillery, C Co 1/4

Those Remembered	Remembered by:
Michael Kilderry, USMC, KIA 06 July 68	Terry Tillery, C Co 1/4
Fallen Marines From 2/26 USMC, KIA 06 Jun 68	Alec Bodenweiser, E Co 2/26
Mark Stickles, USA, KIA 04 Apr 68	Dan Urdesich, B Co 3RD Recon
Louis Ike, USMC, KIA 25 May 68	Michael F Yurek, B Co 3RD Recon
Ralph Gray, USMC, KIA 22 Mar 67	Ruben Cedeno, K Co 3/26
Leslie P Hagara, USMC, KIA 16 Apr 68	Robert F Zamora, A Co 1/9
James M. King, USMC, KIA 21 Mar 68	Terry Hoover, H Co 2/3
Charles W. Adams, USA, KIA 08 Aug 69	Arthur Sovocool, L Co 3/26
John K. Hill, USMC, KIA 27 Aug 68	Albert L. Reed, B Co 1/9
Paul Moucha, USMC, KIA	Lloyd Gower, W Btry 1/13
All From 3RD Engineers, USMC	Gerald Traum, A Co 3RD Engrs
All who Served B Co 1/26, USMC	Ken Pipes, C/O B Co 1/26
All Who Served B Co 1/26, USMC	Robert Blankenship, B Co 1/26
All Who Served E Co 2/26, USMC	Michael B Delaney, E Co 2/26
All Who Served In 3/26, USMC	Kurt L Hoch (COL), C/O 3/26
All Those From 3RD Recon, USMC	Leland Upshaw, 3RD Recon
All Seabees Who Served USN	Raymond Cruz, CBMU-301
All Who Served At Khe Sanh	Charles T Lemke, K Co 3/26
All Who Served	William V Cowan, I Co 3/26
All Who Served South Boston, MA	Raymond F Edwards, A Co 1ST Engrs
All The Marines From 2/26 lost at LZ Margo Sept 1968	Larry McCartney, E Co 2/26
All The Marines KIA F Co 2/3	Joseph P O'Connor, F Co 2/3
Marines Killed in "Hill Fights" 2/3	Robert J Maras, G Co 2/3
Marines From 26TH Regiment	William G Crawford, F Co 2/26
Marines From C Btry 1/13 & I Co 3/26	Glenn Prentice, I Co 3/26
Marines From D CO 1/1 Hill 689, KIA	William Ring, D Co 1/1
Harry Baig, USMC, Killed	Mark A. Swearengen, LNO 2/94TH
Harry Bornefeld, USMC, Passed Away	Irvin Smith, D Co 1/3
Fred Dickson, USMC, Passed Away	Frank Ybarra, H&S Co 4TH Marines
John Padley USMC, Passed Away	Shirley Padley, Wife
Donald J Magilligan, Jr, USN, Passed Away	Danette Magilligan, Wife
Albert R. Lumpkin, USMC, Passed Away	William J. Messner, B Co 3RD Recon
Nellie Cicio G/S Mother Passed Away	William P Biolsi, C/O 1/9
David Forner, USMC, Passed Away	Daniel Erwin, A Co 1/26
Roger Skinner, USMC, Passed Away	Daniel Erwin, A Co 1/26
David "Beetle" Bailey, USMC, Passed Away	William Weidenbacher, H&S Co, 1/26
Howard Waldron, USMC, KIA 06 Mar 68	David Waldron, HQ Co, 3rd Med
John H. Carson, USMC, KIA 05 Jun 68	Lt. Col. Eugene Carson, USAF, Uncle

Memorials

Tribute to Our Brave Rifles, Bravo Co, 1/26
"NEVER FORGOTTEN"

AKINS, LCPL. RONALD PAUL 2/25/68
ALDRICH, CPL. DAVID ALEN 3/30/68
ALDRIDGE, PFC. HERBERT RAY 3/06/68
DERSON, PFC. DAVID BRUCE 3/30/68
BABTISTE, PFC. MICHAEL BRADFORD 2/25/68
BATTLE, JOSEPH CHRISS 2/25/68
BEAUFORD, PFC WILLIS JR. 2/06/68
BERGER, PFC JOHN EDWARD 3/27/68
BILLINGHAM, LCPL. FREDERICK A. JR. 2/25/68
BIXBY, PFC. THOMAS EUGENE 3/27/68
BRELLENTHIN, PFC. MICHAEL J. 2/25/68
BRIGNAC, CPL. JOSEPH PAUL 3/06/68
BRITT, PFC. TED DENNIS 3/30/68
BRUDER, PFC. JAMES ROBERT 2/25/68
CLAIRE, CPL. KENNETH WILLIAM 3/25/68
CLAY, PFC. DOYLE GREGORY 2/25/68
CORBIN, LCPL. RUSSELL B. JR. 2/07/68
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MC KENZIE, LCPL. RICHARD W. 2/25/68
MC RAE, PFC. JIMMIE LEFON 3/28/68
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MOORE, HN. LLOYD WHITFIELD 2/25/68

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RAYBORN, EDWARD, USMC. . . . . Late 70's
JACOBS, SGT. QUILLES, RAY. 4/19/95
QUINN, PFC. DONALD 03/97
PARKER. ROBERT A., USMC. 11/05/01
CEFAIL, CAPT. NORMAN 12/23/80

You comfort us in the dark of night. We see you in the eyes of our children. You are beside us on the safe, forested trail. You are only a smile, a thought and a tear away. Our hearts ache for your family, even today. We speak proudly of your bravery at our annual gathering. You are the benchmark against which all else is measred. Rest in Peace and Honor, Brave Rifles. You are NEVER forgotten.

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The Other Side

The people enter the walkway
It doesn't seem like much at the beginning
Small panels, a few names.

They continue to walk past even larger
Panels more names, then past the "V"
More names, too many names...

Some stop to make a rubbing of a father
a Husband, a Son, a Brother, a Sister,
a friend, or a comrade, all who made the
Ultimate Sacrifice.

Then they move on up the hill and
out the other side.

Some stop, they cry, they wonder why
then they too move on up the hill and
out the other side.

Some stop, touch a name, feel the cold
Granite; then they too move on up the hill
and out the other side.

As they reach the top of the hill they turn
and gaze back at the "Wall" they are amazed
at the courage of, and the ultimate sacrifice
made by so many "Heroes."

As they turn and move out the other side
they are saddened because they know these
brave souls will never move on up the hill
and out the other side.

Jack Neeley

Web Briefs

Charles Broughton C/O Hotel 2/26

The Skipper is going to carry the Olympic Torch in Montana...Semper Fi. What an honor!

Joe Amodeo

Does anyone know my dad?
USMC GySgt. Fabyunkey retired.

I am Linda Fabyunkey Gubbels. My father and my hero served in Khe Sanh. I don't know any definitive information about anyone he served with. I do know that Daddy did two tours in Vietnam. His first tour was around 1965 & his 2nd tour was around 1968. Daddy passed five years ago and I am finding myself needing to understand a part of his life that he chose not to share with us. He just wouldn't talk about war.

Thank you for any information you may have.

❋

Hi guys,

I have some information on my Dad's service in Vietnam. He (on his first tour) was with G Co, 2nd BN, 3rd Marines. Then on his 2nd tour, in which he was at Khe Sanh, all I know is that he was with the 26th Marines. I am trying to get hold of my mom to find out anything else but as of right now...this is all I have.

Thank you for your time.

Linda Fabyunkey Gubbels

❋

(Reply by Larry McCartney)

Don't forget the former Echo Company Commander who took over for Captain Breeding; 1/Lt. Joe Meeks. 1/Lt Meeks was a Staff NCO when he was commissioned during the war. Prior to taking command of Echo Company, he was the 81MM Mortars Platoon Commander. Mr. Meeks is now retired and living in Wisconsin. He's in the Address Book. Since he was a Staff NCO and came to Echo Company in March from 81s, there is an excellent chance that he knew Gunny Fab.

❋

(Reply by Linda)

I want you guys to know that I am prouder than ever to be the daughter of a Marine. The bond that you all have is based on a brotherhood, an indescribable degree of integrity. I am really blessed to have been raised by a person that was part of this.

Linda

P.S. Eric, that is funny that you remember Dad's moustache the most. People always commented on that moustache of his.

❋

From one Marine brat to another

Hi Linda,

If you can attend this coming year's KSV reunion, you'll learn more and feel more than ever before. Over the last four years (three reunions 'cause I missed San Diego) I have had the honor of meeting the HIGHEST quality of Americans. These men, who routinely defer their own importance to their fallen brethren, are in fact the ones who fought, conquered, struggled and most of all, remembered. It is up to us and the children of this organization to perpetuate the remembrance. Hope to see you in Las Colinas.

Dick Peloquin Jr.

Truro, MA Khe Sanh vet

Looking for Khe Sanh vet who lives in Truro, MA who I met at St. Louis or DC Reunion. He was in artillery attached to HQTS. I live in Truro now and would like to find him and say hello.

J Delaire

❋

Mike,

I am forwarding this message to the vet you met at the Reunion. He has limited access to the net through a friend, and he wanted me to post this message to find you. He lives in Truro.

J Delaire

❋

Truro, that can't be a real name of a town. I know there is a Soddy Daisy in Tennessee, but come on, Truro? How do you pronounce the name?

Bigfoot Marine

❋

Hey Bigfoot,

How in the world do you know about Soddy Daisy? I was in boot camp with a guy from there in

Jan 67. Can't remember his name, but what a character. He got chewed out for looking at the sea gulls while in formation, and he told the DI that he thought they were some kind of white ducks. Said he never wore fancy boots like these in his whole life. Don't know what ever happened to him, hope he made it through the war and returned to his beloved mountain home.

Wayne Shumaker

Hi Tom,

I am looking to hear from anyone who was at the Khe Sanh combat base on February 23rd, when we received the most incoming rounds for a single day. I believe they also hit one of our ammo dumps. My name is John Laibinis. When the incoming started, I jumped feet first into a nearby bunker near our C.P. area. That would have been Hotel Co. 2/26. I ripped my left knee on the steel mat that was the roof of the bunker covered with sandbags. I caught my knee on one of the interlocking hooks. If anyone remembers it, I would appreciate your contacting me. There were about 10 or 12 of us in the bunker. A 2nd Lt. came crawling in between 1700 and 1800 hrs to ask for volunteers to go out on the lines that night. He wound up volunteering about 6 men. They had to crawl when there were no community trenches because of all the incoming artillery and our own dump going off. My name, address, and e-mail are in the last directory. Thanks to anyone who can help. Semper Fi!

John A. Laibinis, Sr.

Day is done,
Gone the sun,
From the lakes,
From the hills,
From the sky,
All is well,
Safely rest,
God is nigh.

Fading light,
Dims the sight,
And a star gems the sky,
From afar,
Drawing near,
Falls the night.

Thanks and praise,
For our days,
'Neath the sun,
'Neath the stars,
'Neath the sky,
As we go,
This we know,
God is nigh

Jim Fowler

Rest in Peace 21 January, 1968

HM3 Malcolm Mole
PVT Paul Bellamy
PFC Ted Brown
PFC Mike Cruitt
L/CPL Clifton Jones
L/CPL Dave Rozelle
GYSGT Melvin Rimel
PFC Theodore " Teddy" Brown Kilo 3/26
PFC Paul Melvin Jr. B/3rdRecon
PVT John Jenaro Contreras, H&S/3/26
PFC Reece A. Critchfield, Jr., I/3/26
LCPL Steven Louis Hellwig, H&S/1/26
SGT Billy David Hill, 282nd AHC/MACV 19
PFC Terry Melvin Johnson, I/3/26
LCPL Thomas Lloyd Kingston, I/3/26
WO Gerald LMcKinsey, Jr., 282AHC/MACV19
LTCOL Joseph P. Seymoe, MACV Det 19
SGT Terrence Glenn Smith, HQ 26 MAR
LCPL Larry Fredrick White, H&S/3/26

MAY YOU REST IN
PERFECT PEACE AND HONOR

Veteran?

Some veterans bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, a certain look in the eye. Others may carry the evidence inside them, a pin holding a bone together or a piece of shrapnel in the leg.

Or perhaps another sort of inner steel: the soul's ally forged in the refinery of adversity. Except in parades, however, the men and women who have kept America safe wear no badge or emblem. You can't tell a vet just by looking.

What is a vet?

He is the cop on the beat who spent six months in Saudi Arabia sweating two gallons a day making sure the armored personnel carriers didn't run out of fuel. He is the barroom loudmouth, dumber than five wooden planks, whose overgrown frat-boy behavior is outweighed a hundred times in the cosmic scales by four hours of exquisite bravery near the 38th parallel.

She is the nurse who fought against futility and went to sleep sobbing every night for two solid years in Da Nang.

He is the POW who went away one person, and came back another — or didn't come back AT ALL.

He is the Quantico drill instructor that has never seen combat but has saved countless lives by turning slouchy, no-account rednecks and gang members into Marines, and teaching them to watch each other's backs.

He is the parade-riding Legionnaire who pins on his ribbons and medals with a prosthetic hand.

He is the career quartermaster who watches the ribbons and medals pass him by.

He is the three, anonymous heroes in The Tomb Of The Unknowns whose presence at the Arlington National Cemetery must forever preserve the memory of all the anonymous heroes whose valor dies with them, unrecognized, on the battlefield or in the ocean's sunless deep.

He is the old guy bagging groceries at the supermarket, palsied now and aggravatingly slow, who helped liberate a Nazi death camp and who wishes all day long that his wife were still alive to hold him when the nightmares come.

He is an ordinary and yet an extraordinary human being. A person who offered some of his life's most vital years in the service of his country, and who sacrificed his ambitions so others would not have to sacrifice theirs.

So remember, each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say, "Thank You." That's all most people need and in most cases, it will mean more than any medals they could have been awarded or were awarded.

Two little words that mean a lot, "THANK YOU."

(Author Unknown)

A Presidential Unit Ctation is Awarded to:

Third Battalion, Ninth Marine Regiment, Third Marine Division

For Service set forth in the following:

For meritorious service in connection with operations against North Vietnamese Armed Forces from 17 June 1968 to 6 July 1968 in the Republic of Vietnam. On 17 June 1968 the Third Battalion, Ninth Marines, commenced Operation Charlie. The assigned mission for the Third Battalion was to provide a workforce for the destruction of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, serve as the First Marines Regimental Reserve, and provide a reactionary force during the hours of darkness (one company on 30-minute standby and one company on one-hour alert). The task of dismantling the Khe Sanh Combat Base was arduous, and although a difficult and strange assignment for an infantry battalion trained for offensive combat, the Third Battalion undertook the mission with aggressiveness, zeal, and enthusiasm. The destruction work was extremely difficult and much of it had to be accomplished by manual labor. Bunkers were dismantled and destroyed; concertina and barbed wire collected and buried; and defensive positions destroyed. Salvaged materials were gathered, staged, and transported to Vandergrift Combat Base where items such as landing mats, steel posts, engineering stakes, and barbed wire were to be utilized to improve existing defensive positions. The heat and dust were extremely adverse, and constant mortar and artillery attacks by the enemy while the men of the Third Battalion were operating

and working with bulldozers and trucks in the area made the assigned mission especially dangerous and hazardous. Large numbers of bunkers and materials were destroyed. The remains of numerous vehicles and airplanes were buried, and a ground police of the entire area was conducted. When completed, the Khe Sanh Combat Base resembled a natural and undisturbed piece of terrain. Through their indomitable spirit, intrepidity, and professionalism, the officers and men of the Third Battalion accomplished their mission in record time and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

For the Secretary of the Navy:

Commandant of the Marine Corps

Tom:

During the Siege at Khe Sanh, L/Cpl Clyde Phillips and another Marine whose name I do not recall and I were setting in mines near the Gray Sector. This area was the responsibility of B Co 1/26 and the 37Th ARVN Rangers, located near the garbage dump. The NVA opened up on us with a recoilless rifle. There was a tank sitting near where we were working. I began pointing towards a big tree where there was smoke emitting. The men in the tank understood what I was trying to tell them. They fired one round at the tree where I had pointed.

A patrol of ARVN Rangers went out and checked the immediate area and returned with a recoiless rifle. They later reported that there were also two dead NVA near the base of the tree.

I would really like to know the names of that tank crew who saved our lives that day. My parents were attending a function at a Police Recreation Center named Tankersville when they met a former Marine tanker who also related the same story. I would really like to meet him, so maybe you could print this in the next issue of **Red Clay**.

Big John Pessoni
A Co 3Rd Engineers
Email: Johnpessoni@hotmail.com

COMMENT: You got it, John. Good Luck.

Publishers Comments: Kenny Pipes, former C/O B Co 1/26, became aware within the last year, that members of VO-67 had been honored for their service in Vietnam. As had SOG, they had been sworn to secrecy and their missions had been classified SECRET. *After reading the following published article in which their service at Khe Sanh was recognized, Kenny Pipes contacted members of VO-67 and thanked them for their efforts on our behalf. I have listed those exchanges of e-mails and published the article which appeared in the newspaper November 09, 2001. It is important to keep our organization and its goals alive, so that everyone is made aware of the sacrifices made at Khe Sanh.*

No Longer a Ghost Squadron

The Untold Story of VO-67

by Mark Sauer, Staff Writer
San Diego Union Tribune
Printed November 9, 2001

Jim Koci tried to explain a Navy tradition known as tolling the bell, but his words foundered on the shoals of emotion. For a long, silent moment, the retired commander struggled to contain his tears.

Three decades and a half a world removed from Vietnam, Koci and most fliers from his Navy squadron still teeter between powerful feelings of pride and sorrow when they reflect on a mission once characterized by the words "top secret" and "suicidal." Another word, "closure," is often distained by stoic, aging warriors who have smelled the smoke and blood of combat. But closure is what members of Observation Squadron 67 will seek in a ceremony this month.

The crew of the San Diego-based destroyer Milius will present them with a bell engraved with the names of the 20 men from their squadron who died when their planes went down over Laos in 1968. Among those names will be the destroyer's namesake, Captain Paul Milius of Waterloo, Iowa, whose heroic efforts to keep his doomed plane airborne allowed seven of his men to parachute to a jungle rescue.

"We were a very close group. Because of the secrecy, it was like us against the world," said Koci, a pilot for one of the 12 crews of VO-67, a Ghost Squadron that officially did not exist. "I didn't think about what we did over there for 30 years. When the mission ended abruptly in 1968, we were scattered across

the face of the earth and were told to never talk about it, not even to wives and family, and I didn't. But we were pretty successful. They said a lot of lives were saved because of us. It's time to talk about it."

They were submarine chasers, trained to fly low over the water's surface and drop sonar devices for tracking enemy submarines. They flew lumbering, old Lockheed Neptune P2Vs whose 76-foot long fuselage was fitted with thick steel and special target sights for this new secret mission. The men of what became Squadron VO-67 (the V stands for heavier than air and the O for observation) were abruptly ordered to North Island in 1967 at the height of the Vietnam War. They couldn't fathom their new mission. What's the Navy doing, the joke went, chasing Viet Cong subs in the Mekong River?

After a few months of training, they headed to a makeshift air base in Thailand. VO-67 would fly missions over the Ho Chi Minh Trail, that infamous jungle supply route that snaked through neutral Laos and on toward Saigon in the south. But the United States' official position was that no fighting was taking place in Laos. Because of the Pentagon's secret war there, VO-67 would remain a phantom. From December 1967 to July 1968, VO-67 crews drove their Neptunes down from a safe altitude toward the thick jungle canopy and "inserted" thousands of listening devices along the trail with remarkable accuracy.

One type of sensor burrowed into the moist ground, its antenna popped up and blended into the foliage; the other, resembling a spike, was designed to hang up and dangle in the trees, like a microphone on a boom. American planes circled high above the Ho Chi Minh Trail and listened. The sensors were sophisticated enough to pick up conversations and even footfalls. When enemy troops, trucks and convoys were detected, air strikes were called in. The idea, conceived by the Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, was to create an electronic barrier to the north-south flow of troops and war material. It was dubbed the McNamara Line.

But the Neptunes and their nine-man crews were sitting ducks for enemy anti-aircraft gunners. The fiercely defended trail was nicknamed Steel Tiger. The arriving Navy pilots told veteran Air Force pilots of small spotter planes that VO-67 expected to take losses as high as 60 to 75 percent. "We found it difficult to believe that anyone entering the war was pessimistic enough to expect losses of that magnitude," one Air Force pilot wrote in a recent memoir. "However, they told us their mission required them to fly their Neptunes over the most heavily defended targets at altitudes of less than 500 feet above the road. We then wondered why anyone was optimistic enough to expect that 25 to 40 percent of the Neptunes would survive."

For ten nerve-racking minutes at a time, the Neptunes (top speed 220 mph) cruised above the treetops in a straight line, "inserting sensors into the jungle. Then we'd open all four engines and go to the wall, zigzagging up and out of there," said Koci, 71, who spent 21 years in the Navy. It wasn't a pleasant ride for the guys in the back. The enemy fired round after round of .57mm and .37mm and anti-aircraft fire at the Neptunes. On January 11, 1967, a month after VO-67 began dropping sensors, one of the squadron's 12 planes went down; all nine aboard were killed. On Feb 17, it happened again and nine more airmen perished. Ten days later, Milius's plane sustained a devastating hit as it dropped sensors from an altitude of 5,000 feet. One crewman, John F. Hartzheim, died instantly. But Milius was able to keep the stricken aircraft aloft long enough for the remaining seven crewmembers to bail out. They were rescued: Hartzheim and Milius were declared missing and, a decade later, presumed killed in action.

Rescue teams in recent years have returned to Laos. In 1999, Hartzheim's remains were recovered and returned to his family. Last spring, rescue teams recovered human remains that DNA tests may show are crewmembers from the first VO-67 plane that crashed. No trace of Paul Milius has been discovered.

When the North Vietnamese launched the Tet Offensive and Siege of the U.S. Marine base at Khe Sanh, VO-67 was called into action. Several enemy divisions encircled thousands of Marines. Sensors dropped in the jungle around the Marine base identified enemy strongholds for air strikes and artillery. When the siege ended, the Khe Sanh base commander said without the sensors, his casualties would have doubled.

VO-67 was a stop-gap mission, however. Once fast and modern Air Force F-4D jets were refitted and ready to take over, they replaced the old Neptunes and the squadron was quickly disbanded. Along with new orders and redeployment came the stern warn-

ing to never talk about what went on in the skies over Laos. VO-67 had lost 25 percent of its aircraft and about 15 percent of the aircrew in the squadron.

Nobody seems to know why it took 30 years to declassify VO-67's mission. But an article in a magazine for Navy veterans several years ago cited rumors of its existence. Then an ad in a Veteran of Foreign Wars publication in 1998 searching for crew members garnered several responses. The mission had been declassified; the men were free to talk. "I answered that ad out of curiosity," said Gilbert N. Castenada of Chula Vista. Like the handful of other VO-67 crewmembers who settled in the San Diego area, Castenda said he followed orders and never spoke of the eavesdropping mission over Laos. He said it's helped him enormously to reconnect with his war buddies and attend two VO-67 reunions, the most recent in Reno.

"I didn't know where anybody was all of those years. I was completely on my own," Castenada said. "Bothered me we had to sneak back into the country and never tell family or friends what we did. For so many years, we had to keep this to ourselves. But you need to vent, you need to let it out."

The reunions have been cathartic for the 200 or so VO-67 members who attended. But nearly 60 squadron members have not been located, and the government hasn't been much help, said retired Navy Commander A.G. Alexander of Whitefish, Montana. Bureaucrats cite the Privacy Act, said Alexander, whose efforts were a key to reuniting VO-67. "I think that's just an excuse for them to sit on their rears. The basic problem is the government is so screwed up that nothing much works. Thank God for the Internet, or we'd never have found most of these guys." Alexander has made hundreds of phone calls and written scores of E-Mails and letters trying to track down VO-67 crewman. He said the squadron website www.vo-67.org, has been invaluable.

But reliving the war is not for everyone. Thomas Clark of Bonita hasn't made it to either VO-67 reunion. "I buried Vietnam after I got out of the service. I did that deliberately. But this effort to unite the squadron has brought a lot of it back," Clark said. Unlike many of his fellow fliers, Clark said the classified nature of the mission "kind of helped me. Vietnam was too painful. I lost some people I was close to. I tried hard not to get close to people over there because I knew if you lost that person, it would really hurt," said Clark, a gunner on Crew 6 who at age 34 in 1968 was among the oldest enlisted men in VO-67. "But you get close under those circumstances. You can't help it. Commander Alexander called me up one day, and we ended up crying."

Jim Koci said a few others they know of did not fare so well over the years, and they think it was due to their missions in Laos and the secrets they had to keep all these years. The old fliers of VO-67 have a bit of advice for Navy, Marine and Army commandos already deployed on secret missions in America's new war on terrorism. "I'd tell these guys that when they come back, when it's over, if they need to talk to somebody, do," Clark said. "But make sure it's somebody who truly understands what you've been through. Talk to someone who's been in combat. It took me a long time to realize how well I'd buried the whole thing."

PUBLISHERS NOTE: Clark, just make one reunion, believe me you will walk away a new man, with a whole different attitude.

Kenny, Thank You For Your Kind Words

A very good friend of mine was at Khe Sanh. His name is Louis DeMarco. He is in pretty bad shape right now due to seizures from a head injury he received there. He just moved from D.C. to Tennessee and is not back online yet. I will give him your address if you want. My son is an active duty Marine also stationed at MCAS Beaufort. He is towards the end of his second hitch. Used to be a weapons instructor at the Island for a couple years before Beaufort. Hasn't decided yet whether to stay in or not.

Earl D. Litz
Cape Coral, Florida.... "It's just paradise!"
Observation Squadron Sixty Seven (VO-67)
NKP/RVN October 67-June 68
OP2E Gunner/Photographer

Ken & Group:

This is Dave Steffy — the VO-67 troop. I passed along your last messages to the rest of the squadron and a least one of them would like more info about your reunion in Texas. He will attend, if possible. We still can't get to the websites you mentioned. If one of you can send me the information on the reunion, I will pass it along to him.

Thanks,
Dave

❋

Ken

It worked this time, great site. Did not have time to look at all of it right now but will later tonight. Las Colinas is not that far from Plano and is in the Dallas Metroplex area. If you guys want some of the guys from VO-67 to attend your reunion, I'm sure there would be several that would come. I know I would be honored to come and as it stands now, I could make it. Let me know what to do. By the way the VO-67 website is http://www.vo-67.org — there are other links to related sights such as the recovery of our crew 2, which is ongoing as we speak. Well, got to go as wife is calling, talk to you later.

Lowell

❋

Ken,

I spent a couple of hours yesterday at the Khe Sanh web site. I was moved. I was an air crewman in VO-67 and flew several missions over Khe Sanh. From the air, it looked more like the moon with all the bomb craters everywhere. Let me tell you that I have the utmost respect for those of you who were there. At least we got to go back to a safe base every night. As I said, I read a lot about the history of Khe Sanh and am especially moved by the heroism described in the taking and holding the various hills around the base. My hat's off to you!

Semper Fi (is an ex-sailor able get away with that?)
Rich DeCuir, Crew 2

❋

Ken:

My name is George Hilkens. I served in VO-67. I used to work with a guy who was also at Khe Sanh during that time, named Mike Helvie. Do you remember him? Also, another member of our squadron (Dave Thompson) retired from the Chicago police force, I believe. Small world.

❋

Ken:

I was the plane commander of Crew Six of VO-67. I will never forget, and neither will my crew, in my one and only flight over Khe Sanh. I left the squadron to go to Balboa for back surgery and ended up as having had a "silent" heart attack some time within the year. (The flight had nothing to do with it.) We came in from the west over the mountains, down into a valley north of Khe Sanh, made our run, went to full power, and followed the valley to the east. We couldn't climb over the mountains, turned south at the end, and like water shooting out of rain pipe, we were right on top of Khe Sanh. There was a group of Marines standing there, and I remember seeing one Marine in particular, standing by himself waving to us. I can see that just like it was yesterday. I have always wondered if anyone remembers that? Kerry Bignall was my 2nd. Mech. He is a member of your Association.

A.G.Alexander,Jr.
CDR.USN. (Ret)
328 Karrow Ave.
Whitefish, MT 59937
406-862-5161
alexusn@aboutmontana.net

❋

Ken and Thor,

Thank you for the info and kind words regarding VO-67. All of you on the ground at Khe Sanh were very special to us, and I can't begin to tell you of the satisfaction I felt upon reading your emails. The Marine Corps at Cherry Point, where I was a corpsman in '55-56, got me into Naval Cadets. I sincerely hope I was able to repay some of that debt at Khe Sanh. I was the plane commander/pilot of Crew 1, and still recall those Khe Sanh missions. I am confident that history will show how much we all owe to you Marines (and I hope you had some Navy Corpsman along) at Khe Sanh... A truly great job.

Ron Findley
CDR/USN/RET

❋

Ken,

My name is Lowell Shaw and I am a member of VO-67. I flew some (since I had aircrew wings), but was not assigned to an aircrew. I was what you guy would call a ground pounder with wings.

I tried your website, but it came back as not a good address. Could you update me on that? I live in Plano, Texas, a city just north of Dallas and I would consider it an honor to attend your reunion representing VO-67. I only have one problem. If it is outside of the Dallas/Fort Worth area, I would not be able to travel. I was laid off in August and still out of a job, so I could not afford to travel. But if the reunion is in the Dallas area, as I said, I would be honored to attend. By the way, I am a retired Chief Petty Officer (hope you don't hold that against me — just joking). I was a First Class Petty Officer when in VO-67 and worked on the aircraft electronic and electrical systems (as I said, flew sometimes but not as an aircrew member). I spent three tours in Vietnam, two with other Navy commands) and thanked the Lord that I got out all three times, uncut and unhurt. I have the Highest respect for any service person that went to Vietnam — especially the Marines. You guys did a hell of a job and didn't get half the credit you deserve. Kind of like VO-67.

Please let me know where the reunion is, because there are a few more Texans around in other cities that might be able to go.

Hope to hear from you,
Lowell Shaw
972-423-7792
2809 Peppertree Pl.
Plano, Texas 75074
VO67 Member
lshaw074@yahoo.com

Thomas Clark held a Navy flight suit he wore as part VO-67.

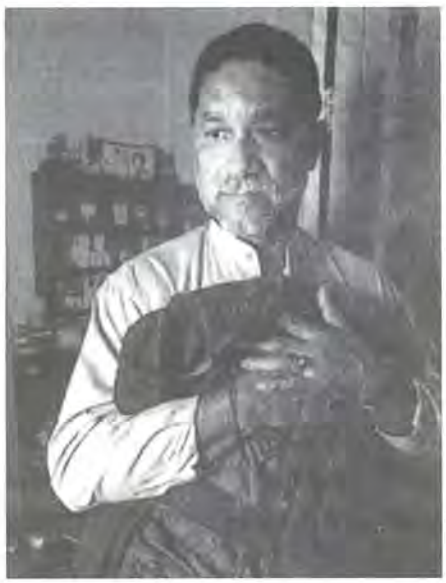

Jim Koci



Crew 9 from VO-67



A few years back, Dave Powell, a UPI photographer, sent me some pictures from his private collection. He was at the base and especially at Hill 881, where he took pictures of the guys and events that spent over 30 years in his closet. When the *History Channel* contacted me about doing a series on Khe Sanh, I thought of Dave's pictures and had Tracy, the *History Channel* editor, call him. He had a picture of Dabney, the one we used on the cover in our last magazine. Tracy contacted Bill Dabney, and he said he had the same picture. But when Tracy sent it to Bill, his eyes lit up, for he had never before seen this picture and didn't know it existed. I asked Dave Powell to write a little something for our magazine. Since then, he has been in contact with others who were at 881, and they listed him on their website along with others who served there at that time. Here is his response and follow up from others to his magnificent photos now out of the closet.

Jim Wodecki

❋

Jimbo,

I must say I am truly honored. I really think there must be some mistake. How does some adventurer with a camera rate being in the company of heroes? Most of whom fought and died for their country. But I am still going to have this framed and hung on a wall that Joelle will let me hang it on. Thanks very much to the officers and men of India Company.

Dave Powell

[Dave Powell's name was added to the roster of India Company.]

❋

Hi Frank,

Well, I don't have Major Chancey's address, so maybe you could forward this to him. I have been thinking a lot about what he said, and I want to thank him for what he said about the photos and about me. I did not know that it was the Purple Foxes that lifted me off the hill. But it has to have been. When I took all those photos of the Super gaggle, it was when I was leaving. To the best of my ability as I remember, is the airlifting of Dave Powell off Hill 881, which was in fact only a tiny part of the huge effort made that day by the Purple Foxes. I had never seen a Super gaggle before — at least not from the ground. I got on the hill much the same way that I got off, with a bunch of choppers coming in like some huge Ferris wheel dropping men and supplies onto the hill. To watch it from the hill, was a whole new experience.

The first thing I saw (I had absolutely no idea of what it was that I was looking at) was this huge trail of what looked to me like white phosphorus, exploding across the sky in a long tight plume. The plume started to descend like a curtain, with chunks of it falling faster than the rest of it. I never saw the jet that created this high atmospheric effect. It seemed like it appeared out of nowhere. Then to my complete surprise, I saw and heard once again, Huey gun ships whipping around the hill, shooting the place up. I remember clearly thinking it was not a good idea for those gunships to be flying that low. Especially over such hostile terrain.

After all the time I spent on 881, the only aircraft I had seen were jets during the CAS missions. Well, I am taking photos like mad amidst all of this sound and fury. Here comes this flight of green choppers diving in and roaring away just as fast as they can. Someone is telling me to get into the trench that was on the LZ. It was probably that incredibly brave Marine who stood totally upright with both his arms in the air guiding the choppers in. I took his picture. It was like he was saying, "Here I am you little bastards, do your worst."

The so-called trench was about six inches deep. It was so shallow the three cameras around my neck made my back stick out like a camel. I distinctly remember rotating the cameras off to one side so I could get down lower in the trench. I kept thinking, who the hell dug this puny little excuse for cover. As a matter of fact it wasn't really cover. The best that could be said, it was concealment. As always, in situations like that, time slows down to a crawl. There were a few other Marines in the trench as well. As a matter of fact, I was laying head to head with a Marine. What really freaked me out, was that he looked so damn calm. I know it sounds kind of stupid, but I actually asked him, "Do I look scared, because you don't?" He said no, I didn't look scared. I was relieved for some strange macho ass reason. Finally, the bird that I am supposed to get on lands. I waited for what seemed an eternity for the ramp to come down. When it does, someone yells GO! GO! GO! I got up and I mentally charted the shortest distance between two points, and set a course for that

ramp. I got up, and just like that movie "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" when they jumped off the cliff, I said to myself, "OOOH SSHHIIII-IT!!!" and took off running as fast as I could.

As I am racing toward the helicopter, this big Marine comes charging down the ramp. He decides the way I am coming to the chopper is also the way he is going to the trench. Neither one of us changed course, and we smashed into each other like two billiard balls. We bounced off each other falling backwards, and to our respective right sides. There we are, standing out in the open still looking at each other. I am pissed and he is smiling at me as if to say you didn't actually think you could come through me, did you, you puny little twerp? Hey, I was six feet, two hundred pounds. The guy must have been a football player or something.

Anyway, I took off again and as soon as I hit that ramp, I took a flying leap into the back of that helicopter. When I hit the deck, I started sliding like I was on ice. I slid all the way forward and came to rest face down between the legs of the Marine who is manning the M60 at the forward window on the right side. He was standing with his legs wide apart aiming the M60. I turned over and looked up to see this Marine with this deadly serious look on his face, staring down at me. I scrambled forward and sat up against the bulkhead of the flight deck of the chopper and tried to make myself into the smallest target as possible. It was then that I realized why I had slid so far forward so fast.

The deck of the chopper was covered with expended shell casings. It was like the whole deck was covered with marbles or ball bearings. I was staring aft at the open ramp as it slowly started to close. I was waiting for the sight and sound of holes being ripped through the chopper. I am saying, come on baby, let's get the hell out of here, please. The ramp closes and the engine starts whining. There is that brief moment when the chopper is not off the ground but seems like it is in the air at the same time, and then we are climbing with the engines roaring, and the bird is straining for altitude. The M60 is banging away, and shell casings are showering down on the deck, bouncing all over the place, until finally I can feel we are moving more horizontally then upward. It's getting quieter, and an overwhelming sense of relief comes over me. I said to the M60 Marine, "Well, I guess we made it." He didn't say anything but had a slight smile came to his lips. I took that as a good sign. I want to thank you, Major Chancey, and everyone with the Purple Foxes, because what I just described was only one day for me. But I realize for you it was a way of life. Frankly, I just don't know how you did it! What magnificent courage!! I will never forget. God Bless you all.

Dave Powell

❋

Dave,

Your narrative of your departure from 881S is superb not only as a realistic description of the event, but also as a tribute to the Purple Foxes. More broadly, your recollections and awesome photographs are indispensable to the overall history precisely because they come from a disinterested third party who had seen enough action in Vietnam to make valid comparisons. We grunts and zombies who did those things repeatedly assumed that the conditions came with the territory, since we had nothing else to compare them to. More to the point, your contributions add a spice to the history that makes it what Frank and I hoped it would be when we began — a fitting tribute to those magnificent young men who endured and triumphed in those awful conditions. They now have a record, in writings and images, for their progeny and friends. They — and I — are both admiring of you for your courage in coming to the hill, and grateful for the record you preserved and have shared so magnanimously. On their behalf, thank you.

Regarding the photographs, I hesitate to impose on your already great generosity, but hope that I may have an 8x10 of whatever two photographs of me you think my bride would want, and 5x8 prints of those others in which I am a subject, however unflattering they may be. She was much taken by that last one in the CAS series. If you could also send a couple of your selection of Bob Arrotta, I will get them to him. We've been in touch over the years, but he is too modest and self-effacing to ask for them himself — again, at your convenience and only as is easy for you. After all these years, any image is a treasure. Regards and Godspeed.

Gratefully,
Bill Dabney

Reflections on Volunteering

by Michael Loehrer

When I arrived in Viet Nam in November 1967, I was assigned to a 105mm howitzer field artillery unit — Bravo Battery, First Battalion, Thirteenth Marines. Many of the outfit were getting "short" and were glad for someone to take over the "FNG" details. When they needed a volunteer to go TAD to Gio Linh (a real hell hole), I was ready for something different and volunteered. I remember the beautiful convoy ride up Highway One, which ran through Hue, Dong Ha, and over the Cua Viet River, all the way to Gio Linh. What a magnificent country side! As we approached Gio Linh, the road became too muddy to proceed all the way into the base. We speculated whether Major General Tompkins, who was riding with us, would trek through the knee deep mud to the command post. Those who knew him, said he would, because he was "Old Corps", and he was a grunt's marine. Those who didn't know him, said no general officer would wade through that mud. It was deep, and it was nasty. So when the convoy bogged down, we all watched with admiration as he instantly hopped out and slogged up the hill to the CP. We immediately followed, filled with pride to literally follow in his footsteps.

We took a little incoming while I was there, but nothing like the stories I had heard. There were a few patrols — I remember one in particular. The patrol ventured west toward Con Thien. It had not gone very far before it was ambushed. I remember it was Mike Company, but I am uncertain whether they were from the 26th or 9th Marines. They responded well, but casualties were heavy, with several KIA. I'll never forget the expressions on their faces as they carried their comrades back in makeshift poncho stretchers. Gio Linh was a pitiful place, but nothing compared to what we would experience at Khe Sanh.

The Unit to which I was assigned left Phu Bai and staged at Dong Ha in the afternoon of January 20, 1968. I was ordered to join them ASAP. As it turned out, half of our unit left that day — the rest of us, the following morning. No one knew where we were headed, helicopters were everywhere. We hopped on one and headed west as the sun set. We traveled a long way and everyone had a different opinion where we were headed. I had been studying the maps of the area, and offered, my opinion, "The only



place I know about over this far is Khe Sanh." It didn't mean much to us then, Con Thien and Gio Linh were more well known.

Because it was late in the day, we ate cold C-rations and had no place to take cover. We were told to dig a good foxhole and expect incoming fire. The red clay soil was rock hard, and we didn't dig very deep before the sun went down. I remember trying to sleep that night in a shallow rut in the ground, my helmet tilted back cradling my head, watching the sky. I could see glowing objects coursing through the sky toward the southeast end of the base. I assumed they were incoming rockets. The other end of the base was taking a pretty good shelling, though nothing came near us.

We learned the next morning that the ammo dump had been hit. Sgt. Hewitt asked for volunteers to help clear the ammo dump of unexploded ordinance. I volunteered but found out the really dangerous part was already over. Weeks later, Sgt. Whitenight informed me that he and a Marine we only knew as "Smitty," moved a lot of ordnance that was still exploding. I think they got medals for it. I and the other volunteers helped other Marines who had previously volunteered.

I was volunteered for many other things, in true Marine Corps style. It was well into the Siege and a lot of people were getting tired of the stinking portable toilets. It seemed like I was the lowest in grade in our outfit for the longest time. I'm sure it wasn't true, but it seemed like it. However, I do remember getting volunteered to burn the drums filled with urine and excrement. A lot of people had been using ammo canisters, and sometimes their own helmets, for a toilet. We only used the above ground portable toilets whenever it was foggy or dark.

Under cover of fog one morning, me and few other unfortunate souls began the nasty job. You know the routine: drag the 55 gallon drums (cut in half) out of the back of the portable toilets, drain the urine, pour in the diesel fuel, light and stir occasionally with an engineering stake till all becomes ashes. We were only part way done when the fog lifted; sure enough, we started taking incoming. The person in charge said screw it, and we all fled for our bunkers. We were never ordered to finish, and believe me I didn't volunteer.

We were soon in short supply of communications people. Radio operators were normally good targets when on patrol. Fortunately, there wasn't much patrolling going on during the siege; some, but not much. However, we lost some of our radiomen because they were also wiremen. There were wires running from every howitzer to the fire direction control center. When we took incoming, these wires were often hit, and constantly needed to be repaired.

We had a standing policy — whether it was official or not, I don't know. Whenever we took incoming, we always returned fire. Since we were surrounded, I think we could just fire freely, and we wanted Charlie to know we could return whatever he threw our way. We usually fired the previous night's harassment and interdiction coordinates, if nothing else was in the works. Whatever the case, the guns needed communication lines, and the wires often required re-splicing during the middle of a barrage. A lot radiomen/wiremen were wounded while performing this mission.

Word came down that we needed communications volunteers. So, I learned how to splice wires from a corporal named Wray. He was Polish, and that was his last name. That was the only portion of his name we cared to pronounce and, really, all I remember. He trained me and didn't seem to care that I was new and only a PFC. After showing me how to splice, he said, "That's all there is to it!" Being curious, I asked, "How do you locate the break in the wire?" With a grin, he said, "You just grab the wire and run."

What a trip! The next time we took incoming, it was very dark, he looked at me and said, "You're on your way." I grabbed the wire and started running. I couldn't see a thing. By this time during the siege, we all had a general idea of where things were. The only light there was came from explosions of incoming artillery. I remained in a crouched position long enough to find the break and fix it. I would find the closest hole, where I hid until the barrage was over. Ten minutes of sheer panic. Talk about extreme sports!

The next time I actually volunteered was April 4, 1968. The Army was starting to sweep up the valley and Marines were preparing to move out from the base. We had topographic maps of the area, but they were out in a little trailer fully exposed to view, and it was broad daylight when someone demanded those maps. Sgt. Hewitt asked for a volunteer, because every time anyone appeared in broad day-

light, we received incoming. Sure enough, I had not been up in the trailer more than a minute or two, when a couple of rockets came in. One landed very close.

I don't remember hearing the explosion at all, but I do remember being showered with red clay, and fighting for air through the dust. A piece of shrapnel went through the biceps of my left arm, and a small piece entered my side. I was medevaced out and taken to Dong Ha, where I was patched up. They cleaned up my arm where the shrapnel tore a nasty hole, but could not locate the piece that entered through the arm-hole area of my flak jacket. What really freaked me out was the large tear in my flak jacket right over my heart. Thank God for whoever invented it — saved my life.



The doctors were either concerned about the way my arm was torn up, or the missing piece of shrapnel in my side, and transferred me to Phu Bai, then Da Nang, then Thon Son Nut. Before I left Dong Ha, Major General Tompkins pinned on my purple heart. The same person who slogged through the mud up to the Gio Linh, four months earlier. He remains to this day one of the most inspiring people I ever met.

Three weeks later, I was released. I would still need three more weeks for a full recovery. Which basically meant an assignment of filling sandbags somewhere. I asked if I could return to my unit instead. They couldn't believe I would want to return to full duty and asked where my outfit was. I told them Khe Sanh — they thought I was a head case. They could not fathom the camaraderie we shared. After much pleading, they released me to return to my outfit, and issued me a light duty certificate.

When I got back, the appearance of everything was shocking. After being in a clean environment the previous three weeks, the smell and filth were incredible. From January to April, we were living in holes in the ground with no showers and no way to clean clothes. While I was in the hospital, I bought a camera. When I got back to Khe Sanh, I took some pictures, which I forgot about until I moved recently and stumbled across them.



Spider Mike Loebrer

Khe Sanh and The Mongol Prince

by Chaplain Ray William Stubbe

The battle of the Siege of Khe Sanh of early 1968 was far more ominous, dangerous, and significant than had been previously thought. It is miraculous, in fact, that any made it out alive from that battlefield. The key to survival and success in that battle may be attributed to the professionalism, dedication, creativity, and humanity of individuals who were there, most of whom remain to this day, shrouded in obscurity in what has been written of that battle. There were many. One of these is Mirza Munir Baig, known as "Harry." This essay contributes much new information concerning the remarkable Harry, as well as newly acquired information derived from official Hanoi military history books, declassification of highly classified documents from the National Security Agency, memoirs of Khe Sanh participants, new descriptions of intelligence gathering and processing during the Siege, recollections from CIA debriefs of Harry, documents pertaining to use of electronic sensors at Khe Sanh, and numerous other, miscellaneous information.

A Desperate Place: How Did We Ever Make It Out Alive?

The battlefield of Khe Sanh, occupied 25% of all Vietnam film reports on TV evening shows during February-March, 1968. Shocking images of horror appeared in numerous popular print media, e.g., "The Agony of Khe Sanh" cover of *Newsweek*, March 18, 1968; its photo essay portrayed desperate young men carrying the bloodied corpse of their Company Commander (Don Jacques), and shocked faces and crumpled bodies in deeply-dug trenches. Haunting faces and desperate conditions captured by David Douglas Duncan and the legendary "thousand-yard stare" on the faces of those at Khe Sanh appearing in newspapers reflected the desperate reality that was Khe Sanh.

Possible reenactment of a Dien Bien Phu scenario became an *idee fixe* for many who feared Khe Sanh's isolation and tenuous defensibility. Overland re-supply via road (QL-9) had become impossible because 9 of the 26 bridges between Ca Lu and Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) were impassible or destroyed. The KSCB airstrip was closed to air-landed re-supply 12-25 February due to untenably hazardous conditions. The Drop Zone was extremely small and unprotected. Lingering morning fogs precluded aerial reconnaissance and re-supply. Surrounding Khe Sanh, like clutching, choking fingers on a throat, were tens of thousands of encircling enemy troops plus tanks, marking the first use of tanks by the PAVN in the war. President Johnson demanded the Joint Chiefs of Staff declare in writing that Khe Sanh would be held. American defenders received up to 1600 incoming rounds a day — mostly devastating rockets and artillery on a base 0.9 mi. long and 0.4 mi. wide occupied by approximately 2725 men. Nuclear weapons were being considered for Khe Sanh.

The considerable enemy presence was alarming. Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) intercepts and analysis reported through TOP SECRET TRINE Daily Tactical SIGINT Summaries disclosed a massive movement of enemy infantry units from North Vietnam positioned in Laos just west of Khe Sanh. Formation of a Khe Sanh Front Headquarters to coordinate units of the 304 and 325C Divisions and support units, located directly west of the DMZ, designated B5-T8, had been established 6 December 1967, commanded by Major General Tran Quy Hai, Assistant Chief of Staff, PAVN General Staff, and Political Commissar Comrade Le Quang Dao, Deputy Director of the General Political Directorate for the PAVN.

The considerable PAVN commitment to the Khe Sanh battle, in addition to the formation of a Front Headquarters and investment in the area of two divisions of infantry (one of which, the 304th, had participated in the Dien Bien Phu battle), is reflected in the PAVN Secret [Mat] classified history of the Ho Chi Minh Trail which reports the total of supplies delivered to B5-T8: double the amount delivered to Tri-Thien, 2.5 times the amount delivered to Region V, and 24.5 times the amount delivered to Nam Bo (an important region that included Saigon and the Delta). Col. Tran Tho, Deputy Operational Commander, responsible for logistics during the Khe Sanh battle, had his hands full! More tonnage of bombs were dropped in this small battlefield area than in all of the Pacific in 1942 and 1943; in an area of 564 square kilometers, friendly fire delivered some 99,600 tons of ordnance.

Life for those on the hill outposts of Khe Sanh was even more tenuous and austere due to inability of

helicopters (their only means of re-supply and medevac support) to penetrate lingering, shrouding fog (known in the area as Crachin, a French word for "spit.") Hill 950, without water for seven days, held a badly wounded man who nearly died; one man on Hill 881-South did die after three days of shrouding fog precluded his medevac, and some corpses decayed for days in a temporary "body bunker." The Company Commander on Hill 881-South, Captain (later Colonel) William H. Dabney, comments: "Ever watch rats crawling in and out of ponchos holding what's left of [men] hit by a 152[mm. artillery round]? The troops did! They were up there five days. Weather socked in. Ripe. We were told we couldn't bury them. We did anyway. Had to."

When Co E, 2/26 occupied Hill 861-A on 22 January 1968, the defenders were rationed to a C-ration meal and half a canteen cup of water a day. On Hill 861, cases of C-rations were stored in an old bomb crater, atop which a guard sat all night to prevent theft. Cpl. Dennis Mannion, a Forward Observer with KILO Co., 3/26, on Hill 861, recalls, "Imagine! A hill armed to the hilt, facing death and destruction daily, and we still had to supply an armed guard to prevent internal theft!" Tragically, one night, an incoming mortar blew off the arm and a leg of the C-ration guard.

Khe Sanh, a place of scintillating beauty — almost a Garden of Eden — shrouded horror and death within its beauty. David Leitch, a correspondent for the *London Sunday Times*, still haunted by memories of the wonderful young men he came to know at Khe Sanh during the Siege battle, captured the life situation: "It was beyond human endurance. I mean, I've been to very many wars, and I'd never experienced being on that level of incoming and that kind of impotence everyone felt. I thought 'the NVA are coming,' you see. I was quite convinced that Giap was going to come over the wire with two NVA divisions. It was just a question of 'when.' It was like being in one of those medieval sieges where you knew you actually had to lose because you didn't have water, or whatever it was, and they were going to get you and cut your throat. Meanwhile, you had a day or two to live, and you had to live like a man. It's a very difficult thing to do. Someone, a Native American Marine, said to me, 'It's a beautiful day to die.'"

The famous photographer, David Douglas Duncan, a Marine officer who served in World War II and photographed Korea, passionately protested what he beheld at Khe Sanh, what the defenders there were forced to endure. He added to the title on the cover of his collection of photographs "I Protest!" the words, "In behalf of the men who will never get out, for whom help came too late."

The severity of life at Khe Sanh is reflected in the hell it became for everyone who was there. Clothes rotted off the bodies of those at Khe Sanh who could not take showers for three months. C-rations were frequently limited to one per day. Water was frequently restricted to one canteen cup per day, and there were many days when there was no water. Col. Lownds reflected before a U.S. Senate Committee:

> "The battlefield is a dirty and ugly place. All the sophisticated instruments of destruction we can devise won't change it, nor will they change the supreme demands of courage, sacrifice, professional skill and dedication which Marines of each and every generation have met on the field of battle."

Soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army units fared even worse. One soldier, Hoai Phong of 9th Regt., 304 Div, wrote in his diary: "Here, the war is fiercer than in all other places. It is even fiercer than in Co Roong and Dien Bien Phu. All of us stay in underground trenches except the units that engage in combat. We are in the sixtieth day, and B-52s continue to pour bombs onto this area. If visitors come here, they will say that this is an area where it rains bombs. Vegetation and animals, even those who live in deep caves or underground, have been destroyed. One sees nothing but the red dirt."

The intensity of the battle at Khe Sanh is reflected in 11,114 incoming artillery, mortar, and rocket rounds between 18 January-1 April 1968, an average of 150 per day (which was the average for all of I Corps in 1967). U. S. forces fired 117,643 rounds of artillery (including 12,441 rounds of 175mm) and flew 2,602 sorties of B-52s delivering 75,631 tons of ordnance (an average of 35 sorties and 1,022 tons a day, 85% more sorties and 82% more ordnance than the daily average for all of South Vietnam and the DMZ for the prior 12 months). 533 sorties were delivered within 3 kilometers of friendly ground forces at KSCB. In addition, 15,217 sorties were flown by tactical air, a daily average of 184.

Officially, 205 Americans died at Khe Sanh during

the battle (20 Jan-31 Mar 1968). That this figure is erroneous is manifest even from official counts of Marine battalions at Khe Sanh, which total 274 American KIA. KIA from other units serving at Khe Sanh adds another 70 for a total of 344. This does not include the casualties of Lang Vei, or an unknown number of defenders lost at the Khe Sanh District Headquarters on 21 January and those from the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion for which no figures are available. For veterans of the battle at Khe Sanh, "Khe Sanh" means the time they were there. Thus, the KIA from Operation PEGASUS (1-14 April) and those from 15-16 April (the date 1/9 left) add 252 more, for a total of 573 Americans lost during the period 20 January-16 April, the period of time the defenders of Khe Sanh were there.

Commander (Doctor) Robert A. Brown, Commanding Officer of 3d Medical Battalion, whose 2d Platoon of Company C served at Khe Sanh as "C-Med," records 2,541 patients seen and treated. Of these 2,037 were wounded in action and 490 were non-battle casualties. 2,249 patients were evacuated of which 292 were returned to duty. Losses by the North Vietnamese Army forces are estimated at well over 10,000 killed. Perhaps the same number of the local, indigenous Bru tribesmen (which were prohibited from being evacuated) was also killed, when census before the battle is compared with census of refugees at resettlements.

Perhaps the greatest battle of the Vietnam War in terms of casualties, publicity, degree of commitment, and prolonged agony — surprisingly by the early 1970s, it was my perceived experience while serving on active duty that military leadership made concerted efforts to de-emphasize Khe Sanh. For example, when the first LHA was launched, news releases announced that LHA-5 would be named USS KHE SANH; the announcement then changed it to USS DA NANG, and when LHA-5 was commissioned 3 May 1980, it was USS PELELIU. Academic discussion of Khe Sanh centered on strategic conundrums ("Who managed to force the other into the battle?" "Who was actually besieged?" "Who won?" "Was Khe Sanh simply a publicity affair by both sides with little reality?") I personally overheard professional military historians at the Marine Corps Historical Center question whether "there really were all those enemy at Khe Sanh," whether the North Vietnamese really intended to make a major effort there as at Dien Bien Phu. Where was the anticipated "big, human wave assault?"

Attempting to discern motives (or plans and strategy) from what happened betrays a *post hoc ergo proper hoc* thinking. At Khe Sanh, absence or presence of results had little to do with a lack of PAVN resolve or action. That Captain Frank James Kennedy was able to deliver several thousand pints of whole blood the evening of 21 January despite a quarter-mile visibility and fog; despite navigating by dead reckoning above a thick cloud layer that obscured hazardous terrain features; despite not having the field in sight; despite having to land his CH-53 by auto-rotation and guidance by only a hand-held green signal from an Aldis lamp as his only ground reference; despite incoming rockets while landing, does not reflect what the enemy did. It reflects what Americans did! Likewise, Khe Sanh generally reflects victory by determination, resolve, common courage by numerous individuals despite almost overwhelming, countervailing forces. Defenders of Khe Sanh were subsequently awarded the rare Presidential Unit Citation, which is granted to units for extraordinary heroism to the same degree as that which would be required for the award of the Navy Cross to an individual, one award under the Medal of Honor.

During intense shelling, gun crews remained in the open to fire 105mm howitzers, wire men ran out amid the explosions to splice severed land lines to resume vital communications, men commonly dashed to pull an injured man to safety. Dr. Edward Feldman removed a live mortar round embedded in a living man's abdomen. Forklift operators, deafened by sounds of their equipment to warning noises made by rockets or mortars that were being fired, continued to move their pallets. Those on the Drop Zone (where there was no bunker or trench or hole to run for cover) retrieved supplies while those on the airstrip cleared it of shrapnel so planes could land. Officers and NCOs were continually seen moving among their troops to cheer and check. Stretcher-bearers moved casualties to waiting helicopters even as mortars exploded near them. Everyone could not help but see craters in which they could stand and still be below ground level. There was no secure place at Khe Sanh. Yet, everyday courage and determination formed the modus vivendi of those at Khe Sanh. Thousands of Bronze Stars ought to have been

awarded, but subsequent acknowledgment was mostly not forthcoming for the valiant defenders of Khe Sanh. The many hundreds at Khe Sanh are now mostly forgotten, consigned to mists of oblivion.

Even the Commander, Colonel David E. Lownds, who with his staff targeted and initiated strike requests for 95% of all local B-52 Arc Light strikes and generally conducted the entire course of the battle, is an obscure person to history. During an ordinary day, his intelligence staff generated targets for 100 TPQ-10 missions, 16 Arc Lights, 100 flights of fixed wing aircraft and up to 500 artillery missions. Yet, when books and articles on the Battle of Khe Sanh are consulted, one does not find an extensive biography of Colonel Lownds or his staff or subordinate commanders. Instead, one usually encounters the names of Generals Giap, Westmoreland, and a few others who may have dictated general policy, but who had little to do with detailed day-to-day operations and tactics. Those who did are mostly "little noted, nor long remembered."

Some may have understandably crumbled emotionally or failed to repulse the repeated assaults. Fierce battles were continually won by the young defenders who successfully repulsed determined attacks by large NVA units: the attack on Khe Sanh village and Hill 861, the attack on Hills 861A and 64, and three assaults against the eastern perimeter, one by a regimental-size force. Some of these involved hand-to-hand combat in darkness. Most left hundreds of dead enemy.

Thus, "Khe Sanh" is not tactics and strategy — it is not even a place to be analyzed or debated. "Khe Sanh" is the people who were there. The wonder of Khe Sanh is not its prior beauty and subsequent horror, not amazement that we all weren't killed there, not the degree of commitment on all levels. The real wonder of Khe Sanh is that so many of such exemplary character were gathered in one place, certainly not as a result of the insight of Generals or their G-1 staff. Reflecting Napoleon's maxim, "In a war it is not men but the man who counts," Colonel Bruce F. Meyers, writing the After Action Report of the battle, noted: "The ultimate success in battle will always hinge on the performance of the individual. In the final analysis, Khe Sanh was no exception. The ability of all those who were at Khe Sanh to perform their assignments in spite of the intensive enemy barrages impacting into their restricted base area while at the same time maintaining a high degree of esprit and elan, were a major factor in the successful defense of Khe Sanh."

Mirza Munir Baig - "Harry"

A Major Reason We Made It Out Alive!

Mirza Munir Baig, "Harry," was born 13 Jan 1932 in Panchgani, India. His name "Munir" means refulgent in classical Arabic, and the name "Baig" is actually a title, not a name, for achievement in the service of the emperor. His mother, Juliette, had been educated at the American University in Beirut, Lebanon (where all her family had been educated from its opening around 1900) and after receiving a scholarship from King Fuad of Egypt, at Clifton College of Cambridge University, where she met her future husband, Osman.

In 1946, Osman was appointed to the British Embassy in Washington, D.C., where the following year Munir and Taimur visited their parents. Among Juliette's new and very good friends were Felix de Weldon, the artist who sculpted the Marine Corps War Memorial (known among Marines as the "Iwo Jima Monument") in Washington, D.C., and his wife, Margot. Juliette took her sons to visit them. "Munir was enchanted with the model," recalls Juliette. It was also in August of 1947 that India and Pakistan became independent of Britain. Osman, being Moslem, became a Pakistani citizen, as did his son Taimur, who recalls: "I was at school when the Partition (India/Pakistan) came through. I went to bed an Indian and literally woke up a Pakistani."

Clifton College prepares boys to enter Sand Hurst, the British school for officer training. Munir was not destined to become a British officer, however. When the time came for him to enroll in Sand Hurst, the turmoil of establishing the new nation of Pakistan resulted in a policy voiding the "father-to-son" tradition of military leadership. By the time the military reasserted its influence in the Pakistan government, it was too late. The British commission their officers at age 19. His father wrote him, "If you want to pursue a military career, the only real military organization left in the world is the United States Marine Corps. Munir was not happy in the world of business. His brother Taimur recalls, "He's always wanted to be a soldier, I guess because of dad." Taimur recalls a

time when the family was at Panchgani. He and his brother played "Cowboys and Indians" while his grandmother's friend, Gandhi, sat quietly on the veranda in white robes with legs crossed.

One might reasonably speculate that the effects of war, political turmoil in his homeland, the family saga, life in England, France, Canada, and America — all conspired to create a sense of "rootlessness" and questions of identity. Who am I? Mongol? Indian? Pakistani? British? American? His brother notes that at times he'd style himself an English country gentleman and dress in jodhpurs and wear a cravat, much to the dismay of his American friends. Munir visited "uncle" Felix de Weldon asking for help to get into the U.S. Marine Corps. Felix took him directly to the Commandant, and he was accepted. Despite all his education and his overwhelmingly prestigious family background, he enlisted 10 Feb 1957 at the Recruiting Station, Washington, D.C., kissed his mother goodbye saying, "Don't fret, mama, I shall make you proud of me," and shipped off to Marine Corps Boot Camp at Parris Island, SC, as a private.

During his first enlistment (10 Feb 56-09 Nov 58), Munir made Sergeant in two years and was awarded a Meritorious Mast for superior performance as a Legal Clerk at Marine Barracks, Brooklyn, NY. Discharged to re-enlist, he re-enlisted on Marine Corps Birthday 1958, and served in the Marine guard detachment aboard the USS INDEPENDENCE. His father, Osman Baig, now Secretary General of the Central Treaty Organization requested Munir be flown off the INDEPENDENCE to be his aide for a week. During this time, he became a naturalized US citizen and was awarded the Coronation Ribbon by the Queen of England (but not permitted to wear it on his Marine Corps uniform) and a Good Conduct Medal.

On 27 May 1960, he was discharged to accept a commission as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. Prior to reporting for training, he married Diane, daughter of Count Nicholas de Rocheford, on 4 June 1960 in St. Matthew's Cathedral, Washington, D.C., surrounded by his Marine buddies. He reported for 26 weeks of training at TBS (The Basic School) where two of his fellow candidates, Gene Hitchcock and Charlie Kappelman (both later served in various intelligence duties in the Marine Corps) first started calling him "Harry" as they hauled him up and down the trails to get him through OCS.

Harry's initial military assignment was artillery. Following training at the Army Artillery and Missile School at Ft. Sill, OK in 1962, he was assigned to 2d 155mm Gun Battery (Self-Propelled) and volunteered for operations off Cuba. Following this experience, he attended Intelligence Research Officer Course, Ft. Holabird, MD and was assigned to 3d Counter-Intelligence Team (CIT), 3d Marine Division, where he became Team Leader for ten months and served outside CONUS (12 Sep 63-4 Nov 64). He was awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal on 11 Feb 1964 for operations with 9th MEB (Marine Expeditionary Brigade) in Vietnam (6 Aug 64-8 Oct 64). During this time, Harry and a jeep driver drove all the way from Chu Lai, through the Hai Van Pass, to the DMZ, with Harry making copious and detailed notes of his observations.

Harry was promoted to Captain (1 April 1965) and participated in Operation HASTINGS (in Vietnam along the DMZ) in July 1966. After completion of AWS, he was assigned to 1st 155 Gun Battery (SP), 3d Marine Division as Executive Officer and as Commanding Officer (5 months). He again departed CONUS 20 April 1967, returning 12 May 1968. During this time, he participated in Operations CUMBERLAND, RUSH, and LIBERTY and subsequently served from 17 September 1967 in G-2, in 3d Marine Division.

During this time, he urged Bob Coolidge to arrange a meeting with the CG, 3d Marine Division, Brigadier General Metzger. Drawing on Marine Corps history, he proposed a mobile guerrilla force composed of NCOs that would live off the land as it roved up and down the Ho Chi Minh Trail destroying re-supply convoys of NVA. Standing aplomb with the large, curved, wide blade of an Indian kukri knife at his side, and stomping his boots like a British officer, he presented the briefing in meticulous detail. After he departed, the General looked to Bob Coolidge and remarked, "Is he for real?"

While serving at Division, his focus was not at all speculative; he was patently practical, and later wrote: "I was the Division G-2 clandestine, intelligence coordinator for military intelligence agencies in the Division TAOR. The 15th Marine Counterintelligence Team and U.S. Army intelligence units had established collection nets far across the Ben Hai

River. These nets had penetrated several NVA headquarters and other organizations. One of the tasks of the nets was to report the movements of the 4th Battalion, Van An Rocket Artillery Regiment, and of the Vinh Linh Rocket Battery together with those of their escorting infantry. These units had caused much damage to the Dong Ha and Cua Viet bases earlier during the summer and autumn of 1967. Close surveillance (by a process too complicated to explain herein) and rapid counter fires by artillery and naval gunfire had subsequently prevented them from reaching their firing positions during the late fall and early winter of that year."

The significance of this for Khe Sanh soon became evident. Harry writes: "On the night of 19/20 January 1968, the rocket units moved south once more. Reported and traced along their route by the agents of the 15th Counterintelligence Team, the batteries and their escort were caught and trapped against a bend in the Cua Viet River. Prisoners taken reported that their mission was to rocket the airstrips at Dong Ha and Quang Tri on the early morning of the 21st to prevent helicopters from flying in support of Hills 881S and 861. This part of the enemy's plan failed." On the 23d of January 1968, Harry reported to Khe Sanh as Target Intelligence Officer (TIO), part of a 3d Marine Division G-2 augmentation team that also included Major Jerry Hudson (who had reported earlier to replace Harper Bohr as S-2) and Major Robert E. Coolidge (Special Intelligence Officer). The 26th Marine Regiment staff at the start of the Siege battle was at half strength. Being a unit of 9th MAB, not III MAF, half of its staff was on Okinawa. For example, Colonel Lownds never had a Sergeant Major.

The ring Harry wore bore the incused family crest: two crossed swords at the entrance to the Bijapur Fort. His mother recalls, "The position was hereditary in the family, and Munir assumed it was still his but for the British invasion!" Thus, with his great-grandfather fighting to keep the fort at Bijapur in mind, Harry was not about to permit besieging forces to overtake this fort! Similarities of the two situations must have been on his mind, for he reportedly spoke to Marines at Khe Sanh about "his" fort in India, how he someday would return and reclaim it! His father, Osman Baig, was a firm believer in being able to talk to spirits of ancestors, and one can only speculate whether Harry may have attended such meditation.

Many recall Harry's arrival, bedecked in unconventional gear. When he first arrived in Vietnam he wore the M-1941 pack and belt harness but was unsatisfied with it. Lt. Bill Smith, an artillery officer of 1/13 who later worked closely with Harry recalls, "The guy had a Boy Scouts back pack and I kept wondering to myself, what am I going to do?" Bob Coolidge explains that Harry bought his pack from Sears, perhaps motivated by his earlier connection with his uncle Selim and his employment there.

Mark Swearengen, the Army Liaison Officer for 175mm batteries at Camp Carroll and the Rockpile, had arrived at Khe Sanh on 18 January. His immediate reaction was one of dismay. He felt a deep concern at what he perceived to be a lack of enthusiasm and recognition for the magnitude of the threat at Khe Sanh. "Then Harry shows up. Captain Steen brought him in. I was at the entrance of the command bunker and thought, 'This guy is different!' He had this British accent and had a kukri knife at his side and spoke as though he were there to single-handedly save Khe Sanh. I thought, 'Is this guy crazy?' And then I realized that this is exactly the enthusiasm that we need right now! It didn't take long to realize he was one heck of a team player, not really out to accomplish everything by himself. He'd ask the advice and opinions of others."

He soon became well known for his humor. Harry had a prodigious appetite, and when low on food at Khe Sanh, ate things nobody else sought, such as "sausage patties with grease." "We were getting shelled, rocketed, and one of the radio operators said, 'Captain Baig, I thought Moslems couldn't eat pork,'" recalls Bob Coolidge.

"Well, when we kill the infidel, Allah will give us dispensations," he replied as everyone laughed.

Another radio operator observing the banter remarked, "I don't know what we're laughing about. To Captain Baig we're all infidels!" He frequently referred to someone as, for example, "Wayne Mason, you Christian pig!" or the NVA as "infidels!" Jerry Hudson, S-2 of Regiment, paints a typical scene. "Some of us would tease him from time to time. 'How come you're eating pork and beans?' He'd reply, 'I have to kill some infidels!' Someone would say, 'Give him another can of pork!'"

Mark A. Swearengen, the Army Liaison Officer for 175s in the Khe Sanh command bunker during the

Siege, recalls Harry: "If you ever met him and had any discussion with him, you'd never forget him. He was, he could be very enthusiastic about unfortunate situations! He'd talk about being surrounded by thousands of enemy troops, and he'd just bubble with enthusiasm! It would scare the daylights out of most people, but he was enthused about it!" 1Lt. Douglas Meredith, who replaced Capt. Mark Swearengen as the 175 LNO in late February 1968, spoke of Harry as "a superb person, just a tremendously intelligent officer. Anybody would give anything to be with him."

Harry was "bubbly." Navy Lt. (jg) Bernard D. Cole, the Naval Gunfire Liaison Officer in the regimental bunker recalls, "New ideas, jokes, gibes, prognostications, criticisms/praise of the C-ration meal he had just opened ('Aha! I have biscuits!' the British term for cookies), interplay with others in the bunker, both enlisted and officer — he seemed always to be in motion physically and active mentally."

Harry was also intolerant of incompetence. The regimental S-2, Jerry Hudson, recalls: "Harry was very, very professional, very intense. Somebody around him who was anything less than that, he'd drive them nuts. He'd jump up and down like an old 'stick-in-the-face,' and yell, 'Incompetence! I cannot stand incompetence!' That's the way he was. He had very, very high standards for himself, and he expected all those that worked with him to be the same." Lt. Cole recalls that Harry "always spoke his mind, no matter what the rank of the person he was addressing. I saw/heard him, more than once, screaming at some senior officer in Saigon (on the phone) when there was a difference of opinion about targeting B-52 strikes." Yet, he never became a victim of anger; he was always in control of himself.

When Harry Baig arrived at Khe Sanh, the Siege battle was two days old. The combat base was a shambles, and the sudden appearance of several tens of thousands of encircling North Vietnamese Army troops who had slipped in from nearby Laos was self-evident in screeches of rockets and whomps of mortars and in the numbed, shock-state reflected in faces with the "thousand-yard stare" and in the "Khe Sanh shuffle" of all there.

Harry had arrived to assist the newly arrived S-2 of 26th Marine Regiment, Jerry Hudson, personally requested by Colonel Lownds upon the normal rotation of the S-2, Capt. Harper L. Bohr, Jr. (who became XO of 3d Recon Bn). When Jerry had graduated from boot camp, the officer he reported to for his first duty was Captain David E. Lownds, recently reactivated from the Marine Corps Reserve.

Originally, Khe Sanh had a mission as a launch site for SOG teams, TIGERHOUND Bird Dog aircraft, CIA-sponsored agents, deep penetration by individuals of the JTAD, and a host of various other activities to collect information, primarily on traffic on the Ho Chi Minh Trail or infiltration into South Vietnam. By now, Khe Sanh had developed into a playground for these units and individuals, all reporting their findings to distant headquarters, while the base itself was in peril and uninformed except for digested, analyzed, and old intelligence from those distant headquarters.

In addition to close-in reconnaissance by patrols from local infantry companies and teams from Company "B," 3d Recon BN, as well as from CAC OSCAR, there were, starting in October 1967, alarming reports from "people-sniffer" helicopters making hundreds of detections close to the base in "uninhabited" jungle! Colonel Lownds had thoroughly familiarized himself with the local terrain by walking it many times alone. There were reports from CIA operatives like the wiry, young Bob Handy, a civilian who suddenly and mysteriously appeared next to Ed Crawford, acting Platoon Commander of G/2/3, as it moved to assault positions during the 1967 Hill Fights at Khe Sanh. There were agent reports from the JTAD at Khe Sanh, the CI Team, the National Police agent net, reports from the Special Forces at Lang Vei, and from the Special Projects team led by George Quamo, who led a large patrol to the Co Roc area in mid-January 1968.

Reports from Signals Intelligence, intercepts of NVA radio transmissions and analysis of who reported to whom and how often in order to determine chain of command and location of headquarters, proved especially useful. By 1 Jan 1968, EC-47 aircraft were consistently flying more than 900 sorties a month. EC-47s of 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing that covered Khe Sanh flew unmolested due to their "cover" of similarity to AC-47 SPOOKY gunship, dropping psychological warfare leaflets when available. So significant was the contribution by EC-47's ARDF that 90% of all B-52 strikes at Khe Sanh during the siege battle were targeted through ARDF data. Brigadier General George J. Keegan noted,

"The Air Force thoroughly reconnoitered I Corps using special sensors plus ARDF."

As the Siege opened, Major George Quamo at the Top Secret FOB-3 camp appended to KSCB, personally ensured a LIMA was strung from the bowels of his deep bunker to the "2" shop of the 26th Marines bunker. Thus, Quamo could ensure that intercepted NVA radio transmissions, translated by a Vietnamese in his bunker, could be shared in "real time." In addition, a plethora of information from a wide variety of sources poured into the "2" shop. These included photo recon missions, including GIANT DRAGON (U-2 aircraft) reports from NPIC. There were RED HAZE reports, SLAR, reports from Bru Montagnards, and the newly developed and seeded electronic sensors, diverted from being seeded in Laos.

Soon information was received as fast as the numbers of encircling NVA soldiers were swelling. Jerry Hudson's arrival was a matter of total immersion. He was thrown into the midst of the tumultuous prelude of the ominous first act now unfolding. "They sent me up there to try to get in the middle [of all these intelligence activities] and direct traffic," recalls Hudson. "At Khe Sanh, there was a whole collection of intelligence agencies gathering information under a lot of authorities, and information was all going back to Saigon and other places, and it wasn't being circulated at Khe Sanh, and we wanted to see if we could get a better handle on the situation."

According to Capt, Jerry Hudson, S-2 of 26th Marines, the abbreviated regimental staff at Khe Sanh was suddenly supported by "...what, at that time, was probably the biggest intelligence operation as part of a regimental operation that I was aware of, and I was pretty much attuned to what was going on. We were mighty close to receiving more information than we could assimilate. It was about that time that Harry Baig and Bob Coolidge arrived, and we began to put some direction and order to this mass of information and tried to keep Colonel Lownds advised so he could make timely decisions and prioritize his decision-making process."

Harry Baig established a section that is not normal to an infantry regiment. Colonel Lownds, in his FMFPAC Debrief, commented that a regiment does not have assets for Target Intelligence, but "General Tompkins automatically started funneling people in to me, and I built a TIO section — Target Information Section. They were needed. I couldn't have done the job properly with the people I had unless I had this TIO section."

Soon both Jerry Hudson and Harry Baig were feverishly collating and evaluating thousands of bits of information on a daily, and nightly, basis. The Naval Gunfire Liaison Officer who worked with him, Lt.(jg) Bernard D. Cole, recalls that Harry "worked tirelessly, nominally a 12-hour watch, but in reality he was there at least 18 hours a day." Cole, who styled himself "Commander, Naval Forces, Khe Sanh" was, in Harry's description, "the naval gunfire officer, without ships," and "an excellent Assistant TIO."

The Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC), located adjacent the S-3 shop in the 26th Marines COC (Command Operations Center) bunker, assembled some unusually remarkable men — few in numbers, but with a creative ability to devise entirely new and effective tactics. In addition to Commanding Officer of 1/13 Lt. Col. John A. Hennelly, Captain Baig and Lt.(jg) Cole of the U.S. Navy, there was: the 24-year-old artilleryman Capt. Kent Steen; Marine aviator, Capt. Richard Donaghy; and U.S. Army Liaison Officer for the 175mm guns, Capt. Mark Swearengen, then 1/Lt. Douglas Meredith. Such a staff, composed of intelligence, infantry, artillery, and air, and from three different military services — while providing a variety of differing perspectives — could easily have fragmented. Yet, Colonel Hennelly's calm, yet firm manner developed them into a harmonious team in which he encouraged free venting of new ideas. Capt. Meredith recalls: "We tried anything. No one ever laughed at a dumb idea. Everything was considered and all were treated with respect. I recall one day asking the aviator why napalm was never dropped at night. It was brainstorming at its best."

Kent Steen recalls this particular discussion and decision: "Napalm, by rule, is only dropped at low level and during daylight. The casings are flimsy and with almost unpredictable aerodynamics. During one of our brainstorms, we determined that the NVA script did not call for napalm to rain on them at night and in the fog and from an altitude. We then set about creating a scheme for doing it. We determined that if we brought the aircraft in at much lower altitudes, say 3500 or 5000 feet, we could get the canisters to hold together and make a reasonably

predictable trajectory... The hard part was goading our aviator counterparts into trying it. They ultimately did — and with spectacular effect. Through radio intercepts, we found that we had great success."

Harry Baig, being especially adept at target acquisition information for artillery fires, picked up on the avalanche of target information and meticulously recorded them on 5 x 8 cards, one card for each 1,000 meter grid square. Harry's job was to organize targets, prepare them for destruction, and evaluate results. These included automatic weapons positions, mortar positions, anti-aircraft weapon positions, artillery, bunkers, fortified areas and trenches, logistic dumps (by type), camp and assembly areas, truck and track vehicle parks, rocket sites, and launch areas. In a letter to the Historical Division, HQMC, Baig reported: "There were over 3,000 separate targets within a 15 kilometer radius of Khe Sanh." Hudson notes that "Harry had a head like a computer."

Pfc. Michael Archer, a 19-year-old Marine who spent the Siege in the COC bunker of 26th Marines as a night shift radio operator on the Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) radio net in the FSCC (Fire Support Coordination Center), recalled the arrival of Harry Baig, and it didn't take long for him to develop deep admiration for this remarkable Marine. "The first time I saw Captain Baig was outside the COC on his first day at Khe Sanh [23 Jan 68]. A recoilless rifle round had whizzed in and exploded, leaving a small crater. I watched as Baig strolled out and took a tape measure out of his pocket. He measured the length, width and depth of the little hole. He walked around the immediate area until he found a thumb-size piece of shrapnel, still so hot he had to bounce it in his palm in order to hold it. He examined the little piece of metal for a moment and then went back into the COC. There he looked at his map for a few minutes and then ordered an artillery mission onto a particular coordinate south of the base where he reckoned the gun was. I was amused at the time by this odd little man, and thought he was quite eccentric. After I saw the results of his later work, I have no doubt that he knocked out a NVA recoilless rifle team that day."

Just four days after Baig's arrival, he identified a NVA artillery headquarters between Khe Sanh village and the base. The air strike he ordered resulted in over 30 secondary explosions. "Two weeks later, Baig, while reviewing an aerial reconnaissance photograph, thought he recognized truck tire tracks converging on a certain location just south-east of Hill 471. I was looking over his shoulder at the photo and couldn't see anything. But I had, by now, become a believer in Baig's power of 'intuition.' As the bomber approached the target that night, I went outside to watch. It was less than two miles away. The little hill erupted in secondary explosions and burned and exploded for the rest of the night. Harry had found a major enemy ammunition dump in less than three weeks. It had probably taken the NVA years to stock it.

"I believe it was these early, crippling strikes against the enemy supply and command centers that disrupted the NVA plan for a major assault on the base. I think they would have had greater success had they attacked before February. Captain Baig's 'guesses' saved hundreds, maybe thousands of Marine lives."

Harry's area of the command bunker remarkably was known for generating calmness in visitors. Chaplain Walt Driscoll, the Roman Catholic chaplain on the base at Khe Sanh during the Siege, once remarked how reassured and calm he felt following a visit to Harry's area of the command bunker. "Everything seemed so rational, so under control, despite all the turmoil and chaos." Upon visiting him, Father Driscoll rendered him "a crashing British salute." Harry had become impressed with Navy chaplains serving Marine Corps units. His brother recalls, "My brother frequently talked about the amazing bravery of chaplains on the battlefield."

So impressed was Harry by Chaplain Driscoll's bravery as he moved about the base to minister to the men that Harry's mother later wrote: "He became a Roman Catholic only 5 months before he died. This was because in the heat of battle, he watched the R.C. priest join in to succor the wounded and give Last Rites. The priest became a real friend."

1Lt. Douglas Meredith recalls Baig, normally working there all by himself or with his assistant SSgt. Bolsey planning fires. Meredith frequently came "to work at the COC early just to listen to his analysis of the daily activity and the plans for the night as he rifled through his target cards. There was entirely too much work to be done. Under other circumstances, I would have listened to him for hours."

Meredith also recalls, "Quite often we'd jump up on the bunker at night and watch some of our fires that we'd planned for the night and see the secondary explosions. Kent Steen recalls Harry's bravery. "One night after arranging one of our artillery raids, Harry had run to the top of the bunker to witness our handiwork. A 'short' 4.2-inch mortar from our own battery flopped in between his legs. It had gone far enough to be armed but miraculously did not explode. I asked him if he had been frightened. He answered, 'No, it is not my time.'"

Perhaps, it was this self-confident elan and lack of fear that inspired confidence to those near him. "Harry was fearless," writes Bernie Cole. Captain Baig went to Khe Sanh with four assumptions: (1) that the enemy would follow a master plan which had been promulgated from a headquarters, not on the field; (2) that the PAVN commander in the field at Khe Sanh could not and would not alter the battle plan to any significant degree, even if new conditions arose; (3) that the modus operandi was predictable and the general concept determinable once the opening moves were known; and (4) "that the plan encompassed classic siege tactics as practiced and studied by General Giap during and after the siege of Dien Bien Phu and as modified by experience gained at Con Thien in September 1967."

Encircling enemy troops unrelentingly persisted in rebuilding and advancing their trench and sap network approach to KSCB despite continuous, close-in air strikes of HE (High Explosive) and napalm, artillery — even close-in B-52 strikes. Baig noted that three or four days later the whole area would be swarming again with NVA soldiers digging their Juggernaut: "The ant-like mentality of the enemy apparently made them continue rebuilding. What we were concerned with primarily was an enemy rush on the wire. We never thought the enemy would fight in quite the inept way he did. We really thought we could expect mass, human-sea attacks." For those who had the most data, who continuously poured over the various reports, the situation at Khe Sanh was indeed ominous. Kent Steen later noted, "We were all very concerned. The NVA made some big mistakes. They underestimated us. I don't think people realize just how close it was."

George Allen, the CIA's Deputy SAVA, was well conversant with the parallels with Dien Bien Phu, having been the U.S. Army's principal analyst during that battle. "I was able to make a connection between what happened at Dien Bien Phu and what happened at Khe Sanh and to understand the difference. That's one of the things that leads to my judgment about Khe Sanh having been 'the real thing.'" Was the situation really so tenuous, so desperate in fact as well as in perception, by those on the ground and in the news media? Was it necessary for President Johnson to require each of the Joint Chiefs to pledge in writing that Khe Sanh would not fall?

In the decades following the Siege battle at Khe Sanh, some historians have questioned the reality of the size of the enemy threat at Khe Sanh. They dismiss any parallel to Dien Bien Phu as mere sensationalism. Those of us who were there know better. It may well be that any comparison with Dien Bien Phu (DBP) is faulty for not considering our logistic capability and commitment, as well as our tactical, aerial, and intelligence support. That, however, does not dismiss the unrelenting pursuit of a tactical reenactment of DPB on the Khe Sanh Battlefield by the PAVN! This was made evident in assaults on outposts (Khe Sanh Village and 861 on 21 Jan, 861A on 4-5 Feb, LangVei on 7 Feb, Hill 64 on 8 Feb) and from the construction of trenches, bunker complexes, parallels, saps and connectors and other "siege works" despite savage napalm and very close-in TPQ-10 and B-52 strikes.

Harry's effectiveness, both from his superior intellectual ability and education as well as his obvious possession of an intuitive "sixth sense," were not always beyond criticism. Did he go too far? Michael Archer, sitting at his radio in the regimental bunker, recalls an emotional encounter. "On February 27, as the enemy massed their troops and tanks to make the last big attempt to take the base, Baig erased the grease pencil circle on his map with a small piece of cheesecloth and ordered a B-52 strike on [Khe Sanh] Village. The area was completely obliterated. I was sitting right there when the Colonel stormed into the FSCC room that evening. I had never seen him so angry. He shouted, 'Harry, I understand that you just bombed the ville!' Baig courteously replied, 'Yes, Sir.' Lownds reminded him that he had strictly forbidden it. Baig calmly explained the necessity of having to do it — tanks, assault troops [a regimental assault force was massing], and anti-aircraft guns. I will never forget the look on the Colonel's face. It was part anger at the insubordination and part resigna-

tion to the fact that it was done, and there was nothing he could do about it now. He looked at Baig for several moments and then said, quite seriously, 'Harry, I wouldn't want to be you when the war crime trials start.' The Colonel turned and left the room. The whole episode again made me suspect that Captain Baig was accountable to a superior officer higher up the chain of command than Colonel Lownds, and I think Lownds knew it, too."

As significant as the new gadgets of war were — sensors, new SIGINT devices and procedures — far greater was the mental grasp and creative response of Harry Baig. As the ancient Biblical writer of Ecclesiastes noted: "Wisdom [in the sense of practical knowledge] is more useful than weapons of war." What Harry "saw" was not so much individual targets but the fluid process; for the NVA were intensely mobile, occupying a mortar or anti-aircraft or headquarters position for a short time, moving from one to another, and perhaps reoccupying the original position. The focus became not on where the enemy is but where they are moving through and to, where they could be projected to be, where their supporting reserve forces or retreat routes might be, given terrain conditions and extensive knowledge of NVA tactics. It involved thinking like a NVA, a feat at which Harry was particularly adept — with deadly consequence for them and saving consequence for all the American defenders! The NVA the battlefield was dynamic, not static.

Interpretation and evaluation of the information together with familiarization and grasp of NVA tactics and analysis of terrain features enabled Harry to discern the dynamic battlefield and target it appropriately. The "total picture" or pattern that emerged involved locations of reserve forces, supply dumps, routes of reinforcement or withdrawal: these were targets as significant as detection of actual units or vehicles. An example to illustrate this may be seen in the NVA "siege works" of trenches to the southeast of the combat base, well known to all. "We knew full well the NVA were seeking to snuggle up to the Khe Sanh base within the 3-kilometer sanctuary that they thought they had from B-52 strikes," he said. Harry's interpretation of the sensor data proved especially significant to the defenders of Khe Sanh on Hill 861-A (Co E/2/26) the night of 4/5 February.

The NVA plan on 21 January, as revealed by Lt. La Than Tonc, indicated attacks on Hills 861 and 881S prior to the main assault on the combat base. During the nights of 3/4 and 4/5 February, sensors reported considerable heavy movement from the northwest of Hill 881S on a ridge to the west and southwest of the hill. The "Z" shaped ridge approaches the hill to a point about 3000 meters away and then runs south for some 4000 meters and then abruptly turns east, ending about 3000 meters due south of the hill. "During that phase of the siege, the S2 and FSCC personnel knew little of sensor accuracy and reliability, and I knew even less. And so, I embraced the theory that it would be folly to become erudite in one's ignorance. Therefore, believe that which the sensors purport to say. Thus, from the evidence of that night, I concluded that at least two battalions of infantry had reached a point 3000 meters to the northwest of Hill 881S; and that they had come from the direction of the known location of the 325C Division."

The total count of enemy troops reported by the sensors was estimated to be between 1,500 and 2,000 men. At first, Harry evaluated them to be resupply convoys and the FSCC reacted by attacking each sensor target as it appeared. However, the second night Harry's thinking veered to envision an enemy regiment and a possible attack against Hill 881S. Majors Coolidge and Hudson concurred that an attack in the thick mist was imminent. Harry knew that NVA tactical doctrine called for an attacking force to move to its assault position in echelons, make a last minute reconnaissance, and to attack in waves. If this were a regiment, then the force would be dispersed in regimental column, battalions on line (one behind the other). A target box of 1,000 x 300 meters square was drawn to the south of Hill 881S around a point where a large force, moving at two kilometers an hour (the NVA rate of march in darkness and mist), would have reached in the time interval since the activation of the last sensor. At each end of this block, a gently curving 1,000 meter line was drawn, extending towards and about the southwestern and southeastern slopes of Hill 881S. "For about 30 minutes, commencing at approximately 0300, 5 February, the five batteries within KSCB of 1/13 and the 4 batteries of 175mm guns poured continuous fire into various places of the block and along the two circumscribing lines at each end." At the end of the Siege, Harry briefed the staff at the ISC in NKP where Lt. Col. Peese, USAF, told Harry that the

acoustic sensors in the area to the south and southwest of Hill 881S had recorded the voices of hundreds of men running in panic through the darkness and heavy fog in a southerly direction. Defenders on Hill 881-S were oblivious to the nightmare and loss of life they were spared by Harry.

Hill 881S was spared a regimental-sized assault by NVA infantry that night. Unfortunately, two NVA battalions managed to creep to the northeast of Hill 861-A. There were no sensors near Hills 861 and 861-A, yet Harry readily took responsibility for his error in not recalling the NVA battle plan for simultaneous assaults on 881S and 861. "When the latter was attacked two hours later, I, the Target Officer and alleged expert on NVA doctrine, was caught flat-footed," he wrote.

In another letter, he wrote: "Once more, Marine NCOs and other ranks made up for the mistakes of the alleged brains of and on the staff, as they have done throughout our history." As it was, one battalion managed to close on 861-A. The second battalion "met a revolting fate. Attended to by one hour of shelling and air strikes which landed on all the possible assemble/reserve areas at the base of the hill."

That didn't infer that Harry did nothing! His immediate response effectively annihilated the second battalion from also attacking E/2/26 on Hill 861-A. Artillery and air support for Hill 861-A involved three simultaneous phases. 1/13 loosed protective fires on the slopes of the hill with three batteries, while a fourth battery concentrated on the area where the enemy movement was the thickest and then rolled down the slope to prevent the enemy from retiring or being reinforced. Secondly, Mark Swearengen, the 175mm Liaison Officer, went to Colonel Hennelly, Kent Steen, and Harry Baig and said, "Let me give you a 'wall of steel,'" and proceeded to direct his four batteries of 175s at Camp Carroll and the Rockpile to fire the "wall of steel" which embraced the base of the hill from the northeast. The objective was to saturate the area where the enemy reserve battalion was estimated to be. The "wall of steel" was moved slowly up the slopes until it reached a point 200 meters from the wire. "Within this space the battery from KSCB rolled to and fro, covering the area from where the attackers had come and into which Captain Breeding was energetically heaving them." Remaining batteries continued their protective missions, adjusted according to the defender's desires. The third phase of air strikes from the rapidly assembling aircraft involved TPQ-10 directed air strikes in the form of 200- and 300-meter ripples dropped outboard of and parallel to the "wall of steel" to avoid check fires. "Bombs fell on known mortar clusters, possible assembly areas, and throughout the area to the far rear of the assault battalion. Enemy doctrine frequently positions the reserve battalion directly behind the assault unit. At all costs, the FSCC was determined to prevent their juncture. The reserve battalion never materialized."

Harry was primarily an artilleryman and his contributions to this aspect of the defense of Khe Sanh were significant. Harry wrote: "The artillery initiative was ours, and we held it throughout the siege, despite the worst croaking of sundry, inexperienced correspondents. Our motto was 'Be generous.' Had the NVA been capable of our artillery techniques, they could and would have blown us out of Khe Sanh. The siege clearly established not only the bankruptcy of the NVA master plan, but also the ineptitude of their vaunted artillery. The press never saw this clearly." Thus, more and more targets became apparent to Baig as the siege progressed. The NVA's rigid adherence to its doctrine and plan made it possible to determine remaining and undiscovered portions of a complex once part of it was located.

"Consequently," notes Baig, "we had far more known and confirmed targets than we could possibly use. Eventually, we began to attack them *en masse* instead of individually... Mortar and artillery positions, of which the former were not worth counting and the latter exceeded 160 separate sites, were bombed and shelled nightly in patterns of fire corresponding to NVA doctrinal position area engineering to destroy the unseen battery ammunition dumps."

An average night's pre-planned artillery fire might include 4-6 TOTs from 9 batteries, 4-6 Army and 10-15 Marine separate battalion TOTs, 40-50 battery multiple volley individual missions, 20-30 battery H&Is. Sensors accounted for at least 20 battery missions a night. Frequently, TOTs were fired into a recent Arc light area 10-15 minutes after the bombers had passed. A further issue of Arc lights were executed on most nights to catch the survivors.

Harry Baig's application of artillery tactics mostly suggested and devised by the creative men of the Khe Sanh FSCC defeated the enemy. According to the Regimental S-3, Lt. Col. Edward J. A. Castagna, they

"turned the tide by hammering these people prior to their jump-off points. Several times we knew, or we figured we knew that these people were in assembly areas and actually were preparing for the attack. This was given to us through these sensor devices."

Young artillery officers such as Lt. William Smith stood in awe of Harry Baig. "I learned a lot from him about sitting down, and while everybody's racing around with a remarkable grasp of the obvious, you should be sitting down and looking back and trying to figure out what's really happening here, what would I be doing if I were over there? He taught me an awful lot. As a graduate of Ft. Sill, I had learned some of it in a theoretical sense, but I had never been able to use it on such a grand scale. Later, when I went to Camp Pendleton and ran operations with reserve units in the summer time as a regular, we never went anywhere without a Harry-type fire plan." Smith recalls, "Harry Baig used to call himself the composer and I said, 'Well, then, I'm the maestro!' I'd go to Harry and say, 'Could you write in a little bass? How about some 175s?'"

For his contributions during the Khe Sanh siege battle, Harry Baig was awarded a Legion of Merit, an unusual award for a junior officer to receive. The Citation reads in part: "Captain Baig exhibited exceptional professionalism and imagination in planning a highly effective defense fire plan for the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Displaying keen analytic and organizational ability, he skillfully compared all such data received with other current intelligence information, compiling an overall estimate of the enemy's disposition that, when utilized for target designation, yielded a most effective tool for the assignment of targets for supporting arms."

* * *

Following a 24-day leave to the United States, Harry returned on 15 June 1968. His next duty assignment was US Military Advisory Command Thailand, although his official record of service indicates he was assigned to the U.S. State Department for this duty. His mother recalls his happiness. He was finally able to be with his wife and daughter, and he wrote, "At last, I can have my family with me in lovely Bangkok, and my office is next to the Prime Minister."

"Officially, he was training an Intelligence Corps for the Thai Army but as he spoke French, he could slip into Laos in camouflage on secret trips," notes his mother.

His friend, Robert E. Coolidge recalls, "He was specifically recruited for that job, to do that [assignment] in Laos." During this time, he was promoted to Major (on 01 Dec 1968), and for his work he was awarded a second Legion of Merit, which noted: "His contributions...were of extraordinary benefit to the Royal Thai Government and to the overall furtherance of United States intelligence efforts in Thailand. These contributions were in fact of such a nature as to prompt the Prime Minister of Thailand to officially request Major Baig's normal tour of duty extended."

On his birthday, 13 January 1971, his mother had a nightmare of his tragic death exactly as it was to happen. The 39-year-old Harry, his 30-year-old wife Diane and his 10-year-old daughter Cecile were apparently asleep in their rooms on the fourth floor of the Imperial Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, on 20 April 1971 when a fire broke out from an overheared grill unnoticed by a dozing cook, which in turn ignited grease and bottled cooking gas. Flames quickly entered the ventilation/air conditioning system. Mysteriously, the fire escape doors at each end of the corridor had been bolted shut *from the outside,* and speculation soon arose that this had been an assassination. Harry's mother notes: "When Munir's death was announced, some thought he must have been assassinated because of his work in Laos."

He, his wife, and daughter were all buried in a single grave in Arlington National Cemetery not far from President Kennedy's grave on Tuesday morning, 4 May 1971, following a service at Ft. Myer Chapel. To the amazement of his father, mother, and brother, several Generals (including Generals Cushman and Tompkins) were present. During a luncheon in the officers' mess, the family first heard of Harry's Laotian exploits. His father remembered, "The information slipped out at a luncheon in the military club given us by a Marine Major who mentioned what an authentic Laotian Munir looked once made-up and dressed in special clothes with his French accent. On asking what for, he answered those were special missions permitted by the President through Kissinger. As a life-long diplomat, I shut up! At that luncheon, I was also told that Munir was due to return to work with General Tompkins, who wept on receiving the news of his death." The family was invited to eat at the Commandant's residence at 8th & I during which

General Chapman said, "Mrs. Baig, you have lost a son, but we have lost a special Marine." Kent Steen writes, "With the perspective of age, I realize the Marine Corps attracts strongly put together people, but Harry was clearly of another genius... I was more aware than most how near [i.e., tenuous] a thing our survival was...he couldn't get enough credit. The rest of us were probably interchangeable — Harry was one of a kind."

Harry's early death and highly classified work while at Khe Sanh has undoubtedly relegated him to an undeserved obscurity among veterans of the Khe Sanh Siege. As is apparent, however, many of us who survived that battle, perhaps all of us, owe our lives to this man. His great-grandfather may not have been able to save the fort at Bijapur, but Harry ensured that our fort at Khe Sanh would not fall. All of us who are Khe Sanh veterans owe this "prince from the Far East" our deepest gratitude!

One of those obscure and forgotten Marines, to whom all who survived Khe Sanh owe their very lives, was a Mongol prince re-clothed in the uniform of a U.S. Marine Captain — Mirza Munir Baig, known to everyone who knew him as "Harry."

PUBLISHERS NOTE: The story of Harry Haig, written by Ray W. Stubbe, was slightly edited due to space constraints in this issue. If any member wishes the entire unedited version, they may contact Ray or I.

One other note. I was directly involved in the battle on Hill 861A on Feb 05 1968. I can attest that the constant and accurate artillery fire directed by Harry Baig saved us from being overrun that night. And I will, at this time, for the men of E Co, 2/26, say "Thanks Harry," may God be with you.



Harry Baig with his wife Diane and parents, Osman and Juliette Baig

Remembering a Friend

by James "Jimbo" Wodecki

Corporal Jay Books and I were born in Pennsylvania. He and I graduated from high school in June of 1964. We both were in the FFA and joined the Marine Corps together. He went to Vietnam the same month I went in — February 66. He was stationed with Supply Company FLSG-A, FLC; I was with H&S Company FLSG-A, FLC. We both were transferred to DPP#10 in June of 1966 at Da Nang Airbase. We became friends and enjoyed talking about home and our girlfriends. His was named Diane; I forgot the name of mine. I remembered his girlfriend's name because she and Jay were going to get married when he returned to the States. Both of our fathers were carpenters, and we both worked for them. The similarities were uncanny.

We put our names in for the CAC unit they were forming when we moved our base to a place called Red Beach, located just north of Da Nang. However, he felt that serving with a logistics unit wasn't his style. Jay thought he could contribute some of his carpentry skills to assist the Vietnamese people if he could transfer to a Marine pacification team. I just wanted some action. Jay was accepted and went to a Combined Action Committee (CAC) Hotel-1 at Red Beach, becoming one of the eight original members of that unit. I volunteered to go to Khe Sanh.

Jay's CAP platoon worked long hours helping build schools and hospitals in Quang Nam province. In a letter home, Jay wrote, "We go on sweeps and patrols just like the infantry. We work with the Vietnamese people, administer medical aid, and build dwellings." In another letter to a family friend, he wrote, "I know God has a plan for each of our lives. I have a lot to live for, and there's a lot I miss and would like to do. But I try not to think of home. My mind is always on thoughts of getting wounded or killed."

Between patrols and working in the local villages, Jay was assigned to build an observation tower that dominated the skyline of the Force Logistics Command base camp at Red Beach. At approximately 0200 hours on the morning of 16 Nov 1966, the Viet Cong launched a surprise attack at Red Beach. Jay was killed in action during that attack. He was blown out of an observation tower by an exploding rocket and was thought to have died by concussion, or by the impact of the fall.

The tragic irony of his death was that his body was found at the bottom of the tower he had built. Red Beach was later renamed Camp Books in his honor. I always remember Jay on the 16th of November and say a prayer for him, as I returned but Jay didn't. Jay is buried at the Brethren in Christ Church in Cleona, Pennsylvania. The cemetery is located above the church on a hill overlooking his hometown. In the church is a stand where the guest book is placed. Over the stand is a special plaque honoring Jay's memory. Jay was straightforward, dedicated, and mature beyond his years for a nineteen-year-old. He took great pride in being a United States Marine and serving his country.

Jim Carmichael
Echo 2/26

On one of those heavily burdened but portentous mornings in early March 1968, one of the day's resupply choppers arrived with its usual gusty flap. Accompanying its approach was the chronically intense flurry of chaos; incoming enemy mortar rounds whose sudden, fracturing blasts created small, jaggedly gouged craters, men yelling excitedly, and the scent of fear hanging like a pall over the hill. Business as usual.

Mail call was subsequently sounded throughout Echo Company. We were scattered evenly around and on top of the hill known on some headquarters map as 861 Alpha. As such, it seemed to me quite a sanitary, if not indifferent, designation. For us, this place of desperation and misery was, by now, our home.

I, among others, had received one of the coveted prizes: a letter from home. Along with mom's usual well-written reminder of better places and times were several snapshots. This was a delightful treat. There was so much news to be eagerly digested from the home front. Yet as I read, it seems to me now that the words my mom penned then were cautious and well chosen. She meticulously crafted her sentences as if these incredible events at Khe Sanh, of which I was taking part, were happening at the intersection of *other time and other place*. To her apparently, it was all playing itself out grotesquely upon dissimilar life forms, surely dissimilar from her son. But for a small token of home such as this letter, I was becom-

ing daily more thankful, regardless of what was so scrupulously left unsaid.

Only years later did certain of these compositions with their pictorial contents bring into relief the actual significance of that moment in my short lived history. I'm certain my psychological maturation made me amblyopic or downright blind to more hidden realities. Survival preoccupied me cognitively so that I could not see that one set of distant occurrences in the world was pitting itself against the feverish ones happening all around me. We, parent and child, were shifting toward differing planets. This was not necessarily a first for our family relationships. There was, however, quite unlike the formative years I spent in their home, even then a veil, a curtain if you will, slipping trenchantly between our separating lives.

One of mom's attending, albeit significant, photos threw a particularly impertinent gibe at me. It was a picture of my best buddy, sitting at my place at the dinner table, eating corn on the cob in my home, grinning ear to ear, so to speak. This struck me deep in a manner and place I had not been jabbed prior to that time. I did laugh outwardly at it though. As far as he and I were concerned, hearth and home were always apportioned equally and with regularity when I was there. We were best buddies, lifelong schoolmates busy with the male bonding mode. But that was then and I was currently absent, my presence missed there. Now I was here, ten thousand miles from there and then. Ten thousand lifetimes separated us. And here, upon this captured fragment of a Kodak moment his smile glared up at me. That was not its intent, but that's what it did nonetheless. His posture did not possess calculation or the hint of a mean spirit. It was full of warmth. It was fraught with "I wish you were here so we could goof off together one more time." It was brimming with playful banter. By his aggregate appearance I could tell he was clueless. Naiveté dripped innocently from the glossy image onto the red dirt of the hill where men were hugging the womb of survival and dying daily all the same. But the misguided energy it required to take that picture and send it was misspent with equanimity for the effect it elicited.

His context and mine stood right there and right then, counter to each other. His atmosphere was soaked with the aromatic smells of home and safety. Mine hung almost fluid with the stench of sweat, sand bags and death. A thick, impenetrable curtain was curiously separating us. Some important and significant event was happening which did not reach me where it counted. Yet, all the same, the form in which the grinding, deadly, ordered routine that my life had now taken glared back into his world, questioning. His savory corn entrée stood juxtaposed to the leathery edibles to which I had become, albeit unwillingly, accustomed. I did not wish it so. I wished for any place, any time, any meal but this.

This war was more absorbed in culling us, her servile inmates, for brutish and destructive purposes than for tickling our American palates. Her meals were tedium served with heaping portions of terror. Her sauces were exhaustion, wounds and disease. Her desserts were psychosis and depletion by death. Corn on the cob and all it represented was completely out of character for this voracious avocation.

Quite unlike my best buddy back in the world, I, like you, would dine on the usual B-something unit, heated on a make-shift stove by one of those foul yet necessary heat tabs. In my bunker, this source of solid rocket fuel was noxious at best. At worst, it was notorious for fouling the air and burning my eyes so that they would tear. Food preparation required grimy hands and a gas mask. The meal itself was nefarious for its after-effects, that being heartburn. We all skulkingly dined in our bunkers. To eat outside in the open meant possible death. You remember. My best buddy did not know this. This picture proved that. The drapes were thick to my untrained senses and opaque to my inner eyes.

* * *

Permit me to press the fast forward button. It is now the month of March in the year of our Lord, 2001. My wife and I are trying to find the correct access road to the recently erected Target store looming ahead of us. This is a moving, self-absorbed section of St. Louis with which we are both unfamiliar. She is giving me her most hopeful conjecture as the designated trip navigator. An added dimension to a more full appreciation of this scenario is her chatter on her cell phone to our daughter. (She can walk and chew bubble gum at the same time.) Catherine's directions to me are expectedly uncertain but equally and unfortunately divided in their affections. Neither of us knows exactly what street to take nor the turn lane from which to take it.

In a few desperate moments my manufactured inner calm has become very confused, internally enlivened and all but debilitating. The mass of chaotically moving vehicles in specific directions toward their own agendas vexes me, because each is completely indifferent to my pathetic situation. They are all eating corn on the cob in their homes, and I am dining on C rations in my bunker. Has anything really changed? Here and now, the world is as unaware and unfeeling of my present dilemma as it was then and there of that situation. That, too, is a source of frustration. They are selfishly absorbed in their own subsistence. But what did I expect? Again, life seems at variance with itself and with me. I know the curtain is falling. After 30 plus years, I now know its color, its aromatic lure, its size and texture. It will embrace me, and I it, as it falls onerous and suffocating. I have been here many times. I am being wizened by its vulgar regularity. I feel leaden inside, weighted physically by my own angst.

I slow the car quickly, dodging traffic, moving to the first left turn lane I see. Having arrived at the turn, I discover in one maddening instant that I should have continued straight ahead. It is the next left I am to take, not the current one in which I now find us both. I am becoming unable to deal appropriately with Catherine's inability to recognize that I need her full attention, not the lesser half of it. This is becoming secretly serious. I am certain she does not know that I feel targeted and trapped, that the war is here and now. The moment is, if anything, obtuse to all outsiders. I sense death is imminent. Survival is all that remains. Incoming!

Two-thousand-one is nineteen-sixty-eight cloaked. Catherine is chattering tediously one second and then laughing uncontrollably into the phone the next. Nothing has changed from that letter in March 1968 or that naïve photo. I inwardly withdraw to the safety of the world that I have erected, brick by brick, to survive. I have "curtained." I am now alone in a car shared with my wife in the midst of several hundred moving blurs of steel and glass and rubber. Everyone is clueless. No one cares. The ubiquitous then and there has once more traversed over into the here and now. I will "participate" in the Target store when I find it, but I will be detached. I cannot care. I will once more strain all my emotional reserves to conceal my deepening, ungainly depression.

In conjunction with my seceding inner seclusion, my fuse is now lit, ready to explode. My 3 compatriots — withdrawal, anger and depression — have taken up their usual state of residency. I am unable to share them or this with anyone, not even my wife although she senses it all. She doesn't need this, but here it is. This is as infuriating as it is physically draining. This is dangerous. I want to be in a bunker, sitting alone. This is life behind the curtain.

* * *

The lawnmower has sounded for me a generous note to the lineup for the day's coming tasks. It sputters momentarily and then roars to life after a few

Bro's

Names appear out of the past,
For hours my heart beats fast.
First comes the joy I've found,
someone who was once lost!
Then memories flood my mind,
again I see the flash and feel the blast.

Depression and pain I feel,
an emptiness in my chest.
What happened to the rest?
Where is Frenchy, Coffey, Crow, and Cann?
Marines from Recon and 1-26 move
through my mind, double time.

Rockets, mortars, artillery blast,
sand bags seep red, blood mixed with red
clay. Holes in the runway, must replace,
sections ripped to shreds.

I'm caught in the past,
nowhere to run, can't hide.
See the flash?
Feel the blast?

Who's in that bag, zipped foot to head?
Is it me, or one of my Bro?

My dream is over, my eyes were never shut.
It's over, it's done,
I'm home at last!

James Jimbo Wodecki

sturdy yanks with the cord. And thus, I go determined and expectant on my way, back and forth, forth and back. One section of the yard has now been shorn. The mowing is easy. Onward to the next province of the yard, I say to myself. And there is currently no hint that my morning will come to a jarring interruption from which I will not recover quickly.

The whack, bang of spinning metal mower blades slicing firmly into a grass-hidden, mostly buried steel beam brings my day's schedule to a malicious and violent stop. The sudden quiet vibrates thickly, my ears and hands suddenly tingling. I have stupidly run over a hidden, immovable object. The mower's crankshaft has succumbed. It is bent within the innards of the smoking machine, now gone silent. It is dead. Killed unexpectedly in the line of duty because of my lack of attention, exposed is my inability to detect what I could not control and somehow should have observed.

The first object I find to reflect my kindling rage is a large, split log from our stack of firewood nearby. I throw it into the neighbor's yard. Silence engulfs me for, I cannot hear. Stillness. My spleen once more vents its displeasure. I am swept insensibly headlong by audacious, turbulent waves of emotion. I pick up Duke's half-chewed softball and heave it wildly somewhere into the wood lined creek. Catherine is saying something about my trying to fix it. Fix it? I know running lawn mowers with contorted crankshafts is oxymoronic. Life as I know it has taken pause.

The entourage of those few insane moments has put me on display, and my unfettered energy seems to have run its full heedless course into unabridged lethargy. I sit motionless in the grass. I long for solitude. I wish for sleep, the type from which one never awakens. My jaws and teeth are fixed, immovable. A tightness seeps into my chest. Some unwelcomed, foreign tonnage pulls heavily upon my abdomen. And yet I am completely hollow inside. My body futilely repels my wife's desperate need for verbal intrusion into my space. Once more I stare disconsolately into and through the curtain, into the time gone by of Khe Sanh. That yesterday has thoroughly manhandled me once more. I have broken the mower. There is no room on 861 Alpha, then or now, for anything broken. Ruined means useless, and useless means death is imminent. All meaning has hushed in the quiet air.

Catherine is once more suggesting that I do something, go get another mower; go down to Sears Hardware. Her suggestions nettle me. I continue my motionless and absent stare. But it can all be set right, she protests. I remain fixed in past time and space. The lawn has to be mowed in the present. It will all be OK, she repeats, if only to reassure herself. Yet the curtain has already come down, firmly. We are now in two different worlds. I am in Vietnam, fighting for my existence. She is in O'Fallon, Missouri fighting for and against two concepts. She is skirmishing franticly to have her lawn manicured on the one hand. And on the other, she is trying with equal inner ferocity not to trot over and retrieve the log I just threw in order not to bludgeon me to death with it. Two tragic events and thirty-three years of distance have undertaken the vanity of fusion. Transfixed physically within a six-foot radius, Catherine and I could not be more distant from each other in mind and body.

In combat, one does not break or discard his gear intentionally or otherwise without that singular action producing dire circumstances. You do not break the sight for the mortar tube and then actuate a fire mission. You do not allow rust in the chamber of your rifle and expect to fire your weapon when someone trips an ambush. You do not let the battery on your radio go dead and trust that you will maintain contact with your air and artillery support by your good looks, if the soup really hits the fan.

Yet, each of these acute possibilities is internalized and perpetuated all the same, trial upon trial, decade upon decade, long after the smoke and din of battle has died away. Bent crankshafts cannot be separated handily from broken mortar sights. They have mysteriously become mentally indistinguishable in the main. The *delirium tremens* of the past is separated from the life of the present by no greater distance than the thickness of psychological draperies. The past and present cling tenaciously, intertwined between the weavings of our own mental and material makeup.

Inner rage at uncontrollable, outward circumstances draws the curtain taut on a weekly basis for me. And life brings it down with irresistible regularity probably for you, as well. I have read several books on the subject of making peace with the traumas of the past. I am supposed to, it is suggested,

bring all that anger to roost in other places by time honored and workable means. I am sure the authors mean well. But I remain dubious. How can one truly come to a living armistice with one's own hellish war? Certainly, I cannot sue for peace in the sense in which they mean. The anger remains because the war remains fully intact and alive. It does not persist motionlessly, as if out of breath, used up or rusted shut. The events of the past are the living paraphernalia of the mind. They know not surrender, nor can they recognize the need to capitulate to my psychological insolvency. Vietnam remains the long, diffuse shadow on the wall of my soul.

The three, aforementioned historical markers are the regular makeup of my life, past and ever present. I can assume that the future will present, for my perusal, much of the same. Each is not threadbare for they individually shoulder the undeniable inbreeding of similarity. The searching and struggling for peace with an enemy that does not have peace on its docket, has, as of this writing, not been overcome by any recent and personal battles or formulas.

To me, it is noteworthy that the enemy lies within psychologically and at the gates of time and circumstances simultaneously. He is the black pajama-clad warrior of the night fenced outside, yet always alert for any weaknesses that may afford him entrance into my world. He eludes detection one minute and openly pronounces his arrival at his discretion the next.

I have discovered no ready made 12-step formulas, Biblical or otherwise, to deter his aggravating intentions of disruption and depression. Although he is parasitic in nature, his residence is my emotional bloodstream. These light and dark cells must coexist as long as I remain alive. Not a comforting thought. But I find solace in the lives of others who have trod the perplexing and painful road of life before me and thus proceed by sure steps alongside my less certain ploddings. The Apostle Peter writes this about our PTSD, "Therefore, let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator."

Semper Fi

In our last issue, we learned the history of the Poilane Family from the memoirs of Madame Poilane, whose family ran the Coffee Plantation at Khe Sanh. In this issue, the Marines have arrived at Khe Sanh and the Hill Battles of 1967 are about to begin.

Chapter Two

The Marines who arrived knew our school very well. And when passing by, they would stop and give treats to the children. They also brought food for the Montagnard children so they could have a balanced diet for their noon meal. They were content when the Marines left. We had a little "Bambi." We bought him from the Montagnards for 500 Piastres. He was found in the brush, his mother most likely had been killed. The commanding colonel at the Marine base was our friend. He often brought us powered milk. Bambi ate at least four times a day. There were a lot of photographs taken of the Marines on their many visits passing through the plantation.

The arrival of the nuns was a very good thing for me. I found myself less alone, especially with the Mother Superior who was French. I knew her very well. My health was not good after the death of my father-in-law. Being cut off from the town was difficult. We liked to get together with our friends from time to time, after experiencing the austere life that we had on the plantation. There were only Frenchmen at Khe Sanh, with the priest and our planter friends. We would gather every Sunday at the house to have our noon meal and evening with the priest and M. Llinares. After dinner, we would play tarot card games until midnight.

It was really our only distraction, since the work did not allow much during the coffee harvest. During the monsoon, there was no question of working. The rain never stopped. You must know tropical rains to really understand a monsoon. Then, there was the humidity, the drizzle and constant fog in February and March before ever seeing the sun in April.

It was then that an attack of the Viet Cong occurred on three hills, North 881, 861 & 881, which were all visible from our house. The culminating point was the Tooth of the Tiger, at about 1700 meters, on a mountain located very close to us facing the Marine base. I think these three hills could be the natural boundary between the North and South,

since we were said to be twenty kilometers from the border. That was difficult enough to evaluate. This attack lasted for three weeks. If my memory is good, it happened suddenly, with no one expecting it. Everything was calm, too calm. The Marines started bombing these three hills, trying to force the VC out. It was all in vain as the Viet Cong were at the bottom, well into the shelter of the mountain dugouts. They were able to prepare their food without anyone seeing the smoke. They had plenty of water and were content with what little they had to live on. They were, therefore, very strong while hearing the planes coming to bomb them.

From our house we could see the bombs leaving the planes. The bombing went on day and night. Other times, the Marines flew in reinforcements. When the Marines evacuated their wounded, the VC responded with machine guns, which they had camouflaged in the forest. We did not take it seriously and continued to harvest the coffee. The Marine visits became rare; we understood why. The Montagnards did not seem affected by what was going on around them. As for us, we became disturbed by the incessant rotations of the C-123 and C-130 airplanes. The noise stopped us from sleeping most nights. Our friend, the Colonel, took the time to give us any news. I think if there was any immediate danger, he would have been the first to tell us to leave the plantation.

As soon as there was a lull, the Marines came to our house to reassure us and to exchange a few ideas. The Colonel gave us his laundry (at our request.) That certainly freed him from an unpleasant job. His wife sent him packages from the United States, and he never failed to bring treats for the children and us.

The attack finally ended and everyone breathed a little easier. Each Monday morning the Colonel brought us his laundry. When he came to pick it up in the afternoon, he was all wet. The rescue of the three hills had cost a lot in human lives. He had however, saved Khe Sanh from an attack. One cannot forget that the Ho Chi Minh Trail was there, very near, and we all knew it.

One can ask how a surprise attack was possible. One must not forget that numerous Montagnards worked at the base and were able to observe the movements of planes, the locations of trenches, and where the machine guns were located. It is very possible that there were VC among the Montagnards. I am now able to say that the chief of the VC among the Montagnards was a woman, a young girl whom had taught me to speak "Bru." I earned her confidence, and she had confided in me. She came to the market at Khe Sanh, dressed as a simple Montagnard gathering information. It was difficult for me to betray the confidence she had entrusted in me.

The increase of men and materials at the base left us less calm than as we had been prior to the attacks on the three hills. The VC retreated but were regrouping and preparing for another offensive. Although we feared they would attack again, we remained at the plantation. The harvest was not finished; it was May or June of 1967. It was necessary to earn a living and eat. At that time of the year, the rains began, and the Montagnards' provisions were diminishing. They survived eating sweet potatoes, manioc, bamboo shoots, and whatever vegetables they could find in the brush.

During the next six months, it was calm. Nothing abnormal happened as the year came to an end. The Christmas celebrations continued as usual. I attended Françoise's eighth birthday party in October 1967. We made a nice cake, and the Marines brought an even bigger one. It took several Marines to carry it. I forgot to point out that Felix had killed a spotted panther the same day. The panther had killed a pig in a nearby village. He placed the trap the night before and his lure worked perfectly. Once it had been trapped, he shot it. The news quickly spread and everyone wanted to take a picture with the dead panther. Each person posed with it in a different manner. We had the skin sent home and tanned. I still have it along with two other skins from tigers which Felix also killed. They are all still in excellent condition.

January 1968 arrived, and the feast of Tet began early in February. Our workers left the plantation to celebrate. That was the only vacation time they were allowed during the year. When we were short of help, I took a Montagnard woman to do the cooking. She was very clean and cooked very well. Her name was M'Pi Ania. She had previously worked at the plantation during the time my mother-in-law ran operations.

The attack on Khe Sanh began at night on January 19th and 20th, 1968. We were surprised to hear the noise from the B-52s, which flew very high. The VC

were in the village and had attacked the guard post, offices and the residence of the Chief of the District. We wanted to go to Mass but decided against it to keep the children out of danger. Father Mauvais had tried and was pushed back to the bridge of Khe Sanh, which crosses the Ta-Con River. The battle was becoming ferocious. No one left the Montagnard villages. The silence was unusual. Helicopters began bombing and firing at everything that moved. Disregarding the danger, late in the afternoon, we went to the home of Father Mauvais. Father Poncet was still in Hue City. Stray bullets from the helicopters struck the entrance to the home of the nuns, so we quickly returned to the plantation.

Felix called all of our workers to protect our house. They gathered things from the basement and slept on cots. The B-52s continued bombing and the noise was unbearable. Helicopters dropped off wounded South Vietnamese soldiers at the Old French Fort. Two of them managed to get to our house. I left the veranda and met another wounded soldier who told me his friend was seriously wounded and was hiding where we stored coffee. I called my husband Felix, who scolded me for leaving the house. Felix located the wounded soldier who was suffering from a broken shoulder. His bleeding had stopped and Felix decided not to change the soiled dressing, to prevent the bleeding from starting again. He gave him a shot of Penicillin and water, which seemed to revive him. Felix told both soldiers to remain where they were until the B-52s ceased bombing.

I omitted telling you that on Saturday, Mr. Miller, the American linguist, had came by the house to warn us that things were getting worse. My husband was not home at the time and when I later told him of the visit of Mr. Miller, he could see the fright on my face.

On Monday, there was still fighting in the village of Khe Sanh. It was rumored that the American forces were no longer giving ammunition to the Vietnamese Army. The nuns continued coming by the house as there was no question of their leaving. The Montagnards did not leave either. Towards the end of the afternoon, Mr. Llinares was able to join us. His son Emmanuel, remained at their house with the rest of the coolie workers.

On Tuesday, the Vietnamese from the villages of Khe Sanh and Cu Bach filed past the plantation carrying backpacks, heading towards the Marine base. Prior to the attack on the three hills, everything had been very peaceful. The sudden attack on the village of Khe Sanh had led to widespread panic. My husband Felix used his car to take the wounded Vietnamese soldiers to the Marine base. He was asked to drive the old and sick villagers to the Marine base. He made many trips in our old 2CV but had to stop, so the vehicle would be ready when it was our turn to leave. Some villagers offered Felix 500 Piastas for a ride, but he could not help them — we really needed the car. Felix instructed us to pack some necessary things and be ready to leave the plantation at any moment. The children were very scared and screamed every time the B-52s conducted a bombing raid. We just took with us the money we had received from the coffee crop we had sold, and a few trinkets and toiletries.

We were the last to leave the plantation. We released our dogs and little "Bambi," then locked the door and left for the Marine base in our old 2CV. When we arrived at the base there was total confusion. The planes that were to arrive to evacuate the villagers never arrived. The Marines did not know what to do. Father Mauvais, who did not want to leave, finally changed his mind and worked his way to the base. Felix spoke to the colonel in charge of Lang Vei, a village on the Lao Bao route. We told him we did not want to leave the area, and he suggested we go with him to Lang Vei. At that time, the North Vietnamese began firing rockets at the base and the children and I took refuge behind some metal barrels that contained pine tar, which got all over me. The children and I were an awful sight and scared to death. At that moment a civilian journalist began basking questions of us. What we were doing there, where we had come from, etc. I am sure she wasn't concerned that we were suffering and had left everything we loved behind; her concern was more of a journalistic nature. She took a picture of us that later appeared in the newspaper in France. Although the photo's appearance assured our families that we were okay, it just was not the proper time to take it.

Finally, the first C-123 arrived at the base. There was a great rush to get on the first plane. We waited, not wanting to be crushed or separated. We were ordered to join the crowd and get aboard. Felix refused, telling the Marines that they had to organize the villagers into groups to allow an orderly with-

drawal. The Marines complied and when other planes arrived, it was done in an orderly manner. The planes were either going to Dong-Ha or Da Nang — we would have preferred Hue.

We left with a heavy heart, leaving everything we loved behind. When we arrived at Da Nang, we met the Miller family, which was a very pleasant surprise. Somehow they had been made aware that we would be arriving. We asked to be taken to the house where the nuns lived. It was January 22, 1968 and nothing else had happened at Da Nang. I cleaned some of the sticky tar, which was very difficult to remove, off of my legs and skirt. Two days later we left for Hue City and the School of Joan of Arc. We had many attachments there and Tet was quickly approaching. This meant everyone would be leaving to join his or her families to celebrate together. We did not know if we would ever be able to return to Khe Sanh. We settled in, having only the bare essentials we had taken with us when we left the plantation. We would have to buy whatever things we would need.

On the night of 31 January 1968, the Tet offensive began all over South Vietnam. We were awakened by gunfire and immediately covered the windows with an armoire. We put our mattresses under the beds to stretch out on. When night came, we left, taking what little we had with us. We worked our way through the streets to the main central building of the school. We saw the first Viet Cong enter the city from the big main gate. We put mattresses over the windows and sealed the building the best we could. Sister Henri was very scared and hid under the covers most of the time.

The central building was located across the street from Saint Francois-Xavier Church, and the VC had taken up a position in the steeple. When shots were exchanged between them and the American forces, bullets would strike the bell in the steeple, it sounded like the song of a bird. Finally, the bell fell to the ground as if it finally gave up its spirit.

We took our meals when the situation allowed it. Mostly, we stayed under the mattresses. The Rossignols, instructors who lived next door to the church, joined us. Soon after, about fifty other people — nuns and others preparing to be nuns — moved into our building. Fierce fighting broke out and at one point, the American soldiers almost attacked our building. We managed to warn them that we were all civilians, and it became necessary to evacuate the building. When we tried to make our way to the chapel there was street fighting everywhere! Civilians as well as the VC and American soldiers were running everywhere. We saw my Vietnamese mother-in-law with Jean-Vincent, Cosette and Nanou. They joined us and the American soldiers helped us get behind the chapel. We thought our last moments had arrived.

The Rossignols attempted to take refuge at the Faculty of Sciences building where everyone was being directed and which was now empty. We encountered a guard who refused to let anyone in. After a discussion, he allowed us entry but we were only given access to a room which was approximately 4 meters square. There wasn't food for anyone but at least we were not homeless. We stood back to back to use the least amount of space as possible. Little Jean-Marie, who was only four years old, cried that he wanted to go back to Joan of Arc. I did the best I could to calm him, although the sounds of the all night battle kept us awake all night.

The next morning the rest of the refugees arrived, those who knew the nuns cooked some rice. We each had a small bowl. It wasn't much but a comfort to our empty stomachs. Felix and two of the nuns went back to Joan of Arc and retrieved some blankets and small survival kits. Sister Paul Xavier brought back her black habit and some consecrated host. She gave communion to all the Christians at the shelter, which was a particularly moving moment. Jean-Marie watched very closely, his eyes speaking for him. For the first time, we knew he understood the significance of communion.

As more and more refugees arrived, the guards opened bigger rooms, which was a great improvement. We were finally able to stretch out. We did not know how long we would be at the shelter, so the extra room really helped. Felix began to organize the refugees, so we could all have at least two meals a day. The Americans gave Felix some raisins, cokes, and sugar. We had to guard them very closely, so that Françoise and Jean-Marie could eat a little better.

The only place to do laundry was in the Perfume River. It was not safe to go there by yourself, so the Americans took us by bus. A group of journalists arrived and informed us through their intermediary that they had requested our evacuation through the American Consulate. On Feb. 11, 1968, all the nuns, the Rossignols, my mother-in-law and her children,

and the Philippino family, and the doctor married to a French woman were able to get on a boat. The priests, including Fathers Poncet, Petit-Jean and Neyroud, stayed at the Providence School. The Viet Cong put Father Lefas and another Frenchman up against a wall. The VC thought they had a grenade in their pocket. They were saved when they discovered it was just a battery. We had to stay on the boat at Hue until February 12, because it was not safe to move. A helicopter arrived and escorted us to Da Nang.

When we arrived at the Da Nang American Consulate, Mary Ange and the Mother Superior of the Sacred Heart School greeted us. I had become sick on the boat and arrived wrapped in a blanket. We arrived at the school where we ate a good meal of meat and rice soup — what a luxury! It was the first hot meal we had had in 12 days. For the first time, we enjoyed a little tranquility. It felt good to sleep in a warm bed. One could not describe the difference in accommodations, it was wonderful.

The city of Hue was still under attack and suffered enormous damage. The Joan of Arc School was destroyed, and the coffee we had stored there was stolen and sold by the VC. The VC looted many buildings, and some personally profited from their attack by selling our coffee crop for a good price. The main bridge, which spanned the Perfume River, was cut in half by the VC and the ferry remained the only way to get to Hue.

We were now refugees in Da Nang. Two days after our arrival, we learned that the VC somewhere near the Hue Canal had beaten Father Poncet and Father Cressonnier. Felix was devastated by the news and could not bring himself to tell me. Sister Xavier was the one who finally broke that news to me. When two of the Fathers learned that a nun had been seriously wounded in Hue at a location still under control of the VC, they returned to help her. Mr. Llinaires accompanied the Fathers. The VC executed both of the Fathers. No one ever learned why. Mr. Llinaires was wounded in the wrist and barely escaped by hiding in a trench.

After 14 days, Father Cressonier's Thi-Ba, the woman who was responsible for the priest home, was finally able to enter the liberated zone. Unbelievably, the bodies of the two Fathers were still where they had fallen. Her and another women placed the bodies in sacks and brought them back to the home of the priest where they were temporarily buried in the back yard. In time, they would be interred at the Priest Cemetery in the District of the Citadel. The cruelty of the VC was incredible — how many other priests died, attempting to save a child, or say Mass is unknown.

The VC committed many atrocities. There was a group of German doctors who served at the Mission of the Order of Malte. They worked at the hospital at Hue, serving the entire population. One was a pediatrician and the others were general practitioners. One of their wives was pregnant and expecting her third baby. The VC kidnapped them and for a time, it was rumored that they had been taken to treat the wounded VC. Unfortunately, that proved to be untrue when they were found executed. One female German doctor who escaped execution, later returned to Germany with her three children.

Most of the massacres took place outside of Hue City on the plain going towards the Benedictine Monastery of Thien-An. Two French Fathers were among those massacred. Father Urbain and Father Guy had made a wrong turn and were captured by the VC. They, like the others, were made to dig their own graves. When the city was finally liberated, many corpses were found, some only half buried. It was hard to believe human beings could be responsible for such an abomination.

After the city of Hue was completely liberated, Felix and a group of nuns went to see the devastation. Felix took notes and recorded the widespread devastation. The Joan of Arc School suffered extensive damage. Felix, Fathers Lefas, Duval, Neyroud, along with Monsignor Urrutia, Jean-Vincent Poilane, and a Frenchmen who lived with the Fathers began salvage work at the school. I stayed in Hue with the children while they rotated back and forth from Da Nang to Hue as limited space on airplanes allowed.

We continued living at Sacred Heart, and had a very large room on the first floor. Most of our friends were leaving Viet Nam and returning to France. The Americans provided abundant food for the orphans who lived at the school. We ate at the sisters' guest table and were able to pay for our meals with the money we had received from the six tons of coffee we had sold from the plantation at Khe Sanh. We made our own clothes from the American surplus, some of the dresses looked very nice. My mother-in-law and friends would also send

us clothes — clothes for Felix and the children that could not be found at the school. Time passed slowly, Khe Sanh was still under siege. Hopes of ever returning were starting to fade. The Montagnards were allowed to evacuate their villages. Most of them traveled by foot to Cam-Lo. They could not stay in their villages as they were completely out of food.

On April 9, 1968, Khe Sanh was finally liberated. Felix was ecstatic and immediately began contacting American authorities through a Philippine friend who spoke perfect English. Felix wanted to return to the plantation to see how much, if anything, remained. The Americans were reluctant, they said it was still very dangerous, the VC were still very close. Finally, they informed Felix he could return on April 12. Upon hearing the news, I hid his passport, as I did not want him to go back to Khe Sanh. He told me he was going, with or without a passport. Although I still did not want him to go, I returned it. On April 13, 1968, he departed by plane to Khe Sanh.

I did not hear from him on Easter Sunday, 14 April 1968, and immediately sensed something was wrong. A journalist informed Mother Angel of the tragic news. She kept it from me until Monday morning, fearing I would not sleep the night before. She sent for me on Monday, the pale look on her face told me something was indeed wrong. She informed me that something had happened at Khe Sanh, and that she was going to the American Consulate to learn the details. When I tried to go with her she refused, making me wait for her return.

She returned and informed me that Felix's plane had been shot down over Khe Sanh. Felix was the only civilian on board. He died in the crash, with five of the fourteen military passengers being injured. One later died. The same nun that went to the consulate located the hospital where Felix's body had been brought. She and the other nuns took care of everything for me. They made the notifications to his mother, took care of the administrative papers, and ordered a coffin. I informed her of my wish to have his body returned to France. The nuns tried to dissuade me. The priests wanted to bury him next to Father Poncet. If he could have spoken to me, maybe that would have been his desire. I did not know, he loved this country so much.

The Americans embalmed his body and returned it to us on April 17, 1968. He was laid out in a little room that served as an office for the chapel. He was dressed in his dark, navy blue suit. A little drop of water and blood came falling from his right ear from time to time. He appeared to have just gone to sleep and was at peace. A tri-colored ribbon and simple bouquet of flowers adorned his coffin. Françoise and Jean-Marie had grim faces. Jean-Marie was especially affected. He came, looked at his Father, left and went back again. At five years old, he could not understand what was happening. Father Petit-Jean remained close to me to get me through the ordeal. I hugged Felix for a long time, his face against mine.

On 18 April 1968, funeral services were held at the Cathedral of Da Nang. Nine priests co-celebrated the mass, which was said by the Vietnamese parish priest. They were all his friends. Father Lefas eulogized Felix in a very solemn way. He had felt particular pain, as Felix was his student at the College of Providence at Hue. Among the many mourners was the lieutenant who had authorized Felix's plane trip; he felt responsible.

After the ceremony, the Americans took the body to Saigon to await transportation to France. I returned to Hue City with the nuns to clear up affairs with the bank. I found the city destroyed. It was still a dangerous time to be in Hue and several times during the night we had to hide on the first floor. Due to the still continuing dangerous situation in Vietnam, there was a delay in our leaving. During this time I could not take the pressure and had to get treatment to allow me to sleep. On 22 June 1968, the children and I left for France after making sure Felix's body would be returned. My stepsisters, Cosette and Nanou, and two nuns came with us. Goodbye Vietnam, where I left so many memories. A part of my life and heart remain in that country where I knew both joy and suffering at the plantation. Life goes on and I still have the children. But Vietnam remains forever engraved in me. It is still hard to describe all these events, it was so brutal.

Felix was 37 years old when he died. He was born on April 30, 1930 at Khe Sanh, and had gone back to die at Khe Sanh.



Françoise Poilane



Jean-Marie Poilane

Navy Doc

At our upcoming reunion in Dallas Texas, the KSV will be honoring our Heroic Corpsmen and Medics who served with us. Their history and Heroic achievements do not need to be repeated. We will also be honoring the Doctors who saved so many lives. This is the story of one KSV Navy surgeon who is remembered in history for removing a live mortar round from a wounded Marine. What is not widely known are his Heroics while serving with an Army Unit at Hill 162 on 04 September 1968. Heroics that have gone unheralded. Here are the eye-witness accounts of those who were there and want his actions properly rewarded.

Prelude to Battle

by Kirk Ross

The pronouncement that they were being assigned to the 1st Battalion of the 61st Infantry Regiment (Mechanized), an outfit operating on the DMZ, was enough to test the nerve of even the best of Captain John W. Langston's young infantry replacements. Captain Langston, Bravo Company C/O, did his best to set the new men at ease and, in a fatherly tone, assured them that they were not going to die while serving under his command. The talk usually worked and with time and experience, the men began to mirror their commander, becoming almost as cocky and confident as him.

Like all the company commanders of the lst Battalion, 61st Infantry Regiment, Captain Langston wore the patch of the US Army's 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) on his right sleeve. In November 1965, he had fought with a 1st Cav Blue Team in the Ia Drang Valley in a pitched battle which marked the first engagement fought between North Vietnamese Army Main Force units and United States troops. The intensity of that action also served to set the tone for what was to come, as the conflict in the South escalated. In July 1968, Captain Langston and his fellow officers were serving in a new outfit, which had just deployed to Vietnam. On this tour, he and the others were all experienced veterans, eager to be going back into combat.

The 1st of the 61st was a part of the Colonel Richard J. Glikes' 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), which had arrived in

Vietnam in July. The Brigade's headquarters were established in Quang Tri while its three maneuver battalions were located at separate base camps outside Quang Tri base proper. Placed under the operational control of the 3rd Marine Division, Glikes' brigade became, for tactical purposes, an asset of the United States Marine Corps. However, with much of the Marine Corps' attention focused on the area around Khe Sanh and the western portion of the I Corps zone, the bulk of operational responsibility for patrolling the DMZ from Wonder Beach to the hills west of the Con Thien fire support base, fell to the 1st Brigade.

Colonel Glikes' brigade often operated jointly with elements of the 3rd, 4th, and 9th Marine Regiments. The foot-bound Marines, according to Lieutenant Colonel Bernard D. Wheeler, C/O of the 1st Battalion of the 61st, unlike his men, were not equipped with armored personnel carriers and seemed always in need of support from their relatively lavishly equipped Army cousins. When they encountered strong opposition, the Marines' lives sometimes relied on the firepower delivered by the highly mobile infantry companies of Wheeler's battalion coming quickly to their aid, a circumstance that Wheeler admitted, often required his men to "throw caution to the wind."

According to Captain Langston, the men of his battalion — in fact, those of the whole 1st Brigade — spent most of August shaking down equipment and familiarizing themselves with their area of operations. During that month, the 1st Battalion of the 77th Armored Regiment and the 1st Battalion of the 11th Infantry Regiment fought two separate engagements near the DMZ which resulted in 132 enemy killed. Despite the successes of its sister organizations, the 1st of the 61st still had fought no significant engagements with the enemy. However, with the Brigade's move on 26 August to a new area of operations west of Cam L6, which was about to be known as "Leatherneck Square," it was about to.

On the morning of 4 September 1968, A Company of the 1st Battalion was ordered to conduct a sweep mission with the purpose of effecting a linkup with a Mike Force of the 3rd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment. Mike 3/9, having the radio call sign "7up Mike," had been in contact with the enemy all morning; however it was not enemy action, but rather increasingly poor weather conditions that compelled its immediate extraction. Soon after linking up with the Marines, A Company would come under the attack of a sizable NVA force. The battle that ensued would prove to be the 1st Battalion's first major contact with the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. The engagement would also see a young Navy surgeon, Lt. Edward M. Feldman, become an unwitting hero to the embattled Army troops.

Accompanied by a platoon of tanks from the 1st Battalion, 77th Armored, A Company, under the command of Capt. Charles E. Vernon, moved out on its mission at 0645 hours. The column of tracks, which was composed of some thirteen or more M-113 Armored Cavalry Assault Vehicles and two tracked recovery vehicles, moved west from the vicinity of Fire Support Base Charlie 2 near Cam Lo, following the course of the east-west grid line "65" for more than two-and-a-half hours until they reached a position approximately one kilometer east of the 160-meter high hill (henceforth referred to as Hill 160) that would be the focal point in the coming battle. Along the way, heavy mud forced the tanks to turn back. This same mud would prove to make the going arduous for A Company's tracks as well. At 0914 hours, Captain Vernon called 1st Battalion requesting to know if the helicopter that had begun circling a point north of his location a few minutes earlier, was in fact circling over 7up Mike. The reply from 1st Battalion confirmed Vernon's guess. This was apparently, the much-delayed re-supply helicopter the Marines had requested some two hours before. With the Marines' location approximately fixed, A Company dropped smoke to mark its position to the Mike Force. The smoke was soon spotted by the Marines, and to coordinate the extraction, 7up Mike then switched over to A Company's radio frequency.

7up Mike, which was at that time located on a minor prominence about two kilometers northwest of A Company, had been in contact with the enemy since well before daylight. During the nearly four hours preceding their initial contact with A Company, the Marines had coordinated several artillery fire missions on suspected enemy positions west and northwest of Hill 160. When their re-supply helicopter drew enemy automatic weapons fire from a position approximately two kilometers to its northwest, 7up Mike resumed its calls to the 1st Battalion of the 61st Infantry requesting two more

fire missions. Still further calls for artillery were made at 1000 hours, at 1006 hours, and at 1007 hours. Eleven minutes later, 7up Mike called 1st Battalion to end the fire missions, which apparently resulted in "excellent coverage" of the target areas. Perhaps prompted by the increasing enemy activity, or perhaps because the visibility was decreasing due to worsening weather conditions, 1st Battalion's Operations Officer again contacted Capt. Vernon with instructions to link up with the Marines.

Capt. Vernon decided that, before he moved to link up with 7up Mike, he would first establish a perimeter atop Hill 160, and so led his men to this position. Along the way, Sgt. Stephen Zerfas' ACAV threw a track and had to stop to make repairs. Another vehicle broke down atop the hill, that of Sgt. Ronald E. Fujikawa. The 1st Platoon, commanded by 2Lt. Duane E. Hulett, was ordered to hold its position atop the hill so as to defend Sgt. Fujikawa's track until it regained mobility. Capt. Vernon, meanwhile, ordered the four tracks of the 2nd Platoon to sweep west and north and cross the Song Noan, a small stream, while Captain Vernon's command group, accompanied by the tracks of 2Lt. Douglas N. Mulford's Weapons Platoon, would sweep north in the direction of the Marines. This dividing of the force, although dangerous, was for Captain Vernon apparently necessary, as it seems he was unsure of the Mike Forces' exact location. The several elements presently moved out and, by 1037 hours, 2Lt. Hesti's platoon was approaching the Song Noan. Apparently, neither 2Lt. Hesli or anyone in A Company had been informed that they were heading into a hot area, one in which the Marines had only recently made several contacts with the enemy. This proximate danger would only be recognized too late.

The Facts

On 4 September 1968, at approximately 1700 hours, Lt. Edward M. Feldman, USNR, was preparing the triage at the main medical facility at Quang Tri for receiving casualties. An Army helicopter crewman came running in asking for a doctor to follow him to his helicopter. Lt. Feldman accompanied the airman and, upon reaching the helicopter, was motioned aboard. Lt. Feldman's first impression was that the aircrew had a wounded man aboard and did not know how to move him. However, when he discovered there were no wounded aboard, Lt. Feldman assumed that the aircrew wanted to lift him to a casualty a short distance away and, therefore, volunteered to go with them.

After flying at very low altitude for some fifteen to twenty minutes, buffeted by typhoon-strength winds, the pilot settled the helicopter into a hover. The helicopter immediately began taking fire from its left side and the pilot abruptly landed atop a knoll carpeted by swampy elephant grass. There below him, Lt. Feldman could see several armored personnel carriers (APC's) from A Company, 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry (Mechanized) under violent attack by a battalion-size NVA force.

Lt. Feldman jumped out of the helicopter and was met by a man who briefed him on the situation. Lt. Feldman was told that he was three kilometers south of the Demilitarized Zone near Charlie 2 Cam Lo combat base. At that moment, enemy automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades set on fire one of the APCs spaced at intervals along the column. When this happened, the weight of enemy fire seemed to shift toward this vehicle. Heedless of the enemy small arms fire being directed toward A Company, Lt. Feldman immediately moved to the head of the column of APCs. Finding no wounded, Lt. Feldman stopped long enough to put on a discarded flak vest and helmet and picked up a M-16 which had also been abandoned. Like everything, it was caked with sticky, red clay. After assuring himself that the weapon was functioning properly, Lt. Feldman, exposing himself to moderate but steady enemy fire, began making his way from track to track.

Behind each of the APC's were clutches of soldiers, huddled close together, returning fire. Lt. Feldman stopped at each vehicle, assisting the wounded and encouraging the men. After he had reached the last APC, Lt. Feldman, advancing as before, retraced his steps back up the column of dispersed APCs stopping again to assist the wounded. As he moved, he was constantly aware of the enemy automatic fire and rocket-propelled grenades coming from a line of small trees and brush off to the right flank, and that some of it was being directed at him. Lt. Feldman stopped to return fire himself many times.

At approximately 1852 hours, Lt. Feldman took charge of A Company 1/61 and personally began directing the men to move with their wounded to a new, more defensible position atop a hill just to the south from which the men could better direct their

fire upon the enemy, and from which point medevacs could effectively evacuate the wounded. As the APCs began climbing the hill, they received what Lt. Feldman thought was heavy mortar fire, as well as RPG and automatic weapons fire. Once atop the hill, Lt. Feldman guided the men in forming a perimeter until all the APCs were in position.

Sometime after getting into position, a lieutenant from A Company 1/61 informed Lt. Feldman that only a small amount of concertina wire and about thirty-two claymore mines were available for night defenses. Feldman was further informed because of the poor weather, they would not be getting any close air or artillery support, and it was unlikely that there would be any evacuation of casualties. Undaunted, Lt. Feldman directed the men in establishing a defensive perimeter. With enemy activity in the area slackening somewhat with the fall of darkness, Lt. Feldman busied himself reevaluating the existing casualties and checking to make sure that any new casualties received medical attention.

Until Lt. Feldman arrived, A Company 1/61 had been taking care of its wounded as best it could. Once the company had been assembled by Lt. Feldman atop the hill, he ordered all nonambulatory men placed in a tight perimeter within the main defensive position where they would be protected from direct fire. This allowed him and one or two A Company men to provide better medical treatment. A dozen or more such wounded were administered to by Lt. Feldman. Many of these wounded men had gone into shock due to their loss of blood. Lt. Feldman separated those casualties that could be saved from those for which there was no hope. Lt. Feldman gave the mortally wounded morphine and made them as comfortable as possible.

At 1930 hours, C Company 1/61 arrived to reinforce A Company. However, Lt. Feldman retained command over the evacuation of the wounded. Lt. Feldman was not formally relieved of his responsibility for A Company's defenses until the next morning. Once the wounded were stabilized, Lt. Feldman placed a called for a CH-47 Chinook for the evacuation of the wounded. Lt. Feldman knew A Company's position on the hill was still being subjected to enemy fire. The wounded would stand a better chance if all were evacuated at one time, thus necessitating the Chinook. Lt. Feldman directed the men to establish a landing zone for the medevac. All the while, A Company 1/61 was still taking moderate small arms and mortar fires.

At 2245 hours, a US Army Chinook helicopter landed on the hill. While Lt. Feldman ordered all the wounded of A Company 1/61 to be placed on board, enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire intensified. The dead were also evacuated, their bodies placed on the floor of the Chinook. Lt. Feldman refused evacuation himself, choosing instead to stay with the men who had been placed in his care. He remained with A Company 1/61 until 6 September 1968 at which time he was flown to C2.

Lt. Feldman demonstrated aggressiveness in taking command and reorganizing the separated elements of A Company 1/61, placed the company in a strong position on high ground, one from which it would have a reasonable chance of withstanding a determined enemy assault if one had come. Moreover, Lt. Feldman's presence had a profound impact on the survival of A Company's wounded.

Eyewitness Accounts

Eyewitness Statement of Sgt. Ronald E. Fujikawa, USA, concerning the performance of Lt. Edward M. Feldman, USNR in combat at Hill 162 in Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam, on 4 September 1968.

On the aftemoon of 4 September 1968, I was a track (ACAV) commander in 2Lt. Duane E. Hulett's 1st Platoon of A Company, 1/61. In the course of carrying out our objective — the link up with and extraction of a Marine Mike Force — my track became immobilized on top of the Hill 162 (location of the destroyed village of Lang Dong Bao Thu-o-ng).

To effect the link-up with the Mike Force, its exact location yet unknown, the Company Commander, Captain Charles E. Vernon, ordered the four tracks of the 2nd Platoon, commanded by 2Lt. Philip T. Hesli, Jr., to sweep west and north, and cross the Song Noan. Meanwhile, Captain Vernon's command group, accompanied by the tracks of 2Lt. Douglas N. Mulford's Weapons Platoon, would sweep north. The 1st Platoon was to hold its position atop the hill so as to defend my track until it regained mobility.

As the tracks of the 2nd Platoon approached the Song Noan, I saw them come under some light, harassing enemy fire. Nevertheless, 2Lt. Hesli's tracks continued across the small river and made

their way into the brush on the far side. 2Lt. Hulett received a radio message from 2Lt. Hesli — one of his tracks had become bogged down on the far side of the river. Hesli had attempted to pull it free with another track, but to no avail. Adding to his difficulty, Helsi's only tow cable had been broken in the attempt. Leaving one track to watch over mine, 2Lt. Hulett struck out to assist 2Lt. Hesli's platoon.

After some considerable effort, the mired track was freed and all six tracks which had crossed the river now re-crossed the Song Noan and began making their way back toward the top of Hill 162, where my element waited. As Hesli's element made their way single-file up the incline at the base of the hill, what had formerly amounted to sporadic enemy sniping began to increase dramatically in pitch.

As the sounds of firing grew steadily, I yelled over to my friend in the other track fifty feet away, "Man, there's something wrong here."

"I don't like this," thirty-two-year-old SP4 Charles Robertson replied.

"Man, I don't like this either," I agreed.

From my position atop the hill, I could see clearly 2Lt. Hesli's tracks, about three to four hundred yards away, which were now under the concentrated attack of a sizable and determined NVA force. I immediately directed my men to open fire on the enemy with two of my track's M60 machine guns. I began firing on the attacking NVA with my .50 caliber machine gun. The NVA, which were attacking the right (west) flank of 2Lt. Hesli's element, had not yet closed with the tracks, but I gauged that the enemy were trying to become intermingled with the column so as to render ineffective the heavy firepower of the tracks' machine guns — the gunners would be disinclined to fire into their own column. Nevertheless, my position afforded me excellent observation of the enemy and the fires from my tracks, I felt, were assisting greatly in preventing the enemy from closing on 2Lt. Hesli's tracks.

It was then that I noticed that Sp4 Robertson's track had engaged NVA troops attempting to close on my own position from the south side of Hill 162. I ordered my track's remaining M60 to engage this new threat while I continued to fire on the enemy attacking 2Lt. Hesli's position. Alpha 1/61's Armored Cavalry Assault Vehicles (ACAV), basically heavily armed variants of the M-113 Armored Personnel Carriers, were each armed with three M60 7.62mm

Fog

Slowly the fog creeps in, at first it was hard to see. The drizzle hid the fog so well it was hard to my eyes to see the sly fog sneaking in.

As I slowly came to realize the fog's presence, I suddenly found myself on an airstrip covered with fog.

The airstrip was empty, no planes, choppers, no one in sight. It was so peaceful and quiet no sounds of engines, no outgoing or incoming. No voices to ruin the quiet.

Peace, the peace of the dead. That fog hid the base from preying eyes of the enemy.

As I stood there I prayed for the fog to both stay and leave. As long as it stayed, we were safe from incoming fire. But I prayed for the sun to burn the fog away so those dead, dying, and wounded could be flown to safety.

The fog is both friend and foe. It means both death and life. I feel selfish not wanting it to leave. I want to live, so I am "lost." I can't have it both ways. Sunshine for food and ammo; fog so Charlie doesn't see and can't shoot at me!

Fog, you remind me of Red Clay — a plateau of death and pain!

James Jimbo Wodecki

general purpose machine guns and a single M2-HB .50 caliber machine gun mounted in the commander's cupola. Along with ammunition for each man's personal weapons, each track carried 2,000-3,000 rounds of ammunition for the M60s and approximately 1,500 rounds for the .50 caliber machine gun. As well, each crew was provided with an M-79 grenade launcher with 50 to 100 rounds of ammunition. Although this may seem like an abundant supply, in a hot firefight, even this amount of ammunition was rapidly consumed by the sustained firing of automatic weapons. Moreover, such sustained firing quickly burned out the barrels of automatic weapons, and there were only so many barrels available. Pausing between every 200-300 rounds to let the overheated M60s cool down, my men fired on the enemy with their M-16s. Meanwhile, Robertson, with an M-79, fired at targets all across the south slope of the hill. So far, Robertson had prevented the enemy from advancing from that direction.

Atop the hill, my element had a terrific field of fire and were inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. To the NVA, however, we also presented an attractive target. I heard the throaty crumping of mortars firing in the distance. In fact, they were coming in by the dozen, I estimated four batteries. Then, one, perhaps as many as four shells, landed on top of my track. I, in the .50 caliber machine gun cupola, was wounded in the face by shrapnel and lost my helmet. I was nearly deafened by the blast. After the mortar fire ended, a direct assault on my position began.

From the amount of movement I had already observed, and from the weight of the enemy's fire, I estimated Alpha 1/61 was being hit by an NVA battalion-sized force of approximately 200 men. Now, from all sides, the enemy came on like madmen.The battle had been raging for thirty to forty-five minutes when the assault began, and I was down to my last .50 caliber barrel — I had already burned up four. As they came on, the enemy managed to close to within fifty meters, and many as near as twenty meters and closer.

The men of my element returned fire furiously, expending most of their machine gun ammunition as well as most of their 40mm grenades. When my .50 caliber began to overheat, I drew up my M-16 rifle, giving my machine gun time to cool down. Some enemy troops overran the top of the hill, placing themselves between my track and Robertson's, and forcing Alpha's machine gunners to use extreme caution when engaging targets. Nevertheless, the attack was beaten off with terrific casualties being inflicted upon the enemy. I estimated that the men of my element had probably killed at least forty or more of the enemy, and that I had, myself, accounted for ten to twelve of those killed by fire from my .50 caliber. In addition to myself, two other men in my track were wounded, one in the arm and one in the shoulder. I did not know if Robertson's squad had sustained any casualties.

I spotted Captain Vernon's element in the distance to the northeast, and I was aware that they too had been hit, but its attackers were too far away to engage effectively. 2Lt. Hesli's element, though having beaten back their attackers, was stalled as well. Alpha's communications had broken down. As I recalled, no one was in charge, it was chaotic. All I could do was sit tight, and try to keep the enemy at a distance. Meanwhile, as there were no medics present, the men applied tourniquets to the wounds of the casualties and otherwise made them as comfortable as possible.

Approximately ninety minutes later, medevacs began to arrive. One medevac, accompanied by two Huey gunships and one Cobra gunship, landed in the valley near Captain Vernon's element. Soon thereafter, a lone medevac landed fifty meters away on the hilltop between my element and 2Lt. Hesli's. One man, whom I learned was a Navy doctor, Lt. Edward R. Feldman, jumped off. With him he carried nothing and had neither a helmet, nor a flak vest. As I recalled, Lt. Feldman immediately started directing traffic.

As Lt. Feldman began moving down the line of tracks of Hesli's element, I looked on, amazed by his seemingly casual disregard for the enemy small arms fire still being directed toward Alpha Company. "Who's this, John Wayne or what?" I hollered over to Robertson. "This guy ain't gonna last twenty minutes."

"We wanted to see someone in charge," I recalled, "He (Feldman] took charge." Feldman picked up an M-16 rifle from one of the wounded, and put on a discarded helmet and flak vest. Although he was under "moderate but steady fire," he made his way "from track to track to track to take care of the wounded." After he had done this, Lt. Feldman then began directing the tracks of 2Lt. Hesli's clement,

along with his wounded, to move to the top of Hill 162. Once there, Feldman guided the men in forming a perimeter. "Hey you, put this track over here," he commanded. "Hey you, put this track over there," until all the tracks were in position.

I did not remember seeing any of our own medics. Therefore, until Lt. Feldman arrived, Alpha had been taking care of its wounded as best they could. Once the company, less Captain Vernon's element, had been assembled by Lt. Feldman atop Hill 162, the Lieutenant ordered all non-ambulatory men placed in a tight perimeter within the main defensive position. This enabled Lt. Feldman, while being assisted by one or two Alpha men, a safe place they could be worked on. A dozen or more such wounded were administered to by Lt. Feldman. Many of the wounded men had gone into shock because of their loss of blood.

Once the wounded were stabilized, Lt. Feldman said, "We got to get these dead and wounded out of here," and got on the radio. In the discussion I overheard, Lt. Feldman told the receiver, "Don't send medevacs, send a Chinook." Feldman knew that, due to the fact Alpha's position on Hill 162 was still being subjected to enemy fire, the wounded would stand a better chance if all were evacuated at one time, thus necessitating the Chinook. Lt. Feldman then ordered the men to establish a landing zone (LZ) for the Chinook. Men set out immediately digging holes into which they dropped strobe lights; these would be visible from the air but could not be seen from the ground. All the while, Alpha was still taking sporadic small arms fire.

At 2245 hours, a US Army Chinook helicopter landed on the LZ on Hill 162. Lt. Feldman directed the evacuation of the wounded of Alpha 1/61. I was evacuated at this time. The dead were also evacuated, and their bodies were placed on the floor of the Chinook. There were no body bags for the dead. There were so many casualties that the wounded were forced to, in some cases, sit on top of the bodies of our dead comrades. Conspicuously not aboard was Lt. Feldman, who had chosen to stay on the ground. As the Chinook lifted into the black night, it was fired on by at least four enemy machine guns. Lines of tracers arched their way toward the helicopter but did not find their target. With the knowledge that our fellow Alpha men we had left behind were so critically short of ammunition, none of the wounded aboard the Chinook, including myself, could help but worry for the defenders of Hill 162 as we were flown to the field hospital.

Prior to my evacuation, I recalled how, as the evening progressed, everyone on the hill began to worry. We [Alpha] were "super low on ammunition," and had continued to get fire all through the night. Apparently, the NVA never knew how bad off we were. What is apparent, however, is that Lt. Feldman's demonstrated aggressiveness in taking command and reorganizing the separated elements of Alpha Company, placed the company in a strong position on high ground [Hill 162], one from which we would have a reasonable chance of withstanding a determined enemy assault if it came. Had the company remained in the valley, a determined enemy assault might have easily overrun our positions. Moreover, Lt. Feldman's presence had a profound impact on the survival of Alpha's wounded. Many of the wounded would have surely died had not Lt. Feldman been present to assist them.

Ronald E. Fujikawa

* * *

Eyewitness Statement of 2Lt. Philip T. Hesli, USA, concerning the performance of Lt. Edward R. Feldman, USNR in combat at Hill 162 in Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam, on. 4 September 1968.

On the afternoon of 4 September 1968, I was 2nd Platoon Commander in Captain Charles E. Vernon's A Company, 1/61. On that day, my company's objective was the link up with and extraction of Marine Mike Force.

At approximately 1037 hours, my platoon, mounted on four M-113 ACAVs, was located at coordinates (04.5-65.3) attempting to ford the Song Noan, a small stream with treacherous banks. While in the process of this complex maneuver, one of my tracks became mired in sucking mud. After repeated attempts to free the trapped vehicle on my own, my single tow cable snapped.

Due to the worsening weather conditions, visibility was down to only 500 meters. Neither I or the men under my command, were able to spot the large body of NVA regulars which had moved into ambush positions along our path. They were prepared to strike my element. The first rocket-propelled grenade impacted with such violence that it

threw me off the top of my track and into the bottom of a shallow creek bed, which ran parallel to my stretched out column. I had been riding in the .50 caliber machine gun cupola. When I had recovered from my initial shock, I discovered I was covered with the brains of Sp4 Barry Walls who had been manning the M60 machine gun mounted on the right side of the track. Sp4 Walls was nearly decapitated by the exploding rocket. Blood was sticky on my face, and I soon realized that much of it was not Walls' but my own. Rocket shrapnel had blinded me in one eye.

NVA soldiers were all around me firing from positions a mere twenty meters away. Already drenched from the heavily falling rain, the barrage of small arms fire mowed down the elephant grass, showering me with debris as I lay in the ditch. This continued for some time but eventually, with my men directing heavy streams of automatic weapons fire into every suspected enemy position, the immediate area quieted somewhat. I began crawling back along the muddy stream bed toward a small thicket situated near the rear of my stalled column.

Sgt. Donald M. Gaines, the weapons platoon sergeant who, for some reason, had accompanied Hulett, was manning an M60 machine gun on the left side of his ACAV. The last track in the column sighted the mud-bathed figure of a man rise up from a small crop of scrub wood and begin to approach his ACAV. Preparing to open fire, Gaines swung his M60 toward me as I advanced. He's one of our guys," shouted another soldier, tipping Gaines' muzzle away from me.

"Let's get out of here," I ordered as I scrambled aboard Gaines' track. I ordered the track driver to move up parallel to my own stalled track. There, I sighted the form of Sgt. James A. Wright lying in the mud behind my track. I dismounted and moved quickly to Wright's assistance. Wright appeared to be dead.

I dropped the rear gate of my track and while being assisted by another soldier, staying as low to the ground as possible to avoid the intense enemy small arms and rocket fire, I attempted to roll Wright's body up the ramp and inside. Wright, who was a chunky guy, was wearing a pack when he was hit, and I found it terribly difficult to roll his body. After some time elapsed, enemy fire compelled the men still inside my track to close the gate. Realizing that I needed support if I was to get Sgt Wright on the track, I called for 2Lt. Hulett's track, located behind my own and to the left, to pull foreword. Hulett responded immediately, ordering his driver to advance. The driver, whose visibility was limited, pulled right over my legs, pressing me down into the mud. With the right track of Hulett's M-113 resting over the backs of my thighs, I cried out. 2Lt. Hulett, looking over the side, saw me squirming in the mud below, and told his driver to back up. Miraculously, my legs were uninjured. I then told Hulett to cover me by placing his track in a position to shield me while I loaded Sgt. Wright onto my track.

The radio in my track was not functioning. Using PRC-22, I was able to establish contact with Battalion. I informed Lt.Col. Wheeler, the Battalion Commander, that we were unsure of our exact location. We began to receive mortar fire as well as small arms. It was shortly after this time that a medevac helicopter arrived. I later learned that Lt. Edward R. Feldman, a Navy doctor came in on this helicopter.

I assisted in reorganizing my element and then in moving it up to the high ground where, that night, we established a defensive position. It rained all evening, so until I was evacuated with the other casualties, I remained inside one of the tracks. My leg was stiffening up, and my eye was swollen badly. In fact, I had two black eyes and both were swollen shut. About an hour after we moved to the high ground, Lt. Feldman came to check on me. With only the red light to see by, he cut my pants leg off and put medication on my wounds. Although our position was still being subjected to intermittent enemy fire, he left to attend other wounded. He separated the wounded and filled the dying with morphine. Sometime thereafter, C Company arrived to support us.

At 2246 hours, an Army CH-47 arrived to evacuate our wounded, and it was on this helicopter that I, too, was evacuated. With regard to the wounded of Alpha Company, it is my opinion that Lt. Feldman's presence definitely had a positive bearing on their fate. It is possible that some of our wounded would not have survived if it had not been for the care given them by Lt. Feldman.

Philip T Hesli

* * *

Eyewitness Statement of John W. Langston, Lt.Col. (USA/RET), concerning the performance of Lt. Edward M. Feldman, USNR in Combat near Hill 162 in Quang tri Province, Republic of Vietnam, on 4 September 1968.

On 4 September 1968, I was in command of B Company, 1st Battalion of the 61st Infantry Regiment (Mechanized). My company had just completed a search and clear operation within the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and had returned to Firebase C2, north of Cam Lo, Republic of Vietnam, for a stand down. At about 1600 hours that day, a runner arrived with orders from the Battalion Commander, Lt.Col. Bernard Wheeler, to monitor the Battalion Command and A Company frequencies. At that time, A Company was conducting search and clear operations near the DMZ.

When I turned on my radio, I heard Capt. Charles E. Vernon, A Company's Commander, reporting that his track had been hit by several rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) wounding him and several others. The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) were attempting to overrun his position. Capt. Vernon's driver turned his track around and began to withdraw when it was struck by another RPG which disabled the vehicle and killed or wounded all on board. Capt. Vernon, obviously in tears, was begging for help.

At that time, weather conditions did not permit the employment of close air support. Although artillery support was available, the forward observer accompanying Capt. Vernon had been killed by RPG fragments. Apparently, none of A Company's personnel were aware of their exact location and did not, or could not, call for artillery support. It soon became clear that A Company's several elements were widely dispersed and fighting separate engagements, against a numerically superior enemy force — several of A Company's platoon leaders had become casualties. Although A Company's men continued to battle determinedly, it was plain that the company's command structure had disintegrated.

As I continued to monitor the Battalion and A Company frequencies, I discovered a Navy doctor, whom I later learned was Lt. Edward M. Feldman, had arrived by helicopter in the battle area. He immediately undertook the task of caring for A Company's wounded. Apparently, Lt. Feldman determined with night closing in, the only way to successfully effect the evacuation of A Company's many casualties, was to reform the widely separated elements. He located a new defensive position atop a nearby prominence. Exercising an obvious innate leadership ability and assuming responsibility for what would have proved a difficult task for even an experienced infantry officer, Lt. Feldman took command of the situation and led the men of A Company in successfully completing this difficult maneuver. Later that night, while still monitoring the radios, I listened as Lt. Feldman called for a CH-47 helicopter to medevac A Company's remaining dead and wounded.

Lt. Feldman had chosen not to leave, but to stay on the ground with A Company, where his leadership and encouragement were needed most. It is my opinion, speaking as a combat experienced Company Commander and career Army officer, that if it were not for the skillful and courageous leadership of Lt. Feldman, many of A Company's wounded would have perished. Moreover, the several elements of the company would have been, had they remained separated, isolated and destroyed piecemeal by the enemy. Therefore, for his conspicuous acts of gallantry in coming to the aid of the men of A Company, 1st Battalion of the 61st Infantry Regiment (Mechanized), which were made at the risk of his own life, over and beyond the call of duty, I am recommending that Lt. Edward M. Feldman be awarded the Medal of Honor.

John Langston (Lt.Col. USA RET)

KHE SANH VETERANS ANNUAL REUNION 2002

July 3-7th 2002
Marriott Hotel • Las Colinas, Texas

223 West Las Colinas Boulevard, Irving Texas 75039
(972) 831-0000 for Reservations
Guest Fax: (972) 831-8861 ✣ Web site: marriotthotels.com

Located in the prestigious Las Colinas Center, 10 miles west of Dallas/Ft Worth airport (DFW)
Free shuttle service, 8 miles from downtown Dallas and Love Field airport.

DIRECTIONS: From DFW, Highway 114 East to O'Conner Boulevard exit. Turn left onto O'Conner Boulevard. Turn left onto Las Colinas Boulevard. The HOTEL is on the right. This Marriott was just built last summer and is a wonderful and clean hotel with outside area to drink beers, whiskey, and cokes. There is a nice breeze from the canals a few feet away from the Hotel. There is in-room coffee and tea, hair dryer and ironing board.

ATTRACTIONS: Texas Motor Speedway, Texas Stadium, Ball Park at Arlington, Six Flags over Texas, Water World, Grapevine Mills Mall and Bass Pro Shop/Outdoor World, Irving Mall, JFK Memorial, West End Market Place, Cotton Bowl, Galleria Mall, Ft. Worth Stockyards, Mesquite Rodeo, Movie Studios at Las Colinas, South Fork Ranch, Dallas Museum of Art and Las Colinas Mustang Bronze Horses. Indoor pool and spa; fitness center and whirlpool; waterfront sun patio; golf and jogging trail nearby. You can make reservations anytime. Early birds (before May 2002) – Chance for free 2 nights at raffle.

COST OF ROOMS: $73.00 per night plus tax.

COST OF FUN: Priceless

Remember we will be going to a RANCH on Friday for our BANQUET. I don't have the cost just yet on this event. Then on Sat., we will have a BUFFET in the late afternoon and have awards and presentations to all our beloved CORPSMAN. Can't miss this one, ya'll. We will have more details and a website up soon. We will also be mailing out Donation Raffle Tickets at $5.00 each – we will mail out five to each member. We are going to limit the prizes to 4 or 5, but they will be big prizes and you need not be present to win.

We now have large 4-inch window stickers on Vinyl with UV ink for sale as a fundraiser for the reunion. It is a diamond box with blue in the center, red around the box with all four branches of service in the red. Inside the blue square are the words KHE SANH in green – also a Vietnam ribbon in the square and the words *Fratres Aeterni* (Brothers Forever). The top of the diamond represents the Mountains and the bottom the Valleys there. It is pretty simple yet says a lot about us. They are $6.00 each 2 for $10.00. They will be for sale at the reunion also. Bumper stickers are in the works and will be ready soon. Cost will be $3.00 each, or 2 for $5.00. They read, "Home is where you dig it." Khe Sanh was home.

If you want to buy a window sticker, send money to Jim Wodecki, 2200 W. McGarity Ln., Allen TX 75002, (972) 727-2997.

Semper Fi
Jim Wodecki Secretary, Khe Sanh Vets

KHE SANH VETERANS ASSOCIATION
Membership Application

COPY, print & fill out form. Submit completed form to the address below.

Check: ❑ New Member ❑ Renewal ❑ Change

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____ MI _____

Nickname: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip + 4: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

FAX: _____ Email Address: _____

Are you a Khe Sanh Vet? Check one: ❑ YES ❑ NO

If YES, when were you at Khe Sanh? (Please be as specific & complete as possible):

_____

_____

Service Branch at Khe Sanh, Check applicable:

❑ Air Force ❑ Army ❑ Navy ❑ USMC ❑ Civilian

Your Unit: _____

If NO, tell us your association with Khe Sanh Vets:

_____

_____

Membership Type (check one & write in amount enclosed):

❑ Life ($150) ❑ Regular ($20) ❑ Associate ($20) $ _____

Please make check(s) payable to: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. If New Member Application or Renewal*, mail completed form with dues payment to:

Tom Eichler
3221 N. Opal
Chicago, IL. 60634
Phone: 773/625-2101 Fax: 773-625-8021
Email TEIC1448@AOL.COM

On renewals, circle any items to be changed. If a Request for change to current directory information, please complete the form, circle the items to be changed, and mail or fax a copy of your completed form.



Lt. Edward M. Feldman, USNR



Members of the **KHE SANH VETERANS** Association take pleasure in presenting the "DOC" Medal To

CORPSMEN, MEDICS, DOCTORS AND EVACUATION TECHNICIANS

Is Hereto Awarded the "DOC" Medal

For service set forth in the following:

For extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance in action against North Vietnamese Army forces in the Republic of Vietnam from, January 1962, to December 1970, during Operations in Quang Tri Province, and the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Throughout this period, imbued with an unrelenting combat spirit, determination, and initiative, they remained undeterred by heavy hostile artillery, mortar, and small arms fire. Our Corpsmen, Medics, Doctors, and other medical personnel were there, saving lives. We, and our families, whom are here because of that loving care, say "Thank you." These individual awards were designed and presented by members of the Khe Sanh Veterans to personally thank each and every one of you for your service. You are all an enduring reminder that *No Man, hath greater love for his fellow man, then when they were willing to lay down their lives to protect the lives of those in their care.*

Presented at the 2002 Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion, Irving Texas, 06 July 2002.

For The President KSV

James "Jimbo" Wodecki
Secretary, Khe Sanh Veterans

Awarded at the 2002 Reunion

William H. Morrison Sr.
James D. Beall
Charles L. Haig IV
John A. Cicala
Donald Ballard
Robert S. Whitman
David A. Martinez
James D. Armbrust
Dr. Edward M. Feldman
Ronald K. Townsend
Lee P. Webber
John R. Roberts Sr.
Robert Shippen (USA Medic)
George B. McClellan
James B. Thomas
Rod M. Fink



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and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

Reflections Reunion 2002

From the Vice President

On behalf of the Khe Sanh BOD, I want to thank our Secretary James "Jimbo" Wodecki, his lovely wife PJ, Ray Addington, members of their immediate families, as well as Ray's Young Marines (YM) for all the hard work and professionalism in putting together a most successful reunion. We heard nothing but accolades from our membership. Your hard work will become a model for all reunions to follow. The hotel was a class act, their staff went overboard to accommodate our every request (some times breaking their own rules). The facilities were first class all the way, and the buffet we were served was out of this world.

The award ceremony directed by Ray Addington was another professional presentation — from Megan, the beautiful young YM, who sang a beautiful rendition of our Nation's Anthem, to the many other Young Marines, who received a standing ovation. The first "DOC MEDAL," designed by James Wodecki, was presented by Retired Major General Mulberry to Don "Doc" Ballard, recipient of the MOH while serving as a corpsman in Vietnam and now a retired Lt. Col., USA. The "DOC" Medals were then presented to all the other Medical Personnel of the KSV.

John A. Alstad was presented his long overdue Purple Heart by Doc Ballard and Earle Breeding, former C/O E/2/26. In a surprise, the Colors of G Company 2/26 were returned to two of their members by Robert Schaefers. (See article "Welcome Home," by Tom Eichler for the complete story.)

Our day at the Dude Ranch was different and a lot of fun. Folks went on hayrides, pitched horseshoes, learned how to line dance, and do the Texas Two-Step. As for myself, being a Police Officer on the West Side of Chicago, I gave a lesson in roping to other members (see photos). Bruce Geiger attempted to compete but as you can see, his horse lost its legs — New York Cowboy. We were again treated to a fine feast at the barbeque, even though we had to ration a bit after Neil Kenny and Bob McLane finished. (James "The High Sheriff" Wodecki, maintained order.)

Back at the hotel, we relaxed and watched a fireworks display from the outdoor veranda, complete with another delicious barbeque buffet. Members chilled out for the rest of the evening, renewing old friendships and finding new ones.

Again, Thank You,
Tom Eichler, *VP*

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

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Bruce Geiger .....Member At Large
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Michael Worth.....Member At Large
Thomas Ford .....Member At Large
Frank Ceniseros .....Member At Large

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BOD NEWS

At the 2002 Board meeting, the resignation of our Treasurer Vince Griffith was accepted. Vince served in that capacity for many years and did an outstanding job. He has in the past graciously stayed on until we could find a replacement. A nomination was made and accepted — Ray Addington was appointed to the position of Treasurer. Ray has outstanding credentials in the field of banking and is directly involved in the organization's functions.



Ray Addington

The BOD voted to have the entire membership vote on the site for the next reunion in 2003. Three locations were in the running for the 2003 reunion — Hawaii, South Carolina, and Washington D.C. A vote by the membership at the General Meeting resulted in Charleston S.C. being selected for the 2003 Reunion. Complete details will be provided in the next newsletter. We are providing basic information in this edition. The proposed By-Laws are included as a separate attachment. Please read them carefully. If you have comments or are in disagreement, kindly let the BOD know.

Tom Eichler, *VP*

2003 KSV REUNION

* * *

The 2003 KSV Reunion
will be held 2-6 July 2003
Charleston International Airport
7401 Northwoods Blvd
Charleston, SC 29406
Ph: 1-843-572-2200
Fax: 1-843-863-8346
Reservations 1-800-Clarion



The Board at work.

Notes from the Membership Committee

Since the last reunion, we have lost 20 members to death or moving without leaving a forwarding address. We gained 70 members for a net increase of 50. This brings our total membership to 3,050. With a list provided by Reverend Ray Stubbe, I have included in this issue the names of Khe Sanh Veterans who died after their service there — either KIA or non-combat-related Deaths. It is a hard job keeping track of our entire membership. If you learn of anyone now or in the future that we missed, please let us know.

Tom Eichler, *Chairman*

Notes from the Publishing Committee

Again, Ernie and I are out hustling for stories in order to make the newsletter work. We need input and stories from our members. God knows, at this year's reunion I heard a million of them. All we ask is that you write them down and send them to us. Do not worry about grammar or spelling. We will take care of it for you. I have just completed the last and final version of the Membership Directory. All the mistakes and omissions in the old version have been corrected. As soon as this issue of the newsletter gets out, I will begin mailing them. All those who pre-paid and received copies, will get new ones. When you receive the latest version and find a mistake, let me know, so I can include the corrections in the Winter Issue of the newsletter.

Tom Eichler, *Chairman*

Memorial Page

The following is a list, compiled by Reverend Ray W. Stubbe, of fellow members who died after service at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. I have included all of the men who died at LZ Margo, since it is impossible to determine which of them were actually at Khe Sanh prior to the debacle at LZ Margo.

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD	CAUSE
ADAMS, DWIGHT LEE	H/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
AUEN, DAVID OLIVER	D/1/26	LCPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
		*		
BAKER, RUSTON LEE	A/1/26	LCPL	18 AUG 68	KIA
BANKS, HENRY DUANE	A/1/9	CAPT	14 JUL 68	KIA
BECKER, MICHAEL PAUL	A/1/26	PFC	07 JUN 68	KIA
BENNETT, PRENTICE J.	B/1/9	CPL	17 JUL 68	KIA
BOHANNON, EDWARD J	K/3/9	CPL	21 MAY 67	KIA
BOND, GEORGE ALLEN	H/2/26	LCPL	08 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
BRADFORD, EDWARD LEWIS	A/1/26	LCPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
BRADFORD, RODNEY	F/2/26	CPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
BREES, WILLIAM MARION JR	H&S 2/26	HN	08 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
BROWN-BEY, LANCASTER	H&S 2/26	LCPL	01 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
BRYAN, LAWRENCE GEORGE	H&S 2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
BEVILACQUA, RENATO M	A/1/26	PFC	08 JUN 68	KIA DOW
CABANO, GEORGE A.LLEN	G/2/26	PFC	03 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
CALZIA, FRANK VINCENT	B/1/26	HN	10 MAY 68	KIA
CAMPBELL, WILLIAM ROGER	E/2/26	PFC	06 JUN 68	KIA
CARTER, JAMES D JR	B/1/9	2LT	07 JUN 67	KIA
CAROTHERS, CECIL WAYNE	H&S/2/26	HM3	11 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
CAUDILL, JAMES	A/1/26	LCPL	18 AUG 68	KIA
CHAMBERS, JAMES LARRY	D/1/26	PFC	18 MAY 69	KIA
CHAPMAN, KURTIS NOLAN	D/1/26	LCPL	09 MAY 68	KIA
CHRISTMAN, JERRY NOLAN	A/1/26	PFC	07 JUN 68	KIA
CLARK, LARY GENE	A/1/26	PFC	15 JUN 68	KIA
COATES, CHARLES T.	E/2/9	LCPL	27 MAY 68	KIA
COLEMAN, CHARLES L	D/1/26	CPL	31 MAY 68	KIA
COLEMAN, WILLIAM FRANK	D/1/26	PFC	16 APR 68	KIA
CONKLIN, RICHARD DOUGLAS	A/1/26	PFC	15 JUN 68	KIA
CORES, THOMAS RICHARD LL	A/1/26	SGT	07 JUN 68	KIA
COYNE, KEVIN MARK	A/1/26	LCPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
CUFF, DONALD MERRITT	A/1/26	SSGT	07 JUN 68	KIA
COTTINGHAM, DUANE ROGER	D/1/26	LCPL	13 JUN 68	KIA DOW
CUNNINGHAM, EDWARD	E/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
		*		
DABUZZO, DENNY	E/2/26	LCPL	06 JUN 68	KIA
DAFFIN, GARY	E/2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
DEFAZIO, PHILLIP FRANK	H&S 2/26	PFC	11 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD	CAUSE
DESCHAINE, NORMAN C	D/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
DESCHENES, MICHAEL HUBERT	H/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
DIXON, DAVID ERNEST	C/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
DONOGHUE, JOHN MARTIN	E/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
DONOGHUE, STEPHEN SCOTT	B/1/26	PVT	29 MAY 68	KIA
DURHAM, JAMES C BUIL	E/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
		*		
EISENBRAUGH, D.L.	H&S/2/26	HN	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
ESPY, JOHNNIE BEE	D/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
ESSARY, GEORGE ARTHUR	A/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
		*		
FERNANDEZ, EUGENIO E JR	D/1/26	PFC	09 MAY 68	KIA
FIKE, DANIEL EUGENE	A/1/26	LCPL	18 OCT 68	KIA
FREED, DAVID BRUCE	F/2/26	LCPL	19 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
		*		
GEERDES, DKONNIE DELBERT	D/1/26	LCPL	13 JUN 68	KIA
GILLASPY, EDWARD ANDREW	D/1/26	PFC	09 MAY 68	KIA
GRANT, STEPHEN MITCHELL	A/1/26	PFC	15 JUN 68	KIA
GRASSI, CLEMENT JOHN	A/1/26	CPL	15 JUN 68	KIA
GRIFFIN, THEODORE STEVEN	A/1/26	PFC	15 JUN 68	KIA
GUM, EDWARD SHERIDAN	D/1/26	CPL	22 FEB 69	KIA
		*		
HACKER, KURT ERIC	A/1/26	PFC	05 JUN 68	KIA DOW
HAGGEY, JIM	E/2/26	LCPL	06 DEC 68	KIA
HANNAH, SAMUEL JAMES	D/1/26	2 LT	07 JUN 68	KIA
HENDERSON, MONTE H. JR	H&S/2/26	PFC	01 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
HENSON, CLARK LEE JR	D/1/26	SGT	16 JUN 68	KIA
HERNDON, W.COLE	H&S/2/26	2 LT	11 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
HOWELL, GATLIN	B/1/9	2 LT	07 JUL 67	KIA
HUGHES, EDWARD JOHN JR.	D/1/26	CAPT	09 MAY 68	KIA
HUNTER, DELON	E/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
		*		
IMPSON, DOUGLAS GERALD	H/2/26	PFC	15 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
ISGRIG, DENNIS EDWARD	C/1/26	CPL	15 MAY 68	KIA
		*		
KIRKEBY, DAVID LYNN	H&S/1/26	PFC	10 MAY 68	KIA
KIZZIE, LEON EDWARD	H/2/26	PFC	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
KNISELY, ROBERT L.EE JR	G/2/26	CPL	01 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
KNOX, DAVID	D/1/26	LCPL	08 JUN 68	KIA DOW
KUNSHIER, GARY LEE	G/2/26	PFC	04 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
KUPPERSCHMIDT, JEROME D	A/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
		*		
LEIGH, THOMAS ANTHONY JR	A/1/26	CPL	18 AUG 68	KIA
LEONARD, ARNOLD LEE JR		LCPL	16 JUN 68	KIA
LEYBA, RAMON	A/1/26	HM3	07 JUN 68	KIA
LOUGHRAN, JOSEPH M	3/26-XO	MAJ	02 MAY 68	KIA
LOYA, PAUL NELSON	D/1/26	LCPL	13 JUN 68	KIA

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD	CAUSE
MARCUM, JERRY LEE	H/2/26	PFC	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
MARKUM, ROBERT BAILEY	D/1/26	CPL	17 NOV 68	KIA
MARTIN, CLIFFORD B JR	B/1/26	HN	29 MAY 68	KIA
MCCLOSKEY, ROBERT ALLEN	A/1/26	LCPL	15 JUN 68	KIA
MCDONALD, D.L.	H/2/26	PFC	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
MCGRATH, PAUL MARTIN	A/1/26	2 LT	07 JUN 68	KIA
MIDDLEBROOKS, CARL MASO	A/1126	PFC	07 JUN 68	KIA
MILLER, CARL ROBERT	D/1/26	LCPL	18 JUL 68	KIA
MITCHELL, HOMER JR	D/1/26	LCPL	09 MAY 68	KIA
MOORE, DENVER JR	G/2/26	CPL	03 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
MOORE, WILLIAM JAMES	H&S 2/26	CPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
		*		
ONSLOW, ROBERT CRANLEY	H&S/1/26	CAPT	10 MAY 68	KIA
OSKILANIC, WILLIAM JOSEPH	H&S/2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
		*		
PARKER, WILLIAM THOMAS	H&S/2/26	CPL	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PARKER, WINSTON GLEN	D/1/26	HM3	09 MAY 68	KIA
PEDEN, CLARK EDMUND	H&S/2/26	PFC	26 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PEGRAM, RICHARD EPPS	FOB-3	SMAJ	23 AUG 68	KIA
PETTLT, STANLEY RUSSELL	E/2/26	CPL	15 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PEREZ, VICTOR JR	G/2/26	CPL	01 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PERSONETTE, MICHAEL DARWIN	G/2/26	LCPL	23 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PHILLIPS, THOMAS MILES	G/2/26	CPL	13 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
POINTER, RONALD JOSEPH	H/2/26	PFC	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
POLLASTRO, DOMINICK	H&S/2/26	LCPL	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
PORTER, JACK EUGENE	D/1/26	LCPL	09 MAY 68	KIA
PRESLEY, JAMES HENRY		LCPL	02 JUN 68	KIA
PROCK, DANNY	E/2/26	LCPL	06 JUN 68	KIA
		*		
RAAB, JAMES DONALD	C/1/26	HM3	12 JUN 68	KIA
RALPH, GARY RAY	A/1/26	PFC	16 AUG 68	KIA
REICHARDT, STEVEN JOHN	H/2/26	PFC	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
RICHMOND, JAMES ROSS	D/1/26	PFC	15 JUN 68	KIA
RINEHART, JAMES DALE	F/2/26	LCPL	19 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
RIVERS, HARRY EUGENE	E/2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
ROBINSON, HENRY	26MAR/SP			23 FEB 69 KIA
ROBLE, JOSEPH EDWARD	E/2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
ROCKEFELLER, RONALD ED	D/1/26	HN	07 JUN 68	KIA
ROSS, MICHAEL ROBERT II	G/2/26	PFC	03 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO
		*		
SANCHEZ, JUAN OSCAR	E/2/26	SSGT	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
SCARPINATO, JOHN A	D/1/26	LCPL	07 JUN 68	KIA
SCOTT, JOHNNY MAJOR JR	B/1/26	PFC	05 JUN 68	KIA
SECOR, GILBERT ARTHUR	FOB-3	MSGT	23 AUG 68	KIA
SHELLEY, GREGORY ALLEN	A/1/26	CPL	07 JUN 68	KIA

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD	CAUSE
SICKEL, ROBERT PAUL	D/1/26	LCPL	09 MAY 68	KIA
SKOCICH, FRANK ALBERT	H&S/2/26	PFC	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
SMITH, JAMES ALFRED	B/1/26	PFC	29 MAY 68	KIA
SONGE, D.L.	H&S/2/26	HN	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
SPILLVER, CLIFTON	E/2/26	LCPL	16 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO DOW
ST JOHN, DAVID MICHAEL	A/1/26	LCPL	18 AUG 68	KIA
STAPLES, ALTON LEON III	A/1/26	PFC	07 JUN 68	KIA
STEWART, BILLY GRAY	D/1/26	PFC	09 MAY 68	KIA
STRICKLAND, BILLY GRANVILLE	E/2/26	SGT *	17 SEP 68	KIA LZ MARGO
TOLENTINO, CLARENCE	D/1/26	SSGT	17 JUN 68	KIA DOW
TRAVIS, MICHAEL WARREN	A/1/26	CPL *	07 JUN 68	KIA
VAUGHT, JOHNNIE L JR.	A/1/26	PFC *	29 SEP 68	KIA
WARD, CARL RAY	D/1/26	SGT	15 JUN 68	KIA
WASHUT, WALTER JUNIOR	K/3/9	CPL	20 MAY 67	KIA
WATERS, WILLIAM WALTER	I/3/26	LCPL	28 AUG 68	KIA
WEATHERS, WILLIAM B III	B/1/9	CPL	17 JUL 68	KIA
WESLEY, ERNEST LAMAR	A/1/26	PFC	07 JUN 68	KIA
WIGTON, PHILLIP GREGORY	M/3/26	LCPL	09 MAY 68	KIA
WILKINS, JAMES MARVIN	A/1/26	LCPL	31 JUL 68	KIA
WINDHAM, MELVIN GEORGE	D/1/26	HN	09 MAY 68	KIA
WYROSDIC, WILLIAM EVERETT	H/2/26	CPL	08 OCT 68	KIA LZ MARGO

A List of Members whom have past away since their service at Khe Sanh Combat Base from causes unrelated to their service at Khe Sanh:

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD
ADAMS, LARRY EARL			
ALAIRE, RICHARD	D/1/26		UNKNOWN
ALBERS, CRAIG WILLIAM	CAC 0	CPL	15 APR 82
ASASAKI, JERRY	SEABEES		20 SEP 91
AUCOIN, ROBERT JOSEPH			UNKNOWN
	*		
BABBITT, MANUEL P.	A/3D ATS		
BAIG, MIRZA MUNIR	HQ 26TH MAR		20 APR 71
BAILEY, BEETLE	C/1/9		22 NOV 98
BALDWIN, DANIEL L III	CCN		01 JUN 94
BALL, PHILLIP	F/2/3		05 JUL 01
BARKOWSKI, WILLIAM J	A/1/13		01 JUN 94
BERNARD, ROBERT	HQBN/3DMARDIV		UNKNOWN
BRACKMAN, JAMES T II	C/1/13		21 JUN 93
BROWN, EDWARD J	F/2/26		1988
BRUNE, AL	L/3/3		11 DEC 00
BURNS, EDWARD	A/3D RECON		1989
BURNS, ROY TB1	B/3D RECON		14 OCT 95
BYSTROM,TOM	L/3/26		21 NOV 92
	*		
CANATSEY, GERALD	2/26		24 MAR 02
CASE'F, THOMAS E	B/1/26	HM3	01 MAR 98
CAWLEY, LEO	1/1		21 JUL 91
CEFAIL, NORMAN	H&S/1/26	CAPT	UNKNOWN
CERRA, BERNARD	HMH-463		29 JUN 97
CHVARAK, DON	108TH ARTY		UNKNOWN
COFFEY, PATRICK	1/3/9		1995
CONICK, JOHN E	ISO 3RDMA DIV		08 AUG 90
COOK, WALTER T	26TH MAR S-4		30 OCT 01
COPELAND, CHARLES			09 JAN 87
CORBIN, ARTHUR W	D/1/9		19981119
COSTELLO, GARY M	D/1/9-X0		03 SEP 97
CRAIG, WILLIAM	A-101 LANGVEI	MSGT	29 APR 99
CUMBERLAND, CECIL	MACV TM 4		UNKNOWN
CURTIS, TIM	L/3/3		2001
	*		
D'HONDT, CAMILLE	A/1/9	GYSGT	13 JAN 00
DAMIANO, JAMES	A/1/1		16 JUL 01
DEGRYSE, RICHARD	11TH ENG		08 OCT 89
DORING, GEORGE	H&S/1/26		30 AUG 90
DRISCOLL, WALTER	CHAPLAIN		12 JAN 02
DUFFY, PAT	H&S/1/26	1/LT	1999
DURR, KING	A/3D SP		26 DEC 00

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD
EPPS, JAMES	C/1/26	1/LT	18 JAN 02
ERNST, CLAYTON	3D FRC		1995
EVANS, JOHN P	E/2/9		27 DEC 00
EVANS, MIKE	H/2/3		21 DEC 88
EVEREST, CHARLES	M13/26		1993
	*		
FAUREBRAC, LES	A/1/16		1992
FEDYSZYN, JOHN	C/1/12		UNKNOWN
FLOYD, DAVID	A/11/9		11 APR 94
FORNER, DAVID	1/26		2000
FOX, JOSEPH	B/3D RECON		11 JUN 70
FRANK, ERNIE UNKNOWN			
FRANKLIN, FR. ROBERT	4TH MAR		UNKNOWN
	*		
GARCIA, LARRY	3DENG		1994
GARRISON, DANNY	A/1/26		01 JAN 00
GRENAT, RICHARD	D/1/26		26 FEB 99
	*		
HALL, W.C.	VMO-6		1997
HAVLIK, JOHN	MACTU-62		1997
HEINRICH, JOHN	I/3/26		1995
HENDERSON, LARRY	ARMY INTELL		UNKNOWN
HENNELLY, JOHN	1/13-C/O	LTCOL	05 JUN 95
HERB, DENNIS	B/3DRECON	SGT	27 NOV 01
HERNANDEZ, AUMONT	FLC		24 NOV 99
HOLLAND, ROGER LEE			19 FEB 99
HOODY, THOMAS E	B/1/26-HN		09 NOV 01
HORNE, T.M.	SOP	COL	31 DEC 95
HUBER, CHARLES	2/26		11 FEB 00
HUSHER, ROBERT	M/3/26	LCPL	1990
	*		
IZENOUR, FRANK	E/2/3	1 /LT	16 DEC 88
	*		
JABUSCH, WILLIAM	H&S/3/26		08 NOV 91
JACOBS, QUILLES	B/1/26		19 APR 95
JARABEK, JOHN J	HQ/1/11		1996
JENNINGS, ORVAL	B/3D RECON		10 NOV 84
JOHNSON, KENNETH	FO		09 FEB 78
JONES, JAMES A	2/17 CAV 101ST		08 MAY 01
KERCH, RICHARD J	MAG-16		19 JUN 98
KILPATRICK, ELDON	C/11/9		07 FEB 98
KINANE, JAMES	B/3D RECON		16 JUN 94
KOSDTROUM, RONALD	D/3RD RECON		15 DEC 70
KUCHIERA, GARY L	M/3/26		04 APR 92
	*		

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD
LACY, STUART	B/1/13		1969
LENHART, GEORGE	MACTU-62		2001
LUCERO, ALFREDO	A/1/13		UNKNOWN
LUMPKIN, ALBERT R	B/3D RECON		09 DEC 01
	*		
MAGILLIGAN, DONALD	C MED	LT	20 JUN 89
MARTIN, ORNAN K	B/3D TANKS		28 OCT 01
MCCAIN, DONALD	G/2/26		30 JUL 81
MCCONNELL, TERRY	C/1/26		1993
MCCRACKEN, JACK H	HMM-165		1967
MCDONALD, JIMMY L	1/13		06 NOV 94
MCGEE, RICHARD L	H&S/1/9		UNKNOWN
MCINTYRE, DONALD M	EOD		06 JUN 96
MCNEAL, JESSE	E/2/26		31 OCT 91
MCNEELE	M/3/26		1989
METTS, ANDREW L	A/11/9		02 NOV 96
MICKE, NICHOLAS	B/3RD RECON		16 APR 71
MOUSEL, THOMAS	1/1		1974
MUMMERT, JOHN D			1998
MURPHY, ROBERT	VMFA-542		1994
	*		
NEFF, ROBERT L	VMO-6		16 MAY 96
NESTER, GARY STEPHEN	G/2/11		1998
	*		
O'DONOVAN, JEROME "CHIP"	HJ2126		22 OCT 99
	*		
PADGETT, ROBERT C			23 JAN 99
PADLEY, JOHN J	RLT-26	COL	06 DEC 91
PARKER, ROBERT A	H&S&B/1/26		05 NOV 01
PARR, RON	B/3D RECON		20 SEP 90
PEHRSON, CHAD	H/2/3		1974
PELLETTER, P.A.	H&S/3/26-81S		27 JUN 96
PIPER, MICHAEL	2/26		07 MAY 99
PLESS, STEPHEN WESLEY	VMO-6	CAPT	1969
PORTER, JOHN			UNKNOWN
PRADO, WARREN	B/1/26-WPNS		09 FEB 02
	*		
RAMSEY, LARRY	11TH ENG		20 NOV 95
RAYBURN, ED	B/1/26		UNKNOWN
RAYMOND, JOHN	A/1/26	CAPT	28 AUG 87
ROBERTS, JOHN P.	20TH TASS	COL	09 MAR 01
RODELL, DAVID L	W/1/13		09 MAY 97
ROMAN, JOSEPH	HMM-265	CAPT	11 JAN 00
ROMINE, RICHARD E	HMM-165	CAPT	31 JUL 99
ROSE, HAROLD K	CCN	COL	11 MAY 90
RUSSELL, VERNER	CAC-0		01 MAY 73

NAME	UNIT	RANK	DOD
SAMMS, TOM	A/1/26		22 NOV 92
SCHAFFENBERGER, WALLY	H&S/3/26		25 MAR 99
SCHRON, COURTNEY			18 MAY 94
SCULLY, ROBERT L	FOB-3		25 MAY 85
SEARLE, HENRY	VMA-211		1999
SILVA, VICTOR	A/1/26		UNKNOWN
SIMS, TIMOTHY C	M/3/26		10 JUN 02
SKINNER, ROGER	B/3DRECON		2000
STAGGS, DAN	E/2/26		04 JUL 99
STEPTOE, BILLY	A-101 LANG VEI		07 FEB 93
STEVENS, EDWARD L	B/3RD RECON		29 JUN 76
STROSS, WILLIAM	G/2/3		17 APR 88
SULLIVAN, WILLIAM	HMH-463		17 JUL 83
SYLVA, DAVID	USAF		23 MAY 99
TAYLOR, MERYIN	USAF C-130S		2001
THEIS, JAMES M	D/1/26		26 MAR 76
THOMAS, JOHN	A/3D SHOREP		26 DEC 00
TORTI, JOSEPH	I/3/26		15 MAR 98
TOYE, JAMES	E/2/26		11 MAY 98
UPHOLD, GEORGE	D/3D RECON		25 NOV 74
WALTERS, FRED M "CHIP"	A/1/9		14 FEB 94
WARD, MARK	G/2/26		23 JUN 99
WATHKE, MICHAEL	C/1/9		1996
WATSON, TALBOT	D/3D RECON	1/LT	12 MAY 80
WEST, JOHN	H&S/1/26		2001
WEDGE, JAMES	B/1/13		02 FEB 99
WHALEN, HARRY D	FOB-1	SMAJ	14 MAY 93

Memorials

In Memory of Jim Epps

My husband Bruce and I attended our first Khe Sanh reunion in Covington, Kentucky. I do not remember if that was the year we met Jim Epps. I do remember searching him out at each of the reunions after we had met. His warmth and friendliness made Bruce and me feel like his old friend. Jim and I connected because we were both victims of COPD, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Jim had severe emphysema and chronic bronchitis, and I have a hereditary deficiency, leaving me with 19% of my lung capacity. I am currently on the lung transplant list in Minnesota. We both struggled with each breath, something others take for granted. I am greatly improved with steroids, which I take before each reunion to enable me to travel.

Jim and I, both on oxygen, shared cabs and tables as our heartier friends walked to ceremonies, restaurants and historic sites in D.C., Philadelphia, or other reunion locales. His generosity was ever abundant, like when he chipped in a $20 bill to "cover" those less fortunate when a van took us to a function in Washington.

Each year I saw Jim struggle a little more. I wish I had connected with him at his home in California when he missed the last reunion. I wish I had known he would be hospitalized and we would never see him again. But I know his struggle is over, and a warm, wonderful, generous person is breathing easier in heaven.

Susan Saffel

In Memory of Robert Harrell

Shortly after the KSV reunion in Chicago, Bob Harrell passed away from liver cancer. We consider ourselves fortunate to have known Bob and to have seen him again last July. He displayed great courage and optimisim, despite the severity of his illness. According to Bruce, these are the same qualities he displayed during the Siege at Khe Sanh, while serving with 3rd Anti-Tanks. For those reasons, we consider him not only a good friend but a good Marine.

We think of him often and will miss him greatly. We find it ironic that the Vietnam War is still taking lives. Our sympathy and prayers go out to Bob's family and to his wife, Mary.

Bruce and Susan Saffel
USMC 3RD Anti Tank

Fog

Slowly the fog creeps in, at first it was hard to see. The drizzle hid the fog so well it was hard for my eyes to see the sly fog sneaking in.

As I slowly came to realize the fog's presence, I suddenly found myself on an airstrip covered with fog.

The airstrip was empty, no planes, choppers, no one in sight. It was so peaceful and quiet no sounds of engines, no outgoing or incoming. No voices to ruin the quiet.

Peace, the peace of the dead. That fog hid the base from preying eyes of the enemy.

As I stood there I prayed for the fog to both stay and leave. As long as it stayed, we were safe from incoming fire. But I prayed for the sun to burn the fog away so those dead, dying, and wounded could be flown to safety.

The fog is both friend and foe. It means both death and life. I feel selfish not wanting it to leave. I want to live so I am "lost." I can't have it both ways. Sunshine for food and ammo; fog so Charlie doesn't see and can't shoot at me!

Fog, you remind me of Red Clay – a plateau of death and pain!

Sam L. Messer
CBMU-301
DET-B SEABEES

Jimbo,

When that medal was put around my neck, it felt like a huge burden was raised from my shoulders. You guys went above and beyond the call. It was absolutely the proudest, humblest, and most important event of my life...bar none.

Doc Jim Armbrust

Sometimes we become so involved with the fun and festivities at the reunion, we neglect to give credit to those who are so deserving. Many thanks to Tom, Jimbo, and all the others who worked so hard organizing and arranging the 2002 reunion. Thanks again for a job well done.

Tex Seiber
Delta Co 1/26

It happened on a hot Thursday night at the Los Colinas Marriott not long after the fireworks. A few of us diehards decided to move our party and the free beer out to the patio. Lloyd, AKA "Shortround," asked me if I would help him move the beer tub from the reception room to the party outside. "Hey, anything for you, Shortround." We both headed for the elevator. When we reached the second floor I said, "Stand back, Lloyd. I'll handle this!" I then bent over, took a hold on each of the handles on the tub of ice and beer, gave a good heave ho, and took a header directly into the ice cold water. This was about all Shortround could handle. In a fit of uncontrollable laughter, all the while rolling on the floor, he let me know in no uncertain terms that I had made his day. "That was the funniest thing I've ever seen," he said. Brothers, it just goes to show you that we'll do anything for one another.

Semper Fi, See ya in Charleston,
Wayne Shumaker

Dear Khe Sanh Veterans, Families and Friends, I write to thank you for the warm welcome so many of you gave me at the 2002 reunion. Your interest in my POW/MIA exhibit and LASIA (Learning and Sharing in Appreciation) exhibit is appreciated. Thank you also to the veterans and others who signed up to receive our student (LASIA) letters. I hope your participation in this important endeavor will reap meaningful rewards for you. The students do gain from learning about you, writing to you, and reading the letters of those who choose to write back. I have noticed this gain, not only in their learning, but also in their outlook. I have heard it said that giving gratitude enriches the giver also. I have seen this in these young people. Again, please accept my appreciation and good wishes.

Sharon Lynn Pelon/ LASIA
Lincoln Avenue Elementary School
1817 W. Lincoln Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53215
e-mail dientae@yahoo.com





Jan McInttyre and Sharon Lynn Pelon. Teachers sharing ideas.

Getting acquainted and reacquainted



President "Bulldog" Smith greeting guests including Gold Star Mother Anna "Mickey" Roble (in dark glasses) and her son Bill, foreground left.



Men of Delta Company



Gold Star Mothers Maylene Littlefield at far left and Lucile Payne (seated) visiting with friends.

Chillin' Texas Style











Shortround and friends



Chief giving his blessing to friends



Friends meet again







All our beautiful young ladies





The Circle "R" Ranch











Uh-oh



Bruce Geiger (USA) — Bruce's horse lost its feet.



Tommy Eichler (USMC) — From the Wild West (Side of Chicago, that is.)

Ahhh, this is more like it



Texas Two-Stepping













Instant Texans





Saturday Night Ceremonies

John Alstad finally getting his Purple Heart from Medal of Honor recipient Don "Doc" Ballard.



Young Marine Megan sings the Nation's anthem.





KSV President David "Bulldog" Smith receives proclamation from the City of Irving, honoring the service of Khe Sanh Veterans.



After Doc Ballard explains the proposed new memorial for Corpsmen, Neil Kenny makes the first contribution for Doc's commemorative statue honoring those who served as Corpsmen.



Major General Mulberry delivers welcoming remarks.

Young Marine Honor Guard march in the colors.



DOCS Awards



The honored "DOCS" march in.



Don "Doc" Ballard, MOH recipient, receives first "DOC" medal from Major General Mulberry. The medal was designed by James Wodecki.



Don "Doc" Ballard and Major General Mulberry award the medal to each honoree.



Web Briefs

Anyone out there know anyone that was part of the detail that used to fetch the supplies that were parachuted into Khe Sanh? I have old footage that I just received.

David

❋

I got to do that.

Quiet in the DZ, but you still had to drive the deuce and a half back into the base. That sucked. Couldn't hear the incoming. I was in "C" 3rd M/T. Sure put a chill up my butt!

Semper Fi
Bill Delozer

❋

I was in 2nd Platoon, Charlie 1/9 — we pulled drop zone security all the time. I remember our corpsman was trapped in his hole. A pallet stuck in it like a cork in a bottle. We got him out with little more than a bump on his head. I remember supplies overshooting the drop zone. If it was close enough, we went out and retrieved them. I have other stories about this, if you want to hear. I would like to see any film you have, it would bring back a lot of memories.

Don Meyer

ED NOTE: Don, let's hear the other stories. We'd love to print them.

❋

I was on the dropping end. I would have liked to see what actually happened to the stuff.

Ray Prittie

❋

I was with B Co, 3rd Recon. We pulled security for one drop. One parachute did not fully deploy and a pallet of peaches was scattered everywhere. Picked up a few cans and ate so many, I got sick. Never ate too many Ham and Mofos though.

Lee Upshaw

❋

I was with HQ Btry, 1/13. I remember one time when three guys jumped out of a C-130 to set up the DZ. Two of the chutes didn't open.

Jim

❋

I was a radio operator with Hq Co Comm. 26th Marines. We provided communications at the drop zone. I remember the incident you referred to. It involved the second and third jumpers and was the direct result of the third one jumping too soon. He landed on the just opening chute of the second one, and they both became tangled and were unable to recover due to the low altitude jump.

Pat D'Amaco

❋

I've got shots of the planes overhead, out come the crates, and the chutes open. Then, there's footage of some that missed the drop zone — crates and chutes in a rice paddy. One of the guys in the video has a big red/black tattoo on his right arm near the shoulder. There are a few black Marines helping him. The slate shown in the credits has the title, "Khe Sanh, re-supply." The dates vary...March 7, 1968, Feb. 26-27, 1968. The credits also give a "Rodriquez" credit for making the film. Anyone know who he is? I'll be looking at more of it tonight at work...will keep you posted.

David

❋

No, I don't know anyone, if you do reach anyone, thank them for that parachute they let me "borrow" back on about 14 Dec 67. Kilo had the western end of the lines back then (facing out to the drop zone), and in our small tent we were snug and warm, thanks to the parachute draped over it! Hope I'm not in the footage on the "borrow mission!"

Dennis

❋

Funny story about my first flight into Khe Sanh as part of a supply mission for Lam Son 719...I was the navigator on a C-130 using radar to get us through the valley to the base in thick clouds. We were in contact with an Army CCT on the ground. They

advised us to watch out for "numerous helicopters in the area." Our AC told the co-pilot to call out locations of any helicopters when we broke out of the clouds. We broke out at probably below minimum landing conditions, and the co-pilot, a first lieutenant as I remember, blurted out... "THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!"

Al Wilson

❋

I speak for all C-130 guys when I say we can't thank you guys enough. Very sincerely, Bro. Can't really put anything else into words. Hope nobody got hurt.

Ray Prittie

❋

Those types of re-supply started back in Sept. of 67. At that time, they almost never hit the drop zone. We had to go out and get the stuff. I remember one time they even dropped some beer. We all got a ration card for 2 beers. Those that did not drink made out as they were able to sell their portion for a nice sum. Recall a lot of the cans were damaged and when you opened it up you had to be quick as the beer would spray out. Ahhh, warm beer in Khe Sanh. What could be better!

I had my two warm ones and I recall getting a little buzz. From what I can remember that was the one and only time we got it.

Gene

❋

####! You have to love the AF. Never dropped any beer. Thousands of sand bags maybe, but no beer. Too much.

Ray Prittie

I salute all the vets with highest regards. I'm looking for anyone who was at Fire Base Henderson when it was overrun May 3, 4, or 6, 1970. My brother's name was Sgt. Michael Francis Brown. B Btry 2/11 Arty. 101st AB, Screaming Eagles. From what I have pieced together, in the spring of 1970, the 101st began a strong effort to prepare ARVN forces to take over operations of the 101st Airborne. At that time their base of operation was Firebase Henderson. The headquarters had three extra howitzers of B Battery 2/11, which would be taken from Firebase Bastogne. My brother was working one of those howitzers. The occupation of Henderson (a former Marine Corps firebase) was near Khe Sanh. Does anybody remember Sgt. Michael Francis Brown or the action that went on early morning of May 6, 1970? If so, just respond:

Spiriteagle77@aol.com
Gregory Brown

Sgt. Ronald Norman Bloom

I am in contact with the family of Sgt. Ronald Norman Bloom, KIA 8/2/68, the morning of the attack on Hill 950. His family is asking for anyone who can tell what his last days were like. They need to know. Ron was on his third tour and was in E Co 2/4, 3rd Plt. He was there from May 68. They have one account of the fight from a Jack Perritt, but would like to hear from others. Thanks, brothers!

I was in-country with Ron for the first two tours.

Semper Fi
Gary

Safe S###ter

Just before the siege, Col. Lownds made every unit near the COC erect some type of decoy antenna to confuse the NVA gunners. In B Co 3rd Recon, we added a pole about 20 ft. tall with the bottom of a 55-gallon drum lid with holes poked in it to the nice 3-holer the Seabees built for us. Our entire company area was blown all to hell, but the s###ter withstood the whole time of the Siege except for a few shrapnel holes. Small wonders.

PS: The board did the censoring not me. I called it like it was.

❋

Leland,

I am sure we crossed paths somewhere in your area! I was in Security Platoon and we lived right next to you on the right flank. I remember all the antennas but never knew some were decoys! I was in

a group at VA with a RAY SAXTON from your outfit. You remember him? Take care,

Jdel

861-A, Feb 5,1968

This morning at 3am, 34 years ago, I became a man after being in my first combat. To All My Brothers that were killed that morning...Rest in Peace...Semper Fi

❋

Amen, brother. We on 861 could only watch and wait. Along with 1/21, this day is one that I, too, will never forget. You guys did one hell of a job. I regret that we lost so many friends on 861 and 861A. Their memory still burns strong within. God bless them all.

Semper Fi "Shu"

❋

It is hard to believe that 34 years have passed since that morning of 05 Feb 68 when the NVA attempted to take Hill 861A away from us. The NVA paid dearly for their efforts, but so did we. For all those brave young Marines who fought so gallantly and gave their lives, I want to say they will forever be remembered as long as the rest of us who fought alongside them remain on this earth. God Bless Them All.

Tom Eichler
E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

David "Bulldog" Smith

I do not know how to contact David Smith. I thought someone on this board might be able to get this question to him. When I first arrived at Khe Sanh, one of my first encounters was with a crazy sergeant named David Smith. After leaving Khe Sanh I stepped on a land mine and ended up at a naval hospital in Corpus Christi, Texas. While there, I ran into Sgt. Smith again. Bulldog, are you the same guy?

❋

No, he is not. Bulldog, the President of the KSV, is a retired United States Army Colonel. He was a Major when at Khe Sanh. His picture is in a recent issue of the *American Legion* magazine.

Photos of Mike Co. 3/9

I need help finding photos for my uncle. His name is Kenny Kanengieter. He was with M CO 3/9 (67-68). I don't know which platoon. He was a L/Cpl. and is from Little Rock, Iowa. He was at Con Thien and on 881s at Khe Sanh. They were shipped to (Okinawa?) afterwards to re-man. He said a photographer did a story in *LIFE* magazine during Con Thien, but his photo was not used. Any help or info you can give would be greatly appreciated. God bless you all.

Deek

❋

Kilo 3/9 went to Okinawa in Feb 67. Mike may have been there at the same time or later. Kilo was also at Hill 881 in April 67, at Con Thien in Spring/Summer 67, on operations in or around Khe Sanh June/early July 68 and at Con Thien for an operation on July 7,1968. Mike, Lima, Kilo, and India worked together while in VN so they would have been nearby Kilo. These are some general dates. Kilo, Mike, Lima, H&S, and some of India 3/9 and 2/12 will be having a reunion this summer in Orlando. Go to Gomer's web page for more info or to post info. *http://www.blueridge.net/mpyle*

Ray Felle
Kilo Company 3/9/3 12/67-8/68
Kilo Company Archive Officer 2001-2002

❋

I was with M 3/9 in 1967 until Dec. 1968. I was also wounded at Con Thien in July 1968. I have no photos but if your uncle wants to write me, tell him I will be happy to talk to him.

Semper Fi
John Bosley

FAC Picked Up Wounded Airmen While Being Mortared

To anyone out there. On or around January 68, my dad, a forward air controller, landed at Khe Sanh and picked up a wounded airman who had superficial wounds. He was mortared while taxiing in. After he parked the 02 aircraft, a mortar landed close to it and it drifted into a K loaded that was idling by the aircraft. It didn't do much damage and after Dad located the airman, he taxied out while being mortared the whole time until he got the hell out of there. Does anyone remember this incident? Please reply if you witnessed this event. Anything at all will be helpful as I'm in the final quest to get the DFC my father was promised for this incident. But due to the fog of war, he didn't get it. Please respond. Any bit of info will be helpful. Thanks.

Steve Smith SGT. USAF, 68-72
C/O Robert C. Smith, covey 150, Danang 67-68

❋

I'm not sure if I was contacted by you before, I was evacuated on 26 Jan 68 before noon — probably not too long after fog lifted and we started getting sporadic mortar shells. The plane, a C-130, I think, was shot at coming in and out of Khe Sanh, not sure if any other wounded were on board. Seems we landed at Phu Bai or somewhere like that near the ocean. I was Army though. My wounds were not very serious, was returned to my unit a month later.

Larry

❋

Larry,

Yes, I talked to you. It probably wasn't you he picked up, because he was flying an 02 aircraft. Thanks anyway for writing back and if you hear anything, let me know.

Steve Smith C/O covey 150.

Looking for George Lundstrum

George, I'm looking for anyone in ATC at Khe Sanh during January or February 1968, concerning a flight by a Forward Air Controller, who was called in to medevac a wounded airman or grunt. My father, covey 150, landed during a mortar attack and picked up and flew the wounded man to Phu Bai. Let me know if anyone in the Khe Sanh organization knows of this incident. Thank you,

Steve Smith, C/O Covey 150, Fac 20th Tass.

June 15, 1968

Does anyone recall any specific battles near Khe Sanh (Quang Tri) on June 15, 1968. I'm looking for Marines from H&S CO 3/4, or any other company in the vicinity who may have known LCPL Paul V. McHenry of Camp Hill, PA. He was KIA that day. He had friends.

CHAK, HUSEMAN & TRAISER
LCPL McHenry Memorial Page

Lam Son 719 Birddog Pilots

Seeking contact with any birddog pilots stationed at Khe Sanh during operation Lam Son 719. I am writing a novel incorporating experiences of same, seeking corroborative information, especially pertaining to my wingman, Paul Bates, M.I.A. Shot down near the Rock Pile. Also seeking links to Nam fixed-wing recon websites.

Robert

❋

Robert,
Check out:
http://www.2ndbattalion94thartillery.com/Chas/11th\0Campaign.htm
"11th Campaign of the 2/94th artillery during Dewey Canyon II and Lam Son 719"

One 8-inch battery and three 175mm gun batteries. Along with some of the info regarding some of the 8/4 arty involved. I have incorporated officers' daily logs, fire missions, battery displacements, battalion operational reports, LZ names and map coordinates. There are a few references also to air operations, call signs from the logs, etc.

C and D battery were the last to leave the border

during the pullout. Infantry retreated around them, and they had no choice but to dig in and stay put for three days after the pullout. Infantry unit refused to go back and help them.

1/77th tanks finally broke through, three days later, to help them run the gauntlet called "Ambush Alley" back to Khe Sanh. I also would like to agree with the KSG. I think we can safely say that operation, with all the losses in men and equipment, was less than successful. The northern area was overrun in 1972 and 1975 by the NVA. One contributing factor is the operational reports that indicate that the ARVN's had no interest in the heavy artillery the 2/94th and other heavy artillery units tried to train them in and to turn over to them. They did not even want to be schooled in tactics.

If you notice in the *History Channel* accounts of the Spring offensive, they only had 105s against the heavy Russian artillery. Once the linchpin surrendered Camp Carroll, there was no overlapping artillery support for the rest of the bases. Carroll surrendered on Easter 1972 with the exception of a ARVN Marine 105 battery and they fought to the last man after the rest of the base had surrendered — some 1,800 strong. Just for your information, the guy that surrendered his troops now owns a hotel in Hue. I also have an operational report for Lam Son 719 put out by the Directorate of Operations Analysis dated 24 March 1971. Let me know what you are looking for and it may have some helpful info. Hope info will help.

Kelley
2/94th

❋

Kelly:

You have it right. Several South Viet units disintegrated towards end of LS-719. Lots of reasons but primarily, they were way over their heads tactically. Few of those units had ever fought against regular NVA units before. They went into Laos thinking they would be handling VC in small groups as in the Delta, but found themselves up against NVA with good communication, heavy artillery, tanks, and sophisticated AA weapons. Too much for them. Officers lost their nerve, troops sensed it, and the whole house of cards came tumbling down. They lacked of any semblance of communication security. They talked in clear in Vietnamese on radios. NVA listened, and knew everything going on. The US conceived, planned LS-719, and asked much more of the South Vietnamese than they were capable of. They'd been fighting Charlie, were simply not capable of fighting Mr. Charles, then or later. Lot more to it, including political nature of South Vietnamese officer promotions, but the US knew all that, should not have asked something so complex and dangerous of the South Vietnamese as taking on the NVA in its own back yard.

❋

I was at LS-719 as a Marine. Did FCA (A) duty over Laos but from an Army slick. I talked to bird dogs a lot but never met them. Not very nice over Laos, bunch of AA, generally had to stay above 1,500 ft. AGL. Supporting the South Vietnamese not easy because they were not allowed to take their American advisors into Laos for US political reasons. They had no one with them who knew much about CAS and no one who could speak good English. To top it off, they had not taken any WP ammo for their mortars or artillery, so they had no good way to mark targets for CAS birds or FAC (A). The result was that CAS was generally ineffective unless FAC could see the NVA. South Vietnamese were scattered all over hell on 11 fire support bases and did not have good communication links to each other, let alone US fire support agencies. Real mess. The whole operation was poorly planned. Vietnamese, without their US advisors on the ground with them, were simply not sophisticated enough to pull off an operation that complex. In my view, they should never have been asked to try.

They had four divisions and could have simply marched them en masse into Laos. They would have been too strong that way for the NVA to mess with and would have had the advantage of interior lines and physical contact among units, so communication failings would have been less critical. That would have made air support a lot easier for US, since we'd have been bombing around one huge blob instead of between and among 11 different positions that couldn't talk to each other, or to us. Those tactics subjected them to defeat by the NVA.

That's exactly what the NVA did. It surrounded FSBs one at a time, prevented re-supply with AA and picked them off. We did our best to evacuate South Vietnamese from FSBs they couldn't hold, but in

many cases discipline broke down. As helicopters came in to pick them up, it became every man for himself. The Slicks were single-engine E models. They became overloaded, and crew chiefs had to kick Vietnamese soldiers off skids, many at high altitude, to make it airworthy. Many Vietnamese soldiers died that way. It was ugly.

The problem was expecting South Vietnamese, with limited experience in fire support coordination (which US advisors had always done for them before), limited communication, no experience in maneuvering large units, and severe language barrier with US support elements, to pull off an operation that complicated, in real Indian country, which Laos west of Khe Sanh surely was. What a catastrophe. Worse, thereafter, most South Vietnamese and the four best divisions that went into Laos had no confidence they could beat the NVA. The long-term result was disintegration of the South Vietnamese in the face of NVA assaults during the '72 Easter offensive and the '75 final assault.

Looking for a Marine

My brother, Joe Harrigan, B Co. 3rd Tanks, 3rd Marines, is a Khe Sanh vet. He's looking for a high school buddy who was also at Khe Sanh, Stephen M. Jenkins. His last known residence was in Louisiana. Any help will be greatly appreciated.

God bless and Semper Fidelis.
Suz Harrigan

❋

Suz,

Give my regards to Joe. Hope all is well. Sometime during the Siege, they moved a tank directly behind our position on the north perimeter. I was awoke the next morning by what I thought was the smell of fresh brewed coffee. I went to investigate (and scrounge) and found my high school buddy Joe behind the wheel. What a great feeling under the worst of circumstances. I think I've got a photo of Joe standing next to his tank. Please give me Joe's phone number, or ask him to call me in Arizona at (520) 399-2857 or (520) 370-3020. Thanks for tracking me down.

❋

Suz,

Your brother Joe tried to reach me last night but missed me. The most recent directory I have listed the following information for Stephen M Jenkins' address: 703 Dogwood Dr., Long Beach, MS, 39560-3806, Phone 601-864-3020. Please pass on my best to Joe and his family.

Fred

❋

Thanks, Fred! You guys are the BEST!

Suz

PFC Charles Cecil Davis

I posted a message in your guest book. I am trying to find information on my husband's best friend who was KIA on May 3, 1967. He was killed on Hill 881N. He belonged to Echo Co. 2/3 1st Platoon. He was very short, had dark brown hair and wore black glasses. He had a tattoo of his name (Cecil) on the top of his left forearm. He was from Bethany, MO. Al Lyon sent me a picture of Echo Company that was taken in Okinawa sometime in March or April, before the Company was sent back to the hill battles of Khe Sanh. If any of you have that picture; he was on the front row kneeling. He was 10th from the left or 4th from the right. He has on his glasses and is holding his cap on his knee. If any of you have any information, please get in touch with us. Thanks.

My Uncle Died on Hill 881

To all of you Hotel Company Hill 881 survivors: My uncle was a member of Hotel Company, and he died in the battle for Hill 881. I am very interested in getting in contact with anyone who knew him or remembers him. My uncle's name was Frank Roth from Philadelphia, PA. Anyone with info on him can contact me at pjpatvir@prodigy.net

Thank you,
Joseph

❋

I was a Marine Sgt. Squad Leader and saw action several times around the Khe Sanh area including

Hill 881. You will have to be more specific on your uncle's name, month and year when he was there. I was in the Khe Sanh area from Jan thru June 67 with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion 9th Marines. We were known as the "Walking Dead." You name a hot spot in the Nam and we were there. Hope to hear from you.

(Apache for "until we meet again")

Eddie Bradford

My brother died on June 8th, 1968. He was a LCPL who died in Quang Nam, (Danang) South Viet Nam. Please, if any one has any information on him, please let me know.

Khe Sanh KIA List

Sandy Shull was KIA 16 Feb 1968 while serving as a radio operator with 1/9. He was assigned to an 81 Mortar FO team, and I do not know which line company. He was assigned from H&S Co. His serial # was 2327104. His company was near the rock quarry at Khe Sanh when he was killed. Can some one tell me how to get his name listed with other 1/9 Marines killed at Khe Sanh, and does anyone remember Sandy?

Larry Deason Sgt USMC 3/12,1/4 Khe Sanh Vet

Final Formation

Thirty-four years ago today, just about this time. Some of the finest and bravest men I have ever had the pleasure to know met their Maker just a few clicks outside of the base. Lt. Donald Jacques and most of the Bravo 3rd Platoon were ambushed and killed that fateful day. Please take a moment, and reflect on these Fine Marines, who gave their all that day. God Bless them!!

Semper Fi!

❋

Hi Doc,
I don't know you personally because I was in C-130s. My deepest respects go out to all you Jarheads who went into harm's way big time and did the impossible in a way that people today can't even begin to comprehend, let alone appreciate. Like there was ever really any doubt? Only in the hearts and minds of the media, I guess. I flew into and over and around that god awful place so many times and thanked the powers that be so much, because I knew that if I got back to Danang, my day was over and I had a hot shower, hot chow, as much beer as I wanted to drink, and, a clean rack to sleep in. I am really in awe of you folks. You will forever live in my heart as the greatest heroes ever. In my mind. you even beat out the Trojans at the pass. Even though I had been flying in-country since Feb '66 and had already gotten messed up big time, the 1st battle of Khe Sanh and Dong Ha and the Siege marked a stark turning point in my life. I cannot believe it was that long ago.

Semper Fi

❋

Doc,
Jan 21st and Feb 25th are two dates that stay in my mind and will be there forever. God Bless You.

Semper-Fi
Big John

❋

We all thank God you made it back that day Doc. I hope I'll see you in Texas for the reunion. All the best!!! Love to you and the family.

Jim Hebron

No Subject

There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about B Company 1/26, and Third platoon. I was on in-country R&R seeing my brother when the ambush happened. I feel I should have been there. I knew a few from boot camp. I miss you guys so much. I went to the Traveling Wall and read your names. I laid my arm and my head upon your names and told you I was so sorry for not being there. And then, for an instance, I thought I heard you say do a chicken dance. You know what? I did do that chicken dance. I smiled but that was for an instant. I will always love you guys and you will always be part of me.

May God be with you.

Semper Fi
Shortround

❋

Don't beat yourself up about it, Shortround, you did what you could. God had other plans for you that day. We all wish things turned out differently.

God Bless
Gene

❋

Shortround and others,

I, too, was one of those who God took from harm's way when better men fell. On 21 Jan 68, I was married to my dear wife and companion of 34 years, Ann. On that day, a fellow Marine and hometown boy LCPL Kendel Randel Jones of Kilo 3/26 fell. Others that I knew — some well, some briefly, some as only a glance in passing — fell. I have no idea why the Lord, My God saw fit to spare this clown when better men fell. I will always remember them and tell of their sacrifice.

Semper Fi, Brothers
Jim

❋

My apology on a mistype. Randal's first name was Clifton not Kendal. I do not know what name he was called by those that knew him as a Marine. This came to mind as I was thinking about him as I drove to town this morning. I remember that there was some discussion of him being called Clifton either in person or by a letter written by a Marine around the time of his funeral and an enquiry. I believe it was a member of the family asking if I had seen Randel while I was at Khe Sanh. To my knowledge, I did not see him while there. He was one of Ann's students the first year she taught school. She mentioned that he was a charmer and that almost every day when he came to class he would be chewing gum and she would ask him to deposit it in the trashcan. Fond, silly memories maybe. Randal's daddy or granddaddy, maybe both knew him as Clifton at home, thus Randel was called Randel there.

❋

Looking For...

I feel very intrusive about my request, especially after reading Doc's last post re: "34 years ago..." However, my brother was there, he was in 1/3 and 1/9, and, as he told me once, any other platoon that needed him. He was strictly involved in the Hill battles. He was on 861, 881S and 881N. He was there from '67 to '68. I do not know what companies, nor do I know the exact months he was there. He finished his basic training at Parris Island in 1966, and then went to Camp Lejeune and shortly after to Vietnam. He was trained to be a machinist — AMTRACs? But he always referred to himself as a Grunt — with pride, I might say! He was called Bob or Bobby and I remember writing to one of his buddies called "The Greek!" Anyone remember him? He's not doing so well, he won't talk about his tour, nor will he give me much more info than this. Any connection to anyone who either knew him or was with his unit would be so helpful. I know this is a random search for the history of a living vet, but I want to know, for my own peace of mind, his story. Thanks in advance for any info or suggestions.

Sincerely,
Patty (his "Li'l Sis")

❋

Patty, he is one of us. I, too, was there for some of the fighting during that time with 1/26. I have found it helpful to return to this page often and realize that I am not alone in my thoughts about that time. If you want to learn more about that period in time, a good place to start is this website, scroll down on the home page and click on the "Hill Battles 67." There is a lot of good information there. He is truly blessed to have you as a "Li'l Sis." You'll find a bunch of great guys who post here.

Tell him Semper Fi for me.

Gene

❋

Gene,

Thank you. I took your advice and spent most of last night and into the wee hours of this morning reading "The Hill Battles 67." It took a box of Kleenex just to get through it, but I am very glad that I did. I feel so different now. I see why my

brother doesn't want to "share" with me. I think I understand now...why would he want to re-live his worst living nightmare! He said he really doesn't want to see or talk to guys in his company. When I asked him why, he said," because I can't look at them without seeing my brother's that didn't make it." After reading last night, I can now understand. I've been so invasive in his personal life re: the war. I know now that I have no right. You know my intentions were good, but it's probably time to back off. I will find out his company and his rank, this I can do through records. The rest...is his.

Thanks so much for referring me to that site, and I recommend it to everyone who has unanswered questions about a loved one who served in Vietnam to read it! Gene, I thank God for finding this website...it really does give me peace of mind and comfort. Because all of you are my family...my "big brother" is here in you all!

Thank you, eternally...

Patty

❋

Patty,

So glad I was able to help with your quest for information. I, too, re-live some of those moments on a daily basis. We truly are a band of brothers — only those who served together in combat can truly understand. Marines, I think, are especially bonded. Sometimes when we face our feelings head on, only then can we truly begin to live with it. I would not give up on him. Just continue to understand, it may be good for him to seek some help, so that he can come to grips with the horrors we all saw and experienced. If there is any way I can help, send an e-mail. Maybe if he talks to one of us, it will help. Who else would understand better? Thanks for your kind words, and I am truly happy I was able to help you get a better understanding. I, for one, will pray that he finds peace. I think that in understanding your brother's feelings you understand all Vietnam combat veterans. I thank you for that as well.

God Bless, Gene

ED NOTE: Gene, why not share some of your daily "moments" in an article for our "other" publication...i.e., this magazine.

❋

Patty:

Bobby is lucky to have a "Lil Sis" like you. I had four of them to help me fight to keep my sanity, although some will argue that I lost the battle. :-) :-) :-) Hang in there with him. Tell him we all said, WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN. SEMPER FIDELIS!!!

❋

Hello Anonymous,

Just when I was about to give up hope...your short but very encouraging message gets me fueled again. Thanks. I doubt very much that your sisters lost any battle with you! And I will pass on the message to my brother.

Patty

Info for 3/26 Marines, Kilo Co. Hill 861

Hey brothers, I'm trying to put some pieces together and need info on personnel rosters, names of the operations for our outfit H&S Co. and 3/26 Kilo Co. Also need info on all of the citations we received for the battles at Khe Sanh including the hill battles. If anyone can help with info or direct me to the source, please e-mail me. Thanks.

Fast Eddie
3/26 KILO CO.
106'S & Front Grunt.
EEKJR10148@A0L.COM

❋

I sure would like to see your roster when it's done. I went through BIS with a guy that wound up in 106s, on 881 South. I graduated first in class, and got stuck in 60mm, while he was riding around on a mule with a 106. Go figure. I can't remember names, but I'm sure I'd remember him if I saw it!

Semper Fi
Glenn A. Valentine
K CO. 3/26

1/5 Cav, Khe Sanh, 1968

Looking for anyone with HHC, 1/5 Cav, B Co, 1/5 or other companies of 1/5 and/or 1/77 Artillery who

were in Khe Sanh in 1968.

A Weekend of Brotherhood

Hey Bro's,

Once again the feisty redhead and I were on the road. This time it was to attend the 10th annual Vietnam Vets Motorcycle Club's party and campout in Reed's Gap, PA. During the 3 days of the event, approximately 3,000 Nam Vets, their families and just plain old civilians lived in a state of brotherhood very similar to our reunions. I met many old Grunts and we were accepted as if I was a member of their organization, which I am not. I was made to feel right at home. One in particular was an old Lima/3/3 grunt named "Hatchet." Yeah, we all had those silly nicknames. We hit it off right away. He was in Khe Sanh during the hill fights and was there to take Hill 861, where I spent my time during the Tet offensive. So, we had something really in common. I turned him on to our "Club," and I'm hoping he will benefit from our brotherhood. He had one too many beers on Friday night and his brothers, most of them Airborne, said that he was done for the night as he sat sort of semi-conscious at the table. They bet me a beer that I couldn't get him up, which I promptly accepted. I moved over beside "Hatchet" and very softly began to sing the Marine Hymn in his ear. Well, by the time I made it to Tripoli, we were both standing at full attention and singing our guts out.

Needless to say, I won the beer and in the process made a very close friend, or I should say, friends. Kind of like old Joe Amodeo at the reunion. Anyway, it was a great time had by all. Met a bunch of good people and felt all warm and tingly inside — as well as perfectly safe inside their wire.

Wayne Shumaker

PTSD– Post Television Supreme Disappointment

by Joseph Olszewski

Having been introduced to the KSV in 1999, I still feel like a "rookie" in this organization. I attended the 2000 San Diego Reunion and a few days of the 2001 Chicago Reunion. Since 1999, I have also met several members of the organization via the Internet who I only had a brief relationship with in '67/'68. Some I remember vividly, while others remember me while I have no recollection of them whatsoever.

One common denominator, however, is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). I saw it at both reunions, I read it between the lines in many e-mails and I read it on the KSV message board every day. What bothers me the most about it is that we were given no warning or training about it in our pre-Vietnam training programs. To be honest, I never heard of it until the 1980s.

During the 50s I remember seeing World War II veterans on Chicago streets selling newspapers while shaking like a tree in a windstorm. My father, who did not serve in WWII, would tell me it was "shell shock." I assumed from that description and various newspaper articles of the era that it meant a condition a veteran had due to being exposed to constant shelling or experiencing heavy casualties such as on D-Day. Most of my uncles served in WWII and they did not have shell shock, so I assumed it was restricted to those who suffered terrible combat experiences. I did have a next door neighbor in Chicago named Barney who was a WWI Dough Boy. He lived alone his whole life, had a dog as his only friend and drank every night. He worked hard every day, but I noticed that nobody ever visited him. The rest of the neighborhood had a casual relationship with him, even in an era before air conditioning when everybody sat outside after supper to escape the heat. I remember him telling stories about WWI and how he thought the military was good for a young man. I always liked Barney, but he hated me because I was always bouncing rubber balls off his roof or bouncing a basketball on my parent's backyard patio. His dog even hated me.

What I have a problem understanding is why is PTSD so common amongst three million or so Vietnam Veterans when most of us just humped patrols all day and sat on ambushes all night? Certainly, being thrust into a dark jungle after spending seventeen or eighteen years on the lighted streets of New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Los Angeles was a shock, but enough to cause PTSD? Certainly, being surrounded by snakes, tigers, tarantulas and water buffaloes after raising Skippy or Butkus for ten years was a shock, but enough to cause PTSD?

Lastly, the occasional VC and/or NVA certainly was more exciting than facing the Taylor Street Dukes or the Blackstone Rangers, but enough to cause PTSD? Certainly, thirteen months of service was nothing compared to three, four or five years that WWII veterans served without any understanding of when they were going home.

So why all this PTSD amongst us? In my opinion, the answer is TELEVISION. We were the first American generation to experience television when it was introduced in the early 50s. When TV first arrived, what was the biggest show? **World War II.** Every night it was either "Victory at Sea," "The Knights of The Hudson," "Annapolis," "The Long Gray Line," "12 O'Clock High" or "The Big Picture." By the late 50s all the WWII movies began to hit the tube. The John Wayne movies began to materialize and who can ever forget Little John, Frenchy and Sarge in the Friday night Combat TV series? All those shows had one common theme: War was glamorous and those who fought were heroes. As young ten-, eleven- and twelve-year-olds, we watched every show and swallowed it like it was lemonade.

Even grade school in the 50s had a lot to do with PTSD in the 70s, 80s and 90s. I vividly remember Catholic nuns telling us how good we were going to live compared to our parents, since the Depression and all the wars were behind us. Thus, our lives would be carefree and prosperous.

By the early 60s, the shocks started to hit us. First, it was the Kennedy assassination when everybody said "Hey, that's not suppose to happen here." Second, it was the overcrowding of high schools and colleges. We said "Hey, how come I'm not rich yet like Sister Anne promised?" Third, the mid-60s arrived, LBJ tapped us on the shoulder and said, "Son, I got a job for you in a filthy place full of disease, poverty like you've never seen, corruption and a whole bunch of folks who won't like you bad guys." Somewhere deep down inside all of us, something erupted. Even worse, once we arrived at that "filthy place" we were shocked to learn that the AK47 was superior to the M16. The VC/NVA walked around at night when we couldn't see our hands at arm's length. Sleep deprivation was the national pastime. And, nobody in any country liked us. We also saw what a dead body looked like for the first time and our response was: "John Wayne didn't look like that on TV." Then we came home, and I don't need to elaborate on that experience.

So there you have it...my theory...simply, an amateur opinion. Certainly, not required reading by VA shrinks. All I hope to accomplish is to introduce something new and hopefully 200, 300 years from now, the archivists of that era will find this article on a computer disk someplace. Hopefully, they'll say: "Hey, this is different and it fits the puzzle of what happened to three million Americans."

Many people will disagree with me, but my answer is why do so many Vietnam Veterans have this condition when so many of them never saw combat? It's simple. We were overly impressed by war via television and when the "real deal" materialized it was very, very different. I have a cousin who was an Army Private who did nothing at Long Binh for thirteen months except sort mail. He has PTSD so bad you could cut it with a chain saw. His wife died at the age of 40 from cancer. He drove a car through a neighbor's living room window and he's been in and out of drug and alcohol clinics. He never saw combat. I've often wondered how much combat Barney witnessed?

Remember, you read it here first:
Joseph Olszewski
Morro Bay, California

Nicholas Romanetz wrote:

Ernie:

I am contacting you on the subject to bounce this off of you. The Marine Corps is currently having the Heritage Foundation raise $25 million to build a Marine Corps Museum at Quantico. The purpose is to preserve the history of the Corps through the museum. My idea, and you are the first to hear it along with Kaheny who gets a CC on this, is to have representatives from the KSV — possibly John Kaheny, myself, Larry McCartney — contact the Foundation and suggest that working through the KSV, we could provide items, pictures, etc. about Khe Sanh. The idea is somewhat self-serving in that we make sure we and Khe Sanh are well represented in the museum. Perhaps the museum directors would welcome input but not give us any more space than other outfits, campaigns, battles, etc. In contacting you, I thought that the newsletter would be a great

place to communicate this information with the membership as well as providing an address if anyone wants to make a financial donation to the fundraising for the museum.

It would be appropriate for me to contact the officers of KSV to explain this proposal and seek permission to use the newsletter/website to solicit money and personal items for donation to the museum and to get involved on our behalf. Before I pursue this idea, I await input from yourself and Kaheny. By the way, the Director of the museum is retired Colonel John Ripley, author and key player in the book "The Bridge at Dong Ha." He is an RVN-era grunt and may see some merit in this endeavor. Since this project will take several years to complete, we have the luxury of time to contact the officers/membership and consider this proposal. I personally would donate my 1:50,000 laminated map with embedded red dust and thrust points on it. Also, the aerial photo of KSCB that was on the back page of one of the newsletters is at the Navy Museum. Ray sent it there, but Kaheny has a pretty good copy as does a retired Lt. Col. I know at Lejeune. I would appreciate it if you and John would provide input to this proposal so I can decide if I should move forward with it.

Nick Romanetz
C/1/26



Bro's

Names appear out of the past,
For hours my heart beats fast.
First comes the joy I've found,
some one who was once lost!
Then memories flood my mind,
again I see the flash and feel the blast.

Depression and pain I feel,
an emptiness in my chest.
What happened to the rest?
Where is Frenchy, Coffey, Crow, and Cann?
Marines from Recon and 1-26 move
through my mind, double time.

Rockets, mortars, artillery blast,
sand bags seep red, blood mixed with red
clay. Holes in the runway, must replace,
sections ripped to shreds.

I'm caught in the past,
nowhere to run, can't hide.
See the flash?
Feel the blast?

Who's in that bag, zipped foot to head?
Is it me, or one of my Bro?

My dream is over, my eyes were never shut.
It's over, it's done,
I'm home at last!

Sam L. Messer
CBMU-301
DET-B SEABEES

Marine Corps Heritage Foundation

"The mission of the Marine Corps Heritage Center is to create a place where all Marines — past, present and future — and especially the American people, can come to view the history of our great Nation through the eyes of Marines."

I share with my fellow Khe Sanh Veterans information about an exciting undertaking of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. In the opening sentence, I quote the mission statement concerning a new and exciting project. The foundation is in the process of raising $25 million to build a state-of-the-art Marine Corps Museum. Members of "The Board" include nearly every former Commandant and Sergeants Major of the Marine Corps as well as notable former Marines of every rank. Some of these men are successful businessmen, politicians, etc., but many are "regular guys" like many of us. Interestingly enough, several members are Khe Sanh vets. Also, a number of notable businessmen — not former Marines — have joined in the effort to build the museum.

The status of the project is as follows: Land has been secured where the museum will be built; a world-class architectural firm has been hired to design a museum that will rival the greatest museums of the world; an official design concept has already been approved by the Commandant of the Marine Corps and ground-breaking for the museum is tentatively scheduled for April 29, 2003.

An excerpt from a letter written by Charles C. Krulak, 31st Commandant of the United States Marine Corps and Co-Chairman, Heritage Center Group, states: "...we have selected...our exhibit designer, and we are working diligently with them to ensure that we will have three Main Exhibits — covering World War II, Korea, and Vietnam — displayed on opening day. Using the newest techniques to help museum visitors better understand the subject matter, each exhibit will include an immersion experience. The World War II exhibit will feature Iwo Jima...the Korean War exhibit will feature the Chosin Reservoir...and the Vietnam era exhibit will feature Khe Sanh."

I have been in touch with the foundation and am in the process of talking to a museum curator to discuss the need for memorabilia/artifacts for display in the Khe Sanh exhibit. Once information is available, you would have the opportunity to donate items to the museum that they may be interested in using. As of this writing, the curator is overseas for several weeks but I am told that he has an idea of the types of items he is interested in using in the display. My main concern is that if you send something and they do not use it, that it be returned to you. What a great opportunity to contribute to such a worthwhile endeavor! Since the completion of the museum is several years away, I plan to communicate with the membership through this newsletter, and possibly, the web site home page concerning my proposal.

Lastly, if you would like to make a tax-exempt donation towards the building of the museum, you may send your donation to: The Marine Corps Heritage Center, PO Box 998, Quantico, VA 22134-0998. Note that the contribution is for the museum. Large contributions such as $28,000 from the 9th Special Basic Class (donated at their 50th reunion) and $25,000 from Edson's Raiders Association, veterans of the First Marine Raider Battalion, have been received as well as countless individual contributions. I am personally excited about the Marine Corps' selection of Khe Sanh to be highlighted in the museum. I will keep the membership informed of the progress of this endeavor in future writings.

Semper Fi....
Nick Romanetz
2ndPlt/C/1/26

Khe Sanh Members, We Need Your Help

We need you help ASAP! A "thank you" book is being put together by people such as you who were either treated by a medical personnel or served as a medical personnel and want to share your experiences. Women and men such as Don"Doc" Ballard (MOH) and our corpsman in Vietnam deserve to be recognized in a book dedicated to them for their selflessness while doing their jobs. They made it possible for so many of us to return home to our families. Please read the following two-page brochure, make copies to pass it on to others. Send us your testimonies ASAP.

We thank you in advance for helping to make this appreciation book a reality!

Semper Fi
Chuck Wright, Founder
www.medicalwarmemorial.org

National Medical War Memorial and Youth Education Center

Chuck Wright, Founder, 452-0606
www.medicalwarmemorial.org

Dear Veteran and American Citizen,

Are you here today because a military medical person took the time to treat you in your moment of need?

Millions of people were born and are alive today because the military medical corps took care of their parents, grandparents, and other relations. From the Revolutionary War of 1775 to the present time, there have been 1,541,452 men and women who were wounded in action (WIA). Those who were treated by the medical corps were able to return home to their families and friends. Some begat 4, 5, or even more children! If you consider that these children had children — there are most certainly 7 to 10 million offspring conceived by someone who was WIA. Without the noble work of the military medical corps, they would never have been born! They, too, owe their lives to the military medical corps.

Your chance to make a timeless tribute has arrived! We want you to share your story of survival by honoring the selfless deeds of medical personnel during wartime. Your account will be compiled in a Military Medical Appreciation Book. The profits from this book will be used to fund the National Medical Memorial and Youth Education Center, Inc. but as a contributor, you will receive your copy of this commendable hardback book free! As a student of William Jewell College, an intern for the memorial project, and the granddaughter of two veterans, I encourage YOU to share your appreciation without delay.

Today is your time to thank the medical personnel who saved your life and the lives of many others. Today you can contribute to the extraordinary appreciation book that will educate and inspire many generations to come. The brochure [not attached] will explain the details of the Military Medical Appreciation Book and the mission of the National Combat Medical Memorial and Youth Education Center. For more information regarding the Military Medial Appreciation Book log onto our website, *www.medicalwarmemorial.org*. Please do not hesitate to contact Christy Kleinbeck or the founder, Chuck Wright, at (816) 452-0606 with additional questions or comments. We need your help! Please send in your stories A.S.A.P.!

Sincerely,
Christy Keinbeck
Public Relations Intern
kleinbeckc@william.jewell.edu

Copy and fill out questionnaire on next page

Copy and fill out this questionnaire:

National Medical War Memorial and Youth Education Center

Name: .....
(Last) (First) (MI)

Address: .....

.....
(City) (State) (Zip Code)

Phone: (.....) ..... Email Address: .....

I am a (check one):

❑ Veteran (WIA)
❑ Veteran of Medical Corps
❑ Medical Corps
❑ Relative of a veteran (WIA)
❑ Relative of veteran who served in the

Name of Veteran (if a relative is contributing the story): .....

Military Serial Number; .....

Military Branch/ Years Served/ Rank: .....

Example: Cpl. Jerry T. Jolly
U.S.M.C. 1950-1951
1st Marines, 1st Division
H Co., 1st Platoon

Veteran's Family Information: (Please list number)
Children: ____ Grandchildren: ____ Great-Grandchildren: ____

Did a military medical person save your life or one of your blood relatives? Were you born because your father, mother, or grandparents were helped and able to return to the US to have a family. If you are thankful for your life, or that of a relation, you are encouraged to write an appreciation story.

Please share your appreciation here: (Space is provided on back or simply attach typed story.)
Refer to brochure for information! Remember:
Should be 300-500 words. Please send A.S.A.P.

- Receive your free Military, Medical Appreciation book when your story is accepted and the book is published!
- Please attach photographs if possible. (Pictures will be returned if you provide a self-addressed stamped envelope!)

Confessions of a Tree Hugger

by Bob McLane

In front of me, a huge oak leaned over like a old woman pulling on a stubborn weed. I was happy to see that the huge tree was still healthy and strong. High among the sprawling limbs lay the ruins of an old tree house. The rotting boards nailed there years ago are warped and splintered, but they hold firm as I climb up into the remains of what once was a mighty fortress. From the lofty shelter of this natural hideout my young cousins and I had held off many a determined posse of fearless lawmen. We never surrendered. We never ran. We kept fighting until they were all dead, or it was time for supper.

The sight of a young man sitting up in an old tree house must have looked strange to the long distance truck drivers passing by, but I didn't care. This time the fight was for real. I had received orders from the United States Marine Corps to report to Camp Pendelton to begin the final training that I would get before leaving for Vietnam. I wanted to go on sitting in the big old tree forever, at least until the #### war was over. I decided that I wasn't going to come down until I had a plan that I was absolutely, one hundred per cent certain would bring me back alive.

I went over every lesson my cousins and I had learned from our many summers as desperadoes. Keep your head down. Listen up. I heard my cousins warn me once more to keep my eyes open for the subtle signs of another attack. No matter what, we all had to be brave. No one wanted to be remembered as a coward. I would rather not be remembered at all. The ones who were remembered were the ones who didn't come back. There were a lot of different ways to say someone had been killed. "He didn't make it" was the most common way Marines in Vietnam told each other about a new casualty. During the Civil War, Mama would tell her neighbors about the dreaded letter from the War Department by saying her son had "fallen." She tried to make it look like getting killed in a war was no worse than taking a header down a flight of stairs.

It made no difference to the undertaker. I had no interest in needing his services anytime soon. Most of my thoughts that morning were not making sense, but neither did a lot of lessons I learned in the Marines. They didn't have to make sense. They just had to work. Finally, I concluded that God really did like me and wanted to keep me around for a long time. With any luck I was going to be good. I was a member in good standing of one of the finest fighting outfits in the world, next to my cousins. I decided it was safe to come down. I picked up an acorn from underneath the big oak tree and slipped it into my pocket. I walked back to the white frame house my grandfather had built, filled with the confidence of my newfound faith. I felt good about the plan I had chosen.

I sat down to an old-fashioned country meal. My grandmother avoided looking at me as we started to eat. I could see the worry in her eyes. I told a joke to break the tension. No one laughed. "Don't worry, I'm coming back from this thing. I guarantee it. She put down a pitcher of tea and looked at me. "Of course you are," she said.

Gunner, I hope this letter finds you and your family in good health. As I look on top of my television set, there sits one single object — a copy of **Red Clay**. As I read the simple words, I remember days long gone. Some of those memories are etched deep in my soul, some make me think and some make me grin. It affects me every day, good and bad.

I still sleep with the lights on in my house. I still dream of those past moments and run from my bed to the living room, hands covering my head, waiting for the loud burst. There are some nights when I cannot remember the dream. Thanks for small favors. So many memories of men whose names I cannot recall, and most, just by their nicknames. I really try to remember, but do I really dare?

I am sitting here drinking a cup of coffee contemplating whether I should go to the reunion in Dallas, Texas, which is only four hours from my house. If I do, I may have to confront people and memories of the past. How will I feel?

I live by myself, but I am not alone. I wait until sunrise before I read **Red Clay**, so there will be no interference. I feel the magazine demands that of me. When I look at the magazine on the television, I wonder, "Why would a man I hardly remember send me such a wonderful gift?" It simply reads, "MERRY CHRISTMAS, Larry McCartney (MGYSGT)"

PS — I have a small pile of sand sitting in my

backyard with a shovel standing in it. People ask. I just look. Those who know will understand.

L/CPL Bill Hubbard
E Co 2/26 2nd PLT
Hill 861A
Semper Fi

Dear Tom,

Thank you for the "Life Member Certificate" and the membership card. Very impressive.

Khe Sanh was a defining time and place in my life. I spent over five months recovering from wounds sustained on 30 Mar 68 from incoming mortar rounds. I am grateful to be alive, very proud and humbled when the Marine Corps awarded me the Navy Cross.

I still have physical limitations but have learned to live with the pain. I have also learned to cope with PTSD in the last year. I am also grateful to have found God's grace, which has became more evident. I sadly had to watch my friend, Billy Lake, B Co 1/26, Weapons Platoon, succumb to cancer about four months ago. The friendships from Khe Sanh can be joyful, lasting, and painful. If you have a directory, I would love to have a copy to find old friends. I do not know much about the Khe Sanh Veterans association, so I would appreciate any help.

Ken Korkow
B Co 1/26 Wpns Plt

Hi Tom,

I served with SOG as a team leader of a spike team. The team consisted of six Montagnards (Bru), and Sgt. Ambrose, the staff radio operator. I just recently learned he suffered a fatal heart attack. I am also a former Marine, 1956-1957, who served in the artillery (105s) at 29 Palms California.

I do not like to repeat "Old War Stories," but I am still bothered by decisions made by a few of our former leaders at Khe Sanh. The vast majority of our leaders were outstanding individuals, but there were still mistakes made that I felt caused unnecessary casualities.

As early as April 1967, I trained my team on Hill 881N and 881S. Prior to my team operating in Laos, we had to verify the team's readiness. Prior to the arrival of the 26th Marines, I had a mission on 881N to locate enemy emplacements and strength. During four days of surveillance, numerous enemy emplacements were observed. They had heavy weapons in each of their concealed bunkers, and there was extremely heavy enemy troop movement. At one point, we were nearly trapped due to the large amount of ground troops.

A few days later, Captain Wiloughby, who later became a hero during the battle at Lang Vei, asked me to join him at a briefing with Marine intelligence officers. At the briefing, I informed the Marines of what we had encountered on Hill 881N. When I suggested that an attack on 881N should begin with large air strikes and a battalion-sized ground assault, they scoffed at my suggestion of the amount of troops required to take Hill 881N.

Captain Wiloughby, offended by their total lack of concern for the information we had provided, left the meeting. We returned to our little corner on the west side of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, located just outside of the Marines' wire. Over the next couple of weeks, we watched as the Marines took a horrible pounding attempting to take Hill 881N without total air support and sufficient manpower. What really hurt was that we could do nothing to help them.

We did lose a lot of our teams while operating in Laos and the areas around Khe Sanh village, but it was never because we failed to heed the advice of others who had been there before and who knew what lay ahead for us. Keep up the good work and may God bless and keep you.

Herb Marshall
MACV – SOG Khe Sanh

About 90 years before the Marines arrived at Khe Sanh, a French explorer went through the area while travelling from Laos to Cam Lo, along a route that was made into Route 9 around 1910. The following is a translation from French of a portion of a diary by Dr. Jules Harmand, who in 1877 travelled from Tchepone to Cam Lo, passing through what was Lao Bao and then through the Bru area. Some of his comments:

> "July 25th: I have taken a large dose of quinine because of the poisoned mountains, the 'red earth' as the natives term it.

"July 29th: After about a two hour march, we came to an immense ravine, where I discovered a torrential river, the Rao Quan. Evening: I have encountered a group of savages who were seized with terror upon seeing me, throwing down their arms and kneeling before me. Their charming little village is Mois. The poor souls, who speak a little Annamite, received me best they could. The ancient chief put his immense house at my disposal. They brought me dry fish and rice. They also roasted a squirrel I had killed along the way. After spending the evening with my host, I slept peacefully among them, on a dreadfully soiled mat.

"The next morning I went hunting in the ravines, which yielded a good harvest of plants. It is a beautiful country — if I had provisions, I might be tempted to remain a few days longer. The Rao Quan is a true river, hundreds of meters wide, with smoothly flowing waters. Unfortunately, we soon encountered numerous rapids. The natives regarded me curiously, kneeling around me in a circle. They were dressed in sleeveless vests, singular in that they were made from sheets of bark from the Antiaris Toxicaria tree. As soon as my baggage arrived, I distributed knives and mirrors among the Mois, who in turn gave me slips of paper with symbols to which they attributed magical properties."

Reverend Ray W. Stubbe
Chaplain 26th Marines

Early August, Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton California

On August 9th at approximately 1300, a mini-1/26 reunion was held at the world famous San Onofre Beach. The site has been known as a gathering place and watering hole for Marines heading to, or recovering from, war tours in the Far and Near East; WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm and most recently, Trash Canistan.

Sergeant Major Morris put out the call for the gathering in mid-July with orders to all hands to be present and accounted for. "You will have a good time!" he bellowed. When the Sergeant Major speaks, the troops comply. We subsequently disobeyed orders and had a great, not good time. There were a few moments of silence as names and past deeds of those who are no longer with us were mentioned with sadness, reverence and respect.

Colonel Snyder, on his first tour, spent a few short months in RVN before being wounded and evacuated to MCRD, San Diego for treatment and rehabilitation. He graduated from the Naval Academy in the early 60's. Ray joined 1/26 for his 2nd tour and assumed command of Alpha Company prior to the Siege — a command he held during and after that long dance was over.

Jim Morris joined 1/26 as the 81 MM Platoon Sergeant and later served as the 81's Platoon Commander. During the Siege, he was meritoriously promoted to Gunnery Sgt. and became the Battalion Operation Chief. He held that billet as his 13-month tour was completed. In the early 70s, Jim returned to Vietnam for his 2nd complete tour as an advisor with the RVN Marine Corps, initially at the battalion level and later, in the capacity as the senior Operation NCO advisor attached to an RVN Marine Brigade.

Former Captain Jeff Stack served at Khe Sanh in Alpha Company as a Platoon Commander and later as acting Company Commander. Jeff was wounded in action. He completed his 1/26 tour and extended for an additional 6 months as a Division Aerial Observer. Since his separation, he has owned and operated a growing and very successful land development company.

Ken Pipes retired from the Marine Corps in 1982. For the next 12 years, he worked for Southern California Edison in the Nuclear Security Field, retiring from that position in 1994.

Captain Steve Longo spent his last 6 months in RVN as the 1/26 Air Liaison officer. Steve had us in tears as he discussed the highlights of a Marine Corps Fighter Pilot. While assigned to 1/26, he got many a wounded Marine evacuated to field hospitals. Steve also controlled air strikes for the Battalion along Route One, Liberty Bridge, the Go Noi Islands, Hill 55, and in the An hoa Basin. He carried his weight and was one of us then, and now!

You all know John Kaheny, a past president of our organization. He was a Platoon Commander and acting Company Commander on a couple of separate occasions. He also served as the Operation watch

officer, and later extended his combat tour with the unit. John is a two war Vet. His Marine Reserve Unit was activated for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He has a way with the telling of a story — and had a bunch of them to tell.

With the concurrence of the Sgt. Major, there may be another call to gather at the same, well-known site for further discussions and to once again smell the cordite and gun smoke of those good — and not so good — experiences from so long ago.

The circle grows smaller but remains unbroken.

Postscript:

It should be noted that two additional members who received orders to attend, were absent; one authorized, and one unauthorized. The Sgt. Major excused former Captain Chuck Patterson after he submitted an "out of town on lawyer business" explanation. Chuck is a lawyer and published poet/author. On the other hand, our famous Medical Doctor, Ed "Fast Eddie" Feldman, was placed in an "unauthorized absence" status by the Sgt Major. His physical description was given to the Base Military Police, who immediately broadcast a BOL for the Doctor. No sightings have yet been reported. Request that Chicago Police Sergeant and our current VP, Tom Eichler, be immediately contacted if anyone in the Regiment observes Fast Eddie moving quickly through their area.

Ken Pipes



Retired Col. Ray Snyder, retired SMajor Jim Morris, Capt. Jeff Stack, retired LCol. Ken Pipes, Capt. Steve Longo and retired Col. John Kaheny

Welcome Home

A tattered but proud symbol comes home at last

by Tom Eichler

On a hot, foggy day at the Khe Sanh Combat Base in 1968, a large element of NVA attacked the position held by Golf Company 2/26. During the battle that followed, the position was threatened with being overrun. The Golf Company Unit Flag (Colors) were entrusted to a young, badly wounded Marine who was being evacuated. Members of Golf Company, during the fierce battle, defeated the enemy and drove them from their position. However, they assumed their colors would be lost forever.

At about the same time, the wounded Marine arrived in the United States and was transferred to a reserve unit. During his recuperation at the unit, a young surgeon helped the wounded Marine with a personal family problem. The Marine in turn, gave the doctor the flag he had carried with him, knowing the deep affection he (the doctor) held for the Marine Corps from his own service during the Korean War. The doctor did not have the slightest idea what to do with the flag. He did, however, know he would treasure it and keep it safe. He wrote down the name of the young Marine, but later lost it and all physical contact with him, and he did not recall his (the young Marine's) name.

After many years had passed, the doctor, Michael Healy, was packing his personal items for a move to a new residence. He told the story to a former Marine friend who had served in Vietnam with 1st Force Recon. That friend, Robert Schaefers, called a few more Khe Sanh Veterans and learned that they were having their reunion in Irving, Texas in early July 2002. Both Dr. Healy and Robert Schaefers, who reside in Texas, vowed they would return it to the rightful owners.

As the BOD convened their regular board meeting at the 2002 reunion, Robert Schaefers arrived with the tattered, old Colors of Golf Company. After relating the story of how he had come into its possession, the BOD voted to have Robert present the flag to surviving members of Golf Company 2/26 at the reunion awards ceremony.



Eric Smith, G/2/26; Robert Schaefers, 1st Force Recon; James Everley, G/2/26 with Golf Co.'s Colors.

In a very short but moving ceremony, Robert Schaefers presented the flag to Golf Company veterans Eric Smith and James Everley. After the ceremony, Robert stated that it was one of the proudest moments of his life to return the long lost symbol to its rightful owners.

PUBLISHERS NOTE: The members of the BOD voted to award Life Memberships to both Dr. Michael Healy and Robert Schaefers.

Hi Tom,

Hope all is well. Just a short update on our first reunion in 36 years —

The Northern I Corps Artillery Units had their first reunion in 36 years. Represented were the following units: 2/94th 175mm Guns, 1/82 175mm Guns, 5/4 155mm Howitzers, 6/33 and 1/40th 105mm Howitzers. Most of these units were attached to the 3rd Division at one time.

The reunion was held in Branson, Missouri on Memorial Day weekend. While the Marine Artillery was invited, no representatives showed. We did have some sign up to attend. They were missed. It was obvious from the amount of hearing aids in my battalion that the large 175s had done their damage to the line officers and gunners. Slides and videos along with some audiotapes were shown and played all weekend. Former C Battery Officer Roy Deloach, who is now a chaplain, remembered the 2/94th KIAs at our banquet dinner. Those that knew the fallen were asked to stand in remembrance.

The audiotapes were of a Marine Recon Patrol during a fire mission and a tape that the 12th Marines have been looking to find for years. Unfortunately, ours was the same one that others have, not the original. Audible, but Marine LTC Rice is not in his description of the massive attack on Gio Linh. We marveled at the counter-fire put out by C/1/12 against just overwhelming incoming. What a valorous episode in the Marine Corps history for those Marine artillerymen and their unit. Those fellows showed what the Corps is about. As I understand, they suffered 75% casualties and had one gun working when they were withdrawn and replaced by one of the other 12th Marine Batteries, believed to be W/2/12. Just an awesome performance by some brave artillerymen.

It was also discussed (as it was early in our struggle) that it may have been the only massed battery to massed battery scenario against the NVA enemy. After Gio Linh, the NVA realized they could not stand toe-to-toe and slug it out with American artillery. One of our former FO's brought about 600 slides of the first opening of QL9. He and his RTO were members of the first convoy out to Khe Sanh and the border.

Among the slides were pictures of the 11th Engineers rebuilding the bridges on the way out, some of the Ontos crews. Also, I thought I saw some 105mm being towed along. I would guess that would be a 12th Battery or Platoon. The 13th would not have been there at that time and the 11th was down south. This would have been late '66 or early '67.

Marine Officer Philip Saur was shown in several pictures as our 2/94th FO. Our RTO's became close friends with Phillip Saur. Phil was later killed on 861A. Phillip Saur would detail an Ontos crew to run the roads with the FO and the RTO. Our FO was wounded on April 9th 1967 while on Marine patrol and medevac'd.

Some of those pictures are available online at *http://www.willpete.com/2nd_battalion_94th_artillery.htm* Scroll down to number 87, Barry DeVita, and you can view those "First Road to Khe Sanh" pictures.

It was decided to try and have a reunion every two years with an effort put forth to find other members of the artillery units that served up north, along the DMZ.

2004 Reunion site has not been selected yet.

Hopefully, some of the Marine Artillerymen will join us in two years.

Semper Fi Marines
Kelley
2/94th 67-68
http://www.2ndbattalion94thartillery.com/

ED NOTE: Why not use the Khe Sanh reunions? It will accomplish two things. A bigger reunion gets better deals, and it saves you guys from the hassles of planning. The Delta Company Association has found this to be an effective way to save time, effort and money. Delta now has the largest attendance by any unit at the reunions.

Dinosaurs in the Air

by Ray Prittie

Thank you so much for the sentiments, bro. Really appreciate that. We really tried to make those bolts as secure as we could, but we were working with stuff that really needed a lot of help. It is the Marine Corps' way though, and why the Corps will be in business for a long time. The Air Force inhabited a totally different universe that we could not identify with at all. We stole one of their trucks from in front of the main PX near the main gate on the AF side at

Danang, immediately painted it Marine Corps green and stenciled in some phony numbers. Hey, we really needed it. We figured they could get whatever they wanted. It was still serving our line shack when I left.

The first line aircraft I crewed was a basket case. (H&MS 11, MAG 11, 1st MAW. The squadron had not been in-country that long. Had only one plane that was now a basket case.) It had been involved in a midair with an ARNV C-47; both trying to occupy the same space at the same time going into Hue/Phu Bai. The ARVN plane became a dilapidated wreck east of the Phu Bai runway. It was still there when I left. Our guys made it back to Danang though, because they were lucky and also knew that Uncle Sam, even though he would probably give the ARVNs a whole bunch of planes, would probably not replace the 834 until the duration.

I had been in-country two days. My first day reporting in to the line shack at the SE corner of the field was a memorable one. We had one plane. When I first viewed it, it had no engines, was on blocks, covered with dust, and had only one wing. The most sorry sight I have ever seen. This was my first real duty station and I was supposed to be flying on that thing. They had just received a new wing in a large wooden crate off a C-130. Over the next couple of weeks we rebuilt that plane. Here I am, a 6725, doing the most bizarre of stuff to get this plane flying again.

The big day came in March 1966. It was like a ceremony around a new prototype taking to the skies for the first time. That plane, even though we were eventually built up with 3 others over time, became the work horse of the unit. It was that plane that brought us back through a dark and stormy night. C-117D (R4-D8) BuNo 50834. I loved that plane. I have beacoup pictures of it. Never was able to find out what happened to it. Its brother, the 835, which I also crewed, now stands in a place of honor on a pedestal at Mirimar. I have a great picture of me taken in July of 1966 with the 834, 835, and the 211 in the background behind me. Little did I know that within a few days the 211 and all the crew except me would be history.

Ray Prittie

In Loving Tribute

by Bill Person

They gave their youth and all they had,
To a war whose price has made us sad.
In a steamy land of fear and strife,
The Reaper stole a loved one's life.
Now we endure in solemn grace,
For no one can ever take his place.
How precious, this freedom, we all share
When we give tribute, we prove we care.
For those who risk it all, their mortal lives,
So we may know that our nation survives.
Please, Dear God, soothe these grieving pains,
Our resolve is tested, but our love remains.
Help us to live as Thy will be done,
And our spirits join, so we are one.
Through time, bereavements slowly dim,
And it comforts us that Your arms hold him.

Han Lee

by Ernie Spencer

I first met Han on 881 South. Delta was in its second or third rotation on that hill. It was October, maybe November. I honestly can't remember. I'd had Delta since Johnson split in mid-July sometime. I started with Delta on 861. The record says I got Delta August 1. Records had to match. Short timers often were given a huss off the line. Johnson had Delta for six months. That's long for a company commander. He spent his last weeks in the BOQ tent down at battalion.

Han Lee, an arty FO, came to see me right from the re-supply UH-34 that dropped him off. He was like me, one of the first Asian officers to serve in the Marine Corps in combat. His credentials impressed me. He had graduated with a degree in civil engineering from Texas. We were both reservists via the PLC program. Han, like me, wasn't a lifer. I do not mean to be disrespectful of career Marines. My five rifle battalion commanders were all great men (three with the Second Marines and two in Vietnam). I've known great Marine officers who I willingly followed because I admired and respected them. Men like Gentleman Jim and Freddy J. Staff officers like Charlie. Fellow junior officers like Pipes, Snyder, Feral, Fitzgerald and Brown. These guys showed me who they were in a time when Marines are really Marines. I got a belly full of lifers before I got to Vietnam.

We reserve officers hated the kiss-ass lifers. They made us sick. We were one-tour guys that were hanging it all out, one time, for whatever reason. After that, we just wanted to go home and get on with our lives. I'll tell one other truth about Marine junior infantry officers. As far as the Corps is concerned, the smart ones fly, shoot big shit, drive or build. The ones like me who can't count past ten without taking our shoes off go grunt. I joined the Corps because I could. I wanted to be a Marine from the time I was a child. Han wanted to serve his adopted country. Han was a first generation Chinese immigrant. He had the misfortune to be educated in Texas. He had a Texas accent with a Chinese-sounding drawl. "You know, I figured that if I'm going to serve our country, I must go with the best." That was Han's motivation for going Marine. He also knew his family would admire and respect him for his choice. Face is very important to Asians.

When I could, I would always request Han for my long-range company patrols. Delta did a 360 around Khe Sanh while I was with it, from the base of Tiger Tooth, to the river that divides at Laos. As far north, and south and west as the regiment would allow. We went out as far as our 155s could reach. This was a time when the regiment at Khe Sanh consisted of just one badly undermanned rifle battalion. At any time, one rifle company would have both sides of the airstrip. One would be on 861, another on 881 South. That left one company to do long range patrols.

I remember Jim telling me with that grin of concern before I'd go out. "Now Ernie, make sure you can handle whatever happens for at least a day." If we stepped into it, we'd have to be prepared to deal with it with only arty to back us. Weather was mostly socked in or pouring. Luckily, things were quiet around Khe Sanh at that time.

I believe Colonel Lownds foresaw what was coming and wanted continuing information about the surroundings. Delta would register artillery on the NVA harbor sites we found. The NVA used the network of trails that ran around and by Khe Sanh. The trails never grew over. There was constant enemy traffic during these quiet times. They followed a recurring pattern when selecting their harbor sites. They were always near water and on a reverse slope from Khe Sanh. Because of the thickness of the jungle we often found these places in, we had to register them with airbursts. Han would shoot the azimuths to the burst. He also did the more accurate type.

I remember Han working one of those surveying things on a three-legged transom when we were on 881 South. He relayed exact angles and stuff back to the battery. They were popping 105s high up on the Laos side from us. Han buddied up to me because we like the same type of staple. Rice. I had a connection through my Bru scouts, who got me the packets from their Bru bloods who worked with the SOG guys. Besides its great taste, the rice came in small, light, individual packets. Just add water. Five minutes if it's hot water, and thirty if cold. That's all I ate out on patrol. Ham fried and rice, with cookies, coffee, sugar and cigarettes rounding out the provisions. Fruit and fancy stuff weighed too much for me. We went out for five days without re-supply. "Take all you want to eat," I told my guys. "But you carry your full load of ammo, water and sleeping gear."

We didn't wear flacks and stopped using helmets. The guys went too far, and Jim made me knock it off. With the camo paint and wild head coverings some of them looked more like pirates than Marines. Their missing teeth added too subtle a touch for Jim's tastes, I guess. Some guys would hang stockings full of cans on the backs and sides of their packs. They looked like dread locks on a green head.

While on the subject of we Asians who served at Khe Sanh, I have to clear the record concerning the fine article that was done on a brother Asian genius, Harry Baig. Harry was a lot of great things, but he was no Mongol. I'm a Mongol. I trace my lineage back to the guys who rode through some of your ancestral homelands. It was my ancestors that burned those towns and rode off with the booty. At the '98 reunion in D.C., Ernest Jones, who was Delta's weapons platoon sergeant, told me what I did before we went out on a long-range patrol. Delta was getting a lot of new guys at the time. I lined the men up in front of me, then said, "Look at me, Marines." Then, pointing off to Laos say, "I'm not like them. I'm taller."

I did what I had to do to fulfill my dream, but I don't remember doing that. I'm at the point in my Khe Sanh journey where what I cannot remember is more important than what I can.

One Incoming Round

by James Carmichael

I remember intensely real fragments of raised voices rattling about in that moment of time, space and past history. Those memorable sounds have long since settled like the dust on the furniture, despite their momentary indelible imprinting and my own shifting fragility. Nothing and everything true penetrated in an instant. I attended to it as one gropes in the dark for the seam of a thick, translucent curtain. A disconnect at the words, "Corpsman! Corpsman up! Get a..." Meaning ebbed.

That enemy mortar round landed within the context of men coming stoically to grips with gnawing hunger. We ate one meal a day for ages. Re-supply, or the lack thereof, stayed on our minds hunting us, haunting us, digging with us, cleaning our weapons ...and dying with us. It waited in earnest for night, sleeping in all the hollow recesses of our stomachs, returning to the corners of our bunkers as morning roused our communal outpost. When we did eat, we did so with the emotional stagnation one possesses fueling his car with unleaded. We worked if only to keep the hunger gremlins at bay, which elicited more of the same. Somebody had to keep an eye on all that banal food we stored frugally on top of the CP bunker.

That "somebody" fell mostly to the mortars section. We stood watch, in shifts, all night. At that hour, the moonlight played wearily on the tops of the tufted clouds. Its brightness fanned out to enwrap and monitor the peaks of the surrounding hills as well as to our own. I could see and hear them in their one's and two's with less difficulty moving toward the treasure I guarded from those hungry men. A few elevated words and the tall elephant grasses growing out of the top of the hill blowing monotonously like unkempt hair reabsorbed them, still hungry. I feared the CO counting cases every morning for the mercy I would show those hungry young men. Occasionally, I turned away intentionally to watch a bombing run, or, to cover myself from the never still air.

Ten minutes. I moved or walked or sat filtering ten minutes worth of ruffled sky through my lungs before that round landed. Eleven minutes earlier, perhaps a few less bites of rice or moments of idle digestion among the NVA mortar crew out there beyond my view, when someone would be yelling "Corpsmen up!" for me. Instead, my early morning replacement sat where I sat and the round landed where he now sat, between his legs — severed and ripped, his limbs now disassembled from his body.

I stood not 60 feet from him when the sharp blur of the slicing object invaded our hilltop and slipped down onto him. I saw the white, instant light and then the smoke. The dirty, three-dimensional acrid smoke and red dirt turned to seedier bits of gray, screening him from me. The tiresome wind released the veneer of dense haze soon after posting it, and his life, now a limp existence, changed. Something erased the deafening explosion as it pressed into the parts of my mind where sound is stored and examined. For one more day, I saw this great event in the context of all the larger ripping and tearing and deprivation.

I stood and looked. I knew another round would soon follow, but I just stood. I could do nothing else, so I wallowed in my deafness. I saw the Corpsmen,

with bags in hand, run to begin his terrible work. Other men rushed about yelling, moving through the whirling air made of paste. Perhaps I imagined sitting myself down to silhouette his body, covering him with my own, protecting him. All of this movement blurred with greater complexity around me and on the stage to my front. I stood where I stood almost as ripped and torn within as he without.

Everything else appeared a dead shade of gray — the grass, even the sky with its streaking bits of golden morning clouds. I propped my exhausted body upright and I bled incrementally during those brief moments. Inches ago, I assumed I was *mostly* bled out. I stood frozen in my mad fascination despite the danger of that next round landing somewhere, addressed "to whom it may concern." I refused to hear. To listen. To realign. Everything — men, grasses and clouds — meandered in melting acoustic waves. And despite my mental equilibrium now blasted off its kilter, this tantalizing scene moved naturally. Rhythmically. But I, I could not hear it in order to absorb it, so I became absorbed by the sum of the whole. I controlled nothing and all the lies lay shattered in the firm, red clay upon which I stood so uselessly.

The second round landed; in masterful alignment with the first but twelve odd feet short, harmlessly short. It maimed by intent only. In warped fragments of time. I moved as an old man who has seen his ancient self, years before he reaches that stage when it presses its spiny fingers into his mind, body and renders him another object to disassemble and bury. The next moments I lived in abject purposelessness. I could do nothing for him. Him the target. Someone resembling me moved to my bunker and became mired and then subsequently lost in cleaning his always dirty weapon. The now full day would continue to blow its calloused soul unopposed relentlessly across the brow of the hill, shifting and bending the watching grasses.

Vietnam: Fictions Distort America's Role

by Bing West

Last Christmas, I went back to a village where I had fought 35 years ago. It is 400 miles north of Saigon, which is now called Ho Chi Minh City. The North Vietnamese also have changed the name of the village to show who won the war. A solitary Marine squad had fought in that village, living among 6,000 Vietnamese. In 1966, 15 Americans walked in; 485 days later, eight walked out. More Americans died in the rice paddies around a forgotten place called Chu Lai than in all of Desert Storm. And, for what?

In the village, I visited our old fort — now a kindergarten — and prowled around the moss-covered stone foundations while kicking up old memories. When I walked back out to the paddy dike, I was surrounded by smiling villagers. An old farmer (my age) peered at me and said: "Welcome back, Dai Uy." A third of a century later, they remembered me, a young captain from decades earlier. They asked by name about the other Marines who had gone home those many years ago and led me through the trails to a palm tree overlooking a bright green paddy. There they showed me a rough marble marker — their memorial to the seven Marines who had lived in that village for a year-and-a-half and who had not walked out.

In the larger geopolitical scheme of things, does the fondness of those villagers for Americans known long ago mean anything? Possibly. It's fashionable now to say Vietnam was a bad war, where even children threw grenades. Forcing American soldiers to do terrible things. It was supposedly a country unworthy of our sacrifice. Those who avoided or protested service argued that it was better not to serve. While poll after poll shows that the Vietnam veterans are proud they served, their collective judgment has been ignored by a media that has labeled the war as unworthy.

Aesop's Fox

"The Greatest Generation" by Tom Brokaw of NBC News became a best-selling book by depicting how ordinary and famous Americans united to fight World War II. As the success of Brokaw's book attests, winning casts a long shadow; we justly praised ourselves for our efforts in the 1940s. Losing has the opposite effect. No such book will emerge about Vietnam. The Greatest Generation were the leaders who sent the next generation into Vietnam. Those same leaders eventually lost heart, abandoned the South Vietnamese people, and transferred to them the blame for failure. Aesop wrote about the fox who, failing to snatch the grapes from the vine, declared them sour. We acted the same way. As a nation, we declared we would help the South

Vietnamese defend themselves against the communists directed from North Vietnam and aided by China and the Soviet Union. When the price became too high, many of the same leaders from the Greatest Generation declared the South Vietnamese no longer deserving of our sacrifices. Sometimes we're not the greatest.

Three Myths

Today, three myths distort the American role in the war in Vietnam:

The first myth is that we were defeated on the battlefield.

Actually, all American combat forces had withdrawn years before Saigon fell. After the U.S. withdrawal, North Vietnam invaded in 1972 and was driven back by South Vietnamese ground forces and U.S. air power. In recent movies such as "We Were Soldiers," North Vietnamese willpower is portrayed as implacable and unstoppable. This is rubbish. As the tragedy of World War I demonstrated, every nation has a breaking point. Three times we had the North Vietnamese on the ropes, and each time it was policy fickleness in Washington that persuaded them not to continue. In the second invasion after Americans left, in 1975, North Vietnam employed Chinese artillery pieces and Soviet-built tanks. We refused to bomb those targets and instead slashed our aid. At the end, some South Vietnamese soldiers were down to one grenade a day.

The second myth is that of moral equivalency — depicting war protesters defying American authorities as being as courageous as the American soldiers fighting the North Vietnamese.

After all, the protesters had Woodstock, where it was difficult singing and making love in the rain; the soldiers had the jungles, slogging through the heat and mud, losing more than 50,000 dead. Some who avoided fighting claimed they were protesting for the sake of those who were fighting. Yet those who fought are proud they did so and in the main saw the protesters as a reason why the North Vietnamese continued to fight. Thanks to the press, we remember the protesters more fondly than we do those who fought. As a nation, we ignored — and often scorned — our servicemen on their return from Vietnam.

Vietnam is depicted as more brutal than World War II. The actions of a few who killed civilians, such as former Sen. Bob Kerrey, have received front-page coverage, with the spin angle being that "the war made me do it." The war, it is argued, corrupted American values and decency. The opposite was actually the case. We inflicted less damage on the civilian population in Vietnam than we did in France and Germany. Our soldiers in Vietnam fought as valiantly and as humanely as did the Greatest Generation in World War II.

The third myth is that losing makes little difference.

But losing did affect our self-confidence, and to this day some countries are wrongly emboldened, believing we can be beaten on the battlefield. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, American foreign policy manifested serious dyspepsia. In supplicant fashion, we courted detente — "can't we all just get along?" — with a supposedly stronger Soviet Union, and we permitted a rabble to seize our embassy in Iran. Only gradually did we recover, electing President Reagan, rebuilding our military, challenging the Soviet Union, and abetting in its demise. The historian Stephen Ambrose has observed that of all the European nations, American GIs in World War II liked the Germans, against whom they had fought, best. Similarly, South Vietnamese widely welcome and genuinely like Americans, though they have nothing to thank us for. The septuagenarians in Hanoi control the economic, religious, social, travel, educational, professional, and personal freedoms of every Vietnamese. One of the few remaining Bolshevik communist regimes, the dictators in Hanoi memorialize long-ago battles, yet they cannot chart a course into the future.

A Tragedy

So Vietnam is mired in a bleak past, while America is the beacon for a shining future. We recovered our geopolitical self-confidence and our martial prowess; for millions of people in Southeast Asia, there was no recovery. That is a tragedy. The South Vietnamese have grace, culture, and ambition. Given the freedom to pursue their own opportunities, they would prosper. Someday the yoke will be lifted from the Vietnamese people. But we should have no illusions about the repressive nature of the current regime. Freedom did not flourish when the North Vietnamese took control. In 1953 when we were fighting a limited war in South Korea, that country was not a model of enlightened democracy. Today, South Korea is a thriving democracy, where we still have 25,000 American soldiers stationed to deter an impoverished, hostile North Korea. To our credit, we

have stayed the course there. In contrast, we tired of the limited war in South Vietnam; the war simply went on too long. That we stopped fighting and withdrew most of our aid is understandable if not laudable. In Korea and in Vietnam, we chose two different courses. Today, South Korea's future is bright and South Vietnam's future is bleak. That cannot be changed. But we should not let myths turn us into Aesop's fox and blame the grapes. The day Saigon fell, the secretary of defense, James Schlesinger, sent a message to our armed forces.

It read in part: "Our involvement was intended to assist a small nation to preserve its independence. You have done all that was asked of you. You are entitled to the Nation's respect, admiration, and gratitude."

That is the proper, elliptical epitaph to the Vietnam War.

"Semper Fidelis" Saves a Life

Decades after his heroics in Vietnam, relatives and servicemen mobilize to help a dying Vet (a Khe Sanh Member)

by Ellen Gamerman
Sun National Staff
Originally published August 16, 2002

WASHINGTON — John Ripley's worthless liver had left his skin a sickly yellow. Toxic fluids were collecting in his system, causing his lean frame to bloat: once 175 pounds, he now weighed 425. His kidneys were failing. An incision glared from his abdomen, closed with staples in case surgeons had to rip it open fast. Eighteen IV lines fed into his unconscious body. One of the Marine Corps' greatest living heroes was dying. In the intensive care unit at Georgetown University Medical Center, a son of the retired colonel, Tom Ripley, sat vigil.

It was 7am when the phone rang: A donor liver had been found. But his father might not live long enough to get it. That's when the Ripleys understood that the delivery of the liver, from a 16-year-old gunshot victim in Philadelphia to the dying veteran in Washington, would take too long if left in the hospital's hands. Their only thought: Call in the Marines. Over the next hours on that day last month, saving John Ripley's life became a military mission. It would involve the leader of the Marine Corps and helicopters from the President's fleet. Support teams would come from police in two cities, a platoon of current and former Marines, the president of Georgetown University and even a crew of construction workers.

"Sir, this is my dad's last chance," Tom Ripley said in a call to the Marine commandant's office. "I'm measuring my father's life in hours, not days." The extraordinary efforts to save the 63-year-old Ripley, recovering from transplant surgery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, shows how far the Corps will go to protect one of its own. Marines will say they'd do this for any fallen comrade. But Ripley is no ordinary Marine. In a messy war with few widely recognized heroes, he is a legend. And at his moment of need, the Corps treated him like one. "Colonel Ripley's story is part of our folklore — everybody is moved by it," said Lt. Col. Ward Scott, who helped organize the organ delivery from his post at the Marine Corps Historical Center in Washington, which Ripley has directed for the past three years. "It mattered that it was Colonel Ripley who was in trouble."

A heroic effort

On Easter Sunday 1972, Col. John Walter Ripley — swinging arm over arm to attach explosives to the span while dangling beneath it — almost single-handedly destroyed a bridge near the South Vietnamese city of Dong Ha. The action, which took place under heavy fire over several hours as he ran back and forth to shore for materials, is thought to have thwarted the onslaught of 20,000 enemy troops. His tale is required reading for every Naval Academy plebe. In Memorial Hall, Ripley, a 1962 academy graduate, is the only Marine featured from the Vietnam War: A diorama shows him clinging to the grid work of the bridge at Dong Ha. Ripley received the Navy Cross, the second-highest award a Marine can receive for combat. That decoration is surpassed only by the Congressional Medal of Honor, which, many in the Marine Corps vigorously argue, Ripley deserves.

But on this July morning, three decades after surviving combat wounds, Ripley was facing death from a transportation problem. His doctors tried four civilian organ transportation agencies and could not immediately be guaranteed a helicopter by any of them. The Ripleys say they were told that a civilian helicopter would not be available for at least six hours. Driving to Philadelphia was not an option

because doctors worried that any traffic delays would ruin the organ.

Helicopter mission

Tom Ripley saw only one solution. From his father's hospital room, he called the office of the Marine Corps commandant, James L. Jones, and secured the use of a CH-46 helicopter, which is part of the Presidential Marine One fleet.

The plan: The chopper would ferry the transplant team to the University of Pennsylvania hospital to remove the donor liver and then transport the doctors back to Washington. Marine lawyers instantly approved the use of military materiel for Ripley, including nearly three hours on a helicopter that costs up to $6,000 an hour to operate. The commandant considered this an official lifesaving mission for a retired Marine still valuable to the Corps as a living symbol of pride. Action was swift. The doctors rushed to Anacostia Naval Air Station, where the helicopter was waiting, rotors spinning. The chopper took off before the surgeons were even strapped in. By about 10 a.m., just three hours after learning that a new liver would be available in Philadelphia, the transplant team was swooping into that city. On the landing pad, an ambulance and a Philadelphia Highway Patrol car, both summoned by the Marines, were waiting.

The motorcade took off, sirens blaring. "When you're in a situation like this, and an organ becomes available, you use the fastest resource to get it," said Dr. Cal Matsumodo, a transplant surgeon from Walter Reed who flew on the helicopter to retrieve the new liver. "This turned out to be the swiftest and best-organized effort that I've ever seen."

Ripley's original liver had been ruined by a rare genetic disease as well as by a case of Hepatitis B that he believes he contracted in Vietnam. After a year-and-a-half of hospitalizations and infections, Ripley had received a new liver from a D.C. area donor July 22. But within hours of the surgery, that donor liver began to fail.

Medical professionals say the organ donation process is safeguarded to keep powerful people from skipping to the top of the waiting list. It was Ripley's critical condition — caused by the failure of the first donor liver, his doctors say — not his personal story, that put him first in line for another liver July 24. Still, most new organs are never granted military escorts. "It was clearly extraordinary, what they did," said Roger Brown, manager of the Organ Center at the United Network for Organ Sharing, a clearinghouse for organ procurement and allocation. Sometimes, Brown said, patients will die because available organs cannot be transported to them in time. "There's a lot of work that goes into matching a donor with a patient," he said. "If you can't find that one piece of the puzzle, it's just devastating."

In Ripley's mind, the mission that day reflects the strength of the Marine Corps fraternity. As he convalesces at Walter Reed, where he went after his operation and is listed in stable condition, he summons his booming voice long enough to insist that Marines would do the same for even an unknown grunt. "Does it surprise me that the Marine Corps would do this?" Ripley said from his hospital bed, his dog tags still hanging around his neck. "The answer is absolutely flat no! If any Marine is out there, no matter who he is, and he's in trouble, then the Marines will say, 'We've got to do what it takes to help him.'"

In Philadelphia, though, the Marine pilots knew exactly whom they were helping and they called it an honor. On the helipad, the flight crew stood ready as the transplant team rushed back with a box marked, "HUMAN ORGAN: FRAGILE."

Moments later, Tom Ripley, traveling with the doctors, got an update from his oldest brother, Stephen, at his father's bedside. Their dad's condition was worsening. The organ had to get to Washington — fast. Tom and Stephen, both former Marine captains, debated the quickest "RTB" — return to base, which in this case meant the Georgetown hospital. In pager messages fired off like battlefield dispatches, the chopper became "the bird" and the doctors the "pax," slang for passengers. As the day wore on, the brothers drew from their military roots, comforting each other with the Marine motto, Semper Fidelis.

Their father, meanwhile, lay still. His dog tags, fastened with the same tape he'd used to keep them from clanking on secret missions in Vietnam, had been removed. Twice, the family had summoned a Catholic priest to deliver last rites. Now, the Ripley's wondered whether a third might be needed. The hours ticked away, and the family learned that the Marine helicopter was too big to land on the Georgetown hospital helipad. But the doctors feared getting stuck in traffic on the drive from the Anacostia helipad to the hospital.

The delivery

A well-connected Marine buddy of Ripley's called the president of Georgetown University and got permission to land on the school's football field. A construction crew standing nearby was soon ripping down fencing to make room. But the Marines rejected that makeshift helipad after sending another helicopter to survey it. The area was deemed too crowded for a landing. At one point, the Ripley's suggested landing at the Marine Corps War Memorial, across the river from Georgetown, by the statue that depicts Marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima. But that fanciful notion went nowhere. The answer finally came in the form of a D.C. police helicopter pilot — Sgt. Thomas Hardy, a former Marine. A Corps official found him and asked whether he would take the team from Anacostia to Georgetown on his smaller chopper. "This was a Marine Corps mission," said Hardy, a Vietnam veteran who agreed to fly without hesitation. "Once a Marine," he explained, "always a Marine."

The organ delivered, the surgery could finally start. The next day, Ripley's recovery began. Slowly, he is gaining strength and returning to a normal weight. Despite the surgery's success, risks of infection or other problems remain. His family expects him to be in the hospital for up to three more weeks. Ripley rests quietly, unable to accept visitors. His wife of 37 years, Moline, sits with him amid pictures of their four children and their grandkids.

Repaying an old debt

The sons who orchestrated this rescue operation call it a culminating moment in their father's military life. John Ripley was shot in the side by a North Vietnamese soldier and during two tours of duty was pierced with so much shrapnel that doctors found metal fragments in his body as recently as last year. After Vietnam, Ripley continued to serve, losing most of the pigment in his face from severe sunburns while stationed above the Arctic Circle. The Marines, his family believes, repaid a longtime debt. "Dad gave 32 years of his life to the Marine Corps," said Stephen Ripley.

"When he really, really needed the Marine Corps, they were there for him." Even from the quiet of his hospital room, the Marine Corps still defines Ripley. His family has packed a cabinet by his bed with copies of a book that John Grider Miller wrote about Ripley's heroics; Ripley says he will give complimentary copies of "The Bridge at Dong Ha" to the medical staff. Not long ago, a military color guard held a bedside ceremony for him, placing in the room the Marine Corps colors that normally hang in Commandant Jones' office. Ripley was urged to keep the flags in his room until he leaves the hospital. On a recent afternoon, Ripley looked past his IV machine, past the uneaten hospital lunch, past the plastic cup of pills, to the flags. He was, at that moment, John Ripley, grateful warrior, awed by what his sons, and the Marines, had done."They reached over the side," he said, "and they pulled me back in the boat."

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A Culture of Victory

Lessons of the Old Corps

by Richard Botkin

Camp Pendleton is not quite hallowed or sacred ground. No real battles have been waged there, no blood other than in training accidents has been shed for freedom within its confines. Home to the First Marine Division and supporting elements, its 200,000 or so acres of coastal real estate allows for most facets of training which have become Marine Corps hallmarks: amphibious assaults, helicopter-borne raids, and good old-fashioned infantry combat.

Constrained on its northern, eastern and southern boundaries by urban sprawl, the regular civilian driving Interstate 5 between San Clemente and Oceanside is treated to a view of what much of California's coastline must have looked like prior to the state's meteoric growth after World War II. For those Marines who have served there or processed through on the way to more serious destinations, Camp Pendleton will always conjure unique memories of training performed: forced marches in the coastal hills, rifle-range details on cool, fog-shrouded mornings, amphibious landings on those miles and miles of unspoiled beaches. More important than the real estate though, are the Marines who constitute the Division. This is the unit that gave America its first ground combat victory in the Pacific at Guadalcanal in late 1942, followed by similar heroics in equally brutal battles on islands like Peleliu and Okinawa.

In 1950, it was the First Marine Division that

landed at Inchon, recaptured Seoul, chased the North Koreans all the way to the Yalu River and then — outnumbered at least six-to-one — defeated Chinese Red Army units in its masterful retrograde from the Chosin Reservoir. In Vietnam, the Division's three infantry regiments were engaged in almost every major battle fought by Marines and the thousands of other skirmishes without names. In Desert Storm and into Afghanistan, the men and women of the First Marine Division have played key roles in every success and victory. Old Corps, every Marine knows about the mythical Old Corps. In the Old Corps, things were just a little bit tougher, the drill instructors more demanding, and the Marines somehow a bit more magnificent. During World War II, Old Corps meant service with Chesty Puller chasing bandits in Nicaragua in the 1930s. To those new Leathernecks in June of 1950, Old Corps was service at Iwo Jima, Tarawa, Guam. In my time, the early 1980s, Old Corps were those guys who slugged it out with the NVA during the siege at Khe Sanh and those who retook the Citadel in the bloody street fighting in Hue in 1968. And on and on.

The lessons of the Old Corps

Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants, in their pre-9/11 planning, committed errors similar to those made by the Japanese militarists before their attack on Pearl Harbor. In both 2001 and 1941, the plotters incorrectly focused on the notion of an America flabby and effete, a culture interested only in the pursuit of pleasure and ease. Who can fault ObL for such an assessment today? During their pre-attack reconnaissance, the terrorists had only to turn on the television, visit the shopping malls and theaters, drive the freeways in major cities to observe the things we value. How can a culture that produces an abundance of dimwitted Hollywood heroes with celluloid spines fight the good fight? How can a nation so full of those content to experience life vicariously on the couch or behind a computer screen rise up and crush the beckoning evil? The raw physical beauty that is Camp Pendleton grows more contrasting each year as its borders become increasingly concreted and the bustle of California quickens. For those who revere the Corps, as most former Marines do, trips there are always rich with nostalgia, as comforting as sitting with aging parents and life-long friends.

Returning recently to visit a brother Marine just back from Afghanistan, it finally hit me. It was not the fondness of happy memories that was so reassuring — it was looking into the future and seeing its promise that was so invigorating. There before me on a very crisp and early Friday morning as I drove through the various regimental camps, the sky already abuzz with helicopters, I could feel the throbbing pulse of this future Old Corps. There they all were, these young Marines: lean, tough, smart, hungry for action, certain of their cause, grounded in a culture that has only delivered victory. These are the warriors ready to write the new chapters in the history of the Old Corps. Back at home and in my own life, away from things military, listening to news, reading the paper, I sometimes get discouraged and easily see why OBL and his ilk never learned the lesson of the Old Corps.

In World War II, Jimmy Stewart joined the Air Force, went to England, and bombed the Germans. This year we sent Woody Harrelson over to destroy British taxis. In World War II — and again in Korea — Ted Williams quit baseball to fly fighters. This year, a sissified Tom Cruise pines for living in the relative safety of Australia. In the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are grown men and women whose commitment to victory is, at best, a distant second to their drive to gain personal power and advance their socialist agendas. Made safe and kept free by far better men, these actors and politicians intuitively know the lessons of the Old Corps. They just hope that we do not remember. So I say "Go ahead, Maverick — eject, eject, eject! Punch out!" We'll give you a call and let you know when it is safe to come back. It is with humble respect that I stretch and paraphrase the Bible in saying that the fools, the cynics, the voluptuaries ... they will always be with us. It bothers me, but I can live with it so long as I know there are just a bit more than a few young men who think they are tough enough to be Rangers, young men who think they are smart enough to drive nuclear submarines, young men whose testosterone bubbles at the notion of landing high-performance aircraft during dark nights on the heaving decks of aircraft carriers.

The spirit of the Old Corps and the essence of American manhood, as described by Teddy Roosevelt, courses through the vitals of these young warriors destined to pay the bittersweet price that comes with — and is demanded by — freedom. They are best honored by TR's own words, penned nearly a century

ago but never more true than today: "There is little use for the being whose tepid soul knows nothing of the great and generous emotion, of the high pride, the stern belief, the lofty enthusiasm, of the men who quell the storm and ride the thunder..."

Richard Botkin is a former United States Marine Corps infantry officer and a board member of World NetDaily.com.
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MEMOIRS

Light of His Life

Long-lost link to fallen comrades finds its way home

by Joe Hurley
The News-Times, 08/15/2002

"It was just a cigarette lighter. Just a lighter passed from hand to hand among soldiers who would die in the jungle. Just a lighter that brought tears to Jim Marden's eyes when he remembered those boys: their young faces and their feet sticking out of body bags. Just a lighter that disappeared from a Massachusetts washroom in 1968 and took with it Jim's last link to his platoon. Just a lighter that mysteriously turned up in New Jersey years later and sat forgotten in a drawer for decades. It was spotted by chance last week and four men worked to find the owner. Just a lighter that, after 34 years, was returned to Jim Marden this week. "I've got my boys back," Jim said Tuesday in the parlor of his New Milford home. He spoke carefully, trying to hold back his emotions, like a good Marine. It was a losing battle. His voice cracked. He halted for a moment. "At some point everybody in my company lit a cigarette off that lighter or touched it." That's the way it was when you were huddled in a foxhole. The lighter would be passed along from its owner to someone who needed it. Jim has a picture of the 47 men in his platoon when they arrived in Vietnam in 1967. And he has a picture of the ones who survived when his tour ended a year later. There were just five. The others were dead or wounded. When Jim holds the metal lighter it all comes back to him. "On how many night ambushes, on how many firefights was that lighter with us," he said, his voice trailing off as the memories returned. "Some people call them flash-



The News-Times/Wendy Carlson

backs. I call it a slide show. The faces come up. But they come up every night anyhow."

When Jim left Vietnam, the Marine Corps confiscated his souvenirs. They let him keep the lighter and an expensive watch. "They were the only things I had left," he said. Back home, he took a job as a mechanic at a Natick, Mass., gas station, where he lost the watch and lighter. His wife, Marsha, said Jim still talked about losing the lighter decades later. Just a few weeks ago, he was at a Marine reunion when someone pulled out a similar lighter. "I used to have a lighter like that," he said. "I miss my Zippo."

That's the way Marsha tells the story. She's the young nurse who waited patiently while Jim was overseas, even though they had dated just twice. She's seen him live with the demons of war memories and raise a family in Kent before they moved to New Milford two years ago. And she said he's earned everything he has. "He's the greatest guy going. He works very hard and he'd do anything for anybody. But he's very serious — everything has to be upright and honest," she said. Over the years, Jim worked day after day of overtime as an SNET cable splicer, partly as therapy to cope with the demons. "There's not a day that we don't talk about the war. It was an important part of his life," Marsha said. Their son James is a Marine and their daughter Heather lives just down the road. It was Marsha who prodded Jim to respond to a message on their answering machine Sunday. It said the caller had something from Vietnam that would interest Jim. Jim was hesitant. He feared unpleasant memories. And both of them wondered if it was a scam. Finally, Marsha said she would call if Jim didn't. He never expected to hear that someone found the lighter.

"I couldn't believe it. Holy cow! How do you thank someone for something like this. Four strangers cared enough to find me — God bless them." At the other end of the phone line, Terry Kucenski of Clayton, N.J., was telling Jim that he

came across the lighter about 25 years ago when he was living with his parents in Bayonne. He doesn't remember how or where he found it, although it might have turned up in a bar, he said. The lighter had Jim's name, his company and the words Khe Sanh 861-881 on it above the motto: "You've never really lived until you've nearly died."

He put the lighter in a drawer, intending to find the owner, but forgot about it until he returned home last week. "I happened to be looking for a pencil, and bingo, there was the lighter," he said. He called his friend Mike Fahy, a Philadelphia police detective, who contacted Joe DeLocqua, a Marine Vietnam veteran. DeLocqua immediately knew Khe Sanh 861-881 meant the owner had been through one of the most important and bloodiest battles of the war. 861-881 were hills at Khe Sanh.

They contacted Doc Hoppy, a former medic in Vietnam who keeps track of veterans through the Internet. Hoppy located Jim Marden, whose picture was recently posted on the Web by a veteran searching for information about the platoon. The next day, Fahy called Kucenski. "He was ecstatic," Kucenski said. "We were all ecstatic that we were able to find the owner. "When Kucenski called, he found out just how much the lighter meant to Jim. He felt like it was a part of his life that was missing," Kucenski said. "I was just glad to be part of it. I haven't been that happy since my Little League team went undefeated."

"When the lighter arrived by courier Tuesday, Marsha couldn't contain her excitement. "I was overjoyed for Jimmy. I ran out of the house and hugged the driver. He must have thought I was a nut," she said. Jim was calmer on the outside. But his tears gave him away. "It was like getting an old friend back," Marsha said. Later, he bought some lighter fluid and tried the lighter. It worked on the first try.

But Jim doesn't plan on using it very often. It's on the mantle in their Old Stone Road home and it will be handed down to his son.

Joe Hurley
sjhurley@newstimes.com



The News-Times/Wendy Carlson

Our Flag

By Bill Person

Only those who paid the price seem to truly understand
The way we feel about the proud emblem of our great land
The brave lads who faced up to that grim and mortal fear,
And now view 'Old Glory' and shed a salty tear.
Remembering things beyond our paltry words to explain
While forgetting not the fallen by we who still remain.
How many lives were paid to make our banner free
And gave their blood for all of us, it stirs most deep in me.
Their ghostly souls are wending down life's dimming eternal hall
To venture on honorably past their final deathly fall.
How beautiful the colors soar, stripes and stars so bright,
That now means so very much to us who had to go and fight.
Wave on, oh symbol of freedom, fill the azure sky
And reach to heaven in our hearts, so proudly we see you fly,
We feel the phantom presence of those who've gone beyond
And watch with us, our flag, that we are so rightly fond.
"Oh, say can you see," in song our voices start to raise.
In joyful anthem to America's flag we reverely praise.
We know what awesome price men have dutifully paid.
Just view the countless crosses where they are quietly laid.
I fear for future times should no one wish to cry
For those of us who gladly fought in days now gone by.
Do not forget us, I strongly urge and pray
We did our part so all our lives can honorably be this way.
I feel no shame as tears run down my proud American cheek.

Do You Know Me?

(Bill Person)

Do you know me?
That I went to war for freedom's sake
And in a far off hostile place,
I served my Uncle Sam.
Lean down close on bended knees
So you can better hear,
While I whisper you my name
So you know who I am.

Do you know me?
When people in a far off land
Braved our enemy all alone.
We sought to give them freedom
From that awesome hostile threat.
But some at home refused to fight
In that frightful worthy strife,
These acts, we'll not condone.

Do you know me?
When American blood was shed,
And dying men lay all about
The horrors there to see.
Each one stood tall and did his part.
Some gave it all, the last full count,
Of that there is no doubt.

Do you know me?
The death angel has come and vanquished me.
Oh, I have felt his fatal sting
To send me where the living fear to go,
I could not tarry long
Yet, when the borrowed days do pass,
Those who survive us still,
To the fallens' presence, he shall surely bring.

Do you know me?
Although my scant numbered days are past,
Still I suffered deeply
And felt the wounded shame
When misguided ones in numbers,
Behaved so dishonorably,
They joined in lofty masses,
Our flag and draft cards burned
They betrayed all departed souls
In tarnished ways to lay the blame.

Do you know me?
I truly hope now you do
For this nation's greatest might
Is forged from spilled precious blood
And those who live must carry on,
To keep the power and bear the torch of right.

Do you know me?
That now I lie among the valiant fallen
Wherein countless graves we rest.
Like them, asked not the reason
Men my country gave the call
But went ever proudly onward
To bravely do my best.

Do you know me?
Tho' my shape is faint for you to see.
Can you feel the suffering,
My lot is to bear?
Do you know the deepest low
My soul it did endure?
Can you feel the anguish?
Or do you really care?

Do you know me?
Tho' I am gone from human eyes
My soul is close to thee
Would that I could
Mend that aching heart,
Take from you all emptiness
And fill that hollow part.

Do you know me?
That I suffered pain in monsoon rain,
The lifeline was sorely stretched
Come you close and look here on,
This blackened, shiny wall
And read my name among the rest,
Where the fallen names are etched.

Inspired by the painting "REFLECTIONS of the Vietnam Memorial," "THE WALL" and a tribute to all veterans.

KHE SANH VETERANS ASSOCIATION
Membership Application

COPY, print & fill out form. Submit completed form to the address below.

Check: ❑ New Member ❑ Renewal ❑ Change

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____ MI _____

Nickname: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip + 4: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

FAX: _____ Email Address: _____

Are you a Khe Sanh Vet? Check one: ❑ YES ❑ NO

If YES, when were you at Khe Sanh? (Please be as specific & complete as possible):

_____

_____

Service Branch at Khe Sanh, Check applicable:

❑ Air Force ❑ Army ❑ Navy ❑ USMC ❑ Civilian

Your Unit: _____

If NO, tell us your association with Khe Sanh Vets:

_____

_____

Membership Type (check one & write in amount enclosed):

❑ Life ($150) ❑ Regular ($20) ❑ Associate ($20) $ _____

Please make check(s) payable to: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. If New Member Application or Renewal*, mail completed form with dues payment to:

Tom Eichler
3221 N. Opal
Chicago, IL. 60634
Phone: 773/625-2101 Fax: 773-625-8021
Email TEIC1448@AOL.COM

On renewals, circle any items to be changed. If a Request for change to current directory information, please complete the form, circle the items to be changed, and mail or fax a copy of your completed form.

Never forgotten – Faces from 26th Marines

Sgt. James N. Tycz [KIA 10 May 67]
Recipient of Navy Cross

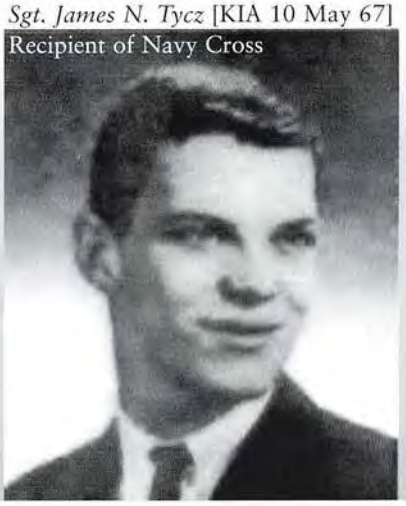

Cpl. James M. Trimble [KIA 6 Apr 68]
G Co. 2/26





2nd Lt. William R. Ammon [KIA 16 Apr 68]
Mike Co. 3/26, 2nd Pl.



Cpl. Edward McGrath [KIA 6 Apr 68] G Co. 2/26



Pfc. Robert G. Piazza [KIA 6 Apr 68] G Co. 2/26



Standing at left is John Raymond, A Co.
John Kaheny is at right.

In this issue...

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...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

Happy 227th

Happy Birthday Marines!

Time has written our history in the lines that now appear on our faces. Our dreams reflect days that have faded from conscious thought and are peopled with men who fell on "fields of glory" long ago and those who have since passed on. The pride, the dedication, the commitment to Corps and Country has not diminished by one ounce. If you celebrate at a gala Marine Corps Birthday ball, at a small, informal gathering with other Marines, or at home with a toast from a single glass — you will be fulfilling that time-honored tradition of honoring the unbroken line of heroic soldiers of the sea, who have borne the legacy of the Corps in peacetime and in war for 227 years. God Bless each of you.

Long Live the United States, and Success to the Marines!

Tom Eichler
VP KSV

Holiday Wishes

The entire staff of the KSV Newsletter wishes every member, and their families, a most Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Tom Eichler & Staff

✻

I wish the entire membership a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and hope to see everyone in Charleston, SC, in July.

David "Bulldog" Smith
President KSV

Health and Veterans Issues

New Benefits For Purple Heart Recipients

I just received a letter from the California Dept. of Veteran Affairs stating that the new Public Law 106-117 allows veterans who have been awarded the Purple Heart to receive inpatient and outpatient medical services at no cost. It also provides for prescription medicine at very low cost. In order to obtain the benefits, the Purple Heart recipient must enroll at a local US Dept of Veteran Affairs (USDVA) facility and provide proof of the Purple Heart award. More information is available at http://www.va.gov or at 800- 827-1000. Please pass on this information to anyone who might find it helpful. Thanks.

Charles Patterson

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

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Book Reviews

Steve Marceau wrote:

Ernie, There are two great books out now. They are especially important for Vietnam vets whom actually saw combat. The first is "A Better War" by Lewis Sorley. It is an accurate chronology of what really happened after Creighton Abrams took over from Westmoreland. The second is "Stolen Valor" by B.G. Burkett. This book destroys the myths that exist about Vietnam and the veterans. You might want to mention these in **Red Clay**.

Steve Marceau
A 2/5, 1st Cavalry Division
Operation Pegasus, Apr 1,1968

❋

Chuck Patterson,

I picked up "The Petrified Hearts" again the other day, and had this chilling sense that I'd never written to thank you for it, and to tell you how highly I thought of it. Many of these poems have stayed with me, such as "Near Cua Viet" and "As Stark and True as They Come," "Both Like One of Stephen Crane's Small Jewels." Also, "The Ending of A Little Knowledge," "Starlight," "Bootlaces," and "Caretaker." The one about the old man thatching his home, the one about killing the pig and, of course, the one about Manny Babbitt. All were also meaningful to me. These are fine poems, dark as heart's blood, which they are. Thank you for giving them to me, and thanks for writing them. I hope you've been pleased with your new gig in L.A. I have been directing the writing program here for the last couple of years and getting some, but not enough writing done. I'm taking a year's breather to finish a book and try my hand at being Italian; as we leave for Rome on Tuesday. My very best to you, and thanks again for these fine poems.

Yours as ever,
Tobias Wolff, Professor in the Humanities
Stanford University, Department of English

Editorial Section

Kudos for the Staff

Dear Jimbo,

I received my Medal and its citation. During a time like this, I am speechless. (If you knew me that is rare.) I'm very, very honored that you have included me on your list. I have always been ready for action since Khe Sanh, and have spent most of my military career training as many young Docs to be ready to be by their Marine Brothers side in the future. I have always worn my awards not for myself but for the Docs who did far more than me, and gave the greatest sacrifice. In my dreams I can still see, hear, and smell the battlefield, and have great pride that I was with you and was able to help save lives. I never had brothers until I joined the Hospital Corps and will always see the Marine Corps as my true brothers. My wife and I attended the 60th Anniversary of the 3rd Mar Div Reunion in San Diego, Ca. I met about 15 Docs and enjoyed it very much. However, when I realized the Khe Sanh Veterans dedicated a reunion to the Docs, I was really sad that I did not know sooner so I could attend. I hope, God willing, I will be able to attend your reunion maybe next year. My therapy is going well, and I am much better. Trying to make friends with my Viet Nam ghosts. I hope to see you in person someday, and I truly thank ALL of your Marine members for this honor you have given me and is my most valued award I have ever worn. I will always wear it with great pride. I will have it on when I enter my last muster in paradise.

Semper Fi!! Your co-van,
HMCS John"Doc"McBride USNR (RET)

Thanks: 2002 Reunion

This was our first Khe Sanh reunion. My wife Pam and I drove from Pennsylvania to spend some time with her sister and brother-in-law. It had been twelve years since she had been to Texas and thirty years for me. Pam and I both feel we were the fortunate ones to visit at the same time the 2002 Khe Sanh reunion was taking place. We knew Jim was big into planning for the reunion but we had no idea what was to take place. Jim and I spent a couple of days running around doing things to get ready for the arrival of his friends and fellow Marines. I do a lot of that sort

Memorial Page

Those Remembered	Remembered by:
SgtMaj James Gaynor, USMC, KIA 25 Feb 68	Charles Fetter, VMF-314
Dennis Herb, USMC	Charles Fetter, VMF-314
Ann Breeding, Wife of Earle Breeding E/2/26	Fr Thomas Stott, G CO 2/26
Alan Tookolo, USMC, 09 Nov 2002	Dean Shanklin, 2/94Th ARTY
Sgt. Carl "Papa Bear"Ballard USMC, 11 Nov 2002	Larry Ballard, H&S 2/26 81MM

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FETTER, Charles H	SHANKLIN,Dean E	SULLIVAN,Robert J
KEITER,Eugene	SHOUSE, Ronald E.	

of thing back home but once the reunion started, I realized how trivial my events are. The first day of the reunion was a sight to behold. Every time someone came in it was like they were greeting a long, lost family member.

Every thing from Charlie and Jim seeing who could floor each other's shorts first to lots of tears and smiles. As the reunion progressed, it became apparent that this really was one big family. I spent most of my time at the table selling t-shirts and other Khe Sanh memorabilia, As far as I was concerned, I had the best seat in the house. I got to see everyone that came in and met a lot of great people. Tom Eichler. Frank and Virginia. Short Round and his family. Ray Addington. Charlie Fox and his family. Louie and his wife. Neil Kenney. Sharon Pelon. Bulldog and many more. When we were sitting around on the outdoor patio in the evening, the conversations were at the very least extremely interesting. When the group would retire to the hotel complementary rooms, the conversations were altogether different. I found myself laughing when they laughed and crying when they cried. The stories had been told a thousand times but by the looks on everyone's face, it was like the first time they had heard them. Whether someone had heard the story once or a hundred times, somebody could always remember a little something they had forgoten. The friendship, laughter, crying and hugging was all part of every story told. You did not need to be a Khe Sanh vet to feel the emotion of the reunion.

All the planned events came off with out a hitch. The ranch turned out to be a lot of fun for us. We enjoyed watching Jim and P.J. doing the boot scoot. Tommy's spurs added just the right touch. The awards banquet was the highlight of the whole week. We feel we were very lucky to have been part of the reunion and are looking forward to South Carolina. To all the friends we made, have a good year and we will see you next year.

Mike & Pam

Tom,

Just received my current issue of the **Red Clay.** You did a great job-thank you.

Don Allen
US ARMY, SPECIAL FORCES, RETIRED
CEO, Veterans Pride Inc.
Jewelry For All Military Veterans.
info@veteranspride.com
http://www.veteranspride.com

Tom,

I just received my issue of **Red Clay** yesterday. I just wanted to write and thank you and the whole staff on what a remarkable job you all do. I took my **Red Clay** down to work and showed a group of vets that I work with. Man, were they impressed.

None of their associations have publications as outstanding as ours. Again, I want to thank you for your time and effort. Semper Fi...

Earl Clark A Co 1/26

P.S. I was born at Cook County Hospital and lived on the South Side, at 69th and Halsted, when I was a young boy. Today, they tell me it is like a war zone. Moved to Phoenix many, many years ago...Take care, Tom

Dear Mr. Eichler,

You do so much work for the Khe Sanh Veterans! The latest issue of **Red Clay** is so interesting. I do thank you for publishing my letter, including several of the snapshots I sent, and putting Neil's photo on the back cover. Such an honor this is.

Thanks. Sending good wishes.

Sharon Lynn Pelon

Tom, Ernie, Jimbo and gang:

Tom, Ernie, Jimbo and all you guys that work on our Khe Sanh Vets Newsletter. SEMPER FIDELIS and thank you much. I just got my copy of the **Red Clay** and was very moved and so very proud of the tribute to Golf Company that you guys wrote up. Not just because of the photo of me, Bob Shaeafers and Jimmy Everley holding the Golf Flag, but also because of the photos on the back page.

Anyway, thanks a lot, guys!
SF Eric

Publisher's Notes, Corrections

This email is in reference to a name listed on page 9 of the Fall 2002 magazine — the section pertaining to those who died after service in Khe Sanh. You listed the name Charles Everest, deceased 1993. This is actually Joseph Wrobleski, formerly of Mike 3/26. Joe was also a mess sergeant for a while. He was born and raised in Chicago, IL. For professional purposes, later in life he changed his name to Charles Everest. When Joe passed, I thought he was buried under the name in which he served. The VA told me that as a matter of policy, all Vets are buried under the name used during the actual time they had served. During a 3/26 reunion in San Diego, I visited Joe's grave located in the Riverside National Cemetery. He has been laid to rest as Joseph Wrobleski. Please confirm that "Ski's" name is listed correctly in all future references. No one except myself knows of a Charles Everest. However, many will remember Joe Wrobleski, known as Ski to those of us who knew him. Thank you for your time and effort. Please make this correction.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael J. Padula

Notes from the Publisher and Membership Committee Chairman

By the time you receive this newsletter, most (paid) members will have received their 2003 Membership Directory. Please check your personal information and let me know of any changes ASAP. It is a complex job keeping up with all 3,100 members. I need all the help I can get. You will also be receiving your dues notices with the newsletter, please remit them ASAP so that we may plan our 2003 budget. I have included separate forms for Life Members to make it convenient for them to make an added contribution, for a remembrance to the Memorial Section.

Tom Eichler VP KSV

Secretary's Notes

For those of you wondering what I have been doing since our last roundup in Texas...after that horse threw me into the barbed wire (smirk). Well, there are several items on our upcoming agenda:

- The election for half of the board members will be held at the reunion in South Carolina. Please send your nominations to "Bulldog," chairman of the nominations committee prior to May of 2003.
- The offices of President, Vice President, Sergeant-at-Arms, Chaplain, and half of the Members-at-Large, are to be filled at the 2003 reunion.
- Raffle tickets will be mailed out to members in February 2003.
- Registration forms are included in this newsletter. Complete and return to me ASAP.

I am working with Brian Mahoney on the reunion.

If you have any questions, contact me at 1-972-727-2997; email: Jim_pj_tx@mindspring.com

I mailed out 150 DOC Medals to members of our organization. Two more were left at the Vietnam Memorial during the KSV wreath laying ceremony on Veterans Day. Bruce Geiger, Tom Ford, Bill Jayne, Sid Patricio, Larry McCartney, Joe Elardo, Bill Gilkey, Jack McCormack, Ed Ronan, and Jack Corbett did a nice job representing the KSV. Billy



Tom Ford, Bill Jayne, Bruce Geiger

Martin, Ray Addington and I attended the ceremony at the Texas Vietnam Memorial, where we left a DOC Medal and Citation. We thanked all the Docs whose names were on the memorial. I think they all heard us. Ray Addington was interviewed by Channel 8 news concerning the DOC Medal and Citation. We made the 5:00 News. I have received numerous thank you letters from our Corpsman, Medics, and Medical Personnel thanking us for the Medals and how proud they were that we so honored them. I sent them to Ray Stubbe to be placed in the KSV Archives.



Jimbo Wodecki, KSV Secretary

You will find a brochure included in this issue displaying the KSV memorabilia we have for sale, Coins, bumper stickers, window decals, etc. These items may be purchased directly from me. If you hurry, these items will be available for Christmas. All profits go directly to our organization. We also have the new KSV store on the eBay network. Members can buy direct or bid on items we have for sale. You can also purchase memberships (Life included) and pay with a credit card using the PayPAL system. Members will also be allowed to sell personal items through this website. For further detailed information, go direct to the website: http://www.stores.ebay.com/id=26342286.

I have been contacted by our Editor concerning the KSV website and what type of information is being posted. There have been complaints that the original intent of the message board (exchanging information and helping other members with pertinent information concerning Khe Sanh) has been negated.The board seems to have been turned into a place for jokes and personal exchanges between members, not related to the KSV organization. A lot of members agree with the criticism, others site our right to say what we want. There have been abuses of the website, but messages are only posted for 3 weeks, then are removed. The Webmaster, Dave Doerman, does edit messages. It is a full-time job and he has been doing his best to remove offensive messages without infringing on anyone's right to express his feelings. I did a study on the Constitution of the website and this is what I came up with. The Khe Sanh Veterans shall not be deprived or abridged of their right to speak, write, or publish their sentiments. The freedom of the press, as one of the great bulwarks of liberty, shall be inviolable. Every Khe Sanh Vet has a right to lay what sentiments he pleases before the public; to forbid this, is to destroy the freedom of the message center. But if he publishes improper, mischievous, or illegal matter, he shall have consequences of his own temerity. **Please email me with your thoughts on limiting the use of the website. I will post the results of the survey.**

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: In response, following are postings of several responses to the above issue raised by the Editor, and other comments concerning the KSV website.

Regarding some recent postings...

I believe the content and general nature of too many of the last year's postings on this message board are demeaning, petty, and lacking in good taste and general civility. I am not talking about remembrances, sharing/seeking information issues regarding VA benefits, PTSD claims, general military information etc. As in all public message boards, the messages are received as authored; what is sent is posted. With that in mind, I urge all legitimate Khe Sanh Veterans to stop using "coded-type" cursing, demeaning comments AKA "putdowns," and to raise the bar to a higher quality, more intelligible substance of communication in our future postings. Remember...the world can read our words. So let's represent ourselves as the honorable warriors that we ALL are — respected, conscionable members of Khe Sanh Veterans.

Bruce "T-Bone" Jones

❋

T-Bone,

What you said was well said! And I think it was much needed at this time. I mean the dialectic can get stifled and boring, when there is no disagreement, especially between us Marines! But then there is a lot more to what you are saying, and I think I understand. Still, if I am one of those people you were talking about let me say this is my defense...I just say what I say, and no matter what I say, (for better or worse) I don't have any premeditated plans for "testing the envelope." Anyway, Bro, I will try to "elevate" my postings or at least I'll try to pay more attention to what I am saying before I post.

Eric

❋

T-Bone,

While I generally agree with your sentiments and acknowledge that it is important to maintain civility as we are, on this forum, representatives of our organization to the rest of the world, I also think it's important to recognize that we are a very diverse group of brothers and sisters who were, by the "fortunes of war," bonded together for eternity. Just as we all may have family members who act in a manner we disapprove of, we must endure the idiosyncrasies of those who err with tolerance and in a spirit of good humor. Has anyone really said anything we didn't hear at KSCB? Your heart is in the right place, and what you said perhaps bears repeating from time to time. But until we have to walk in the other fellow's shoes, who can really say what's in the other brother's heart? Thanks for your thoughts.

Jim Dawdy

❋

T-Bone,

I am a relatively new poster to this board, but I have been around the block once or twice. I was in the Marine Corps, not a seminary. I was taught how to go lock and load and shoot someone when I saw them. The whole idea of learning how to watch what I say at this stage of my life, with my life's experiences to date, is foreign to my nature. If your posting is about religion and you found it there, good on you. If it is about your sensitivities as to how a grunt Marine behaves with other grunt Marines, I suggest you quite possibly may be in the wrong place or I am. I do not wish to offend you or anyone else. But having earned that Globe and Anchor (and many, many people will tell you I did it the hard way), I speak my mind, and mind what I speak, but it doesn't get censored easily. By anyone! If my fellow Marines want me to leave because of that, I most certainly will. I have honor, integrity and wish no flame wars in this Brotherhood.

Semper Fi
Patrick

1/26 Corpsmen

Sure would like to hear from any corpsmen that I was stationed with at Khe Sanh during the siege. I was in the bush for 6 months with Delta Company. I then went to H&S Company, BAS, and RAS, sometime around the first of December 1967. Remember a couple of names, Crawford, Patterson, Dr. DeMaagd, "Ski," Goody, and Beatle. I was with D Company on Hills 881, 861, and 950 — we also manned the perimeter. I carried a cassette recorder and was always recording guys. I went by the name of "Scarface"... I've tried this a couple of times in the past 4 years but haven't heard from anyone.

Rodney DeMoss

EDITOR NOTE: George Crawford, Platoon Sergeant, 2nd Platoon recently called me after 34 years.

❋

Hi, from another "grunt" corpsman. I was with B 1/26 3rd Platoon — yes the "Ghost Patrol." I was the Doc that made it back that day from the ambush. Welcome home brother! You should try and make one of the reunions. There are always a few of us "good men" hanging around the local watering hole. After I left Nam and got out of the hospital, I was stationed with a "Delta" corpsman named Scot Swagger. I wonder if you remember him? I don't remember what platoon he was with, but we sure partied hard back in the states. Hey, look me up in Charleston and drop me a line anytime, great to know any other "Doc" that made it back! Semper Fi.

Doc Cicala

❋

Rodney, Eventually you will bump into someone that will remember you. If not on this message board, just come to the next reunion in Charleston, S.C., 2003.

Dave De Vaughn
Delta Company 1/26

❋

I'm going to try my best to make it to the reunion at S.C. I went to one several years ago when it was in Kentucky, just south of Cincinnati. Ran into one guy I knew from my outfit, Greg Fesenden, from Delta Company, 3rd Platoon. Might not have recognized some others. Maybe, there are still plenty of Khe Sanh veterans that don't know about this organization or are not online. And unfortunately, not around anymore. I still have these vivid images from back then, frozen in my memory. It seems like yesterday when I think about it.

Rodney DeMoss

❋

Rodney — For starters, you ought to read the last two issues of **Red Clay,** the KSV Newsletter. We honored our heroic corpsmen and medical personnel in both issues. I will give you my address and phone number, write me and I will get you signed up with our organization.

Tom Eichler VP KSV
3221 N. Opal Chicago Il 60634
1-773-625-2101

❋

Tom,

I'm already a member, just haven't had the money to spare to send in dues lately. Maybe later on I can send in for a lifetime membership.

Rodney DeMoss

❋

Tom,

I'm going to send Rodney DeMoss's lifetime membership money via snailmail as soon as possible to you. I was also a 1/26 Corpsman and I would like to do this for my fellow Corpsman, so he can receive the **Red Clay** and enjoy it as I do each time. I also know you are working overtime on the **Red Clay** magazine, you have to be. Its certainly appreciated at this end...

Semper Fi
Rick (Doc Z) Zunino
A Co. 1/26th Marines,2nd Platoon

❋

I, too, would like to meet with the corpsmen that were at Khe Sanh. Especially the ones that were in the bomb crater doing triage on us Marines. I would especially like to meet the corpsman who stuck what looked like a 9" bic ball point pen in the hole in my side to see how deep the Chi Com grenade shrapnel had penetrated (liver and lung). No offense, doc, but that is one moment I will never forget no matter how many drugs I abuse.

Wood (Frenchy)

❋

1/26 Corpsmen Bomb Crater

I went out with Bravo Company when we went to recover bodies from the "Ghost Patrol." Dr. DeMaagd, myself and one other corpsman (I believe it was just one other) set up a triage in a bomb crater. I did not, and I repeat did not stick a 9" bic into anyone. Possibly Dr. DeMaagd, the Battalion Surgeon did. If that's the bomb crater you're talking about.

Rodney DeMoss

❋

I don't know if there were any other bomb craters being used for triage on March 30th. So I would think this is it? Great! Are you in contact with the good doctor? I would love to find out the wielder of the Bic, just to reminisce about old times.

Wood (Frenchy)

Doc Medal 2002 Reunion

Doc Felle,

I was with M 3/9 from Nov 67 until Dec 68. I was wounded twice and patched up by Doc Frank Clesantis. He helped me file a claim for a hearing loss and it was granted. I was wondering if you knew where Doc Rodney Robinson may be located. He was from Santa Barbara, CA when he was in RVN. Any ideas?

John Bosley

❋

Just received my DOC medal today. Thanks very much, Jim. It is one of my most prized possessions. When I was with Delta 1/26, I took care of the guys and they certainly took care of me. It was a pleasure to serve with them. When I was at Khe Sanh combat base during the Siege, we all took care of each other. That's what I remember the most — the camaraderie (I think that's how you spell it). I definitely intend to be at reunion 2003. Looking forward to meeting the guys in this group. Hopefully, I'll run across some of the guys from my outfit that I know. Still would like to hear from some of the corpsmen that were with me at the RAS and BAS during the siege.

Rodney DeMoss

❋

I, too, got mail from Mr. James Wodecki (Thanks Jim) but it had stickers all over it "do not open till December 25" so I had it x-rayed which showed that it was a medal presented to Khe Sanh Veterans that took an oath to take medical care of the men and women under their command regardless of race, creed or religion. To administer aid when necessary under even the most severe conditions and to make sure that they knew the difference between a rat bite and a P-38 Wound, and everyone treated their water, even if they disliked the iodine tablets.

Semper Fi,
Ray Felle Corpsman Kilo 3/9/3
Khe Sanh 19June-6July68
Life Member Khe Sanh Veterans

❋

Received the "DOC" Medal yesterday, and am extremely honored. Thank you all. To those we were able to help in whatever way possible, "Welcome Home" To all those we tried to help, but may have not been able to do enough, "May God Bless You." My time spent with K 3/4 during 1967-1968 will always be deep within my heart and it was great being at the 3/4 Reunion in D.C. this past year. Seeing people and being remembered, was impossible to describe. Looking forward to attending the reunion in 2003.

Semper Fi
Tony "Doc" Milazzo

Old Friendship
by Bill Person

I think of you, dear, gentle friend,
With tidings glad, my thoughts to send.
Tho' passing years and far away,
My mind still hears your words to say,
How fine it was that we had met,
And never in life, would you forget.
Our friendship tested, tried and long,
Like sweet lyrics of a favorite song.
In time, this too will have its past,
For us the joy was all too fast.
Our seeds of kindness, cheerfully sown,
With care and trust, our friendship grown.
I wish these kindly thoughts of love
Could soar forever so near above,
Thence catch in minds for grace's sake,
For a better place this world to make

Part Two: 9-11

One year later we are still standing tall,
Never will we let our nation fall!
For we are free,
As America should be.
Sure we are sad about September 11, 2001,
But, should other nations try to spoil our everyday fun?
Some things I know the attackers won't regret,
But that doesn't mean that America should fret.
This year on September 11, 2002,
Take a moment of silence, the proper thing to do.
Remember the families that were sad that day,
Imagine that all you could have done was pray.
While the NYFD was trying to save innocent souls,
The ring of trust was beginning to create holes.
What if they should try this again?
What if 911 would a second time begin?
Just remember that on this day,
Every one will pray.
Not just because of the agony we were put through,
But because that day was actually true.
Put down in history books for young minds to know,
Maybe ask Dad for more, the knowledge will grow!
Like last year, many will cry,
But still, some eyes may be dry.
No tears, no care, no reason to fight,
I know to you this may not seem right.
Some may think that this is a man with no feelings,
But actually the story is written on the ceilings.
Invisible to the naked eye,
But deep down inside, the man is reading, beginning to cry.

In remembrance of 9-11
by Megan Wodecki, age 13
Granddaughter of Jimbo Wodecki

Jimbo, Megan has talent to spare. I'm sure she has a very bright future ahead of her and you should be incredibly proud.

Wood (Frenchy)

"Greetings, My Warrior Brothers."

That greeting is from Captain Edward Ramon, one of our brothers from Nam who I met at our Reunion in Dallas. One Heck of a nice guy and a pretty good poet. If you have not read his book "Scars and Stripes Forever," you are missing out on a fine bit of literature. He really hits home with some of his poems and I am sure if you read them, you will note a message through their words. I just wanted to say THANKS to all who had a hand in the planning for one heck of a good time in Texas, and say that it will be a tough act to follow in Charleston next July. With what I have learned through all my Rebel life, you Yanks will be treated to a real dose of genuine Southern Hospitality. It will certainly be a different experience than you who visited "Parris Island" back in the late 60s.





At the time we did our Big Texas Party, I was working on a project for the community of Tobaccoville, North Carolina, along with several other veterans. Eight veterans (three Marine, four Army, and one Navy) were asked to create a monument to all Veterans. After about six months of hand wringing, headaches, and a couple of blown fuses by myself, we finally completed the project. While the inscription on the large stone may not be what we might have said back then, the inscription on the smaller stone placed at the base of the Flag is right on Khe Sanh Vietnam. I lobbied hard to get this stone placed there for all of us that left a little piece of ourselves, both physically and mentally over there. I hope that some of the guys we left on that mountain, are looking down and will say, "Thanks, you done good." That being said, Gentlemen, raise your glass, because this one is for you.

Ron Shouse
B Btry 1/13 Gun 7



Small World

This last Memorial Day, my wife told me she was going to attend the Memorial Day Parade in Barrington, Illinois with Cody and her friend Karen. She asked me if I was also going, and if I was going to march. "Yes, I will meet you there," I replied and went and got my camera. Even though it was 80 degrees, I put on my jacket with the large Marine Corps emblem on the back, and the 26th Marine patch on the shoulder.

When I arrived, there was a lone person sitting on the steps of the bank reading a newspaper, waiting for the parade to start. I felt like an old-timer and almost turned around and went home. "Nice jacket," the guy on the steps said. "Thanks," I replied, "who were you with?" "Force Recon," he said. We introduced ourselves and the parade marshal approached and asked us if we were with the American Legion. When I turned around he had a look of surprise on his face. I had previously lectured him on my feelings regarding the manner in which the American Legion treated me when I returned from Vietnam.

I pulled my Khe Sanh Veterans membership card out of my wallet and stated, "This is the only group I will ever be a member of." The guy next to me begins laughing and pulls his Khe Sanh Veterans membership card from his wallet. That is how I met brother Mike Crowe. It turned out to be a wonderful Memorial Day.

Joe Amodeo



Veterans Mike Crowe and Joe Amodeo

A Kind and Heartfelt Gesture

Recently my Australian friend, former combat infantryman and Vietnam Vet, Garry Adams, made a trip to Khe Sanh. Garry is familiar with the base, the surrounding hills, and all of Vietnam for that matter. He conducts tours back to Vietnam a couple of times a year for veterans from all over the world, U.S. Marines included. While on his last visit, Garry laid an arrangement of red poppies at the site of the ambush of the Ghost Patrol and said a prayer for our fallen brothers. For him to take a moment during his tour and honor the warriors of Bravo 1/26 was a kind and thoughtful gesture. Garry is a good and decent man and I felt I should share this honorable act with all of my brothers. I think of him as one of us. A special thanks to John Kaheny for supplying me with the coordinates, which I relayed to Garry, in order for him to place the flowers on sacred ground. Peace.

Earl

Kenny,

In response to the many questions on the KSV website regarding the use of (Bee-Hive) Firecracker rounds, I can only add this insight:

I do not know who the first Marine Arty was to use the round. However, either A Battery or B Battery of the 1/40th early in 67, was the first to use that round in combat...maybe late February, early March. They fired on an NVA troop concentration from the City of Angels, Con Thien. It was a success!

I believe only the smaller caliber artillery units had that round. I know the 175 guns did not. I do not think the 155s had them at that time. I recall a huge battle in the Ia Drang in 1967, where the 105s fired right at a 155 unit that had been overrun, using those rounds. They found enemy soldiers pinned to each other, some were pinned into trees, etc.

As far as a ship firing them, I do not know if a ship could reach the perimeter that the fellow was talking about, unless he meant the Da Nang perimeter. Even off the coast of Dong Ha, the ship's 8-inch and 5-inch could only reach so far. The Khe Sanh perimeter would be a stretch. If he had firecracker rounds, they were probably from the Marine 105 Artillery or maybe even 1/40th Artillery. I think we were the only outside Artillery that could reach the

perimeter and even some other parts, to be of better support. We had to rotate a battery out to the Rockpile, especially hitting into the Laotian ridges/border.

One thing the Marines may or may not know is that our A Battery came ashore in Oct of 66. The first thing done was to convert two 175s to 8-inch and send to two crews to Korea for nuke training. We did have 8-inch nuke-tipped rounds in Vietnam, stored in the Saigon area. I guess they wanted to be ready for all possibilities. In fact, I saw on the History Channel, that one of the uses of those actually being considered was for your guys in case it became real bad out there. They were already doing wind calculations, speeds and directions, etc. around the base area. I guess that gives you a warm and fuzzy feeling. Right???

I guess if it would have happened that we would have shot the rounds, we would have had to be closer than Carroll or the Rockpile, possibly from Ca Lu.

Anyway, that ought to make you sleep better knowing that you and the other fellows at least missed that event!

Scraper Fi Marine
Best that way.
Kelley 2/94

Siege

In Khe Sanh we don't live We exist
Along with many creatures
Rats and roaches head the top of the list.

By day artillery and mortar fire
At night the probing of our wire.

In bunkers and trenches we stay
Surrounded by fifty five thousand NVA.

Our position they could over run
We wait and wonder why they don't come.

When the 'mortar magnets' land on the strip
The NVA do their best to score a hit.

When incoming I hear
I dive for cover in total fear
Artillery and mortars hit the ground
One hits the ammo dump
It blow and makes a horrendous sound.

Seventy seven days we've been under the gun
And now the siege is done.

The orders are given "Destroy the base and move out."
As we leave I wonder what was it all about.

Jack Neeley

On Men and Duty

by J. Thomas Dilberger

Of course, as a Vietnam veteran and a man, I find myself looking back on those days when I was a young Marine rifleman. That is normal and for many years I was caught up in questioning the right or wrong of the war. However, I was looking for answers in the wrong places. I have finally found my answer and it has nothing to do with whether our fighting that war was "Right" or "Wrong." The answer is that we as soldiers did what men have done for centuries. We answered the call to arms of our nation. This doesn't mean that we were heroes, but it does mean that we did honor to our families by being true to our upbringing. We were raised from infancy to be honorable men and we did not let our families, church, school, or town down. We walked through the bush enduring intense heat, leeches, rain, heavy packs and combat. We were also pitted against a worthy foe, who was doing the same thing we were, but for his country. Make no mistake, our enemies helped mold us into the men we have become.

All these things give us a way of looking at life our peers who haven't had our experiences cannot hope to comprehend. The crucible that combat soldiers experience leaves on them an indelible benchmark. This gives a man a certain standing in society that men without his background can never attain. All this because as a young man he allowed himself to be tested by friend and foe alike and was not found wanting. I guess it takes the passage of Time for certain things to become clear.

War Resisters

If I am in a group of people and the subject of the war comes up, it is interesting to see men my age, after all this passage of time still justifying their reasons for not fighting, whereas veterans need only to say their units and that is the end of their explanation. I have an idea that all these years later, men who didn't serve their country in the 60s have had plenty of time to think over their actions and aren't too happy with what they did — or is it, didn't do? The thing about this whole affair is that it is like a door opening and shutting. Either you go through the door when it is open to you and prove your manhood, or, if you refuse, the door shuts on you and you have lost your opportunity forever. I think that is why some men today are super patriots. They think that somehow, by making a show of patriotism, they will make up for what they didn't do when their own names were called and they failed to respond.

The Price

Now that I have reached middle age, I am impressed by some things I have learned, such as how much I don't know, and that none of us are going to get out of this life alive. Another thing I have learned is that everything has a price and that price must be paid. There is no getting away with anything without paying the full tab. In the case of men who have done their duty by serving their country honestly, their bill is marked paid. For those men who didn't do their duty as men, the bill is still outstanding. Nobody has the ability to turn their backs on this debt and walk away as if nothing happened. The payment is variable and nobody knows how it will manifest itself. But the debt has been building interest since the time when these men first failed their country and themselves. Many times such men seem to be doing well in life and nobody can see that he is paying any price at all, and maybe he won't be aware of it himself. Maybe it won't even affect him but maybe a family member. Whatever the case, a man refuses to do his duty as a man at his own peril.

Vietnam Closure

By Terry Lacy

On October 23,1998 I finally got a little closure in my life. After thirty years of Vietnam and trying to ask God for forgiveness, it finally arrived. In May of 1968 on Hill 55, Vietnam. 2nd squad was getting ready to depart on a squad-size ambush. My friend John Wielebski, who was the squad leader, was standing around talking and smoking. I went to light a Salem when my lighter refused to light — it was out of fluid. John said take mine, I won't need it out there. Little did I know that it would be the last time I would see John. His squad was hit and John lost his leg — for his heroism he was awarded the Silver Star.

For thirty years, I have fought PTSD, which I really didn't think I had. Plus, I didn't think God would ever forgive me for the things I have done over that period of time. Thanks to a loving wife and two

great kids I finally got some help. I would like to thank Danny Sissel and the Veterans organization for their help.

Closure comes to those who wait, I guess, and it comes in different ways. I had a heart attack last year on February 11. After four bypasses and a defibrillator inserted in my chest, I started on the road to recovery. With the help of Southern Ohio Medical Center and the fine program they have, it has really paid off. I would like to thank all the people who put me on their prayer list in the many churches out here in Mcdermott, Otway, Raden, and Portsmouth. With nothing to do, I started playing around on my son's computer. I looked up several military organizations and some home pages. I finally found what I was looking for — Khe Sanh Veterans. After signing many guest books and leaving many messages I started getting some feedback. I found a few guys I was in Vietnam with but did not really know. Then the break came about six months ago. I found John Wielebski but was afraid to call him.

For the last thirty years, I would get my dad's old three C footlocker out and go through all my junk. I always told my wife and kids that someday I would like to give John's lighter back to him. Well, I finally got up the courage to call him. He was as glad to hear from me as I was hearing from him. As we emailed each other over the months, he decided he would visit me October 25. I was surprised when I found out he had become a Catholic priest. It should not have been that much of a surprise, he was a really nice guy in Nam. When he called me and said he couldn't come, I got really depressed. About a half hour later, he called back and said he was coming. He arrived on Friday afternoon and I picked him up at the Ramada. We spent the whole afternoon together, and I showed him around our little town of Portsmouth. Then I gave him his lighter back and we took pictures, he said that a thousand lighters wasn't as good as renewing our friendship.

He engraved the lighter:

LOANED TO SGT. TERRY LACY, ON HILL 55, SOUTH VIETNAM, MAY 22, 1968. RETURNED OCTOBER 23,1998 PORTSMOUTH, OHIO.

THANKS FOR REMEMBERING

Vietnam Veteran Finds Nature Healing War's Wounds

Excerpts From a Story
By Mark Moser
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As the van carrying peace trees volunteers stopped, Don Shanley shot out the door and scrambled through the fog. He sprinted across remnants of the pock-marked, red clay airstrip, disappearing into the misty countryside. An eerie silence enveloped him along with the group. You could feel the ghost of the past. Without fanfare, the clouds lifted, unveiling the hill where Shanley and his men once fought. But this was different than he remembered. Coffee plants now thrive on what was once a bloody battlefield known as Khe Sanh. Nature had healed most of the earth's war wounds.


Don Shanley at left.

It had been 32 years since Shanley, assigned as a Marine lieutenant, had set foot on this scene where he and his men endured incessant mortars, as they struggled to survive by digging underground pits. "I remember trying to sleep fitfully in a hole filling with water," Shanley said. "Then I'd crawl out at daylight to munch on a dry cracker. We were in rain all day, being pounded by mortars for 20-30 days straight with no relief. It was hell on earth." Shanley, now 55, remembers patrolling this defoliated area where scarcely a blade of grass could survive. And he remembers the many men who needlessly lost their lives in a war that never seemed to make sense. "There was no reason to take the casualties we did," he said. "It turns one bitter."

But no remnants of that bitterness seemed to linger as Shanley returned to Vietnam. A California landscape designer, maybe it was traveling with Peace Trees Vietnam, a non-profit organization with a mission to reverse the legacy of war, that helped transform those once bitter memories. Shanley, who holds a bachelor's degree in history from Stanford and was headed for a master's from the University of California, Berkeley when he joined the Marines

through Officers Candidate School, says he experienced a totally new reality seeing Vietnam today. It's definitely not the same war-torn hell he remembers from decades ago.

Shanley, who admits it will take some time to completely process all his thoughts and emotions, said he experienced something completely different than he imagined he would. Visiting a cemetery where 10,000 Vietnamese are buried stands out as the most powerful few hours of his trip. Reading the names and dates on grave markers drove home the magnitude of their loss. Nearly all those soldiers died before reaching 22 or 23 years of age. Many were only 16 or 17. More than 300,000 Vietnamese are still listed among those missing in action. "I gained a better understanding of the other side's perspective," he said. Their casualties were so extreme. That hit me. I have always had a need to honor all the Americans and Vietnamese who lost their lives during the war.



Minesweeping volunteer in the field.

"It was important for me to put to rest so many images I had brought back from the war in Vietnam," Shanley added. "It was awful and will never go away, but it's now in a more modern context. I've supplanted old images and [the trip] gave me new positive ones to deal with."

Steve Shanley of Edwards was only 8-years-old when his Uncle Don went off to serve in Vietnam. He remembers vividly sitting around the television each evening with his family as the horrors of the Vietnam War were beamed into their home. "This guy was more than an uncle to me; he was my idol, my hero, and a great role model," Steve said. "I've always had such a great respect for him. Even today, when I'm faced with a tough life situation, I think about how Don might handle that same situation."

Coffee plantations now thrive in Khe Sanh. Rubber trees line the road to the cemetery along the Ben Hai River, like sentinels guiding the way. The young people of Vietnam are moving on. And yet so many Americans seem to be stuck in Vietnam — the war.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: Former Lieutenant Donald Shanley, E Co 2/26 Hill 861A, is actively involved in Peace Trees Vietnam (Reversing The Legacy Of War). Not only are they rebuilding Vietnam one tree at a time, they are also involved in removing the thousands of mines left behind from the war. I was also privileged to have fought alongside Don Shanley when our position on Hill 861A was attacked by a large NVA force on 05 Feb 1968. His heroic actions are the sole reason that so many of us were able to return home to our families. For that, and for his work in Vietnam now, I want to say "Thanks."

Uncommon Ground: The Marines and the US Army in I Corps

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American military commanders sought to present a united front, to speak with one voice, regarding the successes of U.S. military efforts during the Vietnam War. This unanimity, however, was more apparent than real. To the extent it was successful, moreover, it minimized the very fundamental differences that existed between the U.S. Army and Marine Corps as to the most effective method of waging war in Vietnam.

Over time these differences became acute. On January 22, 1968, the commander of American forces in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, sent a TOP SECRET cable to General Earl Wheeler, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). This cable noted that the professionalism of the Marine Corps in Vietnam had fallen "far short of the standards that should be demanded by our armed forces" and that Marine performance throughout their ranks required "improvement in the national interest." What caused this polarization? An examination of the differences between U.S. Army and Marine Corps military doctrine in Vietnam furnishes some clues.

Military doctrine may be defined as the distillation of collective wisdom that the institutional leadership uses to effect the ways in which the military executes and plans training and operations. U.S. Army doctrine in the 1960's was forged from its successes in the conventional wars of the Twentieth Century, and modified by the political realities of limited war as waged in Korea. The U.S. Army rode these successes

into the battlefields of Vietnam. Limited war, by definition, places constraints on the use of military resources, constraints that are lacking in conventional wars. The superiority of U.S. firepower and technology in World Wars I and II were incorporated into the doctrine employed in the Korean conflict: massive firepower and the attrition of Communist forces. Although failure in war may incline an army to question the efficacy of its doctrine, the U.S. Army was not so inclined in Vietnam. It was not conceivable that an army capable of defeating both Japanese militarism and Nazi fascism would be inadequate to the task of defeating Vietnamese communism.

In June 1954, the U.S. received permission from France to participate in the training of the Vietnamese armed forces. When the French expeditionary force withdrew from Indochina in 1956, the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group saw its goal primarily as one of creating a conventional army of divisional and supporting units of the Vietnamese National Army (VNA, later ARVN). The divisional force structure of the ARVN was organized to deal with a Korea-style invasion from North Vietnam. U.S. Army Tables of Organization and Equipment were translated into Vietnamese and issued to the ARVN with no major variations. By 1959, the ARVN had seven standard divisions (plus armored cavalry) which closely paralleled U.S. Army units in World War II.

The administration of U.S. President Kennedy brought a change from the massive retaliation strategy favored by President Eisenhower to one of flexible response, which would meet aggression at any level of violence. Kennedy correctly saw that insurgencies were the preferred mechanism by which the Communists would attempt to spread their influence in future wars. Senior Army commanders, however, strongly resisted the Kennedy administration's emphasis on developing counter-insurgency capabilities. Traditional Army doctrine persisted even after U.S. ground forces began fighting in Vietnam. Counter-insurgency remained an added duty to the regular combat mission of Army divisions and brigades. Even the Special Forces, that Army contingency regarded as most capable of meeting the challenges of counter-insurgency, were configured to train and control guerrilla forces and to conduct guerrilla warfare *in support of conventional operations*. The problem facing the South Vietnamese government (GVN), however, was not one of waging guerrilla warfare; rather, it was one of defending against the Communist insurgency. By 1965, the Viet Cong (VC) were "annihilating ARVN battalions as a blast furnace consumes coke." In order to assure the survival of the GVN, in 1965 President Lyndon Johnson granted General Westmoreland's request that 200,000 U.S. troops be deployed to South Vietnam.

It was a different historical baggage train that carried the Marine Corps into Vietnam. The traditional Corps' mission of policing Navy yards and manning the rigging of Navy fighting ships in the nineteenth century evolved into that of a colonial light infantry expeditionary force in the early twentieth century.

Historically, the Marines had been "First to Fight" because of their ability to mount small infantry strike forces on short notice. Regular Army troops had larger logistical needs, which required more expense and delay. Further, there was the feeling within the U.S. government that intervention by Marines was less provocative than the dispatch of regular Army forces. In this view, the deployment of Marines abroad was not considered tantamount to an act of war, while deployment of Army troops was. As a result, in the period between World Wars I and II, the Marines acquired considerable experience in such aspects of counterinsurgency as pacification and the creation of native gendarmeries during operations in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and especially Nicaragua.

During World War I, Marine commanders had resented attempts by the Army to use highly trained Marine forces in rear zones as support troops for the American Expeditionary Force. The Marines preferred the division of military resources employed in World War II, in which the Army concentrated its efforts in the European theater and the Marines assumed a leading role in fighting the Japanese, to that of Korea, where Marine ground and air forces were under operational control of the Army and Air Force and did not operate independently. In Vietnam, the Marines hoped to avoid the allocation of their resources in a manner subservient to other services.

In February 1965, the U.S. embarked upon a policy of sustained air strikes against North Vietnam (Operation ROLLING THUNDER). Senior Army commanders concluded that deployment of American ground forces to Vietnam was essential to provide

base security for the air campaign. Upon being informed of this decision, Vietnamese commanders expressed concern about the reaction of the Vietnamese population to the presence of U.S. combat troops. Given the historical basis for the deployment of Marines abroad, it is ironic that in March, 1965, Assistant Secretary of Defense John T. McNaughton stated the desirability of deploying the Army's 173d Airborne Brigade rather than the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (9th MEB): some planners felt the impact of light airborne infantry would constitute a "quieter arrival" than the formidable brigade of Marines with tanks, amphibious tractors, and other heavy weapons embarking from an sea-borne armada. General Westmoreland preferred the Marine force as being more self-sustaining. Executing a plan that had been in existence since 1959, the Marines came ashore by sea and air on March 8.

The Vietnam War was primarily a land war, and it was the U.S. Army that determined the operations, tactics, and most of the strategy employed in Vietnam. Army theory held that the insurgency in Vietnam would be conducted in three phases. In the first phase, the Communists would proselytize among the masses; in the second, guerrilla operations would commence; the third phase would see open warfare as the now-strong insurgents sought to topple the GVN. By 1965, according to General Westmoreland, North Vietnamese Minister of Defense General Vo Nguyen Giap had moved the fighting in Vietnam to the third phase, which would necessarily be a big-unit war. The U.S. Army committed its ground forces to counter this perceived threat. The emphasis was on conventional operations.

The initial mission for the Marine force was limited in scope. The JCS landing order directed that the Marines would not engage Viet Cong in combat. Marines would only defend the Da Nang airfield. The JCS favored an enclave strategy whereby the U.S. would increase its logistic capabilities to allow for the absorption of additional American combat forces. Westmoreland, still displaying concerns over the vulnerability of base areas to enemy action, suggested the deployment of additional Marine forces to guard the Army communications installation at Phu Bai, north of the enclave at Da Nang. This recommendation was supported by the JCS. Differences between the Marine Corps and the U.S. Army-led Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) date from this period.

Victor H. Krulak, Commanding General of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, and former Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency for the JCS, felt that Phu Bai was tactically indefensible. Krulak was cognizant of the numerical limitations of Marine forces in Vietnam and felt the Army facility should be moved to another place. This would allow Marine forces to remain concentrated in areas where they would be more productive. Army wishes prevailed, and in April 1965, two Marine battalions were deployed to establish an additional enclave at Phu Bai.

Leaders in Washington were convinced the situation in Vietnam had continued to deteriorate. Additional U.S. troops arrived in Vietnam, the Viet Cong achieved major victories in May and June, and the relatively low-risk enclave strategy was discarded. According to the Pentagon Papers, Westmoreland and the JCS articulated the strategy of search and destroy in keeping with sound military principles garnered by men accustomed to winning. The foundation of this strategy was to take the war to the enemy and deal him the heaviest possible blows. Combat restrictions placed on the Marine force were removed. The new mission included offensive operations to find and destroy the VC in the general Da Nang area. Although initial contacts with the VC were light, Department of Defense officials felt this situation was only the lull before the oncoming storm. In this view, large enemy units remained the major threat to South Vietnam. Marines established another base south of Da Nang at Chu Lai. The 9th MEB became the III Marine Amphibious Force(III MAF) with Major General Lewis Walt commanding.

Senior Marine commanders placed less emphasis on search and destroy operations than did Army commanders, because the Marines viewed large units of enemy forces as the secondary threat to the security of South Vietnam. General Walt, shortly after taking command, noted that 150,000 Vietnamese civilians were living within mortar range of the Da Nang airfield. Walt conveyed to the JCS his conviction that the real target in Vietnam should not be the Viet Cong or North Vietnamese Army (NVA) but the Vietnamese people. Only with the support of the civilian population could the enemy operate in sufficiently close proximity to Da Nang to cause damage

to U.S. facilities. By winning over the allegiance of the Vietnamese to the GVN, base security would be accomplished. Large enemy formations posed no threat if they could not operate in populated areas.

Retired Marine general Edward H. Forney, then Public Safety Advisor with the U.S. Operations Mission in Saigon, felt the historical experiences of the Marine Corps in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua had particular relevance to the insurgency in Vietnam. Forney said the Marines should link their pacification efforts with Vietnamese militia at the local village and hamlet level in order to provide the sort of operation around which the people of Vietnam would rally. According to Forney, lack of emphasis on this type of pacification was the major deficiency in operations then being conducted in Vietnam.

Westmoreland felt the Marines were wrong. In June 1965, MACV requested that a total of forty-four allied battalions be committed to Vietnam. If South Vietnam were to survive, the U.S. had to have a hard-hitting offensive capability on the ground. Westmoreland wanted to forget about enclaves and take the war to the enemy with allied troops that could be maneuvered freely. General Krulak observed that the Marines never felt the war stood to be won by grand maneuvers of large forces "in the Tannenberg or Chancellorsville image," but rather in the villages and hamlets. Army General Harry Kinnard, commander of the 1st Air Cavalry, felt the Marines did not know how to fight on land and were reluctant to do so. General William Deputy of the MACV staff felt the Marines "...came in and just sat down and didn't do anything." Different philosophies regarding the appropriate emphasis on pacification versus search and destroy operations would remain at the heart of the disagreements between the Army and the Marine Corps in Vietnam.

Krulak felt there was no virtue in seeking out large units of NVA in the mountains and jungles of Vietnam; as long as they stayed away from populated areas they posed no threat to anyone. By destroying the guerrilla fabric among the people, the U.S. would deny the enemy the logistic bases necessary for continued operations against the GVN. The U.S. should only fight large enemy units when they posed a particular threat to the populated areas. Westmoreland had a different perception. Intelligence reports in February 1966, indicated that two NVA divisions had infiltrated across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) into the two northernmost provinces of South Vietnam. The MACV commander felt the intention of the NVA was to seize Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces and the important city of Hue to use as bargaining points in future negotiations.

The Marines resisted every effort to extend their forces northward, preferring to concentrate efforts on pacification in the more densely populated south. In April 1966, at the insistence of General Westmoreland, the Marines began reconnaissance operations near Khe Sanh in the northwestern corner of Quang Tri province. Initial sightings of enemy troops caused the deployment of additional Marine reconnaissance elements in the DMZ area. By July 1966, heavy fighting occurred in the DMZ region between regular NVA and Marine units. Bases were established at Dong Ha, Cam Lo, and the Rockpile. Westmoreland became alarmed at the extent of the fighting in the north. Fearful that large NVA units would bypass the Marine defenses in the Dong Ha/Rockpile/Central DMZ area and enter South Vietnam from the northwest, Westmoreland suggested the Marines reinforce Khe Sanh.

The Marine command also resisted Westmoreland's suggestion regarding Khe Sanh. The assistant commander of the 3d Marine Division, General Lowell English, claimed that Khe Sanh had no tactical value; if it were lost, it would make no difference. In the Marine view, Khe Sanh was too isolated and would be too hard to support. Bowing to the inevitable, the Marines agreed to reinforce the base in order to retain the prestige of doing it on their own rather than being forced to do so. MACV was convinced the NVA were planning a massive advance into Quang Tri province. The 3d Marine Division was ordered north from Da Nang to meet this threat. Army troops moved to Da Nang to replace the departing Marines.

The expected enemy offensive along the DMZ did not materialize. Nevertheless, a sizeable Marine presence would remain in the north, seriously hampering the Marine pacification program in the southern sector of their Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR). General English summed up the Marines' frustration in Vietnam at the end of 1966 by noting the Corps had been assigned too much real estate and not enough troops. Generals Krulak and Walt thought the Communist leaders wanted to draw the Marines out of the populated I Corps coastal area into a campaign

of attrition in the underpopulated areas of northern Quang Tri province. Since attrition was central to Westmoreland's strategy of search and destroy, the objectives of the Communists and MACV were such that continued fighting between the Marines and NVA along the DMZ was bound to occur.

By 1966, it became evident that Operation ROLLING THUNDER had proven ineffective in stopping the infiltration of men and supplies into South Vietnam from the north. In the search for a better way to stop this infiltration, the Department of Defense proposed the construction of a barrier across the DMZ and Laotian panhandle. In October 1966, Westmoreland ordered his subordinate commands to study the barrier concept as developed by the MACV staff. The Seventh Air Force developed an aerial barrier in Laos, while III MAF and MACV planned for a conventional barrier along the DMZ. III MAF commander General Walt ordered 3d Marine Division commander General Wood Kyle to design the Marine component of the barrier. Both Marine generals expressed strong reservations about the barrier concept, and Marine Corps opposition to it remained consistent. In their view, the barrier concept was fantastic, absolutely impractical, and would tie down additional troops that could be more effectively deployed in other ways. Neither Walt nor Kyle had any choice in the matter, and MACV ordered the Marines to construct the barrier.

In the fall of 1967, MACV received intelligence reports of massive NVA troop buildups in the vicinity of Khe Sanh. General Phillip Davidson, the MACV intelligence chief, felt General Giap intended to overwhelm the base in order to force an end to the war in Vietnam. General Westmoreland was convinced that the Marines under-appreciated the severity of the enemy threat to Khe Sanh. Feeling Marine assets were inadequate to the task, Westmoreland ordered U.S. Army troops into I Corps to reinforce the Marines. I Corps had been predominantly a Marine preserve since 1965. In the view of MACV, the Marines had lost the initiative against the NVA; Westmoreland began to consider putting the Army in charge of I Corps.

The Marines suffered heavy casualties in 1967 during heavy fighting with the NVA at Con Thien along the DMZ. During this battle, the Marines asked the Air Force for tactical support. After the fighting, the Marines were bitter in their assessment of the assistance provided by the Air Force. Marine General John Chaisson, chief of the MACV operations center, told Air Force General William Momyer he had no doubt in his mind that the Air Force had put insufficient emphasis and effort into assisting the Marines at Con Thien. Months later, while preparing for the defense of Khe Sanh, General Westmoreland asked III MAF commander General Cushman to release control of Marine tactical aircraft that were not actually supporting Marines in combat. Cushman, remembering Con Thien, bristled at the suggestion.

Marine forces were outfitted with fewer artillery pieces than Army units. In theory, Marines got gunfire support from Navy ships. When operating beyond the range of naval gunfire, Marines relied on the tactical air support of Marine pilots who had earlier trained as infantrymen. It was this special relationship between comrades that Cushman opposed severing. The disagreement over control of tactical air assets reached into the highest levels of the U.S. military establishment. III MAF seemed to be in virtual revolt over the matter. The Army felt the Marines had more available tactical support than they needed and should be willing to share it with Army forces. Westmoreland was unwilling to budge on this controversy — indeed, he felt so strongly about this that he claimed it was the one issue during his Vietnam service that prompted him to consider resigning. Eventually, the Marines were forced to accept Westmoreland's concept for a single air manager.

The war dragged on in the face of these disharmonies between the Army and Marine Corps. American civilian leaders remained concerned with managing the bombing campaign against North Vietnam. As long as MACV restricted military operations to South Vietnam, the Army continued to play the lead role in deciding the best way to wage war. General Westmoreland explicitly rejected the Marine policy of paying less attention to large units of enemy troops, while favoring small unit activities to accomplish pacification.

The Marines in I Corps fought two wars: one of counter-insurgency in the heavily populated southern portion of their TAOR, and a more conventional war, at MACV insistence, against large NVA formations in the north. By being forced to fight two wars, the Marines felt they had inadequate assets to properly wage either. MACV felt the Marines were too parochial in their outlook, that the threat of NVA

forces entering Vietnam from various avenues within I Corps threatened the integrity of the entire nation of South Vietnam.

General Westmoreland remained convinced of the critical importance of Khe Sanh. The Marine combat base there remained garrisoned as long as Westmoreland was the MACV commander. In April 1968, the Army 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) was assigned the lead role in the operation to establish overland communications with the Marines at Khe Sanh. MACV felt Army high-mobility tactics would be more effective against NVA forces in northern I Corps than anything the Marines could offer. On 1 July 1968, General Creighton Abrams replaced Westmoreland as MACV commander. The Khe Sanh Combat Base was immediately shut down and abandoned.

Marine and Army tactics began to converge. General Abrams was willing to place more emphasis on pacification and lead Army operations away from their previous conventional orientation. The reversion by the enemy to a lower-level insurgency after the losses suffered during Tet, 1968, inclined the Americans to respond with smaller unit activities. MACV was coming to the realization that large-scale U.S. combat operations had brought little in the way of over-all security to the countryside of South Vietnam. The attrition of enemy forces remained the primary goal of American forces, however.

Tactics employed by the Marines also changed. In May 1968, Major General Raymond Davis assumed command of the 3d Marine Division. Davis ordered the division to forego its earlier reliance on fixed defensive positions. In the latter half of 1968, the Marines received additional helicopter assets with the arrival in large numbers of the CH-46 medium transport helicopters. Davis also secured the promise of Army helicopter support from Army General William Rosson, Provisional Corps commander, and from General Richard Stillwell, Rosson's successor at XXIV Corps. With this helicopter support, the Marines moved out of their positions south of the DMZ and began Army-style mobile operations in western Quang Tri province.

It was domestic political considerations and not successes on the battlefield, that offered impetus to the American decision to begin withdrawing its combat forces from Vietnam. General Abrams believed that an American military victory was impossible considering the restrictions under which they were compelled to operate. U.S. Defense Secretary Melvin Laird was determined to effect a major change in American policy toward the war in Vietnam. Despite the unanimous view of the major U.S. agencies involved in the war that the policy of Vietnamization would be unable to deal with the threat posed by the Vietnamese Communists, the new administration of President Nixon instructed MACV to develop plans for turning the war over to the Vietnamese armed force.

When it came time for the first pullout of U.S. forces in July 1969, General Abrams favored the departure of the 3d Marine Division. General Westmoreland, still convinced of the threat posed by NVA forces in the northern provinces, interceded to keep the Marines in I Corps. Abrams later agreed that the first U.S. troops removed from Vietnam would be a combination of 3d Marine Division and Army 9th Infantry Division units. Departing Marine units were not directly replaced. As the Marines pulled out of their positions in the north, the bases were offered to the Army. This offer was rejected.

Marine strength in I Corps at the beginning of 1969 was 81,000, with 50,000 Army troops under III MAF command. By the end of the year, Marine strength had fallen to 55,000 men as Army forces replaced the Marines. In 1970, III MAF relinquished control of I Corps to the Army XXIV Corps. Defense of the northernmost provinces was no longer the responsibility of the Marine Corps.

At the beginning of large U.S. troop deployments to Vietnam, the various services were eager to participate. The Army wanted to regain influence lost to the Air Force and Naval Air that had dominated the strategy of massive retaliation dominant in the early years of the Cold War. Matters of service prestige and career enhancement were at stake in Vietnam. During the advisory period, Marine commanders were concerned that the Corps was only moderately involved in the conflict, which was contrary to Marine Corps tradition. The Marines had no special counter-insurgency units such as Army Special Forces. The only solution to this problem was for the Marines to commit regular Fleet Marine Force units on a large scale.

The Marine command in I Corps would have preferred a free hand in waging war, free of Army supervision. Vietnam was the longest and, in many ways,

the most difficult war for the Marines — Marine casualties in Vietnam exceeded those of World War II. By the time U.S. forces began redeployments in 1969, it was clear that Vietnam was more a place for the military services to lose prestige rather than gain it. The MACV initial plan to re-deploy the 3d Marine Division only included ground units. The Marines, still opposed to the breakup of the their air-ground team, favored the removal of both fixed-wing and rotary air assets along with the ground units of the 3rd Marine Division. Marine Commandant General Leonard Chapman noted that although these air assets were not organic to the Marine division, they were essential if the division was to be used as a strategic reserve in the Pacific. The Corps was looking beyond Vietnam, seeking the re-creation of its force deployment that existed prior to participating in this unsatisfactory war.

Army doctrine was a major contributor to the determination of Army tactics in Vietnam. General Westmoreland claimed to understand the historical rationale behind the employment of Marine Corps doctrine in Vietnam. He understood that the Marines were employed in Vietnam on operations contrary to their mission simply because they existed and were available in time of need. While allowing that Marine doctrine neither trained nor equipped them for sustained operations ashore, such was the manner in which they were deployed by MACV in Vietnam. Given the inability of the Army to operate in a manner contrary to their own historical experiences, it seems simplistic for Westmoreland to fault the Marine Corps for an over-rigid adherence to its own doctrine.

In 1975, South Vietnam succumbed to a conventional invasion of North Vietnamese army forces. This historical reality gives support to the Army belief that the threat posed by large enemy forces to the GVN was a critical threat. However, the rapid crumbling of the civil and military institutions of South Vietnam in the face of this invasion supports the Marine Corps view that winning over the allegiance of the people of South Vietnam to their government was also a matter of strategic importance. The insufficient achievements of pacification exemplify the failure of nation building by the United States in South Vietnam.

Slouching Towards Khe Sanh and Beyond

by Gary W. Foster

Following is a letter I wrote to Donna Elliot in response to her request to help find her brother Jerry who was MIA near Khe Sanh in 1968 (See **Red Clay,** *Winter 2001. I was unable to provide much input or to assist her in her efforts, but the day I drove to Khe Sanh from Dong Ha proved interesting and I thought I would share the events with her. Others may be interested to read of the events, which have little to do with Khe Sanh in the late 60s but proved an interesting day for me nonetheless. I met Donna in Washington, DC in late spring 2002, and we had a long conversation about her brother, the day he went MIA and how she has struggled over the years to locate him. It is to her credit that she carries such a torch. She is persistent and tenacious. I continue to stay in touch with Donna. She is a source of inspiration for all. Now, my letter to Donna from Dong Ha, Vietnam.*

March 31, 2002
Dong Ha

Dear Donna,

My day spent looking for information on your brother.

Slept very little the night before my trip to Khe Sanh and Lao Bao. Arrived at the guesthouse in Dong Ha around 7pm. No dinner, could not eat. Had some peanuts and a couple of Halida beers (warm). Bags carried to the room on the second floor by the driver. Not a very good driver. Too indecisive when he needs to pass, not a good trait when driving in Vietnam. People who pace other cars when passing only cause potential calamity. My driver did just that. Why he drives 30 miles per hour in fifth gear remains a mystery to me. Why he drives 30 mph at all is an even more mysterious question! "Hoang, we got to get rid of this guy. Makes me nervous..." Not that I'm not already a nervous wreck by the time we finish the drive south from Hanoi to Dong Ha on Highway 1.

Room 205: accommodations spacious with two adjoining rooms and a bathroom: high ceilings, street light outside always on and pointed unerringly straight into my room. I always get this room. Air

conditioner straight out of wind tunnel testing, but it's at least very cool. Slippers at the door – too small, hmmm. Fridge contains water and beer and coke. I know to turn down the thermostat to its coldest level and I do so. That's the first thing I do at the Dong Ha Guesthouse, as I call it, having been here many times before. The second thing I do is to spray for mosquitoes. I hate mosquitoes and there are millions of them.

Knock at the door and then it opens.

"Mr. Gary, we need your passport for reception and registering."

"Here Hoang," as I toss it to him.

"You drink beer again?"

"Yes Hoang. Got any bourbon?"

"We eat dinner?"

"You go ahead, Hoang, I'm going to stay here and relax."

"You OK?"

"I'm OK, Hoang, just tired and need some silence; want to relax."

"You too old!'

"Get stuffed, you're too old too — you're more old than me and you're more ugly."

No one would ever understand the dialogue that ensues between Hoang and I. We have become good friends and I enjoy his sense of humor. We have developed a vocabulary unique to our conversation. The grammatical articles such as "the" or "a" or "an" are usually missing from otherwise intelligent conversation. I have traveled with Hoang throughout Vietnam. He is my constant companion and can pave the way for me. He finds me to be a real curiosity and he still thinks I am a spy, but to be honest, the thought has crossed my mind more than a few times that he is a spy too. His name is Hoang Tran Dung. Dung, now that's really his first name. I was introduced to him as Mr. Hoang, but Dung is to him what Gary is to me. Unfortunate name, but in Vietnamese a "D" is pronounced as a "Z." His first name is pronounced "Zung," or more phonetically in English, "Zoong." Sometimes I call him Zung but mostly I call him Hoang. Hoang was a captain in a communications regiment with the North Vietnamese Army. He is three years younger than I and he was in the army for 8 years. During the last few years of the Vietnam War, he walked from Hanoi to Pleiku in three months, and after the war he walked back. He never saw frontline action, being in communications, but he did witness a few B-52 strikes and many other events. He knows every American combat airplane and every American weapon. He asks me constantly what DMZ means. "For the umpteenth time Hoang, it means the De-Militarized Zone."

"But we never de-militarized it," he responds.

"Well, you should have," is my retort. "OK, Hoang, let's go eat." I already know the restaurant. The people there know me and that I like green onions, raw. "Bad for your breath but good for your heart," I always say. Anyway, I don't think Sharon Stone will be passing our restaurant in Dong Ha anytime soon.

Next day, woke up at four; not by sound of my alarm clock but by a friendly gecko lizard trying his best to talk to me and to tell me to get up. When he saw I was not responding, he raised his pesky voice. Peeked at me from the behind the air conditioner and then slithered back behind it. How come the air conditioner wasn't working? What's going on? Where's the remote? The remote?! Where's the light? No electricity in Dong Ha town. More totally undecipherable verbage from that damned lizard hiding behind the AC. Now wide-awake, I got up and stumbled to the fridge and grabbed a bottle of water — naw, it was a beer. Thank god, I had turned the temp in the small fridge way down the night before; the beer was delightfully cold, even at 4am. Only 3 hours until we hit the road again to Khe Sanh and then bump along to Lao Bao. Sat up in bed. The gecko, pleased with his work, continued to talk to me. Just like home, right? Power still off and no light. Well, at least the light just outside my window was out.

Starting to get warm...need water...cold water. Jump in shower in darkness. No water. Dummy! No electricity, no pump, no water — it's a simple concept.

Gray dawn. Clothes on, wallet and passport safe. Left *Danh Ba Dien Thoai Nha khach Uy Ban Ttinh* (Whew!) *Guesthouse* at 7:00am for a restaurant to down some *pho* (noodle soup). Drove past a military crane and two destroyed tanks, an M48 and a T54, barrels on both tanks in the fully depressed position, hatches open. Continued on into main part of Dong Ha. Motorbikes everywhere, dark skies, humid, everyone spitting and coughing. Parked the car outside the restaurant; immediately told we had parked in the wrong place and had to move it. This just after we had driven over a 300 feet extension cord and crushed it. The Dong Ha-ians were setting up a

stage for the 30-year anniversary of the liberation of Dong Ha and found an electrical outlet in a building to power the sound stage. Ran the cord outside the building through the front door and over the road to the stage, 300 feet. Anyway, I didn't know Dong Ha was ever liberated: I thought it was just invaded and overwhelmed.

"OK, no, Mr. Gary, Dong Ha was liberated."

"OK, Hoang," I said. "Jesus!" We had to move the car and then went inside the restaurant first by walking down an incline and then ducking my head to enter. I was the center of attention. Found a table recently vacated by a family of four and sat down amid all the debris left on the floor: napkins, lemons, chopsticks — one broken, bottle tops, chicken bones, and chewed but discarded various other animal parts, etc. The day, my friend, has just started. Great. That's right! Big smile, big stretch, and wait for that great meal of bacon, eggs, and hash browns and the occasional beer.

In your dreams. I ordered my *pho*, as usual — I seldom eat anything else. I have lost my sense of culinary adventure. It arrived in a large bowl. Clean my chopsticks with a napkin the size of a postage stamp, throw it on the floor just like everyone else. Could spit too and be in vogue. Very hot stuff in a large bowl; needed to cool down. Ordered soy sauce, and sliced red chilies. I like my *pho* spicy. Drank tea. Already getting hotter outside. Made a big mess of the soup, hate the spoons they give me. Soup all over my chin and down my shirt. Dropped orange juice from a slice of orange on my brand new white Nordstrom shirt — bummer. Hey, I look great in white even if it is covered in orange and noodle stains and the dust already being stirred up by the traffic outside. The restaurant owner turned up the music. Screaming music. Finished up, paid the girl, let's roll. "Hoang, get in!"

I stole the keys from Hoang — he drives OK but too slow and stops only when he wants to stop. I was showing my new project manager the road between Dong Ha and Lao Bao and I didn't want to have to plead every time I wanted to show him a culvert or a bridge abutment. Into town center, then headed west now, first Cam Lo; traffic begins to thin, but still a few maniacs on the road, then Ca Lu, then the Rockpile. Lots of blasting going on. No traffic but was reminded to bam on the horn constantly. Hoang says, "Make sound of horn. You never know," he says.

"Never know what?" I ask. "What, the VC may come out of the jungle and get me?"

Then a small bridge, then parallel to the Rao Quan River. Had stopped at Cau Dau Mau to show new PM the bridge and the supposed new alignment. We looked to the right but the new road alignment is to the left. What the hell! People honking at us for no good reason and all saying, hello, goodbye and trying to act as if they meant it. Stopped at another bridge Cau Sa laman, big Bru area and thousands of kids about 3 or 4 descended upon us and we could not open the doors of the car. Finally managed to open the door and were met again with hello, goodbye, hello, goodbye...again!

Walked the length of the bridge, shirt now filthy and covered in stickers from a thorn bush below the bridge that I brushed up against. Traffic starting to flow, and slowing across the bridge at km 47. Old bridge, not looking good, needs to be replaced. Corn growing in the creek bed below. Naked kids playing in muddy water, water buffalos snorting and meandering like some people I see in the mall, old ladies smiling with blood red teeth from the betelnut, old men sitting, just like all over the world, kids on bicycles without tires, women carrying fruit to market, wherever that is, in baskets balanced on a pole across their shoulders. Everyone dirty, and by now even me. Everything just peachy keen here on Quoc Loang 9 in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam.

Reached Da Krong, stopped to see a wedding procession, took some photos. No film. Terrific. Was asked to attend but was hardly dressed for the occasion in my white, but turning red, Reeboks. Man falls off his bike. Another man asks me for a cigarette. Sweat pouring out now, shirt sticking and red clay dust in my mouth eyes, ears and elsewhere. Worried cheap hotel pen would bleed and gave it to passerby on a bike. Put it behind his ear and peddled on. Thanks, or at least I think that's what he said. Where's my Mont Blanc? I left it in the hotel room!

Drove on to Cau Rao Quan. Impressive sight but not as impressive as the cable-stayed bridge across the Rao Quan River (Highway No. 14) but new PM not pleased with architecture. What!

Road rises up to the plateau and we reach Khe Sanh finally and stop for 10 minutes then continue on to Lao Bao. Cigarette smugglers and money-changers everywhere. All look the same. The same —

driver on a 110 Honda with a cute girly on the back holding bags of cigarettes bound for Dong Ha.

God, it's getting hot! On to Lao Bao, stop in Lang Vei and try to talk to military people who have a tent over the old US Green Beret camp. Whatchaguys doing? How goes it? Zappnin? You know, usual banter with complete strangers in a country where nobody speaks American. I mean this is Quang Tri Province, right? Good Copy? Man, what are you guys doing here? No response.

Back in the car, continue to Lao Bao. Road not good, bumpy. AC on full blast, shirtsleeves filthy from rubbing the sweat from my face. Hoang not happy about my driving: not blowing the horn enough. I blast it 20 times in an attempt to appease but still not good enough. Arrive at Lao Bao, look for old French fort, not there, of course, but people in Khe Sanh could not answer my question and Hoang was not interested to know either. You know, a little sightseeing never hurt anyone. But the Old French prison is over there. We go there. Totally destroyed by big-time bombs; craters so big you could put my T-bird in them. Yep, craters still evident after 35 years. See Laos border down in the valley with mountains of Laos just behind. Hoang worried that I may cross the border with his car. Are you nuts? I'm already in Vietnam, why sink deeper into Laos? Hang around for 20 minutes looking at drainage and roadway shoulders. Money launderers trying to make a quick kill. I pull out the big bucks – phony $1 million notes handed out by my bank back home as a promo and try to get some Dong. I mean, I have a dong, I just need more Dong — you know, money.

Drove back up the mountain back towards Khe Sanh past Lang Vei and a small reservoir to the left onto the Khe Sanh plateau, and boom, re-entered Khe Sanh. Saw a large bomb on the right side of the road. Stopped and took a look. Big goddamn bomb. Across the street was a junkyard filled with wreckage from the combat base. Owners each had 4 fingers missing from the same hand from trying to cut into a mortar shell. The surprising thing is they are still alive. They showed me where the accident took place and it was just in front of their home/house/shop on the side of the main road. So much for UXO. Lots of junk from the war. Strange business, strange people, produced strange feeling, Let's get the hell out of here.

Got back in car and drive to the base. New museum being built, the highway to the base is under construction, what a pain. No heavy equipment, just hands-on by thousands of Vietnamese and, I suppose, Bru. Glad to see the Vietnamese trying to spruce things up a bit there. Needs an American flag, I think; maybe just a small one. Doesn't look likely though.

Leave the base and drive back to Khe Sanh Ville. Accident between two trucks, didn't see it, but driver's seat on the highway. Did not see driver of either vehicle. Stop for a cold beer. Not cold but plenty of ice. Ice block being splintered into small fragments on bathroom floor. Oh, just great. How do you like your beer? With typhoid or with — oh, what's that other stupid water-borne disease? Cholera, that's it. Looking for Jerry Elliot, asked for the French fort, no one knows. I don't know whether they know but can't imagine why they don't know. Shirt sopping wet now, shirt tail out, hair — well, not much hair — a total wreck. Hot and no wind. But plenty more red dust from the highway as the trucks blowing their horns pass through town at the speed of light. Lady moves a floor fan near us, cord now does not reach outlet but she points the fan in our direction anyway, smiles and sits back down; fan blades motionless.

Hey, this international stuff just does not get any better than this: blaring trucks, red dust, a motionless fan, and typhoid beer! Paid for the beer, Dong back in my pocket; not that Dong, the money dong.

Back in the car, start motor and we are off to find a restaurant near the French fort. Found the restaurant OK, same as the morning: detritus and maybe a few human parts on the floor beneath the table. Old dog in the corner, too hot to move. Kids looking inside. Eat the usual white rice, rice paper, noodles, and greens. Pay up and blast off again.

This time to the Dong Ha bypass, not built yet, that's what we are going to do. Turn off the road towards Con Thien, run smack dab into the new Ho Chi Minh highway. Thousands of people working. More dust. Not a bad drive, decide to look for the Con Thien base. Completely miss it and never found it, turn back and find the road back to Highway 1 and follow it south to Dong Ha, over the bridge. Pigs strapped upside down onto the seat of motorbikes for market, man on bicycle taking red plastic buckets to market piled 10 feet high on bike, accident between motorbike and pedestrian, everyone honking, trucks blaring, and peasants walking in

middle of highway. "Make sound of horn," Hoang tells me. Dodging more people, swerve through side street to market, kid runs in front of car, sound of brakes and tires on pavement, what was in the backseat now in the front seat, arrive at hotel and slug down another beer, this time without ice. Never found the French fort. Shirt completely red with dust and sweat. Hair, still not much hair, a disaster.

That was yesterday.

Not much help to you Donna. God bless you, Jerry.

Gary

Hello Sir:

My name is Patrick Hall and I see you are the site Secretary. I just wanted to tell you that my hero is Mort Freedman who was a USAF Combat Controller at Khe Sanh. He earned the Silver Star at Kham Douc when the C-123 pilot Joe Jackson, earned the Medal of Honor. I entered the USAF in 1980 and went to Clark AB, Philippines. I've heard many Vietnam Vets ask how I made it back. I always found this odd, as I was not there, yet I think I know the answer now. All my NCOs were Vietnam Vets, who trained and taught me all they had to offer. Because of it, I am alive today. Your generation is still giving so much to this day. Mort lives in Angeles City, Philippines, and was in the Marine Corps during the Korean War. Whenever Marines stopped at Clark during my tenure of 1982-1984, Mort would have them all for dinner, it never mattered how many showed up. He pounded into our heads the honor and the courage of the Marines at Khe Sanh. I went to Coronado Island for scuba school with men from Recon. With them was a Gunnery Sergeant whom I told how blown away I was by the respect and admiration his men had for him. At the time I was an E-4 Senior Airman. He spent an entire weekend explaining his responsibilities to his men, which he learned in Vietnam. The knowledge he learned in Vietnam, which he shared, shall last a lifetime. God Bless you Sir, and all the Marines, past present and future, Welcome Home.

Patrick Hall

P.S. You might find some people you know here, http://hometown.aol.com/i-nnicreynolds/index.html.

An Act of Kindness

Dear Jim Wodecki,

Although you may not remember me, in Feb 2001 you helped my family and me search for information regarding the death of my brother, Noble Jackson. Noble was killed in action on 28 May 1967, during Operation Choctaw, in Thua Thien Province RVN, while serving with E Company 2/4, 2nd Platoon. You took time from your own life to help my mother and me research the archives of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines. Through your efforts we were able to locate former Marine, Robert Stefanellie. Robert resides in Brooklyn, NY, served with a 106 Recoilless Rifle Platoon, and was attached to E Company 2/4. We exchanged emails and learned we both resided on Staten Island, N.Y. We had lunch together, and he brought his 2/4 Marine book, along with his military records containing all the operations he and my brother went on together. I had also brought my brother's military records. We learned they were both very close. They left out of Kennedy Airport together right after Thanksgiving in 1966 and arrived in Vietnam together. While attached to E Co 2/4, Robert and Noble went on many operations together. Robert cried and told me what happened the day, during Operation Choctaw when Noble was KIA. My family and I now know the circumstances surrounding my brother's death. We owe it all to you for doing the original research. I do not now feel the pain and emptiness that was my companion for 35 years. I salute you and your family for helping my family finally bring closure to my brother's death. You finally brought peace to my mother's heart. Again, thanks, may you and your family enjoy the holidays and God Bless and keep you,

Sincerely yours,
Teddy Jackson and Family

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: This is what the KSV is all about. Kind of gives you that warm fuzzy feeling, doesn't it?

Intelligence: Was It Too Complex?

by Bill Person

I have given some thought to the overall and complex intelligence effort back during the Vietnam War. There seemed to be no really good place to begin.

I was assigned to Eastern NORAD/CONAD Region at Stewart AFB, New York as the Special Security Officer, SSO and the inheritor of a real mess. It had little to do with security but was instead an SI intelligence complex.

When I arrived at Stewart AFB, New York in June 1965, a Major Dubrow was most anxious for me to relieve him. He had been there for a few years and had been completely ignored by the senior officers on his billet. That means personnel cleared to see Top Secret codeword material. The Director of Intelligence, an Army Lt. Col., had tried to get him to become one of the consumer intelligence types in his outer office, but he had become sort of a recluse inside his vault-like compound. He continued to receive materials and keep the facility open with two sergeants in the communications field. He also had a Japanese wife which is a no-no for holding a SI clearance. No foreign wives of most nations allowed. The exception was Canada, U.K., Australia and New Zealand where background checks could be conducted to determine if they were subversives.

In 1965, the Air Force Security Service relinquished its control of the Special Security offices to Defense Intelligence Agency. This was a system to present highly classified Special Intelligence information to the commanders and their staffs of the other commands, i.e., SAC, TAC, ADC, etc. I was greeted with a pale green covered book, DOD Directive 5200.17, which was the new authority and operating procedures for an SSO. NSA had apparently decided that USAFSS was a lesser entity as were the Army Security Agency and the Navy Security Group, so a new civilian agency was created with more prestige and one, moreover, to study and disseminate information they considered necessary to those commands in the conducting of their activities.

Once I assumed the office complex, I went to see M/General Gordon H. Austin and told him I was his new SSO. I informed him that Defense Intelligence Agency had just assumed control of this facility and that I planned to conduct weekly briefings in the SSO briefing room at 1000 each Friday. My briefings would consist of world events that, in my opinion, he and his staff needed to know. In the event of a war, the first indications would come from this source and if he did not make use of it, he would not know how to use such information if we ever do have a war. I told him that if he and those cleared on his staff chose not to attend, I planned to go to Washington where DIA was located in the Pentagon annex and close the facility, because it served no purpose being there if it was not used. From that day on, no one missed a meeting and most of them came in for special background information. My two NCOs operated the secure communications equipment and with the courier bringing material in weekly, I believe my briefings were the equal of any SSO anywhere. Because I was the one preparing and presenting them, I know what was presented to the commander and his cleared staff. My experience in the intelligence field gave me a sound background to be able to talk with ease about almost every subject since I had studied the materials since October 1962.

In early 1964 while I was at Wakkanai AS, Japan, my intercept technicians intercepted a special signal and after we determined its significance and I reported it, I was criticized for meddling in what was not my area of responsibility. Later, a thick, illustrated report was disseminated to the upper levels of certain commands to confirm what I had reported as fact. While I was Queen Bee Delta Project Officer, my back-end intercept crew began to monitor Navy Task Force 77 transmitting launch activities over hand-held radios. I knew that the Russians had ELINT/SIGINT/COMINT fishing trawlers operating nearby and that they would be intercepting vital intelligence about our strike force composition, ordnance and intended targets. I directed my 10-man intercept crew of linguists to record these transmissions and I sent seven reels of tapes to the Director of Intelligence to confirm my identification of a major breach of security.

CNO and other members of the Pentagon sent a scathing message back, through channels, to say that the only means of getting such information was Queen Bee Delta and that was not my tasked mission. It went on to state that I was neglecting my primary mission by wasting time recording these friendly transmissions. It also stated that Navy Task Force 77 was not violating any security transmissions. I responded that the tapes had been recorded

while en route to Da Nang from Bangkok to pick up fighter escort prior to taking position at Yankee Station. I was directed not to do this anymore by the Pentagon. Gen. Blake, DIRNSA sent me an Eyes Only message to keep doing it and to send him the tapes via courier and not to tell anyone.

Actually, Blake, the Director of National Security was the boss over me and the Queen Bee Delta project and as such, should have been the one to make that call, not the Pentagon. As the war progressed and I was seeing MIGs practicing an intercept technique that I had seen back while at Wakkanai, I sent a special message suggesting top cover for fighter/bomber strike forces for both Air Force and Navy. I was told to let command decisions be made at the appropriate level and keep to my assigned mission which was intercept and report, leaving the planning to Washington. After we lost four F-105s to a single MIG that command said the North Vietnamese didn't have the capability to do, and the Navy lost four F4s to Chinese MIGs, that changed. This took place on the 3rd and 5th of April, 1965. I was concerned that aircraft commanders and Navy ship captains' were not cleared to know what the mission of those vessels were, which I considered vital to their decisions for their own safety. I doubt any of the aircraft commanders or their flight crews knew exactly what was taking place in their planes as they flew EC-118s, EC-47s, EC-130s, EC-135s. Perhaps the SAC crews knew a little more in their RB-47s and RB-57s but I know that neither captains Cmdr. Lloyd Bucher of the Pueblo nor Cmdr. William L. McGonagle of the Liberty knew the extent of their missions.

The intelligence community had a myriad of collection efforts all over SEA and this was fed back to Wheeler AFB, Hawaii in what must have been a river of intelligence. We knew that the world press published everything they could find out about the day-to-day activities of the war and this served as a very good intelligence source to Hanoi. Perhaps because of this, special intelligence and the information picked up by CIA was sent directly through their channels and denied to combat commanders at all levels. PAC Security Region had reams of vital intelligence at Wheeler that could have been shared with the Intelligence Directorate at Hickham, but this did not happen. The information went straight to NSA and the White House. President Johnson and Robert S. McNamara were the ones to review this intelligence and make the major combat decisions.

In January 1968, while flying as a Batcat on an EC-121R over the Laotian panhandle, I detected tanks moving down the Ho Chi Minh Trail on Route 9. I sent a message from Korat to report this, bypassing Task Force Alpha at Nakhon Phanom. The same intelligence office at Hickham where Larry Clum worked replied that Air Force intelligence estimates claimed that the Vietnamese had no such tanks. On February 8th, 11 Soviet-built amphibious PT-76 tanks and 400 NVA troops with supporting artillery attacked the Army Special Forces camp at Lang Vei, overrunning it. The term, "Tanks in the wire!" was used, routing U.S. forces from their base on Route 9. The Siege began with Tet 68 with the Rangers at Lang Vei reporting tanks in the wire, overrunning them. Later, it was reported that these were not tanks, merely amphibious PT-76s. I doubt the Rangers could truly appreciate the significant difference when this assault woke them by boring through the barbed wire.

I believe that President Johnson and McNamara did not want the Commanders in the area to have such intelligence for fear that it might leak out to the press. This in turn might, as the Intelligence Community always reasoned, deny us that intercept source in the future. Like the press always knew, to announce a source denies that and other such sources in the future, so you don't make them public. There was supposedly enough other source intelligence back then: photo-reconnaissance, trail watchers and direct reports from the forward areas. I can only imagine what the commanders from Hickham, Tan Son Nhut, and Udorn must have thought when they examined the intelligence information they did see and then to have directions from Washington to assign a specific target where they may not have any information at their levels.

During World War II, Churchill severely limited his ULTRA and MAGIC to but a few top people. In the Pentagon, an Army General threw a codeword document into his trash basket. He was removed from the access list. Churchill would have shot him. We have all seen a tiny part of that war and it is doubtful that all of the real story will ever be told. I was privileged to see more than most and I write about some of it, but I still have a lot of questions to ask if I could ever know who might be able to answer them.

I do not accept the term we lost that war, but

rather we were not allowed to win it, and then were ordered out. The Queen Bee Delta intercepted tapes that we recorded and dropped off at Da Nang for transcription to be read in Washington, told us peons that we could have destroyed North Vietnamese ability to fight a war in South Vietnam if we had bombed the 92 targets recommended by the JCS in March and April 1965 before the enemy had a chance to prepare for a protracted war. I personally gave a briefing to LBJ in September 1968 to tell him about the sensor war. Until that time, I thought he was the good guy and he was being advised badly. I met the real enemy that day but it took me a while to realize it. 58,000 Americans did not need to die over there if we had a good military leader. Good generals do not make good presidents and good presidents do not make good generals. I stand corrected, we did have George Washington, didn't we, but they broke the mold after him.

Regards
Bill Person

Goodbye Doc

by Bob McLane

A soft rain was falling as twilight turned this Veteran's Day into night. Other Vets quickly walked past the slow moving man in the faded Corpsman's shirt. He leaned on a cane. With a little more light they might have noticed the Navy Cross among the ribbons on the faded shirt. Many were on their way to reunions that were going on all over town as thousands of Vietnam Veterans gathered to celebrate this tenth anniversary of the Vietnam wall. This was a national place of healing but even after ten years, many Vets were seeing the wall for the first time. The man in the Corpsman's shirt stopped walking and clutched the cane tightly.

"Are you alright, Doc?" I recognized him from a party the night before at the Sheraton where hundreds of former and active duty Marines had gathered to celebrate their 217th birthday. The old corpsman had helped cut the cake with a Marine Officer's sword. Any corpsman who ever had served with a Marine outfit in a combat zone was considered an honorary Marine by most leathernecks.

Jim Mayton was a dues paid member of that brotherhood. He had saved the lives of hundreds of Marines in Korea and Vietnam. The cane shook as he looked at me. "I'm out of gas," he said as he fought for another breath. Advanced emphysema and his refusal to quit smoking made even the shortest walk seem like an uphill march with a full pack. A park bench was a few feet away. "Have a seat, Doc. We'll figure something out."

A Green Beret walking by, saw what was going on and offered to help. We thought about carrying him to a taxi but his bad hip killed that idea. A park ranger came by, driving a electric cart. I explained the situation. "Do you know how to drive one of these things," she asked. "I'm a golfer," I smiled. She gave me the cart. I drove Jim back up to the street and hailed a cab. He waited while I returned the cart.

We took the cab back to the Sheraton. Settled in on a couch in the lobby, Jim ordered a gin & tonic and lit a cigarette. His eyes followed a pretty woman walking by. Other Marines entering the hotel saw Jim and stopped to say hello. Everyone from generals to former privates treated the old corpsman with respect and affection. He still wanted to see the wall.

After a BLT sandwich and another cigarette, we hailed another taxi. This time three Marines went with him. They borrowed a wheelchair from the hotel. There are over fifty-eight thousand names etched in gray letters on the black granite wall. That night Jim went to see just one, Edward Gaffney Creed. After picking up some wounded Marines, the young corpsman's helicopter had crashed, killing everyone on board. Among the wreaths of fresh-cut flowers, they find the name. His eyes filled with tears as he rubbed his fingers across the gray letters. "He was a ski bum," Jim told the Marines. "Once he kicked my butt." Quietly, Jim said the goodbye he never had the chance to say in Vietnam. At times like this, some say the wall weeps as raindrops slowly slide down the smooth black granite. James Mayton passed away in the summer of 1994. He was buried in Tennessee with full military honors. At his request, a small piece of black granite rock was added to the headstone.

"Go For Broke"

The Story of the 442nd Combat Team

by Richard Boykin

What a privilege and blessing it was to be a child and grow up in Hawaii in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Advertised and promoted as the "Paradise of the Pacific," the fond memories of those times for me remain undiminished and confirm the billing.

For almost a century, Hawaii had been America's most successful melting pot. My own family's experience was testament to that. My mother's maternal grandparents came from the Azores to Maui in the 1890s to work the cane fields. My mother's father, born in Izmir, Turkey, of Spanish and Sephardic Jewish descent, came to the islands as a teenager just in time to be drafted for World War I service with the U.S. Army.

As it is today, so it was back then. Hawaii has, since the mid-1800s, had a large Asian population. The Chinese came first, followed by the Japanese, Koreans and Filipinos. More recently, there are large minorities of newcomers from Southeast Asia. So pervasive, so complete was this integration from my childhood perspective that, on more than one occasion, I recall my own dear mother stating that "every fourth child born was Chinese." As a 5-year-old in Hawaii, ignorant of fractions, demographics or the birds and bees, it was my natural expectation that, since I was the third child in my family, if my mother were to get pregnant again my new brother or sister would, in fact, be Chinese. Long before it became un-kosher for little boys to play army with real toy guns, my childhood friends and I would while away the hours playing war throughout our neighborhoods. The popular kids, those with the neatest toy guns, got to be the Americans. The second string got to be the Germans or the Japanese. Oddly, it was most of my Japanese buddies who always showed up with the coolest stuff. Out of their fathers' closets or from old, musty footlockers came the real trappings of little boy wealth. Army mess kits and canteen cups stamped "U.S.," entrenching tools, cartridge belts, first-aid kits and even old, ill-fitting helmets. Real treasure.

By age 6 or 7, it was becoming apparent that my Japanese pals definitely had the edge in war loot. Then, I began to hear and slowly learn about a special army unit that so many of their dads had served with. Some outfit called the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Widely known in Hawaii, everyone simply referred to it as the "Four Four Two." I recall being a bit envious and disappointed that my own dad had not been a member.

Internment

Many reasonably informed and educated folks know the general circumstances surrounding the internment of Japanese-Americans living in the continental United States during World War II. (Japanese-Americans in Hawaii constituted roughly 160,000 of the islands' 400,000 residents. Fortunately for all, their internment was a logistical impossibility and thus they were spared.) While difficult to imagine from a 21st-century perspective, the deep-seated racial prejudices of the times, coupled with the real fear of invasion by Adm. Yamamoto's naval forces was sufficient threat to motivate President Roosevelt, a Democrat, to order the internment of American Japanese living on the West Coast. Quite possibly the most egregious abuse of justice committed by the U.S. government in the last century, the internment issue will forever be a dark stain on our nation's history.

Numerous books have been written by the men, women and children forced to experience the shame and deprivation of life inside the camps as citizens without the benefits of citizenship. As modern Americans are the undisputed world leaders in celebrating victimhood, they have been even more aggressively pusillanimous, until 9-11, in recognizing valor, bravery and sacrifice. While many are aware of the broader issues of the American-Japanese internment experience, and that odd, erudite man or woman might also be able to name a camp or two, an extremely low percentage, even among contemporary Japanese-Americans, are aware of the exploits of the most decorated unit in the history of the United States Army.

Humble beginnings

What would eventually evolve into the 442nd Regimental Combat Team had its genesis in the Hawaiian Territorial Guard. With distrust of Japanese running extremely high after the Pearl Harbor attack, the Nisei (second-generation Japanese-Americans) soldiers then serving were actually involuntarily discharged from the Guard. Unwilling to accept this flagrant slight to their patri-

otism and filled with the same desire to avenge Pearl Harbor as most other Americans, these eager young warriors were formed into a separate all-Nisei unit that ultimately became the 100th Infantry Battalion. The 100th Battalion was the first all-Nisei unit, although most of its officers were Caucasian. Initially staffed almost entirely of Hawaiian Japanese, the 100th would evolve into the 442nd RCT and would be fleshed out by young Nisei men from across the United States. The 442nd RCT would ultimately have three infantry battalions (the 100th, the 2nd, and the 3rd), a battalion of artillery (the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion), along with the usual supporting elements required for a regiment — medical, combat engineers, etc.

"Go For Broke"

The 442nd fought in seven major campaigns in the European Theater of Operations. It engaged in some of the heaviest fighting of the war and took horrendous casualties. The men of the 442nd were often pitted against Hitler's finest troops and never lost a battle. Their motto, "Go For Broke," was from a pidgin English expression in Hawaii which basically meant "shoot the works." Their record in combat showed that the 442nd lived by its motto. Suffering casualties enough for two or three army divisions, their skill and tenacity in combat placed them in great demand. Gen. Mark Clark said of the Nisei, "They are some of the best ---damn fighters in the U.S. Army. If you have more, send them over." While the RCT fought in places like Anzio and Monte Cassino, the battle for which the 442nd is arguably most famous and revered is their Pyrrhic victory in rescuing the First Battalion, 141st Regiment of the 36th Division, a unit comprised mostly of Texans. In a six-day period spanning Oct. 25-30, 1944, the now veteran soldiers of the 442nd would advance nine miles against a firmly entrenched enemy at a cost of 90 men per mile to reach and relieve what became known as the "Lost Battalion." By battle's end, the 442nd suffered 800 casualties to save their Texas brothers who numbered only 211 men. After the war, a grateful Gov. Connolly would pass legislation declaring all members of the 442nd "Honorary Texans."

By war's end, the 442nd had been awarded eight Presidential Unit Citations for their extraordinary combat exploits. The men of the 442nd earned more than 9,000 Purple Hearts, more than 5,000 Bronze Stars, and almost 600 Silver Star medals. A total of 680 young men paid the ultimate price in serving a country which did not yet fully value that sacrifice.

The "Go For Broke" culture of the RCT produced valor in super abundance. Ironically, through war's end only one member of the 442nd had been awarded the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest award for combat bravery. As with a high percentage of Medals of Honor, PFC Sadao Munemori died earning his. Prejudice, no doubt, had a role in minimizing the granting of appropriate valor awards to the Nisei. That said, 52 young members of the RCT were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, our nation's second highest valor medal. Of this group, 23 earned the medal posthumously. No other unit in the United States Army would match this record of achievement, sacrifice and bravery.

Separating the 442nd further from distant rivals was the effort made in the 1990s to review many of the old valor awards for possible upgrade. In June of 2000, President Clinton awarded 21 new Medals of Honor to former members of the 442nd (an additional MOH was awarded to a Nisei soldier who served in the Pacific theater.) Of those awardees, nine had been killed in Europe and of the remaining 12, only seven were still alive to receive the recognition so well deserved. It should be noted that all but one of those receiving the MOH had earlier been DSC recipients. The story of this unusual unit and these intrepid and once young men, a unique subset of the Greatest Generation, remains largely unknown and untold. Two cultural issues inhibit the complete proliferation of information about the 442nd to the regular civilian. First is the easily explained reluctance common among most veterans of combat to discuss the horrors of wartime experiences. When all is held back, none of the greatness, the stories of special times or friendships and sacrifices shared get passed along either.

Add to this, in this group of the reddest-blooded Americans, the still admirable and prevalent aspects of Japanese culture which stresses humility and reticence and you are limiting history, at best, to only the very closest confidants or brother warriors. Were it not for the continued presence of Hawaii's senior U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye, himself one of the seven living former DSC recipients upgraded to the Medal of Honor, there would be virtually no awareness of the 442nd outside of the Japanese-American community today.

In researching the facts for this story, I am grateful

for the efforts of the late Chester Tanaka and his book "Go For Broke." Mr. Tanaka, a Nisei and combat veteran of the 442nd published his superb pictorial history in 1982. Thoroughly researched and filled with generous support from his brother soldiers, Tanaka still noted that universal tendency towards selflessness as many of the veterans, while giving critical input to his story, refused to accept attribution for their quotes.

This month marks the 58th anniversary of the savage battle to save the Lost Battalion, enough time for nearly three generations of Texans to be born and enjoy the blessings of liberty bought and paid for with Nisei blood. My sense is that few in Texas will stop to recall. Sadder, though, is that nearly as few in the modern Japanese-American community will even be aware of sacrifices made by fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers, or by the 680 Nisei soldiers who never had a chance at family life.

The story of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, one of the greatest in U.S. military history, remains mired mostly in facts and figures. We know what they did and the prices they paid to do it. What we really do not know is who these young men were and why they did the incredible things they did. It is a story not just for 211 lucky Texans and the 5,000 or so Nisei soldiers, but one for all America to thoroughly celebrate. As these silent heroes approach their twilight years, we need to impose upon them one more time, to have them overcome their cultural reluctance to draw attention to themselves and tell their stories fully. With a bitter and long war before us, the legacy of this unique group of men is the perfect medicine to steel America for whatever challenges are ahead.

Richard Botkin, a member of the World Net Daily Com Board of Directors, served during peacetime as a Marine Corps Infantry officer. *© 2002*

Memories of 1st Platoon Mike Company 3/26

June 1966 – October 1967

by Ron Swensson
December 15, 2002

In Vietnam, I didn't keep a diary or journal; it surely would have made writing this story easier. I apologize for not remembering everyone's name and exact dates. After years of purposefully blocking most of this stuff from my memory, it's difficult to recall. Contacts with friends and fellow Marines over the Internet and at reunions have helped in more ways than you can imagine.

What Am I Doing Here?

Some things a Marine never forgets. Like his ID number that appears on his ID card and dog tags (mine was 2226447). I saved a pair as a souvenir.

There are memories of boot camp that I'll also never forget. Especially the platoon's lead drill instructor's name (Sgt. Effinger) — and his nasty habit of kicking me in the shins whenever I messed up. The pain didn't go away for a long time. Little did I realize that boot camp was the Ritz Carlton compared to Vietnam.

I headed for MCRD in San Diego on February 1, 1966, after screwing up my freshman year at the University of Michigan. In my doldrums, I had read Leon Uris' book "Battle Cry," about the Marine Corps in World War II and that book just festered in my mind until I finally went down to the recruiting office. I had signed up for helicopter duty but discovered on the day I showed up for Pensacola, FL, that your 4-year obligation started when you completed OCS and flight training (2 years +/-), which meant your total commitment was more like 6 years. Instead, I opted for a 3-year enlistment as a 0311 infantry grunt. It just goes to show how stupid I was at the time.

After graduating as a Major in a ROTC-based high school where I was battalion commander my senior year, I discovered I lacked the self-discipline to do the things that would bring success at the college level. In other words, I turned into a true party animal.

My dad had pulled some strings to get me into the university in the first place. My original application was rejected, although I had a pretty good grade point average and my College Board scores were well above average. My dad had plenty of successful friends in Detroit that were U of M alumni, so I guess he went to work for me. Unfortunately, I just didn't have the heart for studying. After 2 semesters, I was politely asked not to return.

How could my life change in such a short time? I was king of the mountain my senior year in high school. Now I was a college flunkout. I assimilated the role I had earned and subsequently developed a

huge chip on my shoulder. The next 3 years of my life in the Marines did little to dampen my attitude. If anything, it reinforced my belief that life is what you make of it.

Las Pulgas, Camp Pendleton

After ITR training and some personal leave after boot camp, I wound up at Camp Pendleton reporting for duty with the newly formed Mike Company 3rd Battalion 26th Marine Regiment. The history of the 3rd Battalion 26th Marines in World War II is something most Marines aren't aware of. I have an uncle who now lives in La Habra, CA, who was an artillery forward observer with M/3/26 when they raised the flag at Iwo Jima. That was the first combat they had ever seen! He never had a chance to return to the States during his 4-year tour of duty.

I was assigned to the 1st platoon in Mike Company, and our Platoon Leader was 2nd Lt. Mike Hester, a recent graduate from Annapolis and nephew of General Krulak, the Fleet Marine Force Pacific Commanding General! Mike was from a family of Marine Corps tradition, as he was the 2nd or 3rd generation Marine in his family. Many years after returning home from Vietnam, I called the alumni office at Annapolis to see if he was still alive and get his most current address. Sure enough, he had made it home, and was then the Commanding Officer of the Honor Company at Arlington, VA. After twenty-some years he was now a Lieutenant Colonel.

1st Platoon's First Sergeant was Sgt. Wade. He was so "Gung Ho," we called him John Wayne behind his back. What I learned from Sgt. Wade was that the ranking enlisted men really are the backbone of the Marine Corps rifle company. Sure, the officers give the orders and probably take the heat when things go wrong. But when it came time to get things done or when the shit really hit the fan, it was the ranking enlisted men that rose to the occasion. Sgt. Wade was old school Marine Corps. I'm sure he had time in Korea. He had excellent map and compass skills and didn't take crap from anyone. Plus his physical stature and personality were big, like John Wayne. I felt extremely lucky to have been in his platoon. He kept his cool under fire and kept us alive as a result of his stringent demands in the field. He had an uncanny skill in selecting the best men for walking point when we were on patrol.

Amazingly, when I called Mike Hester in 1987, Sgt. Wade was the highest-ranking enlisted man in the Marine Corps and was stationed with his own son and with Colonel Hester in Arlington! How's that for a family tree? A fellow Marine friend of mine from the Internet told me that Sgt. Wade had been wounded in action after kicking down a door to a "hooch" that had been trip wired to a grenade. It was good news to hear that he had survived as well. My original squad leader in 1st platoon was Sgt. Kaufman, who was the only guy in our platoon that had been to Vietnam once before. Cpl. Gill later became squad leader after Sgt. Kaufman was KIA in February 1967. Captain Richard Sasek was our company commander, and Lt. Lee Klein was our executive officer.

Captain Sasek was M/3/26's CO throughout our training at Pendleton, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Okinawa. He was relieved of duty after we were ashore at Dong Ha (if memory serves me), and was replaced by Captain Andy DeBona (whom we affectionately referred to as "Bone Head.") Turns out that DeBona was an enlisted man for 6 years before he became an officer. He was the most "Gung Ho" Marine Corp officer I ever knew and a true warrior. Some Marines question his tactics and demeanor while in Vietnam, but I think you have to remember that the NVA and Charlie were trying to kill us. So what's the big deal? It was either kill or be killed — which do you prefer?

But I digress. Las Pulgas was our new home for a while; an arrangement of dormitory style one-story buildings. Las Pulgas sat deep within the perimeter of Camp Pendleton. The place was kind of bleak, but what do you expect from a Marine Corps training facility? It was summer in Southern California. We could occasionally see the high school kids surfing off the coast of Pendleton whenever we were on maneuvers near the coast, which wasn't often enough for me. Morning overcast clouds and afternoon heat were typical for this time of year. To make training realistic, we conducted maneuvers in the high hills at Pendleton during the heat of the day. Guys would drop like flies from heat exhaustion or dehydration. Looking back at events as they unraveled over future months, the Marines in charge did everything they could to prepare us for life in Vietnam.

A couple of things I learned from our training in Camp Pendleton: First, the old school enlisted warriors from Korea or previous tours in VN were the

real teachers and everyone else, including many of the new officers, were the students. Second Lt. Mike Hester was smart. He liked to travel light when in the field. Real light. Where everyone else humped a week's supply of C-rats, Hester would scrounge chow off the guys in his platoon. Most Marines were delighted to share their stuff with him. But I saw things differently. I couldn't stand ham and lima beans, and neither could he, but I'd carry them just so I could share them with him when he came calling. This twisted bit of sharing went on for the better part of a year.

Departure from Long Beach Harbor

On September 9, 1966 we departed from Long Beach harbor aboard the USS Washington. My friend Gene Weresow from 3rd Platoon Mike Company remembers this exact date because it coincides with his birthday. We have been reunited over the KSV website on the Internet. This ship was an old World War II aircraft carrier that had been retrofitted to become an LPH – Landing Platform for Helicopters. I'd never been on a carrier before, and it was kind of neat in design. It was a huge ship. Actually, a city on the water, completely self-contained.

From Long Beach we headed for Pearl Harbor where we went on some maneuvers and liberty for a week or so, then we were off to the Philippines — Subic Bay. It was in the Philippines and later in Okinawa where we became indoctrinated in jungle warfare. We slept in the field. Walked on patrols. Set up ambushes. Learned about punji sticks and trip wires. The only things missing were live ammo being shot at us, and seeing our buddies get killed or wounded. But that was coming soon enough.We spent some time on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. Here we saw crocodiles while on patrol, and at night the rats would climb the trees and keep you awake all night with their gnawing away on coconuts. Little did I know that this was excellent sleep deprivation training, which would come in handy real soon.

Flick's Raiders

The 3rd platoon of M/3/26 was a swinging outfit. Their platoon leader was a warrant officer, Lt. Flick from my home state of Michigan. He was a good looking, lanky guy with several years' experience as an enlisted man. He was real cool with his platoon members. If I had known how to transfer to his platoon, I would have done it in a heartbeat. The guys in 3rd platoon were tight. Many of them were from New York and New Jersey. And man, did they know how to have a good time on liberty.

Back at Pendleton, about 9 or 10 of us (me, the only one not from 3rd platoon) would rent a couple taxis and go to Tijuana, Mexico, commonly referred to as TJ. When we arrived in town we would literally take over an entire bar or club down there. On occasion, we would return with one or two fewer Marines than when we started. Our comrades had been arrested for disturbing the peace or whatever. An officer would have to travel down to TJ and conduct the rescue mission. I'm sure there was a price to pay, but I was lucky and didn't get tossed into the slammer. Well, 3rd platoon's string of tradition on liberty followed it all the way to Subic Bay, PI. Where liberty was cut off at 12:00 midnight, 10 or 12 members of 3rd platoon would be out with their platoon leader after hours. Officers didn't have the same time restrictions that we enlisted men had. And me, thinking that if they can get away with it, so can I, was a serious mistake. I wasn't in their platoon, and I didn't have a Lt. Flick to stand up for me. One night after hours while out with 3rd platoon, who should come walking into the bar but my best buddy, Lt. Hester. I was busted. Hester gave me this funny smile, and next morning I was out in front of our Quonset huts digging a fighting hole (for punishment) while everyone else in 1st platoon was free to go on liberty. Sgt. Wade (I'm sure he was instructed to do so) was trying to make an example of me. So in the future I didn't stay out late after hours.

My Most Memorable Lesson

Once we left the Philippines for Okinawa, we knew we were getting close to going incountry. We just didn't know when. It was in Okinawa's Jungle Warfare School where we learned the most amazing concept about being ambushed in the jungle. And it saved our lives over and over many times. Our instructors told us that whenever we were caught in an ambush while on patrol, to turn towards the incoming fire and with our weapons on fully automatic walk directly towards the muzzle flashes and shoot like hell. They emphasized — DO NOT fall down on the ground — because there you will be picked off like ducks in a barrel. This concept was totally bizarre. We actually trained for days applying this routine using blank rounds. We practiced so

many times that it became a natural instinct to respond in the manner they taught us. This one piece of training alone saved my life many times. Because as M/3/26 whenever we were ambushed, we all acted in unison, and I'm sure Charlie freaked out when they saw such discipline.

USS Iwo Jima

My memory becomes a little fuzzy about exact dates here, but sometime around October or November 1966 we went aboard the brand new LPH Iwo Jima, or so it seemed to be after being on board the USS Washington (World War II vintage). We were acting as the SLF — Special Landing Force — or "float boat" as I have heard it called. Along our journey somewhere (perhaps Okinawa itself), we turned in our M-14s for the newer, improved M-16s. We had them as our primary weapons when we were on the Iwo Jima.

One day we were ordered to saddle up. We were going incountry to set up a perimeter around a Marine Corps group that was in need of help. We flew ashore these big Chinook choppers, they looked like flying bananas with the huge twin overhead blades. They were big enough to put jeeps and such inside. This particular day there were about twenty of us well-equipped Marines inside and as we were landing; with the back ramp already down, we were taking incoming 50 caliber rounds right through the main fuselage of the aircraft. You could hear the rounds going through the sheet metal and everything in between. The Marine flight crew pushed us out that back door so fast my head was spinning. I think I landed on all fours just to keep from breaking a leg or something. Once on the ground we headed for this dike close by and I could hear the distinct "chug-chug" of a 50-caliber machine gun. We could even see the muzzle flash and smoke just ahead of us. It looked like it was elevated about 6 feet off the ground. And there was nothing but open ground (actually a rice paddy) between them and us. This is where the fun started!

We had been instructed to assemble our M-16 cleaning rods so that they were in one piece, and we taped them to the side of our barrels with electrician's tape. In case the rifle jammed, we were in a position to rip off the cleaning rod and insert it down the barrel to clear the spent cartridge that was preventing the weapon from loading another round. Guess what? I don't think I fired 5 or 6 rounds and Whamo! My weapon was jammed. I thanked the Lord I wasn't out in the middle of that rice paddy. We spent the rest of the day near this same location. The VC with the 50-cal. MG were either dying of laughter at the sight of our "continental Army" weaponry, or they had skipped down to the next province. I was so upset over using this stupid M-16 that I wrote home and asked my Dad to send me some kind of sidearm. Just in case.

We floated up and down the coast of Vietnam for a while. I prayed that they didn't send us into a real firefight situation with these stupid rifles. They did send us in a couple more times but just in small numbers, and usually to provide perimeter watch while a downed chopper was being fixed. It was at this point in time that our adventures took a little twist. We were fully expecting to go ashore somewhere in VN off the USS Iwo Jima, but that didn't happen. Instead they took us all the way back to Subic Bay, and the ship hurriedly turned around (now empty of Marines) to extract another battalion of Marines that were in some heavy battle back in Vietnam.

We wound up having Thanksgiving turkey at Subic Bay. Most everyone had dysentery by now, so the turkey just slid on through. The best part of our return to Subic Bay was that they gave us all brand new M-14s! Thank You, Lord. Christmas came early that year. There were times in the months ahead during the monsoon season where you would go a week or so without having the ability to clean your rifle in a dry spot. The rain never stopped so what was a good Marine to do? Usually, I would find a clear stream along a trail and just remove the magazine, lock the chamber open and swish the old baby in the running water of the stream. Presto magic. Worked every time. Lock and load and we're ready for action. Couldn't do that with an M-16, guaranteed.

Dong Ha

In typical Navy/Marine Corps fashion, they used "Mike" boats to take us off the Henrico and up the Perfume River to a staging area before trucking us to the firebase at Dong Ha. Welcome to Vietnam. We finally made it. One of my first memories in Dong Ha was standing in chowline with these Marines that obviously had been incountry for a long time. Their M-14's were silver, long ago the bluing had polished off. They hadn't seen a barber in months, and their uniforms were faded and "salty" looking. Plus, they

had that thousand-yard "stare." I struck up a conversation with one Marine in front of me in the chowline, and wouldn't you know it, he was from my own hometown and we had even dated some of the same girls in high school. For three minutes, we escaped that place in time and I know he felt sorry for us new guys, but he didn't say so.

Our first assignment at Dong Ha was perimeter watch for a day or two. Really boring stuff. Getting acclimated, I guess. We manned these sandbagged bunkers around the airstrip there. The first morning I woke up all alone in this stupid bunker, my partner was gone to breakfast, and my rifle was gone! Deep shit, if you are a rifleman. Well, it didn't take me two seconds to figure this one out. My favorite Platoon Sgt. "John Wayne" Wade probably snuck up and stole it from me while my partner and I were sleeping. And since we had a longstanding twisted relationship already, whose rifle better to steal than mine? I remembered where his bunker was, and since everyone — and I mean everyone — was at breakfast, my rifle had to be in Wade's bunker. Sure enough, there it was propped up against the inside wall of his bunker. I knew there was a reason to memorize your rifle's serial number. One good turn deserves another. Well, I'll tell you this, I never let that stupid rifle out of my hands even when I slept, as long as we were out in the field. Being in a bunker was a little different. Wade never said a word about that incident. Out of sight, out of mind, I guess.

Christmas 1966

Just before Christmas '66 we started on this operation in Co Bi Than Tan Valley to establish what would later be known as Camp Evans, and later, Camp Eagle. We spent Christmas and New Year's on perimeter watch there. This is where I learned how to pull the pin from a hand grenade and let the spoon fly before you threw the damn thing. If you didn't, they'd come flying right back at you! If you counted 2 or 3 seconds before you threw the grenade you would get this "air burst" which was really cool. Charlie had no way to hide from those, and he couldn't throw them back at you either.

Sometime in early 1967, Captain Sasek, our CO, was relieved of duty from M/3/26 and reassigned to another company, and Captain Andy DeBona was brought on board as our new Commanding Officer. Whenever we were ready to go into the field he would say, "Let's go get some ears!" Kind of morbid when you think about it, but as we were soon to discover, once our comrades started to get wounded or killed — that's all we cared about — was getting revenge for our fallen Marine buddies. Months later I really didn't care whether I lived or died; I just wanted to kill some VC. That was about the time I acquired that thousand-yard stare.

Under DeBona's leadership, we definitely took our involvement as Marines to a new height. Our standard operating procedure for at least 4 months (before 80% of us were reassigned to 1st and 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines, in April '67) was to carry a case of C-rations per man, as well as a couple hundred rounds of M-14 ammo, along with linked ammo for the M-60 machine guns, and, every man in the company carried at least one 81mm mortar round or two 60mm mortar rounds. These were illumination rounds mostly. Boy, did they make staying alive at night a lot easier. We were loaded for bear. And thanks to DeBona's planning and leadership, we were self-reliant if the shit hit the fan, which it often did.

Squad-Size Night Ambushes

One thing someone from weapons platoon will have to explain to me someday is why aren't there enough M-60s in a damn rifle company so each squad can have one at night? What we would do is completely saturate a metric grid on the map with our company. Each platoon would have its own area of responsibility, and from there we would break down into smaller size "squad-level" ambushes. We were always short one M-60 MG, so we took turns rotating being the one squad without. These were the nights when the sleep deprivation training helped immensely. As the AK-47 has a distinctive sound like no other, I'll take an M-60 anytime. When Charlie heard the M-60 start firing, he didn't tend to stick around for long. Being on a nighttime ambush at the DMZ was like ocean fishing. You never knew what you were going to catch until after you hooked on. And maybe you didn't really want what was on the other end of the line after all. Especially if it was a big, nasty shark.

I remember one night ambush when there were only about 10 or 12 of us. In customary fashion, we sent LPs down the trail in each direction to give us advance warning if anything came along. Both LPs had PRC-25 radios on this particular ambush. We didn't have an M-60, so we were dead meat if a

"shark" came along. It was just 10 or 12 of us and our fully automatic M-14s and maybe an M-79 or two in the group. Fortunately, there was no moon this night, and I think maybe it was overcast, because it was really hard to see even with the stars a-blazing. We had set up our ambush site along this hedgerow of tall grass, maybe 2 or 3 foot high. We were spaced about 6 feet apart, max. With 2 Marines at each LP, that left only 6 or 8 of us in the primary kill zone. So we covered a span of about 35 to 50 feet from one end of the kill zone to the other. I remember counting NVA regulars as they came stealthily down the trail. They had about 10 yards between each man, they knew what they were doing. If we had pulled the trigger on this ambush, we would have only killed for sure 2 or 3 in our first immediate burst of fire. All of us had enough sense about us to let this group pass our position. I had counted to 110 and stopped counting. They still kept coming. They would have decimated us if we had opened fire on them. The key to not giving away our position had more to do with the radio operators than anything else. In this situation, they had to hold down the "push to talk button" down and hold the handset so that the earpiece and receiver were up against their body. This was the only way to kill the squelch from announcing our presence. This was undoubtedly one of the scariest nights of my life. If we had had an M-60 MG I think we would have sprung that ambush. As a squad, we talked about not having an M-60 that night before we set up the ambush site. We were all on the same sheet of music when the NVA showed up. After they passed our position we called the CP and let the artillery boys do their thing.

Sgt. Kaufman — Our 1st KIA

On one of our nighttime excursions near the DMZ during the monsoon season of 1967, we actually set up a platoon-size ambush site right next to an NVA Regular battalion. It was raining hard when we set up our ambush site about 4 o'clock in the morning. It was about an hour before first light when we finally settled down. As daylight rose, so did the NVA. We could smell the fish sauce they used for their rice along with the smell of their tobacco, which smelled like marijuana to me. They were so close to our position that we could hear them talking incessantly. Vietnamese and Chinese sound very similar to me — short, choppy, one-syllable words strung together.

After about an hour of this nonsense (at this point we had no idea how many NVA there were) their point man started to move down the trail. There was do doubt about it, we were in the NVA's backyard, not ours. One piece of information they forgot to share with us in Jungle Warfare School back in Okinawa was that the point man for the NVA sometimes checked out a suspicious looking area along the trail by "reconning by fire" (as we came to call it). The NVA usually used an AK-47 for this task, so it became easy to know who was shooting at whom. For some reason the Marines never used this tactic that I ever saw, but it did the job it was intended to do. Once their point man shot off a few rounds all hell broke loose. In this instance, we hadn't taken the time to dig fighting holes, we were too wasted from trucking through the jungle all night. So we just flattened ourselves to the earth as close as we could. There were still rounds flying everywhere (mostly theirs) when Sgt. Kaufman, my squad leader, stood up to see where the NVA were. Unfortunately, he didn't have his helmet on, and he caught a solitary round right in the middle of his forehead. I was right next to him when this occurred.

It wasn't until the firing ceased that I realized what had happened. Sgt. Kaufman never let out so much as a peep of sound. The entry point of the wound looked like a minor cigarette burn. Sgt. Kaufman was the only Marine in our platoon that had been to Vietnam before, and he was everyone's inside source for asking about things to come. He also was our platoon's first KIA. It was a sad occasion for all of us. He was truly looked up to. I know he had a wife and child back in the States. I also remember the sad look on Sgt. Wade's face as we left the ambush site and started a sweep of the area for anything we could find.

An amazing thing happened just as the firefight was winding down, before we started our sweep of the area. Down the hill from above came our commanding officer Captain DeBona with Gunnery Sgt. Ortiz close behind. DeBona had his 45-caliber pistol drawn as he was trucking down the trail to find out firsthand what the hell was going on. This was a pretty gutsy move since there were still NVA in the area. Capt. DeBona called in an artillery shoot that included our entire battery of 105s. The NVA never knew what hit them. Gunny Ortiz stood on this ridgeline above us and was shouting orders at

Frances McGuire and me to check out this little clump of bushes near our ambush site. Frances carried an M-79 grenade launcher, and thus was provided a .45 pistol as a sidearm. We poked around these bushes half-heartedly and walked on. Gunny Ortiz was infuriated! He yelled back at us to get on our hands and knees and crawl inside this clump of bushes. Well, I let Frances take point on this one, and sure enough, there was an NVA ammo humper hiding inside this clump of bushes. He had a half dozen Chicom grenades with strings coming out of what looked like a bamboo handle laid out in front of him. This NVA was so strung out on drugs he could hardly move. Frances emptied his .45 in this guy from less than 10 feet away and the guy still could crawl away from us. I was disappointed in the firepower of the .45. Together, we dragged this NVA up the hill to Gunny Ortiz who had an interpreter there to help question him. All in all, this was a sad day for 1st platoon M/3/26. We had lost one of our best men this morning. I became enraged. Somebody was going to pay for this.

Mail Call

It was time for Mike Company to get a little break time back at Camp Evans. A shower, some warm food and mail call were in order. On this particular day there were some surprises. My dad had come through. He sent me a Browning 9mm "Hi Power" pistol with extra magazines and ammo. It kind of looked like a .45 until you put it in a holster. The magazine was about twice as wide as the .45s. There were a few other unique safety features of this weapon that Colt Manufacturing could surely learn from.

The magazine held 14 rounds, plus one in the chamber — you could have your own mini-firefight with one magazine. The safety features were what impressed me the most about the Browning. Even if you had a round in the chamber (which is the only way to carry a weapon like this in the field) once you removed the magazine, you could not fire the weapon. I don't care how hard you tried; once the magazine was removed the weapon was safe. Most accidental discharges from 45s that I ever saw were from supposedly empty weapons.

Another feature I liked was the half-cock safety. Often times when sleeping in a fighting hole at night, or other strange places, I would sleep with the weapon loaded, a round in the chamber, the safety off, and in the half-cock position. This way the pistol was safe until you thumbed the hammer back all the way. Too bad it wasn't double-action. I was glad to have it handy many times. Now that we had our M-14s back, there wasn't really a need for it. In fact, I never actually fired it in combat; however, I slept with it like a sweetheart (when I wasn't sleeping with my M-14.) It may sound funny, but that's exactly what we did on nighttime ambushes.

You didn't want your weapon next to you. You wanted it in your hands pointed in the general direction of the kill zone while you slept. Locked, loaded, a round in the chamber and the safety on. That way when the shit hit the fan you were instantly ready for action — well, almost ready. During this same mail call, my friend Rick Szabo from 3rd platoon received a surprise package from his mom who happened to be a nurse. She had gotten some small medicinal bottles that held about 5 or 6 ounces each and had filled a whole shoebox full of them with Canadian Club whiskey. Hard liquor wasn't found real easy in Vietnam. We were told we were going to be at Camp Evans for a while (little did I think that it would only be for a few hours), so Rick popped open a couple of these small bottles for him and me. At the time, I weighed about 135 soaking wet. I had weighed closer to 155 when joining the Marines. The Canadian Club was definitely relaxing. Almost too relaxing. Next thing I knew we were saddling up to go back on patrol. We each grabbed our case of C-rations (12 meals for 6 days in the field), filled our canteens, grabbed as much ammo and grenades as we could possibly carry and off we went. As we left the perimeter, there was a pile of 81mm illumination mortar rounds waiting for us to grab one on the way out. 1st Platoon was point as we left the perimeter. After the company cleared the wire, we sat down alongside the trail and let the platoon behind us move forward to take point. 1st Platoon was going to be rear guard. Although I wasn't exactly smashed from drinking several ounces of that Canadian Club, when I sat down next to the trail I fell sound asleep. When I awoke, the entire column had gone by my position, and left me there all alone! Boy, did I panic for a few seconds. I scrambled down the trail as fast as I could without making too much noise.

Fortunately, the rear of the column was less than a hundred yards away. That was the first and last time I drank hard liquor in Vietnam.

Cigarettes and Leeches

There was a span of time when we were working out of Camp Evans that it rained 82 days straight! The only thing that wasn't completely soaked was the matches and cigarettes I stored on the top of my head inside my helmet. Prior to this time I never developed the habit of smoking, but here it became a challenge. Believe it or nor it was little things like this that helped you keep your sanity, or what was left of it. In the lowlands, where there were a lot of bamboo trees, leeches would be everywhere.

In fact, if you stood still on a trail and looked around you on the ground, your body was like a magnet. You could see dozens of leeches heading your way as if they had built-in radar. In spite of everything we did to keep them from getting inside our uniforms, there was always a way for them to find bare skin. We learned not to extract them by pulling them off our body, but by using a burning match or insect repellent (mostly alcohol) to get them to let go.

On one occasion a very large leech, about as big as my little finger, during the night had somehow gotten inside my trousers and had attached himself to my penis. I discovered him after first light that morning, and wasn't really thinking very clear. My natural instinct kicked in and I grabbed my insect repellent and douched the leech and me. Too late. The leech fell off, and it felt like my member was going to fall off as well. I hit the ground rolled up in a ball. I'm sure my buddies got a laugh out of it. It took about 45 minutes for the effect to wear off so I could at least stand up. Sgt. Wade wasn't too happy about my delaying our getting out of where we were at the time.

Post Script

In June 2002, the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines had its fifth biennial reunion in Ennis, Montana, the summer home of Andy DeBona, our host. I have only attended one other reunion, and that was the KSV reunion in San Diego in September 1999. So I don't have a lot of experience to draw from in these matters. However, the two reunions were quite different. My first with KSV, I went alone without my wife, Karen. Frankly, I wasn't sure if I could handle the emotional side of this affair and really didn't want to embarrass myself in front of my bride of 32 years. This KSV reunion was wonderful in every way. I should have brought Karen along; she would have enjoyed it. The worst part was having to leave on Sunday after four days of camaraderie. So many memories had been resurrected from the past that I didn't trust myself with facing my fellow Marines and saying good-bye. I snuck out the door like a dog when it came time to leave for the airport. What a schmuck I was.

Attending the KSV reunion was the culmination of over a year of contact with Marines over the Internet — like James Everley, Jacob Krygoski, Frank Taggart, Joe Cote, Tom Kilgore, Steve Sneed, Gene Weresow, and Joe Olszewski. Not all of them attended this KSV reunion (my first), but I know they wanted to be there if they weren't. To give you an example of the type of things that occur during these reunions, let me mention just one incident that took place on Saturday during the KSV reunion in September 1999. As part of the four-day program, we attended an MCRD graduation ceremony out on the main parade deck at San Diego boot camp. As we were walking from the buses towards the bleacher stands on base, I witnessed 3 or 4 members from "Charlie" Battery 1/13 who ran into each other for the first time since being at Khe Sanh during the Tet offensive in 1967. It turned out these 3 or 4 Marines had shared the same bunker for months and hadn't seen each other since they departed Vietnam. I had met one of these former artillery Marines the night before, and it turned out he lived a mile from my house back in Denver!

My second reunion was this past June 2002 in Ennis, Montana. I had planned on attending for the better part of a year, and this time Karen was going to go along. She wasn't sure what to expect but afterwards, was delighted that she came with me. There were plenty of other wives at both reunions. We were among friends. The next reunion for 3/26 will be in Reno, Nevada in June 2004. The next KSV reunion will be in Charleston, South Carolina next Fourth of July (2003). Both are on my calendar right now; wouldn't miss either one if it can be avoided.

Attendance counts at the 3/26 reunions for the first four had a high of 83 or so from what I heard. The attendance in Ennis was 243! The events subsequent to September 11th 2001, I am sure made an impact. Where for 32 years I refrained from even mentioning my association with the Marine Corps on a resume, now all of a sudden it was OK! The feeling being amongst close friends at the Ennis

reunion was completely unique. I met guys I hadn't seen in 35 years. And one even thought he saw me mortally wounded on a medical evacuation helicopter. Seeing remembered faces and reliving old events helped me feel like I once again was part of the human race. From that perspective alone, the entire trip paid for itself. And, yes, there were some guys who snuck away without saying good-bye. But I know from firsthand experience what that was all about, so I don't hold it against anyone. Half the battle of life is just showing up.

The History

The history of mankind points out many examples of ordinary men performing extraordinary things under enormous external pressures. These next two articles represent a moment in time. Our Nation and our Corps were responding to the crisis developing in South Vietnam. Marines responded admirably. With the activation of elements of the 5th Marine Division in 1966, there was an enormous internal pressure to "grow' infantry — both officer and enlisted — to answer the call to arms in Southeast Asia. The first article provides a detailed look at one Basic School class that answered the call. The second provides a close look at the Marine Corps and one small corner of our Nation as the North Country in New York gave the best there was to give in protecting the freedom of all Americans and our allies overseas. The irony is that the number of names etched in granite on the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC is almost the same for both groups. Heed once again the saying on this month's cover, and say a prayer of thanks for the brave men who gave everything they had to give to preserve liberty for you and me.

Basic School Class 6-67

The Tip of the Spear

by Lt. Col. Jack Wells, USMCR(Ret)
Reprinted from the November issue of *The Marine Corps Gazette*, with permission

Marine Officers Sixth Basic Class of 1967 (BC 6-67) convened on 7 June and graduated 498 second lieutenants on 1 November. BC 6-67 sent more lieutenants off to battle and suffered more officers killed or wounded than any Basic School class since the Korean War. The huge size of BC 6-67 was the result of the Joint Chiefs' request to the White House early in 1967 for an additional 200,000 men for the escalating war in Vietnam, plus the activation of the 5th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton in June 1966. In July 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson reluctantly agreed to an increase of 50,000 men for the war effort. The Marine Corps had long been under pressure trying to deal with the acute shortage of officers caused by the number of Marine forces that had been committed to Vietnam. The number of Marines serving in Vietnam had increased a staggering 45 percent from July 1966 to July 1967.

The Marine Corps Commandant at that time, General Leonard Chapman, Jr., aptly described the manpower headaches that the Marine Corps was experiencing when he stated, "There are just three kinds of Marines: those in Vietnam, those who [have] just returned from Vietnam, and those who [are] getting ready to go to Vietnam!"

Most of the officers in BC 6-67 came from the huge 44th Officer Candidates Course (44th OCC) that started in March 1967 with 715 officer candidates, and graduated 585 new second lieutenants on 2 June 1967. In the 44th OCC class were 187 officer candidates from the newly expanded enlisted commissioning program that was used to fill the critical shortage of officers. Joining BC 6-67 were 67 officers that came from the Platoon Leaders Class, about a dozen "fallen angels" (lieutenants who had not completed flight school in Pensacola), and 20 other officers from various Naval Reserve Officers Training Program.

The Basic School in 1967 was commanded by Col. E.H. Haffey, and the class was made up of Companies N and O with 250 officers each. Major Russell Kramer commanded Company N, and Major Carter Swenson commanded Company O.

The Basic School in 1967 had been condensed to 21 weeks of instruction which meant that the workweek included half days on Saturdays with just a few exceptions. The course syllabus had been modified to double the number of hours allocated to land navigation based on feedback coming from the Western Pacific (Westpac) that new lieutenants needed greater proficiency in map reading.

The demand for infantry officers in Vietnam had mandated that fully 70 percent of the class had to be designated as basic infantry officers (0301). Retired Col. Swenson recalls not feeling comfortable in hav-

ing to assign some of the officers to infantry military occupational specialty and more than several in the class did not want to be platoon leaders but had no choice. Unbeknownst to U.S. military leaders at the time, Communist leaders in Hanoi had made a decision early in July 1967 that would directly impact BC 6-67 and change the course of the war. This decision was to launch an all-out offensive in South Vietnam in January or February 1968.

Preoccupied with the long hours of classroom and field instruction, plus late nights on night patrols and compass marches, not many of us realized what we would face in 1968. We were confident of the firepower and technology that was on our side but could not imagine the stealth, deception, and surprise tactics that we would see in doing battle with the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). The NVA were particularly adept at constructing mutually supporting firing positions that were almost undetectable until too late.

After graduation from The Basic School on a crisp fall day on November 1967, approximately 300 new second lieutenants had West Pac orders, either after a short leave or after completion of a formal school such as field artillery or the combat engineers course. Ninety-four officers in the class went on to flight training, including 15 ordered to U.S. Air Force flight schools because of the backlog of officers waiting to start flight training at Pensacola. BC 6-67 officers setting foot in Vietnam in December 1967 and January 1968 were soon to enter a hellish maelstrom of fighting that was inconceivable during our final weeks at Quantico. In 1968 there were more Marines killed or wounded in Vietnam than during any other year of the war.

By mid-December some of the single or more eager lieutenants were arriving in Da Nang en route to either the 1st or 3d Marine Divisions. A short time later, names of our classmates started showing up on the casualty reports being sent out. On 18 December 1967, 2ndLt. Michael Ruane from Brooklyn, NY was the first to be killed after just 9 days as a platoon commander with Company M, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines (M/3/7) in Quang Nam Province. Thirty days later, two more officers were killed in action, 2ndLt. Randell Yeary's reconnaissance patrol was ambushed on Hill 881 North and 2dLt. Thomas Hoare would posthumously be awarded the Silver Star medal for heroic action leading his L/3/4 platoon against an NVA company west of Gio Linh near the demilitarized zone.

A number of BC 6-67 officers found themselves in the 77-day siege at Khe Sanh and the deadly hill fights on Hills 861, 881 North, and 881 South. Marines at Khe Sanh Combat Base would be subjected to days during the siege when over 1,000 enemy artillery rounds would land inside the perimeter. Several of our classmates would also experience the terrifying nightmare of having their platoons or artillery batteries overrun by North Vietnamese sappers. In The Basic School an often heard refrain from the instructor staff was, "What do you do now, lieutenant?" On 16 February 1968, 2ndLt. Terrence Graves was brutally confronted with that phrase when he was seconds away from safety as he and his 3d Force Reconnaissance team boarded the UH-34 helicopter that was going to extract them away from over 200 pursuing NVA soldiers. When 2ndLt. Graves realized that one man was unaccounted for, he immediately jumped off the helicopter. Graves was joined by Cpl. Danny Slocum and PFC James Honeycutt who did not want to leave 2ndLt. Graves alone in the search for the missing team member, whom they found severely wounded. 2ndLt. Graves and his men were hopelessly outgunned in spite of calling in supporting arms from every source available. When a second rescue helicopter from VMO-6 came in to extract the four Marines, it was riddled with gunfire as it was lifting off the

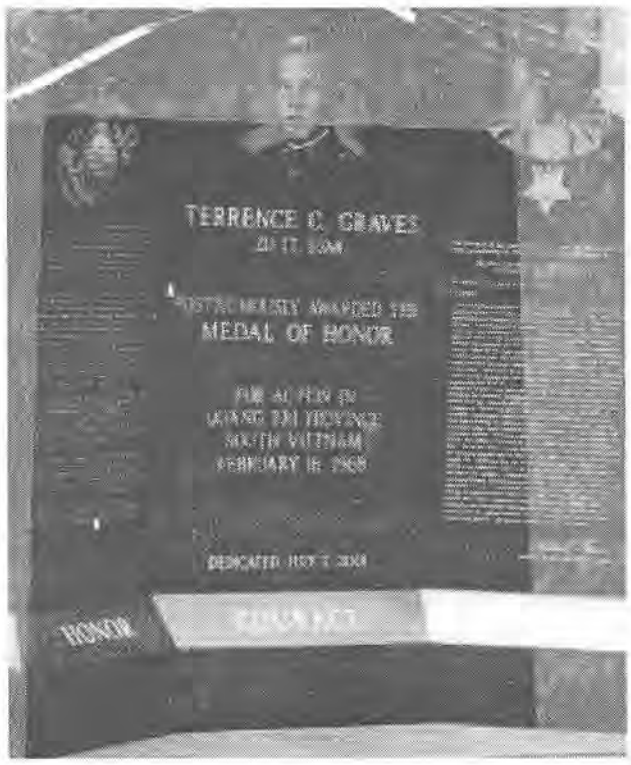

ground and crashed, killing all but Cpl. Slocum who managed to evade the NVA soldiers until he was rescued a day later.

In July of 2001 at The Basic School, Graves Hall, student officer housing, was rededicated in honor and memory of 2ndLt. Graves. Terry was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on that fateful February day. At The Basic School, we received instruction on combat in a "built-up area," and all of us knew well the few cinder block two-story structures that made up "combat town."

Instead of the make-believe combat town at The Basic School, 2ndLt. Leo Myers from Alva, OK found himself in the ancient city of Hue, the third largest city in Vietnam with a population of 140,000 people. More than 5,000 NVA troops comprising 16 battalions had taken over the city on the second day of Tet — 31 January 1968. For 12 days, 2ndLt. Myers led his 1st Platoon, H/2/5 Marines in the bloody street-by-street fighting against an enemy that was so fanatical that some NVA soldiers were found chained to their heavy machine guns to ensure that they would not flee against the attacking Marines. 2dLt. Myers would be the second classmate to be awarded a Silver Star for his heroic actions on 11 February 1968.

BC 6-67 officers were now being killed at a rate of more than one per week through April 1968, and the second NVA offensive, labeled "Mini-Tet," was still to erupt in May. 2ndLt. Thomas Keppen was a platoon commander with B/1/3 that was operating with Battalion Landing Team 2/4 (BLT 2/4). The Marines of BLT 2/4 found themselves in one of the bloodiest battles of the war where they went up against two NVA battalions that were spread out along the Bo Dieu River northeast of the Marine Combat Base in Dong Ha. During this heavy fighting in what would be known as the "Battle of Dai Do," the Marines would suffer 81 killed and 300 wounded in the 3-day battle during 30 April to 2 May 1968. On the first day in this battle, 2ndLt. Keppen's company came under withering machine gun and rocket-propelled grenade fire while crossing the Bo Dieu River in an amphibious assault on top of an LVTP-5. Before that day ended, all of the officers in B/1/3 had been killed or wounded and six months after The Basic School, 2ndLt Keppen turned over command of his platoon to SSgt John Gavel, who at the young age of 22 assumed command of Bravo Company. 2ndLt. Keppen would live through this battle only to die from wounds received in a mortar attack early in July 1968.

From January to November 1968, BC 6-67 lieutenants would be awarded 17 Silver Star Medals, 2 Navy Cross Medals, and 1 Medal of Honor. Another nine officers would be medically retired from wounds suffered in Vietnam in 1968. By late summer of 1969, BC 6-67 officers who had gone on to the Navy flight school in Pensacola or Air Force flight training in Texas began to be assigned to Vietnam. Four of these aviators would be killed during the next 12 months, including lstLt. Bernard Plassmeyer, flying with VMA-311 when his A-4E went down near the A Shau Valley southwest of Hue. lstLt. Plassmeyer had been the honor graduate for the entire BC 6-67 class.

The last classmate to be killed, LtCol. William Higgins, had returned safely from two tours in Vietnam and in 1988 was serving with the United Nation peacekeeping mission in Beirut, Lebanon, when he was captured on 1 February and executed by terrorists while in captivity. In April 1999, the USS Higgins (DD 76) was commissioned and named in his honor. Any one of the rest of us in BC 6-67 could have ended up with our names on the Vietnam Memorial Wall along with the 44 fellow officers and friends that we lost. The men in BC 6-67 were long ago stirred by President John F. Kennedy's inaugural words: "We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship...to assure the survival and success of liberty." Let us never forget our classmates who did not return home.

> "He that outlives the day, and comes home safe...will yearly on the vigil, feast his friends...he'll remember, what feats they did that day."
>
> William Shakespeare, "Henry V"

LtCol. Wells lives in Cupertino, CA. In Vietnam then, 2ndLt. Wells was a forward observer with H/3/11 operating with A/1/7.

IN MEMORIAM
SIXTH BASIC CLASS 1967

Company N		Company 0	
Michael P. Ruane	18 December 1967	Thomas J. Hoare,Jr.	18 Januaryl968
Randell D. Yeary	14 January 1968	Peter L. Siller	26 January 1968
Thomas H. Staples	31 January 1968	Leslie A. Dickinson, Jr.	3 February 1968
James T. Bergen III	1 February 1968	Michael W. Berkery	5 February 1968
Michael A. Deeter	7 February 1968	Terrance R. Roach, Jr.	8 February 1968
Kenneth L. Kirkes	9 February1968	John R. Ruggles III	28 February 1968
Donald A. Hausrath, Jr.	11 February 1968	Richard W. Kapp, Jr.	1 March 1968
Terrence C. Graves	16 February 1968	Thomas B. Ferguson	30 March 1968
Mark C. Whittier	6 March 1968	Charles H. Neel, Jr	5 April 1968
George W. Coleman	17 March 1968	William R. Ammon	16 April 1968
Donald W. Pratt	26 April 1968	Patrick J. Harrington	1 May 1968
John M. Odell	30 April 1968	Paul F. Cobb	16 May1968
Ralph S. Gorton III	27 May 1968	Paul M. McGrath	7 June 1968
Samuel J. Hannah	7 June 1968	Thomas R. Keppen	7July 1968
William F. Reilly	17July 1968	Steven R. Hilton	25 August 1968
Harold L. Cheadle, Jr.	23 August 1968	John L. Molyneaux, Jr.	31 August 1968
Daniel L. Anderson	25 August 1968	Douglas A. Paige	26 September 1968
Jack S. Imlah	29 August 1968	John C. White III	1 November 1968
Michael S. Lafromboise	6 June 1969	Thomas B. Rainey	11 November 1968
Roland C. Hamilton	22 July 1969	Patrick R. Curran	29 September 1969
Joseph W. Devlin	8 March 1970	Toby R. Gritz	25 March 1970
Bernard H. Plassmeyer	11 September 1970		
William R. Higgins	February 1988		

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: After reading this article, it brought back memories of the outstanding officers I had the privilege of serving with during my 8 years in the Marine Corps. In war and in peace, they performed their duties well beyond what was expected of them. While attending our KSV reunions, I was struck by the similarity between Marine Officers and Police Officers, which had never occurred to me in the past. Police Officers tend to stay together as a group because at every social function we attend, there is the person telling a story of an incident they had with a "cop" while receiving a traffic ticket. I haven't heard them bragging about the cop who saved their life, or returned a lost child. As it is at many reunions, I hear stories about officers' mistakes, but few (thankful) recall the heroic actions like those mentioned in the article above. I am sure we would have more of our officers attending in the future if we are more sensitive to their feelings, appreciative of the fine multitude of their contributions and in tune to recognizing their acts of heroism and leadership qualities as well.

The North Country Remembered

by Jack Glasgow
Reprinted from the November issue of *The Marine Corps Gazette*, with permission

The measure of men is often reflected in the standing they have in their communities. Lonely souls come and go and are oft tossed on the trash heap of humanity. In 1966 a community came together. Thirty-six years later the bond is still as strong, and the patriotic fire, once ever so bright, has not dimmed through the years. This is a story about "Hometown America" at its very best in Clinton County, NY.

Hometowns are identified by the three Ps — place, people, and personality. My narrow definition of the "North Country" is Clinton County, NY. The place, or location, is the northeastern most corner of New York State. The County Seat is Plattsburgh, the "jewel" of the North Country. Growing up there, we called it "God's Country." It still is. Bounded by Quebec on the north, Lake Champlain on the east, and the Adirondack Mountains on the west, it is paradise on earth.

People combine to make a place a hometown. There are many cities in America with sprawling suburbs of bedroom communities that become no more than transitional stop-offs in a nomadic lifestyle. That's not the case with the North Country. Generations feed upon generations. Roughly 80,000, from the last census, call Clinton County "home." Many thousands more of us long since removed, brag about our hometown of Plattsburgh — the roughly 25,000 citizens that have become the identifiable magnet drawing us back home over the years. Familiarity and trust are built over time. The small towns and villages witness the spirited growth of youth and fierce competition on athletic fields. As youth gives way to maturity, your fiercest opponent becomes your best friend. Families in one town link to families in others through marriage, work, and play. The network is strong, and the bond is unbreakable.

Personality is the defining characteristic of a hometown. North Country citizens are proud of their heritage. They are passionate, and they are patriotic. They don't whine, and they are not afraid to jump into a fray and help straighten things out. But I think the one thing that defines their personality more than anything else is the pervasive sense of community and the obligation one has to participate for the greater good of all. And in the patient mode of seeking the greater good — you may just see a swagger or two, a bit cocky, perhaps — but not arrogant.

The North Country Platoon

In the early 1960s, North Country boys would graduate from high school and go to college or enter the job market. Some were drafted into the Army. Others volunteered to go into the other services but after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, thoughts of patriotism and love of country were far from the minds of North Country youth. That all changed with the Marines landing in Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam in 1965. The Marines ramped up recruiting and as forces increased in size in Southeast Asia, the need for Marine infantry kept escalating. The need would be greater the following year with the activation of elements of the 5th Marine Division.

I watched the escalation from a comfortable student perspective at Cornell University. My turn would come through Marine commissioning in the Summer of 1966 from the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps program. I knew deep down that the politicians and the State Department would have everything settled by the time I would finish college, Marine schooling, and enter into the Fleet Marine Force in the spring of 1967. Comfortable in my surroundings, I did not realize what was going on back home. Marine recruiters in Plattsburgh were hard at work answering the call. Patriotism was at an all time high in the North Country, and the efforts of GySgt. Bob Brady and SSgt. Charlie Appleton bore fruit. A number of volunteers were able to convince their buddies to join and by the end of January 1966, the local recruiters were able to ship a "North Country Platoon" of 25 young men, with 23 of them from Clinton County. *The Plattsburgh Press-Republican* ran a feature on the sendoff at the bus station on Wednesday, 2 February 1966.

These young men comprising the North Country Platoon were not all young boys coming out of high school. A good many of them had been to college or had been working. Cadyville's Mike Norcross had been with me in Ithaca for 3 years as a student at Ithaca College. All felt it was time to take stock of the situation, put aside education and careers, and answer the Nation's call. Many signed up for a 2-year enlistment program. Recruit training at Parris Island was arduous but something these young men



could handle with ease. The North Country Marines were integrated into Platoon 338 and graduated on 31 March 1966. They were smiling and holding the sign donated by a local sign company in Plattsburgh and brought to Parris Island by a Plattsburgh area contingent of family and friends. The euphoria of enlisting and training together was somewhat dimmed by the sobering fact that fully 90 percent of Platoon 338 would be on orders to Vietnam.

Cold, Sobering Reality

Recruit training was followed by infantry training at Camp Lejeune. By June the initial skills training was complete and a number of the North Country Marines were home on leave, headed to Camp Pendleton and then overseas with their new units. I crossed paths with a number of them at a local bar 2 nights before I was commissioned into the Marine Corps. They were all in their Marine Summer Service "C" uniforms. Some I had played ball against in high school. Some had my mother as their high school English teacher. Some I had worked with as a teenager in the North Country. They were headed to Vietnam. I would join some of them 10 months later. The common denominator that evening was a collective euphoria, a group of the best our country had to offer volunteering to go over and fight for freedom. I'm sure we all thought we would be back drinking pitchers of beer together in another year. Regiments of the 5th Marine Division were forming up in California that summer and several of the North Country Marines wound up together in Company I, 3d Battalion, 26th Marines, known to the Marines as "India" 3/26. Three would make it to Vietnam along with a fourth, Steve Greene, who was born in Plattsburgh and moved away at an early age. He was made an honorary member of the North Country Platoon. The three musketeers were Mike Norcross and Tom Goddeau of Cadyville (my mother was their English teacher in high school), and Mike Conley of Plattsburgh. I had worked with Mike and his brother, Tom, at a local grocery store the year before. As they went through training at Camp Pendleton, none of the four could imagine what was in store for them in a few short months.

Support From Home

The personality of the North Country came to the fore in support of their Marines from the time the young men left on the bus on 2 February until they came home for good. It started with the publicity for the enterprise at the bus station on that first day. It continued at Parris Island with local WIRY radio personality, Tiny Hare, a former World War II Marine in his own right, visiting the North Country Platoon during recruit training. He made another visit to the Marines in Vietnam and brought back tapes of interview for local consumption.

The greatest effort at support and morale boosting came from the family networking back in Plattsburg and the surrounding communities. Bernice Conley, mother of one of the 3/26 stalwarts, organized the mothers back home. She started a newsletter and got a number of the other mothers involved. They painstakingly kluged together the addresses of all of the Marines in the North Country Platoon and solicited information about the Marines and what they were up to. She printed the monthly newsletters and distributed them to Marines overseas and to their families back home. Others helped her, and various volunteers helped her pay some of the postage. The networking newsletter was so popular that it spread way beyond the original intent maintaining

contact with the North Country Platoon. Soon it encompassed all local service men serving in Vietnam and around the world. This networking kept us all informed in the combat zone and allowed many of those listed to link up while "incountry." In addition, it facilitated more letter writing to families and friends back home. Speaking as one on the receiving end of the newsletter, it had a huge impact on morale for the North Country boys in combat. At its peak in May, the list included 95 names. Sixty-one Marines, with 33 "in-country" — others were on orders to Vietnam. Some were still in boot camp. Others were in St. Albans Naval Hospital on Long Island recovering from combat wounds. In addition, there were 34 names of North Country boys in the other Services.



Mike Norcross, Mike Conley, Steve Greene and Tom Goddeau.

A Heavy Price

In Vietnam, as in most wars, the infantry is always the bill payer. Casualty rates in 1967 and 1968 were very high. The 3d and 5th Marine Division regiments and battalions were spread out all along the demilitarized zone with the 1st Marine Division elements near Marine Amphibious Force Headquarters in Da Nang. India 3/26 paid its dues at Khe Sanh and Con Thien among other places. So did the Marines of Echo 2/9 pay heavy dues around Con Thien in May and June of 1967. Fire-fights, ambushes, mortars, rockets, and hand-to-hand combat always take their toll. Some of the North Country Platoon members earned up to three Purple Hearts. The slightly wounded Marines always wanted to return to their units. In the end, Mike Conley and Tom Goddeau joined 44 others from the North Country in making the ultimate sacrifice to further the cause of freedom. MSgt. Charlie Jock, a North Country native and head of the Plattsburgh recruiting substation in the summer of 1966 after the Vietnam transfers of both GySgt. Brady and SSgt. Appleton was instrumental in working the casualty calls and providing assistance to the grieving families.

Support Continued

The networking back home never ceased. Grieving took place in its natural form. Letters of condolence and offers of support came flying back from all around the world. Gears were shifted. The cheerleaders and purveyors of care packages became Gold Star Mothers, joining the ranks of Clinton County mothers who lost sons in World War II and Korea. If you ever get to Plattsburgh, you have to check out Trinity Park. It is a beautiful, square memorial park downtown across Margaret Street from the county courthouse. In that park you can see the handiwork of the Gold Star Mothers. Clinton County gave 269 of its sons in World Wars I and II. It gave 19 in Korea and a heavy toll of 46 in Vietnam. The efforts of Bernice Conley, Gladys Goddeau, and many others witnessed the installation of the Vietnam plaque in 1969. These photos show the Gold Star Mothers at the memorial in February 1979, and the memorial plaque as it looks today. The support continues through today, fully 36+ years after the platoon headed to Parris Island. The North Country salutes its own fallen heroes each Memorial Day in May, as well as each Veterans Day on 11 November. And on the Marine Corps birthday, each year on 10 November, the

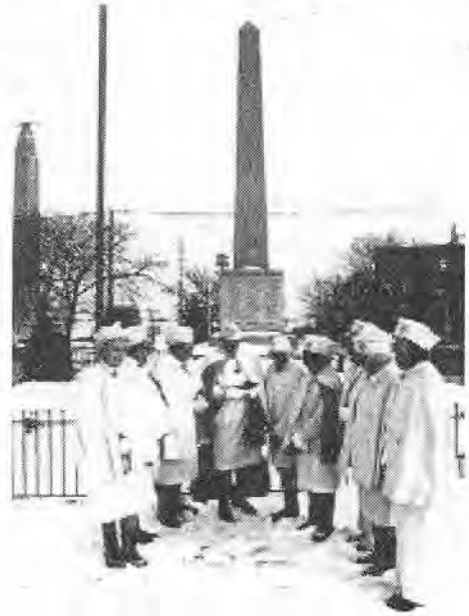

Gold Star mothers at the monument, 1979.

surviving members of the North Country Platoon quietly raise a glass and toast the Corps, wherever they may be, in quiet recognition that when the call came, they answered it with pride, dignity, and honor.

A final manifestation of the continued local support was the establishment of the North Country Vietnam Veterans Association. Its motto is "Vets Helping Vets," and members have a strong collective voice in furthering veterans' benefits to its fellow members. In addition, the organization provides scholarships and performs charity work as well as participating in patriotic parades.

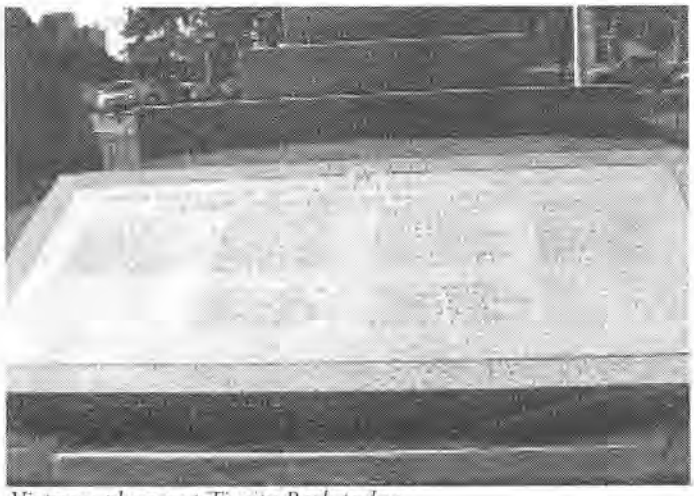

Vietnam plaque at Tirnity Park today.

"Echo Taps"

If you are ever in Yorktown, VA on 19 October, known to the locals as Yorktown Day, go out to the huge monument overlooking the York River. Each Yorktown Day there is a ceremony at the monument. It ends with a lone bugler playing the Civil War melody "Taps." On the other side of a ravine about a hundred yards away, a second bugler, out of sight of the first, plays the same melody. A few notes from the first, followed by the same notes from the "echo," This continues until "Taps" is concluded. It is haunting and so apropos. It makes you concentrate on what's really important in this world. Whenever I hear "Echo Taps," I can't help but think of my friends who didn't come back. They might have been doctors, lawyers, maybe even priests. They would revel in the knowledge that Mike Norcross had a very successful career as a teacher and that Steve Greene retired as the Deputy Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration and is now working at the House of Representatives. They might even smile knowing that the English teacher's little boy became an editor. But they can't, and they never will. So we salute the North Country Platoon. We salute the 46 servicemen who left nothing on the field of battle. And we salute the Gold Star Mothers who work feverishly to keep the memory of their loved ones alive. May the day come when the olive branch becomes supreme. Until then, the North Country Platoons of the future will answer the call, and we will all be proud of them.

Jack Glasgow, originally from the North Country, is editor of the Marine Corps Gazette. *Jack also served with the Marines in Vietnam, with Tango Btry, 3/12, 2ND Provisional Btry 155 Howitzers.*

A special thanks to Mrs. Bernice Conley for her assistance in writing this article, as well as for her untiring efforts on behalf of her "boys." In addition, a special thanks to Mike Norcross, Steve Greene, and retired Marines MSgt. Charlie Jock, GySgt. Charlie Appleton, and LtCol. Dick Moore for information and photos included in the article, as well as the Marine Corps Recruiting Command and SSgt. Daniel Briehl for the photo of the Vietnam plaque.

Nicknames and Marines

Our Own Bruce "T-Bone" Jones

Excerpts from a Story by Col. James B. Wilkinson
Leatherneck Magazine, Nov. 2002

In years past, nicknames were common throughout the Marine Corp. Are nicknames, like lace-up leggings and the MI rifle, part of the "old Corps"? Are they a bit of nostalgia, out of touch in today's Marine Corps?

How do nicknames come about? Physical attributes are the most obvious way to acquire one. You don't think up a nickname for yourself then have everyone start using it. They are bestowed on Marines, and many last throughout one's lifetime. "Old Gimlet Eye," "Brute," "Manila John," "Howlin' Mad Smith," "The Big E," "Chesty," "Big Foot," and "Herman the German" come to mind when the subject of nicknames is reviewed. In the 1930s Marines were patrolling the jungles of Nicaragua searching for anti-government bandits. Wilbur Brown was a young officer leading a patrol when his boondockers (high-top shoes) fell apart. A message was sent requesting a pair of new boondockers. A single-engine Marine Corps plane

appeared and dropped one replacement shoe, then flew away. The plane soon reappeared and dropped the second shoe. The pilot included a note explaining that because of the size of the shoes, the small aircraft could deliver only one shoe at a time. From that day on, young Wilbur Brown's nickname, Big Foot, stuck with him throughout his career.

All of these colorful nicknames belong to "Well-Known, Higher Ranking Marines." When Colonel Wilkinson wrote this article, he insisted that nicknames attributed to the everyday fighting Marine, be included. Thus, our member of the Khe Sanh Veterans is being honored with the recognition of our own "hero," Bruce "T-Bone" Jones.



Cpl. Bruce "T-Bone" Jones

Nicknames are bestowed more frequently in combat. Why? Probably because in combat Marines serve side by side, day in and day out. Keen observers pick up any idiosyncrasies or physical attributes quite easily when living, eating and fighting alongside each other for harrowing days on end. In 1967, Corporal Bruce E. Jones was a 21-year-old forward observer with an 81mm mortar platoon at Khe Sanh. Having served in Vietnam several months, he had lost weight. Once, when Jones was returning to Hill 881 after a patrol through the triple canopy jungles around the hill, a member of the 81mm mortar forward observer team looked at him and exclaimed, "Dude, if you lose any more weight, you'll look like a T-bone steak without any meat." The name stuck. Later on Cpl. Jones was seriously wounded and evacuated. He recovered and returned to his unit in time for the Battle of Khe Sanh in January-May 1968, where be was wounded a second time.Thirty-six years later, Bruce Jones retired from a career as an industrial engineer. He has embarked on a new project: building a Montana-style house for his family in La Crosse, Wis., where he is known by one and all as T-Bone.

Marine aviation squadrons have had nicknames for years. There are the Night-Hawks, Batman, Grey Ghosts and Vagabonds, to name a few. It is rare for infantry units to have nicknames. Perhaps the aviation Marines are a bit more free-spirited than their infantry counterparts. There are a few nicknames for infantry units. The Ninth Marine Regiment was known as The Striking Ninth.

In Vietnam, the 1st Bn, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division became widely known as The "Walking Dead." The unit served in combat for 48 months. There are more than 600 names of 1st Bn, 9th Marines etched on "The Wall" in Washington, DC, honoring those killed in action in Vietnam. The battalion fought with valor and courage in Operation Starlite, Leatherneck Square (Con Thien, Gio Linh, Dong Ha and Cam Lo), Mutter Ridge and other heavily contested areas of I Corps (the northernmost part of South Vietnam, just south of the demilitarized zone). Repeated contacts with the North Vietnamese, coupled with heavy casualties, explains why 1/9 Marines became known as The Walking Dead.

In the early morning of 21 Jan 1968, the North Vietnamese attacked Khe Sanh. The ammunition dump took several direct hits and then exploded. Several North Vietnamese divisions, well armed with everything, including 152mm artillery surrounded Khe Sanh. Just when it seemed that things couldn't be worse, 1/9 was flown into Khe Sanh. While welcoming the experienced and combat-tested battalion, some Marines had other feelings about 1/9 arriving. Lieutenant Ernie Spencer, "Delta" Company com-

mander, 1st Bn, 26th Marines, commented that while things were already grim at Khe Sanh, the situation would get worse because, "The Walking Dead could step in fresh manure coming out of church."



Retired Col. Wesley Fox earned his Medal of Honor with "The Walking Dead."

Those with 1st Bn, 9th Marines fought with valor and distinction at Khe Sanh, making some of the strongest contributions and ensuring Khe Sanh did not become an American Dien Bien Phu. They also performed with distinction during operations in the A Shau Valley, specifically Operation Dewey Canyon. It was in A Shau Valley that Lt. Wesley Fox won the Medal of Honor while serving with 1/9. The nickname The Walking Dead has not only survived the past 35 years, it has flourished. First Bn, 9th Marines has its own website, which claims that The Walking Dead was the only unit in Vietnam to have its own North Vietnamese Army Regiment attached to it. The Ninth Marine Regiment was deactivated years ago. The regimental colors can be viewed in the Marine Museum at Camp Pendleton, CA. Time passes and things change, but heroism is not forgotten.

Nicknames frequently are bestowed on colorful Marines, who combine charisma with ability. In recent years, critics of the U.S. military frequently assert that management has replaced leadership. As a result, it has been said the military has become homogenized and Marine leaders who manage rather than lead are motivated by so-called "zero-tolerance." Make one mistake and your career is over. Risk-free management was not a trait of Chesty Puller, Major General Smedley D. "Old Gimlet Eye" Butler or Brigadier General Hiram I. "Hiking Hiram" Bearss. They led by example.

Based on the outstanding performance by Marines in recent conflicts, leadership is prospering throughout the corps. A visit to Parris Island S.C., or San Diego will reveal that drill instructors and series commanders are dedicated to providing topnotch Marines and Marine expeditionary units and aviation.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: Colonel Wilkinson, served as the Commanding Officer of 1st Battalion, 26Th Marines, in Vietnam.

Memoirs

by Talis Kaminskis

The clouds had been present all day. The once young Marine had been watching them on and off. No sunshine this time. Only a lighter continuation from one night to the next. Shortly, darkness would descend upon the land and once again, as he had so often in the past thirty years, he would sit in a world of wishes and dreams. From off in the darkness came the memories. Presently, the angels would sing in the sky above, but there were never any words or music. Alone sitting, he listened to the chorus he was so familiar with. So many times he composed for them. So many times he practiced for them. And there were periods of time that he actually thought he directed them. But that was the softer part of each night. Inside himself, the apprehension grew. He could feel the stirring of the yearnings that soon would engulf his world. Very little changed from night to night but yet somehow, each night seemed to bring a rebirth. A retelling, a re-evaluation, a new hope. One more patrol, he begged. One more time to feel the fear of hunting and being hunted. The natural high of an adrenalin rush that had built over days. One more; one more; one more of what? Inside frustration built. So much seemed to have been left unfinished when he left. Only at the time it did not seem so. But with the passage of days, turning to weeks, to months, and then years. The euphoria of coming home disappeared, replaced by gnawing threads that soon began to weave together. He had found his thoughts returning more and more to the war he had so desperately tried to remove himself from.

Frustration. Small growing seeds of wanting to relive, and re-change; to alter that which cannot be altered. The habit of taking refuge in the darkness of the night just seemed to happen. Without intent, he found himself searching it. At times, he seemed to sense movement. At first, only brief blurs. Unadjustable focus. Illusionary images not sure to be believed. But the darkness came, and the darkness

went. And each night seemed to refine, add another stroke to the canvas. Slowly came the realization. It was the night patrol. Never having lost their touch of smooth, deliberate motion. Quietly stepping, unhurriedly. The shape of figures slowly carrying out deliberate tasks. Young, stealthy, prime specimens of manhood, easily able to carry out their task. His being tensed, as every fiber of thought and emotion seemed to focus on only one thing. Joining them. Being a part of them. Doing the one thing in his life he Understood. But alas, his body mocked him. Even just sitting, there were aches and pain that never left. Discomforts that grew with each passing day. Yet his mind refused to let go so easily. In the distance, shadows hinted at the outline of the gone jungle. His feet felt damp within well-worn boots from the water of many rice paddies they had carried him through. Softly, caressingly, a well-known weight extended from his hand. Glancing up into the enveloping night, he realized he was lagging just a short distance from the group. Only a few quick steps, a slight hurry up, and he would be amidst them again. But his learned knowledge rebelled at the thought of hurrying at night. Desperately, he cast glances at the shapes moving back into the tree line. Haste brought risk, and risk endangered all. He was losing them. They would soon be gone.

Each time the same predicament, each night the distance so insurmountable. Intently he gazed at the distinct bodies, watching for them. Knowing their procedure, their style, and their goal. He wanted to say something but realized the faces; he could not discern the faces. He knew each and every one of them. But he could not see them. Something separated his ability. He knew them, but it was as though he couldn't. Frustrated, tantalized, tense, his body slumped. In a small sign of despair, he cradled his head in both hands as if in prayer. A deep silent breath seemed to help ease the load. A whisper floated from the distance, "I have to know." No need to seek whose voice was responsible. Mockingly, this night as before, there would be no reply. A slight shaking of the head, an imaginary pain, an excuse to shift his body again. Hands in his lap, one thumb rubbing the other, he let the sadness come. He knew the destination of some. Others had left a blank in all he knew of them. What was it like? What did they feel?

Had they really aged? Or were they as young now, as they were then? The rubbing of the thumbs caught his attention. The darkness could not hide everything. On the contrary, the darkness had become a cruel mistress. Tantalizing him, teasing him. He knew the real darkness. The cruel twist of fate darkness that rather than hid, revealed. It was that the darkness opened, lay bare the multiple paths, emoting back much more than what was offered it. Provided the weight to be carried when the sun ruled the heavens. Damn it, in his self pit, he missed the last glimpse of the receding shapes. Gone was his connection to the deeper feelings. In place another cause, another excuse, and more guilt to ponder. He stared into the darkness, well aware of where he was, and when it was. Thoughts came and went, time passed by without notice. Providing comfort only he could understand. So much, so much. He let his hands join together on his stomach. Tilting back the tired head. He listened to the angels as they sang in the sky above. And for another night, they sang without words or music.

Just Words on a Page

by John Watson

When I was in high school back in the 60's, I, like most of the guys my age — thought with our zippers, more than our brains. What the heck, we were young and had the world by the ass. It was the week before Thanksgiving 1964, everyone at school was thinking of only three things: The Thanksgiving Day football game against Conrad High, the "victory dance" that Friday night, and what time mom was going to have dinner on Thanksgiving. Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving, I got suspended for horsing around in class. Now, all that was left was a long weekend with nothing to do.

January '65 rolls around, and I meet Linda. She was one of those girls that you dream of. She was 5'8" tall, and on the slim side. She had all the right stuff in all the right places. She was a strawberry blonde, had peaches and cream complexion, and the bluest eyes I'd ever seen. After a few dates I asked her to go steady, and she said yes. I thought I was king of the world! We saw each other each day, during and after school, and even on weekends. I couldn't get enough of her. One of our favorite pastimes was a long walk by ourselves in the woods. She'd fix lunch. I can still feel the chill of the fall or early win-

ter winds. We would walk for a while, rest and just sit quietly, watching squirrels looking at us, wondering just what these two humans were doing out in their woods. We'd huddle together to keep warm; a kiss from her was all I really needed.

Our relationship was a good one. We were compatible. Our family backgrounds were similar. We both were from families with several kids. I'm the oldest of eight. She was the second of seven. Our goals at the time were the same. It was as if we were made or placed on the earth for each other. January was a bad month for me. I was again taken to the school office for getting into a fight with another student. The principal was in a foul mood, and the timing of my appearance in his office didn't help. I was summarily expelled. My father was a stern man possessing very little humor. When I informed him of what had happened, he told me I needed to find a job — soon. I worked at a job taking inventory for low pay, and got a lot of hassle from my parents. The worst part was the little time I had for Linda. I was sitting at home one night thinking that I didn't have a job, a trade, or education. It just dawned on me to go into the service to get the education, and maybe make it a career. Either way, I thought I'd be somebody and could support Linda and myself.

January 20, 1965, I put on my winter coat and boots with there being over 2 feet of snow on the ground. I kissed my mother and told her, "I am going to Wilmington to sign up for the service."

"Just be sure you're back by dinner," she said not looking up. What could I say except, bye mom. I get on the road, start thumbing, and a state trooper picks me up and takes me to the Customs House, where all the recruiters were located. I joined the Corps on the 25th of January 1965. During all of this, Linda was taking it all in, was very loving and supportive. We started to make long-range plans for our future after boot camp, when I learned where I was to be stationed. On becoming a proud Marine, it was off to Camp Lejeune to join D/l/2, weapons platoon. We had a Caribbean cruise and came back just before the holidays. When we returned to Camp Lejeune, the whole battalion received orders for West Pac.

I go home on holiday leave, telling Linda that I have orders for Nam. She gets real upset — I didn't know that she was pregnant at the time and that she had miscarried two days later. She became depressed for about 3 to 5 months. We became closer as time went on, looking forward to our getting married when I got back from Nam. While in Nam, we wrote every chance we could, she and my mother become close. I'm surviving just to return to her, and, our future together. It was in May of 1965, when I returned to my hometown, re-entering my world with the highest of dreams. Who was standing there? No parade. No crowd, just my mother, and a brother. No Linda.

We met that evening. She sat across from me. No small talk, no romantic smile, as she had in the past, which wasn't that long ago. She proceeded to tell me that she was getting married to someone else. All I could say was: " Why? What went wrong?" She had just "played me along" so I would have something, some reason to want to come home. She had been seeing a guy for 3 or 4 months and wanted to marry him, but not me? After setting off this bomb for me, she gets up, says good-bye, and walks out of my house and my life. I never see her again. My mind was travelling at the speed of light, yet I felt stuck, as if I were in a hardened cement. I couldn't get it straight in my mind what had just happened to me. I looked at my parents, they knew what was happening but couldn't, or wouldn't get involved. I was in such a mess and couldn't comprehend or sort out what had gone wrong or what I could do to correct it. It was a total and complete betrayal of all I was, believed in or hoped to be. I remained drunk my entire leave, with a mother of a hangover every day.

It is thirty-five years later, and I still think of that period of my life, and what has happened since. I am 55 now with my health not being anywhere as near as what it should be. I have had several bouts with pneumonia and a bout with testicular cancer that nearly killed me. I've been disabled and unable to work since 1983 and have been married four times, my being at fault for the first three. I have a daughter who wants nothing to do with me with a granddaughter I will probably never see. I have had more than 24 different, unrelated jobs. All I can say is, thank God for steering me to my present wife. She is the reason I got off my ass and finally went to the VA to receive help. I am blessed for being with my wife of nearly 21 years, who couldn't be replaced by a million Lindas. She is my rock, and whom I love with all of my heart.

Before & After

We are starting a new series of articles entitled: "Where Are They? BEFORE and AFTER." Articles written by members detailing their lives prior to, and after Vietnam. Joseph Olszewski has volunteered to help members who wish to publish their Life Experiences and has submitted the first in the series.

Joseph Olszewski – Before and After

I was born and raised in Chicago and hated every minute if it. Besides being an "only-child," unless you were into museums or the Cubs there was absolutely nothing to do on the North Side of Chicago. I went to college simply because none of my relatives had and they pressured me to pursue it. My father worked for 52 years for Brunswick Corporation and probably had the very same Manager of Shipping and Receiving job for 30 years. My mother worked as an invoice typist for Borris Smolers, which made women's clothing. Neither of my parents spent one day in a high school classroom.



James Olszewski in field in Vietnam.

My senior year at the University of Illinois was 1966. During the 60s, once you were certain to graduate from college every branch of the military began sending you literature to become an officer, pilot, language specialist, embassy liaison officer or about 1,000 high-tech jobs. I had heard that if you joined the Navy or Air Force as an officer that you would spend more time managing equipment than men (and a few good women, too.) Plus, the Army, Navy and Air Force all required four-year commitments, if you graduated from Officer Candidate School (OCS). The Marine Corps made it very clear that as an officer you would manage men and not equipment and their officer program only required a three-year commitment after OCS. Since the economy was strong in 1966, only spending three years in the military made sense to me and I thought that managing men would look better on my future resumes. Thus, I decided to join the USMC as an officer after graduation. I remember I toyed with a childhood dream of being a pilot but that required four years of active duty after you graduated from basic flight school. I further thought that with a degree in Accounting that the USMC would make me a supply officer or some sort of computer specialist. I remember thinking that combat officers were probably only former football players with degrees in physical education. During that fateful Spring, I took a written examination one day that was supervised by a sergeant. I remember the sergeant entered the room when time was up, but I hadn't fully finished the examination. He was a big, baldheaded guy, and I remember he said, "Take your time, son." My conclusion from that response was that the USMC was short on officers.

I graduated from the U of I in August 1966 and was originally scheduled to attend OCS at Quantico, Virginia in October 1966. But, within a month I received a letter from the USMC informing me that the class was full and that I was re-assigned to attend OCS in January 1967. I was elated as I was able to secure my first job as an Internal Auditor for Warwick Electronics in Niles, Illinois and, therefore, I would be able to save some money before I entered the USMC. That first professional job paid me $550 per month and I was excited because I was now making more than my father's $330 per month.

I left for OCS from O'Hare International Airport on January 16, 1967. I remember I met other guys at the airport who looked as lost as I did. Until that day, I had never flown and this was to be my first flight experience. All of us boarded the plane and compared notes about how much we had prepared for OCS. We had previously received guidelines about physical preparations; such as, being able to run three miles. I remember thinking that must be for OCS candidates who attended in the Spring or

the Summer. Surely, they wouldn't make us run three miles in the Winter snows? I also remember that first flight was fantastic and if I had previously known flying was so great, I would have tried to be a pilot.

I remember sitting in a classroom around the second or third week and saying to myself "what in the world did I do?" The drill instructors, the constant mental and physical pressure, the few but always non-smiling officers, the pain, the cold, the crazy way we ate fast and the long three mile runs in the snow were nothing but disbelief to me. Every week they cut somebody from the program and if you flunked out of OCS you were headed for Parris Island as a PFC. During those tough three months, I remember thinking "I thought the USMC was short on officers?"

The best thing that every happened to me during OCS was liberty. The first weekend we had received liberty a few of us drove to Washington DC, checked into a hotel and promptly went to dinner at some restaurant to finally have food we could eat at a leisurely pace. I think there were five of us and at least two candidates were married.

After dinner we were returning to the hotel as we had a written test coming up at OCS on Monday and some of us wanted to study. As we approached the lobby of the hotel, three other USMC OCS candidates were coming out of the hotel. It was easy to spot us, as we all had the same haircuts and were wearing clothes that were too big for our suddenly leaner bodies. One of the three leaving the hotel stopped us and asked if anybody wanted to go on a dinner date for eight. They had pre-arranged a dinner date and there were four girls and three candidates. As I later learned, one candidate had broken his ribs the week before on the obstacle course and that's why these three were looking for another male replacement that evening. Since we had just had dinner and since two others in our party were married, none of us wanted to attend this dinner party. I remember turning to walk into the hotel lobby and saying "No, thank you." But, then I remembered how hard it was for me to get "dates" in college and I knew I would be stationed at Quantico for seven or eight months. Written tests in OCS were easy for me and I still had part of Sunday to study. So I changed my mind and said something like "OK, I'll go."

That dinner date was how I met my wife of 34 years now. Her name is Rosemary and she had more to do with me getting through OCS than two male drill instructors.

Rosemary and I dated every weekend I could get away from OCS and, later, Basic School. The Basic School tests were easy, the physical training was less strenuous than OCS and being an officer was suddenly a power trip. I also still had the thought that the USMC would assign me to a supply command or a computer operation. I never knew until later that Congress restricted the USMC to 400,000 men (and now a few good women, too) and when a Korea or Vietnam surfaced, EVERYBODY (excluding the really brilliant) were combat infantry, period. If I remember correctly, 70% of my Basic School class was classified 0302 – combat infantry officer. The other 30% went to artillery school, basic flight school, tank school and the really brilliant went to language school. To make a long story short and to keep within the biography theme of this article, I became a rifle platoon commander, could not believe the characters the USMC gave me to command, stepped on a mine in late February 1968 and spent seven months in the Philadelphia Naval Hospital.

During my seven months in the hospital, I had a lot of time on my hands. Thus, I studied the various upscale living locations across the country and related labor markets, while Rosemary planned the wedding. I had no desire to return to Chicago to watch the Cubs and Rosemary had enough of working for the government. I always loved the outdoors and I remembered those long, cold Chicago winters when one had to live indoors for five to six months straight.

One day I was reading a magazine and on the back cover there was a picture of people with their trailer tent camper in Yosemite National Park. I knew at that moment that California was for me. I told Rosemary that weekend and she was ecstatic. My parents were not happy, Rosemary's parents to this day do not understand how I made such a radical decision, and all our other relatives and friends were shocked.

We were married on October 19, 1968 in Arlington, Virginia. I had previously traveled to California for job interviews with Crown Zellerbach, which was a paper manufacturer, Kaiser Hospitals and some cement company. Crown had a beautiful green building right in the San Francisco financial district. I had one interview with several managers

and when I returned to the hotel room there was a message waiting for me. It was their job offer as a Senior Accountant with a starting salary of $750 per month. That was $200 a month more than my first job as an Internal Auditor in Chicago and about $400 more than I had been making in the USMC. I thought I was instantly wealthy.



Rosemary and James Olszewski, 1968.

We had the wedding in the morning, a reception in the afternoon, boarded a flight for California at night and arrived at San Francisco International Airport at 3:00 AM, Sunday, October 20, 1968. There we were all alone. No family, no friends, no car. All we had was each other, our luggage and wedding gifts. We caught a cab ride to Oakland, where I had previously arranged for an apartment while I was interviewing.

After a week or so of honeymooning in San Francisco, I started working for Crown Zellerbach. Rosemary started looking for a job and eventually secured a job with Chevron Corporation as an Economist. I remember thinking the first week or so at Crown that everybody looked so old. We all sat at separate desks in a big room. This was in the days before computers and every accounting project was performed on huge twelve, fifteen and twenty column papers called "worksheets." After a few months, Crown believed in moving new hires around various Accounting Departments to give us more experience. Within three months I worked in the Tax Department, the Internal Audit Department, the Financial Statements Department and the General Ledger Department.

After about a year-and-a-half, I was bored stiff working for Crown Zellerbach. There were no promotions, men who had been with the company for twenty to thirty years held the top jobs and since I had worked in all of the Accounting departments already, there was nothing new for me to learn. Even worse, I had just left the USMC and was used to bossing around forty to fifty 18-year-olds, calling in artillery or air strikes, making life and death decisions and misreading minefields. In this job I was simply shuffling papers in a corporate office. I missed the responsibility level I had become accustomed to in the USMC, and nobody was calling me "Sir" anymore.

One night I was watching TV and there was a special on Stanford MBAs who were about to graduate. One MBA said that he was tying to secure a job with a small company, as small companies were not afraid to delegate responsibility. That made sense to me and shortly I had my resume on file with a job placement firm. Within a few weeks I was granted an interview with a small computer leasing company called Boothe Computer Corporation. The company wasn't even five years old and the entire staff was on one floor. The "one floor" was the 50th floor of the Bank of America building in downtown San Francisco. This was 1970 and there were no high rise buildings in San Francisco taller than the Bank of America, which was 52 stories tall. I interviewed with the Chief Accountant, the Controller and the Vice President of Finance. I was twenty-seven years old and all these men were in their early-to-mid 30s. I got the job and a $1,000 per month salary.

At first, I was in charge of the General Ledger which meant closing the books every month. Then at the end of the year, I was the liaison with the CPA firm that performed the year-end audit. I loved every minute of it, including the ten to eleven straight Saturdays I had to work to finalize the year-end close and audit. The 50th floor of the Bank of America was so tall that often it was above the perpetual fog that came in through the Golden Gate Bridge every afternoon. In later years when traffic helicopters began flying even they flew at altitudes below the 50th floor of the Bank of America. All of us also worked in small cubicles and the building had huge

windows so we could see San Francisco Bay and the sparkling Blue Pacific. I remember one day I stood up and looked around to see the Bay, the Pacific Ocean, fog rolling in and traffic control helicopters flying below us and said to myself, "I made it." In other words, all the college work, OCS, Basic School, Phu Bai, Khe Sanh, Philadelphia Naval Hospital and Crown Zellerbach Corporation were behind me and I truly had become successful — in my small, Polish mind. But, that feeling of success didn't last long. Soon, I was promoted to the Consolidations Department, which was responsible for preparing all the financial statements for the parent company and all of the domestic subsidiary companies. It was hard work with monstrous overtime and ever-increasing pressure. Boothe, at that time, not only leased IBM 360 computers but also made display screens, dabbled in software production and started a separate venture capital company which bought smaller computer-related companies. My job was to train the accounting staffs in all of these subsidiaries to insure that their financial statements were accurate and received by me in a timely manner to perform the overall consolidations. Some nights I worked until 10:00 PM. I loved the responsibility but after three years of this, it began to get old. Also, IBM launched the 380 series of computers and suddenly nobody wanted to lease IBM 360s from Boothe Computer Corporation. Lastly, this was 1973, I turned thirty-years-old and there were no other jobs in the company that I was qualified to perform. Our son, Chris, was born in 1972, Rosemary was no longer working for Chevron, inflation was on the rise, the prime interest rate was 12% and I had a brand new mortgage – $550 a month. I thought I was headed for bankruptcy.

One day I was reading the "want ads" and saw an ad for a financial statements accounting manager for a small family-owned company that made vitamins. So far, I had worked for an electronics company, a paper manufacturer and a computer leasing operation. Here was a company making vitamins and expanding with subsidiaries in Canada and Europe. Vitamins!!! I had never heard of a company that made vitamins. This company was called Shaklee Products, as that was the name of the founder, Dr. Forrest Shaklee Sr.

I interviewed with the Controller. He was one of those hippie types with long hair as he had graduated from UC Berkeley with an MBA, but his head never left Berkeley. He reported to Forrest Shaklee Jr., who was so jealous about his brother that the two of them were not on speaking terms. Thus, I had my doubts about this company, as there were some very peculiar personalities around.

But, I remembered how bad Boothe Computer's balance sheet looked with all the debt they had incurred to buy all the IBM 360 equipment that they could no longer lease. Thus, during the second interview with Shaklee Products I remembered my Vietnam days about gathering as much intelligence as I could about the enemy, and I stole Shaklee's balance sheet from that hippie controller when he wasn't looking. I took one look at that balance sheet and couldn't believe my eyes. Not only didn't they have any debt; they had more liquid assets than product inventory. But, they were also a direct selling company (meaning they sold products door-to-door) and I had no experience with the direct selling industry. However, I had a neighbor who sold Amway, so I later checked with him to determine if he had heard of Shaklee. I remember his words: "Shaklee, yeah they're real competitive and a pain in the neck for me as they are into biodegradable products and customers eat that up." Vitamins, biodegradable products, a balance sheet that could choke a water buffalo? I called that hippie controller and told him I would take the job. He said how's $20,000 a year and all the vitamins you can eat sound? I said, "Great."

That was August 1973. I remember sitting in the personnel office the first day and feeling scared, as here I was thirty-years-old and I was about to begin my fourth professional job. As I mentioned, my father had worked for the same company, Brunswick, for 52 years. Even his father, my grandfather, worked for Brunswick for 30 years as a cabinetmaker. So far, Boothe was the longest I had worked for any company — three years. I thought I was the family black sheep.

In the beginning, Shaklee was a great company. They made vitamins, cosmetics, household and industrial cleaners and the money flowed in like a Vietnam monsoon rain. I was in charge of the financial statement consolidations once again, but these subsidiaries were in Ireland, France, England, Germany, Australia and Canada. All the employees, except the family members, were twenty and thirty

years old.

We worked hard, partied harder and made money like there was no tomorrow. By the mid-70s, we doubled our revenues. By the late 70s both manufacturing plants were operating on three shifts of production. We were one of the first companies in the Bay Area to have profit-sharing for employees. There seemed no end to the company's continued success and growth.

By the mid-80s, business began to slow down. Inflation was low, something called high-tech companies began luring the younger employees and everybody wanted to push keyboards instead of doorbells. By 1986, the dreaded "L" word — layoffs — began to appear. At one point, 40% of the staff was fired. I remember saying "Well, they're not going to shoot me." In brief, all that humping around in the jungles and rice paddies of Vietnam was paying dividends. I was simply above the fear and anxiety of being laid-off. It never bothered me as I worked hard and remembered from my USMC training to develop rapport with management while the company was doing well in the 70s. Granted many of them were fired during the 80s, but somehow I survived along with those who trusted me. We basically watched each other's backs and stuck together — wonder where I picked up that habit?

When the 90s began, a whole new senior management team was in place. Once again, I had to build a rapport with them to survive. This was 1995 already, and I had worked for Shaklee for 22 years and held every accounting job from plant controller to assistant controller. We could hardly turn a profit, we couldn't recruit people to push doorbells for a living and I had lost hundreds of friends. Suddenly, everything I had enjoyed about the company was falling apart.

One day I had to give a speech at an employee picnic. I simply did a recap of all the five senior management teams I had worked with for 22 years and, as per my personality, I spiced it up pretty good. Some people couldn't believe how open and honest I was in describing the personalities of all these teams. Two employees who admired my openness were the senior lawyers in the company. They mentioned that they were looking for somebody for a new position in the legal department. They wanted somebody to write company policies and procedures and to reorganize many of the company departments that had become fragmented and uncooperative. Since I had no legal background, I was initially not interested. But, as I continued to become more disenchanted with the direction of the company and the now boring job of international financial consolidations, I once again changed my mind and said "OK, I'll go." That was 1995 and I continued in that position until December 28, 2001 when I officially retired from corporate life. I enjoyed that last position within the legal department so much that now I wish I had pursued law school after leaving the USMC.

That's the story of my life. I made radical decisions, I changed my mind a several times, I never regretted those decisions and I always learned to adapt to my environment. Wonder where and how I inherited those skills?

PS: If you would like to see your life's story written in this style, but are fearful of writing sentences and paragraphs, contact me via snail or email and I will do it for you. I'll simply send you a form to complete and once I receive it, I'll write a "draft" for your review and approval.

Christmas Treasures
by Bill Person

Old Cap'n Kidd, a pirate bold
He sailed the bounding sea,
And buried treasures of jewels and gold,
But his secret is known to me.

I sought them for my Christmas wish,
To send them all to you
The jewels are days of happiness,
The gold is dreams come true.

Each diamond is for purist love,
To fill one's soul with glee.
You'll see them when you look above,
In the stars that shine for thee.

A ruby is a memory, it makes the heart to sing.
Pearls are for wisdom's sake to do the best we can.
Each precious gem's for that little thing,
That lasts our whole life's span.

The silver is for a dearest friend,
We've kept through year on year.
Such trust and care, it has no end,
Their love we so endear.

Each of these treasures, I gladly share,
Their meaning now is told.
They are precious beyond compare
And worth more than merely gold.

Please take these gifts, I do implore
To share with our human race.
Tho' I wish it could be much more
To make the world a better place.

There's no treasure chest I could imbue
'Neath some desert island's sand
Can match these things I wish for you
On the Christmas star so grand.

Khe Sanh

Khe Sanh combat base everywhere red clay
The Marines were sent to hold this place many
with there lives they did pay.
Death comes quickly in this place
Fifty five thousand NVA surround our base.

The Marines on the hills around the base
Every night the NVA they must face.

Artillery and mortar fire about them nothing
can be done you just sit and hope to your hole
the big one does not come.

Death is grotesque by artillery and mortar round
Most of the time all the pieces can't be found.

Many good men we've lost on and around this base
I see them in my dreams face after face.

We held Khe Sanh it did not fall
I know now it was not worth it all.

In my mind Khe Sanh will forever stay
This place of blood soaked red clay.

Jack Neeley

Treasures of the Mind
by Bill Person

As a youth, I wandered thru fields and in the wood.
I picture still those places where it made my heart feel good.
Each season was a favorite, they all had much to share,
It mattered not the time of year, to venture there, I'd dare.
I had no clue of treasures stored up for later life,
And give me such a comfort to salve my pain of strife.
The spring, it was a promise of a divine, eternal plan.
In summer time, the flowering, with fragrances all so grand.
Then came the turning, bright colored leaves did fall,
Of browns and gold and burning reds, crisp air-- I loved it all.
Oh winter was a wonder with white mantle on the ground.
It set one's heart a-racing like a coursing windy sound.
Yes, the times all were magic. I've locked them in my mind.
These mem'rys are my friends, so dear. I go back for peace to find.
These thoughts stir up mem'rys and often bring back tears.
But left behind are hardships, dimmed through passing years.
Still plainly in my mind, I see family and friends, I loved them so.
Fleeting days took them away to where someday, I too, will go.
In days, I lose their number, I've kept my mem'ry's golden glow.
I go inside when e're I can, to be with the dear ones I know.
My heart is warmed each time I think about the things I dearly love.
'Twill do me now, I know for sure, 'til I join them in heaven up above.
Such priceless dreams, they are but thoughts, yet they truly bless all mankind.
I know of no greater joy in life than these treasures of my mind.

KHE SANH VETERANS ASSOCIATION
Membership Application

COPY, print & fill out form. Submit completed form to the address below.

Check: ❑ New Member ❑ Renewal ❑ Change

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____ MI _____

Nickname: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip + 4: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

FAX: _____ Email Address: _____

Are you a Khe Sanh Vet? Check one: ❑ YES ❑ NO

If YES, when were you at Khe Sanh? (Please be as specific & complete as possible):

_____

_____

Service Branch at Khe Sanh, Check applicable:

❑ Air Force ❑ Army ❑ Navy ❑ USMC ❑ Civilian

Your Unit: _____

If NO, tell us your association with Khe Sanh Vets:

_____

_____

Membership Type (check one & write in amount enclosed):

❑ Life ($150) ❑ Regular ($20) ❑ Associate ($20) $ _____

Please make check(s) payable to: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. If New Member Application or Renewal*, mail completed form with dues payment to:

Tom Eichler
3221 N. Opal
Chicago, IL. 60634
Phone: 773/625-2101 Fax: 773-625-8021
Email TEIC1448@AOL.COM

On renewals, circle any items to be changed. If a Request for change to current directory information, please complete the form, circle the items to be changed, and mail or fax a copy of your completed form.

BROTHERS IN MEMORIAM

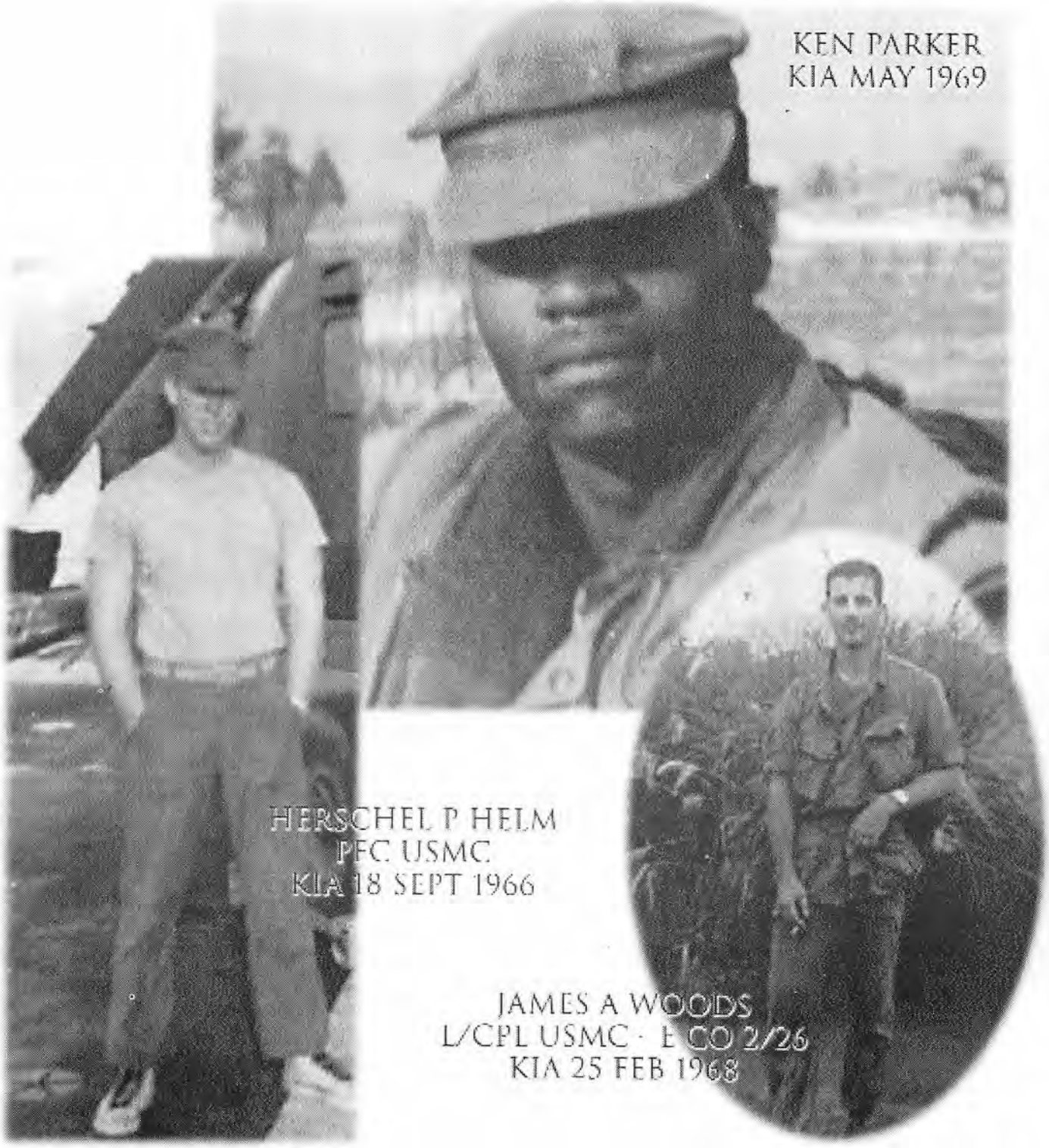

Members of 1st Platoon, A Company, 3rd Engineer Battalion, 3rd Marine Division

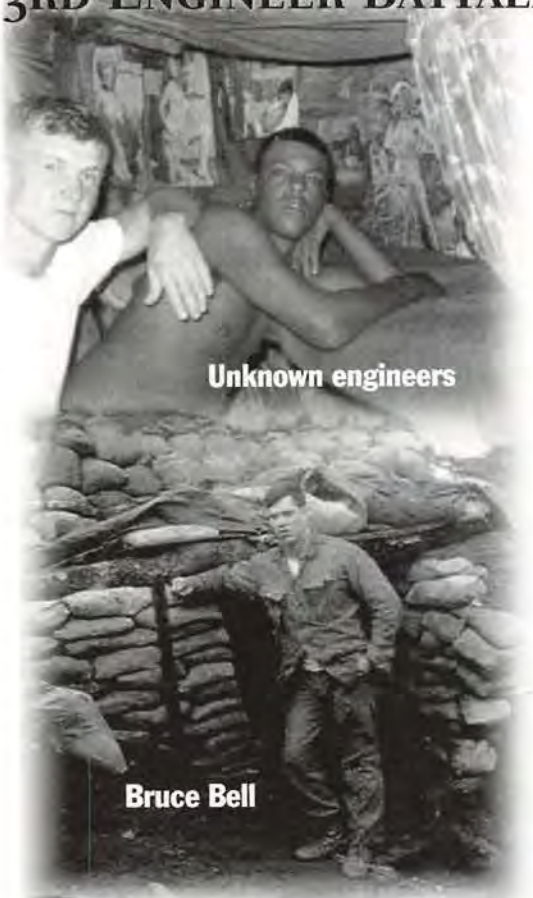
Unknown engineers

Bruce Bell


Bill Gay and John Pessoni


Terry Parr with Bru


David Critchley

An account of their experience at Khe Sanh starts in Memoirs, page 37.

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INCOMING 16
SHORT ROUNDS 19
MEMOIRS 27
Membership Application 67
...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

Notes From The Secretary

Dear KSV Members,

Well here we are guys, already 2003 — hard to believe, isn't it? Next reunion is coming real soon. Everything is running pretty smooth. Brian Mahoney, our reunion chairman, has got it under control. I have contacted a few Bird Dog Pilots who stated they are going to attend. I am working on finding a few more. I hope most of you know we are going to South Carolina, not North Carolina, as shown on last reunion form. We have also added a trip to Fort Sumner, included a trip to the USS Yorktown.

Parris Island seems to be getting a lot of attention and a lot of husbands are taking their wives. There is a lunch and shopping trip for wives who do not want to go to boot camp. Looks like its going to be a big Reunion with many old members (no pun intended) and many first-timers coming. It should be a great time as usual.

Thanks to all who ordered items from the PX fundraiser and to all who put in a donation with their annual membership. There are some less fortunate who will receive a magazine because of you. You guys may not think you are the best, but you're the best I've ever seen.

❋

Upcoming Reunions

3/9 and F/2/12 – BLT 3/9, Inc. is sponsoring a reunion July 16-20, 2003 in San Antonio, Texas. Vets from all eras are encouraged to attend. For questions, the POC is Stew at e-mail address ThreeNineUSMC@aol.com, or telephone (727) 581-5454, a Florida area code. For reunion data, please visit our website at http://www.gomershouse.com/ and click on "Reunions." All friends and support elements are welcome to attend.

Thanks for your consideration in this matter.

Fratres Aeterni

❋

Book Reviews

The Pepperdogs

by Francis "Bing" West
Published By Simon & Schuster

The Pepperdogs is a must read for all of you who are interested in the modern way of war. Bing is a former Force Recon type and Assistant Secretary of Defense. Set in Kosovo, it gives one a good perspective of modern grunt capabilities and the problems associated with command and control in the "joint and multinational" arena. Lots of good stuff on the

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

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Michael Worth.....Member At Large
Thomas Ford .....Member At Large
Frank Ceniseros .....Member At Large

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new small unit tactics and equipment. I recommend it highly. A great insight into what Marines and soldiers may face in the next conflict.

John Kaheny HQ Company 1/26 S-3

West Dickens Avenue: A Khe Sanh Memoir

by John Corbett
Published By Ballentine Books, Jan 2002

from Publishers Weekly:

John Corbett's short, readable account of his days at Khe Sanh during the Siege while serving in a mortar platoon with the 26th Marine Regiment. Described in almost dispassionate prose and in great detail. His brief, staccato sentences effectively convey his last nine months in Vietnam, during which he saw plenty more combat. His brief description of his less than overwhelming homecoming reception rings true. The book's odd title comes from a discarded American street sign Corbett found while digging his personal foxhole.

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from Booklist:

Khe Sanh has slowly assumed its place as one of the most famous of American battles during the Vietnam War. General Giap himself masterminded the siege, thinking the time propitious for a wholesale American collapse on the order of Dien Bien Phu. Corbett's is an eyewitness account, but he has sifted through every history he could find so that readers will understand both the enemy's movements and the thinking of the Marines. While he is no Phillip Caputo, he develops suspense about whether he will make it through the battle unwounded and which of his buddies will die. They die on nearly every page. Of course, the Marines do survive, and their bravery lives on. Semper Fidelis: 36 years later, Corbett does them proud.

John Mort

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from The Men Who Served At Khe Sanh:
from A Khe Sanh survivor

"West Dickens Avenue: A Marine at Khe Sanh" is one of the best books about a Marine fighting for survival during the Siege of Khe Sanh that I have ever read. It was so realistic. While reading it, my mind returned to that God-awful place. His description of the living conditions and state of mind of those enduring all that he described, is simply terrific. Although I never met Jack, he will always be my brother. I am grateful that he brought our Khe Sanh experience to so many through this wonderfully written book.

Jack Pessoni, A Co 3rd Engineers

another Khe Sanh Survivor:

Jack Corbett, in his book "West Dickens Avenue," wrote a brilliant, accurate, and humorous account of his time at Khe Sanh. I truly enjoyed reading the book. It was so realistic. Finally, someone wrote a book from the private's view of combat at Khe Sanh. I would recommend this book to all who enjoy truism in combat. His adventures from the time of enlistment, serving in combat, and the return to an ungrateful nation, was superb. You have done the Khe Sanh Veterans a great favor — thank you brother.

James "Jimbo" Wodecki, FLSU # 2 FLC Ammo Plt

✵

Jack Corbett served in Vietnam with H&S Company 1/26, 81MM, during the Siege of Khe Sanh. He now lives in Key Largo Florida. West Dickens Avenue is his first book.

PUBLISHERS NOTE: "West Dickens Avenue" was named Military Book of The Month. There were several more letters praising Jack's book that were not published due to space constraints.
It is available in hardcover at Amazon.Com. It lists at $24.95, reduced to $17.47.

Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man

by Ernie Spencer
Published by Corps Productions (Ernie's new company)

I have read almost every book written about Vietnam and a place called Khe Sanh. Ernie Spencer's book "Welcome To Vietnam, Macho Man" (both versions) is the best, or among the best written. He brings a different perspective to the responsibilities endowed to a front line combat officer. Unlike most books about Vietnam, which deal with the horrors of combat, Ernie lets us experience other facets of life at Khe Sanh. Besides the horror of war, there is humor, honesty, and even anger. It is extremely difficult to explain to a civilian population the vast responsibilities of a front line combat officer commanding a group of young Marines whose lives are entrusted to him. Ernie Spencer does it with an honest, simple writing style, which destroys a lot of myths created in other novels written by those who have not served in combat. His research was done in the trenches and fighting holes with the young men he led in combat. It is one of those books you cannot put down. It makes you feel you are there with the young troops he is commanding. It should be a reference guide for all those training to be Marine Corps officers. This new release was done by our graphics guy Leo Wong. It has a stunning cover and pictures.

Those who want to publish their memoirs can contact Ernie for consideration in being published by his company.

Thomas Eichler, VP Khe Sanh Veterans
E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

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"Macho Man" is an extraordinary, riveting account of Vietnam. Of the hundreds of books on Vietnam I have read — Spencer's work is the the funniest, the angriest, and the most honest. It is a riveting right of passage. It lights up truth like a tracer round.

The author is part Korean and all Catholic, and his blood and his beliefs are both put to the test. He saw it all — the big battles like Khe Sanh and the small daily conflicts that ate away at your soul and your guts. If you were there, you know this is the true stuff, the things we all felt or knew but seldom had the courage to say.

This book is about truth. By the time I finished I wanted to start all over. Spencer lets it rip. He is the kind of Marine you'd want at your back during battle and by your side with a brew after.

William Broyles, Jr., author *(Brothers in Arms)*, screenwriter *(Apollo 13, Castaway)*

Ernie Spencer's "Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man" is a compelling, uncompromising, sensitive and relentlessly accurate diary of one Marine's experience during the worst year of the war in Vietnam.

Spencer, a well-regarded Marine Company Commander and a gifted writer, shows us the Vietnam War as no other writer has. He is faithful to his Marines, to the hard and gritty facts of combat, and to himself as he captures the language, attitudes and feelings of those Marines who endured the Siege of Khe Sanh.

If you truly want to feel the Vietnam War, I recommend a ride with the Macho Man through Vietnam and beyond.

Chuck Patterson, author *(The Petrified Heart)*

❋



For those who recall only a handful of good books about Vietnam, here is another to add to the list. Spencer writes with a light style, a sense of humor and an honest simplicity. A joy to read.

LEATHERNECK Magazine of the Marines

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Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man is available for $16.95 from Corps Productions. Contact them at Corps Productions, P.O. Box 1452, Alamo, CA 94507-7452 or at www.corpsproductions.com. You can also call directly at 925/838-6348.

Health News

Former Corpsman, William P. Miller, L Co 3/26, writes:

Dear Tom,

I received my Doc Medal and certificate. Thanks so much. Due to my health problems, I was not able to make the reunion in Irving, Texas. I did manage to attend the 3/26 reunion in Ennis, MT. For me, it was one of those special reunions. Many of the original members of the "Filthy Few," 2nd Platoon, Lima Co 3/26, were in attendance. For most of us, it was the first time we had seen each other in 33 years. There were a lot of hugs and tears. We also managed an awful lot of smiles. The stories began to unfold. Friendships that had been kept in everyone's heart were rekindled. It was a healing and holy experience. On the other hand, it was also the opening of "Pandora's Box."

Ever since I had been diagnosed with Porphyria Catonea Torda (PCT) in the mid 1980s, I wanted to satisfy my curiosity regarding the extent of the symptom among the brothers I served with. PCT is a liver dysfunction that occurs naturally in one in 30,000 people. It, along with diabetes, peripheral neuropathy, and other disorders has been directly related to **herbicide exposure**. Having all three conditions, I became suspicious. It did not take long for me to meet other veterans who also had the same condition. I am talking about Marines, Navy, Army, and Air Force veterans. The only thing we had in common was that we served in Vietnam in 1966 or 1967.

While at the reunion in Ennis, I discovered that ten former members of my platoon had some liver problems. One just died 12 February from liver failure, and two others are awaiting liver donors. I later learned two Marines also died while the reunion was in progress (they were not in attendance). I talked to ten Marines from our sister companies, they also had similar disorders. The PCT factor and liver disorders seemed to be in epidemic proportions. We all can relate to diabetes and peripheral neuropathy (numbness in arms & legs), but PCT is a whole different ballgame.

The symptoms of PCT are as follow: fatigue, lesions on the skin, sensitivity to light at extreme levels, and you may pass out or feel faint. Water blisters may appear on your hands or other areas of your body, usually in areas most exposed to sunlight. The skin on the hands will break open easily. The water blisters or scrapes leave a purple scar. Abdominal pains are also symptoms of PCT. If left untreated, this disease will eventually lead to liver failure or liver cancer.

I understand the VA is telling veterans effected with the symptoms that they have too many red blood cells (Polycythemia) and too much iron in their system. They are told to quit using metal pots to cook their foods. To me this is all bullcrap — something needs to be done, and quickly. PCT is a symptom of the liver, in that your liver fails to process iron, resulting in your body shedding iron through your urine. This in itself can cause liver failure. If anyone questions my accusations, then on your next trip to the VA primary care doctor, ask for a 24-hour urinalysis to check for porphyria (iron) in your urine.

If any of this makes sense to you veterans, please contact me at DOCL326@aol.com. This is a serious health problem and the VA is backing away from any type of diagnosis of it. For a disease that is supposed to affect 1 in 30,000 people, I have interviewed plenty of that alleged one, many times over.

Memorial Page

Those Remembered	Remembered by:
William Flahive, MATCU, USMC, KIA 31 Jan 68	Richard D'Ambrosio, MACTU-62
SGT/M James T.Gaynor, USMC, KIA 15 Feb 68	John Kaheny, HQ Co 1/26 S-3
Joseph Roble, E Co 2/26, USMC, KIA 16 Sep 68	Matt Roble, Brother of Joe Roble
David C Ferguson, 3rd Recon, USMC, KIA 05 Mar 69	Daniel R. Ferguson, W/1/13
Michael Evans, H Co 2/3, USMC, KIA 21 Dec 68	David F. Brombaugh Sr, H Co 2/3
Lt. Cole W.Herndon, W/l/12, USMC, KIA 11 Sep 68	James Mooney, H&S Co 2/26
1/Lt Marion H Norman, B Co 1/26, USMC, KIA 29 Mar 65	Bill Person, 553 RD RCN
Robert McAllister, W/l/13, USMC, KIA 18 Aug 68	William RYates, W/1/13
Robert Arnold, W/1/13, USMC, KIA 18 Aug 68	William R.Yates, W/1/13
Cpl. Reuben Mackins, L Co 3/26, USMC, KIA 14 Apr 68	Thomas A. Pierce, L Co 3/26
Kenneth W. Orton, B Co 1/9, USMC, KIA 26 Mar 67	Russell F. Schaeberle, B Co 1/9
Leslie P Hagara, A Co 1/9, USMC, KIA 16 Apr 68	Robert F. Zamora, A Co 1/9
Eddie Heifner, F Co 2/26, USMC, KIA 25 Jan 68	Hank Melanson, F&E Co 2/26
Daniel M. Bennett, C Co 3rd Tnks USMC, KIA 27 Aug 70	Daniel T Pawlak, B Co 3rd Tanks
Leonard N. Newton, I Co 3/26, USMC, KIA 19 Jan 68	Joseph Y. Hawkins I Co 3/26
Cpl. Louis C Goi, USMC, KIA 18 Mar 68	Philip D. Mineer B BTRY 1/13
PFC Douglas G. Impson, USMC, KIA 15 Sep 68	Joseph R Derian H Co 2/26
PFC Steven J. Reichardt, USMC, KIA 17 Sep 68	Joseph R. Derian H Co 2/26
James J. Wagner, B Co 3 d Recon, USMC, KIA 24 Apr 69	James Veletto VMGR-152-352
Ruben A. Burgess, C Co 1/9, USMC, KIA 23 Feb 68	Alphonso R. Lamar A Co 1/9
Frank J. Riportella Jr, B Co 1/9, USMC, KIA 26 Apr 68	Walter S. Johnson Jr B Co 1/9
Samuel Lightman, USMC, KIA 11 Feb 68	John F. Peterson D Co 1/26
Thomas King, A Co 1/9, USMC, KIA 02 Jul 67	Michael J. Little HQ 3RD MAR DIV
Robert H. Littlefield, A Co 1/9, USMC, KIA 16 Apr 68	Maylene Littlefield (Mother)
L/Cpl Frederick Kemp, 3/3, USMC, KIA 08 May 68	Jack Howe H&S CO 3/26
Hank Norman, A Btry 1/13, USMC, KIA 30 Mar 68	Dave Rogers A Btry 1/13
Cpl William Downin, E Co 2/3, USMC, KIA 03 May 67	Richard Maio E Co 2/3
Craig Handly, H Co 2/3, USMC, KIA 17 Jan 68	Gary Hamilton H Co 2/3
Jerry O.Stenberg, USMC, KIA 21 Jan 68	Larry R. Mager F Btry 2/12 & 3/9
D.I. Ibanez, B Co 3RD Recon, USMC, KIA 05 Jun 67	William Messner B Co 3rd Recon
Delbert L. Leasure, USMC, KIA 23 Feb 68	Larry R. Mager F Btry 2/12 & 3/9
Richard Holycross, W/O –4, USMC, KIA 09 Oct 67	Earl Hummer B Co 1st SP Bn
2/Lt Terry Roach, A Co 1/9, USMC, KIA 08 Feb 68	Terry Charbonneau A&C Co 1st M/T
1/Lt Allan H. Jordon, Att.To G/2/2/6, USMC, KIA 06 Apr 68	David Caldon H&S CO 1/26
Cpl Andrew Z.Bucior, C Co 1/9, USMC, KIA 05 Apr 68	Frank A.Bucior (Gold StarBrother)
Capt Erle L. Bjorke, AD 315 TI JAS, USAF, KIA 15 Oct 67	James Dawdy NSA Seabees
Edward G. Creed, HM-3, USN, KIA 25 Jun 66	Kevin Cotter MACG-18 1stMAW
George Hudson, D Co 75th SPT 1/5 Inf USA, KIA 11 Feb 71	Gary F Lee D Co 1/5 Inf 75th SPT
Charles Montross, D Co 75th SPT 1/5 USA, KIA 11 Feb 71	Gary F.Lee D Co 1/5 Inf 75th SPT
Lucio Reis, D Co 75Th SPT 1/5 Inf, USA, KIA 11 Feb 71	Gary F.Lee D Co 1/5 Inf 75th SPT
SFC Charles N. Tredinnick, FOB-3, USA, KIA 29 Jan 68 Hill 471	Lee C. Dunlap FOB-3

Those Remembered	Remembered by:
SFC Eugene Asley Jr, A/101 5THSF, USA, KIA 07 Feb 68	Lawrence T. Cooper FOB-3, 5thSF
Gerald Carr, USA, KIA 07 Feb 68	Michael J Skrekla CIV
James Mayton, USN	Kevin Cotter MACG-18 1stMAW
Those Serving Today	Leland Upshaw B Co 3Rd Recon
All Corpsman & Marines, K Co 3/26	Ben Goddard K Co 3/26
All Those Who Went Before Us	Mark Tierney M Co 3/7
1st Plt D Co 1/1 Hill 689	William Ring VMF-314
Robert Mills, H&S Co 1/26, Died 12 Dec 2002	All That Knew Him
John R. Heinrich, I Co 3/26, Died 22 Apr 1995	Christine M Heinrich (Wife)
Joseph Shea, HQ 1/9 1 /MAW C/Med, Died 10 Oct 2002	All That Knew Him
Doc Crothers	USN James Mooney H&S Co 2/26
All Who Served At Khe Sanh	B/Gen H.T. Hagaman C/O VMFA 23
All Who Served At Khe Sanh	Lawrence Haas C Btry 1/13
All Who Served At Khe Sanh	John R Cowan Sr. H&S Co 2/26
All Who Served	William Cowan I Co 3/26
All Who Served	John M Wertz M Co 3/26 &A Co 1/26
All KIA on Hill 861A	Earle Breeding C/O E Co /2/26
All From Hills 861& 861A	Michael B. Delaney E Co 2/26
All From A Co 3 Rd Engineers KIA	John Pessoni A Co 3 Rd Engineers
All From C Co 1/26 KIA 22 March 68	Nick Romanetz C Co 1/26
Alphonso Lamar	Robert F. Zamora A Co 1/9
All Who Died	Daniel J.Laliberte FLU-SU-2
South Boston VV	Raymond Edwards

Special Remembrance

Those Remembered		Remembered by:
Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment		Larry McCartney E /Co 2/26
Private Phillip G. Cantrell	December 22, 1967	Phu Bai
PFC Jack C. Boggard	February 05, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
L/CpI Tyrone F. Larnitie	February 05, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
L/Cpl Joseph A. Molettiere	February 05, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
PFC Martin L. Rimson	February 05, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
PFC Alan R. Smith	February 05, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
L/CpI Louis F. Staples	February 05, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
PFC Charles R. Stevenson	February 05, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
PFC Ernest V. Taylor	February 05, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
SSgt Glenn H. Calvin	February 10, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
PFC Armondo A. Gomez	February 20, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
L/CpI Julias C. "Corky" Foster	February 22, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
L/Cpl Carlos C. Aguirre	February 24, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
PFC Clifford G. Borrell	February 24, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
2/Lt Ferdinando Distefano	February 24, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A

Special Remembrance (cont.)

Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment

L/CpI Gerrie G. Jefferies	February 24, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
L/Cpl Max A. Nelson	February 24, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
L/Cpl James A. Wood	February 25, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
PFC Michael V.Wright	February 26, 1968	Khe Sanh, Hill 861-A
PFC Earl W. Harris	February 28, 1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 861-A
HN James C. Delaplane	April 17,1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 558
HM3 Charles T. Langenfield	April 17,1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 558
HN Jose A. Lopez, Jr.	April 18,1968	Khe Sanh; Hill 558
SSgt Allen J. Baker	June 06, 1968	Con Thien; Leatherneck Square
PFC William R.Campbell	June 06, 1968	Con Thien; Leatherneck Square
CpI Forrest J. Flyte	June 06, 1968	Con Thien; Leatherneck Square
PFC William A. Hayes	June 06, 1968	Con Thien; Leatherneck Square
PFC Dennis L. Lobbezoo	June 06, 1968	Con Thien; Leatherneck Square
L/CpI Daniel L. Prock	June 06, 1968	Con Thien; Leatherneck Square
CpI Kenneth W. Schauble	June 06, 1968	Con Thien; Leatherneck Square
PFC Walter L. Seawright	June 06, 1968	Con Thien; Leatherneck Square
CpI Lonnie Sheppard, Jr.	June 06, 1968	Con Thien; Leatherneck Square
PFC Peter M. Shepherd	June 06, 1968	Con Thien; Leatherneck Square
L/CpI Mikal J. Sullivan	June 06, 1968	Con Thien; Leatherneck Square
CpI Stanley R. Pettit	September 15, 1968	LZ Margo
PFC Edward Cunningham	September 16, 1968	LZ Margo
L/Cpl Gary R. Daffin	September 16, 1968	LZ Margo
PFC John M. Donohue	September 16, 1968	LZ Margo
PFC James C. Durham, Jr.	September 16, 1968	LZ Margo
PFC Delon Hunter	September 16, 1968	LZ Margo
L/CpI Harry E. Rivers	September 16, 1968	LZ Margo
L/Cpl Joseph E. Robles	September 16, 1968	LZ Margo
SSgt Juan 0. Sanchez	September 17, 1968	LZ Margo
Sgt Billie G. Strickland	September 17,1968	LZ Margo
L/CpI Clifton Spiller	September 28, 1968	LZ Margo
CpI David D. Dumas	October 27, 1968	
L/CpI James W.Heagy	December 06, 1968	Operation Meade River
S/Sgt Charles A. Lauer	December 06, 1968	Operation Meade River

Obituaries

Our Khe Sanh Brother Bob Mills has passed away. Bob was in 81mm mortars, H&S Company on the eastern perimeter of the base. We were in the same mortar squad, and stuck together after Khe Sanh and for all the stuff that happened to us down south afterwards. Bob and I always split the cost of a room at our annual reunions. Bob had a big heart, and anyone who could not afford accommodations at our annual reunions was always welcome to pick a spot on our hotel floor and bunk with us. May God Rest his soul. Semper Fi to Bob Mills.

Jack Corbett

Bob and Casper were fixtures at the bar. Every time you walked by, he was there and would talk to everyone. Jack, he was a good Marine and was unselfish to others. He will be missed at the reunions. Bob was at every reunion I attended. May he find peace on the other side of the River.

Semper Fi Bob
Jimbo

Contributions

ADAY, David R
APRAHAMIAN, Donald R
BAUM, Gary E
BECKHAM, Daniel E
BERAN, Robert J
BISCHOFF, Duke
BREEDING, Earle
BROMBAUGH,David F Sr
BRUNO, Robert
BUCIOR, Frank A
CALDON, David
CARTER, David O
CHARBONNEAU, Terry E
CALDON, David L
CONVERY, James J
COOPER, Lawrence T
COWAN, John R Sr
COWAN, William V
COTTER, Kevin
COUNCIL, Michael
CRUZ, Raymond
DABNEY, William H
DAHER,George J
DAKIN, William E
DAWDY, James
D'AMBROSIO, Richard
DEBONA, Andrew D
DELANEY, Michael B
DERIAN, Joseph
DIFOOT, Robert
DILBERGER, J. Thomas
DONAHUE, David F
DUNLAP, Lee C
EDWARDS, Raymond F
FERGUSON, Daniel R
FIERRO, Timoteo R
FINK, Rod
FERGUSON, Daniel R
FIXLER, Barry
FORBES, James M
FOSMO, Harold D
GLANTON, David M
GODDARD, Ben
GOWER, Lloyd R
HAAS, Lawrence D Jr
HAGAMAN, Harry T
HAMILTON, Gary
HARRINGTON, David S
HAWKINS, Joseph Y
HEINRICH, Christine
HERNANDEZ, John G
HERTERICH, Edward J
HETRICK, James F
HILLIARD, Kenneth O
HOLTHOUSER, Lawrence
HOWE, Jack
HUMMER, Ted E
JOHNSON, James E
JOHNSON, Walter S Jr
KAHENY, John M
KARL, Karl P
KOLLMON, Albert L
KOPPEL, Alexander
LAMAR, Alphonso R
LECLAIRE, Lawrence L Jr
LEE, Gary F
LENZEN, Marty R
LESSMAN, Eugene P
LITTLE, Michael J
LITTLEFIELD, Maylene
LOERSCH, Phillip E
MAGER, Larry
MAGILLIGAN, Danette
MAHONE, Michael
MAIO, Richard E
McCARTNEY,Larry E
McCRACKEN, Hugh D
McKINNIS, Howard C
MENZEL,Robert
MESCHKE, David L
MESSNER, William J
MILES, James J
MINEER, Phillip D
MONAHAN, Frederick G
MOONEY, James
MOORE,Fulton
MOUNTAIN, Roger M
NAJFUS, Louis L
NUNN, John B
OWEN, Kenneth A
PAWLAK, Daniel
PAUL, Dave
PERSON, Bill
PETERSON, John F
PIERCE, Thomas A
RING, William
ROBERTSON, William A
ROBLE Matt
ROGERS, David G
RUECKERT, John G Jr
SCHAEDIG, Roland
SCHAEBERLE, Russell F
SKREKLA, Michael L
SMITH, Walter J
SORENSEN, Gerald R
STECKLAIR, Gene E
STEWART,Robert W
STICKEL, Fred A
STURKEY,Marion F
SULLIVAN, Harvey
TIERNEY, Mark F
UPSHAW, Leland S
WELLS, Marshall R
WERTZ, C.W. III
WHITENACK, James H
YATES,William R
YOUNGHANS, Robert A
ZAMORA, Robert F

We would like to find out the identity of the "Gunny" who in Nov-Dec 1967 routinely came through our back perimeter and had a few beers with us. Also for the first time, I now know that we at FOB-3 were tied in with the 1St Battalion, Ninth Marines. Now we also realize why there were so many NVA present. 1/9 was famous for almost having a NVA Regiment attached to it.

Lee Dunlap
Captain, FOB-3
CDR , A221 USSF

Looking For a Friend

Dear Editor,

I am enclosing this poem written by Pamela Zorn-Anderson. She wrote it as a tribute to the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines who served on Hill 861 and 881. Her poem was picked up by the UPI, copied and sent to many soldiers by their parents. Pamela, who is now 54-years-old, disappeared in the Fort Lauderdale area. The veterans in Texas gave me the mission of locating her and the poem. Anyone with information, please call Rick Foley 856-234-5540.

Art Brooks
1St Force Recon
USMC

Bugler, sound the "Colors" now...
give greetings to the morning sun
and hoist the flag with stripes unfurled
to decorate Eight Eighty-One

She'll wave in gentle majesty,
and let escape a mournful sigh,
for those whose blood has stained this hill
and those who've Yet to die

Personified, she walks with God
and longs for peace when all is done,
but 'til then, lives will still be lost
like those on Hill Eight Eighty-One.

As nightfall comes her vigil ends,
she's folded with a loving hand,
and sent with care across the sea
to the family of a fighting man.
Tomorrow brings another flag
to stand, like she, against the sun.
The queen of those who fought for us
and died on Hill Eight Eighty-One.

A Father's Worry

Brothers,

It is 0254, the house is quiet, and I am wide awake. I sit here drawn to the computer to a place where I know my friends are. My friends whom I depended on so greatly 35 years ago. I am not in danger as we all were then, but now my son is in harm's way as perhaps some of your sons are. Mine is a crew chief on a 46 in the Persian Gulf with the 24th MEU.

While in Khe Sanh years ago, we knew what was going on around us. We saw the day to day horror of that place. I don't have any concept as to what he and his buddies will see in the upcoming weeks and months. Then, we had a certain degree of control over our lives. Prior to a recon insert, we would prepare, we would over fly the zone, we would check all of our equipment, we would practice immediate action drills. We got as ready as we could.

Now my only option is to check websites and CNN and try to get a glimpse of a man a half a world away. Somehow combat in Khe Sanh in 67 and 68 doesn't seem to be as hard as the anticipation I now feel. I now know what our parents went through 35 and 36 years ago. It wasn't easy for them nor is it going to be easy for us who sit and wait. I only hope that my son has the friendship of Marines to get him through as I did all those years ago and still have today.

Thanks guys for the opportunity to speak my mind about what is bothering me this early winter morning. Semper Fi!

Kevin C. Macaulay

❋

Kevin,

I also feel that tight knot in the pit of my stomach. The contributions we all made to this Country, as our Fathers before us, and what our children are contributing now is what made us the great nation we are today. It sure doesn't make it any easier to watch our kids go off to war. My prayers will be

with you. My 17-year-old son is named Kevin.

Semper Fi.
Doc Thomas

❋

Kevin,

I, for one, will never forget sitting in a Washington, D. C. hotel in late April of 2001 listening to you relate your experiences with 3rd Recon at Khe Sanh. At the time, you mentioned that your son was a Crew Chief on a CH-46 that still had the bullet hole patches from Vietnam, and he researched the logs and found it had flown at Khe Sanh. Based on your previous comments, he is obviously on his second enlistment. Any man who would commit to serving his country in a 35 year old helo is obviously "one hell of a man." Like father, like son. At this point, all we can do is pray. You know where mine will be.

Semper Fidelis
Larry

❋

Hoss,

My thoughts and prayers are with your son. Remember he is with the best and as we did some 35 years ago, Marines take care of each other. We know that on a first-hand basis. I sincerely believe it. My son is a 1st Lt in the Army currently stationed in Italy. I, too, share some similar concern should his unit be deployed. A unified support of all true American patriots is what our troops need. I fly Old Glory on the front of my house every day.

Semper Fi.
Leland Upshaw, B Co 3rd Recon.

❋

Dave,

I felt your concerns some 4-5 years ago when my son was with the 13th MEU, HMM-166. Saddam made a fake run back down towards the border and we thought we were going back to war. I turned on CNN, and there they were on board his ship. My son was with a 46 as well, and they showed them flying off the deck towards Kuwait. My heart hit the deck. A few days after, a letter arrives and I felt better. My son told me that when they went on alert, the entire attitude on the ship made a 180 degree turn. Live ammo and the like. I suddenly realized what a outstanding well trained company he was with. Remember the company you and I had at Khe Sanh. These Marines, your son and mine, are better equipped and trained then we were. Each unit had an information phone number that you could call. There was a voice mail message that gave you daily up dates on the unit. They must still have that and it made me feel a lot closer to my son. My son returned home safely. On the way back they stopped in Hawaii. I met him there and sailed back to Camp Pendleton on his ship. It took 8 days, 8 days at sea with the USMC. The only thing they would not let us do was fly. Rest assured that your son and his fellow Marines know what they are doing. These Marines are absolutely fantastic as Marines and as men.

Semper Fi
Rich Hillmann

❋

Kevin,

My sentiments and prayers are with you and your son. I remember coming home from Nam and walking into my house (October 68) and being stunned to see 2 small B/W TVs sitting atop our "large" console TV. I asked my mom what the TV's were all about. She said, "Oh, your father bought them both back in January so he could watch all three networks at the same time and not miss any of the news from Khe Sanh." (No cable TV and certainly no VCR's back then.) Up until that point, I had never given too much thought to what my folks went through while I was in-country. Those extra TVs were proof. I earnestly hope that armed conflict can be avoided. My thoughts are with you.

Dennis Mannion
Convoy out of Khe Sanh

Is there anyone out there who has pictures of the first convoy out of Khe Sanh, or are there any drivers out there? I rode in the back with a 50 cal. mounted on the back of the cab and about a half dozen LAWs opened. That wasn't much company I

had in the back of that 2 1/2 ton truck. I can only imagine that wonderful warm fuzzy feeling the driver had. I was getting a ride to Camp Carroll to rejoin Fox Co. What a lonely ride. Anyone out there on that ride? Fox and Echo 2/26 or from any other unit?

Hank

❋

As a matter of fact, I do have some on VHS made by LT. Bruce Geiger along with hundreds of others from Khe Sanh to Dong Ha convoy, Cam LO, Phu Bai, Con Tien, Quang Tri and other places he was stationed with the Dusters. He has given me permission to sell repos of them to members as a fundraiser for KSV. Anyone interested there are 2 VHS for $10.00 each, Bruce even narrates and added music of the times. Email me to purchase. These are great to have. PJ and I view them every night when reruns are on.

Jimbo

❋

It was fun to read these! Many different units made the "drive" to and from the base. They even had some runs at night, April/May 1968 to prove that 'we could drive the road when we wanted. I (as a junior Lt) believed the whole idea dumb and that anyone could stop us on that road, even if you flunked boot camp!! The road was like a small driveway with a hill immediately to one side and a drop off to the river on the other. The approach to the base off of Highway 9 just had some trees and an approach trench on each side! Third week in May 1968, had the sweep team ambushed and later that week a convoy on Highway 9 just prior to the artillery unit's position.

I recall one ride when a helo called me to ask if we were under fire (because of the dust we had tossed up). After checking all hands we said no and kept on trucking. We'd drive to Ca Lu and pick up supplies and return to Khe Sanh, not a bad drive, never any other traffic! Down south had problems with them cutting in to the convoy after one overloaded civilian vehicle hit a mine in front of my M-151 (near Hill 55). I allowed them to pass!! Actually, they were a nice mine sweeper, just couldn't let them brake down and block the road (push them off the road (quickly!!) and continue the drive.

Yes, a former Marine who lives around here has been denied PTSD since he was "just a driver" and never fired his rifle. He served Dec 67-May 68 and drove the "highways," including Khe Sanh. Sad.)

Well, thanks for the memories.

Terry Charbonneau LT, 1st M/T.BN.

❋

Hello Terry, I was wondering if you were the Lt. in the Bn supply bunker when Lt. Kim Johnson was killed on 23 February 1968?

Terry Lacy

❋

No, it wasn't me. I was still South in the Hue city area until April when we rode North to Ca Lu, and then Khe Sanh. In February 1968, it would have been someone from 9th Motor Transport Bn. I know that one of the M/T officers at Khe Sanh was hit and a replacement was sent from 9th M/T Bn during the second week of February 1968. I was "visiting" 9th M/T at the time and observed the replacement gathering his gear and leaving. Funny, three months later, I was living in the M/T bunker at Khe Sanh. One did get to see different areas of Vietnam while riding the roads.

Terry Charbonneau

❋

One of the guys from Battalion supply and I dug this guy out. We had to find him first. He had a wire wrapped around his neck. I ran over to Alfa Co. supply tent and got my wire cutters and cut the wire from around his neck. I think all he had was a broken leg.

Terry Lacy

Complaints about the Message Board

The last issue of **Red Clay** mentioned that a few of the members were concerned about some of the posts on this message board. I, too, have been bothered by a few of the "off topic" posts, but over the years I have learned to ignore distractions and to

focus on the things I care about. Some of the posts may not interest you, but I can't remember too many posts that didn't get some type of reply. Someone took the time to read and reply to just about all of the messages regardless of the topic. I check all the messages daily to make sure we don't have any personal attacks, ads for porn sites or any other flagrant violations of decent behavior, but I've only had to delete 5-6 messages since this board came online.

I think of this board like our bunker at Khe Sanh. We didn't sit there and talk all night about tactics and weapons, we would shoot the bull, talk about our cars and girlfriends, what we were looking forward to when we got home and what we planned to do on R&R. If conversations didn't interest me, I would tune them out and join back in when I heard something I could relate to. I ask all of you to do the same. I'm happy to see all the posts and don't want to see anyone drop out of sight because of a few off topic posts. I think the best policy is to ignore some of these posts and not encourage the practice by replying to these posts. If you guys have any ideas or suggestions, send me an e-mail or post your concerns here.

Dave Doehrman

❋

Agreed. I visit the site every chance I get. But, I don't always read all that is posted. I don't think there is anything wrong with some of the friendly, light joking around that I sometimes read. I spent a lot of time living in holes that were just that, a quick place to hide from the incoming. But even then we could find something else to talk about, jokingly or just sharing a dream about what we understood then. I think what I'm trying to say is, some things haven't changed much as you can see by the posts from the past and what many of us are still living. And I think some of us just want to remember some of good times no matter how bad things got. You have done a great job with the site. I have been able to find a number of old friends and information that I probably would not have found if not for this site and the involvement from others. It is a wonderful place to come to for all of us. Thanks.

Semper Fi Brother
Hank Melanson

❋

Dave, your message sounds like a common sense way to handle the problem. Keep up the good work!!

Dave Anderson

❋

Well said, Dave. I concur. Keep up the good work. It is what makes message board life interesting. The clown, the lifer, the agitator, the father, the serious guy and, of course, the witty, uncomplaining, shy, handsome, debonair guy like me. It is very uncanny what jogs our memories of the past. Now guys go to the Red Clay PX and buy some stuff so we have enough money to put out another **Red Clay** magazine. http://www.stores.ebay.com/store=26342286

Jimbo

❋

Dave, I do admit that sometimes the Message Board does get out of hand, but that is normal for us guys and what we all went through. Like you said, if you don't like what you are reading, move on. I read the Board every day and it is all interesting to me, half these guys were on the hills. During the Siege, I was on the Base and at the rock quarry with 1/9. So what I can learn from them means a lot to me about the hills.

Keep up the good work, See you at the reunion.

Semper-Fi
Big John

Mortar Magnet C-130s

I was a USAF loadmaster flying in and out of Khe Sanh in 1967-68. I lost a good friend who died when one of our birds crashed at Khe Sanh on October 14, 1967. Does anyone on this message board remember this crash incident? My hats off to all Khe Sanh vets. I'm proud that I was able to contribute by bringing in beans, bullets and band aids. Keep the spirit alive and your powder dry.

Wes

❋

I was there that day, 10-15-67, and helped with the removal of bodies. Kristine Blanksma, Capt. Earle Bjorke' s daughter, who was only three months old at the time, has been a wonderful help to me. She truly deserves our praises for the website to her father's memory, and to the others who perished in the crash.

Jim Dawdy

❋

Wes,

See if this is the right crash...it was 10-15-67... www.geocities.com/erlebjorke

It lists the flight history of the crash. I would love to find out who your friend was...I have been in touch with a few family and friends. The men on the crash were Joe Hannah (survivor), Earle Bjorke, Hottenroth, John Snyder, Ed Mosley, Lawrence Berniski.

Kristine

❋

Dear Kristine,

My friend was Air Force Sergeant Larry Berneski, the loadmaster on that flight. He was my mentor in Vietnam and I was supposed to be on that flight with him. When I awoke, he had already left for Khe Sanh and the word I got from ops was he said that I could sleep in and that he could handle the mission by himself. His act of kindness to me saved my life but left me with a lifelong guilt complex.

Wes

❋

I remember what was left of the wreckage, mostly tail section. I was a C-130 navigator who flew out of Danang into Khe Sanh approx. 50 times in 1971, during Lam Son 719. There were several C-130 wreck sites we could see from the air, most in I corp. One was blown up and burned right in its parking spot on the ramp at Danang. It remained there for days. "Mortar magnet" is right!

Al Wilson
1/24/1968

On the evening of the 24th during heavy incoming, an artillery round landed directly in the doorway of one of the 3rd Recon bunkers. Three Marines and a Navy Corpsman died instantly, the fourth Marine died three days later. Others in the bunker were wounded and buried alive when the bunker collapsed. The survivors were dug out and the wounded taken to Charlie Med. You are not forgotten...

HN Charles Wayne Miller, age 20
LCPL Gregory Popowitz, age 18
PFC Juan Antonio Rosa, age 20
LCPL Gary David Scribner, age 20
PFC Wallace Lee Reather, age 20

Dave Doehrman

❋

Dave,

The day the bunker got hit sticks in my mind very vividly as well. One correction though: Jr. Reather was killed 3 days later when a mortar round landed next to group of guys filling sandbags. A bunch of guys were wounded and medevaced out. Jr. was the only one killed that day.

Kevin

❋

Hey Kevin

He was called Junior, right? When you and I first met in NYC for the Dear America book thing or the parade (1985). I think of you often (and your health issues) and Junior as well. Stay warm and well!

Dennis Mannion

1st Air Delivery

As I am new to the Association (sent in my application for membership today) and old to Khe Sanh (I made so many drops out of C-130's to that hell hole I received a handful of Air Medals), I wish to add to something I read in last month's issue about some parachutists who died at Khe Sanh in November of 67. Earl Dale Jenkins (from Georgetown, IL) and Lewis Clayton Childress (from Urbana, IL), both rather new in country and both Cpls with the 1st Air Delivery Platoon, Headquarters Co., 1st Mar. Div.,

flying with VMRG-152 out of Da Nang. The accident involved the way Cpl. Jenkins exited the aircraft in a low level (800 feet) jump. As you who now remember, the drop zone was small and the nature of the winds that came up the valley made judging them unpredicable. It was a hurried jump, and Jenkins main chute became entangled with Childress's (who was the third man to jump). Jenkins tried to pop his reserve but that added to the entanglement and both men hit the ground at about 90 miles and hour. They were both 19 years old when they died that day. I was with Lt. Medez, our platoon C/O, when we went to Graves registration to pick up their effects. I write this as a pledge to my friends that I will never forget them, and now you all know who they were and their memory can be brighter and stronger. If and when you pray, send a little something to Earl and Lewis. Thanks for being there to all my brothers who did the terribly tough duty at Khe Sanh. I remain your comrade,

John Wagner, Soquel, CA.

❋

John, I remember that day well. What I saw was one man jump out of the plane, his chute opened but twisted around itself, the next man caught up with him and grabbed him and his chute wrapped around the other guys chute and they both came down together. The ambulance truck came by our area and I stopped it to find how they made out, and he told me they didn't make it. John, that will always stay in my mind.

Big John

❋

John, I too, saw this terrible accident. C Co. just came off of 861 a few days before. We were base security/reaction force. I think we just walked through the drop zone, returning from a patrol. I watched the aircraft pass over the drop zone and saw both Marines fall to the earth. That incident was my first experience with death. I had only been in country and at KSCB for just over a month. We never had any contact. Nothing more to say.

Nick Romanetz
1st Air Delivery

❋

John, I was there November 16, 1967. We took a dump truck through the wire and were the first to reach Childress and Jenkins. The Corpsman worked on one with CPR but it was hopeless. I'll always remember how surreal it was to hold a man's hand as he died. He had an M-14 and the stock had broken at the handhold. We were asked to go west into the trees to help guide one parachutist, who had drifted out of sight into the trees, back to the base. We had just located him when an AK-47 fired several bursts and we all had to take cover. In 1997 I finally worked up enough courage and I called Childress's mother and expressed my condolences to her. I should have called her years before, but you know how it is. She had never been provided a convincing explanation by the US Government concerning her son's death, so I traveled to Las Vegas a few weeks later and met with her, a daughter, and a son whom they were visiting who lived in Las Vegas. It was a duty I felt I owed to Cpl. Lewis Clayton Childress, USMC, and a man I have never forgotten and will never forget. I think of him very often. When I am feeling real low his presence within me seems to provide some solace. Strange, don't you think?

Jim Dawdy

❋

John,

I, too, remember the incident well. I was in "A" 1/13 and we used to watch the drops all the time since they were not too far from our position. If my memory serves me correctly four jumpers came out of the C-130. Two landed safely and we could see the other two tangled up in their chutes. I still remember the ambulance passing our position carrying these fine young men.

Jim

We Get Mail

New Red Clay

Received my copy of the **Red Clay** yesterday. Boy, I am always astonished at the professional manner in which it is put together. Of all the organizations that I am a member of, your publication is by far the best. Keep up the good work. Don't know how you do it, but maybe you should raise our dues a couple of more $$$.

Ray Provencio

❋

When I stopped at the mailbox on my way into the house tonight I was carrying a copy of a math book to brush up on algebra to help my little one. Low and behold here was my copy of the new **Red Clay**. Guess which one I read from cover to cover first? No homework tonight! Thanks Tom, Jimbo, and the rest of you fine contributors. I couldn't put it down.

Arty

❋

Guys, Thats another fine job all of you did on this issue of **Red Clay**. Keep up the good work.

Semper-Fi
Big John

❋

Dear Tom,

Thank you for all of the hard work you and the others do for the Khe Sanh Vets. It is a lot of work. Enclosed please find a check for my dues. I am the Widow of Donald J. Magilligan, Jr. When my husband died in 1989, he was doing heart transplants at the University of California at San Francisco. He was the Chief of Cardio-Thoracic surgery there.

Despite all, he was able to accomplish, he always said that the most fulfilled professionally he ever felt was while he served in Vietnam, especially at the Khe Sanh Base. He was so proud to have been a Mud Marine. Our six children loved to hear him say that.

Don would tell everyone how much he admired those young warriors. He said, "They did not do what they had to do for love of their God, or for love of country, but for love of each other." Taking care of those young Marines he considered a God-given gift.

The **Red Clay** is enjoyed not only by myself, but also by my non-adult kids. It keeps us connected to something that was a big and fulfilling part of my husband's life. I enjoy it so!

Respectfully,
Danette Magilligan



Dr. Donald J.Magilligan

Mr. Ernie Spencer,

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading the Winter 2002, Issue 54. As a Life Member I have enjoyed all of the previous issues and especially the article "Uncommon Ground: The Marines and the US Army in I Corps." Somehow I missed the original article. Mr. Brush's treatment of the military doctrine problems between the services is accurate, and it highlighted for me the misapplication of traditional Army conventional war doctrine to a unconventional type

of war. Senior Marine strategists insisted that Khe Sanh had little tactical value, and that it was too difficult to support. Since General William Westmoreland was the Commander of American Forces in Vietnam, alternate strategies put forth by Marine Commanders fell on deaf ears.

To their credit the Marines defended Khe Sanh with great honor, while the Army moved troops to Chu lai and Da Nang to replace Marines supporting Khe Sanh. Today's military historians give Marine, Navy, and USAF fixed and rotary wing aviation full credit, for their role in holding off General Giap's North Vietnamese Divisions that were destroyed in the Siege of Khe Sanh.

My mission during the Siege was to conduct round the clock close air support and air to ground bombing and rocket support to the Khe Sanh area and Hills 861 and 881 north and 881 south held by Marines. I was CO VMFA 323 "Snakes" flying F4 Phantoms out of Chu Lai. For two and one/half months our daily flight frag focused on Khe Sanh along with all other Marine fixed wing air. On 22 Jan 1968, I was shot down leading a strike on a "suspected" anti-aircraft positon southwest of Khe Sanh. Fortunately, my back seater Pete Brandon and I were picked up by a LTH- I H Army Huey on a unrelated rescue mission, but that is another story.

On a related matter, I am on the Board of Directors of the Western Slope Vietnam War Memorial Park, and we are building a memorial dedicated to the men and women from the Western Slope and Colorado who served in the US Armed Forces during the War. From 1959-1975. All money donated by veterans of that war from anywhere in the U.S. are invited to participate. This memorial is being built by veterans for veterans. I am inclosing a pamphlet for your review. See our Web site www.gi.net/fieldofdreams for more info. The memorial will be dedicated on 4 July 2003.

I am forwarding a check to Tom Eichler for $100 for a Memorial and Remembrance Donation for all of the men that left their mark on the Red Clay of Khe Sanh.

Semper Fi
Harry T. Hagaman
B/Gen USMC, Ret

First, please understand I am not a vet. I was not in the service and I was not at Khe Sanh in 67/68. I want to make that clear because I know there are a whole lotta "wannabes" out there and I have come across two of them. No names.

It is by shear coincidence that I travel to Vietnam as often as I do and that I always end up in Quang Tri Province. My company was awarded the construction management of Highway 9 from Dong Ha to Lao Bao and as it happens just before my first trip there, I had read "After Tet," in which I learned for the first time the actual location of Khe Sanh and its proximity to Highway 9. So that is how all this began for me. But now, I have read every book about the hill battles and the Siege and impending battle and how you guys fought like hell. I have met and visited with Ray Stubbe in his home in Wisconsin and exchanged hundreds of letters. I have met Tommy Eichler in Chicago. I have had running and lengthy e-mails with Dennis Mannion and took the time last spring to find his letter home inscribed on the Vietnam memorial in NYC near Wall Street. I met Dennis over an e-mail scrap we had about fake dog tags that I bought during my first visit to KSCB.

I am a civil engineer by education, so geography and elevations, compass bearings, etc. are easy for me. I have a good sense of direction, so I can spot most things and ascertain my location so I am not totally useless in the bush.

I have crawled all over the Combat Base by myself and located the ammo dump that blew. I have found grenades and shrapnel and unexploded 105 and 155 shells. I have walked the entire length of the runway and I have sat on the perimeter next to the Rao Quan River manned by C/1/26 (Blue Sector). I have been able to spot and identify most hills occupied by USMC but have not been able to spend enough time over several days to actually explore the ville, the hills, and the valleys. I never have that much time. I want to stay two or three days in KS Ville at the hotel and will do that before the project is over.

I have come to admire all of you and I listen with keen interest to the various tales told. I am a member of the KS Vet organization out of respect for all of you and have made contributions to the magazine. I find all this very fascinating — it is living history. I am pretty sure of my bearings once there, but I could be mistaken from time to time as to landmarks. I am very pleased to relate my incidents to all of you and I will do my best to answer your questions and try to

orient you based on what I see. So please do not hesitate to call me or relate your stories. If I can find your old positions, or bring back photos of the various places each time I go there, I will try my best. It's the least I can do.

With sincere admiration for you and your comrades.

Gary W. Foster
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A Marine's Recon By Force

From nowhere come images of Khe Sanh,
Forcing silent curses to rape my mind.

Instantly, my emotions sink,
Forcing a breath extinguishing sigh.

My soul's hope sags in bitterness,
Forcing spasms of grief to paralyze me,
calling me to death's dark door.

Daily I denied the thoughts,
Refused the emotions, quashed the grief.

Yet, once enemies, these friends
Forced me to explore eternity,
finding rest in Jesus my Savior.

Being forgiven, I can offer forgiveness,
Canceling the bitterness,
bringing end to the war.

Mike "Spider" Loehrer
B/1/13

Changing of the Heart

by Dave Macedonia

On a return visit to Vietnam in March 2002, I had an experience that changed my life forever. As a Vietnam Veteran who served with the 101st Airborne Division during Lam Son 719 along the DMZ, I have always wanted to go back to Vietnam and explore sites where I had served. However, the highlight of my trip did not happen in those areas. It happened after my DMZ Tour in a place called Hoa Binh, in what we knew as North Vietnam.

Ed Henry and Gary Jones had taken me along as they visited some old French battlefields northwest of Hanoi. They were exploring possible sites for future group tours for Military Historical Tours based out of Alexandria, Virginia. As we visited the Hoa Binh Dam and hydroelectric site, an older Vietnamese man approached me and seemed to be very upset. He was irritated and made arm movements to indicate he was disturbed about something. I asked my guide Hiep, why the gentleman was so upset. He explained the old fellow was distressed because he wanted to talk to me but he did not speak English. Hiep and I followed the gentleman under a structure that served as a café. Hiep entered a large group of Vietnamese and came back with the small-statured gentleman. He seemed nervous but wanted to ask me some questions. With Hiep serving as the interpreter, the old man began to ask me questions. Was I an American? Did I serve in the war? Who did I serve with?

When the man heard I served with 101st Airborne Division and the 75th Rangers, he became very excited and started saying "101 Ranger, 101 Ranger." He ran around to different tables and began pulling on other men and bringing them to me. Questions about when I served and in which specific areas followed. As only Fate would have it, the man, Tran Van Long, and the three other men who stood before me were former North Vietnamese Army soldiers. We had all served in the same area of operations near the Rockpile and Khe Sanh, during the exact same times. All seemed delighted at this unique meeting. I was amazed at the welcoming by these former enemy soldiers. There I stood hugging and holding hands with the enemy. There was no animosity, no anger, and no grudges. As a soldier, I watched and participated in the hunting of these soldiers. I saw them wounded, shot, ambushed, bombed, napalmed, and treated as animals. They were the individuals we wanted to kill, and visa versa. Here we stood, treating each other like long lost friends. The scene generated total respect.

As we attempted to leave the area to continue our tour, Trang addressed our group. He stated, "It was good that old warriors met here today. His only wish was that our countries could become friends as we have become friends." He also said "that we all did what our countries asked of us and most of the time, none of us liked it. But the war has been over a long time, and now we should live in peace."

I left Hoa Binh a better person that day. My war had come full circle. I had renewed my tremendous respect for these North Vietnamese Army soldiers. We Americans have no idea what they have endured in their lifetimes. They are truly special people.

New Marine Corps Museum

by Nick Romanetz

Nick Romanetz just received the following update on the proposed Marine Corps Museum from Kenneth Smith-Christmas, Curator of Material History USMC Museums Division who is our point of contact.

> Just back from Boston today from a meeting with our exhibits designers and read your information. Thank you so much for the offer to acquire items for this exhibit. The scene (Khe Sanh) was suggested by Colonel Joe Alexander and represents Captain Dabney's defense of Hill 881S. It basically consists of the visitor walking through the fuselage of a CH-46 and out the back ramp into a fire base setting, in which the artifacts and scenarios are necessarily compressed. We know that we will have an M101 105mm howitzer and a 106mm recoilless rifle in the scene. Any of the uniform items and 782 gear on the figures (and we have not yet determined how many and which positions they will be in), and associated equipment will be "consumables," as the methods used in constructing the figures will destroy the items as artifacts. We would never use donated artifacts with actual provenance for these open scenes. However, I am certain that we will need individual artifacts to support the story of Khe Sanh in the traditional cased exhibits.

If your colleagues would send us a listing of those items that they would consider donating, we could identify those items that would best support the storyline. I am furiously reading up on the subject now, as I need to know all of the detailed info to help me stage the scene. Again, thank you so much for the offer and your interest.

The recent publication of The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation newsletter *Legacy* published the following:

"EXHIBIT PLAN TAKES SHAPE, WILL PROVIDE ULTRA-REALISTIC VISITOR EXPERIENCE"

Exhibit designers are hard at work planning the exhibitory for the National Museum of the Marine Corps. The core objectives of the exhibit plan are to depict American history through the eyes of Marines, and to help the public understand what it means to be a Marine. The plan calls for the use of numerous, modern-day exhibitory techniques and will feature as its centerpiece three major "immersion" galleries. These galleries, which combine artifacts and display technology with controlled environmental conditions, will immerse visitors in ultra-realistic recreations in critical moments in Marine Corps history. The three immersion galleries will constitute the major exhibits of the National Museum on opening day, and focus on Marine Corps actions during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

The exhibit master plan calls for several other major galleries in the years following the museum opening. After walking through the dramatic central atrium, visitors will view a short, introductory orientation film about the Corps and its history before they move into the main exhibit space. As they exit the orientation theatre, visitors will find themselves in a replica of a recruiting station, from which they will move aboard a bus, the windows of which are television screens that transmit oral histories of individual Marines who are recounting what they felt on the verge of their boot camp experience. As visitors step down from the bus, they find themselves standing astride the famed "yellow footprints," familiar to all who have been through boot camp. Suddenly, they will hear the dreaded roar of a drill instructor issuing the first of many instructions and commands to come! Other important aspects of the boot camp experience will also be recreated faithfully. Following this induction, visitors will be able to move freely in the exhibit area, which will be rich in educational experiences for young and old alike.

Those who have plenty of time can spend a full day or more, exploring the three immersion galleries, viewing numerous vignettes and tableaus, examining priceless artifacts and exploring the colorful stories of Marine lore. For those with limited time, the exhibit design concept also includes a concise, but authorative "fast track" experience that highlights essential elements of Marine Corps history. Visit **http://www.usmcmuseum.org** for up-to-the-minute information to include the latest technology in taking a virtual tour of the exterior and interior of the building design. If you think you have artifacts you would like to donate, contact Ken Smith-Christmas. I will keep the membership updated on this project as information becomes available.

Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas
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Six Clicks in the Sticks

by David Powell

It was the hottest day I can remember in Vietnam. It started hot in another way when the first thing in the morning while standing around waiting to move out with three other guys, we heard the sound of rounds sizzling past our heads along with the cracking sound they sometimes made. It is remarkable how fast facial expressions can change. From a look of casual conversation to the look "someone is trying to kill me." Two radically different emotional states in a split second. When I think back on it now, we all took it rather casually. I say that because if that happened to me today I would probably have to go to bed for a week to recover. It was only a short burst and then nothing. Shortly thereafter, the word

came down that two squads were to go on ahead to a bridge by a village and wait there for the rest of the company to catch up. I asked the platoon Sergeant how far the bridge was, he said about six clicks. He was a friend who was KIA a short time later. I asked if I could tag along, and he said yes.

Including me, we had about twelve guys. We were about halfway there and already soaking wet with perspiration and short of water. I looked straight up and the sun was so bright it was blinding with a brilliant ring of light encircling it. I had never seen that kind of atmospheric halo effect ever before. It seemed like the sky close to the sun was catching on fire. We were making pretty good time moving over rolling hills covered with trees or dense high brush with occasional open terrain. Moving in a staggered file we came upon a small abandoned temple. It was a good spot to take a break. I wandered into the temple. It had a small door and a couple of small windows. The temple was empty except for junk and debris scattered around the dirt floor. Two guys came through the door behind me and we picked out our spots and sat down. I leaned back against a pile of broken furniture and pots. It was quiet, dark, and cool. We were sucking it up. There was a tom-tom-like drum lying in the dirt near me and near it something that looked like a drumstick. I picked up the drum and the stick, put the drum between my legs, and starting beating out a cross between an Indian war dance beat and a belly dance kind of rhythm that you always heard in the movies.

The sound of the drum echoing around that space was weird. All of a sudden this great big kid with an M-60 resting over his right shoulder bursts through the door and started moving towards us twisting and gyrating and doing version of a belly dance to the drum beat. I started beating the drum faster and he was dancing with the machine gun ammo draped around his neck and shoulders, the sweat dripping down his big smiling face. We were all laughing. When he flopped down on the ground all four of us just sat there in silence. It seemed even quieter after the noise of the drum. Outside we heard someone say, "OK, we're moving out." Everyone got up without a word and moved towards the door that would take us back out into the bright hot reality of Vietnam.

A Khe Sanh Seabee's Pilgrimage
From Khe Sanh to Hachita, New Mexico
by Jim Dawdy

Dedicated to Christine Blanksma, in memory of her father, Captain Earle L. Bjorke, USAF, KIA, 15 October 1967, Khe Sanh, RVN.

At the 2002 Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion in Dallas, an event my wife and I thoroughly enjoyed, I purchased a copy of Billy Roble's book "Just One." In the week after returning home, I read it cover to cover. It is a sad but enriching tale of a young man's quest to know about the brother he was too young to remember and of the men to which his brother will forever be "Eternally Bonded."

Having been to only one other veteran's reunion or convention, the Khe Sanh Veteran's 1993 Reunion in Washington, D.C., which I thought was rather intense, I found the 2002 reunion to be both refreshing and rejuvenating. It was great to meet so many old warriors and their families.

I have never considered my participation in the events at Khe Sanh to be heroic. I was just there to fix the runway. And while I had to pull many nights in a muddy foxhole on the Company "A" 3rd Anti-Tank Battalion section of the perimeter, I was not heroic. In the words spoken by Medal of Honor recipient Don "Doc" Ballard in his very eloquent address, I was on occasion "scared to death." During my time there, it was mostly quiet. In the minds of a Marine engineer and a Seabee together in a foxhole on a moonlit night, a clump of trees can become an enemy tank (to which I quite erroneously responded "The NVA ain't got no tanks this far south." A tree stump becomes an enemy sapper who has silently breached the wire. And further out the elephant grass moving in a breeze can become a company of NVA whose sole purpose in life is to kill the two of us, mainly me.

I read in Billy's book about the 30 years it took to honor his brother with the Bronze Star for Valor. I read in other publications of the gallantry of so many of those who attended this year's reunion, as well as accounts of other members who weren't fortunate enough to be able to attend. I came to this year's reunion with the words spoken by General Eisenhower after World War II ringing in my ears: "A measure of humility must be a part of any man

who receives accolades earned at the cost of the blood and lives of others."

After reading Billy's book and attending the reunion, I found myself thinking about these things more than I ever had in the past. A small tornado of memories and thoughts swirled in my mind. It is as though we are engaged in a kind of "Quest" for the Holy Grail, much like that of which the legend of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table teaches us. My wife, a voracious reader, admonishes me that the real lesson of the tale lies not in the finding of the Grail, but in the "Quest" itself. Perhaps Billy Roble might agree.

And so it was with this background that on August 31, 2002 (our 34th wedding anniversary) I began a brief "pilgrimage" to the small, isolated, southwestern New Mexico village of Hachita. In 1901, my wife's great grandparents had homesteaded south of the village in what is known as the "Boot heel" of New Mexico and had taken refuge in the small cemetery at Hachita the day of the infamous raid by Pancho Villa's troops on Columbus, New Mexico in March 1916. Nineteen Americans were killed.

We had visited the cemetery in 1997 and in one of the family plots surrounded by an impressive wrought iron fence were three graves. One was of a Civil War Confederate veteran of the Georgia Cavalry who lived to the age of 80 years. Next to him was the grave of a Spanish-American War veteran who died at the age of 63. But it was the last of the three graves that had motivated my small pilgrimage, for I knew that upon the headstone of this 22-year-old soldier who was killed in July, 1918 — a few months before the end of World War I — were words that would provide something of an explanation to some of the questions that had been eating at my insides for over 30 years.

Why do I still suffer from the rage, despair and hatred I felt, and the darkness which at that moment filled my soul, for the Air Force Captain whose body I helped place in a body bag after he died so bravely when his plane crashed on the red clay of the Khe Sanh plateau?

Why, after so many years, am I alone burdened with the terrible and at times almost crushing weight of feeling an obligation to somehow give value to his sacrifice and meaning to his death?

Why do I struggle with the thought, as I touched his arm after the life force had flowed out of him, that some better part of him had become a permanent part of myself and that much of whatever good I may have accomplished in my life was in fact due in considerable measure to him?

The war has been over for almost 30 years. The bunkers and hooches, the spent 105 and 106 casings, the vehicles and planes have all been eroded by time and the elements, or salvaged by the Vietnamese. Yet, I suspect that within each man and each woman who served or had a loved one die or disabled in the war, a battle is still being fought and will continue to be fought all of their days.

Many questions have been generated by the war: Was it wise or unwise, moral or immoral, a noble sacrifice for America, or a squandering of youth and a loss of innocence? There seems to be no definitive consensus as to the answers to these questions. The only meaningful explanation, at least for myself, is written on the headstone of that WW I soldier interred at Hachita, New, Mexico. Words which are applicable in tens of thousands of homes in America and in hundreds of thousands of homes in Vietnam:

A LOVED ONE FROM US HAS GONE
A VOICE WE LOVE IS STILLED
A PLACE IS VACANT AT OUR TABLE
WHICH NEVER CAN BE FILLED.

Marines at Khe Sanh 1970 Lam Son 719

by James"Jimbo" Wodecki

I never knew this but Marines participated in Operation Lam Son 719, and were also planning an attack on North Vietnam with 3/9 at Khe Sanh. Of all the Marine aviators who participated in Lam Son 719, the helicopter pilots and crews of HMH--463 and HML-367 came under the heaviest enemy fire and played the most indispensable role. Operation Lam Son 719 was founded on the U.S.-developed tactics of leap-frogging troops and artillery into a series of fire support bases. Marines established their own forward operating base at Landing Zone Kilo, two miles south of the Khe Sanh airfield. Marines from other truck companies and from the 1st Engineer Battalion, the 1st Shore Party Battalion, Force Logistic Command, the 1st Marine Division Headquarters Battalion, and the 1st MAW Marine communicators also operated at Khe Sanh and

Vandegrift during Lam Son 719. The Radio/Supporting Arms Platoon, Communications Company, Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division had the mission of keeping both the truck company and wing elements in contact with their parent headquarters in Da Nang.

North invasion plans 1971

From 5-10 February, a task group remained at sea near Da Nang preparing for its mission. By the 7th, the staffs of the 31st MAU and BLT 3/9 had completed plans for the diversion which was to be a helicopter-borne raid on the airfield at Vinh, about 150 miles north of the Demilitarized Zone. The Marines prepared a full operation plan for an attack by two companies of BLT 3/9. The companies were to go ashore by helicopter, seize and demolish the airfield, and withdraw to the ships within 24 hours. The operation order, prepared jointly by the Marine and Navy staffs, included all the usual annexes for air and naval gunfire support, communications, logistics, and intelligence and provided elaborate procedures for withdrawing the raiding companies by boat, if helicopters could not extract them.

After completing the plans, the MAU conducted a communications exercise in rehearsing the planned feint. It also landed 4,000 pounds of explosives and detonating equipment furnished by III MAF and arranged with the 1st MAW to furnish Cobra gunships to reinforce HMM-165 if necessary. The gunships were to remain on call at Da Nang, ready to fly on board the USS Iwo Jima (LPH 2) on short notice.

On 11 February 1971, Task Group 76.4 headed north from Da Nang into the Gulf of Tonkin. Few of the Marines on board knew the actual purpose of their mission. In HMM-165, for example, only the commanding officer and his executive and operations officers had been fully briefed on the plan, and even they were not told that it was a feint until long after sailing. Until then, the executive officer Lieutenant Colonel Jon R. Robson recalled, "we...firmly believed that we might have to go in and try and take Vinh with a battalion of Marines." Marines in both the squadron and the battalion realized that they were preparing for an amphibious raid of some sort and as the ships steamed steadily northward hour after hour, they realized the main objective would be somewhere in North Vietnam. Both air and ground Marines, therefore, readied themselves for their parts of the mission "with all the fears and anxieties...of actually going in and performing the mission as briefed, as little as that was.

On 3 February, Lieutenant General Sutherland, the XXIV Corps Commander, also proposed to MACV an elaborate diversion plan, again involving amphibious forces; this plan was set aside in favor of the Cinc Pac plan, which then was already being implemented. Sutherland message to Gen Abrams, dated 03 Feb 71, and Abrams message to Sutherland, dated 04 Feb 71. (copies in MCHC).

BLT 3/9 was made up of the entire 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines with the following units attached: Battery F, 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines; 1st Platoon, Company D, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion; 2d Platoon, Company B, 1st AmTrac Battalion; 1st Platoon, Company A, 3rd Shore Party Battalion; 2d Platoon, Company A, 3rd Motor Transport Battalion; 2nd Platoon, Company B, 3rd Tank Battalion; 3rd Platoon, Company A, 3rd Engineer Battalion; 2nd Platoon, Company B, 3rd Medical Battalion; and detachments from the 3rd Service Battalion and 3rd Dental Company.

The vessels of the ARG were: USS Tulare (LKA 112), USS Iwo lima (LPH-2), USS Cleveland (LPD-7), and USS Westchester County (LST 1167).

First Day at C-2

by Bob McLane

I spent the afternoon on a working party filling sandbags. Later, the gunny made us put up a volleyball net. We had to dig holes in the rock hard ground with a pick. We took turns swinging the pick. After the first hole was finished, I tossed my flak jacket and my helmet on the ground, followed by my T-shirt. They were a lot more casual around here about stuff like saluting and dress codes than the idiots back at Dong Ha. I liked that. Suddenly, a huge explosion showered everyone with chunks of dirt and we were covered in a cloud of dust and smoke. I dove down beside some sandbags. I had heard about guys that had gotten hit and in the excitement they didn't realize it right away. Quickly I ran my hand up and down my arms and legs as I did a roll call of all my vital parts. Everything looked OK until I ran my right hand over my left arm. I was amazed to see my hand was covered in my blood. It came from a small hole about halfway between my elbow and shoulder. I never felt it. As I lay beside the sandbags I

realized it was not much more than a scratch, the kind the Lone Ranger used to get every Saturday. I started laughing. Some of Ho Chi Minh's arty boys had just tried to kill me. Although that was my blood running down my arm, I wasn't really hurt that bad. I wasn't even upset. Strangely, I felt happy.

Unlike our American shells, there is no symmetry to the shape and size of the Russian hot steel that flew past my arm. I'll never know how big or small the piece of shrapnel was that nicked my arm. Luck in the DMZ was measured in inches. My celebration was short as I looked over and saw a young Marine lying on the ground near me. He was unconscious and bleeding from his nose and ears. I helped some of the other Marines carry him over to the LZ while the radio operator called Dong Ha for a dustoff. Two other Marines were also hit by the same shell. While we waited for the medevac, the corpsman administered morphine and stopped the bleeding on the wounded Marines. He bandaged their injuries. In about twenty minutes, a helicopter came to pick up the casualties. My arm had stopped bleeding. I went back to digging my hole. Now I had my flak jacket back on. Guys came around to see where I had gotten hit. They stared at my arm. I tried to be cool about it, but I was on cloud nine. I felt like Tom Sawyer showing off a new black eye. Rail saw the wound on my arm, "Well Bro, you ain't a new guy no more."

They Get Younger & Younger

Major General Christopher Cortez Recruits Young Marine

by Jim Wodecki

On 06 March 2003, Ray Addington and I attended the local Metro/Plex Marines luncheon in Dallas, Texas. It was attended by active, reserve and old retreads from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and those Marines getting ready for war. The owner of Paul's Steak House, often frequented by Marines, hosts the banquet once a month. As our special guests, we invited Mr. Ray Morris and his son Tray Morris III, age 10, to accept a donation on behalf of the Khe Sanh Veterans. Major General Mulberry, who presented the first "DOC Medal" at our KSV reunion last summer, and Major General Christopher Cortez, C/O MC Recruiting, were our guest speakers.

The Khe Sanh Veterans Organization donated $500.00 this year to the Local Chapter of the Young Marines Big "D" Chapter of the Marine Corps League. Working with us was Lisa Osay, Development Director of the Young Marines in Dallas. These were the same Young Marines who helped us at the reunion of the Khe Sanh Veterans in Las Colinas, TX in July 2002. The Young Marines presented the Colors and participated in our Banquet Ceremonies and "Doc" Medal presentations. When we honored the Corpsmen, Medics and Doctors who served at Khe Sanh. Major General Christopher Cortez, C/O Marine Corps recruiting, delivered an uplifting speech informing the attendees that the USMC has reached its recruiting goal for the last 93 Months. A feat not matched by any other branch of service.

We presented the check to 10-year-old Tray Morris III, who accepted it on behalf of the Young Marines Organization. After taking photos, we were about to leave when Major General Cortez informed me that he wanted to meet young Tray. When I observed the General hand the young man his personal general's coin, I slipped the kid one of our Khe Sanh coins. He then handed it to the General, whose wide smile and hearty laugh let me know he was completely surprised. The looks of gratitude in their eyes was indescribeable. Tray's father was so proud of his young son.

Since young Tray had to be in school, they left the luncheon early but returned about ten minutes later. Mr. Morris explained he was so proud he just had to have a picture with his son and General Cortez. The General was most obliging and took several pictures with Tray and his father. Young Tray had a great story to tell his fellow Young Marines and I am sure one day soon he will be one of The Few, The Proud. I am sure of it. In fact, I think I saw General Cortez slip the kid some recruiting literature. The Young Marines have an outstanding organization. It keeps the young kids off the streets and gives them the discipline they need. I was proud to see the future, past and present Marines together for such a worthy cause.

So you guys should be proud you all made a little difference to a bunch of decent kids. This is just one of the projects the KSV help out with. It's those little PX items you buy and those generous donations that make this kindness possible. I salute all you guys for your generosity. We need to do more of this around

the country. We need your ideas and funds to do other worthy projects.

Semper Fi
Jim (Jimbo) Wodecki
Secretary, Khe Sanh Veterans

The Promise

by Richard Oulton

Some people living in homeowners associations tend to have an unhealthy preoccupation with their neighbors and feel compelled to keep close tabs on them. Their justification for their officiousness and intrusion is to protect property values by ensuring conformity and uniformity. And so, having wrapped themselves in self-righteousness, they proceed to turn these artificially uniform enclaves into mini war zones.

One such battlefield is Wyndham, an upscale development in the Richmond, VA suburbs. The object currently in the Wyndham association crosshairs happens to be the flagpole from which the Oultons fly an American flag, a flag meant to honor the 604 men in Richard's battalion who were killed in action during the Vietnam war. And because of the high casualties they sustained in combat, the battalion earned the nickname of "The Walking Dead." The recipient of a Purple Heart and a Combat Action Ribbon, Richard was awarded a Congressional Veteran Commendation this past November for the honorable service he performed while a member of the Armed Forces. But alas, homeowners' associations are not known for their tolerance of patriots or flags, although the politically correct ones insist it is not the flag they object to, per se, and omit any specific language relating to the flag. Wyndham is no different.

As Richard tells it, being an attorney, he read all 250 pages of The Declaration of Covenants, Conditions & Restrictions prior to buying their house. Nothing he read caused him to rethink the purchase he was about to make. Nowhere in the "book of restrictions" were the words flag or flagpole to be found. "I took the CC&Rs at their word," he said.

However, as soon as he erected a flagpole the winds of war started blowing and the Wyndham Association took the Oultons to court. With no specific restrictions on flags or poles in the governing documents, Wyndham used a catch-all provision in the CC&Rs, and alleged the flag was a "visual nuisance." The judge agreed.

This outraged and upset many people, including members of the legislature who responded by unanimously voting in *The Wyndham Flag Bill*. This statute basically provides that no homeowners association can prohibit a homeowner from flying a flag, unless they disclose it at the time of sale. Despite the fact that the new law was enacted specifically for the Wyndham flag case and was called the Wyndham Flag Law, the judge ruled that the law did not apply to the Oultons' case. He ignored the law. He also dismissed the Oultons' arguments claiming their defenses "complicated the case". And, just for good measure, Judge Harris changed his mind at the last minute and denied them a trial by a jury of their peers. With no laws to protect them, no jury to decide the facts in their case and with none of the facts "complicating the case," the Oultons,' predictably, lost.

After their attempts to appeal to both the Virginia and United States Supreme courts failed, they found themselves back in Judge Harris' courtroom. With no higher authority left to turn to, the Oultons ultimately lost their battle. Judge Harris ordered them to remove their flagpole and the flag by March 1, 2003 or to be prepared to face the consequences.

Should the "consequences" include a stay in the county jail, as Richard suspects, they'll have to make arrangements for their two small children. With no family in the area, they face some pretty tough decisions. They also face the possibility of losing the 6-month infant they are in the process of adopting.

At the base of the flagpole is an inscribed bronze plaque that starts with a promise," I will always fly these flags, as "I owe it to my boys, to my 'Walking Dead Marines.'" Many of the men in Richard's battalion died in his arms and by taking down the flag, he believes he would be betraying his men and betraying the ultimate price they paid to protect our right to fly the flag.

While their fellow homeowners in Wyndham do not object to the flagpole or the flag and have signed petitions in support of the Oultons, once the board started beating the drums of war, and the attorneys got involved, the will of the members themselves seems to matter not a whit.

For more information on the Wyndham Flag case please visit www.americanflagtrial.com. And for a radio interview with Richard Oulton, log onto to www.onthecommons.com, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the "Listen" icon.

PUBLISHER NOTE: Richard Oulton has also been fined over $95,000 by the same Judge. He is currently seeking a pardon from the Governor for his fine and conviction for refusing to take down the flag. Please go to his website for additional information on how to sign the petition for a pardon.

"The Hill" A Soliloquy

by Harry "Joe" O'Dell, K Co 3/9

Company Commanders in the field
Their rifle companies ready to wield
Death and destruction on the NVA
Unleash us, lets begin this day

Check equipment, fill canteens
Each Marine knows the routine

Extra ammo and bandoleers
Give me a 60 Mike-mike round
For surely this day were combat bound

Pointman leads off----------
"Keep your Interval" Lieutenants call
"One round will get you all"

Plodding along about mid-day
A familiar face coming my way
Must be Sunday, how can I tell
Corpsman approaches with outstretched hand and Malaria pill

Down the column He continues
Kit over his shoulder
No Marine could be any bolder

"Chowtime" filters down the line
Ham and limas will do just fine
Washed down with hot halizoned water
Ahhh things couldn't be much better

At the base of the hill--------
The din of battle can be heard
Fire teams up becomes the word

The column forms into squads and teams
Mortar crews set up
While off their tubes the sunshine gleams

Word comes down,"assault the hill"
Though hot tired and thirsty
Each man still has the will
To defeat the enemy and take this hill

Battle over, hill re-taken
Is that Laos over there
Or am I mistaken

Pull off the hill----
Chopper back to bases
Will this day put a smile on their faces
Of far away policy makers
In air conditioned places
Yes----------I would guess

Battlefield tactics can't be made far away
It's the "grunts" in the field who know the way
To certain victory over the foe
Something those D.C. cronies seem to know

In that far away little green land
Our actions were gallant
We are U.S. Marines and we have the talent
But with one hand tied behind our back
Our fullest potential we surely lack

So let policy makers look back on our war
And say--------
Never again commit our forces this way

Sitting in my easy chair
With shawl and kitty on my lap
Happenings in my war I recall
As I begin my mid-day nap

We were young and invincible
And "Remembrances" past
After 37 years and still clearly last
In my mind and soul never to fade
Thank God and Chesty Puller
A Marine I was made

Vietnam...The Sequel

by Steve Johnson

PUBLISHER NOTE: Stephen's article was slightly edited due to the constraints of space in the newsletter. If any member desires an unedited version, I will make it available to them.

Introduction

Col. Warren Wiedhahn, USMC (ret), is a long-standing member of the 3rd Marine Division Association. For a few years now, he has been putting the word out on the tours to Vietnam that his company, Military Historical Tours, conducts. The first time I heard about it I thought, "Why would anyone want to go back there, followed by, "Why would I want to go back there?" I also dismissed it as being too expensive.

I'm not sure when the actual decision to look into it took place. It was more of a mental evolution from complete rejection of the idea to, who knows, it could be fun. It took two years to work up the nerve to send in the reservation and even up to a couple of weeks before leaving, I still wondered if I was doing the right thing.

A few, well-intentioned people I had mentioned the trip to gave me the old, "You need closure," accompanied by what they thought were very sincere looks of understanding and sympathy for the torment my soul has endured, for lo these many years.

I got closure right here! The term "closure" would indicate that there was some sort of gap in a certain train of events. There was no gap. A lot of my friends were killed. That's it! I got back in one piece. That's it, too! No gaps.

Initially, it was a matter of curiosity as much as anything. It's sort of like surviving a terrible car wreck and then going to the junkyard to look at the wreckage and marvel that you lived through it. A friend asked me, "How can you forgive those people for what they did?" "Those people" didn't do anything to me that I was not trying to do to them. I saw the Viet Cong as sneaky little back stabbers but where I was, there were very few of them. My opponent, the North Vietnamese Army, was a well-trained, well-equipped professional soldier trying not to die for his country by causing me to die for mine.

This is not to say that I condone, in any way, how the North Vietnamese treated US POWs. But if you research WWII in the Pacific, or Korea, or, in fact, inter-Asian wars through history, you will see that extreme cruelty towards prisoners seems to be a basic Asian trait. From what I have read, if I was a former POW, I imagine I would have some serious hatred for my captors, but that wasn't my experience, so I cannot relate to it. I hope the following is of some interest.

❋

On 10 March 1998, I began the long journey that would take me back to Vietnam, a place I never expected to return to. I arrived at the Buffalo, NY, airport at about 3:30 PM. There began the odyssey of a lifetime. Processing at Buffalo and the commuter flight to JFK Airport in New York City went like clockwork.

I was beginning to anticipate something going very wrong because, so far, everything was going too smoothly. I must have picked just the right time to fly. After only about three minutes, the shuttle bus pulled up and I got on for a fifteen-minute ride to the other side of the airport. I got off at the Cathay Pacific terminal and got quickly checked in. When I got to the waiting area at the departure gate, there were very few people there, too. I saw a group with Military Historical Tours hats and/or name tags on, located and checked in with Ed Henry, our tour leader, and then hung out until the flight was called.

Our first destination was Vancouver, BC, which is five hours away...two hours there for refueling and then thirteen hours to Hong Kong. A documentary film crew, Peak Moore Enterprises, was also accompanying us. Warren Wiedhahn had said that they have been involved in previous Marine Corps-related film projects and come highly recommended. I understand they are doing this on a freelance basis and have no financial backing. Their plan is to produce a film on their own, then sell it to one of the cable channels like The Learning Channel or The History Channel.

There were a number of active duty officers from the Marine Corps University at Quantico. They were young, earnest, and very respectful. Some are students, but in name only, because they are all captains, majors and colonels. Those who were not students were instructors. Many of them appeared to be keeping journals and I suspect they may be required to do papers on their return.

Many of the young gentlemen from Quantico

(hereafter identified as the YG from Q) were reading the book "Siege of Khe Sanh" that we were sent by MHT. The book also includes the actions at Con Thien, Cam Lo, Hue City, and Lang Vei.

We landed in Hanoi on Vietnam Airlines at about 3:40 PM having lost a time zone on the way. Hanoi airport is strictly no-frills. Customs was brisk, efficient, and humorless. Virtually no attention was paid to the baggage. The weather was surprisingly pleasant. It was probably around 80 with low humidity. We were staying at the Thuy Thien Hotel, which reflects the erstwhile French influence. The hotel is on a side street just across from a police building and as soon as we stepped off the bus we were besieged by street hawkers selling post cards, T-shirts, pith helmets, embroidery and various trinkets.

Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum

At 9:00 AM we went to see the Ho Chi Minh mausoleum and museum. The mausoleum is quite imposing and, at the same time, rather stark. It faces what would normally be a very wide boulevard but it's blocked off to all but pedestrian traffic. Across the boulevard from the mausoleum is a twenty-acre park, which is sectioned off by sidewalks. Within each section is some kind of very thick, bushy grass, which is obviously not made to be walked upon.



The museum was very modern and clean, but quite sterile. One Vietnamese explained that a lot of the displays were more symbolic than realistic. In fact, most of them were not made up of artifacts at all, but were more stylized sculptures in tribute to this or that glorious people's cause. It seemed to me that the average Nguyen could care less about a lot of it. The almost god-like respect seemed a little forced. One thing I noticed, though, was that there were no undisciplined little brats swinging from the displays or racing from room to room. Kids stayed with mom and dad and behaved themselves.

After lunch we went to the People's Army Museum, which was shabby and tacky. Everything seemed to be overly dramatic and almost amateurishly done. Displays were very static, and, if they were lighted, half the lights were out. In the courtyard of the museum was a large pile of chunks of various US aircraft shot down in the Hanoi area. Some of the wreckage had signs describing how this very jet killed 430 little girls before being blasted out of the sky by one of the People's Heroes, or, that exact aircraft was flown by a notorious American criminal who met his miserable end at the hands of a courageous North Vietnamese air ace. There were also artillery pieces and various ordnance plus a NVA anti-aircraft gun just like Jane Fonda liked to work out on. I hit the sack about 10:00 and had no problem going to sleep.

After breakfast we loaded up to go back to Uncle Ho's mausoleum, this time to go in and view the body, which has been on display for several years. There was a long line of locals waiting to get in. We had been told that we would have to walk in single file with our hands at our sides. No hats. Nothing in our hands. No backpacks, cameras, or belt packs. No talking, no smiling, no laughing. If you had your hands in your pockets or did anything the guards thought inappropriate, they could order you out of the building.

I decided that I didn't want to play their game. Respect is one thing but in a communist society respect is not earned...it is forcibly required. He may be North Vietnam's Thomas Jefferson, but he was just a commie stiff to me. I stayed on the bus, and after everyone else got off the driver moved to a small side street.

The last time I saw our people they were in their own line away from, but in front of, the civilians. My immediate thought was that our group was being paraded for the locals. Guards were walking up and down near the civilians and talking to them. Maybe I'm a little paranoid, but I can just imagine that the civilians were being told that the American criminals had come back to show their new found respect for Uncle Ho and atone for their wartime atrocities. About 45 minutes later, some of the guys back from the mausoleum said they felt hostility. The guards pulled one of them out of line and made him empty his pockets. Then, they waved him on. No reason given, and you don't ask why.

The afternoon flight to Da Nang was uneventful until we landed. Let's just say it was about one fishtail away from a crash. Sometimes ignorance is bliss.

In Da Nang, it felt about twenty degrees hotter with high humidity. What appeared to be fog in the distance was not; that's how thick the air was. While getting our bags loaded into the buses, we just stood around and sweated.

Not far from Da Nang we stopped at Red Beach. This is a long stretch of beautiful white sand beach where the 9th Marines made their amphibious landing in 1965. They were the first complete, tactical ground force to touch Vietnam. Girls dressed in the national costume called the *Ao Dai* passed out leis and flowers to the Marines.



We checked in at the Houang Duong Hotel in Hue, which is very nice and very Asian. We toured Hue this morning and it was interesting. We went from point to point in chronological order as the battle for the city unfolded during the 1968 Tet offensive. Among the YG from Q are some TBS (The Basic School) instructors who have researched the battle thoroughly and came prepared to give a narrative as we moved around.

We then went to an area near the center of the city near the Perfume River that bisects Hue. Across the bridge that was about three blocks away was the ancient Citadel that became the focal point for the NVA attack. Just around the corner from where we were all standing was the old MACV (Military Assistance Command Vietnam) compound, which became the center of US activity and which is now a Vietnamese government building. We were told we could walk down and have a look at it and take pictures but to stay across the street from it. It probably would have been OK if there were only a few of us but with about sixty people pointing cameras, it only took about thirty seconds for an army guard to come charging out brandishing his AK-47 and give us the heave-ho. The level of paranoia concerning army or other government facilities is incredible. The idea that looking at, or taking pictures of a building is a threat of any kind is ludicrous. On the other hand, I think a lot of it is based on the concept of continuous intimidation. It seems very petty. I would imagine that the guard who chased us off probably got elevated to People's Hero after his courageous action against the running dogs of capitalism.

We stopped for lunch at a little hole-in-the-wall restaurant and somebody found two American women there. One, Judith Hansen, had spent a year in Da Nang as a "Donut Dolly" with the Red Cross in 1967-68. She said she worked mostly with Marines so we stood up and sang the Hymn for her. She got quite emotional. She was traveling with her sister. It was her first time back.

After lunch we toured the Citadel. Almost all the battle damage has been repaired. Nearly every large city in Vietnam has a citadel, which was the residence of the local king or warlord or whomever was in charge. The Citadel in Hue, however, was the old imperial capital of Vietnam and was built around 1810. Parts of the huge wall around it are now gone but it was originally almost 2000 yards on each side. The Citadel was bitterly defended by the NVA because it had become a symbol of the non-communist south and the presence of the North Vietnamese flag flying over it was believed by the NVA to destroy the Marines' and ARVNs' will to fight. It didn't work.

By pre-arrangement, it had been decided to let the ARVNs be the first troops to re-take the Citadel even though the Marines had taken tremendous casualties getting to it. It became clear though, that the only way the Citadel would be taken was by the Marines, so they went in. Again, by pre-arrangement, the RVN flag was supposed to replace the NVA flag flying over the Citadel, but when the Marines finally blasted their way to the flagpole, the US flag was "erroneously" run up. After a suitable amount of time went by, the "error" was noticed and the South Vietnamese flag replaced the Stars and Stripes.

Ed Henry had told General Mundy that I had, for personal reasons, brought my bagpipes to play at Khe Sanh. There was already a plan for a memorial service there during which a tape of the Marine's Hymn and Taps would be played. The General asked me if I would play Amazing Grace after that. I had not planned on playing in front of the group and told him, but I said I'd give it a try as long as he didn't expect too much. I think he thought I was some kind of ringer from Glasgow.

After breakfast, we bussed north through Quang Tri Province. Even though I had patrolled out of Quang Tri when I was in Echo Company, 3rd Recon Battalion, there was nothing left of the huge base

that had been there. It had been swallowed by a string of shantytowns and markets, except for the airstrip which is still being used.

We piled our luggage in the lobby and immediately reloaded the busses for the trip to Khe Sanh. Its 60 Km of bad road but there is an effort being made to improve it. There is virtually no heavy equipment to be seen except a few beat up dump trucks. Everything is hand labor and much of it by women.

As we got closer to Khe Sanh, the mountains looked bigger than I remembered. Many of the lower mountaintops are being blasted away for rock and gravel to use on the road. There has also been massive slash and burn agriculture practiced here for at least twenty years. The jungle that used to cover these mountains is all but gone, replaced by scrub brush and small trees. There still is lots of elephant grass, though.

First, we went to Lang Vei where the Special Forces camp was overrun by NVA tanks that many in the upper echelons said didn't exist. Some of our recon teams had reported hearing noises that sounded like tanks near the Laotian border. "Harrumph," said the brass, "there are no roads that will support tanks there!" Well, the noises were coming from Laos where vehicles could be used with relative impunity. When it came time to attack Lang Vei, the NVA used the Russian T-76 amphibious tank to ford the river that makes that part of the Laos/Vietnam border, drove east on Route 9, and squashed Lang Vei.

There was a lot of controversy then about why the Marines at Khe Sanh didn't send help, but it was the right tactical decision. Khe Sanh supported Lang Vei during the attack with all the artillery and other resources it had while under artillery attack itself, but a ground force would have been annihilated. If we had come down Route 9, there were hundreds of places to ambush us. If we came cross-country, it would have been the same. Either way it would have taken many hours and it was night. A reaction force would have lost hundreds to save a few dozen.

We had bag lunches at Lang Vei. It was extremely hot and airless. After lunch, we headed back up



The YG from Q with General Mundy (5th from right) at Khe Sanh

Route 9 to Khe Sanh. I knew that where the base had been is a coffee orchard now so I didn't expect to be able to see much. To my surprise, most of the trees were no taller than shrubs and they were in random patches. Not having trees overhead made it possible to "see up and out." It was the least altered of all the former bases we went to. Had it been allowed to grow over, it would have been covered with 30-foot trees and we would have seen nothing. This way, the lay of the land was clear and it was possible to get somewhat oriented.

Nothing is left but the general trace where the airstrip was. There is a badly deteriorated monument there that tells about the 10,000 Americans who were killed or captured by the glorious heroes of the People's Army. Everybody got a good laugh out of it. In the distance to the north was the ridgeline with Hills 950 and 1015. Hill 950 was the radio relay station called Rain belt Bravo. Because of the mountainous terrain in the Khe Sanh area, we rarely were able to communicate directly with the base.

There was a small detachment of Marine communications people there, and they often had to fend off attacks from the NVA who occupied the entire remainder of that ridgeline. It was the first thing I saw every morning as I came out of the Sergeant's hooch. Due to the humidity, it was very hazy but to the west I could just make out Hill 881 South. The other outpost hills were lost in the haze.

The base was abandoned shortly after the Marines made a Herculean effort to keep it during the Siege. It was bulldozed flat to keep the NVA from making use of it. By using a little dead reckoning, I think I got to within 100 feet of my old company area — Bravo Company, 3rd Recon Battalion. I collected a baggie of that unmistakable red dirt that predominates in the Khe Sanh area. After I got to where I thought I was closest, it really hit me as to where I was. Standing on that red dirt looking at the 1015 ridgeline, in that heat, and humidity, and stillness...it seemed like I had been there just last week.

The YG from Q were trying to be everywhere at once. They have studied — and know — this battle probably better than those of us who were here at the time. To have the opportunity to walk this ground and see the terrain features and landmarks was literally an opportunity of a lifetime for them. I turned twenty-one again while I was here. As I looked around the area, it was like playing a video in my head. I could see every building and tent and smell the diesel and aviation exhaust fumes.

Facing north and mentally scanning from left to right, over beyond the mess tent is the Charlie Med station just off the helicopter taxi pad. That's the last place I saw Garry Tallent. It was the day before my 21st birthday and his patrol, Primness, had just flown out on a pair of CH-46 helicopters. They inadvertently landed right on top of a NVA unit — what we refer to as a "Hot LZ" — which shot the chopper up and hit Tallent and the chopper door gunner. We were on the helo pad because we were waiting to be inserted into our patrol zone by the same helicopters. I thought the choppers were returning to pick my patrol up, but they were moving unusually fast. The lead chopper landed hard, and corpsmen from Charlie Med ran into it with stretchers. I was still thinking that maybe somebody had taken a bad fall or something but then they came out with Garry, blood all over, and I was hoping he was only unconscious.

The immediate reaction from my team was that one of them cursed and flung his rifle down on the helo pad. I barked at him to pick up his rifle and get a grip. We were just minutes away from possibly going into the same kind of situation, and I didn't need anyone who wasn't concentrating on the mission. Tallent had been my radioman on a number of patrols. Even when things got nasty, he was always smiling about something.

The helicopter his patrol had been on was shot up a bit so another one took us right out to our patrol zone. It wasn't until we came back almost a week later that we found out he had died. Because of the time delay involved, it didn't quite sink in. It was just that he wasn't around anymore.

Now, in my mind's eye, I'm looking at the regimental command post with its underground combat information center. Beside it is the watchtower that is manned at night, mainly to listen for the "poomp" of a mortar, or the deeper "boom" of artillery being fired at us from the hills. Rockets were harder to hear but if it was very still they made a sharp "Sssssh" when they were launched and sometimes at night you could see the flame of the afterburner. The sentry had a hand-cranked siren that was the incoming alarm that sent us scrambling for the bunkers. Rockets, especially, move very fast and the screaming noise they make is a real motivator to find

a hole to crawl into.

Across the road and down to the right a bit, I see the tiny PX that never had much in it and next to the PX was the post office. Then comes our company office followed by the two rows of hooches and squad tents that house the company. The last hooch down in the row next to the road is where we sergeants lived. We have two-thirds of the hooch and company supply has the rest. The next area down is Engineers, I think. Back on this side of the road is the shower tent. A crude affair, but better than nothing.

Going to the shower tent during the monsoon was always an adventure. There were two ways to do it. One was to go more or less fully dressed in the filthy utilities you had worn for days on patrol. The problem was that after you got squeaky clean from your shower, you had to wear the same foul rags back to the hooch unless you brought a clean uniform with you. If you did, the rain hammered down so hard that your clean, dry utilities were soaked and mud splattered by the time you got back to the hooch. Raincoats were nonexistent and most ponchos were full of holes and offered only minimal protection.

The other way to go to the shower tent was the Marine way. Usually we just put a towel around our waist, stepped into our shower shoes, and strolled across the road. We would arrive drenched and shivering from the cold. Some, to keep their towel dry, just rolled it up under their arm and walked over in their birthday suit. There was absolutely no need for modesty. The best part was in returning to the hooch. Wet shower shoes are slippery and there was mud everywhere. Watching people exit the shower tent was almost a spectator sport because a large number of clean people wound up prone in the mud and rain when they slid out of their shower shoes. Of course, that meant another shower. Sometimes in the monsoon it rained so hard we just stepped out of the hooch and took a "natural" shower on a wooden pallet placed there for that purpose.

There was quite a bit more to the base than that, but it's about all I ever saw. We were off base on patrols so much that when we were here, the time was spent maintaining bunkers and equipment and preparing for the next patrol. I can see the bunkers between the tents and I can see the one where "Doc" Miller, Scribner, Rosa and Popowitz were killed. Khe Sanh was taking a lot of in-coming rockets that day in January of 1968, and most of my platoon was in that bunker. I had, only a few weeks before, been transferred to the newly formed Echo Company, 3rd Recon, that was going to be operating out of Quang Tri.

A Russian 122mm rocket is 4_ inches in diameter and about six feet long. Two thirds of it is rocket motor and the rest is high powered explosives. One of them came right through the door of the bunker and detonated inside. They weren't just killed...they were torn to pieces. One of the guys trying to dig the wounded Marines out of the bunker said later that all they found of Scribner was his helmet with part of his skull still inside. He said the rocket must have gone off in Scribner's lap. They knew it was him because he had written his name and blood type on the helmet cover. Besides those four killed, everyone else in the bunker was wounded, some of them horribly.

I didn't know about that until a couple months later when the Siege was over and what was left of Bravo Company was brought down to Quang Tri where the rest of the 3rd Division was. Those of us who had come from Bravo went to see them and it seemed as if there was hardly anyone left. I talked to one of the sergeants, Dennis Herb, for a while and he filled me in on who from my platoon had been killed or wounded and medevaced out. I think there were only seven or eight of my platoon left in the company.

We didn't stay as long as we had intended. It was too heartbreaking to stand among the tatters of the mighty Bravo Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, USMC.

Most of the nearly 40% of casualties they took were not sustained facing the enemy. It was often due to the company's geographical position on the base. Any incoming that was fired at Charlie Med or the ammo dump that went wide either way, landed on Bravo. Any incoming fired at the regimental CP or the airstrip that went short or long, landed on Bravo. The company area became known as the V ring (as in the center of the target). After the Siege began, patrols outside the base were terminated, I don't think a Recon Marine ever fired a round at the enemy. But, that was when they took the majority of casualties. All they could do was dig their holes deeper.

Finding out that people I thought were alive had been killed three months before stunned me. Since I

hadn't been there when it happened and hadn't seen them in quite a while, there was not the same sense of immediate loss. They were just gone and there was nothing to be done about it. I began realizing that maybe a part of the reason for making this trip was because I never got to mourn those guys.

All of this flashed through my mind in a matter of seconds. I was glad I was alone. This was tougher than I thought. My original intent was to try to get as close to the company area as I could and, very privately, play "Amazing Grace," the "Marine's Hymn," and then "Taps" on my practice chanter. The practice chanter is not much more than a fancy flutophone and it's used for fingering practice for the bagpipes. The bad part is that it doesn't sound like much. Just sort of a muted buzzy sound. I had debated with myself whether to bring the bagpipes themselves and I finally decided that if I had them with me, at least I would have a choice. I deliberately did not bring the drones...those three big pipes that stick up over the left shoulder. I had correctly assumed our bags would get pretty rough treatment on this trip and I just didn't want the drones damaged. It was enough that I was risking damage to the pipe chanter, air bag, and blowpipe. However, the drawback to playing the pipes instead of the practice chanter is that the pipes were meant to be heard over the noise of battle, so if I did play them it would not go unnoticed.

Why would I care if anyone heard me? Isn't "Amazing Grace" an appropriate tune to play on such an occasion? The problem was that I had attempted to play "on the bag" only a few times and did badly to say the least. I had never gotten all the way through any one tune. Playing the practice chanter is not much more than blowing into a plastic tube. But playing the bagpipes brings several new dimensions into play. Imagine rubbing your stomach, patting your head, whistling a tune, and marching in step all at the same time, with almost no practice. Then, imagine doing all that at a very special event, in front of sixty people, with no practice at all. When General Mundy asked me in Hue if I would participate in the memorial service I was flattered to be asked, while at the same time knowing I couldn't do it. It was hard enough just being here, let alone being part of the program. After the group had some time to look around, General Mundy assembled us and began the memorial service by presenting a Purple Heart medal to Rob Sutter, a former Marine captain, for his brother who had



At the memorial service at Khe Sanh. Hills 950 and 1015 hazy in the background. 2nd from left kneeling, Col. Warren Wiedhahn, president of Military Historical Tours; 6th from left standing, Rob Sutter; 6th from left kneeling, LtCol. Howard Christy; Me standing in the back, 8th from left; standing center, dark shirt Gen. Carl Mundy; 10th from right standing in back. Fr. Alan McLean; 5th from right standing, Col. Bruce Meyers; far right standing, Ed Henry, tour leader.

been killed here. That was followed by comments from the General and Alan McLean, a former Marine 2nd Lieutenant who had lost both legs and is now an Episcopalian Priest.

I was pacing around behind the group trying to calm down. I kept trying to wet my lips but I was so dry I virtually couldn't spit. A recording of the Marine's Hymn and Taps was played and, finally, General Mundy gave me a nod. If I'd had any confidence at all that I could do this, I would have just launched into "Amazing Grace" from behind the group. Remember...I had never played a complete tune on the bag and I had only attempted that in front of my pipe instructor.

Even though I knew it would break the mood a little, I felt I had to explain that this was a maiden flight for me so I started saying something like, "I should tell you all that..." and they all turned around! With everyone looking at me I instantly felt I was going to make a damn fool of myself. This was a very personal and serious occasion for me and the enormity of it kind of overwhelmed me. I had to stop and regroup for a moment. I then went on to explain my situation and that if they would bear with me, I'd give it a shot.



I play better now.

It must have been pure adrenaline, but I did it! It wasn't perfect, but it was "Amazing Grace!" Ordinarily, a solo piper plays that tune through twice. When I got to the end of the first rendition, I didn't dare do it again. I instantly felt 20 pounds lighter. I had amazed myself. As I was putting my pipes away all the Khe Sanh veterans came over and patted me on the back or put their arm around me and said it was great. There wasn't any phoniness about it either. They really meant what they said. I couldn't see very well right then, but I think it was Rob Sutter who put his arm around me and said, "Thanks, brother." It was well worth all the mental wear and tear I had put myself through.

I felt completely dehydrated. I bought two cans of pop from a little girl not much bigger than her cooler and chugged both of them down. That was it. I had done what I came to do and for the rest of the trip I would just be Joe Tourist. There was a drawback, however. Now everyone was convinced that I was just too modest and was, in fact, the pro from Aberdeen!

The sun was heading down as we left Khe Sanh. My only regret was not being there at sunset so I could hear the Rock Apes hooting in the hills. Rock Apes was the generic name we gave to any monkey we saw. The most common were a gibbon-like animal that traveled in groups through the treetops as easily as we walk down the street. Every evening, just at sunset, when we were in the bush on missions, the Rock Apes would settle into their roosts and begin howling. It was a long, drawn out "whoo-whooo-whooo" that gradually went up in pitch. Imagine the din when thirty or forty of them were going at it. This chorus would last about fifteen minutes, and we could sometimes hear it coming from several locations around us. When on patrol, the closer we set in at night to one of these groups without spooking them, the better off we were. The Rock Apes did not hoot if anything unusual was going on, so a lot of monkey noise nearby meant we could relax just a little.

The return to Dong Ha was long and quiet. I checked out the room and noticed that the beds were clean and freshly made but that was the extent of the amenities. The waitresses and other staff were in spotless white *Ao Dai*s and were very efficient. They probably hadn't seen this many people at once in a long time. The food was fair but there were a couple dishes I noticed hardly anyone touched. We just weren't sure what it was. About 9:30 I dragged myself up the stairs, got buzzed by a bat in the hall, and hit the sack.

I decided to take the day off because the group was going to two or three locations that I had never been to when I was here thirty years ago. Just by coincidence I found out that three other people were staying back to go to the Lew Puller School in Dong Ha to deliver pens, pencils, etc. Puller was the son of Marine Corps legend General Lewis Burwell Puller who, while in Vietnam, lost both legs, as well as other serious wounds. Because of who he was, or rather, who his father was, there was tremendous pressure for him to be THE SON OF CHESTY PULLER! His wounds brought his Marine Corps career to a crashing halt and he fell into various

addictions and mental problems. One thing he accomplished, though, was to generate considerable donations to an organization called the Vietnamese Memorial Association that was formed to build schools in Vietnam. Because of his efforts, the first of these schools was named the Lew Puller School and there is a bronze plaque with his likeness on it near the front door of the school.

The other three people visiting the school had known Lew as a kid and teenager. This was a special visit for them. Ed Henry had told me that a visit to the school was planned, but I wasn't sure if it necessarily meant the whole group was going. Since I was staying back and had no other plans, I asked if I could go along. I had about ten pounds of pencils, pens, and crayons with me. After a ten minute kamikaze ride we arrived at the school. The cabs pulled into the schoolyard and right up to a flagpole. The school is a masonry, two story, L shaped building with about a two-acre schoolyard. The hallways are external, much like many buildings in the southern US.

One of the group had the headmaster's name, a Mr. Quoc. Somehow, he thought it was pronounced "duck." Two people came out and he asked for Mr. Duck. They obviously didn't speak or understand English, and they had no idea what the word "mister" meant, so the word "duck" had no relevance either. After a few minutes of asking into the whereabouts of Mr. Duck, the desk clerk/spy came out with a lady who turned out to be Mrs. Mai, the assistant headmistress. She understood just a little English, didn't know anything about Mr. Duck, but invited us to her office. It was about ten by twelve feet and had little in it aside from two tables arranged in a T shape with chairs around them. As we sat down, a thermos of green tea was produced and poured into a china teapot, and, from there, into tiny china cups. We toasted, I don't know what. Our spokesman kept trying to explain our presence in his horrible French, which the younger Vietnamese do not speak.

Finally, a couple of us just opened the bags of stuff we'd brought. I think it was only then that Mrs. Mai realized why we'd come. She was very happy to see the pencils and pens and when she saw the two cigar boxes of crayons I'd brought she appeared very surprised and grateful.

Someone began beating what sounded like a bass drum and all the kids came pouring out into the schoolyard. There are two sessions, morning and afternoon, for grades one through six and the total enrollment is 374. Most of the kids wear the school uniform of white shirt and blue pants or skirt. They immediately fell into ranks. For you tactical types, it looked like battalion in column with companies on line) and began a few simple exercises to the beat of the drum. The littlest ones were in the middle and just kind of jumped around. Then, at a certain signal on the drum, they all went screaming back into the school. I had gone down the hall and around the corner to videotape them and before I knew it, my position was overrun and I was hip deep in munchkins.

After things calmed down, they were herded back to their classrooms and we were shown the school's computer room. There were six or eight rather used looking computers someone had donated. Like our hotel, there does not seem to be any electricity during the day so I don't know what good they were. We were introduced to the computer teacher, so I guess they use them, but I don't know when.

On the way to the school, we had passed a large intersection where two or three blown-up American tanks are on display. They are just rusted hulks with weeds growing up around them with a sign dedicated to the Heroes of the People's Army. On the way back to the hotel, the guy in the cab with me said something about stopping to take a picture. I said I would rather not because my ankle was quite sore (it was) and he said OK. In my mind, though, I didn't want to stop because I knew what our tanks look like and didn't need a picture.. It's probably just me but I think any show of interest in something like that is demeaning. It is a monument to the actions of communist forces that almost certainly resulted in American deaths. Remember, even though we are now in South Vietnam, we are in communist South Vietnam and are officially the bad guys...the enemy...the defeated enemy. Except for the South Vietnamese who know better, the people here see us as returning survivors of a beaten invader.

Back at the hotel, I took a short nap and then went down to meet the other three for lunch. While I was lounging in the lobby talking to the desk clerk/spy, a group of about a dozen doctors, nurses, and EMTs from the States checked in. They were in Vietnam holding clinics in several rural areas. I'm not sure

who their sponsor was but there are lots of groups like them working all over the world.

About 4:30 the rest of our group came in, tired and dusty. At 6:00 we had an audience in the restaurant with a Mr. Ky. He was a company commander at Khe Sanh, an NVA company commander, that is. Now he is the 2nd to the top dog in the Dong Ha district of Quang Tri province. He arrived with a small entourage including the ever-present Political Officer who is the watchdog at official functions. The Political Officer introduced Mr. Ky to us and made some welcoming remarks. By now it was dusk outside and the electricity had not yet been turned back on so the only light was from light stands put up by the film crew.

Through one of our two interpreters, Cheong, (pronounced Chee-ung) Mr. Ky gave us the party line about letting the past go and work on the future. Blah, Blah, Blah. About then the electricity came on. There was some lengthy discussion between Mr. Ky and Cheong but before any translation was made, Thrinh, (pronounced Cheen), our other interpreter said that Mr. Ky would now take any comments or questions about the action at Khe Sanh. Apparently that was the wrong thing to say because the Political Officer immediately jumped in and there was more discussion in rapid fire Vietnamese. Then Cheong said that because Mr. Ky had another pressing engagement, he would have to be leaving soon and it would be more productive to talk about the future. Afterward, there were several people honestly wondering if we would see Trinh again. Two former Viet Cong who had been in this area were introduced. One was pretty normal looking. The other guy looked like a pretty tough nut.

A couple of people made a few comments and General Mundy made a few comments. Then Mr. Ky and entourage made their exit. The whole thing was pretty much a dog and pony show, but I guess that's politics. We were all ushered out of the restaurant so they could set up for dinner. While we were waiting, the power went off again and the waitresses passed out candles. That probably happens a lot. After about thirty minutes the power was restored and we had dinner. Power went out again at 9:00.

Trinh showed up for breakfast, alive and well, so I guess he didn't dishonor his family too badly. We left the hotel for the bus ride back down to Da Nang but on the way, we stopped at the Puller School. This was obviously the planned visit I wasn't sure about. They trooped all the kids out for the aerobics demonstration, but it wasn't like yesterday. That was much better. We stopped at a few sites in the Dong Ha area and then headed south.

On the 20th, it would be Colonel Meyers' 50th anniversary. His wife was here on the trip and they will be re-married by Father McLean. Colonel Meyers asked me to play "Amazing Grace" for them at their wedding. That was also the anniversary of their son's death. Another no-pressure situation. As mentioned before, I think some people think I know how to play bagpipes. They were soon to be shown the error of their thinking.

Tomorrow the group would be in An Hoa. I hadn't planned on going but Colonel Christy hinted that he would very much like "Amazing Grace" played there. He lost 100 Marines there in an ambush because of a screw-up at battalion HQ. He wanted me to play the "Navy Hymn (Eternal Father)" but there aren't enough holes on the chanter to cover the octaves needed to play it. Colonel Christy didn't mention my pipes for An Hoa, so I didn't bring it up. We cycled over to the Military Museum. It was sometimes difficult to keep a straight face after reading the ludicrous captions on most of the photos. I saw the same photo in three different places in the museum with a different caption on each of them. The picture was of an American GI leaning against a tree with his head down as if he was taking a breather. One caption had him "trapped in a valley," another had him "retreating before the People's Army," and the third had him, "lamenting the crimes he had committed."

Many items on display were nothing more than propaganda posters showing smiling NVA distributing rice to the oppressed people of the American-backed puppet regime of the South. There were large maps of battles where the NVA killed "thousands" of Americans. Oddly enough, Khe Sanh and Hue did not appear on any map and there was no other mention of either place. One photo showed two US medics obviously treating a Vietnamese heat casualty and one of them was holding a canteen to the victim's mouth. The caption explained, "Two American criminals were administering water torture to a brave patriot." Yet another showed a number of NVA looking over several bodies lying on the ground. The caption read, "Our brave warriors examining some of

the 1000 Americans killed in May 1965." In May of 1965 I'm not sure there were much more than 1000 Americans in all of Vietnam, let alone that many killed in one action. The best part was that all the bodies in the photo were clearly Asian! The photo contradicted the caption. I guess it must be a case of "don't believe your eyes, believe what you're told."

I took a nap and then hung out in the lobby until 6:30pm when I went with Father McLean to the hotel restaurant to help him set up for Colonel and Mrs. Meyers' wedding. Alan suggested I pipe them in to the "Marine's Hymn" and then at a certain point play "Amazing Grace." Despite how things turned out at Khe Sanh, I didn't have any more confidence in myself and was rapidly getting very nervous. I had not previously learned the Hymn and had taught it to myself on the practice chanter only over the past couple of days.

The restaurant was not air conditioned. My hands were very sweaty. My fingers kept sliding off the holes on the chanter and I messed up both tunes. I was probably trying to hold the chanter too tight. Later, the Meyers' and others said I did a good job and the missed notes didn't mean a thing, but it didn't make me feel much better. I didn't plan on doing any command performances. With my nearly total lack of experience as a musician, to have my first two gigs be a 30th anniversary memorial service and a 50th anniversary repeating of the vows was like a passenger trying to land a 747 after the pilots both have heart attacks.

The Meyers' wedding was held under "field conditions," but otherwise went well. The hotel provided two huge flower baskets and a cake and had made up a sign congratulating them on their anniversary. The English spelling was very creative, but they tried hard. The hotel and restaurant staff was there for the service and knew what was happening, but they all looked a little confused at our bizarre rituals. Tomorrow we'd fly to Saigon.

Only two more nights in country after that. We stayed at the Saigon Star Hotel. Another very nice hotel. Saigon is very different than any city we've seen so far. Except for the signs in Vietnamese and the obvious Asian population, you would think you were in a typical large European city. Wide streets and boulevards, relatively clean with a lot of space devoted to parks.

During a farewell dinner that night, there was a single table set with a black table cloth, a plate with a little bit of rice on it, and a vase with a rose. The chair was tipped up as if it was being saved for someone. It represented the missing man.... those dead or unaccounted for. After dinner, there were several toasts and General Mundy was presented a marble plaque. The floor was then opened for any remarks and several people made very moving comments.

All in all, it was a memorable trip and MHT did a flawless job. I would highly recommend it to anyone and even if you weren't there during the war, it's a tremendous trip into a significant era of Marine Corps History.

Steve

Marine Combat Engineers At The 1968 Siege of Khe Sanh

The 35th Anniversary of the Start of the Siege

Story by Bill Gay, Bruce Bell, David Critchley, Frank Kledas, Terry Parr, John Pessoni, and Gerald Traum

This is a history of the part that 1st Platoon, A Company, 3rd Engineer Battalion (Combat), 3rd Marine Division played in the North Vietnamese Army Siege of Khe Sanh during the 1968 Tet Offensive. We had a great platoon. We are proud of what we did.

We paid heavily as many units did. At least eight members of our platoon were killed. So many were wounded that none know the final count. Several are disabled today from wounds and from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).



We write this history for each other, our fallen comrades, our families, the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, at the urging of an older VA PTSD counselor who uses this history to train younger counselors when someone says they were in the Siege.

As our reasons for writing this history increased, so did its length. We added background to help all families understand Khe Sanh. As each of us remembered more, we added more details. Skip over the background information if you already know it. Smile with us as you read the personal stories. We decided that the only truth that is absolute is that each of us remembers the truth differently.



The Khe Sanh Tactical Area of Operations

What Khe Sanh was can be succinctly defined by the titles of historical works authored by Chaplain Ray Stubbe of the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines ("The Valley of Decision" and "The Final Formation"); by writer Robert Pisor ("The End of The Line – The Siege of Khe Sanh"); and combat photographer David Douglas Duncan ("I Protest").

The Khe Sanh valley and surrounding mountains were beautiful, settled by the Bru mountain tribes, Vietnamese villagers and French coffee plantations. Located in the northwest corner of Vietnam about ten kilometers from North Vietnam and Laos, the valley was an important logistics and invasion route for the North Vietnamese Army when they invaded the South.

Hundreds of US fighting men died and thousands more were wounded, as Stubbe states "because of Khe Sanh." Thousands of Bru and Vietnamese citizens and tens of thousands of NVA soldiers were killed and wounded at of Khe Sanh. The French had a combat base at Khe Sanh before 1954. Army Special Forces started operating in the area in the 1960s. Marines arrived in the mid-60s, building a combat base and defeating the NVA in the vicious fights to control the hills surrounding the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB), what were later known as "The Hill Battles."

The US presence reached its peak in late 1967 and early 1968 when the 26th Marine Regiment held the KSCB and the Hills against attacks by two NVA Divisions. The NVA attackers probably outnumbered US defenders about 4 or 5 to 1, even though the 26th Marines were reinforced by the 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, all types of Marine units including 1/A/3rd Engineers, Army, Air Force, Navy units, and a South Vietnamese Army Ranger Battalion.

Route 9, a single lane road, connected the larger Vietnamese cities and Marine bases in the east to Khe Sanh. It also connected Khe Sanh to Laos. The Viet Cong and NVA damaged the eastern length of the highway beyond use sometime in 1967, denying US forces the benefit of being supplied or reinforced by road. The western length of Route 9 to Laos remained open, enabling the NVA to supply and reinforce their units from the Ho Chi Minh Trail. With Route 9 cut, the Marines at the KSCB and on the Hills had to be supplied by air.

That was not too difficult when the Marine garrison numbered only about 1,000. US planes could airdrop supplies on the KSCB using radar controls from the coast near Da Nang, even when visibility fell to a matter of a few feet during the Winter Monsoon season. Supply by air became a real challenge when our strength grew to over 5,000. Supplying the Hills was a tougher job. The Hill defenders, and those who risked their lives supplying them suffered greatly.

The Siege Begins

The fiercely fought 1968 Tet Offensive started at Khe Sanh at the height of the Monsoon season. Close Air Support by fighter-bombers and helicopter gunships, and medical evacuation aircraft often could not help the defenders of Khe Sanh in those early days.

NVA artillery hit the main KSCB ammunition dump the very first time the NVA unleashed what became almost daily massive shelling attacks. The Lang Vei Army Special Forces camp near Laos and the few Marines with the Vietnamese militia in Khe Sanh village were quickly overrun by large NVA forces. NVA tanks, never before used by the NVA against US Forces, smashed through the wire at Lang Vei.

The Marines on the Hills defeated violent NVA attacks. The KSCB was also probed by NVA ground forces.With the Hills and the KSCB undefeated, the NVA used its overwhelming troop strength, artillery and rocket resources, and logistics capability to create the Siege of Khe Sanh.



The NVA relentlessly punished defenders of the Hills and the KSCB with mortars, artillery, rockets, recoilless rifle fire, and direct rifle fire for 77 days until early April. We all knew we could be hit at any time or crushed when an explosion collapsed a bunker or trench.Our normal human senses took on animal-like acuity. We moved like cats from one protective cover to another to minimize the chance of a being hit by a round we did not hear coming. But we heard most of them coming and tensely waited to find out if that round would wound or kill us, a friend, or a nearby stranger.

In April, the Marines broke out of the KSCB and the Hills, attacking the NVA. Many more Marines were wounded and died in these fights, part of Operation Pegasus. The 11th Engineers broke all records building about eighteen bridges and bypasses to enable Army and Marine ground forces to flood into the Khe Sanh area by road, and overland.

More Marines were killed and wounded in engagements in the following months until the Marines departed in the summer of 1968. This departure permanently ended the US presence at the KSCB and on the Hills. Marine, Vietnamese, Army Special Forces and Army regular units continued to operate around Khe Sanh on a temporary basis inflicting great damage on NVA units while continuing to suffer casualties themselves.

Lightly equipped Combat Engineers such as 1st Plt A Co 3rd Engrs were always fighting alongside the Marine maneuver units. More heavily equipped Force Engineers, such as the 11th Engineer Battalion, were always working somewhere to keep supplies flowing to the Marine maneuver units.

Few Knew The Magnitude Of The Siege

From official government records, we know that more US bombs were dropped in defense of Khe Sanh than were dropped in some major theaters during all of World War II. Courageous Air Force and Marine cargo plane and fighter-bomber pilots and crews, and helicopter pilots and crews from all services kept our supplies, replacements, and close air support coming no matter how much NVA anti-aircraft fire was directed at them and no matter how many aircraft and men they lost.

Special US intelligence units in Thailand listened to NVA movements on sensors that a Special Navy anti-submarine warfare squadron, diverted from sea duty, dropped around us. That information helped Marine and Army artillery Forward Observers and Air Force Forward Air Controllers direct devastating fire on NVA units night and day when the NVA prepared attacks.

We recently learned from an article in **Red Clay**, the KSVA Magazine, that the Navy flight crews who dropped the sensors had to fly so low and slow they were decimated. Most of us crawling in Khe Sanh's red clay never knew these brave men were sacrificing themselves to help us survive.

The Joint Service effort and US technology that helped us win the Siege was impressive, but in the final analysis it was the individual Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines at Khe Sanh that held firm, enduring the worst artillery and ground attacks the NVA could deliver. Human costs were high for everyone. Stubbe recorded the names of about 600 US confirmed killed in action. The Charlie Med surgeons log shows they treated about 2,500 wounded in action.

Those numbers don't include all the wounded, and may not include all the dead evacuated directly off the Hills to the rear, the Navy fliers who perished dropping sensors, the pilots and aircrews from all Services shot down, the Special Forces and CIA operatives killed in Laos and North Vietnam while directing fire on NVA reinforcements heading for Khe Sanh, and others that we are just learning about. If we knew who all of those warriors were, the total of US warriors lost at Khe Sanh would be much higher.

Additionally, thousands of innocent Bru mountain tribe members and Vietnamese civilians were murdered by the NVA when the NVA swept into the area. US firepower probably killed many more of

those that could not escape the area when we started bombing, or chose to stay in their ancestral homes. Official estimates of NVA casualties around Khe Sanh are about 15,000. Thousands more NVA died on the Ho Chi Minh Trail carrying supplies to the two reinforced NVA Divisions surrounding Khe Sanh.

The once green landscape around Khe Sanh became a barren moonscape from US bombs and US and NVA artillery. Huge amounts of Agent Orange herbicide was sprayed and has ruined the lives of many fighters and civilians on both sides. We've learned that tactical nuclear weapons were positioned for use in case US forces at Khe Sanh were in real danger of falling. Anyone who knows the terrain at Khe Sanh knows that everyone in the area on both sides would have suffered badly if tactical nuclear weapons had been used.

Presidential Recognition

Khe Sanh was declared one of the most significant battles of the Vietnam War. We now know that President Johnson had a scale model of Khe Sanh in the White House and was briefed almost daily on our ability to hold. It would be years before we personally understood the significance of having survived Khe Sanh. Khe Sanh was mostly just red clay to us. We saw it from a few inches off the ground. While we were there, we doubt any of us thought of Khe Sanh's strategic significance. For their dedicated efforts the defenders of Khe Sanh were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, which is equivalent to the Navy Cross, if it were an individual award.

After the fall of South Vietnam in April 1975, the NVA erected a victory monument at Khe Sanh attesting to the importance of Khe Sanh to their side. Today, the NVA monument is viewed by international tourists visiting the battlefields. Tourists unfamiliar with the many battles at Khe Sanh may believe the NVA victory claims. The US and Vietnamese forces who fought there know the truth: We won.

The Engineer Build Up

By military doctrine, one Combat Engineer Platoon normally supports one Infantry Battalion. We contribute our expertise with demolitions. We also have pioneer tool chests with axes, shovels, and chain saws. Marine Engineers normally leave these at a base camp.

Combat Engineers carry the same weapons and ammunition as the Infantry. Every Engineer also carries two or more twenty-pound Satchel Charges of explosives. The joke is that a Marine Combat Engineer is really only "a grunt with a satchel charge."

Our Combat Engineer Platoon, 1/A/3, supported the entire Khe Sanh Combat Base. By doctrine, this mission normally would be assigned to a reinforced Combat Engineer Company, a force about five times larger than our platoon and much better equipped.

We were faced with doing the best we could with the meager resources we had. We radioed our company in Dong Ha once a day to report our dead and wounded and plead for replacements and supplies, but few came. We became more exhausted as our casualties mounted, but we never stopped working.

Exhausted men doing a great deal with few resources was the normal state of most support units at Khe Sanh. None of us were going to let anyone down on the KSCB, or on the Hills. In late Fall 1967, our platoon had less than twenty members. We sent teams on 1/26 operations, did mine sweeps and civic action projects in the village, blasted rock for the Seabees to use to improve the runway and roads and operated the KSCB water point. Life was not very dangerous, then.

Battle-weary Engineer veterans such as Cpl Gerald Traum, who fought in the fierce 1967 Hill fights, completed their tours and left for "The World." The rest of us recording this history were arriving. After Thanksgiving 1967, our platoon strength increased to over forty. We knew a big fight was coming, but we had no idea that fight would become the Siege.

Another Combat Engineer Platoon from C Company, 3rd Engineer Battalion arrived about the time the Siege started. We were so busy, we seldom saw them, and strangely, none of us recall what they did. We hope someone records their story. We know they must have been as busy as we were. Captain Bert Ranta arrived to coordinate all Engineer work with the regimental staff. Ranta lived with our platoon in a bunker with 2/Lt. Bill Gay and our platoon sergeant, S/Sgt Ronald C. Sniegowski.

From then on we cleared acres of fields of fire, built hundreds of meters of barbed wire fences, planted hundreds of booby traps and mines, retrieved tons of air dropped supplies that drifted into the minefields, cleared many dead NVA from the minefields, built bunkers, and miraculously kept

the water point flowing. We also served as listening posts and reinforced perimeter positions at night.

We worked every day and almost every night in small teams. We seldom knew if our teams had a good or bad day until we returned to our bunkers. That is when we found out about our losses for the day. Some evenings were joyous and some sad.We were only with the units we supported for a short time before we moved on to another mission. Some units never realized we were Combat Engineers. This is why it is so important for Engineers to stay in touch. We were not part of a big family support group like an Infantry Company.

New Fields of Fire and Protective Fencing

In the fall of 1967 most of the perimeter around the KSCB did not have cleared fields of fire or good protective barbed wire fencing. In December 1967, Lt.Gay was talking to 1/Lt. Tim Reeves on the regimental staff about how the perimeter could be improved. Reeves took Gay to talk to Col Lownds about what could be done. Within a day Lownds ordered the Seabees to provide earth moving equipment to help us clear fields of fire, and ordered several Infantry Platoons to work with us to build new barbed wire fences.

The new fences, looking from the enemy side inward, consisted of a high double apron, then a wide empty space to prevent NVA Sappers (i.e., their combat engineers) from breeching more than one fence at a time. An extra wide belt of tangle foot fence, another wide empty space, a triple concertina fence, and another wide empty space before reaching the Marine trenches. Everyone worked hard. The Seabees welded pipes to the sledge hammer heads to replace the broken wooden handles we broke at record rates. We placed empty artillery shell canisters over the fence pickets to create a bigger target for the hammers. Everyone innovated. This Infantry, Engineer Team effort dramatically changed the KSCB perimeter in a few days. The vegetation that once came up almost to the old broken wire was removed. In its place was bare red clay and formidable fencing. The new perimeter protected most of the KSCB and the Special Forces FOB trench lines before the Siege started.

After the start of the Siege, it was too dangerous to clear fields of fire with the Seabee equipment. We did it by hand, burning grass with unused artillery powder bags, and cutting down trees with demolitions. We continued to help the Vietnamese Rangers, 1/9, and 3/26 improve their perimeters while they did a lot by themselves. We wanted very much to help the Hills, but there were not enough of us to be sent there too. We were proud of how much our efforts improved the KSCB perimeter.

Before the Siege, the only type of mines protecting the perimeter was the highly effective Claymore placed by the grunts. But they would not have been enough if wave after wave of NVA attacked. We added hundreds of "Bouncing Betty" and "Shoe Polish Can" anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines, and innovative booby traps. Our booby traps were made to look like fencing material we left behind in the typical manner of US troops who had too much material. However each of those partially used rolls of barbed wire or abandoned steel stakes was booby trapped and set to explode if an NVA tried to crawl or charge through the fencing. At first, we were able to use the cover of the monsoon fog to hide us when we placed mines. When the weather cleared we had to crawl around in the daylight, or, wait to place the mines at night to avoid NVA fire.

We were often shot at by NVA recoilless rifles and mortars. We never understood why NVA snipers did not kill us one at a time. We expected they would start picking us off one by one any day, which made placing the mines even more stressful. We recorded many of the minefield layouts on cardboard C-ration case covers because we did not have minefield recording sheets. In many cases we paced off the distance between mines by moving on our hands and knees to avoid being shot at or mortared while standing.

We did all this with only one compass that we guarded carefully. When Lt. Gay was wounded he held tightly to that compass even while being treated at Charlie Med, until he could pass it on to Sgt. Sniegowski. If that compass was off, anyone entering the minefields with another compass was at risk. Over the years, we've had the chance to talk to Marine and Army troops that used our minefield recording sheets. We are proud to say that whenever the sheets could be found they were found to be accurate preventing US casualties. Sadly there were many situations where the recording sheets were not found and troops were wounded in our minefields.

We had lots of close calls in the minefields. Once, one our squads found themselves in a maze of

grenade and trip wire booby traps the ARVN Rangers placed without telling anyone. While extracting themselves, they crawled through the human waste the Rangers routinely left in front of their positions. We decided that pushing Bouncing Betty mine detonation prongs through a piece of human waste was another good way to fool NVA Sappers, so we added it to our list of camouflage tricks from that day forward.

Many other close calls came as we armed hundreds, if not thousands of mines. We found many old ones from World War II and the Korean War to be in poor condition. We tried to "get the word out" every time we found a problem or a solution because we knew the grunts on the Hills were placing their own mines. Other terrifying close calls came when air dropped supplies would miss the drop zone and land in the minefields. Sometimes we only had to carry the supplies out of the minefields. Other times we would stand frozen in a partially finished minefield as parachutes with tons of palletized supplies came rushing out of the fog. It was a miracle that those pallets did not set off a mine near us or crush any of us.

Many NVA Sappers were surprised and killed by our booby traps as they tried to infiltrate at night, especially in front of the ARVN Rangers. The NVA would have taken heavy losses if our artillery and air power did not stop all of the full-scale attacks they tried to mount against the KSCB. It was gruesome and scary going back in to our minefields to get the NVA bodies out because they were mangled and we knew any mine near the one they set off was now super sensitized. But going in to get their bodies out became a regular task.

Taking the NVA Prisoner That Told Us About The NVA Battle Plans

Shortly before the NVA ground attacks started and after much work on the new fields of fire and protective fences was finished, an NVA recon patrol, including senior officers, risked taking a personal look at the new perimeter. They were discovered and killed trying to escape. As they retreated, one NVA Officer stayed behind and hid. After a few days, he surrendered to the Engineers as we placed mines on the perimeter. We turned him over to the grunts and kept working. His information caused Hill units to attack the NVA while the NVA was moving into position to attack the Hills. A good part of the NVA battle plan must have been changed by the Marines taking the initiative and attacking first.

Imagine what would have happened if the new perimeter had not concerned the NVA so much that they felt they had to try their daring reconnaissance patrol, enabling an NVA officer with so much knowledge of the coming attacks to defect and warn us? Also imagine what would have happened if the few ground attack probes the NVA did try against the KSCB were not so restricted by all the new fields of fire, fences, and minefields?

Opening the Runway on 21 January 1968

When the NVA artillery attacks started on 21 January 1968, the Engineers immediately went to work clearing shells blown out of the ammo dump onto the airstrip. It was a hectic morning filled with CS tear gas, confusion from enemy fire and secondary explosions. We know there were EOD personnel on the KSCB, but we can not remember working with them that day. There was just so much to do that everybody just did what was needed without formal coordination. We did our part to get the airstrip opened, to get casualties out and keep supplies coming in.

Building Bunkers

Before the Siege, many units at the KSCB lived in tents on wooden platforms surrounded by 55 gallon drums filled with dirt and topped with sandbags to create protective walls. After the first day of the Siege, everyone wanted to live completely underground in bunkers. Fortunately, we always lived in bunkers. Before the Siege, friends from other units joked about our damp, dark, cramped bunkers. After the Siege started, everyone envied us. Throughout the Siege, we built some bunkers but mostly, according to military doctrine, we trained people to build them themselves. That was a way to get everyone building.

The Fire Direction Center (FDC) bunker we built for 1/13 was the biggest bunker we built. It is an amusing story. None of us were trained to build large bunkers. We were trained to blow up bunkers, tunnels, and bridges. After brainstorming we ended up using the Seabee equipment to dig a large slit trench over which we built a bridge strong enough to carry a tank. Then, we covered it.

We put empty artillery canisters upside down on the bunker to create a "burster layer." A burster layer detonates a round above an empty space, dissipating



S/Sgt. Ronald Sniegowski building a bunker.

the explosion instead of focusing it on the bunker structure. In this case, the NVA rounds exploded when they hit the canister tops, dissipated the blast into the empty shell casings. We got the word out about this use of empty 105 canisters. Soon, almost everyone was making their bunkers stronger with "burster layers." That saved a lot of lives.

Our burster layer solution was real personal. One of our bunkers took a direct hit. Thanks to the burster layer only a support beam split. The bunker did not cave in — that could have killed or wounded many of us. We emerged shaken but alive and started building double and triple burster layers.

The Water Point Miracle

Our success in keeping the KSCB supplied with water was a miracle. We can't believe the NVA didn't target the KSCB water supply. They probably never thought that a reinforced Regiment would depend on a water source located outside of its perimeter and not under its control all the time. The water point was set up sometime in early 1967 outside the eventual KSCB perimeter. This was probably done when the Marines thought they would just be there temporarily.

We had to pump water up from a stream located in a gully on the north side of the perimeter. The NVA could have diverted or contaminated our water source since the stream flowed from terrain the NVA held. The pump had to be hauled down to the stream to pump water up to fill storage bladders. We drew a lot of mortar fire doing that. They could have ambushed us and destroyed the pump every time we rolled it down the hill to pump water up. To our amazement, even though the NVA routinely hit us with recoilless rifle fire when we worked in the minefields, they never ambushed us when we hauled the pump out. They never had a sniper take us out, even though we had to haul the pump out once every few days.

We may have survived because we hauled the pump at such great speed that we surprised everyone. One day we narrowly escaped a napalm drop by the Air Force near the pump site, because the FAC didn't know we were out there. The pipe from the pump up to the bladders was often punctured. During one especially long afternoon and night, we had to figure out how to create a whole new pipeline from damaged pieces. How we solved that unique problem is hilariously funny to explain now. It wasn't funny then. We were being mortared almost the whole time we were crawling around fixing the pipeline. The bladders and purification equipment were damaged daily. We could write a book about the innovative ways we repaired them. Before long, we were patching the patches.

An Engineer Lance Corporal (we think his name was Shipman) kept the water point operating. He is one of Khe Sanh's many unsung, unglamorous heroes. He was always working in wet torn clothes. He also always sported a few bandages from small shrapnel wounds for which he didn't feel he should receive a Purple Heart. Shipman is one of many that deserves an award but never got one. We all just thought we were just doing our job. If Shipman's name was Christman, he died with one of our other platoon members, PFC Emmett Stanton, when the chopper they were on was shot down on 28 February. Stanton and Christman are both listed as "unit unknown" on the KSV Memorial List. Being killed and unidentified was the lot that befell Engineers, since we were attached to larger units and not always accurately counted in the confusion of combat.

Most of us at Khe Sanh didn't even know Stanton was killed until years later. Until we hear otherwise, we will place Christman among our honored fallen, rather than leave him listed as "unit unknown." He



The water point.

had an MOS that was related to the 350 GPM fuel pump that was cleaned and used to pump water to the KSCB.

PFC Delano arrived to replace Christman to keep the water point going. He was soon killed by shrapnel. Who would have ever thought running a water point could be so dangerous? Imagine what Khe Sanh would have been like if we had to run patrols down to the stream to get cans of water instead of pumping it up at 350 gallons a minute, or worse yet, if we had to fly water in because the NVA diverted the stream or simply dumped a few of their decaying dead in the stream everyday?

Bunker Rats

Ray Stubbe in a recent article in **Red Clay** quoted World War II studies that found that as many as 90% of combatants exposed to continual combat for over 60 days suffer some form of battle fatigue. That wouldn't surprise us, especially when you add the effects of our horrendous living conditions to our constant exposure to danger. Our normal physical condition was one of continual stress from being exposed to danger and to the loss of our comrades, sleep deprivation, hunger bordering on malnutrition, and incredible body filth because we had only enough water to drink.

Our bunkers were alone at the northeast end of the airstrip, across the road from a 1/13 artillery battery. Being alone was good because we could keep our area clean thus controlling the never ending battle with the rats infesting all the bunkers on the KSCB. Other units had to evacuate personnel because of rat bites. That never happened to us. The bad news about our bunker locations was the incessant artillery fire directly over us night and day. The outgoing, added to the constant enemy incoming, made it hard for those of us not helping the grunts man the perimeter at night to get any sleep.

Our isolated position at the end of the airstrip also made it necessary for us to man guard positions around our own area. It would have been easy for an NVA Sapper to drop a satchel charge in our bunkers if one had ever penetrated the perimeter. Between the physically exhausting workload everyday and the perimeter or guard duty we had every night, we probably were much more severely sleep deprived than we ever imagined. Getting basic supplies was also a challenge. Engineers, like other support units at KSCB that operated in a quasi-orphan status without a parent organization often had to scrounge what we needed. Some of our exploits sound like they were written for *MASH,* the TV Show.

We would trade C4 plastic explosives, which could be burned to heat C-rations, for canned fruit and other goodies that we couldn't get as an independent platoon. Finding an onion was always a special treat that resulted in us all combining our C-rations in a large can to create a "hobo stew"which broke the monotonous taste of the C-rations. We would position a few daring souls to pop up as soon as NVA incoming stopped to go over the fences into the food storage areas and throw out a few cases of fruit or something else good to eat. Most of us lost ten pounds or more before we left Khe Sanh because we only received one, maybe two rations a day even though we worked hard. We suffered varying degrees of malnutrition and vitamin deficiencies. We were just young men, almost all of us under 21 and still growing. We were always hungry.

Our clothes or boots rotted off our bodies, or were torn to shreds in the barbed wire, so we posted an Engineer at Charlie Med to bring us clothing or more M-16 magazines thrown out by the corpsman after they evacuated the wounded and dead. Having to haul heavy loads of mines and other materials was always a problem. Due to constant exposure, it wasn't long before all of our equipment and our only truck were hit so many times by NVA shrapnel that they could not be repaired. This led to our biggest "heist" — a jeep and trailer. We jumped in and drove

off with it after the occupants of the jeep jumped out to take cover during incoming. No one remembers the rightful owners ever reclaiming the jeep. We hope that occurred only because of the confusion at the KSCB and not because the original occupants were wounded and evacuated. Life was not easy for anyone at the KSCB. It was hard for us as an independent unit, but we had it many times better than the Marines on the Hills. We'll never forget them. We worked harder on the KSCB, because we knew we were indirectly helping the Hills.

Our Losses Increased

Our platoon was exposed every day and most nights to some type of direct or indirect NVA fire. We tried to be careful and not draw attention to ourselves. We also were fanatical about wearing our protective flak vests and helmets. We tried desperately to get protective shorts but couldn't. Most of our causalities occurred one at a time, but we had a few days when we took heavy losses. One day laying mines for 1/9, four Engineers and five grunts were wounded by recoilless rifle fire. Cpl Claus Berg heard about the losses after working all day on the 1/26 perimeter. His squad immediately came out to help us finish the 1/9 minefield. We all made our way back to the main KSCB together under cover of darkness. On 8 March, Lt. Gay, LCpl Clyde Phillips, and our doc (we think his name was Johnson) were standing by our bunkers talking to Jurate Kazickas, a freelance female reporter working for WOR Radio. She was interviewing Marines from New York City. The NVA got lucky that day. Random NVA artillery rounds wounded all three Engineers and Jurate. Moore was killed a few days later, while attempting to bring hot meals up to our platoon.

Our Personal Experience Were Intense

Each Engineer, like every other person at Khe Sanh, could write a book about their personal experiences and how those experiences shaped their lives. LCpl John Pessoni came to Khe Sanh after going through the worst of the Con Thien battles. He stood out because he was very tall and because he always helped everyone. Pessoni, Phillips, and LCpl Ollie Olsen were part of a team that never stopped working. One day, a Marine tank crew saved Pessoni and Phillips. They were pinned down by an NVA recoilless rifle who caught them working on a forward slope where they were helping a unit booby trap fugas. Fugas was a mixture of jellied gasoline in a barrel that was pushed out from behind by a shaped charge when fired. It is harrowing being pinned down anywhere. It is especially harrowing being pinned down while rigging a booby trap.

Another day Pessoni, Phillips and PFC Upton, who usually supported 1/9 and 3/26 found themselves in a firefight in the 1/9 area. The grunt Gunny Sergeant showing them what he wanted done was wounded. They helped evacuate the Gunny as the jets swooped close in dropping napalm on the tree line from which the NVA were firing. It was Pessoni who later evacuated Lt. Gay, Philips, Doc Johnson, and Kazickas to Charlie Med. PFC Howlett was killed standing next to PFC Terry Parr as they walked across the base coming back from a mission. Parr wasn't scratched. Such unexplainable events happened daily filling us with fear, relief, and guilt.

Parr was a Fire Team leader even though only a PFC. Everyone who could promote him was wounded and evacuated before ordering the promotion. In April, Parr was promoted on the spot by Capt. Bill Nye, the A Company Commander, who was finally able to get to Khe Sanh for the first time. Like so many others, Parr always did his job — and then some. He knew that everything the Engineers did affected many lives. PFC Patrick was killed when our last vehicle was hit transporting supplies. LCpl David Critchley, who normally drove the truck and operated the radio, was spared that day. As our driver and radioman, Critchley was a critical member of the platoon and always on the move. This resulted in him giving much unplanned support to units he encountered. David Critchley and Bill Gay ended up in a *Life* magazine photo taken during one of Critchley's unplanned assistance stops. They pulled two injured Air Force pilots out of a smoldering observation plane that crashed inside the KSCB. On the day Critchley left KSCB, he dove onto the cargo ramp of one of the last C-123s to land and still be able to take off from Khe Sanh. The crew chief dragged Critchley inside as the plane lifted off through a hailstorm of NVA mortar rounds.

Sgt. Sniegowski and Lt. Gay were with Doctor Ed Feldman and HM2 Tilletson from Charlie Med when he removed a mortar round from the stomach of a wounded Marine. They examined the Marine with Feldman and advised Feldman on how to handle the round. Feldman and Sniegowski went in alone to

remove it, to minimize casualties in case it exploded while being extracted. Feldman became a close friend that day and remains one today. Ski was a great Platoon Sergeant. For their heroic actions, Ed Feldman received the Silver Star and Ron Sniegowski, the Bronze Star.

Sniegowski and Gay only argued once. Ski believed it was important to have "green" Engineer replacements clear the NVA bodies out the minefields. He believed this battle hardened them so they wouldn't panic when they got into their first tough situation. Gay felt that was too gruesome for new arrivals to do. After seeing the positive effect of that tough training, Gay decided Ski was right. Not everyone could take the stress. We've struggled to remember the names of more members of our platoon. We recall LCpl Kilroy, who replaced Critchley as radio operator. We also remember Lance Corporals Hrbrich, Lincoln and Fontez, Corporals Bell, Blankie, Ice, and Williams, and a Sergeant Hudson, who after serving two tours in Vietnam, died years later auto racing.

We worked hard. We made a difference. All we could think about was that everything we did on the KSCB also helped the Marines fighting on the Hills. We were not about to let anyone down. Our efforts, the improved perimeter, the minefields and booby traps, the bunkers, the water point, and the help we were able to give to what seemed like a million units, saved lives and helped win the Siege. When the Marines started going after the retreating NVA in April 1968 on Operation Pegasus, the Engineers were again attached as demolition teams. Cpl Kledas and LCpl Richards were wounded while 1/9 was getting ready to move out. They disregarded their wounds and went on the operation as scheduled. A few days later, PFC Phelps stopped an NVA assault on their position and was KIA while helping wounded Marines. For his gallantry, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. There is a wing of the Combat Engineers Instruction Company Barracks at Camp Lejeune named in his honor. We were unaware of this until Bruce Bell was located and informed us that he had visited Phelps's family when he returned to the States and learned of the honor bestowed on Randall Phelps.

In June 1968, the surviving members of 1/A/3rd Engrs left Khe Sanh with elements of the 26th Marines to operate further south near Danang until they finished their tours in Vietnam. We don't remember the racial, ethnic, or religious composition of our platoon. We were just young citizens that fought together, cared for each other, and went on to live our lives. Some of us stayed on active service and were able to talk about our experiences with other military men who understood. Most of our platoon went home in anonymity to a public that did not understand or respect what we did until many years later. Each of us has had to find our own way to deal with the insanity that was Khe Sanh.

Finding Each Other Through The Khe Sanh Veterans Association

After thirty years, members of our Platoon started to meet again because of the wonderful Khe Sanh Veterans Association (KSVA) and its successful efforts to include everyone. David Critchley, Bill Gay, Frank Kledas, Terry Parr and John Pessoni were united in 2001 through the KSVA. Most have attended a KSVA reunion. Gerald Traum was the first to join the KSVA but was only found by his platoon mates in 2002 when he placed a memorial to A/T Engineers in **Red Clay**. Ed Feldman found Bill Gay through professional friends in 2000 and signed Bill up as a KSVA member that very night.

Jurate Kazickas was also reunited with us through the KSVA. Kazickas and eight other pioneering female reporters from Vietnam have just published a book of remembrances entitled "War Torn." Her chapter focuses on her times at Khe Sanh and her being wounded with the Engineers. Bruce Bell found her book on 21 January 2003 and learned Bill Gay and Zazickas had survived. He called them and subsequently found the rest of the platoon.

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Bronze Medal Citation for PFC Phelps

For heroic achievement in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam while serving as a Combat Engineer with Company C, First Battalion, Ninth Marines, Third Marine Division. On the night of 3 April 1968 Private First Class PHELPS's unit was occupying a position on Hill 477 near the Khe Sanh Combat Base when the company was attacked by an estimated North Vietnamese Battalion. Despite heavy enemy fire and white phosphorous grenades exploding around him, he delivered effective fire against a squad of enemy soldiers attacking his position, halting their advance. Steadfastly maintaining his position, he continued to deliver accurate fire until the attackers were forced to break contact and flee. On 8 April 1968, his unit's position on Hill 689 came under an intense enemy mortar barrage. Despite the continuing hostile fire and in an effort to expedite the evacuation of casualties, Private First Class PHELPS assisted in embarking wounded Marines aboard helicopters for medical evacuation and was subsequently mortally wounded. Private First Class PHELPS's courage, initiative and selfless devotion to duty despite extreme personal danger were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the service of his country.

The Combat "V" is authorized.

We are indebted to Ray Stubbe for starting the KSVA and for pressing us to add our unit history to others already on record with the KSVA. We are also indebted to those Veterans who donate their time to make the KSVA, an organization that includes everyone.

Epilogue

David Critchley served the Federal Government for 36 years. He retired with honors from the Defense Information Systems Agency. At his retirement celebration, attended by a huge number of his colleagues, his many accomplishments were summarized. When Dave made his comments, he chose to remember Khe Sanh first. Bill Gay was fortunate enough to be a guest at the celebration. Dave lives near Pensacola, FL.

Terry Parr went home to York, PA, working for years for Caterpillar Tractor. After struggling alone, he recently sought help for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). His VA counselor called to tell us Terry did not feel he could ask us for help because some of us were wounded and he wasn't. We are all now helping Terry. Dr. Ed Feldman volunteered too. Dr. Feldman lives near Los Angeles, CA.

John Pessoni went home to New York City. He worked for years with Otis Elevator. Gerald Traum chose to live remotely in Northern California. They both have 100% PTSD disability. They both talk with strong feelings about the members of the platoon and the work we did to help win the Siege. John lives in Toms River, NJ. Gerry lives in Hayfork, CA.

Bruce Bell went from Vietnam to Quantico where he was a starter of the Marine Corps football team. He returned home to Annapolis, MD where he worked as a certified fitness instructor.

Frank Kledas completed a distinguished career in the Marines, retiring as a First Sergeant. Frank is now an instructor at the Colorado School of Trades Gunsmithing School and is a small business owner in Denver, CO.

Bert Ranta was last heard of living in Australia, where he emigrated after leaving the Marines.

Bill Gay saw Ronald Sniekowski once at Camp Pendleton but has been unable to locate him again and wishes he could.

Bill Gay was hospitalized for over a year from wounds received at Khe Sanh. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his heroic actions at Khe Sanh. Col. Lownds helped Bill make an inter-service transfer to the Army Corps of Engineers. Bill completed a military career dedicated to making sure young troops would never again be put in a situation like Khe Sanh. Bill works in the Information Technology business and lives in Great Falls, VA.

We Honor All Who Served

The history of the Khe Sanh battles is a remarkable collection of thousands of personal stories of exceptional service, sacrifice and hardship. We are proud to add our history to all the others. As we find more Engineers with whom we served, we'll update our story.

Until then, Semper Fidelis and God Bless America from: The Veterans of 1ST Platoon, A Company, 3rd Engineer Battalion, 1967-2003.

IN MEMORY OF OUR FALLEN COMRADES IN THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH AND OPERATION PEGASUS – 1968

PATRICK, ALBERT EARL	PFC	KIA 14 FEB 1968
CHRISTMAN, RONALD S	CPL	KIA 28 FEB 1968
STANTON, EMMETT CHARLES	PFC	KIA 28 FEB 1968
MOORE, LEWIS WAYNE	PFC	KIA 10 MAR 1968
DELANO, JIMMY LYNN	LCPL	KIA 13 MAR 1968
HOWLETT, NORMAN L JR	LCPL	KIA 30 MAR 1968
PHELPS, RANDALL CARL	PFC	KIA 08 APR 1968
CRICKENBERGER, RICHARD WAYNE	PFC	KIA 26 MAY 1968
FAULKNER, ELMER LEE JR.	PFC	KIA 18 JUN 1968

Where Valor Came of Age

History of 1st Battalion, Ninth Marines, RVN

Excerpts from a story by Colonel John F. Mitchell, USMC, Ret.

Con Thien:

On 5 October 1967, 1/9 relieved 3/9 at Con Thien. The Con Thien Combat Base was receiving heavy incoming of all types. We dug deeper and established a bunker system/trench line for individual survival. No night or daylight patrolling was being executed with night activity being limited to a few LPs at the outer wire. The specific mission assigned the resident battalion was strictly the defense of Con Thien Combat Base and improvement of the defensive posture as enemy shelling would permit. The estimate of the enemy situation at that time was the possibility of enemy attack from the north by up to seven battalions.

The primary friendly offensive action at that time was using supporting weapons only. Available was a 105 battery in general support, 4.2 direct support, a platoon of Ontos, a platoon of tanks, a mixed platoon of Army quad 50s and twin 40s and organic mortars. Air was on an on-call basis, depending on the weather, as well as two 105 batteries at Cam Lo and the 175s at Carroll. I feel that under the tactical restrictions existing at that time, my predecessor with 3/9 had done a good job in holding Con Thien Combat Base. While the casualties were heavy, they were understandable considering the handicaps imposed by the physical terrain and mission imposed by higher authority. The major factors confronting me at this time in order of priority, were:

- Morale factors of the individual trooper, psychologically and physically. This type of situation was against all basic principles of Marine warfare.
- Evaluating the capabilities of supporting arms and integrating all defensive/offensive supporting arms into a coordinated plan.
- To effect a limited, positive ground offensive commensurate with my primary mission of the defense of Con Thien to include both maximum day and night activity.
- Prevent troops and facilities from becoming a target of opportunity as much as possible. This was extremely difficult since our fixed positions were known by the enemy, who had the high ground to the north.
- To continue the constant improvement of defenses (including the start of Dye Marker plan) while keeping casualties to the absolute minimum.
- Finally, inflict as many casualties on the enemy as possible.

Analysis and action taken/accomplished above are as follows:

The enemy operated at will within 800 to 1200 meters of the Con Thien Combat Base perimeter during the day and constantly probed the wire with shape charges and banglore torpedoes during the night. It was obvious to me that, if possible, night and day friendly patrolling was needed. Walking before running — a program of using a squad, then up to a company sweeps to the northwest, west, south, and east of the Con Thien Combat Base was instituted starting with the maximum radius being 500 meters. This increased up to 2200 meters by company, two company size without once experiencing an ambush. However, several heavy contacts with the enemy were encountered. In each case, many enemy were destroyed and an orderly withdrawal executed to Con Thien Combat Base prior to being enveloped by superior forces. By the end of the tenth day, it was common to have two companies and supporting units in the field day and night on assigned missions.

This was primarily successful because no patrol/search and destroy mission was initiated during the hours of daylight, or, by the same route or into the same general areas. I had patrols moving in early morning hours (0300) to pre-designated jump-off spots outside the perimeter. Prior to light, they were well on their way to the objective without enemy discovery. This served several purposes; Night movement became common place. Minimum troops were within the Con Thien Combat Base during daylight hours when most of the enemy shelling took place. The enemy was kept off balance and preoccupied as to where we would strike next and a true picture of my intentions could not be determined. In addition, the troops were kept busy plying their trade while concurrent training and sharpness was maintained.

I established a combat base at what became known as "Yankee Station" approximately 100 meters south of Con Thien. Construction was begun at about the 17th day with constant improvement during the daylight hours and three days thereafter. It was manned

by a reinforced company on a 24-hour basis. This eliminated the enemy threat from the south and posed additional friendly attack considerations on the enemy. I feel this forestalled his planned time table of attack. An added plus was the elimination of congestion and targets of opportunity within CCV. This company had only three casualties from enemy incoming while at Yankee Station (34 days). Night ambushes, LPs and OPs were immediately initiated shortly after my arrival. We averaged 12 activities a night. Practically all night probes, enemy mining activity (including banglore torpedoes) stopped.

For the 47 days that 1st Battalion, Ninth Marines occupied Con Thien, a total of only five casualties were incurred from night activity;

It was not uncommon to experience a delay of from 15 to 45 minutes for artillery on observed targets, which was completely unacceptable. A request was made and approved to have the 105 battery within CCB put in direct support of the commander. This resulted in the receipt of artillery fire within two to four minutes from the time of request with obvious results of more kills of enemy personnel. Although the batteries at Cam Lo/Camp Carroll remained in general support, better coordination was effected giving the CCB commander increased priority/authority.

It was a cloudy issue as to who had the authority/control of the air space within the CCB. This was resolved in favor of the CCV commander and daily integrated air strikes were executed under the direct control of the battalion from two strategic OPs, resulting in high ratios of kills on the enemy. During poor visibility coordination between the battalion and the AO on station was effected. This was integrated into the artillery supporting program and enabled constant activity of air or artillery missions at all times. Increased offensive activity when the enemy was expected to attack, obviously upset his timetable and kept him preoccupied.

The above efforts relieved the pressure on CCB, reduced the volume of incoming enemy mortar/rocket fire allowing a major effort to be instigated while establishing the "Dye Marker plan." Eighty percent of the wire, mines, and bunker systems planned at that time were accomplished by 1/9 prior to departure.

Increased confirmed kills — both enemy, destroyed, equipment, secondary explosions, due to supporting arms — resulted in disrupting the enemy Fall offensive. I feel that the above actions of this one battalion materially contributed to this end. I am proud to note that the morale and esprit de corps of the individual trooper was never as high than when this battalion left Con Thien intact with improved training and experienced night training. It was a cohesive organization upon arrival at Camp Evans for further operations. Casualties had been kept to an absolute minimum. Operations at Camp Evans was under the direct control of the Commander of the 4th Marines and his staff. This was the first time after operating under different regimental commanders, they felt the feeling of belonging.

This goes a long ways in morale, esprit de corps and maximum efficiency of the individual Marine. Direct guidance of this nature is both healthy and necessary to any successful attack operation. Keep battalions with their assigned regiment, if at all possible. Any success in guerrilla operations that 1/9 might have experienced while in the Camp Evans areas is attributeable to the direct support, interest and tangible support received by this battalion.

We Arrive at Khe Sanh

On 22 Jan 1968, the first contingent of 1st Battalion, Ninth Marines, arrived at Khe Sanh. Two rifle companies and a 1/9 command group were followed by a rifle company and supporting arms group. This helo lift was followed by the balance of 1/9, less one rifle company and the executive officer which arrived the following day. The helo lift proved to be interesting, as the landings were made in a hail of automatic weapons fire followed by mortar fire from the NVA as we deplaned from the helos. 1/9 received its first casualties at Khe Sanh.

The air strip, as well as the base, was littered with live un-exploded artillery and mortar rounds. The next surprise was where do 1/9 Marines go? There were no guides or directions available to 1/9 Marines. I directed the company commanders to disburse their company as best they could, seek protective cover or trenches, and await further orders.

It was obvious that KSCB was under constant NVA shelling. It was also obvious that no one was safe above ground. Why was I not given at least a brief message with instructions? Welcome to Khe Sanh.

It was late afternoon when my four-man command group and I searched for the 26th Marines command post to report in to the new commander. I under-

stood the chaotic conditions. I realized that the C/O 26th Marines was quite occupied. I was mad, and my sense of humor disappeared over the predicament of my 1/9 Marines.

Compounding this confusing helo landing was the lack of knowledge of the tactical situation at KSCB, as well as the direct hit on the largest ammunition dump, leaving the danger of many un-exploded rounds.

My first meeting with the Colonel Lownds was crusty and to the point. After my short briefing of the current situation by his staff, he gave me orders to assemble my battalion and be prepared for immediate deployment due west of the KSCB. It was about 5pm with not much light left.

I suggested that due to the dispersion of 1/9 at the present time, my lack of any terrain knowledge at Khe Sanh, and darkness approaching, the better part of valor would be an early morning move from KSCB. Col. Lownds insisted that I move out now. I informed the colonel that 1/9 came to fight but not on NVA terms. After further discussion, Colonel Lownds agreed to a daybreak departure for 1/9.

With my initial mission resolved, I left the command bunker in search of a place to stay and a temporary 1/9 command post. By trial and error, we found an abandoned 1/13 bunker equipped with sheets and cots. Since I had no idea where on the base my company commanders were, my order of march, Frag order by necessity, was done by tactical radio. Thanks to well-trained company commanders, 1/9 sallied forth at daybreak, on 23 January. I was thankful to be a whole unit again, eager for a fight, and to control our own destiny.

Movement was slow because of 5- to 7-foot elephant grass and occasional sniper fire.The day was spent in clearing/reconnoitering the area west, southwest of the KSCB. I sought a defensive position to best block a main avenue approach by the NVA.

I chose the "Rock Quarry' which seemed best suited for this mission. It was about 2,000 meters S/W of the KSCB. I personally reconnoitered a small hill fronting the entrance to the valley floor. This knoll was about 500 meters N/W of what became 1/9's MLR.

I directed the acting company commander of Alpha Company to immediately establish a platoon outpost on this position, which later became the celebrated Alpha 1 outpost. Thus, the "dye was cast' for the primary positions/location of 1/9 for the course of the 77-day Siege. I was personally responsible for the selection of 1/9 unit locations.

1st Battalion, Ninth Marines started from scratch in building defensive positions at the Rock Quarry. No trenches, bunkers, wire, mines, or building materials were available. Building defensive positions was of paramount importance. At Con Thien, we at least had bunkers, trenches and covered ammo bunkers, though all needed improvements. In addition, 5- to 7-foot grass surrounding our perimeter imposed difficulties with fields of fire.

The building materials, wire, and mines available at KSCB were slowly sent to 1/9 when available. We were left to our own ingenuity and hard work, digging, scrounging, and utilizing whatever was available from the land. This we did in superb fashion. The fog usually rolled in during the early morning hours, 6-10am. You could actually eat off 1/9's trenches, they were so clean.

I only know of two cases requiring medevac because of rat-bites. This non-battle casualty was a major factor at KSCB causing medevacs. Inspections were held on a daily basis under the supervision of the battalion medical section. In most cases, rat bites required medevac. In some cases, it was an easy way out for some Marines.

Replacements for 1/9 casualties were difficult. I had an informal arrangement with the FOB-3 commander to convalesce a limited number of 1/9 wounded in his superbly reinforced command bunker. It would take a direct hit by a large NVA rocket. 1/9 would select minor wounded junior officers and SNCo's for this RJR reprieve. In a week or two, they were returned to duty. This required no evacuation or replacement.

Basically, the only commands that patrolled daily, weather permitting, was FOB-3 and 1/9. This led to friendly support for each other. Army Major David Smith, FOB-3 commander and I coordinated a plan for patrolling and intelligence gathering. In order to do this, covertly, we jury-rigged a phone the enemy could not tap between our respectful operation centers. Patrol coordination and important intelligence information was gathered for the duration of the Siege.

Initially I was not aware of any animosity between the C/O 26th Marines and the FOB Commander. Very seldom could he get Marine artillery support

for his indigenous personnel who ran daily patrols. 1/9 and FOB-3 were the only ones conducting patrols on a daily basis of more than 250 meters. I would help with supporting arms, particularly on FOB patrols to the south. We shared raw in-the-field collection of intelligence information, as well as coordinating our daily patrols.

The following rewards were directly attributed 1/9's patrolling policy

1. The enemy could not probe 1/9's defense wire without facing extinction. In this regard please note that 1/9 had wire, booby traps anti-personnel mines, outside perimeter listening posts, fighting positions and observation posts that averaged 200-300 meters in a 360 degree perimeter from 1/9's MLR.
2. This eliminated bangalore torpedoes, patrol booby traps, and ambushes.
3. Elimination of direct fire weapons, small arms, automatic weapons and minimum mortar fire on 1/9 positions. The NVA were forced to move or pull back the above mentioned weapons or face extinction from friendly supporting arms or combat patrols.
4. NVA tunneling was a reality for 1/9 — but not for long. The easiest tunneling area surrounding 1/9 position, was the south parameter. Capt. Schaefer, Delta Co. reported to me in early March that several tunnels had reached his outside wire, about 250 meters away.
5. The remedial procedure worked out with Capt. Schaefer, was that at early light or just before the fog lifted, he was to send a unit into the tunnel, eliminate the NVA and fill up the tunnel/trench with dirt. Or, if necessary, destroy their tunnel work with satchel charges; then return to their defensive positions. The size of the friendly forces assigned this task would range from a fire team/squad to a platoon. Whatever was necessary to get the job done. The follow-up on this procedure was to patrol frequently to 400 meters south of the rockpile to insure detecting the beginning of tunnel activity.
   This procedure went on for several weeks before it suddenly stopped. The battalion S-2, while monitoring the NVA radio nets intercepted the following message:
   "Discontinue tunneling activities in the 1/9 sector as it is non-productive. We can come back for the destruction of 1/9 positions after we have seized the KSCB proper."
   This was a compliment to 1/9's defensive posture and its success in eliminating the tunneling. Our monitoring of NVA nets also disclosed their complete knowledge of the Marines T/O and T/E of all the Marine units at Khe Sanh. This included the names of all key commanders.
6. In excess of 8,000 tons of supplies, (food/ammunition were delivered by parachute and extraction). Retrieving a significant portion of the parachute supplies (lappes) was an additional mission of 1/9. These supplies landed in no man's land west of Khe Sanh and NNW of KSCB.
   I assigned Charlie Company the mission of recovery, supported by Alpha Company. The Marines assigned this task were subjected to constant sniper/mortar fire while in the open. They were even ambushed. The NVA were competing in this contest to recover these supplies. It was a rare incident when 1/9 Marines lost. 95% of all recoveries were successful.

1st Battalion Ninth Marines was not adequately prepared to repel an enemy attack. Request for additional anti-tank weapons was made to Colonel Lownds. We received one tank, several 3.5 rockets, and tank mines, enough to cover one major approach into 1/9's position, the south perimeter of D company. In order to cover the gaps, we conducted school on preparing satchel charges to be attached to NVA tanks. Since we knew the vulnerability of the Russian PT76 tank, instruction was given in each 1/9 company for a group of volunteers on the what, when, and particularly the where to place a satchel charge on the enemy tank. The C/O of H&S Company was tasked with organizing a reserve force. This group included me and my staff to corral any intruders who broke through.

I directed B and D companies to be prepared to support the attack with their crew-served weapon upon my order. The one tank I had was moved from the daily camouflaged parking protection deep in the Rock Quarry to the top of the hill, D company's position for direct fire support. This was the first time, during daylight hours, that the tank was sent into direct support. I joined the C/O of D company on top of the battalion command bunker, to coordinate the supporting fires. The tank commander unleashed devastating fire power on the NVA to the

S/W on the valley floor. That Sgt. earned his spurs that day with an outstanding display of marksmanship, firing at a range of 500-700 meters to S/W Alpha 1.

Every night this tank was moved under the cover of darkness, to its defensive position facing south in the D company perimeter. Since 1/9's night outposts reported hearing the movement of suspected NVA tanks from the south, in the vicinity of Khe Sanh village, I assumed that the NVA also could hear our nightly tank displacement. The enemy may think 1/9 had a tank capability, but he wouldn't know how many.

I have been asked in the past by my seniors why I had an Alpha-1 outpost. It was a difficult decision, but one made rapidly. An evaluation of the terrain in 1/9's sector of responsibility convinced me that an all-out assault by the NVA on KSCB would require more than one major avenue of approach. Alpha-1 outpost was selected for its potential, being astride the west to east axis to KSCB. I also needed as much warning as possible before the enemy would reach 1/9's MLR.

According to Intelligence cited in the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines Command Chronology for period 1-29 February, 1968, a planned, heavily concentrated enemy attack against the main Khe Sanh Combat Base in early February during the Tet offensive was disrupted by friendly forces and the fact that the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines including its Company A strong point position, forward Platoon outpost Alpha One was occupying one of the enemies main avenues of approach to Khe Sanh.

The unclassified information now available at H.Q. U.S. Marines Corps, Washington, D.C., therefore indicates that this above referred action of Feb. 8, 1968 was not only the heaviest, defensive line combat for any 24-hour period during the Battle of Khe Sanh but that this above action also marked the slackening of enemy ground troop action against Khe Sanh. At this turning point, the NVA tactics began shifting to increasing use of artillery, rocket and mortar shelling at Khe Sanh.

Company A, 1st Platoon's forward outpost action on 8 Feb, 1968 resulted in one enemy Battalion rendered ineffective, and half the total (NVA) weapons captured for Operation Scotland. After this action concluded, two highly important documents were captured, including many other documents and a letter of prime intelligence value. One enemy POW was also taken. The Command Chronology stated that the outpost's resistance at its strong point position (Alpha One) on 8 Febraury 1968 and their supporting companies response the following day appeared to have upset the enemies' timetable. Enemy contact during the middle of the month slackened. Among the weapons captured were thirteen crew-served weapons, three heavy machine-guns, nine light machine-guns and one 60mm mortar.

The total KIA of NVA soldiers exceeded 150 on this day. The 1/9 battalion received over 350 rounds of enemy supporting arms fire in their command perimeter.

When possible throughout the Siege, Colonel Lownds directed that I attend his daily briefing by his staff. In order to get there, my runner Cpl. Luzon Beasly and myself used a mule (cargo cart), the only vehicle there, to make the dash through 2,000 meters of no man's land.

This sometimes subjected us to sniper fire or incoming mortars while en route. The mule had no sides. On such occasions, one, or, the other would give the alert. We would bail out on each side until it was all clear — then continue our trip. Cpl. Beasley was killed in action March 30th, 1968 while administering first aid to wounded Marines from NVA rocket rounds. He unselfishly gave his life for his fellow Marines.

I was unaware until after leaving Vietnam of the slogan, "Walking Dead." As I now understand, my initial situation when I assumed command of the 1st Battalion Ninth Marines was a low morale factor. This was attributed to several factors: heavy past battalion casualties, no clear established goals, objectives, or reason for being there. There was also a sense of not belonging, bouncing from one regiment to another, and a lack of desire to " win" not just survive.

Those above mentioned qualities were revived with significant results. During my tenure, never did we as a whole cohesive, operating unit become decimated by ambush or assault commensurate with an acceptable casualty ratio of friendly to enemy. As a Junior Officer in Korea, I learned this while participating in the Chosen Reservoir campaign and later as an infantry platoon, executive officer and C/O of a rifle company. I know what chaotic trauma a small leader goes through during and after hand-to-hand combat.

Thus, it is very difficult for me to accept a demeaning title such as "Walking Dead." Not on my watch! Never was this "title' ever discussed in my Battalion while I was commanding the 1st Battalion Ninth Marines.

On July 18, 2002, I had the honor and privilege, of presenting long overdue awards of valor to two members of 1st Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, Ninth Marines. In a ceremony held at the annual reunion of 1st Battalion Ninth Marines, I presented the Silver Star Medal to Lawrence Seavy-Cioffi and the Bronze Star Medal with "V" for Valor to Edward O'Connor. They earned these awards for defending Hill 64 (Alpha-1) on 8 Feb 1968.

When their position was attacked by a reinforced NVA Battalion outnumbering them 10-1 on 8 Feb 1968, both men, with their platoon leaders severely wounded, became the main leaders to step forward, leading the platoon in a vicious fire fight until reinforcements arrived. The attacking enemy was annihilated.

Col. John F. Mitchell, USMC, Ret.

Squalls Between the Storms

by John M. Kaheny

PART 1

The time between the Battle of the Hills in late April and early May of 1967 and the beginning of the Battle for Khe Sanh in January of 1968 has often been described as the 4 silent months. Captain Moyers S. Shores II, USMC, in his book "Battle for Khe Sanh," called this time the "Lull Between Storms." This may be because there are few written accounts of combat activity in the Khe Sanh area during this period. Even Ray Stubbe's and John Prados' excellent history of the Siege of Khe Sanh, "Valley of Decision," does not dwell for long on the events immediately following the NVA defeat on Hill 881N. Perhaps as one who was there, I can share some personal insights and observations on those difficult first 30 days at Khe Sanh for the Marines and sailors of the First Battalion, 26Th Marines.

The first week of May, 1967 found 1/26 continuing to guard the main supply route from Danang to An Hoa. Although headquarters remained on Hill



The Hills before the squall.

55, on May 2 Alpha Company deployed to the far side of Liberty Bridge and into the villages of My Loc and Phu Loc. Without notice, orders arrive, and the battalion was moved within a week to Phu Bai to prepare for Operation Cumberland, a road-building attempt into the A Shau Valley. The word was changed once again and by May 10 both Alpha and Charlie Companies had arrived at Khe Sanh.

On the day I arrived at Khe Sanh, I had commanded the Third Platoon of Alpha Company for almost four months. In those months we had been fairly successful in operating against the VC northeast and southeast of Hill 55. We took several casualties from mines and snipers and lost 3 Marines to the enemy. We had even been "Sparrow Hawked" to Walt Boomer's Hotel Company 2/4 and after a successful night helicopter assault, chased an NVA regiment off Charlie Ridge. With many of the platoon being veterans of earlier operations such as Deckhouse and Macon, we thought of ourselves as a well seasoned experienced combat force. We were wrong; we had not seen anything yet.

When the gate of the C-123 dropped onto the red clay of the Khe Sanh airstrip, the first thing we saw was the thick, cold, gray fog known as crachin. As the fog parted we saw them, the walking wounded from the Hill Fights. Some were standing but most were sitting or lying on the dark red clay mud. The line stretched down the road to what later would be called the "Ponderosa." We walked silently past them for several hundred yards to an assembly area where with the help of the slowly clearing sky, we caught our first glance of Hill 861. We were a very serious and somber bunch.

The next day, May 11, Alpha Company boarded CH-34 helicopters and went to Hill 881S. It was a depressing mess. Colonel John Lanigan, commanding officer of the Third Marines, and his staff were preparing to march back to Khe Sanh. They were all spent from the fighting. We wished them well and began preparing our defenses. There were a few fighting holes and several NVA bunkers available for use, but that was it. First Lieutenant Norm Centers, the commanding officer of Alpha Company, placed Rusty Reeve's First Platoon on the west knoll of the hill complex. Larry Bolger's Second Platoon and my Third Platoon secured the main portion of the hill. It was cold, muddy and the stench of rotting flesh was overwhelming. With our blankets in storage not needing them in Phu Bai, we slept in recycled body bags to keep from getting hypothermia. Earl Hawkins, my platoon sergeant, jokingly filled out a casualty card and tied it to my bag, saying he was just trying to be efficient.

The next several days brought 14-hour patrols and long sessions of trench digging. The engineers were forced to blow the trees because their chain saws broke on the shrapnel infested trunks. Centers evidently had promised Lt. Colonel D.E. Newton, the Battalion Commander, that the defensive fortifications could be built in no time at all. This, combined with the battalion staff's lack of appreciation for the depths of the ravines around the hill, caused the men to be worked and marched almost to exhaustion. Most chilling was our uncovering of scores of Marine helmets with holes in the crown and M-16's with cleaning rods down the barrel and rounds jammed in the chamber.

During the next several days, our aggressive patrolling resulted in sporadic sniper fire from the west. Charlie Company, coming off Hill 881S, engaged a few NVA almost due north of 881S. The NVA appeared to flee to the northwest, behind Hill 88 IN. The only significant events for the first 10 days on the hill were the VIP visits. It seemed that every general, admiral, and photographer in WESPAC wanted to be seen on top of Hill 881S.



3rd Platoon, A Company, 1/26 Marines

On May 20,

Centers said he had a mission for the Third Platoon. He informed me that the next morning the Third Platoon would leave very early and proceed west of Hill 881S for about 2,000 meters on a reconnaissance-in-force mission. The sniper activity had caught the attention of the Battalion Operations Officer, Capt. Ray Velasquez, the recent Alpha Company Commander. I was ordered to take two squads, each reinforced with an M-60 machine gun team and a 3.5 rocket launcher team. I would also take along a forward observer team from the 81mm mortar section co-located with Alpha Company on Hill 881S. We were told to wear soft covers and no flak jackets, as we might have to move fast. That was an omen. In addition, I was informed that once the fog lifted we would be supported by two UH-1E gunships, call signs Oak Gate 1-1 and Oak Gate 1-2. The gunships' mission was to recon by fire on targets we would mark.

When I briefed the platoon, I was reminded that my platoon sergeant, Earl Hawkins, needed to be at the Battalion Aid Station the next day for treatment. That meant that Cpl Beard, the 81mm forward observer, would be second in command. Our platoon guide, Sgt Lopez, would be in charge of the platoon's defensive position on Hill 881S. Going out without them did not concern me very much as the mission had been described as "a walk in the sun." I did not even imagine at that time that we were, to paraphrase Sir Winston Churchill, about to march onto the pages of the *New York Times.*

The next day, Sunday, May 21, 1967 at 0520, 43 Marines and two corpsman slowly moved out the west gate of Hill 881 S and into the dark fog. The fog was so thick that it took us until almost 0800 to reach Hill 821. We set in for a while for the fog to lift. Soon we could see and we moved northwest about 800 meters further along the ridgeline to a place where we could set up an observation post. Just before we got to the small crest, we heard gunshots to the northwest. Some were fairly close but others were more distant. We held up and waited for the sun to burn off the fog at Khe Sanh so the gunships could launch.

At about 1000, Oak Gate 1-1 and 1-2 came on station. I took a hunch and ordered Cpl. Contrereas to have his gunner L/Cpl. Guererro put a smoke round into the tree line that faced us to the north, about 500 meters away. Guererro overshot and the rocket went about 200 meters further into an extension of the same tree line which protected the streambed. I told Oak Gate 1-1 to just go for the smoke. To our mutual surprise, especially Guererro's, the gunships kicked up about 10-15 NVA hidden in the streambed. We couldn't see the NVA but the gunships could and made several runs expending their ammo. We joined in with our 2 M-60's for a short bit until I got a report that the platoon had found a freshly used sniper position just behind us. It had a clear view of Hill 881S. The position was about 1300 meters to the west edge of our position on Hill 881S and the distance explained why we had received so many "spent rounds" on the Hill. We knew the position was recently used because we found a letter he had used to clean himself. We ceased firing down into the streambed/ tree line.

Oak Gate 1-1 then informed me that they had another mission and would be back when we needed them.

Soon we heard distant sporadic fire from the northwest. We set in and made sure no friendly recon patrols were in the area. A bit later, the shooting stopped and we set up a 360 degree post. We saw no movement.

About 1030 things began to get a little strange. Lt. Centers ordered me to assault the tree line. I told him I didn't think that was such a good idea as we only had two maneuver elements and our approach down the slope to the streambed lacked cover and concealment. He suggested we use smoke. We talked for a bit as we started down the slope and I was finally able to convince him that smoke wasn't the solution, as the NVA knew where we were and what our numbers were. In addition, we had no idea of how many NVA were in the streambeds. He then told me to try to envelop the streambed by cutting further northwest. We did, but continued to hear more gunfire in front of us from the higher elevations on the other side of the streambed. Centers then told me to hold up and wait. I did not know at the time but at 1100, Admiral Sharp, CINCPAC and Major General Hochmuth, CG, 3d MAR DIV, landed on Hill 881S. The dog and pony show evidently distracted Centers as the company net went silent for a long period except for requests for our situation and spot reports. It is also highly probable that the gunships had been called back to escort these VIPs.

We were eventually told to sit tight and register

artillery. I picked a round piece of high ground covered with elephant grass. It was marked on the map as Hill 729. It was distinguishable by several bomb craters and the burnt out stump of a destroyed tree. Both the stump and the craters would play a major role later in the afternoon. Cpl. Beard and I registered Alpha Battery, 1/13's 105s on likely avenues of approach, focusing on the tree line and streambed to the north. We were too far out for 81's to be of any use.

At about 1500 or so, Centers came back on the net and told me to check out the streambed. I found a way to mask our movement to any NVA who might be watching from the ridge line to the north, by circling west and then north. It seemed like a good move, but it required us to travel into some dead radio space. To solve that problem I had Cpl Fallone and two fire teams set up in the bomb craters and act as a radio relay. I didn't like splitting our small force, but I had no choice as maintaining radio contact with Alpha Company was necessary. I also did not intend to go too far as we were approaching the end of the artillery fan. We moved out slowly and covered our movement.

Once in the streambed, we found a couple of surprises. The first was a well-used trail, the size of a jeep trail. It was in great shape and had too many footprints for our comfort. The other surprise was several holes — about two feet in diameter — going straight into the ground. At first, we thought that they were tunnels but soon figured out that they were caused by dud bombs dropped at high altitude, probably by an A-6 Intruder during the Hill fights.

At about 1700, PFC Runion, a machine gunner, spotted the NVA standing in the open on the ridge line to the north. There were four of them and they were obviously trying to find us. Runion wanted to shoot as they were about 800 yards away. I told him not to fire as it would give our position away. I contacted Fallone who related that he couldn't see the NVA from his position, as he was staying in defilade. I decided it was time to get back together and let the artillery handle the NVA. The lead squad broke right, and we avoided the streambed on the way back. That was a good move and probably kept us from being ambushed.

Once back at the blackened stump, we set up in a lopsided 360 in the grass with most of the fire power on the north side. We had plenty of concealment but little cover except for the craters. When I notified Centers of the location of the NVA observation post, he put the company's artillery forward observer, Lt. Chuck Willis, on the radio. I had but one radio and traffic was pretty cluttered on the company net, and it was about to get worse. Chuck informed me that the NVA position was just outside the range of the 105 battery, but he had two 155 howitzers available for a precision destruction mission. He asked if I knew how to adjust a precision destruction mission, and I responded in the negative. Chuck said it was easy and he would teach me. He did.

The first round was short and low on the slope and the NVA didn't move. I think they knew the range of our 105s and believed that they were safe. I started moving the rounds slowly up the slope. They didn't even flinch, and one of them appeared to flash the universal sign of disrespect towards us. The next round took the top of the knoll right off. Nothing remained. We got them. Everyone cheered. I passed the word to saddle up and head home, as it was 1800 and we needed to be back and guard Hill 881S before it got dark.

At exactly 1805, the NVA charged out of the tree line and assaulted up the slope, supported by mortars, RPGs and grenades. First, they went for the M-60's, rocket launchers and radios. In the initial volley, Runion's arm was torn off and Guerrero's launcher received a hit and the vibrations split both of his hands. PFC Thomas Henderschott was killed almost immediately as a round pierced his radio. L/Cpl Roger Hurd was hit and killed as he fired his M-16. The round went in one armpit and exited the other, testimony to his being in the off-hand position when hit. Dennis Thayer was knocked over by a grenade and momentarily stunned but recovered and came up shooting. The NVA ran right past him. L/Cpl Fraley spotted an NVA machine gun team coming up the slope. He took aim with his M-79 grenade launcher and fired one round into the gunners chest, it exploded and the A/gunner also went down. PFC Kemp cut down several NVA as they charged right in front of him. PFC Mike Trenholm was hit in the arm and his hand was almost lost. Both corpsman, Doc Rock and Doc Brannon were hit by grenade fragments. L/Cpl Faldutti, a fire team leader, was hit in the back of the head with a batch of shrapnel. A second wave of NVA broke out of the tree line. Fraley and the other grenadier, Russell

Turner, fired continuously into the NVA formation slowing the assault. Gabe Bovenzi, recently transferred from 3/26, joined in but they kept coming.

Due to the height of the grass, I could not see very much and with one squad radio out of commission things got a bit confusing. I knew one thing for sure — we needed help and fast. Then, the first of three miracles occurred. I called in an on-call fire mission to Alpha 1/13 and gave them an adjustment to bring it in "danger close." We were just within maximum range from Khe Sanh Combat Base and the gun target line was parallel to our position. I asked for a battery six. Just then it occurred to me that with the way Alpha Battery was laid out and the position of the marking gun, there was a great chance that the left platoon's rounds would fall right on top of Alpha Three. I called for the left platoon to check fire and to fire with four guns. The gunners did their job and the rounds landed right between the tree line and our position, stunning the NVA and killing several. I repeated the mission several times. This gave us a chance to consolidate around the craters, but we needed to counter attack to recover Henderschott and Hurd's bodies. My radio operator Bozo Worden handed me the radio and charged down the hill. Soon Cpl. Fallone followed with his fire team. For a short period of time, I was alone on the crest of the crater with only my .45 caliber pistol and the NVA running all over the high ground. I spotted Les Faurebrac moving down the hill and ordered him to protect my rear while I called in the medevac mission. He was torn because he wanted to go help recover the bodies and help the wounded. Alpha Battery continued to fire and we were able to get the wounded to one of the craters. We began having problems with the M-16s jamming, but we solved that problem quickly by using the weapons of the wounded. Just then, the second miracle arrived.

My radio cracked, "Pinefold Alfa Three this is Oak Gate 1-1, we are inbound." Fortunately, the gunships had been monitoring our frequency and had heard the call for the danger close artillery mission. Since we were fairly close to where we had been in the morning, they knew where the NVA's positions were and rolled right in with rockets and guns. Even with the artillery in check fire mode the radio traffic was almost unmanageable. At one point, Steve Street came up and carried the radio. Bozo Worden was now busy trying to recover our dead and wounded. Centers kept demanding information, but we were too busy fighting off the NVA. I told him we had 2 KIA and we would attempt to recover them under the gunships' suppressing fire. Centers then said something over the net that was interpreted by everyone who heard it as ordering me to leave the bodies and pull back. My response was short and to the point. We were coming out together. All of us.

I recall the call sign for the medevac was Button Vermillion. As Button Vermillion (a CH-34) approached, the pilot asked for the location of the zone, the best approach, and if the zone was hot. I looked down the rear slope of the knoll we were on and spotted a place in defilade. I told the pilot that the north side of the knoll was hot but if he could land behind us he could make it. Oak Gate 1-1 concurred.



Cpl. Bozo Wodren and 2Lt. John Kaheny.

Unfortunately, as Button Vermillion was making its approach, the pilot decided that the grass was too high on the reverse slope so he came in towards where I was standing with the radio handset. He must have thought that since I was standing on the crest that it was safe. He came right in. Fortunately, we had Faldutti, Trenholm, and Runion ready to go because the zone exploded with incoming rounds. I heard two large cracks and later would find that two AK-47 rounds had pierced my trousers. The crew chief got out of the CH-34, checked out the bullet holes, threw me the finger, saluted smartly, and jumped back in. Button Vermillion took off with the wounded safely aboard.

With the gunships continuing to rake the tree line, we were able to bring the two bodies to the craters. Soon Oak Gate 1-1 said he was out of ammo. Oak Gate 1-2 said he had enough for one more run. He came in with the crew firing small arms and throwing ammo boxes on the NVA. It was a sight to see! Now we were in trouble. Our firepower had diminished considerably as a result of casualties. In addition, it would take eight Marines to carry the two bodies up the slopes toward Hill 821. If the gunships left to re-arm, we would be in big trouble moving in the open grass. Miracle number three arrived just in time.

You could hear them before you could see them. Four tiny dots with afterburners. Two flights of F-4 Phantoms, pregnant with destruction, roared in from the west. Oak Gate 1-1 would control, freeing me to reorganize the platoon and convince Button Vermillion to come back for the bodies so I could free up the eight Marines carrying our dead. Coming straight down the streambed from the direction of 881S the four Phantoms, dropped a continual stream of 500 pound bombs and napalm so close to us that we had to turn away to avoid the flash and blast. It became difficult to breathe but Oak Gate kept them right on target. Not surprisingly, the NVA finally stopped firing and tried to disperse. The Phantoms kept coming. The First Marine Air Wing was nothing less than magnificent that day.

We had moved about a half a mile when Button Vermillion returned to pick up the bodies of Henderschott and Hurd. This time the zone was cold. I ordered Guererro to get on board also as he was useless with both hands split open. We now had the luxury of freeing up the Marines who had been carrying their brothers.

Slowly, we made it to Hill 821 where Rusty Reeves' First Platoon had come out to help us with our walking wounded. By this time, the Phantoms had done their job and Oak Gate went back to base to rearm. It got very quiet. Rusty greeted me cheerfully, but his eyes went right past me. He said "How many tree stumps were on that knoll, John?" I turned around and looked back at Hill 729. What had appeared to Rusty as tree stumps was in reality scores of NVA troops sweeping the area picking up their dead and wounded. I called for artillery to hammer the NVA but the request was denied. I was told we were now conserving artillery in case our positions were attacked later that night.

It was almost dark when we reached the west gate of Hill 881S. Sgt. Hawkins was waiting for me. I thought that Street and I had been bringing up the rear but just as we got to the gate, Cpl Hinds came out of the tall grass. He had been watching out for us, just in case. Hawkins said he could account for everyone. No one was missing, so the three of us entered the perimeter.

It wasn't until the next morning that we knew how many of the platoon had actually been wounded. Several Marines awoke the next morning to find grenade shrapnel under their skin. Evidently, the adrenaline rush had dulled their sense of pain. Out of the 45 who had left Sunday morning, two were dead, three were evacuated Stateside and twelve were treated and returned to duty. We wrote the after action reports and turned them over to Centers.

On May 23, 1967 the New York Times covered the fight on a page dedicated to war news along with an ironic report of the continuing problems with the M-16 rifles and a general denial of any problem with them by Lt. General Walt. For our part, the Times simply said: "Near Khe Sanh [sic], just south of the demilitarized zone, a reinforced Marine Reconnaissance platoon fought an enemy force for almost an hour. A spokesman said later that 25 enemy guerrillas and two Marines had been killed and eight Marines had been wounded." Captain Shores in his "Battle for Khe Sanh" simply states "On 21 May, elements of Company A, 1/26, clashed sharply with a reinforced enemy company; 25 NVA and two Marines were killed. The same day, the Lang Vei CIDG camp was attacked by an enemy platoon."

The number of NVA killed on May 21 is an educated guess and is based on the reports from Oak Gate 1-1 and the accounts of the individual Marines of Alpha Three. Two things were clear — the NVA was not reluctant to attack in the open during daylight, and the NVA was still out there, despite the good efforts of Alpha Three.

On May 30, Alpha Company moved out in force to check out the approaches to Hill 915, an area just south of where we had made contact on May 21, but we found nothing. Low visibility canceled our air support, so we came back early. We were soon relieved on Hill 881S by Bravo Company. I spoke briefly with Captain Connell, the Bravo company commander, and told him of the danger to the west. He told me that for awhile the only patrolling done would be by a company or a larger force and not by platoons. Alpha headed off to the Khe Sanh Combat Base for showers and beer.

Things were quiet for about a week. On June 5 Alpha Company was sent west on Highway 9 to assist in searching for GySgt Ibanez, a member of a recon team, who simply vanished into the night, leaving only a small blood trail and a dental plate. We found some NVA harbor sites nearby but we got the feeling a tiger may have got him. We spent the night in a deserted Montagnard village on the south side of the road. We heard the artillery firing all night long as Hill 950 came under attack and was overrun. Helicopters picked us up in the morning, and we were first told to prepare to land on Hill 950. In a moment, the orders were changed and we were sent to Hill 881S. Bravo Company was fighting for its life just SW of Hill 821. The company command group and two platoons had walked into an ambush.

When we arrived on Hill 881S, the Alpha Company command group along with 2d Lt. Guy Pete's platoon had already departed and joined the fight. Doug Sykes, the Bravo Company executive officer, met me at the command post. We were soon joined by Rusty Reeves, but Rusty's platoon was still on the way. Centers had checked off the Alpha company net without notifying anyone and was using his radio to help control the air strikes. We had no idea what to do. We could see that Bravo was heavily engaged and that the NVA were still in the grass to the east, south and north of the company. A-4s and F-4s were rolling in dropping napalm and 500- and 1000-pound bombs. We learned that Bravo had lost 18 KIA and 27 WIA. Two of the KIAs were radio operators from A/1/13. Both platoon commanders had been wounded. Second Lt. Dennis McDonald, shot in the leg, was evacuated. Second Lt. Richard Stewart was still in the field with a bullet hole in his arm. Fourteen other Marines had been wounded. Bravo had made a turning movement to the SW off Hill 821, across a saddle known as the land bridge and was isolated by mortar and machine gun fire, including at least one .50 cal. machine gun, before the NVA came out of the low ground to the west and east in an attempt to cut the company off. The NVA had attacked in a well disciplined manner, on line with the command groups behind the assault squads.

Not having any information or orders, Doug, Rusty and I debated what to do. Doing nothing was not in the equation. Since Alpha Three was on Hill 881S and — I am proud to say — eager to attack, I volunteered to go out to Hill 821 to cover Bravo's withdrawal. So Alpha Three went out the west gate again. We moved quickly to Hill 821 and set up our M-60's. There were plenty of targets of opportunity. We engaged and caught many NVA running to the north as the A-4 Sky Hawks continued their runs. One A-4 caught several NVA trying to run up hill away from the A-4. It was no contest. Soon, most of the seriously wounded had departed by helicopter and Bravo Co. was able to consolidate its position. By a little past 1600, Bravo passed through our lines on Hill 821. Several walking wounded were among them including Lt. Stewart. Centers, who had not communicated with Alpha company the entire time, appeared to be embarrassed when he found us on 821. He was glad that we had taken the initiative in coming out to help. We helped with the wounded and marched back to 881S.

Although the official reports state that 18 Marines died that day, only 17 are listed in Ray Stubbe's "Final Formation." They are; L/Cpl. James L. Blaz, L/Cpl. John J. Chase, Cpl. Ronald L. Crooks, L/Cpl. Robert F. Enderby, Cpl. Edward F. Furlong, Pvt. Gale E. Gotti, PFC. Thomas M. Healy, PFC. Kenneth M. Johnson, L/Cpl. Kenneth R. Keefer, PFC. Steven L. Millet, PFC. Larry L. Morris, PFC. Wayne M. Pitts, PFC. Frank J. Shovlin, PFC. Philip A. Van Deusen, L/Cpl. Edward A. Vercouteren, Cpl. Walter L. Ward, PFC. Larry E. Worthen.

Once back on 881S, we consolidated the compa-

nies as there was not enough of Bravo Company left to hold the lines. The number of the Bravo fallen impacted the members of Alpha Three severely. Many began to think about what would have happened to us if not for the extraordinary performances by A/1/13 and Oak Gate a mere two weeks prior.

A bit later that day at the Bravo CP on the crest of Hill 881S, I overheard a conversation between Col. Padley who had relieved Col. Lanigan as the senior officer at Khe Sanh, and Lt. Col. Newton, the C/O of 1/26. They were agreeing that the firefight was the result of a chance meeting between two company-sized patrols. I could not believe my ears. Just then Guy Pete interjected and told both officers that what had happened was a well-planned and executed ambush by at least 2 companies. It was hard to argue with the obvious but for some reason the senior officers did not want to believe that the NVA were still operating freely around Khe Sanh. Guy, of course, was right.

Alpha company spent several days with Bravo on Hill 881S until replacements arrived. I was soon transferred to the battalion S-3 section to relieve Captain Cloud who was taking over Charlie Company from Captain Dennis.



Author of article John Kahenym 3rd Plt, A Co, 1/26 Marines

A few days later marked the end of 1/26's first 30 days at Khe Sanh. The next 30 days would not bring any relief for Alpha and Bravo companies, and I would soon be temporarily sent back to Alpha company to help out.

Major George Quamo, An American Hero

by Tom Haggerty

"You have never lived until you have almost died. For those who have fought for it, life has a special flavor the protected will never know."

– Special Operations Motto

Since Sept 11, Americans have become familiar with the term "Special Forces" and the role they are playing in Afghanistan. It wasn't always that way, as the story of a young man from Averill Park, N.Y., will attest. So secret were the missions of America's Special Forces in Vietnam in the 1960s that even now, decades after the war, many "official" accounts have never been made public. Most were reportedly destroyed even before the war ended in 1973. The name George Quamo is etched on the Rensselaer County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington.

But few outside of the select group of men who served with him know anything about the extraordinary heroism and leadership Quamo exhibited there. "I still receive phone calls from guys who served under him," said his brother James Quamo, now of Spencerport, NY. "Some of them even cry telling me how they felt about my brother."

Major George Quamo was a highly decorated Army Green Beret who served in MACV-SOG (Military Assistance Command Vietnam, Studies and Observation Group, formerly known as the Special Operations Group) from 1963 until his death in 1968. About 2,000 people served in SOG during the Vietnam War. It was an all volunteer organization composed of some of the nation's best military personnel, Green Berets, Navy Seals, and Air Force Air Commandos.

SOG took its orders directly from Washington where a small staff operating under the acronym SACSA (Special Assistant to the Chairman for Special Activities) coordinated information and orders from the Joints Chiefs of Staff, White House,

and Central Intelligence Agency. Gen. William C. Westmoreland, the theater commander in Vietnam, did not have complete authority over SOG but was kept fully informed of its missions both before and after, and often sat in on debriefings. Covert operations in Southeast Asia were entirely a CIA mission in its early years, but in 1964 it was turned over to the Department of Defense and SOG was established. To maintain secrecy, SOG's budget was hidden in top -secret Navy appropriations.

SOG teams performed some of the most dangerous and heroic missions of the Vietnam War, including cross-border reconnaissance and lightning "Hatchet Force" attacks on North Vietnamese positions along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, in North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. SOG teams were also involved in recovering downed US pilots, making prisoner-of-war rescue attempts, and penetrating deep into Laos and Cambodia to lead guerrilla forces they had trained in South Vietnam. Some SOG troops were also trained for HALO insertions — high altitude, low-opening parachute jumps. The activities of SOG teams reportedly diverted some 100,000 North Vietnamese troops from the front lines, thereby, saving thousands of American lives throughout the war.

SOG recon teams suffered 100 percent casualties in 1967, the highest casualty rate of any US unit since the Civil War. It also recorded the highest kill ratio in modern military history, 150 to one, with a high of 158 to one in 1970. Of the 17 Congressional Medals of Honor awarded to Special Forces troops in Vietnam, SOG troops received 10 Medals of Honor, the highest number of any comparable unit of its size in the history of American warfare.

The most highly decorated soldier in American history, Sergeant First-Class Robert Howard of Opelicka, AL, was a member of SOG and received the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star and eight Purple Hearts. Howard was nominated for the Medal of Honor three times in 13 months, a feat also unequaled in American history. Many who witnessed his heroics felt he should have won the medal all three times. His leadership and bravery earned Howard a direct commission to the rank of captain in 1970 and he retired a full colonel in 1995.

SOG troops received more than 2000 individual awards for heroism in Vietnam, including 23 Distinguished Service Crosses, the nation's second highest award. In the aftermath of the battle of Lang Vie, 24 Special Forces members were awarded one Medal of Honor, a Distinguished Service Cross, 21 Silver Stars, and a Bronze Star.

On April 4, 2001, nearly 30 years after it ceased operations, MACV-SOG was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation during ceremonies at Fort Bragg N.C. The Presidential Unit Citation is the nation's highest unit award and given only to those units that display extraordinary heroism under fire. It is equal to the individual award of the Distinguished Service Cross. Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, who commanded SOG from 1966 to 1968, said the unit was the most incredible collection of courageous and professional soldiers that has ever served our nation."They accomplished feats of unbelievable heroism," Singlaub said. "They were just extraordinary young men."

MACV-SOG was established on Jan. 16, 1964 and completed its eight-year tour of duty on March 31, 1972. During that time, 10 SOG teams were lost, 14 teams were overrun and destroyed, and more than 300 soldiers were recorded as either killed or missing in action. To this day, 50 members of SOG are still listed as MIA.

In the four years George Quamo served in SOG, he would establish himself as one of America's finest warriors. Young, handsome, and brilliant, the 5'11", 180-pound Quamo was "tough as nails" and one of SOG's most highly-respected field commanders. He spoke three foreign languages (Laotian, Vietnamese, and Thai) and was even an instructor in Vietnamese at the Army language school in Monterey, CA.

Col. David C. "Bulldog" Smith was one of Quamo's last commanders. A tough, former Army Ranger during the Korean War, Smith served two different tours with Quamo in Vietnam, first as a member of the Green Beret "A" teams in the early 1960's and later as a SOG base commander. Bulldog took over as commanding officer of FOB-3 (Forward Obervations Base) of Command and Control North (CCN), located on the outskirts of Khe Sanh in early February, of 1968. Quamo served as his executive officer.

"George was one of the finest soldiers I ever served with," Smith said. He was considered the Lawrence of Arabia of Vietnam. Everyone respected him — the men he served with, the Laotians and the Montagnards. He was an outstanding leader, and he

led by example. He never asked anyone to do something he couldn't or wouldn't do himself. He was at ease talking with a general as he was talking to a private. "He was just a great officer."

About a month after taking over as commanding officer of FOB-3, Smith was wounded when a piece of shrapnel from an incoming round struck him in the head. He and Quamo had been planning a top-secret mission where the pair would be inserted deep inside Laos to form a guerrilla force that would attack the North Vietnamese from the rear. After Quamo was reported missing in action in April of 1968, Smith was offered a replacement for the Laos mission. He declined, saying, "I would only go with George."

Born in Lynn, MA on June 10, 1940, Quamo was the oldest son of Alexander and Kaliroi Quamo, who emigrated from Albania to the United States in the 1930s. The family settled in Lynn and raised four daughters, Yilka, Tefta, Andronika and Marietta and two sons, George and James. The Quamos moved to Averill Park, NY, a small community east of Albany, in 1953. The children attended Averill Park High School, with George graduating in 1958. He joined the Army in October of that year.

Quamo, a natural leader (he was president of his class in high school and a quarterback on the football team), was considered "one of the Army's brightest young officers and the "Perfumed Prince," as former SOG sergeant Charles Berg referred to him, didn't take long to earn the respect of his troops.

Master Sergeant Charles "Skip" Minnicks, at 38, was the oldest team leader in SOG when this fresh-faced captain took over the reconnaissance teams in the fall of the1967. Quamo, 27, was the youngest major in SOG when he was promoted to that rank, on Oct 6, 1967. "I was madder than hell when he took over," said Minnicks, a highly-decorated SOG veteran of four tours in Vietnam. "And I made no bones about it. I didn't hide my feelings at all. He looked like a kid and I resented him."

He didn't say anything about it for a few weeks. One day we were in the jungle, he pulled me aside. He said, "We're both in this for same reason. We're both fighting the same enemy, I don't want to fight you too — we have to work as a team." Well, of course, he was right. Minnicks continued, "I really felt bad about how I had acted. But I will tell you something — I grew to love that man. I would have crawled up inside the barrel of an enemy cannon for him. I mean that. He was one helluva an officer. I can't say enough about him. He was excellent."

Operating deep inside enemy lines, SOG teams conducted some 1,398 reconnaissance missions. "Our exploits did not go unnoticed," Minnicks said, "Not one wounded or captured SOG operative was ever returned to us alive. None. George Quamo knew that going in. No quarter asked, none given. His kind of game. He was a man's man, a leader and one helluva soldier." Minnicks and Quamo were both members of "Special Projects," which included developing a guerrilla force to operate in Laos in the Mu Gai Pass area. Quamo commanded four reconnaissance teams including RT Pennsylvania, which ran more than 20 missions along the Ho Chi Minh trail as well as in Laos and Cambodia. The teams were usually made up of three Americans and four or five Bru guerrila soldiers.

The Bru soldiers were part of the Montagnards or "Mountain people" and were said to have an almost magical ability to detect the presence of others in the jungle. SOG units trained Montagnards, or "Yards" as Americans called them, for guerrilla missions and they became a very trusted ally. The North Vietnamese killed thousands of Montagnards during and after the war. To this day, a number of Special Forces veterans make pilgrimages to Vietnam to bring food and medical supplies to the Montagnards. The group has also arranged housing and employment for some 800 Montagnards who have come to the United States to live, many in the North Carolina area. More than 8,000 indigenous soldiers served with SOG during the Vietnam War and many performed with great valor. Many were also killed.

Quamo had an "intense dedication" to both American and Bru teammates. By all accounts, he was an extremely knowledgeable and forceful commander. His intensity and forcefulness are exemplified in an account of an incident written by Rev. Ray Stubbe, the Navy Chaplain during the Siege of Khe Sanh, for the magazine **Red Clay**. (Stubbe later formed the Khe Sanh Veterans Association and helped edit and write articles for **Red Clay** — stories related to the Siege of Khe Sanh. A number of theses accounts concerned Quamo's SOG teams at FOB-3.

Stubbe wrote:

Operation Pennsylvannia observed units of

NVA and knew there was a huge strong force. Part of the NVA plans included the preparation of the Co Roc Massif, a boomerang-shaped mountain just inside the Laotian border. Standing atop Co Roc were Major George Quamo and Master Sergeant "Skip" Minnicks. They observed units of the NVA that had moved most of their forces in the area for the attack on Khe Sanh." Overhead, a birddog aircraft circled with its passenger, Col Harold K. Rose, the SOG commander at FOB-3. Rose radioed Quamo, "I want you out of there. I want you out of there now." Quamo, dressed in his black uniform, all his men dressed in black, simply responded, "To my knowledge, I am in command at this location, out."

Former Marine Capt. Jerry Hudson, who served as an intelligence officer at Khe Sanh, said Quamo was "one super man." "I had heard all kinds of stories about him before I met him," Hudson said. "He was a legend." The guys in SOG used to bring back all kinds of information but because it was all top secret, the information went directly back to the higher-ups in Saigon and Washington. Then it is filtered down to the guys in the bunkers — usually too late.

"George thought a lot of information should have been given to us right away. The North Vietnamese would move their positions or change tactics by the time we got back. So he began giving some of it to us right away. He personally went out and ran a phone line between the Special Forces guys and our bunker so I would get information fast.

"I do not know where he got his information. All I know is you would see him go through the wire with a couple other guys with heavy packs. He would be gone for five or six days. He was really something," Hudson said. Bulldog Smith confirmed Quamo "leaked" the information to the Marines, yet did it without compromising SOG's own top-secret orders. Quamo would tell the Marine intelligence officer (Hudson) that an area was "hot." If I were in your shoes I would try that area, suggesting targets. Hudson had previously trained Special Forces soldiers at the Naval Amphibious Base at Little Creek, VA. in preparation for recon missions that were conducted from submarines near the shoreline, both day and night. Because of his background, Hudson developed a special relationship with SF troops, Quamo in particular. We spoke from the same bible, he said.

Although only a high school graduate, Quamo was a major in Special Forces at age 27. One SOG officer, himself a West Point graduate, thought Quamo so brilliant that he could have gone through college in a year and half. Quamo also commanded "Project Elephant," a SOG operation that sent teams into Laos to train guerrilla forces as well as leading insertion missions into North Vietnam. He also led other missions to Co Roc Mountain while that area was swarming with NVA.

Sometimes he just defied the enemy to come get us, Minnicks recalled. One time on Co Roc, he had all four teams up there while enemy patrols were chasing us all over the place. He led us up a hill and then stood up and defied them to come get us. He was one tough guy. Master Sgt Robert Cavanaugh, the leader of recon team OKLAHOMA, who also served with Quamo on cross-border operations in Laos, said the officer had great leadership abilities. "I often think that if George had lived, he would have become one of the great motivational speakers our time. He had that kind of effect on people."

Quamo's finest moment came at Lang Vei when he led a heroic rescue of the Special Forces unit that was overrun by a North Vietnamese tank attack on February 7, 1968. The outpost located some nine miles from Khe Sanh came under a surprise attack, although SOG observers had been warning of tank tracks and NVA troop movement for several days.

Quamo was in Khe Sanh when he heard accounts of the battle over the radio. He immediately went to the commander of the 26th Marines, who had been under siege themselves at Khe Sanh, and asked for help to relieve the Special Forces at Lang Vei. Colonel David Lownds, and General Rathvon Tompkins, the 3rd Marine Division commander, both denied the request, fearing a large NVA ambush would annihilate a large relief force to Lang Vei.

Undaunted, Major Quamo rounded up 14 Special Forces volunteers and about 30 Bru tribesman and asked them to help rescue their embattled comrades. Minnicks quoted Quamo as saying, "We may not come back, but we have to help these guys out of there." He then contacted Marine CH-46 helicopter pilots and told them to get ready to fly, that an order would come from their commander. An SOG Medic, Harve Saal, who would later write a four-volume account of SOG, said: "George just scalawaged those guys and told them, "You have to do this because

your boss said so."

Quamo's persistance saved the lives of 14 surviving Special Forces soldiers at Lang Vei. Years later, Quamo is referred to in the book "Night of the Silver Stars," as making a heroic rescue at Lang Vei. Already awarded two Silver Stars and a Bronze Star for bravery on previous missions, Quamo would be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously for "exposing himself to a tremendous volume of enemy fire" at Lang Vei.

He was the last man to leave the landing zone, the DSC citation reads. Major Quamo's intense dedication to his men, his coolness in battle and his extraordinary courage are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army. I really believe he should have been awarded a Medal of Honor for getting those guys out of Lang Vei, Minnicks reflected. He saved their lives.

Former Hachet Force platoon Sgt Stephen "Tim" Kirk, who was awarded a Bronze Star at Lang Vei, recalled Quamos leadership. "I rememember him standing out there in the LZ (landing zone) like George Patton. He was totally in control of directing everything in the midst of all that incoming."

A month and half later, on April 14, 1968, Quamo disappeared and the mystery of his disappearance has baffled many who served with him. His last days begin with Colonel Roy A. Bahr taking command of FOB on March 25, 1968. Quamo was also Bahr's executive officer. "I was the last living person to see him alive," Bahr said. I only knew him for about a month, but he was one of the most impressive officers I ever met. "The men loved him and would do anything for him. He was so young, yet so impressive. It was a shame we lost him."

Rev. Stubbe quotes Bahr in an article in **Red Clay:** "I was 37, going to be 38, and I see George Quamo. He's a major and he's 27 years old, and this guy is sharp. I mean he was outstanding. This guy, he's almost God to these people, because he's such a good man. He had gone into Laos and brought out a whole bunch of Bru just as the Siege of Khe Sanh began. He had such empathy with all the Montagnards, particularly the Bru people."

Bahr said he and Quamo coordinated strikes and patrols outside the perimeter around Khe Sanh, which was surrounded by as many as four divisions of NVA. We then heard the Marines were going to abandon Khe Sanh, and I knew there were some 45,000 NVA in the area. We only had a few Special Forces troops (about 30). It would have been suicide to stay.

Bahr said he drew up an evacuation plan and had the unit's intelligence officer, S2 Hammond Salley, type up the plan because it was so sensitive. Bahr said he knew Quamo had not had any R&R in some time, so he asked him to deliver the Top-Secret papers to Danang and take a few days of R&R. He then walked Quamo down to the airstrip, and watched him get into a U-17, a fixed -wing aircraft that reportedly was "contracted" to the CIA. The plane, registered to Nationalist China so it could not be traced back to the U.S. if shot down, was piloted by two Vietnamese pilots. The plane made a single contact with a radar control central located on Monkey Mountain now Danang, and was never heard from again.

Prior to leaving Khe Sanh, someone had discovered a strange cylinder in FOB-3 with Chinese markings. It had been discovered about February 1, but Quamo decided to bring it to Danang to be assessed. Some have theorized the cylinder might have been some sort of ordnance that might have been shot or exploded while on the aircraft. Minnicks said it was an "unexploded artillery round that Major Quamo wanted examined.

And then there is the story of "Bulldog" Smith and the top-secret plan to go deep inside Laos with Quamo. Both would be declared missing in action even to their families. They would then train and command a guerilla force inside Laos which would then launch an attack on the Viet Cong from the rear. When Quamo was declared missing in action, Smith became angry because he thought Quamo had undertaken the mission without him. Smith had been recovering from an injury when Quamo became MIA. "I was madder then hell, because I thought he had taken off without me," Smith said. He did not believe the report that his friend was missing in action because it was exactly the cover story they were both supposed to have used for the actual mission. "I finally went to General Westmoreland and he told me, George was really missing."

An extensive search was untaken as soon as Quamo's plane was reported missing, including a naval search. Since Danang was near the sea, it was thought the plane might have drifted out to sea and crashed. Six years later, on June 26, 1974,

Vietnamese woodcutters discovered the wreckage in a dense jungle area and the remains of Major Quamo and the two pilots were discovered and identified. The jungle had apparently swallowed up the plane on impact. Bob Donaghue, a former Special Forces radio sergeant who served with Quamo, visited the crash site years later and said the plane had crashed into a mountain on top of a tunnel that was used by the NVA.

"George was a real hard charger and a great commander," Donaghue said. "I loved the guy. Our C/O was 'Bulldog' Smith," Donaghue continued. "Tears still come to his eyes whenever he talks about Major Quamo."

"I asked my brother to be the best man at my wedding," James Quamo remembered. "He said he couldn't make it and that he felt bad, but he had to do some thing important and couldn't talk about it. I got married on April 13, 1968 and he was killed on 14 April 1968."

The remains of Major George Quamo were flown back to the United States and he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on Oct. 21,1974 as his family and several Army officers and soldiers looked on. There were no bands, no generals, and no parades. He died at age 27, a very "special" soldier.

A Marine Corps Poem

They are the first to come and the last to go,
These are the men who run the show.
They work very hard and through all types of weather,
Marines are well known for sticking together.

They stick together when the going gets rough,
And they are the ones who know how to be tough.
Tough in the body and tough in the mind,
But what is one man if he can't also be kind?

They march into battle as brave as can be,
Marines stay and fight for the sake of you and me.
They fight with strength, with honor, and might,
The Marine Corps fights for all that is right.

So next time you see that great flag flying high,
Remember Marines stood up for you and I.
And as those Marines have protected you,
Hopefully, someday, you'll protect them too.

Written by Kristopher Kay for his grandfather John E. Rotchford, a Khe Sahn veteran, and all of the Marines (veterans, present, and Marines to be)

Upon Heaven's Scenes

by Paul Choclis

And so in the end, my fallen brothers, the regiment will emerge from the ashes and dust, like a grand phoenix. We shall return to the battlefields of Vietnam to mend your mangled, torn, bullet reddened broken bodies, and you shall be made whole once again. We shall March together in the rain and the wind through the corridor of death at Cobi Thanh Tan as we did, so long ago. This time will be different. This time nothing shall harm us. This time nothing shall stop us. This time we are invincible. Monsoon waters will not crack our hands and bleed our feet. Insects will not eat our flesh. Bullets shall not pierce us. Bombs shall not impact our flanks. Trip wires will fade at our crossing. Our boots shall not sink, but rise above mud sucking rice fields and our packs with equipment shall be of burden no more.

The fog shall lift as a giant curtain, before us as we make our final approach to the mountain base of Khe Sanh. A golden sun shall warm our faces and our hymn will be playing. There will be no pain now. We shall rise above the Red Clay plateau marching in a column across rolling hills, jungle canopies, and mountaintops. Ascending into the clouds. It is there we shall enter the great eternal spirit camp of our fore fathers. The place of honor. The place warriors go. For it is there we can finally rest. For it is there we can finally sleep. For it is there as we gaze upon heaven's scenes, we shall find positions guarded by the 26th Marines.

KHE SANH VETERANS ASSOCIATION
Membership Application

COPY, print & fill out form. Submit completed form to the address below.

Check: ❑ New Member ❑ Renewal ❑ Change

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____ MI _____

Nickname: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip + 4: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

FAX: _____ Email Address: _____

Are you a Khe Sanh Vet? Check one: ❑ YES ❑ NO

If YES, when were you at Khe Sanh? (Please be as specific & complete as possible):

_____

_____

Service Branch at Khe Sanh, Check applicable:

❑ Air Force ❑ Army ❑ Navy ❑ USMC ❑ Civilian

Your Unit: _____

If NO, tell us your association with Khe Sanh Vets:

_____

_____

Membership Type (check one & write in amount enclosed):

❑ Life ($150) ❑ Regular ($20) ❑ Associate ($20) $ _____

Please make check(s) payable to: Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. If New Member Application or Renewal*, mail completed form with dues payment to:

Tom Eichler
3221 N. Opal
Chicago, IL. 60634
Phone: 773/625-2101 Fax: 773-625-8021
Email TEIC1448@AOL.COM

On renewals, circle any items to be changed. If a Request for change to current directory information, please complete the form, circle the items to be changed, and mail or fax a copy of your completed form.

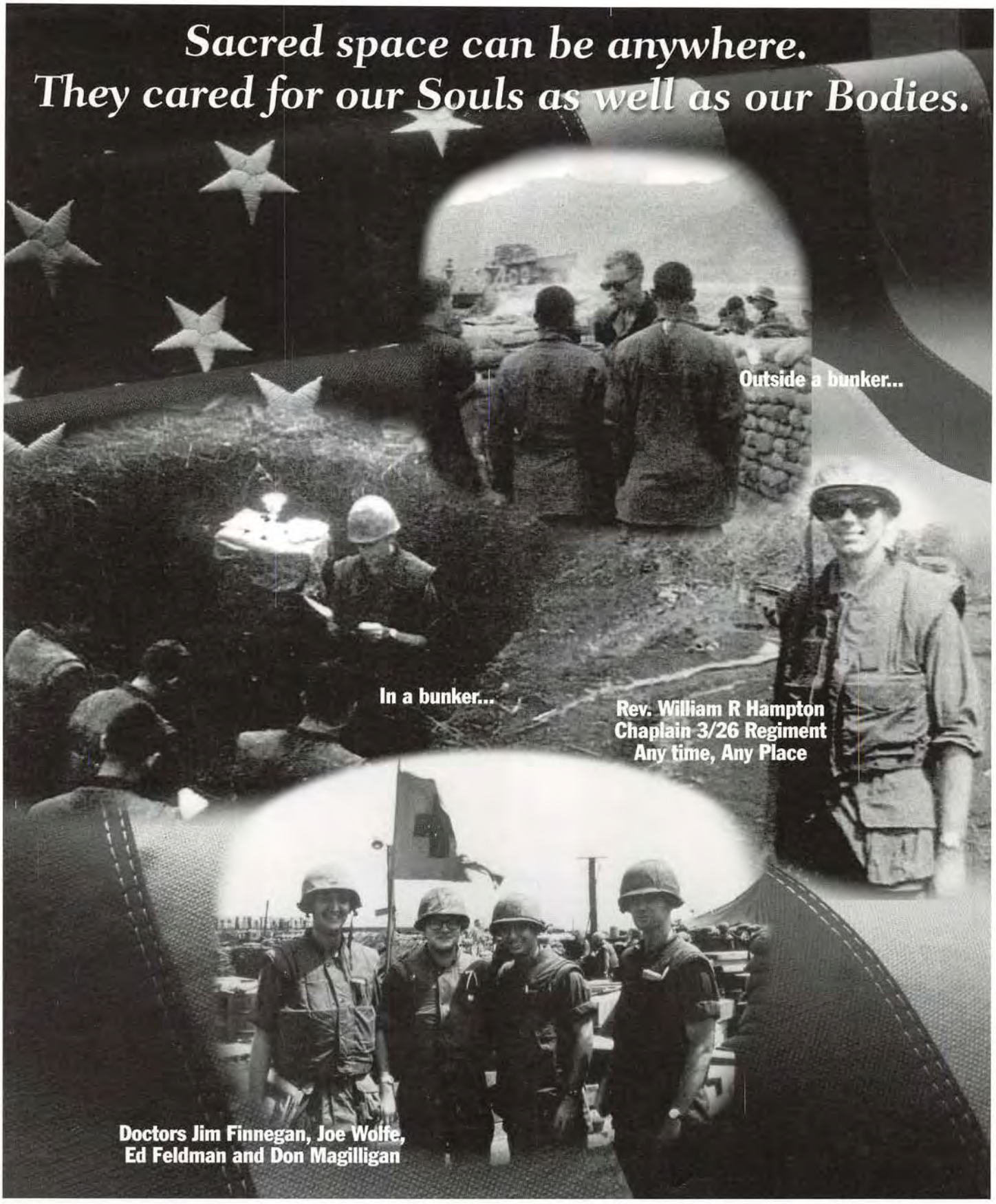
Sacred space can be anywhere.
They cared for our Souls as well as our Bodies.
Outside a bunker...
In a bunker...
Rev. William R Hampton
Chaplain 3/26 Regiment
Any time, Any Place
Doctors Jim Finnegan, Joe Wolfe,
Ed Feldman and Don Magilligan

Dear Khe Sanh Veterans,

My family and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers, cards, e-mails, flowers and phone calls...

see letter on page 5



Frank Ceniseros died 4 April 2003

In this issue...

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...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

Note From The President

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who supported my running for the position of President of the KSV. I take this office most seriously, as KSV represents such an important part of our Nation's history and the outstanding veterans who lived and fought that historic time. As well as this, I personally deem it a very important part of my life. I wish to also thank Bulldog for his fine work as President while on the BOD. As Jimbo, Jim, Tommy, and I embark on plans for our next Reunion, hold on to the straps of your boots. Why? Be assured, it will not only be highly attended as we all spread the word to those who may be first-time attendees, but this committee will bring together one hell of a grand time for each and every one of us, sharing some great times together! Until then, see y'all...

Russ Turner
President KSV

Cover Story

This month we honor Frank Ceniseros and Bob Mills, two of our most dedicated and loyal members who recently passed away. Anyone who has attended one of our reunions is familiar with both of them. Frank Ceniseros and his lovely wife Virginia never missed a reunion and were the most gracious and loving persons. They loved meeting and entertaining new members. Frank thought the world of the KSV and was an active board member. We will miss his homemade hooch. Bob Mills also never missed a reunion and took pleasure in meeting new friends. Everyone could recognize him by his frayed hat and uniform shirt, sitting at his favorite spot at the bar. He was also very generous and considered the KSV as his family. Bob did not have a family except for his elderly Father and he considered members and their wives his brothers and sisters. He showed his love for the organization, and how much it meant to him when he left us $ 8,000 in his will.


Frank Ceniseros and Bob Mills

I have been a member of the KSV since its inception and knew and loved both of them. I will miss them both.

Tom Eichler
VP KSV

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

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Frank Taggart .....Member At Large
Bruce Geiger.....Member At Large
Dale Pack.....Member At Large
William Jayne.....Member At Large
Thomas Ford.....Member At Large
Robert Moxley.....Member At Large

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Notes From the Vice President

Well, we just finished another successful KSV reunion. I want to personally thank Brian Mahoney for his dedicated effort in bringing the reunion to South Carolina. Most members do not know that Brian had to get through a serious family crisis. He still found time to put the reunion together. As in the past, everything did not go as expected. Our beautiful PJ Wodecki, as usual, jumped right in and corrected many of the things that did go wrong. (Jimbo helped a little.) The BOD voted to elect a permanent reunion committee comprised of members who have put together very successful past reunions. The committee will be co-chaired by Jimbo Wodecki and Russ Turner. With these two we also get a bonus — Kathy Turner and PJ Wodecki. We can't miss. I will also be a part of the team.

There was an election of members to fill several Members at Large vacancies and the post of President. Russell Turner, our Sgt.-at-Arms, was elected president. Dave "Bulldog" Smith, as a past president, automatically assumed a place on the BOD. We are fortunate to still have him as a KSV board member. I thank him for his loyal and professional service to the organization. It has been a pleasure working with him in my role as VP. Robert Shippen was chosen to succeed Russ Turner as Sgt.-at-Arms. Dale Pack, Robert Moxley, and Bill Jayne were elected to fill the Members at Large Vacancies. Owen Matthews replaced Bill Jayne as the Chaplain. Welcome aboard to all the new members, and a hearty thank you for those who served.

Although there were a few problems with the hotel due to its age, the staff did an outstanding job with every event we planned for the reunion. The food, entertainment, decorations, and many other things too numerous to mention were provided by AJ, Howard, and their entire staff.

We had in attendance as our honored guest, John Cavaiani (MOH Recipient) and Larry Deibert, former C/O Forward Air Controllers, 220th Airplane Group. John is also a highly decorated veteran of Vietnam. Individual awards were also presented to FAC members Toby Rushforth, Lou Armbruster, Charles Coppess, and Bob Arrotta. James E. Goggins also received his long overdue Purple Heart.

We received an offer we could not refuse from the Hotel that hosted the 2002 Reunion in Los Colinas, Texas, so we are going back there for the 2004 reunion. The reunion committee has already made plans to outdo the 2002 reunion. If that comes to fruition, I urge all KSV members not to miss this one.

Tom Eichler
VP KSV

Notes From the Reunion Committee Co-Chairs

Jim Wodecki and New President Russ Turner

Next year's reunion will again be held in Dallas, Texas. They made us "an offer we couldn't refuse." Plans are for a night at Lone Star Park including dinner and horseracing. A trip to the Air Force Base in Fort Worth, and an evening at Billy Bob's with band, food, rodeo, gun-fighting and bull-riding. More is planned for the week and will be published in the next **Red Clay** magazine. I will try and get discount rates for flights into DFW or Love Field. It was fun last time and will be even more fun this time around.

Room rates will be $69.00 per night, with the City of Irving refunding us $3.00 per room night for weeknights and $5.00 for weekend nights. I figured they would give us back around $2,300.00 just for coming back this year. Tommy Eichler, our entertainment director who is also on the reunion committee, will be picking the band we will have after the banquet Saturday night. The City of Irving, Texas genuinely wants us back. The hotel in Charleston was a bit old and worn, but the hotel staff made up for that with a gracious effort. Hats off to AJ and staff, Bull-kitty, Carmen, Migion, and Cookie the Grill Sgt., who went out of their way to make us enjoy the week we stayed with them, and to others who were always there when we needed something.

We have grown as an organization to where we need a large hotel with a 300-room minimum, and a hub city airport for cheap flights in and out of our reunion. Many members did not come to Charleston when they could not book a room in the same hotel as other members. Several sites for the following year were discussed, considering we went east this year, southwest next year. Vegas might be in order for the West coast. The KSV has many members from California but when we went to San Diego, only 210

members attended. This compared to 470 in Chicago, 390 in Dallas and 385 this year. Under consideration are Chicago, St. Louis, Denver and Washington DC. Since we wanted to go to DC when the Marine Corps Museum opens in November 2005, we will wait till 2006 to go there.

Anyone who wants to send us a presentation for a city that meets the 300-room minimum and hub city airport, please do so. Contact the local Chamber of Commerce or convention center, asking for what hotels cater to large reunions and have them send us proposals for that city. We will consider everyone's ideas that meet the qualifications we set forth, *including California.*

Working with Russ we will make each and every reunion better than the last. With great events and reasonable room rates and flights to our reunion.

I have sent out order forms for 2003 Reunion T-shirts to all who attended. If any are left, I will sell them first-come, till they run out. We also are offering an 11X17 Poster. The picture is of the KSCB base and picture of the Citation we gave to the FAC guys, who we honored this year. Everyone signed the poster who attended this year. They are real nice for framing and will be shipped in a tube. They are $13.00 including shipping. We have 300 of these for fundraisers.

Make check for posters to "Khe Sanh Veterans," 2200 W. McGarity Ln., Allen TX 75002

Getting excited already,
Jimbo/Russ
972-727-2997 (Jimbo before 9:00pm Central time)

Book Review:

GI Blues

Vietnam to Here: A Warrior's Tour

by Sonny Gratzer

This is an outstanding book of poetry. Sonny was a company commander with THE BIG RED ONE in Vietnam. He is highly decorated and was badly wounded and partially paralyzed. After Vietnam, he went back to school and earned an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Montana. The scope and depth of his writings is truly remarkable. Poets are able to express feelings in a way that we prose writers only dream about.

I give this one a big 5 stars.

Ernie Spencer

You can order this book by writing to:

Sonny Gratzer
106 Rolling Green Pl.
Missoula, MT 59803
$13.85 includes S/H

Memorial Page

Those Remembered	Remembered by:
Lt Mike Thomas, I/3/26, USMC, KIA 20 Jan 68	Ray Addington I Co 3/26
Cpl Richard F Sutter, M/3/26, USMC, KIA 21 Jul 67	Robert J. Sutter Brother
DI Reyes Ibanez, USMC, KIA 05 Jun 67	Reyes Ibanez Brother
SP4 Rafael Tenorio, B/1/77 Armor, USA, KIA 26 Jun 69 1st BDE 5TH INF Div	Michael Mulligan, B Co 1/77 Armor,
Sgt Hodges, USA, KIA Jun 69	Michael Mulligan B Co 1/77 Armor
SSC Donald Desmaris, USA, KIA 22 Oct 69	Michael Mulligan B Co 1/77 Armor
Sgt James Neil Tycz, USMC KIA 10 May 67	Sharon L. Pelon (Friend)
Dennis Herb, B Co 3rd Recon	Charles Fetter VMF-314
SgtMaj James Gaynor, USMC, KIA 15 Feb 68	Charles Fetter VMF-314
Capt Danny Coonan, VMF-115, USMC, KIA 08 Oct 68	Charles Fetter VMF-314
LCpl Louis C Lowe, K Co 3/4, USMC, KIA 14 May 68	John Nunn K Co 3/4
PFC James N Youmans, K Co 3/4, USMC, KIA 18 May 68	John Nunn K Co 3/4
L/Cpl Robert W. Belcher, H&S 3/26, USMC, KIA 11 Apr 68	Beverly Phillips (Sister)
PFC Steve A Srsen, A Co 1/3, USMC KIA 27 Jan 67	Steven G. Scott A Co 1/3
SW2 Edward C. Adams, CBMU-301, USN, KIA 16 Apr 68	Larry Kubley CBMU-301 Det B
Cpl Troy D Payne Jr, B Co 1/9, USMC, KIA 26 Apr 67	Lucile M. Payne (Mother)
Capt Erle Bjorke, USAF, KIA 15 Oct 67	Jose S Munoz Sub Unit # 5
Lt. John Carson, C/O E Co 2/9, USMC KIA 06 May 68	Tim DeWolf E Co 2/9
Frank Ceniseros, Passed Away	James Beall B Co 1/26 HN
Bob Mills, Passed Away	All KSV
Chuck Mendoza	Paul Marquis B Btry 1/12

Obituaries

A Good Woman Has Passed, May God Keep Her)

Harvey Hodak wrote:

John DeFelice called me the other morning and told me his Mom had a massive heart attack and that they didn't expect her to live. As you can imagine, he was very upset. He asked me to write to **Red Clay** and ask if any of the guys remembered receiving packages from his Mom when you all were in Vietnam. I told him I'd do that. You all might want to let the others know that we need to keep John and his family in our prayers.

Thanks,
Sandy Hodak

❋

EDITOR'S NOTE: John "Hollywood" DeFelice served with Delta 1/26.

❋

Members of the KSV express our deepest sympathy to the family of our Chaplain, Owen Matthews, on the death of his son, David Owen Matthews, age 27. We will keep Owen and his family in our prayers.

Letter from Virginia Ceniseros

Dear Khe Sanh Veterans,

My family and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers, cards, e-mails, flowers and phone calls during my husband Frank's illness and since his death April 2, 2003. We want to thank you for the beautiful heart-shaped floral wreath sent on behalf of the Khe Sanh Veterans' Association for his funeral services. Thank you to Doc Beall and Linda from Albuquerque, New Mexico, for attending his services. Our family truly appreciated your long trip to Coolidge, Arizona. The concern you have shown for me and my family dur-

ing this difficult time has been an overwhelming and wonderful blessing, and feel we continue to be part of the Khe Sanh Veterans' Family.

Frank was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia on December 19, 2002 and although his leukemia was in remission, he contracted pneumonia and was unable to fight the virus. During his illness, he enjoyed and was truly grateful for hearing from so many of you. Frank was looking forward to the reunion and had already ordered a gallon of "bacanora" to take for all of you who wanted a little shot of Mexican "moonshine." He always got a kick out of the facial expression of those who had never had bacanora and were trying it for the first time.

Frank loved you all and considered you his brothers. I'm sure you will miss him as much as he is probably missing you. I know he is looking down on you with his glass full of "bacanora" toasting you all to have a great time in his memory. Frank always said when he left this earth, he wanted a big party. He was so proud to be part of the Khe Sanh Veterans' Association and was looking forward to getting more involved. We have met so many wonderful people and have made many great lifetime friends. I plan to continue my association with you and know Frank would want me to do the same. Although I am unable emotionally to attend this year, please know that my thoughts are with you. When you have decided where your reunion will be next year, I promised Bulldog I would attend. Again, thank you all of your love and friendship.

Our Best Wishes for a successful reunion,
Virginia Ceniseros and Family

Dear Tom,

I am writing this letter to advise you of the passing of another of our Khe Sanh brothers. Dr. Dan Polland's death was a shock to the many thousands of people that he treated in his many years as an anesthesiologist at our local hospital. I met Dan six years ago when he was treating me for a lower spinal problem that I received when I ejected from a F4B Phantom on 22 Jan 1968 outside of Khe Sanh. Dan spent his tour as a corpsman with the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines from 1965 to 1967. Dan and his family became close friends, and I introduced him to our association. The rest is history. Some of Dan's many exploits were covered in a new book by Ed Murphy entitled *The Hill Fights: The First Battle of Khe Sanh."*

Dan's love of medicine, and helping others, took root in his duty as a combat medic with the Marine Corps. I want to ensure his friends in the Corps, especially in the 9th Marines, are aware of his passing. Dan's memorial service in Grand Junction was standing room only. I was honored to be able to say a few words of remembrance. He was a great corpsman, an honorary Marine, a superb doctor, and devoted family man. He will never be forgotten by those that knew him.

Brigadier General and Mrs. Harry T, Hagaman, USMC (Ret)



EDITOR'S NOTE: General Hagaman, thank you for notifying us of the untimely death of Dr. Dan Polland. Members of the KSV, offer their condolences, and prayers, to his wife Rebecca, and his entire family. He will be missed.

Ray's Corner

Our founder, Ray W. Stubbe, wanted to share this letter he had written to John Pessoni with all members of the Khe Sanh Veterans

The Khe Sanh reunion undoubtedly looms big right now. A connection to the past that feeds the present with happiness, life, and joy, as much as a birthday (remembering our birth and tying to that beginning of our life with all its forcefulness of life-force) brings happiness, life, and joy to everyone. All of you are my family, and many of those who served at Khe Sanh, as well as those like yourself who I've come to know in the years since, are in my daily thoughts.

Life is so very good! I'll be 65 this 15th day of August, and although life has brought me to a rather different place than I'd have imagined, there are so many blessings all around! Perhaps because of my age and certainly in a large part due to having been in prolonged combat, every evidence of life is to me a great miracle, nothing to just assume or take for granted, nothing to regard as "just the way things are." Even the simple healing of a paper cut is a great miracle. Why do things, for the most part, get

better and heal, rather than progress into decay and death? Because they are a great miracle. A few weeks ago, I planted some new flow-ers in my garden, and the beauty of color and abundance of growth, is such a joy. I just came in from an hour's walk along a parkway that's close to my house and just seeing the robins and scampering little animals is so wonderful!

Khe Sanh now comes to my memory in a different way. The loss of so many, quite a few of whom I knew personally and visited six months before the Siege battle began, come to mind through memories of remaining through the night and accompanying patrols from the hill outposts. CAC units and Lang Vei losses had deeply affected me and always will. There were so many more killed than are "officially listed," which has always angered me. What we endured seems to have been dismissed, disregarded, unacknowledged, oftentimes by the officials. What Khe Sanh did to me personally and how it has changed the entire course of my life, obviously makes for some negativities for me.

A few of these include: my changing from a person who was always gregarious and in the company of lots of people, to a person who increasingly keeps to myself and has with-drawn. I changed from a person who more or less regarded my surroundings as safe to regarding life as walking through a mine field with sudden, unexpected disaster always looming. Of course, after 9/11 most of the country, especially those of you on the East Coast and NYC, now feel the same as those of us who were in combat in this regard. Since Khe Sanh, I have believed that every day might very well be my last, and long-range goals and plans and pursuits always have been very difficult for me. Aside from combat, one of things that also happened was that in the middle of the Siege I contracted some odd disease to my kidneys. This may have been from some bug at Khe Sanh. About a week after the Siege began, I was evacuated to Danang for three or four days due to a fever and blood in the urine and returned to Khe Sanh against medical advice. After Vietnam, I had a biopsy of the kidney at Beauford Naval Hospital near Parris Island, where I was assigned. I was told that I had a disease from which I would die within 20 years, that symptoms would go away, and then suddenly flare up and I would die. As a result of that, I made a conscious decision to remain on active duty rather than get out and be with a regular church because if I were going to die at any year, why commit to a long-term effort. Remaining on active duty, with its frequent transfers of duty stations, made more sense to me. Also as a result, I made the conscious decision not to get married and have a family because I felt it would not be loving to someone to start a marriage, and especially a family, if I were going to die at any time! So I became a bachelor, Khe Sanh-related.

BUT ALL THESE NEGATIVE THINGS are nothing compared to the much larger, positive, good, life-enriching things that have come out of that time and that place! Regarding the casualties, I NOW LOOK AT THINGS LIKE THIS: Isn't it a great miracle that although there were more killed at Khe Sanh than officially, that there weren't far more? With the amount of incoming munitions we received, and the lack of concrete bunkers and fortifications, and the amount of NVA surrounding us, isn't it really a miracle there weren't far more casualties? Isn't it a miracle that ANY OF US made it out alive? Isn't it a miracle that just the right people were there at Khe Sanh — people who were able to lead, to work through the situations, to help each other? After all, not everyone could have done what was done!

And isn't it miraculous that so many of us have found each other-after all this time, and with all that has happened since then, we now enjoy each other's company and in a real sense, feed each other with care, concern, affirmation, and are happy to help each other (like with disability claims, and resolving guilt and blanks in our memory)?

And isn't it a miracle that despite the effects of combat that ALL OF US WHO WERE THERE now carry, so many of us have been so very productive, so involved in doing things for the community, have children, have good families, and have achieved such success? (Actually, I think that it's from our emotional wounds that we now are able to do positive things in our community, because we are all the more sensitive to injustice, to needs, to the pains of others, to the issue of war, and so on.)

We have, really, so much for which to be thankful! There is so much that causes us to pause in wonderment at the miracle of life in which we participate, which isn't really spec-tacular in a way, that forces us to acknowledge and be aware of it as a miracle. Which, upon reflection, and stopping to "see" it, overwhelms with a force of the presence of what is good within the situation, that otherwise is some-

times desperate and defeating.

After taking care of dad during a period of grief both of us endured over the loss of my mom, and during a period of de-cline in his health, caring for him for about 7 months, 24/7 with an hour off each day to shop for groceries when a visiting nurse came — by the time of his death, I was in a deep depression. I had gained much weight, lost interest in almost every-thing, and was not in good health at all.



Then I found the gym, lost weight, gained energy, and renewed interest in being active in my church work, and have been given the gift of insight to come to feel gener-ally good! This is a great miracle to me! And a great part of that miracle is due to having been with Marines for so long! For the importance of good physical condition, of depending on the connections with others, and so on, has evidently become so much a part of my inner being, that I started working out at the gym, something that hasn't been part of my normal nature to be doing.

Well, as you can see, I'm doing quite well right now. Life remains, for me, a minefield, but also a place where there are occasional flowers and birds and places of joy and beauty. Life remains short, precious, fragile, and limited but is also so very, very good, renewed and grows and develops as in winter into spring. With what seems dead (branches and twigs of trees, dark earth, bleak landscapes) becomes alive and so abundant in life. People we really care deeply for and who have cared so deeply for us — family, and friends and buddies in combat — still die and we shall too. And yet, there is a continuous stream of blessing we enjoy with those we've known who live in us and continues to live. According to my beliefs we continue to live forever in God who live, forever, and who is connected to us in bonds of love.

Well, I didn't mean to go off in all those directions, but as I sit here this morning, just wanted to share these thoughts with a good friend, and all our members of the Khe Sanh Veterans.

Ode to Ham and Limas

A short poem written by Harry "Joe" O'Dell
Kilo Co. 3/9 2ND PLT RVN 66-67

Ham and Limas what a deal
They're my favorite Chowtime Meal.
Mostly beans and very little meat
Still a tasty C-rat treat.
If and when I get my druthers
I'll always pick those "Ham and Mothers."

Contributions

ADDINGTON, Ray W
BEALL, James D
BROWN, James P
BUCK,David
CASEY, Maurice M
CLARKE, Bruce
COX, Hugh D
CRAPSER, William
CRAWFORD,George
CUCCARO,Frederick A Sr
DeWOLF, Tim C
DONAGHY, Richard E
DUNLAP, Lee C
ERNFIELD, Harry
EUSANIO,Thomas B
EXUM,Ronald
FETTER,Charles H
FINNEGAN, James O
FISHBAUGH, Michael W
FORMONT, Raymond
GRUBB,Robert
GUZMAN,Oscar J
HARE,John F
HOBART,Daniel L
HOWES, Roger A
JASMUND,Russell J
JEALOUS,Bradford
KARL, Karl P
KRESTY,Edward
KUBLEY,Lawrence W
MAGEE, Eli Jr
MANN, Russell
MARSHALL, Herbert H
McEWENBill
McGIFFIN, Carey W
MESCHKE,David L
MEYER,Donald
MILLOCK,Carl
MITCHELL,John E
MONTEZ,Jessie A Jr
MORGAN,Robert
MOUNTAIN, Roger M
MULLIGAN, Michael
MUNOZ, Jose S
MUNS,Karel J
OCONNELL,Anthony P
OTOOLE,David F
PACHECANO, Roberto
PAYNE,Lucile M
PELON, Sharon
ROBBINS, John L
ROBERTSON,William A
ROESSEL, Henry F
ROUSE,Edward
SANDFORD, Paul
SCHAEDIG, Roland
SCOTT,Steven G
SPENCE,Wilbert L
SPRADLIN,David
STROUD, Robert C
SULLIVAN, Harvey
SULLIVAN, Robert J
TORONTO, Wes
VOORHEES, Herbert C
WEBER, William A
WELLS, Marshall R
WHEELER,John T
WHITENACK,James H
WILSON, Ira
WRIGHT, James

We Got Mail!

Jimbo,

I am a member and would like to commend you guys for a job well done! In the early days the organization was great and through the right leadership, it has only gotten better. I just want to thank all of you hard working souls for your dedication to keeping this a first class operation! I was at Khe Sanh from the end of December 1967 to right after Easter in 1968, when we left for Quang Tri. Thanks again! Keep up the great work!

Eternally Bonded,
Tom Rottinghaus 3/26

Tom,

I was just reading the two **Red Clay** magazines you sent me, thanks. My friend Ray Kelly had talked to Dennis Mannion on the computer, and we found out that he lives 1/2 hr from both of us, was in the Corps, in the same places in the Nam, and have the exact same name of a friend who was KIA. The friend also lived near Kelly and I. Now I open your magazine, and see his name again! Small world for us old Jarheads, huh??

We were in Khe Sanh from Sept 66 to Mar 67. When we landed in a C-130, there was nothing but Matson Matting. There was no one there but 2 dozen Seabees and a small special forces camp out near the French village. I remember while on patrol down near the edge of the river bank when a plane came over and sprayed us. We were told to hold our breath. Great huh?I thought it couldn't be worse than working in the tobacco fields back home and getting sprayed. Was I wrong!!

I also liked the story of PCT. I have all the symptoms. Lesions on my arms and face that they told me were caused by Mustard gas, chronic fatigue, and when I get a cut I have a nasty purple scar. I will send e-mail to Doc Miller. I used to see elephant trains going up the mountains, but nobody seemed too excited about it but me. Lot of strange stuff went on there. We were 1/3 when we were in Khe Sanh, then went aboard ship as BLT 1/3. I have never seen an article from anyone in my outfit in your magazine. If you could, would you put a message for 1/3 guys to write? It would be good, OK!! Thanks.

PS – You are doing us all a great service, and I will pass on info to my few friends who are still alive from the 3rd Marines

Semper Fi
Dave Brooks
2nd Plt Delta Co 1/3

Dear Tom,

Thank you for sending the two issues of **Red Clay** that arrived today. The stories are remarkably powerful testimony to the experiences — beyond words — of men who have met challenges that few others are able to imagine. I particularly appreciate the account of Col. Ripley's action at the Dong Ha bridge in 1972. Approximately 15 years ago I visited Memorial Hall at Annapolis. My one enduring memory is the diorama of the sole Marine, hanging from a bridge under fire. It is uplifting to hear the "rest of the story."

My education regarding veterans' issues has been through witnessing the courage and generosity of those veterans who have given our country's citizens a gift beyond reciprocity. There can be no greater humility than to understand that reality. Each year in ethics classes at the medical school, I tell students and resident physicians that our profession could learn a great deal from military professionals regarding integrity and character.

Many times, colleagues upon learning that one of my sons is a career infantryman, have commented, "Oh, they just like to kill people." My response has been, "Once I was ignorant also, not having any knowledge or experience regarding the military. But I have learned a great deal in recent years, for which I am a better person." My work with veterans has not only been a learning experience, but a privilege, as well as a healing.

One of my high school classmates, Donald Walsh, a Merit scholar and a very good man, served in Viet Nam as a Corpsman. He came back to the U.S. for a few days, and stopped to visit me at a state beach park where I worked as a first aid attendant during the summers while in college. He demonstrated how the Corpsmen properly clean a wound. And then he returned to Vietnam two days later, where he was shot through the cross on his back (we were told).

My several trips to Arlington and the Memorial were futile attempts to reconcile the injustice and my indebtedness for this man's life paying for my ability

to live, work, and raise a family. The national shame of civilians attacking Vietnam veterans as they returned is agonizingly clear. But the private agony of some other civilians is not known, I believe.

The fact of the matter is that no one heals alone, as the existence of KSV and **Red Clay** attests. In my case, I can sincerely say that Viet Nam veterans have given me the gift of the opportunity to address my indebtedness. Recognized or not, veterans and civilians need each other. (Unfortunately as psychiatrists learn early in training, most of us resist what we need most.)

Thank you all for sharing your stories and for your sacrifice. Your brotherhood will always remain a testimony to the best of human nature, and I believe, this is what calls some good young men to service.

My best wishes to you all,
Stephanie Mullany

Class Act

Tom,

Like to share an incident that happened at the Indianapolis 500 last weekend. My oldest son goes every year, gets a spot in the infield and does what every "good" young man does when at a race. He had a seat along the infield fence between turns 2 and 3. Part of the pre-game ceremonies included a parade around the track where two members of each service were in the back of pace trucks. All five services were represented, with the Marines being in the last truck. My son related that it was windy and each truck was equipped with hand supports to steady the riders in the back. Because of the wind, the first four services had removed their covers and were holding on to the handles while the vehicles were moving. Not the two Marines, they stood tall and straight, heads covered.

The vehicles went around the track and passed by him one more time heading for the exit. The first four trucks passed, and my son watched the two Marines, still standing proud and tall. Suddenly, the Marine behind the driver (incidentally, my son said his sleeves were covered by nothing but stripes; the other had seemed very young) leaned over and slapped his hand on the drivers side door window. The vehicle rolled to a stop, the Marine stood up, both snapped to a sharp attention, faced to right, and in unison came to a full salute.

Sitting on the other side of the fence was a fire truck with 8 or 9 firemen watching the proceeding in lawn chairs. They held the salute. My son said that one of the firemen realized what was going on, and started a nudge that traveled until all of them saw the two Marines. Sitting a little higher and a little prouder, they acknowledged the Marines salute with a nod. Only at that point did the two Marines drop their salute. The Marine on the left once again leaned over and knocked on the drivers door. It was only then that the vehicle proceeded. The Marines, a true CLASS ACT.

SKI-BALL

Chance Meeting

Jimbo,

Hoping you had a good Father's Day. I hope by now that you have received the pictures that I sent last week. The real reason why I am sending this e-mail is to tell you that for some time now, I have driven past a house which is located on the next block, and from time to time I see a Marine Corps Flag flying in front ! As I was going through our members directory a moment ago, I ran across an address in the same city where I live. The address is for the very same house that I have driven past for years now, and the home of a Khe Sanh Brother. I will stop by and introduce myself. What a small world, one block over and seven houses down !! Thank you for inviting me to join the KSV and thank you for telling me about the members directory. Your friendship, even though we don't know each other, only shows what we have known all along "Once a Marine, Always a Marine"

Semper Fi
Alex Dominguez

An update on "Concurrent Receipt." Any one receiving retired pay and disability pay, may be eligible to receive both, without having the disability pay deducted from their retired pay It does not apply to everyone, but the Senate is trying to make it more generous. You can get info on http://www.mooa.com/ This was formerly the page for the Retired Officers Association. New name is the Military Officers Association.

Jim Wilkinson

KHE SANH VETERANS 2003 REUNION



Charleston, SC - Clarion Hotel



Welcome table at the Clarion Hotel



Parris Island
KSV Reunion 2003


USMC


KHE SANH
THE SIEGE


YOU ARE NOT FORGO





Kathy, Shirley, Bulldog, Tommy, Jimbo



Where's the food?



Friends making friends



Buddies



Having fun



Odd couple



Still fits



KSV Monument…



Guess who?







Frank Taggart with newly elected KSV President Russ Turner



…and Marines paying a visit



Delta Company



More Delta



Used car salesmen



New recruits



Geez, we were skinny...



Members with ice sculpture



Hungry colonel



Meal time



Ed Ronan buttering up the colonel





"You're not going to eat all that, are you?"



"Thanks for sharing."



Conga line, a little too close to the pool



I told you so.



Our own KSV authors Ernie Spencer (Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man 1 & 2) *and John Corbett* (West Dickens Avenue)



Unveiling our plaque for the hotel

Couples, Friends, and Family













Swinging couple















Ed Ronan finally buying a drink
















Sanh Vets





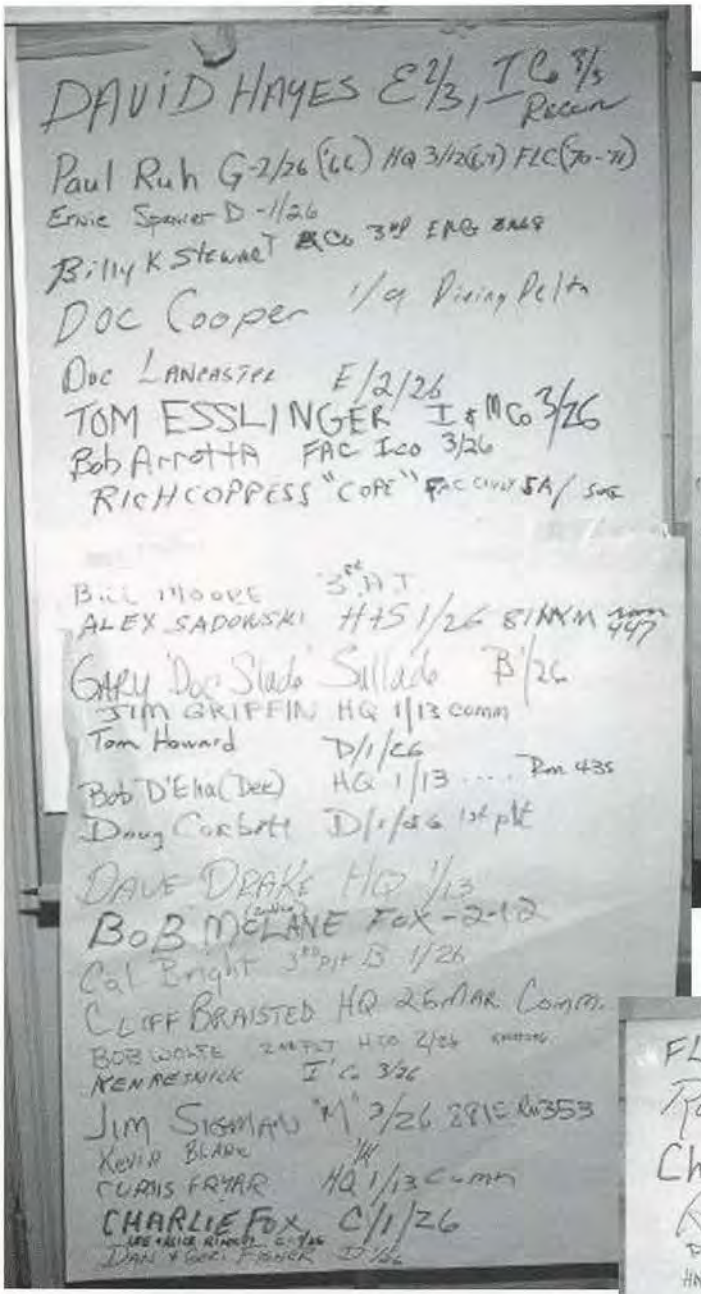
DAVID HAYES E 2/3, I Co 8/3 Recon
Paul Ruh G-2/26 ('66) HQ 3/12 (67) FLC (70-71)
Ernie Spencer D-1/26
Billy K Stewart
DOC Cooper 1/9 Diving Delta
Doc LANCASTER E/2/26
TOM ESSLINGER I & M Co 3/26
Bob Arrotta FAC Ico 3/26
RICH COPPESS "COPE" FAC CIVIL SA/ SOG
Bill MOORE 3rd AT
ALEX SADOWSKI H+S 1/26 81 MM 447
GARY "Doc Slade" Sallade B/26
JIM GRIFFIN HQ 1/13 comm
Tom Howard D/1/26
Bob D'Elia (Dee) HQ 1/13 .... Rm 435
Doug Corbett D/1/26 1st plt
DAVE DRAKE HQ 1/13
BOB McLANE FOX-2-12
Cal Bright 3rd plt B 1/26
CLIFF BRAISTED HQ 26 MAR Comm.
BOB WOLFE 2nd PLT HQ 2/26
KEN RESNICK I Co 3/26
JIM SIGMAN "M" 3/26 2815 Rm 353
Kevin BLADE
CURTIS FRYAR HQ 1/13 Comm
CHARLIE FOX C/1/26

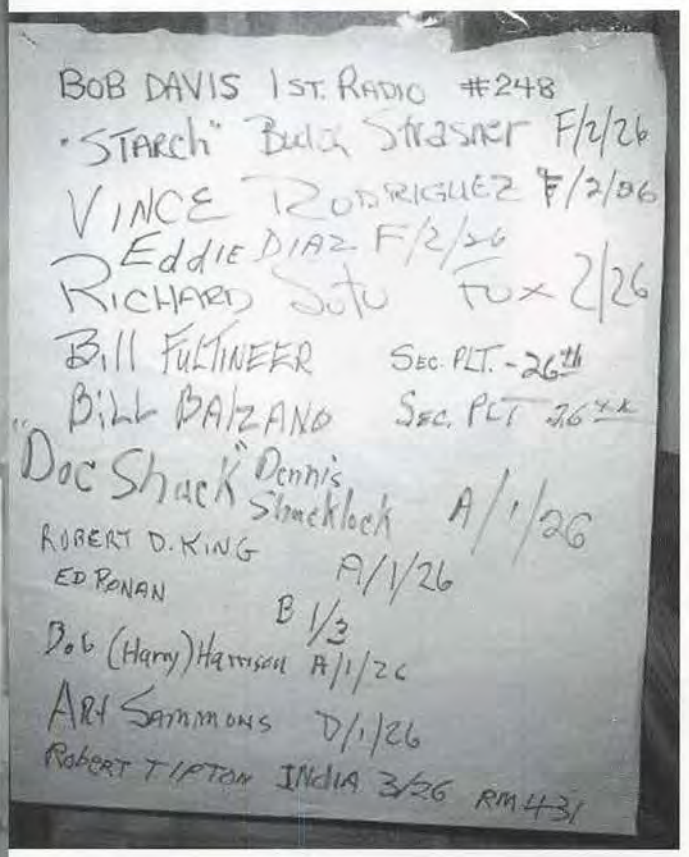
BOB DAVIS 1ST. RADIO #248
"STARCH" Buck Strasner F/2/26
VINCE RODRIGUEZ F/2/26
Eddie DIAZ F/2/26
RICHARD Soto FOX 2/26
Bill FULTINEER SEC. PLT. - 26th
Bill BALZANO SEC. PLT 26th
"Doc Shack" Dennis Shacklock A/1/26
ROBERT D. KING A/1/26
ED RONAN B 1/3
Bob (Harry) Harrison A/1/26
Art SAMMONS D/1/26
ROBERT TIPTON INDIA 3/26 RM 431

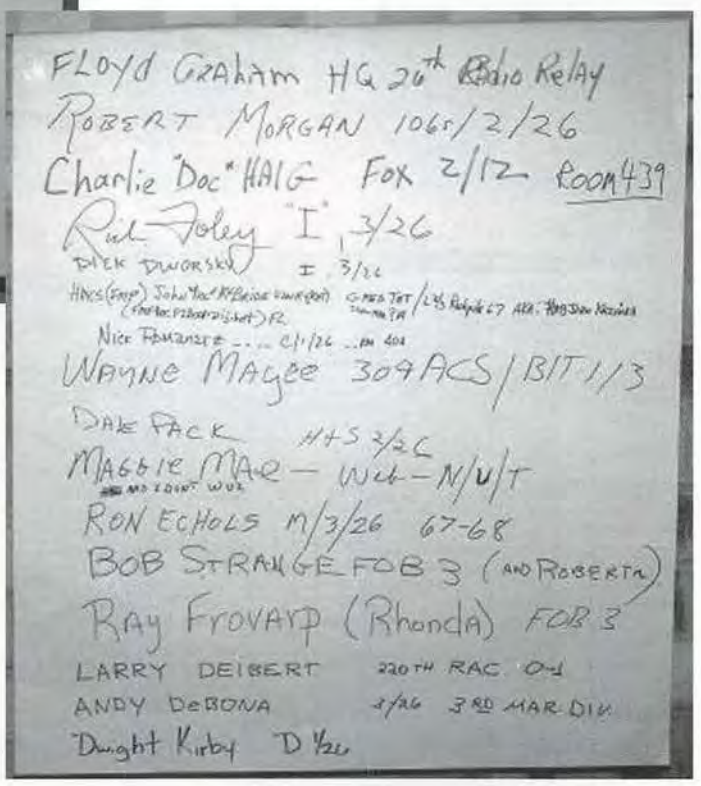
FLOYD GRAHAM HQ 26th Radio Relay
ROBERT MORGAN 106s/2/26
Charlie "Doc" HAIG FOX 2/12 Room 439
Rich Foley "I" 3/26
DICK DWORSKY I 3/26
Nick Romanzo .... C/1/26 .. RM 404
WAYNE MAGEE 309 ACS/BIT 1/3
DALE PACK H+S 2/26
MAGGIE MAE - WLB - N/U/T
RON ECHOLS M/3/26 67-68
BOB STRANGE FOB 3 (AND ROBERTA)
Ray Frovarp (Rhonda) FOB 3
LARRY DEIBERT 220TH RAC O-1
ANDY DeBONA 3/26 3RD MAR DIV
Dwight Kirby D 1/26

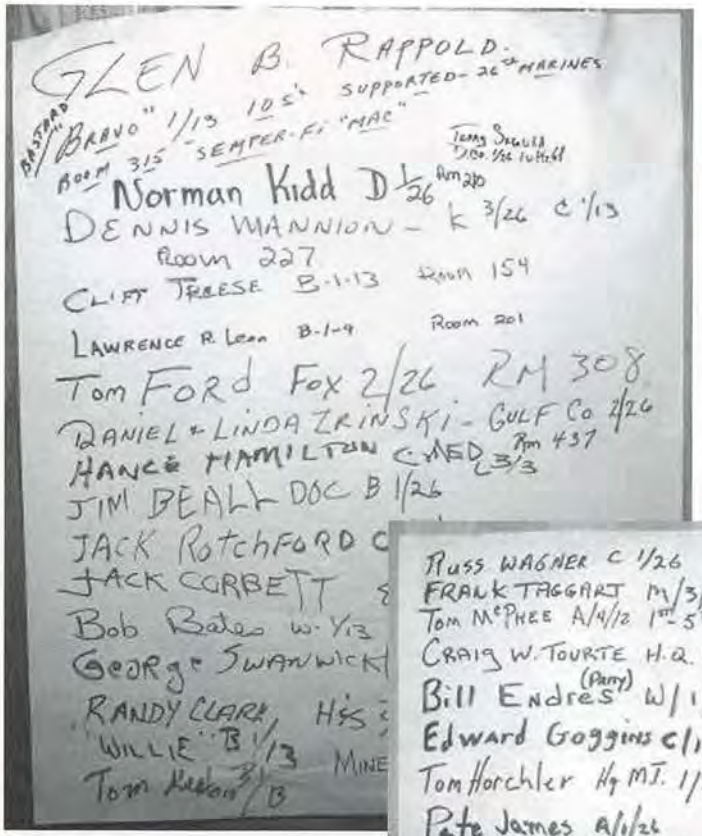
GLEN B. RAPPOLD
"BRAVO" 1/13 105's SUPPORTED-26th MARINES
BASTARD
SEMPER-FI "MAC"
Room 315
Norman Kidd D 1/26 Rm 220
DENNIS MANNION - K 3/26 C 1/13
Room 227
CLIFT TREESE B-1-13 Room 154
LAWRENCE R. Lean B-1-9 Room 201
Tom FORD FOX 2/26 RM 308
DANIEL & LINDA ZRINSKI - GULF Co 2/26
HANCE HAMILTON C-MED 3/3 Rm 437
JIM BEALL DOC B 1/26
JACK ROTCHFORD C
JACK CORBETT
Bob Bates W-Y 13
George SWANWICK
RANDY CLARK H&S
WILLIE B 1/13
Tom Hudson B/13

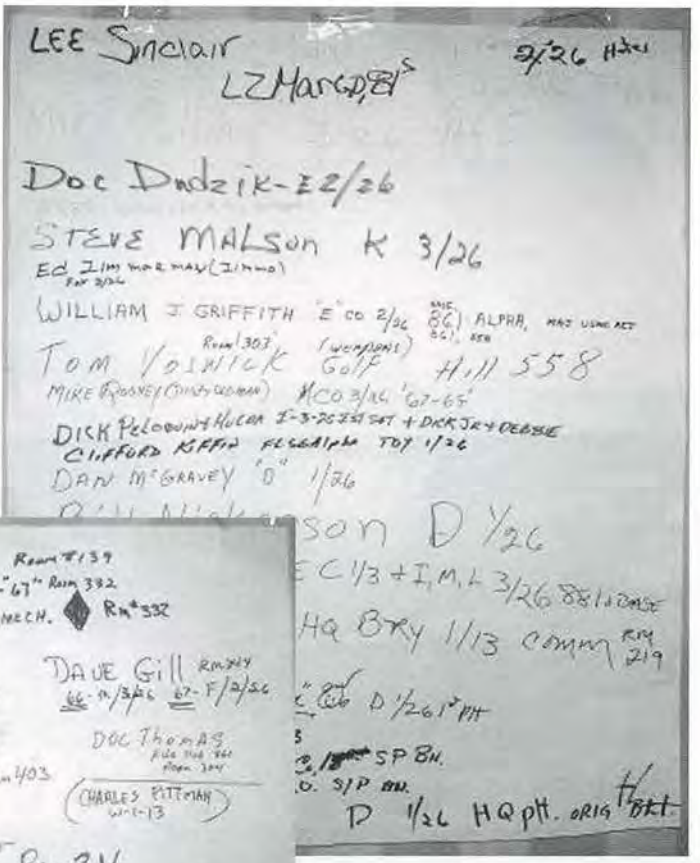
LEE SINCLAIR 2/26 H&S
LZ Margot
Doc Dudzik-E 2/26
STEVE MALSON K 3/26
Ed Jim Mac Mac (Jimmo)
WILLIAM J GRIFFITH E Co 2/26
Room 303 (WEAPONS)
TOM VOINICK GOLF H/11 558
MIKE ROONEY (COMPANY CLERK) HCO 3/26 '67-'68
DICK PELOQUIN HUEY 1-3-26 ??? SGT + DICK JR + DEBBIE
CLIFFORD KEFFIN FELGAMAN TOY 1/26
DAN McGRAVEY "D" 1/26
D 1/26
C 1/3 + I.M.L 3/26
HQ BRY 1/13 COMM Rm 219
D 1/26 1st PLT
SP BN.
D 1/26 HQ PLT. ORIG H/BTT.

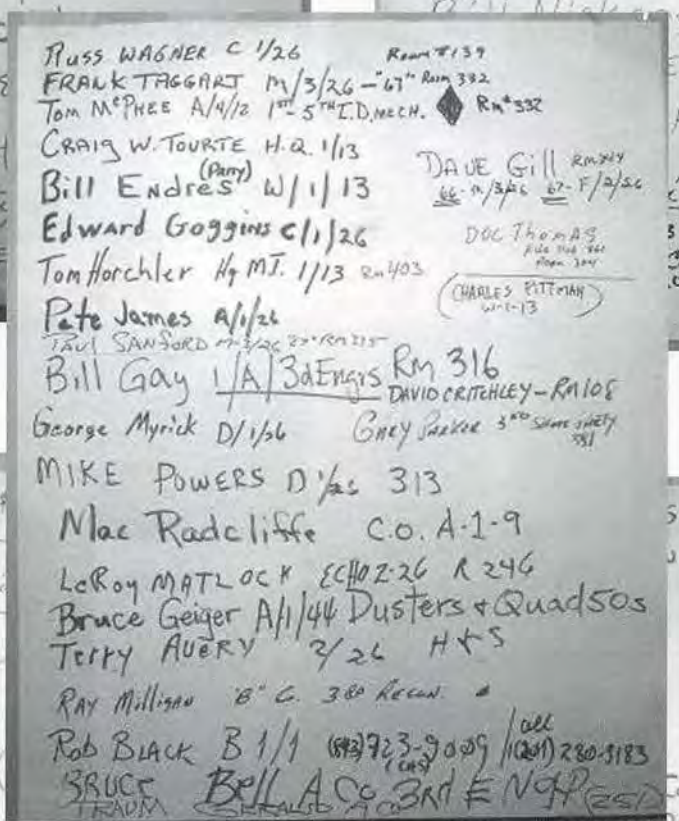
RUSS WAGNER C 1/26 Room #139
FRANK TAGGART M/3/26 - '67' Room 332
Tom McPHEE A/4/12 1st-5th I.D. MECH. Rm #332
CRAIG W. TOURTE H.Q. 1/13
DAVE Gill Rm 314
Bill Endres (Parry) W/1/13
Edward Goggins C/1/26
DOC THOMAS
Tom Horchler Hq MT. 1/13 Rm 403
(CHARLES PITTMAN W-1-13)
Pete James A/1/26
PAUL SANFORD M-3/26 Rm 315
Bill Gay 1/A/3d Engrs Rm 316
DAVID CRITCHLEY - RM 108
George Myrick D/1/26
MIKE POWERS D 1/26 313
Mac Radcliffe C.O. A-1-9
LeRoy MATLOCK ECHO 2-26 R 246
Bruce Geiger A/1/44 Dusters + Quad50s
Terry AUERY 2/26 H+S
RAY Milligan "B" C. 3rd Recon
Rob BLACK B 1/1
BRUCE TRAUM
BILL A Co 3rd ENGR (ESC)

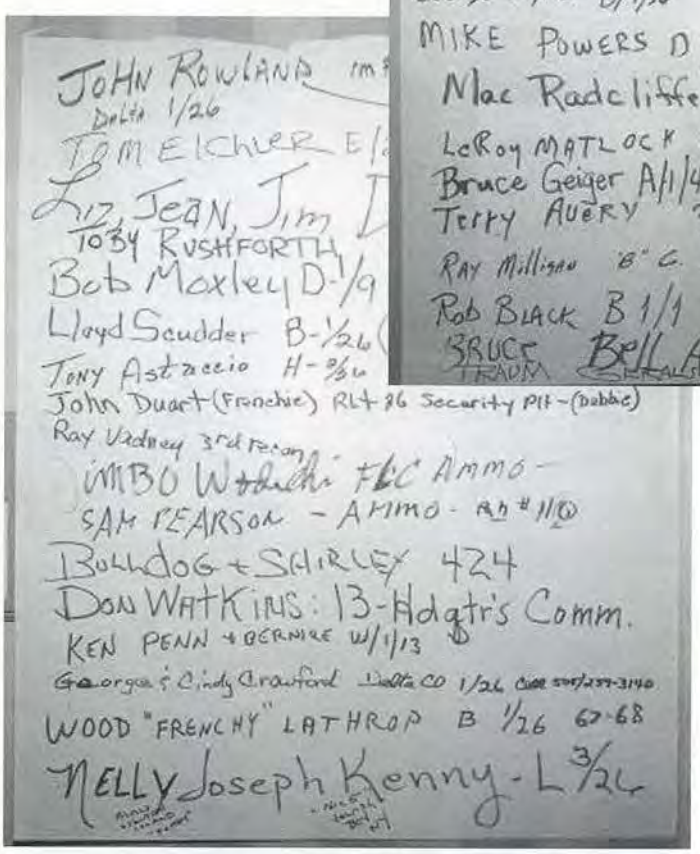
JOHN ROWLAND
Delta 1/26
TOM EICHLER E/
LIZ, JEAN, JIM
1034 RUSHFORTH
Bob Maxley D-1/9
Lloyd Scudder B-1/26
Tony Astaccio H-2/26
John Duart (Frenchie) RLT-26 Security Plt - (Debbie)
Ray Vadney 3rd recon
JIMBO Wodlucki FSC Ammo -
SAM PEARSON - AMMO - Rm # 110
BULLDOG + SHIRLEY 424
DON WATKINS: 13-Hdqtr's Comm.
KEN PENN + BERNICE W/1/13
George & Cindy Crawford Delta Co 1/26
WOOD "FRENCHY" LATHROP B 1/26 67-68
NELLY Joseph Kenny - L 3/26

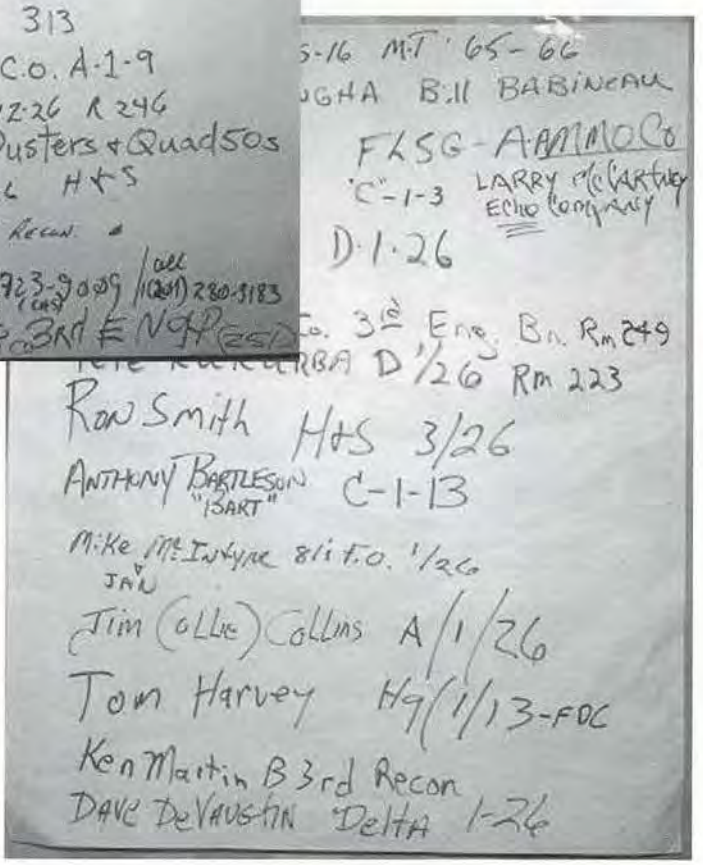
S-16 M.T. '65-66
UGHA BILL BABINEAU
FLSG - A AMMO Co
"C" 1-3 LARRY McCARTNEY ECHO COMPANY
D-1-26
Co. 3rd Eng. Bn. Rm 249
RBA D 1/26 Rm 223
RON Smith H+S 3/26
ANTHONY BARTLESON "BART" C-1-13
Mike McIntyre 81 F.O. 1/26
JAN
Jim (ollie) Collins A/1/26
Tom Harvey Hq/1/13-FDC
Ken Martin B 3rd Recon
DAVE DeVAUGHN Delta 1-26

Awards Night



FAC members receiving awards. Left to right – Larry Deibert, Toby Rushworth, Lou Armbruster, Charles Coppess, and Bob Arrotta



Marine captain setting MIA table



Gold Star Mother Anna Roble (mother of Joe Roble)



Gold Star Mothers Lucile Payne (mother of Troy Payne) and Maylene Littlefield (mother of Robert Littlefield)

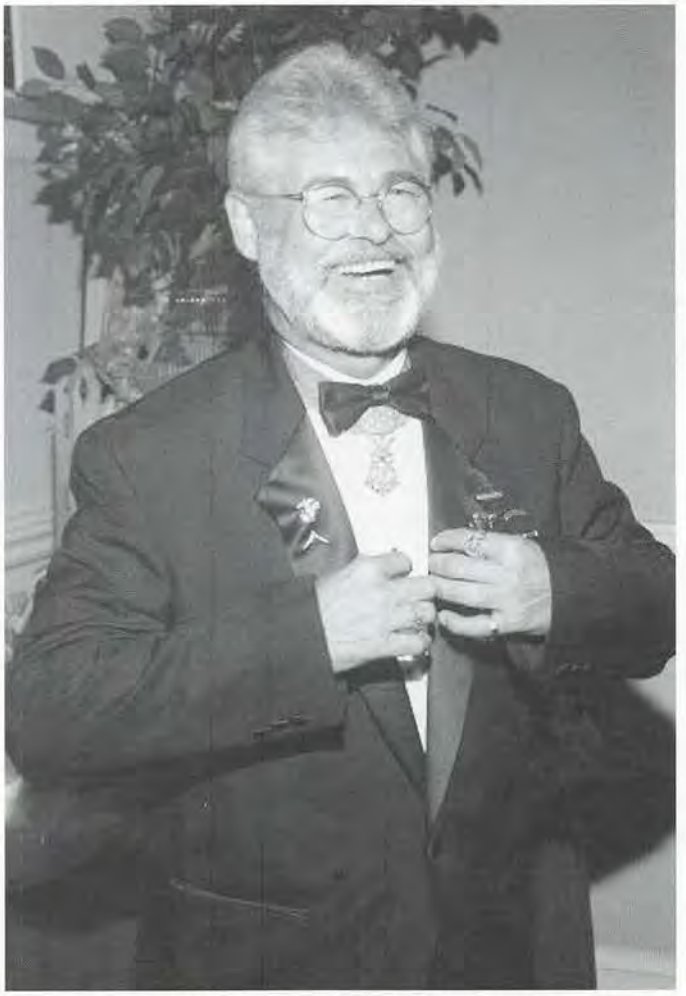

Honored guest John Cavaiani, Medal of Honor recipient

Luau and other Entertainments





One of the guests of honor





Young beauty





Howard & Staff, The Entertainment Committee



Jimbo with Howard and his lovely daughter





The setting for the evening



Home-grown talent

Civilian Elvis sighting





A couple of wannabes.



The"real" thing









Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island



D.I.



What are we doing here?









U.S.S. Yorktown



NVA flag



Reviewing history





KSV Past President Ken Penn



Toby Rushforth and his wife with Bulldog

A Message from the Commandant of the Marine Corps

THE FREEDOM AND SECURITY THAT HAVE COME TO BE ACCEPTED AS THE COMMON BIRTHRIGHTS OF OUR GREAT NATION, OCCASIONALLY DEMAND GREAT SACRIFICE. FOR OVER 227 YEARS UNITED STATES MARINES HAVE VALIANTLY AND SELFLESSLY MADE THESE SACRIFICES SO THAT THE CITIZENS OF OUR NATION COULD REMAIN FREE TO LIVE THEIR LIVES AND TO RAISE THEIR CHILDREN IN THE LIFE AFFIRMING CONDITIONS OF LIBERTY, OPPORTUNITY, AND SELF-DETERMINATION.

MEMORIAL DAY IS THE DAY OUR NATION SETS ASIDE TO RECOGNIZE THOSE WHO HAVE MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN THE SERVICE OF OUR COUNTRY. EACH YEAR, ON THE LAST MONDAY OF MAY, FAR TOO MANY AMERICANS EMBARK ON PAINFUL PILGRIMAGES TO THE FINAL RESTING PLACES OF LOVED ONES WHOSE LIVES WERE LOST SECURING THE PROFOUND BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY THAT WE ALL ENJOY.

CONSIDER THE ENORMITY OF SACRIFICE THE LOSS OF EVEN A SINGLE MARINE REPRESENTS. MULTIPLY THIS BY THE LEGION OF MARINES WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY, AND THE ACT OF HONORING THEM ADEQUATELY SEEMS OVERWHELMING. IN FACT, THERE IS NO SINGLE SPEECH, TRIBUTE, OR GESTURE, THAT CAN BE RENDERED EQUAL TO THEIR SACRIFICE. TO APPROPRIATELY HONOR OUR FALLEN COMRADES, WE MUST NOT ONLY TAKE PAUSE IN SOLEMN REMEMBRANCE, WE MUST ALSO RE-AFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE IN WHICH THEY GAVE THEIR FINAL FULL MEASURE. WE MUST COMMIT OURSELVES TO DOING OUR DUTY AND LIVING OUR LIVES IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THEIR SACRIFICE.

THIS YEAR, DURING OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, MANY OF OUR FELLOW MARINES MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM AND SECURITY, AND WHILE NO WORDS CAN ADEQUATELY DIMINISH THE PAIN OF THEIR LOSS, THERE IS SOLACE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEIR SACRIFICE HAS REMOVED A GREAT THREAT TO WORLD PEACE AND THAT THEY HAVE LIBERATED THE ONCE STIFLED DESTINIES OF MILLIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS. THEY HAVE DONE THEIR DUTY IN THE FINEST TRADITION OF OUR FABLED CORPS, AND NOW WE ARE LEFT TO DO OURS.

TAKE A MOMENT THIS MEMORIAL DAY TO REFLECT UPON THE GREAT SACRIFICES OF OUR FALLEN COMRADES. WHERE POSSIBLE, PARTICIPATE IN THE LOCAL EVENTS THE CITIZENS OF OUR GREAT NATION HAVE CONCEIVED IN HONOR OF OUR FALLEN. MOST OF ALL, RE-AFFIRM YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM AND TO THE OATH OF SERVICE YOU HAVE SWORN. OUR DUTY WELL DONE IS THE MOST FITTING TRIBUTE OF ALL.

SEMPER FIDELIS,
M.W.HAGEE,
GENERAL, US MARINE CORPS

Dear Tom,

I just found out about **Red Clay** bunch a few weeks ago, my barber happened to have an old issue laying around that was left by another customer. He showed it to me and I wrote to Chaplain Clark for more information and he sent me a couple of issues and said to send the membership application to you.

My oldest son spent two years teaching English in Taiwan. When he finished his "tour" he went on "walk-about" throughout the East, traveling in mainland China, Thailand, and even made a side trip to Vietnam. While there he wanted to see the mysterious place called Khe Sanh that he had heard me talk about so many times while he was growing up. After his trip up there, he wrote me the enclosed letter from Hue.

After reading the two copies of old editions of **Red Clay**, I thought his letter to me might be appropriate to print.

Dave Ericson

❋

Taag's letter from Vietnam Sent 9/23/2000

His trip from Hue to Khe Sanh:

Dad, I woke up at five o'clock in the morning and went across the street to a café that had promised me a motorcycle. They were not yet open but a couple of sharp knocks on the door, and the noise made moving a pile of lawn furniture obstructing the door soon had them awake. I ate a quick breakfast of a baguette with cheese and a tomato omelet before getting on the bike for a sunrise start.

I went across the Hue Bridge and turned left following the river until it split into Highway 1. The road was in good condition, so the drive was fast. Unfortunately, my bike was not in good condition and had to be allowed a rest to cool down every hour or so. There was surprisingly little traffic on Highway 1 and even less on Highway 9, which split in Dong Ha. The road was winding and mountainous. The scenery was beautiful.

I was told later that the trees are small because they are just beginning to grow again in many of the areas. I took pictures and stopped at a small village along the road to chat with the children and to share my Pringles potato chips. I took a picture of a little boy with a toy cross bow. His grandfather was showing him how to use it.

After the village, I continued on to the town of Khe Sanh and found that I was going to have a very difficult time actually finding the base. I searched along the old Ho Chi Minh Trail, driving up and down, but had no luck as the base was not marked by any signs. In the end, I was driving through red clay-floored coffee plantations in the hope of coming across it. A very nice farmer offered to lead me there for a fee. Field negotiations having been completed, I followed him through yet more fields to the base.

Everything at the base, except for the runway is green and red. Green for the coffee plants that are now being cultivated there, and red for every bit of brick red soil in between. In no time, it had begun to rain. Really rain. The soil became mud and was slippery. I thought about mud football, but there was no one to play with, so I walked between the rows of coffee seeing the remnants of those who were there before. Old boots, bits of sand bags, pieces of metal, and ordinance that remains there still on the ground because they are live and even the metal-scavenging locals are afraid to touch them.

Arriving at the actual old base, I found a small museum with a brief history of Khe Sanh during the "American War." Pictures of both the Marines inside the base and the NVA on the outside were featured. Some of the pictures were from the *Time* magazine article of July or August 1968. A museum guide led me through the tactics and strategies employed by the Americans and Vietnamese during the war around Khe Sanh. A mound of weapons that had been left in and around Khe Sanh were piled on a stand in the center of the room next to neatly arranged examples of the weapons employed by the Vietnamese.

I walked the airstrip, which is barren. Nothing will grow on it. It was red and long and marred by rivulets of water now eroding the soil because of the rainy season. In each of the natural trenches were naturally excavated war memorabilia. It rained. I was cold.

I returned to the museum. I was the only tourist that day. I listened to stories of veterans who had returned to Khe Sanh. Other veterans returned to find what they may have lost there. Some cried, they said. I said it was healthy.

There are two guides there — two fathers. One had fought for the South against the other father,

who had fought for the North. They fought each other in and around Khe Sanh. They were friends. I also had a father who fought with the Marines, I said. Then, there were three fathers.

I made it back to the road and knew that I still had to go the 150 kilometers that it had taken me to get to Khe Sanh. It was still raining and as I left the mountains, the roads were deeper and deeper in water. I couldn't see the path.

In the rain, I boarded my motorcycle and headed out through the fields towards the Ho Chi Minh Trail (now a very rough and rocky road running near Khe Sanh City). It was very slippery. I fell off my motorcycle, but it was unavoidable. I have never driven on mud like that before. You were right, I remember you trying to explain the mud to Ty and me. I think you have to see it for yourself. It would get into everything. I fell again. Pot-holes were hit that I couldn't see and my already sore ribs and back panged me each time. I hurt my ribs last week when I fell during a boat trip. My back was sore from the motorcycle ride.

I had enough. I stopped and the rain continued. I asked and learned I was thirty kilometers from Hue. Happy that I was close, I ordered some Vietnamese green tea and shared it with a young college student studying English. He bought biscuits and talked. He said his girlfriend is beautiful, but she lives too far away from him. I said I had the same problem. I gave him my e-mail address.

Sunset made the sky orange. It was beautiful but getting dark. My motorcycle lights were broken. I drove next to someone with lights so I could see and honked my horn frequently to be sure bicycles and pedestrians were aware of me. I made it back. I showered and ate dinner. I drank beer with some traveling Germans, and we talked about traveling in German. I went to bed. It was a good day.

It had been a very good day and I will always be glad that I saw with my own eyes the terrain where you spent such a big portion of your life. I took pictures for you and for me. I wished that you could have been there to talk to me about the base. But I know that you wouldn't want to go there. When I return in Christmas, I hope you like what you see in the pictures. Thank you, Dad.

With all my love,
Taag

Tom,

Hope this finds you well.

I am enclosing a newspaper cartoon from 1968. I was researching what the paper had about Terry Roach, Jr., who was KIA on Feb 8, 1968 while serving with A/1/9. While searching I found this and figured you guys might enjoy seeing it.

Just as an interesting point, I also stopped at the high school Terry graduated from and they teach a course about the Vietnam War. Don't know anything about the course, but it's an elective and they do bring in vets (I was unable to participate due to prior plans, but they invited me back.) The information is for Lt. Col. Jack Wells, USMCR (Ret) who is writing about the guys killed from his basic school class — they had the most KIAs. (You published his article in the prior issue of **Red Clay**.)

This next story is for you, as a Chicago guy and Marine.

For the past year, I've been at the U of C Children's Hospital where my 18-year-old daughter is undergoing treatment for bone cancer. You can guess how that is. A few months ago, she was in for chemo and after a few days, my wife and I took a break for a few minutes before her next chemo. We were at a coffee shop where I was standing looking around when a guy asked me about my cover (Vietnam Veteran) and "When were you there?" Now, Tom, remember I'm in the area of U of C with that cover — anyhow, it's Dave Harrington from the 26th Marines and Khe Sanh!! Better still, he and I were in the same company at Quantico and hadn't



seen each other since August 1967! We spoke briefly and have e-mailed since then! Bill Gay is another of our Quantico gang. Anyhow, it was a bright moment in the day.

On page 12 of **Red Clay** you printed my email which contained information about a MT guy being denied for PTSD — well, since that time he's been awarded 100%!! Figured it might provide hope for others. He'd been trying for ten years.

Thanks
Terry Charbonneau

Stress Factors (Coping)

By Cindy Lou Crawford

Why would a husband go into a tyrannical rage when his wife accidentally gives him the wrong driving directions? I do not mean the normal, "Honey, how stupid can you be?" sprinkled with about 25 of his favorite four-letter words. Oh no, I mean hysterical, pounding the steering wheel, panic attack angry!

I know you must think this trivial or even stupid but during one occasion in Houston, Texas, while my best friend and a rather important dignitary sat in the back seat of our SUV, my husband had one of those terrible fits because I had gotten us lost on the interstate. It truly almost caused our divorce.

Now, after twenty-five years of marriage, I know the reason why. "Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man — Reflections of a Vietnam Vet" written by Ernest Spencer solved the mystery. Spencer's book gave my husband, a Vietnam and Khe Sanh veteran, the confidence to write his stressor report for the VA. It also gave me the opportunity to learn more about why my husband over the period of our marriage became less and less able to cope in certain situations.

Of course, I wanted to know more about my husband's Vietnam experience but he never discussed it until now. Ernest Spencer's book put me right there at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. I was on patrol in the bunkers, and suffering the losses. Yes, the language is rough, but you must get past the camouflage of Spencer's raw narrative because the message is pure. The book chronicles Ernest Spencer's experiences as a captain in the Marine Corps, living and dying with our husbands, brothers, and sons.

If you ever wondered what life was really like, and I mean truthfully, Spencer's book gives an account of daily life in the business of war — sometimes funny, sometimes frustrating, and many times heart breaking. Spencer tells us what they saw, how they felt, and how they managed a reality that was so totally different from their expectations.

His personal account is the author's personal catharsis and much of the historical account is like an angry volcano erupting from the stupidity and senseless loss of so many young Marines. As I read the book, I knew it was the real deal. No exaggerated heroics or glamorized fiction fabricated to enhance the author's persona.

For me the answer was my husband's very first patrol in Vietnam. His lieutenant, anxious to get the briefing over with, gave visual recon from the top of a hill. As a twenty-year-old sergeant, my husband discovered he had lead his twelve-man squad to the wrong side of the river on the wrong side of the bridge, facing the wrong direction and was firing on his executive officer's patrol. Luckily, no one was injured and my husband had witnesses to the lieutenant's visual recon.

As for me, however, the trauma was lasting. When I would get him lost, I became that lieutenant. Without knowing, I triggered a flashback that put his life in danger. If you do not know where you are, then you are a dead man!

Cindy Lou Crawford
Proud wife of Sgt. George C. Crawford, USMC

Dear Tom:

I served with the 1st Battalion, 13th Marines at Khe Sanh from 11 March 1968 until the end of April when the whole lot of us were pulled out. I was the Battalion Supply Officer.

After leaving Khe Sanh, we went to Quang Tri for about a month — I'm not sure of the time. At Quang Tri, I was assigned as "Officer in Charge, Battalion Rear." The rear group consisted of the Battalion Supply Section, Mess Section, a Corpsman, and supporting communication and motor transport elements.

Later, the Battalion Headquarters was moved just south of Dong Ha and the Battalion Rear to a place just south of Hue. Later the Battalion, including the Battalion Rear was combined and moved to Da Nang. I left the Battalion in November of 1968 and

returned to Okinawa, to our parent unit, 9th MAB. I succeeded Major Kargill as Commanding Officer, Supply Company, Headquarters Battalion, 9th MAB. In March 1969 1 returned to Camp Pendleton where I worked for the G-4 of the 5h Marine Division until retirement in August 1969. Total service, 22 years 6 months.

I'm enclosing some memorabilia that I have kept all these years. I don't know if it has any value, but you are welcome to use it any way you see fit.

I once received a letter from a Corporal Wilkerson who worked for me at Khe Sanh. I think he lives in Chicago. I haven't heard from any of the others.

Sincerely,
Richard W. Snow, Captain USMC RET

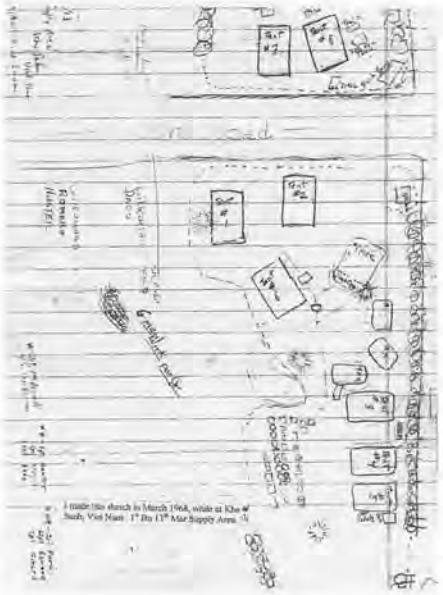

Hand drawn sketches of defense positions

"GYPSY" 1/13 Leaves Khe Sanh; Walks Softy...Carries A Big Stick

by CPL Graham Ross
Sea Tiger, Oct 8, 1968

DA NANG — Their guns roar, and the thunder shakes and devastates the enemy, but the Marines go quietly...very quietly

The men of 1/13 arrived in Vietnam in July 1961. They have been, at one time or another, under the operational control of one division and administrative control of another.

Shortly after their arrival, the light artillery unit was positioned in a little known valley called Khe Sanh. The following battle found the artillery unit in the middle, subjected to shelling by the enemy that Marine infantrymen endured. But their guns roared defiantly back. When it was over, the 26th Regiment and attached units were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. First BN, 13th Marines was one of those attached units. They were the sole artillery unit with the Marines in the valley. Since the end of April, when they left Khe Sanh, they have become a "gypsy outfit," moving as an entire unit five times.

The unit's subordinate firing batteries have moved, in total, over 20 times. In spite of the number of times they've been displaced, the battalion had, from the beginning of May until the end of August, fired more than 64,000 rounds during more than 12,000 support missions. During that time, 32 of the unit's Marines were cited for heroism, and 40 received Purple Heart Medals. The battalion supported U.S.Army and Special Forces units participating in joint operations, American Navy Advisors and South Vietnamese Army and Vietnamese Popular Force units as well as the Marines in their area of operations.

From July 25 until the end of August, the artillery unit was additionally responsible for fire support of 41 miles along National Route 1, from the Hai Van Pass to Phu Bai. They accomplished this mission although they were operating with one less firing battery than other organizations assigned similar task.

Recently, with the return of the 27th Marine Regiment to the United States, the 2nd Battalion of the 13th Marines marched in parade with the returning Marines. Only one unit of the 13th Marine Regiment remains in Viet-nam. Their guns roar, and the thunder shakes and devastates the enemy, but the Marines go quietly...very quietly.

Seeking Information

by Norm Mahalich

My name is Daniel Dimmock. I'm in possession of a burial flag that I'd like to get back to any surviving family members. The flag was retrieved from a storage unit which was being cleaned out. The following information is with the flag:

Daniel R. (Dog) Underhill: 8/07/48 to 2/04/89, US Marine Corps, Vietnam. Charlie 1/9, June 1967-July 1968, KHE-SANH and CON-THIEN, Camp Carroll, Dong Ha, Rockpile, Vietnam. Veterans of

America, Southern Conn. Chapter 251. Any information pertaining to this deceased veteran would be greatly appreciated. I would like to find this fallen Veterans burial flag a final resting place.

Sincerely,
Daniel Dimmock
Judge Advocate Marine Corps League Northwest Ct. Det. 042, Canaan, Ct.

The Sorrow of Unheralded Soldier Sons

by Jerry Large, columnist
The Seattle Times, reprinted with permission

Bud and Verly Hellwig are patriots. They love their country, and they are just the sort of people who form the heart of America, even now, as they live with wounds in their own hearts. They met at a USO dance in Bremerton, Dec. 2, 1944. He was a tall 19-year-old sailor and she, he says, was the most beautiful woman in the room. He gazed at her blond hair and blue eyes and asked her for a date. She declined but said he could accompany her to church. Two months later, they got married and after the war, they settled down to raising a family — three boys, then a little girl. Bud called me the other day about a letter to the editor Verly had sent to *The Times.* He was afraid it wouldn't be published and thought it said some things a lot of other people might be feeling, people whose children went off to fight in Vietnam.

It pains them that people who fought in Vietnam were spat upon and demonized. Celebrations for returning Iraq War soldiers sharpen their sense of hurt and anger. They invited me to their home in Shoreline to talk about it. "We don't want to take anything away from those that have come back, that they've made a big deal about, but unless everybody gets the same, it isn't fair," Verly Hellwig said. "Everybody that was involved in Vietnam, whether they lost kids or not, they all feel this terrible pain that our kids came home as bums, and the rest came home as heroes," Bud Hellwig said. All three of their boys volunteered for the Marines; Gary first, then Steven, then Ray. As soon as each one got out of high school, he'd sign up.

"I guess it's our fault. We taught them whatever our country did, they were supposed to support," Bud Hellwig told me. Hellwig ran away from his home in Arizona to join the Navy in WWII and survived the sinking of his first ship by a German submarine. There are big photos of the boys on a wall of their home, amongst the other family photos, next to several framed medals. If you start looking on the left, at the top, the first thing you see is Steven's name. It's been framed. You look closer and you see that it's a rubbing from a plaque. The plaque it came from is part of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.

On Jan. 21, 1968, the North Vietnamese launched an attack on Khe Sanh, the most forward U.S. base, and began a major battle that would last 77 days. Steve, who was 19, died the first day of the assault. That was also the year public opinion in America turned against the war. When their son was killed, the Hellwig's got calls from strangers taunting them, Bud Hellwig said. "Your baby killer got killed," they'd say. Their other two sons were jeered whenever they wore their uniforms in public. Every conflict since has reminded them of Vietnam, and especially of Steve. This time the response to returning troops has been enormous.

"The media has made such a fuss, like it was the first time such a thing has happened," Verly Hellwig said. She felt so strongly, she sat down and wrote about it. "What a joy it would have been if our sons and thousands of others returning from Vietnam had been treated to the same homecoming our troops from Iraq are receiving. They may not have won the war, but they all fought like heroes for their country's cause and so very many of them gave their lives. I strongly agree that we owe all the troops a thank you whether we believe in the conflict or not. "Our returning sons were met with only criticism and scorn. They could not even wear their uniforms in public without bearing jeers and insults, were kicked off airplanes when trying to get home to make room for late arriving civilians. No media welcomed them with praise or thanks. "Let's never let that happen again."

Bud Hellwig was more pointed. "How come you are so wonderfully patriotic now, and where were you then?" His eyes glistened with tears. "It's very easy to put a flag on your car," Verly Hellwig added. They supported the Vietnam War then and now. "We were supportive of what our country was trying to do. Our kids thought they were doing a good deed."

They resent portrayals of Vietnam vets as all being drugged out or mentally disturbed. This time their politics are different, but their support for the troops remains. "Mrs. Hellwig and I are not supporters of the President and his policies. We are very much Democrats." But they support the men and women who served in Iraq. "They're entitled to our honor and respect." You can be sure that this Memorial Day they're thinking about their son who died serving his country. "Once somebody said to me, 'Haven't you gotten over it yet?' "said Bud. "When you lose a child, you don't ever get over it. All you can do is hope to be able to live with it. "We want people to know that there are a lot of people like us."

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An Eternity of Seconds

Sonny Gratzer

Twice my life turned white
in Viet Nam
in stillness and calm
indescribable.
Pure, chaste white —
brilliant, dazzling, stunning white.
I knew what was going on.
I was conscious.
I could see it all —
suddenly
pain seared my soul.
White, silent suffering covered me
and I still knew what occurred
— each time.
I saw bodies flung
against bare hardwood trees
And I heard my ACAV diesel rumble
refusing to quit
when we hit the "mine."
The mine — a U. S. booby-trapped 105 mm
giant slug
triggered by our own dud butterfly bomb,
triggered by our own C-ration can and a nail
triggered by their split bamboo tied with vine.
Once, too, while seconds flew
I knew instantly I was mangled,
gut shot, spine shot.
The "instant" part not nearly
as fast as in knowing the white
light I lived in for an eternity of seconds.
My life seems long, extended by lights bright
and urgent.
I still don't understand.
Why me, Lord?
But then, why not me, Lord?
I know I've been wrong
and done things You don't condone.
Let me know,
or are the pains and aches my signs?
My lost loves merely retribution for crimes
against your teachings?
My grief is real,
my understanding unfulfilled.
I need to know
when I pray
who to pray for.

I read James "Jimbo" Wodecki's article "Marines at Khe Sanh 1970, Lam Son 719" with interest. First, "LOM SOM 719" was in 1971, but I am sure this was a typo in the heading. I served at Khe Sanh in 1971 flying for 'C' Troop, 2nd/17th CAV, 101st ABN, but I considered myself as a Marine, though I was wearing an Army uniform. For a "combat patch" (the Army allows the wearing of combat patches as part of one's normal uniform wear), I wore a Marine patch, as I had served in combat first with the Marines and would never let anyone forget this. During 1966-68, I had been a helicopter crew-chief (CH-46-A/D) with HMM-262 until my transfer into the Army for their Helicopter Flight Program.

During my combat time with HMM-262 in 1967-68, I was flying out of Khe Sanh on a regular (far too regular now that I think about it) basis. So for me, Khe Sanh, when the Army arrived for LOM SOM 719 was like "coming home." Furthermore, during 1969 and up to LOM SOM 719, I had been flying Cobras for MAV-V-SOGs, CCN mission (MLT-2) out of Quang Tri. So every day we would fly over Khe Sanh, and the hills, headed west to our missions. So for me...I have always considered Khe Sanh my home base, so to speak. One way or another my tours involved Khe Sanh. But my time with the Marines living at Khe Sanh was the defining moment, and even though I was later in the Army, I was and still am a Marine who happened to have also served in the Army.

One last comment. I took a whole lot of verbal abuse (Smile) from those I served with because I wore not only an Marine "combat patch," but also my senior badge was, and still is, the Combat Aircrew Wings, that I earned under fire with the United States Marines (and some of that was at Khe Sanh). Yes, I am proud of my Army service, and flying helicopters was a gas, but being a Marine who served in combat is the pinnacle of honor one could receive.

J.A. Sneaky White Jr.
USMC Sgt HMM-262 ET-50

I spent my first 2 weeks in Vietnam (December 28, 1968 to January 10, 1969) on Namo Bridge as a member of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment (Bravo 1/26)

On the 6th or 7th of January 1969, I and eight or nine "NFGs" who had only been in-country a few days, were placed on a C-46 helicopter with some veteran combat Marines. We flew to an area where a alleged Marine deserter and NVA soldiers had been observed sneaking into a village to get supplies. We set up an ambush awaiting his arrival. Unfortunately, the ambush site was placed in the middle of some type of ragweed field to which I was highly allergic. I then started to sneeze and could not stop, so the ambush was canceled. We returned to our basecamp at Namo Bridge, north of Danang on Highway 1. I later learned my sneezing had forced the cancellation of an ambush that had been in the planning for many weeks.

The next night, I was placed on bridge guard duty with three other Marines. There were four of us on guard duty in two 2-man teams. We had orders to randomly throw M-26 hand grenades into the Song Cu De River beneath Namo Bridge, in an effort to deter NVA/Viet Cong sappers from swimming underneath the bridge and placing satchel charges. During the early morning hours of January 9, 1969, four other Marines plus the OD came onto the bridge to relieve the four of us from guard duty. With nine of us standing fairly close to one another, one of the Marines who was getting off guard duty said, "I have one more grenade to throw." I heard the spoon fly as he threw the grenade. Unfortunately, the grenade struck the bridge railing and bounced back toward all of us. In the semi-darkness, I saw the grenade when it landed near me. I stepped between two Marines and pushed them safely out of harm's way as I kicked the grenade off the bridge. It exploded only a few feet before reaching the surface of the water.

The next day, I was informed by a corporal, whose name I do not recall, that I had been would be recommended for the Marine Corps Medal for my actions. I was transferred on the 10th or 11th of January, 1969, to Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment. I never received recognition for my actions on the bridge. Someday, I hope to locate witnesses concerning four or five other events that occured during my tour of Vietnam; and, to receive the awards for which I was reccommended and never received. I want to set the record straight for my grandchildren and to somehow try to live down that sneezing spell that aborted a combat mission and possibly negated the capture of Private Robert

Garwood, USMC (deserter).

Semper Fidelis Yo Ole' Bro
Loyde P. "Snake" Arender

Our Force Recon Company did not live at the base — B Co. 3rd Bn. Recon lived near the ammo bunker. We merely used it as a patrol base and during the worst of the shelling, we seldom went up there but rather we flew over it. We used Ca Lu and LZ Stud for a patrol base during that period. We started running the 4-man patrols in early Spring of 68 along the borders, sometimes out of Khe Sanh and sometimes out of LZ Stud. We worked hard in that area during Pegasus but saw much more enemy activity later that summer after the base had been dismantled. That summer, we worked the 881-861 area and Tiger Tooth Mt. as well as the extreme northwest corner of the country...crossing into Laos a couple of times. I don't know if the Marine units that endured the battle ever learned what we recon teams found during that time but it was impressive...trucks, tank treads, arms caches, fuel, lots and lots of cemeteries...too many to count.

Although we were also 0311s, we lived much better than the Marine infantry...I think all recon men had a guilt thing about that. Of course, our job was also hazardous but after 5-6 days, we would be pulled out and returned to Dong Ha to be debriefed. We were usually there 2-3 days. We would usually get a half-day of rest, a hot meal, a beer or two, draw ammo, mail and then we would receive the next patrol order...a day to prepare, coordinate supporting arms (if we were within range) and then an insertion by either truck or helicopter. We could work the Khe Sanh area one patrol and then into the DaKrong the next...Con Thien and then the Hai Lang. You never knew where you were going next. Usually when a guy made sergeant, he would be sent to a grunt unit. Most recon team leaders were corporals and lance corporals. We were independent so no one messed with us. No one could supercede our orders as we worked directly under 3rd MAF. In short, we fought a much more comfortable war than you guys did.

That is what made me a bit reluctant to be considered a Khe Sanh Vet, but I am honored that I was asked to join and now consider myself among those who I always felt were a cut above every one else — the Marine grunt. I look forward to working with you on this next effort and I hope that you will like it. I enjoyed reading your story about Asian Marines (in the **Red Clay** issue). We had a Chinese-American in our unit that was from Mississippi. He had the strongest Southern accent I ever heard. He was always joking and could have become a stand-up comic with little effort. He was also a practical joker. His team never let him on the chopper first when being extracted from the bush, since we resembled the enemy in our bush outfits — they were worried about the gunners making a mistake. He left our unit after a while and we lost track. His redneck accent would crack us up and in the Vietnamese village he really shocked everyone. Sure would like to run into him someday.

I now feel bad about the names we had for ethnicities, but I guess it was the Marine way. I cringe now at the word "gook" or "dink," yet I once used it freely. Native-Americans were always "Chief." I am half-Cuban and half-French, so I was the "Spic-Frog" and I never was offended by many jokes hurled at me by my peers. African-Americans were always "Brothers" or "Bloods." Guys from Oceana always called themselves "Pineapple" — we had Pineapple "Chunk" and Pineapple "Slice," one from Samoa the other from Guam. It was innocent but now I guess we have grown up, and we are all politically correct. We were all Brothers and a Family. Wish the world was like that and then there would be very few problems. Your essay about your friend Han Lee was what brought that to mind.

Take care, your bro,
SF Eddie

Why I Joined

by Bill Hubbard

I was reading on the KSV message board about this war our country is now involved in today. All are volunteers. This got me to thinking about why I chose to join the Marine Corps instead of any other branch of service.

I did not join for the glory or adventure, which I considered grand illusions. My reasons were more basic. During this time, most companies wanted you to have your service obligation completed before they would consider offering employment. Another

factor was that three of my closest friends from high school also made the decision to join the Corps. This was the real reason. If my buddies were going, so was I. So, while Operation Hastings was still fresh in the headlines, Alvie Bryant, Bill Brown, Robert Simmons, and I all went in together.

We all lived within two blocks of each other in a poor section of Houston, Texas. We stayed together through boot camp and infantry training. Three of us qualified as expert marksman. Bill Brown missed qualifying expert by two lousy points. It really broke his heart. He felt like he let us down.

We all shipped out together on the USS Walker that had 4,000 Marines and a unit of Army postal workers. We got our assignments while on the ship. Alvie and Bill got off in Okinawa, but immediately requested shipment to Vietnam cause me and Robert were going straight in.

I remember offloading from the USS Walker at Danang into an LST and could see tracers flying everywhere from the nearby hills. I felt like my world was coming to an end. But when the ramp of the LST went down, there was Vietnamese selling Cokes. This absolutely shocked me. I thought somebody should have been handing out ammo instead. We all ended up grunt Marines. I served with E Company 2/26. I got hit by an 82mm mortar round on May 22, 1967 and finished up my tour at Khe Sanh in February 1968.

Alvie and Bill were both KIA I found out about it when my mother wrote me. I don't know how they died and have never tried to find out the details. Alvie was a first class guy. If he lived, he'd be 54 years old today. He had a daughter that was born while he was over there and never knew her. I often wonder what she knows about her daddy. About his life. He had the greatest smile I have ever seen. He had a big love for life. She has no idea that it was Alvie loaned me $30 so I could go to Oceanside and have some fun. I never paid him back that loan. Bill Brown was a tall skinny guy that had never been two miles from home before he joined the Marines. He took to smoking a pipe to make him appear more mature. He had a daughter while serving in Vietnam. He was also KIA. Another child that never knew her daddy.

The undoubted star of our group was Robert Simmons. He was the quarterback of our high school football team. He made meritorious sergeant in Vietnam. He got wounded three times before they shipped him home. He received the Bronze Star besides his three Purple Hearts. When I got out, they were going to give me a general discharge, 'cause I was so messed up. It was some old mustang Marine that called me aside and straightened me out and made it possible for me to be discharged honorably. I don't remember the man's name. He also helped me get a job.

I got married but that didn't work out. I remember my wife yelling at me: "What the hell is wrong with you," she'd curse. Her daddy had landed on Omaha beach and spent the rest of his life drinking. You would have thought she'd understand, but she didn't. I had a long talk with my mother shortly before she died. She informed me that on our block alone, five Marines died in Vietnam. I felt so bad about what our poor mothers must have gone through. I told her how sorry I was for us putting them through that. Robert would call me throughout the years like clockwork on the Marine Corps birthday to wish me well.

His mother told me that he had become an alcoholic after Vietnam. The last job he held was a part-time, short-order cook. Robert, our star brother, lived the end of life in a halfway house. He was a good man who only drank to kill his pain. His mother told me he was in a hospital dying of cirrhosis of the liver. Robert encouraged me to quit drinking. I went to see him during his last days. The last day he was so weak he couldn't talk. I gave him a thumbs up. He slowly raised his arm and gave me a thumbs up, turned it down, turned his head to the side and died. It staggered me. I made a vow to him and all the other guys that I would straighten out. I'm struggling but keeping at it. I don't know the big picture but do the best I can.

I'd give anything for just one more day. One more day when the four of us were young and happy and talking about our dreams of what we'd do after the war. God. I miss my buddies so much. I miss and love my friends. To this day I still keep remembering the stink inside my helmet when I took it off. I remember how cold my flak jacket would feel after I'd put it back on after it was all sweated up.

Well I guess I've rambled on a bit too long, but I know that at least you guys know what I'm talking

about. I don't care what the rest of the folks out there think about us. Only we know and understand.

Semper Fi
L/Cpl. Bill Hubbard
E Co. 2nd Plt. 2/26

On the Reunion in Charleston: Got a kick out of the theme being "Bird Dog Pilots, Our Protectors in the Sky." I forget if I ever mentioned it to you, but I am the current President of the "Forward Air Controllers' (FAC) Association." Our current roster of pilots, maintenance, communications, and intelligence, et al. personnel connected with the FAC Mission is about 2000. I know of several who, along with myself, directly supported the defense of Khe Sanh during the Seige. I got one to come to the last KSV Reunion.

I figured I'd put the word out on our FACNET to let the guys know about this great opportunity to get together with the Khe Sanh Vets. I tried to register at the Clarion today and the gal at the registrations desk said she understood the rooms for the Reunion were already filled and I needed to talk to a guy named "AJ" on Monday. I'm gonna do that so I can put out all the right info to the FACNET guys on my first try.

You smoked me out with the two articles mentioning 1/9 on Hill 64 (8 Feb) and Lang Vei the day before. I was there (FACing) for both of those. Reminded me one more time, I owe you a couple of those stories from my diary. I swear I'll do that in the next couple of weeks.

I told you the one about Lang Vei and my chance meeting with CSM, Special Operations Command, Dennis Thompson (Ret) at the San Diego Reunion in 2000. He was at Lang Vei for the whole thing and ended up a prisoner of war. Dennis and I have been trading e-mails ever since.

About Hill 64: it was only in the last couple of years that I figured out — by matching dates in my diary with the description of the 8 Feb battle on Hill 64 in Eric Hammel's book — I was there facing that battle as well.

I was reminded by the item on a Fort Sumter tour that I have a copy of a letter from one of the family, writing back to Connecticut from her home in Charleston during the bombardment of Fort Sumter. Quite a piece of perspective.

Anyway, I'm looking forward to Charleston and plan to bring my wife, Audrey, this time. It will be a first for her. She's heard me talk about the Reunions and all you characters long enough and decided she has to see for herself. More later.

Aloha, Toby Rushforth
Covey 152/252 & Trail 67
Hue Citadel & Danang — '67-'68

A Successful Hunt, Marines Never Give Up A Fight

The date was March 11, 1968. The place, the Khe Sanh base near the demilitarized zone in South Vietnam amid the heralded Tet Offensive. Combat was hot and heavy. Even as more artillery shells blasted in, American troops prepared to continue their defense. A short distance apart that morning, Ronald Shouse of Winston-Salem and Clifford Treese Jr. of Allentown, PA, enlisted Marines, were busy at their duties. Shouse was near a big artillery gun, and Treese was atop a truck helping to unload shells into an ammunition dump. Suddenly there was an explosion. "I found myself lying on the ground," Treese recalled. "I heard somebody yelling, 'Incoming!" but there was no chance for anybody to do anything." Shouse and Treese were close buddies. They had served together on the same gun. But that morning is the last time they saw each other until 10 July 1971, when Treese arrived from Allentown for a weekend visit. When he was wounded, Treese had to wait an unusually long time due to the heavy fire that medevac helicopters were taking while trying to land.

I lost all my personal effects, including my address book with all my buddies names and addresses. Treese searched for two years trying to find Ron Shouse. All he knew was that Ron lived somewhere in the Winston-Salem area in North Carolina. Things began to pick up when his wife started calling every government agency she could possibly think of. "Everybody offered to help, but they couldn't find Ronnie," she said.

On the 9th of July 1971, she called the Marine Recruiting Station. Gunnery Sergeant Jan Polly got on the telephone and within a short time, he had Shouse's telephone number and address. Treese and his wife were in their car, headed for Winston-Salem. They drove all night, arriving the next afternoon.



Ron Shouse (l), Clifford Treese (r) in 1971

They spent the week talking with Shouse and his wife. "We talked war most of the time," Shouse said "We had a good deal to tell each other. "Shouse said most members of their outfit thought Treese was dead." Treese said he had been wounded at 9:00 a.m. He was taken to the aid station where a small piece of shrapnel was removed. He was bandaged and sent back to duty. At noon the same day, he was seriously wounded. When he was taken back to the same aid station, they asked "You again?" He spent a month at Danang Naval Hospital and a month in the Philippines. He was transferred to Philadelphia Naval Hospital for six months. He was in and out of Wilkes-Barre VA Hospital the next 11 or 12 months while doctors fought to repair his badly, wounded





arm. He went to work as a mechanic but re-injured his arm. That forced him to go to work in a company mailroom in Bethlehem, PA. Ron Shouse went to work for Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company. They both promised to always keep in contact with each other and have kept that promise till the present time.

I'm 23 years old, and I've been drawing for as long as I can remember and when I re-discovered comic books at the age of 13, I decided I either wanted to draw comics or do commercial illustration. At the age of 21, after realizing I was going nowhere, I decided that I needed to follow my vision. I left Albuquerque in 2002 and am now studying illustration at the Art Institute of Seattle. I'm glad I'm in school, but the workload doesn't allow a lot of time for my personal projects.

In 1998 a friend of mine loaned me a book written by a friend of his family. The book was Robert Mason's "Chickenhawk." It's about the author's experience as a Huey pilot in the early years of the Vietnam War. I didn't know much about the Vietnam War at that time, and I didn't think I would enjoy the book very much. Almost immediately, I was com-

pletely enthralled. Mason didn't overburden his book with political rhetoric or posturing. It seemed to me like an honest and personal account of what he saw and felt while he was in Vietnam. I honestly can't say what it was, but something really caught me. I wanted to know more, and understand more. After a time I borrowed some other books from another friend of mine, including James McDonough's "Platoon Leader," and Nicholas Warrs' "Phase Line Green." Since then, I've read just about every book I could get my hands on — from the stories of Navy SEALs to USAF pilots to Viet-Cong organizers. Except for a few times when I read the memoirs of Westmoreland, Nguyen Cao Ky and a few others, I've tried to avoid political rhetoric and stick to the stories of individual soldiers or operations.

I initially started drawing from photographs of the war to practice figure drawing, and I thought I might as well draw something I was interested in. While reading Mark Baker's "NAM," in which he records the experiences of some of the Vietnam veterans he interviewed. I was so struck by some of the stories that I decided to draw them. I guess my drawings of Vietnam are my way of remembering and honoring those who served there. I hope that I have done that and that I can continue to pay tribute.

Seth Goodkind



HUÊ BATTLE FOR THE IMPERIAL CITY

Text and Illustration:
Seth Goodkind



Tet 1968...

In late January 1968, the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) and VC (Viet Cong) launched a series of attacks on U.S. and allied bases and S. Vietnamese cities all across S. Vietnam. The attack on the ancient Imperial City of Huê began in the early morning hours of 31 Jan as elements of the *6th NVA Regiment* swept into the Old City (Citadel) from the South West, from the South the *NVA 4th Reg* entered the New City and Hue was soon under communist control.

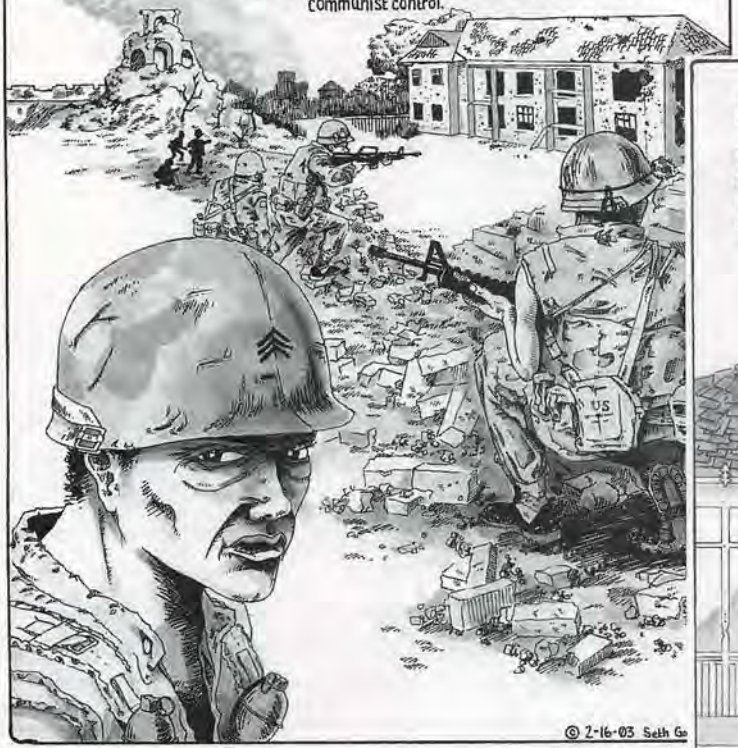

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Within a day elements of the *U.S. 1st* and *5th Marine Regs., ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) 7th* and *2nd Airborne, U.S. 101st Airborne* and *1st Cavalry* were embroiled in a battle that would drag on for 26 days of house to house street fighting that would cost the Marines 142 men KIA, U.S. Army 74 KIA, and 384 ARVN KIA, versus an estimated 5,000 plus NVA, VC killed. After some of the fiercest fighting of the year in which some NVA dug into the 20 foot thick walls of the ancient Imperial palace grounds the city was finally back under allied control When the smoke cleared, nearly half of the city was destroyed and 75 percent of the population homeless. Some 5,800 Vietnamese civilians were either dead or missing.

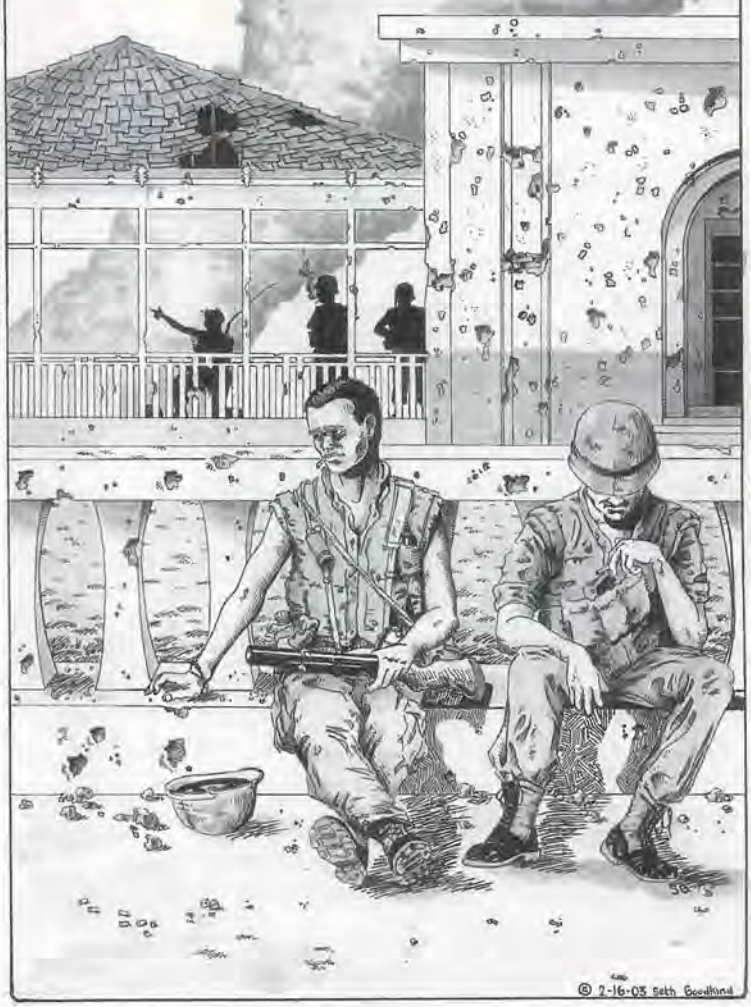

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There Are Two Airstrips!

by Tom Esslinger

In the Spring 2003 edition of **Red Clay**, Steve Johnson did a great job reporting on his visit to Khe Sanh in 1998, the 30th anniversary of the Tet offensive. I accompanied Steve on that trip, and his article prompted me to add to the story. I went on that trip in 1998 because Warren Wiedhahn's Military Historical Tours had enlisted former Commandant General Carl Mundy as the tour leader. When, as a brand new Second Lieutenant fresh out of Basic School, I reported to the Third Battalion, Twenty-sixth Marines at Camp Evans in September 1967, the first person I met was Major Carl Mundy, the Battalion S-3.

Steve's article recounts the moving ceremony (complete with pictures — I appear to the right of center wearing a white shirt and standing to the right of the gentleman in the black shirt) we conducted at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. That ceremony took place on the old airstrip. We were at the combat base for several hours, and I was quite vocal in expressing my opinion that the long, bare, red dirt strip which was said to be the remains of the airstrip was not in the right place! I based my conclusion on the fact that the east end of this area did not drop off sharply toward the Rao Quan River. Likewise, to the north, the land near the airstrip was relatively level, and I remembered this area as sloping gradually to a sharp drop to the river. I found few among us who agreed with me. General Mundy put an end to my comments by pronouncing that he was certain we were standing on the site of the original airstrip. Even twenty-eight years after I left the Marine Corps, I was not about to contradict the Commandant.

In 1998, we could see Hill 861 from the KSCB but could not see Hill 881S where I spent the siege as the Company Commander of Mike Company, 3/26. I was really disappointed to not be able to return to 881S, but there were no navigable roads up there, no helicopters available, and insufficient time to hike there. Therefore, I was intrigued to learn in late 2002 that Frank Gulledge, the webmaster of the excellent Purple Foxes website, was thinking about a trip to Vietnam that would include a hike to 881S. HMM-364 (the Purple Foxes) was the helicopter squadron primarily responsible for supporting the two companies of Marines (my Mike Company and Bill Dabney's India Company) stuck on 881S.

For an outstanding presentation of the imaginative way they accomplished that mission (and lots of other information and pictures on 881S), visit Frank's website at www.hmm-364.org, and click on "The Warriors of Hill 881S." Don't miss the "Dave Powell Photo Collection." I decided to join that tour which was put together by Battlefield Expeditions, an excellent outfit which is a spin-off from Military Historical Tours. Our guide was Bill Stilwagen, a former Marine with experience on the ground and as a helicopter gunner. Bill had been an assistant guide on my 1998 tour and has developed into a first-rate guide.

In early April 2003, our group of eleven former Marines and two grown sons drove the new Route 9 from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh village in forty-five minutes. That trip took over two hours in 1998. After visiting the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp which is in the process of becoming a tourist attraction, we bussed through the rapidly growing suburbs of Khe Sanh village to the combat base. Since our last visit, two new buildings have appeared, there is a new sign, and a destroyed U.S. tank guards the entrance. Obviously, KSCB will also be a tourist attraction. The small museum includes the kind of propaganda Steve Johnson referred to in his article. The museum overlooks the red dirt airstrip. As we toured the area, I again became convinced that this airstrip was in the wrong place. But this time we had a good map and two GPS devices. Bill Stilwagen decided to test my theory. I gave him the six-digit map coordinate for the center of the runway. The GPS showed that we were not on the runway which appeared to be off to the north. We began moving to that area. When we reached sloping ground which seemed right to me, Bill took another GPS reading which showed we were just west of the end of the airstrip shown on the map.

At this point I noticed a Vietnamese man who had been following us. He spoke a little English, and I remembered enough Vietnamese so that we could communicate. He said that he was 35 years old and had lived in the area of the combat base since 1975. I told him what we were doing, and he responded by saying, "There are two airstrips." I asked him where the other one was and he pointed to the northeast. I asked him if he could show us the other airstrip, and he said yes and moved in that direction. We moved

through well-tended and orderly new coffee trees until we reached a long flat growth of trees which was the same dimension as the airstrip. As we walked down the strip, we found a path leading to the north which sloped down toward the river. Soon we discovered barbed wire, remnants of sandbags, and holes which were probably part of the C Company 1/26 lines. Several of our party continued down the path and found the waterpoint which had been outside Charlie Company's lines.

After we explored the area some more and talked to our new friend, Le Quat, we agreed that we had found the old airstrip from 1968. GPS readings confirmed that conclusion. As we hiked back to the second, newer airstrip, we concluded that the new airstrip must have been put there when the combat base was reopened in late 1970 to support the ARVN operation Lam Son 719 which took place in 1971. The logistics and air support for that ill-fated operation were centered at the KSCB. Why the airstrip was not rebuilt on the same site as the strip abandoned by U.S. forces in mid-1968 is a mystery to us. But we are certain that the new airstrip is about a click southwest of the old airstrip. The strips are parallel, but the new one is more barren and obvious, and the old one is well-vegetated and well disguised.

We did reach Hill 881S the next day. We departed from a Bru village with the village chief as our guide. Despite the fact that Bill Stilwagen had characterized the hike as "a light hike" and "arduous," it was a very difficult walk. The poor trail, high elephant grass and hot sun took its toll as we labored up and down the beautiful terrain. After five difficult hours, we reached the peak on a beautiful sunny day where we enjoyed the pleasant breeze and the spectacular view of the border with Laos and the mountains beyond. We held an emotional ceremony there, but that is a subject for another article. The purpose of this one was to pinpoint the location of the two Khe Sanh Combat Base airstrips.

Tom Esslinger, C/O, Mike Co., 3/26 Hill 881S, Jan-Mar 1968

EDITORS NOTE: Tom. Thanks for sending in the article. There has been a lot of stuff printed on the airstrip discrepancy. You give a unique reason why it might be so. Thanks for sending this in, and, by all means write more about 881S.

The Exchange

written by-Harry "Joe" O'Dell
K3/9 2ND PLT. 66-67 RVN

'Twas March 67, Ba Long Valley, RVN
My Platoon Sergeant called us together again,
Told us He had something to say.
"An old friend will be leaving today,
One who has been with you all the way"
Thru MCRD — Edson Range — ITR
Constantly near and never afar.
Whether soaked with rain or muddy ground,
Always dependable never letting you down,
Ready to go when the time came around.
We gathered at the wire to bid adieu,
To an old friend we so intimately knew.
When it came my time to say goodbye
(did I detect a slight tear in my eye)
I cursed and complained and caused a real scene.
Because you see ----------
The old friend who was leaving ,
Was my M-14 .
Semper Fi

During The Khe Sanh Siege in 1968

A USAF Forward Air Controller's (FAC) Recollections

From diary entries on 6 March, 1968
by Toby Rushforth

The setting is Danang Air Base at 2215 in the evening. These are my thoughts, recorded after an exciting day at Khe Sanh.

NVA Tunneling at Hill 861:

Today was very satisfying! I got up at 0615, grabbed a bite to eat and got my Intelligence and Operations briefs. Nothing really heavy going on at Khe Sanh. That's good! Aircraft #331, pre-flight was normal. Took off at 0845 and headed right up to the Khe Sanh area. Red Eye 04, whom I guessed was one of the highly classified recce and surveillance aircraft, reported moving vehicles 5 miles south of the Main Base. I couldn't find them but started out the day by hitting a new road segment that looked like the most probable location with a "Stinger" flight. I then worked with Kilo 14 and Echo14 on both 861 hills. Between us, we found and hit two mortar, automatic weapons and bunker complexes with three flights of fighters.

For a change, the weather was amazingly clear. I could see so far that I had to fight disorientation for most of the flight. All of the little cloud-shrouded valleys and alleys, trees and hills looked entirely different. Some of the "valleys" now looked like slight depressions in the terrain, dwarfed by mountains in the distance.

FACs were directing fighter strikes all over the area. Their flight patterns were obviously not completely deconflicted. As I was working flights in the Hill 861 area, other aircraft kept surprising us by zipping through unannounced. This was dangerous stuff, but I guess we were all too preoccupied doing our own thing to dwell upon or raise hell about it. It was a good day for finding and beating up the bad guys. I had three flights of fighters stacked up overhead waiting while helicopters swirled over Hill 558 nearby. Man, was it getting crowded. Due to a temperature inversion, the more we bombed, the worse the visibility got, from the dust and smoke hanging in the air. We finally got things more coordinated and blew the hell out of two NVA complexes nearby. Good work from those fighter guys. It was like they were showing off, because the usual weather constraints weren't there. The NVA were firing light to moderate small arms fire at us the whole time, but no one got hit. Amazing!

Then came the corker! "Covey 252, this is Echo 14. How about hitting the gully between the two 861 hills? We think they're digging underneath us." I thought — Ha! They're talking to the right guy. I'd been reporting tunneling on hills for the past several days, and no one seemed interested. I hadn't seen active digging, just turned dirt and holes in sides of hills. Echo 14 was deadly serious on this one. Though I couldn't specifically see the diggings, I had an idea of where the tunnel might be, in what looked like brush camouflage. As I surveyed the hills and considered how close we were going to have to come with the ordnance, my stomach got a little queasy about the potential for hurting or killing some Marines in the process. However, I was absolutely sure they were right about the tunneling and knew we had to do something about it right now. There would be no better time, and the weather was about as good as we'd ever get. We really had to talk our way through this one though. Fortunately, there was no hurry, because no direct attack on 861 was in progress.

Bottom line: I figured I had to leave it up to the fighter pilots who were available to do the job. I'd direct it if they felt confident enough to do it. The next flight of fighters was "Whale 34," a flight of 4 Marine F-4Bs — from Danang, I believe. They were loaded with 500lb. bombs and 5" Zuni rockets. I explained the situation on Hill 861 and asked the fighters: "Does anyone feel uneasy about this one?" "One Negative!" "Two Negative!" Three Negative!" "Four Negative!" Whew! OK, so here we go. I asked Kilo 14 and Echo 14 to move the troops out of the trench lines closest to the target area on the north face of each hill. While they were doing that, I went back to the fighters to lay out the tactics: left-hand race track, attack from the north, heading 160 degrees, and dive down the ravine on the south side of the hill. My plan was to run a tighter race track inside theirs at about 1500 feet and dive down underneath and behind each one to double check their inbound alignment heading on the target and between the two hill tops.

There was only about 100 meters between perimeters on the two hills, so this was going to be as close as I've ever worked in direct troop support. "OK,

Whale, keep good spacing to help me control each run on the target. We'll drop one weapon per pass." Lead flew two dry passes on the north-to-south heading ("dry" means "without releasing any weapons.") He was really pressing — high angle dive but very close to the hilltop and down the backside. I felt a deep sense of pride as I watched these guys set up and talk to each other — so sure they could put their ordnance almost in the laps of our own troops without hurting them, while surgically digging out the NVA from the North face of the hill. Kilo got a little antsy as we got closer to actually releasing weapons. The lead F-4 thundering by on the dry passes certainly must have been sobering to the guys in the hilltop trenches. With more assurances, Kilo and Echo said they were ready on the two hills.

I told Whale Flight that if a target run didn't feel just right, to go through "dry" and try it again. The 500lb bombs were first — fantastic! Right on the target, and with no apparent damage to the Marine trenches. The troops continued to report that they were OK. On the first "Zuni" rocket pass, I was right under and behind the fighter as the rocket came off the rail. It did a big corkscrew maneuver, leading me to believe it was out of control. The rest of the world froze in time as the rocket finally straightened itself out and impacted even closer to our Marines' perimeter trench line. Maybe even as close as 20 meters? The troops still reported they were OK.

There were 5 secondary explosions, one very large, as the bombs and rockets slammed into the hillside. We were on the tunnel and explosives alright. Whale 34 flight had finally expended everything they had. What a "shit hot" display of airmanship and support for the troops. As they pulled up from the base to rejoin and head home, I felt a rush of relief. We had gotten the job done without any friendly casualties.

Then, as I watched Whale 34 flight depart and began to tell them how great they were, I caught a big flash of motion through the Plexiglas in the lower part of the cross cockpit door. As I dropped my right wing to get a better look, an incredible sight greeted me. The entire north side of Hill 861 had erupted in almost a volcanic fashion. Rocks, trees, dirt, smoke and a fireball billowing out and away from the hill. There was crap flying everywhere.

Kilo: "Hey Covey, did you see that one?"

"You bet!"

"Holy Shit, are you guys alright down there?!!" It affected the hill all the way up to within a few meters of the trench line. Man! What a blast! The NVA sure had a lot of explosives packed away down there. Good thing the troops had pulled back from the perimeter. "Two Six Actual" came up on the radio. He could hardly talk; it was such a big moment. As I headed for Danang, I realized just how good this whole thing felt. On the radios, I tried my best to help Whale 34 flight and "Hillsboro (Airborne Command Post)" understand what great work they had done and how much it was appreciated by the troops. I believe I alluded to the fact that the whole thing might even have been better than sex?

I subsequently wrote a Letter of Commendation to the Commander of the Direct Air Support Center (DASC) to insure Whale 34 flight got special recognition for their gallant effort that day.

The rest of the story

It's 2 May and I am in the assembly area on the Marine Air Wing side of Danang. I'm waiting for the check-in and boarding process for my R&R to Hawaii. This was really a conflicted time; the heady anticipation of a week in Hawaii was tempered by the thoughts that my FAC buddies were still going to be here, flying every day. They might not all be here alive when I get back? We'd been taking a lot of FAC casualties lately.

In front of me, Vietnamese children were playing with a water buffalo and some dogs, while an older Vietnamese couple (probably their parents) were working their rice paddy with another water buffalo pulling a tiller. Slightly to their right were a few platoons of Marines in combat gear boarding helicopters. What a contrast of peaceful, everyday living with those headed for combat.

"Pardon me sir, but what do you fly?" I was a bit startled as I looked back to my left to see a good-looking young Marine, a bit shorter than myself. He must have seen the wings on my fatigues. I smiled and said "an O-2," thinking there was no way he'd ever heard of one. He perked up a bit.

"What's your call sign," he asked?

"Covey 252," I responded.

He really lit up and blurted out, "You're Covey 252? I'm Hasty Foot 14 Alpha! Gee, sir!" He was so wound up he could hardly talk fast enough. Ha! He made me feel like some sort of a superhero — not only remembered my call sign, but about everything I

did and said up there over the last few weeks. He was talking with so much enthusiasm, I could hardly get a word in edgewise for a while. Was I ever pumped up! His name was Michael Dominic. As I stood there in wonderment, he went to get other friends from Khe Sanh. He came back later to get my address — then even later, he took me to talk with "Echo" from Hill 861. Echo seemed to remember me by call sign quite well. I was amazed at the detail recalled.

However, he did relate a couple of sobering notes. On 6 March, during the bombing of the tunneling effort, a couple of those 500 lb.-ers that hit 50 to 100 meters from the trench line did some damage to friendlies. Some trenchline was collapsed and a guy was thrown across a bunker causing a back injury and breaking his arm. Don't know if he was yanking my chain, but he said one fella actually "lost it" during the bomb strikes. Apparently, he'd been in a couple of tough engagements and was emotionally charged anyway. He heard the bombs, came running out of the bunker and saw the F-4 streak by. Some "joker" saw him and yelled "MIGS! It's OK, ours are on the way!" Snap, that was it.

"Echo," whose name turned out to be Bill, said that there were explosives, supplies, etc. all over the side of that hill after we were through. It finished the NVA effort on the hillside. He also said that the guys who were injured had no problem with it. They got medevaced off the hill.

"Hasty Foot 14 Alpha" spoke of other engagements in days past and amazed me with the detail he remembered, dropping green smoke grenades on St. Patrick's Day, the works. They walked all the way through the processing line with me, talking story. What a rare opportunity that was.

I wonder if these guys come to the Khe Sanh Veterans' Reunions? Sure would be fun to shake hands again!

Note: Aircraft #331, flown during this mission is the O-2 now on static display at the USAF Air & Space Museum at Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio.

Reunions and Memories During 1968 Khe Sanh Siege!

by Toby Rushforth, USAF, Retired.

It was late last century, in fact late in 1999, that I first became aware of the Khe Sanh Veterans' Association. I couldn't imagine how I missed it over all those years. I had been a Forward Air Controller, flying O-2 aircraft out of Hue Citadel and Danang AB in 1967-68. That was a very vital time in my life, as I am sure it was for all of us.

I looked forward to my first Khe Sanh Veterans Association Reunion in San Diego during September, 2000. In preparation, I had a baseball cap embroidered with a FAC badge and my radio call signs. The idea was to help anyone who might have something in common come up and talk. That way I wouldn't have to go around tapping everyone on the shoulder to introduce myself and explain how an AF FAC ended up at a mainly Marine and Army/Special Ops type Reunion. I was somewhat prepared, because I had traded some correspondence with Ray Stubbe about the Association and about combat operations in and around Khe Sanh. I had also read his book, "Valley of Decision," and recognized a number of operations in which I had taken part. So, the idea of maybe getting to talk to guys that were on the ground during the Siege while I was overhead was curious and exciting.

My first KSV Reunion:

After I had checked into the hotel in San Diego, I prepared for the cocktail hour around the pool in the courtyard. As I passed a profusion of guys with lots of red on hats and shirts bearing unit designations, it was a very comfortable feeling (for a guy who was virtually a total stranger to all). As I strode out by the pool, I hadn't gone more than 25 steps before I heard someone yell "Covey!" Geez! Did that feel good. I turned to be greeted by Jim Speer who had been on the USAF Combat Control Team there at KS. He was well acquainted with a number of FACs that we knew mutually, who had been in and out of KS early in the Siege. It was a neat way to start out the Reunion, as I noted with some satisfaction that my "hat trick" had worked. Jim had apparently been to previous reunions and quickly began to fill me in.

As the conversation moved between people, places and events, I mentioned that I had been at Lang Vei the morning it was overrun. Jim quickly pointed out a fellow a couple of tables away and said he was there during the battle. I thanked Jim and quickly moved over to stand next to this fellow who was seated at a table engaged in conversation with a couple others. There was a certain intensity, yet off-hand-

edness about him. I must have moved in such a way that he got a hint I was waiting to talk with him. He briefly paused in his conversation and looked up at me. I asked if he had been at Lang Vei when it was overrun. He looked at me with both surprise and curiousity and said "Why, yes, I was." I explained that I was an AF Forward Air Controller who had been there that morning after the North Vietnamese had overrun the camp. As we ran through a quick battle chronology of that fateful morning of 7 February, 1968, he talked about how he had evaded during the battle, and showed up later in the PM after much of the process of evacuating survivors was about concluded. At that point, I blurted out: "Wait a minute, you aren't *'Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo,'* are you?" He looked startled and said "Yes, I am." I paused, then said "We had assumed you were killed by the North Vietnamese!" It's hard to explain, but this turned into quite an emotional moment. Who knows how and where that wells up from? Let's go back to recount events long past.

My FAC perspective of the Battle for Lang Vei:

I had been in country and at Danang AB for a few months and by that time, was feeling pretty confident about myself as a Forward Air Controller. By that I mean I had not only survived getting shot at pretty regularl, but managed to live through some episodes of "the stupids" in which I was lucky not to have killed myself. Early in the tour, I sometimes even wondered if I wasn't as much a threat to friend as to foe. In any event, at this point, Captain Rushforth was more of a steely-eyed predator (in his own mind).

In January '68, along with other FACs, I was shifted from the "Tally Ho" mission above the DMZ to "Operation Niagra" over Khe Sanh and its approaches. As we became better acquainted with our new mission area, it was clear that something unusual was in the offing. Signs of enemy activity on the approaches from the North and West were particularly revealing.

On the night of 25 January, the Laotian community at Ban Houaysan (otherwise called "Elephant") was overrun (several miles West of Lang Vei, along Route 9.) Among the intelligence reported by us FACs was that there were tracked vehicle impressions all along Route 9, both east and west of "Elephant." In fact, it was later reported by a FAC that we had killed a tank during that battle. However, the tank quickly disappeared. After the battle, the Laotians and their Vietnamese (ARVN) Ranger liaison retreated to the Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei.

7 February, 1968: Lang Vei.

This account of happenings on 7 and 8 February 1968 is from my diary and reflects the facts as I knew them and my feelings at the moment.

> Well! Gerry Harrington and John Buckles had their work cut out for them last night. Lang Vei was being overrun by a large enemy force supported by at least 9 tanks. They said it was an unbelievable sight — walls of tracers, explosions, what looked like flame throwers, yelling on the radios and tanks rolling right over the tops of friendly bunkers. They had difficulty sorting out targets on the ground, but said they did have a B-57 drop some "funny bombs" (cluster bomblets and burning magnesium) on tanks breaching the Camp's southwestern perimeter. They thought the tanks were disabled by that strike?
>
> I got up about 0500. After a fairly inclusive Intelligence briefing on what little was known about the battle, I moved quickly for the flight line and finished the preflight. Aircraft # 396 was in good shape. It had a standard wing load — two pods of 2.75" white phosphorous rockets, a total of 14. The sense of urgency began to grow as I made the radio calls and taxied for takeoff at Danang. The weather was not that good. I'd have to climb on instruments to get on top and cruise to the Khe Sanh area, then figure out how to get under the clouds and over to Lang Vei. I took off at 0710. After about 40 anxious minutes enroute, I used heading time and distance to get down through the clouds west of Lang Vei. Cloud bases were ragged at about 1000 feet above the terrain. Following Route 9 back to the east, I approached the camp and checked in with "Covey 688," a FAC from Ubon, Thailand who was currently in charge of air operations over the battle area. I could see his O-2 ahead, between cloud layers (forming a sort of fishbowl), circling over patches of occasional trees and brush, which were intermittently visible. Columns of smoke

drifted up through the low clouds that were virtually settled on the camp and the rolling terrain around it. It was about 0800 as I fell into trail formation with 688 to listen and try to figure out what was happening. I would be taking over shortly.

Our Special Ops personnel, call sign "Spunky Hanson," were holed up in their Tactical Operations Center (TOC). They were talking to 688 via FM radio. The NVA were swarming all over the TOC, throwing satchel charges, plus smoke and frag grenades down the ventilation shafts and any place they could find access. Spunky Hanson 15A and some CIDG, who had stormed the Camp to rescue the troops, were pinned down by machine gun fire. 688 told them to withdraw so he could bring in some A-1 Skyraiders (Canasta Flight) with lots of guns and ordnance to get the NVA off the TOC. He had the A-1s hold while he dove his O-2 through a "sucker hole" to see if the A-1s could work under these conditions. The terrain was actually in and out of the clouds, an extremely treacherous operation to attempt. I virtually held my breath waiting for him to pop up through the clouds, all the while fearing a flash and column of black smoke would appear instead.

After what seemed like forever, his O-2 popped up through the clouds and he began to talk with the A-1s. It was very risky. They would be in and out of the clouds and in the tree-tops. All four Canasta pilots agreed to give it a try. They formed a "daisy chain" behind 688 and one after the other, dove through the hole in the clouds to see if 688 could lead them close enough to engage the NVA on the TOC. After a short time 688 came back up through the cloud deck. Now we had four A-1s in a tree-top free-for-all, ripping up the landscape, mainly with their guns, strafing the TOC and area around it. I again held my breath, while from an altitude of about 800 feet, except for the drone of my engines, things seemed ghostly quiet. Time was suspended. Again, the tell-tale smoke of an air ground disaster was almost an expectation. When the A-1s came back above the clouds, time started again.

Spunky Hanson said they were apparently successful, as the enemy activity on the TOC had ceased, at least temporarily. I was greatly relieved that the Canasta flight got the job done and were all still flying. It was an amazing feat of airmanship. The A-1 guys were all balls. It was not hard to envision those four A-1s ripping through the treetops, in and out of the cloud bases, high-G turns at treetop level, firing away at the TOC and somehow not hitting each other.

By this time, the inside of my cockpit windows was getting pretty well covered with my grease pencil notes about what was going on and who all the players were. That was a pretty standard practice for FACs, trying to keep track of what is happening on the ground while managing all aspects of the air support.

The clouds were beginning to break up, revealing much of the camp. The TOC had a tank on its side adjacent to it, and the trail/road coming up from the river down by Route 9 (at the Laos border) had two tanks knocked out at about the camp perimeter. I took pictures of the camp and the tanks with my Intel Nikon Telephoto. At about this point, 688 had an engine acting up and had to depart for home. I took over the air operation. The A-1s, bless 'em, were still able to loiter and had napalm and 250/500 lb. bombs remaining.

Meanwhile, we had been trying to coordinate a rescue effort from Khe Sanh. First word was that a ground team would not be sent, because the NVA had certainly set up ambushes at advantageous points along the way. It was also stated that a Helo-Assault Evacuation would not be attempted for awhile due to weather conditions. As disappointing as this was to us, it made our course of action clear. We had to conduct a holding action to keep the NVA away from the TOC until help arrived. Perhaps Spunky Hanson 15A and the local troops could fight their way in?

It wasn't long before Spunky Hanson (SH) came up on "Fox Mike" (FM) again, relating that the NVA were back. "They're all over us out there. Give 'em everything you've got," SH





said. At this point, he seemed calm and almost resigned to his fate. Initially, the fighters were pressing so hard to be effective that after release, the bombs didn't even have time to arm and hit the ground as duds. In one case, that may have saved us an A-1. I aligned myself, coming right "down the chute" behind him on his bomb run. His bomb release was very close to the ground, a dud, which kicked up the dirt. The dirt then briefly swirled behind as the A-1 flew through the dirt plume. If it had gone off, it might have nailed him. The A-1 pilots quickly adjusted and managed to keep the NVA occupied with their remaining ordinance.

I asked SH if they could come out and make a run for it. "We've got badly wounded people down here that can't move, some may even be dead. We're not coming out until you come and get us." We periodically continued our calls for reinforcements and hoped for a helo evacuation task force. It wasn't happening and we were hearing words like it wasn't going to happen for awhile. I couldn't understand what the problem was? It was frustrating!

Meanwhile, Spunky Hanson 15A was having a hell of a time getting the CIDG and Elephant people to move against that machine gun and mortar fire. SH15A, a Sgt. Ashley, went back to get a 37MM Recoiless Rifle to bring fires upon the NVA positions. He subsequently knocked out at least two of the NVA gun positions with the weapon. Even then, he and the Bru/Elephant troops were again driven back. At about this time, I noted a green smoke on the northeast perimeter of the camp. Even from 500 ft., I couldn't determine its origin. Was it a friendly trying to let me know he was there? Was it the NVA trying to spoof me so I wouldn't bomb him/them? I never did figure that one out, but elected not to bomb that area unless I determined it to be the enemy, or absolutely had to.

Hobo 01 and 02 then arrived to replace the Canasta Flight. I had them work on the west side of the compound, around the TOC with CBU (cluster bombs), napalm and strafe. They did a terrific job, but the NVA still had some left.

At this point, my own front engine overheated, coughing and sputtering from being run at full throttle for hours. That really caught me in the gut. I could just see a forced landing among the NVA down there, after beating them up all

morning. Not good!

Major John Seats, another Covey FAC took over for me and continued the holding action, while waiting for the reinforcements we assumed would be coming sometime soon. The engine continued to shudder and sputter, but held together well enough to climb out of the area en-route to Danang.

The landing was uneventful, and I proceeded directly to the Intelligence debriefing room where I was told to call directly to Headquarters 7th Air Force in Saigon. A Colonel answered the phone and began the debriefing. When I mentioned tanks, he fired off and as much as called Captain Rushforth a liar or maybe just mistaken? After all we had been reporting that day and for weeks prior, I thought it incredible that he was questioning me like this. He was so adamant I became adversarial in tone, if not in words, and described the vehicles as "ya know, they have tracks on both sides, this thing that looked just like a turret on top, with a big long thing sticking out of it (like maybe a big gun)!?" Not only that, I was only 500 feet above them. To my amazement, he still wasn't buying it? I played my Ace of Spades — "I have pictures!"

"Pictures," he shouted! "You get them right over to the photo lab and we'll divert a plane to pick them up immediately!" I did, and he did, like within the hour. I'm sure the pictures were great on the briefing circuit (they came out well), but we never heard about them again.

Note: So far, the most comprehensive account I have read, of what happened on the ground during this battle is "The Night of the Silver Stars," by William R. Phillips, published in 1997 as part of the Naval Institute Special Warfare Series. It was indeed a night of heroism and gallantry. Among decorations the defenders received: a Medal of Honor, a Distinguished Service Cross, 19 Silver Stars and 3 Bronze Stars with "V" for valor as well as numerous other awards and decorations.

8 February, 1968: Hill 64, Alpha 1 Firefight and day after Lang Vei:

These are the thoughts and experiences recorded on 8 February, the day after the Lang Vei Battle. Back in my quarters at 2200, after a full day at Khe Sanh, then debriefings and planning.

0550: It was hard getting up. The bed (eat your heart out, guys) really felt good. Got mission briefing for the KS area and things had apparently gotten quiet. The expectation was that the NVA were repositioning for another direct assault in strength on Khe Sanh. The weather at Danang, enroute and on the Khe Sanh plateau was poor. At Personal Equipment, Scottie was in rough shape, really bleary-eyed. He'd been up for about 24 hours. I had some maintenance problems but pressed on. Aircraft #331 was really in pretty good shape. (Note: this is the O-2 currently on display at the USAF Air Museum at Wright Patterson AFB.)

0645: Take off and climb en-route was all weather until on top at 10,000 feet. Using the same procedure as yesterday, I went out into the flatlands in Laos so I could let down through the clouds without hitting anything. I broke out of the clouds at about 1000 feet above the terrain, found Route 9, and followed it back toward Lang Vei. Joe Johnson, Covey 251, was in the area ahead of me and we began to coordinate areas to Recce so we wouldn't be hitting each other in the low clouds.

Lang Vei appeared to be abandoned. There were several hundred refugees on Route 9 between Khe Sanh City and Lang Vei, headed west? Guess they know where the action will be. The Marines didn't know who they were and were seriously thinking of putting artillery on them. I had to make sure — low pass on the tree tops — oops! Damn trees all around me, zipping by the wings. The tops were defoliated and I hadn't seen them — very tall. The refugees were mainly women and children carrying belongings, etc., old men, some younger. That sure tore at me. Those poor people just don't know where to go — getting it from both sides, one way or another. So, so sad! I felt as though I could actually see it on their faces.

Garden Valley 14 Actual at Khe Sanh called — need air to hit mortar and rocket positions just WSW, off the runway, on the ridgeline. Joe Johnson, Covey 251, went out to the west along Route 9 at about the border to escort some

fighters into the area through the cloud layers. We got Canasta 403, a flight of 4 A-1Hs (Navy). They were loaded with bombs (250lb & 500lb) and 20MM strafe. After pre-briefing the fighters and discussing tactics, I marked the ridgeline targets with one of my 2.75" "Willie Pete" (white phosphorous) rockets and cleared them in "hot." We quickly got two secondary explosions indicating that the bombs had indeed found worthy targets. However, at this point, Garden Valley 14 Actual asked us to hold off on the air-strike, and to my amazement, briefed me on a firefight on a nearby hill last night.

Hill 64: Garden Valley 14 Actual described the hill and events as they knew them. The hill wasn't apparent on my map, but there was no doubt that there was still a firefight of some sort going on just to my south. The NVA assaulted the hill in force during the night (mortars, rockets and ground assault) and there was ferocious hand-to-hand combat as the night wore on. The main base supported the Marines in the hilltop defensive positions with direct fire on the east face of the hill (toward the main base), from heavy weapons. However, the NVA simply moved to the back side of the hill to continue the assault.

Garden Valley 14 Actual had not talked to the defenders for some time. Apparently their radios were destroyed or lost in the battle. GV14A said " We don't know what is going on up there. We don't know if our guys are still defending in the trenches, or whether they were driven out of the trenches and are trying to get back in?" My immediate reaction was "How come you didn't tell me this sooner? Here we were dropping bombs on a ridgeline when we had nearby troops in contact?" Couldn't dwell on that. Had to get busy.

I decided that the only way to sort out who was where, was to make a low pass and look in the trenches. From about 1500 feet, I could see explosions and tracers on the hill, but not much more. I planned to get that little sucker going as fast as I could in a dive from the base side of the Hill where there were fewer NVA. I dove at full power on the eastern base of the hill, then snapped it up over the defensive trench lines in about 90 degrees of bank at about 150-200 feet. As I flashed over the trenches at about 230 knots I saw troops in hand to hand combat, grenades going off in the trenches, and about a grand total of 60 troops. The NVA were caught off guard by the pass but hosed me down real good anyway. As I dove down the opposite side of the hill I thought, "How do I get back to altitude with this little thing without giving the bad guys a great tail shot at me hanging on a sky hook?" I flew away for a while, dodging trees, then began my climb while I tried to digest what I had seen.

The predominance of the guys in the trenches were wearing flak vests, and a number had on US style helmets. "That's it!" The good guys are still duking it out in the trenches with the bad guys. I notified GV14A of my conclusions and told them we were going to start putting the fighters on the exterior of the hill and its north and west approaches. I briefed the A-1s on the situation and what we were going to do about it. I had them come in from the north to strafe the bases of the hill and work the strafe up the hill toward the trenchlines. These guys really got down in the weeds for this one, so they could see the whites of their eyes. The A-1s looked beautiful, terrific, skimming through the treetops, blazing away. Sure wish I had one of them. Next it was the bombs in the trees and brush along the western base of the hill. Seemed like this suppressed the NVA for awhile, but they were soon up and at it again. I know we got a mess of 'em, but they were still ready to join the fight.

We had put in an emergency request for prop aircraft that could operate in these mountains, ridges, valleys in this weather. The A-1s were always preferred, because they could carry so much ordnance and loiter for 4 hours or so (depending upon how far they had to travel). Joe Johnson again went west to rendezvous and escorted them back to the battle area. However, we were getting short on fuel.

Bruce Goodhue, Covey 226, arrived and took over air support for the Hill. He had some A-26s en-route (twin-engine, WWII-, Korea-vin-

tage.) They are also great for close air support, working close in bad weather, and being able to hang around for awhile.

As Joe Johnson and I were preparing to leave, we spotted some troops in the open on the back side of the hill headed for the adjacent ridge to the west. With great satisfaction we both unloaded twenty-seven 2.75" white phosphorous rockets on them. We were on target but had to RTB (Return to Base) due to lack of fuel, and did not get a good assessment of the situation after our attack.

En-route Danang: I get a crazy feeling flying around watching those poor guys in the trenches getting blown up. How would I feel if I was down there? Hard to think about. Got a touch of that invincibility complex again too — I was awful low and they were shooting like hell. I'd have given anything for a mini-gun. I was about fired up enough to strafe with my M-16 out the cockpit window. Maybe we should have gone to Dong Ha for a load of HE rockets from the Army guys? Hell! For awhile there, we were about the only ones that could fly in that weather (500' to 1000' overcast, scattered to broken scud from 500' to 1700'.)

Had trouble letting down into Danang for landing. Their radar was overloaded, so I had "Panama" GCI Radar vector me down over the South China Sea. Broke out of the clouds at about 500' above the water. Hmmm! An aircraft carrier right over there! If I had come through the clouds a little further to the left, I might have made a real mess. Really had to piss bad — right there on the ramp.

Called the Tac Air Control Center to debrief, got something to eat and went back to Intel for a detailed debrief for the rest of the troops. My pictures of the tanks at Lang Vei yesterday came out very well and are a great hit on the briefing circuit. Blah!

Yesterday, Spunky Hanson 15A, a Sgt. Ashley, was killed on the 5th assault to rescue the troops in the TOC at Lang Vei. There were more than 9 guys rescued, not sure exactly. Tony Sazanovich was the FAC in charge for the chopper evac yesterday afternoon. He did a hell of a job. They got the crap shot out of them but got all but one of the troops out. Also got some CIDG and Elephant people out too, though I understand it was ugly. Initially the helos couldn't take off because they were overweight with people hanging on the skids. Had to knock (shoot?) some off or lose the whole mission and get everyone killed.

During all this, Tony Sazanovich was contacted by a Special Ops troop who had apparently been evading after the Camp was overrun. His call sign was *"Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo."* SH28B came out of the trees at the old Lang Vei Camp to where Tony could see him. The Helo Evac force was already fully (over) loaded and pulling out to head for Khe Sanh. It became apparent that the Helos were out of the picture and Tony was preparing to land on the torn up, bombed out, airstrip at the old Camp. However, a large number of NVA arrived first and chased SH28B back into the trees and brush. Tony related that it looked like a lot of shooting during the chase. Last transmission from SH28B was "They're coming up from the other side of the strip." No way SH28B will come out of that alive. If Tony had tried to land for SH28B, it would have been nothing short of a miracle if they made it off the ground. The front prop had only 10" clearance and the ground was too irregular. It would have caught in the dirt and debris.

Meanwhile, today on the hill west of Khe Sanh, Bruce Goodhue worked some more A-1s (Canasta flight), A-26s (Nimrods) and T-28s (Zorro) on the NVA around the hill. They did a great job. When it was over, the good guys were able to get up, clear the outpost, and walk off the hill. After discussions with the relief force from the main base, they went up and reoccupied the hill. After the battle, first glance showed about 50 NVA bodies, plus plenty of captured weapons. [Understand that later, a total of 150 NVA bodies were found, along with a number of machine guns, etc.]

Fingerpaint 50 (Marine FAC) did trap 2 tanks in the river southwest of Lang Vei, and Covey 672 had some "tracked vehicles" pinned down near "Elephant." Hope this weather breaks

soon. If it does, we could really clean their clock.

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POSTLOG: At the KSV Reunion in San Diego, September, 2000

So here I am, with a lump in my throat and a tear in my eye, shaking hands with Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo — after all these years. His name is Dennis Thompson. I have since found out that he was captured and escaped several times during the next few days. He was a rather belligerent cuss and not amenable to being a prisoner. For this, he got lots of broken bones and worse. After a nightmarish 6 month trek to Hanoi, he was incarcerated with the other POWs, until the end of the war.

Dennis is a retired Command Sergeant Major of the Special Operations Command and, wouldn't ya' know, he was the featured speaker at our KSV Reunion Banquet. We've gotten a lot better acquainted since then. Dennis has a line on all the survivors of the Lang Vei Battle and some of us who supported in one way or another. We plan to meet this September in Las Vegas.

On the other hand, we have been trying very hard to find Tony Sazanovich, the FAC who was flying over Dennis when he was captured. No luck yet. We'd also like to find that "Covey 688," from Ubon, who was there at Lang Vei that morning.

So why do I like Reunions? Gee, hard to figger out! This is only one story.

Note: For those that haven't read it, the best account I've found of the Battle for Hill 64, on 8 February 1968, is in Chapter 16 of Eric Hammel's book, "KHE SANH, Siege in the Clouds." It was only during the reading of this book that I began to realize that the 8 February, 1968 entry in my diary was about "Alpha-1" in this Battle.

Toby Rushforth
Covey 252
Danang AB '67-'68



Capt. Rushforth, Danang, June 1968


Col. Rushforth, 1985

A Memorial Day Gift

by Ernie Spencer

I don't feel filled with pride during holidays that honor us. The blues and nostalgia rule such days, for me. The still, hot of the previous day gave way to pleasant morning, brushed by a pleasant Delta breeze that playfully swirled about me as I went for a walk. For some reason, I impulsively walked crosstown instead of my usual downtown route. I love living in mid-town Sacramento. It is quiet, with wide, tree-lined streets and old Victorian homes. A few were out puttering about their yards or walking from their cars to their homes. I became engrossed in my own dreams of times past. It was as I circled back that I saw him, standing across the street. He kept glancing at a paper, leaning on a cane, and gripped a bag of things in a white plastic bag with his other.

I crossed the street and as I began to pass him, he stopped me with a confused glance my way. "Excuse me sir," he said. "I'm lost." His old, Philippine eyes were cloudy and confused.

"Where are you going?" I asked?

"I live in Saint Francis Manor. I can't find it." I know the church named for the saint and had sometimes worshiped there. We were within two blocks of the church. I took the bag from his hand and guided him back across the street in the direction of the church.

"How long have you been here?" I inquired.

During the course of our short, yet painful walk for him, he told me about himself. He had served with the American Army during WWII and later during the Korean War. He was given permission to immigrate to the US because of such service and had recently been taken to Washington D.C. to testify for pension benefits for Philippine vets who had served with our country.

"Do you have a U.S. pension?" I asked.

"No. I live on charity from the Catholic Church." I found the manor he lived at and escorted him inside. As I handed him his small bag, he extended his to shake my hand. "Thank you sir for your kindness," he said with a sincerity that brought tears to my eyes.

"It is my pleasure, sir," I said. "I, too, am a veteran." As I finished my short walk back to my apartment, I reflected on how far I have come, on my own journey. Before, I would have been filled with rage at how veterans are still being mistreated, discarded, and, ignored. Our nation seems to value only current acts of perceived heroism and quickly discards the past. But now, I strive to let my anger go. I was meant to be on that walk and going in the direction I took. I saw the moment as a gift meant for me to have the chance to reach out to someone in need. To help a brother veteran filled me with a calm and peaceful contentment I had not been feeling earlier.

The Valley of Blue Light

by Gary Foster

May 14, 2003

The week in Quang Tri Province promised to be beautiful. Such a welcome change from my previous visit. The farther I drove south from Vinh and the closer I got to Dong Ha, the more excited I became. As usual the weather in Vinh was lousy and due to the high humidity there, I felt wet all the time. But now, as I drove south on National Highway No.1, the air roared through the car as I rolled down the windows to feel the much drier sunshine-filled air. My spirits began to soar as the sun rose higher, lingering at its apex before starting its slow descent back to the horizon, all the while causing shadows to lengthen, shorten, and lengthen again. I drove across the Ben Hai River, stopping briefly to reflect on the significance of an American driving across the DMZ unescorted. I had arrived in Quang Tri Province, Leatherneck Square, and the geographical top of Eye Corps. I was in the meat grinder.

Not much longer, at around two in the afternoon, I arrived in Dong Ha. The date was March 19, 2003. This date is important only to me because it was one week short of three years when I arrived, for the first time, at close to midnight, in Quang Tri Province. Since that time, my company had been working on the design and construction tendering of Highway No. 9 from Dong Ha to Lao Bao, and a bypass that swung north of Dong Ha from Cam Lo to access the Cua Viet Port directly. The total project entailed some 98 kilometers of two-lane asphalt road and about 20 new bridges. Finally, construction on the highway had begun in February 2003, just a month before my arrival. I wanted to see the progress for myself on this historic (in some ways the most historic) highway in Vietnam — even arguably,

throughout the world. But I also had other interests for being there. I wanted to try to locate any remnants of the USMC Bridge over the Rao Quan River. I had seen photos of Bridge Number 9 on the KS Veterans website and I wanted to see the actual site myself. I also had another mission: I wanted to try to climb Hills 861 and 558 and place a tiny USMC flag on the latter.

My previous trip to the hills was spoiled due to gloomy, rather doubtful weather and I was so pressed for time that I was precluded from making the necessary effort. Now, I had two days (today and tomorrow) to myself, so I was looking forward to this return. In addition to the two objectives, I would also continue to help Donna Elliot find information about her brother if I could, though I knew there was not much that I could do.

After a quick lunch of french fries and onions, I drove straight to the Rao Quan River where Highway 9 makes a sharp left turn into a horseshoe bend across the river and just below the Khe Sanh plateau. But along the way, I had to stop at Dau Mau and try to orient myself with a photo taken during the NVA attack on that South Vietnam military base in 1972. I identified ridgelines, but everything else had changed and I found no evidence of any occupation, NVA or otherwise. I drove on. I passed the cable-stayed bridge across the Quang Tri River that leads south along Highway No. 14 to the A Shau Valley. It was under construction three years ago but has been completed for over a year. I like the bridge but I must admit, it is out of proportion to the surrounding scenery and environment. The sign pointing the way to the "Vestige of Tacon Base" (Khe Sanh) is still there.

The weather continued to be delightful, but it was getting late. As I drove, I thought back to the many lengthy telephone conversations I had with Dennis Mannion weeks before regarding photos seen on the KS website. Dennis asked me many questions about the landmarks and where KS was in relation to the bridge and vice versa. The places in the photos I had seen were so familiar that I told Dennis I recognized them and had stood exactly where each shot was taken. Dennis sent me copies of his old military maps and after I received them, we had very lengthy, lively telephone conversations. His wife Joan and his family must think we are totally nuts. Dennis recounted so many stories and places. Because of that and some other photos I had sent to KS Vets taken on previous trips, I had stirred up some lengthy e-mails and telephone calls, mostly with Dennis. The photo that intrigued me the most, was that of the pontoon bridge over the Rao Quan River. I knew I could find the exact location of the bridge. I wanted to see if I could match the exact spot from where the photo had been taken showing the pontoon bridge placed next to old bridge piers. I decided I had to see the place for myself. Even if I had been there a number of times, my memory of the precise landmarks, was a little tarnished. I confused the Rao Quan and Quang Tri Rivers at their junction and farther downstream, thinking that the Quang Tri River was a continuation of the Rao Quan River. But I did not mistake the Rao Quan bridge crossing and I went directly there.

I stopped at several places along the Quang Tri River and along the short Rao Quan River. Finally I reached the





bridge, labeled by kilometer (km56) in the Vietnamese system, and labeled number 9 in the USMC or Seabees designation. At any rate, a famous bridge and one that cannot be missed. I walked down the embankment on both sides. I could see the remains of an old road that was bulldozed down to the water from the main road. There was no evidence of anyone having been there at anytime, other than the road which had eroded over time. After considerable stomping around and looking, and searching, and adjusting positions, I finally located the exact spot from which the original photograph was taken and I took a photo in the same direction. Again, like at Dau Mau, except for the ridgelines and the old abandoned bridge piers built by the French, much had changed. I would send these photos to Dennis. I spotted a 12x12 piece of lumber that was badly deteriorated so I supposed this was part of a bunker at one time or another. Traffic was minimal as I walked back up to the main road, now paved. There were no sounds at this time of the evening, and there was no breeze. The sun shone brightly, so I had nothing to worry about for the next day.

I had only a little more than an hour of sunlight left, so I decided to drive hurriedly on to Khe Sanh Ville and then on to Lang Vei. I had heard that recent construction on Highway 9 had begun at Lang Vei, ironically. I knew I could not make it to the Khe Sanh Combat Base that evening before nightfall and would not try.

I drove through Khe Sanh Ville, not veering off the highway towards the base, but kept on towards Lang Vei. It does not take long to drive there. Sure enough as I topped a hill, I could see the Lang Vei Vietnamese tank monument and some construction equipment. The crews were simply scraping the



ground, beginning their initial earthwork cuts, and clearing the vegetation for the alignment survey and cross sections. "Interesting," I mused to myself. I pulled off the road and stopped the car next to the tank monument and opened the door and climbed down on the ground. Then it hit me: I stopped dead in my tracks. Right there in front of me, the bulldozers had unearthed what had to be the rectangular concrete roofs of concrete bunkers from the Special Forces camp that was overwhelmed by attacking NVA on February 7, 1968. This date marked the



first time tanks were used by the NVA in the war. The two concrete slabs were positioned at an angle to one another. So surprised, I thought, "This couldn't be the Special Forces bunkers." But sure enough, just in front of me, totally uncovered, there they were. Logic told me I was looking at history, literally being uncovered before my very eyes. I did not know whether I was seeing the roofs or the floors, but the concrete slabs scraped bare, were completely smooth and there were no wall stems or protruding reinforcing steel that would indicate a wall or a remnant of a wall. "Had to be the bunkers," I said audibly, and then looked around to see if anyone was in earshot. I didn't know how many bunkers there were, but I had heard a rumor that there were remains of an American MIA, James Leslie Moreland, possibly still inside one of the bunkers. I had no way of knowing and do not know now whether there were any American MIA remains there but ever since this visit, I have regretted that I myself could not take the time to explore the situation further. It still bothers me that I was not able to do so. The whole issue of MIAs in Vietnam is not a welcome topic among the Vietnamese, and one has to be careful.

I walked around the denuded site and spotted

three very large bomb craters behind the tank monument on the ridgeline facing Laos. I was to learn that the equipment operator had almost toppled his bulldozer into the largest one (25 feet in diameter and 10 feet deep).

I have always wondered how de-miners work and what equipment they use. Not far from the tank monument, emerging from behind a small hill, a Vietnamese man was waving a metal detector in front of him just a few inches above the ground. He made long sweeps from left to right and back again as he walked slowly forward. He was de-mining. I walked over to him and tried to take his picture but he was a little wary of this and kept turning away. Finally, I was able to take a shot of him as he worked. Then, he waved me over to the side of the hill and pointed at two mortar shells. I was to learn later these were 40mm and 60 mm shells. We also found a 105mm shell and lots of metal fragments. I told him I wanted a piece of shrapnel, and he took me to a place and waved his detector just above the ground and reached down and scooped up some dirt with his small crooked shovel and, bingo, up came a sizeable piece of shrapnel. He handed me the piece of rusting metal which I pocketed and decided I would bring home and give to Frank Willoughby, the Special Forces commander of Lang Vei during the siege in 1968 (I learned later that Mr. Willoughby passed away in 1998, so I sent the shrapnel to Ray Stubbe for his Khe Sanh archival collection). I returned to the tank monument and then back to the bomb craters. I began spotting mortar shells everywhere and I saw one in the bottom of the largest bomb crater. It had evidently rolled down there when the bulldozers cleared the area. I walked into the crater and much to my surprise, had a very difficult time climbing back out — another one of those life experiences out of the way with no need to repeat it.



The sun began to close with the horizon and I loaded back into the car but just before doing so, I noticed a large billboard sign dominated by the smiling face of an obviously optimistic Vietnamese woman placed by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism across the road from the tank monument. The sign read half in Vietnamese and half in English, the English version stating, "*Vietnam — A Destination for the New Millennium.*" Yes, right here in Quang Tri Province, central Vietnam, next to Laos, adjacent to the Ho Chi Minh Trail, down the road from Khe Sanh; yes sir, right here on top of a ridgeline at Lang Vei. I stopped and pondered the irony of such a sign.

I drove back to Khe Sanh Ville as it was getting late — in fact, now already dark. I decided to return straight to Dong Ha. The weather remained balmy, so surely the weather would be as pleasant the next



day as it had been today. I enjoy the drive on Highway 9. There is hardly any traffic to speak of and the scenic vistas are wonderful to behold. I cruised along; not slowly, but not at a fast pace either. It was a very pleasant drive. Along the banks of the Quang Tri River as I approached a small Bru village, I noticed a vague blue-azure tint along the roadway. I did not pay much attention to it and basically forgot about it. I would be reminded of it the next day. I drove on. Back past Dau Mau and the Rockpile, through Da Krong, past the turn off to Camp Carroll (still have not found the fire base), and through Cam Lo, finally arriving in Dong Ha. The day was over and I looked forward to the next day when I would visit the combat base again and try to climb Hill 558 and maybe some of 861. But the weather was not to be.

To back up: through e-mail correspondence, I had made promises to two US Marine KS Vets: John Pessoni and Jacob Krygowski. Now I reminded myself that the next day I had to carry out the promises. These were not big acts of skill or sacrifice or courage or bravery or deeds that would place me in harm's way. The promises were more symbolic than physical so they should present no problem for me. For John or "Big John" I promised to bring back to the USA some red clay from the base. Before I left the states, I made sure to include in my luggage some plastic zipper locking sandwich baggies with which to collect the red dirt. For Jacob, I promised to place on top of hill 558 a small USMC flag that he had sent to me. That evening in Dong Ha, I collected the plastic bags and located Jacob's letter containing the rolled up miniature flag.

There isn't much for one to do in Dong Ha, but there was one nice bar about 200 feet up the street from the hotel. The beer was so cold, I consumed it in 5 seconds flat, or so it seemed, and ordered another one. But the second beer was as warm as the first beer was cold. What a disappointment. But that is how things work in Vietnam. The bartender replaced the cold beer with a warm beer in the fridge, and then when he received an order for another beer, merely grabbed the one he had just put in the fridge. Beer is beer, right! But the third beer was cold again. Two out of three. Not bad.

My hopes of good weather were dashed as soon as I woke up the next day. The morning dawned gray. So dark was it, that I became depressed thinking that it would ruin my day and interfere with my planned trip back to the Khe Sanh Plateau. I had only one free day remaining. For the second trip in a row to KSCB, the day would probably be murky and wet, the base muddy. Disappointed, I consoled myself with the thought that, "Well maybe up on the Khe Sanh plateau it would be clearer...maybe..."

After the usual four cups of very bitter coffee, brewed Vietnamese style — using a small aluminum percolator, really more of a strainer, placed over the mouth of the glass — at a small café outside the Dong Ha Guest House, sitting on a piece of concrete sidewalk listening to the truck traffic, and watching the kids walk to school with their backpacks slung over their backs, I drank my coffee and shuddered somewhat against the cool early morning wind. Why it seemed so cold to me was a mystery, Anyway, it did. Must have been the dampness.

In the courtyard of the Dong Ha Guest House, I met an American woman named Sandy Northrop. She is an independent filmmaker and was filming a documentary about Vietnam people under thirty years of age and their lives after a war they don't remember. I was to meet Sandy later the next morning and we exchanged many stories about Vietnam and Africa. She made a documentary film about Pete Peterson, who was shot down over North Vietnam, became a POW for a number of years, and later served as the American Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, eventually marrying a Vietnamese woman from Hanoi.

I left Dong Ha for Khe Sanh at around 8AM and soon passed the familiar sounding place names again: Cam Lo, Da Krong, etc. I had been that way and on that road now, so many times within the last three years, yet I never tire of reciting the place names out loud when I see them. I especially visualize them as they appear on the red and white concrete road markers: Khe Sanh – 56 kilometers, Lao Bao – 83 kilometers, Da Krong – 20 kilometers, Cam Lo – 12 kilometers, Lang Vei – 35 kilometers, and so on. I remain attentive to the landmarks and constantly remind myself of the grim history that ensued here 35 years ago. In a very real sense, I have convinced myself that all of Quang Tri Province is hallowed ground, just as much and to the same extent as is Gettysburg. To the Vietnamese, it's haunted — and I'm not so sure it's not, as I was to sense and feel later.

To my increasing chagrin, the weather seemed to be deteriorating the farther west I drove. "The Rockpile should be about here, right?" But where was it? Very low clouds and dense fog just above the roadway convinced me to turn the headlights on. Now to the Quang Tri River where the water was low in its banks. Cloudy. Not looking good. Turning to the right to diverge from the Quang Tri River and merge with the Rao Quan River, still no visibility. Over the Rao Quan Bridge where I had visited the day before, I started uphill towards the plateau. Ears feeling the pressure change just like the first trip three years ago. The weather now — well, quite literally, to use a pilot's vernacular — was finally quite "on its ass." "Dammit!" Reach the plateau, passed the new customs station and into Khe Sanh Ville. Clouds began sprinkling rain. Turn right on the road to the base, make my way to the entrance, and see a sign pointing the way. Site appears abandoned. No one in sight. I park in front of the new museum: an A-frame structure, its concrete floor elevated about 10 feet above the ground. It appears still unused. Strange. Then, I see a person emerge from the door of the old museum located adjacent to the new, elevated museum. I pay my 25,000 dong and talk to the curator. His English is quite good.

I go into the museum room. It has not changed one inch in three years. All the junk is still there. I pick up the same M16 that Paul Knight picked up a few years ago. I am alone and I find the guest registry and thumb through it. And this time I leave a message for Donna Elliot, who would return to Khe Sanh at the end of April in search of her brother Jerry, MIA as a result of a downed helicopter near



Khe Sanh since January 68. *"Donna: Welcome to Khe Sanh,"* I wrote and signed my name. (The recent SARS epidemic got in the way of Donna's plans, and Donna postponed her April trip with Danny Williams until later.)

The man inside the museum accompanies me to unlock and open the gate to allow me to enter the area of the base that has been fenced off behind the old and new museum buildings. The fence was not here three years ago. The new museum will open in June at some Vietnamese ceremony commemorating their imagined victory, I suppose. The man follows me some distance but I quickly elude him only to be met by the omnipresent souvenir hawkers — "Ah, no dog tags this time, buddy" — ever reminded of the chiding I received from Dennis Mannion over my having bought, what were probably phony dog tags there three years earlier. "Yo Bro. Not this time, Dennis."

I indicate with an abrupt gesticulation that I am not interested and the souvenir man walks back to the museum. Now I am really alone. Where to go? And what's with this weather anyway? Wind, clouds, fog, and thunder in the valley below the base. The hills. Where are the hills? In the clouds. Cannot see them, any of them — 950, 1015, 861 and 861Alpha, 881N and 881S, 558, all concealed, or perhaps they disappeared.

Resigned now to the fact that my chances of standing on top of 558 are ruined, I reflected on my previous visit there. I could not make it to the top of 558 but on the road to and from the hill (same road to 861), I encountered about thirty ex-Vietnamese soldiers, NVA to be sure. They were dressed in their best uniforms complete with medals. They were having a reunion. I stopped and I talked with many of them. They could not speak English but Hoang helped me. At first he was hesitant to stop. He told me he did not know how they would react to me — I never hesitate to say I am an American, and Hoang knows that. I said, "Stop the car." After only ten minutes, we were drinking tea and beer and each man shook my hand many times and showed me where he fought. They were all old men now, scrawny and looking hungry. I posted a photo of them on the KS website and an ex-Marine said in an e-mail "The only thing holding up their uniforms is their pride." A fitting comment.

I decide to explore the base, but it was going to

rain. Unlike my first trip there, I now know exactly where I am. I decide to find the waterpoint in the valley between the base and the Rao Quan River. Easy. I crossed the USMC runway — the real runway, not the red clay, or what I termed the imposter runway. The path descending to the waterpoint is still there and I begin the muddy, slippery descent. I encounter a man with a machete and, for some reason, with a sudden cutting swipe of his arm, buries the machete in the side of a tree. He smiles and indicates he will join me. It does not take long to walk to the waterpoint down the steep incline where steps have been carved in the dirt, now mud, to make walking a little easier. Once there, its simple scenic beauty struck me. The miniature, enclosed area is pastoral, serene, and very green — a world of its own. Across the stream, widened in places to grow rice, a small boy stood holding a long pole. He was herding his cows (only a few) into the stream. They stood peacefully and drank from the stream unconcerned that I was there. The young boy crossed the stream and stood motionless in the opening where I am sure the Marines had placed pump equipment many years earlier.

I could see up and down the small valley for a short distance. I could also see the clouds were descending even more. It was time to make my way back up the hill to the base. The man who had buried his machete in the tree trunk followed me chattering about something. He retrieved his machete and, with a wave of his free hand, went his own way towards the west, towards the helicopter revetments. Alone again. Wind starting to kick up, clouds racing over the base. The eucalyptus trees begin to sway, their leaves rustling. It's going to rain now for sure, I thought. No raincoat. I would get soaked. Time to get Big John some red clay dirt.

I crossed back over the USMC runway and walked back towards the red clay runway (parallel to the USMC runway) and then turned east and walked towards the ammunition dump. I found remnants of trenches and, I supposed, small bunkers with shreds of sand bag material all around. I noticed that where I was now standing, the ground remained dry, unlike elsewhere on the base. If I was going to get some dirt for John, I preferred it to be dry. I knelt down and scooped red dirt into the self-locking baggie that I had not forgotten to bring with me, and tried to put it in my pocket. It wouldn't fit so I carried it in my hand. Now my hands were stained dirty red and, as I was to find out later, it seemed I could not get the stain out for a couple of days. But now at the west end of the base, the heavens had opened up and I could see sheets of rain sluicing earthward at a wind-induced slant. I was dry but would I stay that way? Well, I still had some things to do, so to hell with it.

I retraced my steps and walked back to the USMC runway. I wanted to find the ammo dump from the perspective of that runway, not from the perspective I had originally found it three years earlier — from the red clay runway. Walking back towards the perpendicular path to the waterpoint, at the junction of the runway and the path, I passed two huts that had been built side by side. A dog started to run after me and was barking. I lived in Africa for 7 years and have been in the company of more than a few lions. One thing I learned: never run from a lion. If near a resting lion and for some crazy reason you want to get closer to him, turn your back on him and you can walk backwards towards the lion to almost within touching range; just don't turn around. If you do, you're dead. But if at a distance and you are being stalked or eyed, never run. It just entices and emboldens the animal, and he will get you. Never run from a dog either. It encourages them more. I stopped cold and just looked at the animal and, as I thought would happen, it stopped in its tracks and merely continued to bark at me. No big deal.

I walked again along the path to the waterpoint and then turned right onto the USMC runway heading east. I was the only person on the base. There was no trace of anyone near me. Not quite true, of course. Another herd of cows was sauntering along the runway towards me and an older man, unlike the small boy at the waterpoint. I let them pass and they continued on. I myself continued on towards the ammo dump along the tarmac. I spotted what



appeared to be the tread marks probably of a tank. The parallel lines of the tank tread indented into the cemented crushed stone reminded me of the ruts left by chariots in the stone streets of Pompei. Those are clearly visible after thousands of years. So here, too, is visible evidence of military occupation of the site at some point in the past. I walked on to find the ammo dump.

And there it was, off my right shoulder. A deep depression in the ground, unchanged from when I was there before: the remains of the ammunition dump that was struck by NVA artillery during the Siege in 1968. 105 and 155 shells everywhere. There were more shells lying on the ground than what I had remembered from before, but there they were, still scattered all over the place. I walked down into the depression and walked around gingerly. A little scary here. I was reminded of Lang Vei the day before: one never knows what is under foot in the meat grinder. I stayed for about 15 minutes and then climbed out of the depression the same way in which I had entered it. I stood on the edge of the crater and noticed that the wind had stopped, the rain farther west having also ceased. The base was silent,



absolutely silent. Not a sound. Quiet as a tomb. I looked west along the runway and I saw a solid layer of clouds not more than 8 feet above the runway deck. The delineation of the clouds parallel to the earth was so remarkably clear, and without any other landmarks visible, I was transfixed. I was in a strange place filled with such ominous foreboding that it created an aura of suspense, a feeling of unknowing, subterfuge, the calm before the storm, a land filled with deep mystery and mystique — the heart of darkness. I raised my arm and could put my hand into the thick dark cloud just above my head.



I stood gazing westward at the upside down horizon along the entire length of the runway as far as I could see, which could not have been more than 500 feet or so due to the height of the trees, the tops of which were enveloped in the horizontal grayness. The base remained quiet, eerily so, and I continued to stand motionless, turning my head to see if there was a whisper of a breeze. Nothing. Then I turned around and faced the east end of the runway and was startled to see a young girl not more than 20 feet from me wearing a purple jacket and a hat. She was staring right at me. She neither smiled nor did she move. She didn't seem afraid but she didn't seem overly curious either. I waved at her and said "Tsien Chao," meaning hello, but she did not respond. Her skin was dark like most Vietnamese and the hair escaping from beneath her hat was unruly. But her expressionless eyes were penetrating. We stood staring at each other for about 20 seconds. I knelt and placed the bag of dirt on the ground and adjusted my camera and took a couple of photos of her. She did not flinch or react. I stood

up and then she raised her right arm and pointed in the direction of hills 950 and 1015. I turned around to see what she may be pointing at and when I turned back to look at her, she had disappeared like a phantom, I supposed into the coffee plants. At that precise moment, the leaves in the trees in the area in which I was standing began to stir as the wind once again picked up. Interestingly, I did not feel the wind, but I saw it move the leaves on the trees. The clouds began to move again, perpendicular to the runway. Now, without question, it was going to rain at this end of the base. It was going to pour buckets.



I headed back to the cover of the museum, a long walk or run in the face of imminent downpours. I made it to the new museum and walked under the elevated floor slab out of the rain that was beginning to stream, in big droplets, from the clouds. I was safe from the deluge.

The man in the old museum, braving the intense rain, came out and walked towards me and asked me "You American?" I said, "Yes." He said to me. "America now bombing Iraq." Not surprised by the timing of events — everyone had known for months that time for Saddam Hussein was coming to an end — but taken by the irony of where I was in relationship to world events, I looked away and said back to him, "So, it starts again."

After awhile the rain stopped. I had one mission left before I returned to Dong Ha. I could not see hill 558 but I could not return without placing Jacob's tiny USMC flag somewhere on the base. But this turned out to be tricky. From the museum, I walked to a secluded place, or rather what I assumed to be a secluded place. I bent down and unfurled the flag and stuck it in the red clay, and then I stood back to take a picture of it for Jacob at which time a Vietnamese man, who I had not seen before, approached me from behind talking loudly. I knew instantly what he was talking about. I gestured that all was OK. And he said "No! No! No!" So I tried to indicate I just wanted to take a picture. He yelled at me some more. So I said, "Ah, OK," retrieved the flag, and acted as if I understood. Satisfied, he returned to the empty museum. Undaunted, I walked about a hundred yards away towards the east behind some trees, well out of sight, and placed the flag in the red muddy Khe Sanh soil again and this time succeeded to take several pictures of it. But then, the decision: do I leave it there, knowing it's not been placed on 558 as Jacob had requested, or do I bring it back with me to the USA? I decided that if I left it there, someone would find it and simply take it, so what's the point? Decision made, I pulled the flag out of the ground, — the bottom of the slim wood flagpole now stained red — rolled it back up and put it in my pocket. I would bring it home and mail it back to Jacob. As Jacob later wrote to me in an e-mail after he had received the flag: "To Khe Sanh and back. Thank you, Gary." Precisely. And thank you, Jacob.

Believe it or not, I had been on the base all day, and now evening was approaching. I climbed in the car, and drove out of the base onto Highway 14 and turned left towards Khe Sanh Ville. At the intersection I stopped at a small café to have a beer and entered a small room. The families living there were all watching TV. So I saw with my own eyes right there in Khe Sanh Ville, on a CNN or, perhaps, BBC feed to Vietnam national television, bombs exploding in Baghdad. The TV showed B52s leaving an English airbase and I thought to myself, "The Vietnamese are no strangers to these things." Darkness was falling fast now and the area was foggy and still rainy. I paid for my refreshment and got back into the car and started back towards Dong Ha — about an hour's drive. Down off the Khe Sanh plateau, past the smugglers who ply the back jungle paths between Laos and Dong Ha, sitting nonplussed on the side of the road on their Honda motorbikes (the passenger is usually a beautiful woman), down the hill and around the Rao Quan corner, and back along the



Quang Tri River. The air was misty, dark, and still somewhat foggy, though not like up on top.

My thoughts returned to the girl in purple and how she had disappeared as suddenly as she had appeared. I wondered what it was she was pointing towards. I have heard stories that the area has taken on mystical proportions and is inhabited by ghosts. Even my usual traveling companion Hoang Tran Dung, is uneasy in Khe Sanh or Con Thien after dark. Sometimes he is very quiet. He would prefer to be out of the bush at night. I wondered to myself: was she an apparition? Thinking about it as I drove, I couldn't remember whether I had noticed if her feet left any marks in the damp spoil. Apparitions, even purple ones, float, they don't walk — and they don't need parkas, right? She was no ghost but she did appear very stealthily from nowhere and disappear equally as fast, apparently also to nowhere. I sensed I was never alone on the base but rather was being closely watched. Of course, I didn't try to look for her. I just thought she lived there somehow in one of the shanty houses constructed from odds and ends on the base. How weird.

And to add another dimension to the weirdness, I noticed again the same intriguing, surreal, certainly alluring phenomenon I had observed the night before while returning to Dong Ha. While approaching and entering the same Bru village along the Quang Tri valley that I had passed through the night before, the same strange light-blue tint suffused the road and surrounding area — a faint azure hue — but it seemed to be more intense than the night before, like it was glowing. And as I drove closer, the intensity increased, seemingly beckoning me closer, deeper — as if there would be no escape. Couldn't be the sun. It's long down. No moon. There aren't any lights, there's no traffic. What is this slight, but increasing blue glow that I see enveloping the area? I drove on and approached the village and drove into the blue light. It was like a blue fog.

I was hesitant to divert my eyes from the road but caught sight of something interesting. As if by chance, I looked to my right and could see right into the doorway of a Bru home. The inhabitants were watching TV. I could see the images on the screen clearly; the hut was that close to the road. Of course! It dawned on me in an instant. There were no supernatural forces at work. The light that bathed the area in blueness was just the collective glow from the television sets in each hut. Amazing. Each and every single Bru hut had a small television set! And, all the sets were turned on! Probably, everyone was watching the war. I had never noticed that before and never even thought they had access to such conveniences. Soon, I emerged from the valley of blue light and, continuing on to Dong Ha, saw the light fade in the mist in the rearview mirror. I continued on alone on Highway No. 9 in the darkness towards the Rockpile in Quang Tri Province. The day was over. In some ways, it was disappointing but in many other ways very enlightening and completely unforgettable. The rain continued to fall. America was at war again. Go USA!

The foregoing manuscript was written by Gary W. Foster who is a Vice President of Stanley Consultants, Inc., headquartered in Muscatine, Iowa and who works in their international division. He travels often to Vietnam, Africa, and the Caribbean. Mr. Foster has visited Vietnam 16 times since 1973. His address is P.O. Box 1211, Muscatine, Iowa 52761. Tel: 563-264-6305, if one cares to discuss this article or find out more information about Khe Sanh or Highway No. 9 in Quang Tri Province. His E-mail address is fostergary@stanleygroup.com.

My Unexpected Visit to Khe Sanh Hill 861 in April, 1968.

by Hugh D. Cox

In April 1968, I was a first lieutenant with Army Special Forces assigned to MAC-SOG in Vietnam. I was given a mission to fly by Army helicopter to Khe Sanh to deliver intelligence documents to our Special Forces unit located within the Khe Sanh combat base.

The North Vietnamese siege of the base had ended and the U.S. Marines were dismantling much of the base. My flight was a routine one since the air strip at Khe Sanh was not under constant indirect fire. We flew over some of the most historic terrain of the Vietnam war including Camp Carroll, the Rockpile, Highway 9 before we reached the airspace over Khe Sanh.

When we reached that area, I was astonished to see the bombing devastation on the hills and mountains surrounding the air strip — particularly to the West. Miles and miles of B-52 bomb craters pock-marked the landscape. There were tens of thousands of craters within sight.

As the helicopter descended, the pilot received an urgent mission to undertake a medical evacuation "medevac" from a U.S. Marine outpost. The pilot quickly gained altitude and flew northwest from the air strip to a mountain ridge about 2,700 feet high. When we approached the ridge, I could see that it was almost like a knife edge with very steep ridges dropping away from the long spine of the mountain. The pilot asked me to jump off when we reached the mountain top ridge. He explained that he needed no extra weight and promised he would return for me. As the only passenger, I jumped from about 10 feet above the ridge.

I was on Hill 861 and it was one of those war experiences one can never forget.

I was not certain how long I was there. Time spent waiting in a war is irrelevant.This mountain ridge was manned by "A" company, 1st Battalion of the 1st Marine Division (which had recently replaced K company of the 26th Marine Regiment). I saw only a few Marines during my visit.

Several Marines were moving about. Each acted in very exhausted slow-motion carrying canteens, supplies and ammunition back and forth. Their young faces all had heavy beards and deep set eyes. I simply watched them as I sat down with my briefcase and weapon. It was as if they had always been there in filthy, damp and torn uniforms. They moved deliberately in spite of their distant stares. They seemed so young, and I felt so old at age 25. These Marines were experienced combat veterans deprived of adolescence. They carried simple things like water and food as if it was for holy communion. Anyone who saw them on that day in 1968 would be proud to be with them even for a short period of time.

No one spoke to me. These Marines seemed busy and unconcerned about my presence. It was as if I had always been there sitting on the ground in my clean uniform and green beret clutching my briefcase and M-16.

Their defensive position along the mountain ridge was one of the most precarious I had ever seen. These Marines occupied the spine of the ridge for only about 10 meters down the steep ridges from the top. Then there was another 10 meters of cut down vegetation probably filled with mines. Beyond, the heavy jungle loomed just 20 to 30 meters away. The North Vietnamese could have been upon us within seconds. I looked over the other side of the ridge. The defensive setup was the same on both sides of the mountain. Hill 861 seemed to be an invitation to attack.

I thought it was best to wait until I was spoken to. The Marines knew I was there. Army types know that Marines are different. I located a foxhole to move to if needed. I tried not to show my growing anxiety.

This strategic combat location was the bloodiest Vietnam ridge I ever visited. Each attack on Hill 861 was a potential enemy victory. Holding this ridge seemed doubtful to me. I admit I was scared.

I had read the reports of the battles along these mountains and ridges. Hundreds of Marines were killed or wounded in taking Hill 861 and the nearby mountain tops like Hill 881 South and Hill 881 North. Brave NVA soldiers took even more casualties in those battles. In January 1968, the Marines had to take the ridge more than once to secure it. It came under serious attack again in July 1968 — after my short visit. Once secured in January 1968, Hill 861 remained firmly in Marine hands.

Finally after a long period of sitting, I was approached by one young Marine who asked me how he could transfer to the Army. He seemed dead

serious. I do not remember my answer. We talked for a half hour in quiet tones while I constantly scanned the tree line below for enemy movement. Everyone knew the elite 324th NVA Division was in this area. Within a few hours, the helicopter returned to pick me up.

During my visit, I knew I was among special men who could be measured by a simple yardstick of courage and trust. Race, class and family background meant nothing on that ridge. I was deeply moved by each man's simple act of sharing with his brothers.

Since that day, I always speak of U.S. Marines in very respectful terms. I will never forget the Corps' finest on Hill 861.

Hugh D. Cox
MAC-SOG

Squalls Between the Storms — Part II

by John M. Kaheny

About a week after the Bravo Company engagement I arrived at Khe Sanh Combat Base to start my new assignment as the S-3 Liaison Officer/Psychological Warfare Officer. I left Alpha Company with mixed feelings. The Third Platoon was now in good hands with my relief — Paul Lojokovic, a bright, dedicated and competent officer. Under the wing of Sgt. Hawkins, he was going to do a fine job. I did feel bad about going to the "real." In the "rear," there were hard backed tents, hot chow and even beer on occasion. Meanwhile the Marines and Corpsmen in the line companies were living in the trenches with C-Rats and a rare warm Pepsi. On the other hand, it was a great opportunity and I would be working with Captain Valesques again and I had spent 5 months leading small patrols and had been spared harm.

Right after I checked into the Operations Section, Master Sergeant Dubois informed me that I was to go immediately to Danang and attend the U.S. Army's Psychological Warfare School because my additional duty was Psyops Officer. The trip almost cost me my bars. Just before I left. Sgt. Nordin, the Alpha Company Admin Chief, told me to visit Sgt. Jamie Freeman, who had recently been transferred to China Beach as the senior lifeguard because of his exceptional performance of duty. I knew Jamie well and witnessed firsthand the reasons why he got such a plumb job. Needless to say, I returned to Khe Sanh on June 22 much wiser mentally, but completely exhausted physically. Sgt. Freeman sure knew how to entertain a young lieutenant!

A few days after my return, I was sitting in the combat operations center being schooled by both Master Sgt. Dubois and GySgt. Lukens when I noticed four holes on the right side of the crotch of my trousers. I innocently asked Dubois why they put the vent holes on only one side of the trousers. He went to a bookshelf, picked up an AK round that was there and put the bullet into the holes. A perfect fit! Both Dubois and Lukens then broke out laughing. Seems that on May 21, the NVA got closer to me than I had believed. As an aside, several years ago at one of our reunions in Philadelphia, Phil Lukens showed up and entertained several members in the bar with this story about a pretty naive lieutenant.

Dubois and Lukens were untiring in their instruction. If I was to clear fire missions in the fire support coordination center, I was going to be trained right. Soon I was catching on and learned to keep my mouth shut and listen. About that time I began picking up some distressing bits of information. Lt. Col. Newton was not generally liked. He kept to himself and was rarely seen outside of his rather well-equipped bunker. Late at night I would brief him on the steps of the bunker on the night activities etc. I was always uncomfortable around him — he appeared very distant. I also heard that many members of the battalion had bad feelings about Norm Centers, the C/O of Alpha Company. I knew Norm pretty well, and he was rather strange on occasion. Some days he was on time and on target, but on others he appeared to be a few clicks off frequency. At this time I just took it all in.

It all changed on the night of June 27. Centers had moved Alpha Company into an open area just south of Alpha Battery 1/13 at the west end of the Combat Base. They were told not to dig in for some reason. The NVA struck twice in the night with mortars. Their target was Alpha Battery but they hit Alpha Company the hardest. Soon Lt. Bolger was dead along with Sgt. Kincaid. Centers had refused to authorize Sgt. Kincaid to proceed to Phu Bai when his tour was up, because the paper work had not

come through and Alpha Company was shorthanded. Kincaid died after his tour date. Rusty Reeves was severely wounded in the leg during the first attack.

I knew that Centers had come by the Combat Operations Center shortly after the attack, but I thought he had been ordered to do so. I later found out he had not. Centers had a piece of shrapnel in his arm when I saw him, but he already had gotten medical attention.

Later that night, the NVA struck again. This time Centers showed up at the COC and was shaking severely. He was babbeling about how the NVA were about to overrun the entire base and that he was lucky to have received his third Purple Heart. I did not notice any fresh wounds, but he had lost his composure.

By the next morning, Centers left for Phu Bai with his "third heart," Rusty was off to Cam Ranh Bay and later in the day 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines got hit hard on Hill 689. Captain Bynum of Lima Company was killed, along with several other brave Marines.

Things settled down a bit and on July 4th Lt. Col. Newton was relieved by Lt. Col. Jim Wilkinson. There was an immediate change in the morale of the battalion. One of the first things Lt. Col. Wilkinson did was go out to the access road to the base and meet a rifle company coming in to the base. He and the Sgt. Major had cold sodas and beer waiting for the grunts as they arrived. A new day had arrived, and it did not go unnoticed.

About a week later, Major Heath the Battalion Executive Officers came into the COC late at night and asked me if I would go back to Alpha Company to help out temporarily and if so, when could I be ready. I said I needed about 30 minutes to grab my pack. He then told me that Alpha just got a new commanding officer and that Lt. Stewart, who had been reassigned to Alpha from Bravo Company, had just fallen off a ledge and had been evacuated. The new C/O Captain John Raymond needed an experienced platoon commander. I also teamed that Alpha was moving out before first light to go back up to Hill 881S. I was to meet Captain Raymond at the mess tent ASAP.

I walked down the dirt road to the mess tent in the dark and was trying to find Captain Raymond when I fell in behind some of the Marines from Alpha Three. They were unaware I was there in the dark and were commenting upon the fact that the company had been mix-mastered since the mortar attack, and that I would be going to the Second Platoon with many of the old Third Platoon, but things would not be the same.

Captain Raymond presence was recognized immediately. He was a great leader who really cared about his Marines. He knew that I was familiar with both the enemy and the terrain and made it apparent that he needed to learn and learn fast. He wanted a fight, but a fight on his terms. He put the Second Platoon out on the knoll on the west end of 881 South. At night, the position was isolated, as we did not have enough Marines to protect the saddle that joined us with the rest of the Company on the summit to the east. Bozo Worden was once again my radio operator, and our little command group was augmented by "Ollie" Collins and two scout snipers, Sgt.'s Frank Jones and Gable. Twenty-four years later, Jones and I would serve together again in Operation Desert Storm. I felt very comfortable watching the members of the old Third Platoon, bringing the many FNGs up to speed.

Checking watch one night at about 0200, Jones and Gable thought they caught a Marine smoking weed. The Marine pitched it far outside the wire so there was no evidence for formal proceedings. In addition, all of us in the CP believed he was trying to get sent to the rear on a weak case, so he could shirk and eventually beat the rap. I can't remember who came up with the plan, but we performed an attitude change on this fellow. Jones and Gable disarmed him, tied him up and staked him outside the west gate for the remainder of the night. All night long, they threw rocks down into the ravines. At first light, we had a young Marine with a serious attitude change.

A couple of weeks later Lt. Col. Wilkinson came up to 881 South with a new lieutenant and a large box of Purple Hearts. Most of the Purple Hearts went to the members of the old Third Platoon, like Dennis Thayer and Russell Turner. After the ceremony, Lt. Col. Wilkinson gave me a choice — to stay in Alpha Company with Captain Raymond, or I could go back to the S-3 and the new lieutenant would relieve me. I decided that after six months in the field

I should not press my luck, so I agreed to go back to the S-3. A few days prior, Bravo Company had broken up an ambush on Route 9 several miles east of Khe Sanh. That action is best described by others, but it was a fierce engagement and as a result Route 9 would be closed until after the Siege. It was also the last serious encounter with the NVA by 1/26 until December of 1967.

I returned to the S-3 and continued to learn my new trade. Most of the Marines in 1/26 who deployed to Vietnam in July of 1966 were now going home in August of 1967. The good news was that Andy Sibley returned after a bout with malaria, and Rusty Reeves was back from the Army hospital in Cam Ranh Bay. Rusty had almost lost his leg but refused to be sent home for one reason. I met him walking from the airstrip to the Bn CP and before he even said hello, he asked where Centers was. I told him that Norm was still in Okinawa as there had been a problem with his orders, but he had been ordered to FMF PAC in Hawaii.

Years later I learned that Norm Centers, subsequently promoted to major, was relieved of command of the Marine barracks in Iceland because he displayed some serious dysfunctional behavior. I believe that he had finally lost his battle with the demons who affected him so adversely at Khe Sanh. As a result he was committed to Bethesda Naval Hospital where he would pass away in the mid-1980s.

Anyone Care?

Sonny Gratzer

Misdeeds lay by the road of
Annoying and unhappy times
Left to rot under tank treads.
Life's failed ambitions
Stink like molding NVA bodies
Poured from trimvanes
Like so much debris.
Nothing to care for!
Smells are summons!
Failed times smell, too.
Failed limbs and failed bowels
Add up to annoyances for others,
Unlike the Gimp to whom they mean all.
Nothing to care for?
Smells are memories!
What else can they be?

Just so everyone knows...





































The Khe Sanh Veterans' Red Clay Issue 57 Winter 2003/04

Happy Holidays Khe Sanh Veterans



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...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

Publisher Notes

In the past, I have been printing the KSV Directory on a when-ordered basis. It is currently contained in a three ring, clear view, hard cover booklet, (5-1/2X8-1/2). I have been making changes as they came in, and sending out corrected pages to those who have a booklet of this type in their possession. Existing problems are that there are so many annual changes, having different directories, and the current process not being cost efficient. I am now negotiating with the printer to print an entire membership a directory, with my then printing changes, and new member information in each issue of the **Red Clay**. Members can make their own changes and add the new members to the section provided to continually update their own individual directory. As cost allow, a periodic new comprehensive directory will be put out, perhaps every other year.

Membership Committee Notes

The 2004 annual dues are now due. If you receive a notice, you have not paid, please remit ASAP. Life Members will receive a form to utilize if they wish to honor someone in the memorial section of the Fall KSV Newsletter.

Message from the Reunion Committee

Our reunion in Dallas Texas is all set. We believe we have negotiated the best rates for lodging, food, and drink, at one of the best 4 Star Hotels in the City of Dallas. The staff, whom had previously accommodated us, is overextending themselves, to make our stay as enjoyable as possible. To this day we are still receiving lower rates for planned events, beneficial to members. All proceeds earned from the reunion will be utilized to lower the price of planned events.

The majority of events have been planned as group activities. We wanted the membership to remain as a group even though we would be away from our base hotel. The cost for the event planned for the women, (Complete SPA pampering activities) will also be reduced, utilizing profits from last years reunion. Our Khe Sanh 500 (Kart Races) is for all members of the family, regardless of size or age. The two nights of Country Dancing, and eating at two of the most famous Country Western Bars, will be enjoyable for the whole family,) live rodeos, shopping etc. We had the pleasure and fun of experiencing these planned events away from our own hotel, in addition to the wonderful events the hotel has put together for us. The hotel and their staff operate a first class organiza-

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

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William Jayne.....Member At Large
Thomas Ford.....Member At Large
Robert Moxley.....Member At Large

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tion, and have promised a stay we will not soon forget. So get your Western outfits ready and plan on coming to the 2004 reunion. All details are included in the enclosed brochures; please get your registration in early. Those in by March 1, will be eligible for a drawing paying for your room for the whole week.

The Reunion Committee

Book Review: They Were There First

Reviewed by Lt. Col. Raymond C. Madonna, USMC (Ret)

THE HILL FIGHTS: The First Battle of Khe Sanh, by Edward F. Murphy (Ballentine Publishing, New York, 2003, ISBN 0891418105, 284 pp.) $24.95 (for members $22.46)

Strap on your helmet for a trip into the hills above Khe Sanh. You can almost hear the crash of the mortars, smell the stench of decaying bodies, and feel the slice of elephant grass on your hands as you walk up those deadly hills with 2d Battalion, 3d Marines (2/3) and 3/3 in the spring of 1967. Not for the fainthearted, Ed Murphy's moving account of the 1967 Khe Sanh hill battles captures the background, sights, sounds, and feel of battle through extensive interviews with over 80 Marines who fought there. The reader will cringe with anticipation expecting the next jam of an M-16 rifle as the Marines fight with grenades, bayonets, machine guns, and a rifle that was not ready for issue to combatants.

From the mouths of the participants and the pages of the after action reports, Murphy recaptures the firefights, ambushes, and medical evacuations that were daily occurrences during this intense fighting. While reading this book, noncommissioned officers (NCOs) will find a wealth of combat leadership to emulate. Junior officers will learn the tools and tricks of their trade — what to do and what not to do. The veterans of these fights will find old friends and many memories both good and bad.

An Army Vietnam-era veteran, Ed Murphy set out to write a "good, exciting story" based on the exploits of real people. Selecting a subject almost neglected until now, he castigates the bureaucracy that sent men into battle with a less than acceptable weapon and then denied it. Murphy wanted to convey an accurate tale as seen through the eyes of the participants. He captures the courage and brotherhood of the heroic Marines who stormed those hills. He accomplished his mission with a book that is good, exciting, and accurate. Murphy paints a clear picture of the horrors of war. His other books include "**Dak To**" and "**Semper Vietnam.**" He has also written three books on Medal of Honor recipients — all worth reading.

The vast majority of participants had no clue why they went into those hills to fight a tough enemy with a less than tough weapon. Most thought the only battle was against the North Vietnamese Army. Murphy opens the readers' eyes to several battles being fought simultaneously: Marines against North Vietnamese soldiers, Lt. Gen. Lew Walt against General William Westmoreland on strategy, and Marines against the newly issued M-16 rifle.

The obvious battle pitted 2/3 and 3/3 against elements of five different North Vietnamese Army divisions. The author devotes the bulk of this story to the fights to capture Hills 881 North (881N), Hill 861, and Hill 881 South (881S). He gets down with the individual riflemen as they walk through the elephant grass, fight through ambushes from an unseen enemy, and live through seemingly endless enemy rocket and mortar barrages. The inscription on the Marine Corps War Memorial that "Uncommon Valor Was a Common Virtue" was never truer than in those hills.

Two less obvious battles lend credibility to this story — Westmoreland's tactical differences with Walt, and the Marines' struggle with their rifles. Murphy explains the background that led General Westmoreland, Commander, Military Assistance Command and Vietnam, to want the Marines at Khe Sanh. The Marines, led by Lt. Gen. Walt, III Marine Amphibious Force Commander, never wanted to be in those hills. He believed the battle could be won on the coastline where the majority of the people were. The battle between Westmoreland and the Marines over tactics went on until he left in 1968. In a fact-filled Part One, Murphy traces the history of how the Marines got to this outpost. Participants in this battle may be surprised by how many of their friends wore the red clay of Khe Sanh before them. He starts by describing the opposing opinions going back to 1966. The cast of characters includes Lt. Col. Pete Wickwire, commanding officer (CO) of 1/3; Capt

Mike Sayers, CO of Company B, 1/9; and the hated crachin (the rain and lousy weather in that area). Even the legendary general Mike Ryan played a role. Mike Sayers' company played a critical role throughout the story. Part One ends with the introduction of Lt. Col. "Pappy" Delong's 2/3 by air from the special landing force and Lt. Col. Gary Wilder's 3/3 by truck into a battle to prevent disaster.

Another battle that cost the lives of many Marines was between these brave warriors and their own rifles — the then infamous M-16. Issued to 2/3 in Okinawa while the battalion was training for duty as the special landing force and to 3/3 while they were still around the Rockpile in northern I Corps, the M-16 displayed problems almost immediately. The first thought was that Marines were not cleaning their weapons properly. This was quickly disproved by inspections at every turn at the company, platoon, and squad level. Murphy deals with this controversy in concise statements of fact and recollection of rifle problems that became daily routine throughout the battle. The individual accounts of rifle failure at critical moments will awaken anger in the Marines who lived through it. Much to the resentment and frustration of company grade officers, senior Marines continued to blame the rifle problems on individual Marines. Murphy's well-researched description of this controversy will awaken the rage many junior officers and enlisted Marines felt at the accusation that these warriors were not properly caring for their weapons. The rifle would be a thorn in the side of bleeding Marines until the problem was remedied in late 1967 with an in-country retooling of the rifle.

Hill 861 was the pivot point on both of the higher hills, and each battalion lost men there. Part Two describes 3/3's assault on Hill 881S as they passed through Hill 861 and wheeled hard left. A composite battalion (two companies from 3/9 and one from 3/3) under Lt. Col. Wilder fought through a heavily entrenched and hidden enemy. Following in trace up Hill 861, Pappy Delong's 2/3 swung northwest toward Hill 881N. The author devotes Part Three to the efforts of 2/3 to attack an unseen enemy relying heavily on artillery and Marine close air support. Both battalions followed a similar pattern advance — reconnaissance by fire, hit an unseen ambush, fall back, call for supporting arms, and resume the attack. The doctrinal "attack through and ambush" proved a less than useful tactic because of foliage density and faulty weapons. As the battle wore on, Marines, released from the strict rules of engagement of the guerilla war in the South, increasingly relied on reconnaissance by fire.

"**The Hill Fights**" is well researched and provides a detailed historical background without boring the reader with dry history. Murphy paints the big picture as well as the view from the fighting hole, capturing the zeal of a Marine under fire. He brings the emotions of the individual riflemen and officers alive on the pages, pushing the reader to each new page. Murphy moves gracefully back and forth between the political, the strategic, and the tactical. One minute the reader is with Westmoreland and the next with Cpl. Gerry Pett, capturing the perspective of colonels and privates and blending them into a fast moving story. This book puts the reader on the hill and in the muddy, bloody boots of the Marine warriors.

Murphy relates the controversy over the faulty M-16 from the eyes of the enlisted Marines whose lives depended on it. He often groups all officers and staff NCOs as being critical of the way their men cleaned the weapons. While that was the first inclination, many company grade (and I suspect field grade) officers quickly identified the problem and came to the defense of their Marines. In retrospect, the enlisted Marines were probably unaware of the dilemma that plagued their officers over this rifle and the many arguments and discussions that took place behind closed doors. The author, who drew much of his book from the accounts of the enlisted Marines had no way of knowing either. The clearest example of an outspoken critic of the weapon is 1st Lt. Mike Cervenak of Company F, 2/3 who put his career on the line to go public with a letter to The Washington Post detailing the real problems.

Marines of all ranks will benefit from reading "**The Hill Fights**" as both an important piece of Marine Corps history told nowhere else and as a factual look into the bloody battle described in this story. Murphy ranks with Jim Webb and Johnnie Clark in his ability to describe the heroism of Marines under fire in Vietnam. This very readable, fact-filled book belongs on the U.S. Marine Reading List. It will be a "keeper" to the heroes who captured those hills.

Lt. Col. Madonna retired from the Corps in 1983. During the hill fights, he was CO, Co H, 2/3. He currently resides in Chester, MD.

Memorial Page

Those Remembered

Lt. Donald Jacques, B Co 1/26 USMC KIA 25 Feb 68
Richard Roach

Remembered by:

Pietro Osimanti, B Co 1/26
Terry McNulty

Contributions

ANONYMOUS (for sending several very generous donations)
BENNETT, Charles A.
COMER, Thomas M.
GAROUTTE, Michael A.
GARVEY, James E.
GREEN, C.T.
DROOG, Daniel
DURHAM, Pierce
KELLY, Charles T.
LEE, Dale
LEMIEUX, Lorne A.
MARQUIS, Paul L.
McCAULEY, Michael
McDONOUGH, Frank
McNULTY, Terry P.
OTTERAAEN, Robert M
OSIMANTI, Pietro A.
PILCH, Bruce M.
POOLE, Leonard.
SUTCLIFFE, Grenville G.
TILLERY, Terry.
VINING, Francis E., Jr.
VOORHEES, Herbert C.
WHITEHEAD, Walter B.

Fading Images

As our color guard marched in front of the Vietnam veterans moving wall
We were piped across the expanse by the bagpipers call.

Tall and proud we marched under a shimmering blue sky
All the while our colors we held high.

As we marched and the wall receded to the rear
Our fallen comrades fell in behind their footsteps we could hear..

The sound of our footsteps grew so loud
They caused a hush to envelope the crowd.

When our march was over I turned to look at the wall
I swear, I could see the images of those heroes fading
With the end of the bagpipers call.

Jack Neeley

We Got Mail

Tom,

You guys do a great job on the newsletter. I am in the midst of intense Hepatitis C treatments from a transfusion I received when I lost a leg to a booby trap. There are many men in my shoes. We suspect the common denominator were the shots we were required to take in boot camp. Those shots were given with air-injected needle guns, one right after another, without sanitation. Blood from the gun could have been passed from one recruit to another. Right now there is a 50% cure rate. I encourage all members to be examined for the disease. It lays dormant and symptoms might not show up for 40 years.

I never showed any symptoms, yet had a very high "Viral Lead" count. I do not think I had any other possibilities for contamination. I never shared a needle, got tattooed, or had my body pierced, except for a little shrapnel. In the September issue of *American Legion Magazine,* there is an article by Senator John Kerry. I found it disgusting and wrote a reply to the editor which was published in the November issue. I have been getting positive replies from all over the country. You may publish it if you choose to do so.

Although I was wounded prior to my brothers from 3/26 serving at Khe Sanh, I feel very attached to all of you, keep up the good work. God bless all my brothers who represented me in spirit. Know that one Marine was praying for all of you during the Siege. If they could have strapped a new leg on me then, I would have been with you all. You are all heroes in my mind. It was that love that caused me to respond to John Kerry's article where my rage was evident. Good luck to all my adopted brothers, God Bless you all.

Sgt. Lorne A. LeMieux
M/Co 3/26 66/67

PUBLISHERS NOTE: Lorne, thank you for the kind words. Coming from one that has made such a sacrifice, it means a lot to all of us. I know your prayers must have had a lot to do with those of us who made it home. I thank you for your defense in the article you wrote for *American Legion Magazine.* I read it and felt joy in your kind words for our service. I cannot print it in our magazine since John Kerry is running for a political office, and our editorial policy also forbids politics in general. Again, I want to personally thank you for your heroic service. We are honored having you as a member of our organization.

Tom,

I just wanted to write a short article concerning my service at the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

After my arrival at Danang, I was transferred to I Corps to serve with Delta Company, 1/26. I would like to dedicate this article to my brothers who fought and died, and those who made it back home. I served as a section leader for M-60 machine guns under the command of Lt. Ernie Spencer. Ernie was a real Marine and to this day, I consider him a friend. I respected him for what he was then, and what he is now. If it were not for him, I would not have made it back home.

Khe Sanh was hell. I saw things that I never saw before. This made me do things I had to do to survive that awful ordeal. When they called the 26th Marines "Professionals," they knew what they were talking about. If I had to do it all over again, I would, if I had Ernie and the rest of my fellow Marines with me. I will never forget what happened at Khe Sanh.

If anyone wants to read a true book about Khe Sanh, I suggest they read "Welcome to Vietnam Macho Man," by Ernie Spencer. It brought back profound memories of my service at Khe Sanh. There, I saw boys turn into men in a very short period. To this day I still cry, when I think of the awful things I saw. I am proud to have served with the brothers like I had at Khe Sanh.

Cpl Roland McClaren
D Co 1/26

Good morning, my friend.

As I said in my previous mail, I saw the picture of my squadron's namesake on the back copy of the magazine. What a terrific sight. My squadron HMM-364, the Purple Foxes, flew out of Phu Bai until December of '69. As I said, my introduction to lovely South East Asia was flying into Hue!! As Tet grew worse, we were flying into Khe Sanh on a "too often" schedule! We would fly up to Quang Tri and re-fuel, then on to Khe Sanh, the Rockpile, 881

North and 881 South!! Oh, the memories!!! Hell, most of the time we wouldn't even land, just push out the supplies!!!!!! But oh those mede66vacs,!!!!!

My address is
449 McCleery St. Apt. 1 Sharon, Pa. 16146
My Email is as follows; disc@724.con

Semper Fi
Jack McJilton

Tom Eichler,

I have to assume that you know Ron Murray and that he has sent this poem to you .In the event not, I am forwarding this to you. As I said before, we in the Thailand-Laos-Cambodia Brotherhood (TLCB) care a lot for the 26th Marines of Khe Sanh. This was forwarded to us by one of our great Ladies we have in the TLCB. If you were not aware of this poem, I am really happy to send it to you.

Jose L. Benavides
Proud Associate of the KSV.

WE SLEPT WITH ONE EYE OPEN, AS WE LISTENED FOR THE SOUND. A MARINE CALLING CORPSMAN, OR THOSE INCOMING MORTAR ROUNDS.

WHEN THE FIGHTING STARTED, IT NEVER SEEMED TO QUIT. MANY BRAVE MEN DIED UP THERE. BODIES TORN AND SPLIT.

KHE SANH WAS A NIGHTMARE, FOR HOURS IT WOULD RAIN. ROCKET AND MORTAR ROUNDS DOWN ON US, I THOUGHT I'D GO INSANE.

THEN THEY SENT THOSE HUMAN WAVES, TO CRASH UPON OUR WIRE. FOR SEVENTY-SEVEN DAYS THEY CAME AT US, BUT WE WOULD NOT RETIRE.

WE FOUGHT THEM UP CLOSE, HAND TO HAND, WE WERE BRAVE AND BOLD. IT SEEMED MORE LIKE A YEAR TO ME, AT NINETEEN I FELT OLD.

I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY WE FOUGHT, OR WHAT THEY THOUGHT WE WOULD DO. BUT THE US MARINES HAD SENT WORD TO HANOI; THIS WAS NOT DIEN BIEN PHU.

Ron Murray

Is Baghdad Safe?

13 Oct 2003

by Gary W. Foster

Baghdad is safe and unsafe at the same time. Many people have asked me what Baghdad is like. I thought I would take some time and write a brief narrative about what I have experienced and have briefly seen so far. I am very safe in the old Palace of Saddam Hussein, and there are quite a lot of Americans, Italians, Polish, British, Nepalese, and Spanish people here. I live in a trailer with a bed made for a midget and a postage stamp-sized blanket. The bathroom is nice but again for a midget. There is hot and cold water, so that's a plus, and the AC is not needed at night. Storage space is at a premium. The weather here at the moment is ninety degrees during the day and in the low sixties in the evenings, and it is very dry. There is not much to do here in the off hours, so I take the shuttle bus from the Palace to the Al Rasheed hotel for a beer or two (or three). Nothing else to do. Hours are long during the day. But wait! There is disco night on Thursday, at the hotel. Whooo Hooo! 70s music. You know, the Bee Gees, Fleetwood Mac, Abba, (love Abba's *"Can you hear the guns Fernando? I remember long ago another starry night like this."* or some such words, can't remember.

Reminded me of Zaire, dancing late at night at 'Le Club Disco in Kinshasa just 4 degrees 20 minutes south of the equator in the African tropics. The presence of French and Belgian women, mindless music, etc. The Iraqis I have met are all friendly. The men don't ever seem to shave, and they all have mustaches. The women don't smile very much, if ever, or so it seems to me. Some wear a semi-veil, and some don't. We all work with Iraqi men and women all day long. The place here at the Palace could not function without them. The area around the Palace is sealed off (probably 25 square blocks) and the streets are deserted except for American army vehicles going back and forth. This is called the Green Zone here we are safe. I can't understand why the militants (whoever they are) don't mortar us, as we would be a plum target. It would seem to be easy, especially from the other side of the Tigris River, which is behind the palace.

One has to be able to show one's ID at all times, so we wear it around our necks. Quite often, at night, there is sustained gunfire of all calibers. It does not affect us, but I know larger caliber bullets can fly five miles or so — maybe more. So every time I hear gunfire, I wonder where the muzzle is pointed. The destruction from the war here is relatively minimal as far as I am able to see. I was taken to the Baath Party headquarters and visited the domed conference room. The dome was penetrated by two smart bombs side by side and exploded deep into the concrete floor below the dome, blowing everything inside to smithereens. The dome withstood the explosion and the two three-foot diameter holes are still visible through its concrete skin at the apex of the dome. There is lots of looting. Food is good, cafeteria-style and quick with a good variety. I seem to drink lots of Fanta orange soda. There is a pool, overpopulated with the Army. Lot of dust. Smoked a hookah the other night. Apple cinnamon tobacco, I believe it was. Pungent. Evenings are dark, not much light. Power plants are coming back on line steadily but electrical demand outstrips supply by a wide margin. Palm trees are everywhere, as is the American military. It is so weird seeing young women manning a tank or carrying a machine gun that is longer than they are tall. But there are many women soldiers here. There have been several soldiers killed since I have been here. In one case, a young women soldier, aged 19, was shot and killed late at night on a road very near Baghdad. There was a very large explosion today in town. As I said, Baghdad is safe and unsafe at the same time. More later.

As always,
Gary

The Brotherhood

Marines still caring for Marines

by Tom Eichler

I retired from the Chicago Police Department on May 10, 2003, after 34 years of service. At a retirement party held in my honor, one of the police officers presented me with a gift I would like to share with members of the KSV. Police officer Edward J. May, a former Marine and Vietnam veteran whose Brother John was KIA serving with the Army in

Vietnam and was posthumously awarded the Silver and Bronze Star, wrote the following letter to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. I am publishing it this time, along with the response from the Commandant, to show that the United Marine Corps, while engaged in numerous conflicts throughout the world, will still take the time to honor one of its own who served long ago.

Dear Commandant Hagee,

Let me start by introducing myself. I am Edward J. May # 2531668. I was a Corporal and served with Fox 2/1 in Vietnam, 1969 and 1970. Let me also tell you what a fine job you are doing with our beloved Corps. I am writing this to tell you a little about a fellow Marine who just retired from the Chicago Police Department. His name is Thomas Eichler # 1838959, Buzzy, as he is known to everyone, served at Khe Sanh on Hill 861A with Echo 2/26 during the Siege. He was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart for his actions. But that is not what makes him special. Buzzy enlisted in the Corps in 1958, served a four year enlistment, and was discharged. When the Vietnam war began, he felt that he had been trained as a Marine and he re-enlisted to serve in combat, the job he was trained for. After being discharged in 1968, he joined the Chicago Police Department, where he rose to the rank of Sergeant. I personally worked with Sergeant Eichler for ten years and would not be the Policeman I am today if not for his leadership. Sergeant Eichler retired as one of the most decorated Police Officers on the Chicago Police Department. He is a Legend.

The reason I am writing this letter is to ask you to send a congratulatory letter, so I can frame it and present it to him, on your behalf, at his retirement celebration on 10 December 2003.

Retiree: Sergeant Thomas Eichler # 1448
09 Dec 68 to 10 May 2003

Mail To: Edward J. May
3720 W 63RD Place
Chicago, Il 60629-4755

Thanking You and Semper Fi

PUBLISHER NOTES: General Hagee also sent an autographed picture with his Letter. I believe this effort by the Commandant exemplifies our motto, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine."

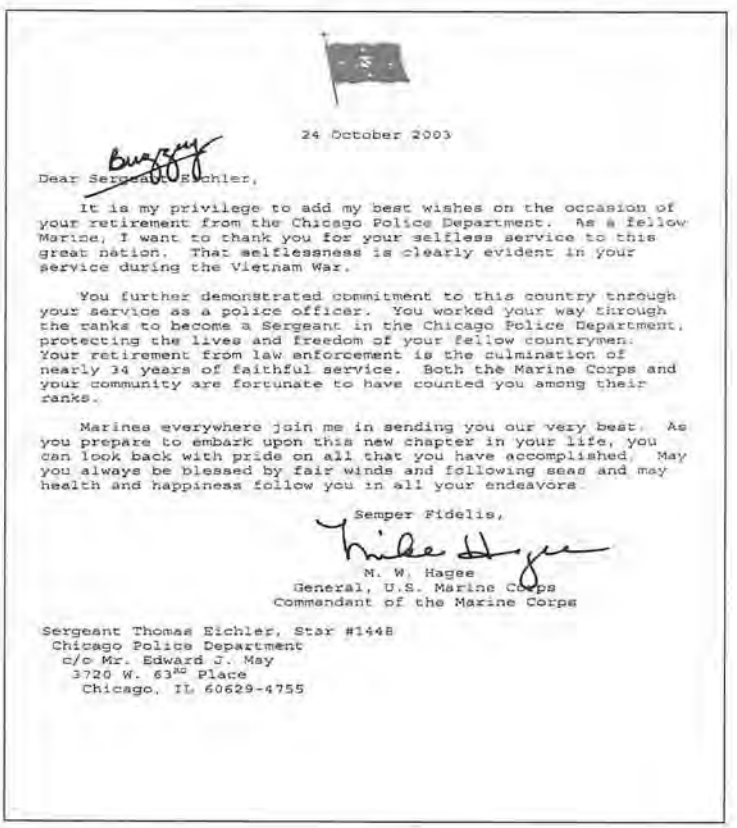

24 October 2003

Dear Sergeant Eichler, Buzzy

It is my privilege to add my best wishes on the occasion of your retirement from the Chicago Police Department. As a fellow Marine, I want to thank you for your selfless service to this great nation. That selflessness is clearly evident in your service during the Vietnam War.

You further demonstrated commitment to this country through your service as a police officer. You worked your way through the ranks to become a Sergeant in the Chicago Police Department, protecting the lives and freedom of your fellow countrymen. Your retirement from law enforcement is the culmination of nearly 34 years of faithful service. Both the Marine Corps and your community are fortunate to have counted you among their ranks.

Marines everywhere join me in sending you our very best. As you prepare to embark upon this new chapter in your life, you can look back with pride on all that you have accomplished. May you always be blessed by fair winds and following seas and may health and happiness follow you in all your endeavors.

Semper Fidelis,

Mike Hagee

M. W. Hagee
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Sergeant Thomas Eichler, Star #1448
Chicago Police Department
c/o Mr. Edward J. May
3720 W. 63RD Place
Chicago, IL 60629-4755

Dear Mr. Spencer,

I am trying to locate anyone who can fill in details about Jack Crosby Bogard, KIA 05 Feb 1968 on Hill 861A. Having grown up together, I have always wanted to know what happened on his final day.

Mr. David Fadley
15512 Township Highway 44
Wharton Ohio 43359

My name is Judy Hornischer. Bob Cahill gave me your name and said you might be able to help me in my search for anyone who might have known my brother HM3 Winston Parker while he was in Vietnam. He was a corpsman with Delta Co., 3rd Platoon, 1st Bn., 26th Marines, 3rd Marine Div. He went to Vietnam in Nov. 1967 and was in Khe Sanh during most of his stay. He was KIA on May 9th 1968 somewhere near Wonder Beach in the Quang Tri Province. I would like to get in touch with anyone who knew him or was with him on his last days on earth. My family does not know much about how he died, and I need to have some closure in my life about this. I still mourn his death and need to put him to rest in my mind. If you can help or know anyone who can, I would greatly appreciate the help. My email address is drh0287@msn.com. My phone number is 402-727-0287. Thank you in advance for any help you can give me.

Semper Fi,
Judy Hornischer

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Dear Judy,

I will publish this request in our next issue of **Red Clay** magazine. When your brother was killed, I was then a battalion intelligence officer but watched this battle. The man who was then the company commander was killed along with about a dozen other Delta company men. I wish I could tell you more but have no recollection. Perhaps some of our members who read the magazine can give you more information. I can tell you that your brother was highly regarded as a corpsman and loved by all who served with him. My heart goes out to you and your family for your tragic loss.

Ernie Spencer

Quiet Acknowledgement

The Marines Memorial Club in San Francisco was established in 1946 to honor all the Marine KIAs of WWII.

When I lived in the Bay Area, I only went there for an occasional business lunch and for a few Saturday night dances. But now that I live 225 miles away from the Bay Area, I stay at the MMC two or three times a year when I visit my son and his wife and can get a reservation, as it is often booked.

Last week my wife and I spent three days there. She loves the upscale shopping at nearby Union Square and I love all the SF homeless people. But, I also take time to tour the MMC as it has a great museum/library on the 11th floor, a great health club in the basement, and a great lobby that takes up the entire first floor. The dining room is located on the top twelfth floor where they have a free buffet breakfast and a free cocktail hour everyday for guests. Like the hippies say, "Been there, done that."

While I was waiting for my son and his wife to join us for dinner, I toured the lobby for the first time in the long time I have been going there. The lobby walls are lined with battle ribbons made into wooden plaques, pictures of several generals of all ages, assorted photos from all wars and "police actions," and special honor display cases for groups such as the WWII Marine Raiders and the Black Sheep Air Squadron of WWII fame. Other display cases also honor Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf War I Marines from those eras.

But what caught my attention was a display case just for Khe Sanh in the rotunda area near the reception desk. It included photos of the Ammo Dump blowing up, a C-130 on fire on the air strip, and various pictures of troops dug in at the combat base. There was also a map of the Khe Sanh area with little flags depicting the units that held the surrounding hills. Most of the hills were identified with the battalion that defended it — except for Hill 861Alpha. In big, bold letters the little flag reads "Echo Company, 2/26." Wouldn't you know that specific display case is right next to the reception desk, where guests lining up to register can glance at it. Stay healthy, Echoski's. Your company is on fine display in the lobby area of the Marines Memorial Club, 609 Sutter Street, San Francisco, trust me.

Joe "0"
Minefield Supervisor, Golf, 2/26

Members Celebrate Marine Corps Birthday and Veterans Day



Bob Dart and Tom Eichler at the 2003 Marine Ball in Chicago.

I decided to celebrate the Marine Corps Birthday, and Veterans Day, attired in Dress Blues. No, not the old ones, I bought a whole new set. I attended the first gala ball, sponsored by the Marine Air Wing with a Marine W/5, whom I served with on the Chicago Police Department for 35 Years. Robert Dart served in the Marine reserves for 43 Years (active & inactive). The Marine Reserve Air Wing sponsored the first gala. Many of the attendees had just returned from service in Iraq. I was treated with so much respect that it was embarrassing. I was so proud to be among these young Marines — feeling ecstatic that these fine young Marines are keeping our electrifying history intact and ongoing. It made me feel good all over that these kids were keeping our proud history intact. I was the second oldest former Marine out of the 500 attendees — another was a former Marine born in 1926.

The 24th Marines Infantry Regiment (Home Boys) sponsored the second ball. Again, I was made to feel honored and special. These young Marines go overboard to make you feel like you are still one of them. They have a ceremony where Marine Reservists wear authentic Marine uniforms from the very beginning of the Corps to the present. When your Era is announced, you are encouraged to stand. Needless to say, the Vietnam Veterans received the loudest applause. I am negotiating to have the same pageant if our reunion returns to Chicago in the near future. I attended this ball with several members of the Khe Sanh Veterans: Ken Penn & his lovely wife Bernice, Larry Brown, and William Griffith. I also attended the annual Birthday celebration by the Chicago Police Marines in the company of Ted Golab and Joe Murphy (KSV) held at the Chicago PD Training Academy. Joe Murphy was just honored by the City of Chicago when he was called out of retirement to head a new unit charged with solving old homicide cases.



At the dedication of Monument at Soldiers Field in Chicago — William Griffith, Ken Penn, Bernice Penn, and Tom Eichler.

On Veterans Day, I was an honored guest of the City of Chicago at the unveiling of a monument honoring all veterans. This monument was one of many dedicated at the new renovated Soldiers Field (Home of the Chicago Bears Football Team). I had my picture taken with my Brother (25th Infantry Division, Vietnam) and Mayor Richard M. Daley. All in all, it was a very busy weekend. The blues are now back in the closet, I hope they do not shrink like the last set.



Veterans Monument at Soldiers Field



Dennis Eichler, Mayor Richard M. Daley and Tom Eichler.

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Ron Shouse and his wife flew to Philadelphia, PA and on to Allentown, where they reunited with Cliff Treese, a friend from B Btry 1/13. The following is a short synopsis of how they spent Veterans Day, and the Marine Corps Birthday.

We spent the night in Allentown and on Saturday, drove back to Philadelphia with Cliff and his wife to do some touring around the town. We went first to Independence Hall but could not enter due to the heavy security guarding the famous Liberty Bell. The bell has been moved to a more secure place and is now behind bulletproof glass. We took a carriage ride down to Penn's landing to see the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It is a very fitting memorial with the names of Vietnam Veterans from that area who were KIA. Their names our engraved amidst scenes from Vietnam, in a amphitheatre setting. There were two Vietnam Veterans guarding the Memorial, since some young skateboarders like to use the facility for their own immature pleasure.



Two of the etched panels depicting scenes from Vietnam.

On the opposite corner is the Korean Veterans Memorial. Scenes of Korea are likewise etched in stone, with the Purple Heart Medal engraved over the entrances. That gave both of us a chill. We returned to our hotel room and had dinner before going to Cookie's Tavern. They advertise that they are the real, unofficial Tun Tavern, and the Marine Barracks of South Philly. It is a great place with a lot of former military men as clientele. We ran into John Corbett, one of the KSV authors ("West Dickens Ave."). Neil Kenny from New York City also stopped by. We stayed for a while and chatted with the Veterans, sort of like a reunion, yet with a lot of guys we did not know — it was fabulous. They treated us like we had been coming in the bar forever. We went back on Monday the 10th and it was unreal. The city police



Members in front of Cookie's Tavern in Philadelphia.



Ron and Lynn Shouse, Linda and Cliff Treese at Cookie's Tavern.

had closed down the street for the celebration at Cookie's on the Marine Corps birthday. We stayed for a while but we knew that we had to get to DC, so after saying our goodbyes to some new friends and Corbett, we were on the road again.



Ron Shouse, Cliff Treese, Bruce Geiger, Ed Ronan, Wes Caton, Col McEwen and others placing the KSV wreath at the Vietnam Memorial on Veterans Day.

We checked in at the Crown Plaza and got a cab over to Roslyn, VA where we met up with Bruce Geiger. Now how about this? An Army Captain coming to the Iwo Jima Memorial to wish the Marine Corps a Happy Birthday — am I the only one to see a little irony in this? We offered to tell everybody we saw that he was really in the Corps, but he said that would not be necessary.

Every year there is a **Delta to the DMZ Dance** where the ladies of Vietnam can come and reminisce about their Vietnam service and hang out with all of us superhero types. This year marked the 10th year of the Women's Memorial. I warn you now, do not make the mistake and call it the Nurse Statue. I was told in no uncertain terms that the nurses were not the only females who served in Vietnam. USO Ladies or Donut Dollies (a carry-over term from WWII and Korea) the entertainers, and our lady stewardesses called Freedom Birds, all did their part. The music from the 60's played until around midnight. The chorus to the song, "We Gotta Get Out of This Place," was repeated many times. We left the dance and went to the Vietnam Wall and the Korean War Memorial, which are spectacular at night. I could feel the cold on my neck and the hair stand up on my arms not unlike nights we all spent together in early 1968; it was really something you have to experience to understand.


United States Marine Corps

This is to certify that

Jimmy Wagner

Proprietor of

Cookie's Tavern, Philadelphia

"The Unofficial Tun Tavern Of The United States Marine Corps"

Has been designated an Honorary Member of

3rd Battalion 14th Marines, 4th Marine Division

In recognition for your Honor, Courage and Commitment to Corps and Country

Semper Fidelis

R. Mastriano
Sergeant Major, USMC

R. Watson Jr.
Lieutenant Colonel, USMC

Cookie's is certified as an official part of the USMC.

The next morning we went back to the Wall and spoke with a number of veterans. We left a few remembrances. We watched the ladies ceremonies and then went to shine the EGA at the Soldiers Statue. The Park Rangers will not let us shine it anymore because so many Marines have polished it and they are afraid the finish will soon be destroyed. I must admit that the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor are pretty smooth. It was just as well, Airport Security had taken my can of Brasso because they thought it was bomb-making paraphernalia; however, I did give it a quick dust off for everybody. We met up with Bruce Geiger and carried the Wreath for the KSV down to the Wall. On the way we ran into Wes Caton, Ed Ronan, and Colonel McEwen. That was total of 6 KSV. Ed Ronan stood with us for a while,



Cliff Treese, Col McEwen, Ed Ronan, and Ron Shouse

and the Colonel, Bruce, Wes, Cliff, and I marched down to the Wall and laid the wreath from the KSV honoring our fallen brothers. It really felt good to do something for the guys that did so much for us. The ceremony did not last long, yet no one wanted to leave. It was sort of like a family reunion — when it was over, no one wanted to say goodbye. It would be great if more KSV could make it. I will be there on Memorial Day for Rolling Thunder, in Dallas in July, and back to DC for Vets Day. You guys and gals make some plans and join us.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE CHESTY PULLER FAN CLUB!

God Bless America and a big OORAH,
Ron Shouse and Cliff Treese
B Btry 1/13

PUBLISHERS NOTE: I want to personally thank Bruce Geiger (the Army Captain), who every year at his own expense, takes the time to personally coordinate the KSV Wreath laying ceremony at the Vietnam Memorial. Another big thanks to all the KSV who attended this year, and the past years ceremonies honoring our fallen brothers.

Major Bruce A. Greene

by Parris Curry

In 1968, while stationed at Marine Barracks, NAS, Jacksonville, FL, we had a new Commanding Officer come aboard. I believe he had just returned from Vietnam. My post was Sgt-of-the-Guard on the day I met him. He introduced himself as Major Greene (Bruce A. Greene). I would soon come to know him both as a Commanding Officer and as someone who took a personal interest in the welfare and the issues of the men who served under him. This story unfolds in two parts:

Shortly after Major Greene's arrival, I was summoned to his office and this photo was taken as he presented my 2nd Good Conduct Award. Soon afterwards, I received orders for my second tour in Vietnam. I had only 12 days to checkout, move my family back to Pensacola and report to Camp Pendleton. While checking out, I was in Major Greene's office when he asked if I was having any issues to clear up and if there was anything that he could do to help.



Parris Curry receiving his second Good Conduct Award from Major Bruce A. Greene at Marine Barracks, NAS, Jacksonville, FL.

I did have one problem, but I could not see a solution in the short time that I had available. I had purchased a home entertainment system (TV, radio, 8-track, record changer in one cabinet) from Montgomery Wards some months prior. It had been taken for repairs twice and was again acting up. There was not a Wards store in Pensacola at that time so I was stuck. In addition, my complaints were being answered by, "We will repair it."

I explained this to Major Greene, and he only asked if I wanted to keep the unit. I did not and I explained that my payments were up-to-date. While I stood in front of his desk, he picked up the phone, called Montgomery Wards, got the store manager on the line. He then explained the situation and explained the fact that they were to pick up the unit, refund all my money and close the account. It seems

that the store manager took exception to this "request." Major Greene's voice remained calm as he explained that he was on the board or committee that determines which business establishments in the Jacksonville area are "Off-Limits" to all military personnel and if that unit were not removed by tomorrow morning, Montgomery Wards would find themselves on that list of such establishments.

I gained a new appreciation for what the initials "B.A." stood for. When I got home that evening, the home entertainment unit was gone, there was a check on the table, and my wife was a little confused and wanted an explanation. I don't know that Major Greene realized how much I meant it when I thanked him. The next event was when arriving in Vietnam and being assigned to 1st Bn., 26th Marines.

I never forgot what he did and have told the story several times. I also never expected to cross paths again. I have only recently joined organizations (Delta 1/26 Assn) and started contacting anyone. At the 2001 reunion in Chicago, I met Ernie Spencer. He and I sat in the hotel lobby talking about people, places, and things when Bruce Greene's name came up. I asked if it was Bruce A Greene, and sure enough it was and that he, too, was with the 26th. Ernie also relayed the sad event of Bruce losing his wife, which had occurred since I had met him. Recently, I have unsuccessfully tried several times to contact Bruce. If anyone knows his whereabouts, please forward this to me. I would simply like to say, "Thanks again."

Parris Curry
D Co 1/26

I ponder this day times long past where prideful
boys died seeking manhood

On hills named metric fantasies faded in drenching
clouds

Cries muted by tall grasses brothers torn by searing
metal

I love this life my family, friends yet know full well
that foolish dreams of glory are for naught

Ernie Spencer

Infantry Doggies

Sonny Gratzer

Some lands give tired Infantry doggies aches they never shake.
My own pair still water like eyes looking into wind
When they see large expanses of land waiting
To be tread by slogging foot soldiers.
Drive on, the man said.
And we did.
Tired.

Navy Seabees

CBMU 301 History

by Art Moore
Contributing Sam Messer, Raymond Cruz



Seabees from CBMU-301 showing off the Presidential Unit Citation streamer atop their unit flag.

In late December 1966, the detailing of personnel to the 31st Naval Construction Regiment in Port Hueneme, CA began. By March 31, 1967, the men were established as the United States Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 301. On April 7, 1967, the unit was commissioned at Port Hueneme with LCDR Henry Holmes receiving the colors as the unit's first commanding officer. On May 17, 1967, the advance party deployed by air to the combat zone in Vietnam. The battalion's rolling stock went by sea and arrived soon at the NSA Danang deepwater piers. The main body flew out from California shortly thereafter and arrived to establish its base camp at Dong Ha, Republic of South Vietnam. By June 24, 1967, CBMU-301 was up and running. Dong Ha Forward Combat Base, RVN, was located approximately eight miles south of the Demilitarized Zone, which was in Quang Tri Province in the I Corps Tactical Zone. The Dong Ha base was a major source of ammunition, fuel, and food for U.S. Marine outposts such as Con Thien, Khe Sanh, Camp Carroll and Gio Linh.

On February 28,1968, CBMU-301's base camp at Dong Ha was named Camp Spillman in honor of BU-1 Charles O. Spillman who died in the crash of a Marine CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter at Khe Sanh. The mission of the main body in Dong Ha was the maintenance and operation of the 3,700 foot AM-2 aluminum runway. CBMU-301 was also tasked with maintenance and support, U. S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy cantonments, maintenance of over 17 miles of Combat Base roads, maintenance of the new and old LCU ramps, maintenance of base electrical distribution and support and maintenance of the Dong Ha Combat Base Hospital.

On June 3, 1968, CDR W.E. Burdick relieved LCDR Holmes as C/O of CBMU-301. During CDR Burdick's command, the base camp was moved 8 miles south to the Combat Base in Quang Tri. This camp was named in honor of SW2 Edward C. Adams who died from North Vietnamese Army artillery fire at the Khe Sanh Combat Base on April 16,1968.

On May 22, 1969 CDR Jim Groff relieved CDR Burdick as Commanding Officer. On February 4, 1970, CBMU-301 again relocated its base camp. Under CDR Groff, the main operation was moved south to Chu Lai (60 miles south of Danang on the South China Sea) to fit the needs of the U.S. Marines and other units they were supporting. This camp was named Camp Wall in honor of CBMU-301's former Executive Officer who died in the U.S. after completion of his tour.

In addition to the original main body at Dong Ha and Quang Tri, CBMU-301 had four details as of May 1969.

- *Detail Alpha* was located at An Hoa, approximately 22 miles south of Danang. The primary mission of Detail Alpha was the maintenance of the 3,500-foot M8-A-1 matting airstrip. Secondary to this is the maintenance support of Marine Corps and Naval shore units based there. This support encompassed maintenance of base electrical distribution system and generators and maintenance of base roads. Detail Alpha also performed selected new construction projects.

- *Detail Bravo* was located at Khe Sanh, approximately 30 miles southwest of Dong Ha. The primary mission of Detail Bravo was the maintenance of the 3,895-foot airstrip. The secondary mission was the maintenance support for the U. S. Marine Corps and Naval Shore Units on the Khe Sanh combat base. On the morning of January 21, 1968, NVA forces launched an all out attack, and the siege of Khe Sanh began. Detail Bravo endured the 77 day siege while carrying out their Seabee mission to this remote, now famous, battle area.

Awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for their

support of the 26th Marine Regiment detail Bravo during the 2-month siege of Khe Sanh.

- *Detail Charlie* was located at Cua Viet, approximately 9 miles northeast of Dong Ha and 4 miles south of the DMZ. Cua Viet was at the mouth of the Song Giang River (Dong Ha River) and the South China Sea and was a major supply station for Dong Ha. The primary mission of Detail Charlie was to maintain the landing craft ramp with construction and maintenance for Naval Units there.

- *Detail Delta* was located at Quang Tri, approximately 8 miles southwest of Dong Ha and 4 miles north of Quang Tri City. The primary mission of Detail Delta was the maintenance of the 3,700-foot airstrip. The mission also included the maintenance support Detail for the U. S. Marine Corps and Naval Shore Units based there. Numerous new construction projects were assigned and completed.

The main body of CBMU-301 was moved from Dong Ha to the Quang Tri Combat Base in late 1968.

Detail Bravo Story

From 21 January to 6 April 1968, Khe Sanh was the hottest action spot in Vietnam. A key role in support of this outpost was filled by Seabee Detail Bravo, a detail from its main body CBMU-301 stationed at Dong Ha— the only Seabee unit to have endured the Siege of Khe Sanh. It was important to the allied forces because it served to block enemy infiltration down Route 9. Six thousand Marines, a few hundred South Vietnamese troops, and fifty Seabees defended it. In addition to Detail Bravo, fifteen Seabees from MCB-10 built bunkers and served on the front line with Marines and Special Forces.



Seabees from CBMU-301, Delta and Bravo: Sam Messer, Ensign Kux (OIC of Seabees at Khe Sanh), and Jerel Wenger

On July 12, 1967, a fifteen-man crew led by LTJG Martin J. Kux convoyed equipment, which included three dump trucks, a road grader, a pickup, a TD-9 bulldozer, two water buffalos, and a cherry picker crane. The first month's project was to build shops, offices, and living quarters and large hardback repair shops for the rolling stock. After completing camp preparations, the Seabees turned to the main job of rebuilding and maintaining the airstrip. This was to be no easy task as the monsoon rains began the month of August. Rains that sometimes measured 21 inches in one day. They had to increase CBMU-301 personnel to seventy-eight men. Six mechanics, twenty steel workers, ten builders, ten electricians, and thirty equipment operators. We also had two engineers and thirty men on loan from NSA, Danang.



Khe Sanh runway

Soil density test revealed the need for a more compact base under the current runway matting. The leading petty officer, E04 Browne, estimated the runway should be able to withstand a pressure of 50,000 pounds per square inch in order to support the AM-2 aluminum matting. The previous rock base had sunk into the soft semi-lateritic soil, causing dangerous depressions. This problem continued as the depressions appeared again in March-April, despite the precautions that were taken to solidify the airstrip base.

The airstrip was completely torn down and only helicopters and fixed wing Caribou transports could use the airstrip. For three months Seabees worked 12-hour shifts, 24 hours a day, through the monsoon rains to level and lay an eight-inch foundation of rock to support the new matting. Near the end of the project, Seabees were laying as much as 300-400 feet of matting per shift.

From December to January, the airstrip was fully operational, allowing the larger transports, C-123's and C-130's to land and service the base. As the hazards increased, the C-130's airdropped their cargo and only helicopters and the smaller C-123 planes used the 3,900-foot runway. The Seabees turned their efforts to maintenance and other minor construction jobs. Members of CBMU-301 actually did more construction than originally planned. As enemy action



BUH-2 Andrew Severin, CBMU-301-D, at entrance to underground bunker, Khe Sanh.



CBMU-301-B Seabees in underground bunker, Khe Sanh: John Reek, Andrew Severin, Garry Kelley, Pete Ruiz, Ron Gornick, Larry Wortman

increased, they built three large underground bunkers covered by eight feet of dirt, to protect base personnel. Heads, showers, and hardback huts were the first to be built. Seabees continued to maintain them until increased enemy action leveled the above ground structures. The existing post office and three mess halls were completely destroyed.

During one of the attacks, a refrigerator containing much need drugs at Charlie Med receiving station broke down. Disregarding their own safety, Electricians CE-ls Harold B.Cann and Michael T. Roback left their bunker and repaired it, saving the vital medicine. No enemy shell penetrated their underground structures, but seven Seabees were recommended for Purple Hearts.

Marines continued to fight back. Jets and B-52's pounded the enemy positions, within 1,000-2,000 meters of the base, hurling shrapnel into the Marine positions. The enemy was determined to dig their way into the base and had to be constantly dug out of their moving trenches. Seabees were forced to work all day and man fighting positions at night — sleep was a luxury.

Seabees had four primary missions; the first and foremost was to maintain the airstrip. Their second primary mission was to construct life-saving bunkers for the Khe Sanh defenders and a safe facility to treat the many wounded. The third and fourth missions were to keep the electrical system that controlled all base operations and communication, and build fighting positions for the beleaguered Marines.

Keeping the runway operational was a major task; it seemed to resist all efforts to remain open. It drew enemy fire like a beacon, exposed to the unfriendly mountains, like it was inviting it's own destruction from round after round of enemy artillery and mortar fire. Gaping holes were torn into the aluminum skin each day. Against impossible odds, the Seabees kept the runway open during the siege. "We brought out only enough men to repair the damage," LTJG Kux explained. They replaced matting only if it was in the middle of the runway. The longest it was ever not in operation was 24 hours.



A C-130 that didn't survive the trip.



LTJG Kux, OIC of Detail Delta, examines damage from a delayed action VC rocket.

During the 77-day Siege, they officially recorded 10,000 rounds hitting the tiny base. It was very perilous to remain in the open for even a short period of time, especially for the equipment operators and runway workers, who were exposed more than the others. During the Siege, most of the work performed by



Bunkers along the runway

the Seabees was done during the early morning hours while the base was encased in a heavy fog.

When they had repaired the east end of the runway, the 35-man crew, moved to the west end. Enemy rounds followed them up the runway while they made repairs. Drivers of heavy equipment would lie on the floorboard to avoid being wounded, while watching for men running for the trench that ran parallel with the runway. Running men were always a sign that an attack was in progress, since the noise of the heavy equipment drowned out the incoming rounds.

Seabees constructed the main operations bunker for the base commander Brig. Gen. C.W. Hoffman, who commanded Task Force Hotel, as well as the two bunkers that housed Charlie Med. When helicopter pilots, newsmen and war correspondents had



to stay overnight, they were safely housed in bunkers with members of CBMU-301, where they would often share each other's rations. Although it was not their mission, Seabees took over the job of maintaining the base electrical systems. They rigged the 20KW and 30KW base generators to their 15KW generator, which enabled them to immediately switch over if one became disabled from incoming artillery.

Since so much excavating was required to move all operations underground, the Tractor Front-end loader became the most valuable piece of equipment. Since all this valuable equipment had to remain above ground, Seabees designed and constructed special protection made from 55 Gallon drums filled with earth.

When fresh troops arrived, the Siege finally lifted, and the hills surrounding the base were secured. The enemy ground troops retreated but the artillery attacks continued. Detail Bravo performed magnificently during those early days, and their dedicated efforts saved many lives. Those efforts defeated the enemy's main plan to close the airstrip and deny the defenders the supplies to hold the Khe Sanh Combat Base.



Lewis "Sam" Messer about 30 or 40 days into the Siege.

Sam Messer, a Seabee serving with CBMU-301 Det B, at the Khe Sanh Combat Base wrote the following letter to his parents, which appeared in their local paper titled, "I'd Like To Be Hunting."

"Jan 28th. Yesterday we were hit by many Mortars and Rockets. I was lucky to be 30 feet away from the first one that hit. I was fortunate to hear it coming and just made it to my hole. I cannot say it did not scare me. I came out with a little bum after a flare from the exploding ammo dump landed in my fighting hole. "I am fine and unharmed." We are not out of this yet but we are ready for anything the enemy throws at us.

"Feb 4th. I am still safe, and I thank the Lord for that blessing. I wish I were home hunting rabbits or squirrels. I should be leaving Khe Sanh in two months, and should be home in June. Maybe in a few days I will be out of this war and be able to forget it ever happened. I know I cannot ever completely forget it, especially my buddies whom I have seen die here. I will always look back and wonder if it was all worth it, I really hope it was.

"Tell Lynn to get those ball gloves out and oil them up. I am going to give him a real warm up. Tell Robert to save all his money because I am going to win it from him when I beat him at pool. Mom & Dad, maybe we won't have to write letters soon and get to sit down and have a nice talk. Right now all our equipment is either broke or blown up. We are on a 2 meals a day food ration, and one quart of water per man. We are low on C-Rations and the water pumps we built do not bring enough water from the river. I love and miss you both very much."

Your loving Son, Sam

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CDR George E. Krauter relieved CDR Groff on April 24, 1970 in Chu Lai and was last Commanding Officer of CBMU-301.

An advance party from Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301 departed the Republic of South Vietnam for Port Hueneme, CA on July 1, 1970.

The sister assumed the remaining duties of CBMU-301 battalion, CBMU-302 that was based at an unnamed base camp in Cam Ranh Bay, RVN. Some of the CBMU-301 crew elected to stay and were merged into CBMU-302. These men continued work in turning over facilities to the Vietnamese Navy so they could continue the fight. CDR George Krauter brought the unit back to Port Hueneme, CA for decommissioning and by October 1970, all CBMU-301 operations ceased. CAN DO!

The Khe Sanh Combat Base

by Gary W. Foster
November 2000, Muscatine, Iowa

"Why us?"
"Because we're here."

– Anonymous, from the Battle of Rorke's Drift

In late 1999, I was informed of a business opportunity that involved the re-construction of Highway No. 9 in Quang Tri Province. I was required to visit the highway prior to preparation of the proposal. The site visit entailed flying from the United States to Hanoi, driving south to Dong Ha on Highway No. 1, and then along Highway No. 9 to Laos at Lao Bao. I remembered from reading Ronald Spector's Book "After Tet" a few years ago that Highway No. 9 passed near the Khe Sanh Combat Base. I retrieved Spector's book to re-read it prior to my leaving the USA so as to refresh my brief understanding about the Siege and the battles for and around Hills 861, 950, 881N, 881S, and others. I reviewed several maps of the area and I found the general location of the combat base and saw it was located not too far north of Highway No. 9. On one map, with reference to Khe Sanh, I read "airstrip unusable."

Although I am not a former Marine or a veteran of the Vietnam War, I do recall in 1968 the reporting of the intense battles in and around Khe Sanh. A friend of mine named Mike Webb flew CH-53s into Khe Sanh from either Danang or Marble Mountain (I can't remember which) and told me many stories of his combat flying experience. So I was aware of Khe Sanh at that time but not of any of its geographic particulars. I did not know much about the hill battles and I had only a vague understanding, at best, of the significance of Highway No. 9, the location and purpose of Camp Carroll and the Rockpile, the fierce fighting west of Cam Lo, and the various LZs that were established later. I, of course, remembered the many comparisons with Dien Bien Phu, but then, at that time, I didn't know exactly where Dien Bien Phu was either.

Looking back, if there was any engagement or characteristic of the war that evokes Vietnam — akin to Gettysburg in relation to the Civil War — in my mind, it is Khe Sanh. Being somewhat interested in military history, I looked forward to visiting the highway. If time permitted, possibly I could visit the site of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. I knew nothing about the physical geography of the base and I had no idea what to expect or what I might see once there. I had little time to prepare for my first visit to Khe Sanh, so I went there not knowing many of the details except what I had read in Spector's book, which I took along with me for reference. My journey to Khe Sanh and the continuous sense of irony I was to experience in Vietnam began in Hanoi.

Hanoi itself is an interesting city. There are few cars, but there seem to be millions of bicycles and motorbikes everywhere. The motorbike has become the primary form of transportation in the city. Entire families ride a single motorbike with each member strategically placed on the seat. Often, in the case of a scooter, one sees a young child standing on the running board in front of the driver with his or her hands on the handles. Hanoi is an extremely quiet place at 5:00am. The streets are dimly lit and the boulevards are free of all traffic. Hanoi is very pleasant at this time of morning, if one such as myself is an early riser and likes to walk. But the population of Hanoi also rises early and by 6:00am, the city is alive with the bustle of its inhabitants and urgent business of the day. By 7:00am, the streets are packed as they will be for the rest of the day, regardless of the day of week. Pedestrians crossing the

streets are at risk.

I left Hanoi by car on March 29, 2000 and began the trek south. I departed the hotel at 11:00am and within the next hour, I was outside the metropolis area driving down Highway No. 1, which eventually parallels the coast. I had received instructions from the concierge at the hotel as to the best way to proceed from the hotel to Highway No. 1. I didn't get lost, but I was never sure of where I was and there were no directional road signs to reassure me. At least, if there were, I never saw them. Driving south, I had remembered that a key route in Vietnam during the war was Highway No. 1 but that was south, not north, of the DMZ. I felt the irony of being on the same highway but in "North," not "South," Vietnam. The first things that struck me were the traffic and the noise. The traffic was horrendous due to the narrowness and overuse of the highway. But what amazed me the most is that everyone and everything uses the highway as if it were constructed for purposes other than transportation. The highway was more or less a workbench, a playground, a drying platform for rice, a cattle (buffalo) trail, a workshop, and a resting place with many people sitting patiently on their haunches in typical Vietnamese fashion. More importantly, in either direction, all traffic, all vehicles regardless of type and means of propulsion, and quite a few pedestrians use the exact middle of the highway. Trucks, cars, motorbikes, bicycles, ox carts, tractors, every imaginable vehicle is in the very middle of the road. If the train, which parallels the highway, could use the highway, I felt certain it would be in the middle too. Everyone is expert at playing "Chicken." Everyone, that is, except me. I drove through the towns of Ha Nam, Ninh Binh (pronounced Ning Bing), and Thanh Hoa — finally arriving at Vinh City in the south of Nghe An Province at around 7:00pm. Anyone who has been in the tropics knows that dusk falls quickly. It was dark and Vinh City, which was leveled by B-52s during the war but was re-built, seemed to me, in the darkness, to be a long, very narrow city. It was dimly lit, as was Hanoi in the early morning hours.



The countryside through which Highway No. 1 passes is flat. It is basically a flood plain and is virtually covered with rice fields with very narrow connecting paths and dikes. The typical Vietnamese home along the highway is tall, long, and very narrow. Highway No.1 is under construction over its entire length and I marveled at the mix of manual labor and heavy machinery. Just to the west of the highway lie the mountains, which are dramatic and rise abruptly from the flat lands. It does not take long to figure out that the majority of the population inhabits the land near Highway No.1 and that the coastal area is the most heavily populated.

The next day, I departed Vinh City and continued to drive south through Ha Tinh and Dong Hoi. Just south of Dong Hoi and Vinh Linh, another smaller town that hardly exists now due to the B-52 strikes, is the 17th parallel and the still heavily cratered DMZ. I stopped at the DMZ and observed the memorial that has been erected there by the Vietnamese government. For me, while gazing around the DMZ area, the irony just continued. Finally arriving at Dong Ha that evening, I stayed in a government-owned hotel and relaxed with a few cold Halida beers. The next morning I would visit Highway No. 9 and, as I was now convinced, Khe Sanh.

On March 31, 2000, I left Dong Ha at 6:00am and drove west on Highway No. 9 towards Laos through patches of dense fog. The traffic once outside Dong Ha, was much less than the traffic at any point on Highway No. 1. Although I could not see the mountain ranges until sometime later that morning, I knew I was climbing merely by the pressure change in my ears. I passed many concrete road

markers painted in red and white giving destinations to various towns and again it was ironic that the distance remaining to Khe Sanh was specifically mentioned on many of the markers. I did not know there was a village called Khe Sanh. I thought it was just the name of the base. For me, reading about a place I seldom mention and then later using that place name in casual conversation produced a strange feeling. Other than reading about Khe Sanh in Spector's book; I have rarely used the two words, within any authoritative context during a conversation. Yet by the end of the day and by the end of my visit to Vietnam, I had mentioned Khe Sanh in conversations so many times, I could just as easily have been talking casually about Sacramento, Toledo, El Paso, or Charleston. And now before my eyes were signs matter-of-factly telling me how far I had yet to drive to a place I had only read about and a place that had been the center of so much sadness in years passed. I felt like Marlow traveling up the Congo River in search of the mysterious, if not nefarious, Mr. Kurtz in Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness." I was being inexorably drawn into a place from which I would never escape. I mused at the continuing irony I sensed because written on the reverse side of the same road signs that showed distances to Khe Sanh, was the corresponding distance back to Dong Ha. I could turn around at any time, a luxury very few Americans possessed thirty years ago. Not that they necessarily drove Highway 9, of course. I didn't turn the vehicle around.

I continued along the road. I saw road maintenance crews at work and in one instance I stopped to talk with them. I met Mr. Nguyen (everyone it seems is named Nguyen), the supervisor. He did not speak English but when I indicated my interest in what his people were doing, he showed me that they were trying to improve the drainage by cutting ditches alongside the road. They all rode to the worksite each day by bicycle. I stopped many other times to review the road and bridges and at one point just east of the intersection of Route 9 and Route 14, I stopped to look at the Rao Quan River churning white with rapids through various small cataracts. The fog had lifted considerably revealing the terrain. Mountains, peaks and valleys, with broad vistas everywhere. Gone were the ubiquitous rice paddies common along the coastal plains; all now replaced by heavy forest and ground foliage.

Finally at 9:30am, I rounded a curve on top of a ridgeline and arrived at Khe Sanh village. I inquired as to the location of the combat base and was escorted to the base by a Vietnamese on a motorbike, arriving there at about 10:00am. I parked the vehicle next to the building posing as a museum. I was struck by the eerie silence and emptiness, lack of vegetation on the adjacent vacant area that I surmised was the runway, and the amount of heavy erosion around the relatively denuded area. Regardless of how empty and deserted the area was I knew I was standing at a place forever fixed in history and in United States Marine Corps lore. The silence and open space enhanced my curiosity and beckoned me to explore. The weather was sultry and still. There was no breeze. The morning fog continued to lift but a haze persisted over the area masking the features of the surrounding hills. The sky was opaque. I examined the four monuments there: a twisted pro-



Three of the four monuments near the museum building.

peller, a howitzer full of the effects of shrapnel, the carcass of a tank, and a concrete spire covered with Vietnamese writing. Walking along the runway in what I thought was a northerly direction (later confirmed to be westerly), I spotted a half-buried hand grenade and wondered how many more were around. Souvenir hawkers followed me everywhere. I continued to the western end of the runway pondering the red soil, a clay technically termed "laterite" which I knew would be dusty when dry and very slippery when wet. It was dusty that day. I noticed that the runway was heavily eroded, and all metal planking had long since vanished. At about 50 feet intervals, small evenly cut ditches were excavated into the soil transversely to the longitudinal axis of the runway. I thought this must be for drainage; that small culverts, now gone, had been placed beneath the metal planking (I don't recall the correct terminology for this planking material). At the end of the runway, which seemed to have been cut into the side of a slope, there were many paths leading away from the runway. I also noticed a hut at the end of the runway. I climbed a small hillock, and using Spector's book, I spotted what I believed, and later confirmed to be, Hills 950 and 1015 — yet, due to the heavy haze I could not see details of the hillsides, only their shaded profiles. I never did see Hills 861 or 881 North or South on that initial visit.

I remained at the base for about 2 hours trying to imagine what it must have been like to experience the Siege and incoming NVA rockets and artillery, but I knew full well my imagination would fall short of the actuality. It was outside my margin of comprehension. When the souvenir hawkers finally left me alone (often I had to tell them to go away, especially one persistent grubby snaggle-toothed guy who chattered endlessly), I sat down on the red dusty ground probably near some bunker evidenced by torn or shredded remnants of plastic sandbag material. I reflected on where I was. The silence was pervasive. There was not even a whisper of a breeze. Looking up at the mute hills, I listened for any sound but there were none, just the sound of my own breathing. At that point in time I did not know how many Americans died there or how many were wounded, or if I did know, could not recollect it. I knew that several thousand Marines were deployed at Khe Sanh, but I did not know the full strength of the garrison. I was cognizant, however, that wherever I walked, perhaps where I was now sitting, in all likelihood, some unimaginable human pain, suffering, and tragedy had unfolded there years before. Although infinitely more tranquil, I was now in the same crucible. I soon realized, and I have mentioned this to many people, there is no monument to the Marines who were there. Nothing. Just red clay or dust depending on the time of year. In time the area will be reclaimed by nature and all remnants of any occupation, all evidence of any American activity, any landmark marking the bravery and suffering of the Marines will be gone. The only other times I could think of where a similar fate had befallen Americans (and I am sure there are many others) is Bastogne and the Alamo. I have been to both places. Monuments do exist there. Even in France where the Germans were defeated in WWI and WWII there are also some monuments to the Germans, but admittedly not many.

When one enters the Alamo, one sees a sign requesting silence in honor of those who gave their lives in March of 1836. In my mind, the mere sight of the Alamo compels me to be silent. The aura of the bravery there is overwhelming. For me now at Khe Sanh, emotionally I was equally moved. The site elicited my own silence in respect for those who served there.



The author inspecting souvenirs.

I left the base having only signed my name in the guest book in the museum. I did not know what message I could leave behind that would be salient to my being there or pertinent to the memory of the Marines who fought and died there or to the historical perspective or significance of the location.

My interest in the base, however, was now piqued. I wanted to learn more

about the combat base and the history there. I did not know if my proposal to the government would be successful, and whether I would return to Khe Sanh or Vietnam. As I began to reflect on what I had seen, I became intrigued by the realization that while I had been physically on the base area, I did not know exactly where I was. When I returned to the States, I researched the events of Khe Sanh on the Internet and found the Khe Sanh Veterans website. I have left a few messages. Through the website I came across the names of Chaplain Ray Stubbe, who I contacted, and Dennis Mannion (Kilo 3/26) who contacted me as a result of a message I left in the website's guest book. I have developed friendships with both individuals.

Through my conversations with Ray Stubbe and Dennis Mannion, who last summer returned to Vietnam, Khe Sanh, and Hill 861 for the first time since 1968, I began to question what I had seen. What I found troubling and what began to gnaw at me were aspects of the geography and other characteristics of the base that I came to suspect were not quite right, at least not as far as they would have been remembered or represented by known landmark references that have vanished long ago.

I began to collect information as to the general layout of the base to solve some riddles that were developing in my mind. I tried to figure out exactly where the little museum building is located relative to known locations on the base. Was it located near the north side, south side, east, west, in the middle, near the end, or on the left or right side of the base? Where was it exactly? Another question I had was what happened to all the debris? What became of the US Air Force C-130s that crashed? There is absolutely no debris present that would indicate a C-130 had ever been there. There is no wreckage debris of any kind at all, anywhere. Were the three military pieces that are positioned on concrete platforms originally from the base or were they imported? While I now believe that the howitzer and tank hull were imported — some say not, that they were buried and later recovered by salvage hunters. I think the twisted propeller probably came from one of the C-130s that crashed or were destroyed at the base. Interesting points and questions.

But there were two questions that increasingly bothered me and which cast a shadow over my understanding of the geography of the combat base: 1) How was it that the runway had become so eroded when, working from a chronology of events at Khe Sanh, the runway had been shut down for major repairs for several months and resurfaced with crushed rock and stone prior to the siege? And where was the crushed rock anyway? I mean, was the entire runway picked over for crushed rock? Didn't seem likely. Who would take it and why? There is a quarry not far away which would have yielded the same quantity of rock and much more easily. 2) Why was the (western) end of the runway or turn-around area cut and notched into the side of a hill? The runway at this point is about 30 to 40 feet below the surrounding small hill, which descends steeply and directly to the longitudinal edge of the runway. This didn't make sense either. Photographs I have seen of Khe Sanh and discussions I came to have with Ray Stubbe and Dennis Mannion did not indicate the runway was notched into the hillside.

I read Ray Stubbe and John Prado's book "Valley of Decision: The Siege of Khe Sanh," and Robert Pisor's book "The End of The Line: The Siege of Khe Sanh." Both of these books provided excellent information. The accounts, history, and details in each book were riveting. I also read Eric Hammel's book "Khe Sanh: Siege in The Clouds" with its many references to Dennis Mannion and Michael Ewing's book "Khe Sanh"; and "Semper Fi Vietnam" by Edward Murphy. I re-read Michael Herr's book "Dispatches," which I had forgotten contained a long chapter and narrative about Khe Sanh and a USMC nicknamed "Day Tripper" and which also contains a short account of the author's encounter on the road with some American named Stubbe. I visited the library and read the 1968 *Newsweek* magazine report entitled "The Agony of Khe Sanh." I was not able to find specific information on the runway. From the magazine photographs I had seen, I could not discern any geographic relief (major changes in elevation) around the runway area. Although some maps show the orientation of the runway differently, most of the information I collected, which appeared reliable, showed the general direction of the runway to be east/west. Later I was to confirm this orientation by the mere numbering of the Khe Sanh runway by the US Air Force. Every runway consists, in fact, of two runways in opposite directions. Each is designated by compass headings to the nearest 10 degrees with each direction being separated by 180 degrees.

The USMC Khe Sanh runways were designated 28 and 10 which means if one were landing on runway 28 (280 degrees), he would be landing in a westerly direction, and if on runway 10 (100 degrees) in an easterly direction. Runway 28 and 10 are separated by 180 degrees, which is correct.

Ray Stubbe sent me an aerial photograph of the base taken in January 1967. I had it digitized and enlarged. I could still not determine exactly where I was and whether the western end of the runway was cut into the hillside.

In late August 2000, I learned my proposal for the Highway No. 9 project was successful and I was to return to Vietnam to negotiate the contract with the government. I was determined to visit the combat base again and this time I would be armed with maps, the aerial photograph provided by Ray Stubbe, and some observations made by Dennis Mannion as a result of his pilgrimage last summer.

Then, just prior to my departure, Ray informed me that a second runway had been built after the USMC vacated the site and that the base had also eventually served the NVA, very probably with placement of SAM missiles. This piece of information influenced my thinking and as a result I developed the theory that the red clay runway near where the museum is standing is not the original Khe Sanh USMC runway. Although this discovery would not be such a revelation and could be easily confirmed by hovering in a helicopter several thousand feet over the site, for the unsuspecting visitor or Vet who would not have access to a helicopter, this fact isn't so immediately or readily deduced from the ground. It would be a shame for anyone, especially a vet, to travel all the way to Khe Sanh from the USA and be misled into thinking that the red clay runway was the original USMC runway. What is the point of returning to a geographical place in one's own history without actually standing in the exact location he or she had occupied years before? Without question, any vet returning would try to find his old bunker, machine gun location, perimeter station, where he was wounded, or where a fellow Marine had died. If a Vet used the red clay runway as an initial reference point to locate his old position and, if this was not the real USMC runway, he would not have correctly identified his old position. Also, after 32 years and changes in the vegetation and geography, one could be easily confused or disoriented about geographic points on the combat base as may be recollected and as they now exist. When Dennis Mannion returned to Khe Sanh and Hill 861, he exclaimed, *"everything has changed."* To many non-veterans such as myself, reaching the wrong conclusion would be easy because we would have no frame of reference. During this second visit I would set out to prove my theory, but since a helicopter rents for $1,000 per hour, my efforts would be conducted on foot.

Later in early October, I returned to Khe Sanh from Hanoi via the exact same Highway No. 1 south to Dong Ha. The traffic congestion was exactly the same as before. Aside from flying, the site can only be reached by driving west on Highway 9 (or QL 9 in the Vietnamese designation) from Dong Ha. Leaving Dong Ha, the traffic lessens and one passes very quickly through Cam Lo and quiet countryside and across a unique twisting bridge called Cau (for bridge) Dau Mau. While Camp Carroll is obscured, The Rockpile is clearly visible. At about Kilometer 50, one passes the intersection of Highway 14 with Highway 9, which is marked most notably by an impressive and recently constructed, cable-stayed bridge over the Rao Quan River. Then, further along Highway 9, at an acute and very dangerous switchback bend, one crosses another bridge over the Rao Quan River. This area posed a major bottleneck and serious threat to any vehicular traffic in 67/68. At about kilometer 58, one enters Hoang Hoa or Khe Sanh Village. Just inside the town, one turns right onto a very rocky road that proceeds generally north and west. There are signs that point the way to the "Vestiges of the Tacon Base" but they aren't very noticeable. Ta



The newly constructed cable-stayed bridge across the Rao Quan River and the intersection of Highways 9 and 14.

Cong (a different spelling) evidently is a name of a village that existed very near the combat base. About 4 kilometers or so along this rocky road there is a sign, partially obscured, that points to the right along another, this time, dirt road. The dirt road (really more of a path) is narrow and twists through the foliage and overhead canopy. Not too far along the dirt road, one catches the first glimpse of the base through the trees and coffee plants: the corner of a small building painted a dirty, faded yellow that is the museum and guest center and the hull of a tank with its turret and barrel still attached. Almost immediately after that first sighting, driving a bit further, one sees clearly the other monuments: the concrete column attesting to the heroics of the NVA, the propeller, and the 155mm howitzer which the Vietnamese at the museum claimed to be a 175. Immediately behind the museum, one can clearly see the profile of Hills 950 and 1015, which are the tallest hills in the area.

The museum area is located in a flat, relatively sparsely vegetated area. The small museum sits on the ground — there is no pavement. The building is rectangular in shape with a main room that is the museum itself, and a much smaller cramped adjoining room that serves as a refreshment area. There is only one door and two or three windows. Just behind the museum are the remains of the previously discussed red clay runway that points west in one direction and to the east more or less towards Highway 9 in the other. The area around the museum and the runway itself are heavily eroded. The juxtaposition of the museum and the runway could lead someone who was there years ago to believe that he or she is standing on the apron area of the USMC runway where C-130s and other aircraft parked.

The weather during this visit was balmy with clear blue skies and a soft wind that abated the high humidity. There was no fog but during the early morning, the vegetation was heavy with dew. It had rained in the area but on the base itself, it was quite dry and very dusty. The plateau on which the base is located and the surrounding valleys and hills were serene. The base was as quiet as I had remembered it to be several months earlier and seemed now to be even quieter, and in some sense, even more surreal. The sun was brilliant and the surrounding hills stood out in dramatic detail, seeming close enough to touch. The air was so clear that the swaying of the palm trees in the breeze on the distant hills could be clearly seen. The countryside was at least ten shades of deep green. Hills 950 and 1015 stood out in vivid detail, their majestic presence dominating the area. In striking contrast to the cerulean sky, they were bathed in emerald, so verdant was the landscape.

Aside from the people tending coffee plants, the entire area is virtually uninhabited. I saw only two huts with a small family in each. Knowing there is nothing conspicuously visible that would lead a person to know exactly where he or she is relative to what was established there in the 60s, I was still uncertain of my location during this second trip. Based on my research, I thought if I could locate it, there was possibly one feature from which other reference points could be identified — the remains of the destroyed ammunition dump which showed on the map to be on the south or right side of the runway when facing east. That had to be one landmark that should have withstood time and very possibly erosion. Surely I could find that. Taking the maps and the enlarged aerial photograph of the base with me, I walked easterly along the south edge of the red clay runway looking for the ammunition dump or remnants thereof. It had to be to my right if the maps were to be believed, and there was nothing to suggest the maps were incorrect. I found nothing where the ammunition dump would have been if the red clay runway was assumed to be the USMC runway and correctly positioned. I was puzzled but I continued walking east.

I crossed fence lines and I walked through rows of coffee plants to where I thought the aircraft eastern turn-around area was located. Walking any further I would have begun a steep descent, so I knew the runway probably did not extend much beyond this point. There is an area where a turn-around could have been established, but I could not find any evidence of a turn-around area, much less the ammunition dump. I did notice an area forward and to my left as I faced further east that seemed a more likely place for the turn-around, but this would have created a kink in the runway or placed the runway in an orientation at odds with the maps I was using. The area I was looking at some distance away seemed strange. Something remained amiss.

I walked in the direction of that area but turned back thinking I was being fooled. From this location, as I looked back towards the museum now hidden

from view by vegetation, I could see Hill 861 perfectly for the first time, and I reflected on Dennis Mannion's visit to the hill last summer and his experiences on that same hill 30 years earlier. When Dennis arrived in Vietnam in 67/68 he had already heard about Hill 861. Ironically, within a few days of his arrival, he found himself atop Hill 861, where he and his comrades spent several months during the Siege. As it happened, one day within 20 minutes after being notified *"to pack my shit,"* he was airlifted off Hill 861 for, I believe, an assaultof Hill 881N, vividly recounted in Murphy's and Ewing's books. Dennis never returned to Hill 861 until last summer.



Unexploded artillery shells at the bottom of the ammo dump.

I began to walk back towards the museum on the opposite side of the red clay runway, disconsolate that I could not verify any geographic point. I wiped the sweat from my face with my shirtsleeve because as I looked down at my papers and maps, the sweat that rolled off my face made them soggy and blurred as my notes were made in ink. After some distance I noticed a fully exposed artillery shell lying on the ground. I kneeled beside it and examined it without touching it. It was rusted dark brown and I noticed the nose was blunted, so I surmised the firing pin was missing, that the shell had never been armed. Further on, I noticed two more shells separated by about 18 inches lying fully exposed in the clay. They were the same size as the one I had previously spotted and I thought they were 105s. I wondered whether these could be from the exploded ammunition dump. I looked around, knowing now exactly what to look for, and I began spotting unexploded 105 and because of their larger diameter and size, 155mm shells. Donovan Webster reminded me of a book I recently read entitled "Aftermath: Remnants of War." In his book, Webster writes about the lasting effects of warfare on the ecology, that a new microenvironment is created by the impacts of war. Although he makes mention of Khe Sanh, what I was now witnessing on the ground before me called to my mind the chapter where he discussed the millions of artillery shells from World War I that litter eastern France.



The author surveying the ammo dump crater with Hills 950 and 105 in the background.

Ahead and to my right, I spotted a large depression and around the rim were various artillery and mortar shells, and something that I supposed was some sort of special hand or rifle-propelled grenade that was painted light blue. I walked into the depression, which is about 10 to 15 feet deep, and I found about 25 more unexploded artillery shells. I looked around from where I was standing in the crater and I spotted shells everywhere leading me to believe I was standing in the crater of the ammunition dump that incurred a direct hit. Although I had learned that the base was dismantled and demolished prior to the end of the war and that ordnance had been placed in excavations around the combat base and destroyed by dynamite, I felt certain I had located the ammunition dump that had been hit during the siege. I was satisfied that I was standing at the very historical core of the

Khe Sanh Combat Base. The crater is about 100 feet in diameter. With this landmark confirmed in my mind, I quickly realized that the red clay runway I originally thought was the USMC runway was an imposter, because the ammunition dump was on the wrong side of the red clay runway. This must have been the second runway to which Ray Stubbe had referred. Standing in the crater facing west, the USMC runway had to be to my right (north) because the maps showed the ammunition dump to be on the left (south) side of the runway. I took a bearing on the longitudinal axis of the imposter runway and turned 90 degrees toward Hills 950 and 1015 (more or less north) and walked in that direction through elephant grass and high foliage. Within 100 meters walking through the thick vegetation, I emerged into a large rectangular clearing and instead of the ground being covered in red clay soil, it was covered with crushed and compacted gray stone. This had to be the surface of the USMC runway or at least the subsurface over which the metal strips were placed because this gray rock was in stark contrast with the geology of the immediate area, which is basically lateritic clay. There is no geologic basis for this contrast of materials to occur naturally. Further, there was evidence of a tar covering which would act as a bonding and maybe a waterproofing agent for the aggregate. Knowing the USMC runway runs east/west, as does the red clay runway, I paced north and south until I found the limits or the edge of the crushed rock. I then divided this distance more or less in half and determined the midpoint of those limits. With this evidence and the correct juxtaposition or orientation of the ammunition dump relative to this newly discovered area, I knew I had found and was now standing on the centerline of the original USMC Khe Sanh runway (Picture L). From there, I walked to the turn-around area at the east end, which I had spotted earlier. It is now covered with coffee plants. Then I retraced my steps and I walked towards the western end but ran into thick overgrowth and could not see any more of the runway. A young Vietnamese man, probably about 18, provided me with shade from a leafy branch he had torn from a tree. Wherever I walked he walked just behind me holding the branch aloft over my head. He was my personal umbrella bearer. We tried to communicate but could not. Although I was grateful for this gesture, I laughed quietly because I walked so much faster than he did — he was always at a slight run behind me just to keep up. He motioned for me to slow down, but I am not a slow walker. Finally I turned left 90 degrees, and after walking about 100 meters re-intersected the red clay runway at a point somewhat east of the museum.

I walked back to the USMC runway and, looking at the aerial photograph, I was able to locate the path to the water point and a road or path that crosses the runway from one side of the base to the other. They are still there and clearly visible. The path to the water point is still very much in use. The helicopter revetment area is overgrown with eucalyptus trees and coffee plants and there is no evidence of its existence. I began to notice that the eucalyptus trees seemed to grow in a line that borders the USMC runway and I surmise the outline of the runway can be easily discerned by these tree lines. Exploring further, I found the outside USMC perimeter and defensive trenches on the northern side of the base, the side nearest the Rao Quan



Looking west along the original USMC Khe Sanh runway after having found the ammo dump.

River. The existence of landmines was on my mind but I figured if I was inside the perimeter and if I was observant and did not explore carelessly, I would be safe. I returned to the museum elated that I now had my bearings.

Inside the museum, I drank some tea that was offered to me in the side room off the main viewing and artifact collection area. The hawkers were present in and around the building in their usual numbers. Sipping the green tea, I looked at the weaponry placed in two piles on the floor and the photographs on the walls. The weaponry on display consisted of the usual M-16s, M-79 grenade launchers, an M-60 machine gun, a claymore mine, helmets and other gear. One photograph on the wall showed a night bombardment and the tracers and arcing rocket trails could be clearly seen. I wondered: How could those Marines have survived during the height of the bombardment? And again, the irony: here I am sipping tea in an area which 30 years earlier was shelled and rocketed incessantly for three months. I sat at the table in the middle of the room and now with the non-circulating stultifying, breathless air in the museum, sweat poured out of me. I spotted and reached for the guest register on the other side of the table and searched through the pages first for my signature of March 31st (which I found), and then that of Dennis Mannion, which I also located quite easily. In large emphatic letters, Dennis had written: *"Let me get the facts straight. We, the Marines, left because we were through kicking ass in this area. I have much respect for the 15,000 plus NVA soldiers who died here. They were terrific, brave men — but they lost! Sorry, but that's the way it was."* Dennis went on to add "wounded twice." I thumbed through the entries that had been made since the date of my first entry and I came across an emotional message written by the mother of a Marine who died at Khe Sanh in 1968. She had made the pilgrimage there, much the same as Dennis and others had, on behalf of her son and in an attempt to heal the wounds and perhaps bring closure to her own suffering. I found a clean page in the book and signed and dated the guest register a second time but still I could not find words to write that would convey my own impressions or express my feelings.

Hitching a ride on a motorbike at the museum, I went back to the notched end of the red clay runway. There is a small hut at the top of the embankment just beyond the end of the runway. Walking back to my right at about a 45-degree angle again toward Hills 950 and 1015, I located the western turn-around area of the USMC runway at the opposite end from the ammunition dump. Then, I walked back to the red clay runway through the vegetation and found myself face to face with the museum. Therefore, I think the museum is located on a line perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the USMC runway extending generally in a southerly direction from the western turn-around area. And of course, the obvious conclusion: the eroded red clay runway that is adjacent to and clearly visible from the museum, is not the USMC runway. I had proved my theory. The red clay runway is parallel to the USMC runway but not as long. The western end of the new red clay runway (the notched end) is about 200, maybe 300 meters further west from the western turn-around area of the USMC runway. The notched end of the red clay runway is cut into the area, which I think was termed "The Ponderosa." The museum is actually at the western end of the combat base and south of the USMC runway. Interestingly, by accident, I discovered machine gun bunkers on the red clay runway, which would seem to indicate, as is a known fact, that the last occupants of the base were the North Vietnamese. Since they had no planes per se or helicopters and reportedly used Khe Sanh as a SAM site, they had no use for either runway in the traditional sense.

For those Vets returning to Khe Sanh after over thirty years who are not convinced of their orientation when visiting Khe Sanh and for first-time visitors who know nothing about the combat base, don't be fooled into thinking that the red clay runway is the USMC runway. If you are interested, when you arrive at the museum building from the road, proceed towards Hills 950 and 1015 (generally north) straight across the eroded red clay runway immediately behind the museum, continue through the trees and coffee plants, and you will find the original USMC runway. From there, other geographic locations on the base as might be remembered by vets should fall into place.

The foregoing manuscript was written by Gary W. Foster who is a Vice President of Stanley Consultants, Inc., headquartered in Muscatine, Iowa and who works in their international division. He

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It's Time Now To Meet The People

A Tribute to the Veterans of Khe Sanh)

by Gary W. Foster

The insipid first line of the title belies the essence of this story. It could just as easily be entitled "What Khe Sanh Has Come to Mean to Me." Had it not been for the purchase of fake dog tags several years ago at Khe Sanh, the chances of my having met so many people who experienced something unique, along with the friendship that developed, would have been greatly diminished. In part, because of that specious, certainly improbable purchase, I have found the history of Khe Sanh and its geography and the history of those who served there fascinating as well as intriguing. I feel privileged to be able to visit Khe Sanh as often as I do, and I do not mind the self-imposed obligation to relate my own experiences to those who were there under far more hazardous circumstances than what I am exposed to today. This is my tribute to the Veterans of Khe Sanh.

Khe Sanh is just the physical place name of a small village in a remote corner of Quang Tri Province, Vietnam, but the utterance of those words conjures much more. What is the essence of a geographical location without the commensurate definition of the people that, by their actions alone, transformed the location into an event; an event of past, current, and — in the case of Khe Sanh — continuously recurring significance? Khe Sanh is more than a random point on a map in Southeast Asia. It is a place apart in the minds of thousands of Americans, who by happenstance, fought there in the late 60s. After so many years have passed, Khe Sanh — at least for a very few combatants — may have become intangible or may be just a vague notion. And for those less in years than 30, it has no significance. Khe Sanh is the Alamo, it is Custer's Last Stand, it's Bastogne, Aqaba, Rorke's Drift, Guignancourt, Dien Bien Phu; and it is Stalingrad. The onerous events that took place at these locations live in the past and have been swallowed by history, but they did occur. Like its predecessors before it, Khe Sanh would never have crawled out from obscurity had it not been for the tumultuous and violent clash that transpired there not so long ago.

No longer satisfied with email and telephone communications, the time was now at hand to pay my own personal respect to this unique group of individuals. I decided I would attend the USMC Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion in Charleston, South Carolina. A strange decision maybe to some, since I myself am not a veteran but after so many visits to Khe Sanh within the last three years, and many contacts with Khe Sanh Veterans, perhaps I could offer something of interest. At least I would be attuned to some of the conversations. I would not be a total stranger — maybe an outsider but no stranger. Perhaps I could learn something. So before dawn on the Thursday before the Fourth of July, I put my suitcase filled with my clothes and all my Khe Sanh notes in my car and backed out of the garage. The air was hot and muggy and the smell of rain was in the air. The leaves on the oak trees in my yard did not stir, the air being that still. I flipped the air conditioner on and strapped myself in. As I left my driveway to make for the airport, sipping my coffee, I thought to myself, "It's time now to meet the people."

Who would I meet? John Pessoni, Ernie Spencer, Bob Arotta, Glenn Prentice, Tommy Eichler, Jim Wodecki, and maybe Jacob Krygoski to name a few. I had communicated with all of them in various forms. Ray Stubbe would not be there this year. And after so many conversations, running dialogues, and intense email exchanges with a complete stranger, I was especially looking forward to meeting Dennis Mannion who would be there with his family.

Two years prior, the reunion was held in Chicago. That would have been the perfect venue for me: a three-hour drive. But on the Fourth of July that year, on that very day, I was quite ironically and very literally in Khe Sanh.

I made my connecting flight to Charleston in Chicago. While I waited I visited a bookstore and saw Tom Brokaw's book "The Greatest Generation." I have seen that book for over a year and intend to read it but have not yet gotten around to it. I almost bought the book to read on the plane, but I have so many books to read I decided not to. I arrived in Charleston from Chicago about 2:00pm.

The South Carolina dead-of-summer sultry heat hit me like a ton of bricks. Man, was it hot! Man, was it

humid! The tall pines prevented any breeze. I retrieved my rental car and made for the hotel. Not easy to locate I discovered. Every time I asked for directions, the people 1 asked pointed in the direction from which I had just come. But eventually I did find the hotel and checked in — room 108, ground level, facing the front parking lot filled with cars and trucks, some with small USMC flags. There were American flags, the occasional yellow and red striped flag of South Vietnam, KS insignias and inscriptions, USMC bumper stickers, and other Vietnam era memorabilia. My room was located directly beneath a very large USMC flag that hung over the outside railing two floors above. I was reminded of my neighbor who died recently. He was a Marine during World War II and was wounded three times on Iwo Jima, survived, served throughout the war, and was highly decorated. He displayed a large USMC flag from a tall flagpole in his front yard. The flag was never lowered and was always lit at night. His name was Dale Plummer.

Many of the Vets had taken the tour of Parris Island, so the lobby of the hotel was more or less empty except for Tommy Eichler slaving away at his computer over some aspect of the reunion. I had met Tommy a year earlier in Chicago, and we recognized each other. "Gary! Welcome," Tommy said and then abruptly, "Thanks for becoming a lifetime member of the association." I was surprised that he remembered. I had decided in the early spring to join the Khe Sanh Veterans Associations on a lifetime basis, as opposed to year to year, in support of the association and the people with whom I had communicated. We talked for about an hour. I met John Corbett, who was selling his new book "West Dickens Avenue." Even though I didn't buy Brokaw's book in Chicago, I decided I would buy Corbett's book but not that day. The title intrigued me. Since there were few vets milling around, I decided I wanted to be outside and explore Charleston. So I drove downtown.

I went to Battery Park and Patriots Point. I visited an aircraft carrier, the USS Yorktown (CV10), which I would visit again the next day. I ate downtown and did some shopping. I returned to the hotel around 7:00pm or so. There were some vets around the bar, but the tour from PI had not yet returned. I went to my room and took a shower. After dressing, I looked outside and I saw that the buses had returned and were disgorging their passengers. I knew Dennis Mannion and John Pessoni were among them, so I walked to the lobby.

The first person I met was John Pessoni, "Big John," who, without hesitation gave me a big hug and lifted me off the ground. I had brought him some red clay from Khe Sanh a few months earlier and he wanted to thank me in person. He had warned me by email that he would give me a big hug — and he did.

Then I saw Dennis Mannion (Hill 861, Kilo 3/26) laughing and talking with a group of people. I couldn't mistake him. He was exactly as I envisioned him from photographs and videotapes he sent to me. Now it was my turn. I walked up to Dennis and gave him a big bear hug and lifted his sturdy frame completely off the ground. We laughed a lot. Our friendliness towards one another, conceived through email and lengthy telephone conversations, immediately congealed, I am sure, into a permanent friendship that over the course of the next three days would become even more solidified. I don't believe I have ever met a more engaging person with more enthusiasm about a topic as was Dennis about Khe Sanh. I met Dennis' wife, Joan and his third son, Devin. Dennis and Devin and I migrated into the hospitality suite where I found a beer or three and listened intently as Dennis openly discussed and reminisced about Khe Sanh, all the while and without missing a beat, energetically pointing to all the photos and maps he had placed on the wall. Some of these I had sent to him. I believe he engaged everyone in conversation and was obviously enthralled to be there. I have never seen a more animated person or anyone with more alacrity.

I met people who were on Hill 950 who never saw Hill 861, I met 881ers who never saw 558 and vice versa. I met people who were at the east end of the base and never saw the west end. I met people who lived and slept with their mortars and never left a 10-foot diameter circle. I met people who remembered the intensity of the incoming shells matching the rainfall. I met people who were on the perimeters and never saw anything of the interior of the base. It never dawned on me but as a member of a unit, you were where your unit was stationed and nowhere else. I never took time to ponder the logistics. I thought a person could just walk all over the base. Not so. You had your fighting position and that was it. That, in it, would be a tedious existence. I met

people who were close enough to the NVA to smell them. I met people who killed them and who were wounded by them or stood right next to someone who had been killed by them. I met a man who threw three grenades at once and rattled on the table with his fists three times: boom, boom... boom, imitating the sounds of the grenades as they detonated. I heard of a Marine who was killed within hours of arriving at Khe Sanh.

I remember a story about a Marine who told me he was on one of the hills and for some reason, he visited the combat base for a few days. The base took some incoming rounds and he ducked for cover. He noticed no one else around him was seeking cover, so he made some comment to that effect and was told, "Naw, that's at the other end of the base."

I heard seemingly imponderable stories of men being killed by shrapnel smaller than a BB, and I heard horrific stories of men being blown to bits — there one second and gone the next. I learned how, after an intense barrage of NVA artillery and rockets, the base would be covered with a patina of gray from the shrapnel. I would read about the same phenomenon in John Corbett's book.

I learned more about the geography of the base and the surrounding areas. We talked about the water point, the revetments, the clouds, the rain, the red mud, Charlie Med, and Recon. Still not sure about the significance of Recon and how it differs from other divisions or battalions. We talked about Lang Vei and how the Bru and Montagnards gathered at the gates of the combat base to try to get in after Lang Vei was overrun and destroyed in early February 1968.

The hospitality suite was a great place to interact, but one can't be shy among this group. Conversations continued. I learned about artillery and rockets. Artillery shells are always on range or distance but can drift left or right of target. Rockets are always on the right azimuth but their trajectory is sometimes long or short. I learned about a special small howitzer on 861 that could be used as a mortar, but the shell would rip end over end during its parabolic arc and then tumble harmlessly down the hill. It wasn't very effective.

Conversations lasted well past midnight and like an artillery shell not quite on its mark, I drifted to and from the central bar area where I met Ernie Spencer, Bob Arotta, and Glenn Prentice. "Big John" and I bumped into each other again, and I don't believe I purchased a beer all night. I felt immediately at home with these guys and I did not hesitate to introduce myself to anyone and everyone. Each vet had a tale to tell, and I listened intently. I, too, told of my own Khe Sanh experiences in a situation more favorable to one's health than what the vets found themselves in 35 years earlier. The entire hotel lobby area was packed with former US Marines, and it held a plethora of USMC emblems, uniforms, KS hats, USMC shirts, flags, bumper stickers, books, jackets, etc. I was afloat, ashore, and awash with the USMC. I got caught up in the swirl. It was interesting and it was fun. I was thrilled I had come to Charleston. No doubt about it — I was at the Khe Sanh Reunion.

Many Vets thanked me for the articles I have contributed to **Red Clay** over the last few years. It's the least I can do and if the readers find what I write interesting, then terrific. I have no personal history with the Marines other than what I have read. But I do know this and I don't think it can be refuted. Each Marine knows they are first in battle for the United States and are proud of that fact, Each Marine knows they are either hated or liked, but each Marine knows they are respected. Each Marine is imbued with the special history of the Marine Corps, of warfare and battles, and reputation and image, and service to country. And each Marine knows that he or she will give 110%. Finally, each Marine believes that he or she is the best the country has to offer. I believe this too.

The Fourth of July, Friday, my second day at the reunion. Well, let's see. Breakfast started with a beer. So far so good. Then I began meeting more people. I met people who were on various hills, and we talked at length. People were from every state of the Union. I met Dennis again and we continued conversations that had started the day before. I studied maps, looked at photos, saw "Big John," and visited with Glenn Prentice. Glenn travels often to Vietnam to help install a water treatment plant in a small village, I think in QTP (Quang Tri Province). I noticed for the first time the USMC flags of the three battalions, (is that right?) of the 26th Marines 1/26, 2/26, and 3/26. All three were at Khe Sanh together.

Around 10:00am, I wanted to go back into Charleston and visit the Yorktown again, which I did. I ate at a French restaurant downtown, and I

continued to explore the city. Charleston is a terrific place. I returned to the hotel later in the afternoon and visited with Tommy Eichler. Dennis was in the hospitality suite, and I talked with him for an hour or two, and we agreed he and his family and I would go together to a restaurant downtown that night. Dennis, Joan, Devin and I dined at High Cotton and enjoyed probably the most delicious meal any of us can remember. Talk of Khe Sanh over dinner was minimal, most assuredly to Joan's relief.

Day three, Saturday. Up long before dawn, I explored Folly Beach in the early morning hours and visited the downtown area one more time. I returned to the hotel around 10:00am. There were more conversations about Khe Sanh — some I had heard and some were new. I visited with Peter James, Ed Miles, and Bob Harrison about their experiences on Hill 950. At least, I think all three individuals were on Hill 950. They recalled times when the clouds were so low that they could not see the combat base. The base had vanished. Hills 861 and 881 stuck up through the clouds like islands. They saw rockets being fired from NVA positions that arced up out of the clouds and then back down through the cloud layer into the heart of the base, the explosions lighting up the underside of the clouds causing an eerie visual sensation. They witnessed air strikes with bombs, rockets, and napalm. They saw helicopter crashes, and they watched as two F-4 pilots ejected from their crippled Phantom jet which careened through the sky pilotless, exploding in a large orange mushroom against a mountainside. The night sky was like a fireworks display with explosions occurring on the base. The trailing exhaust of the incoming NVA rockets looked like Roman candles or moving torches. The vets talked about attacks on Hill 1015 and how the NVA were everywhere — in the ravines, on the side of the hill, in the bush — everywhere infested. I did not realize that the Marine contingency on Hill 950 was so small. It seemed to me they would have been easily overwhelmed, but they weren't even though many intense firefights ensued.

Dennis and I disputed a Marine about the presence of the USS New Jersey in 1968. Uh, I fell silent because I did not know many facts about the ship's deployment. Not so, Dennis. He knew them all. But I did know one thing: The New Jersey's guns could not reach Khe Sanh from the sea. The guns' range is about 30 miles maybe less, and the distance from Cua Viet Port (on the coast) to Khe Sanh is at least 30 to 40 miles. I've been to both places many times. The New Jersey had to operate in water deep enough to maneuver and it had to stay out of range of coastal NVA guns. I would imagine it sat about 8 to 10 miles off shore, maybe more. So, no way. Dennis and I looked at each other and simultaneously, without prompting, said out loud in unison, "Can't reach that far." Dennis and I still talk about that coincidence.

Later in a private conversation, Dennis talked about life after the Marines. When he returned to the U.S. and was discharged, he continued his education at the University of Connecticut. He remembered no one would sit next to him. He was surrounded by empty chairs as students moved away from the Marine veteran who had served in that nasty, unpopular little war somewhere in Southeast Asia. No one would talk to him. I heard many other similar accounts. Years ago, my neighbor at my fraternity house at UC Davis, who flew CH-53s in and out of Khe Sanh during the Siege but subsequently left the Marine Corps for university, was something of a curiosity, more to be avoided. We became very good friends. I could always tell he felt ill at ease among the students there, but I don't recall that ever haunting him. His name was Mike Webb.

After lunch at Hooters (had to go to Hooters), Dennis, Devin, Glenn Prentice, and I decided to drive downtown to see the Huntley, a Confederate submarine that sank in 1864 during the Civil War. It had been located in or near Charleston harbor and recently had been recovered. That was an interesting experience and one that we all found very moving. There were artifacts and plenty of historical dialogue. The bodies of the crew were found rather well preserved and were removed from the sub and placed in a morgue located within the large building constructed for the purpose of preserving the remains of the submarine. The bodies are being examined and will be buried with full military honors in the Spring of 2004. Dennis and Devin are planning to attend the ceremony. The sub itself sits in a large tank of circulating fresh water. The presenter there, I believe who is called a docent, said the reverse osmosis or dialysis, or whatever, would take about 5 to 8 years. To keep the metal from deteriorating, the salt has to be removed from the metal fiber and after being submerged for 140 years; it would take a long

time to extract the salt from the hull.

Later back at the hotel, I met John Corbett (who goes by Jack) again, and I purchased his book, which he willingly autographed. I read it two weeks later on a plane bound for Hanoi from Hong Kong. I am sure I have been in the area of the Khe Sanh Combat Base he refers to as "West Dickens Avenue." Corbett's account is outstanding and adds much to my understanding of the Siege as witnessed from near the extreme perimeter of the combat base. On a personal level, Corbett's book augments the overview accounts of Pisor, Prados, and Stubbe in their respective in-depth accounts of both the Siege and the fight for Khe Sanh. It should be read by everyone.

I thought some Vets would be interested in my own Khe Sanh notes, so I brought my three-ring binder to show them my interest and the maps I used to spot Hills 861, 881, 950, and 1015, and to tell them how, using an aerial photograph given to me by Ray Stubbe, I located the original USMC east/west runway. It's still there but overgrown. I have walked it several times.

The ceremonial banquet was held that night at the hotel. For the first time in my life, I met a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, and I was honored to have my photograph taken with him. His name is Jon Cavaiani. I sat with Glenn Prentice and Dennis Mannion and his family. The level of conversation at the banquet was at a high pitch and I felt in awe of the reunion and all the remembrances, even if the banquet room was physically too small and a bit disjointed.

After dinner, I had one beer at the bar with Bob Arotta. Earlier in the day, Bob received an award for his efforts during the Siege calling in artillery and close air support on Hill 881S. He was only 19 years old. John Pessoni wanted to buy me another drink, but I do not like to travel in the early morning hours after a night of imbibing and I begged off. Uh, probably not a good move in the presence of Marines. I returned home — so ended my first ever Khe Sanh reunion.

Reflecting now, what are my impressions? What am I to make of this memorable experience and gathering of men? First, the pride among the USMC Vets was evident. Here's a vague thought I have had for the last two years, which crystallized, in my mind at the reunion. When someone joins the military, he or she cannot choose the war. "Uh, Korea. I don't like that one. I'll wait for the next one." Or maybe, "Afghanistan? No, not that one either. I'll wait for another one more to my liking." We never know, any of us, what the future holds and where we will find ourselves. We must accept some things sometimes and persevere. And this is what makes the Khe Sanh Veteran unique and this is why the reunion, and the association are important and special.

I gained many other impressions but I believe the impression that is etched in my mind is this. I also know another group of veterans of Khe Sanh, but they are not Marines. They are veteran *Bo Doi* — NVA who I have met. They are equally proud of their service to their country, as are US Marines to the USA. But unlike the American serviceman, after the war the government of Vietnam gave them a ribbon from which dangles a medal stamped out of the lid of a tin can. Veteran soldiers of North Vietnam have no benefits. None. No pension. Nothing. Just their pride. We are fortunate to live in the United States.

What of the people I met at the reunion? These are true Americans in the best sense and tradition of the word. I heard concerns but very few complaints; in fact, I am not sure I heard one. I met a tall man named Mickey (I think that was his name) who wore Harley Davidson attire. Not my choice of clothes but who cares? Each to his own. I talked with this giant of a man and I found him engaging and concerned about many issues, PTSD not being the least of them. PTSD was a common topic among all the vets. He said, "Sometimes I feel estranged because of Vietnam. I feel I cannot connect. I wish I could make some friends. My wife is my best friend but sometimes I feel so different among general people." Mickey just wanted to talk and be with people who understood him and who shared the same issues, good and bad. He had just completed, I think, his third or fourth "Run for the Wall," which he said is a very grueling undertaking. He began attending the annual Khe Sanh reunion to become re-acquainted with his own kind. That seems totally understandable, and what Mickey said touched me to the core. These people, just like me, are human with the same desires, fears, hopes, despair, optimism, concerns, and insecurities, all enclosed within the day-to-day grapple of life. I was witnessing a lasting, invisible bond among hearty, good meaning men and their families, which perhaps is taken for granted among

their own kind but which I appreciated immediately. The comradeship is very deep.

There is an obelisk in Norfolk, Virginia. It marks the celebration of the 100th reunion of the soldiers of the Confederate army of the Civil War — I believe, the Army of Northern Virginia to be exact. Out of an army of over a million men, there were only four still living that attended and their names were inscribed on the obelisk that was erected in 1965 to mark the occasion of the reunion. These men are now gone from this earth. The Khe Sanh reunion is a living, vibrant historical event for me in a very current, poignant way. If put into a broader time perspective, like the last gathering of the Confederate soldiers in Norfolk, in another 65 years there will be only a handful of Khe Sanh Veterans able to attend the reunion or who will even be alive to recount the events of 1968. The events surrounding Khe Sanh must be remembered and everyone needs to thank Ray Stubbe, Ernie Spencer, Jim Wodecki, and Tommy Eichler, and many others for making all this possible. I also have to thank all the Marine vets who made the reunion so worthwhile and colorful for me.

At the corner of Bethany Home and 16th street in Phoenix, AZ — north central Phoenix to be exact — is a restaurant named "Texaz" (with a "z," not an "s"). They serve the best chicken fried steak in the area, and my family and I often dine there. It's an eclectic restaurant, with a myriad of things on the walls and shelves: license plates, bumper stickers, hats, calling cards, beer signs, and Texas memorabilia. It's not a chain restaurant like Bennigan's but a genuine restaurant, which is why I am sure it's so popular. There are two items in the restaurant that carry some significance. First is a replica of the first flag of Texas pinned to the ceiling. The initial flag of Texas, which flew on the border with Mexico as the state was struggling for independence, did not contain a star. Rather, it was a rectangular Rag with a white field and on the white field there was the profile of a black cannon, and I think, a cannonball. Beneath the cannon's profile, the Texans wrote four words: "Come and Take it." Not a subliminal message, the challenge is clear. If you think you want this land, just come and try to take it. I often think of that flag in the context of the Siege of Khe Sanh.

Secondly, opposite the main door to the restaurant behind the first row of booths, there is an adjoining booth that seats four people. On the partition that separates that booth from the neighboring booth, there are a few mementos. There are two license plates: one from Texas that says "ADL1132" and another from Arizona that says "4RMULE," evidently meaning, "For Our Mule" — not sure about the reference. On the other side, there is a sign from the New Mexico Farm Bureau indicating Erma Trujillo, evidently a member of the bureau, as a property owner. And attached to the middle partition just above the table, are two identical license plates from New Hampshire with the letters "BI-T-T-Y" But what is important is not the identification letters but the slogan written above it. "Live Free or Die." I often repeat these words to myself that we are free. We are a free country, but we are free only because of a handful of people who have made it so and who continue to make it so today. These individuals have insured, by their own personal sacrifice, that other Americans can and will live in freedom. It is the measure of the United States Marines who are no small part of this contribution. In my mind, the Marines fought and held on because of us at home. They also fought because they had to for their own survival and that of their comrades. I am sure in the heat of the Siege, no one there thought "Man, we are really fighting for the people back home." Of course not. But if one looks at the continuum of the US Marines and their history and not at any one isolated event, again it is clear, certainly to me, that they fought for us and for our country. For this, every American should be grateful. I am.

My only souvenir of the reunion, other than Jack Corbett's book, is a small rectangular gold and black lapel pin that reads "KHE SANH." I wore it on the lapel of my suit at the Saturday night banquet and I wore it on my shirt collar when I returned to Chicago the next day. I wanted to buy a hat and a shirt that said "Khe Sanh" but to be honest, I thought wearing them would be a bit presumptuous on my part, and I decided I would leave that to those who actually served there. It is, after all, to their credit and in their honor.

Just before retiring for the last evening in Charleston, I still had some packing to do. I spotted Dennis Mannion and his family and I wanted to say goodbye. Dennis and I talked for about 20 minutes and gave each other a big hug. "You're a hero, Dennis," I said, to which he quickly responded, "No,

I'm not." I was taken by his immediate response and humbleness, but I read into it a larger message: these Marines unwittingly found themselves at a location and at a juncture in time and at a time of their own lives when they could have run or stayed to fight. They chose not to run. "Never have, never will," I believe I read somewhere. They made the best of a lousy situation and fought. Who could do or be better? "Semper Fi" is the code by which they live and the code by which they die. I attended another military reunion this summer. When I saw the Marine color guard, I made it a point to walk right up to each one of them and say "Thank you. You guys are the best." When I visit Khe Sanh, and I have since the reunion, the place will assume a deeper meaning for me and I will repeat each time I am there: "Never have. Never will," in honor of the Marines I met at Charleston. I am not sure why, but while driving home and thinking of the reunion, the events that made it possible, and the reason behind its existence, the lyrics of a song by Mike and the Mechanics popped into my head, *"Bring my spear. Invest it with my youth."*

In Chicago's O'Hare Airport (ORD), I passed the same bookstore I had visited on my way to Charleston a few days earlier and I saw the same display copy of Tom Brokaw's book "The Greatest Generation." I thought about the contents of the book, and I reflected on the meaning of the title. The title suggests that a comparison is being drawn with other generations of Americans who had fought before and after World War II. It's difficult to imagine that Americans in other wars were somehow less great. In many ways, World War II brought out the true essence of being an American and revealed the best of America. That they fought for America for no other reason than loyalty to their country was evident. In selflessly answering the call to arms, they represented one of America's great generations and should be honored as such. They earned their due without question. However, Brokaw's use of the word "greatest," a superlative adjective, bothers me. With no intentions of denigrating anyone who has served in the American military and although I will probably read the book someday, I felt no need to buy and read it now. But if comparisons are to be drawn, in Charleston, South Carolina, at the United States Marine Corps Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, over the 4th of July weekend, 2003, assuming use of the same superlative adjective, I believe I met America's greatest generation.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: The article by Gary Foster detailing his relationship with Khe Sanh Veterans and his subsequent experience at the reunion in Charleston S.C., is one of the best written pieces on this subject I have ever read. If any of our members fail to consider coming to a reunion after reading it, is beyond comprehension. Gary put in words what most of us experience when we get together. Being a civilian, he brings a whole new perspective to the reunion experience. If he can feel the way he does about his relationship with the organization, w as brothers who have actually experienced Khe Sanh, should have the same feelings ten-fold.

A Short History of FLC-FLSG-A, LSU at the Khe Sanh Combat Base

by James "Jimbo" Wodecki



Unknown and Louis Naple (rt.), who painted FLC sign

After the initial landing near Danang in March 1965, Marine strengths continued to grow until two reinforced divisions and a reinforced aircraft wing, comprising III MAF, were situated between Chu Lai and the DMZ. FLSG-A supported the 3rd Marine Division, and FLSG-B supported 1st Marine Division Forces. Two FLSUs operated at Dong Ha and Phu Bai. FLSG-A was re-designated from FLSG on March 15, 1966. Its subordinate units were charged with supporting 3rd Marine Division troops from Phu Bai to the DMZ. LSU's were established at Phu Bai, Dong Ha, Hue and Khe Sanh. These LSUs were designated Sub Units 1-5. Supply Battalion was established within the FLC structure at Camp Books in February 1967, and provided a most vital link in



Camp Book entrance

accomplishing the FLC mission. The 7th Separate Bulk Fuel Company dispensed more than 76 million gallons of petroleum products from fuel points throughout MR-1. Ration Company was charged with procuring and issuing food. Marines unable to visit mess halls received close to 11 million Individual Combat Meals in just a 13-month period alone. The bakery made and distributed more than 12 million doughnuts and almost 23 million pounds of bread. The Battalions ASPs #1 and #2 dispensed ordnance ranging from 5.56mm rounds for M-16 rifles to 175mm shells for artillery guns.



FLC's ammo dump at Khe Sanh in 1966.

EOD Marines recovered over 449,000 deadly U.S. and enemy explosive items, disarming and destroying 95,000 of them. The battalion's Retrograde Facility, charged with the shipping of all classes of excess or damaged gear to other commands, transferred hundreds of thousands of measured tons of equipment. Maintenance Battalion was established in February 1967 and was originally located at the Danang Air Base until commitments grew too large and space too small. In 1969, repair sections began moving to Camp Books.

At Motor Maintenance Company, more than 4,235 vehicles were repaired and returned to their parent organizations. Battalion Service Maintenance processed nearly 5,700 work requests on items ranging from typewriters to canvas. Communications/ Electronic Maintenance Company had repaired more than 40,000 damaged items. Ordnance Maintenance Company had replaced more than 1,600 barrels on small arms and artillery guns in addition to refinishing other pieces. Engineer Maintenance Company provided maintenance support for three Force Engineer Battalions, two Division Engineer Battalions, and all engineer equipment organic to III MAF. Over 8,000 work requests were processed. H&S Battalion was formed in February 1967. Among its many duties, the transportation of cargo in support of combat operations and regulating administrative functions ranked high on the list. While transporting two million tons of cargo in support of 1st and 3rd Marine Division Operations, Truck Company ground out over 11 million miles. Communication Company, FLC's communications link with the world, handled 12 million transmissions, both incoming and outgoing on their complex computerized transmitters. Perhaps one of the greatest achievements by U.S. personnel in relation to Civic Action, was the construction of the spacious, 120-bed Hoa Khahn Children's Hospital at Camp Books. Just a few "Pogues" doing their job, so you grunts could function properly in the field. **Glad we could help.**



Jimbo loading ammo.

James "Jimbo" Wodecki
FLSU#2 FLC-AMMO PLT

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: FLC also received two Navy Unit Commendations for their achievements. I have posted them in the newsletter, and Jimbo and I will reproduce them on parchment paper for those who wish one. With the citations is a list of the units eligible for each citation as well as the dates you would have to have been with the unit. Most FLC members qualify for both.

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THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION to

FORCE LOGISTIC COMMAND

For Service as set forth in the following
CITATION:

For exceptionally meritorious achievement in the performance of outstanding service with the III Marine Amphibious Force in the Republic of Vietnam from 12 March 1965 to 15 March 1967. Demonstrating an exceptional degree of professionalism and aggressiveness, this provisionally organized command rapidly collected its limited assets to provide combat service support to the Force as it grew from strength of 5,000 to more than 75,000. The constant effort to overcome maintenance, transportation, and supply problems associated with over 23,000 items of combat essential equipment, aggravated by severe climatic conditions of heat, dust, monsoon rains, and mud, coupled with the rigors of a sustained combat environment were highly significant to the successful accomplishment of the mission of the III Marine Amphibious Force. Noteworthy was the efficient manner in which the Force Logistic Command responded to the frequent geographical shifts of troops, and equipment over great distances within the I Corps Tactical Zone. The proper and efficient provision of combat service support to the Force during the lateral movement of the First and Third Marine Divisions in October 1966, a move involving more than thirty thousand troops, and their organic equipment was particularly outstanding. Additionally, the Force Logistic Command was responsible for establishment, operation and support of the III Marine Amphibious Force Transient Facility, which through extensive expert detailed planning and foresight of the Force Logistic Command, rapidly expanded from a facility capable of accommodating 500 transients a month to a facility currently accommodating more than 20,000 transients a month. The distinguished accomplishment contributed significantly to the high state of morale, health, welfare, and comfort of combat and combat support troops within the III Marine Amphibious Force Tactical responsibilities. The effective teamwork, indomitable spirit, and loyal devotion to duty of the men of the Force Logistic Command made very significant contributions to the combat achievements in the I Corps Tactical Zone and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

All Personnel serving with the FORCE LOGISTIC COMMAND during the period as set forth below are authorized to wear the **Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon.**

12 March 1965 to 15 March 1967.



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION to

FORCE LOGISTIC COMMAND

For Service as set forth in the following
CITATION:

For exceptional meritorious service while serving with the III MAF in the Republic of Vietnam during the period from 16 March 1967 to 31 May 1968. Demonstrating an exceptional degree of professionalism and aggressiveness in providing support for the III MAF, and the Force Logistics Command, and the 2nd Brigade, Republic of Korea Marines, the officers and men of the Force Logistics Command despite adverse weather conditions, and continually difficult lines of communication, provided Supplies in support of 72 major operations, in I Corps Tactical Zone. Especially noteworthy was the efficient manner in which the Force Logistics Command responded to the increased demands on all supply channels during the re-supply of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, and the rapid build up of friendly forces from 75,000 to 138,000 personnel with the addition of two Army divisions, plus a division equivalent of Army Support Forces during the Tet offensive. Force Logistics Command accomplished Western Pacific MILSTRIP/MILSTRAP Accounting System and the successful conversion to data processing to provide additional and more efficient support in the fields of personnel, supply, and maintenance support to the combat forces in the I CORPS Tactical Zone, the Force Logistics established the only data communication terminal north of Danang to facilitate the processing of supply demands. The Force Logistics Command provided legal service to 18,000 officers and men in Danang area and budgeting and financial management functions for nine external organizations in addition to internal units. Personal effects and baggage processing for medically evacuated Marines and operations of the II MAF Amphibious Forces Transient facility continued in an outstanding manner, contributing significantly to the moral, health, welfare, and comfort of combat and combat support troops. By their loyal devotion to duty, the officers and men of Force Logistics Command upheld the highest tradition of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval service.

All personnel attached to and serving with the following units of the **FORCE LOGISTIC COMMAND**, during the

Periods set forth below are authorized to wear the **Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon:**

16 March 1967 to 31 May 1968

Headquarters And Service Battalion (-) (Rein), 1st FSR
Maintenance Battalion (-) (Rein) 1ST FSR
Supply Battalion (-) (Rein)1st FSR
Force Logistic Support Group Alpha/Third Service Battalion
Force Logistic Support Group Bravo/First Service Battalion
Supply Company (-) (Rein), FLSG-B

7 June 1967 to 31 May 1968

Seventh Motor Transport Battalion

31 May 1967 to 31 May 1968

Third Military Police Battalion

5 April 1967 to 31 May 1968

First Military Police Battalion

My Personal History With 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines and Their Service at Khe Sanh

by Gordon H. Hebert M/CO 3/9

The Early Days

In a way, I was lucky with my mode of transportation getting to the war. They put me on a commercial jetliner. A nice alternative to a troop ship. These ships, as I later found out, were extremely cramped and it took 28 days to make the trip. By the time I arrived in Danang, the guys who left by boat on the same day would not arrive for another 27 more days.

When the doors opened at Danang, it was like a blast furnace. I was aware Southeast Asia was hot, but I didn't know that at certain times of the year, 120 degrees was not uncommon. Danang in 1966 was the busiest airport in the world. The flurry of activity was horrendous. Unlike O'Hare or Kennedy Airports, the second and third busiest, everybody at Danang was armed and instead of airliners coming and leaving at a rapid rate, the majority of the traffic was F-105 Thunderchiefs and F-4F Phantoms. It didn't take long to realize I was in a whole new world.

I originally had orders to report to 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines up at the DMZ. When I arrived at Danang, they informed me that 2/4 had been nearly wiped out the previous week and had been pulled from the field. I was now to report to 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines. We were rounded up rapidly and were taken by helicopters to An Hoa, a village about 25 miles southwest of Danang, where 3/9 maintained its headquarters. The helicopter ride provided our first good look at the countryside.

It was exactly as had always been portrayed, shades of green covering the spectrum, water standing in rice paddies, interlaced by streams and rivers. Peasants with water buffaloes were working the fields. Fighting in this area had been quite fierce several months before but was fairly light at the time (November 10, 1966). During the flight I had a conversation with the machine gunner at the door of the chopper. He said that most KIA's in Vietnam occurred during the first two weeks in country, before one had time to become accustomed to common sense precautions. Later, I wondered if the Marines paid him to say that to the incoming troops.

The next day came time for 3/9 to issue its new arrivals their weapons. We were taken out to an area near the base and issued M-14 rifles. The one the ordnance man gave me, looked as though it had been stored in a barrel of brine. It was so badly rusted that I refused to test fire it. At this time, I found out about the Marine-issued mosquito repellent. A fellow who had been there a while took a look at my M-14 and said," You need some bug juice." "Damn stuff won't do a damn thing for bugs, but it'll clean the hell out of a rifle." With some skepticism, I took his advice. Boy, was he right. It took off everything, rust, bluing, and all. My rifle was suddenly bright silver instead of the dull blue it should have been or the rust red it had been. I was a little concerned about it giving away my location to the enemy, but I would soon find out this was a common color.

The following day we mounted trucks to go to our assigned units. I was assigned to Mike Company 3/9, which was stationed several miles away at a little outpost called Phu Loc 6. Don't ask me where they came up with that name. Phu Loc 6 was a miserable place. When I got there, 1st platoon, to which I had been assigned, was out running a patrol, so there wasn't much to do right away. In the late afternoon, I was sitting down, leaning my back against an old overturned boat, watching the sun set and taking in my new world. Suddenly, from a tree line in front of me, a shot rang out and a bullet hit a couple of inches from my head, denting the boat. I scrambled around to the other side and started thinking about that gunner on the helicopter.

Shortly afterward the outfit got back from patrol and I first met the guys. I told my new squad leader, Sergeant Charlie Fury from Boston what just happened. The He said, "Yeah, we got a sniper out there, cranks off just one round every day about 5:30. Never have been able to catch him. Fortunately, he's not that good a shot. Fury was the leader of a pretty salty outfit, which called itself the 2nd Squad "Gonads." Fury — quite a name for a Sergeant in the Marine Corps. Charlie was nothing like his name would indicate. He was small and quite frail for a Marine and most of the men called him Charlie-the-Tuna.

On November 12, we heard that two nights before on the Marine Corps birthday, another unit was celebrating the event more than they should have. After the party broke up, security was not what it should have been, and a small group of VC sappers snuck

into the perimeter and killed a number of Marines in the CP.

One of the more notable characters assigned to my new outfit; was a machine gunner who was known as "The Old Man." The old man was a gentleman about 28 years old from Atlanta, Ga. He was not a big man by any means but had a remarkable ability to handle his M-60 machine gun. I was told a story of one of his exploits in the first few days when I was at Phu Loc. During a big operation, in the days when this area had been quite active, the old man and his M-60 observed a fleeing band of VC crossing a bamboo bridge. The M-60 tends to rise when being fired held in one's hands. The old man, however had a method of controlling this effect and he held the M-60 steady as he mowed down the whole troop on the bridge.

Fighting was not heavy at the time in this region, but there were some pretty interesting occurrences in these early days in Vietnam. We ran several relatively large operations into what was considered to be "Indian country," where the chances of contact were greater than Phu Loc 6. One of my early memories is of one such operation when crossing a large field of rice paddies. We were hit with an ambush from a tree line about 100 yards away. Miraculously, no one was hit and we all ran to the opposite tree line and busted through. Everyone found cover and began to return the fire.

Tom Jenkins, our radioman, took cover in a water bull hooch. He was too preoccupied with what was going on in front of him to notice that the hooch was occupied. Only when he heard a snorting and a frantic pawing on the ground did he turn around. When he did, he saw two very red, narrow eyes in the head of one of the largest Water Bulls any of us had ever seen. This guy had horns that looked like the front of a Buick. At this moment he made his charge and lifted Jenkins up and out of his home. Jenkins still had the large military radio on his back. Like a turtle turned over, Jenkins struggled to no avail. By this time, the water bull was coming out of the hooch to finish Jenkins off. Alertly, one of our point men, Alton Smith, spotted the danger Jenkins was in and emptied a 20 round clip into the behemoth. I think it cost the Marine Corps $200.

This was not the only run-in Jenkins had with water buffaloes. It is a wonder that Jenkins was able to maintain his wonderful sense of humor. Something about Jenkins infuriated water bulls. He never met a water bull that didn't hate him. A few days later we were spread out, sweeping a large field. A single water bull in the field made a beeline for Jenkins. Jenkins had developed a little dance he called the "Liberty Road Shuffle" that never failed to crack us up, which Groucho Marx must have inspired. This day he did the Liberty Road Shuffle in triple time, in tight circles until the water bull got tired of it and gave up. It took a long time before we quit laughing and resumed the sweep.

At this time and for a long time, we had two point men. We were fortunate to have two of the best. Our day point was Smitty, who had eyes like a hawk, good reflexes, and judgment. The night point was Tom Ike, a round-faced little guy with very thick glasses. He had an incredible temper, and nothing failed to upset him. I liked him at once. This Yosemite Sam from rural New Jersey had a sixth sense about the night. His navigational skills were phenomenal. Ironically, both Smitty and Ike later lost their lives in combat while not walking the point.

On these operations, there was a lot of walking involved. Walking in this sector of Vietnam meant crossing numerous rice paddies. Rice paddy dikes were treacherously slippery and difficult to remain upright upon. Being naturally pigeon toed, I developed a method of walking on the dikes that became, upon perfection, almost fool-proof. Private Parisi, on the other hand, was naturally slew-footed and he had a terrible time. Parisi was assigned to my fire team. It didn't take long to figure out that placing Parisi directly in front of me in column would add a good deal of humor to my existence in Vietnam.

Parisi fell into every rice paddy he ever saw. His gate reminded me of a camel — with ankles turned outward and being given the old type combat boots with cleats instead of jungle boots, with the combination, he didn't just lose his footing, he took spectacular falls. I can still remember one time Parisi, loaded down with flak jacket, helmet, probably 300 rounds of ammunition, and a ton of food (Parisi never went anywhere without a lot of C Rations), went literally head over heels, head-first into a very deep rice paddy. He disappeared under the water, and the only thing visible being his helmet floating on the surface, it seemed like several minutes before Parisi reappeared, spluttering.

It was on another of these operations that our old

friend, and a good man General Bruno A. Hochmuth, got killed. Bruno was flying in his helicopter, keeping tabs on the operation when a VC fired a rocket. Bruno and his pilot went down to a fiery death.

A common activity in this area was running Platoon Patrol Bases. A platoon would select a piece of high ground and two squads would set up a perimeter and sit all day long. The remaining squad would go out into the boonies and attempt to make contact. If successful, they would call in air strikes. On one of those days our squad was assigned a fixed position on the hill. It was a long hot wait. Toward the end of the day the active squad had luck and called in the flyboys. They were pretty close to us and were putting on a damn good show. This, combined with a pretty spectacular sun set, created quite a diversion as we packed up to return to dear old Phu Loc.

We move to Hill 22

After about a month at Phu Loc, we were moved to Hill 22 at the end of large, broad Green Valley, somewhat nearer to Danang. My emplacement was right next to an Ontos, like a tank but with six 106 recoilless rifles mounted on it. This one was situated to overlook the valley below and its ammunition was a Malais round, named for its French inventor. Loaded with thousands of little darts, it could be preset to spread out at any specified distance.

Mean monsoon season had started some weeks before. Its toll was beginning to be felt along with the cold. Most people had begun getting jungle rot. It was vital to take off one's boots and socks at least once a day to let your feet dry out. Monsoon season made things uncomfortable in more ways than the one cited above. I can remember being out on night killer teams, and my teeth chattering so loudly that I thought there was no way the VC would walk into the killing zone.

It was here on Hill 22 that I met Corpsman Stan Billowitz, a character that would have a profound influence on my life. We were coming back into the base one day when I spotted a fellow wearing the cap I had lost a few weeks before while out on patrol. This was no ordinary hat. An old salt right had given it to me before I left the states. It was the old style herringbone cap and this one had been worn in World War II and Korea. It was easily recognizable, as the old herring bone uniforms had long since gone out of issuance. I asked this fellow if I could look at his excellent cap. He proudly handed it over and sure enough, there was my name on the underside of the bill. I pointed this out to Stan, anticipating that I might have a tough time persuading him to give it up. He instantly recognized that it was mine, and we were fast friends from that point forward.

One day the platoon was running a patrol in an area called Happy Valley. No idea how it got that name, but it was a misnomer. Happy Valley was very heavily overgrown, loaded with VC and heavily booby-trapped. Another squad was walking point this day when their point man tripped a hand grenade, friction-fused booby trap. The VC used this device exclusively because they had no electrically triggered devices such as we used. This is the first time I had an opportunity to see Doc Billowitz in action. Stan tore down the trail and had the badly wounded point man patched up and ready for medevac in less than five minutes. I had never seen anything like it. Speed in health care was Doc's motto.

Doc and I became quite close, and I started to learn more about him. He was on his second tour of duty in Nam. His brother had been killed there the year before. He was educated at Cornell as an engineer. This lofty education did not keep Stan from pursuing his real passion. He and his wife purchased two semi rigs and drove freight all over the country. When they later divorced, Doc signed up for another tour.

A feature of Hill 22 that I found most disquieting was the outhouse. As I recall, it pointed not toward the valley but rather toward a nearby tree line. Outhouse is not a proper term since this one was more of a simple platform with no enclosure at all. One felt as though he were sitting in front of a firing line. I don't know that anyone ever got blown off the pedestal, but I always thought I was about to be sniped at while utilizing the facility.

We spent Christmas and New Year's 1966 on Hill 22. We and the VC had a mutually declared and mutually ignored "humanitarian truce" during this holiday period. Fighting was sharply reduced, however. Billowitz could usually get his hands on some pretty powerful cough medicine, and we had a relatively good time during the last week of 1966.

After New Year's on another patrol through a

nearby village, we discovered a cache of weapons under the floorboards of a hooch. It kind of looked like a buildup was under way. Since we were scheduled to move on, we didn't have time to worry about it. We were due for what was known as rebluing. The whole battalion would be removed to Okinawa for additional training, to pick up replacements, and have our equipment repaired and serviced. Before we could catch boats for Okinawa, we had to go to Danang and guard a bridge. We were supposed to shoot anything floating in the river in case it contained explosives. It was here that word came to us that Hill 22 was overrun a couple days after we left.

We head for the DMZ

Dong Ha, the northern most airstrip in Vietnam, held a rusting B-58 Hustler which attempted a landing there once and is where the Marine Division had moved its headquarters from Danang. We got on the ever-present trucks and were taken west about 15 miles to Mike Company's new headquarters, Camp JJ Carroll. Camp Carroll was the major artillery base at the DMZ, and bristled with 175MM "Long Tom" howitzers, the largest land gun we had in Vietnam, 8" motorized guns, 155s, and 40MM anti-aircraft guns, which were used to some considerable advantage against ground troops, later consisting of four of them mounted in a square tandem on a tank-like vehicle. It was reputed that if the 8" gun were to fire three rounds, without being re aimed, that two of the three shells would hit in the same hole, incredible.

When we arrived, Operation Prairie I was going on about three miles from the base. Air strikes were heavy and the guns at Camp JJ were going off constantly. There was a rumor that we were to join the fray, but we didn't. One outfit, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines took about 100 casualties on this the first of the Prairie series of operations.

The second was not long in coming, and this time we got involved. In Operation Prairie II, several other outfits got hit hard. While we were called out, Camp JJ got hit with a mortar barrage and the VC attempted to overrun it. The emplacement of one of my closest friends, Joe O'Neil from Waterbury, CT, received a direct hit. When we got back only one wall was still standing (with a Playboy pin-up which had suffered shrapnel damage, in a most vulnerable spot). During this action, one of the 40 MM antiaircraft guns fired so many rounds that it overheated, blew up and killed the guys inside.

Right before we left Camp Carroll for Prairie II, we watched as C-130s sprayed Agent Orange into a jungle nearby the base. When we went out, we went directly to this forest, into areas recently sprayed with Agent Orange as well as many times after. I have always felt that the numbness and blue color of my hands when the weather becomes cold is a direct result of this exposure to Agent Orange.

A distinctly interesting fellow arrived to join us about this time. Cpl. Sonny Vasquez had been in Vietnam some time and was an experienced Marine. I think his outfit had been badly hit and pulled from the field. Sonny, unwounded, was transferred to us. Sonny was from Hawaii and Chicago, full of funny stories and lore, and was an amateur magician who taught me a bit of it. Much more on Sonny, perhaps my greatest of all heroes, later.

We had several minor operations and patrols for the next week or so, one of which was called Prairie II, Phase 2. Another time, we went up north to rescue a couple of helicopters that had gone down at the DMZ, but we were too late. One night, we ran a patrol and got delayed crossing a river when up the trail on the other side of the river, some Marine 105 rounds came in and wiped the trail out. If it hadn't been for that river we would have been right there. That same night, Lima Company was setting up night ambushes in another sector from where we were patrolling. One of their squads got set up early and had been waiting, ready to spring their ambush when another of Lima's squads came walking by on the same path. The first squad had no way of knowing it was their buddies and let loose. I talked to some of the guys later. They had killed five and wounded the rest. What grief it must have been for these guys when they realized the mistake they had made. Things like that and the artillery that almost got us aren't supposed to happen. A minor mistake in navigation or reading coordinates can have disastrous results.

Another patrol we ran about this time was into a valley with a flowing stream that was very rocky with boulders of green slime. The walking was treacherous and, Parisi had his usual hard time. My patented pigeon toed approach didn't work on these boulders, and I performed the most spectacular fall of the day. This effort would have gotten a 10 if judged by Olympic officials. It was very similar to

Parisi's epic fall reported earlier, head over heels, entering the water headfirst. Only I didn't land in a rice paddy. The guy behind me had his camera at ready, and miraculously caught me as though I was doing a headstand on a boulder. Fortunately, my helmet stayed with me and buffered the blow. I've always wanted a copy of this photo but never managed to get one.

On Okinawa, we had picked up numerous replacements and our Battalion was now over strength. One of these replacements was Corporal Horny, who was assigned as our squad leader. Our first patrol went badly. We had only made it as far as the gate when a flare set there to warn of infiltration was tripped. The bright light destroyed our night vision. It also warned the NVA we were coming. We had to wait another half hour, lying by the gate to regain night vision since the enemy knew we were out there and apparently did not want contact that night. We had just another hot, sweaty, scary night patrol. Trying to make it back to base, we got lost. Horny had Parisi climb a tree to see if he could get the lay of the land. He proceeded to lead us on toward Camp Carroll which, of course, was just sitting there with alert Marines watching into the night, armed to the teeth. A Marine manning the lines threw a high explosive grenade, which blew up as designed. The shrapnel hit two Marines, including a fellow by the name of Engibretson who was sent back to the States with Fury. It also hit Parisi, putting a small crease across the palm of his hand. On another patrol trying to find rocket sites, we received word by radio to stay out the night. Since we didn't expect this night work we didn't have any rain gear with us. It started coming down in monsoon proportions about 6:00pm and just didn't let up. It began flooding so we found some high ground to avoid having to sleep and stand watch in gathering water. It rained so hard no one was able to sleep all night.

Not long afterward, we mounted helicopters to relieve Kilo Company at the Rockpile. This was my first trip to the western portion of the DMZ, going toward the high country. The Rockpile is a huge monolith reaching hundreds of feet straight up into the air. There was a helicopter-landing pad on top that partially hung over the side. I was told that in 1965 a company from 2/5 climbed the sides, hanging from trees in order to shoot their rifles to take the Rockpile from some NVA who were stationed there for observation purposes. If this story is true, I hope someone makes a movie of the incident.

Adjacent to the Rockpile is the Razorback. The Razorback, as its name suggests, is a sharp spine of a ridgeline about the same height as the Rockpile. During WWII, the Japanese fortified the Razorback with a network of tunnels and emplacements. 2/5 took the Razorback at the same time they took the Rockpile. Our mission here was simply to sit in fortifications, so the NVA would not take it back. We were not on either structure but rather near the base of the Rockpile. The hooch's were miserable little places, dark and damp. One night, just after I finally got to sleep, a baby rat fell out of its nest directly onto my face. For some reason, I took pity on the tiny little thing, placed it on the rack and slept on the floor.

After a couple of weeks, we made the trip back to Camp Carroll, marching ten miles or so to meet the trucks. The trek out was pretty scary as there were so many good ambush sites, this still being the same craggy country dominated by the Rockpile and the Razorback. I never really thought I would see them again.

At Camp Carroll, we were instructed to turn in our M-14's and to pick up the revolutionary new M-16. We didn't know what a fateful event this was to be until we got into heavy combat. The old M-14 was a magnificent weapon. It was heavier and the rounds were heavier, thus there was a weight factor, and not all M-14's could be fired on full automatic. These were minor disadvantages though compared with the M-16. The M-14 had the distinct advantage of ease of maintenance. It wasn't so sensitive as the M-16 proved to be. Should the M-14 malfunction, it could usually be fixed by simply banging it against a rock or other hard object.

Next came Operation Prairie III. I thought I had seen a fair share of the war up to this point. Prairie III was the real beginning of the war for me. We left on the 28th of March. It was 118 degrees. On the second day out, India Company got hit by a battalion of NVA about 2,000 yards away from us. They got overrun and lost 50 men. A sergeant from India was put up for the Congressional Medal of Honor. From then on Prairie III was one running firefight. One day, we were sweeping Hill 95 and approaching an enormous thicket. By this time, I had learned enough to walk point without screwing up and thus

could take some of the load off of Smitty and Ike. As I started to lead the Company in skirting around the thicket, a NVA machine gunner let loose at the second fire team in the column and hit Smitty six times. One round entered the front of Smitty's helmet and circled his skull between his helmet and helmet liner. This piece of good fortune didn't save Alton Smith. Despite frantic efforts by Doe Billowitz, Smitty died.

I was furious. I said, "Lets go!" to the first fire team. Following little trails that looked like they had been engineered by rabbits but were obviously also used by the NVA, I thought sooner or later, I was bound to come upon the enemy soldiers that shot Smitty. I didn't, however, and as staying in there too long was not a good idea, both from our standpoint and that of the Company outside the thicket, we left.

Operation Prairie III was the first time I saw numerous dead bodies littering a battlefield. I had seen isolated dead enemy soldiers before but nothing like this. The NVA had much less ability to retrieve their dead than we did; the area around where India got overrun was particularly gruesome. On the way back down south to Camp Carroll after the operation, marching on a very long, narrow, straight and lovely path, we came to a quaint little village. A young boy there had a bucket of beer. I, however, had no way of carrying any, because I was assigned the responsibility of carrying the C-4 plastic explosive, for which we had no use on Prairie III. When we did get back, we had one of those monsoon rains like only Parisi could sleep through. I remember sitting on my cot, with the trench lines and the hooch completely flooded, the water reaching the bottom of the cot, drinking those beers and listening to a tape recorder I had purchased on Okinawa.

We stayed at Camp Carroll a day or two after Prairie III, being detached from 3/9 and sent to Dong Ha, where we were assigned to reinforce 1/4, which had been badly beat up. They lost 249 men on Operation Beacon Hill. The first thing we did with these guys was to accompany Delta Company 1/4 in escorting a 60-vehicle convoy to open up a new major Marine base at Con Thien. Con Thien and Mike Company 3/9 were to make the cover of Life Magazine later in the year. The NVA were watching us closely and figured out what was going on. They defiantly didn't want a new base at Con Thien, but we were able to get there before they were able to muster enough force to stop us. That night they attacked, but we were able to repulse them. The next two days we devoted to building up the base. The same two days the NVA devoted their time to building up their forces.

Getting in was relatively easy, getting out was to be a bitch. The day we left was the hottest I ever experienced in Vietnam. It was 128 degrees and I'm certain one could literally fry an egg on the roof of any one of our tanks. We had gone only a short distance on this trail that was just wide enough for our tanks and the trucks we were escorting when the gooks hit. We weren't willing to stall the convoy in order to fight. So we had a moving firefight that paused only long enough for us to gather our wounded and get them evacuated. We were making about a mile every hour and a half. One of our guys, who had been in Nam longer than any of us, got hit. We placed him on top of one of the tanks. I didn't know how he could stand to be on the hot steel but he really didn't have a choice. His leg dangled over the side of the tank. At one point the tank brushed up against a tree next to this very narrow trail and the damage done to his leg as a result was probably worse than the wound he had suffered. It was really a bloody mess. It took five hours to traverse the trail, which had only taken about an hour a few days before.

We went back to Camp Carroll after this mission, and the next night we were sent out on an overnight ambush quite some distance from the base. We were dog tired as a result of Operation Prairie III and Con Thien coming so closely together. We slithered out of the base and made the long night march to our approximate destination. There had been a good deal of discussion that this was an inappropriate evening to attempt an ambush when obviously everybody was going to have a hard time staying alert or even awake. The decision was made to go off into a huge field of elephant grass that was about 6 feet high and where nobody was likely to stumble upon us. We needed a good night's rest. We hadn't gotten much at Con Thien. Out of habit, I suppose, we set up on a line just as we would have done if laying an ambush on a trail and set up a minimum watch, 2 people. Everybody else crashed.

A little later O'Neil heard something moving through the grass in our direction. He was the only one awake at that end of the line and couldn't move to wake up the rest of us. Then he heard enemy voic-

es. Apparently they didn't think they would meet anybody in the elephant grass either. O'Neil removed a grenade from his pouch and pulled the pin. Parisi had been asleep just long enough and right before O'Neil tossed the grenade, Parisi started snoring like a great clap of thunder.

The NVA heard a snore, were startled, and ran away rather than firing into the dark. This was fortunate, but what was unfortunate was that O'Neil had thrown the grenade pin down into the high grass. All this had not created much noise, and everybody was still asleep. O'Neil sat there holding on to his grenade, unable to release it as the spoon would fly off and five seconds later it would blow. He woke us up gently, not knowing how far the enemy had got off to. He explained what had happened and that his arm was getting tired. A brief search for the pin was enough to convince us that this would be a futile effort. Jenkins dismantled a part of the radio for some wire and we tied the grenade where the pin should have gone and spent the rest of the night attentively listening for the return of the NVA. They apparently didn't want us any more than we wanted of them.

We move to Khe Sanh
Khe Sanh & Hill 881 South

We stayed at Camp Carroll for about a week, running night patrols after digging and filling sand bags for reinforcement during the days. We were averaging about four hours sleep a day. We were miserable and thought we were ready for another operation. Up to this point, despite some pretty tough action, we had not lost too many men. Mike Company was still above T/O, having been reinforced on Okinawa. On the 24th of April, we received word that the NVA had massed at an area called Khe Sanh in the very northwest corner of South Vietnam. Helicopters were due any minute to pick us up — this time they were on time. They took us to Dong Ha where we boarded two C-123 transports for Khe Sanh. Khe Sanh was indeed a beleaguered base. It was under almost constant artillery fire from the hills above it. There was a large battle being conducted on a hill visible from the camp, which I later found out was Hill 861.

There was a lot of firing going on, both near and far, both small arms and artillery, both outgoing and incoming. Our airplanes had attracted artillery fire. The airstrip was shaped kind of like a thermometer, with a ball at either end at which the planes could turn around and take off without stopping. Upon hitting the runway, the C-123 lowered its tailgate an, as it practically slid into its turn at the end of the runway, we jumped off with our gear, and the medium-sized transport gunned its engines and gained speed. As it started to take off, explosions followed it down the runway and it made a narrow escape. In the days to follow many others would not be so fortunate.

Once out on the runway, we were greeted by frantic men who stuck their heads out of their bunkers just long enough to wave their arms frantically and shout to us, "Run like hell!" We didn't need a whole lot of encouraging. We dashed and dove into the trench line just as the artillery started coming in and before the C-123s lifted off. It was late in the afternoon by now and after the fire let up, we moved out to a nearby field, which had been planted with "potato trees." It was a very tense night spent there amongst rows of these stubby little trees, which apparently were eaten by the Vietnamese as a substitute for real potatoes.

The next morning we started off by foot for the large battle being waged on Hill 861. As we started to gain altitude and proximity to the hill, things once again became tense. We were crossing large fields and ridgelines. There was no way to know what we would find over each ridge. We were a pretty seasoned outfit and each man knew what to do. Sgt. Hamm, however, felt compelled every few minutes to turn around and yell at the top of his lungs, "Spread it out, watch for booby traps and keep the noise down. When we got past the foothills and on to Hill 861, we started passing by outfits that had been involved in the battle for the past couple days. They looked shellshocked. Little did we know that in a couple of days those of us who were lucky enough would look the same way.

The battle for Hill 861 was just winding down when we got there. The build-up of NVA first became apparent here two days earlier, when a platoon-size overwhelming force of NVA ambushed a patrol of Marines. They were killed to the man, but not all in the first moments of frantic fire. Some were taken captive and horribly mutilated — an effort to affect the morale of those who would inevitably stumble upon their bodies. The opposite was the effect. Emotions ran high. The effort to walk from Khe Sanh all the way to the top of Hill 861 had

taken most of the day. We climbed down the hill, crossing many streams near the bottom. The foliage was thick and nobody needed to be told that we were in deep Indian Country this afternoon. We found a suitable location to spend the evening and did so on full alert. I doubt anybody nodded out that night. The NVA were regrouping, however, and the night went without incident. The next morning we set out toward the west, again crossing numerous small streams coursing through very thick country. We found several hastily dug mass graves, enemy casualties of 861. In the late morning we came to a major trail and shortly after joining it, word arrived by radio to hurry at fastest pace in the direction of Hill 881 South.

There are two hills 881 meters above sea level in this area in very near proximity to one another. It was on these two mountains (they were hills in name only; Hills 861, 881N, and 881S would be classified mountains by any observer) that General Giap had planned his real ambush of the Marine Corps. They controlled the Khe Sanh valley and from here the NVA could, if successful, go straight down to Hue and cut Quang Tri Province off from the remainder of the country. Giap had his NVA dig extensive tunnel and bunker networks in advance of the battle, unknown to anyone except themselves. In several such bunkers, we later found 50-caliber machine guns mounted on bamboo tracks covering the ground below. They were well prepared.

Just before we got our call to sprint the three miles to 881S, Kilo Co. was marching up the mountain, alert but totally unaware of what they were walking into. They were marching directly into Giap's trap. The NVA allowed Kilo's first platoon time to get most of the way up 881 before they sprung. So well camouflaged were they that no Marine sensed what was about to happen. When the NVA hit, it was devastating. Most were killed in the opening volleys. They cut Kilo's platoon into three (approximately squads). Everybody from the top squad was killed except for one Marine named Flowers. Flowers, when the first burst raked the ranks, was hit and fell into a shallow depression in the ground. Remember, this was late morning. Flowers was to remain in this depression the remainder of the day, picking up six more wounds. Only the desperate efforts of the remainder of Kilo Company to save their platoon kept the gooks busy enough and prevented them from killing Flowers. Kilo lost 98 men killed that day, most in their first platoon.

While Kilo was doing what it could, Mike Company was doing what only one of its men, Parisi, had done before — the three-mile dash. Each of us, loaded down with 60 to 80 pounds of gear, truly sprinted to the base of Hill 881S. Rounding the last curve in the trail, it was an awesome sight that greeted our weary band. 881S was enormous and beautiful, very green and picturesque. It wasn't straight up like the Rockpile, but it was quite steep, with a major firefight going on along its slopes directly in front of us. A trail led around to the right of the battle and as our mission was to rescue, and as this trail seemed to be the only way to accomplish it, we didn't hesitate. We started up the hill with our squad still intact in the middle of the company. As an indication of how intensely the adrenalin was flowing at this time, one fellow in our machine gun section carried 1700 rounds of 7.62 machine gun ammo up the hill. This, in addition to all of his other gear.

A big danger in rescue missions is that as you start to save men, you also start to lose men. There is the danger that the combined casualties of your force and the one you are trying to save become greater than the ability of the remaining men to carry out. This process started almost immediately. As soon as the North Vietnamese force became aware that we were trying to flank them, they turned all their firepower on us. Lucky for Flowers and the others from Kilo no doubt. As we neared the top of the hill from this side, the sound was deafening. Most fire fights sound like, "bang, bang, bang" in rapid succession. This one, which was beyond anyone's definition of a firefight, was just one loud explosion. So many guns were going off at once that the individual reports overlapped and the artillery had not begun firing yet so these were all small arms producing one prolonged, loud explosion.

The first squads to arrive near the top had been hit pretty hard, and our platoon was called to pass through them to the front. As we slowly made our way forward, we stopped frequently as the lead men tried to make progress without losing their lives. During one of these halts, I looked over to the right, or north, and saw Marines on Hill 881N as though I was looking through binoculars — they seemed like they were next door. They were running around, obviously engaged in firefights of their own. On

another stop farther up the hill, lying down, I looked up at a nearby tree. I don't know if it was the excitement of the moment or what, but a gnarled piece of bark on this tree produced an image of Jesus so similar to the one usually depicted in American religious materials that it was uncanny. I didn't have long to think about this, for we had to move on. If it was a religious experience, it didn't sink in but not infrequently since, it has been a mystifying memory.

We passed familiar faces from the platoon giving up the point, most wounded or showing signs of severe shock. One of the wounded was Napier. His theory that carrying a lot of rounds was a waste of time and energy, for in any serious fire fight there were always lots of casualties from whom ammo could be procured. This would not get tested today, for he was being prepared for medevac. I never saw him again and don't know how seriously he was hit, whether or not he lived. I do know I thought at the time and have since that it was a pity when on this day, his theory was to prove both right and wrong — yet he was not there to see it.

When we got in front, we arrived at the edge of a large field, very near the top. I say large — large for this heavily foliated hill but not large by lowland standards. Perhaps, a little over sixty yards across. It was here, lying low in amongst the trees, some standing, others having already been knocked down, that I found Aponti. He was from New York City, and I had gone through Jungle Training with him. We also came to Vietnam together. He was a very good friend. At Danang, he was assigned to Kilo Company at the same time I went to Mike Company. Aponti had been shot in the forehead. The entire top of his head was gone. It was a sad moment, but one I could not dwell on till later.

A meeting was about to convene, probably the most remarkable meeting I ever participated in. The scene was directly behind the tree line before the clearing. Fury, Smithwick, O'Neil, Ike, Vasquez and I were hugging the ground behind some fallen trees. The bark, limbs and leaves of these trees were popping, crackling from the rapid succession of rounds that were hitting them. The trees were actually dissembling rather quickly and if we didn't do something to quell the fire soon we would lose our cover.

The meeting started with the question, "What the hell are we going to do?" We needed a volunteer, and no one was willing. Finally Vargas said: "Screw it," followed by, "you guys start firing from here, I'll run over there (pointing to the opposite tree line). When I get there, one of you guys go out to that hole (pointing to what appeared to be an old artillery hole about half of the way across the clearing to the left of the route Sonny planned to take, and directly on line with a machine gun that was doing a large part of the current damage to us.) Someone get those LAWs from Smithwick and work down this tree line and take out that mortar and the machine gun over there on the right."

With that, the meeting was over. I knew if I was fortunate enough to live to see another like it, I would be in deep shit once again. This unique, impromptu confab, made memorable by our stammering, stumbling, stuttering response to the poignant question, "What the hell we going to do?" followed by that most eloquent "Screw it!" was indeed incredible. He didn't really think we had come up with a permanent solution. He expected Vasquez to be dead in the next few seconds. Even if Sonny did make it out of the tree line, he had somehow to run sixty yards through a solid wall of steel. The enemy didn't know how quick Sonny was. While the meeting was punctuated with extraordinary indecisiveness, none now followed it at all.

We opened up blindly into the opposite tree lines, for to raise one's head would be to lose it. The NVA were briefly stunned, for up till then, only they had been shooting. They ducked for a brief second before rising again and resuming their volley. In the mean time, Sonny had escaped the tree line and was on his way. It took another second for the enemy to adjust their aim toward Vasquez. Sonny was probably capable of running a 10 flat on a normal day. This was no normal day and Sonny, like lightning, bobbed and weaved his way toward the opposite tree line, rounds kicking up dirt all around him. He reached it and dove through, getting hit, unknown to us, as he did so. It was only a flesh wound and Sonny went right to work. It was here that the first squad from Kilo had been when the trap was sprung. The only one of those guys still alive was Flowers, but there were many wounded there now from the other Kilo men who came to their rescue. Remember the danger of rescue missions. It had happened here. Kilo was helpless.

As fire was briefly deflected toward Vasquez, I ran the approximate 35 yards out to the arty hole on the

left. The NVA on that side wheeled around and opened up on me but too late. I dove and slid into the hole. Much to my surprise there were three fellows from Kilo who had taken up residence in the hole some time earlier when their relief mission started to break down. They were unwounded fortunately but very badly scared, petrified really, but awfully glad to see me. I got them organized and we started laying down a heavy volume of fire in the direction of the bothersome machine gun and the other NVA on the left side. Napier's theory would have been busted here. If I hadn't had plenty of ammo at this isolated position, things would quickly have gotten desperate. In the meantime, Smithwick with his LAWs was silencing the mortar and machine gun on that side. The volume of NVA fire was being seriously cut. For the first time that afternoon, it was back to "bang, bang, bang" in rapid succession — a bad firefight.

And just as Napier had predicted, there were plenty of weapons and ammunition lying around waiting to be employed by Vasquez. Sonny grabbed several of the idle rifles. He discovered that the tree line to which he had arrived was narrow and that there was another clearing on the other side of it with another tree line beyond from which the NVA were also firing at a rapid rate. He began running from one spot to another. At each stop, firing two M-16s on full automatic. He kept this up long enough to convince the enemy that at least a full squad had arrived.

I'm not sure if it was our training, our previous combat experience, the fact we all knew each other so well, instinct or just what it was, but we all sensed what needed to be done. A couple of guys had worked over to where Smithwick was. As Sonny would open up across the clearing, Smithwick and his band would start firing at the same time and so would I and the three guys from Kilo with me. When we did this, members of our company would run across the clearing to Sonny and the wounded from Kilo in the opposite tree line. Sonny and the rest of us would open up again and our guys started carrying the wounded back across the clearing. We were able to seriously subdue the enemy fire in this manner but unable to stop it entirely. Many of the porters were hit, as were the casualties they carried. It was a real race to defeat the danger of the rescue mission principle. It took quite a while to complete the task due to the large number of wounded. Many men made numerous trips across the clearing. Many got wounded at least once, but most kept going.

One of these was a kid named Karl Gimple of East St. Louis, IL, a great, strapping German from one of the toughest towns in America, a really nice guy. He got hit three times, once in the leg and twice in the back near the base of the neck, almost in the same place. The last of these brought his rescue efforts for the day to an end, but not before Karl had brought seven men across the deadly clearing. One he carried out on his broad shoulders had his head completely wrapped in bloody bandages. Another was Flowers.

Another guy who got hit ferrying the wounded across the clearing was my good friend Joe O'Neil. He was shot in the neck and the bullet remained there. I didn't see him for a couple of months until I went to Danang on my way to R&R. Miraculously, O'Neil was there, the bullet still in his neck. O'Neil sounded kind of like a frog, or rather like "Frog Man" Henry. A couple of years later, Charlie Fury gave me a call. He said O'Neil was working for the Post Office in his home town of Waterbury, CT and doing fine.

In our hole, the boys from Kilo and I had fired a huge number of rounds and our guns were quite hot. One of the M-16s we had malfunctioned, a recurring major problem with these silly looking guns that looked like they were made by Mattel. At last, the Marine artillery cranked loose. I guess whoever called it in gave coordinates to bring the rounds right up near the tree line where we had started off, not knowing that we were out in the clearing. The first barrage of 105 rounds (8", 155 and 175 rounds would have been much too large for this close quarters confrontation) started in the far tree line and continued walking straight for our hole. Each blast got about twenty-five feet closer. We watched transfixed, knowing that if this didn't stop soon we were in trouble. The last explosion was about twenty-five feet directly in front of us. We knew the next would either land in the hole or very near it. We braced for the shock without much optimism. It never came. The series had ended, thank God.

Other 105 rounds that came in were white phosphorous shells. White phosphorous, or "Willie P" as we called it, would burn through anything and keep burning. If it got on your arm, it would burn through and drop on something else and keep burning unless you dug it out or smothered it from the air, which it requires for combustion. Terrible stuff.

One such round exploded just a few feet away from Parisi. Willie P rounds were very fickle. Sometime they exploded out, other times they exploded straight up. This one went straight up. Parisi was not touched. The explosion did collapse one of his lungs, however, and Parisi got a million dollar medevac from the battle for Hill 881. He got his second purple heart.

Perhaps it was the same round, maybe not, for the last thing I would have been looking at during this period was Parisi but about the same time, a glob of white phosphorous came down on my arm and started burning the hell out of me. I didn't know what it was at first but soon figured it out. I dug it from my arm as fast as I could, for cutting myself a little extra was nothing compared to the horror of Willie P. I had seen a guy the year before when I was stationed at San Diego who had tripped a "Bouncing Betty" booby trap loaded with Willie P. A bouncing Betty has a spring under the grenade and when it is tripped the grenade bounces up to head level and explodes. This guy had lived but I am certain he wishes he hadn't. He was blind and almost all features of his face were destroyed. I could just make out where his nose and mouth had been.

When Sonny finally made the fast track back across the clearing we knew everyone alive was out of there. It was now time for us to do the same. The three other guys had spent a long day and there was no question of who would be the last to leave. As three of us started firing, the other, carrying the broken M-16, took off and made it safely back. Then it was just two of us firing, same thing. The third guy left and I fired on full automatic. Just me now. No one to suppress the enemy fire. I knew all enemy eyes would be on me. Fortunately, their volume of fire was nowhere near as heavy as when we first arrived. I took a deep breath and hauled ass. I knew I was going pretty fast, but it was one of those moments frozen in time. I felt as though I was in slow motion. Rounds were hitting at my feet and in front of me. It was the ones in front that worried me. As I finally approached the tree line I took the longest dive of my life. I crashed into the tree line blindly. A stick jabbed into my side as I landed, and I thought I had been hit. I lay there a few seconds before I realized it was not a bullet at all.

When I got up, I surveyed the carnage that was now in back of the tree line. The guy with the bloody bandages wrapped around his head was there, moaning. Flowers was there, having been pumped full of morphine, laughing and babbling about his going home now. Gimple and many others were still there despite the fact that the exodus had already begun. Smithwick and I stayed back at the tree line firing at the NVA while others gathered up the wounded and started to follow the column down the trail. When the last of them got out of sight, Smithwick and I started to follow. We noticed that there was numerous M-16s lying around on the ground. Smithwick and I picked them up. I don't know why since they were more of a liability than an asset compared to the M-14 or the AK47, which the NVA had. Smithwick and I had about seven of them each. Only one of the M-16s I carried worked and that one only would fire a single round at a time. The others had all double fed, where two rounds try to get into the chamber at the same time. It requires a ramrod to clear this problem, and since they were in short supply in these early days of the M-16, only one was issued per squad. Neither Smithwick nor I had one.

When we reached the last man in line we got a good view down the steep trail. My first thought was, "I am watching a train wreck." The scene was horrible, pathetic. Slightly wounded men carrying badly wounded men. There were hundreds of them. We had started up the hill with almost 250 men and had left many back on the battlefield, but now we also had the survivors from Kilo. The line was unbroken from me all the way down to the base of the hill.

Rather than pursuing us, the enemy had a better plan. As they had registered all important points on this hill in advance for their mortars, this trail was obviously an important point. They knew the trail would be full. They opened up. The first round hit almost in the middle of the column and directly on the trail. I couldn't believe what I was watching. After the smoke cleared, a large gap was in the line where there had been three or four men, carrying other men. Now we were back in the saving business. The trail was very narrow, there was no room to pass, and therefore there was nothing for me to do, being literally the last man in line — only to watch our rear and helplessly watch what was going on in front of me. The situation was ripe for disaster. Fortunately, the first round was the most accurate

and while there were more casualties due to these mortars, they were not nearly as severe as they might have been.

We took off down the trail and around the curve to safety, to where we had gotten our first look at 881 earlier. There, behind the protection of the high ground around the curve, lay several dead NVA. They hadn't been there when we had come through earlier. I had an overwhelming urge to start shooting these already dead NVA soldiers but resisted it. I later thought I should have gone ahead and done it. The Marine Corps surely would have thought I had lost my mind and I might have gotten medevaced.

It was late in the afternoon by now, and it promised to be a very touchy evening, plenty to do first. Choppers were continuously coming in with enormous numbers of medevacs, to bring us the water and ammo we were almost out of. After all the wounded were gone, there weren't too many people left around. The first platoon of Mike Company, which that morning had about eighty men with the attached machine gun and mortar units, was now down to fourteen in the field. Only two of those fourteen were unwounded — Hamm and his radioman. Billowitz patched me up with some kind of salve and gauze.

We were directly on a line between 881S and the South China Sea where the USS Iowa stood with its 16" guns. Now that we were off the hill, they were cleared to fire. As these enormous rounds would come in directly over our heads they would sound like freight cars. They sounded very low, and there were some very tall trees in our neighborhood.

This was a very uneasy night, with heavy artillery being sent into the hill by the Iowa. The NVA were unable to get out of their tunnels to walk over and finish us off, which they easily could have done. The next morning we didn't know what to expect, but what transpired made for a very interesting last day of April. Hundreds of airplanes appeared on the horizon. They were of every type and description. Phantoms, Crusaders, Sky Hawks, F-105s and even old Sky Raiders (a dive-bomber, first produced at the end of WWII and now in the service of the South Vietnamese Air Force.) The planes arrived and formed into holding patterns stacked on top of each other waiting their turn to make bombing runs. As those who had dropped their ordnance (mostly 500lb. bombs) left, others arrived. As this went on all day long, I thought there wasn't a hill left. The flyboys came back the next day and did the same thing. April 30, I was told later, set the all time record for the most number of air strikes in the history of world warfare.

The 2nd of May we were assigned the job of taking back Hill 861. Our squad, with just four men left, had the task of walking point. I was the new squad leader by default — there simply wasn't anybody left. Fury, Horny and Vasquez had been hit two days before and were gone, along with the rest. I was it. With Ike (a bandage around his head like the drummer boy in that painting from the Revolutionary War) in front of me, we walked around the curve and got our first look at the hill since April 29th. It wasn't the same hill. A few days before it had been a lush, verdant, overgrown mountain. The sight that greeted our eyes now was from WWI. No foliage, not even many craggy stumps of tree trunks. Everything was brown or black and broken. It was still a big mountain, probably only about two meters shorter than it had been before.

Rather than going around to the right as we had the other day, we took the direct approach, approximately the same route Kilo had taken on its ill-fated trip up the hill. When we started to get up to where the heaviest fighting had been, we began seeing the carnage. There were bodies everywhere, many blown into little pieces by the intensive bombing. The piece that sticks in my mind to this day was a Marine jungle boot with a shinbone sticking up out of it. Here were Giap's tunnel networks and emplacements. The bunkers with the 50-caliber machine guns on bamboo tracks were here. A lot of dead NVAs were here, blown to bits by the 500 lb. bombs and the 16" shells. Not a live NVA soldier was left. All those who lived through the barrage had fled the hill. One Marine we found had been dead only a few hours. We thought we were certain when we left the hill that we had gotten all of the live Marines out, we were wrong.

As we approached the top of the hill, one of those sudden violent thunderstorms rolled over us. A bolt of lightening came out of the sky and hit about thirty yards away. It hit two guys from Kilo Co. They were both killed. Imagine going through what these guys had gone through in the past several days, only to be killed by a flash of lightning after the battle was over. Like the face of Jesus in the bark of that tree, there

must be a message here somewhere. Jesus, like most everything else on Hill 881, got blown up in the bombing. It was not the first and was not to be the last piece of lethal irony, as you will soon found out.

When we got to the very top of the hill, we began to dig. This was easier than usual since all the earth had been loosened and turned over for us. As I began to dig I pushed my shovel into flesh. A little more excavation produced a dead Chinese soldier. He had pictures of his family, his passport, a Chinese compass that was far superior to our own, a deck of cards and $148 in North Vietnamese currency. In an old, beat-up bunker about 30 feet away was a dead NVA soldier who had been exposed to the heat for a couple of days and was getting pretty ripe.

Numerous helicopters arrived at the top of the hill throughout the afternoon bringing a variety of welcome things. They brought mail, water, cigarettes, and SP packs. There were also reporters curious to see the scene of battle. They also brought us Doug Sawyer, who had the great good fortune to be on R&R during the big fight. He was amazed to find almost all of his good friends no longer with us and to be witness to this spectacle of destruction. Also arriving by chopper was a new Platoon Commander. Sgt. Hamm, who had been acting Platoon Commander for months, now gave way to Lt. Williams from Georgia. He convened a platoon meeting. I am sure he envisioned a larger force to gather around him. When only a dozen or so showed up, he wanted to know where the rest were. There were no others. That afternoon, one of the reporters by the name of Ernie Zang, who I was told was a famous war correspondent, interviewed me and had his photographer take some pictures. I was nearly black from sun and dirt, torn clothing, bandaged arm, and down to only 155 pounds.

During the following 12 days, we stood watch on Hill 881 by night and during the day we ran patrols, attempting to harass the fleeing NVA to assure that they did not attempt to retake the hill. On one such patrol, we uncovered a mass grave containing about 250 dead NVA soldiers from the battle for Hill 881. As a fallout of the big fight, Sonny Vasquez was put up for the Navy Cross (should have been the Congressional.) Smithwick and I were put up for the Silver Star. Karl Gimple, to my knowledge, was not put up for anything, which would constitute a raw deal for him, because, with the exception of Sonny and O'Neil, he did more than anyone to save lives that day.

During this period, my left arm with its Willie P burn became infected and painful. The blood vessels began turning green, oozing a foul odor, when Doc Billowitz took a look and announced that I had early symptoms of gangrene. Doc pointed out our current depleted state of manpower (especially leadership) and that I should avoid being pulled out, if possible. After a week of so under his care, my arm started to get better.

Nights were pretty interesting. The first night back on the hill was particularly scary, as intelligence spread the word that there was to be a massive attempt to retake the hill. Despite the fact that this didn't make any sense at all, everybody took it seriously. Around sunset, Arty started firing white phosphorous rounds into a valley near the hill on our side. The white clouds created by the explosions, drifted upward getting caught by the slanting sunlight, taking forms. To me, the image of a circus elephant. Later, in total darkness, the sound of a C-47 became apparent. It was circling over the valley, when suddenly there was a mad, whirling scream and a laser of light belching from the plane. It was the first time I had ever saw a gattling gun fired — every fifth round was a tracer round. The stream of light was continuous, like a laser beam from the plane to the ground. When the gun stopped, the beam slowly receded from the plane until all the rounds hit the ground. I later read that a three-second burst from a gattling gun would put at least one round in every square foot of a football field.

On other evenings, we witnessed B-52 strikes in the distance. Everyone has heard that these strikes are massive but until you have seen one, you can't fathom how enormous they truly are. Dozens and dozens of 2,000 lb. bombs exploding on a line, created such a light show that is beyond description. A few days later, we patrolled the area and saw first hand the destruction unleashed, a path of overlapping craters about 40 feet across and maybe 30 feet deep. I don't know if there had been any NVA troops there at the time, but there wouldn't have been any trace of them if they had been there when these massive bombs exploded.

When it was time to leave the hill for Camp Carroll, our squad was assigned the task of walking point for the entire battalion, which was 3/3. During

this time period, there were a lot of shifting units around. We had to march about 12 miles to meet our trucks for the drive back east. This was rough country with numerous ambush sites. It was a particularly tough job of navigation through country we had never been in before. Ike was magnificent walking point this day. We went over mountains and down into deep valleys, crossing murky, green streams that were hot and steamy.

Tom had an unorthodox method of carrying his rifle. He would sling it over his shoulder so that the rifle rode upside down under his arm. It would seem that this would make it slow and clumsy to bring up and fire when, in the point position, one needs to be ready to fire in a split second. Tom had perfected his method of flicking the rifle around upright and firing in a heartbeat. As we were near the end of this march approaching a thicket, a covey of birds flew out of the thicket making a great noise. Tom, with his good reflexes, whipped around, took aim, and didn't fire. The only thing about this series of events that surprised me was that Tom was fast enough not to squeeze the trigger.

When we got to the road, we found the trucks had not yet arrived. This gave us time to remove the leeches, which had accumulated on our legs from the long march through the valleys and streams. I had 27 of the little bastards on my ankles and calves. I started to burn them off with a cigarette, which is not as satisfactory a method as using that salt, which did a much better and far less painful job. The trucks finally arrived, and we were off on the long treacherous route from west to east along the DMZ. Route 9, in the western sector, winds around mountains and passes by steep cliffs. One of the trucks carrying some men from 3/3 steered over one of these cliffs, killing several of the boys in the back. Not unlike the lightning a week and a half before, this tragic, totally unnecessary accident just wasn't fair to guys who had so recently survived so much.

We passed by the Rockpile and the Razorback once again and through the craggy country beyond. Once back into the flat-forested country beyond the Rockpile area, we came upon a band of Marines who were walking toward the Khe Sanh area. Our trucks stopped long enough for a brief conversation. When I asked one of them which unit he was from, the Marine told us that his unit was the 26th Marines. Though I hadn't heard of the 26th at that time, I sarcastically told him, "Y'all are pretty famous."

I apologize to this Marine today, for needless sar-



Front row, L-R: The Old Man, Parisi, Jenkins. 2nd row: Smithwick, unknown, Gimple. 3rd row: Horny, Engelbretsen, Hebert. 4th row: O'Neil, Wyeth, Hoffman. 5th row: Wright, Hootan

casm on my part. In fact, the 26th Marines were to earn a great deal of acclaim eight or nine months later at Khe Sanh when they endured an incredible 77-day siege in early 1968.

While the effort of 1968 has probably gotten more publicity, due in part to the common practice in 1967 of intentionally under-reporting American casualty figures, the differences between the two incidents are significant. In 1968, the battle at Khe Sanh lasted 11 weeks. In 1967, it lasted only about one week, so all the casualties were extremely compressed into a few days. By 1968, numerous improvements had been made to the defensive positions whose construction had been started by us the year before. In 1967, Hills 881N, 881S and 861 were raw territory. In 1968, the battle was largely a defensive one and was strongly supported by heavy artillery and aircraft from the beginning. In 1967, the battle was offensive and initially not supported at all.

One old gunnery sergeant who had been in the Marine Corps since World War II and had been a participant on Iwo Jima, maintained later that Hill 881S in 1967 had been the only thing he ever saw that compared to the battle of Iwo Jima. A Marine Officer later declared that on April 29, 1967, the United States should have declared victory in Vietnam and left the country for good.

In surmising the battle for Khe Sanh in 1967, I will quote from the official Marine Corps account of the battle for Khe Sanh in 1968. "Attempts were made to obtain logs for fighting positions and bunkers in the canopied jungle flanking the hills. This idea was not successful. The trees close to 881 and 861 were so filled with shrapnel from the battles the previous spring that the engineers did not want to ruin their chain saws on the metal." The NVA were not through, and we stayed at Camp JJ only one day before being called out on Operation Hickory. During that day, I was given a Combat Meritorious Promotion to Corporal.

❋

Postscript

I want to dedicate this article to my father, who encouraged me to write about my experiences in Vietnam. I finished the article on the 2nd day of November 1990. My Dad passed away on the 4th of November 1990 at age 82, before he had a chance to read it. He was a great man and lived life to the fullest. He was a professional tennis player, and a leading expert on the Civil War. He published one major book, and numerous other publications. He was a coach and professor at the University of Chicago, where he was involved in creating the first Atomic Bomb in Oak Ridge, TN, where I was born. He was a Vice President of American General Life Insurance Co. I miss him a lot, God Bless his wonderful soul.

Arrival

Into Vietnam I fly
A place where many will die.

When the door opens
I get my first feel of the heat
I'm covered in sweat
Before I walk even a few feet.

As I leave the plane I can't believe my eyes
There lay fifty body bags
Containing dead GI's.

While walking across the tarmac I look around
Searching for a place to go
If "Charlie" should lob in a mortar round.

When into airfreight we are led
I am wondering
"How many of us will go home dead."

In the terminal many GI's going home I see
All of them looking
As if they are staring straight through me.

When into their faces I look
The one thing they all share
That blank look that thousand yard stare.

Already for the end of my tour I cannot wait
Here I sit contemplating what will be my fate.

Jack Neeley

Mom's White Hair

by Chaplain Ray William Stubbe

Mom's hair turned white one night she heard evening TV news:
A chaplain killed at Khe Sanh, Vietnam, she knew her son was there, where few chaplains breathed life
Was it he? Her heart waited-seconds stitched on eternity's loom while a week wreaked wreckage
As his battlefield oozed into her soul resonating its "battle rock" horror, terror, and pain eventually, She learned he's OK.
As OK as anyone could be in constant shelling, daily death next breath willing, never assured in that place, that paradise of beauty and tranquility now made hell as bombs scraped away all life reverberating explosions in her beautiful tranquility now made hell as bombs scraped away future and hope and life.
A dew of tears, hair turned white, quake crumbling, crushing carefully crafted cathedral constructions housing hopes
Was her soon to be cancer and major heart attack its aftershock
For years I never knew what happened to her,
My own battle pain cocooning me in encrusting hard shell shielding of emotional shelling:
I beheld her white hair merely a result of her age.
She even dyed it to remove its gray (like combat veterans hide their wounds, physical and emotional); I even advised her to display its gray reality.
One night within days of return from battlefield's horror -she assumed I was already asleep-- she tenderly, kissed my forehead
Later, she heard word eruptions from volcanic dream sleep she later mentioned to me.
I never knew what had happened to her, to me-the overtones I didn't hear while fundamental battlefield musical scores replayed WHOMP – BOOM – WHOOSH – ZING SNAP – SCREAMS in presto speed, tarantella madness, forte intensity constantly reverberating, resonating again and again and again its horror song scratched into the LP record of my life replaying its stuck noisome noise while extended death vibrations inverted blessing, inverted peace, inverted life dash to pieces all peace, and one night mom's hair turned white.

Ray W. Stubbe, 11 October 2003

Honoring Our Support Life Lines

CBMU 301 - Navy Seabees

Home was Where They Dug It



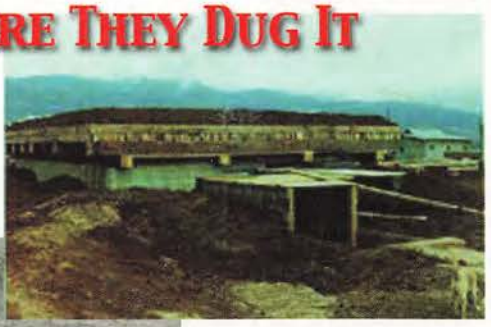



Force Logistics Command

Beans, Bullets and Bandaids







Ask and Ye Shall Receive

The Khe Sanh Veterans' Red Clay Issue 58 Spring 2004

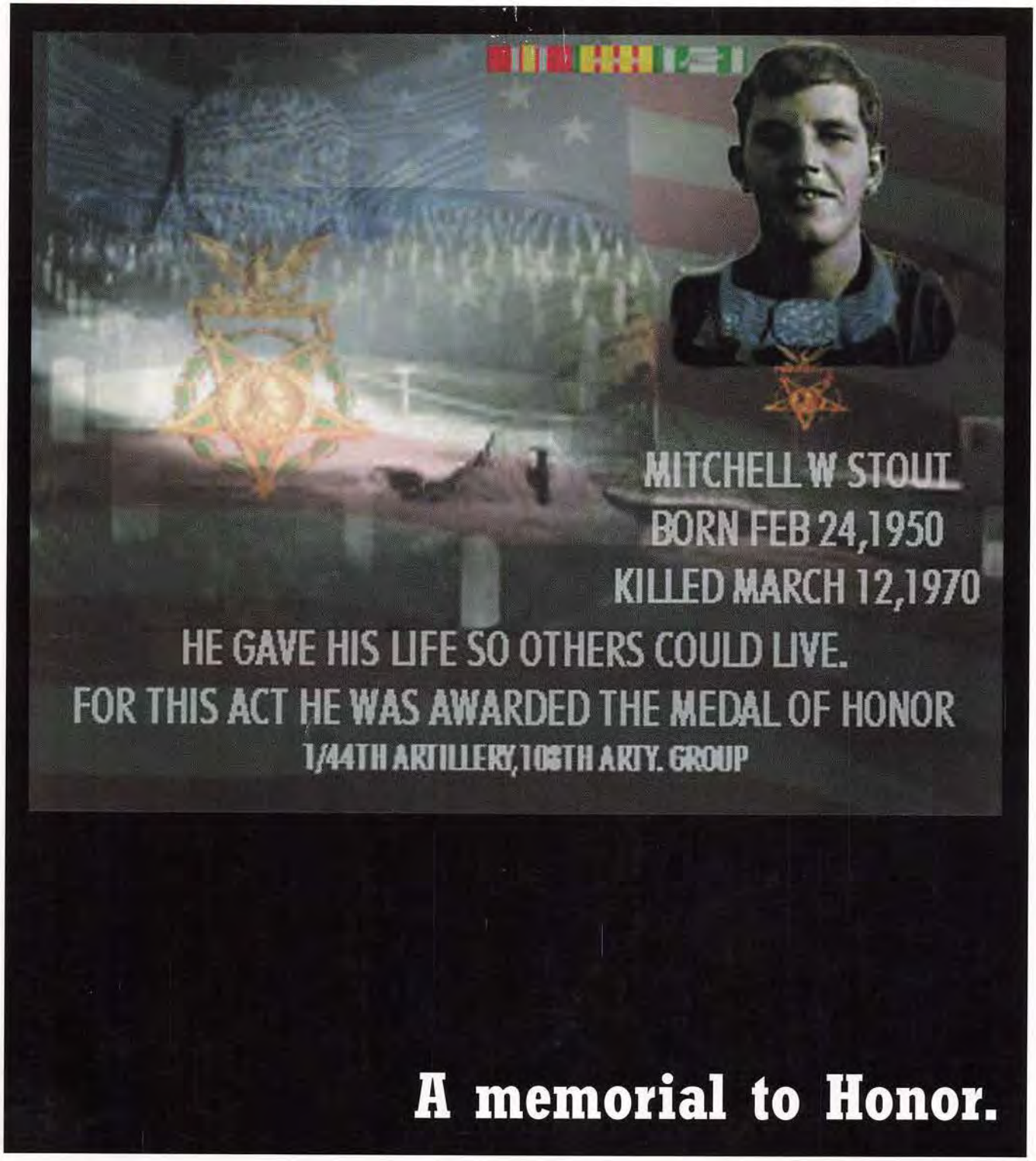

A memorial to Honor.

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...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

Notes from the Editor

Dear Ernie & Linda:

Kare & I arrived yesterday afternoon for our reconnaissance mission of Key West at the beautiful home of Judy & Chuck Van Soye. We report to both of you that Key West is superb. The weather is absolutely delightful and just a little breezy right now. We departed San Juan Island at 40 degrees with rain to arrive here for 74 degrees and clear. Chuck & I will be fishing tomorrow through Thursday. Friday, Kare & I will drive up to Fort Lauderdale to meet you late in the afternoon. You are going to love meeting Judy & Chuck when the cruise pulls into Key West. By the way, we are having Florida lobster for dinner.

Semper Fidelis,
Ross

❋

I got this this morning. I'm leaving Sacramento in a couple of days. I've got a fourteen-day speaking gig on Celebrity Cruise Lines. It's kind of like singing for your supper. My partner Linda and I each do four half-hour talks on our specialties and we get most of our trip covered. We also get to invite guests. It has been a bad winter this last year. Man, oh, man. So many brothers came down with the ol' PTSD bug. Me too. This is why I'm getting out of Dodge and heading for the sunshine: Two back-to-back trips on the Celebrity Century to the Eastern and Western Caribbean. Seven days with Ross and Kare, then seven with Freddy J, my old C/O. Life is good again. Things are definitely looking up.

Ernie Spencer

Reunions

3/9 & F/2/12- BLT 3/9 Inc., is sponsoring a reunion July 6-10, 2004 in the New Orleans French Quarter. Bail Money is not provided. For any questions, contact POC Stew Three NineUSMC@aol.com, home telephone (727) 581-5454, in South Florida. For reunion data, visit our website at www.gomershouse.com (click on reunions). All eras, all friends & support elements are welcome to attend.

Publisher Notes

I have finally finished the updated version of the Khe Sanh Veterans Unit Directory. Hopefully they will be printed at the same time as this newsletter. I just sent out a second notice for the payment of dues. If you have not remitted your dues please do

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Bruce Geiger.....Member At Large
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William Jayne.....Member At Large
Thomas Ford.....Member At Large
Robert Moxley.....Member At Large

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so, ASAP before the upcoming reunion. We need to know how much money we can budget for the upcoming Magazines, and what type of improvement we can make.

Note From the Secretary/Treasurer

We have (3) openings for the position of Member-at-Large for the Khe Sanh Veterans Board. Please mail your recommendations to the Nominating Committee — James Wodecki and Frank Taggart — prior to the reunion. John Pessoni, Cliff Treese, and Ron Shouse have shown interest in the vacancies. Contact Nominating Committee at:

James Wodecki Ph: 972-727-2997
EMail:Jim_PJ_Texas@mindspring.com

Frank Taggart Ph: 541-962-7191
Email: franktaggart@eoni.com

Reunion Committee Update

The plans for the reunion are going as scheduled. If you have not made your reservation and registered, please do so ASAP. Some of the planned events require prior notice of total attendance for discount prices. Again, this is the finest hotel at which we have ever held our reunion. Although we are paying a little more than last year, we have negotiated other benefits that far offset the additional charge. The hotel has agreed to lower the price of beer to $ 2.00 a bottle, and threw in an outstanding Continental FREE Breakfast, every day. Remember, this is a 4-star hotel and one of the finest in the State of Texas. The Hotel has yet more amenities for our group, and has bent over backwards to make our stay enjoyable, and most accommodating. They have also set aside (3) special suites that can be converted to one whole barracks type accommodation. (Two Suites with the middle converted to sleep four additional occupants). That breaks down to approximately $ 20.00 a night for those selecting those accommodations. Trust us, the rooms are still far beyond the luxury we have enjoyed in the past. If you want more information on those special rooms, contact Jim Wodecki ASAP, as they will disappear fast. Prepare for an incredibly great time.

Christmas in Vietnam 1966

In Vietnam It's hard to see,
a million lights upon a tree.
For as I sit here alone,
I see this Christmas again be born.
On this, the day before,
I see our savior being born.
It is a great day, in our life,
it's one we'll never forget to light.
But then we think as he was born,
of all the sins we may have worn.
The wise men came behind the light,
to see the babe that was born that night.
They saw it fit to bring him gifts,
as we do now, upon the 25th.
We all forget what was meant to be,
that we may live for eternity.

Chuck Lease

Obituaries

Dear Tom,

I wrote this little note to let you know that my husband, Warren T. Prado, Sgt. USMC Vietnam Veteran, and a proud member of the Khe Sanh Veterans, passed away Feb 19, 2002.

I thought I had written when he passed away. He died of Agent Orange and God knows what else. He is buried here at Fort Sam Houston Cemetery, San Antonio, TX. He was a member of MSD (Military Detachment Services). These are veterans who provide complete military services for non-active veterans. He was a Post Commander of the American Legion, La Habia, Ca., and also the VFW here in San Antonio. He was an excellent Father, Husband and Marine. He was all Marine and very proud to be an American.

God Bless you all,
Mrs. Yolanda Prado

Memorial Page

Those Remembered	Remembered by:
All those who perished at Khe Sanh	Ron Shouse B/Btry 1/13
1st Lt. Kim W. Johnson, USMC, H&S Co 1/26, KIA 23 Feb 68	Nick Romanetz C Co 1/26
Cpl. Ruben C. McMakis, USMC, L/3/26, KIA 14 Apr 68	Thomas A. Pierce L/3/26
Sgt. Robert Arnold, USMC, W Btry 1/13, KIA18 Aug 68	William R.Yates W/Btry 1/13
L/Cpl. Wilbur "Willie" Stovall, USMC, Hq 1/13, KIA 09 Mar 68	Robert J Holscher Hq/Btry 1/13
SW-2 Edward Cody Adams, USN, CBMU-301, KIA 16 Apr 68	Larry Kubley CBMU-301 Det B
Sgt. James Neil Tycz, USMC, A Co 3RD Recon, KIA 10 May 67	Sharon Pelon (Friend)
L/Cpl. Marco F. Mueller, USMC, F CO 2/3, KIA 15 May 68	Raymond F. Edwards A Co 1st Engrs
Van Tassell, USMC, D CO 1/26, DOW, KSB	Douglas S. Corbett D Co 1/26
Cpl. Raymond L. Plunkett, USMC, D Co 1/9, KIA 30 Mar 68	Larry Ballard H&S Co 2/26 81MM
L/Cpl. Michael Kilderry, USMC, C Co 1/4, KIA 7/6/68	Daniel Burton C Co 1/4
PFC Johnny L.Vaught Jr., USMC, 3RD CAG, KIA 6-68	Steve Riddle Scout/Snipers 1/26
PFC Samuel Lightman, USMC, D Co 1/26, KIA 11/02/67	Jack Peterson D Co 1/26
L/Cpl. Louis C. Goi, USMC, B/Btry 1/13, KIA 18 Mar 68	Clifford J. Treese Jr B/Btry 1/13
Cpl. Ronald L. Dempsey, USMC, B/Btry 1/13, KIA 28 Feb 04	Clifford J. Treese Jr B/Btry 1/13
L/Cpl. Roger M. Hurd, USMC, A Co 1/26, KIA 21 May 67	Joseph J. Oliver HMM-163
HM3 Charles T. Lagenfeld, USN- E Co 2/26 KIA 17 Apr 68	Mark F. Tierney M/Co 3/7
L/Cpl. Paul F. Stedman, USMC-A Co 3RD SP KIA 26 Feb 68	CT Green A Co 3Rd SP
Sgt/Major James T. Gaynor -USMC KIA 25 Feb 68	Charles Fetter 1st MAW
Capt. Danny J. Coonon, USMC-VMF-AW-115 KIA 10/8/68	Charles Fetter 1st MAW
Cpl. Frederick W.Bivins Jr., USMC-H CO 2/3 KIA 30 Apr 67	Eugene Lessman FLSU-2 COMM
Major Lawrence R Moyer, USMC-MAG-16 KIA 31 Aug 67	Charles G. Gerard VMO-6
PFC Edward L.Towslee, USMC-A Co 1/9 KIA 04 Apr 68	Terry Tillery C Co 1/4
L/Cpl. Michael J. Kilderry, USMC- C Co 1/4 KIA 06 Jul68	Terry Tillery C Co 1/4
Members of I Co 3/26	Richard Gallegos I Co 3/26
All 26Th Marines KIA & WIA at Khe Sanh	William Aylward E Co 2/26
Sgt. Dennis Herb, USMC, B Co 3rd Recon Passed Away	Charles Fetter 1st MAW
Tessa M. Dunlap, Mother 94 YOA	Lee C. Dunlap FOB-3 MACV-SOG
Jan M.Dunlap, Wife (44Years)	Lee C. Dunlap FOB-3 MACV-SOG
Col. John Studt, USMC-C/O 25Th Marines (Reserve)	Robert A Hall HQ Co CAC-0
Warren T. Prado, USMC- B Co 1/26	Khe Sanh Veterans
Carl Fennell, USMC Passed Away	Khe Sanh Veterans
Capt. Joseph R.Meeks, USMC- E Co 2/26 -2 Sept 2003	Sally Meeks (Wife)
Sgt. Frank Jones, USMC. Snipers	Vince Gable 26Th Mar Snipers

Donations

ALLEN, Donald R.
ANDERTON, R.H.
AYLWARD, William
BARBER, Michael F.
CAMPO, Carl C.
CASEY, Maurice
COUNCIL, Michael R.
CRUZ, Raymond
DROOG, Daniel L
EDWARDS, Raymond
EUSANIO, Thomas B.
FOSMO,Harold D Jr
GABLE, Vince
GERARD, Charles G
GOWER, Lloyd R.
GUZMAN, Oscar J
HALL, Robert A.
HOLSCHER, Robert J.
JONES, Bruce E.
KNIGHT, Paul.
KRAMARCZYK, David T.
KUBLEY, Lawrence W.
LARSEN, Larry J. J
McCLAREN, Roland
MILES, James J
MILLOCK, Carl
MITCHELL, John
NANGLE, James
PAUL, David
PELON, Sharon
PETERS, Thomas R
PIERCE, Thomas A
RICHARDSON, Dennis L
ROMANETZ, Nicholas S
SHOUSE, Ronald E
SMITH, Ralph H
SMOYER, Nancy
SILVA, Wayne
STRIETER, Jan K
TAUBER, Melvin L
THOMAS, James
TIERNEY, Mark F
TILLERY,Terry
TREESE, Clifford J
WEINRICH, Allan
WINKELMAN, Ted
YATES, William R
ZDUNCZYK, Richard

We Got Mail

Sharon Pelon, a teacher and loyal member of the Khe Sanh Veterans for years, has taught her students to love and respect our veterans. Through her organization, LASIA, she has involved her kids in many activities honoring veterans. On this occasion her students learned about veterans, and Gold Star mothers, and POW/MIA awareness. The following are a few letters her students wrote to veterans on Valentine's Day

❋

Dear Veteran,

Everyone who cares about you should gather around and think. We should think about how glad we are to have all of this freedom and peace. All veterans and Gold Star mothers and people in the army have changed an important part of my life and a part of my heart. Since my dad is in the Army, I love and respect him and all of the things he did in the Army. I even respect people who aren't in my family but still in the Army. I just can't tell you how much you've been a part of my life. I will always remember all of the people that fought in the war and all of the people in the military just like my dad.

Sincerely, Katrina

❋

Dear Khe Sanh Veteran,

We have a lot of snow in Wisconsin. We just had another storm. We shovel and shovel. We also skate, sled, throw snowballs and build snowmen.

We learned about onomatopoeia today, that is when a word sounds like the real sound. Some words are buzz, splash, thud, and plop. We have seen these words in stories and poems. Sometimes the words sound funny.

We made you a valentine. We are learning more about veterans, Gold Star Mothers, and men who went missing. We think a lot of you and thank you.

All of the kids of LASIA

Tom,

Enclosed is my check for my membership renewal, I am proud to be a member. Since we talked on the phone about a year ago, I have saved enough money to become a Life Member of the KSV. Reading the **Red Clay** magazine and talking to other veterans made me realize what a mistake it was to keep things inside of me all these years. When I discovered I was not the only one who has done this, it made my life a lot better. Things finally fell into place. I have to write a letter since I do not have the Internet with e-mail.

I am hoping that someone in the organization will remember me. I arrived in Vietnam from Okinawa, in 1967. After returning to Okinawa, I once again returned to Vietnam in January of 1968. I joined B Co 3RD Recon, commanded by Captain Reynolds. I was sent to Hill 861a to set up communications. That was my first meeting with Captain Earle Breeding and the men from E Co 2/26. Most of the guys could not pronounce my name, so they just called me "Corporal Jack." I was wounded on 05 Feb 1968 when the NVA attempted to overrun the hill.

I once ran an ad in the VFW Magazine looking for fellow Marines from E/Co 2/26. Bill Maves responded and said he remembered me, since he did all the medevacs. I was also contacted by a Michael Worth who asked me if I remembered a guy standing on a rise throwing grenade after grenade at the attacking enemy. Tom, if that was you, thanks, you probably saved my life keeping the NVA off of my back.

If anybody remembers me, I hope they will write. I am so proud to be a Marine, and being a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans.

Semper Fi,
Dan "Cpl Jack" Jachimiak
6608 Revere Dr.
Derby NY, 14047

Health & Benefit News

Record Budget for VA 2004

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will receive a record budget of $64 billion for the current fiscal year, up $4.2 billion from the previous spending level. The budget for fiscal year 2004, which began Oct. 1, 2003, comes as VA is putting the finishing touches on the administration's proposed budget for fiscal year 2005, which will be formally unveiled Feb. 2. Among the major items in fiscal year 2004 budget are $28.4 billion (including $1.7 billion in collections) for health care, up $2.9 billion from the previous year, and $32.8 billion in benefits programs.

Other budgetary categories include:

- $143.4 million for the National Cemetery Administration, an $11 million hike over last year, plus nearly $32 million in grants for state cemeteries.
- Full funding to expedite the handling of veterans' claims for disability compensation and pensions, a total of $1 billion for all programs.
- Nearly $176 million for health care and other programs to assist homeless veterans, an increase of over $22 million from fiscal year 2003.
- $101 million to support state extended-care facilities, $3 million more than last year; and $522 million for construction, plus the authority to transfer another $400 million to health care construction.

Hepatitis C

For several sessions of Congress, Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.) has fought a lonely battle. He has sponsored legislation (H.R. 73, the Veterans Comprehensive Hepatitis C Health Care Act) that would provide testing for the hepatitis C virus for each veteran who served in the active military, naval, or air service during the Vietnam era, or who is considered to be at risk, is enrolled in the VA health care system, and who requests the test, or is otherwise receiving a physical examination or any care or treatment." If the test is positive, "medically appropriate" follow up tests would be provided, as well as appropriate treatment "in accordance with, the national protocol for the treatment of hepatitis" C."

Frelinghuysen's colleague, Sen. Jon Corzine (D-N.J.), introduced a companion bill, S. 1847, on Veterans' Day 2003.

The immediate thrust is to find co-sponsors for this needed legislation in both houses. Then, ideally, the appropriate subcommittees will hold hearings and leadership will push for passage of these measures. The VVA is one of the major organizations seeking more sponsors to get the bill passed.

Department of Veterans Affairs News Release 2003

VA To Grant Benefits To More Vietnam Veterans

WASHINGTON – Based upon a recently released review of scientific studies, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony 1. Principi has decided to extend benefits to Vietnam veterans with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL).

"Compelling evidence has emerged within the scientific community that exposure to herbicides such as Agent Orange is associated with CLL," Principi said. "I'm exercising my legal authority to ensure the full range of VA benefits is available to Vietnam veterans with CLL."

The ruling means that veterans with CLL who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War don't have to prove that illness is related to their military service to qualify for Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation. Additionally, for more than 20 years, VA has offered special access to medical care to Vietnam veterans with any health problems that may have resulted from Agent Orange exposure, and this decision will ensure higher-priority access to care in the future. The decision to provide compensation was based upon a recent report by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) that found among scientific studies "sufficient evidence of an association" between exposure to herbicides during the Vietnam War and CLL.

The IOM review, conducted at VA's request, was the latest in a series spanning the period since 1993 when the independent, non-governmental agency first published a report for VA that examined thousands of relevant scientific studies on the health effects of various substances to which American service members may have been exposed in Vietnam.

"On the modern battlefield, not all injuries are caused by shrapnel and bullets," Principi said. "This latest IOM study and my decision to act upon it are the latest examples of VA's continuing efforts to care for the needs of our combat veterans."

VA requested the IOM panel of experts to focus on CLL in their report because of veterans' concerns that CLL shares some similarities with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, which the IOM had previously connected to Agent Orange exposure.

Principi ordered the development of regulations to enable VA to begin paying compensation benefits once a final rule takes effect. Publication of that regulation is expected in the near future. VA will publish will publish further details, when available, on its Web site at http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/benefits/herbicide/.

In the meantime, veterans with questions about health-care, compensation and survivor benefits may call a toll-free help line at 1-800-749-8387 for information. VA also encourages Vietnam veterans who have not done so to request a subscription to Agent Orange Review, VA's free newsletter that will keep them abreast of developments on this issue and other policies and scientific findings in the future.

Newsletter subscription information is available from the help line number above. Back issues and additional information about Agent Orange are available at another VA Web site at http://www.va.gov/agentorangei.

Agent Orange–Herbicide Exposure

Vietnam Veterans Benefit From Agent Orange Rules

They are society's leaders. They run businesses; direct organizations; hold political office. In their mid-50s, they are at the height of their social and economic power, earning more than others in their age group. Yet, with their success, they can't escape the inevitable health concerns of a graying population.

They are Vietnam veterans, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is concerned they may regard diseases associated with aging, such as prostate cancer, as just another illness rather than as the result of their military service in Southeast Asia.

VA wants these Vietnam veterans to know that they may be eligible for compensation and health care for certain diseases associated with Agent Orange, the defoliant sprayed to unmask enemy hiding places in the jungles throughout Vietnam.

Special health care and compensation benefits are available to the 2.6 million men and women who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975, only 3,300 of whom remain in uniform today. Those discharged during that period are the largest group of veterans receiving VA health care and monthly compensation.

Yet a small percentage of their disability claims are for illnesses scientists have listed as being associated with Agent Orange. VA presumes that all military personnel who served in Vietnam were exposed to Agent Orange, and federal law presumes that certain illnesses are a result of that exposure. This so-called "presumptive policy" simplifies the process of receiving compensation for these diseases since VA foregoes the normal requirements of proving that an illness began or was worsened during military service.

Based on clinical research, the following diseases are on VA's Agent Orange list of presumptive disabilities: chloracne, Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, porphyria cutanea tarda, respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx and trachea), soft tissue sarcoma, acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy and prostate cancer. A regulation is being developed to add diabetes mellitus.

In addition, monetary benefits, health care and vocational rehabilitation services are provided to Vietnam veterans' offspring with spina bifida, a congenital birth defect of the spine. A new law authorizes health care and monetary benefits to children of female veterans who served in Vietnam for certain additional birth defects. Those additional benefits under the new law will not be payable to the beneficiaries until Dec. 1, 2001.

Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war also are eligible for a complete physical examination. If a VA physician suspects a disease might be related to Agent Orange, VA will provide free medical care. Those who participate in the examination program become part of an Agent Orange Registry and receive periodic mailings from VA about the latest Agent Orange studies and new diseases being covered under VA policies.

Vietnam veterans and their families can contact VA for more information about these benefits. For the Agent Orange Registry physical examination, call a

local VA hospital or clinic listed in the government pages of your phone book. To file a compensation claim for a current disability related to Agent Orange, veterans can call 1-800-827-1000 for an application form, or visit VA's Web site:

www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/benefits/herbicide/AOn01.htm

Announced From Washington Concerning New Vietnam Memorial Museum:

President Bush signed into law legislation authorizing the construction of a Visitor's Center to accompany the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial — "The Wall" on the National Mall. It will be an educational facility, built underground very near the Vietnam Memorial Wall. It will include history and tributes to all 3 million plus men and women who served in the Vietnam War.

Photos in memory of those who gave their lives and are listed on the Wall will be presented, plus more than 60,000 items that have been left at the Wall. The Memorial Fund will be responsible for raising funds needed to build and operate the new Visitor's Center. There will be no federal funding of this project, which will cost an estimated $13 million to build. Veterans, and organizations raised $8.4 million to build the Vietnam Memorial. This project will be a healing as well as an educational memorial for future generations to review and remember. Construction time is estimated to be three years.

Legislative News

H.R. 2297, the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003, which became Public Law 108147 on December 16, 2003, authorizes $1 billion over the next ten years for new and expanded benefits for disabled veterans, surviving spouses, and children. This law allows disabled veterans who own or want to start a small business, to receive on-the-job training for periods of less than six months, or when that training is needed to obtain a license to engage in a self-employment occupation, or is required for ownership and operation of a franchise. The new law also requires federal agencies and departments to give special consideration in federal contracting and procurement. In 2002, disabled veteran-owned businesses, received only 0.13 percent in federal contracts, despite a 3 percent statutory goal.

From the VVA Newsletter Jan-Feb 2004

In September, in an attempt to legislate down the long wait for appointments experienced by too many veterans, Rep. Ginny Brown Waite (R-Fl) introduced, the Veterans Timely Access to Health Care Act. Subcommittee hearings have already been held on the bill. H.R. 3094, which would make the standard for a veteran seeking primary care from the VA, 30 days from the date the veteran initially contacted the VA. Care would be rendered at the appropriate VA medical center, or at non-VA facilities should the VAMC be unable to accommodate the veteran within the specified time frame.

VVA testified in September before the Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health in support of this bill

The goal of another piece of legislation, H.R. 2379, which seeks to improve access to health care for veterans residing in rural areas, faces a struggle. Language in the Rural Veteran Access to Care Act of 2003, introduced by Rep. Tom Osborne (R-Neb.), attempts to curb what some see as discrimination in deliv- ery of VA health care services to veterans residing in rural areas.

The problems these bills address are at least in part a result of inadequate resources. The administration request for each veteran using a VA medical facility, is only 60 cents on the dollar as compared to a Medicare patient. Until the veterans health care funding base is restored, admirable solutions offered by Reps. Osborne and Waite will not have the desired effect in restoring equity and reasonable standards for care at the VA.

In May, Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-Colo.) in May introduced S. 1092, the National War Permanent Tribute Historical Database Act. A companion bill was introduced in the House by his Democratic colleague, Rep. Mark Udall. This legislation, which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, authorized the establishment of a national database for purposes of identifying, locating, and cataloging the many memorials and permanent tributes to America's veterans. Sen. Campbell is also the author of S. 330, a bill that calls for severe criminal penalties for anyone who willfully

injures or destroys, or attempts to injure or destroy, any structure, plaque, statue, or other monument on public property commemorating service in the Armed Forces. A related bill, H.R. 2076, sponsored by Rep. Christopher John (D-La.), called for grants to repair veterans memorials. In May, these bills became Public Law 108-29.

Facets of several of the aforementioned bills have been rolled into the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003. H.R. 2297 passed by the House in October by 399-0; its Senate companion, S. 1132, passed on the last day of October by unanimous consent. If signed into law by the President, the act would:

- make permanent the State Cemetery Grants Program
- increase the specially adapted automobile grant from $9,000 to $11,000, increase the specially adapted housing grant from $48,000 to $50,000 for the most severely disabled veterans and from $9,350 to $10,000 for other disabled veterans
- add cirrhosis as a presumed service connected disability for ex-POWs
- eliminate the requirement that an ex-POW must have been held in captivity for at least 30 days in order to qualify for presumption of service-connection for several specific disabilities
- make permanent the VA home loan program for members of the Selected Reserve
- expand eligibility for benefits to children born with spina bifida to veterans who served near the demilitarized zone in Korea between October 1, 1967 and May 7, 1975

Finally, several bills have been introduced with a common theme and goal: to insure adequate funding for veterans health care. These include 8.50, introduced by Sen. Tim Johnson (D-S.D.); H.R. 2475, the Veterans Health Care Full Funding Act, introduced by House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Chris Smith; and H.R. 2318, the Assured Funding for Veterans Health Care Act of 2003, intro- duced by Rep. Lane Evans, ranking member on the House Veterans Affairs Committee. It is the position of VVA that we must restore the funding base to at least parity with recipients of Medicare, and then move to insure that reasonable increases match increases in medical inflation as well as by greater demand on the system.

Tom,

I thought you, and some of the other members, might be interested in the enclosed from *The Economist* December 13 issue. If someone had suggested this when we were all looking out over the perimeter back when, the laughter would have been pretty intense.

It really is a weird world.

Regards
John wheeler

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Planting Trouble – The Coffee Industry

The Economist, December 2003

The village of Khe Sanh, a former battleground in the hills of central Vietnam, is something of an oddity: a booming coffee town amid a global coffee slump. During the mid-1990s when coffee prices soared, Vietnamese farmers planted coffee bushes with abandon. In a decade, the country grew from the world's 16th biggest exporter to the second, helping to create a worldwide coffee glut in the process. This week, as coffee farmers and industry officials gathered in Geneva for a crisis meeting, the Vietnamese are pushing ahead with a new strategy, one that could shake up the market all over again.

The plunge in coffee prices brought ruin to many farmers worldwide. According to a new report by Oxfam, a British aid group, the slump is boosting the drugs trade. In Ethiopia, which produces some of the finest coffee, many growers have uprooted their bushes to grow Khat, which can be chewed as a narcotic and sold for more money. In other countries, such as Peru, coca, which can be processed into cocaine, is being grown as an alternative.



Ray Stubbe

Felix Poilane and some pilots at his his coffee plantation in Khe Sanh. July 19, 1967.

Vietnamese coffee growers have also suf-

fered because of the glut in the market. But not the farmers in Khe Sanh, who have prospered and in the process prompted a nationwide recovery scheme. The key to Khe Sanh's survival is arabica, pricier than the robusta variety most Vietnamese farmers grow. Vo Danh Ke, who owns 2.7 hectares of arabica bushes near the village, says they earned him the money to but a new motorcycle, a television, floor tiles and roofing. His neighbor, Dang Sy Tich, explains how he made enough from his arabica crop to pay off his initial investment in land in just four years. The price has fallen recently, he concedes, but he is still earning a better living then he did growing cassava and rice. "I want to stick with coffee," he concludes.

At the moment, arabica accounts for less than 5% of the coffee bushes in the country. But production has doubled since 2000, according to VICOFA, the Vietnamese growers association. Doan Trieu Nhan, VICOFA's chairman, explains that cheap labor and high productivity make Vietnam one of the world's lowest-cost producers of coffee of all varieties.



Ray Stubbe

Workers spreading outcoffee beans from Madame Poilane's coffee plantation, Khe Sanh village. 1967.

So he reasons the solution to low prices is not to stop growing coffee, but to improve quality and switch to varieties with higher margins. Vietnamese farmers did cut down perhaps 10% of their coffee bushes last year, he admits, but mainly in infertile areas where they never should have been planted in the first place. Instead, VICOFA is encouraging struggling robusta farmers to switch to arabica. Mr. Nhan hopes the same factors that made Vietnam the world's biggest robusta-producer will propel an expansion of arabica.

That is easier said than done. Most of Vietnam's coffee grows in the south, where the climate is not suited to arabica. A special training scheme, whereby big international buyers such as Kraft and Sara Lee, teach growers how to meet their quality standards, also promoted the spread of arabica in Khe Sanh.

In general, however, the Vietnamese government makes a mess of agricultural improvement schemes, says Mandy Woodhouse of Oxfam. It has found the poorest coffee farmers on the least fertile land receive the least help from the government in terms of training, subsidized inputs, concessionary loans and so on. Many of these farmers come from ethnic minorities, speak little Vietnamese, have little formal education and so have the least access to information about prices. They are the people, by and large, who lost money at the height of the slump and who had no safety net to tide them over.

On the other hand, middle-class Vietnamese are investing successfully in arabica without any help, much as they rushed into robusta in the middle 1990s. Duong Xuan Vien, another farmer in Khe Sanh, says he gave up his desk job at a state-owned firm and moved to the hills to grow coffee. "No one wants to quit," he says. " Even now we're planting more."

I am a Khe Sanh Siege Marine. I was stationed on the main base during the Siege, and was assigned to headquarters company, 26th Marines. I have been trying to attend the July 4th reunions for the last 3 years, but I am a builder, and am very busy at that time of the year. The main reason that I have not been able to attend is I live in Wichita, KA, and the people go wild here with fireworks during that weekend. Each year a number of homes and businesses catch fire and some of them have burnt to the ground. I stay outside until about midnight each night, watching for fires. It sounds nearly as bad as 'Nam, if you can believe it. There are laws against shooting fireworks in the city, but the cops can only catch a small percentage. When I move from here, I will be able to attend some of the Khe Sanh Reunions. I am really looking forward to it, as I have much to offer once I get going.

As you see, I am ordering a Khe Sanh Vet hat. I was hoping that it could look like that dirty red soiled clothing that we wore at the end of the siege. But I am still thankful that I can buy one. I will wear it proudly with my Marine Corps emblem and the two purple hearts.

About five years ago I had another case of bleeding intestines, so I gave the VA one more shot at telling me what was causing this condition. They claimed that it was caused by post combat stress (PTSD). I was not able to work, so after a year and half of my refusing to go to their meeting and to enter their program, I finally had no choice but to give in. It has

changed my life for the better. However, a side effect of their therapy was to make me write about my experiences. I could only write about a half an hour per day. However, I was determined to do my best. To make a long process short, I have begun writing a couple of novels about 'Nam.

I have been writing poems and songs about 'Nam and veterans. I had originally planned on sending them off to the song agents, one at a time. But the dam broke, and I found myself writing an album instead of just a few songs. I have received tremendous help from others. Everyone wants to jump aboard, after they read a few of the songs. This is the reason this Khe Sanh Hat letter is so long. I had stumbled across an amazing event that apparently happened close to the Khe Sanh fighting, wherein Capt. John Gardner, a Marine helicopter pilot crashed and died in Laos on June 5, 1967.

I read the same Capt. John Gardner, reappeared in April of 1968, and led a lost Marine patrol out of the jungles and back to the CP. I have been doing as much research as I possibly can on this story. I found it unbelievable. But I cannot find anyone from the crash in '67 or in the lost Marine patrol in '68. I have not turned over every stone on my end yet and will exhaust all leads in the next month or so. I ran across the name Jim Wodecki, and my memory locked into the 2002 Khe Sanh Reunion in Texas. So I thought I would kill two birds with one letter.

In going through the Capt. Gardner story, which I know little of, could you offer some additional light and/or guidance on it? It would be very helpful. I do not want to put anyone out in regard to their personal time, but if you could point me in the direction to more facts regarding this story, I would be very grateful. I have run this story past a couple of military people and it gives them goose bumps. When I'm done, their eyes are very wide open with that strange stare. I know this could be an intriguing story if it can be put together. I do a lot of late night writing and will push on this story. I am sending you some of the paper work I have came up with, so you won't need to duplicate it, and I will do serious digging just as soon as I finish a couple of writing projects I am committed to.

If you are not able to help, I will not be disappointed as I have had to really dig for what little I came up with and realize how difficult it is. I would love to find out who was in that lost patrol in '68. They might have been one of ours at Khe Sanh. I do have a Khe Sanh Combat Manual, and will begin reading it cover to cover soon, where maybe some more leads will be found. The reason I am so gung ho on this matter, is that I may write a historical review about events. I feel like they are too special to be taken to the grave. Anyone who survived the siege realizes that the Man upstairs was watching over us. These events are much too special to let die with us vets. I realize that it is very touchy, as I totally ran from anything that was about Nam or about the military for 30 years. Thanks to the PTSD classes, I can now face a little of it at a time. I am recording what we went through for the sake of history. Well it is good to break the ice with another Khe Sanh survivor, and I am trying to find a way to attend the Reunions in July. I am planning on moving, so it may be a better situation in the near future.

Thanks so much for your time. I do plan to be submitting some poems and writings to **Red Clay** in the near future.

PUBLISHER'S NOTES: Lee, I am so glad to hear that you have finally realized that opening up and discussing your service at Khe Sanh, and writing about them has brought you relief.

The story you have been researching about Lt. John Gardner not being KIA and actually leading a lost patrol back to Khe Sanh is totally fictional. Your own research and facts supplied by the Marine Corps and others, as written below, shows it did not and could not have occurred — even with the wife of Stephen Hanson previously identifying her husband as a captured POW.

As you know, in September 2000, the remains of John Gardner, Stephen Hanson, Timothy Bodden and Bill Laney, were recovered at the site of the crash and positively identified. The only remains still missing are those of Ronald Dexter. This should not deter you from any further research or writing about your experiences. Keep up the good work and please keep sending us more articles for publication.

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Synopsis:

On June 3,1967, Capt. Steven P. Hanson, pilot; 1stLt. John G. Gardner, co-pilot; Sgt. Timothy R. Bodden, crew chief/door gunner; L/Cpl. Frank E. Cius, door gunner; SFC Billy R. Laney, SFC Ronald J. Dexter, SFC Charles F. Wilklow and an unknown

number of ARVN personnel, all passengers, were aboard a CH-46A helicopter on an extraction mission in Laos.

The USMC aircraft picked up a U.S. Army Special Forces team attached to MACV-SOG, Command and Control, and the ARVN troops they were working with. Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observation Group (MACV-SOG) was a joint service, high command unconventional warfare task force, which provided their "cover" while under secret orders to MACV-SOG. These teams performed deep penetration missions of strategic reconnaissance and interdiction which were called, depending on the time frame, "Shining Brass" or "Prairie Fire" missions.

The aircraft received extensive automatic small arms fire upon takeoff from the Landing Zone, took numerous hits and crashed 350 meters from the LZ, located about 15 miles inside Laos west of the A Shau Valley. The helicopter did not burn on impact, and continued to receive fire. Three ARVN troops were able to return to the LZ where the troops remaining at the LZ were extracted the following day. The troops waiting at the LZ could not search because of hostile fire in the immediate area. Air searches located the survivors of the crash, but they could not be evacuated. The on1y American found to be in a position to be safely evacuated was SFC Wilklow.

SFC Wilklow gave the following account of what happened to the crew and passengers aboard the CH46:

SFC Dexter appeared uninjured and left the wreckage with a large number of ARVN troops. Capt Hanson was wounded and outside the helicopter, but stated that he had to return to get his carbine. The Marine Corps believes he died of the wounds he received when the aircraft was overrun, although Hanson's wife later identified her husband in a widely distributed Vietnamese propaganda photograph of a pilot being captured.

When last seen, all the other Americans were still in the wreckage, and enemy troops (the U.S. Army states they were Viet Cong; the U.S. Marines say they were North Vietnamese Army, possibly a joint force of both) were tossing grenades toward the aircraft with no attempt to capture the personnel inside. Wilklow left the crash site, and noted that gunfire suddenly stopped. He continued to evade the enemy and was picked up 3 days later.

When Mr. Ky, the Nung Commander was being evacuated by the last helicopter out, he noted several men (undoubtedly Dexter and the ARVN) in a large bomb crater firing red star clusters from a flare gun.

Frank Cius was taken prisoner and released from Hanoi in 1973. He was one of the dozen or so captured by the Vietnamese and taken immediately to Hanoi and were called the "Laos" prisoners. In reality, none of the dozen had been held in Laos. Ronald Dexter, according to Frank Cius, was captured, and died in captivity on July 29, 1967.

John Gardner, according to the USMC, died on the ground after the crash of the aircraft due to intense enemy fire. Billy Laney was last seen lying wounded on the floor of the aircraft between a crewmember with a broken back and the door gunner with a head wound.

NOTE: The USMC states that Bodden, crewchief/door gunner, was shot in the back and never left the aircraft, but reports received by the National League of Families indicate that he was definitely alive after the aircraft crashed. The U.S. did not know Cius was captured until he was released, evidently believing he never exited the aircraft. Wilklow had indicated that the Vietnamese were not trying to capture the occupants of the aircraft. Therefore, as door gunner, he must have been the "door gunner with the head wound", and Bodden the "crewmember with a broken back".

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The following information was supplied to me by Jim Wodecki.

The SOG team had left Khe Sanh airbase to see if a 52 strike had knocked out the HQ for the entire Ho Chi Minh Trail. The 9man SOG HATCHETT force was inserted by helicopters from HMM-165. One of the birds crashed and killed the pilot. Major Richard Romine took command of the ground unit during a tremendous ground battle. Romine was later awarded the Navy Cross for his actions. Shark-3, a Chinook 46 from HMM-165, piloted by Captain Hanson, co-pilot lst Lt J. Gardner, landed during the rescue operation, and embarked SFCs Dexter, Laney and Wilklow. Laney had already been wounded in his back. As the plane departed, SSgt Bodden was hit in the stomach and Laney took sev-

eral more hits. Both engines were knocked out and the plane crashed. Eventually Cius and Dexter were captured, Wilklow was rescued three days later, badly wounded and suffering dehydration. Laney and Dexter died on July 30th 1967 en route to Hanoi. Dexter's body was buried. Cius was released and returned to American forces on 05 Mar 1973.

We Got Pictures!



Starting over, Tom Ryan, B Co 1/9 with new family: Bunny, Shannon, Bubba, Shea'lee



Proud owner's car. C.T. Green, A Co, SP HE Section



Glen Rappold, Jim Goggins, Nancy Sinatra, Ron Shouse, Cliff Treese

Tom,

Here are some photographs I took as we departed for Khe Sanh, and after we arrived at Khe Sanh.

Alex Dominguez, Hq Bn. 1/3 Sub Unit Comm



1/3 Radio Comm

1/3 radio relay site





The Home of Alex Dominguez, Khe Sanh.



1/3 ceremony to honor Marines KIA and WIA



Alex Dominguez, Khe Sanh.



Martha Raye signing Alex Dominguez's helmet

Of Interest to All Marine Veterans of the Battle of Khe Sanh

The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation is planning to develop the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

The following is from a letter sent by Lt Gen Ron Christmas, President, The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation

It takes a tremendous amount of vision to embrace the idea of a museum that has not been built yet, so I am particularly grateful that supporters with foresight like you stand with us.

That is why, as our plans develop for the National Museum of the Marine Corps, I want to share with you glimpses into what will make our museum rival the finest in the world.

While no museum setting could ever possibly replicate the dangers Marines face in battle, we will use state-of-the-art technology to create exhibits that do justice to the heroism and courage of Marines. Yet make no mistake — it will take the most creative and well-researched designs to sufficiently pay homage to the tremendous sacrifices of Marines.

With your support, we will create dynamic exhibits — like the ones described in the enclosed Exhibit Briefs — that will immerse our visitors in pivotal moments in Marine history.

These "immersion exhibits" will portray critical scenes from World War II, Korea and Vietnam. From the savage battle for Iwo Jima ... to the depiction of the hardships faced by Marines fighting in the Toktong Pass in the dead of winter in Korea. .. to a helicopter re-supply/medevac at Khe Sanh during the height of the 1968 Siege in the Vietnam War... visitors will be engulfed in the sights, sounds, even smells of Marines in action.

State-of-the-art polypanel screens, multi-directional speakers, moving platforms and figures, lighting effects, and other multi-media techniques will be used to re-create a particular moment in our history within these immersion exhibits — figuratively, transporting visitors through time and space.

These kinds of no-holds-barred exhibits will provide a valuable window into our glorious history, and instill the deepest respect for the Marines of our past, present, and future.

And I'm certain you agree that the dramatic stories of Marine valor deserve nothing less than the very finest museum technology and design innovation.

In fact, some of the immersion exhibits we plan to bring you eclipse anything that has been seen in any other museum known to us — truly world-class exhibits that are a fitting tribute to our remarkable heritage.

As you can imagine, Marine history simply cannot be vividly portrayed through the conventional, two dimensional displays that are commonplace in museums. It is only through action that the heroic actions of Marines can be adequately conveyed.

That is why the National Museum of the Marine Corps must go beyond what is expected of museums to capture defining moments in history through the eyes of Marines. Indeed, our Marine heritage deserves more than the conventional displays found in many museums.

As you'll see in the enclosed Exhibit Briefs, immersion exhibits — while costly — will give visitors a sense of the risks that Marines take every day to protect our country. But it will be well worth the extra expense when we create a museum that is worthy of our proud heritage.

With your continued commitment today, we will ensure that our Museum will capture our unique, remarkable history in the most compelling way. I know you share my enthusiasm for preserving and celebrating the precious heritage of the United States Marine Corps. God bless you, and God bless our Corps!

Semper Fidelis, Lt Gen Ron Christmas

Please be sure to read the following Exhibit Briefs, which detail plans for two of our immersion exhibits: the landing on Iwo Jima in our World War II gallery; and Hill 881South, in our Vietnam gallery — just two of the many pivotal moments in our history.

❋

Immersion Exhibit
Hill 881-South, 1968 Siege

Within our Vietnam War gallery, an immersion exhibit will depict a moment in the 1968 Khe Sanh Siege. The setting will portray Hill 881-South, a critical outpost of Khe Sanh, during a dramatic helicopter re-supply/medevac at the height of the extended battle.

Visitors will enter from the stern ramp of a reconstructed CH-46 helicopter, almost as if they were

replacements, hurrying to exit the helicopter at the command of the crew chief to make way for the wounded Marines to be embarked before the NVA mortars find their mark.

The scene presents the hilltop, blasted and burned, devoid of vegetation, stitched with zig-zag trenches, sandbagged bunkers, and gun positions. A tattered American flag flaps bravely in the down- draft. Macro artifacts in the set include a 105mm howitzer, a 106mm recoilless rifle, and an 81mm mortar, each heavily sandbagged. The use of scenic backdrops and projections add realistic dimensions to the set.

Visitors will feel the tension of the moment as haunted eyes stare at the well choreographed offload/medevacs, knowing the consequences of even the smallest delay.

There is a feeling of urgency to accomplish the necessary tasks rapidly, knowing the next NVA mortar attack could come at any time. Poised close at hand, a corpsman holds an IV bottle aloft over his wounded Marine on a stretcher, anxiously looking for the crew chief's signal to stuff the casualty inside. The radio is crackling. The pilot's voice is tense. We hear the unmistakable sounds of not-too- distant mortars firing.

The lookout warns, "INCOMING!"

❋

Immersion Exhibit

The Landing on Iwo Jima, 19 February 1945

In an immersion exhibit within our World War II gallery, the landing on Iwo Jima will be prominently featured. Visitors will enter into a re-creation of a dimly lit ship's compartment, where unseen infrared sensors set off an audio track of exchanges between gathering Marines coming from all around them.

The distant sound of explosions can be heard, then the rasping voice of the Platoon Sergeant at the head of the table says, "Awright, you Marines, listen up. It's almost time to embark our landing craft. Let's take one final look at our assault plan."

At that moment, a scale model of Iwo Jima lights up. "That's our beach," visitors will hear, "Green Beach on the far left, directly below Mount Suribachi. We land, we attack straight across the island, cut off Suribachi before dark. Hit the beach and don't stop. The enemy will hit us with everything they've got. Keep moving and don't bunch up. Follow me."

And that's when the participatory experience really begins. Visitors will step down into a simulated landing craft and sit in near darkness on benches along the bulkhead. The craft rocks gently in the water . .. the engine roars. The sound of major caliber naval guns firing from behind, the shrieking of shells overhead, the muffled explosions ashore — all can be heard.

Flashes of rocket fire and shipboard guns suddenly bathe parts of the bench opposite the visitors in half-light. Then, visitors see the Marines whose voices they heard during the briefing. The faces of lifelike figures appear and disappear in the flickering of the light as we hear their unspoken thoughts from directional speakers.

Through the landing craft's periscope a video sequence depicts the island and its beaches looming larger. The sergeant's voice is heard: "Lock and load!" The Marines opposite the visitors do so, and then go black. Then the ramp lowers and the voice shouts "Go! Move out! Go!"

The visitors follow orders — and exit onto Green Beach in the middle of the action, surrounded by a cacophony of sounds and flashing images depicting the beach and all its horrors. Publishers Note: Anyone seeking additional information can contact the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation at WWW.USMCMUSEUM.ORG or PO Box 998 Quantico, VA 22034-0998.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the creation of this wonderful museum that will honor our valiant Marine Corps heritage can send a check to:

Marine Corps Heritage Foundation
Gift Processing Center
PO Box 900
Riverdale, MD 20738-0900

Dear Ernie,

A recent article in **Red Clay**, the magazine of the Khe SanhVeteran's Association, had a photograph depicting the trench line alongside the airstrip built by Sam Messer and the Sea Bees. It jogged my memory of the time India 3/26 was relieved from our long duration on Hill 881S. We were airlifted off the Hill and thought we were going to a relatively safe position. Unfortunately, we found ourselves fending for our lives in those same trenches. I don't think they knew what to do with us while awaiting further transportation to Quang Tri. The base was still coming under rocket attack and there were no safe structures to house us. We sat in these 3-foot deep shallow depressions that they called a trench line. On Hill 881S we knew what a trench line was, and this was no trench line. We missed the security of our bunny holes on the Hill. Hell, when we first settled in on the Hill, Dabney made us dig the trenches deeper and deeper (thank God he did!). We slept by day, and dug all night when the cloud cover protected us from snipers. Dabney gave direct orders that any Marine caught without a flak jacket & helmet, would be punished. I think they needed someone like Dabney at the base to show them what a real protective trench line looked like.

We watched as a C-130 lumbered in for a landing, and headed for the place where they made their turn, so they could immediately take off. Those getting off jumped as the plane slowed for the turn. As the plane prepared to take off, the rockets came in. Everyone screaming, "Incoming," and I heard those dreadful words, "Corpsman Up!" We assisted the corpsman with many wounded Marines. Finally, 3rd Platoon, led by Lt. Larry "Budda" Boudria (to whom I owe my life), got its chance to fly out of the Khe Sanh Base. Our Freedom Bird was there and when the rear ramp of the CH-46 was lowered, we all raced to escape our months in Hell. SWOOSH, a round came in and a fellow Marine fell injured. The chopper waited bravely as I threw down my pack, propped the injured man on my back and ran across an open field, his weight making me fall to my knees a few times, until I dropped him at the door of Charlie Med. News journalists were watching my actions and never came to my aid. When one of them asked me, "What do you have there?" — referring to the injured Marine I just dropped off — I turned around and said, "Here is what I have," and I punched the guy right on the jaw. Without missing a step I charged back to the waiting chopper.

As I approached the chopper at full gallop, I saw my pack with all my worldly possessions, lying on the ground. My attention was immediately drawn to the Marines on the chopper yelling, "Come on, Doc! The pilot is not waiting another second!" Possessions or Life; Possessions or Freedom? I boarded the Chopper and left my worldly goods for the last flight that day outta Dodge. Months later, my wallet caught up with me. The only item I really miss is the Graphlex 35mm camera, which I used to take the pictures now displayed on the Hill 881S Warrior website. It was the only possession passed down to me from my Uncle, 1st Lt. David Steinberg USMCR, who directed fire for 1/13 from his Observation Plane the first 2 days of the battle for Iwo Jima. He could not land on his ship the Saratoga since it was hit by a Kkamikaze, so he was directed to a smaller carrier, the Bismarck Sea, which later was also hit midship in the powder magazine and sunk with him aboard. I lost his camera but still have his name.

We landed in Quang Tri near dusk. We were greeted with steaks, showers and clean clothes to replace the gear we wore during the entire siege. We went to sleep on the clean white sand (no more red clay) in tents set-up right across the Quang Tri airstrip. We were finally free from the Hill, but in the middle of the night the Hell returned when a Chinese rocket landed in the next tent and killed a few more of those that survived Khe Sanh! I, like others ran into the night, not knowing where to seek shelter or even what the Hell was going on! Those bastards knew we made it through our time on Hill 881S and wanted one more shot at us and they got it! Where is the trench line, where is my bunny hole?

Dave "DOC" Steinberg 3rd Plt. India 3/26

Tom,

Here is a check for my 2004 dues and a donation to help out the **Red Clay**. You do a great job and I enjoy reading it.

I was in Hawaii on R&R when 2/26 moved to Khe Sanh in January 1968. When I got back I joined up with some of the unit still at Phu Bai. I arrived at Khe Sanh just before the ammo dump blew and I think the truck convoy I went on to Hill 558 was the last one to leave Khe Sanh before the siege. I joined the forward air control team on top of hill 558 and helped to build the air control bunker. When "E" Company on Hill 861a was attacked, the forward air controller was wounded and medevaced so I was sent to replace him until a permanent replacement could be found. I think I was there about 2-3 weeks. When I got back to Hill 558, I was assigned to the headquarters area at the base of Hill 558. I worked radio watch and landed helicopters until I left to return to the US. I spent an extra 2 weeks in Vietnam because I didn't get out of Khe Sanh in time to get my flight out of country.

Here are some pictures I have from Khe Sanh. My camera got wet so the film has red streaks on some pictures and some came out too dark. I thought you may want some for web site or in **Red Clay**.

Harold Fosmo



Harold Fosmo the day he left Phu Bai for Khe Sanh



Eating ice cream on 558 which a helicopter dropped on 861a by mistake.

B-52 strike as seen from Hill 558.





Bunker built by Fosmo and Nix at base of 558.



Building Air Control bunker on Hill 558.



Hutmacher and Fosmo from FAC team.



Looking out from FAC bunker on Hill 558.

Sting of Battle

With Bayonets Fixed: Khe Sanh—30 March 1968

Reprinted from *Marine Corps Gazzette*, March 2004

by Lt. Col. Kenneth Pipes, USMC(Ret)

One of the most sobering experiences in life is the responsibility of leading young Marines into the teeth of the enemy knowing that some of them will not come out of it alive. It takes courage, faith, an indomitable spirit, and an unfailing trust in the capabilities of the men entrusted to your care. Fighting at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam in 1967–68 was an ongoing, brutal fight to the death between Marines and soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army. This entry in the 'Sting of Battle' series takes us through a particularly poignant episode of combat as seen through the eyes of a young Marine rifle company commander.

On 30 March 1968, Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines (B/1/26) proceeded from the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base to their pre-designated line of departure located near forward units of the North Vietnamese Army's (NVA's) 8th Battalion, 66th Regiment, 304th (Hanoi) Iron Division. Poised against each other in the coming attack were lineal descendants of one of the most famous divisions involved in the siege against the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and elements of the 26th Marines, one of three Marine regiments of the 5th Marine Division that led the assault against Japan's island fortress of Iwo Jima in February-March 1945.

The attack, scheduled for first light, began at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Immediately upon commencing the assault, the two lead platoons came under extremely heavy mortar, rocket-propelled grenade, automatic weapons, and small arms fire from the 8th NVA Battalion who occupied extensive, well-constructed, mutually supporting bunkers and trench systems.

Under the umbrella of withering fire from nine batteries of Marine and Army artillery that pummeled the flanks of the objective area and created a rolling barrage 50 to 70 meters in front of the two attack platoons, the Marines began breaching the NVA positions. The fight for fire superiority hung in the balance until the attached flame section and combat engineer detachment entered the fray. As their predecessors did on Iwo Jima, these units, covered and assisted by Marine riflemen, began to blind, blast, and burn their way into the NVA fortifications.

For the next four hours the Marines of Company B, some of whom had undergone 70-plus days and nights of continuous, killing bombardment by NVA heavy artillery, rocket, mortar, and concentrated sniper fire, gained some measure of retribution as they routed the NVA soldiers from their fiercely defended positions. Within the breached positions our Marine riflemen were literally walking over the dead and dying NVA defenders.

From the moment of close contact until some 4 hours later when we received the order to withdraw back into the combat base, the fight was hand to hand, bayonet to bayonet, knife to knife, grenade against grenade, and rifleman against rifleman, with the trump card as always, Marines using flamethrowers and combat engineers employing demolitions!

It may seem to some readers that this was just another example of a typical seasoned Marine combat unit doing its job, just another typical day at the office. It wasn't. A significant point must be made here! The rifle company that attacked the NVA that Saturday morning was not the same company that had moved from Hill 881 South 3 months earlier to participate in a battalion sweep toward the Laotian border, and then moved into the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The continuous enemy bombardment while we were in the combat base had hurt B/1/26 more than any other similarly sized defending unit and was exacerbated by the tragic loss of most of an entire platoon on 25 February resulting from an ambush by a reinforced company from the 8th NVA Battalion.

Most of the Marines in Company B on 30 March had joined during the Siege as replacements after the Siege had begun. These young men had traveled a hard road including boot camp, skills training at the Infantry Training Regiment, Staging Battalion at Camp Pendleton, a flight to Vietnam, reporting in to the 26th Marines, exiting the aircraft at the Khe Sanh Combat Base under fire, reporting for assignment to 1st Battalion, and finally, still under fire, joining Company B. To a rifleman, they had no combat experience at the fire team, squad, platoon, or company level.

As it has always been in combat, if it had not been

for the leveling skills of a handful of short-timer leaders, privates first class and corporals, led by an experienced company executive officer, company gunnery sergeant, and outstanding platoon commanders, the execution of this company-sized raid on 30 March 1968 would never have moved beyond our frontline trenches.

As noted by the commanding officer of 1/26 and the S–3 (operations officer) who planned the company raid, "The members of Co B performed individually and collectively in a manner normally expected only of seasoned and combat-experienced Marines." I believe that their brilliant feat can only be attributed to their deep and overriding desire to avenge the prior loss of Marines of their company, most of whom they never knew or met! To them and them alone goes the credit for executing arguably the first successful company-sized offensive assault outside the wire since the ambush of their mates on 25 February, and for making it such a success!

These Marines totally decimated the 8th NVA Battalion, including the enemy battalion commander and his staff. In so doing, the Marines of Company B killed at least 115 NVA officers and soldiers and wounded an untold number of their survivors, according to information later passed to the company that had been intercepted from monitored enemy radio traffic!

Still later, Marines from B/1/26 (none above the rank of corporal) who had participated in the raid were awarded two Navy Crosses, nine Silver Stars, eight Bronze Stars, and two Navy Commendation Medals with Combat "V" for valor for individual acts of courage, gallantry, and heroism! Additionally, over 100 Purple Hearts were presented, with several of these Marines earning their awards for receiving a second and third wound.

Just like their predecessors from Iwo Jima, to a man, the Marines of Company B remain intensely proud of their 26th Marines heritage! We will always feel that we who were privileged to serve with Bravo's young, inexperienced, Marine infantrymen that fateful Saturday morning were truly in the company of men who were, are, and will always be "The Immortals"!

Subsequent to the fighting on 30 March 1968, the company was the recipient of the following from the commanding general of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam:

> Officers and men of B/1/26 USMC deserve highest praise for aggressive patrol action north of Khe Sanh on 30 March. Heavy casualties inflicted on bunkers and entrenched enemy forces indicate typical Marine esprit de corps and professionalism. Well done!
>
> Gen William Westmoreland

And further remarks from our 26th Marines regimental commander:

> I add my congratulations to the above well-earned commendatory remarks.
>
> Col David Lownds

Lt.Col. Pipes retired in 1982 and lives in Fallbrook, CA.

The Battle For Lang Vei – 36th Anniversary

by L.T. Cooper
Pictures By Ray W. Stubbe and Harvey Saal (Plaques)





February 7th marks the 36th anniversary of the attack on the U.S. Army Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei, Vietnam (Detachment A-l0l, Company C, 5th Special Forces Group). Beginning at about 1800 hours on February 6, the camp was subjected to an unusually intense mortar and artillery barrage. Shortly after midnight on Wednesday, February 7, 1968 the camp was assaulted and overrun by an estimated enemy force of over 400 infantry from the 66th NVA Regiment supported by eleven Soviet made PT-76 tanks. Fierce ground combat, often hand to hand, took place over the next sixteen hours. By late afternoon, the surviving Special Forces soldiers who had also evaded capture along with their remaining Montagnard and CIDG counterparts were extracted by helicopter or made their escape on foot to the U.S. Marine combat base at Khe Sanh, 8km away. There they received basic medical treatment and were subsequently evacuated to the U.S. Navy hospital at Da Nang. The enemy attack stopped at Lang Vei and did not continue east toward Khe Sanh which was an intended target.

Among the Special Forces defenders were two of the camp's four radio operators, SP/4 William G. McMurry Jr., and SSG Dennis L. Thompson. During the assault, they were wounded and captured, spending the next five years as POWs. The camp's senior medic, SFC Eugene Ashley, Jr. was killed in action during the attack and was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions at Lang Vei. Major George Quamo (MACV-SOG) was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions at Lang Vei. The attack on Lang Vei Special Forces camp was the first time that the enemy used armor in the Vietnam War.

In April, the 1st Air Cavalry Division finally relieved the Marines at Khe Sanh. Elements of the 1st Air Cav made their way to Lang Vei camp to find nothing except empty trench lines, caved in bunkers, and the hulks of destroyed tanks. However, clear evidence that a horrific battle had taken place was still vividly apparent.

After Action Report: Lang Vei Camp (Det A-l0l)		WIA	KIA/MIA
U.S. Special Forces	24	13	10
VNSF	14	3	5
CIDG	282	29	165
MIKE Force	196	32	34
Interpreters	6	0	5
Totals:	522	77	219

Enemy losses were estimated to have been seven PT-76 tanks along with their three-man crews (confirmed destroyed) and two tanks (probable), and 250 NVA infantry soldiers killed in action. Thirty-six years later, there is still much left to indicate where Khe Sanh combat base was once located. The original airstrip is recognizable, but is barren and little will grow on it. The tall grasses that are indigenous to that region of Southeast Asia have long since reclaimed the surrounding hills where brave Americans once fought. At the former site of Lang Vei camp, the remains of concrete bunkers are still visible but the area is overgrown with foliage. The lone monument to the attack is a PT-76 tank that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has placed where the camp was once located. Note: As of May 2003, both of these locations (Khe Sanh combat base and Lang Vei camp) are in the process of becoming tourist attractions and are visited by American veterans of the Vietnam War. A billboard has been erected in the area which proclaims that Vietnam is "A Destination For The New Millennium" with a website http:ffwww.vietnamtourism.com

Original Lang Vei SF camp.



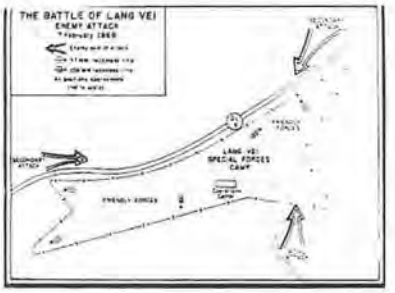



Photos by Ray Stubbe

Reverend Ray W. Stubbe holding services at New Lang Vei TOC bunker being built by Navy Seabees.



The President of the United States
in the name of The Congress
takes pleasure in presenting the
Medal of Honor
to

*ASHLEY, EUGENE, JR.

Rank and organization: Sergeant First Class, U.S. Army, Company C, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces. *Place and date:* Near Lang Vei, Republic of Vietnam, 6th and 7th February 1968. *Entered service at*: New York, N.Y. *Born*: 12 October 1931, Wilmington, N.C.

Citation:

Sfc. Ashley, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity while serving with Detachment A-101, Company C. Sfc. Ashley was the senior special forces Advisor of a hastily organized assault force whose mission was to rescue entrapped U.S. special forces advisors at Camp Lang Vei. During the initial attack on the special forces camp by North Vietnamese army forces, Sfc. Ashley supported the camp with high explosive and illumination mortar rounds. When communications were lost with the main camp, he assumed the additional responsibility of directing air strikes and artillery support. Sfc. Ashley organized and equipped a small assault force composed of local friendly personnel. During the ensuing battle, Sfc. Ashley led a total of 5 vigorous assaults against the enemy, continuously exposing himself to a voluminous hail of enemy grenades, machinegun and automatic weapons fire. Throughout these assaults, he was plagued by numerous booby-trapped satchel charges in all bunkers on his avenue of approach. During his fifth and final assault, he adjusted air strikes nearly on top of his assault element, forcing the enemy to withdraw and resulting in friendly control of the summit of the hill. While exposing himself to intense enemy fire, he was seriously wounded by machinegun fire but continued his mission without regard for his personal safety. After the fifth assault he lost consciousness and was carried from the summit by his comrades only to suffer a fatal wound when an enemy artillery round landed in the area. Sfc. Ashley displayed extraordinary heroism in risking his life in an attempt to save the lives of his entrapped comrades and commanding officer. His total disregard for his personal safety while exposed to enemy observation and automatic weapons fire was an inspiration to all men committed to the assault. The resolute valor with which he led 5 gallant charges placed critical diversionary pressure on the attacking enemy and his valiant efforts carved a channel in the overpowering enemy forces and weapons positions through which the survivors of Camp Lang Vei eventually escaped to freedom. Sfc. Ashley's bravery at the cost of his life was in the highest traditions of the military service, and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

KHE SANH: U.S. Army Air Defenders Defend Besieged Marine Combat Base

Stories and Photos by Bruce Geiger

Khe Sanh Combat Base, site of the most famous siege and one of the most controversial battles of the American Vietnam War sits quietly on a barren plateau, surrounded by vegetation-covered hill, often obscured by mist and fog. It is hard to imagine as you stand in this peaceful, verdant land that in this very place in early 1968 the bloodiest battle of the Vietnam War took place. Little things help you picture what the history books say happened here. The outline of the airfield remains distinct (to this day nothing will grow on it) In pieces, the ground is literally carpeted with bullets and rusting shell casings.

– Vietnam, A Lonely Planet Travel Survival Kit.

"There is no feeling in the world as good as being airborne out of Khe Sanh," wrote Michael Herr in Dispatches, one of the Vietnam War's most celebrated books, but that was thirty years ago. Today travel guides beckon tourists to visit Khe Sanh Combat Base. It's one of several abandoned combat bases, including Con Thien, Camp Carroll and the Rockpile that you can visit as part of a day trip, provided you have a good four-wheel drive. Buy a travel permit for ten dollars at the Quang Tri Province Tourist Office in Dong Ha and follow National Highway 9, which parallels the old DMZ, west out of Dong Ha toward Laos. Turn northwest at the triangular intersection just before you reach Khe Sanh Town. The base is on the right-hand side of the road, two and a half kilometers from the intersection.

Thirty years ago, I led a column of Dusters and Quad 50s out of Khe Sanh at the end of a 75-day Siege. Most Vietnam vets who were fortunate enough not to have left the combat base in body bags probably figure their one trip to Khe Sanh was enough to last a lifetime. But I'd love to drive a Jeep Cherokee up Route 9, stand in the middle of the abandoned combat base and remember that I was once a young soldier.

My route to Khe Sanh was a circuitous one that started at a Nike Hercules fire control center and led to a Duster turret. My military career began during the summer of 1966 when I received my commission at the U.S. Army ROTC training facility in Indiantown Gap, PA after I graduated from Rutgers University. I embarked on active duty in October 1966 as a second lieutenant at the U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery School, Fort Bliss, TX. Upon completion of the Officers Basic Course, I was assigned to the Air Defense Artillery School Battalion as a battery commander and served for about six months while eager1y awaiting orders to a Nike Hercules unit at some exotic destination in Europe.

In July 1967, after a Pentagon advisor assured me that I would remain in my current duty assignment for the duration of my two-year active duty commitment, I received my orders to Vietnam. Five weeks later after completing a thirty-day crash course in ADA automatic weapons, I was still in shock. I took a thirty-day leave to visit with my family before reporting to Fort Lewis, Washington. In early October 1967, I left for debarkation to Vietnam.

I arrived at Cam Ranh Bay and made my way north over the next few days to Dong Ha on the DMZ, where I reported for duty with the 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery (Automatic Weapons Self Propelled). I was assigned to Bravo Battery as a platoon leader and spent most of the remainder of 1967 with Duster sections or squads at Marine firebases at Con Thien and Cam Lo.

Although the purpose of this article is to recount ADA unit involvement during the Siege of Khe Sanh, it is important to note that some of the heaviest combat engagements in 1967-68 took place in and around the hill at Con Thien. For those of us who fought at both combat bases, Con Thien was in many ways a more hellish and miserable place than Khe Sanh. Duster sections from Bravo Battery played a significant role in the defense of Con Thien and in operations to support the firebase.

In early January 1968, I was re-assigned to Alpha Battery. I remember spending a couple of weeks in Dong Ha, where we were placed on air defense alert after Intelligence reported that the Chinese were scrambling Russian Ilyushin fighter bombers to test our air defenses on the DMZ. The thought of tracking state-of-the-art Jet aircraft with our twin 40mm guns was quite sobering, and I remember being very relieved when we stood down from our air defense mission.

In mid January, I took a section of Alpha Battery Dusters to a newly constructed combat base called



Guarding northern approach to KSCB.

A/3, located just below the southern boundary of the DMZ between Con Thien and Gio Linh. A/3, or Tan An Van Giap as it was identified on the map, was a rock-hard patch of dirt hurriedly scratched out by the engineers, surrounded by barbed wire and minefields, and defended by a company of Marines, some engineers, and two Dusters. As enemy activity increased with the Tet offensive in late January, we fired harassment and interdiction (H & I) missions every night into the DMZ. We also used night illumination devices to detect and target NVA infiltrators as they moved through our area of operations. During the early part of Tet offensive, the Citadel at Hue and the combat base at Khe Sanh came under heavy NVA attack. If that was not enough, the North Koreans captured the Pueblo, and several units of the 3rd Division were placed on standby alert.

In mid February I was summoned back to Dong Ha where my long awaited R&R plans were put on hold. I was ordered to Khe Sanh with three enlisted men — Private First Class Arthur Mortman from my platoon and two others from the attached Quad 50s (Golf Battery, 65th Artillery) — to relieve the commanding officer of the Duster and Quad 50 sections. He and several of his men had received shrapnel wounds and had been medevaced before we arrived. By this time, Khe Sanh had been under siege for several weeks and Route 9, the only road access to the besieged base, had been completely cut off. Re-supply and medevac aircraft were coming under heavy fire, and only volunteer medevac missions were being flown Into the Khe Sanh combat base.

After trying unsuccessfully for two days to get a flight from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh, my men and I flew by helicopter to Phu Bai, just south of Hue where we stood a better chance of getting aboard a flight into Khe Sanh. We spent three days waiting on the sweltering runway at Phu Bai before finally getting aboard a Marine CH-53 Sea Stallion, a volunteer medevac mission to Khe Sanh. The pilot, a Marine major, and the crew chief briefed us along with nearly a dozen grunts that boarded the helicopter.

All aircraft attempting to land at Khe Sanh received heavy ground fire, including .50 caliber machine gun, mortar, and artillery rounds. The crew chief had us lay our gear bags on the floor beneath us to shield our bodies from ground fire that might penetrate the underside of the helicopter. We were very nervous and puckered at the thought of .50 caliber rounds ripping through the thin underbelly of the chopper. We would circle down through a heavy cloud cover and have only a few seconds with the tailgate on the ground to disembark with all our gear. As we began our decent, we saw tracer rounds streaking past the windows, through the thick clouds. The crew chief shouted that we wou1d have less than ten seconds on the deck and we had better be off the ramp or know how to fly.

Incoming mortars and arti1lery rounds exploded all around the landing areas. The pilot didn't land the chopper. The crew chief lowered the tailgate as the chopper hovered and we were dumped out like a heap of garbage from the rear of a sanitation truck. We scurried like rats for the nearest trench line or bunker and waited in sheer terror for what seemed like an endless barrage, to stop. The chopper disappeared into the clouds without retrieving any of the casualties it had come for, and the incoming rounds finally ceased. We huddled for at least another twenty minutes before mustering the courage to run from the relative safety of the trenches and made our way across the airfield. We found our gun positions along the northern perimeter of the runway and settled in with our beleaguered comrades to rest and be briefed about the situation at hand.

Our Dusters and Quad 50's had excellent fields of fire commanding all avenues of approach to the northern perimeter of the base. Our two Duster positions were well located at opposite ends of the runway with the Quad 50s placed in between but not more than one hundred meters away from a Duster. The northeast gun positions overlooked a wide-open, grassy plateau, and could easily maneuver to defend the east end of the runway, which sat above the edge of a steep ravine. My command post bunker was sit-

uated near the runway's east end, behind the Quad 50s and our ammunition trailer.

The base ammo dump and 105mm howitzers were across the runway about one hundred and fifty meters behind us. On the northwest end, the Duster and Quad 50 squads guard a more concealed approach through trees and heavy brush. Our bunkers and gun revetments were well constructed and sandbagged, considering that two months earlier the Marines at Khe Sanh were hardly dug in. Most structures had been built above ground with few trenches, and only inadequate, interrupted strands of barbed wire were strung in front of the perimeter defensive positions.

First Lieutenant Lyon Grace had commanded the Duster and Quad 50 sections from late October through early December 1967. After the war, he would describe Khe Sanh as...quiet, uneventful place viewed by ADA personnel as a welcome respite from the grueling barrages at Con Thien and Gio Linh and the daily routine of mine sweeps and convoy escorts. When the intense battles of the infamous "Hill Fights" ended in early May 1967, Khe Sanh was regarded as the closest thing to an in-country R&R center on the DMZ. At Lieutenant Grace's request, the Marine command ordered additional fortification on the northern perimeter, since only one company of Marines, two Ontos crews and our Duster Quad 50 sections defended the entire mile-long stretch of the perimeter.

When the siege began on January 21, 1968, the Marines were not prepared for a static defense of the base. Engineers hurriedly dug trenches and laid additional rows concertina wire around the perimeter. Trenching machines were flown in to cut into the rock-hard surface before the attacks reached a peak in late January through mid-March 1968. During my first few days at Khe Sanh, I surveyed our positions and met briefly with Colonel Lownds, commander of the 26th Marine Regiment and its attached units. In my only conversation with him during my seven-week stay, I assured him that our automatic weapons crews had the experience and the firepower to accomplish the mission of defending the northern perimeter of the firebase. There would be several occasions over the next few weeks when I would feel less confident than I did at that proud moment.

Bad weather in February and early March often left the combat base shrouded in fog for hours or even days at a time. With the fog providing cover from NVA snipers and artillery spotters, we seized the opportunity to drive the Quad 50 trucks or the Dusters for water, ammunition and C-Rations. Most other days were spent holed up in our bunkers since NVA snipers and artillery made movement above ground extremely treacherous. My survival instincts and physical senses had reached a peak, having been sharpened for months under the routine bombardment at Con Thien and A/3. I was able to hear mortar, artillery, and rocket rounds leaving their tubes, and could often identify the type of weapon it was fired from, from the sound it made. I never ignored or second-guessed my own instincts or those of others. I would hit the ground in an instant if I thought I had heard a suspicious sound or saw a muzzle flash. At Khe Sanh, my fatigues were always dirty from diving to the ground. My men would jokingly ask if I had been playing in the mud or dirt again.

I remember moving cautiously through the trench line one clear morning when a careless young Marine stood up and walked across an open stretch of ground between unconnected trenches. In an instant he was struck in the side of his face by a sniper round. Fortunately the round went through his cheek and out of his mouth, knocking out a few teeth, but otherwise leaving him in relatively good condition. After some dental work and a few stitches, he'd be back on line, good as new. The incident reinforced my resolve to crawl or scurry on all fours when moving across open ground in clear weather.

Although we did our best to keep our bunkers clean, we fought an endless battle against the infestation of rats. Any Vietnam veteran will tell you, these were not ordinary rats. They often grew as big as large rabbits and were extremely cunning. After weeks of setting traps to no avail, I finally got fed up and decided one night to take serious steps to annihilate one persistent pest. I climbed into my upper rack, and tucked a flashlight and 45-caliber pistol under my sleeping bag. After my section chief had gone to sleep, I lay awake waiting for the telltale scratching sounds of our nightly intruder, and I was not disappointed. I followed the sound of his movement to the baited traps on the floor across from my bunk.

I silently lined up my pistol and flashlight in the direction of the sound and waited for the complacent intruder to began chowing down. At the moment of

Hill 861 Revisited

A pictorial return to Hill 861. Each issue we will revisit one of the Hills at Khe Sanh, through a series of photographs from the collection of Ray W. Stubbe (founder Khe Sanh Veterans).



Aerial view of Hill 861 with Hill 1371 in the distance. 31 October 1967

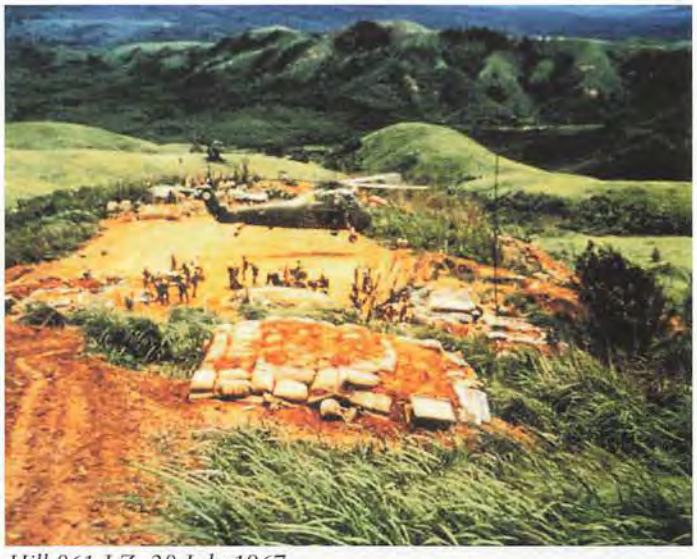

Hill 861 LZ. 28 July 1967



Scout dog and Marines on top of Hill 861. 11 Aug 1967



Placing roof on bunker on Hill 861. 11 August 1967



Eating C-rations in 81mm pit on top of Hill 861. 28 July 1967



Supply hootch. Mule vehicle just delivered supplies. Empty 106mm casings form baundary and walkway.



The "Old Rugged Cross" on top on Hill 861, planted by Chaplain Meschke of 1/26 in memory of the Marines who lost their lives in the battle for these hills. Hills 950 and 1015 in the background. 28 July 1967



"Home is where you dig it" on Hill 861. 28 July 1967



Ray Stubbe conducting services on Hill 861. 28 July 67

truth, I simultaneously switched on the flashlight beam and emptied an entire clip in the direction of the monster rat. My section chief bolted from the sleeping rack below, certain we were under attack. I quickly quieted him and assured him that all was okay, pointing confidently toward the array of triggered rattraps in front of us. The rat's carcass was nowhere to be found, and the sergeant was not amused.

We never did get rid of those critters. When the B-52 strikes left large numbers of NVA dead around the base perimeter, the rats began feeding on the decaying corpses. A major panic took place when the doctors at Charlie-Med identified rats infected with bubonic plague and began giving booster shots to large numbers of Marines. Most of my men and I braved the hazardous trek across the runway to get our booster injections.

NVA gunners had the airstrip zeroed in, and few fix-winged aircraft were able to land without being hit. My bunker was only a few yards off the edge of the runway, and every landing and take off was a nerve-wracking adventure. One quiet morning, I had my 35mm camera in hand as a C-130 Hercules landed and rolled toward the turnaround ramp at the west end of the runway. I watched in horror as incoming artillery slammed into the runway and struck the C-130's left main landing gear, causing the aircraft to swerve and crash into a forklift waiting nearby to unload cargo the wing tanks burst into flames that quickly engulfed the aircraft. The courageous fire crew unsuccessfully fought to extinguish the flames. I ran down the runway toward the aircraft, capturing much of the action on film. Runway personnel had rescued the crew, who escaped with only minor injuries. The aircraft and its cargo were completely destroyed.

With landings and takeoffs of fixed-wing transports becoming too dangerous, the Air Force attempted delivery procedures known as LAPES and GPES. Under LAPES (Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System) the aircraft made a low-level approach and a parachute dragged the cargo across rollers, and out the rear doors. Under GPES, (Ground Parachute Extraction System), the aircraft came in low to snag an arresting cable, which In turn yanked the cargo out of the rear. Both procedures were highly risky for the aircraft and ground personnel, and were finally discontinued when runway cargo pallets crashed through bunkers at the west end of the runway, killing several Marines. Thereafter, most re-supply was made by parachute drop from C-123 or C-130 transports over the northwest perimeter of the combat base.

During good weather, tactical aircraft flew extensive missions, dropping napalm and high explosives on enemy positions across the hills and the plateau in front of our northern perimeter. Some strikes were so close to our positions that the intense heat from the napalm was enough to singe our eyebrows. In March, under cover of fog and darkness, enemy troops dug a network of tunnels and zigzag trenches within a few meters of the perimeter wire on the east end of the runway. They went undetected until the weather broke the following morning, when F-4 Phantoms resumed tactical operations and spotted them from the air. The NVA had evidently hoped that they could tunnel under the wire and the runway to plant mines or explosives that would destroy inbound aircraft and/or the runway surface. Had penetration of the perimeter from this unlikely approach succeeded, our gun positions on the east end would have been the primary weapons responsible for repelling the enemy assault.

The F-4 Phantoms immediately launched heavy air strikes with napalm and high explosive ordinance to destroy the trenches. F-4 Phantoms and "'Puff the Magic Dragon," a DC-3 with machine guns and a Vulcan cannon in the doorway, made multiple sorties. Poor visibility often limited tactical air strikes, leaving the air support to the B-52's. Under the code name "Niagara," General William Westmoreland personally directed the activities of the Strategic Air Command, which flew numerous sorties around the clock, dropping unprecedented tons of explosives in defense of the base. The area around Khe Sanh would soon have the unenviable distinction of being the most bombed place on earth.



C-130 struck by artillery crashed into parker forklift. The crew was wounded but saved by fire crew.

We would often be alerted by coded radio messages to shore up our bunkers and take cover at a predetermined time. The B-52s would, on these occasions, be targeting dangerously close to our perimeter, within the allowable minimum safety range. Despite the eerie sounds of the bombs whistling overhead and the thunderous concussions as they rained down on the target area, it was reassuring knowing the 52s were there. The intense carpet-bombing took an incredible toll on the large NVA force surrounding Khe Sanh. In hindsight it can probably be credited with preventing the base from being overrun.

Duster and Quad 50 crews were restricted from routine H&I fire missions to avoid being targeted by the surrounding NVA artillery pieces dug into the hills. Although we had more than a normal supply of ammunition for all of our weapons, our tenuous circumstances dictated we conserve ammunition in the event re-supply became impossible. We relied on the big 175mm guns at Camp Carroll and the Rockpile to lay in their fire missions at predetermined coordinates and suspected NVA positions. Our guns fired only at identified targets of opportunity, or in support of friendly operations around our perimeter.

One sunny morning around mid-March, Duster squad leader Sergeant James "Smitty" Smith and I, were scanning the plateau with our binoculars. We observed movement at the edge of the ravine about a mile in front of our Duster position. We watched and waited to confirm what had appeared to be an NVA soldier's pith helmet moving back and forth, just beyond the drop-off to the Rao Quan River ravine. The soldier, who thought he was hidden from view, presented an inviting target. We knew there had to be a concentration of NVA troops at that spot. I made a decision to engage the target before they had a chance to disperse. Sergeant Smith and I quietly alerted crew members and slipped aboard the Duster to man the twin 40mm guns. We carefully traversed the turret and elevated the guns to engage the last known position of the target. When the helmet reappeared, we fired approximately eighty to one hundred rounds directly on the target area, obliterating everything within a 100 meter radius. The dry brush burned for several hours — at least one of our enemies from the north would not be zeroing in on us ever again. Shortly after midnight and some 1,109 rounds after the NVA barrage had begun, it was over. This would be recorded as the second heaviest saturation of enemy rounds in a single day during the Siege and the heaviest for the month of March. It took a very heavy toll on Charlie Company, 1/26 Marines, with whom my men and I lived and shared the defense of our sector. I later found out five Marines died in the command post bunker that night; Captain Walter J. Egger, Gunnery Sergeant John J. Grohman, First Lieutenant Paul W. Bush, Lance Corporal Stephen C. Shannon, and Private First Class Bennie J. Sisson.

I had come to know and admire Captain Egger. He had only been in-country one month, having arrived at Khe Sanh about the same time. Although my men and I survived that night with no casualties, it would directly impact our lives for many years to come. I am very proud of the Bronze Star With V Device that I received for my actions that night, although I did no more than anyone I knew would have done under the same circumstances. The heavy fighting continued for another week or so. By the last week in March the incoming wound down considerably.

The NVA had apparently gotten wind of Operation Pegasus, the counter-offensive launched to lift the Siege of Khe Sanh, and decided to cut their losses by moving the bulk of their troops out of the area. By the time the forward elements of the 1st Air Cavalry and 3rd Marine Divisions reached the combat base, the NVA resistance had become light. The main forces had no major difficulty routing the remaining elements from the surrounding hills. The base bustled with activity during the first days of April as a crack ARVN Ranger Battalion moved onto the base with support aircraft and equipment. This was the first time since I arrived that helicopters, which had been unable to park at Khe Sanh because of the intense antiaircraft fire, landed and parked in the bays alongside the runway.

For a few days, the ARVN troops shared our bunkers during the evening hours before moving out with several Marine units to "break out" and link up with the approaching elements moving up Route 9 from the east. It was quite a show, and my men and I took the opportunity to get a well-earned rest after we prepared our equipment for departure. All but one of vehicles was up and running by the time our replacements arrived from Camp Carroll on April 14th.

Charlie Company, 1/26 Marines had pulled out

before dawn, and we were the only personnel remaining in the sector when my battery commander, Captain James Bonds arrived around mid morning. We wasted no time hooking up the disabled "deuce-and-a-half' truck to a tow bar, and anxiously rolled out the gate onto the approach road to Route 9.

This was my first trip on Route 9 east of Cam Lo village. The grueling 40-50 mile adventure to Dong Ha took over five hours along the winding, rebuilt roads and makeshift pontoon bridges. The devastation caused by the continual carpet-bombing was never more evident than it was along the first five miles of winding roadway to the Marine outpost at Ca Lu. The once dense foliage was burnt out or blown away, for miles. The ground was pockmarked with huge bomb craters for as far as the eye could see. Despite this carnage, it was an exhilarating experience for my men and I, who were ecstatic to finally be out of Khe Sanh and on our way back to Dong Ha.

On a Veterans' Day visit to Washington DC, my family friend and squad leader at Khe Sanh, Sergeant James "Smitty" Smith, helped me remember some of the names of the brave men who served with us during the Siege. Among the names were Alpha Battery, 1/44 Duster squad leader Sergeant Manual Floyd Martinez, who was killed in a subsequent action in early June, 1968, Sergeant Dewey Thornton: Sergeant Norman Shank, Private First Class Earl Pavey, Private First Class Arthur Mortman, Private First Class Lloyd Washington, Private First Class James J. Smith, Specialist 4 Hen, and Private First Class Nelson.

First Lieutenant Lynn Grace added a few names of men from the Quad 50 section of G Battery, 65TH Artillery, who had served earlier at Khe Sanh. These names included Sergeant Hollis Ray Hale, a section chief who left the base prior to the siege, only to be killed in an ambush in early February 1968. Specialist 4 Bowman and Specialist 4 Steven Allen Guthrie Jr. died as a result of a non-hostile weapons discharge at Khe Sanh on January 31, 1968.

My friend Sergeant Joseph Belardo and Charlie Battery 1/44th Artillery, Duster/Quad section relieved us at Khe Sanh after the Siege was lifted. Belardo's Duster track led the Pegasus Relief column onto the combat base. His Duster crew enjoyed an emotional reunion along with his platoon leader in Washington, DC. I apologize to the many other Duster and Quad 50 personnel whose names I have been unable to remember but who are no less deserving of recognition for their courageous service at Khe Sanh.

Dusters, Quads & Searchlights History Order of Battle of ADA Units in Vietnam



The **1st Battalion, 44th Artillery** with attached **Battery G, 65th Artillery (M-55)**, and **Battery G, 29th Artillery (Searchlight)**, supported the 3rd Marine Division in northern I Corps area. Based at Dong Ha and Da Nang, 1/44 operated from Phu Bai in the south to Con Thien in the north and Khe Sanh in the west.

The **5th Battalion, 2nd Artillery** with attached **Battery D, 71st Artillery (M-55)**, and **Battery I, 29th Artillery (Searchlight)** was assigned to II Field Force Artillery at Long Binh (north of Saigon).

The **4th Battalion, 60th Artillery** with attached **Battery E, 41st Artillery (M-55)**, and **Battery B, 29th Artillery (Searchlight)** belonged to the 41st Artillery Group of I Field Force Artillery and operated out of Qui Nhon, An Khe and Tuy Hoa. A separate Quad unit, **Battery G of the 55th Artillery**, was assigned to the Americal Division at Chu Lai. Finally, **Battery H of the 29th Artillery (Searchlight)** supported operations of the 9th Infantry Division.

Each of the Air Defense battalions had over a thousand men, but the units never fought as batteries, much less as battalions. Demands for fire support far outstripped availability of weapons, and individual fire units were quickly scattered throughout the battalions' areas of responsibility. Each Duster battery had two firing platoons, both of which could be employed independently, as could the six firing sections of each machine-gun battery. As a result, the war fought by the Air Defense gunners in Vietnam was overwhelmingly a sergeant's war, as detached platoons and firing sections found themselves under the operations control of other types of units. Normal missions for the automatic weapons included convoy security, perimeter defense, and fire support for maneuver operations.

Automatic-weapons units began to stand down early in 1971 and had left Vietnam completely by mid-1972. By that time, the Quad and three Duster battalions sent to Vietnam had fired well over four million 40mm rounds and 10 million .50-caliber rounds in support of American, Vietnamese and Allied forces.

M-55 Quad 50



Known as the "Whispering Death," each M-55 Quad 50 consisted of four Browning M2 .50-caliber machine guns mounted in a power turret on a deuce and a half (2 1/2) or 5 ton truck. With an effective rate of fire of 1,000 to 1,500 rounds per minute, the Quad in action "could literally suck the life out of a hillside at ranges up to half a mile." Generally speaking, Quads could not go cross-country in support of maneuver units. But in operations away from established road nets where heavy machine- gun support was needed, it was possible to sling load the Quad with the CH-47 helicopter."

Searchlights



Both Dusters and Quads "served well in perimeter defenses, where gunners could establish clear fields of fire and alternate firing positions. It was there that the AN/MSS-3 (23-inch) and the newer AN/TVS-3 (30-inch) searchlights were most useful, too. At night the searchlights swept the perimeter in the infrared mode, so as to detect the enemy without disclosing their positions. Having found the enemy, gunners switched to visible light mode for target illumination and engagement. Quads and Dusters were quickly on target because the men routinely laid searchlight azimuth indicators parallel with the automatic weapons. The other major use of searchlights was to bounce light from clouds to improve vision for friendly patrols and nearby positions using starlight scopes."

The Duster



Production of the M-41 Walker Bulldog tank was undertaken by the Cadillac Car Division of the General Motors Corporation at the Cleveland Tank Plant and the first production models were completed in 1951. The M-41 was the first member of a whole family of vehicles sharing many common components. The family included the M-42 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun or Duster as it is also known, which was in production from early 1952 to December 1959. Production of the M-42 amounted to 3700 units. The driver and radio operator are seated at the front of the vehicle with the other four crew members in the turret, which is in the center of the hull. The engine and transmission are in the rear. The M-42 has torsion-bar suspension consisting of five dual rubber-tired road wheels with the idler at the front and the drive sprocket at the rear, and three track-return rollers. The first, second and fifth road wheel stations have a hydraulic shock absorber. The steel tracks have replaceable rubber pads.

In 1993, Lt. Bruce Geiger, after nearly 25 years in corporate America as a sales and marketing executive, embarked on a new career as a teacher in the New York City Public School System. Geiger is currently an elementary school teacher in an inner city public school in the Bronx. He and his wife Dianne (also a school teacher) have been married for 31 years, and are both planning to retire from teaching this year. They have two sons. Their older son David is 27 and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. He is a graduate of MIT and Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, and is currently completing an internship at the Veterinary Specialty Hospital of San Diego. Their younger son Andrew is 23, a graduate of Boston University, and is an assistant manager at The W Hotel in San Diego.

E-mail Bruce Geiger at BMGeiger@aol.com.



Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery, in formation for an awards ceremony. The heroism its soldiers displayed during the long struggle in Vietnam made the battalion one of history's most decorated artillery unit. The battalion became 1-44 ADA in 1968 when Air Defense Artillery was separated from Field Artillery and became a separate combat arms branch.

Platoon Commander 101

by Joseph Olszewski

Since the majority of the readers of **Red Clay** were enlisted personnel during their tours, an understanding of the trials and tribulations of being a 2nd Lieutenant Platoon Commander may be of interest. I've learned through reading KSV Message Board posts and via e-mails with my fellow Marines from my company that rifle platoon enlisted personnel thought 2nd Lieutenant Platoon Commanders were just a bunch of college boys who knew very little about combat. One Marine from my platoon still addresses me as "butter bars" in his e-mails to me. Obviously, the reference is to the brass bars on our collars or shoulders, but I think there is some deep introspection to that phrase.

Thus, I thought the readership would benefit with an understanding of how difficult the Platoon Commander Job really was in Vietnam. I remember being very impressed with the NCOs who were instructors at Officer Candidate School (OCS) and The Basic School (TBS) at Quantico, Virginia. I was recruited by the USMC in college. The NCOs who performed those services were all first-class and very professional. I remember being interviewed by an NCO during my senior year in college and thinking, "I'll have to tell a guy like this what to do in combat?" In other words, he appeared tough as nails. He never smiled and reminded me of Dick Butkus, who happened to be a linebacker for the University of Illinois where I was a student. Butkus later had a great professional career demolishing NFL players for about ten years. I was a 5'7", 180-pound 22-year-old who had not run a mile in four years, looking at a man in his late 20s who had probably just ate somebody for breakfast.

TBS was just like college in that we had unending classes, lectures and live participation in leadership. I think the leadership training was even more emphasized than weapons, tactics, CBS (Chemical, Biological and Stealth warfare), land navigation, physical training ("PT"), and the never-popular Technique of Military Instruction (speech class). In short, we had high-ranking NCOs with 25 years of service, Captains and Majors and even Chaplains giving us lectures and seminars on Leadership 101. It was simple "over-learning."

The problem with TBS is that it lasted five months (it was shortened from nine months due to the need for 2nd Lieutenants ASAP for 'Nam duty). It was similar to practicing for a football game over and over and never playing in a real game. In short, it became dull and boring. I remember the instructing officers posting letters on the bulletin boards from recent TBS graduates who were now in 'Nam. We would read words about their actual combat and leadership experiences. I remember reading those letters and saying to myself, "I can handle that job."

Then the grand day in TBS came when our MOSs were announced. I think 60% of my class was assigned "0301," Combat Infantry Officer. Some were assigned to artillery school, others were prearranged to attend flights schools, and the truly brilliant were headed for Language School (never found out what happened to those guys). On that day the realization hit us for the first time. We were headed for the jungles of Vietnam to lead 40 or 50 Marines in combat!!!

After a month of "leave" when I ran three miles daily in my hometown of Chicago, I got on that plane to California to begin "staging." From California I flew to Okinawa, waiting there for the flight to 'Nam. I remember as the plane was approaching Da Nang, the pilots shut off the lights in the plane. I thought "Wow, this place must be jumping with enemy, if they have to shut off the lights of a commercial airliner to land. Once the plane landed, we all disembarked and were waiting on the runway for our duffle bags to be taken off the plane. I remember the crew shutting down the aircraft and leaving before we had received our bags.

I hardly slept that first night, the jet traffic and sound of gunfire and artillery in the distance. I remember waking up the first morning, walking to breakfast and seeing a weary rifle platoon leaving a hooch for a patrol.

I learned from an NCO that I was headed for 2/26 which was stationed at Phu Bai. Getting on a C-130, and flew to the Phu Bai airport along with a few hundred artillery rounds that were on the cargo floor and staring at me.

My first interview was with a Major who was upset that my record indicated that I had not "fan-fired" an M-16 while I was in Okinawa, saying I could not join my platoon until I had "fan-fired" an M-16. During 1967, TBS was still training and qualifying 2nd Lieutenants with M-14s, as M-16s were so

new, they were first shipped to units in 'Nam and had not reached the training camps yet. Thus, I sat around Phu Bai for about three days. I finally "fan-fired" an M-16. I had to ask the gunny, how to break down the M-16. I was amazed how light the weapon was, compared to the M-14.

The grand day came when the company commander took me on a patrol to meet my platoon (Third Platoon, Golf Company, 2/26th Marines) were located at a patrol base near a pagoda south of Phu Bai. I've often described that feeling to people who were the parents of teenagers in the 70s and 80s as waking up one day and learning that you did not have two or three teenagers to worry about, but 40 to 50!!! They looked so young, except for the Platoon Sergeant, in his late 20s and about to "rotate" home. He was also the Platoon Commander. He hated the job and couldn't wait for a 2nd Lieutenant to arrive. I never had the same squad leaders for longer than a month, Corpsmen were constantly rotated from one company to another. Gung-Ho Marines who wanted more action, requested transfers to "Recon" units.

I was alerted to a mission called Sparrow Hawk around November 1967. A Recon team was surrounded and had suffered casualties. I was sent to the Communication Bunker for a situation briefing and a lecture by Senior officers. My mission was to blow a hole through the NVA encirclement after landing in an unfamiliar LZ, have the casualties evacuated, and then rescue the remaining members of the team. To accomplish this mission I was assigned an assortment of "attached personnel."

I had 81 mortars, additional radio operators, an extra machine gun team, and a Forward Air Controller. These "attached personnel" totaled an additional 15 Marines, all of whom I had never worked with before. All the Marines for this mission were transferred from the Phu Bai airport by truck. A major and a jeep driver drove me to the airport from the Communications Bunker. Throughout the whole ride, the Major kept telling me how to handle the mission, and what to do if various situations took place. We boarded the helicopters and flew for a good hour. Along the way, it was determined that the Recon Team had been overrun, so there was no need for us to continue the mission.

A common problem with being a 2nd Lieutenant platoon commander was that most of us had not planned on making the military a career. We simply wanted to do well, and have a minimum amount of causalities. Most senior officers had been in the USMC for at least five years and were career officers. The promotion process was based on having successful combat operations, battle commendations and recommendations by senior officers. They aspired to have junior officers be as successful as they could, since it reflected on their own leadership capabilities. Their career advancement could be effected by a poor showing from junior officers. Thus, there was tremendous pressure put on 2nd Lieutenants to perform. I remember enjoying being in the field on patrols and sitting in patrol bases and ambushes, as opposed to being on the base at Phu Bai. In the field, no senior officers were around to pressure us.

I was called to a meeting once at the base and had to leave my platoon alone in a patrol base near a pagoda. I was informed by superior officers that General Westmoreland heard college students in Hue were demonstrating because a 2nd Lieutenant didn't control his troops. There had been an allegation that by troops had caused damage to the pagoda. I did not remember seeing any damages, hated even being in that room.

In late December 1967, the "word" came down that the battalion was going to be sent "North" for long-range operations in the "real" war zone. As January 1968 approached, nobody was sure where we were headed. Around the 14th of January the officers learned that we were headed for Khe Sanh. My troops wanted to go to Con Thien, which had been in heavy combat and was on the U.S. national news every night. One of my Marines who was writing a letter home said, "Where and what the Hell is Khe Sanh?"

We flew on C-130s from the Phu Bai airport to Khe Sanh on January 16, 1968. The approach into Khe Sanh was difficult. We landed and were sent to an area just outside the base and within sight of Hills 558, 950 and 861. The next day the officers received word that 2/26 was headed for Hill 558, but our platoon was going to be a "combat outpost" about 1,000 meters north of Hill 558. While the entire battalion walked to Hill 558 the next day, our platoon continued to the "combat outpost," where we stayed for a good two weeks before we were ordered to Hill 558, when Echo 2/26 was sent to Hill 861 Alpha.

Life as a 2nd Lieutenant on Hill 558 was similar to life at Phu Bai. I recall majors chewing me out about

the condition of my troops' bunkers, the lack of depth in the trench lines, and the lack of accuracy of a minefield map they had prepared. There were several minefields established around Hill 558 in February 1968. There had been several instances were Marines accidentally stepped on live mines. On a day in late February 1968, a major told me to enter a live minefield, re-take the compass readings of the location of each mine, and re-do the minefield map. Our platoon had first installed the minefield, and in accordance with the Geneva Convention, built a "cow fence" around the minefield, and placed signs on the fence to warn the enemy with the word "MINH" which is Vietnamese for "Minefield."

One of my leadership failings was that I did not supervise the construction of the "cow fence" and, therefore, I was not familiar with its boundaries and interpretations. Thus, on that eventful day when I entered to minefield to take compass readings and re-write the map, I became confused about where the safe zones where and how to navigate the field. The first and last wooden stakes of the minefield had no live mines and each stake in-between the first and last stake had six mines in a semi-circular pattern at three meters from the wooden stake. Since I misread the cow fence, and the "free zones" when I entered the minefield, I thought I was headed for the first wooden stake. I was really headed for the second wooden stake where the live mines were located and, luckily, I hit the first mine in the pattern. I say "luckily" — if I had walked deeper into the live minefield and hit a mine in the middle of the field, my Marines and Corpsman would have had more difficulty reaching me and would have stepped on a few live mines.

Before my foot hit the live mine, our Company had not suffered any casualties at Khe Sanh. Here was a 2nd Lieutenant stepping on a live mine in a friendly minefield. I felt a slight burning sensation, but no pain. I was informed by a Corpsman who reviewed my x-rays, that I had shattered every bone in my foot, destroying all the nerves. Therefore I did not experience any terrible pain. I remember my Marines carried me on a stretcher to the BAS (Battalion Aid Station), where one Corpsman offered me a cigarette. Since I did not smoke, I responded with "what and ruin my good health?" I recall the entire BAS broke out in laughter.

Later, I was sent by helicopter to Dong Ha, Da Nang, and later that evening to the USS Repose where my left foot was amputated. I believe I spent three days on the Repose and several more days in some hospital in Japan and eventually spent seven months in the Philadelphia Naval Hospital. I was there for seven months, as I needed additional surgery. When you have an amputation, shrunken blood vessels hurt blood circulation, and until that blood circulation improves, doctors will not perform additional surgery.

About a month after my accident, my company was caught in a bunker ambush and about 100 Marines were either KIA or WIA. Since our platoon usually walked point, I would have been third or fourth in the column, and either killed or seriously wounded. Most of those who survived that battle, suffer from PTSD. I learned a great deal from my six months as a platoon commander that helped me in my profession, and in my marriage of thirty-six years. In brief, I had no fear after those six months as a Platoon Commander. My wife and I also only had one child, a son. After having 50 teenagers to supervise, being a parent of one was a breeze.

I feel that joining the USMC, and serving as a Platoon Commander, was an experience, probably the best career move I had ever made. If I hadn't made the decision to join the USMC; I never would have discovered California; I would not have met my wife while walking down a Washington D.C. street one Saturday night while I was in OCS.

My respect to all the NCOs who recruit college seniors for the USMC.

Joseph Olszewski
Morro Bay, California

Part II: Seabees Efforts and Successes at the Khe Sanh Combat Base

by Raymond Cruz, Martin Kux & many others, all contributing

A small group of US Navy Seabees was part of a joint endeavor in the successful defense of Khe Sanh. The following articles are personal accounts of the Seabees of CBMU-301 Bravo Detachment.

General Westmoreland, during an interview regarding the siege of Khe Sanh, commented on one

of the key elements in the success for holding Khe Sanh. He stated "unlike the French at Dien Bien Phu, we have complete command of the air and ability in keeping the supply line open." Key to this factor, was the supply line, keeping the runway open at Khe Sanh. The only reason for any aircraft, fixed wing or otherwise not being able to land at KSCB, was the fog or the intense shelling. With the runway open, KSCB was able to not only receive the needed supplies but also evacuate the wounded and the bodies of our unfortunate brothers.

As intense were the battles in the surrounding hills, so was the battle to keep the runway operational. This assignment fell to the Seabees of CBMU-301-Bravo Detachment. A small unit that not only had the responsibility for keeping the runway open but also communication, refrigeration, and electrical power to the tower and CP, and many other projects.

From Raymond Cruz: EO, CBMU-301 Det B

My introduction to Khe Sanh was most memorable. I was reassigned from A Co. CBMU-301 in Dong Ha to Detail Bravo at Khe Sanh, some time in the fall of '67. I flew out of Dong Ha with supplies and some green Marine replacements on a Chinook. A few miles out of KSCB, the chopper starts to jerk and the cargo chief yells we're taking fire, return fire out the starboard side. I tried to stand as the Chinook banked hard. The sergeant was pulling the 4 other marines up, yelling to all to fire, return fire. I put a magazine in my M-16 and started firing — at what I have no idea. I then see tracers from the sarge and change direction of fire. In seconds it's over as the Chinook is disappearing towards KSCB. As the big bird touched down, the sarge yelled back to the five now wide-eyed citizens of KSCB, "Good shooting, Marines." I instinctively yell back, "Seabee." He then waves us off. I am still not sure what I was firing at, or if they were just having fun with us.

As Heavy Equipment Operator I was assigned to the nightshift during the major reconstruction of the runway. Detail Bravo worked round the clock to rebuild the runway. There was always a crew either working, eating, or sleeping. Some manage to find time to chug beers with the Marines and swap BS. Those that managed to have some spare time would help in the construction of the two bunkers soon to be Home or filled sand bags.

Every one remembers where or what they were doing on Jan 21, 1968 at KSCB. Most of us in Detail Bravo had put in a full day of work and had just gotten to sleep when the shelling started. We scurried into the bunker and out to the trench. Word had come down to us during the early lull in the shelling that we would have to get to the equipment yard to muster for work assignments. We left the sanctity of our soon-to-become-famous bunker, "The Alamo Hilton." What I saw can barely be described — remnants of our living area strewn about, craters from various size impacts, and live shells lay all around the bunker. The area was not recognizable. The Seabees who lived in the bunker next to the equipment yard and next to the runway had already begun assessing what was left of our equipment and supplies. The equipment yard situated near the runway had received several direct hits and turned out to be a prime target for the duration of the Siege. Three dump trucks and a small tractor were totally destroyed; much of our lumber had shrapnel, and some runway matting was also damaged. The mechanics feverishly began salvaging what they could from the destroyed equipment, repairing the ones that had the least damage. Immediately the repair of the runway became paramount, as it would be for the next 77 days.



Martin J. Kux

Ensign Kux examining damage to runway at KSCB from 152mm delayed-fuse. March 1968.

Several days later, one of the senior petty officer came to the main bunker. He informed us that we were the spare bodies for the base and would be called to reinforce as needed. We were issued extra ammo including LAWS and M-79 ammo. Human ammo mules is what we were. Our life expectancy just fell off the scale. That dreaded day came one night in early February. A call came in that FOB-3

was being hit hard and needed help. We gear uped and headed down the trenches and above ground at times toward the Special Forces compound. As we passed Marines on the way, we can hear them saying, "They'll never make it." I was going to agree when I was suddenly told to halt and take cover. Our prayers were answered. Orders to return came down the line. Quickly, we returned to the sanctity of the Alamo Hilton to wait for the next time.

Am not sure of the date, possibly in March. I was told to take the small dozer up to a hill outside the gate and dig out some holes for bunkers. I have no idea what hill it was. I think it was with 1/9. I remember going out the gate and heading up the first hill. A gunny stopped me and asked what I was doing. I explained. He then tells me to proceed on up and some one would direct me. At which time, several mortars hit and a recoilless round also impacted behind the dozer. Immediately, I race this slow moving dozer up the hill. Near the top of the hill am given instructions. Those that had taken up residence there knew that the ground became hard as granite when dry. The little dozer had great difficulty digging any hole. Several more mortars and recoilless rounds impact the area nearby. After one of these barrages, word comes up that the gunny has been hit. I am then told to get the fu#$@*& magnet off the hill. I put the little dozer in high and as quickly as possible, I headed on out, the whole time being followed by mortar and recoilless rounds.

A member of the 26th Marines from the Bronx named Frank Droz, a part of a mortar team, left Khe Sanh during the Siege to be married. It was my cousin he married. That mortar team may remember how they got matting for their bunker. Back in the world, Frank and I would laugh about the impromptu visit he got from his future family. Hope the rest of the mortar team made it out safely. Does any one ever remember hearing bugles and drums one night during a firefight out in front of the Grey Zone, or is that something we just talked about it and never happened?

Dennis Waler EO, CBMU-301 Det B

My memories from Khe Sanh. There are many, both good and bad, but two things really stand out in my mind. The first was how we used to hear the artillery firing in Laos when we were working on the runway, and we would run to the edge of the runway counting down — "3, 2, 1" — then hitting the ground just before the incoming shell would hit. As scary as it was, it was almost like a game.

The second and one of the most memorable of my tour was on a Sunday afternoon just before the major ground assault which I think was February 29, 1968. I was on radio watch at the rear of our bunker. I think our call sign, at least on that day was "Blue Delta 1." On the hill to the south of us was a patrol of 15 to 20 NVA. They were in plain view, in uniform, eating a meal. We called in for artillery and I think it was from Camp Carroll or Camp Julian. At least that is how I remember it. Anyway, they fired one round that was about 200 or 300 yards short. They corrected and fired for effect. When it was all over there were numerous bodies on the ground and I don't remember seeing any survivors. Not much to work with, but there were a number of us enjoying the show. I was involved in a few fire fights on the Cau Viet River between Cau Viet and Dong Ha, and was on the runway at Dong Ha when they hit our ammo dump, Sept 3, 1968.

Jack Haigwood CBMU-301-B

Det B My arrival at Khe Sanh in December 1967 was preceded by an earlier tour in Vietnam. I had spent 11 months in country with MCB-5 in an area east of Da Nang close to Marble Mountain. In 1966 and 1967, Khe Sanh was already well known.

I was finally home with my wife and daughter and the thought of returning to Vietnam never even occurred to me. So, there I was, sitting in a field training class at Camp Pendleton when orders arrived for myself and four others to join CBMU-301 at Dong Ha. I had two weeks leave, to take my wife and daughter home and say goodbye once again.

I arrived in Dong Ha November 1967, mad as hell and with a real attitude. I was no FNG to this place and didn't like being treated like one. About three weeks had past when my attitude finally paid off. I was leaving Dong Ha! Guess I showed those rookies.

Next thing I remember was the C-123 I was in, heading to Khe Sanh. It felt like it was doing a nose-dive into the airstrip. My stomach was in my throat and I think I may have wet my pants during that landing. I remember the welcome sign at the radar station and thinking how I wish to hell I was back at Dong Ha.

I dragged what little I had with me to the Seabee bunker at the edge of the airstrip. Entering the

bunker, I wondered why these guys lived under ground like rats. I got this sick feeling when I realized why. Sam Messer greeted me with that big grin he still has today and told me to grab a bunk. Boy, was I lucky, I got one of the stretchers mounted to the wall. At least the rats couldn't reach me there, or so I thought. I swear those things could climb anything. I soon met all the other guys and wondered what they all had done to be sent here. Sorry Guys! First impression was that this was the "Misfit Bunch," and I was in it.

It didn't take me long to learn that these guys were a pretty special unit. Everyone worked as a team. The work on the strip was long and hard, but I was starting to like it there. Except for the rats, no one seemed to bother us much. These were hard working and equally hard playing guys. I never realized it then, but I would remember their faces for a lifetime. I first began getting a little shaky about this place when rumors from the Recon Marines next door started to sound like we all might be in some serious trouble. Then, the NVA patrol was killed and laid out for viewing. I think it was Sam that buried them, but I still remember that empty feeling I had thinking that the NVA might well be viewing our bodies soon.

On the evening of January 20th, I remember watching the hills light up from the fighting going on up there and thanking God I wasn't there, while praying for those who were. We knew our turn was coming soon. That morning of the 21st was a real shock when the first round hit. I remember scrambling around in the dark, grabbing gear and crawling into that God forsaken trench. I think I was next to last getting into the trench. Lying there, I first tried to count the incoming rounds, but I lost count after about number three. I was unconsciously digging deeper into the dirt with my fingers and teeth trying to hide from the shelling outside. Maybe an hour or so into the shelling, I started to sing some stupid song along with the guy next to me. We started laughing when someone at the other end yelled something like "shut the "$#$#" up"! I guess I was finally losing it for sure.

Later, two Marines who ran the PX jumped into our trench with us and nearly gave me a heart attack. Who in their right mind would be outside in that mess anyways? If memory serves me, I think their bunker took a direct hit soon after they had left it. Remembering how the hills lit up just a few hours earlier, and after hours of exploding rounds, I thought sure we were going to be overrun that morning. Looking out that slit to see if they were coming in under the shelling was pretty tough but when I did, I remember seeing a couple of Ontos Vehicles parked outside our bunker. I guessed they were there in case the NVA tried to come up the airstrip. I felt some relief knowing they would see them first and I could keep my head down.



Ray W. Stubbe

ONTOS.

Hours later, the sight of the mess outside was mind shattering. Unexploded rounds from the nearby dump were laying everywhere. The whole place looked like it had been leveled. The usual morning fog was present, but for once I was happy to see it. I walked the area cautiously avoiding the rounds lying on the ground. I just knew one was going to go off. Everyone was out on the strip working to repair the damage. It seemed like we had to disassemble it to put new mats in place of the ones with holes in them. Eventually, someone came up with the idea to cut the jagged edges away with a torch and fill in the holes. I don't know who it was, but I hope he got a medal for "Good Thinking."

If you could find any humor at all in this whole mess, it had to be when our ensign (God Bless him) put up the "Armed Sentry" sign to scare off the Marines that might try to steal the extra matting we had for the strip. They didn't have to steal it when I was on watch. Just give me time to turn my head and take what you wanted. Besides, these guys were on the wire protecting my butt. (Sorry about this one, Marty, but you have to admit, it was kind of funny.) In his defense, the sign was probably Chief Nunnley's idea.

It always seemed like we got shelled when I was guarding the mats. One night, I was walking around and around trying to stay awake when we experienced some incoming. During my retreat to a safe place, I got my feet tangled in COM wire and hit the ground so hard my rifle came apart. There I lay, unable to do anything but wait for it to end. It only lasted a few minutes I think, but it seemed like hours. After that, I always looked for the nearest bunker when I was out there. Speaking of bunkers, I would like to thank all those guys who were relieving their bowels in the little barrel bunker behind the Ensign's Hut. On one special occasion, that happened to be the closest protection when the incoming rounds hit.

Everyone at Khe Sanh during this time has memories of close calls and lost friends. I still remember a Marine named "Red" we use to play cards with often. Red wore an Aussie bush hat under his helmet that couldn't be missed. I don't remember the exact day, but I do recall that he was supposed to be leaving Khe Sanh very soon. A short round hit in front of him that day outside his bunker and Red died. I never knew his name, but I'll never forget him.

One piece of equipment we had at Khe Sanh was a Galion Grater. I hated the sight of that machine and I think it hated me. I was assigned to maintain all of its two thousand grease fittings. One of the grater's tires was "mortally wounded" by shrapnel and sure as hell one day they dropped a new one in for it. With all the stuff we needed there, we got a tire! I uncrated the tire that day and rolled it over to the lube skid. I leaned the tire upright against the skid and as I let go, a mortar round hit. I was dazed and blinded by it and staggering around when someone took me to the ground (I think it was one of the Recon guys next to us). Three or four more rounds hit within a few yards of us. Later, I saw that the first round had hit about eighteen inches from me just on the other side of that tire. I never got the chance to thank who hit me. I was a bit shaken at the time, but whoever you are "Thank You!"

The weeks following January 20th have been blurred by the years, but it seemed that every day had its moments. Jets dropping napalm, B-52's shaking the ground, incoming arty, more and bigger rats, rain, and fog. However, the worst day I remember was the day I left Khe Sanh. I was leaving on a Chinook in late February and as luck would have it, a C-123 landed before I could get to the chopper. This of course was followed by round after round of incoming. I dropped my bag and ran to the chopper. Just as it was about to lift off, I jumped onto the tail gate. One seat remained empty. A Marine was sitting on the end of the port side row of seats. I motioned for him to move forward but he didn't move. He had that same stare that so many of us had then. When he didn't move, I slid in between him and another Marine. The pilot was circling to gain altitude when we heard a loud pop. I turned to the Marine sitting in what should have been my seat and said, " I think they're shooting at us." His face was pale as he said to me, "I'm hit." As he fell into me, I stood up and yelled to the door gunner. He responded quickly with a first aid kit and started packing the exit wound in the Marine's lower abdomen. The pilot quickly sat us down next to Charlie Med. He was taken away and we lifted off the strip once again. The pilot circled the area looking for the sniper but finally gave it up. I was dropped off at Dong Ha a short time later. Covered in blood and Khe Sanh clay, reality hit. I should have been the one left behind at Charlie Med. I've prayed many times for that Marine. I don't know if he made it or not but would give almost anything to know the name and fate of the Marine that took my bullet.

I left CBMU-301 after a few short months. In those months, I met the bravest, greatest, and most dedicated men I've ever known. On March 9, 1968, I was home with my wife and daughter. As I watched CBS News, I saw an interview with the "Seabees" I had shared that small bunker with. Sadness and guilt for not being there overcame me. I was home and they were still enduring Khe Sanh.

Jerel Wenger, Yeoman CMBU-301 Det B

Sam,

Hot diggedy dawg! When they told me to get my bags packed to move on up from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh, back at the end of June, 1967, I was gung ho to go! Khe Sanh was up there in that peaceful northeastern-most corner of I Corps, up there where they didn't have nightly rocket and mortar attacks, where the land was more verdantly exquisite, where life was a whole lot more civil than it was down in the sweaty, densely-populated coastal plains, or the rugged, overgrown, leech-infested central highlands.

Yup, it was all true back in July 1967, when the sun shone down on Khe Sanh with a heat and radi-

ance like nothing short of a tanning parlor in Beverly Hills, where the sky was a crystalline aquamarine blue from sunup to sunset, where the lush green jungle grew right up to the edges of the combat base and the airstrip, which extended about 300 yards beyond the perimeter. Lovely Khe Sanh, where wild tigers, hunted until recent times from the backs of elephants by the Princes and Kings of Annam, roamed free and left their pug marks in the mud by the banks of the small stream which flowed along the eastern end of the airstrip and then down into the deep valley beneath its foot.

Khe Sanh had the feeling and appearance of a bustling frontier post, with swirling clouds of dust, a forest of ammo-canister utility poles supporting an unruly tangle of wires, cables overhead, a chow hall that served four square meals a day, a throbbing communications center, a fairly busy little airstrip, a proper medical facility with clean cots and crisp linen sheets in a cool, sandbagged warren on the turnaround apron, and all of it ringed by a zigzagging, sandbagged combat trench, fortified with pillboxes and gun emplacements at regular intervals, and staffed by Marines who looked every bit like they meant business and knew how to conduct it. Khe Sanh was a right cozy little place to be, back then.

And Khe Sanh was growing fast, too. A couple of companies of the 26th Marine Regiment were already there, "comfortably" dug in and awaiting the arrival of more of their brothers. There was a contingent of Marine Reconnaissance, Tank and Ontos platoons, 105mm artillery batteries, crash crews, loadmasters and materials handlers, Army Special Forces and liaison personnel, doctors, corpsmen, even a handful of chaplains who were charged with keeping us on the straight and narrow in spite of our intentions to the contrary. Seabees from CBMU-301 had just arrived, by air and overland by convoy up Route 9, bringing about 35 steelworkers, carpenters, heavy equipment operators, mechanics, and electricians along with a couple of bulldozers, a handful of trucks, and an assortment of equipment to maintain and augment the airstrip and the "facilities" that were strewn about Khe Sanh Combat Base.

The first task of the wooden "seats" they left behind. Around the 19th of August, the east end was torn out, shortening the runway to a mere 1500 feet in length. During that first reconstruction phase, the usable half of the runway was only long enough for short-takeoff-and-landing (STAL) aircraft, such as the small-capacity, ugly-duckling "gooney-bird" caribou cargo plane, along with CH-49 Chinook and lumbering CH-53 Hercules helicopters. Those restrictions severely limited the amount of supplies Khe Sanh could receive, and that put MACV's most remote outpost in South Vietnam at some considerable risk. Time was short. The resident Seabees from CBMU-301, reinforced by contingents from the main body and MCB-5 in Dong Ha, worked around the clock, digging out many thousands of tons of rock from a handy nearby rocky outcrop, crushing it to usable size, (Fig 2) and laying it out, grading it, and compacting it to form a foundation for the lengthened airstrip, and then zipping it all up under new aluminum runway matting, finally finishing the first reconstruction of the Khe Sanh airstrip in October.

Having once completed their most pressing job, the Seabees then turned their attention to less immediate issues at hand. The electricians were out and the mechanics were somehow managing to fix all the stuff the other guys broke with indefatigable skill and ingenuity. About that time, the Seabees also started excavation for that magnificent, downright homey bunker dubbed the "Alamo Hilton" by squads of journalists who would later seek shelter and camaraderie in its depths, as well as a headquarters "hooch" and some utility buildings in their equipment yard, conveniently adjoining the airstrip.

Scuttlebutt had it that another battalion of 26th Marines was due to move in soon, and accommodations would have to be thrown together for them. Artillery pieces, ammunition, food and supplies were coming in by the planeload. Platoons of grunts from the 26th Marines were manning the hill positions above the combat base, on Hills 861 & 861A, 1015, 950, as well as on 881South. A steady stream of helicopters were landing, ferrying supplies, ammunition, and fresh troops up to the hills, and bringing back tired, hungry, funky Marines.

All this activity was fine until the rains came. We had been told by salty-dog Vietnam veterans that the monsoon rains in Vietnam were wet, long and intense, that mold grew upon mold, that everything stank, that the soaking wet troops shivered in the cold nights and chilly mornings, and that everything sank, slid and slithered into and over that ubiquitous red laterite mud of Khe Sanh. What we hadn't been told was the good stuff: that the red mud would



Martin J. Kux

Ensign Kux examining damage to runway at KSCB from 152mm delayed-fuse. March 1968.

turn, in the regular downpours and sopping wet fogs of that waterlogged season, into a thick porridge of goo (Fig 1) under the interconnected aluminum facing the runway, and that those slats would start to rear up and buckle, rippling down the length of the runway ahead of and beneath, the enormous, fast-moving weight of the packed cargo aircraft that landed with ever-increasing frequency. Re-supply of Khe Sanh was starting to look a bit problematic.

Our OIC, freshly minted Ensign Martin J. Kux, CEC, huddled together with Marine and Air Force commanders, engineers and experienced NCOs from the main body in Dong Ha, and came up with a plan to rebuild the airstrip again from the bottom up, peeling away its soggy surface, and laying in 3 times the rock that was in the first reconstruction. As reinforcements and additional equipment soon made their way up to Khe Sanh from Dong Ha, the airstrip was soon stripped bare again and the mire scooped out of the way. The blasters, bulldozers, rock crushers, and dump trucks started up an around-the-clock assembly line, and the Seabees once again worked in 12-hour shifts, in the light of day and under the artificial trees of spotlights through the night, recreating our lifeline to the outside world from the ground up.

All during both phases of reconstruction of the airstrip, re-supply of Khe Sanh had to be accomplished somewhat more ingeniously than before. Overland transport of supplies had become impossible with the severing of Route 9 by the ever-present NVA in August. With the airstrip long unusable and soon to be torn out completely, with helicopter and STAL transport limited, risky and slow, and with conventional parachute drops impractical and prone to missing the target, some other method of delivery had to be devised. The new, innovative, never-before-used technology that evolved was the low-altitude, parachute-assisted, ejection delivery system (LAPES), like no other method of military re-supply in the history of warfare, logistics, or engineering. The courage, awesome skill and intrepid flying of the pilots and crews of the MAWs down in DaNang and elsewhere pulled us all through those tenuous days, helping to keep the enemy at bay and keeping us on the ground in Khe Sanh supplied with the materials necessary to defend and feed ourselves, an incredible volume and variety of supplies, munitions, foodstuffs. That's not to mention the huge amount of materials needed to rebuild a nearly four-thousand-foot military airstrip. They brought all that stuff to us by air, too.

With all that tricky flying and a steady buildup of the NVA's antiaircraft capabilities, not all of the aircraft made it safely in and out. A C130, a C123, and a Hercules helicopter were destroyed by enemy fire or mishap, and at least six airmen perished. Two men parachuting from an over flying transport-aircraft, became entangled in each other's chutes and plunged to their deaths. I'm sure members of the loadmaster crews were killed or wounded during their mad scrambles to retrieve those essential supplies from the drop zone. We all know we owe those guys our lives.

The rebuilding of the airstrip at Khe Sanh was done not once, but twice, and with a "can-do" spirit the like of which I've never seen before or since. In the short span of less than 120 days, the old airstrip was completely removed twice. Often enlisting the help of a couple of Marine Corps tanks to pull the heavy slats of the old runway apart. Many, many thousands of tons of rock were "extracted", crushed, transported, laid, graded and compacted for the new, improved and enlarged runway. (Fig 2) Thousands of 20-foot strips of heavy, interlocking aluminum runway matting were flown in by heavy-duty transport helicopter, broken out, loaded onto trucks and transported out onto the emerging airstrip, laid and connected by the Seabees of CBMU-301.

And it was none too soon, either. The airstrip reconstruction was begun in October and completed in December. By that time, a wintry chill was in the air, and reports from the bush and aerial reconnais-

sance were growing evermore ominous. Many of us were amazed and confounded that the entire airstrip reconstruction project had been completed with a minimum of incoming fire and interference from the enemy. All that would soon change profoundly, forever branded in our memories on the 21st of January 1968. But we had a serviceable airstrip, and a means of keeping those life-sustaining supplies and ammunition pouring in during the 77 days of the Siege of Khe Sanh. Seabees "can-do," and at Khe Sanh, by God, they did!

I had forgotten the Recon patrol that got so badly



Martin J. Kux

Ensign Kux examining damage to runway at KSCB from 152mm delayed-fuse. March 1968.

hit, just a little over a week (if I remember correctly) before all Hell broke loose at Khe Sanh. I remember that Painter and other Bravo Recon buddies told us that there was a lot of activity going on out there in the bush for the last three weeks or so before the Siege started. I also remember that 881 N & S were taking heavy shellacking around then, and I remember the frequent arty support from the base and the air strikes by the Phantoms and the old slow-flying propeller-driven aircraft all around them. I remember the medevac choppers flying up to the hills and down to Charlie Med, ferrying the wounded and the dead. I guess we all knew something was about to break.

I also remember the night your Sam Messer's tent got hit. I'm sure we were there, that evening before it got hit, smoking some whacky-weed with the Recon guys and sharing some of the last cans of beer we Seabees had stashed under our office hootch, listening to the ominous stories of contacts with NVA, ambushes, near misses, and of you Recon guys lying still and breathless while enemy patrols and whole companies passed nearby along shadowy paths through the jungle.

I remember how Sam and I stood disbelievingly the next morning over the sandbag-lined crater where your tent had stood just the night before. I remember being told that "Doc" (weren't all corpsmen called "Doc?") and several other guys had been killed outright, that around three had been wounded and medevaced, and that Painter had been hauled off babbling and crazed from the concussion and the horror. That was one of those moments when there just wasn't any feeling inside — just a numbness, shock, disbelief and hollowness that never completely left me until I had been back in the "States" for many, many months. I feel it again, now, fresh and raw, even so many years later. It may be old age, incipient Alzheimer's, or just plain old dillusion, but your name, "Pagano," sounds awfully familiar, Bob...

Anyway, Sam and I ran into Painter and another Bravo Recon Marine back in '93 at a Red Clay Reunion in Washington, D.C. Ron Painter was healthy and apparently happy and sassy. It was good to see him. If you have it, please send me his e-mail or snail-mail address, and if you do write to him, please tell him that I still remember his dream about the massacre of Indian women, children, and old people at the hands of the U.S. Cavalry, that he told me about back at Khe Sanh. At that time I didn't believe him. It was only later that I found out about Wounded Knee. There were many strong and strange forces afoot at Khe Sanh. I still think of some of them, even now, thirty-five years later. Sam's story about the Marine who told him he was going to be killed and gave him letters to send, rang so true that it called to mind many others.

I had many premonitions myself and each time I did, they saved me from sure death. There was the sudden, irresistible urge to take cover just before a 122mm rocket landed right where I had been sitting in the entrance road between the airstrip and the equipment yard. There was that creepy feeling when I was walking by the ammo dump, just before I decided to get out of there and the ammo dump took its infamous direct hit. There was the night I was on watch in the equipment yard, taking a piss when the low "thump, thump, thump" out of Co Roc Mountain just across the border in Laos announced

new incoming; that feeling that there wasn't going to be time to finish the piss, the mad dash for the bunker, squirting like a busted water pipe on the way; that feeling there wasn't going to be time to make it; that reflexive crouch right where I stood, the mangled flatbed trailer and barrels that so perfectly framed my crouching figure, the quick dash and the next blast which propelled me down the stairs into the bunker, never touching a step. There were many spirits afoot in the night at Khe Sanh. There were many spirits, many dark nights, and many unbelievable stories. I can feel them all again, thanks to your letters, and they give me the creeps.

Braegger, CM 1 (CBMU-301 Det B)

I do have a funny story to tell. In the midst of incoming one day, SCPO Benton I, & Lt. Kux went for the generator hole in the yard by the runway. When the shelling stopped as we were coming out of the hole, it appeared to be raining feathers. That's right, there were feathers everywhere. One of the incoming hit one of the bunkers in the forced re-con area, next to us, and it hit their sleeping bags. As far as I know no one was killed, it did hurt some eardrums, and broke the monotony for a few minutes.

Hal Cann, CE-1 (CBMU-301 Det B)

I never had any beer hidden under tents. I had it hidden under the OIC office hooch. I shared a pallet of beer with the Special Forces Chaplain. I remember a picture of a few Bee's with a can of beer in their hands and the caption read "no drinking water in Khe Sanh." I rationed it out at no more than two can's per day and no stashing. It went very well and my guys were happy with the set up. I can still see the Chaplain and I standing near the field office watching the chopper coming in, with the pallet swinging around in circles. What a great sight.

Sam Messer (CBMU-301 Det B)

I have a lot of memories of Khe Sanh, as that was my Home from Aug 67 to March 68. I will try and not go into great detail so as not to take up much space but hit on a few things. First thing was that we had on hell of a time getting parts for our equipment. Sometimes the other Seabees and Marine engineers would come around asking if we were missing parts off our equipment. The answer was always yes, someone was stealing our stuff. But in reality we were sneaking into their areas and stripping what we could get fast for our stuff. Working at night we were able to pull off these acts with out ever getting caught. The only thing we never got fixed was the PTO's on the 2 1/2 tons.

A funny/not-so-funny story. One day we had finished the Alamo Hilton and were bringing rock from the quarry for the top. Frenchy 2nd class EO dumped his load, and took off his bed and didn't come down as PTO didn't work! He was tearing down communication lines and we couldn't get his attention. So the rest of us dumped our loads and on purpose left our beds up and took off for the quarry, also. Needless to say we caught hell. Col. Lownds caught all 5 of us and had us standing tall. He was giving us hell and was going to bust us to E-0, I think he was so mad he would have shot us if he thought he could have gotten away with it. As it so happened Ensign Kux was gone and the Lt./JG Anderson was in charge. Lt. Anderson told Col. Lownds that we were under orders to drive the trucks and that they had been dead lined since November. He told us all to stick our hands out in front of us. Well I had no Idea what was to come, but we all stuck our hands out and Mr. Anderson came down the line and slapped each of us on the hand then snapped us to attention and told us to get our butts back to work! Col Lownds was upset and he called Cmd. Holmes at Dong Ha and Cmd. Holmes flew to Khe Sanh.

They had a argument, and the last I heard was CMD Holmes told Col. Lownds to leave his men alone. He told Lt./JG Anderson to get the lines fixed and left. That was the last we ever heard about it.

Rat Stew

Some time in Feb 68 after the ghost patrol, I was getting ready to eat some c-rat eggs. Frenchy Leblanc called me to the fighting hole outside the Alamo Hilton. He said, "Do you see what I see?" pointing to the garbage dump. I looked out and there were some mamasans from the FOB catching rats. I looked at Frenchy and said what the hell? He said we're going to have a HOT meal. Now, I was hungry as I was down to one c-rat a day and one canteen of water a day. I asked him what are you talking about? He said come with me we're going to get ourselves some hot food. So we took off dodging through the Marine lines, me just following him. He must have done this before, as he knew just where to go and where the holes were in the wire. We somehow got

into the FOB compound, and Frenchy strolled up to this Army Staff Sgt. and cool as you please, said got any hot food today? The S/Sgt smiled and brought out some bowls. We all sat down on the ground and I watched as the mamasan dipped the rats into boiling water, pulled them out, gutted them, striped the skin off, then started cutting them up into a pot of boiling stuff. I sat there wondering what the hell am I doing here, as Frenchy and the S/Sgt made small talk for about 30 minutes or so. Then the mamasan took our bowls and filled them and I ate my first HOT meal since Jan 20. It had some green stuff in it and chunks of white meat, and I ate. I knew it was rat but all I could think of was chicken soup.

Memories of Past Reunions

With the reunion getting so close and the recent influx of so many new members to the organization, the staff had an idea to revisit a past reunion. We chose the 1990 KSV Reunion held in Nashville, TN, via KSV Newsletter #12. It was a practice of Reverend Ray W. Stubbe (founder of KSV) to have the attending members relate their experiences at Khe Sanh at our reunions, and how they felt when attending the reunion. Here are some of those remembrances:

General Ray Davis, who has attended all of our reunions (Tampa, Chicago, and present):

It's very moving for me to see such a turnout. It's totally great. It's a sign that we are getting back together. This nation needs the veterans to get together and exercise the type of leadership that veterans alone know about and can exercise. I had three trips in there during the Siege. I appreciated the depth of the foxholes. I had a son who had a platoon on Hill 950 for a long time (this was after the thing was pretty well settled) and I guess Miles' greatest claim to fame is that he is the first Lieutenant ever to clean all the rats out of Hill 950! I'm delighted to be among you and with you, and wish you all the best, and keep the faith.

Ray Stubbe, (Chaplain 1/26)

I was there July '67 to March '68 as the base Protestant chaplain attached to 1/26. The fellow I'd like to mention is Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer. Jonathan came to Khe Sanh about the 15th of January, and came to see me. He was a very young

The Rats of Khe Sanh

THE RATS, THE RATS,
WHY DO I KEEP HEARING THE RATS?
MORTARS, ROCKETS, ARTILLERY.
THE SHELLS KEEP FALLING,
SO MANY, SO FAST!
HEAR THEM SQUEAL, THE RATS,
THEY'RE DIGGING AND DYING, FAST!
INCOMING AND OUTGOING.
HEAR THEM SQUEAL.
THEY'RE SCARED AS HELL.
ME TOO, NO WHERE TO RUN,
NO HOLE TOO SAFE,
NO WHERE TO HIDE,
I WANT TO SQUEAL TOO!
THE RATS, THE RATS,
LOOKING FOR FOOD.
ME TOO,
WHAT ABOUT RAT STEW?
RATS I HATE THEM.
I LIVE LIKE THEM,
AN ANIMAL,
JUST LIKE THEM.
NO BATH,
NO SHAVE,
NO HAIR CUT,
SMELL JUST LIKE DEATH!
THE RATS, THE RATS,
WHERE DID THEY ALL COME FROM?
HOW LONG WILL THIS DREAM LAST?

9-6-93 LSM
Sam Messer, CBMU-301 Det -B

looking fellow — he looked about 12. He said, "I'm a Conscientious Objector." We talked a little. It was always my feeling that I didn't care if anyone applying for CO status were genuine or not. How can anyone measure that? I just didn't want to be on 881-South or 861 at night when it was attacked and have anyone who had any doubts at all that the chaplain wasn't worth protecting along with everybody else! But this one was definitely genuine. He had joined the Marine Corps believing his recruiter who said he would be working with dogs. He said he didn't care what happened to him; he just didn't want to hurt anyone. He had never been in a fight, never fired a weapon. So we began the long procedure. On the 21st of January after we were attacked, the Top of Bravo Company came to see me and said, "Chaplain, we have a problem. Spicer just won't take up his rifle and clean it. The guys are getting a little edgy and angry."

I later found out they were beating him up. In our common desperation and survival concern where we all depended on each other, that was perfectly understandable. I said, "I have a solution. I deserve a clerk. I live in the C-Med area which can always use stretcher bearers." So Jonathan came to C-Med where he eventually became in charge of all the stretcher-bearer details. He turned into a tiger. He repeatedly remained with the wounded on stretchers, laying next to them during incoming when everyone else took cover. This continued through the Siege until the early part of March when they were loading a large group of wounded onto a helicopter. A mortar round exploded, wounding the casualties as well as those carrying them. Jonathan took a little piece of shrapnel in the sac around his heart. The doctors of C-Med were really not equipped to do open heart surgery, but if they didn't he'd die, so they did, and saved him. He was evacuated to Japan but died 2 weeks later from infection. He was awarded a Navy Cross for his heroism. From him I have witnessed and experienced love, concern for others, lived in action on their behalf, that those who are deemed weak are perhaps actually very strong. He laid down his life that others might live.

Fred McEwan, (S-4, 26 Marines & C/O, 1/26

I want to mention one person or two but I can't because there's 2200 you could mention! It's hard to remember faces and people. We could say JACK EGGER when he got killed. He was in Charlie Company and had just reported aboard and was one of these direct rounds [KIA 22 Mar 68] that landed into his bunker. He and the Company Gunnery Sergeant got killed.

Let me tell you just a couple quick stories. The Regimental S-4 had a lot to do with supply of the bullets and the bandages and the beans. General Tompkins would want to know what was the logistic situation at Khe Sanh — water, garbage, ammunition, medical supplies, graves registration, everything. The Seabees rebuilt the airstrip. We found the rock quarry. There was a young buck Sergeant who discovered the stone. We couldn't find rock anyplace for weeks in mid-1967. They finally found the stone on top of the position held by 1/9. The Seabees brought up a rock crusher. We rebuilt the airstrip and got it in good shape. Around December when the North Vietnamese Army blew a French bridge across Highway 9, Colonel Lownds, the Engineer Officer, and myself went there with one of the rifle companies as security. We swam across that river to check out that area, see if the bridge could be rebuilt. It could not, so we left real quick. It was a precarious situation. The NVA were quickly closing in. The last Rough Rider that came across Highway 9 had a load of bunkering materials for the Lang Vei Army Special Forces people.

One funny story: sometimes you do not understand the enemy. We had a water supply on one side of the base which was never shelled. They could have knocked out our bulk fuel pump. On the other side of the perimeter, we had the trash dump. We worked on the dump, and thank God for the artillery. They were the only ones that had the TD-15 bulldozer, which they let us use. The NVA shot at the driver, with machine-guns, RPG's, and mortars. They never did hit him — he sure deserved a medal. On the other hand, the NVA never hit our water or fuel pump, go figure.

Jack Ayers, (366th Tactical Fighter Wing, USAF)
Told of a group of Marines who had been on one of the hills at Khe Sanh and spotted a jet aircraft's tail identification.

I was the Flight Line Expediter. We were in the secure area at the north end of Danang. A group of Marines were looking down our revetment area. So I pulled up and asked, "Do you guys want to take a ride down here?" and man, they piled on. Well, we had one of these security cops there, and he got a lit-

tle bit upset because I'm taking people down the line, and he challenged me. I said, "What's the matter? Do these guys look like Orientals to you?" So we took them down the line, and we had aircraft in different configurations, maintenance, engines out, what have you. And as I was driving along, the young Marine flipped out on me; I mean he was just out of his gourd! "There it is! There it is!" I said, "Hey, cool it! You're going to fall off the truck. There's what?" And he said, "There it is! There's the SOB that got Charlie off my back!" And I tell you, I've never been so proud in my life!

Lee Klein, (G-2–3RD Mar Div)

I was at Khe Sanh as the Division G-2 Representative. The reason I asked to come up now is because the Air Force officer just spoke. Few people realize the contribution that the Air Force O-1 pilots and their crewmembers made at Khe Sanh. We had an enormously difficult time trying to get Marine O-1 aircraft. In fact, as far as I know, there were only 2 in country or at least attached to the 3rd Marine Division. The Air Force officers (who were a major and, I believe, 3 or 4 lieutenants) were flying in and out in O-1 aircraft, running their spotting missions for Army Special Forces and the SOG units that were either at Khe Sanh or had been flown in from elsewhere. But on all of those missions, they asked me before they took off in the morning and when they came back in the evening, "What can we do for you?" or "What can we tell you?" or "Where can we over-fly so we can tell you if there are changes in the terrain, changes in the trails." Subtitles that those guys were recognizing on a daily basis. For instance, when the dew was wiped off of the plants could be seen very clearly from the air, and they saw things that we would not recognize on the ground. And I'd like to know if there's any way of getting a hold of those Air Force pilots and their crew members who were based at Khe Sanh. I know that the C/O of the outfit will tell you the importance of what they did, at least in terms of the enemy's eyes. The C/O was a Major, and he was shot down with a SAM missile. It's not very typical of the enemy to waste a SAM missile on an observation aircraft"

NOTE: These were the aircraft of 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron, flying as part of Operation TIGERHOUND.

I've done quite a bit of reading about the operations at Khe Sanh, especially the time I was there in April, May, and June of 1967, the Hill Fights. And it's a little disturbing sometimes to read the histories because they're inadequate or inaccurate or at least incomplete — even in some of the histories provided by the Marine Corps. The thing that disturbs me the greatest was the casualty reporting. I was at Khe Sanh those 3 months, and we had 200 KIA, and I know because I counted the casualty lists. Yet in reading some of the official histories, they say that it was roughly a hundred dead and 600 or 700 wounded. I know in 3 months it was 200 dead and 800 injured. Why is that important? It's important to me because if we don't understand what the true costs are, we trivialize those deaths, we won't understand what the costs of those type operations are in the future, and it's easy to plan when you think the costs are far less than they really are and you don't discover until afterwards that the costs are enormous! And they were very heavy in Khe Sanh in those 3 months!

Henry & Dorothy Smith (parents of Cpl. Terry Lee Smith, H&S/3/26, KIA 20 Feb 1968):

We appreciate very much being here. Many of you remember Captain Dabney and Matt Caulfield, and I'm sure they would like to be here. We appreciate very much being able to associate with you people and meet some of the people who were on Hill 881-South. Thank you.

Chaplain Charles (Chick) Kelly, (Chaplain of 1/26, Mar 68)

Hello. This is my first time at a Convention, and I'm glad to be here. I want to find out, where is this guy with the big smile and the blond hair that I used to meet on the line at Khe Sanh? He was gone for a whole month. I said "Where did you go?" He said, "Chaplain. You see this little scar here?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "You see this little scar here?" He says, "I was on the line and this bullet came in here and withdrew here, and it went through the sinus passages and just made one optic nerve a little bit shaky, and they patched me up and sent me back here!" Is that guy here? [He wasn't].

Well anyway, I'd like to say thanks for that wonderful story Doc Blanchfield told about me, but I want you to know the truth. About that time — I'm not a military strategist, but the bullets were getting closer and the noises were getting louder, and I real-

ized it was time to leave! I thought it would be unfitting to lead a "rush out the door," and so I saw this guy who needed help who was blind, and the other guy who had the stretcher, and I thought: that's a great way to leave!

I want to tell you something wonderful that happened at Khe Sanh. I'm proud of this. You know about 10:00 A.M. the fog would lift. The NVA could look right down on you and in came the mortars. I was giving out Communion one day after some sergeants I knew had given me some wine, which they had made from grape juice. When I went to bed, the wine fermented...in my stomach. While I was giving out communion, everyone was down in the ditch. I heard this mortar pop, and I realized I had to jump into that ditch. I did not know if the mortar had hit me in the stomach or the wine had reached its peak of fermentation.

We formed a group of 6 Marines to help give out Holy Communion in small groups due to the danger of having large groups gather together. Two of those Marines; Kevin Macaulay (B/3dRecon), and Ed Prendergast (B/I/26). are here with us. I wrote a letter to the Military Ordinariat and said that this is a good idea, that we should give our Communion this way, and we're doing it, and we're trained to do it, and we'd like your blessing on it. They thought about it for a month, and said No. No other Navy chaplain has asked for this to be done, and we think it's entirely unnecessary. Now every Navy chaplain has assistants giving Communion for them. A concept we started.

Don Samuels, (I Co 3/26)

This is my first reunion, and I've really enjoyed it. I haven't seen anyone I served with since January 20th, 1968. Today I met two of them. I was First Platoon Sergeant of I Company on Hill 881 South, On January 20th we went out and tangled with a NVA battalion on Hill 881 North. I also met my point man, Chet Wilson, and one of my rifleman, Richard Darling. Chet contends he fired the first shot that started the 68 Tet Offensive. Thank you.

Ernie Spencer, (D Co 1/26)

I was with 1/26 from July of 67 to June of 68. I had the distinct honor and privilege to command Delta Company. When I arrived on Hill 861, my XO at the time was a fellow by the name of Bill Fite. Bill was considered an intellectual in Delta Company: he smoked a pipe! and he had an IQ over 70! When I got up there, XO's got to fill you in because he's been in-country about 5 or 6 months. He said: "Skipper...this battalion, the chaplain's crazy, the staff is crazy, and you won't believe it, we got a doctor that is insane!" So I said to him, "I finally found a home in the Corps!" What it was, he had been cared for by Harvey Demaagd. Harvey liked to do jungle sores and apparently he'd done Fite one time, and I told Fite, "Well, I told you guys to wash!" So I got the word when we shifted over to 881, Harvey liked to come out to the field as often as he could. I called Fite over and said, "Hey, Squid-6 is coming up." "O God! Skipper! Gees! Throw me out on patrol! Anything! Get me away from this guy!" I said, "For crying out loud, if we got a doctor that's going to make house calls, I don't want him messing with selecting the men, so the staff officers are going to have to present themselves! Unless you can find a replacement, you're it, Fite!"

We had this new artillery officer, Bill Smith. Fite comes in and says, "Man, I got one, I got a good one for Harvey. It's the new F/O." Bill Smith not only had jungle sores; he had pimples. So I said, "Yeah, he'll do!" So Harvey comes up, gets off the chopper and looking! He's ready. He's ready to rumble! He says, "Where's Fite?" I said, "He went down to the store to get some cigarettes or something," and I sent the word down about Smith. Harvey took a look at him, and we pulled this kid Smith down into the supply tent on 881 just off the LZ then. He's working on Smith, as though he was Michalangelo doing a statue, hitting all these pimples with this syringe! This kid is screaming and yelling. I'm drinking cocoa, and laughing. The supply kid was this innocent little kid from an apple farm in Washington hiding behind there, looking at what these officers are doing, and can't believe it's going on.

One thing I'd like to say to Harvey, after all these years: Your diagnosis was wrong! I got down there to Danang, and the doctor's looking at the chart laughing. I pulled the oxygen mask off and I said, "What's up?" And he said; "I don't think you're pregnant!"

Harvey Demaagd, (Bn Surgeon, 1/26)

Thank you, Ernie. As you all know, I was the Battalion Surgeon for 1/26, and I like to come to these affairs to piece together information that's sort of lost over 20 years, and I thought it was a valuable

experience for me. Then, as of last year, I realized another very important reason to come here is to defend myself of what I'm accused to doing in Vietnam! Last year I decided I'd just deny everything. This year, I decided that wouldn't be true. You can imagine what it's like trying to conduct an intelligent interview in a situation like Delta Company up on the hill. I mean they're coming at you in sort of a bizarre way too! So I found that the best defense was to come on to them equally as strong. That's a sound medical practice, by the way! I'm especially pleased that we have corpsman here. I notice in this meeting there's lacking a lot of corpsmen.

David Buffalo. (H&S, 1/26)

David was on Hill 950 when it was overrun the night of June 6/7, 1967, and survived that attack.

Two things I'd like to say are "Welcome Home," and "Semper fi." I started out with 1/26, H&S, from its inception in California, until we shipped out in September 1966, for Vietnam. We were on Hill 55, and later in 67 assigned up to Khe Sanh valley. We ran a radio relay on Hill 950 with A Company, recon, with the security being supplied by either Alfa or Bravo Company of 26th Marines.

We were hit by a reinforced platoon the night of June 6th and 7th, and I believe that is the first time that Khe Sanh got hit with rocket fire from the opposing valley. We were overrun, and more or less the surviving Marines on the hill played dead for 6 to 8 hours. Marines re-took the hill the next morning, when we were reinforced from the Combat Base.

The person that I remember the most were the people that were in the bunker with me, one who died and one who made it through. That night, as we got overrun, the NV A tossed in 2 hand grenades into the bunker. It'd been raining for somewhere around 10 days, so that one of the grenades landed in the mud and sank a little bit before it exploded, but the other one went off, and caught one Marine from the chest up, and got me and a third Marine named Howard whom I will never forget. Howard ran out of the bunker when that grenade went off, I don't know how, God was certainly looking upon him, because he came back in the bunker without a scratch. That was truly amazing. God was certainly was looking after all Marines on that particular night.

It's difficult for me, because I have suppressed a lot of this for a lot of years. Other than writing Ray about it, this is the first time that I have actually said anything about it. I just want to say: thank you for listening, and I'll see you at reunions in the future.

Kevin (Hoss) MacAulay, (B Co 3rd Recon)

I was with Bravo recon from June of 67 until June of 68. I think I'm one of the only guys in Bravo recon who wasn't wounded during the entire period we were at Khe Sanh!

I landed in-country the day after Hill 950 was overrun. Three recon radio operators were killed up at the bunker. Cpl. Howard Withy, Cpl. Dale Speir, and Cpl. Chip Sherrell. I was a radio operator and had no infantry skills whatsoever. I did not belong in any type infantry unit. All I did on patrol was fall down and stay there until somebody pulled me back up again! The Gunnery Sergeant who was in charge of allocating people to the various companies said, "Who are my 3 Recon Marines?" And I looked at the two other radiomen who I had gone to school with and I said, "Dave, those 3 guys are dead. There's no way in the world anyone going to recon is going to survive 13 months in Vietnam." The first name that was called up was mine!

I look back over 22 years and I thank God that I was sent to recon. I met some men, Marines and Navy Corpsmen, who to this day I consider the bravest people I've come in contact with. Last night, I sat from about 2:00 A.M. about 4:00 A.M. talking about Vietnam. More than I have done in the past 22 years. I am impressed with the sincerity of the men who I spent last night with, as I was with their sincerity then, some 22 years ago. I learned to depend on them 22 years ago, and I know in a pinch I could depend upon them again. I thank God for letting me renew that friendship last night and over this weekend."

Les Faurebrac, (B Co 1/26)

I started with Alfa Company and was sent to Bravo Company after the 2d Platoon of Bravo Company that got chewed up on patrol off the back of 881-South, took 18 KIAs and 16 WIAs on June 7, 1967. It was really bad. So I went to Bravo Company, 2d Platoon, and it was there that I met Tom Steinhardt. I had a bet going with him that he was going to have an accidental discharge with his .45 because he had his safety off a lot of times. When it came time for me to rotate off the hill, and go home. I told him instead of giving him 5 bucks I

would send him a bottle of whisky. For the past 22 years I felt terribly guilty about that. I put an advertisement in Leatherneck. I looked his name up on the Wall to see if he was KIA. I just figured I'd never find him again. I got here to the reunion, and I saw him signed in. So the first thing I did, I jumped in a cab and went to a liquor store and got the bottle. Last night about 10: 30 I called him up and went to his room, and we talked for about 2 or 3 hours. Check this out, I have been carrying this guilt around with me for 22 years, and he didn't remember it!

I met someone over in Bravo Company at Khe Sanh, and I asked him where he was from, and he told me Redwood City, California. That was just one mile away from where I lived. I went to a rival high school. We played football against each other, and here we are talking. His name was Corporal Ken Claire. Corporal Ken was killed on February 25th on the patrol. About 2 years ago I called up Ken's brother, and told him I was with Ken, and he invited me over to talk with him. He invited me back, he was going to invite the entire family and I was going to bring my slides of the area Ken was in. The family was moved, as was I. It was obvious that people never really get over things like this — it's always something you carry around. Ken Claire brought so much life to Bravo Company. I don't know if people remember...he had a famous Tarzan call. He really added a lot of spirit to the platoon and everybody certainly missed him."

George Bailey, (Sub Unit #1, 1st Radio Bn)

I arrived at the Combat Base the day after the first heavy attack in January 1968. I had little tents and little 2-man, 3-man units, and they had that diamond-shaped antenna with the Portable Radio Direction Finder. It was our job to find the enemy radio transmitters, pass the information to the S-2 who would then pass it on to the artillery batteries for a fire mission. We were in the business of trying to determine the enemy strength during the Siege

We didn't make a lot of friends, because we all had clearances and were an independent unit. I lost half of my platoon one day. They weren't on the wire where they were supposed to be. I started looking, and I drifted off the wire someplace. Pretty soon I saw one or two of them, and they were all packing litters up to Charlie Med. We were getting hit pretty hard, and a whole lot of green folks just came in. They just arrived by helicopter and were on their way to the trenches and were getting hit. My guys were out carrying them back up to Charlie Med. When I found them, I chewed them all out. I was known as "Crazy George" anyway; I was the "Crazy Gunny." So I got them back to the area and after I chewed them out, I ended up putting them all in for a decorations. They were all bloody and beat. I just want to thank them!

Grady Branch, (C BTRY 1/13)

This is my first time at a reunion. The fellow Colonel McEwan was talking about on the TD-15 tractor at the garbage dump, his name was "Dutch." That's all I ever knew him by. I'm sure glad to see a lot of the guys! I was in the motor pool area of Charlie, 1/13. Dutch was the one who dug a hole that we pulled a deuce and a half down into, with a ring-mount with a .50 Caliber on it. We got hit a couple times and the fellow says, "Branch, get off here and get on that .50!" I'm in the bunker. I said, "You got to be kidding!" I was just out there; they had machine-gun fire on that truck. He said, "Get out there and man that gun." I said!, "I tell you what: you come out there with me, and I'll man that gun." He peeked out and glass was going everywhere. He said, "Forget that!" I'm sure proud to be here, and I'm glad to see a lot of you!"

Tom Steinhardt, (B Co 1/26)

I was on that infamous patrol with Bravo Company on June 7th 1967. I was one of the few guys that didn't get hurt. My fire team was all gone except for me.

I was one of the M-79 men, and I got pretty good with it. As a matter of fact, I think it was Lieutenant McDonald who asked me if I could hit a tree out about 300 yards out, and I said, "Yeah, think I can get it." I asked him if I could use the sights this time; he said, "Yeah." He thought I was cocky. I locked and loaded and used the sights, and here was a tree maybe a foot wide. I thought I could get close to it, and that's all I really wanted to do. Well I caught it 5 feet off the deck, and blew it right in half! He didn't say anything; he just turned around and walked away. That was the end of our conversation.

I hadn't seen Les for 22 years. I dropped out of sight. I got over my nightmares in 1972. We did make a bet about the .45 I had carried. I guess I thought I was John Wayne. Last night I got back about 9:30. The phone rings. I picked it up, and it's

Les. He says, "Are you Tom Steinhardt?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Did you carry the M-79?" I said, "Yeah." There were other things that I also carried C-4, blasting caps and detonation cord. He said, "Well, I got something for you, can I come up?" I said, "No problem." My wife asked, "Who was that?" I said, "Damned if know! He's coming up and he's got something for me!" My wife said, "Well, what if he's coming up to kill you? What if you did something to him?" I said, "Well, we'll know when he hits the door! I'm not going to worry about it. I think I can take care of myself." So he showed up, and brought some pictures which jogged my memory. We got to talking, and he had a bottle of booze. We drank about a third of it. That's why we were late getting up this morning!

This is my first reunion, and I'm glad to be here. The reason I'm here is my son joined the Marine Corps last October. When he got to boot camp, he had a Battalion Commander's Inspection. His CO was with 1/13. My Son Matthew, was standing tall like a good Marine, ears pinned back and his thumbs on his side. The Colonel asked him how tough it was. He says, "Not very tough, sir." The Colonel says, "Why?" He said, "My dad is a former Marine and I have lived with him 18 years!" That is when it all started. That's when I got involved. That Colonel said to make sure I come and see him, and that's how I found out about this organization. I hope I can make every one of the reunions from now on. I feel like I'm back home now. It's just been a great time the past couple of days. I can hardly wait until tonight.

Meeting Les has been a highlight. I'm still looking for a guy for the last 22 years. If anyone ever runs across a guy named Ron Exum, I was interrupted by Ed Prendergast. He lives in South Philadelphia, I have his address, Damn! What a surprise. I have looked for him for 22 years. He is the one that picked me up when I got hit.

Richard Zdunczyk, (B BTRY 1/13)

I had just received this package from a friend of mine. Basically I was an outcast. The reason I was an outcast was because I had this flying over my bunker. Displaying a Canadian flag over the front of the podium. The CO said to take it down because they could use it as an aiming stake. Originally, it was white and red. I was there from December of 67. Khe Sanh got hit in January of '68, and the 3d time I was hit was March 12th, and I was medevaced. The rest of the time I spent at Great Lakes Naval Hospital and the Marine Barracks playing games with the Naval recruits. Also, I was Canadian, and I've been naturalized since June of 1986."

Glenn Rappold, (B BTRY 1/13)

We don't give enough credit to our Corpsmen. If it wasn't for our corpsmen, I'd be dead today. The blast took me 15, 20 feet off the ground... My left leg was under my rear end. I kept on screaming, "Oh my God! Where's my legs?" I played football, baseball, soccer. I said, "I'm not going home with only one leg!" I got hit in the left ribs and it looked like a squirt gun, squirting me in the face. Passed out 3 times. The 3 guys on my gun were from Missouri. They kept on screaming, "Glenn, you leg's there! Your leg's there." "I don't see it." They lifted my head up to see my leg, it was there. They put me on a jeep. I was in shock. "I want a drink of water."

Two guys took me off the jeep on a stretcher, one had a big patch over his left eye, he got hit in the face with shrapnel. There was a water buffalo that dropped some water right there. He dropped me off the stretcher because he slipped and fell, and I rolled off the stretcher. When I got in the underground bunker, he says; "This will quiet you from shaking and getting all messed up, take this smoke." I don't smoke, but sure enough, I stopped shaking. . That night I had to urinate so bad. I was in an underground bunker. I got up off my stretcher and tried to get up, and I fell down twice. This big Spanish Sergeant, who was 6-4, 250 pounds, came in and said, "What's wrong, Glenn?" Said, "I got to urinate." "No problem." Picks me up like that, takes me out, I do my thing, come back. I'm crying. He says, "Why are you crying?" [So choked with emotion he can barely continue talking, Glenn continued.] I said, "Because us Marines really stick together!" That's all I can say.

Dave Steinberg, (I Co 3/26)

I was with 3/26, 3rd Platoon, India, from November 67 through June 68, most of the latter part spent on Hill 881.

They called me "Doc Dave," and I'll tell you, coming back, this is my first reunion. I haven't been called "Doc" for a lot of years. My wife accused me of being distant to people and not letting people get close, I think a lot of us do. I've known a lot of peo-

ple but not necessarily having a lot of friends. Coming to the reunion this week and being called "Doc" again put it all home that I am certainly proud and happy to be part of this family. As a T-Shirt in the PX says: "We did our very best." We tried to save who ever we could. We were the parent. We were the confessor. We were the cheerleader. We were in charge of sanitation and tried to make life more palatable, which is why I went to Dabney and said, "Hey, we're pretty thirsty. We're pretty plastic out on 881-South, and we're wiping the dew off in the morning because we don't have any water!" "I'll take care of it Doc." So we had more ammo the next day!.. I went back to Dabney and said, "We're starving to death!" "OK, Doc." And we got more ammo! So we seemed to definitely have enough ammo. I personally lost 80 pounds – which, as you see, the family has managed to put back!

Sometimes we were hooking up bodies that we buried under netting. Often times we had green guys that thought they were coming up to a Country Club all dressed up and saying "Where do I go?" The sniper didn't give them enough chance to get the rest of the sentence out before he just picked him off the LZ. So those guys that had to hook those choppers and heavens knows every time a chopper came in I just went to the LZ because if I stayed where I was, that's when they called me out anyhow. So I just went out there and waited for wounded to get wounded. Many times they came in thinking I was hit, but it was a lot of others. I never, ever, had to wait more than a second to get a Marine to help me drag somebody in or put them on a chopper, never had to worry about my buddies taking care of me. I don't remember the names. I don't remember the faces, just did it day after day.

I do remember one individual. He was with mortars, and he came down to our saddle where the 3rd Platoon was. His name was John Francavilla. John would come down and we'd sit and talk in the same spot all the time. I did my job as a Corpsman, and choppers were coming in, and guys were wounded, and it was "Corpsman Up" again. I'd be damned that after 45 days of just everyday talking to John I was called out to the Saddle to treat guys. When I came back, that very spot that we talked for 45 days was gone, and so was John. (K IA 09 Apr 68).

I love you like brothers and sisters. In the Navy, when I went back, every time they'd fall out for inspection, I'd wear my Marine greens! Every time there was a bar fight, they'd say "Come on, Doc! You know what side of the room you belong on!" And the next day at Captain's Mast! Captain at the Naval Hospital would say, "Doc, you like being a E-5, don't you?" I said, "Yeah, but I like to be on the winning team." I'm happy to say I'm on your team!

Pat Breeding, (wife of Earle G. Breeding)

As all of you wives know, when you stay behind, it's not easy. I came home from work and my daughter was in junior high, and I picked up the paper and on the front page it says: "Captain Earle G. Breeding's Company Has Been Overrun." I thought: "This just can't be!" Fortunately, I knew some people to call. I called them, and they said, "No; it's not true. They had a bad time, but they hung in there." I tell you it's the worst evening I ever spent in my life, because I thought he was dead."

Earle G. Breeding, (CO, E/2/26)

There was no such thing as a round coming in and not getting somebody, until we learned that you don't come up during the day, for any reason. The rounds would come in 3 or 4 at a time, we would say, "Did somebody get it?" After a while we quit saying that. When the rounds would come in, we'd say, "Who got it?"

So here comes old Bill Maves. "Do you suppose you could get some of those fancy flying airplanes and come bring them in kinda close?" And he says, "How close to you want them?" And I said, "How close can you bring them in?" And he looked at me, and he says, "Are you crazy?" So we moved everybody off from the west side of the hill between us and Kilo Company. [Breeding looks at Maves.] Bill, tell the rest of the story."

Bill Maves, (TACP on 861-A)

Mr. Breeding wants some close air support. I really didn't have a lot to do with it, the pilots are really good. We had a flight come off a Navy ship. "OIL FLIGHT" was the call sign. They carried 500- pound delayed fuse bombs. Captain Breeding wanted them in close because his men could hear the enemy tunneling. I said, "Well, that's awful close! They're dropping thousands of pounds of ordnance." He said, "Well, I'll worry about what happens!" I said, "OK, you got 'em."

I threw the smoke grenade to mark the target!

They came in, and I happened to be kneeling down next to my CO looking up the trench line. When they finally cooked-off the first two the trenches came together! And that was a close feeling! One Marine had to be taken out suffering from a concussion. We put in the whole flight, and had a lot of secondary explosions. I think Earle got a little grief from the base, they thought he had been there a little to long.

After the Skipper left, we had a lieutenant take over. He didn't have the same view of airpower as Captain Breeding. I was out one morning, and this flight happened. They don't ever land with their ordnance intact, and they wanted to drop it. I said, "Sure, we'll take it." And this Marine came out of his hole. I don't remember his name. He just got up and stretched and looked around. I was standing there with the radio, and he said, "What are you doing?" And I said, "Well, we're going to drop some bombs down here."

They had to make a run right over the hill. They couldn't come from the 881 side because the NVA could shoot them down. So they flew their pattern in over us. This poor guy crawls out of his bunker, turns around, and says, "Where are they?" I said, "They're coming right there!" and just then there are a flight of F-4s. Their bomb racks came open, and it was bombs away. The Marine turned white, and I will admit it made me a little nervous.

This Lieutenant came over and he was irate. He says, "What in the #%F!* are you doing?" And I said, "Hell, we do this all the time! Welcome to 861A!" I handled all the medevacs and re-supply. I sent a lot of people out — that was my job. I always thought I did a good job. I got them out, if there was any way to get them out. I was lucky, I could heal after working with some of the traumas associated with sending people out in body bags."

Steven Fitzgerald, (Adjutant of 1/26)

I was there from July of 67 through June of '68. I was involved mainly in the paperwork end of the battle. I saw a lot of these kids come in, and I assigned them to a company. Sometimes I would have to go the same night and identify their body. It ate at me and when I left Vietnam, I closed the door. That was it, I didn't do anything about it. Fourteen years later, I got involved in what they called a "guided meditation." It took me to a point where I was hurt, lonely, and I felt abandoned. I started talking about my experience with my wife, I hadn't shared a lot of it with her. I closed off again until I saw the PBS documentary program on the Wall in Washington DC. I shed lot of tears that night, and decided I had to visit the memorial. I did, and found it to be a great healing process. Ernie Spencer sent me a copy of his book, Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man. In it he wrote: "Dear Steve, Glad to see you're alive, love Ernie." It means so much seeing these guys here tonight. Reverend Stubbe who used to run around Khe Sanh as gaunt as the rest of us trying to find a hole to live in. He always wanted to go up to the hills and see the troops up there. We had a time of it up there, but a lot of us made it, thank God. A lot didn't; we always have to remember that."

Sid (Fish) Patricio, (D/1/26)

We've been coming together for 3 years, and I enjoy myself every time we get together with the guys from Khe Sanh. It's a real happy feeling to be here with all the guys. I just wish a lot more of us were here that never made it. I'm not much for words. That's it."

Russ Mann, (Medic, 1ST SPECIAL FORCES)

I was a medic with the 1st Special Forces group. My team was slated to launch a mission from FOB-3 at Khe Sanh. We arrived the day before Lang Vei fell and remained there for the rest of the Siege. Needless to say, trench warfare was something I had neither trained for, nor expected. Writing this letter brings old memories into view. One that I'd like to share with you is of the FOB-3 water truck. The most dangerous job at the FOB-3 was the daily drive to the water purification point near the runway control tower. This duty was shared on a rotating basis by the junior NCO's and was equally dreaded by all.

The water truck was a five-ton tanker that provided a highly visible roving target to the NVA artillery spotters. It had been wounded many times in the course of its duties and was a patchwork of welded sheet metal and odd parts. Only the steadfast devotion and ingenuity of our mechanic kept it running and moderately watertight. The seats had bloodstains and the windows were long gone.

The truck growled and rattled so loudly while underway that it was impossible for the driver to hear the muted thump that announced incoming rounds. The best strategy was to closely observe anyone above ground along the route. If they suddenly

broke into a run or dove for cover you slammed on the brakes (so the truck wouldn't keep rolling and run over someone if the driver were killed) and lay on the floor of the cab till the barrage was over.

People that lived and worked along the route gradually became aware that the water truck had a tendency to attract unfriendly fire, and began seeking cover as it approached. This caused some confusion on the part of the drivers, and resulted in a somewhat jerky drive, as the truck stopped, and started in multiple repetitions over the course of its appointed rounds.

I've often wondered about the final resting place of the faithful truck that slaked our thirst throughout the course of the siege. Never faltering, delivering life-giving water to those in need despite multiple wounds, a veritable Gunga Din of Khe Sanh. Thank you for allowing an old veteran to ramble on."

NOTE: There were many others who made comments; these are only representative of the kind of sharing, openness, trust, and sharing that characterized the reunion.

Pills

Sick hospital smells
Fill the dead of night
Waiting for the Angel of Mercy
To bring her little white cup
Holding killers of pain
Knowing she will again
Tell you not to become addicted.
Is the alternative to addict to pain?

What's going on here?
Who hurts
Where does it say
You can't alleviate our aches?
Wo is trying to kill us,
Making us adjust to agony?
Goddammit to hell,
Can't you see our tears?
Can't you see how we feel?
Can't you see we are ruined
Forever?

Give us our dulling dope,
Go back to your cubby hole
Pretend we're getting better
Out there in the wards of Hell,
Stinking each other out.
We know we must heal ourselves.
We know you are ignoring us
Out of an outdated belief system.
To Hell, I say!
We've been there, we say,
And ow we're here to stay

Sonny Gratzer

Old Friends

Old friends are for loving,
remembering what they've done
while passing time together,
when we pass in the setting sun.
Many of you aren't around now,
you've taken the Great Hike.
Some of you fought to stay here
harder than you liked.
You passed on anyway,
now lying among the trees,
green grass
and headstone freebies
the VA gives us.
You shot your last shot,
aimed your last bow,
laying in laterite dust
you knew it was time to go.
You asked for little
dying there,
wanting only to know,
"Did I do well, do you care?"
while you make the
green grasses grow.
You were better than "well,"
the best of the best.
And I do care,
knowing I'll see you again
when my last message is sent in.

Sonny Gratzer



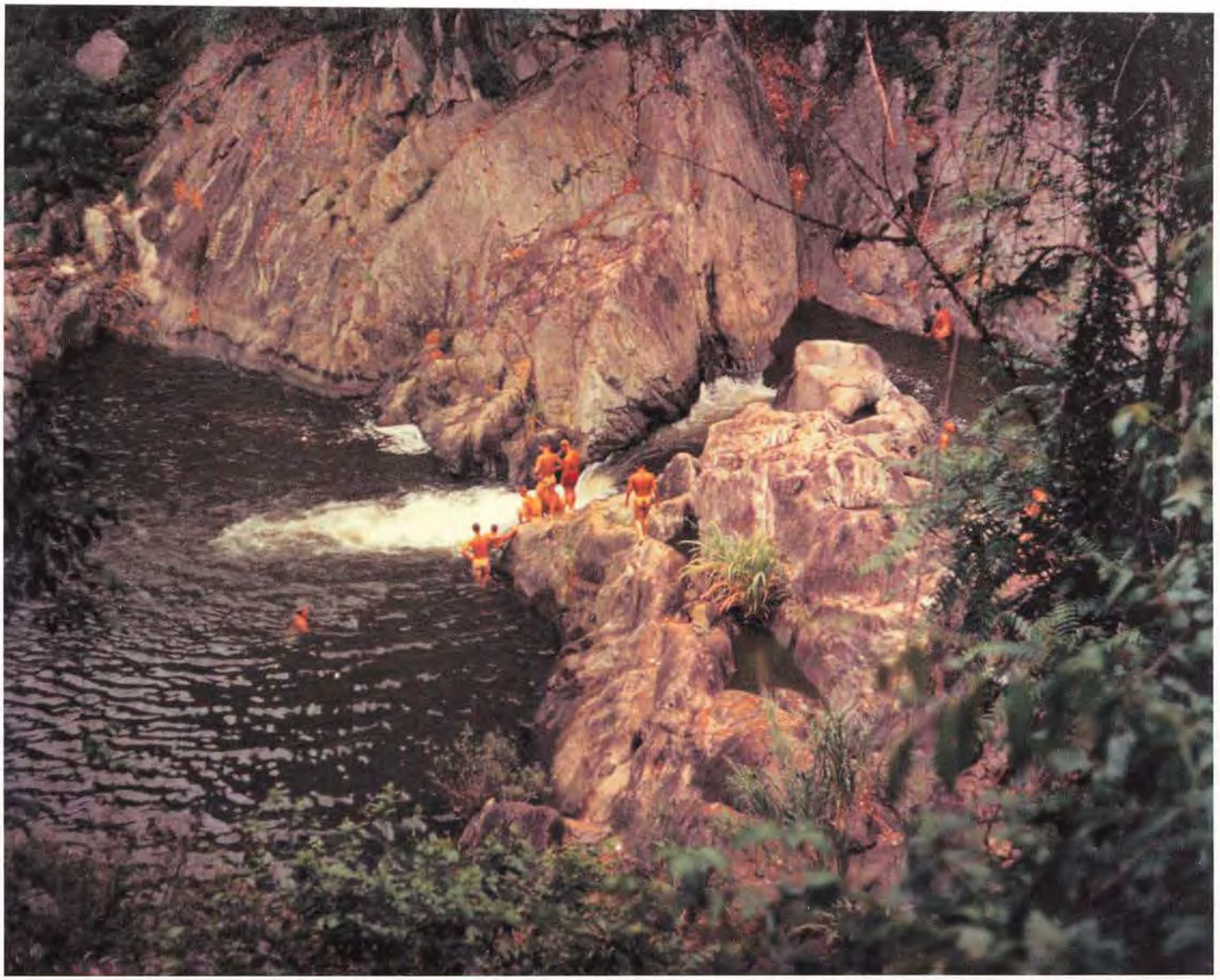

When Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe (founder, KSV) showed this picture to his mother, she stated, "How nice of the Marine Corps to issue those boys those WHITE bathing suits."

Marines from Charlie Company 1/26, swimming near their bridge position.

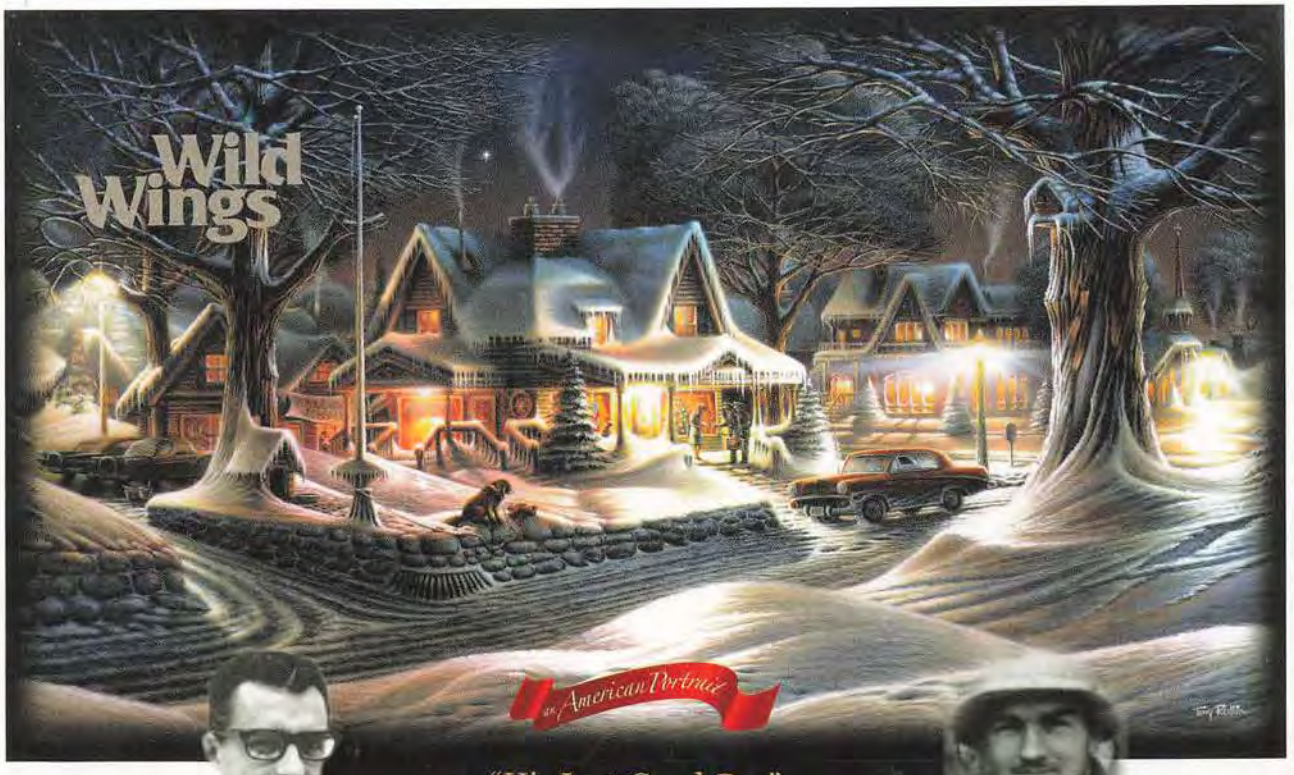



"His Last Good-Bye"
"Mother & Father Forever Live in Pain with the Ultimate Loss"

Redlin Langenfeld

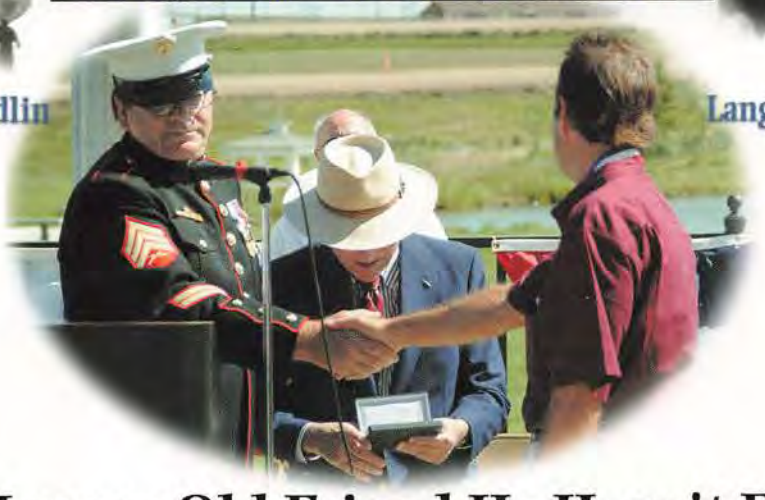

Artist Honors Old Friend He Hasn't Forgotten

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...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

Publisher Notes

For all those members who attended the Barbeque at Billy Bob's Honky Tonk and were disappointed that you did not get to see me ride a live bull during the indoor rodeo, I offer the following "Chicken Proof" photo — you just had to stay for the 10:00pm show.

Tom Eichler



Riding Bull (10:00 PM Show)

Notes from the Editor

We still need a photo of someone in the act of writing home for the cover of the Poem Book which will be published shorty. Please contact me or Tommy if you know where one might be obtained.

Ernie Spencer

Secretary's Notes

I want to take this opportunity to thank the membership for electing me Secretary of the KSV. I am both proud and humbled by your trust. I can assure you that I will work hard towards achieving the goals of the organization. As always, I thoroughly enjoyed the Reunion in Dallas, Texas. It is always a pleasure to meet old friends and find new ones. If I start naming all the wonderful people whom I so much enjoy, I will probably forget someone, so rather than do that, I will just say thank you to all, for allowing me to be a small part of your life.

"Big John" Pessoni

Treasurer's Report

The 2004 KSV reunion in Dallas was a great

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

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Thomas Ford.....Member At Large
Robert Moxley .....Member At Large
Dan Fisher.....Member At Large

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time. I am a bit disappointed that members who said they would be attending, failed to show up. I know that economy problems and disasters accrue from time to time, yet if you didn't make it, you missed a lot of fun.

Tom and Janice Slaby from 3rd AT's won the 5 free room nights after qualifying in the raffle for those registering early. Next year we are making changes. Register early before the reunion, late registrants will pay five dollars additional. The late fee will pay some one to do registrations at the reunion, so the reunion folks can enjoy a little free time. First place of $1000.00 in the raffle went to Hank Melinson; second place for 5 free nights, went to Al Knight. Third place is ticket number 413863, four free room nights (The winner has not come forward, please do so). Fourth place, 3 free room nights was won by Doug Corbett with Sokoloski claiming the $100.00 cash prize. Congratulations to all the winners. Overall, the raffle was a bit disappointing. Out of 3,100 sent out, only 128 were returned before the reunion. Let us all attempt to be more active in the future.

The reunion had a few glitches, but everything worked out. The Adult Kart Racing was too much for some gray hairs. Many members took advantage of our volunteer van and driver. He made many trips to downtown Dallas and the superb shopping malls. Thursday we had a dance instructor teaching country and western dancing. It was a lot of fun learning the Texas Two-Step and several line dances for our trip to Billy Bob's Honky Tonk in Fort Worth. The instructor returned as the DJ and everyone had fun. Some did karaoke too. Singing competition was fierce, but the singing by those pictured in Figure 1, easily won the competition. Those in Figure 2 just warbled their way through. Billy Bob's Barbeque, billiards, pool, bull riding shows, dancing and drinking were a lot of fun.

Saturday evening's awards banquet was fantastic. The food was superb, and the Emmy-Award winning band made the evening of dancing and drinking a special evening. If you missed the Reunion, there is next year. Hope ya'll won't miss out again. Put away a few bucks a week, then when it's reunion time you'll have enough.

Semper Fi
Jim Wodecki



The winning singers



The "losers"

Memorial Page

Those Remembered
Charles T. Langenfeld HM3 USN KIA 17 Apr 68
All those from A Co 1/26 who perished at Khe Sanh

Remembered by:
Terry Redland and Langenfeld Family

Donations

Ronald H. Rayner

Terry A. Redlin

Harvey E Sullivan

We Got Mail

Seeking Information

Steve Newton tells me that he went back to old posts at the Khe Sanh Vets website and found the one from me asking if anyone knew Bruce. We exchanged e-mails and spoke by phone yesterday. He also put me in touch with Lee Rimkus who lives in Montana. I gather that Steve used to be a member of KSV but dropped out, and Lee is still a member.

Being somewhat experienced with the Internet and having seen lots of strange goings on in that arena, I feel I need to check up a little on these two. Do you have any knowledge of them? Is there a list somewhere of those who did, in fact, serve at Khe Sanh? Do you have ways of checking the information? They both tell me that they were assigned to C/1/26 in early February 1968. I do not have immediate access to my KSV members list, but I hope to find it tonight when I go home. There's no guarantee, since I really have no idea where it is. I just wanted to make sure that they are on the up-and-up before I get too involved with them.

Thanks, Barry Cunningham

❋

Barry, a new membership directory, is being sent to you. Newton is not listed in the old one I have, but Lee Rimkus is listed as a member of C company 1/26 living in Montana. The best way to ask your questions about your brother is to go to our Khe Sanh message board at www.geocities.com/Pentagon/4867. Click into the feature titled "New message center and do a post. It's a no brainer; ask questions about your brother. I note from our book that he was KIA on 8 Feb. 68. There are a lot of C company guys in our organization that were with the company during that time. If you would like, you can write an article or letter about your brother and send it via email and I will publish it in our next issue of our magazine. Not all our members read the message board but they all get the magazine. Talk about your brother if you would like. Include pictures of him and we will do an article on him. We always give special honor to our brothers who were KIA. I am the editor of the magazine and I will personally see to it that your brother receives the honor he is due. Just let me know what you want and I'll get it, if I can.

Respectfully yours,
Ernie Spencer

Subject: L/Cpl. John Burdette Appleton
From: Michael Oyler

Dear Mr. Wodecki,

Earlier today, I tried to send you an email regarding Appleton, a Marine with K/3/9 who died on Hill 881S on April 30, 1967.

I also attached photos of Appleton and his last letter home. If you did not get it, please reply to this message and I will resubmit my email and photos to you. Thank you. How do I get the next issue of **Red Clay**? You were kind enough to send me a couple of 2002 editions when I registered Appleton's sister, Joyce Standard, as an Associate Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association and a "Gold Star" sister.

❋

Yes, I got the picture. I posted the letter and his picture at www.khesanh.org 1967 link. I sent it to Tom Eichler for the next issue of **Red Clay**. I posted his picture and letter on our message board to see if I can find anyone who remembers him.

Semper Fi
Jim

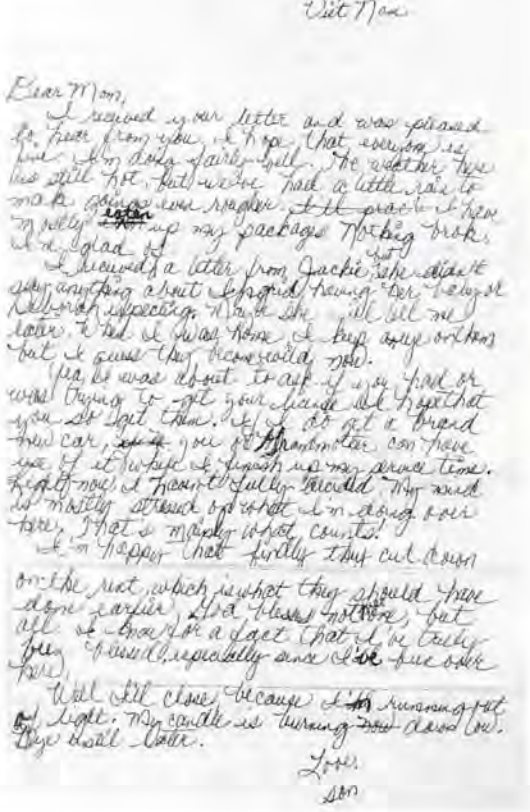

25 April 67
Viet Nam

Dear Mom,

I received your letter and was pleased to hear from you. I hope that everyone is fine. Say hello to Jane for me. The weather here is still hot, but we've had a little rain to make things more tolerable. It is peaceful here mostly. Thanks for sending me the package. Nothing broke, I'm glad to say.

I received a letter from Jackie, she didn't say anything about Joyce having her baby at Kilgore Hospital. Maybe she will tell me later. I bet it was nice to have a boy or girl but I guess they have to be.

Yes, he was about to ask if you had or were trying to get your name on that you sent them. If you do get a brand new car, you'll have to send me a picture so I can see it. I hope I finish my overseas time. Right now I haven't fully decided. My mind is mostly stressed on what I'm doing over here. That is mainly what counts.

It is happy that finally they cut down on the riots, which is what they should have done earlier. God bless mothers, but all I can say for a fact that I'll be truly glad to see especially since I'll be free over here.

Well I'll close because I'm running out of light. My candle is burning down low. Bye I'll write.

Love,
Son

Anatomy of a Fire Mission

Showing how Infantry and Artillery fight together

by Paul Marquis

A fire mission starts with a call on the radio. Picking up the receiver, the battery Executive Officer hears the words that never fail to excite an artilleryman: "Contact fire mission, battery adjust." The Exec repeats the order to the guns, which prompts the crew to start a sequence of carefully rehearsed moves. Bravo Battery made do with four or five men to a gun. While two men can operate the gun, five seasoned artillerymen could maintain peak performance over an extended period.



105 destroyed

A typical gun crew consists of a Section Chief, an Assistant Section Chief, a gunner, and an "A" gunner, loader, and powder man. In most cases, the loader did both "load and powder." Meanwhile, the Exec, using an aiming circle, which is an instrument much like an engineer's transit equipped with a scope (capable of both day and night viewing), "surveys in" each gun. During this procedure, each gunner points a telescope at the aiming circle. Using this as a reference point, the gunner makes sure his gun tube is pointed in the correct direction. By this time, Fire Direction Control (FDC) has made all the calculations, determining the range, deflection, elevation, and other firing data, in order to let the guns know what powder charge to use, what angle at which to level the guns, direction, and type of round and fuse to use.



W/1/13 Gun #5

The call for artillery starts as an infantry company advances through the jungle in single file, twenty meters behind the point man. In the middle of the column, near the company commander, marches the Forward Observer (FO); he follows behind the radioman. If a bullet hits the radioman, it has to go through that man's chest and the radio before reaching the FO, who is an extremely valuable member of the company. The dense jungle makes heavy going for the company, which stays off trails to avoid ambushes and booby traps.

The FO's concern is to keep track of the unit's position and to stay in contact with the distant battery of 105 Howitzers. From in front of the company, a burst of small arms fire breaks the stillness. As the Marines hit the ground, someone yells "Sniper!" The company commander checks out the situation and decides to have the FO call for artillery. Having anticipated that request, the FO has radioed the battery as soon as he hits the ground to "contact fire mission" and gives the location (a six-place map grid designation indicating a point on the ground to within 100 meters), and has asked for "Willie Peter" (white phosphorous) shells with a mechanical time fuse. As the company commander asks for the fire, the radioman says, "Shot," which means the shell is on its way and will explode in five seconds. The shell detonates in the air, mottling the sky with white smoke above the jungle canopy. The FO lines up his compass in the direction of the burst. The aim must be adjusted to the right toward the front of the column and towards the sniper. He radios the correction, "Danger close" — the artillery is being asked to fire within 600 meters of the Marine position. "Right 200, drop 200



Typical gun crew. W/1/1/3. L-R: Charlie Belasco, Larry Fisher, unknown corporal, Howard Wittaker, Don King and Bill Endres.

shell — HE" (high explosive shells, which are fused with a point detonating fuse to explode upon impact, will now be fired by two of the guns in the battery). Again the radioman says "Shot," and five seconds later, the shells explode but the shells are too distant. The FO orders the battery to drop another 100 meters. The next explosions are just right, as the shells fall through their high trajectory and explode in front of the Marine positions. Most of the resulting fragmentation falls out, away from the Marines. A backwash of pebbles, wood fragments, and occasional pieces of metal pelt the helmets of the front ranks, as they hug the ground.

This is what close artillery support means. The company commander, the FO, the point platoon leader, and the artillery battery have thought and fought as one. Only a little ammunition has been expended; seven rounds in all. Best of all, no Marine lives have been lost.

Given the difficulty of target acquisition, and the need for duplicate safety checks, many artillery batteries averaged about five minutes response time. Some batteries responded in less than two minutes. The Marines at Khe Sanh managed to reduce this to an incredible forty seconds. Bravo Battery never stayed in any one place for any length of time, moving from DaNang to Khe Sanh with many stops in between. Bravo Battery had to stay within range of 2/3/3 at all times. They were on the float with 2/3/3 and fought in the Hill Fights with the guns positioned at Khe Sanh. Bravo fired in excess of 13,000 rounds in Hills 881 and 861. Sappers overran Bravo Battery on 28 August 1968, with four Marines receiving stateside wounds. Bravo Battery lost three men (KIA) in an ambush on 18 April 1968, and mourns the loss of a number of Forward Observers.

Khe Sanh Special Report

A Trip to DC, World War II Dedication by Our Roving Khe Sanh Ambassadors

Ron Shouse and Cliff Treese

May 28, 2004: Here we are for another Memorial Day Weekend. Lynn and I flew out of Greensboro, North Carolina to meet up with Cliff and Linda Treese in Washington DC for the annual Rolling Thunder Ride to the WWII, an annual event to keep the public aware of the plight of POW's and those that are MIA from all wars. This year the Dedication of the Monument for WWII Vets was on Saturday and we planned to be there. There were so many veterans and their families attending, it was impossible to get in if you did not have a ticket. The news people told us, 45 blocks were closed to vehicular traffic and a lot of the older Vets had to be bussed in from the Pentagon parking lot.

I thought that a lot of the speakers should have cut short their speeches because of the heat and the physical condition of the older vets, but you know how some people are. If there is someone to listen, they will talk. This was a very nice, fitting tribute to

the senior veterans that is long overdue, a must see when you go to DC. A lot of people brought pictures of their fathers and other relatives to leave, like we do at The Wall. It felt great to walk down the street and have a vet from WWII give a clenched fist or yell, "Semper Fi."

Friday Night, we went to the Marine Barracks at 8th and I Streets for the evening parade. We were greeted by Sergeant Major and Mrs. Battaglia, the Sgt. Major of Marine Barracks, and given VIP treatment all night. We met the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Hagee, gave him a Khe Sanh Vet Challenge Coin and invited him to our reunion. He thanked us. He was a nice guy, probably a holy terror to the guys under him, but he was nice to us. The highlight of the evening was the silent drill parade. Eight platoons in dress blues, the band and the drum and bugle corps all performing at the same time. No commands spoken but every movement precise. Was a great spectacle and if you have not seen this performance you are missing a real treat. I was told that at one time we all looked like that; I just do not remember being that tall. We met "Chesty," the Marine Corps mascot, and had pictures made.



Ron and Cliff with Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Hagee.

Saturday morning, Cliff and I went to the Pentagon to see if there was some kind of military strategy we could help with. We were told our help was not needed. We were outside taking some pictures when a guard walked up carrying a machine gun and tells us pictures are not allowed. We promptly held up our hands and surrendered. Nice guy, but I would hate to have to fight him. Talk about big — this guy could use the gun for a club. Later in the day, we met Cliffs daughter's family who had never been to DC. Cliff's 12-year-old grandson was amazed at the sights and how the veterans made him feel like he was one of them. By the end of the weekend, Cliff's grandson Dylan wanted to return every year on Memorial Day weekend with his grandfather.

Dylan was afraid after hearing at school and on the news that Washington was in danger of terrorism over the Memorial Day weekend. During our stay at the hotel on Sunday morning, Dylan met dignitaries from the country of Oman who were staying at the hotel. They told him about their country, and how the children of their country were a lot like American children. This eased his fear that not all people of the Muslim faith were bad.

After breakfast Sunday morning, we began preparing to go over to The Wall for the day's activities. We stopped by Thunder Alley for souvenirs and to talk to some of the biker vets, then went across Constitution Avenue to find a place to stand for the parade. DC Police were in front with sirens going and lights flashing. Behind them came Big Paul of Orange County Choppers on the POW Bike and his son Paul Jr. on the Fireman's Bike. The crowd was ecstatic. Paul Revere came by on his Harley along with several other celebrities on theirs. The bikes passed in review for 3 hours or longer, with pipes blaring and the ground shaking, hence the name "Rolling Thunder."

We started our trek to the concert. Cliff and I and our wives were standing on the Arlington side of The Wall, and the concert was on the other side of the Washington Monument. Thirty years ago a couple of miles was nothing but now my tongue was dragging the ground when we finally got to the front of the bandstand. Paul Revere and the Raiders were fantastic. He is just as wild and crazy as he was back in the 60's. Bill Medley, the surviving member of the Righteous Brothers, sang too. Connie Stevens



With Bill Medley of the Righteous Brothers...

told a few stories of her time with the USO in Vietnam. Chris Noelle, whose sexy voice used to sign off on AFRS with "Good night, all you guys out there and here is a kiss from Chris. Good night." She was one of the announcers on stage. Nancy Sinatra was there and sang her song "Boots." Cliff and I presented her a pink satin jacket like the one that the Pink Ladies of "Grease" wore. It had her name on the front and a pair of jungle boots embroidered on the back saying These Boots Were Made for Walking. Glen Rappold as a gift from the Khe Sanh Vets, gave her a hat she wore during the second half of her concert.



...and Nancy Sinatra.

We did go down to The Wall to leave some things for guys that are no longer with us. This is always a tearful time for me. I did not know them all by name, but I know everyone of them is looking down and is proud of what all of us are doing so that they will not be forgotten. Semper Fi, guys.

I dusted off the Emblems at the Soldiers Statue for everyone. Park personnel will not let us shine them any longer. The Sergeant Major at Marine Barracks said he receives a phone call from the Park Rangers every day that his Marines are shining the Emblems. He said that he assures the park personnel that it is not his men "ruining" the finish on the EGA. He did get the men together and told them if someone knew who is "ruining the finish on the EGA," they should set up an OP or LP so they will not get caught. ADAPT-IMPROVISE-OVERCOME is still the order of the day.

It seemed like there was a Presidential motorcade whenever we needed to get somewhere. We saw the President on his way to Arlington on Monday morning, and he had some sort of conference in our hotel on Tuesday. Cliff and I tried to get a picture, but the Secret Service said no. We tried to tell them how we were important "War Heroes," and almost won the Vietnam War single-handedly, but they did not buy that BS. I got the idea of getting frisked by the Secret Service for a picture to post in the **Red Clay**. The agent said, "Now, I know you guys are crazy." See, this PTSD thing comes in handy after all. He took our business cards and offered to send us an autographed picture of the President.

The trip was great and would have been better if more of the KS Bros had been there. Our reunion is right around the corner, and Veterans Day is in November. I hope you guys plan to do something other than cook a steak or burger and drink a few beers. Pack up the wife or girlfriend, kids or grandkids and come on up for the celebration next year. You will feel better, and a little less wealthy. What the heck, you have to do something with that big check the VA gives you.

Semper Fi and God Bless America,
Ron and Cliff

"Dragon Slayers"

Robert Bailey's Latest Painting
Story prepared by Gary W. Foster
July 26, 2004



Dragon Slayers by Robert Bailey.

The juxtaposition of American air might against the Thanh Hoa Bridge, fearfully known as the Ham Rong or Dragon's Jaw Bridge, may become, if it hasn't already, the arch-symbol of the air war against the North Vietnamese. Destruction of the bridge became an intense obsession of American military planners. The Vietnamese, obsessing no less, fought to preserve the bridge, which for them had become the supreme symbol of their resistance to American air power. It's not without plausibility then that the destruction of this sacred symbol by the Americans may have been more important than the destruction of the structure itself.

A steel through-truss type structure, the Ham Rong Bridge, designed by Nguyen Dinh Doan, was principally a railway bridge with cantilevered roadways on

each side of the main structure. In order to cross the Ma River at its narrowest point and because of limitations of the geometry of the railway curvature, the Ham Rong Bridge crosses the river almost due east-west. The general terrain in the immediate area of the bridge is flat with the exception of a jagged limestone ridge on the west side of the bridge known as Rong Mountain, and a small hillock on the east side known as Ngoc (Jade) Hill. The Ham Rong Bridge derives its name from these two geologic features that figuratively form the jaw bones of the dragon's mouth on either side of the river. Hence the English translation: "Dragon's Jaw."

The bridge depicted in "Dragon Slayers" is the second bridge to cross the Ma River at this location and was dedicated by Ho Chi Minh on 19 May 1964, the same day as his birthday. The first bridge was destroyed by the Viet Minh during the French resistance war many years before. As the air war in North Vietnam intensified, the Americans eventually divided North Vietnam into military regions called Route Packages which began at the Ben Hai River at the DMZ and were numbered one through six from south to north. With deadly portent, the Dragon's Jaw found itself in Route Package 4, assigned to the US Navy, now its primary antagonist.

The Ham Rong Bridge was attacked throughout the war with intense alpha strikes from US Navy carriers, occasional coordinated strikes by the US Air Force and US Navy, independent strikes of opportunity, and stand off attacks by missiles and by lobbing bombs. Navy pilots often dropped unexpended ordnance on the bridge or its environs before returning to their carriers. Under the direction of Nguyen Van Coi, commander of the air defense of North Vietnam, the Vietnamese positioned large numbers of every caliber of anti-aircraft weapon around the Ham Rong Bridge, atop Rong Mountain and Ngoc Hill, creating a formidable defensive curtain.

The Vietnamese made various claims as to how many American planes were shot down while engaging the bridge or its air defenses. The numbers cited by the Vietnamese range between 99 to a preposterous high of 1,000. One claim holds that in one day as many as thirty US planes were shot down while striking the bridge. Although many American aircraft crashed in the area from other nearby actions or missions, historical records show only about 10 aircraft total were shot down while conducting missions directly against the bridge or its air defenses. While many planes continued to be shot down in and around Thanh Hoa throughout the war, LCmdr. Ev Southwick and his RIO, Lt. Jack Rollins, flying a flak suppression mission in an F4 from VF114 on the USS Kitty Hawk, were the last American airmen to be shot down while striking the bridge or its air defenses. Captured just east of Thanh Hoa on the very banks of the Ma River, they became POWs in the Hanoi prison system and were released in 1973.

In all, the Americans flew about 1,000 sorties against the bridge including two special attacks by USAF C130s. The dreaded dragon finally met its fate in May of 1972 when laser guided bombs dropped from USAF F4s, dislodged the massive truss from its western abutment, felling it into the muddy river below. The exuberance of the upper echelon planners remained unabated by this excellent result and additional attacks were planned and executed against the Ham Rong Bridge. On October 6, 1972, a flight of four A4 aircraft, escorted by F4 flak suppression fighters and F4 iron-hand anti-SAM aircraft launched from a 27C Essex class aircraft carrier coordinated delivery of six two-thousand pound laser guided bombs on the structure effectively putting the Dragon's Jaw permanently out of commission. Through "Dragon Slayers," Mr. Robert Bailey has vividly captured the dramatic, poignant action with his definitive and timeless painting of an attack on the Thanh Hoa Bridge in Route Package 4, North Vietnam.

Legal Reform

To Those Who Served at Khe Sanh

by Patrick Brady

This is an addition to my posting "Agent Orange/ Diabetes/PTSD" – by Patrick G Brady, June 8, 2004 at 02:53:24 PM. I have since come to the realization that probably most did not understand the contents of this posting. Let me give you just a sample of my experience. I was co-chair to the patient council on the spinal cord wing at the Long Beach Veterans Medical Center for nine years. During that time I participated in rewriting the MP-5 which became the MP-2. It created a cost-effective home health care program that was a start for taking care of paralyzed veterans in their own homes. The problem with this program was that although it paid for medical aides in the home, it made them independent contractors and, therefore, ineligible for benefits such as heathcare. Also, taxes were not automatically taken out. Hourly wages were not mandated and have remained a battleground every year with the facilities budget. Financial limits were not placed and, therefore, veterans who had won the lotto or were on R-1 and R-2 were allowed this benefit, but non-service-connected veterans on vents have to fight to even qualify. Well, I learned a lot and have come to the conclusion that a word here or a word there changed can make a world of difference in what and how the law is interpreted by legal minds.

The Code of Federal Regulations should reflect the liberal terms for which they were written, yet the laws pertaining to herbicide were written after the fact and they were very restrictive. The time limits were impossible to fall into and so these ailments became impossible to obtain results of service-connection. I am not totally convinced that the Congress intended it this way and maybe we should look to seek a revision through either Congress or by class action. The code I would seek to revise would be Title 38 Code of Federal Regulation 3.309. In part (a) of this regulation it lists, chronic diseases. The following diseases shall be granted service connection although not otherwise established as incurred in or aggravated by service if manifested to a compensable degree within the applicable time limits under Sec. 3.307 following service in a period of war or following peacetime service on or after January 1, 1947, provided the rebut table presumption provisions of Sec. 3.307 are also satisfied. I would suggest that, "within the applicable time limits under Sec. 3.307." be moved to read as follows: (a) chronic diseases due to exposure of herbicides.

The following diseases shall be granted service connection although not otherwise established as incurred in, or aggravated by service following service in a period of war or following peacetime service on or after January 1, 1947, if manifested to a compensable degree within the applicable time limits under Sec. 3.307, provided the rebut table presumption provisions of Sec. 3.307 are also satisfied. (b) The Tropical diseases should also automatically be included if combat was preformed in a Tropical theater. (c) Diseases specific to former prisoners of war, should be amended to include combat veterans that served over sixty days of consecutive combat and "provided the rebut table presumption provisions of Sec. 3.307 are also satisfied" be eliminated. These changes should then be added to: (e) Disease associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents. If a veteran was exposed to a herbicide agent during active military, naval, or air service, the following diseases shall be service-connected would not invoke Sec.3.307 on war time veterans, and would result in the revision of Sec.3.307 and the time limits put on combat veterans. How many of you are frustrated that you have multiple conditions and yet they don't become service connected until after they result in cancer? Is it fair to penalize combat veterans in this way? Sec.3.307 reads as follows:

> Sec.3.307 Presumptive service connection for chronic, tropical or prisoner-of-war related disease, or disease associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents; wartime and service on or after January 1, 1947(a) General. A chronic, tropical, prisoner-of-war-related disease, or a disease associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents listed in Sec. 3.309, will be considered to have been incurred, in or aggravated by, service under the circumstances outlined in this section even though there is no evidence of such disease during the period of service.
>
> No condition other than one listed in Sec 3.309(a) will be considered chronic. (1) Service. The veteran must have served 90 days or more during a war period or after December 31,

1946. The requirement of 90 days' service means active, continuous service within or extending into or beyond a war period, or which began before and extended beyond December 31, 1946, or began after that date. Any period of service is sufficient for the purpose of establishing the presumptive service connection of a specified disease under the conditions listed in Sec.3.309(c) and (e). (2) Separation from service. For the purpose of paragraph (a)(3) and (4) of this section the date of separation from wartime service will be the date of discharge or release during a war period, or if service continued after the war, the end of the war period. In claims based on service on or after January 1, 1947, the date of separation will be the date of discharge or release from the period of service on which the claim is based. (3) Chronic disease. The disease must have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year (for Hansen's disease (leprosy) and tuberculosis, within 3 years; multiple sclerosis, within 7 years) from the date of separation from service as specified in paragraph (a) (2) of this section. (4) Tropical disease.

The disease must have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within 1 year from date of separation from service as specified in paragraph (a)(2) of this section, or at a time when standard accepted treatises indicate that the incubation period commenced during such service. The resultant disorders or diseases originating because of therapy administered in connection with a tropical disease or as a preventative may also be service connected. (5) Diseases specific as to former prisoners of war. The diseases listed in Sec. 3.309(c) shall have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more at any time after discharge or release from active service. (6) Diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents. (i) For the purposes of this section, the term "herbicide agent" means a chemical in a herbicide used in support of the United States and allied military operations in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, specifically: 2,4-D; 2,4,5-T and its contaminant TCDD; cacodylic acid; and picloram. (ii) The diseases listed at Sec. 3.309(e) shall have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more at any time after service, except that chloracne or other acneform disease consistent with chloracne, porphyria cutanea tarda, and acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy shall have become manifest to a degree of 10 percent or more within a year after the last date on which the veteran was exposed to a herbicide agent during active military, naval, or air service. (iii) A veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, shall be presumed to have been exposed during such service to a herbicide agent, unless there is affirmative evidence to establish that the veteran was not exposed to any such agent during that service.

The last date on which such a veteran shall be presumed to have been exposed to a herbicide agent shall be the last date on which he or she served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975. "Service in the Republic of Vietnam" includes service in the waters offshore and service in other locations if the conditions of service involved duty or visitation in the Republic of Vietnam. (b) Evidentiary basis. The factual basis may be established by medical evidence, competent lay evidence or both. Medical evidence should set forth the physical findings and symptomatology elicited by examination within the applicable period. Lay evidence should describe the material and relevant facts as to the veteran's disability observed within such period, not merely conclusions based upon opinion. The chronicity and continuity factors outlined in Sec. 3.303(b) will be considered. The diseases listed in Sec. 3.309(a) will be accepted as chronic, even though diagnosed as acute because of insidious inception and chronic development, except: (1) where they result from intercurrent causes, for example, cerebral hemorrhage due to injury, or active nephritis or acute endocarditis due to intercurrent infection (with or without identification of the pathogenic microorganism); or (2) where a disease is the result of drug ingestion or a complication of some other condition not related to service.

Thus, leukemia will be accepted as a chronic disease whether diagnosed as acute or chronic. Unless the clinical picture is clear otherwise, consideration will be given as to whether an acute condition is an exacerbation of a chronic disease. (c) Prohibition of certain presumptions. No presumptions may be invoked on the basis of advancement of the disease when first definitely diagnosed for the purpose of showing its existence to a degree of 10 percent within the applicable period. This will not be interpreted as requiring that the disease be diagnosed in the presumptive period, but only that it be shown by acceptable medical or lay evidence characteristic manifestations of the disease to the required degree, followed without unreasonable time lapse by definite diagnosis. Symptomatology shown in the prescribed period may have no particular significance when first observed, but in the light of subsequent developments it may gain considerable significance. Cases in which a chronic condition is shown to exist within a short time following the applicable presumptive period, but without evidence of manifestations within the period, should be developed to determine whether there was symptomatology which in retrospect may be identified and evaluated as manifestation of the chronic disease to the required 10percent degree. (d) Rebuttal of service incurrence or aggravation. (1) Evidence which may be considered in rebuttal of service incurrence of a disease listed in Sec. 3.309 will be any evidence of a nature usually accepted as competent to indicate the time of existence or inception of disease, and medical judgment will be exercised in making determinations relative to the effect of intercurrent injury or disease. The expression" affirmative evidence to the contrary" will not be taken to require a conclusive showing, but such showing as would, in sound medical reasoning and in the consideration of all evidence of record, support a conclusion that the disease was not incurred in service.

As to tropical diseases, the fact that the veteran had no service in a locality having a high incidence of the disease may be considered as evidence to rebut the presumption, as may residence during the period in question in a region where the particular disease is endemic. The known incubation periods of tropical diseases should be used as a factor in rebuttal of presumptive service connection as showing inception before or after service. (2) The presumption of aggravation provided in this section may be rebutted by affirmative evidence that the preexisting condition was not aggravated by service, which may include affirmative evidence that any increase in disability was due to an intercurrent disease or injury suffered after separation from service or evidence sufficient, under Sec. 3.306 of this part, to show that the increase in disability was due to the natural progress of the preexisting condition.

How many of you now realize the complications in law implemented as a protection and yet abused by our government in an effort to save a buck? How many feel reform is necessary since Veterans Administration continues to deny benefits to combat veterans that were known to be exposed? How many even realize that this affects you? The proximate and secondary conditions are not very well known and as a result conditions that should be service-connected are not. Chloracne, for example, by its own definition is considered to be a clinical sign of exposure. How many in combat bother to report acne of any kind? Let's use some common sense and realize that if you now have a diagnosis of chloracne after you returned from Vietnam, and you were not exposed to a toxic waste dump, it is a pretty safe assumption that you were exposed to Agent Orange. You served in an area that was so saturated with it by 1967 that it would fit the EPA definition of a toxic waste dump. This is where we fought and died. (I CORPS)

Does it make sense that the VA made a declaration that anyone who served in Vietnam was exposed? Yes. The VA then doesn't have to explain the mixing with other agents such as DDT and all its health ramifications. We were exposed to more than just the rockets, artillery, and mortars along with the occasional sniper rounds. We were fighting in a toxic waste dump and now the government wants us to die without a fight from diseases they knew all about. We're in another war now. How are we going to care for the next generation of vets? Our Veterans Hospitals are so underfunded that good care means that at your autopsy it might not say, "death at the hands of another" when in fact, because you had a

wish for cremation, it went uninvestigated? I have survived this system for over thirty-six years and believe that it still needs change and the ones that can get the job done are those that were most affected during our last conflict. So do you think with a concerted effort we as combat veterans just might have a chance of revising a few of the injustices? If you do, contact me.

Patrick G Brady
LIMA 3/26th Marines 67-68

You are a brother, as well as I
we fought the same war,
share some of the same memories
and now we fight a different battle.
what does this mean?
we were for the same reason once in our lives.

the tables have turned,
and we are both different,
fighting a different battle for everyone to see.
if you think it hurts, you don't know how I feel.
we will probably never see this eye-to-eye.
I'm sorry that it had to be this way.

the bell has rung,
the battle had begun,
and now its starting to get weak.

show is over,
judges have decided,
we are waiting for the score.
the same thought crosses our minds
"it better be me, I deserve this"
when really no one does...

this fight doesn't matter,
it should be done and forgotten
and erased from everyone's minds.
people have been hurt,
feelings have been damaged
and yet we still beg to differ.

Megan Wodecki

EDITOR'S NOTE: Megan is Jimbo's granddaughter. The poem is a response to some of the childish postings done on the message board by some of our members.

Another Perspective

Response To Previous Article "Platoon Commander 101"

by Dan Manley, HM2 G/2/26

I offer my recollections of events as previously described in Joseph Olszewski's article "Platoon Commander 101," which appeared in the Spring 2004 **Red Clay**.

I joined 3rd Platoon, Golf Company, 2/26 in Jan 68, just prior to the battalion's re-deployment to Khe Sanh. I had previously spent several months with 1st Platoon but in preparation for the move, some of the "short time" corpsmen were rotated out of the field and the rest of us were shuffled around.



Quang Tri, August 1968

On the 16th of Jan 68, we boarded C-130s and were flown to Khe Sanh. We arrived in the afternoon and were trucked a short distance from the runway where we were told to dig in for the night. At that time, I had no idea where we were but, I was informed that this was a hot spot and that I should dig a deep hole. I did. My introduction to the Red Clay.

The next morning, the 17th of January, we packed up and started walking. I was somewhere in the middle of the column and had only a vague idea of where we were going and in what direction. We marched a good part of the day through ever changing terrain. At the beginning of the trek, we crossed rolling hills covered in a sea of elephant grass. Later it became more difficult as we made our way through jungle vegetation and steeper hills. By mid to late afternoon, the word was passed that we had arrived at our destination, as Lt. O described it — our "combat outpost." We were on the top of a hill in the middle of the jungle.


Con Thien, July 1968

Everyone was low on water so a detail was sent out to find a source. I went with them. We made our way down the hill and followed a ravine for a short distance. The ravine suddenly spilled out into a beautiful mountain river. The river, at this point, was maybe 50 yards wide and crystal clear. It was bordered, on our side, by a white sand beach. The far shoreline was rocky and littered with huge boulders. I don't remember much being said, but everyone stripped down and jumped in. I don't remember whether or not we posted outlooks.

In the following days, at least one patrol that we made from our combat outpost involved crossing the river. Our route, I believe, was further downstream from our swimming hole. At this point the river was narrower and the current very fast. The speed of the rushing water made it very difficult to cross without being swept off your feet, to complicate matters we were carrying a full combat load. Someone, I don't remember who, volunteered to carry a rope across and anchor it on the far side. This proved to be a life saver as there was a deep hole in the middle and several guys went under, but managed to hang onto the rope. Eventually, everyone made it across safely. When we left Khe Sanh in April '68, from the helicopter I saw no jungle in this area and there was no sign of the river.

I do not remember how long we remained at the combat outpost, but it was not too long before we went back to Hill 558. When we arrived at Hill 558, the rest of the company and battalion were already there. We set up on the Southwestern portion of the perimeter. HM3 Scarborough and I dug a fox hole on the very peak of the Western hump. We did not consider the

consequences of the skyline, yet. We were thinking in terms of being central to the platoon, in case we were needed. Our choice of location was further complicated because we were directly behind a 106 recoilless rifle, which had a commanding view of the valley to the south and west. The gun crew was pretty good about letting us know when they had a fire mission.

During the early days, there were a lot of work details involving stringing wire in front of our perimeter. Lt. O referred to a "cow fence," but I do not remember it that way. I recall that concertina wire was unrolled and stretched across the front of the perimeter. We attached noise makers to the wire and laid out "Tangle Foot." This was crisscrossing strands of wire laid out a few inches above ground. Eventually we had two rows of wire strung with a mine field in the middle. I remember the squad leaders being involved in laying the antipersonnel mines and that they had drawn a map. We were further protected by claymore mines, some of which had been rigged to detonate barrels of gasoline fugas.

I am unaware of the events leading up to Lt. O being in the minefield. I was later told by a squad leader that he had been ordered to correct a discrepancy with the minefield. At the time of the explosion I was at the top of the hill working around my foxhole. By this time I was acclimated to incoming and I knew this was not enemy fire. I grabbed my medical kit in the event I was needed, and made my way toward the explosion. When I arrived on the scene, two of the squad leaders were already there. One I recall was named Mack. I walked over to them to find out what was going on and only then did I realize someone was lying in the minefield. They informed me that it was the "LT" and asked if I was going to help him.

Without thinking, I made my way through the wire and only when I was standing over Lt. O did it dawn on me that now I was in the minefield as well. I had no idea where the mines were or how they were patterned. I could only grit my teeth every time it was necessary to step around the LT. He was in great agony and thrashing around on the ground. I was concerned that he might detonate another mine as he moved around on the ground. By now I was very nervous myself, but intent on doing my job.

Surprisingly, there was very little bleeding probably due to traumatic constriction of the leg muscles. However, I decided to put a loose tourniquet on his leg in case it was needed later. In tending to the wound, it was difficult figuring out what was foot and what was boot so I put pressure dressings over everything. He was in a great deal of pain and yelling for morphine. After some difficulty, I was able to administer three ampoules of morphine. I was so nervous that I had trouble opening the ampoules. Three was the limit, but they did not seem to offer him much relief. I made sure the ampoules were attached to his collar. That way the BAS would know how much he already had. The next step was to get him out of the minefield. For the second time, I came to the realization of the danger we were in. I lifted Lt. O into a fireman's carry and tried to retrace my incoming foot steps. We exited without further incident. A couple of our fellow Marines were standing by with a litter. They helped me get him onto the litter and Lt. O was carried the short distance to the Battalion Aid Station. I had done all I could do so I did not accompany him to the BAS.

Dan Manley
Formerly: HM2 G/2/26 and ISG USA (Ret.)
Currently: Veterans Service Officer, Nevada Office of Veterans Service

Rats

Adding Insult to Injury

by Jim Madara

Before the Siege, we lived in tents with sandbag walls and our cots neatly arranged in squad bay fashion. We had no sooner moved in, when the rats came to visit. They chewed on your hair, fingernails, put droppings in your gear, gnawed through packages from home or anything left laying out, and caused all sorts of other mischief and mayhem. Some people would accept them and leave small offerings of C Ration leftovers under their cots to keep them from nibbling on body parts during the night (which, by the way seemed to work!) Other people would get angry and blow a fuse.

"God damn these *&%#ing things," one of my tent mates roared one evening as he stuck his K-Bar into the sandbag wall by his head. "One of these *&%#ing things *&$#s with me tonight and I'm gonna cut it deep, wide and continuous... "He had a

wild look in his eye, so I left him alone and silently hoped I didn't have to wake up to a rat butchering.

The next morning I had the early radio watch, so I got dressed in the dark and was using my flashlight to negotiate my way out of the hooch when the beam fell on the K-Bar stuck in the sandbag wall by the head of my sleeping tent mate. Stacked on the blade like a cache of small civil war era cannon balls was a pile of rat droppings! The rat must have had to aim pretty well in the dark and release his load from a ledge about a foot above the blade to place them so neatly.

Jim Madara
HQ Btry 1/13 Communications Platoon

Tommy,

Greetings! I hope everything is well with you and your family and you're enjoying your retirement. I also hope the reunion plans are progressing well and on schedule. I'd like you to print this page and read it at the reunion membership meeting if time allows. Thanks and have a great reunion.

❋

Fellow Khe Sanh Vets,

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best and sincerely hope you all have a great reunion. It's a special time to be enjoyed with a very special breed of brothers and survivors who all hold something very dear in common. Relish the moment and the time you can spend together.

Myself, I cannot attend again this year. Last year I was in Federal service, activated with my guard unit in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and could not attend. This year I find myself in the same situation; our unit was once again alerted on May 10th. We may, indeed, again find ourselves called to duty in the very near future and be obligated to respond. Being the senior NCO in the unit it is my responsibility for that readiness to be maintained and ensure the soldiers are ready, if and when the mobilization order comes.

I know that I am one of the very few from our original ranks who is still actively involved with the military and that, too, would end soon if I were not on a stop-loss program. I have had the distinction of serving in both Southeast and Southwest Asia previously and am prepared to return, if necessary. Time will tell.

I can assure you of two things, however, gentlemen. First, God willing, I will be able to attend another KSV reunion sometime and have the chance to see my original brothers-in-arms again. And secondly, the troops I may have to take with me into harm's way will benefit from the experiences we lived and the lessons we learned so long ago in such a unique place.

Semper Fi and enjoy your time together!

Sincerely,
Bill Maves
E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

Chance Encounter at Khe Sanh

by Craig W. Tourte

I was just another PFC during the ten plus months I was at Khe Sanh. I finally made E3 towards the end of my tour. I have a vivid memory of a special moment I would like to share with my brothers.

I was manning the line on the east side of the base across from HQ.1/13 just a hundred yards or so south of the main gate. It was one of those dark dreary nights when you just stand there looking straight ahead at nothing. Exhausted from lack of sleep, C rats, rain and cold, digging and just plain being there, I turned towards a voice behind me, who said; "How is it going, Marine?" I looked up and saw a squared away Marine holding an M-16. He had a big broad mustache and was accompanied by another Marine with a radio on his back. This Marine was obviously an officer of a type which I had never seen before. He introduced himself as Colonel Lownds. He said he was just seeing how things were going and asked how we were getting along. I swallowed hard and said, "Fine." He smiled, turned away, and continued walking down the trench line. Of course, I knew the name of the commanding officer, but not in my wildest dreams did I ever expect to see him out in the trench line without some type of detachment and virtually alone except for the radio man. I never expected a colonel to express concern for a lowly PFC. It was as if God himself had spoken to me.

That simple act lifted my spirits and for some rea-

son I felt a lot more secure knowing that the commanding officer was in this with us and was exposing himself to the same dangers the rest of us faced. I never saw Colonel David Lownds after that, but I would like to thank him and let him know how that moment touched the life of this lowly PFC.

The actions at Khe Sanh left deep scars on all who served there. I am proud of all who served — and of Colonel Lownds who shared the danger and the pain, and made one lowly PFC feel as if his life was worth something. I hope there are times when you feel the pride I do, in belonging to this brotherhood of Khe Sanh Veterans.

Origin of the Message

"For those that will fight for it... FREEDOM...has a flavor the protected shall never know."

– originating in Vietnam, 1968

by L/Cpl. Edwin L. "Tim" Craft, B Co 3rd AT's (ONTOS)

I graduated from high school in 1966, and all of my course studies had been academic. My main interests besides girls, were marching band and debate. Having won the Kansas State Oratorical championship in 1964 with a speech topic "Optimism Formula for Freedom," my intentions were to become a lawyer. I was aware of the Vietnam war, especially when it began to heat up in 1965. Little did I know that before the next year was over that I would take a journey straight into the pit! of hell, and see the heaviest fighting our country has ever experienced.

After high school, I enrolled in junior college. I paid my own way by working part time for the H. D. Lee Company. When I quit college to join the Marines, my professors tried to get me to reconsider. My grades were well above average, and I probably would never have been drafted. I joined because the guys were fighting and dying, and I did not want them to do anything I would not do.

After joining, I was in the States nine months, then I was sent to Vietnam. We made a stop on Wake Island. It looked like a grain of sand in the middle of the ocean when our commercial flight United 707 Jet pitched downward to land. All of the Marines who fought there became POWs of the Japanese. I later met one of them, and got to know him well. I spoke at his funeral. His name was Bob Eaton.

Next was Okinawa, then Da Nang, Dong Ha, and finally, Con Thien. My first day in the field I met a Marine who would be my Commanding Officer...a fine man. Thirty minutes later, Lt. Dallas Thompson would move in front of me and die from an explosion. He fell right across my lap and died looking into my eyes. We were taking so much incoming, that our Platoon Sgt. ordered us off the hill. When I found a hole to jump in, the Marine in it mistook me for a corpsman and called me "Doc". He said, "'Doc', that is some of the fanciest footwork I have ever seen. They were following you all the way down." I told him, "I'm not a corpsman, I'm a Marine, and I just got here. I was scared and following orders. I don't know enough to plan anything. He just looked at me for a long while and said, "That was still some run, Doc!" Con Thien means "Place of Angels." We were under siege there for several months and were cut off from food and water for much of it.

Leatherneck Magazine called the Siege for Con Thien "Time in the Barrel." We received a minimum of 200 incoming rounds a day, and it was a small place. It felt like they hit every square inch. One thing I quickly learned was how to tell the difference in the sounds of incoming. That knowledge was literally a matter of life and death. Mortars made a high arch, and the initial blast in the distance was a muffled report. Artillery rounds had a bassier sound. It gave you slightly more time to find cover, but if it was on you, then you were in deep trouble. The most terrifying one was the rocket, and it screamed as it came in. You could not tell where it might come down, and it came fast. They also had recoilless rifles that fired large shells. They went off almost at the same time you heard them fired at you.They had a flat trajectory.

After months of carnage, we had a cease-fire on Christmas Eve of 1967. On that day I heard a broadcast on Armed Forces radio and learned the protesters were marching on our Capitol protesting against us. I could not believe what I was hearing. Here we were fighting for freedom and these low lifes back home were fighting against us. I was dazed. I just could not understand it. I was hurt, angered, and disgusted. (This motivated me to write a message on a C-Ration case.)

After that night we got the word that we were going to an area called Khe Sanh. We were under siege for 77 days. It was during this time that I spotted a reporter and asked him if he would mind getting a message back to the world for me. He asked, "What is it?" I told him and he looked shocked and asked if I would mind writing that down. I said, "Sure" and wrote it on a C-Ration case. That message is: "For those that will fight for it...FREEDOM...has a flavor the protected shall never know.

❋

Publishers Note: Tim stated that when he attended a reunion in St Louis, the Marine who had originally found the C-Ration box with that message, questioned him in regards to how some particular parts of the message were written. When he responded, the Marine told him that only the original author would have known the facts he related in his answer. Tim claims this verifies that he was the original author.

My Renewed Faith in the Younger Generation

by Ken and Sharon Pipes

Tom:

I am attaching this e-mail to a letter to the editor of the local Fallbrook paper regarding a fine young businessman that recently did some painting for us. The letter was submitted at the beginning of April and is expanded upon here. I think you will understand why, when you read the story behind the story.

While Mr. Testerman was correcting my more serious painting errors in the family room, I was talking long distance to a family member of a Marine that was killed in action on 25 February 1968. This was a call that I had wanted and needed to make for over 35 years. I just could never get it done. I did not realize that young Mr. Isaac Testerman, the owner of his own business painting company was paying attention to my phone call.

What I did not put in my letter to the editor was the fact that Mr. Testerman gave me a 10% discount off his original estimate because I was a Veteran, and had fought for our country in Vietnam. That saved Sharon and me at least $300.00.

Later that same afternoon we conducted a walk through to make sure that he and his young crew had done a satisfactory job. I broke out the checkbook to pay Ike for services rendered (which was outstanding!) Rather than the amount we had previously agreed upon in the contract, he gave me an additional $100.00 discount with the understanding that that money would be sent to the Khe Sanh Veterans. I agreed, only with the understanding that the money would be donated in his name in memory of Lieutenant Don Jacques, and all of the members of his platoon that were killed in action on 25 February 1968. Enclosed with my original letter and with this e-mail, is the check for one hundred dollars in the memory of the Brave and Heroic Marines who tragically lost their lives on that never to be forgotten day.

What I did not say in my letter to the editor was that Ike and his workers were all under 25 years old, were motivated, hard working and respectful. It was very clear that he held all veterans of our country in the highest regard and with deep respect.

Sharon and I just want you and the members of our organization to know of the actions and conduct of Ike and his crew. They restored my faith and confidence in our younger generation. Perhaps, just perhaps, our fine old country may be in much better hands that I thought.

Tom, please use this letter, the information and the check as you see fit. I do request that in some way, Mr. Isaac Testerman be mentioned in the most positive way possible, and perhaps be given a certificate of some kind. He and others like him, in the military or not, hold our future in their hands. If we have a bunch of young folks like him in the wings — and I now believe we do — our country will be ok.

❋

Publishers Remarks: Ken, my thanks to you and Sharon for your most enlightening letter. I have sent young Mr. Testerman and his young crew a certificate of appreciation from the Khe Sanh Veterans, for the support and kindness displayed to you and your family and the KSV through his generous donation.

A Trip Worth Remembering

Fulfilling the Khe Sanh Veterans Legacy

by Tom Eichler

Our founder, Reverend Ray W. Stubbe, recently placed me in contact with members of a family who lost a loved one at Khe Sanh. The family was seeking closure after 36 years. Since this is one of the reasons Reverend Stubbe founded the Khe Sanh Veterans, I immediately attempted to contact family members.

I had first spoke to Mr. Randy Eggenberger, CEO of Wild Wings. Mr. Eggenberger's company distributes the art and works of Terry Redlin, a world renowned artist, recently voted America's most popular artist and the most widely collected painter of Nature and Americana. Terry Redlin's wife, (Helene née Langenfeld) had lost her brother in Vietnam — Charles T. Langenfeld who was killed in action at Khe Sanh while assigned to Echo Company 2/26 as a corpsman.



Tom Eichler and Randy Eggenberger, CEO of Wild Wings

HM3 Langenfeld distinguished himself during the battle on 05 Feb. 1968, when NVA forces attacked Hill 861A at the start of the Tet Offensive. He was later killed on 17 April 1968 while seeking a fresh water supply for the men of E Co 2/26.

I was put in touch with Julie Ranum, executive director, of the Redlin Art Center, located in Watertown, South Dakota, the hometown of Charles T. Langenfeld. Terry A. Redlin built the center and gifted it to the citizens of Watertown, SD. The Art Center was designed by Terry's son, Charles Redlin, who was named after Charles T. Langenfeld.

Terry Redlin was unveiling his latest works "An American Portrait" at a signing on 7-8 August 2004, at the Redlin Art Center. The Redlin Group planned to honor all America's servicemen at a prayer service on the 8th of August 2004. The final painting in his "An American Portrait" series, titled "His Last Goodbye" [see this issue's front cover), is a scene of a neighborhood, aglow with lights, as families prepare for the upcoming holiday season. The snow glistens in the moonlight and the stars twinkle in the clear night sky. In the painting, Dad has just finished hanging the homecoming banner, having been busy all day getting ready for his son's return. The cars are washed and the garage straightened. Mom has the tree decorated and lit. From the house wafts the aroma of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies, their son's favorite. From the window, she sees a car slowly pull up to the front walk. As she opens the door, expecting to embrace her son, she is horrified to see a representative from the Navy along with a Chaplain, walking up the snowy steps. Her heart sinks as she realizes it is not her son arriving as they had been expecting, but the devastating news that he has been killed in war. As her body begins to crumble from the inside out, she finds herself unable to speak, unable to even breathe. An old buddy drops the teddy, knowing his friend is never coming home again. "His Last Good-Bye" immerses us in the pain of an American family's ultimate loss.

The final painting was inspired by one of Terry Redlin's personal experiences. It captures on canvas the memory of his brother-in-law and dear friend, Charles Langenfeld. Terry and Charles loved to hunt and fish. They also enjoyed chess and other board games and would spend hours together. Even though Charles was ten years younger than Terry, the two shared many interests and had great respect for one another. It was a true friendship and a brotherly bond.

Charles, a Navy hospital corpsman, was killed in the Siege of Khe Sanh, while serving with Echo Company, Second Battalion, Twenty Sixth Marines, on Hill 861A. He had only 8 hours to go before he would have been rotated to the rear and out of harms way. Like many Americans, Terry, his wife Helene, and her family, live forever with the pain of their ultimate loss.

NOTE: Terry Redlin has most generously donated all the proceeds from the sale of this painting, to the Khe Sanh Veterans.

Charles Redlin has spent many years of his life, seeking information on the last days of his beloved uncle. Since I had served and fought alongside HM3 Langenfeld on Hill 861A, and seeking to uphold our founder's wishes, I decided to travel to Watertown to participate in the scheduled event, and present the Redlin and Langenfeld family a posthumous "DOC" Award. I contacted Earle Breeding, the former commanding officer of Echo Company, who also agreed to be a part of the ceremony. We were both included as guest speakers at the ceremony to honor all serviceman. It was our sincere hope that we might bring final closure to the Langenfeld and Redlin families.

Both Earle and I were overwhelmed by the kindness and loving care shown us by the Redlin and Langenfeld families and by the citizens of Watertown. From the Mayor to the owner of the hotel who provided our accommodations, we could not have felt more welcome. They repeatedly thanked us for traveling to their town to honor one of their native sons, who gave his life while taking care of others.

We were honored at dinner by the Redlins and Langenfelds, where we met other members of their immediate family. After looking at pictures and articles, both Earle and I related stories concerning Charles Langenfeld's service and his last days at Khe Sanh. I hope we were able to finally bring the closure the family had sought for so many years. I know Earle and I really felt good being able to do what our organization was created to do. We especially wanted the family to know what a close relationship the Marines had with our beloved Corpsman.



Tom Eichler and Earle Breeding at ceremony.

Julie Ranum did an outstanding job at the Art Center with the service honoring all servicemen. The American flag was delivered to three recently returned veterans from the war in Iraq, by a group of volunteer veteran skydivers. Earl and I presented "DOC" Medals to Helene and Charles Redlin.

We told them we were privileged to share in Charles T. Langenfeld's short life.

Terry Redlin during a private conversation told a personal story about why he also felt Marines and Corpsman had close relationships. When he and Charles were growing up, they were altar boys in the Catholic church. When one of them was serving, the other would always attempt to catch the eye of the other, while sitting in different locations in the church. When they made eye contact, they would do a hand-muffled laugh.

During the military funeral of Charles T. Langenfeld, one of the Marine Honor Guards firing a salute, suddenly did the same hand-muffled laugh both he and Charles had done so many times. Knowing how professional and caring Marines are during such devout ceremonies, he asked the Marine why he laughed in that manner. The Marine, although totally embarrassed by his actions, related that it just came over him and he could not control his actions. Terry believed Charles had spoken to him through one of the Marines he so dearly loved and cared for.

I hope Terry will understand why I chose to relate this incident, since it reflects our close relationship with our corpsman, the legacy of Ray Stubbe, and the depth of our bonds.

Tom Eichler



The Secretary of the Navy takes pride in presenting the

NAVY COMMENDATION MEDAL

posthumously to:

HOSPITAL CORPSMAN SECOND CLASS CHARLES T. LANGENFELD
UNITED STATES NAVY
for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For heroic achievement while serving as Senior Corpsman of Company E, Second Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, Third Marine Division in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On 5 February 1968 when a numerically superior North Vietnamese Army force assaulted the company's defensive perimeter on Hill 861A near Khe Sanh, Petty Officer LANGENFELD, then a Hospital Corpsman Third Class, distinguished himself as he personally treated the numerous casualties and directed the activities of other corpsmen. Repeatedly exposing himself to intense enemy mortar, rocket and automatic weapons fire, he moved throughout the fire-swept area to aid fallen Marines and assist in their evacuation to the company aid station. His heroic actions and sincere concern for the welfare of his comrades inspired all who observed him and contributed significantly to the accomplishment of his unit's mission. By his courage, bold initiative and selfless devotion to duty, Petty Officer LANGENFELD upheld the finest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service."

The Combat "V" is authorized.

FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,

H. W. BUSE, JR.
LIEUTENANT GENERAL, U. S. MARINE CORPS
COMMANDING GENERAL, FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC

My Introduction to a Place Called Khe Sanh

by Charlie Fox, C Co 1/26

I was a L/Cpl. with about 14 months in the Corps. I had been in 106s with 3/6 at Lejeune and Gitmo. I was shocked when I was transferred to Khe Sanh. I was assigned to 2nd squad, 3rd Plt, Charlie Company, 26th Marines, as a grunt. My days of riding were over. I was now one of those guys I used to laugh at as we rode by. Third platoon was commanded by Lt. Jim Epps, who later went to weapons platoon, and was replaced by Lt. Skip Wells.

Khe Sanh was in the middle of the monsoon season and we were living in tents at the Ponderosa. One day we were helilifted to Hill 881, and walked back to the KSCB. The platoon was made up of short timers and FNG, about 50-50. It was the first time I faced making contact.

We packed up one day and headed to the runway to catch a chopper to Hill 950. We attempted to land for three straight days, but it was too foggy. We could not see the top half of the hill. We laid around the airstrip most of the day and would later return to our tents. On 9 December, we again board CH-34s. I was loaded down like a pack mule. I was humpin' everything I own, including plenty of reading material. We got 8 or 9 guys on this thing and the nightmare began. The engine revved up, the whole thing shook and shuddered, one wheel got off the ground, and then the thing just settled back on the runway.

The door gunner is yelling we're too heavy so two guys jump off. Here we go again, revving, shuttering, shaking, one wheel up, then the other, then, we're back on the runway. Two more guys jump out and we try again. I'm sure I'm going to die in this thing, but we're finally in the air using a modified taxi method — I'm way in the back. We touch down on a finger one third of the way up 950. As I go to step out, the chopper shoots straight up in the air and I fall back in. Back to the runway, more Marines load up and away we go again, round two of trying to get airborne. I'm scared and haven't even been shot at. We finally make it and as we start into the LZ, I wind up in the back again.

A beam of light hits me in the eye, I look and see a round hole and can only think, Damn, now the rivets are popping out. As we go in, I hear firing. The door gunner is firing and as I go to jump out, the chopper again shoots straight up in the air, only this time the gunner kicks me in the ass and I freefall with about 75 to 80 pounds of equipment on. I land on my feet in 7 feet of elephant grass and a foot of mud. I go to my knees and immediately split the crotch of my pants, from knee to knee.

I wanted to shoot at the helicopter. We got through the grass and into the trees only to find out that the fun had just begun. Hill 950 is steep. We pulled ourselves up the hill going from tree to tree, sliding in the mud then climbing some more. Two steps up and three steps back. The climb seemed to take forever. Exhaustion and leg cramps had set in by the time we got to the top. Somewhere in this climb, we hit a slightly flat area and are walking easy when someone empties an M-16. My heart stops, I'm looking for cover and something to shoot at but find neither. I probably had that deer in the headlights look. The word comes back that he thought he saw a sniper in a tree, but it was only a monkey. My first real trip out and I learned what essential gear was and what nonessential gear was. Things will change the next time.

Our position was on the very top of the hill. It consisted of bunkers going off a main trench line that went completely around the hilltop. There were several rows of concertina wire trip flares, and claymores. My bunker was on the far side of the hill facing away from Khe Sanh. In the middle was an LZ that was so small that CH-46s and 53s couldn't land. On the Khe Sanh side was a "coal chute" that was used to get rid of garbage. The word is that this place was overrun a year ago, when there were a lot fewer people.

Most days, when you looked out of 950, all you saw were clouds below, no combat base, no elephant grass — not even the bottom of 950. When the sun was out during the day it was pretty nice. At night, it got downright cold. They issued a block of C4 explosives to each bunker. Each guy got to burn some in the bunker to try to warm it up after coming in off watch so you could get a little sleep. Added to the cold and rain was the fact that we had tropical weight jungle fatigues and no field jackets. During one listening post at the edge of the wire, three of us huddled together trying to share body heat in the rain. It didn't matter that we weren't watching because you couldn't see five feet in the fog.

Lieutenant Wells shows up on the LZ one day with a Mohawk haircut, jungle fatigues cut-off at the shoulders and knees, and a football. A football game breaks out. Sometime during this game, a Huey circles the hill. We're all looking, when a radio operator comes out of the CP and tells Wells that a new general is in the chopper. Lt. Wells comes to attention and salutes in the direction of the chopper. It left without landing. Guess we made a great impression.

One day we got a great surprise. Fresh eggs are choppered in, and I get even luckier. My bunker partner didn't eat eggs. I got a can of ham slices, and eventually, after much stirring, made ham and eggs made in a peach can using many heat tabs.

21 December, 1967, Lt. Wells took a squad plus patrol out to hill 1015, which was a rifle shot across from us. Hill 1015 was the only place that Hill 950 had to look up to, and we did it all day, everyday. We're told those "other" people lived over there. We get to the top of Hill 1015 and after walking a little ways, stopped, and everyone got down. Word came back that there were NVA boot tracks in the mud. I was staring hard into the brush and saw little fireplaces built out of stone. We checked them out and were told the NVA cooked on them. I've seen enough, this can't be good. We walked back without any other signs of the NVA, but us new guys knew for sure now that we weren't in Kansas. Toto wasn't anywhere.

24 December, 1967, I'm not a new guy any more, I guess. I'm supposed to be in charge of a three man listening post tonight. As I'm walking to the CP to get a radio, a guy calls me over to the garbage chute and says, "Listen," I hear someone stumbling around in the cans lying at the bottom of the chute. I go to the CP and inform Lt. Wells, and his reply was "I'll fix that." He grabs a CS grenade from a bag as he goes out the doorway of the CP.

We all laughed as the grenade went down the chute. The listening post was cancelled and we went on 50% alert. I had no sooner stepped into my little cutout in the trench when a grenade goes off behind the machinegun bunker, just to my left. I must have ducked real fast, pushing my backside out in the trench, because my gasmask on my left hip took a little hit. Things started getting a little crazy for a minute or two. We had four wounded and were now at 100% alert.

Lt. Wells called for artillery fire around the hill. He put the three M-79 men in the middle of the LZ and had them shooting. The artillery came in and did a job. Thank you, John Kaheny. That was nice shooting. Things got very quiet. Lt. Wells stood in the middle of the LZ that night, and from time to time would yell for one squad or another to throw grenades over the side. This went well until some clown down to my right, threw a white phosphorus grenade. It hit the wire, bounced back and went off on our side of the wire resulting in another guy getting wounded. The rest of the night was quiet. Merry Christmas.

It was about 1100 hours when the chopper came in with Christmas dinner. Turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, corn, and all the other trimmings, including ice cream. The only problem was that the only thing we had to put all this food in was old mess kits. It was quite a mixture. Mashed potatoes and ice cream mixed with gravy with a peach on top. But, it sure beat C rations. At noon the choppers came back and we flew back to Khe Sanh and tents again. So much for my big adventure. We end up with five WIA's and never saw anyone. 950 was certainly an eye opener. During the siege, Charlie Company was assigned to the Blue Sector, and I got to look at 950 every day. Thank God our stay up there was short.

My Service in Vietnam At Khe Sanh, Chu Lai and Danang

The Personal Account of a Navy Seabee

by Hugh J. McCauley, AIA USN



I joined the United States Navy Fleet Reserve in the early 1960's, serving on a destroyer. I did not like it and transferred to the Seabees to be trained as a construction steelworker. At that time I never heard of Vietnam. In 1965 I received Seabee training at the (CBC) school in Davisville, RI. Upon graduation they sent me to the biggest (CBC) School in Port Hueneme, CA. The war in Vietnam was creeping up on us an we had to receive combat and weapons training, since we were scheduled to be shipped out to Camp Shields, located in Chu Lai, South Vietnam.

At the time we all thought it was a lot better then being sent to Korea.

My battalion was there building support bases off the coast of the South China Sea, located south of the Song-the-Bon River, just north of Batangan. We constructed a lot of Marine support facilities for Marine Air Groups, MAG-12 and 36, and other Marine units. We also did construction for ROK (Korean) troops inland, up in the hills, and other deep field bases. We even serviced some Australian units. Those chaps loved to just sit in the shade and scream out "You Bloody Yanks are Crazy," when we worked in the noonday sun, with the temperature well over 100 degrees. The Australian troops were allowed to wear thin khaki standard issue shorts and did not have to work during the hours when the temperature was at its highest point. Our regulations would not allow us to do the same, and we were extremely jealous. Their parent units had served in North Africa, Burma, India and Malaysia during WWII, and knew how to deal with hot climates, we did not. And we didn't drink tea much either.

We had very little modern equipment, and most of it was outdated. The majority of our work was done by hand. We constructed runways, LZs, POL farms, pipelines, and communications poles, power stations with transmission wires, roads and culverts. We built our own rock quarry, concrete batch plant, piers, and landing ramps. You name it, we built it. Civilian contractors hired under Government contracts to perform the same functions had state-of-the-art equipment, and used civilian workers from all over the world.

In 1966, the tour of Construction Battalion 4 was extended by more than a month because our replacement battalion was being trained at the CBC in Gulfport, Mississippi, and their training was not yet complete. The Navy was involved in a lot of recruiting of new Petty Officers from various construction trades, and re-enlisting former servicemen. Finally their advanced party arrived at Camp Shields. We all felt that relief was on the way. Seabee units rotate as a complete unit, not as individuals. Their construction projects are also assigned to a whole unit. Due to this unit rotation system, a Seabee could do several tours in Vietnam. Some of our guys did three tours in RVN.



Hugh McCauley, MCB-4

In 1967, the Vietnam war became a tougher, protracted struggle, compared to our first deployment in 1966. The enlarging war made it more dangerous and the work became harder. When I joined MCB 4, the Battalion strength consisted of approximately 450 men. With the increased workload the battalion strength more than doubled to over 1,000 men. The closeness which I had experienced with the smaller unit, was non-existent with the larger unit.

While stationed at Danang, we were often deployed as 12- to 20-man teams (detachments), to other parts of the country. My right foot got busted on a job near Danang and I was put on light duty since I couldn't wear a boot. One of my jobs was to act as courier delivering mail, money, tools, cases of food and beer and anything I could get on a chopper, or larger craft, to deliver to our teams. That's how I got to Khe Sanh the first time. I was scheduled to deliver small equipment and leave the next day. The runway needed constant work and lots of earthmoving. The Seabee team there had only small equipment and really needed larger equipment to keep the runway open. I was asked to get a D-8H bulldozer and lots of tools to the CB units at Khe Sanh. The air strip there was narrow, short and actually sloped about 60 feet from the low end at the east to the high end at the west. I loaded the new dozer and other needed equipment into a C-130. This trip concerned me because I had heard that the Khe Sanh runway may not be able to take such a heavy plane loaded with a payload of dead iron equipment. I had heard that no fully loaded C-130 had yet landed at Khe Sanh. But, it was a priority mission and they needed the heavy equipment to keep the runway functioning.

By this time, I had been in and out of the base before on a C-123, and was familiar with the best and safest way to approach and land there. Not that I was a pilot, but it's a gift to understand the physics of it all. I sat on the floor between the pilot and co-pilot and attempted to convey my experience of previous landing. They paid little attention to my advice and began circling the runway, alerting every NVA gunner located in the sur-

rounding hills. They were flying quite fast and overshot the end of the runway. After wasting about 600 feet they got the belly wheels on the AM-2 matting.

Moving at such a high speed and running out of airstrip they threw on the brakes and feathered the props to reverse pitch, which resulted in a very torn up runway. Pieces of the deck matting were hitting the bottom and rear of the plane's hull. My heart in my mouth and looking at the end of the runway coming at us quickly, I had to get to the exit on the lower deck's left side as the plane began to slide sideways uphill. The crash trucks were on hand to chase us from mid-runway to where the plane had to start to turn to avoid climbing the hill in front of us. They turned the craft to the right at the last possible second, but I thought that the left wing and props were toast and trash, given the mound in front of the plane. It was a crazy landing for sure.

I found my way out of the exit while the plane was still moving and tumbled to the ground, got up and ran away from the plane with my a bum foot, leaving everything behind. My panic, however, was short lived because the crash crews took care of everything. The plane made the big turn off the hill and came to rest at the extreme west end. The Seabees and Marines quickly off-loaded the important cargo. I was still shaking from the experience. I left my garrison belt and pistol on the plane. It took some time to get the runway ready for that big silver C-130 to take off again. The new bulldozer was immediately put to work repairing the damage the plane had made to the runway.

My foot was getting better and many of my friends from Detail Bravo and Delta were there, and I got to stay at Khe Sanh for several months. Our Chief, Jim Reevis, was happy to have another hand, even a slightly damaged one. As far as I know, we were the second Seabee team at Khe Sanh; the first team from our MOB was there earlier in 1967 to build the big bunkers for the light-recon pilots who flew right down the throats of the NVA gathering around the Khe Sanh combat base. The enemy was assumed to be getting ready for a repeat of Dien Bien Phu. The NVA were notoriously implacable.

Those USAF spotter planes had cameras and smoke rockets to give real information to USMC intelligence and artillery officers, as well as B-52 groups. The Seabees worked in 10-12 man teams, 12 hour days, 24 hours a day, to keep the runway open. We even supported the Marines on perimeter watches in trenches and bunkers to the north of the runway, when we should have been sleeping. Looking off into the valley of death, we dug trenches and filled sandbags, stood watch and fended off enemy probes or endured their H&I fire. We gave back as good as we got, and with the help of the US Army Dusters. Mounted with double 40mm guns, the tank-like Duster was a great machine, and they had night vision instruments. The first time they parked next to me on the trench line, I had no idea of their capability until they opened up with 100% WP fire, as NVA were creeping up the slope in front of me. I couldn't see them, but the Duster did.

Not to offend anyone, but the hills north of Khe Sanh combat base (950 and 1015 etc.), a series of ridges all assembled in view, we nicknamed Cleopatra's Tit. It was suggestive to the first Marines there. A gigantic natural sculpture of a woman reclined in posture about 4 miles long. Seeing it in profile from the south or looking at it from the air, reminded me of a reclining woman's form. I'm not dreaming this up. Anyone out there among the early teams remember this? This geographical formation was a natural fortress for the NVA.

When things were light and regular, we helped to transport camp workers to and from our base to the western town of the same name. It was a village laid out on both sides of the road with houses, shops, a Catholic school, Buddhist Temple, etc, perhaps 4,000 folks. Most of the trade supporting the town was based on local plantation work with coffee, sugar, tobacco, bananas and handicrafts of many kinds. The town was full of ordinary lowlander Vietnamese. Very few of us spoke Vietnamese but a few of the educated civilian women workers spoke French and our guys from Louisiana could come up with a Cajun phrase. It was always a cause to celebrate. French culture and language was always a good thing for us so far from home.

We saw Bru, called Montagnards by the French. In their ancient Thai-based language, Bru meant that they were real people, as opposed to anyone else whom they called Moy (savages). This included the downland Vietnamese or anyone unrelated to their tribes. The Bru were slash and burn hunter-gatherers, and aboriginal highlanders, who typically moved from place-to-place through the mountains, season-by season. They knew no national borders, and wan-

dered where their old traditions took them like nomads. They marked their settlement lands however, so that the circuit could continue from generation-to-generation.

Lang Vei Special Forces Camp

The Bru had a village called Lang Vei with stilt houses, long family dwellings all made of tree trunks and branches with grass roofs. These aboriginal mountain folks were proud survivors in a natural setting. Anything they could find on four legs was food as they killed elephants, deer, wildcats, monkeys, and big rats. They hunted with crossbows and javelins, as well as special throwing knives. Many of the tribal women were also employed on the coffee plantation operated by a local French family who had been there for a long time. They brought farm tractors to our runway to send out produce from Khe Sanh, where small planes (Pilatus Porters) were used as cargo shuttles.

At Lang Vei Special Forces camp, overlooking the Laotian boarder in the crotch of the Ho Chi Trail (called the Parrot's Beak); I met the camp captain, a graduate of Temple University. He was a Green Beret, ever so grateful to us Seabees who helped support his position. Because of tough topography, a crescent-shaped runway was the only way to layout a strip for light spotters and Caribou cargo planes to get in and out.

The force on that base included Bru tribesmen who loved the US forces and loved to fight the NVA. RVN-CIDG was there in numbers too. Some of our Seabees remained there and worked with them until the place was eventually overrun by NVA. I remember that night, and the noise from that base when we were even in the underground Seabee bunker at Khe Sanh, 5 few miles away. They said later that the captain was sabotaged in his bunker by his own mess chef, a Viet-CIDG-traitor. The film with John Wayne was based on the events of that occasion, or maybe others like it.

We Seabees also built revetments for the small aircraft and kept up with runway maintenance. When the big push started in late June of 1967, we saw lots of large choppers (Navy gray and a kind we never saw before) come in on our runway with many hundreds of Marines. We guessed that the big choppers could have come from a carrier off the coast. The Marines looked fresh and young and marched off to the northwest of the runway and then down to the valley slopes to meet their fate, as their target was what we called Cleopatra. Thing is that they had new model rifles unlike our M-l4s. Indeed, these new guns looked like the plastic toys we had seen back in the States. That part of the story has been a returning refrain from many in early Khe Sanh combat. These new rifles were short of the mark in every way compared to the 30 cal. M-l or 7.62 mm. M-14. The truth is we lost too many men because the new toy-like rifle was just not suited for real combat situations.

I was then a wide-eyed young man of 24 or 25 with a lot to live for, as I watched the Marines that day. They were delivered to the site on whirling blades, assigned the mission and they carried it out with such dispatch and bravery. I couldn't imagine. Some said 500 worthy men were lost that day as if in the twinkling of an eye. At this action, there was a gal from France, a reporter-photographer. She was about my age or younger, very attractive, and blonde. L'Express had allowed her, along with permits from the Saigon Army Generals, to cover this activity in I Corps. She was beautiful, gorgeous, bright and yet our sister. The Marines gave her to us so that we would do the right thing, by giving her our best bunker, guard the latrine for her, and before the battle would begin the next day, we had the honor of a dinner with her in our Playboy bunker. I shared the chore of chef, using C rations mixed with hot Korean beer as sauce. We also had a refrigerator run by a small generator that could keep a case of steaks and beer cold. Just finishing one more day and avoiding being hit, was often cause enough to empty the fridge.

We heard later that this French girl had been hit while covering the battle. We only knew her a few hours and were downcast upon hearing the news. Shortly after this, there were paybacks by the NVA with rockets. We lost some of our Seabee team. The enemy had targeted our part of the compound because we had done so much to help the Marines do their jobs. Smaller mortar rounds were nothing compared to the rockets. We rushed for cover to our small, and not-too-well-made, covered but muddy bunker. My back was to the opening, when a mortar round impacted nearby. The stings I felt were probably dirt and debris kicked up by the explosion. I'd been in other mortar attacks and just got pelted with dirt and stones, so I paid no attention. We left that

position after a lull and headed for our big bunker.

We didn't have to talk about what we were doing — it was instinct. We all thought that if the NVA were going to follow up with an assault on the base, they would have to come right through our position. When we got there, our big bunker had become a hospital and morgue. A chaplain and a senior corpsman had done their best with our Marines and our dying and dead men and also attended to the wounded. The corpsman noticed blood on my back and patched me up. He wanted to tag me as wounded. I quickly refused and wouldn't have it. Hell, it was a mere scratch, I thought. No, with all these others really hurt and dead, I didn't want attention. Choppers came in and out above our bunker for a while. It got really quiet that night in the Seabee bunker. Strangers drifted in and squatted in corners with their rifles. No one spoke.

The next morning a message came from my chief (perhaps because I was not behaving too well) that my request for R&R filed many months before was approved. I had to get out of Khe Sanh on my own. Nothing came in except food and ammunition and nothing went out except dignitaries, the wounded and dead. This is the worst part of my story.

My own stuff having been blown away while my hooch-mates and I were underground. I wandered around the next day in the salvaged clothes of a big guy in our detachment who had been killed. I went out to the runway to see two C-123s with rear ramps open to receive full loads of the bodies of the men who had gone down the hill and had to be retrieved as KIA. I was ashamed to ask anyone there. They were stern, quiet, respectful and formal in their duty of loading these corpses on the planes. Given the temperature and the sun, the Marines in those bags were swelling and reeking. There is no way one cannot remember that odor.

I approached one of the attendants, a lance corporal, who totally ignored me. He was focused on the job. He was committed. He never looked at or answered. He was in a trance. I went to the next plane's flight deck and asked the crew if I could travel with them. They shrugged and said, "OK, if you want to go to Dong Ha." I knew that Dong Ha was a large base and that I would be able get back to Da Nang from there by chopper or other transport. On that flight out of Khe Sanh, I was sitting up against the forward cabin wall, looking aver a field of dead Marines, laid out on the cargo deck. Some were so distorted by rigor-mortis that the bags couldn't be totally closed. My thoughts of how they had been killed became torturous as the C-123 cruised eastward. I just couldn't take being the only live passenger on that plane. It broke me up. The intolerable became quickly impossible. I had to move away from that deck of death. I went up to the flight deck and found a comer where I could coil up and just cry as the flight took us (dead and alive) to Dong Ha. There I wanted to find another craft to take me back to Da Nang. The plane was cleared of the dead, pressure washed by an efficient team of experts, then loaded with a troop of entertainers all painted up and dressed in sequins and colorful feathers, musical instruments and sound system equipment. They were joyful and talking rubbish.

What had I just seen, and what was all this? It boggled my mind. A few minutes before this cargo deck was full of the honored dead, now disgraced by living, joking women and musicians on their way to another entertainment gig. I was in no way entertained or amused by them, and they must have noticed my sober lockjaw reserve. They then became quiet until we landed at Da Nang.

I got back to Camp Hoover by hitching rides from the airdrome and entered the gates without a hat or helmet, and filthy. I was written up by the guards for being out of uniform. They wrote the name on my jumper, but it wasn't my name. Chuck Hubbard had died, literally split apart by a large rocket fragment; they didn't know that, and I wouldn't talk. I even had his rifle, all rusty and dusty. I was a mess with a small shrapnel wound on my back. I just wanted to get to my own hooch and rest for the next day. I wanted to get myself together and get out of Viet Nam to my first ever and last R&R, to Malaysia. I became an insomniac and couldn't sleep or eat for many days. It was a joyless departure out of country.

Even on the Malaysian peninsula there was an emergency. Police and soldiers with weapons ready were in the banks, at checkpoints on the roads into and out of towns. Muslim terrorists had boarded a bus near my hotel in downtown Kuala Lumpur, in the most cosmopolitan Asian city I had visited, and they killed the passengers. Sound familiar?

Returning to RVN was like revisiting Hell. From here, because it still breaks my heart, I can't go on because it's just too much for me.

They've recently dedicated an old bridge for the US Seabees. It connects Brattleboro, VT to Chesterfield, NH. The first US bridge or structure to be dedicated to the memory of those who can Build and Fight (Construius Batuimus).

Semper Fi and **Can Do** to all of you.

A Patrol Gone Bad

by Tom Ford, D Co. 1/26

This story is about a fictionalized Delta Company patrol off Hill 55 during the fall harvest of 1966. I wrote this a couple years after returning to the "world."

"Yeah, Vietnam will do that to you. Seriously, Dave, if you had any value other than as grunt, you wouldn't be here. If you had any smarts, you wouldn't have joined in the first place. When you consider all the possible military occupations that you might have got into and the fact you ended up as a grunt, it's clear that you're worthless."

Dave had unsnapped his flak jacket, but that wasn't providing much relief from the heat. The slight breeze sweeping across the field could hardly be felt. Taking off his flack jacket would have given some ventilation around his body, but he'd learned not to do that. During his 11 months in Vietnam, he'd seen too many guys messed up by mines and booby-traps.

The heat was exhausting and it was impossible to get comfortable. Dave looked at his watch. It was only 1:30 and he knew that it would be early evening before it started to cool off. The only way to ignore the heat was to pretend you were somewhere else. Dave thought about the "world" as he ate. The world is the United States and home. He thought about the fall session in Michigan, football games, changing colors, and 60-degree temperatures. It felt good to relive, in his mind, the enjoyable things he used to do. All of it seemed like such a long time ago, a distant dream. That was another thing that Vietnam did. It screwed up your time perspective.



Tom Ford, D Co. 1/26

Dave could only stay distracted for awhile. Reality was Vietnam and there was no way to make it go away. The two Marines ate quietly, occasionally looking around to check for anything unusual. Across the field, a group of villagers worked steadily, harvesting rice. They seemed unaware of the Marines. Dave had to shield his eyes from the sun's glare to see them clearly. When the fighting wasn't around, Vietnam had a storybook quality. The villagers were cutting and bundling rice same the way their ancestors had for centuries.

The cluster of hamlets surrounding the field was part of the village of Cam Bo. The field was about a mile and a half in length and a quarter-mile wide. The platoon had come by four days before, but hadn't discovered anything unusual.

Dave was eating a C-ration cracker and daydreaming about his girlfriend Judy when his happy thoughts were interrupted by the radio.

"Delta Two Bravo. Delta Two Bravo. This is Delta Two Actual. Over."

He unclipped the radiophone from his flak jacket. "Delta Two Actual, this is Delta Two Bravo. Over," he responded.

"Delta Two Bravo, put your Actual on. Over."

"Wait one." He turned and tossed the phone to the Squad leader. "Hey, Smitty. The lieutenant wants you."

"Don't throw that thing at me, dammit." Smitty picked up the phone and started talking. His face hardened and he looked pissed off as he handed the phone back. "That son of a bitch," he cursed.

Dave sat up. "What's the scoop?"

Smitty threw a handful of dirt into the field. "Man, I don't know why they're doin' it. We're not going back to Hill 53 right away. He wants to sweep those hamlets over there again," he said, pointing across the field.

"Hell! That's the wrong way, Smitty. That'll take three or four hours, man. We won't get back in until seven or eight o'clock."

"Yeah, I know. He's sending the 1st Squad in from the south and we're to come in from the north. 3rd Squad will stay with him on the side of the field."

"Why the change of plans?" Dave asked.

"What the hell do I know? If I knew, it wouldn't make any difference. We'd still have to do it." Smitty stood up. "Pass the word. Team leaders up," he called out.

In a minute or so, the three team leaders arrived and the squad leader passed on the Lieutenant's orders. "OK, here's the story. We are going to take a look at those people harvesting out there, and then enter the north hamlet of the village and sweep south. Franklin, your team's point. Jones, you're in the middle, and Martinez, you bring up the rear. We are leaving in five minutes, so get everyone ready to go.

While they talked, Dave looked across the field at the people harvesting rice. There were about twenty of them. Everybody was working except for an old man who stood around and watched. Except for him, the villagers appeared to be women and children. This was a contested area and all the men were gone, either with the South Vietnamese Army or off in the hills with the VC.

The squad leader's final word to the team leaders was to tell them to watch their water. It would have to last until they got back in.

"You want me to tell the lieutenant we're leaving?"

"Yeah."

Dave spoke into the phone. "Delta Two. Delta Two, this is Delta Two Bravo. We're movin' out. Over."

Smitty called out for the first team leader. "Okay, Franklin. Get it moving. Keep it spread out. Don't bunch up."

They stayed off the dikes to avoid any mines or booby-traps, and crossed the field to where the women and children were working. Dave always felt like a naked target in the open like this. The Vietnamese ignored the Marines as they approached. All, except the children, kept working. The children jabbered and pointed at the Marines. When their mother spoke harshly to them, the squad leader knew the VC were close by. The children weren't scolded that way when the area was clear. Everyone in the squad instinctively scanned the tree line surrounding the field for a sign of trouble.



C Company patrol to Hill 55

"Delta Two Bravo. Delta Two Bravo, this is Delta Two. Over." Dave replied, "Delta Two, this is Delta Two Bravo. Over."

"Delta Two Bravo, check the ID cards of those people. Over."

"Roger," replied Dave. "Smitty, the lieutenant wants us to check ID cards."

"Pass the word. Check ID cards," the squad leader called out.

The Vietnamese knew the ritual. When the Marines asked for ID cards, they stopped working and produced them. There were all in order. The only male was the old man.

Smitty called for Lance Corporal Bergen, who could speak Vietnamese. "Bergen, see if you can get the old man to tell us where the VC are."

"OK, Smitty." Bergen turned to the old man and greeted him, "Chao ong."

The old man looked surprised. "Cong san o dau? Cong san o dau?"

The old man shook his head. "Kong biet. Kong hieu. [No VC. No VC.]"

"Smitty, he's not gonna talk," Bergen said to the squad leader.

Crazy people, thought Dave. We're here to protect them and they tell us nothing. He looked the people over closely. He'd never really gotten used to the Vietnamese. Conical-shaped hats, barefoot kids, and rag-tag clothes. Old ladies with betel nut-stained teeth and young mothers old before their time. The only thing that seemed right to him were the teen-age girls in their bright, colorful tunics. What a strange place to fight a war, he thought.

The squad spent about twenty minutes checking the people out. Then Smitty, who was looking at his map, called him over. "Tell the lieutenant we found nothing here and we're movin' out," he said.

"Roger." Dave picked up the hand set and relayed the message.

"OK, Franklin. Get 'em movin'. Head

toward that break in the trees over there were the trail is," Smitty said, pointing. "Spread' em out. Don't bunch up."

The squad waded through the waist-high rice in staggered formation, staying off the dikes that criss-crossed the field. The village of Cam Bo was made up of eight hamlets. They were strung out around the perimeter of the field and connected by trails. Each hamlet was about 300 yards long and, nestled in the trees were the homes, animal pens, gardens, tobacco and sugarcane plots. During the rainy season when the fields were flooded, the hamlets resembled small islands of palm and banana trees.

Everyone watched the tree lines. He kept his radio antenna pulled down in front of him. The VC liked to shoot at radio-men and machine-gunners. Dave didn't think this actually concealed the fact that he was carrying a radio. It still stuck out like a sore thumb, but it made him feel better. Some radio-men even put their radios in a pack. The worst problem around here, he knew, wasn't snipers — it was mines and booby traps. That was what scared him most. Generally, bullet wounds healed pretty well, but mines just tore a person up.

When the squad got close to the trees, Dave could see some of the bamboo huts. In an open area, he saw two women squatting on the ground. They were shaking a large straw matte disk to separate the rice hulls from the grain. The squad was just entering the hamlet when five shots rang out.

The Marines hit the deck and scrambled for cover. The call went out, "Corpsman up, corpsman up. Franklin's been hit."

The squad laid down covering fire in the direction from which the shots had come, while Smitty and the corpsman ran up to Franklin's position. After a minute, the firing stopped. They knew that the sniper had ditched his weapons and either run away or hidden.

"Delta Two Bravo. Delta Two Bravo, this is Delta Two Actual. Over."

"This is Delta Two Bravo Over." Dave spoke "Lieutenant, we've got one WIA. Don't know how serious yet. Wait one." Dave ran over to where the wounded man was laying. "Smitty, I got the Lieutenant on the radio," he said as he handed over the handset.

Dave knelt down and looked at Franklin. He was in a lot of pain and moaning, but alert. The corpsman had ripped open his uniform and was putting a battle dressing around his thigh where he'd been hit. There was a lot of blood.

"What you think, Doc?" Dave asked the corpsman.

"He'll be okay, Dave: I got the bleeding stopped."

Dave looked at Franklin. "You sandbagger. I knew you'd get out of the Nam before me.

Franklin gave him a weak smile and said, "See you back in the world, Dave."

"Jones, get your team up and get movin' in there," Smitty called out. "See what you can find." He gave the phone back to Dave and said, "give the first squad our position. They're going to sweep in from the other end of the village and we'll meet in the middle." He turned to the corpsman. "Doc, you stay here with Franklin. The lieutenant will be here in about 20 minutes with the 3rd Squad to set up a landing zone. Carver, you stay here and keep the Doc covered until the lieutenant gets here, then follow us."

The squad leader, Dave, and the rest of Franklin's team went into the hamlet. They heard Bergen yelling at a Vietnamese woman, trying to find out where the sniper was. She kept saying she didn't know. Bergen knocked her down and walked away. The squad went about the business of searching the huts and bunkers in the hamlet. The Marines were mad and the people were scared. The squad searched thoroughly, but didn't find anything. After the lieutenant arrived, Carver's team came into the hamlet and joined the rest the squad.

"Tell the lieutenant we're movin' out now."

"Roger, Smitty," Dave replied. "Delta Two. Delta Two, this is Delta Two Bravo. Over."

"Delta Two Bravo. Delta Two Bravo, this is Delta Two Actual. Over." "Lieutenant," Dave said,"we're gonna be movin' down the main trail to the next hamlet. Don't fire in this direction Over.

"Roger, Delta Two Bravo. Out."

The squad proceeded cautiously down the trail, looking for mines and booby-traps. The villagers did not look at them as they passed. Most stayed inside their huts and some inside their bunkers. Dave did not trust the Vietnamese. They never came forward and told them about the VC in the area or the location of mines and booby-traps. They had to know these things, Dave thought. If they didn't, they would step on mines themselves.

"Smitty, it doesn't feel right," said Dave. "They're

still in here. I can tell."

"Yeah, me too. Pass the word. Keep them spread out. Don't bunch up."

The squad moved off the trail. Smitty, Dave, and the rest of Franklin's team walked parallel to it. The other two teams moved deeper into the hamlet. They checked the huts and bunkers, and looked for tunnels.

"That sniper could be anywhere, Smitty," Dave said. "Hell, they're probably all VC in here."

"Yeah, Dave. I don't know what to think."

It was cooler inside the village. The tall trees gave a lot of shade. Dave opened the gate to a yard and walked through. The small, one room house was made of bamboo and had a thatch roof. There was nobody in the house or a bunker below it. The villagers used these bunkers as shelter from bombs and artillery. The house had a dirt floor and little else. Inside the door were a couple pots that held rice. Along one wall, there was an altar set up with a picture and two incense holders on it. Dave had heard that these people worshiped their ancestors. He looked over the house carefully. Behind the house in a pen was a water buffalo. These animals became skittish when they smelled a strange scent. A few months before, a guy in the first platoon had shot one with an M-79 grenade launcher when it charged them. As Dave approached, the big animal started to get restless. Dave looked around the pen and saw nothing. He was glad the water buffalo was tied up. Satisfied there was nothing there, he headed back to the trail.

What a crazy, primitive place to fight a war, he thought. Dave didn't hate the Vietnamese like many American soldiers did. Most of the time, he felt sorry for them. To Dave, these folks were just caught up in something they knew nothing about. Right now, though, he was angry like the rest of the squad because of Franklin.

Further into the hamlet, Dave recognized a kid. At first, he couldn't remember when he had seen him before. The kid looked at him and waved. He was about eight-years-old. What the hell is this? Dave wondered. He waved back and walked on. He tried to remember where he had seen the kid before. He thought about his last patrol in this hamlet. Then it dawned on him — the red ants!

It had been during the rainy season. There hadn't been any Viet Cong in the village that day and there was time for relaxation and laughter. Everything was wet and Dave had set down on a grassy spot of ground. The kid had been standing there shaking is head "no," but Dave had ignored him. What the hell would a Vietnamese kid know, he'd thought. But the kid did know. That spot was the home of a red ant colony, and they had attacked Dave with vigor. They climbed up under his uniform and bit him all over. Those red ants were vicious bastards, he remembered. There was no way to get them off except to wash them off, so he stripped his uniform off and jumped into the filthy rice paddy water. The kid had laughed like it was the funniest thing the world.

"Smitty, hold it," Dave told the squad leader. "That kid — he might talk to me. Get Bergen up here."

The squad halted while Bergen and Dave went over to the kid. He didn't run when they approach. He even smiled at Dave. Dave took his hand and Bergen asked him if he knew where the VC were. The kid looked scared. He pointed down the trail and bolted.

"Smitty, the kid pointed down the trail when we asked about the Viet Cong," Dave told the squad leader.

"You'd better get on the horn and pass the word back to the lieutenant."

"DeltaTwo. Delta Two, this is Delta Two Bravo. Over."

"Delta Two Bravo, this is Delta Two Actual. Over."

"Lieutenant," Dave said "we found a kid who indicates that the VC are still in the ville. It looks like they're between us and the first squad at the other end."

"Delta Two Bravo, you act as a blocking force. First squad will sweep in your direction. Over."

"Roger, Delta Two Actual. Out." Dave turned to the squad leader. "Hey, Smitty, he wants us to set up a blocking force here and let the other squad sweep this way."

"Okay," replied Smitty. "I'll take Franklin's team. You stay with me. Jones and Carver, you get your teams on each side of my flanks and spread out all the way across the hamlet. 1st Squad's gonna push 'em towards us to try to flush them out."

Behind him, Dave heard the steady "whump-whump-whump" of the helicopter gunships and the medevac ship approaching. Soon the gunships were hovering overhead, giving covering fire to the medevac chopper as it decended to pick up Franklin. The

Hills 881S, 950 and 471 from the collection of Reverend Ray W. Stubbe



NVA position on finger of Hill 881S



Southern slope of Hill 881S [12 Oct 67]

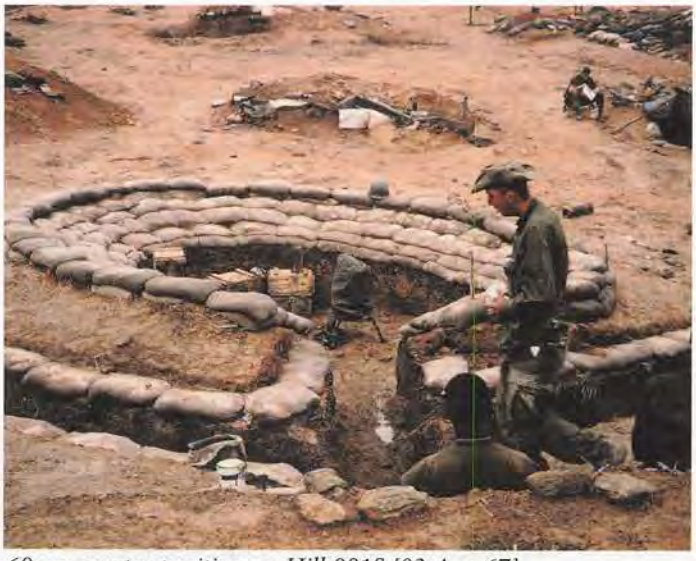

60mm mortar position on Hill 881S [03 Aug 67]



Calling in WP marking rounds, Hill 881S [20 Jul 67]

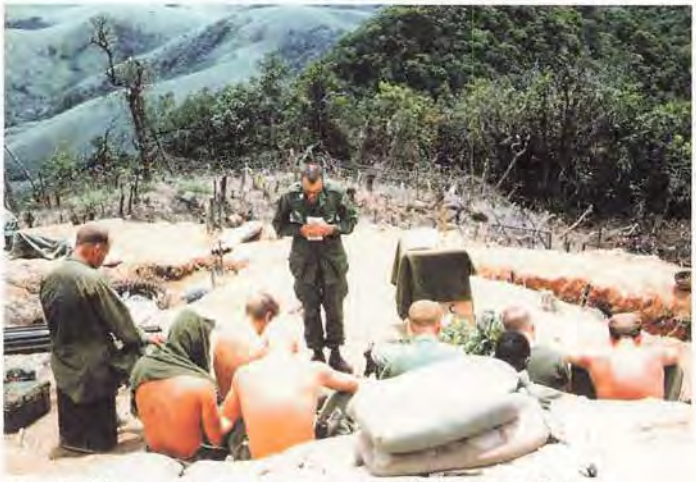

Ray Stubbe conducting services on Hill 950 [31 Jul 67]



Marines of CAP-O-3, Hill 471 [26 Sep 67]



View east on Hill 950. The Rockpile and Razorback are visible.

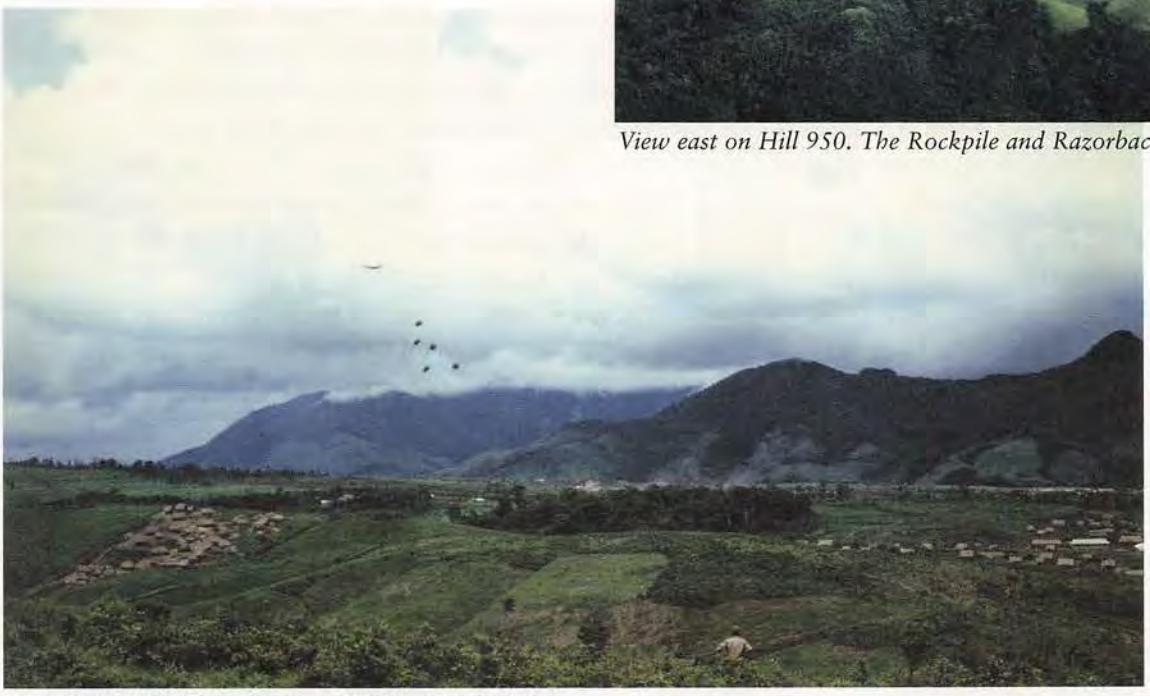

View from Hill 471 looking on Hills 950 and 1015.



Marines of CAP-Oscar-3 entering Tum Plang Ville [26 Sep 67]

chopper was on the ground only a moment, and then lifted off again. When it reached the altitude of the gunships, the three helicopters turned and headed back to the hospital at Da Nang. Dave was glad that Franklin got a good wound and probably wouldn't have to come back.

"Delta Two Bravo. Delta Two Bravo, this is Delta Two. Over."

"Delta Two, this is Delta Two Bravo. Over," replied Dave."

"First squad is entering the other end of the hamlet now. Over."

"Roger. Delta Two Bravo out." Dave turned to the squad leader.

"Smitty, they're coming in the other end now."

"Gotcha. Okay, you guys. Pass the word. They're coming in," the squad leader said.

The squad spread out and found good firing positions where they could see through the hedges and trees of the hamlet. The hamlet was about 50 yards wide at this point. Dave sat down next to a clump of bamboo. He could see across the clearing, an intersection of trails by a fence. Smitty was only a few feet away. "How long do you think it'll be before 1st Squad gets here?"

"Shouldn't be too long, Dave."

Dave took out his canteen and drank. It's still going to be a long hump back, he thought. I'd better take it easy. He glanced at his watch. It was 4pm. He checked his rifle once more and clicked the safety off.

The squad had been in place for about twenty-five minutes when the horrible sound of a mine exploding blasted the air and cries of pain rang out.

Jesus Christ, Dave wondered.

"Pass the word. Stay put, "Smitty shouted,"1st Squad can handle it."

A Bouncing Betty mine is vicious. The mine was spring-loaded and didn't explode when it was stepped on. The pressure of a man's foot triggered the mine and released its spring-latch.

When the victim stepped off the mine, it would bounce up in the air and explode about three feet above ground. The mine usually severed the victim's legs just below the hips. The VC had stolen thousands of these mines from the South Vietnamese Army. They were all made in the United States.

Cries of pain burned into everyone's ears. From the right flank, where Jones's team had settled in, a machine-gun suddenly opened up. Then, the riflemen in his team fired too. The firing lasted only a moment and then subsided.

"Jones, what the hell is goin' on?" The squad leader called out. He got up and handed over to Jones's position. Dave followed. Jones was standing over the body of a young man dressed in black pajamas. "We got one, Smitty, "he said.

"Delta Two Bravo. Delta Two Bravo, this is Delta Two Actual. What's that firing about? Over."

"Delta Two Actual, this is Delta Two Bravo. Lieutenant, we think we got a dead VC here. Over."

"What do you mean you think? Over."

"We got a dead somebody here, Sir," Dave replied. "He has no weapon. Over."

"What did the guy do, Jones?" Smitty asked.

"When the mine exploded, he took off running out of those trees over there and into the field," Jones answered. "We opened up and there he is."

"Yeah, Jones, he had to be a VC," he said. "There is no young man his age around here anyway." He pointed to the body. "Check him for papers or documents."

They searched the man's body. There was nothing on it. The wounded Marine was still crying and screaming. The terrible sounds of his dying filled the hamlet. It bothered everyone and seemed to last forever. His agony made the Marines feel hopeless. They didn't even know for sure if the young man they'd shot was Viet Cong. It didn't seem possible, but he might well have been a civilian. That's the worst part of this war, Dave thought. You never really knew who, what, or where the enemy is. It seemed like you could never get back at them. The hamlet finally became quiet, and they all knew the Marine had died.

"Delta Two Bravo. Delta Two Bravo, this is Delta Two Actual. Move into the field and set up an LZ. Over. "

"Roger, Delta Two Actual," Dave responded. He walked over to the squad leader. Smitty, the lieutenant wants us to set up an LZ out in the field."

"OK, Dave. Pass the word. Set up a perimeter out in the field," he said.

"What about him?" Jones said, pointing to the dead Vietnamese.

"Hell, leave him where he is," Smitty said. "Let the villagers bury him. He's one of theirs. "

The squad set up the perimeter and waited. 1st Squad arrived with the body of the dead Marine.

They laid him down in the rice paddy. He had been one of the new replacements and couldn't have been in Vietnam more than a month. Dave hardly knew the guy. The thought that he could end up like him bothered Dave. Being scared was another thing that Dave would never get used to. He wished there was something to cover the body with. It was a terrible sight. The medevac flight was slow, taking about an hour and a half to get there. It seemed longer to Dave, but there was a priority system and a KIA was lowest on the list.

The platoon started back to Hill 53 a few minutes after the medevac helicopter lifted off. It was almost 6pm when they left the landing zone. The sun had dropped lower in the sky, but it was still real hot. They moved quickly across the fields and through the hamlets. Dave's muscles ached and his radio and gear seemed to weigh a ton. The Marines tried to be careful but by then, they were exhausted. The platoon was lucky though. They were fired on twice by snipers, but nobody was hit.

The platoon made it back to Hill 53 in the dark at 10pm. As they entered the company compound at the top of the hill, Dave turned and looked back from where they had come from. In the dim moonlight, the fields and hamlets seemed peaceful. He couldn't see much except the flickering fires from a few lanterns in the far distance. Most of the villagers were in their homes asleep. He imagined that by now someone had taken the body of the suspected VC — maybe even his family. Dave knew that 20 miles away, in Da Nang, someone was preparing the body of the dead Marine for shipment to his family.

God, he thought, Vietnam is unreal. I just want to survive.

Khe Sanh Memoirs

by Ron Smith

Khe Sanh: December 1967

The following is compiled from dates noted on my Official Orders while in the Corps, letters I sent home from Vietnam, official Marine Corps histories (The Battle forKhe Sanh, us. Marines in Vietnam, 1967, U.S. Marines in Vietnam,1968) and from some very hazy memories.

Larry Emond, Ray Lewis, and I joined H&S Company 3/26 at Camp Evans, in Early December 1967. We had gone to radio-telegraph school together in San Diego and went on to Air and Naval Gunfire training with 1st ANGLICO in Hawaii. By the time we arrived at Khe Sanh, we had been together for over a year. On 13 December we left Camp Evans in a convoy to Dong Ha. We passed through Hue, and I was surprised at the size and beauty of the city. Shortly after we arrived in Dong Ha, we were hustled aboard choppers for a flight to Khe Sanh. Some of the people who had been up to Khe Sanh before told us how pretty it would be. They were right, there was the coffee plantation run by the Poilane family, who traced their roots back to the French colonial period in Vietnam. Lush is the most appropriate adjective for the countryside when we arrived. Beneath all the green, of course, was the red clay that powdered the combat base in dust during the dry season and mired it in mud during the rainy season. The surrounding hills still had plenty of vegetation on them. Hills 950 and 1015 seemed like regular mountains. I also remember a priest who rode around on a Honda motorcycle. He had a flack jacket that had RCMP (for "Royal Canadian Mounted Priest") on the back. I can't remember if he was a chaplain or a local priest. I think that he was killed when Khe Sanh village was overrun.

We were put in a section outside the regular lines in order to extend the defensive perimeter of the base. We pitched tents, dug fighting holes, and strung wire. In the main section of the base, there were above ground hootches, similar to those at Camp Evans, a PX (loaded with Brasso, shoe polish, tooth powder, and little else), and a mess hall. I also remember the three of us (Ray, Larry, and me) walking down from the area we were given to the center



Ron Smith and Larry Emond

of the base for a movie shown on a bed sheet. I can't for the life of me recall what it was. I remember the fog, too, which was so thick early in the morning that someone could disappear ten feet in front of you.

When we were settling in, the three of us had a poncho-covered lean-to that we slept in. We dug holes next to it to jump into during the incoming which had already started. I remember leaving the perimeter and following a trail past the Bru village to a water point. I know that we crossed over a three-strand barbed wire fence, and I thought at the time that it was not much different from some of the fences I had crossed in the Michigan countryside. One day, someone from the H&S radio section (I think it was Toby Jackson) took me over to the section where the ARVN Rangers were, and I traded my GI pack and four packs of Salem cigarettes for a nice rucksack, that I kept for the duration of my tour (including a later trip to the hospital in Guam).

Each of us was taking watches on the battalion radio net in a sandbagged tent. I remember that it was cold in the mornings and someone built a stove out of a 55-gallon oil drum. The barrel was still covered in red paint, and it gave off some pretty nasty fumes when it was first fired up. So, I put my gas



Ray Lewis

mask on and was immediately chewed out by a captain for being a smartass. He acted as though that was a character flaw, but anyone who knew me would know that I thought that characteristic was one of my stronger qualities. I have some notes that say that the high temperature for Khe Sanh in December was 79 degrees and that the low was 53 degrees. The cold weather might seem a bit strange because when most people think of Vietnam, they think of the heat, but some of the northern elevations can get pretty cold. We had even colder temperatures up on the hill outposts.

For Christmas, Ray, Larry, and I had a small (about six inches) decorated Christmas tree that Larry's mother sent him. The December issue of Esquire magazine had a cover that featured a Christmas wreath complete with hand grenades, so we thought it would be fitting to take a picture of Ray with a Christmas stocking, sent by his mother, stuffed with grenades and M -16 magazines.

Not long after Christmas, things began to get serious. Along with the increased incoming, there was a copy of Bernard Fall's history of the fall of Bien Dien Phu, and we were ordered to move everything underground. Individual bunkers had to be one or two men only. I think Ray, Larry, and I had a pretty good basement going before anyone told us this. I wound up with a bunker of my own. Ray and Larry dug one together close by.

My bunker was lined with plywood that I had scrounged up somewhere. Since we didn't have any power or hand tools, I had to dig my bunker to fit the wood. It was about five-feet deep, six-feet long, and three-feet wide. I found a log that was about, three feet in circumference and four-feet long to use as my main beam. I ran some marshton matting from the beam to the rear of the hole and then covered it with an extra poncho I picked up somewhere. Then, I covered it all with five layers of sandbags, which was supposed to be enough to stop an 82mm mortar. Of course, most the incoming was from 122mm rockets, and 152mm artillery. Near the front of my bunker, I knocked the bottom out of an ammo box and set it into the side of the bunker to create a hinged window. Ray and Larry had similar windows in their bunker. From this point on, we were filling sandbags, standing lines, or pulling radio watch, heading into January and what was to become the Siege of Khe Sanh.



The Hill Fights Revisited

The Story of Echo Company 2/3

by James R.Cannon E Co 2/3, Major USMC Retired

This story is dedicated to all the Marines, organic or attached, living or deceased, who served with Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines during April and May 1967, and especially to (then) 2nd Lt. Frank "Ike" Izenour, Jr., Platoon Commander, 1st Platoon, and SSgt. Robert Morningstar, Platoon Sergeant, 2nd Platoon.

Frank was a hard-charging second lieutenant fresh out of The Basic School, a fast learner, a fine person, an excellent Marine officer, and a hell of a good friend of mine. Morningstar was a shotgun-loving, beer-drinking, Staff Non-Commissioned Officer, who wanted everyone to think he was somebody. He was. He was a loyal, dedicated Marine with a heart as big as a barn door who would do just about anything for anybody. He would give you the shirt off his own back, whether you needed it or not. You only had to ask for it. I could and did depend upon him a lot. He was my platoon sergeant.

Preface

The following is a true story. No names, places, times or dates have been changed. This is one man's story of the Hill Fights near Khe Sanh in northwest Vietnam. During the period of 26 April through 11 May 1967, there were many actions and events untold and many acts of valor unnoticed. Every man there has or had his own interpretations as to what took place, his own story to tell. This one is mine. In it, I have tried to depict exactly what took place. I have not told any untruths or exaggerated. I have, however, tried to express my feelings and reactions to certain situations or events.

The Khe Sanh Hill Fights

In April 1967, I was the Platoon Commander of the 2nd Platoon, Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines. Echo Company (as well as the remainder of the battalion) was participating in Operation Beacon Star in Phong Dien District, Thua Thien Province, RVN, an area in the coastal plains approximately 16 miles north of Hue, against Main Force Viet Cong.

In the morning of 26 April 1967, Echo Company was to land by helicopter and push elements of a large Viet Cong unit into a blocking force. My platoon, the 2nd Platoon, reinforced (rein.), was to be

that blocking force. We were to be helilifted into position first. We found, however, that instead of being helilifted into a blocking position, we were being helilifted to Phu Bai, where we would board transport planes to Khe Sanh. I knew that to divert this operation, something big was up.

My platoon (rein.) was the first element of the 2nd Battalion to reach Khe Sanh. Upon landing, we disembarked and moved rapidly to the west side of the runway and established a perimeter. As the remainder of Echo Company and the other companies of the battalion arrived, the perimeter was enlarged. By about 1600 hours, most of the battalion was in. Fox Company would arrive the following day.

Shortly after 1600 hours, the battalion commander gathered his officers and briefed them as to the situation and why we were there. He stated that elements of 1/9 and 3/3 were in heavy contact with the North Vietnamese on Hill 861, that casualties were heavy, and the we (2/3) would spend the night in rear of 1/9, allowing them to move through us that night and that, "Tomorrow we'll kick ass, won't bother taking names."

At that time, I was the 2nd Platoon Commander, 2nd Lt. Frank Izenour was 1st Platoon Commander, 2nd Lt. John Eller was 3rd Platoon Commander and 2nd Lt. Clifton Caner was Weapons Platoon Commander. Captain Al Lyon was our Company Commander and 1st Lt. Jack Adinolfi was executive officer (XO). At the helm of Golf Company was Captain James P. Sheehan, Fox Company's CO was Captain Martin P. Sorensen, and Captain Raymond C. Madonna commanded Hotel Company. Of course, the battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Earl "Pappy" Delong. Major Wendell O. Beard, who later assumed command of the battalion, was the battalion's XO.

Companies were assigned sectors for the night and we moved into our positions, just west of the Khe Sanh Combat Base and just south of Hill 861. At about 0300, I was awakened and told that Lt. Col. Delong wanted me to take a patrol out at first light to find an avenue of approach to the Hill 881 North area. After coordinating with our company artillery Forward Observer to establish concentrations in support of my patrol, I selected about seven men from my platoon and issued my patrol order.

At first light, my patrol moved out to the west to accomplish our mission, that of finding an avenue of approach northward. The patrol members were excellent Marines. Nothing was said throughout the patrol. All commands/orders and communications were carried out with hand and arm signals. We were out about five hours. No contact with the enemy was made.

Upon our return, we found the entire battalion saddled up and ready to move out. After being debriefed, we were issued our operation order. Golf Company was to attack northwestward, seizing and securing Objective 1, Hill 861. Echo Company was to attack in a northwesterly direction along the same axis but to the west of Golf Company. Hotel Company would be in reserve. Foxtrot Company was also in reserve but, I believe, at the time remained as the regimental reserve or part of it. At that time, I did not know if the elements that were supposed to move through us southward had, in fact, completed their withdrawal.

When ordered to move out, Echo Company moved westward to a ridgeline where we were to wheel and concentrate our movement northwestward. My platoon, 2nd Platoon, had the point. As darkness began to fall on us, we established a company perimeter on the high ground and set in for the night. Meanwhile, Hill 861 was being pounded by artillery in preparation for Golf Company's assault the next morning.

The following morning, 28 April, we continued our advance northwestward as Golf Company assaulted Objective 1, Hill 861. By early afternoon, Echo Company had reached a position just west and slightly north of Hill 861. We began to receive 60mm mortar fire and immediately took cover. Counter mortar fire by the company's 60mm mortar section into the suspected mortar positions quickly rendered the enemy mortars silent. I had received one casualty who had taken shrapnel in the buttocks. He was not medevaced.

At this time, each platoon sent a fire team to a stream nearby to fill canteens. I accompanied my fire team to the stream. Close by, where we filled out canteens, laid two dead North Vietnamese soldiers. One was laying face down in the stream; nevertheless, we needed water and the iodine tablets we carried would sterilize it. So we filled up our canteens and moved back to our defensive positions.

The rest of the afternoon was spent patrolling to the front of our perimeter. It was during this patrolling that my platoon found several dead

Marines. It was apparent they had been caught in a minute ambush. It appeared that before dying, they had hidden their crew-served weapons to prevent the North Vietnamese from capturing them. The bodies that were found were still intact but bloated and black from the scorching heat of the sun. We removed the bodies of the dead without incident to an LZ for helilift back to Khe Sanh. We did not know at the time, but later found out, that the North Vietnamese were in well-camouflaged bunkers approximately 100 meters away with a clear field of fire on the litter detail. The dead Marines were helilifted out without incident. We resumed our defensive posture to await further orders.

Late the following morning, 29 April, M 3/9 and M 3/3 moved out across our front along a small ridgeline from east to west. As they did so, they began to come under sniper fire from the well-concealed bunkers mentioned in the preceding paragraph. In the ensuing firefight, the unit engaged took about nine casualties before air strikes with napalm could be brought to bear on the enemy bunkers. These units were moving toward their intermediate objectives in preparation of an attack on Hill 881 South.

After fine-tuning our defensive posture for the night, Echo Company officers were summoned to the company command post (CP) for a briefing. During that briefing, we were told that elements of the 3rd and 9th Marines were moving to an intermediate objective to our west-northwest to continue the attack on Hill 881 South the morning of 30 April. We were told that literally hundreds of North Vietnamese had been spotted in the open on 881 South and that artillery bombardment would prevail on the hill most of the night. It did. Artillery rained down on Hill 881 South so heavily and for so long, we thought that nothing could have survived it and that the next day would be a piece of cake for the attacking unit or units. Not so, as we could later attest.

The next morning, on 30 April, Echo Company jumped off into the attack. Our mission was to seize the big hill, Hill 881 North. Out intermediate objective was a smaller hill, but by no means small, just south of 881 North. A frag order would be issued later by Captain Lyon prior to the assault on our intermediate objective. We would bypass to the east the unit or units attacking 881 south.

Prior to reaching our intermediate objectives, at approximately 1300 hours, the unit attacking 881 South began their attack. With my field glasses, I could see the assaulting unit in an assault formation, generally abreast, moving from a northerly direction down the ridgeline southward. I saw Marines starting to fall and quickly jerked my field glasses to the left. I saw NVA moving from position to position, resupplying the machine guns in bunkers opposing the assaulting Marines. The NVA bunkers were well concealed and I imagined even more so for the assaulting Marines. To see so many Marines fall caused a deep ache in the pit of my stomach and I thought. "God, I wish there was something I could do."

As we approached our intermediate objective, the tempo of the fighting on 881 South became even more apparent. It seemed as if all hell was breaking loose. My heart went out to those brave Marines. I was quickly brought back to the realization that the Skipper, Captain Lyon, wanted his platoon commanders up for a frag order.

The plan called for the 1st and 2nd Platoons to move up to the base of the hill, and upon signal assault abreast, 1st Platoon on the left, 2nd Platoon on the right. Upon securing the hill, we were to establish a hasty defense with the 1st Platoon defending from 8 to 12 and the 2nd Platoon defending from 12 to 4. 3rd Platoon was to move to an open area to our right front (northeast) and support by fire 1st and 2nd Platoons' assault on the intermediate objective. Upon signal, the 3rd Platoon would move up and tie in from 4 to 8.

The Weapons Platoon Commander, 2nd Lt. Canter, accompanied 2nd Lt. John Eller and the 3rd Platoon to the supporting position. I thought the 3rd Platoon would get bogged down by the enemy in the proposed support position; nevertheless, the 3rd Platoon moved out to their assigned position to establish a base of fire.

Immediately upon the 3rd Platoon reaching their position, my platoon and the 1st Platoon began our advance to the assault position. The undergrowth was much thicker than it had appeared. Grass at the 3rd Platoon position was waist high. Elephant grass and bamboo on the south side of the intermediate objective was well above our heads.

As we neared our assault position, firing erupted with the 3rd Platoon. Firing directed at the 3rd Platoon began to intensify. It was coming from the hill directly to our front. I heard later that Second

Lieutenant Canter was hit while directing the fire of one of his machine guns. I thought that to relieve any pressure on the base of fire, we, the 1st and 2nd Platoons, needed to begin our assault immediately. This was OK'd by the Skipper and Frank and I jumped off in the assault. Going was tough and control was difficult but we managed to stay generally abreast by coordination via radio.

We were about half way up our objective when shots rang out. In a split second, I found myself several yards down the hill with my radioman, L/Cpl. Carl R. Hovietz a Navajo Indian tearing at my clothes to see where I was hit. One round, I presume the first, had hit me just above the heart. By some miracle, it had failed to penetrate my flak jacket. Another round had creased my left upper arm and gone into my pack, splattering my can of ham and limas. Still another round creased my left hand and completely destroyed an M-79 grenade launcher I had previously picked up from a dead Marine. Apparently, the antennae from my radio had provided the enemy an excellent reference point. To keep from being further menaced by my radioman's inspection, I sprang to my feet and keeping somewhat lower than before, with Hovietz in tow, I scurried back up the hill to rejoin my platoon.

We broke out of the tall grass just before the beginning of the crest of the hill. I quickly determined that Frank, the 1st Platoon Commander, and I were still abreast and in good shape. If we were to catch hell, it would be any second now. The tempo of the assault heightened. As if acting on cue, our Marines quickened their pace and began to scream. No shots were fired; the enemy had pulled off the hill. We pushed through the objective and quickly established our hasty defense. The objective was ours.

Upon securing the hill, I moved back to the crest where I could observe the 3rd Platoon and the company command group and to signal them to move up. Waiting for the 3rd Platoon and the command group, I again observed 881 South through my field glasses. I saw Marines scampering down the northeast side of the hill, dragging and carrying their wounded. I pondered the courageous efforts of those brave Marines. I was so thankful that our casualties had been so few.

When Captain Lyon arrived at the crest of the hill, I brought him abreast of the situation and informed him of what we had found on the hill. The hill was literally peppered with mutually supporting, well-concealed, strongly built bunkers. There was evidence they had been occupied very recently but were now empty. The area was well policed, which indicated to me that these were well disciplined, well trained, experienced troops. We were to hold this position pending the capture of 881 south.

We began to dig in, camouflage and clear fields of fire. At the same time, each Platoon conducted patrols to its front to ascertain any other enemy positions, avenues of approach, and the general layout of the land. Listening posts were established, and we settled in for the night.

The following morning, 1 May, the rays of the sun quickly found their way through the openings of the canopy above us. Everything seemed so serene and peaceful. Our Marines were taking turns shaving, brushing their teeth, and cleaning their weapons. There was a strange sound I had never before heard in Vietnam and this was my second time in this country. I reported it to the skipper, as did others within the company. It was determined later to be locusts.

In the midst of morning awakening and cleaning up, there came a dull whomp-whomp-whomp. I shouted, "Incoming," as did others who were familiar with the sound. We were receiving enemy mortar fire. The rounds rained down on our Hill with deadly accuracy as if they were guided by an unseen hand. As soon as they had landed and exploded, I rushed to the command post. I told the company Commander I thought they had come from just north of us about 400 meters. I told the company commander I thought the North Vietnamese were firing from some type of platform on the reverse slope of the hill. Counter-mortar fire was called in on the suspected position and the enemy mortars fell silent. We would move through this area the next day and my suspicions would be proven correct. The North Vietnamese had built platforms made of earth and bamboo on the reverse slope of the ridge, extending out far enough so that the rounds from the tubes would clear the hill. In addition, they had dug into the side of the hill for cover in case of counter-mortar fire. The remainder of the day was spent patrolling, cleaning weapons, and preparing for the next day the assault on 881 North. Hill 881 South had still not been secured. The night passed without incident.

The following morning, 2 May, Captain Lyon called the platoon commanders together to issue an operations order for the attack on 881 north. We would wait until Hill 881S was secured and, on order, move out to attack Hill 881N from the south-southeast.

By early afternoon, Objective 2, Hill 881S, had been secured. We moved out in a company column with 2nd Platoon, my platoon, as point. As we moved toward our objective, we had artillery pounding the left side of it. This would cover our movement and we could adjust it as we neared our assault position. The fires caused by the exploding artillery provided excellent screening for our approach to the designated assault positions.

Marines of 2nd Bn., 3rd Marine Division, lead attack on Hill 881N

As we neared our assault position and began deploying, the sky began to turn dark and the wind began to blow. It started to rain. I was hoping that the rain would not put out the fires. To have both the rain and the smoke would be to our advantage. This would screen our movement and, hopefully, the NVA would be down in their holes trying to keep dry.

Having deployed, we began our assault walking our artillery up the ridgeline to our front. Halfway up the hill, the assault was stopped not by the enemy, but by order of the company commander. "How strange," I thought. Nothing stops the assault except the enemy and we had not made contact with the primary defensive positions yet. We would later learn that it was a matter of control; the inability to control such large units, so far out, in such bad weather.

A frag order was issued. We were to return to the position we had previously occupied. My platoon was to move through the rest of the company and take the point in the company's movement back to where we had left earlier that afternoon.

It became increasingly dark during our movement back to our previous position and by the time we arrived, it was night. It was still raining. Everyone was tired and miserable and the bone-chilling rain didn't help. We searched out the inner perimeter and, after doing so, each platoon took up their old positions. It was still raining hard. We put out our trip flares and claymore mines, put out our security, and established 50% security for the night. In each two-man fighting hole, one man would be awake while one man slept.

In my bunker were me, my platoon sergeant (SSgt. Morningstar), and my radioman (L/Cpl. Hovietz). It was 0400 in the morning. The rain had stopped and there was an eerie mist hovering over the hill. I had taken my boots off, wrung the water from my socks, and turned my boots upside down to allow them to drain. Everything was quiet.

My second squad leader, Sgt. Billy Joe Like, broke the silence. I heard him shout, "Halt, who's there?" With that challenge, the entire northern half of the hill exploded. We were hit. I shouted to Morningstar, "Let's go," and sprang for the bunker entrance. As I did so, one of my Marines was blown in on top of me. He was badly wounded. I told Morningstar to take care of him and told my radioman to come on. From my right front at about 2 o'clock enemy machine guns were raking my section of the perimeter. At the same time, enemy mortars were falling over the entire hill. We fired our final protective fires. I could hear the machine gun near the first squad chattering in long bursts and I knew this was not a probe.

My second squad leader was nearly cut in half by machine gun fire. My first squad radioman, PFC John R. Meuse, radioed to me that he was hit and needed a corpsman. I told him to hang on, that I would get to him as soon as I could. My two corpsmen had their hands full, as did all the other company corpsmen. He told me that the machine gun (ours) in his area had been knocked out and that his squad leader was about to set off their claymore mines. I told him to go ahead. I heard the terrific explosion and then there was silence,but not for long. There were more explosions, screaming, agonizing groans of pain, and cursing

Casualties were mounting. The situation was extremely bad. I called the command post and told the company commander that I needed help, that we were under assault by a large force, and that all of my crew-served weapons had been knocked out. I also asked for my preplanned artillery concentrations to be fired and called for a flare ship. I was informed that I couldn't have both. I was somewhat pissed. I knew that the flare ships could fly above the maximum ordinance of artillery (arty) and I needed both. I asked for arty and waited. No arty. I screamed into

my radio, "Damn the arty, give me some light." Another casualty. I told Hovietz to get him in the bunker with Morningstar.

Captain Lyon told me he was sending a squad from the 1st Platoon up to help me. They never arrived. Another squad was dispatched to me. They, too, failed to arrive. I learned later that both squads were badly hit as they tried to reach my platoon.

I made my way toward the company CP. I stopped at the XO's bunker. He was gone. I thought, "God, I hope he hasn't been captured." I again radioed the Skipper. I asked him to send me a 3.5 rocket launcher team to knock out the enemy machine gun to my right front. I met the team near the XO's position and took them up just behind my second squad. From there, I had a good field of fire and a safe back blast area. I was in the process of directing their fire when an explosion went off just in front of us. My rocket team was knocked out. I was still standing. For some ungodly reason, I thought nothing could touch me. I had put my radioman in the bunker with Morningstar to help with the wounded. As far as I knew, I was the only one alive up there except those that were in my bunker.

The enemy machine gun was still spitting out deadly fire. Trip flares were going off to my right front. I found no one alive in my first or second squads, yet there was movement all around me. My platoon was in trouble; I needed help. I was able to reach the command post and inform my company commander of my situation. There I found the XO. I was glad he was alive. He would soon take over the company.

I informed my company commander that my entire first and second squads were wiped out, that there was only one friendly position up there, that of my bunker where Morningstar, Hovietz and two wounded Marines were located. My third squad, although lightly engaged, was still intact and had suffered no casualties. They were my extreme right defensive squad.

Captain Lyon informed me a platoon of Foxtrot Company was moving up the rear to help block the penetration. I passed the word to keep my bunker protected, that it was occupied by friendly troops. Sometime, from somewhere, I had grabbed an M-16 rifle, firing it until it jammed. I threw it down and pick up an M-14. I overheard reports that the NVA were wearing flak gear and Marine helmets and some were in the trees shouting, "Marine, you die." I cannot attest to this. I do know that they were hard to stop. Even point blank firing into their chests would not ensure they would be stopped. Some had been beaten with entrenching tools or whatever one could get his hands on. Consequently, there was much hand-to-hand combat that morning. We found later that several Marines had died while trying to clear jams from their M-16's.

Initially, these stoppages were blamed on unclean rifles. Such was not the case. Extensive investigation and research would later show that there were two reasons that the M-16 had so many stoppages. One reason was that the cyclic rate of fire was too fast for the buffer rate-reducing group. The other reason was two types of cartridges had been manufactured, one of which had a rim base so thin that often when fired, the extractor would pull off the rim, thereby leaving the spend round in the chamber.

It wasn't long before 2nd Lt. Carroll's platoon from Foxtrot Company arrived. I briefed him on the situation and cautioned him that my platoon sergeant and radioman, along with two wounded, were still in my bunker. I then moved forward with Carroll's platoon and, taking up a position beside a machine gunner, began to direct his fire into the position of the enemy machine gun. He started firing but soon stopped. "Damn jam," I thought as I turned toward him. I then saw why he had stopped firing. Blood was running down the side of his face. I rolled him over toward me so the assistant gunner could take over.

It was now light. I heard the Hueys behind us. Relief was just a few rockets away. Smoke was thrown to mark our positions and to direct the Huey's rockets north of us. One of the first rockets fired hit our command post, wounding our company commander and killing or wounding several other key personnel, including our forward air controller, artillery Forward Observer, and senior corpsman, Doc Kleinschmidt. Doc, knowing that I always carried a plastic tube with me, asked me to perform a tracheotomy should he stop breathing. I promised I would. He had been hit in the side of his left jaw.

At about the same time that 2nd Lt. Carroll's platoon had arrived, word came from Hill 881S that the enemy was grouping on the west side of our hill for a counterattack. The unit commander wanted to know if he could fire 106 recoilless rifles into them.

He was given the go-ahead. I knew how impressive the 106 RR was. I had been a 106RR platoon commander. I had never been on the receiving end though, but knew the devastation the 106 rounds could reap. Meanwhile, Marines on the west side of the hill from both John Eller's platoon and Frank Izenour's platoon, were throwing grenades down the hill as fast as they could pull the pins. The counter attack was quickly broken up.

Word was passed to pull back off the hill, that Hotel Company had been helilifted to our northeast and would be sweeping toward us. We couldn't pull off. My bunker with Morningstar and the other three Marines would be left unprotected. I wouldn't pull off. I would pull back just far enough to keep the bunker in sight. If Hotel Company did reach us, we could get down in our holes and let them sweep over us. With good communications, this could be done. We waited.

Until now, there had been no prisoners taken. It didn't surprise anyone. With the anger built up in our Marines and the tenacity with which the NVA fought, I didn't expect any. From somewhere, God only knows where, word came that "Pappy" Delong would give 20 days R & R to the man who got him a prisoner. Within minutes, we had three. From these three, it was learned that another NVA division was on its way south to retake the hill complex. It was this division that would overrun Lang Vei several nights later.

I was on pins and needles. I wanted to reach my two squads that were still up there. I prayed that some were still alive, but everyone knew there was no hope. Still, I wanted to pull them out. Marines always pull out their dead and wounded. Firing was still going on. We continued to wait. Finally, I pulled my third squad leader back and informed him of what I was about to do. I told him to get the third squad on their bellies; that we were going to crawl back over the crest of the hill and take up the first and second squads' position. I told him that, upon reaching those positions, we would watch out for Hotel Company and, should they approach, mark their positions with air panels. We would kill everyone who wasn't a Marine. With the help of 2nd Lt. Carroll's platoon, we did just that. The lst Platoon also helped. Where was Hotel Company? Out there somewhere, I guess. The fighting continued and at about 11:30 that morning, 3 May 1967, we reached our forward positions. The look on Morningstar's fact as he crawled out of his bunker was one of disbelief. After all, he had been in the midst of hell for well over seven hours and survived. He would be KIA (killed in action) two months later by a single shot from a sniper's rifle.

I surveyed the first and second squads' positions. Only then did I realize the strength with which the enemy had attacked. There were bodies everywhere, mostly NVA. In front of my first and second squads lay about 80 North Vietnamese bodies. The remainder of the hill was literally strewn with bodies. There was no telling how many had been dragged off or died later from this fight. I could not tell black Marines from white Marines. They were all black. Without circulation of the blood, bodies lying in that hot sun for hour hours became parched and blackened.

It appeared that my first squad leader had set off his claymores at the most opportune time. It was also apparent that both squads had been overwhelmed. It was into these two squads that the main thrust of the enemy attack had been launched. I should have cried, but I didn't. I didn't have time. I would cry later, and when I did, the tears would never completely stop. The memory of these Marines, so young, so brave, would stay with me forever.

The official body count of the dead NVA was 137 but we stacked 236 weapons including AK-47's, Russian assault machine guns, mortars, Russian sniper rifles, and SKS carbines. On top of the hill, just behind my bunker, I found a dead NVA. Strapped around his neck was a rectangular metal box. Half of the box contained a radio and radio equipment. The other half contained cooked rice. They had come to stay. They stayed.

With 2nd Lt. Carroll's platoon now attached to our company, we reestablished our defensive perimeter. At the same time, we continued to mop up, account for our casualties, and treat those wounded who would not be medevaced. We had to be re-supplied and replenished with ammo. Our company gunnery sergeant, GySgt. David F. Johnson did a super job. After we helilifted our dead and wounded, I sat down with our first sergeant, "Top" Charles Patrinos, who was sitting on a log near the XO's old position. It was then I learned several of the men I thought were dead had been medevaced out with

wounds. In my platoon alone, I had 11 KIA and 17 WIA. I had an additional 5 WIA not evacuated. Morningstar had attempted to come out of the bunker sometime earlier and had been hit in the hand. He was not medevaced. My radioman, Lance Corporal Hovietz, was also wounded but not medevaced. My third squad remained intact.

Shortly after accounting for my casualties, one of the men from my third squad reported that someone was coming down the hill behind us, waving a white flag. We didn't need any more prisoners. POW taking time had expired. I told two of my men to sight in on him and when he got close enough, waste him. They didn't. The closer he came, the more he looked like an American. Who was he? Our Marines didn't wear tiger stripes. He kept coming, waving his flag. My two men kept him in their sights even as he walked into our lines. He was a damn redheaded, freckled-faced, freelance photographer and journalist. He wanted a story but we all had too much to do and had no time for story telling. After a while, he got discouraged and left. Who knows? Maybe he went north.

About 1500 that afternoon, the battalion commander flew in by helicopter to appraise the situation. First Lieutenant Jack Adinolfi had assumed command of the company. Members of the company were still mopping up. After summarizing all that had taken place, I rejoined my platoon in the mopping-up operations.

While extending our fields of fire and improving our positions, I found a bunker that was freshly dug and camouflaged. Lying inside the bunker entrance was a dead North Vietnamese officer. Several others were inside. I went over to where "Pappy" Delong was and told him I would be getting him a souvenir, a North Vietnamese officer's pistol. He was pleased.

I returned to the bunker to get the pistol, but as I approached, the muzzle of an AK-47 came out firing. I hit the deck and rolled. The AK-47 disappeared back into the bunker. I had one of my fire teams cover me while I tossed a grenade into the bunker, after which I crawled back to the bunker entrance. Again, the muzzle of the AK-47 came out firing. Playtime was over. I called for the engineers. I told the engineer squad leader to rig me up a satchel charge; that I wanted an entire bag of C-4. The bag contained four packages of the plastic explosive. I knew that when this blew, no one would ever find the pistol but then too, afterwards, this bunker could definitely be considered friendly.

I had the fire team provide me covering fire while I crawled close enough to the entrance to pull the fuse and throw the charge in. As I threw the charge into the bunker and rolled away, the fire team opened up to prevent the NVA from throwing the charge back out. I estimated there to be about seven NVA in the bunker. No one will ever know for sure. When the charge went off, chunks of earth, pieces of bodies, and other debris were scattered all over the hillside.

I went back to where Lt. Col. Delong was sitting and apologized for not being able to get the pistol for him. Nothing that was in the bunker before the blast could be found. I guess I used too much C-4. "Pappy" didn't seem to mind. During those hours from 0400 to 1100 that morning, I witnessed much bravery from many of our troops. One in particular was that of SSgt. David L. Noakes, Platoon Sergeant of the 1st Platoon. I recall him being badly wounded. I ordered him back to the medevac area to be medevaced. Instead, he made trip after trip up near the fighting to bring out the wounded Marines. Then there was PFC Meuse, my first squad radioman. After being hit in the chest, he continued to fight and died in his fighting hole. After finally reaching his position that morning, I stood there for the longest time wishing I could have reached him in time. I remember thinking, "My God, how young he was." Then, too, there was PFC Johnson, who sat upon the side of his bunker eating peanut butter as if nothing were happening, bullets flying all over the place. I thought I had lost him too, but not from wounds. He would later distinguish himself in an assault on a fortified position south of Con Thien.

As night drew closer, we intensified our efforts to strengthen our positions. This could be the night the North Vietnamese division that was moving south might hit. We would be ready.

The status of our positions that night was as follows: Our XO, lst Lt. Jack Adinolfi, had assumed command of the company and was now the company commander. We were without an XO. My platoon was strengthened to 17 men with the addition of one gun team and one rocket team. Our portion of the defense extended from 10 to 2. Second Lieutenant Carroll's platoon would defend from 2 to 6 and 2nd Lt. Eller's platoon would defend from 6 to 10. Second Lieutenant Izenour's 1st Platoon would

fill any gaps and constitute the company reserve. Second Lieutenant Carroll's platoon would revert back to Foxtrot Company the following morning. Although sporadic fire continued throughout the night, nothing major occurred and the night passed with no additional casualties.

Morning came and we were anxious to get the hell off the hill. The stench from the NVA bodies was becoming almost unbearable. Beyond us to the north stood Hill 881N.

Approach to Hill 881

First Lieutenant Adinolfi called the platoon commanders together for an operations order in our attack on 881N. We would attack two companies abreast; Foxtrot on the left, Echo Company on the right. We would have both artillery and air support. Since Foxtrot Company would be on the left; they would pass through our position, pick up Carroll's platoon, and move to the designated assault position. Echo Company would follow in trace, tie in with the right side of Foxtrot Company at the assault position and on order, seize, secure and defend the right side of the objective, OBJ 3. Adrenaline ran high, we were chomping at the bit. "Echo 2, you have the point."

Foxtrot Company came up from our rear end and, after coordinating with our Skipper, continued their movement through us. Echo Company followed in trace to a point where we were to turn northeastward and move to the assault position. We would assault northeasterly up the slope, over the ridgeline, turning northwesterly up the ridgeline. We reached the assault position and waited for Foxtrot Company to get in place. Artillery was pounding the hill. Some dropped within 50 meters of us. When we assaulted, we would walk the arty up the hill in front of us. Upon securing the hill, we would readjust the arty onto a high knob to our north about 200 meters.

Finally, the word came to assault and my platoon moved out as rapidly as possible, keeping generally abreast of the platoon on my right. Echo Company was guide company and Foxtrot Company was to guide on us. Foxtrot Company fell behind on my left and was slow maneuvering even though we met minimal resistance. To prevent any decrease in our momentum, we (Echo Company) pushed forward up the ridgeline and over the crest and into a hasty defense. We were already in our hasty defense when Foxtrot Company arrived. My platoon set in from 11 to about 2 o'clock, where we tied in with the 1st or 3rd Platoon. As Foxtrot arrived, I showed the company commander where to tie in with my most leftward position.

There were a few NVA bodies lying around on the hill, which I attributed to the artillery and previous air strikes. Hill 881N was ours. Just to our front stood a peak. It towered over us. Sooner or later, it would have to be taken. It was too late in the afternoon to do it right now. We set about establishing our night defense, plotting our night defensive fires, putting out trip flares and claymore mines, and establishing our listening posts. There was a sense of relief through the company.

Sometime during the night, we were hit with enemy mortars. They fell short but, still, I called in the coordinates of the suspected enemy mortars and counter-mortar fired. There was some sporadic fire during the night to my right and right front. We were being probed. I had specified 50% alert but throughout the night, I found everyone in my platoon awake. The following morning, to our front at about 1 o'clock, we found two dead NVA, one assault machine gun, and one AK-47.

Later that morning, my platoon was pulled off the line to patrol the ridgeline to our rear, east of Hill 881. Golf Company, after securing Hill 861, had continued their attack northward to support our attack on 881N, if necessary. My platoon was to patrol the ridgeline behind them to search out any enemy they may have missed or bypassed. We made no enemy contact but did find another machine gun and one rifle. Hotel Company had reverted to the battalion reserve.

Upon our return to Hill 881N, the company commander called me to his CP to issue me another frag order. This was to take the high peak to our front. I was told by 1st Lt. Adinolfi that Foxtrot Company had tried to take it while my platoon was on patrol but was unable to do so. I thought to myself, "My God, this is unbelievable." Foxtrot Company was virtually unscathed and numbering, with attachments, well over 200 men. I asked for flamethrowers because I knew that if the North Vietnamese were in bunkers, the best way to get them out was with flame.

I called my entire platoon together and issued a five-paragraph order. Normally, I would have issued

the order only to my squad leaders and attached unit leaders, but I only had one squad leader. I expected some grumbling and complaining, but instead they cheered. I was so proud of those few men. We would jump off in 30 minutes. We were preparing to move out when we were stopped and I was called back to the CP. I was told we would remain in our positions and let close air pound it with bombs. I must admit I was very relieved. After the bombing runs were completed, it was only a matter of Foxtrot Company walking up and searching it out.

For the next three days, we maintained our defensive positions and conducted vigorous patrolling. On 9 May, both companies Echo and Foxtrot were to patrol in force northwestward of Hill 881N. Foxtrot Company was to patrol northwesterly; Echo Company would patrol westward, then swing northward to our final patrol objective, Hill 803. Intermediate objectives and checkpoints were established, preplanned fires were plotted, and the patrol order was issued. Our patrol would be made up of the 1st and 2nd Platoons, the company CP, and one section of 81 mm mortars. The 3rd Platoon would remain on Hill 881N. My platoon, the 2nd Platoon, would take the point.

We moved out along our assigned route, assaulting each intermediate objective or checkpoint as if it were defended by enemy troops. As we neared our final objective, Hill 803, we could hear Foxtrot giving situation reports to battalion. They first started off with messages such as "Pygmalion 6, this is Foxtrot 6; we have encountered snipers; we have 1 kangaroo (KIA) and 3 wolves (WIA)." In no time, it became "We have 5 kangaroos and 9 wolves" Their problems were becoming larger with every passing moment. The situation was intensifying.

As we came to the base of the hill to our front, I deployed my platoon for the assault and up the hill we went. Upon reaching the top, the platoon went into a hasty defense. I dropped to my belly and took out my field glasses to see if I could determine what was going on with Foxtrot Company. What I saw horrified me. The North Vietnamese were crawling over the men of Foxtrot Company, stabbing what appeared to me as being wounded Marines. Foxtrot Company had been drawn into a saddle along a small ridgeline and couldn't move. I saw the NVA attempt to drag off what looked like a wounded Marine.

I grabbed an M-60 machine gun and determined that a clump of bushes, which appeared to me to be the closest the NVA had got to Foxtrot Company, would be my reference point. I determined that all left of those bushes were dead Marines and NVA. I opened up with a long burst of fire, raking the ridgeline from the bushes to the tree line at the left end of the finger. The range was about 1100 meters. I turned and told the weapons platoon sergeant, SSgt. Benny R. Gavin, to take the other gun, watch my tracers, and rake the finger from the bushes to the left. Our fire was right on target.

Meanwhile, my company commander had come up behind me. He shouted, "Get off the gun, Cannon." "Go to hell," I replied, and kept firing. I meant no disrespect. He had not seen what I had. I knew what I was doing.

After driving the NVA off, I turned the gun over to the gunner, with instructions to keep the NVA off that finger. First Lieutenant Adinolfi was on the radio with battalion. As soon as the radio conversation was over, Adinolfi turned to me and said, "Jim, you're a leader; go pull them out." I answered with, "You're a commander; give me some support."

First Lieutenant Adinolfi informed me that Foxtrot 6 (Fox Company Commander) was hit and that the entire company was pinned down and couldn't move. He said Lt. Col. Delong had told him, "Send Cannon down there but have him be careful and if he gets into it, pull him out." How could I not get into it? The Skipper informed me that artillery support could not be provided because of the close proximity of the enemy to Foxtrot Company.

I turned to Frank Izenour, the 1st Platoon Commander, and asked him to guide me to the base of the finger where the bushes I used as a reference point were located. I always carried a pen flare in my helmet cover band. I would pop one of these every few minutes and Frank could adjust me. He nodded that he would.

I issued a frag order to my platoon and we moved out, down the western slope of the hill we were on, toward the valley floor. We knew it would be rough going and that time was of the essence. The valley floor was a jungle but not as thick as I thought it would be.

Somewhere along the line, we had inherited a combat photographer corporal and before we moved out, he asked if he could go with us. I could use all the

help I could get. He grabbed a rifle from somewhere and left his camera behind.

Some of Echo Company were wounded We reached the valley floor in hardly any time at all. I had informed my point to keep me informed as to anything he heard or saw. I had handpicked my point man. I knew he was good. As we moved across the valley floor towards Foxtrot's position, two things kept worrying me. I kept thinking of the possibility that I may have killed some of Foxtrot's men when I was raking the finger to my front with machine gun fire. The second thing was my plan to envelop the enemy's right flank. It could happen that Foxtrot would mistake us for the enemy and fire on us. I changed my plan. I decided to take the high ground to Foxtrot's rear and conduct a frontal assault through Foxtrot Company.

Suddenly, shots rang out to my front. My point had made enemy contact. I halted the platoon until I could ascertain what was happening. I saw my point man as I moved forward. He had two additional rifles slung over his shoulder. They were enemy rifles. We didn't have time to chat about what had taken place, but apparently he had run into two un-alert NVA and killed them both. He pointed to his right. There, as far as I could see, were freshly dug graves. Bloody web gear lay all about.

By radio, I informed Frank that I had changed my mind; that I would be securing the high ground to Foxtrot's rear and to guide me to the base of the high ground. As we reached the base of the high ground, I asked Frank to have machine gun fire delivered on the northern edge of the finger. This would keep the enemy down and provide us with some covering fire. We formed one line and swept up the hill. At the top, I found 2nd Lt. Carroll and three other Marines. Of the four, two had been wounded. It was payback time. I was glad that I could help him and Foxtrot Company. He had helped me so much just six days earlier.

Second Lieutenant Carroll informed me that he and the other three Marines were the only ones who could break out and reach the high ground. Two of them had been wounded trying to get to the high ground.

Meanwhile, back on Hill 803 where I had just left, the battalion commander had flown in by chopper with a skeleton staff, a 106 Recoilless Rifle section, and another 81mm mortar section. They, too, were under fire, from a hill to the north of them. I again asked for support but was denied at the time, because they were under fire. Because of my preoccupation with pulling Foxtrot out, I may have gotten support later and not realized it.

It was time to act. One fire team and one machine gun, along with the combat photographer, would lay down a base of fire over the heads of us and Foxtrot. Two fire teams would assault through Foxtrot. As the assaulting fire teams passed through Foxtrot, the base of fire would shift their fire from the finger to the edge of the tree line. They would cease fire on a red smoke and join us by hand and arm signal. I would be with the assaulting fire teams.

We moved out and the base of fire opened up over our heads. As we passed through Foxtrot, I overheard a big black Marine ask, "Who was that mother f***er on the machine gun?" I asked as I passed him, "Why?" He replied, "He saved our asses." I felt relieved. I believe he was a gunnery sergeant.

We passed through Foxtrot Company and opened up with our assault fire. My Marines began to run, firing and screaming across the northern finger. As we neared the tree line, I popped a red smoke. The base of fire ceased. We immediately went into a hasty defense and I signaled my base of fire up. While my platoon sergeant supervised the defense, I radioed Echo 6 to inform him that we had secured the finger. He, in turn, informed me that choppers were on their way to lift us all out. We were all to he helilifted back to Hill 881 N.

When the choppers began to arrive, my platoon protected the hill while Foxtrot boarded. I had a team survey the dead NVA and strip them of their weapons and equipment for use by our S-2 (Intelligence). Foxtrot had 29 dead and 19 wounded. My platoon had suffered no casualties. The enemy had 33 dead and an undetermined number of wounded.

I was the last man off the finger; the last man to board the choppers. The first three or four choppers were able to make it to Hill 881 N, but the choppers carrying my platoon didn't. By the time we reached 881, the clouds and fog were so thick we were unable to land. It was back to Hill 803 for us. After we landed on Hill 803, the battalion CO joined me in my newfound fighting hole. He asked how 1st Lt. Adinolfi was doing. I told him, "Fine." He replied "Great. I was going to give the company to you but

since Jack is doing a good job, he'll keep the company." That was fine with me. I was content with being a platoon commander.

"Pappy" asked me what we needed to defend that hill for the night. I told him we had not come prepared to spend the night. For a good defense, we needed a lot more than what we would get. A chopper would fly in from Khe Sanh and bring us trip flares, claymore mines, a re-supply of ammo, including additional 106 rounds and 81mm mortar rounds and grenades. For now, we would have to do with what we had.

The Skipper issued a defense order for the night. In it, he stated that Lt. Col. Delong had asked for B-52's to bomb the valleys west of us. H & I (Harassment and Interdiction) fires would continue all night from our 81 mm mortars and artillery from Khe Sanh. After the order was issued, 1st Lt. Adinolfi and I had a chance to talk. He told me that Lt. Col. Delong had personally fired the 106 into the back of an NVA as the enemy soldier ran up the hill during the action when my platoon was helping Foxtrot.

During the conversation, I asked 1st Lt. Adinolfi, "What are you trying to do, get me killed?" It seemed that my platoon always had the point, was always the assault element, and always occupied the most likely avenue of approach in the defense. I told him if that was the case, let's get it on right now and settle this damn thing. I added that if it was because he had confidence in me and my platoon, I appreciated it. He didn't answer. I would receive my answer months later by mail. I appreciated the letter, his answers, and the rationale on which he based his decisions.

During that night, I experienced one of the most eerie feelings I have ever had. B-52's bombed the valleys to our west. You didn't know they were even up there until you heard the bombs whistling. By then it would be too late for those below. It wasn't until after the explosions that we heard the sounds of the jet engines far away. They were that high. Incidentally, it was that night that the NVA division moving southward would bypass us and overrun Lang Vei, killing or capturing most of the defenders. After a hairy night of strong easterly winds, constant firing from our 81mm mortars, flares drifting softly and slowly from the skies above, the distant thunder of our artillery, and the screaming of B-52 bombs raining down on the valley below, the fog which had settled in the valleys around us began to dissipate. The sun shone beautifully. It would be a magnificent day.

First Lieutenant Adinolfi summoned his platoon commanders and other key personnel together to brief us as to what we were about to do. We would expend all unnecessary ammo on possible enemy positions, avenues of approach, and suspected enemy bunkers. We would move out in company column back to Hill 881 N, where we would be helilifted back to Khe Sanh, spend the night, get a hot breakfast, and then be helilifted back aboard ship to resume our role as the SLF (Special Landing Force). And wouldn't you know it — 2nd Platoon, you have the point."



The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY CROSS to

LANCE CORPORAL FREDERICK G. MONAHAN
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

For extraordinary heroism while serving as an Intelligence Scout with Company E, Second Battalion, Third Marines, Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on 3 May 1967. During Operation BEACON STAR, while deployed on a small hill complex south of Hill 881 in the vicinity of Khe Sanh, Lance Corporal Monahan's company came under intense mortar and automatic weapons fire and hand grenade attack from an estimated battalion of North Vietnamese Army forces. Lance Corporal Monahan positioned himself between the command post and the attacking enemy. After repeated vicious attacks, the enemy penetrated the perimeter and had advanced to within twenty meters of the command post when he boldly launched a fierce single-handed assault with rifle fire and hand grenades. With complete disregard for his own safety, he fearlessly exposed himself to hostile fire to direct accurate rifle fire on the enemy. Although painfully wounded by grenade fragments, he repulsed repeated enemy assaults, killing the determined enemy soldiers in hand-to-hand combat as they attempted to overrun his position. With exceptional courage and fortitude, he kept the numerically superior North Vietnamese pinned down for more than two hours until reinforcements arrived at daylight. Steadfastly maintaining his position, he guided the relief force into position and skillfully directed their fire against the retreating enemy. By his intrepid fighting spirit, exceptional fortitude and gallant initiative, Lance Corporal Monahan served to inspire all who observed him and contributed in large measure to the success of his unit in repelling the attackers. His great personal valor reflected the highest credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.



In the name of the President of the United States, the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific takes pleasure in presenting

The SILVER STAR

to

Second Lieutenant James Roscoe Cannon
United States Marine Corps

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Platoon Commander with Company E, second Battalion, Third Marines, Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. In the early morning hours of 3 May 1967, Second Lieutenant Cannon's Platoon which was responsible for the sector of the company defensive perimeter covering a critical avenue of approach near Hill 881, came under intense small automatic weapons and mortar fire from a numerically superior North Vietnamese force. Despite the heavy fire around him, Second Lieutenant Cannon courageously moved among his men consolidating and skillfully reorganizing his unit's position in order to prevent the enemy from penetrating his command post. On several occasions, he personally engaged the enemy in hand-to-hand combat, driving back repeated attempts by the North Vietnamese to overrun his position, killing numerous enemy soldiers. Subsequently, he fought his way to the command post, informed his company commander of the tactical situation in his sector and assisted in coordinating the company's defensive positions. After the enemy attack had been repulsed, Second Lieutenant Cannon organized his unit and aggressively led his men in searching out the enemy, routing them from their positions and inflicting heavy casualties on the North Vietnamese force. In large measure, due to his inspiring leadership, determined fighting spirit and bold initiative, the perimeter defenses were quickly reestablished. His Platoon, although suffering numerous casualties, remained an efficient fighting unit. By his courageous actions, exceptional professionalism and selfless devotion to duty at great personal risk, Second Lieutenant Cannon upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

FOR THE PRESIDENT,
V.H. KRULAK
Lieutenant General, US Marine Corpss

KSV Awards Banquet



PJ Wodecki receiving award for 2004 Reunion from Tommy and Russ.



"Jimbo" receiving his Playstation construction set at banquet.



Katherine receiving award for her work with our reunion.



"Jimbo" Wodecki receiving award from Tommy and Russ for 2004 Reunion.



Russ and "Jimbo" receiving Texas flag.



"Bulldog" receiving award from Tommy and Russ.



Doctor Pete Chambers, Captain, USSF, lighting MIA candle.



Capt. Pete Chambers, USA, USSF, receiving DOC Medal from Doc Ballard.



Doctor Pete Chambers, Captain, USSF, addresses the audience.



Jerry Griffin, USN, receiving DOC Medal from Doc Ballard.



New Board officers [R-L]: President Russ Turner, VP Tommy Eichler, Treasurer Jim Wodecki, and Secretary John Pessoni. (Chaplain Owen Matthews missing.)



New Khe Sanh Directors [L-R]: Cliff Treese, Ron Shouse, Tom Ford, Frank Taggart, Dale Pack, Bob Mills, and Bulldog Smith. (Dan Fisher missing.)



USAF Bill Person carrying the Air Force Colors.



USA Bruce Geiger carrying the Army Colors.



USN Doc Thomas carrying the Navy Colors.



USMC Lloyd "Shortround" Scudder carrying the Marine Colors.



Representing MIAs, Pete Chambers, USA, and Ron Parsons, USAF



USMC Volunteer Color Guard



Old warriors Tommy Eichler, USMC, and Dave "Bulldog" Smith, USA.



Doc Ballard with DOC Medal recipient Hall Watts, D Co, 1/26



Time for a little fun!

Billy Bob's Barbeque



























TEXAS






























USMC



















KSV Reunion 2004

















Cart Racing





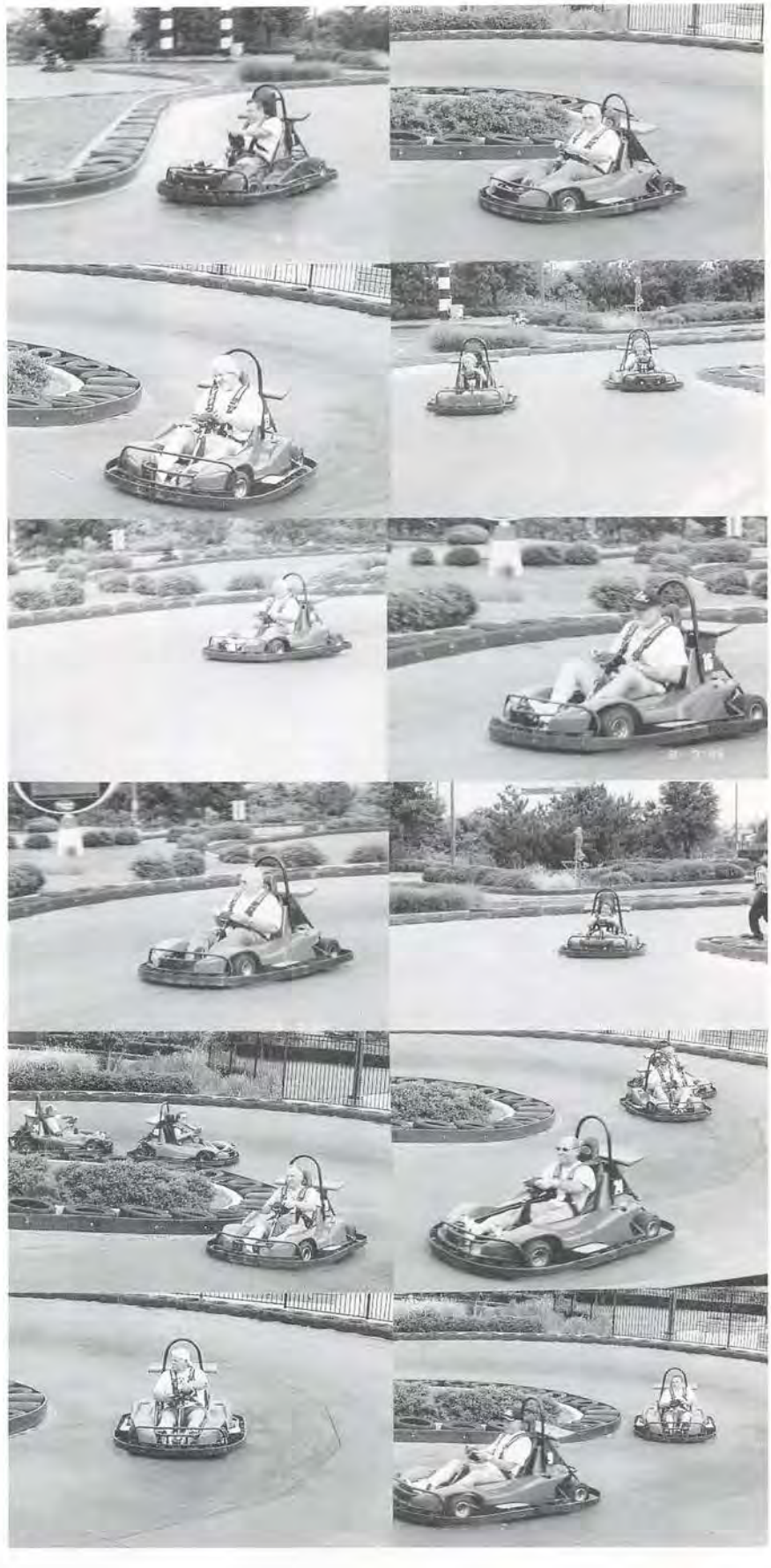


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SPEEDZONE


WINNER'S CIRCLE
FIRST PLACE
SECOND PLACE
THIRD PLACE

Lt. James Cannon, E Co. 2/3 receiving Silver Star from CMC. Wallace Green for action exemplified by the Marines attacking Hill 881N below.





KHE SANH

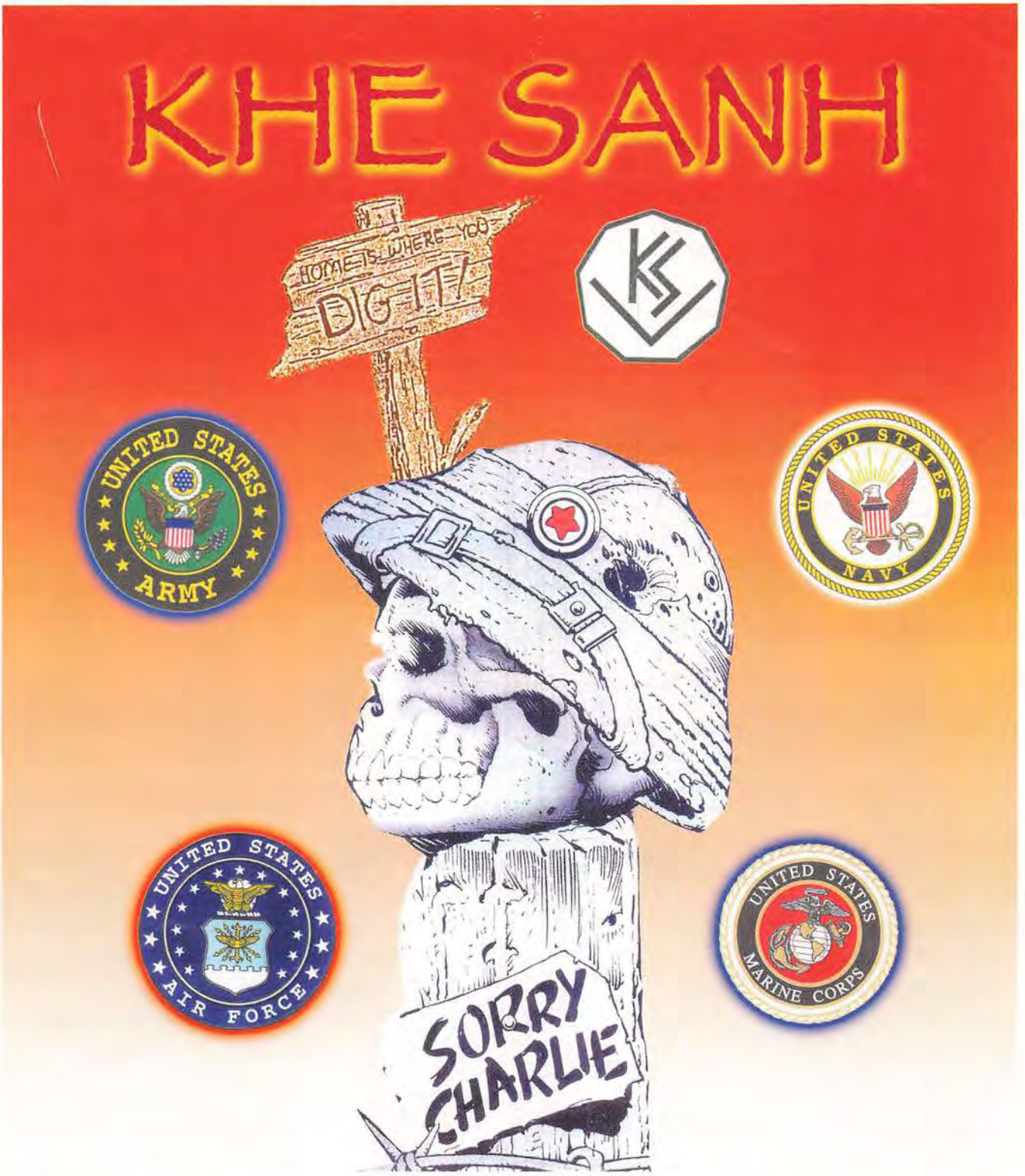

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...and a sprinkling of your poetry throughout

Secretary's Notes

Khe Sanh Veterans New Message Board

Since the last reunion we have started a new message board. This site is paid for by members of the KSV. Members are required to register, and names and information, can only be viewed by members. We presently have 128 members. This site is at *www.khesanh.org*. To register, sign in our guest book, then click on the link that reads **<Big John send me the password>**. After approval from Big John, you sign a registration form, and you are able to post messages. Welcome aboard.

Also at *www.khesanh.org* site is the Khe Sanh Veterans PX and 2005 Khe Sanh Reunion information, and membership applications to join Khe Sanh veterans, pictures from past reunions, pictures from 66-67-68 of Khe Sanh and more.

Big John Pessoni Secretary

Notes from the Reunion Committee

After reviewing comments from the membership at the Dallas Reunion, the reunion committee has decided to limit the number of off-site activities at the Chicago Reunion. Many members have suggested more activities at the hotel, rather than activities requiring group travel. In response we have decided to hire our own transportation. These mini-buses will be operated by veteran Police Officers who have volunteered their time and are very familiar with Chicago and surrounding communities. This transportation will be available day & night, for small or large groups of members who wish to visit the many sites that the City of Chicago has to offer. They will drop off and pick up members at regularly scheduled sites, as well as personal requested visits to other sites not on the regular schedule. Each day the vehicles will make scheduled trips to shopping areas, museums, amusement parks, famous Chicago landmarks, and restaurants. There will be a one-time fee of $10.00 assessed with the registration fee for this transportation.

We have one group trip planned for Friday the15th of July to Navy Pier. Here there are a myriad of activities on this peninsula that extends into Lake Michigan, from shopping and a fun amusement park. It is one of Chicago's main tourist attractions. This trip will include a three-hour boat ride with dinner and dancing along Chicago's beautiful skyline. Shopping and free time will be from 12:00pm-6:00pm. The boat ride will be from 7:00pm-10:00pm. The boat docks directly along Navy Pier. Members are encouraged to sign up for this event at the reunion. Members can pay at the pier for this event.

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

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Bruce Geiger .....Member At Large
Cliff Treese.....Member At Large
Dale Pack.....Member At Large
Ronald Shouse .....Member At Large
Thomas Ford .....Member At Large
Robert Moxley.....Member At Large
Dan Fisher .....Member At Large

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Note from Chairman, Membership & Publishing Committee

With your magazine you will find new pages for your membership directory with changes since November 2004. There were over 300 changes in that short period of time, so you can see why it is important to immediately inform me when there are changes in your personal records (address, phone, email). If you know the location of any member who has moved and who has left no forwarding address per listing, please inform me so we may get them back on the mailing rolls.

Tom Eichler

Editorial Note

Although our **Red Clay** magazine has almost exclusively published stories and articles pertaining to our experiences at Khe Sanh, we have made the decision to dedicate a new section of this publication to our brave young men fighting the war in Iraq. So much misinformation has been reported concerning the actions of these young warriors that we felt obligated to publish true stories of their heroic actions. Most of these articles have been sent by our own Khe Sanh veterans, who brought them to my attention.

Note from Editor

Everyone says how much they love our magazine. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, we need more personal stories. You will note that we are having to go "outside" of Khe Sanh for our stories to fill our magazine. This is not our wish. Sometime back I went up on the message board and asked for stories. I received promises that have not been fulfilled. As I stated on the message board, your musings on the message board only last a couple of weeks then they are gone forever. Our magazine will be kept by Texas Tech and other schools "forever." We are a historical society. Do your part. Tell your story.

Book Review – Con Thien: The Hill of Angels

Reviewed by Lt Col. Kenneth W. Pipes, USMC (Ret)

With this sterling book, Captain Coan, Marine Tanker, wounded Vietnam Veteran and combat leader of many battles fought against the experienced and professional North Vietnamese Army in and around "The Hill of Angels," has arrived as a riveting and knowledgeable Marine Corps historian! In my opinion, with the publication of this detailed and well researched work, he joins a small, elite band of Marine authors, who expand the grasp and understanding of a confusing period of the Marine Corps heroic battles in the far northern provinces of South Vietnam!

Unlike most authors, Captain Coan made a bold and commendable decision early in his organizational research period. He would focus his research on the continuing Battles of Con Thien within a four-grid-square area and include all units, operations and major combat actions. Thus, everything that occurred in this arbitrary zone from 1967 until 1969 when the area became the responsibility of the South Vietnamese is included. Major operations in this time period in and around Con Thien will be more than familiar to those that fought and survived these fierce battles: Prairie III, Prairie IV, Hickory, Cimmarron, Buffalo, Kingfisher and Kentucky to mention just a few of the major actions! Marine casualty totals, when viewed in this correct manner are staggering: over 1400 Killed In Action and 9,200 wounded in action.

Impressively, the author's decision moved his writings from personal recollections, which is the format of many books written about Vietnam, to an all encompassing and well documented historical overview of major events surrounding the titanic struggles between our Marines and the NVA for control of this key piece of terrain. Consciously and commendably this approach highlights the individual courageous actions of Marines — from PFC to company grade officers. You will recognize the names of and remember many of these stalwart Marine warriors. I sure did! Details that you may not have known become rhyme and reason for the saga of Marine courage and tenacity — in any clime and place! Rightfully so, few senior Marine Field Grade

or General Officers are mentioned. The war in Northern I Corps and their civilian counterparts neither tactically nor strategically was something many of them could nor should be proud of!

Documented here and in the recently published book, "Khe Sanh, The First Battle of the Hills," are the terrible screw-ups regarding the M-16. Though they were wrong, very senior Marines in Vietnam and Headquarters Marine Corps blamed the Marine Infantrymen for not cleaning their weapons properly and their combat leaders for not correctly supervising this necessary combat evolution. They were terribly and tragically wrong in their assessments and testimony before Congress! It was they who were negligent for not giving their last full measure of devotion in defense of their Marines against these dastardly and cowardly accusations! Marines were fighting and dying as they repeatedly and successfully executed Regimental and Division orders — orders that precluded our attack into NVA artillery, staging and marshalling areas just to the north of the Ben Hai River. Few senior civilian or military leaders were as willing to go into the breach for their Marines or Soldiers. As Captain Coan documents, the Marines on the sacred ground in and around Con Thien did not have this luxury! Like their French Foreign Legion predecessors, they marched and died, while their senior civilian and military leaders were generally not willing to place their careers in jeopardy by fighting for necessary life saving changes to the convoluted rules of engagement and failed strategy!

Captain Coan's research moved the stories of the murder of Marine prisoners of war by the NVA from the realm of rumor to fact. The skinning and nailing of bodies to trees, desecration of our dead and wounded by unspeakable mutilation have all been moved from the shadows into the harsh light of day! Was it better that this information was kept (to the extent possible) out of hands of the Marines on the ground? You who were there have your own opinions! Personally, speaking as a rifle company commander at Khe Sanh during the Siege, we and our Marines had a need to know this information!

This outstanding historical writing builds upon the groundwork laid by the Reverend Ray Stubbe and others who have written similar works about the many battles in and around Khe Sanh. The operational battles of Con Thien and Khe Sanh frequently changed names. The reality is that only the name of the operation changed. The committed forces on either side remained much the same, as they were funneled into and out of these meat grinders. Captain Coan's commendable research approach documents the terrible cost in Marines and Soldiers killed, maimed and wounded. Remember: 1419+ killed and 9265 wounded in a two-year period within four grid squares of the "Hill of Angels." It should come as no surprise to those who buy this book that some of the units that fought at Con Thien were then sent to Khe Sanh for the "Battle for the Hills" and "The Siege," before returning to the never ending struggle for control of Con Thien. As we used to say with great justification, "one good deal after the other!"

For the serious historian and Vietnam Marine and Army Veterans who survived the carnage in Northern I Corps, this outstanding book is an absolute must buy! When the reader adds Captain Coan's superb book to "Khe Sanh, The First Battle of the Hills," they will have a nearly compete picture of this trying and demanding time in our Marine Corps history. For our professional cadre of NCOs and officers, the long running fiasco of our experience in that time and place became a template for how not to fight a war. These Marines, who were later to occupy senior positions in our Corps, changed the way we would conduct our future war fighting! Out of the dismal failure of members of the "Greatest Generation" in Vietnam arose the success of Desert Storm and the initial success of the second war with Iraq! With its publication, Captain Jim P. Coan deserves only the highest praise for his book and has earned the support of our loyal Corps of readers! Well done, sir and congratulations!

Captain Coan is an active member of the Khe Sanh Veterans.

CON THIEN: The Hill of Angels, by James P. Coan (University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 35487-0380 ISBN 0-8173-1414-8 360 pp.) $29.95. (for members $26.95)

Lt Col. Pipes retired in 1982 and lives in Fallbrook, CA.

Memorial Notes

Representing the Khe Sanh Veterans, I attended the funeral of James Storc of A Co 3Rd SP, who died after a fight from cancer. James was a gifted athlete and played softball (16-inch Chicago-style), most of his short life. The many people paying their last respects came from all walks of life: former Marines, police officers and motorcycle enthusiast. James was a Life Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans. I met him at the reunion held in Chicago in 2000. Although he lived a short distance away, I never really got to know him. While paying my respects, I discovered that I was a few years older than Jim, but we grew up in the same neighborhood and had the same childhood group of friends, who greatly admired him. What a small world. Jim leaves two young twin daughters and a lovely wife and will be missed by all. His two best friends, Joe and Jim Krzak, both former Marines, called Jim "The Colonel." Both said; "Our country lost a hero, and we lost our brother and best friend. We will miss him dearly."

Tom Eichler

❋

John Noon writes that **John W. Greene** was a true friend and a great Marine, who could have been removed from a combat zone after receiving 3 Purple Hearts. He refused because he promised John Noon's mother, that he would watch over him. While keeping that promise, John was KIA after the tank he was riding on struck a mine during a combat operation. John Noon still thinks about his friend every day.

❋

David P. Leitch was an international news reporter that was with the Khe Sanh Veterans during the battle of Khe Sanh. His articles focused on the life conditions of the men. His articles reflected a great concern for our welfare. He often spoke to me, and related the agony he still felt for those who endured at Khe Sanh. He was a Life Member of our organization. Two of his writings on Khe Sanh were printed in the book *Deadline, Collected Journalism* (published in London by Harrup in 1984, "Inside Khe Sanh," pp.6-13; and "Khe Sanh-Two," pp.20-24).

Ray Stubbe

❋

Father Thomas S Stott passed away 18 Jan 2005. Tom served two tours as a corpsman in Vietnam with G Co 2/26, 67-68 and B Co 1/7 in 1970. Tom became a Catholic priest and served several churches in North Carolina. He was a loyal Khe Sanh Veteran and will be missed by all. Our condolences to his loving family.

Memorial Page

Those Remembered	Remembered by:
PFC Bruce Cunningham, C Co 1/26, USMC KIA 08 Feb 68	Barry Cunningham (Brother)
Wilbur (Willie) Stovall, HQ Btry 1/13, USMC, KIA 09 Mar 68	Robert Holscher, HQ 1/13
Sgt. Neil Tycz, A / 3rd Recon, USMC, KIA 10 May 67	Sharon L.Pelon
L/Cpl. Edward Day, NC, L Co 3/3, USMC, KIA 26Aug 68	Michael Fleming, E Co 2/26
Thomas M White, G Co 2/4, USMC, KIA 01 May 68	William R.Yates, W 1/13
L/Cpl. James M. Mullins, USMC, KIA 25 Mar 68	Max L. Welden, B Co 11Th Engr
HN Jose Lopez, 2/26, USN, KIA 18 Apr 68	Rick C Zunnio, A Co 1/26
PFC Walter Tyrcz, A Co 1/26, USMC, KIA 14 Mar 68	Rick C Zunnio, A Co 1/26
2Lt David C Ferguson, C 3RD Recon, USMC, KIA 05 Mar 69	Daniel Ferguson, W 1/13 Brother
Cpl. Ruben C McMackins Jr, L Co 3/26, USMC, KIA 14 Apr 68	Thomas Pierce, L Co 3/26
Cpl. John W Greene, C Co 1/26, USMC, KIA 04 Jul 68	John M. Moon, C Co 1/26
L/Cpl. Paul F. Stedman, A Co 3RD SP, USMC, KIA 26 Feb 68	C.T. Green, A Co 3RD SP
PFC Ted Britt, C Co 1/26, USMC, KIA 30 Mar 68	Mr&Mrs Michael McCauley
SW2 Edward Cody Adams, CBMU-301, USN, KIA 16 Apr 68	Larry Kubley, CBMU-301
Sam Lightman, D Co 1/26, USMC, KIA 02 Nov 66	John Peterson, D Co 1/26
L/Cpl. Thomas J McManus, C Btry 1/12, USMC, KIA 06 Jun 68	John Fedyszyn, C Btry 1/12
HN Robert "Doc"Aucoin, D Co 1/26, USN, KIA 27 Jul 68	"Doc" Bob Cahill, D Co 1/26
PFC Edward L Towslee, A Co 1/9, USMC, KIA 04 Apr 68	Terry N Tillery, C Co 1/4
L/Cpl. Michael J Kilderry, C Co 1/4, USMC, KIA 06 Jul 68	Terry N Tillery, C Co 1/4
2Lt Thomas Hoare, USMC, KIA 18 Jan 68	Bruce Lewy, E Co 2/26
GySgt. Di Reyes Ibanez, A / 3rd Recon, USMC, KIA 05 Jun 67	Whipple Ibanez (Brother)
L/Cpl. Frederick W Bivens, H Co 2/3, USMC, KIA 30 Apr 67	Eugene P Lessman Jr, FLSU -2
PFC Ezekeil T Exum, A Co 1/5, USMC, KIA 22 Feb 67	Eugene P Lessman Jr, FLSG-A
George King, C Co 1/4, USMC, KIA 05 Jun 68	Dan L Burton, C Co 1/4
Timothy R Cox, H Co 2/26, USMC, KIA 13 Mar 67	Roger D. Chicoine, H Co 2/26
Ralph Padilla (Manny), K Co 3/4, USMC, KIA 18 Jun 68	Louis R Menacho, K Co 3/4
HM2 James D Raab, C Co 1/26, USN, KIA 12 Jun 68	Lee D Rimkus, C Co 1/26
Cpt. Walter "Jack" Egger, C Co 1/26, USMC, KIA 22 Mar68	Bruce Geiger, A Btry 1/44
GySgt. John J Grohman, C Co 1/26, USMC, KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger, A Btry 1/44
1LT Paul W Bush, C Co 1/26, USMC, KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger, A Btry 1/44
L/Cpl. Stephen C Shannon, C Co 1/26, USMC, KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger, A Btry 1/44
PFC Bennie J Sisson, C Co 1/26, USMC, KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger, A Btry 1/44
Sgt. Manuel Martinez "Dusters"A -1/44, USA, KIA 09 Jun 68	Bruce Geiger, A Btry 1/44
Maj Harry M. Ravenna III, 2/94TH Arty, USA, KIA 03 Jun 75	Mark Swearengen, 2/94TH Arty
Doug Meredith	Mark Swearengen, 2/94TH Arty
All of 1/26 Who Gave All, USMC	James B. Wilkinson, (LtCol) 1/26
2ND Platoon, E Co 2/26 , USMC, 06 Jul 68	Jeff Bodenweiser, E Co2/26
All Active Corpsmen & Their Marines	Kevin J Cotter, HM-2 MACG-18
3rd Bn 26TH Marines	Richard Gallegos, I Co 3/26
All of Fox Co 2/26	Richard Soto F Co 2/26 Cpl.
Tommy W Lassiter, M Co 3/26, USMC, 10 Apr 04	John J. Lassiter M Co 3/26
A Company, 3Rd Engrs, USMC	John Pessoni A Co 3Rd Engrs
1st Lt Lewis B Puller Jr, 3/1, USMC	Col William Dabney C/O I Co 3/26

Memorial Page

Those Remembered	Remembered by:
Dr Donald J. Magilligan Jr, USN, Passed Away	Danette Magilligan (Wife)
John R Heinrich, I Co 3/26, USMC, 22 Apr 95	Christine M Heinrich (Wife)
David P Leitch, Writer, CIV, 03 Dec 04	Khe Sanh Veterans
Michael P.Rossi, 75TH INF AB, USA, 13 Nov 04	Khe Sanh Veterans
Raymond Barnwell, F CO 2/1, USMC, 11 Oct 04	Khe Sanh Veterans
Gary West, C CO 1/26, USMC	Khe Sanh Veterans
Larry Goeske, MACTU-62, USMC, 21 Mar 03	Khe Sanh Veterans
Alex Stokes, G Btry 1/12, USMC	Khe Sanh Veterans
James Storc, A Co 3rd SP, USMC, 09 Dec 04	Jim & Joe Krzak (Friends)
FR Thomas D Stott, (HN) G Co 2/26, USN, 18 Jan 05	Khe Sanh Veterans
Charlotte Everley, Passed Away, Mother of James Everley G/2/26	Khe Sanh Veterans
John C. Lane, H&S Co 1/26, USMC, 22 Jan 05	Khe Sanh Veterans
John Subbiondo, H&S CO 3/26, USMC, 22 Jan 05	Khe Sanh Veterans

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WRIGHT, Phillip J
ZDUNCZYK, Richard

VA Health News

Help the VA Help You?

by Patrick G. Brady

To Those Who Served:

We are at WAR and have a medical system in the Veterans Administration that is in crisis. Care is a disaster as it tries to put a patch on the dam holding back old problems, along with current problems, and make adjustments for perceived future problems. It is time to step back and look at what is working and what is not. All of our VA Medical Centers are affiliated with a University Medical School, which use us veterans to train their interns and residents. In past years, some within the system had the foresight to set up accredited fellowship programs that granted physicians Board Certification in a particular specialty, such as cardiology, endocrinology, neurology, radiology, neuro-radiology and spinal cord injury and so on. It used to be that these physicians would have to commit to so many years of service within the VA to gain access to these programs but as years passed, these programs were slowly eliminated as not being cost effective.

What they failed to realize was that in doing away with these programs, they did away with a source of future specialists and thus put the load on the staff on hand. Through attrition, we now find ourselves in the CRISIS we are in today. Nursing had similar programs with either a two-year nursing program at community colleges, four-year programs from the universities, or nurse-assistant programs that were set up at the high school level which, upon completion, gave the individual a General Education Equivalency Degree — all at local VA facilities. This was seen by some as being too expensive and that is why we have staffing problems in some facilities today. We need to renegotiate our affiliations with the universities and create through Congressional incentives, if necessary, a return to these types of programs for the facilities that do not have them.

The cost of it will be far less in lives lost due to poor care. Currently, good physicians are stressed to the limit. I stress the fact that these programs be accredited as this is the only way it would end up being an asset to the Veterans Hospital System. There is no reason why we should not have an accredited fellowship program in every Veterans Medical Facility in every specialty that the facility has.

I ask that you copy this and send it to your local Congressmen and Senators.

Oops...

On page 28 of the Fall 2004 issue of **Red Clay,** the article "A Patrol Gone Bad," lists Tom Ford as the author. It should read Tom Howard. The name is also incorrect in the picture at the bottom of the page. Sorry, Tom. Fat thumbs.

On page 52, the caption at the bottom of the picture of the KSV Board of Directors, incorrectly has Bob Mills listed. It should read Robert Moxley. Sorry, Bob.

– Tom Eichler

No Greater Love Hath a Man

by Joyce Greenwood

In July of last year I had the opportunity to attend the Khe Sanh reunion with my husband in Irving, Texas. The men and the stories they shared was an experience for me that I would like to share. My husband is a proud Marine who served in the deadliest battle (77 days under constant siege from the North Vietnamese) in the Vietnam War's history.

My weekend experience with these brothers (Marines) changed my way of thinking forever. I will never understand what they went through. I wasn't there. They were. However, I can now understand what they meant when some Marines are called the "walking dead." Our men all gave the ultimate sacrifice for all of us.

When we arrived at the Omni Hotel there were groups of men sitting together, and there were those who sat alone with a blank stare. We gathered for the reception that afternoon, and my husband met another Marine who served in his same unit. This individual had been bayoneted eight times and was presumed dead. He was placed in a body bag. But, medical personnel noticed movement in the bag — he was still alive! He is a living testimony of someone who was determined to live despite his injuries. At the same gathering was another veteran who was also cared for by his nurse. This Marine is paralyzed from the neck down and can only move his eyes. My husband and I acknowledged him with a smile and a pat on his arm. He responded with a beautiful smile.

Another veteran walked in with no hands, the lower portions of both arms were gone. That reminded me of a quote, "I complained I had no shoes, until I met a man with no feet." This was the veteran who carried in the Marine flag during the ceremony that evening.

The evening ceremony began with the salute of flags. After the prayer the various flags — Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Marine — were carried in by their respected veterans. The veteran with no hands carried the Marine flag. He struggled to carry the flag, but he did it. All the brothers saluted him and shouted their hoorah! You would have to have been there to experience that salute, and the grunt of the Marines in unison. I asked my husband how they knew to shout at the same time. He said that it was the sergeant's tone of voice and training he had had as a Marine. I noticed that when the flags were being carried, all the veterans stood at attention. An Indian veteran at our table who was crippled and somewhat bent over, stood tall and tears came from his eyes as he watched his brother struggle to carry the flag. Another veteran had to hold up his right arm with his left arm during the salute. His arm had been re-attached, and he could not use it.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the medals to various veterans. A soldier, who had just returned from the Iraq War a week before, was present and he gave an update on the war. He carried in a helmet and lit the candle for the "Missing Man." He asked for our understanding. It was going to be hard for him to talk of the war because he had not yet talked about it to anyone. He asked for a moment of silence for one of his brothers who took the hit and was killed. He said it should have been him, but instead his brother had shielded him. This was an emotional time for some of the veterans present. I observed very few cried — most had only blank stares and looked at the floor. I, along with other veterans' wives, were the ones who cried silently.

We wives were honored and presented a sterling silver necklace with a medicine wheel emblem and the letters "KS"' inscribed in the middle of the emblem. The officer said that if the significant others had not been there for their men, who knows where they would be now? Our young men were rejected when they returned from the war. Some did not fit into the mainstream of society. Instead, they used drugs and booze to soothe their pain and injuries. This is the sad reality of war. Today, many veterans isolate themselves and are homeless, or sit in institutions because of no support system at home. Our society is ignorant and does not understand what sacrifices our men endured for our freedom.

As I observed these men and heard their stories, I thought of the appropriate scripture passage which says: "No Greater Love hath a man than he would lay down his own life for his brother." I said this to myself every time a medal was presented to a veteran.

This experience made me realize that even if some of our veterans may not have the visible scars on the outside, they have scars on the inside. War is so ugly a word. It changes the lives of our men who fought and are still fighting today so that we may enjoy our freedom. I am sure that if my husband's mother were alive today she would say: "My son is not the same

person he was when he left for the war."

These brave men gave the ultimate sacrifice when they went to war to fight for our freedom. With this in mind, as Veteran's Day approaches, be mindful of this. Don't take this day for granted as just another day. Show your utmost respect for those veterans you meet. Say a silent prayer for those families who were not as fortunate as us who had our loved ones return from the war.

Our Roving Ambassadors Do It Again

by Ron Shouse

Here we are for another great Veterans Day celebration. A day off, with picnics, parties, football, and beer drinking. I remember when it was just another day — like November 11, 1967. Back then, some of us probably thought absolutely nothing about the importance of it. Little did we know that this was the last Veterans Day that some of our brothers would ever celebrate, and within a little over two months we would all experience what is our bond to each other and a big page in the History of Vietnam.

For years, I tried to forget the 'Nam and did not celebrate this holiday for our Brothers. But alas, I kept seeing some of them on a regular basis in dreams and thoughts and found out later that I have PTSD. I try to remember the good things we did and the laughs we had, rather than the things that all of us would just as soon forget. If we do not remember the Brothers we lost, they will be forgotten. This is the reason that I volunteer for veterans programs in my community. I know we were taught to NEVER VOLUNTEER, but if somebody doesn't step up, it will not get done. I belong to Post 290 of the American Legion. We do the military funerals, parades and any other patriotic programs for our community. So here I am, the tallest guy in the squad (as all of you can tell), out front to give the command for the 21-gun salute for our fallen heroes at the dedication of the Veterans Memorial in our local park. This monument dedication was for the City of King, County of Stokes, in North Carolina. The theme was "ALL GAVE SOME — SOME GAVE ALL." I wonder who suggested this? A few years ago when I was part of a dedication at another memorial, I sent in pictures and wrote to say "Gentlemen, raise your glass, this one is for YOU." Now I say "Gentlemen, raise your glass, because this one is for THEM."



Honor guard salute

KSV Members Still Serving

Lands of Russia Ministry
Cadence International

by Dr. David L. Meschke, Chaplain 1/26 Khe Sanh

PURPOSE – To proclaim the gospel of Christ and disciple believers in the military communities (military forces and their families, retired military, and civilians working in the military community) in nations of the former Soviet Union.
STRATEGY - Cadence International is partnering with the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (UECB), a well-established and growing evangelical church in countries of the former Soviet Union. Working together, we identify within their churches former military personnel who have biblical training and who sense the Lord's calling to minister to their military forces and communities, which as yet do not have official military chaplaincies. The UECB assigns these men and their wives to do military ministry, with Cadence providing them prayer support, financial support, and encouragement.
CURRENT STATUS – Our first selection and supporting of military workers took place in Belarus in early 1997, then followed in Ukraine and in Russia during 1998. Additional workers have been appointed each year since then. At the present time, a total of twenty nine national workers are working full-time in military ministry in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, together with their wives, supported financially by praying donors who provide them funds through Cadence International.

In addition, God has brought Alex and Isabel Jaruchik to serve alongside Dave and Betty Meschke in this unique Cadence ministry. Alex is well known among believers in the former Soviet Union, having translated Dr. J. Vernon McGee's radio program "Through the Bible" into Russian language for twenty-five years. Alex now prepares Bible teaching radio programs which are aired four times weekly by Far East Broadcasting Company, targeting military people in the Lands of Russia. Alex also serves as Dave's translator when they visit our workers in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

Military people and their family members are coming to Christ, being baptized, and then being discipled in the Christian faith. Many Bible studies are being conducted. Churches have even been organized in military villages (we would say "military housing areas") adjacent to military bases, and some of them have already acquired their own houses of prayer (we would say "church buildings"). Over three hundred thousand Gospels of John have been distributed by our military workers.
ADDITIONAL SPONSORSHIP NEEDED – Will you prayerfully consider helping to sponsor one of our workers, by prayer and financial support? Financial support for these national workers varies from $200 to $300 monthly, depending on the size of their family and their geographical location. We have several workers who still lack a portion of their support, and we have recently appointed additional new workers for whom we have only a small amount of support. Support in any amount will be appreciated. You may make your check payable to "Cadence International," and send it to P.O Box 1268, Englewood, CO 80150, together with a separate note that your gift is for support of one of our Lands of Russia workers.

Thank you and may God bless you.

Dr. David L. Meschke, Director of Lands of Russia Ministry, Cadence International, 6763 S. High Street, Centennial, CO 80122-1331. Phone: 303-794-0095; E-mail: dave_meschke@cadence.org

Biography

Dr. David L. (Dave) Meschke is the former General Director of Cadence International, the mission known for its first forty years as Overseas Christian Servicemen's Centers, or OCSC. Dave is the founder and leader of Cadence International's "Lands of Russia Ministry," evangelizing among the military forces and families in nations of the former Soviet Union.

Dave was reared in a Christian home in southern Minnesota and trusted Christ as his Savior at the age of twelve. He received his formal training at



Oleg, Nastya, Vadim, Mikhail, guest Dick Barnes and Dave

Wheaton College and Dallas Theological Seminary. Following ordination and a short pastorate in Oklahoma, he was commissioned a Navy chaplain in 1957 with the endorsement of IFCA International.

During twenty-one years of active duty service in the Navy, Chaplain Meschke served more than eight years in ships, aboard Destroyer Squadron 26, USS AJAX, USS CORAL SEA, and USS PROTEUS. Much of this time was spent at sea in the Caribbean and Western Pacific areas. He served at Navy bases in Tennessee, Illinois, Florida, California and Rhode Island, and at Marine bases in California and North Carolina. He also served with a Marine combat infantry battalion (1 8t Battalion, 26th Marines, Fifth Marine Division) in the Republic of South Vietnam for one year.

Dave left active duty with the Navy in 1978 to become the General Director of Cadence International. Founded by Jesse Miller and other former GIs in 1954, Cadence now numbers 250 missionaries who lead ministries in some sixty locations near military bases in Korea, Japan, Philippines, Cambodia, Thailand, England, Germany, Italy, Spain, and sixteen states in the U. S. including Alaska and Hawaii.

Dr. Meschke also served from 1981 to 1994 as leader of the military chaplaincy program for IFCA International, known now as Bible Churches Chaplaincy. During those years the number of their chaplains serving in the Armed Forces more than doubled. Dr. Meschke has served in other offices of IFCA International, including the office of National President from 1993 to 1996.

After leading Cadence International for seventeen years, Dave relinquished leadership of the mission in 1995 to pursue gospel ministry to the military forces of nations of the former Soviet Union. To date these nations do not have official military chaplains to carry on religious ministries. He has established a partnering relationship between Cadence and the largest evangelical Protestant church body in these nations. American donors to Cadence are providing prayer and financial support for twenty-nine former Soviet military men and their families, mostly former officers, who are now engaged in evangelistic outreach to their own military forces in three nations of the former Soviet Union, Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. Dave has made twenty-one ministry trips to these countries, providing training and encouragement, as well as financial support, to those national workers.

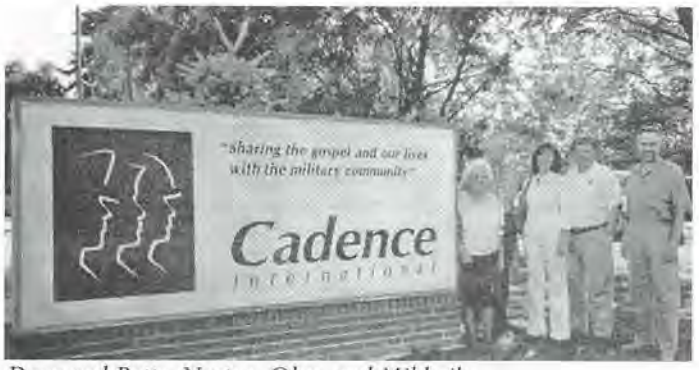

Dave and Betty, Nastya, Oleg, and Mikhail

In 1950 Dave married his college sweetheart, Elizabeth ("Betty") Warren, of Oak Park, Illinois. They now live in Centennial, Colorado, near Denver. They have five adult children, one of whom is serving in Christian ministry, fifteen grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

In 2003, Dr. Meschke was awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity by the Rocky Mountain Bible College and Seminary, located in the Denver area, for his forty-six years of faithful ministry to the military forces of America and of other countries.



Dave and Betty Meschke

Khe Sanh Community Library Fund

by Chuck (Lt. Col., USMCR, Ret.) and Laurelyn Gaede

March 2003. Sitting on a split bamboo floor in a house on stilts, sipping fresh green tea with Chief Nai in the village of Ruong after a day hike up Hill 881S with the Chief and one of his villagers guiding

us, it is hard to imagine the danger and destruction of the area in March 1968 — unless you were there back then. As Ray Stubbe wrote after viewing a picture of my wife and I on the slope of 881S in March 2003, "Who would have thought that a man and his wife would one day stand in a place that once was so dangerous." But we did, and we have decided to return the Chief's hospitality by raising money to build a community library for his village and other villages in the area.

Chief Nai's village is nestled in the valley by the stream below Hills 689 and 881S. He returned to the area in 1972, and today his village numbers about 400 people. In May 2004, my wife and I visited with him again. This time we went specifically to ask him what we could do to help his village. Chief Nai replied that his village has a school, a water purification system, a hospital, and a road was being built; he really didn't need anything else!! But his village does not have a library.

The library that we are building is fully equipped and staffed for one year, and it will also serve the community as a social gathering place. Approximately half of the books will be about unexploded ordnance and landmine safety. The land for the building will be cleared of unexploded ordnance, and landscaped when the building is finished. A librarian will be hired and trained. The cost is about $7000 dollars, and our first library project has been fully funded by my wife and I and our family and friends.

My wife and I are working with Chuck Meadows, Executive Director of Peace Trees Vietnam, Inc. (COL, USMC, Ret.; Commanding Officer, Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines in the battle of Hue City, February 1968). We are looking for others who will help build another library in the Khe Sanh area. Maybe there are members of the Khe Sanh Veteran's Association who would like to build for the future in Khe Sanh today. Perhaps some of the Khe Sanh veterans would like to build a library in memory of some buddies. For myself, I am not only returning the hospitality of Chief Nai, but I am continuing to help the people in the Khe Sanh area in a way that I could not in 1968 or 1969. My wife is a humanitarian at heart, and I am proud to have her as a partner in this project.

If anyone would like to join my wife and me in our community library project, you may send your contribution to Peace Trees Vietnam at the address on the brochure, and mark it for the "Khe Sanh Library Fund." Locations for future libraries, when funded, will be based on needs assessment by the local authorities and agreement with Chuck Meadows and his Peace Trees Vietnam staff. We expect to work throughout Quang Tri Province, and be we are focused in the Huong Hoa District, of which Khe Sanh is the capital I forgot to mention that on our second visit to Chief Nai, after the fresh green tea, he served his own locally prepared rice wine. He said it was 50% and not as strong as that of the next village over which has 65%. Now that was an honor and an experience I will not forget for a long time!! As a matter of fact, I am looking forward to returning to his village to see the library, and I am wondering what Chief Nai will do then.

See following page for information on how to help >



Khe Sanh Community Library Fund

Bring Education to Children and Families

Peace Trees Vietnam
P.O. Box 10697
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 www.peacetreesvietnam.org
206-842-7986

Huong Hoa District

Quang Tri Province, Vietnam
Location: in the center of Vietnam, near Laotian border
Population (as of Dec 31, 2003): 63,614 people; 31,181 children under 18 years old; 16,188 women
Ethnic minority: Van Kieu (28,629, 45%); Paco (3,197, 5%)
Majority: Kinh (33,530, 52.7 %)
Area: 1,150.75 sq. km.
Average yearly income: $200.00 USD
Agriculture: Forestry: 51.99% (cultivating, farming, breeding...)
Industrial: Construction: 29.66% (sewing, construction material production)
Communes: 21
Villages: 174
Towns: Lao Bao, Khe Sanh
Schools: 14 primary, 7 secondary, 8 primary & secondary, 2 high
Hospital: 1



Donate Now!

Peace Trees Vietnam
Khe Sanh Library Fund

Thank you for helping bring more education to the children and families in the Huong Hoa District, Quang Tri Province, Vietnam.

Chuck and Laurelyn Gaede
Fundraising volunteers, 512-282-3449

Make checks payable to: Peace Trees Vietnam
P.O. Box 10697
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Name .....

Address .....

City .....

State, Zip .....

"861"

Hal Croft, K Co 3/3

A poem with a reason but no rhyme

A few yards from the top of 861
Pinned down in a deep, dark fog,
So deeply dark we could only touch and hear.
Hearing dying, wounded marines
Hearing NVA taunts

Crawling toward his garbled groaning
I grasped a taught leg as his voice
Drew fire from the darkness.
A Marine wrenched back and forth
Bleeding from a sucking chest wound.

I pulled a poncho over us
Lit small light to set our stage.
He wheezed as a square of poncho
Seemed to stop the bleeding as hours
That were minutes passed.

The black marine whispered his way to death.
And I rolled away to a hole
And passed into a jealous sleep
While sticky blood dried on my hands
The fog kept me alive for tomorrow.

The fog faded to a gray dawn.
Three black Marines with bare backs
Bandaged white faced the far tree line
Bought time as I bandaged a corporal
Stunned by shrapnel and shock

More mortars, more shrapnel, more shock
The corporal was dead.
Hueys strafed the top of the hill
More time for the few who could walk
To drag the dead down.

My burden had no face
Feeling only his boots, I never looked back.
But felt the thumping of his head
Like a sledge slamming my chest.
A final thump at the LZ.

I spat at a chaplain who told us
"Good job."
Hands crusted with dried, brown blood
Had done no Agood for the black PFC,
The Corporal, or a faceless Marine.

'Twas the night before Christmas and I was on alert
My perimeter was secure with trips set in the dirt
The fog was playing games with me and images appeared in my brain
The jungle grass was making noises I could not explain.

As I strained to see what was in front of me.
Not a mouse or NVA but an ape was staring at me.
I called on the phone to the CP
Shoot the thing it don't matter to me.

My sight was true-my aim was clean
I couldn't pull the trigger
Being Christmas eve
Off he went up a tree — then he did spot me.

He waved and said to me Merry Christmas
So you don't believe, this tale—
It's my tale and I'm sticking to it.
To all a good night.

Jim Wodecki

We Got Mail

Tom, thought you could use these pictures. We were at Khe Sanh from Feb – March, 1967. We were hit before Easter Sunday, and on Easter Sunday 1967

Larry Hester E Co 2/9



L-R: Sanchez, Nick Pettitear, Larry Hester, Carl Olsen, E Co., 2/9. March '67.



Carl Olsen, E Co., 2/9. KIA March '67.

❋

Tom,

I returned to Vietnam in 2000 with VVRP (Vietnam Veterans Restoration Project). We worked on three projects — 2 in North Vietnam and one in Quang-Tri, near Dong Ha. I went to Khe Sanh and could only observe one small airstrip. Khe Sanh and Vietnam will always be part of our lives. I plan on going again someday. I enjoy **Red Clay** very much. I am paying for a Life Membership.

Charles Sepulveda, USA
14th Engr Bn, 18th Engr Brigade, Lam Son 719

❋

Hi Tom,

Having served at Khe Sanh with MCB-4 and being a member of the KSV is indeed an honor. I proudly carry my KSV Life Membership card with me at all times. I have been trying to learn the identity of a Marine lieutenant that also had the responsibility for us Sea Bees as well as his own Marines. He was quite a handsome guy and always looking out for his men and the Seabees who built their bunkers.

He once went on R&R to Danang. He returned with soap, shaving gear, and a lot of other goodies. Our Seabee hut was located near the ammo dump & supply pit, near the old stone tower. During our first mortar attack, I remember all 13 Seabees cramming into a 20-foot slit trench that did not even have a roof. During the attack, this lieutenant came running by and stopped and inquired if we were all okay, without any regard for his own safety. He became an immediate friend to all us Seabees.

I remember on another occasion I observed a dog near the wire by the old tower. He looked like he was foaming at the mouth. I asked what I should do and was told, "Shoot it!" I did and never thought this little act would become a little mini-drama. In the first place, I learned that you do not shoot a dog suspected of having rabies. And you do not shoot a dog that turned out to be the mascot of another group of Seabees in an adjacent hut.

I went from being just another green inexperienced EO Seabee to a hated Dog-Killer. It also brought a few nights of having tear gas grenades tossed at our hooch, by other equipment operators. We also had to have a refrigerator brought up to Khe Sanh to store rabies vaccine. These memories are not much, but I would really like to find out the name of that lieu-

tenant. I heard he was killed leading a patrol in 1967. If that is true I would like to contact his family and express my undying gratitude. He touched so many of us with his acts of kindness, and I would like his family to hear of his unselfish acts. If anyone has any information I would appreciate any help.

Ward Jarvis
MCB-4 Seabees
Ph: 607-687-2723
Email: WHH069@AOL.COM

❋

Welcome aboard, our newest Life Members

BALZANO, William C
CAUFIELD, Matt P
COMPTON, Ricky
CULLEN, Michael F
CURRY, Parris D
DILBERGER,Thomas J
DURHAM, Ronald L
ELKAN, Paul
FEYH, William H
FOGO, Wallace E
GRAEME-GRIMES, Rhod
HANSON, Skip
HANZLIK, Donald
HARRIGAN, Joseph E
HONN, Gerald E
HUMES, Michael D
JARVIS, Ward J
JONES, Michael J
JORDAN, William H
KRESTY, Edward J
LINCOLN,Weldon
McCREADY, Daniel J
MILLER, William P
MUNKACY, Donald P
OHRT, Leonard M
PARKER, Marshall E
PEARSON, Sam D
PLOCK, Kenneth A
PRENDERGAST, Edward
SHEPHARD, Charles B
SIGMAN, James P
SEPULVEDA, Charles
SMITH, Ralph H
STAHL, Glenn
SULLIVAN, Robert J
TOMPKINS, Thomas J
TOPMILLER,Robert J
VANWINKLE, Harlan E
WELKER, Gary
WILLIAMS, John P
WORTHLEY, R.Randy

Recently Joined Members *(as of 1 Nov 04)*

ANDREWS,Russell M USN 1/1 1st M/T HM3
ASHFORD,Richard E USMC H Co 2/1 3Rd Plt
BERGREN,Wayne A USAF 20th TASS
BILBREY,Larry E USMC F Co 2/26
CAMPAGNA,Paul T USMC K Co 3/9
DENTON,David USMC H&S Co 3/26
JOHNSON,Fredrick R USMC H&H&S Co 2/26
McCALL,David B USMC E Co 2/26 Hill 861A
MILZ,Daniel J USN Senior Corpsman L Co 3/9
MORRISSETTE, Edward USMC F Co 2/26
GALVIN,Ricardo USMC
NESTOR, David USAF 20th TASS 0-2 Observer
SEEL,Martin E USMC F Co 2/26
SEGURA, Michael T USMC D Co 1/26
SLEPESKY, Michael USMC I Co 3/26
TOMER,Charles D USMC D Co 1/26
TOWNSEND, Peardie USMC

KSV in Iraq

An Interview With Cal Bright, KSV, B Co 1/26 now working in Iraq

by James Wodecki

How did I get here, and what qualified me for this job? I was hand-picked along with several others in the middle of 2003. We were picked for certain qualifications per our resume along with job descriptions, prior military status, and performance ratings.



Cal Bright, ready to go

We were all carefully screened for this assignment. Several were disqualified for various reasons. The list went from around 25 to less than 12. We were rated. I finished third. The top 5 were given various tests and TDY assignments and schooling for further evaluation. I did not get picked until March of 2004. In July, I was sent to school in Los Alamitos, CA for basic military training; to HQ DLA for advanced military systems training; to DDC (virtual call center) for another week; and finally to CRC at Ft. Bliss (replacement/staging center) for preparations for deployment to Iraq. I flew from Ft Bliss to Bangor ME, then to Weiszbach, Germany, Arifjan, Kuwait, and finally to Baghdad, Iraq. Flying time took 27 hours with stopovers for refueling.

My position here in Iraq is as a multi-class expeditor, senior material management specialist, equipment specialist, item manager, federal stock class technician, 1-800 technician on everything the military uses, plus what ever else they can add to my job position/title, including gopher. I work 12-hour days, 7 days a week with no days off. I have been working daily since 1 August and will continue until I leave in February 2005. I will return the first of March for my second tour, which will go to the end of June. Hopefully I will make it back in time for the reunion in Chicago.

Entertainment here is scarce. We have a complete gym, and you can jog around the base for exercise. We have a BX/PX (large and small) open 24/7, free laundry, large mess halls with everything you can possibly want to eat. I still managed to lose 15 lbs., walking around and riding the stationary bike. I walk wherever I go, but only on base. You are not allowed off base without armed escort. We do have a recreation center where movies are shown. There is a pool, but with 10,000 people on the base, there is always a long wait. We work 12-hour shifts with breaks for dinner. We sleep in a mobile trailer with five other people. It is very cramped and not comfortable.

My base pay has been lifted so I can earn as much as I want. Being a civilian, I am entitled to overtime, hazardous duty and shift pay for working after 6pm, and double time for Sundays. I get paid every two weeks, my usual 80-hour work pay along with 86 hours of overtime.

My job allows me to travel at least once a week. I go armed — usually with an AK, 870 shotgun, or M-16, and go out for a day or two.

There are many jobs available here — mostly high risk, high paying security jobs. If the guy is currently on military status, he cannot apply until he is discharged. There are many security agencies begging for outside help. Currently they are hiring non-US citizens as well. Leaf through a Soldier of Fortune magazine and search the want ads. For my position, you need to apply for a civil service position and wait your turn, which takes a lot longer than the security agency jobs.



Cal showing off to Iraqi workers

If you want to become a civilian contractor (security), don't go it alone. You can end up on the wrong end of a chopping block. You cannot trust any local Iraqis, Jordanians, Syrians or Iranians. They will not hesitate to kill foreigners seeking jobs. Think long and hard before coming here just for money. I don't recommend it. The tour for a security guard is usually at least 18 months, often longer in most cases.

Q. Those RPG's — are they the same they used in 'Nam on us and what are they doing with captured caches of weapons from Fallujah and other places?

A. The RPG's are pretty much like our LAWS. In Vietnam they had the B40 rocket. Here RPG's are a little bigger, more deadly and a bit more accurate. Most of the weapons recovered by US Forces are redistributed among the Iraqi Security Forces. Much of it finds its way back to the streets, where it is again used by the enemy. The desertion rate here is much higher than it was in Vietnam. When the insurgents attack an Iraqi force a lot of them just run or join in the attack. Sometimes it makes you wonder who you are really supporting.

Q. Are there any similarities between Khe Sanh and Iraq?

A. There are a few, but not many, unless you are on the so-called front lines. One big difference is the suicide bombers. They are everywhere, and they are getting more sophisticated, learning from Hamas and the PLO. You cannot travel on any highway or road (off base) in relative safety. You must be armed, must travel in pairs, or travel in convoy. I travel exclusively with a Marine escort, if I travel off base. I never go with less than 5-7 Marines with me when traveling. It is not like when I was in 'Nam. I actually feel I'm in a POW camp, and we are the armed guards as well.

Q. Are the women prettier than the Montagnard women?

A. You don't fraternize with the local women. Most of them are already spoken for (as in married) (mostly pre-arranged). I have seen several up close and NO THANKS! I have not seen one truly foxy local woman. On the other hand, many of our female soldiers and civilian contractors are nice looking. But, for every good looking woman, there are at least 10 men around them, so I just stay away. It isn't worth the hassle. Almost all locals working on base are Iraqi men. Contracted women are from all over the world, Philippines, Jordan (interpreters), India, South America, Australian, Turks, British, and American.

Q. In the picture, those supplies look a mess, how do you find anything?

A. I was able to find many pallets of cargo destined for the agency I work for. Others were marked for another group, but I beat them to it, so we got another skid of water. I was able to load up a 40ft low boy trailer with no room to spare with equipment that I found.



Cal with fellow workers

Q. Big John Pessoni, wants to know how he can get a pair of those brown boots, size 13. He says they look comfortable are they?

A. I'll take my 'Nam jungle boots over these any day. These wear out in no time. Mine are wearing thin on the heel already and I've only had them since August. Tell Big John they aren't worth it, unless you get the ones that are standard issue for the special ops people. I don't have those, at least not yet.

Q. Can you send us back a captured RPG or some other souvenirs for the reunion?

A. You want an RPG, you better take a number. I would want a few first. By the way, you did notice what I was carrying in the photos. That is Mr. Ivan.

Q. Are you the old man there? Does anyone ask your advice?

A. I am actually younger than many Soldiers/Marines and Airmen over here, so I don't get asked, at least not before the local Marines found out I was a 'Nam vet .They really had questions when they found out I served at Khe Sanh. Today's Marines are just like we were — young mostly, tough and ALL ITCHIN for a FIGHT.

Q. In 'Nam, we had sappers hopped up on drugs. Are those suicide bombers on drugs?

A. The sappers in Vietnam were different from the ones here in Iraq. These guys actually think (no drugs or alcohol needed) that when they blow themselves up, they are going to a better life and will be with Allah. The former regime along with the PLO, Syria and Iran will pay their relatives up to $25,000 for each one who gets blown up. They have no problem getting volunteers. They have their opium and hash but for the suicide bombers, there is no need.

Q. Thanks, Cal, for the interview. We hope to see you at the reunion in Chicago next summer.

Semper Fi
Jim "Jimbo" Wodecki

❋

Publisher Note: PJ & Jimbo Wodecki sent supplies to Cal. Here is his response to their generosity:

Thank you so much for the two boxes of goodies. They just showed up this past couple of days and already are almost gone. The Marine security guard also says thanks for the pocket knives and D-ring key chains. Hmmmmm... Marines and knives! Interesting combo!

The attached Christmas cards were nice to receive and I couldn't believe that someone took the picture of me and Short Round. That picture means a lot to me, and I'm sure it means as much to Short Tound.

I have been real busy traveling lately, down into the Green Zone and out to Baghdad for the past week. It appears I will be transferred there sometime soon, not sure when. I will be working on station with the people I've been supporting for the past two months. They already have my desk, sleeping quarters and provisions ready for me, just waiting for the signal to go. When I get back, I can give more details, but right now I can't. It was like when I worked in the Choi Hoi out of MACV — only tell you just enough to get your interest

Still doing 12-hour days, 7 days a week. We had Thanksgiving off. I believe my next day off will be Christmas. Not so bad, two days off this year since the first part of August. We still are taking incoming, only averaging 3-10 rounds a day. A big difference from Khe Sanh. Camp Victory South is about 4 times the size of the Khe Sanh combat base, so to me, it's nothing. I just go about my business without interruption while a bunch of these guys even some of the older ones run scared. I just laugh. Well, enough for now. Again thanks, guys. We'll meet in Chicago. I found out that I'll be able to get back home the end of June, so the reunion will be no problem. So take care and stay in touch. THANKS SEMPER FI!!

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News From Iraq

Submitted by Sam Messer
Written by Lt. Col. D.G. Bellon, USMC, RCT 1 HQ Co, UIC 40145, FPO AP 96426-014

Dear Dad –

Just came out of the city and I honestly do not know where to start. I am afraid that whatever I send you will not do sufficient honor to the men who fought and took Fallujah. Shortly before the attack, Task Force Fallujah was built. It consisted of Regimental Combat Team 1 built around 1st Marine Regiment and Regimental Combat Team 7 built around 7th Marine Regiment.

Each Regiment consisted of two Marine Rifle Battalions reinforced, and one Army mechanized infantry battalion. Regimental Combat Team 1 (RCT-1) consisted of 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion (3rd LAR), 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines (3/5); 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines (3/1)and 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry (2/7). RCT-7 was slightly less weighted but still a formidable force. Cutting a swath around the city was an Army Brigade known as Blackjack. The Marine RCTs were to assault the city while Blackjack kept the enemy off of the backs of the assault force. The night prior to the actual invasion, we all moved out into the desert just north of the city. It was something to see. You could just feel the intensity in the Marines and Soldiers. It was all business. As the day cleared, the Task Force began striking targets and moving into

final attack positions

As the invasion force commenced its movement into attack positions, 3rd LAR led off RCT-1s offensive with an attack up a peninsula formed by the Euphrates River on the west side of the city. Their mission was to secure the Fallujah Hospital and the two bridges leading out of the city. They executed there tasks like clockwork and smashed the enemy resistance holding the bridges. Simultaneous to all of this, Blackjack sealed the escape routes to the south of the city. As invasion day dawned, the net was around the city and the Marines and Soldiers knew that the enemy that failed to escape was now sealed. 3/5 began the actual attack on the city by taking an apartment complex on the northwest corner of the city. It was key terrain as the elevated positions allowed the command to look down into the attack lanes. The Marines took the apartments quickly and moved to the rooftops and began engaging enemy that were trying to move into their fighting positions. The scene on the rooftop was surreal. Machine gun teams were running boxes of ammo up 8 flights of stairs in full body armor and carrying up machine guns while snipers engaged enemy shooters. The whole time the enemy was firing mortars and rockets at the apartments. Honest to God, I don't think I saw a single Marine even distracted by the enemy fire. Their squad leaders, and platoon commanders had them prepared and they were executing their assigned tasks.

As mentioned, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry joined the Regiment just prior to the fight. In fact, they started showing up for planning a couple of weeks in advance. There is always a professional rivalry between the Army and the Marine Corps, but it was obvious from the outset that these guys were the real deal. They had fought in Najaf and were eager to fight with the Regiment in Fallujah. They are exceptionally well led and supremely confident. 2/7 became our wedge. In short, they worked with 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines. We were limited in the amount of prep fires that we were allowed to fire on the city prior to the invasion. This was a point of some consternation to the forces actually taking the city. Our compensation was to turn to 2/7 and ask them to slash into the city and create as much turbulence as possible for 3/1 to follow. Because of the political reality, the Marine Corps was also under pressure to "get it done quickly." For this reason, 2/7 and 3/1 became the penetration force into the city. Immediately following 3/5's attack on the apartment buildings, 3/1 took the train station on the north end of the city. While the engineers blew a breach through the train trestle, the Cavalry soldiers poured through with their tanks and Bradley's and chewed an opening in the enemy defense. 3/1 followed them through until they reached a phase line deep into the northern half of the city. The Marine infantry, along with a few tanks then turned to the right and attacked the heart of the enemy defense.

The fighting was tough as the enemy had the area dialed in with mortars. 3/5 then attacked into the northwest corner of the city. This fight continued as both Marine rifle battalions clawed their way into the city on different axis. There is an image burned into my brain that I hope I never forget. We came up behind 3/5 one day as the lead squads were working down the Byzantine streets of the Jolan area. An assault team of two Marines ran out from behind cover and put a rocket into a wall of an enemy strongpoint. Before the smoke cleared the squad behind them was up and moving through the hole and clearing the house. Just down the block another squad was doing the same thing. The house was cleared quickly and the Marines were running down the street to the next contact. Even in the midst of that mayhem, it was an awesome site. The fighting has been incredibly close inside the city.

The enemy is willing to die and is literally waiting until they see the whites of the eyes of the Marines before they open up. Just two days ago, as a firefight raged in close quarters, one of the interpreters yelled for the enemy in the house to surrender. The enemy yelled back that it was better to die and go to heaven than to surrender to infidels. This exchange is a graphic window into the world that the Marines and Soldiers have been fighting in these last 10 days. I could go on and on about how the city was taken but one of the most amazing aspects to the fighting was that we saw virtually no civilians during the battle. Only after the fighting had passed did a few come out of their homes. They were provided food and water and most were evacuated out of the city. At least 90-95% of the people were gone from the city when we attacked.

I will end with a couple of stories of individual heroism that you may not have heard yet. I was told about both of these incidents shortly after they


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occurred. No doubt some of the facts will change slightly but I am confident that the meat is correct. The first is a Marine from 3/5. His name is Corporal Yeager (Chuck Yeager's grandson). As the Marines cleared and apartment building, they got to the top floor and the point man kicked in the door. As he did so, an enemy grenade and a burst of gunfire came out. The explosion and enemy fire took off the point man's leg. He was then immediately shot in the arm as he lay in the doorway. Corporal Yeager tossed a grenade in the room and ran into the doorway and into the enemy fire in order to pull his buddy back to cover. As he was dragging the wounded Marine to cover, his own grenade came back through the doorway. Without pausing, he reached down and threw the grenade back through the door while he heaved his buddy to safety. The grenade went off inside the room, and Cpl. Yeager threw another in. He immediately entered the room following the second explosion. He gunned down three enemy all within three feet of where he stood and then let fly a third grenade as he backed out of the room to complete the evacuation of the wounded Marine. You have to understand that a grenade goes off within 5 seconds of having the pin pulled. Marines usually let them "cook off" for a second or two before tossing them in. Therefore, this entire episode took place in less than 30 seconds.

The second example comes from 3/1. Cpl. Mitchell is a squad leader. He was wounded as his squad was clearing a house when some enemy threw pineapple grenades down on top of them. As he was getting triaged, the doctor told him that he had been shot through the arm. Cpl. Mitchell told the doctor that he had actually been shot "a couple of days ago" and had given himself self aid on the wound. When the doctor got on him about not coming off the line, he firmly told the doctor that he was a squad leader and did not have time to get treated as his men were still fighting. There are a number of Marines who have been wounded multiple times but refuse to leave their fellow Marines. It is incredibly humbling to walk among such men. They fought as hard as any Marines in history and deserve to be remembered as such.

The enemy they fought burrowed into houses and fired through mouse holes cut in walls, lured them into houses rigged with explosives and detonated the houses on pursuing Marines, and actually hid behind surrender flags only to engage the Marines with small arms fire once they perceived that the Marines had let their guard down. I know of several instances where near dead enemy rolled grenades out on Marines who were preparing to render them aid. It was a fight to the finish in every sense, and the Marines delivered.

I have called the enemy cowards many times in the past because they have never held their ground and fought, but these guys in the city did. We can call them many things but they were not cowards. My whole life I have read about the greatest generation and sat in wonder at their accomplishments. For the first time, as I watch these Marines and Soldiers, I am eager for the future as this is just the beginning for them. Perhaps the most amazing characteristic of all is that the morale of the men is sky high. They hurt for the wounded and the dead, but they are eager to continue to attack. Further, not one of them would be comfortable with being called a hero even though they clearly are. By now the Marines and Soldiers have killed well over a thousand enemy. These were not peasants or rabble. They were reasonably well trained and entirely fanatical. Most of the enemy we have seen have chest rigs full of ammunition, are well armed, and are willing to fight to the death.

The Marines and Soldiers are eager to close with them and the fighting at the end is inevitably close. I will write you more the next time I come in about what we have found inside the city. All I can say is that even with everything that I knew and expected from the last nine months, the brutality and fanaticism of the enemy surprised me. The beheadings were even more common place than we thought, but so were torture and summary executions. Even though it is an exaggeration, it seems as though every block in the northern part of the city has a torture chamber or execution site. There are hundreds of tons of munitions and tens of thousands of weapons that our Regiment alone has recovered. The Marines and Soldiers of the Regiment have also found over 400 IEDs already wired and ready to detonate. No doubt these numbers will grow in the days ahead. In closing, I want to share with you a vignette about when the Marines secured the Old Bridge, the one where the Americans were mutilated and hung on March 31 this week.

After the Marines had done all the work and

secured the bridge, we walked across to meet up with 3rd LAR on the other side. On the Fallujah side of the bridge where the Americans were hung there is some Arabic writing on the bridge. An interpreter translated it for me as we walked through. It read: "Long Live the Mujahadeen. Fallujah is the Graveyard for Americans and the end of the Marine Corps."

As I came back across the bridge there was a squad sitting in their Amtrac smoking and watching the show. The Marines had written their own message below the enemy's. It is not something that Mom would appreciate but it fit the moment to a T. Not far from the vehicle were two dead enemies, lying where they died. The Marines were sick of watching the "Dog and Pony show" and wanted to get back to work.

Dave

Two More Heroes

by Sam Messer

This is what Marines do, and always have done. They are your neighbors, the kid who delivers your paper, the cop who protects your block, the high school football star. They are the best: the few, the proud. They lay down their lives for their country. They don't deserve mocking; they deserve to be honored and thanked.

Please read this article about a Marine who sacrificed his life for his comrades in Fallujah:

Reprinted from *The Army Times:*

Marine Sacrifices His Life for Others in Grenade Blast

by Gordon Trowbridge

Fallujah, Iraq Sgt. Rafael Peralta built a reputation as a man who always put his Marines' interests ahead of his own.

He showed that again, when he made the ultimate sacrifice of his life Tuesday, by shielding his fellow Marines from a grenade blast. "It's stuff you hear about in boot camp, about World War II and Tarawa Marines who won the Medal of Honor," said Lance Cpl. Rob Rogers, 22, of Tallahassee, Fla., one of Peralta's platoon mates in 1st Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.

Peralta, 25, as platoon scout, wasn't even assigned to the assault team that entered the insurgent safe house in northern Fallujah, Marines said. Despite an assignment that would have allowed him to avoid such dangerous duty, he regularly asked squad leaders if he could join their assault teams, they said. One of the first Marines to enter the house, Peralta was wounded in the face by rifle fire from a room near the entry door, said Lance Cpl. Adam Morrison, 20, of Tacoma, who was in the house when Peralta was first wounded.

Moments later, an insurgent rolled a fragmentation grenade into the area where a wounded Peralta and the other Marines were seeking cover. As Morrison and another Marine scrambled to escape the blast, pounding against a locked door, Peralta grabbed the grenade and cradled it into his body, Morrison said. While one Marine was badly wounded by shrapnel from the blast, the Marines said they believe more lives would have been lost if not for Peralta's selfless act. "He saved half my fire team," said Cpl. Brannon Dyer, 27, of Blairsville, Ga.

The Marines said such a sacrifice would be perfectly in character for Peralta, a Mexico native who lived in San Diego and gained U.S. citizenship after joining the Marines. "He'd stand up for his Marines to an insane point," Rogers said. Rogers and others remembered Peralta as a squared-away Marine, so meticulous about uniform standards that he sent his camouflage uniform to be pressed while training in Kuwait before entering Iraq.

But mostly they remembered acts of selflessness: offering career advice, giving a buddy a ride home from the bar, teaching salsa dance steps in the barracks. While Alpha Company was still gathering information, and a formal finding on Peralta's death is likely months away, not a single Marine in Alpha Company doubted the account of Peralta's act of sacrifice. "I believe it," said Alpha's commander, Capt. Lee Johnson. "He was that kind of Marine."

More News from Iraq

by Hank Melanson

Another great Iraq SITREP from the CO, Task Force 2/24, call sign "Mayhem 6," Lt. Col. Mark A. Smith, USMC

Semper FIDELIS! Don.

Well, the New Year is upon us...and it is my most sincere hope that this letter finds all of you in high spirits for the blessings that surely will abound in 2005!

The New Year was welcomed by the Mad Ghosts in BIG fashion. We were part of a brigade-size operation, with our "newest, best buddies" from the 2 Brigade Combat Team and Colonel "Fighting' Mike" Formica, as we forayed into previously unchartered territory along the Euphrates River. This was the largest operation to date for the Mad Ghosts and was a "full-up" round consisting of helicopter-borne assault, mechanized assault and motorized assault. It involved virtually every element of the battalion. And, our brothers in the ING were tasked, for the first time, to operate in a field environment for an extended period of time (a task they performed extremely well, I might add!) The mission was precise: establish a cordon of the area and locate Anti Iraqi Forces (AIF) and capture them, and to disrupt their seemingly never-ending supply of ammunition and explosives, with which they fight their cowardly war of IEDs and VBIEDs. Now, with all the moving parts, there are about a gazillion things that could go wrong. NONE did! The Mad Ghosts and our brigade partners were flawless in execution. They swept into an area, coming from 360', in the middle of the night, via helos, trucks, HMMWVs, tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles and at H Hour plus 20 minutes, a stretch of land approximately 16 km long by 10 kilometers wide was cordoned and owned by elements of the Mad Ghosts and the 2 BCT. Many Iraqis woke that day to a situation they had never seen! The systematic search was begun, and approximately 48 hours later, almost 100 insurgents had been identified and incarcerated and an unbelievable amount of cached weapons and explosives had been located and confiscated. Two VBIEDs were located that were in the process of being equipped with their explosives and were destroyed. This was all accomplished through a massive "team" effort, and I would like to recognize some key players:

1. The Marines of the Engineer Platoon from Virginia. They hunt weapons caches like a dog hunts squirrel. Their tenacity in search techniques has ensured hundreds of explosives that saw their life cycle completed through a safe and controlled detonation at the hands of the engineers, rather than at the trigger of a fanatical Muslim seeking a one way trip to Virgin-land. I will never be able to say enough about the performance of these Marines and the unbelievable amount of work they have accomplished for this battalion. And, more importantly, I will never be able to say thank you in any manner of sufficiency for the number of lives they have saved! But, you know what? If you could see the light in their faces when they find a cache...I think they get all the thanks they ever wanted.

2. The Marines of the Truck Platoon from Pennsylvania. Now understand, these Marines are from Truck Co, 4th MarDiv, and as such are designed to be a "tactical" asset used primarily to maneuver fighting Marines to the combat zone. However, reality of counter-insurgency requires that they also be used in a combat service support role: picking up mail, repair parts, etc. These Marines have been tireless in their support and have logged some of the longest hours known to man. And for this operation, they seamlessly transitioned into Warrior mode, and delivered hundreds of Marines to the fight, at night, with night vision goggles (NVGs) and did so without incident. They also are on the Lt. Col. Smith List of Never-Ending Thank Yous.

3. HET 9 (Human Exploitation Team). These Warriors come from all over the Marine Corps, active and reserve, and are the ones who do the field interviews of our persons of interest. Simply said: they are the best in the Marine Corps, and all of Iraq. This group of Warriors has produced more intelligence, saved more lives (both in the Mayhem AO and outside) than any intelligence asset in the war. They are remarkable, sleepless, and define "dedication to duty." CWO2 Murphy, their OIC, was a casualty in October after being shot in the foot, and they have pressed on under the leadership of M/Sgt. Ertz in a manner that is nothing short of inspiring. Please allow me one second to digress: Murph, you should swell with pride and tears right now, for YOUR Marines have been spectacular...and a testimony to your leadership and preparation. (Oh yeah,

and don't think for a second you are not in for a rash of — about your letter home following your injury describing your "ambush dance"...skip, shoot, duck, shoot, hop, shoot, swim with the fishes, shoot, etc., etc., etc.)

4. **The COC Marines.** COC stands for Combat Operations Center. These are the Marines that run the command and control systems. The radios and computers that on the modern digital battlefield are indispensable. Each of them does the work of 3 people, run long shifts and ensures the situational awareness and report/process execution that is critical in this counter-insurgency. For an operation like this one, I had both my forward COC and my Main COC in operation, and they were brilliant in their execution. They are and will always be the "unsung heroes" of the Mad Ghost deployment. (And for me personally, Cpl. Kostyn and L/Cpl. Blackford were a source of humor, the importance of which just cannot be understood unless you have attempted to command in a high stress environment. But for those who have, and for those who will, you will cherish the uncanny humor of such Marines...they helped to sooth the savage beast that is Gy/Sgt. Engram!!!)

5. **The fighting Marines of Fox, Echo, Golf and Weapons,** who take precision violence to the enemy, and a spirit for victory that knows no equal! H&S Co, who provides the security and support to all these operations, and conducts much of their own patrolling, and "hunting" of the Muj, and who have taken our FOB and turned it into a fortress. The Marines of this last paragraph are the Bn proper, and no Commander has ever had the privilege of leading a better one. My duty is their mission accomplishment and welfare...and my duty has been my honor. Now, with all of that said, let me finish by telling you the best part of the story of this Operation, which was code-named: Operation River Walk, for it goes without saying, we cannot do anything without a "code name." It is just what we do, code names and acronyms. As successful as this Operation was, it like all others, shapes us for future operations. The hunt will go on and ELECTIONS WILL OCCUR.

I have stopped watching the news from the US totally. I no longer can take the maniacal rages it places me in as I swear ungentle man-like profanities at the TV in my dust-covered cubby-hole of an office, directed at "pundits" and "experts" who do not, in my very humble opinion, have a single clue and who report every single incident that occurs here as if they are color commentating on a football game. Well, I can barely fog a mirror intellectually, but I think I know a thing or two about this war thing, and the vast amount that I don't know, I have certified geniuses like Major Dan Whisnant and CWO5 Roussell to teach me. And what I know...war is a slog. And a counter-insurgency fourth generation war is definitely a slog. The only weapon the enemy has IS the MEDIA, and the target is YOU! They are attempting to win this War by breaking your will. I pray that will not happen. Because...and this is the moral of the story, the best part of the story of Operation River Walk is what we discovered about the people. You see, our belief going into this operation was that this part of our Western zone (which we had not been able to foray into much due to other commitments) was the heart of a massive AIF insurgency, replete with popular support and headed by Wahabiists (yes, the very people who brought you the slaughter of 9/11). We found many of the Wahabiists and their caches. They are now headed to Abu Ghraib and their caches destroyed. But the people...no, what we found among the people was MUCH support for the US and what we are doing here. We found a genuine desire to live free and to ELECT who they want, not who the Imams and terrorists want. See, what we found is what we always find: a majority of people being intimidated, terrorized and oppressed by a radical, fanatical and clinically INSANE few.

We found people who want us to finish this fight, no matter how long it takes, and who were genuinely appreciative of our efforts. HUH, a little different than what you hear out of NY and Washington newsrooms. Gotta tell you, would love for my Marines to actually meet these "fighters who are resisting a foreign invasion of Iraq," because they might actually fight the way Soldiers do. NO, what we meet time and time and time again, is radical Muslim extremists whose sole goal is the defeat of America and the spreading of their brand of medieval thinking that abhors technology, enslaves women, cheapens human life and seeks the establishment of their brand of religion, or death. So I say, let all the national media talking heads rave on. Rave on about every single act of insurgent violence and trumpet it as some massive blow to the MNF effort. Rave on about how we are losing. Rave on, as if you

really care about any of what you are spewing. Just, Rave On. The ground truth is known by those actually on the ground.

And for those on the ground, we will win, we will bring freedom and democracy to a land that has NEVER known it, and we will suffer and sustain the hardship required to do it. We will do it and we will take the time required for such a massive effort in a world that wants a "drive-through window" war. We will do it in the spirit and with the best example we have: the spirit of 1776, when freedom and democracy was also brought to a land that had NEVER known it, a land that would become known as THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. We will win because, although the violence is a huge part of what we do, ultimately this global war on terror will be won by ideas. And YOUR Mad Ghost, YOUR Marine is the best example of what the best idea in the history of mankind has to offer. Their never ending decency and compassion has lit, and will continue to fuel for the people of Iraq what freedom is truly all about: respect, dignity, hope, love and a personal quest to find meaning in YOUR OWN WAY! For this, 10 of my most prized possessions and reason for my existence gave their last full measure of devotion, on the battlefields of Iraq, and for this, WE rave on!

May God Bless and Keep the families of 2/24...and may we all offer a special blessing on the families of our fallen heroes... and those of our wounded who struggle daily, particularly Regina Simon as she prays beside the bed of SSgt. Chad Simon, and is a beacon of strength and grace for us all. God especially be with you, Regina, and your wonderful husband Chad.

Lt. Col. Mark A. Smith, Mayhem 6
CO, Task Force 2/24
"Mayhem from the Heartland"
Or as the terrorists call us, "The Mad Ghosts"
Mahmudiyah, IZ
2nd Bn, 24th Marines, H&S Co, Bn Cmdr
Unit 43495 FPO-AP 96426-34

At Burial, Love and Remorse

Woodbridge Marine's Wounded Comrade Couldn't Save Him

by Ian Shapira Washington Post Staff Writer

Tuesday, November 23, 2004; as friends and relatives bade farewell to Lance Cpl. Brian A. Medina yesterday at Arlington National Cemetery, one mourner laid his crutches on the ground and put his fists on top of the silver casket carrying his comrade. Cpl. Andrew Ethridge, 23, leaned over, put his forehead on his fists and began crying. Gregory Medina, the father of the dead Marine, stood next to Ethridge, patting his back. "He was devastated and he was feeling that it was his fault, and I was telling him that it wasn't," the elder Medina said after the service. "He was saying: 'Sorry, I did what I could, I am sorry, I could have saved you.' " Cpl. Medina, 20, of Woodbridge was killed Nov. 12 in Anbar province, Iraq, one of two Washington area Marines to die there that day, according to the Pentagon.

Ethridge said in an interview that Medina had gone inside a gated home in Fallujah searching for weapons and was killed by insurgents' automatic gunfire. Ethridge, who was part of a team of Marines behind Medina's, heard the shots ring out and charged toward the house to save his friend, but he was felled by a bullet to his right leg. "I knew that with the amount of fire that was coming out [of the house], no one could escape that," said Ethridge, who roomed with Medina on Okinawa just before they were deployed to Iraq in September. Recalling how it felt to lie wounded, unable to reach Medina, he said: "I was just thinking that I couldn't get to him and that it was weird how getting shot didn't feel like I expected." Yesterday, about 75 mourners, including high school friends and teachers from Prince William's Gar-Field High School, paid their last respects to Medina, who had joined the military because of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. "He wanted payback. Something about that day hit home with him," said Medina's father, a construction inspector from Woodbridge and a former Navy Seabee. "But when he got to Iraq, I thought maybe he jumped into this too fast."

Medina was assigned to the 1st Battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment, which is part of the 3rd Marine Division, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force,

based in Hawaii. He joined the military after graduating from Gar-Field High in 2002, his father said. Yesterday's funeral was preceded by a Catholic service at the Post Chapel, where the Rev. Robert McClanahan, surrounded by a U.S. flag and lighted candles, told mourners that the measure of a life should be taken by the quality of the years, not their number. Small one-page programs with a photograph of the Marine dressed in his uniform were passed out to mourners. Excerpts of great works and maxims were printed on the back. The first one, under the headline "Brian's Legacy to His Friends and Comrades," quoted the famous lines from Shakespeare's "Henry V": We few, we happy few, we band of brothers. Medina was laid to rest near the cemetery's columbarium, in the first grave of a new row, in front of soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Gregory Medina, who sat next to his ex-wife, Lolita Converse of Newport News, accepted the U.S. flag. Medina was the 93rd service member killed in Iraq to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. He left behind three siblings, Jennifer, 19, Patrick, 11, and Andrew, 8, and a stepsister, Stephanie Converse. Harriett Rowe, a guidance counselor at Gar-Field High School who attended the funeral, recalled how Medina was well known for more than being an ROTC member. Medina, it turns out, was a sweet break-dancer. He learned the acrobatic hip-hop dance style while living in Italy with his mother during his first three years of high school. When he returned to the United States to live with his father during his senior year, Medina started a break-dancing club at Gar-Field. "When he started spinning on his head, I said: 'Brian, hold off. I don't think you should do that. I am not ready for you to break your neck,'" recalled Rowe, who was the club's adviser. "But he was real good and serious about it because he wanted to learn and wanted to teach." And people don't understand why I Love You Marines !!!

Sam Messer
CBMU301

My Son, The Soldier, Comes Home for Good

by Milton McNeely

An email forward that must be shared with you all. May our Lord Eternally Bless the Soul of this Soldier and all those who fall and have fallen protecting their Mates, Family and our Nation! Semper Fidelis, even unto death! Happy Thanksgiving, my friends. That we have such sons... and fathers... as this, is something to be truly thankful for. God bless all our boys, and their families. And may God bless and watch over my boy in Afghanistan on his third tour in a combat zone.

From Colonel Tom Sims (US Army Retired): My son, the soldier, comes home for good.

At last report, he had left Iraq and was awaiting a flight in Kuwait. With luck he will be in Germany today and then on to Texas. By the way, he is called "remains" but I know better. He is my son.

I want to tell you about him. Not because he is so great a guy, although I think so, but because he represents the thousands of sons and daughters America is sending to far away places to secure our peace and our liberties at home. Captain Sean Patrick Sims, commanding officer of A Company, 2-2 BN, 1st Infantry Division, was killed in action Nov. 13 in Fallujah, Iraq while clearing insurgent occupied buildings. A tough assignment, clearing an urban area. Dirty, dangerous work. Sean lost his executive officer the day before, and I read of the deaths of two Marine captains who were similarly killed in Fallujah.

It is sad when a father must write his own son's obituary. I don't know what to say. My son, like others falling in that conflict, was a hero who believed in his mission, his unit, and his men. He also believed leaders should be in the front leading, not following. And that is how he died. He was well liked and respected by his superiors and the men in his company, who sensed his concern for their well being. He was also concerned about the well being of the Iraqi people and did his utmost to guard them from harm. Sean was a devout Catholic, who lived the tenets of his faith on a daily basis. There is no doubt in our minds that Sean is now in heaven and in the hands of our Lord. We grieve for his loss, which is our loss, but not for his soul. If anything, we ask his intercession on our behalf as he is now

much better placed for that effort.

I don't know what to say or how to describe the sacrifice of your blood for this country. Having served in Vietnam twice, having a father who spent 36 years as a soldier through two wars, and a brother who served in Vietnam twice and is now 100% disabled from his injuries there, I am encouraged by the awareness of our countrymen for the sacrifices of our children. I am thankful for the realization by our citizenry that freedom is not free.

My son was not a rampant political supporter for any party, although he was probably more Republican by instinct. But he did have an abiding trust, and belief in the United States of America. He felt we are a moral nation, steadfast in our principles. This nation does not take its commitment of its sons and daughters to war lightly. But unlike many nations in the world, we do not shirk our duties to commit our blood to just and necessary causes. Because that is what keeps us free.

I think he understood something which seems to have been lost in the debates over weapons of mass destruction and poor intelligence estimates in this particular war. That is that sovereign nations must be held accountable for their actions. We cannot tolerate nations that hide behind borders and provide support to enemies who are intent on our destruction. We can debate on how this war developed and was executed. It can not be debated that nations now look carefully at their responsibility and accountability before providing such support. America has made its statement. If you support terrorism, we will find you and destroy you, whatever the cost.

My son understood this and believed what he was doing was right. But he also believed that you can't go in and destroy a country and walk away. He was anxious for the insurgents to be quickly defeated so we could start the nation-building that Iraq so sorely needs. He chafed at the delays and the debates in implementing aid. He was not a romantic. He understood well the backwardness of the country, the stranglehold of its religion and more challengingly, the social and political pressure of the tribal system. They all looked insurmountable when you add them up. But he had been raised in a tradition of grit and putting one foot forward at a time, so he was not deterred by the challenge. He was faced with a difficult, dirty and seemingly impossible task, but his response was not how do I get out of it but how do I get it done.

I think his sacrifice to his nation can best be summed up in a message I received from a friend expressing condolences for his loss: His sacrifice was made to keep my family, my sons and my grandchildren as well as all Americans safe and free and for that we will eternally be grateful. That's nice. My son would agree. That's what he thought he was doing. In retrospect, the true hero here is his wife, who is left a young widow with a young son to raise. She is a woman of grace and grit. She will do well by her son and her warrior husband.

Regards,
Tom Sims
(Col. US Army Retired)

Khe Sanh Memories

Khe Sanh was so very long ago to me,
They now even have tours there for all to see.
No incoming, no trenches, no body bags at all,
Not even brave warriors would not let it fall.
Time passes, we get older, and memories begin to fade,
Unfortunately, the ghosts stay with us every day.

Eternally Bonded

Twenty Seven seconds for each mortar to fall.
From Hill 881N. "Incoming" we did call.
Twenty-seven years and the echo is still there.
Those haunting memories, sometimes so hard to bare.
Our lives go on, the older grayer we become.
But we remain Eternally Bonded, equally as one.

David "Doc" Steinberg

Where DOCs Come From

by HM2 David "Doc" Steinberg

I don't know how many enlisted in the U.S. Navy specifically to become a corpsman. I was in my 3rd year of college as a Psychology major at a University in Chicago, tired of fighting the SDS (Students For a Democratic Society, an organization that disappeared along with the anti-Vietnam protests once the draft was replaced by the birth year lottery...it must not have seemed so important once their butts were safe from the draft.) My Navy recruiter said that with my background I would surely end-up as a corpsman on a psych ward in a Naval hospital, far from that thing going on in Vietnam, which was just heating up in those early months of 1966.



"Doc" Steinberg at Khe Sanh

I joined the Navy to serve as my father did for 4 years during WWII. I joined the Navy since my Uncle, for whom I was named, 1st Lt. David Steinberg, USMCR, was killed at Iwo Jima. To join the Marines would have been too painful for the family. I joined the Navy because I had 4 years of high school Army ROTC, attaining the rank of captain and winning a high school letter for being part of the Precision Rifle Drill Team that won the State championship. After those years of spit and polish, I refused to ever wear a uniform that had brass and needed to be shined with brasso (still cannot get that smell out of my nose to this day.) I joined the Navy because I entered as a HN Hospital Corpsman or E-3 right out of boot camp because of my college credits.

In June of 1966, I took my oath while standing on the 3rd baseline at the Chicago Cubs Wrigley Field ball park. The Cubs Team was lined up along the 1st baseline. Our gaggle of Navy enlisted, were called the Chicago Cubs Company. Our families where invited to watch us take our oath and we were allowed to join them watching the baseball game before we said our good-byes in the stands and promptly boarded awaiting Navy buses for the Great Lakes and Boot Camp that lasted 8 weeks.

My knowledge of precision rifle drill and marching automatically put me in the position of ROPC, Recruit Petty Officer Chief (drill instructor complete with sword and responsibility for our Recruit Company). We won all the honor flags and I marched the company to all classes and required tests (smoke house, gas chamber, swim tests 1-4, etc.) You know I never qualified for swimming, since I never was tested. Once I marched my men to the pool I was yelled at to get my men into the water by the numbers. Once the last group jumped in, I was yelled at to get to the other side of the pool and get my men out of their *#% pool building.

On the last day of Navy boot camp, the men got their striker assignments throughout the Naval Fleet and on-shore operations. The Corpsmen were sent to Hospital Corps School for another 4 months. We learned medicine and healing from Navy nurses and doctors. We gave saline injections to one another as practice, and we laid out stretchers and practiced using field dressings and preparing for evacuation of the wounded, or sick. We were taught how to keep those aboard ships and on the ground safe from injury and disease through sanitation and preventive medicine (although nothing said about supervising the burning of the half barrels from the shitters.) The good news was that there were women. I mean Waves, those of the opposite sex, who were in our classes. The bad news was that we were competing for academic awards throughout Hospital Corp School and while I did place third, the first 2 places went to women.

On the last day of Hospital Corps School, we were assigned to our new duty stations — some to ships, some to Naval and Marine bases and others immediately to FMF or Fleet Marine Force training to serve the Marines in combat. Wherever our assignment was, the training we received was adequate and professional. It was said to be equal to a 2nd year med student's and all were prepared to "Do Our Best"

which is all we ever could do in times of peace or combat.

I spent the next year at St. Albans Naval Hospital, Long Island, NY. It was a big hospital and I served on many types of wards and clinics before being accepted to Operating Room Technician Training (setup the surgical suites, prepare and sterilize the instruments, circulate and scrub surgery) where you had to know the numerous surgical procedures as well as the surgeons, if you were to pass the proper surgical instrument at the proper time. We did surgery for combat and non- combat injuries and for all the retired and military dependents from all branches of the military.

I was actually seeing the end of the story I was about to live. These Naval Hospitals were where the combat wounded I later treated on Khe Sanh's Hill 881S for more than 3 months, and later in the bush along the Perfume River near Hue, and the triple canopy jungles off Hill 55 SW of Danang would end-up; that is, if they survived my field medical treatment, helicopter medevac to an in-country Medical Battalion, transfer to a Hospital Ship or NSA, Danang and then on to Japan, etc.

This is also where I saw the real tragedy of war. Not the loss of life or limb, but the reality of our fighting men and women returning to the "World." Many of the amputees did not realize the true extent of their life-changing wounds until they arrived at the hospital where they were to finally be reunited with their loved ones again after their trip to hell and back. Remember that once wounded, the future amputee was in a daze with immediate surgery of the limb — if beyond all hope or following unsuccessful debridement, uncontrolled infection and subsequently, the decision to sever the limb was necessary to save the life of the wounded person. Following months of surgery, stump revisions and getting around on crutches or in a wheel chair on some Ortho Ward in many places along the way back to our Naval Hospital, they remained with other amputees in the same circumstances. They joked around, played games and raced down the halls in wheel chairs doing wheelies. They had become accustomed to their life among the other wounded and helped each other out as they did in war. But "Oh Baby" they would tell me, I am back in the "World" and my gal and my family are coming to see me! They were still the young warriors who left for war and they survived unchanged in their minds and surely they were getting along well, although they had never been tested outside of the accommodating environment that a Naval Hospital provides with ramps and other things that today we take for granted with Disability Laws and provisions.

The tragedy I referred to was more horrific than I would ever later experience in the field and later in many years as an EMT back in civilian life. The tragedy was yet days later when I again passed by that "Oh Baby, my gal and family are coming this weekend." Instead of being filled with stories of hope, he laid under covers, depressed and appeared to have given up. While a one-eyed man is King among the blind, these heroes finally saw the "World," but the "World" saw him completely changed, not able to move around as he did and stunned with the loss of future potential as was once imagined. The family mourned his loss of limb instead of being overjoyed at his very survival and his gal was kind, but he knew from her hollow eyes that she would not be back. I cried for him and promised myself that I would never forget this true tragedy.

I continued my time in surgery as a member of the Open Heart Scrub Team. I did my job and learned to be the best I could, receiving my new rank of HM3 or E-4. Each day other Corpsmen I knew in the Operating Room or in the hospital were receiving their orders to FMF training and 'Nam. The rumor was they needed so many because the life expectancy of a corpsman in Vietnam was about 7 days. However, I was an important member of a specialty surgical team and not every corpsman was sent to 'Nam. I was still there while others were shipped out. One day, a few of my buddies entered the Surgical Suite as I passed the instruments to the doctors during a long operation. I could see their sardonic smiles even under their surgical masks...Dave, it is your turn to become a "DOC" not just a corpsman...you got your orders to report to FMF training at Camp Pendleton, California, 1st Marine Division.

Now it was my turn. HM3 David Steinberg reported to the outskirts of beautiful Oceanside, CA. Thankfully, our new Marine Uniforms with the subdued Navy Rank on the sleeve did not have brass requiring brasso, but what is this stuff about putting our utility hat on a circular hat block and spraying the hell out of it with spray starch! Another entire

sea bag with all the utilities, khakis and greens, FMF Corpsmen do not rate the Marine dress blues. We still had our own blues, complete with fashionable bellbottoms for those formal occasions.

I wrote a song while I was in college that went:

Today I received a letter it was from Uncle Sam,

It said "Greetings My Child," you are off to Vietnam!

Well I picked up that letter and read those words of Woe,

Then quickly call my draft board to see if it weren't so.

Well, I told them I was classified as a "student,"

But they said so sternly, "By order of the President"

Without a choice I packed my bags and kissed my sweetheart good-bye,

And before I knew what was happening I lay under bomb-shelled skies!

Now listen to the moral for all you students classified 2-S,

Don't be so sure that you're exempt, for YOU may go next!

My first day in the chow hall line, I understood what they meant by rank has its privileges. I was called out of line and invited to dine with the non commissioned officers in their own mess area. In the Navy an E-4 Petty Officer is nothing and deserves nothing except less duty nights and weekends. I liked this Marine stuff.

We played jungle combat, qualified with the M-14, the .45 pistol, and practice hand grenade, dug trenches and shared a poncho tent half and pole with a comrade who provided the other poncho half and pole so we could sleep in a cozy pup tent...just like we would in 'Nam...are you kidding me? We manned fighting holes on top of a tall hill overlooking the Pacific Coast Highway and shivered all night due to the cool October Night...not the fear of Victor Charlie, who might be lurking in the hills of Camp Pendleton.

After 30 days leave home to Chicago, I flew to San Bernadino Air Force Base to catch a flight to 'Nam. The troops I had trained with, took the 22-day trip to 'Nam by ship. I, HM3 Steinberg reported alone, since corpsmen were sent individually to Vietnam via Continental Airlines to Okinawa and then Flying Tiger Airlines to Danang. That 7-day life expectancy for a Corpsman in the bush must have been more than a rumor if they were sending us over one-by-one via express.

I arrived in late October of 1967 with most of my gear left in Okinawa. Slim chance that in 365 days, I would DEROS back to the "WORLD" and pick it up. I was thirsty as hell in Danang wearing those heavy green starched utilities from the states. I was thirsty and my American greenbacks would not even



Arota looking over maps towards Hill 881N

buy me a Coke until I ran into a departing "DOC" who swapped me for MPC, Military Pass Currency, available in green or red that changed often, leaving the Black Market with worthless wrong-colored paper.

I reported in and learned a few interesting facts, like its MIND over MATTER — They Don't Mind that I Don't Matter. First, due to heavy casualties among "DOCs in I Corp, my orders where changed from 1st Division to 3d Marine Division. Second, my hopes were shattered about spending my year in an OR Suite when the officer at the holding company told me that, he was very impressed with my rank and training in the Operating Room and confirmed that one day soon, after about 6 months with a Marine unit in the bush if I was still alive, I would have that opportunity. The next day I was on a 6-by truck heading north along Highway 1 to Camp Evans. There I was assigned to the BAS, Battalion Aid Station of the 26th Marines, who were engaged at Con Thien, Gio Linh and along the Cua Viet River. I had my own Willy's Jeep ambulance and got

my _ ton Military License to drive it everywhere and to fool around on the mule, a pallet on wheels that they would drop loaded with supplies dangling from a parachute. For us it was a go-cart. I remained with the BAS through early December, when we were ordered to pack-up the BAS, turn Camp Evans over to the Army's 101st Airborne, and move to Dong Ha where we were to set up the BAS in preparation for 3/26 to move to that base. We took over a few hooches and dug a bunker that even the rats would have been proud to share with us during incoming. We no sooner completed the bunker than we received word not to unpack, but move the BAS. It consisted of about 15 pallets, the Dang Ha air strip for shipment to a lovely, quiet, mountain local called Khe Sanh.

After nearly 15 days of sitting on the airstrip with the gear, our ride to Khe Sanh arrived. It was now early January and I reported with the gear to the far end of the base to Dr. Feldman. I was one of the Senior Corpsmen and did my daily sick calls by day and typed up death notices on the KIA's by night (Died in Thau Thien Province from whatever). Life



BAS 3/26 home of Doctor Ed Feldman

was good but the clock was ticking. We just didn't know it.

Something in the air was different earlier in the night before the ammo dump got hit early the next morning. We were told to burn all of our letters from home in case we were overrun. Overrun? That was a good bedtime thought as my eyes closed and those of us in the tent side-by-side on cots drifted off to sleep.

0530 or whatever...BOOM BANG BOOM...we all ran from the Corpsman Tent, and jumped into any depression in the red dirt — incoming, outgoing, the ammo dump was lit-up like the 4th of July. It was dark and we scattered to safety. I curled up like a ball under a pallet near the end of the Khe Sanh runway and fell back asleep. The morning sun and the relative quiet woke me and I climbed out from under the depression I had clawed-out with my bare hands during the chaos. Yes, the pallet of 105 mm artillery rounds protected me just fine...was I nuts!

Later that day, I was told that there had been heavy Corpsmen losses on Hill 881S and that I should take a few things and as a Senior Corpsman, go up there and check things out. I flew in by Huey Helicopter and jumped off with my Unit 1 Medical Bag across my chest. It was a hot LZ with incoming still pounding the Hill. "Corpsman up," was the first thing I heard, and I crested the hill near a motor or gun pit where a Marine was on his back clutching his chest and gasping for air. After months at the BAS, here I was with my very first immediate casualty. He had a sucking chest wound. All my training came back to me and I quickly took the plastic bag from a field dressing bandage and was able to seal the air leak. I wrapped him tightly and a few Marines got him onto the saddle for a medevac.



Trenchline in front of Dabney's CP, Hill881S

I finally reported to Capt. Dabney and told him I was to check on the corpsman situation on the Hill for the BAS down on the Khe Sanh Combat Base. I asked him where the other DOCs were on the Hill. He told me that I was standing in front of him. I was immediately assigned to Lt. Lawrence Boudria of the 3rd Platoon, India 3/26 for all my days on the Hill and what was to turn out to be many interesting months through the summer after leaving the Hill in April. There was one other DOC on our side of the Hill and Dabney ordered me NEVER to be on the same side of the Hill as him EVER! As it turned out, the two of us were the only DOCs for a long time.

The story of the Hill and the DOCs like myself who survived the entire siege is best saved for another time...my intent is to show, where we DOCs come from. We are all Brothers, Eternally Bonded.

Christmas 67 at Con Thien

By Bob McLane

In the fall of 1967, hundreds of bicycles and small trucks carried thousands of tons of rice and bullets along the Ho Chi Min trail through the not so distant mountains to re-supply the hidden army we were fighting across the DMZ. Countless 500-pound bombs dropped from never-ending flight missions of B-52's had failed to stem the flow of supplies.

From as far as seventeen miles away, dozens of long range North Vietnamese artillery batteries hidden in caves along the border of the DMZ, pounded Con Thien night and day. I had been up to the isolated Marine base several times in November, riding shotgun on convoys delivering ammunition and C-rations. This time we were bringing hot turkey and cold eggnog. I volunteered to ride in the lead truck. I had heard stories of guys on a convoy losing their legs because of land mines. I decided to take my chances on the roof of the deuce and a half. I crossed my legs and rested my M- 16 in my lap. I brought along a can of hard candy I had gotten from one of the cooks. I tossed pieces to the kids we passed along the road to Cam Lo. I remembered to yell Merry Christmas in Vietnamese. We rolled through the barbed wire gate around noon and immediately began unloading our Christmas cargo. I laughed at the other guys riding in the convoy. Their faces and uniforms were covered in red dust from the dirt road we had been riding on since we left Cam Lo and headed north. My own face was spotless. Riding on the lead vehicle had its advantages. Con Thien was a cluster of sandbagged bunkers surrounded by mine fields and razor wire. The six 105 howitzers of Fox battery were set up and ready to fire support for any patrols in the area. We were glad we had made the trip without any trouble. We had heard stories about how many times the Christmas "truce" had been violated last year. The cooks set up a chow line and started serving Christmas dinner. They were in a hurry to get this over with and get the hell out of there before something bad happened. The gunny walked over to me and held out a carton of eggnog. "This is for you, McLane." I looked at him and shook my head. "No thanks, Gunny, that is for the guys up here." He smiled at me and shook his head. "No, this eggnog is for you. Watching you riding on the roof of that truck this morning made me proud to call you a Marine, in spite of your weird ways." The gunny didn't have to twist my arm. It was a hot day.

The guys in Fox battery were like most Marines in any line outfit, they could use a shave and a shower. Most were shirtless in the sun. All wore helmets and flak jackets. So far the artillery batteries on both sides had honored the Christmas truce. The food disappeared fast and it was time for us to head south. I climbed back on the roof of the lead truck and waved good-bye to the guys in Fox battery. We rolled out of the gate. We made it back to Dong Ha without any trouble. Eleven months of war still lay ahead of me, but I never forgot the excitement and pride I felt that Christmas Day riding into Con Thien.

The Battle for Hill 950 06 June 1968

Shortly past midnight, approximately 19 very sudden, loud screeching rockets pierced the calm, silent, very dark summer jungle night, exploding on Khe Sanh Combat Base, killing two, and wounding eleven. Killed were Rodney C. Little who was sitting on an orange crate playing cards when the rounds hit, striking the nearby Seabee tent just across the roadway. A round struck the top of the tent pole so that it detonated as an air burst. Also killed was Senior Chief Equipment Operator Donald J. Barnes who had been sent to KSCB to maintain the heavy equipment used to construct roads and facilities at the rapidly-expanding base. June 5, 1967 was the first day of his second tour of Vietnam service. The Seabee camp at Dong Ha was later named in his memory. During the attack, Gunnery Sergeant James Wilkinson Moore, Jr., of H&S Co., 1/26, dashed from his bunker to go to the Seabee bunker, but was knocked back by the blast. Although he suffered torn cartilage, and bruises to his ribs, he still assisted in the evacuation of the wounded, and only after doing so would allow himself to be treated and evacuated.

At 0125 Hours, the SOG unit located at the Old French Fort just east of Khe Sanh village received 6 mortar rounds. The main attack, however, was an assault atop the very steep Alpha Relay on Hill 950. This hill's radio relay capability was used as a radio relay since the PRC-25 radios used by patrols mov-

ing on the steep hills and deep valleys were "line-of-sight." They frequently moved into positions where it would have been impossible to communicate with the headquarters on KSCB were it not for this high radio relay site. Approximately 40-50 North Vietnamese Army soldiers of the 6th Battalion, 95th Regiment, 325C Division, attacked 950 from Hill 1015 to its east.

A bunker occupied by (call sign) PINEFOLD RELAY, Cpl. David Buffalo, Cpl. Dale Lloyd Speir, and L/Cpl. Kenneth S. Howard, Marines from H&S Co., 1/26 on the north side of the outpost, were isolated throughout the attack. Cpl. Buffalo was on the radio, calling in artillery on the positions from where the NVA fired, while the other two Marines with him looked and listened for rockets from the north that were fired over the hill towards KSCB. Following the fourth volley of rockets, Howard heard grenades explode on the outpost, and Buffalo reported the outpost under attack. Speir observed an NVA soldier entering their bunker, and unloaded half a magazine at him. Howard observed three other NVA attempting to enter the adjacent bunker, left his bunker and opened fire on them. While outside his bunker, another NVA soldier tossed a grenade into the bunker containing Buffalo and Speir. It had been raining for about ten days and the deck of the bunker was soft mud. Buffalo was near his rack as Speir moved from side to side. "When the grenade went off I remember feeling something hot hitting me. Howard came back into the bunker. Neither of us knew at that time what had happened to Speir. It was at this time I whispered to PINEFOLD that I was hit and the camp had been overrun. They asked me to key my set, once for yes, twice for no, in response to their questions if it got too dangerous to speak. I told them to fire on the camp as it seemed we were the only ones left and in the bunker," said Buffalo.

Buffalo continued. "We found out later, Speir was already dead. The ground was muddy. I always thought the grenade that killed him and wounded me had sunk in the mud before it went off, and he had caught shrapnel in his chest because he wasn't wearing his flak jacket. I was saved because of the combination of the grenade sinking and my being on the top bunk, away from the major explosion. It could be true that Speir either fell on the grenade partially or it landed on him, but as I recall, he was standing. As the night wore on, I prayed that we would be safe and made every promise in the book, if God would see me through this."

Cpl. Wethy told machine gun #2 that KSCB was under attack and then alerted Sgt. Richard W. Baskin, who was in charge of the security detachment atop the outpost. The area of Alpha Relay was very small; there were only 9 Marines from the Security Platoon, radio operators consisting of 6 Marines from 1/26, and 3 Marines from A Co 3Rd Recon. These 18 Marines occupied sandbagged bunkers covered only with ponchos to protect them from wind and rain. It was very easy for these people to just lob grenades in and be effective. Sgt. Baskin had been helo-lifted to the top of Hill 950 on Monday, 28 May 1967 to relieve Sub Unit #5 Marines. Including himself, he had nine Marines in his squad, consisting of two, four-man machine gun crews.

At 0150 Hours a flare was tripped about 30 meters out from the hills east side. One minute later, a RPG fired by the NVA sailed over the hill and detonated a trip flare on the west side of the pe- rimeter. The eastern side of the hill began receiving hand grenades, a few RPGs, and a high volume of small arms fire. L/Cpl. Castillo yelled, "Incoming grenades, everybody get up, we're under attack!" A grenade exploded in front of his position on the west side of the hill. Sgt. Baskin yelled to Cpl. Wethy, the radioman on watch, to bring in artillery on the east side of the hill. Baskin ran out of his hootch and before anybody knew it, there were NVA swarming up the eastern side of 950 and grenades were going off all over the place. "People were screaming and hollering and there was a lot of confusion. At the time I was standing outside my hooch, Baskin dashed into his bunker and grabbed his M-16 but didn't bother with his flak jacket or cartridge belt."

During the initial attack, grenades hit a bunker containing 4 snipers. PFC David Stephenson managed to escape and while moving, was hit by NVA rounds, fell, and was pulled to safety by Cpl. John Roland Burke and PFC Thomas R. Back. A grenade exploded in their midst, knocking both snipers into the bunker and throwing Stephenson away from it. Burke was badly hit in the head, and although bleeding profusely, attended to L/Cpl. Carper, who was also wounded. Burke placed Carper on top of the rack and placed his body on top of him to keep shrapnel and other flying objects from hitting him. As Stephenson struggled to get into the bunker,

another grenade exploded, knocking him into the bunker. Burke, after rendering aid to the wounded, charged the enemy from his bunker and was killed by a deadly hail of enemy fire.

Sgt. Baskin saw three NVA soldiers throw the charges/grenades into the snipers' bunker and heard their screaming. Two managed to get out only to be cut down by the waiting NVA, despite his at- tempts to cover them. At this point, Baskin took a W/P grenade, pulled the pin, let the spoon fly and held it. "He finally released the thing, when he and the soldier were looking at each other. It hit him right in the chest when it went off. It was terrible. It just blew him off his feet. His partner there caught a fraction of it, and both of them were aflame. He may have been a lieutenant, and was just blown to pieces. He was like ash when I found him that morning."

Cpl. Powell's machine gun #1 was hit with grenades, seriously wounding Cpl. J. B. Powell, L/Cpl. Lawrence, and PFC's Monroe, and Stephenson. When their machine gun guarding the eastern sector of Hill 950 became unserviceable, the men decided to fall back towards L/Cpl. Balzano's position. L/Cpl. Larry Eugene Lawrence, gunner for the machine gun, covered their withdrawal. When they came under fire, L/Cpl. Lawrence fired point blank at the enemy, driving them back, allowing the three men to make it to safety. Lawrence was hit, fell, stood up again, and was killed. Sgt. Baskin saw him get hit. "I wanted to go out, but I just couldn't. There were NVA on our right flank who were penetrating right up through the center," said Baskin

PFCs David Stephenson, and George D. Monroe, staggered into the position manned by L/Cpl. Richard C. Green and PFC Jeffrey L. Arnold, just as PFC Monroe yelled, "Cpl. Powell has been hit." At that moment, two grenades were thrown into Green's hole, and although they exploded, no one was injured. A trip flare went off on the east side showing four North Vietnamese soldiers jumping up and down on top of the radio bunker. L/Cpl. William C. Balzano killed two with the machine gun, while PFC Arnold and L/Cpl. Green killed the other two with their rifles. Sgt. Baskin had moved into a hole in front of Green and Arnold to cover the southeast, as Castillo dashed from the hole containing Balzano's machine gun and took over Baskin's position, killing several NVA soldiers.

The hilltop was shrouded in dense fog. Trip flares created eerie silhouettes. Sgt. Baskin heard Balzano firing his machine gun. As Baskin moved, Cpl. Powell, the gunner on the other machine gun position that had been overrun, came up to Baskin, fell at his knees and said, "Sarge, help me, I am hit in the back." Baskin grabbed him and dragged him to his hooch. They could hear rockets to the northwest over their heads heading towards Khe Sanh.

When Balzano's machine gun froze, he and PFC Arnold desperately attempted to repair it, breaking it down and checking each piece, but were unable to fix it. Balzano told Baskin: "I can fire one round, but can't get any sustained rate of fire out of it." Baskin heard PFC Steve Arnold say: "He's with Cpl. Powell and is seriously wounded. This was my first firefight and I know I'm in a position now where everyone's depending on me as I depend on everyone else." PFC Stupar dashed from the recon bunker, only to be shot and killed. The recon bunker was hit by a RPG that entered the bunker through an opening and exploded inside, killing the three occupants.

The NVA force clearly had fire superiority in addition to their element of surprise. Sgt. Baskin spotted the NVA setting up a machine gun atop the bunker in the center of the outpost using the sandbags for the base of their gun. L/Cpl. Green continued firing at the NVA, and at least five or six fell over the cliff. Marines not in the radio bunkers, or at the east machine gun position, withdrew to the southwestern side of the perimeter where Baskin established a 360 perimeter around one bunker and two other positions. Balzano, PFC Steve Arnold, Cpl. Powell, and PFC Monroe manned a machine gun position while Baskin, Green, and Castillo manned a bunker covering the right flank. A grenade exploded, peppering the backs of Castillo and Baskin.

By 0220 Hours, Baskin requested that artillery be fired on top of the hill. The request was granted. 4.2" mortars, 40mm dusters, and 106s blasted the hilltop. At 0230Hours, 3rd Mar Div COC reported to III MAF COC: "The situation looks grim on the hill. One report received indicated the position was overrun; however, cannot tell complete situation at this time." Ten minutes later: "Three are reported still alive. All contact has been lost with Marines on Hill 950: appears position completely overrun."

At 0500 Hours, fog completely shrouded the outpost. NVA soldiers held the bunker containing the three radios in the center of the hill. Sgt. Baskin told

Castillo, "We got to get over there; we got to get that radio. Castillo picked up two rifles from dead NVA. Sgt. Baskin told him to spray covering fire as he maneuvered to the center and assaulted the communication bunker occupied by the NVA. "I knew it was either take that bunker or stay here all day, and who knows what may happen?" As Baskin, Castillo, Balzano, Green, and PFC Arnold went on line and assaulted the bunker, the NVA fled. "They showed their backs and we were happy; we knew we had them," said Baskin. They seized the bunker along with a NVA POW. Communication was restored with KSCB. The Marines heard the NVA dragging their dead from the position, and fired at them until they disappeared into the woods.

Cpl. Buffalo had worried about the antenna sticking out of his bunker. The NVA had evidently assumed no one was alive in this bunker. After throwing one grenade, they made no further assaults on it.

As the morning dawned, "I heard someone ask, 'What the hell is Vietnamese to stop?'

I jumped out of the bunker and shouted "Americans, Americans!" Someone said, "Come the hell out of there," and I did with both my hands preceding the rest of me. I was afraid I'd be shot if I didn't. Howard came out after me. I couldn't walk, re-enforcements had arrived.

At 0945 Hours, KSCB received the radio call from Alpha Relay that all friendly were accounted for. At 1230Hours, weather broke, and helicopters landed elements of Co D/1/26 to secure and evacuate the WIA and KIA. A/Btry & W/1/13 had fired 3,206 rounds in support of the Hill 950 fight. Ma- rines from D/1/26 scouring the area discovered an NVA WIA, PFC Nguyen Van Chat, of C-9 Co., K9 Bn, 95th Regiment, 325-C Division. The 20 year old NVA from Thanh Hoa in North Vietnam, stated that his unit of 100 men attacked Hill 950 with 50 AK-47s and 38 CKC-90s. PFC Chat dis- closed that his unit walked two days and nights from the north of the vicinity of Dong La Ruong, with only six hours rest in the three days preceding the attack. C-9 Company was composed of 100 men (90 of which were combat effective). The mission of their unit was to overrun the Marine position and then retreat back to their base area at Dong Tri Mountain (Hill 1009, known as Hill 1015 on American military maps). The 325C Division began their infiltration into South Vietnam, crossing the Ben Hai River on 7 March 1967 and their first engagement was this attack on Hill 950.

The following gallant defenders of 950 who were KIA were:

BARNES, EOCS Donald Joseph NMCB-10
BURKE, CPl. John Roland H&S 1/26
HUBBARD, BUL3 Charles A. NMCB-4
LAWRENCE, L/CPL. Larry E A/3rd Recon
SHERRELL, CPL. David Frank A/3rd Recon
SPIER, CPL. Dale Lloyd A/3d Recon
STUPAR, L/CPL. Michael Nick H&S 1/26
WITHEY, CPL. Howard Hugh A/3rd Recon

Khe Sanh Vets Return to Vietnam with Gold Star Moms

by Bruce Geiger

In August 2004, four veterans including three Khe Sanh Vets returned to Vietnam as escorts for Operation Gold Star, sponsored by the National Dusters, Quads & Searchlights Association. Beginning with the first return trip in July 2000, the DQS organization has raised over $50,000 to bring twenty Gold Star Mothers to Vietnam to visit the sites where their sons gave their lives. Generous contributions have been made over the past five years by numerous veterans groups including the Khe Sanh Veterans and by individual members. On the four trips made to date, many veterans and several wives have made the trip at their own expense (approx. $2700 each) to escort the Gold Star Mothers throughout Vietnam. They have served as a support



The Whole Gang. L-R: Anna Roble, Bill Griffith, Betty Van Dusen, Carol Tabor, Jim & Sandy Smith, Joe O'Neal, Bruce Geiger, Betty Pulliam, Janice Dahlke

group for the mothers and provided background knowledge of the many battles and diverse locations in which they served during the conflict.

The Operation Gold Star IV group met in LA the evening of Sunday, August 16th, 2004 after arriving from their home airports. Escorts for the group included Khe Sanh vets, Bruce Geiger, Jim Smith and his wife Sandy, Bill Griffith, and DQS vet Sam Hopkins. Gold Star Mothers participating on the trip included Anna Roble, Janice Dahlke, Virginia 'Joe' O'Neal, Betty Pulliam, Carol Tabor, and Betty Van Dusen. We boarded a China Airlines flight after midnight for the thirteen hour trip to Taipei followed by another three and a half hour flight to Saigon where we began our in-country adventure with "Happy," as our in-country travel guide.

Our first two days were spent in Saigon, where we did some sightseeing and got a chance to rest a bit from our long flight. On our second morning we traveled by tour bus about a half hour south of Saigon to the Ben Luc Bridge, the site where Janice Dahlke's son Randy Mueller (D- 2nd/47th Inf, 9th Inf Div KIA – 3 Mar 69) was killed. There is a new bridge at the site alongside the old bridge that crosses the Phan Co River, a tributary of the Mekong River, We stopped and held a ceremony honoring the young soldier who was killed while guarding an engineering dredging operation at the bridge. We had a beautiful ceremony alongside the river at an old bridge guard house and concrete quay that stretched out about 10 meters into the river. We attracted a number of Vietnamese onlookers who politely stood and listened as we stood around a special flower arrangement that we had made in Saigon. Information researched by DQS in advance about her son's unit and operations were shared with the group. Mrs. Dahlke also shared remembrances of her son. This set a very positive tone for the five remaining ceremonies, and was a very uplifting experience for all the mothers and us veterans. After the ceremony, we took pictures and gave the locals some American flags and flowers as souvenirs.

In the afternoon we did more sightseeing, strolled around the Saigon streets near the hotel, and shopped before dinner. We departed Saigon the next morning after breakfast for the next leg of our journey to the beautiful mountain city of Dalat, stopping along the way for pictures (and a traffic violation) at Bien Hoa airfield, which is now a huge industrial park complex. We had lunch in the mountain town of Bao Loc after which we visited the nearby Dam Bri Falls, which is among the most famous in Southeast Asia. After getting drenched at the falls, we returned to Bao Loc to warm up with a cup of fresh Vietnamese coffee, and arrived early that evening in Dalat where we spent the next two days sightseeing, learning a bit of Vietnamese history, and shopping. We visited two ethnic Montagnard villages, a Buddhist monastery, and the Bao Di summer palace.

From Dalat we traveled east through the "Song Pha" pass and saw the huge Japanese built hydroelectric plant and pipeline on our way to the coastal town of Phan Rang. There we visited an ancient, ethnic Cham Tower before traveling to Cam Ranh Bay where we stopped at the airport. Thirty-seven years earlier this had been the place where I and tens of thousands of US troops first arrived in Vietnam. We traveled along a brand new coastal highway from Cam Ranh Bay to Nha Trang where we would spend the night. Nha Trang is truly the Riviera of Vietnam's beach resorts. Hotels are all along the oceanfront. Tourists and Vietnamese vacationers were parasailing, boating, and basking on the seemingly endless, white, sandy beaches.

In the morning we traveled north on Rt. 1, then northwest along Rt. 14 to Pleiku via Buon Ma Thuot. We passed through the Ia Drang Valley near Chu Pong Mountain where the 7th Air Cavalry fought the first major battle of the war in 1965, becoming the subject of a famous book and more recently the movie "We Were Soldiers." We had dinner and stayed the night at the Pleiku Hotel. After breakfast we stopped at the site of a former Army/Air Force base (101st Airborne) on our way to Kontum and then to Dak To where we visited a war monument (Russian T51 Tank) and stopped to pet and play with a friendly calf. We drove on to Ben Het near the border (8km) with Cambodia and Laos along the Vietnamese side of the Ho Chi Minh trail. We then returned to Kontum to visit a Catholic orphanage, and visited with kids from infants to teenagers. We also met the ARVN Captain, who on our first OGS trip in 2000 invited us into his home to share his prized rice wine. We took photos, left lots of candy, and gave a generous donation. Our trip continued back to Pleiku, then east along Rt. 19 through the Mang Yang Pass to An Khe, and An Khe

Pass to the coastal town of Qui Nhon where we checked into the Seagull Hotel and had dinner before retiring after an exhausting day.

The following morning we traveled north toward Bong Son (Binh Dinh Province) and stopped at Phu Cat, a former US airbase which is now shared by a brand new civilian airport terminal handling two flights a day. We drove north to Phu My, former site of a base camp where Carol Tabor's son Richard Eugene Tabor (E-1st/503rd Inf, 173rd AB KIA – 7 Jan 71) had been stationed and held our second remembrance ceremony nearby off Rt. 631 in a small village near where he had been killed. Local villagers observed inquisitively as we remembered our fallen brother. We rewarded their friendliness and hospitality with candy, pens, American flags, and flowers from the ceremony. We returned south to Qui Nhon for an afternoon of shopping at the local mall which looked like those in any small US town. After checking into a different hotel, we went for a swim in the South China Sea before dinner.

The next leg of our trip took us north along Rt. 1 through Quang Ngai City near the road to My Lai where the infamous massacre occurred. We drove north past the former Marine base at Chu Lai, now an off-limits Vietnamese military installation, before stopping for lunch at the Phoy Hoi garden restaurant in the beautiful town of Hoi An. After lunch we toured the local silk factory where we saw the entire process in the silk worm life cycle, as well as the spinning and weaving of silk yarn into cloth. Silk tablecloths, napkins, scarves, etc. were a real bargain, and we did lots of shopping here. Several miles farther north at Danang, we stopped at Marble Mountain to take pictures and visit the largest marble factory (one of twelve) where we shopped for beautiful, hand carved marble items. Although it began to rain, we visited China Beach where we held a brief memorial ceremony on behalf of a Gold Star Mother who was unable to make the trip. We collected some China Beach sand as a remembrance for her before checking into the beautiful Saigon Tourane Hotel in Danang. In the evening we had dinner at the Apsara restaurant which featured ethnic Cham musical entertainment and a replica of an ancient Cham tower. Back at the hotel, most of the group turned in for the evening, but a couple of us headed out to find dessert at a local ice cream parlor, the"'Indochine Gardens." They were showing "Tom & Jerry" cartoons on a big outdoor screen.

After breakfast we drove by the former "Freedom Hill" in Danang, where there had been a large military installation including a USO and PX. We made our way over to Rt. 1 near the sea and up to the Hai Van Pass, stopping to take photos of the beautiful coastal scenery. Visible from the lower roadway of the pass was a Japanese tunnel project in its final stage of construction through the mountain that will soon divert most commercial trucking from the arduous 21 km. trek over the pass. On the northern coastal side of the Hai Van Pass, we stopped at the beautiful Lang Co beach, which was a 101st Airborne Hqs. known as Eagle Beach during the war. We had refreshments and bought souvenirs before driving past the Lang Co lagoon on the west side of Rt. 1 and the Tam Giang lagoon, where three major tributaries converged from the mountains into a large estuary. Here, a major shrimp farming industry thrives in the coastal plain. We stopped at Phu Bai, the former site of a large military airfield and base, where a new civilian air terminal has recently been completed, and from which we eventually would fly to Saigon before returning home. Further north we drove into Hue City, then along the beautiful Perfume River, and checked into the Saigon Morin Hotel, the finest of all the hotels we stayed in.

After a breather and lunch in Hue, we traveled north to rural Rt. 49, where we headed west about 35 km. into the Ashau Valley and LZ Ripcord. Virginia O'Neal lost her son Samuel Stephen Lance (A-1/506th Inf., 101st AB KIA – 1 May 70) in the vicinity of Ripcord during Operation Texas Star that was launched to regain the initiative in the mountain area east of the Ashau Valley. At the base of Ripcord in a relatively uninhabited area, we held a ceremony in remembrance of the sons of Joe O'Neal and several Gold Star Mothers who were unable to make the trip. Our guide pointed out former firebases including LZ Bastogne and others which were accessible to US troops only by helicopter during the war. We returned to the Saigon Morin Hotel and went out to a local restaurant for dinner. Afterward, a couple of us took cyclo rides around the city, and I visited the famous DMZ Bar where thousands of returning veterans had autographed the walls. We rode along the Perfume River before heading back to the hotel for the evening.

The next morning we headed north again, where









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we stopped at Camp Evans, former base camp and Hqs. of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, where I spent the last three weeks of my Vietnam tour in September 1968 before returning home. We traveled north on Rt. 1 past Quang Tri City on our way to Dong Ha from where we would visit most of the Marine firebases in and around Leatherneck Square on the DMZ. We had lunch in a rather dingy roadside restaurant across the Dong Ha Bridge on Rt. 1 before heading north through Gio Linh and across the Ben Hai River about 15km. into the former "North Vietnam." Our destination was the seaside village of Vin Muoc, where the entire village of several hundred people moved underground into a network of tunnels for three years, to avoid the heavy bombing north of the DMZ. They dug many miles of tunnels, three levels deep at the edge of the sea, reaching a maximum depth of nearly 70 meters. Several of the Gold Star Moms joined us to explore a stretch of the tunnels which had been fortified and dimly lit to accommodate a growing tourist trade. In addition, the village had added new walkways, exhibits, and a brand new museum building to replace the "shack" which was there when we visited in 2000. On our return trip across the DMZ, we stopped and walked back across the old "Freedom Bridge" which had also been shored up and replanked since our 2000 visit. Water buffalos grazed warily nearby but would not let us get too close.

After passing back through Gio Linh, we headed west just below the DMZ toward A3, and then to Con Thien where we stopped to climb the hill. The 1.5 km climb up a narrow cow path to the concrete French bunker was a bit too difficult for the mothers. Having spent much of the last three months of 1967 on the hill at Con Thien, I was determined to climb to the top alone where I found the bunker overgrown with vegetation. From this vantage point at the top of the hill, I was able to locate both of my Duster positions. I took a Ziploc bag of soil. I also saw an oxcart, pulled by an ox, and got a couple of photos before my digital camera battery died. Predictably, my spare was on the bus at the bottom of the hill! Our tour bus drove south from Con Thien across the new Cam Lo Bridge (one year old) to the intersection at Rt. 9, and then east back to Dong Ha and our modest hotel on Rt. 1. After dinner I took a stroll up Rt. 1 through a relatively quiet Dong Ha which now stretched several kilometers in each direction from Rt. 9.

We arose early, ate breakfast at the hotel, and began our day with a short bus ride to a residential area to visit the last remnant of the huge Marine base at Dong Ha, an old reinforced concrete, aircraft hanger where the airfield had been during the war. It was located behind a group of houses in a residential backyard, and had become a play area of sorts for the local kids. It was here that we had chosen to hold a remembrance ceremony for John Phillip Van Dusen, (USN Seabee KIA – 20 Sep 68 at Camp Barnes, Dong Ha) the son of Betty Van Dusen. John was also a Khe Sanh veteran, having supported operations at Khe Sanh earlier in 1968. He was killed during a mortar attack at Dong Ha. A number of Vietnamese quietly observed our ceremony in the hanger, and afterward were eager to talk with our group. It made for a very rewarding experience, and we gave them American flags, pens, candy, and flowers as a token of our appreciation.

We traveled a short distance west on Rt. 9 just outside the Dong Ha Marine Base to the location of a former compound defended by 1/9 Marines in mid-1967. We held a remembrance ceremony here for Dale A. Pulliam, the son of Betty Pulliam (C-1/9 Marines, 3rd Mar Div KIA – 14 May 67) during a ground attack. Dale had also fought in actions at Khe Sanh and Con Thien.

Continuing out Rt. 9 west through Cam Lo, we stopped at Camp Carroll to explore the former Marine base where C-1/44 Dusters were based, along with the Army's big 175mm guns that supported operations throughout the DMZ. Bill Griffith and I came across a former NVA soldier who had cut his hand with a machete while tending to his herd of cows. It was bleeding and dirty, so we coaxed him to return to our tour bus where we cleaned, disinfected and bandaged the wound. He was so grateful that he gave Bill Griffith his NVA pith helmet for a few dollars.

We drove further south from Camp Carroll to a town called My Loc where I had a memorable "encounter" with a large water buffalo. For as long as I can remember, I have had an insatiable desire to pet one of these beasts, and this handsome specimen was accommodatingly tethered by a hemp rope, tied to a steel pipe that was driven into the ground. I handed my camera to Sam Hopkins, and slowly approached the grazing animal along the rope. It was

very nervous, but I whispered reassuringly to it as I bravely inched along the rope, getting close enough to stroke his wet nose just before he jerked his head and snorted at me. When I went back to Sam and the camera, I discovered he had missed the shot. I again showed Sam what to do, and approached the now irritable beast with irrational confidence. As I again got within a few inches, holding the rope tightly in both hands, the beast decided he would have no more of this and bolted to my left. The rope instantly became taut on my right side, and jerked my legs out from under me before snapping from the pipe. It zipped through my hands before I could unclench my fists, leaving me with nasty rope burns and torn blisters. Of course by now, everybody from our group and the surrounding hamlet had seen what happened and was horrified. A few of the guys helped me clean and dressed my wounds at the bus, and needless to say, I was duly teased throughout the remainder of the trip.

Further west on Rt. 9, we stopped at the Khe Gio Bridge to honor one of our C-1/44 Duster comrades, Sgt. Mitchell Stout who on 12 March 1970 had thrown himself on a satchel charge to save his buddies during a sapper attack on the bridge defenses. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, the only Air Defense Artillerymen ever to receive our nation's highest military decoration.

We traveled out Rt. 9 past the Rockpile westward toward Ca Lu where we were delayed at a bridge construction site as rock was blasted with dynamite charges. We took the opportunity to visit a Bru Montagnard village alongside the road. The shy kids hesitantly allowed us to take pictures, but gleefully mobbed us when we brought out the candy and toys. Bill Griffith was like the pied piper, finally getting them to line up to bring some order to the chaos. Some of the Gold Star Mothers held the babies and played with the children. We gave gifts to some of the elders, and finally got on our way when the roadway was opened.



Bruce Geiger with children at Ca Lu.

It was somewhat overcast when we arrived at the outskirts of Khe Sanh. We drove up the road to the former combat base through lush coffee groves and came upon the new museum building that had been constructed since our last visit in 2000. We placed a large flower wreath and held a ceremony honoring the many men who had served here. Those of us who fought here took a few minutes to tell a bit of the history of the "Hill Fights," the "Siege," and the later dismantling of the base. While others toured the museum, I was determined to find my former Duster and Quad 50 positions that I had been unable to locate on my 2000 visit due to erroneous information about the original runway location. This time I humped through the heavy vegetation to the coffee groves where the original runway had been located, and was ecstatic to find the 'blue sector' perimeter where my gun positions had been dug in during the siege. I took another Ziploc bag of red clay, took a moment to remember my Marine friends who did not survive this place, and headed back to our tour bus.



Khe Sanh village



Gold Star Mothers with memorial wreath

Our tour bus traveled back out to Rt. 9 and headed west through Khe Sanh village past Lang Vei, to the town of Lao Bao at the Laotian border. We stopped for lunch at a very nice hotel restaurant, where we had an excellent view of Co Roc Mountain where the NVA gunners had dug in their heavy

artillery to fire on Khe Sanh and the surrounding hills during the siege in 1968. After lunch we drove near the border crossing with Laos, where we bought some souvenirs from the local kids before stopping in a large, modern mall to do a little shopping. We backtracked on Rt. 9 and stopped for photographs at Lang Vei, the site of the former Army Special Forces camp that was overrun in January 1968 by the NVA using Russian T76 Tanks for the first time in the war.

By this time it was late afternoon, and we headed back along Rt. 9 to a spot between Ca Lu and the Rockpile, which was as close as we could get to LZ Margo, where the son of Anna Roble, Joseph Edward Roble (E Co., 3rd Bn/26th Marines, USMC KIA – 16 Sep 68) was killed during a heavy mortar attack while defending the Command Post and LZ.



Bill Smith, Bill Griffith, Bruce Geiger

Ironically, one day earlier Joseph Roble had saved the life of Bill Griffith, who was severely wounded during an intense firefight with the NVA, and today Bill Griffith was among the Operation Gold Star group standing in Vietnam beside Anna Roble at a remembrance ceremony in honor of her brave son. For his actions, Joseph Roble was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star with 'V' device for heroism at Arlington National Cemetery in a 1998 ceremony. We gave American flags and candy to the many Vietnamese onlookers who had been quietly observing from the road.

We returned to Dong Ha, where we had a late dinner and retired for the evening. In the morning, we traveled south where we stopped in Quang Tri City at the bridge site of a monument honoring the prisoner exchange in 1973 between North and South Vietnam. In Quang Tri city, we visited the site of the old Citadel that was all but completely destroyed when the NVA stormed across the DMZ in 1975. From Quang Tri City we traveled south

to Hue where we took a cruise on the Perfume River. After the cruise, several of us visited the more famous Citadel that had been the scene of intense fighting at the start of the Tet offensive in 1968. We ate dinner in town and spent the evening at the Saigon Morin Hotel. In the morning we drove to Phu Bai Airport where we said goodbye to our tour bus driver and his son, and caught a flight to Saigon. Our last day in Saigon featured an afternoon of high energy shopping which included a trip to the lacquer factory and to the many shops on the streets within walking distance from our hotel. On our last night in Vietnam, we took a dinner cruise on the Saigon River and reminisced about our two-week pilgrimage. The next morning we had a fabulous breakfast before departing for the airport where we said our goodbyes to our guide 'Happy' and boarded our flight to Taipei. Some nineteen hours later we arrived in Los Angeles where we lugged souvenir-laden luggage through customs, said hurried goodbyes, and scrambled to catch flights our own home towns.

We had little time together as a group at the culmination of our journey to reflect upon the intense emotions we had experienced over the past two Anetta_00weeks. The mothers were overwhelmingly grateful for having had this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. As I reflected upon this trip, I was reminded of a symbolic gesture carried out at each of our remembrance ceremonies during all of the four Operation Gold Star trips to Vietnam. It has been described by the mothers as "walking in their footsteps." At the conclusion of each ceremony honoring their fallen son, the Gold Star Mother, joined by a veteran, placed their footprints in the soil to symbolize having walked in the footsteps of her son who gave his life on this Vietnamese soil. This gesture along with the entire two-week experience enabled each of the mothers to complete an important missing piece to the difficult task of dealing with the loss of their sons. For each of us serving as veteran escorts, it had truly been a labor of love.



Remembering Our Unsung Heroes

Our brave Marines in the face of an inferno after a direct hit on the ammo dump by the North Vietnamese gunners. They attempted to save ammunition that would be badly needed for the defense of Khe Sanh.

Khe Sanh Vet Barry Fixler Answers the Call


Gun to head...


Knocks it away...


Bad guy starts shooting...


Barry dives for his gun...


Man still shooting...


Barry returns fire...


One shot...


Other makes the door...









Barry shoots and pursues and captures one of the bad guys...

In this issue...

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MEMOIRS 10
...and a sprinkling of your poetry

Cover Story

A Hero in Our Midst

by Tom Eichler

Barry Fixler is a Khe Sanh Veteran who served with Echo Company, Second Battalion Twenty Sixth Marines, Weapons Platoon, on Hill 861A.

Barry owns and operates Barry's Estate Jewelers, located in Bardonia, New York. On February 13, 2005, two men entered his store and ask to look at engagement rings. A few minutes later, both men pulled out handguns, and Barry was staring directly into a chrome automatic pistol, pointed directly at his head. Without hesitation, Barry knocked the gun away, slid down the counter and pulled out his own handgun. A gun battle ensued and he shot one of the offenders. Both armed offenders ran from the store with Barry in pursuit. The wounded gunman collapsed in the doorway, and Barry covered him and summoned help from nearby shoppers.



Barry, far left, at 1985 Welcome Home parade



Responding police units located the second gunman, along with a third suspect who drove the getaway van. They recovered additional weapons, gloves, and other items used in the attempted robbery. The men will be charged with felony robbery counts. Barry said the two men came into the store and asked about engagement rings. After a few minutes, each man pulled out a gun. He said one robber pointed a weapon, saying, "Don't move! I'll kill you." "Next thing I see is a silver automatic right in my face. All you want to do is stay alive. I did what I needed to do to defend myself. Detectives reviewed the tape from the store's video surveillance camera and ruled the shooting justifiable.

Detectives recovered the suspect's gun near his body. During the search for the armed man, the county's police used a helicopter and tracking dog. Later, Barry stood by his shop with his lovely wife Linda, who had been driving to a doctor's appointment for a sprained ankle when she saw the yellow police tape blocking access to mall. Linda said, "It happens in every area. You got two mutts who don't want to find a job, and they just want to take what other people have. This is something you read about

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

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Dale Pack .....Member At Large
Ronald Shouse.....Member At Large
Thomas Ford.....Member At Large
Robert Moxley .....Member At Large
Dan Fisher .....Member At Large

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happening to someone else. You never think it will happen to you, I am so proud of Barry." Barry's shop is adorned with a large sign printed with the American flag and the message "Barry Supports Our Troops." Maybe the bad guys didn't get the message,

Fellow merchant's came by to offer their support. Cleatis Hunter, who works across the street from Barry's shop, said he heard a gunshot and ran across the street. Hunter said the suspect was lying on the store's floor, covered in blood. John Settle, another merchant called Barry a "good guy," a Rotarian who did charity work for the community. "He does a lot for charity and is a big supporter of our troops in Iraq. Another neighbor who worked next door said, "I am just glad he didn't get hurt. He is a trustworthy businessman and is well-respected in this town."

Barry was a member of my weapons platoon and a personal friend. He had been to my home during the Chicago Welcome Home Parade, and also participated in the New York Welcome Home Parade. On behalf of the Khe Sanh Veterans, I want to give him a Big THANK YOU not only for his courage, but all the other things he does in support of ALL VETERANS.

Taps—John Friedrich, 5th Comm.

by Jim Fowler

John and I served together for over two years in Vietnam. He replaced me when I departed Khe Sanh and helped Ann and I move into our first home at Cherry Point.

From Andy Morris, 5th Comm. webmaster: I once again have the honor of passing along information about John Friedrich. John's wife Marilyn called me this morning to inform me that John had died last Thursday. John's condition had progressed to a point where she had taken John to the hospital and while being treated that day, John suffered a heart attack and died.

I spoke to John on the 13th of February, and he didn't sound very well. I had hoped that we would have him around for a few more months, yet this was not to be. I find myself saddened and happy at the same time. Sad with the loss of a good friend, and outstanding human being, and happy that John didn't suffer for a long time with his cancer. Marilyn seems to be doing good, accepting her loss. John was buried at the local military cemetery in San Diego.

Please send cards if you wish to convey your condolences. The family would also love to hear from

Memorial Page

Those Remembered	Remembered by:
S/Maj James Gaynor, USMC, KIA 22Mar68	Charles Fetter, H&MS-11
Cpt Daniel Coonan, USMC, KIA	Charles Fetter, H&MS-11
Sgt Dennis Herb, 3rd Recon, passed away	Charles Fetter, H&MS-11
Cpt Walter J Egger, C Co 1/26 C/O,USMC KIA 22Mar68	Frederick J. McEwan, C/O 1/26
L/Cpl Joseph T. Bailey, C Co 1/26, USMC KIA 19Feb68	Charles N. Chamberlin, C Co 1/26
L/Cpl James R Wells "Elvis," F Co 2/26, USMC, KIA 07Apr68	Tom Ford, F Co 2/26
HN Roger M. Nelson, F Co 2/26, USMC, KIA 07 Apr 69	Tom Ford, F Co 2/26
Raymond M. Gray, USMC, CAC Oscar-1 passed away 10Mar05	Larry L. Larson
John "Chris" Lane, USMC, H&S CO 1/26, passed away	Mary Ann Lane (wife) & Hunter Freedom Lane [son]
George M Bailey, USMC, SUB UNIT 1, passed away 22Dec04	Ruth Bruns
Col James M Cummings, USMC passed away	Khe Sanh Veterans
To All the Fallen of Delta Co 1/26 66-70	John Finn D Co 1/26

anyone who served with John at 5th Comm. Like most of our families, they have a vague idea of what John did in Vietnam. I will be adding a section to our website for our fallen brothers to be remembered!

You can send your cards to:
The Friedrich Family
3977 Bob St.
San Diego, Ca 92110

❋

John "Dutch" Haaland

by Hank Melanson

I was looking through the updates for the Khe Sanh and found that John Haaland had moved to Los Lunas, NM from Florida. So I decided to call him and see if we could get together. I was too late. His wife told me that he had past away 26 Feb 05 and will be put to rest in Arlington soon. Dutch had been ill for some time and suffered greatly at the end. His wife is in great pain and is very lonely. If there is any one out there who knew Dutch, please call his wife for support. Dutch was an A/O for the Third Marine Division, had two Purple hearts and a Silver Star.

Semper Fi, Brother Dutch. You are in my prayers.

❋

In Loving Memory



Chris Lane, 56, of Clearwater, closed his eyes, Sat. (1/22/05) at Morton Plant Hospital. He was born in Dayton, Ohio. He was a retired Readjustment Counseling Service Administrator and therapist, St. Petersburg, FL. He moved to Florida from Chicago in 1990, where he served as Regional Manager of Readjustment Counseling Service Midwest Region for several years. He was a highly decorated USMC veteran of the Vietnam War (2 tours). A member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, 1st Marine Division Association, and Disabled American Veterans. He devoted his life to family and fellow combat veterans. A proud warrior with the soul of a poet, he lived the values of the Marine Corps every moment of his life. He was a strong leader, talented orator, and gifted clinician, who left a significant impact on all who knew him. He loved fatherhood, weightlifting, and dog training, and could dance better than James Brown. Survivors include his wife Mary Ann and son Hunter Freedom Clearwater; a sister Susan Lane, and niece Jennifer Sage, both of Pineville, NC. Countless friends and colleagues who knew his integrity and strength, are deeply grieving his passing.

Semper Fi.

❋

In Loving Memory

Tom Ford writes:

To L/Cpl James Randall Wells "Elvis" and HN Roger Miller Nelson, both F/Co 2/26, KIA 4-7-68. Your lives touched mine briefly in 1968, but your memories will remain with me forever.

❋

Ross Webster writes:

We know "Sky-6" will now be watching over Colonel Cummings. Colonel James M. Cummings, U.S. Marine Corps, (Ret.), passed away on January 17, 2005 after a valiant struggle to overcome pulmonary disease. He was 83 years old. Col. Cummings enlisted in the Marine Corps shortly after Pearl Harbor and fought as a Marine rifleman and non-commissioned officer in the South Pacific on Guadalcanal and Bougainville. He was subsequently commissioned and was in China at the end of the War. He joined the Chicago Police Force and served until being recalled to active duty during the Korean War, then remained a career Marine, commanding the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment in the Con Thien and the Khe Sanh areas of Vietnam.

He retired as the Headquarters Director of Administration after 30 years of service. During his off-duty hours, he coached little league baseball (beginning that program in the Hawaiian territory in 1954 and assisting the development of the Springfield program here in 1956) and CYO basketball in Northern VA in the 50s and 60s. A charter member of St. Michael's Parish in Annandale, he served in numerous lay capacities during a period stretching over 45 years. He is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Wynne, four children, one sister, 16 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with Full Military Honors.

Col. Jim Cummings, USMC, was one helluva good CO. We are all in his debt. Please ask all of our gang to pause for a moment to ask our father, Sky 6, to comfort and take good care of his lovely wife Wynne and to look out for "Money 6" until we can "take over the watch" and march by his side again.

Semper Fi,
Money Hotel 6

Book Review

A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered, by Michael Archer. Central Point, Oregon: Hellgate Press, 2005. Pp. viii, 192, notes, $15.95.

In a powerfully written, highly descriptive and fast paced narrative, Michael Archer recounts his experiences as a radioman during the crucial three-month North Vietnamese siege of the remote US Marine outpost at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam in 1968. When he arrived at Khe Sanh in December 1967, Archer had no idea that he would soon be immersed in the bloodiest, most confusing and controversial battle of the Vietnam War. Thus, his story portrays the growing apprehension of the Marines as they realized that Communist forces had encircled the American base with the intention of scoring a decisive victory over the US. Archer effectively conveys the fear, trepidation and general bewilderment experienced by newly arrived Americans in the combat zone, while graphically describing the fall of Khe Sanh village during the early days of the battle.

In the process, Archer blends humor, irony and drama to craft one of the best books written about the Vietnam War and certainly, the preeminent account of the battle of Khe Sanh. His depiction of his personal journey from an awkward, alienated youth to a cynical, hardened Khe Sanh combatant, invites the reader to consider the perplexing situation in the US during the 1960s as Americans argued with increasing fervor over the American commitment to South Vietnam, the often impulsive decisions of young people to join the military at a time when it was engaged in an unpopular struggle, and the loyalty and camaraderie that grew up among those who fought together in South Vietnam.

At the same time, Archer confronts a number of controversial issues left over from the hostilities, including the sometimes uneven performance of South Vietnamese troops, the controversial decisions on the part of US Marine commanders to abandon several US Army positions under attack by superior Communist forces, and the ferocious conflict that arose between the US Army and the US Marine Corps in the midst of the hostilities. As a radio operator working in the 26th Marines Regimental Command Post, Archer examines the complex relationship between enlisted men and officers during wartime and demonstrates the critical role of technology in preventing a North Vietnamese onslaught against the Khe Sanh perimeter.

By far, the best sections of the book are his depictions of the daily existence of Marines at Khe Sanh with all of their idiosyncrasies, foibles, superstitions, dark humor, and forced bravado under the most sustained barrage of enemy fire of the conflict. Archer brings these outrageous characters to life as he portrays the everyday valor of the young Marines endeavoring to survive their time at "The Worst Place on Earth." (pp.124-25) Indeed, despite the poignancy of the story, this reviewer often found himself laughing aloud at Archer's representations of his fellow Marines.

He ends the book with a moving and personal tribute to his childhood friend who was subsequently listed as an MIA in South Vietnam. Yet, his work clearly indicates that Archer remained unprepared for the negative reactions of his fellow citizens towards veterans when he returned to the US. Nor does he attempt to hide the bitterness that all Khe Sanh participants felt after the US command abandoned the base in July1968. Thus, Archer points out that after "over 1,000 Americans died fighting for Khe Sanh in 1968" (p.175), Marine veterans of the battle witnessed the outrageous spectacle of the US command giving up the position without a fight where so many young Marines had recently struggled and died. Perhaps, this superb book's greatest value is that it stands as a metaphor for the frustration and futility felt by those who clashed over thousands of "patch[es] of ground" (p.188) throughout the Vietnam War.

Robert Topmiller
Assistant Professor of History
Eastern Kentucky University

Reunion Committee Report:

This is the last newsletter before our upcoming reunion in Chicago. If at all possible, please register as early as possible. It allows the committee to accurately design a schedule and plan for events. We are trying to obtain tickets for a Chicago Cubs baseball game on Friday, 15 July, at historic Wrigley Field. It is not an easy task,they are sold out for the entire month of July.

Need Help

Can anyone put a name on any of these guys? Standing in the middle is me. This was my fire team around June/July 1967. B/1/26 1st Platoon.

Thanks
Gene



Contributions

ARNDT,Terrence D
BARLOW, JOHN D
BATES, Robert
BENAVIDES,Jose
CATON,Louis W II
COSTELLO, James M
DROOG,Daniel
EUSANIO,Thomas B
FETTER,Charles H
FORD, Tom
GUNDERSON, Rex L
HUNKE,Thomas
KATES,Bruce E
LANE,Maryann
LARSON,Larry L
McEWAN,Frederick J
ONEIL,Joseph F
PILGREEN,James
POROWSKI, RITA
REES, Ronald
ROEDEMA,Charles L
SMITH,Robert W
SMITH,Mary Ellen
SPIVEY,B.Larkin Jr
TOMAZIC.David F
ZEITTS,John

New Life Members

GALIANO,Robert J
REINERT,Ernest J
SMITH Ronald E

Newest Members

BENDER,Rick L CO 3/26
CROSBY,John B Co 1/26

Remembering March 22

by Bruce Geiger

March 22nd is a very bad time for me. It was a hellish night thirty-seven years ago when the NVA pounded the base with nearly 1200 rounds, the second heaviest shelling of the Siege. About an hour after dark, the shit hit the fan, and I, for one, thought this was the final NVA assault. As I was making my way down the "blue sector" trench line to check my gun positions, the C-1/26 CP bunker took a direct hit from a 122mm rocket. The rubble was burning and I helped several Marines try to dig out survivors. I was able to retrieve a corpsman from Charlie Med across the runway, but only a couple of Marines, including Chuck Chamberlin, survived the blast. Killed that night were Captain Walter "Jack" Egger, GySgt. John J.Grohman, 1/Lt. Paul W. Bush, L/Cpl. Stephen C. Shannon, and PFC Bennie Joe Sisson. We will honor their courage and forever keep them in our memories.

Semper Fidelis.



Bruce,

I was a radio operator with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, assigned to the Blue Sector north of the runway at the Khe Sanh Combat Base during the Tet Offensive of 1968. As you may recall, the 1st Battalion, 26th Regiment was engaged in a defensive position within the perimeter of Khe Sanh Combat Base. From 1/21/68 through approx. 3/31/68, Charlie Co. was assigned to the "Blue Sector" north of the runway with support from your "Army Guns"—Quad 50s and Twin 40s.

All of us were engaged in securing and holding the northern perimeter of KSCB, along with the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion. On the afternoon of 3/22/68, I had just returned to my Command Post bunker from the area known as the Ponderosa. I'd had the first "shower" in approximately 2 months. Lt. Siegrist, an F/O attached to C Company, and I had taken turns trying to light an immersion burner on a 55 gallon "stove-top," outhouse type shower facility. Each time we attempted to light the burners, we were frustrated by recoilless rifle fire. We finally managed to heat some water and have a half-ass shower!

We emerged with somewhat clean utilities and proceeded down the Ponderosa Road with a new attitude. Mr. Charles opened up on us again with recoilless rifle! My best memory is of Lt. Siegrist dropping to the prone position with his compass, to shoot an azimuth on the RR rifle. We had both seen the muzzle flash and heard the round streaking past our heads, impacting behind us. We raced across the turnout area across the runway, holding onto our helmets and laughing all the way, hoping to make the 'C' Co. CP and call in a fire mission ASAP.

Lt. Siegrist had a "Triumph Motorcycle" T-shirt under his flack-jacket, wire-rimmed glasses. His camouflage helmet cover was real sloppy. I trusted his expertise calling in Fire Missions, which he did as soon as we slid into the temporary Charlie CP. Nothing was heard from that particular gun position after the lieutenant called in his coordinates to Alpha 1/13! Just another day in the life at Khe Sanh.

The couple of days prior to March 22nd were a brief respite from all the shit we'd been dealing with for 2 months. That night, it turned deadly. My last recollection is of reading a letter from my grandmother in Livingston, MT and realizing that we were getting hit real bad. We hunkered down in the Charlie CP. The last thing I did was fill the Coleman lanterns. I'd gotten tired of them going out in the middle of the night. When the round came in that took almost all of us out, it ignited the JP4 from the lantern and caused grievous injuries to my radio operators. The CO and XO and Company Gy/Sgt. were killed outright, too, from the artillery shell that impacted on the roof of the bunker. I was lucky in that the radios beside me took most of the blast. This was the second time that I'd escaped.

L/Cpl. Joseph Thomas Bailey, Sgt/Major Gaynor, Capt. David Ernst, Capt. Egger, Lt. Bush, and Gy/Sgt. Grohman, not to mention Pfc. Jenkins, and two other Marines whose names I cannot recall, were all KIA. I remember waking up and seeing an arm hanging above my head in the wreckage of the bunker. I think one of the officers may have still been alive and trying to get out prior to succumbing to his wounds. All of the men in the west end of the bunker died. I saw a patch of sky and climbed out like a chicken with a broken wing, having suffered no more than a broken shoulder and minor shrapnel and burns to my right arm and left leg. My radio operator, L/Cpl. John Mattern suffered deep second and third degree burns from his chin to his knees, as

well as losing his right bicep and left kneecap.

Thank you, Mr. Geiger, for crossing the runway that night under fire, to get a corpsman over to our bunker. You did not have to do what you did, but I and my family and the families of those you saved that night thank you. We are forever in your debt. The rest is best left to memory, because all of us have to keep that part away from "polite society." I am sickened by what has happened since March of 03, but I suppose there will always be wars. Thank God for Marines, Soldierswho else would deal with the "dirty devices of this world?"

Thank you again, Lt. Bruce Geiger/Army Guns and Semper Fidelis,

Blackbud Charlie, OUT
Charlie 1/26 CP Group Radio Ops.

❋

Bruce,

It was truly a terrible night as I remember it, as I stood in one of our fighting holes, 3rd squad, 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company. I can't remember who else was with me, but it sure sounded like Arty to us instead of a 122 Rocket. We had the lucky position of being directly in front of the old CP when it was hit with a 122 Rocket. I was in the trench line in an overhead covered fighting hole when the concussion knocked me to the ground. The new CP was further to the east than was the old one, but I swear to you, it sure sounded like artillery as it came from the southwest of us and sounded like a low flying jet or a train. It did not have that witch's scream like the rockets had. We lost some very fine Marines that night and Chuck was lucky for the second time.

Semper Fi,
Steve Hecknauer
C-1/26

❋

Bruce:

Talk about scared...

I had 18 days and a wake-up left. I will always have fond memories of Lt. Bush who was my Platoon Leader when we went to the hills in early May 1967 to clean up the mess that was left. He was a compassionate and strong leader who would never put his Marines in jeopardy without being there with us.

SEMPER FI, Paul Bush—you will always be remembered.

Steve Jenkins

❋

Remembering That Night

by Nick Romanetz

Bruce,

Just to keep the record straight, Shannon and Sisson were my Marines, and they were not in the CP that night, but in a bunker just in front of one of your gun positions. They were KIA shortly after the Charlie CP was hit. Their bunker was east of the CP and took a 122 rocket and a third man inside escaped pretty much intact. The CP was brand new and well built. It is thought by many that a 152 round hit it. I think that the Final Formation states all of those KIA's were in the CP. I contacted Rev. Ray some time ago about the correction and that may have been addressed in the revised edition of Final Formation.

❋

Remembering That Night

by Chuck Chamberlin

Bruce,

Nick's right. He ought to know. They were not in the bunker with us that evening. His bunker buddy, Gunnery Sergeant Grohman, chose to come to the CP that evening. Probably hadn't been there 1/2 hr. prior to his demise. "Eee Tai!" Gunny used to say (Japanese for "it hurts"). Despite many aspersions cast at him, Gunny Grohman did care about the guys in "C" Company. Being Company Gunny wasn't a popularity contest, and I saw him cry the day that '53 got shot down southeast of us. He was just stressed like the rest of us. His stress ended 3/22/68. I've been lucky enough to have visited his name on The Wall several times now. Ironically enough, their names are listed in the same position that they died that night...Capt. Egger, Lt. Bush, and The Gunny.

S/F,
Blackbud Charlie, OUT

❋

Remembering That Night

by Nick Romanetz

Chuck:

The gunny did appear to be a real hard ass but you are right, he cared very much about the well being of all Marines—from this green 2/Lt. right down to the privates and everyone in between. The Charlie Company lines definitely were in the impact area that night. Two direct hits on two bunkers and a lot of near misses. I remember the next morning as warm and sunny as we recovered our dead and cleaned up the damaged bunkers. Three weeks later, we were at Wonder Beach.

More Web Briefs

March 30, 1968

by Milton McNeely

The history books say differently but my opinion is that the siege ended on March 30, 1968. Bravo Company, successfully led by Ken Pipes, busted out, kicked ass, and took at least 115 NVA names. That was KIA; no telling how many wounded or DOW.

The target of this outstanding Marine assault was about 850 meters south of the Khe Sanh Combat Base perimeter. The enemy troops, estimated to be a NVA battalion, were occupying a heavily fortified position in the general area where the Ghost Patrol was ambushed on February 25th. A large part of the mission was to recover the remains of our lost Brothers from the 25th, and of course to destroy the enemy and their position.

The NVA must have felt the wrath of GOD was coming down on them when our Marines attacked with flame throwers and bayonets fixed. Many may have rather faced the wrath of GOD than the wrath of a single company of Marines seeking revenge and payback, not only for the 25th but for the entire Siege. Due to the heavy losses that Bravo Company had sustained throughout the Siege the mission was accomplished to a great extent by Marines who had just arrived fresh from the States, just out of boot camp. Much has been made of that fact and high praise was given to the quality of training they received stateside. Credit for the success of this action should go to the 1/26 staff for the excellent planning and coordination of the attack and most importantly to the officers and men of Bravo Company who carried it out.

One of the new guys who had just arrived on the 20th of January was PFC Don Rash. That night, he spent the night in the supply tent along with several other replacements who had arrived that day. They got in late enough that they had not even received weapons, helmets, or flak jackets. Not a good situation when the incoming poured in on the morning of the 21st. Don Rash was one of our new guys who was awarded the Navy Cross for action on March 30th. No amount of training could make this kind of hero who bravely gave his life for his fellow Marines.

On the opposite side of the spectrum from Don Rash was L/Cpl Wayne Moore. On the 30th he had just returned to Bravo Company from a special 30-day leave for extending his tour. He was actually listed on the company rolls at Bravo Company Headquarters as AWOL, as he didn't check in with Headquarters when he returned to his platoon and no one from his platoon notified Headquarters that he was back. Pure administrative error of some kind. He was at the other end of the spectrum from Don because of time in-country not because of heroism. He also heroically gave his life for his comrades in arms and he wreaked havoc on the enemy prior to his fall as did Don Rash.

There were several brave Marines lost that day. Each and every one a hero, but considering the fact that a Marine company was attacking a heavily fortified enemy position manned by a NVA battalion, the Marine casualties were miraculously light. Each and every one was accompanied by heroic and valorous acts that would require an entire book to even come close to an adequate explanation. The heroism, determination, selfless sacrifice, and outstanding leadership of all involved, greatly contributed to the accomplishment of the mission, and kept friendly casualties to a minimum.

This was one of the few successful bayonet charges of the Vietnam War, and is more representative of the Marine Corps and Corps traditions and standards than the rest of the Siege combined. The Marines of Bravo Company did what Marines do best. They left their defensive positions, attacked, and killed the enemy.

In regard to the 6,000 Marines at Khe Sanh being surrounded by 40,000 NVA, a Marine reportedly said, "We have them right where we want them."

My thought is that Bravo Company proved it on March 30, 1968. As a result of that action, the NVA command figured out that the Marines were not being held captive and that the Marines could and would attack and destroy the enemy at will. They decided to cut their losses and withdraw. That's why I think the Siege ended on March 30, 1968.

❋

March 30, 1968
by Steven Wiese

I also would like to mention some men who were in my squad on 30 March. Besides L/Cpl Moore, there were L/Cpl Smith, my 1st team leader and the best Marine I ever had in Nam. PFCs Anderson and Roper, my M-79 man L/Cpl Sinkowicz, and PFCs Miranda, Wilson, and Black. I'm not sure of his rank, but Shackly and Frank Brice. May have misspelled some of the names, and it is possible that some of these men may have been killed before the 30th, I just can't remember the time frames, but I want to say these men were true MARINES, and their action made me proud to be a Marine.

❋

March 30, 1968
by Joe Rash

Mac, I'd like to mention another Marine that I met once and talked to about that day, Lonnie Wayne Morrison, PVT-E2. He had only been in Nam a week or 2 and was awarded the Silver Star for his actions on the 30th. He was in Don's squad.

❋

March 30, 1968
by Bruce "T-Bone" Jones

I will add the names of two fine Marines who died that day. Cpl. Albert "Russ" Sanford, the 81's F.O. who replaced Gilbert Wall, and 1/Lt Marion "Hank" Norman, the Arty F.O. (one fine "down to earth" officer from Texas). Russ had just returned from 30-day leave after extending for "6 more" so that his married brother (also in the military) would not have to be sent to Nam. His mother told me three years ago that "that's just the way Albert was...always caring for his family. His father and brother never could get over losing Russ." Gotta love 'em, huh?

Road to Las Vegas
by Craig W. Tourte

I returned from a little road trip; just me in my old trailer. From Sacramento, California I drove over to Reno, Nevada then south on 395 to Carson City, Bridgeport, Bishop, Lone Pine, and then deep down into Death Valley. From Death Valley, I headed east to 95 and south to Las Vegas where I stayed for a week or so. I reversed course when I returned and drove all the way north up 95 to Reno, passing through numerous little desert towns and villages, stopping often.

While in Las Vegas I happened to get a hold of two Khe Sanh Veterans, Phil Nuchereno and Mike Powers. Both were gracious and shared their personal experiences while at Khe Sanh and what they were doing in their present life. Phil recently returned from Kosovo. I went to boot camp in San Diego with Mike. Ernie Spencer was Mike's CO in Delta 1/26. I never met Phil before and certainly did not remember Mike from boot camp some 39 years ago. I found Mike's memory for dates and places strikingly interesting, as I had forgotten similar details and facts. Phil had a heck of a time of it in Kosovo, often facing down angry mobs that threw rocks and bottles at him. The firing of an AK at the UN troops was not uncommon and two years of that kind of stress would get to anyone.

When I decided to travel to Las Vegas, I connected with them through this website and told them that I was coming. They both took a chance and agreed to meet with me, not knowing or caring what kind of an idiot I might be. I share this with you because I want you to know there are a lot of us out there. We are different for sure, but in a way we're the same. As my friend and fellow Khe Sanh Veteran Tom Horchler says, it does not matter who you are or what you have done, you were there and that is all that matters.

I think if you were to look closely you would find that we Khe Sanh Veterans all carry the same baggage, although I'm not sure I can describe what that is, I only know that it seems to be present in all of us. There is a line out of an old Clint Eastwood movie. Chief Dan George refers to his tribe as "The Human Beings." I think we, as Khe Sanh Veterans are like that, a kind of tribe of Human Beings, because we have developed the ability to feel and

perhaps even project something indescribable that few others can.

❋

Regarding My Meeting with Craig in Las Vegas

by Phil Nuchereno

It was a pleasure meeting Craig Tourte. I found him to be a gentleman. He certainly knows about Khe Sanh and is very supportive of all Khe Sanh Veterans. My fiancée and I both like Craig and feel we now have a new friend. A funny thing about Khe Sanh Veterans, I had never met Craig before, but it did not take long before we connected. As veterans, it was as if we had known each other for years. My fiancée and I were both impressed by Craig. We look forward to visiting with him again one day. I look forward to meeting other Khe Sanh veterans that visit Las Vegas.

It Didn't Take Long Before We Connected As Veterans

by Tom Ford

Phil: Now try to imagine what it would be like attending a reunion. Take the feelings you have now and project them tenfold and I bet it still wouldn't be enough to cover the experience of a reunion. SF

❋

Road Trip to Vegas

Returned from Lake Tahoe on the 12th of this month. Stopped in Lone Pine at a small eatery. While my wife in I spent a week at Zephyr Cove, we had dinner with Jeff Bodenweiser and his wife at a restaurant at Camp Richardson (some may know of the place, not a military installation by any means). Also shared a table at the Charthouse. (Bring a flashlight if you eat there, some of the booths have very inadequate lighting. I asked the waiter for a flashlight, he went to another table, when he brought back a Swiss Army knife [small] with a red light for me to use.) Anyway, it is an interesting trip down 395 from Tahoe to I-15, with a lot of snow on the mountains. I know the Marines still train at Pickle Meadows (near Bridgeport and June Lake.)

Bigfoot Marine

But I Am Not a Killer

A boy in a soldier's uniform, not nowing or understanding.
What is war? Will I ever fill this uniform?
Uncle Sam said, Stand firm, Stand Tall,
Make your country proud.

I must kill to protect my country, my family, and what I've got.
But I am not a killer.

Stands before me this stranger to my eyes,
Yet I must make a decision, will he live or will I die?
But I am not a killer.

An innoceence inside me, now long dead and gone,
No longer a child, no longer carefree,
I must decide will it be him, or will it be me?
But I am not a killer.

His name never known, his face never forgotten,
This boy in a soldier's uniform, so young and so proud.
But a killer he is not.

I return home no longer a boy, yet not a man, I no longer fit in,
Strangers look at me, they call me a killer—a killer.
A country I fought so proudly for spit in my face,
And called me a disgrace.

Now a man aged will past my years. When I dream,
I hear his scream, I see his eyes,
This boy whose life passed before my eyes,
I will never forget them and I'm proud to say, -----
But I am not a killer, ------- a killer I am not.

Steven Wiese

Seeking Information

by Michael Takiff

I am the author of *Brave Men, Gentle Heroes: American Fathers and Sons in World War II and Vietnam,* published in 2003 by William Morrow (an imprint of HarperCollins).

> "Michael Takiff's page-turner, featuring the stories of fathers and sons who served in World War II and Vietnam, paints a picture of these two wars through new eyes."
>
> Army Times

James Bradley, author of "Flags of Our Fathers and Flyboys called Brave Men," a fascinating journey into the hearts and minds of dads and their boys as they discuss the crucible of war." Library Journal called it "a major contribution to the history of these two distinct and influential wars."

I am beginning work on a new book: a comprehensive history of the Tet Offensive of 1968. And I am looking for military personnel, American or Vietnamese, who saw action during the offensive (including any who fought at Khe Sanh, Jan.-Mar. '68). If you fit this description, I'd be most grateful if you'd email me at tetbook@earthlink.net. Please include the designation of your outfit and tell me where you were during this time. Include a brief description of your combat experience during Tet/Khe Sanh. Please include contact information so that we may speak over the phone. Depending on the size of the response to my query, I may not be able to call everyone right away. But I will definitely be in touch as soon as I can. Also, if you know of other people who might have collections and information to share regarding Tet/Khe Sanh, please forward this email to them or include their contact info in your email to me. Thank you for taking the time to read this notice. I will greatly appreciate hearing from anyone willing to share memories about this key period of the Vietnam War.

The following is a series of thoughts from Craig Tourte of his Vietnam experience, and how it has affected him.

(1) Every Single One is Important

Donald Baron Sanders, KIA March 4, 1968. RIP

by Craig W. Tourte, HQ 1/13

There were so many and every single one is important and all should be remembered. All who died at Khe Sanh continue to affect us to this day. How can we forget them? Sometimes we try, but should we forget? They are always standing before us, their memory is with us every day. While we remember them all, there are the personal ones, men who we were with, the ones we still see in our thoughts and dreams. The ones whose young faces we still see and whose voices we still hear. Their quick death was a reminder that it could come to us just as suddenly. We are the ones who now speak for those who cannot. We are the ones who can tell their story because they cannot. We are the ones who can try to make the others understand, because they cannot. We are the ones who can tell their families that they loved them and thought about them every day, because they cannot.

Donald Baron Saunders was just another U. S. Marine Corps private at Khe Sanh Combat Base who died on March 4, 1968, as did many others. I would like to post a small piece taken from the *Belleville, New Jersey March Times,* **"Belleville Sons Honor Roll,"** dated March 14, 1968.

> Since he had to leave this world, I am glad he left it the way he did, with courage and fighting for his country. There was little else for William D. Saunders to say. He is the father of PFC Donald Saunders who was killed in action in Vietnam recently. The young Saunders, only 20, died of wounds to his head and body from enemy mortar fire in Quang Tri (Khe Sanh) last week. Saunders enlisted in the Marines two years ago on September 28. It was a day that William Saunders will never forget, as it was the elder Saunders' birthday. Donald completed his basic training at Parris Island, S.C., and advanced infantry training at Camp Lejeune, N.C. He volunteered for duty in Vietnam.
>
> When asked why, Mrs. Maisie Saunders, his mother, said, "Donald was never too talkative. He made his own decisions. I think he felt the boys were doing a good job and he should back them up."

"It was just a job that had to be done for him," added Saunders, "and he never complained." In all his letters there was never a word of complaint. He tried to reassure us, in fact." Mrs. Saunders states that Donald did mention in one letter that he did not know whether it was the last letter or not and that they were surrounded by the enemy. According to his mother, the difficulties of the people of Vietnam particularly affected him. He wrote home about the villagers who had to scramble for food and were so starved that they were eating garbage.

Donald did manage to telephone home just two weeks ago at 3 A.M. to talk to his parents. This is how Mrs. Saunders remembers the call. "We were surprised and so happy to hear his voice. The first thing he said was don't talk about anything military, Mom. There was so much confusion because of the relay through Hawaii that we could not say very much. I said something and then had to wait for it to be relayed. He did say, "What's happening, Mom?" which was his favorite expression. It was so good to hear that. I only wish we could have talked much longer, it was over so quickly, so very quickly. A member of the First Battalion of the 13th Marines, PFC Saunders attended Belleville High School. He was a member of the cross-country team that won the Big Ten Conference Championship in 1965. He was also a member of Little Zion U AME Church in Belleville.

Of the military conditions in Vietnam, Saunders never said a great deal, according to his family. Of course, Mrs. Saunders said, he sometimes wrote that he gave candy and food to the Vietnamese children. The only thing he really asked for was undershirts. It seems that you could not purchase them over there because of the climate. "When he enlisted," the senior Saunders adds, "we hoped for the best, we did not want anything to happen. But we know he was on a machine gun and the first thought of any enemy is to knock the machine gun out. At least he wasn't like those doves or slobs, who try to find any excuse to get out of going. That is the one thing I remember, he never, even after he was in combat, said he was sorry or complained." PFC Saunders leaves besides his parents, a brother Kenneth, who is 16-years-old and a sister, Miss Kathleen, both at home.

Besides being a fellow Marine, Donald was a friend of one of two African-Americans in our unit. I collected what few personal belongings he had and gave them to our sergeant for shipment home to his family. I completed my tour and was shipped home a few months later. When I got home I sent his family a letter. I told them that I had been with Donald shortly before he died and how sorry I was. I also told them that Donald was a great friend and how highly he was respected and liked by all of us. They returned a letter to me thanking me for my thoughts. I never heard from his family again, but to this day I think of them often. There are just so many things I would like to tell them.

Thomas Horchler is another Marine who I was with at Khe Sanh and someone to this day I continue to have an association with. Tom placed Donald's body into his truck and drove Donald to graves registrations. Although that chapter in Donald's life ended that day at Khe Sanh, it did not end for us—and in a way, started a new chapter in the lives of everyone Donald's short life touched.

The point is, all Khe Sanh Veterans have a personal account similar to this one. To us, their loss was not just a number or a name but a real "hit you in the gut" memory. I think a lot of us are still waiting to see how those memories are going to affect us and the lives of those whose lives we have touched, as we continue to turn each new page in the chapter of our life.

(2) Difficult Times

This is a difficult time for many of us. The anniversary of the Siege causes us all to take a moment to remember those who did not return. I think for many of us, the Siege at Khe Sanh was the defining point in our lives; we balance everything against that experience. We also understand that many of our brothers died prior to and subsequent to the Siege, on the hills, in the jungles and in the air. The posts of tributes and final formations attest to the loss still felt by so many.

The 77-day Siege of the United States Marine Corps Combat Base at Khe Sanh, Vietnam at the start of Tet on January 21, 1968, is never far from the memory of those who fought there. We are middle-aged men now, some with whole parts and some missing parts, but we're here. Many others who fought with us are not. We knew so many; we can still see their faces as if it were yesterday. Although we see ourselves for the age we have become, those young faces have never changed. One would think those memories would fade; on the contrary, as we grow older we remember and appreciated their courage and sacrifice even more.

We were the ones who were with them when death came. The one's who held them in our arms, tried so hard to save them and knew we could not. Their loved ones miss them and so do we. I wonder if we may just miss them a little more. Their families have adjusted to their absence and still mourn their terrible loss; we, who were with them, still mourn their death. A song, a cloud, a crowd of happy people in a laughter-filled room brings me back to the thoughts of those who are no longer here. Those young men, who wanted to live, fought to live, tried to live, yet died so that we could live. Men whose faces I still see today. Men I lived with, men I fought alongside, men I endured hardship with, men I loved like brothers, most I didn't know, but I shall never forget them.

We all pay tribute in our own way and we'll never forget.

(3) Road to Khe Sanh

I have only been on two convoys, one into Khe Sanh and the other out. The first was the convoy from Dong Ha traveling sixty kilometers west on Highway 9 to the Marine Corps Combat Base sometime around August 1967. The 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB) whose men later transitioned to parts of the 13th and 26th Marines, formed up in Okinawa where we loaded onto the U.S.S. Washtenaw County LST (1166. An LST (Landing Ship Tank) that I was sure somehow was lost after WWII and hidden from the cutting torches until it was suddenly discovered and put back into service for Vietnam. It actually was built at Sturgeon Bay, Wis., in 1951. (Late in June 1960, she bade farewell to the United States for the last time. Though her Navy career was destined to continue for another 13 years, the tank landing ship would never return to American shores (Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships).(It sure seemed like an old historic relic to me. It was a two-week crawl across the ocean to Vietnam. The Washtenaw seemed to sail at less than slow speed; old rusty smoke belching freighters would pass us day and night. The old tub creaked, moaned and rolled the whole way. We Marines were stretched out on canvas racks deep down in the belly of the ship, with just a couple of inches between us—it was a miserable ride.

It was however, the first time I had ever heard the term "Navy shower." It was hot, sticky and close in that old ship's belly. Another Marine and I were taking a rather long shower and having a pretty good time letting the cool water roll over our bodies when a sailor came in and started yelling at us. I could never tell if some of those guys were enlisted or officers—they wore a khaki type of uniform with silver on their collars so we played it safe and called him sir. He yelled, "Haven't you ever heard of a Navy shower?" We could not understand why he was so upset. Of course, our look was blank and our response was no. His explanation seemed logical to me (they'd run out of water), so we shut off the water until he left and then, joined by others, turned it back on and continued with our new found refreshing experience. It would be our last real shower involving pressurized plentiful water for a long time.

After stopping in Danang to unload some equipment we continued north along the coast and finally disembarked on Cue Viet beach where we unloaded our vehicles and gear. We dug our fox holes in the sand and stayed for a couple of days. We made our way up to Cue Viet harbor and onto small LSUs (Landing Ship Utility) for our trip up the Cue Viet River and ten kilometers inland to Dong Ha. Besides the sniper fire and my rifle jamming because of sand fouling the receiver, all went pretty well. We arrived in Dong Ha just before dark, welcomed by a hail of incoming mortars and rockets. Rockets screamed in, smoke filled the air, loud blasts of detonation from incoming rounds, and outgoing reports from Marine artillery overloaded my senses. It was a total chaotic site as we slowly docked. A rather large Marine lieutenant ran out to meet us and helped us unload the trucks and gear and got us moving up the road. I heard later that he had been a football player in col-

lege and was highly regarded by his men. I was immediately impressed with the way he took charge; he seemed like the only one who knew what he was doing and his strength was somehow reassuring. With the confusion of the incoming rounds and his take-charge attitude keeping us all under control, I thought his actions were extremely heroic, it just seemed like he had no fear.

We spent our first night in Dang Ha housed in an above ground wooden type of barracks right next to a unit which just a few nights before received a direct hit from a rocket, killing a couple of Marines. As the rockets and mortars rained into Dong Ha, we all felt particular venerable and knew at any moment we were going to be the next set of casualities. Frequent dashes to the feces and garbage-strewn trenches outside, made for some pretty exhausted young Marines.

The thought of leaving Dong Ha the next day was a welcome relief—what a God-awful place. You just had the feeling that nothing good could ever happen there. Flat, dry, seemingly desolate, and certainly not defensible, and attested too, by the many rounds of incoming we had endured during our stay.

It seemed that the Marine Corps always started any activity very early in the morning and this morning was no different. Hurry up and get your gear together, hurry to get into formation, hurry to get over to the location where the convoy was staging, hurry and get to the truck you would be riding, hurry and stow you gear and then wait around for several hours for something to happen. The wait did give me a few hours to assess the convoy and I have to admit, I was looking forward to the adventure. It was just an incredible assortment of vehicles and weapons. Besides the numerous deuce-and-a-half trucks, there were trucks with quad fifty machine guns on turrets accompanying us as convoy escorts. The quad fifty was originally configured to provide anti-aircraft fire during WWII. There were twin 40 guns placed on some type of wheeled vehicle and it seemed that ever third or forth truck had a 50-caliber machine gun in a turret, placed where a passenger would have normally sat in the front seat. I think there may have even been a tank or two.

We mounted up around mid-morning. It certainly seemed like a formidable force with all the men and supporting arms. We drove from Dong Ha at a crawl, smoke bellowing, gears grinding, trucks swaying and overloaded. A cargo of bright faces, new green uniforms, clean weapons at the ready and not a clue as to what lay ahead. As we entered the dark green foliage of the jungle on Highway 9, Huey helicopter gun ships joined us overhead.

The Vietnamese had been fighting invaders for hundreds of years. The Chinese, Japanese, French, and now the Americans. At the time, there was not a better-trained, experienced, motivated jungle fighting force in the entire world and we were driving through their front door. We must have looked pretty fresh and new to the experienced Vietnamese soldiers who I am sure were hiding and observing us carefully along our route. Highway 9 was a tunnel through the jungle. Deep foliage was all around, often there was a canopy of growth overhead and for the most part it was a narrow, one-lane dirt road. Occasionally we would pass stationary Marine units in defensive positions guarding a bridge or outlook point. It was a long slow ride, and I began to realize how vulnerable the convoy was to sniper fire and ambush.

My first impression of Khe Sanh as we climbed over the crest of a hill was that the base looked pretty desolate, bleak and kind of tired and worn out, but the surrounding jungle was almost Shangri-La like. The jungle was so green and dark that I can only describe the color as a kind of a deep blue.

The convoy passed along the south end of the base and entered the main gate located at the southwest. I don't remember if there were even any guards at the entrance. We made a sharp right turn and stopped. This was going to be our home for some time. Looking out towards the jungle there was one strand of concertina wire and a few yards of tangle foot. There were no trenches or defensive covered fighting positions, just a few fighting holes. I was struck by the realization that compared to Dong Ha, Khe Sanh was rather small with little defensive positions and few Marines.

Marine ready for action, I was tired of being shelled seemingly every day I had been in Vietnam. In just those few days I was tired of having to take it and never having had the opportunity to return any of what I was more than willing to give back to the enemy. Little did I realize incoming was something that would forever shape my life and the lives of those who stood with me on that dusty road. What lay ahead would forever change the U.S. Marine

Corps, its history, its future, the future of the War in Vietnam, the political future of this Nation's president, and the future of all subsequent conflicts this nation would ever become involved in. As a young Marine, being up there in the mountains was both frightening and exciting. The bloody Siege of the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh, South Vietnam was about to begin and none of us knew it.

There wasn't much in the way of a defensive perimeter when our convoy pulled into Khe Sanh from Dong Ha that August evening 1967. The base at Khe Sanh had been occupied at various times over the years by a variety of countries, armies, including various units of the U. S. Army and U.S. Marines. Currently the base was being held by the 9th Marines. The Marines I saw that day appeared to be just as exhausted as the base seemed bleak, tired and worn out. The Marines had been battling in the Hills since 1966 in an underreported slugfest with elements of the North Vietnamese Army while using a newly issued M16 rifle that continually failed, resulting in numerous American casualties.

By looking at the uniforms worn by those troops who had been at Khe Sanh for some time and those of us who had just arrived, the casual observer would have thought we were from two different armies. While our uniforms were relatively clean and kind of a bright green color with green helmet cover and black leather boots, the uniforms worn by the Khe Sanh Marines were stained a dull red color because of the volcanic dirt so prevalent in that part of the country. They all wore jungle boots, which were, of course, also stained a red color. The Marines had a kind of emasculated starved look about them and deep sunken eyes with dark circles around the sockets. Besides being an odd red color, their uniforms were all torn and ratty and kind of mismatched like they had been patched together from different uniform handouts. We dismounted from the trucks at our assigned location and were immediately ordered to "dig in" before we started doing anything else. I took out my entrenching tool, and myself and another Marine started to dig what I can best describe as a kind of hole in the middle of our encampment with no defensive purpose in mind. I confess I did not know what I was doing besides just digging into the ground. I thought I would dig something a few feet below the ground, something sufficient to perhaps sleep in and protect me from whatever, although I didn't know what that was. After a few hours of digging with tired blistered hands, we decided that our protective depression, now about six inches deep and eight feet wide, was good enough. Besides, the ground was really hard, so we decided to call it a day.

We then joined the usual work detail unloading the trucks of the various hodgepodge of equipment carried by a headquarters company. For the rest of the week, one day was the same as the next, primarily setting up headquarters company of the 13th Marines. One evening a couple of those Khe Sanh Marines came by and stopped by our little depression as we were sitting inside. They just stood there for a couple of minutes not saying anything. Then one of them said something along the lines of, when the incoming starts you'll realize that no hole you can dig is deep enough. Incoming. I was thinking more along the lines of small arms fire, but then again I did not really know what to expect.

I had many subsequent conversations with these Marines in the days to follow. Each time they would offer some more advice. Dig your bunker deeper, narrow not so wide this is how to place your sandbags around the top, stock and carry more ammunition than you think you'll ever need, keep your rifle clean, keep lots of water around, this is the way to construct a hell box for your claymores, this is the way to set your claymores out so the NVA won't turn them around on you, check the wire every morning and every night. Somehow hearing it from these Marines who were privates like me, just kind of made me realize that the lessons they were provided were darn important and that I had better listen to their advice.

What was most interesting about my association with these Marines were the long evenings that I spent talking with them. In hushed, quiet whispers they would talk about the hill fights. How the NVA would hide in spider holes and shoot at the troops from behind after they had walked by. How during the battles they were often unable to even see the enemy and they would have crawl to look for Marines who had been wounded and were crying and yelling for help. About how so many men had been lost. How after the battles the Marines would spend the next several days walking the hills looking for the dead and when found, carry them on their shoulders off the battlefield. I tried to listen and

learn as much as I could. I could not have respected any group of men more than those Marines.

Then one day I noticed they were gone. No good bye, no good luck, no see you later, no saddle up and move out. They were just gone and we seemed so alone. I think it was then I realized Khe Sanh was over for them. The bloody and long hill fights, the jammed weapons, the carrying of the dead, the sleepless nights, the total exhaustion, the defense of the Marine Corps Combat of Khe Sanh was all behind them. It was up to us now. It was our Khe Sanh to defend. They did the best that they could, they gave all they had left to us and they had no more to give. Khe Sanh Combat Base was closed and abandoned in April 1968 shortly after the 77-day Siege that accounted for over two hundred killed and an untold number wounded. I often drift back and remember those who fought before us, who suffered before us, and to those who were there for us.

(4) Heroes

I wish I had been a hero, but I wasn't. It would have been thrilling to have my peers recognize me for my exceptional bravery and heroic deeds on the battlefield, but there were none. All of my medals from my service in Vietnam and the Siege of Khe Sanh were REMF. When I received shrapnel wounds from the exploding ammunition dump and the numerous incomings, I just took care of them myself, as did the many around me who received the same type of minor wounds and injuries. I was never involved in any heroic deeds or individual acts of bravery.

I have met two real legitimate recognized Congressional Medal of Honor recipients. Captain Jan Vargas, Company G, 2d Battalion, 4th Marines who fought at Dai Do. Captain Vargas was wounded numerous times while he maneuvered Marines across 700 meters of open rice paddy while under intense enemy fire after the enemy launched a massive counterattack at his position. He killed one enemy solider with his knife.

I met John Cavaiani (Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army), at the Khe Sanh reunion in 2003. On June 5, 1971, while serving as a platoon leader on hill 950 or 1015, and while the hill was being overrun he refused to be evacuated by helicopter and stayed behind with the remainder his men fighting off the NVA. While others escaped he grabbed a machine gun and held off the attacking enemy. He was eventually captured and was beaten as he watched others who had been captured and assassinated by the enemy.

Both are wonderful men who anyone would enjoy spending time with. I wonder if I had been placed in those same circumstances, if I would have performed as well. I have known other combat heroes more unsung. Some received a little recognition, but most have received none.

There must be a lot of heroes out there most of us don't know about, because I hear and see them all the time. My attention is often drawn to the loud ones in the bar, club or social gathering who are boasting about their combat experience and heroic deeds and tales of being there. I read stories from the ones who post on the various web sites boasting about their combat experiences with tales of super secret hunter killer teams and events they just cannot talk about, who won't identify themselves by signing their real name or provide the name of their unit or commanding officer. My suspicion is that most of them are phonies. I have not met any real Vietnam Combat Veterans who were loud, boisterous or braggarts (although I am sure there is the exception.) Most seem to have returned home and just lived their lives as best they could.

My point is there really were a lot of heroes in Vietnam. Just ordinary men, placed into extraordinary circumstances, most of us will never hear or read about them.

Where Do They Come From?

This is written by a Navy Commander at a port in Kuwait. No commentary needed, the 3-minute read below says more than a 20-page article could about our warriors and the constitution of our men. Where do we get such men? "They are so damn young."

I was going to the gym tonight (really just a huge tent with weights and treadmills), and we had heard that one of the MEUs (Marine Exp Units) that had come out of service in the "triangle" was redeploying (leaving country). We saw their convoy roll in to the Kuwait Naval Base as the desert sun was setting. I have never seen anything like this. Trucks and humvees that looked like they had just come through a shredder. Their equipment was full of shrapnel

blast holes and missing entire major pieces that you could tell had been blasted by IEDs. These kids looked bad too! I mean, sunken eyes, thin as rails, and that 1000-yd. stare they talk about after direct combat. Made me pretty damn embarrassed to be a "rear area warrior."

All people could do was stop in their tracks and stare and feel like me...like I wanted to bow my head in reverence. A Marine Captain stationed with me, who was standing next to me, was also heading to the gym. He said, "Part of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 8th Marines, sir. Took the heaviest losses of any single unit up north as part of Task Force Danger, sir."

As the convoy rolled up, all of us watching just slowly crept toward these kids as they dismounted the Hummers and 5-tons. Of course, we were all shiny and clean compared to these warriors. These kids looked like they had just crawled from Iraq. I had my security badge and ID around my neck, and started to help them unload some of their duffle bags.

A crusty Gunny came up to me and said "Sir, you don't have to do that..." I said, "Gunny...yes, I do..." They all looked like they were in high school or younger!! All held themselves sharply and confident, despite the extreme fatigue you could tell they had endured. "You guys out of the triangle?" I asked. "Yes, sir." Fourteen months and twice into the grinder, sir"—both fights for Fallujah. All I could do was throw my arm around their shoulders and say, "Thanks Marine, for taking the fight to the bad guys...We love you, man."

I looked at these young kids, not one of them complaining or showing signs of anything but focus, and good humor. "Sir, they got ice cream at the DFAC, sir? "Haven't had real ice cream since we got here." They continued to unload and after I had done my handshakes and shoulder hugs, the Captain and I looked at each other.

They want ice cream—we'll get them ice cream. You see, a squid O-5 and a focused Marine O-3 can get just about anything, even if the mess is closed. Needless to say, we raided the closed DFAC (mess tent) much to the chagrin of one very pissed-off mess sergeant and grabbed boxes of ice cream sandwiches (as many as we could carry), and hustled back to the convoy. I felt like Santa Claus. "Thank you, sir." again and again from each trooper, as we tossed up the bars to the guys in the trucks. I'm thinkin', "Son, what the hell are you thanking me for? I can't thank you enough."

And they are so damned young... I will sleep well knowing they are watching my back tonight.

GOD BLESS THE USA & OUR WARRIORS IN HARM'S WAY

Marines in the Mist
My Return to Hill 861

by Dennis Mannion



Dennis' bunker on Hill 861 (1968)

It was early morning on July 13, 2000, and more than anything else, it was the overwhelming silence that shook me up. Oh, there was the force of the wind that swirled the leaves on the trees and moved the scrub vegetation from time to time, but the only real sound to intrude on my thoughts was my breathing as I walked along what used to be the outer trench line of Hill 861. When I had last been there in 1968, the hill was a place of unrelenting noise at all times of the day and often at night. Bomb runs and bomb strikes, artillery impacts, mortar rounds coming in and going out, recoilless rifle blasts, the thump and whine of helicopters, the incessant chatter of machine guns, all the big stuff, were always in competition with incessant radio static and chatter, entrenching shovels being used, c-rats being opened, muted voices and strident yells.

Now, over three decades later, I stood atop Hill 861 and I was comforted by the fact that terrain features on the distant hills were the same; bomb craters on the NVA-held ridgeline 500 meters to the west were still evident in precisely the same spots as my old photographs depicted; and the remains of my old bunker were exactly where I'd knew they'd be. But the absence of noise was disconcerting. That and standing out in the open exposed to the nearby hills

without a care in the world, something that would have brought instant death so many years before!

I had hiked up to 861 two days earlier with seven others—three Khe Sanh vets and some civilians—but this venture back 48 hours later was a solo journey. After hiking by myself from the old combat base access road to the top of 861, I felt honored and blessed to be standing in a place of so much death, destruction, and bloodshed. I thought about battlefields all over the world and the toll in human life on both sides, and it was almost too unrealistic to acknowledge that I was entirely alone on a hill of such military and historic significance. I stood at what used to be my bunker entrance and stared down at my civilian hiking boots. Amazing, I thought, to reflect that the last time my boots were on this exact spot of earth, it was 12 April 68. My boots were scuffed up jungle boots, and I was leaving by helicopter for the quick ride to 881S and the pending Easter Sunday assault of 881N. Now, 32 years latter, I had come back to 861 to say goodbye and to try to come to terms with all that had happened to me and my friends on this hill and on the ridges and in valleys around it.

In February of 2000, when I began the process of making plans for a return to 861, I felt that I needed to do something for buddies of mine who never came home. In April of that year, I was in church for Palm Sunday services, and acting on a hunch, I grabbed an extra handful of blessed palm as I headed out the door with my family. At home I cut off the flimsy ends of the palms, and what I had left were rigid pieces about 20 inches long. I cut those into pieces about 3 inches in length, and I used a magic marker to write in the names of Marines and corpsman who I personally knew who had died in Vietnam. Along with the names I added the dates of their deaths, and when I was done, I put the 28 pieces of palm into a plastic bag. It was an unsettled late spring and early summer at my home in Cheshire, CT. I was soon to return to a place that had been a part of my daily thinking for over three decades and I did not know what to expect. I just knew that with the opportunity in front of me, I had to go. My entire Vietnam trip and return took two weeks, but I am only concerned (as I was then) with my time on 861. Our group spent a total of four days and three nights at Khe Sanh. The initial day was spent touring the old combat base and settling into our rustic accommodations in town.

On Day 2 we got up early for the departure to 861. We rode out past the old combat base in our hired van. Passengers other than me included KS vets Paul Knight (861) and his son Todd, Bob Arrotta (881S), Glenn Prentice (881S), Dave Kniess (my former student), Donna Elliott (searching for info on her MIA brother), and our Vietnamese translator Le Hanh. We stopped the van at a point where the trail to 861 looked promising. It seemed to be in the very area that Kilo Company 3/26 had used back on 26 Dec 67 to hike to 861, and with my original FO map in hand, we set out with heavy packs under scattered clouds and spitting rain. It took over four hours for the lead group (Glenn, Bob, Dave, and I) to get onto 861. The stragglers arrived within an hour of that, so that by noon all of us were on the hill.

We pitched three tents near the old CP bunker, but the wind picked up and the rain really began to pelt us. I paid scant attention to the weather as I had no trouble finding my old bunker! I spent over an hour cutting all the fresh growth away so I could expose the actual hole I had lived in 33 years before. By mid-afternoon one of the tents had collapsed, one was leaking badly (my twenty-year-old, two-man backpacking tent), and there was nothing to see or do. Our initial plan was to spend the night on 861, hike over to 881s the next day, overnight there, and return to town the following morning. The weather conspired against us, however, and by mid-afternoon half the group left for a harrowing return to town in even harder rain, powerful winds, and gathering darkness. Dave, fearing for his very expensive video camera was one of those who left. I stayed, along with Bob, Glenn, and our interpreter. The 4 of us spent a miserable night in a tent that really was designed for 2 or 3 at the most!

In the morning of Day 3, the weather was worse. We staggered out of the crowded tent into winds that were a constant 50 to 60 mph with a cold rain that was driven sideways across the top of the hill. Literally, we could not see beyond 15 feet. Even as fanatical and determined as I was to not leave, there was no point in staying on 861 or heading over to 881s. With great reluctance, we shouldered our rain soaked gear and trudged back towards the old combat base. Arriving in town, we were informed that our group was being arrested. Being on the hills without a permit (and a guide) was a serious viola-

tion of local laws and the police demanded our passports! The authorities said that we would have to pick them up in the late afternoon of the next day in Dong Ha (26 miles away). After some discussions with the local authorities, Bob and Glenn got permission to try to get to 881s on the morning of Day 4. He agreed to let them go if they signed the proper forms. I spoke up and asked for permission to go back to 861 in order to retrieve our one good tent. This was a lie. I just felt a need to spend more time on a hill I had come half way around the world to visit. Forms were signed for Dave and me, and that night we packed up for a second return to 861.

Dave and I awoke at 4 in the morning on the 13th of July for our return visit. We had made arrangements for two local kids to give us rides on their motorbikes back to the spot where the trail to 861 left the old combat base access road. It was raining fairly well but the wind had died down. In the dark, I lost track of Dave and his driver. Ten minutes later, I was at the trail junction but without Dave. What I did not know—and would not know until later in the afternoon—was that Dave's driver had stopped for gas, and Dave, sensing that the rain would be bad for his camera, directed the kid back to the guest house. I waited for fifteen minutes without any idea of where Dave was and I was troubled about what to do. Eventually, I paid my driver a dollar, strapped on my pack and turned for 861 alone.

I had no trouble getting up there; in fact, with less weight and no tent to lug, it took just over three hours. I only stopped once, by large tree on Hill 700, for water and a granola bar. In many places, I could see the tracks and boot prints made by all of us in the previous days. By 7:30 in the morning, I was again on the former LZ of 861 but this time I was totally alone! Amazingly, the rain stopped, and while the sun never came out, it was easy to see over to the other ridgelines. For the next 4 hours it was just me, the mist, the memories, and the history of the hill. I felt privileged to be walking around a place of so much pain and so much sacrifice. I walked the entire trench line again, re-visited my old bunker (where I had cut down all the vegetation two days earlier), and dug a bit in the dirt. I found an old C-rat spoon, some barbed wire, part of a USMC flak jacket, and the fin assembly of an NVA 82 mortar. I knew that I had to be off the hill by noon because the van was going to leave Khe Sanh for Dong Ha by 3:00 p.m. So when it was time to go, I thought of the blessed palms in my pocket. I lugged my gear (and the "new" stuff from the hill) down to the LZ. I returned to the top of the hill, and right between my bunker and the old CP bunker, I took out the names of the dead.

Speaking at the top of my voice, I said an Our Father and a Hail Mary. Then, one palm at a time, I read the name aloud and said, "May God have mercy on your soul." As I let each piece go, the breeze caught them and sent them in various directions. After 28 names (and a few tears on my part), I returned to the LZ. As I bent over my pack to tighten things up for travel, I looked back to the top. I was stunned to see a group of figures—15 to 20—standing in a loose formation or a group at the top of the hill. They had on helmets and flak jackets and the wind moved their clothing and the ponchos that some of them were wearing! I blinked, looked away, looked back, and they were still there looking down at me. No matter how many times I looked away and then back, they were still there looking at me. I started to cry and in a loud voice, I asked them to watch over my family and all my friends. As the seconds passed, I felt less alarmed and more comforted. After ten minutes, and knowing that I could not delay any longer, I picked up my pack, saluted the entire group, turned my back to them, crossed the LZ, and dropped off into the elephant grass below. I never looked back at them or the hill again.

It's been almost 5 years since I last walked on 861. I am a different person today as a result of my time up there. Until the day I die, the 13th of July will always be a new anniversary day for me. Semper Fi.

Dennis Mannion
Arty FO
Kilo Company 3/26
Cheshire, CT

The Zig-Zag Club Chapter 1

by Robert McLane F Btry 2/12

Cameron, Texas 1974

Sheriff Black pushed his hat back and sighed. "Son, sometimes this job can be pretty rough, like when I'm telling a pretty young woman that her husband has just been killed by a drunk driver or a father that his daughter has been arrested for dope.

Sometimes things don't make sense, but a sheriff has to listen when the judge is talking, even if I don't understand a damn thing he is saying. I don't think there is anything wrong with you, but your brother thinks you're nuts and the judge agrees. Now, I have to deliver you to the veterans' psychiatric hospital in Waco. Sometimes, I think the whole world has gone rubber room crazy."

I was beginning to think that my life had turned into a never-ending shit storm, a series of train wrecks where, despite my best intentions, all my dreams and plans had once again ended upside down in a pile of twisted and burning metal while passing strangers stared and shook their heads. These were supposed to be the good times I had waited so long for, the dreams that I had held on to through all those long nights and days in the DMZ. Texas had seemed a million miles away when I was curled up in a fetal position in a muddy trench in Khe Sanh while North Vietnamese artillery shells screamed down from almost eighteen miles away. All I could think about back then was the day that I would climb on board that big freedom bird that would take me back to the world I left behind. I soon found out that it was a world that had changed forever." Don't worry about it, Sheriff. I have been in a lot worse situations than whatever is waiting in Waco. At least I'll be sleeping between sheets."

We passed an old truck loaded down with bales of fresh cut hay. Sheriff Black looked at me. "I appreciate what boys like you have gone through over there for this country. A lot of folks don't, but I do. I appreciate it and I want you to know it."

We waited for the one red light in the small town of Lott to turn green while beside us a long freight train headed north was slowly picking up speed. I smiled. "Well Sheriff, I wish you appreciated it enough to let me hop on that old freight train out of ---------- here." Sheriff Black laughed. "I would like to do that Robert, but I wouldn't be doing the job the voters in Milam County hired me to do. I can't just pick and choose which orders I will follow when the judge hands them down. He said to take you to the VA hospital in Waco and that's where you are going."

We pulled into a truck stop for gas. "Son, I'm getting hungry. I guess we got time for a bite to eat. You can have anything on the menu. Milam County is going to pick up the tab. "We walked into the small cafe and found a booth. The waitress brought over two glasses of water and looked me over. "What did he do?" Sheriff Black smiled. "Betty, he burned down a rock fence back in Cameron! Now get us some coffee over here and a couple of those chicken fried steaks before I arrest you too." I smiled as I drank coffee and people looked around and wondered what was going on. It was pretty obvious from my shoulder-length long hair and beard that I wasn't the new deputy. One couple got up and paid their check and left.

"Looks like I am making some people nervous. Maybe you ought to have me in handcuffs. "Sheriff Black shook his head as he cut into his steak. "Sheriffs in Texas have their own ways of doing things and if enough people don't like it, they can vote them out come Election Day." He looked at me. "Son, I want to ask you a question. What was it like over there?"

I watched the waitress bringing my coconut pie. "Remember that traveling carnival that you ran out of Cameron a few years back? The one with all those rigged games?" Sheriff Black nodded his head. "I remember, folks were losing all their money trying to knock over milk bottles filled with cement. Well, sheriff that was sort of what the Vietnam War was like. Everybody was wearing out their arms trying to knock over some cement milk bottles. After throwing a couple of thousand baseballs, you feel like your arms are going fall off and the damn milk bottles are still standing. This time there wasn't any sheriff coming around to close the game down. My job wasn't all that different from yours. We wore uniforms and carried guns and tried to catch bad guys, Mostly, we just tried to stay alive."

I finished my pie. The sheriff paid the tab and tipped the waitress. We drove through the main gate of the VA hospital and parked in front of the administration building. I guess he had made the trip before. He walked around and opened the door for me. I stepped out and followed him inside. We found a receptionist, and the sheriff signed some papers while I sat in a chair and waited. I looked over my shoulder at a picture of Richard Nixon staring down at me. He was smiling. I smiled back into Tricky Dick's eyes. He seemed to be thinking, I've got you now, my little war protestor. You zigged when you should have zagged.

I saw my brother walk in. I looked at him. "Why

are you doing this?"

"Because I love you." Tears welled up in his eyes and he turned away. Sheriff Black walked over.

"Son, I better get on back to Milam County. You take care of yourself, now, you hear? "We shook hands and he left. A man in a white coat sat down beside me and took a ball point pen out of his shirt. He began making notes on a clipboard. He looked over at me. "Sir, my name is Dr. Herster. If you don't mind, I'd like to ask you a few questions." "Sure." I looked at him. He had a gentle grandfather's face and silver white hair. He started asking me questions...a lot of dumb questions.

"Mr. McLane, who is the President? I looked up at Nixon. "That ugly asshole in the picture." I tried to humor him without being rude. Finally he was finished. "Jimmy, could you come here, please?" A large man dressed in white pants and a white shirt walked over. "This is Mr. McLane. Would you walk him over to Building 17 and see that he gets settled in? Thank You." He handed the big man a file with my name written at the top of it. Jimmy smiled at me and we left for Building 17. The Waco veterans' psychiatric hospital was scattered over a sprawling campus of three-story dormitories encircling a large quadrangle of fresh cut grass and towering oak trees. The top floors were screened in. We passed men driving tractors that were cutting the parched grass. Some guys who looked like patients were milling around. They had earned what the VA called "grounds privileges." Their eyes were void of any expression. They were walking in a manner later described as the "thorazine shuffle."

It was a ten minute walk to Building 17. We took the elevator up to the third floor. At the end of the hall, Jimmy took a large ring of keys from his belt and unlocked a gray metal door. Once we were inside, Jimmy locked the door again. We were standing in a large room filled with chairs and desks and people. He walked over to a nurse and handed her the file. "This is Mr. McLane, he just came in." The nurse smiled at me and asked me to sit down. She wasn't all that bad looking. I sat down in a chair beside her desk and waited.

"Welcome to Building 17, Mr. McLane. My name is Nurse Atkins. May I call you "Robert"?"

"Sure," I smiled. I looked over at five guys in pajamas sitting in a row of over-stuffed chairs. They were puffing away on cigarettes and watching a Green Acres rerun on television. A guy in his twenties walked up. He was wearing a faded blue robe. "Miss Atkins, I need a shot." She smiled up at him. "Well Rusty, you are just going to have to wait. Right now I am busy." Silently he turned around and walked over to the television and stared at the screen. After a few more questions, Miss Atkins asked me to roll up my sleeve. "First, I am going to take your blood pressure. Then, I am going to draw some blood for our lab."

I rolled up my sleeve. She rubbed my arm with a cotton swab. "Now, I'm going to stick you. This may sting a little bit. "Ever since I was a little kid, I had hated needles. After all the shots I had taken to go to Vietnam, I had made my peace with the process. She drew several vials of blood while I tried to concentrate on Eddie Albert. He was a veteran of D-Day. Reciting stupid jokes on a television show must have seemed a million miles from Omaha Beach. Nurse Atkins walked over to a locker and came back with a pair of pajamas. "I would like you to put these on, please. You can put your clothes in this plastic bag." She pointed to a small room that had a single bed with spotless white sheets.

I stepped inside. The pajamas were too big, but I managed to tie them on. At least the cloth slippers fit. I walked back out and handed her the bag. She handed me some pills in a paper cup."Dr. Herster has ordered you some medication, you have to take it. If you don't, we will give it to you by injection." She handed me another paper cup filled with water. I tossed the pills down and drank the water. Thanks to the wonders of thorazine, the seventy or so patients on the third floor of Building 17 could be easily managed by a handful of nurses and aides. Nurse Atkins told me I was free to watch television. I walked over to where Jimmy was folding some towels.

"So, how are you doing, my man?" Jimmy smiled at me. "A little nervous, I haven't had psycho playmates since I got out of the Marines." Jimmy laughed. "Heck, don't you worry yourself none. You know I used to wrestle. Anybody that messes with you is going to have to answer to me. I can whip anyone in this building, if I have to. Now, you just take it easy, you hear?" I smiled. "Thanks Jimmy."

A doorway beside the television led to a large screened-in front porch. I walked over and looked down at the trees and fresh cut grass below. I wished

I could smell the grass and feel the sun on my face. What the hell am I doing in here? Will I ever get out? I had been in plenty of tough jams before. I had just spent a year up to my eyeballs in a f#*!ing war: At least I was going to be sleeping between clean sheets.

"Play the hand you're dealt boys. Play it with grace and style." I remember the words my daddy used to tell his customers back in his domino hall. A short, fat man in faded pajamas wandered by singing, "How much is that doggie in the window...the one with the wagging tail?" I later learned he had been on the locked ward of building seventeen for almost twenty years. There were other patients who also looked like they had given up on ever getting out or being sane again. Now, the thoughts that had been running through my mind slowed down to a crawl. Just forming words into a simple sentence seemed to take forever. I felt like I was walking uphill on an endless road of thick molasses.

"Hello." The guy who wanted a shot was looking at me. "My name is Russell I used to be a pilot in the Air Force. Then I tried to kill myself. Now I live here. What did you do?"

"Nothing that called for me being put in here. It seems I have a brother with an overactive imagination."

Russell smiled and began to unbutton his pajama top. "Wanna see where I shot myself? "He opened the shirt to reveal a large vertical scar running across his stomach. "After I got out of the hospital, they brought me here. That was two years ago. This place ain't so bad. I can have a shot anytime I want one."

A middle-aged man with thinning hair and wearing a bathrobe walked over. He looked up at me and smiled with the rapture of a three-year-old and announced, "Haircut day, buddy! Today is haircut day!" Russell nodded at him. "That's Larry. He tried to kill himself too. One day, he closed the garage door and started his car. Unfortunately for Larry, the car ran out of gas. He did succeed in destroying over sixty percent of his brain. He's also been in Building 17 for almost twenty years."

Larry walked over to tell the guys watching TV about haircut day. I liked the big porch. The screened-in windows were open and I could hear birds singing. Patients were free to come here and stare out at the other red brick buildings and the long, high hurricane fence that surrounded everything. It felt good to get away from the damn TV and the blue cloud that floated over the room as the members of the Nicotine Club sat in their chairs and puffed away. I wondered how long I was going to be in Building 17. It was scary to realize that this place would be the final home for many of these poor bastards. They would never leave here alive.

A buzzer announced someone at the front door. One of the nurses reached for the big ring of keys in her pocket and opened the door. An aide dressed in white pushed in a large stainless steel cart. Trays of food were stacked inside. The evening meal had arrived. A line quickly formed as my fellow lunatics patiently waited for the nurses to pass out their dinners. The food was bland and starchy. I washed it down with a paper cup of Kool-Aid. On TV, Green Acres was replaced by a game show where contestants tried to guess the price of a new washing machine. The Nicotine Club yelled higher!" as they puffed away. I was getting a little bored when I noticed an old Monopoly set and a worn out deck of cards on a shelf. I decided to start a game of my own. I took the play money and the deck of cards and sat down at a table. I stacked the different colored bills neatly in front of me and shuffled the deck. I invited Russell and some of his associates to join me in a friendly game of blackjack. I went over the basic rules as I gave each player five hundred dollars of funny money. "Relax fellas, this is play money and this time we are just playing for fun."

My daddy would have been proud of his second son. I dealt each player two cards, one up and one down. "Now don't be afraid to bet 'em up if you feel lucky." Several patients bet their entire stake on the first hand. After they busted, I took back their money. "Try to bet a little more carefully next time. "I smiled as I gave them another five hundred dollars. They promptly bet everything on the next hand and lost again. This time I gave them each a thousand dollars. Gambling with lunatics was like taking candy from a baby. Nurse Atkins walked over and frowned. "Now Robert, I am not sure this is how the Monopoly money was intended to be used."

Russell looked up at her. "Don't worry Miss Atkins, this money is not real and neither are you! "Miss Atkins wrote a short note on her clipboard. "Well, we'll have to see what Dr. Herster says." She walked away. The two face cards Russell was holding weren't good enough, since the six of clubs I

dealt myself gave me twenty-one. I gathered in the money from the losing hands and dealt another round. Here's the weird part. I knew when to take another card and when to stand. Every time, I continued to win each hand and lend out more money to the losers until Russell had enough. "Let somebody else deal," he growled. "Sure boys, no problem. "I passed the deck to Larry. I continued to manage the money and every few minutes I lent the losers another thousand dollars. I kept winning. My stake was now up past five thousand dollars. Russell frowned at me. "How do you win every hand?" I looked at Russell and then looked at the two face cards in my hand. I stared at the deck Larry was holding.

"Golly fellas, let me show you," I smiled at Larry. "Give me a hit." Larry tossed me the ace of diamonds. I laughed as I showed them the two jacks in my hand. "That's why you can't beat me. "Any other card in the deck but an ace and I would have been just another loser. I didn't just hope the next card was an ace. I knew it: "That's it! I quit!" Russell shouted as he threw in his cards and started to walk away. "Me too! "Larry growled as be got up and followed Russell. "Relax boys, it was only play money." The game was over. I gathered up the different stacks of Monopoly money and put the box and the deck of cards back on the shelf. Russell walked over and looked me in the eye. "I just want to know one thing. How did you know that last card would be an ace?

I smiled, "Being insane has its advantages." At 8:45 Nurse Atkins turned off the TV and announced it was time for bed. Patients shuffled off to take their last meds of the day and brush their teeth. They climbed into beds that were arranged in a perfect line. At nine o'clock, Nurse Atkins dimmed the lights and my first day in Building 17 was over. Thanks to the level of thorazine in my blood, I quickly drifted off to sleep. The lights were turned back on at 6am. It took a couple of minutes to realize that I had woken up in an asylum. I got up and washed my face. The Nicotine Club was lighting up their first cigarettes. They waited quietly for the TV to be turned on. I heard a key unlocking the big gray door that led downstairs. An aide came in pushing a large cart that held our breakfast.

Someone handed me a tray with a carton of milk and a box of corn flakes. There was also a plate with some lukewarm scrambled eggs and a piece of bacon. There was a small plastic cup of black coffee. I wondered why I was having so much trouble opening the box of corn flakes. Then, I remembered the Thorazine. Accomplishing even the simplest task now required all of my patience and concentration. I gave up on the corn flakes and just ate the bacon and drank the coffee. I curled up in a stuffed chair and went back to sleep.

"Mr. McLane! Mr. McLane!" One of the day nurses woke me up. "You have lab work this morning." She made a note on her clipboard. I shuffled over to a line of patients waiting by the gray door. One by one, an aide called out our names. Then he took a key from his belt and opened the door. We followed him into the hallway. In a few minutes, an old school bus pulled up and we climbed aboard. We rode along quietly to another red brick building and followed the aide off of the bus and inside. I was handed a number and waited. I found out that "lab work" was VA code word for more blood tests. When someone called my number, I walked over to a small desk and rolled up my sleeve. I still thought of needles as instruments of pain and terror, but I waited quietly. The young nurse read the name on my wrist band and then drew several vials of blood. In a few more minutes we were on the bus and headed back to Building 17. All of the comfortable chairs were occupied so I curled up in a corner on the floor and went to sleep. "Mr. McLane! Mr. McLane! You have to stay awake. The doctor will be here shortly making his rounds. He will want to talk to you." "Goddammit! If you want me to stay awake, stop giving me pills that put me to sleep!"

I glared up at the startled nurse. She took her clipboard and made a couple of notes. "Your medication is something you need to talk to your doctor about, but you have to stay awake." She walked away. I walked over to the large screened in porch and stared down at other patients milling around on the grass below. I wondered how long I would be in this hell hole. The big gray door opened and several patients entered and were slowly led over to a table that held some leftover breakfast trays. They sat down and stared at the trays like they were some kind of puzzle. Later I learned that while the rest of us were eating our breakfast, these poor bastards were upstairs getting electro-shock treatments.

First, they were strapped down on a bed. Then a

piece of rubber was inserted in their mouth and some kind of gel was smeared on their temples. Finally, a small metal paddle was placed on each side of their head and someone hit a switch, sending a jolt of electricity directly through their brain as their body convulsed and strained against the leather straps.

Back on the ward, the day nurse turned on the idiot box and the TV junkies began their morning fix. The gray door opened again and a large man in a white coat walked in. Dr. Berster. VA regulations required an attending physician to spend a short daily session with each patient who was coherent enough to hold a conversation. Dr. Berster did this while sitting behind a small folding table. One by one, each patient was led over to a small chair for a short visit. Finally it was my turn. "Good morning, Dr. Berster." I was amazed how long it took to form thoughts and then to transform those thoughts into speech. "And how are you feeling this morning, Mr. McLane?" "I am much, much better. I was wondering when I could leave here? "Dr.Berster smiled and looked at his clipboard."Well, you just got here. First, we have to run some tests and try to determine just what it is that caused you to end up here. When we have some answers, then we'll talk about when you will be ready to leave."

"Could you please reduce the dosage of my medication?"

"The current dosage is supposed to help you to stay calm. My notes here say that you snapped at one of my nurses this morning. She was just doing her job. If you continue yelling at my nurses, we may have to increase your medication." Dr. Berster thumbed though the top pages of his clipboard. "It says here you took the Monopoly money and started a poker game. Gambling here is illegal, Mr. McLane."

"Dr. Berster, we were just playing for fun. There is nothing to do here, but watch that stupid television."

"Well, it may just be for fun to you, but one of our long term patients is very upset. He thinks he owes you ten thousand dollars. There will be no more poker games. Do I make myself clear, Mr. McLane?"

"In that case he better pay up. Looks like I'm going to need the money to hire a lawyer to get me out of this dump. Say, they sent me to have blood drawn this morning. What happened to the blood they took yesterday? Did they lose it?"

"The combination of drugs we are giving you is very strong. Mr. McLane, if we didn't monitor it everyday, it could even be fatal. I am afraid you will be having blood work done on a daily basis until I say otherwise."

"Daily?" I repeated the word as I stood up and gripped the edges of' the small table and stared down at Dr. Benter. I wanted to flip it across the room, but even in my drugged condition I knew that was a no-no. I slowly released my grip and sat back down.

"I think that will be all today, Mr. McLane." He nodded at Jimmy and another aide who grabbed me and dragged me over to a bed. They held me down while one of the nurses shot another load of drugs into my ass. Dr. Herster left. The thorazine hit me like a monster wave at the beach. I was carried far out into a turquoise blue ocean where pretty mermaids rode side-saddle on prancing sea horses.

Iraq Veterans Support

by Buck Davis

I attend the Vet Center here in Tallahassee, Florida and there are 12 members in our group, excluding the counselor. The group is made up of three Marines, one corpsman who was with 1/9 in Vietnam, and eight soldiers. We are all Vietnam combat veterans and all have PTSD. One of the Marine members came up with the idea to recognize the 124th Infantry Regiment of the Florida National Guard, who are located here in Tallahassee, for their service in Iraq. Their unit served a tour in Iraq and some of them are going back for another tour soon.

We decided to present a CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION with each soldier's name written in calligraphy. Each certificate has the Regiment's patch, the Florida National Guard logo, either the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Combat Medic Badge, or if the individual soldier didn't receive either of the badges, we put an American Flag in the space where the badges are.

At the top of the Certificate across from the Regimental patch, we put the Vietnam Service Medal; it is almost the size of the real medal. In short, the certificate commends the soldiers for their service and sacrifice in Iraq and notes that we, as fellow combat veterans of the Vietnam War, appreciate what they did for our country. The certificate is presented by the Vietnam Veterans Support Group;

Tallahassee, Florida.

The certificates are in full multi-color, printed on a light tan parchment type paper. One of the Soldiers in the unit was killed, for whom we made a special certificate, given posthumously. In addition to the other graphics, in his certificate we put a Bronze Star medal and a Purple Heart medal, to be presented to his mother. We ended up with 125 certificates with the Combat Infantryman's Badge, 4 with the Combat Medic's Badge, and 3-4 with the American Flag. Our little group is going to present the certificates to the National Guard Unit on May 14th or15th, at one of their National Guard meetings. Each Soldier will be presented a certificate at the informal ceremony. The certificates are beautiful for special framing. Sincerest thanks and appreciation is extended to these fine Iraq veterans.

We share this with you, as we are proud of what we did to show our appreciation to these soldiers. We especially feel this way, because we are a small group of Vietnam Veterans desiring to do something special to the best of our abilities. Actually, we feel so good about coming up with the idea, and more amazing is that we actually were able to accomplish this calligraphy, each individual name, and personally present them to each soldier.

Our main motivation other than to do something nice for the Soldiers, was to do something that no one did for us as Vietnam Veterans. Imagine how good we would have felt come home from Vietnam to receive a personal certificate from a group of World War II Veterans or Korean War Veterans. Anyhow, I thought I would share this with you, and if someone would like to give me an e-mail address, I will send the person via e-mail, a copy of the certificates that possibly could be scanned and put on this web site for everyone to see. Thanks for letting me share this with you.

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Response to Letter By Buck Davis

by Craig W. Tourte

Had to read the post by Buck Davis several times before I was actually able to get through it. Tears came down my cheeks each time I started, and it took me a couple of times before I was able to read the whole thing. I joined the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Inc. Butte County Chapter 582 because of my friend Tom Horchler. Tom and I were at Khe Sanh together. The VVA started out as an anti-war movement group. Not that I'm for war, but I always felt that for some reason a disservice was done to those who were currently serving, not being supportive of the military. VVA's founding principle is "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

I don't know if Buck and his group of Vets knew this, or if they are members of the VVA. But whatever or however they are made up, they are certainly doing more than their share to carry the message of the VVA and all Vietnam Veterans, along to the next generation. When I joined the VFW and American Legion in my community the whispers were: you lost your war, but we would kind of like you around to do our grunt work, I have not been back.

If you have a moment, I would like you to please read Buck's post again, and think about what it would have been like if former vets had done this for us, of what Buck's group has done for the Iraq veterans. Words just cannot express my appreciation to Buck's group who also represent me. If you have the time, post a little something to Buck and the boys, letting them know you give a sh#t. Read his post and appreciate what they did. I sure do.

They Are All Finally Coming Home

by Donnae

Emmie Ard has a set of fine china in her dining room that her son Randy sent while he was flying Army helicopters in South Vietnam. It was delivered the day after she and her family were told that Randy, 20, was missing in action after his helicopter was shot down over Laos on March 7, 1971. For 34 years, the china set has never been used.

"We wouldn't, couldn't bring ourselves to eat off of it," said Nell Vanvooren, Randy Ard's sister. "It sat in a china cabinet since 1971." After more than three decades of waiting, Randy Ard's family now knows without a doubt that he never left Southeast Asia and died at the hands of enemy soldiers there in the jungle.

His remains were identified in December, 2004 by a special Army lab in Hawaii, and the family learned the results in January. "It was very hard to go through it at first, and I cried every day for a long time, but I put it behind me," Emmie Ard said.

"I think 34 years is a long time to wait for an answer, but he's coming home now, and I have peace with that now, but I still think about the families who don't have peace. There are so many who don't know. "I hope they all will one day."

Few days pass that Randy Ard's family members don't think about him, Vanvooren said. "I always wonder how he would have done something and what he would have thought about something," she said. "He was the oldest and I looked up to him. "This news gives me some peace. I'm just glad he didn't suffer and wasn't in a prison camp for years."

Randy Ard was buried March 19 at the Marshall Memorial Gardens during a family ceremony. He dreamed of flying and wanted to be a pilot most of his life, his mother said. As a teenager, he washed planes at an airport near Pensacola—where the family lived in the late 1960s—in trade for flying lessons to earn his private pilot's license.

Dedication and good grades in high school earned him an appointment to the Air Force Academy, Emmie Ard said. There was no promise of flight duty after four years at the academy, though. "He turned (the Air Force Academy) down because the Army told him they would let him fly," Emmie Ard said, "but he had to fly whatever type of aircraft they chose for him. "He came to me and asked me what I thought about it, and I didn't really want him to go into the (Army) because of what was going on in Vietnam at the time."

Emmie Ard told her son "that he was grown and could do what he wanted and if that's what he wanted to do, I was fine by it." Randy went through flight training in 1970 at Fort Rucker in South Alabama, and soon found himself flying helicopters in Vietnam. On March 7, 1971, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Randy Ard took off in an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter with two passengers from Quang Tri, in what was then the northern portion of South Vietnam.

"He was taking passengers in to Laos," said his brother, John, who gleaned information on his brother's fate from the Army and survivors. "But the enemy had a radio and convinced him to land at another place. He came in to the landing zone and, just as he was hovering, they opened up, shooting him down."

The helicopter went down in Laos just across the Vietnam-Laos border, in the village of Ban Kahn. Randy sustained two broken legs and a shattered pelvis in the crash, but the other two managed to drag him free of the wrecked Army helicopter, John Ard said.

Shortly after the helicopter went down, enemy soldiers were approaching the crash site and the small position of three Americans was about to be overrun. "Randy opened up with his pistol to keep them back, but the others left," John Ard said. "He didn't survive..."

On a pleasant Sunday evening in early March 1971, a government sedan pulled up to the Ard residence with two Army officers. They came bringing the news that Randy was missing in action. "I knew it was bad when I heard the knock on the door and saw the two men from the Army standing outside," Vanvooren said. "I shuddered and I knew it was bad."

The news shattered their world, but not knowing what happened to Randy would haunt the Ards for decades. "I think if we had known he was not coming back it would have eased the pain, but this changed my family," Vanvooren said. "It certainly weighed on my parents and it made their life harsh at times."

Randy Ard's father, Tess, who died in November

2002, was realistic about his son's fate. "He never lied to himself about it," Vanvooren said. "He knew Randy wasn't coming back. It bothered him greatly not having a final answer."

For years the Ard family had few details about Randy. They knew he wasn't with them and was a missing part of their life. It was 34 years of birthdays, family events, Christmas holidays, and a 1975 family move to Albertville without Randy. "All we knew at first was he had been shot down and was missing in action," John Ard said. "The details came out more and more over the years, some from the Army and some from the people who were there, but we didn't know all that much at first."

As a teenager, Vanvooren would play games with herself thinking her brother was alive and well, living an exotic life in Southeast Asia. "I'd think maybe he had woke up and not known where he was and now he was married to a beautiful Asian woman and living a wonderful life," she said. As the years passed and pages on the calendar turned, Randy's family came to realize his life had ended in the Laotian jungle. Logically, after a few years, you know he's not coming home," Vanvooren said. "You have to face that."

The Army provides advisers to help families when their loved ones are classified as missing. It was a nice gesture, Vanvooren and her mother said. "At first, as a kid, you hate the Army. It was the Army that took my brother away," Vanvooren, 50, said. "But as you grow older, that fades and in the end, I've come to appreciate the Army for what they have done for the families. For the professional support they have offered."

The Department of Defense changed Randy's status in 1978, John Ard said, from "missing in action" to "missing, presumed dead" because of the number of years that had passed without any information on the case.

That provided little comfort to the family. Status changes don't provide answers. However, to have his remains on the way home holds the peace the Ards are looking for, John Ard said. "It's a great relief to know this is done," he said. "I want him to be able to walk in here, but I know that's not going to happen," Emmie Ard said. "I've put this to rest and I'm at peace with it now." For 1,842 families that peace may be elusive. That's the number of unsolved missing-in-action cases the Department of Defense still has on the books from the Vietnam War.

The American involvement in the Vietnam War ended when U.S. troops left in April 1975. For years after the war, the Vietnamese government had limited relations with the U.S. government. In 1995, the United States and Vietnam established trade relations. Part of that deal was a full accounting of American servicemen lost in Southeast Asia.

Crash site graves have been identified and sets of remains have been sent to the special Army lab in Hawaii over the past decade. Several sets of remains a year are identified by the lab, bringing closure to family members. As Randy's family make preparations for a burial, the china set he sent home in 1971 sits looking brand new, is unused in a glass cabinet.

"We've talked about using it now that we know, but it would be strange to eat off the china now," Vanvooren said. "I think it'll stay where it is for now."

The Breaker Patrol Are Also Coming Home

On April 23rd, 2005, Lance Corporal Samuel A Sharp, Jr. will be interred at Oak Hill Memorial Park, located at 300 Curtner Avenue, San Jose, California. Sam and three other members of the reconnaissance team "Breaker" have been missing in action in Vietnam since May 10, 1967.

For several months, Sam's unit 1st Platoon, Alpha Company, 3rd Recon Battalion, 3rd Marine Division fought in the Khe Sanh area, near the DMZ in South Vietnam. On May 9th, 1967, Sam was serving as assistant patrol leader with the "Breaker" team on a reconnaissance patrol. The mission was to gather intelligence information on suspected enemy infiltration routes. Given the history of prior enemy sightings in the area, enemy contact was highly probable. The "Breaker" patrol was helicopter lifted into an area just south of the DMZ.

Shortly after midnight, the patrol came under heavy small arms fire. Sam was killed instantly, in the first few minutes of the fire fight. Sam and three other members of the "Breaker" Patrol were not extracted, due to heavy combat activity in the area. Sam Sharp's remains and that of the other three members of the "Breaker" patrol, l/Lt. Heinz Ahlmeyer, Sgt. James N. Tycz, and HM-3 Malcolm T. Miller were recovered in May, 2003 by the Joint POW/MIA teams Accounting Command repatriated

to Hawaii in the summer of 2004.

All four were identified via DNA examination. The internments of Lt. Ahlmeyer, Sgt. Tycz, and HM-3 Miller were expected to occur spring 2005, at Arlington National Cemetery, with planning of these ceremonies currently in process with the respective families. Details of these internments are not available at the time of this writing.



Sgt. Tycz

Milwaukee Marine, killed on a desolate Vietnam hilltop when he picked up an enemy grenade to save the lives of his men almost 38 years ago, will finally be buried with military honors

Sigmund and Agnes Tycz never had a chance to bury their son—their 22-year-old Marine named James Neil Tycz. He died on the hilltop overrun with elephant grass on a hot and humid day in 1967. When the three survivors of a seven-man Marine reconnaissance team were finally airlifted to safety off Hill 665 near Khe Sanh, they looked down from the helicopter to see the bodies of Sgt. Tycz and his three fallen comrades.

Listed as "Killed in Action-Body Not Recovered," Tycz remained on Hill 665 until American military casualty teams returned to the spot decades later. His brother, Phillip Dale Tycz, 61, gave the military a sample of his DNA in the hopes one day his brother's remains would be identified. It wasn't needed. All that was found of Tycz were three teeth, which were identified through dental records.

Now Tycz's remains will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. His four remaining siblings—his parents died within two months of each other in 1988—will gather at the cemetery on May 10, the anniversary of his death, to finally lay their brother to rest. "I'm glad it's over," said Peter Carey Tycz of Franklin, who was four years younger than his brother and joined the Marines because of him.

Phillip Dale Tycz was working at Mobil Oil in Milwaukee the day his family found out his brother had died in Vietnam. One of his sisters called to tell him the horrible news. "It was heartbreaking. It still hurts when I think about it now," Phillip Dale Tycz said Sunday from his home in Plano, Texas. "I felt sorry for Mom and Dad. Dad really took it a lot worse than I expected."

A transfer and a promotion

A transfer and a promotionSigmund and Agnes Tycz received a letter from their son on May 9, 1967. In the letter, which was printed in The Milwaukee Journal, Tycz told "Mom and Pop" that he had been transferred to a new platoon and promoted to platoon sergeant. "The change is a little strange, of course, but I know once my men and myself get used to each other, everything will be just great. They're a platoon of good Marines and I plan on keeping them that way, with my newly acquired 'Sarge's growl!' (Would you believe—my squeak??!)" He mentions the fighting around Khe Sanh, sandbagging his living quarters because of nightly mortar attacks, and the sad task of being a stretcher bearer for wounded and dead soldiers and Marines.

"None of us here like this war, especially after seeing a friend or a fellow Marine wounded or worse, but the majority (I hope for the sake of democracy) believe in fighting off Communist aggression in a weakened country...Our lieutenant passed me the word that we go in at 7:30 a.m. tomorrow. None of us want to go, but that's our job and I pray I will never fail to do it." The letter was signed "Your Marine Son, Neil," and below his signature was a sketch of an American flag and the note: "The U.S. is 'in.' It is free!"

Honored for bravery

Honored for braveryHe was killed one day after his folks received the letter. Tycz, who served in Company A in the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion of the 3rd Marine Division, was awarded the Navy Cross for his extraordinary bravery. Leading a seven-man recon team on a patrol in enemy-controlled mountainous territory, Tycz and his men were detected by a North Vietnamese Army unit of as many as 50 men, according to the Navy Cross citation.

Tycz's team was attacked by small arms fire and mortars and within minutes, one Marine was killed and three seriously wounded—but not before they killed several enemy soldiers. Tycz deployed the rest of his men, moved among them to direct their fire and shouted encouragement. When the radio operator was hit, Tycz used the radio to call in artillery fire on enemy positions, and when a grenade landed near one of the wounded Marines, Tycz ran toward it, picked it up and threw it. But the grenade traveled only a short distance before exploding, killing Tycz.

Since the area where Tycz and the three other

Marines died was in enemy territory, the military had to leave their bodies behind. From 1993 to 2004, U.S. Marine Casualty Department members visited the isolated site of the firefight eight times, a place that local tribesmen stayed away from because they considered the hilltop haunted.

The first evidence was discovered in 1998—remnants of American uniforms, 31 teeth, nine of which were identifiable, and bone fragments that couldn't be identified. Last month, Tycz's siblings were notified that three of the teeth were from their brother. Now as they prepare to travel to Washington, D.C., for his burial, his family remembers the brother who earned a letter on the South Division High School tennis team, who totaled his older brother's 1958 Pontiac Bonneville on the day he got his driver's license, who joined the Marines because he wanted to do something with his life, who gave up a cushy assignment as a general's aide to go to battle, who wanted to serve his country.

Another Missing Hero Comes Home Hometown Honors Vietnam Soldier

Charles Lindewald, missing since 1968, is memorialized after his remains finally found

Submitted by Donnae

Stephen Bradshaw never met his uncle. But the 26-year-old has always felt a connection to the man who served five tours of duty in the Vietnam War and made the ultimate sacrifice there more than 36 Years ago. US Army Master Sgt. Charles Lindewald has finally come home. The LaPorte native was declared missing in action in February 1968 near Lang Vei in Vietnam when his Detachment A-team 101 Company C 5th Special Forces came under attack. The Green Beret was 28. His body was not found until late 2003.

Since Bradshaw was a boy, he has heard stories of his uncle's bravery in combat. Following in Lindewald's footsteps, Bradshaw also joined the Army, returning home from Iraq in July as a sergeant with the 1st Armored Division.

On Saturday, Bradshaw, who now lives in Chicago, sat in the first row of LaPorte New Church, where more than 130 people gathered for a memorial service in honor of Lindewald, who was awarded three Purple Hearts, a Silver Star and a Bronze Star.

Members of the Wall Gang stood along the perimeter of the packed church, sun shining through the stained-glass windows. On a table stood black and white photos of Lindewald and his brother Tom next to a Green Beret hat.

"I am proud of him," Bradshaw said later at LaPorte's American Legion Post 83, where a reception was held following the memorial service. "I've always felt he has been watching out for me." After the service, a procession of cars and motorcycles worked its way down Pine Lake Avenue to Soldiers Memorial Park, where the LaPorte Honor Guard fired a 21-gun salute and member Dick Kuta played "Taps" on his trumpet under the gray skies. Military veterans from as far away as Portage gathered around the Vietnam Veterans memorial as American flags and POW/MIA flags ruffled in the chilled breeze.

The military service was organized by Amvets 911, Vietnam Veterans Inc., VFW Post 9423, VFW Post 1130, American Legion Post 83, and the Wall Gang.

"I still can't believe this is actually happening," said Vietnam veteran Richard Mose Mrozinski, commander of Amvets 911 and past president of Vietnam Veterans Inc., after the service. "This is what we have been demanding from the government for so long. We want every guy to be accounted for."

Lindewald's sister, Mary Perez of Michigan City, was 17 when her brother went missing. He left for the Army when the 54-year-old was 6. Their brother, Tom, died five years ago. "In the limited time we had together, he was so much fun to be with," she told the Herald-Argus after the service. "Initially [when he was declared missing], I thought there had to be some mistake, but as the years went on, I came to accept that he wasn't coming home. I never realized there was this piece of me missing until his remains were found. There has been a sense of relief and closure."

Perez, who has three adult children, has been touched by the community support she has received. "I can't believe all of the people who still care after all these years." In April, the family will travel to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, where Lindewald's remains will be buried on the 29th. His commanding officer and two other survivors of the battle will also be there. Growing up, anytime Lindewald would come home to LaPorte, he would

talk about the country's commitment in Vietnam, Perez said.

He felt we did have a place over there. He loved what he did, she said.

Colonel Ross Brown Writes:

Dear Mr. Pounds:

Our mutual friend Skip Funk shared this heart-warming story of your generosity in helping a young Marine from Memphis. Skip's fellow Marines and Khe Sanh veterans sincerely thank you.

Semper Fidelis,
Ross Brown

❋

My Fellow Marines:

I wanted to start your week out with a great local story from Memphis. A Marine from our area was seriously wounded in Iraq about 2 months ago. It was nearly 6 weeks before he was well enough to travel and come home. His injuries were so serious that he will require therapy for years and will never return to duty or a normal life. He sustained a head wound in combat and was being evacuated when the Humvee he was riding in was hit by a roadside bomb. Every Marine in the Humvee was KIA except him. Recently, President Bush visited Memphis to explain his Social Security program for the future. His presentation lasted about one hour. Our Marine attended with his sister. When the Secret Service realized who he was, he was escorted down to the front row, right in front of the President. When President Bush completed his speech, he left the stage and walked directly to our Marine and spoke with him and his family for several minutes. He also autographed the Marines arm sling and a program the sister was holding without being asked. A local benefit golf tournament was arranged for our Marine.

It was a scramble format with each team of 4 costing $1,000. The tournament filled up so quickly that they finally had to turn applications away. My good friend Charlie Pounds called to tell me that he had signed us up to play in it and that I should set aside April 22nd for the benefit. He sent in his personal check for the entire amount of $1,000. Two days later, the tournament director called Charlie to inform him that the event was full and that he could not accommodate us. Charlie told him to keep the check, it was going to help a very special man.

All of you need to know that Charlie did not serve in the Marine Corps, but believes deeply in our history, purpose and mission. That's probably from being around me so much! He's heard all the stories about every one of you and what you mean to our Corps. Please join me in thanking him for his kindness and support of our Marine. Hope all is well. Deep Respect and Semper Fidelis.

Skip Funk, H&S, 1/26

With the upcoming reunion being held in the City of Chicago, I thought I would pass on these two stories to our membership, sent to me by Craig Tourte.

Tom Eichler

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Story #1

Many years ago Al Capone virtually owned Chicago. Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic. He was notorious for enmeshing the Windy City in everything from bootlegged booze and prostitution to murder.

Capone had a lawyer nicknamed "Easy Eddie." He was his lawyer for a good reason. Eddie was very good! In fact, Eddie's skill at legal maneuvering kept Big Al out of jail for a long time. To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well. Not only was the money big, but Eddie also got special dividends. For instance, he and his family occupied a fenced-in mansion with live-in help, and all of the conveniences of the day. The estate was so large that it filled an entire Chicago city block.

Eddie lived the high life of the Chicago mob and gave little consideration to the atrocities that went on around him. Eddie did have one soft spot, however. He had a son that he loved dearly. Eddie saw to it that his young son had the best of everything: clothes, cars, and a good education. Nothing was withheld. Price was no object. And, despite his involvement with organized crime, Eddie even tried to teach him right from wrong. Eddie wanted his son to be a better man than he was. Yet, with all his wealth and influence, there were two things he couldn't give his son; he couldn't pass on a good name and a good example.

One day, Easy Eddie reached a difficult decision. Easy Eddie wanted to rectify wrongs he had done. He decided he would go to the authorities and tell the truth about Al "Scarface" Capone, clean up his tarnished name and offer his son some semblance of integrity. To do this, he would have to testify against The Mob, and he knew that the cost would be great, yet he testified.

Within the year, Easy Eddie's life ended in a blaze of gunfire on a lonely Chicago Street. But in his eyes, he had given his son the greatest gift he had to offer, at the greatest price he would ever pay. Police removed from his pockets a rosary, a crucifix, a religious medallion, and a poem clipped from a magazine.

The poem read:

The clock of life is wound but once
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop, at late or early hour.
Now is the only time you own.
Live, love, toil with a will.
Place no faith in time.
For the clock may soon be still.

❋

Story #2

World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Lieutenant Commander Butch O'Hare. He was a fighter pilot assigned to the aircraft carrier Lexington in the South Pacific. One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top off his fuel tank. He would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to his ship. His flight leader told him to return to the carrier. Reluctantly, he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet. As he was returning to the mother ship he saw something that turned his blood cold, a squadron of Japanese aircraft were speeding their way toward the American fleet.

The American fighters were gone on a sortie, and the fleet was all but defenseless. He couldn't reach his squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor could he warn the fleet of the approaching danger. There was only one thing to do. He must somehow divert them from the fleet. Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he dove into the formation of Japanese planes. Wing-mounted 50 caliber's blazed as he charged in, attacking one surprised enemy plane and then another. Butch wove in and out of the now broken formation and fired at as many planes as possible until all his ammunition was finally spent. Undaunted, he continued the assault. He dove at the planes, trying to clip a wing or tail in hopes of damaging as many enemy planes as possible and rendering them unfit to fly.

Finally, the exasperated Japanese squadron took off in another direction. Deeply relieved, Butch O'Hare and his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier. Upon arrival he reported in and related the event surrounding his return. The film from the gun-camera mounted on his plane told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He had in fact destroyed five enemy aircraft. This took place on February 20, 1942, and for that action Butch became the Navy's first Ace of WWII, and the first Naval Aviator to win the Congressional Medal of Honor.

A year later, Butch was killed in aerial combat at the age of 29, His home town would not allow the memory of this WWII hero to fade, and today, O'Hare Airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man. So the next time you find yourself at O'Hare International, give some thought to visiting Butch's memorial, displaying his statue and his Medal of Honor. It's located between Terminals 1 and 2.

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So what do these two stories have to do with each other?

BUTCH O'HARE WAS EASY EDDIE'S SON.

"Jake the Snake" RIP

by Michael E. O'Hara,
Bravo Co 1/26

It is mid-January right this moment as I sit here at my computer. It is very cold but sunny, and fortunately no snow at the present time. It will soon be anniversary time for us all. By the time this gets in the newsletter, warm weather will be here and I should be "flying in the wind" on the Harley. For now, it is only the anticipation of Spring that keeps that hope alive.

It is the time of year, as I know you all are aware, that we all ponder much. We think of days gone by, of friendships that were and have been made throughout our lives. We mourn, we pray, we do all kinds of things that are vacant to our mind at other times of the year. I am no different than most of you in this respect. Mostly, I cry.

I once knew a cabinetmaker that had a brother who did some real hard time in Korea. He had a real bad drinking problem. My friend and I were discussing his brother's problems and I told him the only way to explain it in terms he could understand was this way. He simply had a broken heart. I guess that is what Khe Sanh has come to mean to me. It simply broke my heart.

There are, of course, many stories of brave and good men, those who fell hard and those who suffered dearly. We all know them too well. We all have them. Every company, battalion, unit and organization that was there, have their own personal stories, each and every one compelling in their own right.

But every once in awhile someone comes along in life that totally changes who we are, or who we might become as we grow and mature. Just because they are in your environment, they make a difference. I had a teacher that affected me that way when I was a teenager. I once worked for a man who kind of helped shape my character also. But it was a man I met while patrolling off of 881S in November of 1967 that would, in time, affect who I was and who I would become as much as any man I ever knew. I can't really explain why it turned out that way...it just did.

Quiles Ray Jacobs, or, as he was affectionately known, Jake the Snake, arrived about a month after my arrival with Bravo Company 1/26. Jake was a year younger than me but had joined a year earlier. He was a Lance Corporal, and had arrived with a group that had done some additional training at Gitmo Bay. He was immediately assigned as FTL.

It was a good time for our squad. Many were due to rotate by early 68 and others by the following summer. Most of us were FNGs, and November and December gave us the time to begin to meld together as a team. There was time to develop our map reading skills, learn how to maneuver and hone our overall skills hunting the bad guys. We were fortunate to have this time to "break in."

Shaking the bush came natural to a kid like me from southern Indiana. It was not much different than hunting squirrels. Jake, on the other hand, brought something else to the table. Jake was a street smart kid right off the streets of Los Angeles. It was a tough environment, but he had someone special in his life. Jakes' mother was a devout Christian woman, and she knew how to raise her children. Jake arrived at Khe Sanh fully prepared for whatever might confront him—his mother had seen to that long before the war started.

Looking back on those days, they were hard times. These were the things that brought us all so terribly close to each other for life. The endless nights on watch, the LP(s, the ambushes. The night before the predawn artillery attack which began the Siege, our squad did a night ambush down off the end of the runway in the gray sector. I got blessed walking point and Jake had the starlight scope. It was eerily clear out that night if my memory serves me correctly. Our silhouettes stood out boldly on the horizon. We made no contact but returned early. When we got back Jake said as they were watching through the starlight scope that they could see Charlie sighting in his mortar tubes. I left my boots on when I went to sleep that night.

Jake was a natural born leader. He knew how to treat people, which is the key to getting things done. He knew he wanted to be squad leader. He would have to be patient. Cpl Belfontaine had had the squad a long time and was very good but was due to rotate in early 1968. The squad was handed to two other successors whose stay was short-lived for one reason or another. By early February, Jake was fully in charge of Bravo 2/3.

We never let that affect our never-ending conspiracies though. We were into everything. We ran nightly raids up to the main storage areas. We paid off

guards and used anything we could to steal extra food and gear. I know at one point we had stashed over twenty one gallon cans of fruit. We were stealing runway matting, poncho liners—you name it. When they finally caught on to what we were doing we would cook up some other plot. By the end of February, it was getting kind of hard to steal food and other things. Sadly, we devised a scheme of hiding the names of casualties from the gunny for an additional day, so we could draw rations on their names. They would put you in jail today for some of the things we were forced to do just to survive.

Jake turned out to be an exceptional squad leader. We continued to improve our area of responsibility and there was little discord within the squad. Things would soon turn for the worse. On the whole, the company was maintaining pretty well until the end of February, when we lost 27 men from our third platoon. That has been pretty well documented. Those numbers continued to rise. We had no other choice but to accept things for what they were and keep on keeping on.

When the C-123 went down on the sixth of March, we watched as we lost twelve more from Bravo. One was Ron Ryan from our M-60 gun pit in our squad area. He was another one of those "exceptionally fine young Marines."

Jake, somehow, managed to guide us through it all. Late March would add insult to injury, but Jake continued to exhibit his unique leadership skills. On the 20th or the 21st (not real sure) we were running a small squad-size recon. We started out pre-dawn in front of FOB-3, sat in at a defined position and waited for first light. When 0800 arrived, we got up and began to move out when the hostile fire erupted. We were getting it from a tree line. Mortars, small arms, and machine gun fire were impacting all around. For a short while, I think we were even caught in crossfire of sorts by the supporting fire from the base. Dan Horton and Doug Furlong had to be evacuated with severe leg wounds from the mortar fire, and a couple others needed some minor attention from the corpsman.

Once that was completed the orders were to continue on. Jake had been standing maybe a foot in front of me when this action had begun. He had been shot across the back. The bullet went in and out of his flak jacket at each shoulder. It virtually exploded in my face. Jake said he was OK and he actually assisted me with the evacuations. After we had moved on down thru some enemy trenches we found a few corpses and some smoldering web gear. When we stopped at one point to disarm a tripwire I noticed a considerable amount of blood had run down on Jakes trousers from under his flak jacket. I asked him again if he was hurt and his response was for me to assume the point, we needed to complete the patrol and get on back. We did so without incident.

When we got back, Jake asked for the corpsman to look at his back. After a whopping 168 stitches they bandaged up his wounds. That bullet had cut completely across his back. He looked like someone had laid into him with a machete. They wanted to medevac him out of Khe Sanh, but he refused.

Jake never gave up control of the squad. Even with his wounds bandaged he continued to run the day-to-day affairs of our squad. He even led us on the March 30th raid into the ruins of our third platoon in which we would lose twelve more from Bravo, even as we destroyed a battalion from the 66th NVA Regiment. Two evenings before that event, Jake (along with the rest of us) would suffer a heart wrenching loss. Kent and McRae were in Jake's hooch shooting the moose. Just as they stepped out the door, a single artillery round got both of them. It affected Jake deeply until his final days.

Jake and I parted company in April just before the company left Khe Sanh. He was wounded again down on the Go Noi island area. He was shot in the shoulder while going to the aid of another Marine. I would not see him again until 1970 when I ran into him at Camp Pendleton while going through the separation process. It was a short visit. Jake had come home with two Purple Hearts, a Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, one Bronze Star and a Silver Star. I was not surprised. It would be twenty-two years before we would see or hear each other's voice again in 1992. The years had passed and I was getting the urge to find out what had happened to all those I had served with. I had gotten a call from Bob Hanna who had Jake's personal information. I called Jake on the phone and the plans to go to San Diego began. I was so excited. Good times were ahead. My time with Jake would be limited to three years, but I would come to fully understand why myself, and everyone who ever knew him, found his friendship to be so precious.

When we hooked up for that first time, we were in

Los Angeles a few days before the reunion. I had flown out and was staying with my former in-laws in Temple City. I was so happy to see him when he parked the truck. We hugged in the middle of the street for the longest time. You can imagine what the people in the passing vehicles might have thought. I met his wife Naomi (an angel in disguise) and we visited with another Marine from Bravo that night. Ron Hightower was also a squad leader at Khe Sanh in our company and was seriously wounded after the Siege. Jake had been complaining a little of having a stomach ache, but I didn't think about it.

This was in 1992 right after the riots took place in L.A. It would be awhile before I learned what Jake was doing while that stuff was going on. Jake and I both, as it turned out, became home builders. Jake was into some light apartments too. We had a good time in San Diego and were really looking forward to the 25th reunion in Washington D.C. the following year. Jake and I had some surprises lined up for some other special people, working hard all year locating the rest of the squad. We never have found all of them, but we made a really good showing in D.C. that next year. Dan Horton, Steve Foster, Ken Rodgers, Jake and I, all made it. We later found Doug Furlong in Australia.

It was 1993, which would turn out to be the last reunion Jake would be able to attend. He brought his mother and other family with him. He knew more than he was telling us. We had a wonderful time. It would take volumes of paper to go into some of the stuff we did in D.C. We had gone down to the Wall on Thursday evening ahead of the scheduled services to kind of do a private thing. It was raining, getting late and we were getting stewed. I have to tell this. We pulled into a bar not far from the Wall, which was about to close. An unidentified off duty policeman (K.P.) who was with us just whips out his badge and says, "Bar is now ppen!" Ernie Spencer was in the mix and we all got to kidding him about his drinking capabilities. Well, we were drinking double hot shots of whiskey, followed by a longneck. After three rounds I had to defer. These guys were killing me. Then Ernie downs a double shot, sticks two long necks in his mouth and downs them both without hesitation. Don(t ever try to keep up with Ernie at the bar. You are going to lose.

In the fall of 93, I went to San Francisco to see Ernie and attend a Marine Corps Ball. Most everyone who was in the bar in D.C. was there, except for Jake. He did not feel like coming. I knew something was amiss. Ernie told me Jake had confided in him that it was colon cancer. That was just like Jake, it was no surprise.

Jake and I stayed in close touch over the next two years. He missed the 94 reunion and he was beginning to let me know he was pretty ill. He convinced me he was going to beat it. If anyone could, it would be him. When he started making the trips to Mexico for treatment it was obvious it was not working. Then one day after I returned from the reunion in 1994, I got a call from Jake. All he said was "get your sorry butt out here and see me." I knew when I hung up the phone what the deal was. It was almost too much. I began to make my plans for what I knew was going to be a bittersweet journey.

I called Ken Pipes and made arrangements to stay with him and we went to visit Jake together. I think we stayed two nights with Jake at his home in Compton. We swam in the pool, drank some good whiskey in the Jacuzzi, and drove all over visiting some of Jake's properties.

Jake owned an apartment building that he had built, located in the area where the riots had taken place in 1992. His daughter lived there and was the property manager when we were there. It was a very nice, secure and well built facility. While we were in the area, Jake began to explain what had occurred during the riots.

Jake's apt complex was twelve units. He moved all of his tenants over to his home in Compton for two weeks while his wife cooked, washed cloths and generally cared for these people while Jake and company guarded the building with, shall we say, "adequate security" to keep his building from falling prey to the rioters. They never bothered it. They burned down the three adjoining corners.

Those last few days I spent with Jake in August of '94 were very precious. We talked about a lot of things. Jake had been divorced just a few years prior to us getting back together and knowing Jake the way I did, I found it was not what I would have expected. Jake was a very dedicated family man. He refused to be evacuated at Khe Sanh because he knew he would lose his opportunity to go to Hawaii to be with his wife. When I shared my thoughts with him his response was "we simply grew apart" and that was the end of that conversation. That was very

typical of Jake. I knew him twenty seven years and I cannot recall him ever saying an unkind word about anyone, even his enemies.

Jake believed all God's children are beautiful people. He always said he did what he had to do throughout his life, no regrets. But he also carried the same load many of us have been asked to carry throughout our lives, and he always said he hoped the Lord could forgive him. I(m sure He did. Jake was without question one of the finest human beings I have ever had the privilege of knowing.

When Ken and I got ready to leave, Jake and I stood in the drive of his home and we just hugged each other, just like we did on that street in Temple City two years prior. I don(t think we even discussed his advancing colon cancer. Ken and I did not have much to say all the way home. I was pretty dehydrated though. We all knew what had just occurred and what was to come.

I regularly talked with Jake throughout the Fall, and into the Winter of 1995. Then the situation got to where I was talking to Naomi every time Jake was in the hospital. Winter turned to Spring and the flowers began to bloom. It was mid-April and Jake was not doing well. During the night of 18/19 April, I had this weird dream that Jake and I were riding in a limo and there were magnolia trees everywhere in bloom. I told Maxine the next morning, and we decided Jake's time was very short.

It was April 19, 1995. Some jerk had just blown up the federal bldg in Oklahoma City. Naomi called. Jake was gone. It's so hard to believe it has been ten years since that moment in time. For those who were fortunate enough to have been touched by his life, you need not be told of his deeds, his presence, or his kindness and all the support he provided this organization in its early years.

Jake was not only a Marine's Marine...a Man's Man, but he was what the rest of us hope we are judged to be someday. A Good Man with a Kind Heart and a Warm Spirit, who did what he could to make this world in which we live just a tad bit better off for having passed this way.

With all my Heart,
Godspeed and Semper Fi My Friend
Lighthouse two three

Why Am I In Iraq

by Jim Zucarelli



MSGS Sarnowski and Jim Zucarelli at Camp Victory

A little background on myself. I served with the 26th Regiment from December 1968 to February 1969. I am not a veteran of Khe Sanh. When Doc Whitman organized the "Delta 1/26 Association," I joined so that I could remain active with those Marines/Corpsmen whom I served with. I lasted only two months in country. I arrived as a Second Lieutenant and transferred to the 26th Regiment on 22 December 1968. The 26th regiment was OPCON to the Third Marine Division at that time. I was assigned to Delta Company on 03 January 1969. Delta Company was located on Hill 190 about twenty kilometers outside Danang. I was assigned as the Platoon Commander of the Second Platoon. I commanded the Second Platoon from 03 January 1969 to 22 February 1969. I was wounded the night of February 22nd while out on an ambush south of Hill 190. I was medevaced from the field to the 95th Army Evacuation Hospital at China Beach and then to the U. S. Naval Hospital in Yokuska, Japan.

I was hospitalized for eight weeks. I finished my tour of duty in West Pac on Okinawa at Camp Hansen. When I returned stateside I reported into Camp Lejeune and served the remainder of my obligation in the Second Division with 3/6. I was released from active duty on 01 June 1971. Between June of 1971 and now, there was a huge package of living that was done. But that is a story for another day. Why am I in Iraq? Because I had to pay for a new car. In 1988, I bought a new Dodge Caravan. As I pulled out of the dealership with my new minivan, I said to myself (while my wife and our three children were sitting in their seats), "How am I going to afford the monthly payments?" as I was the only

wage-earner in the family. So I looked for a part-time job. The U. S. Marine Corps Reserves would not take me (because of my VA disabilities). The U. S Army Reserves would not take me (because I failed the medical physical because of my VA disabilities). The New York Army National Guard was either blind to these disabilities or had to make its quota. Whatever the reason, I was brought into the New York Army National Guard as a Captain in the Engineer Branch.

The National Guard said I was too old to be an infantry officer (I was a few months shy of age 43), so a combat engineer I became. If you fast-forward to 01 March 2003 and you were a fly on the wall in Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's office in the Pentagon, that was the day he chose the National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division to take over from the Army's 1st Infantry Division (Big Red 1) in Iraq. I have ahead of me a one year tour-of-duty here in Iraq, and I have just completed my first week. One week down and fifty-one weeks to go, or more precise, 356 days and a wake-up. Yes, my next year is truly 24/7/365. There are no such things as a day off, and I work from 0600 to whenever the work gets done, or I pass out from fatigue (never the former; always the latter). It is tough on me being 58 years of age. Keep in touch. As I tell all my Delta friends, I am looking forward to the Reunion scheduled for the summer of 2006 in Washington, DC. Though I wear the desert uniform of the United States Army, I am, and will always be, a United States Marine.

Training for Arriving in Iraq

We stayed at Fort Drum for 5 months and were scheduled to leave 12 November. Unfortunately, the plane developed mechanical problems and we had to sleep overnight in the terminal. A replacement plane arrived and we left the next day. We were in full combat equipment so it was a little cramped. We flew from Fort Drum to Shannon, Ireland, refueled, and then flew over the English Channel. (London was lit up like a Christmas tree), across Belgium, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Turkey and eastern Iraq (between Baghdad and the Iranian border). We landed in Kuwait City and were immediately driven by bus to an Army base in the Kuwaiti desert. That was Sunday afternoon.

This is where I will be until some time after Christmas. The threat is high but not as high as Iraq. Weapons must be carried. The best way to describe Kuwait is sand and horizon; nothing else. Tonight there is a bright sky with the crescent moon. We are in training for our movement into Iraq and unloading our equipment that came on a Navy ship. The temperature today was 85°F with a gentle wind. The sand is everywhere. Everything is mobile: Port-a-Potties, shower vans, and work areas. This morning there was no water so we all took "combat showers" – from water bottles poured over our heads. The last time I brushed my teeth and shaved from a bottle was in Vietnam. I guess nothing changes very much in the life of a trooper. If we don't push into Iraq until after Christmas, that means we won't get home until early, 2006. I am trying to keep up with these soldiers that are young enough to be my children. One soldier told me the other day that she has a lot of faith in me to lead her as I am AS OLD as her grandfather. Gad Zooks! The chow is plentiful (I wish the water was). I will be sending emails like this until we get more established. Keep us in your prayers.

My Arrival

Arriving anywhere for the first time has its brief moments of exhilaration, which can be timed by looking at your watch, followed closing behind by those moments of sullen reality, which can be timed by looking at your calendar. That was what greeted me arriving



Saddam Palace, now Corps HQ



Standing under Hand of Saddam Hussein statue



Main Gate at Corps HQ

here in Baghdad. First, I did get assigned a trailer, which will be my living quarters for the next year. I opened the door and my first comment was: "Geez, they actually swabbed the deck and washed down all the walls in anticipation for my arrival. How lucky I was and what a great bunch of guys at billeting." I discovered I was wrong when I went to choose the bed that would be mine. Both were soaking wet with water, and what I thought was "early spring cleaning" by the billeting staff was really a trailer with 1,000,000 leaks in the roof. The water was everywhere. I went back to billeting and mentioned my dilemma and they gave me that bureaucratic "deer-in-the-headlight-look", and then handed me a box of paper towels and a bottle of Fantastic cleaner. My first night in Baghdad was trying to position my bed so that I could sleep in-between the incessant water drips.

For the next three days I was on my knees scrubbing, swabbing and air drying everything in sight. I was elated. I awoke to noise on my roof and thought I was being hit by a mortar or rocket attack. Lucky for me, it wasn't incoming but the billeting office sent two workers out to patch the leaks on my roof. I can't complain though. I should have taken pictures to show our local union shop how men in Iraq repair roof using flashlights and pitch in the middle of the night. So now that my 8' by 10' area I call "home" is now habitable, I can think forward to learning my job here in Baghdad. Thank God our brains are divided into two hemispheres. My first three days in Baghdad sort of burned out my right half. I will use my left half to work with while the right half recharges.

A Letter to Our Marine Brothers Who served at Khe Sanh

by Buck Davis
1st Engineers

My brother-in-law and I were both in the Marines and served in Vietnam as combat engineers. He was assigned to the 3rd Combat Engineer Battalion, and I was with the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion. He arrived in Vietnam December 1967, and I followed in January 1968. We have compared notes throughout the years, and discovered we were in or around the same places during our tours.

Both of us were at Khe Sanh after the Siege, and we both spent some time on the hills around the base. We both saw combat serving on the hills. I was with 1/1 on Hill 689, and we had a terrible fight with the NVA trying to recover some dead Marines that were killed in an ambush outside the wire. I think we were the last Marines in the Khe Sanh area after it was abandoned. We didn't leave the hill until July 12th or 13th, were overrun and had some bad times during recovery, and lost more good men in the process. But that is not what I want to write about. Tim, my brother-in-law and I spent a lot of time recently talking about the Marines that were at Khe Sanh during the Siege.

We both have been in firefights, received incoming mortars, rockets and some artillery at times, but we couldn't imagine what the Marines went through during the Siege receiving incoming every day. It had to be the most unnerving experience that anyone could go through. Tim and I reflected back on the times we received incoming and what a scary experience it was, but compared to thousands of incoming rounds each and every day, that would be one of the worst experiences a person could go through. I just wanted to let you know that at least two old Marines are thinking about you and your experiences, and we are both amazed that any of you would be sane today after that experience.

I am currently being treated for PTSD, but when I think about the Marines that were at Khe Sanh during the Siege, I would think all of you should be rated at 100% disability for PTSD for going through that experience for such an extended period of time. Tim and I have the deepest respect for you and for what you went through. Thank you for what you did, God bless you for your service at Khe Sanh. I am pretty nuts now, but if I had been there during

the Siege receiving all of the incoming you had, I think I would be in a mental hospital.

Tim and I offer you the supreme Semper Fi.
Buck

War Story

by Ski-ball

Thirty-seven years ago, right around this date, we received orders from CAC HQ in Phu Bai that we were to take part in a large operation in conjunction with units of 1/1. We were to swing southeast out of our village and then circle out, and come back up in a north direction. 1/1 would push almost straight south out of Phu Bai (all of this on the east side of Highway 1)—the intent being to push the units of VC and NVA going in and out of the fighting in Hue, eventually trapping them against a river where we would prevent their crossing. We took two full squads (for us, that meant 12 Marines total and about 24 PF's). That also meant that we would only leave 4 of our guys in the village, and that even the guys that we normally would not trust to go out on patrol with us, would have to go. Almost from the first, it was an ongoing shootout. Nothing major at first, just enough to slow us down, and irritate the heck out of us.

We finally called a halt in a rice paddy to settle down, get our bearings, and see how 1/1 north of us was doing. Three Hueys supporting 1/1 spotted us, and took positions for what looked like a strafing run. This was probably based on all the Vietnamese characters they could see manning the rice paddy sides. Not having radio communications with them, we started to try to bunker in for the coming attack. Just then, one of the black guys in the other squad, ran out into the middle of the rice paddy, whipped off his helmet, and started pointing at his face, just as the first Huey started to make his run. It stopped directly over him; the door gunner looked out and down. We could see his lips moving, and then he reached way out and gave a wave. All three Hueys then headed north back towards where 1/1 should be moving towards us. We proceeded north, immediately taking more fire.

Ahead of us, we could hear the arty support for 1/1. We were moving in a more congested area, a large number of huts, where a lot of our PF's had families. Our movement was slow, as the rate of fire intensified. Individual huts had to be cleared, and the arty got closer. The arty finally lifted, and we headed for the south bank of the river. As we made a turn next to the river, we spotted a number of civilian bodies lying dead out in the open. As we got closer, I recognized two of them. One was the mother of one of our PF sergeants, and the other was his daughter, about 8-9 years of age.

We had just shared dinner at their house two nights before. The mother had been caught in the back by an arty blast, but there was absolutely no mark discernable on the daughter. As he cradled their bodies, a part of me that had kept me going on so long died, and another part that I had never felt, was born. Sheer, unmitagating, non-feeling emotion for those who would wage war. Violence answered with violence. The only solution. Direct conflict with the love I felt for those who only wanted to live and be left alone. I lost a large part of myself that day. A part that had helped keep my comrades and me alive. For the first time, I truly let the fear of vulnerability get to me. I did not lose the power to kill, but I had the lost the power of not letting it get to me. Where before it was an asset, I now possessed a liability. My war had changed drastically.

Father and Son, Serving Together at Khe Sanh

by Skip Funk

My father, Lt/Col. Harry M. Funk, USAF, was the Liaison Officer for the Air Force in Washington, D.C. from 1966 to 1970. His office was in the old Cannon Building where the House of Representatives was located. When the Siege began, he requested TDY to Guam and was transferred there for 60 days to fly B-52 missions in direct support of Khe Sanh. His reasoning was that if his son could endure what Khe Sanh had to offer, he could leave his comfortable desk job in Washington, and do his part to help me.

I never knew if or when he was flying one of the many missions we witnessed, but I always imagined him up there looking down on us and saying a prayer on our behalf, as they delivered their payload. After I returned home, we sat down many nights and talked of the connection we felt during that tough

time. He admitted that during some of his runs that it was very difficult for him to look down on Khe Sanh, knowing that we were in desperate times and wondering if what he was doing was making a difference. I assured him that it made all the difference in the world. In fact, in some of my letters to him during the Siege, I included photos of the Arc Lights in action from our ground perspective, and he shared them with all of his crew members.

Lt/Col. Funk, USAF and Cpl. Funk, USMC may hold the distinction of being the only father/son air/ground team during the Siege of Khe Sanh. To this day I am so very proud of him for stepping forward to do his part on our behalf. I was released from active duty in August, 1968 and returned home to complete college and get my degree. I moved to Cincinnati in 1970 with a new job to be close to him. He was based at Columbus AFB in Columbus, Ohio flying KC-135 tankers. We spent many good weekends together, playing golf and attending Cincinnati Reds baseball games, and enjoying a new connection between father and son.

The sad part is that on Thanksgiving night, 1971, while he TDY in Thailand, a Thai native stopped my father and attempted to rob him. My father resisted and was shot and killed in the attempt. The man was arrested that weekend and confessed to the crime. He was executed by a firing squad within three days. Such a terrible loss. Didn't mean for this to be commentary on my life, but thought the timing of your e-mail and the subject may be of interest to those Marines who did not know the whole story. Thanks for your e-mails and for staying in touch. I attended the monthly meeting of our local chapter of the Marine Corps League last night. Good to stay in touch with our roots. My very best regards to all, Semper Fidelis.

Skip Funk
H&S,1/26)

Ross Brown wrote:

We were all at Khe Sanh together with 1st Battalion 26th Marines. Congratulations on your graduating from The Air War College. I am one of five Marine officers, all lieutenant colonels, graduating from The Air War College in the Class of 1985. The Class of 1985 was comprised of some 270 officer students, mostly Air Force colonels. During our time at The Air War College, I do not recall one single Air Force officer ever stepping forward to tell the five of us Marines that he had served at Khe Sanh or flew missions in support of the Marines at Khe Sanh.

That was until your Air Force General Russell E. Dougherty, former CinC Strategic Air Command, came to speak to our class in the Spring of 1985. After the general's speech, I waited in the lobby until all of the Air Force officers had finished kissing his ring. General Dougherty then looked at me, smiled broadly and walked over without a moment's hesitation. "Ross Brown, what in the world are you doing in that Marine uniform?" General Dougherty inquired. I had grown up at Strategic Air Command's March Air Force Base in California while Lieutenant Colonel Dougherty was raising his family and working his way up the chain of command in the U.S. Air Force. I simply replied that I had always been a Marine and appreciated the support his Strategic Air Command had provided us Marines at Khe Sanh and elsewhere. After that moment, Air Force officers came out from everywhere to tell the five of us how they had played an important role in supporting the U.S. Marines in defending Khe Sanh. Thank you, Mr. Butler and...

Semper Fidelis,
Ross

Ross,

My really good B-52 story comes from a grainy black and white photograph I acquired when I was researching Crickets on a Steel Tiger (my Air War College report on the interdiction of the Ho Chi Minh Trail 1966-1968). The label on the back says: "104677 USAF U.S. Air Force B-52s crisscrossed the countryside around the embattled outpost of Khe Sanh, Vietnam, leaving the entire area interwoven with geometrical patterns of pock marks. In this pictorial montage which was pieced together from reconnaissance photos, each white dot shows where a bomb fell. The larger white forms at the right are clouds which characteristically hung over the base. April 1968." U.S. Air Force Photo. On the front, the picture is labeled "B-52 STRIKES." Faint vertical lines show where the strip photos have been matched together. Near the lower right corner, a grease-pencil

mark encircles the US Marine base at Khe Sanh, and you can barely see the outline of the runway with clouds etched around.

Two other labels northwest of the base indicate the locations of Hill 881 North and Hill 881 South. Those hills are about 4 miles off the end of the runway and had been battlegrounds in May 1967 during the NVA's first major attempt to move in on Khe Sanh. During those Hill Fights, over 100 Marines died and more than 1,000 NVA troops were thought to have been killed. The picture continues for about 9 miles west of Khe Sanh and about ten miles north, so it shows about a hundred square miles. Lines of little white dots cover most of those 100 square miles. There are sections of jungle that are more white than dark. In this region northwest of Khe Sanh, it was believed that either two or three (I don't have my books out to cross-check) NVA Divisions were massing to eventually overrun the Marine base with its 4,000 defenders and create the American Dien Bien Phu that would drive us out of the war.

During the 77-day Siege of Khe Sanh that followed Tet-68, the NVA suffered tens of thousands of casualties within the region covered by this picture. All those little white dots help explain how and why. That picture is part of why A Certain Brotherhood had the storyline that it has. If the NVA could have held off the B-52s and prevented all those lines of white dots, Khe Sanh might very well have been overrun in early 1968. Airpower made the difference. Many of those bombs were loaded on B-52s at U-Tapao. Be proud of our (the TLCB's) role and don't ever forget it. I feel one other personal connection to that picture. For about 2 weeks in late July/early August 1967, I lived in a bunker at Khe Sanh. Flying conditions were miserable; living conditions weren't much better although the Marines took good care of the FACs as they wanted us available and ready when they needed us.

I did get some good missions, helped pull some of our guys out of the jungle, gave moral support to a company climbing a hill one beautiful afternoon, got to do some legal buzzing one afternoon flying cover over a large convoy heading back down from Khe Sanh to Camp Carroll, etc. One memory I have is that in the summer of 1967 that hundred square miles looked mostly like virgin jungle from the air, with the exception of the craters left from the battle in May on Hills 881 North and South. All those lines of little white dots didn't exist. That's part of why I have always been so impressed by that photo from April 1968.Take great pride in having served your country when you were called.

Jimmie H. Butler
Nail 12
Feb 67 Jan 68

Attacking Hill 881N

by Chester Wilson, I Co3/26

I remember the morning the company left 881S to attack Hill 881N. I was with 1st. Platoon, 1st. Squad. We went around a bomb crater, an area that was very familiar to us. We had been in a firefight the day before when we surprised an NVA outpost. We moved into position for the attack. Names have faded over the years, but I remember Cpl. Coniff & Ron Ford. Ron was on my left, I don't remember who was on my right. We were about halfway to the top when we received fire. Everyone dropped and began to return fire. I was firing my M-14 as fast as I could. Enemy small arms fire was kicking dirt up into my face. I fired a LAW and rolled out of the line of fire. There was an explosion to my left and a scream from Ron Ford—he had been hit. I went to see how bad he was hit. I dressed his wounds, and he headed back to the rear.

A short time later, another explosion, another yell, another wounded Marine. I administered first aid and he had to head for the rear. I resumed laying down a base of fire until Phil Provanzano informed me that everyone else had pulled out and I was the only one left, and they had called for an air strike. I did not realize I was all alone up there. I am glad the NVA didn't know it. I returned to the tree line by the crater where the wounded had been taken to await medevac and the air strike. I helped set up a perimeter for the arrival of the medevac. The helicopter had just landed and picked up wounded, when it was hit and rolled down the hill. Parts were flying off and I was almost struck by one of the wheels. It crashed into the valley and the Marines rushed to rescue the wounded and crew members.

And the end of the day, 1st Platoon was completely exhausted. People have asked me if I was ever shot, I answer no, but it wasn't that the NVA didn't try. I received minor shrapnel leg wounds which I

suspect were a lot less painful. To all my fellow Khe Sanh Vets I wish you well.

To my fellow Marines every where, a big Semper Fi.

❋

In Memory of Adrian Brittles, and William Walter (Muddy) Waters III. If anyone is interested Adrian is buried at Turtle Hill Cemetery on the East side of Tampa, Florida. I have been there, and am going this year. I plan on visiting Muddy's grave at Hampton Roads National Cemetery this April. Does anyone know where S/Sgt. Taylor is buried? I would like to pay my respects. He was such a good person and outstanding Marine. We had some good conversations before I rotated.

Reminiscence Time

by Ski-Ball

Thirty-seven years ago this night, I spent my last night in combat. Three Marines and one PF on a night ambush. The ambush was successful with one minor glitch. That is why it was my last time in combat in Vietnam. The years have passed by quickly, though so many of the memories have not. My thanks go out to a Marine chopper pilot who disobeyed orders to pick me up in the dead of night and to those back in Phu Bai, who in spite of a very long night (there was a big brouhaha) going on up near the DMZ that night, and casualties were a plenty, made sure that I was not ignored and kept me up to date why I was not at the top of the list in getting treated.

It was a long night, and even a longer morning. Next to me was a lieutenant who was due to go on R and R, but upon hearing that his unit was in trouble up at the DMZ, got on a chopper to go back up there instead of staying on the freebird heading for some fun. Rank didn't matter in our conversation. On my other side was a young fellow, who seeing I had a Bible, asked to borrow it. I told him it was not in English, but a Bible given to me by my parents written in Latvian before I left for Nam. He just looked at me and said, it didn't matter what language it was written in, the message was the same, and he would just like to hold it for a while.

There were sandbags piled around a lot of the cots we were on, and in the distance at one point I could hear mortars dropping. At that point I couldn't move anymore and just lay there listening, judging in my mind how close the mortars were getting. The next day, I was flown down to Da Nang and from there, a flight to go old Yokasuka, Japan, where I was to spend a few months of my life. A person can do a lot of thinking lying in a cot, especially when the sense of immortality no longer exists. And it is amazing how the effects of war bring out the equality of all men, regardless of race, color, creed, and rank. A lot of thoughts and images went through my mind and heart that night and in those following times. And a new sense of values and love were born.

Oops

Michael Matey Jr wrote:

Ernie: I just wanted to bring this to your attention if I may. On memorial page 6, in the remembrance by Col. Dabney honoring Lt. Puller Jr., you have Lt. Puller listed as having served with 3/1. It should have read 2/1.

I was a member of Golf Co. 2/1 when Puller joined us in late July 1968. I was in Con Thien for the second time. I was the RTO for Captain Woods who assigned Lt. Puller to the 3rd Platoon. I had arrived in country on the 16 January 1968, and was sent to Con Thien. We moved out of that hell hole in March to Ca Lo for Operation Pegesus. I was with H&S Company and arrived at Khe Sanh with the advance party in early April. I went on many operations until we closed the base on July 5, 1968. I've written an article about what happened during the last few days of the base for Ray Stubbe and included color pictures. I hope to see him in July in Chicago.

In Sept, we were finally moved down from Northern I Corps to an area south of Da Nang. This is the area where Lt. Puller was severely wounded by a booby trap. We had been assigned as a blocking force for another unit. I was only about fifty yards away when it happened. It took us almost 45-55 minutes to get him medevaced. When I got to him the first thing I remember him saying; "Am I going to lose by leg?" I answered, "The corpsman will tell you." I thought we had started receiving incoming. Nine months at Khe Sanh and Con Thien had no effect on me. When I got home in February 1969, my mother, future wife and I went to the Philadelphia Naval Hospital to see Lt. Puller and give him some cookies and to shoot the breeze. Lt. Zier, the 2nd Platoon leader was also there. Lt. Zier passed away

in 1972 of Agent Orange. So it's 2/1 not 3/1. I feel it is important to get information correct, if possible. Thank You.

The Prayer and the Photo

Doc Bob Cahill
Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines,
1st Platoon Corpsman

God...

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

I had an aunt send me a small wallet-size copy of the Serenity Prayer while I was in Nam. I carefully placed it behind the plastic picture protectors, opposite my fiancé's engagement picture. We all know how things will deteriorate, while humping the bush in thick triple canopy jungles to flooded rice paddies. We all took great care to cover our possessions like these with plastic to keep dry; but was near impossible in monsoon rains and jungle fighting. Photos and similar billfold type possessions usually ended up faded and in such shape they were unidentifiable. I did my best to protect my billfold from the elements, so I could recite the prayer while looking at my high school sweetheart's picture, who I was to marry when, or IF, I returned from Nam.

After a year of Hell on Earth, I came home, physically intact, with the prayer and the photo. I still have both today with some minor rice paddy damage. I still recite the prayer daily, and still look at my wife, only now in person. I am so grateful to have both. I have an inner feeling that these two little items—with God—got me through Nam. I share this with my comrades—to use the prayer. It is powerful and it works; maybe not quite as fast as I would like, but then I refer back to the prayer. I am not considered a religious man, but I am spiritual, and have found serenity by the prayer and tons of love and care and understanding from my wife throughout our life's struggles. I hope some of you can use this small Prayer—IT WORKS. It is the mainstay prayer in many recovery groups, so why not in OUR recovery from the WAR. Makes sense to me, and I hope it will for you. Peace, love, and serenity to all our comrades, past and present. Semper Fi.

I wrote this for, and dedicated this to, our brothers on the Wall. The character in this short story is not me, although some of my thoughts and emotions are expressed. He is really all of you.

Earl Clark
A Co 1/26
God bless.

The Mist

The Marine walked along the path beside the Reflecting Pool. In the past, he had sometimes stopped and moved closer to the water to watch the moonlight quiver off the surface. But today there wasn't a moon to be seen because of the low cloud cover, which caused the air to become thick and consuming.

Slightly stooped, he no longer strode in the deliberate cadence once used as a young man fresh out of boot camp, but in steps so soft and slow he seemed almost motionless, the strength long ago taken out of his legs. Patrolling miles of mountains and valleys around the area known as Leatherneck Square, shrapnel wounds...and time, had all taken their toll.

In the distance, the Vietnam vet could barely see the glow from the lights of the Lincoln Memorial in the background. He knew that the long, shadowy monolith that is known as the Wall would soon come in to view; a great slice cut out of the earth by two mammoth slabs of marble conjoined at the apex. How dark and mysterious, he thought, as he approached the structure. The Marine wondered if it felt somewhat intimidating to civilians and tourists visiting the memorial for the first time.

These were the early morning hours just before the daylight would appear on the horizon. He was always awake at this time of night, for sleep was short and the nightmares relentless.

He always thought it odd that the darkness, which had shrouded death's mask so many years ago at Khe Sanh, had now, ironically, become his closest ally. The darkness protected the Marine's anonymity and kept him isolated from others. It is how he preferred it.

There was a mist in the morning air and it reminded the Marine of the constant fog and mist that would engulf the hills and valleys around the combat base during the monsoon season. It was so dense you couldn't see six inches in front of you. Thinking back, it seemed to him that the monsoons lasted his

whole tour of duty in-country.

In the gloom the park lanterns gave off an eerie light and the drizzle surrounding them seemed to dance and swirl until it floated out, as if in reverence, toward the monument. The moisture gently clung to the polished granite making it glisten.

As he passed the panels of names his thoughts were always the same: How could this be? How could so many lose their lives? Why was it that these young men weren't allowed to live out their dreams, to fulfill their destinies?

Questions, always questions...and never any answers.

Standing in front of the Wall, the veteran remembered hearing somewhere that everything in the universe happens in time and space. At that particular time and in that portion of space, events took place that would cost over 58,000 American men and women their lives. Such a heavy price to pay- the cost in American lives, or in the grief of so many families.

There were the memories of losing a close buddy, another casualty with no time to grieve, along with the fear that this may also be your last day on earth as well. There was the anger felt when getting tired of the daily pounding and yelled out loud to the enemy, "Come on, you sons-of-bitches, I'm tired of this—let's go, bring it on."

Alone in the mist, his mind drifted away becoming lost in the present and traveling to a destination becoming more and more distant with time. But the vet's mind hadn't fully betrayed him. He still remembered the laughter of Marines playing practical jokes on one another, the trading of C-rations, sharing cigarettes, and the warmth felt as another Marine shared a letter written by someone in his family back home.

Yes, some memories were soothing to the Marine, but most of them cut deep into his soul. He halted every few steps, at certain panels, and with the softest touch, brushed his fingertips along the names of his brothers. For him though, these are not just names on a wall, they're faces, and with each face there is a story; the stories are of honor and bravery witnessed each day during the battle of Khe Sanh. Touching the Wall was his communion of the spirit, a melding of souls between brother Marines. He felt as if we were all threads, woven together, becoming a fabric of steel gray mist and red clay.

Each time he looked at his brothers on the Wall his feelings of guilt would consume him, forever thinking to himself: why them and not me? The Marine felt that he might not ever be able to come to grips with those feelings.

The first sliver of daylight was beginning to push through the gloom, which signaled it was time for him to go, and say goodbye for now. Shortly, he would again become invisible.

As always, the Vietnam vet's last thoughts were of the betrayal he felt by his country, his government and the politicians that never gave him and his brothers-in-arms a commitment to complete and total military victory. Upon his return to the U.S. he was treated with disrespect and called horrible names by people who didn't even know him. He was judged only because he wore a uniform.

Through the years, the roller-coaster ride of emotions turned from hurt to anger, rage and bitterness, and the only way he knew how to numb those emotions was through alcohol and isolation. However, the numbness was always short-lived.

Also, the man thought about the word "closure" and how many people have used that term in relation to healing. When it came to war, he and his brothers-in-arms knew there was no such thing as closure, just emptiness.

With one last look behind him, followed by a tight, steady salute toward the Wall, the Marine set his cover low on his brow, buried his shoulders deep into his field jacket and pulled the collar up around his neck. As the old warrior turned away, he brought his sleeve up to wipe the droplets from his cheeks and spoke softly to himself, "These aren't tears. Marines don't cry...it must be the mist."

In the Footsteps of Titans

by Gary W. Foster

No one can explain why it so difficult to relate to people who have never been some place where one has been, or who have not been there under the same circumstances, or experienced the same thing in the same manner. For someone who has experienced something extraordinarily profound, an imperceptible transformation takes place within one's psyche: that person is never again the same. His or her persona and perceptions are altered forever. Life takes on a new meaning.

Along with this phenomenon, there is a tendency to want to return to those places where the experience manifested itself, where the defining moment of our lives emerged and was revealed like an incipient statue being carved from a block of marble. There is a magnetic force that compels us to return to special places; that is, places special to each of us. I doubt anyone knows why for sure but it may be the need to relate to our inner selves free from outside influences or judgments; or, especially since we cannot convey it to anyone else in a manner they will understand, to confirm the story again to ourselves, to convince us that the event did, in fact, occur; that we are a living testament to our own destiny molded from such an event. Reunions seem to fill this need and allow each of us a few moments to relive something in our past with our comrades or colleagues with whom we shared a common experience, as if to make tangible again those elusive moments. In my own life, I have returned to my high school, my college and I have revisited places to which I had traveled years ago, such as the south of France or London, where something interesting had happened to me. But I must admit, I am not quite sure why.

The compelling need to revisit a place that is special seems to be directly proportional to the time spent away from that place: the longer the absence, the more the desire to return. Why is this? An answer to this question perhaps cannot be found. But there can be no disputing it, the attraction to return to someplace in one's own history is very strong.

And now mix this place of deep personal value or emotion with a place of profound international, humanitarian, political, or military significance and the attraction or desire to return is exacerbated. It becomes stronger; cannot be denied. Even as I have come to know certain people and have listened to their tales vicariously, I have developed a desire or perhaps, at least, a curiosity to visit that place where their saga unfolded, as if I had been there too by their side. Khe Sanh represents such a place.

Like some of the other nearby geographic characteristics that circumscribe the Combat Base, one hill in particular is one of the more dominant features of the landscape. From the valley of decision, as Ray Stubbe termed it, I have seen it looming on the horizon in the distance, beyond the Combat Base. I have seen the hill in the gray of the early morning hours, through the clouds in the valley, through the rain, and at sunrise and at sunset. I have seen the top as it appeared above the mist of moisture-laden skies. I have seen the hill, on occasion, resplendent in clear weather, a rare phenomenon to be sure because the atmosphere is usually uncooperative—when it seemed the trees were so close I could see the branches and leaves move in the breeze, I could reach out and touch them: they beckoned me. It has happened.

I have been close to it. I have had a desire to climb it but never had the time or, for that matter, the opportunity. My being on top or reaching there has eluded me—like a dream where no matter how hard one tries, one never reaches the destination which always remains out there somewhere beyond one's reach, or when one can never run fast enough to evade monsters, conjured-up captors, or demons of the night. I have stopped thinking about going there, thinking I may never have the chance. The hill is before me always, even in my mind, but as in the dream in which I never reach my destination, I cannot get there. Each time I saw it, it seemed farther away; an unobtainable distant exotic place like Bali Jai. It was a destination seemingly within my grasp but forever slipping away.

But wait, no so fast! What's this? A porthole-size window of opportunity to reach a heretofore unattainable destination, a place I have never been but a place others have visited and which keeps calling them back. And now, do I not feel the overwhelming tug of curiosity, the swelling ineluctable need to seize the moment; to be there, if only briefly, and, as an added benefit, without bodily risk.

Somehow, I knew. Something told me, kept pulling at me. And on 7 April 2005, I embarked on a brief journey that heretofore has so often escaped me. I thought the opportunity would not present itself to me again. For the first time, I had a real chance to truly climb this mountain that lay before me filling the view through the windshield of my vehicle.

"Binh," I said, turning to my driver and pointing through the windshield of our 4-wheel drive vehicle. "See that road up the side of that mountain? Well, drive up there." I continued, pointing upwards through the windshield.

What dramatic changes have occurred in the valleys around and in between Hills 558, and 881. First, a large hydroelectric scheme is being constructed on the Rao Quan River not far from the nearby hills and valleys of the area. This massive undertaking can be

viewed from behind a restaurant that serves beer with ice just around the corner from the customs clearance house on the left of Highway 9 as one progresses to Dong Ha from Khe Sanh. But the most amazing thing to see is the number of roads and streets being built in the area around the hills. It was astonishing to see this development. The Yellow Brick Road, which during my first visit was nothing more than a very rough and bumpy cobblestone country conveyance to the Base has been paved, replete with striping and drainage ditches. Driving to the main gate and museum of the Combat Base is easy. Commercial and industrial development is progressing at a rapid pace and it does not appear as if it will stop any time soon. The area is experiencing an economic growth spurt, but I have no idea what's driving it.

As soon as one crests the rise on the road just past the Base, the hill rises dramatically. It fills the horizon; and is unmistakable. The sun, finally having emerged from behind the low clouds, was brilliant and the temperature was not that unbearable, but it was increasing incrementally, inexorably. The hill dominates the area and behind it is Hill 881, and to my right rear is Hill 558 and the clearly distinguishable and indomitable 950 and 1015, each a historical hill so identified by its height above sea level in meters.

Binh turned off the newly paved road onto the smaller road and, bouncing along, we angled up the side of the base of the hill. The road became narrower, but I urged Binh forward. "Keep going," I said, motioning with my hand that we could continue upwards. This hillside road is new, I thought; has never been here before as far as I could tell.

"How far will this road take me?" I mused out loud. The road turned into a trail and then narrowed down even more. Still, we drove upwards. To my right, I spied a small hut with a corrugated metal roof and at that point the road clearly ended. I looked through the windshield and saw a foot trail that proceeded through the thick, lush green coffee plants. "I wonder," I said. I opened the door and climbed down from the 4-wheel drive vehicle. I stood and looked around. I could see the steep sides of the hill before me through the somewhat enshrouding trees and swaying tall grass and ubiquitous coffee plants. To my left there was a valley and then another lower ridgeline and what I thought were the beginning slopes of Hill 881. I turned to look in the direction of the Combat Base and Khe Sanh Ville. I could see the earth cuts being made for the hydroelectric scheme and the ensuing development in the general valley area. Hill 558 was perfectly outlined and now, from this vantage point I noticed that, whereas before there had been very little human activity, a road has inched its way around the sides to the top. "So, Binh" I said, "I can drive virtually to the top of 558 now." Binh looked at me and nodded his head but I knew he did not know what I was saying. "So there's 558." I said out loud, as I surveyed the area to get my bearings, as if Binh could understand me. "Five fifty-eight," I said again, pointing. I remembered Jacob Krygoski – a Marine I have not forgotten but who I have never met – who had been stationed on 558. I thought of John Pessoni but could not remember if he was on any of the hills.

But my sights were set on another possibility that dawned on me. "Jesus," I said, "I'm probably a sixth, or even a fifth of the way up this monster hill". I surveyed the area through the trees and coffee plants. I looked behind and all around me. "And here's a foot trail going up! How far does it go?" I knew what I was going to do. I knew with complete clarity of thought what I was doing. I was not fooling myself and I doubt I was fooling Binh. No, I knew what I was going to do for sure. I was going to the top of this hill! I realized I had known that already as soon as we had turned off the main highway, but I did not allow myself to admit it. I stopped myself. Oops! Wrong shoes, wrong slacks, no hat, no water, nothing. I'm not prepared for this. Fuggit, I'm going to the top.

I started climbing. First, through head-high rows of coffee plants. The going was definitely uphill, but easy and with plenty of downward visibility for footing. "So far, so good," I mused out loud. My breathing was easy. Binh followed me for awhile. The last mountain I ever climbed was Mt. Sinai in the Sinai desert in 1988. That was plenty steep then. I found this upward climb to be relatively easy in comparison. I kept going, taking note however that the trail became steeper with each step and the rows of coffee plants more narrow. I was soon surrounded by thick coffee plants. I reached another small trail that climbed an eight-foot high earth ledge. I pulled myself up by tree limbs and, once on top, realized I had left the coffee plants behind. I was on my way now. I was also on my own, and without water, this last fact not sinking in just yet.

Now on the ledge I looked down and could see the metal roof of the hut and the vague outline of the vehicle. Binh was nowhere in sight. Turning to face the mountain, just in front of me was a barbwire fence lined with scraggly trees, that proceeded up and down the hill, the kind of scene one might find around farms or ranches in Colorado. The fence was trampled down and some posts had fallen, but there was a clear delineation of a property line or something. I stepped over the barbwire with the assistance of a low tree branch that I grabbed hold of and found myself in a narrow clearing that went straight down the fall line of the hill. "Foster, there is no turning back now," I said out loud for anyone to hear, although no one was around to hear me; and to reinforce in my own mind that I was about to undertake something significant, if not onerous.

I looked down the trail and thought this must be the brown stretch of earth that runs up the side of the hill that one can see from the Yellow Brick Road, from the crest near the Combat Base. To my right, the trail went straight down and into the canopies of thick trees and brush. But I wasn't going down. No. I could care less about the descending trail. I was going up. I turned left and looked up the ascending trail.

"Let's see, this mountain is a little less than 3,000 feet above sea level. I estimate I am about 800 feet above sea level. So I have only 2,200 feet to climb." I learned to think of climbing mountains in terms of chunks of elevation or increments and not in individual feet. Psychologically, at least for me, it makes climbing easier, as it makes objectives more attainable. So, in ten feet increments, that's 220 increments; or in 50-foot increments, that's 44 increments. Let's go with the 44 increments. I can do this. I started uphill.

At first my strides were even and long and I gained elevation quickly. I stopped a couple of times and looked at the valley. This much, so far, had been easy. The hut and vehicle had long disappeared from view. I saw shade farther up the trail and decided I would take a five-minute break there. I made it, no sweat well; I was actually sweating pretty profusely. I sat down to relax and felt OK, still breathing evenly. There was no breeze and the sun shone intensely through the trees. The shade I had seen was not much shade after all.

I looked up the trail and could see only a steep slope of the mountain in front of me. "Aw, come on!" I said, "I've climbed at least 300 feet or so from the fence." I should be able to see the top. But no.

I stood up and began to climb again. The trail did not disappear. It just continued up and it began to run through thick grass that was over my head with a riot of briars intermingled all through it. I continued on and quickly found myself entangled in long thorny limbs and briars. They attacked my shirt and pants and finally, becoming so enmeshed with this vegetation, I was stopped until I could disengage from them, pulling each bramble from my clothes with my fingers. Then onward, ever upward again, and again the same thing happened. I was pulling thorns out of me every inch of the way. They stuck to and became embedded in my shirt, in my pants and in my flesh. Now where was the top? I fought my way through the elephant grass and the briars and emerged into another opening. But now I noticed the trees had lessened and there was now no shade at all. And, there was no water. This thought finally was not lost on me and I was becoming quite thirsty. "Aw, the top is just ahead," I said. "Get up and push on." I could not see the valley or the top of the hill or the trail behind me or anything. Just tall grass: tall thick grass with incredibly sharp edges and long thorns.

I continued to climb but noticed during brief pauses that my recovery time was increasing in between multiples of increments. The hill was becoming steeper or I was trying to accomplish too much too soon. "Slow down." I reminded, or rather, warned myself. Then the thought occurred to me, and the implications really hit me. First of all, it's against the law to be here without a permit. Second I am alone with no way to contact anyone. And third, as a renewed thought but one that was becoming more of a concern, not a single drop of water. "What am I thinking?" I felt my pocket. "Cell Phone! I'll call Binh to let him know I'm OK." Dialed in the number, hit the system but could not hit his cell phone. Well, just great. Put the phone back in my pocket

I looked at my slacks, many pulls of thread in the fabric due to the brambles and thorns. "So be it." I looked at my arms and blood was dripping down both of them from multiple scratches and abrasions. "Funny," I thought, as I pulled thorns out of my skin. I was reminded of "The Red Badge of Courage." For some inexplicable reason, my mind went back to my eighth grade year when I had to

have a tutor in introductory English literature. The first book I read under her was Stephen Crane's short but definitive novel of the Civil War. How odd, I thought, to be reminded of this simply because of some blood on my forearm. But now my mind began to ponder many things as I sat and recuperated. I watched as a trail of ants marched serenely up the hill, over and under leaves, on the ground next to me. How many Marines, much bloodier than me, marched, trudged, and humped through this area on daily patrols like these ants? How many Marines went up and down this same hill once, twice, many times a day? How many firefights or ambushes ensued here in this mass of vegetation? How could anyone see anyone? A wasp flew next to my head, just out of arm's length, making slow buzzing noises. The breeze had stopped or, rather, I knew the tall grass had stopped its circulation as I sat on the ground sweating.

Sweat now really poured out of me as the sweltering heat spiraled. I was reminded of my second visit to the Combat Base five years ago when I found the ammo dump and confirmed the runway. Sweat poured out of me on that day too. I knew I was dehydrating quickly. I thought, "I either reach the top soon, or I will be forced to climb down." Now, the reality of not having water became very acute. "This is not good." If I could gauge the remaining distance to the top, I could estimate my chances. But I could see nothing. All I knew now was the mountain was sloping upwards in front of me and was snaring me into its steely undeniable grip. Was this tantamount to Kurtz's descent into the heart of darkness? Would this mountain consume me, eat me alive? Would it suck me in and spit me out—spent, exhausted, torn, thirsty, bloody? Apparently so.

Another few increments. Had to sit down. Sweat running out of my body like Niagara Falls. Steeper climbing and rougher going. Looked at my watch: "Let's see, left car at 11:40." Ah, at least I remembered that. "It's now 12:55. Binh must be wondering where I am." And now I wondered whether he may have driven down the trail thinking I may be below him. I reached into my pocket for my cell phone and opened it and dialed his number; hit the system but still cannot hit his phone. "Man! Maybe I better go down. Maybe the authorities followed us here and have taken him in." Though I doubted this possibility, I knew the authorities frowned on such excursions in these hills. "I'm not really supposed to be here." I was in dilemma: a propitious moment of decision. I thought for a few seconds: no water, no communication. Then I thought of Dennis Mannion and his comrades in Kilo 3/26. My mind was made up. Nothing was going to stop me from climbing this mountain! Nothing!

I stood up, blood and sweat everywhere, barbed slacks, and ripped shirt. I turned to look up the trail and words from the children's story "The Little Engine that Could" popped into my mind: "I think I can, I think I can." Not a breath of air. With the steep side slope of the mountain staring me in the face, slowly I put one foot in front of the other and said to myself. "I know I am almost there." I wasn't.

This hill, I realized, was challenging me now. Though it may accept my presence, it would not accept it without proof of my worthiness. Joseph Campbell, the great mythologist, I was sure, would have provided me with some mythological parallels.

With little time remaining, I kept trudging upward into and out of thick grass. No trees. Sun crashing down on me now. I lay down in some tall grass, burying my head in the reeds to ward off the insistent sun, listened to my heart pound away, and felt the sweat continue to completely soak my shirt. My pants were covered in brambles and now red dirt. My breathing eventually slowed and subsided but my heart raced furiously. I was very thirsty. I waited for a few more minutes and stood up again. Worthy I may be, exhausted I am becoming. Can't give up "Never have, never will." I have never forgotten that expression I read once in Red Clay after 9/11, three and half years ago.

Still not quite there yet. The trail opened into thinner and shorter grass and I could see the slopes of "eight eighty-one" to my left and the ridgeline of what I thought connected the mountain I was on to an adjacent mountain sort of to my front. Behind me, I could now see the valley and the roads far below. I could see "nine-fifty" and "ten-fifteen" easily and I knew my bearings. I looked at my watch: 1:30PM. Sat down and then lay down and let my heart pound again on the inner walls of my chest till it rested. Becoming impatient and fearful – I thought I would run out of time, or Binh and subsequently myself perhaps would be arrested – I stood up and followed the narrow opening again up and back into thick grass. Man this hill is up! All the way! Where is the top?

Another increment farther and I lay down again. My neck is now bleeding, as is my face. Well, I'm use to that by now. "Landmines!" The thought careened through my mind. "Oh yeah, I'll bet they're some around here, somewhere." Bombs and mortar rounds; at least they don't pose an immediate danger. If they didn't explode then, they probably won't explode now. But landmines, now that's another story. Wonder if there are any around here? Probably not on this trail. Well, I consoled myself, they'll just add to the predicament I now find myself in.

I got up and turned to the top and marched on and up. Sun, almost directly overhead or at least it seemed directly overhead, continuing to pour its bright heat down on me. I looked to the left and, through the tall grass, could make out round depressions in the earth. Must be bomb craters. But now, what's this in front of me? There appears to be a clearing up ahead. There is! I reached it and the slope flattened out and the climbing became easier. I saw trees up ahead but more importantly; I noted the open sky behind them. I saw the same ridgeline to my left that I had seen earlier at about the same elevation I was. I could see the slope of 881 flattening. "Man, I think I'm going to make it! I can't be very far from the top now."

With renewed vigor and enthusiasm, I made the last 100 steps and emerged through the thick grass to a plateau and, knowing the top of the hill was attainable, I rested one last moment. Time was now my enemy. I could not take much more time. I had other things to do this day and this short climb was but a spontaneous interlude. I called Binh on the cell phone but there was no answer. The top of the hill was just a few feet above me.

I raced the remaining distance; not sure why. Became entangled in thick grass again, and found a new route round, next to a small tree. I saw a trench line in front of me covered in tall grass. I knew it was a trench line because I could follow the contour around to my left and back again to my right. I could see the valley and all the hills; and 881 was right next to me. Hill "five fifty-eight," below me, was clearly identifiable. "Ah, but the breeze, the wind." What a relief. I began to hike up the incline in front of me. I was breathing heavily and sweating like there was no tomorrow. But I was there. I had reached the top.

I lay down on the top to recuperate, and as soon as I did, I could not see anything due to the tall grass. Now I thought, "Was I really at the top?" I surmised so except there were lumps of very tall grass off to my left and front. I walked there but didn't have the strength or time to fight more thick grass. No. This is it. This is the top of the hill. I was there.

I walked all around and looked at the valley and to the adjacent hills and pondered Hill 881 so close that I thought I could climb that too. But no—no time, and no water. I noticed that the Vietnamese had planted several rows of small pine trees. This had to be recent, within the last few days. The diggings for each sapling were not smoothed out by rain. Interesting. And then I realized that the going was easier for me here because before they had planted the trees they had cut down the tall elephant grass with their machetes.

I sat down facing the Combat Base. Hills 950 and 1015, far across the wide valley, were to my left front in clear unobstructed view. I think I was in the approximate area where Ray Stubbe held a service with a rugged cross planted in the ground. The photograph of this is now famous and a mural of it exists in Ho Chi Minh City. I wiped rivers of sweat from my eyes on my shirtsleeve. I could not help but remember that Dennis Mannion, Bob Arotta, Glenn Prentice, Paul Knight, Paul's son, Jeff Knight, Donna Elliot (who lost her brother Jerry (MIA) in February of 1968 in the Khe Sanh area), Dave Kniess (a former student of Dennis' who recorded the team's visit on film), and Lan Anh, their interpreter had climbed the mountain in July of 2000. Preceding me, they had visited where I now was, some of them for their second time.

The wind died down and I felt a sudden sensation. A slight chill swept over my body. Something seemed strange. I felt I was not alone. I felt as if someone else was on the mountain with me. Sitting still in the hot sun with the panorama of the valley spread out beneath me, I hooked my arms over my knees and stared all around. I stared as far to the horizon as I could. There was not a sound, not a breath of air and the grass and leaves on the smaller trees stood still. I remembered the Vietnamese consider the entire valley and surrounding hills to be haunted. I looked into the sky and saw puffy white clouds floating as they do in the American Midwest on a lazy day in late August. I saw their shadows dance across the

valley floor below. I listened for any sound. There was none.

Now totally alone and engulfed in eerie silence, I wondered: were spirits of fallen American combatants swirling around me? I stood up and peered into the grass and along the sides of the hill and toward 881 and back towards 950 and 1015. I felt no wind but I sure felt something. Yes, they probably were present with me. And, if they were with me and confused about who I was, and perhaps worried about my intentions, then I wanted them to know I was there as a friend. I had not come up here to interrupt their solitude or to denigrate their sacrifice or to violate their spiritual space. I had come up here to honor them.

I looked at my watch and realized I had been on top for 20 minutes. I had to get down. I didn't have any more time. I walked back to the small tree where I had crested the mountain and looked down and then back across the inclined plateau. The wind picked up briefly. I turned to begin descending the trail back to the hut and vehicle. But after only a few steps I kept thinking about the Marines who had experienced what I had just experienced—the same thing, same place, many years before but in circumstances many times worse, far worse, than what I had experienced this day. Yes, thorns, humidity, heat, beating sun and interminable rain, tall grass, endless sweat, blood, bugs, wounds; but more; the enemy with their whizzing, stinging, deadly bullets and the thump of their grenades, the crunch of their insidious mortars, and the deep pounding explosions of artillery rounds fired from Co Roc Mountain in Laos and elsewhere. This was a very different and very dangerous place 37 years ago in 1968.

I stopped my descent short and stared out over the broad green valley now punctuated with darker green shades from the shadows of the white, hovering indolent clouds, and then back to the top of the mountain I had, on a whim, just climbed. I stood still. "I should say a prayer," I said. But what would I say? I never really pray. Why would I pray now and for what exactly? Somewhat at a loss, I felt I should at least say something to mark this moment and to remember the Marines who had served and died here. In slightly more than a solemn whisper of my voice, I simply and respectfully said the only words I knew appropriate for so many who endured the supreme hardship of this unforgiving, dreadful hill, who never gave up, and who made the ultimate sacrifice: "Semper Fi." I felt honored to be here, albeit in a detached, even morose way. It was a privilege to be where so many brave American men had been years before me. Climbing this lonely mountain in some foreboding, recessed corner of Quang Tri Province in the narrowest waist of Vietnam, taking an opportunity that had presented itself to me and may never present itself again. I knew my life had changed. Yes, climbing this hill was a challenge. Now, having gained the summit, descending it, after but a brief respite on top, made me a little sad. I would not be able to relate this experience to very many in ways they would understand. I knew I was given a gratuitous opportunity to visit the same place so many Marines may have wanted to re-visit but can't. Knowing all this, and knowing the history of this area, I realized I had been given a chance to walk in the footsteps of giants. "No." I thought. "Not giants." Not quite correct. "Titans" is the better descriptor.

Feeling now the soft warm breeze in my face as it rose from the valley beneath me, and seeing the dry, gray-green of the sun-parched, thick, chaotic vegetation as it enveloped the crest and side slopes, I turned my back on the mountain and started my descent. Retracing my steps and disappearing again into the canopies of tall grass and overgrowth as I walked down and back into the coffee plants to the vehicle, I had made my way off a non-descript hill that I had climbed only hours before but a hill indelibly etched into Marine Corps history—perhaps with the other hills collectively in and around Khe Sanh, comprising what has come to be called the Hill Fights, a symbol as historically significant as Iwo Jima. A lonely, grass-infested hill in central Vietnam unknown to most everyone. But to a select group of fighting Marines, and now always remembered by me, a hill that will forever be known in numbers marking its height above sea level, and in words: Eight Sixty-One. I had climbed Hill 861 and stood on the very ground where Titans once stood. None of us should ever forget them, the sacrifices they made, and what they accomplished there.

We Got Pictures

Submitted by Jim Gottman, Lima Co 3/3 while they were at the Rockpile February, 1967














Before and After. What happened, Jim?

Welcome Home...

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

PRESENTED POSTHUMOUSLY

TO

FOR HIS PARTICIPATION IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM WHILE SERVING WITH "A" COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, 124TH INFANTRY REGIMENT. AS FELLOW COMBAT VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR, WE UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE HIS ULTIMATE SACRIFICE ON BEHALF OF ALL AMERICANS. WE SALUTE HIM FOR HIS BRAVERY, LOYALTY AND DEVOTION TO DUTY. HIS OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. IT IS SOLDIERS LIKE HIM THAT MAKE OUR COUNTRY STRONG AND PROUD.

VIETNAM VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP

TALLAHASSEE VET CENTER

17 MARCH 2005

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

PRESENTED TO

FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM WHILE SERVING WITH "A" COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, 124TH INFANTRY REGIMENT. AS FELLOW COMBAT VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR, WE UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE YOUR SACRIFICES ON BEHALF OF ALL AMERICANS. WE SALUTE YOU FOR YOUR BRAVERY, LOYALTY AND DEVOTION TO DUTY. YOUR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. IT IS SOLDIERS LIKE YOU THAT MAKE OUR COUNTRY STRONG AND PROUD.

VIETNAM VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP

TALLAHASSEE VET CENTER

17 MARCH 2005





Lt. Commander James Raab " DOC" Medal Recipient, With Lovely Wife Kathryn



Sharon Zunio "DOC" Medal Recipient



Our Newest Member

KSV CHICAGO REUNION SPECIAL EDITION

Reunion Committee Report on 2005 Reunion,
Aside from problems we experienced with the hotel, I believe everyone had a great time at the reunion. Some of our BOD members came up for election and the results our as follows: Russ Turner was elected (Unopposed) as President. Russ was the only Staff member up for re-election. The election for Directors at Large resulted in Doc "Fast Eddie" Feldman being elected to replace Frank Taggart, with other Directors at large maintaining their respective positions for another term.

Due to the overwhelming generosity of our members, our PX did great, with sales of $6,100.00. Reaping a good profit, was the sale of Ray Stubbe's new book, and from our Poem Book put together by Tom Eichler. Our thanks to John Pessoni for the hard work which made this all possible. Sgt. Grits added $1,140.00 from sales of his merchandise; our thanks to Don and Meg for coming. Our silent auction brought in another $1,350.00.Remember, you can visit our PX on line at www.khesanh.org by clicking on the PX link, and we will soon be adding many new items. Any order in next few months will receive a free Khe Sanh Veterans bolo.

We were greatly disappointed in the Hotel. We had negotiated every conceivable item we thought important to our members, and the Hotel just chose to ignore our written contract. In the first place, they promised that the Hotel would undergo a 70 Million Dollar renovation prior to the reunion. They did not spend one dime, in fact the conditions were worse then when we signed the contract. We are presently involved in negotiations to recover monetary damages for all their indiscretions.

All monies recovered will go toward reducing the cost of the reunion in Mobile Alabama next year. For your information, the violations of the contract included wrong rooms, parking issues, no provisions for complimentary coffee and buffet lunch, incorrect food at the banquet, and giving away rooms scheduled for our planned events .The list goes on, but we shall address them.

Again aside from a few scheduling issues with our transportation, we believe everyone had a good time. We are working on upgrading our website with new pictures, PX format, a message board, and guest book. You will need a password to get in; try **bjjimbo.** Fill out the registration form; all information is private.

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Robert Moxley..... Member At Large
Dan Fisher.....Member At Large

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SECRETARY NOTES:

There were a few complaints regarding the hours that the PX was supposed to be open. Next year they will be posted to avoid any confusion. Our members were very generous and made the PX a great success. You made us look like a great small business. Lloyd Scudder's daughter Sara did a wonderful job helping set up the PX. There were a lot more volunteers willing to help. I thanked them for their kind offers. The necklaces Ron Shouse and his lovely wife Linda made, were big sellers. We actually ran out of them. Ron and Linda are making some more, so we should have them in the PX soon, for those who missed out.

I want to thank all my Khe Sanh Brothers for sharing one of the best reunions I have attended. It is the one time of my life, when I am really happy and relaxed, just being around friends. There were times I laughed so hard, and time to have met some new brothers from Engineers, whom I know will be back next year. Our brothers from Recon were there in force, but kept getting lost (just kidding guys). The reunion committee worked tirelessly. My thanks too, Jimbo, Russ, and their beautiful wives PJ & Kathy.

A personal thank you to Tommy Eichler, and his brothers Denny & Bobby, for a job well done; you guys were great.

John Pessoni

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

I would like to thank everyone who attended the reunion this year. We had a very good turn out, with more than 230 veterans, 120 wives, and other family members. Had a few problems, but nothing that our committee couldn't handle. A very big THANK YOU to all who helped with things that needed to be done to make it a great success. Special thanks to Ron Shouse, and Tommy's brothers, Dennis & Robert, for the transportation, and Tommy for the two BBQ's. I would also like to thank the girls for doing such a good job with registration. Thank you all for a job well done. We had a new member added to our board as many of you know. He is Doc "Fast Eddie" Feldman; welcome aboard Ed. Next year's reunion will be in MOBILE, ALABAMA, and already it is off to a good start. It's going to be a great one. There are many things to do there, and we are working to make it a fine trip, to see old friends, and meet new ones. We had several FNGs this year and expect to see more next year. Take care all and see you all in MOBILE.

Russ Turner

REUNION 2006

Plans for Mobile Alabama. The trip to Mobile is already looking good, with the pending planned trip to Pensacola, and a visit to their military museum. Watch for a performance by the Blue Angels with VIP status, a trip to the USS Alabama Park, and a planned Mardi Gras at the Hotel with seafood and Southern Pork, and other BBQ's as we get details worked out. We think it will be a great city for our reunion. See ya'll there.

Jim Wodecki and Russ Turner

OOPS

There I go with my Fat Thumbs Again

In the recently published Khe Sanh Book of Poetry, I wrote in a short Bio, that Loyde Arender served at Khe Sanh with K Co 3/26. Loyde upon receiving the book, immediately called me, and informed me of the mistake. He asked me to correct it because he did not want his fellow veterans thinking he was trying to be a Khe Sanh Wanabee. The Mistake was all mine. I apologize to Loyde. Also the picture on the front cover of the Poem Book is our own Jack Corbett, writing home. (West Dickens Avenue)

Tom Eichler

TAPS

Major Jerry Edward Hudson (USMC, Ret.)
Age 73, died Wednesday, June 29, 2005

Jerry was born in Fort Wayne, IN on May 26, 1932 to the late Virgil and Hazel Hudson. He grew up in the Masonic Home in Springfield, OH, and enlisted in the Marine Corps after completing high school. He was commissioned right off of the drill field, and retired with the rank of Major in 1971, after serving 21 years. He served in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, where he was the intelligence officer at the Battle of Khe Sanh. After retiring from the

Marines, Jerry moved to Charlotte, NC, as Director of Safety and Security for the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. While working at UNCC, he earned his BS in Criminal Justice. Following retirement from UNCC in 1989, Jerry worked for Hechinger's and then moved to Richmond, VA for a short time before returning to Charlotte where he worked with Wal Mart. A memorial service was held, July 1, 2005 with Chaplain Pressley Stutts of the United States Marine Corps, officiating.

Survivors include his wife, Elaine Price of Charlotte; sons and daughters-in-law, Scott and Kathy of Waynesville, OH, and Mark and Anna, of Norfolk, VA; and grandsons, Paul and Ryan of Waynesville, OH.

Mike Fishbaugh

General Robert E. (Bobby) Galer Medal of Honor

General Galer was the embodiment of a true Warrior. He first fought at Pearl Harbor, firing at the Zero's with a Springfield 03. His WW II combat service included, among other battles, fighting at Guadalcanal, and earning the first MOH awarded in that campaign. He was one of only two Marines with the MOH to participate in the invasion of the Philippines, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, the other being fellow Guadalcanal MOH recipient GySgt John Basilone. He bunked with Lindberg and talked his way back into the war after being ordered to leave the Pacific to participate in War Bond Drives after the battle for Guadalcanal. He was shot down 4 times in combat. Three times on Guadalcanal, and the last time as a 37 year Group Commander in Korea, flying a Corsair.

All one has to do to learn about the Marine's Corps's participation in WW II and Korea, is learn about General Galer's service in the Corps. He was an All-American basketball player for The University of Washington before joining the Corps in 1935. He will be buried at the Texas State Cemetery in Austin, Texas.

Jim Wodecki
FLC-LSU-
Ammo platoon Khe Sanh

LARRY "WAYNE" WRAY, 57, died Friday, June 3, 2005, in Fort Wayne.

Born in Greenville, Ky., he was a Vietnam veteran, serving with Marine Helicopter Squadron 165. He was a family man and will be missed by everyone who knew him. He is survived by son, Landon Wray of Witchia, Kansas; daughters, Abby, Ashley, and Amber, all of Fort Wayne; mother, Ella of Fort Wayne; sisters, Linda (Ron) Shroyer of Fort Wayne, and Sandra (Wayne) Watts of Philpot, Ky.; and his companion, Lois Stanger of Fort Wayne.

I met Larry at the Vet Center here in Fort Wayne and ended up hiring him to work for me back in the 80s. Larry wasn't a Khe Sanh vet, but hauled a lot of 1st Recon teams in and out of hot LZs around Da Nang. I lost touch with Larry after the company we worked for was bought and our jobs were eliminated.
David Buffalo June 10, 2005

Colonel Mark F. Tierney 10/19/42-2/6/05

With the heaviest of hearts I am sorry to report that at 11:40 A.M. on February 6, 2005, Super Bowl Sunday, Lieutenant Colonel Mark F. Tierney, USMCR (Retired) died in his Lake Ridge, Virginia home, as a result of several Agent Orange related cancers. He is one of the finest Marines I ever served with during my thirty (30) years of Active Duty and Reserve service.

The Colonel joined the Marine Corps Reserve in 1964 and after graduation from Boot Camp as his platoon's Honor Man, was trained as a Communicator, reporting for duty with a Reserve artillery unit near his home in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area.

Upon completing college in 1968 the Colonel, though eligible for promotion to Staff Sergeant, accepted a commission and volunteered to serve in the Republic of Vietnam. After he was trained as an Infantry Officer and Vietnamese linguist, he reported for duty as a Platoon Commander with Mike Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. Subsequently the Colonel served as a Civil Affairs Officer for the 1st Marine Division and made many trips into Khe Sanh to help the people of that area.

I did not have the good fortune to meet Lieutenant Colonel Tierney until 1991 when we were both mobilized for the Gulf War. He was the II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) Staff Counter Intelligence Officer, and I was the Intelligence Chief for the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade 2nd (MEB). I was very fortunate to serve under him almost continuously from that point until he retired from the Marine Corps in 1995, after more than thirty one (31) continuous years of officer and enlisted service. Though he was my senior in the Corps, I was extraordinarily fortunate to have him became my mentor and friend. He is the first individual I was ever able to talk with about the events occurring at and after *LZ Margo,* in September of 1968, and all the grief that incident caused me.

I believe that the true measure of the man is in how he treats those who can't do anything in return. That description epitomizes the Colonel. When I was sick last December, he was the one who made sure that I got to the hospital and back home when I was released. He was the one who took me to have my stitches put in, and later removed. While he was in the hospital, he asked me for some addresses and envelopes, since he wanted to make advance tax payments so that his wife wouldn't have to. He also made sure he made a donation to our association knowing full well it would be his last one. He died just five (5) weeks later.

The mentorship and friendship the Colonel gave to me is something I will cherish for the rest of my life. In an era when people have a warped definition of leadership, he was the finest leader that I ever worked for. His philosophy was simple, give your Marines a job, and make sure they have what they need to do the job, then get the hell out of their way and let them accomplish their mission. He was never surprised with at what his Marines produce. On February 11, 2005, Lieutenant Colonel Mark F. Tierney, USMCR (Retired) was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

Larry McCartney
M/GYSGT Retired

Colonel John H. "Blackie" Cahill, USMC, (Ret.)

Rest in Peace

Colonel John H. "Blackie" Cahill, USMC, (Ret.), 80, died July 14th, 2005 at Scripps Green Hospital in La Jolla, Ca. He was a resident of the North County for the last 33 years. Born October 22, 1924 in Dorchester, Massachusetts, he graduated from North Quincy High School in 1942 and attended Boston College. In May 1943 he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, and completed basic training at Parris Island, South Carolina. He was a highly decorated combat veteran of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

During World War II he fought in the Pacific Theater, seeing combat in the battles of New Guinea, Cape Gloucester, New Britain, Peleliu and Okinawa. After the end of the war in 1946, he was stationed in China for six months. In 1950, he was deployed with the 1st Marine division to Korea and was with the first Marine unit to fight in that war. He was wounded and evacuated in the battle of Naktong and received his first Purple Heart. He returned to combat with the 3rd battalion, 5th Marines, and was in the historic battle at The Chosin Reservoir. During the Korean conflict he was awarded the Silver Star, our Nations third highest award for heroism. His citation states that this award was given for:" With limited food and ammunition and no possibility for re-supply, Lt. Cahill courageously and successfully directed his platoon's defense against an estimated strength of four hundred. While holding the almost untenable

position, Lt. Cahill, continually exposed himself to heavy hostile fire moving from man to man, encouraging and reassuring them until relief arrived. It was largely due to his inspirational leadership and dauntless courage that the enemy failed to break through this vital United Nations position." In Korea, he would also receive a Bronze Star Medal with the combat "V" for valor. In1958, after the Korean War, he attended and graduated from the Naval War College and was promoted to major that same year. In 1965 he was promoted to Lt. Colonel.

In 1968 he was reassigned to the 3rd Marine Division and sent to Vietnam. He saw combat in the battle for Khe Sanh. He was wounded in combat another three times during his tours in Vietnam, and awarded three gold stars in lieu of second, third, and fourth Purple Heart Medals. He commanded 1/9 at the end of the Siege.

He was promoted to Colonel in July 1970, and assumed duties of Commanding Officer, Weapons Training Battalion at Camp Pendleton. He retired after 35 years of active military service with the Marine Corps in 1978.
Ken Pipes

Gilbert Wall RIP

It is with a very sad heart that I report to you all that Gilbert Wall died on 22 March 2004 of a brain aneurysm. He died in his office while at work at the Black Feet Community College in Browning, Montana. Gilbert was the 81's FO with Bravo 1/26. He served 2 and one half years in Vietnam with the 5TH and 26TH Marines. He was the bravest Warrior I served with, and was a close friend.

Bruce "T-Bone" Jones

POETRY

CLOTH

The most expensive cloth there ever was, or ever will be.
There are far to few who know the value, or understand
the cost.
There are fewer still that have been willing to bare that cost.
Except for a few that came before and a few that came
after guys like me.
People seem to choose not to know, or incapable of understanding why.
This piece of cloth will make guys like me actually cry.
These pieces of cloth are all the same shape, all the same color.
It does however come in many different sizes.
Not unlike those who have fought for this cloth, these colors, this flag.

Rick Tam

BLOWING IN THE WIND

Peter, Paul and Mary such beautiful
songs they sing, such meaning.

Today at our ward picnic.
Fun we were supposed to have.
Things were going fine till songs we HAD to sing.

Not in a mood to sing or laugh,
I joined the circle on the fringe.

Blowing in the wind,
Once a song I loved.
But its words have such meaning,
today this song made me Flash.

Still now hours later,
the tears want to flow.
The words running through my mind,
time after time.
How many people must die?
When will we say enough is enough?

To a plateau of red clay,
I stood and looked at body bags,
all in a neat row.
Stretchers with my Brothers
dead and dying.

I too want to know when will it end?
Sam Messer
CBMU 301

BOOK REVIEW:

Foxtrot Ridge: A Battle Remembered. Mark W. Woodruff (2002). Clearwater, FL: Vandamere Press. Reviewed by LT/COL Charles S. Gaede, USMCR (Ret).

"For an obscure and otherwise unremarkable plot of ground, Foxtrot Ridge was the scene of immense courage and carnage from May 1968 through July 1968," writes author Mark Woodruff (p. 189). The most poignant books I have read about the Vietnam War are eyewitness accounts where the author has written his story. Mark W. Woodruff has written *Foxtrot Ridge: A Battle Remembered* from his perspective--as one of the Marines in Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines (2/3) who fought the battle.

The "battle of Khe Sanh" may be divided into three segments. The battles in early 1967 in the hills west of Khe Sanh have been called the first battle of Khe Sanh; the isolation and bombardment of Khe Sanh in early 1968 is called the siege of Khe Sanh; and the period from 16 April 1968 to 11 July 1968 would be called the last battle of Khe Sanh. It has been said that the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) began pulling out of the Khe Sanh area in March 1968. That would not have been apparent to the Marines of Fox 2/3 on 28 May 1968, to the Marines of Echo 2/3 on 31 May 1968, or to the Marines of India 3/4 on 1 July 1968, who were all attached by the NVA on Foxtrot Ridge, and to many other Marines who fought intense battles in the area between 16 April and 11 July 1968. A volume in the Marine Corps Vietnam Series, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam, The Defining Year, 1968*, includes a chapter of the events during this time period, and the battles on Foxtrot Ridge are included among them. However, Woodruff's *Battle of Foxtrot Ridge* adds substantially more detail to the one battle which gave that obscure plot of ground its name.

Woodruff worries that his book is influenced by his participation in the May 1968 battle. If so, then my review of this book is influenced by my own presence in 2/3 at that time. But I consider that a good thing; no one else can write about an event the same way as the one who experienced it. My company, Hotel Company, arrived on Foxtrot Ridge a few days after the battle was over, when we could smell the odor of decaying flesh in the air.

The foxhole Marine's viewpoint of a battle is different than the viewpoint of any other observer. The great contribution of *Foxtrot Ridge* is that author Mark Woodruff has interviewed about 27 of the Marines of Fox Company and has reported their recollections of the battle of 28 May 1968. Readers of the book who knew Marines in Fox 2/3, will encounter buddies and read their account of the battle. It will awaken memories.

Woodruff has provided a good drawing that shows the defenses and battle zones on the hill, and he has placed original 1968 photographs that the Marines provided to him throughout the book. He based much of the book's structure on the 2/3 Command Chronology for May 1968, and he includes a complete copy of it in an appendix. Woodruff presents the Marines' story of the battle chronologically in their words. Of course he has made a few editing changes to their words, but he acknowledges that. Here is one story.

Lance Corporal Robert Kincaid: When Mylin yelled that, 'we're overrun,' I stuck my head up. There were two North Vietnamese soldiers standing with their backs at our hole and they were looking downhill, like they did't see our hole or know that we were there. I was shaking to death. I remember and I'm not a bit ashamed to say that I was scared to death. When I looked, those two Vietnamese soldiers standing there had faced Mylin's direction and the corporal that was with me shot one with his M-16, and I shot the other with the shotgun.

It was kind of a simultaneous. I mean we did not plan or conspire to shoot these people. It was just like a conditioned reflex. And I did not really pick one out. I just shot the one that was closest to me. That was the one to my right. I had double-ought buck in that shotgun, he really went down. Then it really intensified heavy small arms fire. It got loud. I could hear voices. I could hear yelling. I could remember RPGs throwing dirt in the hole on top of us. I can remember the dirt going down the back of my T-shirt. And then I can remember it was just Charlie Kholer, and me in the hole. I don't know where the other guy went. pp. 116-117.

Woodruff has included the names and a short biography of each of the Marines he cited in the book in separate appendix. I find this to be an important part of the book, for it brings the reader up-to-date with the men who fought the battle. It also makes this book as much a history of the Marines of Fox 2/3 in May 1968, as it does an account of the battle.

On May 31, 2004, I revisited Foxtrot Ridge. Today Foxtrot Ridge is a short walk from the Khe Sanh Hotel, and a sweaty climb through thick elephant grass and other vegetation. The wood leeches are there too. In 1968, it was a dangerous combat march to it. From it we had a view to the Laotian border, and our observation from Foxtrot Ridge interfered with the Ho Chi Minh trail movement.

But today you cannot see the Laotian border; in fact it is difficult to see a few meters. The vegetation has returned, and from a distance Foxtrot Ridge is just another vegetation covered hill near Khe Sanh.

There are foxholes on the hill, buried beneath the vines, elephant grass, and thick brush. A Vietnamese guide and the local villager, who I hired to cut a trail to the top of the hill with his machete, had never heard of the battle of Foxtrot Ridge, and they were fascinated with the story. It was an education unremarkable plot of ground, Foxtrot Ridge was the scene of immense courage and carnage from May 1968 through July 1968," writes author Mark Woodruff (p. 189). Today the "plot of ground" is equally if not more "obscure and unremarkable." The greatest contribution of the *Foxtrot Ridge* is to memorialize in history the courage and bravery of the Marines of Fox 2/3 who fought, were wounded, died, and survived the battle on 28 May 1968. Mark Woodruff has told his story and theirs well. You will be glad you read it.

POETRY

Untitled

Pen and paper I take in hand. My head to pull from the sand. On television I see things that stir memories. Fog and rain I see, that stirs
Khe Sanh up in me.

Blood and Death on the streets, that brings Tet back to me. Children White, Black, and Brown, the hand of Death on their Brow. That stirs- Children, hiding, underground. Uniforms, Fatigues, and Guns on TV That brings back war to me.

Comedy on TV I see, brings no laughter for me. Football, Baseball, sports I love, excitement, joy, anger or pain. No none- none of the above.

No Joys in my life you might say, I have some in a small way. In Jennifer's eyes a glint I see, this touches something in me.
Nieces and nephews anticipation, small children glowing. These bring out the best in me.

AS dusk turns to black, terrible memories come back.
When times I get the stare, I wish somebody would pop a flare.
So that my eyes and brain could see, that there is still beauty around me.

Because of the tears I wipe from my eyes.
I know somehow I will survive!!!

Sam Messer
CBMU-301 Seabees



MEMORIALS

IN LOVING MEMORIES OF OUR BROTHERS LEFT BEHIND

"WE WILL NEVER FORGET"
REST IN PEACE

FROM YOUR BROTHERS IN SUB UNIT 5

RAYMOND GOODWIN	KIA 03 MARCH 67	KHE SANH
CHARLES LYNCH	KIA 27 JUNE 67	KHE SANH
FRANCISCO MAZARIEGOS	KIA 27 JUNE 67	KHE SANH
DENNIS O'CONNOR	KIA 27 JUNE 67	KHE SANH
JAMES SHEPARD	KIA 27 JUNE 67	KHE SANH

BOURKE-CHILDRESS-JENKINS MEMORIUM

IN MEMORY OF

EARLE LAWRENCE BJORKE	CAPTAIN	USAF 714 TACTICAL AIR WING
LEWIS CLAYTON CHILDRESS	CORPORAL	USMC FLC PARA- DELIVERY
EARLE DAVE JENKINS	CORPORAL	USMC FLC PARA- DELIVERY

REST IN PEACE

YOU WILL ALWAYS BE IN OUR HEARTS

Those Remembered			Remembered By
Frank Riportella Jr	B Co 1/9	USMC KIA 26-Apr-67	Walter S Johnson B Co 1/9
Manuel Babbitt	3RD AT's	USMC Passed Away 04 May 99	John Hargesheimer 3/AT's
Bob Harrell	3RD AT's	USMC Passed Away 31 Aug 01	John Hargesheimer 3/AT's
Jerry Murray	D Co 1/26	USMC Passed Away 09 Aug 05	Khe Sanh Veterans
Charles H. Fox	C Co 1/26	USMC Passed Away 14 Aug 05	Khe Sanh Veterans
James R. Snow	W/ 1/13	USMC Passed Away Aug 05	Khe Sanh Veterans

SHORT ROUNDS

Welcome Stop for Warriors Somebody finally got it right

By Tony Perry, Times Staff Writer Bangor, Maine

Locals of Bangor, Maine are on a mission to greet every military plane, at any time, in any weather. Their tally so far: 200,000 troops. Tired and bleary-eyed, Marines of the 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment, based at Twenty Nine Palms, Calif., were finally back on U.S. soil after seven months on the front lines in Iraq. But, they were still many miles and hours from their families and the homecoming they longed for. Their officers told them they would be on the ground for 60 to 90 minutes while their chartered plane was refueled. They disembarked and began walking through the airport terminal corridor to a small waiting room.

That's when they heard the applause. Lining the hall and clapping were dozens of Bangor residents who have set a daunting task for themselves: They want every marine, soldier, sailor and airman returning through the tiny international airport here to get a hero's welcome. Even if the planes arrive in the middle of the night or a blizzard, they are there.

Composed mostly of those who served in World War II and Korea, they call themselves the "Maine Troop Greeters". They have met every flight bringing troops home from Iraq for nearly two years, more than 1,000 flights and nearly 200,000 troops. "Here they come. Everybody get ready," said Joyce Goodwin, 71, her voice full of excitement, undiminished by the hundreds of times she has shown up to embrace the returning troops. As dozens more Marines came down the corridor, the applause grew louder and was accompanied by handshakes, hugs, and a stream of well wishes: "Welcome home." "Thank you for your service." "God bless you." "Thank you for everything." Faces brightened. Grouchiness disappeared. Greeters and Marines alike began taking photographs. The Marines were directed down a corridor decorated with American flags and red, white and blue posters. Cell phones for free calls to family members are provided. They found a table with cookies and candies. Plates of homemade fudge circulated. "Welcome home, gunny," said Al Dall, 74, who served in the Marines during the Korean War, as he thrust his hand at a startled Gunnery Sgt. Edward Parsons, 31, of Shelby, N.C. "This is incredible," Parsons said. "Now I know I'm really back in the world."

The greeters line the corridor both as the troops arrive and later, as they return to their planes to continue their journeys to Fort Hood, Camp Pendleton and other Army and Marine Corps bases. The airport gift store opens early. T-shirts saying "I Love Maine" are popular, so are adult magazines. The store takes military script from troops low on cash, even though there is no way for the store to get reimbursed. The airport bar does a brisk business, selling Budweiser at $3 a bottle. Some flights have rules against drinking. The commanding officer of this battalion had no such restriction, and the bar was full of Marines laughing, singing, and joking. "We appreciate everything you've done for us," said Bud Tower, an Air Force veteran, who, at 58, considers himself "a kid" among the other greeters.

Kay Lebowitz, 89, has such severe arthritis that she cannot shake hands. So she hugs every Marine and soldier that she can. Some of the larger, more exuberant troops lift her off the ground. "Many of them tell me they can't wait to see their grandmother," she said. "That's what I am, a substitute grandmother." The greeters also turn out for flights headed to Iraq, but those are somber occasions. The Marines on this flight were returning from a lawless stretch of desert along the Syrian border, where they dodged roadside bombs and sniper fire on a daily basis. "When the flights are going over, it's heart-breaking," Lebowitz said. "But when they're coming home, it's heart-warming." The core of the "Maine Troop Greeters" is a dedicated group of about 30 residents who have a highly developed "telephone tree" to get the word out about impending arrivals. Their numbers swell on weekends when particular brigades are due back, such as local National Guard units. Families with young children join in. Most of the greeters support the U.S. mission in Iraq, but their goal is historic,

not political. Discussion of politics is banned. The greeters don't want America to repeat what they consider a shameful episode in history: the indifference, even hostility that the public displayed to troops returning from Vietnam. I think there's a lot of collective guilt about the '60s," said greeter Dusty Fisher, 63, a retired high school history teacher now serving in the state Legislature.

The airport in this city of 31,000 has a long runway and is a refueling stop for many overseas troop flights. The terminal is a tidy, homey, two-story structure with skylights and floor-to-ceiling windows that let in copious light. Above the waiting room, a banner reads, "Maine. The Way Life Should Be." Once the troops find seats, the greeters fan out. Phillip Eckert, 70, a bantam-sized ex-Marine with an outsized personality, likes to talk about the "old Corps" and tell stories of tough-as-nails sergeants and crazy-brave officers he knew from Korea. He wears a red sweatshirt that says: "Not as Lean, Not as Mean, But Still a Marine." Eckert leads Marines in raspy versions of the Marine hymn. He does his drill-instructor imitation: "move it, Move It, MOVE IT," he said in a mock-urgent voice. "I whoop and holler at the troops, and they seem to like it, I guess," he said. Jerry Mundy, 69, also a former Marine, likes to dispense mildly salty jokes. "My lady friend just bought us one of those king-size beds," he said. "Trouble is that at my age, after I finally find her, I forget what for."

Others try a quieter approach. Dall makes himself available if the troops want to talk about the traumas of combat. I've been there, so I know what they've gone through," he said. "I say, Forget me, this is your time. I'm here if you need me." Like the Marines, the greeters have had casualties. Four have died since the group started meeting the planes in May 2003. Marjorie Dean suffered a fatal heart seizure while she and her husband, Bill, were on their way to meet a late-night flight a year ago. She was 79. Goodwin missed three days of flights when she was in the hospital for heart surgery. "I felt like I was in withdrawal," he said. "It was awful not being able to be here for the boys." Bill Knight, 83, one of the group's organizers, came to the airport just hours after his doctor told him that he has advanced prostate cancer. "It never occurred to me not to come," said Knight, who served in the Army and Navy for three decades. Francis Zelz, 81, who served in the Navy during World War II, said it is a point of pride to respond even with only a few minutes notice. Many of the greeters were part of a similar welcome-home effort during the Persian Gulf War. "You get a call at 3 a.m. about a flight in 30 minutes, and you think about staying in bed," Zelz said. "Then you realize, no, I can't do that. That wouldn't be right." On one window of the greeters' office at the end of the corridor are hundreds of photographs of Marines and soldiers killed in Iraq taken from newspaper stories.

Inevitably, troops drift toward the window and search for their buddies. Sometimes they scribble small notes of remembrance next to the photos. The 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment suffered 15 dead and 86 wounded. The Marines were left alone to search for their buddies' photos. "There's Wilt," said a Marine pointing to one of Lance Cpl. Nicholas Wilt, 23, of Tampa, Fla. "There's Rowe," said another, a reference to Capt. Alan Rowe, 35, of Hagerman, Idaho. After several long and silent minutes, Staff Sgt. Larry Long, 31, of Clovis, N.M., finally found the photo he was searching for: Pfc. Ryan Cox, 19, of Derby, Kan. "He was a good Marine, a hard-charger," Long said with a catch in his voice. "He would have been a good squad leader." Navy chaplain Lt. Cmdr. Robert White, returning home with the Marine unit to which he was assigned, said the Bangor welcome may prove therapeutic. They need to feel good about themselves and what they've been through," White said. Marine Lt. David Tumanjan, 24, of Boise, Idaho, said the Bangor greeting is both humbling and gratifying. "It shows us that what we did wasn't in vain," he said. The greeters say their payoff is seeing the surprise and smiles on the faces of the troops. "Every flight coming home makes it like Christmas Eve," Tower said.

Don Guptill, 71, who served in the Army in Korea, listened as an enlisted Marine, his eyes fixed on the carpet, talked quietly about being wounded three times. As the call came over the loudspeaker to return to the plane, the young Marine reluctantly pulled something from his back pocket. It was his Purple Heart. He said he was embarrassed to wear

it," Guptill said. "I told him: You wear it. You earned it. You wear it for all the guys who didn't make it home. The Marines were barely gone when the Maine Troop Greeters began preparing for the next flight. "It's going to be a busy day for us," said Bill Dean, 70, an Army veteran. "That feels good."

INCOMING

A Visit with OCS/TBS Classmate Gary Morris

By Dave Rogers

Gary Morris is a retired Marine Lieutenant Colonel who lives in Irving, TX, which is not far from my home in Arlington. Until January 17, 2005 we had never met even though we both graduated from the 38th Officer Candidate School class in December 1965, then The Basic School class (3-66). In May 1966 Gary located me via the OCS/TBS web-site at MyFamily.com. He contacted me and suggested that we have lunch together in Irving.

We decided to meet on Monday (Martin Luther King Day) at the Red Lobster on Airport Freeway. After entering the door I immediately spotted Gary wearing a red cap with USMC written across the front with a matching red shirt displaying "38th OCS/TBS 3-66." Gary had attended a reunion of classmates at Washington/Quantico in July 2004 where all attendees received the cap and shirt. We immediately began talking about our training at OCS and TBS along with our wartime experiences in South Vietnam. I learned from Gary very quickly that he has three passions in life, his grandchildren, USMC, and baseball. He also described himself as being an amateur, self-taught artist. He discussed some of his art projects that he had worked on.

After lunch we drove to Gary's home. As soon as we entered through the backdoor from the garage, I noticed his art work hanging on every wall along with various photos. Gary had a story for each photo and painting as we made our way along each wall. There were paintings and drawings of eagles, cowboys, Indians, and musical instruments. One of the photos was of his OCS class. Another showed him alongside squadron members he had served with. We came upon a plaque with the inscription: "Gary Morris Hall of Fame," along with a brief history about his accomplishments as a baseball player at the University of Dallas in Irving. I shook his hand since the only other Hall of Famer I ever had the opportunity to shake hands with was Roger Staubach of the Dallas Cowboys. Being in a hall of fame anywhere is a major accomplishment and certainly identifies that person as a standout player.

Gary had other outstanding qualities besides athletics. He had been recognized by his hometown as Ambassador of the Year and, was the recipient of a Community Service Award. He also received a spirit award from his Alma Mater and special recognition for his support of the armed forces, in particular being recognized for his leadership role in a POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony.

Gary showed me his work station for painting and drawing. Before leaving his residence, he gave me four prints of cowboys, one of an Indian, and, one oil painting of an eye-witness scene at Khe Sanh at night during Tet in 1968. It was a scene he had remembered before becoming an artist. Having been at Khe Sanh, I told him that the painting reminded me of the surrounding hills during the Hill Fights of 1967, and specifically the counter-attack by North Vietnamese against Hill 881 North. That painting really invoked war-time memories. The painting and prints have been added to the My Family web-site for viewing. Use Art_by_Gary for the login ID, and password. Comments about the artist concerning his background and art work can be found at this site's homepage. **(See Pages 73-75 for an example of Gary's artwork).**

Gary's latest endeavor has been to assist a Marine Corporal in putting on a photographic exhibit of his combat photos taken during the war in Iraq. Approximately 500 people from the local FBI office in Dallas will be able to view the show around Memorial Day. One of the photos shows a Lieutenant with a Gunnery Sergeant discussing strategy while studying a map. Said Gary: "The Corporal taking the picture talked a lot about the Lieutenant. To make a long story short, I want to do a work of them hopefully for the basic school from our class in memory of our guys lost." Our OCS

class lost 33 of its class members during the Vietnam War. That indeed will be a noble tribute. It was a pleasure to meet and talk to a former OCS/TBS classmate who retired a Lieutenant Colonel. Gary has achieved many other goals in life and received special recognition, for serving his country and others in his community. He is still actively involved with painting and drawing. It provides him much pleasure.

Gary Morris was the first baseman of the University of Dallas baseball team from 1961 through 1964, playing on the most winning team in UD history. His 1964 school team was the first to qualify for postseason play. In 1964 he led the NAIA in stolen bases. He holds school records for most runs batted in for a game, and stolen bases in a season. He also holds the record for most at bats, runs and triples. The inscriptions on several plaques presented to Gary are shown below.

Ambassador of the Year Lifetime Member

Presented to Gary Morris by Irving Chamber of Commerce for an outstanding year of service, April 13, 1985 "**The Ulys Knight Spirit Award** is given to an alumnus, alumna, or group of individuals affiliated with UNT, who have shown spirit and enthusiasm as they contribute time and energy to a program or activity that has benefited the university family. "**Ulys Knight Spirit Award UNT 1989 Presented to Gary Morris**

Community Service Award

Presented to Lt. Col. Gary Morris, USMC, Retired Morris Specialties1992, Irving Parks and Recreation Board. In appreciation for your support and participation of POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony, September 15, 1995, Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center Bonham, TX.

Hall of Fame

Inducted February 1999, Presented to Lt. Col. (Ret.) Gary Morris, USMC, in recognition of your undying patriotism and dedicated energy in paying tribute to our armed forces through four conflicts. Our deepest appreciation, Irving Heritage Board 2003.

INCOMING

REPORT FOR INDUCTION PARRIS ISLAND
By Our Roving Ambassadors,
Ron Shouse & Cliff Treese

Get on those yellow footprints, eyes straight ahead, chin in, chest out, shoulders back, stomach in, thumbs along the trouser seams and feet at a 45



Ron Shouse on Yellow Footprints

degree angle. Cut off the Bull S###, you belong to me now maggots. Sound familiar? Treese and I heard something similar to this the first week in April. Things have not changed much at our once home away from home, Parris Island. Recruit Receiving now has a modern brick building, not some old broken down, white clapboard 2 story dinosaur from WWII. The DFNG's now spend a couple of weeks in the Receiving Barracks, learning basic military courtesies, how to make a bunk, and things of this nature. The Drill Instructors still go out of their way to make sure the new recruits are physically fit by allowing them to do lots of push-ups, bends, and exercise the proper use of the sand pit.

Cliff Treese and Ron Shouse, along with Cliff's wife Linda and daughter Brandi, reported aboard MCRD Parris Island and were treated like Royalty. We checked in at the Bachelor Officer's Quarters (Osprey II) and then went over to the PX, and the Parris Island Museum. Gunnery Sergeant Charles Taliano sent a couple of items for our silent auction in July. You may not know him by name but you know the man. He is the Marine Drill Instructor yelling at the recruit with the caption "We didn't promise you a rose garden". After we settled in, we stopped in to see Colonel John Valentin, Chief of Staff at Parris Island. We first met Colonel Valentin on a previous visit to P.I. when we got lost while Searching for a female D.I. Ron had his picture taken with him when the reunion was held at Charleston. He was sitting on the front steps of a



Nice of them to remember

very large house, tying his shoe. We yelled to him for directions and he came over to our vehicle. He was very kind, noticed our hats, and asked if we were at Khe Sanh. He told us he talks to the recruits about Khe Sanh and has the greatest respect for all Khe Sanh vets. We presented him with a Khe Sanh coin and he ran into his house and brought out 2 beers labeled Valentin's Red Patch Lager, with a picture of Chesty Puller on it. Being mere enlisted Marines, we did not realize who we were talking to.



Hand to Hand Training

Cliff asked him his rank and he laughed and said he was a Bird Colonel. We felt about an inch tall. We have kept in touch with him and he was kind enough to invite us back. On a subsequent visit to P.I., we spoke to colonel Valentin about doing a story for the Red Clay about recruit training today and how it compares to training in the 60's. Colonel

Valentin was receptive and offered any assistance he could provide. He turned us over to Major White in Public Affairs. Major White introduced us to Master Sgt. Art Prioletta, Public Affairs Chief. Over the next few months Cliff coordinated this visit with M/SGT Prioletta. He arranged for a staff van to take us on a VIP tour of the training at P.I.

Our first stop was the hand to hand course. Remember when you would walk up behind your opponent for the "naked strangle?" It is now called "Counter the Strike". It still gets the job done, but it just sounds better. We went to the pool to observe drown proofing. Each group of 10 recruits was supervised by several instructors. Also visiting the pool were a large group of teachers from throughout the U.S.

This was too much for Cliff, he fell out and was taken to the hospital by his wife, treated and released for what was thought to be dehydration. Shouse and Cliff's daughter Brandi continued with the tour.

Remember the Khe Sanh history marker at the rifle range? This sort of gives the appearance of it just being a rifle range. This is not the case. There is a pistol range, small arms range and the rifle range which is actually "pop-up" targets laid out at different distances. They do not qualify here, but



they do keep score. I guess you would call it a type of Familiarization or "Fam Fire" course. You shoot from bunkers, from windows, and piles of rocks that let the young guys get a feel of what it is like to shoot from different positions. The recruits spend 2 weeks at the Range, just like we did with a few minor changes. They shoot the M16-A2. This weapon is nice. It is unlike those Matty Mattel pieces of junk we had. These are accurate to 500 yards. They get "Hot Meals" for breakfast and dinner for the 2 weeks, and have a box lunch for the mid day meal. If they qualify with the rifle, they graduate. If they do not, they get put back and do it again.



Non Qualifiers, Dragging Range Tower

The Range Tower is still the same. The ones that do not qualify are still dragging it, but I think it rolls better now. The Women Marines qualify too, but are not dropped back as the men because there are not as many women recruits. If the recruit is still having trouble learning to shoot, they have an indoor course. It is called ISMT or Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Training. This is the



Ron Shouse on Simulated Firing Course

biggest facility of it's kind anywhere. It is computerized and will show the point of impact and will tell the instructor why the recruit cannot hit the target without wasting a lot of ammo. Law enforcement from all over has used this facility. We both were given the opportunity to use the range for

an hour and half. During the instructions for shooting on the ISMT 45 range, Treese got sick again. Ron fired the 45, and the rifle. Treese's wife drove him back to the hospital where he was admitted. We all thought he was just trying to keep from showing up Ron, but he was really sick.

We had gone to lunch at H&S Company prior to going to the ISMT range. You have your choice of a salad line, a sandwich line, or meat and 2 vegetables. Not bad chow for $3.50. And a far cry from food we ate as recruits. Civilians do all the cooking. There is no mess duty for the recruits anymore. Ron asked if they had any of those delicious powered eggs we ate as recruits but they couldn't find any. Ron was very disappointed. At first we thought Cliff got sick because of the food, but later found out how seriously ill he was. He had kidney failure.

Cliff was AWOL so Ron, Brandi and Linda went to the Crucible Brief. It is similar to our "Elliot's Beach". There are more combat fundamentals and



Cliff & Ron at Gas Chamber

the recruit performs his task with little sleep, and only a couple of C-Rats. They are called MRE's now. The Crucible used to be a requirement to graduate, but this has been changed. We talked some Drill Instructors who had their Crucible cancelled due to bad weather. This just did not sit too well with me because I remember some of the weather we had, and felt that it would have been valuable training for the new Marines.

Right across from the Crucible Briefing Point is the "Gas Chamber". I am sure everyone has tears come to their eyes just thinking about it. Not to mention a runny nose, heaving, and all those bumps on your head from running into trees. I do not know where they got their information but they told us this is supposed to be the worst gas chamber anywhere. If it is worse than the one I went to at Camp Geiger, this should be cruel and unusual punishment.

The Slide for Life has a net at the base of the tower but there are still guys that fall in the water. If they fall in the water, they must put their hands on their head and sing the Marine Corps Hymn as they walk out of the water. The rappelling tower has a big pad at the bottom instead of a sawdust pit. The training is still about the same, so I guess if it isn't broke you don't fix it.



Chow Time

We attended the "Pinning On Ceremony" of the EGA for Bravo Company Recruits that were going to graduate the next day. It was great to see these young men doing what we did some 40 years ago. There is an indoor facility at the end of the Parade Deck that is used for this program if there is inclement weather.

Treese was in Beaufort Naval Hospital, but was determined to attend the Morning Colors and Graduation on Friday. He negotiated with his doctor and was given a pass for the ceremonies. Evidently they didn't trust this Marine to return to the hospital so they sent him to P.I. in the hospital commander's staff vehicle. The driver was told that he had better catch Treese if he fell. Fortunately, he was able to

attend both, and was returned to the hospital without further incident. He spent three more days in the hospital before being discharged and returned home to sunny Florida.

We all assembled at Base Headquarters for Morning Colors. There were a lot of parents in attendance. Some of the mothers wore shorts and the bugs were delighted they did. Bug repellent stock hit an all time high that morning. Ron offered to help keep the bugs out of the ladies shorts but was told that would not be necessary. Cliff and Ron were seated in the VIP section and did not kill any bugs which attempted to devour us. We wanted to show the new Marines that we were "OLD CORPS TOUGH". We presented the Commanding General, the Chief of Staff, and the Base Sergeant Major, with Khe Sanh coins, a ball point pen, a copy of the "Final Formation", and had photos taken. We then proceeded on to the Graduation. Sitting right behind us in the grandstand was a Marine recently returned from Iraq and was wounded there. He had sustained an injury to his hand and lost part of his leg. He was there to see his brother graduate from P.I. They both had the same drill instructor at P.I. His DI was overcome with emotion at the sight of the young Lance Corporal and the reason for his attendance.

This will make you proud, and at the same time will make you sad. I swear that I could see all of us right there on the Grinder in our younger days. Everything was perfect and when the Band played the Marine Hymn there wasn't a dry eye in the place. The whole thing took less than an hour. Afterwards I walked out onto the hallowed ground and could not help but think of how many Marines had marched by that reviewing stand, and that I was one of them. God Bless 'em all, Semper Fidelis, Frateas Aeternius.

We would like to thank General Richard Tryon, Colonel John Valentin, Sgt/ Major Robert Hollings, Major White, LT Miller, and M/Sgt Art Prioletta, for their assistance with this tour. They went above and beyond the call of duty, insuring we were provided all the information we needed. Without their help, we could not have completed this story.



L-R General Tryon, Cliff Treese, Ron Shouse, Sgt/Major Hollings



Obstacle Course



Graduation Day



Ron & Cliff with Chief of Staff, Colonel John Valentin.

MEMOIRS

TANKS AT KHE SANH
By Craig W. Tourte

Before I volunteered for the Marine Corps I drove a large tractor on the fields of my uncle's farm. I loved driving those beasts and always thought it would be a pretty neat job to be a tanker in the Marine Corps. I always thought that driving a tank must be somewhat like driving that old tractor. During boot camp we were asked what MOS we were interested in. I, of course marked the boxes for tanks, or armor, I am not exactly sure what it said but that is what I was interested in. Of course the Marine Corps had other needs, and my being a tanker was not to be.

When I arrived at Khe Sanh on the convoy from Dong Ha, we turned north from highway 9 and drove towards the front gate of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. There was a stretch of dirt road from the highway (a narrow dirt road) to the front gate of around two hundred yards. As we entered the main gate, we then turned east and drove about a few hundred yards before we stopped. There was not much in the way of defensive positions, a few fighting holes and concertina wire, and that was about it. I don't recall when I first spotted that big M48 tank at Khe Sanh. I think I must have seen it being driven around the base. I was in awe of its size. The engine was a big diesel, which belched thick black smoke. It just looked powerful and aggressive and I envied those who were aboard.

I watched as it moved around the small base, much like a teenager watches that shiny new car he wants but knows he can't afford. At some point during the next several months, that tank parked near the main gate facing south with it's 90mm cannon pointing level out towards the direction of highway 9. I was convinced that nothing would come down that road that the tank could not destroy.

I pulled guard duty at the main gate a number of times. Every time it seemed as though I were alone. I don't recall ever seeing anyone else except that big tank standing guard right behind me. I don't recall ever seeing the crew around. It was like that tank was watching over me and I felt comforted by its presence. A huge 1 million candle-power Xenon searchlight was mounted above the main cannon. I remember thinking that it was the oddest thing having a big searchlight on that tank. It got dark at Khe Sanh and I mean really dark and black. I knew that if it became necessary for that tank to turn the light on, it would draw all of the fire towards it that the enemy would have been able to muster.

That M48 weighted in at 52 tons, and had a 1790 cu inch 690 horsepower diesel motor, with a CD-850 Alison Transmission. The engine and transmission alone weighed over 6 tons. I don't recall seeing that or any, of the other tanks at Khe Sanh fire their cannon but it must have been an awesome sight when they did.

It was one of those really dark and foggy nights at Khe Sanh when the Lang Vei Special Forces Base was over run by NVA tanks. I could hear the sound of the V6 240 horsepower diesel engines coming from the PT76 Amphibious tanks, kind of a muffled sound off in the distance. At the time I was not aware of what the sound was. I knew it was some sort of motor noise but I was not able to identify it. I certainly did not think it was tanks. I'm not sure if any others on the base could hear the motors, but I could, as I stared off in the direction of Lang Vei.

During the Siege I lost track of the tanks and also my interest in them. I was too busy just surviving my own ordeal. As I think back to the Siege and all that we went through, it would have been interesting to have been a tanker at Khe Sanh, especially with all that shrapnel flying around everywhere. The tankers must have felt relatively safe inside those hulking monsters. I imagine when shrapnel hit the side of the tanks it made quite a noise. I never did get the opportunity to ride in a tank. Even today when I see a one, I wonder what it would have been like to have been inside during the Siege, instead of laying on the hard cold ground, enduring the cold, wet, mud, bugs and snakes. I am sure of one thing though, the rats couldn't jump that high.



MEMOIRS

THE DAY MR. CHARLES THOUGHT KEN PAE WAS IN CHARGE

By Charlie Fox

One on the rules of combat written by "Murphy" states: "try to look inconspicuous." I don't remember the exact date, but one of our members broke that rule and paid the price.

Charlie Company, 1/26 was on the Blue Line with the second squad of the 3rd platoon being just to the right of the water point road. At the time, we were a rather "fat" squad. We actually had a sergeant for a squad leader, and corporals for fire team leaders. I was a lance corporal and M-79 man.

We were, at that point in the siege, where we were restricted to two C ration meals a day, and one canteen of water. We were lean, extremely grubby looking, and very smelly. When you think you smell bad, you do. I've heard stories about showers, electricity, steaks and all the other stuff we dreamed about, but our little group acquired things like candle wax for making our own candles by scrounging it from blown up hootches and bunkers, extra chow by stealing it from the LZ's, and gear from where ever we could "find" it. We got a pallet of stretchers that went out of control on a LAPES drop that provided bunks that we hung from the runway matting bunker roof with comm wire. It helped keep the rats away.

A large pipe, coming from the water point ran directly behind our bunker, across the trench and up the hill where there was a large valve. The pipe then continued towards the runway. After seeing that pipe for many days and cracking my head on it many nights while moving down the trench, it finally came to me that maybe, just maybe, there might be water in it. I knew Mr. Charles was smart enough to poison the water, but that wouldn't matter if we just used it to wash, shave and get our clothes clean. I discussed it with my team leader, Bob Stuart, and it made sense to him, but before we moved on our plan, PFC Ken Pae and another individual entered the picture. Pae got a five-gallon water can, left our little group, and went to the valve on the hill, and hope to get water. Stuart and I were bent over trying to turn the wheel on the valve. It wouldn't open. Good old Ken Pae shouted encouragement. The area to the right of the water point road outside the wire was the home of an NVA sniper who didn't hit many things he shot at. But he was persistent. I know, in this sniper's mind, he was watching the man in charge shouting orders to his underlings, when in reality a corporal and lance corporal were busting their combined butts while two PFC's were screwing off.

In the midst of our struggle with the valve wheel and a lot of cursing and grunting, I heard a very loud "WHANG" and looked to see where the strange noise had come from. Pae was standing there with that deer in the headlights look, still holding the water can. A quick glance at the water can revealed a bullet hole and as Pae raised the can, a bullet hole in his leg. Pae was nice enough to confirm all this by announcing in true Marine style, "I'm $%$^& shot!!" Our training kicked in. In true Three Stooges style, we promptly ran into each other, backed up a step and ran into each other again. I think everyone changed their angle of departure on the next attempt, because we missed each other on the next try and headed for our imagined place of safety. There were no more shots, possibly due to the sniper's laughing so hard at our attempt to flee. Pae and company made it to the trench, while Stuart and I went the other way over the hill.

After doing the usual, "Damn, that was close," and joking away our fear, Stuart and I found a small gully and headed back towards the trench line and started our low crawl back while getting shot at three more times. Our final obstacle was the mound of dirt from the trench. I was convinced we were going to get shot going over it, but my corporal was convinced that we had to get into the trench. So, we devised our plan. "We'll go on three." As I rose up on that magic "three", the ground exploded in my face and I fell back convinced I was dead while Stuart made it into the trench. After a very slow self-examination I convinced myself I wasn't dead, or even hit and decided I was going to remain that way even though everyone thought I had to get in

that trench. I did make it into the trench, about ten minutes after it got dark that evening.

Murphy's Law was violated and the violator was punished. When we get to Mobile, Al next year, be kind to Ken Pae when he wants to tell you how I got him shot. Be gentle. Remind him of Murphy's Law and the fact that the enemy, many times, is not up on what our chain of command really is.

SHORT ROUNDS

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

By Craig W. Tourte

I have read a lot about Vietnam and Khe Sanh the last few years. I attended the Khe Sanh Reunion in 03 and had a great time. I didn't see anyone I served with at Khe Sanh, except my friend Tom Horchler who I met at Khe Sanh and had a few conversations with while there. I rode shotgun on Tom's truck on the way out of Khe Sanh after the Siege. But, other than Tom, I didn't see any of the few I served with. I did a little research and found most of their names on the Khe Sanh Roster. I didn't remember their names until I researched the roster and it was interesting to recall and remember their young faces and little things about them. Some were funny, some were serious, all wanted to survive and they were from all over the country.

I wrote a little piece on the Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page Web Site requesting that any who saw the article contact me. Their names are not listed as members of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association and I have not seen their names on the KIA list, so I would assume that many survived and returned home. I have found the addresses of a few and written them letters. I expected an immediate response but was disappointed that none attempted to contact me. Tom has had the same experience, some who he has been able to contact have welcomed him and others have requested that he not attempt to contact them any more.

I was watching the Fox Channel and the special on Khe Sanh. It was really interesting and amazing that so many of us survived. A friend asked me if it was really as bad as was portrayed, I thought a minute and told him that often television documentaries seem to make situations seem much worse than they really were, but in this case, reality was much worse than any program or old grainy film could possibly show. I wonder now, in my later years, what has happened to those brave Marines I served with during the Siege at Khe Sanh, to those who stood with me so long ago. I would want to know, just to say hello, and even perhaps goodbye.

I understand that we each must face our own demons, and sometimes there is just not enough room for certain memories. Perhaps it is a good thing some have moved on, and not looked back. I think some do not want to look back at their experience at Khe Sanh, and there are those who would like to reach out, but cannot. Maybe they are the lucky ones.

WHERE DID EVERYONE GO?

By Craig W. Tourte

I have heard and read all of the stories, as I am sure you have. How there were so many of us at the Khe Sanh Combat Base during the Siege, that they just could not put any more boots on the ground in that very small space. How we were stepping all over each other. They could just supply so many people with so much food, ammo, and we had reached our limit. I guess that was true. I have read there were from five to six thousand of us. Seems like a huge number for a place measuring about one half mile by about a mile. They made it sound like we were standing shoulder to shoulder in the trench line with no room to spare. I guess the numbers were correct, but my question is, where in the heck were you?

When that big old rocket screamed in on me, I laid down in a communication trench dug just a few inches below the ground, as it smashed into the ground just inches from me, I was alone. When the 152's went off and were roaring my way, I dived into a bunker on the line and I was all alone as the ground shook from the impact beside me. You must have left. As I got up from my fighting bunker which was just one sheet of runway matting I placed over the trench line, and put a couple of layers of sandbags on top, that rocket entered right

where I had been standing just seconds before. I was alone again, where did you go? When I stood guard all night long at the main gate and that snake crawled over my feet and the rats onto my lap, you were not around. I could not see you on either side of me. I was alone as usual, what happened to you? As I looked out into the foggy night, looking for movement and the shadows I knew were the enemy, only I could see them, you were not to be seen. As I ran to Charlie Med to repair the shrapnel wound to the back of my neck, I ran alone and you were not beside me.

When I prayed to God every morning to let me live another day, you did not pray with me. When I thanked God at night for letting me live another day, you were not there to thank him with me. Sometimes at Khe Sanh I just felt so alone. Where were you? Were you standing right beside me? If you hadn't been there with me, I wouldn't be here today. Thanks for sticking around.

MEMOIRS

BUNKERS

By Craig W. Tourte

I was thinking about the word bunker and how it just sounded so solid and safe. When I was down in the bunker. It makes me think of those old films of the trenches from WW1 in France; where the trench was filled up with the soldiers, but the bunker (must have been filled with the officers) were timber covered and safe from incoming artillery. I remember seeing a film of the old generals and officers hunched over some type of map table smoking cigarettes and looking very stern while dust came through the roof. The bunker shook from the incoming rounds, but the bunker held up.

As we made the turn north from Highway 9 into Khe Sanh Combat Base, sometime in August 1967, I noticed there was not much to see. We stopped about 100 meters east of the main gate and dismounted. This base and this spot were going to be my home (H.Q. 1/13) for the next 8 months. Nine months of basic training, ITR, MOS, Staging, a few months in Okinawa, did little to prepare me for what lay ahead.

I think we expected to receive incoming small arms fire and perhaps some mortar rounds and a rocket or two. But, we certainly were not prepared; nor did we fully prepare, for what was to hit us some 5 months later. We dug defensive trenches, filled sandbags with our entrenching tools, put out wire, ran the usual all night LP's, and built a bunker to sleep in. Our bunker looked like all the others being built around that time of year. First we put up those big, canvas, green tents. There were a lot of tents then, pitched everywhere. When it rained we'd take off our clothes and stand next to the edge as the cold water came down in streams. I look at pictures now from those days past, everything looks so green (tents) and red (from the clay dirt) with lots of new green sandbags piled around.

Our sleeping bunker was like all the others that we saw around us. It started with the tent, then 55gallon drums filled with dirt, that were placed around three sides with only the doorway left unprotected. We also filled empty wooden 105mm boxes with dirt and put those on top of the drums. We then loaded more sandbags on top of the boxes. It must have been 6 feet in height when we finished. We found some old runaway matting and placed it over the top and put more sandbags on top of the matting.

We did a good job. It looked pretty good, kind of battle ready. We felt that we would be safe, since we had built a "bunker." I even attached a small California flag to some type of pole I found, and put it on the roof of our bunker. I was proud of the way it flapped in the breeze. I expected some old sergeant, or brass to come along and tell me to take it down, but it stayed in place.

We did our assigned jobs for the next 5 months, occasionally adding new sandbags to our bunker and even a few new wooden 105mm boxes. We placed a couple of pallets on the floor (deck) so we would not always be stepping in the mud. Every day was pretty much the same. We worked on the trench across the road from our bunker, and filled sandbags. I was awed by this interesting place that I knew so little about. Occasionally we'd go beyond the wire a few hundreds yards to look around, and perhaps bring back some timber or anything else we thought was interesting or useful. It was always an

exciting adventure for us non grunts, no radio or way to communicate if we ran into trouble, but we did not expect any.

I liked being outside the wire. It made me feel like a real Marine. I knew in my heart I was meant to be a grunt. I hated my MOS, I loved ITR and Staging Battalion, but I was only in for a couple of years and I guess that's where they needed the manpower.

It seems like I was awake all night January 20, 1968. I had guard duty and around 0400 or 0500 the morning of January 21, I was walking around inside our area when I heard something scream right over the top of me. At first I thought it was another one of the F-4's that would fly over the airfield at about 100 feet off of the ground, but when it hit, I knew exactly what it was. The ammo dump blew up after the first round came in. I must have yelled incoming, but the blast woke everyone up anyway and no one had a doubt that we were under attack.

Without orders or any yelling, everyone ran out of our bunker and headed across the street into the trench line. We stood in the trench line and watched the slow destruction of Khe Sanh. We then realized how pitiful our little sleeping bunker really was. As the big rounds from Co Roc fell around us and the rockets screamed in, we realized that nothing that we could have built, and everything that had been built, was useless against such a powerful force that we were experiencing and witnessing.

During the Siege of Khe Sanh, every standing structure that I saw was destroyed, including our bunker. Two rounds from Co Roc landed just a few feet from where I was laying in the trench. The ground shook and lifted me into the air and slammed me back down again. The air was full of dust and dirt everywhere. When the ground settled, I looked out from the trench and saw that on the outer lip of the depression the round had made just a few inches from me. I got out of the trench and stood next to the huge hole that had been blown into the ground. There was still smoke coming out of the middle.

One of the guys I had spoken with the day before was killed by a rocket a few yards away. He had been a Drill Instructor in San Diego and had just arrived at Khe Sanh hours earlier. It was the first time I had a normal human conversation with a Drill Instructor. He seemed like a really decent guy, not a jerk, like so many others DI's Our bunker that took so long to build was useless. We took the sandbags that had not been blown apart and used them to strengthen the trench line. But, we knew there was really nothing that we could do to make our position safer.

We did our jobs and stayed in the trench line during the night. Someone had to carry the dead and injured, hump the ammo, carry the water, go out to the airfield and take the cargo off of the pallets and put them into the trucks to deliver to the guns and other units. Someone had to fill and pile new, fresh, undamaged sandbags onto the bunkers of the officers. Donald Saunders was killed doing this job. He had taken my spot. Someone had to go to the guns at night and hump the ammo when they fired the H & Is, and return fire during the days. Someone had to go beyond the wire and sit out all night long and listen, observe and wait for the enemy. That "someone" was us, it was **our** job.

I don't know how we could have trained or prepared for our experience. I never heard of any courses given by the Marine Corps on how to build defensive bunkers that would enable one to survive heavy artillery. Apparently the NVA learned and they learned well. It was their home and they had the time and the ability. They knew what trees to cut, how to place the timbers, shore up the joints and protect and reinforce the ceiling.

When I look back on my old photographs taken at Khe Sanh, I notice striking differences. Those photo's taken before the Siege are filled with the color green, green uniforms worn by young men with fresh faces, green tents, green vehicles, green sandbags and standing wooden buildings. As I look at the photographs taken during and after the Siege, I see very little green, or any standing structures. The uniforms of the now aged men are no longer green, but torn, faded and stained the color of red clay, with few photographs of vehicles. There are

Photographs of large holes in the ground and piles of cloth, which once served as sandbags. I also see a Familiar sight in these photographs taken so long ago, that are similar to others I have taken during other battles. I see pictures of really brave men.

As I look back now on those old photographs of Khe Sanh taken during and after the Siege, I notice that they were not unlike those photographs and films I remember seeing taken in France during WW1 showing the trenches and bunkers. Of course the difference is that our bunkers which we privates built, would not have withstood those incoming artillery rounds, or much of anything really. I don't know if our officers deep down in their bunkers were standing around a map table looking stern and smoking cigarettes.

SHORT ROUNDS

Part Two
Once A Marine Always a Marine, Brothers Taking Care of Brothers

By Tom Eichler

In issue 60, I printed a story regarding the Commandant of the Marine Corps, taking the time to honor me when I retired from the Chicago Police Department, in 2003. This honor was due to a Police Officer under my command, writing the commandant requesting a letter. As you may recall from the article, the CMC not only took the time to write a letter, he sent a personal photos and his very personal thank you, for my Police and Marine service.

On May 15, 2005, I attended the annual National Police Officers Memorial Ceremony in Washington DC. The Police officer who originally wrote the letter (still an active Chicago Police Officer) also attended. We were the honored guest of Captain Jason Pelt, USMC, assigned to Marine Barracks Honor Detail.

During the twilight parade ceremony we sat with the Commandant and other VIP's. Among those VIP's was the assistant Secretary of the Navy. After the parade, the Commandant visited with his



Tom Eichler with CMC, General Hagee

Marines and the many dignitaries in attendance. I informed one of the senior NCOs of the honor the Commandant had bestowed upon me when I retired. I asked if I could personally thank him, and



Ken Penn, KSV with CMC General Hagee



Officer Edward May with CMC General Hagee

introduce him to the Former Marine who wrote him the letter. This Marine was not only a highly decorated Chicago Police Officer, but had lost his

brother who was KIA while serving with the United



L-R Ken Penn, General Nyland, Tom Eichler, Marine Major

States Army in Vietnam, during a two day battle in which he was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, & Two Purple Hearts.

Once again, the Commandant put aside his busy schedule of activities, and met with our CPD Officer, Edward May, and myself. I thanked him for taking the time to write a personal letter regarding my retirement. He was most gracious and took photos and chatted with the people in our party,



L-R Ken Penn, Ed May, Captain Jason Pelt, Tom Eichler

which included Ken Penn, KSV. We later met in the Officers Quarters, not only with the Commandant, but with the Assistant Commandant, General William L. Nyland, who was also a gracious host. What other Branch of Service would have the Commandant & Assistant Commandant take the time to honor a couple of old Marine Veterans? The motto **"Semper Fidelis"** never meant more to me and Officer May. Thank you General Hagee from the bottom of my heart.

INCOMING

Attendance at the Gold Star Mothers Convention, Dallas Texas

By James Wodecki

The American Gold Star Mothers annual Convention was held in Dallas TX, at the Crown Hotel. I attended with my wife PJ, as representatives from the Khe Sanh Veterans association. We arrived early so we could talk to a few of the Mothers, and wait for friends who were attending with us. Ken Waterston vice Commandant of Marine Corps League and his lovely wife Cigi, along with Jim Meeks the National BOD of Vietnam Veterans of America, would join me as guest speakers.

As we entered the lounge we met several other KSV members who were waiting for the banquet to begin. I observed two older gentlemen seated at the



Jimbo with Gold Star Mothers

bar. One of them, pointing to my EGA tie clip, asked me if I was a Marine. I replied yes, and he told me that his son was also a Marine, and was killed in Beirut. His son's name was Jim Young, whose Mother Judith, was the new National President of the Gold Star Mothers. Mr. Young asked me where I had served in Vietnam, and I replied Khe Sanh. I further informed him that I was there to present a donation to the Gold Star Mothers which would enable one of their members to return to Vietnam to visit the place where their son had breathed his last breath.

A tap on my shoulder from a little lady behind me, and a soft voice said "my son was killed at Khe Sanh in 1968". With tears in her eyes, she presented me with a laminated, boot camp picture of Joey Keith Wheeler who was KIA at Khe Sanh while serving with B Company 1/9. She informed me that Joey was killed at a place called the Rock Pile on March 31st 1968. I gave her a big hug, told her how sorry I was, and attempted to give her a mental picture of where the Rock Pile was in relation to the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

I proceeded to hand her a Khe Sanh coin, and with a shaking hand she graciously accepted. She left our presence to change her dress for the upcoming Banquet. My wife and I then sat with another Gold Star Mother who lost her son during the 9/11 bombing of the Pentagon. He was a Marine who had already served two tours in the Persian Gulf. Just 2 weeks before his death, he had called and told her he was serving in a safe place and did not want her to worry as she did when he was in Kuwait. As luck would have it, he was in a safe location at the Pentagon just a few minutes prior to the plane crash, but left and entered the location where the plane struck.

We then spoke with Anna Heard, the present past President of Gold Star Mothers. We had previously spoke to her on the phone but never actually met. After her son was killed in Vietnam, she made three promises to herself; to become an active Gold Star Mother, to become the president, and bring the annual convention to Dallas, her son's hometown. She had accomplished all three. We had a delicious meal and I sat and pondered what I would speak of when it was my turn to address the convention. When it was my turn, I informed the crowd that the other speakers had already spoke of the items I planned to address, but I have something they did not have, a check for $ 1,000, to help one of their members return to Vietnam. They applauded; I looked at Mary Wheeler, as I spoke on. I told them I could see in all their eyes, their son's presence with us. God Bless all the Mothers who have lost their sons and daughters in war. I thought it was over when Anna and several other Mothers left the room for a few minutes. They have a ritual for replacing the past president position.

Dressed in flashing red, white, and blue sunglasses, carrying fishing poles and wearing funny hats, they returned to the room, Anna leading the way. They led a procession around the banquet room, singing "The Old Gray Mare, She Ain't What She Used to Be". WE were Shaking our heads and laughing as we left to return home.

POETRY

BLOWING IN THE WIND

Peter, Paul and Mary such beautiful
songs they sing such meaning.

Today at our ward picnic.
Fun we were supposed to have.
Things were going fine till songs we HAD to sing.

Not in a mood to sing or laugh,
I joined the circle on the fringe.

Blowing in the wind,
Once a song I loved.
But its words have such meaning,
today this song made me Flash.

Still now hours later,
the tears want to flow.
The words running through my mind,
time after time.

How many people must die?
When will we say enough is enough?

To a plateau of red clay,
I stood and looked at body bags,
all in a neat row.
Stretchers with my Brothers
dead and dying.
I too want to know when it will end.

Sam Messer
CBMU-301 Det B

INCOMING

THE POWER OF A MARINE L/CPL

By Tom Eichler E Co 2/26
Hill 861A

With both of my brothers attending the Reunion, helping with driving our rented vehicles, it brought back memories of how much they both mean to me, and how proud I am of them..

Denny lied about his age and joined the United States Army when he was only 16 years old, being assigned to the 25TH Infantry Division (Cacti). He was a Fire Team Leader, and was sent to Vietnam. Robert was drafted, assigned to the 1st Calvary Division, and also sent to Vietnam. I had reenlisted in the USMC, and was awaiting orders. My Mother received telegrams that both Denny & Robert had been WIA, both for the second time.

Denny was severely wounded while leading a patrol that was ambushed by a large NVA force. He was sent to Japan, and transferred to Great Lakes Naval Hospital to recover from his wounds. Robert suffered the same fate while on patrol, and was sent to a hospital in Japan to recover.

Denny received the Bronze Star, Bobby several Air Medals for Bravery. Both were promoted to Sergeant.

Shortly before I was to leave for Camp Pendleton, I received Denny's Bronze Star and Purple Hearts in the United Stated Mail. I knew that Denny had been transferred to numerous hospitals for rehab, but I still thought his citations should be given in proper Military fashion. By now Denny had recovered and been assigned as a drill instructor at Fort Leonard Wood. Taking pen in hand, I wrote a letter to the Commanding General at Fort Leonard Wood, informing him that I thought his medals should have been given in proper Military Fashion, and mailed them back to him.

I signed the Letter **THOMAS J. EICHLER L/CPL, USMC (RET)**. Well the Army I guess, wanting to avoid the wrath of a Marine L/Cpl, held a Division Parade and presented Sergeant Denny Eichler with his Medals.

I too, was a Sergeant in the Infantry USMC, with E Co 2/26, Hill 861A.

Another bother William, served in the United States Navy as a CPO.

WEB BRIEFS

A series of conversations on the Khe Sanh Veterans Websites, with the niece of a Khe Sanh Veteran KIA at Khe Sanh Combat Base, seeking answers to his death.

Wendy Ferris is the niece of PFC Michael John Laderoute. He was a part of the 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines. A member of the Ghost Patrol, Michael was declared MIA on February 25, 1968, and his status was changed to KIA, body recovered resulting from Bravo Companies successful action on March 30, 1968.We will begin with Wendy's email and questions. My response follows.

First of all I would like to apologize to you for taking so long to get back to you. I have four children that keep me busy. I also I attend college full time and work a part time job. Thank you for the kind words, I understand completely how difficult it is for a lot of the men who served over there and in any other war. My Grandmother has never recovered from the loss of my Uncle. We grew up talking about him in whispers so she wouldn't hear us. I developed a love for a man I never knew and wanted to know. My questions of why did he go, were always there. Why enter a war that was not ours?

When beginning this search I had to worry first of all of offending family members who thought it best to leave the past alone. I didn't want to do that. I wanted to bring my Uncle back into the light, which as a War Hero and member of our family he deserves to be recognized. I was tired of pretending he never was except in some version of a dream that you could only remember snatches of. I was worried about approaching vets who might be hesitant to talk to someone who was not a vet. I have read about the antiwar sentiment and how many soldiers were treated on their return home. I

am a believer that even though we may oppose a war, we must support our vets.

I am very happy to say my fears were for nothing. I have been greeted with many emails offering encouragement and support in my search for information. I have spoken to men whose stories have moved me to weep for their loss and pain. When I first started I was shaken to the core at what so many of you went through. It was hard for me to think about, and harder still to imagine going through it. I am so grateful that I will never have to experience it, and am so grateful to those who served. I want to be able to teach my children to be grateful as well. I am looking at the events of February 25, 1968, outside the box and from a lot of different views. I wasn't there, so I cannot say I am correct in my thoughts. I have heard a lot of different versions of the causation of the patrol being ambushed. My Mom thinks that Khe Sanh was used to lure the NVA out in the open.

I know that on March 30 a patrol was sent out to get the remains of the patrol, and many were lost and only a few remains were recovered; nine I believed is the official number, Ronald Ridgeway being one of them. I have been trying to find out when the rest of the remains were discovered and how they determined identification. I found information where the government has tried to classify identity with a handful of bone fragments. As a Biotech student, I know it is impossible. You cannot even determine if someone is male or female using that method.

I have been reading messages that many experience dread with the anniversary of the Tet Offensive. My family doesn't acknowledge the event. My Uncle's birthday was last Sunday, and in my mind I wished him a Happy 56th and wished he was here. This is only one man, and you all have so many to remember and Honor. You have your own demons to carry. I read about your post keeping certain subjects a little more private. You are correct in thinking that there are people out there who would use such information against others. More people need to see and understand what you men have gone through. What you sacrificed and continue to sacrifice. I truly pray that this New Year is good to you and to all the other men and women who served, not just in Khe Sanh, but any war.

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Wendy,
Sorry it took me a few days to get back to you but I wanted to visit with a couple of others and do a little research about a few of your questions. Frankly, some of your questions brought up several unresolved questions of my own. I want to thank you for all your kind remarks both in the emails and in your postings on the message board. I also want to thank you for being persistent in asking the questions that you have. Your doing so has prodded me to strongly examine some issues that have plagued me for 37 years. There are a number of fellow Khe Sanh Vets and even family members like yourself, that have many of these same unresolved issues, therefore I decided to post your letters and my response on both message boards. Maybe this will help answer questions for others, and it will also give some of the other guys an opportunity to give their point of view, and maybe answer some questions. I hope you don't mind.

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Mac,
I've been reading Eric Hammel's book "The Siege of Khe Sanh"...I have a couple of questions I am hoping you might be able to help me with. M/Gen Tommy Tomkins says that he had ordered patrols to go no further than 500 meters off the wire for the purpose of wanting to bring the enemy closer to the base, and then all patrols were stopped. It was thought that NVA trenches were within 50 meters of the wire. Seismic monitoring was going on just for that belief. I am perplexed about an order given for the patrol on Feb 25. Did Captain Ken Pipes try to have the patrol delayed due to weather, and the request was denied? Does anyone know why that request was denied? If I am bombarding you with questions I apologize and if you would rather not answer, I understand.

Wendy,
Although it has been years since I read it, I recall that Hammel's book was accurate to a great extent. However, different people sometimes see things from a somewhat different perspective. Another

thing is that our own memories sometimes deceive us, and some of us have even spent years trying to bury memories that are just too painful to fully acknowledge.

On top of that, there is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder eating away at most of us, and let's face it, as much as we hate to admit it we are getting older and that takes a huge toll on our memory. Another thing is that I constantly have to ask myself, is if I really saw this first hand, was it a dream, or was it just described to me in such vivid detail that the memory is etched in my brain as if I was there.

Captain Pipes probably would have led the patrol himself, but that is not the way that it was done, and would not have been considered even if he requested it. Another thought as to why it was the Third Platoon, is the depth of leadership and competency of the men in the Third. They were all good men. Not to belittle the other platoons. Actually Bravo Company from Captain Pipes down to the newest arrival, was the best of the best.

I'm not sure about the request for a delay of the patrol due to weather. That may or may not have happened and my thought is that it really doesn't matter. After the tragic events of the 25th, there was a scramble to second guess every single minute and detail of the action. I honestly do not think that any of it was deserved at any level.

In war, battles are won and battles are lost. Unfortunately February 25, 1968, was one of the battles that the US lost during the Vietnam war. To my knowledge it was the only one that Bravo Company was engaged in that they lost, and there were many in which Bravo Company was the over all victor, including the one in which I mentioned Jacques having been in prior to the siege. There was also the tremendous victory that Bravo Company claimed on March 30, 1968, and we can also most certainly claim the ultimate victory for the battle of Khe Sanh. Lt. Weiss and his 1st Platoon did an outstanding job in attempting to reinforce and rescue the 3rd. Several more good men were lost in the attempt as they were also ambushed by NVA. The fact that Lt. Weiss and his men were able to avoid not completely falling prey to the ambush, speaks highly of the entire 1st Platoon in itself. Although he was able to do so, it was not his decision to break contact and return to the perimeter. The decision wasn't even from the Battalion Commander as I had previously thought. It probably came all the way from Division. If the whole company had been thrown into the fray, the entire company would have been destroyed. Another observation that I just became aware of, is that Division was also concerned that if the whole company left their defensive position on the perimeter to join in the rescue effort, the entire sector of the perimeter would be so weakened that it could not withstand an NVA counter attack and Khe Sanh would fall.

Personally, I think that Division had it right. I think that the NVA were massed and ready to make just that very strike. The way and place that the 3rd Platoon was ambushed, and the preparations that had been made to ambush the reinforcements, indicate that it was a part of the over all NVA strategy to take Khe Sanh. If Khe Sanh had fallen and the hills lost the supporting fire that Khe Sanh provided, the hills would have fallen soon thereafter. This buries another demon for me. The one that asks, if we did what we should have done in regard to reinforcing the 3rd Platoon, and were the decisions regarding this, the right ones? Did everyone at every level do everything they could have done?

On the issue of the recovery of the bodies of those lost and left behind on the 25th, I have had several conversations and have done little research, but relied mostly on my personal notes at the time. This is one of the reasons this reply has taken so long. It took a while to locate and organize my notes. My notes show that there were eight Marines from Bravo Company that were immediately listed as KIA bodies recovered on February 25,1968. I believe that they were all from the 1st and 3rd Platoons. My notes also show a total of 19 Bravo Marines that were listed as MIA. My notes are very detailed and include name, rank, serial number, MOS, and even next of kin. For Michael J. Laderoute, my hand written notes actually show two next of kin entries. One located in Montreal, and one in New Brunswick, Canada. I only mention this

so that you can see the great amount of detail and effort that went into doing everything possible for our lost brothers and their families.

Again, referring to my personal notes: after the highly successful raid on the enemy led by Bravo's Commanding Officer Ken Pipes, on March 30, 1968, the status of the 19 Marines that had been listed as MIA on the 25th, was changed to KIA body recover. After more than a month the decomposition of the remains was very bad. Identification was also hindered by the fact that personal items had been removed by the NVA. Another factor was that in addition to the wounds received that led to their death, the bodies were further torn apart by constant artillery and mortar fire directed to that general area for more that a month.

Ten of those recovered were separately, positively identified and individually shipped home to their family. Nine others were so commingled and in such a state that they could not be separately identified, and were interned in a mass grave at Jefferson Barracks. They were Michael Baptiste, Jerry Dodson, Frederick Billingham, Bruce E. Jones, Michael Brellenthin, John Lassiter, James Bruder, and David Scarbrough. The ninth was Ronald Ridgeway. Ron actually was not KIA, he was unconscious, and apparently the enemy had mistaken him for dead. When he regained consciousness he was taken as a POW.

One of the reasons that we can be fairly certain that there were no other survivor/POW's from the 25th, is because Ron would have seen them while he was taken miles away to a rendezvous camp where he joined up with additional POW's and was then taken to a POW camp. There is no way that Ron could have missed other POW's, either on the march or at the POW camp and he most certainly would have told the Corps during his debriefing. He has also been to at least one Khe Sanh Vets convention and has been in contact with a number of us. There has been no mention of other Bravo Company POW's, because there were none.

As for thoughts that there more Marines KIA on March 30, 1968, my notes show that there were ten Marines lost from Bravo Company. I also later added two more names one from A/1/13 and one from H&S 1/26. Each and every one of these men were true heroes and their loss was mourned by all; however, the battle was an overwhelming defeat for the enemy. Their losses were well over a hundred killed and no telling how many were wounded, or DOW. Considering that a single Marine rifle company was assaulting a battalion of NVA in well fortified positions, the Marine losses were miraculously light. I say miraculously because I truly believe that there was divine intervention that day.

Wendy, thank you again for your persistent effort and questions which caused me to get back into all this. Over the last couple of days I have talked with some truly outstanding men and I probably would have missed that opportunity had not been for your prompting. After gaining new information and some first hand observations from others I have changed my outlook on several major issues. Several of my personal demons have finally been put to rest. I can only hope that some of this information will help you and maybe a few others.

"Mac" Milton McNeely

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Wendy,

I just wanted to add my thoughts; understandably you are having a very difficult time excepting your Uncle's death, and this I can truly understand. I was on the ghost patrol that day, I was a squad leader, and some of my men didn't make it back from that patrol. Over the years I have had a very difficult time second guessing what could have been, what should have happened, but the fact is what happened, happened. Did Lt. Jacques make the correct decision? Well, here's my opinion, and this is in **NO** way to take away anything from the Lt. I don't think it was the best decision that could have been made, but Wendy, you should look at it this way. The men that gave their lives on that patrol, more than likely threw a monkey wrench into the NVA's plans to take Khe Sanh. I truly believe that patrol may have saved thousands of lives at Khe Sanh base.

As far as Captain Pipes decision not to send out a large rescue force, I'm sure his decision was one of the toughest he had ever made. To know Ken Pipes, you would know that this man would do anything in his power to save the life of even ONE man, if it was possible to do so.

Wendy, I'm sure from your stand point, you think your Uncle died unnecessarily, but given the choice to have gone on the patrol or not, I bet he would have gone. Speaking for myself, and the men in my squad, we couldn't wait to get out on patrol, we were so sick of being stuck on the base and being mortared and rocketed and not being able to do anything about it. So like I said, you should think of your Uncle as the HERO that he was, and the thousands of lives that he helped save.

Seven Wiese
B CO 1/26
Semper Fi.

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Mac & All Who Responded,
From everything I know of my Uncle I know that he lived his life on his own terms. He made a choice to be in Vietnam. I know now there is no one underlying reason for the events of the 25th at least not in my mind. My search to find out what happened was not to lay blame on anyone's doorstep. It was for understanding and peace of mind. My family and I have that now. Thanks to so many, especially Mac and Ken Pipes. In my heart I believe that many more people need to hear the stories of the brave, and heroic men who fought there, died there, who continue to suffer for the sacrifice they made. To survive and return, meant to be changed forever. Not one person who went there came back the person they were. That too was a sacrifice. Not only to themselves, but their families, and loved ones. For those who have never gone to war, the freedoms we enjoy are taken for granted. We take it for what it is and never think about what it Might have cost...

Here in New Brunswick, Canada there are not a lot of Vietnam vets. There are no families that we know that can relate to what happened. We have been solitary in our grief. Finding this website and all of you has changed that. In all of you I see something that amazes me, a closeness that you usually only see in families (and sometimes not even then), the support you offer each other, is so special and unique. Something that someone looking in, can see but not even begin to understand. Something to aspire to, among mankind in general. If the world could reach what you all share, then maybe there wouldn't be any more wars. There is unity among you even when you don't always agree. Thank you so much for your words of support and encouragement. Thank you for welcoming me to your site and sharing with me your memories.
Semper FI
WendyFerris

MEMOIRS

THE GUNNY

By Dennis Mannion

The name is on panel 35 east, line 9, and although the monument in Washington, D.C. doesn't list any particulars, I know that it was January 21st 1968 at about 0330 on Hill 861 at Khe Sanh when Gunnery Sergeant Melvin Rimel was killed by North Vietnamese gunfire during an all out assault on the hill. He was 15 years older than I, he outranked me by a considerable amount, I was not near him when he died, and he wasn't a good friend of mine. It is the Gunny's sacrifice, more than any other, that I still carry around like emotional baggage after all these years.

He was from the small town of Dawson, Pennsylvania and had enlisted in the Marine Corps during the Korean War. Decided to stay in and make it a career, and was part way through his second tour in Vietnam when I joined Kilo 3/26 in the fall of 1967. Every Marine Corps E-7 I ever crossed paths with seems, at least in my memory, to have been a particularly big man, but in the case of Gunny Rimel, that was physical reality. He was well over 6'4"and weighed in excess of 245 pounds with a voice to match. He was married and had 4 children, a facet of his life that I learned 20 years later. I was an enlisted man (E-3) holding down an officer's job as the company's artillery forward observer, and as a consequence of those responsibilities I came into almost daily contact

with him as part of the Kilo's command group. He was firm when the job required him to be so; he was a sharer of his extensive field knowledge; and he relaxed many of us under some very harrowing conditions. Our CO, Captain Jasper, was wise enough to know that men like Rimel were the heart and soul of infantry outfits, and I think the best way to put it was that under the aegis of Jasper, the Gunny ran the company like a benevolent dictator.

In some ways, I was innocent about many things in those days, especially the depths of my own fears and my curiosity – but I sensed early on that he was what I like to call "*good people.*" As my first months in-country passed, I began to slowly benefit from his goodness. In December of '67, Kilo was sent to Khe Sanh as part of the buildup, and an aura of impending battle loomed heavily over those last peaceful days of the year. We spent Christmas dug in just off the western end of the runway at the combat base, and he stopped by my tent/foxhole on that special day to share some of the goodies that he had received in Care Packages from home. Along with the material gifts, he seemed almost apologetic for us young kids having to be away from family and friends at this time of the year.

The next day, Kilo hiked up to Hill 861 and replaced a company there. We began conducting daily platoon and multi-platoon sized patrols, with the platoons rotating these assignments. However, as the only artillery FO, I accompanied every one. On the 13th of January, I was informed that the patrol for the day would be going northeast off the hill, down to what would become 861a during the siege. Since they would not be out of sight and within range of our 81 mortars, I could have to day off! After 18 straight days of patrolling great distances, this was welcome news indeed. However, the Gunny had other plans.

He "convinced" me and 4 others to accompany him down into the steep ravine that ran below the entire western side of the hill. The purpose for our little sojourn was to try to find the wreckage of a shot down USMC helicopter (from the Hill Fights back in April 67 and to ascertain whether two machine guns were still in the debris. I had my doubts about the whole thing. Wouldn't the guns have been destroyed in the crash, or wouldn't the NVA have taken them months before. It's not wise or even possible to turn down a Gunnery Sergeant's personal invitation.

We went out the northwest gate, hung a left, and began the slow and cautious process of disappearing into the dense vegetation of the ravine. With our protective barbed wire no longer visible behind us, and the real jungle growth all around, it was as if the war had suddenly left us behind. Take away the grenades, the M-16's, the helmets and the flak jackets, and we easily could have been hikers or campers in some out of the way region of the world. The bottom of the ravine was spooky quiet but the vegetation was not as much of a hindrance, so visibility was better and scattered evidence of the Hill Fights was in abundance – trash, c-rat cans, used LAW tubes, shell casings, and even the remains of two partially buried NVA. But, no helicopter. Sitting by a small stream, we lunched on C-rations and Kool-Aid flavored water and talked. Well, mostly, the 5 of us listened and the Gunny talked. What I remember most was that he spoke about fate and being in the wrong place at the right time. He recounted a few Marine Corps experiences, both from battle and back in the States, where death and injury could have just as easily been him if the timing was right. He talked about FEAR – his as well as ours – and he talked about the responsibility we had to look out for one another. Sitting beside that stream for an hour, it was actually pleasant, and I hated having to get up, gear up, and climb back to the war.

A week later, he was dead, hit by mortar shrapnel when Hill 861 was partially overrun by the NVA in the post-midnight assault that marked the start of the 77-Day siege. I had no advance knowledge of his death, and thus no warning, until I ran by his bunker in the half-light of early dawn. I looked down, stopped short, and knelt. Tears came to my eyes as I used my thumb to close both of his. I knew, in a slow motion sort of way, that the good fortune and protection afforded me (and others) by this individual had left me for good, and that my days on this hill, if not numbered, were due to change. I had already experienced the deaths of others in combat, buddies who were more my age,

but this loss was different. The detonation of this 82mm mortar round cost me my guide, my advisor, and my protector. In short, I lost my Marine Corps father, and that is why, there is at least a moment in every waking day since that I think of him and the lessons he imparted.

I often look up at the sky when I think of the Gunny and it is doubly appropriate to do so. Thirty-seven years ago, I looked up to him both literally and figuratively, and when I first found his name on the Wall in 1982, I had to lift my eyes and stand on my tip-toes in order to see his name on Panel 35e.

MEMOIRS

The next stop is Saigon
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By Colonel William T. Dabney

Dabney remembers a conversation he had with General Lewis Burwell Puller concerning the Vietnam War. He believed that Vietnam posed similar strategic problems as North Korea, but there was no vital American interest in Vietnam and Vietnam was not a peninsula.

I met Gen Puller in the spring of 1957. I was a sergeant on active duty on leave after a Far East tour, and was near the end of my 3-year hitch. He had recently retired, lived near my home in Virginia, and was a friend of my father. We met at the funeral of a mutual cousin, to which I had worn my uniform because it was the only appropriate attire I had. Because the old church was too small for everyone, the ladies were inside, and the men were gathered around the gravesite in quiet conversation.

He spotted the uniform and introduced himself in his gruff way, asking me about myself and what I had done in the Corps. I was flattered by his interest, which I later learned extended to all Marines. After the burial, he asked me to come to see him. When I called to follow up on his invitation he asked me for lunch, after which the two of us repaired to the porch with some Virginia bourbon.

My impressions of that afternoon remain vivid. He was reading when I arrived, and there were books scattered all over the house. As we talked, he was unfailingly patient with my ignorance. I was impressed (awed might be a better word) by the breadth and depth of his thinking about geopolitics and military history, and my respect for this aspect of the man deepened as I pursued my own studies at Virginia Military Institute (VMI), Marine Corps Schools, and the National War College. In effect, I



As the Legend **As the Man**

knew the man before I knew the legend. The legend, then, does not portray entirely the Marine I knew. He was much more than the medals and 'one liners' for which he is remembered today. I have long felt that to be the Corps' loss because the young men who strive to emulate him today cannot know him for what he really was. God knows we need our heroes. We should not let them be remembered only because they were brave and, as he often described himself, lucky.

It is in that spirit that I have written out my recollections of the conversation, for whatever value they may have to the readers of the Gazette. He had many questions about Okinawa, where the 3d Marine Division had recently moved from Honshu. He was particularly interested in how we trained and how much live-fire training we conducted. When he asked what my plans were, I said I'd been accepted at VMI and intended to return for a career upon graduation. I then asked what he thought was in store for the Marine Corps in the future. He replied that he thought a NATO war

unlikely, and we'd probably fight next in Vietnam. He recalled his Marines singing about Saigon as they marched into Hungnam from the Chosin Reservoir in December of 1950. ("So put back your pack on/The next stop is Saigon/'An cheer up me lads/Bless 'em all," as quoted in Robert Leckie's The March to Glory, p. 192.)

Vietnam, he said, was essentially a colonial struggle, unresolved because of the Geneva partition. The Soviets were using it, through support of Ho Chi Minh, to extend Soviet hegemony in the area. In turn, the United States regarded a North Vietnamese attempt to conquer the south as a threat to American interests in accordance with the 'domino theory'-that the loss of South Vietnam risked the eventual loss of all Southeast Asia to the Soviets. The Vietnamese, he suggested, regarded the growing American involvement as offering little more than the prospect of one colonial power replacing another.

When I asked how he thought the war would end, he replied, without hesitation, "The Red Chinese Army will win it without firing a shot."

That leap of military logic was a bit large for a young buck sergeant to understand, and I asked him to fill in the blanks. He began by regretting that he did not have good maps with which to explain. He then discussed Korea, saying that the decisive force in the war and the subsequent peace was the U.S. Seventh Fleet. This was so because the peninsular geography of Korea restricted the maneuver of large armies, whether North Korean or Chinese. They were forced to attack on narrow fronts where they offered good targets for the superior firepower that American industry could provide, and their flanks and supply lines were always vulnerable from the sea.

He said that President Truman's decision to accept a partial victory rather than widen the war into China was correct. We could not have fought two continental campaigns at once, and Europe would therefore have been put at risk. Additionally, given our maritime superiority, widening the war was unnecessary to achieve our original Korean war objective. That objective, he reminded me, was to prevent a Communist takeover of South Korea by force, not, as Gen MacArthur had later decided to reunify Korea. He remarked that he considered Gen MacArthur's decision the classic example of Clausewitz' dictum that war tends to create its own momentum. (He would have agreed, I suspect, with President Bush's decision to stop after liberating Kuwait.)

All great powers want buffer states, and North Korea was precisely that to Red China. It could accept an American army in South Korea, but could not tolerate its approach to the Yalu. Its reaction was understandable and, he said, expected by most Marine and many Army officers at that time.

It was fortunate for Korea, he remarked, that President Rhee had placed South Korean forces Under United Nations (effectively American) command. The ultimate right of command was the power to appoint and relieve subordinates, and we had left the South Korean forces in good shape by appointing competent officers who had proved their worth in battle. (I don't believe it occurred to him that we would not insist upon the same command relationship with South Vietnam.)

He ended his discussion of Korea by saying that the Korean War was strategically necessary because, coupled with our military presence in Japan; it ensured our control of all straits leading out of the Sea of Japan, denying the Soviet Pacific Fleet unhindered access to the Pacific. It also gave us, in Japan, a secure offshore base from which to influence events in Northeast Asia as we chose. He reminded me that Admiral Mahan had called Japan "the England of the Pacific."

Before discussing Vietnam, he said that wars should be fought only for vital national interests, and that those interests were few: survival, strategic position (as in Korea), resources/markets or access thereto, and in limited cases, cultural affinity. He suggested that "saving the world for democracy," however it was phrased, had never been accepted as a vital interest by the American people. Had it been, we'd have joined the League of Nations after World War I. (He remarked to me in 1961, shortly after President Kennedy's inaugural address, that the

President's " . . . we shall bear any burden, pay any price, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty," was grand rhetoric, but lousy strategy.) The domino theory was flawed, he said, because China and Russia were and always had been enemies (the Great Wall faces north, he pointed out). The Chinese would view Soviet control of Southeast Asia as encirclement, and would either deny the Soviets supporting transportation links across China or march to prevent it.

He explained that in redesigning our armed forces after World War II for the strategy of 'Massive Retaliation' made possible by nuclear weapons, we had neglected the forces and training to win a conventional war quickly and decisively. We would need time to reconfigure and retrain them, and would probably commit them piecemeal to Vietnam, which would give a resourceful and determined enemy like Ho Chi Minh time to adjust and fight on.

Gen Puller believed that Korea and Vietnam posed similar strategic problems. Both were artificially divided. Both North Vietnam and North Korea were, with Soviet sponsorship, intent upon reunification; they both bordered Red China; they both were regarded by her as buffer states. But there were two critical differences.

The strategic difference was that there was no vital American interest in Vietnam. It did not threaten American survival; it was not located where American or Soviet bases would provide any strategic advantage; we depended on it for neither resources nor markets; we had no cultural links with its people. Consequently, there was even less justification for risking an all out war with the Red Chinese over Vietnam than there had been over Korea.

The operational difference was that Vietnam was not a peninsula. A large army can always outflank a small army if it has room to maneuver, and the long Chinese border with Vietnam, Laos, and Burma provides that room. Invading North Vietnam risked catastrophe by confronting the huge Red Chinese Army in a continental campaign where our fleet could not be decisive. Should we invade we would "Stand a damn good chance of being pushed into the sea" (his words). The North Vietnamese could not defeat us; but since we could not go north, neither could we defeat them. (When I later asked whether we could do so by bombing, he suggested I read the Strategic Bombing Survey done immediately after World War II, keeping in mind that North Vietnam was an agrarian nation.) Consequently, he said, should we commit forces to Vietnam; we would condemn our troops to a prolonged defensive campaign in South Vietnam in which North Vietnam retained the initiative. He cautioned that a salient characteristic of Asian peoples is patience.

He then observed that democracies do not fight colonial wars well. Such wars tend to be long, he said. Absent a vital interest, the electorate of the democratic power eventually concludes that the marginal benefits of a victory are not worth the cost in casualties. Witness, he said the British in India and the French in Indochina. The decisions to withdraw were made in London and Paris, respectively, and not by force of arms in the field. He suggested that the same outcome was probable in Algeria and the other European colonies in Africa. In all cases, the defeat was (or would be) not military, but political.

The North Vietnamese understood that reality, he said, having recently been one of its beneficiaries in the 1954 Geneva Accords. They would shape their tactics accordingly. Since a defensive campaign in a place with porous jungle borders would at best result in a bloody stalemate, at some point the mothers of Peoria and Pocatello would grow weary of burying their sons and petition their elected representatives to bring them home. North Vietnam would then reunify the country on its terms, and the Red Chinese Army would have won the war without firing a shot. Note: In a later discussion (we had several before his health failed in the late 1960s) he remarked that an eventual rapprochement between America and China was inevitable and essential, and that if we withdrew from Vietnam rather than challenge China, we might create an opening to achieve it. Should that occur, he said, it would profoundly alter the strategic situation of the

Soviet Union, which would then face the possibility of a two-front war against a steadily strengthening NATO and an industrializing China? Col Dabney later met and married Gen Puller's daughter Virginia. They live in Lexington, VA

MEMOIRS

The History of the "Ponderosa"
By Irvin Smith
Delta Company 1/3, Khe Sanh

I just finished reading the latest issue of **Red Clay.** Part of the story on page seven, brought back memories of my time at Khe Sanh. We arrived at Khe Sanh on C-130's during the Monsoon season in December of 1966. I remember we placed our packs on the metal runway being built by the Navy Seabees. Unfortunately, they were soon buried under mounds of freshly dug Red Clay. The Seabees apologized and dug out our gear. We immediately set out in a Northerly direction from the airstrip. I recall Lt. Ronald R. Burton chewing out one of the Marines who had managed to bring his guitar with him. It kept making noise every time the strings brushed up against the heavy bushes and elephant grass.

Once we arrived at the location we would be defending, we dug in as best we could. As luck would have it, one of our Marines knew how to operate heavy equipment. With a backhoe borrowed from the Seabees, we were able to dig much more formative defensive positions. After we were pretty well established, someone thought we should give it a name. Because of the physical layout, I and a few other Marines thought it looked like the place from the television show, **Bonanza**, so **"The Ponderosa"** was born.

We spent some cold miserable nights on ambushes, surviving the elements, leeches, and mosquitoes, while waiting for the NVA to attack. Those attacks never came, but there were NVA who would light a lantern down from our lines, trying to draw fire, to have us disclose our positions. We never did fall for those kinds of tricks. Our position was close to the Water Point down by the river. Once Lt Burton let us bathe in the river, a few guys at a time. This almost became a fatal error when a helicopter gunship accidentally opened fire on us. I recall Lt. Burton exiting the river wearing only his pistol belt, radio in hand, screaming for the helicopter to cease its attack. He saved a lot of Marines that day with his quick thinking.

I was not at Khe Sanh during the siege, but participated in the following operations: Prairie, Beaver Cage, Hickory, Bear Bite, Colgate, Choctaw, Union, Maryland, Bear Claw and Buffalo, where I was WIA. I would also like to mention a few of the men whom I was proud to have served with. I might not have the correct spelling of their names, since my memory is some what faded, but here goes: Dave Brook, Bill Southern, Rod Brewer, Ray Kelley, Luewellyn, Lopez, Phil Lynn, Harry Bornfield, Lt Ronald Burton, Lt Spears, Bill Sims, "Doc" Pearson, Jerry Furmanski, Dean (M-79 Man),Alabama, Roger Flood, Don Sweeny, John Cook, and Miller.

In May of 2004, I returned to Vietnam in search of my youth that I lost so many years ago. It was a real good experience except for the accident I had near Namo Bridge, located near Danang Harbor. While jumping from a large rock, all 285 Lbs of me slipped, and I landed headfirst, breaking my arm.

I am still looking forward to returning there with my wife in 2006. I will be going with the current president of the 3rd Marine Division, Mr. Bill Erwin, B Co 1/3 (69), who has returned many times. He and his associates took good care of me in 2004. The country is really very pretty and the Vietnamese people were very good to us on our first trip. I will never forget the ones we left behind. So now you know how and when the **"The Ponderosa"** got its name, God Bless all of you,
Semper Fi
Irvin Smith

MEMOIRS

THREE DECADE WAIT ENDS WITH VETERAN RECEIVING BRONZE STAR
By Leonard Skonecki Focus Correspondent

On March 22, 1971, Bloomville resident John

Ward earned something very special. On June 22, 2005, he finally received it.

On that day more than 34 years ago, John was a specialist fourth class in Company A, 27th Engineering Battalion. He was far from home, serving with the U.S. Army in the war in Vietnam. His unit was assigned to repair the primary and assault airstrips of the American base at Khe Sanh. The airstrips were vital for purposes of re-supply and providing air support for American operations in the vicinity.

John and his unit were working on the assault air strip when the primary airstrip was hit by an enemy artillery barrage. According to Army records, John "moved to the damaged strip to begin immediate repairs and came under four additional enemy artillery barrages. Although faced with physical danger, Specialist Ward continued the vital repairing of this critical re-supply airstrip. His intrepid determination and professionalism without regard for his own personal safety was highly instrumental in the successful completion of this mission in a minimum of time. His valorous actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United. States Army. John earned a Bronze Star for his devotion to duty under fire that day. **He never received it.**

Shortly afterwards, he was discharged from the Army and came home. Other members of his unit were decorated for that action sometime later, but John's order authorizing the Bronze Star got lost. He didn't receive his award until June 22, 2005, in a ceremony sponsored by the Seneca County Veterans Service Commission at the Tiffin Amvets Post 48.

At first, John wasn't concerned with the medal. He knew what he had done. But about 20 years ago, it came to mean more to him. John set about trying to get the medal, without success. He went to the Army, to the military archives in St. Louis, and various government agencies. He hired a professional investigator at the cost of several thousand dollars, all without luck. As the years went, I almost gave up. Roughly10 years ago, John knocked on the door of the Seneca County Veterans Service Commission. Service officer Jim McAuliffe who took up the search. "I tried everything I could he said".

Mac was able to locate a hometown news release about the engagement, but that wasn't proof. I needed the citation, the order. You can buy a medal, but it doesn't mean anything without the order," John said. Then, less than a year ago, help came unexpectedly from Manor, Pa., in the person of retired Master Sgt. **George Smeltzer**. George had just joined an association of Khe Sanh veterans, a group John already belonged. He casually flipped open his new Khe Sanh directory to see if there were any names he recognized. The first name he saw? **John P. Ward**

George was a member of John's unit. He was with John on the Khe Sanh airstrip three and a half decades ago. He, too, had endured the shelling. George gave John a call, just to say hello. John wasn't home. His wife Sharon took a message. Finally, John and George talked. Like John, George earned a Bronze Star that day. And, being career military, he'd kept all his Army paperwork, including' the award citation. John's next phone call was to Mac. "After I talked to him for a while, I realized that he was for real," John said. "I told Mac to call him. I can't thank Mac enough for all his work."

Mac and George talked three times over the next 24 hours. Two days later Mac had a copy of George's citation. Now the mystery of John's missing award was cleared up. Everyone had been looking in the wrong place. John's unit was part of the 18th Engineering Brigade. A month after the attack at Khe Sanh, the 18th was re-designated and re-assigned to the Engineering Command. It was the latter unit which issued the award' citations. Armed with a copy of George's order, Mac was quickly in touch with Clifford Snyder of' the National Archives Records Administration in Suitland, Md. George's order gave Snyder a place to start looking.

At first, Snyder came up empty. But he persistently expanded his search until, bingo! he discovered order 394, John's citation, which had laid waiting

for 34 years... "It was like a thing come true," John said. Retired Maj. Gen. David Einsel presented John with his Bronze Star and citation. John also received a proclamation from Seneca County Commissioners Joe' Shock, Dave Sauber and Ben Nutter. The ceremony was held at Tiffin's AMVETS Post 48, where John is a member. John Ricker is the post commander. The colors were posted by the Seneca County, United Veterans Council. The Seneca County Veterans Service Commissioners are Tom Evans, John Leifheit, Dave Martien and Jim Rochester, who also attended, Commission chairman Dave Young, also a Vietnam vet, said, "I'm happy, I'm proud that we were able to do this."

The Bronze Star is one of America's highest military honors, John's has a "V" device attached to it The "V" indicates it is earned as the result of valor displayed by the soldier, **John's Bronze Star was earned in 1971. On June 22, it found its rightful home.** Today, John and Sharon live in Bloomville. Among the 80 persons in attendance was Bloomville Mayor Barbara Jacoby. John has a construction business there. "John does a lot for Bloomville. He donated the equipment building in our park and made picnic tables. Most anything we ask, he does," the mayor said.

Publisher Note: This story is a wonderful example of why Ray Stubbe founded the Khe Sanh Veterans. Our congratulations go out to John Ward for his long overdue award, and to George Smeltzer, for helping in John's quest.

MEMOIRS

The Swimming Hole

By Jim Madara

HQ Btry 1/13, Comm Platoon

Our first FDC was simply a wide trench scooped out of the red clay by a bulldozer. The trench angled down to a flat area for about 25-30 feet and then angled back up to ground level. We erected sandbag walls at either end of the trench where it started to angle back up and then threw a couple of tents over the top. Officers slept behind the wall in the foreground. Headquarters Battery, 1st Bn. 13th Marines (Artillery) were staged in Okinawa at Camp Hansen and arrived in South Vietnam in the summer of 1967. We arrived on LST 1166 and made a beach landing south of the Cao Viet River and then proceeded by convoy up Route 9 to Khe Sanh. There wasn't much at the base but a few bunkers left by the French and red clay, so we started filling sandbags.

Our construction of hooches and "bunkers" was based on what we had seen at Dong Ha and Da Nang. Our living quarters were large tents with sandbag walls on the sides, and as you can see from



The Swimming Hole. FDC 1/13 after the flood. Note the "telephone poles" made out of 155mm powder casings in the background.



FDC HQ Btry, 1/13, before the Siege. Tent in upper right belonged to the Seabees

the picture, our vital command center would not have lasted long during the siege. Within that trench covered with a tent we had radio communications links with ground and air forward observers. There was also a Fire Coordination Control, ground wire link with our artillery batteries, plotting tables, and, later the first computer I had ever seen (which I think was called a FADAC).

Blissfully unaware of what was to come, we settled

down to ply our trade. Then, it started to rain and rain and rain. I was standing radio watch one night and noticed water seeping through the sandbag wall just behind me. I stuck a pencil into the bags to mark how high it was getting and moved the pencil a number of times before the game got old and I forgot about it for awhile. Really early in the morning I glanced behind me and noticed the sandbags had become saturated with rain water and was moving like a snake. I yelled something and leaped up to grab hold of the lip of the trench, as the wall gave way and a wall of water rushed over my buddies and all the gear before it disappeared behind a blanket that served as the dividing wall between the work space and the officers sleeping quarters. The last thing I saw in the fading yellow light from the drenched gas lanterns was a very surprised officer dressed in wet skivvies floundering on his rubber lady, as the wave returned from crashing against the far wall. Sorry I didn't get a picture of that.

Things have a way of turning out for the best. After the rains destroyed our first bunker and we dried everything out, the Seabees built us a really nice one up by Alpha Battery. We never would have survived the first day's incoming if we had still been in this bunker at the start of the siege.

MEMOIRS

The Concert

By Craig Tourte

I went to a concert in Sacramento last night, with Oldies music, mostly from the 60's. Lots of people there were my age: Everyone was enjoying themselves, singing along to those old tunes that reminded us of our youth. The man next to me was telling me what a great time he had during the 60's, gave me a little nod and wink as he went on about his time in San Francisco, the girls and the concerts he attended as a kid. He said his hearing was bad now because of the all concerts and the music was so loud, we laughed and I kind of smiled at him and his wife. They seemed like nice folks.

I enjoyed the music. I'm not much for dancing, or singing along, but I loved the simple lyrics of the songs. It was a beautiful day with warm, clear skies. I enjoyed watching the older women remembering when they were young. There was the occasional old guy with the too young girlfriend, or wife, who looked kind of funny. Almost everyone was middle aged, but I just couldn't see myself as such, though I knew better.

During one of the old tunes; I don't remember which one it was, I started to cry. It came up from my throat and into my eyes and the tears ran down my face. Good thing I had on that big old pair of wrap around sunglasses because no one noticed. It seemed like a long time before I was able to compose myself. Fortunately I didn't have to talk to anyone, or look at anyone directly.

Memories are unique things. We all have them. I don't know what we called them in the years following our return from Khe Sanh. I think to a certain extent, we didn't know we had them. Perhaps we just thought it was an experience and it was over. A memory? The word sounds like something you can turn off and on. I think a lot of us just didn't know why our lives seemed to have gotten so screwed up when we got home. In looking back on our histories of divorces, drug and alcohol abuse, bitterness, and our inability to get along with other people, it seems like a lot of us turned out that way. Most of know why now, they kept telling us it was because of our experience in Vietnam. It is PTSD and we would work through it. I went to counseling classes where we sat around and heard other Vietnam veterans talk about their experiences, but it seemed like they were more interested in talking about theirs than listening to ours. You understood when they talked about their one or two experiences, seeing friends killed in the brutality of war, and you could see that it certainly seemed to affect them, but they didn't and couldn't understand mine. I tried to make them understand, to tell them in my own words what those 77 days was like, but as I looked into their eyes, I knew they were not getting it, none of them.

I have talked to a number of you, with similar stories where you tried to tell others. After you finished you asked yourself why you bothered opening your mouth. One Khe Sanh guy told of

when the CP blew up and all were killed but him and when he got to Dong Ha was placed in the medical tent there were dozens of other Khe Sanh Veterans laying around, moaning in pain,. blood running in streams across the dirt and how after his recovery, he felt so guilty because he thought he should have gone back.

Another Khe Sanh guy was talking to the guy next to him and just remembered that the next time he saw him he had no arms and he was confused and didn't know what happened. Another had the breath knocked out of him and the head of the guy who had been standing next to him was now sitting on his lap unattached from his body. Another moved his new squad up the hill and told them to watch him. and when he came down for them, he directed their attention to another fire team off to his right, and now told his men to watch them. Because they would not make it up the hill. When the machine gun of the NVA exploded in front of his position, all of his men got down as they watched the other team continue to stand and die.

Another arrived at Khe Sanh with boots that were too small and a friend he had known gave him a new pair. How those boots meant so much to him after the friend was killed. And, when he was wounded for the second time that day, they cut those boots off and threw them away. This had affected him, because it was all he had left of the memory of his friend. How could anyone ever understand the meaning of having those boots?

I thought of all of those things during that concert, sitting there listening to music on that warm Saturday afternoon. My hearing is not too good, but it is not because of going to concerts with loud music. I smiled at the guy sitting next to me, but not because of his memories of girls and concerts in San Francisco, but because of my memories of a Siege so long ago. He just would not understand why would he, no one else has, and unless you are a Khe Sanh veteran, you won't, and never will.

INCOMING

NEWS FROM IRAQ

This is another combat report from Colonel Bob Chase, G-3, 2ND Mar Div in Iraq.

Was talking to Gino and he asked for some details on the MATADOR fight. Figured, by now since many of you might have caught some of the interviews, you'd like to hear, 'the rest of the story..."

Matador is now officially over, supposedly, they were going to fight our way back and destroy us, guess they missed the turn at the dairy queen. We are back and the final tally was Good Guys 125+ enemy dead, many more wounded, and 39 detainees of some significant value. The bad guys, who talk a real good game, 9 Killed (6 in the one Amtrak) and 30 wounded (most will return to duty). Not a bad week's work.

As we have said, our intent was to make ourselves big by leveraging our firepower and mobility. This area was a real sh--hole for AMZ criminals. We knew it, 1st Division knew it, but working it on a regular basis was tough. We kept some recon there and got the timing pretty well, brought up a bridging unit from the Army in Baghdad, then went across in the middle of the night (that was probably the only part that didn't go on sked, the bank gradient was poorly assessed) but we had near and far-side security already in and a blocking position near the Syrian Border.

The enemy figured out after about 4 hours that we were there in force. They came down with about 100 fighters (no, scratch that they were TARGETS) and made the poor decision to take on a battalion in open ground. They with drew, we went after them into a place called Ubaydi. Many mounted boats and tried to escape North, we pushed Air and the Cobras sunk a bunch of trash barges that night. Meanwhile, we continued to push west across the river. Our far-side units started to see pockets of insurgents move to key areas to emplace mines/IEDs. They came out, snipers took them out; their friends came for the bodies; they, joined them on the deck, permanently.

The force started getting the tanks and LAVs across later than we had hoped; but when they did. Our first casualties came at a high-rise where the enemy had prepared positions; a platoon moved in under fire, 2 Marines, a SSGT and a LCPL were first in the hatch and received a burst of MG fire. As the unit assumed they were dead (no additional fire/no one came out), they lit up the house and dropped it with a couple 500-pounders. As we moved to recover our Marines (NONE LEFT BEHIND), we discovered that the L/CPL, a though wounded, was still alive (he is serious, but stable). Unfortunately the SSGT had taken a round to the grape and had been killed by the initial burst. We moved on; portions of the task force moving along known rat-lines and others working intell developed in the cities of Ramana and Karabila. Fighting was sporadic, intense, and one-sided in outcome. We followed individuals into buildings, we leveled the buildings; all night, every night, Marine Air had eyes up and shooters on-station, talk about a guardian angel! Each night we re-assessed, looked at the intel and developed the next target sets. We stayed down there until a few days ago; then shifted to a series of caves in the north.

The caves were on an escarpment and rumors abound about whether these were, Bin-Laden like caves answer no, mostly small caches and some protection from about everything but a hellfire with a laser designator. We exploited some and closed most of them permanently. The enemy propaganda talked a lot about how they were going to kill us as we retreated, etc. They showed pictures of devastation in Al Qaim (caused by an intramural fight between the tribes and foreign fighters, no less) and blamed the Americans. Al Jazeera called to speak to me and interviewed me twice on air, yes, I called the enemy cowards, and again, they hide behind women and children in the cities and caused their death by their cowardice. Played well, enemy swore they had captured/killed the enemy commander. Went on again last night to ridicule them for their lies and continued fear of death, told them the destruction of AQ was evidence that, the noble tribes of Iraq also reject those that deface their holy places and dishonor their dead. We'll see if a wanted poster appears tomorrow's bad news is, they still didn't get pissed off enough to come out and play. We went back across the river without incident, decided to 'poke a stick' in Ubaydi (where the big fight was), just ONE MORE TIME before we left. NOTHING, they wanted no part of these Marines again. We're all back at base camps and Forward operating Bases, maintaining, cleaning, talking s--t, and prepping for the next smackdown!

NBC interviewed me again, last night, good stuff, but they harped on the casualties. I told them it was war; they wanted to know if a whole squad was killed in the track. As I told them a squad's worth of Marines were killed/hurt (6 KIA, 14 WIA) but it was NOT the catastrophic loss of a squad (it was a HQ track). NBC wanted to know how to refer to them, as a squad, company, etc. I told them, pretty bluntly, "refer to them for what they will always be, US MARINES! They continued to push (I was starting to become a bit agitated); they wanted to know how we considered this a success with the deaths. I nearly lost it. And how would we remember them, would there be a ceremony? You know what happens when I get into this mode. Thought you might appreciate the answer:

We can never replace a fellow Marine or best friend but I can attest that he died doing what we all hope to be doing as Marines, they were advancing, leading, and setting the example. They were being MARINES! It may not matter in the grand scheme of things to anyone but us, but we are singularly proud that we have and know Marines that fought and died like these. We remember and memorialize them and keep them alive every single time we put on this uniform -- we are just honored to wear the same eagle, globe, and anchor as these warrior/heroes. We don't make policy, we don't decide on the fight, but we do fight and win. And when we win, it is because every one of these Marines fight with us in sprit, and we will not, we cannot let them down. To we Marines, Semper Fidelis is more than a motto. It was to them, and to us who were privileged to fight with them, a way of life. Not sure that will get on the tube. Unfortunate, because I think we should all be such Marines when our time comes.



C-28's at the Cross Roads



Huge Bronze statues of Saddam Hussein



A Mosque inside Green Zone

POETRY

This is a poem being sent from a Marine to his Dad.
For those who take the time to read it, you'll see a letter from him to his Dad at the bottom. It makes you truly thankful for not only the Marines, but ALL of our troops.

THE MARINE

We all came together,
Both young and old
To fight for our freedom,
To stand and be bold.



In the midst of all evil,
we stand our ground,
And we protect our country
From all terror around.





Peace and not war,
Is what some people say.
But I'll give my life,
So you can live the American way.



I give you the right
To talk of your peace.
To stand in your groups,
and protest in our streets.



But still I fight on,
I don't bitch, I don't whine.
I'm just one of the people
who is doing your time.

I'm harder than nails,
Stronger than any machine.
I'm the immortal soldier,
I'm a U.S. MARINE!



So stand in my shoes,
And leave from your home.
Fight for the people who hate you,
With the protests they've shown.



Fight for the stranger,
Fight for the young.
So they all may have,
The greatest freedom you've won.



Fight for the sick,
Fight for the poor
Fight for the cripple,
Who lives next door.



But when your time comes,
Do what I've done.
For if you stand up for freedom,
You'll stand when the fight's done.



By: Corporal Aaron M. Gilbert, US Marine Corps
USS SAIPAN, PERSIAN GULF

March 23, 2003

Hey Dad,

Do me a favor and label this "The Marine" and send it to everybody on your email list. Even leave this letter in it. I want this rolling all over the US; I want every home reading it. Every eye seeing it, and every heart to feel it. So can you please send this for me? I would but my email time isn't that long and I don't have much time anyway. You know what Dad? I wondered what it would be like to truly understand what JFK said in His inaugural speech.

"When the time comes to lay down my life for my country, I do not cower from this responsibility. I welcome it."

Well, now I know. And I do. Dad, I welcome the opportunity to do what I do. Even though I have left behind a beautiful wife, and I will miss the birth of our first born child, I would do it 70 times over to fight for the place that God has made for my home. I love you all and I miss you very much. I wish I could be there when Sandi has our baby, but tell her that I love her, and Lord willing, I will be coming home soon. Give Mom a great big hug from me and give one to yourself too.
Aaron

POETRY

THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH

If freedom needs reminding of honor bright
and memories dim with life's fast pace,
remember the young marines
on the hell of Khe Sanh's face.

Of tanks white hot and holed right through
and napalm's glow and medics sprawled
across the bodies of their friends
and going to the wounded call.

Of steep air-strikes and flare-lit nights
twelve yards forward and ten years back,
and fighting hard with bayonet's grace
as men in black attack, attack.

And gallant youth in hell's own glades
cutting, thrusting on the hills,
remember those boys and Khe Sanh's sighs
where the echoes of courage are calling still

And as you march down Arlington's streets
past ashen widows and winding-sheets,
and hear the somber bugles shrill
pray for the lost on Khe Sanh's hills.

John A. Moller
Whiskey Two Company
RNZIR

POETRY

THE COWARD OF KHE SANH

The coward of Khe Sanh,
Each day you see him rise.
He runs outside to take a piss,
Gives the high sign,
Then runs inside.

The coward of Khe Sanh,
Doesn't walk & doesn't run.
He's doing a shuffle,
Bent forward a bit at the hips.

At the sounds of the mortars,
Rockets or arty,
He becomes the fastest man alive!

The coward of Khe Sanh,
Works on the strip,
He hauls ammo from the dump to the pits.
He loads the rounds into the tubes.
He also wants to kill an NVA or two.

The coward of Khe Sanh
Sometimes leaves a trail.
A Trail of shit paper flying behind.
Some ass hole yelled
Incoming!

The coward of Khe Sanh,
See him run,
One hand on his head,
One on his gun!
His weapon is for fighting,
His gun is for fun!

The coward of Khe Sanh,
No where can he run,
No where can he hide.
So each day and each night,
He stands on the firing line.

The coward of Khe Sanh,
He looks at you,
From out of my eyes.
Sam Messer

KHE SANH VETERANS BOOK REVIEWS

Here are just a few of the letters Chaplain Ray Stubbe has received in regards to his latest edition of Final Formation "Battalion of Kings." Congratulations Ray, we all know how much of your life was spent getting our story into the History Books. The book is now available in our KSV PX for the price of $ 25.00. Plus $ 6.00 S/H. You will have to order now, there is a limited supply.

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY

MARINE CORPS HISTORY & MUSEUMS DIVISION

1254 CHARLES MORRIS STREET S.E.
WASHINGTON NAVY YARD, DC 20374

Ray old friend,

I received your books yesterday and was delighted to hear from you, but more importantly, amazed at the thoroughness and excellence of your book "Battalion of Kings." I have sent the copies to our Reference Section where they will become an important source to our many clients seeking information about Khe Sanh.

The book is one powerful and personal work. The format permits the researcher to access the date of an action; casualties involved, and better still, comments about the participants. In fact the research is handed to the requester with little else for him to do. Pretty amazing.

As for my personal involvement, you probably already know from the tapes that I had business at Khe Sanh during my first Company Commander tour in 1967; both opening & keeping open Rt. 9, and the Hill fights. We spent one hell of a lot of time and lost some good Marines--too many--trying to keep the road safe from the Rockpile all the way to Khe Sanh. It became impossible by late '67, and frankly, the cost was not worth it. I have since been back to Vietnam a few times and seen what has become of the road. You would not recognize it;

wider, straighter, and now a major route for traffic out of Laos all the way to a deep water port at Cua Viet. Really hard to believe.

My actions on Hills 950 and 1015 in 1971 are in print for the very first time with your account on pp. 426-427. Also, for the first time I have seen the actual number of casualties there, which we didn't know at the beginning of the operation--30. Of the many close scrapes I lived through in two years of fighting with US and Vietnamese Marines that action ranks as one of the most remarkable. Remarkable for three individual reasons; 1) getting off the mountain and through an amazing amount of fire with just a minor wound, 2) being able to evacuate all of the casualties after having made a controlled crash landing on the air strip, and under enemy fire, and 3) getting off the airstrip after having been left there, alone, and with a badly shot up & broken helicopter.

Perhaps there is another factor you are unaware of that would have a major impact years later. As I went about the desperate job of unloading & transferring casualties from the troopship into my still operating helo, I became soaked—very literally "soaked"—in their blood. I even had difficulty holding them and carrying them (alone, without any help) because blood is so slippery it was hard for me to stay on my feet. When the job was finished I looked as if I had fallen into a pool of blood. It was all over me; hair, eyes, chest, back, and unbeknownst to me at the time, it had entered the wound I had received. It also entered the multitude of cuts, abrasions, etc. we all had that never seemed to heal.

Years later I would take an annual physical and the examining doctor would tell me that I had something unusual in my liver enzymes. He then asked me "have you been around any blood in the past"? I told him the story. When he heard this he said, "that's it, you have Hepatitis. When I finally retired from the Marine Corps this disease came at me with a vengeance and my liver finally failed in 2002. So in some way I suppose the enemy did manage to give me a near fatal wound in that action on Hill 950 in 1971. Even so, I beat the odds again. I will include the full story of the liver failure experience in 2002 that turned out to be another miracle of survival.

I send you greetings from your admirers here; Dan Crawford and Bob Aquilina who now have the book and appreciate what you have written. It will be of good use to us. With our appreciation, best wishes, and, Semper Fi,

John W. Ripley
Colonel, USMC (Ret) Khe Sanh 1967, 1971
Director

*

MARINE CORPS ASSOCIATION

Marine Corps Gazette & Leatherneck
(Magazine of the Marines)

Dear Chaplain Stubbe,

Thank you for your letter of 28 June 2005 and the accompanying book, "Battalion of Kings." I assure you it will reside in a place of honor on our reference shelf. The book is rich in history and provides tremendous insights into the valor and bravery of that special brand of warriors who fought it out tooth and nail at Khe Sanh. Wishing you continued success and we thank you for your continued support.
Sincerely,

John P. Glasgow, Jr.
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret)
Editor, *Marine Corps Gazette*

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

2313 Red River Street
Austin TX 78705-5702

Dear Reverend Stubbe:

Thank you very much for sending us the copy of "Battalion of Kings": A Tribute to Our Fallen Brothers Who Died Because of the Battlefield of Khe Sanh, Vietnam. I have added it to our collection for the benefit of staff and researchers alike. Along with your and John Prados' Valley of Decision and some documents about the aerial re-

supply of Khe Sanh during the siege in January - April 1968, compiled and given to us by Ray Anderson, this volume represents another excellent source of information about .that landmark engagement.

Sincerely,
Allen Fisher
Archivist

*

Dear Ray,
I received a copy of your recent book, "Battalion of Kings" sent to me with your cover letter last Wednesday, July 6th. What a wonderful surprise. It is an incredibly rich documentary. I know that I shall be spending many hours reading through it and reminiscing, with tears, our days of youthful valor. Thank you so much for this wonderful gift, and for your love and dedication throughout all these past years that have brought you to this publication. I know, beyond any doubt, that the love of God dwells richly in your heart. I love you, Ray!

My wife is busy building the library she's always wanted. It's in our living room. When it's finished we intend to spend many hour sitting there and reading. Your book will have a place of honor, just as you have in my heart.

Semper Fi,
John P. Colvis
4978 S. Hoyt St.
Littleton, CO 80123-1988

*

Dearest Reverend, Ray Stubbe,

How do I ever find the words to tell you how much your sacrifice, dedication, loyalty and understanding mean to me. You are an amazing man of God who has sacrificed so much and given so much for others. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you do, and all you have done over these many years while serving in Vietnam and at home. Thank you so very much for the new revision of your book written in memory of, and dedicated to, all of those who fought and died during the "Siege of Khe Sanh". This book was created out of the love and compassion you have for your fallen brothers and their families. It means so much knowing how deeply you care; and for this I can never thank you enough or show you how much you are appreciated.
For this and so much more, may God Bless You Always.
Semper Fi.

You Are Forever In My Prayers. With much love,
Suzi Littlefield
Gold Star Wife
Robert Littlefield KIA KSB

*

Dear Chaplain Stubbe,

Today I received your book and sat down and read the event of the day of my son's death in Vietnam. All I can think of is that I was so blessed to have a great son who was willing to fight for this free country, and set a good example of love, and friendship to those who were with him. War never will be easy; sometimes God is kind in helping the rest of us find those good men who were with him, and grow to love them as he did. That has been my privilege. You spoke of Gary O'Neil, Billy Moffat, and Lieutenant Ken Penn. I have come to know all of them. They have sort of become my sons, and great friends.

I have met several of the other men were in his unit. Captain Mike Pierson, Howard Whitaker, Billy Joe Hill, Willie Roe Yates, Bob Harris, John Wright, Bob Bates, and several others. I consider them part of my family. I really love them all. I also met three Vietnamese brothers who I became very close to. I think of all those whom you all fought against. They had Mother's too. How sad is this earth that we cannot be kind to one another. We should all live as God has told us to do. I believe that we will all meet in the hereafter, laugh, and rejoice together. For the friendships we have all formed. There will be no war, and we will be a family together.

Thank you so much for sending me that book to remind me how much I care for all of you. Also for the kindness you have all shown me and my family. God bless you in all you do to further the work and

love that you so graciously share.
Semper FI
Wilma Bugger,
Gold Star Mother
Curtis Bugger KIA KSB

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE
AND CARLISLE BARRACKS
CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA 17013-5021 .

U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center A TTN:
Collection Management
950 Soldiers Drive
Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013-5021
Dear Reverend Stubbe,

On behalf of the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, thank you for your unconditional donation of the book: Battalion of Kings. You have enriched our collection by your generosity. .

The purpose of this letter is to acknowledge that your materials have been received. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact us anytime. Thank you again for your contribution. Your support of the Center, and its mission of telling the Army's story is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Gregory E. Statler
Registrar,
For Collection Management

*

Dear Reverend Stubbe,

I received the autographed copy of Battalion of Kings and want to thank you for sending it. If I can, or should reimburse you for your time, money and efforts please let me know, as I will be happy to do so. In the meantime I wish to say you composed a masterpiece that will always remain in my home. Knowing how my friends and many others died on the battlefield in Vietnam, helps to bring closure to my memories of long ago. I'm sure many others feel likewise. You have done a great service to many Veterans of Khe Sanh. Little did I think when I first attended one of your services at Khe Sanh in 1967, that you would play an important role in my life many years later. But you truly have, and for that I am most grateful. Semper Fi,
David G. Rogers
2720 Laurel Valley Ln.
Arlington, TX 76006

*

Dear Ray,
Thank you for your extraordinary book! I have been reading it since it arrived last Friday and am just in awe of the incredible effort and dedication it required to accomplish something of this magnitude. I didn't think anything would ever again equal the powerful emotions I felt years ago, when alone one evening, just after sunset, I first came upon The Wall in Washington, D.C.

Yet, ***Battalion of Kings*** has done that. In fact, it is sometimes too overwhelming and I must stop reading for a while. Though difficult as it is to reflect upon the horrible end each of these young men met, and the often ghastly scenes that forever disturb the sleep of their buddies, such a personal, monument, profoundly honest, heart-rending could never have been achieved in stone. Your ability to weave the lives, and deaths, of these men into the broader historical context, from both, American and North Vietnamese perspectives, gives this tribute a real sense of purpose and continuity that I often find missing in other memorials. .

Michael Archer

*

Dear Ray
I'm unilaterally doing away with such formality of headings. We both know our own names and addresses well enough to not have to write them out with each letter. Anyway, it gives me more room to shoot my mouth off.

Thank you so much for the copy of "Battalion of Kings." I look through it every night, bringing back so many memories of those days when we were so young and charged up with life, even though we were in that place of death. When I read about those

men who were killed, I think that they will be forever 18-19-20 years old throughout eternity. Also, that old saying, that as "long as we live, they live" is so true. I want to say congratulations for your work in compiling this testament to those men. It must have been a monumental task compiling this information. I read at random. Wherever I happen to open, that's where I start. I finish each piece and highlight the heading.

For some reason, I think its best that I read it this way. The statements are terse and manly. No morbid sobbing and weeping. Exactly the way it should be. These men died doing their duty to their comrades. I know that sounds heroic, and it was. It was even more heroic in that most people don't know. They don't know who these men were or anything about them. Oddly, that's fine with me because the memory of these men is too much for the average person now. They couldn't conceive of even allowing themselves to be in a place that such men as these actively sought out and put themselves into. They were the boy next door, the H.S. dropout, and the scholar athlete, the religious boy, and the boy with no religious training. All meeting their ends as brothers. That's all I can say of your effort. Well done Ray. I'm proud that I know such a good person as yourself, take care.
Semper Fidelis

J. Thomas Dilberger
1000 River Rd. Apt. 6L
Belmar, N.J. 07719

Publisher Note: There were just too many more letters to print in this issue.

*

KSV BOOK REVIEWS CONTINUED:
KHE SANH BOOK OF POETRY

We also received many letters of thanks for the recent issuance of The Khe Sanh Book of Poetry. These are all poems that have appeared in our Red Clay Magazine. They are for sale in the Khe Sanh PX for $ 10.00, Plus $ 3.00 S/H.

Here is just one of the letters we have received.

Tom,
Many thanks for the wonderful book of poetry written by members of the Khe Sanh Veterans organization. You and Diana Fecarotta did a great job in editing and putting the book together. To have two of my poems included in your book is an honor. Thank you, also, for including the two poems written by Paulette Mitchell. She and Laurie, Buzzy and Paulette's daughter, were able to attend the 30th anniversary reunion of the Battle of Hill 881 South. I promised them I would try to get the poems published. Thanks to you and Ernie Spencer and others for including the poems in the KSV Magazine.

Semper Fi,

David Rogers





MEMOIRS

A Warrior without his Armor

By Tom Clarkson
Gulf Region Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Baghdad, Iraq

"There is something either highly auspicious or very suspicious about us talking about Vietnam and Iraq today," James S. Zucarelli said with a soft smile that crinkled kind eyes. "I noticed this morning that I have exactly 190 days left on this tour here in Iraq, and as were the number I had in Vietnam, serving on Hill 190!"

A Liaison Officer (LNO) between the 42nd Infantry Division, of the New York National Guard, and the Project and Contracting Office (PCO), Zucarelli is one of a very few. Today, he is an **Army** Lt. Col. serving in Iraq, and in 1968-69 was a **Marine** 2nd Lt. in Viet Nam.

His pride is obvious as he states that his father has always been his hero, and clearly enjoys recounting the story of how his father and mother met. Now 88 years old, during WWII, the senior Mr. Zucarelli was a naval aviator on anti-submarine duty, flying PBYs out of the Panama Canal Zone Naval Air Station. His mother and a girl friend, though in their early 20's, in proper Latin tradition, accompanied by a chaperon, had come from Cartago, Costa Rico on a visit to Panama. His father, the senior Mr. Zucarelli was then a young smitten ensign.

At his earliest opportunity, bedecked in a spotless, perfectly ironed, white dress uniform, he arrived, unannounced, at her parent's door, back in Costa Rico.Love prevailed and they were married in Buffalo, NY in 1942. That area, the community of Amherst specifically, has been their, and James' - home ever since.

His boyhood was during an idyllic time, though in the early days of the Cold War, the public was more interested in whether our President Ike would break par in his golf game. Well before the "electronic age" and with only three television stations, no digital pagers, cell phones, or computers, little distracted a young boy from savoring his youth.

Such was the locale for his two sisters, one brother and James' upbringing, middle class upstate New York. From Kindergarten through his high school graduation from St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute, to the Jesuit run Canisius College, his education was Roman Catholic based. At Canisius, he was enrolled in the mandatory, ROTC program. Like many youths, when he and his girlfriend broke up, toward the end of his sophomore year in college, he was distraught and decided he would quit college, join the Marines and go off to war. At the recruiting station, a crisply-attired, ramrod straight, no nonsense Marine Captain fired a question, "Just why you want to join the Marines, son?" It seemed a simple enough question so Zucarelli candidly answered that he'd just split up with his girl friend.

With that the officer rose, walked around his desk, grabbed Zucarelli by his shirt, pinned him to the wall and delivered an impassioned, several minute, diatribe (with liberal use of that particular flavor of profanity only a seasoned military veteran can so capably invoke.) In a highly abbreviated form, the Captain suggested "that was about the stupidest thing he'd ever heard!" By the time James left the recruiter's office, he'd wisely decided to return to his college coursework. He did, however, sign up for the Platoon Leaders Course which would allow him a Marine commission when he graduated. As a result, in June 1968, he went to Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Va. for the Officer's Basic Course and became a Marine infantry officer.

On December 22nd six months later, he arrived in Da Nang. Two days later, he was in his first fire fight when the "listening post" he and several others were manning was attacked. Of that traumatic introduction to Vietnam, he remembers little other than that the only weapon he had at that time was an Army issued .45 caliber pistol. It jammed, and after beating it on the ground to no avail, he found himself weaponless and crouching behind a bush, as though that would somehow stop hostile fire. He was, however, learning fast. He soon said to his Gunnery Sgt., an experienced E-7, "Gunny, you just tell me what to do and I'll do it." Wise that young

lieutenant, though like all zealous, enthusiastic, and well intentioned young men, he soon forgot counsel given by more experienced combat hands.

It happened only a short time later after he'd taken over command of the second platoon, Delta Co., 1st Bn., 26th Reg., 3rd Marine Div. Their task early in 1969, was that of the first line of defense, "out in Indian territory." By day they conducted Search and Destroy patrols and at night, set up squad sized ambushes. During his very first patrol, deployed exactly by the book, he saw smoke coming from a cave directly in front of his platoon. Enthusiastically and stupidly, he ran ahead of his men hitting a trip wire, and, as luck would have it, was able to throw himself behind a boulder just as the booby trap went off. The VC clearly heard the Americans coming and had departed the area. After their corpsman had pulled sharp splinters of rock from his face, his platoon sergeant approached and quietly requested, "Sir, might I have a word with you?"

Properly, and polite-like, they stepped behind a large formation of rocks where Zucarelli found himself thoroughly counseled, chastised, and chewed out in no uncertain words. Devoid of the plethora of colorful profanities, the several minute session boiled down to the simple guidance that "You are the Platoon Leader. You do not run ahead of the platoon. You do your job; we will do ours. Do you understand?" Now, he got it! He attributes the fact that he is alive today to the advice, tutelage and friendship of Platoon Sgt. David Hayes.

The anniversary of the '68 TET Offensive loomed ominously ahead in but a few days. As a result, U.S. forces were on high alert but it was work as usual for the Marines. Though his Italian last name translated to "a little sugar" there was nothing sweet in how February 22 would turn out. Zucarelli, himself the twelfth man, took out a squad ambush team, set up their claymore mines, spread out, found cover, and prepared to fire their weapons, on full automatic at any enemy unlucky enough to walk into their trap. At 2015 he quietly did a radio check on the PRC-25 radio. Soon it appeared they had set up in the right place as they silently watched several armed individuals, with the typical, Vietnamese coned hats upon their heads, stepped into their killing zone. Zucarelli set off the claymores and a dozen Marines started spraying rounds into the midst of half a dozen "hostiles."

Momentarily it seemed that all was going off as planned when "suddenly all hell broke loose". A veritable wall of fire rolled upon them, as those, they'd ambushed were the point personnel of a battalion sized VC unit.. A few moments before the fight, he'd removed his helmet and placed his twelve hand grenades in it. As a result of the unholy humidity and sweltering heat, he'd also taken off his flak jacket and jungle fatigue jacket, having fought bare-chested in the battle of - and for - his life.

A squad taking on a battalion! Frantically he called for artillery support, "Box us," he screamed on his radio, "we're not going anywhere for a while." Luckily "Puff", a C-47 gun ship, was soon overhead laying down sheets supporting fire. He formed his prescribed "wagon wheel" defensive position desperately trying to keep the overwhelmingly large force held at bay. However, a sapper slipped through and standing not ten feet away, pointed his AK-47 at Zucarelli. Out of ammo, he realized the enemy was too close to throw his one remaining hand grenade, and too far away to engage in combat with his father's WWII K-Bar killing knife strapped on his waist. His life, he was sure, was at an end when to his side Lance Cpl. **Edwin J. Smolarek, Jr.**, unleashed a burst from his M-16, killing the VC before he could shoot.

As the platoon leader, he ordered his men to withdraw. No sooner had Zucarelli issued the order, than a grenade knocked him down and out. Thankfully, another of his squad noted his absence, came back, and dragged him to cover. This position afforded little cover as he remembers another grenade going off close by and feeling the shrapnel pierce and lacerate the back of his skull. Though eleven of his twelve men were wounded, none had been killed. In addition to incurring a collapsed lung, Zucarelli, sustained a total of seven wounds to his head, back, arms, and legs. When he was medevacted he noted the time, 2205 hours. An hour and fifty minutes had transpired since setting off

those claymores in what was supposed to have been a simple ambush.

He was taken to the 95th Evac Hospital outside of Da Nang, the same one that years later was the subject of the TV series "China Beach." Without anesthesia, a doctor diagnosed one of his injuries, promptly put a knee on his chest while a nurse held down his arm and with scalpel in hand, cut deeply though the skin and muscles to the lung so that he could insert a tube into the collapsed organ. Later he remembered a priest giving him last rites and then equally vividly he experienced a sense of total calm as an aura of "whiteness" surrounded him and he found himself looking down on his own mangled body.

Days later as he began recover he put this "out of body" experience off to a euphoric state induced from morphine. He described the experience and said something about it to his corpsman friend "Doc" Whitman. "Doc" quietly listened and simply responded, "Morphine is not given to those suffering from chest wounds. You were given none." He had spent a mental lifetime in Vietnam. It had taken only eight weeks. A like period of physical recovery time was required of him in Yokuska Naval Hospital, in Japan. Repair of deep emotional wounds were on an altogether different timetable. As a result of his extensive injuries, his last eight months of duty were spent on Okinawa. During this time in the hospital, he had ample opportunity to ponder the complicated and difficult decisions facing those in command. Among several incidents, one decision he had made weighed upon him. It was an incident he would later often pose to classes of young leaders that he would address.

They were carefully creeping along on the first day of a five day Search and Destroy mission. Ahead of them they saw two individuals setting a fine tripwire to catch and kill any American forces coming that way. The Marines were able to capture both of them. With over four days still ahead of them in their mission it made no sense to try to take them along as prisoners. Orders were simple - these were the enemy - "dispatch" them.

The two enemies Zucarelli and his men had just captured were seven and nine years old! War is not pretty. As he lay in the hospital he asked himself, "Did he do the right thing?" After significant thought, Zucarelli had . . . . . released the two children.

Upon his own release from active duty. he returned to Buffalo and a public that was massively anti-war. He became a total recluse, not leaving his parents' house during June, July, or August 1971. At the time he didn't recognize his condition for what it was, but now he does, a classic example of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The second part of the process of becoming whole again came with the birth of his first child in 1979. He came out of the self imposed closet into which he had locked himself with his Vietnam experiences and memories. The next step for him was when the Vietnam Wall was built and dedicated in Washington, D.C.

This for many was an acknowledgment and recognition long overdue. His family helped in his healing. An important part of his very existence, Lance Cpl. Smolarek who had saved his life, was himself killed in July 1969. Ironically, though they had not known each other in their youth both were the same age and came from Buffalo. Smolarek was buried directly across the street from where Zucarelli had gone to college and where his daughter then went. She regularly visited the grave of the man who had saved their father's life, sometimes sitting beside it while studying. The family carefully maintains his grave site and, to this day, his daughter keeps her father's savior's picture in her room.

One day he saw an opportunity to determine, through the Vietnam Veterans newsletter, **RED CLAY,** if those harrowing experiences which had so terribly plagued his mind were truly real or imagined. He placed a simple message in the publication,"Second Lt. James Zucarelli, Delta1/26, USMC, does anyone remember me?" Shortly after its publication Robert Whitman from Ames, Ia., who had been the corpsman of the first platoon, 1/26, contacted him and started their conversation

with a simple, "Yah, I remember you." Besides that, he knew the location and contact information of Cpl. Edwin Knight, the one Marine who had not been wounded during that horrific night on Hill190. Ultimately, several of them started the Delta 1/26 Marines Association.

So, what brought him full circle to don once again a military uniform?

Zucarelli had sat down to read the evening paper and saw an ad encouraging veterans to re-enlist in the National Guard. First he tried to get into the Marine Reserve. His numerous wounds and ten point VA disabilities precluded that possibility. Finally, at age 43, he went for a physical so that he might join the National Guard. The doctor was doubtful but Zucarelli, his Vietnam demons now shed, pleaded saying, "I feel that I still owe something to this country and I really want to do this."

When the Secretary of Defense announced that he was activating the first National Guard Division since the Korean War – the 42nd Infantry Division (ID) or the Rainbow Division, the once young Marine lieutenant was 57. By the time he leaves Iraq he will be 59. Does age help someone like him, in a deployment such as this, he's asked? "Wisdom is what we should seek. It's comprised of a balanced blend of knowledge and experience that can be gained only through the passage of time. Awareness of when and how to apply that wisdom comes only through maturity." In a shortened answer his response would be a monosyllabic, "yes!"

His organization, the 42ID has a long and proud heritage. Presently comprised of Soldiers from 26 states and the territory of Guam, it was the first Army Division deployed to France in WWI. It was the unit that liberated Dacau in WII. More recently it constituted the first responders to 9/11 in New York City. Accordingly, the words "Never Forget" now grace their division standard. His job in Iraq is that of "keeping my ear to the rail and my eyes peeled," he explains. "While an extremely difficult position from which to work," he laughs, "my job is to 'make things happen,' be the "conduit guy" and be 'productively reactive'. Furthermore, well aware that we are the first deployed National Guard Division I strive to ensure our excellent, service based image and reputation are properly maintained. "I'm in the information exchange business and sometimes keeping up with that is quite a chore what with the six sectors of the Project and Contracting Office: Oil; Public Works – Water; Electric; Transportation and Communication; Security and Justice; Buildings, Health and Education."

He sees not the remotest parallel of our involvement in Iraq to the experience that was Vietnam "There," he explains, "We were fighting a well organized and structured, ideologically driven force. They had a recognizable cause. Yes, we knew that the NVA and VC was our enemy, but we could have respect for them as believers of that for which they fought. For them it wasn't about Communism … it was simply nationalism. Think about it," he challenges, "Ho Chi Minh didn't do what he did for power or personal gain. He was a nationalist. "Here, we find ourselves fighting desperate, factionalized knots which employ barbaric tactics like car bombs blowing up mosques, and suicide bombers blowing up crowds of women and children." Rhetorically he asks, "And for what end? Do these insurgents really think that they are doing anyone any good?"

Too few grasp the reality that there is no such thing as 'instant democracy'. For the best model imaginable, look at the United States we're still a major work in progress! If put in the proper perspective, it's not a bad analogy to compare our disassociation with King George nearly 225 years ago to the Iraqis now being out from under the thumb of Saddam Hussein. Neither action meant voila, now there's a perfect democracy!

People, like countries, also grow and change. In 2001, Zucarelli and two Viet Nam veteran buddies returned to the country where they lost their youthful naiveté. As a Marine in Vietnam, in the throes of combat, he himself, killed at least seven individuals. One of them had been a female Viet Cong combatant. The memories haunted him. The demons of these deaths rode his soul. He knew not

if he returned to apologize or for catharsis. He did know, however, that he returned neither as a victor nor as the vanquished.

While visiting the State University of New York (SUNY) Da Nang campus they found themselves invited to a floating restaurant in Da Nang Harbor. Seated across from him was the city's Chief of Police, and nearby the Mayor. The guest of honor, the Province Communist Chairman, arrived. As a youth this man had worked in the Da Nang Air Force Officers Club. Upon overhearing discussions of upcoming missions, he would slip downstairs to use his wireless to tell fellow VCs what areas they should avoid.

Through an interpreter, the Chairman stilled the assemblage with his query of Zucarelli, "Why are you here?" Conscious of the ramifications of his response, his answer was one of civility and politeness. In appreciation for the country, its people, and the great beauty of its women. The Chairman's cold response was, "Why are you really here?"

Not one to mince words when challenged, the former lieutenant told the interpreter, "Please translate my answer word for word," Upon receiving her assurance that she would do so, he stood, looked the Chairman directly in the eye and stated with calculated directness, "Mr. Chairman, I am here because I once was fighting men like you. I have killed them and they have killed men like me. My blood has streamed from multiple wounds into this very land. No one has the right to tell me that a part of this country does not belong to me or that I do not belong to this country. "

Upon translation of his words into Vietnamese, the silence was deafening. The chairman slowly rose from the dais, and walked to his once bitter enemy. The thought flashed through Zucarelli's mind, "Holy S***, what have I just done?" When the senior communist official reached his side, he locked their eyes, looked deeply into them, and then the Chairman took his once antagonist and bitter enemy into his arms and gave him a long hug of love, reconciliation and welcome.

Two old warriors stood side by side, without their armor or arms, and looked into the future.

Note: Tom Clarkson is a Strategic Communicator with the Gulf Region Division of the, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. Requests for more information should be directed to him at (540) 665-5344. Email requests can be sent to: Tommy.G.Clarkson@tac01.usace.army.mil
For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit

INCOMING

MY HEROINE

By Joe Moring

At the KSV Chicago reunion, my lady friend Sharon Zunio, was awarded the "Doc Medal," for her service as an Air Force Medical Evacuation Technician. We were on my Harley on our way home, when I attempted to exit the highway in Repent, Idaho, to look for a gasoline station. I looked down, and observed gravel on the pavement "Look out" I yelled, too late. The next thing I knew my head was bouncing off the rocks on the shoulder of the road. I pulled my leg out from under "Baby Blue"(My Harley). I found Sharon, her arms were bleeding, and all cut up. Despite her wounds, Sharon took charge.

She retrieved a pair of sweats from the bike and started to work on stopping the bleeding from my head wound. Sharon managed to stop the bleeding, and pulled me to a safe place while she looked for help. In my daze, I looked up a saw a corpsman holding an IV shouting orders, working on me with her free hand, the other waving for help from passing motorist. I realized it was Sharon. The Ambulance finally came, and took us to the hospital. Sharon was cut and scrapped from her knuckles to the shoulder. The doctor said my eye is going to be ok and I will need a skin-graft on my elbow. He also said if Sharon hadn't been there to stop the bleeding, I would have bled to death in 4-5 minutes. Once again Sharon has proven herself worthy of the "Doc Medal, still saving lives. I truly love her.

SHORT ROUNDS

A Great Day in California!

By Chuck Chamberlin

Took a ride today with KSV's, Craig Tourte, Chuck Teasley and Steve Wiese to the 26 acre residence of Tom Holchler, also a KSV. All together there were about a dozen guys in the group. Craig Tourte arranged for, and provided transportation for everyone. It turned out just great. I learned Chuck Teasley was the C Co 1/26 radio operator whom I replaced before the company left Hill 861.

Steve Wiese was a Lieutenant with B Co 1/26, and survived the February 25 ambush, and the March 30 battle to retrieve those KIA. Craig Tourte served with Hq Btry 1/13 at Khe Sanh. I also met another fellow, R. Cueva from Vacaville, California, who's brother Tony was awarded a Navy Cross, and whom had dated my sister in high school. Talk about a small world. The entire day was an absolute revelation for me. To finally meet and talk with fellow KS Vets in such a great setting was a "changing day" in my life. Without becoming to melodramatic, the thoughts, feelings and behavior of these individuals, and the things we discussed, once again made me proud to still be associated with such a great bunch of guys.

Blackbud Charlie, Out

Publisher Note: It is so great to know that our organization has brought so many people together. We have found old friends and met so many new ones. This is why the organization was founded, to keep our legacy alive.

S/F

Tom Eichler



Mini Reunion at Tom's Farm



L-R Steve Wiese, Chuck Teasley, Craig Tourte

Glad you guys had such a good time. It is always great to have a get together with a bunch of Khe Sanh Vets.

Leland Upshaw

Bravo Company, 3Rd Recon

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Leland,

I'm sorry I missed the party. I posted the photos for Craig. I heard those Marines sold $ 50.00 worth of aluminum cans the next day. Well, maybe only $ 20.00.

Mike Fishbaugh

FLC

*

Mike,

What I see is one old Dr. Pepper can, and a beer bottle hiding in the rear. Is that all there was to drink.

Leland Upshaw

*

Leland,

There was lots of water, some milk, and we had a big chocolate cake. I think someone did sneak in a beer or two, and there was that Dr. Pepper.

Craig Tourte

*

Guys,

This thing did not start out this big. It was just supposed to be a few guys stopping by. Tom knows a lot of veterans who stop all the time. I wish I had contacted Ernie Spencer. He lives about 25 miles from me. Chuck Teasley and Chuck Chamberlin

have had little contact with Khe Sanh Veterans. I think they are still in shock. Finally realizing there are others just like them around for support. I hope Ernie can make it next time.

Craig Tourte
Hq Co 1/13

Craig,
I am hurt at not being invited that I killed my wife's two cats. Steve has been over to my place for dinner and he knows how much those two, 17 year old cats mean to my new wife. So make peace with her before you invite me to one of your chingaderos. I know you guys feel uncomfortable being around officers, but I assure you we pi$$ and Sh!t just like you guys do. Well maybe not, I'm still regular, but my bladder seems to be shrinking.

Ernie Spencer
D Co 1/26

KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION, CHICAGO IL, 2005



Lady Of Guadalupe
Hispanic Vietnam Veterans Memorial- Chicago, IL

One of the many sights members were able to visit during the Chicago Reunion. The following pages contain photos of our members enjoying each others company, and the various events held at the reunion.

HOTEL BBQ





Boy that Tommy Sure Can Cook, How Many Times Did You Go Thru the Line, Jimbo



"Wow", That's Good Steak"



"Come on Bill that's Your Third Helping"



"Come and Get It"

BBQ AT JARHEADS















TRIP TO NAVY PIER





One of the World's Biggest Ferris Wheels



They shopped till they Dropped





Boat Ride



Trish & Family

KSV BANQUET



Ron Shouse, Bob Moxley & Casper



Lt.Commander James Raab, To Place Symbolic Cover at MIA Table



Floyd "Shortround"McCulley

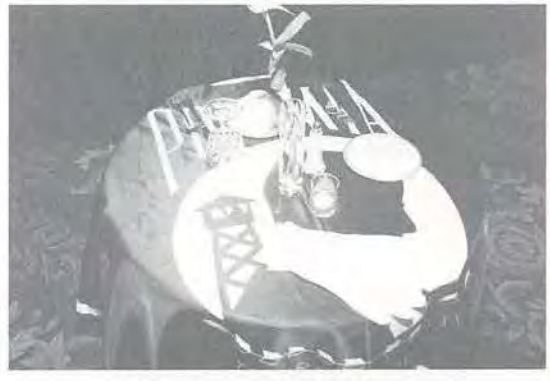

MIA Table at Banquet



The Fox Family & Friends



Engineers



Neil & John seeking Devine help from Chaplain Ray Stubbe, with Neil's wife, Alice



Russ, can I please dance with Tommy?



"Here", please put your clothes back on



Okay PJ, you can dance with Tommy



C Co 1/26 with Lt Cmdr James Raab who received the "DOC" Award for his Father, HM-3 James D. Raab, KIA with C Co 1/26.



Our own Chippendale Dancers



Ok Ken, if John Strips it is only worth $ 2.00



Echo Company 2/26



Delta Company 1/26



Delta Co Memorial Lunch



Getting Ready for memorial Lunch



Also Getting Ready For Memorial Lunch



Fond memories! (Memorial Lunch)

IF YOU AIN'T 0311, YOUR'E JUST SUPPORT

CHARLES H. FOX
REST IN PEACE, YOU WILL BE MISSED BY ALL



Little kiss from Bruce Geiger



Charles H. Fox C CO 1/26



Okay Charlie, Pucker Up



" HUGGY BEAR"

If You did not get hugged by Charlie Fox, You have never been Hugged. Of Course the Army Guys took it a little further.



Who Loves You Baby?

CHARLIE'S THEORY OF CRIME

After working 23 years as a Police Officer, assigned to a one man car on the midnight shift, I became a "thinker", and figured a few things out. I developed the "Pod Theory" years ago, and after years of watching, know it to be true. On Wednesdays spaceships come to America and distribute seed pods. Many come to Central PA. This is because we have two airports. On Thursday, the pods sprout and start producing a++holes. By Friday night, they have all sprouted and there are a++holes all over the place, running around, causing trouble etc until the dawn of Sunday morning. The Sunday morning sun causes them to start to die and by Sunday night all but a few are dead. All are gone by sundown on Tuesday, but on Wednesday, the spaceships return.

There are times of the month when the numbers of spaceships vastly increase. During full moons there is an increase due to the available light for landings. On pay weeks there is an increase due to the extra money available for fuel. I have attempted to verify the spaceship arrivals with the Federal Government, but they deny everything. Other officers working the midnight shift in my area confirmed my theory. Igor Demetrovitch, a Moscow police officer, confirmed my findings also existed in his country, and found the same denials from his government. He also confirmed an additional peak period in his country that is exactly 30 days after their potato harvest.

TAPS

Bye Charlie, My Good Friend
Charlie thanks for the advice through the years. You had a wit probably because you were from PA. I met Charlie on the IRQ network way back in 95. We found out we were at Khe Sanh but at different times. I attended two Khe Sanh reunions, and kept asking him to attend. Finally in 1997, Charlie decided to attend the St Louis Reunion. Charlie always bought his family with him when he left home. When he arrived, I went to give him a hug. Holding his arms on his side, he looked at me like I was strange. That tough old Marine ex cop, hugging a man he didn't know, it was funny. When he was departing the reunion I went to shake his He gave me a big hug and a kiss on the cheek. I Loved that guy. In his own words: The most dangerous thing on the battlefield is a second lieutenant with a map and compass
James "Jimbo" Wodeck, Treasurer
Khe Sanh Veterans
FLC Ammo Plt

.....

Charlie will be missed by many, who knew him in Nam and also who just met him at reunions. He was never at a loss for words and knew how to get some to laugh.
Semper Fi

Russ Turner, President,
Khe Sanh Veterans'
Alpha 1/26

.....

Charlie, sadly I sit her with tears in my eyes, never imagining having to write your obituary. I will miss you dear friend. I used to fear death, until I thought how many of our beloved friends are there waiting. It is going to be some kind of reunion; I will not forget the Jack.
Tommy Eichler, Vice President
Khe Sanh Veterans
Echo 2/26

.....

It is a sad note when one of our own passes. Pray that he is in a better place without pain and sleepless nights. We all know when it is our time nothing can keep us for that appointment. All we can ask for is that it happens quickly and our loved ones are left in good hands. God Bless you Charlie Fox, and God Bless your family.

Chuck Teasley
Charlie 1/26

.....

I was one of Charlie's gun team leaders at Khe Sanh. We remained together, and left Nam at the same time. I remember him best as a caring person who took care of all his people. When we left Khe Sanh we camped at an Army supply point. As we were waiting in the chow line, one of the soldiers commented that they have been taking mortar fire during the evening hours.
Charlie remarked that would cease after they ate dinner. That night Charlie set up a night ambush, and sprung it with a LAW, followed by his shotgun. Did not take another round of mortar fire the whole time we were there.
Semper Fi Charlie, Guns are up. Turtle out.

Dave Meyer
Charlie 1/26

.....

Charlie was my squad leader in KS, and he became a very good friend. We would kid each other at some of the reunions and this past reunion, I ripped on him and called him Charlie-Charlie because he had gotten so big. Goodbye, Charlie. You will always be in my heart, I will never forget you. Semper Fi, Brother!

Chuck Chamberlin
Charlie 1/26

.....

Semper Fi Foxy, to my friend, Brother, 1st Team Leader, and traveling Buddy, you will be missed.
Steve Hecknauer
Charlie 1/26



SNAP SHOTS



SNAP SHOTS



SNAP SHOTS



SNAP SHOTS



SNAP SHOTS

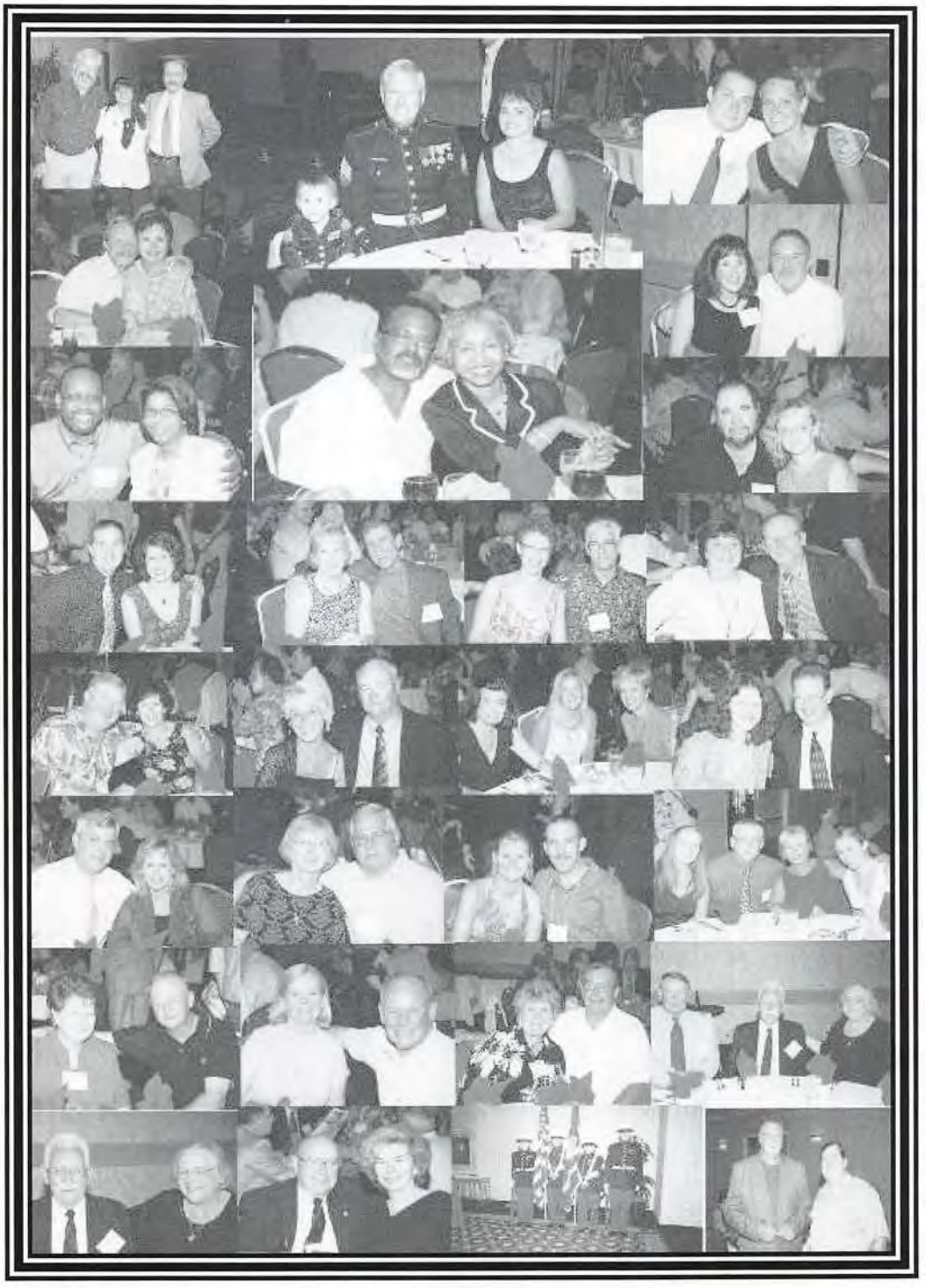

SNAP SHOTS

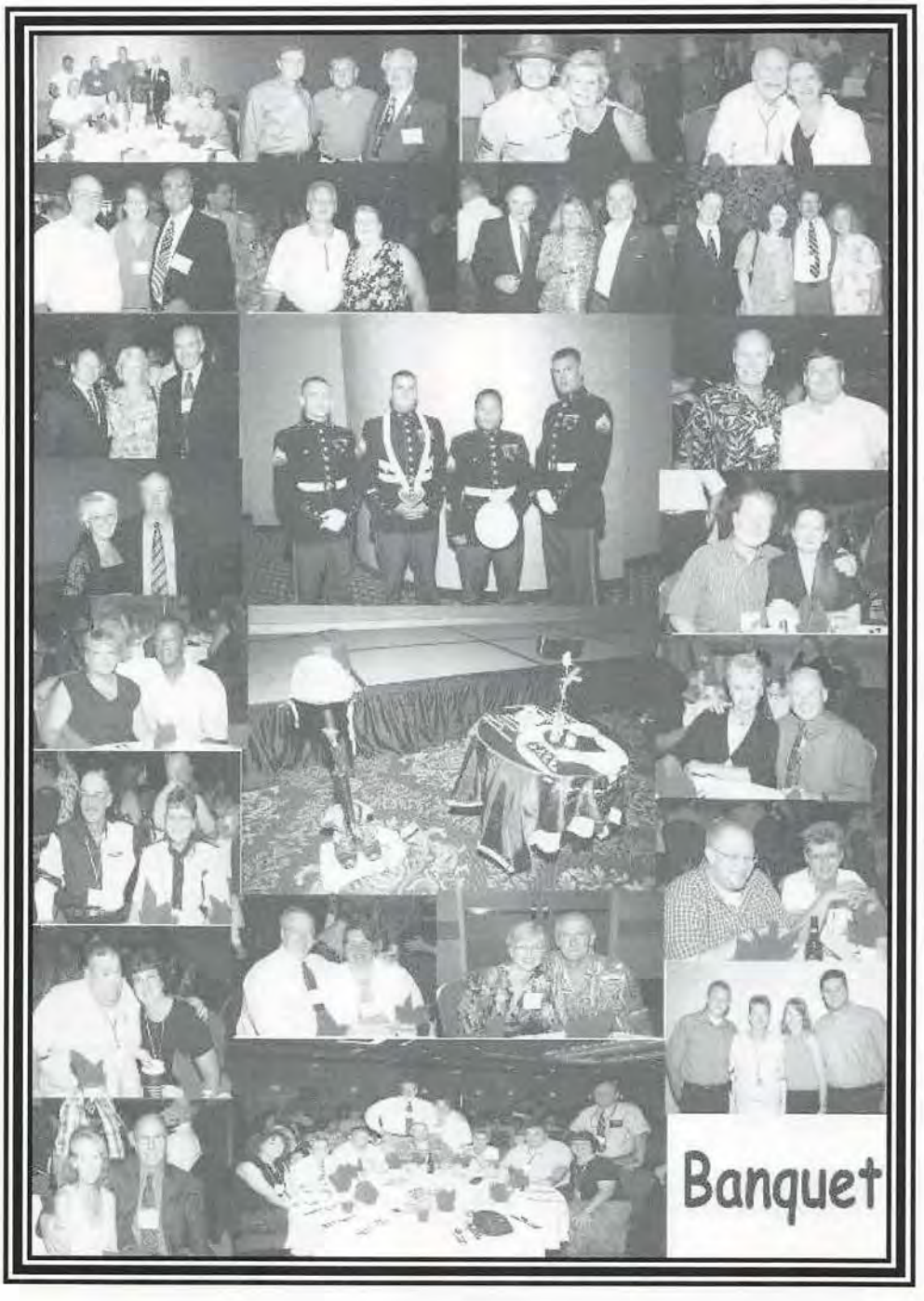

SNAP SHOTS



SNAP SHOTS

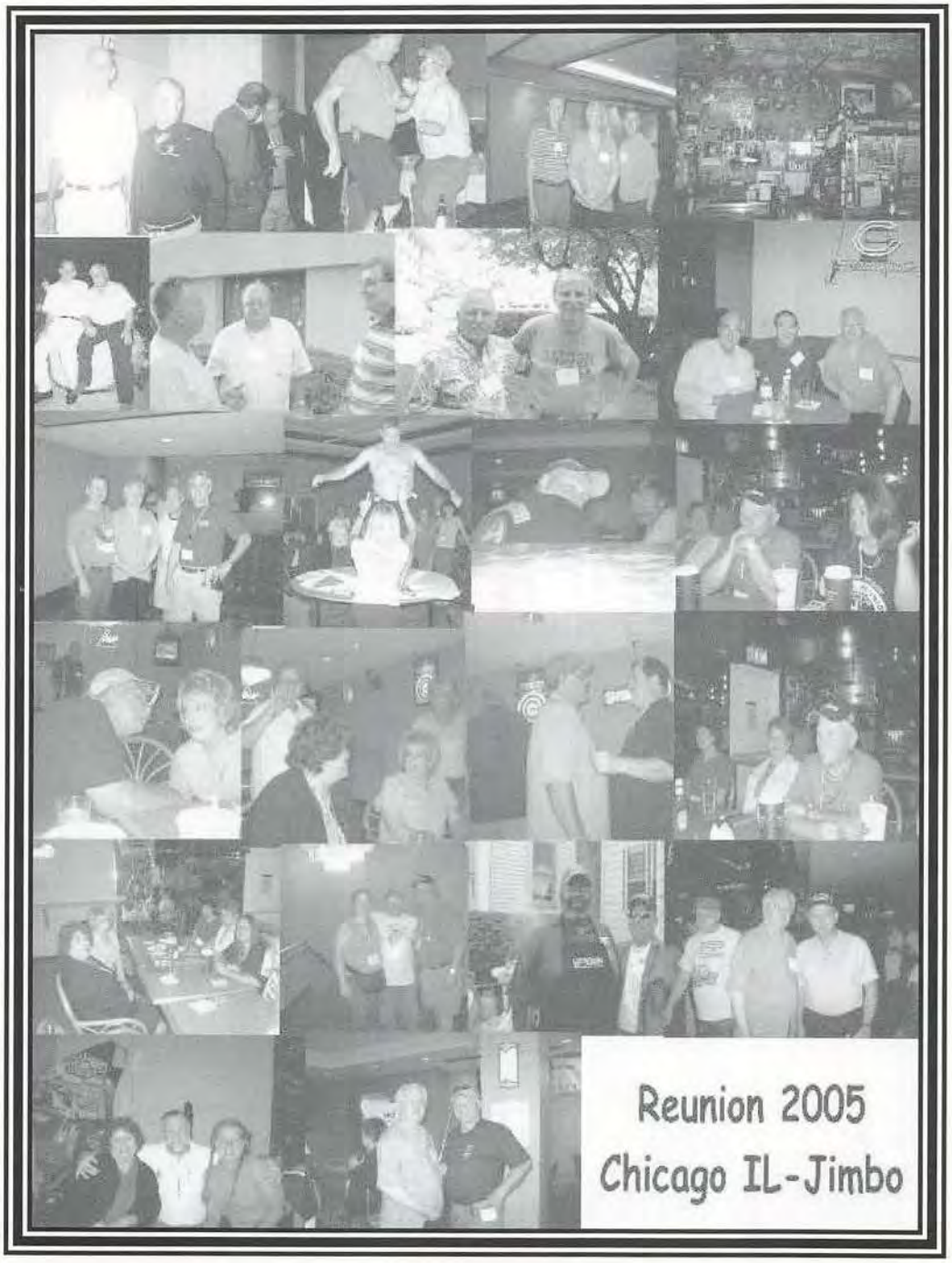

SNAP SHOTS

ART BY GARY MORRIS





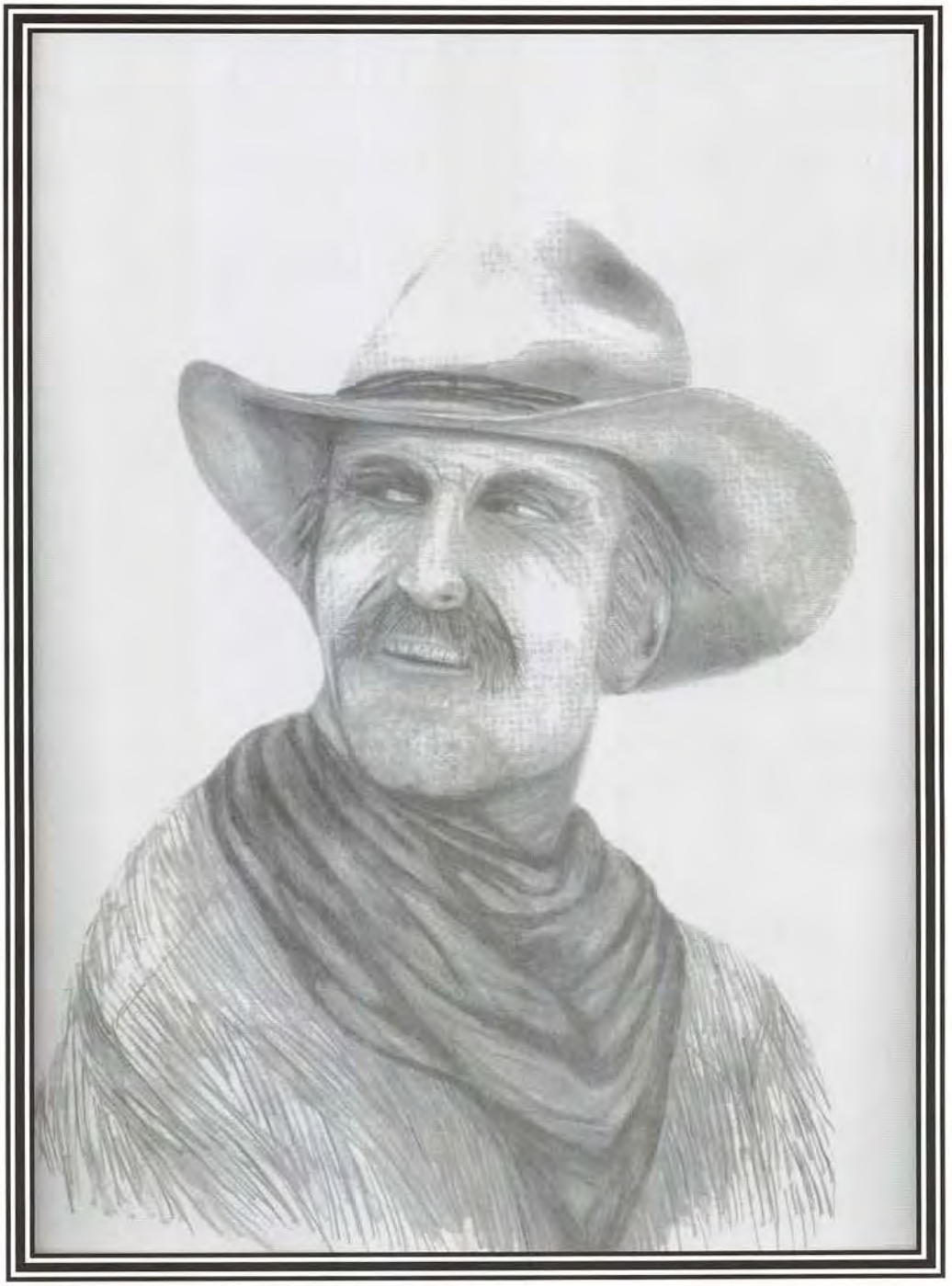



Memorial to Spanish Servicemen KIA During the Vietnam War. At 92ND & Brandon, Chicago Illinois. Those from the neighborhood, have their pictures at top of Memorial.



Close Up of Scroll on Memorial



KSV Women at the Memorial (Note the size in relation to the girls).

Issue 63

WINTER
2005

The Khe Sanh Veterans

RED CLAY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY NEW YEAR



HOME WAS WHERE YOU DUG IT

Publishers Comments:
In this issue you will be receiving your annual dues notice. Our dues are supposed to be paid each Dec for the next year. A lot of members did not pay dues until May or June. It is impossible for me to keep track of over 2,000 members all paying their dues at different times. I have made the cutoff period for seven months. So if you waited 7 months to pay dues you are due again this December.

If you receive a dues notice you fall within those guidelines. **This does not pertain to new members who have joined this year, or those that paid in November.**

Members can now pay their dues, purchase items from the PX, and pay for the reunion with a credit card. This information will be included on all the new Dues, Registration, and PX forms. You may also order by phone with a credit card by contacting our Treasurer, James Wodecki.

.....

REUNION COMMITTEE REPORT:
The reunion planned for Mobile Alabama in June of 2006, is off to a rousing start. Utilizing lessons learned from our recent Chicago reunion, we rewrote contracts with provisions which will prevent failures that occurred with the Hotel in Chicago. The Hotel staff in Mobile, along with the City's promotional agency, are going to provide (which we feel)will be one the best reunions the Khe Sanh Veterans will experience. We have included a special layout in the center section of the magazine (Pages 38-39) detailing plans for the reunion in Mobile.

On another note, we have filed a complaint with the Better Business Bureau, against the Wyndum Hotel in Chicago, alleging many contractual violations. We are seeking monetary damages. If successful, these funds will be utilized to bring the down the cost of the Mobile Reunion.

OOPS:
In issue 62 of Red Clay, there were several misprints in articles on Pages 3, 9, 30, 53,54, and 63. Page (3) 1st paragraph, **Linda** Shouse should read **Lynn** Shouse. Page (9) Memorial to Jenkins, Childress & BJorke, **Earle Bjorke** should read **Erle Bjorke.** Page (30), bottom of 2nd paragraph, should read **Steven Wiese,** not **Seven Wiese.** Page (53), My Heroine Story, should have **George Cole,**

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Thomas Ford.....Member At Large
Robert Moxley..... Member At Large
Dan Fisher.....Member At Large

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not **Joe Moring**. Page 54 2nd paragraph **Steve Wiese was not a Lieutenant**. Page 63, tribute to Charlie from **Chuck Chamberlin** was written by **Kenneth Pae**. A computer misalignment please accept my sincere apologies .

MEMOIRS



77 Days at Khe Sanh
By
Raymond A. Milligan USMC
Vietnam April 67 – September 68

Force Reconnaissance Marines are highly trained volunteers. They are cross trained in parachuting, SCUBA, and scouting. Reconnaissance is usually performed with a team of four to eight members. They are inserted behind enemy lines to gathering intelligence. Their motto is Swift, Silent, and Deadly. June of 1967 Bravo Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, "The Eyes and Ears" of the 26th Marines was assigned to patrol the area around the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Little did we know that in a few months the base would become engaged in the longest continuous battle of the Vietnam War. 77 days of constant incoming and our lines probed by the NVA. Hill 861A would be attacked and partly over run. Hill 881S would also feel the wrath of the NVA.

I arrived at Khe Sanh on 13 August 1967, after serving with 2nd Force Reconnaissance stateside. I was assigned to the 3rd Platoon Bravo. We were located along the main road not far from the PX, Post Office and chow hall. The air strip was behind the Reconnaissance area and the Scout/Sniper area was between Reconnaissance and the main ammo dump. Across the road from Reconnaissance was the Regimental Command bunker and Command Post complex.

Before the "Siege" began 3rd Reconnaissance teams ran many patrols around the Khe Sanh area. We lost our first man soon after I arrived. Between June and December, there where five Marines KIA. L/Cpl Garry Tallent was KIA on the 20th of August while his team "Sample Case 1" (2B1) attempted an insertion by a CH-46 Helicopter at (XD 904 498). Gary was hit as he exited the chopper. L/Cpl Marion Meggs team "Frostburg" (2B2) drowned on the 16th of November while his team was crossing the Rio Quan River, coming in off a company patrol. It was Meggs' last patrol which he did not have to go on due to his rotation date being so close. My team at the time of Meggs' drowning, was in route to patrol an area South of Khe Sanh along Route 9. We had our mission changed and were assigned the task of recovering his



body. We recovered his body in the same spot he had fallen into the river. His body finally came to the surface after five days underwater. We had reached the site on the fourth night.

PFC Gary Stickel was KIA with Team "Seven-Up" (3B3) on 22nd December during a firefight near Hill 557 (XD 763 411), Ed Pooley was also WIA. I was the Assistant Team Leader of Team "Seven-Up".



On December 30th PFC Terry Jones and L/Cpl Thomas Tingely team "Barkwood" (1B3) were KIA in a firefight 4 KM directly west of Hill 689 (XD 761409). During the month of December, our Reconnaissance teams were sighting large groups of NVA troops moving into our area and around the base. Intelligence would tell us later that the 68th Regiment (artillery), 95C Infantry, 304th and 325th C Division's of the crack NVA regular's, were the ones we were fighting against. The 325th C had participated in the victory for the North at Dien Bien Phu.

The "Siege" started the morning of January 21, 1968 at approximately 0500 hours. One of our Reconnaissance teams on patrol observed the rockets as they came from Laos towards the Combat Base. They radioed the information just before the rounds started to land. We were violently woken from our sleep by the enormous sounds of the rockets and artillery rounds. We grabbed our gear and ran for the bunkers. Soon incoming rounds found the ammo dump which was close to Reconnaissance's area. The ammo dump took a direct hit and fifteen hundred tons of ammo blew up. All of the CS gas also blew up.

The gas then started to cover the whole base. Unfortunately I missed getting my gas mask as someone else beat me to it. It was a long night as I had to breathe using my field jacket as a filter for the gas (now I knew why they put us in the gas chamber at P.I.). We took incoming rounds all day long the first day. Parts of the runway were destroyed, buildings were on fire, and our base looked like something from a category 5 hurricane. Hootches were on fire, the mess hall was blown to bits, and live rounds from the ammo dump continued to explode.

We would get hit by incoming every day for Seventy-seven days straight. No let up. We lived in bunkers, both big and small. These bunkers held from three to as many as twenty Marines. We also had our buddies the "rats" stay with us. We had rats the size of small cats. There were thousands by the end of



the Siege. A few of our men were bitten had to go to Charlie Med for a series of injections for fourteen days in a row. Every day that went by you didn't know who would be back in their bunkers that night. Bravo Reconnaissance Company would have ten men killed and close to sixty men wounded during the "Siege". After the incoming slowed down we repaired and re-enforced our bunkers. We dug a trench along the entire length of our company position.

On the first day of the Siege we still had a team out on patrol trying to find a radio that was lost in a firefight on 14 January when 2Lt. Randall Yeary's team made "contact". Both Yeary and Cpl. Richard Healy were killed in the firefight. The team that went out to recover the radio was "Team Barkwood."

On 21 January with the Marines of India Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines left hill 881S. The recon team was to slip away from the grunts and find the radio. That patrol was ambushed and two more Reconnaissance men, Cpl. Charles Bryan who would be awarded the Navy Cross for his actions on that patrol, and PFC Paul Beddoe, Jr. were both killed during the firefight.

Life was going to become very interesting over the next three months. Every day we had jets flying over dropping bombs and making firing runs just outside our lines. B-52 's dropped bombs as close as 1200 meters from our lines. We were limited to one C-Ration meal a day. Ammunition was a priority, food could wait.

We rarely showered, let alone shave. It was an adventure just trying to go to the Head! Bravo Companies mission was reconnaissance. We were the



reactionary force in case an attempt was made to overrun the base. We didn't just sit around. Our C/O had us doing all types of details. We would carry the wounded and dead to the planes, fill sand bags, and cleaned up the ammo dump. We did details at the drop zone and picked up materials for our company. We were kept busy so as not to dwell on what was happening.

Eight of the "Bravo" Company Marines who died, were killed the first 13 days of the "Siege". Before it ended, we lost two more. By the middle of February we lost more than half our company.
On January 22, fifty 122mm rockets, five 120mm mortars, and twenty seven 82mm mortars hit the base. We lucked out that day and had no causalities. The next day was my 20th birthday. Several of the guys sang happy birthday, and gave me a pound cake and peaches as a gift. That was my favorite food from the C-rats. I will always remember and cherish that moment.

January 24th was a disastrous day for our company. Late in the afternoon we started to get hit again.



The bunker across the trench from me, contained 20 men. The bunker received a direct hit in the back entrance. Four Marines died instantly and 16 wounded. Those killed were HN Charles Miller, L/Cpl Francis Popowitz, L/Cpl Juan Antonio Rosa, and L/Cpl Gary David Scribner. When the round went off, one of our men (nicknamed Elvis) dove into my bunker. I can still hear him scream today. I just started rocking back and forth hoping this madness would end.

After the men were taken to Charlie Med we had to clean up the bunker. This was the worst time of my life. Body parts were all over the place. I remember picking up a boot of somebody. I just put it down and stopped for awhile. We finally finished our task. I hoped that I would not have to deal with something like that again, but that would not be the case. Things were going okay for us until the 28.th L/Cpl Thomas William Hollis was on perimeter duty, and stuck his head out of the bunker. He was struck in the head by a piece of Shrapnel and killed.

30 January turned out to be very depressing for many of us, especially me. My two mentors and friends would be hit by an incoming artillery round. L/Cpl Timothy Michael Barmer and L/Cpl James Kevin McCann. Barmer was killed immediately and McCann would die of his wounds February 3RD while on the USS Hope. I ran several patrols with both before moving to Assistant Team Leader of 3B3. They taught me every-thing they could think of to help me survive.

Tim died in the arms of one of our Corpsman. Tim was trying to push the others into the bunker when

the round hit. The time was 1650 hours. Most of us were outside our bunkers eating or making the best meal we could. Tim and Mac were no more then fifteen yards away from me. Their bunker ran parallel to the main road. I had just said hi to them when the round hit. The next thing I knew I was thrown back into my bunker from the blast. I never got to see them again.

On the 1st of February I made a fast dash to the first airplane that could land. I was going to Hawaii for R&R. One week break from death and destruction. Planes did not land very often at Khe Sanh. Once they did you could count a few seconds and mortar rounds would start to come in. If you didn't make the plane you didn't get to go. No one was going to call a taxi for you. Luck was on my side that day as I made it out.



I returned on the 7th of February and found out no one from our company had been killed. A few days later the Commanding Officer needed someone with a driver's license to be company driver. I did not know that the CO wanted someone with a military driver's license. He never asked to see one, and I didn't volunteer to show one. I ended up becoming the company driver with my own beat up jeep I didn't have to fill sandbags anymore. I did have to drive to the drop zone to pick up supplies and take guys to Charlie Med when needed.

Later on I would regret being in the jeep. In late February I was waiting for our S/Sgt to finish some business in another part of the base. I heard two rounds going off in the background. As I started to get out of the jeep I found myself flying through the air. When I landed I could not see anything, and I remembered saying to myself, being killed was easy. But lucky me, I escaped death again. I had a concussion and punctured eardrums, and a hell of a headache. The jeep was peppered with shrapnel and my helmet had a piece in it.

Except for McCann dying on 3 February, we would not have another death until 22 March when PFC Carl Lyons was killed while working at the ammo dump. On 25 February thirty men from Bravo Company 1/26 went out on what was supposed to be a line of sight patrol. Several NVA were observed and pursued. The men ran right into an ambush. Twenty-seven were killed, two others would make it back to the base severely wounded and one wounded Marine was captured. He would be released at the end of our involvement in Vietnam. This happened just east of our location. The bodies had to stay until 25 March. Marines from Bravo Company went out to recovery the bodies. Recon Marines took over their position. A firefight ensued, and eleven more Marines from "Bravo" Company were killed. They still managed to recover several bodies. The rest of the men would be recovered on 6th April by Delta Company 1/26.

By now we were all pretty numb about what was going on. We had the thousand-yard stare that you read about in war stories. All of us were dirty, sinking, and hungry. Most of hoped the NVA would attack. It was very frustrating to just wait for something to happen. Day in and day out incoming would land all over. One day in March we took over 1300 rounds of incoming. That was the day that General Westmoreland was told he was going home. As the time passed on we just went through the motions.

As April approached ,the incoming slowed to a few hundred a day. Our company would suffer one more casualty. On April 8th HN Richard Smith, one our corpsmen, died from an accidental fire. Smith was pouring high octane fuel in the ditches to help burn out the rats. The fuel got all over him and he caught fire. He went running through our area and

was tackled by a Marine. The fire was put out but he died from his injuries. I had been on many patrols with him, and knew him well.

In April, Bravo Third Recon left Khe Sanh for Quang Tri. We would regroup and start running patrols again. Not much happened to our company after Khe Sanh. A few more would be wounded in a fire fight in July. My tour of duty ended on September 1, 1968 and I headed home. That was the best flight of my life. I ended up in a guard company in Washington DC area. I was discharged in April of 69. After being discharged I joined my local police force in June. I started as a Patrolman and moved through the ranks, retiring as Chief of Police in October 1995.

MEMOIRS

Villagers at the Gate

By Craig W. Tourte

(Please forgive the accuracy of this story as to time frame; this evacuation may have occurred just before the Siege started. I don't think we would have walked the Vietnamese to the airfield and onto an airplane if incoming rounds were landing).

I had been at the Khe Sanh Combat Base since the early part of August 1967. Any contact I had with indigenous people was with the local Montagnard tribe. A strange looking little people by Western standards, elf like in appearance. They wore loincloths and were dark skinned with protruding bellies developed from parasites in their intestines. If you passed one on the road they were hard to spot if standing off to the side. I had no real contact with the Vietnamese and don't recall having seen any subsequent to my arrival by convoy from Dong Ha.

In January 1968 the NVA were coming and the local Vietnamese knew it. "Khe Sanh Village was lost." "More than 1,000 terrified Vietnamese Civilians had arrived at the gates of the Combat Base." "...Madeleine Poliane was there too, with her children...They pleaded to be let in, but Lownds would only let a very few through the gates; he feared the introduction of a Trojan horse into his battered fortress." (The End of the Line by Robert Pisor.)

I had never seen real Vietnamese civilians before, and I certainly hadn't expected to see so many at



one time when I did. I had guarded the front gate of the base many times. There was the occasional, yet minimal amount of American military traffic coming and going during the daylight hours, but never any Vietnamese of any sort. Here now, all of a sudden where hundreds of them. Their eyes were hollow and their faces were filled with fright. I thought at the time they were more fearful of us than the approaching NVA. As a young Marine and one who had few contacts with any Vietnamese, I was concerned that any one of them could have a grenade concealed just waiting for the chance to give it a little toss in my direction. (As I stood in front of the group of Vietnamese, and just before I stepped aside to let them pass, I took the two photographs that accompany this article).

We divided them up into small groups and walked with them from the main gate to the airfield to ensure they didn't wonder off. The Vietnamese had all they could carry and looked like refugees in those old World War II movies. Marines walking on each side of the road accompanying them to the airfield. Their pace was brisk and hurried, almost a run, a kind of panic, with little conversation amongst them. A C-130 was waiting for our arrival at the airfield, with the rear ramp in the down position and the propellers turning. I walked with the Vietnamese up into the airplane, which had no ad-

ditional cargo in its belly. The Vietnamese filled up the huge space inside, sitting on the floor all bunched together. There were lots of women, children and older men, with a few younger men interspersed amongst them wearing partial uniform clothing, which peaked my attention.

I don't recall if we looked through their belongings for weapons or explosives, but I remember at the time thinking it sure would not take much to bring this airplane down if any were armed. I was uncomfortable and apprehensive being with them ,and not liking the enclosed quarters of the



airplane having little chance of escape should anything happen. They all hurried inside, where ropes or lines had been stung low across the fuselage every so many feet for the occupants to hold during the flight. It appeared the airplane crew had gone through this routine before. I backed down the ramp out of the airplane and was glad to be away from the Vietnamese who, I knew little about and was highly suspicious of.

I don't remember how many Vietnamese we met at the front gate that day, or how many trips we made to the airfield, but I recall we sure squeezed them into that airplane. As I look at the photographs now, I can see more clearly the terror on each face. Perhaps even expression of a greater terror than I was able to see, those many years ago.

The irony of this of course, is that the Vietnamese sought protection at an American Marine Base and left on an American airplane. Left their homes, fled from their own people, fled to safety while we Americans stayed behind to fight in a long and bloody battle, a Siege that lasted 77 days.

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MEMOIRS

Flame Thrower at Khe Sanh

By Craig W. Tourte

I remember as a kid watching those old grainy newsreels of the Pacific Island campaigns during World War II. The images of the Marines rushing the beach and heading up into the jungle to fight the Japanese. The Pacific Islands were filled with hiding places, including pill boxes, bunkers, natural caves and those dug out by the occupiers. By all visual accounts they were tough battles, the Marines employing grenades and flame throwers to drive and burn the enemy from their fortifications.

In 1967 those battles of World War II in the early forties seemed quite distant to a young private heading to a place I never heard of before. A strange country and war I did not understand and a people I didn't particular care about. I just knew it was a war; an adventure for me and in the Marines was where I wanted to be.



It was a long dusty convoy from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh that August morning. I was happy to be leaving Dong Ha, we had been mortared and rocketed

during our short stay, and the facilities they housed us in were above ground. When we heard incoming we'd run outside into the filthy trench that ran alongside our above ground wooden barracks. Of course every sound of a boom was incoming to us, and any loud bang would get us all running, it was just miserable.

As our convoy emerged from the jungle west bound on highway 9, I observed the base and surrounding mountains as we skirted the south end of Khe Sanh Combat Base which then turned north onto the lead in road towards the base. When we entered the main gate we made an immediate right, continued on for approximately one hundred meters then stopped. This base and these mountains were to be my home for the next eight months.

We had entered Vietnam just a few days before, arriving by an LST ship from Okinawa. Landing and disembarking at Cue Viet where we dug into the sand and stayed a few days, drawing mortar fire at night. We continued up the Cue Viet River via small LSU's and into a Dong Ha, which was under a substantial mortar and rocket attack. I didn't get a good look at the defenses at Dong Ha and we didn't have any at Cue Viet, so my understanding of what a base defense should look like was limited.

As I looked out towards the south end of Khe Sanh, I observed a single strand of concertina wire over grown with weeds. There were a few fighting holes here and there, but nothing that I imagined would have stopped an aggressive attack by a determined enemy.

As the days and nights accumulated and I became more aware of my surroundings and understanding of the base and the immediate area before me, I spent some time inspecting the wire in front of my position. It consisted of one strand of concertina wire and in front of that a row or two of tangle foot wire, all overgrown with weeds. There was a dead tree stump some seventy-five meters to the front, which at night took on the appearance of a man standing in an upright position. (Shot at numerous times by new Marines who mistook the tree for an enemy).

The hill fights had recently ended, and what was left of the Marines units were exhausted and worn out from the recent long battles. Those few who remained showed us how to dig trenches and fighting holes, fill sandbags, how to place the Claymore mines out in front amongst the wire, and how to manufacture hell boxes for the Claymore ignition wires. They reminded us to check the mines several times during the night because the NVA would turn them around with the front facing toward us. They told us how important it was to go out and bring the Claymores in during the day so the enemy could not see where you had placed them the night before.

Those who were left and had endured so much in the hills, were not immediately concerned about improving the defenses at Khe Sanh. The grass under the wire and out into the fields of fire was several feet high. I had to stand up and look out into the wire to see anything at all, and during the night any observation to the front ground area was impossible.

I don't think I really expected to see a flame thrower in real life. I had no recall of seeing one in ITR nor did I hear the name flame thrower ever mentioned in any training class. I thought it was an ancient weapon used so long ago in World War I and II, and was no longer part of the modern weapons employed by Marines. I must have been digging (as I always seemed to be doing) when I saw two Marines walk into the concertina wire in front of me. One clearly had two cylinders on his back. I immediately knew that he was carrying a flame thrower. I knew a little about the flame thrower, that you could mix a variety of liquid fuels and that fuel was propelled by compressed gas. I also knew that as the fuel left the gun of the flame thrower, it was ignited at the tip some way. I was not aware that the gunner could just spray the fuel without first igniting the fuel.

As one Marine stood by, the second Marine with the flame thrower ignited the tip of the gun and propelled the lit fuel into the weeds. I was close enough to feel the heat and was immediately impressed. The Marine with the flame thrower then stopped the spray and stepped back for a few seconds, he then just sprayed the area under the concertina with the raw fuel, which was ignited by the

already burning weeds and grasses. This went on for a few minutes and then it was over and they left. I watched as the weeds burned and knew that I never wanted to be on the working end of a flame thrower. It was the first and last time I had ever seen a flame thrower in action. I took a picture of that event, but missed the Marine with the flame thrower and was only able to get the stream of raw fuel and burning weeds.

I don't have any recall of weeds continuing to grow under the wire or in the field after that incident. I remember running LP's out into that area which, was pretty lonely and dark. I never shot at the lone dead tree and I don't think I even thought about why nothing was growing out in that field or under the wire where just several months before, grass and weeds were two feet high. I think Agent Orange may have taken care of the native growth and eventually, errant incoming. And that dead tree stuck all by itself seventy-five yards away, the one that looked like a man standing in the upright position, it became a victim of the gunners from North Vietnam, they must have had the same illusion we did.

MEMOIRS

After The Siege

By Craig W. Tourte

The Khe Sanh plateau was a beautiful spot. It was lush and green, the mountains were a kind of blue color, deep and dark, one could even describe them as breathtaking in their appearance. I arrived at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh sometime in late July or early August 1967. The plateau had a certain feel about it, I could sense there was something about the place but I just didn't know what it was. I was unaware of the brutal hill fights that had occurred just a few months before my arrival but knew there were ongoing small unit skirmished with the NVA. As a young man not particularly taken with history, I had no knowledge of a similar place located in North Vietnam by the name of Dien Bien Phu and the similarities of the circumstance of Khe Sanh escaped me.

Others have spoken about what a nice place Khe Sanh was before the Siege, how there was "nothing going on," but we who were on the base those early months, those of us who were engaged in the daily grind of preparing the defenses, cooking the meals, hauling the water, ammo and other supplies, digging the trenches, filling the sandbags, stringing the concertina wire, knew different. Those of us who had endured the rain and fog, stood guard duty in the trenches knew.

Those of us who arrived during those early months, saw the line of body bags on the tarmac after the ambush in the hills. The men up in the hills on 881, 861, 950, and the others that surrounded that plateau all knew. All of us who were there, even those involved in the smallest of mundane everyday tasks knew. We all knew because we could feel it, smell it, and most of all sense it. You can't exactly explain that sense thing, but one knows what it is when that cold chill runs down the back of your spine. We knew something was about to happen, we just didn't know when or for how long.

The only thing that changed for us on January 21, 1968, was that now all of those strange feeling, we had experienced, that indescribable sense we had, became obvious. We were so used to the constant alert, tension and vigilance, that little escaped our five senses. Now we understood why we had all felt and yes, and even acted the way we did. For those of us who survived that 77 day Siege and saw it through to the end, our nerves where pretty much shot. I think for the most part, we were all in shock for months and even years afterwards.

Then it was over, we packed up and left the Khe Sanh plateau, just like that. No days or months of relaxation, no ease into it, no stand down, just packed up what little we had left that hadn't been shot, rocketed, mortared, hit by heavy artillery, or eaten by rats. We literally hopped on a truck and drove away, heading for the province of Quang Tri. After dismounting the convoy from Khe Sanh somewhere in Quang Tri, I said goodbye to Tom Horchler as he and some of the others I had been with for so long, drove away in their trucks. We found ourselves surrounded by Marines in new green uniforms and weapons at the ready; you would have thought we were prisoners of war.

I still can't understand what that was about. They sort of guarded us while we were afforded the luxury of hot showers and some chow. They all had this strange look on their faces and appeared to be apprehensive of our presence. It might have been that those troops had just never seen Marines in what I am sure looked to them like red uniforms (because of the red clay at Khe Sanh). I don't recall if we had a change of clean clothes but I remember I quickly found myself guarding some kind of fuel dump or tower out in the middle of nowhere, it was the best duty I had in Vietnam.

I was used to the rice fields of Northern California and we were right in the middle of them. I took a bath a couple of times a day in the few inches of water flooding the fields by just striping down and letting the warm water run over my body, it was my own private bath and swimming pond, no incoming and I didn't mind the mosquitoes at all, having grown up with mosquitoes along with the heat and humidity.

There was a grunt unit or other unit of some kind less than 1,000 meters from us on our right on a finger of land jutting out into the rice field. It seemed that all night long they would fire to their front, automatic weapons and rifles with little to no fire control. You would have thought they were constantly getting probed or were in a firefight but there were no incoming rounds towards them, only their outgoing. We would sit up on top of the trench line watching all of the outgoing firing and looking for the incoming rounds of the enemy that would identify their position, but it never came.

There was no fog, it was warm and we could hear the frogs and bugs out in the fields in front of our location. There was no sound of splashing water, no dead silence, no sign of the enemy or that electric, tense feeling like we'd had as we stood all night long in the trenches behind the wire at Khe Sanh waiting for the enemy we all knew were there. I just could not figure that other unit out; they must have been a new grunt or REMF unit of some kind. Another guy and I climbed over the trench and walked about 100 or so meters in the dark out into the field, but there was nothing, and nothing that we could make out over in front of the other unit. We figured they were all just a little jumpy. They must have had lots of ammunition and an inexperienced leadership, or perhaps they just were able to see or even sense, what we could not.

It was great duty and I wanted to stay near the warm running water, watching the farmers work in their fields during the day and ready to take on any comers during the night. In fact, after those long months at Khe Sanh absorbing the thousands of rounds of incoming, we were kind looking forward to a little pay back, but they never came to us; maybe the NVA and VC were just confused by our red uniforms.

One day a jeep arrived and a sergeant told me that my cousin had been killed in an automobile accident back home and he asked me if I wanted to go home for the funeral, of course I said yes and it took me less than 5 minutes to saddle my gear and hop onto the jeep. The next thing I remember I found myself at an airfield and on a damaged C-123 heading for Da Nang to be repaired. I didn't say goodbye to anyone or get any addresses or telephone numbers from those I had endured so much with, in a blink of an eye I was gone

My tour in Vietnam was about up anyway, and my enlistment in the Corps was coming to an end. I knew I was not coming back as a volunteer, in fact I remember having the distinct feeling that God was telling me not to come back. I never did make my cousins funeral and I did not return to Vietnam. I have thought about those few I left behind so many years ago, those I endured so much hardship with. I have a certain amount of guilt for leaving them. Most of us arrived in Vietnam about the same time, so I knew those who had survived with me were not far behind. During the first few years I was home, I'd occasionally watch the war being played over and over on the television, and just being glad I made it home alive. I had known so many who had not. But I also remembered that voice someplace in the back of my mind telling me not to return. Unfortunately for most of us, we can never leave that war behind and the Siege at Khe Sanh will always be with us.

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MEMOIRS

My M-14

By Craig W. Tourte

I had been introduced to the M-14 Rifle in boot camp while at MCRD San Diego (1966 Platoon 1145). As the Marine Corps Rifle Creed states, "This is my rifle. There are many like it, but this one is mine. My rifle is my best friend, it is my life..." At the time I didn't realize how familiar I would eventually become with that weapon. It was a rough, heavy, and at times a punishing beast, but I grew to love its simplicity and especially the way it fired. I had been a pretty good shot with a shotgun and rifle even before I volunteered for the Marine Corps. I had a real fondness for shooting a variety of weapons that we young men carried around in our pickup trucks in the farm country of Northern California. I easily qualified as an expert on the rifle range at Camp Pendleton.



Of particular emphasis in boot camp was the manipulation, assembly, disassembly, care and cleaning of the M-14 Rifle. How many times did I hear, "...The M-14 7.62mm rifle is a magazine-fed, gas operated, shoulder weapon..." I cleaned that rifle so many times it became tedious and boring in its redundancy. As much as I distained the riggers of discipline in boot camp, I found the Infantry Training Regiment (ITR) after book camp to be exactly what I was looking for in the Corps. I don't recall if it was in ITR or Staging Company for Vietnam, that we were exposed to a variety of weapons and allowed the opportunity to fire them. I was assigned a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) for a couple of days. I loved the power of that weapon even though the magazine held only 20 rounds. It weighed a ton and taxed all of my strength carrying it around the hills of Pendleton. I could put a lot of rounds out into a fairly tight group, while others could not hit the side of a barn with it.

I flew to Okinawa from El Toro Marine Corps Base in California. I don't recall when I was issued my M-14; it may have been sometime while I was in Okinawa or on the Landing Ship Tank (LST) we took from Okinawa to Vietnam, sometime in late July or early August 1967. We all had selectors (or automatic fire) on our M-14's but my M-14 also had a folding bipod attached to the gas cylinder located just below the barrel. This addition added several more pounds to the already heavy, but durable weapon. It was necessary to depress a series of push buttons to release each leg to the vertical position, and then to level each leg. It was a cumbersome affair and changed the appearance of the barrel. At first glance it did not resemble the M-14 we had spent so many hours training with.

After two weeks at sea, we made a short 36-hour stop in Da Nang harbor to unload supplies, anchoring in the harbor. It was dark , and I was on top of the deck looking out over the water, trying to escape the heat and stifling air of the decks below. Marines were housed six high on stretched canvas racks with just a few inches between each bunk. A sailor on guard duty suddenly walked over to where I was standing and said, "Did you see that?" I asked him what he as talking about, and he told me that he had seen air bubbles coming up from the water like there was a driver swimming under the ship. I didn't know what he was talking about and just kind of shrugged my shoulders when he grabbed his radio and told whomever he was talking to that he had seen bubbles from a diver and that the Marine he was standing with had also seen them. He then asked permission to toss a grenade over the side. It became kind of a big deal with all sorts of Navy personnel running over to the side to take a look. I left not wanting to become involved in the increasing panic of the young sailor and offi-

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cers.

We sailed north to Cua Viet harbor where we disembarked from the LST. The scene was right out of an old WW II movie, with the bow of the ship opening up with trucks, some pulling wheeled artillery while driving out of the ship. We traveled a short distance and settled someplace near the beach. I dug my first of many foxholes in Vietnam in the sandy beach of Cua Viet, where we stayed for several days.

I'm not exactly sure when we received our first incoming round, but it seemed like it was within hours of our arrival. The explosion was not that close to us, but at the time it certainly was a freighting experience. An Amtrak was traveling along the beach not far from our location when it was hit by a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) or ran over a land mine. They were asking for volunteers to respond but although several of us were prepared to go, it was apparently decided they did not need the assistance of some green newly arrived unit.

The sand was a constant problem, seeming to get into everything. It was difficult to walk in, cold in the evening and hot in the burning sun of the day, it got into our food, packs, clothes, and weapons. We saddled up all of our gear and headed for the mouth of the Cua Viet River to start our journey west to Dong Ha. We boarded a small Landing Ship Utility (LSU) for our cruise to Dong Ha. It was getting dark and we had been sailing for some time, passing small villages and huts dotting the rice fields along the riverbanks.

Suddenly rounds were passing over our heads like so many bees, followed by the report of rifle fire. I looked out over the side of the small vessel and observed the flash of small arms fire coming from a small hut several hundreds meters out into a rice field. I had a magazine locked into my weapon, pulled the bolt back to charge a round into the receiver, but when I released the bolt the round stuck half way into the chamber of the barrel, fouled by fine grains of sand. I sat down on the deck and completely field stripped my weapon, removing the cleaning rode from the rear butt plate and locating a toothbrush I had used for cleaning. By the time I got the round removed, the sand from the receiver, barrel, chamber, magazine, and got the weapon reassembled, our firefight was over.

I was disappointed and embarrassed, but a whole lot smarter and thankful for those many hours in boot camp I had spent dissembling and assembling weapons. I realized that while the weapon was clean, I had failed to empty each magazine and clean each round of the fine grains of sand that had attached themselves to the rounds and inside of the magazine wall.

From Dong Ha we convoyed west on highway 9 to the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh. I don't recall when I was first introduced to the M16A1, as not being a grunt unit, we continued carrying the M-14 which was fine with me. I had heard about the failure of the M-16 and the distained Marines who were issued this weapon who had repeatedly voiced about the failure rate. There was some talk about the round making a big hole when it hit flesh, because the round actually tumbled in the air during flight.

That just did not make sense to me and I thought those who said that, just did not know how bullets functioned in flight. I don't think I really thought much about the M-16 until some members of Delta Platoon came back from recovering the bodies and equipment of what was left of the remains of Bravo Platoon "Ghost Patrol." I talked to one of the Marines carrying two of the black plastic M-16's who said they were made by "Mattel Toys" (Pieces of junk) There was not many left of them, and I think some black plastic ones even melted. No Marine I talked to, had ever referred to the M-14 like this.

I had spent some time talking to Marines who had been carrying around the M-16. At Khe Sanh we carried our weapons everywhere we went. One Marine even had this light bipod for his M-16 that supported the weapon under the barrel, it weighed almost nothing. I borrowed someone's M-14 and stuck the M-16 bipod under the barrel of the M-14 and it worked perfectly. All this time I had been carrying this big old heavy bipod attached to my M-14 and this little, light M-16 bipod worked just as well, and even better, because of it's lighter weight and ease of placement.

When I left Vietnam after my tour, I took my rifle with me to Okinawa. I was ushered into a small room where everything was removed from me, but worst of all, my rifle was taken away. I had carried that M-14 for a long time and it had been good to me, I trusted it and we had grown and experienced much together. We were together constantly; slept with me, being my rifle was my constant companion. I knew it would be there for me; as long as I took care it, it would take care of me. I know there were many like it, but that rifle was mine, it was my best friend and at times, it was my life.

MEMOIRS

Just Another Quiet Recon Patrol!

By Cpl Bob Partain

The eyes of the slim, 20-year-old Marine scanned the hillside as the UH-IE (Huey) gunship carrying his reconnaissance team slipping into the valley below. For Cpl. Sandy R. Reid, the most decorated man in the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, this was his 23rd recon patrol. "Let's go!" ordered Reid, even before the helicopter had time to touch the ground. Five Marines and one Navy corpsman were out of the Huey and running through the tall elephant grass, before the pilot had time to turn around and check his passengers. The gun ships that had escorted the reconnaissance Marines to a jungle valley just south of the Demi-litarized Zone, made a few wide, lazy circles to make sure the team wasn't receiving fire and then whirled out of sight.

The team was on its own. After establishing radio communication with a relay station, Reid, a **Khe Sanh Purple Heart winner,** led his Marines to an area which would provide a better hiding place. The team moved into thick jungle undergrowth. They stood in a 360 degree circle watching and listening, when PFC Ruben Zapata, the team's point man, noticed the first indication of enemy activity in their RZ (recon zone). The smell of smoke from a small fire was blowing from within the jungle. "We can't afford to check out the smoke down here, we've got to find out what's above us first," Reid told his assistant patrol leader, Lance Cpl. James Consaul, as he called in a situation report.

They silently worked their way up the steep mountain, pushing aside the bushes and thorn trees and then carefully replacing them so no trail was left for the enemy to follow. The team reached the top of the mountain and stopped for a rest when cigarette smoke and Vietnamese voices made the recon Marines freeze with their rifles at the ready. Three North Vietnamese Army soldiers were moving down a small trail not more than 25 meters away. Wanting to recon the area further, Reid, holder of a Silver Star and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, let them pass without giving the word to ambush the unsuspecting enemy. The Marines watched the three NVA with their weapons trained on them till they were out of sight.

The next day passed slowly for the Marines as they searched for enemy trails and looked for additional signs of activity. While on watch the third night, PFC Johnny L. Hood received a report from the teams radio relay point that a large enemy force was headed toward the team's position. After being informed of the report, Reid woke up Consaul. The two sat under a poncho liner and studied their map with a tiny penlight. "If they continue their line of approach, they should go through the valley below," Reid told Consaul, as they scrutinized the map. "And if they go where the trails indicate, we might get some artillery practice tomorrow", commented Consaul as he flicked off the light.

The next day the Marines sat hidden in the thick jungle and watched the valley below for signs of the enemy. But none came. After a day of seeing nothing, they debated about moving to another position. "They might have stopped and hidden for the day," commented Lance Cpl. Glen E. Patterson, as he looked down into the thick jungle. They decided to watch the valley for one more day before moving to another position. The Marines were awakened the next morning with their daily malaria pill, presented personally by their corpsman, Hospital man Duane C. Stinke.

They ate their "long rations" for breakfast and then resumed their observation of the valley below. suddenly, sounds from the valley broke the long silence that had dominated their vigil. The sounds of saws cutting bamboo and other sounds of construc-

tion, soon told the Marines that the enemy had moved into the valley to build a base camp. Reid plotted the enemy position, made a report of the NVA activity below, and requested an artillery mission. Within minutes, 105 mm artillery rounds fired from a fire support base assigned to cover Reid's team, which found their mark in the valley. The hillside echoed with the sounds of exploding artillery shells as 72 rounds hit on the enemy position. Reid knew from experience that if anyone was left alive down there, they would come looking for the team. All he wanted to do was get out of the zone.

He had accomplished his mission. He radioed and asked when they were going to be extracted. He was told that the team was scheduled for pick-up the next morning. The Marines found a good defensive position (harbor site) and decided to stay there until next morning when they would move to their pre designated pick-up zone. At first light, they carefully moved down the mountain and then hid in the bushes to wait for the helicopters. They waited for the sounds of approaching helicopters, but none came. Instead came the sounds of heavy rain which continued till mid--afternoon. Suddenly the rain stopped, and shortly afterwards helicopters could be heard in the distance. Patterson switched his radio frequency to the pilot's, and confirmed the Marines' hopes that the 'copters were heading for them.

The recon team waited until the pilots had seen them and then ran for the landing zone just as a CH-46 transport helicopter settled down to pick them up. They scrambled aboard and the helicopter headed home. For Reid it was another completed mission - his 23rd. "A routine mission," said Reid, as he listened to the drone of the helicopter engines taking them back to their home base camp. He hoped that his 24th would be just as easy.

MEMOIRS

Growl No More

By SGT. BOB MORRIS

A man-eating tiger was killed by members of a small recon patrol when the 400 pound cat attacked a 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion Marine in the northwestern corner of South Vietnam. The attacked Marine survived.

The six-man recon team were on an observation mission near Fire Support Base Alpine, about six miles east of the Laotian Border, when it encountered the tiger. The team had completed its assigned mission and was waiting to be helilifted from the area, when the incident occurred. Bad weather conditions had prevented their immediate extraction and the team had posted a two-man radio watch while the others settled down to sleep.

The tiger struck swiftly and silently. "Suddenly I heard somebody scream," said PFC Thomas E. Shainline, "then somebody else was yelling, it's a tiger, it's a tiger! PFC Roy Regan, who had been sleeping next to the victim recalled, "I jumped up and saw the tiger with his mouth around my partner. All I could think about was to get the tiger away from him. I jumped at the tiger and the cat jerked his head and jumped into a bomb crater 10 meters away, still holding his prey."

The Marines quickly followed the tiger to the crater and opened fire on the attacking beast. They could not be sure which one of them actually killed the tiger, since they all fired at it. Once hit, the tiger released his prey and the man staggered out of the bomb crater." He looked dazed and he asked what happened," recalled PFC Maurice M. Howell. The injured Marine was immediately given first aid treatment and a medical evacuation helicopter was called.

In minutes, a Marine CH-46 helicopter arrived to pick-up the injured Marine, the rest of the team, and the dead tiger. The injured Marine was rushed to the 3rd Medical Battalion hospital at Quang Tri, suffering from lacerations and bites on the neck. The tiger, measuring at least nine feet from head to tail was transported to the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion headquarters.

After examining the huge beast, Major General Raymond G. Davis, commanding general, 3rd Marine Division, and Assistant Division Commander, Brigadier General Robert B. Carney, Jr., congratu-

lated the reconnaissance team for killing the animal. It is believed to be the same animal that killed a Marine earlier in the vicinity of Fire Support Base Alpine.

Also on hand to examine the beast, now very still and hanging from a ten foot scaffold, was Phan Van Sang, a professional Vietnamese tiger hunter, who had participated in the tiger hunt, organized following the first tiger incident six weeks before.

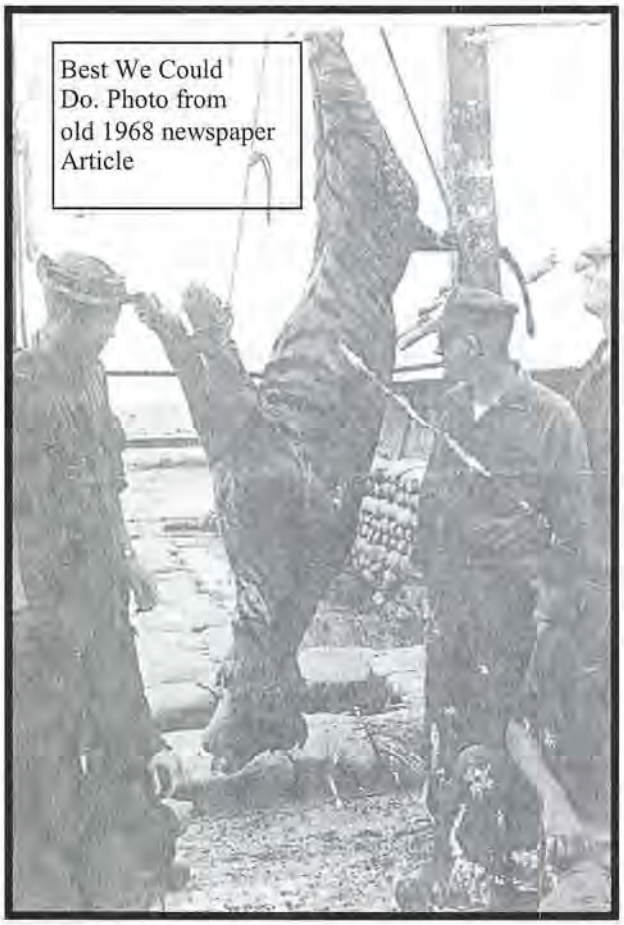

Examining their Kill are Standing L-R PFC Maurice M. Howell, L/Cpl Jackie Blankenship, PFC Delbert D. Kelly Jr., Kneeling L-R PFC's Thomas E. Shainline, and Roy Reagan.

Sang told the Marines that he had killed five tigers in his 20 years of hunting, but that he had never seen one as large as that man-eating cat. He expressed the belief that the tiger might very well be the same cat that attacked the other Marine. He explained that large cats usually work only in pairs and tend to hunt in the same area.

For the recon team, it was a memorable experience, marred only by the injury to one of its members. But as they looked at the strung-up 400 pound man eater, they knew that this tiger would never attack another Marine.

BOOK REVIEW

Do we need another book about the Vietnam War? Visit your nearest large retail bookstore and stand in front of the military history section. You will find books about the Vietnam War written by snipers, chaplains, and long-range patrol leaders, as well as by platoon, company, battalion, regiment, and even division commanders. The media is well represented with views ranging from strident hawks to malcontent doves.

With this vast selection, should you be interested in *Voices of Courage: The Battle for Khe Sanh, Vietnam*—the latest volume about Vietnam? The answer is a strong and unequivocal yes. Why such a robust recommendation? The coauthors have strong credentials. Ronald J. Drez served in Vietnam as a Marine. He has written several historical books, some while working with the late Stephen Ambrose. His coauthor, Douglas Brinkley, has written more than a dozen books, including his recent *The Boys of Pointe du Hoc: Ronald Reagan, D-Day, and the U.S. Army Second Ranger Battalion* (William Morrow, 2005).

The book's structure works extremely well. Drez and Brinkley carefully set the stage for the major battle by providing a concise overview of previous enemy contacts in and around Khe Sanh.

For months before the battle started, North Vietnamese battalions streamed down the Ho Chi Minh trail, setting the stage for a critical battle at Khe Sanh. The authors skillfully weave information extracted from North Vietnamese Army (NVA) archives. Resolution 13, issued earlier by Ho Chi Minh is described. He sets forth a goal of killing 10,000 Americans in a

major battle, causing them to depart Vietnam. These forces, led by General Vo Nguyen Giap, killed and captured more than 10,000 French soldiers at Dien Bien Phu. The French departed shortly thereafter. And who was to lead the NVA during the battle for Khe Sanh? It would be none other than General Vo Nguyen Giap.

The media frequently compared Dien Bien Phu and Khe Sanh. The authors point out that such comparisons are not valid. Dien Bien Phu was 100 miles from the nearest French forces. Khe Sanh was only 10 miles from significant support. The French had about 100 aircraft. Marines at Khe Sanh could count on deadly Marine close air support, skillfully employed by forward air controllers on the ground, alongside infantry companies. U.S. Air Force B–52 bombers flew missions from Okinawa, Guam, and U-Tapao, Thailand.

If the Marines had a secret weapon the title would go to Marine Capt Mizra M. Baig, who was the target information officer. The Air Force dropped state-of-the-art sensors around Khe Sanh and the hill positions, concentrating on known and suspected avenues of approach. Capt Biag was so adept at interpreting and using the readouts from these sensors that the authors refer to him as "a hired assassin."

Heroes at Khe Sanh were numerous. The authors devote significant space to the gallant efforts of the rifle companies defending Hills 861 and 881 South, particularly the leadership of Capt Bill Dabney, who commanded Company I, 3d Battalion, 26th Marines (I/3/26). Marine helicopter pilots and crewmen were conspicuous in their gallant performance day in and day out. They flew countless missions to the hill positions as well as the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Enemy troops had landing zones (LZs) on each hill zeroed in. Each helicopter received incoming mortar rounds, and even rocket propelled grenades could reach the LZs. Helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft landing at the base had additional threats, to include accurate artillery fire.

The selection of photographs and their placement throughout the book are particularly effective. The maps and sketches are kept to a minimum and are simple, clear, and easy to understand. The illustrations in the book go well with the authors' narrative. They have taken a sometimes—complex battle, and laid it out so it becomes very understandable to the reader.

To summarize, this book is extremely well researched, superbly crafted, and filled with graphic details of pitched battles. It portrays the daily heroism, endurance, and tenacity, displayed by a gallant force of Marines and corpsmen, supported by the Air Force in a prolonged conflict against a dedicated and determined enemy. In the words of Drez and Brinkley, "This book is an attempt to set things straight, and is dedicated to all who fought in our nation's longest, most controversial war, and never lost a battle."

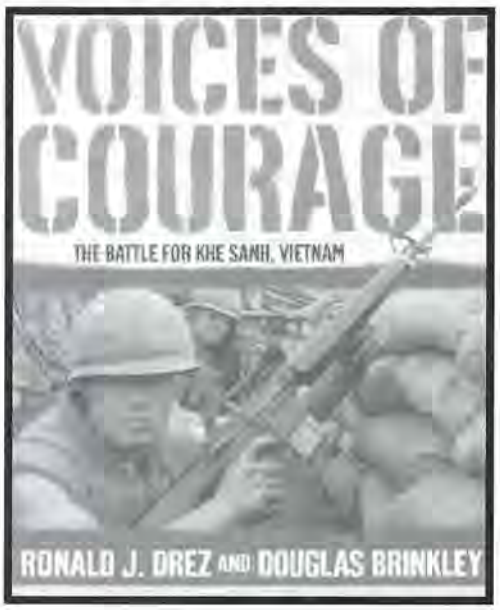

LtCol Wilkinson enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1948, was commissioned in 1951, and fought in Korea and Vietnam. He commanded 1/26 at Khe Sanh. On retirement from the Marine Corps he spent 26 years with Merrill Lynch as senior resident vice manager

Voices of Courage: (The Battle for Khe Sanh) By Ronald J. Drez and Douglas Brinkley. Bulfinch Press, New York, 2995 ISBN 0821261967, 192pp., $35.00 (Member $ 31.50)

SHORT ROUNDS

OUR KHE SANH ARCHIVES FIND A PERMANENT HOME

By Tom Eichler

With the publication of Battalion of Kings, Chaplain Ray William Stubbe has donated all of his Khe Sanh records and memorabilia, to the Wisconsin State Veterans Museum in Madison, Wisconsin. This includes some 475 books pertaining to what happened at Khe Sanh, about 90 linear feet of files, five boxes of microfilms, over 2,000 cassettes of interviews, several thousand still photographs, several dozen VHS tapes, and a room-full of artifacts sent home from Khe Sanh. The Wisconsin State Veterans Museum includes holdings dating from the Revolutionary War but is especially strong in materials dating from the Civil War to the present. There on staff are about half a dozen librarians, a like number of archivists, and a curator. (Read Ray's Speech on Pages 55-61)

The hundreds of Khe Sanh vets who contributed memoirs, diaries, letters of information, photographs, artifacts, etc., to Chaplain Stubbe may now rest assured that these are safe from damage or destruction by fire, water, theft, or consignment to a land-fill (should Ray suddenly die or become seriously ill and someone had to clean out his house). These materials will not be immediately open to the public, thus guarding privacy concerns, but will be preserved for future historians many decades from now, who wish to gain an accurate picture of our Khe Sanh experience. This collection is undoubtedly the most complete collection of information concerning Khe Sanh that exists, including not only personal accounts, but official documentation from the Department of Defense, all branches of the military service, CIA, DIA, NSA, and the President Johnson Presidential library. About 110,000 pages of documentation pertaining to Khe Sanh have been microfilmed on archival film which should last at least 300 years under suitable climate control, and sets of these films have been deposited with various archives.

Chaplain Stubbe plans to prepare two more books: a collection of quality photographs from Khe Sanh, the other being a collection of translations of official (and in many cases, classified Secret) histories of what happened at Khe Sanh which have been recently translated, including numerous tactical maps, tables, and details that provide "the other side" of what happened at Khe Sanh.

The 40th anniversary of the siege battle at Khe Sanh will happen ,in about two years (2008), a time traditionally for doing special commemorative events (as with the D-Day 40th anniversary). Then, just a decade later-and for us who are getting older, ten years passes very quickly!-we will have the 50th anniversary. Since it takes several years of "lead time" to get some things done, the time to plan is NOW. (Possible suggestions might be a performance of special symphonic musical works which have been written specifically to honor Khe Sanh veterans, a smaller one by Randy Cross and Symphony No.6 by Weresow, the father of a Khe Sanh vet; the issuance of a special US postage stamp, the writing of a commemorative book, a Congressional resolution and perhaps proclamations by the various state governments, a special reunion which would have high-profile dignitaries as part of the program, TV programs, etc.)

INCOMING

RETURN to HILL 861

by Mike Bradbury K Co 3/26



This past July, while the reunion was going on, Miguel "Pop" Salinas and I were returning to Khe Sanh to climb Hill 861, our home of record during the TET siege, with "K" Company 3/26

Following the trail of Dennis Mannion and Glenn Prentiss, "Pop" & I left the states on the 7th of July and were on top of 861 on the 13th, both dates were exactly 5 years after Dennis and Glenn climbed the same Hill.

Pop and I started putting this trip together just before Christmas of last year. 861 is the last place I ever wanted to see again, but after seeing Dennis' video, and realizing that the trip is actually possible, I finally said, "What the hell, I guess it's time." The lessons of "do's & don't do's" learned by Dennis and Glenn, made our trip over there and back fairly uneventful. We were treated well by the Vietnamese wherever we went, in spite of the fact that they are still living in poverty, because the only visible improvements the north has made, is in their own government buildings. People are still living in huts, and manage to eke out a living by peddling produce and souvenirs out in the streets

Khe Sanh has expanded into a small town, and there is now a modern museum of sorts, that lies not far from the old runway at the main base. Speaking of lies, there is a "monument" outside the museum that attempts to convince all foreign visitors that we all got our asses whipped up there, that the "brave and gallant" freedom fighters of the north just virtually routed the Marines out of Khe



Sanh, creating "hell on earth for the Americans", causing our eventual departure in 1975.

True, US forces left Khe Sanh and the surrounding hills. But they did under our terms. They did not run the Marines out of anywhere. There is a tourist log book at the museum, and you can damned sure know that yours truly wrote a paragraph or two in



it, stating this. It has probably been removed by now, but It made me feel a little better about it.

With required guides, Pop and I fought the heat, humidity and leeches on the morning of the 13th, and sometime before noon, we were up on our hill again. 861 is considerably higher in elevation than it was back in 1968, or so it seemed 7 years later. I'm 57 and Pop just turned 70. The valley is lush



and grown over now, and there is now an observation tower just below 861. As we made the final push over the top, the old "ghost town" began to come alive again. The old trench line started to appear in various places, including the one at the hilltop that once ran through the command post. The area still holds a few hazards like mortar rounds that never went off, and other live projectiles, so you have to be very careful where you walk.

Other things invoked some lifelong bitter memories as well. When I picked up two panels that were once part of somebody's flak vest, I couldn't help but remember the first aid kits we found on the dead North Vietnamese, the ones our media never told the folks back home about, the ones do-

nated to them by the students of Berkeley College in California.

I elected to bring home some dirt from the hill, and dug out a spent slug from an AK-47, the gun that "takes a bootin' and keeps on shootin I", while we were saddled with that "Mattel Toy" that jammed more often than not. As of this writing, the M-16 still requires a considerable amount of maintenance. Our M-14 was a 308, it would kill reliably far beyond the distance of an M-16. You could fire it all day, no matter how dirty it got. Why was it replaced with that plastic piece of crap? Anybody out there know?

There were light-hearted times on the hill as well. There had to be, just to keep morale up. Doc Tho-



mas thought it was funny to drop an inert grenade down the back of my shirt after he had pulled the pin. He wasn't laughing later on, after Mike James and I hung a sign that read "urinal", around his stovepipe chimney he had protruding out of the top of his bunker!

Pop & I came back down off the hill that afternoon, and both agreed that the trip was worth it. The Vietnam War means a lot of things to a lot of people. I know guys who wouldn't go over there again if the trip was free. I believe there is never any closure. If you have the guts to face reality, you did not fight for flag and country, nor Mom's apple pie. Be that as it may, we were there, and despite the fact in the minds of many, we lost war, I know the 26th Marines kicked butt, and took names during that infamous spring of 1968, from one end of Khe Sanh to the other. Vietnam is nowhere near worth the time or money to visit. Khe Sanh by itself is. We won that one, and we won it despite the news media, bombing halts and other political interference.

MEMOIRS

By Gary Parker

Ronnie Foster posted this on another board and gave me permission to post here. Ronnie was with FLC

In an interview for a book I am writing, I spoke with Cpl. Lionel Guerra, Bravo Co. 3rd Recon Bn. working out of Khe Sanh in '67-'68, until he was medevaced out on 20 Jan 68. He told me this story: Guerra: We were waiting for the helicopters to pick us up from a patrol. With me were Junior Reather, Kevin Macaulay, and the rest of the team. As we made our way down a hill toward a river, we kept hearing a strange noise behind us, but didn't know what it was. I whispered to the other guys that it sounded like a couple of water buffaloes having sex, and we all had a nervous laugh.

We finally stopped and were positioned near the water and were being very quiet. We had seen an elephant that day as well as a lot of other wildlife, but it was quiet at the time. Suddenly we heard a very loud, scary noise. We weren't laughing anymore when at about that time, pushing its way through the underbrush, stepped this huge beautiful Bengal tiger not more than twenty feet away. I think it had been following us down the hill. The tiger looked and sniffed around, checking out the area, and then slowly walked over to the water and began to drink. It was a magnificent animal, well over eight-feet long. While we were watching it, Reather slowly took his camera out of his pack and took a picture. When the shudder went 'click' the tiger instantly looked directly at us. Our eyes were probably as big as saucers as he gave us the eye. We couldn't fire our weapons without giving away our position.

The tiger stood motionless and stared at us for a moment and gave another loud roar. I thought he was going to charge us, and I did the only thing I knew to do; I roared back. The tiger looked at us for a few more moments and turned and casually



CPL LIONEL GUERRA

walked back into the bush." PFC Junior Reather was killed a few days later during the siege.

Speaking of tiger attacks, after I got hit at Khe Sanh, I spent some time in the hospital in Danang. After I got out, I ended up in Quang Tri with the 3rd Shore Party H&S. I went out on the lines a few times while I was there. I remember one night around 2 in the morning, we heard a terrible scream coming from somewhere out in front of our lines. Then we heard what seemed like 20 shots being fired just in front of us. The next morning, we found out that a Marine on an LP was attacked and was in the process of being dragged away by the neck. The other Marine on the LP with him chased it down and emptied his M-16 on



This is the photo he took

the tiger. I went down to the supply tent and watched the XO skin the tiger and cut his head off to send to Danang for a rabies test. I'm not sure who got the skin, but I know someone sent it home. As for the young Marine, he was never right after that. He was sent away somewhere and we never heard from him again. Anyone ever here this one?

Editors Note: Yes, that story is true. A picture of the Man Eating Tiger also appears in this issue, see Page 16.

MEMOIRS

"PATCHES"



Patches as she sits on the Pope AFB, sporting a new paint job. The aircraft got its name from the paint that peeled from the body of the plane while it was employed to Southeast Asia. The C-130E returned there recently after getting a new paint job. No longer patchy, the plane still flies regularly for Pope, AFB crews.

For more than 40 years, the C-130 Hercules has carried troops, vehicles and armaments into battle. It has dropped paratroopers and supplies from the sky and provided humanitarian relief around the world. Despite the tough flights, rough landings and combat environments, the C-130 is still considered by many as one of the hardest working aircraft in the Air Force.

"These planes are really a testament to our heritage and a great product," said Capt. Jannell MacAulay of the 41st Airlift Squadron. "Most of the planes are older than their pilots. I feel honored to fly some of these planes knowing what they've done in the past, what they were capable of. "One such

plane is tail number 2-1817, more recently known as "Patches. "Born in 1962, one of Patches' first homes was Pope Air Force Base, in 1964. It returned to the base in February 2005. In the 41 years it spent away from North Carolina, it created quite a legacy. One of the aircraft's missions that made the history books took place in Khe Sanh, Vietnam, February 5th 1968.

Khe Sanh was only a few miles from the Demilitarization Zone, or DMZ, in South Vietnam and the Marines who held the base found themselves surrounded by enemy forces in January 1968. Airlift was the only means for bringing supplies in and out of the base. C-130's handled most of the missions that kept Khe Sanh alive despite the barrage of artillery that came with every landing.

Lt. Colonel Howard Dallman and his crew, assigned to the 345th Tactical Airlift Squadron, were scheduled to bring in 35,000 pounds of ammunition and a medical evacuation team from Danang to Khe Sanh Feb 5th. The guidance and control system at Khe Sanh was out, but the navigator believed they could make it in with an airborne radar approach. He was right, "1817" and its crew found the runway and landed, but only moments after touching down, the aircraft was hit by a shell that ignited the ammunition boxes in the cargo hold. The crew began fighting the fire, hoping the entire load would not explode and take a large piece of Khe Sanh with it. Colonel Dallman backed "1817" to a safer area on the runway, and with the help of the fire crews on the ground, the fire was extinguished.

The crew quickly unloaded the cargo and medical team. As they completed their task, the aircraft began to draw enemy fire once again. One of the tires was blown by a snipers bullet and mortars rained in from all directions. The crew stayed with the plane, changed the damaged wheel, loaded a Marine corporal and his out-of-commission bulldozer and experienced engine trouble all before taking off from the battered position.

"1817" was hit again as it left Khe Sanh, but was able to continue its flight. Colonel Dallman was awarded the Air Force Cross and his crew received Silver Stars for their actions that day. Since that time, "1817" has spent time at Dyess AFB, Texas, at Langley AFB, Va., and with the Air National Guard in Boise, Idaho. Upon returning the Pope AFB this year, "1817" had just received a new paint job. Maintenance crews thought it odd that some paint had started to peel back around the windows, but the plane was needed overseas, so the unrestricted C-130 took the long jump "across the pond."

The C-130 that arrived in Southwest Asia looked like a different aircraft than the one that left the United States only days earlier. The paint had not only peeled off around the windows, but in almost every other section of the plane. "The ground crews were calling it Spots and The Cheetah Plane and all kinds of names," said Major Chip Brown, 41st AS. "But the name that ended up sticking was the one Lt.Col. Polly Montgomery gave it Patches. "Most of the missions "Patches" flew were to shuttle troops and cargo into and out of the combat zone. Many of those missions were not easy.

Major Brown told of one such mission. "We were going in to Balad (Iraq) and we received some anti-aircraft artillery fire. Then, as we were putting the gear down and trying to accomplish checklists, a rocket propelled grenade went across the nose of the aircraft. We were the first plane coming into land after the field had been under attack. They thought they had calmed the attack down, but apparently it was still relatively hot."

"Patches" flew thousands of hours in Iraq and although maintainers tried to cover up the yellow spots left by peeling paint, it was a losing battle. The paint just would not stick. What mattered most was how "Patches" flew and there was no denying the aircraft's excellence. "Patches" was the most effective, least broken and most flown aircraft at the base for two consecutive months. When the plane returned to Pope in July for routine inspections, the maintenance crews couldn't believe it was the same C-130."We knew what was going on with the paint in the desert, but I was very surprised to see the extent of it," said Senior Master Sgt. Gregory House of the 43rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. "I was expecting to see leading edges and for the tail to be pretty yellow, but I never expected to see the back end of the plane

completely yellow." "Patches" was inspected and sent off for a face-lift. The new and improved paint job made a world of difference. "When she got back she was ugly," said Sergeant House. "Now she's a lot better looking and it's harder to pick her out in the crowd. "No longer patchy, the aircraft was up in the sky carrying on its legacy only hours after it returned from the depot." It's amazing what these planes have been through and they are still flying," said Captain MacAulay. "As much as the Air Force says that they're building newer planes to replace the C-130E models, they are still the workhorse of the Air Force. They do a lot of the work out there in the war zone. I'm honored for the experience I've had to fly them. It's been very rewarding and made the reason I joined the Air Force worthwhile. This is what I wanted to do it this is why I wanted to be a pilot."

By Lisa Terry McKeown
43rd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

SHORT ROUNDS

A MARINES PRIDE

By Phil Nuchereno

Some things in life are life long and will never change. While shopping today I encountered a young recently graduated boot camp Marine. He was wearing dress greens and had a sharpshooter badge. He was walking ten feet tall with his chest out. His mother was with him and you could see how proud she was parading her son in public. Reminded me of myself 39 years ago with my parents.

I starting thinking about Craig Tourte, Mike Powers, and all the other Khe Sanh brothers that post here that I'm sure experienced the same feeling that young marine did with his mother. It was a nice feeling going back in time upon seeing that young marine. Its funny how something like seeing that young marine can immediately bring out the pride. I'm sure each and every one of you can remember after boot camp how tall you walked. I'm glad after all these years I am still able to see a young man wearing a marine uniform walking so proud. That young marine today if just for a few seconds brought me back to a time when I was 19 years old. To a feeling I will never want to forget. At a time when I and all of you walked ten feet tall
Semper Fi

Phil

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MAIL CALL

Hello Tom,
My name is George Miramontez and I want to tell you that I had a pretty good time at the 2005 Khe Sanh Reunion this past July in Chicago. As you might already know, it was my first time at a reunion. I did not know any of the guys, though some looked familiar, I had a good time. It took me back a few years just reminiscing with the some of the guys about the same places we had been... It was definitely a pleasure meeting all you guys.

At first, I didn't know what to expect. But after being at the reunion, I want to upgrade my membership to a lifetime membership. My only regret was that I was not able to stay for the duration. I had made prior reservations for both Chicago and Washington D.C... Three days in Chicago, and four in DC. I had to see the wall for the first time. I arrived 1 day early in Chicago to meet as many of the guys as I could in the time allotted.

As much as I wanted to stay, I had to tear myself away from the reunion and go see the Vietnam Memorial. I had told Ron Shouse about my intentions, but he said not to go alone. I had no choice but to go alone. It had just been too many years of not being able to see it. Arriving in Washington D.C. I made arrangements for a 2 day tour for some of the monuments, with the Wall Memorial being on the 2nd tour. It was really not enough time for what I wanted to do, but the opportunity was finally here. After making arrangements at the Wyndam Hotel in D.C., I had some dinner and a couple of drinks at the bar, went back to my room and went to sleep.

When it came down to the wire, I was filled with extreme apprehension for my objective. After viewing some monuments, I knew in my heart what I had to do. I slowly walked over to the wall directory for the names that I knew. I slowly started walking toward the wall. Images of faces

started filling my mind, like pages in a book. I had no clue of what I was going to do, or how I was going to react at the wall. It was time to make peace and confront the ghosts of my past. With step I took, it became increasingly dif-ficult for me to retain my composure. Ron Shouse was right about what would happen. I continued at a slow pace feeling the hair on my arms bristle, while goose bumps tingled on my arms. When I found the names, I touched them and felt my eyes start to water, occasionally struggling to keep them dry. It was an electrifying ex-perience, so many memories. I felt at peace as I said a silent prayer, turned and left, touching the wall once more.

I felt much better after that and very satisfied that I had finally made it there. I took my time visiting the other monuments, went to a bar and reflected on what had transpired in just a week's time. Tom, I didn't know when my membership expired so I sent you this enclosed application with fees for a lifetime membership. This is a great organization, and I want to be part of it. I hope you are enjoying your retirement as much as I am mine. As always....

Semper Fi !
George Miramontez

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SHORT ROUNDS

Open Letter To All Our Beloved Corpsmen
By Ken Pipes B Co 1/26

Please forward to all our Marine Corpsmen. May God always protect and watch over these exceptionally Brave and Courageous Warriors, now and forever! Thanks Doc's for what you did, what you are doing and will always do--" Going Into the mouth of the guns for your Marines! "Blessings, Prayers and Semper Fidelis. With Great Respect.

Ken

From Roy Fleck:
Get My Dad's Goat

I joined the Navy, mostly to get my Dad's goat. He was a Marine who was wounded at Chosin during the Korean war. At the time I really didn't get along with my dad as most 17 year olds don't. As with the men in my family, I knew it was a duty and honor to serve even if it meant going to war myself. Still I wanted to do something in the medical field. In Corps School we were given "dream sheets" to see what we wanted to do after school. We had an old Chief who was an FMF Corpsman during Korea and Vietnam and instead of telling us how great FMF duty would be he told us up front that his job was to discourage us from going FMF because he was not going to send any pansies" (my words not his) to his beloved Marine Corps.

He told us how many seconds the average life of a corpsman was during a firefight (7 seconds), that corpsman, radiomen and officers were shot first in that order, that corpsmen made up the majority of the KIA's and then he took us to this hall which I called the hall of names and read off the names of corpsmen who had been awarded the Medal of Honor and what they did to deserve the medals (Navy FMF corpsmen account for the majority of MOH winners in the Navy).

But what made me realize that I had made the right decision was on my graduation from Field Medical Service School my Dad came up to me and told me that when he was wounded at the battle of Chosin a Corpsman came up to him and with bullets flying he dragged my father to safety and secured his wounds for transport. When he got to the MASH unit he asked about the corpsman who was not with his unit so he could thank him for saving his life. He was told that the corpsman died later that day trying to save another Marine.

He got up patted me on my shoulder and said. "Take good care of them." Oh by the way ,16 of us at corps school showed interest in being FMF corpsman. After the Chief's little "talk" only two of us stepped up. American by birth, U.S Navy by choice, FMF Corpsman by the grace of God.
Semper Fi

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POETRY

I WONDER

It's a vital link they used to say
Of that far off patch of blood red clay
Until we blew it up and walked away.
Was this reason gone astray?
So many names etched upon the wall
Of those who came and gave their all.
For freedom's future they had to fall.
Is there a name I don't recall?
I see them still, those gaunt drawn faces
Of men and boys from many races.
They appear in the damnedest places.
Isn't memory something time erases?
Now I'm left to wonder why
So many had to bleed and die
when we gave it up and still get by.
Is it any wonder I sometimes cry?

Allen D. Shoup

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INCOMING

A REUNION OF THANKS

By James Wodecki

A reunion between Dr. Geisler and Bob Moxley took place September 24th at 1330 hrs at the Hyatt Regency in Dallas, TX, at 300 Reunion St. downtown Dallas. Colors were presented by local ROTC.

Robert Murl Moxley was born in Portland, Oregon, being one of four children. His parents were both deaf mutes. To ease the burden on his parents. Bob was sent to live with his grandparents in Tumilo, Oregon. His mentor and grandfather taught bob how to hunt and fish. He also taught him the values of what people want and what people need and the honor of pride in every thing one does.

Bob enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1968, and completed basic training in San Diego, California. After basic he was assigned to Delta Company, 2nd platoon, second squad. Bob arrived in Vietnam December 25th Christmas, Morning 1968. His first assignment was with the First Battalion Ninth Marines. He participated in Operation Dewey Canyon and the taking of hill 1044. He was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" for his actions, wiping out a NVA Machine gun nest. Bob was shot in the helmet by an NVA sniper, the bullet was stopped by his helmet liner. It is a Vietnam souvenir he cherishes

Bob fought in Operation Apache Snow in April 1969 where he received the Navy Commendation with combat "V". Bob also fought at the Ashau Valley, Con Tien, Cam Lo, The Rock pile, and Vandergriff.

On June 12th, 1969 Bob's last fight was in Operation Utah Mesa at Khe Sanh, where he was severally wounded. He was hit in the left leg at the knee, he self applied a tourniquet to his leg. Bob then noticed his right arm was bleeding badly from an entrance and exit wound in his bicep, again he self applied another tourniquet.



Bob was stabbed by an enemy bayonet while fighting him off with his K-Bar. Bob passed out and was left for dead. He was placed in a poncho liner. By the Grace of God a helicopter door gunner retrieving the Marines who had been KIA, discovered Bob was alive. He informed the helicopter pilot. Bob was rushed to Charlie Med in Quang Tri.

Dr. Geisler and the other Surgeons at Charlie Med, had orders, and it was a general rule, if you can save a life by removing a limb, it was to be done. In stead Dr. Geisler spent four hours performing a delicate artery transplant that had only been attempted a few times in a combat situation. Without the benefit of special suture materials, Dr Geisler

transplanted an artery from Bobs leg, to his arm, saving both limbs.

Dr. Geisler came to Bob in the recovery room and said you are one lucky Marine. Bob said, just look at me! I look horrible. With his leg and arm in that had now turned green and black, in a sling. Dr. Geisler said, you came closer to loosing your arm than your leg and left the room. A corpsman talked



with Bob and informed him how lucky he was to have that surgeon take the time he did to save not only his life, but his leg and arm.

Bob's road to recovery started at Charlie Med. And ended nearly a year and a half later at the VA hospital in Portland Oregon, after stops in Yokohama Japan, Cherry Point, and Camp Lejuene, NC.

Bobs dream has been, to find that doctor, who gave him the life that he shouldn't have, and walk to the man on a leg he shouldn't have, and shake the hand of the man with a hand he shouldn't have, hug him, and thank him for what he did.

In 2004, Bob met Charlie Brown in Dallas at the Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion. Charlie works with Medal of Honor recipient Doc Ballard. Who operates the National Combat Medical Memorial & Youth Education Center. Bob asked him if he would help in finding his surgeon. In less than 6 months Bob received word from Charlie, he had located the surgeon who had operated on him. Dr. Geisler made numerous phone calls and cut through miles of red tape, and finally received bob's medical records. Which verified all the facts, the connection was made

Bob's Daughter and Son In Law, and their grandson also made the trip to Dallas for the historic meeting. Dr. Geisler's Son, and Daughter In Law accompanied by their daughter, also made the trip. I attended the ceremony with my Wife PJ, and several members of the Khe Sanh Veterans, VP Tom Eichler, Past President "Bulldog" Smith, and several more KSV from the Dallas area.

In a short but moving program, Bob finally met and shook the hand of the doctor who had saved his life. Bob presented the good doctor with a Khe Sanh Veterans "Doc" Medal, and their children exchanged gifts. After swapping stories, both the good doctor and Robert Moxley answered questions from those who had attended the ceremony, which will be the subject of a future documentary.

Bob now lives in the Mountains in Cove, Oregon. He is an avid a hunter, fisherman, and farmer. Bob is a healthy strong man, retired Marine, retired Postal Supervisor, and life member of the Khe Sanh Veterans. He and his wife Rita, are almost totally self sufficient, except when they go in to town for coffee and toilet paper once a month.

Dr. Geisler was born in Midland Texas on Feb 26 1936. He received his BS at the University of Notre Dame in 1957, and attended the St. Louis University School of Medicine in 1961. Dr. Geisler did his Residency and Internship at University Hospital of St. Louis, 1961-1966. his residency in Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery was at the University of Texas, Southwestern Medical School, Dallas 1966-1968.

Enlisted USN 1968, he served with Third Medical Battalion 3Rd Mar Div, Qunag Tri & Dong Ha, March to November 1969. He was discharged in 1970, with rank of Commander.

Still practicing Medicine in Dallas Texas, he and his wife Mary have three sons, a daughter, and nine grandchildren.

JUST A LITTLE THANK YOU LETTER
By Dale Lee

Hello Dale,
I have spent some time on this letter trying to find words that make sense and are meaningful to you. However, words have been hard to find because I am not sure if they can convey my heart to yours. So, dear friend, it is time to send this. I continue to look for words that convey my heart but if I keep looking I will never send this. It is like saying thank you to someone who has done you a great service. In reality "thank you" doesn't imply nearly enough description of what it means and how one really feels about the favor/service provided. Dale, thank you.

We really enjoyed seeing you and Sharron this summer. Your boat is great! I hope you used it as much as you wanted this summer and I hope your summer, and now fall, and summer again has and will be great.

I write because I have had many thoughts about you over the years and I want to tell you about them. I am not sure why I am doing this at this time, except that I should have done it long ago, and I want you to know how much I appreciate you. For some reason I feel close to you even though we rarely meet. I remember meeting you and Sharron, having beer and you introducing us to "salty dogs." I remember we went to the drive-in, you wearing your uniform (all Special Forces member were free), and the deer hunt with you and your father. I remember that you didn't talk much about Vietnam except some about your arrival there and how scared you were for a period of time, then, how bold you were because you were tired of being so scared. I don't know much about your experiences in Vietnam, but I do know you saw and experienced much tragedy to say the least.

I went into the Army Reserves, trained for Vietnam, but our unit was not called. Often I wonder if I had what it takes to do what you and over 2 million that were called and served had to do in Vietnam. Recently I found a web page that listed KIA. For the first time I looked up some of my friends names and my heart was saddened. I realized that possibly while I was playing or practicing baseball at the University of Utah, there were friends in firefights getting wounded or killed. These guys, you and many of your friends, had paid a high price. I know many Vietnam vets that returned to the states, who are paying a very high price, in trying to deal with regular, everyday life as the winds of memory and experience in trauma often return.

We have all had our major difficulties in our marriages, jobs, and with our kids. I am glad Marcia had hung in there with me as I can be a jerk at times. I don't know the problems you have struggled with, but I am sure there are some that only death can take away. I want you to know that I honor you in every sense of the word. I appreciate that you served your country while, at times, your country did not serve you. I want you to clearly know that your service and life have been worth while. I don't know where you are, concerning God, but I am thankful that he saw fit to help you and I get to an age that we can look back and be thankful and appreciative that He has surrounded us with people who love us, and has given us the grace to work out our problems and difficulties. I am glad our lives have crossed paths. I can and do tell others, that I have a friend who served our country, who saw all he didn't wish to see, and more. This friend returned, made a life, has people that love him, has grandchildren that will be proud of him, works hard, and now owns a boat to relax on, as much as he and his wife can.

Well, my friend, you have earned so much more, you have run the race and for us all the finish line is getting closer. I pray that you have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and I pray that you and yours are protected from the enemy's plans, and that pain does not knock on your door; and if it does, that God continue to grant you the grace to handle it. You are an ***AWESOME MAN, A MAN"S MAN.*** America is a better place because of you, and I am a better person because I know you. As I re-read this, it seems it may not be as clear as it should. I hope this enters your heart and brightens your day, because there are so many Americans and others that are thankful to you even though they don't know you personally. Continue to love your wife, children, and grandchildren, and know that you are an awesome MAN and I honor you...THANK YOU!!!Your friend,
Larry Williams

INCOMING

THE HIGH GROUND

By Robert Clark

A couple of years ago someone asked me if I still thought about Vietnam. I nearly laughed in their face. How do you stop thinking about it? Every day for the last twenty-four years, I wake up with it, and go to bed with it. But this is what I said. "Yea, I think about it. I can't quit thinking about it. I never will. But, I've also learned to live with it. I'm comfortable with the memories. I've learned to stop trying to forget and learned instead to embrace it. It just doesn't scare me anymore."

A psychologist once told me that NOT being affected by the experience over there would be abnormal. When he told me that, it was like he'd just given me a pardon. It was as if he said, "Go ahead and feel something about the place, Bob. It isn't going nowhere. You're going to wear it for the rest of your life. Might as well get to know it."

A lot of my "brothers" haven't been so lucky. For them the memories are too painful, their sense of loss too great. My sister told me of a friend she has, whose husband was in the Nam. She asks this guy when he was there. Here's what he said, "Just last night." It took my sister a while to figure out what he was talking about. JUST LAST NIGHT. Yeah I was in the Nam. When? JUST LAST NIGHT. During sex with my wife. And on my way to work this morning. Over my lunch hour. Yeah, I was there.

My sister says I'm not the same brother that went to Vietnam. My wife says I won't let people get close to me, not even her. They are probably both right. Ask a vet about making friends in Nam. It was risky. Why? Because we were in the business of death, and death was with us all the time. It wasn't the death of, "If I die before I wake." This was the real thing. The kind where boys scream for their mothers. The kind that lingers in your mind and becomes more real each time you cheat it. You don't want to make a lot of friends when the possibility of dying is that real, that close. When you do, friends become a liability.

A guy named Bob Flanigan was my friend. Bob Flanigan is dead. I put him in a body bag one sunny day, April 29, 1969. We'd been talking, only a few minutes before he was shot, about what we were going to do when we got back in the world. Now, this was a guy who had come in country the same time as me. A guy who was loveable and generous. He had blue eyes and sandy blond hair. When he talked, it was with a soft drawl. Flanigan was a hick and he knew it. That was part of his charm. He didn't care. Man, I loved this guy like the brother I never had. But, I screwed up. I got too close to him. Maybe I didn't know any better. But I broke one of the unwritten rules of war. DON'T GET CLOSE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING TO DIE. Sometimes you can't help it.

You hear vets use the term "buddy" when they refer to a guy they spent the war with. "I and this buddy of mine. "Friend" sounds too intimate, doesn't it. "Friend" calls up images of being close. If he's a friend, then you are going to be hurt if he dies, and war hurts enough without adding to the pain. Get close; get hurt. It's as simple as that.

In war you learn to keep people at that distance my wife talks about. You become so good at it, that twenty years after the war, you still do it without thinking. You won't allow yourself to be vulnerable again. My wife knows two people who can get into the soft spots inside me. My daughters. I know it probably bothers her that they can do this. It's not that I don't love my wife, I do. She's put up with a lot from me. She'll tell you that when she signed on for better or worse she had no idea there was going to be so much of the latter. But with my daughters it's different.

My girls are mine. They'll always be my kids. Not marriage, not distance, not even death can change that. They are something on this earth that can never be taken away from me. I belong to them. Nothing can change that. I can have an ex-wife; but my girls can never have an ex-father. There's the difference. I can still see the faces, though they all seem to have the same eyes. When I think of us I always see a line of "dirty grunts" sitting on a paddy dike. We're caught in the first gray silver between darkness and light. That first moment when we know we've survived another night, and

the business of staying alive for one more day is about to begin. There was so much hope in that brief space of time. It's what we used to pray for. "One more day, God, One more day."

And I can hear our conversations as if they'd only just been spoken. I still hear the way we sounded, the hard cynical jokes, our morbid senses of humor. We were scared to death of dying, and trying our best not to show it. I recall the smells, too. Like the way cordite hangs on the air after a fire-fight. Or the pungent odor of rice paddy mud. So different from the black dirt of Iowa. The mud of Nam smells ancient, somehow. Like it's always been there. And I'll never forget the way blood smells, stuck and drying on my hands. I spent a long night that way once. That memory isn't going anywhere.

I remember how the night jungle appears almost dream-like, as the pilot of a Cessna buzzes overhead, dropping parachute flares until morning. That artificial sun would flicker and make shadows run through the jungle.

It was worse than not being able to see what was out there sometimes. I remember once looking at the man next to me as a flare floated overhead. The shadows around his eyes were so deep that it looked like his eyes were gone. I reached over and touched him on the arm; without looking at me he touched my hand. "I know man. I know." That's what he said. It was a human moment. Two guys a long way from home and scared sh"tless. "I know man." And at that moment he did.

God I loved those guys. I hurt every time one of them died. We all did. Despite our posturing. Despite our desire to stay disconnected, we couldn't help ourselves. I know why Tim O'Brien writes his stories. I know what gives Bruce Weigle the words to create poems so honest I cry at their horrible beauty. It's love. Love for those guys we shared the experience with.

We did our jobs like good soldiers, and we tried our best not to become as hard as our surroundings. We touched each other and said, "I know." Like a mother holding a child in the middle of a nightmare, "It's going to be all right." We tried not to lose touch with our humanity. We tried to walk that line. To be the good boys our parents had raised and not to give into that unnamed thing we knew was inside us all.

You want to know what frightening is. It's a nineteen-year-old-boy who's had a sip of that power over life and death that war gives you. It's a boy who, despite all the things he's been taught, knows that he likes it. It's a nineteen-year-old who's just lost a friend, and is angry and scared and, determined that, "Some *@#*s going to pay." To this day, the thought of that boy can wake me from a sound sleep and leave me staring at the ceiling.

As I write this, I have a picture in from of me. It's of two young men. On their laps are tablets. One is smoking a cigarette. Both stare without expression at the camera. They're writing letters. Staying in touch with places they would rather be. Places and people they hope to see again.

The picture shares space in a frame with one of my wife. She doesn't mind. She knows she's been included in special company. She knows I'll always love those guys who shared that part of my life, a part she never can. And she understands how I feel about the ones I know are out there yet. The ones who still answer the question, "When were you in Vietnam?" "Hey, man. I was there just last night."

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From Supreme Allied Commander Europe

Dear Chaplain Ray Stubbe,
Thank you for your thoughtfulness in sending me the book, *Battalion of Kings: A Tribute to our Fallen Brothers who died because of the Battlefield of Khe Sanh, Vietnam.* I was delighted to receive such a fine historical book of our forces in support of their nation. Thank you also for the honor of mentioning my involvement as a First Lieutenant and the brief sketch about my father. I look forward to reading it at my earliest opportunity. This is an excellent resource and will be a valuable part of my library.

Thank you for thinking of me, as well as for all that you have done on behalf of the Corps. I wish you continued success.

James L. Jones
General, U.S. Marine Corps

SHORT ROUNDS

USMC SPECIAL FORCES?

By Mike Fishbaugh

I always thought our Recon and Snipers were our Special Forces, times are changing:

Marines get OK for Special Forces

The News and Observer November 02, 2005.The Marine Corps is getting its own special operations command, and its headquarters and the bulk of the 2,600-strong force will be at Camp Lejeune, the Department of Defense announced Tuesday.

The command will include a special operations regiment, a unit that trains foreign troops and a support group. Part of the regiment will be stationed at Camp Pendleton, Calif. Some of the command's Marines will come from a Corps expansion authorized in the current federal budget, while others will come from existing units, said Major Douglas Powell, a Marine spokesman at the Pentagon. There's no firm start date, but the command's first leader, Brigadier General Dennis J. Hejlik, has already been chosen. Hejlik not only has combat experience, but has served as chief of staff at U.S. Special Operations Command, an umbrella command that oversees Army, Navy and Air Force units -- and which also will include the new Marines force.

The new force is a natural, said Daniel Goure, a defense analyst with the Lexington Institute, a think tank in Arlington, Va. For years, the Marines have trained and used troops for some special operations missions. "What you've got is units that are already there, or nearly already there," he said. "This is a clear recognition of existing skills."

Also, he said, by maintaining a tight relationship with the Corps, the Marine special operations unit would avoid problems that special operations units in the other services report, such as little control over their transportation, problems with communications systems and issues getting backup from conventional troops with assets such as armored vehicles.

For years the Corps has been inching toward a full role in the special operations community, which is best known for the Army's Green Berets -- whose headquarters is at Fort Bragg -- and the Navy's SEALs. The U.S. Special Operations Command and the Marines signed a memorandum of agreement in November 2001 to start working together more. Since then, said Powell, Marines have worked with special ops troops from other services everywhere from the mountains of Afghanistan to the streets of Fallujah.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the elite special operations units have been worked harder than at any point in history. While they've been getting increasingly more funding, Goure said, they've also been losing seasoned veterans to the Army's Delta Force and the Navy's SEAL Team 6. Those secretive anti-terrorist units, he said, are reportedly growing in size. Also, many veteran special forces troops have been lured into the booming private security industry, where their skills can command salaries of more than $200,000 a year. Meanwhile, the pool of Army, Navy and Air Force personnel who meet the rigorous requirements for recruits to special operations units has remained flat. So it makes sense, Goure said, to turn to the Marines, the one service that has an all-but untapped pool of troops who fit the requirements.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

VETERANS RECORDS ACCESSIBLE ONLINE

By Charlie Taliaferro

The National Archives now has a webpage where veterans can request a copy of their DD-214. It is at: http://www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html A military veteran, or the next of kin of a deceased, former member of the military can use this webpage. The next of kin can be any of the following: surviving spouse that has not remarried, father, mother, son, daughter, sister, or brother.

Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online website.

We Get Mail

Tom,

I did not know of the existence of the Khe Sanh Veterans, or I would have joined long ago. I was a member of Bravo Company, 1st Platoon, 1st Battalion, and Ninth Marines. Lieutenant Carter was our Platoon leader.

Although it was years ago, one story always remains fresh in my mind. We were out on an ambush one night when it was so dark, you could hardly see your hand in front of your face. I was with another member of the platoon who had just recently arrived in Vietnam.

Suddenly I heard movement directly in front of our position. I told the new member to find some cover as I was going to issue a challenge prior to taking any action, which would compromise our position.

I was scared to death, and as we were taught shouted "who's there", a voiced replied, "third platoon dummy", and made an additional comment which I won't print. I found out later that everyone else had been told that the third platoon would be linking up with us. To this day, I do not remember being so informed. I know you do not challenge the enemy when you are on an ambush, yet I still do not know why I chose to do so, a few lives being saved. I would really like to meet that Marine from the third platoon some day, to see if he remembers as vividly as I do.

Paul Kaspar
B Co 1/9

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SHORT ROUNDS

WHAT SEMPER FI MEANS TO ME

By Joe Moring E Co 2/9

It means belonging to a special organization that not just anyone can join, or endure and complete its extreme discipline.

It means being screamed at, and humiliated in front of others, having your rifle field stripped and stuck inside your pockets, threatened with being sent to the brig when you have done nothing wrong, and made to do push-ups in the rain and mud, until you need help just to get to your feet. After all that agony, you're called to attention, and asked by your DI if you want to quit. You respond with a resounding NO, and are again made to do push ups. But on Graduation Day, that same DI finally calls you Marine. That's Semper Fi.

Even under conditions of extreme weather, war, illness, fear, filth, and hunger, you always know that the Marines next to you will always be there for you, as you will be for them. That's Semper Fi. When you find a quiet place after a battle, or firefight, and you're still shaking, you say a prayer, or shed some tears for a lost friend (s), or even a few for yourself, you pick up and continue. That's Semper Fi.

When you have been in the field, and re-supply gets hard, you find a small can of peaches that were forgotten at the bottom of your pack. The peaches are all yours, but instead, you call neighboring Marines, and everyone takes a sip of juice, and part of a peach. That's Semper Fi.

You return home to a Nation where a large part of it speaks out against the war you fought, you still hold your head up, and feel a sense of honor for serving this same Nation. That's Semper Fi.

When you hear the question over the years from the young and old, with a voice of admiration and respect " You Were a Marine?" That's Semper Fi.

When you are at a Veteran's Day ceremony and toward the end of the performance the band, the orchestra plays a medley of the Armed Forces tunes. The orchestra leader asks if those who served will stand when their branch of service's song is played. Many stand from the Army, Air Force, and Navy. Only a Few, Proud, Marines for the Marine Corps Hymn, That's Semper Fi.

To me Semper Fi is more then just some secret code, or hand shake like a Fraternity, or some men's social golf club. It's a tribute only few can render to another, who has earned the right to be called... a Marine.

MEMOIRS

MY TOUR WITH KILO COMPANY 3/26

By Brian Mahoney

I joined the marines in 1964 after graduating from Bay Shore High School in N.Y. Three guys who played football with me also joined on a dare. Three out of us four made it home safe. In 1964 the Vietnam War had started to pick up. At that time, Marine boot camp lasted 20 weeks. It was later shortened when the Vietnam War really escalated. My first assignment was as machine gunner with 1st Bn., 6th Marine Regiment at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

I would meet the future C/O of Kilo Company while stationed at Las Pulgas, Camp Pendelton, California. Captain Delanor Bynum was an imposing figure, 6'2, 220 Lbs, and could have been a model for the Marine Corps recruiting poster. He walked into the barracks one Sunday morning while I was reading a playboy magazine. He knocked me on my ass and told me to put away the %&%& book and try reading a Marine Corps Manual. This was our first meeting but would not be our last.

We began training for Vietnam, and were given our last 96 hour liberty pass. I thought about flying to Ft. Hood Texas, to visit my Brother Michael and his wife, Liz, but ran into a buddy of mine who I had served with at Camp Lejeune. Carl Wuestenhoefer, with whom I had done some heavy partying in Santa Domingo in 1965. He told me of this bar where the girls would dance topless if you put money in the jukebox. This was before Topless Bars became the rage. So he, another Marine and Joe Baranoski, and I headed for town. We were not asked for Identification, so we ordered a few beers.

While awaiting the pleasure of the topless ladies, the local police entered the bar and asked everyone for their identification. I handed one of the officers, Carl's identification card. He looked at me and asked me to spell "Wuestenhoefer". I replied "how many chances do I get". All three of us were then placed in handcuffs and transported to the local jail. At the time it was funny, until we learned we would be spending our last liberty in jail. If anyone ever asked me if I had ever been arrested, I reply yes, for not knowing how to spell Wuestenhoefer".

My military career was not going well at all. I would run into the Captain several more times. My Lieutenant was a mustang officer named Lemoine. He was the one who had to go to bat for me with the captain each time I screwed up. He informed the Captain that I was a good field Marine, but acted like an idiot on liberty. The lieutenant once joked that my MOS should have been changed to "1600 Liberty".

The original 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines bordered an APA navel ship out of San Diego in the fall of 1966. I remember working all night loading the magazines with all kinds of ammo. It seemed like it was enough ordinance to fight WWII. Again. There were several ships taking us to Vietnam,; I remember the USS Lenawee having a purple heart on its bridge. A sailor told me it had been hit by a Japanese Kamikaze in WWII. It looked so old I couldn't believe it was still in service. Kilo Company almost never made it to Viet Nam. A typhoon named "Ida" almost sank us on the Lenawee. When the typhoon started we were sitting down at chow on the mess deck. I remember food trays flying all over the place, with both Marines, and Sailors, being thrown across the deck like rag dolls.

We retreated to our squad bay that had aluminum framed canvas racks six or seven high. Everybody was seasick and the decks had about two inches of vomit sliding like waves up and down. One of the seasick Marines was lying under the fresh air vent in an attempt to get some air when he got hit by a torrent of sea water right in the face. He jumped up and yelled "abandon ship." Everybody headed for the hatch until we all realized, there was no place to go in the middle of the South China Sea.

We later found out how close we all came to sinking. Another ship had lost its steering ability, and came within a couple of meters of hitting our ship in the convoy. The ship lost two lifeboats and the steel davits were bent like pretzels. Scuttlebutt had it that a navy chief won a Navy Cross for crawling into a compartment that had potential toxic fumes and fixed the problem, saving many lives. We were never told anything about what actually happened

and had to rely on rumors.

When we stopped at the Naval Base in the Philippines, we were granted liberty. At that time, they had in place what they referred to as "Cinderella Liberty". This meant you had to return to the ship before midnight, or face severe discipline. We always headed for the town of Olongapo to the Shamrock Bar. It was well known for the pretty bar girls who treated you like a king. Of course all they really cared about was how much money you spent buying their "Saigon Tea" (colored water), yet you were charged for champagne.

On one of those trips, Sgt. Jim Dearden and I were drinking with two of the girls. Mine was named Lydia Gome. She had a tight dress and a pushup bra. I actually found myself falling in love with a hooker. At that time I really didn't care because I figured I only had a few months to live after we arrived in Vietnam. The aircraft carrier FDR pulled into Subic Bay with thousands of sailors who had been to sea for months. They had plenty of cash and were all looking for a little fun. One of them made the mistake of dancing with "my girl".

I said to Dearden "I'm going to beat the shit out of that squid". Jim was a NCO but he was as drunk as I was. He said "go ahead Jake, I don't like sailors either". I got up to confront the sailor, we had some words and I took a slow motion swing at him. He ducked and I caught Lydia in her jaw. The bar erupted in a huge fight between Sailors and Marines, and I got knocked to the floor. Dearden told me to get out of the bar before the Shore Patrol arrived. As I stumbled down the stairs, a Filipino Police officer tried to stop me, I knocked him down and fled from the bar.

I started to run down the main street. The cop got up, gave chase, and actually began to shoot at me. I observed that my arm was bleeding pretty bad, and tried to hide in some bushes. I was surrounded, and placed under arrest by some very angry Philippine Cops. Fortunately the Shore Patrol arrived and took custody of me. When they found out we were on our way to Vietnam, they released me in the custody of two other Marines from my unit; Sergeant Nunez and Corporal McClelen, who were as drunk as I was. Nunez carried me back to the ship while McClelen cleared a path.

They thought I had been shot by the police. In fact a bar girl had actually stabbed me during the fight with the sailors. On the way back to the ship we began making remarks to sailors on the ship and were surrounded and outnumbered. A Navy Chief attempted to intervene, but the sailors kicked our asses. The civilian authorities notified the ship about our actions the night before and Captain Bynum was really pissed. He called me into his office, showed me my warrant for promotion to Corporal, then proceeded to tear it up. I left his office as a PFC.

When we arrived in Vietnam, Captain Bynum acted like he wanted to win the MOH, or die trying. Although he was always hard on me, he would not ask anyone to do anything he would not do. After Debarking from the Lenawee we loaded up onto trucks to be taken to a Hill in Cobi Tan Valley, located just outside Phu Bai, a province called Thu Thien. It was just prior to monsoon season, ensuring our misery. We were busy digging foxholes, loading sandbags, and setting up our fields of fire.

I was setting up the M-60 machine gun with sand bags when I heard a mortar round fire behind me. The mortar team was adjusting their elevations and covering what was known as dead space. One of the fired rounds fell short and landed in one of our fox holes, killing the two young Marines. These two guys never saw an enemy, never fired a shot, both killed by "friendly fire". This was the beginning of thirteen months of total insanity that would affect every one of us forever.

One day just before the monsoon season, we were sitting on our hill watching the valley below us when someone spotted two VC. Bob Corsa took squad one down into the valley to try to surprise the VC. We were all boots, as far as any real combat was concerned. It was something that should never have been done, because we learned the hard way, how savvy the VC was. I told Corsa that I could probably get them from about 1000 meters with the M-60. Corsa wanted to get closer. We continued to advance towards them when they spotted us and ran away. We went after them like

the cowboys would go after the Indians. We were led into an ambush. My A gunner, Ron Zacker detonated a bobby trap. I was in front of Zacker when the loud explosion made everyone hit the ground. I looked at Ron who was black and dazed. He laws in such bad shape; Corsa was also hit in the head and didn't look much better. The third man hit was our radioman Flynn, who got hit in the groin. I fired into the tree line just for the hell of it, but the VC were invisible. Joe Beck dragged Zacker out of harms way. Everyone was finally helped to cover. The corpsman gave first aid and tried to get a med-evac chopper for our wounded.

Corsa got morphine and was screaming obscenities at the VC. Beck was both emotionally upset and extremely pissed, that one of his men was down. He took the gun from me and wanted to kill every VC in the area. Joe wanted to do something, yet felt helpless because the enemy would never show themselves. They were smarter than us. After Joe took the gun, I went back to carry Corsa to the med– evac chopper, and told him he'd be all right, trying to keep him calm. I didn't know if he was going to make it or not. The chopper finally arrived after the Corpsman screamed over the radio for what seemed like forever. We popped a green smoke grenade to indicate the LZ for the pilot to land.

Another guy and myself carried Corsa. I thought we were going to be shot at or blown up. The VC loved to shoot down choppers. Ron Zacker had to hop on one foot to get aboard because there was no one available to carry him, and he obviously didn't want to wait. Twenty-five years later Ron Zacker would tell me what happened. The chopper was hit several times by small arm's fire. I didn't know this because of all the noise. Ron would spend a year in a hospital in Japan. They tried to amputate his leg twice but he wouldn't let them, and still walks with a limp. Corsa was sent to a hospital in the States. He hasn't fully recovered from his wounds. He retired from NYPD because he was having seizures.

Another day we were running one of the many patrols from our hill. Lt. Dobie was leading the squad on a ridge when a sniper opened up on us. We were walking along the top of a large bomb crater and everyone dove into the crater for cover. I felt safe in the crater and saw no need to return fire at an invisible enemy. The Lieutenant yelled get the machinegun going, so I jumped up on top of the crater and wasted about 50 rounds of M-60 ammunition. I fired in the direction of the sniper and he fired a couple of shots back till everyone decided to call it a day, and continued on their way.

During this time I considered our patrols a total waste of time. The VC and the NVA always picked the time to do battle. It would be like that the entire tour of duty. The next day another patrol went out and the sniper fired again. This time I wasn't near the bomb crater. The two Marines, who jumped in just like I did the day before, were blown up by a 155mm bobby trap. I felt lucky and guilty at the same time. Surviving Nam wasn't training or how tough you were. It was pure simple luck. After a few months in country, the many patrols became a haze to me. We were more concerned about the elements than the VC.

One night the entire first platoon went out at night to ambush a large NVA force, that was detected moving by a railroad track. We walked half the night through a very heavy rain. We were exhausted and miserable. I thought if we do find the enemy, their going to kick our tired asses. After realizing that the entire platoon was lost, an officer told us to just stay where we were and do the best we could to stay awake. We wrapped ourselves in our ponchos and tried to watch for the NVA. The next day I woke up and saw everyone in the squad sound asleep. We could have had our throats cut during the night. Exhaustion had overcome any fear. We got away with one that day.

Another day we went into a village with two PF's leading the company. The first couple of villages had Vietnamese going about their business as if we weren't there. The women totally ignored us. The kids would hound us for candy or money. The proud Vietnamese women resented us for turning their children into beggars. There were never any men in these villages. They were either with the VC, or dead. After we walked through the third ville, the two PF's came running past me yelling "Beau Cu VC". Our point fire team had been ambushed. The point man, a PFC named Plott, had been shot. The rest of the team was pinned down.

The call went out for machine guns up. My team consisting of Beets, Blevins, and Kent, hauled ass to the front of the company, along with Sgt. Nunez.

The VC had hit and ran, they were invisible. Plott was dead. We looked for anything to shoot at. The Corpsman who attended Plott was crying. Nunez or Beck spotted heads bobbing up and down in the rice paddy. We all started firing at the movement. I went through a belt of machine gun ammo. Even if we killed ten or twenty, the VC would go to great lengths to hide their dead. They would always be invisible. It started to get dark and the powers to be, wanted us out of this area.

We crossed a canal with Plott now wrapped in a poncho. Captain Wildprett ordered my-team to cover the company withdrawal across the rice paddy. The VC waited until the troops started to cross the open paddy. The shit then hit the fan. A squad was trapped on the other side and the company was taking heavy fire. I was firing the gun as much as I could. Joe Beck was firing and directing my gun at the same time. Nunez was shooting and trying to get artillery support on the VC. Kent was bringing as much ammo as he could carry. He tripped with an ammo can and I almost blew his head off.

The VC were shooting at us and dirt was kicking up all around us. I was scared stiff. If I could have disappeared, I would have. It was a miracle that nobody in the gun team was hit. The trapped squad made it across the canal and Sergeant Ives blew us a kiss in gratitude. Artillery and air support started to pound the VC, and it was over as quickly it began. We eventually made it back to Phu Bai and we were all very glad to be alive. Our gun team was put in for Bronze Stars, but they gave it to one of the Mortar Men behind us.

My A-Gunner Joe Beck had been with me since our days at Camp Pendleton. He actually became my squad leader in Vietnam, after I was busted twice. He had a great attitude, and never complained about anything. His Father was a career Marine, and I accused him of wanting to follow in his Dad's footsteps. He should have been an Officer, nothing fazed him. He always displayed leadership abilities. The only time he deviated from his care free attitude was when someone from the company was KIA. I always had the attitude that the Corps had messed over me, and I constantly bitched about every thing. Joe and I saw a lot of combat together. Unlike the others in the platoon, I was already a machine gunner prior to us deploying to Vietnam, and was not as Gung Ho as the others.

Ron Zacker was also A-Gunner in our machine gun team. I liked Ron because he bitched as much as I did. Zack was as strong as a bull. He could hump the hills with extra ammo and those silly tripods with the best of them. Zack was badly wounded early in the tour. Joe and I both thought highly of him. As close as we all were, when someone got hit and left, it was like they never existed. It was like if you put it out of your mind, it did not happen.

Richie Clark was a Navy Corpsman assigned to our platoon. Richie was from Babylon L.I., about two miles from where I grew up in Bay Shore. We became friends probably because we felt close due to our home town proximity. Richie was very cocky and not liked by the senior NCO's. One day this corpsman was checking the troops for VD. It was called "A Pecker Check". Richie approached the Company Gunny and said, "whip it out Gunny" .The Gunny was furious. He said: "Clark I've been married over twenty years and I don't need anybody to be checking me". Clark was unfazed. He told the Gunny he had his orders and again told the Gunny "Whip it out." I'm convinced that Clark fate changed that day. Every time the grunts went out on an ambush, it seemed they had Clark with them.

1st Sergeant Ben Goddard was a Marines, Marine; he was responsible for implementing all of Captain Bynum's orders. Every time he saw me he would say the same thing; "Mahoney, I am going to make a Marine of you yet", and took a playful swing at me with the shillelagh he always carried. Everyone in the platoon had the greatest respect for him. Even in the 100 degree heat of the jungle, he would hump the hills with all the young Marines. Even the scout dog we had with us, suffered from heat stroke and had to be med-evaced.

We once gave him an AK-47 inscribed by all the men from Kilo Company. He extended for another tour when we left, and suffered a near fatal wound to his neck. He once remarked that when he retired he was going to have a PFC in Dress Blues, chauffeur him around in a limousine. We all said we would be honored to volunteer for that assignment.

Don" Moe" Miller was a rifleman with Corsas squad in first platoon. Moe was a character right out of a war movie. He was from Zanesville Ohio. He always reminded everyone of this very important fact. He should have been from Kentucky or Tennessee, because he had those boonie instincts of Davy Crockett or Daniel Boone. He wore a pair of black lace panties on his helmet that was sent by his girlfriend. Moe was always our point man. If there were enemy in the area he could sense it. If there was a trip wire, Moe could usually find it. My aunt was sending me copies of the N.Y. Daily News, and Moe would always ask me for the funnies. The series that interested us the most was a series of articles called TEEN WISE. It gave teenagers advice on their problems. What a hoot. Here we were in a war and reading advice on how to handle adolescent problems.

Sgt. Victor Oliver Nunez was weapons platoon sergeant. He was from Mexico City. He joined the Marines after seeing John Wayne in "The Sands of Iwo Jima". He was on his second of three tours in Nam. He was wounded seven times; three of those times with us. He was very popular with the troops, and knew how to treat people. He always had a smile on his face. I use to kid him by calling him the "Human Magnet," and the "Human Dog Target". He would laugh at my New York accent, and tell me "Jake, say Coffee".

One night we laid in an open field in a defensive position. It was pouring and windy and we were Freezing our asses off. Vic and I huddled for warmth. I told him the next day that we got engaged last night. We had Amtrac's with us and their guys were starting the engines for heat. One of the grunts got close to the engine for warmth. While the poor grunt was trying to get some warmth the Amtrac Marine stood on top and inadvertently pissed on him. I said to Nunez "everybody pisses on the grunts", Nunez laughed; he loved being a grunt in machine guns.

One night we went out on ambushes to a location known as Rabbit Site. We usually went out about 1500 meters before we set up. On this night it was the monsoon season, and was it ever a wet miserable night. We decided to set up a phony ambush so we could get back to our base. We all began firing. When I opened up with the machine gun I was to close to Richie and I think it later had an effect on his hearing. We radioed back to the CP that our ambush site had been compromised, and requested that we return. Our ploy did not work and we were ordered to set it up again at another location.

After a few months Clark transferred to Recon. I think if he stayed with us he figured the Gunny would eventually get him killed. On rare occasions, we were in hardbacks at Phu Bai. They put us on alert to be choppered to pull out recon patrols. These standbys were called Sparrow hawk. One day corporal Tony Rosell got drunk and began yelling "Sparrow Hawk on the Road". We fell out in full combat gear reading to go. We were halfway to the chopper pads when we found out it was all a joke. The next day 1st Sergeant Goddard had Corporal Rosell wearing a large field pack marching up and down the road, in 100 degree heat.

On another occasion Recon was actually surrounded. We landed about 200 clicks from them and climbed a hill to link up. The point man from recon had a bullet strike a grenade he was carrying, and it was deflected, yet left him only with a nasty burn. Their Lieutenant had taken over his position and was killed. Recon was a hairy job, so they had priority in extracting them from an area. Our squad set up a perimeter and cleared an LZ. You could hear the NVA all around us but couldn't see them. A Huey came in and we started firing so Recon could get out.

It was starting to get dark and we could hear the NVA moving closer. Somebody had a small flashlight and signaled another chopper to get us out. If we stayed there overnight we would be over run by the NVA. A chopper hovered at the LZ and we had one minute to get on. Instead of a Huey they sent a Chinook. We crawled up the ramp as the chopper

long. They caught us in an open area with artillery and mortars. We hauled ass for a wood line. I never made it. A rocket exploded near me and I took shrapnel. The blast dislocated my knee. I looked down at my leg expecting it to be gone. I think the rocket hit a soft spot in the ground which absorbed most of the blast. I crawled to the tree line and started digging a hole. I thought the human wave assault was coming next. The NVA were no longer invisible. We later learned we were out numbered 5 to 1.

There were a lot of yells for corpsmen, one wrapped my leg and put a tag on me. He said its all right Jake, you're out of here. It started to rain heavy. I was in a daze. It was like a dream. I didn't even recognize the corpsman. I didn't know were Beck was. The choppers started to come in to take out the wounded. I waited because I wasn't that badly wounded.

When they finally put me on a chopper I was happy to get out. A gunny sergeant with a head wound held my hand the whole flight. I think he was in shock. We landed at a place called C-2. I waited for a while, while they treated the badly wounded. I felt like such an asshole being there. I had trouble walking, but my wounds were minor compared to most of the guys. I regret leaving till this day. They wrapped me up and I eventually went back to help defend Dong Ha. I was on crutches when I ran into my old buddy Jim Dearden. He threw a grenade and it was either thrown back or landed short and got him in the leg.

Sirens went off which meant incoming! Jim and I headed for a trench. Jim had a six pack of cold beer. He also had a portable record player and one record. We spent the next couple of hours drinking beer and singing "Grooving on a Sunday Afternoon", by the Young Rascals. Dong Ha was getting heavy fire from the North, and we could care less. We were getting our load on and weren't concerned with the incoming. From Dong Ha they moved us to defend Khe Sanh. It later would become known as The Siege.

The base was taking heavy rocket and mortar fire. The veterans could hear the rounds when they left the tubes. We would head for the ditches as soon as we heard the distinct noise. The guys with less experience would pile on top of us after the first round landed. I had a new guy say I'm sorry for landing on you. I said, " that's alright, can you get three or four more guys on top of me".

When it was time to rotate home, the Marine Corps gave us the option of waiting longer in-country or leaving on a ship two weeks early. Joe Beck decided he would wait for a plane home. I said give me a row boat and a couple of oars and I'd leave now. If you stayed and took the fast plane ride home you could get killed. Most of the guys not wanting to take the risk, had to take a boring two weeks at sea.

We pulled out of Danang harbor in the fall of 1967. When the ship cleared Viet Nam, one of the grunts yelled "IN COMING' every body in the squad bay nervously laughed. This was the first time in over a year we felt safe. I told somebody I didn't think the NVA had any submarines. A month before the tour of 3/26 had ended they had suffered over 40% causalities in four days. We had caught the heaviest combat at the end of our tour.

I went to the wall
Today and I cried

I cried for the living
And I cried for those
Who died

I cried for myself
Because I came home

Someday I will join
Them and not be alone

I cried for the dreams
That will never unfold

For the love unspoken
That will never be told

I cried for my daughter
And my wife at my
side

For the horror and
Anguish covered by
Pride

I cried for a nation
So absorbed in its sin

It could turn its back
On its finest young
Men.

I cried for my brothers
Who still live in hell

With no one to turn to
Their stories to tell

I went to the Wall
today and cried

Larry Richards A&B Co 3rd Recon



FINAL TRIBUTE FOR CHARLIE GOODBYE MY FRIEND

By Neil Kenny Lima Co 3/26

The steady thumping of compressed air, that distinct sound of a Huey Gunship, echoed across the hallowed ground coupled with the volley of fire from a firing squad, as we departed the National Cemetery of Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. With family and friends having gone, we few, we band of brothers stood as one, for a last time, to pass in review for a Sergeant of Marines.

Our Brother Charlie Fox has reported for duty at the gates of his creator, in a place far removed from here, here where he has done so much for so many for so long. He shall be long remembered by all whose lives he touched.

When I arrived at the funeral home the previous evening to join the ranks, the seemingly endless line of folks stood quietly gathered. Entering the facility, we sat and waited near Kathy, Todd, Lynn, Grant and the rest of the Fox clan. It would be several hours before the long line of visitors had passed and then we stood gathered as one to softly say a pray and pay our respects to this man.

The folks who came, viewed the many mementos displayed throughout the large viewing area. The 'famous' mud bowl team photo. The State Championship Team in those crisp, red uniforms. The many featured photographs of a man who wore mostly nothing more than a set of sweats, set off by a red ball cap sitting somewhat back upon his head, yet permanently affixed to show that mischievous smile that was inquiring if you might be "Brain Damaged".

There too, were the ample photo arrangements of Marines who had stood beside him through his service in the Corps, and during his journey in the Nam. There was the very helmet that he wore in Nam that he managed to procure. It was adorned with his short timer calendar, hometown slogans of choice, and the name of the now long forgotten girlfriend who never made the rank of wife, mother, companion and friend to this old warrior. The black rubber inner tube held that still full bottle of halizone tablets, accompanied by the all so sacred and precious roll of sh!t paper that we cherished. Especially since we didn't bother to use those halizone tablets.



Attired in his coaching uniform and encased within his poncho liner we placed two coins from our association - one old, one new, a bottle of Jack and a red cover that said it all--Khe Sanh Vet--into his coffin for his final patrol.

We retired to the Holiday Inn and stood in the parking lot into the early morning of the day upon which we would lay to rest our brother, our friend. We did, as Marines are oft to do, fetched and bitched about this and that, and tried to avoid any conversation of all that we knew we would shortly reluctantly do. It was the anticipation of the days events that we sought to somehow displace, while knowing we would surely do that which Charlie would gladly and sadly have done for each of us if it were his appointed duty.

When I think about it, I had only spent perhaps twenty-five or thirty days with Charlie in this life.

Those days were the shared time spent at our reunions. Truth be told, it was the few hours he and I shared in Charleston and Chicago that joined us forever. Just several days before he passed, I was blessed to have sat with Charlie, Kathy and Lynn at their second home - the Red Land Midget Football Field - for several hours into the next morning; talking about this and that, sharing the secrets of our soul.

This past July at our reunion in the Windy City, I sat and listened to Charlie speak to a gathered group of Poolies - young men seeking to earn the Title of Marine. His words were profound. He told them, "I have been married to the same woman for thirty-five years. I have three beautiful and wonderful kids. I have been a police officer for twenty-nine years. I have coached state championship football teams. I have coached state championship baseball teams. I have coached state championship softball teams. The thing of which I am the proudest is having been a Squad Leader of Marines in Combat.

I knew then as I know now and always have, from the time when I was a nineteen-year-old Corporal, that no experience would ever compare to, a squad leader of Marines. I watched as he, who had paved the path for those who would follow, passed the torch to the next generation of Marines.

A lone wasp rested upon my back at the church. It next drifted over to Kathy and the kids. Flying up to the pulpit, it circled Harold Easter, Charlie's lifelong friend, and oft thought of second brother. It settled upon the ear of Tom Shank, a police officer who had the privilege to be trained by Charlie and serve along side him for seventeen years as a member of the Lower Swatara Police Force. My bride, Alice, said that while folks often say butterflies are the soul of our departed who visit to reassure us, it was befitting that Charlie stop by each who spoke of him this day. A feared warrior this Wasp - no better friend, no worse enemy. An insect lost within the confines of a church, or rather Charlie touching each of us to say, I am free of this world and in my final place. I await you each at this place we all call home. Charlie was really more of a Wasp than a Butterfly, if you know what I mean.

The more than mile long procession of cars followed Charlie to the Red Land Midget Football Field. The bleachers were packed with a standing room only crowd who stood silently in the gently rain. Charlie exited his vehicle and escorted by his Honor Guard, passed through the ranks of police officers and Khe Sanh Veterans who stood at attention as he made his way one last time to the fifty-yard line. There his namesake Scott, recited the poem Coach. Charlie's youngest asked all those gathered whom he coached to come to the field. Attired in their bright red jerseys the team huddled around their Coach. The rallying chant was uttered and the players placed their hands upon their Coach vowing to continue as their war chant echoed one last time while Charlie stood upon his favorite battleground.

Exiting the stadium, the long line of twenty-six vehicles, perhaps to symbolize the regiment in which we served, slowly drove through the highways and byways of Charlie's life. Those who we passed along the way, moved aside and waited while we traveled that path that we all shall someday make.

It was befitting the man, this Sergeant of Marines, this Son, this Brother, this Husband, this Father, this Coach, this Friend; to make this patrol to the Final Formation to join that Battalion of Kings.

I shall love you and miss you until I see you in the morning, Sergeant.

Semper Fidelis and Fratres Aeterni,

.....

A FINAL GOODBYE
CHARLIE"S FINAL FAREWELL
By Tom Ford

On Thursday I went down to Lewisbury Pa to pay my last respects to one of our beloved members, Sgt Charlie Fox. I joined the ranks of fellow Khe Sanh Veterans Bruce Geiger (Dusters&Quads), Sid "Fish" Patricio (Delta 1/26), Neil Kenny (Lima 3/26) and his wife Alice. You would have thought Charlie was the mayor by the amount of people that were present. There was a viewing line that wrapped around the building. I unofficially timed the waiting time at 1hr 25 minutes to see Charlie, and the family. This went on from 1800 till well after 2100 hrs, non-stop. We were warmly received by all.

Friday, in the rain, was the church service. I found myself thinking "God its great to be a MARINE



and a KHE SANH VETERAN". While waiting for the services to begin, I had the pleasure of meeting Lt Col. Joseph Innerst, USMC recently retired, who showed up in dress blues, and was quite enamored by our (KSV) presence, as were all. When I thought that it couldn't get any better, it did. I observed two more KSV walking up the driveway. Both of them were wearing the "Siege" hats. They were Ed Goggins from (Pa), and Lee Rimkus from (Montana!) who served in Charlie Co 1/26.

A short time later, Steve Hecknauer (Pa), another Charlie Co guy, comes walking out of the crowd. Now I'm thinking "Squad minus"! It even got better because the young pastor of the church turned the ceremony over to the former pastor, Harold Easter, a life long buddy of Charlie Fox, and a Former Marine and Khe Sanh Vet with Alpha 1/26. His eulogy was outstanding!

From the church we went to the RED LAND MIDGET FOOTBALL FIELD for a "ceremony" that I will carry with me forever. It was a "Pass & Review" at the football stadium where Charlie has probably spent his entire lifetime helping kids. Charlie was carried, in the rain, by family and friends to the 50 yard line and then ALL the "kids" that Charlie ever coached were summoned from the crowd to the casket, and once present, they surrounded it and began what I think (I never played football) was a final cheer for their beloved coach. All of this was witnessed by another 200 people standing at the fence above the field. A very moving moment.

Then at the cemetery, Charlie's mom drags this guy down to our KSV contingent to introduce him and it turns out to be John Sabol, HMM-364 (Purple Foxes) another Khe Sanh Veteran! Wow! Have we got Charlie covered or what? After the prayer ceremony we let all of the people leave the area and WE (We Band of Brothers) Khe Sanh Veterans, stood at attention around Charlie and gave Sgt Charlie Fox, (C Co 1/26) Khe Sanh Veteran, a final hand salute.
Semper Fi my brother

.....

In Memory of Charlie Fox
By Corporal Ken Pae

When I arrived in Khe Sanh in November of 1967, I was assigned to Charlie Fox's squad and from that day our friendship grew. I quickly learned to trust and respect his decisions, and relied on him without question. I knew that Charlie, along with God's help, would keep me safe—and they did!

Upon arriving in Khe Sanh, I was assigned to be the radio man, but what Charlie neglected to tell me was that the radio man was always the target—DAMN!

I remember one night after a monsoon rain, that Charlie assigned me to a four-hour night watch. The fog set in and I could not see my hand in front of my face and the silence petrified me because I did not know what was out there.

I also remember going out on LPs at night and Charlie telling everyone to be as quiet as a mouse. Believe me, I was quiet; I think I even forgot to breathe. When I was at the last reunion this past July, I was again amazed at how Charlie could remember every operation, every person's name, their date when they were wounded or killed and where it happened. And, once again, Charlie reminded me how he got me shot in the leg, but I knew it wasn't his fault—I was a casualty of war.

Charlie Fox was the best squad leader a person could ever have. He looked after me and he looked after all of his men, and we love him for it. I am proud to have served with Charlie.

CHARLIE'S FINAL TRIBUTE



















IN MEMORIUM



WE WILL ALWAYS
REMEMBER OUR
FALLEN BROTHERS
A COMPANY 1ST PLATOON, 3RD ENGINEERS

PFC	Albert Patrick	USMC	KIA 14 Feb 1968
CPL	Ronald Chrisman	USMC	KIA 28 Feb 1968
PFC	Emmett Stanton	USMC	KIA 28 Feb 1968
PFC	Lewis Moore	USMC	KIA 10 Mar 1968
L/Cpl	Jimmy DeLano	USMC	KIA 13 Mar 1968
L/Cpl	Norman Howlett	USMC	KIA 30 Mar 1968
PFC	Randall Phelps	USMC	KIA 08 Apr 1968
PFC	Richard Chickenberger	USMC	KIA 26 May 1968
PFC	Elmer Faulkner	USMC	KIA 18 June 1968



MY UNSUNG HERO
By John Pessoni A Co 3rd Engineers



This is in memory of PFC Randall Phelps who served in my squad at Khe Sanh during the Siege. I used to call him Shultz because I did not like his first name. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star with the Combat "V" for bravery, while attached to Company C, First Battalion Ninth Marines. An outstanding Marine who will never be forgotten by the guys he served with God bless you brother till we meet again.

His citation reads in part:
On April 3rd 1968, Randall Phelps was serving as a Combat Engineer with Charlie Company, First Battalion Ninth Marines, on Hill 477, near the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The Company was suddenly attacked by an estimated North Vietnamese Battalion. PFC Phelps, position came under attack by a squad of NVA, utilizing heavy small arms fire and grenades. PFC Randall Phelps, delivered effective fire against the enemy until other Marines were able to join him in the defense of his position. On April 8th, when his position on hill 689 came under an intense enemy Mortar barrage, Private First Class Randall Phelps, again distinguished himself when, disregarding his own safety, he assisted in loading badly wounded Marines aboard a med-evac helicopter, before he himself, was mortally wounded.

There is a wing of the Combat Engineers Instruction Company Barracks at Camp Lejeune named in his honor





BJORKE-CHILDRESS-JENKINS MEMORIUM

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR BROTHERS

ERLE LAWRENCE BJORKE	**CAPTAIN USAF**	**714 TACTICAL AIR WING**
LEWIS CLAYTON CHILDRESS	**CORPORAL USMC**	**FLC PARA DELIVERY**
EARLE DAVE JENKINS	**CORPORAL USMC**	**FLC PARA DELIVERY**

REST IN PEACE

MEMORIAL

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR BROTHERS LEFT BEHIND
"WE WILL NEVER FORGET"
REST IN PEACE

FROM YOUR LOVING BROTHERS IN SUB UNIT 5

RAYMOND GOODWIN	**KIA**	**03 MARCH 1967**	**KHE SANH**
CHARLES LYNCH	**KIA**	**27 JUNE 1967**	**KHE SANH**
FRANCISCO MAZARIEGOS	**KIA**	**27 JUNE 1967**	**KHE SANH**
DENNIS O'CONNOR	**KIA**	**27 JUNE 1967**	**KHE SANH**
JAMES SHEPARD	**KIA**	**27 JUNE 1967**	**KHE SANH**

MEMORIALS

I REMEMBER

By Michael OHara
B Co 1/26

On this date in 1967 a battle would rage south of I corps in a rubber tree plantation. A place called Srok Rung near Loc Ninh (hope I spelled it correctly) An Army unit was heavily engaged with a large Viet Cong force. Much bravery was displayed that day. One soldier earned our nations highest honor. (Stryker)

One brave trooper who was KIA that day and died a very hard death was a young soldier named Larry Clayton Banks. Larry was one of my best friends all thru high school. We spent our last leave home together before we shipped out for the Nam. Larry was a sole surviving son but chose to go anyway. He was the only man from my sparsely populated county to be killed in the Vietnam War. Three of us from the same class served at Khe Sanh and survived.

I served with 1st Bn 26th Marine Regiment.
Larry served with 1st Bn 26th Army.
Go figure huh.

I still miss him terribly.
Semper Fi and Happy Birthday to all

MEMORIALS

BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE MY DAD, FORGOTTEN HERO, NO MORE!

His son remembers Lieutenant Pham Van Hoa, Vietnamese Air Force

Each year, I pause on this date to commemorate my father's life and to celebrate the Marine Corp's Birthday with bittersweet irony. Now that my father is gone again, I realize I had joined the Marines for him and for South Vietnam, as much as I did for any sense of patriotism to America. I wanted to relieve him of a loser's guilt, a husband's regret, a father's remorse. I had to backtrack four decades.

I was born a Vietnamese in an old French hospital six months before President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered thousands of U.S. Marines into my country. Growing up amid a brewing war in my own backyard, my childhood dream was to become a pilot and serve my country like my father.

A decade later, before communist tanks rumbled through my hometown, my family, minus my father, was flown to Marine Barracks Guam. At Tan Son Nhut air base, Marines had been flown ashore to evacuate Saigon. A few days after we left, my father rushed the U.S. Embassy in Saigon along with a frenzied mob. A shirtless Marine wearing a flak jacket pressed his M-16 against my father's chest and prevented him from entering the compound as the last choppers departed. Stranded and dejected like Miss Saigon, my father watched with shame as South Vietnamese soldiers ripped off their uniforms and threw their rifles into the Saigon River to evade capture by the approaching communist troops.

My mother raised my three sisters and I in California by herself. When we landed in the United States, she was 39, spoke no English and had never traveled abroad. We spoke French, but I thank God, and Buddha, that we didn't go to Paris to live with my aunt, because there I wouldn't have been able to realize my dreams. My mother, however, could not have predicted the powerful forces pulling me to my calling, even in a foreign country.

My father finally made it to America. But once he arrived on these shores he never received a welcome home, veteran's benefits, or a pension. He had served his country for 21 years, South Vietnam's entire existence, and had survived another 12 years in captivity. After the war, his former allies and their journalistic chroniclers, safely home in the United States, portrayed the South Vietnamese as corrupt, incompetent, shadowy figures who had not been worth backing. (Sounds like the Iraqis?) The communists couldn't break him though they repeatedly tried; they forced him into hard labor in numerous reeducation/prison camps where he nearly died. His captors called him unpatriotic, traitor, American puppet, pirate pilot, and cheap mercenary. Finally, with intervention from the Reagan Administration, they allowed him to

emigrate.

In 1999, my father became an American citizen, sworn in by Judge David O. Carter, a Marine veteran who had been seriously wounded in Khe Sanh. I was there to witness the momentous occasion, two heroes and former allies embracing each other, two veterans of the war in Vietnam.

Five years ago today, my father took his last breath. He had lapsed into a ten-day-long coma, resulting from a massive stroke amid radiation therapy treatment for lung cancer. Two weeks earlier, he had cast his first and only, presidential ballot in a free election. Around the world, in every clime and place, Marines celebrated the Corps' 230th birthday, except me, I was crying.

At his funeral, my father's old comrades showed up in force to honor him, as did some of my Marine friends. The men who had served with my father in squadrons and in the prison camps had draped a large yellow flag with the three bright-red horizontal stripes over his coffin. The afternoon I gave his eulogy was the hardest day in my life: I had lost my father a second time. I had to eulogize him in English. I had neglected my native tongue far too long for me to speak eloquently of his life and legacy in Vietnamese.

People have told me that with death comes closure. It was the opposite for me. My father's passing away raised more questions and created a greater void inside me, a burning desire to ask him the $64,000 question. "When you think back Dad, were all the fighting and bloodshed in Vietnam worth the price?"

As I began tracing my father's history in the Vietnam War, I came across an old letter he had written me:

Dear Son,
If it doesn't matter to you what I did was a failure, then I will tell you some stories of the past. All I've been doing is to get along with all of you. Things have changed. No one can estimate to what extent. I was a coward. For you guys see me become a loser, my old combat friends will see me with another eye. Another reason, either simple coincidence or you may call it destiny, is you're in the same Marine unit that I used to fly support for, and was rescued by, in the early days of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

I was floored. I immediately powered up the computer and Googled various key words. This was what I discovered. I almost didn't get to meet my father at all. This was my first connection to the U.S. Marine Corps.

On April 27, 1964, five months before I was born, my father, then Second Lieutenant Pham Van Hoa (pronounced "Hwa") of the Vietnamese Air Force was shot down in his Skyraider attack aircraft. He had been flying in support of the largest heliborne assault up to that point flown by U.S. advisers in their secret war. After dead-sticking his stricken plane to a loamy field near Do Xa in central Vietnam, he awaited his fate as the Viet Cong rushed down from the hills and closed in. Luckily, a Marine helicopter had followed his smoky silhouetted plane. The pilot landed his chopper next to the Skyraider and the rest is history.

Forty years after that heroic rescue, I tracked down the Marine pilot-turned docent at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center (Smithsonian Air & Space Museum) near Dulles Airport. At age 74, retired Colonel John Braddon still sounded like a tough fighter pilot (he only flew helicopters for one tour). Between leading visitors through the museum, Braddon and I sat down for a quick lunch. We traded war stories, his much longer than mine. He finally shared his memories of that fateful day: "I do not deserve great credit for my action. Years before, USMC helicopter squadrons supporting Vietnamese units had decided to set aside helicopters to rescue downed crews and that is why I was prepared to rescue Lt. Hoa. Also, Lt. Hoa was supporting Marines. In that capacity he came under the umbrella that 'Marines take care of their own.' However briefly, he supported us and became one of us and we made sure he was cared for."

Upon hearing those words, my mission came to an end. I had to meet Braddon to complete my final duties. *My father had somehow managed to move on about the Vietnam War before I could. His refusal to blame anyone for the betrayal of South*

Vietnam, his lack of bitterness for his imprisonment, his avoidance of hatred were his greatest legacies, affecting me more than his military service. Before he went into surgery, he told my oldest sister: "I'm not afraid to die. I've lived a full life, I have no regrets."

My head is clear, my breaths come free. Thank you Colonel John Braddon. Semper fi Dad. And Happy Birthday Marines!

WEB BRIEFS

I'M SO EXITED

By Steven Wiese, B Co 1/26

I can't begin to tell you how excited I am, that captain Pipes called to let me know he had heard from Mike McCauley who was in my squad in Khe Sanh, he gave me his phone number. I called Mike and we talked about all the old squad members - it was great: He said he had a picture of the whole squad, and he was going to send me a copy, which I'm really looking forward to. The picture was taken before March 30th, so it has all the (old) squad members except Arthur Smith, and that's because Mike said Arthur took the pictures.

I'm so excited that after all these years I finally found a member of the squad, though we really didn't talk that long. I think we were both kind of in shock; we said we would talk again in the near future. I can't express my gratitude to captain Pipes for all the help he has been, first finding Lt. Long, and now Mike. I know the board has helped bring a lot of people together, and that's what it's all about.

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The Young Marine and the Old Cop

By Charles M. Grist
Special to the Orlando Sentinel
Posted October 26, 2005

The young Marine, in his dress-blue uniform, sat in the passenger seat of the car. He was visibly upset and his new wife, in a formal dress, stood helplessly nearby. I was the cop called to the hotel parking lot at 3 A.M. for a disturbance. Now that I had found it, I had to fix it. Walking up to the Marine, I glanced at his uniform and immediately recognized the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal. This meant he had been overseas in the war on terror, probably to either Iraq or Afghanistan. He had been drinking at his wedding reception and his wife said he wouldn't get out of their car.

I asked him where he had been overseas and, staring straight ahead, he said, "Fallujah," a major battleground for Marines in Iraq. When I asked him how long ago, he said he had only been back for a couple of months. Then he started to cry. I knelt down next to the car and told him that I was an Army sergeant and that I had also been in Iraq, stationed in Baghdad. He suddenly looked at me with a look of "recognition," that unique way that one war veteran looks at another. Through wet eyes he said that "they," meaning the insurgents, had killed his friends. It was clear now that the problem was post-traumatic stress.

As I put my hand on the shoulder of this strapping young Marine, I told him that I knew how he felt, and I did. When I was his age, I was returning from Vietnam with similar memories. I told him that it had been 34 years since I returned from that war and I can still see the faces of my friends who died there. After my tour in Iraq, I have new faces to add to the old memories. After he calmed down a little, he agreed to let me help him to his room. I asked him if he was still on active duty, and he said he was on leave but planned to spend his whole life in the Marines. I smiled to myself. He was a spiritually "wounded" warrior, but he was still a warrior.

As we reached the hotel room, I looked at him and shook his hand. I told him that he had lost a great deal in Iraq, but he had also been given a great gift. He asked me what I meant. I explained to him that he had been given a chance to teach other Marines the warrior skills he had learned in combat. Now that he is an experienced infantryman, he not only has the opportunity, but the obligation, to pass his knowledge on to new Marines. This would be the best way for him to honor his fallen comrades. He promised that he would do so. Then he began to cry again. I put my arm around him as a father would for a son. I did feel his pain and briefly my own pain returned, giving me a lump in my throat.

What a sight we must have been; the old cop embracing the young Marine.

At one point the young man said, "They just don't understand." He was talking about the rest of the world—the non-warriors—those for whom we carry the sword. I told him that, no, most do not understand and never will. That is why we take care of each other, just as we did in war. Then the new husband joined his bride in their room.

I walked outside into a hot summer night and returned to my job on the street.

It was time for a cup of coffee.

Charles M. Grist is a veteran of both Vietnam and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is a master police officer with the Altamonte Springs Police Department. He wrote this commentary for the Orlando Sentinel.

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NEWS FROM IRAQ

MY FINAL FREEDOM BIRD FLIGHT
By Lt/Col Jim Zucarelli

Everyone ... The time is 1230 hours here in Baghdad. I am leaving Baghdad for Tikrit at 1600 hours. The trip is by convoy which should take a little less than three hours. My tour in Baghdad comes to an end. My time in Tikrit will be working with the 101st Airborne Division troops and helping them assimilate into the Iraqi overall combat/ reconstruction mission.

This transitional period will last until the 10th of November (the birthday of the Marine Corps). On that date, I should feel "wheels-up" out of Iraq and fly down to Kuwait. Kuwait will be "hurry up and wait" until the most happiest of "wheels-up" and that is when I leave Southwest Asia for the flight back to the States.

Back in Vietnam, that flight was called the "Freedom Bird". For me, it will be my second, and most definitely my last, "Freedom Bird" flight. This has been a chapter in my life that will be memorable, but laced with a little nostalgia as well. How does one control their inner-most feelings? One does not.

I have been flooded with long ago memories of leaving Vietnam as a young 22 year old Marine Second Lieutenant. Now I find myself trying to come to terms with leaving Iraq as a middle-aged 58 year old Army Lieutenant Colonel. The juxtaposition of this tsunami of emotional feelings is, at times, overwhelming. A world without wars in today's world is a utopian dream. However, when war rears its ugly head those that march off to war are the young; and for me, "America's Finest".

I am an aberration. Too old and too slow. What I have seen in this past year over here in Iraq is America's young that are so innocent I want to adopt them all. and I want to personally bring them all home safely. That is my utopian dream. If I can end my tour of duty here In Iraq with one wish, and one wish only, it would be this. For all of you back home, never, absolutely never, forget this young generation who have left the safety of the American shores for hostile climates throughout the world. Support our troops; pray for our troops; and never ever reject our troops. Say what you want about those leaders who make the decisions back in Washington, DC. I, myself, also hold my opinion. But never turn your frustrations and aggravations against these young men and young women over here just doing their job; with no complaints and no hesitations. Support them. When I see them on the streets of Baghdad they are all "babies". My heart breaks for them. I love them so much. I care for their safety; more than I do for mine.

God Bless, Good-Bye and Semper Fi. See you all back "in-the-world" .

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OUR NEW MILITARY

The average age of the military man is 19 years. He is a short haired, tight-muscled kid who, under normal circumstances is considered by society as half man, half boy. Not yet dry behind the ears, not old enough to buy a beer, but old enough to die for his country. He never really cared much for work and he would rather wax his own car than wash his father's; but he has never collected unemployment either.

He's a recent High School graduate; he was probably an average student, pursued some form of sport activities, drives a ten year old jalopy, and has a

steady girlfriend that either broke up with him when he left, or swears to be waiting when he returns from half a world away. He listens to rock and roll or hip-hop or rap or jazz or swing. He is 10 or 15 pounds lighter now than when he was at home because he is working or fighting from before dawn to well after dusk. He has trouble spelling, thus letter writing is a pain for him, but he can field strip a rifle in 30 seconds and reassemble it in less time in the dark. He can recite to you the no-



menclature of a machine gun or grenade launcher and use either one effectively if he must. He digs foxholes and latrines and can apply first aid like a professional. He can march until he is told to stop.



He obeys orders instantly and without hesitation, but he is not without spirit or individual dignity. He is self-sufficient. He has two sets of fatigues: he washes one and wears the other. He keeps his canteens full and his feet dry. he sometimes forgets to brush his teeth, but never to clean his rifle. He can cook his own meals, mend his own clothes, and fix his own hurts. If you're thirsty, he'll share his water with you; if you are hungry, his food. He'll even split his ammunition with you in the midst of battle when you run low. He has learned to use his hands like weapons and weapons like they were his hands. He can save your life - or take it, because that is his job. He will often do twice the work of a civilian, draw half the pay and still find ironic humor in it all. He has seen more suffering and death then he should have in his short lifetime.

He has stood atop mountains of dead bodies, and helped to create them. He has wept in public and in private, for friends who have fallen in combat and is unashamed. He feels every note of the National Anthem vibrate through his body while at rigid at-



tention, while tempering the burning desire to 'square-away' those around him who haven't bothered to stand, remove their hat, or even stop talking. In an odd twist, day in and day out, far from home, he defends their right to be disrespectful. Just as did his Father, Grandfather, and Great-grandfather, he is paying the price for our freedom. Beardless or not, he is not a boy. He is the American Fighting Man that has kept this country free for over 200 years.



He has asked nothing in return, except our friendship and understanding. Remember him, always, for he has earned our respect and admiration with his blood. And now we even have women over



there in danger, doing their part in this tradition of going to War when our nation calls us to do so. As you go to bed tonight, remember this shot... A short lull, a little shade and a picture of loved ones in their helmets

For our troops in Afghanistan, sailors on ships, and airmen in the air, and for those in Iraq. "Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. Amen."

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Living Life Under the Rigors of Post Traumatic Stress
Strange Parallels
The Man Behind "The Twilight Zone"
By James Carmichael E Co 2/26

"There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man...It is a dimension as vast as space and timeless as infinity...It is the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man's fears, and the summit of his knowledge...This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area we call the twilight zone."

This is a timeless monologue uttered by a familiar if not durable voice whose naturally cropped clauses brought terse drama to the burgeoning television culture of America in the 1960's. In tandem with Rod Serling's opening monologue was that unconventionally eerie music that would set the nation's mental palate for his eccentric style of provocation. That was its design. I was weaned on the clever suspense it brought into my sheltered world. And for 30 spellbinding minutes each week, less commercial interruptions, I was transported into a dimension of surrealism and irony as I'm certain you were. I would miss homework rather than the "Twilight Zone".

But it was only recently, while watching his biography on television that I discovered to my utter amazement that his life was propelled, if not altogether eclipsed by the same disorder from which I and so many of us suffers. I didn't know he was a combat veteran. Amid the immense and immediate world of Rod Serling existed a bewildering ignorance of the writer, the husband and father whose core was as enigmatic as it was dark. Of this I was certain. I knew intuitively watching that commentary on his life just what made him "tick". He suddenly ceased to be the international Star I thought I knew. Instead, he became my brother in arms. He and I, should I say, we all were now joined at the hip, so to speak.

Rodman Edward Serling left for military service with the usual trepidation and determination of many young men his age in a world gone mad. World War two had become fact. But he never fully relinquished his grasp on the nurturing womb of Binghamton, New York, his maternal home. Yet it was with a sizeable number of indisputable genetic family traits that he entered the world at large. We, as his adoring audience, would recognize most of them as we watched him perform on television.

The primary particulars one noticed about him were external and behavioral. As a collage, each formed the boundaries of his enigmatic personality. He was handsome, cheerful, polite and confident. He also had a temper. He could be ruthless in debate and he was given to bouts of depression. His desire was to be a typical teen and to that end he succeeded.

He received from his parents a rich inheritance of abstract but impressive qualities that would stand him in good stead with the up and coming universe of television. His father, Sam, an engineer at heart,

passed to Rod the love of language. His mother Esther, lovingly bequeathed her youngest offspring her own engaging disposition and staunch intellect.

Yet all of these genetic qualities needed an engine to drive the whole person forward. That dynamic machinery came in the form of what he did not possess: size. Rod barely stood five feet four and a half inches tall. For a lesser man this might have been an insurmountable impediment. Size, or the lack of it, proved to be Rod Serling's shining motivation. It would propel him beyond an infantry grade position to that of paratrooper. He was a para guy, jump boots and all.

All Rod needed was a directional gyroscope. His birth into a non-orthodox Jewish family was the path his father Sam chose for his family. It was in high school that he began to view all religions with a jaundiced eye. Rod specifically chose to date Gentile girls. Unfortunately, the Jewish fraternity he pledged did not look favorably on this practice and subsequently voted him out. Thus he was banned from participation in his university coterie. Slowly he would have to look at a world he couldn't explain, and within himself for internal inertia. Rod ultimately turned to Unitarianism, as did many Jews of that era.

Yet few of us could have guessed what dark events formed the opening dialogue in Rod Serling's "Twilight Zone" mind. The opening paragraph to this chapter was born and fomented in the South Pacific, Leyte, the Philippines, atop one of the foothills of the Mahonags, in December, 1944, surrounded by hundreds of Imperial Japanese soldiers.

Author Gordon F. Sander, writes this of Serling's dark and dangerous two weeks surrounded by hostile Pacific forces, "One incident in particular that occurred during the siege, during a close-in food drop by army cargo planes, traumatized the once gung-ho 'paraguy.' A friend in the outfit, an equally loquacious Jewish corporal from Brooklyn by the name of Melvin Levy, had a refreshing habit of mock-directing the 'biscuit bombers' during the intense, unchuted food drops. Then, during one of the drops, while Levy, Serling, and the rest of the platoon were taking cover under a palm tree and Levy was doing his monologue, one of the huge crates came crashing through the leaves and decapitated him. Afterward, Serling, still in shock, led the services for Levy..."

"Death was a close companion during those two weeks of hell in Leyte. Today it was Levy, killed by a food crate. Who would it be tomorrow--and how would he die? By a 'friendly' food crate? Or by an enemy jungle knife or bayonet? Was there, perhaps, something about a man's face that indicated his number was up? If only they could tell, the battered and beleaguered men wished, as they hunkered down in their foxholes. Years later, that idea, taken to its supernatural conclusion, would animate 'The Purple Testament,' one of Serling's grimmest and most haunting episodes of Twilight Zone, and one of several war stories with a Filipino setting." (Pg. 45-46 A)

During this stretch of fighting, Sander recalls, "To add to Serling's and the other besieged troopers' sense of hopelessness, news came through of a surprise paratroop attack on the division's rear echelon headquarters at Bito Beach...If Division wasn't safe, who was?" (Pg. 46)

Sander makes other statements like these about Serling and the war's effect on him. Upon Rod's homecoming from the war and subsequent discovery of an almost emaciated mother after the death of his father, "Serling continued to be haunted by his memories of the war." (Pg. 52) "Nevertheless, the effect on Serling, who may have been suffering from what today would be described as post traumatic stress disorder...". (Pg. 52) "Spooked by his memories of the war, Serling had difficulty thinking about the future." (Pg. 52) "Like many combat veterans who also became writers, Serling would never quite purge himself of the war and what the war did, good and bad, to its participants. It was to be his dominant literary concern for the next decade." (Pg 55) "He was absolutely reckless. And sometimes, he would just lie there and we thought he was dead..." his friends wrote of him (Pg. 55). "To be sure, as the nineteen-year old education major was soon to discover, that blustery layer of self-assurance was a thin one. Beneath was a war-scarred man-child with a mass of psychological wounds and insecurities." (Pg. 59).

"Fittingly, Serling's first script writing assignment was to conjure up a fifteen-minute squib to commemorate the nation's first Veterans Day. The assignment gave the injured veteran an opportunity to provide his own posttraumatic definition of courage: Not all battles are fought, not all victories are won on a battlefield. And not all courage is found only in actual combat. As an aftermath to this war, there are men fighting new battles...personal struggles that must be fought and won...and these need as much if not more courage. They are conflicts which thousands of disabled veterans are facing with themselves...veterans come back confronted with readjustments to a life without an arm or a leg...It's a tough fight which requires a certain requisite of courage." (Pg. 56-57)

Rod Serling died at age 50 on June 28, 1975. It had been noticed that he had "presentments of death" which "began appearing in Serling's work" prior to his death. (Pg. 216) George Grunbok "was a fellow passenger on a cruise that Serling and his wife took to South America in 1973." George said this about Rod on that trip, "He was kind of temperamental. He'd be high and low in the same day." (Pg. 217)

Over the years, Serling developed a 4 pack a day cigarette habit. "He was always smoking, basically chain-smoking one right after another." (Pg. 215-16) "His drinking also increased. One Cornell professor recalled seeing Serling sitting by himself in a local bar 'getting stewed.'" (Pg. 216) Serling had his third and final heart attack "while in the middle of open heart surgery". (Pg. 218) The doctors found that he had the arteries of an 80 year old. They simply crumbled in the physician's hands.

You may be as surprised as I was to learn that Rod Serling was a combat veteran. But I am not surprised at his age of death and all that attended it. It seems to me, that without realizing it, several generations have been affected in a huge way by the trauma of Rod Serling's war. Because of the food crate incident mentioned previously, life took the form of irony. This was a dominant theme in Mr. Serling's works. This also was terribly clear to me as I watched a television biography of his life. He had all the symptoms of PTSD but none of his close relations or fellow workers who were interviewed, much less the public, seemed to have a clue as to the reasons he acted as he did. He had what I have and what you may have; a trauma induced disorder that colors all of your life. I just thought you might want to know.

ROD SERLING: THE DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES OF LIFE IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE, Contemporary Books, 1989. (Pg. 185 B)

SERLING: THE RISE AND TWILIGHT OF TELEVISION'S LAST ANGRY MAN, (Dutton: Penguin Books, 1992)

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RAY'S CORNER

PRESENTATION TO WISCONSIN STATE VETERANS MUSEUM ON DONATION OF KHE SANH MATERIALS, 10 NOVEMBER 2005 BY RAY WILLIAM STUBBE

Today, November 10th, is the 230th Marine Corps Birthday. On November 10th, 1967, the clouds hung low over Khe Sanh. For several weeks we had several inches of rain a day. Trenches and bunkers collapsed. It was impossible to get dry. Although I grew up in Wisconsin, I've never been colder. The clothing of the Marines rotted and their skin shriveled from always being wet. Hills they patrolled were slick mud slides causing broken arms and legs.

On this particular Marine Corps Birthday, I was on Hill 881 South the hills derived their numbered names from how many meters above sea level they are. We were 6 miles from the border of Laos, a little over 14 miles south of the DMZ, and a little over 4th miles from our main support base, Khe Sanh Combat Base. While all of Khe Sanh engendered a sense of isolation, this place was the edge of life.

The hill was completely socked in with fog, and the troops were assembled. Despite the enshrouding isolation, a CH-34 helicopter pierced through the cover bringing our Regimental Commander, Colonel David E. Lownds. Later I said a brief prayer; Colonel Lownds briefly addressed the

troops. He mentioned that we would all soon be in the American history books.

Something was about to happen. We all sensed that even if we weren't privy to Top Secret, intelligence convinced the Generals that Khe Sanh was soon to be attacked with a major force.

We all knew the isolation of Khe Sanh, tucked in mountainous terrain so close to nearby Laos, from where tens of thousands of regular divisions of the well trained North Vietnamese Army could suddenly surround and besiege us. Our isolation was further apparent, since we could be reached only by aircraft and a dirt road called Highway 9. It's sinuous path wound through dense vegetation, bordered by sharp cliffs, and contained 31 old bridges, before reaching Khe Sanh. Bridges washed out, roads were easily cut, and ambush sites were abound.

Khe Sanh sat atop the crater of an ancient volcano, and the monsoon rainfalls had weathered the rock into laterite soil that stained everything with a redish hue. The microscopic particles of the soil penetrated into the skin, making those who had been at Khe Sanh different, almost as though the violence there had penetrated through our skin into our very soul. One could not but help think in such primitive thought of what is "taboo": places, things, and people filled with power that is transferred to those who come in contact with them, making them unsafe for normal society. The volcanoes were the result of a massive slamming of land mass into Southeast Asia, causing a rugged mountain range. There were only a few passes along this north-south mountain range, and one of these was at Khe Sanh along Route 9. Along this ancient route and through this small pass, Mongols and Siamese penetrated from the west, and Vietnamese Anamites assaulted from the east. Khe Sanh was either born in violence, and violence palpably suffused the area like a Spiritual miasma, or it was simply the clouds we were experiencing on this Marine Corps Birthday on Hill 881 South.

Khe Sanh was also a wonderful place, cooler than the coastal areas to the east. It was a very beautiful place, almost like a Garden of Eden with lush vegetation and a large variety of animal life from cobras to ocelots, large tigers, wild pigs, large caribou-like animals called Kouprey, pythons, deer, and an amazing variety of insects and birds. Those at Khe Sanh couldn't help but regard it as an enchanted, spiritual place. Yet, all of us who were at Khe Sanh were to learn that "a thing of beauty is *[not]* a joy forever!"

Khe Sanh was also the home of one of Vietnam's 31 Montagnard tribes which were of a different racial stock than the Vietnamese. The tribe at Khe Sanh was known as the Bru. They were scantily clad, very friendly, very primitive, and all the Americans who came in contact with them came to like them a lot. Old women were in their 20s having crinkled skin, and smoked small clay pipes and had faces betraying loss of most of their children who died from malaria or intestinal infections. Men hunted with wooden crossbows.

Some of our Marines lived in the Bru villages as part of a program that defended the villagers from the enemy. Half the defense force was Marine, half Bru. The Marines sent home for clothing for the Bru children. Once I accompanied a patrol into a neighboring village. Suddenly realizing I had placed my camera on a tree stump and walked away, I became concerned and told one of the Marines who told me, "Don't be concerned, Chaplain, these people haven't even learned to steal" I returned, and there was my camera.

I arrived at Khe Sanh in the middle of July, 1967, when it was very peaceful and beautiful. The monsoon rains had not yet transformed it into a pool of slick mud. Navy Corpsmen playied basketball at the medical area known as "C Med", and the Doctor wore cut-off jungle boots he called his "Jungle Oxfords." The welcomed cooler air was like walking into an air-conditioned room on a torrid summer day.

Only a few weeks earlier, I had been a student in a Ph.D. program at the University of Chicago, sitting at lunch with some of my fellow students when I mentioned that I had volunteered to go to Vietnam as a Chaplain. "How can you, as a representative of the Christian Church, go there and by your presence support a corrupt Saigon regime?" someone asked.

I had been enlisted in the Navy in the reserves during my senior year in high school, on active duty as a deck hand on destroyers for a couple years after graduation, and knew how teens feel in a military setting, far from home. I told my fellow students that I was not concerned about politics, only that I felt someone has to care for the needs of individuals, no matter where they were. Most of the Marines, averaging age 19, told me they went to Vietnam, after they heard President John Kennedy's motivational words: "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask rather what you can do for your country". They soon realized their purpose was personal survival, and came to realize they were here to protect one another.

Chaplains, of course, are not "military persons" according to the Geneva Accords, but are merely officially attached to military units. According to the Geneva Accords, this status becomes apparent should a Chaplain be captured. It is up to him whether to remain with those captured and minister to them, or return to those who have not been captured! Chaplains do not bear arms or fire either in peacetime or during war, not because there is a moral judgment against bearing arms. According to the legal parlance of the Accords, it's simply because the Chaplain is "exclusively engaged" in ministerial duties. So restrictive is this requirement, that in an article that appeared in our Navy Chaplains' Bulletin at the time, gave a scenario of a Chaplain engaging an enlisted assistant driver as he was driving a jeep, being fired upon. The enlisted man is wounded, unable to fire his weapon, and the enemy creeps closer and closer. While the Chaplain may even have been a marksman in civilian life, he is not permitted to take the man's rifle, even to protect him!

Soon after arriving at Khe Sanh, I flew out on a chopper to Hill 881 South, and conducted a worship service. My text was the story of the Prodigal Son who traveled to a far country where life was very difficult. I noticed that most of the Marines' trousers were torn and ripped. One had a large portion of the crotch missing, exposing his manhood. No one wore undergarments, of course. After the worship service, the Company Commander, Captain John Raymond, told me that I shouldn't talk about their conditions of life unless I experienced them. So I accompanied a patrol to gain insight into the living conditions these men faced. I knew that the message of God's love and the assurance of God's presence was proclaimed more by actions and "being with" than simply in words.

The patrol advanced at a rapid pace down the steep northern slope of the hill - the same slope Marines had fought while advancing up it only a few months earlier. I remember falling so much due to the slope and the vines that forward movement was more from falling forward than from walking forward! After half an hour, felt I just couldn't continue. It was impossible to return, however, the only choice was to continue. We waded through rushing streams and crept along rocky sides of a gorge, gingerly moving atop large, slippery rocks. We frequently fell from vines that tangled our feet. Bamboo thickets, like steel bars, were abound. Tall "elephant grass," about 7-foot tall, was razor-sharp, full of bacteria. Cuts on arms and hands resulted in large sores that remained infected for weeks. Although everyone had two canteens full of water, savoring only a small sip at a time, the water was gone after about 7 hours of patrol. The body became completely numb and mechanically continued moving. Small leeches wiggling on leaves attached themselves to exposed skin, and could only be removed by squirting insect repellant or lighting a match and burning them off. Squashing them only resulted in a large infection. Some Marines had a leech somehow get through their fly and creep up their penis.

Those on the outposts lived a very primitive existence. For the six weeks they were on the hill, they were unable to bathe. The Company Commander once handed me a sandbag full of bars of soap, saying, "Take these to the missionaries in the village; we can't use these up here." Many had teeth that showed advance stages of decay. Most Marines used their tooth brushes to clean their rifles because cleaning rods, patches, and just about everything else, was so scarce. The word among the troops was that the Marine Corps returned money to Congress to justify their existence, claiming they could get along with far less than the Army. There was no light at night except for the command bunkers which had Coleman lanterns and those lucky enough to have been sent candles from home.

The men were helpless over situations arising at home a mother who was beaten by the father, brothers who are veering into drugs or crime, a sister into teenage' pregnancy, an uncle or grandparent who had basically raised the Marine, dying, and the Marine couldn't return home or do anything to help family situations. These were the sort of things they shared with me while I stayed overnight at those various outposts, sharing their life.

I thought of these things one night while sitting at a restaurant with my parents several years later. Two women at an adjacent table were talking and one said, "You know, my neighbor gets a retirement from the military. Can you imagine that? All he did was serve his country!" Some will never know. Perhaps this is best, although our knowledge of good and evil experienced, casts us out from the garden forever.

Then came the monsoon rains, several inches a day, with the temperatures about 50 or 40, and since we could never get dry, the cold penetrated into our soul. Trenches and bunkers collapsed. The laterite soil became as slippery as ice. Fog blanketed the area so that aerial observers could not detect enemy presence and re-supply was always questionable. Those on patrols became increasingly miserable. The airstrip began to wash out and had to be completely re-laid with a crushed rock subbase-all during these rains of Biblical proportions. When the siege battle began and dozens of reporters suddenly descended upon us, many were critical that we hadn't dug sufficient positions, but they didn't know that we couldn't, due to the monsoon rainfall.

By the end of 1967, several of our recon teams made contact, resulting in the death of young Marines. One young man from the recon unit, Rick Noyes, was riding in a 6-by truck for a recon insert. Having lost several of his close buddies, he told me he had 5 months left and just didn't want to go in the bush again. As the truck proceeded past the rock quarry area, some of the men from 3/26 jeered them, "Are there really any enemy out there?" they taunted. A patrol on Co Roc, the cliff just inside Laos that loomed as a minatory harbinger of evil to erupt, discovered numerous indications of NVA presence.

There was always a time of humor in the midst of the approaching havoc. While walking by the recon area, I overheard a Patrol Leader briefing his team, and wanting all their watches synchronized, he said, "Gentlemen, circumcise your watches!" Because senior headquarters knew by the end of November, 1967 that Khe Sanh would be attacked , the issue became whether to abandon it or reinforce it. The decision was made to reinforce, but it had to be made in such a way that the NV A would not be aware that we had discovered their plans and movements through our analysis of their radio transmissions. Thus in mid-December, 1967, another battalion arrived, and in mid-January, another battalion, marking the first time since World War II that the entire 26th Marine Regiment was together.

At one of the evening regimental briefings, Colonel Lownds said that we now needed to concentrate on deception. From the mountain ridge to the north, forward observers from the NVA could easily determine the location of the Regiment's bunker. He said everyone needed to erect false antennae and construct false bunkers throughout the combat base.

The following morning, at the battalion briefing, LtCol Wilkinson repeated the Regimental Commander's comments and added, "Well, after we do that, instead of the regiment receiving a hundred rounds of incoming, the entire base will receive five hundred." His humorous jest was to prove quite accurate.

On Saturday, the 20th of January 1968, a patrol from Hill 881South to Hill 881 North, encountered stiff resistance, loosing two of their Platoon Commanders killed in the battle. As they progressed, they were suddenly recalled to Hill 881 South. Unknown to them, a NVA Lieutenant who had been passed over for promotion had surrendered and disclosed the NVA battle plan.

The blood bath, in which we were all to be baptized with everyone emerging completely changed forever, had begun.

The following day, Sunday the 21st of January, NV A from the 325C Division and the 304th Division

(which had fought at Dien Bien Phu) launched their attacks, attacking Hill 861 and almost overrunning it. The Marines fought back and after a desperate hand-to-hand combat, regained the hill. The Company First Sergeant wounded in his neck and spurting blood, kept himself alive several hours by applying pressure to the wound. The NV A's 66th Regiment attacked Khe Sanh Village leaving several hundred dead. The position was abandoned with the defenders and the civilian seat of local government relocating within the perimeter of the combat base. The combat base itself was shelled, NV A incoming making a hit on one of the base's ammunition positions, causing it to ignite and spew semi cooked-off ordnance and blanket the eastern half of the base in a cloud of tear gas during the attack.

I was with the medical personnel in a ditch as this was happening. As the degree of incoming lessened, casualties poured in and a MEDEV AC helicopter arrived. I remember one of the Corpsmen running to the trench and exclaiming, "My casualty with the leg wound outran me! I couldn't pin on his evacuation tag before he got in the helicopter!"

Being a Sunday I was stunned, and remember walking towards the high impact area where the ammo dump exploded, carrying a brass cross, a bottle of wine for communion, and some religious literature, wondering whether to hold worship services! The tear gas brought tears, and through bleary eyes 1 beheld the specter of devastation. Everything above ground was in shambles. I remember seeing one man on a stretcher with his entire abdominal cavity exposed. One of the corpsmen told me that he didn't think that man would survive. Another man (Mussari) had a NVA mortar stuck in his abdomen, and a doctor, accompanied by a Marine engineer, surgically removed the live round, and the engineer raced to take it to a safe place.

One Marine was brought into C Med (L/CPL Slaugenhaupt) who moaned and groaned on the stretcher, "I lost everything! 1 lost everything!" Attempting to console him, 1 asked if he had lost all his pictures-or a phonograph-or all his clothing-from the incoming hitting his bunker. "Oh no, Chaplain, you know all those peanut butters and jellies in the C-rations? I had been saving them in a wood ammo box, and the incoming destroyed everything. I lost everything!"

The Marines dug deeper and deeper. The Khe Sanh Combat Base was about half a mile wide and 3/4ths a mile long, held about 4500 men, and took about 400 rounds of incoming mortars, rockets, and artillery a day. One day, we received over 1300 rounds, mainly artillery. Together with the hill outposts, there were about 6,000 Americans defending the position. We were surrounded by over two divisions of North Vietnamese and, together with supporting units and nearby forces, the total enemy encircling us was about 40,000.

B-52 strikes dropped their ordnance closer and closer to the base, decimating enemy forces hugging us in a siege. (B-52 Arc Lights aircraft can carry 128, 500 and 750-pound bombs dropped in a rectangular pattern usually 1,000 yards long and 100 yards wide. Most strikes were by 6 aircraft, covering an area one-half mile wide and 3 miles long, all exploding within several seconds, completely deci-mating the area).

Jeanne Dixon's prophecy of 1200 dead at Khe Sanh is approximately correct. For the entire time of American presence at Khe Sanh, there were 1390 Marines killed there. If one adds the Army and Air Force, the total is 2091 killed. During the siege battle itself, from 20 January 1968 through 31 March, there were 402 killed. (Officially, there were only 204). If one includes those killed until the base was evacuated in early July, the total for 20 January to 11 July is 990.

MACV estimated the NVA losses at 15,760 killed by air and artillery plus 8880 from ground action, for a total of 24,640. The local Bru tribe, which was forbidden to evacuate, probably lost at least 2,000 and possibly 11,000 killed.

During the siege battle, 96,000 tons of bombs were dropped, nearly twice as much as was delivered by the Army Air Corps in the Pacific during 1942 and 1943. By the end of March, 1968, the lush, enchanted Garden of Eden with all its beauty, perhaps containing species of flora and fauna not yet known, has been transformed into a moonscape, a

wasteland product of human technology, a valley of dry bones. Mountains had been moved, tens of thousands of human lives perished, the lives of survivors, their families and the families of the dead were forever altered.

About a dozen wounded crowded into my bunker one night when medical evacuation helicopters were unavailable to transport them. Half a dozen sat on my bed, survivors of a bunker in the recon area that had taken a direct hit by an artillery round, killing 4, one of whom I had just baptized after his recon team was shot out while attempting to insert, 4 times. One of those sitting on the bed, Rick Noyes, held a roll of toilet paper and was dabbing his head. Crumbled wads of blood-soaked paper cluttered the floor. During the night, squeaking rats darted throughout the bunker. One of the doctors slept on the floor with his feet outside the bunker. I curled up on a small field desk and slept on it for the night.

The next morning I was shocked to see Rick Noyes in the recon area. "Weren't you evacuated?" I said. He then explained that the blood on his head wasn't his own head wound, it was blood from those who died in that bunker when it took the direct hit. The men maintained a sense of humor throughout the ordeal. When the screeching rockets exploded, someone might say, "Wow, those NVA gunners are sure piss-poor in their accuracy. They missed us by at least ten feet!" One Marine dove into a water-filled culvert during incoming, emerging later, half red (from the mud) and half green, from head to foot, creating a sort of clown-like amusement to those around him.

But mostly, the time was grim. Most of us realized how vulnerable we were. Despite good air support as close-in aircraft dropped their bombs and amazingly sublime splashes of napalm, accompanied by cheering troops on the lines, we all knew that if all those 40,000 NVA surrounding us decided to make a human wave assault on us, the battle would be intense and deadly.

Almost all of us, me included, were not privy to the Top Secret technology that kept the NVA from doing that. We had electronic sensors seeded to detect movement and even record conversations. We had COFRAM, ordnance specially designed to cover a rather large area with a huge amount of small metal fragments. COFRAM munitions were manufactured at Amron Corporation in Waukesha, Wisconsin. The artillery variety was first fired when the nearby Army Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei was overrun on February 7th 1968.

I suppose what will linger in my memory is the remembrance of so many good, young men. Men who commonly were seen to dart out during incoming to rescue someone wounded and unable to move. Men who gave their last bit of food or last drops of water to someone who needed them. Men who affirmed life in the presence of death, who had courage while facing great fears, who expressed love through actions of blessing others.

I left Khe Sanh changed forever, as did probably everyone else who was there. I remember arriving at Quang Tri and some Marine along the road yelling at me as he saw me, "must be Khe Sanh!" No matter how much I bathed myself, using a small aluminum mount-out box as a bath tub, the red clay that had embedded itself in my skin, continued to rub off on the white towels as though I was wiping with toilet paper.

My next duty station after my 18 months in Vietnam was at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina. I was asked by a doctor at the hospital there if I wanted to medically retire since I had an auto-immune disease that would kill me within 20 years, contracted while at Khe Sanh.

During this time I attempted to make sense of what I had experienced, trying to find some meaning, get a grasp on everything, and so, using diaries I had kept each day while in Vietnam, along with clippings and other materials. I spent evenings and weekends in the Chaplains Office completing [on *01 April 1970]* a 1072 single-spaced typed manuscript, *Khe Sanh Chaplain* in 1970, along with a 378-page manuscript, May *Christians Kill.*

My attempts to clarify resulted in several additional rewrites of the experience, attempting to make sense out of what is really non-rational. It became an effort that reminds one of the myths of Sisyphus struggling to push a large rock up a hill,

only to experience it repeatedly rolling down the hill. The final rewrite was completed 06 June 1989, which was 1106 pages long, single-spaced and included extensive material from other Khe Sanh veterans as well as official documentation. This was submitted to Mr. John Prados who greatly reduced it while at the same time adding the needed dimensions of understanding Khe Sanh at the White House and MACV levels.

I had remained on active duty, and as I look back, the experiences of war had continued to trouble me, although I didn't attribute it to that at the times. There was a helicopter that landed on our brand-new ship one day. It was an amphibious ship, and I went aboard the helicopter which was going to fly to another Navy ship. The Crew Chief told me to strap in. Amazed, I said, "Do we sit down? And strap up?" He said, "Yes," (like you're sure some dumb Chaplain)-Sir! I said, "Your windows-you have windows!" "Of course," he replied. But I said, "No one has smashed them out. How are you going to fire at the enemy?" By this time he was quiet. I'm sure he was wondering how he might call the people with straight-jackets, but I didn't think I was being unusual or different at all. Then I blurted out, "And there are no bullet holes! I don't think this is a safe bird. I'm getting off!" (I'm sure he was greatly relieved!)

The months before my retirement from the Navy Chaplain Corps were spent in an adjacent Veterans Administration hospital in the unit for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which was newly identified at the time. Prior to leaving there, I decided on two main goals. One was to get a book printed that would preserve what we experienced at Khe Sanh. The other was to start an organization of those who were there.

The first resulted in the book *Valley* of *Decision,* co-authored by John Prados, which was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1991 in a limited hardback edition. (And was recently reprinted by the US Naval Institute Press as a quality paper-back in...2004). The second goal resulted in the establishment of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a Wisconsin-based non-profit corporation, on 01 Sep 1988. The organization now numbers about 3,500, includes veterans of the Khe Sanh battlefield from the entire time American troops were there, and has annual reunions in addition to publishing a fine first class magazine.

This past summer, I donated to the Wisconsin State Veterans Museum, over a hundred boxes of files pertaining to my research on Khe Sanh, over 600 books pertaining to Khe Sanh, some 2,000 cassettes of interviews, several dozen VAS tapes, several thousand still photos, five boxes of microfilms, and a room full of artifacts and memorabilia pertaining to Khe Sanh. with the hope that all of these things will help preserve the memory of what we experienced and help clarify that experience to succeeding generations.

Like Odysseus returning from the battle at Troy, I needed to bury the oar of the ship far enough inland where nobody would know what it was. Those who weren't there will never really know the depth of the experiences which these artifacts and these documents dimly reflect; but perhaps some, in succeeding generations may ask "What does this mean?" with curiosity, while those of us who were there ask "What does this mean?", with an intensity that can only be managed by placing the experience within a larger context of meaning. And so, I donate these materials – threads in the greater tapestry of historical lineage this museum preservation and proclamation..
Thank you.

A MARINE SALUTE TO OUR CORPSMEN ON OUR 230TH BIRTHDAY
By Mack

This is for men like Doc Langenfeld, Doc Delapane, Doc Lopez, and all of who were KIA in April of 1968, and Doc Vanderstock, Doc Torres, Doc Wicall and others, all of who were WIA on February 5, 1968. SEMPER FIDELIS!!! from Marine brothers. Too many times we as grunts, forget to thank our Doc for being one of us.

Remember you are one of us and that is exactly how we feel. Thank you great Docs, and your familiesas well. The ideal squad is 13 Marines and a Corpsman. The Corpsman is a Navy enlisted man who has medical training and is skilled enough to get you and what ever pieces that were left of you

to a hospital. He's a Navy man, has the respect of the Marines ,and is thought of as one of them known to everyone as Doc. He's the one that responds to the call "Corpsman Up!" He is the one who'll run to you when you've taken one in the chest, the wind is knocked out of you, and you're trying your #### best to move, so the people behind you know you're still alive, yet not moving so much, as to have Charlie pump more rounds into you.

He is there when there is complete chaos, automatic rifle fire, hand grenades exploding, M-79 rounds being lobbed into the brush a few meters in front of you, and more noise than anyone ever hoped to make on the fourth of July. When it seems like you have been laying there for ever, he is the one that has exposed himself to enemy fire to run up to you to scream in your ear, "WHERE ARE YOU HIT!!!" If you're lucky, you can point to the place because you sure as hell can't talk. You're gasping for air because it's leaking out your lung like a tire with a hole in it. You're trying to stay out of shock and feel like your whole body is on fire. You're wrenching with pain and bullets bounce all around your head and body because they are now trying to kill you **And the Doc**.

For some strange reason, God knows where the courage comes from, the Corpsman seems immune to, or oblivious, of all that is going on around you. His only focus is you. In the movies a guy gets hit once and that's about it, in Vietnam, there wasn't any limit to the number of times you could be hit in one firefight. Hell, you could get hit a dozen or more times if someone possessed little else to do but try to nail your young butt. It should be easy for you to see how panic and fear can work on a guy that has been wounded and is basically helpless and the people keep shooting at him... Fear that every round that just misses you, means the next one won't. Lying helpless, unable to move or breath, can cause a panic that does it's m#######est to conquer your soul and leave you pissing all over yourself in fear.

The corpsman yells for a medevac to be called. One is called by a good radioman while someone else is calling in a fire mission that may take twenty minutes before the first round comes in. A lot can happen in twenty minutes, your whole outfit could be wiped out. If the ambush is big enough and you're caught in a cross fire, it could take a lot less than twenty minutes. The action is hot, bullets burn your skin. They get close enough to feel without actually hitting you and that's close. The dirt and sand are red hot as bullets kicked it in your face. You think, God that was close!! Please God just get me out of this one. I promise to be good from now on. Suddenly, someone is dragging you by your collar or some piece of clothing; you're not sure what is going on, but you do know that the pain is bringing you close to unconsciousness. Your whole body is shaking uncontrollably, your chest has a hissing sound coming from where you think your lung is, it's spouting air and filling up with this warm substance that makes it harder to breath, you're sure that blood is now filling your lung up to the point of collapsing. Fear and panic is gone and replaced with shear terror and shock. Yet this Navy guy keeps miraculously dragging your body towards safety, while half the enemy force are trying to nail him.

"Corpsman Up!" You hear through your fog, you know another one of your friends has just taken a hit and could possibly be worse than you are. "Coming" screams the Doc. He tells someone to keep pressure on the rag covering your chest and not to take his hand off of it. He turns and heads in the direction of the last caller, while the enemy continues to do their best to nail him before he can reach his next casualty. Maybe this is why we considered the corpsman to be one of us, although they never went through boot camp at Paris Island or San Diego, they are Marines at heart and #### good ones. Only a fool or a hero would leave a place of safety to throw his body in harms way for someone he may not even know. I never met a Corpsman that I thought was a fool. To me a hero does things that his logical mind is telling him not to do. His logical mind says to stay put, get further down, yet he goes to the rescue.

The hero goes forward in the face of enemy fire. His only thought is to get to the guy that has called for help. He will get to him!! He may get shot himself, but he will not let that guy die by himself. Sometimes they aren't alive when he gets there, but he's there and exposed to the same fire that killed

the man he came to rescue. He goes from wounded to wounded doing what he can to save their lives, doing what he can to give them a little more time; time to get them back to an aid station where they may be saved. Let me be point man any day over being a Corpsman in a Marine infantry outfit. At least I can take cover and return fire.

The Corpsman is special. The Navy offers a lot of other programs that are a hell of a lot less dangerous. Corpsmen know going in that they will be placed in harms way. They knew that they would be assigned to the heaviest fighting areas in Vietnam, yet they volunteer anyway. They care about human suffering and want to do all in their power to aid, and were willing to give their lives to their calling. Check out The Wall, you'll find a lot of corpsman on that wall. They gave their all. Many of us, who were fortunate enough to return home, did so because of their unselfish acts of heroism. In many cases they did so without any medals or rewards except the personal feeling of having done their job and doing it well.

Because of them, thousands of Marines today can greet each other and say welcome home. When you go to see The Wall, a tribute dedicated to Vietnam serviceman who paid the ultimate price for their country, you will see a statue dedicated to the grunts. You will see an area dedicated to the nurses who served their country. What you won't see is a tribute to the Corpsman. A tribute to the men who risked their lives by exposing themselves to tremendous enemy fire, by running, by crawling and by inching their way into the thickest of the thick of fighting, to answer a call for help. They sacrificed their safety to save others lives. I wonder why there are no special honors awarded to these individuals. These men who prevented so many of us here today from having our names on The Wall.

There is a place where a statue could and should be placed. A statue of a single individual, loaded down with his medical gear. A statue representing those that were always ready and willing to give their lives in the hopes that they might save a life. Corpsmen are a special and distinct breed of men who stand out proud and strong. Their everyday acts of bravery and heroism deserve to be recognized by their brothers in arms. They gallantly served and were unselfishly willing to give their all. Because of them, many of us were given the opportunity to make a difference in the world. There are hopes that statue in honor of the Corpsman who served our country so well and who were so important to the Marines in the field, will be in place one day. Statue or not, We would like to personally salute you and to say to you;
Semper Fidelis Marine!

The title is well earned and the honor long overdue. Thank you for your willingness of service and self sacrifice, so that many like myself, today are able to say, welcome home Doc, a job well done.

.....

THANK GOD FOR OUR CORPSMAN
Poem By Ed Becker

From the halls of Montezuma
First words of a famous song,
When Marines go into battle,
A Navy Corpsman goes along.

From its very beginning
The Corps had steadily grown,
And the attitude of a Marine is
"we take care of our own"

Marines may give up their water
Or even their last bean,
But never their Navy Corpsman
Wearing the Marine Corps green.

When Marines and their Corpsman
Are standing side by side,
The first thing you notice
Is the sharing of their pride.

If you are looking for trouble
Of a kind you've never seen,
Attack their Navy Corpsman
The one in Marine Corps green.

MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION
By Tom Eichler

On November 12th 2005, I was an invited guest at a Marine Corps Ball hosted by the 2nd Battalion 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, (Mad

Ghost). The regiment had recently returned from the War in Iraq, where they lost 14 Marines KIA.

I attended the ball with two other Khe Sanh Veterans, Neil Kenny, and Ken Penn, and our editing Director, Diana Fecarotta. Ken Penn attended with lovely companion Gail, whom we met at the reunion in Chicago.

Coupled with attending the Marine Ball, Neil Kenny, had learned that Dan Sinise, the actor/ musician, who portrayed Lieutenant Dan in the movie " Forest Gump", was appearing with his band " Lieutenant Dan's Band", at "**Joe's Bar**" located at 940 W. Weed St, in Chicago. IL., a fund raiser for **The United States Vietnam Arts Program.** Neil had wanted to meet with Dan to seek his endorsement for the Scholarship Fund he is attempting to set up in Memory of Jason Dunham, a Marine who gave his life protecting his fellow Marines in Iraq, and who is currently being considered for the Medal of Honor. www.jasonsmemorial.org. After a wonderful time at the Ball, where we had been received warmly by all in attendance, Neil, Diana and I went to the club where Dan was appearing. Upon arrival at the club, we observed long



lines waiting to see the show, and absolutely no parking.

The accommodating Valet Parking attendants allowed us to park in front of the club, while we sought an audience with Dan Sinise. Upon exiting our vehicle to enter the club, many young citizens waiting to enter, approached us, shook our hand, and thanked us for our service.

When we entered the club we were again warmly greeted by the security staff, and Owner Ed Warm, who also thanked us for our service. Ed then admitted us to the VIP lounge while we waited for Dan to finish his session. Patrons in the VIP section were very warm, thanking us for our service and offering free libations.

Neil spoke to the manager of Dan's band, and explained our reason for wanting to speak to Dan.



When the band finished playing, they adjourned to the VIP Section for a well deserved break. Although physically exhausted, Dan who has always wonderfully supported veterans causes, agreed to meet with us and other veterans who were there to thank him for all his support over the years.

Anna Sherony one of the founders of Wounded Soldiers - Wounded Heroes, was also there with a



severely injured soldier from Iraq . Their group has helped thousands of severely injured veterans from the war in Iraq , and Afghanistan.

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Gary was most gracious, as were all his band members, along with the club staff. He agreed to look at



the proposals given to him by Neil Kenny. Gary then posed for pictures with our party, and all the other veterans who wanted to thank him for his long enduring support of all veterans organizations.

I would be remiss if I failed to list the goals and accomplishments of the Wounded Soldiers and Heroes foundation. They are a great organization who needs support to maintain their wonderful work.

WOUNDED SOLDIERS & HEROES
WWW.WOUNDEDSOLDIERS.NET

The Wounded Soldiers' project mission is to assist the men and women of our armed forces who have been severely injured during the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other hot spots around the world. Many of their injuries are traumatic amputations, gunshot wounds, burns and blast injuries that will retire these brave warriors from military service. The Wounded Soldiers' mission is to demonstrate love and support by helping to meet the basic needs of wounded service personnel and their families.

It's a program designed to demonstrate physical and emotional support to wounded service personnel by helping to provide quality personal care, and clothing and recreational items to enhance their recovery. Many service men and women are evacuated straight out of the field with no possessions. The Veterans Foundation of Illinois Wounded Soldiers has sent over 1,700 Survival Care Packages and have met with over 600 Wounded Hero's and their families. With help, they want to continue sending Survival Care Packages and assist with the needs of our Wounded Heroes, who are inpatients and outpatients at all US Medical Facilities, both domestic and abroad, along with their families. .

They started the Wounded Soldiers Program back in November 2003, at which time we had 2,000 wounded. We now have over 16,000 wounded soldiers and thousands of them have lost limbs (some of them more then one) thousands are brain damaged, badly burned, blind and/or deaf for life. They have sent over 1,700 men and women care packages to our Heroic Soldiers that are hospitalized at Walter Reed Hospital and Bethesda in Washington DC, Brookes Medical Center in Texas, Naval Medical Center in San Diego, and to the US Medical units in Iraq and Germany.

These young men and women are truly the HEART OF AMERICA. During their visit to Walter Reed and Bethesda in November 2004 and New Years 2005, they delivered an additional 850 care packages to the inpatients and outpatients at these hospitals. They also provided plane tickets to Wounded Soldier Families so they could be together for Thanksgiving, and provided money to families for special needs while caring for their wounded loved ones. In May 2005, their goal was to send 150 care packages to Brooks Medical Center, 250 to Walter Reed, 100 to Bethesda, 100 to the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, and 40 cases of Mrs. Fields cookies to Landstuhl (US Medical Hospital in Germany). Boy do our wounded love Mrs. Field's cookies!

They also purchased over 800 Army, Air force, Navy, and Marine jackets to give to our wounded for Christmas, New Years Eve, Valentines Day and St Patrick's Day at Walter Reed, Bethesda, Brookes Medical Center in Texas and Naval Medical Center in San Diego. They would love to purchase more of the same jackets for our wounded, but their funds are running low (they are hoping for a miracle).

What Happens When A Solider Is Wounded? When an American Hero is wounded his or her

Dan was most gracious, as were all his band members, along with the club staff. He agreed to look at the proposals given to him by Neil Kenny. Dan then posed for pictures with our party, and all the



other veterans who wanted to thank him for his long enduring support of all veterans organizations.

I would be remiss if I failed to list the goals and accomplishments of the Wounded Soldiers and Heroes foundation. They are a great organization who needs support to maintain their wonderful work.

WOUNDED SOLDIERS & HEROES
WWW.WOUNDEDSOLDIERS.NET

The Wounded Soldiers' project mission is to assist the men and women of our armed forces who have been severely injured during the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other hot spots around the world. Many of their injuries are traumatic amputations, gunshot wounds, burns and blast injuries that will retire these brave warriors from military service. The Wounded Soldiers' mission is to demonstrate love and support by helping to meet the basic needs of wounded service personnel and their families.

It's a program designed to demonstrate physical and emotional support to wounded service personnel by helping to provide quality personal care, and clothing and recreational items to enhance their recovery. Many service men and women are evacuated straight out of the field with no possessions. The Veterans Foundation of Illinois Wounded Soldiers has sent over 1,700 Survival Care Packages and have met with over 600 Wounded Hero's and their families. With help, they want to continue sending Survival Care Packages and assist with the needs of our Wounded Heroes, who are inpatients and outpatients at all US Medical Facilities, both domestic and abroad, along with their families. .

They started the Wounded Soldiers Program back in November 2003, at which time we had 2,000 wounded. We now have over 16,000 wounded soldiers and thousands of them have lost limbs (some of them more then one) thousands are brain damaged, badly burned, blind and/or deaf for life. They have sent over 1,700 men and women care packages to our Heroic Soldiers that are hospitalized at Walter Reed Hospital and Bethesda in Washington DC, Brookes Medical Center in Texas, Naval Medical Center in San Diego, and to the US Medical units in Iraq and Germany.

These young men and women are truly the HEART OF AMERICA. During their visit to Walter Reed and Bethesda in November 2004 and New Years 2005, they delivered an additional 850 care packages to the inpatients and outpatients at these hospitals. They also provided plane tickets to Wounded Soldier Families so they could be together for Thanksgiving, and provided money to families for special needs while caring for their wounded loved ones. In May 2005, their goal was to send 150 care packages to Brooks Medical Center, 250 to Walter Reed, 100 to Bethesda, 100 to the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, and 40 cases of Mrs. Fields cookies to Landstuhl (US Medical Hospital in Germany). Boy do our wounded love Mrs. Field's cookies!

They also purchased over 800 Army, Air force, Navy, and Marine jackets to give to our wounded for Christmas, New Years Eve, Valentines Day and St Patrick's Day at Walter Reed, Bethesda, Brookes Medical Center in Texas and Naval Medical Center in San Diego. They would love to purchase more of the same jackets for our wounded, but their funds are running low (they are hoping for a miracle).

What Happens When A Solider Is Wounded? When an American Hero is wounded his or her family is called ,a call that changes their lives forever. Many will leave their home, job, friends and

family is called ,a call that changes their lives forever. Many will leave their home, job, friends and family, to be with their wounded love one for weeks, months, and even years. They do this to provide love and support to their wounded family member. The wounded need all the love and support their family and friends can provide as they start to travel the long, painful, and difficult road to recovery. Back home there is no income coming in to pay the bills, let alone the airfare, hotel and meals expenses that the family has incurred. Their FLMA has expired, and the families have to decide between staying with their love one who needs them, or losing their job, home, and belongings. No family member should have to make this choice and with our help, they won't have to.

Anna & Rich Sherony are Proud Marine Parents (son Michael) who work tirelessly for the cause of the Wounded Soldiers of America. They are full of love, concern, and compassion, for the men and women fighting for our freedom around the world today. Because of these true virtuous hearts, they



have started the Wounded Soldier Program, to which they affectionately call, The Heart Of America, to help and assist these Heroes and their families in any way that they can.

There is no need too great or small that they will not go above and beyond to meet. It is for this cause, that they are so dedicated and work so passionately.

Anna and Rich have traveled and have sent care packages to various military hospitals: Walter Reed and Bethesda in Washington, DC, Brooke Medical Center in Texas, Naval Medical Center in San Diego, and US Medical units in Iraq and Germany inclusively.

They are, in fact, "Guardian Angels" to which God has placed here on the earth to watch over, care for, meet and bring to light, the day-to-day, future, physical and emotional needs of these Brave Heroic Men and Women of our Armed Forces, to





which we sometimes take for granted. Wonderous applause for "The Heart of America".

.....

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PHOTOS OF THE NEW MARINE CORPS MUSEUM SCHEDULED TO OPEN 10 NOV 2006 SUBMITTED BY NICK ROMANETZ

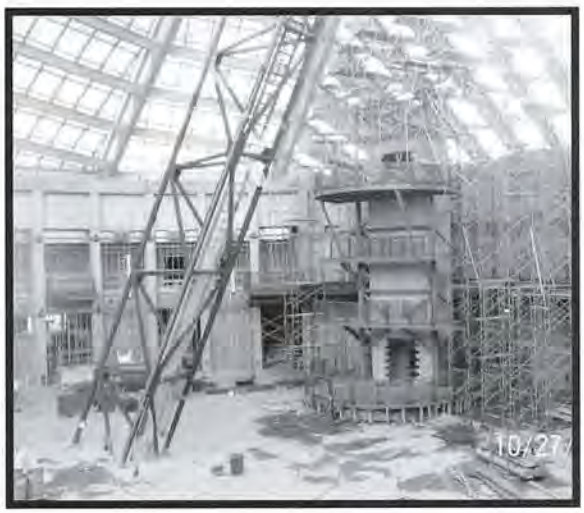







SOME INTERESTING CHANGES FROM THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

UPDATE ON CO-PAYMENT PRESSCRIPTION INCREASES FROM THE VA

By Mike Fishbaugh

Co-payments for outpatient medicines prescribed through Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities will rise by $1, according to an announcement today by VA. The $1 increase for a 30-day supply of prescription drugs will take effect on January 1, 2006, the first change in VA prescription drug co-payments in four years. "Through sound management practices, efficient pharmacy operations, and price negotiations that put veterans first, VA has been able to contain prescription drug costs," said the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, noting that co-payments paid by veterans will still be lower than similar expenses in the private sector. The increase to $8 from $7 for a 30-day supply of prescription drugs is required by federal law, which bases VA's co-payments for outpatient prescriptions on increases in the Medical Consumer Price Index.

The $1 increase will not affect veterans who have an injury or illness connected with their military service resulting in a 50 percent or greater disability. Also known as "Priority Group 1" veterans, these patients will see no change in their current prescription drug benefit. Other veterans with less pronounced service-connected ailments, those classified as Priority Groups 2 through 6 – will see their prescription drug co-

Payment pocket expenses for VA medicine will remain capped. The new cap will rise to $960 per year, up
$120 from the previous level. This means veterans in Priority Groups 2 through 6 will pay no more than $960 annually for VA outpatient medicine. or un-employability, coverage. Medication for a veteran whose annual income does not exceed the amount of VA pensions Medications for health problems that may be linked to Agent Orange for Vietnam veterans, to radiation exposure, to undiagnosed illnesses of Persian War veterans, or for new veterans within two years of discharge after serving in a combat theater.

Veterans who have no injury or illness related in any way to their prior military service, referred to as Priority Groups 7 and 8 – will also see their co-payments increase, but there is no cap on annual payments for outpatient medicine. Not all prescription drugs will be subject to the $1 increase. Outpatient medications not subject to co-payments included;
(a) **Medication for treatment of a service-connected disability**
(b) Medication for a veteran who has a service-connected disability of 50 percent or more
(c) Medication for a veteran disabled by 50 percent or more.
People wishing to receive e-mail from VA with the latest news releases and updated fact sheets can subscribe at the following Internet address: **http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opalist_listserv.cfm**

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SENATE PONDERS VA DISABILITY HIKE

Another article of interest to many of you; those of you who had your claims adjudicated in Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio, Connecticut, Michigan, and Indiana may want to talk with your Service Officers. For almost 30 years, Vietnam veteran Richard Halstead of Bellevue has bounced from job to job, unable to hold down steady work because he couldn't get along with his co-workers, drank and suffered flashbacks to his year in combat.

Starting in the early 1980s, Halstead began receiving monthly checks of about $570 from the federal Veterans Affairs Department because it considered him partially disabled by a mental disorder, called post-traumatic stress disorder, brought on by his service. Halstead applied in 1990 to be considered completely disabled. After 13 years, the VA granted his request, and also agreed to compensate him for his heart disease and diabetes related to Agent Orange exposure, and bumped his monthly payments up to $2,700.

What Halstead didn't know is that for decades, veterans in Michigan and five other states have been shortchanged in disability payments. The two Democratic senators from Illinois, another one of the under-compensated states, have introduced a proposal that would allow veterans to increase their disability payments and receive back compensation as well. Halstead has been receiving as much compensation as veterans in other states since he was declared 100 percent disabled, but he could claim back payments for the previous years.

Halstead, 57, said he would apply for back compensation—but only if there's no chance the VA will lower his current monthly payments. "I just feel that I earned it," Halstead said. During his year of Army combat duty in Vietnam, the helicopter he flew in was shot down six times. Tommy Vietor, a spokesman for Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, said the Senate proposal wouldn't allow the VA to lower the compensation of veterans who apply for back payments.

The disparity in disability compensation was uncovered by a Chicago Sun-Times report a year ago that said Illinois veterans were receiving the nation's lowest disability payments. After members of Illinois' congressional delegation asked the VA for an explanation, the agency's inspector general found that average disability payments for 322,663 veterans in six states—Illinois, New Jersey, Ohio, Connecticut, Michigan, and Indiana—were lower than could be accounted for by obvious factors. At the same time, the review found higher-than-average payments for 182,825 veterans in six other states—New Mexico, Maine, Arkansas, West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Oregon.

The inspector general's report concluded that one major factor was large variation in disability payments awarded for post-traumatic stress disorder.

In response, Obama and fellow Illinois Senator Dick Durbin persuaded fellow senators to insert a requirement in a military spending bill that the VA notify veterans in the six under-compensated states that they may resubmit their disability claims and perhaps receive retroactive payments. Veterans in the states where disability payments are higher than the national average wouldn't lose any money under the proposal.

"We should err on the side of generosity when providing them disability benefits," Obama said in an interview. The freshman senator sits on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Senate and House negotiators are considering the proposal as they draft a final version of the spending bill for the 2006 fiscal year, which began Oct. 1st. Michigan Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow support the proposal. Halstead said it sounded fair. "If there is a disparity in the way that they're paying states, why?" he asked. "It ought to be the same across the board."

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Congress Approves 4.1% Veterans' COLA

All:
Key words are, ". . . Assuming President Bush signs the bill, S1234 . . ." I believe he will sign the bill, but when is undetermined.

Congress has approved a 4.1% increase in veterans' disability and survivor benefits, effective Dec. 1st. The increase in disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation and pensions matches the cost-of-living adjustments in Social Security and in military and federal civilian retired pay. Congress has never linked veterans' benefits to the same automatic COLA formula of other federal entitlements, instead retaining the responsibility for passing a separate annual COLA bill for veterans.

Lawmakers have provided an inflation-matching increase in veterans' benefits each year since 1976, but not always on time for the raise to be included in January paychecks. Assuming President Bush signs bill S1234, there is still enough time this year to process the change for the January payroll. The only negative word about bill S1234, came from Representative Shelly Berkley, D-Nev., who noted that the increase does not apply to the relatively new $250 monthly transition benefit paid to surviving spouses of service members killed on active duty for two years after the death. The benefit, approved two years ago, is paid to spouses with children.

"Unfortunately, our widows and orphans are going to have to survive on a stagnant benefit," Berkley said. An increase in the dependents' benefit is still possible, however, because the House and Senate veterans' affairs committees are negotiating details of a possible veterans' benefits bill that at one time was supposed to be attached to the COLA measure. Discussion on the bigger package of benefits continues, with hopes of passing the measure in mid-December after a two-week congressional break for Thanksgiving, House and Senate committee aides said.

By Mack

POETRY

We served the years
And paid the price

With thread bare nerves
And sleepless nights

We went to the bush
And ran our patrols

Now it's the inner rage
We fight to control

In an instant we are
There again

Fighting to save
Ourselves and men

It seems that as
The years go by

The dreams get worse
Why didn't I die

Those closest to you
They don't know

For our emotions we
Are afraid to show

So we band together
Your Brothers of mine

For only you know
The test of time

To me the truth
Is as the poet wrote

And I want you
All to take note!

We few, we lucky few
For he who sheds his
Blood with me today
Will be my brother
TOMORROW

Larry Richards

BOOK REVIEW

VIETNAM'S ORANGE, WHITE AND BLUE RAIN AGENTS AND WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION;
328 Pages
By Charles Kelley

Charles Kelley, a Vietnam Veteran who served with the US Army 175 MM artillery out of Camp Carroll, pulls no punches with this book of scathing evidence of scientific, analytical, factual data and in your face style, indictment of conspiracy, against the Department of Veteran Affairs and several other government agencies. He promises: "With documented evidence and references to the evidence, I will show that our own government promised her Veterans care, and reneged on that promise. With documented evidence and references to the evidence, I will show that our own government, including the White House, has committed conspiracy against a complete segment of our society, The Veteran." This he does in a systematic, scientific fashion. He references not only American, but foreign scientific sources as well.

Most American readers can now conceive the horrors and use of toxic chemicals on his own people, by Saddam Hussein, or the millions of Jews murdered by gas by Adolph Hitler, but most readers will have difficulty understanding the massive and continued cover up by The American Government of the use and toxic effects of Agents orange White, and Blue, in Vietnam. More than just Agent Orange was sprayed in Vietnam. Also used were agents White and Blue. Never was adequate testing on any of these deadly combinations done prior to their being used in Vietnam.

The evidence presented will shock you and leave you wanting to fix the wrong, the American government has bestowed on the very people who fought and protected our freedom and rights. The author neatly frames his main point with an Introduction by Jeffrey A. Truman on the Feres Doctrine allowing a better legal understanding of the Bureau of Veterans Affairs and unchallengeable power; then with all fairness, Mr. Kelley finishes his book with some recommendations.

Mr. Kelley's engineering background is displayed by his analytical and scientific thinking. He demonstrates his ability to utilize scientific analysis, legal data, medical information and stamina to cut through the bureaucratic and political red tape to show the horrific physical and psychological disorders and genetic defects from exposure to dioxin and other chemicals used in the war by the US Government. The author's intensive and exhaustive research leaves many questions to be answered by the Bureau of Veteran Affairs, the White House and elected officials and their appointees. Time and time again, the author shows the flawed studies, hidden records or altered documents that have led to the premature death of many veterans and the suffering of their offspring due the Veterans toxic exposure, passed on genetically. Time and again, the author shows the U.S. Government's inability to give her Veterans the benefit of the doubt, as mandated by law, the U.S. Government destroying or misplacing scientific data, or spinning the facts to avoid accountability for 40 plus years of cover up, to avoid doing the right thing for her Warriors and future generations.

The readers will notice the author may appear personal, at times, with feelings of frustration and righteous anger, regarding Agent Orange and the whole fiasco about its effects on the human system and the government's lack of accountability. To better understand these personal feelings, the reader must know that Charles Kelley is totally disabled, due to severe polyneuropathy with muscle atrophy, Diabetes Type II, and chronic fatigue and pain. No less than 5 civilian doctors have validated his illnesses, yet the Bureau of Veterans affairs fails to recognize them as service connected due to toxic exposure during service near the DMZ in 1967-68. Being the true patriot that he is Mr. Kelley agonized over writing this book, since it would shed such a bad light on the American government.

He discovered that the area most sprayed was Northern I Corps in 1967-68 while he was there. His major discovery is that the way that everyone was affected by these deadly poisons was by the use of the water since everyone there drank, bathed and used it for cooking and the poisons after spraying entered the water systems.
I salute you Charles Kelley, for your patriotism,

undying love for your comrades, and your bravery, to not let this issue die with we Vietnam Veterans and our offspring (this is a multigenerational issue). I am inspired by your ability to continue the fight for Veterans rights and freedom. You sir, meet the definition of hero.

The effects of Agent Orange may not be reversed; but knowledge of this American atrocity may alleviate future pain and suffering. I believe this is the primary intent of the author. I would recommend this book be read by ALL Politicians, All employees of the Bureau of Veterans Affairs, most specifically VA Health Professionals and Administrators. I suggest all Vietnam Veterans and their families read this book and use it for a reference, if you feel you have been exposed to any Toxins or Chemical agents while performing your military duties. Mr. Kelley also touches upon the medical conditions suffered by our Gulf War Veterans. He put his heart and soul into researching and writing this book and has made it his life's mission to find justice for we Vietnam Veterans. Please support him.

To purchase his book online go to:
WWW.CORPSPRODUCTIONS.COM , or to pay by check write to Corps Productions P.O. Box 1452 Alamo, Ca 94507

With great honor and respect,
Bob "Doc" Cahill
Former 1st Platoon Corpsman,
Delta Company, 1/26 Marines 1968-69,
Retired Registered Nurse



OPERATION "SEMPER CRY"

By Jimbo Wodecki

My wife PJ has come up with a novel idea to help the family of a young Marine serving in Iraq. She is asking wives of Khe Sanh Veterans to help her in an endeavor to have a baby shower on line for Doug Pierson, serving his country who is now on his second tour in Iraq and can't be home for his wife and first born.

At our last reunion we met a nice couple L/CPL Doug and Melissa Pierson. Doug was on leave from Iraq and was just married. He was returning for his second tour in a few weeks.

We Khe Sanh veterans sort of adopted them. Since returning Melissa found out they are going to have a baby girl while he is gone. We sent Doug a package to make a few days brighter. PJ had an idea we can do a baby shower for them to lighten their load. A gift card from Wal-Mart, diapers and anything "girl" for the new angel coming would be nice. Doug is sending me a flag he flew with a certificate of appreciation and I will bring it to silent auction at next years reunion and funds will be sent directly to them. If you want to send a package to Doug in Iraq or any of his buddies here is his address. Doug made Corporal since he returned.

Cpl Douglas B Pierson
1st LAR BN H&S Co MT PLT
Unit 40595
FPO AP 96426-0595

Letter Received from Melissa Pierson, after PJ ran the idea past her:

An online baby shower would be SOOOO awesome. Please tell PJ that I think ya"ll are fabulous, and some of the best people in the whole world. Just let me know if I need to do anything. We would be honored and grateful. I don't think I will get to have a real shower before the baby is born, because most of my friends are still at Camp Pendleton and I of course moved near my mom while Doug is gone. Most of my family is not in this area, so it will be a while before I get a real shower. So this online shower would be so cool!!



I am not registered yet; I will probably just register at Wal-Mart since they are all over the country! I am going to get that done within the next few weeks. Baby girl is due March 25th.

Letter from Doug in Iraq:

Jim,
All is as well as it can be in Iraq its just getting colder than hell here, well at the moment, what we all have been waiting for, is happening! We are having a little girl that is going to be daddy's little angel! I have been busy we have had a lot of ops we've been on. I have a gift for you and the rest of the Khe Sanh vets, I flew a flag here and it comes with a authentic certificate in honor all of you. I was also able to get a challenge coin from my battalion. I hope you enjoy them, which are already in the mail; you should get in the next few weeks. I want to thank you again for all you are doing for my wife and I. As far as sending packages, just send them to me and I will make sure that my marines will appreciatively get them. Happy holidays.
God Bless
Doug

NEW VIETNAM MEMORIAL UNVEILED IN CHICAGO ILLINOIS
By Tom Eichler

Mayor Richard Daley recently dedicated a Memorial honoring all those who served in the Vietnam war. I attended with Neil Kenny, and my Brother Denny. Here are a few pictures from that ceremony held on Veterans Day, 11 November 2005, to coincide with the Marine Corps Birthday.



Neil Kenny With MOH
Recipient Allen James Lynch





ART WORK BY ED ORR









ART WORK BY ED ORR



KHE SANH VETERANS STILL SERVING

Bill Maves served at Khe Sanh on Hill 861A, during the Siege. He was recently awarded a Purple Heart in Iraq, for wounds received while serving with the United States Army. Bill saved many lives as the Medical Evacuation officer on the Hill . He is due home before Christmas, God speed Bill we love and miss you.

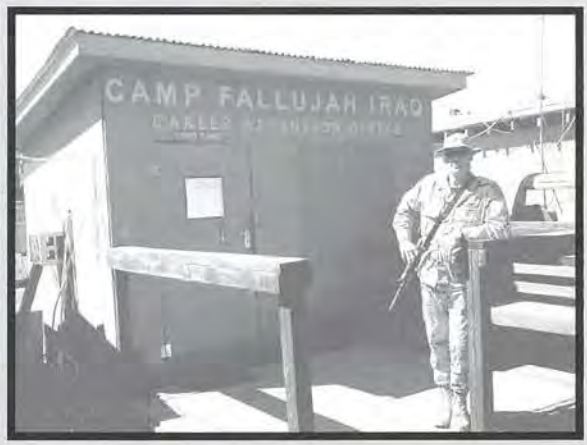











HILL 861 & 861A

10 NOVEMBER 2005

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

On November 10th, 1775, the Second Continental Congress Resolved to raise two battalions of Continental Marines marking the birth of our United States Marine Corps. As Major General Lejeune's message reminds us, the ensuing generations of Marines would come to signify all that is highest in war fighting excellence and military virtue. Each November as Marines the world over celebrate the birth of our Corps, we pay tribute to that long line of "Soldiers of the Sea" and the illustrious legacy they have handed down to us.

This past year has been one of continuous combat operations overseas, and distinguished service here at home - a year of challenges that have brought out the very best in our corps; In Iraq and Afghanistan. Marine courage and mastery of complex and chaotic environments have truly made a difference in the lives of millions. Marine compassion and f1ex1bility provided humanitarian assistance to thousands in the wake of the South East Asian Tsunami, and here ay home. Marines with AAV's, helicopters, and sometimes with their bare hands saved hundreds of our own fellow Americans in the wake of Hurricane's Katrina and Rita. Across the full spectrum of operations, you have showcased that Marines *create stability in an unstable world,* and have reinforced our Corps reputation for setting the standard of excellence.

The sense of honor, courage, and patriotism that epitomized those who answered that first call to arms 230 years ago, is still indelibly imprinted on our ranks today. In commemorating our anniversary, let us strengthen our ties to the past by paying homage to those who have gone before us. As we honor the sacrifices of our wounded and fallen comrades, our commitment to one another remains unshakable. We take special pride in the actions of the Marines now serving in harms way, and rededicate ourselves to the service of our Nation and our Corps.

Happy Birthday Marines, Semper Fidelis, and keep attacking!

M.W. HAGEE
General, U.S. Marine Corps

ISSUE 64

SPRING
2006

The Khe Sanh Veterans'

RED CLAY

WHO,WHEN, AND WHERE?
READ RAY W. STUBBE'S CHRONOLOGY OF ACTIONS AT KHE SANH , AND AWARDS ELIGIBILITY. THE YEARS 1962-1972 (FEATURED STORY)

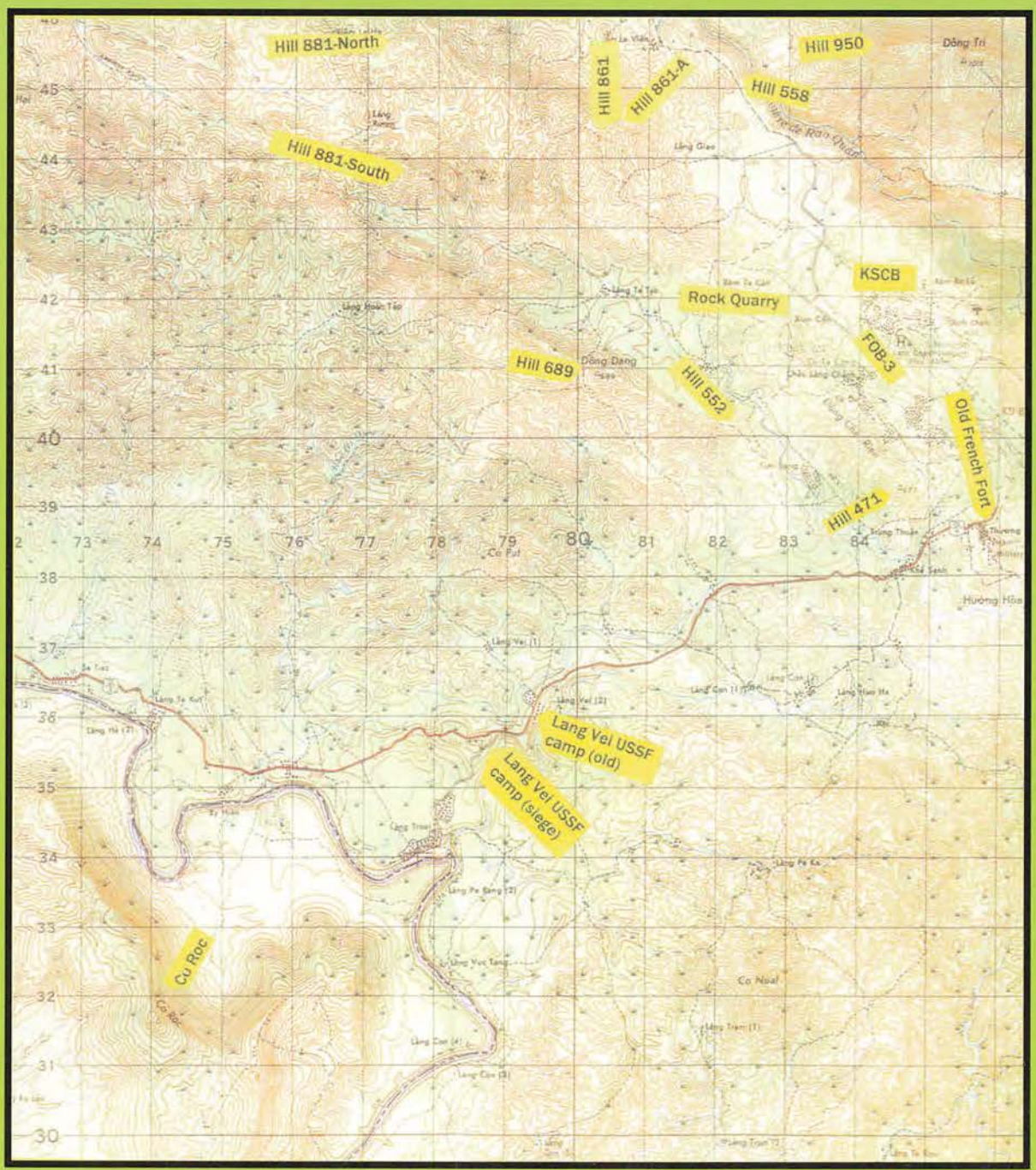

SECRETARY REPORT

It's that time of year again, start saving your pennies, and get ready for the party to begin. June is coming fast and before you know it the reunion will be here. Be prepared to be busy. There are a lot of things to do this year in Mobile. The PX has a lot of new items to enjoy. The PX helps support our magazine. The membership was very supportive at the reunion in Chicago last year. As an added pleasure I get to meet all you guys and your families. Register before the reunion so you can save a couple of bucks and buy more gear from me. The reunion should be one of our best. The hotel and accommodations look great. Jimbo, PJ, Russ and Tommy did a great job of getting us what we want for Hospitality and PX rooms. We have so much more than last year. We are allowed to drink in the hospitality room. The hotel is even supplying free Kegs of beer. It is always good seeing all of you and knowing that I am in a safe place. Just like at **KHE SANH** .
Semper Fi
Big John
A CO 3rd Combat Engineers

PUBLISHER NOTES

I want to remind our members that our magazine is totally financed from the dues paid by our members. The magazine is published three times a year. for each issue, the turn around time for the writing, editing, printing and mailing, is two months. When one issue is shipped the next is already started.

We have a quality printing company that does outstanding work. In order to have an affirmed completion date I must inform them of the quantity of magazines we will be ordering. Our low price is also based on the quantity ordered.

Since the spring issue has to be completed and ready to roll by the end of February, I must have the dues in by March 01. I order the quantity based on paid members. In the future, if your dues are not paid by that date you will not receive that issue of the magazine. I cannot keep ordering extra magazines and hope members will eventually pay their dues.

Tom Eichler VP, Chairman,
Publishing & Membership Committees

TREASURERS REPORT

Reunion 2006 Mobile Alabama

Registration for our Reunion 2006 is off to a great start. Many have chosen to pay their registration fees via credit card, which we now have in place. One small request, when calling, please call between 1 pm and 6 pm Central time for registrations, PX items and membership. We prefer everyone use the forms sent to you and mailed to us. It sometimes gets overwhelming when we get calls at 8 am or 9 pm in the evening. Make sure to make your hotel reservations before May 26, 2006, midnight. Rooms may not be available after that. Room rates are $85.00 per night, doubles. Rates are good for 3 days before and 3 days after reunion.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS CALL-(866)749-6069 or **FOR ONLINE RESERVATIONS** use the **Khe Sanh Veterans group code # 25747**. Pets are accepted at hotel with a non-refundable pet deposit of $50.00 Many have made suggestions regarding future reunions sites. Here are a few things that have to be in place before that is possible. We began the selection process 2 years ahead for the selected location. Next year is DC that was voted on by the membership to coincide with the opening of the new Marine Corps Museum. The following years are open. If you are really interested, get in touch with your local convention center, ask them for hotels in your town that have done Military reunions. We prefer central locations but are open to west coast places like California, Nevada (Las Vegas), New Mexico, Arizona, etc. The selected city has to have hotels large enough to accommodate everyone from the membership who attends, (300-500). Have your convention centers send us the list of hotels in that city and we will contact them and negotiate. We usually select three places and have the membership select their choice. The last several years voting was limited to certain cities due to the delay in the opening of the new Marine Corps Museum. Last year there were only three other suggestions made besides Mobile Alabama.

PX NEWS

Our PX is doing well, members are increasingly supporting our organization by purchasing items from our PX. Our magazine, **RED CLAY** is solely sup-

ported by dues and sales from our PX. The more items bought, the better the magazine. Good participation from the membership will also allow us to purchase a larger variety of items for our PX. Our items are also designed to attract new members. Someone sees you wearing a hat, shirt, pin, etc with our KSV Logo, and often we get a new member. Every dime we collect goes back to the organization. The entire staff and their families are volunteers and dedicate their own time to the organization.

Please be nice to us on the phone. This is your organization support it.

Election to Board of Directors;
There are several board members up for re-election. If you want to run and be on the board of directors, send your name in to Russ Turner, President, and election committee chairman. You must send in your name or the name of someone you think would like to be on the board, prior to our reunion. A candidate must have attended at least three reunions and be a paid member. Names of candidates will also be accepted at the reunion but will have to wait till the following years' election to run for the board, in accordance with our by-laws. Two members have sent in their names in so far: Dennis Mannion and Neil Kenny. No associate member is eligible for the BOD seats. If you want to change any by-laws or have your own ideas for operating the organization, run for a board seat.

James "Jimbo" Wodecki
Treasurer & Co- Chairman Reunion Committee
KSV Web Page Master

MEMORIALS

Those Remembered			Remembered By
Cpl Gregory F. Popwitz	3rd Recon	USMC KIA 27 Jan 68	John Hernandez F Co 2/3
L/Cpl Thomas J. Sweeney	3rd Recon	USMC KIA 26 Feb 68	John Hernandez F Co 2/3
Cpl Reuben C McMakins Jr	L CO 2/26	USMC KIA 14 Apr 68	Thomas A. Pierce L 3/26
L/Cpl Paul F. Stedman A Co	3rd SP	USMC KIA 26 Feb 68	Thomas Green A Co 3rd SP
L/Cpl Jay Books		USMC KIA 08 Sep 68	Charles H. Fetter VMF-14
Sgt Major James Gaynor H&S	1/26	USMC KIA 15 Feb 68	Charles H. Fetter VMF-14
Capt Daniel Coonon	VMF-15	USMC KIA16 Nov 66	Charles H. Fetter VMF-14
Dennis Herb	3rd Recon	USMC Passed Away	Charles H. Fetter VMF-14
Lt/Col Richard R. Blair	C/O 3/26	USMC Passed Away	Khe Sanh Veterans

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Members of 3RD Platoon, Hotel Co, 2/3, Reunion

By Lt/Col C.S. Gaede USMCR (Ret)

The Marines of 3rd Platoon, Hotel, Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment (H/2/3) held a reunion commemorating the 38th year since their service in the Republic of Vietnam from 29 September to 2 October 2005, in Austin Texas. Most of the Marines joined the Battalion in late 1967 after it was assigned a Tactical Area of Responsibility south of Da Nang. In March 1968, the Battalion moved to Phu Bai, and from there to Ca Lu for Operation Pegasus that reopened National Route 9 to Khe Sanh and officially ended the siege of Khe Sanh. On about 10 April 1968, the Battalion moved to a position on Route 9 approximately 6 kilometers east of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The Battalion and the Marines of the 3rd Platoon operated in the hills east and southwest of the Khe Sanh Combat Base until the Base was evacuated in June 1968. Although the North Vietnamese Army was withdrawing, they had many units remaining in the area. The Marines of the 3rd Platoon engaged in many battles. Several of them were killed in action, and more were wounded.

On September 30, 2005 some of the 3rd Platoon Marines and their wives to viewed the sand table model of Khe Sanh that President Lyndon B. Johnson used in his Situation Room for briefings during the siege of Khe Sanh. It was a remarkable experience. In 1968 we Marines knew only the trail we were on, the next hill ahead, and the ground around our fighting holes and to the immediate front. That the President of the United States would have a model of the whole terrain where we were living and fighting, or that he would be spending time pondering it would never have occurred to us.

More memories and emotions were experienced the morning of October 1, when the staff at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas campus arranged a special exhibit of photographer David Douglas Duncan's Vietnam photographs. Duncan, a retired Marine and Life magazine combat photographer is known for the 1967 photo on the front page of Life magazine of the Marine at Con Thien. The Harry Ransom Center staff have prepared a multimedia presentation that combines tape recordings of interviews of Khe Sanh Marines during the siege with his still photographs. Watching and listening to the presentation is to take a step back in time. For those who would like to see and hear the presentation, it is titled *David Douglas Duncan: A Vietnam Tribute.*

The video is available at http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/online/ddd/multimedia/ Most likely Khe Sanh siege veterans will recognize someone Duncan is interviewing, but veterans who are sensitive to memories of actual sights and sounds from then should be aware that they might encounter some heavy memories. The most memorable event of the Duncan exhibit occurred when L/CPL Patrick J. Hodgkins realized that he was the man in a photograph in Duncan's *War Without Heros* (p.47). It had appeared to some of us that the photo was "Boot camp," but only he could confirm it. Needless to say, it was an emotional moment for Patrick to see himself in the photo. We are glad his wife was there to experience the moment with him.

Another unique experience occurred on the afternoon of October 01, when Gary Lavergne, author or *Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Story*, led the men and women on a personal tour of the University of Texas Tower. Gary's book has been featured on the History Channel as part of the True Crime series, and he is considered the leading historian on Charles Whitman shootings. While the Marines of Vietnam brought honor to the Corps, Charles Whitman, an former Marine, brought dishonor to us on August 6, 1966, by randomly shooting innocent civilians from the top of the Tower. The University of Texas does not promote or permit tours that talk about Charles Whitman, but the Administration was kind enough to grant permission for an exclusive tour for us. SWAT teams were created after the Tower shootings as a way to deal with such events in the future. Watch for a made-for-TV movie based on Gary's book to arrive soon.

We Marines and our wives of the 3rd Platoon, H/2/3 are all grateful to Michael MacDonald, Registrar, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library & Museum, Mary Alice Harper, Photographic Archivist, Harry Ransom Center, and Gary Lavergne, personal friend, for taking their personal time and making special arrangement for us.

We Marines spent much time talking, bonding, with

each other, and left the reunion knowing that we brothers had been reunited. It was an opportunity for the us and our wives to share positive memories and emotions, as fresh as they were in 1967 and 1968.

TX; L/CPL Joe Whittington, Rifleman (Awarded Silver Star Medal), Montgomery AL; Cricket Whittington .

The following poem was written by Doc Roy Moon, who served as our corpsman for 3rd Platoon, from



L-R Front row kneeling: L/CPL Robert Guzman, Radio Operator, San Antonio, TX; L/CPL Stephen A. White, Radio Operator, Las Vegas, NV **2ND** row standing: S/SGT John B. McDonald, Platoon Sergeant, (M/SGT, USMC (Ret.)), Laramie WY; Hospital Corpsman Roy Moon (USN), 3RD Platoon corpsman, Fort Gay, WV; L/CPL Abraham Piedra, M-60 Machine Gun Team Leader, (Command Sergeant Major, New Mexico National , Guard (Ret.)), Alamogordo, NM **3RD** row standing: PFC Robert W. Griffin, Rifleman, Baytown, TX; L/CPL Patrick J. Hodgkins, Markesan, WI; CAPT Donald J. Myers (COL USMC (Ret.), Hotel Company Commander, 2/3, late 1968, Spring Hill, Florida; Solomon Johnson, Company Gunnery Sergeant, (GY/SGT, USMC (Ret.)), Hesperia, CA. **Back row standing**: 1ST LT. Charles S. Gaede (LT/COL, USMCR, (Ret.)), Platoon Commander, Austin TX (Awarded two Purple Heart Medals); L/CPL Joe , Richardson, (PO1, USN (Ret.)) M-60 Machine Gun team, (Awarded Purple Heart Medal), Belleville IL

Not in photo: Erma Guzman, Pat Piedra, and Linda Hodgkins. L/CPL Billy M. Martin, Rifleman (Awarded Purple Heart Medal), Plano, TX; CPL Ralph S. Rodriguez, Squad Leader, San Antonio

September 1967 to September 1968. And at Khe Sanh from April-June 1968.He tended many wounded Marines, including myself, and has remained a friend and comrade to us all of us.

MARINE POEM
Grunts on the Ground

Mountains upward, They would go, Into the clouds, The young and bold.
Heavy loads upon their backs, Life's preservatives in their packs.
Step by step each would climb, from an eagle view the snake would wind.
Slow and silent each step they took, ears and eyes at max alert.
Silence broken, A whistling sound, Tubes popping, Incoming rounds.
Tasting dirt, Voices sound, Corpsman up, Point man down.
Drop the pack, Plot a course, Direct line to the crying voice.
Smoking rifles, Along the crest, In the middle, Gunners nest.
Bullets singing in the air, Sting of dirt, One so near.
Heart racing, Adrenalin flowing, Feet so slow, Keep on going.
Near the crest, Frag a flying, Grunts a fighting, Some a dying.
In the dirt, Limb part, Hope still, Beating heart.
Crimp an artery, Stop the flow, Talk to God in silent woe.
Call for help, MEDAVAC, Blood soaking, Through the wrap.
Whispering plea. Ease the pain, Holding tears, Can't explain.
Popping smoke, Pilot sees, Door gunner firing, Hot LZ
Dust flying, Chopper lands, Poncho passed to outstretched hands.
Rotors roaring, Off the ground, Gave it all, Homeward bound.
On line, Near the top, Pass the word, Hold what you got.
Maps open, Coordinates marked, Radioman's speaks, Here's your mark.
In the rear, Miles away, Big guns blast, Arty away.
Lying low, Voices sound, Friendly fire, Arty rounds
In the valley, Beyond the crest, Enemy mortars, Put to rest.
Above the trees, Buzzing sound, Birddog circling, Snooping around.
Diving low, Above the ridge, Bunkers spotted, Charley hid.
Another circle, Coming down, Popping smoke, Target found
High above, Out of the blue, Phantoms roar, Sky hawks too.
Dipping wings, Slowly turn, Lining up, Making run,

Drop the load, Pull the stick, Up they climb, Burners lit.
On the ridge, Flaming blast, Burning napalm, Blazing grass.
Bombers gone, Arty quiet, Grunts moving, Finish the fight.
Inch by Inch, Up the hill, Weapons blasting, Fighting still.
Reach the top, Wall of lead, Spider pits, Straight ahead.
Hit the deck, Belly drop, Machinegun blasting, Rounds nonstop.
Grunts up, Grenades in hand, Pins pulled, Steady hands.
See the pits, Toss the frag, Second later, Charley sags.
On top, Hill secure, Frag the bunkers, Making sure.
Dead and wounded, Many seen, Mostly Charley, Some Marines.
Bandage wounds, Rifle splints, Marines carry
Rear sent.
Popping smoke, L.Z. clear, Help on the way, MEDAVAC here.
MEDAVAC out, Re-supply in, Drop the gate, Off new Men.
Gather the dead, Remove tags, Pits of HELL, Zip the bag.
Silent walk, Not a sound, Bags on Chopper, Homeward bound.
On the hill, All that's left, Scorched earth, Freedom's best.
Pass the word, Moving out, Single file, Different route.
Down the hill, In the flat, Compass checked, Fold the map..
Hump for hours, Sun has set, Getting dark, Here we rest.
Perimeter formed, Claymores set, Dig a hole, In I get.
C-Rats open, Heat tab lit, Beans and franks, It's the pits.
Next hole, New man in, Whispering voices, Chat begins.
Where you from, Quick reply, Alabama, Bama guy.
Make a trade, What he says, Beans and Franks for Potatoes and Bread.
Potatoes warmed, Break the bread, Chow down, Field fed.
Boil water, Coffee mixed, Calm the nerves, Caffeine fix.
Stretch the legs, Head in hands, Talk to God, Understands.
Not a scratch, Still alive, Feeling awful, Tell me why.
Little voice, DO NOT FEAR, Give ME the load, Shed the tears.
Fall asleep, restful night, sun coming up, gone the night.
Another day, Snake unwinds, Moving out, Marking time.

Doc Moon
3rd Platoon
H 2/3 1967-68

INCOMING

CHORUS HONORS ALL VIETNAM VETERANS AT WAR MEMORIAL
By Tom Eichler

The Arlington Good times Chorus paid tribute to all Vietnam Veterans by singing the "Armed Forces/ America Medley" at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial immediately following the Southwest District chorus contest in San Antonio on October 22, 2005. Approximately 100 people listened as 30 barber-shoppers under the direction of Dick Kneeland sang the patriotic songs at the "Hill 881 South" statue located at Veterans Memorial Plaza.

The bronze statue, which was designed by former Marine combat artist Austin Deuel, based on an eye-witness event, is the largest of its kind in the country, weighing more than 10 tons. It is approximately 10 feet high at its highest point, 23 feet long, and 12 feet wide. Two young Marines are depicted, a radio-man looking skyward for an evacuation helicopter while rendering aid to a dying comrade lying on the ground.

Hill 881 South, located in the northwestern part of then South Vietnam, was the site of intense combat during the Vietnam War. On April 30, 1967 a bitter battle took place between U. S. Marines and North Vietnamese Army regulars. The ensuing heavy loss of life was the inspiration of the poem "Death At My Door," inscribed on the base of the memorial. The poem was written by then 1st Lt. David G. Rogers the following day, and dedicated to those who were killed in action. Rogers is a 10 year barber-shopper with the Good times Chorus, and resides with his wife in Arlington, TX.









Photos Courtesy of Connie Rogers

MEMOIRS

The Last Stand of Khe Sanh Area United States Army

Mike Fishbaugh

Date : August 1971
Company:Recon Team Kansas, Studies and Observations Group (SOG) Group leader: 1st Lt. Hagen) Action: Republic of Vietnam, 7 Aug 1971, Khe Sanh, behind enemy lines Mission: reconnaissance "prisoner-snatch" Awarded Medals: Army Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, three Silver Stars

RECON

The once bustling Khe Sanh Marine Base in South Vietnam's extreme northwest had been a ghost town for more than three years by the summer of 1971. It was, however, used briefly that February to support the South Vietnamese invasion of Laos. After that bloody debacle, they abandoned not just Khe Sanh, but the entire region, yielding immense areas to the NVA. Almost overnight, the North began extending the Ho Chi Minh Trail highways into South Vietnam.

In late July 1971, U.S. intelligence began tracking a large enemy force moving across the DMZ a dozen miles east of Khe Sanh, threatening the coastal cities of Hue, Danang and Phu Bai, where the last sizeable American ground units were based.

It was essential to learn what was happening near Khe Sanh. The mission was assigned to a shadowy organization called "SOG". Created to conduct covert missions deep behind enemy lines in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam. This top- secret Studies and Observations Group had shifted most of its operations in-country in 1971, to cover the continuing U.S. withdrawal.

From among its clandestine assembly of Army Green Berets, Navy SEALs, and USAF Air Commandos, the Khe Sanh mission became a prisoner-snatch assigned to Recon Team Kansas, an 11-man Special Forces-led element that included eight Montagnard tribesmen.

MISSION

How do you grab a prisoner in the midst of 10,000 or more NVA? Headed by an easy going, lanky Midwesterner, 1st Lt. Loren Hagen, along with Sergeants Tony Andersen and Bruce Berg, the RT Kansas men had brain stormed through several scenarios until settling upon the best option. They would land conspicuously on an abandoned firebase which obviously would draw some sort of NVA reaction, put up a short fight, then extract by helicopter.

But half of Hagen's men would stay hidden on the hill. When the NVA sent a squad up to see if the Americans had left behind sensors or bombing beacons, as SOG teams often did, the hidden men would ambush the NVA, seize a prisoner and come out.

In case a serious fight developed, Lt. Hagen reinforced his team with three more Green Beret volunteers, Staff Sgt. Oran Bingham and Sergeants Bill Queen and William Rimondi, eight Montagnard tribesmen and six U.S. Special Forces troops, a total of 14 men.

DEPLOYMENT

Landing at last light on Aug. 6, 1971, Lt. Hagen surveyed the scrub brush and bomb craters below them. He split his defense into three elements to cover three slopes. Immediately they went to work restoring the old firebase's two dilapidated bunkers and shallow trenches. The enemy must have seen them land. Hagen planned to be ready.

It was well after dark when the SOG men noticed campfires on two facing ridgelines. Unusual the NVA normally masked itself. By midnight, enemy probers were at the base of the hill, firing provocatively from the north, south, east, and west.

At 1 a.m., a USAF AC-130 Spectre gunship arrived, walking 40mm and 20mm fire around the hill nearly all night. Never once did the team fire their weapons, staying blanketed in darkness. At 3 a.m., the SOG men heard trucks and tailgates dropping. This was odd, very odd. Beneath the hill, dismounting NVA soldiers formed up into platoons and companies, which their leaders marched through the darkness to their assigned attack positions, to wait for dawn. Just before sunrise it became forebodingly

very quiet. Then, Lt. Hagen heard more trucks arriving.

Fifty miles away at a coastal airbase, a USAF forward air controller (FAC) and a flight of helicopters was lifting away for the false extraction. They would be at RT Kansas in 30 minutes.

Encircled by the NVA as darkness gave way to light, Lt. Hagen detected glimpses of NVA on one slope. On another slope pith helmets appeared, bobbing in the fog. When his men reported NVA on the third slope, too, Hagen realized his hill was completely encircled by NVA. That would require a whole regiment, at least a thousand men.

The NVA regimental commander understood he had to kill the Americans quickly. They'd inadvertently landed almost within sight of the Hanoi High Command's critical new venture, the first six-inch fuel pipeline laid across the DMZ.

The fuel line would be absolutely essential in a few months when entire tank battalions rolled through there for the war's largest offensive. Already the 304th NVA Division was massing there. A regiment of the 308th Division was preparing for the 1972 Easter Offensive.

At LZ Kansas a fourth battalion moved into place. Then, concealed in the ground fog, a fifth battalion arrived. Later, SOG's commander, Col. John Sadler, would learn an entire regiment had stormed the hill, supported by a second regiment. It was a mass assault by approximately 2,000 enemy infantrymen.

As the clearing ground fog revealed the terrible truth, Lt. Hagen had no time for inspiring words, just serious soldier work. In those final moments he repositioned weapons while his men readied grenades and stacked magazines. The Catholic Montagnards made the sign of the cross.

The NVA attacked. Hagen suffered four KIA in four minutes. A well-aimed RPG rocket smashed into Bruce Berg's bunker, collapsing it starting the attack. Fire went from nothing to 10,000 rounds per second. Andersen could see dozens of NVA rushing in lines up his slope. He shot them with his M-60 machine gun. Hagen hollered that he was going to check Berg. He ran directly into a ferocious maelstrom, bullets ricocheting and slamming the earth in front of, behind, and beneath him. He only made it a dozen yards when fire from the other slope cut him down, killing him.

Then Klaus Bingham left a bunker to reposition a claymore and a bullet struck him in the head, apparently killing him. One Montagnard in a trench below Andersen, fired several bursts then jumped up to pull back and fell into Andersen's lap, dead. Four men had died in less than four minutes. Andersen was now the senior man.

Small arms fire hit closer on all sides and grenades lobbed up from below the hillcrest as waves of NVA were scurrying behind small rises and rolling from bomb crater to bomb crater. Andersen dashed over the hill to look for Hagen, but couldn't see him anywhere, just 100 khaki-clad NVA almost at the top.

He fired one M-60 belt at NVA advancing up his own slope, then sped to the other approach and fired belt after belt on the 100 assaulting enemy. By then, grenades started coming from behind him as NVA closed in from his rear. Just a dozen yards away, beyond the curvature of the hill, enemy heads popped up, cracked a few shots, then dropped back down.

Still a dozen minutes away, the approaching Cobra gunships went to full throttle, leaving the slower Hueys behind. Meanwhile, RT Kansas had just run out of hand grenades when a North Vietnamese grenade exploded beside Andersen's M-60, rendering it useless. He spun his CAR-15 off his back and kept shooting. He tossed back another grenade, but it went off in front of him, nearly blinding him. He kept shooting. More shrapnel tore into him. An AK round slammed through his web gear and lodged in his elbow, knocking him down. He stumbled back to his knees and kept firing.

The perimeter was pinched almost in half when Andersen grabbed his last two living Montagnards, circled below the nearest NVA and somehow managed to reach the survivors on the opposite side. He found Bingham, started to lift him, but saw that he was dead from a head wound. All around him he heard, "zzssss, zzssss, zzssss," as bullets flashed past his ears.

LAST STAND

He dragged Bingham back to where Bill Queen lay, wounded. Only Rimondi wasn't yet hit and still firing furiously. Andersen put them in a back-to-back circle just off the hilltop where they would make their last stand. AK bullets had destroyed their team radio, another slug had shot Andersen's little survival radio out of his hand, so Rimondi tossed him another survival radio, their last.

Now the NVA were streaming, rolling over the crest like a tidal wave, their rattling AKs blending together into one never-ending burst. Andersen's men were firing not at NVA, but at hands wielding AKs over parapets and around bunkers. There was no place left to fall back. Andersen was shooting NVA no farther away than the length of his CAR-15 muzzle. The time it took to speed-change a magazine meant life or death. From the air it looked like an ant mound, with moving figures everywhere. Cobra lead rolled in and sprinkled 20mm cannon shells around the surviving SOG men, and at last fighters arrived, adding napalm and Vulcan cannons to the melee. Then at last the assault ebbed, turned, and the NVA fled for cover, just as the Hueys arrived.

Though wounded repeatedly, Andersen crawled out to fire his CAR-15 to cover the landing Hueys. With Rimondi's help, Andersen dragged as many teammates' bodies as he could to the first Huey, then helped the wounded Queen and others aboard the second.

Allied KIA Count: 64%

In one hellacious half-hour, nine of Recon Team Kansas' 14 men had been lost. Lt. Hagen had died, along with Bingham; Berg was presumed dead. Six Montagnards had died. Rimondi and Queen both suffered multiple frag wounds, Andersen had been struck by both small arms fire and shrapnel, and their other Montagnards, too, all had been wounded. "It's amazing that any of us came through it with the amount of incoming that we were getting," Tony Andersen says today, 25 years later. He attributes their survival to his deceased team leader, Lt. Loren Hagen. "He epitomized what a Special Forces officer should be, attentive to detail, a lot of rehearsals, followed through on things," he explains. "We were ready. I think that was probably the only thing that kept us from being totally overrun. Everybody was alert and knew what was happening and was waiting."

As for Hagen's bravery, dashing into a wall of AK fire to try to save Bruce Berg, that didn't surprise Andersen, either. "Lt. Hagen was that kind of officer. He was a good man."

Against the loss of most of his teammates, Andersen learned, the USAF counted 185 NVA dead on that hill, little RT Kansas had killed half a battalion and probably wounded twice that many NVA. But that gives Andersen little satisfaction compared to the loss of most of his team.

Perhaps Andersen's most difficult duty was carrying the bodies of his six Montagnard teammates, his "family" he called them, to their home village. "As soon as they saw us driving up in the truck, they knew. Wailing and moaning started, and all the grieving." The villagers gathered in a circle around the headman's stilted longhouse. "Through one of the interpreters I tried to explain how proud we were of them, what good fighters they were, that they had died for a good cause."

That would be borne out a few months later when the intelligence generated by RT Kansas' spirited defense helped U.S. analysts read enemy intentions, enabling American airpower to counter the NVA's Easter Offensive.

And though details of this incredible fight would remain classified for decades, enough was disclosed that 1st Lt. Loren Hagen's family was presented the U.S. Army's final Vietnam War Medal of Honor. Tony Andersen, who held together what remained of RT Kansas through those final mass assaults, received the Distinguished Service Cross. Queen, Rimondi, Berg and Bingham were awarded Silver Stars. And now, today, with full disclosure, we can appreciate the significance of their noble stand.

Medal of Honor

HAGEN, LOREN D. - 1Lt, US Army, Inf, US Army Training Advisory Group.
Action: Republic of Vietnam, 7 Aug 1971.
Inducted: Fargo, N. Dakota.
DOB 25 Feb 1946, Fargo, N. Dakota

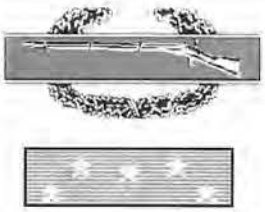

Citation: 1st Lt. Hagen distinguished himself in action while serving as the team leader of a small reconnaissance team operating deep within enemy-held territory.

At approximately 0630 hours on the morning of 7 Aug 1971 the small team came under a fierce assault by a superior-sized enemy force using heavy small arms, automatic weapons, mortar, and rocket fire.1stLt.Hagen immediately began returning small-arms fire upon the attackers and successfully led this team in repelling the first enemy onslaught. He then quickly deployed his men into more strategic defense locations before the enemy struck again in an attempt to overrun and annihilate the beleaguered team's members. 1st Lt. Hagen repeatedly exposed himself to the enemy fire directed at him as he constantly moved about the team's perimeter, directing fire, rallying the members, and re-supplying the team with ammunition, while courageously returning small arms and hand grenade fire in a valorous attempt to repel the advancing enemy force.

The courageous actions and expert leadership abilities of 1st Lt. Hagen were a great source of inspiration and instilled confidence in the team members. After observing an enemy rocket make a direct hit on and destroying 1 of the team's bunkers, 1st Lt. Hagen moved toward the wrecked bunker in search for team members despite the fact that the enemy force now controlled the bunker area. With total disregard for his own personal safety, he crawled through the enemy fire while returning small-arms fire upon the enemy force. Undaunted by the enemy rockets and grenades impacting all around him, 1st Lt. Hagen desperately advanced upon the destroyed bunker until he was fatally wounded by enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire. With complete disregard for his personal safety, 1st Lt. Hagen's courageous gallantry, extraordinary heroism, and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty, at the cost of his own life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon him and the US Army.

SHORT ROUNDS

Huong Tan Community Library Dedication
Khe Sanh, 27 October 2005
Charles S. Gaede, Lt/Col, USMCR (Ret.)

In the foothills of Hill 881S on the grounds of a school that serves the people of the Montagnard villages, the first educational project donated by a non-governmental organization to ethnic minorities in Quang Tri Province was dedicated on 27 October 2005. Named the "Huong Tan Community Library" and constructed in cooperation with the Quang Tri Province Women's Union and PeaceTrees Vietnam, Inc. (PTVN) the funds were donated by the friends and family of Chuck Gaede. The funding included the staff, training, and operational expenses for one year.

The library has a reading room equipped with books, tables, and chairs. A separate room serves as the office for the librarian and her assistant. The library office is also a place for the local women to gather to socialize and to share information. It is a "no men allowed" room. The PTVN explosive ordnance disposal team cleared the grounds of unexploded ordnance, and the grounds are landscaped with trees.

Madame Sam, the Chairwoman of the Quang Tri Province Women's Union, conducted the dedication ceremony. District and local women officials, local residents, and the librarian, Miss Xuong, and her assistant, Miss Khong, attended. Quang Le, the PTVN in-country coordinator, represented PTVN, and Chuck Gaede represented all of the donors. Local news reporters attended too.

At the conclusion of the dedication ceremony, Madame Sam presented Chuck with a generous supply of Ca Phe Khe Sanh, the best gift they could have chosen. Madame Sam also used the occasion to award and distribute ten small family business loans to local families from funds provided by the Quang Tri Women's Union.

After the ceremony at the library, Madame Sam hosted a reception at a restaurant in Khe Sanh. Following the reception Madame Toan, the Vice Chairwoman of the Women's Union of the Huong Hoa District, took Quang Le and Chuck to view the proposed site for a second library in Lao Bao Town,

near the border of Laos. Chuck is making plans to begin the fund raising for it. The Huong Tan Community Library will benefit the women and children of the Huong Tan Commune for many generations, and it was especially gratifying to see it operational in an area so heavily fought over and destroyed in the Khe Sanh battles. Thanks to all of those who gave funds for the library.

In the photos:
Photo #1: Madame Sam and Chuck Gaede, unveiling the Huong Tan Community Library plaque.

Photo #2: Madame Toan, Madame Sam, Miss Xuong, and Chuck Gaede planting the trees.





MEMOIRS

"A Patch of Ground"

Craig W. Tourte

It's funny about this Khe Sanh stuff. So much time has passed and I had not really thought about it much until these last several years. I was not really interested in talking about my experience with anyone else until I had a conversation one afternoon on the telephone with Tom Horchler, a fellow Marine who I had met at Khe Sanh and had not seen nor heard from for some 35 years. I attended a reunion with Tom and had the opportunity to talk to others who went through the Siege and found that many had the same thoughts and (perhaps lack) of feeling's about that event that I had. It seems that many are still trying to deal and understand what it was all about. The last few years have been equally as strange, having grown close to so many who were there.

I just finished reading a book written by Michael Archer titled "A Patch of Ground." I think Michael might have been at the reunion in Chicago this year, but I don't remember. Michael's experience was pretty much what all of us went through during the Siege. It was well written, a fast read and his memory of events and descriptions of the base and horrors of the artillery poundings and loss of those he knew, were excellent and evoked emotion. I had particular emotional memories of my friends Chuck Chamberlin (C/1/26), and Steve Wiese (B/1/26), when Michael described those events that forever changed the lives of both of these fine men.

So what is it about this Khe Sanh THING that sets us apart from so many others? For me Michael said it best in the last paragraph of his book. "...there were times during those years when I could close my eyes and see the insolent young faces of my buddies, the fine red dust of Khe Sanh etched into their every pore. The ease, humor, and courage with which they endured such relentless peril would sometimes seem to me like a dream. In those moments, it did not matter how I felt about the war, the nation that I wished to forget, or myself. It mattered only that I was proud to have stood with them and defended a little patch of ground."

I have always held a very large space in my heart for those who stood with me at Khe Sanh and for those who enabled and supported us. Michael notes that after the base was abandoned the next day a plane flew over and an NVA (Michael describes it as a Viet Cong flag) was flying over the base. It doesn't matter I guess what happened to Khe Sanh after I left, after my war was over. What does matter to me now, is that I am proud to have stood with so many, those who in my later years I have had the privilege of meeting and knowing.

MEMOIRS

"I still miss him as if it was yesterday"
From Richard Rash:

I have spent the last 37 years at Christmas, without Don, and I still miss him as if it was yesterday.

We grew up in Pageton West Virginia, a small coal mining town. Since all the coal mines have since shut down it is almost a ghost town. Don and his twin brother Ron were born Sept. 14, 1948. I had just started the 3rd grade. On that day, I was walking home from school, and saw my Dad walking to meet me. As he got closer I could see that he had been crying. That struck me because he never cried. As we walked home he told me that I had a new baby brother, and we should be happy about it.

What he did not tell me is that he thought the second twin Don, was stillborn, because when he had left the house the Doctor had already given up trying to get him to breathe, and had pronounced him dead. My Moms sister Anna was there to help in the delivery and she would not give up. She grabbed my brother and held him under the faucet with the cold water running. As we got closer to the house we could tell there was more than one baby crying. Dad threw me on his shoulder and broke into a run toward the house, laughing and crying at the same time. To his surprise he had 2 sons instead of one.

The following year my Mom had another baby, and now had 3 sons all still in diapers, and on the bottle. I, being the oldest, had to learn to change diapers and feed the bottles to my brothers, so my Mom could take a break once in a while. That task brought me closer to the twins and the bond between us grew stronger. At the age of ten I became the world's youngest baby sitter. There were 5 boys. Mom and Dad could not take all of us when she shopped or took care of her household chores. I was the helper.

I remember when the twins were about ten years old; I started to teach them how to use a gun. I had joined the Navy, and when I came home on leave I would take them in the woods with the old single shot 22 dad had bought me on my 12th birthday. We would shoot at pennies stuck in the top of old fence posts. Don became a better shot than me and his brother.

The last time I saw Don was in the late fall of 1967 after he had graduated from boot camp. I was working in Chicago. I asked for time off to see him before he went to Camp Pendleton Ca. I woke him up about 6 o'clock one morning and asked him if he wanted to go Rabbit hunting one more time before he left. He got dressed and we went off over the mountain rabbit hunting. To get to where we were going we had to walk over the hill where the old town water tank was and down the other side to the valley.

As we reached the top of the hill near the water tank we could see that it was so foggy that you could hardly see the road. Snow had fallen the night before. It had warmed up quite a bit causing the fog. We sat near the water tank and chewed the fat while we waited for the sun to come out and burn some of the fog off. I told him about my wife expecting our first baby in December. He talked about his upcoming trip to Pendleton and eventually Nam.

I never knew much about the battle at Khe Sanh on 30 March 68, when Don was KIA. One day, I was browsing through a book store at the mall here in town in 1990. I picked up the book titled, **SIEGE OF KHE SANH.** I thumbed through the book and on page 200 Don's name jumped out at me.It had a short story of that battle and a copy of His **NAVY CROSS** Citation. I bought the book and took it home to read. In the book, several of the Marines described the weather on 30 Mar 68, as being so foggy that they had to delay the patrol until they could see well enough. I Immediately I thought about the hunting trip Don and I had been on that day. I wonder if he was thinking about it the morning he died…

Publisher Note:
Donald Rash was awarded the Navy Cross for his heroic actions against a large enemy force on 30 March 1968, while serving with Bravo Company 1/26, at the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

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MEMOIRS

The Proud Tree

By Craig W. Tourte

The plateau that was the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh was my home for approximately 8 months. It was pretty much my world and I didn't really know what was beyond that very small place, it just seemed so far from anywhere. In a way, "Being at Khe Sanh was like being nowhere." *

When I arrived on at Khe Sanh sometime in August 1967 there were minimal defenses and those who had suffered so much during the hill fights were the left over few tasked with defending it. There were a smattering of tents, some hard sided buildings by the airstrip and a too few defensive trenches and fighting holes. A couple of strands of concertina wire were the only obstacles that separated the base from the jungle, enemy and the uncertainty beyond.

Without much thought or planning we started digging, not really sure how deep, wide, long or how to construct a defensive position or build bunkers. We began our digging on the base side of the concertina wire in what we thought was a zigzag configuration where the hard dirt allowed us to sink our small folding entrenching tools. We filled thousands of sandbags, which at first we stacked on top of the trench in front of us, then gradually constructed various covered fighting and firing positions. The clay ground was hard and had that deep red volcanic color I had been so familiar with while living in Northern California in the shadows of Mount Shasta and Lassen.

Our defensive area located on the south side of the base and east of the main gate, was flat and offered relative clear fields of fire. After several months, I became fairly familiar with the area to my front, having spent an abundant amount of time staring out onto the gentle slope of cleared jungle now covered with various grasses and vegetation, before the ground disappeared into the dark green jungle beyond. At night I was often selected to man a Listening Post in front of that position. I was handed a spool with a hand held landline phone and wire wrapped around the spool. I was told to walk out until the wire played out and to lay down and listen and observe. Those were the only orders my two comrades and I were given. I guess if we observed any response or actions of the enemy that we wished to make it was up to us privates. I didn't particularly like this assignment, but I did as I was ordered.

As darkness fell we would maneuver ourselves around the concertina wire and tangle foot being careful not to disturb the Claymore mines as we walked away from the protection of the base and our fellow Marines. I don't really know how many feet of wire was on that spool but it sure seemed like it went out for a long distance. We walked on without a word between the three of us, being careful where we stepped and looking for something resembling a depression or rock or any other feature that would afford some type of covering protection, but most often found none and just laying down on the damp vegetation. As I turned my head and looked back at the base it seemed so far away. Although I don't now have any recall of lights emitting from the base, I have a sense that the base had a certain glow about it.

During one such foray, a distinct tink, tink, tink of metal on metal was heard. All three of us puckered up and searched for the source of the sound. We heard it again, as we looked around unable to determine in what direction the sound was coming from. I happened to be looking over my right shoulder when I heard the sound one more time and realized it was coming from the helmet chin strap hinge of the Marine at my three o'clock. I whispered to him that he was an idiot and that he was making the sound. We all breathed a sigh of relief and that was the end of it. I can clearly hear that sound to this day.

Directly in front of my position and 100 to 200 meters south of the concertina wire, stood the stump of an old dead tree. This stump stood about six feet high, it's odd shape gave it an appearance of having a shoulder. The stump was clearly identifiable in the daylight and we who observed it so often became quite familiar with it's shape, but when day light turned to that Vietnam jungle blackness, it was a different story. During certain moonless nights, in the

fog and rain or sometimes just sitting all alone looking forward, the stump seemed to slowly move back and forth and take on other shapes and sizes. If one concentrated on that stump it would on occasion, take the shape of a human form, and all sorts of objects similar to an AK and RPG could be seen hanging from it. More than once the stump gave the appearance of wearing a pith helmet.

One day I walked out to that old stump and noticed several thousand small holes in it, similar to those made by a rifle round. The tree had been dead for some time, was burned and quite battered. As I got closer to the tree, I could see that it didn't resemble a human form at all, it was just an old dried out dead tree whose limbs and other useful wood product had been harvested long ago. I had heard that while others had been out on LP they had mistaken that old tree stump for the enemy and tried to kill it, shooting at it numerous times before realizing that the old stump was not an enemy stocking the perimeter positions. I was told that one team got up and fired at it as they ran back to the base.

It would be interesting if I could tell you that we who were familiar with that old dead tree played tricks on the new guys, but Vietnam and in particular those of us who were at Khe Sanh had no time or patience for such games. Going out into the jungle all night with just a hand held landline phone, laying down and waiting for the enemy to come to us or sitting in the trench line staring and concentrating on the few hundred meters of open area in front of our position while totally exhausted, was serious business and we all knew it.

When SOG moved into the area in the later part of 1967 or early 1968 they took that old dead tree stump out, using the area to land helicopters. I don't know why my memory is drawn to that old dead tree stump. Vietnam had seen numerous battles in and around that area for a thousand years and that tree must have lived several hundred of those years judging by the size of the trunk.

As I look at the photograph I took of the old dead stump, I think back to the many hours I spent laying around and near it, scared and wide awake in the dark, rain and often moonless nights. I can still smell the damp earth, hear the sounds of the bugs and night creatures and remember how alert I became when I could not hear any night or jungle sounds at all. I think of my friend Donald Saunders (KIA 3/4/68) who so often accompanied me, and who had the same doubts, fears and hope for the future I had. I think about what must have been at one time a large proud tree on top of a plateau, which through hundreds of years must have survived thousands of battles, in a place that was nowhere. A place called Khe Sanh.

* "If you were at Khe Sanh you were nowhere," is attributed to words spoken by an unknown officer.



NEWS YOU CAN USE

HIGHER LIMITS EXTENDED IN VA HOME LOAN PROGRAM
By Charlie Taliaferro

WASHINGTON 29 December 2005, America's veterans and their families now have a greater chance to make their dreams of home ownership a reality, thanks to an increase in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home loan guaranty limit. Effective January 1, 2006, changes in the loan guaranty limits will mean veterans are able to get no-down payment loans up to $417,000. The previous ceiling was $359,650.

The Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004 tied increases in the VA guaranty to increases in the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation conforming loan limit. When this limit increases, VA guaranty limits also go up, allowing VA to keep pace with rising home values.

VA-guaranteed home loans are made by banks and mortgage companies to veterans, service members and reservists. With VA guaranteeing a portion of the loan, Veterans can receive a competitive interest rate without making a down payment, making it easier to buy a home. More information about VA home loan benefits is available on the Web at http://www.homeloans.va.gov or by calling 1-800-827-1000.

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POETRY

THE FACE OF WAR

War is the bitter fruit of man's failure to reason and the arena for old men to wield the weapon of their country's youth.

The old men lay down the gauntlet; the young men bleed and die for it Shouting, "long live the king".

What of the young warrior's who survive, who come home ?Certainly not the men who left,

What is wrong with my son? What is wrong with my brother, my lover, my daddy, my friend?

He is here, but he is not,
He is in PTSD hell until he dies.

Mike "Animal" Preston

INCOMING

A Surprise At the Black Granite Wall

By Doc Pershing

Yesterday I sat and read the entire magazine, it was outstanding. I was grateful for the articles on PTSD, but the entire magazine held my attention. The article on the wall was especially interesting to me. I went to the wall with two other vets from here in town (Springfield, Illinois) back in 1995.We went at the end of April and there was a lot of ceremonies going on, it was the 25th anniversary of the fall of South Vietnam.

We got there late on Friday afternoon. And after checking into the hotel we walked directly to the wall. It was evening by then and just about twilight. I had on my sunglasses that I always wear. As I was walking down the wall there were a lot of people and buses parked. A young woman approached me and asked if I was a Vietnam Vet. I told her I was and she asked me if I would do her a favor. To which I replied of course.

It turned out the woman was from the Pocono Mountain area of Pa. She had brought her girl scout troop by bus to see the wall. She had all the girls lined up and everyone of them shook my hand, and thanked me. I was speechless, and just nodded to them all. That was the very first time since I returned home that anyone had ever thanked me for serving in Vietnam. I was glad that I had those shades on, for I was in tears. I didn't want those little girls to think they were upsetting me. Each and everyone of them was so sweet and polite. I was glad I had the support of my two friends at that time.

So you see when I read the article about not going alone to the wall, I had good reason to agree with that statement. That black granite wall means a lot to we Vietnam Vet's. But it also means a lot to others, especially those little girls that traveled to see it first hand. Semper Fi Brothers.

*

INCOMING

By Bob Greenwood

I questioned myself whether to write this message or not. It seems the word Tet, always puts me in a down mode especially during the months of January and February. Of course it could be the Vietnamese Buddist Temple just down the road from where I live causing the funk I find myself in most of the time. January 22nd, Delta 1/9 was conducting an operation just north of Dong Ha. At noon everything came to a halt. We got word that choppers would be coming in to take us back to Camp Evans. The peon grunt like me had no idea what was going on or where we were going, just follow orders.

We arrived at Camp Evans and we thought we would be able to go back to the company area and grab some extra smokes or pogey bait. The orders were that nobody break formation because we were waiting to be airlifted to someplace called Khe Sanh. Then word started to filter down that Khe Sanh was some surrounded village, jumping off in some rice paddy, hit the ground blazing away...etc. The rumors. Choppers finally picked us up about four hours later and off we went. When we landed at the base in the late afternoon, I walked out on the airstrip and said to myself, "hey this is not so bad" LOL!!

As we were milling around the platoon leader said "don't bunch up, spread out." While I was standing on the airstrip, several of us noticed some Phantoms making a bombing run off in the distance. Suddenly anti-aircraft shot down one of the Phantoms and the Corporal next me said "Oh $@#%, we're in for some deep, deep $!@# if they can take down a Phantom". The next day Delta Co 1/9, left the base and headed for the rock quarry, along the way we passed hill 64 and saw those French bunkers; man we thought that would be "decent" if we could use them. A couple of weeks later, fate showed us why Hill 64 was not a good choice to make a stand. The platoon from Alpha Company was almost over-run.

I was medevaced on February 22, out of Khe Sanh, and I still cry out for help. So many years ago but it seems like just last week. I can't wait to see my Brothers, at this year's reunion. There aren't many 1/9ers at the reunion but I still feel that sense of Brotherhood from Khe Sanh Vets, and nobody can take that away from me. Sorry. I'm just feeling kind of down.

Semper Fi,
Bob

*

BOOK REVIEW

Life Member/former S/Sgt. Robert A. Hall of Madison, Wisconsin has published a collection of anecdotes from his four years on active duty, including Vietnam where he served with Radio Relay, Headquarters, 26th Marines at Khe Sanh, and his month with CAC-O in Khe Sanh Ville in 1967. Also are his five terms as a Massachusetts state senator (and six additional years as an active Marine Reservist while in the senate), and his 23 years as a non-profit association executive. The book, entitled "The Good Bits," is available from Author House for $14.99, plus shipping. The stories range from the everyday life of an enlisted Marine to his interactions with well-known Massachusetts politicians like John Kerry and Mike Dukakis. Included are stories that will delight and amuse you, as well as lessons learned about leadership, integrity and human relations. For more information and to read a sample from the book, log on to www.thegoodbits.com.

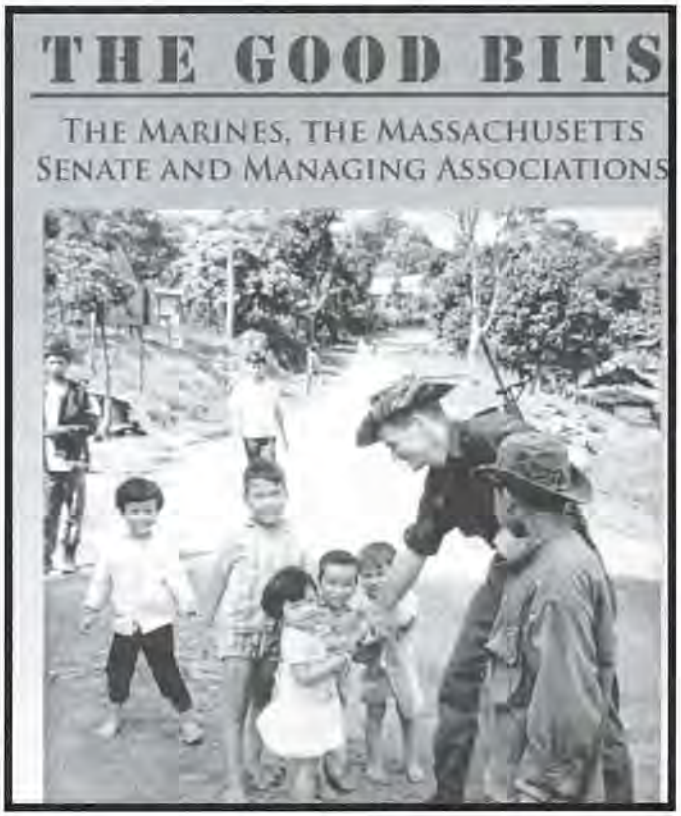

OBIT

FRANCIS E. VINING JR.
Retired Gunnery Sergeant
August 23 1940-October 08 2005

Francis E. Vining Jr. died Oct. 8, 2005, at Tobey Hospital. He was the husband of Priscilla J. (Cook) Vining, for 23 years. Mr. Vining retired from the Marine Corps as a gunnery sergeant after 20 years, and was a veteran of the Vietnam War, serving at Khe Sanh with B Co 3RD Tanks. He also served 10 years in the Marine Corps Reserve. His awards include the Bronze Star Medal with V for valor, and three Purple Hearts.

VETERANS TAKING CARE OF VETERANS, LEST WE FORGET

Barry Fixler E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

Just Caring For Eddie
By Thomas D. Segel



If there is any area of news coverage where media bias exists, it is the seemingly universal ignoring of the human face of war by the mainstream press. Those labeled as "traditional" broadcast outlets and print publications have consistently offered the public a laundry list of bombs, bodies and devastation, but have seldom reported little more than the numbers. It is rare indeed when a person or group are examined as living, breathing participants in what is perhaps the most horrifying and uncivilized of endeavors.... war.

To bring the reality of the conflict in Iraq into focus, one must turn to what is rapidly being referred to as "the new media". In more precise language it is the combined efforts of talk radio and the electronic publications of the Internet that reach the heart and the hurt of what is happening to the men and women of our armed forces.

A prime example of this would be when reporting about those who have been wounded in action. Traditional publications seldom report on wounded Americans. If they do, the items are short and usually limited to numbers or totals. Those wishing to learn more must search out websites on the Internet or tune in the commentators of talk radio. A Google or Yahoo search will give you more than 1,400,000 hits on information about Americans wounded in Iraq.

The topic can best be examined using the heart-wrenching story of Marine Sergeant Eddie Ryan. On April 13, 2005, this young Marine was manning a rooftop position along with other members of his sniper platoon. Not much was happening until that first shot and a bullet pierced his brain. It was quickly followed by a second shot that smashed into his jaw. The enemy had not even pulled the trigger that day. Ryan had been the mistaken target of friendly fire. But, this is not really a story of a devastating wound, but instead it is one of faith and prayer.

Eddie Ryan died that day. There was not a breath of life in him when teammate Sergeant Karl Schaeffer started CPR. He continued forcing air into Ryan and applying the life saving technique until the young Marine was again breathing on his own. When Eddie was in condition to be moved, he was flown to Germany. He was sustained by a variety of life support systems and given little chance of survival. His parents were flown in to be by his side. Doctors told them that even if he did remain alive there was no way he would ever remember his family or anything about himself. All his father, Chris could do was remain by his side for hours on end and pray to God for his life.

Eddie never left them. When he was stable enough, he was air evacuated to Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. At the time doctors said it was so he could be close to family and friends at the end. Everyone's prayers continued. WABC's Mark Levin who asked all his listeners to pray for Eddie heard the family had asked for a network of prayer and informed his audience. Sean Hannity reported the story on his radio program. The hometown community and the church offered prayers. They were all answered far beyond anyone's expectations.

Ryan's friend and team leader is "CJ" Quinlan who was still in Iraq, but asked his wife to keep checking on the wounded Marine and report back. It was difficult for Lisa to walk into that hospital room and see a close family friend lying in such a state, but she continued coming and reporting on those visits to those still fighting the war.

One day another Marine returned from Iraq and Lisa Quinlan took him to see Eddie. "I brought Sergeant Taylor White to the room that day and when Eddie saw him he smiled." He recognized Taylor White... his first reaction to seeing a friend. Progress continued and six weeks after being shot Eddie started to move his head. Next he was transferred from Bethesda to a military rehabilitation hospital in Richmond, Virginia. Shortly after arriving he looked at his mother and uttered his first word..."Mom". The very next day His father Chris was bending down

and saying, "I love you", when the Marine responded, "I love you too, Dad." At that moment they knew he was aware of his family.

The Marine's recall was proven again when CJ Quinlan returned from Iraq and walked into the room. Eddie looked at him and said "Papa Bear" which was CJ's nickname. Today, Eddie Ryan has gained weight, can talk haltingly, and has full use of his left arm and limited use of the right arm. He can sit up in his wheelchair and has managed to stand with assistance, but is still unable to walk. Eddie has full memory and recalls the events of his childhood and later years. He has a sense of humor and his sister makes him laugh frequently. He is starting to speak in complete sentences.

Eddie's father took months off from work to be by his side. Angie, his mother, quit her job to remain near the wounded Marine, and his sister, Felicia, took time off from college to be with her brother.

This is a story that has been told and retold by website, and email. Few mentions of Sergeant Eddie Ryan appear in the mainstream media. One such mention, however, must be credited to a caring publication. On January 23, 2006 there was a story in The Times Herald-Record, which serves New York's Hudson Valley and the Catskills. It tells of Eddie Ryan's battle to recover from his wounds. It reports on how the family's main concern is that Eddie's release from the hospital is only weeks away, and he will be unable to function in their small home.

According to the Times Herald-Record, "...the hallway to Eddie's bedroom is too narrow for him and the wheelchair. The main bathroom in his family's 1,300 square foot ranch-style home can't accommodate him, either. The living room can't hold Eddie, his mother Angela, his dad and sister Felicia at the same time, Chris Ryan says."

Handicapped assessable renovations, including an addition to the home will carry a price tag of almost $100,000. It is a cost far beyond the family's reach. Eddie is only eligible for $10,000 in government assistance. But, the faith of the entire family remains strong. Their prayers for help are being answered too. People are coming to the aid of Eddie and his family in a variety of ways.

Americans are reaching out. Barry Fixler, a jewelry storeowner, and former Marine ran a special event. All proceeds from his jewelry sales were donated to the wounded serviceman's rehabilitation. Fixler learned about Eddie's condition from his wife, Linda, who is one of the Marine's nurses. Barry is a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans, and a consistent contributor to all veterans causes.

Eddie Ryan's story is being carried on a website donated by A&E Advertising and Web Design. The company has also made arrangements for people to donate to Eddie Ryan's rehabilitation at **www.helpeddie.com** Marine sniper buddies have joined together and are offering a special rifle in a fund raising drawing that is dedicated to Eddie. Those wishing to purchase a ticket can write to Sniper's Hide at **fgalli@intelexltd.com**. Chris Ryan is looking into every possible option to assist his son. He is comforted by the public response the family has already received. But, he also noted there are almost 10,000 wounded service personnel who can never return to active duty. "Things have got to change", he says, "not just for Eddie, but also for all these kids giving their lives and their blood for their country. They are not getting taken care of."

OBIT

Tom

I just wanted to inform you of the passing of another great Marine who had served in WWII. Karl R. Leffler was a BAR man, in the first wave that landed at Tarawa, at 18 years of age. He was a Professor at Purdue University and an all around great guy. He never forgot his Marine Corps roots, and was impressed with our magazine and what we went through at Khe Sanh.



Louis Famiano
Mag-36 FAC Team 01

POETRY

By Mike Fishbaugh

Doc G, HM-2 Hospital Corpsman, served with the 1st Battalion 9th Marines September 1967 - November 1968. His tour of duty included Con Thien, Camp Carroll, Rock Pile, Ashau Valley, Khe Sanh, and various other scenic spots in Northern I Corps. Doc today is a husband, father, Presbyterian minister, valuable member of his County Rescue Squad, and Chaplain to the County Police Force.

Reflections of "Doc G"

Why I Am Who I Am

You may wonder why I'm so different
Why I have so many unusual ways
But feel not alone, for I wonder too
But in answer, this is all I can say...

My life before Nam was quite normal
Not a prep course for what I'd encounter
And in your wildest dreams you'd never imagine
How intense just living in Nam could be,

Well, here is part of the story of Life in the Nam
Of how I was changed into what I am

Over there, you didn't see a tree in a forest,
You saw an ambush behind every leaf.
There were no fields of grass to romp in,
Just another place for booby traps and pits.

There were spiders and snakes, elephants, tigers, insects...
None of which seemed to care much for me.
And of course there were people of a different culture,
Who wanted me to die more than they cared for their own life.

So listen to this story...and find out who I am
I'm a man changed by the misery of Vietnam.

I have walked through a river of blood
While death tugged at my shirttail.
I have slept with the corpse of a friend

Who hours before was my bosom buddy.
I have lived in the stench of feces and urine
While rats scampered across my feet.
I have held men too young to shave in my arms
While they gasped their very last breath.
I have cried at the loss of a comrade
And I wondered why it was him and not me.
I have eaten food with blood caked on my hands
While I sat among the wounded and the dead.
I have endured great hunger for food
While my lips were parched with thirst.
I have lived in a hole in the ground with vermin
While my brains seemed to cook in the sun.
I have invaded a land that was not my own
And I hated a people I didn't even know.
I have had muscles ache from extreme fatigue
While my eyes bore witness to the extreme horror.
I have run unafraid through artillery and bullets
While wondering if the next round would get me.
I have grown faint from fear
While my mind entombed the living nightmares.
I have witness pain of intolerable degree
While I held the pieces of destroyed tissue in my hands.

I was obligated to play God, and I did it
As I decided who was to live and who must die.
I have fired at the enemy with a vengeance
And I have promised to kill a friend out of mercy.

I have done these things...

For you, it is a spring rain
For me it is a memory of haunting death.
For you it is a walkway through a pleasant wood area,
For me it is a one-way path to devastation.
For you it is a restaurant with wonderful atmosphere,
For me it is an invitation to mortar attack.

Yes, it is true I have changed.
I'm not who I was and never will be again.
So as you wonder why I am the way I am
Or why I do as I often do,
Please remember...
Sometimes I don't know why either.

" Doc G"
Richard A. Goodwin

PERSONAL MEMORIAL

ROBERT LEE HAYS REMEMBERS HIS LOVING WIFE



Frieda Jean Hays, the daughter of the late Wilton Fredrick and Mary Louise King Witzgall, was born March 18, 1943 at Huntington, West Virginia. She entered into eternal rest November 20, 2005 at the age of sixty-two years.

She graduated with the Class of 1961 from the Highland Springs High School, Highland Springs, Virginia. On December 16, 1961, she was married at Sandston Virginia to Roger Emertt Lovan who preceded her in death on February 24, 1987. On October 9, 1992, she was married at West Plains, Missouri to Robert Lee Hays. For twenty-five years, she had been employed with International Shoe Company, Hy-Test and West Plains Shoe. She was the Municipal Court Administrator for the City of West Plains. Mrs. Hays was a member of the Missouri Association for Court Administrators since 1997. Since 1972, she was a member of the First United Methodist Church where she taught Children's Church, assisted with God's Kids and Junior High Youth and was a member of the Esther Group and Seekers Sunday School Class.

Mrs. Hays is survived by her husband, Robert Lee Hays, and a family of six children: Kenneth Dwayne Lovan and wife, Marie, Elkland, Missouri, Elizabeth Francine Smith and husband, Dennis, West Plains, Missouri, Jeffrey Wilton Lovan and wife, Sonya, Jordan, Arkansas, Robin Lynn Doyle and husband, Joseph, Lebanon, Missouri, Robert Leon Hays and wife, Sheila, Rolla, Missouri and Amanda Gene Hays, Joplin, Missouri; nineteen grandchildren, Ashlee, Geoffrey, Jack, Eathan, Mystique, and Eddie Lovan, Sethanie Cox, Amanda, Clayton, and Dustin Smith, Richard, Roger, and Holly Lovan, Daniel, Ryan, and Joshua Williams, Shawna, Kobe, and Cody Hays; two great grandchildren, Chad and Colby Hays; one brother, Kenneth Witzgall and wife Alberta, Annapolis, Maryland; and several nieces and nephews.

Her parents and first husband precede her in death.



POETRY
Submitted By Dennis Chericone
(Author Unknown)

The Main Thing
You must remember
Is the Jungle
Has retaken the trenches

Think it forgiven
Look on it healed
As a scar.

WE GOT MAIL

Tom, I am sending in double dues, please pay for a brother who cannot afford to. I am proud to be a Khe Sanh Survivor, and associated with the RED CLAY magazine. I have just completed a two year battle with Lymphoma Cancer. On Dec 14, 2005, I received a most wondrous Christmas present when I was finally diagnosed to be in complete remission.

I was already receiving 100% compensation from the VA when I was first diagnosed with cancer. Lymphoma cancer is associated with agent orange and the many defoliants, used in Vietnam. I thought I had escaped the wrath of those chemicals until being diagnosed in 2004. It is terrible that so many of us are being brought down by these symptoms after being involved in such terrible direct combat as we endured at Khe Sanh. We are in fact still fighting the effects of war in many different ways.

During the war my mother suffered so much always worrying about my well being. She watched the news every day when broadcast live, hoping to get a glimpse of me. Mom and dad are still alive and we spend a lot of time together. That is why it was so hard for me to tell them about my cancer after being diagnosed. I had to deliver the news face to face and it almost killed me. My wife is my strongest supporter. We met and married after I left military service. She also anguishes about this war that never leaves us.

I want to thank everyone for their efforts with the **RED CLAY** magazine. I find it a very good source of closure to our war.

KHE SANH VETERANS STILL SERVING OUR COUNTRY

Dear Mr. Eichler, just a short note to let you know that my husband, Wayne Silva, D Co 1/26, is still serving in the Marines. His unit has just been activated, and they are headed for Iraq. He will be stationed at Camp Fallujah, with the 1st Marine Regiment.

He is not scheduled to return until November of 2006, which will give him 30 years of service in the USMC. I dare say I do not think there are that many Khe Sanh Veterans in Iraq, especially A 58 Year old. I guess there are still **A Few Good "OLD" Men left.**

KENNETH W. BARTELS, (B Btry 1/13)
Is also serving in Iraq. As of this writing we do not know the unit he is serving with.

Editors Note: if any member wishes to express their good wishes to Wayne or Ken, here are their email addresses, Wayne -**USMC126D@YAHOO.COM**.
Ken -**DEBABARTELS@AOL.COM**
Of course we will be sending our brother WAYNE & KEN our good wishes, and gifts, as we have our other brothers who serve/served there.

MEMBERS SENDING CONTRIBUTIONS
ADAMS,Harry J Jr
ALLEN,Lewis
ARNDT, Terrence D
BOWMAN, David J
CAMPO, Carl C
CAUSEY, Hubert L
CHANDLER, Daniel T
CROSBY, Craig
DAKIN,William E Jr
EUSANIO,Thomas B
FESSENDEN, Gregory L
FOSMO, Harold D Jr.
HERNANDEZ, John
KEATING, Michael E
KESEK, Ronald S
LESLIE, James
FETTER, Charles H
FORBES, James
GREEN, CT
HENDRY, David J
KENDIG, Dennis R
LALIBERTE, Daniel J
LAFOUNTAINE, Norman S
LEAHY, Michael M
LEMIEUX, Lorne A
LESLIE, James
McFARLANE, Andrew
MOSEBAY,Watson T Jr
PETERS,Thomas R
PIERCE, Thomas A
PROVENCIO, Ramon
SMOYER, Nancy
SNIEGOWSKI, Ronald
VAN DE BOGART, Allan F
WALKER, Colin C.
WHITTON, Donald
WRIGHT, Phillip J

MEMOIRS

Journalists and Others

By Craig W. Tourte

The loss of anyone in war is tragic, but it is the nature of the beast. The war in Vietnam was covered and brought to the American public via television live for the first time. I don't know how many journalists were lost covering that conflict, but Bernard Fall, a French journalist, author and educator, comes to mind. I think I have read all of his books dealing with the war in Southeast Asia. Who can forget books such as "Hell In A Very Small Place, the Siege of Dien Bien Phu," and "Street Without Joy." He was a popular individual who was known and loved by many Marines and who's death came at the age of 40 on February 21, 1967, along with those of GY/SGT Byron Highland and L/CPL Glenn Harris while on a patrol with A&C/1/9 near Hue.

I know that Walter, Harry, and Dan were in country. I remember seeing the newsreels of them when I returned home in 1968. Each describing in a breathless whisper the dangers the American forces faced dealing with the soldiers of the north and rebels of the south. They all seemed to be dressed the same, some kind of khaki bush jacket with matching pants. I remember a photograph of Walter wearing a flak jacket and helmet, it made him look out of place and rather odd, I thought at the time how old Walter looked. There were lots of pictures taken by various journalists and cameramen who visited the war. Male and female came and went, some were lost to the conflict, but I never saw nor knew any of them.

I think I have seen most of the photographs taken of Khe Sanh during the Siege. Considering the historical circumstances, there really don't seem to be that many. It appears the majority were taken by the men who were themselves involved in the conflict. I don't have any personal recall of ever seeing a news type person at Khe Sanh during the 8 months I was there. Of course I realize that I was located in one of the more isolated corners of the base and few "visitors" ever came that way. There were few officers around and those who were in the area during the Siege seemed to be fairly inconspicuous.

It was one of those afternoons; a clear day after the fog had lifted. Helicopters would come and go. Toilet waste barrels were burning and the big guns of the NVA had not hurled anything at us for an hour or more. There was a feeling in the air that I could not describe, more of a sense than anything else, but I didn't know what it was. Sgt. Michael Secli had to report to H.Q. 1/26 for some reason, quite a walk (or run) from our location on a road we traveled only when it was absolutely necessary. Sgt. Secli was gone for two or three hours and returned with some exciting news. Sgt. Secli told us that he was talking to someone when he sensed something in the air, which he could not describe. He asked if there was a woman on the base and was surprised to hear that there was a female journalist in the area. I was surprised to hear this news, I never had seen a journalist, newsperson, cameraman or any other type of media at Khe Sanh, at least where our unit was located. On the other hand, there really was not much to look at or report on in the southwest corner of the base. Lots of blown up tents and sandbags, large holes in the ground, jagged metal objects lying all over the place, pretty much the same that could be observed anywhere on the base. But there were few good-looking officers or people of any importance in our area. We were just a bunch of privates, doing our job and trying to stay alive.

It would have been interesting years later, to be able to see my young face on the cover of Life Magazine, to have been able to read a quote I might have made that had historical significance, and which was still repeated to this day. I might have been standing by a sign that read "Home Is Where You Dig It," but it never happened. There was no photograph of me in my torn battle fatigues with cigarette dangling out of my mouth, or my name with hometown listed. No journalist visited us at our little corner of Khe Sanh and if they had, they probably would have spelled my name wrong.

I am reminded that although I did not see any journalists, they did visit Khe Sanh, along with various journalists and photographers who covered the Siege extensively. Ernie Spencer and Lawrence "Mack" McCartney brought Robert Ellison to my attention. Ellison arrived sometime during the start of the Siege but left in February. Ellison was returning to Khe Sanh in March onboard the C-123 Caribou that was shot down while on approach to the base, which tragically killed all. Ellison took numerous photographs of the destructive power of the NVA's incoming rounds, including the famed photograph of

the ammo dump explosion featured on the front page of Newsweek Magazine on March 18, 1968. Another famous photograph taken by Ellison was one titled "Marines In Trench" depicting three Marines laying prostrate in the bowels of the red clay trench in their dated flack jackets and helmets, hands over their face and helmeted head. A powerful photograph even when viewed 38 years later and a photograph that still evokes strong remembrances and emotions.

Ellison is also noted for the famous "Red" photograph. This photograph is the face of a Marine with the words "Red" written on the side of his helmet and a PFC chevron drawn on the front. The haggard face, sunken eyes and drawn whiskered cheeks reveal the utter exhaustion and hopelessness felt by so many of us. It is the face of all who went through the Siege of Khe Sanh.

Anyone who has read Bernard Fall's book "Hell In A Very Small Place, the Siege of Dien Bien Phu," cannot help but make the comparison of the Siege at Dien Bien Phu and the Siege at Khe Sanh. President Johnson made the comparison when speaking of Khe Sanh when he summed up his feeling while the fighting was still in progress, "I don't want any damn **Dinbinphoo**." Khe Sanh Veteran Gordon Young reminds us that Bernard Fall was killed while on a patrol with Marines on his own Street Without Joy near Hue, in the area he so eloquently described and wrote about some years before.

Leland Upshaw and Lawrence "Mack" McCartney inform us that David Douglas Duncan, a retired Marine and then photojournalist visited the base and hills during the Siege. Lawrence McCartney said Duncan visited Echo Company on Hill 861-A after the morning battle of February 5, 1968. Duncan took photographs for Life Magazine and wrote extensively, authoring two books, which include photographs of Khe Sanh. One was "War Without Heroes," and the other was "I Protest." An important passage in his book, "I Protest" reads, "I am no kook, hippie, hawk, or dove. I am just a veteran combat photographer and foreign correspondent who cares intensely about my country and the role we are playing...and assigning to ourselves...in the world today. And I want to shout a loud protest at what has happened at Khe Sanh and in all of Vietnam." Duncan gave the royalties from "I Protest" to the families of Marines killed at Khe Sanh.

One of the more memorable photographs taken by Duncan while at Khe Sanh showed deceased Marines being loaded onboard a CH-46 helicopter. Khe Sanh Veteran Kevin Macaulay, a former Corporal with Bravo 3rd Recon writes, "In all probability, one of the deceased Marines being carried aboard the CH-46 on 21 January 68 was Bill Bryan. We of Bravo Recon gave our brother Marines their last salute as they left Khe Sanh on their way home."

In 2003 David Douglas Duncan was 88 years old and living in the South of France.

It was Jim Madara who remembers the female reporter being at Khe Sanh and relates that towards the end of the Siege that he, and another Marine were driving alongside the airstrip while helicopters were landing and disembarking many starched utility types (could they have been officers?). Both were looking at the crowd for the rumored return of the female reporter when one of the starched utility types got in their way. Jim caught the gleam of a silver insignia going over the fender of his jeep. It wasn't the reporter (female) so Jim decided to continue on and fulfill his assigned mission. He was surprised that he never heard anything else about the incident. Jim's recall is that the silver flash looked a lot like a bird.

Jurate Kazickas was a 24-year-old correspondent visiting Khe Sanh during the Siege. Tall and blond and some said even exotic-looking, she gained access as a free-lancer and the Marines liked her being around. "It was a quiet day, March 8, 1968, and Kazickas was interviewing a group of Marines in the sunshine. Suddenly she heard a whistling sound and the men shouted, "Incoming!" A rocket exploded 50 feet away. Instead of throwing herself on the ground, she made the mistake of running toward the bunker. Shrapnel tore into her face, arms, legs, and rear end."

Johnny "Doc" McBride was one of Corpsmen who had "the pleasure" to cut off Ms. Kazickas pants. "It was a surprise when we saw a female anatomy but we were too busy working on the wounded for it to really make a difference...it was like a treat from heaven...she was very cute. It motivated me to survive the incoming and make it home...I have a letter

from her thanking us for taking care of her."

Ernie Spencer remembers that Doctor Ed Feldman was also one who attended to Ms. Kazickas and that Doctor Feldman and Ms. Kazickas are friends to this day. Ernie points out that Bill Gay with engineers was badly wounded as he stood next to Jurate Kazickas that morning.

" Word traveled quickly that a female reporter was among those who had been taken by helicopter to a hospital in Da Nang. The military didn't send flowers. One colonel said, "She got what she was looking for." (Cristina Rouvalis and Bill Schackner)."

Jurate Kazickas is now a 63 year-old freelance writer who lives in New York City and "...still carries the faint scars from the bloody Siege of Khe Sanh." She is a board member of the Adoption Institute, which is dedicated to improving the lives of people touched by adoption, and the co-author of "War Torn." Ms. Kazickas recalls her time at Khe Sanh. "I was only there 24 hours before I was wounded: mercifully not seriously. It was a little humiliating to have shrapnel in my rear end." "... fortunately the only plastic surgeon in all of the northern part of Vietnam was on duty that day, and-he said if you were a Marine, I would just take a Brillo pad and just scrub all of that stuff out of your face, but he worked on me for about an hour, taking out every little piece of shrapnel."

Dickey Chapelle was a war corresponded known for her horn-rimmed glasses and boonie hat decorated with jump wings she'd earned in another war. With cigarettes, custom-tailored fatigues, and pearl earrings, she had a passion for her stories and loved Marines. In the fall of 1965 Dickey convinced the editors of the National Observer to send her back to Vietnam where she had been many times before.

"On the morning of November 4, 1965, Dickey, on patrol with a platoon of Marines, stood second in line behind the platoon leader, Lt. Mauriski. Making their way out of camp, the lieutenant tripped a hidden wire triggering a grenade and mortar that sent shrapnel flying. Dickey was thrown 20 feet and caught a piece of shrapnel in her neck, which nicked her carotid artery. She bled to death, her head in the lap of another reporter. Dickey once told a general, "When my time comes, I want it to be on a patrol with the Marines." She was the fist member of the press killed during Vietnam and the first American woman reporter killed in battle. One can't help wonder, with her love of the Marines and having spent her career striving to be the first, if she couldn't have written a better epitaph."

I think back to 1965 and Chuck Chamberlin transporting the remains of the Marines beloved Dickie Chapelle. I believe Ms. Chapelle's family would be proud to have known that Chuck, a Marine who would survive the bloody Siege of Khe Sanh years later, was the person who was with Dickie on her last journey. I believe it was fitting and proper and to a certain extent, destiny that Ms. Chapell was placed into his care. I believe that Ms. Chapell would have considered it her privilege.

I am thankful for the presence of the journalists and photographers on the hills and base, and for their bravery. Their photographs allowed us to recall the bravery we had in ourselves and helped us to remember our comrades who had not returned.

Editors Note: In the above article Craig speaks of Khe Sanh Veteran Chuck Chamberlin who had to escort the body of Chapelle. Below is Chuck Chamberlin's personal account of that occurrence.

Transporting Dickey Chapelle

By Chuck Chamberlin

One of the worst jobs I had prior to joining the Marine Corps was working for a funeral home out of Fairfield, CA that had the Army contract for bodies being returned from Vietnam. I was paid $1.25 per hour as I recall, and the job consisted primarily of assisting with the processing of remains at Oakland Army Terminal/Mortuary Section. There were about a half dozen of us on the grunt crew, and after unloading the shipping cases from trucks we would then open the cases, remove the bodies, and place them on gurneys, which were then staged for the morticians in the preparation room.

It took awhile to get used to the smell of camphor and Formalin, and that other smell that can't be disguised. I don't think I'll ever forget the sight of so many men's' bodies, some whole and others mangled beyond all recognition. I soon learned to block out the fact that not long ago these were walking/talking human beings. The morticians embalmed the

remains, dressed the deceased in their Class 'A' uniforms and, for those that were "viewable", applied makeup to make them more presentable to their friends and relatives. We would then place these soldiers in caskets, using silver spray paint to obscure the glass on those deemed "non-viewable", seal the caskets and place them in plywood shipping crates. An American flag was provided for each of them. I then transported these fallen heroes to San Francisco airport for their final flight home. In the case of those from the Bay Area, I provided transportation to local cemeteries including the National Cemetery in San Bruno, CA for burial with military honors. Business was brisk and there was plenty of overtime.

I think my experience with this gruesome job had a lot to do with my joining the Marine Corps. I figured by then that I'd seen enough Army bodies to last a lifetime. That and the fact that my older brother had done a hitch in the Corps, including 6 months in 'Nam before rotating home for discharge. In my naïve/ignorant teenage mind I thought I'd be better off as a Marine! Little did I know that 2 years later I'd be offered a similar escort assignment by a marine officer while assigned to Casual Company, Treasure Is., CA. By then I was a Corporal fresh out of Oak Knoll Naval Hospital after surviving the Khe Sanh siege. I took a guard detail at the federal building in San Francisco instead, but that's a whole other story.

One Friday night in November of '65 I was told to drive the "funeral coach" (hearse) up to McClellan AFB about an hour north of Fairfield. There, I was to pickup the remains of a civilian "VIP" who'd been flown in separate from the usual route via Air Force transport, and I was told to return the remains to the Travis AFB morgue near Fairfield. I was handed a sheaf of paperwork that in typical military fashion consisted of multiple carbon copies to be duly signed and stamped by the appropriate personnel, and proceeded to carry out this somewhat unusual assignment.

It's been over 40 years since then, but either upon my return to Travis that evening, or the next day, I assisted with removing those remains from the shipping case. I recall being shocked to discover that the deceased was in fact a diminutive female in her mid-40's, with a single small shrapnel wound in her neck. At Oakland Army Terminal I'd gotten used to seeing the remains of relatively young adult males with the entire range of combat wounds. To see this woman with a seemingly tiny wound surprised me, but at the time I didn't know who she was or the circumstances of her death. I have since learned more about the woman I transported from one Air Force base to another that night…

The following information, was compiled from various sources on the Internet such as "Wikipedia" and "digital journalist.org".)

Dickey Chapelle was born Georgette Louise Meyer in Shorewood, Wisconsin in 1919, and by the age of sixteen she was attending aeronautical design classes at MIT. She soon returned home, where she worked at a local airfield, hoping to learn to pilot airplanes instead of merely designing them. However, when her mother learned that she was also having an affair with one of the pilots, Chapelle was forced to live in Florida with her grandparents.

Eventually, she moved to New York, and met her future husband, Tony Chapelle, and began working as a photographer sponsored by Trans World Airlines. She eventually became a professional, and later, after fifteen years of marriage, divorced Tony, and changed her first name to Dickey. Despite her mediocre photographic credentials, Chapelle managed to become a war correspondent photojournalist for National Geographic, and with one of her first assignments, was posted with the Marines during World War II.

After the war, she traveled all around the world, often going to extraordinary lengths to cover a story in any war zone. She later learned to jump with paratroopers, and usually traveled with troops. This led to frequent awards, and earned the respect of both the military and journalistic community.

Despite early support for Fidel Castro, Dickey was an outspoken anti-Communist, and loudly expressed her pro-American views at the beginning of the Vietnam War. Chapelle was killed by a landmine in Vietnam on November 4, 1965; her last moments were captured in a photograph by Henri Huet. She became the first war correspondent killed in Vietnam, as well as the first female reporter to be killed during battle.

Whiskey-voiced and brave, Dickey Chapelle spent most of her adult life in a man's world. She knew

how to parachute out of a plane as well as how to fly one, had adventures in three wars, and was remembered by nearly everyone she ever met.

In 1962, she won the Overseas Press Club's George Polk Award for the best reporting in any medium, requiring exceptional courage and enterprise abroad. Her proudest achievement was the Distinguished Service Award, presented by the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association. At her memorial service, a representative of the Women's National Press Club said Chapelle was "the kind of reporter all women in journalism openly or secretly aspire to be. She was always where the action was."

I saw many dead bodies from Vietnam before this one and many more after, but none seemed sadder to me than Dickey Chapelle's. There's one of those Australian campaign hats lying on the ground near her head in the picture, and I read that she'd put a flower in the hatband that morning. I've also read that she once told a general, "When my time comes I want to be on patrol with marines". It's been said that she got her wish, though I've never been sure about that, with her or anyone else. Her last words reportedly were… "I guess it was bound to happen".

I quit that lousy job not long afterward, and within a year was in boot camp in San Diego. Dickey Chapelle is also the subject of a song by Nanci Griffith The last verse is included below:

"It was 1965,
Over Chu Lai in a free fall dive
In a dawn patrol to cover the dead zone ground
She tiptoed through the land mines
All along the enemy lines
But she never saw the one that took her down
She captured the bloody pearls of war so well
That war was bound to steal the end of Dickey Chapelle"

"Pearl's Eye View (The Life of Dickey Chapelle)" by Nanci Griffith/"Maura Kennedy



The photo below is from "R E Q U I E M" by Horst Faas, taken by Henri Huet in Chu Lai, Vietnam, 1965 (AP). The caption reads: "U.S. Marine Corps chaplain John Monamara of Boston administers the last rites to war correspondent Dickey Chapelle





Dickey Chapelle and Archie's Angels, 1962
Dickey Chapelle (Left Kneeling) and some of Archie's Angels display a communist flag captured by the troops they carried in early operations against the Viet Cong. This photo was part of an article written by Ms Chapelle for National Geographic, Vol 122, No. 5, November 1962. This article documents the first meeting of Dickey and HMM-362. The relationship ended in tragedy as an Ugly Angel helicopter piloted by Greg Lee raced her shattered body to Delta Med at Ky Ha 3 years later. She did not survive. Marines in photo are from the left: R. J. Dumas, G. T. Simmons and A. J Rohl.

A FEW OF OUR NOTABLE PHOTO JOURNALIST THAT SERVED WITH THE USMC



David Douglas Duncan - WWII, Korea, Vietnam.



Dickey Chapelle –WWII, Vietnam KIA 04 November 1965



Robert Ellison Vietnam - KIA 06 Mar 68, KSCB



Juarte Kazickas- Vietnam - WIA KSCB 08 Mar 68 Current Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans

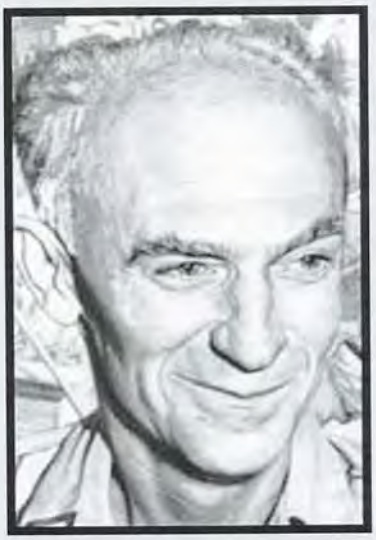

Ernie Pyle, WWII - KIA Okinawa 17 April 1945



Bernard B. Fall-Vietnam -KIA 21 Feb 67 near the City of Hue

POETRY

My Belated Christmas Greeting to All Khe Sanh Vets

By Mike "Animal" Preston

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light, I
gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest, my
daughter beside me, angelic in rest.

Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
transforming the yard to a winter delight.
The sparkling lights in the tree I believe, completed
the magic that was Christmas Eve.
My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,
secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.

In perfect contentment, or so it would seem, so I
slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.
The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near, but I
opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, then the
sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.
My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear, and I
crept to the door just to see who was near.
Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night, a
lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old, perhaps
a Marine, huddled here in the cold.
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled, standing
watch over me, and my wife and my child.
"What are you doing?" I asked without fear, "come
in this moment, it's freezing out here!
Put down your pack, brush the snow from your
sleeve, you should be at home on a cold Christmas
Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift, away from
the cold and the snow blown in drifts..
To the window that danced with a warm fire's light
Then he sighed and he said "Its really all right, I'm
out here by Choice, I'm here every night."
"It's my duty to stand at the front of the line, that
separates you from the darkest of times.
No one had to ask or beg or implore me, I'm proud
to stand here like my fathers before me.

My Gramps died at 'Pearl on a day in December,"
then he sighed, "that's a Christmas 'Gram always re-
members." My dad stood his watch in the jungles of
'Nam', and now it is my turn and so, here I am.
I've not seen my own son in more than a while, but
my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile.
Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,
the red, white, and blue... an American flag.
"I can live through the cold and the being alone,
away from my family, my house and my home.

I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.
I can carry the weight of killing another, or lay down
my life with my sister and brother..
Who stand at the front against any and all, to ensure
for all time that this flag will not fall."
"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright, your
family is waiting and I'll be all right."
"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,
"give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?

It seems all too little for all that you've done, for
being away from your wife and your son."
Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret, "just
tell us you love us, and never forget.

To fight for our rights back at home while we're
gone, to stand your own watch, no matter how long.
For when we come home, either standing or dead, to
know you remember we fought and we bled.
Is payment enough, and with that we will trust, that
we mattered to you as you mattered to us.

*

WE GET MAIL

A Simple Thank You

It is now the beginning of the year 2006. A lot of years have gone by since 1967, and part of 1968, at Khe Sanh. I have had 7 heart attacks and PTSD to compound my health. I would like to express , and I am sure all would agree, what a blessing the Reverend Ray W. Stubbe has been for all of us, especially for our deceased brothers and their families.

Personally I will always be grateful for his belief in my truthful discussions regarding my time at Khe Sanh. God Bless him always. I would also like to express my gratitude to Phillip Wright and Larry McCartney for listening and believing in me. May the good Lord bless them and all who served at Khe Sanh.

Semper Fi

Daniel Laliberte

BOOK REVIEW
By Tom Eichler

In the last edition of Red Clay there was an article in the memorial section with a story concerning a former Marine paying tribute to his Father Lt Pham Van Hoa, a former member of the Vietnamese Air Force. His son, Quang X. Pham, the former Marine's name should have been listed as the author.

Besides writing that article, Quang X. Pham has written an outstanding book, called **A Sense of Duty, My Father, My American Journey**. Below is just one of the many fine reviews of his writings

Reprinted with permission
Quangs book reminds us of price they paid
By GORDON DILLOW,
The Orange County Register

This month will mark the 30th anniversary of a shameful chapter in our nation's history. Thirty years ago we abandoned a longtime ally, the Republic of (South) Vietnam.

And with it, along with millions of others, we abandoned Quang X. Pham's dad.

Quang is an old friend of mine, a 40-year-old Mission Viejo businessman who came to the U.S. as a boy refugee from Vietnam, and later served as a U.S. Marine helicopter pilot in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. His father, Pham Van Hoa, now deceased, was a U.S.-trained South Vietnamese Air Force pilot who spent 12 years in a communist "re-education" camp, because he refused to leave his country when the North Vietnamese army swept through South Vietnam in April 1975 - this, while America, after investing 58,000 of its own sons' lives, stood by and washed its hands of the entire bloody and tragic affair.

And even though he became an American who loved his country and served it courageously in uniform, for many years that abandonment rankled Quang's heart. It rankled mine, too.

Quang has written a new book about his father, and about his own experiences as a refugee who became an American Marine. It's called "A Sense of Duty: My Father, My American Journey," published by Ballantine Books (you can get more information at www.asenseofduty.com.) I highly recommend it for anyone who wants to understand what the Vietnam War meant to some of the people who suffered the most because of it - that is, the people of South Vietnam. It's powerful, and moving, and in it Quang tries to dispel a myth about Vietnam that still persists.

The myth is that guys like his dad didn't fight for their country.

"I just want to see South Vietnamese (military men) like my father acknowledged," Quang told me. "Not made into heroes or anything, but just acknowledged for what they did. I wanted to set the record straight."

Certainly the casualty numbers tell a story that's far different from the myth. The South Vietnamese armed forces lost a total of about 250,000 men killed in the war - a number that, as a percentage of national population, was about 50 times greater than American deaths.

And the numbers of the maimed were even greater. Ten years ago, as a reporter for the Register, I went back to Vietnam to cover the 20th anniversary of the end of the war, and everywhere I went I would meet aging former ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) soldiers who were missing arms or legs or eyes, many of them reduced to beggary because the communist government offered no pensions or even menial jobs for former ARVNs. When they found out I'd been an American soldier in the war they would often break out yellowed, crumbling, long-hidden South Vietnamese military ID cards and tell me, "I was with you, I was with you." And they were.

Now, I know some of my fellow American Vietnam veterans will disagree with me on this subject. They'll call me up and tell me bitter tales about "Marvin the ARVN," about South Vietnamese M-16s that were in perfect condition because "they'd never been fired, and were only dropped once," about South Vietnamese corruption and incompetence and cowardice. Certainly there was no shortage of such things, particularly in the ARVN's politicized upper ranks.

But don't tell me - or Quang X. Pham - that 250,000 guys died with no brave men among them. Don't try to tell guys who got their arms or legs blown off, that they didn't fight hard enough. Don't think that a lot of guys like Quang's father didn't have a sense of duty and honor, even as they lost their war, and their country, and languished in brutal communist prison camps for years and years and years.

In the coming weeks you'll probably see and hear a lot of retrospectives about the Vietnam War, some of them truthful, many of them media myths perpetuated by people who were never even there - the same sort of myths that even now are being created about the Iraq war and the Americans fighting it. More on that in a future column.

But if you think that the Vietnam War was strictly an American war, if you think that the people of South Vietnam weren't worth fighting for, or with, then I have a suggestion. Talk to a guy like Quang X. Pham. And ask him about his dad.

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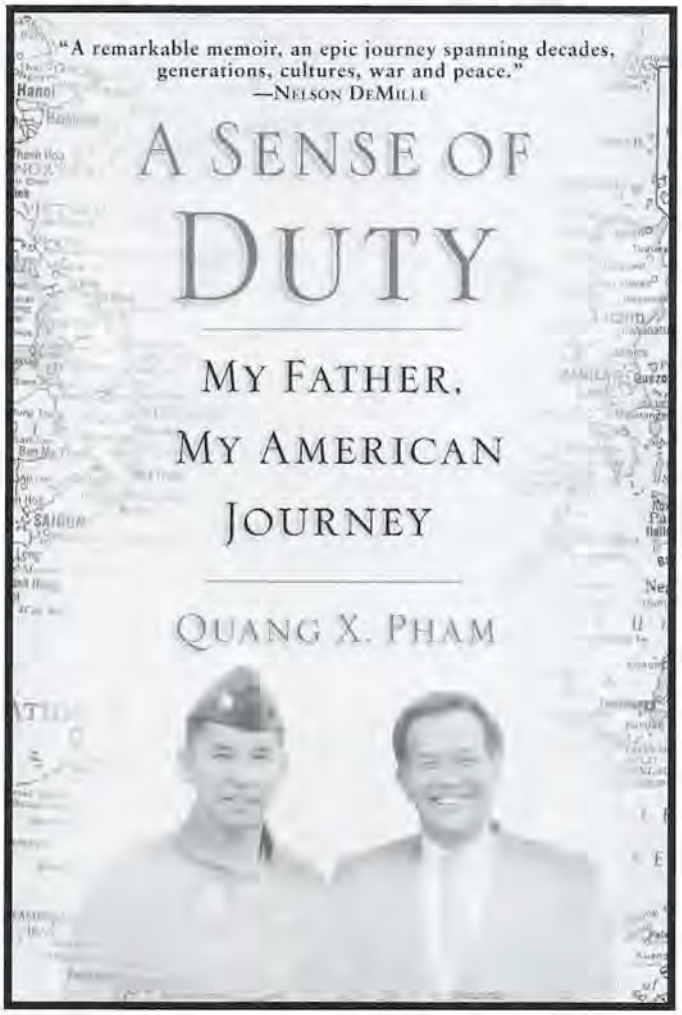

OBIT

Glenn's Rappold's wife Helen, has been ill for several years. It is with great sadness to let Glenn's Khe Sanh brothers know Helen passed away 16 Feb 06. Ronald and Cliff have been with him over the past few weeks, and I know Ronald would want me to let his brothers know this sad news. Please keep Glenn and his family in your thoughts and prayers.
Lynn Shouse

Rappold, Helen F.(nee Bryan),St. Peters, MO, February 15, 2006, age 63. Beloved wife of Glen B. Rappold; loving mother of Terry Savage and Sherry (Mike) Landen; dear sister of Barbara (Robert) Hernandez; cherished grandmother of Rachel (Jason) Huffman, Ebony Jimenez, Jordan Savage, Kara Landen, Melissa Landen; and great grandmother of David and Christian Jimenez.



Many don't know what Glenn has been through these last years, especially recently, with Helen in the care of Hospice. Glenn hang in there, we are with you in your time of grief. To send Glenn a card:
Semper Fi
Jim and PJ
Glenn Rappold
1 Inverness Ct.
Saint Peters, MO 63376

Rest In Peace

In moments of loss and sadness we all tend to look skyward and ask the question,
"Why?" Why her? Why now?

We who have sought this answer for so long for the many who have slipped away from us in this lifetime, whether in the jungles or at home. We who have witnessed these loses since our youth, are perhaps eternally confounded by this part of life which comes to us all at yet some unknown place and time. We share your Grief, We Mourn your loss, We send you our Love, Thoughts, and Prayers, and most of all-We Shall see each other in God's Good Care.
Glen Keep the Faith & Stay Strong.
Love, Your Brother in Arms.

Semper Fidelis
Neil Joseph Kenny

KHE SANH: A COMPREHENSIVE CHRONOLOGY

Many of our members have requested a re-print of an article by Reverend Ray W. Stubbe that appeared in Issue 93 (Spring) which listed which units served at Khe Sanh, and the various combat operations that were conducted. Ray wrote in that same article, a chronology of Khe Sanh going back 130 million years. For this article I have condensed it to the years 1962-1975. Ray has updated the information to include reports from the North Vietnamese Army, and their day to day operations during that period.

NOTE: unless otherwise noted, units indicated participated in the operations for the entire period noted.

OPERATION VIRGINIA
(17 Apr 66– 01 May 66)

1ST Battalion 1ST Marines, A- Co, B- Co, C- Co
B BTRY 3/12
A Co 3RD SP
B Co 1ST Platoon 3RD Engineers
5TH Platoon 1ST Force Recon

(NO NAME)
(30 SEP 66 - 23 APR 67,(Part of PRAIRIE), SOP Khe Sanh, 3RD MAR DIV REP

1/3	30 Sep 66-02 Feb 67
B Co 1/9	02 Feb 67-23 Apr 67
E Co 2/9	07-27 Mar 67
1/3/3	17-19 Mar 67
F Btry 2/12	05-23 Apr 67
I Btry 3/12	Feb- 05 Apr 67
CAC"O"	06 Feb 67
A Co 2ND PLT 3RD AT's	27 Mar -23 Apr 67
Det, 3RD Force Recon	Jan-06 Apr 67
A Co 3RD Recon	15 Mar- 23 Apr 67

BATTLE OF KHE SANH
SEARCH AND DESTROY
(24 APR 67-13 MAY 67)

3rd Marine Div Consisting of:

2/3	26 Apr-12 May 67
3/3	25 Apr-13 May 67
B Co 1/9	24-27 Apr 67
E Co 2/9	01-12 May 67
1ST Battalion 26TH Marines	11-13 May 67
C Co 1/26	04-13 May 67
K Co 3/9	25 Apr-13 May 67
M Co 3/9	27 Apr-13 May 67
F Btry 2/12	24 Apr-13 May 67
B Btry 2/12	27 Apr-11 May 67
A Btry 1/12	13 May 67
B Btry 2-94 USA	24 Apr-13 May 67

OPERATION CROCKETT
(13 MAY 67-16 JULY 67)

26th Marines
1/26
A Btry 1/13

A Co 3RD Recon	13 May-25 Jun 67
F Btry 2/12	13 May-14 Jun 67
A(-) 3RD AT	
W Btry1/13 4.2	25 May-16 Jul 67
3/26	13 Jun-16 Jul 67
CAC"O"	
C Btry 1/13	14 Jun-16 Jul 67
B Co 3RD Recon	25 Jun-16 Jul 67

ARDMORE
(17 JUL 67-31 OCT 67)

26th Mar
SubUnit # 1, HqCo, 26thMar
Det, 1st Search Light Btry, 12th Mar
Det, Div ISO, Photo, Postal, Exchange
I/26
Det, 3d SP
C/ Co 1ST PLT 3RD Eng
3/26 17 Jul 67- 13 Aug 67
Cmd Group + K & L Co, 04 SEP, I&M Co
A Btry 1/13
Det, 1ST Prov 155 Howitzer Btry
Det 2ND Prov 155 Howitzer Btry
C Btry1/13
W Btryl/13
Sub Unit #5, HqBn, 3dMarDiv
A(-)/3d AT
B Co 3RD Recon
B-Co 3RD PLT 3RD Tanks
C 2(-) 3RD Med Bn
A-2(-)/ 3d SP
Det, N 9TH MT
Det, B 9TH MT
CAC"O"
LtSec, *Nl-44* (US Army)
Sec G/65th (US Army)
Det A-10l, 5th SFGA

HqBtry, 1/13	27 Jul- 31 Oct 67

SCOTLAND
[01 Nov 67—31 Mar 68]

The list indicates those eligible for the Presidential Unit Citation for the dates indicated. Some of these units were present at Khe Sanh before the Siege battle, e.g., 26th Mar and 1/26 for the entire period, 2/26 arrived 17 Jan 68, A-1/3rd Eng arrived 27 Dec 67, 1st Prov, 155 How Btry/3/12 arrived 05 Jan, and some were there prior to the siege, e.g., I/3/12 (01-09 Nov 67), C-1/3rd Eng (01-27 Dec 67) [Units are listed as indicated in ALMAR 232010Z/May68:

26th Marines	
HqCo	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
1/26	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
2/26	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
3/26	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Attached and supporting units:	
USMC:	
1/9 (less Co C)	22 Jan—01 Apr 68
C/1/9	23 Jan—01 Apr 68
1/13	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
2nd Prov, 155 Howitzer	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, 1st Searchlight Btry, 12th Mar	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, 3rd Eng	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
B/3rd Recon	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
3rd Plt, D/3rd Recon	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
1st Plt, A/5th Recon	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
A(-), 3rd AT Co	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
A/3rd SP	24 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, H&S/3rd SP	24 Jan—01 Apr 68
2nd Plt, C/3rd Med	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Otter Plt, 3rd MT	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, B/9th MT	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det A, 9th MT	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det SU#1, 1st Radio	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, 3rd Dental Co	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, HqCo, HqBn, 3rd MarDiv (Postal, Photo, Exchange, ISO, AOs, Staff Augment:	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
CAC "O"	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, Comm Co, HqBn, 3rd MarDiv:	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, 5th Comm	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, 7th Comm	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, FLC	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
SU #1, 17th ITT	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
B/3rd TK	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det 0-1, H&MS, MAG-16:	20 Jan—14 Mar 68
Det 0-1, VMO, MAG-16:	05 Mar—01 Apr 68
Det 2, MASS-3	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det B, ASRAT 3	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, H&MS-36	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, MACTU-62	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, WERS-17	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
U.S. Navy units:	
Det B, CBMU-301	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det MCB-10	20 Jan—19 Feb 68
Det, MCB-53	20 Jan—13 Feb 68
Det, MCB-5	20-24 Jan 68
U.S. Army units:	
Det, A-101, 5th SFGA	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, 44th Arty	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, 65th Arty	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, 238th Counter-Mortar Radar Unit,108th Field Arty	22 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, 1st Plt (Smoke), 25th Chemical Co	09 Feb—01 Apr 68
544th Signal Det, 37th Signal Bn:	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
FOB-3	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
U.S. Air Force Units:	
Det (Operating Location AJ), 15th Aerial Port Sq	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, 366th Transport Sq, 366th Combat Support Group	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det, 903rd Aero Med Evac Sq:	20 Jan—01 Apr 68
Det A, 834th AirDiv	20 Jan—31 Mar 68

Others:

37th ARVN Ranger Bn

In addition to the above, personnel of the following aviation units who were located at or landed at Khe Sanh are eligible for the PUC:

USMC units:

HMH-463
HMM-163
HMM-262

HMM-362
HMM-364
VMO-3
VMO-6
HMM-165
HMM-363
HMM164
VMGR-152
USAF units:
309th ACS,. 315 ACW
310th ACS, 315 ACW
311th ACS, 315 ACW
319th ACS, 315th ACW
535th TAS, 483rd TAW
536th TAS, 483rd TAW
457th TAS, 483rd TAW
458th TAS, 483rd TAW
537th TAS, 483rd TAW
459th TAS, 483rd TAW

PEGASUS
[31 Mar—15 Apr 68]

Prov Corps Vietnam	
Prov Corps Vietnam Arty	
1st Cav Div (including 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Brigades)	
26th Mar	
HqCo, 26th Mar	
Det, 5th Comm	
Det, 7th Comm	
Det, 3rd MarDiv Postal	31 Mar—12 Apr 68
Det, 3ed MarDiv Photo	
Det, 3rd MarDiv Exchange	
Det, 3rd MarDiv ISO	
1/26	
2/26	
3/26	
1/9	
1/13	
3rd Recon	
B-3/3rd TK	
A(-), 3rd AT	
Sec Btry, G/65 (USA)	
LtSec A/1 ADA AW(SP)/44	
A/3rd SP	
C-2/3rd Med	
Det, H&S/3rd MT (M-76)	
MACTU-62	
Det 20th TASS, USAF	
CBMU-301, Det B	
LSU Khe Sanh	
Det, 3rd Eng	
1st Plt, 25th Chemical Co (USA)	
Det, C/3rd MT	
4th Plt, SU#1, 1st Radio	
Det, 238th Arty (Radar)/1/40	
1st Mar	
1/1	
2/1	
2/3	
11th Eng	
NMCB 5	
TF KILO, 3rd MarDiv	
3rd ITT	
Det, A/1st Med	
B/1/12	
A(-)/1st Eng	
A(-)/1st SP	
A(-)/1st MT	
C-3(-)/3rd TK	
AT-1(-)/3rd TK	

SCOTLAND II
[15 Apr 68—28 Feb 69]

TF GLICK	15 Apr -
TF HOTEL	(deactivated 01 Jul 69)
2/1	15 Apr—2-7 Jul 68
1/1	15 Apr—12 Jul 68
3/4	19 Apr 68 -
3/9	04 Jun—05 Jul 68
2/3	15 Apr—20 Jun 68
1/4	06-16 Oct, 01-30 Nov
68	
1st Mar	
4th Mar	
A/1/9	
B/1/9	
11th Mar	
2nd Brig (USA)	
1/5 (USA)	
2/5 (USA)	
1/77 (USA)	
A/1/30 (USA)	

CHARLIE
[17 Jun—06 Jul 68]

3/4	19 Apr 68 -

DAWSON RIVER WEST
[02-19 Jan 69]

9th Mar
2nd Bn/2nd ARVN Regt
3rd Bn/2nd ARVN Regt

PURPLE MARTIN
[27 Feb—08 May 68]

4th Mar
3/12

NO NAME
[01 Mar—22 Apr 69]

1-5 Mech Div (USA)

MAINE CRAG
[10 Mar—02 May 69]

3rd Mar
TF REMAGEN
1/3
2/3
3/3
1/12
TF HOTEL
4th Mar
1-5 Mech Div (USA)
12th Mar
3rd Eng
3rd Recon
3rd TK

TROJAN HORSE
[04-27 Aug, 08 Sep—01 Oct 69]

Project DELTA, 5th SFGA (USA)

FREDERICK HILL
[13 Mar 69—]

USA units

HERKIMER MOUNTAIN
[09 May—16 Jul 69]

4th Mar
1/4

CAMERON FALLS
[29 May—23 Jun 69]

9th Mar
3/9
F/2/12

UTAH MESA

1/9
3/9
Bn of 1-5 Mech Div (USA)

LAM SON 719
[30 Jan 71—06 Apr 71]

XXIV Corps (US):
HQ, XXIV Corps
101st Abn Div (Ambl)
DISCOM (-)
23rd Inf Div
1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech)
1st Brig, 5th Mech Div:
1st Bn, 22th Inf
1st Bn,. 77th Armor
3rd Sq, Cav
5th Bn, 4th Arty
3rd Bn, 187th Inf, 101st Abn Div (Ambl)
4th Bn, 3rd Inf, 23rd Inf Div (OPCON)
1st Bn, 82nd Arty, 23rd Inf Div (Attached)
7th Eng Bn
11th Brig, 23rd Inf Div.
101st Abn Div:
101st AHB:
A, B, C, & D/101
235th AWC
158th AHB:
A, B, C, & D/158
D/227th Avn Bn
159th AHB:
B, & C/159
478th Avn Co.
132nd Avn Co.
179th Avn Co.
223 CAB:
48th Avn Co.
173rd Avn Co.
238th Avn Co.
282nd Avn Co.
14 CAB:
71st Avn Co.
174th Avn Co.
116th Avn Co.
III MAF—HMH 463
163rd GS Co.
2nd Sq, 17th Cav:
A, B, C, and D/2/17
4th Bn (Aerial Arty), 77th Arty

27th Eng Bn
I Corps (ARVN)
HQ, I Corps
1st ARVN Inf Div
1st ARVN Abn Div
1st VNMC Div
1st ARVN Ranger Group
10th ARVN Engr Group

1962

08 FEB – US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) is established.

02 MAR – 12 Apr - The fall of Tchepone prompts American involvement in Vietnam and becomes the focus of the SEATO exercise TULUNGUN, conducted in the Philippines. The exercise provides a "cover" for introducing US Marine helicopters into Vietnam.

08 JUL – First permanent American military unit arrives at Khe Sanh to check infiltration on Route 9. The "A" Team under the command of Capt WEAVER locates at the Old French Fort (XD 858388, designated Thuong Van on the tactical maps) on the eastern side of Khe Sanh Village.

23 JUL – Declaration and Protocol on the neutrality of Laos is signed in Geneva. The USSR Ambassador PUSHKIN) pledges to the US Ambassador HARRIMAN) that it will keep North Vietnam from conducting operations in Laos. (This is, of course, violated as the Ho Chi-Minh-Trail network is constructed).

16 SEP – A violent typhoon strikes Khe Sanh.
Nov – Operation SWITCHBACK commences as paramilitary operations are removed from CIA control and assumed by MACV. (This includes the USSF "A" Camp at Khe Sanh, which had been prevented from conducting local patrols by the CIA, even from possessing a .50 caliber machinegun for its defense.)

NOV-DEC – The Khe Sanh airstrip is upgraded by laying PSP (Pierced Steel Plate) by an ARVN engineer unit.

1963

05 SEP – An Air America C-46 was hit by ground fire and crashed near XD2548, approx 2 km. NW of Tchepone. Eugene DeBruin and 4 non-US crewmembers parachuted and were ultimately captured while 2 other crewmen were killed in the crash. As a result, Air America began resupply of BV-33 (CP at Ban Houei Sane, XD 625379) from Khe Sanh rather than from eastern Laos.

1964

24 JAN – MACV SOG established.

FEB – Monsieur WOLF, a French pharmacist from Dong Ha, is assassinated on Route 9 by VC following a visit with Monsieur LLINARES, one of the French planters at Khe Sanh.

03 MAR – Father PONCET of the Foreign Missions of Paris arrives at Khe Sanh to begin ministry as the local priest.(He is assassinated in Hue, 13 Feb 1968).

26 MAR – Capt FLOYD THOMPSON, CO of "A" Team at Khe Sanh, is shot down while on an aerial observation flight and becomes the longest-held POW of the Vietnam War. Capt Richard L. WHITESIDES, the pilot, becomes the first American KIA at Khe Sanh.

APR – SESU (Signal Engineering Survey Unit) organized. MAJ Alfred M. GRAY, Jr. (later Commandant of the Marine Corps) makes a preliminary recon of Tiger Tooth Mt. (Hill 1739, XD 832543, the highest point in northern I Corps) with a handful of Vietnamese. He runs out of food, overruns a NVA base camp en-route to friendly positions, and captures a large quantity of NVA documents. SESU's infantry element, 76 Marines from Co G/2/3, is the first Marine ground unit to conduct operations in Vietnam; this is at Khe Sanh.

20 APR – EUGENE POILANE, the French coffee planter and botanical explorer, is assassinated in a Communist ambush along Route 9.

MAY – VC rampage the MILLER's house in a local Bru village during their absence as tensions rise in the Khe Sanh area.

13 MAY – Advance party of ARVN occupy Tiger Tooth Mountain for SESU operation.

13 JUN – MAJ GRAY and his unit occupy Tiger Tooth Mountain for SESU operation.

24 JUN – Operation LEAPING LENA inserts 8-man reconnaissance teams (with 2 Americans per team) by parachute east of Tchepone. Only 5 men survive and return to friendly control.

16-19 JUL – SESU departs Tiger Tooth Mountain During 1964, a 4-star American General visits the POILANE plantation where he is informed that defoliant spray in nearby Laos has caused the POILANE's durion fruit tree to cease producing fruit. A claim for damages is filed at Quang Tri and the Americans pay damages, but the Vietnamese officials keep it for themselves.

USSF "A" team at Khe Sanh relocates from the Old French Fort position to the Khe Sanh airstrip and begins construction of concrete bunkers (which the Marines were later to assume were from the French days).

1965

21 SEP – Presidential approval given for SOG for American USSF to lead reconnaissance teams behind enemy lines.

18 OCT – First SOG mission launched into Laos as part of Operation SHINING BRASS.

22 DEC – USSF at Khe Sanh makes significant contact with sizable unit of NVA and annihilates them.

1966

03 JAN - USAF aircraft arrive at Khe Sanh airstrip to commence Project TIGERHOUND (aerial recon of eastern Laos).

03 JAN – USSF Camp on the Khe Sanh airstrip is attacked by NVA using 120mm mortars, the first use of these large-caliber weapons in the Vietnam War.

MAR/APR – North Vietnam reorganizes the battlefield, creating B-4 Front (everything south of Route 9 to southern border of Thua Thien Province) and B-5 Front (everything in Quang Tri Province north of Route 9 to the DMZ). B-5 is also referred to as "Tri-Thien Military Region Route 9."

APR – The North Vietnamese Central Military Party Committee issues a directive establishing the Tri-Thien Military Region which is detached from Military Region V. In JUN, 1966, directives are issued establishing the Highway 9 Front.

17 APR – Operation **VIRGINIA** commences in the Khe Sanh area conducted by First Battalion, First Marine Regiment (1/1), the first battalion-size infantry operation in Khe Sanh

01 MAY – Operation **VIRGINIA** concludes with negative enemy sightings. (They had swept the area recently swept by USSF and did not enter areas where USSF claimed the NVA were operating but where they, the USSF, had insufficient manpower to sweep).

29 JUL – FOB-1 recon patrol on Co Roc makes contact resulting in 2 American KIA.

SEP-OCT – Various intelligence sources reflect large-size NVA units moving into the Khe Sanh area. Debate between Gen WESTMORELAND, COMUSMACV (who believes a sizeable invasion is imminent) and Gen L. W. WALT, CG, III MAF (who believes NVA have no interest at Khe Sanh) develops.

10 SEP – A Det of 65 Navy Seabees of NMCB-10 arrive on the Khe Sanh airstrip to upgrade it. They are augmented on 30 Sep by another 32 Seabees.

29/30 SEP – Battalion 1/3 moves to Khe Sanh USSF camp on the Khe Sanh airstrip. AO is a circle with a 10,000 meter radius from the Khe Sanh camp.

OCT – 22 Seabees of NMCB-7 build six concrete bunkers at Lang Vei for the ARVN.

10 OCT – Battery B, 1/13, (105mm howitzers) arrives at Khe Sanh.

15 OCT – Project DELTA arrives at Khe Sanh to launch Operation 13-66: scour area just under the DMZ near the Laos border. AO XD6670 – XD9070

– XD9050.

Mid OCT: JTAD (Joint Technical Advisory Detachment) at Khe Sanh forms.

DEC – Staff of 3rd Marine Division prepares a detailed, comprehensive analysis comparing Khe Sanh with Dien Bien Phu.

02 DEC – a Project DELTA recon team is overrun in the Khe Sanh area.

19-25 DEC – USSF Camp at Khe Sanh displaces to Lang Vei, displacing ARVN battalion 3/2 which moves to the Old French Fort position.

DEC – LSU [Logistic Support Unit] is established at Khe Sanh.

1967

JAN – Det of 3rd Force Reconnaissance Company arrives at Khe Sanh to replace Project DELTA unit and operations.

14 JAN – The codename for SOG operations into Laos, SHINING BRASS, is replaced by PRAIRIE FIRE (for operations into Laos) and NICKLE STEEL (for operations in the western DMZ west of the YD/XD line).

18 JAN – First Marine KIA at Khe Sanh, CPL MICHAEL JOHN SCANLON of the Det, 3rd Force Recon Co.

23-26 JAN – The DRVN Party Central Committee holds its 13th Plenum and issues Resolution #13 which calls for winning "a decisive victory in a relatively short period of time," while making preparations for prolonged warfare.

26-27 JAN – Recon patrol in heavy contact at Khe Sanh. 4 USMC helicopters are destroyed in rescue effort and GEN WALT (CG, III MAF) is on scene.

01 FEB – BLT 1/3 departs Khe Sanh except for Company B/1/3.

02 FEB – Advance party of Co B/1/9 arrives to relieve B/1/3.

06 FEB – B/1/9 arrives at Khe Sanh and relieves B/1/3.

06 FEB – CAC OSCAR is established in Khe Sanh area with 52 Marines organized into 3 platoons. (CP is at the Huong Hoa District HQ in Khe Sanh village, XD 846380). It is the only USMC CAC in Vietnam whose indigenous force is Montagnard soldiers.

25 FEB – Squad-sized patrol of B/1/9 makes contact.

02 MAR – Two USAF planes accidentally bomb the civilian village of Lang Vei (XD 794363) causing 116 Bru KIA and extensive property damage.

MAR – As a result of the bombing of Lang Vei, MACV Advisory Team #4 is established in Khe Sanh village for the Huong Hoa Subsector of Quang Tri Province.

07 MAR – Co E/2/9 arrives at Khe Sanh.

13 MAR – The MILLER family returns to Khe Sanh after a year's absence.

15 MAR – Co A, 3rd Recon Bn, begins to arrive at Khe Sanh to relieve the Det of 3rd Force Recon Co.

16 MAR – A patrol of Co E/2/9 is decimated at XD823440 while patrolling near Hill 861.

27 MAR – Route 9 is reopened (had been closed to vehicular traffic since 1964).

APR – A decision is made not to sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail (by moving west on Route 9 to Thailand as a road-improvement operation) by President JOHNSON and his Cabinet, fearing a repetition of Korea where Chinese troops entered the conflict. Dr. Walt ROSTOW notes that this is the decisive point that determined the result of the Vietnam War: had the US insisted that USSR honor the Laotian Accords of 1961 to prevent North Vietnamese troops to operate in Laos, the Vietnam War would have ended right there. GEN WESTMORELAND continues to plan for an operation to move westward and sever the Ho Chi Minh Trail network to be launched from Khe Sanh airstrip. (This eventually is executed as LAMSON 719 in Jan-Mar 1971, but is

far too late).

APR – North Vietnamese Politburo and Central Military Party Committee discuss intention of achieving a "Decisive Victory." The Joint High Command assigns a number of cadre groups to examine battlefields and get a feel for the situation and prepare forces in battlefields to determine the direction of a strategic attack.

24 APR – 1ST and 3RD Platoons of B/1/9 make extensive contact with NVA on Hill 861 (XD 803443) precipitating the "Battle of the Hills," or "Battle of Khe Sanh, Search and Destroy."

25 APR – 3/3 Command Group (together with Co K/3/3 and Co K/3/9) arrives at Khe Sanh.

26 APR – 2/3, the SLF (Special Landing Force) then conducting Operation BEACON STAR, arrives at Khe Sanh. Co K/3/9 arrives from Camp Carroll.

27 APR – Co M/3/3 arrives at Khe Sanh to replace Co K/3/3; M/3/9 arrives to replace B/1/9.

28 APR – 2/3 assaults and seizes Hill 861 (XD 803443).

02 MAY – Hill 881-South (XD 777438) is captured by 3/3.

03 MAY – E/2/3 is attacked at XD 738451 by a large NVA force which, although it penetrates the defensive perimeter, is repulsed.

04 MAY – USSF Camp Lang Vei (at XD 798371) is attacked following internal sabotage by NVA agents posing as CIDG recruits. Both the CO and XO are KIA.

04 MAY – F/2/3 and E/2/3 commence final assault of Hill 881-North.

05 MAY – Hill 881-North is captured by 2/3.

09-10 MAY – Recon Team BREAKER (Team 1A2) is almost totally annihilated at XD 758534 in the Khe Sanh area. 3 survivors are rescued as flames engulf them together with sizable NVA force. Dead bodies, not rescued, remain on the battlefield.

11 MAY – Lead elements of 26th Marine Regiment arrive at Khe Sanh to relieve 3rd Marine Regiment.

13 MAY – "Battle of Khe Sanh, Search and Destroy" concludes: 168 US KIA, 443 US WIA, 2 USA MIA, 824 NVA KIA (confirmed), another 551 NVA KIA (probable), 6 NVA POW captured, over 24,000 artillery rounds fired, total ordnance dropped is over 3,000,000 pounds, not to include TPQ-10 directed flights or 23 B-52 Arc Light strikes. Operation CROCKETT commences, conducted by an abbreviated staff of 26th Marines regiment (the rear element remaining on Okinawa) as a 9th MAB unit, and battalion 1/26.

13 MAY – COL JOHN J. PADLEY, CO, 26TH Marines, relieves COL J. P. LANIGAN, CO, 3RD Marines, as "SOP 3RD Mar/Div/III MAF Rep Khe Sanh."

15 MAY – John and Carolyn MILLER, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, move into concrete house in Khe Sanh village, refurbished by efforts of newly established FOB-3 and funds donated by Marines at KSCB.

21 MAY – Patrol by 3rd Platoon, A/1/26, makes contact at XD751449 resulting in 2 US KIA.

JUN – The North Vietnamese Politburo determines to implement strategic planning to achieve a "decisive victory" in 1968. "We had to attack the American forces and force them to defeat militarily in order to change the scope of the Vietnam War."

02-04 JUN – Marine helicopters, launching out of KSCB in support of a FOB-1 mission to OSCAR-8 in Laos (XD 793044, assumed site of NVA headquarters controlling the entire Ho Chi Minh Trail network) are shot down, beginning a desperate battle resulting in 4 American MIA (one, LCPL Frank Edward CIUS, is later returned to US control in 1973.)

05 JUN – One Marine (GySgt Di R. IBANEZ) mysteriously disappears while in an evening harbor site of a recon patrol from Co A/3rd Recon Bn.

06 JUN – SFC Charles F. WILKLOW is rescued from the OSCAR-8 battle.

06 JUN – KSCB receives approximately 19 rockets

at 0105H. Hill 950 (XD 844456) is attacked by approx. 40-50 NVA from the 6TH Bn, 95C Regt, 325C Div. and feared overrun, but a few Marines hold off the attack and in a daring early morning counter-attack, repulse remaining NVA attackers.

07 JUN – Co B/1/26 makes contact at XD 760445 with NVA unit resulting in 18 USMC KIA, 16 USMC WIA, and 63 NVA KIA (confirmed).

13 JUN – Bn 3/26 arrives at Khe Sanh to augment 1/26 due to recent NVA activity.

18 JUN – Hill 950 is struck by lightning igniting 30 claymore mines.

25 JUN – Co A., 3rd Recon Bn, is relieved by Co B, 3rd Recon Bn.

27 JUN – Battle of Hill 689 (XD 803409): after KSCB is mortared a CAC patrol is sent to determine NVA mortar positions resulting in 4 CAC "O" Marines KIA. I/3/26 and L/3/26 are dispatched to the area. Total KIA for the day: 25 US KIA.

12 JUL – CBMU-301 Det "B" Seabees, arrives at KSCB to upgrade the airstrip which has washed-out in places.

15 JUL – Census of local area reflects 8,930 Bru living within 8,000 meters of KSCB along Route 9.

16 JUL – Operation **CROCKETT** concludes (206 NVA confirmed killed and another 417 probably killed).

17 JUL – Operation **ARDMORE** commences (26TH Marine Regiment (-), 1/26, and 3/26).

17 JUL – Command Group "A" and Companies K and L depart Khe Sanh. Companies I and M and the remaining elements of 3/26 depart 04 SEP.

21 JUL – 175mm guns enroute to KSCB return to Camp J.J. Carroll as a large NVA ambush site is uncovered by patrols of M/3/26 and B/1/26 moving on Route 9. 19 UA KIA result from the contacts. the 175s return to Camp Carroll.

12 AUG – COL DAVID E. LOWNDS relieves COL JOHN J. PADLEY as CO, 26TH Marines at Khe Sanh.

15 AUG – C/1/26 Bridge position (XD 910400)is abandoned; 1/26 radio call-sign changes from PINE-FOLD to MOLLY PITCHER.

16 AUG – One Marine drowns in Rao Quan River while evacuating the Bridge Site and assisting locals across river.

17 AUG – COL LOWNDS closes the KSCB airstrip in order to effect repairs.

20 AUG – Recon Team SAMPLE CASE I (2B1) is shot out of insert zone killing 2 Marines.

23 AUG – USAF TIGERHOUND aircraft crashes on airstrip killing the pilot.

31 AUG – Work on KSCB runway begins with removal of 150-ft. of matting.

AUG/SEP – NVA Agent "X-1" surrenders and gives Mr. Robert BREWER, Quang Tri Province Senior Advisor (who is CIA) a copy of "Resolution 13," the NVA 1968 Tet Plan.

03 SEP – South Vietnam holds its first national presidential election.

02-04 SEP – Recon Team BROAD WEAVE II encounters extensive contact with NVA soldiers.

05 SEP – Remainder of 3/26 departs KSCB leaving only 1/26 as the infantry element defending the area.

17 SEP – Heavy rains collapse bunker being constructed; 2 Marines die.

18 SEP – OpPlan 5-67, Relief of Lang Vei Special Forces Camp, is issued.

11 OCT – 65 Navy Seabees of Detail JULIETT, NMCB-10, arrive to construct new bunkers in the FOB-3 compound. Navy Seabees of MCB-11 construct a new site for Camp Lang Vei at XD 786456.

15 OCT – A USAF C-130F aircraft crashes on the KSCB airstrip.

20 OCT – North Vietnamese artillery units begin

preparation of the Khe Sanh battlefield.

30 OCT – People Sniffer missions begin at Khe Sanh to detect enemy by detecting ammonia.

31 OCT – Operation **ARDMORE** concludes with 113 NVA confirmed KIA and 210 additional probably KIA.

NOV – FOB-3 relocates from Old French Fort position in Khe Sanh village to KSCB for better security.

01 NOV – Operation **SCOTLAND** commences (26TH Marine Regiment (-) and 1/26). AO: From DMZ south along GL85 to GL48, east to GL90, south to GL43, east along GL to GL95, south on GL95 to Da Krong River, southeast along Da Krong River to YD004302, then south to Laotian border at YD004234. Boundary then follows Laotian border on S and W to the DMZ and east along DMZ to point of origin. The area encompasses approx. 403 square miles.

NOV/DEC – Based on USMC signals intelligence from MAJ GRAY's Radio Battalion, the decision is made at a meeting of Generals CUSHMAN, TOMPKINS, DAVIDSON (MACV J-2), METZGER, and COL HOUGHTON (G-2, III MAF) and various intelligence specialists, to reinforce Khe Sanh rather than Camp J.J. Carroll, the previously assumed target.

NOV/DEC – North Vietnam creates a new Front Headquarters, a portion of the B-5 Front designated "B5-T8" to control operations in the Khe Sanh area. The Front HQ is located approx 10 miles west of the western edge of the DMZ at Sar Lit (XD6266).

03-22 NOV – 1,000 troops of US 4TH Division and 173RD Airborne Brigade at Dak To are attacked by 4 NVA regiments (about 6,000 troops); NVA fatalities are estimated at 1,455 while US casualties are 285 KIA, 985 WIA, 18 MIA. Some regard this as a prelude to Khe Sanh, testing siege tactics and gearing-up for the attack against Khe Sanh.

06 NOV – Radio call-sign of 1/26 changes from MOLLY PITCHER to BLACKBUD; CAC "O" from ACTIVATOR to MUTTER; 26TH Marine Regiment from MORRAY to INTRIGUE; recon from SANTA ANA BRAVO to AIR-MINDED BRAVO.

09 NOV – Signals intelligence personnel operate on Hill 881-South.

09 NOV – LTGEN ALFRED D. STARBIRD (DCPG, a cover for a CIA project) visits Hill 881-South. DCPG develops an electronic sensor program.

10 NOV – COL LOWNDS, during Marine Corps Birthday ceremonies on Hill 881-South tells troops, "You will all soon be in the American history books."

16 NOV – Two air-delivery Marines are killed while parachuting into KSCB; one Marine from recon drowns in the Rao Quan River.

17 NOV – a 300-pound deer (actually a Kouprey) is shot near Hill 881-South.

17 NOV – COL LOWNDS emphasizes camouflage: need to erect false antennae and bunkers on KSCB to confuse enemy observers.

19 NOV – North Vietnamese Politburo and Joint High Command issue directives for the "General Offensive and Uprising" (Tet) establishing 2 battlefields across the entire South Vietnam area. Highway 9 Front is given the mission of drawing-in and dispersing mobile forces to create favorable conditions for all of South Vietnam. N-Day [the Vietnamese equivalent of D-Day] is set for 31 January 1968.

27 NOV – Khe Sanh begins to be a focus of concern by President JOHNSON and White House staff due to multi-intelligence indications that Khe Sanh will be struck with a massive NVA force.

DEC – DRVN Political Bureau issues historic resolution on "transforming our revolutionary war in the South to a new phase—the phase of winning a decisive victory."

03 DEC – The Highway 9 Front receives the "General Offensive and Uprising" directive.

06 DEC – North Vietnam Central Military Party

Committee orders establishment of the Party Committee and Headquarters of the Highway 9 Front, commanded by Brigadier General Tran Quy Hai. The mission: destroy the enemy, draw in and hold in place Americans and South Vietnamese mobile forces to create favorable conditions for subsequent attacks in the Tri-Thien and Hue area.

13 DEC – Bn 3/26 arrives at Khe Sanh to augment defense as part of the decision to reinforce rather than abandon the position, knowing the NVA plan to attack the position. The augmentation is phased so that NVA do not realize we know they will attack. General WESTMORELAND argues that this will provide an opportunity to destroy large numbers of NVA which otherwise would have moved into the densely-populated areas to the east making combat more costly to civilians.

15 DEC – Dr. Walt W. ROSTOW forwards completed intelligence analysis of probable attacks on Khe Sanh and the NVA Tet Offensive to President JOHNSON.

22 DEC – Recon Team SEVEN UP (3B3) makes contact (at XD763411) resulting in 1 Marine KIA.

25-30 DEC – the 325C Division enters the Khe Sanh battlefield.

26 DEC – B/1/26 on Hill 881-South is relieved by Co I/3/26; D/1/26 on Hill 861 is relieved by Co K/3/26.

28-30 DEC – 1/26 conducts a battalion sweep northwest of KSCB; patrols encounter NVA squad and capture a map marked with all entry routes to Marine positions in the area.

28 DEC – the North Vietnamese Campaign Party Committee meets to ratify the campaign order: Khe Sanh is to be the principle area while the eastern Quang Tri Province area (e.g., Hue) is an important area.

30 DEC – Recon team BARKWOOD (1B3 at XD 761409, 4 KM directly west of Hill 689) engages NVA unit resulting in 2 Marines KIA.

1968

01 JAN – There are 298,498 Marines in the Corps with 81,249 of them serving in Vietnam. Gen Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., becomes 24th Commandant, USMC, and his son, 2/Lt Walton F. Chapman, commands 3rd Plt, D/1/26, at Khe Sanh.

01 JAN – NVA recon unit probing western portion of KSCB perimeter is detected and engaged by Co L/3/26.

03 JAN – Lead elements of the 320th NVA Division enter the Khe Sanh battlefield.

05 JAN – COMUSMACV directs SLAM mission in Khe Sanh area. The code-named operation NIAGARA is approved by the Ambassador to Laos on 16 JAN and by CINCPAC on 17 JAN to be executed 21 JAN.

05 JAN – a FOB-3 patrol en-route to its insertion is shot out of the air and crashes at XD 701021 resulting in 5 US KIA.

09 JAN – The North Vietnamese Command HQ assigns missions to their 2 infantry divisions. The 304 Division is to attack and seize Huong Hoa District (Khe Sanh village) and then eliminate Ban Houei Sane (BV-33, in Laos) and Lang Vei. The 325C Division is to eliminate Americans on Hill 861, surround and constrict Hill 881-South and 950, and be prepared to attack American forces landing by air to the north and northwest of KSCB.

10 JAN – CIA concludes in a document of this date that Khe Sanh is the target for a major NVA attack.

11 JAN – A large unit from FOB-3 scours Co Roc Mountain (XD 742318) just inside the Lao border under the leadership of MAJ QUAMO in charge of Special Projects, discovering numerous NVA caches and engages the enemy.

12 JAN – GEN WESTMORELAND requests JCS declassify COFRAM munitions for use in **non**-populated areas of I Corps (i.e., Khe Sanh).

13 JAN – A portion of KSCB's ASP is relocated; COL LOWNDS directs various defensive measures

be implemented.

14 JAN – COMUSMACV requests III MAF review contingency plans to relieve Lang Vei USSF Camp.

14 JAN – LTGEN Robert CUSHMAN (CG, III MAF) directs various defensive actions be made by COL LOWNDS.

14 JAN – Recon Team DOCKLEAF (2B1) determines enemy presence on Hill 881-North; 2 Marines of the patrol are KIA.

14 JAN – The North Vietnamese 304th Division Party Committee meets from 1800 to 0300 on 15 JAN to discuss their combat mission. The main issue was the change in launch time which had been planned to begin the end of February; now it was changed to 20 JAN and combat preparations "had to move quickly." Troops, moving over a long route of march, had just arrived on the battlefield. Organization of the troops and preparation of caches of rice and ammunition had not yet been accomplished. Recon of the battlefield had just been initiated. Military medical detachments had just arrived on the battlefield and route to evacuate wounded had still not been established. The mission assigned to 304 Division was to attack BV33 at Ban Houei Sane and to "liberate" the Huong Hoa District (Khe Sanh village). The 7th Bn, 66th Regt, did not reach its regrouping point to attack Khe Sanh village until 0400, 21 Jan since their route of march had just been bombed by B52s which knocked down trees causing slow movement with some elements becoming lost. The 7th Bn was the unit assigned to "liberate" Huong Hoa District and was reinforced by a 82mm recoilless gun company, a 82mm mortar company, a transportation platoon, a sapper squad, and an engineer squad.

16 JAN – ASRAT BRAVO arrives on KSCB and is operational 18 JAN.

17 JAN – 26th Marines received OPCON of 2/26 making the first time all of the 26th Marine Regiment and attached infantry battalions are operating together in combat since Iwo Jima in WW II; 2/26 moves to positions near Hill 558 (XD 820451) to guard the northwest valley approach to KSCB.

17 JAN – USAF O-2 plane crashes on take-off from KSCB killing the pilot and one FOB-3 soldier passenger.

18 JAN – GEN WESTMORELAND directs diversion of electronic sensors to the Khe Sanh area.

20 JAN – III MAF notifies COMUSMACV that contingency plans for the relief of Lang Vei are valid; no additional support is required.

20 JAN – Electronic sensors are first seeded in the Khe Sanh area.

20 JAN – Co I/3/26, patrolling towards Hill 881-North where recon team DOCKLEAF made contact, makes contact with an estimated NVA battalion resulting in 4 USMC KIA including 2 platoon commanders.

20 JAN – NVA Lt La Thanh TONC surrenders at KSCB and discloses the NVA battle plan of attack against the position.

20 JAN – Recon Team NURSE is surrounded. On the basis of this contact, Bn 1/9 is later located at the Rock Quarry vice Hill 471 as originally planned.

20 JAN – North Vietnamese Rear Service Bases A1, A2, and A3 are established.

21 JAN – The Khe Sanh Siege battle begins. According to North Vietnamese histories, the battle has 4 phases: Phase I (20 Jan – 07 Feb) has the mission of eliminating Hill 861 and drawing in 2 to 3 American infantry divisions, pin them down and eliminate them, destroy the positions at Ban Houei Sane and Lang Vei; Phase II (10 Feb – 31 Mar) has the mission of encircling KSCB; Phase III (01 Apr – 07 May) has the mission of attacking American forces relieving the siege; and Phase IV (08 May – 15 Jul) has the mission of encircling KSCB and attacking withdrawing American forces. The NVA's battlefield includes 3 districts of Laos and extends to the Cua Viet River. The Khe Sanh portion of the battlefield is identified by the secret designation "B5-T8."

21 JAN – Hill 861 defended by K/3/26 is attacked by 6th Bn, 95C Regt, 325C Div; perimeter is penetrated with brunt of the attack on the northwest side

of the hill. NVA force is repulsed by the Marines leaving 47 NVA KIA. Hill 861 is reinforced with a platoon of D/1/26.

21 JAN – KSCB is attacked by fire 0500H-0530H. ASP #1 blows scattering ordnance; extensive damage to buildings and equipment but little personnel casualty.

21 JAN – An A4D "Skyhawk" is shot and crashes while making runs on enemy near the KSCB perimeter. Pilot, Capt DOWNING, safely ejects and is rescued.

21 JAN – Battery B, 1/13, arrives on KSCB making friendly fire support at 46 artillery pieces.

21 JAN – Capt KENNEDY, flying a CH-53 on mission "LUMINOUS 51," delivers 8500-pounds of whole blood, morphine and other essential medical supplies in night darkness and fog with no airstrip lighting.

21 JAN – Huong Hoa District Headquarters (XD 858386, 2 mi. south of KSCB) with MACV Det 4 (also HQ of CAC "O" and the JTAD) in Khe Sanh village, is surrounded and attacked by 7th Bn, 66th Regt, 304 Div. A relief force from MACV Det 19 is launched from Quang Tri via helicopters of the 282nd AHC, lands at the Old French Fort and is decimated.

21 JAN – Project TIGERHOUND ceases operations at Khe Sanh.

22 JAN – 1115 Vietnamese civilians are evacuated from Khe Sanh; Bru Montagnard tribesmen are not permitted to evacuate and told to return to their villages.

22 JAN – USMC helicopters evacuate Marines of CAC OSCAR from Khe Sanh ville to man a portion of the FOB-3 perimeter.

22 JAN – Counter mortar radar arrives at KSCB.

22 JAN – Bn 1/9 arrives on KSCB and subsequently moves to positions at the "Rock Quarry." (XD 831419).

23 JAN – 3RD MarDiv G-2 augmentation arrives at KSCB consisting of Majors MIRZA MUNIR BAIG (TIO) and ROBERT B. COOLIDGE (Signals Intelligence).

23 JAN – ASRAT B sets new MASS-3 squadron record by controlling the delivery of 210.7 tons of bombs. (The record is again broken 27 Jan with delivery of 247.37 tons).

23 JAN – An A-4 aircraft is shot down over KSCB; MAJ WILLIAM J. LOFTUS, pilot, safely ejects and is rescued.

23 JAN – USAF reports sighting NVA tanks at Ban Houei Sane, 13 miles west of Khe Sanh on Route 9, the position of BV-33.

24 JAN – The NVA 24th Regt, 304 Div, and 198th Bn, 203rd NVA Regiment (tanks) overruns BV-33 Royal Laotian Battalion at Ban Houei Sane (XD625379, referred to as Ta May Strongpoint in North Vietnamese literature). Refugees (soldiers and their families) move to Lang Vei.

24 JAN – Marine and Air Force fighters and bombers fly 301 missions against North Vietnamese Army positions around Khe Sanh, a record number for a 24-hour period.

24 JAN – KSCB begins to receive artillery from 100mm field guns and 152mm artillery guns at Co Roc, Laos. A bunker in the area occupied by Co B/3rd Recon Bn is struck killing 3 Marines and 1 Navy Corpsman.

24 JAN – Co F/2/26 on a company-minus patrol to Hill 516, makes contact with entrenched NVA company. F/2/26 resumes assault 25 Jan, but is unable to neutralize objective.

25 JAN – "Gravel" mines ("MICRO GRAVEL," XM-45E1) are seeded at Khe Sanh.

25 JAN – MGEN RATHVON MC CLURE TOMPKINS (CG, 3rd MarDiv) prohibits patrols beyond 500 meters of friendly positions; plans a "set-piece" battle.

26 JAN – Hatchet Force DENVER from FOB-3 conducts patrol into Khe Sanh village and encounters heavy fighting but sustains no casualties.

27 JAN – 30 large secondary explosions at XD 843385, a site 500 meters directly north of the former CAP O-2 position at Khe Sanh ville and at XD 847369 (about 1000 meters directly south of Khe Sanh village)—probable NVA artillery HQs—is destroyed following the newly-arrived Maj BAIG's perceptive analysis of NVA movements and his extensive knowledge of NVA tactics after being at Khe Sanh only 4 days.

27 JAN – 37th ARVN Ranger Bn arrives on KSCB (425 Rangers with US Advisor, Capt Walter GUNN); occupies positions on eastern side of defensive perimeter in a line forward of perimeter manned by B/1/26 Marines.

28 JAN – Project 972 office at 3rd MarDiv sends contact team to KSCB to train Marines in use of new ground surveillance radars (NOD, PPS-5, PPS-6, MSS-3); another electronic sensor string is seeded.

29-31 JAN – North Vietnamese and VC forces launch attacks against some 105 cities and towns throughout South Vietnam. Enemy ground assaults are launched against 5 South Vietnamese provincial capitals. Ultimately, more than 80,000 North Vietnamese regulars and Viet Cong guerrillas are committed to the 1968 Tet Offensive.

29 JAN – President JOHNSON requests and receives statement from the Joint Chiefs of Staff that KSCB can and would be held against any NVA assault.

29 JAN – FOB-3 patrol makes heavy contact at Hill 471 (XD 846393) and Khe Sanh ville resulting in 3 US Army KIA.

29 JAN – A planning group on the staff of 3rd MarDiv suggests installation of gear to ensure Arc Light delivery within one kilometer of friendly positions. (Previous limit had been no closer than 3 KM of friendly positions).

29/30 JAN – Signals and photo intelligence disclose large NVA positions poised to attack Khe Sanh.

30 JAN – Largest B52 strike of the Vietnam War hits the B5-T8 command center in Laos controlling the battle at Khe Sanh; HQ displaces. There are 85 secondary explosions.

30 JAN – MSGT DU rallies at Lang Vei and discloses his Bn is to ambush American troops moving between KSCB and Lang Vei and eventually to attack and overrun Lang Vei itself.

01-09 FEB – Elements of the 2nd Bn, 5th Marines and 1st Bn, 1st Marines, clear enemy forces from Hue south of the Perfume River. In a house-to-house battle, they are able to retake the province headquarters, jail, and hospital. By 09 Feb, the last organized resistance in the city south of the river ends with more than 1,000 NVA killed.

01 FEB – Aerial photographs reveal tanks near Khe Sanh.

02 FEB – US Army 37th Signal Bn bunker is struck killing all occupants.

02/03 FEB – Electronic sensor SPOTLIGHT reports reflect heavy NVA troop movement along avenues of approach to KSCB.

05 FEB – Co E/2/26 on Hill 861-A (XD 805445) receives heavy NVA ground attack which temporarily penetrates part of the defensive perimeter resulting in 7 USMC KIA and 109 NVA KIA.

05 FEB – USAF C-130 aircraft, loaded with ammunition, is struck, but fires are extinguished and plane is able to depart KSCB.

06 FEB – Contingency Arc Light targets submitted today include, within their "boxes," Hills 950 and 558, and are within a thousand meters of Hills 861 and 861-A.

06 FEB – While the 2nd Bn, 9th Regt, 304 NVA Div, was moving into its regrouping position the night of 06 Feb, it was hit by 3 B-52 strikes along the Hoc Coc Giang Stream. The entire Bn suffered nearly 200 casualties.

06 FEB – Marines fighting in Hue City tear down Communist flag at the provincial HQ building and replace it with the Stars & Stripes.

07 FEB – USSF Camp at Lang Vei (XD 786357) is attacked by the 66th Regt, 304 NVA Div, supported by the 198th Bn, 20-3rd Regt (tanks), the first use of tanks (Soviet PT-76 amphibious tanks) by the North Vietnamese Army in the Vietnam War. The attack

overruns the camp. USMC artillery fires COFRAM munitions, the first use of this type of ordnance. Several thousand refugees gather at KSCB including approx. 2,000 Laotians and 5,000 – 6,000 Bru Montagnards. The refugees are refused access onto the KSCB and told to return to their villages. Most of the Bru are subsequently killed while Lao are eventually evacuated. A daring rescue by a small group from FOB-3 rescues Americans from Lang Vei.

08 FEB – An outpost designated "Hill 64" manned by a platoon of A/1/9, is assaulted by NVA troops and almost completely overrun; a few defenders are able to hold a section of the outpost until it is evacuated at first light.

10 FEB – North Vietnamese newspaper Nhan Dan warns that U.S. forces at Khe Sanh face a defeat as disastrous as that suffered by the French at Dien Bien Phu.

10 FEB – USMC C-130 of VMGR-152 crashes on the Khe Sanh airstrip.

10 FEB – NVA withdraw 5 regiments from Khe Sanh battlefield as the 66th Regt (304 Div) replaces the entire 325C Division. (Probable result of press release of 09 Feb that nuclear weapons were being discussed for use at Khe Sanh). CIA document notes that additional artillery support units more than compensate for the withdrawal of the infantry units.

11 FEB – COL ARGO, Gen. WESTMORELAND's staff historian, presents extensive analysis comparing Khe Sanh with Dien Bien Phu and numerous other military sieges. He doubts that Khe Sanh will be able to hold.

12 FEB – USAF ceases landing C-130s on Khe Sanh airstrip, considering it too dangerous. Up to this point, from 21 Jan – 11 Feb, USAF C-130s had delivered 7,338,000 pounds of assorted supplies via 320 C-130K and C-7A sorties to KSCB.

13 FEB – USAF begins massive air-drop of supplies.

13 FEB – 37th ARVN Ranger patrol captures a 82mm recoilless rifle.

13 FEB – A major NVA supply area (at XD 8734) is struck resulting in approx. 1,000 secondary explosions.

13 FEB – III MAF reports that Marines killed 1,078 NVA and 52 VC during the past 2 weeks at Hue City.

14 FEB – GEN MAXWELL D. TAYLOR, running the White House "War Room," recommends to President JOHNSON that Khe Sanh be evacuated "before the battle begins."

14 FEB – K/3/9 departs Ca Lu Combat Base (YD 012455) and is ambushed while moving west on Route 9 at XD 990450.

14 FEB – A major NVA supply area is struck just inside Laos (at XD 7622, about 21 KM south-southwest of KSCB. The site is repeatedly struck for the next 7 days, generating approximately 1,000 secondary explosions and fires.

15 FEB – A NVA rallier discloses NVA may use FROG (Free Rocket Over Ground) missiles against Khe Sanh.

16 FEB – First use of LAPES (Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System) at Khe Sanh is successful.

16 FEB – Total defenders at Khe Sanh: 154 USMC officers and 3,070 USMC enlisted, 10 USN officers and 191 USN enlisted, 5 USA officers and 30 USA enlisted (does not include FOB, classified at the time), and 5 USAF officers and 24 USAF enlisted, for a total of 3489. (The 16 April manning message indicates 21 officers, 110 enlisted, and 455 ARVN at FOB-3 and 2 US officers, 3 US enlisted, 14 ARVN officers, and 436 ARVN enlisted for 37th Ranger Bn, making a grand total of friendly defenders at Khe Sanh approximately 4530).

18 FEB – During a 24-hour period, ASRAT BRAVO controlled 99 missions with over 275 aircraft dropping 486 tons of ordnance on 105 targets, establishing a new squadron record.

18 FEB – CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific, one of the Unified Commander controlling military operations in the Pacific area, including Vietnam] grants approval of Arc Light delivery within one kilometer from friendly forces.

19 FEB – GCA knocked out by incoming; TPQ-10 technique is used satisfactorily to control air-drops.

21 FEB – TPQ-10 guided air strike accidentally drops bombs about 40 meters inside KSCB perimeter, making a 40-ft. hole near B/1/26 between the 37th ARVN Ranger lines and those of B/1/26.

23 FEB – KSCB receives over 1,300 incoming rounds, mainly rocket and artillery.

24 FEB – Hill 950 is down to 2 gallons of water. The defenders on this outpost have been without water for 7 days.

24 FEB – SUPERGAGGLE helicopter re-supply of the Khe Sanh hill outposts commences.

24 FEB – The city of Hue is declared secure after a 25-day battle. A combined force of Marines, Army, and South Vietnamese forces had accounted for more than 4,500 Communists killed and the capture of large amounts of supplies. Mass graves of several thousand Vietnamese civilians (government workers, priests, and women) massacred by North Vietnamese forces are discovered.

25 FEB – A patrol by 3rd Platoon, B/1/26, is ambushed sustaining very heavy casualties just outside the wire of KSCB (at XD 849409). Dead cannot be recovered and are left on the field; one Marine is captured as POW and released in 1973, RONALD RIDGEWAY.

26 FEB – First close-in Arc Light strikes commence at Khe Sanh with delivery within one kilometer from friendly forces.

27 FEB – Khe Sanh village is struck by multiple B-52 strikes.

29FEB/01 MAR – Regimental-size assault by NVA against KSCB is detected by electronic sensors and decimated by COFRAM as assaulting troops close on perimeter.

06 MAR – C-123 crash kills 43 USMC, 4 USAF, and 1 USN. E/2/3 conducted recovery operations at the site, XD 933404, on 25 Mar, and by C/1/4 on 05 Nov 1968.

06 MAR – Aerial photographs reveal that numerous Arc Light strikes on Khe Sanh village have totally annihilated it, the Old French Fort, and the triangular District Headquarters compound.

07 MAR – The few remaining Bru in Khe Sanh begin to be evacuated. During the period 09-19 Mar, 1,247 Bru are air-lifted from Khe Sanh to a refugee center at Mai Loc, just south of Cam Lo on Route 558.

08 MAR – Jonathan Nathaniel SPICER, a conscientious objector, is hit and subsequently dies due to performing his duties as a stretcher bearer at C Med and is later awarded the Navy Cross for his heroism.

08 MAR – 3 patrols by 37th ARVN Rangers result in 20 NVA KIA.

10 MAR – NVA incoming rounds on KSCB spew propaganda leaflets.

13 MAR – CIA memo of this date notes that although the 320th NVA Div moved from the central DMZ to coastal lowlands of Quang Tri Province, reducing the possibility it would be used against Khe Sanh, a formidable concentration of enemy troops, perhaps as many as 20,000, still threatens Khe Sanh.

17 MAR – COMUSMACV requests Agent Orange be sprayed along Route 9 from Khe Sanh to Bong Kho. Spray missions are conducted 14 and 25 May and 16 June. Within 2.5 kilometers and within 28 days of spraying, an estimated 25,900 Marines were affected according to a report by the Comptroller General of the US.

18 MAR – An estimated 600 NVA assault 37th ARVN Ranger positions on the eastern perimeter of KSCB.

22/23 MAR – In excess of 1100 rounds slam into KSCB.

24 MAR – a 1/9 patrol results in 31 NVA KIA and 5 USMC KIA, 14 WIA (3 evacuated).

25 MAR – Co E/2/3 searches wreckage of C-123 that crashed 06 Mar. (Area also searched 05 Nov 1968 by a patrol of C/1/4), recovering bodies and identification items.

27 MAR – NVA 81mm mortar shells disperse propaganda leaflets on KSCB, the second time in a month.

29 MAR – Last assault attempt by the NVA against KSCB results in 7 NVA KIA by ground fire and 71 KIA by artillery.

30 MAR – GPES (Ground Proximity Extraction System) resupply introduced at Khe Sanh.

30 MAR – Co B/1/26 patrols area of 25 Feb contact to retrieve MIA. Ferocious battle ensues making recovery of bodies impossible at this time.

31 MAR – Operation **SCOTLAND** concludes. Operation **PEGASUS (LAM SON 207A)** commences as largest III MAF offensive of the War, involving 14 infantry battalions. USAF Operation NIAGARA terminates. During the siege battle (21 Jan – 31 Mar), total casualties: 354 Americans KIA, 209 Vietnamese KIA (not including 37th ARVN Ranger Bn), for a total of 354 friendly KIA, 2,541 patients were treated in medical facilities (2,031 WIA and 490 NBC—non-battle casualties; between 2800 and 12,800 local Bru were killed; an estimated 24,640 NVA were KIA.

01 APR – Operation PEGASUS/LAM SON 207A begins (concludes 15 Apr 68), the largest III MAF operation of the war involving 18 infantry battalions (7 USMC, 8 USA, 3 ARVN) for a total of 19,000 USA soldiers, 10,000 USMC, 300 helicopters and 114 heliborne artillery pieces. AO: XD9766 – YD 0334 to Lao border at XD7726, north along border to southern boundary of DMZ, then east along the DMZ to XD9766. 42 miles of Route 9 which had been closed since Sep, 1967, is reopened.

03 APR – While 1st Marine Regiment continues to attack west along Route 9, 2-7 Cav makes contact with Co-size blocking force at XD 890404. 2-7 Cav, 1-5 Cav and 2-12 Cav airlifted into varous LZs receive incoming receiving 9 KIA.

04 APR – Bn 1/9 (- B Co) departs Rock Quarry position, assaults and secures Hill 471 (XD 846393).

05 APR – 1/9 on Hill 471 repulses Bn-size NVA attack.

06 APR – Bn 2/26 breaks out of its CP at Hill 558 (XD 820451) and assaults Hill 700 just to the south southeast of Hill 861.

06 APR – 84th Company, 8th Airborne Bn, 3rd Airborne TF, is airlifted into KSCB to link-up with 37th ARVN Ranger Bn for the initial "relief" of KSCB.

06 APR – 1/9 is relieved by 2-12 Cav on Hill 471.

06 APR – MIA from 25 Feb and 30 Mar are recovered by patrol of D/1/26 and B/1/26.

07 APR – 1/9 assaults and secures Hill 552 (XD 822402), a major NVA stronghold during the siege battle.

07 APR – Cos F & G, 2/26, assault Hill 700 and secure objective 10 Apr.

07 APR – 2-5 Cav secures the Old French Fort after a bitter fight.

08 APR – Co D, 2-7 Dav, enters KSCB to link-up forces and formalize "relief."

09 APR – 1/9 assaults and secures Hill 689 (XD 803409).

10 APR – Col Bruce F. Meyers arrives at KSCB to relieve Col David E. Lownds as CO, 26th Mar, (relief on 12 Apr) and the mission of destroying and abandoning KSCB.

11 APR – Bgen Jacob E. Glick, ADC of 3rd MarDiv, arrives at KSCB; TF GLICK is activated to deactivate KSCB.

11 APR – 2 helicopters launched from Quang Tri to pick up medevac from Hill 881-South collide in mid-air 7 miles west of Dong Ha.

12 APR – Route 9 reopened to KSCB.

12 APR – Co B, 1-12 Cav, captures Lang Vei (XD 784357) finding 11 dead NVA, extensive NVA weapons and munitions, but no Americans.

13 APR Felix POILANE, the coffee plantation owner, returns to KSCB and is killed when the aircraft in which he is riding crashes. Born at Khe

Sanh, he managed his father's plantation since 21 Dec 1957 when he arrived at Khe Sanh with his wife, Madaleine. The Poilane family had departed KSCB 22 Jan 1968 and sought refuge in Hue.

14 APR – 3/26 assaults and secures Hill 881-North (XD 774457)

15 APR – Operation **PEGASUS** concludes; Operation **SCOTLAND II** commences under command of TF GLICK. Casualties for PEGASUS: 59 USA KIA, 51 USMC KIA, 33 ARVN KIA (total: 143 KIA), 236 USA WIA, 459 USMC WIA, 187 ARVN WIA (total 882 WIA), 5 USA MIA, 638 NVA KIA by USA, 404 NVA KIA by USMC, 260 NVA KIA by ARVN (total: 1302 NVA KIA), 18 NVA POW.

16 APR – Bn 3/26 departs Khe Sanh.

16 APR – Two companies of 1/9 become pinned down in two separate ambushes near Hill 689 resulting in 40 USMC KIA, 1 DOW, 15 WIAE, and 17 WIANE.

18 APR – 1st Marine Regiment assumes OPCON of all units at Khe Sanh.

18 APR – Bn 2/26 departs Khe Sanh.

19 APR – Co I/3/4 arrives on Hill 689 to relieve 1/9.

21 APR – Bn 1/9 departs Khe Sanh.

21 APR – Patrols from 3rd Force Recon Co. begin using KEYHOLE patrols, first used at Khe Sanh, involving 4-man, lightly-armed patrols used only for recon, not as FO or to engage the enemy.

21 APR – 1st Mar recover 38 USMC bodies from the 1/9 contact of 16 Apr plus 2 American KIA believed dead 2-3 months.

25 APR – TF GLICK re-designated TF HOTEL, under command of BGen Carl W. Hoffman.

25 APR – US tanks ambushed upon departure from KSCB

MAY – PAVN High Command sends 308th Infantry Div (minus the 36th Regt.) into combat at Khe Sanh to operate in the southern portion of the battlefield.

06 MAY – Memorial Service for 1/26 KIA at Khe Sanh conducted at Wonder Beach.

08 MAY – The NVA B5-T8 Front begins Phase IV of the Khe Sanh battle (lasting to 15 Jul)

15 MAY – Contacts with NVA increase, reflecting new NVA units in area.

16 MAY – K/3/4 and M/3/4 make significant contact with NVA at XD 788419 and XD 792416.

18 MAY – An entire recon patrol from E/3rd Recon at XD 885512 is annihilated.

19 MAY – NVA ambush road sweep detail and tanks; overall plan was to overrun KSCB. 37 USMC infantry KIA; 5 tanks suffer considerable damage; over 300 NVA KIA (100 by tanks).

23 MAY – President JOHNSON awards 26th Marine Regiment and its supporting units the **PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION.**

27 MAY – M/3/4 makes contact with NVA at LZ PEANUTS (XD 810393).

27/28 MAY – F/2/3 position at XD 874383 is attacked resulting in 13 USMC KIA, 44 USMC WIAE, 174 NVA KIA (adjusted to over 200 as the surrounding area was searched).

30 MAY – 01 JUN – Operation DRUMFIRE II, an artillery raid, executed against Co Roc Mountain artillery positions.

31 MAY – E/2/3 attacked from 4 different directions. Co B/1/1, sent to assist, is also ambushed.

JUN – 2/1 defends KSCB, 2/3 provides road security for Route 9 until relieved by 3/4 on 20 Jun. 2/3 departs Khe Sanh to provide perimeter security defense at LZ STUD (XD 996460).

02 JUN – Operation **ROBIN NORTH** commences with 1st Marine Regiment.

05 JUN – C/1/4 receives 130mm arty from Co Roc on LZ LOON (XD 876334) resulting in 9 USMC KIA and 31 WIAE.

06 JUN – LZ LOON attacked by Bn-sized NVA force and artillery. Although attack is repulsed, FSB is abandoned. Results of attack: 154 NVA KIA, 24 USMC KIA, 37 USMC WIAE. USMC KIA are from helicopter that crashes at XD 877334.

06 JUN – Operation **ROBIN SOUTH** commences with 4th Marine Regiment.

08 JUN – C/1/12 at LZ TORCH (XD 911278) receives NVA attack resulting in 28 NVA KIA, 14 USMC KIA, 113 USMC WIAE.

09 JUN – BLT 2/4 attacked by Bn-size NVA force resulting in 7 USMC KIA, 41 WIAE.

12 JUN – Operation **ROBIN NORTH** concludes (91 NVA KIAC, 3 NVA POW, 16 USMC KIA, 130 USMC WIAE).

12 JUN – PAVN High Command and Front HQ, B5-T8 (Khe Sanh Front) assigns 246th Independent Regiment to replace the entire 304th Div which is withdrawn to be refitted. The 304th Div's CP sustained a direct hit by a B52 mission.

14 JUN – BLT 2/4 discovers Russian 1 ½-ton truck and van complete with machine shop.

15 JUN – Casualty figures in Khe Sanh area 01-15 JUN: 431 US KIA, 33 ARVN KIA, 2313 US WIAE, 187 ARVN WIAE, 3097 NVA KIAC.

15-18 JUN – Bn 3/4 units attacked resulting in 30 USMC KIA, 88 USMC WIAE, 315 NVA KIAC.

17 JUN – JCS concurs with III MAF proposal to abandon Khe Sanh and adopt a mobile posture in area.

17 JUN – **Operation CHARLIE** commences with the mission of destroying KSCB. 1/1 occupies Hills 689, 861, 881A, and 558; 3/4 patrols from FOXTROT RIDGE (XD 874383); 2/1 defends KSCB and Hills 552 and 471 plus road security; 3/9 destroys all bunkers and collects all salvageable items.

18 JUN – A Bn of 88th NVA regiment attacks 3/4, penetrating their FEBA. K/3/4 receives brunt of attack. Casualties: 14 USMC KIA, 30 WIAE, 129 NVA KIAC.

18 JUN – **Operation ROBIN SOUTH** concludes: 604 NVA KIAC, 48 NVA POW, 77 USMC KIA, 286 USMC WIAE, 20 USMC WIANE. During ROBIN operations, helos transported 6,164,374 pounds of cargo and 18,767 combat troops. 1,118 close air support missions expended 1740.5 tons of ordnance resulting in 64 secondary explosions. 13,381 rounds of 105mm and 2,103 rounds of 155mm were fired.

19 JUN – Co I/3/4 defending FOXTROT RIDGE (XD 874383), some 2000 meters SE of KSCB overlooking Route 9, is attacked. Later search on 02 Jul discloses 212 NVA KIAC, 77 weapons captured. Capt Merlyn A. SEXTON is awarded Navy Cross for this action.

19 JUN – 05 JUL – KSCB is destroyed.

24 JUN – ASRAT departs Khe Sanh for Chu Lai. News reporter John S. CARROLL "leaks" news of abandonment of KSCB. Within 12 hours of his disclosure there was an immediate increase of NVA artillery into KSCB killing several Marines as well as increased NVA activity against Marines on the Hill 689 outpost.

02 JUL – Advance party of 2/1 departs KSCB, walking off eastern end of airstrip under cover of darkness. NVA artillery slams into now abandoned KSCB.

02 JUL – A patrol from D/1/1 on Hill 689 is ambushed. One body cannot be recovered at the time.

05 JUL – Patrol of 16 men from D/1/1 recover MIA but sustain 8 additional MIA (BNR) at base of Hill 689.

06 JUL – Hill 861 is abandoned by A/1/1 which relocates to reinforce Hill 689. Hill 558 is abandoned by C/1/1 which moves to Hill 689.

08 JUL – 1/1 is reinforced by L/3/4.

11 JUL – Some daring "body snatcher" teams of Marines successfully recover MIA.

12 JUL – 1/1 is heli-lifted from Hill 689, thus ending the period of permanent installations at Khe Sanh for Marines as a mobile tactic is adopted. Cu-

mulative statistics for SCOTLAND II (16 Apr – 11 Jul): 301 USMC KIA, 25 USA KIA, 1489 USMC WIAE, 123 USA WIAE, 242 USMC WIANE, 34 USA WIANE, 2 USA MIA, 2440 NVA KIAC, 56 NVA POW. 2/4 remains in Khe Sanh area with a platoon on Hill 950 (E-3) and one company on ridgeline between Hill 950 and FSB CATES (XD 927437). 3/4 continues to operate in Khe Sanh area.

02 AUG – Hill 950 (XD 844456), manned by a Plt from E/2/4, is attacked. Western edge of position is overrun, but attack is repulsed. Results: 6 USMC KIA, 11 USMC WIA, 5 NVA KIA.

OCT – 4th and 9th Marines launch large-scale clear and search operations in extreme western Quang Tri Province, beginning their sweeps from FSB NANKING, one mile west of the former KSCB. 3/4 sweeps west, finding little enemy presence. 1/4 and 2/4 sweep east toward DaKrong Valley. 4th Marines establishes 6 new Fire Support Bases (FSBs): NANKING, GURKHA (XD 872482), ALPINE (XD 756532), ARGONNE (XD 678572), NEVILLE (XD 824577), and FULLER (YD 0159), all to the northwest of the former KSCB.

06 OCT – 2 battalions of 2nd ARVN Regiment land on Hill 881-South and move north and southwest.

10 OCT – Memorial services are conducted on old KSCB airstrip.

12 OCT – FSB GURKHA (XD 872482) is activated (4 miles NW of FSB NANKING).
23 OCT – FSB ALPINE (XD 756532) is established, 11 miles NW of KSCB.

01 NOV – K/3/4 searches out Tiger Tooth Mountain and locates (at XD 838544) wreckage of CH-46 helicopter, 3 skeletons, and one ID care.
02 NOV – K/3/4 locates remains of a UH-34 at XD 824538 (plane #11-IN).

NOV – 1/4 scours area north of Khe Sanh just south of DMZ.

30 NOV – A Vietnamese CH-34A helicopter with a SOG team from FOB-1 embarked, crashes in flames at XD 515410, one Km north of Route 9).

28 DEC – Camp J.J. Carroll (YD 063548) is deactivated.

31 DEC – Teams from 3rd Recon Bn are inserted west of Khe Sanh along the Laotian border.

1969

02 JAN – Operation DAWSON RIVER WEST begins (conducted 020600H/ Jan69 – 191600H/ JAN69 by 9th Marine Regiment together with 2nd and 3rd Bns of the 2nd ARVN Regiment). Minimal contact with NVA is encountered. Numerous small arms caches and various NVA munitions are uncovered near Lang Vei on 07 Jan by E/2/9. No sizeable enemy concentrations or supplies exist in the Khe Sanh area. Results of the operation: 43 NVA KIA, 1 NVA POW, no friendly casualties.

24/25 FEB – Fire Support Bases NEVILLE and RUSSELL are hit by heavy sapper attacks. RUSSELL, manned by E(-)/2/4 sustained 60 casualties; NEVILLE, manned by H/2/4, had 10 KIA and 20 WIA. These attacks launch **Operation PURPLE MARTIN.**

27 FEB – Operation PURPLE MARTIN commences (terminates 08 May 1969), conducted by 4th Marines, supported by 3/12 artillery, with mission: to scour the area south of the DMZ in the Khe Sanh area. 3 Bns were employed abreast, occupying FSBs ALPINE, ARGONNE, NEVILLE, and RUSSELL.

05 MAR – Team DOCKLEAF from C/3rd Recon Bn, engages with estimated NVA platoon resulting in 3 USMC KIA. **PFC ROBERT HENRY JENKINS, JR., is posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.**

10 MAR – Operation MAINE CRAG commences (concludes 02 May 69) conducted by 3rd, 4th, and 12th Marines, one Bn of 9th Marines, TF REMAGEN (USA armored force from 1st Brigade, 5th Mech Div), 3rd Eng Bn, 3rd Recon Bn, 3rd Tank Bn, with mission: scour area south of Route 9 in Khe Sanh area, determining NVA use of Route 616 and 926.

10 MAR – 2/3 is helilifted into LZ HAWK (XD 895407) and begins overland movement by foot to SW, heading for Route 926.

15 MAR – Battery A/1/12 helilifted into LZ SNAPPER (XD 845344).

19 MAR – 3RD Marines assumed command of TF REMAGEN.

20 MAR – 1/4 completes assault on FSB ARGONNE, the furthest FSB in the AO.

21 MAR – H/2/3 discovers staging area for 150 troops and a rice cache of over 350 tons, 7,000 pounds of salt loaded in a French truck with Russian tires and American markings.

21 MAR – The Bn Commander, COL SARGENT, is KIA and every member of his staff are either KIA or WIA. Results of operation: 355 NVA KIA, 5 NVA POW, 206 IWC, 106 USMC KIA, 428 USMC WIA. 129,000 artillery rounds fired in support of the operation.

06 APR – TF REMAGEN CHOP from 3RD Mar to TF HOTEL and begins operations near Khe Sanh plateau.

07 MAY – Operation HERKIMER MOUNTAIN commences (terminates 16 JUL 69) conducted by 4th Marines who remain in place following termination of Operation PURPLE MARTIN.

29 MAY – Operation CAMERON FALLS (3/9) commences (terminates 23 Jun 1969).

04 JUN – Recon team FLIGHT TIME (D Co, 3RD Recon Bn) is overrun on Hill 471 (XD 846393) resulting in 6 USMC KIA.

12 JUN – Operation UTAH MESA commences (conducted by 1/9, 3/9, one Bn of the 1/5TH Mech Div, and 3RD Eng Bn; concludes 9 Jul).

23 JUN – 1/9 "stood down" from offensive operations and moved to Vandegrift Combat Base to prepare for embarkation.

23-30 JUN – 3/9 makes extensive contact after inserting near Huong Hoa (XD 864376) and sweeping to Lang Hole (XD 871308) with the NVA 4th and 6th Bns of the 27th Regt.

08 JUL – Task Force HOTEL is deactivated terminating a 16-month period in which it was the control HQ for the 3rd Marine Division's mobile helicopter borne operations.

JUL-SEP – 3rd MarDiv relinquishes large multi-Bn search and destroy missions in Khe Sanh plateau and other western Quang Tri Province areas. Area is now designated a "Reconnaissance Zone."

04-27 AUG – Det B-52 (PROJECT DELTA), 5th Special Forces, conducts **Operation TROJAN HORSE** in Khe Sanh area. The operation resumes 08-10 Oct and results in 1 US KIA, 24 WIA, 1 NVA KIA, and 1 NVA KBA.

26 NOV – 5th MarDiv deactivated.

1970

The 1st Brigade of the 5th Mechanized Division, US Army, is responsible for the western Quang Tri Province area and conducts operations in it. During late 1970, evidence mounts that the NVA were preparing for a major offensive in the northern I Corps Tactical Zone.

05 MAR – 26th Marine Regiment is presented with the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with palm as a unit award.

18 MAR – 26th Marine Regiment participates in farewell ceremony at the DaNang airfield. Because of the redeployment of 26th Marines, the Marine portion of U.S. forces in I Corps became less than those of the U.S. Army, and III MAF became subordinate to XXIV Corps.

06 MAY – FSB HENDERSON (YD 081411) defended by A/2-501 Infantry, is attacked resulting in 31 USA KIA, 33 USA WIAE, 2 USA MIA, 19 ARVN KIA, 45 ARVN WIA, and 29 NVA KIA.

18-19, 24 NOV – Electronic Battlefield Hearings conducted by the US Senate Committee on Armed Forces receives testimony from COL LOWNDS, MGEN TOMPKINS, and MAJ JERRY HUDSON who disclose the pivotal role played by electronic sensors which had been seeded as the Khe Sanh siege began.

1971

29 JAN – Operation LAM SON 719, Phase One, begins as LtGen LAM establishes I Corps Forward command post at Dong Ha and Gen SUTHERLAND sets up XXIV Corps Forward HQ at Quang Tri. US Army engineers rebuild bridges and culverts on Route 9. Artillery and support units move into Khe Sanh to build an airstrip capable of receiving C-130 aircraft. This new airstrip parallels the former airstrip. Lang Vei is established as a major helicopter base.

08 FEB – ARVN 1st Armored Brigade advances into Laos along Route 9, beginning Phase 2, pushing toward Tchepone.

18 FEB – South Vietnamese encounter NVA resistance in company and battalion strength.

19 FEB – 400 to 500 NVA overrun the 39TH ARVN Ranger Bn resulting in 178 KIA and 148 WIA. NVA subsequently employ elements of 5 divisions, including an estimated 12 infantry regiments, 2 artillery regiments, and at least one armored regiment, to counter the South Vietnamese incursion into Laos.

17 MAR – Phase 4, withdrawal, commences as armored brigade moves eastward along Route 9. ARVN command loses control while attempting to withdraw too quickly and inadequate advance planning and coordination, resulting in a near rout.

06 APR – Last South Vietnamese troops depart Laos. Results of LAM SON 719: to South Vietnamese forces: 1549 KIA, 5483 WIA, 651 MIA; to US forces: 215 KIA, 1149 WIA, 38 MIA. Estimated NVA losses are 13,000 NVA KIA. The NVA, so tenaciously committed to the Ho Chi Minh supply network, construct another large road further west near the Mekong River to ensure continued movement of supplies and troops into South Vietnam.

04-05 JUN – HICKORY RADIO RELAY site (Hill 950) manned by 27 Americans and 67 indig. of SOG is overrun. SGT Jon R. CAVAIANI, taken prisoner, is released by the North Vietnamese 23 MAR 1973 and later awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during this attack on HICKORY.

09 JUL – American forces are no longer obligated to defend the region south of the DMZ at the 17TH parallel. The US military had moved into this area in 1966 to reinforce the 1954 Geneva Convention Agreement, prohibiting ground or artillery attacks from the buffer zone.

19 JUL – Redeployment of all major USMC units from South Vietnam is completed.

27 AUG – Army's 1ST Brigade of the 5TH Mechanized Division withdraws from Vietnam. (It had operated along the western area of the DMZ and Khe Sanh area since January, 1971).

11 SEP – In an effort to remove any remaining KIA/MIA from atop HICKORY before all US forces departed Vietnam, Major JOHN W. RIPLEY, advisor to 5th Bn of Vietnamese Marines, accompanies a team to Hill 950 to extract approximately 30 bodies. The force is attacked and MAJ RIPLEY crash lands on the former Khe Sanh airstrip while remainder of force departs, leaving him alone. He makes preparations to fly a crippled chopper out himself but is rescued by a helicopter manned by an Army Warrant Officer.

1972

20 JAN – A USAF gunship patrolling Highway 9 to Khe Sanh is shot down at 5,000 feet right over the Khe Sanh airstrip by SA-2 missile.

30 MAR – FSB SARGE (YD 028478, Dong Toan Mountain) is attacked resulting in 2 American soldiers of the 8TH Army Radio Research Field Station, 509th ASA Group, Army Security Agency MIA when their bunker CONEX box takes a direct hit.

30 MAR – NVA launch offensive to capture Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces. 304TH NVA Division captures area of Khe Sanh after entering Vietnam through the Lao Bao area and moving east along Route 9. 24TH Regt captures Cam Lo on 02 Apr, 66TH Regt captures Mai Loc on 03 Apr, and Quang Tri City is captured 01 May. South Vietnamese forces recapture Quang Tri City on 16 Sep.

07 JUL – Major LEONARD ROBERTSON, piloting an A6A, is killed after his plane is shot down and crashes at XD837304 (1500 meters southwest of

Hill 471), the last American in the immediate Khe Sanh area.

20 NOV – USMC Captain DONALD CHARLES BREUER (VMFA-232) crashes near XD 662350, 1 KM south of the Xepone River, the location of the former BV-33, and becomes the last American KIA in the wider Khe Sanh area.

1973

Bernard C. Nalty's book, *Air Power and the Fight for Khe Sanh*, is published by the USAF.

23 JAN – Paris agreement to end the war in Vietnam is signed. The cease-fire is effective at 0800, 28 Jan, Saigon time.

14 MAR – Sub Unit One, 1ST ANGLICO, the last Marine unit to depart Vietnam, is transferred to FMFPAC.

29 MAR – The last US troops depart South Vietnam, ending 10 years of US military presence. Only a Defense Attaché Office and a few Marine guards at the Saigon Embassy remain. HQ, MACV, is closed. Hanoi releases the last 67 of its acknowledged POWs, bringing the total number released to 587.

Publisher Note:
If any member wishes a complete copy of the Chronology put together by Ray Stubbe, email me at Teic1448@aol.com, and I will send it to you. Ray is still working on his latest endeavor, a history of the battle of Khe Sanh, from the North Vietnamese Army. I have read portions of the book and was amazed how efficient their Armed Forces were at Khe Sanh. In simple terms they really had their shit together, and were a worthy opponent, even though we kicked their ass.

MEMOIRS

Twenty Years Old

By Craig W. Tourte

On January 8th Joe Harrigan wrote a Post about what he was doing on January 21, 1968. Certainly I cannot forget where I was and what I was doing. Many of us have stated over and over again, throughout these many years where and what they were doing on that fateful day. I have to admit many years have passed where I had not thought about Khe Sanh and what occurred those many years ago. Like my friend Tom Horchler discussed, I too don't think I had much recall of those past events until recently.

So many years have passed and it seems like only yesterday. Young men all, long lives ahead, full of promise and hope. I was 20 years old, young in years but old in life, the result of to much battle in a very short time. I may have spent too much time, during these recent years, thinking about me and perhaps not enough, remembering them. My heart still sees a twenty year old, who had the thoughts that twenty year olds should have had.

I had guard duty and was walking north from the south trench line towards the base interior. I was approximately 100 meters or so north of the wire between what I think were a couple of supply tents, when I heard what sounded like a jet plane scream over the top of my head. At first I thought it was another F4 which had flown low across the base going west to east, like I had seen fighters do in the past (flying east to west). I stopped in my tracks and followed the sound as I looked up into the cold early morning sky, not able to identify the sound at first, but upon hearing the first explosion I immediately knew that the base was under attack. The rockets and other incoming continued and I yelled my alert of "incoming." I'm not really sure why I yelled that, certainly everyone knew it and they all rushed for the safety of the below ground trench line from the above ground tents we had so carefully erected.

The above ground sleeping tents, which we ignorantly called bunkers, had dirt filled 55 gallon drums and ammo box's around the sides, about 5 feet high. We immediately recognized the inadequacy of these structures upon hearing and seeing the impact of the

first incoming rounds. The ammo dump had blown and we dodged hot, deadly shrapnel from our own ammunition along with those from the enemy guns the rest of the day and night. I was shocked when I smelled tear gas and had to run back into the venerable protection of the sleeping tent/bunker to retrieve my gas mask, never really thinking it would be necessary to wear a gas mask in a modern day war. Those are my remembrances of that date, when I was twenty years old.

My son came home from college during this winter break. He was filled with stories of school and the girls he had met and the friends he made. He told me it was the best time in his life. The morning he went back to school I went into his bedroom and sat down on his bed. I told him that I loved him and would miss him while he was gone, something my parents never did before I went off to war. Rubbing his back while I spoke to him, I thought back to when he was a child and to all of the things that he did as a small boy. I though of how now, he was a man and that he had his whole life ahead of him, a life filled with promise and hope. I am sure he was thinking all of the things that twenty year old men should be thinking. I was glad he would never have to think that the hole was not deep enough, pray that he ran fast enough, and that at anytime it could be him, or if it was not him, than who, because with so much incoming, it most certainly would be someone, knowing that for us, it was.

"WHAT A WAY TO FIGHT A WAR" INTERESTING NEWS FROM THE WAR IN IRAQ & AFGANASTAN

By Robert Hall

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE -- Six days a week, Shannon Rogers kisses his wife and two young kids goodbye and wheels his battered 1989 Chevy Cavalier out of the driveway of his suburban Nevada home. The houses here are cookie cutter, done in beige stucco. Like most of the other dads and some moms in this traditional middle-class community, Rogers heads down Interstate 215, toward his job near Las Vegas, using the 30 minute drive to make the mental transition from family man to workplace professional. But Rogers will end up in a place far different from that of his fellow commuters: when he arrives at work, he will be at war in Iraq.

Rogers, an Air Force major and experienced fighter pilot, is part of an elite group of U.S. troops playing a crucial role in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan from the U.S.'s most notorious playground. From Nellis Air Force Base, outside Las Vegas, Rogers controls a Predator, a flimsy drone that has been transformed from a spy plane into one of the wars' most lethal weapons. Predators played a key part in catching Saddam Hussein and have killed al-Qaeda suspects in Pakistan and Yemen. In September a Predator tracked 11insurgents who had attacked a U.S. base in Iraq, then killed them as they fled.

What makes the Predator mission--and Rogers' job--so unusual is the7,000 miles between pilot and plane. Basing the crew members at home rather than at the front keeps them out of harm's way and saves the military money. Still, "for us, it's combat," says Rogers, 34, who has been deployed to battle zones twice, most recently Iraq this summer. "Physically, we may be in Vegas, but mentally, we're flying over Iraq. It feels real."

Certainly the decisions they face are life and death, as TIME observed when it was recently granted exclusive access to operations of the Air Force's 15th Reconnaissance Squadron, which commands 25 Predators from Nellis. It was 10:30p.m. in Nevada, 9:30 a.m. in Iraq, and after two hours of watching insurgents fire a pickup-truck- mounted .50-cal. machine gun at U.S. troops in western Iraq, Rogers and the sensor operator with whom he works were given the command to shoot the truck. Both developed a case of what Rogers calls the "trembles"--the nervousness of wanting to kill the enemy but injure no one else, combined with the enormity of taking human lives. Just as Rogers pushed the button to let fly one of the Predator's Hellfire missiles, a car appeared and started to drive toward the pickup. His partner's job is to keep the missile locked on target or, if necessary, divert it to a place where it would cause as little damage as possible. "What do we do, sir?" the partner asked in a shaky voice. "Stay on the target and hope he drives fast," said Rogers coolly. The car passed, and the truck exploded violently when the Hellfire struck. Rogers let out a whoop and exchanged high fives with his partner. The Predator is an unlikely star. In military terms, it is an unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV. It was first flown a decade ago and for years was armed with only an unsophisticated camera for intelligence gathering.

After the fall of 2000, when Osama bin Laden was spotted in Afghanistan by an unarmed Predator, the U.S. government sped up a program to fit each aircraft with two Hellfire missiles. Awesome sounding but benign looking, the 27ft. long Predator is painted a dull gray and shaped like an upside-down spoon with wings. The drone is made of lightweight composite plastic and metal, and has a tiny, propeller-driven engine--adapted from a snowmobile's--with a decidedly unimpressive top speed of only 150 m.p.h. Rogers' previous craft, the supersonic F-15 jet fighter, can fly up to 900 m.p.h.

The Predators commanded by the 15th Reconnaissance Squadron are launched and landed by troops at the front, but while they are in the air, up to 24 hours straight every day, they are controlled by Air Force crews sitting in six grounded cockpits at Nellis. Each cockpit consists of two large armchairs set in front of banks of computer screens with keyboards, control joysticks and live video images. Video is relayed from a camera mounted on the bottom of the Predator not only to Nellis, but also to troops on the ground, commanders in the region, and the Pentagon. The crew consists of a pilot who flies the plane and launches missiles, and a sensor operator who controls the camera and the laser targeting device for the two Hellfires.

The crew members communicate with troops and commanders in the war zone through secure instant-messaging systems, as well as radio transmissions routed through a mission controller, who sits in a command center at Nellis and issues orders to the crew. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have proved the worth of unmanned aircraft--which are cheaper and, because there is no pilot to be shot down, politically more palatable than traditional airplanes. The thousand-plus UAVs in the military's arsenal range from tiny craft that can fit in a soldier's palm to ones the size of business jets. Military analysts are predicting that within two decades, UAVs may even take over the jobs of pilots flying fighter jets. It makes economic sense; the $4 million Predator is a bargain compared with the Air Force's newest fighter, the $354 million F-22. The effectiveness of the Predator in war zones, however, has translated into stresses in an unlikely place: back home. The operational tempo puts intense pressure on the small group of men and women who deliver death from a distance. The 180-person Nellis unit runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with no holidays. The unit has logged more flight hours than any other squadron in the Air Force yet is only 65% staffed. Crew members are so tightly scheduled that when on duty, they have to ask permission to go to the bathroom and cannot leave their chairs unless there is someone to replace them. The troops call the Predator compound Shawshank because it reminds them of a prison. The schedule demands that the men and women change shifts--days, evenings and overnights--every three weeks, which makes fitting into normal civilian life off base nearly impossible. Morale, say many crew members, is suffering. Crew members are experiencing more problems in their personal lives, including separation and divorce.

One may expect that being home would be a plus for the troops, but actually it's often a complication. Soldiers in the field have to cope with danger, but at least they live in one world, whereas their counterparts at Nellis commute daily from war to civilian life. "How many people can say they went to work today and killed or captured a few terrorists?" says Lt. Colonel John Harris, commander of the 15th. "Our people are proud they contribute to the war from home. But being at home brings some additional stresses.

We're very close to a crisis. Rogers says he feels pulled in two directions, between spending more time helping with the war effort, and also being an integral part of his family. He rushes home after his day shift to jump in the pool with his kids. "At least I get to sleep in my own bed," says Rogers. But he says being deployed in Iraq was easier because he was isolated from the daily errands and the emotional demands of family life. His wife Laura feels differently about his being home. "It takes the edge off being a pilot's wife," she says, "at least I know I won't be getting that phone call in the middle of the night telling me my husband has been shot down or is missing in action."

WELCOME HOME
3 Khe Sanh MIA's Recovered
Listed in "Battalion of Kings" page 416

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced that the remains of four U.S. servicemen, missing in action since the Vietnam War, have been identified. They will be

returned to their families for burial with full military honors. They are: Major Jack L. Barker of Waycross, Ga.; Capt.John F. Dugan of Roselle, N.J.; Sgt. William E. Dillender of Naples, Fla.; and Pfc. John J. Chubb of Gardena, Calif. All were from the Army's 101st Airborne Division. Chubb was buried in Inglewood, Calif., on Feb. 18. Barker, Dugan, and Dillender will be buried on April 12, in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington. D.C.

On March 20, 1971, Barker and Dugan were piloting a UH-1H Huey helicopter with Dillender and Chubb on board. The aircraft was participating in a troop extraction mission in the Savannakhet Province of Laos. As the helicopter approached the landing zone, it was hit by heavy enemy ground fire. It exploded in the air and there were no survivors. Continued enemy activity in the area prevented any recovery attempts.

Pictures You Will Not See On Your Local News





MINI REUNION LUNCHEON HELD, TO REMEMBER 21 JANUARY 1968, THE START OF THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH

January 21, 2006 CHICO, CALIFORNIA
By Craig W. Tourte

There are times in our life in which events occur that changes our whole being. January 21, 1968, was such a life altering experience. It's difficult to explain certain events to those who have not experienced the same deprivation and hardship. What that event does however, is to bring those involved closer together.

The start of the Siege of the United States Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh on January 21, 1968, was certainly one of those experiences. As we recall the Siege and honor the many who did not return, we not only met those who were present, but find that there were many more who were impacted by that event. We hear from those who fought on or near the base before the Siege, from those who contributed to our survival, and from those who subsequently served in that area of operation both in the air and on the ground. Their experiences were often just as difficult as those of us who were present during those long 77 days.

We Khe Sanh Veterans, in fact, most being Vietnam Veterans I believe, find a certain amount of solace being with those whom we had served in Vietnam with. When together we are able to share experiences and feelings that we are often unable to share with family and friends. On January 21, 2006, a group of 50 or so Vietnam Veterans got together for a luncheon in Chico California to honor those who served and died at the Khe Sanh Base between 1961 and 1971. In a way, it was a gathering to honor all Veterans who served in that conflict.

Veterans and supporters showed up at the Eagles Hall in Chico, thanks to Tom Horchler (the unofficial Mayor of Chico California), a Marine who I had met at Khe Sanh. At the end of the Siege, Tom drove us (with great skill) out of Khe Sanh, away from that which had not been blown up, shot up, bombed, rocketed, mortared, or otherwise destroyed in 77 days, Quang Tri, from Khe Sanh with far fewer of us than had arrived.

Chuck Chamberlin (C/1/26) (Blackbud Charlie),

described his experience at the luncheon as, "...the whole thing took on a life of its' own. I hesitate to use the term, networking," but I met more neat guys and their gals, and renewed so many old acquaintances. It was absolutely incredible to have been in the company of guys like Steve Wiese (Ghost Patrol), Mike Archer, author of "A Patch of Ground ,"and my old friend Tony Cueva.

The get-together "Chingadero"..(E.Spencer's word) we had yesterday, at the Eagles Hall in Chico, CA was outstanding. Craig Tourte and Tom Horchler put this thing together, to commemorate that morning 38 years ago, when we all found ourselves actually up against it. Anyhow, we all had a great time. There were about 50 paid ($10.00 lunch) and another 35-50 (who's counting?) that came through."

"The reporter for the local paper was down at the Sierra Nevada Brewery, wondering where the hell all the Marines were suppose to be. There's always that 10% that don't get the word. At the last minute, Tom and Craig changed it to the Eagles Hall due to the great number of folks that wanted to attend. The whole thing took on a life of it' s own." "...I believe a good time was had by all. Once again, I'm proud to have friends and associates of this caliber. I'll remember yesterday for the rest of my life. This was a shakedown cruise..." "We're going to do it again next year to get the wrinkles out, and on our 40th we're going to get a band and have a real West Coast reunion/party!"" We're thinking maybe Reno???"

Steve Wiese (B/1/26) remembers the luncheon as, "...it was a great day, I'm glad that it did come together, I hope it becomes a yearly thing, it's a great reason for all to get together and remember the ones that were not able to come back."

Mike Archer (26th Hq Co) notes, "An outstanding event! Many thanks to Tom Horchler for putting this all together. It was great, finally getting to meet Tom, Craig, Chuck, Steve, the Cueva brothers and all the rest of you guys I had heard about, or from, over the years. I brought an old high school buddy along, who lives in Chico, was in the USMC Reserves, but did not serve in Vietnam. Later that day, he kept talking about how incredible it was to watch all we Khe Sanh Vets interacting like family. He spoke of what an honor it was to be able to spend time among such men-and I told him I felt exactly the same way."

Chuck Teasley (C/1/26) reflected, "...I have spent today reading, "A Patch of Ground" and reflecting. I have read many messages (on the Khe Sanh Message Board) asking why now, some 38 years later, we find the need to travel back. As I look at the photographs with all of the "Old Veterans" who shared a common ground, I think I understand. Being around some of the bravest of the brave and knowing, like my own back yard, each spot they were at is like going back to the old neighborhood. It's safe to talk and laugh about things no one else would understand. No one needs to explain anything, as everyone already knows. It is the same feelings as laughing with the kids you grew up with about things you did as a kid. Things you would never want your parents to know, not because they were so bad, but you don't want to hurt them. Sharing our past with "Outsiders" just does not work. I just want to thank you for making this happen and inviting me to join."

Khe Sanh Veterans know there is a place in the world during the month of January, where it's foggy and cold with towering mountains looking down onto a small, isolated plateau, hallowed by many and surrounded by deep green jungle, where the many souls were of those who did not return. While in other places, it's relatively warm, the sun is out and shinning from a rich blue sky onto the faces of aging men who remember that time so long ago when they were young, and are grateful now, that they no longer have to suffer through the deprivation and hardship they once experienced. Aging men and comrades who remember those who did not return, and on this most appropriate day, honor their memory.

Here is a partial list of those who did sign in. Many left prior to the picture being taken

Chuck Teasley C Co 1/26
Chuck Chamberlin C Co 1/26
Tom Horchler 1/13 Hq Btry M/T Sec
Paul Turnbull 1/13 Hq Btry M/T Sec
Ken"Buzz"Sawyer 1/13 Hq Btry M/T Sec
Craig Tourte Hq Btry 1/13
Dave Tonick A Btry 1/26
Steve Wiese B Co 1/26
Billy Davis K Co 3/9
Gary Connor "Doc" 3rd-4th-5th-9th Marines '60-'80
Dan Ferguson W & A Btry1/13
Steve Orr 26th Regt. Comm.
Mike Archer 26th HqCo

Tony Cueva B Co 1/4
Rich Cueva W Btry 1/11
Dusty Russo E Btry 2/11
Hennie Van De Velde B 2/26 Hill 861A
Harold Tobisch G Co 2/3 & B Co 1/1
Mike Perry G Co 2/1
Steve Busby B Co 1/1
Jeff Green 1st SP HC 1st & 3rd Div.

There were also many Heroes from the Army, Navy, and Air Force present.

TWO HUMOROUS STORIES TO END THE MINI-REUNION WITH

By Craig W. Tourte

Debt Owed-Debt Paid and Recognized For Heroic Deeds

For those of you who have followed my worthless little stories, here are two more.

I was never a hero in Vietnam; my claim to that most noted Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh is that I showed up. I was never engaged nor was I involved in any singular acts of heroism. I have mentioned many times in my little stories that Tom Horchler drove the truck I rode shotgun when we left Khe Sanh for Quang Tri. Tom tells the story that during the long, dangerous and dusty convoy, I was sitting in a rocking chair perched on top of the load. We all know that there were no such conveniences at Khe Sanh; perhaps his memory is just different than mine. The ride to Quang Tri was not without incident. While descending a narrow road and traveling down an incline, the truck rose up on all three axles on the right side and nearly went over. Tom was able to right the truck and we continued on to Quang Tri. If the truck had gone over it would have been certain death for me. I always joked that Tom saved my life (of course he would have caused my demise if the truck flipped over).

That debt was repaid many times over January 23, 2006, on the golf course. It was one of those beautify days in Chico California. We had a great lunch and got on the course a little after noon. All was well when Tom came to play golf as usual, although I was somewhat shocked to hear the amount of profanity he was using to coax along the ball due to his age related deteriorating skills. We were in separate golf carts as Tom had the much-preferred companionship of his dog Lucy with him. As he descended a small but steep hill his cart locked up and he slid sideways into some rocks, the cart turning over on top of him pinning him to the ground.

Through much effort and individual heroics, I was able to stop my cart just before colliding with his. Casting my fears aside I sprung into action, leaping off of my golf cart and running up to him and yelling, "Hah, are you alright? It just seemed like the thing to say at the time. Tom yells, "Get this thing off me," Without fear for my own safety and completely disregarding any danger that might be present, I lifted the cart off Tom and laid him flat on the ground. While he was laying on the cold ground in great pain I asked him how he was doing. Not receiving a reply and making the instant observation that he was suffering, I thought of just getting a golf club and putting him out of his misery, but collected my thoughts, and grabbed his cell phone which of course did not work. He took hold of my arm and said, "Craig, maybe you could find a Corpsman for me, my legs don't seem to be working." I again sprung into action jumping into my golf cart, never considering the hazards that faced me, and drove alone and unarmed back to the clubhouse at a blinding speed of 2.4 MPH where I called an ambulance.

I returned to the scene and comforted him as best I could by saying, "Does this mean our golf game is over for the day?" He paid for it (I got lunch) and I wanted to make sure he understood his obligation was not yet over. Anyway, everything turned out all right, he was released from the hospital later that evening with some minor scrapes and burses and a few stitches (kind of a nasty to-the-bone cut on his leg). Later that evening he asked me if I would mind rubbing his feet, but I figured I had done enough.

I will never receive any official recognition for my unselfish heroic action but my debt to Tom Horchler for saving my life those many years ago while leaving Khe Sanh is finally paid. Oh, and his dog Lucy was just fine.

Recognized for Heroic Deeds

I wish I could have been a hero. I could sit at the bar and tell all the other liars what a hero I had been. How I had bravely faced the enemy while overcoming my own fears and rushed forward into what I

knew were the arms of certain death, but because of my own skill and cunning (and luck) 1 survived to fight again. When the call went up for a volunteer, I wish I could say I was the first to raise my hand. But I didn't do any of those things, and God bless those who in reality did, they truly are the deserving ones and the real heroes.

But in my own little world I became a hero (to myself) when I braved the dangers of the golf course and it's cart path to help my friend and former Marine Tom Horchler, and yes I'll say it, perhaps I even saved his life. Because of my little story, others have recognized me as someone special and deserving. I am proud to announce that 1 am now a legitimate holder of a medal. Our own John Pessoni has bestowed on me that most prestigious medal, the 'BRASS STAR" in recognition of my selfless acts and heroic deeds. John also awarded Tom the medal of the "PURPLE FLOWER" for wounds received, which I hate to say is one of those "I was there medals" not quite as prestigious as the BRASS STAR.

So at the reunion in Mobile in June when I'm sitting at the bar and you over hear me say something like". . . and I was awarded a medal for bravery." You know that I was awarded the BRASS STAR for my heroic deeds and actions on the golf course, not for any action at Khe Sanh. Gee, I hope I don't confuse the two events when I'm telling you about the medal I was awarded.



L-R Tony Cueva B/1/4 , Tony's brother Rich Cueva W Btry 1/11, Craig Tourte, Hq Btry 1/13



Damm, I got Ham & Mothers



Tom Horchler, HQ Btry 1/13 M/T



Swapping War Stories



PHOTO OF SOME OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS & FAMILY, THAT ATTENDED A LUNCHEON HELD IN CHICO, CA ., ON 21 JAN 06, TO REMEMBER THEIR FALLEN BROTHERS, AND THE START OF THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH, 21 JAN 1968.



L-R Chuck Chamberlin, C Co 1/26, Steve Orr, 26 Mar Reg Comm, Mike Archer (26 Mar Hdqr Co, sitting) Rich Cueva W Btry 1/11.

WEB BRIEFS

Remembering 21 January 1968

By Don Meyer

Today is another anniversary of the beginning of the siege of Khe Sanh thirty-eight years ago. I have been thinking that I did not arrive at Khe Sanh until the 22ND, when 1/9 was sent to reinforce the base, so I had missed the initial attack.

As I think about the siege, I cannot help but think of all of the people who have been affected by their time there. It does not matter if you were there during the siege, the Hill Fights or in combat there before or after these battles, Khe Sanh is a part of your life. If you are like me, and many of you are, you have thought of Khe Sanh for decades, and it stands clear in your mind even today. How many other things, if any, can you say the same about? We all

lost something there, and we all gained something there. I lost my youth, my innocence, and that spark that made me laugh and enjoy life. I gained sorrow, regrets, guilt, and a hole in my heart that just won't heal. Khe Sanh was a place that changed each of us forever. No matter what or when your battle was, it changed you. We remember it and honor it each day, and will until the day we die. Some have said that they have been able to leave Khe Sanh behind, but I don't believe that. If it is behind, why do we think of it? Maybe some have learned to cope, and I hope they have, but no one has forgotten.

For those who do not believe in PTSD, let them enter our heads for one day, and see how it plagues our souls, and keeps us awake at night. I wish I could be young again, and be able even for one day, regain the innocence, and the joy of life I left behind. I wish I could see my buddies who died, one more time, and laugh as we once did. But I can't so I count anniversaries.

Semper Fi
Don Meyer
C 1/9 67/68

*

Don,

I think you really put the right words and feelings into your post. When you stated why Khe Sanh has remained a part of many of our lives, whether we were there during the Siege, Hill Fights, or any of the other combat actions, and operations around Khe Sanh. I was not there during the Siege, just during the Hill Fights. After leaving Khe Sanh in Mid-May/67, Echo 2/9, went to Dong Ha. Dong Ha, which became the 9th Marine's Headquarters. Leatherneck Square, and the Southern DMZ was included in our TAOR.

Throughout most of 67, the 9th and other supporting units 3rd, 4th, 26th, and 1st marines saw some of the bloodiest and hardest fighting of the war. Speaking for me only, over the years my thoughts tended to go back to Khe Sanh, just like you mentioned. After reading your post, and pondering the thought, I believe I now know why. Years after the war ended, many people did not want to know about Vietnam, or how we veterans felt about having served there. Most just wanted to sweep it under the rug. If some did inquire about the war, it was often, " How come we lost?", " Did you really kill babies,?" " Did the Military give you guys drugs before you went into the field"? I withdrew, feeling loss, guilt, and betrayal. For some years, the history of the hard fought battles we fought, and the sacrifices we made, were left from history, and mostly forgotten.

When some of the early movies were made about the war, most were pure Hollywood BS. One place that was remembered due to the Siege, and writings from the ones who were there, a place where most of the truth had been preserved, and was then being written about, telling of the sacrifices, courage, pain, and loss, at Khe Sanh. The Siege, brought to light many other battles, and places that had been forgotten. Especially through books such as "Valley of Decision" which not only focused on Khe Sanh, but all of Northern I Corps, including all services. Other books are, The Hill Fights, Con Thien, etc. I believe I am drawn back to Khe Sanh, not to take credit as a siege vet, but to listen to, and share with a fellowship of Marines, who carry a very special courage, no matter where, or when they served, or where they fought. Khe Sanh is a symbol that will always remind others of what Marines and other military branches who stood shoulder to shoulder, in the darkest of days, 38 years ago, did for our country.
Semper Fi

Joe M.

*

Well said Joe,
Unfortunately, now that history is being told, far too many are perverting the accurate historical record we seek to write. Too many with an agenda, too many wishing to profit for the sacrifices of all those who served. We need to stand ever vigilant and correct the mistakes when they are put forth.
Semper Fidelis
Mack

*

Don,
I remember the day 1/9 arrived. A CH-46 landed in our area at the east end of the base. I will never forget it! It felt like help had arrived so don't worry. I think about Khe Sanh almost every day. Even more, since I have found this site. I never have applied for PTSD benefits but probably have it. I just take it one day at a time. I am more fortunate than others who experienced so much more danger.

Stay in touch with your friends, and brothers, like you do today. I don't know you personally, but I am your friend and brother and always will be until the day I die! I am off work now and will check in Monday.

By Pat Hopkins
S/F
Hoppie Blackbud Whiskey Over!

*

DON,
On this anniversary, I attended the funeral of a friend and fellow Vietnam Veteran. Kind of ironic I guess. After all, it is a day of mourning.

Jack Haigwood

*

WEB POETRY

LOST

WHAT IS LOST?
LOST IS MY YOUTH.
LOST IS MY INNOCENCES.
LOST IS MY FAITH.
LOST IS MY CONFIDENCE.
LOST IS MY ENERGY.
LOST ARE MY FRIENDS.
LOST IS MY MIND.

MEMORIES

MEMORIES OF WHAT?
MEMORIES OF DEATH.
MEMORIES OF PAIN.
MEMORIES OF DESTRUCTION.
MEMORIES OF CHILDREN.
MEMORIES OF BEAUTY.
MEMORIES OF FACES.
MEMORIES OF EVERYTHING LOST.

LOST!

LOST MEMORIES.
LOST NAMES.
LOST SLEEP.
LOST LOVE.
LOST COURAGE.

GAINED?

WHAT WAS GAINED?
A BLACK WALL.
A LOT OF GRAVES.
A COUNTRYS INDIFFERENCE.
A LOSS OF LIMBS.
A LOSS OF DIGNITY.
A LOT OF NAMES, BABY KILLER,
DRUG CRAZED, MURDERER, TO NAME A FEW.
A MILLION PLUS MEN AND WOMEN
WHO FACE A LIFE OF PAIN.

NOTHING GOOD WAS GAINED!
"WAR-WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?
ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!!!"

Sam Messer

*

SAM,

I am not a poet, but I've always admired your way with words. Yes, so much was lost and nothing gained from that fight. Still and all, we survived to remember those guys who gave their all...we will never forget. Don't torment yourself anymore. It's easy for me to say, yet I too pace the floor at 2 in the morning, like you. I wish we could bring some of our friends back, but we can't. However, I spent yesterday with some real heroes here in Northern CA, thanks to Tom and Craig. We need to focus on the good human survivor stories that the best of us represent. I never did a single valorous act at Khe Sanh or on the hills, but I believe, having read your poetry, that there is a case to be made for just getting thru that meat grinder and retaining our humanity. It #### near drove me nuts for awhile, but I'll be 60 yrs. old next year and comes a time, you got to' lay down that sword and put away the anger. The Sicilians say revenge is a dish best served cold, and another saying is "the best revenge is living well". Live well my friend, and thanks again for your well written thoughts.

Chuck Chamberlin
Semper Fidelis, Blackbud
Charlie, OUT

Photos That Do Not Appear On Your Local News





"THANKS JOE"
By Gene Weresow

This past Saturday Jan 21, the anniversary of the siege, the NJ Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Vietnam Education Center, hosted a Khe Sanh remembered in prose and poetry. The event was well attended. I would guess near 100. Poetry was read from the Khe Sanh book of poetry. Much credit must go to Joe Belardo who acted as moderator, and put this thing together.

The day was a great experience for me. I was glad to meet some of these heroes of Khe Sanh. I was humbled by the wonderful people who spoke, and feel honored to have been a part of this tribute to those who fought at Khe Sanh. I think I got more out of this than the audience. The memory of our fallen Brothers lives on here in NJ. God bless them all. Thanks Joe, for asking me to be a part of this.



"KHE SANH REMEMBERED"
NEW JERSEY VIETNAM ERA
EDUCATIONAL CENTER
By Nick Romanetz

Thirty-eight years to the day, New Jersey area Khe Sanh Veterans were part of a program entitled "Remembering the Battle of Khe Sanh – In Prose and Poetry." Hosted by the New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Foundation (www.njvvmf.org), the program was held at the beautiful Vietnam Era Educational Center located on the Garden State Parkway in Holmdel, NJ (on the grounds of the old Garden State Arts Center). **Joe Belardo, a KSV (Army Dusters/Twin 40's), past board member of the VV Memorial Ed Center and resident of South Plainfield, NJ,** arranged the program with the assistance of Sibley Smith, Director of Education at the Center. "The center hosts between 6-10,0000 school aged children each year to attend special programs or just tour the Center and explore the many pictures and artifacts on display." The Center also has an outdoor wall where the names of all of New Jersey's Vietnam era KIA's are engraved in granite, similar to The Wall in DC.



The Khe Sanh event on January 21st was a great success. Nine KSV were panelists for the event and another 10-12 KSV were in the audience, nearly all of us members of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association. The event was a mini-reunion! The audience totaled just over 100 persons, many of them Vietnam Veterans from all branches of our armed forces. Sons, daughters, wives and grandchildren of veterans were also present. Although the event was published in local newspapers, several persons that just "stopped by" to visit the Center were treated to the Khe Sanh Experience through the panelists. All of us were honored to have Todd and Grant Fox present, Charlie sons, making the trip in from Pennsylvania.

The format for the event began with an introduction by Sibley Smith and the singing of The National Anthem by Jersey City Fire Captain Daniel Delaney. Moderator Joe Belardo provided insightful opening remarks about the purpose of the event, the significance of The Battle of Khe Sanh and introduced the panelists. Prior to each panelist speaking, Joe read passages or an entire poem from the recently published Khe Sanh Veterans Book of Poetry. To help the audience have a better understanding of Khe Sanh, the event program provided a map of KSCB and units located at the base as well as an area map identifying all of the hill outposts and their proximity to the base.

Gene Weresow (M/3/26 & B/1/26) of Edison, NJ spoke about the now famous "Home is Where You Dig It" sign and explained that the sign meant exactly what it said! He recounted how 11 of 12 men in a patrol he went on off of on Hill 861 were all killed or wounded, he being the lucky one. The weather, c-rats, preparing positions on the base were all recounted and the WIA of the round eye, female, reporter were subjects he touched upon. This being Gene's first time at public speaking at an event like this, he was initially nervous, as were several panelists, but once he got on a roll, his 15 minutes of speaking time was gone and he did just fine!

John Pessoni (A Co 3rd Combat Engineers) of Toms River, NJ simply explained to the audience that the main thing he did was "blow stuff up." His experiences in laying minefields, creating "fugas" obstacles and blowing up trees and having them fall the wrong way were some of the lighter moments of the afternoon. Being shot at while on missions, dodging incoming and realizing that when 1/9 showed up, "they brought their own NVA with them" were a part of John's sharing. His final recollection was about the female, reporter who took shrapnel in the buttocks and his lost opportunity to administer first aid since he was in the immediate area of the blast that wounded the reporter.

George Einhorn (A/1/9) of Metuchen, NJ remembered being on patrol (elsewhere in I Corps) when his unit received a radio message to report immediately back to base. Soon thereafter, his company was loaded on choppers and dropped off at Khe Sanh. His platoon eventually manned an outpost on Hill 64 near the rock quarry. He recounts how a numerically superior NVA force assaulted and partially over ran the hill on February 8, 1968. Only 13 Marines, George included, of about 64 walked off of that hill after the battle. Most of the platoon was killed or wounded. In April '68 on Hill 471, George told of being wounded by shrapnel from a 122 mm rocket, being med-evaced and the chopper out of Khe Sanh being hit by ground fire, and having to return to the base. He says he was wounded again on the aircraft. Eventually being evacuated to Japan and then the Philadelphia Naval Hospital, where he was medically separated from the Marine Corps.

Dennis Whalen (B/1/9) of Toms River, NJ said he would rather face a platoon of NVA than engage in public speaking. However, like Gene, once he got into his presentation, he sailed through with flying colors! Dennis, like George, recounted his company's sudden warning order and immediately choppering into Khe Sanh. He recounts how beautiful it was (Jan. 22, 1968) with the jungle showing "26 shades of green." As he soon recounted, the beauty of Khe Sahn turned into a daily struggle with life and death. As a radio operator, Dennis recalls watching the battle on Hill 64 from the rock quarry. He said it was like a movie with the NVA taking a part of the hill, counterattacks pushing them back slightly and then the NVA regaining the ground they had just lost. The close in battle between Marines and NVA was described by Dennis as "kids being close to each other and having a snow ball fight, only they were throwing grenades at each other." Dennis described the helplessness of watching the battle, unable to help. He recalls an ARVN prop driven aircraft dropping its ordnance on the hill, which seemed to break the back of the NVA as they disen-

gaged from battle. Other recollections included living like an animal and developing a keen sense for incoming. "One you heard the round leaving the tube, you knew what caliber it was."

Neil Kenny (L/3/26) of Staten Island, NY told the audience that by the time he was 19, he had experienced the war, lost his grandfather who was an anchor in his life, and found himself discharged and on the streets at home as a high school drop out. Neil claims that at the induction center, he was found to be 4F but had his medical records changed because "I wanted to go." He recounts that as a young Marine, he sometimes had "a problem" with authority and the chain of command. Seems Neil had the notion that if a PFC was to fill sandbags for a bunker, anyone using that bunker, including SNCO's or NCO's should also fill them, and he let them know that. Neil had the audiences in stitches with his humorous accounts of life at Khe Sanh, but he also presented one of the most poignant moments of the afternoon when he told of the death of his friend Phil Sheridan while attacking 881N on 14 April 1968, and holding a dying Marine in his arms. Neil recounted that there were too many Phil Sheridans in Vietnam, and it was obvious that his comments and presentation had a deep impact on the audience.

Bruce Geiger (Army Dusters/Twin Fortys) made the trip to **New Jersey from New Rochelle, NY.** He brought many of his large, framed color pictures and set up a display entitled "The Road to Khe Sanh." Bruce spoke of his days as an ROTC student at Rutgers University, his MOS training and the belief that he would spend his Army career in Germany. Calling himself "the Forrest Gump of dusters," he told of his time at Con Tien and eventually winding up at Khe Sanh. One of his most vivid memories was the night of March 22, 1968 when the C/1/26 CP was hit by a 152 arty round. He recalls a night of heavy incoming, the base being on alert for a possible ground attack, and the fact that his lines were being hit hard by incoming. Responding to the call for help at the CP, he tried to get the wounded Marines out of the bunker and assisted Chuck Chamberlin who was in the old company CP about a month earlier, when it was hit by a rocket. The new company CP had collapsed and was on fire. A short distance down the lines near his gun positions and bunker, another C/1/26 bunker took a direct hit from a 122 rocket, killing two Marines and wounding a third. Bruce personally knew three of the KIA's in the CP bunker, and that night remains a vivid part of his Khe Sanh experience. The only panelist to speak well over the allotted 15 minutes, Joe Belardo was nice enough to let Bruce finish telling his story, ultimately leading to Joe replacing Bruce at Khe Sanh.

Joe Belardo was the final panelist to speak. He recounted his experiences in dismantling the base and running a convoy out of Khe Sanh after the base was "closed." He told of being left at the base with about 12-15 men after the 6,000 Marines were long gone, with no "lines," bunkers, or prepared fighting positions. Joe completed his presentation with the reading of an original poem he wrote about Khe Sanh.

Remember that throughout the afternoon, Joe read an original poem about Khe Sanh prior to introducing each panelist. Joe is to be commended for the effort he put forth in organizing this event. John Pessoni had boxes of the KSV Poem Books as well as Ray Stubbe's "Battalion of Kings" available for purchase. I believe that John sold nearly all of the poem books and a good number of Ray's book. I did note that Big John assumed the posture of a rock star or sports celebrity at the end of the presentation in that in addition to selling the books, he was also busy autographing them and posing for photos!

Other KSV that were present were Bill Griffith, Bruce Lewey, Bob Galiano, Mike Urban, and Sid Patricio. Sid is to get credit as the "official" KSV photo-historian. He took several pictures and posted them on the KSV web site, and as I write this, I am told that one or some of his pictures will accompany this article. I must also apologize in that there were a few more KSV at the event, but I do not have their names.

As I read on our two KSV web sites, several remembrances were held around the country to commemorate the 38th anniversary of the beginning of "The Siege." The New Jersey presentation was top shelf. Once again, thanks to all of the participants and a special thanks to Joe Belardo for planning and executing a most successful event!

Editors Note: The event was also reported in the local newspaper; here is what they wrote about the event:

Bonnie Delaney
Staff Writer Asbury Park Press

January 21, 2006, marked the 38th anniversary of the enemy attack that started the Battle of Khe Sanh, the battle that launched the war's pivotal Tet Offensive of 1968. To remember and honor the American military effort in that action, a panel of Vietnam veterans of the Khe Sanh Battle discussed their personal recollections and reflections. The words of other participants were shared through readings of their poems, recently published in *The Khe Sanh Veterans Book of Poetry*. The panel was moderated by Joseph Belardo of South Plainfield, NJ, a contributor to the poetry book and recipient of the Purple Heart Medal and the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for valor, for his service during the Battle of Khe Sanh. Panelists included Khe Sanh veterans George Einhorn of Metuchen, NJ, Bruce Geiger of New Rochelle, NY, Gary Parker of Barneget, NJ, John Pessoni of Toms River, NJ, Nick Romanetz of Annandale, NJ, and Dennis Whalen of Toms River, NJ.

The Vietnam Era Educational Center is located adjacent to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial off the Garden State Parkway at exit 116. The Memorial and Educational Center is maintained through a partnership between New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Foundation, and the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The Educational Center is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 4 PM. Regular admission is free for veterans and active-duty military personnel. Regular adult admission is $4.00; student and senior citizen admission is $2.00; and children under 10 are admitted free.

*

Sarah Burton
Staff Writer, Asbury Park Press

It's been 38 years since the Battle of Khe Sanh began, but for the men who risked their lives there, on a remote military base near Vietnam's border with Laos, it could have happened yesterday. "It just stays with you," said John Pessoni of Toms River, a Marine who fought in the 77-day attack, which began Jan. 21, 1968, during what Americans believed to be a cease-fire amid the Vietnam War. "Every day I think of that place," he said. "For a lot of us, it was like yesterday," said Eugene Weresow, another Marine.

On Saturday, the Vietnam Era Education Center in Holmdel marked the anniversary of the battle with a prose and poetry program. "To tell you about Khe Sanh is very difficult," said moderator Joseph Belardo, who served from 1967 to 1968 in Vietnam."You can't understand what it's like to be truly frightened, to take another life, to see your friends die, to pick up the pieces. Before you stands a group of noble men, caught between today and yesterday," he said of the men who gathered Saturday in the center's Testimony Theater. Educational lectures and programs are held monthly at the center, which opened in 1998 on the grounds of the PNC Bank Arts Center and draws between 6,000 and 10,000 student visitors each year.

We do not promote war, but we tell you what it's like," Belardo said. Approximately 1,000 American soldiers were killed in the Battle of Khe Sanh. Nearly 5,000 were wounded. Weresow was the lone survivor of a mortar attack on his 12-man squad. " I walked out of that one alive, as the only survivor--guess God was watching over me," said Weresow, of Edison. The men spoke of the hard times they experienced, spending the night in a hole filled with rainwater because it was warmer than stepping out into the cold night air, experiencing napalm so hot "you could feel the heat coming up your back," showering in the rain and washing laundry in a barrel of boiling water. "It's just what you had to do," Pessoni said. "You had to take care of you. If you didn't, you didn't make it home."

They also shared stories that then, and today, still make them laugh: drinking warm Kool-Aid, cherishing a rare can of peaches and pretending a mess hall's mashed potatoes tasted like those made at home. "It may not sound like much, but mashed potatoes (were) like something from home," Weresow said. "Like something mom used to make." According to some of the men, sharing these stories helps preserve the memories of those who were left behind. I personally find it very rewarding," said Nicholas Romanetz of Annandale, Hunterdon County, a second lieutenant with the Marines, about being a part of the program. "It's very moving," said Jean Varga of Freehold, who was visiting the memorial with a friend. "I looked at this whole journey in

Vietnam as an adventure," said Neil Kenny, a Marine from Staten Island who said he grew up playing war games. One night at Khe Sanh, after curling up in a hole as rocket fire passed overhead, Kenny, then 18 years old, said he realized the truth: "I realized that this was not a game. This was not the game I'd played as a kid. This was the real deal."

*

Editors Note:

Prior to attending the program on 21 Jan 2006, some Khe Sanh members, toured the facility, and were interviewed by Bonnie Delaney, a reporter from the Asbury park press. The following are those remembrances.

When Dennis Whalen flew into Khe Sanh on Jan. 21, 1968, on a helicopter, he recalled that from the air, Khe Sanh appeared to be "the most beautiful place on earth." "It was a former coffee plantation, and from the air it was 28 shades of green," he said. "Later, I found out it was the most vicious place on earth."

"The first thing we saw when we got out of the chopper was a pile of bloody boots. I knew that it was bad and it was only going to get worse," said Whalen, who left Khe Sanh just three months later but served two tours of duty in Vietnam, which totaled 19 months. "Khe Sanh was a place I thought I'd never get out of." The Dover Township resident will be one of nine Vietnam veterans who will share their recollections of their time in Khe Sanh during a poetry reading and oral history discussion at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Vietnam Era Educational Center in Holmdel.

Saturday marks the 38th anniversary of the enemy attack that started the 77 day Battle of Khe Sanh, which launched the war's 1968 Tet Offensive battle for Khe Sanh, Route 9, and the other bases in that area, said Joseph Belardo of South Plainfield, who will moderate the program. Belardo served in the Army, and his unit was deployed to Vietnam as the 3rd Marine Division's combat mobile fighting team, under Marine control. He operated a "duster," which was a self-propelled tank with automatic weapons.

Belardo, who was wounded numerous times and received the Bronze Star with Valor and Purple Hearts and other medals, and his crew of Duster C131 were the last to leave the Khe Sanh combat base 10 days after it closed on July 5, 1968. He said he and his crew dismantled the entire base "sandbag by sandbag."

Whalen was a radio operator with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, and was also wounded while at Khe Sanh. He said he was struck by shrapnel from a 60 millimeter mortar round. Just about everybody who was there got hit," he added. John Pessoni, a Dover Township resident who served with Alpha Company, 3rd Combat Engineers, said he considers himself to be lucky. I never got hit, and I was there during the full siege at Khe Sanh," said Pessoni, who did the nightly "listening" post detail outside the base perimeter.

He also did demolition work and helped install land mines around the base perimeter while he was at Khe Sanh. "I blew stuff up. I'd go out with the grunts (infantry) and do demolition with them," Pessoni said. As Pessoni walked around the Vietnam Era Educational Center for the first time on Jan. 11, he, Whalen, and Belardo looked at maps and photographs and tried to pinpoint their locations for one another.

"Holy mackerel, just looking at all this stuff gives me the shivers,' said Pessoni. "We were all 18-19 years old when we were there. My sergeant, who was 23 or 24, was like our father," recalled Whalen. Sibley J. Smith Jr., director of education at the center, said that when high school students tour the center they are told that Vietnam was "the teenage war."

Belardo said the goal of the program on Saturday "isn't to rewrite history but to give a historical timeline of the Battle of Khe Sanh with recollections from the people who were there." "It was the most famous battle in Vietnam, and it was one of the most bombed bases. It was a jump-off point for Special Forces, and it was the place Marines were stationed to stop the infiltration of enemy forces down the Ho Chi Minh Trail," he said. Pessoni and Whalen said Khe Sanh was also known for its huge rats, and panelist Bruce Geiger, who served as an Army lieutenant with Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery the Dusters, described the rats as being "extremely cunning" and "as big as large rabbits" in a story he wrote about his experiences. Geiger's and Belardo's stories have been published in **The Vietnam** Maga-

zine, and Belardo's recollections have been published in the book "**The Soldier's Story - Vietnam in their Own Words,**" and **"The Khe Sanh Book of Poetry**." Both have also appeared in television documentaries about the Vietnam War, and Belardo is a past board member of the New Jersey Vietnam Veteran Memorial and Education Center. He was an original member of Victims of Agent Orange, the predecessor of the first Agent Orange Commission.

SOME OF OUR DISTINGUISHED PANELIST WHO RELATED THEIR STORIES



Joe Belardo - C Btry 1/44 TH "Dusters"



Dennis Whalen B Co 1/9



Bruce Geiger - A Btry 1/44TH "Dusters"



"Big John" Pessoni A Co 3rd Engrs



Nick Romanetz- C Co 1/26



Gene Weresow B Co 1/26



Neil Kenny L Co 3/26



George Einhorn A Co 1/9



Sid Patricio of South Brunswick (left) a Marine who served during the Battle of Khe Sanh, points out for Todd Fox of Harrisburg, Pa., the base where he and Fox's father were stationed, at an event Saturday at the Vietnam Veterans Education Center, Holmdel, marking the anniversary of the battle. STAFF PHOTO: MICHAEL J. TREOLA

After the program several of the Khe Sanh veterans and their families, gathered at a local Vietnamese Restaurant for Dinner. Needless to say they enjoyed each other's company and a delicious meal.









Todd & Grant Fox with a "Real Foxy Chick", from SI. Neil Kenny's beautiful wife Alice.



L-R Bruce "Bigfoot Marine" Lewy, E Co 2/26, Bill Griffith E Co 2/26 and John "BigJohn" Pessoni, A Co 3RD Engineers.



L-R, Bill Griffith E 2/26, Joe Belardo Dusters, Unknown, Neil "Duracell Kid" Kenny, L 3/26, Gene Weresow B/1/26, Nick Romanetz C/1/26, "Big John" Pessoni 3rd Eng, Bruce Geiger Dusters, George Einhorn A/1/9, Dennis Whalen B/1/9, "Homeless Vet" Sid (Fish) Patrico, D/1/26.
There were others at event who left before the picture was taken.

NEVER BEFORE SEEN PHOTOS FROM HILL 861A
By Tom Eichler E Co 2/26

During the siege of Khe Sanh I served with E Company 2/26 on Hill 861A. I was a corporal, serving as the acting weapons platoon sergeant. As best as I can recall, there were very few if any cameras . Some how I acquired this very small slide action Minolta camera (the kind you saw in those old spy movies). I did not know much about operating it, and one day just went around the whole hill, clicking away. I still had the camera with me when I left Vietnam in 1968. I attempted to have the film developed, and learned it was not film, but very tiny slides, less than a quarter of an inch square. I finally had them developed in 1969, but no one could make them larger, without complete distortion. They sat on a shelf in my home slowly deteriorating. In 2003, Earle Breeding and I traveled to Charlestown SD, to attend an opening of a series of paintings by Terry Redlin, the worlds most popular painter of Americana. We also presented the Redlin family with a **DOC Medal** for Charles Langenfeld the brother of Terry's wife, who was killed at Khe Sanh while serving as a corpsman with E Co 2/26.

We also met Terry's son Charles Redlin, who as his father, is a very strong supporter of the KSV, and has completed an extensive study of our time at Khe Sanh, during the siege. Charles, utilizing very sophisticated equipment, and many painstaking hours of his own valuable time, restored 99% of those slides. Although they are not pristine, they are viewable. Chuck has preserved a part of History for everyone to see.









































A SPECIAL OBIT AND FAREWELL
VIRGINA MONTAGUE EVANS PULLER
"CHESTY'S GIRL"

A MESSAGE TO "CHESTY, WHERE EVER YOU ARE," HAVE THE TROOPS ON ALERT AT THE GATES, YOUR LOVELY VIRGINIA, IS COMING ABOARD.





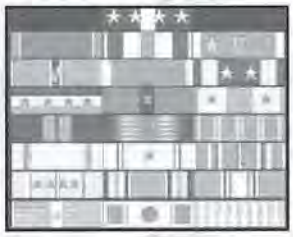



BY ELLEN ROBERTSON
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER Feb 8, 2006
Submitted By Mike Fishbaugh

Virginia Montague Evans of Saluda was 16 and Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller was 27 when they met at a cotillion in nearby West Point. Puller, who would become the most-decorated Marine in the Corps' history, was smitten, said their daughter, Virginia Dabney of Lexington." My father said that winning her hand was his hardest battle," Dabney said. For years, he'd go on Marine Corps assignments and return to Saluda to ask Virginia to marry him. She finally said "yes" when she was 29 and he was 40 and a Marine captain. They married in a military wedding on Nov. 13, 1937, at Christ Church, the Episcopal Church in Christ, the church where generations of her family had worshipped.

Mrs. Puller, who was widowed in 1971, has died at her home in Saluda. She was 97. One of three children born to a lawyer's family, she grew up at Evanslea, a big house in Saluda that had 52 windows, said her daughter Martha Downs of Alexandria. She graduated in the early 1920s from St. Mary's School in Raleigh, N.C. "She was everything he ever wanted. They were everything each other ever wanted," Dabney said. "They were absolutely devoted to each other. He sent her roses all the time and they wrote love letters. "Puller "did the Marine Corps. He thought it was the greatest thing and the best way to take care of us," Downs said. "Mother did everything else." "She bought cars and houses and life insurance, and she did it beautifully. But she didn't want anyone to know she was doing those kinds of things. She wasn't sure it was ladylike. She wanted people to think Father was doing all that.

"She was a genteel Southern lady, but an iron lady," Downs said. "If you didn't have manners when you were coming in the house, you did when you left." Mrs. Puller accompanied her husband on a tour of duty in China in 1940. She and her infant daughter, Virginia, left on the last American dependents' ship before the Japanese took Shanghai in 1941during World War II. She also followed him to Hawaii and across the U.S. mainland but returned to Saluda during his combat tours in World War II and the Korean War. When he retired in 1955 as a lieutenant general, the couple settled in Saluda. "She really loved the Marines," Dabney said. "She fed hundreds of them. She knew how much it meant to him. He would bring Marines home off the street if he met them at a gas station." She found Marine husbands for her daughters.

At Christmas, she would be "graciously serving a Southern lunch to sergeants at this end of the table and generals at that end," Downs said. "When my father would get tired, she would say, 'The general needs a nap.' " Mrs. Puller loved history, historical restoration projects, and going to old homes and plantations. She was a member of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. A son, Lewis B. Puller Jr., died in 1994. In addition to her daughters, survivors include seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

ANOTHER MEMORY

By Mike Fishbaugh

"Chesty" Puller's Funeral Detail!

I received the below e-mail from an 8th & I Marine, Dennis Bosco, 1970-1973, Long Beach, CA. It contains a fascinating account of his participation in Lt. Gen. Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller's funeral detail.

John T. Reim
"Semper Fi"

Dear John,

When Chesty died I was the Section Leader of the Body Bearers. Chesty was lying in rest at the local Saluda, VA funeral parlor. A Gunny from the HQMC was told to take a Dress Blues button for Chesty's uniform and take me to the burial site. I went to the funeral parlor and the man there did not know how to attach the button. So he opened the casket up and the Gunny put the button on his blouse. He was buried in his Dress Blues with a chest full of medals. I remembered that in Boot Camp we said "Good night to Chesty Puller wherever you are!" The gunny and I bowed our heads and said goodbye to Chesty.

We reported back to the Puller residence that we had accomplished our mission. There was more brass in the house than in the Drum & Bugle Corps. His two daughters and son were there too. The gunny and I were the only two enlisted Marines. I never felt more self conscious in my life. Mrs. Puller saw me and zeroed in on me. Asked how I was doing and said her general always loved sergeants. She told me to take my blouse off (wearing my greens) and sit down in the general's chair and prepared me a huge plate of food and told me to eat. Noticing my embarrassment, she said you just relax sergeant and let me take care of you. After dinner she took me on a tour of their home. I was so nervous I could barely breathe. She was very warm and generous and ignored most of the people there while attending to me. She asked if I wanted a copy of the General's book and I said no Ma'am I have one already. Their son was there in his wheel chair. We made small talk and he was very upbeat and spoke to me for awhile. Finally, the Gunny said we had to leave. After I put my blouse on I thanked Mrs. Puller for her hospitality and tried to stammer out my condolences, and sensing my embarrassment she just came up and gave me a hug. She thanked me for stopping by and said to come visit her anytime.

A few days later we carried Chesty to his final resting place. A week later I received a handwritten letter addressed to me from Mrs. Puller thanking me for the beautiful ceremony. I wish I could take all the credit. I still have it and it is the most cherished memorabilia of my career. A great woman with a huge warm heart.
Semper Fi,
Dennis Bosco
Captain USMC (Ret).

MY ANTIDOTE FOR TET AND THE JANUARY 21, 1968 EXPERIENCE

One evening with Delta Company, Khe Sanh; Belize sailing Expedition

By Doc Cahill

John Rowland, Delta Co 1/26 President, had a novel solution to the depression, intrusive thoughts, and generally bad effects from the memory every year of the anniversary of the Beginning of the siege of Khe Sanh. John arranged for the charter of two, 42' catamarans for a week long sail from island to island along the Belize coast with 7 of his combat Marines/ Corpsman buddies. The expedition began on Jan 21, from San Pedro, Belize, with the Muddy Joe, skippered by Fleet Commander John Rowland, with his lady Rachel, first mate Charles Gallagher, and his lady, Melanie. The remaining crew included: Al Knight, Delta friend, Freddy (HOSS) McEwan, and my Bride, Joyce. All three ladies are members of the Delta Chicks, excellent gourmet cooks, and valuable

crew members. The Quo Vadis was skippered by former Delta Company C/O, Ernie Spencer and his lady, Linda, also a member of the Delta chicks. With crew members: Mike Powers, Tom Slaby and his lady Jan, Andy Corr a friend of Delta Co., and Battalion Commander of 1/26, Colonel Fred McEwan.

Being the Fleets' Corpsman, Retired RN and Lifetime Member of the PTSD Health Club, I may have a different or skewed perspective of things. So bare with me! Most of the aforementioned Vets have varying degrees of PTSD, and physical scars, acquired in Vietnam; limiting some social skills; heavy lifting, coherent speech, and graceful moves.

Each catamaran had different rules. The rules for the Muddy Joe were: Have Fun, Have More Fun, and Make sure you have fun! I won't speak of the rules on the Quo Vadis, but let's say the behavior on the Muddy Joe was less military. No set restrictions on shore leave, dress code, or consumption. No taps and the only reveille occurred when captain John decided to start the Muddy Joe's engines or generators in preparation to set sail.

John was excellent instructing what needed to be done in preparation to set sail, to tack, to anchor, and other needs to have an exciting, and safe sailing experience. Amazingly, the rookie crew learned the tactics, and we quickly found ourselves manning our stations without discussion; team work, just like in Nam…..very impressive to John and me.

We found this teamwork very effective dealing with several engine and electric power problems, encountered during our week long cruise. Freddie was a hulk and was the real force in raising the heavy anchors. I assisted Freddie and Gallagher positioned the chain properly as we dragged each anchor in. Raising and lowering of the sails became routine as the three of us took our stations, performing the tasks efficiently. The expertise of our captain in maneuvering the boat around with one engine, made our duties easier. Got to give it to captain John, he had the experience, and we never felt uncomfortable as a crew. Now, where's Big Al, during the crews' tasks… some of you may wonder…oh yeah, he's friggin trollin' off the aft of the Muddy Joe. Ain't caught nothing but a couple damn poisonous blowfish and pressure sores on his ass, in 4 days….. A real fisherman, my sweet sailin' ass!!!! But, his "What me worry" attitude fits in quite well with this crew. If you know him, you must admit, he is a lovable sort!

The Muddy Joe crippled along with the starboard engine useless, leaving the craft with no electrical power, thus no refrigeration, nor power to raise and lower the two anchors. We were also left with no communication. Our crew persevered, even enjoyed the additional challenge…what a Team! We were sailing north through an area, called Bluefield Range. There were several various sized islands, most uninhabited.

It was late afternoon, and we needed to start looking for a place to anchor, as we saw a storm approaching off in the distance. Skipper John decided to have the Cats anchor in a cove protected by two islands from the oncoming storm. One island, Bluefield Caye, had several small weathered buildings, all painted blue/green with a maze of docks, and piers connecting the buildings, and access to this part of the island, was built over the water.

The remainder of the island was well wooded. John explained it was probably an old fishing camp. It looked deserted, so we decided to send a recon team to check it out, after securing the anchors. Our crew chefs (Delta Chicks) informed us, we only had some sausage and ground meat left, which needed to be cooked, since we lacked refrigeration. We thought we'd check it out and perhaps cook our food at the deserted fishing camp and maybe catch some fish… that is where Big Al comes in…yeah ,right!

We lowered the 6' rubber dingy, equipped with a 15 hp outboard to prepare for a beach assault on the island. The dingy, well used with more patches than my favorite childhood jeans, required inflation with the furnished hand pump, on a daily basis. No problem, we had only a few hundred yards to the nearest pier. John, Freddy, and I climbed into the pitiful looking dingy. John takes one pull on the rope and the Evinrude was cranked. There was no movement on the island as we motored to the nearest pier. Freddy jumped up on the dock and secured the dingy, as John and I made our way onto the pier. We stood there a minute looking over the area. "Hello, hello", we yelled…no response. We walk along the pier, I follow Freddy as John takes an adjoining pier to another area. Walking slowly, we watched our

step due to missing boards and warped planks, making it a somewhat treacherous walk. Also, the sun was lowering in the sky, as some overcast became evident as the storm moved towards our location.

Stumbling along we yell again "hello, hello, again nothing. Suddenly, Freddy grabs me by the arm and points; "There is someone laying on a cot in that building...there's half a bottle of rum next to him." Freddy and I move closer in unison, just outside the open shack door, we yell a loud hello! A thin, dark, wrinkled, old looking man lept to his feet with a smile, dressed in shorts, tee shirt and ball cap. Looking somewhat startled as Freddy asks; "Do you have any fish or lobster for sale?" The startled man answers; "No, but I can always catch you some!" He extends his hand out and says; "I am Omar, the caretaker of the resort. We do not have much, I am keeping an eye on it while the owner is gone, I welcome you."

John joins up with us and asks Omar if we could cook our food here. Omar becomes very jubilant as he states; "You are Americans and you are welcome to use anything I have, let me show you to the kitchen and dining hall, what is mine is yours." He rhythmically gestures and sings his words. Omar is excited to have visitors...who knows how long he has been on this island alone. He said he would start the generator, while showing us to the dining facility. Amazingly, Omar had a full kitchen with cooking and eating utensils, plates, silverware, gas stove, even a pita pan heater. Beyond the wooden stick wall was a large 16'x20'dining area with multi style tables and chairs. The building was well constructed of vertically attached to small diameter wood posts. There were openings for windows and doors, equipped with wooden storm shutters. The interior was decorated with a 3'x5' flag hanging on each of the four walls; one American, one, British Union Jack, one Belize and one Omar identified from South Africa. It stayed very comfortable in the dining area, with the Caribbean breeze. We thought this is great, and Omar welcomed our suggestion to bring our food and drink ashore and prepare a feast for us all. He agreed to get the kitchen going as we walked to our dingy for the ride back to tell our sister ship and our crew of our findings.

Skimming across the smooth Caribbean bay between the islands in the dilapidated dingy was exhilarating to me. The beautiful blues, greens and turquoise colors of the sea, the sun lowering in the sky, promising a beautiful sunset on the water, and the picturesque islands were just awesome. I am grateful to be experiencing all this....what a paradise I am thinking.....Before I knew it we reached our sister ship and climbed aboard; with excitement in our voices, we tell our comrades of our findings and plans. We invite them to join us, on the island where we can discuss safety plans regarding the storm approaching while we eat and party. We then zip off towards our boat to pick up some crew and deliver drink and food to Omar's.

It requires two trips in the dingy to deliver the crew with a cooler of drinks from the craft to Omar's. We would need to return to the boat for our food supplies once Rachel, Melanie, and Joyce, meet Omar and check out the kitchen. Omar again shows such great delight and hospitality as he meets the rest of the crew. The kitchen will work, and plans are made, but it's time for social hour as the drinks are put on a table with mixers, and Omar's finest glassware, with the local and only Brewery name on it, Belikin, "the Beer of Belize"! Omar then explains he will be back; he had to get some bait to take Big Al fishing...THANK GOD! The crew wanders around the piers and docks checking out the buildings. I followed one pier to another row of blue/green buildings; two were outhouses, equipped with toilet seats and all....gettin' fancy in Paradise, I thought. I lifted the lid and 5 feet below is the clear waters of the Caribbean; Omar explained later, that the marine life biodegrades the feces with no harm to the ecology.....HHHMMMM, I hope to give it a try after supper and tell Big Al not to fish on this end of Paradise! Is this paradise or what, everything works in harmony....ah the tranquility of it all!!

Omar returns with "bait" for Big Al. "Hermit crabs", says Omar. "We catch little fish, and then with little fish, we catch big fish." As he chats with Big Al, the rest of us set up chairs on the pier as the sun begins to set on the Caribbean. Wow what a sight.....seems spiritual in nature, the beauty of it all. I realize how fortunate I am to be here. I hear the crew from our sister craft will not be joining us for supper and are heading to their boat. I was too consumed with the beauty of the setting, before long our crew gathered to watch the sunset. Omar comes to inform us the storm is heading away and will not

affect us. Cool…now back to the sunset! You have to see it to appreciate it, not just the indescribable view, but the actual feeling of it all is inexplicable. Amazing!!! Almost total darkness shortly after sunset, but Omar even has lighting provided by a kerosene generator….. As we retreat to the dining hall.

Big Al, Freddy, Rachel and I, climb into the dingy to go to the boat to get the food. Now some had been drinking and were feeling little pain. I'm not sure who was running the outboard, Freddy or Big Al, as they argued on how to start it. Finally under way, Rachel and I are opposite each other towards the front of the dingy holding flashlights in attempt to avoid some low areas where the motor would hit coral or sand. We get halfway to our catamaran, when the motor dies, and there is a smell of gasoline. Al and Freddy attempt to crank it with no luck. Meanwhile we are being carried out by the tide. The gasoline line was discovered lying on the deck and would not stay attached to the motor. Freddy and Al are screaming at each other, Rachel is laughing so hard, I'm afraid she's about to fall out of the under inflated dingy, that now won't start……total darkness, except for the flashlights from Omar's and the lights of our sister boat getting smaller and smaller as we continue to drift out to sea.

Freddy then says; "I'm here to make sure Rachel is safe….(I guess John gave him instructions), But we don't have to worry, we have Doc!" I am then thinking as we float away, yeah, this guy is twice my size not mention Big Al, not named Big for the hell of it. Rachel continues to laugh as Al and Freddy are getting gas all over each other and the dingy trying to repair it. The flashlights are getting dimmer, and I notice a large image ahead of us…oh Shit, it's that red schooner anchored earlier as we entered the cove. We hear John yelling from shore; "PADDLE….PADDLE!" Yeah right, do you think we have paddles or oars, I am thinking….Not a chance! Rachel and I start paddling with our hands. Finally, the engine cranks, I turn my flashlight towards the engine as we accelerate, and see gas spraying out of the junction of the motor and fuel line….but we keep moving….the motor slows, then dies again. Al is attempting to keep the fuel line in while Freddy operates the motor. After several attempts and sputtering of the motor we make it to our boat. By then we are hysterical with laughter, and yelling at each other. As I am helping to "drag" Big Al from dingy to boat he falls onto the steps laughing so hard he is crying. "I peed my pants," Half crying and laughing; "But I have a medical problem!"….."OK, Al, we don't need anymore info about your incontinent issues"; I shout out compassionately! Rachel can hardly walk she is so broken up with laughter.

We finally gather ourselves, and get what we need and prepare to get on the dingy when Big Al yells at Freddy to put his cigarette out because of the gas in the dingy. Freddy complies and flicks the butt! Rachel and I look with alarm as the lit cigarette catches the wind and is blown towards the gasoline laden dingy. I envisioned a ball of flames as I'm sure Rachel did. It just misses and falls harmlessly to the water. WHEW!! We make it back to Omar's with the dingy only dying once, thank goodness!!

The table is set with Omar's dishes and eating utensils. Once again the ladies of the Muddy Joe cook up a delicious meal of egg, sausage and potato burritos with a sautéed mixture of vegetables, using Omar's kitchen. We gather to eat, Omar at the head of the table and the crew were seated opposite each other. Omar says a short Blessing, after which we dig in!! Conversations were going in 2-3 directions as the food is passed around and plates are loaded, while the good food, drink, and friendship are saluted. Everyone is enjoying themselves and each other. Suddenly, the attention focuses in Omar's direction, who is apparently feeling the effects of "good" booze! I was unable to catch the beginning of the conversation Omar was having with Big Al, but I heard Omar make some kind of disparaging remark regarding President Bush.

Big Al, looking pretty well wasted, seemed to be motivating Omar with more political jabs. Omar continues spewing his world political views; his voice became angry and loud. Capt. John, now standing and shaking his finger towards Omar. The crew is scrambling to gather our things as others shout their feelings to Omar. We leave the building with our things, needing a few trips to the docked dingy, leaving Omar with the dirty dishes…sure am glad we were finished eating before Omar became radical terrorist on us.

Freddy and I are carrying things to the dingy, we suddenly hear, "HELP…..HELP", and water splash-

ing. We walk down the pier and see this object wallowing in the water, "HELP ME"...It was Big AL... he had fallen off the dock! Freddy yells, "STAND UP!" Al stumbles around and gets to a staggered stance in the knee deep water, as we reach down and pull him up, laughing like hell. He is a bit unstable; we guide him to a chair in front of the dingy against one of the bunkhouses, to await the dingy ride.

It takes two trips to get the crew to the boat, John has learned to run the motor and hold the fuel line in. The ladies and supplies are taken first with Gallagher using the flashlight to see. Big Al is still in the chair, insisting he is sleeping on the island. Freddy and I tell him that is ridiculous, but Al is too wasted to make a reasonable decision. John and Gal arrive back for us. I say; "Come on Al," knowing he will need help. He is still mumbling about staying on the island...I walk over and get nose to nose with him, I state in a clear, slow, deliberate manner; "Al, if you stay, you will awaken with Omar violating you as you are tied to the bed in there," pointing in the bunkhouse!

Al decided to try to get up; we help him into the dingy and finally head towards the boat. We make it, with no problem, but now to get Big Al out safely. Gallagher ties the dingy up, Freddy is behind Al assisting him. I am leaning on the portside safety cable as I reach and grasp Al's hand. He stumbles aboard the step of the cat...falls against me, he goes down and I, the only friggin Squid on the expedition, go overboard!! Freddy swears I came out of the water faster than I went in! We finally all get aboard. We get Al to bed, I hit the shower, and coffee is brewed. The remaining crew sits together on the deck sipping coffee, already reminiscing about the events just over the last 4-5 hours. We couldn't believe the evening remembrances for a lifetime!

As I think back, I wouldn't change a thing. The whole Omar experience was enlightening in so many ways to me. I feel grateful again to have shared this experience with my comrades and our brave lovely ladies. The therapeutic effect of this trip has been amazing to me, and oh the thrill and honor of being Corpsman of Marines again. Such a pleasure, too sweet for me to express fully! I stated earlier, I am a PTSD survivor.

Upon return I had an appointment with my trustworthy shrink. He has admitted the VA is a major stressor in my life and agreed more time in Belize would do me good. I told him he could help me by giving me 6 months worth of medications and he won't see me anymore...."I'm moving to Belize." ....Shocked, he stated, "I'll give you the meds, but what about your lab work, and other health problems?" I said, "No sweat Doc, they will resolve themselves as I resolve my stress by going back to Belize." He nodded and said, "You are probably right!" Therefore, if you read this in the Red Clay, I should be living in Belize. Thank you Brother John Rowland for your very therapeutic trip...I recommend it to all who suffer with PTSD, or anyone who wants to seek a better way of life...for me at least....From Caye Caulker, Belize, Central America....this is

Doc Cahill.....OUT
1/26 Delta Co.
1st PLT. Corpsman
RVN 1968-'69



Publisher Comments:

Doc Cahill, I am sure glad you and the troops from Delta had a good time. It must have been a real special experience for you. I hear tell all the time you spent in the US Navy, this was the first time you ever got near water, or put your feet on any kind of boat. Welcome Aboard Ahoy-Mate.

Tom Eichler



Kneeling, L-R Omar, Al (Fisherman) Knight– Standing L-R Fred (Hoss) McEwan, Joyce Cahill, Melanie Stone, Charles (Let me walk point) Gallagher, Rachel Rowland and Doc Cahill



L-R Joyce Cahill, Fred McEwan, Charles Gallagher, Melanie Stone and John (JR) Rowland

A PROUD MOMENT

By Steven Wiese B Co 1/26

I have a story that I'm so proud of, and want to pass it on before it's too late.

We Viet Nam guys are getting older. I'm sure we all have stories to tell. Please believe me, in telling this story I am not trying to make myself out as someone who was a lot braver than the next guy, "I wasn't". I just feel the story needs to be told, to show the character, and bravery of the men at Khe Sahn.

I was a squad leader with Bravo Company, 1/26. I had been with B Company since arriving in Nam over a year earlier (I extended my tour six months). I had been in Khe Sahn since the company came off of Hill 881. I'm sure everyone is aware of the history of Khe Sahn receiving the rockets and mortars every night, where my story begins.

It was sometime between the middle of February and the 25th of February 1968. The nightly rocket and mortar attacks had been getting worse. Like most of the Marines in Khe Sanh, it was taking its toll. One afternoon the Lieutenant came down and informed me that intelligence reported enemy activity around Khe Sanh had intensified, and an attack on the base was not if, but when. We were to hold our position for as long as possible. If we were to get probed, and the opportunity to capture an NVA, were available, we were to do so, and not kill him. Headquarters wanted a live prisoner, and it was the highest priority.

I was convinced the enemy was tunneling under our perimeter. I had taken a steel rod about four feet long, that I had "borrowed" from somewhere. I had driven it in the ground in the corner of my bunker. I left three or four inches sticking out of the ground. I would take an empty can, place it on top of the rod, and listen. It was crude but it did work. When it was very quiet once in a while I would hear a faint tick, or click, I assumed this was when their pick or shovel would hit a rock, and I sent word up to the skipper that I thought I heard tunneling. They sent down a couple guys with listening devices, headphones and the whole works. They hung around for two or three hours, said they didn't hear anything, and left. I didn't care, I was sure I heard digging. I was thinking about it one afternoon while my men were on various work parties, filling sand bags, reinforcing bunkers, and the usual daily activities. Suddenly a brilliant idea came to me, at least I thought it was brilliant. They wanted a live prisoner, I thought that shouldn't be so tough, we knew they were out there, so I thought I would take a couple men, sneak out in the middle of the night, an capture an NVA. To me, it seemed a snap.

Well that's how it started, how could I make this work. The best way it seemed would be like a recon team, moving slowly and quietly, with maybe just two men. I couldn't order them to go, after all this wasn't an authorized mission; I wanted Lance Corporal Wayne Moore, and Lance Corporal Author Smith (not Arthur). I knew no matter what happened, I could depend on them. I considered them the best the Marine Corps had, (and on March 30th, they proved it) but I couldn't order them to go. I couldn't even ask them if they would go. I decided the best way was to gather my men, tell them my plan, and ask for volunteers.

Once the whole squad met in front of my bunker, I informed them of my plan. I told them I was sick and tired of sitting around doing nothing, getting rocketed and mortared and just sitting waiting to die. I said I only needed two men, to sneak out from in front of our squad area. We would take no gear of any kind, no flak jackets, no helmets, only a bayonet and pistol. Our goal was not to kill, but to capture, and get back.

I again explained this was not an authorized mission, but I was acting on my own. Everyone was to keep this hush-hush, no one was to know about it. I also told them that this could be a very dangerous mission, and I wasn't really expecting anyone to volunteer. I told them not to make any decisions now, but to think about it, let me know later, if they chose to go.

Here's where the pride part comes in, L/Cpl. Moore was the first man to come to me, I'll never forget it. He did not volunteer, he informed me that he was definitely going, he didn't care who volunteered. I thanked him, stating "I was hoping you would come". The second man was L/Cpl. Author Smith. Smitty said, "you can count on me". I knew I could.

Something happened that day that I had not expected. Throughout the day, every last man in my

squad came to me and volunteered. One man told me he was afraid, but, if I didn't get two volunteer's, he would go, because he didn't want to let me down. I never would have taken this individual with me on such a mission, but my respect for him rose a notch that day.

Then something truly remarkable happened. A man from a another squad come to me. He said he heard I was going out, and wanted to volunteer. His name was Corporal Claire. He was one of the members of the ghost patrol, later KIA 2/25/68. I was surprised, and wanted know how he heard about it. He informed me that the rumor was going around. I told him the story was bull shit. He replied, "still, if you are going out, I want to go". I had three more men volunteer from other squad's that day. I had said I wanted this to be kept hush-hush, but still, the story spread. I was told to report the Captain Pipes, immediately.

When I reported to the skipper, I did not think I was quite prepared for what occurred. The skipper commenced to chew my ass. He told me he had heard I was taking a suicide mission outside the wire, and in no uncertain terms that I would **NOT** go out. If I did, I would be busted in rank to Private, and spend the rest of my days on work details. And if I still pursued my idea, and someone was to get killed, he would make sure I was court-martialed, and put in the brig for the rest of my life. Then, as only a commanding officer can do he said, "do you understand me Marine"? I snapped back as if I was still in boot camp YES SIR. On the way out the door the skipper said "Corporal, you make me proud to be a Marine". Somehow he had turned that ass chewing around, as only a great leader can, and I came back to the bunker feeling proud.

Needless to say, we never went out of the wire that night, or any other night. I hope I've portrayed some of the pride, to have served with these men, these warriors. In remembrance of L/Cpl. Author Smith and L/Cpl. Wayne Moore, who were KIA 3/30/1968.

Bravo lives on

POETRY

Heart of a Veteran

Does anyone truly see
Into the Heart of a Veteran?
Secrets and memories only
Each other can grasp and know.
'Nam was cruel, and the rain fell
Onto their skin as they stood,
Young, and scared in that hell.
The ones who came home,
Came home to sneers, and to
Friends they no longer knew…
Life went on, but differently.
Some married and had families,
Some never spoke of the things
They had seen, things they had done.

There is a new generation now,
Of the young and the brave,
I am the wife of one of those men.
Letting go, saying goodbye,
Waiting for letters from Iraq every day.
Our baby is due very soon,
A little girl who will change the world.
Will he be home to see her arrive?
We wonder and we pray.

But I have not been alone, you see,
These marines who fought in 'Nam-
They have lifted me above my fears,
Helped me see I will be okay,
And that this baby girl is the prize
At the end of a dark tunnel for one marine.

In the mornings I open my front door,
To see another day begin.
There waiting are baby clothes, gifts,
And cards that contain the prayers and
The well wishes that these veterans
have extended to our baby girl.

So, I ask....Does anyone truly see
Into the heart of a Veteran?
I think I have seen a peak.
Love and compassion live
Amidst the memories of war,
Amidst the aftermath of tragedy.

Although it may feel like the world

Has forgotten and left you behind,
This family has not and never will.
You are a true and living example of
Unconditional love and support.
And I will always thank God
For making a place for me
In the Heart of a Veteran.

Melissa Pierson
Wife of Cpl Douglas Pierson
USMC, IRAQ

THE FEW THE PROUD, THE FINEST

The Visit

by Craig W. Tourte

I realize that all of our members are not Marines, but for those of you who are, I thought you would enjoy this email a friend sent to me.

My dad, Angelo, was in the hospital in Tacoma, Washington. A former Marine, and veteran of the Korean War, he was having his third knee replacement surgery. A long and very painful operation was going to be made even worse because dad was going through it alone. There was no one to hold his hand, no familiar soft voices to reassure him. His wife was ill and unable to accompany him or even visit during his weeklong stay. My sisters and brother lived in California and I lived even farther away, in Indiana. There wasn't even anyone to drive him to the hospital, so he had arrived that morning by cab. The thought of my dad lying there alone was more than I could stand. But what could I do from here?

I picked up the phone and called information for the Puyallup, Washington Marine Corps recruiting station, where I joined the Marines ten years before. I thought that if I could talk to a Marine and explain the situation; maybe one of them would visit my dad. I called the number. A man answered the phone and in a very confident voice said, "United States Marines, Sergeant Vanes, may I help you"? Feeling just as certain, I replied, "Sergeant Vanes, you may find this request a little strange, but this is why I am calling." I proceeded to tell him who I was and that my father was also a former Marine, and 100 percent disabled from the Korean War. I explained that he was in the hospital, alone, without anyone to visit and asked if Sergeant Vanes would please go and see him.

Without hesitation, he answered, "Absolutely." I asked, "If I send flowers to the recruiting station, would you deliver them to my dad when you go to the hospital?" "Ma'am, I will be happy to take the flowers to your dad. I'll give you my address, you send them, and I will make sure that he receives them," The next morning, I sent the flowers to Sergeant Vane's office, just as we had planned. I went to work, and that evening, I returned home and phoned my dad to inquire about his surprise visitor. If you have ever talked with a small child after that child has just seen Santa Claus, you will understand the glee I heard in my dad's voice.

"I was just waking up when I thought I saw two Marines in their dress blue uniforms standing at the foot of my bed," he told me excitedly. "I thought I had died and gone to Heaven. But they were really there!" I began to laugh, partly at his excitement, but also because he didn't even mention his operation. He felt so honored: Two Marines he had never met took time out to visit an old Marine like him. He told me again and again how sharp they looked and how all the nurses thought he was so important. "But how did you ever get them to do that?" he asked me. "It was easy. We are all Marines, Dad, past and present; it's the bond."

After hanging up with my dad, I called Sergeant Vanes to thank him for visiting my dad. And to thank him for the extra things he did to make it special: wearing his dress blue uniform, bringing another Marine along. He even took a digital camera with him. He had pictures taken of the two Marines with my dad right beside his bed. That evening, he e-mailed them to me so I could see for myself that my dad was not alone and that he was going to be okay. As for the flowers, they hardly mattered, but I was glad for the opportunity to express my feelings. The card read: "Daddy, I didn't want just anyone bringing you flowers...so I sent the World's Finest. Semper Fi."

Publisher Note: *I am going to make sure Sergeant Vanes receives copies of this issue of Red Clay, with his story. I will also send copies to Headquarters, USMC, so they know of the wonderful things our Marines are doing.*

KHE SANH VETERANS VISIT WOUNDED VETERANS FROM IRAQ

Visit to Camp Lejeune
By Ronald Shouse

Cliff Treese and I went to Camp Lejeune, to visit the young warriors who were wounded in Iraq. Who better to talk to them than a couple of old war Heroes from the 60's. I drove down on the tenth of January from Winston Salem, North Carolina. Cliff drove up from Melbourne, Florida. Upon arrival, I checked in at the Hospitality House and decided to recon the area.

The PX is still in the same place, but now the area around it that used to be a PT Field, is a now scheduled to be a shopping center. The building once used as Force Troops Headquarters, is located in the same place, but is now a barracks. The area where Women Marines were formerly located has also moved. Base and Division Headquarters are still as we left them, and are now designated FSSG.

While I was conducting my recon, Cliff was cruising around the countryside trying to find Camp Lejeune. When he finally arrived, we got something to eat at one of the many fast food restaurants located on the base. After supper we sat on the balcony of the hospitality house and listened to the sound of mortars and artillery fire coming from the impact range located near Courthouse Bay. With the helicopters flying around, it was like being back in Vietnam. We both should have had an attack of PTSD, but strangely it seemed relaxing, or maybe we both just felt safe. We both had the best sleep we have had in years.

On Wednesday, we located the area that we came to visit. It is located at Hospital Point, and is called "**Wounded Warrior Unit".** Lt Colonel Maxwell who was wounded in Iraq, started this program. It has been designated "Maxwell Hall" in his honor. Even though the veterans we met were 40 years our junior, they received us as if we were one of them.

While these young Marines were eating lunch, Cliff and I put down the convertible top on his vette, and after lunch at Burger King, drove around the base, since it was an unusually warm day, for the month of January. Cliff wanted to visit the base barber to get a military haircut, in case he wore his dress blues during our visit. He did not get a "high and tight", but it was regulation. We also got in a little shopping at the PX.

We returned to Maxwell House, met with Lt. Col Maxwell, and visited with the wounded Marines. We brought the video of the battle of Khe Sanh, produced by the History Channel. After viewing the video, they had a million questions. Cliff and I answered them as best we could. We also told a few humorous stories in regards to what they could expect when they reached our age. We informed them of our organization and its goals, and the most important thing, keeping in touch with each other. If they did, they would discover that they would still look out for each other as we, in our organization do.

We personally spoke with a couple of men that were concerned about their future, since their wounds had ended their military careers. Cliff informed them he had felt the same after suffering his disabling injury, but had persevered, and had led a wonderful productive life. Actually talking to veterans that had been through the same circumstances seemed to have a very positive effect on these young men.

While Cliff was talking to the men, I wandered out and talked to some officers in the foyer of the barracks. I first thought they were advance party for a Congressman that was scheduled to visit. They were in fact there, to inform these wounded Marines of their future benefits from the VA. A female Captain looked me straight in the eye, and said she would make sure that they understood everything they were entitled to, before they left. I do not recall receiving any such information concerning future benefits when I got out, but I could be wrong.

Congressman Jones, representing the Eastern North Carolina District, finally arrived. The Marines did not seem to put much faith in what they thought he had to say. I sort of recall we felt the same way when a politician visited us. Of course, as we did, they sat and politely listened, on their best behavior. Congressman Jones surprised me. He seemed like he was genuinely concerned with the situation these men were in. After he spoke, he took a handful of his personal cards and put them on the table. "If you guys need anything at all he said". Although we had never met him, he seemed sincere, not someone campaigning for votes. After he departed, Cliff and I

continued our visit. We presented the Marines with gifts from the Khe Sanh Veterans, and handed out challenge coins from our organization. Cliff and I invited Captain Williams, and his wife to dinner. We decided to meet at the Lone Star Steak house in Jacksonville.

When we left the barracks, Cliff got lost and we almost missed dinner with Captain Williams and his lovely wife. They were just arriving when we finally found the restaurant. Jacksonville has changed a lot in the 30 years since we left. Highway 24 from the main gate still has the pawn shops, but the bars have been replaced with night clubs. There are several shopping malls and restaurants are everywhere. It doesn't look like a military town anymore.

When we went back on base, Cliff and I contacted a young man we had previously met at Dieruff High School in Allentown, Pa. Jeshua Alston told us that he was going to join the Corps and asked us if we would like to come to Parris Island when he graduated. It was almost two years ago that this kid got his first stripe. Now he is a Corporal, soon to be Sergeant, and will be going back to Iraq within the next 2 months for his second tour as a 0311, which seemed to be the primary MOS of all the men we spoke with.

When it was time to leave, I told Cliff that I was going to drive around and reminisce. I ended up at Base Headquarters, and spoke to the Sergeant Major. He was very pleasant, but looked so young. I asked him why all the Marines in the Corps today, looked so young and skinny. He told me it was something they put in the water. I bought a bottle before I left but it hasn't helped me yet. If it works I will get a water buffalo filled to bring to you guys. Cliff called me later to tell me that he went to Clothing Sales to see about a set of the new camouflage utilities, and to the PX for some more goodies.

We returned to Maxwell House and showed the wounded warriors the banner that we all signed at our reunion. We asked if the group would like to have one for all of them to sign. They thought it would be a great idea. Cliff and I will go back to MCB Camp Lejeune for that presentation along with some copies of "Battalion of Kings" for the General and Sergeant Major, sometime in the near future.

Cliff got a late start from Camp Lejeune, so he stopped by Parris Island to spend the night. He got a room on base, and next morning went to see General Tryon, the CG of MCRD, Colonel Valentine, base Chief of Staff and Major White, Base Public Affairs officer. He presented them with a copy of the **RED CLAY** which included the story we did on returning to Boot Camp. They really liked it, and without these three men opening all the right doors for us, we never would have been able to do it. They made sure we got everything we wanted, and treated us like we were some kind of dignitaries.

Cliff also made a stop at the Parris Island Museum to see Gunnery Sergeant Charles Taliano, the Rose Garden DI. Sergeant Taliano was on his way to Bethesda Naval Hospital to visit the kid wounded in Iraq that had received the note saying "wish you would die". Cliff caught up with him by phone and said he would see him in March when he speaks to a Platoon of Graduates from the 2nd Battalion.

I am sure that I speak for Cliff when I say, we were so proud to be in a room with these men. What the younger generation showed us can not be described in words. You have to stand there to feel the pride and the courage of these young men. In them we saw a lot of you guys, some forty years ago, that no matter what was going on or how bad it was, you had to get back where you belonged to do your job. It was another successful trip by your Roving Ambassadors and we hope you guys can make it someday.

Fortes Fortuna Juvate (fortune follows the brave)
Ron Shouse B Btry 1/13
Cliff Treese B Btry 1/13





Sgt Klepper and Corporal Moonyhan, Part of the "Stick Brigade."



Day Room, with Lance Corporals Silverdale and Williams, the Marines we spoke to, regarding their future.



Gunnery Sergeant Barnes



L-R Ron Shouse, Lt Col Maxwell, Cliff Treese, Captain Williams.



Wounded Marines Watching Khe Sanh Video in their Day Room.

Publisher Note:

Thanks Ron and Cliff, you and your lovely wives Lynn & Linda, at great personal expense, are forever promoting our organization, through your numerous endeavors to help veterans. You are a credit to the Khe Sanh Veterans and the United states Marine Corps, and the United States of America, God Bless

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The Khe Sanh Veterans'

RED CLAY

There have been many stories regarding an F/4 Phantom being shot down and landing at Khe Sanh. Thanks to Joe Belardo, C Btry 1/44 TH (SP) Dusters, here is photographic proof that the plane landed, was repaired and successfully made it back to the carrier from which it took off.



A-4 Skyhawk Off Aircraft Carrier - Shot in Gas Tank. Notice Fuel on Runway and Tail Hook.



A-4 Skyhawk Readying for Takeoff



A-4 Skyhawk Readying for Takeoff

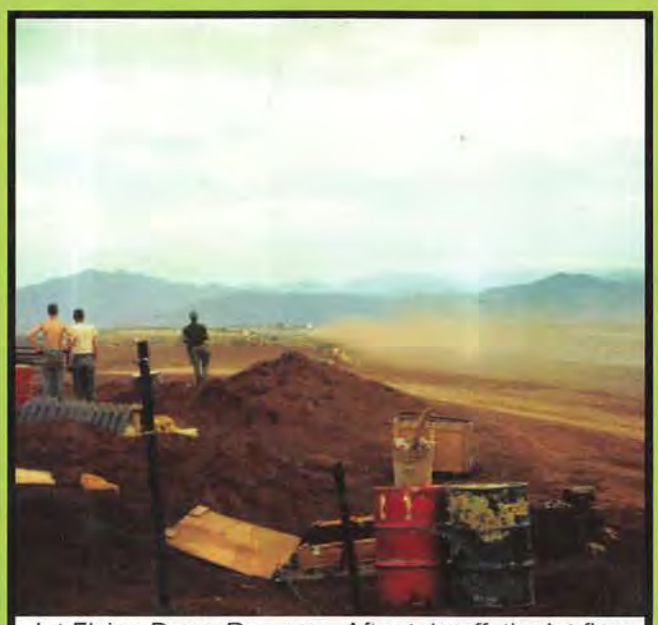

Jet Flying Down Runway - After takeoff, the jet flew 50 feet over runway and did a victory roll skyward

Issue 65

The Khe Sanh Veterans'

SUMMER

RED CLAY

(Feature Story)"**THE GRIM REAPER"** The True story of the crew from C Battery 1st Platoon 1/44 TH (SP)"**DUSTERS"** during their time in Vietnam, as Told By their Crew Chief Sergeant Joseph Belardo USA









Secretary Notes

The reunion is already upon us. If you have not registered please due so. I believe this is going to be one of our best reunions. The committee has done an outstanding job. I have a lot of new items for the PX. All profits go to our magazine which is constantly improving in size and quality. If you like the magazine and want it to continue, support the PX.
John "Big John Pessoni
Secretary

Publisher Notes

I want to thank the members who responded to my request for dues payment. However over 120 members who paid last year did not respond, and are still in arrears. The next Red Clay (Issue 65) will be out the 1st of June. Our printing Company gave us a special deal on issue 64 and if those who failed to pay their dues, do respond, they will be able to receive both issue 64& 65.

Michael Fishbaugh has been added to our staff as the Article Research Editor. He has done a fine job in searching out articles from many sources. Although many of these article are interesting, we would rather have personal stories written by our members. The magazine is only as good as the articles you submit. So get off your butts, jot down those stories, let everyone enjoy them. Pretend your'e are at some gin mill relating of your personal remembrances.

Reunion News

When you receive issue 65 of Red Clay, the reunion will be a few weeks away. Please register as soon as you receive the forms with your magazine. We have

MEMORIALS

Those Remembered				Remembered By
SW2 Edward C. Adams	USN-CBMU-301 Det B		KIA 19 Apr 68	Larry Kubley SW3 CBMU-301 Det B
Sgt. Manuel F. Martinez		USA	KIA 09 Jun 68	Bruce Geiger A Btry 1/44 "Dusters"
Capt. Walter J. Egger	C1/26	USMC	KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger A Btry 1/44 "Dusters"
Lt. Paul W. Bush	C1/26	USMC	KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger A Btry 1/44 "Dusters"
G/Sgt. John J. Grohman	C 1/26	USMC	KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger A Btry 1/44 "Dusters"
L/Cpl. Stephen C. Shannon	C/1/26	USMC	KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger A Bter 1/44 "Dusters"
PFC Bennie J. Sisson	C/1/26	USMC	KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger A Btry 1/44 "Dusters"
S/Sgt. Arnold J. Ferrari	C/1/26	USMC	KIA 31Mar 68	Bruce Geiger A Btry 1/44 "Dusters"
PFC Joseph K. Wheeler	C/1/9	USMC	KIA 31 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger A Btry 1/44 "Dusters"

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Robert Moxley..... Member At Large
Dan Fisher..... Member At Large

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to plan for scheduled events and it is important to have an accurate account of those who will be attending. If you have any problems with making reservations please call Jimbo or PJ at 972-727-2997. A few of the staff at the hotel are still misinforming members of availability of rooms and the status of the hotel after the storm. We have spoke to them and the problem should be taken care of.

We can assure you there is nothing wrong with the hotel. They are in the process of making a few renovations. They have assured us that guest will not notice the repair work being done. It is a beautiful hotel and they have many wonderful things planned for our reunion.

*****

Real Reason for Reunions

By George Marrett

"I now know why we who have been to war yearn to reunite. It's not just to tell war stories, look at old photos, and drink beer... although we do all of that. We don't do so to laugh at our past mistakes or dry one another's tears either. Warriors gather because they long to be with buddies who acted their best, men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw, right down to their humanity. I did not pick these men to share my year of toil and torment. They I now know them in a way I know no others. Never have I given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me into the future. It was also part of the unwritten code, the reason we were willing to die for one another and our country."

PERSONAL OBIT

Just A Story

By Ski-ball

My brother and I have been estranged for many years. Although my mother tried to have contact with him, there was none. Every year on his birthday she would send him a card with money enclosed. Never was it sent back, nor was it ever acknowledged. Early in the estrangement, I stopped by and knocked on his door, but he would never answer. Telephone calls had the same result. My brother also served in the Marines. Everyone that I ever ran into who knew him in the Corps had nothing but the highest regard for him as a Marine. But, as a brother and a son he was one rotten son of a bitch.

Plain and simple. Last Wednesday, just as I was ready to try to catch some sleep the phone rang. A voice on the other end asked if I was so and so who grew up in a certain part of Cleveland, and had a brother by such and such a name. I said I was, and, I did. He had seen my brother's name in a public service obit in a local paper and gave me the name of the funeral home that paid for the obit. I thanked him for letting me know, hung up, and called the funeral home. A gentleman answered (who I later learned had also served in the Corps), and after identifying myself, there was a silence on the other end. Finally, he spoke. He told me that he did not know that my brother had any family. My brother had spent his last 8 months in a nursing home. Where when he checked in, he had answered to the question "next of kin, I have no living family members."

He died a pauper and the local Marine Corps League Chapter was burying him the following Tuesday in the nearest National Cemetery. His body had already been cremated. They had funds set aside for such occasions. I filled in some blanks for him, thanked him, and hung up. I said that I would be at the funeral ceremony. I now had one of the hardest tasks in my life to do. Early the next morning I set off on a 4 hour ride to Cleveland to let a 92 year old mother know that her oldest son was dead. That was one long trip. Although she has slowed down, she wanted to go to the ceremony. The following Tuesday my youngest son went with me to help with my mother.

The day was beautiful. I must say that the Marine Corps League Honor Guard did a wonderful job. The tribute was fired with M-1's, and, with precision. The flag was folded by two sharp active duty Marines, who presented it to my mother. Fella's. When Taps was played, my tears rolled. Years ago I had stolen a picture from my brother from when he was in Nam. My wife had blown it up and framed it, because I wanted a face attached to the casket and the name. The social worker from his nursing home volunteered to hold it during the ceremony. She was surprised to learn that he did have a living family. With my son's help, my mother held up as well as could be expected.

He had two ex-wives and a couple of kids. None of them showed. I really don't know if they were aware of his passing. The phone numbers my mother had were no good, and there was no listing for any of them.

I buried a brother who I no longer knew. From his social worker and the funeral director I received what few papers they had, including a well worn discharge paper. Hence the earlier questions. Maybe it was not the way I envisioned, but my mother was able to say good bye to him. It has been a long week. And a lot of thoughts and memories keep crossing my mind. Some good and some bad. But such is life, and, such is death.

*****

MEMOIRS

HILL 861 16 March 1967

By Danny Schuster

Today, March 16, 2006 brought back vivid memories that I usually don't remember. I need to share this. On 15 March 1967, 1st Platoon of Echo 2/9 left the Khe Sanh combat base via trucks, and were dropped off at the French plantation at the foot of Hill 861, to begin a PPB. We were under strength by at least a dozen Marines. We made it nearly three fourths of the way up the hill before dusk. Staff Sergeant Olson, our platoon Commander, chose to leave our squad, (led by Lou Damiano,) in some elephant grass as an ambush. There was a huge ravine near where we set up, and we could hear the NVA talking all night.

When we rejoined the rest of the platoon early the morning of the 16th we informed S/Sgt. Olson that we heard a lot of chatter from the NVA during the night. He requested artillery support from the Base Commander prior to our platoon moving out that morning but was flatly turned down.

We were on the move for about a half an hour when Johnson the point man saw a couple of NVA setting up a home-made claymore mine. He opened up on them and they returned fire, seriously wounding him. If it were not for the immediate action of Doug Goodin, our gunner from Weapons platoon, many of us would have died very quickly. Goodin had the gun up and blazing in a matter of seconds, and the enemy fire subsided long enough for us to set up a makeshift line along a trail through a bamboo thicket. It was shortly after we set up that the enemy started rolling grenades down the hill on us. SSgt. Olson was finally successful in getting air support. I can still remember those crazy bastards flying those jets right at tree top level, dropping 500 pounders on the NVA positions. Those pilots saved our asses. A chopper came in for Johnson. Joe Schroeder was one of the Marines who volunteered to carry Johnson. An enemy soldier suddenly appeared and opened up with his AK47. Joe was killed instantly and, most likely Johnson. Fens returned fire killing the NVA who had shot Johnson and Schroeder.

We were sent out into a perimeter and were digging foxholes when mortars started falling on us. Lou immediately realized that they were walking the mortars with great accuracy, along the line of our perimeter. He got my fire team out and was running behind me when he went down. I remember turning around and not seeing him. I went back and found him. The entire fire team grabbed him and carried him back to our platoon CP area. When we saw how seriously he was wounded, we thought that he was not going to make it.

By now we had between five and seven KIA's and just as many WIA's. Lou was the worst off. A helicopter arrived to med-evac Lou, and the other WIAs. Lou, the most seriously wounded, was the first to be placed on the helicopter. Our fire team carried him on aboard. We are probably alive today because we were on board when a mortar round hit the ramp just as the helicopter was taking off. Most of the men in the immediate area of that chopper were killed by that incoming round. We headed back to base in a badly damaged helicopter. I remember L/Cpl Moore noticed that his chest was bleeding. A corpsman took a look and realized Moore had shrapnel imbedded in his lung. Lou was rushed to the hospital. I learned later that he survived.

On that day, 2/9 suffered the largest loss for a platoon from one company, 12 good men KIA. A platoon from Bravo 1/9 arrived on Hill 861 from another PPB, and lost 6 of their own KIA trying to bail out my buddies from 1st Platoon. By the end of that stinking day there were 18 Marines KIA and 59 WIA from two platoons. The picture is of the memo-

rial service held at Khe Sanh for the 12 1st Platoon members KIA. I regret to this day missing it because I was down in DaNang at the EENT Clinic. Today is not a good day for me.

Joe Schroeder
Lloyd Kurtz
Bill Lamon
Julian McKee
Rich Vedder
Andy Alderman
Michael Daley
Francis Benoit
Norm Catlin
Jim Goetz
Charlie Gunn
Ron Imperiale
George Johnson

Semper Fidelis,
Danny Schuster
Echo, 2/9

A RELATED STORY

Here's a related incident, I found amazing. My wife and I were in Las Vegas on vacation 2-3 years ago. We were "casino" hopping down the strip toward the Lexus from the Flamingo. I was losing miserably all week long. We were sitting at the bar at the MGM Grand. I am a video poker player and had just lost another $20 at the bar machine. There was a large screen TV behind the bar. I wanted to leave but my wife still was having some luck on her machine. Just then God Bless the USA started playing with an accompanying video. I sat there sipping a beer and when the scenes from Vietnam appeared. I began crying like a little kid.

The bartender came over, and put another beer in front of me. He said it looked like I needed one. I was wearing my 2/9 cover. After I calmed down, I decided that the $20 I might lose really meant nothing. I stuck another bill in the machine. In the next 20 minutes I hit a $100 and $200 jackpot, then a Royal Flush for $1,000. We left and were heading across the pedestrian walk to the Excalibur when my wife said she thought a man was trying to get my attention. He was from 1/9 and informed me that they were having a reunion at the Excalibur. I said: "great we'll try to find some of them." He cautioned that there were no formal events scheduled at that time of day, so everyone was probably split up. We went into the casino, and I told my wife we'd stop at the



bar, and if we did not see anyone from 1/9, we would go back to our hotel.

Not only were there 1/9ers at the bar, but four of them were among those from Bravo 1/9 who came to our assistance on 16 Mar 67. To say we had a "few" would be understating things. What a small, and sometimes wonderful, world we live in. We lost two corpsmen that day Doc, Andy Alderson was the other. They were loved and well respected. Benoit saved many lives that day. I can only do my own little thing, but hope it helps somewhat in allowing them and the other Marines lost that day rest in peace and never be forgotten.
Semper Fi,

Publisher Note: Here is a copy of the Navy Cross Citation for HM-3 Francis Arthur Benoit E Company 2/9.



BENOIT, FRANCIS ARTHUR

Hospitalman Third Class, U.S. Navy

Corpsman (Attached), Company E, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, 3d Marine Division (Rein.) FMF
Date of Action: March 16, 1967

Citation:



The Navy Cross is presented to Francis Arthur Benoit, Hospitalman Third Class, U.S. Navy, for extraordinary heroism on 16 March 1967 while serving with Company E, Second Battalion, Ninth Marines, Third Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in the Republic of Vietnam. While returning to the Company Command Post from a night platoon patrol base, Petty Officer Benoit's platoon was suddenly attacked by an enemy force employing small arms, automatic weapons, and hand grenades. Observing several wounded men, Petty Officer Benoit rushed forward into the intense enemy fire to administer medical aid, but was wounded, himself, by a hand grenade before reaching the casualties. Stunned and temporarily unable to move, he waited for the wounded to be brought to him, and then quickly and competently rendered medical assistance while exposed to enemy fire. After the attack had subsided and the wounded had been put aboard an evacuation helicopter, he refused to be evacuated and thus leave the platoon without a Corpsman. When the second helicopter came in, the landing zone was hit by enemy mortar fire, inflicting additional casualties. Petty Officer Benoit again stayed behind to treat the wounded. He was helping the last wounded man into the third helicopter, before boarding himself, when he was fatally wounded by an enemy mortar round. By his technical skill, courage and inspiring devotion to duty, Petty Officer Benoit undoubtedly saved the lives of many of his fallen comrades. His heroic actions were in the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

Authority: Navy Department Board of Decorations and Medals
Home Town: Red Lake Falls, Minnesota

SHORT ROUNDS

LIFE HAS A FLAVOR

By Michael W. Rodriquez

He stubbed his toe and almost tripped on the railroad tie just this side of Castroville Road. He recovered his balance and glanced around, his eyes narrowed in suspicion, hoping no one had seen how clumsy he'd been. He grunted and wondered why he cared whether anyone had seen him. He scratched at his beard and glanced around again. Don't mean nothing, he muttered. I don't care; nobody cares. I don't care, he thought again, and sniffed at the stink of his body odor. He pulled his coat tighter to him and wished he had a match to light the one cigarette he had left. He knew he was saving it for a special occasion, but he also doubted he had any special days left in his life. He felt tired, or hungry, he wasn't sure which. No, he decided, I'm tired. Maybe I just need to sit for a while.

He eased himself down onto the gravel between the railroad tracks and the bushes that lined the rail bed, away from the road. He swung his head left and then right, struggling to remember again why he was so fascinated with railroad tracks. And then a distant memory, as if a dim bulb, lit up inside his brain. He thought he remembered a fight when he was younger, lots of guns and little people and loud noises and people shooting at each other. He knew he hated loud noises, but he could not remember why. He knew he also hated little people, although he could not recall why that was, either. He did know he loved the railroad tracks. They went this way and then they went that way and he had, as a young man, gone this way and that way, too, and he wondered, why did I do that?

He shifted his weight on the gravel and reached into a pocket of his trousers. He withdrew his hand and lifted his most prized possession to his eyes. His hand held a Zippo lighter, a stainless steel lighter that he'd had forever. He'd held onto it all these years, even when he was in the hospital in Seattle. They wanted to take it away from him, but he just set it down on a table and went back for it later. He knew that if this was all that was left of his life and it went away, then he'd go away, too. He flipped the lid open and spun the wheel, no spark flew, and no flame jumped to life. He did not care that it didn't work. What did matter, he still had it, and been able to hold onto it all these years. Longer than he'd held onto . . . What was her name? He grunted, afraid he could no longer remember the name of his first wife.

He'd been married several times, before he got sick, but he didn't care about the others; he just wanted to recall the name of the first girl he married. He glanced to his right, to the tracks coming toward him from the east, and then smiled, showing broken yellow teeth. Thelma, that was her name, why did that matter? He wasn't sure, but he thought it should be important to him. The marriage did not last long, but that was okay; the others hadn't lasted long, either. He sighed and felt his breath wheeze in his chest. He was tired and hungry and he hurt in places he could not even name.

He flipped the lighter's lid shut, the quick snap of it loud in his ears. He turned his head, anxious that no one should see him or his lighter. It was all he had left, it was all that was left of his life, and he closed his hand around it to hide it, but he did not put it back in his pocket. The sun was almost down and he knew he should find a shelter or an alley or something, but he couldn't will himself to stand. I like it here, he decided. I think I'll stay. He sat for a moment and then his eyes closed and his breathing became shallow. His head jerked and nodded once, then twice, and then it fell, resting heavy on his chest. Still sitting between the bushes and the railroad tracks, his heart thudded once, thudded again, and then his breathing stilled and his hand opened. The lighter slipped from his fingers and fell to the gravel at his feet.

He was still there when the cop saw him the next morning. The young patrolman turned his vehicle onto the shoulder of the road and called in a possible vagrant. He stepped from the car and walked to the man. He knew, even as he approached, that the man was dead. Poor old bastard, thought the young cop, and then he saw the lighter at the man's feet. He knelt and, still staring at the man, he picked up the lighter and glanced at it. He read the inscription, glanced at the still-sitting body of the man, and again, read the inscription. **"For those who fight for it, life has a flavor, the protected never know."**

This saying has been all over the internet, on Zippo

lighters- paraphrased in speeches, etc. A quick web search on the phrase resulted in several items found. It appears to have originated at Khe Sanh.

The inscription written on a C-ration box by an anonymous Marine during the battle of Khe Sanh in1968, which states "For those who fight for it, life has a flavor the protected never know." In an article written in **RED CLAY**, Timmy Craft claims to have written the phrase while serving with A Co, 3rd Anti Tanks. Tony Shaw asks if the statement he saw posted while serving in Khe Sanh, "For those who fight for it, life has a flavor the protected never know" (as cited in Newsweek, February 12, 1968), originated there or is paraphrased an older source.

"You have never lived, till you have almost died. And for those who fight for it, life has a flavor that the protected will never know." Anonymous (Graffiti on a sign at a command post at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam)

An American flag painted on a tank along with these words: "For those who fight for it, life has a flavor; the protected will never know."

Colonel Edward F. Danowitz, USMC (Ret), Altamonte Springs, Fl says, "These were the most important days, moments, seconds in their lives... We, who are Marines, who lock arms and embrace today, are not friends, or neighbors. We are brothers of combat. For those who fight for it, life has a special flavor that the protected will never know. That is what ties Marines together, and those who were there can savor the flavor that only combat veterans know."

*****

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Purple Heart designation to the Veterans ID

By Mac - Milton McNeely

All, FYI, the following is information that Ken Pipes forwarded requesting that it be shared. Please help get the word out to anyone that you think may have an interest.
Semper Fi,

VA adds Former POW and Purple Heart designation to the Veterans Identification Card VA has added Former POW and Purple Heart (PH) designations on its VIC. These designations are in addition to the Service-Connected designation already displayed on the VIC.

The cards have a photo of the veteran on the face of the card and identifying information imbedded using bar code and magnetic strip technology. Cards are issued to veterans enrolled in the VA health care system and are used for identification and administrative processing purposes. The VIC cannot be used as a credit or an insurance card and it does not authorize or pay for care at non-VA facilities.

Former Prisoner of War and Purple Heart recipients who are currently enrolled with VA and have a current VIC photograph on file will automatically be sent an updated VIC commencing early May, 2006. Former POWs and/or Purple Heart recipients who are enrolled but have not yet been issued a VIC may request the new card by visiting their local medical center to have their photo taken. Card processing will take five to seven days once eligibility is verified. VA encourages any Former POW or Purple Heart recipient who has not yet enrolled in its health care system to do so and once enrolled to request issuance of a VIC.

*****

WEB BRIEFS

Did anyone out there have any contact with Lt. Mariz. He was killed at Khe Sanh on Jan 30 1968. He was only there for two or three days. He transferred in from Okinawa. I'm his son-in law and am searching for information on his short time there for my wife, (his daughter). If you can help let me know. Thanks

Mike Fishbaugh

Mike, I emailed Mr. Hudak and told him that there is a rather extensive story regarding 1/Lt Robert J Mariz of HQ 26 Marines in Chaplain Ray Stubbe's book "Battalion of Kings" page 143. I also informed Mr. Hudak how he could order the book on Khesanh.org by going to the PX section of the site.

Craig Tourte

Craig. Thanks for responding to Mr. Hudak. As I surf the web, I have run across several family's who are tying to find answers and closure on a lost family member. Many received very little, if any information other then what they were told many years ago. I have referred a couple to "Battalion of Kings" and both of our Khe Sanh Web sites. The footnotes alone create a history and tell the amount of time that was spent researching oral interviews, etc, to make this book. I have two copies. One is going to my local college because they do have semester courses on Vietnam in general.

Semper Fi
Mike Fishbaugh

Mike, I also posted this email I sent to Mr. Hudak.
"***The things we endured never leave those of us who were there, and others who happen upon this web page can read a little of our history, and learn why we continue to come together.***

Pat,
I copied the article that is contained in the book "Battalion of Kings" regarding your wife's father, Robert Mariz. The book is a first hand account as told by others, about their involvement and often last moments with those killed at or near the Marine Corps Combat Base at Khe Sanh. It's a tough read. The experience never leaves those of us who were there. We have a reunion ever year somewhere in the US. This year it is going to be in Mobile Alabama and next year in DC. If you are around during any of these reunions why don't you folks stop by and introduce yourselves. I think your wife would find it helpful to be around the men who endured the same struggle for life that her father did. Also, please check out Khe Sanh.org for more info on the reunion and other materials relating to the Khe Sanh Veterans. I hope reading the below information will be of some help to you.

I want to add one more thing. There was absolutely nothing Lt. Mariz could have done to prevent what happened. The 122 mm rocket was huge and fast. Often we could not hear them since they were launched from miles away from the base. Worst of all, we had no structures or bunkers strong enough to prevent them from penetrating the interior and exploding. Survival for the most part was all just a matter of luck.

Semper Fi
Craig W. Tourte
Khe Sanh Combat Base 1967-1968

From "Battalion Of Kings" by Chaplain Ray William Stubbe 30 January 1968

KIA

L/CPL Timothy Michael Barmmer B/3rd Recon
1ST Lieutenant Robert J. Mariz HQ 26 Marines
Sergeant Jesus Roberto Vasquez, EOQ

HISTORY
The Khe Sanh Combat Base received one incoming 122mm rocket from the northwest, demolishing the company office which was for the most part, a plywood hardback located bear the regimental COC."We didn't spend too much time in there, said James Walsh". The rocket came in, hit just to the west of us, and threw shrapnel throughout the old company office. Both clerks were wounded. It blew the fingers off one, a red-headed man and hit the other one in the leg. I was standing right in the middle of them, and still everything missed me. I don't know how that happened. I found out Lieutenant Mariz had just left the regimental bunker, and was walking past the recon office when that rocket hit, and that's where he as killed."

"Kevin Macaulay, a radioman in Bravo Company, 3rd Recon, recalled the incident: "This brand new Lieutenant, he'd been in country a day or two, just exited the regimental COC bunker. You could tell he was new, his utilities were perfectly clean. His flak jacket was green; ours were stained red, from the soil at Khe Sanh. He walked right into the path of the rocket. He was seriously wounded. We saw him lying on the ground. One of his feet was at a turned at an impossible angle, and almost severed.

We were already carrying our company clerk, a fellow by the name of Ronald Coleman out of the company office who had taken shrapnel from the some round. Coleman lost, I believe, the major portion of all of his fingers on both hands, plus he had a gaping wound over his right kidney. I believe he did later survive. We brought Coleman up to Charlie Med, and came back for the wounded Lieutenant. As we

were loading him onto the stretcher, Colonel Lownds, the Battalion Commander, came up out of the COC bunker.

Colonel Lownds watched us as we picked him up and took him to the aid station. We came back with the empty stretcher. Colonel Lownds yelled; " Hey Marines how's he doing" ? I looked at the Colonel, and shook my head. Colonel Lownds was visibly upset by the Lieutenant's death. It was one of the few times that I had seen Colonel Lownds, or spoke to him. It left me with the impression that he did really care for the men under his command.

"Robert Mariz, born 9 July 1930, had enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1948. In 2002 one of his daughters wrote: My dad was very special to me and his memory is very strong in my mind and in my heart. I know I am lucky to have loved him and known him for the years that I had with him. I was 13 at the time that he died. We lived in Oceanside, California. We finished out that school year and then moved to Minnesota (always considered our home state) that summer. My mom has never remarried and still loves him very much. I have a sister, Pasti, who was 10 at the time. He was only at Khe Sanh about 2 days when he died. He had been a courier out of Okinawa for 6 months before going to Khe Sanh. He had traveled to Vietnam as a courier, but at Khe Sanh he would have been permanently stationed until August or September. He would have had 20 years in The Marines as of April in 1968. He had served in Korea when he was young and was at the Chosin Reservoir. I was named after the Marine Corps although my name is spelled differently. If I'd been a boy (I was told) I would have been named Gung Ho or Semper Fi, but I think that was a joke. The Marine Corps was important to him, as was his country. He believed in it."

*****

SHORT ROUNDS

My Personal Opinion

By Craig W. Tourte

I'm going to try and make an analogy here. When we were kids there was this big bully in grade school and we all hated him. He stole lunch money from our lockers and he used to beat up the weaker kids in school. He grew up to become a banker, had 5 kids and took his family to church on Sunday. I still hate him, not for what he became, but for what he was and for what he had done.

Tookey (sic) Williams started a gang when he was a young man. This gang evolved into a huge machine that was responsible for the murder of many of our citizens. After killing four innocent people he was sentenced to die. Twenty-five years later, Tookey wrote children's books from prison, found the lord and by all accounts was a changed man. They juiced Tookey, not for what he had become but for what he had done twenty-five years before. I still hated Tookey for killing the four innocents those many years ago and for founding a gang that has been responsible for the murder of thousands.

I understand and appreciate what Vietnam has become. I understand that most who live in Vietnam now, do not have any memory of the war with the United States. I know that Vietnam is now at peace and united after 1,000 years of various wars and conflict with the Chinese, French, Japanese and Americans. I understand that it is a different world now than the one I lived in 38 years ago. I understand that our war was a long time ago. What the heck, some of the Vietnamese may even love us now, while there are so many other countries that hate us. But as much as I understand all of these things and try to forgive those who brutalized so many of us and their own citizens, I know that for some, there is still a burning in their hearts. Many of us continue to view the country of Vietnam and it's government for what they were back then, rather for what they are now. I have rationalized, thought about this issue; remembered the events of our time, faced my doubts, forgave and tried to understand and move on with my life, but it's still there burning inside of me. I think it is OK if some of us are still pissed off about the whole thing, including being-pissed off at Vietnam, if it just does not make much sense to them, because there are times it just doesn't make sense to me either.

I'm sorry, but I still view the country of Vietnam much like I view the school bully who preyed on the weak and the founder of the gang, that killed four innocent kids so many years ago. I'll continue to be pissed off about it be it ever so irrational.

INCOMING

"Made In Vietnam"

By Craig W. Tourte

One cannot move forward by taking a step backward. When I served in Vietnam in 1967-1968, World War II had been over for 22 years. When I visited Japan in 1980 the war with that county had been over for over 35 years. Today the war with Vietnam has been over for 35 years and my personal connection with Vietnam has been over for over 38 years.

While visiting Japan I was surprised at how gracious I was treated by the Japanese people. I loved the food and felt nothing but the utmost respect for the Japanese and their culture, although some cultural differences were difficult for me to understand. I wonder if I had been a veteran of the Pacific campaigns, if I would have felt the same? I doubt it. While vacationing in Hawaii in the 70's I was standing near a group of Japanese men who appeared to be in their 50's while they pointed out toward Ford Island and were making airplane wings with their hands in flying motions. It was obvious to me that they had some personal knowledge of the Pearl Harbor attack years before. I'll admit to having a cold chill run down my spine. At the moment, I did not have a fondness for the Japanese. They observed me watching them so engaged and immediately stopped what they were doing. It must have been something in my stare.

I am pretty well versed on the history of Vietnam and have a remedial understanding of why America was involved in that conflict. I am not as sure that Vietnam was our enemy as much as we were theirs'. Vietnam is certainly a different country now than when we were there. The median age of the Vietnamese is 25.51 years of age. English is their second language. The literacy rate is 94% making for a lot of skilled workers.

The United States signed a Bilateral Trade Agreement with Vietnam in July 2000. In 2003 the two way trade between Vietnam and the United States was about 6 billion dollars. The United States is the number one trading partner in Vietnam, producing and exporting to the U.S. such things as Levis and Nike shoes, garments, seafood, crude oil, furniture and handicraft items. We export aircraft and spare parts, machinery and industrial products to Vietnam.

It should also be noted that Vietnam is one of the world's safest locations. "This is recognized by the international organizations and the world community. This factor became more and more important after September 11, 2001..."

I have known a few Vietnamese who came here after the war and know that their subsequent generations have contributed to this country in many positive ways. In conversations I have had with some, the war with American is mostly forgotten and seldom mentioned. Visitors from America are welcomed. The world is different now. Our earth has turned many times and many millions have been born since our conflict with that poor country.

So what is the point of this little story? I was in a big box store this weekend and my wife purchased a small table that had to be assembled. As the box was placed into our cart, I read "Made In Vietnam." At that moment I remembered a small isolated base located in the South West corner of Vietnam and I didn't have a particular fond feeling for the Vietnamese. I exclaimed in not too soft a voice, "Made in Vietnam" to no one in particular. As I reflect back, I believe my tone had a slight edge to it. The 19-year-old kid who placed the box in the cart looked at me with a big question mark on his face. My wife had no reaction. I know my reaction does not make much sense, especially given the facts that I have stated above, but I have to tell you, I'm still pissed off. It's an emotion I cannot explain to anyone and an emotion I don't have to explain to you. You already know.

*****

POETRY

A Moment in Time

In the end, I found myself at the "Wall"
there for all the world to see,
asking myself, "why them and not me?"
The many names reminded me of how life was at hand, to die in a foreign land,
Where life was given, and suddenly taken away,
for freedom has a terrible price,

for the spirit and the flesh,
where lives were thrown away,
like the throw of the dice,
Where the true hero in measured,
didn't come home at all,
So here I am, standing before the "Wall,"
listening to their voices crying out,
OH America! have you forgotten?
For whom prays for peace more,
than the one who fights the war,
As I stood there with tears on my face,
a lump in my throat,
I could only remember what one great general said,
"Old Soldiers never die, they just fade away."

Jerome Howell
3rd Shore Party A Co

MEMOIRS

Charlie Battery
1st Battalion - 44th Artillery
Automatic Weapons – Self Propelled
Twin 40mm
Duster C131 "Grim Reaper"

By Joseph Belardo

March 1968: If we weren't doing convoys up and down Route 9, my Duster C131 "Grim Reaper" did search and destroy missions behind Camp Carroll, deep into the southwest, towards Khe Sanh. We had observed tracks from a suspected NVA PT76, Russian made tank. Our hope was to be the first to take out an NVA tank, a dream that never happened. Our Duster was one of two Dusters assigned to meet the "1st Cav" by a small outpost behind Camp JJ Carroll called Delta-5. The area where they assembled was a large, flat expanse of land we called the "Plains of Delta 5." We waited all day and all night for them to completely arrive and assemble. We looked at each other in amazement as the morning dew lifted and we saw all the equipment they had. It seemed like they had more equipment than all of the Third Marine Division. You name they had it.

We could smell hot chow coming from one of their portable mess halls, and asked one of their officers if we could get a hot meal. He rudely replied, "You live with the Marines, go eat with the Marines." I told the cocky bastard where to stick it and gave him the finger. The crew thought it was great and heckled him as he walked always as we sat and ate our C-rations. We were attached to the Marines, and were damm proud of it. Needless to say we did not get off on a good start with the Cav. I really didn't care. After about fifteen minute I approached the same officer, and reintroduced myself (the Grim Reaper), the person the Cav was talking to all night. I informed him that my Duster would be his leader on the convoy down Route 9, and the second Duster would be at the rear. Looking him right in the eye, I said "Saddle up Lieutenant; it's time we got going."

He did not like the idea that I, only a Sergeant was giving him orders. (On a Duster an E-5 was the Squad Leader, and considered the Track Commander) I explained that our Lieutenant would catch up to us on the road. We did our job and escorted the Cav. up to Route 9 and west to Calu, which was



now being transformed into LZ Stud. Stud would be the jumping off point for the famous Operation Pegasus. Pegasus was the name given to the reactionary forces assigned to reopen the road to Khe Sanh. This particular group of the 1st Cav would brag how they saved the Marines from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh, how they kicked NVAS' ass. But, we knew better. The NVAS' ass had already been kicked and beaten by hundreds of Marines, artillery, jets, Dusters, Quad-50's and a million pounds of bombs dropped by the B-52s. We fought side-by-side with the Cav. The resistance the NVA gave the Cav., on a whole, was minimal compared to the

NVAS' actual fighting abilities. Their "minimal" gave the Cav trouble. They saw some action, but nothing like we saw in the prior months. But, the Cav always claimed bragging rights, but as an honorary Marine we knew who the real ass kickers were.

April 9th: LZ Stud was hit by 50 NVA artillery shells. We continued to help the Cav open Route 9 from LZ Stud to Khe Sanh. I always thought they were helping us.? The going was slow and the fighting sporadic. We finally rotated and got a rest. Our



new position was on top of Outpost Hill 250 situated outside the northeast corner of Camp Carroll. I can still remember that spectacular view of the DMZ, Dong Ha Mountain, Con Thien, Cam Lo and Route 9. Hill 250 gave us a chance to regroup. My crew would get credit for shooting out three NVA artillery rocket positions in three days. The secondary explosions were fantastic. We yelled with a madman's joy as the enemy positions were destroyed. Dead NVA meant Marines would not die that night. I enjoyed shooting the Marine .50 caliber sniper rifle from the tower on top of 250. It was an awesome experience. The shooter would use Willy Peter rounds from the 106 Recoilless and give us NVA targets to shoot. I must have been back on someone's good list. If I could have chosen a place to spend my tour, it would have been 250. The view from Hill 250 was magnificent. At day break you stood above the low clouds. As the mist lifted, you could see the horizon. It was breath taking, and it also took the breath away from the enemy because of the hills firing and shooting advantage. It is a shame how war mixed and twisted emotions, including mine, I felt safe there. That alone allowed my brain to get much needed relaxation.



April 11: The Rockpile got hit by six NVA rockets. One of the rockets damaged a Duster and wounded one of the crew.

April 12: We were on a search and destroy mission with the Marines behind an old plantation slightly southwest of Delta-5. All of a sudden about thirty Viet Cong (VC) walked out of this tree line. They were all holding their hands and rifles high, yelling "Chieu Hoi – Chieu Hoi" (I surrender).We expected it to be some kind of trap. Almost all of them were dressed in their traditional daytime white pajamas. The Marines searched them and confiscated all their weapons and we marched them all to Delta-5.We kept them huddled in small groups outside of D-5. It was funny, because when we first radioed Carroll that we had captured over thirty of the enemy, they thought we were joking. The leaders of the VC constantly spoke and caused unrest amongst the prisoners and had to be individually separated from the other prisoners. It took all day before they finally arrived with some trucks and took them away. I always wondered where the prisoners went. Another thirty NVA rockets hit The Rockpile. One of our Dusters at the Rockpile spotted the NVA forward observer and hit him with a fast-eighty 40mm rounds. The NVA stopped shooting for the rest of the day.

April 13: At the Rockpile, two Dusters dueled with an NVA rocket team and observed secondary explosions as they hit their mark. Larry Roundtree's Duster was one of two Dusters to be the first to drive into Khe Sanh in 77 days. We got a call on the lima-lima from LT Bligh,"Saddle-up, you're going to ro-

tate to Khe Sanh." immediately. I was shocked when he told me to choose the other track that would be sent with me. To this day I feel guilty for suggesting Steve Harris's track. I knew he would jump at the request, and he knew I would choose him. Steve and I had gone from boot camp to Nam together. He was a courageous soldier and had a good crew. If the Khe Sanh I knew had changed like they said it had, Harris was my first choice. I also knew that LT Bligh would love to send Harris. A few weeks earlier, Harris and LT Bligh had exchanged some serious words about an ambush they were in on the road to Khe Sanh. This was going to be a first; Dusters C131 and C132, sister tracks, would be together, defending one base.

Harris, who was now stationed at the Khe Gio Bridge and had cut his foot real bad while bathing in the river, had been medivaced to Dong Ha. Another real good friend from boot camp, Frank Bardone, became acting squad leader. Bardone would take Harris's crew to Khe Sanh. Harris was never told, and I mean never, that he was going to Khe Sanh. He wasn't even told that his track had left for Khe Sanh without him. Rumor has it, he was really pissed when he got back to the "Bridge" and found that track, complete with crew, was gone. I understand he got very upset with me when he was told I had volunteered him for Khe Sanh. What are friends for? It was about a month before he caught up to his Duster. I always wondered if they gave him KP and shit burning details while he waited to catch a convoy to Khe Sanh.

Captain Vincent Tedesco our new CO would escort us to Khe Sanh. We did not go with another convoy or any other group, just three vehicles; Tedesco and his jeep driver, "Smitty" along with Duster C132, and my Duster, C131.Captain Tedesco was the best commanding officer we ever had at C Battery. He would lead us with courage and a true understanding of how the NVA fought. But, driving to Khe Sanh with only three vehicles I thought was a bit crazy. But, what the hell, you can't live forever! I was always comfortable when Tedesco was in charge. He treated all the Duster and Quad crews with respect and asked for our advice and opinions from each other. The Captain and I hoped our little convoy would not become an accident on the ride to Khe Sanh.

We were the first and, as far I knew, the only idiots ever to make a solo attempt to drive to Khe Sanh. We were about one third of the way to Khe Sanh when my engine blew. Black smoke was pouring out the engine grates. The Duster, known to be fast, was now reduced to a top speed of less then 5 miles per hour. Our track was a great target for any decent NVA sniper, RPG team, or satchel charge thrower. We briefly stopped along the road to assess the damage. Tedesco informed us that he and the other Duster would proceed to Khe Sanh, with all due speed. If anything should happen, he would send help and return with all the Dusters and Quads at the base. My driver Earl Holt, who never cursed or used God's name in vain, uttered his first words of profanity under his breath. Tedesco and Bardone departed for Khe Sanh, assuring us how we were great soldiers "Rough Riders" and knew how to fight, just radio us for help. Bardone yelled: "Remember, we don't make house calls."

We waved goodbye to each other as the dust from the departing Duster hid us from view. Deja vu of January 24th battle on Route 9 was stirring in my brain. One of my crew even took pictures of their Duster as it sped down the road on the other side of the valley. I ordered my crew to unlock the turret, open all the upper ammo boxes and slowly traverse back and forth, and stay extremely alert. I instructed my gunner Wally Owens that if shit happened to shoot the first minute with both 40's on full auto (240 high explosive rounds a minute), and, I'd sweep the area. One cannoneer, George Lewis, was to remain seated, holding two hand grenades to throw in the enemys' direction before he started loading the 40's. The other cannoneer, Benny Sitello was ordered to squat and use the M-60 machinegun to cover the hill and cliff above our right side, and to never stand up. George would load the auto-feeders. All were instructed to keep a low profile and no talking, absolutely no talking. Taking to each other while on the road or during incoming was something I absolutely forbade. All your attention and concentration had to be on your job, the enemy, and the direction they were coming from. They were a great crew and knew what had to be done. It was routine business for road warriors. The balance of the ride to Khe Sanh seemed to take all day. We all thank God to this day that nothing bad happened. Over three hours alone on Route 9 to Khe Sanh was no place to be. Years later at a reunion, we would joke with Tedesco and Bardone about how they left us on

the road that day, and how Frank would not accept collect calls. I guess we were the only idiots to ever ride that section of road from Calu to Khe Sanh all alone.





I had not been completely down the road to Khe Sanh in many months. I could not believe how this once picturesque winding road had changed. The all out American push to save Khe Sanh had destroyed the area. The weeks of artillery, napalm and B-52 strikes had leveled everything. I told my men: "Welcome to Death Valley. Almost all the trees were gone or splintered. The terrain looked like the earth was upside down. It made my hair stand on end. We had already chewed up Route 9 from Camp Carroll to Calu. The area was filled with bomb craters, napalm scars, and dead NVA decaying along the sides of the road. The smell of death burned the nostrils and the rotting flesh upset our stomachs. This sight was like nothing I had ever seen. Our slow crawl to the infamous Khe Sanh changed our souls even more. I didn't think we would make it to Khe Sanh alive.

Our arrival at Khe Sanh would turn into a bad omen for my superstitious crew. The Captain was with Bardone, having him take up position at the east end of the runway by the old ammo dump. Our combat section from Charlie "C" Battery was relieving Alpha "A" Battery which was commanded by LT Bruce Geiger. "A" Battery had done the test of time during the infamous 77-day siege. Tedesco would go back with a large convoy and the two Dusters we were replacing. We were taking the bunker at the northwest end of the runway across from "Charlie Med." Another Duster which was departing Khe Sanh was pulling out of the parapet as we arrived. They expressed their joy about leaving. Two Marines waving goodbye stood in the mouth of the track's three-sided parapet next to our new bunker position. The NVA opened up with a barrage of artillery from Co Roc, a mountain enemy fortification in Laos. The first shell was a direct hit on the two Marines. We never heard it coming. They were blown to smithereens. Parts of them were scattered all over our parapet, bunker, and Duster. Tedesco and the convoy left as quickly as possible. We helped the Marines quickly bag as many parts of their comrades as they could find, and ran them across the runway to graves registration.

Our new position was still covered with the remains and blood of the two poor Marines. My crew stood there in disbelief. It was a bad omen. Our job after the battles on Route 9 was body recovery. They had seen death many times and knew all about dying and suffering. But this, direct artillery hit on a fellow American next to what was our new private sanctuary, our new bunker, our new home, was totally unacceptable. We were hoping our bunker at Khe Sanh was off limits to artillery. We should have known better. It happened so fast that you could not even take cover. We did not have time to close our eyes, or, even blink.

The crew had given out their fair share of what we

called "being smoked," a term we used when the 40mm cannon shell hit an NVA soldier. When one of ours got "smoked," it had a whole new meaning. My men would remember this day forever. On our Duster we carried rakes, picks and shovels. As my crew checked out their new bunker, I hastily raked the rest of the Marines' remains into a pile. I then shoveled the pile into an old rusty half of a fifty-five gallon drum. I had the crew carry the drum about a hundred feet west of our bunker. I then shoveled dirt on all the blood stained ground around our area. Holt backed up the Duster into the parapet. We were now ready for the NVA. As a team, we quickly finished our task of "it's only a thing – it ain't anything" and went back to business. After we were settled into our bunker, I burned the remains in the drum. As the ashes rose, Earl walked over and read from "the Good Book." The words of God took the mental edge off what now had turned into a very bad day. We would find parts from those Marines who died in our area until we left Khe Sanh. The drum would become our area's crematorium for all the body parts that never made the body bags. We hoped the NVA artillery would not hit our crematorium and kill our friends again. Earl's words from the Bible continually healed our fragile souls.

Dear Diary: ***FEAR***

Nam, where lives are lost and saved everyday without thought of its psychological consequence. I remember the many days of being shot at and the sight and inner fear of seeing a friend shot or dead. Bullets are like something reaching for me, unseen, but heard, unbiased and deadly.

My mind cannot grasp the swift change of events in an all out fire - fight. My trained reflexes have me running, dodging, hiding and returning fire. The shadow of death is all around me. The sounds of war, the suffering, the dying, are in itself... unbelievable.

The fear of perishing that struggle for self-preservation keeps me going. It was just like they said it would be all blood and guts. The only thing they left out was John Wayne.
The military could train me for just about anything, except the harassment and interdiction of artillery warfare. It was like nothing I could imagine. The sound alone made my heart stop. I can only relate to this by having you lie between railroad tracks and have the Baltimore Express pass over you.

One artillery shell fired at you isn't too bad. It only lasts for a few seconds and only hits one spot. When the barrage begins, destruction is devastating. The long lasting artillery attack plays havoc with my mind. If I'm caught in the open, I'm scrambling for the nearest shelter, preferably a bunker. Once inside I'm still not safe. All I have accomplished is the elimination of a lot of shrapnel. We just sit and wait in huddled masses. Listening, wondering, and waiting for the one with your name on it. That endless time, working on your nerves. Minutes seem like hours, hours that feel like days. Screams from the wounded, sighs of the dying, the helping that never seems to be enough.

I begin to wander, dreaming of home, my loved ones and the things we haven't done, but want to. I begin to pray, praying silently, praying in groups. Fear has come a-calling and I have to suck up all that is holy to me, all that has made me what I am, all that will show the men around me that I will get them though this and send them home in one piece.

Like the scream of a murdered woman, a shell lands close and reawakens me to my surroundings. A twelve-foot cube, seventeen feet below Mother Earth, totally in darkness.

Finally it's quiet and we crawl from the bowels, the womb of our Mother, exhausted from mental fatigue. "Thank God I'm alive."

April 19: A Convoy heading to Khe Sanh with Marine Unit G-2/9 was ambushed by the NVA. Dusters provided direct fire support on NVA main positions, enabling the marines to extract their wounded and dead. Four Duster men were wounded in action protecting the marines.

My crew and I hated Khe Sanh. It was a stagnant position and we were road warriors. The siege was over, except for a few snipers that were always trying to kill us. The incoming never stopped, the big guns from Laos pounded the base at will. Hundreds of enemy artillery shells hit the base daily. Living conditions were deplorable. The NVA had blown the base into little pieces. Garbage and debris was strewn all over the place. The only true thing that ruled the base was the rats. Rats were as big as rabbits. Rats grew larger by the day as they feasted on

the dead NVA in what we called Death Valley. We shared our bunker with families of rats. A rat crawling on you during your sleep was an everyday common occurrence.

We had inherited a dog, or should I say puppy, named "Rex" from a Marine named Bruce. The dog's name was instantly changed to Comanche, the handle given to Dusters from Charlie Battery. The dog broke the monotony of the constant incoming and that lonely isolated feeling. He was a good dog and was the mascot of everyone on the northwest end of the runway. One day Comanche started frothing at the mouth and shaking. We feared the dog might have rabies. He was still just a pup and liked to gnaw on your fingers. Panic set in. We all thought we had rabies. Rabies meant getting two weeks of shots in your belly, something we all dreaded.

We preferred fighting the NVA and not dying from rabies. I came up with this great idea and gave the dog a name, PVT Charles Comanche. On the next medivac chopper, we sent George Lewis and PVT Comanche to the hospital in Da Nang. We knew



George would get some doctor to treat our dog. Avoiding rabbi shots in all our bellies depended on him. Comanche was diagnosed with distemper and was sadly put to sleep. George was no fool, and stayed a few extra days at China Beach. George claimed he could not get back to Khe Sanh. His stories about the USO shows were refreshing. We were all jealous. Our new LT, whom we called LT Dan, lived at the other end of the runway just past the Quad-50's. The LT never knew George was gone.

May 14: Jose Diaz was killed. Khe Sanh removed what little was left of your shame and modesty. The constant incoming had blown up almost all the shitters. The empty 40mm cans became our depositories. The cans, filled with a little kerosene, were placed in the trenches or brought into the bunkers.



God, it was embarrassing. The airtight lids kept the smell down. It was only bad when in use. Burning shitters at Khe Sanh was a no-no. The NVA could and would put an artillery shell on top of them as you took a crap, a mess that nobody treasured cleaning.

Our Duster still had a bad engine and was used only to retrieve recon teams and Marines close to our perimeter. I guess this was good for us, because we could not do convoys, mine sweeps, or search and destroys. The constant body recovery fried our brains and gave a whole new meaning to brotherhood.We all felt guilty when, on June 9, our brothers-in-arms from the 3rd Marine Tanks were destroyed and killed just outside the gates of Khe Sanh. Marine SGT Clifford Evans was killed. He was one of our best friends. I had fought a lot of battles with him on that "Road to Hell. "Our engine was now almost completely dead. If they had replaced our engine in a timely fashion, we might have been able to help or save them. Cries for help on the radio haunt me forever. We questioned everyone, over and over, if they were sure he was dead. I pray for him on my yearly visit to "THE WALL." It wasn't until a few days before we closed Khe Sanh that our engine was finally replaced. I had worried that our engine would finally stop running before getting

this replacement. We got there doing five miles per hour, we could also leave the same way.

Water was a prized commodity at the base and we were unable to get our own water, so we built a shower. We cut the lid off an old Agent Orange drum and cleaned the inside out with rags and dirt. The men put a hand release fire hose nozzle in the drums small screw hole. We wedged the drum on top of the bunker and announced to the marines that we had a shower. The guys thought I was crazy because we had not showered for weeks. We took little baths out of our helmets and didn't have enough water for showering. So, I made a deal with this Marine LT who was in charge of the marines who lived in the trenches on our north perimeter. We had showers for all his men, if he supplied us with water. Our position always had water, thanks to our shower. We used our gasoline pump to pump the water up into the drum. It was great while it lasted.

One of the other items we never had enough of was C-rations. Our convoys brought us ammo and mail, but always seemed to forget to bring rations on their weekly jaunts. I would lose another thirty pounds during my stay at Khe Sanh. I weighed around 145 pounds and had lost over 60 pounds since I arrived in Nam. We started to monitor the helicopter drops each evening at our end of the runway. Minutes after the chopper was gone, the Marine Ontos crew and us would raid the shipments. Our stretcher was used to carry off all usable items and food. Our best raid yielded dehydrated hamburgers and string beans. They looked like little gray cardboard squares. If you placed them in your mess kit frying pan, added water and a little heat from C-4, then "Ole" - you got hamburgers. Gary from the Ontos opened a big can of string beans and we all ate like kings.

It was like the original 77-day siege had never ended. The NVA continually pounded the base with heavy artillery. I stopped counting incoming at 250. My brain was beginning to fade. I was losing track of time and dates. I really didn't give a shit. I walked the area tall and proud, defying the snipers. My men didn't question me.

To amuse ourselves, we would have wrestling and boxing matches with the other Duster crews who came in on the convoys from LZ Stud. Our crew, because of our bad ass Kung Fu Master George Lewis, was always the winner. Occasionally we'd even have a rock throwing fight. We were totally nuts. I remember getting hit in the face with this big rock and getting this giant black eye. Captain Tedesco arrived out of nowhere on the next convoy. I think he came just to bust my balls and tease me. "Belardo, I heard how you got that black eye and you're not getting another Purple Heart," the Captain bellowed. My crew thought this was great. We could have all been dead and the command would not have known or even given a shit. Get whacked in the head with a rock and the whole DMZ knew about it. That shiner lasted a couple of weeks. I was known to have handed out a few black eyes. This must have been God's way of getting even. The joke was on me and that was okay.

June 9: Manuel Martinez was killed.The convoy brought me an extra man named Simon. Benny, my cannoneer, tried to take Simon under his wing and teach him what was to be expected and what was happening at this base. Simon was his own man and rubbed everyone wrong. We had a C-ration policy that each person on the crew would take turns eating the famous beanie weenies. Simon was left alone one day to guard the bunker while our Duster went to the other end of the camp to shoot at a suspected NVA position. After our return, George Lewis discovered that Simon had eaten his beanie weenies. George was a very large, very strong man, much larger than Simon and a Kung Fu Master. He was truly a real badass, not someone you wanted to piss off. George carried an old razor sharp "Enfield bayonet" strapped to the back of his flak jacket. He had it out and wanted to carve up Simon. It was amazing how a simple can of food could make a man crack. Simon thought it was a joke, but George went ballistic. Simon was going to die, if I could not calm down George. I had never seen George get so angry with anyone or anything. Simon had crossed the wrong bounds of crew trust. Trust in each other was the only thing we had to offer. It was sacred to my men. To appease George and the rest of the crew, Simon covered our bunker with a new layer of sandbags. Simon filled, tied, and stacked every sandbag by himself, with George as his personal watchdog. I explained the situation to our lieutenant, and about my fear for Simon's safety. Simon left a few days later on the next convoy. Before he left he had to empty all the sand bags he had filled plus a few hundred more. We were taking Khe Sanh apart.

A Douglas A4 fighter plane from one of the aircraft carriers signaled "May Day" to the base that it must attempt an emergency landing on Khe Sanh's short runway. The edges of the runway were already filled with planes and helicopters destroyed during the siege and since our arrival. The base came alive: Men scurried from their holes to get a better look at what might be added to the collection of relics along the runway. Poised with shovels, fire extinguishers, stretchers, and water, we waited with cameras around our necks for the jet's arrival. It was the most excitement we had since the chopper had left dehydrated hamburgers and grapefruit on the runway for us to steal.

The A4 plane landed with its brakes locked and engines in full reverse thrust. It came to a screeching halt a few feet short of the end of the runway. Everyone ran to its aid. The pilot was a little shaken, but seemed to be in good health. The jet had a small hole in its fuel tank and had run out of gas. The pilot was lucky that the plane's tail hook didn't catch on something as he came down the runway. We were all lucky that the NVA were not shooting at the base from Co Roc. The fighter plane was dragged off the runway and into an old helicopter revetment for protection. It would emerge a few days later with its gas tank repaired, a tail hook strapped to the plane's fuselage, and a pilot eager to fly off the base. As the pilot got into the cockpit, he gave all of us the "High Sign." The thumbs up gesture made us all start cheering. The jet roared down the runway, lifted and was gone. Minutes later, the pilot flew the jet about a hundred feet over the runway and did a spiral victory roll skyward. It was a good day for all: The monotony was broken with joy and excitement, and no one was injured.



June 21: I celebrated my twenty-first birthday. My family and girlfriend Nancy had sent me cookies, popcorn, pepperoni and provolone cheese. My crew thought we were at a feast as we celebrated my passage into manhood. We ended our feast with eating our favorite meal from home, Lucky Leaf Baked Apples in a can. After we finished the apples we each took turns putting our tongue in the can, getting those tasty last licks.



We had trouble with this helicopter pilot and crew who got their kicks hovering over our position and causing a dust bowl. This helicopter arrived twice a day to pick up Marines leaving the base. The red clay dust clung to the oiled 40mm cannons. The pilot hovered a few feet over our bunker and had his door gunner point his gun at my men. It was so dusty; we had to re-clean the guns every time he came. One day I met the helicopter at the runway and advised the pilot that his dusting and pointing his gun shit had to stop. The pilot was some arrogant bastard with a severe attitude problem and told me where to shove it. I told him it's not a game and the next time I'd beat his ass. Plus my men would love to have a reason to shoot his mangy ass out of the

sky. The next day he did his same routine. As the helicopter was hovering over us, we heard a loud popping noise as the NVA shot him out of the sky. The chopper burst into flames and crashed just outside our perimeter wire. We ran out and saved the mangy bastard, his crew and its passengers. They were lucky only to have some broken noses and minor cuts. The following day we had a group of officer's show up at our bunker and accuse us of shooting the helicopter out of the sky. I laughed and advised them that if we had shot them, they all would be dead. I told them they should go check out the helicopter. It was only on the other side of the wire and visible from the perimeter. I told this officer that they should give us a medal for saving their sorry asses. We were never questioned again.

June 26: I got hit in the left shin with shrapnel. I reported to what was left of the aid station, Charlie Med, across the runway from our bunker. The Navy doctor treated me for my minor wound. After viewing all the Marines with much more serious wounds, I was overcome with mental shame for being treated for my nicked shin. The next several hours I spent assisting as a stretcher-bearer for the wounded and the dead. Again, I was introduced to body registration, a small reminder of the small price I had paid compared to so many others.

Stretchers, wounded and the dead were a daily vigil. When needed, we would help Graves Registration clean and care for the dead. Cleaning their faces and loading them on outgoing choppers was the least we could do for their mothers. The whole crew sometimes helped. We called this detail "Cleaning Faces," an ordeal with much mixed emotions that has lasted a lifetime. Months later, a small rusty spot appeared on my left shin from the shrapnel. It's been over thirty years and the rusty spot still appears. Putting on my socks each day is my daily reminder of my stay at Khe Sanh.

My crew did not get upset when I added a new Grim Reaper symbol on the front gun plate situated between the 40mm barrels. I up-graded from a skull painting to a real NVA skull. The hardships of war had caught up with my moral fibers and my Christian upbringing. Besides, NVA bones were everywhere. To my surprise, the crew thought this was the greatest. They nicknamed the skull "Ho Chi." Kissing their first two fingers; they each took turns patting the skull for good luck. I started speaking openly of never going back to the real world. My crew and I had crossed over to the dark side of life. It was becoming hard to focus on anything nice or anything real. If it wasn't for our CARE packages, perfumed letters from home and mail call, I think we would have totally flipped.

We had been ordered weeks before, to abandon the KSCB. This was something we thought never would have happen. We had kicked NVA ass all over the DMZ. My Duster crew had been in many firefights and lost five Dusters before arriving at Khe Sanh. We were winning the war. The troops thought it was time to keep the ground we fought for and march on Hanoi. Abandoning this base destroyed all the reasons we had fought for. It was political suicide and the warrior did not count. So many Americans had died in vain. So many Americans were severely wounded, both physically and mentally. We all knew it was the turning point of the war. Even though I did not like the war, it was not in my mental make-up to give up, quit, retreat or lose at anything that cost lives. The warrior in me would rise to the occasion, step to the front of the line, face my adversaries head-on, and be mentally and physically accountable. Abandoning Khe Sanh was a personal insult to all Vietnam veterans.

As instructed, without haste, we continued to dismantle the base. I became in charge of our area. I was told not to leave anything standing. All trenches and foxholes were to be filled. All buildings, bunkers and shelters were to be torn down If we could not take them down, blow them up. Nothing, not even the garbage, was to be left for the NVA. Our bunker and the Ontos crew's bunker next to us would be the last to be destroyed. These bunkers would be used to shelter the remaining clean-up crews from the enemy.

The NVA snipers never stopped shooting and the NVA artillery from Co Roc increased their fire missions each day. As trenches and bunkers diminished, our living conditions became a nightmare. As far as we were concerned, the "Siege" was still on. Hundreds of enemy artillery shells hammered us twenty-four hours a day. I stopped counting each time when the hundredth round hit. We would strip the bunkers of all their sandbags. As the sandbags were removed, they would be cut open and the dirt dumped

out. All metal roof decking, ammo cans and empty brass used for roof artillery deflecting material was gathered, loaded on trucks, and shipped off the base. The Dusters were used to pull the big roof timbers out of the bunkers. Bulldozers filled the empty bunker holes and the area was plowed flat.

Men crowded into a few small holes and trenches



trying to stay alive. The rats scurried over the debris, men searched for cover and their own place to live or die. Rats, our other enemy, became comrades trying to stay alive. Living under the Dusters became everyone's second home. The enemy knew we were abandoning Khe Sanh. Some asshole had it plastered all over the front pages of every newspaper. The enemy continued to increase their daily artillery barrages on the base. The NVA shelling was unbelievable, killing and severely wounding many of the Marines who lived in shallow shelter holes they had dug in front of our Duster. There was no safe place to hide. We stacked the dead and wounded by the old "Charlie Med." A small group of corpsmen assisted those brought to this area as best they could. Convoys and helicopters seemed to be coming and going on a daily basis.

June 30th: Khe Sanh had all but vanished before our eyes. We didn't waste time and leveled the Ontos bunker with the use of C-4 explosives. Incoming was fierce. We took cover in our bunker, the last full standing fortification. As we crowded in this twelve-foot cube, ten feet underground, an enemy artillery shell hit. The NVA bunker buster artillery shell exploded and collapsed the left rear corner of the bunker, burying Wally and me alive. The only thing that kept us alive and from being crushed to death was the homemade bunk beds we took cover under. It took the guys hours to dig us out. When you dig for men, you dig slowly so you don't cut them in half with the shovels and picks. It was hard work clearing the sandbags, ammo cans, old 40mm brass and runway matting off our bunkers roof. Wally was lucky and only had small cuts and lots of black and blues. My left leg had been partially pulled out of its hip socket and had turned purple, red and blue. I had black eyes, fat lips and a flattened nose. I must have been in shock because it didn't hurt and I didn't remember much. At the aid station the guys held me down as the Doc pulled my leg back into place. It hurt like hell and I passed out. The good old Doc gave me a bottle of that military cure all pill, the APC's (all purpose capsule – aspirins), and sent me back to my position.

Later in life I would suffer from blood circulation damage, a bad back, and numb legs. My men gave me the day off. Mother Earth under our Duster



would become our home. I watched as my men slowly removed about five feet off the remaining top portion of our bunker. Hundreds of enemy artillery shells pounded the area around our position. Hell would have been a better place to live. My men slept in the fetal position as if hoping to return to the womb and get a new chance at life. I couldn't take it any more and ordered the bunker to be leveled by C-4. I didn't want anymore of the men in my charge to die from exposure to the enemy artillery. We all started praying with Earl.

The only thing we left was the three-sided earthen parapet for the Dusters, Quad-50's, and Ontos. We slowly moved our clean-up crew toward the east end

of the runway. Our Duster would accompany us as a portable artillery shelter and bunker. We eventually rendezvoused with Steve Harris's crew at the other end of the runway. Most of the Marines had already left the base. Our Duster crews and a hand full of Marines guarded the entire length of the north side of the old runway area. It was July 2nd and the mighty Khe Sanh was no more, reduced to a flat plateau with a small group of America's best guarding her.

We frequently moved the Duster to different locations all day, so the NVA artillery could not get a fix on us. Our Dusters were giant silhouettes on a barren plain, the biggest targets left standing on Khe Sanh. Each evening to keep the NVA in check, we continued the Vietnam tradition of shooting from the camp perimeter. Some called it "Mad Minutes." I called it a "Moment of Madness." The Dusters twin 40's cleared the perimeter nightly of any NVA hoping to get close to the base until we could leave for good.

July 4: The day for old glory was spent watching the choppers speed across the base, trailing different colored smoke grenades. This was hopefully our last night at the infamous base. The NVA, who always seemed to have good intelligence, knew this was their last chance to shoot at Khe Sanh. The constant incoming, eventually without my knowledge, fried my brain. July 4th would take on a whole new meaning. Fourth of July fireworks became my Achilles Heel. My family and friends joke at my involuntary twitching and my fast departure from our country's yearly display of freedom.

My family thinks it's the explosive of the fire-works that makes me anxious. I try to explain to them that fireworks are like Dusters shooting. Everything starts real slow, a few bursts here and a few there. There's lots of white, as if the enemy is probing the wire and we're popping flares for illumination with smoke trails floating away in the breeze. Then come a few big explosions, and then a few more; followed by lots of whistling ones and colorful ones. A noise rises from the crowd as both sides start screaming their "oohs" and "aahs." Explosion after explosion, momentum building and building, to the grand finale, then comes the final push from the enemy. There's a final human wave rushing at you, with guns blazing as if they were special ground effects. The crew of the Duster, holding fast in their turret, wait and wait; waiting patiently for that terrifying moment, the heart stopper of every war when the "enemy is in the wire." The Duster on full auto-fire becomes the grand finale, shooting 240 high-explosive cannon shells a minute at point blank toward the advancing enemy. Shells rip them to shreds, exploding in front of you like giant red paint-balls. Each round is followed to its target by the burning tracer of death in its tail. Explosion after explosion can be heard, followed by the roar of war - giving witness, to your day of killing. Like the fourth of July, it ends as fast as it started; and the only thing left is the smell of sulfur and that quiet calm.

July 5: Marine Unit 2/1 had departed Khe Sanh in the middle of the night. I was shocked when I checked the perimeter and found no Marines. Nobody told us they were leaving. I radioed the other Duster to stay on 100% alert. It was eerie looking through our Starlight Scope and seeing no Marines manning their respective positions. LT Dan was radioing everyone for assistance and help. Nobody came or helped.

July 6: The last few troops from Khe Sanh were loaded on trucks and convoyed back to LZ Stud. Steve Harris and our LT Dan took out the first convoy. I was asked to be the rear security on that last small convoy. It was a terrible feeling seeing everyone on that last convoy standing in their vehicles, taking that last look, at what was once Khe Sanh. A Marine officer asked if we could drive around the abandoned base looking for stragglers. The Marines, who were short on radios, were afraid that all their men did not get the word to leave. As we drove around the base, the NVA artillery gave us their final good-byes. So as not to be caught in the NVA artillery, I instructed the last convoy to leave the base and that we would catch up. I told my men to take a good look and say their personal good-byes, because we were the last Americans to leave the mighty Khe Sanh. We were even nutty enough to stop and take a few pictures and make some personal comments about leaving. Standing on the Duster, we each paid a silent homage to our stay at the famous "red clay". The NVA artillery was getting closer and heavier. It was time to catch up to the convoy. I told Earl to put it in high gear; it was time to go home. It was going to be good to get back to Camp Carroll--hot food, showers and seeing our old

friends. We had been gone for almost four months.

While at Khe Sanh, I forgot that Steve Harris and I were still on the top of someone's shit list. We would only get as far as LZ Stud, the next combat base. Harris took the north side of the camp, and we had the higher southern slope. We were issued a tent, cots, shovels and picks. An officer I did not know told us to make this our permanent position. The officer ordered us to dig and build a bunker. After we finished, we could get rid of the tent.

The ground was so hard that, after a week of digging, we had a hole only about a foot deep and ten feet square. My men, who had already helped fill in by hand an area about a half-mile square at Khe Sanh, refused to dig anymore. Instead, we helped each other make shallow, individual little graves. The graves were surrounded with sandbags and rocks. During incoming, we would lie in our graves and pray. The ground was so hard on this hill that it was impossible to dig any deeper than a foot. We started to scavenge each day for building material so we could build our own above ground bunker. The bunker would never be built and we really didn't



give a shit.

LZ Stud gave me the opportunity to visit with two of my hometown friends who were in the Marines, John Paulus and Leon Rejman. It was good to talk of home and seeing old friends. Years later, Leon would die from Agent Orange related cancer. I recently gave his sister, Stella, some old pictures of us from Nam. John opened his own restaurant in Asbury, N.J., a fabulous place with great food and service.

The Grim Reaper was back on the "Road", running from LZ Stud (Calu) to the Rockpile. Ambush Alley was still holding true to its name. The rear deck of our Duster again became stained burnt umber, and smelled of burning flesh from our hot exhausts. We returned daily to our shitty little tent, now riddled with shrapnel holes. It became a different existence because we had no means of illumination. There were no candles, no burning homemade gaslights, and no electricity. We occasionally lit a candle to see inside the tent. Someone always yelled: "Lights out, keep it low, keep it down." Maybe someone cared if we got killed. We surely didn't give a rat's ass anymore. Our inner core was drained, running on a reserve of pure hostility and hate.

August 5: We arrive back at Camp Carroll at lunchtime. We had not had a real hot meal since Christmas. Our first stop was the mess hall. We had been



gone from Carroll so long we felt like strangers. True to our reputation we pushed to the front and ate first. Our first stop "MILK". Our new position was called the "Water Point" and was situated to the right of the main gate leading into camp. I was now a short timer and scheduled to leave Charlie Battery, 1st/44th around August 13. Earl, Wally, and I openly

discussed having Earl become the new squad leader. George would become the driver, and they would get a new gun bunny. As the days passed, I became very uneasy about leaving. I had trained my men to the best of my ability, but I was not sure if that was good enough. I thought about re-upping. My insides churned with mixed emotions about going home.

Will they all make it home? It wasn't that I was leaving that made me restless. We had lived and breathed and fought as one unit. To this day I am sure that we were the best in all the ADA. I hoped that the "newbee" coming to my crew would not let my men down and rise to the occasion.

My last day at Camp Carroll was spent in the look-out tower next to the water point. It had been a long year and the view from the high tower sort of put things in perspective. It was my time to leave the DMZ. Captain Tedesco, to my surprise, asked me for my personal night vision Star Light Scope.

"Belardo, I don't need to know where you got that scope, and I'm not sure if I really want to know how you got it, but I want it," he said. Someone was still squealing on me. "Captain, my boys can't shoot gooks in the dark if you take our scope," I replied. We both smiled and laughed. Tedesco joked and said, "Joe, all of us can now take turns shooting gooks in the dark. It's time for you to go home." Captain Tedesco was a great officer. He made the difference through true leadership that was needed in a Charlie Battery captain. I knew he would look after my men. I considered him my friend, and knew my men could trust him and his combat judgment. We shook hands and patted each other's back as we said our farewells. Before I let go of Tedesco' s hand, I thanked him and reminded him about how my crew would follow him to hell and fight the devil for him. I thanked him for not sending me on the Dong Ha Mountain missions. I always felt that mountain had my name on it.

August 13: I said our traditional "So long, see you later" to my friends. I was going home. We never said goodbye; goodbye was forever and bad luck. Leaving was an unbearable mental pain. Part of me has never left Route 9. We would joke and say we knew each other "when." You can add a lot of endings to the word when. When.... nothing you held sacred was sacred anymore. When.... you thanked God you lived and another died. When.... you stopped thinking about dying. When...you stopped thinking of home. When...you (fill in the blank).

Dear Diary: <u>My Memories</u>

Zippos, red ants, rubber trees, bamboo, Lucky's, Camels, Salem's, Paul Malls, Tarrytons, Menthols, hedgerow, triple-canopy, re-supply, medic, sulfur, death, mosquitoes, leaches, fox-holes, sweating, monsoons, rice paddies, booby traps, elephant grass, trip-wire, fire-support, water buffalos, B-52, Tet, perimeter watch, Ho's Trail, search and destroy, incoming, fire in the hole, dust storms, dust-offs, flares, night vision, infra-red, shit burning, outgoing, friendly fire, hot chow, no chow, cold chow, c-rats, big rats, piss-tubes, chow lines, mail, saddle-up, WIA, MIA, KIA, POW, BNR, corpsman, gunny, mad minutes, spotter round, willy peter, RPG's, AKA's, land mines, toe poppers, punji pits, Montagnards, ARVNS, friendly forces, snipers, sappers, body bags, no bags, green smoke, red smoke, yellow smoke, short rounds, air bursts, tiddy bops, real world, my world, short time, long time, no time, make time, medivac, CP, recon, LRRP's, big guns, arc-lights, NVA, Viet Cong, R & R, China Beach, scented letters, mom's cooking, home, live friends, dead friends, no friends, tracers, H & I's, high explosives, full-auto, rapid fire, return fire, single fire, blocking force, L-shaped ambush, malaria pills, Agent Orange, bamboo vipers, cobras, scorpions, spiders, centipedes, rats, Rock Apes, Spider Monkeys, body counts, mass graves, no graves, pieces, 364 days and a wakeup, tracks, trucks, jeeps, Mules, Mighty Mites, wreckers, guard duty, KP, hooch, bunkers, LZ, bros, napalm, 57 recoilless, claymores, choppers, MOS, NFG's, REMFS, daytime, nighttime, one kill, ten kills, hundred kills, Star Light, dig-in, parapets, slit trench, tears, crying, screaming, cheers, joy, laughter, hate, killing, fear, buddies, cold beer, hot beer, no beer, soda, water, hot , dusty, stinky, hot shower, no shower, river bath, helmet shower, no sleep, papasan, mamasan, Yards, number one GI, number ten GI, dinky doa, number one boom-boom, Chieu Hoi, ROKs, Aussies, sanctuary, repose, church, prayers, praying, dreams, bugs, darkness, electricity, candles, the night, C4, lightning, sunsets, mud, red clay, freedom bird, goodbye, later, bouncing betty, .50 cal., bloopers, 175, 155, 105, 106, 40mm, 90mil, 4.2, M60, 81's, M16, M14, M79, sandbags, ammo boxes, Puff, blood, beetlenut, frag, flak jacket, LAW, flame thrower, rocket launcher, mine sweeps, Dusters, Quads, Search-

lights, PRIC-29, PC's, am-tracks, tanks, wire, mine field, nurses, Donut Dollies, round-eyes, generators, lima-lima, SOP, trip flares, convoys, rough riders, make a hole, foul odor, death, lookout tower, we're nothing, they're nothing, ain't nothing, going home, NAM.

In Dong Ha, I was given my unit separation papers and casually handed another Purple Heart with masking tape holding the medal box closed. "We think this is yours, soldier," the personnel section said drolly. True to the end, my personnel files were all screwed up. I was discharged from the Army with what they call "temporary records and a Soldier's Affidavit." It took twenty years of letter writing before I was re-issued my Purple Hearts, Good Conduct Medal, and my other Unit Citations. In 1997, the Air Defense Artillery Magazine did a feature article about the January 24th ambush. Thanks to this article, John "Tank" Huelsenbeck, Earl Holt, Chester Sines, and I were awarded the Bronze Star with "V" for Valor. I had made a promise never to forget Roger Blentlinger, the Marine who risked his life for mine. I refused a medal unless Blentlinger was also awarded the same medal. It was nice that we all finally got some recognition for our service to our country. It was even a better day when I called Roger and told him he was getting an Army Medal. I made a big thing about getting the medal. I was so proud, and yet embarrassed that it came to my house via UPS. I had been told a Senator or Congressman was going to present the award, not the UPS man. What was finally going to give truth and proof to all the Vietnam stories I had told my family has remained in its shipping box?

Everyone going home from the 1/44th met at China Beach. The officers never knew that we had made pre-arrangements for one of our convoys with about twenty men from "C" Battery and Headquarters to meet us at the "Beach." Major parts and supplies had to be picked up at the Da Nang docks. It was an excuse to party for three days. China Beach was glad to get rid of us. We had taken over the whole place. All of us (Steve Harris, Frank Bardone, Larry Roundtree, John Gunesch, Noble Grinner, Wayne Bailey, Haden Waite, Paul Raymond and Ray Ellis) were singing, dancing, drinking, eating and acting twenty-four hours a day as if this was our last day on earth. "It felt great." Jim "Doc" Butler was the last to shake my hand. We said our goodbyes because this was a forever farewell, then I caught the next plane to Cam Ranh Bay. At the Cam Ranh Bay departing center they gave us a quickie debriefing and shipped us the next day to Fort Lewis, Washington. We left Vietnam singing "Summer Time and the Living is Easy" as Paul Raymond strummed his guitar. Thirty-six hours later, August 17, 1968, fitted in my new dress uniform; I got my final discharge from the Army.

As I flew home in what we called the "Freedom Bird", I could not help but think about my past year: about no electricity, just candle power, limited food (C-Rations), water rationing, hundreds of enemy artillery barrages, occasional bathing, no bathrooms, burning shit, living with the rats, scorpions and insects. I remembered every thing crawling on you in your small dark bunker many feet underground, using Agent Orange to defoliate the area around our base positions, friends wounded and dying, taking turns helping at the medical stations and graves registration, carrying the wounded, wrapping, tagging and bagging the dead and picking up the pieces, and, taking another life. GOD, IT WAS A HELL OF A YEAR.

The 1st Battalion 44th Artillery was one of the highest decorated combat units in Vietnam. It earned the Army Presidential Unit Citation, Army Valorous Unit Award, Army Meritorious Unit Commendation, Navy (Marine) Presidential Unit Citation, Navy (Marine) Meritorious Unit Commendation, The Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, and The Republic of Vietnam Civil Action Honor Medal.

I ironically had to take the last step of my journey home in a helicopter from JFK to Newark airport. On August 18, 4:59 PM, I emerged as a civilian, still dressed in military clothes, from the shuttle helicopter at Newark Airport, NJ. My family, girlfriend, and about thirty relatives and friends greeted me. I was surprised about how frightened I was about getting off the chopper. I could see them screaming, yelling and crying. I had changed and did not want them to know. It would break their hearts. I never wanted them to know the other Joe Belardo. After a few restless minutes, the pilot told me it was time to go. Like nothing ever happened, I fixed my hat, straightened my tie, put on my shades, took my last deep breath, and stepped out of the chopper to meet my family. My father was the first to meet me. We

just stared at each other. We both knew the price of war, he fought in the Battle of the Bulge and we did not need to speak. He extended his one hand to me and just said, "Well." I removed from my wallet his small red religious scapula he had carried in WWII and placed it in his hand and thanked him. "You can have this back when I die," Dad said softly. He hugged me tight and kissed my cheeks and cried. "Now go say hello to your mother, Brenda, Kenny, Nancy and the rest of the family." I was fortunate, my homecoming was wonderful. I was loved and had forgotten how good it felt.

When we arrived at our house, my father had placed a banner on the front lawn that said WELCOME HOME SON. I came home in time for the Labor Day parade. The local newspaper asked to do an article about my tour in Nam. The parade was in my name, and I rode with the mayor in his Cadillac convertible. It was a great homecoming. The following month my parents had to make their telephone number unlisted. The twenty-four hour a day calls never ended. Nameless voices yelling, "Baby burner – child killer – rapist – bastard – village burner – war monger," and a hundred other terrible names. My mother cried, and my father questioned my tour. I was never so sad. The war was bad enough. I thought what we read in the papers was journalistic bullshit. I was wrong. My fellow countrymen hurt me more then I can ever express. For years if I were introduced to someone as a Vietnam vet, the reply would be a single expressive word "Oh." I always wondered what that "Oh" meant. That little word cut me like a knife. Life has its ups and downs. Vietnam filled them both. To this day, I tell everyone that I was "A DUSTERMAN," one of the "LAST GREAT GUNFIGHTERS" and damn proud of it.

Over twenty years would pass before I spoke to an officer from 1st/44TH. Out of the blue, I had this overwhelming urge to talk to them. I had to tell them I understood. They would know what I meant. I wanted to thank him for getting me home. Maybe without any of us knowing it, they gave us that inner drive to make it home. They had signed my New Jersey flag I flown on the DMZ and added their hometowns. After three calls, I was talking to Lt Harden's mother. I was amazed. She knew who I was. She told me the now Lieutenant Colonel Harden would love to talk with me. I called the old lieutenant the next day, and we spoke on the phone for almost three hours. Like magic, speaking with him released my mind and soul from years of hate. It was time for my mind to lock the other me deep in the back of my brain and get on with my life. Talking to him was great. He gave me, the now Colonel Vincent Tedesco's home telephone number at Fort Bliss, Texas. My good ole Captain couldn't believe it was me. We spoke for hours. We all met that year at a military reunion at Fort Bliss. The hugs, tears and stories were the best. The reunion helped us all bury a lot of demons

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HEALTH TIP

I was watching the tube tonight and found out that Tiger Woods lost his father to diabetes and prostate cancer. He was a Vietnam Veteran. That doesn't surprise me. Why? Because these problems as well as liver problems, are epidemic among us. It doesn't make any difference whom, or how well known, we are. This type thing has been going on for a long time. So you guys who have not seen a doctor for a long time had better keep looking over your shoulder.

Doc Miller L Co 3/26

*****

A HEARTY THANK YOU

Members Sending Contributions

LEAHY, Michael M
PETERS, Thomas R
MAGILLIGAN, Danette
McKINNIS, Howard
MUDD, Ronald B
PATRICO, Sid
ROBBINS, George
SHIMER, Wilbur W. Jr.
SPIVEY, B. Larkin Jr.
SULLIVAN, Daniel D
TOURTE, Craig W
VAN DE BOGART, ALLAN

Semper Fi

POETRY

VIETNAM

Such a beautiful land, with green mountains,
until the war came,
and left it with bomb craters and blood stains,
The grass so green, the blood so red,
The skies so blue, and so many dead,
We left it, with not a tree standing in places,
as we sprayed poison on the trees,
where is thy reward for such deeds?
To run out in the end, with the job un-done,
to give up, what was hard fought for and won,
In a world of pain and sin,
where does one begin, or end?
with the burdens of life,
or the children's sake?
Where their lives were at stake,
precious little one's,
caught in the cross fire,
of the seen and un-seen,
where they did also bleed,
as a result of mans deeds,
Oh come oh Lord,
to settle such things,
that all war brings,
broken dreams, broken hearts,
and give our world a new start.
Amen

Jerome Powell
3rd Shore Party A Co

*****

INCOMING

Red Clay to Ramadi and Back

By Dave Kniess

My friends returned to 29 Palms last night after their 3rd tour in Iraq. It was pretty awesome to see them all again. I'm glad they made it home alive. Before they had left, I handed each one of them a small 35mm film container filled with red clay I had scooped up from the combat base in 2000. A sort of good luck charm. Cpl. Mark Dean told me last night that he and some of the others would smear a little bit of that red clay on his arm before every patrol. The spirit of Khe Sanh was in Ramadi for the past 7 months.
I thought you'd all want to know that.
Semper Fi/Anchors Aweigh
Dave

POETRY

The Lost Patrol

They left the wire
Looking forward to return.
They were not the first
And, God knows, not the last.
It was just a look,
A quick look,
To see what Charles still had.
And they found out
They certainly did, and
That little knowledge
Was a dangerous thing.
They were not the first to die
And, God knows, not the last.
Laying like sprawled children
Gazing at a star filled sky
Until their brothers came
To take them home.

Chuck Patterson

*****

INCOMING

HEROES of the VIETNAM Generation

By James Webb

The rapidly disappearing cohort of Americans that endured the Great Depression and then fought World War II is receiving quite a send-off from the leading lights of the so-called 60s generation. Tom Brokaw has published two oral histories of "The Greatest Generation" that feature ordinary people doing their duty and suggest that such conduct was historically unique. Chris Matthews of "Hardball" is fond of writing columns praising the Navy service of his father while castigating his own baby boomer generation for its alleged softness and lack of struggle. William Bennett gave a startlingly condescending speech at the Naval Academy a few years ago comparing the heroism of the "D-Day Generation" to the

drugs-and-sex nihilism of the "Woodstock Generation." And Steven Spielberg, in promoting his film Saving Private Ryan, was careful to justify his portrayals of soldiers in action based on the supposedly unique nature of World War II. An irony is at work here.

Lest we forget, the World War II generation now being lionized also brought us the Vietnam War, a conflict which today's most conspicuous voices by and large opposed, and in which few of them served. The best and brightest" of the Vietnam age group once made headlines by castigating their parents for bringing about the war in which they would not fight, which has become the war they refuse to remember. Pundits back then invented a term for this animus: the "generation gap." Long, plaintive articles and even books were written examining its manifestations. Campus leaders, who claimed precocious wisdom through the magical process of reading a few controversial books, urged fellow baby boomers not to trust anyone over 30. Their elders who had survived the Depression and fought the largest war in history were looked down upon as shallow, materialistic, and out of touch. Those of us who grew up on the other side of the picket line from that eras counter-culture can't help but feel a little leery of this sudden gush of appreciation for our elders from the leading lights of the old counter-culture.

Then and now, the national conversation has proceeded from the dubious assumption that those who came of age during Vietnam are a unified generation in the same sense as their parents were, and thus are capable of being spoken for through these fickle elites. In truth, the "Vietnam generation" is a misnomer. Those who came of age during that war are permanently divided by different reactions to a whole range of counter-cultural agendas, and nothing divides them more deeply than the personal ramifications of the war itself. The sizable portion of the Vietnam age group who declined to support the counter-cultural agenda, and especially the men and women who opted to serve in the military during the Vietnam War, are quite different from their peers who for decades have claimed to speak for them. In fact, they are much like the World War II generation itself. For them, Woodstock was a sideshow; college protestors were spoiled brats who would have benefited from having to work a few jobs in order to pay their tuition, and Vietnam represented not an intellectual exercise in draft avoidance or protest marches but a battlefield that was just as brutal as those their fathers faced in World War II and Korea. Few who served during Vietnam ever complained of a generation gap. The men who fought World War II were their heroes and role models. They honored their father's service by emulating it, and largely agreed with their father's wisdom in attempting to stop Communisms reach in Southeast Asia. The most accurate poll of their attitudes (Harris, 1980) showed that 91 percent were glad they'd served their country, 74 percent enjoyed their time in the service, and 89 percent agreed with the statement "our troops were asked to fight in a war which our political leaders in Washington would not let them win." And most importantly, the castigation they received upon returning home was not from the World War II generation, but from the very elites in their age group who supposedly spoke for them.

Nine million men served in the military during the Vietnam War, three million of whom went to the Vietnam Theater. Contrary to popular mythology, two-thirds of these were volunteers, and 73 percent of those who died were volunteers. While some attention has been paid recently to the plight of our prisoners of war, most of who were pilots, there has been little recognition of how brutal the war was for those who fought it on the ground. Dropped onto the enemy's terrain 12,000 miles away from home, America's citizen-soldiers performed with a tenacity and quality that may never be truly understood. Those who believe the war was fought incompetently on a tactical level should consider Hanoi's recent admission that 1.4 million of its soldiers died on the battlefield, compared to 58,000 total U.S. dead.

Those who believe that it was a "dirty little war" where the bombs did all the work might contemplate that it was the most costly war the U.S. Marine Corps has ever fought five times as many dead as World War I, three times as many dead as in Korea, and more total killed and wounded than in all of World War II. Significantly, these sacrifices were being made at a time the United States was deeply divided over our effort in Vietnam. The baby-boom generation had cracked apart along class lines as America's young men were making difficult, life-or-death choices about serving. The better academic

institutions became focal points for vitriolic protest against the war, with few of their graduates going into the military. Harvard College, which had lost 691 alumni in World War II, lost a total of 12 men in Vietnam from the classes of 1962 through 1972 combined. Those classes at Princeton lost six, at MIT two. The media turned ever more hostile. And frequently the reward for a young mans having gone through the trauma of combat was to be greeted by his peers with studied indifference or outright hostility. What is a hero? My heroes are the young men who faced the issues of war and possible death, and then weighed those concerns against obligations to their country. Citizen-soldiers who interrupted their personal and professional lives at their most formative stage, in the timeless phrase of the Confederate Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery, "not for fame or reward, not for place or for rank, but in simple obedience to duty, as they understood it." Who suffered loneliness, disease, and wounds with an often-contagious élan? And who deserve a far better place in history than that now offered them by the so-called spokesmen of our so-called generation. Mr. Brokaw, Mr. Matthews, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Spielberg, meet my Marines.

1969 was an odd year to be in Vietnam. Second only to 1968 in terms of American casualties, it was the year made famous by Hamburger Hill, as well as the gut-wrenching Life cover story showing the pictures of 242 Americans who had been killed in one average week of fighting. Back home, it was the year of Woodstock, and of numerous anti-war rallies that culminated in the Moratorium march on Washington. The My Lai massacre hit the papers and was seized upon by the anti-war movement as the emblematic moment of the war. Lyndon Johnson left Washington in utter humiliation. Richard Nixon entered the scene, destined for an even worse fate. In the An Hoa Basin southwest of Da Nang, the Fifth Marine Regiment was in its third year of continuous combat operations.

Combat is an unpredictable and inexact environment, but we were well led. As a rifle platoon and company commander, I served under a succession of three regimental commanders who had cut their teeth in World War II, and four different battalion commanders, three of whom had seen combat in Korea. The company commanders were typically captains on their second combat tour in Vietnam, or young first lieutenants like myself who were given companies after many months of "bush time" as platoon commanders in the Basins tough and unforgiving environs. The Basin was one of the most heavily contested areas in Vietnam, its torn, cratered earth offering every sort of wartime possibility. In the mountains just to the west, not far from the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the North Vietnamese Army operated an infantry division from an area called Base Area 112. In the valleys of the Basin, main-force Viet Cong battalions whose ranks were 80 percent North Vietnamese Army regulars moved against the Americans every day.

Local Viet Cong units sniped and harassed. Ridgelines and paddy dikes were laced with sophisticated booby traps of every size, from a hand grenade to a 250-pound bomb. The villages sat in the rice paddies and tree lines like individual fortresses, criss-crossed with trenches and spider holes, their homes sporting bunkers capable of surviving direct hits from large-caliber artillery shells. The Viet Cong infrastructure was intricate and permeating. Except for the old and the very young, villagers who did not side with the Communists had either been killed or driven out to the government-controlled enclaves near Da Nang. In the rifle companies we spent the endless months patrolling ridgelines and villages and mountains, far away from any notion of tents, barbed wire, hot food, or electricity. Luxuries were limited to what would fit inside ones pack, which after a few "humps" usually boiled down to letter-writing material, towel, soap, toothbrush, poncho liner, and a small transistor radio. We moved through the boiling heat with 60 pounds of weapons and gear, causing a typical Marine to drop 20 percent of his body weight while in the bush. When we stopped we dug chest-deep fighting holes and slit trenches for toilets. We slept on the ground under makeshift poncho hootches, and when it rained we usually took our hootches down because wet ponchos shined under illumination flares, making great targets. Sleep itself was fitful, never more than an hour or two at a stretch for months at a time as we mixed daytime patrolling with night-time ambushes, listening posts, foxhole duty, and radio watches. Ringworm, hookworm, malaria, and dysentery were common, as was trench foot when the monsoons came. Respite was rotating back to the mud-filled regimental combat base at An Hoa for four or five days, where rocket and mortar attacks were frequent and our troops

manned defensive bunkers at night. Which makes it kind of hard to get excited about tales of Woodstock, or camping at the Vineyard during summer break.

We had been told while in training that Marine officers in the rifle companies had an 85 percent probability of being killed or wounded, and the experience of "Dying Delta," as our company was known, bore that out. Of the officers in the bush when I arrived, our company commander was wounded, the weapons platoon commander was wounded, the first platoon commander was killed, the second platoon commander was wounded twice, and I, commanding the third platoon, was wounded twice. The enlisted troops in the rifle platoons fared no better. Two of my original three squad leaders were killed, the third shot in the stomach. My platoon sergeant was severely wounded, as was my right guide. By the time I left my platoon I had gone through six radio operators, five of them casualties. These figures were hardly unique; in fact, they were typical. Many other units for instance, those who fought the hill battles around Khe Sanh, or were with the famed Walking Dead of the Ninth Marine Regiment, or were in the battle for Hue City or at Dai Do had it far worse. When I remember those days and the very young men who spent them with me, I am continually amazed, for these were mostly recent civilians barely out of high school, called up from the cities and the farms to do their year in Hell and then return.

Visions haunt me every day, not of the nightmares of war but of the steady consistency with which my Marines faced their responsibilities, and of how uncomplaining most of them were in the face of constant danger. The salty, battle-hardened 20-year-olds teaching green 19-year-olds the intricate lessons of that hostile battlefield. The unerring skill of the young squad leaders as we moved through unfamiliar villages and weed-choked trails in the black of night. The quick certainty with which they moved when coming under enemy fire. Their sudden tenderness when a fellow Marine was wounded and needed help. Their willingness to risk their lives to save other Marines in peril. To this day it stuns me that their own countrymen have so completely missed the story of their service, lost in the bitter confusion of the war itself. Like every military unit throughout history we had occasional laggards, cowards, and complainers. But in the aggregate these Marines were the finest people I have ever been around. It has been my privilege to keep up with many of them over the years since we all came home. One finds in them very little bitterness about the war in which they fought. The most common regret, almost to a man, is that they were not able to do more for each other and for the people they came to help. It would be redundant to say that I would trust my life to these men. Because I already have, in more ways than I can ever recount. I am alive today because of their quiet, unaffected heroism. Such valor epitomizes the conduct of Americans at war from the first days of our existence. That the boomer elites can canonize this sort of conduct in our father's generation while ignoring it in our own is more than simple oversight. It is a conscious, continuing travesty.

Former Secretary of the Navy James Webb was awarded the Navy Cross, Silver Star, and Bronze Star medals for heroism as a Marine in Vietnam. His novels include The Emperor's General and Fields of Fire.

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POETRY

I stood up
I showed up
I stepped forward
I raised my right hand
I stood in the gap
I walked in the fire

I did not run
I did not hide
I did not dodge
I did not evade

Consequently... ...

I have nothing to prove
No one to convince
Those who matter already know
Those who don't, never will

Author Unknown

SHORT ROUNDS

A Simple Thank You

By Craig W. Tourte

I receive lots of emails from various friends and acquaintances. A lot of the messages are jokes and various stories that I in-turn, share with others, and most are pretty funny. Occasionally I get something that just kind of kicks me in the gut. It just seems that the older I get the easier it is for something to draw moisture to my eyes and tears down my cheeks. I am not really sure what it is; perhaps I just have the time now to think about life and appreciate just a littler more the sacrifices made by others. I am especially drawn to those who sacrificed everything, to those who gave all of what little they had.

A friend sent this email to me this evening and I thought I would share it with you. It was one of those stories I was talking about, you know, the one that brings tears to my eyes. ?

Last week, while traveling to Chicago on business, I noticed a Marine Sergeant traveling with a folded flag, but did not put two and two together. After we'd boarded our flight, I turned to the Sergeant, who'd been invited to sit in First Class (and seated across from me), and inquired if he was heading home. "No," he responded. "Heading out?" I asked. "No, I'm escorting a soldier home." "Going to pick him up?' "No, he is with me right now. He was killed in Iraq. I'm taking him home to his family."

The realization of what he had been asked to do hit me like a punch to the gut. It was an honor for him. He told me that, although he didn't know the soldier, he had delivered the news of his passing to the soldier's family and felt as if he did know them after so many conversations in so few days. I turned back to him, extended my hand, and said: "Thank you. Thank you for doing what you do so my family and I can do what we do." Upon landing in Chicago the pilot stopped short of the gate and made the following announcement over the intercom.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to note that we have had the honor of having Sergeant Steeley of the United States Marine Corps join us on a flight. He is escorting a fallen comrade back home to his family. I ask that you please remain in your seats when we open the forward door (so as to) allow Sergeant Steeley to deplane and receive his fellow soldier. We will then turn off the seat belt sign."

Without a sound, all went as requested. I noticed the Sergeant saluting the casket as it was brought off the plane, and his actions made me realize that I am proud to be an American. So here's a public thank-you to our military for doing what you do so we can live the way we do.

Stuart Margel, Washington, D.C.

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WEB BRIEFS

A Dangerous Place

By Craig W. Tourte

Although my personal knowledge of the Marine Corps Combat Base at Khe Sanh is limited to the period of time I was there from August 1967 to April or May 1968, as I look back it seems like I was there forever. To this day certain experiences remain vivid in my memory and dreams. I have read extensively about the events of the Siege and have spoken to numerous individuals who were there with me. Each recalls a somewhat different, yet similar experience to mine.

While the Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) varied, I am sure that 0311 (Infantry) made up the majority of those on the base and surrounding hills. It makes sense that most causalities were to those who held the MOS of an infantryman or a related combat specialty. By more than one account, there were from 5,000 to 6,000 men at Khe Sanh in late 1967.This number includes the hills and various other locations around the immediate vicinity of the base. That would seem to be a fair amount of military personnel, at least by Marine Corps standards. But, regardless of the exact number of U.S. and allied personal at Khe Sanh, it is generally accepted that the number of NVA troops in the area was somewhere between 20,000 to 40,000.

I don't know the ratio of 0311's to other MOS's on the base, but there were certainly many different and varied military specialties present among the Marine, Army, Navy and Air Force personnel. Cook's, truck drivers, office clerks, engineers, Seabees,

medical personnel, electricians, mechanics, wiremen, artillery, forward observers, graves registration, supply, radar, fork lift drivers, heavy equipment operators, air traffic controllers, tanks, supporting arms (50s and twin 40s). There might be more. To look at those present, you could not tell one from the other. We all looked the same. Everyone carried his individual weapon wherever he went. Red stained ratty green uniform, tired, scared, skinny and exhausted, grunt, clerk and cook. Each MOS took casualties and all faced the same dangers. We had our time in the V ring. No job was easier than the other.

Tom Horchler was a truck driver with H.Q. 1/13 who risked his life daily, taking incoming while he drove his truck to the dump, hauled water, C rations, sandbags, or artillery shells from the landing strip to the guns. He picked up the dead and gently transported their bodies to Grave Registration. He was a moving, exposed, high value target every day. He Had no trench, armor, sandbags or overhead to protect him. He was unable to hear the rounds leaving the guns of the enemy, unable to run, hide or even hope. All he had was luck and a prayer. He also spent the night standing guard in the trench line waiting for the attack that we all felt was coming. Tom knew he had a dangerous job. No one had to tell him it was dangerous and no one had to thank him for his effort in supporting them. It was the job the Marine Corps gave him. It was just as valuable, necessary and dangerous as any other. There were many at Khe Sanh just like Tom Horchler, not an 0311, but a Marine doing his job which was just as dangerous, just a dirty and just as necessary as the rest of the jobs that had to be done.

Donald Saunders was a 20-year-old Marine from Newark, New Jersey. He had a couple of young sons back home and loved Motown music. He often spoke of his love for his boys, mother and father, his sister, as well as the many friends he had back home. He was well liked and seldom complained about the danger of incoming and the deplorable conditions. Like most of us at Khe Sanh, Donald just did his job the best he could. Donald Saunders was a cook (3371), not foodservice, rear area support, not in the rear with the gear, but just a cook with H.Q. 1/13. He went where and how they went and lived like everyone else did at Khe Sanh while doing any number of jobs not necessarily related to his MOS. Donald Saunders was killed at Khe Sanh on March 14, 1968 when a mortar fell from the afternoon sky while Donald was helping others reinforce their bunker. Donald's father said: "Since he had to leave this world, I'm glad he left it the way he did, with courage and fighting for his country."

At Khe Sanh we were all the same and it did not matter what MOS the military had given us. There was no safe place, no place to rest, hide or sleep.No place safer than another. We were all the same at Khe Sanh no matter the MOS, officer, enlisted or civilian contractor. We all shared in the danger equally and our causalities reflected our presence. I think there were many like Tom Horchler and Donald Saunders at Khe Sanh. Young Marines who did their duty while fighting every day trying to stay alive with courage and for their country.

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By Craig W. Tourte

I certainly recognize the difference between those of you who went outside the wire and those of us who did not. I have had many conversations with my good friend Steve Wiese who walks around this earth with a halo over him and who is apparently wrapped in the arms of the Lord. I have sat spell bound as Steve related his experiences on the hills, on the ghost patrol with Bravo, the March 30 patrol and why he decided to return to Vietnam for another tour of duty. Other experiences Steve says were more dangerous than what he had experienced during the Siege of Khe Sanh.

I have listened to Mike Powers of Delta relate how he assisted those who returned from the Ghost Patrol and of his many assaults against the enemy. I have even had a conversation with Mike's point man who told me how Mike saved his life after he was wounded.

I have talked with Chuck Chamberlin about his experience on the hills and how he survived both direct hits on Charlie Company's CP bunkers. He is still haunted by visions he has of the blood running down the deck of the medical tent in Dong Ha.

I have listened to Neil relate his experiences. I watch, listen and learn.

I did not fix my bayonet. I did not participate in a charging attack or look into the eyes of our enemy. My combat experience is much smaller and limited. But, I did show up and survive for eight months and the seventy seven day Siege at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. There are more heroes than I can ever mention. I don't feel like one of them. No one has more respect for the grunts and the job they did than those of us who stayed behind the wire. It was not because we wanted to, but because that was just our jobs. Believe me, a lot of we REMFS wanted to go along with the grunts, but we did what we were told and stayed behind.

But I, I believe that recognition is deserved for our efforts in being there, suffering, bravery, standing fast, being wounded, and, yes for dying whether it was inside or outside the wire at Khe Sanh, or, any other location. We were who we were. We cannot change the story or our experiences. Above all, we were just Marines and please don't thank us for our "support."

Ed Note: Craig throw away your guilt. We <u>ALL</u> "just" did the task given us.

By John Rowland

Craig. Your observation is very good. To look at anyone who had been at Khe Sanh during the siege, you probably could not tell what MOS they were. Everyone was exposed to the same dangers both real and speculative, but the only area of difference that I can see was that the grunts were the only ones going outside the wire along with F/O and Recon. No one was in any less danger inside the wire than anyone else. I have said to many, that as bad as Khe Sanh was, after we left, I wished many a time to have been back instead of where we went...just my humble opinion only...Semper Fi....proud to have served with everyone at Khe Sanh...just a grunt..Delta 1/26 67-68

By Gordon Young

Craig. That was wonderful. You really have a way with words. You always seem to get everything just right. Thank you so much. S/F

MEMOIRS

REMEMBERANCE OF THOSE WHO LIVED AND DIED AT KHE SANH "THE SIEGE" (OCT. 9, 1968)

Mike Fishbaugh found this very interesting article published in the February Issue of Leatherneck Magazine, regarding a ceremony held at Khe Sanh many months after, the Siege.

"This article appeared in the Feb 69 issue. Military officials called it, "Continuing Operations in the Scotland II area". The press called it "The Return to Khe Sanh"

Members of the Fourth and Twelfth Marines wanted to know, "Who ever left?", "These Marines had still been operating in the Khe Sanh Basin since the end of the siege that began January 20,1968, lasted until the end of March, and cost more than a thousand American casualties.

Batteries of the 12th Marines had artillery sites on several of the mountains surrounding the basin, and the 4th Marines had operated continuously in that area from early April (68) until the Memorial Services on that airstrip Oct 9,1969.

Nomenclature differences aside, the fact is that after several days of operation, a memorial service was held on Khe Sanh airstrip to honor the Marines who fell during that bloody bombardment.

The operation leading to the Khe Sanh ceremony began , when elements of the Third Engineers, India Battery, 3/12 and Kilo, 3/4, along with helicopters, combined forces to set up a fire support base, named NAN KING, at the rock quarry about a half-a-mile from the strip.

The next day the 4th Marines began sweeps from several areas toward the strip. There was almost no contact, and few caches were found. Apparently the enemy hadn't been using that terrain to any great extent.

At 0630, Oct 9, elements of Kilo Company, led by Capt Sid Thomas, left Nan King to sweep the road leading from the fire support base to the airstrip.

This part of the operation was also uneventful. An hour later the troops finished their sweep, and set up a perimeter defense around part of the strip. Artillery and strike planes worked over the ridge lines with their ordnance, and then dignitaries began arriving.

The 3rd Marine Division Band landed on the strip first, followed by generals, regimental and battalion commanders, an ARVN platoon, and about 2 squads of the press corps. Engineers set up two flagpoles for the ceremony-others checked a sound system, and Kilo security forces watched apprehensively as helicopters set down on the airstrip and shut down their engines. They felt that if there was one tube, one mortar round and one enemy Soldier left in the basin, this would draw the round like a magnet. But the Marines had done their work well during the operation. The hour-long ceremony was uninterrupted.
By SSgt Herb Richardson

There was another report on the ceremony on 14 October 1969, in the Pacific Stars & Stripes Newspaper, with a few more details of the event.

From Stars & Stripes

EX-FOE JOINS HONOR TO KHE SANH DEAD

The American and South Vietnamese flags once more were raised over the KSCB Wednesday, Oct 09, 1969, honoring Allied dead who fell during the longest siege of the Vietnam War.

A former North Vietnamese soldier who fought American Marines during the 77 day battle stood stiffly at attention and saluted as honor groups slowing raised the flags at the North end of Khe Sanh's 3,000 foot long runway.

As a North Vietnamese soldier, Sergeant Nguyea Trung Thung had crawled within yards of the Khe Sanh perimeter before being wounded in a B-52 raid in February. He later defected to the South Vietnamese Government.

Wednesday, he paid his last respects to those who perished , and those that were wounded at Khe Sanh. The Marines, in full battle gear formed an honor guard on either side of both flag poles.

A chaplain read the Lord's Prayer and other selected passages from the Bible. Sergeant Hubert Day, from Chattanooga Tn., sounded Taps.

The ceremony was interrupted several times by loud explosions over the mountains to the North, as nearby allied gunners kept firing. The North Vietnamese did not fire a single round into Khe Sanh, since the return of the Allies.

In contrast, they fired over a thousand rounds a day during the height of the siege. As the service continued, Marines stood silhouetted on the skyline acting as security guards.

A few thousand yards away, two regiments of Marines and south Vietnamese troops searched the jungle for NVA and supplies. Lieutenant David Tuckwiller, from Charleston WV, who was a platoon commander at Khe Sanh, also attended the ceremony. " It was really quiet today," he said " Everyone was talking in whispers, it was not like that during the Siege".

Frank Noe served with Charlie Company 11th Engineers, and was an integral part of the memorial service, written about in Leatherneck Magazine & the Pacific Stars and stripes in 1969. He contacted Mike Fishbaugh and graciously donated the following Photographs of that ceremony and a short story of his participation.

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Hi, Mike, I was with 11Th. Engineers C company, 3rd Marine Division and in country Nov.67-1968-July 1969. My first time at Khe Sanh was January,1968. We were the last ones to get out of Khe Sanh and made it back to the Rock Pile only to be surrounded again. Two weeks later we finally made it back to Dong Ha. We then returned to Khe Sanh in October of 1969 with 3/4 to again raise our Colors and the Vietnam colors, in a tribute to those killed and wounded at Khe Sanh during the siege.

After the choppers dropped us off we were supposed to hook-up with a Platoon from K Company, 3/4. We had trouble contacting them on the radio. We spotted an antenna in the bush. So I crawled in that direction and found a good sized bomb crater full of fellow Marines sound asleep, including the Lt. With The radio in the center. I left the Regiment and

Battalion out. (True Story) I am sending you photos of that ceremony, and a aerial photo of the Airstrip.



Joe Rabasca & Minyard Walking into Khe Sanh?
Frankie Noe Thomas & Rabasca ?

























POETRY

The Marine Sniper & the Reporter

The Monsters and the Weak
The sun beat like a hammer, not a cloud was in the sky.
The mid-day air ran thick with dust, my throat was parched and dry.
With microphone clutched tight in hand and cameraman
in tow,
I ducked beneath a fallen roof, surprised to hear "stay low".

My eyes blinked several times before in shadow I could see
the figure stretched across the rubble, steps away from me.
He wore a cloak of burlap strips, all shades of gray and brown,
that hung in tatters till it seemed he melted into the ground.

He never turned his head or took his eye away from the scope,
but pointed through the broken wall and down the rocky slope.
"About eight hundred yards," he said, his whispered words concise,
"beneath the baggy jacket he is wearing a device."

A chill ran up my spine despite the swelter of the heat,
"You think he's gonna set it off along the crowded street?"
The sniper gave a weary sigh and said, "I wouldn't doubt it."
"Unless there's something this old gun and I can do about it."

A thunder clap, a tongue of flame, the still abruptly shattered;
while citizens that walked the street were just as quickly scattered.
Till only one remained, a body crumpled on the ground,
the threat to oh so many ended by a single round.

And yet the sniper had no cheer, no hint of any gloat,
instead he pulled a logbook out and quietly he wrote.
"Hey I could put you on TV, that shot was quite a story!"
But he surprised me once again - "I got no wish for glory."

"Are you for real?" I asked in awe. "You don't want fame or credit?"
He looked at me with saddened eyes and said: "You just don't seem to get
it."
"You see that shot up length of wall, the one without a door?
Before a mortar round hit, is used to be a grocery store."

"But don't go thinking that to bomb a store is all that cruel,
the rubble just across the street, it used to be a school.
The little kids played soccer in the field out by the road."
His head hung low, "They never thought a car would
just explode."

"As bad as all this is though, it could be a whole lot worse."
He swallowed hard, the words coming from his mouth
sounding like a curse.
"Today the fight's on foreign land, on streets that aren't my own.
I'm here today 'cause if I fail, the next fight's back at home."

"I won't let my Safeway burn, with my neighbors dead
inside.
I don't wanna get a call from school that says my daughter died;
I pray that not a one of them will know the things I see,
nor have the work of terrorists etched in their memory."

"So you can keep your trophies and your fleeting bit of fame.
I don't care if I make the news, or if they know my

name."
He glanced toward the camera and his brow began to
knot,
"If you're looking for a story, why not give this one a shot?"

"Just tell the truth of what you see, without the slant or spin;
that most of us are sure O.K. and we're coming home
again.
And why not tell the folks back home about the good
we've done,
how when they see Americans, the kids come at a run."

"You tell them what it means to folks here just to speak their mind, without
the fear, that tyranny is just a step behind;
Describe the desert miles they walk for their first chance to vote,
or ask a soldier if he's proud, I'm sure you'll get a quote."

He turned and slid the rifle in a drag bag thickly padded,
then looked up again with eyes of steel as quietly he added:
"And maybe just remind the few, if ill of us they speak.
That we are all that stands between the Monsters and
the Weak."

Michael Marks
January 2006

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INCOMING

STATE PARKS SEARCHES FOR PURPLE HEART RECIPIENTS

By Milton McNeely
For more information: Cathy Jimenez, 518-486-1868

National Purple Heart Hall of Honor to Preserve Stories

ALBANY, NY -- (03/16/2006; 1130)(EIS) -- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissioner Bernadette Castro today began a nationwide search for Purple Heart medal recipients to share stories to be included in exhibits at the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor museum located at the New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site in Vails Gate, New York. The facility will honor Purple Heart medal recipients, veterans who were wounded or killed while serving their country.

"The new National Purple Heart Hall of Honor will serve as our nation's only institution dedicated solely to recipients of the Purple Heart medal and offer visitors an incredible journey through military history across generations with a unique combination of historic resources and interactive, state-of-the-art technology," said Commissioner Castro. "Governor Pataki's commitment to preserving our heritage through this one of a kind museum will provide a destination for service men and women to share their powerful stories and poignant reminders of human sacrifice.

"This facility is a fitting tribute to the veterans who have put their lives on the line in support of freedom. I look forward to adding the details of my own family member who served in World War II at the Battle of the Bulge, and together with the information and recollections of other Purple Heart recipients and loved ones, the Hall of Honor will preserve these precious stories well into the future."

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor is a 7,500 square foot facility that will honor recipients of the Purple Heart Medal through the development and presentation of a series of exhibitions and programs that have been created with the participation of Purple Heart recipients, their friends and families. The Hall of Honor will work with veterans and families to collect invaluable personal information on the background and service information of each recipient, the circumstances surrounding their wounding, the photographs and letters home, and copies of discharge forms or citations that document receipt of the medal. The information collected will be included in exhibits at the museum and an electronic database that will be available onsite and over the Internet for a worldwide audience.

The Hall of Honor will also include a reception area, gallery, exhibit hall, learning and education center for school groups and tours, and presentation room. Through historical photographs documentary film footage, period objects and videotaped recollections by veterans themselves, the Hall will provide a multi-media show exploring the spirit of the American people during times of crisis.

"The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor will honor the nearly two million Americans whose sacrifices have earned them the Purple Heart medal. Now more than ever, it is important to recognize the men and women in our armed forces who were wounded in battle for this country, and those who continue to serve so faithfully today," said Senator Bill Larkin, a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army. "This historic place will be a reminder of the cost of freedom. It will be a fitting tribute to our veterans and how much we value and appreciate all they have done for our country. It will bring young people especially that much closer to understanding the experience and sacrifice shared by these special veterans."

Governor Pataki has committed $4.1 million toward the planning, design and development of the Hall of Honor. Other funds to support the project include $402,000 in federal HUD/VA funds secured by U.S. Representative Sue Kelly and additional donations from veterans and their families. The Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), the national organization whose members are Purple Heart recipients, has contributed $500,000 toward the project.

"Every Purple Heart veteran is a hero whose story needs to be told so we can fully honor their sacrifices and learn from their experiences," said Congresswoman Sue Kelly. "The Hall of Honor will uniquely highlight these stories and will inspire our community to preserve the legacy of our military heroes and better appreciate the freedoms for which they fought."

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor is located at the site of the final encampment of George Washington's Army at New Windsor Cantonment and plays a central role in the history of the Purple Heart. To honor service of his troops, General Washington chose a select number of troops to receive a purple cloth Badge of Merit, the precursor to the Purple Heart Award. The present day Purple Heart medal took as its inspiration the color and shape of the badge and added the image of George Washington to honor the man who valued the outstanding service of his soldiers. In 1932, the new Purple Heart medal was presented to 150 World War I veterans at the New Windsor Cantonment site and the medal has been presented to over a million military personnel.

Families who would like to share their story or other materials of Purple Heart recipients to be considered for the exhibition or archives to support the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, please contact the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, P.O. Box 207, Vails Gate, New York, 12584 or call (845) 561-1765. Tax deductible gifts to the Hall in support of the ongoing development of the memorial and museum are also being accepted.

Thank you,

Michael J. Clark, Project Coordinator
The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor
PO Box 207, Vails Gate, NY 12584
Phone 845-561-1765
Fax 845-561-6577

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, preserves and shares the stories of America's military personnel wounded or killed in battle, recipients of the Purple Heart. It is currently under construction at the New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site, the living history museum of the Northern Continental Army's final encampment of the Revolutionary War, 1782-1783.
Visit them online at www.friendsofpalisades.org

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MEMOIRS

OPERATION "DEWEY CANYON"

Submitted By Mike Fishbaugh

Ed Note:

We have just passed the anniversary of one of the major operation of the Vietnam War, by 3 Battal-

ions of United States Marines from the 9Th Marine Regiment, 3Rd Marine Division.

Many of those same Marines also fought at Khe Sanh. During operation Dewey Canyon, Five Marines would be awarded the ***Medal of Honor.***

Lance Corporal	**Thomas Noonan**	**G Co 2/9**	**
Corporal	**William Morgan**	**H Co 2/9**	**
PFC	**Alfred Wilson**	**3rd Recon**	**
PFC	**Robert Jenkins**	**3rd Recon**	**
1st Lieutenant	**Wesley Fox**	**A Co 1/9**	

**** Posthumously**

The commanding general of the 3d Marine Division, headquartered out of Da Nang, was Major General Raymond G. Davis. For Davis, this was his third war, having served in World War II, and receiving the **Medal of Honor** for his heroism at the Chosin Reservoir in Korea. Davis referred to the 9th Marines as the "Mountain Regiment" and his "Strike Force Regiment". As Operation Dewey Canyon began on January 22nd, General Davis had good reason to pay close attention to the efforts of his Marines. Among the men assigned to meet and defeat the enemy in their A Shau sanctuary was a young lieutenant in command of a rifle platoon. By a strange twist of fate that defied military policy prohibiting relatives from serving in the same war zone, Operation Dewey Canyon would send Davis' son, Lieutenant Miles Davis, into harms way. The first phase of Operation Dewey Canyon primarily involved the movement and positioning of air assets. Phase II, the movement of the 3 battalions of the 9th Marines out of Vandegrift Combat Base began on January 31st. It was during this move to position the 9th Marines at the northern edge of A Shau that Lance Corporal Noonan died trying to save the life of his fellow Marines.

Lance Corporal Thomas Noonan did his best to ignore the mud as his company slowly moved down the side of the hillside. It was February 5th, and Operation Dewey Canyon was two weeks old. The men of the 9th Marines were moving into the A Shau Valley, and Company G, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines (2/9) was moving out of its location southeast of Vandegrift Combat Base as part of the incursion into A Shau. It was early in the monsoon season, so the progress of the Marines was hampered not only by the dense foliage, but also by the intermittent rains and the slippery mud. Suddenly, bad went to worse as the lead element walked into the enemy. From their concealed positions, the North Vietnamese opened fire, wounding four men. Further up the hill the rest of the Marines were stuck by the impossible terrain and the hail of enemy fire. No one could reach the wounded. Lance Corporal-Noonan was a rifleman in his company, despite an education that could have granted him an almost immediate commission when he joined the Corps. Now the 25-year old took upon himself the task of rescuing his brothers. Carefully he moved down the slippery slope, ever mindful of the heavy enemy presence. Nearing the wounded, he took cover behind some rocks to shout encouraging words to the wounded Marines, assuring them that help was on the way. Alone he raced across the fire-swept area, locating the most seriously wounded man and dragging him backwards to shelter. Enemy rounds whistled through the area, hitting Noonan and knocking him to the ground. Despite his own wounds, Lance Corporal Noonan got back up and resumed dragging the wounded Marine towards the cover of the rocks from which he had earlier encouraged the men. Before reaching its shelter, enemy fire reached out again, a rain of hot lead striking the young corporal's body. Inspired by Noonan's example, the rest of the platoon charged the enemy, pushing them back and reaching the wounded. All four survived. Noonan was the only casualty. He died, the collar of his wounded comrade's fatigue shirt still grasped in his hands in a valiant attempt to save a friend. He was the first to earn a **Medal of Honor** in an operation that would test the courage of all the Marines of the 9th.

From January 31st until February 10th, 2/9 continued its movement south, flanked by 1/9 and 3/9. Colonel Robert Barrow, commander of the 9th Marine Regiment (who later became the 27th Commandant of the Marine Corps), coordinated the mission with support from American asset's throughout I Corps. By February 10th the three battalions were poised and ready to enter Phase III, the incursion into A Shau. Along the way they had built numerous fire bases with names like Henderson, Tun Tavern, Shiloh, Razor, and Cunningham, to provide artillery support and maintain supply routes. The large movements of the three battalions demanded a regular and consistent re-supply at Vandergrift Combat

Base. On February 13th far to the north, a convoy was carrying supplies to Vandergrift when it was ambushed. In the heavy mortar and small arms fire that followed, the convoy security squad moved to engage the enemy. Marine Lance Corporal Thomas Creek dashed across the fire swept area to take up a better position from which to attack the enemy when he was wounded. Almost as quickly as he fell, the enemy threw a grenade at his position. Nearby were others of his squad, men who were about to die. Ignoring his previous wounds, Lance Corporal Creek rolled on top of the grenade to absorb the blast, sparing the lives of his comrades at the expense of his own. Though not officially a part of the Dewey Canyon operation, in his support role the 18-year old hero's posthumous Medal of Honor must be counted with that of those who fought further south. Even as Lance Corporal Creek lay dying in a gully northeast of Vandergrift, far to the south the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines were crossing the Da Krong River only 13 kilometers from Laos. Phase II of Operation Dewey Canyon was under way. The following morning the Marines of 1/9 and 2/9 began moving out of their fire bases as well, heading southward and towards the North Vietnamese Base Area 611 that ran from the north boundary of A Shau and into Laos.

The move into A Shau was at once both miserable and dangerous. Triple-canopy jungle made movement difficult and two weeks of continuous fog and heavy monsoon rains removed any possibility of personal comfort and made re-supply difficult. The enemy moved freely through the A Shau at night on roads they would carefully camouflage during the day with movable trees and shrubs ingeniously planted in containers. As they moved, the Marines were subjected to heavy artillery fire from NVA guns inside Laos. At night, more troops and weapons moved down the Ho Chi Minh trail. General Davis caused a slight stir on the home front when a newspaper reported a remark made in a personal conversation. "It makes me sick," the 3d Marine Division C.G. had said, "to sit on this hill and watch those1,000 (enemy) trucks go down those roads in Laos, hauling ammunition down south to kill Americans with."

Early in the third phase of the operation, General Davis flew out to meet with Colonel Barrow. Earlier that morning the General had begun receiving reports of enemy contact..."Kilo Company, fire fight, 1 killed, 2 wounded." An hour later Kilo Company was in contact again, more Marines killed, more wounded. Davis did his best to concentrate on the meeting at hand, all the while knowing that his son was a rifle platoon leader in Kilo Company. Even as he landed for his meeting with Colonel Barrow, some of the wounded were arriving...Lieutenant Miles Davis among them. The younger Davis would survive his wounds and subsequently would receive the Purple Heart Medal from his father.

Meanwhile, in the A Shau, other Marines struggled to stay alive and complete their mission. By February 20th, the Marines had moved all the way to the Laotian border. As the enemy played their deadly game of hide-and-seek, raining death on young American Marines and then quickly scurrying across the border into the safety of Laos, Colonel Barrow had seen too many of his men die to the unfair advantage. "The political implications of going into Laos were pretty unimportant to me at that point," he later stated. The policy of US commanders had always been that units could enter Laos or Cambodia, only when American lives were endangered by enemy forces therein. (Usually this applied to SAR (Search and Rescue) missions for down pilots or LRRP (long range reconnaissance patrols). Colonel Barrow saw the danger his own men faced from within and, despite the very real possibility of sacrificing his distinguished military career, ordered Hotel Company, 2/9 to cross the border and set up ambush positions INSIDE Laos.(This plan was approved by General Creighton Abrams, commander of all U.S. Forces in Vietnam...AFTER the border crossing had already occurred.)

With elements of the 9th Marines now operating inside Laos, the other battalions moved out to take up positions along the border. On the morning of February 22nd, the 1st Battalion was in place on ridge overlooking Laos. The Marines of 1/9 called themselves the Walking Dead. On this day, for one company in particular, the name would be all to real.
First Lieutenant Wesley Fox was in command of Alpha Company, 1/9. He was a seasoned veteran, now in his 19th year in the Marine Corps. As a young Corporal he had served in Korea, slowly working his way through the ranks to become a First Sergeant by 1966. The veteran leatherneck, now in his second war, had begun anew...working his way

through the commissioned ranks. Fox had already completed a tour in Vietnam, and recently had extended his combat tour. As dawn broke on the forested hillside overlooking Laos, Alpha Company was sent out to look for and destroy a suspected enemy force operating in the region. Lieutenant Fox's 3rd platoon had made contact with them the previous day, and now the Company was looking to finish the fight. In addition, First Battalion was low on water. A detail was dispatched to get re-supply from a stream below, Alpha Company leading the way to provide security as Lieutenant Fox and his men searched for the enemy. As they reached the stream, the enemy appeared.

The NVA seemed to be everywhere, popping up out of hidden spider holes to rain devastating machine-gun and small arms fire on Alpha Company, while enemy mortars fell on the embattled Marines. The suddenness and the ferocity of the attack caught the Marines by surprise, many falling wounded in the initial onslaught. Quickly Lieutenant Fox moved out, working his way through the heavy jungle overgrowth to gain a position where he could assess the situation and direct his platoon leaders. Deadly missiles struck the foliage and bamboo palms around him. Fox located a sniper's position, quickly killing the enemy with his M-16 rifle before moving on. As Fox deployed his platoons, two enemy mortar rounds landed in his position, killing his radiomen and air and artillery observers. Shrapnel stuck the lieutenant in the shoulder but, despite the bleeding wounds, he grabbed both radios and continued to direct the movements of his Marines. The lieutenant who led Fox's 2nd platoon was seriously wounded, and Fox instructed his executive officer to take command of that platoon. When his platoon leader in the 3d platoon was killed, Fox quickly moved in to fill the void and take command. He personally destroyed one position while continuing to should orders and give encouragement. Coolly he spoke into the radio to coordinate aerial and artillery support for his Marines. Among those working to defend these Marines on the Laotian border was artillery officer Harvey "Barney" Barnum, who had earned the Medal of Honor three years earlier and returned, at his own request, for another Vietnam tour. As the enemy fire continued unabated, the executive officer Fox had sent to 2nd Platoon was killed, and another of his lieutenants was wounded. Though wounded, Fox was the only officer in Alpha Company still capable of leading the resistance. This he did with calm professionalism, his Marines repulsing a final enemy assault during which the Company Commander was wounded a second time. Heedless of his battered body, Fox began organizing his survivors in establishing a defensive position. As corpsmen moved about to locate and treat the wounded, Fox refused aid, setting himself to the tasks leadership demanded. By late afternoon his Marines had secured their position, and Delta Company 1/9 arrived to relieve them. Ten of Fox's brave Marines had died and, of the 153 men who had joined him that morning in the patrol down from the ridge, only 66 were able to continue the mission the following day. Despite his wounds, and determined not to leave Alpha Company leaderless, Lieutenant Fox was among them.

For two weeks Captain Dave Winecoff and Marines of Hotel Company operated in Laos, setting up ambush positions to strike back at an enemy that had never recognized the neutrality of Laos and had effectively used it to advantage against American soldiers and Marines. Five days after the border crossing, one patrol from Hotel 2/9 was moving down a road inside Laos when it was attacked by an NVA squad firing automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades from the shelter of their fortified bunkers. Two Marines fell very close to the enemy bunkers, wounded, and trapped. Efforts by others in their patrol were met by heavy and sustained enemy fire. Twenty-one year old Marine Corporal William Morgan slowly began working his way through the undergrowth to a position near the open road directly in front of the enemy position. Yelling encouragement to the wounded Marines, Morgan suddenly stood to his feet and rushed into the open roadway to single-handedly attack the enemy. Fully exposed to the fury of the enemy emplacement, his efforts drew an immediate and torrential rain of enemy fire. Corporal Morgan's lifeless body fell to a heap in the middle of the roadway, but his valiant charge had distracted the enemy and drawn their fire long enough for the remaining men of the patrol to reach and rescue the wounded. A year later, Corporal Morgan's family accepted his Medal of Honor from President Richard Nixon during ceremonies at the White House. His date of heroism is listed as 25 February 1969, and the place of action is listed vaguely as: southeast of Vandegrift Combat Base, Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam. Indeed he

sacrificed his life southeast of Vandegrift... far to the southeast...far enough to be outside Quang Tri province and inside the borders of Laos.

On the last official day of Operation Dewey Canyon a reconnaissance company was returning to their base of operations out of Fire Support Base Cunningham when they were attacked. Private First Class Alfred Mac Wilson took charge as acting squad leader of the rear squad, maneuvering his men to outflank the enemy. When two men manning his own machinegun were wounded, Alfred Wilson and another Marine were rushing to man the gun themselves when an enemy soldier stepped from behind a tree to lob a grenade between the two men. Immediately, Corporal Wilson threw his own body over the grenade, dying beneath its lethal blast, to spare his comrade. Hostilities did not end with the official conclusion of Dewey Canyon either. The Marines continued to hold their base camps in and around A Shau as the Mountain Regiment began their slow withdrawal. Two days after Alfred Wilson jumped on a grenade to spare his comrade, a similar engagement occurred at Fire Support Base Argonne near the DMZ, where Marines of the 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division were lending their own support to the Dewey Canyon Operation.

When the enemy made an early morning attack on the 12-man recon team's position, Private First Class Fred Ostrom headed for a two-man position with his friend, PFC Robert Jenkins. An enemy grenade exploded as the men reached their position, blowing off part of Ostrom's right hand and arm. As the wounded man sagged into his position, a second grenade was thrown directly into the emplacement. PFC Robert Jenkins quickly pushed Ostrom aside, then covered his wounded friend with his own body. Jenkins shield of flesh and blood spared the life of his wounded friend, but at that cost of his own life.
Such was the courage of the Marines, from the experienced vets of other wars like General Davis, Colonel Barrow, and Lieutenant Fox, to the valiant young warriors fresh out of high school. They went, they did their job, and some came home. Valor abounded, many were the acts of heroism that went unrecognized, five Marines earned Medals of Honor,.and only one, Lieutenant Wesley Fox, survived to wear it. He does so, humbly, in honor of all those valiant Marines who became a part of his own legacy in Operation Dewey Canyon.

Operation Dewey Canyon officially ended on 3 March 1969, when Hotel Company left Laos. In those 56 days US Marines built more than 20 base camps and accounted for more than 2,000 enemy casualties. Dewey Canyon was different from other campaigns however, in that the real goal had not been a combat mission to destroy the enemy, but a mission to take away his large cache of supplies being stockpiled in A Shau. During the period US Marines captured 1,200 enemy machineguns, 4,000 bicycle tires, 2,200 enemy rockets, and two big 122mm cannons. More than 500 tons of enemy ammunition was confiscated or destroyed, as well as more than 100 tons of rice stockpiled to feed the enemy troops. Much of the confiscated rice was subsequently donated to needy villages in the region. The success of the mission was not without cost to the Marines of the Mountain Regiment either...130 young American boys killed in action, 932 wounded.

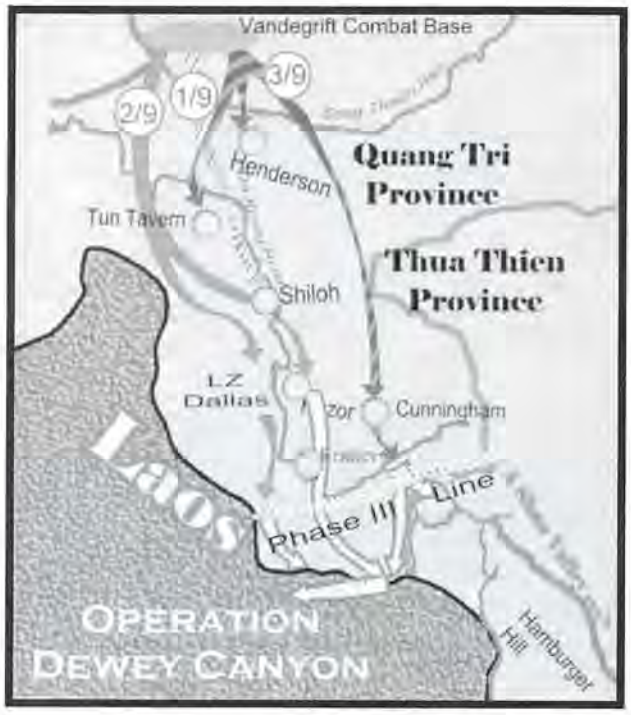

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INCOMING

"THANKS"

"Doc"Capt John Roberts,USMCR,just wanted to thank the Cap Marines from Oscar Company

I served as a Corpsman with Oscar Company in the Ville, specifically at Oscar II. Thanks for noticing a fine web sight that was imitated by a valiant Marine,

SSgt "Bagpipes "Taylor, USMC Retired. There were a lot of great Marines associated with Oscar Company. I only wish that I had more contact with the other 2 platoons than I did. It was the bravery of the CAP Marines and the Army Advisors (District Headquarters) and later the SOG at FOB-3 that motivated me to later become a Marine Officer. I finished up my career in the Marine Corps Reserves serving as the Tank Detachment Officer, Amarillo, Texas, In Charge by retiring in 1983.

I cannot begin to express my reverence and respect for all of you who served at Khe Sanh. I was only able to do my small job because the rest of you taught me how and what to do. I owe a great debt to Marines of Oscar II for my very life. On more than 3 occasions I was saved from imminent death if it were not for some Marine knocking me over the head or tackling me during a mortar barrage. Much has been said about us "Doc's) but in our hearts we knew that we were adopted and we also knew who the real "Warriors" were.

God Bless you everyone and thanks,
Semper Fi
"Doc" Roberts

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MEMOIRS

The following article, was written by Robert Palmer, and published in the Military Journal. Robert passed away in 2001. It is being reprinted as an honest and riveting account of the Love, Admiration, and respect Marines have for their beloved Corpsmen.

Robert Palmer HMM-163

Robert Palmer joined the Marines in 1965 at the age of 18, and was sent to Vietnam in July 1967. He was there for 13 months, until August 1968. This story is his tribute to a young corpsman with whom he served in Vietnam 33 years ago.

Because of a base closure (Naval Station New York) and the DOD Civilian Priority Placement Program, I transferred to the National Naval Medical Center in 1994 and began working in the office of Command Inspection, Evaluation and Management Control. When I walked through the Medical Center that first time and saw the bright faces and sharp uniforms of the many young corpsmen here, images of other bright young faces returned. Images from another time, another place, and of a young Navy corpsman whose memory had remained with me for more than 26 years.

It was February 1968 in Quang Tri Province, Viet Nam just south of the Demilitarized Zone. As a Marine helicopter crew chief with HMM-163, I helped provide support to friendly forces operating in northern I Corps, along the DMZ with North Viet Nam, the approaches to the Ho Chi Min Trail and the border with Laos. The Tet Offensive had begun and the battles for Hue and the combat base at Khe Sanh were underway. We were nightly subjected to mortars, rockets, sporadic sniper fire and probes along our perimeter. During the day we flew missions: At night we performed the unending maintenance, sometimes in helmets and flak jackets. At night, many of us, including me, were assigned to the perimeter to augment ground forces assigned to defend us. Ground attacks had broken out around us so close that shrapnel from aircraft and artillery fell on the flight line and in the living areas. Bullets would fly overhead or sometimes smack into something. Nerves were frayed, tempers were short, and the fear of being overrun was very real.

On this particular morning, my aircraft a Sikorsky UH-34D had been designated MEDEVAC for the day. I felt uneasy. Flying MEDEVAC often meant going where the action was. At first light I pre flighted, rigged for stretchers, drew two M-60 machine guns from the armory and mounted both port and starboard. I made the yellow sheet entries and certified the aircraft ready for flight.

While stowing gear, checking and rechecking things in preparation for first flight, a young Navy corpsman appeared at my plane and introduced himself. He looked new. He even smelled new. In a rather high pitched voice he cheerfully explained he had been in country only a couple of weeks, and had flown only one other MEDEVAC mission. Sizing up this soft-spoken kid, I decided he would panic the first time we ran into trouble, and from his slight stature I couldn't see how he could help himself,

much less anyone else. I tried not to show my contempt as he stowed his gear.

A sergeant from the radio shop arrived. A shortage of aircrews meant volunteers from the maintenance shops to man the second M-60. Soon, the pilots arrived and began their preflight. One I didn't recognize. Another new guy. What a crew, I thought -- a new corpsman, a new copilot and a gunner from one of the shops. The pilot and I were the only seasoned members of the crew. I had a bad feeling about this.

The pilots returned to the ready room and the rest of us made small talk to pass the time. Although I felt a certain arrogance towards the corpsman, I found him likable, cheerful, talkative and excited about the mission. God! I thought, he looks forward to this. I wandered over to the maintenance shack where I knew some of my fellow crew chiefs would be. Seeking sympathy for being assigned such a raw crew, I complained to anyone who listened. I was especially unflattering in describing the new corpsman and made it known I felt he would be useless.

A siren signaled our first mission and, at a full run, we converged on the helo. As the pilots scrambled up to the pit I grabbed a fire bottle. Amid a flurry of flipping switches the pilot signaled engine start. A short prime, a few turns and the fifteen hundred horsepower Pratt & Whitney sprang to life, followed by a brief idle and the signal to engage rotors. I pulled chocks and climbed aboard as we began our taxi roll. Granted clearance, we taxied onto the runway and the pilot pushed the throttle to full power and the runway began to pass quickly beneath us. As we rotated through sixty knots the tail lifted and the main landing gear rose from the runway. The helo pitched nose down as we raced down the runway a few feet above the surface. As I looked aft I saw our chase plane, a Huey gunship, armed with eight M-60's and sixteen rockets fall in behind us. By the end of the runway we were treetop level and as we crossed the outer base perimeter we locked and loaded the M-60's. We began a rapid accent to two thousand feet with our chase plane close behind. Our corpsman looked like a kid who had just gotten off his favorite ride at Coney Island. Don't know why, but that annoyed me.

It took only minutes to reach Dong Ha. We turned west following the river. At the Rock Pile we turned south, again following the river. At Cam Lo we headed west, towards Khe Sanh. A forward element of the 26th Marines had two casualties from an engagement that had just broken off. The terrain was mountainous with towering trees and canopy foliage that hid the ground below. Marines on the ground had moved a WIA and a KIA to an area that air strikes had blown enough leaves off the trees we could see down through the canopy when directly above. They directed us in by the sound of our helo. Unable to land, we would have to use the hoist. From a hover the pilot lowered the helo until the wheels were in the tops of the trees. Leaning out I could see the Marines below. Just as I began to lower the cable and sling came the unmistakable sound of small arms fire.

The reaction below was immediate as Marines sought cover and firing positions. As the firing continued several distinct sharp "thunks" sounded. I knew that sound and realized we were taking hits. As I swung the M-60 into position I called to the pilot, "We're taking fire." No response. As I repeated the warning, the pilot was wryly telling the copilot what manifold pressure and engine rpm should be and to remember to keep rotor rpm up. From almost directly below, a North Vietnamese soldier shot up through the belly of the aircraft. I swung the M-60 out but couldn't lower the muzzle enough to bear on my target below. Almost in a panic I glanced around the helo cabin. The window gunner and corpsman were looking at me, but did not seem aware of our danger. In that instance, I knew I was the only one aboard who knew we were in trouble, real trouble. Again I keyed the mike, "We're taking fire!" "What's that?" came the reply. A pause, then, "I've lost a radio." To the ground the pilot radioed, "Echo Hotel, we're taking fire". "Roger MEDEVAC, at your six clock" came the response. "Roger, Echo Hotel, we're departing" the pilot replied, at which the helicopter rose slightly and slipped to one side. As soon as I had a clear field of fire, I began firing. As I sprayed the foliage and trees below, something made me glance up. Just inches away was the smiling face of the corpsman feeding ammo into the M-60, having pulled most of the belt out of the can. In amazement, and still firing, I stared into his face for a moment and then shouted, "What are you doing?" "Helping" he hollered back, still smiling with no sign of fear, absolutely none. As we stared face-to-face across the firing machine gun a feeling of in-

tense affection and camaraderie for this man came over me. I stared a moment more then let go of the M-60 like it was a hot iron as a vision of dead or wounded Marines flashed before me. I realized I had long since quit looking at what I was firing at. I waited tensely, expecting the radio to crackle with the horrible news I had just shot our own men. It never came; instead a conversation between the pilot, chase plane and the ground unit began as to what our course of action would be. "Crew chief?" the pilot called over the mike.

"Yes sir?" I answered. "We're going back." I somehow knew that, I thought dryly. "Make'em keep their heads down," "Yes sir," I answered. We made a pass at the zone and I opened fire on the spot from which we had received fire, upon which the helo made a hard tight turn and went into a hover in the treetops. I immediately ran the cable and sling down through the trees. When I got the WIA level with the cabin, the corpsman was right there to help pull him in, taking over as I released him from the sling. The young corpsman worked quickly and smoothly over our wounded passenger. I ran the hoist back down for the KIA, expecting ground fire at any moment. Nothing. I brought the KIA up and without a word the corpsman helped pull him aboard. I gave the "All clear!" and the pilot applied power.
As the helicopter rose and rotated away from the zone, muzzle flashes appeared in the foliage below and in our direction. Instantly I returned fire and watched my tracers disappear into the semidarkness below the canopy. Something exploded. God, I thought, the guy was carrying something that exploded. What happened next so startled me I fully quit firing. The whole area erupted in one explosion after another with streams of tracers and rockets pouring into the site. Awed for moment I just stared, then looked up and there was our gunship almost directly above us laying in a withering fire at the enemy below. A deep sense of pride for my fellow flyers came over me, as I realized not a word had passed between the pilots, the gunship saw my tracers and responded to cover our departure, possibly saving us. I glanced to my side and there was our corpsman, a foot away, taking in the whole show. He looked like a kid who had just had the adventure of his life.

Clear of the zone we headed east along the river, back towards Cam Lo. Since the WIA injuries were not life-threatening, the pilot decided to stop at the nearest firebase and assess our damage. We landed at a small sandbagged clearing manned by fellow Marines. I unplugged the mike and exited the aircraft. Sure enough, as I crouched and crawled along the belly of the aircraft, I found various hits. All were through the empennage except one in the fuselage at the radio compartment. That explained the radio. As I mentally traced the path of some of the rounds, the engine changed pitch and the aircraft raised up on the struts and suddenly lifted off, leaving me sitting there on the ground, staring in disbelief. As I stood up I saw Marines running for cover. Standing alone in the middle of the landing zone in a flight suit, I felt abandoned and suddenly very vulnerable. A running Marine stopped dead in his tracks and looked at me with an expression of "What in the hell are you doing here?" and then yelled "Incoming!" That I understood. I quickly covered the dozen or so yards to the nearest sandbags. "What's happening?" I asked. "Our guys spotted NVA setting up mortars to hit the LZ" a Marine replied. We waited for the rounds, which should be seconds away. Nothing. Soon, people started to fidget. A few minutes more and the all clear was passed.

I asked, "What happened?" A dirty, tired Marine looked at me and grinned "We took'em out." I vowed never to call these guys "grunts" or "ground pounders" again. No sir, never. After a few more minutes came the welcome sound of a helicopter. My helicopter. The helo landed and I climbed aboard to grins of the crew. I tried to act dignified and not show the utter relief of being back on board. We took off immediately, too dangerous to sit on the ground for long. I plugged back into the intercom and the pilot called down "Sorry crew chief, I thought you were on board!" Yeah right, I thought.

We climbed to altitude as we retraced out route back out of the mountains and back to Dong Ha. Dropping off the KIA and WIA we headed south and quickly covered the last stretch to Quang Tri. On landing the pilot taxied back to the revetment from which we had started. Once the chocks were in place and the aircraft shut down, I began removing the various gear I wore starting with the flak jacket. The corpsman strode up to me and announced, "Boy, when I fly I want to fly with you!" adding, "When you fly you see action." Puffing out my chest I ex-

plained this was pretty much routine (a lie). And, if you fly with me you'll probably see some action (another lie). I sadly informed him that because the MEDEVAC mission is rotated, he would also have to fly with other crew chiefs. We talked on and as we did I realized I had made a new friend. Shy at that age and not good at making friends, what friends I had were precious to me. I liked this guy.

Because of battle damage my aircraft was grounded for repairs. I watched silently as my new friend gathered up his gear to report to a new bird. As he walked away I remembered the things I had said about him earlier that morning. Feeling shameful, I decided I must fix that. I went to the ready room to see what discrepancies the pilot wrote up. As I thumbed through the logbook I saw where the pilot had scrawled across the yellow sheet, "Crew chief can sure sling lead." On seeing that, my ego soared through the roof. On leaving the ready room my feet barely touched the ground. Today I had made a friend and had confirmed my manhood. To anyone who would listen, I had to tell about the new corpsman and the morning's events.

As I talked to my fellow crew chiefs it was, "Hey, you know that new corpsman? He's going to do just fine." I added, "We took fire this morning and he did great! Don't worry about him, he'll hold his own." Satisfied that I had undone some of the damage I did earlier that morning to my friend, and of course amplifying my role a little, I set off to find my new friend. We chatted a bit about being in country and going back to the world when our tours were up. I finally had to leave and take care of my aircraft that was down for repairs. The war goes on.

Having made sure the sheet metal and radio shops had my aircraft scheduled for repair, I realized it was lunch. I left the flight line on top of the world, walking a little more erect and with a little more authority and relishing the events of that morning. Having finished noon chow, I returned to the flight line for the tasks at hand. As I strode towards the flight line a passing crew chief asked, "Have you heard?" "Heard what?" I replied jovially. "We lost the MEDEVAC bird. Went down in the zone," he replied, still walking. "What?" is all I could choke out. "Yeah, shot down," the crew chief added. In shock I asked, "What about the crew?" "The corpsman got hit, hit bad," he called back. How bad?" I demanded. He stopped, stared at me for moment studying my expression and then shaking his head stated grimly, "He won't be back," and walked away. In a daze I walked to the ready room and asked the duty NCO if he had any word of the crew. "They're trying to get'em out. Chase is still on station but the zone's too hot to extract them. It's pretty bad up there," came the reply. Again I asked, "The corpsman?" Looking up at a map on the wall, the sergeant restated what I heard before. "Took hits, real bad." "Dead?" I softly asked. "Don't know," muttered the sergeant.

The rest of that day was mostly a fog. It kept going over and over in my mind. 'Why? Why him? He wasn't there to kill anybody. He didn't deserve this.' Over and over I thought, 'Why?' A heavy feeling of guilt and shame came over me as I remembered making fun of him earlier that morning, and putting him down behind his back. That day I vowed I would never again pass judgment on someone without really knowing them (didn't happen) or talk about someone behind their back (didn't happen either). I never found out what became of that corpsman. They got the crew out and he and a crew member were Medevaced, but after that, nothing. Never heard a thing. I wanted to say I was sorry.

Sometimes when I realize I'm taking someone else's inventory instead of my own or passing judgment with out really knowing a person, I think back to that corpsman I briefly knew so many years ago. And when I walk the halls of the National Naval Medical Center and see young corpsmen with bright faces filled with a future yet to come, I feel in some small way, I have somehow come full circle

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MEMOIRS

Edit Note:
When Colonel Ripley almost passed away from a very serious illness we published an article in Red Clay. About the Commandant of the Marine Corps taking charge and providing immediate transportation for medical treatment, helping to save Colonel Ripley's life. Many of our newest members may be unaware of the outstanding service the Colonel has given to the Marine Corps and the United States of America. He is also a distinguished member of the

Khe Sanh Veterans and has contributed his time, and materials to our organization.

Col. John W. Ripley

By Jennifer Sheppard, USNA-AA Staff



The first Marine to receive the Distinguished Graduate Award, Col. John W. Ripley, Class of '62, has lived a life of service to this nation, his community, the Naval Academy, and the U.S. Marine Corps. His careers, both military and civilian, epitomize the highest standards of duty, honor and integrity.

Colonel Ripley served in the Marine Corps for 35 years. He served two infantry tours in South Vietnam, one as a rifle company commander in the demilitarized zone and one with the Vietnamese Marine Corps during the 1972 Easter Offensive. He was Lima company commander in the Leatherneck Square area of Dong Ha, Con Thien, and Khe Sanh. Ripley was wounded in action, but returned to complete his tour. During this tour of duty, Colonel Ripley was awarded the **Silver Star** for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action ..." during combat operations. While leading a relief column, his unit came under heavy fire from recoilless rifle and automatic weapons. He "led his unit out of the impact area across 200 meters of open terrain, repeatedly exposing himself to hostile fire, as he directed artillery fire and air strikes."

Ripley's true test came during the 1972 Easter Offensive. Then-Captain Ripley was the lone Marine to the 3rd Vietnamese Battalion when a large force of North Vietnamese regulars, backed by more than 200 tanks, surged toward the capital of the Quang Tri province, which, if captured, would leave a clear path to the ancient capital of Hue. One strategic bridge across the Cam Lo River, at the town of Dong Ha stood in the way.

While under continuous enemy fire, Ripley loaded a backpack with explosives and, hanging from the bridge, pulled himself hand-over-hand to the center of the bridge where he planted his demolition charges. He made a dozen trips to the center of the bridge before he had placed 500 pounds of plastic explosives in the girders--enough to drop the bridge and stop the invasion. By dropping the bridge, Ripley trapped the advancing force on the other side of the river, where it was decimated by air strikes and naval gunfire. His selfless action delayed the fall of South Vietnam by nearly two years. For this, Ripley



was awarded the nation's second highest combat award, the **Navy Cross.**

John Grider Miller captured Ripley's Easter Offensive actions in the book, The Bridge. They are also depicted in a diorama outside Memorial Hall. Ripley's other service included duty with the Marine detachment aboard USS Independence (CVA-62); with a Force Reconnaissance Company; on an exchange tour with the British Royal Marines; and as commander of a battalion and a regiment. In addition to typical staff billets, he served with the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps units of Oregon State University and the Virginia Military Institute. He also was the senior Marine and director of the division of English and history at the academy.

Ripley has earned six valorous and 14 personal decorations. Following his retirement from active duty in 1992, Ripley was president and chancellor of Southern Virginia College in Buena Vista, Va., and subsequently he was president of Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, Va. He was selected by the Marine Corps commandant to be the director of the history and museums division in 1999.

POETRY

REUNION

I see them through tears welling in my eye
Try to stop raging rivers I might as well not try
Boys ... no, now men, standing at the end of the hall
Men I haven't seen since tempestuously awful days long ago
Days held in infamy for thirty-nine years, or so
Men who in days of yore offered their all
This band of brothers occupy nightly dreams since my fall
When this combat infantryman bit the dust
Though long ago I've shed combat rust
Now about to greet my brothers-in-arms, I must...

For I have marched with this band-of-brothers in dreams
Walking tangled wood where real horror in repugnance teems
We were much younger then when we humped the gear
Remember days of piss and vinegar with wall-to-wall fear
Digging foxholes, hiking, laughing, living with these men
Humping the knotty shadow's rustic den
Just another click or twenty ... where have the good times gone
Thirty-nine years ... what happened to our fighting prime brawn?
Some I see are still raw-hide tough fighting machines
Though most are not, gone a long way from our teens...
Some still haunted by fetid memories that will not let them be
Some still fight long ago battles in their mind they see
Old men, paunchy and overweight
Brothers of the Nam tempting fate, irate
Remembering good times ... haunted by bad times
The best of men ... the worst of men
Together in dinky dau times that tried men's souls
Times that determined where our future goes
Times that after thirty-nine years lives with us still
Buried down deep, Vietnam memories old soldiers fill.
I've not seen them since we roamed jungles black and deep
Since we scaled the highlands where eagles keep
Since we humped the killing zone
Dancing the edge of death, so far from home
Negotiating raging rivers to tropical savanna grassland
Playing deadly games with the NVA brigand
Whose greatest wish was preoccupied with our dying
Wary of Vietcong Papa sans our way defying
Fetid fear a constant despair, put way back there...
With smells of rotting death wafting in vile air.

We came in-country strapping brave youth
Patrolling eye-high elephant grasses rude and uncouth
Bearing war weapons lightning with thunder malevolent
Hoping to remain to sweet life somehow relevant
Laughing so we wouldn't have to think where we were
Bravely fearless to make bad times go like a blur
Beaucoup gung-ho and naive
By the cruel war made men to deceive
Veterans only hoping to survive
Long enough to make it back to "the world" alive.

Now, back-to-back, again we face the past
Remember times that will forever last
Beside men we walked the lip of death with
Who mid fear and a leap of faith
We cast our lot with
Faced the devil with
Stood before the bar of judgment with
Calling on all powers that be, beseeched
This motley crew mixed and matched
We laughed, we dreamed, we bellyached...

Men of Mississippi, New Jersey, California, and Oklahoma bonded
We'd only two choices, do it or die, so we responded
Defended each other for very life depended
Gained deeply abiding love for our combat brothers
Black, white, red, yellow or polka-dotted men war gathers
We became as one in this world of harms, there were no others
Family and boyhood friends so very far away
Far from this life-and-death passion play
So this band-of-brothers worked cooperatively, intimately
Closely together in concert, forever, cohesively

Gary Jacobson

Awesome!

It is a Great photo of an Air Force training squadron flying in a never-done-before "USA" formation over the control tower "Taj Mahal" (HQ building) of Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas

The planes are traveling 400 mph and you had to be just right to get the shot at that instant. It is a hard formation to maintain as the ones in the S are just a little graduated degree behind the next one, and remaining that way to maintain the formation.



INCOMING

I am a Life Member of Khe Sanh Veterans. I served with India Company 3/26, in Lt. Fromby's 3RD Platoon on Hill 881S. I was a machinegun squad leader. I arrived at India Company in July 1967, right after the Hill Fights, and through Ambush Alley, Cua Viet, LZ Betty, them back to Khe Sanh for the second time. I rotated home from Danang in August of 1968.

At this point in my life. Most of the names and faces of those who died in Nam have become less clear and are more difficult to recall. It seems my close friends are now barely discernible. I don't quite know how it goes for the rest of you Khe Sanh guys. But I believe we are slowly becoming "the World War II Vets" of our society. It seems as though only events remain, and the faces manifest themselves less and less. Those of us, who have remained in contact with each other throughout the years, must be realizing that our numbers are dwindling. Like me, they look forward to living out the remainder of their lives knowing what we did as young men, during those times, at that one place, and have lived to recount the valorous things that were done by those who served and survived such battles as the siege of Khe Sanh, battles at Con Thien, Cam Lo, the Rockpile. We are truly blessed.

Issue 63, of the **RED CLAY** included a letter by one of our fellow survivors, "**77 Days at** Khe **Sanh, by Raymond A. Milligan. USMC, Vietnam April 67 - September 68**. "His article moved me to write this letter. Mr. Milligan detailed an incident involving the insertion of a recon team on Hill 881 N by India Company, including my platoon. I recall that incident, and the number of casualties we sustained in the insertion. The part of the story that moved me was that I knew Corporal Tommy Hollis. Since it was my platoon that would contain the insertion team, I ran into Tommy the night before during our briefing.

Tommy Hollis and I were in the same Platoon in boot camp. He was a generous, happy -to-be-alive kind of guy. His last day on Earth, he and I sat on op of my bunker smoking and talking about what was to take place the following day. I recall him talking about how he was really scared and truly believed he was not going to survive this operation. I remember telling him that it was all "pre-operational jitters" and that I felt that way before every operation. I remember telling him since my platoon was going to provide the insertion, I would take extra care and make sure he at least got there in one piece. Getting him back was another story. We knew going in, that 881 N had plenty of NVA in well fortified positions.

Lt. Fromby's Platoon had the responsibility of flanking to the right of the main body of India Company, as they frontally advanced on 881N. I recall we had been given a "take five and smoke em' if you got em," as we prepared to move out. Someone began firing an M-79 at us. We tried to determine where the fire was coming from. The main body of India Company had made contact with a superior NVA force. Our column began moving out when automatic weapons opened up. I had a habit, gained from previous squad leaders, of always walking with my point gun team, to determine the situation, quickly set up and provide fire. I don't recall much after the intense fire we received. I remember fighting was intense, back and forth. We had to collect Marines KIA, under fire. Those KIA included Lieutenant Fromby and his radio operator. We called in medevacs with the help of an F/O who was with our platoon. I recall being extremely frightened while running around making sure that men were in position, creating the LZ, and staging the dead and wounded for the incoming birds. But most of all, making sure that our men continued to "stay the course!" Tommy Hollis died during that insertion. Tommy was right; he didn't making it through that operation.

Because of this, I believe that Mr. Milligan was mistaken, when he believed that Cpl. Tommy Hollis was killed in the trenches. I hope that some of us who were there during this incident can clarify things. If we are incorrect, please provide knowledgeable information so that families of friends lost will have as true and accurate assessment of how their loved ones died.

John J. Macias
I Co 3/26 (Guns

Ed Note: This is good. We are an historical society. This helps tell "our" history from all perspectives.

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INCOMING

A Story Of Fiction? "Bonded Together"

By Craig W. Tourte

This is just a little story of fiction. It has a little of me in it and as you read further, you may find that it may have some of you, (fiction? perhaps not).

From the book "Band of Brothers" by Stephen E. Ambrose (pg 220), describing battle with crack German armored and infantry divisions. "...beyond the wounded and killed, every man at Bastogne suffered, men not wounded by shrapnel or bullets were nevertheless casualties. There were no unwounded men at Bastogne." "...I'm not sure anyone who lived through that one hasn't carried with him, in some hidden ways, the scars. Perhaps that is the factor that helps keep...men bonded so unusually close together."

The Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh was a cakewalk for John, compared to the suffering of so many others. Oh sure, John had the usual wounds inflicted by the millions of sharp edged pieces of shrapnel flying around, and at one time he was sent down to Charlie Med to get patched up, turned and left after viewing the carnage and wounds of those who were far more injured than

he. Sure John carried a stretcher for those who were wounded and killed, had thousand of close calls and ran for his life more times than he was able to count or remember. The NVA tried their hardest to kill him, but John guessed it just was not his time.

So John carried a guilt these many years as he remembered the roar of the tank motors and 20-hour battle that raged at Long Vei as he stood staring out into the fog. At the time, John did not understand the full extent of the circumstances.

John stood by the side of the road as Bravo left the wire that morning, listened to the battle and watched as the bodies came back months later.

He spent an afternoon talking to Marines before they left for the hills. And visited their green fly covered body bags sitting on the airstrip before the helicopters came to carry them away, their battle and war over.

John spent hours talking to Marines he had served with, about their fears, desires and their children and families. John wrote letters to parents and loved ones of the dead Marines he had known and served with. But John had survived, and it was war. But unlike them, John made it home alive, Vietnam was a distant past. There were the occasional nightmares, but didn't we all have them ?John thought. There were important things at hand now, marriage, a job, raising kids, dealing with in-laws. He had been to Vietnam so what? lots of men had been to Vietnam and they were fine, although John had never met one who had served during the Siege at Khe Sanh.

As John got older he became more pissed off at everyone and everything. it wasn't him, he rationalized, it was them, those assholes. John's wife told John he had changed. he was not the person she married 25 years ago. John told her to take a hike. what the hell, the kids didn't like him anyway. maybe it was her who changed.

It was so long ago, yet those nightmares about Vietnam kept coming back, more vivid now, even after all of these years. His apartment was a lot smaller than the house he once owned and lived in with his family. Sometime the walls would close in, but he had been in smaller spaces. Besides, no one was shooting at him. John told himself that he could take it. At least he had not been wounded, like so many others he knew and had served with. The war was a long time ago.

John left his job. He didn't like anyone at the stupid job anyway. The wife had moved on and into a new marriage, how did she put it? "I'll never, ever marry another Vietnam Veteran." John seemed to spend more time alone now. He once again visited the park where he spent many hours reading. Just sitting by himself, not really thinking of anything any more, not of his wife, job or even Vietnam. John was not sure, but there just seemed to be something about the guy sitting all alone at the table over by the water. The guy was reading something and never looked up from his book. Another middle aged man sitting alone at the table in the park, but there was something about the guy that drew John's attention. John thought the guy looked familiar, but just could not place him. As John continued to stare at the man, a strange feeling suddenly came over him. It kind of started in his feet and slowly worked it's way up to his head and into his brain, causing his ears to ring and his face to flush red with blood. Thirty odd years flashed in front of John's eyes and he was suddenly looking at a young wounded Marine he remembered as Carl. John stood up and rushed over to the man and yelled: "Carl?" The man flashed his eyes from his book to a face he recognized immediately…

John and Carl had both been wounded at Khe Sanh. Some wounds were more obvious than others.
"…there were no unwounded men at Bastogne…I'm not sure anyone who lived through that one hasn't carried with him, in some hidden ways, the scars. Perhaps that is the factor that helps keep…men bonded so unusually close together."

There is a point to this story, I wonder if you got it?

New Window Decal For Sale at the KSV PX. Comes in Color



OBIT

Major General Houghton

Mike Fishbaugh

General Houghton died of natural causes, March 27, in his home in La Jolla, Calif., at 85 years old. He was a Life Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans

The San Francisco native retired after 35 years of service in the Marine Corps, leaving the depot behind as his final duty station. Enlisting in the Marine Corps April 15, 1942, Houghton was commissioned a second lieutenant September 26 of the same year. Houghton is noted as a legend in Marine Corps history by peers and loved ones.

According to former Marine sergeant, Rudy M. Contreras, Houghton was an enlisted man's friend. When Houghton formed a Marine reconnaissance unit in 1949, PFC Contreras became good friends with Capt. Houghton and was eager to train under his command. "He was a very, very disciplined person, and of course he expected that from his troops," said Contreras. "But he didn't think he was above anybody else. The troops really respected him for his attitude."

Contreras was unable to serve under Houghton's command because he was reassigned to a unit in San Francisco, while Houghton took charge of 1st Marine Division's reconnaissance company. But they continued a friendship and later, during deployment to North Korea in 1950, Contreras crossed paths with Houghton again. "He was strict," said Contreras. "He expected you to do whatever was expected of you. He was very fair. He wouldn't pat you on the back, but he was very
fair."

Enemy forces destroyed bridges across the Han River, an entrance into Seoul, Korea that Contreras' unit needed to utilize. Houghton's reconnaissance team, the same one Contreras tried to join a year earlier, was sent to secure a route for Marines to cross the waterway as an overpowering force. Contreras saw Houghton before he swam across the river. Houghton was wounded in action and sent back to the United States with his first Silver Star and a Bronze Star with Combat "V." "I never did get to serve with him, but I would have liked to. He was a good man," said Contreras.

After several assignments and promotions, Houghton took command of the 5th Marine Regiment in the Republic of Vietnam, February 1967. During a six-month period, Houghton was awarded the Navy Cross, a second Silver Star Medal, and a second and third Purple Heart Medal. In April 1973, Houghton was promoted to major general while assigned as commanding general, Force Troops, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific and as the chief of staff, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.

That year, Maj. Gen. Houghton assumed command of the 1st Marine Division and the 1st Marine Amphibious Force. In 1975, he concurrently assumed command of the 3rd Marine Division and the 3rd Marine Amphibious Force, and he completed his final two years in service at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. "I went to the depot to talk to the commanding general," said Contreras. "I didn't know at the time that (Maj. Gen. Houghton) was the commanding general." When Houghton's aide-de-camp told Contreras the general was ready to see him, he walked into the office, not expecting to come face to face with an old friend.

"Holy mackerel! He came up from behind his desk and hugged me and we stood there and we talked," said Contreras. "He told the major 'I'm closing up. I'm closing up shop for the day. One of my boys is here.'" And with that the commanding general left the office at 8:30 on a Friday morning and didn't return for the weekend. Houghton invited Contreras to spend the weekend at the general's quarters, attend an afternoon tea-party held for colonels and generals only and purchased a new tie and shirt so Contreras would fit in at the event. 'I want you to look presentable for tomorrow,' he told me. For me it was the highlight of my tour at the depot," said Contreras.

Houghton awards include four Presidential Unit Citations, the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three bronze stars, the China Service Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, the Korean Service Medal with two bronze stars, the Vietnamese Service Medal with three bronze stars, the Vietnamese National Order 5th Class, the Vietnamese Army Distinguished Service

Order 2nd Class, the Vietnamese Armed Forces Honor Medal 1st Class, the Korean Presidential Unit Citation, the Vietnamese Armed Forces Meritorious Unit Citation, the Philippine Independence Ribbon, the United Nations Medal and the Vietnamese Campaign Medal.

Houghton's good humor and strict nature were in keeping with the utmost Marine Corps traditions. A legendary leader and inspirational person, Maj. Gen. Houghton touched many lives and left a great impression on the Marine Corps for years to come. Maj. Gen. Houghton is survived by two sons, Samuel and Kenneth Houghton; two daughters Pamela Robles and Penny Dudek, and six grandchildren.

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INCOMING

KHE SANH VETS HONORED

Students Honor Khe Sanh Vietnam Veterans in Surprise Ceremony.

By Christy Strawser
Daily Tribune Staff Writer

Vietnam war veterans Chuck Lemke, and Bob Johnson got a hero's welcome Thursday, March 23, 2006, at a surprise pep rally put on by the students at Norup Middle School in Berkley, Michigan, where the two vets work.

The tears came first for Robert Johnson, whose blue eyes were wet even before the Norup Middle School band finished "The Marine Corps Hymn." He wasn't the only one in tears inside the school gym, which was packed with whooping young people who hoisted banners as the patriotic music swelled. "Welcome home" was spelled out in red, white and blue, with each letter on an individual poster that kids held high. Johnson's colleague, Chuck Lemke, welled up too as the music ended and middle schoolers walked to a podium on the gym floor to thank both men for serving their country in Vietnam.

The event was a surprise "Hero's Welcome" that students and staff planned on the sly for Johnson, a paraprofessional at Norup, and Lemke, the school's head custodian. The kids learned in class that some Vietnam veterans were badly treated when they came back from war, spit on and mocked. So they wanted to make sure the two veterans at their school knew their sacrifices were appreciated, even if it came 37 years late.



Charles Lemke & Robert Johnson

"I tend to get a little emotional," Johnson, 59, said. "The emotion of this day is pride. I'm proud of every person in this room." Students were proud they managed to keep the big day a secret from two people who know their building better than anyone. Staff pulled the wool over Johnson's eyes by telling him they were planning a welcome home for Lemke, 60, who was away the last two weeks, from a return trip to Vietnam.

During the celebration, kids read poems, the band played patriotic songs and fellow veterans appeared to give Johnson and Lemke flags and sweatshirts. Students hugged them and handed over thank you letters. "It was hard to keep the kids from talking," custodian Joseph McGee said. "That was my job; I kept telling them it was a secret. But this is awesome. I love it. I've never seen anything like this before."

Thursday was Lemke's first day back at work after an emotional return trip to Vietnam. He and wife Susanne, along with humanitarian volunteers, revisited places he had only seen in nightmares since 1968. "I had suppressed a lot," said Lemke, who was in the country from August 1967 through May 1968. "But going to the places where I served, it was just, there are no words, really." Returning to Vietnam reminded him of long marches, the sound of ammu-

nition fire breaking through thick fog and the **Red Clay** that embedded in his skin in **Khe Sanh.** "You couldn't scrub it off, it had to wear off," he remembered.

Johnson also fought in **Khe Sanh**, a Marine base under siege by the North Vietnamese during a relentless attack that lasted several months. They think they probably met at one point, but neither remembers it. "We might have looked the same back then," said Johnson, who was in Vietnam from 1967 through 1968. Johnson stayed in the military until 1997, when he retired and brought some military order to Norup. Lemke left the service as soon as he got home in 1968.

"I was a civilian 10 days after my last run," said Lemke, adding that he went to work in a bank and kept his military past quiet to avoid confrontation. At the time, he didn't think anyone would be proud of his service in Vietnam. "I just kind of kept it a secret," he said. "A lot of us did that. The (emotional) bricks didn't start falling until 18 years later. "And when he was ready to start talking about the war, Norup kids were ready to listen, according to Assistant Principal Vince Gigliotti. "It's always important for us to take a look at history."
Charles Lemke is a current member of the Khe Sanh Veterans and served with K Co 26Th Marines.

A HEARTY THANK YOU
Members Sending Contributions

APPLEBAUM, Robert S
BUSBY, Stephen
CATON, Louis V
DAWDY, James
DOWNEY, Ward A
DEARING, R.M.
FRYE, B.H. Jr.
GUZMAN, Oscar J
HOFFLER, John T
KUBLEY, Lawrence

INCOMING

ANOTHER VISIT TO PARRIS ISLAND

By Cliff Treese

Prior to leaving our visit with the Marines wounded in Iraq, (Issue 64) I made arrangements with Captain J.A. Garris to give a talk to Platoons 2020 and 2021, prior to their graduation. This was part of a program called "Once a Marine". Arriving at Parris Island, I contacted Captain Garris to discuss the topics he wished discussed with the graduating Marines. One of the main topics he stressed was "Married Life." I presented him with several more gifts from our PX.

I drove over to the museum to visit S/SGT Taliano. I gave him a copy of the picture that I had made of the Hooter's Girls holding Marine jackets. He said he would find a perfect place to hang it. Everybody that saw the picture said it would make a perfect recruiting poster. I gave him a hat and a new Home is Where You Dig It pin. It was getting late and I wanted to stop by Colonel John Valentin's office to say hello, and give him a few of the Khe Sanh window decals and some key chains.

The next morning, prior to my scheduled speech, I went back to the museum to see S/SGT Taliano. He wanted to look up some names of Marines that he knows who were at Khe Sanh, which he did not have an address for. Unfortunately, they were not listed in my Unit Directory. I went to the PX to find something for my wife Linda. While there I met two guys wearing vests with Viet Nam patches on the back. One served with the Marines the other the United states Air Force.

It was close to the time for my talk so I headed over to the office of captain Garris. He informed me the talks are usually an hour long, but since he wanted the recruits to see the Khe Sanh documentary, I should take as long as needed. He introduced me to the rest of the staff of Golf Company: Capt. J.M. Lane, C.O. of Golf Co., Capt. G.H. Baum, and the Battalion C.O. Lt. Col. J.P. Gfrerer.

Captain Baum was the officer who would be introducing me to Platoons 2020 and 2021. The platoon size is about half of what it was back in 1966. They attempted to play the Khe Sanh Documentary As you might expect, the VCR didn't work. I ended up

talking for about an hour and fifteen minutes. After word I held a question and answer period. Besides answering questions about Khe Sanh I managed to talk about married life in the Corps, as requested by Captain Garris. One recruit informed me that his father served at Khe Sanh and talked about it very little. He said his dad was coming to the graduation, and if I came, I could meet him.

The Platoons that I talked with had an exchange student from the Romanian Army who was there attending DI's school. He was learning our methods of training to take back to Romania. After my speech, he approached me, and said he wanted to shake the hand of a Khe Sanh Survivor. He then took the word" ROMANIA" that was over his left side shirt pocket, held on by velcro and handed it to me. In turn I gave him a Khe Sanh pin from my hat.

The recruits now get 5 hours of base liberty on the Sunday before graduation. The DI's asked if I was going to attend the graduation ceremony, and be available for more questions. The recruits still get a one day graduation liberty to visit with parents who might arrive early. They also get to leave the Island right after graduation and go home with their family. While waiting for the recruits liberty to start, I met a senior DI from Hotel Company. I asked why some recruits are wearing the green camo utilities and a few others the tan ones. He said the ones in tan are the ones who did not qualify on the rifle range.

I went over to the PX and was approached by several recruits who shook my hand and asked more questions about Khe Sanh, and what the Corps was like in the 60's. Eventually several of us went to the Pizza Hut, for Pizza. Before leaving the PX, most of the recruits filled up on candy and junk food that they hadn't had for the past 12 weeks. New recruits have their pay put into the Federal Credit Union and are issued a debit card for their purchases.

The recruits informed me that the DIs instructed them to buy a watch, and that all the junk food or drink had to be gone before they got back. I never saw so many kids eat so much candy in such a short time. I told them to take it easy or they would be sure to get sick. They said they didn't care it would be worth the stomach ache. After filling there bellies with Pizza, we went over to the Subway/bowling alley to sit and talk about their experiences in the Corps. I told them that I was leaving in the morning for Camp Lejeune to visit the Wounded Warrior Barracks but I would be back in time to see their pinning ceremony of their EGA on Thursday and graduation on Friday. I then left for Camp Lejeune to meet with Ron Shouse for our second visit with the wounded warriors.

CAMP LEJEUNE VISIT

When I arrived at Camp Lejeune my room wouldn't be ready until later that afternoon.. I drove around the base for awhile and stopped by the PX so I could call Ron Shouse on my cell phone. The use of cell phones while driving on base is a definite no-no. Ron said he was en-route and should be at the base by 1830 hours. Ron called and we went to supper, then back to the Hospitality Inn, relaxed and watched TV.

The next day we called the Wounded Warrior Barracks and talked with Gunnery Sergeant Barnes. The gunny informed us that we could come after 1400 hours. Since we had time to kill, we roamed around the PX. Ron had been told by his wife Lynn not to bring any more junk home. He did exactly as he was told. He only purchased valuable treasures that are now on display in his office.



The "Wounded Warriors" in Day Room

The gang met us in the parking lot. It really was like seeing some old friends. When we went down the last time, there were 14 in the unit. Since then, 3 have returned to their original Companies. There are now 24 in the Wound Unit. We sat and just talked to them and even though we were some 40 years their senior, they acted like they had known us

forever. They are even starting to joke about how they got hit.



Corporal Maguire, with Banner we had made for the Wounded Warriors

Colonel Maxwell's wife appeared at the barracks and informed us that the colonel had to go to Bethesda Hospital for treatments for his wounds. We asked Mrs. Maxwell to accept our gifts and the



The Whole Gang, and Colonel Maxwell (Highlighted), with Banner

signed banner we had brought on behalf of the wounded warriors. She informed us that she had to leave right away to pick up her children, but would make sure the colonel received our gifts.

Gunny Barnes gathered all the wounded Marines in the day room, and accepted, and hung up the banner we had brought from the Khe Sanh Veterans. While talking to the wounded warriors the name of Khe Sanh Veteran Glenn Rappold came up. Corporal Maguire who had lost his right arm and had a severe head injury, informed us that he had met Glenn at a parade welcoming him home from Iraq. When Glenn found out Corporal Maguire had not yet received his Purple Heart, he gave him one of his he had received in Vietnam. I immediately called Glenn and had him talk to Corporal Maguire.

We also spoke to an E-5 Corpsman named Joe Roe, who was wounded by an I.E.D. (Individual Explosive Device) on his right side and his right hand. He said he was blown down an embankment and into some water that woke him up. He did not realize at the time how badly he was wounded. He also did not want his squad of Marines to know how scared he really was. He joked about his injuries and when a stretcher was brought in for him he refused, stating " I walked in with my Marines and I will walk out with them." Joe was also the Corpsman that stabilized Colonel Maxwell when he was struck in the head, prior to going to the hospital for surgery. He lost the pointing finger on his left hand and will tell you that he gave the "Hadji's" the finger. A little humor for the guys who were hurt worse than him because he did not want the younger guys to be any more scared than what they already were.

It was after 1700 hours. The wounded warriors were having supper brought in to them by the Navy Wives organization. At least two to three times a week, different organizations bring them meals so they don't have to eat at the mess hall. We decided to say our good byes for now and that we would be back. One said "You were our heroes, and we just want to be as good as you guys were." If anyone has a comeback for this, I am all ears?

We learned some of the vocabulary from the Sand Warriors. Anybody remember the Gook Shop? Well, it's called a Hadji Mart now. I was told the sand gets ground so fine that it looks like talcum powder, sticks to everything and is called Moon Dust. I seem to remember some red dirt somewhere a long time ago that did the same thing, except it was called RED CLAY. Funny how some things never change. One of the Sergeant's told me that the only good thing about that place was that you did not have to go far to fill sand bags. He could fill 2 from the crack in his ass every day.

Before we left, Ron went to see the Commanding

General and Base Sergeant Major. They were TAD somewhere but he left both of them copies of "Battalion of Kings". He received a thank you letter and an invitation for us to stop by again for pictures.



General Tyron on Final Run With Graduating Class



General Tyron after Run with Graduating Marines, with Cliff Treese



Marines From Golf Co, Receiving Their EGA

RETURN TO PARRIS ISLAND



General Tyron & Sgt/Major Barret

I left Lejeune and headed back to Parris Island. I arrived about 1800 hours and went right to the Osprey Inn Billeting Office. This time I was assigned a room in the BOQ

I went to the 2nd Battalion to see Captain Garris. Nobody was in the office so I went outside and met a DI who said the graduating Platoons were out for their last run. As I drove back to the BOQ, I saw the Platoons on their final run being led by General Tyron, the CG of Parris Island. He even addressed the parents in his running sweats. I spoke with him a few minutes and had a picture taken. He had to leave right away to get dressed for the EGA pinning ceremony, being held at 1200 hours.

I was seated in the reviewing stand and was introduced to General Amos, Commanding General of II MEF at Camp Lejeune. Except for being a little cool, the weather cooperated as far and it did not



rain. Now that they were officially Marines I stayed on the parade deck and welcomed them to the Marine Corps. Several introduced me to their parents, who informed me that their sons could not stop talking about what they had learned about Khe Sanh.

I went to the base museum to visit with Sgt Taliano. Many of the recruits were there purchasing items and I was again introduced to more parents. I went to The Traditions Restaurant to get something to eat



before it got too crowded. After being seated at a table, the family in the next table started talking to me about their son. The father was a former Marine and he wanted to shake my hand for being a Khe Sanh Survivor and for the service I do talking to



Staff of Parris Island

people about Khe Sanh, and my injuries. He said his son pointed me out as soon as I walked into the room. He said it was such a coincidence that his son was talking about meeting me and then I walked in and got a table next to them. The Romanian Sergeant who I had met, walked up to me and thanked me for spending time with the recruits. I told him that I was in their shoes 40 years ago, when I went through Parris Island. The only difference was that nobody came to talk to us before most of us got the orders FMF WESPAC. It's unfortunate that most of these Marines are probably going to get their orders on Graduation day. I got up early and went to Headquarters Bldg. for Morning Colors. In attendance were General Tryon CG MCRD, Lt. General Amos CG IIMEF Camp Lejeune, Female Air Force General Peterson, CO National War College, Colonel Valentin, Chief of Staff MCRD. Along with many parents and friends were several Jr ROTC Detachments from various states who all came out in the bitter cold. The base Marine Corps Band played as a detachment of the base MP's did the honor of raising the flag. After the ceremony at Headquarters was complete, everybody headed for the Parade Deck for the Graduation.

As I arrived, I was informed that due to the weather, the ceremony would be held indoors. We were escorted to the reviewing area to watch the ceremony. I sat behind retired Sgt/Major Barret who is the instructor for a Marine Corps Junior ROTC at a high school in Rutherford, N.C. He was there with some of his students to watch the 37th and 38th of his Junior ROTC graduates attend and graduate from Parris Island. Lt. General Amos sat to the side of me with General Tryon. I must admit, the indoor ceremony just isn't the same as out on the Parade deck. After the ceremony I took a few pictures and said my good byes. Capt. Garris asked me if I would come back and next time he said he would have a TV and VCR that works. I went outside and got into my Vette and made the 5 hour drive home. I meeting all these fine Marines both at Parris Island and Camp Lejeune was a real honor for both of us

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MEMOIRS

THE SARGE

By Jim Dawdy (Seabee)

It can be a long night indeed. From midnight to 4:00 AM can seem endless when it's just you and a Marine in a muddy foxhole on the northwest perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base in a monsoon rain. It's freezing cold. Few words are exchanged as you peer into the darkness. Thoughts of being back in the world, lying with your girl on the sand on the bank of the river, the moon reflecting off the ripples of the

water as it courses its way over rocks worn smooth by hundreds of years of sand gently but persistently, wearing away the jagged edges. "Sweet nothings" being softly exchanged.

You are startled back into reality when a flare eerily illuminates the tall grass across the re-supply drop zone. You remember the training at Pendleton. Don't straighten the pins on your grenades. Don't reveal your position by unnecessary talking. Keep your safety on so you don't accidentally blow away the guys out on listening post in front of you. You start to imagine all manner of bad things. Fear starts to twist your insides into a ball-and it's only 2:00 AM.

What else can you say but: "Sure" to this Marine you have only known for a few days when he quietly asks if you will promise to see to it that his wife receives his wedding band if he "gets it" tonight.

Is there anyone else on the line, or are we alone? Haven't heard a thing for a long time. Haven't seen anything since the flare. All is distressingly quiet.

It's easy enough for a kind of suppressed panic to set in, and the longer it's quiet, the easier it seems to believe that the night will never end. That you won't survive to see the dawn. The stress increases moment by moment.

Suddenly there is a strong, confident voice out of the darkness: You fellows okay? How 'bout a little coffee-its not very hot, but it'll help. Looks like it's going to be another quiet night, and there's only one more hour until you're relieved, but stay alert."

You're gonna make it. You know you aren't alone. Someone does care. THE SARGE.

*****

SHORT ROUNDS

"Snakes"

By Craig W. Tourte

I don't have an aversion to snakes. My cousin and I used to hunt for rattlesnakes in the foothills of Northern California. With 22 caliber rifles slung across our backs, tall leather cowboy boots on our feet with thick socks and carrying short handled shovels, we'd hike up into the dry grass and granite rocks above the small community of Maxwell. The same quarry where granite slabs were harvested to build the Ferry building in San Francisco and the infamous Folsom Prison.

We would not have to spend much time hunting; rattlesnakes just seemed to be everywhere. We would make lots of noise and step carefully listening for the tell tail sound of their rattles. We'd kill them immediately, not waiting for them to coil up or slither away. When we got home we'd skin them out and place their hides on long boards to dry out, then hang them around the walls of the house. Although the skinning omitted a foul odor we often took the meat into the house and after cutting it into small chunks, fryed it in a large black skillet with a little flour, salt and pepper. And yes, it tasted just like chicken.

I did some jungle training in Staging Battalion at Camp Pendleton before flying to Okinawa and then shipping via LST 1166 to Vietnam in 1967. At Camp Pendleton we all humped out into the hills and practiced attacking ridgelines. After one practically long day we gathered in a bowl between some hills. It was raining and we had not slept or eaten for a



couple of days. It was supposed to be some type of survival training. There was a large pot of boiling water and some rice was added. I don't think many had ever eaten rice before, but Northern California was rice country and I always enjoyed the rich texture of the glutinous medium grain cornels.

Someone had killed a rattlesnake and with a certain amount of pride was holding it and showing it around. It was somewhat humorous to watch the city boys pull back at the site of the dead snake, not wanting to get close to the dead creature. I suggested that we place it into the pot of rice. Most agreed. I skinned it out, cut it up into small chunks and threw it in the pot. We were all cold and hungry and though lacking spices, that pot of boiled rice and snake tasted pretty darn good.

There were lots of snakes in Vietnam and the mountains of the northern area of South Vietnam identified as I Corps. The Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh had more than its share. The scourge at Khe Sanh Combat Base during the Siege however, was not the snakes, but rather the huge rats that were everywhere. But, snakes did play a part in that experience. If there had been more snakes perhaps there would not have been so many rats. We didn't seem to notice the rats so much until the Siege, but we certainly noticed and often came into contact with large snakes.

There was little sleep for any of us at Khe Sanh and this day was no different than any other. My responsibility was the front gate, which was located at the southwest section of the base. There were no orders or instructions as to what I was suppose to do, who I was suppose to call or notify if a situation arose. There where no, what ifs just the order that I had front gate duty. I took that to mean that if any NVA attacked the front gate my responsibility was to kill as many of them as I could before they killed me.

It was a pleasant evening, a few stars were out and there was little fog. I could not see anything to my front beyond 50 meters, but I could hear the insects and sounds of the jungle, which told me that no little people were in a line of assault to attack my position. You get into a habit of listening very carefully when you're alone, waiting for the enemy to come and kill you. It's important to be able to identify sounds, and after many hours of concentration, listening and studying the blackness ahead, one learns to identify the sound of an animal moving through the brush, a rat digging or the sound of humans running in your direction.

Despite being totally exhausted, hungry and filthy, I was alert to the sounds of the jungle and experienced at staying awake and listening very carefully. I caught the familiar sound right away. There was no mistake and I was not in doubt as to what was causing the familiar crawling and slithering sound. I knew immediately that a snake was near. I was alone in the trench and remained perfectly still. The sound grew closer as I tensed, knowing the snake was moving in my direction. Although I knew a little about the snakes of northern California, I did not known much about the snakes of Vietnam.

I could hear the sound and feel the weight of the reptile as it crawled over my right boot, slowly inching it's way along the dirt floor of the trench. As the snake crawled off of my boot and inched it way along the trench line, I lit my trusty Zippo lighter to take a look, it was a huge black creature at least 6 feet in length. It was the first and only snake I ever saw at Khe Sanh. I am sure there were many lurking around the many holes and crevices so often occupied by the large, cat sized rats that were so prevalent.

When I returned to Northern California after my tour in Vietnam, my desire to hunt snakes was over, but I spent considerable time shooting at rats.

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INCOMING

Another outstanding Khe Sanh Veteran Poet/ Writer is discovered.
Rufus Daigle, B 3rd Recon Artist/Poet
Meet the Mystic
Arts and Letters Volume 31, No. 49 April 13, 2006
By Andrew Hodgdon

Khalil Gibran once wrote, "Life without love is like a tree without blossom and fruit." As a fellow artist, Santa Cruzan Rufus Daigle has dedicated his life to mirroring that philosophy. First taking up the pen at 5 years old, he's published two volumes of poetry that celebrate the most elusive poetic muse: happi-

ness. "I'm trying to find myself as a human being, to find happiness in myself and share it," Daigle says.

On Friday, April 7, the poet read from his book, "The Mystic Sings" at the Santa Cruz Public Library. Although he carries an extraordinary amount of passion in his heart, Daigle has suffered through a great deal of pain. He is a disabled veteran who was wounded in **The Siege of Khe Sanh** in 1968.

Upon returning home to Louisiana, he began exhibiting his work before moving to Dallas to attend Southern Methodist University. Chance delivered Daigle to San Francisco, where he connected with artists of all walks of life. He later invested in a 100-acre ranch in Clear Lake to farm grapes, "I've always wanted to contribute to the land; my poems are prayers for the land," he says.

It was here in Northern California that Daigle composed "From the Wings of an Angel." This book of poems demonstrates a distinct talent for rhythm and word placement. His style of arrangement presents the reader with clear and honest sentiments. The metaphors are fluid and rhythmic, producing vigorous imagery. "The book explained how I felt about love," Daigle says. "It comes from seeing so much death in Vietnam. I wanted to clarify that love exists, and say just how beautiful that is so people can understand and connect."

He eventually opened a gallery in Berkeley and has since seen his paintings exhibited in Oakland, San Francisco and Seattle. In addition to his U.S. displays, his work has also hung in the Virgin Islands. Daigle's recent book, "The Mystic Sings," is a collection of poems and paintings that symbolize an intense search for clarity within the context of angst, racism and war. This colorful combination of visual and written mediums will definitely appeal to impressionistic art fans. One poem, entitled "Requiem to a White Owl," pays witness to one of Hawaiian folklore's legendary deities. Other pieces, like "Pele's Angel," remind us that destiny may very well return us from whence we came. The book is, "A little more mosaic, more complicated, because I have grown and the work has become more intricate," Daigle says. "I want to leave an impression about beauty, as well as the erotic and the painful."

Rufus Daigle read from his collection of poetry and exhibits two of his newest paintings on, Friday, April 7 at The Mountain Art Center for the Poet's Eye/Artist's Tongue exhibition. On Sunday, April 9, he performed at the Santa Cruz Main Library for Poet/Speak. He was also featured Monday, May 8 at Independent Voices through the Santa Cruz Art League. Those interested in poetry readings can call 402-1232, or contact Rufus available at Bookshop Santa Cruz and the Capitola Book Café.

In a letter to Mike Fishbaugh, he wrote: "Mike, yes I am a Khe Sanh Veteran, I was with 3rd Recon. I also sell prints. Giclee's, number prints on acid free canvas. I also just had another book published. If interested in purchasing my work, let me know. I really live in Hawaii, growing coffee and painting. Rufus 831-419-8403

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INCOMING

ANOTHER KHE SANH VETERAN STILL SERVING WITH DISTINCTION

Story By Miranda G. McLeod
Staff Writer

Jackie Bevel, assistant to the State Attorney, said "You'll know he's a Marine when you walk in." Was she ever right. State Attorney **Harry Shorstein** has Devil Dog written all over him, as much as he bleeds orange and blue. "You'll come to learn Marines are very proud," he said. A fact already known, but dually represented by Shorstein's Bronze Star with Combat "V", Marine statuettes and autographed photo of General Alfred M. Gray, Jr., former Commandant of the Corps. "All Marines are very proud of Marines. We don't hide it," he said.

A native of Jacksonville, Shorstein received both his bachelor's and law degrees from the University of Florida before he joined the Corps. Mr. Shorstein was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in 1963. After graduating law school, he served as a Captain in the 3rd Marine Division in Vietnam, seeing active combat duty during the Tet Offensive, Battle of Hue, and the siege of **Khe Sanh.** His decorations include a Bronze Star with Combat "V", Combat Action Ribbon, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, and a Presidential Citation. He served as a platoon commander

and Commanding Officer of B Company, 4th Am-Trac Battalion.

Shorstein's done a lot of serving and has experience in both the defense and prosecution of criminal cases. After his return from Vietnam, Shorstein worked as division head in the Office of the Public Defender. From 1970-74, he served as division head and Chief Assistant State Attorney. He was the youngest person to serve as General Counsel for the City of Jacksonville. He worked in the private practice of law for 15 years, and was appointed as State Attorney in 1991.

Shortly after becoming State Attorney, Shorstein focused his office's attention on juvenile crime. "We're very, very proud of what we've done," he said. "In its simplest form, it's a very comprehensive approach to juvenile crime, with a focus on being tough when appropriate, including trying juveniles as adults, but more importantly focusing on prevention and early intervention. To me, it's common sense."

He has a lot of faith in the tight-fisted juvenile justice program. Last September Shorstein issued a biannual, 38-page Statement on Juvenile Justice which hammers down the logic of the program. "What's made us so successful, is that (the program) has the tough component and progressive prevention/early intervention and they mesh. As a result, our record on reducing juvenile crime since 1992 is unprecedented anywhere in the world," he said.

The State Attorney's office has been recognized by national and international media for the progress it has made. The juvenile justice program has been profiled on CBS's "60 Minutes," "The News hour" with Jim Lehrer, "NBC Nightly News" with Tom Brokaw, U. S. News and World Report, The New York Times, USA Today, and Parade Magazine. "There are some who think we are too tough at times, and there are some who think we are too prevention oriented, but there really hasn't been any opposition," he said.

Shorstein says he'll run for State Attorney again in 2008. As a captain in the Marine Corps, Shorstein received the Bronze Star with a Combat V for his participation in the Siege of Khe Sanh, which he says was arguably the most well-known siege during Vietnam. There were reportedly 5,000 Marines surrounded by more than 100,000 Viet Kong and North Vietnamese troops. "We really didn't do a whole lot because we were shelled all the time by artillery mortars and rockets. We just hoped not to get hit - we dug holes to get into." Shorstein also received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and a Presidential Unit Citation

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WEB BRIEFS

MIN-MINI REUNION

By Mike Fishbaugh

I Had the pleasure last Sunday to spend a couple of hours with Mike Archer and "Doc' Topmiller. Mike was having a book signing "A Patch of Ground" at the Joseph-Beth Bookstore in Lexington, KY. I met Mike last July in Chicago at the Reunion. Doc is a professor at Eastern Ky University and has made several trips back to Viet Nam on research for the school. Mike was to visit the university and speak in one of Doc's classes this past week. I Had a great time.

Mike

It was great seeing you again too. In addition to Doc Topmiller's two history classes at Eastern Kentucky University, I gave presentations about Khe Sanh to four other classes, as well. Those professors had also adopted A Patch of Ground for their courses, so the students knew something about the subject. My goal was to illustrate for them for them how combat by Marines along the DMZ differed tactically, and in intensity, from fighting in other parts of South Vietnam. They asked many questions and I came away surprised at how hungry these kids were for information about the Vietnam War, a far cry from the early 1970's when I returned to college on the G.I. Bill and found discourse about the war far less civil (how's that for a monumental understatement?). The admiration, and, for want of a better word, "awe" with which they regard Vietnam vets would, and should, make us all proud. I'm off to the University of Delaware on May 4 to continue to tell our story, and hope to submit an article to Red Clay in the next couple of weeks about "Khe Sanh on Campus." Thanks again for driving all the way into Lexington to say hi. It was good seeing a familiar face.

Semper Fi,
Mike Archer

MEMOIRS

Riding in Helicopters

By Jack Haigwood

Late in February 68 I was on my way to Dong Ha by means of a Chinook. While I was making my way down the strip, a C-123 was approaching the runway. Incoming rounds soon followed. I made a dive for the chopper tailgate and was the last man on board. The Marine sitting in the last seat didn't slide forward so I squeezed in next to him. As we lifted off, a sniper bullet hit making that "pop" sound. The bullet hit the Marine next to me going thru his left buttock and exiting his lower stomach. He lost so much blood that the floor of the plane was covered red. We sat back down at Charlie Med where they took him away. Those few minutes and that Marine are etched forever in my mind. I always wonder about him? Did he live ? Did he die? I also wonder way he didn't move forward and let me have that seat.

Semper Fi Brother! Where ever you may be.

POETRY

DAYLIGHT

Three hours to daylight
The end of another long night

As I stare into the darkness
I have awesome power under harness

We have been lucky so far tonight
There has been no enemy in sight.

Two hours to daylight
If he shows we will unleash our might

Is he here, will he come?
Will all die or only some?

One hour to daylight
Maybe we will not have to fight.

Finally I see it, daylight
I thank God no one had to die tonight

Rick Tam

MEMOIRS
C-130 Hercules Lands on U.S.S. Forrestal

Edit Note: There have been many stories about the giant C-130's that served us so well at Khe Sanh, actually taking off and landing on a US Navy Carrier. Here is an Excerpt from Herk: Hero of the Skies, by Joseph Earl Dabney, Airlines Publications and Sales, Ltd., 1979., that details how and when it was accomplished. I have also included pictures of the C-130's aboard the U.S.S. Forrestal.

When one reviews the encyclopedic range of accomplishments by the C-130 Hercules and its valiant aircrews over the years, surely one of the most astounding took place in October 1963 when the U.S. Navy decided to try to land a Hercules on an aircraft carrier. Was it possible? Who would believe that the

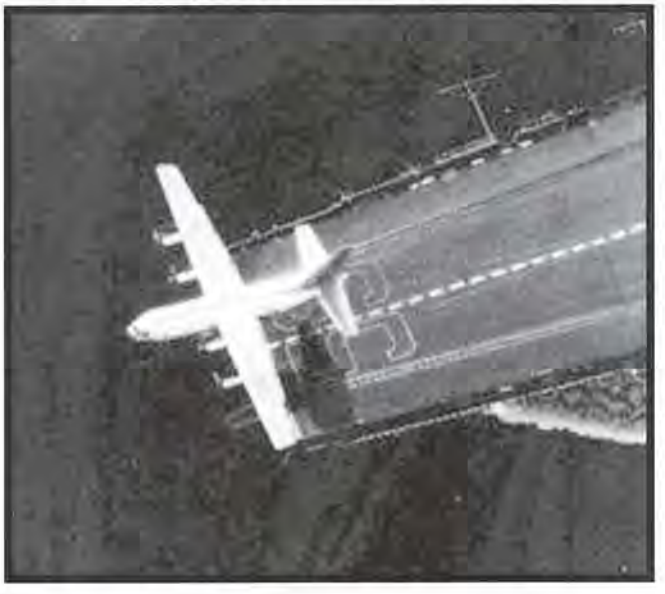



big, four-engine C-130 with its bulky fuselage and 132-foot wing span could land on the deck of a carrier?

Not only was it possible, it was done in moderately



rough seas 500 miles out in the North Atlantic off the coast of Boston. In so doing, the airplane became the largest and heaviest aircraft to ever land on an aircraft carrier, a record that stands to this day. When Lt. James H. Flatley III was told about his new assignment, he thought somebody was pulling his leg. "Operate a C-130 off an aircraft carrier? Somebody's got to be kidding," he said. But they weren't kidding. In fact, the Chief of Naval Operations himself had ordered a feasibility study on operating the big propjet aboard the Norfolk-based U.S.S. Forrestal (CVA-59). The Navy was trying to find out whether they could use the Hercules as a "Super COD" - a "Carrier Onboard Delivery" aircraft. The airplane then used for such tasks was the Grumman C-1 Trader, a twin piston-engine bird with a limited payload capacity and 300-mile range. If an aircraft carrier is operating in mid-ocean, it has no "onboard delivery" system to fall back on and must come nearer land before taking aboard even urgently needed items. The Hercules was stable and reliable, with a long cruising range and capable of carrying large payloads.

The aircraft, a KC-130F refueler transport (Bu No 149798), on loan from the U.S. Marines, was delivered on 8 October. Lockheed's only modifications to the original plane included installing a smaller nose-landing gear orifice, an improved anti-skid braking



system, and removal of the under wing refueling pods. "The big worry was whether we could meet the maximum sink rate of nine feet per second," Flatley said. As it turned out, the Navy was amazed to find they were able to better this mark by a substantial margin.

In addition to Flatley, the crew consisted of Lt. Cmdr. W.W. Stovall, copilot; ADR-1 E.F. Brennan, flight engineer; and Lockheed engineering flight test pilot Ted H. Limmer, Jr. The initial sea-born landings on 30 October 1963 were made into a 40-knot wind. Altogether, the crew successfully negotiated 29 touch-and-go landings, 21 un arrested full-stop landings, and 21 unassisted takeoffs at gross weights of 85,000 pounds up to 121,000 pounds. At 85,000 pounds, the KC-130F came to a complete stop within 267 feet, about twice the aircraft's wing span! The Navy was delighted to discover that even with a maximum payload, the plane used only 745 feet for takeoff and 460 feet for landing roll. The short landing roll resulted from close coordination between Flatley and Jerry Daugherty, the carrier's landing signal officer. Daugherty, later to become a captain and assigned to the Naval Air Systems Command, gave Flatley an engine "chop" while still three or four feet off the deck.

Lockheed's Ted Limmer, who checked out fighter pilot Flatley in the C-130, stayed on for some of the initial touch-and-go and full-stop landings. "The last landing I participated in, we touched down about 150 feet from the end, stopped in 270 feet more and launched from that position, using what was left of the deck. We still had a couple hundred feet left when we lifted off. Admiral Brown was flabbergasted."

The plane's wingspan cleared the Forrestal's flight deck "island" control tower by just under 15 feet as the plane roared down the deck on a specially painted line. Lockheed's chief engineer, Art E. Flock was aboard to observe the testing. "The sea was pretty big that day. I was up on the captain's bridge. I watched a man on the ship's bow as that bow must have gone up and down 30 feet." The speed of the shop was increased 10 knots to reduce yaw motion and to reduce wind direction. Thus, when the plane landed, it had a 40 to 50 knot wind on the nose. "That airplane stopped right opposite the captain's bridge," recalled Flock. "There was cheering and laughing. There on the side of the fuselage, a big sign had been painted on that said, "LOOK MA, NO HOOK."

From the accumulated test data, the Navy concluded that with the C-130 Hercules, it would be possible to lift 25,000 pounds of cargo 2,500 miles and land it on a carrier. Even so, the idea was considered a bit too risky for the C-130 and the Navy elected to use a smaller COD aircraft. For his effort, the Navy awarded Flatley the Distinguished Flying Cross.

MEMOIRS

"A Marine's Story"

Bob Ringham (I/3/26)
By Craig W. Tourte

Twenty-Three years ago I was visiting the island of Hawaii with my lovely young bride when I had the occasion to strike up a conversation with another fellow vacationer. We talked about the subjects fellow vacationers talk about, the island, where we were from, what we did for a living, what we had seen and enjoyed about the island, that sort of thing. I don't remember exactly how the subject came up, but Vietnam, Marines and Khe Sanh just seemed to naturally flow into our conversation.

We had a rather extensive conversation about Khe Sanh. At that time I (and not again until 2003 when Tom Horchler called me) had I ever knowingly spoken to another Khe Sanh Veteran. After a few days we went our separate ways, but did manage to exchange addresses. We wrote back and forth several times. It turns out he was a reporter/photographer for The Chicago Sun-Times. When I returned home from Hawaii he sent me a little Chicago Sun-Times



newspaper. The article was about his return to Vietnam, "I had to go back...I left part of my life in Vietnam, and I wanted to see if I could find it." This newspaper contained a four-part series of his personal memoirs and exclusive photographs of his return to Vietnam from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City.

The years have passed and I have researched his name on Goggle and written to him, reminding him of our conversation in Hawaii, but for whatever reason, he has not responded and I have had no further contact with him. I thought it would be interesting to the readers of Red Clay to read a little of this well written article about his experience on hill 881 in 1968 with I/3/36.

From the Chicago Sun-Times
"Return To Vietnam"
By Bob Ringham (I/3/26).

"The first time I flew into this airport (Da Nang), 18 years ago, I was a Marine carrying an M-16 rifle. And I thought I was protecting my country from communism. This time I was carrying a camera and sitting next to a Russian tourist. It was hard to believe there was a time when I thought it was my job to keep this guy from invading the United States."

"He was fat, and he looked like a middle-class American. If we both took off our clothes, I thought, there'd be no way to tell which one of us was the communist. This is where I entered Vietnam on January 15, 1968. It was a huge military air base then, busier than O'Hare Airport. The first thing that hit you was the smell of jet fuel and the sound of helicopters and Phantom jets."

"That smell is gone now. There are weeds pushing up through the runaways. The aircraft bunkers are crumbling away and the first thing that hits you is the silence. It's like a metaphor for Vietnam. All of Vietnam seems to be crumbling away. There's poverty everywhere. Buildings are decaying. Vehicles falling apart. These people may have won the war. But they seem to be losing the fight for a better life. I had always thought Da Nang was just a U.S. base, and I was surprised to find it's also a city of almost half a million people.

I photographed it but that film was later confiscated. I was 18 when the Marine Corps flew me in here from Okinawa, and I thought I was ready for combat. Then I saw a guy with the strangest eyes. He was standing outside a transit station, just staring out at nowhere. I went up to him and said: "Why do they send old guys to fight this war when the Marines have got all these young smart-asses like me to do their fighting?" "I'm only 19 he said." Right then I realized I was getting into something over my head. He said he'd come from Khe Sanh and I thought: Oh my God! That's where I'm going"

"I got there fast, that same day. They put me on a C-130 transport, with a bunch of other grunts, and the crew chief said: "When we land at Khe Sanh, we are not going to stop the plane. The back of the plane is going to open. We'll drop your bags out. Then you guys jump out to the right, pick up your bags and run to the trench." We landed, and the back fell out. They threw out our gear. We jumped and we ran. There were explosions. As we were diving into the trenches, the Viet Cong were walking mortar rounds down the runaway..."

"I reported to a sergeant who assigned me to India Company, 26th Marines, 3rd Battalion. There were three hills in front of Khe Sanh that were key to control of the area, and India Company was up there on one of them: Hill 881. They flew 10 of us there in a helicopter. It came down on the hill with two machineguns firing. As we were getting off, they were throwing dead Marines into the helicopter. I was the last one off, and I stepped on the chest of a dead Marine. That's how I found out what people looked like when they got hit. We took a lot of casualties on the hill. Basically we just sat there and took a beating from mortars and snipers. There were about 50 or 55 people in my platoon when I go there, and by March 1, there were only eight left. The rest were all dead or wounded. There were two guys who were real good friends, Robert Wiedeman and Frank Szymanski, I was standing duty watch one day when Wiedeman came by with some peanuts. He asked me it I wanted some, and I said no. So he walked on around the corner to talk to Szymanski, and a mortar round came in and killed both of them instantly, I felt guilty about that for a long time."

"A couple of days later, on March 1st, a mortar round blew up our command center, I was assigned to a work detail to rebuild it, with four other guys, and we were digging a hole together when another round came in and hit us. One guy was killed instantly and another guy lost his nose. One guy had a chest full of shrapnel, and another had a concussion. I caught a lot of shrapnel in both legs in my butt and in my left arm. The left leg was the worst, it was laid open, and I couldn't move it. But you don't bleed a lot with shrapnel; because it's so hot it sears the wound shut."

"I was lying there like a dummy, trying to remember if I was suppose to yell for a medic or a corpsman. It didn't matter, because we had none. The two we'd had were killed. So a grunt put a compress bandages on my legs, and they carried me to an artillery bunker. I spent the night in the bunker, and the next day, two guys carried me to a helicopter landing area, but a sniper opened up so they dropped me and ran off. I crawled on my elbows to some sandbags and I lay there all day, out there with the sniper. But he knew I wasn't going anywhere, and he was waiting to nail anybody that tried to come for me. I didn't want to be there when night came. But they came out just before dark and carried me back to the bunker. The next day they brought in maybe six helicopters and three Phantom jets and two gunships. The Phantoms were dropping napalm and the gunships were blasting away, and the helicopters were shooting everything in sight when one of them

peeled off and landed. They got me on board with the other wounded. The crew chief was firing an M-16 out the back door when we took off and the hot casings were landing on me."

"...I got a Purple Heart in the hospital on my 19th birthday, March 15th. A Marine Colonel came by with a Master Gunnery Sergeant, and he pinned the Purple Heart on my pajamas. He also gave me a birthday cake. Then he moved on to a young Marine who'd lost both legs and pinned a Purple Heart on him. The Marine tore it off and threw it on the floor, and he said, "That won't bring back my legs." The Colonel lost his composure and left the ward. But the Sergeant stayed. He held the Marine in his arms, and the Marine was crying, and the Sergeant told him he should be proud to be a Marine and proud to be an American. Then the Colonel came back and pinned the Purple Heart on again. This time the Marine left it on. But he was right, it didn't bring back his legs."

I found this old newspaper and letters from Bob Ringham, while going through a box of old stories I had written. I keep all my old service related stuff in a cardboard box, deep in the closet of a back bedroom. I came across some other old photographs of Marines I had known, names mostly forgotten now. I wonder sometimes, where they are and what they are doing, and if they have survived as long as I have? I think there may be a number of Bob Ringham's out there, men we fought alongside and men we cried with over the loss of fallen comrades, wounded men carried away, some never seen nor heard from again. I wonder if they too sit in their little offices located in the rear of their house located in a small corner of America, wondering about those they once knew, about those who survived a place called Khe Sanh?

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KHE SANH VETERANS STILL SERVING
Michael Ray K Co 3/26

Retired Davenport cop is training Iraqi police
By Dustin Lemmon

Michael Ray, second from right, a retired Davenport police officer, is pictured with Iraqi police officers in Baghdad. Ray is in Iraq with the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team to teach law enforcement skills to new police officers in the Middle East country.

It took Michael Ray years to put his experiences in Vietnam behind him. It wasn't until an opportunity to help in Iraq came along that he found a way to put them to rest for good. His family says Ray, a retired Davenport police officer, has been working in Iraq since November, training Iraqi police. His wife and son said he's trying to help the Iraqis in hopes that its people will be in better shape to run the country themselves when Americans leave than the people of Vietnam were. "Being a Vietnam vet, he felt like they never got to put things to rest," Shawn Ray, Michael's son, said. "If the world is a better place he's going to feel good. "Ray's wife, Barbara Ray of Buffalo, recently returned from Costa Rica where she and her husband were able to vacation before he had to return to Iraq to finish the final six months of his voluntary duty. She said her husband was shot in Vietnam when a bullet that went through his lieutenant struck him in the shoulder, exited his body and hit another soldier in the ankle. The lieutenant died, she said. Ray served at the fire base in Khe Sanh during the Tet offensive in 1968, in which the base was attacked by the NVA in one of the largest and most remembered battles of the Vietnam War.



Barbara Ray said her husband didn't talk about the war for a long time but saw volunteering in Iraq as an opportunity to make up for the failures he saw in Vietnam. "He had been in Vietnam and he kind of felt at the time that rather than having closure over there we just kind of left," Ray said. He thinks "as people we owe it to (Iraqis) to help them get their freedom. "Michael Ray, 60, served in the military

for 11 years and worked for 23 years as a Davenport police officer. He was shot in 1987 while working a security job at a restaurant in the Village of East Davenport. Ray retired from the police force in 2001. It's the second time Ray has served in the Middle East in the past three years. Prior to serving in Iraq, he was in Qatar for a year working in security for DynCorp International. His duties in Iraq are more dangerous, his wife said. "He's not working in the Green Zone (a safe zone in Baghdad)," she said. "He's actively going out to the Iraqi police stations. "Ray and other members of the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team have been teaching the Iraqis how to use guns, to search people and to write paperwork, Barbara Ray said.

"They're happy to have them there," she said of the Iraqis, adding her husband speaks to them through an interpreter. "He's just amazed by their desire to learn. They want to help. "One of Ray's interpreters befriended him after telling Ray about how his own father was killed when he was younger. The man took to calling Ray his "father," Barbara Ray said. She said her husband doesn't talk much about how dangerous the job can be. On their vacation he did finally admit that he wasn't in a safe place while working in Iraq. She said other volunteers on the team have been killed by explosions, and Ray himself has witnessed attacks. "They have to dive into bomb shelters on a regular basis," Shawn Ray said. Barbara Ray said she hopes the experience helps both the Iraqis and her husband. "He's helping them to see Americans as individuals and that we do care," Ray said. "I hope it makes him feel like he did something good"

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INCOMING

PAYING OUR RESPECTS

By Ron Shouse

Cliff and I don't always get to do happy things and this past February was no exception. Bravo Battery Alumni, class of 68, Tom Keaton, Jerry Williams, Cliff and I journeyed to St Louis Mo to attend the funeral of Glen Rappold's wife, Helen. Our KSV President, Russ Turner, and his lovely wife Kathy, arrived to pay their respects on behalf of the KSV.

While in St Louis, Cliff, Glen and I had the opportunity to visit the Missouri Air National Guard and



meet the Commanding Officer. We talked for awhile, gave him one of our coins and a pen from the KSV, and had pictures taken. As we were leaving the HQ Building we noticed a sign that said 3/24 USMC. There was no way we were going to pass up an opportunity to square away the younger bunch, so in we went. Most of these men had done a tour in Iraq, some in a combat status, but mostly support. We were well received and again took a few pic-



tures. We also went to Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery to visit our memorial to those who were KIA on 06 March 68, when the aircraft in which they were passengers was shot down at Khe Sanh. They were buried in a mass grave. God Bless Them All.

We also visited the wonderful memorial that Glen built in his back yard. As the sign said, it was really a labor of love to have built such a wonderful remembrance to our brothers who were KIA.



L-R Ron Shouse, Glenn Rappold & Cliff Treese with Marines from 3/24



Ron & Cliff at Entrance To National Cemetery St. Louis Mo. Jefferson Barracks



Names on Memorial of those buried in Mass Grave KIA when their aircraft was shot down at Khe Sanh



Visit to Memorial at Glenn Rappold's Home



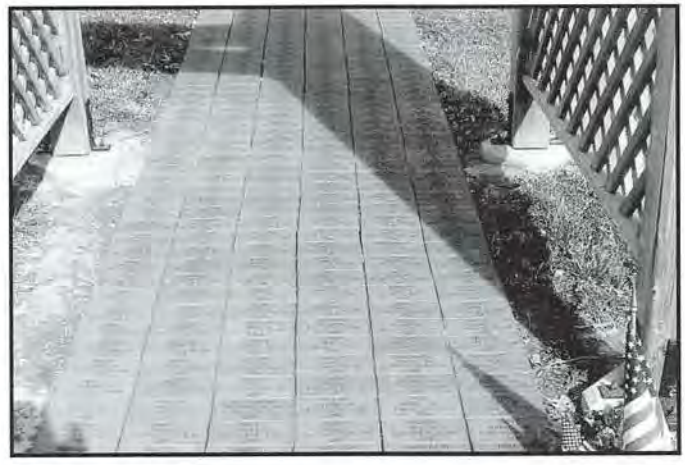

Entrance to "Pathway of Honor"
Bricks with names of those KIA

We Get Mail

Dear Tom,

I am writing about the comprehensive Chronology of Khe Sanh published in issue 64 of Red Clay. The unit I served with was not included in the Lam Son 719 operation. I served with Delta Company 14TH Combat Engineer Battalion, USA. We were stationed at Camp Evans & Quang Tri. Our Battalion Headquarters was actually located at Quang Tri. I and four other soldiers actually led the operation up the mountain. We started at dusk and arrived at the Khe Sanh Plateau at 10:00 the next morning.



Charlie Sepalueda and Teammate Mike, with NVA Colonel Toy



Only Bridge Left Standing that was crossed during Operation Lam Son

We had followed the roadbed cutting down Bamboo and brush off of QL 9, where no human had been since 1968. Every one else involved in the operation followed the trail we created, including Bull Dozers, Tanks, etc. We re-built culverts and bridges all along Route 9.



The "Hill", Rock Pile is in back round



View of Hills, from QL-9

The 14th Combat Engineers are not written about due to the fact we were a small unit attached to the 18Th Engineer Brigade.

If anyone desires additional information on our unit's action in Vietnam, they may contact Colonel Byron Schriever at ***bschriever @ comcast.net***



QL-9 in year 2000



Khe Sanh Village

Or our 14th association historian Billy Grey at *dogray@digitex.net* Or 14th CEB at Fort Lewis Washington, Lt/Col Michael W. Brobeck Commander 14TH CEB at *michael.brobeck@us.army.mil.* Their unit is currently serving in Iraq.

I have sent pictures of my trip to Vietnam in 2000, with V.V.R.P. (Vietnam Veterans Restoration Project). ***Vvrp.org***. This organization works on rebuilding Schools and Orphanages. The picture of me is at Do Luong North Vietnam in Nghe An Province.

MEMOIRS

"LESS WE FORGET"
Robert Jenkins, Medal of Honor KIA 05 Mar 69
By Mike Fishbaugh

Vietnam Hero: 36 years later, memory lives on in hearts of family, friends.
By Randy Lefko
Palatka Daily News

It was Feb. 5, 1969, and Operation Dewey Canyon near the North and South Vietnamese border was two weeks old. American forces were holding a hilltop in the jungles just inside the South Vietnamese border in a vicious fire battle with North Vietnamese troops.

On March 3, a platoon of 12 U.S. Marines from the Third Reconnaissance Battalion, Third Marine Division, was inserted into the battle after the North Vietnamese continued to barrage the American troops.

Two days later, Robert Jenkins Jr., a 20-year-old Interlachen Marine, and Fred Ostrom, a 19-year-old New York Marine, were side by side in a muddy hole with their machine guns blasting away with 10 other Marines trying to stave off the offensive. "Robert was a machine gunner and I was his assistant pushing the ammunition into the weapon," said Ostrom, who was wounded by a grenade earlier, losing part of his right arm and hand. "The enemy threw a gas grenade into the hole as we were getting sliced by bullets left and right," said Ostrom. "I ran to get my gas mask when they threw a hand grenade into the hole. Robert saw it, ran toward me, pushed me out of the way and jumped on the grenade. He absorbed the full blast. I will never forget Robert for that." That was 3 a.m. on March 5, 1969.

Jenkins was killed instantly, said Ostrom, who continued the fight until a platoon of Huey helicopters came in about 7:30 a.m. and cleared the area of enemy fire. "I got hit with another grenade two or three minutes later and broke my arm in four places," said Ostrom. "When the choppers came in, the medics lifted Robert and took him to the helicopter. Marines never leave a Marine." Later in March of 1969, Jenkins was honored with the U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor and the Purple Heart and has been

honored with the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze stars and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Jenkins' father, Robert Sr., 83, and mother, Willie Mae, 80, have lived in Interlachen since 1947 and still remember their son every March 5. "I kind of mill around the house that day and look around hoping to see him walking out there," said Jenkins Sr. "Thirty six years and his memory is still here. His momma doesn't talk about it much. It pains her to talk about it. I wish he was still around." Jenkins Sr had been a soldier during World War II, but was only in the Army eight years before being asked to leave for medical reasons. "They told me I had medical problems before I went in and it wasn't because of my service," said Jenkins. "It's garbage."

Jenkins said Robert wanted to join up and get his 20 years after hearing what had happened to him. "Robert went right down and joined up," he said. "He said, 'Papa, if you went in, I'm going in." On a spring day in 1969, Jenkins can't recall exactly when, he was sitting at a pond fishing in the west side of Interlachen. "I saw this car pull up and a Marine captain got out and walked toward me," he said. "I knew. It hit me real bad when he told me my boy had been killed in the war. I just went to pieces. After all this time, I still don't know exactly how he died."

Not long after the news about Robert, his younger brother, James, joined the Army. "I took him down to Palatka and we signed him up," said Jenkins. "They told me not to worry about James because he wouldn't see any front line action because of Robert being killed." James served his 20 years and retired, but has been absent from the family for about three years. "All I know is he is in Gainesville somewhere," said Jenkins. "He don't come around here no more. Maybe because of Robert, it's too tough." In 1977, the Putnam County School District honored Jenkins by naming the Robert H. Jenkins Jr. Middle School in Palatka. Ostrom and fellow Marines fund the Robert H. Jenkins Jr. Memorial Award, which is awarded to students who exhibit good citizenship, hard work and an unselfish attitude. In Interlachen, the Robert H. Jenkins Jr. Memorial Park stretches along Atlantic Avenue just a few yards from the Jenkins' house. "I come out here time to time and just drive up and down the road," said Jenkins. "The town of Interlachen keeps it clean." Ostrom said he has been lobbying for a Navy ship, a guided missile destroyer, to be named in honor of Jenkins.

"I don't know what else I can do to thank him," said Ostrom, now 56. "I have been fortunate enough, because of Robert, to enjoy my family and my grandchildren all because of him. I will never forget what he did for me. My son Sean has a 2 year old named Brock Robert Ostrom that was named for Robert."

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Retirees Dig in Heels Over Tricare Fees
Stars and Stripes By Tom Philpott
April 06, 2006

Ignoring the intimidating props, boxes of angry letters from thousands of military retirees senior Defense officials and military leaders appeared March 29 before a contentious House subcommittee to make their case for hiking Tricare fees sharply for under-65 retirees and their families. In the verbal sparring that ensued, Pentagon leaders gave as good as they got. But no lawmaker took the role of referee. All threw punches on behalf of retirees, and treated with kid gloves a second panel of witnesses representing dozens of pro-retiree military associations and veteran groups.

The Pentagon's plan to boost out-of-pocket Tricare costs for 3 million beneficiaries, to include a tripling of managed-care enrollment fees for retired officers and a doubling for senior enlisted retirees, seemed to shatter some traditional alliances and form new ones. Republicans and Democrats together questioned the realism of projected cost savings from raising Tricare fees and the wisdom of doing so in wartime. The active duty four-star officers in the room spoke in support of the increases. Retired officers led the opposition.

David S.C. Chu, undersecretary of defense, and Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., the Pentagon's health affairs chief, reminded the armed services' subcommittee on military personnel that, since 1995, Tricare benefits and the beneficiary population have grown, program costs have soared, yet Tricare fees

have remained the same. They portrayed it as a bureaucratic oversight that now needs correcting. Otherwise, military health costs, which have doubled since 2001, could double again by 2015.

Defense leaders were joined by the vice chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps, who echoed the contention that a prized benefit will be difficult to sustain unless fees are raised. "For 11 years we have not done just service to this benefit, in that we failed to index" Tricare fees and CO-payments to inflation, said Adm. Robert F. Willard, vice chief of naval operations. Benefit enhancements, rising medical costs nationwide and a widening disparity between Tricare cost-shares and private health insurance premiums have led to a migration of working retirees and their families back intoTricare.

That recent shift, said Chu, is encouraged by civilian employers, some using cash incentives, hoping to trim their own health care obligations. Indexing Tricare fees to medical inflation back in 1995, said Willard, "would have prevented the current crisis that we find ourselves in." But Rep. Vic Snyder of Arkansas, ranking Democrat on the panel, challenged Willard's use of the word "crisis." "A crisis implies we're not going to pay for anything. We're going to pay for health care for our men and women in uniform, and retirees. We're going to sustain the program. The question is how ... and right now there's not a lot of ... enthusiasm for the method you all have proposed," Snyder said.

He also questioned department hand wringing over the widening disparity between Tricare fees and private health insurance premiums. "We want there to be a disparity because that's part of what we give for people turning their life over to us 24 hours a day," said Snyder. Snyder referred then to comment from Gen. Robert Magnus, assistant Marine Corps commandant, in defense of the higher fees, that Tricare would remain the "gold standard" of health plans. If that's true, Snyder suggested, migration of retirees will continue despite higher fees because "people are going to jump from the silver standard. They're going to jump from the copper and bronze standard."

"The issue is ... can we sustain the gold standard," said Chu. "What happened in the last 10 years is we polished the gold standard to a very high luster. The result is that private companies and state governments are trying to shift their appropriate medical costs to the Department of Defense." To the charge the planned fees would climb too far and too fast, Chu said another way to look at them is that for 11 years, "our beneficiary population has enjoyed a relief from indexing."

Defense officials estimate the higher fees will save $11 billion by 2011. The assumptions are that 144,000 current users will decide to leave Tricare and another 350,000 beneficiaries, who would have shifted to Tricare if fees stayed frozen, will stay with their private sector plan. What the estimates really mean, said Snyder, is that 500,000 retirees don't agree that the increases are modest, as Chu suggests. Chu said younger retirees should be willing to contribute more to sustain the program and "to deal with the [employer] cost-shifting issue."

"Usually when a product improves people are happy to help contribute to the cost of improvements," Chu said. "And that's what We're asking here." Retired Navy Vice Adm. Norbert R. Ryan Jr., testifying on behalf of The Military Coalition, a consortium of service associations, called the planned fees "disproportional and inappropriate." Ryan said he was surprised to hear uniformed leaders take "a sky-is-falling approach" to Tricare costs. The greater danger to an all-volunteer force, during a long war, would be raising future health care costs for careerists facing their second or third wartime deployment, he suggested. Snyder asked if the firestorm over Tricare fees could have been avoided if officials pushed for a more modest change, perhaps to adjust retiree Tricare fees in the future by the percentage rise in military retired pay each year. Ryan said he couldn't be sure that wouldn't anger retirees.

Retired Army Maj. Gen. William M. Matz, speaking for another group of associations, the National Veterans Alliance, said it was "astounding" to hear the Pentagon explain a cost-saving plan intended to discourage thousands of retirees not to use their earned benefits.

WE GET MAIL

Tom,

Perhaps our ships crossed in the past……it would have been long ago!

My wife just sent me the Spring Issue of Red Clay.

Appears she sent (see "pg 22) - a short note that was picked up by RED CLAY…. Thanks for your kind thoughts and support from fellow Marines who have served and continue to serve our country in its time of need.

As I reflected upon the current issue of RED CLAY and what my Situational Awareness is currently in Iraq (IZ) I have noted a common theme that may be of interest to those who served in VN. The list is not comprehensive nor is it meant to be. However, in the heat of battle, it represents some observations that I have made as a result of having two deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

Although the "Lord" allowed me a safe return as I departed KSCB on the 27th or 28th of Dec. 1967. The experiences serving with , D Co 1/26 for 12 months have remained ingrained in my soul and a day does not go by wherein I do not reflect upon the good and bad times we all experienced during that time. My tour in 67 was two fold – Rice Patty's in the AO of Hill 55 in Da Nang and the daily conflicts we experienced at Dodge City / Liberty Road and continual "Sparrow Hawk" operations at other AO's are distant memories. This does not include the second phase of my tour wherein we were at KSCB and performed combat missions that principally emphasized as I recall: Perimeter Security of KSCB, Major Operations and Defense of Combat Outposts at Hills 861 and 881 that overlooked the KSCB.

The "Threat" we marines experienced in Viet Nam (VN) are different in some ways to what we are experiencing in IZ. . However the "Threat" remains and how the Insurgents in IZ deliver upon that "Threat"' has tremendous similarities in what we experienced in VN.

Upon reflecting on VN in relation to my second deployment in support of OIF some startling similarities with different names:

Viet Nam circa 1967/ 68	Iraq circa 2003 / 2006
Marine	Marine
Enlisted/Draftee	All Volunteer
Uniform Sateen's Jungle Utilities See Note 1	Uniforms Desert Digital
Unit 1st Bn 26 Marines Award Presidential Unit Citation Operation Scotland	Unit IMEF Award Presidential Unit Cita- tion OIF 1
Communism Flanking Countries North Viet Nam China/Laos/Cambodia	Terrorism Flanking Countries Iran/Syria
Ho Chi Min Trail	Western Euphrates River Valley
NVA	Former (Ba'athist / Fedeeyan Republican Guard)
Viet Cong Terror/Intimidation/Murder Murder	Insurgents Terror/Intimidation/
Incoming Rockets Mortars Fire-fight	Incoming Rockets Mortars Small Arms Fire (SAF)
Bunker Trench Line	Bunker Jersey/Texas/Alaska Barriers
Booby Traps	Improvised Explosive Devises (IED)
Sapper	Suicide Bomber
Vehicle Hardening	Vehicle Up Armor
LAW M14 or M16 M79 M60 Iron Sights	AT4 M16 or M4 Carbine 203 M240 Gulf ACOG (optical site)

45	9 mil
City/Hamlet/Ville	City/Town/Village
Jungle	Urban
Combat Outpost (861)	COP (classified)
Terrain Hills/Delta	Terrain Flat
Red Clay	Sand

Tom – Although the names are different … there is a tremendous similarity as evidenced above.

Reading the Chronology of KS in **RED CLAY** only reminded me once again of the details of what we often forget over time. You must Thank - Reverend Stubbe for his historical efforts.

Jim Savage, Henry Gagne, and Mike Powers were friends that I served with in D Co. as there were others - Smith, Taylor, Lennox, Gervasi, and Talbot. I am sure there are other names that I can recall over time. And of course there is my former CO Capt. Spencer. Most of the names of other fellow marines are a distant memory.

In the event you see Ernie, tell him I said hello and remind him that I am the Marine who lived down the street in Martinez.... I am sure he will remember me and his book Macho Man that he presented to me is a constant reminder of that time and place where we shared a common experience.

I have read RED CLAY over the years and as a result of the recent issue I have reflected on the experiences and event with far more thought.

I am thankful for that reflection the Red Clay offers.

Tom, again, I appreciate all the support. Upon my completion of over 30 years of service in the Marine Corps, perhaps at that time I can fully participate in the KSV reunion. I often wanted to attend, but my obligations with career and the Corps often conflicted with the reunion schedule. It was unfortunate, but perhaps the future will allow me the opportunity to meet once again with those I had the honor to have served with.

Semper Fi

CWO 4 Silva, Wayne H.
TFMP
Camp Fallujah, IZ

Note 1:
Tom the individual gear we utilized in VN was often referred to a 782 gear.... However, the issue today, although similar is far more complex and technologically evolved. With all this technology comes the price of weight and complexity.

My observations are that today's Marines' are far more mobile than we were during my tour with the 26th Marines. For the most part as a 0311, I remember the word was "Grunt" and "Humping," were synonymous.

As such I have not reflected on the personal gear issue regarding a compare and contrast. Basically, today the Marines have more 782 gear to complete there Missions.

Footnote:

Thanks for allowing me the time to reflect on a time and place that had a significant and dramatic impact on my life and family some 39 years ago.

As a side note.... As I prepared to send this email … I received an email from Mike Powers, who I had the opportunity to share many moments with in 1967. I have not heard from Mike in over 39 years … I received positive contact from him today via email.

I look forward to getting back to him in the near term.

*****

MEMOIRS

AWOL FROM KHE SANH

By Tom Eichler

In an article written entitled "Professionalism versus Managerialism in Vietnam", written by Professor Richard A. Gabriel in the January-February 1981 issue of the Air University Review, he attempted to assess the combat performance of the Marine Corps in Vietnam based on certain statistics, which included the desertion rate. Lieutenant Colonel W. Hays Parks USMCR took issue with his findings, in the May-June Issue of the same review. The following is an excerpt from that article, which includes

the desertion statistics from **Khe Sanh** during the entire siege.

Colonel Parks based his findings on his experience as a Marine infantry officer and judge advocate during the Vietnam War. Having served as the chief trial counsel (i.e., senior prosecutor) for the Second Marine Division (1967-68) and the First Marine Division (1968-69). Professor Gabriel's attempt to assess the combat performance of the Marine Corps in Vietnam based on certain limited statistics was not supported by the cases tried.

Colonel Parks agreed, as Professor Gabriel argues, the Marines placed greater emphasis on maintaining a disciplined military force than did the Army. Thus, while the Army had five to six judge advocates per Vietnam division, the Marines had as many as eighteen prior to the August 1969 revision of the Manual for Courts-Martial, more after that date, most of whom concentrated on military justice. In fairness to the Army, Colonel Parks stated that the Army judge advocates handled the claims program for all of Vietnam, thus permitting the Marines to concentrate on military justice. Other factors impacted on Marine performance.

Colonel Parks found there was a serious error on Professor Gabriel's part in his conclusion that "Marine Corps units suffered problems equal to or even greater than those found in Army units" with respect to certain offenses. They did have different philosophies regarding disposition of offenses. The Marine Corps took even the slightest infraction to trial, whereas the Army very early in the war began referring most of its offenses to non judicial punishment or Chapter 10 (administrative) separation. Professor Gabriel seemed to acknowledge this with his comments on the rigid disciplinary system of the Marines but neglects it in his conclusion regarding the similarity of offense rates.

Colonel Parks cited one example to show the disparity of attitude toward prosecution between the two services. In 1968 he tried three Marines who deserted from **Khe Sanh** at the height of the siege. They made their way to Saigon, where they became part of a 50-man (3 Marine, 47 Army) black market ring dealing in postal money orders. All 50 were deserters. He tried the three Marines before general courts-martial and gained sentences in excess of ten years for each. Although the soldiers were susceptible to the same charges, they were allowed to plead guilty to lesser offenses before special courts-martial or accept administrative separation because of the shortage of Army judge advocates.

Colonel Parks also disagreed with Professor Gabriel when he inferred that desertion/AWOL occurred in combat units, citing the "desertion per thousand rate". Colonel Parks stated those statistics were for the Marine Corps as a whole, not for the Marine Corps in Vietnam exclusively.

Colonel Parks stated that in the First Marine Division in Vietnam during 1968-69 (the height of the Corps involvement in Vietnam), fewer than a dozen Marines were tried for desertion; the Third Marine division was even less (a Marine Division in combat Exceeded 25,000 strength). That is why he says Professor Gabriel really missed the mark when he used stateside statistics to compare "Marine and Army *battlefield* Performance."

Ed Note:
I do not think the matter of desertion was ever debated prior to Mike Fishbaugh printing the article on the Khe Sanh Veterans Web Site. Several of our members responded to the article, myself included.

One of the Corpsman I met while at the BAS at Khe Sanh went on R&R and tried to return while the siege was at its peak. A couple of "not able to land" flights and he just didn't come back! Morris was a Silver Star recipient from earlier battles, so to think him a coward doesn't fit well! He ended up in jail in Da Nang, reduced in rank and I'm sure well persecuted. I ran into him in the Philippines on the way home! I didn't agree with Morris' actions, but going through what we went through, I couldn't hold it against him either! I'm sure he has paid a great price over these years! If you happen to see Morris, tell him " I am glad you made it home."

Doc Jim Thomas

Larry McCartney USMCR Master Gunnery Sergeant retired, who served with E Co 2/26, on Hill 861A wrote :

I was injured and sent to the hospital directly from Hill 861-A on March 7, 1968. Three (3) weeks later I was released from the hospital and had to make my own way back to Khe Sanh. I had a heck of a time, I checked in at the USMC Liaison Desk at every location but couldn't make it back until March 31. Every place I went—Camh Ranh Bay, Da Nang, Dong Ha, and Quang Tri—I got an excuse as to why I couldn't get a flight. I was fortunate to meet some Sea Bees at the airport in Da Nanag., They let me spend the night with them and told me to come back If I still couldn't get out. Come to find out that one of the "Bees" was the cousin of a high school classmate.

I Finally got out after two (2) nights with the "Bees" when I met a Sergeant from 1/9 who told me to go to my battalion rear and I told him "that's what I'm trying to do Sir, the 2/26 rear is at Khe Sanh." When he heard that he got real helpful and took me to the 1/9 rear. I guess he was impressed that someone wanted to go back. Anyway, 1/9 Marines helped me get back and even had me carry extra equipment to Khe Sanh for them. I can't blame them in the least bit. The guys needed it and it had to get there somehow.

Bottom line, I was an 18 year old PFC with just eight (8) months in the Corps and not a whole lot of skill or savvy but I managed to make it back. It wasn't easy though, so I can understand if someone was "delayed en-route." But to go over the hill" strikes me as a weak excuse.

I Sure would like to know who those three Marines who were court martialed were. We lost several Marines who left for medical reasons and never returned, through the years we've found one or two of them, but there are several still "MNIA" as "Missing - Not in Action."

(Interesting side note) I learned form my two nights with the "Bees" that they can drink almost as good as a Marine. CAN DO "Bees" CAN DO.
Semper Fidelis!

Thomas Eichler E Co 2/26 Hill 861A wrote:

On 5 February 1968, our positions on Hill 861A were overrun at the start of the Tet Offensive. After a horrific battle the enemy was severely defeated. It came at the cost of 11 Marines KIA and many more WIA. I was a participant in that battle as was Larry McCartney. I was scheduled for R&R shortly after the battle. I was fortunate to be going to the much desired country of Australia. Through all the chaos in Vietnam, I managed to make it to the R&R center in Danang. I did this by begging transportation from every source available, even flying with those Marines who were KIA at Khe Sanh.

When I arrived at Danang I was approximately two hours late checking in. Thus, they gave away my flight to Australia to some non combatant, even though there was time to correct the change and allow me to go to my original destination. Here I was filthy, covered with Red Clay, covered with the blood of those Marines who did not make it, and I was being treated like dirt.

I was sent to the Philippines for R&R which I really did not want. In fact I requested to go back to Khe Sanh, and give up the R&R. I was instructed to go on my R&R and to quit complaining. When I returned to Danang, like Larry, I attempted to get back to at Khe Sanh. No one wanted to go to Khe Sanh because of the siege.

Although I could have easily stayed at Danang or went to some other nice place, I felt like Larry. I had an obligation to get back to Khe Sanh. Although it wasn't easy, I managed to make it back to Khe Sanh by begging a ride with a helicopter crew from Marble Mountain, who were bringing a repair crew to Khe Sanh to fix a damaged CH 34.

Upon landing at Khe Sanh during a barrage, the repair crew were all wounded while disembarking from the CH 46, because they tried to bring off some equipment. I had previously told them to kick the equipment out the rear door and run like hell for the trench line along side the airstrip.

I made it to the trench line just as it took a direct hit. It was full of Marines who like myself, were waiting for a helicopter to take them to their respective Hills. Most of them were killed or wounded. I had my backpack and canteens on my belt blown off, but was not seriously wounded. To this day, I do not know how I survived.

Even though those who served at Khe Sanh endured many such experiences, they as I , had no

thought about going over the hill. I find citing such experiences as a weak excuse.

Lacy wrote:

In A Company 1/26 a Marine was AWOL when I arrived in Vietnam July of 1967. They wanted me to go to Saigon pick him up, and bring him back to Khe Sanh. I ended up getting out of it. He was brought back in black PJ's and sandals. When the siege started in January, he was gone again on one of the first choppers or planes that left. I left Vietnam in Aug of 1968 and he had not been found yet. I cannot remember his name

POETRY

THE FINAL INSPECTION



The Marine stood and faced God,
Which must always come to pass.
He hoped his shoes were shining,
Just as brightly as his brass.

"Step forward now, Marine,
How shall I deal with you?
Have you always turned the other cheek?
To My Church have you been true?"

The Marine squared his shoulders and said,
"No, Lord, I guess I ain't.
Because those of us who carry guns,
Can't always be a saint.

I've had to work most Sundays,
And at times my talk was tough.
And sometimes I've been violent,
Because the world is awfully rough.

But, I never took a penny,
That wasn't mine to keep..
Though I worked a lot of overtime,
When the bills got just too steep.

And I never passed a cry for help,
Though at times I shook with fear
And sometimes, God, forgive me,
I've wept unmanly tears.

I know I don't deserve a place,
Among the people here.
They never wanted me around,
Except to calm their fears.

If you've a place for me here, Lord,
It needn't be so grand.
I never expected or had too much,
But if you don't, I'll understand.

Author Unknown

BOOK REVIEW

"LURPS"
By Robert C. Ankony

From a blue-collar neighborhood in southwest Detroit to the badlands of northern I Corps, Ankony's memoir is a vivid and unusually honest tale of one man's journey to war in South Vietnam and back...From his remarkable eyewitness account of the North Vietnamese attack on Quang Tri City during the 1968 Tet Offensive to his description of the equipment and skills a soldier in Vietnam needed to survive, [Ankony] has given us an highly readable tale that is sure to entertain and inform anyone who has an interest in the war" -- Dr. Erik B. Villard, US Center of Military History, Washington, D.C.

"Lurps is the memoir of a juvenile delinquent who drops out of ninth grade to pursue a dream of military service. While a paratrooper in Europe, he volunteers for Vietnam where he joins the elite U.S. Army LRRP/Rangers--small, heavily armed long-range reconnaissance teams that patrolled deep in enemy-held territory. Set in 1968, during some of the war's major campaigns and battles including Tet, Khe Sanh, and A Shau Valley, Lurps considers war through the eyes of a green young warrior. The compelling narrative and realistic dialogue engrosses the reader in both the horror and the humor of life in Vietnam and reflects upon the broader philosophical issue of war.

This poignant, autobiographical, coming-of-age story explores the social background that shaped the protagonist's thinking; his quest for redemption through increased responsibility; the brotherhood of comrades in arms; women and his sexual awakening; and the mysterious, baffling randomness of who lives and who dies."
(quote from editor, Michael J. Carr)
Bob,

Thanks for the book and the lovely words. I was just planning on writing you yesterday, to tell you that your book, unlike any other that I've worked on, keeps coming back to me--all those images that seem so real that I surely must have lived them myself. More than anything it's the voice--*your* voice--that comes through without any of that macho, glory-days strutting that seems to leak into even the best books about war and combat. Through your unflinching honesty (and your innate storytelling ability), you've contributed something real and valuable about war, about *that* war, and about imperfect humans and the sometimes mysterious ways in which they transcend their own mediocrity.

Hats off, my friend--it's a beautiful thing,.

Mike

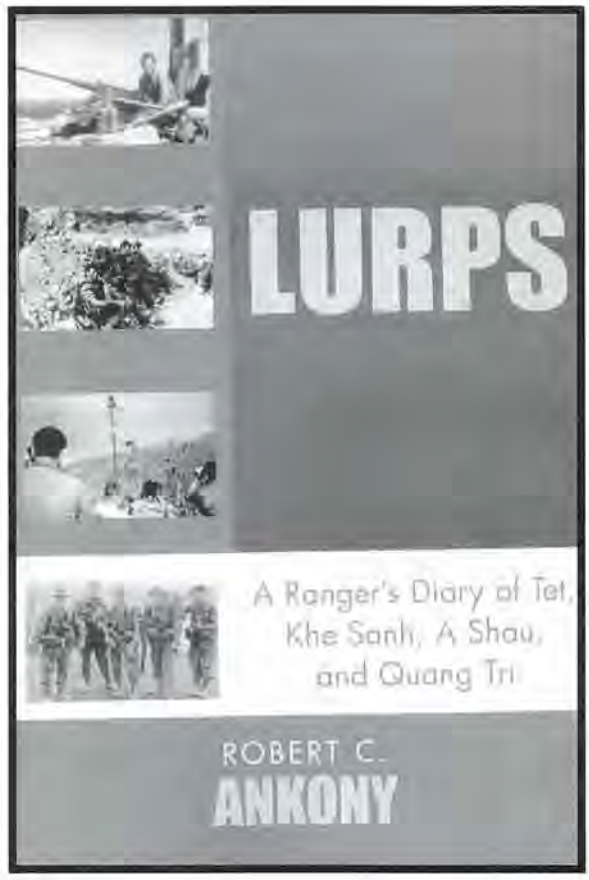

Ed Note:

Dr. Robert C. Ankony is a Life Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans. He served in the US Army from 1965-1968. His decorations include the Bronze Star, Air Medal and CIB. He was a Detective/Sergeant with Detroit's Wayne County Sheriff Department, retiring in 1984. Dr. Ankony received his ph.D in Criminology, M.A. in Sociology, and M.S. in Criminal Justice from Wayne State University; and a Master of Correctional Sciences from the University of Detroit. He has published multiple journal articles on military history and criminal justice. LURPS is his first book.

For orders and information contact the publisher, Hamilton Books at www.hamilton-books.com

INCOMING

Huntington Beach, CA 92648
714 960-9170 - Fax: 969-7549

In The Highest Tradition
By B.B. Yarborough

This is the short photo story I promised to send. OK to share with others who are interested. Here are four photos to give you the background of a great story, with a happy ending. First photo, (Fig 1) that has become rather famous, taken by photographer Lucian Read. The man in the middle is 1stSgt Brad Kasal of Weapons Company, 3d Bn,1st Marines. He is severely wounded, bloody uniform, being helped out of a building where he entered to rescue Marines. He can be seen still holding his 9mm pistol in his right hand. This action occurred during OIFII (Operation Iraqi Freedom II), on November 13, 2004, just before 3/1 returned and was adopted by Huntington Beach, CA. Kasal was nominated for the Medal of Honor.



Fig 1

Second photo (Fig 2) taken by me during the Memorial to the 33 KIA's of 3/1 in May 2005. Behind the CO (LtCol W. Buhl), is Kasal in the wheel chair. Talking to him is Frank Albano who was in my infantry company during the Korean War. I talked to Kasal that day, and although there was a question at that time if one of his legs could be saved (he received 7 bullet wounds plus shrapnel from a grenade), his main concern was how long it would be before he could get back o duty.



Fig 2

Third photo (Fig 3) taken by John Wintersteen at the 3/1 homecoming April 1st, 2006. Kasal is in leather jacket with walking cane. Here is the happy ending. On May 1st, Kasal was promoted to Sergeant Major, decorated with the Navy Cross, which was end result of nomination for Medal of Honor), and assigned to a three year tour as head of a recruiting office in Des Moines, Iowa, which is near his home. I attended the ceremony for now Sergeant Major Brad Kasal on May 1, 2006.



Fig 3

The last photo (Fig 4) of this Marine's Marine is a testament to what will power, medical care and prayer can accomplish in the relatively short time of 1 1/2 years.

BB Yarborough
19542 Pompano Lane #106



Sgt/Major Kasal Receiving Navy Cross

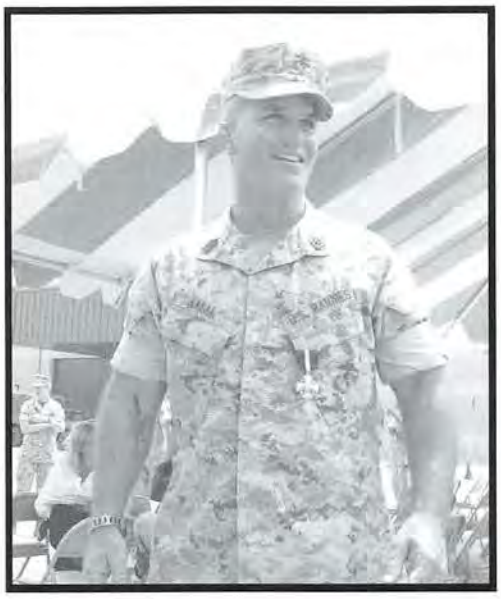

Fig 4

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY CROSS to

FIRST SERGEANT
BRADLEY A. KASAL
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For extraordinary heroism while serving as First Sergeant, Weapons Company, 3d Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM on 13 November 2004. First Sergeant Kasal was assisting 1st Section, Combined Anti-Armor Platoon as they provided a traveling over watch for 3d Platoon when he heard a large volume of fire erupt to his immediate front, shortly followed by Marines rapidly exiting a structure. When First Sergeant Kasal learned that Marines were pinned down inside the house by an unknown number of enemy personnel, he joined a squad making entry to clear the structure and rescue the Marines inside. He made entry into the first room, immediately encountering and eliminating an enemy insurgent, as he spotted a wounded Marine in the next room. While moving towards the wounded Marine, First Sergeant Kasal and another Marine came under heavy rifle fire from an elevated enemy firing position and were both severely wounded in the legs, immobilizing them. When insurgents threw grenades in an attempt to eliminate the wounded Marines, he rolled on top of his fellow Marine and absorbed the shrapnel with his own body. When First Sergeant Kasal was offered medical attention and extraction, he refused until the other Marines were given medical attention. Although severely wounded himself, he shouted encouragement to his fellow Marines as they continued to clear the structure. By his bold leadership, wise judgment, and complete dedication to duty, First Sergeant Kasal reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

For the President,

Secretary of the Navy

SHORT ROUNDS

Did You Ever Wonder What Happened To The " MARLBORO MAN".

Michael Preston wondered what ever happened to the Marine whose picture was plastered across hundred's of newspapers, after the Battle of Fallujah. He found this interesting article which answered the question. what ever happened to the "The Malboro Man".

By MATTHEW B. STANNARD
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

The photograph hit the world on Nov. 10, 2004: a close-cropped shot of a Marine in Iraq, his face smeared with blood and dirt, a cigarette dangling from his lips, smoke curling across weary eyes .It was an instant icon, with Dan Rather calling it "the best war photograph in recent years." About 100 newspapers ran the photo, dubbing the anonymous warrior the "Marlboro Man." The man in the photo is James Blake Miller, now 21, and he is an icon, though in ways Rather probably never imagined. He's quieter now – easier to anger. He turns to fight



THE MARLBORO MAN

at the sound of a backfire, can't look at fireworks without thinking of fire raining down on a city. He has trouble sleeping, and when he does, his fingers twitch on invisible triggers. The diagnosis: post-traumatic stress disorder.

His life in Kentucky, before and after the clicking shutter, says much about hundreds of thousands of new war veterans as his photograph said about that one bad day in Fallujah, a photo Miller cannot see as an icon. "I don't see a whole lot," he said. "I see a day I won't care to remember, but that I'll never forget." As a teenager from the hills of eastern Kentucky, Miller followed in his grandfather's footsteps and joined the Marines. He left for boot camp in November 2002. Four months later, the war in Iraq broke out. "Before I knew it," Miller said, "I was thrown into the mix without even thinking about it." For a while, Iraq didn't seem all that bad. Miller and his fellow Marines settled into a routine, setting up hiding places among the palms and sand, and watching for the white pickups that insurgents used to plant bombs and fire mortars.

There also was time for candy and laughter with the Iraqi children who came running to see the U.S. troops. Miller felt he was helping. Then, on Nov. 5, 2004, in the middle of a sandstorm, the Marines got word that they might be heading for an assault on Fallujah, at the time, the capital of the Iraqi insurgency. No U.S. forces had gone inside the city in months. And now Miller would be among the first. He had been a Marine for less than two years. "It puts butterflies in my stomach right now," he said. "I don't know if you can describe it. I don't think words can."

The days before the assault were an intense blur of training, preparation and fear. But there was one bright spot, when Miller ran into a good friend in the chow hall, Demarkus Brown, a 22-year-old from Virginia whom he had met in infantry school. Now they were together outside Fallujah. The assault began Nov. 8, 2004, when U.S. planes hammered the city in advance of the artillery push. Miller was under fire from the moment he stepped out of the personnel carrier. It lasted into Nov. 9 – the day that, for a while, would make Miller's face the most famous in Iraq.

As Miller remembers that day, he was on a rooftop taking fire and calling for support on his radio. As insurgent bullets from a nearby building pinged off the roof, a horrified Miller heard footsteps coming up the stairs behind him. He said he raised his rifle – and barely had time to halt when he saw it was embedded Los Angeles Times photographer Luis Sinco. Miller returned to his radio, guiding two

tanks to his position. When they opened fire, he said, the thunder left his body numb – but the building housing the attackers had collapsed. Later, he said, they would find about 40 bodies in the rubble. "I was never so happy in all my life to take that handset away from my head," Miller said. "I lit up a cigarette." His ear was bleeding from the sound of the tank firing – Miller still can't hear out of his right ear. His nose bled from a nick he took when his rifle scope and radio got tangled up mid fire. He looked at the sunrise and wondered how many more of those he would see. He was vaguely aware that elsewhere on the rooftop, Sinco was taking pictures.

At a briefing the next day, Miller's gunnery sergeant walked up to him, grinning, and said: "Would you believe you're the most famous Marine in the Marine Corps right now? Believe it or not, your ugly mug just went all over the U.S." The Marines wanted to pull him out of Fallujah, Miller, said, not wanting their poster boy to die in combat. But he stayed. He won't talk about the weeks that followed. He only mentions moments. The day his column barely survived an ambush, escaping through a broken door as bullets struck near their feet. The morning he woke up to discover that a cat had taken up residence in the open chest cavity of an Iraqi body nearby. The day he discovered Brown, his friend from infantry school, had been killed.

"When we found out, I told a couple of my buddies who were close to him, too. We just sat around, and we didn't say much at all," Miller said. "You didn't have the heart to cry." But it wasn't those terrible benchmarks that affected him the most, Miller said. It was the daily chore of war: the times he had to raise his rifle, peer through the scope and squeeze the trigger to launch a bullet, not at a target, but at a human being. "It's one thing to be shot at, and you shoot a couple rounds back, just trying to suppress somebody else," Miller said. "It's another thing when you see a human being shooting a round at you, knowing that you're shooting back with the intent to kill them.""You're looking through a scope at somebody. It's totally different. You can make out a guy's eyes."

When Miller returned to the States, none of the Marines talked much about the strain that war puts on one's emotions, Miller said. The "wizards", military psychologists, gave the returning troops a briefing on the subject, but nobody paid attention. Miller dismissed the early signs, too. When he and his buddies reacted to a truck backfire by dropping into a combat stance and raising imaginary rifles, well, that was to be expected. And when his wife, Jessica, the childhood sweetheart whom Miller had married in June told him he was tightening his arm around her neck in the night, that was strange, but he figured it would pass. So would the nightmares he began to have about Iraq.

Then one day, while visiting his wife at her college dorm in Pikeville, Miller looked out the window and clearly saw the body of an Iraqi sprawled out on the sidewalk. He turned away. "I said, 'Look honey, I just got to get out of here'. I couldn't even tell her at the time what had happened," he said. "(I thought), 'Well, that's it. That's my little spaz I'm supposed to have that the psychiatrists were talking about....I'm glad I got it out of the way." But he hadn't. Jessica Miller, a psychology student, tried to help with a visualization technique. But when he looked inside himself, Blake Miller found a demonic door guarded by a twisted figure in a black cloak. Under the cloak's hood, he spotted the snarling face of the teufelhund, a Marine Corps icon – the devil dog. "So I come out again, without closing the door," he said. "After all this happened, my nightmares started getting a lot worse."

Finally, Miller went to a military psychiatrist, who diagnosed him with signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. Miller thought that meant he could not be deployed. But in early September, he joined a group of Marines headed to New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina."I really didn't want to go....There was a possibility we would be shooting people," he said. "We could be going into another (urban warfare) environment just like Iraq, except this would actually be U.S. citizens. Here we go, Fallujah 2, right here in the States." Not long after they arrived, as Hurricane Rita bore down on them, the Marines were packed into the amphibious assault ship Iwo Jima to wait out the storm offshore. And one day, as Miller headed for the smoke deck with a Marlboro, a passing sailor made a whistling sound just like a rocket-propelled grenade.

"I don't remember grabbing him. I don't remember putting him against the bulkhead. I don't remember

getting him down on the floor, I don't remember getting on top of him. I don't remember doing any of that," Miller said. On Nov. 10 – one year to the day after the Marlboro Man picture appeared in the Los Angeles Times, Miller was honorably discharged after a medical review. His military career was over. Miller returned to eastern Kentucky, the place he had spent years trying to escape. He wanted the familiarity and the safety of the people and land he'd known since birth. "Maybe it made me think twice about what I had lost," he said. "What I was really missing."

In a way, though, his family is still missing Blake Miller, the Miller who left Kentucky for Iraq a couple of years ago. The man who left was easygoing, quick to laugh, happy to sit in a relative's house and eat and smoke and talk. The man who came back is quick to anger, they say, and is quiet. And when he takes a seat in his adoptive grandmother's home, amid her collection of Christ figurines, it is in a chair that faces the door. Mildred Childers, who owns those figurines, sees Miller's difficulties as a crisis of faith. She still remembers Miller's call just before the assault on Fallujah, and his question: "How can people go to church and be a Christian and kill people in Iraq?" He was raised where that's one of the Ten Commandments, do not kill," she said.

Recently, some of his Marine buddies have been calling Miller up, crying drunk, and remembering their war experiences. "There's a lot of Vietnam vets … they don't heal until 30, 40 years down the road," Miller said. People bottle it up, become angry, easily temperamental, and hell, before you know it, these are the people who are snapping on you. "Jessica Miller interrupted. "You're already like that," she said. She recalled her first glimpse of the Marlboro Man – an image seen through tears of relief that he was alive, and misery at how worn he looked. "Some people thought it was sexy, and we thought, 'Oh, my God, he's in the middle of a war, close to death.' We just couldn't understand how some people could look at it like that," she said. "But I guess for some people it was glory, like patriotism." She looked at her quiet husband through the smoke drifting from his right hand. "This is the dark side of the reality of war…People don't want to know the **Marlboro Man has PTSD**."

OUR NEWEST LIFE MEMBERS

ABRAMCHAK, Peter J
BOOGE James E
BOWMAN, David
BRANCH, Grady L
BRONSTON, Martin
CAMERON, Donald R
CHERICONE, Denis
CHOCLIS, Paul J.
COLVIS, John P
CONAWAY, Daniel
CREPEAU, Richard
DAVIS, Charlie W
DAVIS, George I Jr.
DORN, Jerry E
DILBECK, Randy L
EVANS, Edward M.
DONNELLY, Thomas W
ESCALANTE, Manuel A
FAMIANO, Louis V
GOODIN, D.L.
GREEN, C.T.
HALLER, Thomas
HECKNAUER, George S
HESTER, Larry
HOWE, Stuart G
LESSMAN, Eugene P
LUHAN, Charles Jr.
McDANIEL, Jerry
MYRICK, George
ROCK, William C
ROWE, John F
ROWLAND, John
RUMMEL, Michael P
SABOL, John Jr.
SHINTON, William H
SMELTZER, George
SPEER, James
STACHYRA, Robert J
STECKLAIR, Gene
STRIETER, Jan K
TARVER, Ocie M
TEASLEY, Charles J III
WERTZ, Edward E

INCOMING

Stories You Will Not See On Your Local News
By Doc Wurth
K CO 3/9

I grieve for the families of these fallen heroes. I am also darnm proud that we still have these selfless patriots being raised in this country who understand that there is something greater than themselves in this world. This includes my son, Eric.

Karla Comfort received a lot of looks and even some salutes from people when she drove from Benton, Ark., to Camp Pendleton, Calif., in her newly-painted, custom Hummer H3. The vehicle is adorned with the likeness of! her son, 20-year-old Lance Cpl. John M. Holmason, and nine other Marines with F Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division who where all killed by the same improvised explosive device blast in Fallujah, Iraq, in December.

For Karla Comfort, having the vehicle air brushed with the image of the 10 Marines was a way to pay homage to her hero and his fellow comrades who fell on Iraq's urban battlefield. "I wanted to let people know (Marines) are doing their jobs honorably, and some of them die," said the 39-year-old from Portland, OR "I don't want people to forget the sacrifices that my son and the other Marines made."

Leading up to her son's death, Karla Comfort had received several letters from him prior to his return. He had been deployed for five months, and Comfort "worried everyday he was gone until she got the letters and found out the date he was coming home," she said. Marines knocked on the front door of her home in Farmington, Mich., at 3 am with the dreadful news. "I let my guard down when I found out he was coming home," she said. "There are times that I still cannot believe it happened. It's very hard to deal with."

Karla Comfort came up with the idea for the rolling memorial when she and her two other sons attended John's funeral in Portland, Ore. "I saw a Vietnam (War) memorial on a car, and I said to my son Josh, 'we should do something like that for John,' she recalled."He loved Hummers." She purchased the vehicle in January and immediately took it to Airbrush Guy & Co. in Benton, Ark., where artist Robert Powell went to work on changing the plain, black vehicle into a decorative, mobile, art piece.

"I only had the vehicle for two days before we took it in," she joked. Two hundred and fifty man-hours later, Powell had completed the vehicle. The custom job would have cost $25,000. Out of respect for Karla Comfort's loss and the sacrifices the Marines made, Airbrush Guy & Co. did it for free. Comfort only had to purchase the paint, which cost $3,000. "I love it," she said. "I'm really impressed with it, and I think John would be happy with the vehicle. He would have a big smile on his face because he loved Hummers."

Karla Comfort gave Powell basic instructions on what to include in the paint job. But in addition to the image of her son in Dress Blues and the faces of the nine other Marines, there were several surprises. "He put a lot more on than I expected," she said. "I think my favorite part is the heaven scene."

On the left side of the vehicle, a detail of Marines are depicted carrying their fallen comrades through the clouds to their final resting place. The American flag drapes across the hood, the words, "Semper Fi" crown the front windshield and the spare tire cover carries the same Eagle Globe and Anchor design that her son had tattooed on his back.

"All the support I have been getting is wonderful," she said. Karla Comfort decided to move back to her hometown of Portland, and making the cross-country trip from Arkansas was a way for her to share her son's story. It's also her way of coping with the loss.

"Along the way I got nothing but positive feedback from people," she said. "What got to me was when people would salute the guys (Marines). It's hard to look at his picture. I still cry and try to get used to the idea, but it's hard to grasp the idea that he's really gone."




SEMPER FI






LCpl Huhn
LCpl Watson
LCpl Holmason
LCpl Moder n



Award Winning Photos -1ST & 2ND Place By Todd Heisler *The Rocky Mountain News*

When 2nd Lt. James Cathey's body arrived at the Reno Airport, Marines climbed into the cargo hold of the plane and draped the flag over his casket as passengers watched the family gather on the tarmac. During the arrival of another Marine's casket last year at Denver International Airport, Major Steve Beck described the scene as one of the most powerful in the process: "See the people in the windows? They'll sit right there in the plane, watching those Marines. You gotta wonder what's going through their minds, knowing that they're on the plane that brought him home," he said. "They're going to remember being on that plane for the rest of their lives. They're going to remember bringing that Marine home. And they should

SEMPER



FIDELIS

The night before the burial of her husband's body, Katherine Cathey refused to leave the casket, asking to sleep next to his body for the last time. The Marines made a bed for her, tucking in the sheets below the flag. Before she fell asleep, she opened her laptop computer and played songs that reminded her of 'Cat,' and one of the Marines asked if she wanted them to continue standing watch as she slept. "I think it would be kind of nice if you! kept doing it," she said. "I think that's what he would have wanted."

GOD BLESS



THE USMC

ISSUE 66
FALL
2006

THE KHE SANH VETERANS' RED CLAY



SPECIAL EDITION

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2006 REUNION, MOBILE ALABAMA







OLD WARRIORS AND GOOD FRIENDS

TOGETHER AGAIN



PARTY TIME AT VEETS BAR
JIMBO WITH OWNER DOUG PREVITO

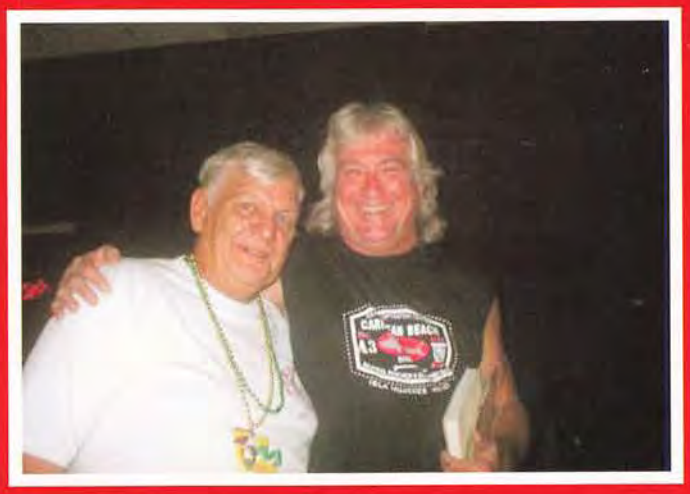













From The Office of the Secretary

The reunion in Mobile though smaller than expected was one of the best I have attended. Members were very generous and supported our PX very well, enabling us to earn enough funds to purchase additional items for next year in DC.

I met two guys with whom I served with in Vietnam, Luther Upton and Clyde Phillips. It was the greatest feeling being with them again after all these years. The reunion committee did another outstanding job. My condolences to Neil Kenny and his lovely wife Alice on the loss of their beloved pet Charlie who attended the reunion with them. Charlie made a lot of friends at the reunion.

And, a get well to Glenn Rappold who had a stroke while undergoing a heart exam. The latest news is very good and he should make a full recovery. Next year's reunion should be the biggest ever because of the new Marine Corps Museum. See you all there. Semper Fi

Big John Pessoni, Secretary KSV

From The Desk of The VP

I hope that all who attended our annual reunion in Mobile had a good time. There were a few little things that went wrong, but what the hell, we are not the IBM Corporation. There were several things voted on at the membership meeting that concerns the whole KSV organization. Annual dues were increased to $ 30.00, and a Life Membership will now cost $ 250.00. Both increases will be effective 01 January, 2007.

There was also an election held for the offices of Vice President, Secretary, and three positions for Members At Large. There were no candidates for the office of VP and Secretary so Tom Eichler and John Pessoni were re-elected. Seven candidates ran for the three open spots on the BOD. Dan Fisher & Cliff Treese were re-elected and George Myrick was the top vote getter for the third opening. I want to personally thank Ron Shouse for his faithful

MEMORIALS

Those Remembered			Remembered By
The Men of **E Co 2/9 & B Co 1/9**	USMC	KIA 16 Mar 67	Bob Slattery E Co 2/9
Walter J. Gelien HMC VMP-2	USN	KIA 28 Oct 65	Jerry Griffin B Btry 1/13 HN
Edward "Ned" Creed HM3 HMM-161	USN	KIA 25 Jun 66	Jerry Griffin B Btry 1/13 HN
Gary L. Saxton L/CPL	USMC	KIA 22 Jan 68	Michael Brophy HQ Co 26TH MAR
Jerry Hudson S-2 26Th Marines	Passed Away		Mark Swearengen

All Who Received PH & Those who Earned one But Never Received One "Mac" McNeeley

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Cliff Treese.....Member At Large
Dale Pack .....Member At Large
George Myrick.....Member At Large
Thomas Ford.....Member At Large
Robert Moxley..... Member At Large
Dan Fisher..... Member At Large

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and dedicated service as a member of the KSV BOD.

Another subject decided at the membership meeting was the location for the 2008 annual KSV Reunion. The location for 2007,Washington D.C. has already been chosen. There were four entrees, all from the West Coast: San Diego, Ca., Albuquerque NM, Las Vegas NV & Reno NV. The membership selected Reno Nevada, for the 2008 Reunion.

Message From The President

I want to thank all who attended our reunion in Mobile, Alabama. Though the turn out was not as large as we would have hoped for, most had a good time. Remember, your attendance and being able to see old buddies again is what the reunions are really about. Jimbo and I, are working on next years reunion in D.C.. We hope to have the plans finalized very soon. Hope to see many more in Washington next year for the new Marine Corps Museum, a visit to the Viet Nam Memorial, and a trip to 8th and I. This is my 4th year as president of this fine organization. I want to thank each of you for the trust you placed in me.

We expect a large turnout for the reunion in Washington. We need to have the registrations submitted as soon as possible, when we have the date finalized. We know many members will be bringing their families to see the many sites Washington offers. We will keep this in mind while selecting the hotel, affording the membership the opportunity of taking advantage of the fine Metro System in Washington D.C..

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, an organization was needed to promote renewed fellowship of those who survived the Khe Sanh and RVN experience thus forming the Khe Sanh Veterans Association Inc.; and

WHEREAS, one of the goals of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association Inc. was collecting and preserving an . accurate history of service in and around Khe Sanh; and

WHEREAS, it also honors and preserves the memory of those who were either lost at Khe Sanh, later killed in action, or later died of wounds received there; and

WHEREAS, they reach out to the loved ones of those who died, so that they might better understand the nature of their loved ones service at Khe Sanh; and

WHEREAS, they promote research and understanding of the Khe Sanh experience to help heal wounds both physical and mental, of the Khe Sanh experience;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor Samuel L. Jones, on behalf of the City of Mobile and the members of the Mobile City Council, do hereby proclaim Thursday, June 29, 2006 as

KHE SANH VETERANS DAY

in the City of Mobile.

Done in the City of Mobile, Alabama this the 22nd day of June, 2006.

MEMORIAL

James E. Heagy was a loving friend of Mike Worth, Doc Lancaster, Bill Griffith, Steve Haisley, Larry McCartney and Bruce Lewy, all from E Co 2/26. They served with his son L/Cpl James W. Heagy who was KIA on 06 Dec 1968 while serving with E Co 2/26.

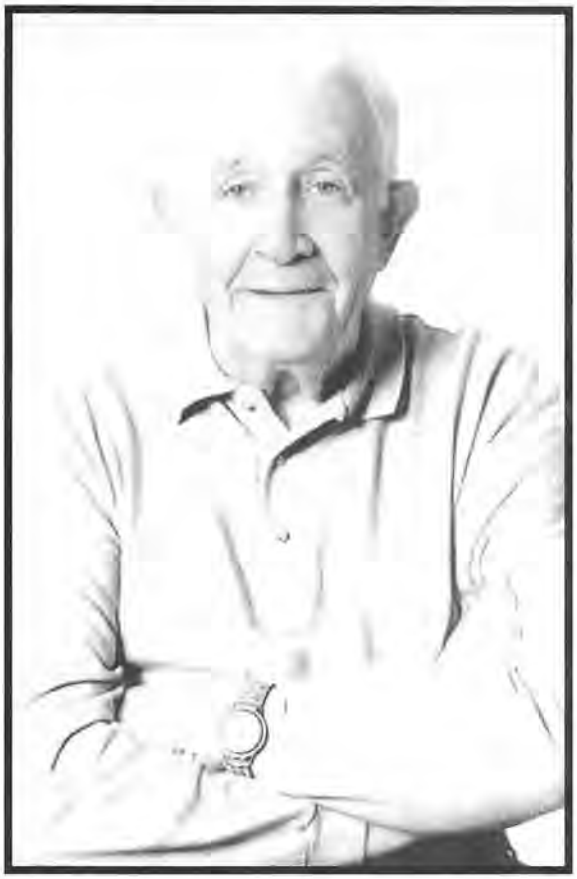

James E. Heagy was born on September 29, 1925 in Pittsburg Pennsylvania, the second son of William and Margaret Heagy. He leaves behind his wife Mary, daughter Marilyn Hudson, her husband Stephen, 3 grandchildren Stephanie Hudson. Timothy Hudson, his wife Elyse, Daniel Hudson, and, his faithful dog Buddy.

Jim had many fond memories of his service on the naval destroyer USS Hale during WW II, he never tired of telling stories of his experiences.

Upon leaving the navy he met Mary Postell. They were married six months later on June 1, 1946. Their marriage lasted for nearly 60 years. She was the apple of his eye. He was always proud to show off the pictures of her that he kept in his wallet. They were blessed with a son and daughter. Their son Jimmy was born in June 1949. He was KIA while serving with E Co 2/26 USMC. He recently commented to his wife how very special their daughter Marilyn was to him. There was nothing he enjoyed more than spending time with her, whether telling stories, good natured teasing, or, just having a cup of coffee.

William Heagy, Jim's father was a police officer for the City of Pittsburgh PA. and was killed in the line of duty. This inspired Jim to also pursue a career as



a police officer. He achieved the rank of Lieutenant in a distinguished career for the City of Pittsburgh. Upon his retirement from the city he worked for the University of Pittsburgh police department.

Jim was well known for his integrity, quick wit, and sense of humor. He had a great love of sports especially the Pittsburgh Steelers. He was also very loyal especially when it came to his family. He was very proud of his three grandchildren who lovingly called him Pap.

In 2000 Jim and Mary followed the family and moved to South Carolina. Twenty years earlier they began an annual tradition of vacationing at the condo Jim bought in South Carolina to watch their grandchildren grow up on the beach. Mary has been a Jehovah Witnesses for more than 50 years. Though not a Witness himself, Jim supported his family and encouraged them to practice their faith.

Jim passed away peacefully at 2:00 p.m. on Friday March 10, 2006. He was at home sitting in his favor-

ite chair while Watching sports with Mary and Buddy.

OBIT

Passing of a Brother

By Chris Penzera

Donald Penzera, Company B, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. Served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1969. He was a veteran of Khe Sanh. He passed away on May 28, 2006 after a courageous battle with cancer. He always remembered his brothers and would want them to know of his passing. He was a Marine until the end. I Send this with love and thoughts for you all.
His loving wife of 17 years,
Chris

MEMOIRS

"Warriors of the Past: A rendezvous with Eternity"

By Ron 'Doc' Ferrell (FMF)

30 June 1998-0600 Ka'u, Hawaii.

The bedside alarm went off like a Tsunami Warning. Damn!I swung out of bed. My guts were doing an E ride at Disneyland. This was the day. After more than thirty years of self-imposed isolation I was about to catch a United flight from Keahole airport in Kona, Hawaii and fly to Washington, D.C. My bags were already packed as I staggered to the kitchen to fire up the coffee. Ugly thoughts of 'Chicken Kiev' intrusively invaded what remained of my sleep. Airline food...swell! The sun was just popping over the Volcano. The morning light penetrated the O'hia forest illuminating the bright red Lehua blossoms on the trees. The morning mist lay thick, enshrouding the landscape.

A shiver ran down my spine. It was as if I could walk into the mist, disappearing like a time traveler. Where would the mist take me? The future did not exist. Today was racing towards me at 700 plus miles per hour. There would only be the past. A past that I had tried without success to forget. Time. A man made concept was playing hard-ball catch up today.

Spencer, I thought, what the hell have you gotten me into? "Hey! The trip will do you good," he said. "You can run with the gunfighters again, and the 'Wall', will be a healing process." Yeah right! I poured a cup of steaming coffee while my gaze stayed fixated on the mist. I thought of Huggo's my favorite watering hole in Kona town. On the center bar post is a bronze plate that says "Free beer tomorrow!" So much for the future.

1 July 1998-0550 Dulles International Airport

The thud and bump of the Boeing 767 as it landed startled me and chased away the fatigue of a 14 hour flight. The engines reversed thrust and the speed brakes engaged.

"Doc!" "Yeah?" I turned. There was no one sitting next to me, or even across from me. The flight crew was firmly strapped into their pull down seats in shoulder harnesses. Why is that passengers don't rate a shoulder harness?. Just a seat belt. It doesn't make much difference in the end if you auger in at over 400 knots. I miss trains. I had been careening though space five miles above the earth's surface while stewardesses passed out Marriot's version of the 'Last Supper' and called it our in-flight dinner.

Before we left two Boeing mechanics were tweaking the aircraft for pre-flight.

One says to the other, "Well, what do you think?" His accomplice replies, "Yeah! I think it'll get off the ground!" I was trying to amuse myself. A failed attempt to forget the voice that had called out to me moments before. F###ing voices! They never shut up. The past follows me wherever I go. I suddenly realized I could not escape my past, even at speeds approaching Mach 1.

Dennis Higgins a veteran Marine had driven in from Racine and was there to greet me. I spotted him immediately. Age had taken its toll on him as it had done to me but his eyes, our eyes, had not changed. They will never change. Our eyes had witnessed the crucible and carnage of war never change. Eyes that hold a thousand yard stare in a ten foot room. Eyes that were witness to slaughter. We have a look that

frightens people, causing them to abruptly turn and take another direction. It was not hard to spot a Marine warrior in the crowd.

We loaded my gear in his Grand Cherokee and headed for the Crowne Plaza Hotel. In exactly 27 minutes the 'Past' would have my ass. Dennis already had a room, I was doubling with Spencer. Served him right. This was his idea. After checking in at the desk a bellhop with a cart stacked my gear. We walked to and stepped into the elevator. Just as the elevator doors were almost shut, the 'Past' jumped in and pressed the button for the fourth floor.

"Doc!" the voice shouted. I looked at the bellhop. "What?" I responded with a look of surprise.

He looked at me. "Sir?" His expression began to form a pattern of confusion as it etched its way across his face.

"You said 'Doc', how'd you know?" I asked, stunned by his psychic ability.

"Sir? I didn't say nothing sir." he replied defensively. His eyes screamed. I have to get out of here...right now!

The elevator stopped, the doors opened and he pushed the cart quickly down the hall, turned right and disappeared. By the time I caught up with him he had the cart empty and asked me for my magnetic coded door lock card. I handed it over...he shoved it in, opened the door, carried in the gear, pointed to the bathroom, telephone, air conditioning, coffee maker, closet, blinds then without waiting for a tip, headed for the door..."have a nice visit sir. Welcome to Washington." I looked down the hall. He was gone.

I flopped my suitcase on the bed and opened the luggage. I rummaged through the piles of clothing looking for a small velvet maroon colored bag. There it was. I gently opened it. All was well. It had survived the long trip from Hawaii. My past was intact. I awakened it from its 32 year nap and laid the four tier ribbon bar on the dresser. Washington, D.C., in the first week of July was in the middle of a heat wave. It was suffocating. The humidity was palpable. The heat radiated off the concrete. The water tasted like Clorox. It was like Vietnam with a really bad traffic problem. I turned up the A/C to max and headed for the shower. A cold water shower. It was great. The shower smelled like Clorox. Chlorine must be a hot item in the District of Confusion. I put on a fresh Aloha shirt, shorts, deck siders (no socks) grabbed my walking cane and let my innate olfactory senses lead me to the hotel bar.

After the elevator stopped and opened I was surprised to see the lobby filled with a crowd of people and luggage. English disappeared in the sea of languages that chattered throughout the lobby. The international flair of the crowd put me at ease. It reminded me of Hawaii where all cultures, nationalities and races come together in harmony. I spotted the bar and began shouldering my way through the crowd. The bar was filled. I stood there listening to the shouts, yells and laughter. Time slipped away...I entered the bar, I was 50 years old...by the time I was able to commandeer a barstool, surrounded by veteran Marines I felt as though I was 19 again. It was great, God I felt so alive.

The bartender was suddenly in front of me. "May I offer you something to drink Sir?" He took me by surprise. 'Sir' was not in my lexicon of salutations. I automatically, without thinking, looked behind me to see who the bartender was addressing. There was no one immediately behind me...just the clamor of the crowd in the lobby. I turned and looked at his face filled with expectation.

My 'Past' ordered a Budweiser, "Ice cold! Colder than my second wife!" The bartender laughed and said, "Here you go Sir!"

"Mahalo Nui (thank you)," my 'Past replied. I reached for my wallet and took out a ten spot and laid it on the bar.

The bartender asked, "Is it cold enough for you?"

I said:"close, but not quite...do you have a freezer?" He grabbed my ten and walked off laughing.

The first beer went down like water. Despite the A/C in the hotel the heat and humidity of Washington was not comfortable for me. I am used to the trade winds of the Hawaiian Islands. Artificial atmosphere isn't all it's cracked up to be. There is no substitute

for real oxygen. Behind me in the lobby hung a large banner. "Welcome! Khe Sanh Veterans!" Another veteran Marine walked in and sat on the stool to my right and shouted out his drink order over the decibel level of the crowd. My 'Past' moved from the vacant stool to accommodate him.

He introduced himself and said he was with Recon at Khe Sanh. I told him I was never near Khe Sanh. I was in and out of country before that party began. I second guessed his next question and told him I was an FMF Doc with 1/5 and H&S III M.A.F. in '66 & '67 in Quang Ngai. I second guessed his third question and told him I was here because of Captain Spencer with Delta 1/26.

Before I was halfway through my second brewski, Recon ordered another one for me. My "Past" did not object. I scanned the crowd. Never have I seen so few drink so much so fast in such a short period of time. I knew that I was surrounded by my Marines...the gunfighters. I was in hog heaven. The hotel staff on the other hand seemed to be on the verge of hysteria. They were out manned, out gunned and way over their heads with this crowd. This was better than a frat party. I wanted to shout 'FOOD FIGHT!'

'Doc!" a voice shouted. I ignored my 'Past'. The little s.o.b. never shut up. 'Doc! Hey...Doc, dammit I'm talking to you!" Ooops! My past had taken a nap and I was blindsided by the present. I turned. There stood the biggest damn Marine I had ever seen. Way over the height limit for the 'Corps'. Then again, you have to remember back then he was a kid, and a male does not stop growing until he's 28 years old or so. This guy went the distance! He picked me and my past up like a couple of five year olds and hugged the shit out of us. He dropped us on the barstool as suddenly as he picked us up. His face radiated a smile that was from his heart, as only a Marine can do. After all, we Doc's" were their pets. "Where are you from Doc?" he asked. Someone said, "Hawaii". "No shit Doc! That must' be damn nice, beats the shit out of 'Philly'!"

"That's affirmative!" I responded...."but you have to live somewhere...right?" He just grinned.

I have no idea who said "Hawaii". Maybe it was me, or my 'Past' or Rrecon on my right. I turned and there was Spencer. He had checked in invisible in the crowd that filled the lobby and had gone to our room and changed and was in the bar wearing my red gift Aloha, ("flowers and parrots" Tom Selleck, Magnum P.I.) shirt with shorts and sneakers. He spotted me and gave me a Marine style hug. I said, "Ernesto...you took me by surprise...you look just like Tom Selleck. I swear. I can't tell the difference." I got a Quantico induced U.S.M.C. officer's frown in response. My 'Past' started laughing.

"F###g Doc's are all the same," he growled. His fake anger only fueled my laughter and the sheer joy of being back with the Corps The Proud. The Few. The Marines! It made up for the past 32 years of misery. Everything that was me was firing in perfect synaptic order like an in-line six. I was on the fast track to Nirvana or Hell. At the time I could have cared less. Spencer ordered a bud-lite or Coors I can't remember. I looked at him. He returned my stare and it screamed 'f##k you doc!' I started laughing again. Recon' looked at me, and I said; "Officers!. He shrugged in acknowledgement. Party time! I had once asked Ernie if Quantico had ever given him a Marine Corps officer's saber. He evaded the question. The sabers are custom made to meet the man. I assumed they did not give Ernesto a sword, he being half Korean. It was quite simply too close to the 'Code of Bushido'. I loved to rag on him. He is my good friend. I used to kid him as to how he got to be a Marine officer in combat with a degree in 'Philosophy'. It would always light his fuse. I crack myself up. It made no difference in the end what your background was...you were a target; cannon fodder.

I met Air Force pilots, Aussie's, two Scotsmen, doggie's, but mostly Marines crowded the bar. I met four FMF Docs. My "Past" was curious, and examined them closely. We wondered how they differed from us. They were attached to large Marine combat units up North, while I was operating more or less independently almost two years earlier down South in Quang Ngai Province. I spotted several Marines with life-long debilitating injuries from the war. I looked to my "Past". His eyes welled with the tears of regret, compassion, anger, frustration and guilt. We ordered another beer.

2 July 1998-0500 Crowne Plaza Hotel, Washington, D.C.

The beer fest had lasted all night long. After the bar closed, Marines spread out, many going downstairs to the large hospitality suite that held more booze than the bar upstairs. Others went to their rooms and opened up their private stocks and held mini-reunions. My 'Past' said "Doc it's time. Let's go" My legs felt like rubber as I stepped out of the front entrance to the hotel. I had sheathed my walking stick in its silk cover and began the six block walk to the 'Wall'. The traffic was light. The pimps and hookers were still out trolling for last minute victims before the sun came up. Then, they would hide from the light like vampires.

I found the grassy green park and began following the red picket searching for a way inside. Finally I came upon an entrance to the park. My 'Past' spotted the well worn trail and I followed it. Large oaks dotted the landscape. We stayed on the trail moving deeper into the park. My peripheral vision spotted a shadowy figure dart behind a tree. I slipped the knot on the silk sheath and continued. "Doc. Over here!" "Shut up!" I muttered quietly to my 'Past', before realizing he had not uttered a sound. "Doc! Stay on the trail." Ah f##k! I was really losing it. The grass was wet with night dew. Small wisps of mist floated through the giant oaks. The trail stopped abruptly. I turned and there it was. A long black granite Wall. As I followed the walk in front of the Wall it became higher, and I could look over the wall and beyond under the early morning mist. Something moved. "Over here Doc!" My 'Past' was scared shitless and mute. I could see our reflection in the Wall. Was that me? "Morning Doc," someone said. I turned. I was alone with my 'Past'.

The names etched into the granite seemed endless. "Hey Ferrell. I have someone coming down to watch the desk, let's raid the galley!" my 'Past' whispered, "Larry?" I stopped and faced the Wall. Larry where are you? I mentally asked. My 'Past' remembered the midnight raid on the galley at NAS Pensacola Naval Hospital. My eyes followed the names down the Panel. There he was. Lawrence Terrell Steiner, Panel 09E- Line 125. I knelt using my walking stick as a crutch for balance and forced my left hand to lightly trace the surface of the etching. My 'Past' intrusively remarked, "Hey Larry look at me. Been a long time huh?" The cold black slab was mute. "Later today I'm bringing a buddy of mine for you to meet. Watch over him 'Doc' Okay? His name is Mike. He was a damn good Marine."

I stood, I could not see the Wall clearly. As dawn approached my eyes were filled with tears. I turned and started back toward the end of the Wall where I had left the trail. My 'Past' whispered, "Larry I saw your pink slip at Chu-Lai. I've always known where you were." I reached the trail and started for the park entrance. Some one said: "Later Doc." My 'Past' did not respond. He was in a hurry to get back to the hotel, and had a ten yard head start on me. I wondered if he bore witness to the non-existent theory we describe as the future. By the time I caught up with my 'Past', the present found us entering the lobby of the hotel.

2 July 1998-1800 'The Vietnam Memorial Wall'

The Khe Sanh Marines arrived at the Wall that evening. Long lines of Marines and visitors crowded the path searching for memories. My 'Past' had no need to search for remembrance. I had carried it with me securely locked for eternity within a private recess in my mind. My 'Past' held the key and was the gatekeeper to my cerebral dominance. He had effectively for the past 32 years compartmentalized my anxiety, aggression, rage, pleasure, sexuality, phobias, obsessions, compulsions and stress.

I shouldered and made my way through the crowds working my way to Panel 09E- Line 125. My 'Past' had locked up the endorphins and decided to set panic free. I had Mike Mahoney's framed eulogy with me. I knelt and propped the frame against the Wall, carefully aligning its left border to Larry's name. My hand trembled as I removed my Corpsman insignia from my lapel and tried to place it carefully upon the frame. I dropped it twice. My 'Past' whispered, "you can do it...try it again." 'Panic' was busy discovering and pushing all my stress triggers. My 'Past' decided to open the floodgates and filled my eyes with tears as I finally placed the pin on top of the frame.

I was exhausted. A failed exercise in self-control. I stood and backed away. My 'Past' was busy introducing Mike to Larry. I felt as though I were eavesdropping on a private conversation. I thought 'Panic' had flipped the switch on my auditory nerve. The silence was deafening. I looked at the crowd and re-

alized there was nothing wrong with my hearing. No one was speaking. The scream of silence emanated from the Wall. Someone said: "You did your best 'Doc." I turned. There was a woman standing behind me. I said: "My best was not good enough."

She said: "Pardon me. Are you speaking to me?" I was losing it. I was on a fast track to a room with neoprene wallpaper. My 'Past' said, "Later Mike. See you Larry. Aloha Nui Loa." Someone said, "Semper Fi! Doc." The woman behind me offered me a handful of Kleenex. She did not have enough. I mumbled my thanks, and started for the end of the Wall, not bothering to wait for my 'Past'. He would find me soon enough.

The sweltering heat of the city did not seem to be present at the Wall. I felt a chill in the air while those around me soaked with perspiration. I was on the edge of eternity, and the Wall was the black abyss, a doorway to something mortals could only explore with their final breath. My 'Past' stepped out of the Wall and found me frozen before the Vietnam Memorial Statues of three men in combat gear. They looked so real. The on one of the statue's arms stood out in perfect detail. I watched closely, looking for signs of pulsation. My 'Past' castigated me for my foolishness. We left the hollowed ground and returned to the hotel. I went to the bar and ordered a beer. My 'Past' informed me that my rendezvous with eternity would come in due time.

3 July 1998-0900 "Arlington National Cemetery"

Buses filled with Khe Sanh veterans passed through the gates of Arlington. I watched as the winding narrow road lead us through rolling acre upon acre of tombstones. Monuments to people who had given their lives for their country. The countless thousands of markers seemed to go on without end. We got off the buses and walked towards the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. My 'Past' and I were overwhelmed by the expanse of the cemetery. This was where eternity warehoused the millions of souls who had paid the ultimate sacrifice. It struck me that while this place was vast, it was not the only national cemetery. I thought of 'Punchbowl' National Cemetery in the crater of a dormant volcano on the island of O'ahu in the middle of Honolulu.

I tried to focus my attention on a formal Marine Corps ceremony. The mother of a Khe Sanh Marine who died 30 years ago was being presented his Bronze Star for valor posthumously. My 'Past' kept turning my head away from the ceremony as we stared in awe at the rolling hills covered with thousands of grave markers. I forced myself to pay attention to the ceremony. The color guard, all Marines, so young and magnificent in their full dress blues, stood at attention like statues. For them, eternity might have to wait, then again, it could be upon them with the next conflict and their time could be measured in hours, a few days, or, weeks. We all have a prearranged boarding pass to eternity.

It was time to return to the buses for the trip back to the hotel. My 'Past' decided to remain and contemplate the warehouse of souls that was Arlington. He would meet me later at the hotel bar and give me his thoughts. After the bar had closed and the booze downstairs in the Hospitality suite was exhausted, I decided to return to my room. I grabbed a quick shower and packed my gear, making sure my bamboo walking stick was securely stored in its custom made traveling box. Everything was ready to go. All I had to do was grab a couple of hours sleep. It did not come.

I lay there on the bed. My mind was racing with the events of the last couple of days. Washington was a monument to the dead. My 'Past' asked, "What did you expect?" I couldn't answer that. All I could think of was that I had to get out of there. The distance from Washington to my island home in Hawaii was far. I dreaded the 14 hour return flight. I closed my eyes. The comatose sleep that slammed the door on my 'Past' and barred the memories never came. The 'Past' entered without knocking. "Hey Doc, Have you figured it out yet?" he inquired. I was too tired to answer. Too tired for guessing games. Then the shocking answer to his question hit me like a sucker punch. I realized my 'Past' born under fire in the bloody chaos of combat in Vietnam 32 years ago was closer to my island home than the Washington monuments to death. My 'Past' had followed me to Washington to embrace eternity and discuss my fate.

6 July 1998-0550 Ka'u Hawaii

I normally awaken early. Today was no different. The day before, my 'Past' and I had boarded a jet and

chased the sun west to Hawaii. I did not have to suffer the hangover of jet-lag. I put on the coffee, then went to my home office and booted the computer. By the time I was up and ready to go the coffee could be heard gasping its last effort to percolate one more time. The coffee was done. I poured a cup and looked out the kitchen window. The sun was popping over the volcano, but dark clouds on the southern tip of the island told me it would be an overcast morning. The ground mist that enshrouded the landscape within the O'hia forest was darker, thicker, more forbidding. I picked up my cup and walked outside and stood there for a moment. The mist was a dark gray wall. It stopped at the very edge of the forest on my property line, as though it was not permitted to cross its boundary.

I sat my cup on the lanai railing and walked to the edge of my property. I stood before the gray wall of mist. My 'Past' urged me to step into the mist. It said, "Go on! See what's there. Catch a glimpse of eternity. What are you waiting for?" I knew it was only water vapor. My 'Past' told me that fact was irrelevant.

I said, "There is nothing there but O'hia trees and bush grass."

My 'Past' said, "Forget logic...take a chance!" I told my 'Past': "You're making me crazy.

" Shut up," he laughed.

What the hell! I walked up to the gray wall of vapor and stepped inside. I turned and could barely make out the house, 75 yards away. I stepped deeper into the mist. My 'Past' said, "Can you see them?" See who, I thought. He replied, "The warriors." I thought...this is nuts. I don't see anything. Something rustled in the grass. I startled and looked to my right, something moved. Probably a mongoose I thought. My 'Past' chuckled at my assumption.

A chill ran up my spine. Whatever had moved was no mongoose, pig or dog. It was something larger. I could hear the bipedal footstep; the cadence of a human moving through the grass. He could not have been more than 20 yards away. I shouted, "Hey! Who are you...come over here?" There was no answer to my call. I looked up and the morning sun was burning a hole through the overcast like a laser. The light of day penetrated the mist and its heat began to vaporize the gray shroud. I stood still and watched its ethereal departure. It was there and it was gone. Suddenly it was a brilliant sunny morning. The mist had disappeared, replaced by the light of a full sun. I was standing in the bush and could clearly see my house. I turned and surveyed the area. Nothing but trees and bush grass.

I stepped across the boundary to my land and started back to the house, wondering where I left my coffee. My 'Past' said, "Did you see them?" No! I thought. I didn't see a damn thing. Shut up! My 'Past' started laughing. "Eternity just touched you and you don't believe your own senses," he said. I found my coffee and took a sip while staring at the forest. My 'Past' said: "Don't worry Doc you don't have to believe in eternity until you die, then we'll talk."

Semper Fidelis

Ed Note:
Very nice riff Ron. I helped Daddy scatter Mama's ashes off the rim of Punchbowl that over looks Diamond Head, Waikiki and Pearl Harbor. Two years later I did Daddy's, myself. Army full dress service. Flag. Three volleys from M-16's. I went and shook each of those riflemen's hands after. They seemed surprised. "Thank you Soldier," I said as I went down their line, left to right and proudly pumped their right hands, looking each in his eyes. I'm thinking of doing my last gig there.

INCOMING

A DREAM COME TRUE
Short round Is Getting His Hands

Lloyd Scudder, who survived Khe Sanh only to lose both hands in a training accident, is finally getting his hands. After a long four years, the first hand is in place and you can see by the pictures(Page 10) he was making good use of it. Soon he will have both. God bless you Short round. More to come.







MINI BOOK REVIEW

How we make Marines
By Ron Smith

I am reading Larry Smith's new book, THE FEW AND THE PROUD: MARINE CORPS DRILL INSTRUCTORS IN THEIR OWN WORDS. After reading a piece from Parade Magazine yesterday, I hade to run out to the book store and pick up a copy of the book. I am about halfway through, and I have enjoyed every minute of it. Smith gives equal time to both Parris Island and San Diego.

ED NOTE:
I reprinted the excerpts from Larry Smith's Book which Ron Smith mentions in his article as it appeared in PARADE Magazine June 4, 2006. Craig Tourte also responded with a short article concerning discipline at the end of the article by Larry Smith.

How We Make Marines
By Larry Smith

How does the Marine Corps take 17-year-old civilians and in 13 short weeks, transform them into Marines? How do they motivate those young men and women to become members of a group that needs to function at the highest level under enormous stress? Parade Contributing Editor Larry Smith spent two years researching his new book, THE FEW AND THE PROUD: MARINE CORPS DRILL INSTRUCTORS IN THEIR OWN WORDS. He discovered that drill instructors are the key to making a Marine-and that there are lessons all of us can learn from them.

They arrive by bus, usually after dark, when they are more likely to be disoriented. A drill instructor wearing a "Smokey" hat comes in yelling that he will give them only seconds to get off "his" bus and line up on the yellow footprints painted on the street outside or face unmentionable peril.

Thus begins what many former Marines call the most difficult period of their lives. "In the beginning, we cried," recalls Staff Sgt. Christine Henning, 29. "We didn't know what they were saying. We didn't know what they wanted us to do. "They have joined the Marine Corps for different reasons. "I'd say that

half come to escape from something," notes Sergeant Henning, who eventually became a D.I-Drill Instructor-herself. "It may be family, limited prospects, a small town, no jobs, drugs, alcohol abuse. They want to fix things in their lives. Some just come for education. Some come for travel. "

"Many are totally convinced, by the time they're 17 or 18, that they'll never amount to anything," says R. Lee Ermey, 62, a D.I. at the Marines West Coast Recruit Depot in San Diego in the 1960s who later played the rugged Gunnery Sergeant Hartman in the film Full Metal Jacket. "The drill instructor's job is to turn that around-and that's what he does."

Leadership by Example

"Drill instructors were not spit out on a rock, and the sun didn't hatch them," says Ermey. "They graduate from the D.I. School, and the drill instructor is the best the Marine Corps has to offer. Their leadership qualities are second to none. Nobody ever forgets his drill instructor."

"The underpinning of the psychology of recruit training is leadership by example," explains Maj. Keith Burkepile, 37, who was director of the Drill Instructor School at Parris Island, S.C., for the last two years. "The drill instructor becomes the role model, and the recruit is inspired to emulate him or her. We want the Marines to be successful with their units, successful on the battlefield, successful in life. "Here's how they do it:

We Toughen Them Up

Once "aboard" the depot-whether at Parris Island or San Diego recruits go through "Receiving," where they get their heads shaved, receive gear and undergo medical and physical tests. During the next three days, called "Forming," they meet their drill instructors and learn how to be recruits. Twelve weeks of actual training follow.

Parris Island. 4 miles long and 3 miles wide-is known as a hard place, made special by sand fleas, stultifying heat and 500 fearsome drill instructors. It has four recruit-training battalions, one of them exclusively for women. More than a million young men and women have survived training there since 1915.

The physical challenge is grueling. In three months, recruits learn to march, to move through water with packs on, to rappel from 60-foot towers, to practice hand-to-hand combat and fight with a bayonet simulated by use of the pugil stick (like a giant Q-tip). They must qualify with the M-16 rifle, handle gas masks and solve the "Confidence Course culminating in an 11th-week event known as "The Crucible," which lasts 54 hours and consists of combat-related activities that can only be accomplished through teamwork. Recruits get four hours of sleep a night, and limited rations.

We Demand Obedience

The very first thing a Marine learns is immediate obedience to orders. "There's no getting around that Marines are trained to kill," says Chuck Taliano, 61, who trained recruits at Parris Island during the Vietnam era "The drill instructor's job is to teach the basics of how to do it-by hand, by bayonet or by rifle-and how to stay alive. In a war, you haven't got time to debate the issue. You have to give them instant willingness to obey orders."

How do you instill that kind of discipline? "By example," says Major, Burkepile, explaining: "The sand fleas are going crazy, biting all over the recruits. The drill instructors are standing there. They're not scratching. They're not itching. You don't think they're getting bit? They're getting bit too. They're demonstrating by example.

"You know," he adds, "self-discipline-even if it starts with letting yourself be bitten by a sand flea-will take you a long way in life. Americans love to eat good food, and it takes discipline to say when you've had enough without overdoing it. What makes a woman take care of kids and a family all day long and then, when her husband gets home go out on a run? That's discipline. She makes herself do it."

That self-discipline fosters independence and confidence. "If you think about it," says Burkepile, "self-discipline will get a young man or woman of 22 to do a lot of things. It may send them to college, where they'll have good study habits and succeed. It also translates to the workforce: Your self-discipline will get you to work every day. It'll get you to pay your bills. When you talk to bosses in charge of hir-

ing people, they say that once they have a former Marine on the job, they start looking for more.':

We Instill Motivation

"Motivation," says Major Burkepile, "comes from wanting to be better in life. It makes you feel good. We do two-hour physical-training sessions here in the morning that are very hard. You've got to get up for that, you've got to get motivated. Motivation comes from each of us being around each other. You see another person pumped up, and you go out and get pumped up, and it rubs off on the next person. It's infectious. If they're fired up and motivated-if they're working together as a team they're going to perform better.

"In the civilian world, you look for like-minded people who are similarly motivated to help you acquire discipline."

We Insist On Teamwork

"Recruits learn how much easier everything becomes when they put the other guy first and help each other out-whether it's making a rack or cleaning your weapon," says Major Burkepile. "When people start helping each other, things get done faster and better. "We all get selfish. That's just human. But you feel better if you help someone else."

We Work Them Hard

"If there's one thing recruits do at Parris Island, it's work hard," says Major Burkepile. "Discipline, pride, self- respect, motivation-they all tie into that. If nothing else, hard work builds character. Hard work makes the unit better, it makes the individual better, and it keeps you mentally sound. A lot of times when they're working hard, the recruits don't realize that their physical condition is getting better. At the same time, they're learning something new. Now they can translate that skill that they just learned by working hard into another task-whether in the Marine Corps or out. Hard work also builds camaraderie.

"I'm a horrible procrastinator around the house, but once I start doing something, I feel a lot better than if I'm sitting on my lazy butt watching TV."Hard work also prepares you for what could be down the road. Nobody knows what tough times are ahead-in the Marine Corps or out. If you know how to work hard, you can cope. It's a habit of mind. "It's the same with kids. If they have halfway-decent work habits, it's going to payoff in school, it's going to payoff in life, and it's going pay 0
for society."

We Keep Them Busy

"If the recruit isn't busy," says Major Burkepile, "he feels sorry for himself. He thinks about Mom and Dad, TV, other stuff he could be doing. He thinks, 'Why did I do this?' But if he's busy all day, he doesn't have time to think about it. Training is over before he knows it. "Keeping busy is a value in itself. It keeps you focused, keeps your mind off things that might drag you down."

Attitude also is important, adds Major Burkepile: "The PT instructor will say, 'Look, you have to be here. Why not get the most you can out of it and make it fun? Make it positive.' All of sudden, they're motivated, and they're getting in shape. "To anybody out there who wants to get fit, I say: 'Find a way to make it fun-whether it's a walk in the evening or running with friends or competing in a small way. The same with your job: Find a way to make it fun.

We Honor Tradition

"As training goes on," says Major Burkepile, "the weight and responsibility of the Marine Corps tradition really starts to sink in. When they receive that eagle, globe and anchor pin the day before graduation, many recruits will cry. They know the torch has been passed to them. "In the civilian world, you make sure your children know where they came from-what their grandparents did, how they came over from the old country and built a life or worked selflessly for decades to provide for the family, surviving the Great Depression or World War II or Vietnam_. It's important to pass that stuff on. That's family tradition.

"If you believe in democracy and America, it doesn't matter if you're a Democrat or Republican: You believe in the freedoms we have. Preservation of that doesn't always come without work and even bloodshed. That's part of the responsibility faced by these young recruits. They have not only the weight of the nation on their shoulders but also the weight of the Corps: not letting down the Marines of the past and the Marines right beside them - the man on the right

and the man on the left. That's a powerful motivation. It's learning to be part of something large: than yourself."

PARADE Contributing Editor Larry Smith is the author of THE FEW AND THE PROUD: MARINE CORPS DRILL INSTRUCTORS IN THEIR OWN WORDS *(Norton), now in bookstores.*

Comments

By Craig W. Tourte

Ron. This has nothing to do with the book, THE FEW AND THE PROUD: MARINE CORPS DRILL INSTRUCTORS IN THEIR OWN WORDS. It just looked like a good place to insert a little story.

After boot camp in San Diego, I was off to Pendleton for ITR. We had a large company and were instructed by "Troop Handlers." Some were pretty hard Marines. Most had recently returned from Vietnam. Being pretty salty and a full-fledged Marine right out of boot camp, most of us were of the opinion that we could no longer be treated like "boots." The Troop Handler said he wanted the biggest shit bird in the company and picked a guy out who was now our appointed leader. The handler told us that whatever the guy said was an order to be obeyed like it had come from God himself.

I'm kind of hard headed and do not suffer fools lightly. I thought the guy was an idiot and I picked a fight with him, because he was really stupid and I was not about to follow this knucklehead anywhere. After I made my point, the troop handler (E5) called me into his office, stood me at attention and reached over and knocked me clear across the room onto the floor. He then stood over me and said: "When that guy tells you to do something, you're to consider it an order as if it came from me. Do you understand?" Of course I understood quite well and learned what the word "discipline" meant, must be a derivative of disobey. I never forgot that lesson. Training is expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior.

SHORT ROUNDS

A Khe Sanh Story

By Craig Tourte

Since tomorrow is Memorial Day I thought I would share a little Khe Sanh story with you. I went to boot camp with Mike Powers who eventually served at Khe Sanh with Delta 1/26. Ernie Spencer was Delta's C.O. Last year during the reunion in Chicago I was sitting at a table with Mike and some of his Delta company and platoon members. It was the big Saturday evening party and everyone was having a great time. I was by myself, just hanging out at their table listening to the conversations. Sitting next to me was a man who served in Mike's squad. I can't remember his name, but he looked kind of like a bookkeeper or accountant. Mike got up and left the room for a few minutes and the guy says to me: "You know, Mike saved my life in Vietnam." I told him that Mike and I had been in the same boot camp platoon in San Diego. I had met him again in Las Vegas earlier that summer. I thought he was a great guy and Mike thought a great deal of the men in his company and his CO (Spencer).

The guy told me that as the squad approached a hill he got hit in the chest. Mike pulled him down inside of a shell hole and put a dressing on his chest wound and that if it had not been for Mike's fast action he would not have made it. I was stunned because it was just so matter of fact and said with little emotion. I looked at the guy closely and saw in him a respect and appreciation for another man that would be difficult to describe to anyone else. Mike is a pretty unassuming guy, and has a quiet edge about him. I would not find it unlike him to spring into action during a firefight, or, to put himself on the line for his men. Mike came back and the guy left for a few minutes. I told Mike what I had just been told: Mike looked at me and said something along the lines that it was no big deal. Two out of three of us at that table thought it was a great big deal. Because of Mike's action someone was with us that night who in all probability would not have been were it not for the unselfish action taken by a fine squad leader those many years ago.

As I looked around the room that evening, I saw many just like Mike. Some were dancing with their

wives and girlfriends, some even dancing on top of a table. Others talked to friends they had just met and some with those they have known for many years. I'm sure there were many stories and experiences that could be told about other men in the room that evening, just like the one this guy told me about Mike Powers. I find that I am always broken up with emotion being around these guys. Hero's all. By the end of the evening with a fair amount of adult beverage consumed on my part and tears running down my cheeks, Mike put his arm around my shoulder. I think Mike is just the kind of guy who is there when you need him. At that time and moment nothing else in the world seemed to matter except being in that place with so many great men. I'm looking forward to the reunion next month. If you haven't been to a reunion you're missing out on sharing those conversations, emotions and feeling that you haven't been able to share with anyone else for a very long time.

SHORT ROUNDS

Rick Johnson/ Hill 881- 1967
By James A. Jones
Editor ,East Manatee Herald

Sharing the Vietnam experience Brawny Rick Johnson looks a little like the actor Alec Baldwin. He's got an easy smile, nice personality. A Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, this East Manatee resident carries ugly scars on the front and back of one leg from a rocket attack at Dong Ha. Doctors, all but one wanted to amputate. Rick knows how lucky he is to still have that leg and to be walking around. He is one of a number of Vietnam veterans who called or sent e-mails to me earlier this year when I wrote a series of articles about returning to Vietnam.

Before I was a newspaperman, I was an Army officer during the Vietnam War. Rick was preparing to make his own pilgrimage to Vietnam and he wanted to pick my brain about what I had seen and experienced. We sat in The Herald's East Manatee newsroom one day and exchanged memories and experiences. He was going on the journey with Robert and Patty Allen. Robert is pastor of West Bradenton Baptist Church. Rick would be with the Allen's for a week and a half and then be on his own for a week and a half. My advice was simple: 1. Get an aisle seat on the plane so that he could move around, and 2. Go anywhere and do anything, within reason, while in Vietnam.

Rick had been involved in a harrowing ambush on Hill 881 near Khe Sanh on April 29, 1967, and later had been badly wounded during an attack at Dong Ha, five miles south of the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam. Rick made his return journey to Vietnam 39 years after he was wounded and medically evacuated. I was curious about what he found. "We had a really great time. Everyone was really kind to me," Rick told me Friday. But if he hadn't been persistent, he would have never gotten back to Khe Sanh. His driver didn't want to take him there, said it was too dangerous. "You should have been there the first time," Rick told his driver, recalling that ambush on Hill 881. Eventually, Rick made it to Khe Sanh, but not Hill 881.

At Khe Sanh, he encountered a bus load of American students from Cornell University, who were preparing to visit a museum at the site. Their instructor asked if I had served in Vietnam. I talked with him a bit, and he asked me if I would mind speaking to his students. So I got to teach college for an hour!" Rick said. Rick gave the students a different version of history than what was presented in the museum. The retired Marine also learned a few things during his recent trip. He got to stay in Vietnamese homes and see how strong families are in that part of the world. And he also got to see Ho Chi Minh City, the former Saigon. Like me, he found it a bit disturbing to see the flag of the former North Vietnam flying over the entire country and to see the soldiers in the communist uniforms. He was concerned that the country is still not as free as it should be. When he stayed in the homes of local citizens, they had to report his presence to the authorities.

He didn't get to do everything he set out to do. He wants to go back again. Next time, he'd like to find Hill 881 and just stand there and reflect. James A. Jones Jr., East Manatee editor, can be reached at 708-7916 or atjaones1@HeraldToday.com.



INCOMING

USMC LIVES ON
Great story by Scott Jones

Photo showing the "GUNNY" standing very tall and giving a one finger salute as he walked to a HUMVEE with his uniform mostly torn off and many field dressings covering his extensive wounds...

Article taken from the OMAHA WORLD TRIBUNE

The Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant in the picture is Michael Burghardt, part of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Team that is supporting 2nd Brigade 28th Infantry Division (Pennsylvania Army National Guard). I heard the below story first hand last Saturday during a video teleconference between his Brigade Commander and the 28th Infantry Division Commander. I thought that others should hear it as well, as I think it demonstrates the true spirit of most of our troops on the ground (from my experience).

John

Leading the fight is Gunnery Sgt Michael Burghardt, known as "Iron Mike" or just "Gunny." He is on his third tour in Iraq. He had become a legend in the bomb disposal world after winning the Bronze Star for disabling 64 IED's and destroying 1,548 pieces of ordnance during his second tour. Then, on September 19, he got blown up. He had arrived at a chaotic scene after a bomb had killed four US soldiers. He chose not to wear the bulky bomb protection suit. "You can't react to any sniper fire and you get tunnel-vision," he explains. So, protected by just a helmet and standard-issue flak jacket, he began what bomb disposal officers term "the longest walk," stepping gingerly into a 5ft deep and 8ft wide crater.

The earth shifted slightly and he saw a Senao base station with a wire leading from it. He cut the wire and used his 7 inch knife to probe the ground. "I found a piece of red detonating cord between my legs," he says. "That's when I knew I was screwed."

Realizing he had been sucked into a trap, Sgt Burghardt, 35, yelled at everyone to stay back. At that moment, an insurgent, probably watching through binoculars, pressed a button on his mobile phone to detonate the secondary device below the sergeant's feet. "A chill went up the back of my neck and then the bomb exploded," he recalls. "As I was in the air I remember thinking, 'I don't believe they got me.' I was just ticked off they were able to do it. Then I was lying on the road, not able to feel anything from the waist down."

His colleagues cut off his trousers to see how badly he was hurt. None could believe his legs were still there. "My dad's a Vietnam vet who's paralyzed from the waist down," says Sgt Burghardt. "I was lying there thinking I didn't want to be in a wheelchair next to my dad and for him to see me like that. They ! started to cut away my pants and I felt a real sharp pain and blood trickling down. Then I wiggled my toes and I thought, 'Good, I'm in business.' "As a stretcher was brought over, adrenaline and anger kicked in. "I decided to walk to the helicopter. I wasn't going to let my team-mates see me being carried away on a stretcher." He stood and gave the insurgents who had blown him up a one-fingered salute. "I flipped them one. It was like, 'OK, I lost that round but I'll be back next week'."

Copies of a photograph depicting his defiance, taken by Jeff Bundy for the Omaha World-Herald, adorn the walls of homes across America and that of Col John Gronski, the brigade commander in Ramadi, who has hailed the image as an exemplar of the warrior spirit. Sgt Burghardt's injuries, burns and

wounds to his legs and buttocks kept him off duty for nearly a month and could have earned him a ticket home. But, like his father who was awarded a Bronze Star and three Purple Hearts for being wounded in action in Vietnam he stayed in Ramadi to engage in the battle against insurgents who are forever coming up with more ingenious ways of killing Americans.

IRAQ

An officer's tribute to his fallen Marines

To family and friends and all those back home who support the fight for freedom. I just sealed the envelope on what I hope to be the last condolence letter I ever have to write. As I addressed the envelope to the mother of my most recent fallen Marine, I inscribed "FREE" on the upper right corner to denote the lack of postage due to its origin being a combat zone. As I wrote that word, I felt the pen - and my heart become heavy. Four simple letters, written to denote the cost, or lack thereof, of sending a letter to home from combat. Four simple letters that sum up everything written inside of that envelope. The postage is free, liberty is not. All of the Marines who we evacuated after the horrible IED attack on the night of 01 May have fallen, each at his own time. Yesterday was their memorial service. Memorial Day weekend was an appropriate time for such a service. Moving units around at the last minute to get as many Marines back inside the wire just for the few hours they needed to pay their last respects to their fallen brothers is the type of Memorial Day weekend one experiences during war. I have received quite a few emails from family and those friends who I consider family, wishing us the best during this Memorial Day weekend and thanking us for the sacrifices made. Those people who should be thanked are the ones that won't come home and those families they won't come home to.

Lance Corporal Robert Moscillo - Combat Engineer, man of God, brother to five and son. Robert was killed on the night of 01 May.

Robert spent many years growing up trying to figure out what his path in life was going to be. When he felt called to religious service, he decided to join the Marine Corps first to serve his country and to earn the money he needed to attend the religious education he sought. He was attached to my platoon for about a month before he died in the IED attack on 01 May. A source of entertainment, motivation, and spiritual outreach among the Marines in the platoon, he will be sorely missed.

Corporal Cory Palmer Recon Marine, Sniper, Marine Combatant Diver, Son and Brother.

Cory Palmer wanted to hike the entire Appalachian Trail. He loved surfing and lived for having fun. He was one of the finest Marines I've ever served with. He died on 06 May as a result of the burns he sustained on the night of 01 May four days before his 23rd birthday.

Enthusiasm "intense feeling for a subject or cause, eagerness, zeal ...something inspiring." Corporal Cory Palmer personified enthusiasm for the Marine Corps, for having fun, and more importantly, for his family and his brother Marines. Indeed, Cory was "something inspiring." A specimen of physical greatness and mental ingenuity, he was a natural leader. Though he didn't hold a leadership billet during most of his time in the platoon, Cory led Marines. Every Marine in the platoon would follow Cory, myself included. He was a man who had the courage to speak his mind, and the courage to take the enemy face on. Paddling against the waves to find the one he wanted was the way that Cory operated in all that he did. Whether surfing, or wading through the tides of war to find the best way to destroy his adversary, Cory always maintained his composure and followed through on every occasion. Cory and his enthusiasm will be missed.

Corporal William "Brad" Fulks Recon Marine, Golden Glove Boxing State Champion, Son, Brother, and Boyfriend.

Brad Fulks was a quiet professional who was deeply respected by every man in the platoon. He died on 18 May 2006, 15 days after his 23rd birthday.

Toughness "so strong and resilient as to withstand great strain without breaking." Corporal William Bradley Fulks was tough. A quiet professional, he was humble, yet had every reason not to be. A golden glove boxing state champion, he could put a man on his face in a second, yet never once let that quality show, unless he needed to. It was easy for

me to tell that the men in the platoon felt comfortable around Brad whether out in town or outside the wire they felt protected. I know that if I had to survive a bar fight, or a gun fight, he'd be the one I'd want right by my side and I know that the rest of the platoon feels the exact same way. Brad and his toughness and quiet dependability will be missed.

Sergeant Alessandro Carbonaro Recon Marine, Recon Team Leader, Husband and only Son.

Today is the one-year anniversary of the marriage of Sergeant Alessandro Carbonaro and his wife Gilly. A year ago he was married in Washington D.C. Days ago, he was buried a few miles south, in Arlington Cemetery.

Wisdom"insightful understanding of what is true, right, or enduring...a native good judgment." Sergeant Alessandro Carbonaro personified wisdom. Refined in his ability to communicate, Alex quietly commanded the attention of the platoon at times. His words and opinion were valued among every man and his good judgment was often sought from those both above him and below him. Many times, I went to Alex for ideas and advice on how to accomplish a task, never walking away without a better plan than the one I had started with. It was easy to tell from my first days with the platoon that he cared greatly for his Marines and their welfare. After the horrible IED attack, as his fellow Marines treated his wounds, he continued to ask about his team members, ignoring the pain he himself was experiencing. He truly cared for others more than himself the mark of a great man and a true leader. Alex and his caring nature and wisdom will be missed.

The four great Marines listed above are only those from my platoon. Our battalion has lost two more and there are others who are still in naval medical facilities beginning their healing process. Some have been killed in the enemy's cowardly but effective IED attacks. Others have died and been wounded in close range firefights with determined and fanatical foreign fighters, members of well known terrorist organizations like the one responsible for September 11th. One of these men is **Petty Officer 3rd Class Lee H. Deal, a Special Amphibious Reconnaissance Corpsman whose funeral was Friday in Baton Rouge, LA.**

A former student of West Monroe High School, he was to be married upon his return from this deployment to his wonderful fiancé.
All of these Marines are those who should be remembered this Memorial Day weekend, along with all those who have paid the ultimate price in every war before ours.

I have been fortunate to have such a great family and such great friends to know that everything we do here is supported from those back home. I've received numerous care packages some which have been gestures of extreme generosity (thanks Mr. Art!). I've taken these care packages and massed them together, then separated all the things inside to make "sniper re-supply packages" to drop off to my recon teams and sniper teams when we replenish them with water and ammunition. The men greatly appreciate your generosity.

Have no doubt that as the American people grow wearier and more impatient during this war, that our resolve grows even stronger. The enemy knows that his greatest friends are those in America who can work to demoralize the country and to break our will to fight. He has learned from history and knows the impact of the media and the influence of famous people who have no idea what freedom means or its real cost. Today's Jane Fonda's still exist and all those factors that made it so difficult to achieve a strategic victory in Vietnam are the same factors that exist today.

We won the tactical fight every time in Vietnam. We continue to win the tactical fights today. It is at the strategic level that America is so vulnerable because of the influence of the masses the most often times uneducated masses, those that are swayed easily by the media and by famous people who are out of touch with reality. The evil we face today in this world in fanatical Islamic Fundamentalism is as bad or worse than the evil faced by communism or even Nazism during WWII.

Many people agree that our participation in WWII is what prevents us from speaking German today. To stand by and idly watch whole portions of the world succumb to the demands of Islamic Fundamentalists is as bad an appeasement as Europe in the late 1930s. The men who fight and kill these evil people every day in this war understand this. I can only

hope that those back home, the masses who affect foreign policy decisions, can look at history and come to understand this. The war we are fighting is a just war and a necessary war. During this Memorial Day weekend, let us not forget those who have paid the ultimate price fighting it.

Robert Moscillo, Cory Palmer, Brad Fulks, Alessandro Carbonaro Strong physically powerful, robust, healthy, difficult to break, durable, intense, violent, persuasive, and forceful." **Robert, Cory, Brad, and Alessandro** were strong Marines and strong men. All were intense and violent against the enemy. They protected their fellow Marines. In his own way, each was persuasive. Each was robust, healthy, and difficult to break. We must not look at their passing as them having broken, or given in. We must look at it as their passage to a place where their strength, their toughness, wisdom, and enthusiasm will be used for a much greater cause, that of the Lord. They remain among us, watching over the platoon and using their talents to protect us against evil a much greater foe than anything we'll face on earth's battlefields.

Thank you for your constant prayers. Please pray for the souls of these Marines and for their families this Memorial Day Weekend.

Semper Fidelis,
TommyWaller
1stLieutenant,USMC
ReconPlatoonCommander
Al Anbar Province, Iraq

INCOMING

Warren native and Veteran of the Siege of Khe Sanh, inducted into Local Hall of Fame

By Joshua Hudson Tribune Chronicle Assistant Sports Editor

Dennis Pardee doesn't regret much about the decisions he has made in his life and on the football field. And why should the Warren native? He has seen success on the football field with Warren G. Harding and the Case Institute of Technology. He also served in the USMC During The Vietnam War, as the CO of A Btry 1/13 , at Khe Sanh. He earned several distinguished awards, including a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. His gridiron accomplishments earned Pardee more recognition when he was inducted into the Case Reserve Athletic Club Hall of Fame.

Pardee remembers his reaction. I had to sit down, he said. After 50 years, I was finally in the Hall of Fame. His April recent hall of fame induction goes with the one he received in 2001 to the Warren Sports Hall of Fame. The enshrinement into both halls of fame capped of an amazing football career for Pardee. He earned four letters in football and two in track while at Case. In 1953 he was a unanimous choice to the all-conference team, received the Les Bale MVP award and was named to the Associated Press All-Ohio Small College Team.

The success Pardee enjoyed at Case may have never happened if he didn't put education first in his college decision. Pardee graduated from Harding in 1951 and was being recruited by Ohio State, Michigan and Notre Dame, but decided on the Case Institute of Technology because of its engineering program and its academic reputation. He said he was close to attending Ohio State, but since the Buckeyes already had a running back in Howard Hopalong Cassidy, he decided Case was the place for him. "Its a good thing I didn't go to Ohio State because I would have been sitting on the bench," he said. "I also thought about joining the naval academy out of high school, but I really wanted to be an engineer."

The military would call later in life, but first came a shot at the National Football League. When Case dropped football in the 1954 season, Pardee received a letter from the university's running backs coach, who also happened to be the son-in-law of Baltimore Colts coach Weeb Ewbank. The letter asked Pardee if he wanted to come and try out for the Colts. But since he also worked to pay for his school, Pardee couldn't afford the time off. "I didn't come from a very wealthy family, so I had to work," he said. "I ended up a couple of credit hours short of my degree, so I had to work so I could finish going to school."

Pardee spent a year working at IBM after graduation, but was informed that he was going to be drafted to help fight in the Vietnam War. Instead of

waiting for the day where he would officially be drafted, Pardee decided to join the Marines. But his football career didn't end because he was in the military. Pardee spent time playing with the Pensacola NAS, Camp LeJeune and two years with the Quantico Marines. He also played inter service football at Fort Meade and led his team to three straight championships. "I switched over from halfback to quarterback on those teams because I lost a step, "Pardee said. " I was also the coach on those three teams."

He served in the Vietnam War between 1967-68 and was an artillery battery commander during the siege of Khe Sanh during the Tet offensive. He retired from the Marines in 1969 and worked some odd jobs before working as a civil engineer at the Vienna Air Base, which is where he retired from in 1993. Now Pardee spends time golfing, even though he admits his football success hasn't carried over into his golf game. I play golf but I wouldn't exactly say I am good at it, he said. I get to spend a lot of time with my wife, Beverly, and I am satisfied with everything I have done.

INTERESTING LETTER

April 18, 2006
Dear Crimson Tide Fans,

I often get asked to compare coaching in the NFL to college. Both have many positives, but I think one of the main reasons I love college football is that we get to help shape young men's lives. We have young 18 year old boys come to Tuscaloosa and we get to watch them mature into young men. We are convinced that the experience of football will help them understand the challenges of life.

This past year I received a letter from one of our former players, Nathan Cox. He graduated from the University and then joined the Marines. He was in Iraq during this past fall. Nathan opened our eyes to the importance of college football and the importance of protecting our country. He is truly a special young man. His family did an outstanding job of instilling great character in him and we hope the University of Alabama has had some Impact on him as well. I hope this letter inspires you the way it has inspired our team.
Roll Tide!
Mike Shula

THE LETTER:

Coach Shula and Team,



I wanted to take a few minutes to write ya'll and congratulate you on how the season is going. I have tried to follow you as closely as possible, and have not been able to watch a game yet but have kept up through newspaper articles and the programs the athletic department has been gracious enough to send me. I did however get an email of Prothro's catch, amazing. I wanted to take a few minutes of your time to write you and let yourself and the team know how much College Football really means to people, and how much this country should mean to your players. Hopefully, you will be able to share this with the team in some capacity, and if not just give them my best.

I came to Alabama in the fall of 2000 with the hopes and dreams of playing time and a national championship ring. You all know how the story goes. During my four years we had four coaches and a 24-25 record, and as for me personally I didn't accomplish everything I had hoped for but wouldn't trade my experience and the friends I made in Tuscaloosa for anything. I joined the Marine Corps Officer Program as soon as I graduated in May of 2004. Many thought I was crazy for giving up Law School or a good job to do it, but I truly believe in this country and felt it was something I had to do.

I still remember 9-11 like it was yesterday, coming up to practice and watching the TV as they showed the planes crashing into the World Trade Center over and over. We were suppose to play Southern Miss that week, and I recall being so angry that I wanted to leave school that afternoon to enlist and go fight.

Four years later I am now serving with 3rd Battalion

6th Marines India Company as an Infantry Rifle Platoon Commander in charge of about 60 Marines over in Western Iraq. It is truly a war zone over here, as not a day goes by where we don't get shot at or IED'd in some capacity. It seems like every day we lose another Marine. It doesn't seem fair that 18year old kids have to die before they get a chance to really live, but no one complains here or asks for sympathy.

This is something that every single one of us chose to do for one reason or another. All of my Marines enlisted during a time of war and chose to do Marine Infantry, which is as front lines as you get on the battlefield. We knew what we were asking for and we have certainly got it.

You have no idea how much college football means to the Marines over here. Nearly everyone has a team they follow and almost use it as their identity.

Each week I have Marines coming up to me and telling me the score and how good ya'll are playing. They want to know all about each of you. "Who's the fastest, the strongest, the biggest?" Does Brodie get all the girls? What is Coach Shula like? What was it like to play there?" I respect all of you for not only having the ability to play major college football, but also just having the fortitude to stick with it. I know it is not always the easiest thing to do, but like Coach Bryant used to say: " if it was easy everyone would do it." Looking back on my career there that is really one of the few things I can hang my hat on is that I simply never quit.

In closing I want to wish you well on the rest of the season. My Dad mailed Alabama hats to everyone in my platoon, so remember you have a lot of people pulling for you even in Iraq.

I know sometimes it can be disgusting how serious some fans take football, but the truth is it really does mean a lot to people, everyone needs something to root for, especially over here.

Finally, I want to leave you with this. I believe in this country, I believe it is worth fighting for no matter what the cost. There are a lot of young men over here that have made sacrifices that you can't begin to understand in order to be here to fight for you and your families back home, so that you can live in a place where 90,000 people can go watch a football game on Saturday afternoon and have something to cheer about. They are all proud to do it, and ask nothing in return. I just want all of you to be grateful for the opportunity you have, and not to waste it because the truth is no matter what your beliefs are young men are dying day in and day out to give their fellow Americans a chance to make a better life for themselves. We have a quote that hangs about the Marines barracks by George Orwell that says, "People sleep peaceable in their beds at night because rough men stand ready to do violent things on their behalf."

Take care of each other, be proud to be an American, and enjoy the good days because the bad ones will come. I am sending ya'll a flag just as a reminder of what our country stands for. I hope you will find a place to put it, and that it makes you as proud as it makes me. So next time the Star Spangled Banner plays, do me a favor and stand a little straighter, stick your chest out a little further, and take a second to remember what it means to be an American, then go kick someone's ass for me.

ROLL TIDE! FORTES FORTUNA JUVAT (Fortune Favors the Bold),
Lt. Nathan L. Cox USMC

MEMOIRS

A Day at Khe Sanh with A Company 3rd Shore Party Battalion

By Jerome Howell
3rd Shore Party Battalion, A Co.

I have always felt there was humor at Khe Sanh, sometime hard to come by, but it happened. The time frame was a few days after the day we took in over 1300 rounds, around February 21, 1968. I had only been in Khe Sanh about a week digging bunkers and air lifting supplies on the LSA to the hills. I learned that there were three places one had to be at his utmost in awareness; The Navy shower, the outhouse, and the medical station. Of course anywhere on the base was dangerous, but some areas seemed to attract a lot more incoming; the West Turn Around Point, our Company area because it was very close to it, the LSA where I air lifted supplies, and the medical station, especially at the height of the siege when we were getting hit with so much artillery.

The LSA was a very dangerous area. We had a couple of names for it. We called it the Impact Area, or the Saddle. We didn't have any cover. Standing on top of a load of small arms ammo, army logs, or water under a chopper, one couldn't hear anything. At one point if one could hear the report of a firing, it only took about 4 seconds to get to you. If we had time we would join others in the trenches, or hid between the rock crushers the Seabees left near the LSA. I do not know how many know the story behind the big hole where the C-123 that was hit on the West Turn around Point. It was dragged off the Turn around Point and deposited in that hole. It was big enough to hold most of the plane. This hole was about 30 feet from my bunker where Sgt. English, and L/Cpl Ron Kieger and I lived. One day someone left a pallet of anti-personnel mines there. As the day wore on we became very concerned.

I decided to take a shower, and wash my lovely socks. They were so stiff I think I could have bounced them off the wall inside the bunker. I was enjoying a rare occasion at Khe Sanh. A shower. A Russian Rocket came in and hit near the West Turn Around point. I suddenly got the feeling I had better leave the shower. I made it to the closest bunker, a small one, the smaller the better I thought and jumped in it. There was already someone in the small bunker. I can't remember his name, but he was from Minnesota. He looked at me astonished since I was almost naked. He said: "What the heck!"

I said:"showers are dangerous around here!" He and I spent the next 15 minutes that seemed like an hour, hugging each other counting the rounds coming in. All of a sudden there was this huge explosion. The bunker we were in collapsed on us, and the lights went out. I was stunned for a few minutes. After it was over the Marine in the hole with me says: "Man, we will have to quit meeting like this."

My reply was, "Don't worry about it. I will take a spit bath from now on."

I had to get up enough courage to get back to the shower again, but this time I took my uniform with me. The explosion left a very large hole, as I said about 30 feet from my bunker. A few days later I was standing next to it looking at it and a Major came by and asked me what caused the hole. I thought I would be a smart ass and told him, "Well sir, didn't you hear about that 300mm Chinese artillery piece they brought down here?" He turned white faced and walked away mumbling that he would have to check it out.

Every now and then nature calls. I grabbed a Play Boy magazine that I had stashed and off to the outhouse I went. I wasn't in there five minutes when a 130mm round came in and hit behind it in the 3rd Engineer area. It helped me out the front door. I crawled to the Navy shower to pull up my pants. There sat the Battalion Chaplain with a smile on his face. He says: "Well, it looks like they caught you with your pants down."

I said: "Well sir, it's nice meeting you, but I must be on my way, this Navy shower and I do not get along too well." I left him there as I crawled to a bunker. I never could find that Play Boy magazine. I have written Ray Stubbe and he can't remember if it was him or not. He did say that he heard the explosion of the anti-personnel mines and that it was heard all over the base.

INCOMING

Packing up & Moving out

By Craig W. Tourte

I'm moving in three days. Shutting off the phone, email, fax and mailing address. You'll be hearing from me again some time in the future, but not until I'm settled in and have a little time to think about things that have changed (and establish new fax, email and phone lines). We all change a little as time goes by. I can't hear or see as well as I once did. I am intelligent enough to realize that my motorcycle days are over because my reaction time is just to darn slow now to be safe, and my back hurts too much to sit on a bumpy ride for any length of time. I'll be gone from this house on Friday and then off to the reunion on Tuesday the 27th. I look forward to seeing all the other old men who have also have changed as much as me, some for the better and others for the...well, you get the picture.

This will be my third reunion, and I have enjoyed all of them, each a little more than the last. I went to my new mailbox today and what do you know? My new edition of Red Clay was there (Thanks Tommy

and the rest of the staff). It's another great edition. I got to thinking, what is going to happen when those who give so much to this great magazine and association are no longer able to contribute? What happens then? If I'm still around, I think I'll feel kind of empty and alone. I don't think I want to be the last man standing. We're all so fortunate for the dedication of those who work so hard to make our lives a little more rewarding.

On page 3 George Marrett wrote an article titled Real Reason for Reunion. I thought I would share it with you, just in case you are not a member of the Khe Sanh Association and/or do not subscribe to the Red Clay magazine and are not attending the reunion this year.

"I now know why we who have been to war yearn to reunite. It's not just to tell war stories, look at old photos, and drink beer…although we do all of that. We don't do so to laugh at our past mistakes or dry one another's tears either. Warriors gather because they long to be with buddies who acted their best, men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped raw, right down to their humanity. I did not pick these men to share my year of toil and torment. Know them in a way I know no others. Never have I given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious then my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me into the future. It was also part of the unwritten code, the reason we were willing to die for one another and our country." Thanks again George, you wrote an outstanding piece.

Ski-ball wrote an article titled Just A Story. This was a sad story about the death of his brother. It was an excellent piece of writing and kind of kicked me in the gut. It's strange how our lives have little turns and twists. Reading these articles written by Khe Sanh Veterans makes me appreciate having survived these 59 years and helps me to understand that I am not alone in this world. I know I'm not getting out of here alive, but while I'm here, it's kind of nice to realize there are so many of you who are just like me.
Semper Fi
See you at the reunion
Craig

STILL SERVING

KSV Gary Sallade AMVETS National Chaplain

2004-2005

Courtesy Vantage Point Magazine



VAMC Chillicothe Physician Assistant Gary Sallade was appointed the 2004 - 2005 AMVETS National Chaplain at their convention in Spokane, WA. Sallade, a Vietnam veteran, is a life-member of Chillicothe's Price-Tatman AMVETS Post 4, where he has long been Post, District and Department of Ohio Chaplain.

Originally from Pennsylvania, Sallade served in the United States Navy from 1966 – 1969 as a Corpsman and was assigned to B Co, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment in **Khe Sanh** during his time in Vietnam (1967-68). For his service, Sallade received the Combat Action Ribbon, PUC (2), Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, and Fleet Marine Force Badge.

Sallade is active in a variety of community activities. His involvement with veterans extends beyond his VA and AMVETS duties. He takes time to honor veterans from an earlier generation through his involvement with the local "Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War" group, often traveling to Gettysburg, PA for activities surrounding Remembrance Day. Sallade is also a member of the Veterans of

Foreign Wars where he served as Post Surgeon from 1997-1999, and the **Khe Sanh Veterans Association**.

Since 1987, Sallade has been involved in the local community as a high school soccer coach. In 2004, his Unioto High School "Shermans" advanced farther than any Ross County team had ever gone in the state tournament, making it to the Division III Soccer State Final Four in Columbus before losing 3-1 to Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy. "There are people whose paths we cross everyday who have some need in their lives that we – you and I – might alleviate if we just take the time to do so," said Sallade

A Physician Assistant with both the Medical/ Surgical and the Primary and Preventive Care Lines, Sallade has been married to fellow employee, Brenda Sallade for 16 years and has three children, Scott Sallade, 36, Louisville, KY, Shelby Sallade, 32, Cincinnati, Ashley Caudill, 20, Chillicothe and a 5 month old grandson, Casey (Scott).

SHORT ROUNDS

THE MARLBORO MAN: PART TWO

Ed Note: This is a follow-up article on the story which appeared in Issue 65 of Red Clay.

Courtesy of the Chronicle

With a surgeon's care, James Blake Miller adjusted the two rows of ribbons on the coat of his Marine Corps dress blues. Then he adjusted them again. He pulled on the coat, cinched the white belt that fit a bit more snugly than when he left the Marines in November, carefully adjusting the collar. "After this," he muttered, "I ain't wearing the mother again unless I'm buried in it." He slid a pack of Marlboros into a sock -- nothing goes in the pockets of a Marine's dress blues, and walked outside.

In the five months since The Chronicle revisited the story of Miller who became known as the "Marlboro Man" after a photo of him smoking during a break in combat in Iraq was published in hundreds of newspapers in November 2004 -- everything and nothing had happened to him and his wife, Jessica. But on this day, June 3, Blake and Jessica were getting married, again. Through the generosity of neighbors in Pike County and strangers in the Bay Area, they would have the big wedding they had wanted but couldn't afford a year ago, when they settled for a ceremony in a county building tucked behind an auction house.

Miller always said he spoke out about the terrible things he'd seen in battle and about the turmoil in his life since his discharge from the Marines with a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder so that others would get help. And for a long time, he had declined offers from well-meaning strangers, falling back on his working-class values that said help is something you give yourself. But in the end, Miller succumbed to a determined effort by friends and strangers to thank him for his service with more than words; people who saw him as a symbol of American troops fighting overseas; a war fought by men and women they thought deserved more. In the end, Miller accepted those offers. But even as he adjusted his uniform and prepared to meet his bride under a floral gazebo, he still seemed to struggle with what he was being given.

"What do you say to someone who does something for you like that?" he would say, again and again. "What do you say?" Reaching out Miller's story struck a chord with a public conflicted over the war in Iraq. Hundreds of people e-mailed The Chronicle; others wrote to Miller care of general delivery in Jonancy, the tiny hollow where his father lives. One man rode with his wife on a motorcycle from Kansas and spent two days at a body shop in town, hoping the young veteran would stop by. When he failed to appear, the man drove away, leaving a message for him: "It will be all right." Some people knew little of the war, like a fisherman from Rhode Island who sent the Millers $20, saying he didn't know anybody in the military and wanted a way to help. Some, like a Delaware mother who wrote that her Marine son committed suicide after his return from Iraq and thanked Miller for speaking out, knew too much. Some wanted to do more than say thank you.

"I was so struck by the simplicity of Blake," said Eunice Davis, a resident of Pleasanton who read about Miller in The Chronicle in January. Like many who contacted Miller, Davis opposed the war but supported the troops fighting it. "He went

through so much, and seems to want so little," Davis said. "He didn't wish for a Mercedes. He wanted a wedding and he wanted to please Jessica." When she finally tracked the Millers down, they seemed a little baffled," she said, by her question: "Did they still want to have that big wedding? They absolutely did not know what to do with what I was saying to them," said Davis, who remembered how people treated veterans returning from Vietnam and worried the same thing was happening again. "Blake kept saying, 'I can't let you spend that kind of money' ... he kept saying he wasn't looking for handouts."

While the Millers mulled, Davis began a quiet end-run around their reluctance. She called the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, which gave her the number for a wedding planner in Pikeville. "For about five or 10 minutes, I had no idea who she was talking about," said Missy McCoy, a co-owner of Signature Events. "Then she said 'Marlboro Man,' and it all started coming together." Softening a hard road The uncertainty Davis encountered in Miller's feelings about his wedding was an indication of his life.

Since January, some things had gotten easier. After the Department of Veterans Affairs confirmed the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, that forced him out of the military, he had begun receiving disability payments, staving off the financial panic that had begun to consume the couple. He and Jessica moved from her grandparents' house into their own apartment over a furniture store in Pikeville, just off Highway 23, where coal trucks rumble day and night, not far from the high school they attended. Jessica was working as a dance instructor. They talked about going into real estate.

Like many young veterans, Miller also spent some of the benefit money on a treat: a Harley-Davidson Softail Standard motorcycle, the first bike he ever bought new, chrome dripping off an engine that roars like an idling rocket. Jessica wasn't too happy, and a newspaper story that mentioned the motorcycle drew a couple of nasty letters from folks accusing him of malingering on the public dime. Miller didn't care. "Ever since I was a little kid, I could get pissed off, get on the bike, and I didn't have a care in the world," he said. Now he spends many afternoons tooling through the mountains of eastern Kentucky, pumping his fist at passing coal trucks that respond with blasts of their horns and thinking as little as possible about the past.

"Sometimes, I think about how good it is to have a second chance to ride. Then I think about all the guys who didn't get that chance. Then I just crack it," he said, his hand opening up an imaginary throttle. "Best thing to do." It's also one of his only things to do -- Miller's life, since he left the military, has become somewhat static. The disability checks have insured his basic needs are met, but despite his continuing nightmares and waking visions, he has not had a therapy session since January. This month the VA scheduled him for his first follow-up after The Chronicle asked about his treatment.

He looked into a job with the police, he said, but was told he couldn't be hired for an armed position because of his disability. The VA will review Miller's condition in January, and by then, he hopes, he will have recovered enough to get and hold a job. In the meantime, there are too many days when he wakes up with no reason to get out of bed, when it's too easy to just lie in the dark listening to the coal trucks and thinking about the guys who aren't receiving checks because they don't know they need help; or the guys who just landed in Iraq and will never get help because they're never coming home. "It's like a big guilt trip, day in and day out," Miller whispered. "I just lie there and rot."

"As alone as he feels, what Miller experiences isn't uncommon among returning vets," said Dr. Robert Huwieler, a clinical psychiatrist at the VA in Huntington, W.Va. Like Miller's irritability, his nightmares and his memories, the guilt and the inertia are classic symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder as is a tendency to avoid contact, either by throwing oneself into work or by hiding from the world. "The casual observer simply can't see the wounds, and the veteran has a motivation to conceal them," Huwieler said. "What we would like people to do is to be able to talk sooner." Miller doesn't have a lot of folks to talk to. But lately he's been having long talks with Luis Sinco, the Los Angeles Times photographer who took his famous photo in Fallujah. And he talks to the people who track him down. "Being able to talk to those people ..." he shook his head. "If they hadn't sent me those letters, I don't know what I would have done."

The days before the wedding gave Miller plenty of reasons to get out of bed. The last-minute crises that seem to accompany all weddings. A pastor unexpectedly canceled. Tuxedos and dresses needed alterations. Invitations never got mailed. Miller hand-delivered one invitation two days before the wedding, pulling up at the home of Debbie Thomas with a roar. Thomas' son, Ernie, had joined the Marines with Miller and is still in the service. On the day of the wedding, he was scheduled to board the amphibious-assault ship Iwo Jima. "Now the rumor is he's going to be going to Iraq," Thomas said. Miller was silent a moment, his eyes on the ground. "I thought he was just supposed to be in the area, but stay on the ship," he said. "Well, now the rumor is he's going," she said.

In fact, none of Miller's Marine friends were expected at the wedding. He and Jessica had kept pushing up the date, hoping they could hold the ceremony before anybody shipped out. But when they finally learned his friends' ship dates, it was too late. "It's hurting him that he's missing it," Thomas said to Miller. "He wanted to be there." Miller replied, "He was going to be my best man." "And I guarantee that you'll be his best man," she said. A proper wedding instead, Miller's best man was Jeremy "Bobo" Tackett, a lifelong friend who grimaced as he worked his way into his tuxedo in the locker room of the golf course where the wedding was being held. "I feel like a plus-sized Chippendale," he grumbled. Guests were arriving -- friends, relatives, people from wildly different chapters of Miller's story, gathered together on the same page. Eunice Davis and her husband, Ron, finally met Jessica, who wore the white dress she had been saving for the occasion and a diamond-studded wedding ring donated by James Allen Schultz, a Maryland jeweler. Eunice Davis gave the younger woman a lace Italian handkerchief. "It's only for happy tears," she said, which Jessica promptly provided as her uniformed husband looked on, smiling.

"These young men and women -- God bless them," Ron Davis said. "Not just the men and women that go, but the Jessica's of this world. She has to deal with the post-traumatic stress, but she does it smiling and with love. That's courage. "Not far away stood Sinco, the photographer whose offhand shot of Miller's face -- the last photo on a bad day -- made Miller an icon. "To this day, not a day passes when I don't have a thought about Fallujah," Sinco said later. "What separates me from Blake and all the other guys is I didn't have to shoot anybody."
He dragged on his cigarette. "I'm a journalist; I'm not supposed to hope for an outcome to a story," he said. "But just this once, I wish for a fairy-tale ending. "Miller's fellow Marines were not the only guests missing. His own father and brothers did not make it, pulled away by the demands of work in a paycheck-to-paycheck life. In the end, though, the wedding came off without a hitch, well-stocked not only by the Davis' contributions but by donations from local businesses. Cooks set out chafing dishes filled with pulled pork and prepared a chocolate fountain; a local rising bluegrass star, Bo Isaacs, tuned his guitar; a bartender laid in a supply of Corona and tucked away a quart jar of moonshine.

At the appointed time, Jessica's "papaw," Hursel Fouts, guided the bride to her uniformed groom waiting under a floral gazebo. Pastor James Cantrell read the vows as the couple wept and smiled and "I do"-ed in the right places. At the end they walked off together through a shower of applause, toward a hill where an American flag turned ruddy in the sunset.

Within days, the Millers were on a plane to Washington. The National Mental Health Association, an advocacy group, had asked Blake to tell his story on Capitol Hill to try to persuade lawmakers to boost funding for veterans with post-traumatic stress. In the marbled halls of Congress, he was greeted as something of a celebrity -- and a mental health expert. "I've read a lot about you," said Rep. Mike Michaud of Maine, the ranking Democrat on the House Veterans Affairs subcommittee that handles health issues, gripping Miller's hand as he entered his office. Sitting across from each other, the congressman and the former Marine were an incongruous pair. Michaud, a silver-haired two-term lawmaker, was dressed in a standard-issue dark blue suit and red power tie. Miller, with the high-and-tight haircut he got for the wedding and a day-old beard, looked more like a country-and-western singer in his cowboy boots, blue jeans, striped shirt and sport coat.

But it was Michaud who spent most of the hour peppering the 21-year-old Kentucky native with questions: "How did Veterans Affairs treat you? Are

there enough services in rural Kentucky? Have you read my bill to increase counseling for vets with post-traumatic stress?" Miller was polite, constantly calling the lawmaker "sir," but also blunt, especially when talking about the failure of the VA to adequately treat post-traumatic stress. He described how he couldn't get an appointment to see a psychologist for five months.

"It's upsetting because there are veterans out there who want to get this s -- out, who want to have it fixed as best as possible," Miller said. "Some things you can't ever get rid of and you can't ever be cured of. You can't run away from it and you can't hardly deal with it." His eyes turned watery as he explained how he sought treatment after he started having blackouts. He was afraid that, in a dark moment, he might hurt Jessica. He'd heard similar stories from other troops back from Iraq. "Take any loved one you have -- can you imagine waking up in the middle of the night to realize that you had harmed them in some way?" he said. Jessica, who recently received her degree in psychology, told Michaud that, in many cases, wives and other family members must persuade veterans to ask for help. "Usually Marines or soldiers will see it as a sign of weakness, so often it's going to take someone else," she said. As they left, Michaud urged Miller to continue to speak out -- to lawmakers, to VA officials, to his fellow veterans. "You shouldn't underestimate yourself as one individual, what you can accomplish. You telling your story is really powerful." It's the kind of thing Miller has heard often over the past five months: that telling his story to the world is helping other vets who lack his ability to speak out despite the pain and the pride. He always appreciates the kind words, but wonders if the people who say it aren't missing the point. "It's not what I can do to help people," he would say. "It's what everybody else can do."

WE GET MAIL

Tom,

Please accept this donation towards the expenses of the Red Clay. As time passes and memories fade it's important to be reminded of what we did and the sacrifices of our brothers so long ago. I have lost touch with most of my unit. While I seldom see reference to my platoon in the magazine, my memory is tweaked with each issue. Several things jump to mind as I write this.

It took me a long time to make the trip to the wall. Rolling Thunder was my first experience. I looked at the panel that has the names of those lost the first night. I found Sgt. Terry Smith and the others. Terry stood out from the others because I had to go to Dong Ha with Frank Jones to identify his remains. The trip down and back was the usual mad dash on and off the helicopter. We snipers never liked or used helmets prior to January 19, 1965. We sure used them after that. I tried to contact Terry Smiths family a couple of times over the years with no results. I believe he was from Arizona if anyone knows them.

For a time Frank Jones and I were assigned to Hill 881. I remember living in a bomb crater out on the knoll. I don't recall the unit we were assigned to. I believe the Lt. was John Kaheny. We didn't have a severe problem with rats like we did on the line at the base. I shot a deer and we boiled it up with a mixture of C's in a 55 gal drum.

When I left the Hill I was sent to run a section of the lines that stretched from the gate down towards the trash dump. The sniper hooch had taken a direct hit from a rocket and we lost most of our new Remington 700's I was platoon boss but we were spread out with little means of communication. I got hurt on the 19th, but helped many more seriously hurt than me. A gun pit took a direct hit and I carried two of the wounded to C- Med. Does anyone remember the elephant skull in front of C-Med, or where it came from?

I had been hurt the first night, then again on February the 8th. I was med-evacted to Danang where they operated on me. The doctors who worked in a bunker on the north side of the runway saved my life. Before I was flown out, Jones and a couple of others came over to see me. Frank had gathered all my gear including my weapons and put them in a sea bag which apparently went out with me. The next time I saw it was in my parent's living room, just as Frank had put it together. There was live ammunition and a loaded NVA Pistol in the holster. I was on leave from the Hospital in Key West. My Dad told me it was delivered by taxi. What's the chance of that happening again?

While I was in the hospital at Bethesda a General came by and presented me two Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star. I think McNamara was with him. I still have the picture. I was later told that Lt. Grebe who arrived just before the siege started, made the recommendation for the Bronze Star. I contacted him several years later because I never received a written a citation. He told me that he had put the war behind him and didn't want to talk about it with anyone.

Just prior to the siege a battalion sized outfit, either 3/26 or elements of the 1/9, came up from Dong Ha. I was selected to lead them out to a helicopter crash site near the Laotian border on hill 1015. I am not quite sure of the details. Frank was with me as usual. We were the only ones with red utilities. The rest of the patrol was new and had recently arrived in country. We spent a lot of time helping them with their gear.

Thank all of you for your efforts on the magazine. I hope to meet some of you next year in DC.

Vince Gable,
Sgt. HQ 26th Scout/Snipers

Dear Tom,

First of all I would like to tell you how much I enjoy our magazine, Red Clay. It has come a long way since the beginning of the organization. I have trouble putting it down and read it cover to cover.

I was in A Co 1/9 at Khe Sanh and also participated in Operation Dewey Canyon. I was wounded on Hill 471 in April 1968. I spent a month in the hospital and returned to 1/9. I finished my tour in March of 1969.

I am a Life Member of the KSV and have been to several reunions. My wife and I also went to a mini-reunion in Charleston SC. My former CO Mac Radcliff was the guest speaker. My friend and fellow Khe Sanh Veteran had a heart attack and passed away in his room that very evening. I did CPR on him until the arrival of the EMT's.

His death was hard on me and brought some of the nightmares back. An eerie thing though... his room number was 1/9/3. I have been thinking about attending the 40th anniversary. In 2008. That will be my first reunion since Charleston

I am inclosing a donation for the magazine, for a job well done. What would one expect, it is done by Marines.

Sincerely
Leonard Cosner
A Co 1/9 2ND PLT

Tom,
I found this article in the VVA Veterans newsletter.

Class of 1968



In June of 1967, two buddies, Ron Ridgeway and Bill Meeks, Jr., dropped out of Sam Houston High School in Houston to enlist in the USMC. Both served in Vietnam. Ridgeway served with the 26th Marines at Khe Sanh, where he received three Purple Hearts. He was a POW from February 1968 to March 1973. Bill Meeks served as a radioman with the 27th Marines and also received three Purple Hearts.

Ridgeway and Meeks are members of Chapter 343 in Houston and have sons serving in the Armed Forces. In May, Ron Ridgeway and Bill Meeks received their high school diplomas at a special graduation ceremony in Huntsville Texas. Texas law allows high school diplomas to be presented to men or women who quit school to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces during a time of war. Although both men had earned their GEDs while in the Marine Corps and had attended some of their high school reunions, they had never received their diplomas. The date of the diplomas was May 31, 1968.

Dave " Bulldog" Smith

Ernie,

I would like another copy of Kelly's book for a nurse friend of mine. Her ex husband was in the Marine Corps in Vietnam. She informed me that he helped load 55 gallon drums of Agent Orange in helicopters for dispersal on jungle canopies.

One of their children was born blind, and she is very interested in reading about Agent Orange. On my first tour in RVN when I was flying Med evacts, I remember seeing Agent Orange being loaded on those big helicopters. I think they were UH-34's. We called them "Deuces". This was at Marble Mountain.
Doc Griffin

Mr. Wodecki,
Enclosed find a check for $ 100.00, for the Khe Sanh Veterans. I appreciate receiving the issues of Red Clay and read them entirely. Your publication is so professional. Jack would be very proud of you all. Even more proud then he was in 1966-1967. Use the funds where they will do the most good.
Sincerley
Shirley Padley

Ed Note: Colonel Padley was the 26th Marines Regimental CO prior to Colonel Lownds

Jim and PJ,

I just want to thank you again for bringing your group to Mobile. I do hope you will return in 2009. The reunion banquet was very special and thank you for including us. The dinner we had on Sunday was a nice way to end it,. thanks again for that./ I will always treasure the plaque. People in our office cannot get over it.God Bless
Jerry Buzzard,
Mobile Bay Convention & Visitors Bureau

Hey Tom,

I hope this finds you well. The enclosed check is from some students in Branford High School, Branford, CT. I spoke there yesterday on my KS experience to about 200 kids. They had had a bake sale and raised some money for a veterans group that I deemed important. So you guys get it! The Teachers name was Mindy Baker.

Concerning the reunion. I had every intention of going, but I am in the middle of a medical setback. An old injury, not illness, (thank God,) is going to keep me away. I had knee replacement surgery on a battered left knee a few weeks back. I actually hurt the knee as a result of a pretty brutal, cheap shot block on 5 Dec 69 at Lejeune

It's been over 30 years since that day. I have had two major surgeries and 2 scopes. In the last two years it's been bone on bone and unrelenting pain. I had to have the replacement even though I worked very hard at rehab. I outworked every flicker in the place, that's for sure. I never got full range of motion back. They have tried a few things, but I have to have a MUA (**Manipulation Under Anesthesia)** in mid June. Essentially, they bring me back to the hospital, knock me out, and manipulate the knee joint in every normal movement, breaking all the adhesion's/ scar tissue that prevents me from walking normally right now. The Doc says it won't hurt because I will be asleep, I told him: "Yeah, but I do have to wake up, then what?

I'll be forced to spend two to three in the hospital depending on swelling and pain. I had lots of both after the last replacement. Then it's home for bed rest and rehab twice a day that will last for 10 to 14 straight days. That effectively puts me out of the reunion. I wish I could be there to put up my pictures and see some of the guys. I'll miss it. Next time I, hope.
Dennis Mannion

PICTURES YOU WILL NOT SEE ON YOUR LOCAL NEWS





INCOMING

Tribute to Corpsman John Michels

This is our Corpsman
Assigned to a tent at Dong Ha
the tent was blown up
by incoming rockets
you cared for the wounded
At a trash dump near Cam Lo
you bathed and bandaged
and laughed and played
with Vietnamese children

You were initiated at the Dunes
into the Marine Corps
a bucket of scorpions
was poured on to your chest

You drank chocolate milk
to celebrate a Marine's birthday
and once again to celebrate Ho Chi Minh's birth
day at Quang Tri Bridge

You marched naked
across Quang Tri Bridge
proclaiming to the laughing Vietnamese
that "The French have returned"

You listened attentively
as your men read letters
from their friends
and families at home

You watched in horror
as your friend Richard Jorgenson
was thrown from a truck
into a speeding tank
(The tank stopped 1 foot away from
Jorgenson - he sustained broken ribs
but survived)

You survived a four hour firefight
tending to heat stoke victims
Lima Company suffered no serious casualties
but as we prepared to leave the battlefield
victorious
an explosion took the life of Major Joseph
Loughran

Like a skilled surgeon
you delicately removed leeches
from our eyelids
and the insides of our mouths

When Marines were trapped
on a mountaintop - using a machete
you cut your way through
hundreds of yards of thick vegetation
and successfully relieved them

On the way up the mountain
you came across half dead
North Vietnamese soldiers
you gave them water
and blessed them with
the Sign of the Cross
then moved on

You fed starving Marines
with handfuls of Cadillac dog food
when the food was gone
you allowed them to continue
sucking the flavor from your hands

You warned us not to drink
water buffalo piss
then you fought to get
your share of the puddle

You made helmet liners
for your Marines
out of captured
NVA women's black panties

You participated in our beauty contest
after a great deal of debate

we all came to an agreement
that "Adak of The Mole People"
was the prettiest girl in the world

Each day you passed out
Useless malaria pills
at night you cleared
the mouths and throats
of malaria victims.

You took a needle and thread
and sewed poncho liners into vests
to keep your men warm at night

You used powdered coffee creamer & sugar
and made "Railroader's Turkish Taffy"
and shared it with other soldiers
and the Vietnamese

When a priest came to celebrate mass
you pressed the Turkish Taffy into wafers
the wafers and the blood on the ground
were consecrated in the
Sacrament of Holy Communion

You calmed your men
who were trapped
in an eight grenade daisy chain booby trap
they all survived that day

You played a game with your men
dispatching pages of
James Mitchner's book "Hawaii"
to Pvt Strande for instructions
Strande would receive the page
then send back appropriate quotations
from his Bible

When Tom Strande
was killed you tied him
to a tiger litter and helped
carry him up a steep hill

When a Marine who
had lost the use of his arms
tried to help carry Tom Strande
with his teeth
you understood and helped him

You shared with your squad
L/Cpl James Leroy Brown's
bottle of "Manila Rum"
at our Last Supper
(Less than 24 hours after John Michel's
death, Brown would die in a mine field)

Your life was saved by our scout dog
the dog was cut down
you ran through machine gun fire
to retrieve the dog's body

You were cut down by an M-79 grenade
surrounded by wounded Marines
the Marines all badly cut up and in pain
cried out for their "Corpsman"
a Marine by your side cried out in horror
"This is our Corpsman!"
there was silence
all cries and all physical pain ceased

You were tightly wrapped by a friend
in a rubber poncho - he fanned you
and stayed by your side
"Do you hear them Doc? I can hear them!
They're coming for you, Doc, it won't be long"
You heard my voice and you smiled.

By his friend PFC Robert Greer
3rd Platoon, Lima Company,
3rd Battalion, 26th Marines
Vietnam 1968

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MEMOIRS

JUST A LITTLE STORY

By Ray Pritte

I arrived in country in late 1965. I was assigned to MAG 11, H&MS 11, and a C-117 Crew. That was my actual FPO address. We had at one time three C-117Ds and a C-45 Beechcraft. After my obligatory 13 months. I had my choice of duty stations. I Picked VMGR-352 at El Toro (KC-130Fs). Thought I was going to have it made in the shade, an 0800 to 1600 job with some training missions here and there for my last year and a half, forty miles from my parents place. Made in the shade? Not! I Should have realized by that time that the Marine Corps didn't operate that way, especially during war. Wishful thinking I guess. I took 30 days leave and reported in to VMGR-352. Within a couple of weeks I found my-

self detached with an half dozen other planes and crews to VMGR152 at where else, but my favorite place in the world. Danang. The VMGR-152 ramp was about 100 yards south of my old ramp. To get around the congressional prohibition on sending someone back involuntarily for a second tour, they always sent us TDY and rotated us back to El Toro occasionally for a week or so to keep the books straight. What a crazy existence.

Once I got to spend a weekend at my parents place. Big Sunday dinner. After dinner I watched the TV news. Of course it was non stop footage from Vietnam. Very surreal. Here I was in sunny, Southern California, eating a fantastic dinner with my parents folks knowing I had to get up at 0330 to get back to El Toro for an 0500 briefing for a Transpac refueling for Navy and Marine Corps jets (primarily F-4s and A-4s) all the way across the pacific to Danang. We might get an overnight stop at Futema. We hauled every kind of trash you can imagine in country for a couple of weeks before handing in our plane just out of check to 152 and taking one of their battle weary wrecks back to El Toro. Once one of the planes that we had flown all across the Pacific was found to have cracks in the wing roots that you could drop a nickel into.

I went down in a 117 on the 10th day of Operation Hastings and lost the rest of my 5 man crew. How I survived I don't have a clue. I was really messed up bad. I spent four months at the Naval Hospital at Yokosuka, then was given the choice of staying on in Japan on embassy duty, or, going back to my old squadron. It was not a hard decision. Embassy duty? Good grief. Plus no combat or flight pay? My last flight out of Danang was in August of 68 to go back to school on the GI Bill. I was one of the few enlisted crewmen who was around so long that participated big time in Operation Hastings and was still around for many missions into Khe Sanh during the Siege.

I have lost touch with almost everyone but a couple of special guys who I crewed with. They are on the CC, except for Donna, She is a special friend of mine who was a Sgt in the Army. Her brother Jerry was a door gunner who went MIA during the Siege. Tom Eichler is the Chairman of the Membership Committee and VP of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association (KSVA).I am a life member of the KSVA. A number of other 352 and 152 guys are also members.

MEMOIRS

Dedicated to the Chosen Few, the Grunts of Kilo Company

I am a grunt company Kilo Company, 3Rd Battalion 26th Marines. I have been from Khe Sanh to Chu Lai, Dong Ha, to Danang. I have humped the Oklahoma Hills. I have swept the Arizona Territory in areas like Dodge City. I have made beach landings, vertical envelopments and used the old feet to find the enemy. I have been T/O and rated as ineffective, but I have survived to see the enemy at its lowest level. I have fought both NVA and irregular guerillas. My finest hour occurred on December 26 when my sister companies and I were deployed to Khe Sanh. We were chosen to man Hill 861 just west of the combat base. It was a major post between the enemy and Khe Sanh. The hill remained quiet until Jan 15 1968, while my men were preparing for Tet. Rumors were that 50,000 NVA were in my area. On 21 January 1968, at 0230 Hours, we met the enemy. My men and I were ready though the fog blocked our vision. The cries and yells came towards me. Again and again they pounded at me, but my men fought valiantly. Many paid the full price. Only 15 NVA broke my lines, but that was soon closed. The enemy fought on through the night. By 0600 just, as fast as they had came, they disappeared. They had run away, soundly defeated. I had weathered the fight well, with 14 men killed, and 22 wounded. Their count stood at 250 dead and 6 captured. I had stood firm. We stayed there 5 months until the enemy withdraw from the area.

I then moved to Quang Tri where my men and I again searched out the enemy. We hopped around from LZ to LZ without many losses, but we did inflict losses on the enemy. In May of 1968, my sister companies and I were called to another part of the country, this time to the hills that surrounded Danang. There my men and I spent more than a month in the bush. My men and I discovered large weapons and food caches. Contact was light, but the scars I received at Khe Sanh were still sore. I spent the hot summer in the hills and rice paddies around Hill 10 and Hill 55. I had a few days in the rear once in awhile.

In September 1968 my sister companies took over the Hi Van pass. My mission was to protect the road to Phu Bai. I remained there until November 1968 and was invited to tour the area called Dodge City. I joined a gigantic cordon to block enemy forces and helped to push back the enemy. Again my men fell but the enemy paid a high price. My sister companies and I killed over 500 enemy in twenty days of fighting. I sustained three killed and 11 wounded. The news of being a special landing force late in December 1968. I found out we were equipped with sea legs when we went aboard the USS Ogden, then on to the USS Valley Forge. They planned as I had, not to get used to life on ship, because on 16 January we were off again. The next few months found my men and me in Chu Lai, and An Hoa. I was cut down to nothing, but always seemed to get new people. My men and I were both scared. On March 22 we were extracted and taken to Hill 55. where we remained for three days, until we were once again called out to hump more hills. For a month I combed the Oklahoma Hills. I lost one of my best officers on this operation. It always seemed that the good men were always the first to die.

After the Hill operations we once again returned to the ship. I wondered what they had planned for me now. We stayed on the ship until June 12th, when we left and went to the Esso Plant. The Esso Plant was a familiar site. It was good to be on land again. After 97 days we left the Plant and returned to the Hi Van pass. I left and went to Hill 190 where I spent 3 months. I did a large part while there, acting as a reaction force, finding and destroying enemy supplies. After three months we switched to the Namo Bridge. The VC had tried my force once, and they again failed. What of the future? A pacification force? leave Vietnam? No one knew for sure, only that I will move on with the courage and Espirit De Corps that has kept me alive so far. I have seen many men and will see more. I have received numerous awards. The PUC, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry are among the honors won by my regiment. I am a grunt company, but it is the men and their morale, and physical courage help me stay strong. Peace may come, but until then I will do my duty as a grunt company.

Rodney M. Svetich
Sergeant USMC
Kilo CO 3/26

INCOMING

Our Roving Ambassadors Visit to Washington DC for Rolling Thunder

By Cliff Treese B 1/13

Ron and I accompanied by our lovely wives flew to Washington DC to participate in Operation Rolling Thunder, it is a tribute by Bikers at the Vietnam Memorial to our fallen Veterans who perished during the Vietnam War. Cliff also had two of his buddies from the VA attend the ceremony.

We decided to visit a few of the museums while we were in DC. We always choose a few different ones each time we visit Washington. We chose the Aerospace and Native American Museums (Pic # 1 & 2).

Ron and I felt right at home when we got on the escalator. The steps all had Parris Island yellow footprints on them. We looked around for D.I.'s to start yelling at us. Ron and I tested our flying expertise in an F-14 simulator. Needless to say, we are better at artillery than flying. We flew most of the mission upside down.

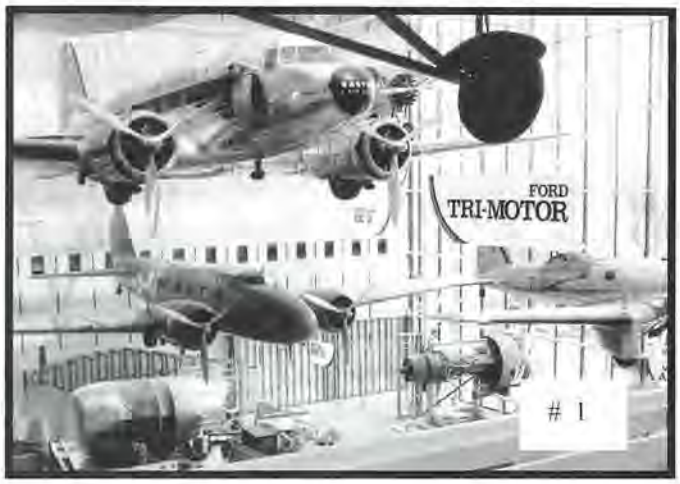

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At the Native American Museum there are numerous displays from all the different tribes, from Alaska to Florida. While leaving the museum we ran into two Native American Cherokee Indians from Tennessee. They are both from the UCAN Veteran's Society & Honor Guard. One of them was Paul D. (Four Eagles) Green from Cleveland, TN (Pic # 11).

Ron, his three buddies and I had tickets for the Evening Parade at 8th & I. We were concerned if they would even have it, but as we approached the sub-

way entrance the sky opened up. When we arrived at 8th and I God must have been looking down on we Marines. Just as quickly as the rain started, it stopped. We were hungry. Since we were early we stopped at a bar called Marty's. Ron met a man



who was looking for tickets for 8th & I. He gave them the two extra tickets we had for our wives who chose not to attend. Ron's three buddies who were all soldiers, were very impressed by the parade, as are all who have had the pleasure to attend the ceremony. After the program, we stopped and said hi to Chris Noel from Vietnam Armed Forces Radio Station.

The next morning Ron and I walked to The Wall.



The perfect time to visit the wall is before the crowd arrives. You can take your time and have a little privacy. We went to panel41E and 45E to pay our respects to two of our friends from B 1/13, (Ron Dempsey and Louis Goi). We spent a few minutes talking about the good times we had with them before Khe Sanh. We really miss our friends.

We walked back past the Three Soldier's Statue to visit the flagpole with the Service emblems at the base. We were proud to see that the Marines are still polishing their portion of the base, even though it is against Park rules. (Pic # 4) We heard Gordon Painter singing by the Reflection Pond and walked over to the stage. (Pic # 6) We have met Gordon on our previous visits to Rolling Thunder. Gordon is a great guy and took the time to speak to us between songs.

By this time a crowd was gathering and we followed them back past the Three Soldier's Statue to the far end of The Wall. CNN news approached Ron and I and asked if we would participate in an interview. Ron and I along with a Khe Sanh Marine sniper from 1/9 were interviewed by their reporter. The reporter asked us our opinion of the war in Iraq compared to Vietnam and why we came to visit The Wall. Ron's interview aired Sunday morning. Mine aired Monday morning.



Ron disappeared. When we finally found him he was checking out the custom bike being raffled by Rolling Thunder, along with the chassis of a young lady promoting the raffle. (Pic # 3). I don't know how many tickets he bought but we had a hard time getting him away from that bike.

On Sunday, the day of the Parade, we returned to Thunder Alley. Constitution Avenue is blocked off when the parade starts. The parade usually takes several hours to complete. It starts with the usual D.C. Police motorcade followed by the Rolling Thunder vehicles. This year's parade was reported to be 750,000 strong. Biker's come from all over the

country to participate. When the parade comes down Constitution Avenue, you know why it is called Rolling Thunder. You can hear the parade coming long before you can see it. It is an awesome sound and sight.

We returned to the stage area by The Reflection Pond to listen to the show put on each year by the Rolling Thunder Organization. Each year celebrity performers donate their services to the Rolling Thunder cause and honor Veterans with a free show. For more than twenty years a veteran portrays a POW and sits in a bamboo cage during the performance. (Pic # 7 & 7A)) He is carried in by an honor guard and endures the heat in order to illustrate the humiliation of being caged like an animal and the plight of the many POWs during the Vietnam Era.

As the program began I looked behind me up the steps of The Reflection Pond with the Lincoln Memorial in the background and witnessed hundreds of veterans and their families standing with their hats



off and their hands over their hearts during an excellent rendition of the National Anthem performed by Gordon Painter (Pic # 10). Ron and I heard that Nancy Sinatra would soon be leaving the motor home to come to the stage area.

Although Ron and I were both Cannon Cockers" we decided a recon mission was called for in order to find Nancy's bus. We put the bus under siege until Nancy surrendered and agreed to a Peace Conference before going on stage. As always, Nancy graciously granted us a few moments of her time and posed for pictures with us (Pic # 8). I asked her about the jacket we had made for her two years ago. She said she still has the jacket and wears it on regular occasions. She remarked that she can always count on the Khe Sanh Veterans'to show up for the



Rolling Thunder Concert. Monday, Ron and Lynn left to visit their daughter in Maryland. Linda and I returned for the services being held at The Wall. Four new names were added to The Wall this year. Their surviving family members were special guests at the ceremony. Jimmy Fortune, formerly of the Statler Brothers, returned to The Wall once again to



sing his moving song, More Than A Name On The Wall. There wasn't a dry eye in the area. After his performance, I approached the stage to speak with him. I had met him two years ago and presented him with a Khe Sanh hat and one of my cards (Pic # 9). He remembered me and remembered his camera crew had filmed Ron, Glen, and me with him at the Wall. He informed me that he plans to use the footage shot that day for a music video of the song More Than A Name On The Wall.

He presented me with an autographed CD of his new song In God We Trust. As always, the ceremony at

The Wall was very moving. Wreaths were laid to honor those who lost their lives in the Vietnam War along with those still unaccounted for. Taps were played by a bugler and bagpipes who stood on top of The Wall at its apex. We returned to the hotel to get ready for our flight back to Florida. It was the perfect ending to another great trip to Washington, D.C.

Cliff Treese &Ron Shouse BOD













After The Parade At 8TH & I With Chris Noel

BOOK REVIEW

RED PLATEAU: Memoir of a North Vietnamese Soldier. By John Edmund Delezen. Published by Corps Productions. 141 pages. Stock 0961852925. $14.35 MCA Members. $15.95 Nonmembers.

Reprinted with permission from Leatherneck Magazine, June 2006.



"Red Plateau" takes you inside the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) by using a unique concept. The author, John Delezen, a decorated, multi-wounded Marine veteran of the war in Vietnam, writes the story through the eyes of a young, newly conscripted recruit who is transformed into a highly dedicated member of the NVA. This is accomplished by using diaries and ledgers kept by Nguyen Van Tuan and members of his battalion. Delezen previously wrote the well-received "Eye of the Tiger," based on his experiences while serving in 3d Force Recon Company along the Demilitarized Zone in Vietnam's northern I Corps.

How did the author become so knowledgeable about our former enemy? After the war, he studied Vietnamese and returned to Vietnam. While touring Hue, he was relaxing near the Trang Tien Bridge when he met former NVA soldier Nguyen Van Tuan. This casual meeting of two former enemies led to a life long friendship. The author and Tuan, who possibly faced each other in mortal combat, became like brothers. The result of countless meetings led to a supremely crafted narrative, "Red Plateau."

Tuan becomes the voice of Delezen's short but powerful book. Through Tuan's eyes, details of life in the villages of Vietnam and the daily life inside the NVA come alive. Conscripted into the army, Tuan received three months of harsh train-ing and became part of an infantry unit. After training, the unit moved south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The first few kilometers by truck were the last ride during the war for Tuan. For the next six years he and his comrades covered mile after mile on foot. His unit moved south through the Truong Mountains (ominously called the "Door to Death), where U.S. aircraft were always on the prowl, searching for targets along the trail. The most feared weapons for Tuan and his comrades were B-52 bombers and napalm. Young North Vietnamese women manned many of the antiaircraft batteries along the trail .

Using Tuan's voice to describe the move south, the author's prose is masterful. Even the most hardened veteran of the war should feel a kinship to the typical NVA soldier. The author's well structured narrative benefits from seemingly endless sources of information mined from the diaries and journals covering years of combat in South Vietnam. The book's title comes from the coloring of these documents, mostly tinted red by long exposure to the clay soil which permeated the area of combat operations of Tuan's unit.

The reader will learn the innermost workings of the small infantry units of the NVA, including the close bonding between NVA soldiers and the difficulties of traversing long distances with extremely limited support and sparse rations. Mail from home was almost non existent. When a soldier was fortunate enough to receive a letter, he eagerly shared the news with others.

To ensure the young soldiers maintained proper communist attitudes, a political officer accompanied each small unit, or cell. The performance of these omnipresent and oft times barely tolerated officers is described, as well as punishment imposed on soldiers for minor infractions. After reading of the dangers faced day and night by the NVA, the reader may wonder how so many survived to enter battle in South Vietnam. Air strikes decimated their ranks. Malaria and dysentery were common ailments.

Using the voice of his friend, Delezen has captured the daily challenges of living, traveling and soldiers dying beneath the triple canopy week after week. He takes you inside their "hearts and minds" as well as any author has done. His success is due to many factors. The language skills were most helpful, but the real key was his deepening friendship with Tuan, who provided access to countless documents and records of years of combat by a small NVA unit.

Most important, Delezen's talent for expressing the innermost feelings and motivation of low ranking

NVA soldiers is what separates this short and inexpensive paperback book from the many other books about a war that claimed more than 58,000 American lives. "Red Plateau" is well worth reading for many reasons, not the least of which is learning of the leadership skills displayed at the platoon, company and battalion level. The captains and majors portrayed in "Red Plateau" had fought the French for years and now faced a new and more formidable enemy, armed with devastating weapons and numbering more than half a million. The leadership traits portrayed in "Red Plateau" provide valid "lessons learned" for decades to come.

Lt Col James B. Wilkinson, USMC (Ret)

Editor's note: Jim Wilkinson enlisted in 1948 *and was commissioned in* 1951. *He served as a rifle platoon leader in the Korean War and was an advisor to the Korean Marine Corps in* 1964-66. *He commanded* 1/26 *at Khe Sanh and was XO of 4th Marines later in* 1968. *After retirement from the Corps, Wilkinson became senior resident vice president at Merrill Lynch, retiring in 1995.*

RED PLATEAU is available at www.corpsproductions.com

Hey Ernie

I missed you at the Reunion. However, I did pick up the "Red Plateau" book you published. Fascinating story for anyone (like me) who could see himself and people he knew dancing in and out of it. Delezen's poetry is evident throughout as a filter through which Tuan's tale is told. At times, I wondered just how much of the telling was Delezen's?

No matter, it's a hell of a story that I couldn't put down. The sensitive, poetic way the story is related really helps conjure those tender and stark moments and images. Another reason, I suppose, is that I really could visualize much of the terrain and some of the events being related. On page 101, for instance, Tuan heard "helicopters" over the fallen base at Lang Vei in the early light hours. Nope! That was definitely me and another FAC in our O-2s, sizing things up and directing air strikes. The second paragraph he describes the aircraft in the treetops and fog? That had to be "Canasta" flight, four Navy A-1s from the carrier. As a follow up to my contacts with the Lang Vei survivors, I have struck up a liaison with one of these "Canasta" pilots. Amazing how his diary parallels mine in thought and events. I plan to share the book with him. It'll knock his socks off. It all got me thinking again about putting my own diary into readable form. Gotta get it digitized first, I guess.

Ray Stubbe's "Battalion Of Kings" makes a good cross check of daily activity during the Siege, doesn't it? Got one of those as well. That was one grand hotel we were at in Mobile. Since I missed the last two reunions, it was great to see so many familiar faces again. So you are in El Dorado Hills, CA now? Nice area. I still have a sister in Sacramento and visit fairly often. My annual sabbaticals are the "Sacramento Dixieland Jubilee" and the "Reno Air Races." Maybe we can connect for more Thai food on one of my trips through?
Cheers,

Toby Rushforth

Ed. Note. Thai food is an insider joke between Toby and me. It happened in Waikiki. Got a great Thai place right here in El Dorado Hills. Half hour from Old Town Sac. on the road to Tahoe.

WEB PAGE SHORT ROUNDS

REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST
MCRD San Diego

By Craig W.Tourte

I'm heading down to San Diego next week from Northern California. It is about a 9 or 10 hour drive. My son is turning 21 so I though I should spend a little time with him (OK so I got a late start). Over the phone he was telling me how difficult it was only having one little in the wall air-conditioner. He told me it was 85 with a little rain. I didn't want to start on, about where I was, or, what I was doing when I turned 21. But I can remember it quite clearly. His turning 21 will be a special memory for me.

I'm going to be in San Diego for a couple of days before my wife flies in., She is still employed while I lay around on my butt a lot. While I'm there I think

I'll drop in to see MCRD. I haven't been to the place since I left in1966 (platoon 1145), although I have often stood inside the San Diego airport looking at it just across the runaway. I have noticed the changes and observed that there appears to be far fewer recruits than when I was there with Bill Poland and Mike Powers, both Khe Sanh Veterans. I must have looked kind of funny to the other people if any of them spent any amount of time observing me. The memories come rushing back and I can't help but think of all the many who went before and after me and of those who did not return.

I seem to remember that boot camp was a short, but difficult 8 week course. Mike Powers reminds me that most who were in our platoon were East coast Reservists. I think it's going to be a little difficult when I first get in my car and make my way to the front gate. I'm sure they'll wonder who this old man is. I'll wear my red Khe Sanh Veteran shirt and see if that gets me into the officers club. Do they have an officers club? I won't tell them I was just a Private, make that an E4 when I got out in 1968, but I always kind of felt like a private. I hope I don't find myself yelling: "Yes Sir."

My wife is flying back to Northern California from San Diego on August 3rd and I'm heading up the coast to beautiful San Louis Obispo to play some golf. I'm going to be by myself. Sometimes it's good to spend some time with your memories and thinking about one's youth. A long drive to nowhere in particular kind of clears my mind of the little stuff and helps me to remember and appreciate all that we as Khe Sanh Veterans went through, and to realize that as much as things change, they remain the same.

My Tour of MCRD San Diego
First Visit After Boot Camp

By Craig W Tourte

Realizing that I graduated from the Recruit Depot exactly 40 years ago was daunting this morning as I toured the historic facility. It was the first time I had returned since I graduated from boot camp. Mike Powers (D/1/26) and Bill Poland (HQ 1/13) were in my 1966 graduating platoon 1145 and both served at Khe Sanh. They look so much older now. I of course look much the same as I did when I graduated. OK, so I've gained a few pounds, but give me a few weeks and I'd be right back to where...another dream I'm afraid. The most painful experience was realizing that the new recruits would be my grandchildren's age (providing I had any). I met Lt. Col. Thomas A. Richards, U.S.M.C. (Ret.) who is currently the Executive Director of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Museum Historical Society www.mcrdmuseumhistoricalsocidety.org. We talked a little about Vietnam and his 20 year military career. He was a graduate of the Recruit Depot and served there as a drill instructor. He served in Vietnam in the early 70's.

The Historical Society is currently constructing a new wing featuring the Vietnam War. The Society has donated $150,000.00 towards this effort, which is now making its way through the bureaucracy for approval. I gave Col. Richards one of our Khe Sanh coins. He was very appreciative and in return gave me a gold coin with the Eagle Globe and Anchor that read "United States Marine Corps, Semper Fidelis." The flip side read, "MCRD Museum Historical Society, San Diego California." It was very impressive and he called to me and came outside saying he forgot to give it to me when I was in his office. I took a few photos of the Vietnam glass case devoted to our war. A case measuring about 8X10 with a few artifacts inside is all that is currently presented, but that should change sometime in the future. There was a small typed notice mentioning Khe Sanh and Tet, but that was about it.

I stood out on the grinder and had a conversation with another former Marine who retired 4 years ago. He served 20 years and retired as a drill instructor. He told me about some of the changes he had seen at the Depot over the years. I didn't say much other than nod a little. I figured, what was the use talking about the base as I knew it 40 years ago. I wondered over to the theater which has not changed at all. There was some kind of small ceremony going on inside for enlisted NCOs who had completed various college courses. My attention was drawn to two Privates cleaning the floor up in the balcony seats where our platoon always managed to sit during the mandatory church services on Sunday. The theater remains hot, stuffy and airless inside. Outside, I stood over on the side where I had my photograph taken with my parents, grandparents, aunt and uncle the day I graduated those many years ago. Me standing uneasy before my family, proud in my new green uniform. They are all gone now, but that stoop

on the North side of the steps has remained the same. I wondered how many other young Marines have stood there with their families.

I received quite a few "Good Morning Sir," as I walked around, feeling like an ancient forgotten relic of centuries past and forgotten. The grinder is still as large as I remember, but now it seems that one third is devoted to parked vehicles. There were a couple of recruit platoons marching on the grinder. It just did not seem as impressive with all the cars and trucks parked around. The recruit platoons didn't look to be as large as the platoons we had during the Vietnam period, but they did look pretty sharp, I think graduation is every Friday. The Marine Corps Band was playing somewhere off in the distance.

The music stopped me in my tracks, remembering when the band would march to the large flag every evening when the colors were taken down. I am still moved by the music and the memory. Of course all of the old Quonset huts are gone now, the new barracks having taken their place some 35 years ago. I was happy to leave the Marine Corps and the Recruit Depot when I returned from Vietnam and where I was stationed shortly before I go out in 1968. I confess as I left the Depot I never looked back. But, as I got in my car and drove out the front gate this morning, I knew I had left a little of me behind this time and then realized that I had left a great deal of me behind when I drove out of those same gates in 1968.

REPLIES:

First Visit After Boot Camp

By Dennis Mannion

Craig: Very nicely done. When the reunion was in Charleston, I naturally took the hour long bus trip to PI. I don't remember if you were there. Sorry. At the conclusion of the tour, they unloaded us at the PX Cash Sales area with instructions to stay in that location for the hour or so. I waited 30 seconds before "drifting" away. I knew I'd never find my barracks in 1967. We were in the old wooden ones left over from WWII and they were long gone. It took 15 minutes or so to walk to the Grinder. I believe that we were there on a Thursday with graduation on Friday.

Two platoons were alternating time between the vast pavement and the visitor stands. There was plenty of wide open space for both, but they alternated close order drill and some DI TIME while sitting at rapt attention. I stood quietly to the side of the stands and could not help but smile at all the: "Sir, Yes, Sir" response and the constant use of the DI's: "Do you understand me?!"

One of the DI's approached and said: "Good Afternoon, Sir." He saw my reunion tag with the Khe Sanh name and inquired if there was anything I wanted. I asked if it would be OK to walk out to the dead center of the Grinder where I knew I had walked all those years before. He said, "A Khe Sanh Marine Sir? You can walk anywhere you want out here. Take all the time you desire."

I eased my way down in front of the seated platoon so that I was in the absolute center of all that concrete. I then walked straight out until I was in the exact middle. I did a 180 degree turn. No. I did not point one foot behind me and do an about face. I took in the view. The last time I had that same view with the stands in front of me and the Iwo Jima statue to the left. It was Graduation Day on 16 March 67. I knelt right at that spot, down on two knees like in church, and said a quiet prayer for the Platoon 236 guys who never made it back, the Khe Sanh guys who never made it back, and, all the Marines and Corpsman from our era who never came home. I stood for a minute...brushed away a tear or two ...rejoiced that my good wife and one of my sons were back at the PX waiting on me, then turned and walked on a 45 degree angle to reach the end of the Grinder. As I walked, I kept looking down at the concrete wondering if my spit polished boots (never done quite right) had ever made contact in that exact same spot 3 plus decades before. We spent a lot of time out there. I bet they did.

First Visit After Boot Camp

By Jim Peterson

Great story Craig

I made the same trip in May of this year. I visited MCRD for the May 5th Graduation and was proud to see that it was my beloved 3rd Battalion graduating, exactly 10 days short of forty years since I had stepped on those yellow footprints. I mentioned this

to the Lance Corporal at the gate. His reply: "I heard you lived in Quonset Huts back then."

I too saw the sign for the "Little Saigon" area and El Toro which is in the process of being converted into a Housing Development similar to New York's Central Park area. For some reason I always thought El Toro was much further North. During my return to the States, the crew from the Continental Airlines flight allowed me to stay on the airplane for its final leg to LAX where I caught a flight to Chicago. I'm-saving Pendleton for the next trip and maybe 29 Palms where I went to 50 caliber School.

OBIT



"CHARLIE"

was the beloved companion of Neil and Alice Kenny. Those who were privileged to have met Charlie at the reunion in Mobile, are saddened by his loss. Not only are our "Pets" our loving companions, they are also our "Best Friends."

MEMOIRS

Fishing the Rao Quan

By Dan Fisher D Co 1/26

The column of green clad Marines snaked slowly along the north bank of the Rao Quan River where it intersects with Route 9 east of Khe Sanh Combat Base. A place known on tactical maps as the "Hairpin."

At intervals of 50 feet two Marines would drop from the end of the moving column and begin digging fighting positions facing both the river and the steep embankment to their immediate rear. Their mission was to provide security for engineers constructing a crossing some distance up stream from an earlier blown bridge.

It had been four weeks since the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines arrived at Khe Sanh following the Hill Fights and life was hectic for all the Battalion's companies occupying, fortifying and defending the Combat Base, the three Hill outposts and running long range combat patrols in all directions right up to the Laotian Border below Co Roc Massif. NVA units roamed this Area of Operations and announced themselves in quick and deadly encounters.

One pair of Marines thrown together by chance finished their fighting hole and began the uneventful watch to their front and back. The hot, humid jungle conditions of the river gorge weighed heavily on their attention span and they searched for anything to talk about to keep alert. Suddenly, familiar swirls in the river captured their attention and they talked excitedly of fishing back home in the mountain streams of Arizona and the woodland lakes of Minnesota.

When "the word" passed to shift the watch to fifty percent one Marine scurried to find materials for their new quest. A sturdy bamboo shoot, a length of trip wire, a hook fashioned from an old frag pin and tipped with a piece of pork steak rounded out their tackle.

Quietly, one Marine plied the murky, river currents while the other carefully scanned the river and surrounding embankment for sign of enemy or their ever-roving platoon sergeant with each taking turns to fish. Did they catch fish? I can't remember and it didn't much matter. It was a well deserved break from the stark reality they had come to know.

That mission soon ended and they went on to many others but each Marine carried that fond memory for years to come often retelling it during family fishing trips of how they once fished a distant jungle river.

Fast forward 33 years to the 2000 Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion in San Diego. Both of these angling Marines, Ray Palmer and Dan Fisher, were brought together again by Delta Company historian, Tom Howard, who, during his research noted two similar fishing stories, Memories of that long ago fishing excursion remained sharp with both veterans. Gifts were exchanged and promises of future fishing trips were made, but under different circumstances!

Semper Fi Dan

SHORT ROUNDS

MY THE PATH TO RECOVERY

By Robert Schoondermark M CO 3/26

During my path to healing, I was in the VA Hospital in Hot Springs SD in May of 2001. While in a "Sweat Lodge" at the hospital, I found myself on my knees with my forehead touching the ground much like the Muslims pray. Actually, I was just trying to get my nose out under the wall of the lodge to get some cooler breaths of air.

My simple prayer was: "God, AA says if a person is on their knees and sincerely ask the creator, he will remove the urge and craving," Since I could not handle life with or without alcohol and apparently the creator wasn't going to allow me to die, I needed help. If he would take this urge and craving, I would strive to do as he would lead me. I had a lightning flash and those awakening lightning beings shocked that urge and craving right out of my body. I have not had the slightest desire to touch alcohol in over 5 years. Thank you brothers. To share serenity, and stay on the path, we are blessed to walk together whatever times we can.

Ed Note: Robert sent in a copy of the buckskin legacy he gifted to the PTSD program at the VA Health Care facility in Black Hills, SD in 2003. A copy was also accepted in the permanent collection at the Angel Fire memorial in 2005.

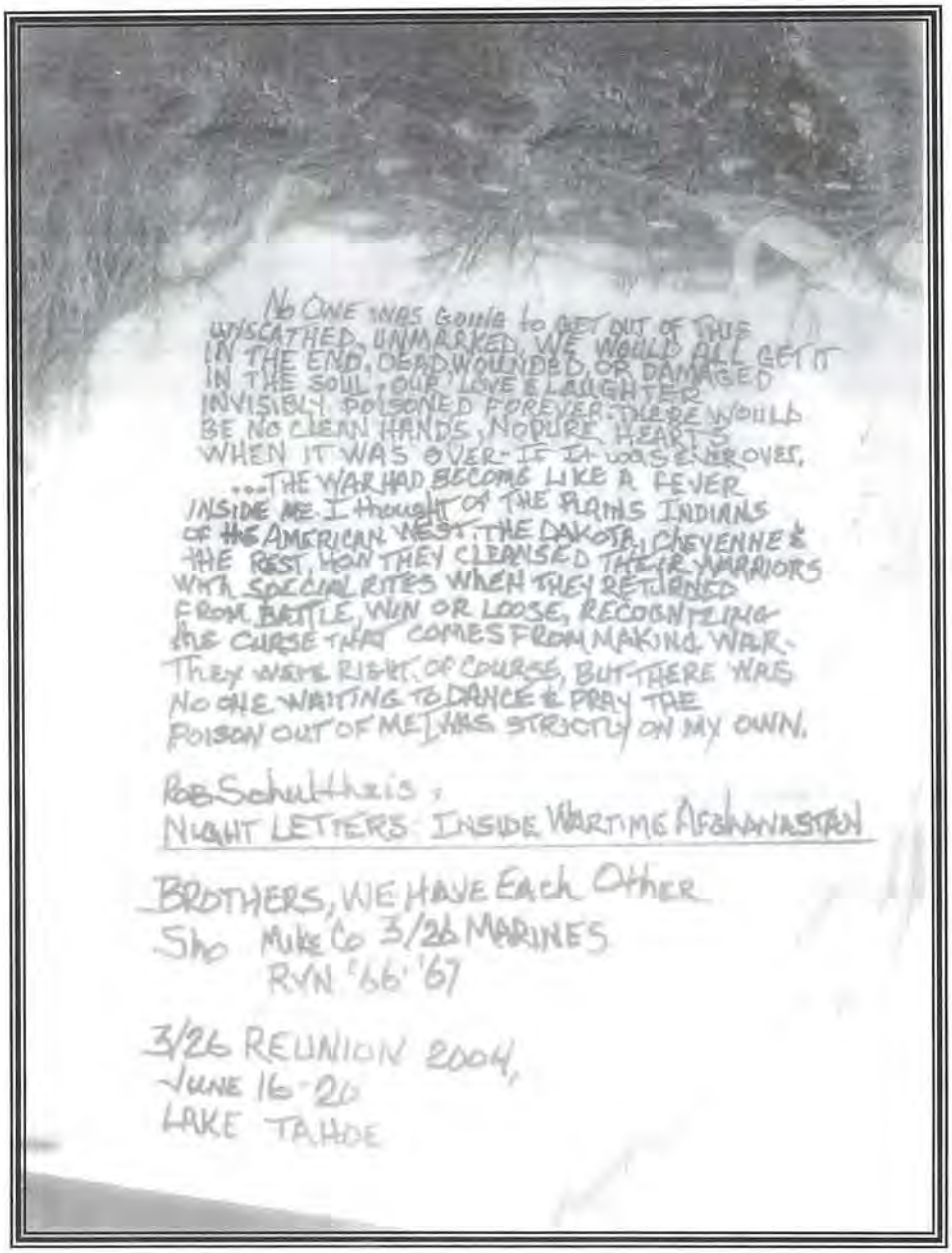

POETRY

From the sands of Iwo Jima
To the Siege at old Khe Sanh
We have kept our Marine Corps honor
Through those battles fought and won
Yes, we braved the heat and Monsoon rains
That fell on jungle greens
We are proud to name our title
Of United States Marines

Bill Person, USAF

MEMOIRS

Khe Sanh Hillbillies

By Craig W. Tourte

The 77 Siege of the Corps Combat Base at Khe Sanh was pretty much a grind for those of us who survived that most harrowing experience. The time we spent at Khe Sanh prior and subsequent to the Siege was no cakewalk either. The deprivation was constant the whole eight months that I was on the base. There was too little water and what was available was always warm, the foul taste often masked by a dry powered sweet cool aid in red or orange flavor. The quality of food was mostly poor, often consisting of a canned mystery surrounded in lard with a familiar label but unidentifiable when opened and poured, grease and all onto a dusty metal pan before being placed into the oven of a portable gasoline fired cook stove. Some dried bulk and food products were left over from the Korean War. Any fresh or frozen meat received was saved by the Gunny for the field grade officers. When the cooking facilities (mess halls and stoves), small tent in the case of H.Q. 1/13 were blown up during the Siege, we subsisted on C-Rations, another dated canned product. Three or four months of C-Rations during the Siege did not offer one's digestive system much relief from the familiar cramps and dysentery.

It was often difficult to obtain replacement uniforms for the too quickly rotting ones we had arrived in. Our stateside leather boots quickly turned a kind of greenish color within a matter of weeks and a strange mold grew on the exterior before the leather rotted away. The replacement canvas jungle boots, although occasionally found to have been worn by another and uncomfortable for the most part, were a welcome relief from the leather boots. There seemed to be little in the way of weapon cleaning material and troops often questioned the reliability of the new M16 rifle. There was little or no electricity or artificial illumination for most of us. Toilet (head) facilities were limited to a board placed over half of a 55 gallon barrel partially filled with diesel fuel. The eight months I spent on that Red Plateau just seemed to stretch on forever with just miserable, endless days and nights of rats, snakes, fly's, and other assorted winged insects. The Siege caused more misery than I ever thought possible.

The 77 day Siege brought new challenges for survival. In addition to limited amounts of food and water we were forced to deal with other very basic needs like toilet paper and soap to wash our hands. During the Siege, in addition to the lack of everything else, we had little or no sleep. It was a kind of dull, numbing dream like state. We stayed in the same clothes for months at a time, were never clean, never rested and always exhausted

I was happy to leave Khe Sanh after eight months up on that plateau. I miss nothing about the place and have no desire to return. I have spoken to others who sometimes boast about spending two or more tours in Vietnam. Bless their hearts, but I knew I could not return to Vietnam, I felt that to hesitate or return would mean certain doom for me. All of those who returned for more war were just bigger and better men than me. I have observed with interest the pictures shown to me by many other Vietnam Veterans. You know the ones? Grinning and posturing with weapons proudly displayed, perhaps some bodies of NVA or VC laid out as a kind of grotesque trophy. The Siege was exhausting for me both physically and mentally. I knew I could not go through anything like that again: The war was over for me.

The years passed and I tried to forget, but of course that did not work out well for me, nor for many of us. I kept visiting Khe Sanh whether or not I wanted to be there. Khe Sanh continued to visit me. I unwillingly returned there night after night. An unwelcome visit that I could not control. Although the visits were short, they were often and just long enough to see the faces of those I'll never forget. I could smell that unmistaken odor of war, and it stunk.

Thirty-eight years passed and I slowly begin to recall the names of those who I served with. Although my recall of certain events faded over the years, occasionally a voice, name or photograph would bring me back. After the Siege, what was left of our unit packed what was not blown, rocketed, mortared, shot or burned up and hastily piled what little was left into duce and a half trucks for the convey to Quang Tri.

I had met Tom Horchler at Khe Sanh. We found that although we lived in small neighboring towns in California, we had the same Marine Corps Recruiter. During the Siege we often spoke of our chance of survival, each promising to visit the other's family if the other did not return. Tom was a truck driver with HQ 1/13. He had a dirty, dangerous job with no sandbags to hide behind, no trench to jump into. Just a large moving target, driving the dead and wounded, artillery rounds and pallets of the provisions of war to all points in the bulls eye of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. I rode shotgun on the truck that Tom drove out of Khe Sanh.

I went to Boot Camp in San Diego, California (Platoon 1145, 1966), ITR and Staging with Mike Powers (D/1/26) and William (Bill) A. Poland (HQ 1/13). I served with both at Khe Sanh, though at the time I was unaware that Mike was also present on the base. I respected Bill. He was quiet and competent. He never complained about our horrible circumstances, like the water, food, twenty-four hour days, incoming and the wounded. I on the other hand bitched and complained all of the time. When I got home from Vietnam I talked to Bill on the telephone. He was living some where in Ohio I think, and working at a GM plant. Bill invited me to visit him and said he was pretty sure he could get me on at GM. I declined the invitation and lost track of him.

It's strange how the computer has made the world a smaller place. After 38 years I was able to contact Bill Poland and met him again at this year's reunion in Mobile, Alabama. Bill is still a quiet guy, who like the rest of us, has been deeply affected by the war and the Siege at Khe Sanh. I am proud of the fact that I was able to introduce Bill to our Khe Sanh family for the first time and signed him up in the Association. The reunion and our meeting after 38 years was an emotional experience for both of us.

A few of the photographs I took at Khe Sanh survived. They're old, faded and grainy. The photographs take on a new meaning for me now. I see a Marine looking back at me who is young and healthy and the same age my son is now (21). I also look into the faces of those who did not return with me. A sad moment, but a moment that helps me to appreciate what I now have and appreciate the sacrifice made by so many. Tom Horchler, Mike Powers, Bill Poland and I all made it back from Vietnam and the 77-day Siege of Khe Sanh, although we all continue to carry the emotional scars of our experiences from that time in history.

Tom recently came across an old photograph he took of our small unit after the Siege. He told me that he took the photograph just before I climbed onto the back of his truck for our long crawl in the convoy off of the plateau and out of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The little black and white photograph barely survives time. It's crumpled, faded and the film is kind of bubbling up away from the paper. The faces of the seven men in the photograph are clearly identifiable. I have no recall of Tom taking the photograph. I was stunned when I first saw the photograph. My initial response was that the look on the faces on the seven men were of angry. Upon closer scrutiny, I realized that none of the men were posturing with a weapon, nor did they have flak jackets or helmets on. They all carried the same deep, fixed stare, and were just totally and utterly exhausted and spent. Their wounds from the long Siege were unseen to the naked eye, but I am sure are a little more visible today.

Tom had the photograph repaired as best that it could be done. The technician noted what appeared to be some type of photo damage to the open doors and blended them away. Tom had to tell the technician that the blemishes were in fact holes made by shrapnel and were not a flaw in the film. Tom calls this photograph the "Khe Sanh Hillbillies." Shortly before the picture was taken, Tom got a cardboard bottom to a case of C-Rations and wrote on the cardboard "Khe Sanh Hillbillies" and placed it on the front of the trucks radiator. Apparently that is what he thought we all looked like, a bunch of poor hillbillies heading out of town in a beaten down old truck. Tom drove.



H.Q. 1/13

Left to right those pictured are as follows:
Sitting down, bottom of photograph**: Fred Louis Thomas, Jr.** Standing left side of photograph: **Sgt Michael Secli** Standing next to Secli in glasses: Not Identified (may be **Jesse Brinserf**) Left side sitting on truck hood: **William A. Poland** Middle of truck hood: **Edward G. Lawida** Sitting right side (of photo) on truck hood**: Pedro** Padilla Standing between Padilla and Lawida: **Craig W. Tourte**

Missing from photograph:Jose E. White, Beryl H. Bushaw, Richard J. Fitzpatrick ,Emory J. Newman
KIA: Donald Baron Saunders
WIA: Robert Y. Brown

BOOK REVIEW

INTO THE DMZ: A BATTLE HISTORY OF OPERATION HICKORY May 1967, Vietnam

Big Bear, CA (October 20, 2005) - Mark A. Cauble, Barstow Community College History instructor, has just had his book published. It is entitled **"Into The DMZ: a Battle History Of Operation Hickory," May 1967, Vietnam.**

Leatherneck magazine says of Into The DMZ, "Twice wounded as a member 1st Platoon Golf Company, 26th Marine Regiment, and now a professor of history, Mark A. Cauble has written a book for those who were there! More than that, he puts the fighting into historical context and writes a thoroughly satisfying read for Vietnam history buffs."

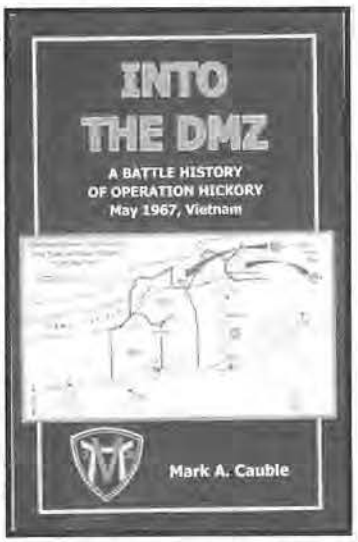

"Into The DMZ" tells the little-known story of one of the most intense battles of the Vietnam War. It is an account of the courage and endurance of men in combat. In early 1967, the North Vietnamese Army attacked American forces from vantage points within the Demilitarized Zone. They ambushed the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines, and Operation Hickory was launched to save 2/26 and to destroy the enemy. The author introduces and concludes this book by examining the battle in context of the Vietnam War and the larger struggle between the West and Communism. A historian, philosopher and participant in Operation Hickory, his three distinct voices give the work a unique perspective.

Comprised from numerous eyewitness accounts, the battle narrative drops the reader into the thick of the action alongside the Marine riflemen. Academic research supported by military documentation provides details with maps, drawings and actual photographs from Operation Hickory. "Into The DMZ" describes how these warriors indeed earned "the red badge of courage."

Mark is that uncommon person who matured in the 1960s and, though not unaffected by the political turbulence of the era, put everything on the line for his country when fashionable opinion turned against it .

The unit sprang into action following a North Vietnamese ambush on May 8, 1967. Based on his records and memory, and those of his fellow Marines, supplemented by the official Marine record, Mark Cauble tells of his unit's day to day operations, which constitutes the heart of his book. But he also provides the larger context of the Communist assault on the world, first in 19th century writings (Marx and Engels), and then in wars (Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mao and many others) in the 20th, against non-communist regimes. Mindful of his own sacrifices and those of his buddies in combat ; some making the supreme sacrifice, Mark Cauble connects the unglamorous, tedious and violent experiences of young Marines in a hostile foreign jungle to the grand acts of statesmanship that ultimately vindicated their service.

Richard Reeb, Ph.D.

Another Reviewer: Bradley T. Bellah (Los Angeles, CA)

There have been many books written about the history of America's involvement in Vietnam. Some have concentrated on the political aspects and fallout, while others have analyzed the military's overall plans and objectives. The best have taken the reader into the war in an attempt to explain what the everyday Marine or Soldier experienced in Vietnam. INTO THE DMZ: A BATTLE HISTORY OF OPERATION HICKORY ranks among the best books I have read about combat, from the battle plans of an operation, down to the very sounds, smell, and horror of the battlefield.

Author Mark Cauble is a history professor who served with the Marines in Vietnam and was a participant in Operation Hickory. His training as both a Marine and as an historian gives the reader a unique view of the Vietnam experience. The book is bracketed with a prologue and epilogue that lays out a brief history of the region before and after America's involvement. Mr. Cauble places Vietnam into its rightful place in history; as the costliest battle fought within the larger global conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, known as the Cold War.

Operation Hickory took place in May 1967. The

goal of the operation was to save the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines, who had been ambushed by the North Vietnamese in the Demilitarized Zone that separated North and South Vietnam, and, annihilate the enemy.

Mr. Cauble's style is very detailed and visual. Drawings of weapons and enemy tactics are provided, along with photographs and maps. The early chapters build a kind of nervous anticipation of what is to come. As the Marines head out on patrol; looking for an unseen and well defended enemy, carrying 100 pound packs in 100 plus degree weather, the reader is given a glimpse of the day to day, minute to minute life of a Marine in the field. In addition to facing enemy fire, the Leathernecks had to battle thirst, foot-long leeches, yard-long centipedes, tigers and rats. One rat in particular was so formidable, it became known simply as "the King Rat." Some of these stories make you shudder and laugh at the same time. However, the real strength of the narrative lies in the eyewitness accounts from the battlefield.

The depiction of what it was like to be under enemy fire is very intense and disturbing. The sound a man makes after being shot. Selfless acts of heroism that, in many instances, lead to death. The sense of dread knowing that the enemy is nearby but remains unseen. Dealing with jammed weapons and low ammo. Seeing men next to you suddenly killed or wounded; and the general confusion and chaos that ensues. These images will linger in the mind long after the book is put down. Those who have never served in the military will find this book invaluable when trying to understand what their fathers, brothers, sons and daughters in the Armed Services have endured and sacrificed in order to protect the everyday freedom that the rest of us take for granted. Mr. Cauble views history through the lens of a philosopher. This viewpoint assists the reader in placing the experiences shared by Vietnam veterans into the larger, universal experiences shared by all brave men and women who have served in time of war. This makes the subject especially relevant in today's world.

Military buffs and historians will no doubt relish in the details of Operation Hickory. Those who have never read a book on Vietnam and wish to understand this very controversial and turbulent time in American history will find "Into The DMZ" an excellent place to start. The book is very well researched. Extensive end notes and bibliography are provided for those interested in further research into the war. Highly recommended!

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MEMOIRS

One Day in the War

By Ron Smith H&S 3/26

The event I am going to describe is similar to a number of experiences of the men during the siege. Like many of my memories, this one is clouded by thirty-eight years. Some of the experiences in question are as clear as if they happened yesterday. Some of it is pretty blank. The event is one of the attempts to get the bodies of Gunny Wire and Gunny Robitaille (both from Mike 3/26) off of Hill 881S.

The Gunnies were killed in the same hole on 23 February 1968. KIAs were routine medevacs, and that status combined with foggy weather made it difficult to get a chopper in to pick up the bodies. It probably didn't help that we had a UH-34 permanently parked in one of our LZs. I am not sure how many attempts were made before my number came up, but the Gunnies had been dead for several days. The odor is something that I will never forget.

I was picked to help get the bodies into the LZ. I had been working the LZs as part of my TACP duties. I am not sure how the three grunts from India Company had been selected. It was hot that day. We worked up a pretty good sweat getting the bodies out onto the LZ. India Company had run out of body bags, so the Gunnies had been wrapped in ponchos and placed on stretchers. We had two men on each stretcher, it was tough work. When we were told that a bird was on the way in, we had to hoist the stretchers out of the deep trench line that circled the hill and run to the LZ, bent low to make smaller targets for the NVA sniper on 881N.

Once in the LZ, we waited in a shallow trench for

the medevac chopper. When I was given the word, I popped a yellow smoke to identify our LZ. We were out of the trench and moving towards the chopper while it was hovering in the LZ, but it started taking fire from 881N and had to abort. Before it took off, the crew chief tossed out two body bags. We raced back to the shallow trench to await the mortar rounds that usually followed the choppers into the LZ. After we were certain that the LZ was quiet, we raced back to the main trench line in our bent over positions, picking up the body bags on the way.

Once we were safely in the trench line, huffing and wheezing, I remembered a small plastic bottle of Crown Royal that I had been saving. Ever since I had joined 3/26 at Camp Evans, I had been trying to get my dad to send me a bottle of whiskey. My dad was a man who was not opposed to a good stiff drink, or two, or three. He was afraid that I would somehow get in trouble if I was found with a bottle of whiskey. When I convinced him that the worst that could happen was for me to get my head shaved and sent to Vietnam, he sent me a small plastic bottle that held about four shots of Crown Royal.

After I had retrieved the bottle from my Willy Peter bag we each had a shot that burned all the way down. I heard that the HST team was given the task of putting the Gunnies into the body bags that we had collected. I never envied them that task. The details about how the bodies finally made it off the Hill are best told by Captain Dabney:

"Worst conflict with regulations involved two KIAs. Round landed in hole not much left. Had no body bags, put remains in ponchos and staged in zone for next bird. Weather went sour, couldn't get birds in. By second day, troops were watching rats crawling around bodies. Hot up there in daytime with obvious consequences for condition of bodies. Sent radio message requesting permission to bury them 'till we could get them out. Reply, negative. Regulations prohibit field burial in RVN. But I had a serious morale and health problem. Sent second message explaining problems, again requested permission to bury. Again, denied. As I've said before, people who write regulations have never been anyplace like 881S regulations are written in air-conditioned offices. By third day, with weather still zero, I sent message down saying that unless otherwise directed, I intended to bury KIAs that evening. Kept copy of message so there would be a record for finding them later. Got no reply. Buried them that night. Couple of days later, weather lifted and first bird came up to get nets and slings. Had no medevacs, because weather so bad NVA couldn't see to shoot either. Couldn't justify risk of trying to land bird to pick up permanent routines. Disinterred them, put them in net and piled other nets/slings on top of them to hide bodies. Had to do that because regulations also said you could not transport remains externally. Bird one of yours picked up load. We called as he lifted off and told him he had bodies slung underneath. He rogered, and said nothing more.

Apparently he said nothing when he delivered them at Dong Ha, either, because we never heard any more about it. I'd probably have been relieved over that one if he hadn't kept his mouth shut." (Other recollections from Captain Dabney can be found on the Warriors of Hill 881S website
http://www.hmn-364.org/india-sixdup.html

I can't remember the names of the three men who shared this experience with me. They are long forgotten. I would however, like to hear from them if they happen to run across this little piece. My e-mail address is **rsmythe@mindspring.com**.

RESPONSES TO ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN ISSUE 65

Tom,

In the last issue of Red Clay (65) there was a great article from Joe Belardo. I have great respect for Those army ''duster'' guys, loved having them around. They gave me a safe, warm, fuzzy feeling. The part of the article that talks about Simon stealing George Lewis' beanie weenies is great. I and others can really relate to wanting to kill anyone that would steal your food. One would rather mess with an angry Pit Bull, then fool with a grunts chow. Eating became a ritual with us. It was the only time you had to yourself. The preparation was like a priest prepping for a High Mass for the Pope., The enjoyment was better than sex, I think.

Subconsciously you knew it could be your last meal. It also was a marker that your short-timer calendar

was one day shorter. We had so little to treasure. Food became the most important thing in the world. You would savor each delicious morsel. Now You probably would not eat the same food even if it was going to make you $10,000 to eat it on a reality TV show. My personal experience was having some stupid FNG filch a couple of cookies I had gotten from the states in a care package, big mistake on his part , it took three guys to pull me off him.

What is really amazing is how what we did then for such a short time has changed our entire lives, and our eating habits, at least mine. I know I have never gone back to what I once was. Go to a restaurant and there are no seats available where you can put your back against the wall, and face the door. What do you do? I have a solution., Go to a different restaurant.

Before Vietnam, I ate three normal meals a day, at a normal speed. Now I eat each one very slowly. My brother on the other hand, wolf"s down his food as fast as he can, starting with the favorite part first. He was a "60" gunner grunt and got interrupted to damn often in the bush. I guess he thinks Charlie is going to ambush him in McDonald's. Carry On.

Mike "Animal" Preston

POETRY

Rats in the Bush

There are different kinds of rats in the bush.
There are four legged rats, two legged rats,
and rats in a box.

All of these rats can be found in the bush.
Some of the rats you learn to live with,
some you don't.
Some you learn to kill, some you don't.

One of the good kind of rats crawled into tunnels,
the other good rats came in a small brown box.
The boxes are all the same shape and size.
What came inside the box could be bad,
or good as gold.

It didn't matter that it could be over forty years old.
You can mess with all the rats but one in the bush.
You never, never mess with another mans C-RATS, or you may not leave the bush.

Oh yea you can do something else with the four legged kind in pinch.

Rick Tam

Tom,

The article in the last issue of Red Clay (Issue 65) where the troops had returned to Khe Sanh to hold a memorial service, brought back a few vivid memories. I was one of seven Seabees who were already there pulling up the airstrip.

We went in with our tools and two Marines. The next morning a bunch of helicopters arrived with a band, flags and a lot of high ranking Officers. They played the U.S. and Vietnamese National Anthems and raised several flags. They then left as quickly as they had come taking all their equipment with them. There was a film crew taking pictures of the event. I know they took pictures of a load of runway matting being carried away. We left later the same day and the strip was still there



The Team Returning to Take Up Airstrip



Downtown Khe Sanh



Originally Patching Holes in Runway



Last Convoy Out of Khe Sanh



Returning to Khe Sanh To Pull Up Airstrip

I am enclosing these pictures of the work we were doing prior to the arrival of the contingent who held the ceremony.

Larry Kubley CBMU 301-DET-B

MEMOIRS

The Battle of Long Tan
Fellow Australian and New Zealand Vietnam Veterans Finally Receive Recognition
108 ANZACS vs 2500 VIET CONG

By Paul LePetit
July 16, 2006

It is one of the most remarkable battles in the history of war, yet one of the most unknown and unacknowledged. On August 18, 1966, 108 young Australian and New Zealand soldiers, most of them doing national service, found themselves isolated and facing 2500 trained and dedicated North Vietnamese and Viet Cong soldiers. In an extraordinary 3-1/2 hours during a monsoon, in the mud and desolation of a rubber plantation, the Anzac troops lost 18 Australian soldiers and had 24 wounded. The enemy lost 800 men, with 1,000 wounded.

"This is an opportunity to correct history," said Martin Walsh, executive producer of *The Battle of Long Tan,* a documentary that will be aired close to the anniversary of the forgotten conflict. Directed by award-winning documentary maker Damien Lay, *The Battle Of Long Tan* will focus not on the politics of the war (at that time there were no protests going on in Australia), but on the individuals and the parts they played in the heroic encounter.

The documentary includes interviews with not only the men of the Long Tan contingent, but their enemy as well. "One of things we are trying to focus on is why the men from each side were there," Walsh said. "We want to change the perception of the Vietnam veterans," a perception that has been shaped to a great degree by Hollywood and by politics. "If you meet these soldiers, they are the most well adjusted people you could find," he said. Walsh said that the film had not been made without encountering difficulties. There are still agendas where people want to steer history down certain paths. "Australians actually won their part of the Vietnam War."

Filmed in Australia, New Zealand and Vietnam, the documentary begins with an action sequence recreating the battle itself. It was fought by accident. At the major base Nui Dat, performers Col Joye and Little Pattie had begun a concert, the first special act for Australian forces. But the day before enemy mortars had pounded Nui Dat killing one soldier and injuring 22. The Long Tan men were one of several groups sent to patrol the environs to ensure that enemy mortars would not land on the concert area. By the time they reached the edge of what would be their battle zone they could still hear the concert in the back ground. Little Pattie, then 17 and Col Joye were evacuated soon after fighting began.

The chaos of the battle was intense. In the rain and with lighting hitting the barrels of the guns, the Australian force was down to 100 rounds of ammunition at one point and would have certainly lost if the helicopter supply ships had not disobeyed orders and returned under fire to replenish the batteries.

The documentary talks to the participants and explores their feelings. "It is so rare to get first hand accounts of war like this," Walsh said. "It is very moving. Almost all the men we talked to had not told their story, even to their families." The filmmakers also had great support from the Australian and New Zealand defense forces.

The New Zealand Army provided a gun battery of the identical type used at Long Tan and men to work it. "They spent the day firing the original artillery, while a fire brigade hosed them down to emulate the conditions at the time," Walsh said. The day after the battle the commander of the American forces, General William Westmoreland, flew in to look at the scene No one believed that this could have happened. "In all military history the world over, this is one of the most remarkable achievements," Walsh said.

And sadly for the men involved, there has never been proper recognition of their heroism. Lay is working up to 22 hours a day to complete the project. He includes the seven commanders, both allies and enemy in the film.

INCOMING

A Reunion Story

By Craig W. Tourte

This was my third reunion and I think I enjoyed it the most. I had a great time at the first two I attended, but they were pretty emotional for me. The first reunion was followed by a DUI, depression and some other issues relating to PTSD that I had to deal with. I skipped a year before I attended my second reunion. This one was much better. I felt stronger and was not as overcome with emotion. I think I may be getting a handle on this PTSD thing after all. This was the first reunion a friend from Khe Sanh attended, and he reminded me so much of myself when I attended my first one. I hope he does not have to go through what I did, and he returns next year when the reunion will be held in D.C..

My wife came this year, a big step. I was not sure if it was the brightest idea I ever had, but things worked out. I don't think wives (or others) can really ever understand this Khe Sanh thing, but it was my effort to help her understand why on occasion, I'm so screwed up. I can't begin to describe the event. One really needs to experience it for themselves. I think she came away with a slightly better understanding of what was involved in this reunion, other than just a bunch of middle ages men sitting around talking about past adventures and shared experiences.

I'm getting to know a few more at each reunion I attend. Sometimes it's not too easy. I sometimes feel like an outsider, but I hang in there and meet as many people as I can knowing that next year I'll know just a few more and meet others I had not known. I was sorry that my friend, Chuck Chamberlin (C/1/26) was unable to make it this year. I missed his company.

Delta had another big gathering this year. They're a great group of tight, brothers. I have always admired the bond they have for each other. I have never fixed bayonets, charged the tree line, or humped into the hills. I was on the Khe Sanh Combat Base for 8 months. I was not a hero. I showed up and did my job, survived the Siege and that's about it Please don't thank me for my support. During the Saturday evening banquet at the reunion, I was impressed at the many tables that Delta had reserved. Middle aged men, they no longer look like the warriors they once were. But I could sense a certain spirit and could still see the fire in their eyes. It might have just been the anticipation of the buffet that was about to be served, but perhaps not.

My wife and I found a table with a couple of vacant seats and sat down with some others. I was happy to be with them. We all introduced ourselves and I knew once again that I was among brothers. I went to boot camp in San Diego (platoon 1145, 1966) with Mike Powers from Delta. Through these reunions I have gotten to know Mike once again and I am proud to be able to call him my friend. Mike came over to our table and asked if we would like to sit with Delta. I was stunned and appreciated Mike's invitation, but didn't want to intrude. I thanked Mike and told him how much I appreciated his invitation, but that I didn't want to interfere. Mike told me that John Rowland, Delta's president asked him to come over and invite us to sit with him and his wife at Delta's table. The invitation was more than I could take. I can't began to tell you how proud I was to have been invited to sit with the men from Delta Company. We found a couple of vacant seats next to John and our wives talked and got along together just fine. I introduced myself to the others at the table and they were all very gracious to both of us. It was pretty cool being able to sit with these fine men who I have admired and observed from the outside. I appreciated being able to sit down with them and being treated like a brother and friend. Thanks Mike Powers and John Rowland and the other Delta brothers for making this reunion a memorable one. You truly are a great bunch of men whom I am proud to know.

Ed Note: We're thinking of giving Craig his own magazine

MEMOIRS

BROWN DOG

By Don Bumgarner

Here is a Vietnam story I received from a guy who was in C/1/3 during 1966. I don't know the writer of the story, or if he was in C/1/3. I know 1/3 was in the area of the story. The writer, Charles P. Dugan wrote it. I thought it was good and wanted to share.

If you know Dugan or what unit he was with, let me know.

The year was 1966 and I was a newly assigned machine gunner in an infantry unit that was protecting a high mountain pass that was between Da Nang and Phu Bai, Vietnam. The pass is called Hai Van Pass, which means Place of the Clouds. It is located 30 km north of Da Nang. The Marine Corps name of the hill that my unit was on was Hill 724. It was a dangerous and treacherous area that was of high strategic value. There was only one narrow highway that wound up steep cliffs (Highway 1) that reached the peak at Hai Van. At the base of the hill was a small village called Namo. My story starts in that village.

On a patrol through the village my squad noticed a small wooden cage outside of a hooch. We were new to Vietnam and unaware of the customs of the people. We were always alert for booby traps and we moved closer to the cage. Inside the cage was a small, brown puppy that brightened up when he saw us approach his cage. He began wagging his tail and wanting to be held. It was love at first sight for all of us. Don't tell anybody, but most Marines are real softies when it comes to animals. The owner of the hooch came out and I decided to offer to buy his puppy. I just didn't like his living conditions. The old villager started his trying to up the price and after much debate, he decided on a price. He then pulled out a sharp knife and proceeded to open the cage.

All of us were shocked that he pulled a knife out and we all raised our weapons to him. He looked very frightened and assured us that he meant us no harm. He explained in gestures that he was just going to prepare the dog for us. We were confused and then he made the motion of drawing his knife across his neck to tell us that he was going to kill the dog and dress it out for us to Chop-Chop. I can only tell you that the anger level went up 100 notches at that suggestion. We then realized that the dog was being raised to eat by the villager. I unbuttoned my flak jacket and reached in and took the dog from his hands. I threw the money on the ground and placed the pup next to my heart so I could carry him up the long torturous climb back to our base camp.

The first event that happened was all of us knew that it was going to be a challenge to get our superiors to allow us to keep him. It was a miserable walk back to our hill. Our fears were baseless because we had a wonderful Captain named Silva, and he allowed us to keep the puppy as a mascot. We loved him before, but we really loved the Captain after that. Next we had a heated debate on what the dogs name should be. It was not an easy process since Marines are very bull-headed and strong willed. After much serious and highly intelligent discussion we arrived at the unique name of Brown Dog. You have to know Marines to appreciate this.

Brown Dog was the darling of the hill and only one Marine hated him and that was OK because we all hated him too. We all decided that if Brown Dog didn't like him that there had to be a damn good reason. Later he proved to be a coward in combat and was removed from our hill. Brown Dog was very happy that he left. I lost a stripe because I caught this guy kicking at Brown Dog and I informed him not to do that again. I guess I did the informing a little too harsh, and the 1st. Sgt. explained the error of my ways.

Brown Dog had a ritual during his life on the hill. At night we were in bunkers staring out into a dark, fog filled jungle. We were issued Seismic Listening Devices which consisted of probes planted in the ground in front of our bunkers. We had a small console inside that had earphones. We could hear footsteps approaching, or animals moving. We got pretty good with the device. Brown Dog would make the perimeter of our positions and visit every bunker to check on "His" Marines. He was always a welcome visitor and he spent all of his non patrolling time in his daddy's bunker, MINE! He also went on patrols with us and had an intense hatred for the Vietnamese. He would growl and really act up when he would see or smell one.

On April 1, 1967, we were dug in and the fog was pea soup thick that night. I was in the machine gun bunker and we were really spooked. About 3 am Brown Dog shot up and went on full alert. I rang the field phone and informed the Command bunker that Brown Dog had alerted. Our Lieutenant advised me to trust my Seismic Device and not a damn dog.

My bunker was the forward bunker and the most vulnerable. I looked at my machine gun crew and whispered that I was going to disobey the Lt's stupid order. They all nodded as I prepared the pop-up flare

to shoot into the sky. I popped the flare and lo and behold we had beaucoup Gooks in the wire! All hell broke loose and it was a very violent battle that night. It was up close and personal fighting and many people on both sides were killed and wounded. Brown Dog was hit by shrapnel but continued to fight the enemy. I saw him attack the leg of an NVA before he was wounded.

The attack failed and for what seemed like an eternity, we waited for the sun to come up. There were dead people in the wire, burning, and moaning out in pain in the darkness. I held Brown Dog in my arms and awaited the medevac helicopters that were coming to help our wounded. I really thought Brown Dog was going to die in my arms.

When the choppers came I handed my baby to the door gunner and asked him to get him medical help and told him that we would all be dead if it wasn't for Brown Dog. Marine to Marine, he gave me his word and I watched the dust-off. My Captain pulled me aside and told me that he was glad that I never followed orders. He rubbed my head and told me that he was going to call to Headquarters and tell them the story and he assured me that Brown Dog was going to get the best of care.

Brown Dog had lost a lot of blood so I really didn't have much hope. The next day we received word that Brown Dog had been taken to Army Vets and they had saved his life. He had over 100 stitches, needed blood and antibiotics but he was going to live. He was the hero to all of us. He received a canine award for heroism and we promoted him to Cpl. I also got my stripe back much to the chagrin of the Lieutenant.

Cpl. Brown Dog returned to a hero's welcome as we had a full formation to welcome him home. I left the hill June 9th, 1967. He was in very good hands with the Marines on the hill. I tried to take him home but that was impossible. I really hurt having to leave him on the hill, but I knew the Marines would take excellent care of him.

I have always thought it was so ironic that once he was going to be eaten by the Vietnamese, and instead he caused the death of so damn many of them.

All of my friends still have his picture and we all know that we would not be here today if it were not for a little, mixed breed named Brown Dog. He will be in our hearts until we die and a part of our souls forever.

When we assemble for our reunions, we always toast Brown Dog. Rest in peace little Warrior and wait for Your Marines to join you. We will always be Semper Fidelis to you and your memory. A Salute and three cheers for the finest Marine on our hill!

Ooo-Rah Brown Dog!

Cpl. Charles Patrick Dugan
2164539 USMC
Vietnam 1966-1967
Machine Gunner - Infantry





OBIT



CATHERINE LEROY 1944-2006

SHE WILL BE MISSED

I can't believe it. I sat with her at her apartment last summer, sipping tea as we thumbed through her new book, UNDER FIRE: IMAGES FROM VIETNAM, and talked about how she wanted to do a documentary on the Paparazzi in Los Angeles. We went and saw the latest version of The Quiet American a few years ago. It was pretty amazing as she recounted what she had seen and done so long ago. Side trips to Cambodia with a "Dashing young French Embassy staffer." She told me about getting snatched in Hue during TET, only to be let go after she protested to a young NVA officer in her sometimes to often vulgar language. Just amazing stuff this woman told me about, like getting wounded, a plate in her head, Khe Sanh, Beirut. This woman was a walking history book. I wish I had written down everything she told me.

I had no idea she was sick. I feel privileged to have known her. Here's an Interesting quote from a former colleague of hers, Jonathan Randal of the Washington Post: "She spoke the most disgusting English. I asked her where she learned it from and she said 'the Marines'."

Rest in Peace Catherine. I'm sure the Marine's are looking after you.

David Kniess

REST IN PEACE

Catherine Leroy, the French-born photojournalist whose stark images of battle helped tell the story of the Vietnam War in the pages of Life magazine and other publications, died Saturday of cancer, a physician at St. John's Health Center said. She was 61.

Leroy was 21 years old in 1966 when she took a one-way ticket to Saigon to document American troops in Vietnam. A year later she became the only accredited journalist to participate in a combat parachute jump, joining the 173rd Airborne in Operation Junction City. In 1968 during the Tet Offensive, Leroy was captured by the North Vietnamese Army. She managed to talk her way out and emerged with images of the North Vietnamese Army in action that were used for a Life magazine cover.

A famous 1967 photo, "Corpsman In Anguish," portrays a young Marine, his face wrenched in torment, hunched over the dead body of his friend, while smoke from the battle rises into the air behind them. Leroy worked for the Gamma and Sipa photo agencies and later sold her work to The Associated Press and United Press International. Her photos appeared in publications worldwide.

In 1972, Leroy shot and directed Operation Last Patrol, a film about Ron Kovic and the anti-war Vietnam veterans. After Vietnam, she covered conflicts in several countries including Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Libya. Leroy co-authored the book GOD CRIED with Tony Clifton, about the siege of West Beirut by the Israeli army in 1982.

Leland Upshaw

She Will Be Missed .

We met in Khe Sanh. I took her picture near the recon area and air strip. We talked for about an hour. 35 years later I meet her at a BBQ at David Kniess' house. We talked about Khe Sanh, and Con Thien. I was never at Con Thien with 3/26, but the stories she told were something. She had guts, I'll miss her.

Glenn Prentice



Corpsman Vernon Wike looks up in anguish realizing Marine comrade is dead. Battle for Hill 881 1967.



Marine Holds a Wounded Comrade at DMZ Operation Prairie 1967

Catherine Leroy was born in Paris in 1944. She was twenty-one when she left for Vietnam, in 1966. Two years after arriving there, she was captured by the North Vietnamese Army during the Tet offensive in Hue. Her intrepid reporting made her one of the war's most published photographers. In 1967, she became the only journalist to partake in a combat jump. She photographed the Marines during the bitter hill fights and was wounded in action. She has won many awards, including the George Polk, the sigma Delta Chi, and the Art Directors Club of New York. For her coverage of the 1976 Civil War in Lebanon, she received the Robert Capa Award, the first women to do so. In 1983 with Tony Clifton, she published *GOD CRIED*. In 1997 she was honored by the University of Missouri for distinguished service in journalism.

The Four pictured Photos are some of her published works from Vietnam



NVA Lieutenant & His Men Guarding a Position near Cathedral of Hue during onset of Tet Offensive February 1 1968



Wounded Marine getting help from a buddy 1968

ANOTHER ARTICLE ON A FOLLOW UP STORY CATHERINE DID ON TWO OF HER MOST PUBLISHED PHOTOS FROM THE VIETNAM WAR

Legendary Photographer Catherine Leroy went searching for the men captured in two of the Vietnam War's most famous images. She found how history, and pictures, change even heroes.

BY JEFFREY ELBIES
September/October 2005

Though the Vietnam War ended 30 years ago, its distant thunder continues to echo. It was perhaps the most intimately photographed war in history, and in those still images the fighting has never ceased. The most powerful of the pictures are the ones that captured the apperceived truth of the morally contentious conflict. In these sustaining images, it is the suffering of the combatants alone that speaks with authority. To mark the anniversary of the fall of Saigon, Paris Match magazine decided to track down the subjects of two such photographs. One was a shot of a wounded black Marine reaching out for an injured comrade, made on October 5, 1966, by Life magazine photojournalist Larry Burrows, who would himself be killed in a helicopter crash near the Cambodian border in 1971. The other image showed a bewildered Marine kneeling over the body of a fallen comrade, taken in April 1967 by legendary photographer **Catherine Leroy**. To photograph the two men, the magazine assigned Leroy herself, now living in Los Angeles.

Over the years, Leroy had kept in touch with the Marine she photographed that day in the bloody battle for Hill 881 near the border between South and North Vietnam. His name was Vernon Wike, and he lived by himself in a small home in Prescott, Arizona. When she and Paris Match correspondent Regis Le Sommier met Wike in 2005, it was clear that the man Leroy had photographed so long ago had come back from the war with a burden he could never rid himself of. Married four times, with two daughters he no longer speaks to, he had been living meagerly on a $325-a-month pension. The 58-year-old told Leroy that he felt more like 80. "While not physically hurt, he suffers from extreme Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, waking from nightmares every night," wrote Le Sommier. "On his arms, he has tattoos of the names of his dead comrades. He's lost in a jungle of his own mind."

For Wike, the haunting memories and the pictures that Leroy shot of him during the war had become intertwined in a psychological spiral. The "Hill Fights" of spring 1967 were toe-to-toe slugging matches between Marines and North Vietnamese troops near the Marine outpost at Khe Sahn. Leroy, a freelance photographer who would later be seriously wounded while covering the war, arrived at the battle in the late afternoon that day on a re-supply helicopter, wearing combat fatigues and a white handkerchief over her hair. She quickly learned how intense the fighting there was. "I was standing next to a colonel, and suddenly I heard a zzzzzzzz-ing sound near my ear," recalls Leroy. The colonel said, "You better take off that white handkerchief, because someone just shot at you.

She began following a Marine company on an assault through the bombed-out terrain. "It was hard to walk, because the earth was loosened and giving way, and the noise of the battle was deafening," Leroy says. Pinned down by gunfire, she saw a wounded Marine four meters ahead of her. "I heard someone yelling, "Corpsman, corpsman!" And I saw this other Marine rushing to the wounded man, and he put his ear on the man's heart. Then he looked up in total anguish." The man in anguish was Wike. Recounting his story of that day to Le Sommier, he said, "I heard a bang, and I lifted my head out of the trench and saw my friend Rock -- it all happened like in some dream -- his body started falling and I threw myself at it. The only noise I heard was his heartbeat disappearing little by little. The bullet was in his chest." As Leroy recalls the incident, Wike, who had been among the lead assault, then picked up the dead soldier's rifle and disappeared among a second wave of Marines. "He was yelling, 'I'll kill them all!" she says.

Wike returned home from Vietnam without any physical injury but troubled. In 2003 he accidentally shot himself with a gun he had placed in his pants pocket. In 2004 the house he was living in burned to the ground. Leroy photographed Wike in the cluttered bedroom of the small apartment he moved to after the fire, shooting with a Mamiya 7 and a single strobe. As she worked, Wike told her that her images of him as a young man had marked him forever; after 30 years, he said, it was still those pictures that woke him from his sleep at night.

Two days after the portrait session, Wike suffered a stroke that paralyzed his body and cost him his sight. He later moved to the home of a sister in the Mid-west. "Vernon," says Leroy, "is haunted." Leroy found the black Marine in the Burrows picture with the help of Burrows's son, Russell. Jeremiah Purdie was living in Fayetteville, North Carolina, a framed print of the famous image hanging in his home. A tiny shell fragment was stuck in a corner of the frame -- a fragment that entered Purdie's skull that day in 1966, when, during the battle for Mutter Ridge, Burrows photographed him. That battle was part of a six-month action called Operation Prairie whose aim was to cut off North Vietnamese infiltration through the Demilitarized Zone into the South. It turned into a costly affair, pushing U.S. casualties for the week to their highest of the war.

When Burrows cabled New York with instructions on handling his damp film, he found himself apologizing: "Sorry if my captioning is not up to standard, but with all that sniper fire around I didn't dare wave a white notebook." While covering the fighting for Hill 484, Burrows took a series of photos of a wounded black Marine being evacuated. In the most famous image from the series, the wounded Marine, Purdie, reaches out to a mud-covered comrade. After he came back from Vietnam, Purdie tried to bury his memories of the war. But he, too, had nightmares. His wife, Angel, told Le Sommier that her husband often woke up screaming. It was only three years ago that Purdie, after counseling from a PTSD specialist, began to talk about his experiences during the war. He said the counselor had liberated his fears, finally convincing him that he hadn't abandoned his comrades when he was flown out of the battle.

Purdie had joined the Marines during the Korean War because, he said, it was the only service that would "take a black man." After Vietnam, he worked as a Marine Corps recruiter, talking to young men, most of them black, in parking lots and supermarkets. For his efforts in the battle for Hill 484 he received the Bronze Star. His wife told the Paris Match reporter that Burrows's photo had helped Purdie deal with his memories of Vietnam -- allowing him, in a sense, to remain connected to his fellow Marines who never came home. "When I photographed him, I could tell he was tired, so I had him just sit on his bed," says Leroy. A month after the portrait was made, Purdie died. "I consider myself lucky to have met him, and photographed him," says Leroy.



VERNON WIKE

Ed Note: My God! If anyone deserves a 100% PTSD rating it is Wike. Members of his unit should help him. This is what Delta does and it works

SHORT ROUNDS

A GIFT TO THE KHE SANH VETERANS

By John Pessoni A Co 3RD Engineers

1st Platoon, A Company, 3rd Engineer Battalion (Combat), 3rd Marine Division played a significant role in the support and security of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, with a small force of about 20 dedicated Marines. Although our ranks were slim, we provided support for the entire base. Normally a Reinforced Combat Engineer Company with much more resources would have been assigned this type of mission.

One of the missions we successfully completed was the demolition of rock from what was a mountain, and later referred to as the Rock Quarry. This rock the Seabees used to improve the air strip and roadways. This effort kept the air strip open even though greatly shortened. We fortified the meager perimeter fence by installing hundreds of meters of high double apron fencing, extra-wide bolt of tangle foot fence, and triple concertina barbed wire.

The fence lines included by hundreds of booby-traps and mines. We sent teams on combat operations with 1/26, performed mine sweeps and civilian action projects in the village. We operated the Water point located outside the perimeter. It was not controlled by Marines at all times. Following the explosion of the Ammo Dump, we cleared live shells blown onto the runway, and sent teams throughout the base to find more live rounds. We built numerous bunkers after the Siege began since most of the troops lived in above ground, or inadequately protected hootchs.

Although we suffered killed and wounded, we were determined to keep going. We are proud of what we did in support of all the Khe Sanh Veterans. In recognition of these accomplishments we wish to dedicate our unit guide on to the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, on behalf of John Pessoni, David Critchley, Duke Upton, Wally Hoffman, and Clyde Phillips.

SEMPER FI

MEMOIRS

MAD DOG MEDEVAC

By Aaron Carter HMM-163, MAG -16, FMAW

At 1800 hours, on 26 January 1967, Sgt. J. Vradenburg and I were securing our UH-34D helicopter at Khe Sanh. We had just finished adding a gallon of engine oil to the tank when our aircraft commander Capt. Gunniss and Co-Pilot 1st Lt. Hein jogged around the tail of the bird toward us. Captain Gunniss informed us that we were launching on an emergency extraction to extract a recon team (Mad Dog) located at position XD 673527 (300° radial on Channel 58 at eleven miles).

Our flight departed the base at 1805 hours. The flight consisted of our ship, Superchief 1-9 Superchief 1-10 our wingman, and two UH-IE gunships Deadlock 4-0 and 4-2. En route, Captain Gunniss advised that the LZ was hot and warned us to conserve ammunition. During the first few minutes of the flight, our information was updated. Mad Dog advised that one of the team was wounded and that they believed they were surrounded by enemy troops.

By 1815 we were approaching the zone from the south at about 1,000 feet above ground level (AGL). The LZ was something of a pinnacle, in hilly terrain, elevated about 600' above the surrounding area. Radio contact was established with the team after some initial communication difficulties. There was a lot going on. In addition to our flight, two CH46 helicopters were orbiting the area, on a mission to insert troops. With so many helicopters in the air, and so much happening on the ground, radio traffic was snarled. That ended when Captain Gunniss declared: "medevac priority."

As we initiated a reconnaissance pass over the LZ, we took fire from at least three automatic weapons, positioned about ten feet apart, on a hill approximately 800 meters west of our position. I began to return fire on all three guns while advising our pilots that we were taking hits to the port side. During the exchange, I expended about 100 rounds and eliminated at least two of the three targets. A hasty inspection of the aircraft revealed about eight hits to the helicopter fuselage without critical damage.

Concerned about the enemy location and strength, Captain Gunniss continued flying on a northerly heading as he considered the best approach corridor into the LZ. As we over flew the LZ, Mad Dog leader came up on frequency and said: "You're not going to leave us? You're going to come and get us, aren't you partner?" Lieutenant Hein called back: "We'll get you out." Mad Dog called again and said: "We have another man down."

Deadlock Leader advised the team to pop two smokes; yellow for the team position and red for the nearest enemy position. Shortly thereafter two plumes of smoke could be seen with the red about thirty meters west of the yellow. Deadlock launched attacks on known and perceived enemy positions while we staged for a northerly approach. Deadlock

received no enemy fire during its strike.

We began our second approach from the north, flying at a height of 400' AGL. As we approached the LZ, we began taking fire from several enemy positions beneath us along our approach corridor and from the north and east. Sgt. Vradenburg and I returned fire on as many targets as possible while sustaining about twenty more hits to the aircraft. Captain Gunniss aborted the second approach, maintaining a northerly heading. As we over flew the zone, Mad Dog came up on the radio and said: "Don't leave us." Lieutenant Rein called: "Roger, we'll get you."

Another quick check of the aircraft revealed no evidence of critical damage. As far as airworthiness was concerned we were good to go for another approach to the LZ. Sgt. Vradenburg and I reorganized our ammunition supply. The look in his eye gave me the impression that he felt like I did. I believed that Captain Gunniss would get us into the zone by whatever means necessary. But, I was not so confident that we would be able to get out once we had touched down. Another concern was the fact that the zone was not big enough for more than one helicopter. If we could not depart the zone, the team would have to relocate to another LZ. With two wounded, that might not be feasible.

Experience had taught us that a helicopter moving low and fast is a hard target for VC shooters. Most of the hits we took in flight were near the tail section. The VC it seemed, knew nothing about duck hunting, but the VC never had trouble hitting us on the ground. Our first passes over the zone had given us a chance to see some of the soldiers shooting at us. Some were wearing black pajamas and some were wearing NVA uniforms. Among helicopter air crews, the NVA had a reputation for remarkable marksmanship. For this reason, when we knew they were in the area, it was standard operating procedure to fly nap-of-the-earth at top speed (150 Knots). Even their mortar crews had trouble hitting us when we were low and fast. But that kind of flying demanded much of the pilot. I can't recall how many times I had to peel a tree branch from a wheel strut. Some pilots delighted in their skill and liked to bump the hilltops with the landing wheels as we over-flew them. It made for a thrilling ride, but it was not without risk.

By now Captain Gunniss had a plan. From his viewpoint in the cockpit, he could see that the LZ was choked with elephant grass. His plan was to come in low and hot, terminate the approach with an extreme flare, then touch down on the spot with minimal ground speed. While in the zone the elephant grass would provide enough concealment to give the recon team time to board the aircraft. If the team moved quickly; with the cargo door facing the team, we could be in and out in less than fifteen seconds.

Fifteen seconds is an important time standard for combat aircrews. The standard denotes the life expectancy for a crew engaged in a scenario such as the one we were facing. The standard was carefully explained to flight crews trained at NATTC, Memphis and to pilots trained at Pensacola. Proceeding with full appreciation for our situation, Captain Gunniss began the approach from the north at 85 knots and 50' AGL. All was quiet until he flared to bleed off air speed. About ten meters from the LZ, the enemy opened up with a heavy volume of fire. We immediately began taking many hits and Sgt. Vradenburg and I returned fire as best we could.

Captain Gunniss reacted to the heavy volume of fire by executing an 1800 pedal turn and touched down tail first on the spot. The turn oriented me westward. I came face-to-face with the heaviest concentration of incoming fire. My first impression,;and vivid memory, of this moment would always be its likeness to an Independence Day fireworks finale. From our 7 O'clock through our 9 O'clock, the volume of incoming fire was immeasurable. While my body was busy returning fire on innumerable targets, my mind had time to reflect on the reality of our situation. I felt certain that our helicopter would be disabled within the next few seconds. I began to conserve ammo by firing in two-to-three round bursts.

There were so many targets, prioritizing was difficult. The concentration of enemy fire seemed to increase with every tick of the clock. I glanced toward Sgt. Vradenburg to see if he was okay and saw that he was very busy on his gun. The elephant grass was about eight feet high and very dense, but the main rotor downwash caused the grass below it to bend away from the aircraft. This allowed a clearer view of incoming tracers. Most of the incoming rounds seemed to be coming from light shoulder weapons. Others were obviously 51 calibers. My mess tray hung slightly aft of the port gunnery hatch. One

round hit a corner of the tray. A 30 cal grazed the left side of my flight helmet. Another tore through the upper tight shoulder seam of my flak jacket. One 30 cal round severed the fuel pressure indicator line as it passed through the flight deck consol. A 51 cal passed in front of my face and continued upward between the feet of Captain Gunniss, before exiting the aircraft through the nose section. It was clear from the trajectory of the 51 cal round that the gun was positioned close at hand. I put about fifty rounds in that area.

Most people would say that ten seconds is a short period of time. I believe there are many combat veterans who have experienced ten-second periods that seemed like an hour of pure hell! Lieutenant Hein, looking down and to his left could see the Recon team hopelessly pinned down and advised Captain Gunniss. Because of the inability of the team to move to the aircraft, and seeing the intensity of incoming fire increasing with time, Captain Gunniss elected to depart the zone.

Seconds before liftoff, I experienced stoppage on my M-60. I haven't the vocabulary to express how unhappy I was about this development. I raised the feed cover to clear the feed mechanism and fired again. But all I got was a single round. I reset the ammo belt and fired. Once again I got stoppage after a single round! As I worked to reset my belt again we lifted off and I observed six men; face down on the ground just ten feet from our former position, all wearing black clothing. Since much of the incoming fire had been at close range, I fully believed the men to be VC.

Our briefing included nothing about how the team members were attired. As far as I knew, they were wearing the standard Recon uniform typical of what we saw at base camps. There is no doubt in my mind that had my gun been operational, six recon members would have lost their lives as we lifted off from that zone. As incredible as the timing of this stoppage may seem, this next point is even more so. Once clear of the zone my gun began to function normally and I resumed firing on enemy targets. After returning to the air base at Phu Bai, I had the weapon inspected by our armorer who gave it a clean bill of health. No defect was found. I used that same gun for the remainder of my first tour in Nam (about eight more months) and it never let me down. To me, this is something of a miracle.

During the sortie, I fired about eight hundred rounds. Sgt. Vradenburg fired an equivalent number. With smoke in the cabin, flight deck, and with hydraulic oil streaming into the cabin from the main transmission deck, we limped back to Khe Sanh to perform an emergency landing at 1835 hours. During the sortie our helicopter took enough hits to require 138 patches to the fuselage. Additional repairs included replacement of two main rotor blades, three tail rotor blades, the intermediate gear box, a hydraulic line, and a fuel pressure indicator line. Three helicopters (CH-46 Sea Knights) were lost in the LZ during the night-time hours that followed. According to the information I received after returning to Khe Sanh, Superchief 1-9 was the only helicopter to get in and out of the LZ that night. The team was recovered as part of a vertical envelopment operation that lasted another three days.

After-action reports were filed. Stars & Stripes got wind of the story and they made a big deal of it. They took photos, one of which I'm enclosing with this write-up. Captain Gunniss received the DFC and Sgt. Vradenburg and I each received a Navy Com-



mendation Medal.. But to me, the real heroes of this story are the six members of that Recon team who demonstrated exceptional courage at great personal risk. I have never met them, nor have I communicated with them, but I would very much like to. I am often invited to share my Vietnam experiences with history classes and youth groups. This story is one that I often use as an example of the types of missions combat aircrew members participated in while serving in South Vietnam.

The story deserves a better ending than I am able to give it, with the facts I have at hand. Also, I would like to hear this story from the perspective of any or all of those six recon members. If you read this story and you were one of those six Marines, I want to hear from you. My contact information is on the membership roster.

Cpl. Aaron "Shaky Jake" Carter
HMM-163, MAG 16, FMAW

MEMOIRS

A Visit to The Wall

By Larry McCartney, E Co 2/26
Hill 861A

Saturday, January 17, 2004 is a landmark day for me. It is the day I finally started to feel the healing from a lifetime of pain and bitterness that started in Vietnam. While I still have much of that pain, that intense bitterness, Saturday, January 17, 2004 is the day that with the love of God and the help of family I started to take some of the edge off and I can only hope that in the years ahead the constant throb continues to decrease as it has since that day.

To be sure, I am no different than millions of my brothers and sisters who experienced the horrors of war in Vietnam and the betrayal of our country upon our return. As a matter of fact I've been far luckier than many. I have some semblance of a normal, "successful" life; not the life I wanted, but a good life none the less. Those who have "walked the walk" and "talked the talk" know there is a rage that lurks below the surface, maybe well controlled, but a rage nonetheless.

My rage verged on going out of control for many years, but was held in check with the help of the love of my family, my father, mother, five brothers, five sisters, as well as various brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews. While that rage destroyed relationships and deprived me of establishing a family of my own, I was extraordinarily fortunate because it never completely alienated my family: They always hung in there with me.

Saturday, January 17, 2004 is a landmark day because, quite by accident, that is the day that I took my family to The Wall with me. My family was in the Washington, D. C. area that day because my brother-in-law was ordained an Episcopal minister and after the ceremony three of my "baby sisters" asked me to take them and my niece to The Wall since they had never been there. I was momentarily hesitant because the only time I have ever been to The Wall was when I went with those with whom I served during Khe Sanh Veterans reunions, or holidays such as Memorial, or Veterans Day. I quickly discarded that hesitancy though, remembering all their love and support through the years. They deserved the trip.

As we were en-route to The Wall I learned that my other two sisters, as well as three of my brothers and their wives, were following us. It would be a "family reunion" of sorts, I steeled myself for the experience. I need not have.

By the time we all arrived, parked and started our tour it was early evening. Dark and with a light rain, the lights cast an eerie glow. I first took my family to the statue of the nurses, then to the three infantrymen before I could muster up the courage to walk the length of The Wall. I first stopped at Panel 37 East, Bogard, Lamitie, Molettiere, Rimson, Smith, Staples, Stevenson, and Taylor, and told them of the morning of February 5, 1968: and how incredibly lucky I was that day.My job was to hold the rear flank and wait for a call that never came because we only needed a few good men. As we continued to walk, I mentioned other names: Calvin, Gomez, "Corky" Foster, C. C. Aguirre, Borrell, Lt Distefano, Jefferies, Nelson, Wright, Harris, Doc Langenfeld, Doc Delaplane, Doc Lopez, and how my luck continued to hold. They had died during the incoming that was intended, but failed to break our will and I never got more than a few minor scratches.

During our walk I purposely walked directly to Panel 59 West I told them about June 6, 1968. Baker, Campbell, Flyte, Hale, Hayes, Lobbezoo, Piccano, Prock, Schauble, Seawright, Pete "Little Shep" Shepherd, Lonnie "Big Shep" Sheppard, and Sullivan and again how incredibly lucky I was. Like Alan Ray Smith who was KIA on February 5, I had arrived in country with Denny Lobbezoo. But for the luck of the draw, platoon and squad assignment, they were on The Wall, but not me.

Slowly I walked back to Panel 43 West and while looking directly at it I quietly told my family that the closest I ever came to being memorialized on that piece of granite was right there. September 16, 1968 with Cunningham, Gary Daffin, Donohue, "Bull" Durham, Hunter, Rivers, Joe Roble, and Cliff Spiller who died two weeks later. I didn't go into any detail about the events of LZ Margo; just a few miles east of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, just that I was incredibly lucky to be one of the one hundred forty six wounded and not one of the twenty two killed that day. I did tell them that this was the day that permanently shaped me. And why I returned for a second tour in Vietnam, stayed in the Reserves, volunteered for the Persian Gulf War, Haiti, Bosnia and other assignments I had. This was why I was so full of hurt and anger. This was why I was constantly "pushing the envelope" throughout the years, and why I was trying to write of my experiences. As I spoke, two of my "baby sisters" held onto me while I finally was able to cry.

The tears aren't all cried yet., The anger and bitterness isn't gone. The writing isn't done. But with the grace of God a step forward as been taken. Only time will tell.

MEMOIRS

THE UNEXPLOITED VULNERABILITY OF THE MARINES AT KHE SANH

©2000 By Peter Brush

Like Ia Drang before it, both the North Vietnamese and the Americans declared victory at the battle of Khe Sanh in 1968. These dual claims of victory are not inappropriate in a tactical situation where the adversaries have different goals. At Khe Sanh, US commander General William C. Westmoreland was certain the Communists' primary goal was another Dien Bien Phu; namely, to isolate and capture the Marine combat base. The Communists, on the other hand, claimed that Khe Sanh was merely a diversion to draw US forces away from the populated areas of South Vietnam in order to maximize the effects of the Communists' efforts during the great Tet Offensive of 1968.

But the Communists were not completely rigid in their tactical thinking. Their diversionary claims notwithstanding, they would have captured the base at Khe Sanh had they been able. The North Vietnamese, however, were unable to seize the base due to superior American firepower. They could have forced the Americans out of Khe Sanh, but they never realized the means by which this could have been done.

Both sides had compelling military reasons for their interest in the region around Khe Sanh. The geography of Indochina made Khe Sanh militarily significant. General Westmoreland felt the critical importance of Khe Sanh was clearly apparent. It would serve as a patrol base for the interdiction of enemy personnel and supplies coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail from Laos into northern South Vietnam, a base for covert operations to harass the Communists along the Trail, the location of an airstrip for aerial reconnaissance of the Trail, the western anchor for the defensive line along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Vietnam, and a jumping-off point for a land invasion of Laos to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail. According to Westmoreland, abandoning the US military presence at Khe Sanh would allow the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN, the North Vietnamese Army or NVA) the ability to carry the fight into the populated coastal regions of Northern South Vietnam. For the Communists the region around Khe Sanh was the avenue for their entry into northern South Vietnam. From a strategic standpoint, it would clearly be in the best interests of the PAVN to end the American presence at Khe Sanh.

Khe Sanh was located on Route 9 which ran from near the South China Sea at Dong Ha westerly to Savannaket, a market town in Laos along the Mekong River. This old French highway ran just south

of and mostly parallel to the Demilitarized Zone. In August, 1967, Communist forces destroyed many of the bridges on Route 9, blocked the passes, and mined the highway. Khe Sanh was effectively isolated from overland resupply and would remain so for the next nine months. The Marine garrison at the Khe Sanh Combat Base could only be provisioned by air.

In October, 1967, General Giap ordered men and material sent down the Ho Chi Minh Trail and infiltrated across the Laotian-South Vietnam border in the vicinity of Khe Sanh. In response, General Westmoreland ordered the reinforcement of the Marine garrison there. Westmoreland wanted a large Marine force at Khe Sanh in order to entice PAVN troops into a killing zone where massive firepower would destroy them in large numbers. The limiting factor was that this force had to be small enough to be supplied by air. The result was a reinforced Marine regiment of about 6,600 men. On January 21, 1968, the PAVN began rocket, artillery, and mortar attacks on the Khe Sanh Combat Base. US air and artillery assets prevented the enemy from massing his forces in sufficient number to launch effective ground attacks on the base and surrounding hilltop positions. As long as Khe Sanh could be adequately supplied with ammunition, POL (petroleum, oil, lubricants) and food, the Marines could maintain their positions.

Concerns over the ability of the US to successfully defend Khe Sanh were manifest at the highest levels of government. President Lyndon B. Johnson, his national security advisor, the advisor's military assistant, and the National Security Council staff representative for Vietnam were all kept abreast of the developing situation around Khe Sanh. President Johnson summed up his feelings regarding Khe Sanh while the fighting was in progress: "I don't want any damn Dinbinphoo." Both General Earl G. Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Westmoreland assured the president that preparations for the defense of Khe Sanh were adequate and that the base would be successfully supplied. Support for the defense of Khe Sanh received priority over all other operations in Vietnam.

The job of supplying the Marine base at Khe Sanh fell to various Marine Corps and US Air Force aviation units. This airlift would have been a massive operation even under ideal circumstances. The purely logistical problems were compounded by poor visibility that fell below minimum requirements for airfield operations 40 percent of the time. The PAVN added to the difficulty by directing a heavy volume of antiaircraft and artillery fire at incoming aircraft.

The re-supply process suffered a sharp setback on February 10 when PAVN gunners shot up a Marine C-130, fully laden with fuel bladders, while it was attempting a landing at the Khe Sanh airstrip. As a result of this incident and fire damage sustained by other aircraft already on the ground, C-130 landings were temporarily suspended during February. At the beginning of March this suspension was made permanent. Consequently, during these periods, the Marines were denied the use of the best heavy-lift aviation assets in their inventory. Most supplies thereafter were delivered by parachute. According to the official Marine Corps history of the battle of Khe Sanh, these parachute drops ". . . were sufficient for bulk commodities such as rations and ammunition." Certain supplies, such as replacement troops, medical evacuations and medical supplies, could only be delivered by aircraft that made actual landings on the runway at Khe Sanh.

In the opinion of this writer, who was present during the siege, this official assessment of the success of US supply capabilities regarding rations was overly optimistic. A hot meal was defined as heated C-rations. The Marines at Khe Sanh sometimes went weeks without hot meals. Rations were routinely limited to two meals per man per day. One Marine reported that he went several days with only one C-ration meal per day. A company commander on Hill 861, located about two miles northwest of the combat base, reported his men were forced to go for days without water. Another reported that his water ration was one-half canteen cup of water per day, which had to suffice for drinking, shaving, and brushing teeth.

Water is an extremely difficult commodity to deliver to a besieged garrison. It is heavy. It must be handled in special containers that cannot be used for the delivery of other liquids, and water containers are vulnerable to incoming artillery attacks. One helicopter crew attempting to deliver water to Hill 861 was rattled by PAVN fire, panicked, and released its cargo from a height of two hundred feet. The

parched Marines watched the water containers burst apart in mid-air.

Had the Communists realized the vulnerability of the Marine water supply, they could have forced the abandonment of the combat base. The Marines occupied various hilltop positions surrounding Khe Sanh. These positions, initially supplied from the combat base itself, were later provisioned by helicopters flying from the 3d Marine Division Forward base at Dong Ha. Water for the combat base came from the small Rao Quan River which flowed through hills to the north occupied by the PAVN.

Even though the combat base was not dependent on air-lifted water as the hill positions were, it was, nevertheless, often a scarce commodity. The water point itself was located about 150 meters outside the northern sector of the base perimeter. There was a small hill and tall grass that obscured visual contact with the water point. The water was lifted ninety feet over an 800-foot span by pumps. A dirt dam twenty-five meters wide caused the formation of a reservoir six feet deep. During the extensive rains of September and October, 1967, the dam broke. US Navy EO1 (Equipment Operator First Class) Rulon V. Rees led a detail to repair the dam in the fall of 1967 using old scrapped Marston matting from the airstrip. This detail blasted a crater in the river bed about thirty feet in front of the dam to act as a reservoir in case the river level fell. Marston matting was placed on the face of the dam.

No patrols went out to get the water. It was pumped inside the perimeter and went to a large black rubber water tower container. This reservoir was frequently punctured during the siege, causing temporary lack of water on the base.

Had the PAVN realized how vulnerable the Marines' water supply was, they could have interdicted it by diverting the Rao Quan River or contaminating it, thereby forcing the Marines to attempt a breakout. However, General Giap, who achieved victory at Dien Bien Phu in part due to his meticulous battlefield planning, seems to have not realized the vulnerability of the Marines' water supply. Nor did the local PAVN commander. General Westmoreland did not become aware of the magnitude of the potential water problem until the base was surrounded by the North Vietnamese. By that time, a successful evacuation was not possible.

The concept of an overland evacuation of a reinforced regiment, fighting its way through two or three PAVN divisions that held every tactical advantage, presented a problem of such magnitude that Westmoreland was reluctant to consider it. The Joint Chiefs refused to consider it.

Had the PAVN succeeded in interdicting the Combat Base's water supply, 3rd Marine Division commander General R. M. Tompkins is quoted in one source as saying that it would have been impossible to provision Khe Sanh with water in addition to its other re-supply requirements. However, in a letter to General Davidson, General Tompkins stated that water could have been added to the provisions already being supplied to support the base. By examining the supply requirements and the logistical capabilities of the Americans it is possible to determine which of these contradictory statements is correct.

III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF) headquarters established the official supply requirement for Khe Sanh at 235 tons per day. The Americans were hard pressed to meet these requirements. The airstrip was completely closed on various occasions due to the weather or damage sustained from enemy fire. During the month of February alone, the Combat Base had a deficit of 1,037 tons of supplies actually delivered compared to scheduled deliveries. The air delivery problems were compounded when the use of the large C-130 cargo planes was curtailed due to hostile fire. Passenger requirements were met by the use of C-123 aircraft. The smaller capacity of the C-123s necessitated a five-fold increase in landings. More landings meant more targets; one aircraft upon returning to Da Nang was found to contain 242 holes before the maintenance personnel gave up counting. In the first month of the siege four major aircraft were lost to hostile fire.

Helicopters were widely used as re-supply vehicles. Only helicopters could reach the hilltop positions, whose supply requirements were 32,000 pounds per day. Helicopters were stationed at the combat base at the beginning of the fighting. These aircraft became so vulnerable to hostile fire that they had to be kept constantly in the air whether they had missions to

perform or not. Eventually losses became so great that this unit was deployed away from Khe Sanh, as helicopters were being lost at a rate faster than they could be replaced. No less than thirty-three helicopters were destroyed or permanently disabled between the beginning of the siege and the end of March, 1968.

These losses were sustained without the implementation of an additional requirement for water delivery. According to the relevant US Army field manual, the water supply requirement for drinking, personal hygiene, food preparation, laundry, and medical treatment is six pounds of water per man per day. These levels provide enough water to support continuous combat operations for extended periods. The implementation of this requirement would have added 158 tons per day, an additional load of 67% over the supply requirement without water. Unlike ammunition and food rations, which could be palletized and delivered by parachute without the need for special containers, water was difficult to stockpile during the periods when re-supply was possible, for use when landings were not permitted due to weather or hostile fire. The official optimism of US commanders regarding re-supply at Khe Sanh notwithstanding, the Americans would not have been able to provide the base with water under the existing tactical conditions.

By March the PAVN began withdrawing from the Khe Sanh area, and in April the Marine regiment was replaced, allowing it to withdraw via the newly reopened Route 9. The primary goal of the American forces at Khe Sanh was to destroy large numbers of North Vietnamese soldiers. In this they were successful. Although the official body count of enemy soldiers killed at Khe Sanh was 1,602, the US command placed the total number of North Vietnamese at between 10,000 and 15,000 killed in action. American deaths sustained in the siege itself, plus mobile operations in the Khe Sanh tactical area after the siege, totaled approximately 1,000 KIA. In a war that focused on kill ratios and body counts as a measure of success, Khe Sanh was placed in the win column by the American military.

As with the Americans at Khe Sanh, the French garrisoned Dien Bien Phu as "bait" for the Vietnamese Communist forces. An American observer there reported that the French base could "withstand any kind of attack the Viet Minh are capable of launching." When the Viet Minh knocked out the airfield at Dien Bien Phu, resupply became impossible and the French became isolated and vulnerable. On May 7, 1954, after sustaining heavy losses, the French were forced to surrender. The very next day the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference began. France's loss at Dien Bien Phu led directly to their withdrawal from Indochina.

Victory in combat, however defined, often hangs by a tenuous thread. Even with the claim of victory by the US at Khe Sanh and during the Tet 1968 fighting in general, the psychological victory of the Vietnamese Communists during this period led to the beginning of the end for the United States in Vietnam. It was during the 1968 Tet Offensive that opposition in the US to the war in Vietnam, in terms of regarding involvement as a mistake, first rose above 50 percent and exceed the level of support. Approximately one fourth of all the television film reports on the evening news programs in the US during February and March, 1968, were devoted to portraying the situation of the Marines at Khe Sanh. Had the North Vietnamese simply interdicted the water supply of the Marines at the Khe Sanh Combat Base in 1968, thereby forcing the Marines to evacuate and inflicting heavy casualties upon them in the process, the United States could have easily have met a fate similar to that of the French.

INCOMING

Khe Sanh Memorial Service Address
July 1, 2006
KSV REUNION, MOBILE ALABAMA
"LOOKING BACK, PRESSING ON"

By James Rutherford Chaplain 2/3

The great philosopher Charlie Brown and his friend Lucy were in a discussion about life. "You know," said Lucy, "life is like being on a cruise ship out on some great ocean. On the ship of Life there are some people seated in deck chairs at the rear of the ship, looking back at where they have been. And then there are others seated at the front of the ship, preoccupied with where they are going and what the future holds. Now, Charlie Brown, considering that you are on some ship out on the great ocean of Life, in which direction is your deck chair facing?"

"Well," replied Charlie, "out on that great ocean of Life, I'm still just trying to get my deck chair unfolded!"

Some of us will relate to Charlie Brown, while others may well be found locked into the events of the past. In every generation there seems to be some colossal event which largely shapes and defines that generation of people. For our grandparents it was the Great Depression. For our parents it was World War II. For us it is probably related to Nam. Listening to your stories shared at this year's Reunion over the past few days reminds me that many of us have been shaped in large measure by what happened there. I have been, and so have you. Perhaps we never really have a clear picture of where we are going until first we know where we have been. For us, looking back is like the re-opening of a photo album.

In my album I see a picture of CPL Norman L. Cox. He was ecstatic about a young daughter whom he had never seen. Four weeks short of that long-awaited meeting, he was killed in action three miles east of Khe Sanh.

LCPL Steve Olney's girlfriend had said 'yes' to his proposal of marriage, and he wore a silly, perpetual smile for his good news. But he died on a ridge someplace south of Con Thien.

2nd Lt. John Spindler had indicated to his chaplain that he intended to begin study for the priesthood upon completion of his Marine Corps service. A 122 round ignited a pile of ammunition atop Hill 689, and John went home early to be with God.

I see in my album a picture of LCPL Mike Turner. Mike had his life mapped out pretty thoroughly as well, but he died in the same blast that killed 2nd Lt. Spindler.

Capt. John Roesler hoped to return home to re-build a fractured marriage. A "bouncing Betty" prevented that during Operation Pegasus.

Ken Kirkes hoped to return to Tennessee to help his dad with the family-operated grocery business, but was instead killed while engaged in one of the Hill Fights.

HM3 Ron Keller, having saved several lives, looked forward to entering pre-Med training upon completion of his current tour. Time ran out for Ron during Operation Scotland II.

These and so many similar stories are not unlike yours. They are the pictures in your internal photo album. So many of the world's best and most promising we left behind. I read for you an excerpt from one chaplain's end-of-tour report:

At 3rd Medical Battalion in Phu Bai, Mass Casualties was the cry heard again and again. Within minutes a C-123 or the helos would begin delivering their bloody cargo, Marines! Sons of shop-owners, auto salesmen, nurses, short-order cooks they were. Newly-weds, hot-rod enthusiasts, jokesters. Some were college students. Yet there they were! Bleeding! Suffering! Bewildered! And while the doctors worked swiftly and silently, litter-bearers raced and corpsmen darted in the hope of saving lives. Some single mother's only son coughed and died without a whimper. To the uninitiated it would seem the entire world had gone mad, but there would be no time for protracted reflection in that chaotic scene. It was a visit to Dante's "Inferno," as day after day, night after night, the scene was re-enacted. And when the wounds had been sutured, the mangled limbs removed, and the shattered nerves calmed, the triage area again became a waiting room of anticipation for the next drama or tragedy which would surely ensue.

"After Operation Fortress Century there were Operations Kingfisher, Formation Leader, Knox, Foster, Badger Hunt, Houston, Ford, Pegasus, and Scotland II, the latter two breaking the back of the siege of Khe Sanh. The sun was hot, the nights cold, the rains drenching, the miles long and hard, the heart homesick, the body weary, but those brave men having been thrust into this violent society bore their suffering well. Who can ever forget the open, festering sores on the feet of Marines who had been unable to remove their boots for 28 days? Nor the anguish of the Staff Sgt., suddenly realizing that the bunker he'd just blown up was the hiding place of a small Vietnamese baby. Or the pathos of the Company Commander who raged over having lost his Platoon leader to a "bounding Betty," but who himself was blown away the next day by a similar device. "And who can forget the pale bodies and ashen faces of the 26th Marines after the Khe Sanh siege? Each looked ancient; as though they had just

emerged from the jaws of hell, and they had! And what of the pleading of the corpsman, critically wounded, asking the chaplain to pray for his buddies whose screams he heard even as he was being med-evaced? And what of the S-3 officer who inadvertently sent a Platoon into a "hot LZ," having been given the wrong grid square marking? Fourteen "kings" were crowned that day!"

Yes, we look back, and what we see and remember shapes us in large measure into what and who we are today. But that was 38 years ago; one-half a lifespan for most of us. What about today? In view of all that has attended our past, what now are we to do? I suggest that we are now to press onward in the following ways:

We must remember the unpaid obligations to our brothers who did not return. Ironically, some who helped us to survive did not survive themselves, and we owe them a huge debt.

We must keep aflame the candle of THEIR unspent days.

We must drink deeply of our lives because of the life denied THEM.

We must maintain attitudes of gratitude, and not relegate ourselves to being self-indulgent "whiners."

We must, to the best of our ability, accomplish and fulfill all that THEY might done and become, as well as reaching our own hopes and dreams.

We must offer a double-portion of generosity, sacrifice, responsibility, goodness, compassion, honor, and love in THEIR name.

So much for THEN and NOW. How about TOMORROW?

I will now put on my chaplain's cover and ask you to move your deck chairs and join me at the bow of the ship. There are two Great Realities about Tomorrow, and they are these:

1. We Will All Die!

The rich will die, and so will the poor. The educated will die, and the ignorant. The haughty will die as well as the humble. Both vagabonds and kings will die. The heart transplant recipient and the surgeon having performed the heart transplant will alike die.

Recently in Florida near where I live, two newly-weds, very much in love, decided to ease out of their wedding reception without telling their guests. They confided their plan for an early departure to their best man, who assisted them in slipping out without disrupting the enjoyment of their friends. Following them to the outskirts of town, their best man watched in horror as a collision ensued involving an intoxicated driver and the newly-weds. All three died instantly. Death is no discriminator. It takes from us those whom we might deem the worst, and it robs us of our best. All of us have known this to be true for at least the past 38 years.

Several years ago a Pulitizer Prize was awarded for the year's top photo. It depicted a young man, slumped behind the wheel of a car, who had died of a drug overdose. In the foreground was a parking meter with the words, "Time Expired," clearly visible. It is beyond us to find logic and to make sense of why some die so early, while others live a statistically normal lifespan. There is no earthly reason. And this brings me to great reality Number Two:

2. We Will Never Die!

A contradiction to reality Number One, you say? No! According to Holy Scripture death is a brief pause and not an end; a semi-colon and not an exclamation point! Death occasions a separation between body and spirit (soul). The body "goes to sleep," so to speak, while one's life essence, spirit, personality, or soul; whichever term we choose to use, goes to be with God. There is a part of us which does not sleep even when the body does. The mind, along with the central nervous system, keeps vigil and effects involuntary responses within which sustain life even while the body is at rest. Our dreams represent the mind's processing of each day's countless memories, experiences, and other stimuli even while the body if for all practical purposes out of commission. This explanation is painfully over-simplified, but it is offered to make a point: Death is only the cessation of one's physical being and not of one's spiritual nature. Holy Scripture affirms that at

death we pass into a most intensive awareness of self, God, and others. It is of utmost importance that we know that truth within God's Word; it is as important and as vital as our knowing the Author of the Word.

This has come across much more clearly to me in recent days. Just a few weeks ago I lost my best friend and the love of my life after her twelve-year battle with cancer. I miss my Carolyn terribly, even though there are rare moments when I can feel some joy that she is at last free from all pain the the horribly debilitating effects of cancer. Somewhere in the Bible, Jesus said: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven .. for where you treasure is, there will your heart be also." What huge deposits you and I have made into God's bank through our many earthly losses - the loss of parents and siblings; for some of us the loss of children and mates. And always, always, there is the memory of our buddies and our shipmates, now gone from us for these 38 years.

But we press on. We choose to not 'lose' our lives by too long placing our deck chairs toward the rear of the boat. Living too much in the past can be immobilizing and is a sure prescription for wasted years and a wasted life. Remember that the only things we can do for those who have left us too soon is to complete their lives through our well-lived lives. Drinking to their memory might have its place, but it's no substitute for living out their lives through our own deeds of support, hearts of compassion, and our acts of kindness to others.

Marines, let's re-commit to giving primary focus to the future and not just to lingering in the past. Let's face forward and not sulk at the stern of the ship. Let faith, truth, and God's purpose light and guide your way as you continue in the journey; from God, to God.

May God bless you, and, SEMPER FI!

INCOMING

The Thing War and Other Events Do: Lessons from Vietnam and Elsewhere How We Change and What Causes the Change.

By Gary Foster

Ngo Thi Tuyen – Hero of Thanh Hoa

The war in South Vietnam was fought by male combatants from America, North and South Vietnam, Korea, New Zealand, and Australia. The same cannot be said for the military forces north of the DMZ. Hanoi termed the war a People's War. Woman fought alongside men. Not many women marched south to fight the Americans, but they fought their own war in the north. They fought American fighter and bomber planes that sought to destroy the war-making infrastructure of North Vietnam. They operated machine guns and anti-aircraft batteries and they faced the daily perils, alongside their male companions, as war was waged against them from above.

She still lives in a tiny house off a main street in Thanh Hoa. No longer young, she maintains her fighting spirit and pride; and also her graciousness. The woman, once not more than 18 years old, is Ngo Thi Tuyen. In the flicker of a camera shutter she was captured on film carrying large anti-aircraft shells on her back to the gun emplacements on a mountain top near the Ham Rong Bridge. The determination in her young face as she trudged up the hill to the gun emplacement burdened with the weight of the two Russian made artillery shells is telling.

As a result of the ordeal, Ngo Thi Tuyen became a national hero, an official title bestowed on her by her government that she proudly carries to this day. At such an early age in 1967, Ngo Thi Tuyen crystallized what women of her country should and did do in the struggle against the Americans.

Saigon

At the definitive end of the war, April 30, 1975, when the North Vietnam Army entered Saigon and crashed through the gates to the Presidential Palace,

Tudo was renamed Dhong Khoi. Regardless of the name it was on Nguyen Hue near the intersection with Tudo Street, kitty-corner from the Opera House that I saw her. Climbing out of a deux cheveaux French made Citroen - a funny little car - she alighted with such alacrity and a bright splash of color, that my eyes became instantly riveted. I had not seen a western, less a blond woman for many, many weeks, and the instantaneous contrast that she presented among the sea of short dark haired Vietnamese intermixed with the green uniforms of American servicemen was no less than striking. While the surroundings seemed somewhat dull and lifeless, she was brilliant, vibrant, alive.

There was something mysteriously attractive about her, beyond description, beyond her western skirt, blouse, heels and flowing blond hair. She had stepped into another, exotic world, a world of intrigue, excitement, danger; and into this world she brought a reverse exoticness of elegance, and élan that was missing in the teeming turmoil and insane craziness of Saigon. In the cocoon of relative safety of Saigon, she seemed to swirl and thrive within the chaos. I could almost surmise by her expression that, like Durga, the Hindu goddess who makes her home on the battlefield, she was comfortable in a war zone, albeit in the relative safety of the capital city, but in the middle, or rather towards the end of a war nonetheless. I watched her from in front of the Opera House.

Within the breath of a breeze, she was swallowed up by the bustling crowd, disappeared, gone forever. I never met her but the image of that single fleeting moment remains.

Dinner in Kikwit

War changes a person. But other things do too. And these should be no less counted.

Kikwit was the embodiment of the Congo: remote, exotic, dark, foreboding, and in the middle of nowhere. Sitting on the banks of the Kwilu River, it was mute testimony to times gone by when Belgian farmers cultivated palm oil and frequented their private social club, le circle sportif, in town overlooking the river. The tennis courts, now empty and stripped of their lights and fence and net, are silent. Players, scurrying across the court in maddening play, their white tennis balls swooshing across the net or sailing over the fence, are only ghosts. The white boundary lines of the court are now faded into antiquity. The swimming pool, past host to children splashing in the shallow end while their parents sipped cocktails at the nearby sheltered bar has become the washing machine for the local population as women do their family's laundry from the edge or steps at one end of the pool.

The entire area surrounding Kikwit is covered with palm trees. Our camp was nestled in among them a fair distance from town. John and his wife invited me to dinner at their home one evening in camp. "Gary, my wife and I would like to have you over to the house tonight for dinner." House? Wife?

When someone invites a guest to their home, the invitation should be treated as an honor, a privilege. In some cultures the guest is obliged to bring a gift; and in any event that is always a nice gesture. But John's invitation was curious, almost comical. His wife was not his wife at all, but some girl he had picked up in a village, probably between Bakali and Gobari, maybe even as far back as Gembo or Bankana who traveled with him from camp to camp as the electric transmission line project we were working on progressed half way across Africa – seems to me her name was Chantel - and his house, not in another town or suburb but rather in the middle of a jungle with beat up trucks and mud covered bulldozers parked just nearby that replaced more sophisticated sedans and convertibles thereby completing the picture back home, looked just like mine. It was nothing more than a 10 foot by 10 foot square room that contained a small bed, a smaller desk, a folding chair and a reading light. And of course there was a single door and window that opened on one wall. The windows usually never worked or leaked in heavy rain and one had to take care when entering the room because you would either trip on the door sill or hit your head on the top of the door frame. Connected to the back of your home was another one exactly like yours. We lived in duplexes. Air conditioners cranked all night blasting the square room with cold air that dissipated in the noon day sun and more quickly if the generator failed. You were separated from your neighbor by three inches and each of you could hear everything the other person was doing.

The community in which John and his 'wife' lived

and in which I lived was not a neighborhood in Sacramento or Des Moines, but rather, linked by a wood planking sidewalk, it was a line of hootches that resembled trailers and which comprised a construction camp in the middle of the nowhere of an African jungle not found on a map. There was no town square and this was not Newport Beach. Forgotten by time in no-where's ville, this was the ultimate in chic jungle ticky-tacky housing.

John can be forgiven for the nuance ,or for his reference to a contrived, if not phony living situation. After so many months in the boonies, one struggles for some semblance of society, of home, of normalcy. After awhile, having been removed from society, nothing is normal. Often many of us used gestures and phraseology, which made more sense back home in our own society than to our current situation. Why not? Who cared? What consequence would it have? Home, hootch, house, porta-camp; camp, neighborhood. What was the difference?

In the belly of Africa, so removed were we from reality, from our world, we all began to react in our own unique ways to our environment to preserve our sanity. Some drank too much. We all did. Some smoked ganja. Some read. Some went for walks and exercise. We built large bonfires at night, and we played our tape cassettes till they wore out or until everyone went bananas. There was a large cross section of music, from country and western to classical, but it seemed the favorite sound among everyone to the detriment of other music soon focused on Fleetwood Mac and Abba. Their songs could be heard throughout the camp at all hours, day and night, and from camp to camp. "Do you hear the guns Fernando?" We became mesmerized by their music.

But mostly what we all longed for was to be out of the jungle and back in normal society. John was trying to create that normal society in Kikwit. Who can blame him?

Baghdad: An Abrupt Breakfast with a Dour MP

The giant mess hall in the Palace in Baghdad was very quiet each morning at five hundred. Sometimes the waiters would serve coffee early but mostly they placed it on the table at about 5:30. Sometimes the coffee was scalding hot and at other times it was tepid, even cold. One never knew.

Jennifer Greely could be seen each morning early in the Palace of Baghdad in the cavernous dance hall that served as our dining mess. She usually sat toward the back on the left side at one of the longer rectangular tables. She had silky dark hair pulled behind her head and cold black piercing eyes. She seldom smiled and her eyes would dart around the room in a nervous gesture suggesting tedium - tedium with the people around her who were not part of her unit and with whom she knew she could never identify. Jennifer Greely was probably about 22 or 23 and had arrived in Baghdad from Mobile about 8 or so months before. I know this because one day, I saw her sitting by herself and asked if I could join her. She said nothing, just motioned for me to sit down. The coffee in its giant aluminum pot with a spigot at the bottom that leaked had not been brought out yet so we waited.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"Greely," was the quick reply.

"I know. I can see your name tag on your uniform. What's your first name?"

"Jennifer."

"Where are you from?" I asked.

"Mobile."

How long you been here?"

"Eight months." And with that last response she got up and left the table. So much for me. I never talked with her again.

For the rest of my stay in Baghdad, I would see her and say hello, but she would never return the gesture. Once I saw her sitting eating her lunch and I said hello and she dismissed me with an irritated wave of her hand. Later, I was to learn a little about Jennifer Greely though I didn't learn very much. She was an MP, a policeman, or rather a police woman. She had been in the army for two or three years and would probably re-up. Through a colleague of her's I was to learn that MPs are not only peace officers and enforcers of rules and regulations and protectors from Navy drunks on shore leave, they were also the last line of defense. Jennifer carried a 9mm Beretta

Army issue hand gun. She also carried an M16, glow sticks, and two grenades in their own pouches. I saw her in complete military regalia, helmet (Kevlar), bullet proof vest, camouflage uniform, webbing, glow sticks, canteens, ammunition clips, a two-way radio, and her trusty 9mm Beretta automatic pistol.

I saw Jennifer on guard duty, walking the perimeter, outside the Green Zone's concrete barriers on patrol, and standing guard duty late at night at the main entrance to the Palace when we would return from the Al Rasheed hotel more than slightly tanked. Jennifer was intriguing to study and it was fascinating to watch her expertly manipulate her weapons to load and unload them, check for ammunition and point her rifle and pistol into the tilted barrel filled with sand to "clear her weapon" before entering the Palace building, or her bivouac area. She was always easy to spot because she had a unique gait to her walk. Greely was a sergeant of some lesser rank, maybe a corporal. A few details and her name were all I knew, or was ever to find out about her. The day I left Baghdad, I saw her climb into a Humvee and was driven away, her M16 pointing out the right side of the vehicle.

Linda's Sorrow

The tallest building in Bangkok in 1972-1973 was the Dusit Thanni Hotel. Air America maintained an office in the hotel. Bangkok bustled then as it does today but back then it was a haven for military men on R&R. The Dusit Thanni, tired, run down today and now overshadowed by many taller buildings, was not the only hotel back then. The city was dotted with simple rectangular hotels, 5 or 7 stories tall and about 10 or 15 rooms long. These were dubbed R&R hotels. Like cookie cutters, they all looked alike: main door placed squarely in the middle of one side and air conditioners continuously blasting away. They provided accommodations to the giant influx of military from Vietnam and catered to their more lurid or salacious needs as they caroused through the city in search of what O'Brien terms poontang.

I met Linda as I returned from Chaing Mai. I arrived in Bangkok by bus. I had taken three buses during the night each one stopping at a terminal in some town where I would catch the next bus. I passed by Udorn and saw continuous waves of US Air Force jets roaring into the night sky on some mission to Vietnam as the bright flames from the afterburners streaked behind the jets. From Udorn, at about 4 AM, I caught the last bus to my final destination at some point near Don Muang International Airport, on the distant outskirts of Bangkok, where I could catch a metropolitan bus into the city. She got on there and sat next to me.
She wore dangling gypsy type earrings and a yellow and red scarf around her head and she was reading a book. Her bags were at her feet and she wore a long brightly colored dress, sandals and rings on her toes. She wore the scarf she told me because when she had been a little girl she had been accidentally scalded with boiling water and the hair on one side of her head never grew back.

During the 45 minute ride into town past the Dusit Thanni Hotel we talked and agreed to meet later that night for some Singha beer and Thai food. I was staying at the Thai Song Creet hotel and she was staying at an equally dumpy rat infested hotel across the nearby klong.

We stopped at an intersection with the Dusit Thanni in sight.

"I have an AK47 in my bag," she volunteered

. "What? Where did you get that?" I asked.

"Outside Saigon on the road to Can Tho. I got it after a big battle. Lots of VC were killed and I found the rifle, so picked it up as a souvenir."

"You mean you brought it with you here."

"Yep, got it right here," she said as she kicked her bag with her foot.

"What are you going to do with it?" I asked with keen interest.

"Take it home and put it on the wall."

"Why?"

"To remind me of my time in Vietnam."

It turns out that Linda traveled to Vietnam to be part

of something larger than life, larger than her life. She traveled there on her own, with little money and stayed for four years doing various jobs and eventually working in an orphanage. She was tired now, the Vietnam conflict was drawing to a close and she wanted to go home. It had drained her. There was no more war. When asked why she felt compelled to come to Vietnam, she said "It's the only war we got." It seemed to me this was a cliché and it seemed I had heard the same remark somewhere before and after. But I saw it in her as a genuine statement. Her eyes assumed a distant look and her face became expressionless. "I loved it there. I had fun, great fun, dated lots of guys and went everywhere. It was a great adventure"

"You went into the countryside?"

"Many times. I always went by chopper and would stay out until I wanted to come back to Saigon. It's easy. Just go to Tan Son Nhut or Bien Hoa and get on a Huey. Sometimes I didn't care where I went, I just went. And then I would have to grab any ride I could to get back to Saigon. Simple. Now I'm going back to the States." She shrugged.

"How do you feel about that?" I asked. Linda became sullen as if a realization which she had pushed into the depths of her mind to be forgotten, denied, cast aside had suddenly been pried back out in the open by someone being too nosey. I was not prepared for the pitiful stream of litany that followed.

"I'm not sure what waits for me. I'm scared. I've changed. I'm not the same as I once was. No one will understand me." Linda looked out the bus window and I saw a tear run down her cheek. She began to cry slightly. Vietnam and all its memories, still so fresh in her mind, were forever in her past now. Gone. The last four years were evidently so incredibly exciting for her, it filled a void that had resided in her for all her life, gave her purpose mixed with adventure, she was part of something, it was so intoxicating, like a rush now descending, where would she get her next fix? She left Southeast Asia the next morning for Hawaii, I supposed, and then on to Oregon, I think.

The Congo River and the Transformation of Margot

Seeing a sunset on the Congo River is like seeing no other sunset. Sweeping north, running west and then dipping south before it empties its brown, hyacinth infested water into the Atlantic Ocean, The Congo River is the only river that flows across the equator twice. Due to its geographical location, it experiences the deluge of two distinct rainy seasons and as such the large drainage basins and the myriad of tributaries maintains the mother of all rivers at flood level year round.

Trois Zed (three Z) day occurred sometime in the early 70s. President Mobutu, himself renamed the country known as the Belgian Congo. The name he chose was Zaire. While he was at it, continuing to exert, if not flaunt his self assumed benevolent power, he also took the time to rename the currency the Zaire and the mighty river that has flowed since the dawn of time La Fleuve du Zaire. But to me it will always be the Congo River.

Passing through Kisangani, once called Stanleyville, the Congo River flows to Kinshasa, itself a renamed Leopoldville, and on past the giant hydro-electric schemes at Inga, its angry water squeezing into the narrow chutes, and finally disgorging itself into the Atlantic Ocean past Matadi. But it's at Kinshasa, just across from Brazzaville, that the river opens into a large basin that slows the torrents of the river to a calm pool. Still fast moving, the Stanley Pool, wide at Kinshasa, embraces the city with a ponderous, and at sunset, a beautifully serene lake.

She had arrived in Kinshasa; like we all did, at a little past midnight. She was met by the project facilitator, placed in a yellow bus and driven to the Memling Hotel in the heart of the city arriving there at about 3 AM. Kinshasa at that hour is quiet and dark, even intimidating. But when she woke up the next morning and peered outside, she would have seen a world very unlike her own and she may even have felt a bit of fright. She really had very little to worry about. Africans may appear intimidating but for the most part they are docile people, chaotic perhaps, but docile.

We never knew Margot had arrived, that Margot was among us. People walked across the compound all the time and some we knew, some we didn't. So it would not have caused a stir that she appeared at the gate in the same yellow bus and then be seen among

the trucks and other vehicles.

Unprecedented for us, Margot was not just a visitor, she was an employee, a worker. Women did work on the project, but they were wives of the men who had been assigned there and they did small tasks to keep themselves from getting bored. The project never brought over a female to be an active construction worker. Margot was not a tourist, no, she was coming to Zaire to work on our project as someone's assistant. She was; like all of us, an expatriate.

It didn't take long for word to get out. Management was asked to find her a job on the project so she could gain overseas experience. So she arrived, but without much fanfare. Her tumultuous exit, on the other hand, was much more infamous and caused quite the raucous among the expats.
Margot went bamboo, an expression we used to indicate someone was leaning away from his or her ways at home and towards the indigenous lifestyle and local manner of living. No one could figure it out. One day she was a Western woman, hailing from somewhere on the East Coast, the next she was in the jungle, in a manner of speaking, barefoot and, yes, very pregnant. When the transformation occurred exactly no one can say for sure, but it happened with lightning speed. She was a hippie, or so the word was, and the Zairian culture facilitated that lifestyle's foibles. She went to hangouts that other Americans frequented, but then she disappeared. It was learned that she had begun hanging out dans le cite, dancing till all hours in local bars to Zairian music. She started to come to work barefoot, then with Zairian dress and finally it was as if she had forgotten how to comb her hair or wear makeup, or, it was commented, take a bath. She finally just stopped coming to work at all. She had gone native on us. She had gone completely bamboo.

When the Project Director sent her home a very delicate and awkward matter everyone knew about Margot. She allegedly took her Zairian boyfriend with her and she left Kinshasa festooned with beads and bangles and African jewelry, quite literally barefoot and pregnant. How did all this happen? And how so quickly?

War is Truth

Men go to war for economic or territorial gain, or to satisfy ego. There are no other reasons for war. But why is everyone so captivated by war? What I believe Norman Mailer tried to suggest in THE NAKED AND THE DEAD, his attempt at the perfect war novel, is that war is truth in a way no other truths exist in or about life. Pull the pin on a hand grenade and the truth is it will explode and kill. Yank the lanyard on a cannon or a howitzer and the truth is the projectile that had been stuffed in its breach moments before is sent unerringly on its way, on its destructive mission. Governments and people talk and write, but there is no guarantee that the truth is spoken or written. There may be and usually is a hidden agenda. Load bombs into the bomb bay of an airplane, and the truth is, once released, death and destruction will result.

But Mailer also examined ethics and morality and good versus evil in his book and suggested that integrity, noble, good deeds, good intentions, do not always result in good, happy, or, noble results. The truth is war kills. It also maims. We are fascinated with this for some reason. So fascinated are we that as we close with it we become even more intoxicated with its ferocity and increasing danger. That is, until the risk of danger and harm outweigh the fun of witnessing it, and if we are not involved, we pull back. And this is another source of our fascination. We are intrigued by men who have joined an organization and must perform as expected. They cannot pull back

At the first battle of Bull Run, all of Washington DC turned out to watch the resulting carnage as if it was a theatrical play. But as the horrors of battle: cannon exchanges and charges of Infantry and Cavalry ensued, whole Platoons cut down as if by giant scythes many people reeled in horror and returned along the Warren Turnpike to the safety of the Potomac and their homes in D.C. But many stayed to watch. Men and women followed the movements of certain Platoons or Regiments as they marched and fought along the unfinished railroad or in the open undulating fields. They touched human drama and suffering of war, but did not themselves become singed.

"It's good that war is bad, for I should come to love it." Spoken at Fredericksburg at the height of battle when the Confederate army was slaughtering the Union forces as they drove up the hill to Mary's

Heights, Robert E Lee stood among his General Staff confident his Army would win the day and the war. Months later, the General would suffer his worst defeat at Gettysburg and the tables would turn. In each case, the world stopped to watch and later to pay tribute in the form of monuments, reunions, stories, and historical accounts that are read to this day. Unlike any other human endeavor, we memorialize war in a way that keeps it at the forefront of our conscience and we love it. We love the drama, the risk, and the essence of destruction. We cannot believe that we love it, but we do. War is Raw, or so goes the epithet for a particular wrestling show. War is truth in its rawest form.

The Shooter of Baghdad

So characterized by prolific dust, I often referred to Baghdad as the brown city. Not a particularly inspiring skyline, the buildings of Baghdad seemed squat, old and dusty. Baghdad itself is a twisting spaghetti of streets and byways, small alleyways and paths. The Tigris river loops through the city and because of the dissected geometry of the city layout and non-descript landmarks, one can easily become spatially disoriented.

In Baghdad everyone had a gun, some had several. It was a fact of life. One became used to it. There was no option. Guns lay on desks, propped up in the corner, or they were laid on the floor. The rifles, as they were handled, clicked and clanked and clacked and one became so used to the sound of someone manipulating them that each type of weapon could be identified merely by its signature sound as it was laid on the desk next to a computer, table, or floor. Guns were prolific and they were everywhere. And, in a very unsettling way, they always seemed to be pointed at you.

She was a shooter. She was not in the military. She was a contract worker. She always had three guns. She carried a 9mm automatic pistol, a smaller automatic pistol and an M4. An M4 is a smaller version of the M16. The weapon is basically the same, but the barrel is shorter and the stock is such that it can be used as a pistol or a shoulder held weapon. It's a no non-sense, extremely lethal weapon. All shooters carried the M4 in front of their bodies with the muzzle pointed to the ground. If you had an M4 and didn't carry it this way, you would be considered a novice and ridiculed. You were not part of the club.

She was not often in the Palace grounds, but when she was, she was noticeable. She was one of them. She moved with them. She walked with them, talked with them and rode with them. She lived with and worked with them. She talked to no one else but her comrades in arms. She was a body guard, a shooter, in short, a mercenary.

She wore glasses, a white and black kaffier scarf the type that Palestinians wear and her brown hair was pinned loosely behind her head with a gold clip in a sort of flailing pony tail. She wore dark green baggy cargo pants loaded with clips of ammunition and she carried clips in the pockets of her bullet proof vest. She carried her M4 in her hand with the sling and the muzzle pointed to the ground, or slung loosely over her shoulder. She walked with total confidence. She never spoke to anyone except to her comrades.

One day a convoy of vehicles pulled up in the parking lot. She opened her door, climbed out and stood guard for the person she was protecting as he emerged from the vehicle. She stood with steeled eyes, and looked around her with her M4 loaded, at the ready. She was the center of attention. I detected a slight smile at the corner of her lips. She was proud of who she was and what she was doing. She was clearly enjoying the experience immensely.

The Hills of Khe Sanh

The small, sleepy town of Khe Sanh and the Combat Base are reached by highway from Dong Ha in the east and Lao Bao in the west. Highway 9 has been completely upgraded now with a wider thoroughfare and new concrete bridges. The time required to drive to Khe Sanh from Dong Ha is a little over one hour. The drive is scenic and at locations as it parallels the Quang Tri River, majestic.

It was along one of the slopes to the top of the mountain that a photographer took photos that became famous and were seen all over the world and are seen to this day. Heretofore perhaps not a well known photographer, the person looking through the view finder, pressing the shutter button as the violence swirled and the carnage continued unabated, recorded the events for history which may even have become the pictorial definition of the experience

called the war in Vietnam. One particular picture showed Vernon Wike, a Corpsman, or Hospitalman, who tried to save the life of William Roldan, a Marine who had been seriously wounded in the chest. But with a flicker of a pulse and a chest full of gurgling blood, the wounded Marine succumbed to the only fate left to him and he lost his life. Realizing this, the Corpsman left him to tend to other Marines as badly wounded elsewhere on the slopes of the mountain.

The image is hauntingly without hope. We are drawn into the scene, the chaos of the battle and we see the fear in the Corpsman's eyes. We feel great sympathy and a loss of hope because it depicts one individual in a situation he cannot control, and from which he may never escape. With mud and blood covering his military fatigues, soaking wet with his sweat, his body low in the dirt with shrapnel and bullets flying through the air, the corpsman was captured in the 35mm frame in a desperate, hopeless bid to save the young Marine's life. That one single image appeared in magazines in the USA and was flashed throughout the world. The world took note and that little corner of Vietnam called Khe Sanh suddenly lost its anonymity and became a special deadly place on the map as the world would continue to watch.

The photographer, feisty though she has been described, was not a war-hardened journalist who had bounced from war to war, though she did later. Pressing the shutter of a camera is not gender biased. The photographer was none other than a 21 year-old French woman named Catherine Leroy who had come to Vietnam to report on the war through the lens of her cameras. So determined to capture the essence and drama of the struggle in this small country, to close with the phenomenon called war. She had gone into the very core of combat to capture on film the horrors that would occur. She succeeded. The result was poignant and startling. Her craft and dedication, her skill and her fearless desire were manifested in her work. The photographs she took speak for themselves. Leroy, already well known in certain circles and in Saigon, became internationally famous overnight. She survived the horrific onslaught on Hill 881N and Vietnam. She lives today in California. One can only imagine the transformation she underwent from a peaceful life in France to war ravaged Vietnam, then the transformation again afterwards, back to her more peaceful, safer environment from where she came. After such experiences, no one is ever the same.

The Uzi

I wasn't bothered when Cynthia had her picture taken while holding an Uzi. As we stood outside in the sun-spiked entrance to the museum we had just toured in Jerusalem, she had struck up a conversation with an Israeli soldier who had been leaning against a low concrete wall that served as the perimeter of the walkway. Before I knew it, she was holding the Uzi that just a moment before had been slung over his shoulder. I could tell she had never held a firearm before, or ever exposed to one in such an intimate manner. I knew Cynthia knew nothing about the weapon, but I also knew, that she was captivated by it. It held some sort of fascination for her. So compelled, she succumbed to her curiosity and, overcoming a tinge of shyness at the triviality but frankness of her question; like the awkwardness of a young boy when he timidly seeks permission from the pilots, much taller than he, to sit in the cockpit of a plane, she finally asked if she could examine it. Could she hold it? I saw that she was slightly intimidated by the little levers and small gadgetry that adorned the sides and top of the weapon and by the ungainly clip that held 20 or 30 rounds of neat little 9mm shiny cylindrical brass casings tipped with rounded, not quite as shiny, copper bullets. But she held it anyway.

There was no mistaking it. Standing beneath a scorching midday sun that penetrated a deep blue cloudless Israeli sky, suffusing the area with a sharp brightness, there she was, light brown hair flowing, seemingly a weapons expert with an Israeli machine gun in her hands. When she posed, finger on the finger-guard that protected the trigger, with her other hand holding the short fore stock, the little black fire-spitting machine I never new if the safety was on with its olive green sling now dangling just above her knees, was prominently displayed in front of her body the entire image to be caught on 35mm film. And it was.

The camera clicked several times. Captured for all time, like Lee Harvey Oswald photographed in Dallas with his Italian made rifle before events at Dealey Plaza, Cynthia, wearing her IDF uniform

with the small blue SAREL ribbon emblem, emblazoned with Hebrew writing, looped through the epaulet on her left shoulder, would be seen forever with a loaded, very lethal weapon in her hand.

No, I wasn't bothered by any of the scene unfolding before my eyes. I stood nearby and gazed nonplussed at her and the others without emotion or expression. I even accepted the ironic implausibility. If she wanted to hold the gun, so be it. She could hold the gun.

I did, however, find it all very curious. Was this the same Cynthia who many weeks before was uncomfortable sitting next to a very young Israeli soldier who escorted us on the bus we, 11 women 7 men, as we left Tel Aviv and embarked for Nafa in the Golan Heights, because he, with a confident nonchalant matter-of-factness, held a loaded gun, clip in place - an M16 to be precise? Was this the same Cynthia? Really?

The other women in our group who had crowded around Cynthia displayed the same novel interest as they took their turn being photographed with the suddenly popular instrument of death. Were these the same girls with whom I had just spent many weeks in Golan and who would cringe sometimes at the mere mention of guns or stayed awake all night out of fear of the Merkavas as they practiced night maneuvers and fired their main 105mm cannon and 50 caliber spotting Browning machine gun that was slaved to the main gun? What happened? What caused Cynthia and her gender colleagues to change? How? Why all of a sudden did they become so fascinated with guns? Why did they so spontaneously want to hold one? And, more interestingly, why was I, an unwitting observer of this unreal ceremony, surprised to find the scenario unfolding to be so fascinating, if not perhaps a slight turn-on?

REACHING OUT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR : BAY STATE VETERAN NEWSLETTER

From Reverend Ray W. Stubbe

Dear Robert:
Many thanks for the special edition of *Bay State Vietnam Veteran* (Vol. 2, Issue 3, Winter 1994) with the cover feature on Khe Sanh and related battles and the well-done story by Ted Stratford along with your comments and numerous photographs. This issue is a spe-cial treasure, and I am very grateful you sent it to me. Your letter reflects how we are all being reconnected after all these years: someone knows someone else, and then eventually old friends that had not seen each other for decades suddenly have the wonderful surprise of reconnecting! Your work with your publi-cation greatly helps in this process. I'm sure, along with providing much useful informa-tion and stories that promote pride in having served and gratitude for having had that opportunity. (At this time, however, I doubt many would have regarded serving in Vietnam as "an opportunity!")
Thanks for your thoughtfulness, my friend.

Semper Fi

From Russ Turner, President KSV

Bob,
You asked what I remember over the past 38 years. I remember being a young 19-year-old from Missouri going to a place that I had never heard about, and thinking that it was going to be like playing war as a seven or eight-year old with the neighborhood kids. Little did I know, just what lay in store for me. I remember the look of death, the smell of death: Yes, There is a smell of death. Flesh burnt from Napalm, bodies that had been left from the Viet Cong laying in the hot sun for days that had a smell you can never forget, and still can smell it if you stop and remember.

Remembering helping to put the dead and wounded buddies on a medevac chopper and hoping that they would make it, but never knowing if they did survive, and still wondering if they survived. Coming to reunions and seeing some of those who did make it and being elated to know it. One thing about war is the bond of friendship that you make, not just with the guys that you served with, but with the guys that were there while you were there with you in another Platoon, or another Company. Being able to share the same experiences with them and talking about it with these brothers that are like family you can share your thoughts with, and help each other in the healing process.

I can also remember good times that you have when you are not out on patrol, the laughter of playing a joke on the FNGs just arriving in country. The down

time when you could lay back and enjoy a hot beer with a letter from home and sharing these letters with each other. The KHE SANH Vets are a special group of veterans from a time in history that is not like any other group of veterans. Don't get me wrong. I do not think that we are better than any other group, just that we have a special bond because of what we went through and experienced while we were there.

Russell Turner

INCOMING

Publisher Note:
Regardless of what conflict the stories pertain to, I never get tired of printing stories of our relationship with our beloved corpsman, and the job they do protecting and saving Marines.

Marines and their Corpsmen
Submitted By

Mac - Milton McNeely

Another email forward from **Ken Pipes** that I thought you all would want to see regarding Marines and their Corpsmen.

All hands:

Ellen Bradley sends this out of the Navy News Service. It is on patrol in Afghanistan with Marines and their Corpsmen. When I was in the Marine Corps Corpsmen never had to buy a beer. I trust it is the same today.
Thanks Ma'am,
Seamus

Navy Corpsmen: A Marine's Best Friend

Navy News Service
July 9, 2006
By MC1(SCW/SS) James Pinsky

The corpsmen warned me the air would be thin up there, but I didn't notice. This was my first combat patrol and like a child trapped in the dark, I was petrified. The shoestring-narrow roads around the 6,000-foot mountains of Torkhem, Afghanistan make the battle-hardened Marines I was embedded with something the Taliban doesn't nervous.

The drivers, behaving more like tightrope walkers than desert warriors, eased their Humvees along the trails with one eye on the path and the other pragmatically scanning the limitless caves and nomad populations for the enemy. I didn't move, not a millimeter, while we climbed along paths so narrow that I honestly thought if I breathed too hard I'd tip us over the side, plummeting us more than a mile down to certain death.

I didn't breathe. I didn't blink. I waited for Taliban to ambush us from behind every rock, and there were a lot of rocks. HN "Doc" Joseph Nededog, noticed my white knuckles. "You know, I've been waiting for months for one of those goats to fall off the side of these mountains," Nededog quipped. "They never do," he said with a grin. I smiled, and finally breathed. That's what "Docs" do. They make everyone comfortable, a when you're a corpsman for Marines in the heart of insurgent country, helping a photojournalist keep his lunch down and his lungs working is an easy day. Nededog has seen worse.

After all, it wasn't the enemy that made these combat veterans slow their pace, and rightfully so. It was Afghanistan itself, not the besieged Taliban, that claimed 3rd Platoon's first soul in a humvee rollover less than a month before this patrol. Doc Nededog rolled that day too; still, he managed to treat his turret gunner who lay motionless, crushed between his weapon and the callous Afghanistan desert floor. It wasn't enough. Third Platoon lost a Marine that day. Losing any Marine is terrible, but to these Marines, all Marines, the thought of losing a corpsman was unimaginable. That's how much Marines love their corpsmen.

"We're a brotherhood out here. To lose a corpsman would be a huge blow," said Marine SSgt. Matthew Morse, 3rd Platoon Commander, "maybe more than losing a Marine, because our corpsmen are our security blankets." And when you're actively seeking to eradicate some of the world's most dangerous guerrilla warfare fighters, you bring one hell of a security blanket. "Corpsmen have the trauma training to react to any situation," said Morse. "The corpsman who was in the vehicle that rolled and killed one Marine had enough awareness to recover from his injuries and still treat the Marine."

And that's what Marines expect corpsmen to do because history says they will. No single rating in the Navy is more decorated for valor than the hospital corpsman. The Marines don't wonder if he will save their lives. They just wonder when. "Being a Marine is hard enough, and we are their corpsmen," said HMC Claude English, 1/3 Marines battalion medical chief. "We're the ones who get them home to mom and dad. If they get hurt they come to you, and that's why they cherish you."

Rollovers are the least of Doc Nededog's worries today. Just a few miles away from their convoy, black smoke billowed into the desert sky. Too far away to harm these Marines, it garnered no more than a passing glance. The sights and sounds of war don't impress them any more. But the smells do. The burning trash and raw sewage odors linger like cheap perfume, giving some areas of Afghanistan an unforgettable stench. "The smell always reminds me that something isn't right here," said Nededog.

Hours later, back at Firebase Torkhem, officially called Forward Operating Base (FOB) Torkhem, the Marines found out that the smoke, caused by a fuel truck explosion from an improvised explosive device (IED), may have been meant for them. "The Taliban know we're here helping the Afghan border police," said Morse. It could have been ugly, but the border police did their job. They found the bomb in enough time to get everyone away. Nobody was hurt, not even the driver."

Just a year ago, according to the international police mentors, that bomb would have made it through to its destination. The training is working. And that was why Doc Nededog and his Marines climb and drive Afghanistan's mountains and cross its deserts. They play big brother to the developing Afghan border police, helping them stand on their own. The idea being few bullies would pick a fight with a little brother with such a ferocious sibling. So far the plan worked, making 3rd platoon's corpsmen combat-wise - very bored.

INCOMING

Jim Capers
One of Our Own

Submitted By Mike Fishbaugh

From the desk of The Daily News-Jacksonville, NC: Jim is listed in our membership directory with 3rd Force Recon.

June 19,2006
ANNE CLARK
DAILY NEWS STAFF
Daily News Staff

Phu Loc, 1967. 2nd Lt. James Capers, USMC, led a 10-man patrol to destroy an enemy base camp. The Americans were advancing when a mine went off, seriously wounding several men. One lost a leg, another lost a kidney. The team's war dog died. Capers was hit 13 times. Then artillery rounds began to rain on them. Capers tried to go to his men but with a broken leg, he had trouble standing. Then his team's corpsman, a man he knew as Doc Smith, charged 40 meters through enemy fire, landing on Capers before giving him a shot of morphine.

"Doc came through the carnage," said Capers, who retired in 1978 as a Major. "He fell on me and saved my life. He fell on me; he had five children. That's not in the corpsman manual." Capers paid tribute to men and women like Smith at the 108th Hospital Corps Birthday Celebration, held June 16 at Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune. The retired Recon officer was an ideal speaker for the event; a recipient of three Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars who worked alongside Navy corpsmen on numerous missions.

Back in Phu Loc, Doc Smith stayed with Capers' team, calling in air strikes and artillery after treating the 10 wounded, becoming for a time the patrol's leader. He stabilized the men until they could be transported to safety. Capers spent days flying to Phu Bai, then Da Nang, to Japan where he nearly lost his leg to gangrene to Alaska, before finally landing at Andrews Air Force Base and going to Bethesda Naval Hospital, all the way cared for by Navy corpsmen.

Capers would go through three surgeries and a blood transfusion, but he would survive. He and wife

Dorothy celebrated their 46th wedding anniversary Saturday. "Had it not been for those guys, she would have been a widow," said Capers. Friday's celebration marked the day in 1898 Congress established the U.S. Navy Hospital Corps. That year, hospital corpsmen were assigned to the Marine Expeditionary Battalion that landed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, during the Spanish American War.

Like any military birthday celebration, honors were rendered to the U.S. flag, with tributes read from Marine and Navy leaders. Under the hospital flag pole, sailors in their whites served as the color guard. Guests stayed cool under lightly swaying tents. The youngest and oldest corpsmen in the hospital command-Hospitalman Apprentice David Guimond and Master Chief Raymond Guynn, respectively cut the first pieces of birthday cake. It's like a family, said Guimond, who was born in 1987 and enlisted in the Navy last year.

Asked why he became a corpsman, Guimond said, "Because there's a huge future in it. I'll have the knowledge to save others." Before the birthday cake was wheeled out at the Naval Hospital celebration, those gathered first paid tribute to those corpsmen killed in action since June 2005. Nine in all, killed in a helicopter crash or while on combat patrol or engaging the enemy or by homemade bombs, serving in the front lines of this conflict with their Marine brothers and sisters.

Each name was read aloud, marked by the ringing of a bell, matched with the nine stands solemnly draped with flak jackets, helmets, and firearms. Back in Vietnam, during the battle of Khe Sanh, a young corpsman tended to wounded Marines all night long. Doc said he was a little tired, and sat down for a minute. The bugles began to blow, calling the unit back into action. A Marine reached for Doc, but he didn't get up. He'd died. Capers was stunned. He never even learned the corpsman's name. "I wondered: what man of men was he? Who were his parents? Who told you, you had to do this?" Capers wondered. Then: "You instilled that in him," Capers told the corpsmen in the audience. "You taught him that you stay at your post."

BOOK REVIEW

"THE TWINS PLATOON"

AN EPIC STORY OF YOUNG MARINES AT WAR IN VIETNAM

By Christy W. Sauro Jr. Zenith Press

On June 28, 1967, 150 young Minnesotans were sworn into the U.S. Marine Corps at a Minnesota Twins baseball game and came to be known as the "Twins Platoon." Author Cristy Sauro Jr., who was a member of the That Platoon tracks the history of many of his fellow recruits from that ball game ceremony through boot camp at MCRD, San Diego and into the maelstrom of Vietnam by late 1967 heading towards the infamous TET Offensive of 1968.



Author Sauro interviewed many veterans of the Twins Platoon, their family members, friends and girlfriends to grasp the mood of those times when public support for the Vietnam War was beginning to shift. The boot camp experiences related by Sauro and other members of the Minnesota Twins Platoon 3011 will ring true with all Marine veterans who read this book.

The bulk of the book continues with the deployments of the newly minted Twins Platoon Marines to Vietnam by December of 1967. Their orders disperse them to a wide variety of Marine units and occupational specialties. Of particular interest to Khe Sanh Veterans are the chapters dealing with "Siege" experiences by several "Twins" veterans. Other members of the Twins Platoon personally describe their harrowing experiences in the battles of Hue City, Dai Do and the search and destroy operations around Da Nang through the remainder of 1968 and into 1969. The book contains a fine collection of the veterans' personal photos and the jacket cover photo is by honored Khe Sanh photo journalist Robert Ellison.

Their wartime experiences weigh heavily on many

of the "Twins" Marines who return home and Sauro's descriptions of family efforts to understand their sons speaks of a more simple time before delayed psychological stress from combat was even recognized by mental health professionals. The book concludes with author Sauro finally coming to grips with the meaning of his own Vietnam experiences in the scope of American public opinion.

The Forward by Brigadier General William Wiese (ret.) and comments by Major General James Livingston, MOH (ret.) and noted Vietnam War author Eric Hammel reflect the strong brotherhood of the Marine Corps and respect for Mr. Sauro's fine story of young men in war and its aftermath.

Dan Fisher

The Necklace And The Indian

By Craig W Tourte

While at the reunion in Mobile, John Pessoni (A 3rd Eng) was handing out necklaces, he gave one to me. They immediately caught my eye, made of yellow, white, green and red beads arranged in the resemblance of a South Vietnamese flag. I was quite taken with them. Unlike a hat or T-shirt that might proclaim one's being a Vietnam Veteran, the necklace was much more subtle, more a little clue than a statement. I begged John and he gave me a couple of them before the reunion was over. There was just something about the necklace that had become kind of symbolic for me. Although I tried, on several occasions to take the necklace off, I found that I just could not., That necklace just became my personal little statement.

When I got home from the reunion, several of my friends who are also Vietnam Vets noticed the necklace right away and asked if I could get one for them. I called John who told me that Ron Shouse (B/1/13) had made them and that Ron had provided quite a few for the reunion. I called up Ron and he told me that he would be more than happy to make up some more and send them , to me. He refused payment, so I sent him a shirt to show my appreciation.

While I was in San Diego this week, I got a room at a small motel that sits on the outskirts of the Gas Lamp District. It's a new redevelopment area with lots of small bars and restaurants. I spent a couple of evenings just kind of walking around watching the people, going in and out of the various neighborhood bars, enjoying thinking and being by myself. Wednesday, I found myself in just such a bar, although I don't remember the name. It was just a few blocks from my motel, so I felt comfortable sitting all alone knowing that if I consumed a little to many adult beverages, it was a short walk back to the motel and bed.

It was early evening and there were just a few patrons sitting at the bar sipping on a variety of alcoholic mixtures. There was a baseball game playing on the television. I sat near a corner of the bar so no one could sit on the right of me. There were a lot of empty stools to my left. Unless the bar was full, it would be strange for anyone to sit down right next to me, but someone did.

I continued to watch the game but not really watching it while lost in my thoughts I noticed that the guy who had sat down next to me, kept looking at me. When I glanced at him, he'd look back down at his drink or the television. I noticed that he was probably about my age and looked like life had been pretty hard for him. Sometimes you can tell how life has gone for people by just looking at their face and seeing a life of hard times. After several minutes he turned towards me. I looked at him, wondering what he wanted, or, more likely, what he was going to ask me to give him. I saw his eyes go to my neck and he said: "Vietnam." It was then that I realized I was wearing the necklace that Ron had made and which I had not removed since the reunion in July. Looking at him full on, I realized that he was an American Indian.

During my attempt at higher education after high school, I had the occasion to attend a Junior college, but considering the fact that I had been the product of the public education system and my high school GPA was 1.96, I realized that my chance of being successful at that endeavor was slim to none. Though not successful, having flunked out after the first semester, I had become good friends with a Native American from the Hoopa Valley up in Northern California. After I flunked out, my stepfather suggested I should pack up my crap and find some place else to live. My Indian friend who also flunked out, suggested that I come up and stay with him on

the Reservation for the summer. Having no where else to go, I drove to the coast along the Klamath River and stayed with him for a couple of months. I developed a very intense appreciation and respect for these American Natives and later noted their Warrior spirit was evident in the Marine Corps and in Vietnam.

"Yes, Khe Sanh" I responded. We both turned around to face the bar again, saying nothing. By this time of the evening I'm afraid I was feeling the full effects of the several stops I had made before I had found my way into this place.

After what seemed like a few minutes, he said: "That was a long time ago." My recall now is that I just nodded, unable to say anything and I'm afraid I was caught up in the moment, like I can get some times. I reached up and unhooked my necklace and placed it into his hand, stood up and walked out of the bar and back to my motel room.

Looking back I don't know what happened. I wish I could have asked him the usual questions, like, when were you there? Who were you with and where were you in Vietnam I wish I had shook his hand and asked his name, but I'm afraid I just couldn't. I think there are times when words can't be spoken, and often, they just don't have to be spoken, like trying to explain a Khe Sanh experience to someone who was not there. Sometimes you just can't find the words to describe it.

REPLIES:

Apache and a beaded necklace

By Ray Palmer

Craig, I am a full blood Apache and was with Delta 1/26 from November of 66 to November of 67. I wanted to meet you at the last reunion, but unfortunately could not. I wanted to meet the Marine who could capture with words, with easy, events and near events that happened a long time, ago and yet in my mind just yesterday, and with the blink of an eye a moment ago. Read with fascination your accounts of the meeting with the unknown Indian and the transfer of the beaded necklace. The person need not have been an Indian. In several words you have captured a ritual that is common among American Indians, "what is mine is yours" and nothing asked for in exchange.

If you could give me an address where I can send a "replacement" beaded work... I would like to replace the one you gave to the "Indian. Also, I'll add the unit you were with.

Ray Palmer
White Mountain Apache

Marching In The Fog

Still On The Road

By Craig W.Tourte

As I marched on the grinder of MCRD San Diego in 1966, darkness was an early visitor during the month of October. It was relatively early in the evening for Marine recruits and our training continued unabated by the closing Darkness and invading fog, which seemed to wrap itself around the towering skyline of downtown San Diego, then slowly creep down into the valley of the depot. Occasionally, the fog was so dense it blocked out all but the hallo of light omitted by the incandesces of the tall structures.

We spent hours and hours on that grinder, marching back and forth, listening to the constant shouting cadenced of our Drill Instructors. The marching orders of left, right still ring in my ears and invades my sleep forty years later. As I stood out on the grinder this week during my first visit back to where it all began, I once again looked up towards the same towering skyline, knowing many were the same buildings I viewed from this exact location forty years ago. This time I no longer wondered who occupied the structures, why they were not home with their families sitting before their televisions, eating what and when they desired and admiring their freedom to come and go as they pleased. I now wondered if those up in the tall office buildings ever thought of the hundred of thousands of fine young men who had passed through the Depot. So many training and marching off to some conflict or war in a far away land most had never heard of. As my memory of my marching returned and I again cast a glance towards the skyline, I remembered then feel-

ing so alone, but yet looking forward to an adventure, the likes of which I could never have imagined.

I volunteered for the Marine Corps. I was a sole surviving son and did not have to go to Vietnam, but I had nothing and nowhere else to go. The Marine Corps and a war in a far away land called to me, a call I was unable to ignore. The Marine Corps was where I wanted to be, and strange as it may seem to an outsider, Vietnam was where I needed to be. I neither understood nor cared about the politics involved. I left San Diego Thursday, August 4th around 2100 hours. Interstate 5 climbs North past the Depot as it snakes its way towards Los Angeles. The traffic was moving at its usual snails pace and I caught the San Diego skyline in my rear view mirror. I could see the tall towers of the city and the fog once again approaching as it began to wrap the upper stories of the city in its cool white shroud. As I distanced myself from San Diego and my memories of what was really the start of my life, I felt a tug at my heart and a lump form in my throat. There might have even been tears in my eyes. It's hard to explain these things to outsiders. But I know you'll understand.

I had intended to drive to Los Angeles and find a small motel near the freeway and get some sleep before starting up the coast Highway 101, but the thoughts and memories of times past occupied my mind and I didn't want to lay in some motel room and stare up at the ceiling for the rest of the night while those thoughts you know the ones ,once again occupied my brain. I drove past Camp Pendleton and Oceanside, turning off onto the 405 near the old Marine Corps Air Base of El Toro, where so many of us flew off to another world and some never to return, towards the West and the beach cities that skirt the city of Los Angeles. The miles were stacking up as I left memories of San Diego, boot camp and the Siege of Khe Sanh far behind. It was around 2300 Hours. I had my window down and the radio up, I was starting to feel pretty good. The cool air rushed into my nostrils and up into my head, clearing my brain of painful memories. I had recovered, for the most part, from my melancholy. Around the city of Huntington Beach, in Orange County, I spotted a small green California road sign off on the East side of the highway. I don't know what there was about this relative inconspicuous sign that drew my attention to it and I was passed it in an instant. Normally, I would have missed it. I don't know why I happened to look along the side of the highway while going the un-posted, but "mandatory" speed of 80 miles per hour on the L.A. freeway at that time of night, but there it was. I had seen it and it was too late. The sign read: "Little Saigon."

A couple of hours later I knew it was no longer safe for me to continue, I had driven too far and the only room I could find out in the middle of nowhere was an expensive Marriott. It was that or sleep in my car. I had not eaten all day and the only restaurant within miles was closed. I was not able to sleep and stayed up and wrote, The Necklace And The Indian story I posted. I drifted off sometime during the early morning hours only to be awaken around 0830 by a knock on the door and the announcement in broken English, "Housekeeping," and by the voices of other non English speaking workers outside of my window, cutting the hedge. It was time for me to move along.

WE GET MAIL

Membership Information

Sir,

My name is Tom Nickols, son of T.L. Nickols, Retired GySgt... I need to know if as a son, I would be allowed to join your group. I realize that my military service was not one during your time, but I am currently working on a project that may be of interest to you and all of the Marines in your group.

Dad served from 1953 to 1973 as a radio operator and load master. From a single photo, I can see that he started in C-47S. I'm not yet sure if it is Marine Corps or Navy. My project started some 10 years ago when I decided that I was going to find out exactly what dad did, who he did it with, and what differences his life made to not only us, his family, but to the men and women he served with and the Corps as a whole.

Through your Web Site I was able to connect to a friend of my father. He uses the name Raven. Through Raven I have found that Dad did make a difference. He did make a real and lasting contribution to all who would follow him and the staff he worked with. This project, once completed will give

all of the Marines and their families the tools needed to develop some of the most accurate histories available today on any single aircraft.

The plan is simple. I am currently collecting the data needed so that any Marine or family member can use this book, or CD to look through the aircraft, duty stations (Both home and abroad), Combat sites, i.e., Vietnam, Japan, China, Thailand, etc., and bring stories into memory through recollection of these items. It will be open, meaning you will not need to contact me to use any information or photo's to write your history. I hope this will help all groups or organizations that want to write their history to share with others. First hand accounts always make the best reading. They are always from the heart and mind of those directly involved.

Laying this out, I will start with the aircraft that was replaced by the then known as GV-1's. These were I believe the R4DS, RSDS and I think some of the C-47S AKA "Gooney Birds." From there I will put in order of acquisition as best I can the KC130 and the units who received them. This will be complete with photos of all planes, provided I can find them. I think I need 4 or 5 more to have at least one shot of each. With all of this in place, the book, or CD set will simply grow.

As a Marine looks through the material, he can spot a plane that triggers a memory of a particular flight or mission. I hope he will say: "Oh yeah, I remember that KC130. That's the one that had the goofy ADF. Never would read true." Or the dreaded in flight emergency, like: "That 130 had the worst wiring of all. During short field operations, the pilot's breaker board started smoking due to frayed wires caused by vibrations emitted through the aircraft under stress." All of this type of stuff is what makes for some good reading. I realize my examples may never have occurred, but you get the idea.

Once a story is developed by the Marine, or family member, simply submit it to me, or your organization representative, and their story will be added to the collection. Updates will occur about every 90 days, and be mailed out to all who want the update. I hope this project will keep all Marines, still in service,nally at home, including their families, up to date on the most recent accomplishments of how the KC-130F evolved from 1st off the line to the new J. This project will be supported by a dedicated server for the internet guys out there. The server, once I get the rest of the parts, will be the home of the KC-130F Information Center. This server should be online in late September.

Well guys, I would really like some input on what you think. I know this is doable, and I hope that it helps to serve everyone's best interests. This could become one of the best ever written and updated history books on the KC-130FIR/J ever written.

Thomas Nickols Firefighter
Paramedic Avilla fire & Rescue
Avilla, Missouri 417-793-5520
Nick@Jasco.us

INCOMING

Reunion in Branson Missouri

By Cliff Treese B Btry 1/13

After an excellent trip to Washington, D.C., for Operation Rolling Thunder, Linda and I left home to embark on another little outing. We drove to Albany, Kentucky to see her mom and the rest of her family. Linda's mom is not in the best of health since her stroke a few months back. We arrived there in time to spend some time with her before we came to the conclusion that she could no longer live by herself. Since her stroke she has became totally blind and could not get around by herself. Linda and her brother made arrangements for her to be put in a nursing home close to their home. Linda and I spent another week in Albany getting things straightened up at her mom's place. We visited her every day.

Linda informed her mom that we were leaving the next morning to go to Glen's house in Missouri. We were going with Glen to attend the welcome Home Reunion in Branson MO. Linda told her that their family reunion was coming up in a few weeks and she would try and make it back to take her. She was in a little better spirits after hearing that.

Linda and I got back on the road and drove to St. Peters, MO. to Glen Rappold's' house. We arrived about supper time and decided to go to Hooters, our favorite dining establishment, for supper. Last time we were there the girls signed a poster for the Wounded Warriors. We took a few more photos

(Pic 1&2). Glen and I then went to his memorial and attempted to put new flags up. I talked him into doing it the right way by lowering the poles down instead of trying to climb a ladder up the extended poles. If I hadn't been there Glen surely would have fallen off and broke something (Pic # 3).

We left Glen's and headed for Branson. As we got near, we were driving in a long construction zone. We had crossed a bridge with only a few feet of shoulder on our right and a concrete barrier to our left. Glen who was driving the lead vehicle, decided to stop and relieve himself. When he got back in his car he pulled out without looking, and almost hit a truck as it came over the bridge. The driver hit his brakes and swung over to the shoulder where Linda and I were stopped. Fortunately I was driving our Dodge with the Hemi in it. I floored it and drove up the shoulder to get out of his way. He passed me and wouldn't let me off the shoulder. He was mad at me and kept moving over to try and run me over the embankment. I hit the brakes and let him go and pulled in behind him. When the construction zone ended and I could pass him, he gave me the bird. My PTSD was shifting into high gear at this point. All I could think of was to get in front of him and lock up the brakes. I thought the better of it, and just took his plate number to report him to his company.

We finally arrived in Branson and checked into our hotel. I had to locate Larry Wilhite, the manager of Mansion America, to find out when they planned on showing the documentary on Khe Sanh from the History Channel, "Khe Sanh the unsung Heroes." I was asked to be there during the showing by Lou Reda from Reda productions who produced it for the History Channel. After touching base with Larry, the three of us decided to walk around and see the sites. There was a Huey flying around that was giving rides for a fee. We walked up to the Traveling Wall that was on display in the parking lot. There were several large tents set up with vendors.

The next morning we returned to the Mansion because they were showing the documentary on the big screen in the theatre. The showing went well and we met several veterans who said they served at Khe Sanh. I had the new banner with me, and they signed it. We met up with Chris Noel and sat and chatted with her awhile, and she signed our banner (Pic # 4). I told Linda and Glen that I would like to go over to the landing area and take a chopper ride. I finally convinced Linda, and off we went. The ride was great and we found out the co-pilot was a pilot who flew in and out of Khe Sanh (Pic # 5&6). The lady who checked us in before going up was a former Marine who retired as a Sgt Major (Pic # 7). When we left the flight area we heard drums beating, and we watched an original Native American Pow-Wow (Pic # 8).

The next morning we attended the Veterans Parade which ran through the streets of Branson. They had old WWII military Ducks there to take the Vets who would rather ride than walk. Glen and I hung our Khe Sanh banner on the side of the Duck and climbed aboard. The Duck was filled with Army Veterans. We were the only two Marines aboard. As we passed the reviewing stand, the announcer announced: "Here comes the Khe Sanh Veterans," then said to the others on the stage,:"Does anybody know about Khe Sanh?" Many vets in the area all yelled and cheered(Pic # 9).

I had one guy run up to the side of the Duck and told me he was from C Btry 1/13. I told him we were from Bravo 1/13 and he should sign the banner. This man ran along side of the Duck while signing the banner. Linda was waiting in front of our hotel to get a picture of the banner on the Duck. I asked the driver "Capt. JED" if she could come aboard and he stopped in order for us to lower the ladder and get her aboard.

We arrived back at the Mansion America building where we made several new friends. Among them was Air Force Brig. General Robbie Reisner who was the ranking senior POW in the Hanoi Hilton. The General related a few stories of his captivity by the North Vietnamese and the tortures he endured. Chris Noel, along with the owner of Mansion America, Mr. Bucknell, was also there with the General to receive awards (Pic # 10).

When the show started the Marine Corps Color Guard came on stage to present the Colors. Several different entertainers appeared on stage to sing and perform. They had a short skit depicting the Viet Nam Wall with Veterans standing at the Wall and hearing voices of fallen buddies coming from the Wall. They also had a group of singers come on stage singing and dressed in clothes from all eras in

American History from the Revolutionary War to the Present War in Iraq (Pic # 11)

The next morning was the first day of a two day out door concert. The show wasn't due to start until 1:15 PM, so we went over to the tent area to walk around. A man named Harry Schiltz came up to me and asked if I had been in Khe Sanh during the Siege. I told him that I had been. He said that he was in a Long Range Recon unit around Khe Sanh and he was the only survivor from his patrol, after they walked into an ambush. After being bayoneted in the back, he crawled and hid in a tree trunk until it was safe. He then made it back to our lines, and later received the Navy Cross (Pic # 12).

We heard music coming from the stage area, so Linda and I walked over to the stage and set up our chairs. They wanted to get things started a little early. Paulette Carlson of Highway 101 came on stage first to perform a few songs to get the crowd warmed up even though. her band wasn't scheduled to come on until 7:20 PM (Pic # 13)

The National Anthem was sung by Shawna Stratton. The first scheduled group to perform was The Liverpool Legends, better know as the Beatles. George Harrison's sister is the manager of this group and has moved from England to Branson (Pic # 14 & 15). The MC of the show for the two days was Rex Smith. Rex made an announcement that if anybody wanted to pass their hats up front he would mention their unit. I took my hat off and passed it up to Rex. I was the first to do so. He then announced: " Here's to all you survivors of Khe Sanh." Everybody in the place stood up and cheered. He went to pass my hat back. I told him to keep it and to wear it proudly. He told us that he lost an uncle in Nam who was a fighter pilot who was shot down. His remains were never recovered. He gave everybody their hats back and wore ours (Pic # 16).

All during the show on Saturday, choppers and other military aircraft flew low over the stage area. Most of the aircraft were rebuilt and flown by Vietnam Veterans. Mickey Gilley and his band also performed. He still sounds good (Pic # 17). Chris Noel came on stage and was presented with Paul Revere's hat and announced that he would not be there (Pic # 18). She then shocked the stage crew by calling for all Vietnam Vets in the area to come up on stage (Pic # 19). Everybody looked around and said: "I hope this stage holds us all."

Artemus Pyle of Lynyrd Skynyrd and the band were next to perform. Artemus came on stage and announced that he was in the Corps from 1969 - 1973 in the Air Wing and in Nam for one year. He told us with a name like Pyle, what do you think his DI called him in San Diego MCRD? GOMER. I went to talk with him as his show ended and he told me to come back stage. Linda and Glen followed. We talked and took some pictures (Pic # 20 & 21).

Rex Smith the MC, followed by singing several songs one called "From here to Eternity" that talks about the battle for Khe Sanh. Chely Wright, was great She talked about a guy she met while entertaining troops in Iraq. She noticed that name on his uniform was the same as hers. He asked her to go out on a date and she asked if they could possibly be related. He said he didn't think so. She told him if we move to Kentucky it would be okay. She learned a few days later he was killed the next day in an explosion. She was an excellent performer.

Glen had to be back in St. Peters for a doctors appointment on Monday morning. Linda and I both said we might as well leave early, because we had an 1100 mile trip ahead of us. We all left out around noon and headed our different ways home.

Cliff Treese BOD




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BASTARD BRAVO


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BRAVO


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Cliff &
Linda

KSV TREASURERS ANNUAL REPORT

Jim Wodecki Treasurer Report -from 7/1/05 to 6/20/06

Annuity #1 **$57,337.96** (balance as of 3/31/06)
Annuity #2 **$25,987.54**
($2000.00 transfer to checking account 10/10/05 for Red Clay fall issue included in balance

Life members Annuities	**$83,325.50**
Index Checking: account +$36.00= Total Savings on hand.	**$83,351.50**
Balance in Checking Account	**$21,350.00**
TOTAL	**$104,701.50**

Income. 2005-2006

Donations:	6,700.00
Donation from Ray Stubbe Book	4,500.00
Interest earned checking account:	$22.09
KSV annual dues:	$12.442.14
Life memberships:	$10,097.27
PX Fund Raiser:	**$13,615.22**
Reunion Registrations 2005:	$5,431.00
2005 Hotel Refund;	$1002,69
Reunion Registrations 2006:	$17,671.00

Total Income 2005-2006 $71,481.14

Stock cashed in for Red Clay #62	$2,060.47
Flex checking account transfer for Red Clay #63	$2,100.00
Transfer from Annuitv #2 for Red Clav issue #63	$2,000.00

Stock and transfer from Annuitv: **Total $6,160.47**

Expenses 2005-2006

2005 Banquet Hotel	$7,428.00
2005 PX items bought	$419.00
2005 reunion T-Shirts	$1,806.00
2006 reunion T- Shirts:	$1,129.44
Accounting CPA	$466.40
Administrative costs	$3,741.62
Credit card charges for AMEX	$10.54
Credit Card Charges Discover:	$26.95
BBQ meat for 2005 reunion;	$2,600.00
Credit Card processing costs:	$369.46
Printing for Rays new book:	$4,500.00
Sullivan Insurance:	$1,601.00
Marine Corps Heritage (KSV brick) :	$300.00
PX Help:	$705.00
Red Clay #62 (printing and postage):	$9,010.33
Red Clay #63 (printing and postage):	$ 11,221.39
Red Clay #64 (printing and postage):	$9,126.81
Red Clay #65 (printing and postage):	$7,387.90
Reunion Help 2005:	$317.00
2005 reunion Vans and band.	$4,000.00
2006 reunion refunds:	$280.00

Total Expenses 2005-2006: $70,934.47

* Administrative costs include, Credit card machine leasing, bank charges, web site, and domain name, message board, guest book, L-Distance calls for PX and reunion business, PX boxes, tape, postage and misc., 2006 reunion costs- also bad checks, ink and paper)

NOTICE TO MEMBERSHIP

We are starting a new magazine section to thank those members who contribute so generously to the Khe Sanh Veterans. Their contributions allow us to continue to expand and improve our Red Clay magazine. There will be four levels of contributions: SILVER $ 20.00-50.00, GOLD over 50.00-200.00, PLATINUM over 200.00-1,000, and DIAMOND over 1,000. Each member will receive a new membership card, corresponding with their level of contribution.

DIAMOND

DAWDY. James H. Jr.

PLATINUM

FOSTER, Gary W
GABLE, Vincent L
PATRICO, Sid
KUBLEY, Lawrence W
SCOTT, Michael D
TOURTE, Craig

GOLD

ALLEN, Lewis J
BROPHY, Michael W.
COOK, Michael H
COSNER, Leonard G
DUNLAP, Lee C
GERARD, Charles G
LEE, Dale
LOERSCH, Phillip E
MAIN, Ronald G
MANNION, Dennis M
MCNEELY, Milton L (Mac)
NOYES, Richard C
PADLEY, Shirley W
PATTERSON, Charles E
RAIT, Donald M
ROBBINS, John L
SHANKLIN, Dean E
SLATTERY, Robert J
SMITH, Walter J
STUDT, John C
WILKINSON, James B

SILVER

APPLEBAUM, Robert S
CATON, Louis W
DEARING, Richard M
HALL, Robert A
HARRIGAN, Joseph
HOFFLER, John T
MAHONEY, Brian
MEYER, Donald J
MUDD, Ronald B
SWEARENGEN, Mark A

A FEW REUNION SNAP SHOTS







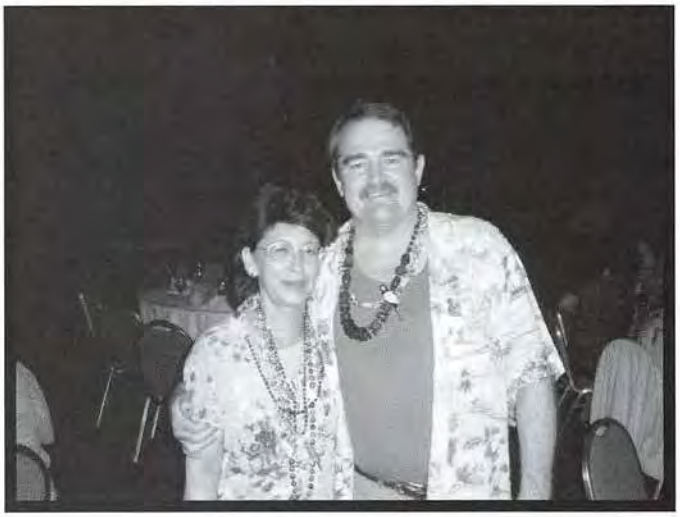







Big John & His Date



Picture Speaks For Itself



Boy Did Kathy Change



Chillin



Santa Wannabees



More Chillin
















DUSTERS



YEAH, "Shake it Baby"



I Told You This Table Was To Small



"LOVE"



Tommy, Is That Your Daughter?



Police Line Up



Who In The Hell Is Paying For These Drinks



"Buddies"



The Sgt Major "Twist"



"Rising Star"



"Yahoo"



New Members at Large



Glenn, Whispering Sweet Nothings

INCOMING

Hi Tom,

Last month, I had the rare opportunity to attend an Educator's Workshop at Quantico where I learned about OCS, the Basic School, the War Fighting Lab, new weapons and tactics, and the Marine Corps University. Accompanying us for the week were a group of young officers. All except one had served in Iraq.

At the end of the week, I presented a copy of Mike Archer's book about Khe Sanh to the commanding general of the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. I reminded him - gently - that Vietnam is just as important to the USMC story as any other war and that the USMC should embrace Vietnam vets and ask for our help in supporting the USMC and its recruiting efforts.

I am a professional historian now, but at Khe Sanh I was a corpsman.

Doc Topmiller
Senior Corpsman, Regimental Aid Station
Khe Sanh, 1968

Robert J. Topmiller PhD
Assistant Professor of History
Eastern Kentucky University
Keith Hall, Room 304
521 Lancaster Ave
Richmond, KY 40475-3102
rtopmiller@hotmail.com

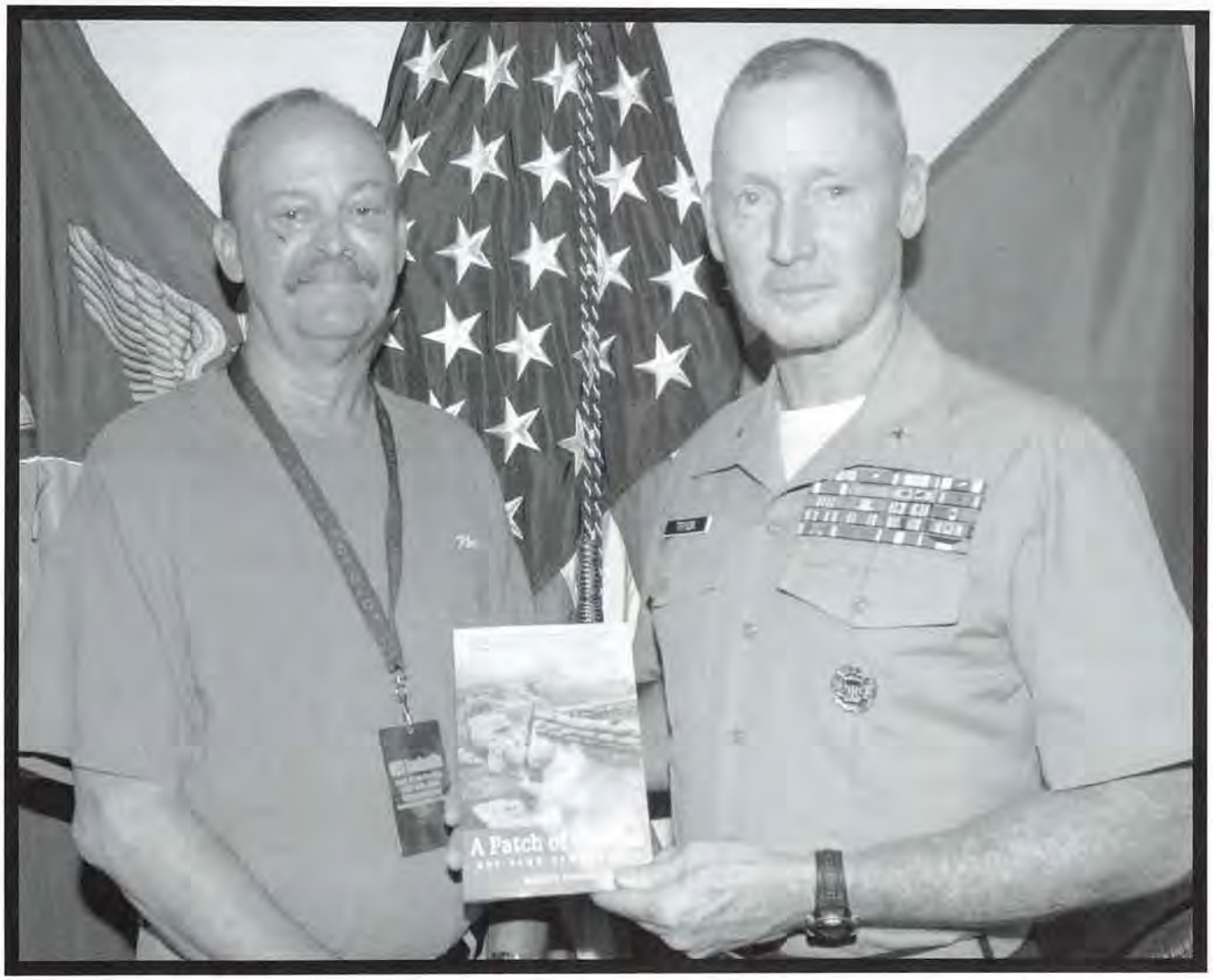

Brigadier General Richard T. Tryon The Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruiting Command Quantico, Va., Receiving Book From Professor Robert J. (Doc) Topmiller PhD












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USMC
COMBAT
ENGINEER

ISSUE 67

WINTER

2006

THE KHE SANH VETERANS'

RED CLAY



Christmas Tribute To Our Fallen Brothers

Rest easy, sleep well my brothers
Know the line has held, your job is done
Rest easy, sleep well
Others have taken up where you fell, the line has held
Peace, Peace and farewell







THE KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION
WASHINGTON D.C. JULY 03-08 2007

Sheraton National Hotel , 900 South Orme Street, Arlington VA 22204
Reservations PH: 703-521-1900- Fax 703-521-2122- www.SheratonNational.com
Room Rates $89.00 a Night– Three days before and after Reunion. Parking $ 2.00 a Day, in and out privileges. Pets are welcome with no restrictions (No Fee). Enjoy familiar comforts and a warm welcome at the Sheraton National Hotel. With the Reagan National Airport, Metro Rail Station, downtown Washington D.C., and the Pentagon all just minutes away, the heart of the nation is at your fingertips.

Free shuttles to and from the Airport 0500-11:45 PM. Leave every Half Hour. Free Shuttles to and from the Metro station and the Pentagon Centre Shopping Center, 9:00 AM–11: PM , leave every half hour.

Tuesday	**03 July 07**	**Registrations Begins 0900-1700 Hours**
Wednesday	**04 July 07**	**Bus Trip to the Vietnam Memorials (Time TBA)**
Thursday	**05 July 07**	**Bus Trip to visit the New Marine Corps Museum (Time TBA)**
Friday	**06 July 07**	**Bus Trip to The Marine Corps legendary Sunset Parade 8TH & I Street (Time TBA)**
Saturday	**07 July 07**	**Annual Awards Banquet**
Sunday	**08 July 07**	**Memorial Service (Morning Time TBA)**







Publisher Notes:
The notice for the 2007 membership dues have been mailed out. A reminder, the dues for a regular membership have been raised to $30.00, and a Life Membership is now $250.00. Please pay your dues ASAP. We are required to have our budget in place for 2007 at the annual reunion. It is a lot of work for me to keep up with thousands of members paying at separate times. I will see you all at the reunion, and I wish you all a very Joyous Holiday season.

Tom Eichler

Secretary Notes:
I wish all my Khe Sanh brothers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year. The reunion is just around the corner so get your room reservations as soon as possible. They are going fast. This reunion will probably be the largest the KSV has held. Try your hardest to join us in DC. Please get your dues in on time. It supports our magazine and PX. We have new items. You will receive the new brochure with the dues notification. Current registrations reflect that many members will be bringing their families and arriving a few days prior to the start of the reunion.

Big John Pessoni

Note From The President
We will be holding an election for the office of President and several Directors' positions. If any member wishes to run for a position on the BOD, they must notify me prior to the reunion. Call me for the qualifications

Russell Turner, President

Those Remembered	**Remembered By**
Sgt James Neil Tycz	Sharon Pelon
All Veterans of the 1967 "Hill Fights"	David G. Rogers A Btry 1/13
Dennis Richardson A Co 3Rd A/T USMC	Khe Sanh Veterans
William Feyh 3Rd Force Recon USMC	Khe Sanh Veterans
Ellis Turner HN Recon USN	Khe Sanh Veterans
Raymond R. Prittie VMGR 152/352 USMC	Khe Sanh Veterans
Virgil Crunk B Co 1/26 USMC	Khe Sanh Veterans
Gary Dahlheimer 3Rd A/T USMC	Khe Sanh Veterans
L/Col Joseph Donnelly XO 1/9 USMC	Khe Sanh Veterans
Larry K. Spangler HQ CO 26 Mar USMC KIA 2-12-68	Charlie Frugoni HQ Btry 1/13
For W1/13 & A 1/26 KIA 18 Aug 68 at Cau Doi	Willie Roe Yates W Btry 1/13
L/Cpl Gregory F. Popowitz B Co 3RD Recon USMC KIA 24 Jan 68	John G. Hernandez Fox Co 2/3
L/Cpl Thomas J. Sweeney C Co 1/26 USMC KIA 26 Feb 68	John G. Hernandez Fox Co 2/3
James Stewart USMC 1/9 Passed Away April 1971	John G. Hernandez Fox Co 2/3

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Bruce Geiger.....Member At Large
Cliff Treese.....Member At Large
Dale Pack .....Member At Large
George Myrick.....Member At Large
Thomas Ford.....Member At Large
Robert Moxley..... Member At Large
Dan Fisher..... Member At Large

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OBITUARIES



DENNIS RICHARDSON
A CO 3RD ANTI TANK USMC

It is with heavy heart that I notify you of the passing of our friend and comrade in arms, Dennis Richardson. As you know, Dennis had not been in good health for the past few years but he was a fighter and he fought up to the very end. Don't have any details at this time, will pass them as I learn more. In the meantime please remember Dennis, his wonderful wife Susan and their lovely family in your prayers.
Rest in Peace Skipper
Semper Fidelis
Larry

WILLIAM FEYH
3RD FORCE RECON USN HN

Dear Tom,
I am writing to inform you of the passing of my husband, William H. (Bill) Feyh, on November 9, 2005. He was a corpsman with 3rd Force Recon in Vietnam and retired from the Navy as a LCDR in 1996 after 34 years of service to our country. He always had a soft place in his heart for Marines and for the men he served with. He was laid to rest in Barrancus National Cemetery on board the Naval Air Station, Pensacola. May your good work be continued through the Khe Sanh Veterans Association.
Sincerely,
Leah A. Feyh

Khe Sanh "Doc" Turner Passes

Ellis "Butch" D. Turner, 58, of Newark died Tuesday, August 22, 2006, at his home.

Butch was born November 10, 1947 in Decatur to Ellis & Mary (Stanley) Turner Sr. He married Mary Mick August 2, 1986, in Addison, Illinois. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1966 - 1971, was a corpsman affiliated with the 26th Recon Marines stationed at Khe Sanh in Vietnam, was awarded two Purple Hearts and Presidential Unit Citation. He was a bricklayer with Union Local #56 in Carol Stream and was an avid hunter and outdoorsman. He was a member of Glendale Heights V.F.W. Post #2377.

Butch is survived by his wife, Mary; his daughter Erin, mother, Mary Turner of Fairview, North Carolina, two sisters, Denise (Robert) Thomas of Fairview, Beverly Piel of Florida, several nieces and nephews and many cherished lifelong friends. He was preceded in death by his father.

Memorials may be directed to the Disabled Veterans or the Lorton Cemetery Fund.

RAYMOND R. PRITTIE
VMGR-152/352 USMC

Raymond R. Prittie, 60, of Ontario, CA passed away August 27, 2006.

Ray Prittie was born December 1, 1945 in Windsor, Ontario, Canada and has resided in Ontario, CA for the past 30 years. Mr. Prittie was a United States Marine Corps veteran who had served two tours of duty in Vietnam. He was a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association. Mr. Prittie earned a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in 1974 and worked for 30 years as a civil engineer for the City of Los Angeles. He is survived by his wife Donna; a son and daughter-in-law, Troy and Natalie Prittie of Rialto CA., sons Ryan and Chad Prittie, both of Ontario, a brother and sister-in-law, Harry and Kathy Prittie of Overland Park KS., his grandchildren Seth Douglas, Devin and Isabelle Prittie, and a nephew, Michael Prittie. A Celebration of Life service will be held. Please contact Donna at (909)947-1562 for details. Memorial contributions

may be made to the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, Attn: Tom Eichler, 3221 N. Opal, Chicago, IL 60634.

VIRGIL CRUNK USMC B CO 1/26



Another of our Brothers has passed. Sorry, but right now I just can't find the words. Here is the email that Phyllis, Virgil's wife, sent and the reply that I sent to her.
Milton McNeely

Mac and Ken,
Virgil passed away today at 11:30 a.m. He died at Crossroads Hospital. I feel like my heart is broken. Today is my birthday. He had sent me flowers at work. I went by the hospital this morning. and we had coffee together at 6:30. I told him I had to go to work but would be back a little later. He said OK. He called me at 9:30 a.m. told me he loved me, and we talked for a few minutes. About 30 minutes later the hospital called and said he had taken a turn for the worse.

The doctors worked on him for about an hour and a half. He would not have a pulse and then he would. They took him to ICU continuing to work on him. He stopped breathing several more times. The doctor said the more times he quits breathing the chance of him coming out of it were less. I took his hand and told him it was OK to go. I told the doctor when he had done everything he could do to just let him go. I loved him so much. I feel like I am in pieces. Thanks for the many prayers
Phyllis

Phyllis,

May our Lord bless, keep and comfort you. God's word tells us that to be absent from the body is to be with the Lord. Virgil told me several times how blessed he was to have a wife such as you. I know by your remarks that you loved him very much. Please let me know about the funeral arrangements. I will share the info with others
Mac

GARY DAHLHEIMER 3RD ANTI TANK USMC

I just received word yesterday that Gary Dahlheimer, 3rd AT's, died in his sleep in Fresno, CA. Remember him and his family in your prayers.
John Hargesheimer

Gary, In July 1993 at the 25th anniversary reunion of the Khe Sanh Vets (my first reunion) you came over to this new guy and introduced yourself in your distinct, gravel voiced way. Yours was the first welcome I received. It made me feel more at home. After much discussion, we made the connection to Bruce Saffel, 3rd ATs, also of my hometown. You sent me on a mission to contact Bruce and he in turn contacted others of 3rd ATs. The rest is history.

I last saw you in Chicago, 2005 with the results of your stroke slowing you down but never stopping you. Farewell good friend. God speed.
Semper Fidelis
Dan Fisher D Co 1/26

I first met Gary Dahlheimer at my first Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion in Chicago in 2001. Gary was with a group of Ontos Marines who had been attending the KSV reunions for many years. Gary was a great guy, and had some interesting stories of his time in Vietnam with Alpha Company, 3rd Anti-Tank-Battalion, Ontos). I last saw and talked to Gary at the 2005 Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion in Chicago. This was after his stroke, and it had taken a toll on his health. When he arrived at the 2005 reunion he was pretty upset. The airline had lost his wheelchair. I was saddened to hear of Gary's recent passing.



Scott Berry

Special Remembrance from a few of Gary's special friends: Al and Juarenne Owen, Bill Moore, Jim Lea, John and Kay Hargesheimer and Tom and Jan Slaby.



10 November 2006

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

On November 10th, 1775, our Corps was born as the Continental Congress raised the "first and second battalions of American Marines." Each year as we celebrate our birthday, we pause to reflect on the Marines of yesteryear who fought in our touchstone battles and forged the modern Marine Corps with their courage, integrity, and undying commitment to their fellow Marines. Each of our storied battles is a link in the long chain that binds all Marines together-from the Continental Marines at Bunker Hill to the Teufelhunden crossing the wheat fields of Belleau Wood. This chain binds us to the Marines on the crest of Mount Suribachi; it passes through the ice and snow of the Chosin Reservoir and the steaming jungles of Vietnam, and it anchors firmly today in the desert sands of Iraq.

This year's celebration again finds many from our ranks serving with distinction in harm's way. As we have for the past 231 years, our Corps is answering the Nation's call. I can report first hand that our Marines fighting on the front lines of the Long War on Terror are performing brilliantly, acquitting themselves with honor, dedication, and dignity in difficult and dangerous environments.

All Marines are making a difference. Regardless of where you are serving, you are adding new chapters to the legacy that was earned with sweat and blood on old battlefields. Just as previous generations of Marines shaped today's Marine Corps, your deeds are molding the Corps of tomorrow. Our Corps has never been stronger, and all Americans are extremely proud of your magnificent performance and unwavering commitment to serve our Corps and country. With high caliber Marines like you, our future has never been brighter.

Another irreplaceable element of our success as Marines is the terrific support we receive from our families. Through the long hours, the exercises, and the combat deployments, their support is unconditional and firm. They give us love and devotion, providing us with the strength to drive on when duty calls. Today we should all acknowledge our loved ones for their patient, steadfast service.

To all who have earned the title Marine, to the superb Sailors who serve with us in every clime and place, and to our precious families-I wish each one of you a heartfelt Happy 231st Birthday.

Semper Fidelis and Keep Attacking!

M. W. Hagee
General, U.S. Marine Corps

MEMOIRS

A Foggy December Morning

By Craig W. Tourte

As I sit here cozy and comfortable staring outside into the gray foggy morning, my thoughts wander back to December 1967. We started with a large green tent made of canvas. Somehow there seemed to be just enough room for all of us lower ranked Marines to find a place to lay our "rubber ladies." We may have even built a kind of bunk bed so we all could fit inside. Wooded pallets were placed on the floor so we would not always have to walk in the mud. We slept in our clothes, occasionally taking off our boots, but having them unlaced and nearby for a quick put on and lace up. We may have had a few candles, but certainly no electricity that I remember, and, nothing to keep us warm on those short days and long, cold, wet, and foggy nights.

Since we were in a war zone; although we had not seen any "action" yet, we knew it was a future possibility, being a small mountain base with the very strange name of Khe Sanh, located somewhere in South Vietnam. I am not sure any of us at the time really understood where it was in relation to direction or borders. It was not until years later that I learned the runaway of the airstrip ran East and West. For some reason I had always thought when I looked up at hills 950 and 1015, I was looking to the West. I often visualized that the ocean was on the other side of those mountains and I could see our ships off shore like those old World War II movies, ready to fire over those mountains in our support just like I had seen in those old black and white movies and newsreels.

It started with just a very few sandbags and then we were able to acquire some empty 55 gallons drums which we filled with that strange red earth, enough to place around the base of the tent. We felt pretty comfortable with those drums around us, about waist high, but for months continued to build our above ground bunker. We acquired some wood and old rusty runway matting and placed it over the bulkhead on top of our single layer of sandbags. The sandbags by now were hard as rock, having soaked up water. The clay dirt placed into each sandbag with a small entrenching tool soon becoming hard as cement. Up and up we went, putting layer upon layer of sandbags, building a ring around the tent. I placed a long pole on top where I placed a small California State flag. We all felt safe and comfortable inside, feeling that our little above ground bunker would protect us from the incoming which we really didn't understand or know anything about.

It leaked a little, was cold and damp, but it was all we had and we called it our "bunker." We were all so young and green then. We worked our butts off on almost a 24-hour clock. there was just so much to be done. On those few occasions when the weather would clear we would stand or sit outside in the sun, thinking most often about home, family and Christmas. The mail would arrive and we would all share with the others the things young men shared. Mostly we talked about girls and cars. Occasionally one of us would walk the long walk to the little wooden post office over by the main base area to pickup the mail or drop some mail off, but most of us seldom got over there. I remember there were several little wooden buildings, one was a post office, some type of commissary I think, and Graves Registration was in a large green tent. I hated to even walk by; it always had that "smell." We all worked so hard on our above ground bunker, but on January 21, 1968, we found it was all for nothing. War is always such a learning experience.

MEMOIRS

Sunday Morning Patrol

By Leland Upshaw

WARNING ORDER

Place: KSCB
Date: 25 DEC 67 Extraction 30 DEC 67
Time: 0700
Mission: Reconnaissance Patrol - Perform reconnaissance in six grids making observations of enemy activity. Engage enemy with supporting artillery and air.
Method: Walk Out/Walk in
Unit: Bravo Co/3rd Reconnaissance Bn. 1B2 Call Sign "Old Colonel"
Assignments: Eight man patrol armed with M-16's; M-79 Grenade Launcher, HE Grenades, Thermite Grenades, Smoke Grenades, 2 PRC-25 radios with

tape and whip antenna, air panel; and food and water for five day mission.

Special Orders: Christmas cease fire in effect. Do not engage the enemy unless engaged first.

The morning was quiet and damp. As we departed our company area all were still asleep other than normal security watches. As we put on our camo, saddled up our heavy gear and walked west along the main street, all we could hear were our own feet stepping through the crumbling red clay and occasion puddle.

As we proceeded along our way parallel to the air strip looking to our left and to our right, a certain calm seemed to be present. The normal activities of digging in, filling sand bags, loading materials; burning ####ters, cleaning rifles, etc. were put on hold for an extra 30 minutes for the men to sleep in.

As we approached the area of the tarmac and Charlie Med., a lone CH-34 helicopter was doing a low and slow pass on our right with streaming red and green smokes attached to the landing gear. My thoughts were... Christmas cease fire? Why are we going out on patrol to hunt the enemy if there is a cease fire? On this mission would we meet the enemy? Would we get ambushed with someone getting wounded or killed? Will I perform well and shoot the enemy before he shoots my fellow team member? Many thoughts race through my mind as I walk into the area that could end up being the jaws of death. I'm bewildered and sad being in a place like this on Christmas, I just swallowed up these feelings and realized here it was just another day and surviving was the most important thing.

We passed through the western outside perimeter of the base across our "friendly lines" into what often was referred as "Indian country." From this point forward our attention levels were heightened and we go into our recon mode. Whispering, keeping good intervals, closely observing to our right, left, rear and our point man always looking ahead for ambushes, traps, and a safe area to pass.

We complete our mission on December 30 in the morning with no contacts. Our mission uneventful just cut hands from elephant grass, sore and wet feet, hungry because of limited rations carried. Any cigarettes left are wet and unsmokable. Still, we are OK. We did not see the enemy, and as far as we knew he did not see us. We were safe once again. Four days closer to our rotation date. Four less days we have to spend in the Nam. We clean up ourselves, and our gear, and wait to get our next warning order in about three days.

That same day 30 DEC 67 one of our other teams was not as lucky. Team "Clemson Song" 1B2 was patrolling directly west of hill 689 and was hit by the enemy. L/Cpl Thomas Tingley and PFC Terry Jones were killed. I, along with my fellow recon brothers went down to the chopper pad when these two lost brothers were brought in. Death was real. Why just days before I had seen these men, with their smiles, their jokes, and most important, their presence. They were the same as me, just doing their job. The thoughts of that day will never leave me. It could have been us, "Old Colonel." Were we lucky? Was it just not our day? I don't know.

I think about these men and others that I was with that perished before and after this date. I will never forget. Christmas is supposed to be a happy time for loved ones and friends. While I do celebrate this time of year I still remember those that missed the many things I have had an opportunity to enjoy.

May this Christmas bring Joy and Happiness to all my fellow Khe Sanh brothers and their families.

KSV MARINES IN THE NEWS

Marine's 40th Year of Service Honored in Iraq

July 08, 2006

CWO-4 Wayne H. Silva cuts into the cake prepared for his 40th anniversary with the Marine Corps at the Morale, Welfare and recreation Building at Al-Asad Iraq. CW0-4 Wayne H. Silva, a Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defense officer with Task Force Military Police of the 1st Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment started his Marine Corps career when he stepped in the yellow footprints June 28, 1966 at MCRD Gunner Silva's first duty assignment after boot camp and ITR, was with 2nd Platoon of

Delta Company 1st Battalion 26th Marines, in Dec. of '66 when the company was in hill 55, southwest of Da Nang, Vietnam, and later on May '67 at Khe Sanh combat base until his rotation date of Jan. 68. After his active duty enlistment, Gunner Silva remained in the Marine Corps reserves of the 4th Marine Division.

The 57 year old Martinez, CA. native has been part of nearly every major Marine Corps campaign in the past four decades.



CWO-4 Wayne W. Silva Cuts Cake
Celebrating 40 Years of Service

KSV IN THE NEWS

History of special forces
Richmond Times Dispatch

The creation of the Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command makes sense to a military historian who has spent more than 60 years around the Corps.

Bruce F. Meyers is a retired colonel who fought at Iwo Jima in World War II and **Khe Sanh** during the Vietnam War. He also commanded the first Marine Force Reconnaissance in 1957. He has published a number of books on Marine Corps history and practices law in Seattle.

In a recent e-mail, he said the Corps' entry into special operations reminds him of past efforts to improve intelligence-gathering and reconnaissance skills, drawing on the lessons learned battling the Japanese.

After the Korean War, the 1st Force Recon experimented with novel ways to plan for atomic warfare with the Soviets. This included launching Marines from submerged submarines and parachuting from jets.

The trailblazing unit developed sky hooks for moving aircraft to use during emergency pickups of troops on the ground. That extraction technique later was portrayed in James Bond movies.

The Marines also worked with new techniques that assisted helicopter pilots navigate in distant and unfamiliar landing zones, Meyers said. He noted that this was before the development of the Global Position System.-- Chip Jones

Vietnam Veterans speak to Marines back from Iraq
By Rick Rogers
Union-Tribune Staff Writer

The Marine Corps is tapping the experience of Vietnam veterans in hopes of keeping today's troops from suffering mental anguish caused by combat.

Camp Pendleton's post-deployment program seeks to help Marines and sailors adjust to life after war. Aiding in the effort are members of the American Combat Veterans of War, who use memories of their time in Vietnam to encourage Marines to seek counseling if they feel anxiety from their combat duty.

"We know what combat is about," said **Bill Rider,** a former Marine wounded three times in Vietnam and a veteran of the siege of **Khe Sanh.** At least 40 of his friends died in Vietnam, including several

squad members.
"I'm going to address the guilt complex. If someone was hurt, and it was unavoidable, you must let it go," Rider said. "Your big enemy right now is post-traumatic stress disorder. It will attack you. It will kill you. It will make you beat the hell out of your wife or husband or girlfriend."

In the low light of a conference room yesterday, about 75 members of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force who returned just days ago from Iraq inched up in their seats to listen.

Marine Corps officials did not allow reporters to question the service members.

Mental health is a major concern among Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Defense Department and Department of Veterans Affairs statistics suggest that one-third of all combat veterans suffer post-traumatic stress or some other mental illness. If not treated early, these can turn into lifelong, debilitating conditions.

"(Post-traumatic stress) is a progressive, fatal disease. If you don't get it off your chest, it will take you out," Rider told his audience, mostly young support staff members. He told them to watch out for themselves and each other, and not to let pride or stigma keep them from getting help.

Symptoms of post-traumatic stress include being overly vigilant, as if anticipating an attack; sleep disorders; and self-medication through drugs or alcohol.

Col. Darcy Kauer, commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force's headquarters group, brought the veterans into the transition program six months ago. He said education is essential in treating the mental stress and keeping men and women ready to fight. So far, 1,200 to 1,500 Marines and sailors have gone through the transition program.

"I've seen what can happen when people don't transition well," Kauer said. "We are trying to find whatever tool . . . to prevent (drunken driving) or a marriage from falling apart. "If we've got a weakness, let's take steps to improve it and make things right. The Marine Corps is serious about this."

STILL SERVING-NEWS FROM IRAQ

By Robert A. Hall

This is one of the guys I've been sending care packages to, one of the grandsons of my Colonel, **KSV John Studt. From his Mom.**

I'm passing along what I know so far about Jonathan's injury. It's late on Monday night so I hope this is coherent. On Sunday night, Jon (3rd LAR, Iraq) called his brother, Danny (1/3, Hawaii) and told him the following:

Some time Saturday, their Light Armored Vehicle hit an IED (improvised explosive device) containing two mortar rounds and it "tore up the vehicle", rendering the Marines inside either unconscious or dazed, and killing the driver instantly. When Jon came to, he grabbed his weapon and set up his position of defense until help arrived. He also pulled the Lieutenant, who was pinned behind their turret gun, out of the vehicle. Later, after the adrenaline began to wear off, he realized there was something wrong with his ankle and was then taken to the field hospital in "the rear" where he was told it was fractured. He's being treated there and was told he won't be allowed to return to his unit until their deployment is up, the end of this month.

According to Danny, Jon sounded a little dazed but pretty upbeat. He told Danny that, after things settled down a bit, he went back to their destroyed vehicle and grabbed his brother's picture out of the place where it had been tacked up. He also told Danny that he's pretty sure he gets a Combat Ribbon now, and maybe a Purple Heart. So typical of Jon.

I'm told he gets to sleep in a warm bed each night and use the phone or computer whenever he wants to now. I am thankful to God for protecting our son and I want to thank each of you for praying as well. When I know more, I'll be happy to forward information to you. God bless,

Publisher Note: Both of Colonel Studt's grandsons are back from the wars, but both are returning. John's Son a Lt Colonel is still serving in Iraq. God Bless them all.

MEMOIRS

MODERN PIRATES 1968 HAWAII

Ernie Spencer

They are what are left. Bred in fetid back water ports and towns throughout the world. They started in crude hewn craft barely seaworthy, then stole or traded their way upwards to ever expanding fleets of ships. They greased, stole, stalled, smiled, and continuously lied. Lied even when they did not have too. Streams of lies and BS pour out their mouths. Steamship owners and executives of shipping companies. Today's pirates. They seem like some macabre collaboration between Federico Fellini and Gilbert and Sullivan. Two weeks after leaving Nam my shipping career begins. I'm hired as a management trainee at Matson Navigation. Right from Nam to the "world" just like That I went. Combat to BS. Parading egos on review. The company has a near monopoly on shipping into the state of Hawaii. Even most of the military supplies are shipped in by Matson. "Aloooha, Matsoon," the switchboard operator purrs to the incoming callers. Matson is making a ton of money. It's the height of the Vietnam War. I'm what everyone wants now. A married male with a college degree and most important, military service completed.

I've always disliked those guys. Military Academy types. Any man who locks himself away during his prime partying years has to be sick. Your best years, wasted. Marching, saluting. College was the best years of my life. I majored in Philosophy, officially, but party is what my real major was. Man did I have a good time. I joined under the PLC program when I was 19 in 1963. I knew what was coming. I saw the war taking off. I was going to get in all the fun I could before I faced it. Lock yourself away in a military school without booze and women? Man that is sick.

All of my bosses at Matson, there in Hawaii, are Academy graduates. Most from Kings Point (the Merchant Marine Academy), but one from Annapolis. The Annapolis guy we nicknamed "itch" because he was always scratching himself nervously. He did twelve years in the Navy and "got out." Nosey, kiss ass, short hair, first class jerks every one of them. Two weeks after I begin with Matson, I'm hit. "I cannot find anything physiologically wrong with you, Mr. Spencer." I'm sitting on the edge of his examining table, shirtless, gazing outward at him. The doctor they brought me to never asks about why I might be this way. Nam never occurs to either of us. An hour earlier I had collapsed with severe stomach cramps, at my desk. The excruciating pain subsides there in the doctors office.

Damn right I feel awkward after taking a cab back to the office. Too ashamed to ask anyone for a ride. Clank! The metal doors come down. Put behind. Forgotten. "It was nothing, really, just a stomach flu," I say to Bob. Sincere the concern in his eyes. Bob was from New England. Served in the Army just after the Korean War. Now besides working for Matson he's also a lieutenant colonel in the Hawaii Army Reserves. Hawaii is a very patriotic, flag waving state. "Sheat Ernie, the closest I ever came to combat was those bath and massage houses over on Okinawa. Heee." A weasing hiss to his self generated laugh. So obvious his attempt to draw me out. I ain't war rappen with some chain-smoking never saw nothing doggie, I think to myself. "I'm fine Bob, you're the one that needs help." We both laugh. He's one of the few management people at Matson who is compassionate. I like Bob. Within the month Bob and I are sitting alone in his cubicle, chairs near to one another, staring into each other's eyes. He sighs openly then slowly almost inaudibly speaks. "My daughter and I went to identify him today. They were married less than a year. My granddaughter is two months old. She'll never know her father. He was a Navy corpsman.

Volunteered. A local boy. Hit a booby trapped artillery round while on patrol with the Marines. I hope my daughter gets on with her life." Passively we gaze to and away from one another. To the traffic flowing by on the busy boulevard. Through thin curtained large glass walls we see the traffic outside our ground floor office. We sit. Watch. Bob needed to tell the story of the dead. Why do they always think that I need or want to know? Maybe they know I understand.

THE GREATEST GENERATION ?

My father was rescued in 1964 by a Marine H-34 after getting shot down in his Vietnamese Air Force Skyraider over the Quang Ngai Province. There has been much deserving attention to the Battle of Iwo Jima with the recent release of the movie "Flags of Our Fathers." Yet the Corps had 101,574 killed and wounded in Vietnam, almost 4,000 more casualties than in World War II. It was only in the number of dead (19,733 to 12,983) that WW II held the greater number. Vietnam was not a simple "civil" war as depicted in history books and pundit columns.

Here's to your health and to our Corps. May we garner another 231 years of tradition unimpeded by progress!
S/F,
Quang X. Pham

SHORT ROUNDS

Ponderings From A Bus Bench
By Craig W. Tourte

I sold my house in the suburbs and moved back to the city and into the little house I have owned for the past 30 years. As could be expected, the neighborhood has gone through a few changes, but the same old lady still lives next door. I thought she was old thirty years ago, in reality she was much younger than I am now. The 60-year-old homes in the neighborhood are filled with mostly middle-aged blue-collar workers, retired people and a few young families.

The grocery store across the street is closed and boarded up with a tall chain link fence around the parking lot, as is the Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant next door. There is a vacant lot where the old Chevron gas station once was. New fast food restaurants have sprung up along the busy main street and a 24-hour AM/PM opened on the corner a few years ago. Just down the street a few blocks sits the little neighborhood bar called Ernie's Interlude. Of course Ernie has been deceased for many years now, and the place is currently owned by his nephew, who lives out of town and takes little interest in the place. Ernie's sits in a little 4-business strip mall that has seen better days. A nail solon run by Vietnamese ladies, a smoke shop and late night liquor store with massive iron bars on the windows run by an East Indian are all neighbors of Ernie's. A broken down car wash is in the back, where Ernie's regular customers park in the evening out of sight of the street and neighbors, their vehicles hidden from spouses, old lovers and the late night cruising of police cars.

A few nights ago I found myself sitting at the bar in Ernie's. A U shaped affair with 20 or so stools around the bar and a few tables off to the side. There are the perennial photographs in cheap dusty frames hanging on the walls. Old photographs of the now long deceased Ernie and his many customers. Mostly people now forgotten, who played golf and tennis in various tournaments and events sponsored by Ernie's establishment. Small, cozy and quiet, with libations that are reasonable priced and most often the 3 working television sets are tuned to the latest sporting event. Occasionally a customer will put a few dollars into the new satellite system music center (jukebox) and play a slow country song or oldies from the sixties or seventies. The bartenders and even a few of the regulars are starting to recognize me, but I still feel obscure and comfortable. Ernie's Interlude is my kind of place.

It was well into the evening and dark outside. I had walked into Ernie's around 9:30 PM; it was now around midnight and time for me to leave. Walking to Ernie's from my house is not much of a problem, but walking home can sometimes be a challenge for one who has spent any amount of time consuming adult beverages. The drink I ordered at Ernie's cost $4.00; the same drink cost me $11.00 (a single shot) at the Riverview Plaza Hotel in Mobile Alabama during the reunion this year (2006).

I have to be very careful when walking home from Ernie's because I have to cross two, 2-lane city streets before walking into my neighborhood just a few blocks away. At times, the walk home can be a dangerous adventure. About half way home, there is this old bus bench that sits all alone near the roadway and next to the chain link fence that surrounds the now boarded up grocery store. There are several battered, rusted and long forgotten newspaper racks nearby and of course the area is littered with various amounts of trash and castoffs. It was cool and dark that evening, with few vehicles traveling along the normally busy street in front of me. I was really not in a hurry to go home, I walked out of Ernie's be-

cause I knew that I still could make it home in my current condition. About half way home, I took a seat on the old bus bench. Here I was, an inebriated lonely, middle age Vietnam veteran sitting on a bus bench in the dark, late at night, next to some junky abandoned and rusting newspaper racks, surrounded by trash, pondering my failures and difficulties in life.

A police car drove slowly by and the two young policemen inside gave me the once over but did not stop and continued on down the street. The area has quite a number of low rent and government subsidized apartments, so it is not unusual to see interesting characters walking along the street at various times of the day and night, although I happened to be the only character out on that particular evening.

My thoughts went back many years ago, when I too drove a big shiny police car around the same beat and along the same street. I was a young man, former Marine and Vietnam veteran and a survivor of the Siege at Khe Sanh just a few years before, feeling fortunate to have a job and knowing that I had already faced danger much worse than anything a policeman could possibly face. On the lookout for various thieves, robbers, drunks, drug dealers and unscrupulous characters who might be sitting on vacant old bus benches in front of boarded up grocery stores late at night waiting for the opportunity to attack the innocent, rob late night business establishments or take what did not belong to them. I was deeply pensive and found myself lonely, depressed and feeling worthless.

My thoughts went to my friend Tom Horchler who I had served with at Khe Sanh in 1967 and 1968, some 39 years ago. In 2003 Tom suggested that we attend the Khe Sanh Veterans Association Reunion to be held in Charleston, South Carolina. I would not know anyone at the reunion, but wanted to spend as much time with Tom as I could. In 2003 he was the first Khe Sanh veteran I had spoken to in 35years. I felt a real comradeship with him.

It was a truly rewarding experience to be able to meet and talk to so many Khe Sanh veterans in Charleston. I don't think I had been around so many really interesting people before in my life. It was clear that many had been attending these reunions for years. The respect and affection they had for one another was overwhelming. I am not a particularly garrulous person, but I tried to meet as many as I could. Neil Kenny, John Pessoni, Bruce Geiger, Dave Drake, Dennis Mannion, Erick Clark, John Rowland, Jim Wodecki, Tom Eichler, Milton McNeely, Nick Romanetz, Lloyd W. Scudder, Cliff Treese and Ron Shouse are just a few of the many I met at the reunion, each a hero to me and each with his own individual experience and prospective of that time in history. They were a completely fascinating group of individuals.

I found it interesting to observe how each interacted with the other. Some were with their families and others came with other veterans or by themselves. I noticed that Lloyd W. Scudder drew an unusual amount of attention from the other veterans. Many walked over to meet him and have a picture taken with him. There was seldom a time when he was not engaged in conversation with someone. I noticed the great love, respect and admiration so many had for this man. He of course obliged them all and was more than accommodating with their requests.

I also noticed that Mr. Scudder was missing his hand at the end of each arm. I made my way to Mr. Scudder and introduced myself, he was happy to extend his arm to me and acknowledge me. I told him this was my first reunion and that I was pleased to meet him. We exchanged some small talk, but shortly others had gathered around and it was time for me to move along and allow them to have some time and conversation with him.

Over the next several days, I think Mr. Scudder came to recognize me. Towards the end of the reunion, I had the occasion to sit down and talk to Mr. Scudder and he told me a fascinating story about his injuries.

Mr. Scudder was with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion of the 26th Marine Regiment, at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh in South Vietnam and was at Khe Sanh during the 77 day Siege that started on January 21, 1968. On February 25, 1968, 2/Lt Donald Jacques took Bravo Company across the wire located at the East end of Khe Sanh and into a horrific battle where numerous Marines were killed and few escaped the ambush. This event was later known as the Ghost Patrol. It just so happened that Mr. Scudder was visiting his brother at another base

in Vietnam during the time that Bravo went across the wire and he returned to Khe Sanh with the gut wrenching feelings of loss and guilt that many such survivors carry in their hearts the rest of their lives.

When Mr. Scudder returned home from Vietnam he was assigned as a weapons instructor at the Marine Corps Camp Pendleton in California. One of his assignments was to instruct new Marines on the proper handling and throwing of the hand grenade. Mr. Scudder would accompany the new Marine into the grenade pit, no more than a hole in the ground, and instruct the Marine on how to hold the grenade, pull the pin enabling the safety spoon to be released when thrown, then to toss the grenade safely.

The Instructors where having problems with this particular batch of grenades and all of the instructors were apprehensive of their use. But in the Marine Corps, one does what he is ordered and the Marine Instructors carried on with their duties of instructing the new Marines, who would most certainly soon be on their way Vietnam.

Mr. Scudder was in the grenade pit with a young Marine and was giving him instructions on how to hold the grenade with the safety spoon against the palm, how to remove the pin and how to toss the grenade. He was standing directly in front of the Marine, instructing the Marine on how to place the grenade in one hand and how to remove the pin with the other hand, pull his arm back and toss the grenade. The young Marine managed to remove the safety pin on the grenade but then froze in place. Mr. Scudder placed both of his hands around the hand of the young Marine so the Marine would not drop the grenade or release the spoon. As Mr. Scudder turned his head to the right to call another instructor over to place the safety pin back into the grenade it suddenly and without cause exploded in his hands, killing the young Marine and severely injuring Mr. Scudder. As a result of the tremendous blast Mr. Scudder lost both hands, the use of his left eye, damaged several ribs and suffered severe internal injury.

Gravely injured, Mr. Scudder was then transported to Oaknoll Naval Hospital in Oakland California where he lay for over three months recovering from injuries that many men would have succumbed to. On more than one occasion an officer came into his hospital room and interrogated him, questions where asked why he mishandled or dropped the grenade. Mr. Scudder wondered if the Marine Corps was blaming him for the accident, and holding him accountable for the deadly explosion. Mr. Scudder was discharged from the Marine Corps upon his release from Oaknoll Hospital, his pay was placed into the front pocket of his trousers and he was transported by pickup truck to the bus terminal in downtown Oakland California.

The Marine Corps pickup that transported Mr. Scudder into Oakland, parked across the street from the bus terminal and the driver opened the door for Mr. Scudder and pointed to the terminal. Unable to see clearly he stumbled as best he could across the street and purchased a bus ticket home to Oregon. It was necessary for Mr. Scudder to ask the ticket agent behind the counter to remove money from the pocket of his trousers in order to pay for the bus ticket, Mr. Scudder told the ticket agent, "I don't have any hands."

Many years have passed since the accident, an accident which can be directly attributed to the Vietnam War. Training cycles were accelerated and shortened as young men were rushed to Vietnam. Munitions, weapons and equipment necessary for war were manufactured at a record pace. On occasion newly manufactured munitions would unexplainable explode, fail to explode or somehow malfunction. Poorly made weapons like the newly issued M-16 rifle were placed into the hands of Soldiers and Marines with the prior knowledge that the rifle had serious deficiencies. Weapons would most often fail to fire during critical periods of combat. Weapons failure was blamed on poor cleaning and maintenance by the very men who were issued this poorly manufactured rifle. Thousands of young men were killed and injured as the result of these failures. It was later revealed that the Department Of Defense had prior knowledge of the weapons potential for failure.

Through these many years, Mr. Scudder has tried many alternatives and ill fitting prosthetics provided by the Veterans Administration. After so many failures Mr. Scudder kind of gave up on the Veterans Administration and to a certain extent, I think the Veterans Administrating may have forgotten about Mr. Scudder. He has continued to persevere and endure these many years despite his injuries and the seemly lack of concern by the Veterans Administra-

tion. Mr. Scudder told me at this years Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion (2006) that the Veterans Administration was going to give him another try with something newly developed and he was looking forward to it's success.

It has been over 4 years since I first met Mr. Scudder, and I think about him every time I hear someone gripe or voice a complaint about an irrelevant event in their life. I think about a very brave man who faces real challenges each and every day, challenges most of us could never imagine. Mr. Scudder is popular at the Khe Sanh reunions, not because of his loss of limbs, but because of his bravery, inspiration and his perseverance.

Sitting on that old bus bench all alone in the dark after my departure from Ernie's Interlude, it was time for me to end my melancholy and leave. It was time for me to stop feeling lonely and sorry for myself, to stop feeling depressed and worthless. I opened up the door to my house, went in and went to bed where I knew I belonged. I was thankful for another day and so appreciative of the man who helped me to appreciate what I have. A man who was severely injured during the war in Vietnam while trying his best to instill a little knowledge of combat and survival to someone else, a man who gave all that he could give, Lloyd W. Scudder, the bravest and toughest Marine I know.

Lloyd W. Scudder also served as the Sgt. At Arms of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association. This article was written with his permission.

KHE SANH VETERAN "SOUNDS OFF" CORRECTS TELEVISION SHOW

From: Michael Preston
To: Show, "War Stories"
Subject: Inaccurate reporting

Your Fox News is absolutely the best thing on television. I love war stories by Colonel Oliver North. He gets a giant Semper Fi from me. While watching a recent issue of war stories, I realized that some of the pictures were not of the place being featured. Is it normal to insert file footage to embellish a historical documentary? Or was this an honest mistake? The story of "Hamburger Hill" contained photos I recognized as place I am intimately familiar with, Khe Sanh! Two of the pictures were of the ammo dump blowing up at Khe Sanh during the Siege. They were taken the morning of 21 January 1968. What are they doing in an Army film about Hamburger Hill? Another picture of a Marine looking up out of a fighting hole was also taken at Khe Sanh. It was a Marine with kilo Company 3/26, where I was.

The picture of the ammo dump exploding with 2 marines in the fore ground was taken by Robert Ellison. This photo is in a book "The Vietnam Experience'', 1968 by Clark Dougan, Stephen Weiss Boston Publishing Co. pg. 60-61. Library of congress catalog card number 83-70672 if you would care to look it up. We have had so much smoke blown at us over the years it would be heart breaking to find out that nothing has changed, just more spin by the media and more bullshit. I would sure be disappointed if the Colonel knew. I would like to hear from you before I send this email to any one else, like The 3rd Marine Division Association, Khe Sanh Veterans, The National Museum of the Marine Corps and The Heritage Center., etc.

This is not the first time that the struggle at Khe Sanh has been used to glorify and embellish other stories and those of us who sacrificed. I do not like it at all. I bet Colonel Lownds would be pissed if he knew, maybe he does, I don't know. All the best

Mike "Animal" Preston
301 Bravo USN Seabees
26th Marines 3RD Marine Division. 67-68

RESPONSE RECEIVED

To: Mike Preston
From: Martin Hinton ,Fox News
Subject: War Stories with Oliver North

Mr. Preston:

First, let me thank you for taking the time to write in and thank you for your support of War Stories. Let me reassure you that this was an "honest mistake." I can personally attest to the days we spend at the National Archives looking for materials and the hours

we spend in the edit room examining footage frame by frame in an attempt to identify people, places and things. Unfortunately, our average is not perfect.

I can offer you no more explanation than this. But I can promise you everyone who worked on that show has been made aware of your e-mail and they will be that much more diligent in the future because of it. Finally, you may be familiar with Col. John Ripley (USMC RET). We recently returned to Dong Ha, with Col. Ripley, for an episode on the Easter Offensive in 1972 and his role in stopping the NVA advance. It is set to air October 1st. As a Marine I thought you would be interested.

Again, thank you very much for writing in and thank you even more for your service to America.

All the Best,
Martin Hinton
Senior Producer
War Stories with Oliver North
212-301-5076 (O)
646-245-4841 (M)

SHORT ROUNDS

Welcome To Delta Company

By Rod Jordan D Co 1/26

In April 1968, the Tet offensive was winding down, and our battalion was still at Khe Sanh, but would be withdrawn shortly. When I heard I was going there I thought this is great, I just arrived in country and will probably be dead by next week. As it happened I never made it there. I and Larry Kautz were treated to some incoming mortar and rocket fire as we landed at Dong Ha. I still remember the pilot saying when the ramp went down "jump out, I'm not landing." We looked at each other and said "what the hell is he talking about." We found out very quickly.

After about a week of truck convoy duty in Quang Tri we finally boarded choppers to join our battalion. When we arrived we were told to stow our equipment. We then went to the beach to meet our new company, Delta. The day was beautiful and the white sand and water made you think you were at a resort. I'm thinking, maybe I will stay here my entire tour, Yea right! We met most of the company that day, Most were lying on the beach or swimming and some playing football. They deserved those few days. They had earned it.

The company did not stay there long. We went out on a chopper rescue one night and almost got our asses blown up by the Navy. The third platoon was gone for awhile and when they got back we were about to embark on a journey none of us could have foreseen. The first week of May will always live in my memory. In my first fire fight I saw 10 men die and many more wounded. It was bad. I was a new guy and scared. But you learn fast in war and you learn to harden yourself even when a good friend goes down. For our battalion and our company, the summer of 68 was a hard test of courage, and shear will to carry on. Only the guys who lived it will understand. We lost many Marines in those months. The ones like me who survived also did our country, and the Marine Corps proud. I knew many good men over there and I miss them. One man who inspired me was Sergeant Henson. He died in June of 68. That was a sad day for all of us. He was All Delta!

MEMOIRS

The Search For. . . "Corpsman Jim"

By Patricia Naple September 21, 2006

My husband, Louis (Louie) Naple, Jr., a Marine Corps veteran, served in Vietnam 1966--1967. He was in I Corps and traveled to Dong Ha, Quang Tri, Phu Bai and Khe Sanh. Over some period of time during our marriage, Louie would share pieces of an event that occurred while he was in Khe Sanh. The details of this event have never left my mind.

The event took place in early March, 1967. Khe Sanh was hit with extensive mortar and rocket fire, leaving several Marines wounded and some killed. Louie ran around ordering (carrying) some men into foxholes, bringing others to the battalion-aid-station driving a jeep under fire, and then assisted "Corpsman Jim" in treating the wounds of other fellow Marines.

The next day "Corpsman Jim" told my husband that he had informed the officer-in -charge about Louie's bravery while under fire. However, the officer never filled out any paperwork, thus the events of that evening were never recorded and Louie never received recognition for his actions of that night.

As the years wore on I decided that I wanted to try to rectify this situation for Louie. I wondered if we could find "Corpsman Jim." Louie did not know his last name, but remembered that he was from Newark. When I got a computer in 2000 I began to search for "Corpsman Jim." What follows is the story of my six year journey through websites, e-mails, correspondence, and conversation. . . all to find the person who witnessed Louie's bravery at Khe Sanh.

Whenever I would meet someone from the military, I would ask if they were a Vietnam Veteran, their years of duty in Vietnam and their branch of service. Then I would proceed to tell them of my search for a particular Navy Corpsman. One encounter was with a gentleman named Francis "Fran" Elliott who had been a Navy veteran, and I lit up at the prospect of him knowing/finding "Corpsman Jim." He provided me with many websites to check, as well as newspapers and magazines I could write to and place ads in their Searching For sections. I found out that this Navy Veteran was heavily involved with all sorts of activities in Worcester's veteran community, and decided that Louie should meet him. Louie now is actively involved in many such activities related to being a veteran, including the Massachusetts Vietnam Veterans Memorial; the Veterans of Foreign Wars; the Marine Corps League and other local groups.

I began to submit information to various veterans' websites, but they were unable to respond with any information regarding "Corpsman Jim," probably because I wasn't able to supply a last name. I even e-mailed the Today Show to no avail. I also e-mailed many veterans and in the process talked about things in their lives from the past (serving our country) as well as more recent happenings in their lives. Some veterans told me that although they'd received medals, that they'd put them away in draws and forgot about them and the war. Nonetheless they were anxious to help me in my search for "Corpsman Jim," however difficult it might be for them.

One night at the computer, I typed in Khe Sanh and up came the Khe Sanh web site. Jim (Jimbo) Wodecki was the first person with whom I corresponded. I learned from Jimbo that he was with my husband at Khe San, and that they both shared the same details of that evening in March 1967. Jimbo didn't know "Corpsman Jim's" last name.

Still working without a last name, Jimbo told me about a reunion that the Khe Sanh Organization was going to have in 2002 at which they would be honoring Corpsmen. Here was my opportunity to see if I could finally locate "Corpsman Jim." Louie and I talked it over and we decided to go to Texas and see what the Khe Sanh Reunion was all about and also to see if we could find our Corpsman.

We attended the reunion, but the Corpsman we were looking for was not there. Louie was delighted to meet Jimbo Wodecki again after some thirty plus years. Jimbo was very helpful in obtaining more information for us about "Corpsman Jim."

When we arrived home, Jimbo had e-mailed us the roster of I Corps. The last name on it was J.M. Mitchell- MOS 8404 (Corpsman). Shortly thereafter, Jimbo sent me a copy of the Unit Diary. The last name on the Unit Diary was James M. Mitchell. Jimbo e-mailed Louie and said that this was the "Corpsman Jim" we'd been searching for.

Finally. . . we had a last name, but the struggle to locate and communicate with him was far from over. As I mentioned earlier, my husband remembered that "Corpsman Jim" was from Newark. Living on the East Coast, I just assumed it must be Newark, New Jersey. Much later we discovered that it was Newark, Ohio.

I continued the search and even called a few Mitchells, but no luck. Another contact that Jimbo gave me was a Master Gunnery Sergeant Lawrence McCarthy. Actually I had e-mailed this man many times before, and although he was very helpful, we were unable to locate Corpsman Jim Mitchell. One day while watching the History Channel on TV, a man was talking about the Vietnam War, and discussing things that I'd heard about. Suddenly his name flashed on the screen - - Master Gunnery Sergeant Lawrence McCarthy. was watching the person to whom I'd sent so many e-mails. Soon thereafter, Louie and I were able to meet Larry in person at the Khe Sanh reunion in Charlotte, South Carolina.

As time went on, we continued to visit the Khe Sanh web site with the hopes of eventually obtaining some small piece of information that would help in our search for "Corpsman Jim." Then, a break came when a Mike Fishbaugh posted a list of Corpsmen's

names on the Khe Sanh website. I e-mailed Mike and asked if he had ever heard of James M. Mitchell. He said no. However, I e-mailed him explaining why I was looking for this particular Corpsman in the hopes that he might in some small way join us in the search. And he did.

Mike Fishbaugh wrote to the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO where he forwarded



the information about James M. Mitchell, and they responded, providing Information Releasable under the Freedom of Information Act.

That's when Louie and I learned that Corpsman Jim's Newark was in Ohio and not New Jersey. Mike Fishbaugh and I both found an address and phone number. Mike called James Mitchell, and I wrote a letter. However, neither of us received a response. Mike told me that sometimes veterans do not want to be reminded about their experiences, but, in my heart, I was hoping that "Corpsman Jim" did.

I told a fellow worker Rich Breagy, a former Marine and Vietnam Veteran about my long search for James M. Mitchell. Rich said that he had a corpsman friend in Vermont and that he would e-mail him over the weekend to see where I might go to continue my search. By Monday evening I had obtained 2 websites. I e-mailed both of them with my story, and one responded. To my surprise, the response read. . . . I think I have located him." I could not believe it! Finally!

However, because of the Privacy Act, he could not give me Corpsman Jim's address, but that I could provide him with mine, and he would forward it to him. Instead, I chose to give him my husband's name, address, and telephone number. Then anxiously awaited a response via telephone, computer, e-mail, or snail-mail.

On March 25, 2006, 1 called home from work to check my phone messages. One message was a voice that said. . . "Sergeant Naple, I am your Corpsman that was with you in Khe Sanh back in 1967." I couldn't believe what I was hearing!

Naturally, the first thing I did was to call my husband Louie to give him the wonderful news. Louie was speechless then finally said. . . "I just can't believe it!" I asked him to wait until I got home from work so that we could listen to the message together. We did, and then Louie called and spoke with Corpsman James M. Mitchell that evening. I haven't yet met Corpsman Jim, but 1 feel connected. He's been on my mind for 6 years.

Jim said that he never forgot that night, or my husband. He hadn't spoken about it in nearly 40 years. Jim had retired at 20 years from the Navy as a Chief Corpsman and moved from Ohio to a Southern state



a few years ago. Louie and I are planning to visit with Jim on our drive to Florida next vacation.

It still remains to be seen whether Louie will be decorated for his bravery that night at Khe Sanh. But, it is the story of a six-year journey to find "Corpsman Jim" that is so important to tell. The reunions,.the veterans we met and those we communicated with through e-mails, phone calls, in person, and the stories about their life-experiences that they shared with me. To all of them, and veterans everywhere, I would like to say. . . Your service to your country was more than just medals and accolades and you didn't wear the uniform for the exorbitant amounts of money that you were paid. But, what you wear on your chests, are your credentials, your resumes. They're emblems of the quality of your service to your country. Thank you so much for all that you have done for us. God Bless.

SHORT ROUNDS

MY FIRST BUT NOT MY LAST REUNION

About 15 years ago, a man came through my town trying to sign up people for the MOPH. We talked about Vietnam and where and with whom we had served. When I told him that I was at Khe Sanh during the Siege he told me about a reunion the Khe Sanh Veterans hold each year. Like everything else I've, done since Vietnam, I, procrastinated about it. I didn't join the MOPH and I didn't try to get any information about the reunion. Like most of you, I did not want to think about it or talk about it. I couldn't help but think about it, but mostly I just suffered in silence. I'd lost touch with the friends I'd made over there and they had lost touch with me. Then 5 or 6 months ago, somebody told me about the Khe Sanh web page. I went on line, entered my name and low and behold, the next day I had an e-mail from John Pessoni. He told me about the reunion in Mobile. I hadn't seen Big John or anyone I served with in 38 years. Don't get me wrong, I've probably met 200 people who said they were at Khe Sanh they must have been with you guys because they sure as hell weren't with us. I think they are, what Neil Kenny would call "Wannabes." I went to the reunion I can't begin to tell you how much it meant to visit with my old friends, Clyde Phillips, David Critchley, Wally Hoffman and of course, my good friend John Pessoni. Combat Engineers are like red-headed step children. We were sent out in 3 or 4 man teams to support the infantry units.

We didn't get to know a lot of the guys we served with because we were moved around so much and speaking from personal experience, guys in 3/4, 2/9, 1/9 and 1/26 sometimes weren't around long enough to get acquainted. And I guess we weren't around very long either. I got to meet a lot guys at the reunion that I would never have known had I not gone. Neil, Fish and I took a trip to Waveland and Bay St. Louis, Mississippi to see the total devastation caused by Katrina. This was my first reunion, but as I told John and Neil, as long as I'm physically able, I won't miss another one.

I told my shrink at the VA that I slept better those 4 or 5 nights than I had in 38 years. I felt as safe as if I was in Mamma's arms. I love you guys. Thank you for having the Reunion and thank you John for staying on me to make sure I came. It did a world of good for me. I won't miss another one. By the way, I have since joined the Khe Sanh Vets Organization and the MOPH.

Luther J, "Duke" Upton
A Company 1st Platoon
3rd Combat Engineer Bn

INCOMING

VIETNAM VETERAN THANKS REDWOOD CITY FOR SUPPORT

San Mateo County Times 12 August 2006

On July 24, Sgt. Vince Rios, USMC (Ret.) of South San Francisco presented the City Council of Redwood City a signed copy of the. book, "The Names Not On The Wall'" written by John "Doc"Hutchings.

A close friend of Doc Hutchings, and the only Vietnam veteran from San Mateo County , portrayed in the book, Rios expressed his thanks to the City of Redwood City for its long standing support for the individuals who have served in the United States

Armed Forces

The book, which describes Hutchings' experience as a combat corpsman in Vietnam is a vivid and compelling story. It is made all the more real for the local community as Redwood City is described in a poem On the books jacket as "The Town That Cared" Hutchings and Rios both belonged to the 1st Marine Division . Their unit, Alpha Company 1St Marine Division 5Th Marine Regiment, was adopted by Redwood City in 1981.Hutchings on many occasions, saved the lives of many marines, including Rios who was injured six days prior to the end of his second tour of duty in Vietnam. An enemy explosive device vaporized both of his legs, left his right arm dangling from his shoulder and partially amputated his left index and ring finger.

Rios was awarded three Purple Hearts, being shot twice in previous actions, and Two Bronze Stars with "V" Device for Heroic Achievement. He has rebuilt his life and dedicated himself to obtaining four college degrees (including two Master's) all the while working to serve veterans. He has also been presented a myriad of other awards for his military duty and civilian community service. Redwood City's role in the author's Vietnam experience stems from the seriously divided nation to which he, and many others returned, having risked their lives to do their duty and serve their country.



Many were greeted not with thanks, but largely with scorn and contempt. This devastating demoralizing experience was repeated throughout the country. In the midst of that controversy, "one town in Northern California wanted to do what a nation was afraid to do: welcome its warriors home at last", according to the book. That town was Redwood City, which invited the 1St Marine Division to be honored for its service by taking part in the 4th of July parade. Members of this unit, including Rios, still today march in the parade.

Redwood City also continues to support our armed services through Yellow Ribbon Redwood City (www.yellowribbonrwc.com), a community based committee of volunteers who have come together to offer support to local deployed servicemen/women and their families.

"Doc" Hutchings closed his book-jacket poem with these words:
"Much older now, we'll march once more.
Our formation not so pretty.
We'll proudly salute the town that cared…
God bless you, Redwood City.

MEMOIRS

The End

By Craig W. Tourte

It seems as if there is always an identifiable beginning and end to most battles. The sound of the bugle, the first and last shot fired, the raising of a flag, the lone survivor, the eerie silence, the rush of the breeze and the lingering smell of death.

The presenting of medals and awards, the arrival of the general or politician to take credit for the victory (never for the defeat) confirms that the event has ended. Those involved in the battle are quickly forgotten while the credit is accepted by too many who had little involvement in the event itself. Some even represent that they participated during the most brutal and terrifying moments, but confirmation of their

presence years later, is often difficult and embarrassing.

The Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh started on January 21, 1968, when at 0530 Hrs the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) rained hundred of rounds of mortar, artillery and rockets into the base interior destroying the main ammunition dump. And an estimated battalion of NVA attacked K/3/26 on Hill 861. "After penetrating the southwestern portion of the Marines perimeter, the enemy was repulsed leaving 47 dead..."

The nightmare that was the Siege at Khe Sanh officially lasted for 77 days and nights, ending on April 1, 1968, after the launching of Operation PEGASUS when, "...Marines from 2/1 and 2/3 attacked west from CA Lu along Route 9. Elements of 3d Dde, 1st ACD conduct helo assaults into LZ Mike and Cates and a joint engineer task forced begin repairs of Rout 9 from Ca Lu to Khe Sanh." Although the opening of Route 9 from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh most often signifies the end of the Siege, the base itself continued to absorb hundreds of daily incoming rounds fired by the enemy hidden in the surrounding hills.

For the lowest ranked Marine, one day was the same as the next. I certainly recall when the Siege started and heard the first rocket pass over my head as it traveled west to east. I am a little unclear when the Siege ended. The official date of April 1st is insignificant to me. I have no recall of the blowing of the bugle, the raising of the flag or that the battle, Siege or danger was over. April 1st, 1968, was much like the past 77 days, and would be like the next 17 to me, until April 18, when we withdrew by convoy, driving eastbound on Highway 9 to Dong Ha and then to Quang Tri.

What I do remember, although I don't recall the exact date, is that there was something remarkably different about this day. I was standing in the trench line looking south. It was relatively warm that afternoon when I heard the obvious sound of a helicopter in the distance. I was accustomed to the sound of helicopters at Khe Sanh and observed numerous models. The strangely odd and dated Sikorsky Choctaw UH 34 made frequent landings into the FOB base located south of my location. The huge CH 53 heavy lift Sea Stallion would fly over and land at the airstrip, often slinging cargo under its belly. The CH 46 Chinook with its double rotors were always awesome sights to behold. The UH-1 Huey seemed to make it presents known every day at Khe Sanh, coming and going with troops and wounded, a life savor to so many. After 8 months at Khe Sanh I was able to recognize the unique sound each helicopter model made, a sound I can to this day often identify and a sound that on occasion brings a chill to me and causes me to duck down just a little.

This afternoon the sound of this particular helicopter was different. Clearly identifiable as a fast moving, low flying helicopter, the sound was not a model I could identify. This helicopter was the bugle I could not hear, the flag I did not see, the breeze I did not feel. It was the last shot fired I did not hear and it was the eerie silence after the battle. The sight of this helicopter was the signal for me that the Siege was over.

I could hear it rushing up towards me and suddenly it passed over my head, much like the first NVA rocket did months before. It was fast, long and slender and looked like a snake as it flashed overhead making a wide banking turn to the south before it turned once again and headed over the base. I remember someone saying in a whisper "Cobra." I was stunned; it was the most beautiful sight I had ever seen and I could not take my eyes off it. I watched as the Cobra circled overhead, daring the NVA to molest it. Not imagining that a sane enemy would launch an attack against such an awesome machine. Around and around it flew, as Huey's and other helicopters followed it into Khe Sanh. Clearly the Cobra was the king of the battlefield.

On April 8, 1968, the 2/7 Calvary arrived at Khe Sanh. The United States Army had arrived (what took you so long) with all of its new weapons, lots of troops, new green uniforms, plenty of food, and a magnificent helicopter called COBRA.

Craig,

Nice post on the board. I'm just reminding you that 1/1 was part of the group opening up highway 9 into Khe Sanh. Parts of the unit stayed until the base was closed in the later part of July.

Cobra was a neat looking bird--to bad it had a 'dead zone' where it couldn't see and therefore lots got

taken down. All you needed was some gunner not worried about the second cobra which should be covering the first--watching that blind zone---but, hell, a grunt team for a cobra was a great trade for the NVA.

First cobra I saw was at Camp Evans in early Feb '68 when the 1st Air Cav got the birds. They said they were the first unit in Vietnam to get them--could be since I know other Army flying units always said the "Cav" got the gear first. A point of interest was that one, if not the, best pilot at that time had been an enlisted man in the navy (air wing navy) and wanted to fly but without a degree he could not in the Navy or the Marine Corps. His background made him a sure thing for the Army. He became their first Cobra pilot, working around Hue during Tet. I saw that unit lose over 20 helos in one day, and had them all replaced in one day.

Terry Charbonneau

Craig,

You may share my story with anyone. Thanks for asking.

Funny, how your story made me think of that time and place. I was part of a convoy that was bringing units of 1/1 back to the Phu Bai area from Quang Tri/Camp Evans area. We'd been at it a few days and had been told how important it was to maintain the time schedule. No reason why it was important, but during my 13 month tour it was the only time there was such stress put on the movement of units. At my level that is. I was in charge of a convoy the first day going through Hue City and all that but on the second day I became the 'trail officer'. We became delayed in the Tet celebration which was on- going in the streets of the city.

We had no security, no extra drivers, only one Marine to a truck-except for the gun trucks with the .50cal and naturally a radio for me. So when some Army LRRPS wanted a ride to Camp Evans I was happy to allow their rifles to join us. While stuck in a traffic jam in Hue the Army guys wanted to go get some booze. I allowed them but said that if we started to move and they weren't there; that was their problem. They went looking and came to a house with a long front yard that had a large table and guests all having a good time. The GIs asked if they could buy some beer. The young men there said yes, they'd sell some. But, the oldest man there (appeared that) and at the head of the table said: "NO wine number ONE," and gave them each a full large glass of wine. He refused their money and wouldn't let the young men have it. Wished the GIs a happy Tet. They made the convoy and slept to Camp Evans.

We were late getting to Evans and didn't have 'full' efforts loading the vehicles and therefore had to leave ten trucks there (with the junior officer-me). That was the night Tet started and those trucks with all their supplies sat until weeks later when we could finally get back to Phu Bai---the saddest part is that Marines had to go into the Hue fighting without helmets, etc because they were on the truck at Evans.

To this day I question what I could have done different to get one or two more trucks on that last convoy. And, yes I have answers of what I could have done. The answers aren't just being more of an asshole with people (I did some of that) but different decisions which affected the outcome. Now, you know one of my memories--a motor t memory.

Some of the other stories of that period are funny, like me being the senior Marine. A 2d Lt out of school at Quantico for 4 1/2 months and representing all the Marines stuck at Camp Evans. I met each day with an Army General. He was nice and understanding of our situation.

You get all that reading for opening up some of my memories. The next time we drove past the house were the wine was obtained it had graves in the court yard and many holes in the home and walls around the yard. Hue was the only place were I heard a Vietnamese kid say thank you for something after begging for food. At that time they were starving and would eat whatever was given. The begging was a con and they'd go nuts if you opened it.

Semper Fidelis,
TC

MEMOIRS

DANGER IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

By Jim Dalto K Co 3/26

Life on Hill 861 was not easy, comfortable, or safe. Exhaustion, hunger, and thirst were constant companions. Our days were filled with working parties. We did a lot of digging, deepening the trench line from what was referred to as "knee deep" to an average depth of six feet. Chopping fighting holes and bunkers into the parapet of the trench line, filling thousands of sandbags and empty wooden ammo cases to reinforce our positions. Digging sleeping holes into the back side of the trench; not that we got to use them much. We dug until our hands blistered and our arms, shoulders, and backs screamed with pain.

Working on the wire in front of the trench line was worse. When the company was hit that first night, 20-21 Jan 1968, there were minimal segments of wire in front of the lines. By the time we were done, we had a hundred feet out from our lines simply stuffed with every type of obstacle that we could think of, with offset gates throughout so the enemy could not run straight at us. Barbed wire, concertina wire &, razor wire, strung from ankle height to something a man would have to pole vault to get over.

As obstacles went up, we would string all sorts of special little surprises into the tangles. Trip flares, wired grenades with smoke grenade fuses in them. Many claymores and various homemade booby traps made out of empty plastic mortar rounds stuffed with C-4 and machine gun belt links, hooked into trip wires or claymore hell boxes. We even worked up some Foo-Gas devices wrapped around a Willy Peter mortar round on the front. All of it hooked to a claymore hellbox and set to cover strategic approach routes. Everybody wanted to get their hands on one of the hellboxes.

Working out on the wire was extremely dangerous. It later became progressively more dangerous every day we were exposed out in the open. NVA Mortar Hogs, never, ever, passed up an opportunity to rain misery down on us. We were also trapped by our own devices protecting our positions. You could not dive for cover when incoming enemy fire hit for fear of landing on one of our own booby trap devices. All you could do was crouch down and listen to your hole pucker to the max.

Bad as working on the wire was, re-supply runs were worse. Our miniscule LZ was nothing but a bulls eye. When they dropped a round down their mortar tube we knew it would hit the LZ. Every man on the base knew that, we called it the Death Race.

The worst part of catching a re-supply detail was the wait. Whoever was unlucky enough to catch that detail had to quietly gather in the trench line below the LZ and wait. Everyone knew that once a chopper committed to an approach, the NVA would begin dropping rounds. We knew we had at most, 30 seconds to come out of the trench, run to the LZ, grab something and beat it back to the relative safety of the trench. Everyone had seen a buddy shredded up there. A death race Indeed.

Personally, it took every ounce of courage I had to take that first step in the death race. Once you started moving, you were too busy to worry. We had to do it. Without those supplies we would be in a world of hurt. So we did it again and again, terrified beyond comprehension, doing our job nonetheless. To me it was the very definition of courage and heroism, and every trooper on the hill did it.

We couldn't even go to the bathroom in safety. Urination was no problem. We simply took a bunch of those ubiquitous, empty, plastic mortar shell containers, threw away the screw-on tops, poked holes in the other end with pick blade on an entrenching tool, and then buried it at an angle in the side of the trench. If you had to use your bowels it was a different matter. There was a small outhouse built on a level portion of the hill but it was completely exposed. It seemed like the NVA had an observer that told their mortar teams when someone went inside, and they would immediately conduct a fire mission. You learned to make it a quick head call and get back to the safety of the trench line. I would always try to hold any bowel movement until darkness fell. Cleaning our only "head" was a nasty job usually given to those who had screwed up and were being punished. It was commonly referred to as "burning Shitters." I would pray that the NVA would shell the position when it was my turn to clean the head. But they knew it was a lousy job and they actually

wanted us to suffer through it.

One time one of the Marines used JP-4 instead of Diesel fuel while performing this duty. He soon found out that JP-4 was more volatile than Diesel fuel. He was blown backwards and his eyebrows and eyelashes were burned off, and he was covered with fecal matter. After our corpsman determined he had no serious injury he broke into hysterical laughter, as did the rest of the platoon. Since there was no extra water for a bath you can imagine what the poor Marine had to endure. Fellow Marines stayed down wind of him threatening him each time he drew near their position. We all felt sorry for him, but you just had to laugh at his predicament. Even our Platoon commander found humor in the accident, commenting "that marine was squared away and is the most clean shaven one on the hill."

POETRY

Against The Odds

To the eastside shore, did draw me, to the eastside shores, of unknown forces did I go?
Bound to a future shape, where my ancestors before me, to a place called Vietnam.
And we marched to someone else's drum, and as the storms rose up, of the demonic, who's eyes will shame you, down the barrel of my gun, I will name you one by one.
Day by day, my brothers marched to war, yet never to know what we were fighting for.
Was it to complete desires, worldly gain? designed for worldly men,
We were masters of the harp, with ears and hands to lend, soldiers come and go, for the love of thee, fighting, and dieing to be free,
They said "the parties over now,"
As the curtain came down,
It is not enough to just, remember
Or do for others as we weep,
Do we weep for ourselves or those departed,
Only to find ourselves where we started,
Only in forgiveness will healing come,
And may never be realized by some.
To linger in a war past gone,
Will never allow one to find home,
It is not always be what we die for,
But what we live for

Jerome Howell 3rd Sp Bn A Co. 1968 Tet
In memory of Khe Sanh

KSV IN THE NEWS

The Wichita Eagle
Fred Mann

John Ortiz points to the floor of his Wichita home. He knows now it is safe to walk upon, he says. It won't collapse or blow up. But it took years for Ortiz to understand that his own floor won't kill him. On Hill 881 South during the Vietnam War, nothing felt safe. Ortiz hugged that hill for 77 days, from Dec. 26, 1967, until April 1968, his clothes rotting, rats skittering across his face at night, shrapnel flying, friends dying.

But he and 400 or so other Marines managed to hold onto the hill during the Tet Offensive and preserve the nearby base at Khe Sanh. An exhibit on Hill 881 South is part of a the new National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Va., which was dedicated Friday. It is an "immersion" exhibit, meaning it re-creates the surface and atmospheric conditions of the area, and includes a panoramic mural of the surrounding terrain. Ortiz, 57, doesn't need to be immersed in the area again, but he and his family will visit the museum next week. They didn't attend Friday's dedication, choosing instead to join a reunion next week of more than 200 Marines who fought on the hill.



KSV John Ortiz Holds the Hat he wore on Hill 881S in 67-68.

A Vietnamese phrase book that Ortiz used on the hill is one of the artifacts on display. Ortiz says he is thrilled, even overwhelmed, at being a part of the museum. But he doesn't feel personally connected to the exhibit, he says. It is not about him, he says. "To me it's about all the people who were there and all the people who supported us," Ortiz says. "Even the museum, it's still not about that hill or Khe Sanh. It's about every single Marine that ever had anything to do with Vietnam."

Ortiz and the others didn't know the strategic importance of the hill at the time. He was just a kid then, an 18-year-old lance corporal, a communications specialist who manned a telephone and radio and coordinated mortar fire. Hill 881 South was the farthest outpost of all the hills ringing the Khe Sanh base. It was near Laos, only a mile from the Ho Chi Minh trail. If 881 South fell, the enemy would overrun the other hills and be able to fire at will into the base, which was down in the valley. When the enemy failed to take the hill, it abandoned the plan.
Ed Note: The distance to the border was further and direct fire into the KSB is incorrect.

Of the 400 Marines manning the outpost during the siege, 44 died. They were under constant attack from mortars, rockets, artillery and small arms fire. They lived in rat-infested bunkers and trenches on minimal C-rations and rationed canteen water. Ortiz wrapped himself like a mummy at night because the rats ran over him to get to the tins of C-rations hanging behind his head. Their canteen water was only for drinking. A Marine risked being court-martialed if he used it to wash or shave.

Ortiz showered twice in his 77 days on the hill -- when it rained enough to rinse soap off his body. Hygiene wasn't the worst problem. "When you're on the hill," Ortiz says, "you don't know what's going to happen. Every day, every step, every breath, every movement for all that time, you are watchful. "Your antenna went up and stayed up," he says. "To this day." Ortiz never was physically wounded, even though rounds of shrapnel frequently struck near his bunker, flew into the doorway and bounced around inside. "It's a miracle anybody got off that hill without some sort of physical injury," he says.

Ortiz had received training in basic Vietnamese, so he served as a translator during prisoner interrogations. Interrogations were brief because 881 South was a just a way station for prisoners. What he remembers most about the interrogations is giving food to one of the prisoners. Not just any food, but a highly coveted pound cake. The time he was most afraid was when he was to be taken off the hill. He knew the hill. Everything beyond it was unknown territory, he says. Ortiz remembers flying off the hill to Khe Sanh, which was still under attack, then to relatively safe Quang Tri. There, he kissed the tarmac and joined other Marines in throwing his rotted clothing onto a bonfire.

After showering, putting on fresh clothes and dining on his first warm meal in months, Ortiz heard incoming rockets that killed several of the hill survivors. "That's the way it was," he says. "It's the same with Iraq. You see a person today, and tomorrow they're gone." Ortiz arrived home in the midst of hostile anti-war sentiment. A few people asked him questions about the war, but then dropped it. Girls wouldn't date him. Boys laughed at his Marine haircut. So Ortiz swallowed the war and kept his experiences to himself.

Eventually that silence exploded inside him. He became ill with anxiety and suffered frequent panic attacks. He began receiving counseling for post-traumatic stress disorder in 1992, and it took four years to deal with the worst of it. Ortiz worked full time at the Mid-America All-Indian Center, where, even though he is Mexican-American, he rose to executive director. But he left the center in 1998 when the pressures of the position triggered a relapse into anxiety, mood swings, sleeplessness and nightmares. Ortiz hasn't had a steady full-time job for 10 years. But he's made it financially by doing a mix of small, temporary jobs and some consulting work while living on Veterans benefits that increased as his disability ratings increased. His wife, Pam, worked full-time for a cosmetology supply firm until she left last year to care for her ill father. Ortiz, who has a master's degree in sociology from Wichita State University, wants to work full-time again as a counselor to veterans.

For fun, he is a drummer with a band, "The Neons," and has an online business buying, selling and restoring drums. He and Pam have three grown children and four grandchildren. They make up for all the negative experiences he has endured, he says. His feelings about Veterans Day change from year to year. Some years he's into it. Other years he prefers not to think about it. His feelings about this week's reunion are mixed, as well. It will be a bittersweet time. He feels a close, family bond with the Marines he fought with, but the memories they share aren't pleasant. And they all feel the way he does about being part of the new museum, he says. It's an honor, but it's not about them. "Nobody feels like a hero," Ortiz says. "We feel like survivors."

ANOTHER KSV IN THE NEWS
Milford man to reunite with Fellow Marines

By Amelia Skimin
Staff Writer

It could have been another Alamo.

In 1968, about 6,000 American Marines faced 20,000 North Vietnamese soldiers at the battle of Khe Sanh. At the end of the battle, the United States proved victorious. Thousands of North Vietnamese soldiers were dead, as were a few hundred Americans. More than 400 American Marines were wounded.

Among the wounded was 19-year-old Kenneth Warner, now a Milford resident. He'd arrived in Vietnam the previous year and became a squad leader for second squad, first platoon, India Company, 3RD Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment.

After being wounded, Warner eventually made it to an evacuation point and was evacuated to the Khe Sanh Combat Base by helicopter. From there, he was sent to a hospital in DaNang then to the U.S.S. Sanctuary, a hospital ship.



Once he had healed sufficiently, he returned to combat, back to Hill 881 South, where he'd been stationed before. He was there for nearly a month before receiving his orders home.

In the years since, Warner has often thought about the men with whom he served, wondering what happened to them. Many, like him, were only teenagers at the time. Later this month, he'll be able to stop wondering. Next weekend Warner, his wife, Donna, son, Jesse and daughter, Margo will be in Virginia to join his company for a reunion to coincide with the opening of the Marine Corps Museum. More than 220 Marines will attend.

"I'm anxious to go," Warner said. "There's people, a couple of names I've thought of for 38 years." At the reunion, the members of India Company will be joined by the Purple Foxes, the Marine helicopter squadron responsible for getting members of India Company up and down their hill.

The Marine Corps Museum will feature a Marine battle for each major United States war. The Vietnam War will be represented by the battle of Khe Sanh. The exhibit entrance will be a Purple Fox helicopter, with actual voice recordings playing in the background. The air in the exhibit will mimic the temperature and humidity of the battle.

In addition to visiting the museum, the reunion will include a visit to the Vietnam Memorial. "This is something I've never been able to do," said Warner, of the visit. It was only about two years ago that he was ready to see it. Until last year, Warner didn't know the full significance of the battle of Khe Sanh, particularly Hill 881 South. It was actually his son who found out.

As a senior at Milford High School, Jesse had spent some time talking to Marine recruiters. When he mentioned to the recruiters that his father had been in India Company, 26TH Marines, the response from the recruiters was surprising. It turned out that the actions of the Marines on Hill 881 South is taught to new Marines as part of the Corps' history.

When Jesse told his father, Warner decided to check

it out for himself and found a Web site devoted to the "Warriors of Hill 881S," maintained by Col. William Dabney, Warner's commander. It was on the site that Warner learned about the museum and the reunion.

"It was just something that went on in my life. I never realized its significance," Warner said.

KSV WEB TALK

6-7-67

By Steven Wiese

I find myself today thinking back about my time in Vietnam, so I'd like to ask for a little help, on June 7 1967, I was involved in a patrol that went off of Hill 881. There were many men killed and wounded that day. I had been in country for several months at that time this was my first real firefight, what I would actually call a battle. During the fight I pretty much fired off all the ammunition I had, the machine gun team had been killed so I picked up the M-60, not that I really wanted it. I just remember laying on the trigger and spraying the side of the Hill, if I saw muzzle flash I'd fire in that direction, there was chaos on the Hill men running in all directions a lot of yelling and screaming, since the NVA were in spider holes they seem to be all over the Hill. I was on the side of the Hill which was facing towards Hill 881, I can see the Hill and I can see people on it. I couldn't see anyone else on the Hill I was standing on. I could hear people yelling so I moved in that direction which was basically to the top of the Hill. The total, actual events of that day are much to long a story.

Which brings me to my question, Medivac choppers were called in, and there was another Marine with me, loading dead and wounded onto the choppers. It was about the third or fourth chopper in that this individual was shot. I think he was hit in the leg but I'm not sure, he looked at me said: " I'm going home," and then he jumped into the chopper. I watched him fly off with a huge smile. Does anyone know who this individual was? My squad leader was a Black Marine his name was Corporal Ward. He was killed that day. If anyone knows of his family members I would like to try to get in touch with them. He was a fine man, and a fine Marine. Rest well my friend.

There is also a man who had the radio when we finished loading the dead and wounded we were told they would not send another chopper to pick us up the LZ was to hot, that we would have to walk back to the Hill. I remember they were five or six of us, I was walking point with the 60, and the guy with the radio was behind me. If anyone knows who these men were I'd sure like to talk to them. I also like to give thanks for this web site, knowing you are out there for support has been very helpful, thank you all. B/1/26 Lives on

Steven,

Well, I thought I was the only one that drifted back to 6/7/67, as for the radioman you are looking for, you found him. It only took almost 40 years but that not bad for us grunts. I was Lieutenant McDonald's radioman 2nd Platoon "B" Co. my nickname was "Yogi" from Baltimore, Md. I can see the men on the hill running around and remember the look on their faces as we walked inside the wire. I had a Medivac tag on my shirt. I got smacked early that afternoon, but as hot as the LZ was, the walk back to the hill looked like the best bet. Once on the hill the General (I thought it was General Walt) came up to me and said "Marine you look like you have had a bad day come with me. I was medivaced down the hill in his chopper. I was grateful. Speaking of being grateful, I am grateful you made it back. WELCOME HOME thanks for reaching out.

Semper Fi

Denny (Yogi) Bowers

Steven,

I was there with you that day, my squad was on the left side we were going up the slope in a "V" formation. We took about 40 to 50 motor rounds before the NVA stormed us. Most of my squad was killed in the initial volley. I hit the ground and remember thinking I got to get out of the kill zone. Rolling to my left as the mortars exploded all around me I came across a wounded Marine bleeding badly. As I was patching him up the NVA were all over the place and shooting our wounded. I had a face to face with a few of them as they ran right past me in the tall grass. One seemed to see me but did not shoot right away, I shot one and the other two ran off.

From hill 881s they were shooting direct fire from the 106's right over my head.As the NVA scattered I made my way to the top of the slope and came across an M-60 gunner who was struggling to shoot and load the M-60, I dropped next to him and helped feed ammo.

At this point the gun ships arrived, followed by F-4's, as I recall laying there at the M-60 position, a large piece of one of the 500 lb bombs being dropped fell near us. I heard it hit the ground. I looked over and saw a smoldering piece of shrapnel. (Could that gunner have been you?) There was one VC running from left to right and the gunner (you?) let out a stream of rounds but never hit the guy. Remember the chopper coming in to pick up our wounded and us policing the area. I humped back to 881S with six M-16's and other gear. Eleven of my squad was killed that day, I think we lost 15 in all. I can't answer your questions, but I can still see that day vividly. We were a two platoon patrol, and I know for sure that we were in soft covers and no flak jackets; it was a very hot day. Platoons from A Co, came down from 881S to cover our withdrawal. I still don't know how I survived that day without a scratch. I think of it often, and remember those we lost. May they rest in peace?
Semper Fi Bravo Brother
Gene Weresow

Gene,
Yes that could very well have been me, there were a couple of men that stopped and helped load ammo for me that day the last guy hooked on 3 or 4 more belts of ammo so I had like 500 or 600 rounds in one long belt, I remember getting up to run and the ammo hung up in the grass pulled me over. There was a guy who called out that there were a lot of NVA coming up the ravine. I looked over and the side of the hill was crawling with NVA, there was a SGT that told 5 or 6 of us to take our grenades one in each hand, we stood in line on the side of the hill he said on his command pull the pins, but don't throw the grenades until he said so, I remember him counting 1,2,3 then he said throw. I know some of you are going to read this and think what a bunch of crap, I swear this really did happen. Was I ever happy to see those F-4's. Are you going to the reunion in D.C. ? We need to get together and talk.
Semper Fi brother.
Steven Wiese

Gene,
The platoon from Alpha that came out to Hill 861 was the 3d platoon. I was the platoon commander. Later just before dark back on Hill 881S we merged with what was left of Bravo Company for the night defense. Wish we could have done more.
John Kaheny

Steven,
I was with Alpha Co. 81's on 881 and we watched the fight (albeit helplessly). Never realized so many were lost! I remember you returning to the hill. I also remember a big Sgt. leading the way. Name forgotten. Wish we could have been there to help. If I remember right, we weren't allowed to fire any support because of the close in fighting until after you started returning. Needless to say, glad you made it back. Your story sparked one of my forgotten memories.
Bruce Buck

Steven,
I am planning to go to the reunion, hope to make the reservations soon. There is a lot more to be told on that battle. Hope to get together with you and exchange our thoughts. Do you remember the General up on 881S when we returned, I think it was Walt, there were other officers in his party and I remember one with a movie camera, wish I could see those flicks, I'm sure the guys on top of the hill got a eye full. BTW as I said we did get support from 881S, they did direct fire some 106's, probably saved my butt. But it was awful close. Thanks guys who ever you are.
Semper Fi
Gene Wereslow

Gene
Yes, I do remember the general, I talked to Ernie Spencer about that day he told me there was a general visiting Khe Sanh and when the fire fight broke out he jumped a chopper and flew up to 881, the general and I had a little discussion after the fire fight, I wonder if he's still alive I would love to talk to him and see what he remembers of that day. Yes there was a camera crew there. I'd love to see that footage. The 106's did give us cover fire on the way in but the F-4's are what saved our butts. I think the NVA coming up the ravine would have overrun the hill, but when the F-4's showed up they turned and

ran. Outstanding. I'm looking forward to talking to you in D.C.
Steven

Steven,
Just finished reading the command chronologies for June 67. The General was B/Gen Metzger not Walt as I previously stated.
Gene

Steven,
Dear Sir, You are one of the few, the proud, and the only remaining men that fought the fight. Many more assisted you, not to mention the air support that you received. I was a lowly Cpl. back at the Base. I stand in awe of your superlative duty Mr. Wiese. I wish I could've been with you and Bravo. But, then, I would probably be dead. Here's health to you and to our Corps which we are proud to serve. In many strife we've fought for life, and never lost our nerve. Blackbud Charlie, Out.
Chuck Chamberlin

Steven,
I was with then Lieutenant John Kahney. I remember going out to hook up with what was left of Bravo. Remember being scared as hell with what we were going to find. Felt so helpless when we got there. I just wished we could have gotten there faster, see you in DC in July.
Russ Turner

Follow-up on 6-7-67
Steven Wiese

I don't think I can explain what I'm feeling right now. It is kind of like one of those did I shut the garage door? Did I turn the stove off? You know the feeling, like there's something you forgot to do. Once Ernie Spencer told me, "you have to be careful what you say on a public board, or in public in general", thank you for that advice Ernie. I would like to offer a little explanation in regards to my previous 6-7-67 post. On the day that happened, I was mad, angry and upset, and wanted revenge. So what did I do, I extended my tour in Vietnam. It might have been a foolish thing to do, but I had just turned 19 in May and was young, dumb, and you know the rest.

Because of my extension I ended up in Khe Sanh during the siege. As you know I was a member of the ghost patrol (2-25-68) and I went out on March 30th 1968 on the payback patrol, I was involved in an ambush on Route 9 with Lieutenant Long, so I've asked myself many times why I am still here. I must have been spared for something. I must have been destined to make some great contribution in life. But here I am getting old and I've accomplished nothing great. I haven't made the world a better place to live; I'm not a doctor saving lives, so I asked myself why? I asked this question of the shrink at the VA, she thought for a moment and you know what her reply was: "Maybe it's so I can remember these men and tell their story, to family members of what heroic men they were." Well I'm no Mickey Spillane so writing is out. One day I hope I will be able to reach their family members. Maybe there's someone who would like to hear from you. Thanks again guys for your support.

Steven,
I know how you feel I've wondered those things for years. I've come to realize that we were all spared for a reason. You don't have to know that reason. For me, it may be my family my kids and my grand kids. I may have not done anything worth writing about, but who knows what my children, or grand children will do. Maybe nothing, maybe something wonderful. Often you don't know how you touch the lives of other people and how that affects them. So I would guess that at least indirectly you have accomplished much. At least that is what I hope for. I've quit trying to figure it out. I think it goes hand in hand with the survival guilt we all feel to one extent or other.

For me, I've always tried to do the right thing, and treat people as I would want to be treated. I hope that is enough in the eyes of the Lord. Let it go. Stop trying to figure it out. Just do the best you can with the time you have left. BTW, I was in the point squad on 7/27/67, and in Lieutenant Long's platoon, when we again walked right into that ambush. I had a chi com land and explode not 3 feet from me. Just minor wounds, go figure. You can't. Hang tough Bravo Brother, the good Lord makes the calls not us.
Semper Fi,
Gene Weresow

Steven,
I am sure everyone wonders about the same thing. When out on patrol and the guy next, beside, or be-

hind you gets hit, why not me? When we were down at 55 it happened a lot. Someone hits a land mine, booby trap, or hit by a sniper, why not me? Were we saved for something or just lucky? Were we saved to remind the world of those who did not make it? Heaven and our creator only knows. The other question I have is, why is it that all us old men who kept it locked away for so many years, now seem to be consumed by it? I am proud to say you are a friend. If it were not for all this Khe Sanh stuff we could have walked our dogs by each for years without knowing the common bond.
Chuck Teasley

Steven,
The one thing I have learned is that most of use will never discover another Penicillin, the vaccine for Polio. The one thing we can do is be there for each other. Sometimes it is just reaching out and touching one person, and making their life better even for one moment so they are able to get through that day. Because of what we have been through it has made us stronger then most. We are a little more honest with our feelings, and we feel love, anger, and pain more then a lot of people.
Have a good day
Bill Gerrard

REFLECTIONS

USMC SAN DIEGO
By Craig W. Tourte

I few months ago I drove down to San Diego and visited the MCRD. I was disappointed in the museum. I had thought that such a distinguished facility would have had more artifacts reflecting Marine Corps history. I was assured the museum was a work in progress and that a new wing would be open soon. As I wandered over to the small case that reflected the Vietnam War I observed a 12X24 inch paper plaque placed into a wall box attached to the bulkhead. This is what plaque read:

"From 1965 to 1973 US Marines served in Vietnam to help contain the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. Marines were engaged in a variety of conflicts fighting against organized Viet Cong (VC) guerrilla groups and units of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). At the height of the involvement in Vietnam, the Corps had more than 75,000 Marines ashore as part of the Third Marine Amphibious Force. The majority of Marine Corps operations conducted during this decade were small unit actions, battalion size or smaller. The most notable campaign of the war was the Tet Offensive of 1968, which began for the Marines with the siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base at Khe Sanh. By 1969 the Marines had begun to withdraw from Vietnam, and by the end of 1970 there were only 21,000 Marines and 1,200 Navy men left in I Corps. The last Marines left Vietnam in force on 25 June 1971. The Vietnamese War became the Marine Corps longest war, and it left 14,691 Marines dead and 88,633 wounded. The Marines also lost 252 helicopters and 173 fixed-wing aircraft in combat, and 172 helicopters and 81 aircraft operationally during the war."

I remembered thinking as I was reading this plaque and viewing what little items were available depicting that conflict so long ago, that our experience was somehow being reduced to a small footnote in history, to a plaque located in a dark back room over in a corner that is covered with dust and is seldom visited.

I'm looking forward to viewing the Marine Corps museum in DC during the reunion next year; I heard they have done a great job.

Craig,

I agree with you, after your post about visiting MCRD and how much you enjoyed it sparked the wife and I into making a special trip to San Diego to watch a graduation and visit the museum, we totally enjoyed the graduation, but to say the museum was a disappointment would be a huge understatement. That same trip we had the opportunity to visit with Captain Kenny Pipes, what a privilege that was. It made the whole trip worthwhile. P.S., Thanks again for inviting me along to celebrate the Marine Corps birthday, still not sure if I'm sober yet.
Steven Wiese

Craig,

Tony Anthony (3/26) and myself serve on the Board of the MCRD Museum Historical Foundation. Tony is the president, I am the vice president. The Foundation raises funds for the museum and also organizes the documents that provide personal experi-

ences of Marine Corps veterans to the recruits at MCRD on T-20. We do not operate the museum which is run by the Marine Corps for the purpose of highlighting the base's role in Marine Corps history beyond just Vietnam. As that is the museum's mission, it should not be expected that the Vietnam War is its primary focus. However, the Foundation has made a gift to the Museum to expand its Vietnam exhibit which will be opening soon. It will be a first class display. If you would like you can always make a contribution to the MCRD San Diego Museum Historical Society and help us out. Check out mcrdmuseumhistoricalsociety.org

John Kaheny

John,

I have written a number of articles regarding my recent visit to MCRD San Diego and my remembrances of boot camp (platoon 1145 in 1966 along with Mike Powers from D/1/26 and Bill Poland from H.Q. 1/13, both of whom are Khe Sanh Veterans and members of our association) and my impression of the museum. Please let us know when the new Vietnam War exhibit is available and open to the public I am wondering if they'll have some type of ceremony? I'll take another drive down there from Northern California and check it out. I'll even make a donation. Maybe I can get some of us old Khe Sanh Veterans who live in California or near, to meet in San Diego and we can view it together.

Craig

POETRY

Memories

I remember you!
As always being the smiling one.
The kid who never quit,
Until the last battle had been won.
I remember you!
The night we graduated from high school,
So sure of ourselves.
Lord knows we sure thought we were cool.
I remember you!
When we joined the Corps," look what we done"
Going home in our dress blues.
Your Daddy huggin you, smiling, saying "That's my son!"
I remember you!
When we got our orders for war.
We were so excited;
The noble heroes were going to settle the score!
I remember you!
Walking ahead in the mist and gloom.
Wet, cold, and scared
Never knowing our lives would change so soon.
I remember you!
The screams of the dying.
Faces full of pain and horror,
People running, disappearing, never seen anymore.
I remember you!
When the rockets hit, then that terrible roar,
The sounds of combat.
The reality of War!
I remember you!
Torn and dismembered, staring up at me,
Seeing your insides floating in the slop.
Wondering, praying, thanking God it wasn't me.
I remember you!
Trying to hold on with your one good arm.
Never crying----
And me covering you, trying to keep you from further harm.
I remember you!
Asking when the choppers would land.
Looking you in the eye,
Lying, telling you they're coming as fast as they can.
I will always remember you,
When the light left your eyes.
Feeling your body quiver
In protest to the pain when you died.
I'll always remember you
Old friend: it was 20 years ago today and
I still think of you often,
And still don't know what to say-----
EXCEPT, I MISS YOU ERIC!!!!

Larry Hatfield F/O 81MM A Co 1/26
Written April 1988 In Honor of Kurt Eric Hacker R/O A Co 1/26 KIA

PICTURES YOU WILL NOT SEE IN THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA



Air Force Chief Master Sgt. John Gebhardt, of the 332ND expeditionary Medical Group at Balad, Iraq, cradles a young girl as they both sleep at the hospital. The girl's entire family was executed by insurgents; the killers shot her in the head as well. The girl received treatment at the U.S. Military hospital in Balad, but cries and moans often,. According to nurses at the facility, Gebhardt is the only one who can calm down the girl, so he spends several days holding her while they both sleep in a chair.

MEMOIRS

DEALING WITH "THE GREATEST GENERATION"

By Ernie Spencer

I have one daughter (Evie). She was a great gymnast. During her freshman year of high school, she won the championship for her school. Being a gymnast gave her great upper-body strength. A couple of her uncles (on her mother's side) were also gymnasts. Four of them became Marines. One served in Vietnam and was WIA. The other three served post Vietnam. One died as a Cobra pilot on a night training mission at Quantico. The other two were: an Admirals aide, and the other, electronics weapons repairman. Her mom became a Navy Corpsman (Reserve) and was called up during the first Gulf War. She retired after sixteen years as a 1st Class. Evie inherited my reputation as a brawler. When she was a freshman, her fellow high school students hung out in downtown Walnut Creek on Friday nights. One Friday night a male junior started harassing her girlfriend a little too much. Evie hit him with one overhand right (Daddy's favorite punch) and decked him. He became the laughing stock of the school.

In college she often went partying up at Chico State, then the most famous party school in the country. Evie's future husband (at the time) is not a fighter. Some of the guys in the bar started harassing him. Evie stepped in and hammered the clowns. During a flight she was taking in the early nineties, she happened to be seated next to an old guy. You know the type, his pants up near his armpits. Evie proudly carries my dog tag from Nam on her key chain and happened to remove it from her purse. The old turd grabbed it from her and said loudly:

"What are you doing with this Marine dog-tag? Evie politely replied:
"That's my dad's. He was a Marine and wore it in Vietnam.
"Oh yeah" the old goat sniffed, "I was on Iwo Jima!"
"Oh really?", Evie said. "My daddy was the CO of Delta 1/26 at Khe Sanh during the Siege. You ever heard of that battle? His unit also fought on Iwo.

And by the way, what unit were you with on Iwo, and, what wave did you go in on?"

His jaw dropped. She doesn't know who landed when, but knew by his expression that she had him, since he just looked straight- forward, head down.

"Now give me my keys, f_ _k head, or I'll kick your sorry, old a$$. He meekly handed them back.

After they landed and he scurried out, she got in one last shot. "Say hero. You weren't a REMF by any chance, were you?



On The Cover

David Wiegler's photo features Evie Spencer, who sparked the Knights to an 18 point victory over Miramonte and an FAC title. She compiled a combined score of 32.7

Las Lomas High School
Walnut Creek, Ca May 25 1984

MEMOIRS

SUB UNIT 5

By Larry L. Larsen
Sub Unit 5

I have attended a couple of Khe Sanh Vets reunions, both at Chicago. I have always enjoyed myself. Very often I am asked what Sub Unit 5 was. I either try to explain what it was or tell the curious that we were in a submarine in the Roa Quan.

Actually Sub Unit 5 was a small company sized unit that was formed on 1 February 1967 and disbanded on 12 January 1968. It was part of HQ Bn, 3rd Marine Division. It existed for slightly less than one year. During its life it was never anywhere else than Khe Sanh.

There were other sub units from HQ Bn as well. Sub Unit 2 was at Dong Ha. Sub Unit 4 was in the Phu Bai area. SU4 consisted mainly of CACs Alpha and Hotel. I believe that there was also a Sub Unit 1. I have not found any record of a Sub Unit 3.

Sub units were not only limited to HQ Bn. I have found reference to them in records of other units such as the 26th Marines. I believe that the FLC organization had many of them scattered around. Sub Unit 5 appears to have been formed to control the base at Khe Sanh when 1/3 left early in 67. For a time SU5, B/1/9 and a handful of personnel from other units were the total USMC force at Khe Sanh. This came to a screeching halt with the advent of the Hill Fights in April of 67. By the middle of May, much of the 9th Marines and the 3rd Marines were engaged in a bitter battle there. Other units would come and go during 1967. 1/26 showed up at the end of the Hill Battles and spent the rest of 67 there. The 26th Marine Regiment HQs soon moved to Khe Sanh. And we all know what 1968 brought.

Sub Unit 5 consisted of a large variety of MOSs. Maybe it can best be compared to the H&S Company of a Battalion. There were communicators, combat engineers, Motor T, cooks, PX and postal clerks, intelligence, air strip supply, water supply and even a Marine with an MOS listed as a clarinet player. And there were a large number of 03s. Many of the O3XX MOSs were assigned to CAC Oscar. CAPs Oscar 1 and 2 operated in the village of Khe

Sanh. 3 were in the Bru village near the gate. They were the only CAC units that worked entirely with Bru forces. CAC Oscar was transferred from SU5 to SU4 in July of 67. In 1968 the CAC units were formed into a separate organizations know as CAG.

Some of the Marines in SU5 were already at Khe Sanh when the unit was formed. Some came from 1/3. Others had been at Khe Sanh TAD from Phu Bai with HQ Bn. Some volunteered. Others were sent. I know of one Marine who spent his entire tour at Khe Sanh with SU5. Some SU5 Marines remained at Khe Sanh when the unit was disbanded shortly before the siege. They either joined HQ Bn, 3rd Marine Division, the 26th Marines or some other unit. Many of the Marines I knew in SU5 had tours that ended in 1967. Many, me included were gone before the siege started. Some had time left to do on their tours. More than one extended and stayed in Vietnam. I know of one who first extended for six months. When he returned to the States, he decided to re-enlist and return to Vietnam. He ended up with 3rd Recon and returned to Khe Sanh long after the Marines had abandoned it.

SU5 Marines were very involved in the evacuation of the Bru at Lang Vei when they were mistakenly bombed by the US Air Force on 2 March 1967. The next night SU5 lost its first man. Raymond Goodwin who was killed by incoming on 3 March 67.

Four more SU5 Marines were lost on hill 689 on 27 June 67. They were Marines from CAC Oscar. SU5 Marines accompanied patrols from time to time. They manned LPs and the perimeter. They provided security for MedCap patrols. The communicators manned equipment in the COC until the unit was disbanded. Supply Marines worked with the air drop and LAPES supply runs. During the fall of 67 the runway was undergoing repair much of the time. The only fixed wing aircraft that could land were the bird-dog observation planes and the C7A Caribou. Supplies arrived by either air drop or LAPES. Manpower arrived and departed by chopper. Hwy 9 had also been closed. SU5 Marines also helped man the site on Hill 950.

Early in 67 the base was under the command of whoever was the senior officer pPresent. That officer would be the CO of SU5. The Hill Battles pretty much ended that. After the 26th Marines took over SU5 was just another support unit. The total strength of SU5 reached a high of 139 in May of 67. By November of 67 it was down to 38.

In May of 67 there were 7 Navy personnel assigned to the unit, six corpsmen and a doctor. Others passed through SU5 in a matter of days. KSV founder Ray Stubbe was originally assigned to SU5 when he arrived. Some of this had to do with billets with other units. Ray of course become the 1/26 chaplin. Another became a civil affairs officer. I have the MPRs for SU5 except for the month of January 68. MPRs were just that, a monthly personnel roster. If an individual was not part of the unit both at the first and last days of the month, he did not appear on the roster. Dennis Alfred O'Connor was a sad example. He was KIA before he was ever listed on a SU5 MPR.

I was in the communications platoon of SU5. We occupied some hard-back hooches near the Grey sector. Other SU5 Marines were scattered around the base. It is sometimes said that Khe Sanh was a quiet place in 67. I guess that is true for much of it. But roughly 300 Americans lost their lives at Khe Sanh in 1967

I have spent about six years researching SU5 and its men. I have the above mentioned MPRs. HQ Bn CCs and a few other records. There really is not much mention of the unit. I have managed to track down about 45 of the men who were part of SU5. When I first started looking I could only remember two names. I have since found both of them, JJ Johnson and Sgt John Drum.

I also found the radioman that slept on the cot next to mine. I have started a web site for SU5 at http://www.subunit5.bravehost.com/welcome.html. In July of 2005 at the KSV reunion in Chicago, seven SU5 Marines reunited. That would have been the most in one spot since it was disbanded. I was a lowly private for most of my time at Khe Sanh. (That's another story). I worked hard at avoiding anyone who had much rank and I thought might be looking for a shit detail volunteer. In the last few years I have spoken with Majors and Colonels and even an Admiral. I have spoken with Sergeants Major. I have even spoken with a CWO 4 (I don't think I ever even saw one when I was in the Marines.) They all have one

thing in common. It is this brotherhood called the Khe Sanh Veterans Association.I hope that this has helped to explain what Sub Unit 5 consisted of. Welcome home brothers. Semper Fidelis.

Watching over and praying for our Warriors who have served, and are still in harms way throughout the world



Camp Lejeune in North Carolina opened the first wounded warriors barracks to lift Marines' morale and help wounded service members return to active duty or transition out* of *the Marine Corps.

By Kara Petrovic



As more and more Marines-wounded by roadside bombs and in shootings-continue to return from Iraq, they are surrounding themselves with other wounded Marines to share in their final phases of recovery.

In September 2005, North Carolina's Camp Lejeune welcomed six Marines wounded in Iraq as the first residents of the first-of-its-kind wounded warrior barracks, The barracks, called Maxwell Hall, officially opened in November 2005. Today, 35 Marines live and work together, and call Maxwell Hall home. The barracks-named after Lt. Col. Timothy Maxwell, who sustained severe brain damage after mortar shrapnel pierced his brain-brings the hurting together to heal together.

Maxwell, a former operations officer for the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, was on his third tour in Iraq when he almost died Oct. 7, 2004. He awoke to an empty hospital room longing for his unit. The isolation was enough to drive him mad. At that moment, he started thinking about other wounded Marines who were probably experiencing similar feelings and recovering alone. "These guys have a hard time talking about the war, especially to people who haven't been through war," Maxwell said. "Most are right out of high school, and they needed a sense of togetherness. They didn't need to go back home or back to empty barracks."

After returning to the U.S., Maxwell, along with Gunnery Sgt. Ken Barnes-another wounded Marine-



Colonel Maxwell

approached their superiors in March 2005 about converting a building at Camp Lejeune into living quarters for wounded warriors, so that they could recuperate together. Some commanders initially objected to the idea, but Maxwell and Barnes pressed on to convince those who weren't sold on the idea. "We kept telling them, 'Who can take care of Marines better than Marines? Barnes said. "From the outside looking in, we proved that no one else can take care of them better."

In August 2005, Maxwell and his supporters were successful as Camp Lejeune's former officers' quarters were transformed into six personal living spaces. Since then, the barracks has expanded to include 40 rooms. But unlike traditional barracks, wheelchair ramps replaced steps and hand-bars were installed to accommodate residents' needs. A recreation room also includes computers, a big-screen TV and a videogame system to keep up morale. "It's all about togetherness here," Maxwell said. "It's not fair that some have to spend time alone. Coming here gives these Marines a place to hang out."

The Path to Recovery

As of August 2006, 65 Marines and sailors have lived, worked and recovered at Maxwell Hall since it opened its doors. Barnes, the top enlisted man in charge of the barracks, said wounded warriors are treated like Marines. They are up-each morning by 5:30 a.m., straightening their living quarters and in formation by 7:30 a.m.

When Marines first arrive at the barracks, they are



divided into five different squads, depending on the severity of their wounds and mobility, and assigned a job to perform four days a week. A sergeant leads each squad. "The sergeants are key," Maxwell said. "By looking at their sergeants, it gives these wounded Marines a chance to see what they're going



to look like in six months." According to the Department of Defense, 6,195 Marines have been wounded in Iraq and 91 Marines were wounded in

Afghanistan as of Aug. 5, 2006.

Like Barnes, who lost his arm to a roadside bomb in Iraq on Nov. 2, 2004, the barracks' 46 staff members, except two, also have been wounded in either Iraq or Afghanistan. Staff members coordinate doctors' appointments and help Marines with mounting paperwork and future plans. "We're more than a barracks," Barnes said. "We offer them a chance to be part of a team again. There's a huge piece of your life missing when you are wounded. I look at life a lot differently now, and that's partly due to the barracks. I've learned to talk better and adjusted myself around people."

Maxwell's wife, Shannon, his 12-year-old daughter and nine-year-old son supported Maxwell's vision from the beginning. Shannon also helped found a support group for spouses of wounded veterans. "We fully believe that the barracks concept is beneficial to them," Shannon said. "Family members can empathize with and love them, but since they haven't walked in their shoes, they can't understand how that really feels."

The Real Wounded Warriors

The wounded Marines staying at Maxwell Hall are similar to thousands of service members across the country in their passion for their country and their need for camaraderie.

At 15, Brandon Love stood beside his older brother with envy as he watched him enlist with the Marine Corps. "It was always my dream to join," Love said. "I told the recruiting officer right there that he'd see me in three years."

Love followed in his brother's footsteps and joined the Marines, becoming a lance 'corporal with F Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment. He deployed to Iraq in 2005, but his tour ended Sept. 23, 2005, outside Karmah, after a car explosion sent shrapnel piercing through his right arm and bursting his eardrums. The following November, the Charlottesville, Va., native joined other wounded warriors, including two from his own unit, at Camp Lejeune. "For me, the camaraderie is the best part," he says. "Everyone here has been through similar things. We can joke about our wounds with one another without anyone else getting offended." Four days a week, Love works as a photographer in Camp Lejeune's Public Affairs Office, snapping photos of group functions to display for public viewing. Love says he enjoys covering the barracks' events, but says he's ready to move on.

"I'm ready to go back to Iraq," Love says, "Wherever my boys are going, I want to be there," For Sgt. Jason Simms, 28, of Philadelphia, the road to recovery has been a longer process. He was wounded only four months into his deployment. Simms arrived in Iraq in March 2004 with 3rd Pit" D Co., 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Bn., attached to the 1st Marine Division. On July 1, 2004, the 'Humvee he was riding in rolled over a land mine during a routine patrol sweep along a highway in Fallujah. Simms suffered burns to his hands and face, as well as a broken leg. Simms, who has been with the barracks since it originally opened, works as its 2nd squad leader. "This is one of the best things the Marine Corps has done," Simms said. "I think it helps them with the healing process because I'm hurt, too. I wish I could have come straight to a place like this."

Simms' unit redeployed to Iraq in September, but with each passing day he continues to improve and looks forward to re-enlisting. "I've got more surgeries ahead of me," he says. "As soon as I can return to active duty I want to be back in Iraq. Hopefully, I'll be able to leave a few months from now."

For some Marines, however, the decision of whether they will return to their units after their wounds heal is uncertain. "There are times I think about just going back to school to become an auto mechanic," said Lance Cpl. Collin Wolf, 22, of Boston. A member of 1st Mobile Assault Plt., Weapons Co., 3rd Bn., 6th Marine Regt., Wolf was only five weeks into his tour when the Humvee he was riding in hit a land mine, embedding shrapnel into his right leg and shattering his femur. Since mid-April, Wolf's been recuperating at the barracks. "After you've been sent home, 90% of the guys back in your unit don't understand the extent of combat injuries," Wolf said. "They do here. If I wasn't here, things would be a lot harder." Wolf works in the barracks' inter-support section, making phone calls to wounded Marines across the country. He provides answers to questions about what each Marine can expect during his recovery. "I wish more people knew about the barracks," Wolf said. "Not having a place like this would make

it harder to recuperate."

Wounded Marines coming home from Iraq will continue to receive the best care possible, but not only at Camp Lejeune. Based on Camp Lejeune's program, California's Camp Pendleton opened a West Coast Wounded Warrior Center in August. The center, located less than a quarter-mile from Camp Pendleton's hospital, can house 26 service members. Officials expected to have half of the center's rooms filled by late August.

"I'm excited for them, but we all knew it was coming," Maxwell said. "It was only a matter of time. Once Pendleton's center picks up, it's going to be better than [Camp Lejeune's], because they've been watching what works and what doesn't." Although Maxwell is close to ending his career with the Corps, he said he will always remember the fulfillment he received by helping Marines like Love, Simms and Wolf.

I've enjoyed working at the barracks, but I don't like getting credit for the idea," Maxwell said. "We need to give credit to all the veterans who had to come back wounded and alone."





POETRY

The Soldiers Voice

Whether you agree while I sit here in this fox-hole
Whether you believe this cause is right or wrong.
Whether just or unjust.
I am the one here.

I didn't choose to create this fight.
I have to believe it will be worth it in the end.

Like you I am someone's child.
Please don't be unkind.
Don't cut me to the bone.

I fight to sleep at night.
I fight for you to sleep at night.
I fight to come home,
You are already there.
I fight to save my own soul,
Yours may already be saved?

I'm not here based on any religion.
I'm here with many,
Yet I'm here alone.

I'm not the one to blame for all this.
I stand in this hole to create strength for us all.
Don't hate me because I'm here.
Think. Of me walking to free us all

Pennie Chrisope

INCOMING

STOLEN VALOR ACT MOVING THROUGH CONGRESS

By Catherine Stortz Ripley /C-T
News Editor Saturday, November 18, 2006 9:24 PM CST

Claiming to have received the military's second-highest honor may be unethical but most likely not illegal. However, legislation is working its way through Congress that would make many of these types of situations criminal acts.

Just this week, U.S. Congressman Sam Graves added his name as a co-sponsor to the Stolen Valor Act which was introduced by Colorado Congressman John Salazar. The legislation would penalize distributors of phony medals and those who fraudulently claim to be decorated veterans. Salazar's legislation would place criminal penalties on those who falsely claim to have risked their lives for our country, restoring honor to those who have truly earned it.

"As soon as I learned of these misrepresentations, I contacted Congressman Salazar's office to add my name as a co-sponsor to the Stolen Valor Act," Graves said. "It is reprehensible and unethical to claim unearned military decorations, but unfortunately it is not illegal.

Congress needs to close this loophole so we can protect the integrity of those who have truly earned these military honors and prosecute those who fraudulently claim these awards." Graves said that he plans to bring the matter to the attention of House leadership "to help ensure we move forward on the Stolen Valor Act."

The Stolen Valor Act was inspired by a paper written by Pamla Sterner, a student at Colorado State University at Pueblo, to tighten a loophole for people fraudulently wearing military awards. Sterner's husband, Doug, operates homeofheroes.com, a Web site dedicated to honoring veterans. Mary Schantag, who runs the Skidmore, Mo., nonprofit POW Network with her husband, Charles, that exposes people who claim military awards they have not earned,

says passage of the act is needed not only because individuals are stealing other people's valor, but because of the impact such activities can have.

"We've got to increase the penalties," she said. "We've got to find a way to stop this because these guys are literally changing the history of Vietnam and our conflicts."

Schantag has been involved in investigating the claims made by Jim Fields, who delivered the keynote address at the Veterans Day service in Chillicothe on Saturday. Fields claimed to have received the Navy Cross, which is the military's second-highest honor; however, today (Friday), he told the Constitution-Tribune that he didn't have the Navy Cross and later reportedly told the Marine Corps Times newspaper that he never made reference to-having the Navy Cross.

"You've got to figure that if Fields went out there and started telling stories, he had an entire audience believing he was something he was not," Schantag said.

Some people falsely claiming military service and honors believe their actions to be harmless. "They think it is a victimless crime and it is not," Schantag said. "There are families, veterans, people who listen. It's not right. It is morally wrong, ethically wrong. Donald Ballard, who is Missouri's only living Medal of Honor recipient, is a strong proponent of the legislation and said that even Fields had expressed support for getting the Stolen Valor Act passed "One of the discussions we had was that he talked about helping us find these phonies," Ballard said.

Ballard said that with pending legislation, it would be wise for Fields to set the record straight. "He better admit it now because it's going to be a felony very shortly," he said. "If this law passes and you still claim you've got it, it will be a criminal offense." Ballard predicts that there will be a "major turnover" in exposing fraudulent heroes regarding many honors, including the Bronze Star, Distinguished Service Cross and Silver Star.

Pursuing fake heroes is nothing new to Special agent Thomas A. Cottone Jr., with the FBI in West Paterson, N.J., who says that he has worked on a couple hundred cases involving stolen valor - from Medal Of Honor impostors to other individuals wearing very high military awards. He told of one case in which an individual posed as a highly decorated Marine Captain sitting with the family of a Marine killed in action. The man, who had lifetime memberships to numerous military organizations, confessed that he had never even served in the military. In another case, Cottone was receiving the Honorary Marine Award along with another individual during a prestigious ceremony. However, it was proved that the other individual receiving the honor had 21 unearned combat awards. He was later court-martialed and convicted.

Cottone is outraged by what some individuals try to pass off as truth. "They are not someone just playing dress-up," Cottone said. "They are stealing acts of valor.

They are there to steal the unearned admiration and respect and, literally, steal the acts of valor that real service men and women did to earn those things.

"The impostors go out of their way to be in the spotlight and get anyone to listen to them," he said. These actions are very different than those shown by individuals who actually receive these honors."Most of them, to a fault, are the most humble people," he said. "Most of the real people who have been there, done that are humble."

(Publisher Note: See Page 69 For Results)

MEMOIRS

"Bridge on the River Kwai"

By Tom Eichler E Co 2/26

I was sent this article from the Stars & Stripes from 10 December 1967, depicting Marines from E Co 2/26 guarding Seabees repairing bridges on Highway 1, recently destroyed by the Viet Cong. It reminded me of a picture hanging on the wall of myself and Barry Fixler from E Co 2/26 with people from the village near a bridge which had just been rebuilt, which we were guarding. We had nicknamed it **The Bridge on the River Kwai.**

I thought members might recognize some of the men in these pictures attached to the following article:

U.S. Navy Seabees from Tango Detail of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 rebuild a bridge shelled by the Viet Cong at Phu Loc on Route 1, a key link between Hue and Da Nang.



Cpl Tom Eichler & L/Cpl Barry Fixler from E Co 2/26 with Village people while guarding Bridge & Seabees on Rt 1.



Seabees and their Marine guards clean up after a day of bridge construction on Route 1.





A Heavily load gives the partially completed bridge a test



Marine PFC Roger Spradley of Stuart Fl from E Co 2/26 Writes Home





Seabee Petty Officer Daniel J. Gomez operates a Pile Driver.



BOOKS BY KSV

"NAM AU GO GO"

By John Akins



John Akins joined the Marine Corps in 1967 because he was eligible for the draft and wanted to serve two years and get on with his life. He was just 19 years old. He did not expect to be an infantry point man slogging to the combat base at Khe Sanh during the 1968 Tet Offensive. The impact of violence and death changed his life.

With very little training, he was plunged into the Heart of Darkness, as Joseph Conrad called it. He

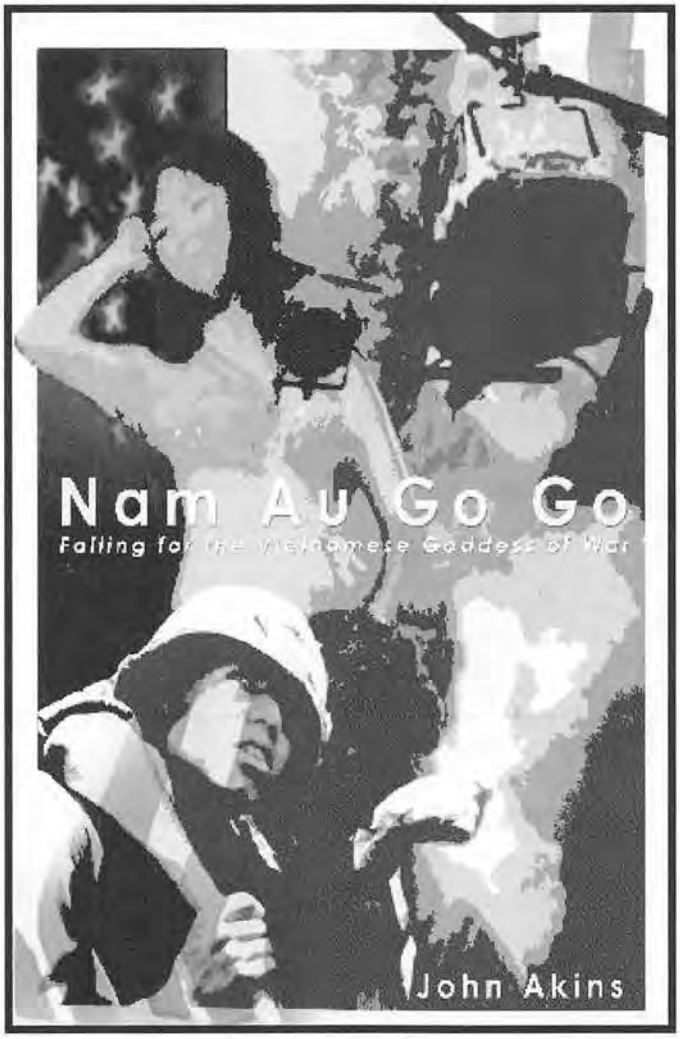

found himself "beyond good and evil, beyond fear, beyond sex and death, in the dark interior of the human mind and soul. Detached, addicted to danger and violence." He learned to survive. Many were killed all around him, and he became a killer.

Going home was almost impossible. At times he wished he would stay on forever. "I'd fallen in love with the Vietnamese Goddess of War," he says in ***Nam Au Go Go***. He got home without serious wounds, except for his mind. He worked at ordinary jobs but without satisfaction. Eventually, he made several trips back to Vietnam to visit the places where he had fought. "I was looking for my soul," he explains

Nam Au Go Go is available on several internet book seller sites.

INCOMING

"Gallery of Grunts"

Heroes but No Heroics By Henry Allen Washington
Post Staff Writer
Sunday, November 19, 2006; D01

The new National Museum of the Marine Corps shows you the Marine Corps as it is, which is mostly enlisted men, anonymous grunts, and war as it is, which is dirty, crazy and endless. No victory parades up the Champs-Elysees or down Fifth Avenue through the tickertape, no full-dress surrenders, no girls kissing Marines at war's end, no wreaths, triumphal arches, reflecting pools or any of the World War II Memorial stuff on the Mall, no generals holding binoculars with one hand and pointing over the battlefield with the other, not that many officers at all, really. And just about no ideology about freedom, America the beautiful or making the world safe for democracy.

A staff sergeant named Steven Sullivan, one of the builders of the exhibits, last week stood inside the big circular hall that holds fighter planes and displays, which include a helicopter disgorging troops in Korea and Marines hitting the beach at Tarawa. He summed up the ethos of the whole 118,000 square feet of the place: "No grandiosity, no heroic garbage." One doesn't think of the Marine Corps shrinking from advertising its glamour: the Iwo Jima flag-raising monument, those grandiose TV ads with knights, dragons and swords, and the bumper sticker braggadocio: "Marines -- When It Absolutely, Positively Has to Be Destroyed Overnight." And there's the 210-foot spire that slants over the museum in unavoidable line-of-sight of travelers driving on Interstate 95 past the Marine base at Quantico. The museum itself, however, is not about glamour; it's about the Marine mystique. And despite the glamour created by supremely adroit Marine public relations, the mystique is founded on -- of all things -- a willful and even perverse modesty.

Not the modesty of Spartans or kamikazes, or the French Foreign Legion parading at a half-time funeral step with leather aprons and axes, but a pristine and hard-eyed dirt-farm stinginess, a nearly lost American poor-but-proud aesthetic that makes Marines enjoy their belief that they're always fighting with hand-me-down equipment and not enough troops (because one Marine is as good as 10 of any enemy, a belief that was just as wrong when the Confederate army believed it, too). There are also the casualties that provoke the perverse Marine boast that the corps is the finest machine ever developed for the killing of young American men. A friend of mine once heard a Marine colonel say to an Army colonel: "The Army uses tanks to protect men. The Marines use men to protect tanks. "Hence, at the end of the museum's three most powerful displays World War II, Korea and Vietnam -- you see not jubilation in triumph but merely a list of Marine casualties, dead, wounded and missing. And carved into the stone of the entrance hall are the words of Sgt. Maj. Dan Daly, twice a Medal of Honor winner: "Come on, you sons of #####es, do you want to live forever?"

If you cannot savor this sort of irony and understand that it is irony, the Marine mystique will elude you. But like a beautiful woman, the Marine Corps is secretly delighted to think that you don't understand it. Beyond that, it doesn't give a ####. A museum video screen shows a reporter in Vietnam talking to a Marine who just put himself under enemy fire, risked his life, to retrieve a dead man. "What possessed you to go out and get that body?" "He's a Marine." "What do you mean?" "He's a Marine. I'll take care of him." Semper Fi, as we Marines say to each other

for the rest of our lives. It's short for Semper Fidelis, the Marine motto: Always faithful. Fighting their way back from the Chosin Reservoir in Korea -- exhausted, under fire, sick, wounded and frostbitten -- Marines walked so that their trucks could carry the dead, as if they believed that men die but Marines live forever, a bleak immortality akin to the Greeks' underworld; self-sacrifice but with none of the transcendence of martyrdom.

The point here is the admirable or at least intractable modesty – an arrogance of modesty -- that creates the Marine mystique as Marines know it and the museum shows it. The mystique drives the Marine Corps and preserves its rituals, most important among them being boot camp, which has not changed much in living memory, an initiation rite that begins with chaos and terror fomented by the rabid indignation of drill instructors at your trespass. It ends, months later, with a graduating platoon gliding across the drill field with the oblivious elegance of a ship sailing along a horizon.

The museum conveys the terror of the first days in boot camp by understatement. It plays the drill instructors' shouts (Louder! Louder! Look at the weapon! Shut your mouth!) at room-conversation volume and lets you amplify them in your mind. You wander through the museum's dark and noisy labyrinths -- the popping of helicopter blades, the artillery and machine-gun fire, bomb bursts, MOVE OUT! MOVE OUT!, landing craft engines grinding toward the beach of Iwo Jima, Bugs Bunny singing "Any bonds today?" in a WWII cartoon, and phrases floating through the air from a thousand recorded recollections: Now the Marines would get their chance like cattle in a slaughterhouse we shall land stench of rot. You see medals and weapons collections and mannequins (molded and placed by Staff Sgt. Sullivan) of Marines killing and being killed, and all the idiosyncratic relics, the old dog tags, a letter opener made from shrapnel, ammo boxes, a canteen with a bullet hole in it, a pinup girl, a straight razor, all with the banality of someone else's souvenirs.

There's no glory when you walk off a trembling CH-46 helicopter to find yourself marooned on Hill 881 South, which was a very hot landing zone for months near Khe Sanh, Vietnam, live bodies flying in on helicopters and dead ones flying out while mortar shells exploded, rats prowled behind the sandbags, and the Marines fired back at the mortars with 105mm howitzers like the one you see here with tires flattened by incoming shrapnel. The mystique goes deep. It provokes the fists thrown at or by sailors and soldiers in waterfront bars. It may instill the knack to be found in the lowest private for talking smack to the media, "telling sea stories," as Marines themselves say, and making civilians believe them. The Marine Corps is a cult, a tribe, a religious order. The mystique even prompts the occasional American male to lie about having been in the Marine Corps (as in the new novel by Jim Lehrer, a former Marine lieutenant, called "The Phony Marine"). If you were a Marine, those men make your flesh crawl with pity. You say: My God, if I could be a Marine, they could have been Marines; don't they know that? Perhaps they couldn't have. But so what? You were a Marine and they weren't, and that is all the difference. Listen up, people! That is all the difference. And that difference is what the museum is all about.











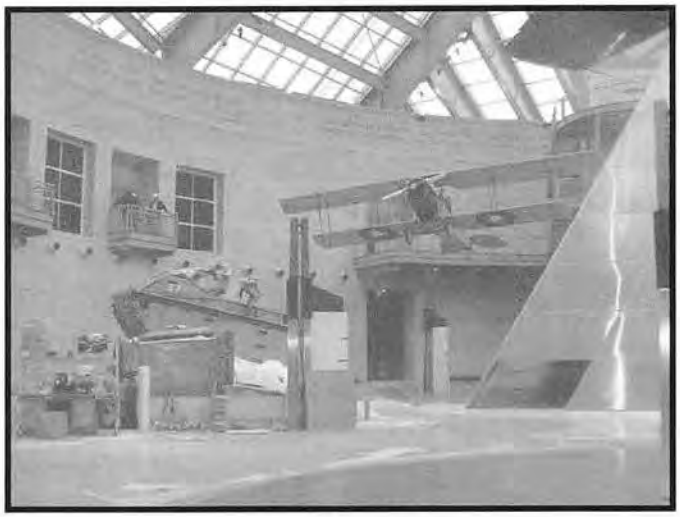





The National Museum of the Marine Corps, 18900 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Triangle, Va., is open daily except Christmas, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.
For information, go to
http://www.usmcmuseum.org/ or call 800-397-7585.



OUR MEMBERS STILL SERVING

Vietnam vets give out meals to 300 families

By Kirk Moore and Lauren O. Kidd

Asbury Park Press

TOMS RIVER - Thirty-five years ago, these men were carrying sandbags, ammunition, wounded comrades on stretchers. Tuesday, under a cold sun, Vietnam veterans passed out turkeys and bantering like the young warriors they once were.

"Nice pickup truck. Where'd you get it?"

"You know what they used to say: "How many Marines does it take to drive a truck? One to turn the key and two to push it.' "

Laughter rolled across the parking lot, along with carts of food bound for some 300 households in need. The annual project has grown since 1986, when the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 200 in Brick started by collecting food for a half-dozen families, recalled John P. Dorrity, director of the Ocean County Veterans Service Bureau.

"We do a lot with single mothers and veterans' families," said Dorrity, a former Army aviator who's worked for the veterans program since 1995 and brought the annual holiday food drive with him to the county office. "This is important. If we don't take care of the weakest links, we're nothing as a society."

About a dozen veterans turn out to help in the collection and distribution, and do their bits to bring the whole operation together. One man has friends in the trucking business who helped transport some 250 turkeys and food packages from the Food Bank of Monmouth-Ocean Counties.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars District 12 helps collect food, as does the American Legion, other veterans groups and a number of private donors, Dorrity said. Chuck Hogan of VVA Chapter 200 leaned against the bed of his pickup truck, which was loaded with bundles wrapped in supermarket bags. Canned peaches and boxes of Goya rice mixes bulged under the plastic.

Students at schools in Lacey, Toms River and Lakewood collect food, too, Hogan said. The distribution is set up with help from local veterans groups and churches. The group's most distant shipment is 30 turkeys and food packages distributed through the Vet Works office in Trenton, he said.

Meanwhile, members of Ocean County Hunger Relief will be picking up more than 600 microwavable Thanksgiving meals today that have been prepared by students of the Ocean County Vocational-Technical School in Brick. The full-course meals, which include turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and vegetables, will be given to "those we consider most vulnerable," said Carol Latif, executive director of Ocean County Hunger Relief.

The group will distribute the meals based on its master list of Ocean County motels where the homeless reside. Latif said the microwavable meals are essential because some people do not have a stove and cannot have a meal, even if they are given a full turkey.

Latif thanked those who have donated food for the holiday season, but wanted to remind donors that the needs of the hungry are "all year round." Food bank managers reported donations are fewer and food supplies are tighter than usual this year, Dorrity said.

Ocean County Hunger Relief also announced that Thursday, Thanksgiving meals will be served at the Shore Vineyard Church in Beachwood, the Church of the Epiphany in Brick, the Macedonia Baptist Church in Lakewood, the Village Lutheran Church

in Lanoka Harbor, Lacey, St. Martha Church in Point Pleasant, St. Gregory's in Point Pleasant Beach, Simon's Kitchen, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Parish Hall in Seaside Heights, and Jesus is Lord in Toms River.

At the veterans' food distribution, **John Pessoni** of Toms River and **Richie Mannes** of South Orange handed off the turkeys and food packets from the bed of a panel truck. Like most of the group, **Pessoni, a Marine veteran of the Khe Sanh siege in 1968, has been doing it for the better part of a decade now.**

"I'm serving as an apprentice," quipped Mannes, the newcomer. But he enjoys the charitable work. On Thanksgiving Day, he said, "I'll be at a soup kitchen in Newark."

MEMOIRS

WE GET PHOTOS

Photos submitted by John DiGaetano B Co 1/26

John was on the 30 March Patrol outside the wire where he was wounded for the second time, and medevaced to Japan for several months before returning to Vietnam.



John DeGaetano B Co 1/26









Bravo Company 1/26 Bunkers





C-130 Burning After Being Shot Down On Runway





John DiGaetano standing in bomb crater from Rocket which landed behind his bunker

MEMOIRS

By Jim Dalton
K CO 3/26

Near the middle of April, 1968, the siege was finally lifted. Word was the Air Cav had came up Highway 9 and were taking over Marine positions. We Marines were slated to move out of our positions and complete clearing the Khe Sanh area of the enemy. Kilo Company was to take Hill 881N, news that really made our ears prick up. While the prospect of going up 881N was a bit scary, Kilo Company had been sitting on our Hill, taking it, for two-and-a-half months. Now it was our turn to dish it out, and we weren't thinking at all kindly toward the NVA. Even better news, two other companies of the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines were going with us – Mike and Lima companies. The Corps had gotten it right, for once...gave the job to the men who'd earned it. We were a mite enthused.

Moving out involved several steps. It started when elements of 2/26 assaulted out from the KSCB toward our positions, a show we enjoyed immensely. Once they reached our Hill, and took over our positions, we were choppered over to Hill 800E, just adjacent to Hill 881S. From there we saddled up and began climbing towards the 881S trench line. We'd made it maybe about 3/4 of the way there when, "BOOM!" a large explosion sounded out from above the trench line. For a moment, I wasn't too concerned; then chunks of shrapnel started thumping into the leaf litter around us. I turned away, facing back downhill, and "Whump!" a goodly-sized chunk of steel hit me right in the back of my right knee. Took my leg right out from under me, and down I went.

Nanny, the Squad's resident Texan, was the man closest to me. He'd heard the thump, saw me go down, and then immediately scrambled over to check me out. Finding a hole in my pants leg, he whipped out his Kabar knife and slit the cloth, searching for the wound. There was a pause, a chuckle, then he said, "Man, you are one lucky S.O.B.!"

"What! Why!?"

A Corpsman was there by then, and, after a quick scan of my leg, pronounced, "Didn't even break the skin!" Incredulous, I craned around and discovered that the Corpsman was right. There was a welt, a bit bigger than a half-dollar but no blood. To me it was a real good news/bad news kind-of situation. My luck had, incredibly, held once again, but maybe I had just used up the absolute last of it. That thought had my head really spinning as they helped me back onto my feet and we completed our trek up to the trench line.

Kilo Company spent the night on 881S.With several Companies on the Hill, everybody managed to get all of four hours of uninterrupted sleep, an out-and-out luxury. We moved out at dawn, loaded for bear. We did our approach march in columns, carefully picking our way through a jungle blown to rags and tatters. It was eerie, very close to spooky there, especially when we found an unexploded bomb in our path. It was a Snake bomb, the type which had these large, rectangular, slotted fins, designed to pop out as the bomb cleared the aircraft and slow the thing enough to allow the plane to get clear of the blast zone. In this instance, the entire body of the bomb was imbedded in the soil, with only the fins visible, flush with the ground. Because of the tangled jungle wreckage, our only available path required every man in the Company to step over the thing. While it might not sound like much, nobody looked happy about taking that particular cautious step. As for myself, I discovered that my crotch can cringe independently.

We finally arrived at the base of 881N, peeled off the column into our assault lines, and tensed, steeling ourselves. After the kind of wait that ages a man years, arms were waved, orders were shouted, and we started moving uphill. It turned out that there were very few NVA on the hilltop, and they all died very quickly, each one with probably pounds of rounds in them. The only casualty we had that I know of was a Sergeant who suffered a broken finger by waving his hand behind a man cracking off a L.A.A.W. rocket. While everyone was just tickled pink about the general outcome of all this, the amount of NVA butt we did kick was miniscule compared to the amount we wanted to kick.

After policing-up the area, we humped back through that shattered jungle to Hill 800E, where we dug-in a perimeter for the night. Scuttlebutt buzzed through

the ranks as we dug our holes, all of it boiling down to, "We're getting out of here!" When anyone would eagerly quiz an officer or senior NCO about this line of thought, they wouldn't say, "No." But they did grin, which was as good as a confirmation in our almost frenzied minds. So we spent a very long night of anticipation there mostly sleepless, and collectively wanting the sun to rise.

Rise it finally did and we had our C-Rat breakfasts in a high state of dithering anticipation. After breakfast, the Squad Leaders were summoned over to our Lieutenant's hole to get the word. They didn't even have to speak when they returned, their smiles told it all. Even Slaybaugh had a real smile on his face, rather than his usual mean smirk. Their confirmation of great news put smiles on the faces of every man in the Company, something which hadn't happened for quite some time. Our Platoon, the 2nd, was damn-near ecstatic. The word was that we were slated to be the first to leave. Though our particular Squad was slated to be the last of the Platoon to board, we cheerfully allowed ourselves to be put through the rigmarole of being staged at the edge of the LZ and sorted into boarding sticks.

Anticipation reigned as every man's eyes avidly searched the skies, eager to be the first to spot our tickets out of there. At long last we heard the chop-chop sound of approaching rotors, then spotted four outright beautiful Banana Boats [CH-46s] winging our way. Eagerly we surged to our feet and edged forward toward the LZ, only to be crushingly disappointed a few moments later when the choppers suddenly broke-off their approach, then quickly disappeared. Everybody seemed to slump, like a day-old balloon, and the bulk of the Platoon ended up bunched up and milling in confusion. Slaybaugh, our Squad Leader, took one look at this mess, shook his head in disgust, and said: "You guys might as well just crap out. It'll take them at least a week to sort out that mess."

His statement made a lot of sense to us, since no grunt would choose to stand if they could sit down. So our entire Squad went to ground. I lay down almost like I was relaxing in a recliner, with my pack as a backrest, my M-79 ammo bags as armrests, and my hands clasped behind my helmet... the picture of ease and content. Suddenly I heard the LT's voice urgently shouting, "Spread out! Break it up!" Turning my head to the left, I saw him shove his way into the middle of the muddle, his arms spread wide, trying to physically force people to move... when, BANG! a large mortar round detonated at his feet!

I know it all happened in a split-second, but it seemed like I was watching it unreel nanosecond by nanosecond, extreme slow-motion, like time had hit a sudden swamp. I could see the instantaneous black dust ball, with a flash at the epicenter. I could see the Lieutenant's shredded body flipping backwards, spraying blood and flesh, obviously dead. I could see the bulk of the Platoon falling away from the center of the blast, looking like the bloody petals of some obscene flower...

Shock froze me there for a moment, then more mortars started landing. Rolling over onto my stomach, cowering at the slaps of concussion, I tried to melt into the earth as the barrage continued. After maybe a dozen rounds, there was a lull. In the sudden silence I heard the awful cries and groans of the wounded. An utterly ghastly sound that hit me deep, flinging me headlong into a complete blue panic, sending me scrambling away from the impact zone as more mortar rounds started coming in.

I crawled maybe 100 feet before I was able to stop my stampede. Looking back, I spotted a Corpsman moving through the continuing fire, heading toward the wounded men. Suddenly ashamed, I wiggled out of my gear and scurried after him. I caught up with him as he started tending to a Marine whose legs were riddled with shrapnel. The Corpsman looked up at me as I arrived and shouted, "Let's get him the hell out of here!" I nodded in instant agreement; we both grabbed a shoulder of the man's flak jacket, then, posthaste, dragged him out of the impact area and over the lip of the hill.

Once the casualty was in relative safety, I left the Corpsman to bandage him while I dashed back over the hilltop, intending to retrieve my gear, then return and provide protection for them. As I was returning to them, however, another Corpsman waved me over to him and the casualty he was frantically working on. As I knelt beside him, I could immediately see why the Doc was so concerned. The poor casualty was a complete mess. His entire body, was riddled with shrapnel, his face gouged and ruined, his right arm ending in a blackened stump halfway between

his wrist and elbow.

"We gotta get this guy outta here!" the Corpsman yelled. "He's in bad shape, so we gotta carry him. We'll need help!" Nodding, I quickly scanned the area and spotted another guy from my squad, Wissinger, wandering almost absently by. Jumping up, I collared him, pulled him over, and told him to lift the man by the legs while the Doc and I each took a shoulder. Together we hustled him off the hilltop to relative safety. As the Doc started working on the casualty again, I hovered nearby, ready to help in any way I could. It was then that the wounded man groaned, opened his eyes for a moment, and then passed out again. I knew those eyes!

"Oh my God, it's Tweedy!" I said, literally gagging with sorrow.

Tweedy was one of those guys who'd look like a teenager at 30. A baby-faced, almost beautiful kid, who's big, cornflower-blue eyes reminded everyone who saw them of a certain cartoon canary's. It just plain broke my heart to see those eyes set in that bloody, mangled face. Horrified, I turned away, sudden tears blurring my vision.

Several bad minutes later, the chop-chop sound of a helicopter pierced through my grief. It was close. Looking skyward, I saw the beautiful sight of a CH-46 hovering above us, the pilot looking directly at us.

"We gotta get him on that chopper!" I yelled. Springing to my feet, I quickly scoped out the area around us and spotted a slightly flattened part of the slope nearby. Using my M-79 as a pointer, I alerted the pilot to it and saw him nod in comprehension.

Carefully, oh so carefully, that pilot maneuvered his Banana Boat down and around. There wasn't enough room to simply land, so he had to put just his rear wheels down on that small flattened spot while keeping the nose in the air and the whole ship level. It was a stunning feat of airmanship, but that pilot did it and held it there as we scrambled to get aboard. Because of the slope, boarding was a bit of a project. The rear rotor's arc was dangerously close to the slope, nearly clipping the grass, so we couldn't simply run for the chopper's rear ramp; not without being turned into hamburger in the process. Instead, we had to run toward the nose, then back along the body of the chopper and get on the ramp from the side. Somehow we managed to do all that. The second we cleared the ramp, I saw the crew chief yell into his mike and the pilot immediately jerked that bird into the air. We were safe!

Our relief lasted only seconds. As we gently lowered Tweedy to the deck, he regained consciousness and promptly freaked completely out. The Corpsman, while trying to hold him down, whipped out an ampoule of morphine and attempted to inject it into Tweedy's left arm. But Tweedy, crazed, dazed, and in pain, was struggling too hard. Sickeningly, he was even beating on the Corpsman with the stump of his right arm. Without thinking, I jumped in to help; grabbed his stump and pinned his heaving body down as gently as I could... a few seconds that have haunted my nightmares for decades.

Once the Corpsman finally got the morphine into him, Tweedy passed out again, and I was able to collapse back onto the nylon-mesh bench seat of the chopper. Trying to relax, I glanced over at Wissinger, who was sitting next to me, staring into space, zonked out on horror. I noticed that he was holding his left arm in an odd way. Looking closer, I saw a bloody hole, about the size of a quarter, in the back of his left wrist. I showed him the wound, then, as he goggled at it in horror, pulled out a battle-dressing and slapped it on his wrist.

All of this had taken maybe three minutes to transpire, and I'd pretty well had it. I needed to relax, maybe light up a smoke, and try to calm the shakes. As I sat back, however, my left elbow bumped against the nylon mesh and I felt a sharp nip of pain. Lifting my arm, I discovered a thorn-like, blackened piece of shrapnel jutting maybe a half-inch out of my elbow. Disgusted and royally pissed, I yanked the thing out and flung it away from myself, then bummed a Band-Aid from the Doc.

The chopper flared in for a landing just after I got my Band-Aid on. We set down next to Charlie-Med, inside the main Khe Sanh perimeter. People with a stretcher were standing by, and they hustled on board the second our ramp touched down. All hands gently placed Tweedy on the stretcher, and then the bearers hustled him off the chopper and through the entryway of Charlie-Med and out of sight. As soon

as the rest of us had debarked, that chopper was back in the air, barely waving a farewell. There were more wounded to rescue.

About then, with events suddenly slowing to subsonic, I finally had a few moments to fall apart... and promptly did. I became convinced that Tweedy wasn't going to make it, that he needed a priest. Just as I was about to run off half-cocked, I noticed someone hustling toward the hospital. To my complete amazement, I spotted a cross on his collar. It was a Chaplain. I told him about Tweedy in a rush of words, begging for him to help the guy. He didn't hesitate. Giving my shoulder a quick, comforting squeeze, the Padre said, "Don't worry, son, I'll see to him.", then hustled through the door into Charlie-Med.

That moment of comfort didn't last very long at all. A few minutes later, chopper after chopper began shuttling in, bearing the bloody bodies of what used to be my Platoon. It was a time of terrible sorrow for me, watching my friends, hurt and bleeding, being carried into Charlie-Med. It was like finding out your brother was in a car crash, multiplied by more than twenty. I can only describe it all as... heartbreaking.

Eventually, some order was reestablished and Kilo Company gathered itself and moved across the airstrip into a trench line near where the plateau dropped off. This section was manned by an ARVN Ranger unit, not a man of whom had ever heard the phrase, "Police up the area." The trench was half full of rotten garbage...not litter, garbage...and smelled like a dump. Rats were scrambling in profusion all over the place, bold enough to cavort in the daylight.

As we settled into this mess, we at last had time to take stock of ourselves. It wasn't good. Our Platoon now consisted of one seriously under strength Squad, barely two fire teams. Kilo Company, already woefully short of men, was no longer considered operational. We were out of business.

A pall of despair settled over us as darkness fell. I was in a bad way. Along with my load of grief, it occurred to me that I'd been hit twice in the past several days. My luck had held, but did I have any left? I was still in Khe Sanh, and seriously doubting that I'd ever get out in one piece.

Author's Note

When I recently saw my first copy of Red Clay ever, I had quite a shock. I recognized a face I had only seen once 38 years ago. It was Padre I had met outside Charlie Med on that awful, 15th of April day in 1968. The name under the picture identified him as the Rev Ray Stubbe. I have since written to Padre Stubbe, thanking him for the comfort he gave me and my dying buddy so long ago. Someday, soon, I'd like to shake his hand.

One of the people I contacted after I received my copy of the Khe Sanh Membership Directory was Dennis Mannion – Kilo's arty FO. While we were talking, I learned that my Lieutenant and he were close friends back on Hill 861. He knew the Lieutenant's name. Ashamed, I had to admit that I did not. I could not recall ever having heard it. To me he was simply the LT. When I talked with him, I had always addressed him by his rank or I called him Sir. Mannion understood completely, and then told me his full name – Benjamin S. Fordham who went by his middle name of Steve.

Learning his name seemed to heal a decades old hole in my heart. Lt. Fordham had been my platoon commander for months. I had liked him. He was a nice guy, a good officer, and by God, a fine Marine. He died in front of my eyes while trying to save the lives of his men. The grief of it has echoed in my mind for all these years. But now, knowing his name offers me a great deal of comfort. I can finally honor him...by name. I'm proud to have known him.

Ed Note: Beautiful Descriptive Prose.

MEMOIRS

MONSOON

By Gene Weresow

Monsoon season in Vietnam can be difficult to deal with. Especially when your job description involves a lot of outdoor activity. I would estimate that the Marine Corps grunt in a full thirteen-month tour (if he makes it that long) spends 99% of his time outdoors. Most nights are spent in a hole he has dug in the ground. But there are nights when he does not

even get the luxury of a hole. This is the story of one such night.

It was a typical monsoon night, visibility was poor, the night was cold with seemingly never ending rain. Trudging through the jungle mud was even more demanding when visibility required that you maintain physical contact with the man in front of you. So it was this night that required each man in the column to reach out and put his hand on the shoulder of the Marine in front of him. This night you would not hear the squad leaders and platoon commanders barking out orders to "keep spread out". Mike Company of the 26th Marines moved out at night fall for an unnamed village somewhere in a part of South Vietnam know as the Co Bi-Than Tan Valley. This was part of Operation Chinook. Our mission like so many times before was "search and destroy." We were to enter a village that was suspected of being used by the VC. Not that the village like many others was sympathetic to the VC, but it was being used none the less by the Viet Cong to supply and unwillingly recruit additional fighters for their cause. Mike Co. was tasked to go into the village, relocate the local populous to a new location, and deny the enemy of anything of use to them. Food, shelter, recruits and such. Many of these villages were used as a base of operation for the enemy.

We marched in this monsoon muck for what seemed to be all night. Noise discipline was none existent as the beating of the constant rain absorbed any sound we made. So we humped for miles it seemed, arm to shoulder. Physically and mentally the night had taken its toll on me and many others. It's not that we were not able to sustain the march. We were in good shape and this march under normal conditions would have been a piece of cake, even with the full packs, full compliment of ammo and three days rations. I began to think that I should have gotten rid of the extra set of utilities and socks I had stashed in my pack. Early in our tour we learned that one should not wear skivvies to prevent chaffing in the jungle environment. Later at Khe Sanh I would find out that luxuries like extra utilities and socks were hard to come by. At Khe Sanh the clothes would literally rot off our body. The M-14's we carried were heavier than the M-16's we were later issued and on this night it seemed that the lesser weight of the rifle and ammo would have been welcomed. As I reflect on it now the M-14 was a much better weapon in these conditions. The 30 weight motor oil I used made for trouble free operation of my weapon, were as the M-16 needed a lot more tender loving care to ensure its effectiveness when the need arose. Still, we were Marines and there was no excuse for a weapon that did not fire when needed. A clean weapon was essential if one had any hope of survival.

Reaching the village, we waited for daybreak. We scooped out the area once daylight came. We moved in and confirmed through the village elders that the VC were indeed active in the area. We found no other evidence of their presence. The village was made up of mostly elderly woman, men and children. Some were in need of medical attention. Corpsman soon became busy attending to their medical needs. The rest of us stood security and searched the village. The plan was to relocate these people to a newly built relocation area and destroy the village. As we gathered them up the call went out for choppers to fly them out. The weather was so poor that all air traffic was grounded.

During monsoon season visibility was poor even on the ground. I could not imagine aircraft flying even in the daylight hours. As so often happens in the Marine Corps we were to hump it out to a road where vehicles would pick up the villagers and transport them to their new home. They did not want to leave the only home they had ever known. I felt a sense of real pity for these people. How, I wondered, could people live under such meager conditions? There was no electricity, no phones, no amenities of any kind that we had at home. It seemed that they were living in the dark ages, by our standards they were. I came to realize that if this is all they ever knew it is the whole world to them and most of them had never been very far from their home. So it was natural for them to be upset about leaving, even with the promise of better homes.

As often as not with the Marines the order of the day was hurry up and wait. We hurried to get the people ready to go, to round up all their belongings, which by my standard should have been all earmarked for the dumpster. Packed up, saddled up and ready. We then sat around for a couple hours until the brass figured out what the next move would be. The word finally came down to saddle up and moves out. Among the villagers were a few poor souls who could not make the hump to the road without help.

There was one old man that we had to carry because of his poor health, I don't know what he suffered from, but knew that this guy would need to be carried the whole way. As the march began, we left the burning huts and the dead live stock. I felt sad. I could see in their faces the fear and uncertainty of leaving their lifelong home as they watched it burn. The man we carried reminded me of my Dad. Not that he looked like him, but I guessed his age at about the same as Dad, and he was slight of build like him. was really sad for him and the others. We carried this man and others for what seemed to be ten miles, often on our backs. The monsoon rain had not let up and the going was made even harder by the additional weight. The trip to the road took longer than expected and the transport was postponed for another day. We spent another night in the monsoon rain, I had no idea where we were and sure hoped the powers that be knew more than I did.

The night was uneventful. No enemy were encountered. As dawn brought a new day, we loaded and sent the villagers on their way. I found out that the man I helped carry on my back did not survive the night. It was yet another sad moment in an ever more complex war.

Mike Company 3/26, completed another search and destroy mission. We searched for the enemy, did not find him, we destroyed a village and maybe managed to help kill an aging man. Should we have gone into that village? Did we do those people any good? Would the aging man and all the villagers been better off if we had just left him and the others alone? Another successful search and destroy complements of the USMC. We did our job, but did we do any good I wondered? It was another one of many sad days in South Vietnam.

MEMOIRS

Christmas At Khe Sanh

By Craig W. Tourte

The Marine Corps Combat Base at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam was located in one of the most isolated sections of the country and a long, lonely, treacherous way from any combat support. Someone once said: "If you are at Khe Sanh, you are nowhere." Initially supported by just a few thousand men, it often lacked the basic necessities of electricity, clean water and adequate washing and bathing facilities. In the monsoon months the Khe Sanh base was a muddy mess. There were few visitors even before the Siege, other than the occasional professional athlete, or B movie star who would make the very dangerous journey to spend just a few hours, staying near the Headquarters Complex, not venturing to the increasingly dangerous hills.

I grew up watching the old black and white newsreels of Bob Hope visiting the troops during the various wars and conflicts. In the early 1960's I would watch Bob visiting the troops in Korea, Da Nang and Saigon. Thousands of troops would sit or stand around a large raised stage, which contained Bob and a full orchestra with beautiful dancing girls. Generals and various field grade officers were present and the troops all had big smiles on their faces. The laughter would thunder at Bob's jokes about the various politicians and Generals involved in the conflict, some were even present during the show. Everyone came to see Bob and his Holiday show. A good time was had by all.

I spent over 8 months on the Khe Sanh Combat Base and went through most of the seasons including Thanksgiving, Christmas and the Siege. Not once did I see Bob or any other celebrity visit the base with good reason. Khe Sanh was a dangerous place and if you managed to get there, "You were nowhere." When I rotated back home I was asked numerous time if I had ever seen Bob Hope. My mouth would drop, unable to explain the depravation I and my fellow Marines had gone through for so long. My response was most often just a smile and a simple, "NO."

I thought about what it would have been like if Bob Hope had brought his holiday show up to Khe Sanh. To that dark, dank very dangerous plateau way out in the middle of nowhere. I closed my eyes and thought for a few minutes and decided I'd have Bob and his show visit Khe Sanh during Christmas of 1967. Sorry if you missed it. We all did.

What a joyous time we all had at the Khe Sanh Combat Base during Christmas of 1967. Besides the weather just being down right pleasant, Bob Hope and Ann Margaret flew in on a couple of C-130's. The Seabees built this big stage over by the ammo dump. We had lights and everything. First Battalion of the 26th Marines went up into the mountains and

cut down this huge pine Christmas tree and a tank retriever went out and carried it back. It was placed into the ground over by headquarters. I think some USO guys came up from Saigon and covered the tree with lights and placed a big star on the top. You could see it from miles away. The guys on the hills said it was a beautiful site to behold. Folding chairs were placed out for several thousand. The troops were brought in from the field, down from the hills, and out of the trenches to enjoy the show. Thank goodness the enemy did not select this time to attack, because no one was on guard duty. I guess it was just a sign of respect by the NVA not to attack during this very special time of year.

I cannot tell you how lovely the backup singers and dancers were who accompanied Ms. Margaret. Her voice sounded as sweet as a dove in June. I am embarrassed to describe the short skirts Ms. Margaret and the dancers wore. We were all given warm long johns and gloves as Christmas presents from the USO. Although these items had been left over from the Korean War, they were still much appreciated. Food was flown in from Da Nang, big hams and turkeys with lots of gravy. We were all able to eat as much as our small stomachs could hold. I should not reveal this; and it may have even been against regulations, but there was a hosted bar and we were able to have as much adult beverage as we could consume. All the guys were very careful and responsible with their drinking, which made our Colonel proud. Mr. Hope was particularly funny when he told that joke about the General and the flower girl. We all laughed so hard we cried. When Santa flew in on the helicopter we all yelled in excitement like little children.

A couple of Generals came up from Saigon, they were quite impressive standing up on the big wooden stage in their uniforms with all of their shinny stars and ribbons, hero's all from wars of old. We could tell how proud they all were of us at Khe Sanh. President Johnson sent a representative. He stood up on stage in a bright blue suit with a white shirt and red tie and told us what an important job we were all doing and that he had a personal message to us from the President himself. Then he said something I'll never forget; he said the President of the United States said to all of us at Khe Sanh, "Endeavor To Persevere." Although I did not understand the meaning at the time and it sounded like something out of a Clint Eastwood movie, it was inspiring just the same.

The next morning the Donut Dolly girls who had come with the show gave all of the guys donuts with lots of hot coffee. It was just more than most of us could eat. We were all sad to see Mr. Hope and Ms. Margaret, the big band, the singers and dancers; the donut girls, Santa, the chefs; the President's representative, and the generals leave us. What a great time we all had. Sorry if you missed it. Oh well, that's war...and one more thing, we persevered.

I have now reflected on that period of time, Christmas at Khe Sanh 1967 and it appears that I have misspoke and that my recall of those events as stated in the story above are in error. I fear it all may have just been wishful thinking and a figment of my imagination. As you who were at Khe Sanh during Christmas 1967 well know, Bob Hope and Ann Margaret never came to Khe Sanh during Christmas of that year nor any other year nor did any other USO entertainer. The weather was poor with rain and fog 24 hours a day as it always was during that time of year. There was no stage with lights built by anyone near the ammo dump, or a tall pine Christmas tree (in Vietnam) with lights seen a mile away placed next to headquarters. No tank retrievers on the base. No singers or dancers in little skirts. No ham or turkey with gravy. No open bar with unlimited amounts of adult beverages. The troops never came out of the field, off the hills, or out of the trenches. We did not sing Christmas carols Santa did not visit us, but hill 950 was probed by the NVA on Christmas eve. No Generals came. No Presidential representative in a blue suit with a message taken from a Clint Eastwood movie not yet filmed. No presents of warm long johns and gloves left over from the Korean War given to us by the USO and no jokes told by Mr. Hope about a General and a flower girl. And, we did not laugh until we cried.

I'm sorry. I wish all of those things had been true, but they were not. No my friends, it was a Christmas best forgotten and the last Christmas for so many who were on or near Khe Sanh in 1967 just before the long Siege began. We didn't have much then. It was a miserable time for us all, but I am thankful for what I now have. I think often of those who are no longer with us. I remember them to this day. I'm thankful now for every Christmas I have had since.

MEMOIRS

VIETNAM WAR VETERANS ARE REUNITED
The Sandersville Progress
By Curt Parsons
Contributing Writer

In 1968 Marine Corporal Frank Archer of Sandersville and fellow Marine Jimmy Dalton were airlifted to safety from the Battle of Khe Sanh in Vietnam. It was the end of their tour of duty, but they left behind buddy Joseph Harrigan who had about four months of duty remaining. It was only this year, 38 years after leaving Vietnam, that Archer was sure Harrigan had made it back to the states.

Archer and Harrigan were tank mates during the Battle of Khe Sanh. Dalton was in the same platoon but was assigned to a different tank. Archer recalls U. S. troops as being surrounded and vastly outnumbered by the North Vietnamese. Because of enemy fire, "everything flown in had to be air dropped," said Archer who at different times served as loader, gunner and driver of his tank. Harrigan was the tank commander.

Archer recently contacted the *Sandersville Progress* and spoke about his joining the Marines and about the Vietnam War. "When I joined the Marine Corps out of high school I wanted to serve my country," said Archer who ended up being sent to Vietnam. Archer was wounded in 1967 prior to the Battle of Khe Sanh. He spent several months recovering off shore on a navy hospital ship, before returning to the battlefield.

Archer said, when it came time to leave Khe Sanh there was "so much fire fighting and shooting going on," that it took several tries before he was able to climb into a hovering helicopter. Only after boarding the helicopter did Archer realize Dalton had also made it aboard. Although opinions were mixed regarding our Country's involvement in the conflict between North and South Vietnam, Archer said he was unaware of opposition to the war until he returned home. "I just thought that everybody was supposed to serve their country," said Archer.

Both Archer and Dalton were discharged in 1969 from Quantico, Va. It was the last time the two saw each other. Archer got married a short time later and took a job with the Georgia State Fire Marshals Office.

This past spring Joseph Harrigan contacted Archer from his home in Pennsylvania after spotting his name in ***Red Clay,*** a Battle of Khe Sanh veteran's publication. Harrigan told Archer he had talked with Dalton, who is from Virginia, but is now living in Macon. It seems that Harrigan and Dalton were looking for Archer and he was looking for them. The three have talked separately with each other and plan to meet face-to-face in Washington D.C. in July at a convention of Khe Sanh veterans.

According to the on-line encyclopedia *wikipedia,* the Battle of Khe Sanh was a "clear tactical victory for the U.S, "but a debatable strategic victory. The encyclopedia goes on to say that the Khe Sanh base was abandoned by US troops in June of 1968 because of a change in strategy.

INCOMING

A FITTING TRIBUTE
By James "Jimbo" Wodecki

On Monday November 13, 2006, Jim Spear USAF, Bill East USMC, and my self gave interviews about assault weapons, booby traps and artillery, used in the Vietnam War. John Culbertson author of "Arizona Territory" a sniper with 2/5 and another KSV Boyd Barclay (Captain Hook) National Commander 98-99 of the Purple Heart Association were also there to be interviewed. These interviews were held in Arlington Texas by the Discovery channel for an upcoming new Television Show called "Flashback".

I saw it as a chance to let out the anger in me for the Marines who died in the Hill Fights of 1967. They will be remembered. I informed the interviewers that the Colt weapons company and politicians should be held accountable for the disaster that followed the issuance of M-16 garbage rifles to our troops. That piece of junk jammed constantly from the poor quality of gunpowder used in the ammunition when it first was issued. Marines were found shot in the back by the NVA on the Hills 861 and 881. They had also been stabbed in the back by our leaders. You will have to watch the show for the rest of my story. Since I was never under NVA artillery fire

Jim and Bill gave interviews on that subject.

On 15 November, the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall arrived in Garland TX. I left a copy of the Battalion of Kings and a Poetry book, at the Wall so others could read the heroics of these men KIA at Khe Sanh, and the softer side of our thoughts in our poetry book. I discovered Colonel Don "Doc" Ballard was going to be guest speaker at the dedication ceremonies. I wondered what we could do for the dedication and those Corpsmen and Medics who never received the "DOC" Medal we had given to members of the Khe Sanh Veterans. I then wrote another citation similar to those we had issued. With a few changes to reflect all who had served and died in Vietnam.

Attending the ceremonies on 18 November, were Congressman Sam Johnson and his wife Shirley. Sam is a decorated war hero, whose awards include two Silver Stars, two Legions of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and one Bronze Star with "V" for Valor, two Purple Hearts, four Air Medals, and three Outstanding Unit Awards. During the Vietnam War, Johnson flew F-4s. While flying his 25th combat mission in 1966, he was shot down over North Vietnam. He spent nearly seven years as a prisoner of war, half of that time in solitary confinement. Johnson recounts the details of his POW experience in his autobiography, "Captive Warriors."

Also attending the ceremony was Congressman Jeb Hensarling, Texas State Representative Joe Driver and Ann Herd, past Gold Star Mothers President, Dorothy Shafernocker (Momma knockers) who's son died while with Sea wolfs helicopter in Vietnam. Dorothy can always be seen at the moving wall. In her younger years she even trucked it all over the country.

Colonel Donald "Doc" Ballard MOH and Chuck Wright USMC were there as guest speakers. Chuck or Charlie Brown as he prefers, is leading the way for a National Memorial for Corpsmen and Medics killed in Vietnam. Our own Billy Martin was there representing the Marine Corps League. My wife PJ and I represented the Khe Sanh Veterans.

There were veterans from all wars, including WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Kosovo, Desert Storm and Desert Shield, Afghanistan and Iraq. There were young men and women in the ROTC also attending. The senior citizens center where it was held is a city memorial with benches on the grounds with names of Garland Texas Heroes from all wars.

The colors were presented by the Disabled Veterans of America. Songs were sung by Michael Perry, and we all joined in. Sam Johnson walked slowly to the stage to speak first. What a great man still serving his country. Charlie Wright informed the participants of the actions surrounding the MOH being awarded to Doc Ballard. Doc Ballard spoke of the differences in the MOH between service branches. He found humor on a bleak day and even got in a few jabs at the Marines. It was a nice speech very politically incorrect. Doc said he wasn't running for any office so he could say what ever he wanted.

During my speech I informed the crowd that the Khe Sanh Veterans presented the first Doc medal to Don Ballard, in Dallas TX in 2004. Fittingly the last one cast should recognize all Corpsmen, Medics, Doctors and Medical personnel who died in Vietnam. We had a little ceremony with me reading the citation. Donald E. Ballard Medal of Honor recipient Presented the "Doc" Medal. Colonel. Ballard thanked all of the Vietnam Veterans and Families and friends gathered for recognizing these special "Docs," these **Men of Honor.**

Doc and Ann Herd placed it by the wall to be put in a museum as all mementos are when left at the Wall. It was all video taped and shown on the local TV channel 16 in Garland .I was promised a CD of the events.

PJ and I had Doc Ballard and Joanie over for dinner at our home in Lucas. We watched football and I Barbequed. Doc Ballard informed me that there was another MOH recipient from the Korean War who lived in Lucas. This came as a shock since only 10 people reside in Lucas. It was a fun and relaxing week. Three different shows will be on Discovery Channel and one on Channel 16.

The Members of the **KHE SANH VETERANS** Association takes great pleasure in presenting the **"DOC"** Medal to:

all Corpsman, Medics and Doctors, who saved thousands of lives during the in Vietnam War. Of the 58,168 names listed on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. 2,096 are Corpsmen and Medics. Many thousand more would be listed here if it were not for these brave men and women.

For extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of their duties in action against the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces in the Republic of Vietnam This Medal is cast in Honor of you "DOC" .Throughout the Vietnam War, imbued with an unrelenting combat spirit and initiative and undeterred by heavy hostile artillery, mortar and small arms fire, under extremely difficult terrain, incessant heat and monsoon rains, the Docs were there, saving lives. Thank You "Doc" from all of the Khe Sanh Veteran members.

Presented at this Vietnam Veterans "Moving Wall", Garland, Texas.
November 18th 2006



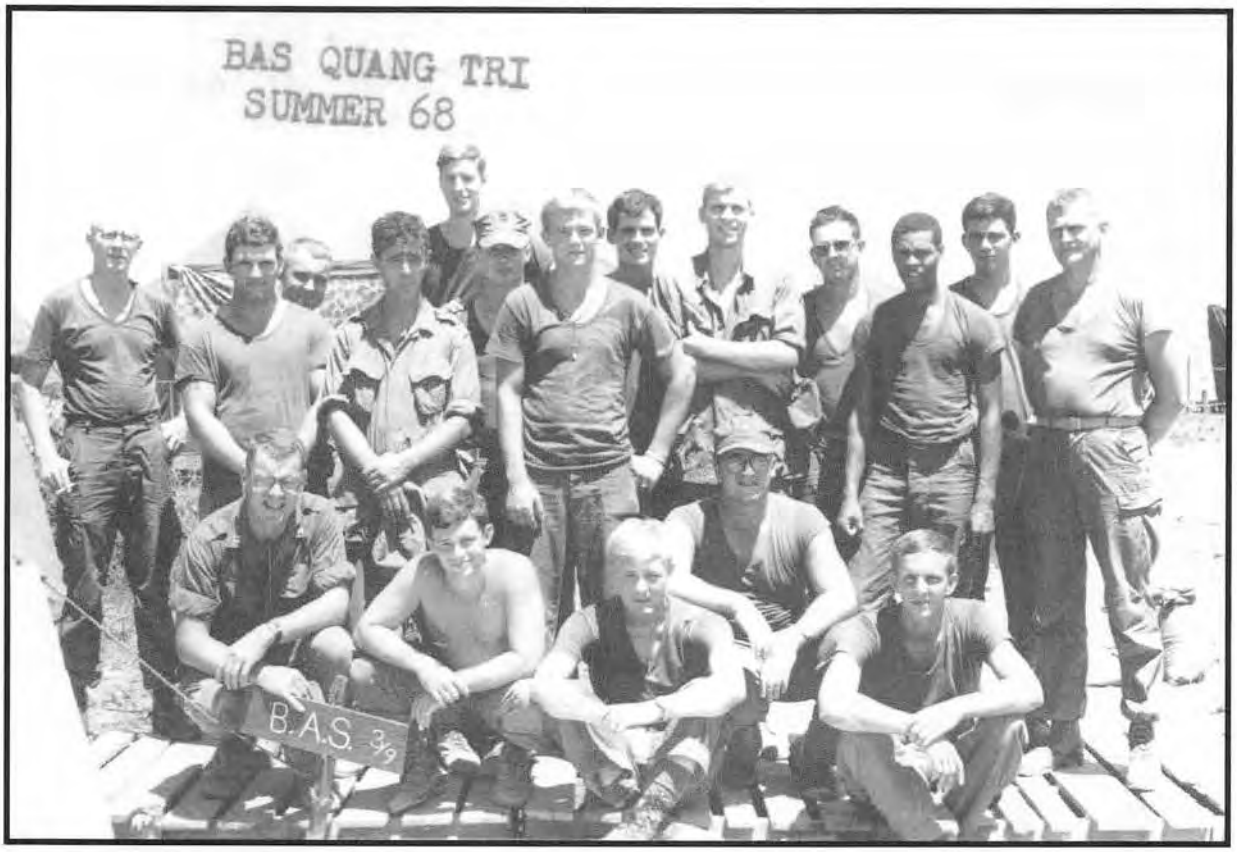
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INCOMING

OLD VIETNAM "GEEZERS" PARTICIPATE IN TRIATHON

Vietnam Veterans David O'Toole and Bobby Pagliotta complete an Iron Man Triathlon, held in Panama City Florida, on 4 November 2006. The event consisted of three events; 112 Mile Bike Ride, 2.4 Mile Swim and 26.2 Mile run. David finished in 14 Hours. Bobby Pagliotta is a disabled Marine who served with Delta Company 1/4 at Con Thien. David Served at Khe Sanh with B Btry 1/13

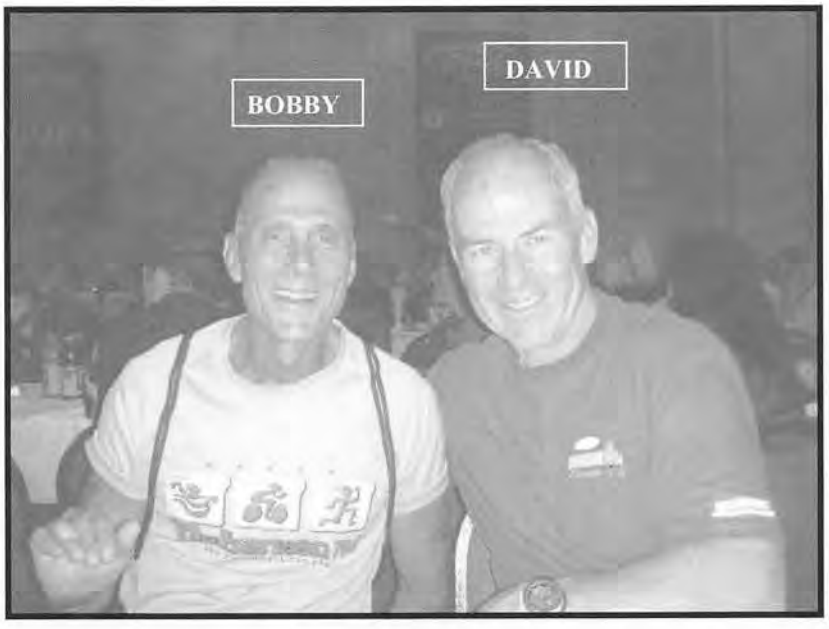

PUBLISHER NOTE:

The following is a follow up to the article on page 37 "Stolen Valor Act moves Through Congress" and why it is an important piece of legislation.

FBI agents have arrested a St. Louis businessman who they say posed as a highly decorated Marine Major even though he never served in the Corps. Forty-eight-year-old Michael Weilbacher was arrested while attending a local Marine Corps League meeting. Federal authorities say he was spotted earlier this month at another event, the Marine Corps Annual Birthday Ball, wearing several distinguished medals.

"He was wearing the Navy Cross, two Silver Stars, four Bronze Stars and just about every medal in the book," said Major William G. Dragan, who attended the event and told ABC News that he immediately became suspicious of Weilbacher. "He boasted of getting his Navy Cross by leading a secret mission against drug cartels in Colombia, which seemed very strange to me," Dragan said.

Weilbacher's girth also raised suspicion, Dragan said. "He is massively overweight, something like 400 pounds, and yet he claimed he had just left the Marines, which did not add up because he could never meet USMC physical standards," Dragan said. Federal authorities say there is no record of Weilbacher ever serving in the Marines. Weilbacher was charged under a federal law that makes it illegal to wear Armed Forces medals without being authorized. The charge carries a penalty of six months in prison and/or a fine of $50,000.

A bill currently before Congress, "The Stolen Valor Act of 2005," would also make it against the law to make verbal or written fraudulent claims of having been awarded medals or decorations.

FBI agent Tom Cottone Jr., who has investigated more than 200 cases of imposters wearing military medals, says, "They do it to feed their own egos and gain instant respect and admiration." "The imposters also attempt to enhance their careers and achieve financial gain," Cottone says. "There are probably thousands of individuals currently wearing unearned medals and decorations and thousands more making false claims of receiving military awards. "Weilbacher was released on bond today after an initial appearance before a federal magistrate. He is scheduled to be arraigned in federal court Dec. 7. He could not be reached for comment.

A Former Marine Sergeant Gary Lakis, who boasted of a chest full of medals was exposed on World News Tonight as having never seen combat or won the medals he wore on his uniform. He was investigated by both the FBI and the Defense Department's Criminal Investigative Service. But, the U.S. Attorney's office in San Diego did not prosecute the case.

As for Lakis, investigators say he had moved to Australia during the time he was under investigation.

Lakis had been awarded a $66 million government contract to enhance security at U.S. Navy bases on the west coast and in Hawaii. But Pentagon records obtained by ABC News showed that Lakis never saw combat and never received the medal he wore.

Publisher Note: See Page 69 For Result

"LESS WE FORGET"
Article Leatherneck July 1968
"USMC 11"

By John Martin

The Marines who manned the isolated base at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, needed help. The members of the 26th Marine Regiment and its supporting units were surrounded by estimated tens of thousands of North Vietnamese regulars. For 77 days, commencing with the first heavy enemy bombardment on January 21, 1968, the Marines had been under the constant threat of an all out enemy attack. The only supply route was by air and, in landing and taking off, several fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters had been destroyed by enemy artillery.

But no one was sitting idly by during the crisis. In addition to the Khe Sanh Marines' own reply from the artillery pieces of the 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, U. S. aircraft strafed, bombed and blasted enemy strongholds in the surrounding hills. On April 1, Operation Pegasus was initiated with the mission of clearing the land supply route to Khe Sanh and easing the pressure on the Marines who were holding it. Route #9 stretches from Dong Ha in the east, through Ca Lu and Khe Sanh, and eventually to the Laotian border. From Dong Ha to Ca Lu the road

was clear for convoys. But from Ca Lu to Khe Sanh it ran along the twisting and picturesque Quang Tri River and then over the mountainous hills to Khe Sanh. And ever since the enemy had planted an ambush on the road, January 13, 1968, the area had been considered hostile territory and the lifeline to Khe Sanh had been cut off from U. S. traffic. Removing the enemy forces from that area was the first objective of Pegasus.

After B-52 strikes and Marine artillery had saturated the hills adjacent to the road, the U. S. Army's First Air Cavalry Division began to sweep the terrain above the Route #9, moving toward Khe Sanh. The Marine phases of the penetration began with the First Marine Regiment, composed of its own 1st and 3d Battalions and the 2d Battalion from the Third Marines. They moved directly through the valley, clearing out enemy positions which had escaped the onslaught of the air and artillery strikes.

Almost directly in the wake of the First Marines, the 11th Engineer Battalion began their work on the road. The Marine engineers had been given until April 12 to fulfill their mission: To improve and widen the road to accommodate traffic to Khe Sanh and, where necessary, to erect bridges capable of supporting the heavy vehicles which would soon be moving up and down the road. Although the road bore the designation of Route #9, the 11th Engineers quickly posted their trademark signs as fast as they moved up the road. The signs, unofficially, renamed the 18 miles of winding highway "USMC 11."

The 3d Platoon from the 3d Bridge Company kicked off the engineering operation when they began putting up the first bridge, April 1. They were succeeded by Alpha Company, Bravo Company and Delta Company of the engineers, all of whom played a curious game of leapfrog in opening the road and building the bridges. According to 1stLt Duncan Hoffman, executive officer, Alpha Company, as soon as the road was cleared far enough ahead one company of engineers would begin work on a bridge. Then, as quickly as another site was open, a second company would leapfrog the construction at the first site to begin work farther down the line. The pace quickened from there.

The 11th Engineers provided bridges at 18 crossings, including several supplementary bridges called "by-passes," to complete the project by April 11, one day ahead of their deadline. Commencing with Bridge 9/17 (the 17th bridge on Route #9 and the first bridge past Ca Lu), they worked their way up to the Rao Quan Valley which precedes the hill route to Khe Sanh and planted Bridge 9/34 at the bottom of that valley. The going was nearly always rough, the dust gathering on the Marines' sweat-soaked bodies like insects on flypaper. But one thing which added speed to the engineers' efforts was the fact that the French had worked along the same route years before during the French-Indochina War. Although the N.V.A. had blown up all the remaining French bridges during their activities of the past year, the sound masonry abutments still remained in most cases and these provided a tailor-made foundation upon which the Marines could improve.

Even this, however, was not always possible. In several cases, at Bridge 9/34 for example, the French supports were too far apart to allow the engineers to construct a practical bridge in limited time. In these cases, by-passes were constructed and the French abutments were turned into guard posts or used as parking spots for tanks. The engineers constructed the bypasses by first positioning several large cylindrical steel culverts lengthwise in the river bed, allowing the water to flow through them. The culverts were then packed into place with numerous sandbags and covered with tons of dirt from dump trucks. Bulldozers carved out a supplementary road leading to the by-pass and smoothed over the dirt on top of the by-pass to form a driving surface.

In addition to the by-passes which were constructed at all sites where a conventional "bulk" bridge was impractical, by-passes were also set up alongside the places where there were bulk bridges. Further, at a site where only a by-pass could be built, two by-passes were made. This served a twofold purpose. First, the by-passes allowed an easier means of crossing for heavier equipment, such as tanks. Second, they imposed a double challenge to any enemy sneaking in to attempt to blow up one of the bridges.

More security came with the Marines of Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, Third Marines. Men like PFC Richard Miller and PVT Richard Farnsworth were strategically detailed along the road at every bridge site to set up bunkers as guard posts and to defend the bridges if an attack materialized. Another obser-

vation post against enemy activity was "The Rock Pile." This imposing rocky crag sits along "USMC 11" and the Marines who man it have an excellent view of several of the bridges near Ca Lu. The guard duty was made easier, in places. Many of the bridges were built as little as 75 to 100 meters apart. Miles wound out between others.

Problems, of course, were bound to occur as the road work progressed. At severely cratered. Here, explosives had to be used to dislodge more dirt and the excess was then pushed around by the bulldozers to fatten up the road. One factor which aided the dozers in their quick improvements on the road was the old surfacing laid by the French. In only a few places could the hard surface still be seen through the layer of brown dust which now covers the road and clouds up behind each passing vehicle. And, elsewhere, although parts of it had been broken up by artillery and other spots had crumbled from long use, the hard chunks still provided an excellent foundation upon which the 11th Engineers could build.

With the old abutments still standing and the road surface still evident, further earmarks of another era were found in abandoned French bunkers alongside the road. It was obvious that Route #9 had played a significant part in the history of the struggles of South Vietnam. One of the most vivid and tragic sites of French activity is present in the vicinity of Bridge 9/34, spanning the Rao Quan River deep in the valley of the same name. The Rao Quan River is a tributary to the Quang Tri River. None of the 18 bridges, in fact, crossed the Quang Tri itself, but spanned the streams which lead into it.

Evidence of French attempts to bridge the Rao Quan lie within 150 meters of the present 9/34. At one point, the river is still somewhat bridged by the twisted wreckage of a now rusted steel suspension framework which was blasted from its high supports, 50 feet above the river bed, by the enemy many years ago. Close by, a cement bridge with steel reinforcing cables protruding from its broken body, also lies in bits and chunks in the river where it met the same fate as its metal counterpart.

A third French bridge was never completed. Its supports jut out from both sides of the enclosing hills but the signs are apparent that the work was suddenly abandoned before completion. Why, no one seems to know. The Marine version of 9/34 is a floating bridge which consists of a wooden platform resting across four rubber pontoon-type floats. The floats were heli-lifted in by the Army's CH-54 "Sky Crane."

Cooperation between the Marines and the Army had been outstanding all through Pegasus, and the 11th Engineers received a special commendation from the Commanding General of the First Air Cavalry Division for their work on the road. Army helicopters were used on other bridges too. Bridge 9/28, according to Major Joseph C. Thorp, 11th Engineers S-2 and S-3 officer, was fitted with a 30-foot platform atop the old French abutments. Bridges 9/31 and 9/33 both received 38-foot, four-inch spans. In each case, the bridges were lowered by the helicopter while Marine engineers on the ground guided the heavy platform into position with guy lines. But the action wasn't all on the bridges. Pfc Kevin Rooney, of Fox Company, was guarding Bridge 9/32 and commented, "There hasn't been much action this close to Ca Lu but they get more further on up the road."

Rooney was right. Delta Company, 11th Engineers, was patrolling the section of road nearest to Khe Sanh and they were kept busy. A portion of the company, led by 1stLt Floyd Campbell, captured two NVA. soldiers almost at Khe Sanh's doorstep and discovered several more enemy bunkers in the area which they cleaned out with Willy Peter grenades. PFC Larry E. Ramsey, a combat engineer with Delta, was usually the grenade heaver and PFC Larry E. Sherbert and PFC J. R. Albert were always close by with more handfuls of the hot stuff to back him up.

With the road finished by April 11 and officially opened April 12, the first vehicle rolled into Khe Sanh. It was a Jeep and its chief passenger was LtColonel V. A. Perry, commander of the 11th Engineers. But a Jeep is a versatile vehicle and, with the road making treacherous curves in places, and plagued by bumps and dips, LtColonel Perry knew that one final test had to be made before the road could be considered in satisfactory condition. He ordered his men to take the "low-bed" to Khe Sanh.
"If that low-bed can make it," said SSgt Donald Thompson, NCOIC of the engineers' motor transport section, "anything can make it." The low-bed was a

large, cumbersome, 5-ton truck and, for a trailer, pulled a long flat-bed designed for hauling heavy equipment. At 9:30 a.m. on Easter Sunday the low-bed rolled out of Ca Lu and, with SSgt Thompson and 1stLt Bud Westmoreland, motor transport officer, bouncing ahead in a Jeep, it began its slow, plodding journey up "USMC 11." At 11 a.m. the low-bed rolled over the pontoon bridge at 9/34 and then I up the steep hills toward Khe Sanh. The supply route to the Marine base was open and ready for business.

With convoys now going back and forth along the road, things began to slack off. Enemy shelling of Khe Sanh had picked up again but none of the enemy showed up along the road and it was assumed that the N.V.A. had vacated the area for the time being. No chances were taken, however. Marine artillery was called in on several of the hills near the bridges every night. The Marines stood their guard posts with alert eyes. But now, with a little time off, members of Fox Company, like Cpl Terry A. Kelley and Pfc David J. Gardner, took advantage of a job well done by going swimming in the ice cold waters of the Rao Quan River.

Cpl Frank Geramita found that the swift-flowing water beneath Bridge 9/32 enabled him to get a decent shave without cutting himself in a million places. And LCpl Tolbert McGlohorn could now brush his teeth in the clear stream with no pasty after taste to rinse out with the precious supply from his canteen. The Marines found other sport in bicycles, apparently left behind by the enemy in their hasty departure.

A good share of the engineers was still hard at work, though. Many of the supplementary bypasses were still under construction next to the bulk bridges. They had to be completed as soon as possible so that the convoys could use them while the professional-type bridges were being moved elsewhere in Vietnam. But the big goal had been achieved, that of opening the supply route to Khe Sanh. And, with Marines in Khe Sanh already branching out into the surrounding hills to chase down the enemy, it looked like the recent activities of Pegasus had served their purpose.

And, in addition to the road, the engineers could count several things at Ca Lu itself among their recent achievements. Upon arriving there they had built almost all of the bunkers, cleared fields of fire, set up ammunition and oil supply points, and had constructed the berms (fortified parking places) where the helicopters could land. On the road itself, they had put in an estimated 40,000 man-hours in meeting their deadline and had used more than 5,000 equipment hours. And one piece of that equipment, now sitting back at Ca Lu, sums up the whole theme of the engineers' accomplishments on "USMC 11." On one side of the truck is painted the words: "If you can't swim it; bridge it." The other side reads: "Khe Sanh or bust."

The Defenders of Khe Sanh, As Reported By Leatherneck Magazine July 1968

By John Martin

Although the few newspapers which had filtered in shortly before the Easter weekend declared that the threat to Khe Sanh was over, the Marines who were manning the base were taking no chances. True, they could now eat their C-ration meals above ground and engage in outdoor activities such as football and volleyball without fear of incoming rounds, but they still made it a point to keep their helmets on and their flak jackets tight about their bodies whenever they ventured far from the safety of their bunkers.

But there was a definite release of tension in the air. With the withdrawal of several battalions from the Khe Sanh base to go into the surrounding hills to seek out the enemy, and the knowledge that the road from Ca Lu was being secured by the infantry and made accessible by the engineers, the atmosphere was one of a big, inaudible "Whew!" For 77 days, commencing January 21, 1968, the Marines had lived a life of constant harassment. It had been approximately two and one-half months of constant enemy shelling, day and night. For 11 weeks they had lived with filth, grime, red dust -and rats. There had been uncountable hours, minutes, and seconds of fear, prayer, hope and death around the battle-scarred bunkers of Khe Sanh.

But in spite of it all, morale ran high. And Col David E. Lownds, the commander of the 26th Marine Regiment and its supporting units during the continual peppering of Khe Sanh, "never had a doubt" that, in the event the enemy had elected to attack, Khe Sanh

could have been defended. "I had the finest enlisted men in the world," Colonel Lownds stated. "And they had the best morale, under the conditions, that any commander could ask for. Since January 21," he recalled, "there was no hot chow, no beer, and no showers available. But every Marine I saw had a smile on his face. To them goes all the credit." Lt/ General Robert E. Cushman, Jr., commanding general of the III Marine Amphibious Force in Vietnam, expressed his opinion as to why the North Vietnamese had never ventured to attack Khe Sanh. "Because they'd have been slaughtered," he said, "and they knew it!"

General Cushman attributed the let-up on Khe Sanh to three things. First, he pointed out; there was the fortitude and combativeness of the Marines there. Second, there was the tremendous air effort which blasted the enemy from their positions in their hills. And, third, there was the accurate barrage of artillery fire directed at the enemy by the 1st Battalion, 13th Marine Regiment. "The trouble is," said General Cushman, "that everybody counts the incoming rounds. No one ever counts the outgoing. We replied a hundredfold to every enemy shell. We beat them down. The area was becoming untenable for the enemy."

The opinions of General Cushman and Colonel Lownds are shared by all the Marines who can say, "I served at Khe Sanh." Corporal Don H. Wiggins was "kind of disappointed" that the enemy had never attacked. And L/Cpl Timothy Wright, who had been flown into Khe Sanh as a replacement in early March, during the heat of the onslaught, told us that he didn't mind it a bit. "I knew what it was like when I found out I was coming here," he said. With the bigger part of the threat to Khe Sanh diminished, it was evident that a smaller force could handle the base itself and that many of the Marines would move into the hills surrounding Khe Sanh to provide a greater area of defense. Some were glad about leaving their bunkers; others were not.

"I was scared out of my wits when I got here in February," said L/Cpl Joe Haggard, "but, now, look . . . here's the place. We dug the bunkers and got the incoming, and now I might have to leave. There may be hot chow in other places but this . . . this is home."

Sgt Johnny Baker shared Haggard's opinion. "I was shaky when I got here," he admitted. "But Khe Sanh is like any other duty station. If I'm going to get 'blown away,' I'll get 'blown away' no matter where I'm at"

All the Marines seemed to think of the incoming rounds in a philosophical manner. "If I get hit," said PFC Robert Reyna, a member of Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, "there must be a reason; because something is guiding my every step and movement. I'm proud to be here and glad to be doing my part."

And Lt Charles T. Kelly, USN, one of the chaplains at Khe Sanh, had words to that effect in his Holy Saturday services, held in a dingy bunker at Khe Sanh. "Men," he said, "we must consider ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God."

The men sang "Rock of Ages" and "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name," and Chaplain Kelly gave the epistle to Cpl Jim Hill to read aloud and Cpl Dennis Finley read the gospel. Faith, hope and sheer determination helped sustain the Marines at Khe Sanh during those hammering days. They had faith in their own capabilities; hope that the supplies would come in; and the pilots had sheer determination in flaunting enemy fire to deliver their necessary cargoes.

Reminiscent of the Berlin Airlift in scope was the supply stream which flowed into Khe Sanh. In spite of heavy enemy artillery and hornets' nests of small arms fire, directed specifically at many of the incoming planes, the pilots got through to Khe Sanh. They either unloaded their cargoes in precious seconds on the runway before taking off again or dropped them from the air by parachute.

And the fact that not all the supply planes flew out again was dramatized in the wreckage of several helicopters and transport planes, lying in twisted metal graveyards along the airstrip. But the planes rolled in despite the enemy, because the Marines at Khe Sanh needed the supplies to keep them going. "They did a good job," remarked Major W. T. Cook, assistant S-4 officer for the 26th Marines.

"We received outstanding support from the Air Force planes, the Third Marine Division, and the Force Logistic Command."

Corporal Ernie Ross, a member of the open air post office section at Khe Sanh, also had praise for the mail drops. "Most of the time," he said, "the mail came in whenever they could get it to us. Once, more than a week went by with no mail. Then, they dropped in 40,000 pounds of it." Looking at an aerial view of Khe Sanh is like looking at one-third of the base. The rest is underground. In small, one- and two-man "hootches," to larger L-shaped "office" bunkers, all the way up to the underground complex which houses the Combat Operations Center, the Marines lived and worked beneath the red dust carpet of Khe Sanh, their way lit only by candles and, in some places, electric lights that didn't always work.

One of the most vital and active points was "Charlie Med," the casualty treatment center operated by Charlie Company of the 3d Medical Battalion. Although Charlie Med treated upwards of 2,000 casualties during the siege of Khe Sanh, according to Lt Edward Feldman, one of the Navy doctors there, his own biggest challenge came on the first day of the bombardment when PFC Robert Mussari was hit by an 82-mm. mortar fuse which lodged in his stomach without detonating. "They brought him in with a large battle dressing on his abdomen," recalled Lt Feldman, "and we took him down inside Charlie Med and padded him with sandbags."

While HM3 Roger Tillotson, a Navy corpsman, stood by with four flashlights shining into the exposed area, SSgt Sniegowski handed the instruments to Lt Feldman who removed the tissue around the fuse and extracted it in a ten-minute operation. The fuse, which was slightly smaller than a hot sauce bottle, was then buried outside until an EOD team could arrive to blow it up.

"We had no anesthetic available for the operation," Lt Feldman said, "but he never flinched or cried once. He said he wanted to come back to Khe Sanh again." (Mussari received additional treatment in Pennsylvania.)

"This is typical of all the Marines," Feldman went on. "They never cry out in pain. In all of our experiences, most of the casualties are more worried about their buddies than themselves. None of them wanted to leave Khe Sanh."

PFC James C. Heard, who had arrived at Khe Sanh shortly before the hostilities began, was one such Marine. Heard was hit in the arm with shrapnel from an exploding mortar. His wound wasn't serious enough to warrant evacuation. However, he was the type who would have wanted to come Back, if the injury had required him to be medevaced. Heard shared the unanimous sigh of relief, however, after the threat to Khe Sanh had died down. "You feel real good after everything is over," he said.

The Army's First Air Cavalry Division, having finished its sweep up Route #9, had moved into Khe Sanh. But they were already in the process of mounting helicopters out again, to head for other parts of the war. The Marine force, too, had been largely diminished, with field units swarming the hills around Khe Sanh to take enemy positions and provide a more mobile defense of the area.

And, while the 11th Engineers put the finishing touches on Route #9, the supply route they had nicknamed "USMC 11," the enemy struck again at Khe Sanh. All day on Easter Sunday, artillery rounds fell on the base. This time, the fire was thought to come from inside Laos, since Marines had captured most of the enemy gun points in the hills. But incoming was nothing knew to Marines in Vietnam, especially those at Khe Sanh, and the possibility of the problems involved in an enemy ground attack had been eliminated.

Perhaps one of the biggest threats to Khe Sanh during the deluge was the fear of the unknown. Newspapers had suggested that the defenders of Khe Sanh might meet the same fate as the French had in the historic battle of Dien Bien Phu. On March 14, the 54th day of the Khe Sanh saga, the word went around that North Vietnamese General Giap, who was reportedly masterminding the attack on Khe Sanh, had finished Dien Bien Phu on Day 54! But Khe Sanh is still there and the Marines are now certain that history will not repeat itself. . . .



One of our KSV members is a great artist and true patriot. His name is Dennis Smith. If you are traveling on Interstate 5 between Sacramento and Portland or on to Seattle stop and take the time to see this memorial. It is only 10 miles or so up highway 97 out of weed California. Weed is on Interstate 5, you will be glad you did. This memorial honors all veterans from all wars and peacetime. It is called "the living memorial sculpture garden" It was founded by a group of veteran's in1988. It is now sponsored and maintained by the Kiwanis club of Weed/Lake Shastina. Dennis Smith did the sculptures. I am pictured paying my respects to our colors and a memorial to the Iwo Jima marines. The sculpture is named: "the greatest generation.'' Mike "Animal" Preston.



Another sculpture is called' So Much, By So Few, For So Many " The mountain pictured in the background is Mt.. Shasta . All 14, 142 feet. I think it is the second highest mountain in California, right after Mt. Whitney @ 14,494 , the tallest mountain in the continental U.S., AWSOME !

More Pictures on following Page:



THIS SCULPTURE IS CALLED POW-MIA , SHOWS A MAN IN A TIGER CAGE .THE FORMER MARINE IN THE WHEEL CHAIR IS DON JACOBSEN, HE WAS WITH MAG 12- 67- 68 AT CHU LAI . NOTICE THE WAR LANCES

SHORT ROUNDS

KSV STILL SERVING

Sam Messer, CBMU-301 DET-B and several other Vietnam Veterans recently spoke to a group of Schoolchildren in regards to their service in Vietnam and Khe Sanh. The following letter was sent by their teacher thanking them for taking time to enlighten her students

Hi Sam and friends,

It was so good to hear from you. I just got back from being with the eighth graders where I met you. My class has been on Thanksgiving break and we just got back on Tuesday the 28th. I just finished getting my pictures printed so they could see you and your friends. They were very excited about you and we have looked at the web pictures. With all the media attention and so forth they are very smart when it comes to Iraq and the current war. Vietnam is known by some because some have relatives that were there too. My older brother had a draft number of three when he was just 19 so he joined the Air Force. He was there for three months and then was stationed in Thailand. We all here at our school want to thank all of you for your bravery, love of country, or whatever you possessed to go fight such an unpopular war. We thank you, respect you, and pray for you for protecting our rights and freedom. The kids want to write you so be on the lookout for some letters. Again it was so nice to meet you and your buddies. Take care and just drop us a line now and then. We will be e-mailing you also if that's ok? They have

some questions but I will e-mail them next week. We pray for you and your family everyday. Love, Kathie Hockenberry and her second graders

Kathie and class:
I am sorry for the delay in emailing all of you. Sometimes things happen that you don't have control of. My wife and daughter insisted I accompany them on a road trip to Florida, and back home to Olathe, Kansas. You and the kids made a bunch of grown men cry at Arlington, and we thank you for it! Some of those men pushing me around had never been thanked or welcomed home, when they returned from Vietnam. You made a good weekend great. I thank you again for all of us old farts. I have a web site I hope you and the kids will visit, plus a copulation of questions and answers from the last few years from students looking to interview a Vietnam Vet.

My Web Site shows me as a 21 year old kid in Viet Nam. There are pictures that show a regular kid, growing up in Kansas in the late 40's and 50's. I went to Vietnam a 20 yr old naive, kid. I turned 21 at Khe Sanh, Oct 18, 1967, the site of the 68 Siege that lasted 77 days. By the time I left Khe Sanh I felt like a 45 yr old man. If You Have questions I have not answered email them to me at Sam & Brenda's web site. You can also visit the Khe Sanh Veterans Website, where we go to find support from our brothers.

Sam Messer
CBMU-301 U.S. Navy Seabee

IT GOT PASSED

The Stolen Valor Act Passed a vote in the Senate & House of Representatives and only awaits the President's signature

The House of Representatives passed a Senate-approved bill Wednesday that would make it a felony to claim unearned military decorations. The bill would close a loophole in current law that allows phony recipients to escape prosecution as long as they don't physically wear the awards they claim.

If signed into law by the president, the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 would impose up to six months imprisonment and a maximum $5,000 fine for any false verbal, written or physical claim to an award or decoration authorized for military members. Penalties would be doubled for fraudulent claims to decorations specifically awarded for combat valor, such as the Navy Cross, Silver Star and Medal of Honor.

During floor debate on the bill, which was passed unanimously by the Senate Sept. 7, House Judiciary Committee chairman Rep. James Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., referenced recent cases in Illinois and Missouri of men who have never served a day in uniform each claiming to be Marine officers and recipients of the Navy Cross, the nation's second highest award for valor. Rep. John Salazar, D-Colo.,who introduced the House version of the legislation in the summer of 2005, said the bill re-introduces a precedent set by George Washington in 1782. When he established the Badge of Military Merit, the nation's only military award at the time, Washington wrote, "Should anyone who is not entitled to these honors have the insolence to assume the badges of them, they shall be severely punished," Salazar said.

The House's approval of the Senate bill, introduced by Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., on Nov. 10, 2005, was the result of a last-minute bi-partisan effort to put the legislation to a vote before the end of the current session. Salazar agreed on Sunday to set aside his own bill, which has been hung up in the judiciary committee since he introduced it, in order to support Conrad's nearly identical legislation on the Senate side. "We don't care if our name is on it. We don't care if we're 30th on the list of co-sponsors. We just want something done," Salazar spokesman Tate Rosenbusch said Monday

INCOMING

CONGRATULATION NEIL KENNY

Leatherneck Magazine
Dec 2006
Sound Off Letter of the Month

Although we just celebrated the 231st anniversary of our beloved Corps, I want to take a moment to recall the 229th Birthday of the Marine Corps. In another uneventful day for us here in America, we went about our business without notice to the valor, courage and commitment of a lowly private first class.

PFC Christopher Adlesperger that day in Fallujah, Iraq, did what it is Marines do. This Marine on that day did rise in the blinding chaos of combat to distinguish himself by seeking to protect and save his fellow Marines. Although he survived the events of November 10, 2004, Adlesperger was later killed in action.

This Nov. 10 would have been the 25th birthday of Jason L. Dunham from Scio, N.Y. We better knew Jason as Corporal Dunham, formerly of "Kilo" Company, 3d Battalion, Seventh Marine Regiment. On April 14, 2004, in Al Anbar province, Cpl Dunham raced to a checkpoint to be there for his Marines. The events of that day and its resulting combat led directly to his death.

Cpl Dunham's actions saved the lives of his fellow Marines that day. It brings me directly to my own day of infamy when, as we stormed Hill 881 North in a fire team and squad assault, I watched helplessly as Lance Corporal Philip F. Sheridan raced to the hilltop to get a better location to call in the supporting fire that he knew would protect and save his Marines. LCpl Sheridan died that Easter Sunday, on the side of a hill far from his home in Garden City, Long Island, N.Y.

What, then, were the meanings of this Nov. 10 and the ceremonies? I should hope it was to recall that we, who have served in good times and bad, remain ever faithful—that from the inception of our Corps in Philadelphia at Tun Tavern to the present conflicts around this globe, we Marines have always been, and shall always be, willing to do that which others could not or will not do.

From the first recruit to earn the title to those Marines who today wear the eagle, globe and anchor, being a Marine should be a joyous and somber event.

The joy of our collective service and sacrifice to God, Country and Corps is, suffice it to say, well deserved. We remember that freedom is not free, and only those who have fought for it understand its price.

These are the emotions that brought me to the 231st anniversary of our Corps. It was another chance for me to recall all who have come before, during and after my time in this greatest of all organizations.

Cpl Neil J. Kenny
USMC, 1967-69
Staten Island, N.Y.

Another Story you Will Not See on Your local News

Marines Save Iraqi Baby to Honor Fallen Medic

A Routine Patrol Turned Into a Mission to Help Sick Child. The story of a group of Marines' quest to save a sick baby in war-torn Iraq gives some hope to humanity this holiday season.

At the center of the story is Navy medic Chris Walsh and the 1st Battalion 25th Marines. The Marines were patrolling the streets of Fallujah in June when they faced an enemy attack. "An IED exploded im-



mediately adjacent to Chris' vehicle, so they all piled out to chase the trigger man," said Capt. Sean Donovan. But the Marines had a surprise encounter in their pursuit." And as they did so, a woman came from one of the houses calling to them that the baby was sick. So they stopped, and Chris came up and looked at the baby," Donovan said. "And this was baby Mariam, and it was immediately clear to him that this baby desperately needed care." Baby Mariam was just 2 months old and suffering from a rare intestinal abnormality. Under the threat of another attack, Walsh had to make a quick decision. "Right on the spot, the mission changed from the trigger man to the baby girl," Donovan said. A rou-

tine military mission suddenly became a lifesaving mission for Walsh and those around him.

"The shared willingness to engage this mission was the bravery of the family in bringing her forward," Donovan said. Visiting Under Cover of Darkness For the next three months, Walsh and the team made house calls under the cloak of darkness into the dangerous city to help the baby. They were trying to get baby Mariam stabilized, taking photographs, consulting experts, and trying to get her papers to leave the country for medical care. Staff Sgt. Ed Ewing led the visits. "We showed up at all different times of the night," Ewing said. "They never knew when we were coming. We did that purposely to protect us and protect their family."

As months went by, the unit continued its routine patrols. On Sept. 4, tragedy struck when one of their Humvees was hit once again by an IED. This time three men in the unit were killed -- Lance Cpl. Eric Valdepenas; Cpl. Jared Shoemaker; and Walsh, baby Mariam's guardian angel. For those who survived, saving baby Mariam became a eulogy to their fallen comrades. "To honor Chris, to honor the other men that died in the battalion, we had to go through with the mission and keep fighting," said Father Marc Bishop. Mission accomplished eventually the Marines won their fight, and baby Mariam was granted permission to leave Iraq.

Dr.Rafael Pieretti from Boston's Massachusetts General Hospital performed the surgery, which took place in October. "She's doing well," Pieretti said. "She's gained weight. She's socializing more. She has a different life." On the eve of baby Mariam's arrival, Walsh's mother, Maureen, received a letter from Donovan, telling her the story of a life that was saved because of her son's big heart. The letter from Donovan read in part: "Although he won't be visible, Chris will be very much on that patrol, the hope for Mariam's very tiny life having arisen from the charity and gallantry of your son." Recently Maureen Walsh met baby Mariam. "It made me feel like Chris was there," she said. "He wanted something like this. He wanted to make a difference in somebody's life."

WHERE DO THESE MEN COME FROM?
Daniel's Ordeal

Monday November 13, 2006 started like any Friday the 13th only it fell on Monday that week. I joked with my office mate about how frustrating the day had been when I received the call that put my world on hold.

At about 1:30 in the afternoon I received a phone call from Major Mathews in Iraq. He made sure he was speaking to L/CPL Renshaws mother and then said "Your son is stable, he has been shot. He was airlifted to the hospital and is out of surgery and stable. I will stay on the line as long as you need and answer any questions you may have". I couldn't think of any questions. He knew I would have some so he gave me his email address and told me someone from Hawaii would be calling to be my liaison with the Marine Corp.

Before he hung up he gave me our first goal. As soon as Daniel was stable enough to travel they would be sending him to Germany. So I had a small first step. I would come to cherish each step and each goal because they all gave me hope.

Within the next two hours I got a call from the liaison in Hawaii. He told me that the Marine Corp would be sending me to Daniel when they knew where he was going to be. Thus started the most profoundly life altering experience anyone could have.

I always want to remember the support I received from our family and friends and dozens and dozens of total strangers. After Rusty and I went and told my parents and my sons they started a phone web. I would call them for the next 2 weeks with any updates and they would call everyone they knew and on and on. What a blessing it was to not have to speak to all those people each time there was information on Daniel. Email was the easiest way for us to communicate and we eventually received emails from as far away as India. Prayer circles were started all over the country and the media showed great restraint by dealing with Greg Merchel and allowing us our space.

Tuesday I spent the day waiting for the phone call from Germany telling me Daniel was stable enough

to move. I got that call from the surgeon in Germany who spent a lot of time explaining Daniels injuries, and treatment. She told me that Daniel had received excellent care in Iraq and the surgeons there had done a magnificent job cleaning him up and caring for his wounds. She then told me that his next step would be the US and they would call me when he was going to be moved. Lastly she gave me a phone number to call Daniel.

Wednesday morning at 7:00 a.m. I made the international call and spoke to Daniel. He said he was great. I wondered if he was really great or just great drugs. It was great drugs, but just getting to speak with him, his voice low and whispery gave me hope and happiness that I carried with me all day.

Thursday. When I called Daniel he said "Mom, I hurt." Those are the three words that will devastate any mother. I started doing laundry so I would have clothes to pack when they told me I could go to my son.

Friday, the Marine Corp Liaison called me at about 4:00 and told me Daniel had arrived in Bethesda. We asked if we could fly on Sat. He called back 20 minutes later with flights leaving Saturday morning at 6:30.

All during this week, my family and friends and total strangers sent me cards letters and emails with best wishes for Daniel. A fellow realtor offered to handle my business and even the bank brought us flowers. The Guys from the Army Recruiting office upstairs in my building brought me a plant, a card and offers of assistance in anything we might need. I told them I would probably need muscle when we got back because Rusty's house was under contract and we had to move him out of it. They actually helped us move.

Saturday we were on our way. When we arrived in Washington DC. The Marine Corp Liaisons office sent a van to pick us up. He took us to our room in the Navy Lodge, got us checked in and then straight to Daniels room at Bethesda. During our stay the Marine Corp paid us $60 per day for meals, all of our lodging and our airline flights. The Semper Fi Fund covered the cost of our cell phone bills and any other bill we might have. The goal is for the family's of the injured to have no financial hardship while they stay with their Marine. Some of the families had stays of months. The Marine Corp and Semper Fi fund paid lost wages, bills, childcare, whatever was necessary for these families.

My first glimpse of Daniel was hard. I noticed how thin his face was, his coloring was very bad and he was in a lot of pain. My second glance showed me the most beautiful quilt covering his bed. It was a purple heart quilt hand stitched and quilted to keep him warm. This was the first of many lovely gifts sent from people all over the United States as their way to support our injured troops.

They do deserve our support. The next two weeks went by in a haze of hospital rooms, hotel rooms, McDonalds and Subway. The overall strongest feeling during this time was one of hope and happiness. Ward 5 is where most of the injured marines are sent when they get out of intensive care. Most of the Marines had lost limbs or had injuries that were very severe. The surgeon called Daniels injury, "just a simple gunshot wound." It is extremely difficult to wrap your mind around that phrase, however compared to 90% of the men on Ward 5 Daniels injuries were simple for the surgeon. He had a sliced liver collapsed lung, shattered diaphragm and a couple cracked ribs, but all of them would eventually heal.

The people I met during our stay were incredible. The servicemen were upbeat most days and working hard to get healthy. The overall attitude was excitement. Excitement for the future and all of the things they would be able to accomplish once they healed enough to get their new prosthesis'.

The technology is exciting. Even the young men who lost both legs would get new ones with computer chips that would match their strides; Deep sea divers could get special prosthetics for diving. There was never a feeling of loss with these men. Even on the bad days they and their families were supportive of each other. One father told this story, his son had brought back a virus from Iraq and his leg would not heal enough to get a prosthesis. Every few days they would have to go back into surgery to have the bad tissue removed and the pain was intense. The continual surgeries and the lack of progress had zapped his sons will to fight and the father was very worried. All he asked for was the spark back in his sons' eyes. The doctors tried every medi-

was working. The known cure was penicillin; however his son was allergic to that drug. The doctors finally decided to give him penicillin in a 2% solution and adjust the amount every 15 minutes to build up a resistance to the allergy. That day when the man went into his sons' room after the treatment his son said " Dad, can you please take me outside. I want to be in the sun." The treatment had worked and the Dad got his wish. His son was on his way to recovery and would be able to leave Bethesda in a week or so to start his physical therapy and get his new leg. They had been in the hospital 4 weeks by that time. Everyone on the Ward celebrated the victories. No matter how bad the day was, no where was there the attitude of lucky him. Every parent and every injured Marine felt lucky me.

We met parents who had been staying in housing on base for as long as 4 months, working to bring their sons home. No one was bitter. They were just grateful to be able to be with their loved ones.

The other overwhelming feeling was that the injured servicemen would all go back and do it again even knowing they would come home torn up. In the mind of the Marines the struggle is basic. Good versus Evil and protect your brother. I was deeply affected by the courage of these young men.

We had a couple of tough days. The worst one came after we had been there 3 or 4 days. Daniel got a call from his buddies in Iraq. At first we were really excited but the call was a sad one. The patrol that had taken Daniel to the Medivac unit had hit an IED and 3 or the 4 men on board had died. One of them was Daniels close friend L/CPL Mario Gonzales, he had held Daniels hand while they put him on the helicopter and he said you lucky guy you're going home. They had been through Afghanistan together and we have tons of pictures of the two of them goofing off and showing off. Daniel had thought that they had hit the IED after dropping him off and he shut down on us. He did not respond at all to anything we said or did. Nor did he want to talk to us about his friend. The new commander of the Marine Corp just happened to pick that day to visit the ward and when he saw how frightened I was he wrapped me in his arms and I sobbed. The poor man got mascara all over his beautifully pressed uniform. He held me as long as I needed and in his eyes was amazing compassion. I will always remember the look in his eyes and the mess I made of his uniform. We laugh about it now.

We started to search for the surviving Marine, Staff Sgt Wilson. The next day we found out he had been transferred to Bethesda and was still in intensive care. We asked a nurse if we could take Daniel down to see the Staff SGT and she said she would check. The next morning Rusty was walking the Ward with Daniel and saw the name Wilson on one of the rooms. They checked with the nurse and sure enough it was the man we had been looking for. His injuries were severe but he is a jolly man, and talked to Daniel as long as Daniel could stay about his friends and what had happened to them. They had hit the IED one day after dropping Daniel off, not the same day as Daniel had feared. After Daniels first visit with Staff Sgt Wilson he really started to get better. He had them unhook him from the morphine and the IV. He started walking as much as he could and we visited Staff Sgt Wilson often. Many times the Staff Sgt's family would come get us because during that time the Staff Sgt would have flashbacks and nightmares and call for Daniel. They helped each other in Bethesda just like they did in Iraq. These men have a bond that most of us will never experience. They understand that this bond is very special. They don't take it for granted, ever.

We had many special visitors while we were there. An amazing parade of high ranking Military men visit the ward regularly. We also had one person who was not in the military that made a huge impression on me. The Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger came on Thanksgiving Day. He has visited ward 5 on Thanksgiving for 13 years. There is no publicity, no cameras and no agenda. He sits with each man as long as they wish. While he is there no outsiders are allowed on the ward. He is there for the wounded, period. He spent almost his entire thanksgiving day on the Ward. We were in the last room he visited. He did not seem impatient or in a hurry when he came in. He asked Daniel how he had been shot with real interest and compassion in his voice. Daniels story went something like this.

When he got shot it felt like someone had hit him in the head, even though he knew he had been hit in the midsection. He said he knew what starts felt like. He fell face first onto the ground and his buddy Langden ran over to him. His buddy then went and

found a safe place for Daniel and ran back over to him, to try to drag Daniel to the hut. Daniel realized that they were still being shot at and he weighed well over 200 pounds with all his gear so it would be really tough and dangerous for his buddy to drag or carry him.

Daniel got up on his feet and ran with his buddy to the cover. Then, he said "I did a perfect Hollywood dive into the hut. It may not have looked like a perfect dive to anyone else, but in my mind I could have been in the movies." The Governor laughed.

My best day came on November 27, I had told Daniel that we would be a little late that morning because we had to do laundry. He had not eaten much up to that point and we had tried everything to get something in him. We had even bought jello, fruit, ice cream, and Campbell's soup, whatever we could from the convenience store to try to tempt him to eat something. The day before we had met SSgt Wilson and Daniels attitude had improved but he still had not been hungry. I was not too concerned about showing up at 10:30 instead of our usual 8 a.m. The first words out of Daniels mouth were "Mom, where have you been? I'm starving." He did not say it in those exact words. He spoke it like a Marine with some color interspersed here and there. I walked right out into the hall and danced a jig. Everything got better after that. We had no more bad days.

Daniel had three different roommates while he was at Bethesda. The first was a double amputee who had his spine fused and had lost a lot of the use of his right arm. He left for Walter Reed a couple days after we arrived. He was in a lot of pain most of the time but still was excited about being able to walk again.

The second was a wonderful man who was a lieutenant in the navy and was and explosives guy. He had gotten wounded in a remote controlled blast but had not lost any limbs. He had the most wonderful sense of humor, his outlook was "sew me up doc I have work to do." His wife's outlook was a little different but she is very special and we grew very close in the hours we spent together.

The third roommate was a retired Marine who had served in WW2, Korea and Vietnam. He had needed surgery and was on the ward to recover. He proved the saying "Once a Marine, always a Marine." The day after his surgery he had wanted to sit up in the chair, so much to the dismay of his wife, doctors and nurses he pulled out all of his IV's, and tubes and sat in the chair. It took the nursing staff more that 15 minutes to hook him back up and his wife made him promise to call the nurses next time. As she left later that day she asked us to keep and eye on him so he didn't do it again. "He is stubborn" she told us

"So don't let him get impatient and pull out his tubes again." He had written a book on Guadalcanal and we are reading it. We had been blessed again with our roommate.

We finally were able to bring Daniel home on Wednesday November 29, 2006. We were met at the airport by the Freedom Riders, the VFW and Mayor Doody. We were also met by a huge contingent of family and friends. Our plane arrived in the middle of the day. We were touched and humbled by the reception we received. The media was out in force; Daniel doesn't understand why we think of him as a hero. On the way home that very cold day Daniel stated his beliefs perfectly. He simply said, " Mom, this country is very special and worth protecting."

I promised this letter to you all awhile ago. It has been hard for me to leave the intensity of Ward 5 and adjust to day to day. Daniel turns 21 next Tuesday. I will forever be grateful he made it. I am including a copy of the poem Daniel wrote while he was in Bethesda. It is potent.

Poem by Daniel Renshaw, written November 26, 2006.

There are times in our life when we were struck by tragedy
And you know you would not make it through without your family
Something very similar just happened to me
Fighting in Iraq is what starts my story
Walking through the streets trying to keep people safe
Then a pain then a bang then I landed on my face.
More shots rang as people ran and marines began to fight
Still in a little daze and pain causing a haze I had

lost all my might
Langden found a spot and while under heavy fire he ran back out into
Then my mind cleared as I saw him there I knew he came for me
His life for mine he was willing to trade without skipping a beat
I couldn't let that happen so I climbed onto my feet
He half carried me back to the place where he had found the spot
He gently helped my down as he screamed Corpsman up
I couldn't help but think my life I would have to pay
Then as if sent by God Marines were there to save the day
The medivac called and people going every which way
I heard it over and over from my buddies you do not get to die today
Then up the streets the humvees roared as they pulled up to my shop
More marines jumped out and began to shout we're here to pick him up
Upon arriving at the LZ Gonzo came to me he held my hand and said
Don't worry man soon you'll be home free
My gunner from Afghanistan a best friend he was to me
He gave me strength while we waited there at the LZ
He helped me to the bird and covered my eyes for me
I'd never get to repay him because 2 days later he died by an IED
Lying in a hospital with things hooked up and beeping
Drifting in and out of consciousness but not really sleeping
Pretty soon I was able to start accepting a phone call
The people on the other end are the ones who are worth it all
The ones I'd take 10 bullets for and never flinch or fall
My family and my friends you know I love you all
They flew me to Bethesda where my family I'd get to see
I'd get to hug and kiss my mom, my dad and of course Rusty
But upon there arrival they got no proper greeting
Just me being a jerk with no proper reason
How painful it must have been to see me lying there
And added pain of me lashing out acting like I didn't care
With me every painful step on the path to recovery
Though I am weak they are strong and bear my burdens for me
I want my message loud and clear in what I'm trying to say
If it weren't for my loved ones I would not be here today.



MEMOIRS

Sam Warlick Remembered
By Robert I. Morgan

I served with Sam Warlick at Camp Lejeune before we went to OCS at Quantico. I was in the 3rd Platoon of Bravo Company; he was the Honor man in the 4th Platoon. Our graduation day in late March 1967, was a delightful spring day. Our futures were glorious; we were young; we were Marines and content in our expectations of leading rifle platoons.

My roommate at The Basic School, Frank McLavy, and I ran into Sam and a buddy of his in San Francisco on the way to Viet Nam in early October 1967. We had drinks together; I think at the Top of the Mark. I joined the 2nd Bn/26th Marines. Sam went to the 2nd Bn/9th Marines. I was at Khé Sanh when I learned he'd been killed in action--as I heard it--going forward.

Others among my comrades have been killed. The Marine I personally mourn most, however, is Sam Warlick. Perhaps it is because my parents and I met Sam's mother at the commissioning ceremonies. Sam's mother has come to represent all the mothers who have lost sons in war. I no longer remember the details of her appearance. I spoke to her for only a minute or so.

My fleeting impression of her never left me. She was very southern, very charming, and extraordinarily beautiful. I always intended to get in touch with her and others members of Sam's family to tell them of the esteem in which I held Sam. The same feelings were shared by anyone who had ever served with him. I regret I did not attempt to make contact until a couple of years ago. I did not remember her name and was unsuccessful. After this article appears in the newspaper in Raeford, members of his family may contact me, I sure hope and pray that they do.

Recently, I attended a reunion in Fredericksburg with Col. Bill Dabney and friends of mine in 3/26 who served on Hill 881S. We went to the new Marine Corps museum. There are walkways there lined with bricks individually dedicated to comrades and to our service. I looked in the index to see if one had been dedicated to Sam. I didn't find one. I hope I haven't intruded in ordering a brick dedicated to Sam in honor of Sam's mother. It reads, "Sam Dixon Warlick-NC"; "E/2/9 KIA 30 Nov 67"; "He'll be remembered."

If anyone would like to get in touch with me concerning these matters, I can be reached at: the Tarbell Professional Association, PA; 45 Centre Street; Concord, New Hampshire 03301; 603-226-3900, or rmorgan@tarbellpa.com.

Responses:

Dear Robert,

I am the sister of one of Sammy's friends, Harold. They were like brothers. Sam is being remembered in Raeford and hearts are pouring out their memories. I wrote a column about Sammy and Harold. I do columns for the weekly paper in Raeford when they have need for "filler"... I still find it hard to think of myself as a columnist.

You are so right in your memories of Pearl Gold Cornwell Warlick, Sammy's mom. She was just as you said, only more. She was my mother's best friend. When my mother died, she became "my mother" and when my daughter married, Mrs. Warlick was "the grandmother" at the wedding. Such an elegant woman, but with a heart that came out through every pore in her skin! She was correctly named. She was a "jewel"

When Sam died, I was determined that Mr. and Mrs. Warlick would know I had not forgotten him, so on his birthday, remembering 30 Nov. 967, I did something for them. Mrs. Warlick is dead now. But I still let Sam's sister's know I remember. This year, his sisters and my brother gave me permission to write a column about him. I am going to send this column to you.

Thanks are to God for you and the others like you, my son-in-law, Cody, is a Marine living in Sneads Ferry, but he has Rheumatoid Arthritis, so he was retired from active duty.

I will be glad to answer any questions you might have. I am sending this letter from me to Sam's sister and to my brother. Judie lives in Greensboro, NC and my brother lives in San Antonio. They can answer more questionsfor you. Judie had a very interesting experience a few years ago at the wall in DC, Ask her about it if you talk to her.

I was blessed to accidentally find the Marine Corp Museum Ceremony on the PBS TV one night. I called and asked if it will be played again. They said they don't have rights to repeat it at this time, but they will try to get them before Memorial Day or Veterans' Day.

Lilmar Sue Taylor-Williams
Phone 910-328-2374
1226 North Shore Drive
Surf City, NC 28445

Dear Ms. Williams:

The paper called and asked me to draft a single letter for this Wednesday's edition of the paper. I've combined the original draft and the response. I had carelessly assumed that the first was published this morning. I didn't say so in the letter, but one reason I was reluctant to drive to North Carolina and persevere until I found the Warlicks was an instinctive sense that their loss must have been truly terrible to bear. I shrank from adding to it. I'm not sure which course would have been the correct one. Now, however, I very much regret not having met Mrs. Warlick before she died. My mother is still in relatively good health and turned 83 on 9 Nov 06. She lives alone in Ellisville, Mississippi. My daddy died in 1993. RIM

PS: I'll cancel the brick if anyone finds it intrusive. By the by, we all called him, Sam. I never heard him called Sammy. Semper fi'.

Robert,

You may call me Limar. I was only 5 years older than Sam. As he got older he was Sam, but can't you just see "Sammy" in that photo with my brother as they stopped on their way to school. I am sure you would have called him Sammy had you known him at age 7.

As for not going to see the Warlicks, you are right. It was an awful thing for them, but Mrs. Warlick liked to talk about Sam. She and I talked lots of times and just looked at photos. Whatever your choice, it was the right one, because Mrs. Warlick would have wanted you to do what made you feel comfortable. She was one of the most unassuming persons I ever knew. She was only VAIN in one respect. She never told anyone, not even my mother, how old she was! That was off limits!

The Brick is just a very special thing for you to do and I am sure Barbara and Judie will be so thankful that you did it for their brother. I do hope you get to talk to his sisters. I know that my cousin and I were just talking about Sam. A lot has been brought up with the column I wrote. (you did get that and the responses, didn't you?), My cousin lived in my grandmother's house just 2 doors down from the Warlicks. She was living there while her husband was in Vietnam. He retired as a Col. Mrs. Warlick told my cousin that she would come to see the new baby soon, but that she just couldn't come right then, She always believed that Sam was doing what he was supposed to do that that it was what he wanted to do.

Thanks for the memories, Limar Sue

CHRISTMAS AT KHE SANH

Pinned down in Khe Sanh, Christmas '67

By: William J. O'Connor, C Btry 1/13

During the Christmas holiday of 1967 I was a captain in the U.S. Marine Corps stationed in South Vietnam as the Battery Commander of "C" Battery 1st Battalion 13th Marine Regiment at an isolated combat base known as Khe Sanh. During this period it was quite calm but enemy activity was starting to build up.

I remember quite clearly that a truce was declared during Christmas Eve but, as usual, the enemy did not honor the truce and we had to return fire with our 105mm Howitzers during the evening of Christmas Eve. Christmas Day was not all that special because we were in a desolate area where the food was terrible and there wasn't anything that would really get us into the Christmas spirit and there definitely weren't any USO shows.

One of the few things that would remind me of Christmas back home was a small Christmas tree which my wife sent to me, complete with Christmas lights. That tree occupied a special place in my bunker and brought to me the only Christmas spirit which I would experience. I also remember that Christmas dinner at the battalion mess hall was not that great and my troops complained about the quality of the food, which I fully agreed with.

Christmas was a very depressed time because we were far from our loved ones. This was not the first time I was away from home for Christmas. As a

young Second Lieutenant, I spent my first Christmas away from home in Hong Kong. At 0500 on the morning of January 21, 1968, we were attacked by a superior force of NVA regulars and almost overrun. When the smoke cleared we were surrounded by a force of 55,000 NVA regulars. We were only a force of 5,500 men and we were out of ammo, water and chow, with no firm idea of when we would be re-supplied.

During the attack we had not only lost all of our aiming posts to incoming enemy fire but had also lost our aiming post lights. The Christmas spirit re-visited us when we dismantled my Christmas tree and used those lights as our aiming post lights. Even in the midst of a destructive warfare situation we were able to look at the Christmas colored lights and retain some sort of Christmas spirit.

Needless to say, every Christmas serves to remind me of those terrible times in Vietnam but also reminds me of all of those brave Marines who served with me during that terrible Siege of Khe Sanh.

Used by gracious permission of Bill O'Connor

One veteran's holiday memory, but offered with thoughts of ALL the brave who served & with special remembrance of those who cannot be with us to celebrate holidays. THANK YOU! For your priceless gift to all of us & to our country. May your holidays & every day be happy, peaceful & blessed?

Lucille Biscaglio

From The Publisher:

The Khe Sanh Veterans Association had the pleasure of honoring members of the 2nd Battalion 4TH Marines when they recently returned from a tour in Iraq. A plaque was presented to the families of each of the 11 Marines who were KIA. I, and other members of the KSV, have a very personal relationship with many members of 2/24 here in Chicago, and have attended many of their functions. We have met Lt/Col Mark Smith and are aware of the fondness he possesses for every member of his Battalion. The tribute he has written says it all, God Bless the United States Marine Corps and the United States of America, Where do we find such men?

A Beautiful Tribute to Fallen Marine

LtCol Mark Smith sends this beautiful tribute to fallen Marine L/Cpl Wichlacz who paid the ultimate price for our freedom

Lt. Col. Mark Smith
It is again my unfortunate duty and with gut wrenching sadness that I report to you the death of Lance Corporal Travis M. Wichlacz, Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines, USMC. L/Cpl Wichlacz was killed on 05 Feb 05 when an improvised explosive device was detonated immediately adjacent to the HMMWV he was riding in. L/Cpl Wichlacz was part of a force conducting a raid against a suspected terrorist location when the IED was initiated. He sustained fatal injuries as a result of the explosion. He was killed instantly and felt no pain. He was secured by his brother Marines in the patrol, air medevaced back to FOB St. Michael, and then with the utmost of dignity was prepared for his final journey home, which began approximately 12 hours after his death.

Now, when L/Cpl Wichlacz arrived at FOB St. Michael, I went to our Shock Trauma Building to greet him. The Medical Section, our fabulous Navy Surgeons and Corpsman from the US Navy, conducted their unfortunate task of documentation and identification. This is not enjoyable duty, but the professionalism and reverence with which these amazing Sailors conduct this task touches your heart and your soul. They may be Sailors, but my US Navy Staff are Mad Ghosts, part and parcel of this Mad Ghost Team, and will forever have both my undying respect and my gratitude, for they give everything they have (and then some) to tend to the wounds of my Marines, both living and dead. Following the medical responsibilities, the Navy Chaplain Lt. Manilla gathered us all around the peaceful body of L/Cpl Wichlacz and said both a blessing and a prayer. I then held his hand and wished him Fair Winds and Following Seas for his final journey home. And, I told him JOB WELL DONE! For he had given all that others would live, and live abundantly, in freedom and with the ability to seek their own journey. For this, I know he will be rewarded in Heaven.

Then, you leave the building. This is the moment that the Devil has his day. For at this point, I was filled with anger, hate and rage! The mind races with thoughts of vengeance. The body wants to lash out in violence in pay back for what has been done. And, you then look around at all the tools of violence and destruction at your immediate disposal and realize it would not be a hard thing to do!!! But, as it should be with the Devil, he gets but that fleeting moment of control, because the rage is replaced with respect. The respect of a fallen hero who calls to you to remember Who and what you are: A UNITED STATES MARINE. The hero himself seems to speak to you from beyond the land of the living and reminds you that we are the ones that do well, and destroy only evil. He tells you that we came to free the oppressed and set the conditions for long-term stability in a region that has never known it and by doing so will ensure the freedom and safety of our beloved back home. No, it is but a very fleeting moment that the Devil gets, it is a LIFETIME of remembrance, respect and honor that the hero earns. That we will never dishonor our fallen, that we will stay our course no matter how difficult, that WE WILL ACHIEVE VICTORY is the only outcome there can be! And, with YOUR Marines, YOU'RE Mad Ghosts that is what it shall be. VICTORY with honor. VICTORY that delivers violence ONLY to the cowardly enemy, and compassion, respect and admiration for the people of Iraq, who we free and protect, and who have Suffered unspeakably for far too long.

When this moment of illumination comes, from which all follow on actions are guided, I will tell you, it comes with intense grief. But that is O.K. That grief only speaks to the righteousness of the cause and the realization of the heavy price freedom requires. L/Cpl Wichlacz paid it, we now have a lifetime to earn it.

I am not a fan of Hollywood for its politics. I have never really been able to grasp, in my simple Hoosier mind, why people who make a grotesque amount of money by pretending to be something, honestly and earnestly believe that we care what they have to say about politics. No, that one has always escaped me. I mean, playing pretend is what my angelic daughters do, and although I love them more than I love my next breath, and would lay down my life for them, I have come to the conclusion I do not want Brittani and Nichole establishing National Policy and the use of force to achieve it...at least not while they are 8 and 6! So, I kind of feel the same way about Actors. But, as an art form, as a medium designed to stimulate the mind and touch the soul, well, on that count, sometimes Hollywood hits it out of the park. One such instance was the movie saving Private Ryan. For if you would, my wonderful families of 2/24, I would like to ask you in light of L/Cpl Wichlacz passing, and in honor of all 11 of our fallen heroes, to reflect with me. Reflect on the final scene in Saving Private Ryan. The scene where Ryan is old, gray, round and soft in the middle, and he is with his wife and fully-grown children. They are visiting Arlington National Cemetery. Ryan is at the grave of his Company Commander and reflecting on the events of a battlefield over 50 years past.

He is reflecting on the shared violence, the shared hardship and the death of his comrades. As he is reflecting, he is sobbing. Sobbing the tears of a pain that knows no relief, knows no easing in its passage of time. And then, he says to his wife, words to the effect of, "tell me I am a good man. Tell me I have been a good man." Many is the time, 11 to be exact, that all I wanted in this whole world was to feel the soft hand of my beautiful and loving wife on the back of my sobbing head and telling me I am a good man, that I have done right by my Marines and my country. Because, you see, that is what we owe L/Cpl Wichlacz, our 11 and all who have given their lives in this and all previous Wars. We owe them to live good lives. Good lives in the sense that we always think first and foremost of the cost of freedom! That we remember a life lived free, is a life lived without hardship, and most of the time in frivolity and miniscule tasks. But the majesty of it, is that we have the time and space to be engaged in the frivolous and miniscule.

That we grocery shop, go to movies, go to ball games, eat out, eat in, barbeque, drink beer or not drink beer, attend the soccer games, watch our kids flip monkily through gymnastics, go to Disneyworld...we do all these without nary a thought, because a lineage of Warriors since 1775 have given us that freedom. That we never forget that, that we always pay honor to that is OUR CHARGE. Please ladies, understand, no preaching of morality here. I am not defining living a good life by any means

other than NEVER forgetting what the price of our American lives really is. Our freedom, our ability to do the things we do as Americans, which we Mad Ghosts miss so dearly and will never take for granted, has been paid for with the blood of YOUNG Americans in battle. That the National Anthem ALWAYS be sung with that in mind, that the pledge of allegiance always be said with pride, conviction and a commitment to defend it, that you respect the flag when you see it, these are the requirements of a "good life" for an American. Never forget these MEN! Never forget these Warriors! And, in our case in particular, as the families and Marines that are 2/24, NEVER FORGET THESE MAD GHOSTS! For the reasons for which I would rightfully earn eternal damnation are many and varied, but that I ever dishonor these wonderful heroes, well, I am confident that will not be one of them!

So in your reflection, please join me in a final farewell to L/Cpl Travis M. Wichlacz: good night sweet and gentle Warrior. You have touched us all. We have been deeply and profoundly saddened by your death, but we have been even more enlightened and touched by YOUR LIFE. Rest in the embrace of angels, Travis, rest in the embrace of angels! WE LOVE YOU. God Bless the Magnificent Marines and Families of 2/24.

MEMOIRS

Merry Christmas, Snake

By Robert A. Hall

A Vietnam Christmas

Eddie wrapped a length of C-ration baling wire around the trunk of Aunt Thel's tree, and wedged the end between the bunker's crumbling sandbags. That corrected the starboard list caused by a bent stand. Considering that their mail had been air-dropped from a C-130 cargo plane, the two-foot artificial tree had come through remarkably well, with only the bent leg and one broken limb. At Snake's suggestion, they had turned the "bare spot" to the wall and trimmed the tree with the surviving decorations and local crafts: a tin star cut from a C-ration can, a pair of lance corporal chevrons with the black coating worn off so they glittered, some brass M-16 shell casings.

Eddie would have preferred canned peaches from Aunt Thel, but he thought the tree looked right cheerful in their bunker. He twisted the tin star to catch light from the radios and began softly singing: "Jingle bells, mortar shells, V. C. in the grass-- You can take, your Merry Christmas, and shove it up..."

He sensed "incoming" and ducked as Snake's boot banged into the wall, safely away from the precious tree, sending a trickle of sand dribbling through the slats of the wooden pallets that served as the bunker's floor. Eddie turned and saw Snake smiling at him over a can of C-ration ham and limas. You couldn't get pissed at a guy who would trade you beanies and weenies for ham and "slimies," which every reasonable person hated the way Santa's pointdeer Rudolph hated clear weather.

Eddie wiped his eyes to get rid of the stinging caused by grit from the sandbags. It didn't help. "Since when did you get the Christmas spirit?" he asked, "I thought you were a Black Muslim?"

Snake had announced his new religion several weeks ago, the fourth in seven months. Though he maintained a devout facade, his "conversions" were a standing joke in the platoon. Eddie had reasonably pointed out that while he, himself, was black, Snake was a white dude, an awkward start for a Black Muslim. Snake's response was that Eddie was an Uncle Tom; and, that since there was no other black dude to be the radical on their radio relay team, he would have to do it himself, "Just like every goddamned thing else around here."

"Can't be a Muslim on Christmas Eve," Snake smiled, and continued dropping pieces of John Wayne crackers through the floor planks for the rat. He's been trying to kill the rat just last week, but, following the lead of the Viet Cong, had declared a Christmas truce with it yesterday. Eddie picked up the jungle boot, and turned it over, observing that it was nearly new. He looked down to his left boot, where the electrical tape holding it together was coming loose. The sides had rotted and he hadn't been able to scrounge replacements from supply's limited stock.

"Hey, Snake, how about giving me your extra boots? We're the same size, almost." "Certainly, my man," Snake promised, "As soon as the Sear's catalog

comes and I can order something more stylish. We might, however, barter--I do admire that K-bar knife on your belt." Snake rose and headed to the bunker door, which hung precariously from the hinges of shell boxes. "I'll go switch generators."

He went into the night, taking only a small flashlight, to carry out the regular task of alternating the 400 cycle generators that powered their AN/TRC-27 radio relay unit. Eddie was re-taping his boot when the first mortar round exploded in the small perimeter. "Christmas truce!" he spat, lunging for the door, "Little rice-propelled bastards!" By the time the Corpsman had checked the flow of blood from Snake's mangled leg, and closed the flap of open flesh on his right cheek, the painkiller had taken hold and he was babbling happily.

"Lucky break, Eddie," he said, laughing, "I tripped over the goddamn antenna guy wire and couldn't make the hole. Now I'm going home for Christmas, buddy. I'll be dancing in Time's Square on New Year's Eve while you're still stuck in this shit hole, man."

Eddie glanced at Snake's leg and winced as they loaded him onto the stretcher. "Nail one of them hippy broads for me," he said. Snake laughed again, almost a giggle. "Hey, Eddie," he said, "You can have those boots." He gave a weak, cheery wave. "Merry Christmas, man." "Merry Christmas, Snake," Eddie said, then he impulsively pulled the K-Bar from his belt and laid it on the stretcher, knowing that some rear-echelon pogue would probably steal it from Snake. "Take that home as a souvenir of this slice of paradise."

Snake waved again as the corpsmen hefted the stretcher and struggled carefully up the muddy slope toward the med-evac LZ. "Merry F----ing Christmas," Eddie whispered to himself. He turned to go check the radios. The grit was bothering him again. Now, he thought, who the hell can I trade ham and limas to?

MEMOIRS

HOW I SPENT THE "SIEGE"

By John M. Kaheny

OK! I am now 62 years old and it is time to tell the truth. Not every Khe Sanh veteran suffered during the siege. I commuted. Yes, that's right, I commuted to the siege. Sounds like a contradiction in terms but it is true. You see, I was smart enough, I know that's very debatable, to extend my Vietnam tour for six months just two months prior to opening day. The reason was simple, I had orders to Camp LeJeune and I was a bachelor. When Lt/Col Wilkinson advised me that I might get killed by extending I told him that there were things worse than going to Camp LeJeune in 1968 and I would take my chances. I don't gamble anymore.

The rules were fairly simple. I received 30 days of free leave for extending but I had to start taking them before my normal rotation date. I was also entitled to 10 days travel but if I was gone from the 1st battalion, 26th Marines for more than 40 days I would be charged regular leave for those excess days. I could go anywhere in the world for free. Initially I was planning on going to Europe with Ross Brown who also had extended but my Dad was ill with cancer (I had already been home for emergency leave in October) and he was not expected to live much longer. I made the decision just to go home and spend some time with family and friends.

Like most lieutenants I really did not know the system and for some reason I thought that my overseas tour started the day I arrived in Danang January 20, 1967. I didn't consider the fact that it was the date I left CONUS. So it was about February 15 when I finally got around to asking Bill Ferrall, the S-1, where my orders were. He checked and was told by 3d MARDIV G-1 that they were holding them in Phu Bai thinking that I would come and get them. I was also informed that I needed to get there ASAP before they expired. It was now late afternoon and I grabbed my pack, pistol, flak jacket and helmet and took off running to say a quick good bye to the Marines in the battalion S-3 where I worked.

When I entered the COC I was told to report to Lt/Col Wilkinson ASAP. My first impression was that he obviously knew that I was leaving. When I met him in his office at the west end of the command bunker he was very somber. The reason he called me in was to ask me if I wanted to take command of Charlie Company as Capt David Earnst had been severely wounded and was about to be evacuated. He also told me that Sgt Major Gaynor had also

been wounded and was in critical condition. When I informed him of my orders he didn't hesitate and told me to see to my father as I could always get another command. He was and still is a very wise man.

After my quick good bye I took off for the airstrip. Once there I met Lt King from 3d Battalion, 26th Marines who had just arrived by helicopter from Hill 881S. In his hands was a WP bag with the remains of a Marine hit by a mortar. We walked over to Graves Registration together. He was going home also so we soon both started walking over to where the outgoing passengers were waiting. It was then when a corpsman came over and asked us for help.

A CH-53 was inbound and was going to take out the wounded including David and Sgt Major Gaynor. I volunteered to be a stretcher bearer for Sgt Major Gaynor. Once the CH-53 landed the usual NVA response began and we ran out through the incoming and loaded the chopper as it made its turn without stopping. It was just starting to get dark but we were on our way.

King gave a cigarette to Capt Earnst and I held the IV bottle for the Sgt Maj. The Sgt Major was failing and I found myself squeezing the IV bottle in frustration. By the time we got to Dong Ha it was dark and the Sgt Major had turned gray. King and I made our way to Delta Med and became separated as we were asked to perform different tasks. It was a bad night, Sgt Major Gaynor didn't make it.

I spent January 16th at the battalion rear in Phu Bai. The base was a mess, Marines were moving out and the Army was moving in. When I checked into the Division Personnel Office I was assisted by a crusty Warrant Officer who was stunned when I requested to return to 1/26 after my leave. I assured him that the siege would be over by then and that I just wanted to continue to serve with my friends. He gave me one of those looks and said 'Well OK, Lt!"

That night I found my way to what was left of the Division's officers club. It was also in complete disarray with nothing to drink but crème de menthe. Several lieutenants, all recent arrivals were sitting on some crates watching the night sky over Hue explode with star clusters. I joined them and told them what Khe Sanh was like. Soon the same Warrant Officer appeared and came over to us. He was looking for volunteers to go to the 5th Marines in Hue, but clearly said to me that I was going home and not to even think about it.

The next day, I linked up with King in Danang and after a brief visit to the Danang Press Club (that's another story) we flew to Okinawa and beautiful Camp Hanson. Walking down the main drag to the mess hall I ran into Sgt McNeil, Lt/Col Wilkinson's former driver and radioman. I asked him if he could go on liberty with King and myself. He informed me that only Staff NCO's and officers were authorized off base liberty. I said we could fix that and later that night the three of us piled into a cab, with McNeil in the middle. When asked for our IDs at the main gate, King and I placed our cards on the window glass, McNeil held his up and they didn't check his rank. So we all had a good time in Kim village!

The flight home was uneventful and soon I was home at our house in Point Lookout, New York. It was February 21, 1968. There was no time for adjustment. A week earlier I had been cold, wet and surrounded by 40,000 NVA, now I was drinking Rusty Nails, eating steak, sleeping in my childhood bed and watching my buddies slugging it out on the nightly news on TV.

It being winter in New York, I soon realized I didn't have enough winter clothes. My mother had donated what had been left of my college clothes when I went of to Vietnam a year earlier. My sister, who thought I was a lunatic for extending my tour, took me out shopping and tried to make me look civilized.

A few days later, my sister and I went to see " I Never Sang For My Father" on Broadway. New York City seemed to be in another universe.

My parents were supportive of what I was doing but were concerned about my return to Vietnam. I had asked to go back to 1/26 even though I could have requested another assignment, but that was were my friends were. My Dad, being "Old Irish" said little but understood. My mother, whose brothers had seen the worst of World War I, never gave up hope.

Reading the newspapers was a stressful event as the reporting of the war was to say the least pessimistic. Everyday someone was saying that the Marines were

in imminent danger of being overrun. I didn't believe it for a minute.

I borrowed my sister's car and headed to Washington DC to visit some of my college buddies who were in either law school or dental school at Georgetown. Unlike them I had spending money so we were able to get me to the point where I didn't think of the war as much. I took several other trips to visit friends including flights to Boston, Pittsburgh and Rochester.

I was trying to catch a military standby seat to Boston on Eastern Airlines in order to save a bit of money when I received a gift of kindness. The stand by line was very long but I was prepared for a long wait. To fly military stand by in those days, you had to be in uniform. I was in the line only a few minutes when a flight attendant asked me to follow her. We went around the line and through a door where I met the captain of the plane. He told me I had a jump seat in the cockpit if I wanted one. I was on my way!

Boston was a great college town and my college roommate was in graduate school at Boston College. He was married and lived right next to the campus. Finding dates was not a problem. One day as I was walking down the street my eye caught that infamous copy of Newsweek with the siege on the cover. I was shocked to see inside the pictures of Bravo's dead. I recognized Lt Jacques and several others. It made me ill. To this day I have never bought another copy of Newsweek.

I soon took off for Rochester and was bumped up to First Class on the request of a bunch of businessmen who were all WWII veterans. By the time I got to Rochester I was pretty well oiled. My return flight to New York was delayed due to a snow storm so I spent St. Patrick's Day in the Holiday Inn at the airport.

When I arrived in Pittsburgh I ran into Pat Fitch of Bravo Company and formerly of H&S Company in the airport. I knew Pat quite well from his work in the S-1 shop. When he saw me, he ran up and gave me a hug. It was then that I heard the complete story of the "Ghost Patrol". Pat's tour was over and he was on his way home on leave. It was a very emotional meeting.

It was soon time to get back to the war. I flew to San Francisco and took the bus to Travis Air Force Base. After checking in at Travis I ran into a bunch of CH-46 pilots at the officers Club. They were on their way to Danang and pumped me with questions and a few drinks. Soon we took off for Okinawa but we got diverted to Japan because of a typhoon. Having spent most of our money before leaving, we arrived at an Air Force Base in Japan fairly broke. The slot machines became a godsend and we were able to win enough to go to dinner in Tokyo.

On March 31st I arrived in Danang via Okinawa and made my way north to Phi Bai. As my travel and leave had expired due to the side trip to Japan I was eager to get back to the battalion. I went to Division Disbursing and picked up the payroll knowing it would give me priority at the landing zone.

The helicopter pad was total chaos. There were more Marines in line than boat spaces available. I went to the shack where a corporal was trying to bring order to the mob and identified myself as a pay officer. Knowing the rules he put me on the top of the manifest. Behind me was a tall Marine captain. He was immediately displeased that I had priority and he did not. After a few words with the corporal he was given a slot right behind me. He still wasn't happy. I introduced myself and he told me he was Captain Champion and was on his way to take over Bravo Company. I said I was from 1/26 and if we got in safely I could take him to the CP, or at least where it was when I left. He looked at me funny but I realized that he had not yet been the subject of a full blown NVA artillery attack. Convinced that I was about to die anyway, I may have appeared flippant to him.

The flight in on a CH-34 was uneventful until, of course, the landing which must have been very exciting to the uninitiated. We jumped out into a sheaf of incoming, finding defilade behind the burnt out wreckage of another helicopter. Captain Champion's eyes could not have been larger. He said "what do we do now Lieutenant?" I looked around to get my bearings and decided that since 950 and 1015 appeared to be in the same place as when I left that I could find the CP by dead reckoning. We made our way through the rubble to the road that led to the COC and I advised Captain Champion to keep an eye out for a hole to jump into on short notice.

As was my habit in those days I was whistling when we entered the COC bunker. Almost immediately I heard the words "pay up". Seems that the radio operators and journal clerks had a bet going about whether I would actually return. After the initial reaction Corporals Mattingly and Sheetz came over and greeted me. They smelled like, well you know, but I was glad to see them. The bunker was a pit. Filthy only begins the description. Dark, damp and dismal was a start. I reported formally to my new battalion commander, Lt/Col F.J. McEwan, who understandably was in a rather foul mood. I asked about my assignment and he told me that I would stay in the S-3 until we left Khe Sanh and maybe longer. We have work for you he said. I went back to the COC and settled in and got up to speed. I was back in the war but I was also home.

I soon learned the details of what had transpired while I was gone and of Bravo Company's bayonet charge a few days before. The bad news was given to me slowly by Bill Ferral the S-1. I had lost a number of good friends, both from H&S Company and from my days in Alpha Company. It was time to get back to work and prepare for Pegasus.

INCOMING

The Football Player

by Craig W. Tourte

Another "I wanted to do" story, "but..."

So I have been playing golf on Tuesdays with the group from our little neighborhood pub around the corner. I'm just a little younger than most, but there are a few Vietnam Vets, and a couple left from the Korean War. Most are civilians and didn't goers. About 20 who got no closer to a battle than their television sets, or the latest Life magazine. All in all they treat me well. Just leave me alone and we'll all get along just fine. After golf, while at the pub a few of us trade war stories. The bulk of talk seems to be about operations and illnesses as opposed to the topic of several years ago. You know what I'm talking about.

We have a former professional football player in the group. He played in the early or mid 60's for the Detroit Lions. After ball, he went on to management. The guy is in his early 70's, but still a great jock. About Elvis's age, I think. He is quite the hero around town, looked up to by the patrons. He's full of football stories about games and players long forgotten .

We piled into different automobiles for the ride to the golf course. The football guy asked me to ride with him because he was unsure of the way. That was a little odd; since he has lived most of his adult life, aside from college, and playing professional football, in this town. On the way to the golf course the conversation started with the usual small talk. I was proud that this guy who is so admired by all, asked me to ride with him.

About 10 minutes into the ride he got real quiet and turns to me and says: "Craig, I just wanted to let you know that I tried to sign up, but I had real bad knees and couldn't pass the physical." He said the day of the Marine Corps Birthday, he happened to be in the bar and heard a few of us as we sat around and talked about Khe Sanh. At first I didn't know what he was talking about until I turned to look at him. I saw a little tear in his eye. He said that he had always wanted to go into the service but could never pass the physical. I asked him when he could have served. He told me that Korea had gotten over and Vietnam had not yet started. I didn't know what to say. I think I said: "that's all right," but I'm not really sure.

The point of this story is that I get pretty sick of the excuses I have heard over the years from the one's who ran away so that others could take their place, but I am also touched by those who try to tell me in their own way that they do appreciate those who answered the call. I think it was a big deal for this tough, old, professional football player; the hero of so many Sundays and stories, local athlete who is looked upon and admired by so many, to even address the subject with me. I was stunned that he would feel so guilty in my presence. It must have been difficult. I appreciated him feeling that we were something special. I knew deep down in his heart that we were all heroes to him, and that he knew he could never be one of us.

SHORT ROUNDS

Tommy, this was written by Justin Tobish, the son of Harrold Tobis. Harrold served with Golf 2/3 and Bravo 1/1.
Tom Horchler

TO OUR SOLDIERS COME HOME

Being returned to a society which they were sent to protect, some were praised as heroes, some spat on in disgust, some shunned because they could not return to the nine to five and softball and barbeques on the weekends. These are men who now see through different eyes. Eyes that search for meaning with a vacant far off stare. These same eyes that witnessed the inhumanity and horror of war first hand, forever seared into their minds, forever changing their beings.

Some bare scars of the flesh, but it is the wounds of their souls which take the most time to heal. For this they turn to each other. Forever bonded together by the blood of their fallen brothers, and the tears that have fallen since, they again band together to fight a different battle. This battlefield is not laid with mines, or filled with the roaring din of battle. These men fight to find reason and closure for the acts that are inevitably performed, or witnessed by soldiers in a time of war. Why so much death? Why are they left behind? Why is innocence lost to so many? These are questions that have no answers. The only truths are the screams and cries echoing from their past. Time may help to quiet these echoes a bit.

For some the sounds will never die down. For others they may. However slight or great their healing is a testament to their allegiance to one another. Knowing and relating to one another that they are not society's rejects, or cold blooded savages, but brave men who have been to the very limits of mans' nature. Only now are some coming to grips with their past, through the open arms of each other. So to you heroes, I salute you with immeasurable respect and pride. From this young citizen, appreciation and gratitude.

SHORT ROUNDS

Publishers Note: My two brothers (both served in Vietnam) and recently helped out at the Chicago Reunion, wanted to wish the membership a Holiday greeting. The pictures are from the Veterans Day celebration this year in Chicago Illinois.

A HOLIDAY GREETING FROM THE UNITED STATES ARMY



L-R Robert Eichler 1st CAV, Mayor Richard M. Daley, Dennis Eichler 25th Infantry Division,



Robert and Denny with Allen J. Lynch
Medal Of Honor recipient



Robert and Denny with Chicago Police Commander James Keating



L-R Roger McGill 25th Inf Div, Robert Eichler 1st Cav, Patrick Quinn Lt. Governor Illinois, Dennis Eichler 25th Inf Div.

WE GET PICTURES

These photos sent in by Robert A. Hall were taken in Okinawa shortly before he deployed for Vietnam. They are from late 1966 or 1967. The unit on his back is, a 53LB, TRC-27 multiplex unit, which Radio Relay types might recognize.





POETRY

'Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone,
in a one-bedroom house made of plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney with presents to give,
and to see just who in this home did live.

I looked all about, a strange sight I did see,
no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.

No stocking by mantle, just boots filled with sand,
on the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.

With medals and badges, awards of all kinds,
a sober thought came through my mind.

For this house was different, it was dark and dreary,
I found the home of a Veteran, once I could see clearly.

The Veteran lay sleeping, silent, alone,
curled up on the floor in this one bedroom home.

The face was so gentle, the room so unclean,
not how I pictured a United States Veteran.
Was this the hero of whom I'd just read?

Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?
I realized the families that I saw this night,
owed their lives to these Veterans, willing to fight.

Soon 'round the world, the children would play,
and grownups would celebrate a bright Christmas Day.

They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year,
because of the Veterans, like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder how many lay lone,
on a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home.

The very thought brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees and started to cry.

The Veteran awakened and I heard a rough voice,
"Santa don't cry, this life is my choice;

I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more,
my life is my God, my country, my Corps."

The Veteran rolled over and drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours, so silent and still
and we both shivered in the night's cold chill.

I didn't want to leave on that cold, dark night,
this guardian of honor so willing to fight.

Then the Veteran rolled over, with a voice soft and pure,
whispered, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas Day, all is secure."

One look at my watch, and I knew he was right.
"Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a good night."

UNKNOWN

WE GET PICTURES

Jack Corbett submitted the following photograps: Picture # 1 shows him and Mike Urban who he has not seen since they served together at Khe Sanh. Both were with H&S 1/26 81MM Gun One. Jack ran into his old friend at the Marine Corps Birthday Party this year at Cookie's Tavern in Philadelphia. Picture Number 2 taken by John in 1968, shows Mike right after he dropped a round down their mortar tube. Picture # 3 is at Khe Sanh near their mortar pit.







Publisher Note:
Looking at Picture # 1, it is hard to believe John Corbett is that wholesome young Marine pictured on the cover of the KSV Poem Book.

THOUGHTS AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas Eve 2006

Greetings Marines:
During my lifetime of 62 years (44 years as a U.S. Marine) I have met precious few combat leaders of Marines. Our Lt/Colonel Jim Wilkinson, Captain Ernie Spencer, Lt/Colonel Charlie Davis and Lt/ Colonel Ken Pipes are truly our Marine Leaders.
Semper Fidelis,

The pebble filled C rat cans were hung on the wire with great care
With armed Claymores in place the NVA would not dare
When up on 950 there arose such a clatter
J B was alerted and said what on earth is the matter?
We popped some alum and alerted Spooky 1-4
Then called in the 81's, the best in the Corps
On Alfa, on Bravo, on Charlie and Delta
Even Ross' cooks and bakers were digging deep in their shelter
The noise got so loud even the rats left their nests
The NVA realized they had challenged the best
So they slipped away, over the crest
Dr. Ed had finished some C rat Candy
And said I think I'll open a medicinal brandy
The Motor T officer stumbled into a ditch and fell on his bean
His tour was shortened but his record stayed clean
Young T-Bone was manning an LP at Midnight
When he saw ole Santa through his trusty Starlight
He heard him exclaim to all at Khe Sanh 'ere he sped out of sight "Happy Christmas to all and to all a goodnight!"
Colonel Ross Brown

MEMOIRS

A Christmas Story worth Repeating
Kilo 3/26 Christmas at Khe Sanh
By Dennis Mannion K 3/26

Like weary travelers, who finally get to rest in the comfort of their own homes after a week of constant motion and movement, the members of Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment spread out into the foxholes and bunkers that made up the company's perimeter at Khe Sanh. It was Christmas Eve 1967, and we had just returned from a four-day operation that had taken us west of the combat base into the rugged hills and terrain of the Khe Sanh Plateau. Despite minimal creature comforts at the base, it was a relief to know that we didn't have to hike those hills for a while. That alone was a legitimate Christmas present.

In terms of the physical setting and the expected sounds and colors, this was sure to be my bleakest holiday ever, but it remains the Christmas that stands apart from all the others, and the one which memory doesn't confuse, over three decades later. My radioman, Dave Krom, and I headed straight for the position that we had constructed the previous week. Even though it was just two foxholes covered with a tent-like affair of scrounged parachute silk, we felt elated to be home for the holidays. At mid-day, a rumor which had been circulating since the previous morning turned into reality. An arriving helicopter touched down just outside the company area, and mailbag after mailbag began to spill out onto the ground!

The distribution of our Christmas mail, which had been held in storage for nearly two weeks, required the work of scores of Marines as there were thousands of letters and hundreds of "care packages." More than anything else, it was the sheer volume of these packages that brought a festive, holiday atmosphere to our corner of the war. Denied a chance to

be in the real world, it was as if its realities had been sent to us, and each package opened helped to reduce the tensions and the fears accumulated during the previous week.

By late afternoon, Kilo Company was almost giddy with child-like happiness and Christmas spirit. Since Dave and I had not drawn perimeter guard that night (another present), we settled in under our parachute hooch to feast on our collective packages and to recall Christmas memories from earlier years. With our military gear relegated to the sides of the tent, the war almost seemed to have been replaced with plentiful food, laughter, and friendship. Considering how the previous four months had been spent, we had another gift to be thankful for, we were still around for the holiday while a number of our companions were not. Sometime after midnight, wrapped in a poncho-liner and surrounded with gentle memories of home and the holidays, I drifted off to sleep thinking of my family and mostly my mother.

I was jolted out of my sleep on Christmas morning by the sound of "Jingle Bells!" Two Marine Corps helicopters with Santa's painted on their sides were making repeated passes over the combat base, and loudspeakers mounted in the doors were playing one Christmas song after another. It was incredible! Within seconds, people from all over were up, out, and on their feet to cheer and to wave. The show didn't last more than 10 minutes, but it was enough to get our day off to a magical start.

At noon, a Catholic chaplain celebrated mass out in the open, and as I sauntered over, I was suddenly struck with the thought that 12 noon on Christmas Day in Vietnam corresponded exactly with 12 midnight on Christmas Eve in Connecticut. While I knelt with rifle in hand in the red dust of Khe Sanh, my family was kneeling in the pews of St. Mary's Church in New Haven for Midnight Mass. It was the only time in my 13 month tour when I knew exactly what members of my family were doing at a given moment. I used to wonder and guess at their actions and activities from time to time, but in this short period of mass and remembrance, I was linked to them with a bond that stretched over 15,000 miles. In spite of the distance, I never felt closer to any of them as I did at that moment, and the simple act of closing my eyes seemed to move me out of the war and into the comfortable surroundings of family and home.

By nightfall, Christmas morning in Connecticut, I was strapping on the weapons and gear of an infantryman and preparing to move to an ambush position outside our protective barbed wire. Our route out the gate took us directly across the very ground where mass had been said earlier, and where, through the miracle of Christ's birth, I was permitted to stand for a moment at a window to the world.

INCOMING

Message From Editorial staff:

The Khe Sanh Veterans sent complimentary copies of our publication to every Veterans Hospital and Veteran Centers in the United States during the early 1990s. As the magazine grew in size this became a financial liability for the Khe Sanh Veterans, and we discontinued the practice.

We have recently began sending the Red Clay to the **Wounded Warriors** from Iraq, at both Camp Lejeune, NC. and Camp Pendelton, CA. We would like to again continue sending the Red Clay to the Veterans Hospitals and Veteran Centers.

What we propose is that a member, or members send in a $50.00 Donation. This donation would be specifically designated for the purpose of sending a one year subscription (10 magazines each issue) to the Hospital or Center of your choice.

Each magazine mailing would be accompanied by a letter with the name of the Khe Sanh Veteran/s making the contribution. This donation package would also be available to non KSV subscribers to our magazine who wish to participate. Please let us know your thoughts on this proposal. NO WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE. How about YOU reading this, stepping up to the plate.
$ 50 is the cost of a nice dinner with the spouse. This is a worthy cause. We need to get our message out to more people.

Happy Holidays KSV Staff

COPY & SEND REGISTRATION FORM

KHE SANH VETERANS Inc. 2007 REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, and tour costs. Please enter number of people attending, which tours and the Saturday Memorial Banquet. Send amount payable to Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. Make a copy of this form before mailing, your Check or Money order will serve as your confirmation. Refunds, Cancellations (2 Weeks Prior To Reunion– If Non Emergency) For questions call Tom Eichler (773) 625-2101
Fax (773) 625-8021 Email Teic1448@aol.com. **NOTE: We Are Now Accepting All Major Credit Cards For Reunion Registration**

Make Check or Money Order Payable To: **KHE SANH VETERANS Inc**

Credit Card Information **Circle Card Being Used**

Registration Includes Hospitality Room Administrative Cost & Bus Transportation to Three Scheduled Events. Banquet cost covers Liquor & Food Licenses For Hospitality Room.	**$ 35.00**		
Monday 02 July 07 Free Day (Early Arrivals Enjoy DC)			
Tuesday 03 July 07 Registration Begins 0900-1800 Free Day Hospitality Room Opens			
Wednesday 04 July 07 Registration 0900-1100 Bus Trip To Vietnam Memorials 1200-1700	No Fee		
Thursday 05 July 07 Registration 0900–1100 Bus Trip To New Marine Corps Museum 1200-1700 Lunch Available At Museum Cafeteria	No Fee		
Friday 06 July 07 Registration 0900-1200 Bus Trip To Marine Corps Legendary Sunset Parade 8Th & I , Washington DC (Prior To Sunset)	No Fee		
Saturday 07 July 07 Memorial Banquet (Buffet) 6:00 Cocktail Hour, Dancing	**$ 40.00**		
Total Amount Payable To Khe Sanh Veterans			

OFFICE USE ONLY
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Send Check, Money Order Or Credit Card Info To:
Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.
3168 Meadow Field Dr
Arnold Mo, 63010-3751

Name On Card:	Visa	Master Card	Discover	Amex
Card Number:	Other Card Types:			
Expiration Date:	Three Digit Code On Back Of Card			

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Name:		Unit Served With:	
Spouse Or Companion's Name			
Other Guest Names: (1)	(2)	(3)	
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NOTICE TO MEMBERSHIP

We are starting a new magazine section to thank those members who contribute so generously to the" Khe Sanh Veterans. Their contributions allow us to continue to expand and improve our Red Clay magazine. There will be four levels of contributions: SILVER $ 20.00-50.00, GOLD over 50.00-200.00, PLATINUM over 200.00-1,000, and DIAMOND over 1,000. Each member will receive a new member-ship card, corresponding with their level of contribution.

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DAWDY. James H. Jr.

PLATINUM

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FRUGONI, Charles
GABLE, Vincent L
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MERCADO, Saturno
MEYER, Donald J
MORGAN, Robert I
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MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY NEW YEAR



This Modified Christmas Card is a copy of an original issued by the 3rd Marine Division, Vietnam 1968

ISSUE 68

SPRING

2007

THE KHE SANH VETERANS'

RED CLAY



COVER STORY (DISASTER AT DONG HA) PAGES 16-18 PHOTOS & STORY BY MIKE PRESTON CBMU-301 DET B

OTHER FEATURED STORIES

RESCUE AT KHAM DUC	23-29	VALOR ON HILL 689	62-64
OPERATION HICKORY	47-53	THE BATTLE FOR HILL 488	72-83

IT WASN'T MOM'S HOME COOKING BUT SOMETIMES IT TASTED LIKE STEAK SEE PAGES 42-45 FOR ADDITIONAL PHOTOS AND C-RATION ARTICLE. SURE BRINGS BACK MEMORIES.





















SECRETARY'S NOTE:

I just wanted to remind the membership that we have invited two veteran Service Bureau officers from New Jersey to the reunion. If you have been contemplating filing a claim for PTSD, bring all supporting documentation with you. If you are already receiving 30% through 70% bring your DD-214 , and supporting documentation, John Dorrity noted he can handle your case from New Jersey with no problem and bring you up to 100%. Please pass the word if you know of any member seeking help with filing a claim. Both Bureau Officers are highly proficient at what they do and have volunteered their services.

The DC reunion should be one of the largest the KSV have held. We are expecting many new members. Registrations show that many are bringing their family to make it an extended vacation. This is your chance to see the many sites our Nations Capital offers. Please support our PX and bring a few items for our silent auction, which supports our Magazine RED CLAY. Hope to see you all there.

Big John Pessoni

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

Just a reminder that there will be an election for President and several Director positions at the reunion. All members seeking to run for a position should notify me in writing, prior to the reunion. Call me if you need to know the qualifications required for the positions that are up for re-election.

There are still a lot of members who have not paid their 2007 dues. Please try to get those delinquent dues in prior to the Reunion so we can complete an accurate budget for the upcoming year and still print three issues of our Magazine **Red Clay**.

Russell Turner
President KSV

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
Col Harry Alderman USMC C/O 3/26 Passed Away 4 Feb 07	Khe Sanh Veterans
Cpl. Reuben C. McMackins "MAC" L Co 3/26 USMC KIA 14 Apr 68 Hill 881N	Tom Pierce
SgtMaj James T. Gaynor H&S Co 1/26 USMC KIA 15 Feb 68	Col. John Kaheny A Co 1/26
L/Cpl Gregory F. Popowitz B Co 3RD Recon USMC KIA 24 Jan 68	John G. Hernandez Fox Co 2/3
L/Cpl Thomas J. Sweeney C Co 1/26 USMC KIA 26 Feb 68	John G. Hernandez Fox Co 2/3
James Stewart 1/9 USMC Passed Away April 1971	John G. Hernandez Fox Co 2/3
Thomas B. Eusanio HMM-161-164 USMC Passed Away Jan 6 2007	Khe Sanh Veterans
Michael W. Sayers B Co 1/9 USMC Passed Away 21 Nov 2006	Khe Sanh Veterans
Terry Meek E CO 2/26 USMC Passed Away Feb 04 2007	Khe Sanh Veterans

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Cliff Treese.....Member At Large
Dale Pack .....Member At Large
George Myrick.....Member At Large
Thomas Ford.....Member At Large
Robert Moxley..... Member At Large
Dan Fisher..... Member At Large

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OBITUARIES



RICK DEARING USMC
CHARLIE CO 1/26

I am sending this e-mail to advise the passing of my brother Rick Dearing. Rick was in C Co 1/26 from January 1968 until February 1969 and at Khe Sanh the entire duration of the siege. When I arrived in August 1968 I hooked up with him for a visit at Troi River bridge and we went to Japan on R&R Christmas of 1968. Rick finished his tour as a SSgt stationed at HMX-1 flying with Marine One during the Nixon presidency. When discharged, he entered law enforcement and retired from DEA as a GS-14 ASAC in Washington, DC a year and a half ago. He was currently working for Booz & Allen. He suffered a heart attack while at work. We were both Marines and in law enforcement together. I will miss him. Another Marine to guard the Pearly Gates of Heaven.
Semper Fi
H.H. "Duke" Dearing
USMC 1960-71

THOMAS J. KERR USMC HMM-164
1947-2007

Tommy Kerr, a Vietnam veteran and railroad worker, could be a bit gruff, but that's not what his former Boy Scout troop members remember most about the Greenwood resident. "He loved that Scout troop," said Eric Denney said of Mr. Kerr, 59, who died Wednesday from heart-related problems. The makeup of Mr. Kerr's Troop 270 looked a bit like a lineup of characters from a sitcom, Denney said. About half the kids were from a church, and some came from economically disadvantaged homes. Under Mr. Kerr's leadership, they became a close-bit group. Mr. Kerr provided the spark that led Deaney and others to become Eagle Scouts. Mr. Kerr had a couple of rules about fighting. If his Scouts got into a fight, Mr. Kerr made it clear he would take on the winner. If they fought with a Scout from another troop, Mr. Kerr never condoned it but wanted to bow whether they had won.

Other Scouts probably heard campfire stories on camping trips, Denney said. 'We heard stories about **Khe Sanh,"** he said, speaking of Mr. Kerr's experience as a Marine. Mr. Kerr grew up in a small town in upstate New York and met his wife, Linda, at a wedding in Fort Wayne, right after he returned from Vietnam. She was attracted by his "pretty" eyes and fell in love with him. He was stationed in North Carolina and vowed to come back for her when she turned 18. He did.

The couple moved to Greenwood in 1980 after he landed a job with Amtrak, where he was a general foreman. They joined Christ Our Shepard Church of the Brethren, where he also was an associate pastor; and he agreed to start a Boy Scout troop. More recently he was a member of Greenwood Christian Life Church. Some of the kids Mr. Kerr invited came from families who didn't have much, so he helped buy their uniforms. If a Scout had a problem, Mr. Kerr helped, even if it meant taking a boy to the library to make sure he was doing his homework, his wife said. In his own way Mr. Kerr was paying back the type of help he received from adults who took a special interest in him when he was a boy, his wife said. "I think that kind of rubbed off," The Kerr's had bought a 5-acre ranch near Spencer, where Mr. Kerr planned to work with horses after he retired in May. He already was planning to hold a hog toast there to celebrate

Other survivors include daughters Alisha Ann Hess and Nicole Jeanne Kerry Taylor; his twin brother, Douglas L. Kerr Jr.; another brother, Roger Kern and a sister, Nancy I Hammond.. Mr. Kerr's Scouts, who once called him "Sarge," served as pallbearers.

OBIT



COLONEL HARRY L. ALDERMAN, USMC COMMANDING OFFICER THIRD BATTALION TWENTY SIXTH MARINE REGIMENT



Colonel Harry L. Alderman, 79, died Sunday, February 4, 2007, at his home in Burleson. He had Alzheimer's disease. Funeral services are 10:00 a.m. Wednesday at Crosier Pearson Mayfield Funeral Home in Burleson. Inurnment is planned at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. Visitation was 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, February 6, 2007, at the funeral home. A native of Clovis, CA, Col. Alderman enlisted in 1945 and served aboard the cruiser USS Huntington as part of the WWII European Occupation. He was commissioned in 1948 and fought in the Korean War which included the Battle of Chosin Reservoir. Following his return, he served as aide to Major General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller and participated in an amphibious landing of Beirut, Lebanon in 1958. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Col. Alderman served as executive officer of a deployed battalion.

During the Vietnam War, Col. Alderman served as commander of the Third Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines in the siege of Khe Sanh and later served as executive officer of Task Force Clearwater, a Riverine Force unit. He retired in 1974 while serving at Marine Corps Headquarters in Arlington, VA. Harry was preceded in death by his wife, Patricia, in 1973. Survivors include sons, Robert Bruce Alderman of Alexandria, VA and Brian Joseph Alderman of Austin, TX; daughters, Joanne Elaine Webb of Austin, TX, Helen Christine Alderman of Burleson, TX and Nancy Claire Bilderback of Houston, TX.

M/SGT GERALD E. "JERRY" HONN
USMC KSV
H&S Co 1/26
April 30, 1936-May 3, 2006

Mr. Honn was born in Bradley, Ill. to the late Joseph George Honn and Pearl Geneva Wheeler Honn and was married to Dolores White Honn.

He was owner of Jerry's Lawn and Grounds Maintenance Service and was retired Master Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps. During his twenty years of service to his country, he was awarded the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal with Silver Star, the National Defense Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon with Star, the Vietnam Service Medal with 3 Stars, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. Jerry spent two years in Vietnam serving with the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, 5th Marine Division. His last five months in Vietnam was at Khe Sanh in 1968.

After retiring from the Marine Corps in 1974, Jerry moved his family from New River Air Station in Jacksonville to Goldsboro. He attended Wayne Community College where he earned a degree in Turf Management.

Recently, Jerry became very interested in the arts and began painting with the Soul's Palette, a special group formed to nurture the emotional needs of patients who have serious, chronic illnesses through Southeastern Medical Oncology Center. A memorial service was held at Main Street Cemetery with full military honors.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his sons, Gerald E. "Jed" Honn and wife Joanne of Goldsboro, and Gregory A. Honn of Fla.; sister Donna Krizan of Odessa, Fla.; brothers J. Michael Honn and Jan of Kankakee, Ill. and James K. Honn and Anita of Gilman, Ill.; and grandchildren, Emily Madison Honn and Brittany Honn. Jerry was preceded in death by son Jeffrey Honn and sister Joyce Honn.



INCOMING

Mike Clausen MOH

Mike Fishbaugh
FLS-FLSG

Monument to Raymond "Mike" Clausen, Jr. Unveiled

By Debra Lemoine
Advocate Florida parishes bureau
January 28, 2007

Description for Photo: Former U.S. Marine Lance Corporal's. Steve Bish, left, and Ed West, center, along with retired helicopter pilot Col. Walt Ledbetter view the monument unveiled in Ponchatoula Cemetery on Saturday recognizing Medal of Honor recipient Pfc. Raymond 'Mike' Clausen Jr.

PONCHATOULA -- Hundreds stood in the pouring rain to watch a parade in Hammond that welcomed Medal of Honor recipient Raymond "Mike" Clausen Jr. home from the Vietnam War on July 31, 1971.

Almost 36 years later, another crowd stood in the cold, drizzling rain to honor the U.S. Marine again Saturday morning. This time, they unveiled a monument at his gravesite in the Ponchatoula Cemetery detailing his heroic actions that led to the nation's highest military citation being presented to him. What drew the veterans and Ponchatoula and Hammond residents to this site Saturday was a man they loved for his bravery who said what he thought despite the consequences, friends said. Yet they credit his impulsive nature to saving the lives of 19 Marines trapped in a minefield near DaNang, Vietnam, on Jan. 31, 1970.

"He was a Marine you wanted with you when you were really in trouble," said retired Col. Walt Ledbetter, the commanding officer of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263. Ledbetter flew the mission that led to Pfc. Clausen's medal. Ledbetter received the Navy Cross for the same mission. Clausen died at age 56 from liver disease on May 30, 2004. Since then, retired State Trooper and Vietnam veteran Phillip Monteleone of Ponchatoula spearheaded the formation of the Mike Clausen Foundation and efforts to raise $19,000 to pay for the memorial. The memorial wall includes a carving of Clausen and an artist's rendering of the mission that led to Clausen's medal. The other side displays a narrative of Clausen's Medal of Honor citation signed by President Richard Nixon.

"This is not only for him," said retired Lance Cpl. Ed West, one of the Marines rescued by Clausen. "This is your Vietnam Wall in south Louisiana." Clausen did three tours in Vietnam and flew in more than 1,900 combat missions, Ledbetter said. On Jan. 31, 1970, Ledbetter briefed his crew on a mission to rescue two platoons trapped in a minefield. He warned the Marine crewmen not to get off the helicopter or they, too, would need rescuing.

"I lowered the ramp," he said. "Mike Clausen looked out on that minefield and he knew what needed to be done. Six times he walked out of that aircraft. If he had not done that, the mission would not have succeeded." Ledbetter said Clausen's entry into the minefield while under enemy fire meant that the pilot had to land in that field only three times to collect all of the men. If Clausen remained inside, Ledbetter said he would have had to land in that minefield six to eight times, increasing the chances that the rescuers would have landed on a mine as well. The platoons were "Kingfisher" forces, dropped into battles by helicopters to surprise enemy forces. Once the platoons landed, they surprised the targeted North Vietnamese troops, who ran for the tree line for safety, said retired Lance Corporal Steve Bish, a radio operator on the ground during the fight.

The Marines followed and ended up in the minefield, he said. With directions from helicopter pilots surveying the scene from above, Bish was able to walk out of the field unharmed. Others, such as West, who lost both his legs when a mine exploded, were killed or wounded by a mine before they could be picked up by rescuers. West said he never had a chance to meet Clausen again after that mission. He saw Clausen only twice - once when Clausen carried him from the minefield on a stretcher and then again when Clausen covered West with flight jackets to keep him warm enough to avoid going into shock from his wounds.

In civilian life, Clausen graduated from Hammond High School before signing up for the Marines. He married his wife, Lois, in 1976 and moved to Ponchatoula. He also survived a debilitating car crash, having to relearn how to read and write during his recovery, Lois Clausen said. He also worked as an inspector for Boeing at its aircraft refurbishing facility at Lake Charles, and she traveled every weekend from their home in Ponchatoula to see him there, she said. "He was a wonderful person," Lois Clausen said. "Everybody likes him."

INCOMING

Vietnam-Era Marines Recall Siege

By Betty Porter
For Florida Today

Palm Bay, three former Marines who survived the Vietnam War's Siege of Khe Sanh told American History students at Brevard Community College recently that the experience forever cemented them as brothers. The three decorated men: Cliff Treese of Palm Bay; Philip Mineer of Fort Myers; and Ronald Shouse of Winston-Salem, N.C., said they



are committed to keeping alive the memory of the 1,267 U.S. soldiers who died in the battle 39 years ago. Khe Sanh Marines are eternally bonded, said Treese, who lost an arm in the fight. The Khe Sanh Combat Base was a remote American outpost that initially came under sporadic attack by North Vietnamese forces in the spring of 1967, only to come under full-scale siege by January 1968. Eventually, American forces drove through to rescue the embattled Marines by April 1968.

Though credited as a military victory for the United States, the strategic significance isn't fully understood today. Some historians suggest the siege was a diversion preceding the Tet Offensive, others theorize the North Vietnamese planned to replicate previous military victories at Khe Sanh and attempt a knockout punch of American forces. It took a while for me to be able to tell some of my experiences from my tour in Vietnam, but now when asked, I do answer questions about it for the

younger generation, for the simple reason that there is little or no information about the War in Vietnam in the history books, Shouse said. Treese was incorrectly listed as killed in action for three days, leading to a heartbreaking telegram to his family. Days later, he made a phone call telling his loved ones he actually survived he spent three and a half years in military hospitals. The three decorated Marines were invited to the Palm Bay campus to speak by History Department Chairman and Associate History Professor, Laura Dunn. The vets spoke to the U.S. History II classes of instructors Patrick Richards and Joe Roberts. Both classes were filled with students who were not born when the Vietnam War took place. Most of the students however, were about the same age as the three vets when they fought in Vietnam, age 18.

Eighteen-year-old student Jacob Stonecypher of Palm Bay who attended the vet's presentation in his morning U.S. History II class said, I felt personally moved by their presentation and I have a lot of respect for these men. It's cool that they are reaching out to the younger generation to help us understand what it was all about and what it was like actually being there. I didn't realize all that went on in that War and how many soldiers were killed until these three Marines spoke to us, Alicia Glass, 19, of Palm Bay said, adding, Nor did I realize how young the Marines were who fought in Vietnam.

It probably influenced my decision as to what part of history that I will do my term paper on, Josh Tuchman, 19, of Palm Bay said, adding, Their presentation was really interesting and I really want to learn more about it. Tuchman's history instructor, Joe Roberts, said he was only 13 at the time of Khe Sanh, but noted that the battle was legendary in the Marine Corps history. He said he remembers being personally entrenched and very interested in what was going on in the Vietnam War, remembering the media coverage of it, and that he especially paid close attention to it during the five years leading up to his being eligible for the draft. The war had wound down by that point, but I know that it had such an effect on me that it probably led me to became a history buff, he said. Roberts U.S. History II class viewed a 44-minute History channel video called The Battle of Khe Sanh that chronologically documented the 77-day Siege of Khe Sanh and featured in it photos and commentary by Treese. Then the class had the opportunity to ask questions of Treese and his two Marine comrade buddies as well as view up close the many Vietnam artifacts and personal photo albums the Marine trio had brought. Treese, Mineer, and Shouse will be attending a national Khe Sanh reunion this July 2-8 taking place in Washington, D.C.

INCOMING

MARINES AND THEIR CORPSMEN

Fellow KSV:
A very moving and timely story. After reading this you will begin to understand the bond that exists between Marines and their Corpsmen. We are eternally bonded by the trust and need for each other under less than desirable conditions. If I live for another 100 years, my love and respect for Marines will not have diminished one iota. Long live the Marine Corps.
Semper Fidelis!
John "Doc" Wurth
L Co 3/9

By Jim Sheeler
Rocky Mountain News

December 30, 2006 ARLINGTON, Va. The sergeant with no legs sat inside the cemetery, thinking about how this homecoming was supposed to happen. The 24-year-old Marine had spent the past two months in a hospital bed, grimacing as he devised his own painful physical regimen to strengthen the tender stumps that end just above his knees, hoping to earn his prosthetic legs early. His unit wasn't supposed to return from Iraq until April, so he figured he had plenty of time to learn how to walk. "I wanted to walk when they came off the bus to see all of them, but especially 'Doc,' " he said, referring to the last face he saw before everything went dark. "I wanted to shake his hand and say, 'Thank you.' "Wednesday morning, near the perfect rows of headstones that stretched up and along the hillsides at Arlington National Cemetery, the man in the wheelchair spoke quietly, in a soft Southern drawl. "To be honest," he said, "I'm pretty nervous about this." "You'll do fine," his mother said. The sergeant's body is still riddled with shrapnel wounds, pitting the skin on his entire left side with deep pink scars. What is left of his legs jutted from the wheelchair, filling only a fraction of his jeans,

which were folded at the place where his knees used to be. Only one hand works.

He looked over at his wife and two daughters, at his parents and the rows and rows of white marble. Somewhere out there was a fresh grave. As he entered the place known as "our nation's most sacred shrine" for the first time, the sergeant said he was unshaken by the seemingly endless headstones. What got to him, he said, are the people left behind to grieve. "I just think about all the families," he said, "and the people like myself who had to go into Arlington for this."

The sergeant's father wheeled him into a waiting room, where the Marine asked to sit in the corner, out of the way. Soon, the room was filled with crisp Navy uniforms - admirals, chiefs and hospital corpsmen, many of them sporting dress coats jingling with medals. Then, down the stairs, the sergeant saw the people who wore no uniforms, the ones who wore only grief.

As it turned out, the man with no legs didn't need to learn how to walk to welcome home Navy Hospital Corpsman Christopher A. Anderson. Doc's family walked over to him. A choice to 'go green 'Marine Sgt. Gregory Edwards took his last step Oct. 21. After six weeks in country, Alpha Company was on patrol in Ramadi, Iraq, conducting house-to-house searches when a hidden explosive detonated. He woke up and saw the hazel eyes he recognized immediately.

The lanky 24-year-old from Longmont wore a patch with two snakes intertwined around a winged staff - the caduceus, the traditional sign of a healer, and the emblem of a Navy corpsman. He was the only one of them in the squad who was not a Marine - the most important one of them all: the one they all called Doc. Before being deployed, Navy corpsmen say, they have a choice to "go blue," serving their time on a ship or stateside, or to "go green," assigned to the Marines.

Christopher "Doc" Anderson volunteered to go green. Before arriving in Iraq in early September, Anderson was assigned to Alpha Company of the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment - a group with a decorated history dating to World War I. The rookie corpsman was soon on the front with the infantry, saddled with securing some of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Iraq. Before the Marines headed to Ramadi, they had to know that the sailor from Colorado with the massive pack of medical gear was the kind of man they could trust with their lives.

Marines don't train field medics of their own; they rely on Navy hospital corpsmen, as they have for more than a century. A traditional saying holds that a Marine infantryman doesn't wonder if his corpsman will save his life - he wonders when. "When you get a new corpsman, he has to prove himself, that he can do the same things the Marines can do," Edwards said. "When we do PT (physical training), he has to keep up. When we go on our hikes, he has to carry the same ear, plus his medical gear, which must weigh an additional 30 pounds. And he can't fall back. "A fourth-generation sailor, Doc Anderson never fell back. Although relatively scrawny, it didn't take long for Anderson to prove that he could run as quickly as any of the "grunts," with the same endurance. He used his height to help shorter guys over walls and fences, following behind, always looking out. Using his medical equipment as a universal translator, and ice-breaker he treated Iraqis as well as his own men, forging trust in a place where the word often has no definition. If he saw an Iraqi child with a cut or scrape, he would paste the child with antibacterial cream and bandages and attempt to win his part of the war with Band-Aids.

Among the Marines, he earned frequent smiles, often at his own expense. He was teased endlessly for his trademark bouncy walk - a literal spring in his step - which he swore he didn't do on purpose. He stocked an endless reserve of bad jokes, the punch lines of which he would laugh at much too loud and much too long, until everyone around was laughing both with him and at him. "I like to remember the good times with Doc," Edwards said. "Sometimes he was a complete jackass." 'You're not going to die on me' One week before the funeral, the sergeant sat outside Walter Reed Army Medical Center and closed his eyes. "You're going to have to give me a minute here," he said. For weeks, he couldn't tell the story of what happened that day - he lied when asked about it, saying that he couldn't remember anything.

The problem was he could remember almost everything. On Oct. 21, his patrol had stopped in front of

one of the houses owned by a government official in Ramadi, he said. The sergeant stepped on what he thinks was a mine or a radio-controlled explosive. "I was unconscious. And when I woke up, the first face I saw was Doc Anderson," Edwards recounted. "He said, 'Don't worry about it sergeant; it's not that bad.' "The sergeant looked up and saw his legs - or what little was left of them. He saw all the blood, looked at his mangled hand and he went into shock. "Doc kept saying to me, 'Stay strong. Stay with me, Sgt. Ed,' " the sergeant said. "He said, 'You're not going to die on me.' "The Marines carried Edwards into an Iraqi home, where Anderson began emergency first aid. "I told him, 'You take care of my babies.' "Doc Anderson said, 'You're going to take care of your babies. You're going to be just fine.' ""There was a lot of pain. "The sergeant stopped and closed his eyes again. "Give me a minute," he said. Once transferred to a Humvee, Anderson kept working, tying tourniquets with one hand while elevating the sergeant's head with another as they sped to the nearest aid station. That's when Doc started shouting at his patient. "While we were in the Humvee, I could feel myself slipping away, wanting to go to sleep, and Doc started yelling at me," Edwards said.

"I was ready to enter whatever after life there is, and he kept yelling at me, telling me it was going to be OK. "Anderson later would tell his friends and parents that it was the most terrifying day of his life that he constantly second-guessed himself, wondering if he had done everything he could have and should have. He told his closest friends that he had lost the sergeant's pulse three times on the way to the clinic but that each time he had managed to bring him back.

More than 30 days later, Edwards woke up at Walter Reed in Washington, D.C. He remembered one voice: "The last thing I heard was Doc saying, 'You're going to be OK.' "Prankster got 'squared away' One of the highest compliments a service member can bestow on another is to say that he or she is "squared away. "Squared away means that nobody has to worry when the action starts - someone who is squared away can be counted on, even in the most hectic circumstances, to perform flawlessly. As a boy, Christopher Anderson hardly fit the term.
A prankster with a Bart Simpsonesque streak, he was a master of mooning his cousins from the car. Along with his brother, Kyle, he drove plenty of schoolteachers to the brink of breakdown.

As he grew older, he could juggle girlfriends like a street husker. A stickler for dressing immaculately, he spent inordinate amounts of time choosing his clothes and was known to change clothes as many times as Cher before going out to a bar. As a teenager, he worked as a baseball umpire, learning to moderate, keep constant watch and mediate disputes. After graduating from Longmont High School, he worked many jobs - from clothing sales clerk to bar bouncer, but always left one option open. Three generations of Andersons before him had enlisted in the Navy. His Father served as an elite Navy SEAL. In 2005, he became the fourth. Soon after signing the enlistment papers, he committed himself entirely. At boot camp, he was voted the "honor graduate" of his company. He then returned to Longmont during Christmas break and spent all of his spare time at the recruiting office, trying to bring as many sailors as possible along with him.

His enthusiasm sparked the interest of Navy Commander Dave Copp, who awarded Anderson the Navy Achievement Medal even before the young sailor entered corpsman training school. "I remember this kid," said Navy Chief Darrell Crone, an instructor at Naval Hospital Corps School in Chicago, who oversees the Internet site corpsman.com. "He was decorated with an award before he got to our school. We thought, 'What the hell is this - what kind of brown-noser is this?' "After a couple of phone calls, he found out. "He wasn't a brown-noser of any kind," Crone said. "When he was on leave, he was actually recruiting. Normally when kids go home, they lie on the couch and play video games. He was out there doing the job. He was the kind of guy who, if there was a nook or cranny to get things done, he could just do it."

After Anderson's death, his father received a call from his son's commanding officer, who told a story of the first time he saw Christopher in Iraq. The lieutenant colonel remembered pointing to the only serviceman there who wasn't a Marine and asking about him. "The master sergeant looked up and said, 'Oh, that's one of our docs, Anderson. He's the most squared-away Marine we've got,' " Rick Anderson

said. "And that was Christopher - squared away. "Sacrificing for kids 'like mine' Last week, inside Ward 58 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the sergeant shook out a Marlboro Red. These days, despite what the doctors say, even his mother won't give him grief about smoking. "I figure he survived that," Cheryl Edwards said, nodding toward his legs. "He can have a cigarette. "

After 36 surgeries, much of the shrapnel remains inside. The sharp chunks of metal will work their way out during the next several years, as his body expels the war. Edwards' left hand was shattered in the blast, the bones pulverized "like powder," he says. The hand is now a gnarled brown mess of dead, flaky skin and giant Frankenstein stitches that wrap around the fingers that have been reattached and secured with surgical pins. He can move his thumb and forefinger like a crab pincer, but he lost some of his knuckles, so his other fingers are shorter than they were. At one point, surgeons suggested amputating some fingers to save his hand.

"The doctor came in and said, 'How attached are you to that index finger?' " Edwards said. "I told him, 'I'm attached to all my body parts. I've already lost enough.' The stumps of his legs are discolored patchwork quilts of skin grafts. One leg was rebuilt with the thigh muscle from a donor body; it now ends several inches above his knee. The other was amputated through the kneecap. On his head, a bandage covers a quarter-sized dark red hole, which otherwise remains framed in the "high and tight" Marine haircut. Outside the hospital 10 days ago, a man in a camouflage uniform paused at Edwards' wheelchair and offered his hand in thanks.

"I get that a lot," he said after the man left, pulling out another cigarette. "But me, personally, I don't think I need to be thanked for my service. I chose this. I know that being blown up or dying is one of the hazards of my job. If you don't expect to get hurt as a Marine infantryman, you're in the wrong line of work. "This was his third tour in Iraq. He went in on the initial invasion and saw the statue of Saddam Hussein fall. During his second tour, he was nearly electrocuted and spent time at Walter Reed recovering. Although he is a living example of the war's cost, he prefers to look back on what he says will be lasting benefits of his sacrifice. "I lost my legs not for this country, but for the country of Iraq, so their children will be able to run around, just like mine," he said as he watched his daughters, ages 3 and 5, playing on the hospital grounds. "If time was turned back, I'd do it all over again. "He says he told the same thing to President Bush last week. Before leaving for Texas for Christmas vacation, the president and first lady made rounds at Walter Reed, speaking to many of the wounded. Edwards' mother said that the president, after visiting with Edwards for about half an hour, spoke to other injured service members then returned to the sergeant's room. "(The president) said, 'Some of the guys have cussed me out. Some said they hated me. But I'm going to quote you word for word in my next speech,' " Cheryl Edwards recounted. "He said, 'I'm going to quote you,' " the sergeant said. " You just watch.' "Outside Walter Reed, Edwards' girls ran back to him, and he boosted Paige into his lap. The girls call the stumps of his legs "Daddy's boo-boo. "Memorial Day never ends.

At Arlington National Cemetery, the American flag flies at half-staff every weekday, as an average of 25 funeral processions a day amble near it, past the white rows of marble, where privates and unknown Civil War veterans lie near Medal of Honor winners and presidents. Arlington is where Memorial Day officially began, the place where it never ends. The cemetery holds the remains of more than 300,000 men and women on more than 600 acres. According to the Department of Defense, the cemetery recently acquired more land, which should keep it available for burials until 2060.That is, if the current rate of burials holds.

In section 60, the place where they bury soldiers from the latest war, the headstones are still fresh. The first of those tombstones is for another man from Colorado, the first casualty from the Iraq War buried at Arlington: Russell Rippetoe, of Broomfield. Not far away lies Lt. Col. Ian Weikel, of Colorado Springs, who was killed in Iraq in April. In between are several men who were stationed at Fort Carson - Lt. Col. Eric Kruger, Chief Warrant Officer Dennis P. Hay, Sgt. Neil Armstrong Prince and Spc. Hoby Bradfield. Since Sept. 11, 2001, a total of 21 Navy corpsmen have died in Iraq and three have died in Afghanistan, making up more than one-third of the total Navy casualties. Not far from the cemetery, the massive Iwo Jima memorial towers over an intersection, honoring the Marines

who raised the flag over Mount Suribachi during World War II. Although it is considered a Marine memorial, one of the men immortalized 32 feet tall in heavy bronze is John "Doc" Bradley, the unit's corpsman. At the beginning of World War II, corpsmen and Army medics wore red crosses on their uniforms. That stopped when the enemy began using the crosses as targets, knowing that the servicemen would do anything to save their medics. These days, the corpsmen wear the Marines' digital camouflage while in combat zones and carry full weaponry. Still, as the tombstones reflect, they remain primary targets.

At Arlington, visitors can buy a $6 ticket for a "Tour mobile" that whisks them through the cemetery in 30 minutes - a tour that pauses at the eternal flame of President Kennedy, the Tomb of the Unknowns and the home once owned by Robert E. Lee, back when the cemetery was a plantation. The Tour mobile doesn't go near section 60.Across the street, the ground is empty. There, workers are preparing section 61. The unspoken bond.

Back inside Walter Reed, Edwards grimaced. He lives every minute with pain that would make most people wince, so when his face contorts in pain during physical therapy, it nearly shakes the hospital table. "I'm not a very good patient," he said. "I have no patience. "Nearby, men with new computerized legs ran on treadmills, while others tried out their new arms.

In a corner of the room last week, two little girls and a young boy watched How the Grinch Stole Christmas, oblivious to their parents' trying to figure out their new limbs. After he awoke in the hospital, Edwards asked not to see his own two girls. "It's not that I didn't want to see them," he said. "But I didn't want them to see me. "When he first heard that his Doc died Dec. 4 from a mortar attack, he asked his wife and kids to leave the room. "My dad stayed with me," he said. "For two days, I was heavily depressed. I was heavily medicated. It took me two days to cope with it without being medicated. Now that the funeral is close, I'm starting to have a hard time with it again. "Last week was the first time he spent a night alone - sometimes, while asleep, his arms will flail and his body will thrash with the inevitable nightmares, so family members take turns watching him, making sure someone is there to wake him from battle. Only a week before, the commandant of the Marine Corps met with Edwards at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

In the center of the lobby is an enormous bronze statue of a Navy hospital corpsman carrying a wounded Marine, as the injured man's legs drag the ground. Edwards said, he plans to send his Purple Heart to the Anderson family. "It's the only way I can say thank you," he said. "I can't put it into words, what a corpsman means to his Marines. "He thought back to that bronze memorial. "It says it all in that statue," he said. "It's called The Unspoken Bond." 'Daddy will tell you one day' Wednesday morning, inside a building at Arlington National Cemetery, the Anderson family walked past the Navy officers, directly toward the man in the wheel chair. Debra Anderson was immediately intercepted by another mother. "Your son saved my son's life," Cheryl Edwards said through sobs, locking Debra in a hug. "I thank you. I thank you so much. And I'm sorry. So sorry." The women hugged, then the men did the same, thumping each other on the back. "He saved our son's life," Cheryl Edwards repeated. Together, the families walked to Sgt. Edwards, who sat with his 3-year-old daughter, Paige, in his lap, and 5-year-old Caitlin and his wife, Christina, by his side. "I'm so glad you're here," Debra Anderson said. "I wouldn't have missed it for the world," he said quietly. "I didn't give them a choice at the hospital. I told them I had to come." "I know Christopher was so worried about you," Debra Anderson said. "He was so worried."

"He did everything right. Be proud of him," the sergeant said. "If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't be able to hold my daughter on my lap. "Rick Anderson then bent down in a deep hug. With the knuckle of one finger, he brushed the hand of one of the girls and smiled. "Your boy kept me alive," Edwards said. "I wanted to let go, and he kept me alive." Kyle Anderson approached Edwards and during a long embrace told the Marine that he now carried part of his brother with him. Kyle told the sergeant he always would consider Edwards his brother. Edwards looked up at Anderson's parents. "If there's anything I can ever do for you, you let me know," he said. "You just take care of these girls," Debra said, offering one of the largest smiles that many family members have seen since her son was

killed. "We want to watch these girls grow up," she said. From her father's lap, Paige pointed at Christopher Anderson's mother. "Who dat?" the 3-year-old said. "You'll understand one day, OK?" her grandmother said. "Yes," the sergeant said, stroking her hair. "Daddy will tell you one day." 'They all come home'

In section 60 of Arlington National Cemetery, the sun flashed off the bugle of a lone sailor who stood among the thousands of headstones. Dormant trees scratched toward the blue sky, holding dried cherry blossoms that had turned brown. The burial was supposed to take place last week, but the family was caught in the blizzard and spent the night at Denver International Airport while the sailors rescheduled the burial for Wednesday. The Andersons spent Christmas without their son, without an ending. It had been 23 days since the sailors first rang their doorbell to tell them the news. The day before Christopher's funeral, the Department of Defense announced the death of another corpsman - another piece of news that hit hard in the crowd of mourners, which included several families who have sons serving in Alpha Company, still in Iraq.

Earlier in the month, the Siruchek family from New York received a call from their son, a Navy hospital corpsman, who told them that his best friend had been killed. Lots of people called Christopher their best friend. "Matt asked us to come for him," Adam Siruchek said. "He said, 'Since I can't be there, can you go in my place?' "The couple knew they had no choice. They didn't know how hard it would be. "The biggest fear in our mind is that it could be us in those chairs (near the casket)," Becky Siruchek said. "They're living our worst nightmare, the thing we actually have nightmares about. And they're going through it. "As the Anderson family approached the flag-draped casket and took their seats, six sailors surrounded it and lifted the flag.

The chaplain spoke, and the rifle salute cracked. The lone bugler then began the first few notes of Taps, and Edwards dropped his head, without wiping his tears. Methodically, the Navy honor guard folded the flag into tight triangles, slapping each fold into another, as if the flag were starched. A rear admiral presented the flag to Debra. Within 15 minutes, it was over. Debra's sister, Sherry McDonald, handed out a bag filled with dark brown dirt, sent from the home field of Chris Anderson's favorite baseball team, the San Diego Padres. Each family member took a fistful and dusted it onto the casket. Kyle, imitating his brother as an umpire, spread some of the dirt on his own jacket. Debra placed her hand on the casket and held it there for several minutes. Slowly, she let go. The sergeant's mother walked to Debra Anderson again, and they embraced. "Greg says he wished it was him," she said, crying again. "He says he wishes that it was him who came home in the casket instead of Christopher. "The two women held each other for a long time." They all come home," Debra Anderson finally managed to say, as they hugged on the bright green artificial turf laid out over the mud where another family would soon stand. "They all come home. "A father's salute .After everyone else climbed into their cars and prepared to leave, Rick Anderson stood with Kyle at the gravesite. The two men put their handprints in the dirt, and smeared it around. -Kyle Anderson didn't want to leave the casket, and, once again, it fell to his father to convince him to go. For the past three weeks, Rick Anderson had been the quiet rock, steadying his family, comforting them, looking out for everyone, the way he had taught his son to do, the way his son was doing. He spoke at his son's funeral in Longmont and said he cried long and hard during his private, personal conversations with God.

On the outside, with his friendly face and salt-and-pepper moustache, he looked more like the real estate salesman that he is, rather than a former member of one of the most elite special warfare units in the country. But after all of the quiet, all of the stoicism, Rick Anderson stood at the empty gravesite, took a deep breath and let out a Navy SEAL war cry that carried over the headstones. "HOOYAH, KID!" he shouted at his son's casket, his voice breaking. "YOU DID GOOD."

Field of honor Eligibility for burial at Arlington National Cemetery includes:

• Anyone who dies on active duty.

• Any retired veteran with 20 years service or greater from the regular military.

• Reservists who have one period of active-duty service other than training who are age 60 or older and have a total of 20 years or more.

• Honorably discharged recipients of the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star and Purple Heart.

• Other eligible service members include former prisoners of war and veterans who are medically disabled with a 30 percent rating or greater before Oct. 1, 1949, as a result of their military service and were discharged for that reason. Their spouses are eligible for burial alongside their husbands or wives. Source: Department Of defense Sheel-erj@rockymountainnews.com

INCOMING

With Any Luck

By Craig W. Tourte
HQ Btry 1/13

I don't care what "they" say, aging is a difficult physiological process to endure, at least it has been for me. Don't get me wrong here, I'm happy to be around and mourn those who are no longer with us. One would think that as one ages, life would get a little easier to endure. I was talking to my friend Tom Horchler a couple of weeks ago and the topic of how much longer we had came up. I told Tom I was lucky if I could squeeze out another 15 or 20 and Tom responded that he hoped he didn't have that long.

We were the lucky ones, the ones who came back, being able to survive our service at Khe Sanh. That's what I thought for so many years until I started to talk to other Khe Sanh Veterans about our experience. Seems most carry a lot of pain and life has been difficult. What I find particularly interesting is how much we have in common with each other. Sure we have our individual issues, but I think on a whole we have the same, how can I say this, the word "core" comes to mind. I thought I was lucky, but I have found that so many others have carried such pain through the years that now some do not feel so lucky to have made it through. Their experience at Khe Sanh has taken such a huge toll on their life.

On January 21st I was sitting around talking to about 20 old guys, (yes even older than me) all vets of various conflicts. Most were WWII and Korean Veterans with a few Vietnam Vets in attendance. We went around in a circle and each told their story. Some told heart breaking stories of their combat experiences, some came to tears and were not able to relate their experiences other than to utter a few short sentences. Still, most had never seen combat. What struck me was that the ones who identified themselves as Vietnam Veterans seemed to stand apart from the rest. Another observation I made was that those who had not experienced combat seemed to want to talk about their experience the most. The ones who identified themselves, as having been in combat didn't seem to have much to say.

I certainly don't mean to identify myself as someone who has a lot of combat experience. I was just a REMF who was fortunate enough to survive the Siege. I wore my Khe Sanh T shirt that day, the one I got at the reunion a couple of years ago. I told the group that this day was special for me and that I was wearing my shirt in honor of those lost 39 years ago, when the Siege at Khe Sanh started I received a lot of comments, all seemed to know about that event and one man said that he had flown B-52's around Khe Sanh during the Siege. I thanked him and shared with the group a little about the experience of being on the base when the bombs were dropped, how we heard the noise, and how the ground shook and how the B-52's most likely saved us all.

This same group met several more times during the next twoweeks but I didn't attend. The old (older) guys wanted to talk about WWII and the frozen Chosen. I had shared my experience and figured that was enough. I think Vietnam Veterans are just a little different and there don't seem to be as many of us around as there once was, a natural physiological process. There were no young vets in attendance. In a few more years and with any luck, I'll be one of the old guys. Wait, that's what I am now, Oh God.

MEMOIRS

"JERRY"

By Donna Elliot
Sister MIA Jerry Elliot

Something startled me from a deep sleep to being wide-awake and totally alert. I scanned the room in the predawn stillness; the soft light of the coming day filtered through the bedroom curtains and reassured me that all was in place in my bedroom.

Cindy, cuddled next to me, was sleeping soundly. I couldn't shake the feeling that something was wrong. When I have premonitions it feels like manic butterflies in my stomach. I can't remember when the premonitions first began, it seems like I've had them since I was a little girl. Mama says that having a sixth sense has always been a gift that some of the women in her family are blessed with. I don't know that I consider it a gift. I hate this feeling of knowing something is about to happen, but never knowing exactly what to expect.

I kept trying to pin my anxious feelings down, figure out what, or who, it was related to. Then it hit me like a hard fist in my soft belly, somehow I just knew that Jerry was alive, but he was in very, very serious trouble. I was extremely upset about this feeling and I wanted it to go away. I tried to will the uneasiness away, forcing myself to think about anything that would hold my attention for a few seconds. Maybe I'm dreaming and I'll wake up. I don't know how long I laid there like I was paralyzed while crazy thoughts flew around in my head at the speed of light. My heart was pounding like a frightened rabbit caught in a wildfire. What is it, what's happening? Why am I experiencing these weird thoughts about my brother? As I lay in bed trying to sort these feelings into something less bewildering and frightening there was a loud, solid knock on the front door. Time stood still and for a moment, one last peaceful moment, I was frozen in time. I knew somehow that there would be soldiers on the other side of the door, standing there, disheartened with terrible news about Jerry. What nightmares they must have when they closed their eyes to sleep.

I can hear Mama down the hallway waking Daddy, exaggerating in her panic, "Bill! Bill, get up! There's someone beating on the front door!" Daddy rolled out of bed with a sleepy but resigned groan, and I listened to his bare feet smack the tile floor as he walked quickly down the hall, to the front door. Mama was moving around in the bedroom searching for her robe. I imagined her wrapping it around her tightly, like a shield, then she stepped into the hallway and walked into the living room just as Daddy turned on the lights. There was the whoosh noise the door made when it was opened. From my bed I could see down the hall to the open door. I caught a glimpse of olive-drab dress uniforms as two soldiers stepped inside, and without speaking, closed the door behind them. I could hear the deep male tones of their voices, although they spoke in hushed tones. I couldn't understand their first words, but I was stiff as a board because I knew it had something to do with Jerry, and it was not good.

I slid up in bed, leaning stiffly against the headboard. I didn't really want to hear what they had to say, but their words floated down the hall, charging the air like thunderbolts. "Are you Mr. Elliott?" one of the soldiers asked. "Yes, Bill, just call me Bill, and this is my wife, Mary," Daddy answered. They identified themselves as Casualty Officers, and then a steady, calm voice spoke directly to Daddy, "We regret to inform you that your son, Private Jerry Elliott, has been listed as missing-in-action." "Missing-in-action," the words hung in the air, too mind-bending to absorb. I couldn't breathe for the choking lump in my throat; my heart was so heavy my chest hurt. I hid my face in my pillow and tried to shut the words out, but they were in my head bouncing around, "missing, missing, Jerry is missing". Mama's screams gradually turned to wails, "Oh no, oh no! Not Jerry! It can't be Jerry, I told him not to try to be a hero!" Mama's screams pierced my heart, I wanted to run to her, but I was afraid to see her face. I didn't know what to do, so I did nothing but cower in my bed and stare at Cindy's sweet little face untouched by tragedy.

They solemnly read from the Report of Casualty that on January 21 Jerry was serving as a "Gunner of a military aircraft on combat operation, which, while on the ground after the passengers had disembarked, was hit by hostile small arms fire, exploded and burned. He was last seen engaging the hostile forces in a firefight after leaving aircraft to assist crew. Search is in progress." Daddy saw the Casualty Officers to the door, thanked them for coming in person, closed the door behind them, and locked it securely, as if locked doors would keep more bad news away. There was an odd stillness in the house without the usual smells and sounds of morning. There was no coffee perking, or the sound of Mama and Daddy's lively morning conversation as they planned their day. They were not talking to each other at all, and I was scared to get out of bed and break the silence. I felt like I'd eavesdropped on a sacred grown-up conversation, and if I let them know that I'd heard most of what was said, it would make it all too real, and I'd have to be an adult too. I

wasn't ready for this, I was only 16.

Long minutes passed before I gathered enough courage to slip out from under the warm covers, move quietly down the hall, and peek around the corner into the living room. Daddy was sitting in his chair staring at nothing, tears running down his face; and Mama had her head in her hands, openly sobbing. I'd never seen my Daddy cry before; I didn't want to see it then. For some reason that frightened me more than Jerry being missing. My world was unraveling and there was nothing I could do to stop it. I wanted to run to my parents, tell them that I loved them, tell them that everything was going to be alright, that somehow I knew Jerry was going to be alright. But what if they didn't believe me? I desperately searched for safe words of comfort, but I couldn't think because my mind was going in so many directions at once. I wanted to ease their minds, but I couldn't make myself go into that room so full of raw pain. Instead I eased back down the hall into the bathroom, shut the door, and shoved my face into a towel so hard and tight that I couldn't cry. I vowed that I would never cry in front of Mama and Daddy, I would be strong for my family, I would show them that they could lean on me, that I could hang tough because I sincerely believed that Jerry would come home. As I sat alone in the bathroom I realized that everything had changed now, none of us would ever be the same again. Even when Jerry was found things wouldn't be the same because now we know how dangerous being a soldier really is. There won't be anymore pretending that war is all glory and that nothing bad can happen to him.

I started to think about Jerry, wondering where he was, if he was hurt, hungry, tired. Are they being mean to him? Does he know that I know that he's alive, even though I can't explain how I know? I can't bear these thoughts, so I shoved them into a dark corner of my mind, and every time they tried to raise their ugly heads I pushed them back down again. Later that day the Western Union telegram came, it read exactly the same as the Report of Casualty, but it also advised, "In order to protect any information that might be used to your son's detriment, your cooperation is requested in making public only information concerning his name, rank, service number and date of birth." It is Sunday in Mississippi, but because Southeast Asia is a day ahead of the U.S., we got the news on January 21st, the same day that Jerry went missing in Vietnam. When I did return to school on Monday I would remember what the Army had said about keeping quiet for Jerry's sake. I would try to carry on like nothing has happened. In fact, as far as I was concerned there was nothing to talk about, Jerry might be missing, but he was still alive. The Army, his friends, they were searching for him. All we could do now is wait.

Days, then weeks go by. Our house was not full of laugher anymore. Home was not a place that I particularly wanted to be. Mama and Daddy barely talked to each other, or Cindy and me. "Where's Jerry?" sat in the middle of the supper table like an ugly centerpiece that everyone tried to ignore. Cindy tried to end the silence by chattering about her school days in second grade. She didn't understand what had changed, why everyone was so sad, because she had no idea what MIA meant. Mama wanted to protect Cindy. Why break her little heart over her "Butter" until he was found, alive or dead.

We were both left to figure things out on our own, because we were without parents who knew how to cope with a situation where you're not supposed to talk about a soldier that's missing. That left all of us without a support system, no one to talk to, no shoulder to cry on. It was like a kidnapper telling the family of his victim not to call the police or he would kill their loved one. Daddy returned to work and kept himself too busy to think, except in the evenings after supper when we all watched television together and every once in a while I would see his dark brown eyes shiny with unshed tears. Mama was alone all day while Cindy and I were at school. Little about the next couple of months stands out in my mind except for the many times I would come home and find Mama sitting with Jerry's picture in her arms, rocking back and forth, saying over and over again, "Mama loves you Jerry, Mama loves you."

SHORT ROUNDS

KSV MEMBERS STILL SERVING
DAVID LORD
1/26 Khe Sanh Veteran
MOPH's National Service Officer in Mexico

MOPH's only National Service Officer assigned outside the United States is David Lord. His jurisdiction is the entire country of Mexico; however, all his veteran claims are submitted through the MOPH National Service Office in Houston, TX. David moved to Mexico over ten years ago, spending the first six years in Guadalajara and Lake Chapala. The most recent four years have been spent in Puerto Vallarta, which fronts on the Pacific Coast a thousand miles south of Tucson, Arizona.

David began his service to veterans in Mexico by becoming the Service Officer at an American Legion Post 3 in Guadalajara in 1996. While there, he discovered numerous WWII, Korean and Viet Nam-era veterans needing assistance with physical problems due to age or service-connected disability. Many had no medical coverage due to low income. Then David became aware of a program available through the VA for veterans living in foreign countries and decided to get such a program off the ground in Mexico. He negotiated an agreement with the Mexican Fifth Regional Military and the Mexican Military Hospital to serve U.S. veterans at the same rate charged for the service given to Mexican veterans. It was a first, as far as he knows, where U.S. veterans received treatment at foreign military facilities and hospitals outside of wartime. Word traveled fast by word of mouth, and soon David became well known by all veterans in the area. He spent many hundreds of hours serving veterans in Guadalajara using his special medical program devised to assist veterans from his American Legion Post.

Since moving to Puerto Vallarta and becoming a National Service Officer with MOPH, David travels extensively throughout the region assisting veterans with VA claims, writes weekly columns in the local English language newspaper, the Vallarta Tribune and contributes to the on-line news at . He also receives numerous e-mails (some even from the US) asking for advice or help.

David revels in his recent success stories where he assisted a veteran or dependent in receiving VA benefits they were unaware of. One example he cites is of a veteran named Mike living in Puerto Vallarta. Mike was barley able to survive on his social security income of around $500 per month, but with David's help, he is now receiving over $1,400/mo. in pension from the VA.

David also recalls helping a widow of a veteran who died over forty ago receive a death pension benefit of $7,200 per year. This income has made a tremendous difference to the widow as well as her family members who used to pay for her total support. The widow now enjoys the dignity of paying for her share of food, clothing and medicine.

Veterans with emergencies also find their way to David. Last year, a young Iraq war veteran came to Puerto Vallarta with his family on a cruise ship. While the ship was in port, the veteran had several post-traumatic "episodes" of anti-social behavior that landed him in a Mexican jail. The veteran's attacks of PTSD were viewed as retaliatory by the Mexican police who beat him badly despite the fact his behavior which was triggered by intense flashbacks where he believed he had been captured and was fighting for his life. The more he fought back, the more he was beaten. David did not hear of this incident until the following day when the veteran was transported to the local hospital for sedation and treatment of the injuries. David's NSO credentials and reputation at the hospital, allowed him to enter the intensive care unit and stay with the veteran for three days. David was finally able to negotiate the veteran's release from Mexican custody so he could leave the country with the assistance of a doctor as his travel companion on board a commercial aircraft.

One last example of David's work is a veteran who lives hundreds of miles from Puerto Vallarta in central Mexico. David was able to travel many miles to assist this man who now receives a healthy compensation check monthly from the VA. David acknowledges that without the help of the MOPH Service Program, which finances David's outreach expenses, much of his work would be limited. He also credit's much of his success to Don Hubbard, the MOPH NSO in Houston, TX who processes his claims through the Houston VARO and to his Regional Field Supervisor, Gary Mason in Waco, TX.

We salute David Lord for his tireless work and compassion in the service of veterans abroad in Mexico!

Biographical note: David Lord served in Vietnam as combat Marine for 1st Battalion 26th Marines, during which time he was severely wounded. He

received the Purple Heart and the Presidential Unit Citation for his actions during the war in Vietnam. In Mexico, David now represents all veterans south of the U.S. border all the way to Panama, before the V.A. and the Board of Veterans Appeals. David Lord provides service to veterans at no fee. Veterans are welcome to drop in and discuss claims/benefits to which they are entitled by law at his office located at Bayside Properties, 160 Francisca Rodriguez, tel.: 223-4424, call him at home 299-5367, on his cell: 044 (322) 205-1323, or email him: amophmx@@yahoo.com or david.lord@yahoo.com.

MEMOIRS

DISASTER AT DONG HA

By Mike "Animal" Preston
CBMU-301 Det B Seabees

At Dong Ha, five miles below the DMZ, the Seabees of MCB-11 lived through the worst ammunition disaster in history when the enemy launched a 140-mm rocket attack and blew up 20,000 tons of ammunition on the afternoon of September 3, 1968. Elements of the Viet Cong combined with North Vietnamese People's Army rocket companies, infiltrated within 10 miles of Dong Ha and bombarded the town in a harassing action designed to disrupt the national elections being held that day. In addition to Army and Marine artillery and infantry units guarding the area, Marine Air Group 16 operated a landing strip in conjunction with the Air Force just outside of the town. Three hundred yards southeast of the airstrip MCB-11 was encamped. Concentrated between the Seabees and the air strip was a fuel dump holding 40,000 gallons of aviation Gas and an ammunition dump containing 20,000 tons of explosives – C4 plastic explosive, artillery shells and sundry types of ammunition.

MCB-11 had been deployed at Dong Ha since April and the men suspected the enemy would attempt something spectacular to detract from the elections, but just what the Viet Cong had up their pajama sleeve was unknown. At 1400 the first rockets came screaming in, their tail vanes making the peculiar high pitched whistle so familiar to fighting men in Vietnam. The first two shells dropped with deadly accuracy into the aviation gas dump. The fuel blew up with a roar and sent a long black column of smoke into the sky. The NVA used the smoke column as a mark to range in on the ammo dump and the Seabee camp.

History's Biggest

One rocket battery "walked" a train of explosions across the Seabee camp while another battery slammed missiles unto the ammunition. The ammo dump took several hits, then blew up. The men rattled around in their mortar holes helplessly as succeeding shock waves shook the camp. The 20,000 tons of ammunition continued to explode during the next eight hours. For the record, it was the biggest ammunition disaster in history. In 1917 a munitions ship blew up with 11,000 tons of ammo in Halifax; in April 1944, a ship with 270 tons of explosives blew up in Bombay, India, and caused great damage and loss of life; in Port Chicago, California, on July 17, 1944, the SS E. A. Bryan with 5,000 tons of ammunition blew up and killed 323 civilians and Navy seamen.

At Dong Ha, the ammunition tonnage was four times greater than the Port Chicago disaster, yet, miraculously, not one man was killed by the blast. All subsequent casualties resulted from enemy fire. By the time the ammo dump erupted, most of the Seabees and Marines had made it to their dugouts. However, many men of MCB-11 remained above ground, dodging smoking hot artillery shells raining down from the ammunition dump explosions, as they carried wounded comrades to the battalion aid station. Leading Chief Petty Officer Ed Hanby remembers the first effects of the bombardment. "The rockets came in, two of them, and hit the aviation gas which exploded all over the place. Then two more rockets or artillery shells hit the ammunition dump and it started to 'cook off.' Dud shells and smoking live ones were falling all through the camp. The rockets started to hit our camp and that is when we began having casualties."

Seabee Casualties

Two days before the September 3rd attack, the North Vietnamese rockets and 152mm artillery had hit the Seabee camp with devastating accuracy. The first rocket struck the hut of Builder Richard Sheets

and Constructionman Richard Wager. Wager was killed as he dived toward his mortar hole trap door in the floor of the hut. Sheets was peppered with shrapnel and burned from the blast. He survived to return to the battalion a month later after treatment on the Naval Hospital Ship Repose. Five other Seabees died and many were wounded in the first few bursts of the rocket barrage. The North Vietnamese were firing the 140mm Russian made rockets and 152mm artillery shells from camouflaged vantage points above Dong Ha.

The 140mm rocket, as described by Chief Engineering Aid Quinton W. Willis of Preston, Kentucky, is eight inches in diameter and five feet long. The warhead is 85 pounds of high explosive with an impact fuse of bronze metal. They are very accurate and dependable. There has never been a dud 140 mm rocket that we know of, we only have knowledge of them from some captured from the Viet Cong.

The launching platforms for the enemy rockets are simple affairs: two 2x6 boards about ten feet long are nailed together to form a "V". The launchers are laid on the ground and wooden wedges are placed under the boards. The rocket is placed in the "V" trough and the rocket is ranged by moving the wedges to the proper positions. The accuracy of the rocket fire indicated that Viet Cong artillery spotters had infiltrated the area around the camp and called in the rages to the enemy batteries. The NVA rocketeers bombarded the Seabee camp and the MAG 16 compound for several hours.

Evil Speakers

Enemy loudspeakers hidden in the rice paddies around Dong Ha lent an incongruous note to the happenings during the election period. After the ammunition dump had blown up, the Viet Cong via the speakers accused the American forces of launching a B-52 air raid against Dong Ha. This bit of propaganda backfired on the enemy for the villagers were quite aware of the true nature of the explosions. The metallic chatter from the loudspeakers gave the nights a nightmarish quality. Acts of heroism performed by the men of MCB-11 were so numerous they almost became routine. BUC William H. Neal and SWF2 Joseph H. Wood ran through the enemy barrage to rescue BUCN Sheets who was standing in the blazing wreckage of his hut, riddled with shrapnel and his clothes on fire. The men put the fire out and carried Sheets three hundred yards to the aid station through the shells raining down from the explosions. These two men also assisted two other Seabees who had been mortally wounded. PN3 William E. Andre and DT2 Michael D. Nelson saved the life of BUH3 Robert A. Martindale who had been blown out of his hut by the blast. Though seriously wounded, BUHCN Edward J. Stier, aided by BUH3 George C. Dorman, scrambled through the smashed huts to assist in the removal of dead and wounded men. LTJG Robert Cahill, Delta Company commander was slightly wounded while aiding other wounded men to safety.

UTP2 F.E. Beckett and SF1 Stanley Loziol were welding up holes in the water tank when a round landed near them and blew out the tires on their welder.

Pickup Service

The men of MCB-11 performed numerous acts of heroism during the September 3 rocket attack – one of the most outstanding was that of BU2 Floyd J. Pratt who rescued 30 Marines trapped in the burning Ammunition Supply Point. Pratt tells it as: "We were finishing a concrete pour just outside the rear area of the camp. The rounds came in and set off the ammunition which began exploding loudly. We completed the concrete work, then got back into our truck and headed for the back gate. A Marine sergeant stopped me by the back gate and asked if I could drive the truck into the ASP to rescue some Marines. So I did."

Pratt drove his truck into the thick of the exploding ammunition and 30 Marines piled aboard from where they had been trapped in mortar holes. Pratt got the men out in quick time. Another Marine Sergeant asked Pratt if he would return to the ammunition depot and rescue some wounded Marines supposedly trapped in a bunker. Pratt drove his truck back into the inferno and reached the bunker. Ammunition was going off all around his truck and whizzing pieces of shrapnel bounced off the truck cab and body. Pratt's last trip proved fruitless – all the Marines had been evacuated minutes before his arrival. Pratt calmly drove his battered truck back to his company area.

The last elements of MCB-11 were flown into Point Mugu Naval Air Station on December 6, completing the battalion's second deployment. Not all of the men of the battalion came back; nine will remain in Vietnam forever, killed in action by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regular army attacks at Khe Sanh and Dong Ha. This is the story that goes with my pictures that I sent you a few days ago Tom. I wish I had more film that day because the night shots were spectacular. Later that night ''Charlie'' walked some rounds through our area to the north of MCB 11 but nothing like they went through being right next to the ammo dump.

I never did hear if any of those Seabees got decorated for their bravery that day. I wouldn't be surprised if they didn't, after all it was just their job, just another day at the "office.'' I saw this kind of heroism hundreds of times at places like Khe Sanh, Qua Viet, in the hills, everywhere. I hope it was recognized this time.

WE GET MAIL

In response to an article written in the 67 issue, Winter 2006 on page 14, Short Rounds "Welcome to Delta Company" by Rod Jordan D Co 1/26.

I pulled Sergeant Henson back that day with a sucking chest wound. Even with all the medical help he was given he died. He was truly a warrior, one to be proud to have served with him. There are not many people alive that served at that time in 1/26. There were a lot of very brave men who gave it their all. You came in country after Khe Sanh when we were Quang Tri. I was in Khe Sanh for the whole siege and with you for all the battles we fought after. I am sorry I don't recognize your name but 38 years is a long time. I spent 12 months and 26 days in Viet Nam and 38 years talking about it. You are right when you say only those who were there will understand it. I understand it and am thankful I made it with no purple heart. I hope you are proud of the time you served, I am. Some of the names you may remember are Bill Hudnall, (HUD), Mike Cutini, (WOP) Don Friedsam, and DOC (Sam Newton). My name is Mike Beauregard, "BEAU" and as an E-3 I led the battalion of 16. That's all that was left until you came. Semper Fi.

Mike Beauregard
D Co 1/26
10731 N.W. 18th Court
Coral Springs, Fl 33071

IN MEMORIAM



Terence Raymond Roach Jr. Birmingham, MI
KIA 8 February 1968, age 25
A Company, 1st Bn, 9th Marines
By Jack D. Wells

Terry Roach grew up in Birmingham, Michigan the only son of three children. Terry's mother and father were in vaudeville, and passionate about their Irish heritage and Christian beliefs. People recall that to be around the Roach family was uplifting, positive and a joy to be around. All throughout high school, Terry was a confident, free spirit of a young man who once was suspended from his high school for wearing kilts to class. Terry was athletic and played varsity baseball in high school.

After high school Terry and his friend Tony Martinaitis were going to join the Army, and Tony recalled: "Terry enlisted in the Marines. The Marines! Can you imagine? Terry wanted more than anything to be a Jarhead. Oh God, how I miss him." After boot camp and six months active duty, Terry returned home and enrolled at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. Terry loved Irish history and music and met his wife to be, Lynn O'Connor, at the Irish Music Club at Wayne State. Terry was proud of his Irish background and loved to sing Irish fight songs in the student union. At Wayne State, Terry was famous for wearing his Irish kilt to class.

In Terry's second year at Wayne State, Terry ap-

plied to join the Platoon Leaders Class program offered by the Marines which would lead to a commission as a second lieutenant after graduation from college. In the summer of 1966 Terry attended ten weeks of training at Quantico, Virginia. Terry successfully completed the course in August and returned back to Wayne State University and upon graduation in December 1966, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps.

Terry married Lynn in May 1967 and in June left for Quantico to join the Sixth Basic School Class. At Basic School, Terry ended up in the same platoon as his friend Tom Rainey who Terry knew from PLC's at Quantico. On a crisp fall day, the first day in November, Terry and 498 other lieutenants graduated from Basic School. Terry had received his orders to Vietnam and he and Lynn returned home to Michigan to get her settled before his departure.

On November 30th Terry flew to Norton Air Force Base in California, where he joined up with about thirty classmates for a flight to Okinawa where they stayed for a few days before continuing on to Vietnam.

Upon arriving in Da Nang, Terry and several other new lieutenants flew by C-130 to Phu Bai where they were briefed on the enemy situation by the Commanding General of the Third Marine Division. Terry wanted more than any thing to be given command of a rifle platoon and hitched a ride on a truck convoy the next day to Camp Evans to report in to 9th Marines ahead of some of the other lieutenants he had arrived with.

At Camp Evans, Terry was given command of 1st Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Bn, 9th Marines. At Camp Evans, Terry and his men made frequent patrols in the area around Route 1, which was named "The Street Without Joy" by the French in the "French/Indo China" war in in the 1950's. Lt. Roach's platoon had several brief skirmishes with NVA soldiers the latter part of December 1967 during which his platoon sergeant and one of his Corpsman were killed.

Farther north from Camp Evans, around Khe Sanh, the final few weeks in December through early January were deceivingly quiet as thousands of North Vietnamese soldiers that were pouring into the surrounding hills and valleys tried to avoid any significant combat with the Marines. This lull in the fighting changed after midnight on January 20, 1968, when North Vietnamese forces launched an attack on Hill 861 northwest of Khe Sanh. Six hours later, a enemy artillery barrage commenced on the Khe Sanh base causing heavy damage and the Marines ammunition dump to blow up. Two days later on January 22, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines were ordered to move from Camp Evans to reinforce the Marines at Khe Sanh and the battalion became under operation control (OPCON) of the 26th Marine Regiment headquartered at Khe Sanh.

The day after arriving at Khe Sanh, Terry's platoon, reinforced with a weapons platoon, was sent out to a small hilltop referred to as "Alpha 1" in reference to the First Platoon of Alpha Company. The position was also referred to as Hill 64, which was in reference to the number of Marines on the hill instead of the height of the hill in meters. This was done to mislead NVA specialists that monitored the Marines radio transmissions.

The fortified Hill 64 position was about 500 meters in front of 1st Battalions lines which were near what was called "The Rock Quarry". Terry's Marines were to be forward security for the battalion and to prevent an attack on the Khe Sanh Combat base from the large number of NVA forces that were in the hills to the west.

Nights were always terrifying on Hill 64 as heavy fog rolled in after sunset and did not lift until just before dawn. The night time hours always seemed filled with sounds of things moving around the northwest side of the hill as the Marines strained to see in the fog and the darkness.

In the early days of February 1968, tension was high on the Hill 64 outpost when Division intelligence reported that electronic sensors had detected what was thought to be a North Vietnamese Army regiment moving into the Khe Sanh area.

Lt Roach was doing every thing he could think of to prepare his men and his Alpha 1 outpost, for the expected attack by the North Vietnamese. Lt Roach instructed the squad leaders to brief their

men that in the event of an attack, the Marines were to get out of their bunkers to avoid being trapped if NVA soldiers were able to get inside the defensive wire obstacles. Lt Roach had his Navy Corpsman go around to each of the bunkers to give refresher lessons on basic combat first aid. The Chaplain for 1/9, Lt Jack Heino, also came out to the isolated Hill 64 outpost to conduct religious services for the men. In Terry's letters to his wife Lynn he wrote about his platoon radio operator L/Cpl Jim Rizzo. Terry wrote:

I put Rizzo up for a Bronze Star for his action during operation "Badger Tooth". He is a fine young Marine. Men like Rizzo really make me feel proud of our country and the Corps. Rizzo is going home in April and will go back to Kent State University after he gets out of the Marine Corps"

The bond between a platoon commander and his radio operator was typically strong. Twenty four hours a day they were never far from one another and shared the same bunker. The radio had to be monitored all day and all night. Radio operators and their platoon commanders were among the primary targets in any attack by North Vietnamese Army soldiers.

Around 3:00 AM on 5 February, Lt Roach's men could hear the attack by over 200 NVA sappers that breached E Company 2nd Bn, 26th Marines defensive wire on Hill 861A just two miles to the north. Classmates 2dLt Jeff Bodenweiser and 2dLt Don Shanley and their men were fighting for their lives.

After midnight two days later, the Alpha 1 Marines heard distant explosions of battle coming from the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp about four miles away as hundreds of North Vietnamese soldiers supported by tanks attacked and overran the position around 1:00 AM on February 7, 1968. The Lang Vei attack was the first time that enemy tanks had been used against American forces since the Korean War.

On a daily basis, Lt Roach double checked all his defensive positions on the hill and verified the artillery and mortar defensive fires with a forward observer from D Battery 2/12, PFC Larry Seavy-Cioffi who had joined the Hill 64 Marines just three days earlier.

PFC Seavy-Cioffi remembers that Lt Roach was an intense officer, and seemed to be preoccupied with the worry and responsibility that he bore for the sixty five men on the hill. In a philosophical discussion with PFC Seavy-Cioffi over C-ration coffee one afternoon, Seavy-Cioffi remembers Lt Roach saying "God is my rock", (2 Romans: 2) when talking about the imminent peril the Marines were facing. Lt Roach also wanted to send out patrols in the area forward of their position on the hill. His request was denied because it was considered to dangerous to patrol the area forward of the Marines position.

Around 1:00 AM the morning of 8 February there seemed to be more movement than usual outside the tangle of concertina wire surrounding the hill. Around 3:00 AM, Lt Roach moved around the position checking on his Marines and the defensive positions. A little after 4:00 AM, the hill erupted from a heavy mortar barrage fired by North Vietnamese soldiers from the 101D Regiment which drove the Marines to cover within their bunkers. The sound of a bugle signaled that the attack against the Marines by an estimated battalion of North Vietnamese soldiers had begun.

Eighteen year old PFC Ed Welchel's bunker on the west side of Hill 64 was the first to get hit by chicom grenades and a red smoke grenade signaling the start of the attack. The concussion of the grenades blew PFC Welchel's helmet off, throwing him against the wall of bunker, knocking his rifle out of his hands. Choking red smoke filled the bunker. It seemed that Lt Roach was there immediately, helping the stunned PFC Welchel to the relative safety of another bunker, before moving off into the smoke and darkness to rally his Marines on the west side of the position and to try and halt the NVA attack.

Minutes later, the barrage ceased and attacking NVA threw canvas on top of the barbed wire and breached the Marines defensive positions in two places. Lt Roach hurriedly assembled a squad of his men and led them forward against the attackers who were now inside the position. A short time later Lt Roach was killed while moving in a trench

line towards the attacking NVA soldiers, firing his M-16. Lt Terry Roach was posthumously awarded a Bronze Star for his heroic actions. Part of 2dLt Roach's Bronze Star Citation reads:

"Disregarding his own safety, Second Lieutenant Roach unhesitatingly left his covered position and fearlessly moved about the fire-swept terrain he fearlessly engaged the soldiers in hand-to-hand combat until he was mortally wounded".

Fifty one Marines and Corpsman on Hill 64 were killed or wounded during the furious battle. At first light, a relief force of 2nd Platoon, Alpha Company led by the company commander, Capt J. Radcliffe drove the NVA attackers off the hill and rescued the gallant survivors of Alpha 1 who had battled the numerically superior NVA force with such a ferocity that they prevented the enemy from taking total control of the hill. After evacuation of the men who had been killed and wounded, Alpha Company was ordered to abandon the position and air strikes were brought in to destroy any remnants of the defensive positions that might be subsequently used by the communists.

Lynn Roach and Terry's family were devastated when they were told of Terry's death in Vietnam. Terry's daughter, Mary Scott, was born three months after her father was buried with honors on a cold winters day at Sacred Heart cemetery in Detroit. Terry's father never recovered from the shock, and for the final years of his life, after brewing the traditional morning coffee, with a tear in his eye would always make a toast to his son and the "Corps."

The Company Commander of Alpha 1/9, Captain Max Radcliffe still finds himself waking up sometimes in the early morning darkness and hearing the voice of L/Cpl Rizzo saying: ***"Skipper, they are all around us, you got to come and get us"***

Terry's daughter is now married and has a family. Mary Scott named her son, Terry in honor and memory of the father that she never saw, who was taken from her in the battle on Hill 64.

MEDICAL NEWS

Overcoming Neurotoxicity (*Agent Orange/Gulf War Syndrome*) With a Simple Natural Treatment

By Dr. Howard Peiper (Khe Sanh Veteran)

The nervous system comprises the brain, spinal cord, and a vast array of nerves. Bodily functions controlled by this complex network of nerve processes, transmitters, hormones, receptors, and channels are movement, thought, vision, hearing, speech, heart function, respiration, and numerous other physiological processes. Although toxic substances can adversely affect every major body system the nervous system is particularly vulnerable. Unlike many other cells nerves have a limited capacity to regenerate.

If a substance adversely affects any of the structural or functional components of the nervous system it is considered to have neurotoxic potential. At the molecular level a substance might interfere with protein synthesis within certain nerve cells leading to reducing production of a neurotransmitter and stimulating brain dysfunction. Neurotoxins can adversely affect sensory or motor functions, disrupt learning and impair memory processes. They may also cause detrimental behavioral—effects which give rise as the earliest signs of exposure. In addition, there is evidence that the adverse effects of some neurotoxic-induced neurodegenerative diseases may not become apparent until years after exposure (i.e. cancer, diabetes, MS, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's).

Scientists have found that when certain species of rice grains are grown under optimal conditions, and are harvested at the proper age, they contain top quality functional and essential nutrients such as polysaccharide polypeptides. Rice grains meeting these criteria are perfectly suited to enhance the cellular energy (ATP) production of the mitochondria for DNA repair and cellular regeneration. They combat free radicals and enhance the detoxification process establishing an anabolic (building) phase increasing the functionality of the body's natural healing power.

An important function of polysaccharide polypeptides is its ability to detoxify the body. Avoiding contact with neurotoxins during wartime is virtually impossible. A buildup of these toxins within the body can manifest as many forms of illness. By not identifying the cause of the illness many physicians misdiagnose and prescribe what become "band-aid cures." The first step in bringing the body back to health is to detoxify externally and internally, thus removing toxins from the system. Polysaccharide polypeptides can assist this process and when these toxins are eliminated it helps to support and strengthen the glandular system, accelerating the healing process.

Polysaccharide polypeptides stimulate cognitive enhancement primarily through its influence on important neurotransmitters. These neurotransmitters relay information between neurons and rely on specialized brain chemicals to function properly. While memory is an extremely complex phenomenon, neuronal transmission is even more complex Polysaccharide polypeptides support neuronal transmission by:

- increasing levels of noradrenalin (thinking, learning, planning)
- balancing levels of dopamine (libido, information processing)
- increasing levels of acetylcholine (memory) Increasing levels of serotonin (mood, sleep, balances appetite, lowers substance cravings)

Please take note that depression is a symptom of insufficient serotonin levels. Scientists have found that a positive therapeutic effect of polysaccharide polypeptides was revealed in patients who exhibited pronounced depressive states of varied origins. Studies also reveal that polysaccharide polypeptides have been shown to preserve nerve cell function by supplying food and nutrients at the cellular level. The concept is simple. Provide the cell with food easily recognized and utilized by the cell's DNA (the "molecule of life") to generate energy and this will provide the vehicle for repairing cell damage.

Studies have shown that polysaccharide polypeptides help nerve cells produce normal proteins, allowing these connections to actually be rejuvenated. This is incredible news for people who are affected by neurotoxins (i.e. Agent Orange, Gulf War Syndrome). Nerve cells exposed to these neurotoxins were ultimately protected from damage after adding bioglycanate to the medium. A degree of cellular regeneration of the nerve dendrites and axons was also seen. These extraordinary results have consistently been observed in subsequent research.

Polysaccharide polypeptides are a high, bioactive form of essential elements that improves the cellular environment within which to create a harmonious basis for ultimate gene expression. It has been proven that it can work both in vitro and vivo to correct degenerative health problems at the cellular level.

Dr. Howard Peiper, nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, has written many books on nutrition and natural health including the best seller "The A.D.D. & A.D.H.D Diet". His latest book is titled "PSP, Nature's Healing Miracle". Howard was a hospital corpsman with the marines at Khe Sanh in 1967. His website is: walkthetalkproductions.com

(Use this information as a side bar)

Neurological and Behavioral Effects of Exposure to Toxic Substances

MOTOR EFFECTS	SENSORY EFFECTS
Convulsions	Vision Disorders
Equilibrium Changes	Pain Disorders
Weakness Tremor	Tactile Disorders
Twitching	Auditory Disorders
Lack of Coordination	
Unsteadiness	
Paralysis	
Reflex	
Abnormalities	
Activity Change	

ACTIVITY EFFECTS	COGNITIVE EFFECTS
Mood and Personality	**Cognitive**
Sleep Disturbances	**Memory Problems**
Excitability	**Confusion**
Depression	**Speech Impairment**
Irritability	**Learning Impairment**
Restlessness	
Nervousness	
Tension	
Delirium	
Hallucinations	

GENERAL EFFECTS	
Loss of Appetite	
Depression	
Neuronal Activity	
Narcosis	
Stupor	
Fatigue	
Nerve Damage	

MEMOIRS

AIR FORCE MOH

Rescue at Kham Duc

Tom Eichler E Co 2/26
Publisher

In early 1968, the North Vietnamese Army launched a major offensive into South Vietnam. It began in January with an attack on the US Marine Corps base at Khe Sanh, just below the Demilitarized Zone. The siege lasted 77 days, with the marines sustained by air strikes and aerial re-supply. The main blow of the offensive fell on Jan. 31, the Tet lunar New Year holiday, when the NVA and the Viet Cong attacked military bases and population centers all over South Vietnam.

In May, in the second phase of the offensive, two NVA regiments attacked the US Army Special Forces camp at Kham Duc, located in a valley about eight miles from the Laos border and 100 miles south of Khe Sanh. From there, US Special Forces, augmented by South Vietnamese soldiers and Montagnard irregulars, kept watch on the Ho Chi Minh Trail on the other side of the mountains. The camp also impeded enemy infiltration of the South Vietnamese highlands.

Kham Duc had a 6,000-foot-long asphalt runway, built in the 1950s to bring in materials to build a hunting lodge for South Vietnamese leader Ngo Dinh Diem. Wooded hills rose on all sides. The camp was not built to withstand a major assault by artillery and infantry, and it did not hold out long against the large NVA force. The attack began May 6 at a forward operating base, Ngoc Tavak, three miles to the southwest. The casualties were heavy, and two Marine Corps helicopters were lost. Survivors retreated to the main camp. Kham Duc was reinforced by airlift in the May 10-11 period, but the NVA occupied the surrounding hills, sweeping away the defensive machine gun outposts. The North Vietnamese could shoot down on the camp and on aircraft landing there.

As the attack intensified with heavy fire from artillery, mortars, and recoilless rifles, Military Assistance Command Vietnam changed its mind about reinforcing Kham Duc. Army Gen. William C. Westmoreland, commander of US forces in South Vietnam, decided to evacuate the camp instead. The US faced the need to bring out about 1,000 people,

not only US troops but South Vietnamese soldiers and, in some cases, their family members. Army and Marine Corps helicopters would conduct about half of the evacuation, but fixed-wing Air Force air lifters would be needed as well. At 8:30 a.m. on May 12, the Air Force's 834th Air Division, which controlled all the C-130s and C-123s operating in South Vietnam, was told to begin an all-out effort to evacuate Kham Duc.

The C-130 was the primary tactical air-lifter in Vietnam and was on its way to becoming one of the greatest airplanes of all time. It carried three times the payload of the old C-123 that it was to replace. However, the Vietnam War gave a new lease on life to the C-123, which had been declared obsolete and was scheduled for retirement. It was ideal for missions into short airstrips and remote locations. The K model of the C-123 had two small jet engines fitted on wing pylons for extra power at takeoff.

Also around 8:30, 7th Air Force ordered maximum priority for air strikes to support the evacuation. US airpower pounded the NVA positions throughout the day, beginning with B-52 strikes at dawn. Tactical airpower flew about 140 sorties at Kham Duc, 120 of them from Air Force units in Vietnam and Thailand.

Check Ride Diverted

Since the evacuation wasn't laid on until 8:30 that morning, Air Force units in Southeast Asia had already begun operations for the day before they got the news. Lt. Col. Joe M. Jackson, commander of a C-123 detachment at Da Nang, had taken off at 7 a.m. for his semiannual flight check. Maj. Jesse W. Campbell, the flight examiner, was in the co-pilot's seat. Jackson had scheduled the check ride for a cargo mission, no passengers, to various locations up and down the coast. The flight check involved such things as shutting down an engine, best done without passengers aboard.

This was Joe Jackson's third war. He enlisted in the Army at Newnan, Ga., in 1941, when he was 18 years old. He became a crew chief on B-25 bombers, and then earned his commission and wings in the aviation cadets. He flew P-40 and P-63 fighters and, toward the end of World War II, B-24 bombers. After the war, he returned to fighters and flew 107 combat missions in F-84s in Korea. He was one of the first Air Force pilots selected to fly the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft. Jackson is credited with several aeronautical innovations, including a bomb-tossing method to deliver nuclear weapons from fighter aircraft, later adopted by Strategic Air Command for use by bombers.

Jackson was serving as a war planner in Europe when he got his orders to go to Vietnam. After being checked out in the C-123, he arrived at Da Nang on Aug. 28, 1967. His detachment, part of the 311th Special Operations Squadron at Phan Rang, had eight aircraft. They had seen hard duty during the siege of Khe Sanh. Jackson's call sign for the check ride was "Bookie 771." The crew, in addition to flight examiner/co-pilot Campbell, consisted of the flight engineer, TSgt. Edward M. Trejo, and the loadmaster, SSgt. Manson L. Grubbs. The aircraft they were flying was a C-123K, the model with the booster jets under its wings.

Early that afternoon, they were told to return to Da Nang for diversion to the evacuation of Kham Duc. Campbell declared the flight check over (Jackson passed) and stayed on for the air evac mission as co-pilot. They drew flak vests, extra ammo for their .38 revolvers, and an extra M-16, and were airborne for Kham Duc at 2:55 p.m. The camp was about 45 miles west of Da Nang.

Upon arrival, Bookie 771 reported in to "Hillsboro," the C-130 airborne battlefield command and control center (ABCCC), and joined the other aircraft stacked up over the base. In another one of the airplanes then orbiting Kham Duc was Maj. Gen. Burl W. McLaughlin, commander of the 834th Air Division.

Evacuation of Kham Duc

A fierce battle had been raging at Kham Duc since daybreak. The first helicopter to arrive, an Army CH-47, was shot down about 7:30. Moments later, an Air Force A-1E was shot down outside the camp perimeter. The NVA shot and killed the bulldozer driver who was trying to clear away the helicopter, which was blocking the runway. It was eventually pushed to the side, but the runway remained partially obstructed.

In all, seven aircraft—three helicopters, the A-1E, an O-2, and two C-130s—would be lost that day at Kham Duc. When Bookie 771 got there, a good deal of the action had already taken place.

The first C-130 in that morning was flown by Lt. Col. Daryl D. Cole. The crew had not yet heard about the evacuation and was delivering a full load of cargo. Cole drew ground fire as he approached and landed with extensive battle damage. A main landing gear tire was flat, and the wing fuel tanks had been punctured and were leaking. The crew could not unload because panicky Vietnamese civilians and irregular troops rushed aboard and refused to budge. The damaged airplane could not take off with all that weight. Cole taxied off the runway, and the crew hacked away as much of the bad tire as they could with a bayonet. When the aircraft drew mortar fire, the Vietnamese fled. One explosion came so close that it shattered a cockpit window. The fuel leak had thrown the aircraft out of balance, but despite the problems, Cole got it into the air and back to Cam Ranh Bay, where the crew counted 85 bullet and shrapnel holes.

At midmorning, Capt. Phillip Smo-ther--man, an O-2 forward air controller working tactical air strikes on enemy positions, was shot down over the base. He made a controlled crash and got his airplane off the runway. He found an abandoned Air Force radio and remained on the ground for five hours, translating the base's needs for close air support to the ABCCC and the forward air controllers. He worked one strike that put ordnance just over 30 yards from his bunker. He left on the last C-130 that took passengers out.

Early in the afternoon, Maj. Bernard L. Bucher's C-130 took off with 150 women and children, families of the Vietnamese irregulars, aboard. The aircraft was shot down as it cleared the field and crashed with no survivors.

Lt. Col. William Boyd Jr., also flying a C-130, saw Bucher go down. Ground fire was heavy as he approached. As he was about to touch down, a shell exploded 100 feet in front of him. He pulled up, went around, landed, and took 100 people aboard. He took more battle damage on the way out. The aircraft made it to Cam Ranh Bay, where somebody spray painted "Lucky Duc" on the side, referring to its fortune in surviving.

As Lt. Col. John Delmore's C-130 came in, the cockpit was riddled with ground fire. The enemy was trying to kill the crew. Delmore crash-landed, but he had no brakes or hydraulic power and little directional control. The airplane struck the remains of the CH-47, and Delmore wrestled it off the runway, where it hit a dirt mound and stopped.

About 4:30, the ground commander ("Crossbow") reported that all friendly forces were clear and requested air strikes to demolish the base and the equipment left behind.

The airborne command post then gave an order to the fighters that were in the area to go in and destroy the camp," Jackson said, but "the C-130 that had just taken off said, 'Negative, negative. I let three members of the combat control team off,' and that's when the dead silence was so loud. It was just like hitting a guy in the face with a dead fish."

Capt. Robert M. Gatewood, duty controller on the ABCCC, said, "A hush could be felt, literally, over the radio as all agencies realized the implication of this statement."

After a few moments, the ABCCC broke the silence to tell the strike fighters to hold up and to send some O-1 and O-2 FAC aircraft down to look. They weren't able to see anything. An airplane would have to go in to get the combat control team.

The Combat Control Team

Maj. John W. Gallagher was mission commander of the combat control team, although he was a C-130 pilot, not a combat controller. The other two members of the team, TSgt. Morton J. Freedman and SSgt. James D. Lundie, were both fully qualified combat controllers. They had come to Kham Duc as part of the first contingent of reinforcements May 10. Their job was to control the airlift and coordinate the approach, loading, and unloading to expedite departure of the airplanes and limit their exposure to ground fire.

On the morning of May 12, Gallagher heard that the airlift mission had been canceled. There was room for confusion. According to an Air Force study of the battle by Lt. Col. Alan L. Gropman, 7th Air Force called off the C-130 evacuation about 10:30 because of the severity of ground fire. Military Assistance Command Vietnam subsequently ordered resumption of evacuation. Gallagher decided the CCT should pull out, overruling the opinions of Freedman and Lundie, who thought that the team ought to stay. On Gallagher's orders, the CCT boarded Cole's C-130 when it left at midmorning for Cam Ranh Bay.

McLaughlin, learning that the CCT had left before the job was complete, ordered that they go back in. Indeed, Cole's airplane was the first C-130 into Kham Duc. By the middle of the afternoon, seven more C-130s and a C-123 landed at Kham Duc. However, these flights were finished by the time the CCT returned to the camp in the late afternoon. A great many people were involved in the evacuation, which was a complicated operation. Some of the details—such as the situation of the CCT—got lost in the weeds.

When the CCT got to Cam Ranh Bay, Gallagher was told that the team had to go back to Kham Duc. Major Jay Van Cleeff, whose C-130 had been diverted to Cam Ranh Bay, was instructed to fly them to the embattled camp. That seemed strange. Previously, Van Cleeff's crew had understood they would be making a container delivery system airdrop at Kham Duc because it was too dangerous to land. Now they were going to put people on the ground there.

Gallagher and Van Cleeff called "Hilda," the airlift control center at Saigon, and questioned the order. Hilda told them they were "talking too much over the air" and that the CCT should go back to Kham Duc and help with the evacuation. Before they left Cam Ranh Bay, Freedman tried to obtain an FM radio, but was unable to do so. He would have to rely on his survival radio.

Van Cleef landed at Kham Duc about 4:20, and the CCT got off. The airplane stayed on the ramp for a few minutes, then left.

There was nobody at Kham Duc except the CCT and the enemy. Everybody else had been evacuated. To make matters worse, Freedman's radio wouldn't work, so they couldn't notify anyone of their plight. The NVA had placed three .50-caliber machine guns along the runway. Freedman put one of them out of action, killing the gunners with his M-16.

Lundie had a rifle as well, and they had enough ammunition to fight for a while. "Sergeant Lundie had five magazines and I had six," Freedman said. Several airplanes passed over the field, and then a C-123 came in, rolled by, and took off before the CCT could flag it down. The stranded airmen did not know if they had been seen by the air lifter crew.

"The thought of another plane was impossible and illogical because the NVA were moving all around us," Freedman said. "So much ammo was blowing up you couldn't tell 'incoming' from our own, and it was throwing debris all over the runway. Even if they knew we were here, no man in his right mind would attempt a landing. I never felt so lonely in all my life."

They were close to despair when Gallagher called out: "There's a 123 on short final."

It was in this C-123K Provider that Jackson and his crew made their courageous rescue. The K model had small jet engines to assist in max-performance takeoffs. Ignoring safety, Jackson kept them at high power, keeping time on the ground to fewer than 50 seconds. Miraculously, not a single bullet hit the aircraft.

Assault Landing

The first 123 that went in looking for the CCT was "Bookie 750" from Phan Rang, flown by Lt. Col. Alfred J. Jeanotte Jr. Fighter aircraft escorted him down and strafed the jungle, but the enemy fire was hot.

Rather than reversing engines to come to a full stop, Jeanotte kept moving down the runway, looking for the CCT. He accelerated to full power and took off. The C-123 had broken ground before the crew spotted the CCT waving at them. Jeanotte did not have enough fuel left to land again, stop, and make another maximum effort takeoff. The next airplane in the queue was Joe Jackson's Bookie 771. Jeanotte

briefed him on where the CCT had been seen. Col. William K. Bailey, commander of the 311th Special Operations Squadron, to which the C-123s were assigned, later described the situation.

"Kham Duc by now was a battleground in hostile hands. It was under heavy ground and mortar attack," Bailey said. "The hostile forces had long since zeroed in on the airstrip with small arms, mortars, light and heavy automatic weapons, and recoilless rifle fire. Within the immediate vicinity of the runway, manned hostile gun emplacements had been established. The camp was engulfed in flames; its ammunition dumps were continuously exploding and littering the runway with debris. In addition, the remains of an enemy destroyed... helicopter reduced the runway length to approximately 2,200 feet." Jackson was at 9,000 feet when he got the call to go in. He had watched the enemy gunners blazing away at Jeanotte.

"I was not going to make a long, low approach like this other airplane had because I saw the fire that he had drawn from this ridge on the southwest part of the field, and I [didn't] want any part of that," Jackson said. "I decided to make my approach extremely steep, just as straight down as it would go."

(Many published accounts of the mission are in error. They say Jackson applied full aileron and opposite rudder for a "sideslip" descent. Jackson says that never happened.)

On an assault landing, Jackson said, "the airplane more or less slams into the ground, [and] at that point, you normally reverse the propellers ... to reduce your stopping distance." However, he was not going to do that. Reversing the propellers on a C-123K would automatically shut off the two auxiliary jet engines to prevent damage to the engines from debris and gravel thrown up by the propellers.

"I briefed the guys that I would not reverse the engines unless necessary because I didn't want to have to take time to start them," Jackson said. "It took about a minute or so ... to get them started, and I figured that was too long.

"I briefed the co-pilot, Major Campbell, [and] I said the only thing I want you to do when we get on the ground is to make sure that the flaps get from the assault position, which is full down, back up to the takeoff position. [I] briefed the loadmaster, ... as soon as this thing touches down, I want the doors opened just as quick as possible."

With that, he closed the throttles, put the landing gear down, put the flaps down full, and set the propellers in a flat pitch. The jet engines were started and idling. Jackson took the old airlifter down in a dive it was never designed to make, descending at 155 mph. Supposedly, the flaps would not hold at that speed. Around 151 mph, the wind pressure in the "blowup valve" blows the flaps back up to prevent damage to the system. However, the flaps held.

Bookie 771 leveled out 50 feet above the ground and 1,500 feet from the runway. Jackson came in from the southwest and touched down at the very end of the airstrip, some 2,200 feet from the wreckage of the CH-47 helicopter. That much runway, he said, was "adequate to stop in, but you have to clamp on the brakes pretty well."

Jackson's unorthodox descent took the enemy gunners by surprise, but they soon adjusted their aim.

50 Seconds on the Ground

"It didn't seem like there was any possible way for a plane to get in," Lundie said. "The whole camp was burning and exploding. When I looked up and saw that C-123 coming in, it was like a miracle. I couldn't believe it."

The CCT was "in a ditch alongside the runway and they started running toward the runway when I was about halfway down on the landing roll," Jackson said. Two of the enemy machine gun positions along the ramp were still firing. One was under the wing of Delmore's C-130, and the other was beside the wreckage of a UH-1 helicopter. Gunners in the hills were shooting down at them. "I saw tracers coming out from under the airplane that had apparently struck the runway and were ricocheting off the runway, under the airplane," Jackson said. The C-123 "only sits about two feet off the ground, so they were missing mighty close."

Jackson figured the hillside gunners "just kinda underestimated the range. That made the bullets drop enough to just hit the runway underneath the air-

plane and then ricochet out the other side." As Jackson was turning the airplane around, Campbell exclaimed, "My God, look at that!" A 122 mm rocket, apparently fired at zero elevation from the ridge to the north, was coming down the runway toward them. It struck the ground, bounced, and came to rest about 30 feet from the airplane, but it did not explode. It was a dud.

The CCT, having sprinted from the ditch, boarded the airplane quickly. "The loadmaster said, 'All on board,' and Campbell made a very astute observation like, 'Let's get the hell out of here,' " Jackson said. Jackson steered around the dud rocket and ran the throttles up. The jet engines reached 100 percent, and they were off. They used only about 1,000 feet of the runway for the takeoff roll.

"I say that we were on the ground somewhere around 40 to 50 seconds," Jackson said.

Fifteen seconds after the airplane started moving, the spot where it had been stopped erupted with mortar fire. Jackson figured the mortar shell had been in flight something like 40 seconds and that they made it away just in time. When they got back to Da Nang, they checked the airplane for bullet holes. There weren't any.

In nominating Jackson for the Medal of Honor, the 311th SOS commander, Bailey, noted that "miraculously, Bookie 771 survived the approach, landing, turnaround, and departure without receiving a single hit."

Hilda, the airlift command post in Saigon, almost struck again. According to Sam McGowan—a C-130 crew member in Vietnam, now a prolific writer on airpower—after Jackson had gotten the first CCT out, Hilda ordered another C-130, carrying another CCT, to put them on the ground at Kham Duc. The order was not rescinded until the C-130 was about to go in.

Medal of Honor



The critical moment at Kham Duc was captured for all time in a photograph taken from the air during the 50 seconds that Bookie 771 was on the ground. It is believed to be the only photo ever taken during an action that led to the award of the Medal of Honor.

The picture is fuzzy and the scene is obscured by smoke, but Jackson's C-123 is clearly visible on the runway, as are the other aircraft shot down earlier in the day. The photo was taken moments before the dud rocket got there. The CCT can be seen running from the ditch. It is not known who took the photo, but a copy of it was attached to the nomination for the Medal of Honor.

There only one known photo of a Medal of Honor action taken while it was under way. Joe Jackson had just put his C-123 down to pick up three combat control team airmen. Jackson braved close-in enemy fire from both sides of the runway and from the hills above Kham Duc. Jackson himself received a copy of the photo through regular distribution about two weeks after the battle. It arrived at Da Nang aboard a cargo airplane and was turned in to the airlift control center, which passed it on to Jackson. The photo was between two pieces of cardboard, wrapped in brown paper with Jackson's name on it.

Shortly after the Kham Duc mission, the wing vice commander from Phan Rang was visiting Da Nang and staying with Jackson. The two of them were together when the vice commander got a telephone call. Hanging up, he told Jackson that he was to be nominated for the Medal of Honor.

While the nomination was pending, Jackson was directed not to fly any more missions. He finished his tour in Vietnam in August with 298 combat sorties.

The Medal of Honor was presented to Jackson at the White House by President Lyndon Johnson on Jan. 16, 1969.

Co-pilot Campbell was awarded the Air Force Cross. The crew members, Trejo and Grubbs, were decorated with the Silver Star. There were other awards for the action at Kham Duc. Bucher, who died when his C-130 went down, was awarded the

Air Force Cross, as were Boyd, the pilot of "Lucky Duc," and Jeanotte, who made the first attempt to rescue the CCT.

Cole, pilot of the first C-130 in, who made it out with the destroyed tire and leaking fuel tanks, received not only the Silver Star but also the Mackay Trophy for most meritorious flight of the year.

Eight months after the Medal of Honor ceremonies at the White House, Jackson was at the Air Force Association convention looking at the exhibits when he ran into Westmoreland. They talked about the war and Kham Duc, and Westmoreland said, "You know, I was the guy who recommended you for the Medal of Honor."

He had followed the action at Kham Duc closely as it unfolded. Apparently, the call to the vice wing commander at Da Nang had been the word from Westmoreland, coming down the line, to make the nomination.

Jackson spent three years in the Pentagon in the Directorate of Plans. In 1971, he was reassigned to the Air War College faculty to teach strategic studies. He retired in 1973 after 33 years in the Air Force.

Reunion in Charlotte

Jackson went to work for Boeing, setting up a training program for the Iranian Air Force, which was using Boeing 707s in a number of roles. He was in Iran for three years, then came back to Seattle to work in Boeing's training department. He retired for good in 1985. In the years since then, he has kept busy with volunteer work and other activities.

In May 1997, Joe Jackson was being honored at the observance of the 50th anniversary of the Air Force at a race at the Charlotte Motor Speedway in North Carolina. For one person in the crowd of 185,000, it was a special surprise when Jackson was introduced. Jim Lundie of Concord, N.C., recognized the pilot who had rescued him at Kham Duc 29 years before. It was an emotional moment as Jackson and Lundie hugged and shook hands.
"You hear about long lost family members being reunited and the emotions they feel," said Lundie, who had left the Air Force in 1968. "This was the same close family feeling for me."

Until They Come Home





MEMOIRS

TASK FORCE GLICK

Robert A. Younghans,
Sergeant Major, USMC, Retired
11th Engineers-H&S Co- Task Force Hotel

In early spring 1968, I was a CWO2, 1360 Construction Officer, S-3 Delta of 11th Engineers Battalion, stationed at Dong Ha. The XO, Major William Mannix instructed me to find a qualified officer who was demolition qualified. The battalion was to provide an officer to TASK FORCE GLICK at Khe Sanh. I only knew of one officer who fit the request. Captain Joe Plyer, the Commanding Officer of Charlie Company, who was about due to rotate back to the States. Major Mannix looked me in the eye and said: "Gunner, looks like you are it." He added, "relax, you will probably get a Legion of Merit for the job I am assigning you." Major Mannix was aware I had once taught Demolition and was the OIC of the Demolition Range at MCES, Courthouse Bay, CLNC.

I was instructed to report to B/Gen Jacob Glick, C/O of Task Force Glick at the KSCB. After reporting in, I contacted M/SGT Joe Vance of C Company 11th Engineers. My orders were to blow the 37th ARVN Rangers trench line and positions. In theory, this would reduce the size of KSCB, and make it easier to defend. The problem we faced included the fact that the ammo dump had been blown up prior to our arrival, leaving no TNT, and little C-4 or DET CORD. In addition, each Ranger position held CS and Frag Grenades. With help from the 26th Marines we gathered most of the grenades and placed Grade Three 105 HE rounds in each position as a Charge, and primed them with a small amount of C-4 tied together with DET cord. We notified Task Force Glick and the S-3 for the 26th Marines, and blew it.

I contacted the senior Chief, from CBMU 301 who provided a Dozer and operator to backfill the area. Once this was completed I was "loaned" to Task Force Hotel, and worked with them until relieved. I believe that the Legion Of Merit remark by Major Mannix was an idle one; He had to forsee the job we accomplished with so little at Khe Sanh. During that same period, operation PEGASUS was developing, and what MSGT Vance and I had accomplished was past history. I find it disappointing that most of the published accounts of the Siege do not mention Task Force Glick, and an even lesser mention of Task Force Hotel.

MEMOIRS

"THANKS"

Harold D. Fosmo, Jr.
Hotel Co 2/3

I want to sincerely thank the Helicopter crews for the following two incidents that took place while I served with H&S Company at the base of Hill 558. There were several helicopters inbound with mail in cargo nets. One of the bright colored bags fell out of the net quite a distance our perimeter. The helicopters flew over dropping the nets at our locations. The helicopter the bag dropped out of turned around and headed back to pick it up. The flight commander told him on the radio to leave the bag and get back in formation. There was no reply from the pilot or crew of the helicopter even after very angry calls for them to turn back. The helicopter touched down briefly and a crew member grabbed the bag. The helicopter flew over our position and threw the bag out to us. I hope they found out there was something wrong with his radio. That act of bravery meant a lot to those of us that received mail that day. If the pilot and the crew of that helicopter read this, I want to say thank you for all of us.

I had just directed a helicopter landing for a Medavac. The crew asked me if there was anything we needed. I jokingly replied: "cold beer would be nice." I had forgotten about it until one day I again landed a helicopter for another Medavac. One of the crew held a paper bag out the window and dropped it. I caught the bag and inside was a six- pack of beer. By the time I shared with everyone, I only got a few swallows, but it was great. If the pilot and crew of this helicopter read this I want to say thank you for all of us.

UPCOMING REUNIONS

The Third Marine Division Association will hold it's Annual Family Reunion August 15—19, 2007 In Las Vegas, Nevada. Headquarters Hotel, Plaza Hotel & Casino (Downtown). Anyone who served

in, was attached to or served in support of the Third Marine Division at any time since it was formed on September 16, 1942 is eligible and cordially invited to attend. For Membership and Reunion information contact: SGT MAJOR BILL KRUEGER, Retired. Home Phone (703) 451-3844 or write 7622 Highland St., Springfield, VA 22150-3931 or visit our website: www.caltrap.com.

WE GET MAIL

Tom,
Thanks so much for the Red Clay Magazine. It was forty years ago I left the small town of Spring Hill, Kansas for Vietnam. Some of what happened there is still with me. I served with a lot of good men in Kilo Company 3/26 and Charlie Company 1/26 at Khe Sanh on Hill 861, 1967. I am still fighting with snakes in my bunker or PTSD. I take it a day at a time, and with God's help I hope to some day have total peace.

Pat Buckley
Charlie Company 1/26

SHORT ROUNDS

THE VIETNAM VETERAN WHO STARTED IT ALL

By Rudy Estela # V-75366

Here at Ironwood state Prison in California, there is a Vietnam Veteran who is fighting a different type of war far away from the jungles of Vietnam, a war of literacy. As I walk the prison yard I notice there are a lot of prisoners walking around carrying a stack of books like a normal college campus. We now have a college program, which originally only benefited veterans. The program has now expanded to benefit all inmates, which I'm grateful for. I am currently enrolled in the college program as a full time student. The person who created this program, and who we owe it all to, is Mr. James A. White Jr., a Vietnam Veteran who served in the U.S Marines, and in the U.S Army. With the Marines, he was in Vietnam for a year and a half attaining the rank of sergeant. He joined the US Army as a helicopter Pilot and flew both Scout and Helicopter Gunships. He was there for three years reaching the rank of CWO- 2. All of Mr. White's time in Vietnam was in northern "I" Corps.

Thanks to the college program many of the initial students have graduated, and others such as myself are now trying to obtain an A.A or A.S degree. More A.S's then A.A's. All of this could not have been done without the vision of this man. The college program was started in 2000, with only 53 inmate students. In 2007, there are 5,000 students state wide. With the opportunity of a higher education many of us will have a better chance to become productive citizens. As I interviewed this remarkable man I learned his main goal is to give people the chance for them to find better jobs. I also want Vietnam Veterans who read your magazine to know that from inside a California Prison, there is a warrior who is doing so much to help out society.
Rudy Estela # V-75366
D-4/129/ISP
PO Box 2199
Blythe, Ca 92226

WEB BRIEFS

My Return To Vietnam

By Jim Dawdy
Runway Repair Khe Sanh Seabees

I went back to Khe Sanh for the first time in over 39 years. I hired the hotel car and driver for the day from the Hotel Morin in Hue. We drove in an almost new Mercedes Benz van to Dong Ha and picked up a guide. We then proceeded west along Route 9 through Cam Lo, Ca Lu, past Camp Carroll, with a roadside stop at milepost 31, to look at the Rockpile. The road is very modern and extremely smooth, with wide paved shoulders and large bridges

I was absolutely astonished at Khe Sanh town, a bustling business area (free economic zone) with buses from Thailand and Laos going by every few minutes. The area has about 30,000 residents with many multi-story buildings and new ones presently under construction. We continued on Route 9 to Lang Vei, and the guide led me into the trees where the remains of one of the old bunkers was located. There is also a PT-76 tank on a concrete pad on display there. The old base is now a coffee plantation with coffee bushes 7 feet tall, and lies beyond a

fence around the new museum, which is quite substantial and, all-in-all, fairly non-critical. The caretaker unlocked the gate for us and the guide and I walked toward where the trail started down to the stream, where our water point was. I think the old runway is about where the electric power line runs today. The guide (48 years old) has been up 861 and 881S, and seemed very knowledgeable about the area. If it wasn't for 861, 950 and 1015, I would hardly recognize the place. I will try to e-mail a few pictures when I get back. Total cost for day trip from Hue-driver, guide and vehicle =$150.

WEB-SITE JARGON

Does anyone remember my cousin Earl Harris E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

Larry Harris

Mr. Harris:
I remember your cousin and the February 26, 1968 incident in which he and Michael Wright were injured and later died from their injuries. Earl was a good Marine and a good young man, the world misses men such as him.

Semper Fidelis
Larry McCartney; PFC; Echo Company,
2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment

Thank you Mr. McCartney,

I was unaware that Michael Wright and my cousin were injured the same day. Was there a flurry of mortar fire that day? Are there any details of the events on Hill 861A. Am I correct, was it Hill 861A. Forgive my ignorance and I trust you will let me know if I am intruding with my questions. I believed that Hill 861A was under almost continuous mortar fire from mid-February until the end of the month. I have read all I have found until now, but have not found out many details of what occurred during the month. I believe the camp withstood a major and prolonged attack on February 22, and was temporarily overrun. I did find out from Jim Wodecki there is a book available, I believe put together by those who served at Khe Sanh and the hills around it.
Respectively,
Larry Harris

Mr Harris,

First and foremost, you are not intruding. A basic tenet of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association is that we reach out to the family of those lost at Khe Sanh. Another tenet is that we maintain and preserve an accurate historical record of what occurred. Your inquiry is most welcome. Yes, it was Hill 861-A.

The major and prolonged attack to which you refer occurred at 4:05 A.M. on February 5, 1968; exactly thirty nine (39) years ago today. PFC Earl Harris was a part of the defense of the hill that withstood the attack: the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) penetrated our perimeter but never managed to establish a foothold on Hill 861-A since Echo Company immediately counterattacked and pushed them off. The hill was under pretty much continuous mortar attack the entire month of February, but it was heaviest during the last two weeks of the month. Michael Wright and your cousin were next to each other and both injured by the same mortar round, there were no hand grenades involved.

At the time they were at or near a position that was close to the northwest corner of our trench line. It was mid-afternoon and a helicopter was inbound to the LZ which was on the southeast corner of our trench line. Normally when the enemy lobbed mortar rounds at us we could hear the tubes go off, but in this case the enemy used the sound of the incoming helicopter to mask their firing. Under normal circumstances we would expect incoming mortar rounds to impact at or near the landing zone (LZ), so it was out of character that rounds landed near the northwest corner; the round that killed Earl and Mike and wounded at least one other likely fell short of it's target--the LZ.

There are several books and articles concerning what happened on that hill during different times of the 1968 Tet Offensive. Some of those involved are CC on this E-Mail and there are others who they can put you in contact with. Please feel free to contact me at any time and I will do what I can to assist you in your search for information.

Semper Fidelis
Larry McCartney

INCOMING

Looking back at a Divisive War in the Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Kenneth Burns
The Daily Page

It resembles any ordinary suburban front door, except that it is mounted on a museum kiosk. As people approach, a doorbell rings brightly, inviting them to pull the door open. Then they see a mournful display: vintage Western Union telegrams announcing the grim fate of two young Wisconsin men who served in the Vietnam War. One was killed in action in 1970, and the other was reported missing in flight in 1965.

The door greets visitors to "In the Belly of the Dragon: Life and Death in I Corps," an exhibit that opened in September at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (30 W. Mifflin St.). I Corps was the northernmost military region of South Vietnam, and much of the heaviest fighting occurred there. The exhibit documents extraordinary events that took place in I Corps, as well as more prosaic moments, and it is dedicated to the 530 people from Wisconsin who died there. The exhibit is modest in scale, just one smallish room. A handful of large displays dominate the collection, including one documenting the battlefield funeral service, photographed for Life magazine, of an American killed at Khe Sanh in January 1968. The service was conducted by chaplain Ray William Stubbe, of Milwaukee. Across the room is a replica of the canvas domiciles that housed American soldiers in Vietnam. This one is decorated with pinups from Playboy, and there also is a copy of Catch-22, the satirical antiwar novel by Joseph Heller.

Accompanying the display are ammunition crates holding the wartime possessions of Wisconsin men who served: a compass, a knife, many cigarette lighters. Other arrangements collect snapshots of soldiers at their leisure. In one, especially poignant, a shirtless young man prepares a Chef Boyardee spaghetti dinner at an outdoor stove. "An American soldier enjoys the comforts of home," the caption wryly notes. Another display recalls the life of Walter Draeger, the Air Force pilot reported as missing in flight in that devastating telegram. His helmet is behind glass, and there is a photograph of him riding a bicycle and smiling. What is most moving about the exhibit is a mailbox holding what appear to be actual letters home from the war. These visitors can handle and read. In one, dated Feb. 17, 1968, Sgt. Jerry Paul writes to La Crosse from Ai Tu. "Had a gunner 'freeze' on a gun," he reports. "Have to replace him, could get someone killed if he's to shook to fire." It is a grim and necessary reminder of a troubled time, this collection, and it is marred only slightly by ubiquitous images of that titular grinning dragon -- an awkward metaphor for Asia that is not aging well. But apart from the heartbreaking imagery, what haunts me most is the ringing of that cheerful doorbell. During my visit, it tolled again and again as visitors walked beneath a sensor mounted over the door. It was a sad sound, but it delighted a group of young children. "Who's there?" they asked again and again in response, and pulled the door open. "In the Belly of the Dragon" will be on display until March 2008.

POETRY

Sonnet for Those Who Serve in the War on Terror

'Tis not for riches, glory or a name,
'Tis not for fickle politicians' praise,
Or you whom every errant breeze yet sways—
Your cheers and jeers are mostly much the same.

The troops who go out armed for Uncle Sam
Are different from the boys and girls at home.
The comradeship that claims them for its own
Has stretched from Valley Forge through Vietnam.

Why would a man or woman take a gun,
And wear the uniform and go and serve
In some hell-hole that touches every nerve,
And might not make a difference when it's done?

They do not fight for flags and apple pie,
But mostly for each other. That is why.

© Robert A. Hall
HQ Co 26Th Marines
Khe San Veteran

POETRY

The Marines of '64 Reunion

How does our Corps and country find
Such special men as these?
The bonding of long years ago,
Was dusted off with ease.

Across the barracks moonlit grid,
Sang hearts with tears of pride;
The Marines of '64 again,
Formed up from far and wide.

We ever shall remember well,
The battlement "Taps" so clear,
In honor of our fallen mates,
So far, but always near.

A special time, a special place,
Rare bonding, if you please.
How proud each man to call his own,
Such special men as these.
Semper Fi!

Judge P. J. Gulbrandsen (retired)
Former Captain, USMCR

To all Marines and their families, past and present, from The Basic School, Class 3-64.

INCOMING

STORIES YOU WILL NOT SEE IN THE LOCAL NEWS

"God Bless Denzel Washington One of the Good Guys"

Denzel Washington and his family visited the troops at Brook Army Medical Center, in San Antonio, Texas (BAMC). This is where soldiers who have been evacuated from Germany come to be hospitalized in the United States, especially burn victims. There are some buildings there called Fisher Houses. The Fisher House is a Hotel where soldiers " families" can stay, for little or no charge, while their soldier is staying in the Hospital. BAMC has quite a few of these houses on base, but as you can imagine, they are filled most of the time. While Denzel Washington was visiting BAMC, they gave him a tour of one of the Fisher Houses. He asked how much one of them would cost to build. He took his check book out and wrote a substantial check to help build one. The soldiers overseas were amazed to hear this story and want to get the word out to the American Public, because it warmed their hearts to hear it.







INCOMING

NEWS FROM IRAQ

By Hank Melanson
E & F Co 2/26

Capt John Dunn sends this SitRep from Lieutenant Commander Heidi Kraft MD USN. The Commander was deployed with the Alpha Surgical Company, 1st Medical Battalion, the First Marine Expeditionary Force, in Iraq. The doctor gives a very explicit definition of what life is like in Iraq.

I MEF from Camp Pendleton, CA, was just replaced by II MEF, Camp Lejeune, NC. "Subject: Greetings all from hot, hot, hot Iraq. We are short indeed...although not quite as short as we had originally thought...our flight home has been posted and is showing up 3 days later than planned. The good news is that we leave in the middle of the night and arrive (all admin complete, including turning our weapons into the armory) around dinnertime at Pendleton on the same day we leave (11 hrs time difference).

The other good news is it appears we've got commercial contract air carriers taking us home...so we don't have to worry about sleeping on the cold steel deck of an Air Force C-17. So...we turned over authority of the surgical company last week to our replacements, who had a serious trial by fire here in multiple ways, including multiple traumas, surgeries, increased risk to their personal safety, power outages, water outages, and camel spiders in the hospital...all in their first 4 days. But a few days ago, we heard the helicopters coming and knew they were dealing with multiple traumas, several of which were going to the OR...and we sat in our barracks and waited for them to call us if they needed us. They never did. Last week was the ceremony to mark the official end of our role here. Now we just wait.

As the days move very slowly by, just waiting, I decided that one of the things I should work on for my own closure and therapeutic healing...is a list. The list would be a comparison: "Things That Were Good" about Iraq and being deployed with the Marines as one of the providers in a surgical company, and "Things That Were Not Good." Of course, it's quite obvious that this list will be very lopsided. But I thought I would do it anyway, hoping that somehow the trauma, the fear, the grief, the laughter, the pride and the patriotism that have marked this long seven months for me will begin to make sense, through my writing.

Interestingly, it sort of turned into a poem. To be expected, I guess. Most of all it's just therapy, and by now I should be relatively good at that. Hard to do for yourself, though. So here goes...in reverse order of importance...

Things That Were Good

Sunset over the desert...almost always orange Sunrise over the desert...almost always red The childlike excitement of having fresh fruit at dinner after going weeks without it Being allowed to be the kind of clinician I know I can be, and want to be, with no limits placed and no doubts expressed

But most of all, The United States Marines, our patients... walking, every day, and having literally every single person who passes by say "Hoorah, Ma'am..." Having them tell us, one after the other, through blinding pain or morphine-induced euphoria..."When can I get out of here? I just want to get back to my unit..."

Meeting a young Sergeant, who had lost an eye in an explosion...he asked his surgeon if he could open the other one...when he did, he sat up and looked at the young Marines from his fire team who were being treated for superficial shrapnel wounds in the next room...he smiled, laid back down, and said, "I only have one good eye, Doc! , but I can see that my Marines are OK."

And of course, meeting the one who threw himself on a grenade to save the men at his side...who will likely be the first Medal of Honor recipient in over 11 years... My friends...some of them will be lifelong in a way that is indescribable My patients...some of them had courage unlike anything I've ever experienced before My comrades, Alpha Surgical Company...some of the things witnessed will traumatize them forever, but still they provided outstanding care to break, for 7 endless months And last, but not least... Holding the hand of that dying Marine

Things That Were Not Good

Terrifying camel spiders, poisonous scorpions, flapping bats in the darkness, howling, territorial wild dogs, flies that insisted on landing on our faces, giant, looming mosquitoes, invisible sand flies that carry leischmaniasis 132 degrees Wearing long sleeves, full pants and combat boots in 132 degrees Random and totally predictable power outages that led to sweating throughout the night Sweating in places I didn't know I could sweat...like wrists, and ears The roar of helicopters overhead The resounding thud of exploding artillery in the distance The popping of gunfire...Not knowing if any of the above sounds is a good thing, or bad thing

The siren, and the inevitable "big voice" yelling at us to take cover... Not knowing if that siren was on someone's DVD or if the big voice would soon follow The cracking sound of giant artillery rounds splitting open against rock and dirt The rumble of the ground... The shattering of the windows... Hiding under flak jackets and Kevlar helmets, away from the broken windows, waiting to be told we can come to the hospital...to treat the ones who were not so lucky... Watching the helicopter with the big red cross on the side landing at our pad worse...watching Marine helicopters filled with patients landing at our pad...because we usually did not realize they were coming... Ushering a sobbing Marine Colonel away from the trauma bay while several of his Marines bled and cried out in pain inside Meeting that 21-year-old Marine with three Purple Hearts...and listening to him weep because he felt ashamed of being afraid to go back

Telling a room full of stunned Marines in blood-soaked uniforms that their comrade, that they had tried to save, had just died of his wounds Trying, as if in total futility, to do anything I could, to ease the trauma of group after group...that suffered loss after loss, grief after inconsolable grief... Washing blood off the boots of one of our young nurses while she told me about the one who bled out in the trauma bay...and then the one who she had to tell, when he pleaded for the truth, that his best friend didn't make it...

Listening to another of our nurses tell of the Marine who came in talking, telling her his name...about how she pleaded with him not to give up, told him that she was there for him...about how she could see his eyes go dull when he couldn't fight any longer... And last, but not least... Holding the hand of that dying Marine.

Lieutenant Commander Heidi Kraft, MD, USN
A member of Alpha Surgical Company, 1st Med Battalion, 1st MEF. "Integrity - When you do the right thing even though no one is watching."

INCOMING

PAUL GALANTI - FORMER POW
TIMES-DISPATCH
GUEST COLUMNIST
Sunday, January 28, 2007

Since I was otherwise occupied as a POW in Hanoi and wasn't able to observe firsthand, I suppose it was a '60s thing -- when everybody who was anybody was or deeply aspired to be a victim. And, later, when the soldiers who'd fought valiantly in a war they actually won handily en route to defeating an entire evil empire demanded the same respect given every other element in society -- deserving or not -- they were accorded their own category of victimhood and enshrined in the most out-of-sight, obscure memorial in Washington, D.C. The re-writing of history to correct the many historical perversions has been very slow in coming.

I remember writing one of my first Op/Eds about the Vietnam "Wall," which reminded me then of a big hole in the ground or a large open mouth ? la a contemporary actress/ally of our enemy. But it was a nice gesture. Although it tended to patronize the suddenly glamorous former "baby killers," most of our contemporaries in military service shrugged it off as a belated, sort-of thanks from a grateful nation. From my first days in the military, I was taught that our job was to serve; there would be tough times but keep a stiff upper lip and press on. And enjoy the good times and camaraderie that military life -- almost exclusively -- engenders. Most movies back then had male heroes who sucked up adversity and pressed on. Mothers encouraged their daughters to marry the strong, silent types -- like John Wayne. On my return in 1973, being greeted by crowds and overuse of the sobriquet "hero" was embarrassing and confusing. The words and articles written about our incarceration in the filthy, miserable dungeons

of communist Vietnam were laced with the term "heroes" -- and there were, in fact, a few of those. But it became apparent, early on, that by hero the writers and speakers and extollers usually meant victim -- as in you poor guys. There was obviously a confusion of terminology! In fact, the roles had been reversed. At Home, the Same Spin

During my entire time in the infamous Hanoi Hilton POW compound, I felt like Winston Smith in Orwell's 1984 as the North Vietnamese propagandists talked about their glowing victories and mocked American efforts as the ignominious defeats of the U.S. aggressors and their lackeys. Now that I was home, I began to feel that propagandists in our country had developed their own strain of Newspeak to justify their weak arguments. When we POWs were released in February 1973 after the crushing B-52 raids and crippling of North Vietnamese commerce, I thought we'd won. Imagine my surprise when many Americans apparently indoctrinated by academia and a powerful media seemed to think we'd been routed.

Fast forward to 2007. Reading the generally unbelievable mainstream media, one would suspect that unemployed communist propagandists had found a new home -- as journalists. Their endless agonizing over American losses omits any mention of the good things that are happening throughout the Middle East or even the crippling losses of the other side! Embedded in the safe Green Zone, reporters write damning articles that cannot be corroborated. I'm almost glad this is happening because I can now see with my own eyes what transpired here in the 1960s while I read between the lines in Vietnam. From the condescending words used to describe the fighting forces, to outright exaggerations and lies, efforts are made to transform our servicemen into "victims." Regardless of how it started, the assault on America by our own tenured, unassailable academy, by our own "free" press and politicians for personal gain is undone by e-mails from actual soldiers and Marines in harm's way. But the true story usually fails to gain traction. It's much easier to manufacture hand-wringing bad news to weep and wail and whine about our valiant troops/victims than it is to find something interesting to report about our successes. Call it the Dan Rather/Jayson Blair School of Journalistic Integrity -- it has a deleterious effect on those who never cross-check the stories. It's a good reason that polls can swing up and down by 10 percentage points on the basis of an unreliable but sensational story. Military Doesn't Need Sympathy Our armed forces are not victims. They are not in Iraq because they're dumb. They are performing selfless acts on behalf of all Americans, and they don't need sympathy. That, simply, is what they do. Proudly. And justifiably so. Always have, always will. It's something the Hate America crowd will never understand. Frankly, most of those serving don't care what their de facto domestic enemies think of them. But, if those ungrateful Americans ever need help, their armed forces will be there serving proudly.

A Richmond resident, retired Navy commander and attack pilot Paul Galanti was a prisoner of war in Vietnam from 1966 until 1973. He is currently the chairman of the Board of Veterans Services for the commonwealth. His Commentary Columns regarding veterans appear regularly on the Back Fence.

INCOMING

MARINES HELPING MARINES
Wounded Marine Goes Home in Style

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

HICKAM AIR FORCE BASE, Hawaii, Feb. 9, 2007 – A Marine wounded in Iraq traveled the final leg of his journey back to his unit in style yesterday. Marine Lance Cpl. Steven Eastburn, a member of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines, at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, enjoys a ride home courtesy of Marine General Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Pace met Eastburn at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., where the young Marine had been recovering from wounds suffered in Iraq. When Eastburn told the chairman he was going to continue his recovery in Hawaii, Pace offered him a ride because that's where the general was headed next. Photo by Staff Sgt. D. Myles Cullen USAF

Lance Corporal Steven Eastburn, arrived back in Hawaii on an executive jet. Pace visited service members at David Grant Medical Center at Travis while his C-40B aircraft was being refueled. Eastburn was at the hospital, and Pace asked the 20-



year-old Marine if he would like a ride back to Hawaii. "Of course" the Marine said. "This is a big government plane," the chairman said. "We can always make room for one more." Eastburn was wounded while pulling guard as his squad was setting up an observation post. A sniper shot him through the right arm just above the elbow. "There was a second shot, but he missed," the lance corporal said. "My squad leader came out to get me." His squad gave him immediate attention then got him to a medevac point. He was flown to Balad Air Base, Iraq; and then Landstuhl, Germany; before going on to Andrews Air Force Base, Md.; and finally to Travis.

At Andrews, Eastburn received a new treatment called a peripheral nerve block. The treatment uses a machine to place a small bit of local anesthetic into the affected area. "It gives the wound a chance to heal without the side effects of morphine or other drugs," said Air Force Dr. (Lt. Col.) Bill Whelan, a



flight surgeon traveling with the chairman. "Many people get nauseous due to the side effects of morphine. But with this, Steven is able to eat and gain strength. He's doing well." Eastburn will be assigned to Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii, closer to his unit's home base.

As the jet pulled up to the distinguished visitor area at Hickam, a number of people were there to meet and greet the chairman and his wife, Lynne. Eastburn's parents were also there. The chairman came up the aisle of the plane and told the young lance corporal to "lead everybody off the plane." "Thanks for the ride, Sir," the lance corporal told Pace. "I won't forget it."

INCOMING

Members Still Serving "The Mightiest Corporal in the World Award"

By Glenn Prentice
C Btry 1/13 & I Co 3/26

For the second time in a year, Bob Arrotta and I spent the weekend at the Yuma Marine Corps Base. We were invited by the Major in charge of a class for training the top Aviators and Radio Operators to be Forward Air Controllers in Iraq. We gave them a two hour class on our experiences on Hill 881S (Using Power Point with sound, and all of our photos) on Close Air Support, Super Gaggles re-supply methods, medavacs in "Hot LZs," and Arty missions.

In addition we discussed tactics and counter tactics employed by both sides. There are many similarities that can be drawn with problems and solutions on Hill 881S, and current problems facing our Marines in Iraq. At the end of the program Bob was presented with a plaque bearing his name and Photo from the Hill 881S.

The entire class must complete a run with simulated missions that are timed and scored for accuracy. The award is called "India 14." (Bob's call sign in Vietnam). A similar award in Bob's name is located in the East Coast School. We should all congratulate Bob on his recognition and continued service to the Corps.

INCOMING

BRIGADIER GENERAL WALTER " TABASCO MAC" McILHENNY, USMC (DECEASED)



Brigadier General Walter Stauffer **"Tabasco Mac"** McIlhenny was born 22 October 1910 in Washington, D.C. He received his education at Force School and Central High School in Washington, D.C., and Lane High School in Charlottesville, Virginia. He later attended the University of Virginia, also in Charlottesville. He served two years with the Washington High School Cadets, and four years in the Virginia National Guard, attaining the rank of platoon sergeant. Honorably discharged from the National Guard on 15 June 1935, he enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve and completed the Platoon Leaders' Class that summer. He was commissioned a Marine Reserve second lieutenant, 3 December 1936, with a rank date of 6 November. During subsequent summer assignments to active duty, he attended the National Rifle Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio, as an instructor and shooting member of the Marine Corps Reserve Rifle Team. He was a member of the 1937 team that won the Hilton Trophy and the A.E.F. Roumanian Trophy; coach of the 1938 team that won the Roumanian Trophy; captain of the 1939 team that won the Rattlesnake Trophy; and winner of the Bronze medal in the National Individual Rifle Match, which entitled him to the Distinguished Marksman Badge. Prior to reporting for extended active duty in World War II, he was an engineer with the Continental Oil Company until 1940, when he joined the family firm, the McIlhenny Company of Louisiana, makers of Tabasco Sauce.

Called to active duty as a first lieutenant following the outbreak of World War II, General McIlhenny served continuously until December 1945. After completing The Basic School for Marine Corps Officers at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, he was assigned to the 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, at New River (later Camp Lejeune), North Carolina, and served with that unit throughout the entire war. In May 1942, he embarked with the 5th Marines for Guadalcanal, where the 1st Marine Division made its initial landing on 7 August 1942 under heavy enemy fire. For heroism as Executive Officer and later Commanding Officer of Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, during the landing on Guadalcanal and its subsequent capture and defense, he received both the Navy Cross and the Silver Star Medal. He also received two Purple Hearts for wounds received in this campaign, along with the Presidential Unit Citation that was awarded to the 1st Marine Division (Reinforced) for heroism on Guadalcanal.

In December 1943, he again participated in combat against the enemy, this time at Cape Gloucester, New Britain, as the 1st Battalion's Plans and Training Officer. He served subsequently as Regimental Intelligence Officer, and 3d Battalion Commander. In September 1944, during the landing on Peleliu, Palau Islands, he served as Regimental Plans and Training Officer. Again, he received the Presidential Unit Citation as a member of the 1st Marine Division (Reinforced). The unit was awarded the honor for heroic action in the assault and seizure of Peleliu. On his return to the United States in December 1944, then Major McIlhenny was assigned to Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, where he completed the Instructor's Orientation Course and served as an instructor in the Rifle Units Section. He also completed the Artillery School at Fort Benning, Georgia, during this assignment. Relieved from active duty 26 December 1945, Major McIlhenny continued his affiliation with the Ready Reserve in his home state of Louisiana. He organized

and trained Volunteer Training Unit 8-25 in Lafayette, Louisiana, and commanded that unit until his retirement from the Reserve. On 1 November 1959, he was placed on the retired list of Marine Reserve officers and was advanced to brigadier general by reason of having been specially commended for heroism in combat. In addition to his Marine Corps service, General McIlhenny was one of the founders of the Marine Military Academy in Harlingen, Texas, a private military college preparatory boarding school for boys in grades 8 through 12 that remains the only school in the world to offer military leadership based on the traditions of the United States Marine Corps. Under his guidance, the Marine Military Academy has grown steadily since 1965. He supported the Academy from its very inception and was of the original seven co-guarantors of the loan to establish the school. Many major projects were undertaken through his leadership and he is listed as a major contributor to the Academy. For many years, he served as the President of the Board of Trustees of the Academy and was the President Emeritus of the school at he time of his death.

However, Brigadier General McIlhenny was perhaps best known as the president of the McIlhenny Tabasco Sauce Company, located in New Inberia, Louisiana. His company's creation of two recipe books under his direction, The Charlie Ration Cookbook and The Unofficial MRE Recipe Booklet, and donation of thousands of bottles of the hot pepper sauce to Marines serving in Vietnam have helped make Tabasco a standard fair for those serving in the field even today. Brigadier General McIlhenny passed away 22 June 1985 after a brief illness. He had made his home on Avery Island, Louisiana, and was laid to rest there in Grove Cemetery after a simple military service.

During the Vietnam war Brig. Gen. Walter S. McIlhenny son of the 2nd company president of McIlhenny Company from his experiences with C-Rations as a soldier during WWII came up with the idea to send soldiers copies of the Charley Ration Cookbook filled with recipes for spicing up C-rations with Tabasco Pepper Sauce wrapped around two-ounce bottles of Tabasco Pepper Sauce along with a handful of a P-38 type can openers all in a waterproof canister. The first thumbnail below is the canister and it's contents. The second is a copy of the magazine ad sent to me by the Historian & Curator of the McIlhenny Company. The next thumbnail is of a Charlie Ration Cookbook that was sent in an envelope without the Tabasco Sauce or openers. The other thumbnails are the Charlie Ration Cookbook itself:





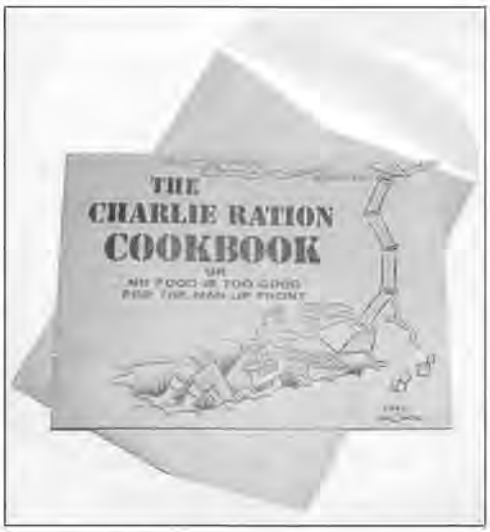

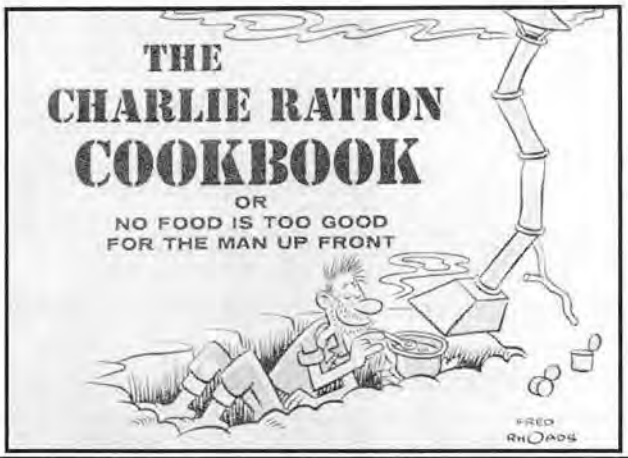



Great battles have not only produced famous generals, but gourmet dishes as well. Chicken Marengo was named after the battle of Marengo, in which Napoleon Bonaparte defeated the Austrians on the 14th of June, 1800. This dish was first cooked on the battlefield itself by Dunand chef to Napoleon.

Bonaparte, who ate nothing until after a day's battle was over, had gone forward with his general staff and was a long way from his supply wagons. Seeing his enemies put to flight, he asked Dunand to prepare dinner for him. All the chef could find were three eggs, four tomatoes, six crayfish, a small hen, a little garlic, some oil and a saucepan. He then and there created the Chicken Marengo.

The dish was served on a tin plate, the chicken surrounded by the fried eggs and crayfish with the sauce poured over it, the water being laced with brandy borrowed from the General's flask. Bonaparte, having feasted upon it, said to Dunand, "You must feed me like this after every battle."

The American fighting man today does not have a personal chef, but he does have his C-Rations. The contents of these remarkable packages contain far more nutriments than normally required for any man in the field and offer solid, good-tasting meals that are the envy of fighting men all over the world. Occasionally, though, a trooper will find it necessary to depend on C-Rations for a prolonged period of time . . . and it is with this in mind that TABASCO brand pepper sauce thought of a recipe book to help add dash and variety. There is no telling what gastronomic creations can be concocted with the C-Rations as a basic, combined with what the American trooper can find in the field or village near the combat zone. All he needs is imagination and a buddy who will act as assistant chef.

Whether eaten alone, with a buddy or two or in a group, the recipes found in this book are predominantly based on the single units and various combinations of the basic C-Rations. Outside ingredients may help, but they are not essential to the menus. Another thought: when combat situations make it impossible to do anything with your C-Rations except open them up and eat them cold, adding Tabasco right from the bottle will always add a distinctive bright flavor.

G.I. Joe has gone gourmet. These recipes were created for the fighting man in the field. Bon appetit.



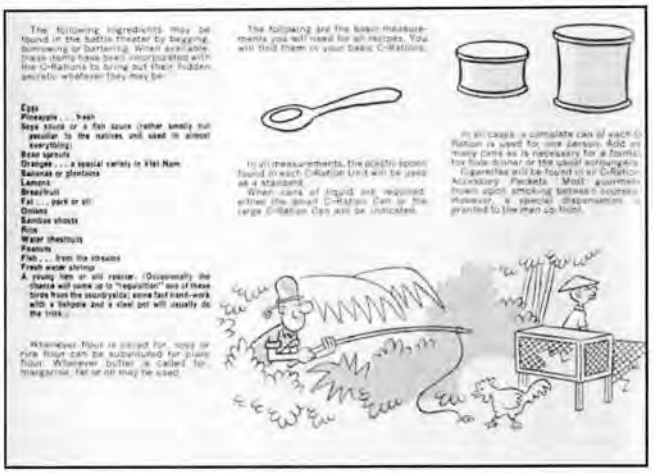

The following ingredients may be found in the battle theater by begging, borrowing or bartering. Where available, these items have been incorporated with the C-Rations to bring out their hidden secrets, whatever they may be:

Eggs
Pineapple . . . fresh
Soya sauce or a fish sauce (rather smelly but peculiar to the natives and used in almost everything)
Bean sprouts
Oranges . . . a special variety in Viet Nam
Bananas or plantains
Lemons
Grapefruit
Fat . . . pork or oil
Onions
Bamboo shoots
Rice
Water chestnuts
Peanuts
Fish . . . from the streams
Fresh water shrimps
A young hen or old rooster. (Occasionally the chance will come up to "requisition" one of those birds from the incumbrances; some fast front-work with a fishpole and a clear pair will usually do the trick.)

Whenever flour is called for, soya or rice flour can be substituted for plain flour. Whenever butter is called for, margarine, fat or oil may be used.

The following are the basic measurements you will need for all recipes. You will find them in your basic C-Rations:

In all measurements, the plastic spoons found in each C-Ration Unit will be used as a standard.

When cans of liquid are required, either the small C-Ration Can or the large C-Ration Can are indicated.

In all cases, a complete can of each C-Ration is used for one person. Add or many cans as is necessary for a family, for late dinner or the usual extravagance.

Cigarettes will be found in all C-Ration accessories. Packets. Most gourmets frown upon smoking between courses however, a special dispensation is granted to the man up front.



PORK MANDARIN

*One can pork steak
Green onions, chopped
Two spoons water chestnuts, chopped
Three spoons butter or oil or fat
Three spoons flour
Five spoons pineapple chunks, fresh or canned
Small can pineapple juice, fresh or canned
Half a can orange juice
Two spoons lemon juice
Generous dash TABASCO pepper sauce

One spoon soya sauce . . . two, if desired
If any candied ginger or fresh ginger root is available, a few slices may be added.

This original for this recipe took a lot of time; if you followed it, the VC would be sitting on your lap. Here's a new quick way to cheat Charlie and have some thing different.

Melt the butter or oil or fat and sauté the onions and chestnuts for about five minutes. Add the flour and stir until smooth. Add the pineapple juice, the lemon juice, the orange juice and continue cooking until the sauce is smooth. Add the pineapple chunks and other ingredients and, if available, the candied ginger or ginger root. Continue cooking until the sauce is very smooth. Now separate the pork steaks and add to the mixture, along with the juices from the can. Continue cooking until heated and bubbling. This may be served over boiled rice or crumbled crackers.

*This is from your Basic C-Ration

TIN CAN CASSEROLE

*One can franks and beans
*One can beef-stuff with potatoes
Generous dash TABASCO pepper sauce
*One can crumbled crackers
*One can cheese spread, melted
*Four spoons green onions, chopped coarsely
Two spoons butter or oil or fat
One small can of water, if necessary

The casserole can be elegant, but as most meal-kits, women often use it as a camouflage for a hasty meal after a long day in the field. Make it a recipe to put the Old Lady's Bridge Luncheon to shame.

Melt butter or oil or fat and sauté onions in it. Then add the cheese until it is melted and well blended. Now add the crackers for a few minutes and then return to can or other cooking utensil. Combine a can of franks and beans with the beef-stew and potatoes to this mixture and correct the seasoning. Cook for as long as necessary, seeing that the casserole is always moist. However, if it gets too thick, add a little water as a thinning agent.

This can be served over boiled rice with an added dash of Tabasco just before eating.

*This is from your Basic C-Ration

CREAMED TURKEY ON TOAST

Four spoons bamboo shoots or bean sprouts
Two spoons green onions (green part only)
Two spoons butter or oil or fat
*10 spoons milk
Three drops TABASCO pepper sauce
*Salt and pepper to taste
*One can turkey loaf, sliced
*One can white bread
Two spoons flour

This is a more elegant version of War D's "shit-on-a-shingle."

Melt butter or oil or fat and sauté onions or bamboo shoots. Add flour and cook until smooth. Now add the spoons of milk, a few at a time, and continue cooking till sauce is thick and smooth. Add other ingredients and then the sliced turkey, and continue cooking till turkey is well heated through. Serve immediately over rounds of white bread which have been fried in butter or oil or fat or toasted, if possible.

*This is from your Basic C-Ration

FISH WITH FRONT LINE STUFFING

Green onions, chopped (green and white parts)
Two spoons butter or oil or fat
Generous dash TABASCO pepper sauce

One spoon lemon juice
Eight spoons bean sprouts
*One can crumbled crackers
Two spoons water chestnuts, chopped
One spoon soya sauce
*Salt and pepper to taste
*One can ham and egg, minced
*Enough spoonfuls of milk to moisten mixture

Catch a fish. The above stuffing is enough for about a two pounder. Scale and clean the fish and stuff with the above, prepared as below. The stuffing may be doubled pending on how many and what size fish you caught.

Rub the fish inside and out with a little lemon juice and a few drops of Tabasco, as well as a little melted butter or oil or fat.

Melt butter or oil or fat and sauté onions in it. Then add bean sprouts and water chestnuts and cook for about five minutes. Add the minced ham and egg mixture and then add all other ingredients, adding the milk last and just enough to moisten the stuffing.

Stuff the fish with this mixture and secure with a string if necessary.

If a moist shell oven is possible, bake the fish in it, but make sure not have to cook for very long, no matter how it is cooked. If an oven is not available, the fish can be cooked in a sauce pan some butter or oil or fat and turned frequently until done, basted with a little water in the center of the stuffing should be heated separately.

*This is from your Basic C-Ration

COMBAT ZONE BURGOO

Two spoons butter or oil or fat
Three spoons chopped onion
One chicken, cut up and boiled until almost tender
*One can spiced beef with sauce
*One can ham and lima beans
*Can of crackers, crumbled coarsely
*Salt and pepper to taste
Generous dash TABASCO pepper sauce

Kentuckians will recognize this as a variation of a back hills Burgoo, which is a real man-size dishing. It is an ideal for late dinner for two or more.

Melt butter or oil or fat and sauté the onions. Combine the cans of lima beans and ham with the spiced beef and onions and add the cut up pieces of chicken. Add the crumbled crackers by this, the Tabasco and salt and pepper to taste. Cook slowly until the chicken almost falls off the bones. If the Burgoo is too thick, thin with some of the chicken stock.

Should you have pre-boiled the chicken, you will have some excellent chicken stock on hand. Get with a buddy and make the stock found in the following recipe.

*This is from your Basic C-Ration

PATROL CHICKEN SOUP

Four spoons minced onion or green onions
Four spoons butter or oil or fat
Four spoons flour
One dash TABASCO pepper sauce
*Salt and pepper to taste
Two large cans of the chicken stock from the above recipe
*Crackers
*One small to one large can milk

Melt butter or oil or fat. Sauté onions or pastry or rice or fish, and add flour. Stir until smooth and thick and gradually add the two chicken stock until soup is well blended and add canned AND Tabasco, and salt and pepper and serve immediately with broken pieces of crackers.



FOX HOLE DINNER FOR TWO
(Turkey and Chicken Roulette)

Two spoons butter or oil or fat
Two spoons flour
*One can chicken and noodles
*One can turkey loaf, cut up into slices
Three drops TABASCO pepper sauce
*Salt and pepper to taste
*One can cheese spread
*10 spoons milk
*Crackers from one C-Ration can, crumbled

No one likes to dine alone, and this recipe is ideal to combine a variety of C-Ration Units.

Melt butter or oil or fat, add flour and stir until smooth. Add milk and continue to cook until sauce begins to thicken. Add cheese, spread and cook until cheese melts and sauce is even. Empty cans of turkey loaf and chicken noodles into the cheese sauce. Season with Tabasco, salt and pepper to taste and continue cooking. Cover goulette with crumbled crackers and serve piping hot.

*This is from your Basic C-Ration

SOUP DU JOUR

*One can ham and lima beans, mashed
One equal can hot water
*Salt and pepper to taste
A generous dash TABASCO pepper sauce
Three spoons green onions, chopped and sautéed in butter or oil or fat
Two spoons butter or oil or fat for the roux
Four spoons butter or oil or fat for the bread croutons or crumbled crackers
*Fried bread croutons or crumbled crackers

There is a soup du jour on every menu of every American restaurant from Maine to Frisco. There is no reason why the Armed Forces should be an exception. The front-line fighting man has one advantage. He knows what goes into his meals du jour.

Mash the ham and lima bean mixture to a pulp. Combine with a can of hot water and bring to a boil, stirring briskly all the time. Add Tabasco and salt and pepper to taste. Serve piping hot, garnished with fried white bread croutons (pieces of white bread cut up into cubes) or crumbled crackers sautéed in butter or other fat.

*This is from your Basic C-Ration

BREAST OF CHICKEN UNDER BULLETS

*One can boned chicken
*One can cheese spread
*Salt and pepper to taste
One dash TABASCO pepper sauce
*White bread
Two spoons butter or oil or fat, if available

Breast of chicken, under glass was never inflicted for sheer enemy gloss and shrapnel fun. The dish can be prepared in quick time, using only the Basic C-Ration.

Heat the can of boned chicken in a meat can. Melt the cheese spread. If butter or oil or fat is available, add two spoons. Season with salt and pepper and Tabasco. Cut loaf of white bread in half lengthwise if so desired. Place a mound of chicken over each half of white bread and cover each with the hot melted cheese sauce. This should stick to your ribs.

*This is from your Basic C-Ration

BATTLEFIELD FUFU
(Chicken with Peanut Butter Sauce)

*One can boned chicken
*One can peanut butter
Two spoons butter or oil or fat
One spoon soya sauce
Two dashes TABASCO pepper sauce
*Two to three spoons milk

Ham slices or pork steaks may be substituted for the boned chicken. No matter what you do to it, though, it is still Battlefield Fufu.

Melt the butter or oil or fat and add the peanut butter. Stir until well blended. Add the milk and continue cooking until sauce is smooth. Now add the can of boned chicken, pulled apart, and the soya sauce and Tabasco. Continue cooking until hot and smooth. This may be served over boiled rice or crumbled crackers or with white bread.

*This is from your Basic C-Ration

HAM WITH SPICED APRICOTS

*One can fried ham, sliced with juices
*One can apricots with juice
*One can jam
Three spoons flour
Three spoons butter or oil or fat
One spoon lemon juice
One spoon soya sauce
Generous dash TABASCO pepper sauce
*Salt and pepper to taste

Melt butter or oil or fat, add flour and stir until well blended. Add the jam and heat until melted. Now add the juices from the ham and the apricots as well as the lemon juice, soya sauce and Tabasco. Salt and pepper to taste. Continue cooking until sauce is thick. Separate the ham steaks and continue cooking in this mixture to hot. At the last five minutes, top each ham slice with a half apricot and keep basting for a few more minutes with the thickened sauce. Serve ham with white bread.

*This is from your Basic C-Ration



GUARD RELIEF EGGS BENEDICT

*White bread
*One can ham and eggs, chopped
*One can cheese spread
One dash TABASCO pepper sauce
One spoon butter or oil or fat
One spoon flour
*Four to six spoons milk
*Four spoons butter or oil or fat for frying the bread
*Salt and pepper to taste

Most recipes for Eggs Benedict called for spoils and expensive English Muffins. However, there is no reason why G.I. white bread can't be used now. Just be sure to split your loaf in half, never cut it with a knife. Don't ask why . . . it just tastes better.

In a meat pan, fry the two halves of white bread. Cut the can of ham and egg mixture and heat. Place a piece of the ham and egg mixture on each half of bread and cover with a sauce made as follows:

Melt the butter or oil or fat and add the flour, blending well with a spoon. Add the milk and blend until smooth. Add the can of cheese spread and stir until melted. Add Tabasco and salt and pepper. Pour immediately over each half of the egg and bread combination.

This is a very simple breakfast dish for two and requires little skill. One man prepares the sauce while the other heats the eggs and bread mixture.

*This is from your Basic C-Ration

BEEFSTEAK EN CROUTE

*White bread
Two spoons green onions (white part) or plain onions . . . minced
*One can beefsteak with juices, cut up into small pieces
Generous dash TABASCO pepper sauce
*Salt and pepper to taste
One spoon butter or oil or fat
*Bread crumbs from center of loaf of bread
One to two spoons water

En croûte simply means in a pastry shell and the ingredients of this bread lends itself to such a shell with no trouble whatsoever.

Scoop out the center of the white bread so you have a shell. Reserve the bread so crumbs. Sauté the onions in the inverted butter or oil or fat for a few minutes. Sprinkle the bread crumbs over this and moisten with the juices from the meat. Add a spoon or two of water. Cut the meat up into fine pieces and season with salt, pepper and Tabasco. Spread melted butter or oil or fat inside the shell and fill with the meat mixture. This mixture is enough for two people.



CURRIED MEAT BALLS OVER RICE

LEFTOVER BEAN SOUP

CEASE FIRE CASSEROLE

RICE PADDY SHRIMP

POUND CAKE WITH CHOCOLATE SAUCE OR BATTLEFIELD BIRTHDAY CAKE



DATE PUDDING WITH FRUIT SAUCE

PECAN CAKE ROLL WITH PEANUT BUTTER SAUCE

BISCUITS AND TEA



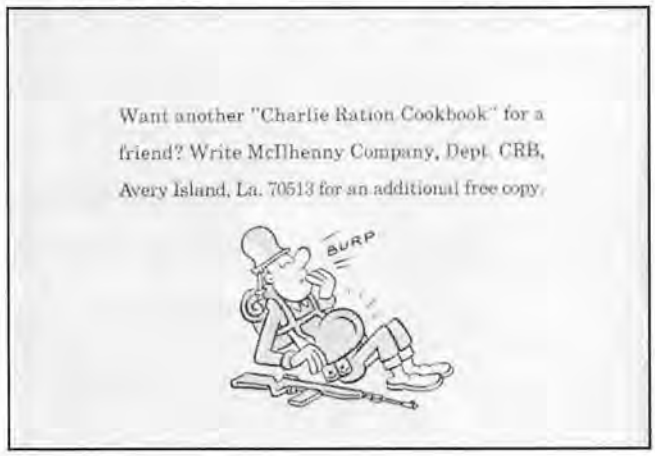

SHORT ROUNDS

NICE LETTER

Dear Sgt Grit,

For a long time, I've felt like a very unique person. I have one biological father, who survived a battle on a small island in the South Pacific, because of two other Marines and a Corpsman. My father, a thin, 6'4 farm boy from Kansas, was hit by a Japanese sniper. Unable to move, he said he just lay there, several feet from his rifle, as a fellow Marine tried to reach him. One was pulled back by the other Marines when he was hit by the same sniper, but they just kept coming for him. One Marine went down, and then another, both hauled back by other Marines, before a Navy Corpsman bounced out and ran for him.

My Dad said that the man couldn't have been over five foot if that, but the man grabbed him, and hauled him back, by tossing him over his shoulder, with his feet dragging the ground, as the man raced for safety. He learned a few moments later, that two of the Marines died trying to reach him, and it was a heavy burden to bear for a very long time.

He married, had three daughters, and worked all his life at being a good neighbor, a good husband and a good father, because of them. Years later, when I joined the Corps, my father told me that story, on Father's Day. He said he felt guilty each and every time we wished him Happy Father's Day, because he said, " You have three other men who should be honored, I was just the one who survived. "Since then, each Father's Day, I remember those three other men, and I have been trying my best to honor them in every way I can, by living a very ordinary, American life, because that's what they sacrificed for... ordinary American life, where we can go to church, mutter about our government, or just read a book. Every birthday I celebrate, I think of those men, and I am humbled by their sacrifice. Corpsmen will always hold a special place in our hearts, because my sisters and I exist, because of one.

Glynis,
(7th generation Marine)

BOOK REVIEW



Praise for GRACE UNDER FIRE

'Personal letters from troops on the front lines are among the most honest and intimate expressions of the human heart. Through Andrew Carroll's passion for preserving these letters we see history unfolding, heroes struggling with irresolvable dilemmas, and glimpses of God in the face of death. Anyone living with difficult circumstances will find in these letters the strength and grace to persevere. You may discover, as I have, that Grace Under Fire is one of the most inspirational books available today.

Frank Selden, author of FINDING FAITH IN THE FURY

Publisher Note:

The front cover of this book contains the picture of Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe which has been used in many interesting ways. Chaplain Stubbe is planning to publish an article in Red Clay of its various uses. It is also displayed in the Chaplain's section of the new Marine Corps Museum. Several of Ray's letters from Vietnam are also included on pages 93-100, including his baby picture.

Available in Hard cover at Doubleday Publishing $16.95- www.doubleday.com

INCOMING

By Carlton B. Crenshaw C Btry 1/13

I thought that I would pass along some useful information to other veterans who fought at Khe Sanh. I have heard about the Marine Corps oral history program but never paid much attention to it. In November, just before the opening of the new museum, I was contacted about giving an oral history. In December I met Lance Corporal Michael Satkovich from the History Section of the Corps. Essentially I had the floor to speak of my experiences. That interview went well and lasted over two hours.

I felt there were many things I wanted to talk about during the first interview and didn't get a chance to. As a result, I had a second interview over the phone from the study in my home. Those two interviews enabled me to communicate things that I had not been able to over the past 38 years. When I left the Marine Corps in late 1969 I met a guy who I had grown up with. He was my best friend through grade school, middle school and high school. After an hour or so of just letting my feelings spill out, our meeting ended abruptly. My friend just couldn't believe that those kinds of things happened. As a result, I just bottled up everything in a "closet" like most of us did.

The interviews that I had in December involved a wide range of topics and on several occasions I became choked up by memories that caused me to lose my composure. I think that is normal. When you see other interviews on the History Channel or other media about vets of former wars talking about their experiences, they usually are emotional. After completing these interviews and hearing them replayed a few days later when I received four copies of each interview on CD, I felt immensely relieved. It was like a huge weight was lifted off of my back, not

from trying to hide from anything but from the fact that you had so many emotional feelings trapped inside you. I could now also tell my children what had happened during a critical time in my life

I realize that many others in our fairly large group have also had oral histories taken over the years. I would recommend that everyone take a look at doing this. Retired Colonel Dick Camp (former captain and company commander of Lima Company, 3/26 in 1967 and 1968) has recently taken over the History Division. He wants every Marine to be able to have their own personal interview. I commend him for wanting to do this and for the Marine Corps committing significant resources during a war in which it is fully invested to put in the level of resources that it is devoting to this.

The interviews can be oral in person at Quantico, in one's home or over the phone. There are alternatives with Marines submitting written histories either assisted by other Marines or the Historical Division or just done on their own. Our point of contact is Lance Corporal Michael Satkovich. His email is michael.satkovich@usmc.mil. His phone number is (703) 432 5054. He strongly recommends that our Marines contact him via the computer if possible because of the amount of travel that he has to do and the limited amount of phone mail memory available to him.

SHORT ROUNDS

TIME TO GO HOME

By Craig W Tourte
HQ Btry 1/13

So once again I found myself sitting in the little neighborhood pub around the corner from my house. The last time I looked, it was around 1700hrs. Now through the stare of one eye open and one closed so I can focus, I find its 2230hrs. Where the heck did the time go! I have grown to enjoy this little piece of heaven. The bar is kind of a U shaped affair with about 20 stools and a few tables against the walls. The dusty perennial photographs in cheap frames hanging kind of crooked from the old faded nicotine stained walls hold the memoirs of customers now long since gone. Small, cozy and quite, with libations that are reasonable priced and country music that plays on the jukebox reminds me of days gone by. I drove down to Beverly Hills last week, at the Four Seasons the drink I usually order cost me $17.32! That's right! For just one drink! The same drink here cost me $3.00.

I'll be 60 years old in a couple of weeks and I'll admit that many of my rather rough years are behind me. Now I'm just another old guy sitting at the end of the bar with a few other old guys. You know the ones that most people ignore now, same stories, some old complaints. My friend Bob is 67 years old, he was my roommate in the early 70's and the first man I met when I moved to this town. He has had kind of a difficult life, a couple of marriages and divorces and other issues. Bob was in Vietnam during the early 60's, flew troops around in those old helicopters but he doesn't talk about it much. When we get together we mostly talk about the girls we have known and the mischief we got into. The stories are always the same but we can't remember what we said most of the time anyway so it always sounds kind of new and is just as funny to us. Funny how you always sound fine to the guys your talking to at the bar but as soon as you talk to someone else you sound…well, you know.

We both talk about going home but know in our hearts we really don't have much to go home to, so what the heck, one more sounds good. The female bartender comes over to us and looks at us a few seconds and says "Craig, you and Bob need to go home." What, I haven't been kicked out of a bar since I can remember. But we both laugh and get up and stumble home (I walked the few blocks home).

The point of this, is that I realize time has come and gone and what a lot of us have left with now are stories about old times and our old memories of events that are getting harder to recall, but most importantly the realization that we're not alone and there are so many just like us. And the realization that way too soon, we're all going home. Darn, I think I had better have one more; I've got another story to tell, I'm just wondering if I have told it before.

MEMOIRS

OPERATION HICKORY

By Tom Eichler E Co 2/26
From Marine Archives

The international agreements which followed the French withdrawal from Indochina established the separate states of North and South Vietnam - and guaranteed the integrity of a Demilitarized Zone, centered on the Ben Hai River, between the two states. There is no evidence that North Vietnam ever intended to observe the neutrality of the DMZ, and by the time major US forces were inserted into South Vietnam the DMZ had become de facto North Vietnamese territory. Never the less, US policy conformed to the international agreements, including observation of the neutrality of Laos, Cambodia, and the DMZ.

That policy did allow air and artillery fire into the DMZ in response to enemy fire coming from the DMZ, a sort of "you can shoot back but can't take protective measures" arrangement. As US and ARVN forces built up in Quang Tri Province, so too did North Vietnamese forces in the DMZ and immediately north of the DMZ. Within the DMZ the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) built numerous artillery positions, camps, supply sites, and other well-protected military installations, commonly dug into the mountainsides along the Ben Hai Valley. These installations supported the frequent NVA incursions into Quang Tri Province and provided a sanctuary when things got too hot south of the DMZ.

In the spring of 1967, NVA forces based in and supplied from the DMZ were conducting major operations from Khe Sanh in the west to the coast. On 24 April a major battle bagan at Khe Sanh, NVA forces repeatedly cut Highway 9 between Cam Lo and Khe Sanh, and initiated major mortar, rocket, and artillery attacks against Marine installations at Gio Linh, Camp Carroll, and Dong Ha. At 0300 on 08 May the NVA staged a major effort against the Marine observation post on Hill 158 at Con Thien, two miles south of the DMZ's southern border, with simultaneous diversionary attacks against Camp Carroll, Gio Linh, and Dong Ha. Although the elements of 1st Bn, 4th Marines, held out at Con Thien, they lost 44 men killed and 110 wounded. On 10 May a Marine A-4E (BuNo 151997) was hit by surface-to-air missiles fired from just north of the DMZ; the pilot, Major Robert L. Snyder, was killed in the incident.

The increased enemy activity in northern Quang Tri was enough to get Washington's approval of a foray into the DMZ - a combined action by the Army of South Vietnam and the Marines conducted as four simultaneous but separately named operations to begin at dawn on 18 May 1967:

- In the west, Operation Hickory covered incursions by elements of the 3rd, 4th, 9th, and 26th Marines.
- In the center, the 1st ARVN Division moved up Route 1 in Long Son 54.
- In the center and east the 7th Fleet's landing forces conducted airborne and amphibious assaults into the DMZ itself under Operation BELT TIGHT (SLF Bravo - 2nd Bn, 3rd Marines)
  Operation BEAU CHARGER (SLF Alpha - 1st Bn, 3rd Marines)

During the night of 17-18 May the NVA directed heavy mortar, rocket, and artillery attacks against Marine positions all along the DMZ, with Gio Linh and Dong Ha suffering the most. The attacks aided the Allies in a fashion, since it permitted them to send heavy artillery fires into the DMZ without compromising tactical surprise - and the attacks which began at daylight on 18 May did indeed surprise the NVA.

The following description of the fighting is taken directly from "U.S. MARINES IN VIETNAM: Fighting The North Vietnamese 1967" (Telfer, Rogers and Fleming, History and Museums Division, HQMC, Washington DC, 1984):

OPERATION LAM SON 54

Hickory/Lam Son 54 started on schedule. The 1st ARVN Division elements jumped off at 0500, moving in column up Route 1, into the DMZ. Surprise was complete; the ARVN units encountered no resistance as they moved to the Ben Hai and wheeled south. The two 1st ARVN Division battalions started their sweep south on the east side of Route 1, while the three airborne battalions, supported by

tanks, turned to the west and then southward abreast the advance of the 1st Division units east of the highway. On the 19th, the airborne battalions engaged elements of the 31st and 812th NVA Regiments. From then until the 27th, when Lam Son 54 ended, ARVN units were in constant contact with the enemy. Their casualties were 22 killed and 122 wounded. The enemy suffered more substantial losses: 342 killed, 30 captured, and 51 weapons seized. Most of the casualties occurred in the area known as the "rocket belt" north of Dong Ha.

OPERATION BEAU CHARGER

East of the Lam Son 54 operational area, Operation Beau Charger began at the scheduled L-hour and H-hour of 0800, 18 May. Just before and during the launching of the assault, a duel started between Navy fire support ships and NVA shore batteries. Although the NVA batteries hit no ships, 10 salvos bracketed the USS Point Defiance (LSD 31). After return fire silenced the shore batteries, the surface landing proceeded without further incident; there was no opposition.

The Beau Charger heliborne force experienced a different reception. Landing Zone Goose was a "hot" zone, and only one platoon of Company A, the assault company, managed to land. The Communists closed in and the situation was very much in doubt. At 1100 elements of Company D and the rest of Company A, reinforced with tanks, succeeded in joining up with the isolated assault platoon. The Communists withdrew only after air strikes began to hammer their positions.

On the 18th, NVA gunners ranged in on supporting Marine SLF artillery positions, knocking out two guns. Ships of the Seventh Fleet returned fire, silencing the North Vietnamese batteries. The Marines relocated their remaining guns at positions 5,800 meters further south.

Action during the rest of Beau Charger consisted of light contact and continuing artillery harassment until the operation ended on 26 May. West of the Beau Charger operational area the 3d Marine Division was faced with a much different situation. There, the enemy had come to fight.

OPERATION HICKORY/OPERATION BELT TIGHT

Adjacent to the Lam Son 54/Beau Charger operational area, 3d Marine Division units launched Operation Hickory on the morning of 18 May. Lieutenant Colonel Figard's 2d Battalion, 26th Marines and Lieutenant Colonel Peeler's 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, supported by tanks and Ontos, advanced northward from positions near Con Thien. Concurrently, Lieutenant Colonel Vest's 3d Battalion, 4th Marines moved by helicopters into a landing zone (LZ) within the DMZ near the Ben Hai River, northwest of Con Thien. The heliborne battalion was to act as a blocking force to prevent the enemy from escaping to the north, or to stop the movement of reinforcements into the area from the north.

Shortly after 1100 the lead element of Figard's 2d Battalion, 26th Marines made contact with a force which intelligence officers later determined to have been two battalions. All elements of the Marine battalion quickly became engaged in the battle; the enemy defended from well prepared bunkers and trenches. As the battalion moved against the NVA positions, the right flank came under vicious automatic weapons and mortar fire. Casualties were heavy. Among them were Lieutenant Colonel Figard and his S-3, both of whom required evacuation. Despite the heavy enemy fire, the Navy hospital corpsmen continued their treatment of the wounded. By 1600, Peeler's 2d Battalion, 9th Marines had moved up on the right of the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines and was also in close contact. Fighting continued until nightfall when the Marines broke contact and pulled back to evacuate casualties. During the day, enemy fire killed 5 Marines and wounded 142; 31 enemy soldiers were known to have been killed.

The 3d Marine Division already had replaced the wounded Lieutenant Colonel Figard with a new battalion commander. As soon as it learned of Figard's condition, the division immediately ordered Lieutenant Colonel William J. Masterpool, who had just joined the division staff after command of 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, to assume command of the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines.

That night, 75 radar-controlled air strikes hit the NVA positions in front of the two Marine battal-

ions. At 0500 on 19 May, heavy artillery fire fell on the enemy defenses and both battalions jumped off in the attack at 0700. During the "prep" fires several short rounds landed on Company F, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, killing 3 and wounding 2 Marines. Within minutes, the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines again checked its advance because of savage fire from its front and right, while Peeler's battalion encountered only light small arms fire and pushed rapidly ahead to relieve the pressure on Masterpool's flank. By 1030 the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines had overrun the enemy bunker complex, accounting for 34 North Vietnamese killed and 9 wounded.

During the rest of the morning both battalions continued to advance against negligible resistance. At 1330, Captain Robert J. Thompson's Company H, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, on the easternmost flank of the advance, met heavy automatic weapon and mortar fire from the east. The company returned fire, but then received additional enemy fire from a tree line 60 meters to the front. Again the Marines returned fire and a tank moved up in support. It silenced the enemy with cannister fire. A squad sent forward to check out the area also came under heavy automatic weapons fire. The tank, moving to support the squad, halted after being hit by RPG rounds and began to burn. A second tank maneuvered forward to help; RPGs disabled it also. Captain Thompson, unable to use other supporting arms because of wounded Marines to his front, moved the entire company forward to retrieve the dead and wounded. After moving the wounded to the rear, the company pulled back and called in supporting arms fire on the evacuated area. The action cost the Marines 7 killed and 12 wounded; enemy casualties were unknown.

In the meantime, Lieutenant Colonel Vest's 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, after the heavy action involving the 2d Battalions, 26th and 9th Marines, swept to the southeast to block the NVA withdrawal. On 18 May the battalion made little contact, but discovered a large, abandoned, fortified position, well stocked with food and equipment. For the next two days Vest's battalion maneuvered toward the other Marine battalions which were moving north. Contact was light, but the battalion encountered intermittent mortar and artillery fire. The battalion continued to uncover large caches of rice and ammunition-over 30 tons of rice and 10 tons of ammunition-but due to the heat and distance to the landing zones much of the rice could not be moved and had to be destroyed.

To the southwest, Lieutenant Colonel Wilson's 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, screening the western or left flank of the operation, saw little action during the first two days. Then, on 20 May, Company K, point for the battalion, made contact with what it initially estimated to be an enemy platoon deployed in mutually supporting bunkers in a draw. The enemy, at least a company, took Company K under fire. To relieve pressure on Company K, Company L maneuvered to the flank of the enemy position, but was unable to link up with Company K because of heavy enemy fire. Both companies spent the night on opposite sides of the draw with the enemy force between them, while supporting arms pounded the enemy position all night.

On the 21st, Company M moved forward and joined with K and L and the three companies were able to clear the area. The clearing operation was costly: 26 Marines were killed and 59 wounded. The Marines counted only 36 enemy bodies, but the lingering smell in the draw indicated that many others were in the destroyed fortifications.

Meanwhile, the division reserve, SLF Bravo's BLT 2/3, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel DeLong, and HMM-164, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Rodney D. McKitrick, joined Operation Hickory on the 20th. The employment of SLF Bravo involved a unique departure from the norm for amphibious operations in that the heliborne force passed to the control of the 3d Marine Division as it crossed the high water mark. This procedure ensured positive control of all supporting arms covering the battalion's approach to its inland tactical area of responsibility (TAOR).

The squadron helilifted the battalion into the DMZ northwest of Gio Linh to block possible withdrawal routes of NVA units then engaged with ARVN airborne formations to the east. By noon all elements of the battalion were ashore and sweeping north toward the DMZ. The Marines of BLT 2/3 encountered only light resistance from small NVA units, apparently security elements for several large ordnance caches and bunker complexes. One of the bunkers was exceptionally sophisticated, constructed of steel overhead and walls. The Marines

captured more than 1,000 60mm mortar rounds, as well as large quantities of small arms ammunition and medical supplies in the same complex.
After sweeping the southern bank of the Ben Hai River, DeLong's battalion wheeled south and began a deliberate search in that direction. Although the battalion met no resistance, it did uncover and destroy two extensive subterranean bunker complexes filled with supplies and ordnance. On the 23d the advance halted temporarily because of the declaration of a cease-fire to be observed throughout Vietnam in honor of Buddha's birthday.

After the brief "stand down", two battalions, the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines and the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines, began sweeping the DMZ to the southwest toward the mountains west of Con Thien. The 3d Battalion, 9th Marines continued to move northwest as the other two battalions moved south. To the east, the remaining Hickory battalions resumed search and destroy operations in the southern half of the DMZ and "Leatherneck Square."

Early on the morning of 25 May, Captain John J. Rozman's Company H, 26th Marines made contact with a large NVA company in a mutually supporting bunker complex near Hill 117, three miles west of Con Thien. The action was extremely close and lasted for more than an hour before Rozman's Marines managed to gain fire superiority and disengaged to evacuate their casualties. Air and artillery then hit the enemy positions. When relieved of its casualties, Company H maneuvered north of the hill mass where it met Captain John H. Flathman's Company K, 3d Battalion, 4th Marines at 1345. Both companies moved against the hill. At 1500 savage fighting developed; the Marines estimated the enemy force holding the position to be at least several companies.

When the Marines could not break through the strongly fortified position, Lieutenant Colonel Masterpool ordered them to disengage so that supporting arms could again attack the enemy positions. The two Marine companies again attacked but broke off the action at 1730 and established night positions north and west of the hill. Results of the day's fighting were 14 Marines killed and 92 wounded; the Marines counted 41 NVA bodies.

Marine air and artillery pounded the hill all night in preparation for the next attack, scheduled for the next day. At 0915 on the 26th, enemy automatic weapons fire forced down a UH-1E helicopter on a reconnaissance flight over the area. Among the wounded in the helicopter were Lieutenant Colonel Masterpool, his executive officer, and the commanders of Companies H and K; Lieutenant Colonel Masterpool and Captain Flathman had to be evacuated. Consequently, the battalion delayed the attack for another day to allow time for further bombardment of the hill and command adjustments. On the 27th, Companies E and F, 2d Battalion, 26th Marines, under the control of Lieutenant Colonel Vest's 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, moved against the objective behind covering artillery fire. They met no resistance and secured the hill by 1600. The 3d Battalion, 4th Marines then passed through Companies E and F and consolidated on the ridges leading up to the higher ground west of Hill 117. In the meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Duncan D. Chaplin III arrived by helicopter to assume command of the 2d Battalion, 26th Marines, temporarily under its executive officer, Major James H. Landers.

During the night, Colonel James R. Stockman, the commander of the 3d Marines, initiated heavy artillery fires from Con Thien and Gio Linh and using the 175mm guns of the Army's 2d Battalion, 94th Artillery to "literally change the face of the earth" on the enemy-held high ground. The following morning, the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines continued its westward movement onto the high ground without opposition. Lieutenant Colonel Vest's men encountered only the extensive destruction of numerous fortified positions, apparently abandoned by the NVA early in the artillery attack. Colonel Stockman then ordered the battalion to move toward Con Thien.

With the exception of the Hill 117 battle, contact diminished during the last days of Operation Hickory and the artillery operations to the east. Nevertheless, the Marines found and destroyed numerous well-fortified areas before the operation terminated on 28 May. In addition, they captured or destroyed more than 50 tons of rice and 10 tons of ordnance. Total enemy casualties for the combined Marine/ARVN operation were 789 killed (the equivalent of two NVA battalions), 37 captured, and 187 weapons taken. Of this total 447 were killed by Marines (85 in Beau Charger, 58 in Belt Tight/Hickory, and 304

in Hickory). Allied losses for the operation were by no means small; the Marines lost 142 killed and 896 wounded, while ARVN losses were 22 killed and 122 wounded.

The first large-scale allied entry into the southern half of the DMZ signified that the rules had changed. The area was no longer a guaranteed Communist sanctuary from which they could launch attacks. More immediately, the operation had upset, at least temporarily, the NVA organizational structure in the DMZ. The Marines realized that this initial search and destroy operation would not permanently deny the enemy's use of the area. Nevertheless, while total friendly control had not been established over the region, the removal of the civilian population from the area, some 11,000 people, now permitted the Marines complete freedom of use of supporting arms.

As noted, the ARVN and Marine forces didn't remain in the DMZ - US sensitivity to world public opinion precluded that, although the world didn't seem to mind the permanent North Vietnamese Army presence in the DMZ. The sweep through the southeastern quarter of the DMZ did reduce NVA activity south of the DMZ through the summer, but within a year's time the NVA was back in force. At least 156 Marines and sailors died in the fighting between 18 and 28 May 1967. They were

HQ Co, HQ Bn, 3rd MarDiv

LCpl Arthur V. Vigil, San Francisco, CA

E Co, 2nd Bn, 26th Marines

LCPL Robert O. Barry, Glen Falls, NY
PFC John J. Guist, Cleveland, OH
PFC Dwight R. Stockholm, Gladstone, MI

F Co, 2nd Bn, 26th Marines

PFC Robert B. Bailey, Yreka, CA
PFC George R. Butler, Durand, IL
PFC Sidney D. Chapman, Chicago IL
CPL Delmar F. Cook, Tacoma, WA
LCPL Stephen J. Eichelberger, Fargo, ND
CPL Larry D. Faulkner, Wilmington, OH
LCPL David A. Fisch, Remsen, IA (Silver Star)
PFC Benjamin H. Ingalls, Austin, IN
Cpl James S. Leonard, Hartford, CT
LCPL Gerald A. Robinson, Kenauee, WI
CPL Harry A. Wadsworth, Millbrook, AL

G Co, 2nd Bn, 26th Marines

PFC Michael J. Cahalane, Hamilton, OH
PFC Charles A. Eakins, Clay, KY
CPL Charles W. Johnston, Des Moines, IA
CPL Richard H. Krumm, Blue Earth, MN
LCPL Whilton A. McCarthy, Charlotte, NC
PFC Arthur Reynolds, Philadelphia, PA

H Co, 2nd Bn, 26th Marines

LCPL Kenneth R. Abmeyer, Tulsa, OK
PFC Peter M. Coons, San Diego, CA
2ND/LT James B. McGill, Johnstown, PA
LCPL Raymond M. Sieger, Chicago, IL
PFC John A. Sutherland, Tampa, FL

H&S Co, 2nd Bn, 26th Marines

HM2 Gregory R. Gingerich, Redondo Bch, CA
HM2 Claude A. Hodge, Auburn, NY
CPL Chester J. Joy, Kingston, NY
PFC John C. Pfeiffer, Hillsdale, NY
HM2 Robert A. Turner, Portland, ME

A Co, 1st Bn, 3rd Marines

PFC Charles L. Anderson, Seattle, WA
LCPL Kenneth N. Cheek, Philadelphia, PA
PVT Edward J. Christensen, Bristol, CT
PFC Mark A. Dalgliesh, Amarillo, TX
LCPL Paul F. Doyon, Ipswich, MA
CPL Stanley M. Godwin, Fort Meade, FL
CPL Russell F. Keck, Okmulgee, OK (Navy Cross)
Cpl Richard L. Land, Hazelwood, MO

B Co, 1st Bn, 3rd Marines

PFC Dennis D. Kramer, Placerville, CA
CPL Orrie E. Macomb, Great Valley, NY
2ND LT Joseph T. McKeon, Chicago, IL (Silver Star)
CPL Clyde U. Mitchell Winston-Salem, NC
PFC John T. Wilson, Phoenix, AZ

C Co, 1st Bn, 3rd Marines

LCPL Franklin G. Hazzard, Leominster, MA
PFC Willie Mitchell, Chester, SC

D Co, 1st Bn, 3rd Marines

PFC Willie L. Brown, Newport News, VA

H&S Co, 1st Bn, 3rd Marines

1ST LT Louis D. Dobbin, Brighton, MA
LCPL John J. Nemchik, Trenton, NJ
HM3 Michael F. Smith, Fairfax, CA
CPL John C. Stecker, Milwaukee, WI

2nd Bn, 3rd Marines

Cpl Stephen K. Jennings, Albuquerque, NM

F Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Marines

LCPL Ralph P. Flint, Hagerstown, MD
PFC Stanley T. Melvin, Atlanta, GA
PVT Thomas D. Niedermeier, Rochester, NY
CPL Michael Sorovetz, Southgate, MI
PVT George N. Wright, Boring, OR

H Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Marines

GY/SGT Harry K. Davis, Tucson, AZ
LCPL Edwardo J. Gonzales, Sinton, TX (Silver Star)
PFC Mark R. Lander, Battle Creek, MI
PFC Alan R. May, Cicero, IL
SSGT Hildra McCoy, Wilmington, NC
CPL Roy Smith, Birmingham, AL
PFC Ronald D. Starr, Martins Ferry, OH
PFC Sandy Zimmerman, Baltimore, MD

H&S Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Marines

HM3 Donald R. Ellis, Florence, AZ (Silver Star)
L/CPL James Johnson, Ponca City, OK (Silver Star
PFC Ronald L. Sharar, Orlando, FL

H&S Co, 3rd Bn, 4th Marines

HN John A. Hollingsworth, Little Rock, AR

I Co, 3rd Bn, 4th Marines

SGT James F. Akins, Smartt, TN
2NDLT Leo J. Kelly, Pittsburgh, PA
PFC Thomas A. Ronald, Tuscarawas, OH

K Co, 3rd Bn, 4th Marines

PFC Alfred Cobos, Los Angeles, CA
LCPL Harold J. Dillard, Hackensack, NJ
PFC Reynald G. Lepage, Biddeford, ME
PVT Joseph A. Maggio, Melrose Park, IL
PFC Robert J. White, Manchester, CT

L Co, 3rd Bn, 4th Marines

PFC Walter L. Babbitt, Boonton, NJ
SGT Donald Crane, Indianapolis, IN
PFC Ted L. Edwards, Nottingham, PA
LCPL Michael C. Farrell, Riverside, MI
PFC William A. Fish, Oakdale, CA
PFC Colin F. Jackson, Thousand Oaks, CA
PFC Kenneth D. Phares, Astoria, OR
PFC Jimmie L. Thomas, Ocala, FL
PFC Michael D. Withrow, Mesquite, TX

A Co, 1st Bn, 9th Marines

PFC Garry D. Klein, Mott, ND
CPL Peter E. Millar, Paramus, NJ

B Co, 1st Bn, 9th Marines

PFC Lloyd V. Roberts, Hemingway, SC

D Co, 1st Bn, 9th Marines

PFC Lloyd M. Adkins, Cleveland, OH
PFC John W. Avelleyra, Mount Rainier, MD
SGT Richard Brown, Rockville Centre, NY
LCPL Robert E. Monahon, Swedesboro, NJ (Navy Cross)
CPL George M. Walkinshaw, Long Beach, CA

H&S Co, 1st Bn, 9th Marines

HN James L. Gales, Bynum, NC

2nd Bn, 9th Marines

CPL Walter A. Pairan, Cincinnati, OH

E Co, 2nd Bn, 9th Marines

PFC Otto C. Grabow, Bethpage, NY

F Co, 2nd Bn, 9th Marines

PFC Benny L. Butler, Humboldt, IL
PFC James T. Dobish, Oshkosh, WI
LCPL Dennis H. Fairfield, Modesto, IL
PFC Johnny M. Johnson, Huntington, WV
LCPL Austin R. Joseph, New York, NY
LCPL Douglas W. Murphey, Springfield, TN
PFC Barry C. Price, Chester, PA
LCPL Joe P. Wooden, Columbus, OH

H Co, 2nd Bn, 9th Marines

PFC Robert J. Brady, Elizabeth, NJ
PFC William Corbin, Joppa, MD
Cpl Richard K. Gillingham, Valatie, NY (Navy Cross)
PFC Joseph M. Grantham, Goldsboro, NC
CPL Wayne C. Harmon, Downey, CA
PFC Gregory P. Moser, Edmonds, WA
PFC James C. Offley, New Bedford, MA
PFC Alan T. Read, Bloomington, IN (Bronze Star "V")
LCPL Harold D. Shelton, Baltimore, MD

H&S Co, 2nd Bn, 9th Marines

HM3 Phillip M. Hines, Dodge City, KS
HM3 Edward A. Paine, Redondo Beach, CA

3rd Bn, 9th Marines

LCPL John A. Gravil, Cheshire, CT
LCPL Alfred R. Gregory, Denver, CO
SGT Jeffrey R. Hughes, Pensacola, FL

H&S Co, 3rd Bn, 9th Marines

PFC Thomas Brown, New York, NY
PFC Douglas O. Keefe, Columbia, SC
HM2 Bruce A. Manton, Youngstown, OH
HM3 Wesley R. McKee, Porum, OK

I Co, 3rd Bn, 9th Marines

Cpl Nicholas A. Pavlakovich, Geneva, OH

K Co, 3rd Bn, 9th Marines

PFC Peter Albert, Danvers, MA
LCPL Haakon W. Andresen, Salt Lake City, UT
LCPL Frank H. Beran, Galveston, TX
CPL Edward J. Bohannon, Phoenix, AZ
PFC Robert T. Boykin, Virginia Beach, VA
SGT William J. Brown, Philadelphia, PA
LCPL Vernon E. Depew, Forks, WA
PFC Ramon Gonzalez-Rodriguez, Villa Palmeras, PR
PFC David H. Holland, Springtown, PA
PFC Louis J. Inferrera, Vineland, NJ
PFC Thomas L. Lester, Springfield, IL
PFC Jonathan F. Lowman, Franklin, OH
CPL Robert W. Meiss, Yardley, PA
CPL Ronald B. Mos, Lamont, CA
LCPL Robert E. Payne, Geuda Springs, KS
LCPL Thomas W. Poore, Summerville, SC
LCPL Luis E. Segarra, New York, NY
LCPL Candido Serrano-Giral, Barceloneta, PR
CPL Walter J. Washut, Sheridan, WY
PFC Larry L. Williams, Louisville, KY

L Co, 3rd Bn, 9th Marines

LCPL David G. Bendorf, Livingston, WI (Navy Cross)
PFC John F. Dugan, Merrick, NY
LCPL Thomas W. Goodrich, Cortland, NY
PFC David E. Hartsoe, Coatesville, PA (Navy Cross)
CPL Reuben J. Neal, Wheatland, PA
CPL Willie B. Skrine, Mayfield, GA
HN Galen E. Warren, Seattle, WA (Silver Star)

M Co, 3rd Bn, 9th Marines

LCPL Cleveland Batiste, New Orleans, LA
PFC Thomas R. Ike, Millington, NJ
CPL Robert Katavolos, New York, NY
CPL Walter L. Queen, Newark, NJ

INCOMING



"Combat Wounded"

Guardians of the Vietnam Wall

By Lt. Col. Ray Funderburk, US ARMY

Tomorrow, with many of my comrades, I will stand guard at the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C. We will stand there quietly, conducting ourselves with the dignity and honor that the memorial deserves, for all the friends we left behind in Vietnam. We come there to guard the wall against by demonstrators who come to protest the Iraq War and who reportedly want to deface the wall as some of them painted the steps of the U.S. Capitol in another demonstration this year. We will peacefully stand guard between them and the memorial on which the names of so many of our friends and relatives are etched. Let me tell you why.

After a savage battle one day in the Mekong Delta, I had to crawl over a mound of dying and dead Viet Cong to get back to my landing craft. The crawl over bloody bodies didn't have an impact on my feelings. But, when I reached the landing craft and saw six body bags with young soldiers inside, I couldn't help myself. I broke down and cried, unashamedly.

That fateful day I promised those young men in those black plastic bags I would tell their story to the world, the story of their sacrifice. Since then, as a journalist, I have tried to relate to the world what Vietnam was like, but have failed miserably because you cannot put into words the emotions, the fear, the loneliness, the disgust, the horror, all the emotions you gather in combat.

It was 40 years before I could visit the Vietnam Wall. I worked in the Pentagon, traveled through D.C. many times, but couldn't bring myself to visit the shrine where all my dead comrades are named. You see, I promised to tell their stories, but it's difficult. I try, but few listen. I write, but few read. I couldn't bear to visit them and have them ask why I haven't told their story to the world.

So, I continue to write. A few years ago, I became a member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), an organization of 40,000 combat wounded veterans. One must have received a Purple Heart to become a member. It is the only veterans service organization comprised totally of combat wounded. After a few months, I was asked if I would serve as their national public relations director. Having been a television reporter, editor of three newspapers and two magazines -- including Infantry, I accepted.

My life is now more fulfilling because I have the opportunity to tell the stories of our brave warriors who fought in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq. I work seven days a week telling those stories to the public in print, radio and television.

Recently, I was appointed to the board of directors of the newly created Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor, N.Y. I am excited about that opportunity because we will be able to tell the individual stories of our combat warriors through video interviews accomplished by those who fought on foreign shores.

We, who shed our blood on the world's battlefields, are brothers all. When we came back from Vietnam, we were dishonored. Now, with the Gathering of Eagles and the proud display of patriotism being shown by so many wonderful veterans, perhaps we can finally say, "Welcome home, brother."

I look at those names on the wall and think of the men and boys that went to war and returned in a box. I touch each name and tell them I'm sorry they had to die. And, as I touch each name carved on that black stone, I cry inside.

They didn't want to die, they wanted to come home

and have life, a family. They had plans, loved ones, friends, dogs, a garden, an old car to fix up.

In Vietnam three decades ago, he looked in my eyes as he was dying. I was holding him close, his body ripped open, his blood staining my fatigues. His blue eyes were beginning to glaze over as he whispered, blood trickling from the corner of his lips.

"Please, sir, tell my why I have to die? I don't want to die, but I need to know why?" his voice a rasp as he took his last breath.

My throat was constricted, tight, too tight to reply. Tears welled up in my eyes as he faded away, his blue eyes remaining open, never to see home again. He was placed in a black, plastic body bag. A youngster from Kansas, Ohio, Louisiana, New York, California, Nebraska -- from somewhere.

I made a vow that day, that fateful day, when I gently put him down. I vowed I would tell his story and every boy's story, the story of what they did, how they died and try to reason why. I cannot find an answer. As I walk along the sidewalk littered with flowers and photos, reading the names, I still cannot answer and tell them what I promised I would tell the world. Maybe one day when I become one of those names I will meet them again and we can talk about why we had to die. Meanwhile, I will guard the wall that honors his name.

Mr. Funderburk, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel, is public relations director for the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

OBIT

LATE HONORS

1ST SGT JAMES E. PERRY Sr. USMC
MACV TEAM 4 KSV
2-26-34 - 2-12-06

In 1952, on his 18th birthday, James Perry enlisted in the Navy. He was a ships cook, and accrued 43 months of sea duty. During this time he made it to Petty Officer 2nd class (E-5). He was honorably discharged on February 29, 1956.

He started pursuing a doctorate in physical medicine after discharge from the Navy. After 2 ½ years of training and work in this program, he "felt the military tugging at him" and enlisted in the Army in the summer of 1958.

He started his Army career as an instructor training medics and later in 1958 was transferred to Korea. He served in Korea and later spent several years in and out of advanced medical schools. He specialized in emergency medicine in both hospital and combat settings.

He served in Vietnam with Military Advisory Command Vietnam (MACV) Advisory Team #4 as the team medic and was also the Senior Medical Advisor to Team Commander and to the Huong Hoa District Chief from March 1967 – January 1968 in Khe Sanh village and then later with the Bru Montagnards in Cua Valley until September, 1969. It is for his heroic actions on 21 January 1968 in Khe Sanh village that he earned the Silver Star that is being awarded on 2 March 2007.

"For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force: Sergeant First Class Perry distinguished him-self by heroic action on 21 and 22 January 1968 while serving with Advisory Team 4, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. On 21 January, the District Headquarters at Huong Hoa (Khe Sanh) was attacked by a determined North Vietnamese Army force. At the beginning of the attack, Sergeant Perry immediately converted the advisory team quarters into a makeshift dispensary. Throughout the battle, he moved about the compound carrying the wounded on his back to the dispensary. At one point, when the Regional Force Company was being hit the hardest, Sergeant Perry moved to the position to treat the wounded. When one of the bunkers took a direct hit, Sergeant Perry left the protection of the advisory bunker to pull the wounded from the rubble. Sergeant Perry's bravery, initiative and devotion to duty were responsible for the saving of lives and were an inspiration to his team. Sergeant Perry's bravery, initiative and devotion to duty were responsible for the saving of lives and were an inspiration to his Vietnamese comrades. Sergeant Perry's heroism, compassion and humor are captured in his own words in ***Expendable War-***

riors: Khe Sanh and the Vietnam War by Colonel (ret) Bruce B. G. Clarke.

He served in Vietnam from June 1970 - April 1971 in Xuan Loc with United State Army Vietnam (USARV).

He returned to Carlisle Barracks after his tours in Vietnam in 1971 and was Chief Ward Master at the Dunham Army Hospital. During this time he also pursued and obtained an Associated Degree in American Law and Procedure, and a Bachelors Degree in Public Administration from Upper Iowa University. He was subsequently promoted to First Sergeant (E-8) and retired on March 31, 1976.

After his military retirement, he worked in Civil Service at the New Cumberland Army Depot until again retiring on February 29, 1996 with twenty years of Civil Service accrued.
After his Civil Service retirement, he proudly participated and was team leader with the Cumberland County Honor Guard. He was also the Chaplain for the Carlisle Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post #477.

BOOK REVIEW

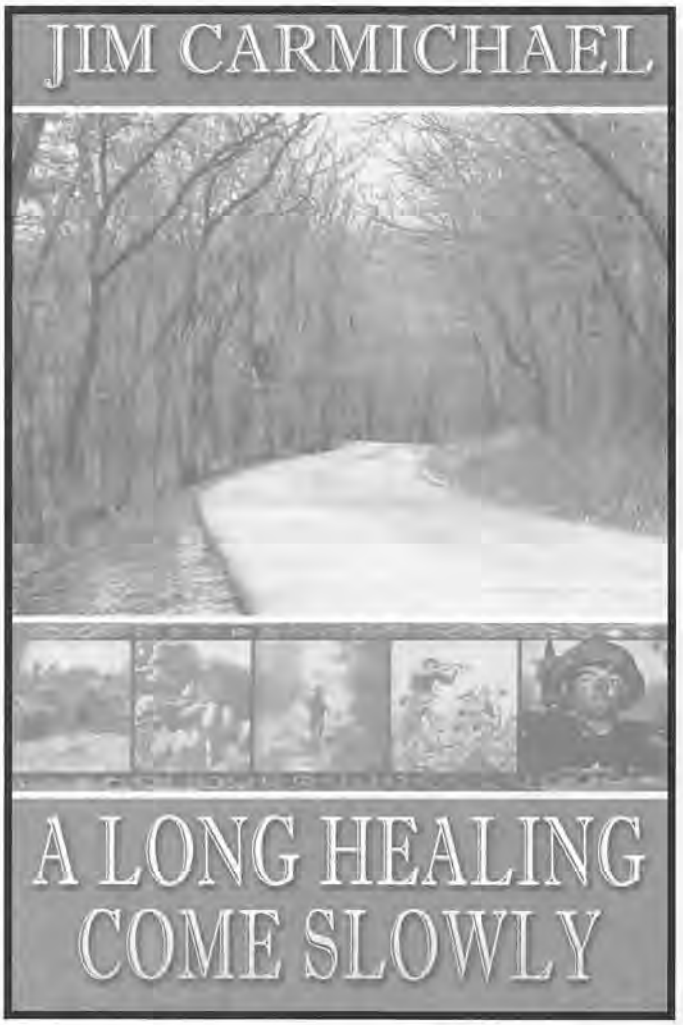

The reader of A LONG HEALING COME SLOWLY immediately confronts the living situation of war's lingering devastation both on those who experience it as well as their families. Precipitated by a death of a Vietnam Marine, a very successful veteran of World War II suddenly plunges into the depths of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This powerful novel does not dwell on one or two characters, however, but includes many, all caught up in the powerful web of war's devastation, centered on Stephen Lloyd, the veteran of World War II.

All the characters are developed with such detail of emotion and unfolding events that characterize masterful and great literature. As only a work of fiction can do, the gamut of PTSD comes alive in all its excruciating detail, far exceeding clinical presentations. Tears were welling up in my eye after only a few dozen pages. The characters so vividly live through fears, helplessness, suicidal thoughts, attempts to be helpful by those who care and secretiveness by those who have buried the pain. Only a veteran of war could have the insight to make the characters so authentic, alive, and engaging. Through the crucible of this pain, an intensely human drama unfolds that too long has been relegated to individuals and families who secretly and quietly are unseen by the general public, or to institutions that clinically attempt to ameliorate, past which we drive our cars without a second thought.

The Greek word for "truth" literally means "that which is not secret," based on "a" ("opposite of") and "lath" (like the hidden boards behind a plaster wall, the word for "secret"). Like the children's story, "The Emperor's New Clothes," Carmichael has spoken what all who fought in a war already know but find great difficulty verbalizing, especially to those they love and who are closest, that for those who participate in a war, it never really ends.
This book helpfully assists such warriors in confronting and clarifying the maelstrom of their own experiences while also providing helpful insight to

those living closest to them. The book makes a statement all society needs to heed lest we embark too easily upon the option of engaging in a war. Finally, and most significantly, the book provides a solution from a spiritual direction. Unlike many previous books addressing the spiritual dimension of PTSD, describing and analyzing the spiritual plight of war veterans, the Christian perspective Carmichael presents infuses the level of childhood faith learned in institutional churches so that the faith reaches an adult level adequate to address the issue.

For those who experienced war and then departed the spiritual oasis of their church, this presentation does not dismiss or bind war's painful memories in some medicine-induced dark hole of the soul, nor does it even transform them (as through a program of artistic or socially productive activity). Rather, we are given the life-giving paradox of having "peace in the midst of war," "life in the midst of death," "beauty in the midst of ashes," value in the presence of those who regarded one a social pariah. This approach affirms the negatives and the questions, but unlike Rilke's line about having to live the question if one is not able to live the answer, Carmichael provides the possibility to live the answer.

Ray Stubbe, author of "VALLEY OF DECISION: The Siege of Khe Sanh," "INSIDE FORCE RECON: Recon Marines in Vietnam, First Force Reconnaissance Company: A History, and Battalion of Kings," and "The Heritage of Those That Fear Thy Name"

For me, "A Long Healing Come Slowly" was tremendously cathartic. After reading how Jim Carmichael has so vividly described the trials and tribulations of so many who have attacked life with such a gusto following their combat experiences, I don't feel quite so alone, I don't feel quite so inadequate, I realize we are all blessed with as well as limited by our humanity; we do our absolute best and take pride in our efforts and accomplishments.

I highly recommend "A Long Healing Come Slowly," not only to combat veterans but to their loved ones as well. After reading this story I came away with a sense of understanding, a sense of serenity, a sense of closure that I haven't had since I returned home in 1969 and almost immediately volunteered for a second tour.

Lawrence E. McCartney
Master Gunnery Sergeant of Marines (Retired): 1967 - 1997
Larry served with E Co 2/26 on Hill 861A

MEMOIRS

DIVINE INTERVENTION

By David Billingsley USA
1/5TH INF DIV MECH (RED DEVILS)

"There It Is," they used to say in Vietnam. It was as if an evil spirit was loose. One of the demons, known to the Vietnamese as Ma. Weaving in and out of visible reality, a dancing ghost. It would appear suddenly out of a whirl, shimmer for an instant, and be lost. The grunts came to recognize it. They would say without excitement, "There It Is," with emphasis on the last word, to let their friends know that they had seen it and to be sure their friends had seen it. It was without form itself, but it could assume infinity of forms. It was as tiny as a lizard's eye and as huge as the big black sky. It became events, it became things themselves. It had no strength of its own because it used human strength. It had no life of its own because it used human lives with a brave prodigality. Because it used so many young lives it could assume a youthful, frolicsome aspect. Some people called it the **Gray Rat**, or **The Snow**. Some called it **Mr.Gray Rat**.

The union soldiers during the American civil war called it the ELEPHANT. That was what going into combat was called then. Please understand how young a lot of these guys were. Their youth was a factor in how they thought and spoke. We all had one thing in common, we had all caught a glimpse of the **Ma.** The war's infernal antic spirit. Whether they knew it or not, everyone was looking for a metaphor.... My personal Divine Intervention began on the morning of August 21, 1970. One month after my 20th birthday. Our company set out from Quang Tri combat base headed northeast toward the Ho Chi Minh Trail. I asked the lieutenant if we were going back to Khe Sanh. I said, Lt. if we were headed back to Khe Sanh, could you put me on the next chopper out of here. Because I was a short timer, I've been in the the field or country for eleven months, and I did not want to go back to Khe Sanh.

He said, don't worry Billingsley, I'll put you on a chopper in a couple of days, besides think of it as just another ordinary patrol, a Sunday walk in the park, a country stroll, just another ordinary hunting trip. I said ok Lt. I get your point, but I knew in my mind that we weren't hunting rabbits, we were hunting Mr. Charles, and Charles carried a AK-47, and shoots back, and I've had enough of being shot at.

The last thing I wanted was to get shot up, with less than 30 days left in NAM. Just hunting trips my ass. My experience lately was that we only came into contact with the enemy once or twice a week and those encounters were usually brief. It was the 23rd of August when I experienced something that has been with me for over 37 years. And I've never told this to anyone until now. We were working our way up Hill 585 when one of our mortar tracks ran over a landmine, and it blew the whole right side completely up, rendering it useless. The lieutenant said to make sure all the mortars, and any live ammo was put into another track, and not to leave anything behind that the gooks could use against us. I got five or six guys to help get the mortars off the track; I was standing in line waiting to do my part to help. When it came my turn, out of nowhere, I heard this voice say with some authority,

"MY TIME!"-"MY TIME," At first I just looked at him like he had gone crazy. Then with a shove he pushed me out of line and said it again, "MY-TIME!!!!" I said well hell if you want to help that bad, go ahead, get you some! As I watched him, I noticed that he had on new fatigues, and new boots. I thought, Who the hell is this guy and where did he come from. I've never seen this guy before and I've been with this unit longer than anyone. He looked Puerto Rican to me. As he turned to leave with the mortars, I received a call from command that they were sending a chopper to pick up the APC. Just about that time a very loud explosion rang out. It was so loud it burst both my eardrums. Picked me up and threw me about ten or fifteen feet where I landed in the bottom of a bomb crater that was about twenty feet deep.
The guy that demanded it was his time, had stepped on a mine, and it shattered his body from the waist down. I finally regained my composure, as I looked up from the bottom of the crater; the lieutenant was standing there with a mad look on his face. He was trying to tell me something, and I was trying to tell him that I couldn't hear him. At that time, the Viet Cong hit us with everything they had. The Lt. took off running, to find another radio. I started crawling my way up to the top of the crater. When I reached the top, I started looking around to see what was going on. And the first thing I saw was the Puerto Rican laying there, a medic had already checked him out and said he was dead. He covered him up with a poncho.

I just couldn't get my mind off this guy. Why did he insist on taking my turn in line? A Huey chopper came in and was trying to land, when two RPG'S went off just over their heads and they got the hell out of dodge. The chopper pilot left and went around to his left to get out of harms way. When they tried to land, the down force of the chopper blew the poncho off the little man that had stepped on the mine. When it did, I was looking him right in the eyes and he blinked his eyes. I was stunned. I just couldn't believe it. I called for a medic to check him again, and they tried to tell me he was dead, but I knew better. I saw him blink his eyes. So the medic did as I asked and called for some help. The little man was still alive. A couple of guys ran over to help get him on a stretcher and I saw that they needed one more to help carry the stretcher around where the chopper was waiting. I came out of that crater like my ass was on fire and grabbed the left side of the stretcher and we took off for the chopper. As we made our way to the chopper, I was trying to get The rest of his body parts on the stretcher with my left hand so they wouldn't drag the ground. We finally got him on the chopper, and they took off headed for the ship. The Lt. told me he died about ten minutes after they left with him.

We called in artillery in on the NVA, and blew them all to hell. The fighting was over. My mind was still on the Puerto Rican guy. I just couldn't seem to figure out what had just taken place. Where did he come from? How did he get there? Why didn't the Lt. or I hear of his arrival? My father always told me that he was on his knees praying at nine thirty every morning. Well it was about nine or ten when the fire fight took place that day. And I'll tell you right now that I'm a very strong believer in DIVINE INTERVENTION because of what I experienced that day on Hill 585. I just wish I knew a little more about the guy. I would at least like to know his

name and where he came from. I guess if the Good Lord wanted me to know the answers to all my questions He would tell me. It's been thirty seven years and I haven't heard a word. Still waiting... This is a true story.

BOOK REVIEW

Red Clay on My Boots
Encounters with Khe Sanh 1968-2005
By Robert J. Topmiller
USN CHARLIE MED KHE SANH

Few people are more intimately acquainted with the horrors of war than Navy corpsmen serving with U.S. Marine units in combat. Upon that terrible and grisly stage, corpsmen carry out their duties, and become heroes to Marines, by risking their lives to help others; bandaging wounds, easing pain, comforting the dying and lamenting (sometimes forever) the loss of those they could not save.

In 1968, at age 19, Bob Topmiller found himself in just such a situation, amidst of the longest and bloodiest battle of the Vietnam War -- at a place called Khe Sanh. Surrounded by as many as 30,000 of North Vietnam's best troops supported by artillery, tanks, anti-aircraft guns and rocket units; 6,000 Americans successfully held the majority of their positions despite fierce ground attacks and endless artillery bombardment. Young Bob Topmiller was among a handful of corpsmen that, at great peril to their own lives, forayed out each day under intense enemy fire to assist some of the nearly 3,000 Marines who would eventually be killed or wounded during the three-month long battle.

In Red Clay on My Boots: Encounters with Khe Sanh 1968-2005, now Professor Bob Topmiller combines chilling personal recollections, with his expertise as a distinguished scholar of Vietnamese history, to create a unique and powerful account of the Vietnam War -- and the disturbing human toll it continues to exact. Topmiller's courage during that fierce and bloody battle would later serve him well in his tireless quest for reconciliation; eventually leading him from the brink of despair to rediscover a level of compassion he thought lost forever amid the carnage and ubiquitous red clay of Khe Sanh.

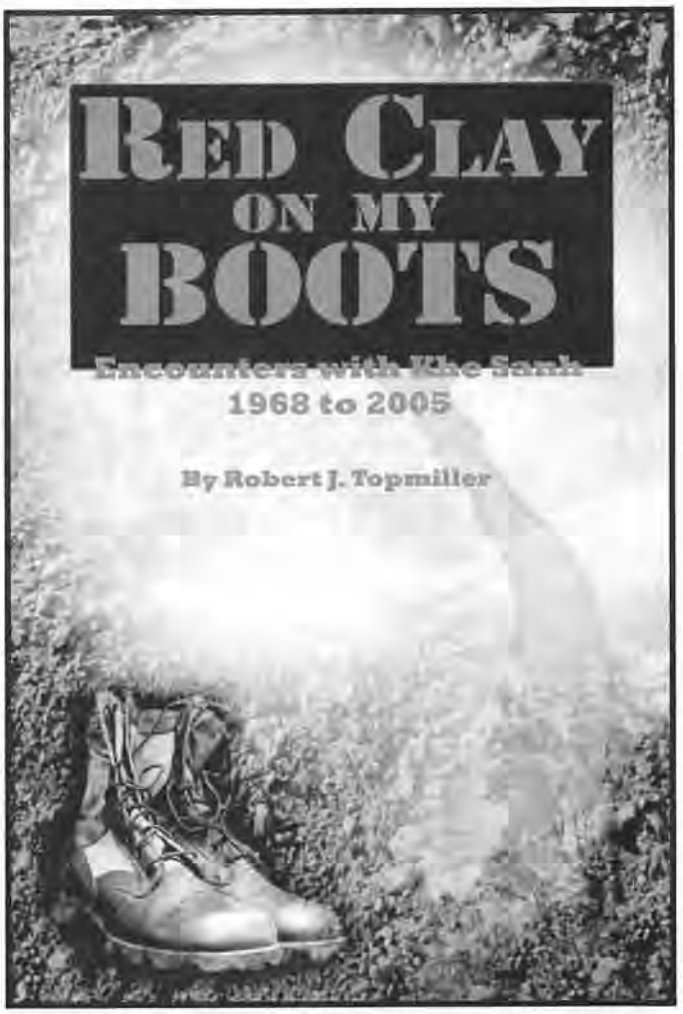

Topmiller's search took him back to Vietnam a dozen times, visiting a multitude of cities, villages, and former battle sites. His knowledge of the language and culture permitted him access to facets of the society often missed by more causal travelers, but which provides the reader with astonishing glimpses of the war and its aftermath.

Everywhere he traveled, Bob Topmiller witnessed the shocking legacy of Agent Orange on Vietnamese society; particularly evident in the appalling numbers of children deformed at birth by an environment still poisoned from the war. Topmiller's search for inner peace ended in 2002 at a non-descript doorway on a street in Hue – a special school for these severely handicapped boys and girls. Since that day, Bob has been supporting them; back again, after nearly 40 years, easing the pain of war.

Terrifying, heartbreaking, enlightening and, above all, honest; Red Clay on My Boots is a story hard to

forget.
Robert "Doc" Topmiller is an Assistant Professor of History at Eastern Kentucky University and served as a corpsman with the 26th Marines Regimental Aid Station from January through July 1968.

Mike Archer, author of *A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered*

Broken hearts, ruined minds, wrecked families, and shattered lives are all realities of the Vietnam War. Real people suffered because of the fighting, death, and tragedies that occurred at the battle of Khe Sanh. This is a story of a Vietnam corpsman immersed in the bloodiest, most confusing, and controversial battle of the Vietnam War.

As the war ends, the author tries to re-build his life but finds his mind and heart are still on the battlefield in Vietnam. How did this happen? Why did I survive? When will the nightmares end? Was it all for nothing? He has been fighting his own internal war for the last forty years. This is his story.

Robert Topmiller entered the U.S. Navy in 1966 at age seventeen and trained to be a Hospital Corpsman. He served in South Vietnam in 1968 with the 26th Marines during the battle of Khe Sanh.

Topmiller received his B.A. and M.A. from Central Washington University and his Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky. Currently, he serves as an Assistant Professor of History at Eastern Kentucky University where he teaches World History and the History of the Vietnam War.

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INCOMING

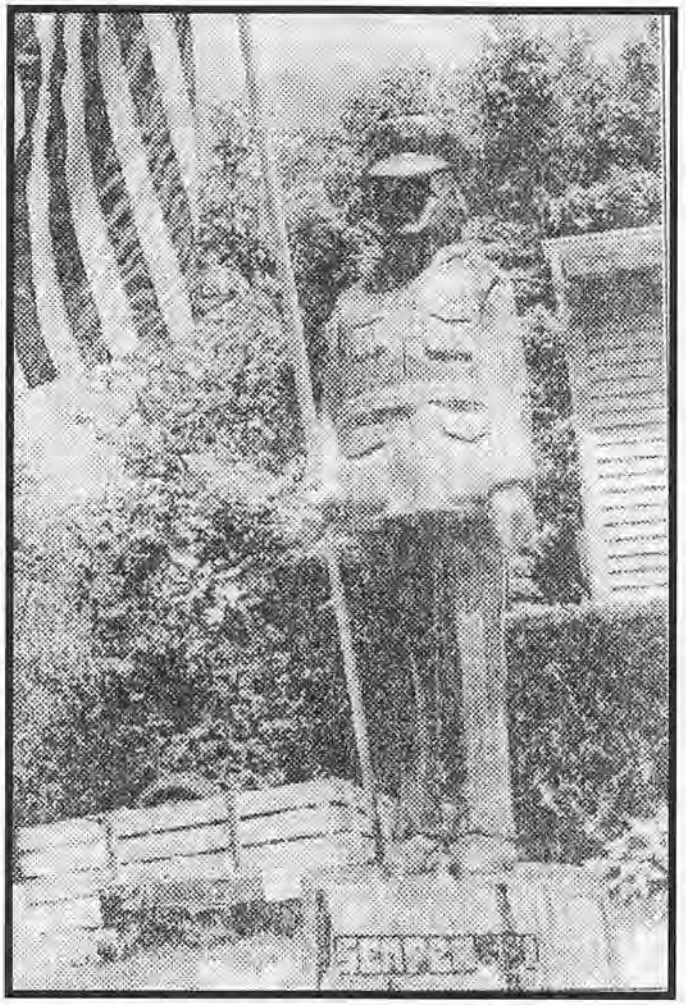

Marine's statue stands tall in support of troops. Conklin man utilizes oak tree to create striking, 8-foot-tall tribute

'It's a tribute to our people in uniform. Regardless of your opinion on war, you've got to support them.'

By Brian J, Gafney
Correspondent

Submitted by Del Chamberlain
I Co 3/26, Hill 881S

Looking at Rick Correll's hand carved Marine statue, you sense how foolhardy it would be to challenge a real-life Marine on duty. The statue, more than life-sized and called "Semper Fi" looks something like Winston Churchill when he stared into the eyes of the Nazi war machine and backed it down. "I was calling him Winston for a while," said Correll, 56, of Woodcrest Way, a Marine during the

Vietnam era. 'It's a tribute to our people in uniform. Regardless of your opinion on war, you've got to support them". I don't want the stuff that happened to us when we came home from Vietnam ... they called us baby-killers.' Well. People can have their minds made up, and it doesn't matter to me what your opinion is, just so you support our troops.'
The statue was carved from a large, old red oak tree that might have toppled into Correll's house during a storm. He liked the tree and had it trimmed back to a big stump. After a year he decided to have it carved. "I had Gordon Cook, of Whitney Point, come in, "Correll said. "It took him a couple of weeks, because he had to go back and work out his graphs and drawings. It took him as much prep time as the actual work. It's hand-carved, and with a chain saw." The 8-foot statue was finished June 5th Correll has since been applying sealer to protect it from the weather. Correll said the tree's roots are still in the ground, giving it a solid foundation He is working on night-time illumination, so he can fly the flag with his statue around the clock. "People are always stopping cars, and taking pictures, always taking pictures," he said. Some don't have to take pictures, though, and they are pleased about the statue. "Its awesome." said Rob McKay, one of Correll's neighbors. "From the beginning, when they took the tree down, we all thought it was a great idea: We knew he'd do it. And we thought, if his vision came to light, it would be perfect.

McKay said the statue improves the neighborhood, and it gets people thinking about things that should never be far from their minds. "Too often people see the military, and it's only on TV," he said. "But I think something like this statue keeps it in people's minds, that there are military living next door, there are military living in their neighborhood. It's here, not just on television. I'm proud to live next door to a Marine." The statue brings home what kind of people is living there, said McKay's daughter, Step, 15, for whom the statue has become a landmark as well as a lesson. "People first said, 'Oh, boy, what's it going to be? And now, a lot of my friends find my house by it," she said.

Rob McKay said he is encouraged by the people who come to look at the carving. 'They drive by, and they stop to look at the statue. It gives them a moment of reflection." Which seems to be what Correll hoped would happen. "We've got guys, right now, fighting and dying," he said. "They are people on guard for you. Without them, we're sunk."

OBIT

Michael Robin Lovett
D Co 3rd Recon KSV

Michael Robin Lovett, age 58, of Glen St. Mary, FL died Monday, March 12, 2007 in an automobile accident. Robin was born and raised in Jacksonville, FL and he was an avid surfer and musician from an early age. Following his 1966 graduation from Ribault High School, Robin joined the USMC where he proudly served in Company B, 2nd Recon Battalion, Special Forces in Vietnam. For his brave service in the Battle of Khe Sanh, Robin earned a Purple Heart and the prestigious Cross of Gallantry, along with numerous other military decorations.

Robin was proud to have worked his entire life exclusively as a professional musician. His musical career began at age 14 when his band, Robin & the Counts, performed onstage behind the Biff Burger on the corner of Soutel and Harborview in Jacksonville. After returning from Vietnam, Robin formed the local bands West and Strawberry Fair. With his brother Terry, Robin and Strawberry Fair toured up the east coast to New Hampshire, where they eventually settled and evolved into the band Fair Exchange. Fair Exchange was followed by The Lovett Brothers Band, an immensely popular band which toured New England for several years. Robin and Terry broke off to form the acoustic/electric duo, then trio.

The Lovett Brothers, with the addition of younger brother Marvin. When his brothers returned to Florida 1983, Robin performed as Manchester New Hampshire's favorite solo act for the next twenty years. During that time, Robin also formed the legendary BTC Jam Band, which played every Tuesday night at the Boston Trading Company for the better part of a decade. From 2000 to 2003, Robin played lead guitar and vocals with the ever-popular Grinning Lizards band, capping off his 20 year Northeastern tour. Robin's epic journey came full circle when he returned to his childhood home of Florida to be with his mother, his close-knit family, and the beaches that he loved.

Robin's kind soul and joyous spirit were cherished during his lifetime and will be tremendously missed by those fortunate enough to have been touched by his love. Family members include his wife, Michelle Lovett of Glen St. Mary, mother; Linteen Daymon of Jacksonville, seven children; David Lovett of Jacksonville Beach, Christopher Lovett, Ryan Lovett both of New Hampshire, Joshua Lovett, Zachary Maynard, Cheyenne Regnier and Jesse Regnier all of Glen St. Mary. Brothers; Terrell (Michelle) Lovett of Palm Harbor, Fl. Marvin Lovett of Clearwater, Fl. and Madison Lovett of Vero Beach, Fl. sisters; Sharon (Dave) Westcott of Macclenny and Linda Sorrentino of Mass. and grandson; Alexander Lovett all survive.

INCOMING

Stories You Will Not See On Your Local News

England Awards British Distinguished Flying Cross To Marine Major Serving With British Forces In Iraq



Marine Major William Chesare, left, is the first U.S. pilot to earn the British Distinguished Flying Cross since World War II. British army Pvt. Michelle Norris, right, became the first woman ever to be awarded the British Military Cross at the same ceremony.

England's Queen Elizabeth II awarded the British Distinguished Flying Cross to a U.S. pilot for the first time since World War II during a ceremony at Buckingham Palace in London on March 21, according to a Corps release. Marine Maj. William Chesarek was serving as an exchange officer with England's 847 Naval Air Squadron in Amarah, Iraq, last year when British forces on the ground came under "repeated attack from rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire from insurgents using large, hostile crowds for cover," the release said. Chesarek spent five hours flying overhead in a British Lynx helicopter identifying targets and covering the British troops on the ground, the release said. "Given the serious threat to the forces on the ground, and the inability to return fire given the crowds of protesters, Chesarek elected to fly repeated passes at very low level, under heavy small-arms fire and at least one near-miss from an RPG, in an attempt to distract and disperse the crowds," according to the release.

Chesarek is currently assigned to Marine Corps Forces Europe.

MEMOIRS

The "Walking Dead" Show Valor on Hill 689

The 1St Battalion 9Th Marines earned their nickname in Vietnam in a fight so fierce they were forced to leave men behind.

Reprinted from VFW Magazine Feb 2007
By Shannon Hanson

As the siege of Khe Sanh came to a close in mid-April 1968, elements of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, held the high ground on Hill 689 a few miles away. It appeared that enemy units were returning to the area, as Marines had made contact with remnants of an NVA platoon on April 13 and 15. On the morning of the 16th, Capt. Henry D. Banks of A Company led two reinforced platoons totaling 85 men on a search-and-clear mission southwest of the perimeter on the hill. At 10 a.m., Banks ordered two squads to search a nearby ridge covered in four-to-six-foot elephant grass. They soon came under small-arms and sniper fire. The first Marine killed was Cpl. Robert H. Littlefield. David Ford remembered; "The first shot fired went through Littlefield and almost hit me. I thought he was going to live. Toward dark, I saw him still laying there, but by then he was dead:'

Banks deployed the company, with 1st Platoon establishing a base of fire and 2nd Platoon, led by 1st Lt. Michael P. Hayden, attacking up the ridge. NVA fired from well-concealed bunkers in a horseshoe shape and drove the Marines to the ground. "It appeared that when the 2nd Platoon had got into position to assault, that they [NVA] were just waiting for them, and just cut them down with small-arms fire: Banks said. Hayden said their only choice was to attack and take the hill, and under machine-gun cover, he led the charge. "We didn't move 15 feet when Lt Hayden got hit and was killed," said Sgt Paul J. Cogley "Suddenly, they opened up and everybody hit the ground. We stayed that way for a least an hour

Banks ordered the 2nd Platoon to fall back but the dead and wounded. were still within 10 feet of the enemy bunkers and could not be extracted. Casualties mounted, and soon 10 Marines had been killed, 20 wounded. At about noon, Lt Col John H. Cahill, commanding officer of 1st Battalion, ordered D Company under Capt. John W. Cargile, to assist A Company in evacuating the dead and wounded.

Heroism Abounds in C Company

Meanwhile, Cahill moved out with two platoons of C Company, led by Capt. Lawrence Himmer, to sweep the bunker complex from the rear and clear out any enemy resistance. 2nd Lt. David O Carter of 2nd Platoon led the advance up the ridge. Enemy fire broke out from hidden fortified positions and Himmer, both platoon commanders and several squad leaders fell with wounds. "We got to the top of the hill—they were everywhere," Carter said. "They were dug in bunkers. I was hit three times. I went up there with 32 men, and only eight men didn't get hit we did one hell of a job up there. I think the only thing that saved us was basic aggressiveness"

PFC Eddie It Pritchett saved Carter's life. Himself wounded, Pritchett knocked Carter down to keep him from being hit, and placed him in a protected place. Pritchett then jumped into an NVA occupied emplacement and engaged them. He received the Bronze Stat After Carter and the platoon sergeant were wounded, Cpl Jose Ruiz took charge of the platoon. He rendered first aid to the wounded, regardless of the danger "He got down and gave each and every one of them the best medical care he could." Cpl John Kocsis said. "After this, he and his men continued on the assault There he gave his life by jumping in front of a wounded Marine to save his life." For his selfless bravery, Ruiz was posthumously awarded the Silver Stat Pfc. Mauro Martinez also showed battlefield bravery when he threw his body over Cpl William P. Holland to shield him from rounds and was mortally wounded. He received the Navy Cross. "He paid the supreme sacrifice in order that one of his buddies would live," read the award recommendation. C Company's valiant assault enabled A Company to extract all of its WIAs and most of its KIAs.

Not Enough Walking Bodies

By 3p.m.,A and C companies had suffered high casualties And were nearly immobilized in the elephant grass by enemy fire from the bunker complexes. Cahill ordered D Company to deploy along A Company's right flank and attack across the ridge. The company advanced, but with the deep grass and enemy fire, progress was slow with casualties mounting. "Our movement in any forward direction was nominal due to intense fire and extremely accurate sniper fire," Capt Cargile said. "We were receiving sniper fire from two to three directions. Still, we could not pinpoint the source. The snipers were very good. Four out of my five KIAs had been shot in the head." After learning of D Company's heavy casualties at 5:30 p.m., Cahill ordered the battalion to extract the wounded and any KIA's they could, and pull back. Cahill was unaware that Gen. Rathvon Tompkins had issued a standing order that all KIAs should be evacuated. "We were forced to do something we had never done before—just leave bodies out to report people as missing," said 1st Lt Kenneth L Harman, executive officer of C Company "I don't feel this was through carelessness of the individuals. It was simply that there weren't enough walking bodies left to carry the limp bodies out."

Cahill said he felt that "additional Casualties would have resulted if I had chosen to remain on the hill. Plans were formulated by me to recover the KIA's on the 18th, but other plans by higher headquarters had been made preventing the battalion to do this job." H Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines was sent in to recover the bodies several days later "This

was a fierce fight," said David Brombaugh, who was part of the recovery operation. "We lost KIA and WIA in our unit. The bodies were in bad shape from the days left there, and many were mutilated. We got all the bodies the morning of the 22nd and walked back to The Sanh."

In total, the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines lost 43 killed in action on Hill 689 and 32 wounded. The 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines sustained six KIA's and 55 WIA, in the recovery operation.

The Rescue of Cpl. Hunnicutt

The morning after the battle, on April 17, Marines heard the voice of Cpl. Hubert H. Hunnicutt III calling across the valley. He was wounded and taking shelter in a bomb crater. Volunteers in two CH-46 helicopters attempted to rescue him, but when they landed, they received heavy fire from NVA and found only decapitated and disemboweled bodies of Marines. A second rescue attempt shortly after yielded not Hunnicutt but a Pfc. G. Panyaninec.

Hunnicutt, meanwhile, crawled out of the crater and came upon Capt Himmer, who was still alive. Hunnicutt stayed with Himmer, receiving AK-47 fire in the leg, hand and elbow and playing dead for about five hours. He moved Himmer down the ridge, but they were separated when Hunnicutt fell into a gorge. The following morning, Hunnicutt yelled for help again. "About noon, an Army Huey started flying around me," he recalled. "It dropped two red smokes on me and scared me to death. I thought they were going to blow me away." Hunnicutt was rescued and received the Navy Cross for his efforts to save Himmer, who was never again seen alive.



Leathernecks of 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, aid a downed helicopter during Operation Scotland II in the DMZ, on Sept 20 1968.

We have instituted a new magazine section to thank those members who contribute so generously to the" Khe Sanh Veterans. Their contributions allow us to continue to expand and improve our Red Clay magazine. There will be four levels of contributions: SILVER $ 20.00-50.00, GOLD over 50.00-200.00, PLATINUM over 200.00-1,000, and DIAMOND over 1,000. Each member will receive a new membership card, corresponding with their level of contribution.

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DAWDY. James H. Jr.
TOURTE, Craig W.

PLATINUM

ALLEN, Lewis J
COLE, James F
FOSTER, Gary W
FRUGONI, Charles
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SCOTT, Michael D
STACK, Geoffrey L
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GOLD

ALLEN, Lewis J
BROPHY, Michael W.
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TATE, William R
WACHSMUTH, Robert W
WILKINSON, James B
YATES, William R

SILVER

AMBROSE, James F
APPLEBAUM, Robert S
BOLAND, Thomas
CAMPO, Carl
DEARING, Richard M
FOSMO, Harold D Jr.
HALL, Robert A
HARRIGAN, Joseph E
HOFFLER, John T
KAZIMIR, Edward J
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KENDIG, Dennis R
LARSEN, Larry L
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MELLON, David L
MEYER, Donald J
MORGAN, Robert I
MOSEBAY, Watson T Jr.
MUDD, Ronald B
NEWSHAM, Robert G
PELON, Sharon
RINEHART, Earlin R
STAHL, Richard E
SWEARENGEN, Mark A
UPSHAW, Leland
VIVONA, Robert T

MEMORIES (Web Chatter)

March 22, 1968
By Bruce Geiger
1/44th Arty (Dusters) A Btry

Those who were on the Khe Sanh Combat Base 39 years ago tonight will remember the heavy bombardment, officially recorded as the second heaviest of the siege (1100+rounds). Many will also remember the losses suffered by C Co 1/26. The company CP took a direct 122mm hit, killing Captain Walter 'Jack' Egger, Gunnery Sergeant John J. Grohman, First Lieutenant Paul W. Bush, Lance Corporal Stephen C. Shannon, and Private First Class Bennie J. Sisson. Although the horror of that night will remain with me forever, so will the bravery of the Marines, Soldiers, and corpsmen that assisted in rescuing many others from that burning bunker including Chuck Chamberlain who we have been fortunate to have with us for several recent reunions.

Bruce,

I, too, always think of this date and reflect back on that night. Just to share with other KSV members...GySgt Grohman shared a bunker with me near of one of your guns (quad .50?). The word was that we were going to get shelled that night at about 2200 and we might expect a ground assault as well. The Gunny said he thought it best that he go to the CP and be available should the CO need him. At about 2200, the company was manning the lines, awaiting whatever was to come. I clearly remember that the NVA were late in starting the shelling. According to my wrist watch, all hell broke loose at about 2210.

Just to keep the record straight, Sisson and Shannon were not in the CP bunker. They were in a bunker right in front of one of your guns about 30 yards from my bunker. There was a third marine in that bunker, junior, who got out without any serious injury aside from some hearing concerns from the explosion. Both bunkers were hit within 10-15 minutes of each other. I think that may have been the night that the ARVN Rangers had a probe on their lines. I recall the next day being clear, sunny and mild. A grim task excavating both bunkers and attending to the dead. Chuck Chamberlin was in the company bunker and was instrumental in getting the wounded out right after it was hit. As I recall, 5 gallon cans of fuel caught fire and there was the danger of ammo and grenades in the CP bunker cooking off. That was the second time during the Siege that Charlie Company's CP was hit. The first time the CO, Dave Ernst, was seriously wounded and the Bn SgtMajor, who was making the rounds, was killed.

Nick Romanetz
C Co 1/26

Bruce and Nick,

I too remember that night like it was yesterday. I was in our trench line alone of fighting positions checking with my squad member on watch when it happened. We were to the west of the CP. I remember vividly what sounded like a low flying aircraft landing directly to our front and down the side of the plateau, the next one was closer to our trench line but to our east approximately 50 meters the next one is the one that I believe hit the CP. It didn't sound like rockets to me it sounded more like artillery. I would venture to say that it came from Co Roc judging by the sound. I could be wrong but that was my impression that night and it still haunts me knowing that so many of our men lost their lives that night.

Steve Hecknauer
C Co 1/26

Steve,

I agree with you, I think the round was a 152 artillery from CoRoc. As you recall, that was a brand new "state of the art" bunker with a double roof. Unless it was a 122 rocket with a delay fuse, I think artillery is the right call.

Nick Romanetz

For The Record
By Chuck Chamberlin

I was fortunate to have survived both direct hits on the Charlie CP. Just wanted to mention that in the first hit, on February 15, one of my radio operators, L/Cpl. Joseph Bailey from Gainesville, NY was seriously wounded. He died of those wounds on Feb-

ruary 19. Another of my radio operators, L/Cpl. John Mattern, was also badly burned and suffered shrapnel wounds in the second CP hit on March 22. Like I said, I was very lucky to be evacuated to the Repose, then to Japan, then home. A long time ago, but we'll always remember.

Chuck
C Co 1/26

INCOMING

A Vietnam War project in Cowboy Country

By Richard Bernstein Published: March 25, 2007
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LUBBOCK, Texas: This low-slung, spread-out town in the Texas Panhandle would seem almost a foreigner's stereotype of cowboy America, a place where a tourist attraction is a prairie-dog park, the vehicle of choice is a four-door pickup, and the surrounding land supports some of the largest cotton and cattle farms in the world. Lubbock (metropolitan population about 250,000) is also the kind of conservative town likely to be supportive of a president during a time of war, and, indeed, it has more than its share of sons and daughters doing service in Iraq. The other day, the top story in the local press was the return home, after an eight-month tour of duty in Iraq, of a reserve transport battalion that is headquartered here.

And if the war in Iraq seems present and close in Lubbock, memories of that other terrible American war, Vietnam, are also keen in a town that has more than its share of Vietnam veterans. But there are more than memories here. Lubbock, home to Texas Tech University, a world-class institution with over 28,000 students, is the site of a fast-growing center that, after only 18 years of existence, boasts the largest documentary collection on the Vietnam War outside of the official, government-maintained National Archives in Washington. At a time when many are seeing the Iraq war as a kind of Vietnam in the desert, the Vietnam Project and its enormous documentary collection would seem especially valuable, and, no doubt, it is. But though the purpose of the project is clearly educational and scholarly, it is not uncontroversial. When a few years ago a former South Vietnamese ambassador to Washington, Bui Diem, came to speak here, for example, some members of the history department protested his presence on campus.

Today in Americas NY police spied on activists before 2004 convention Gonzales's congressional support wanes CIA awaits rules on questioning suspects Similarly, some experts on Vietnam have charged that the Vietnam Project, while ostensibly open to all points of view, is really "a right-wing think tank," as one writer put it, whose purpose is to rehabilitate the image of the former South Vietnamese government and to portray the American war in Indochina as a noble effort. In other words, even as the Iraq war inspires a certain emotion in Lubbock, the Vietnam Project stokes some of the intensity of feeling that the Vietnam War still provokes in the country at large, 32 years after the war ended there in a Communist victory.

The Vietnam Project is the brainchild of a remarkable academic entrepreneur named James Reckner, who, decades ago, served two tours of duty in Vietnam, advising the South Vietnamese Army in riverine warfare. Reckner's academic specialty is Theodore Roosevelt and the development of American naval power, but he started the Vietnam Project in 1989 when he began teaching a course on the Vietnam War and discovered that the university possessed very little material on it.He gathered a band of local veterans, and the archive was born. **The first documents in the collection were a bundle of letters, the envelopes still caked with the mud of Khe Sanh, that a Lubbock resident, Dan Siewart, sent to his mother. "At that point, the whole archive sat in** my hand," Reckner recalls. Now there are some 20 million pages of documents, including a 12,000-volume library, some 500 oral histories of former American soldiers who saw duty in Vietnam, and thousands of carefully catalogued boxes of other things, from North Vietnamese propaganda materials, to American after-battle reports, to comic books showing public attitudes toward the war.

Reckner is particularly proud of what he deems to be his inclusive approach to the Vietnam War, and he has numerous examples. Former South Vietnamese officials and current North Vietnamese generals have met each other at his twice-annual confer-

ences, during which last year there were presentations by both the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth (the group that opposed John Kerry's presidential candidacy) and the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. William Westmoreland, who commanded American troops in Vietnam, has spoken here, and so has Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon Papers to the press.

Reckner is also proud of the several hundred scholarships sponsored by the Vietnam Project that enabled poor Vietnamese and Cambodian youths to go to college in their home countries. He brings young American groups to Vietnam even as Texas Tech has become one of the chief places where Vietnamese students study in the United States. And yet, clearly, what he feels as the unwelcoming attitude of some of his colleagues in the history department saddens Reckner - and makes him angry. "I've attracted $10 million in donations for the Vietnam Project, and the history department does its best to ignore its existence," he said.

Perhaps what is at the bottom of the different views at Texas Tech is not so much the Vietnam War itself but the deeper cultural conflicts that were aroused by the war - the conservative sense of patriotism that is almost palpable in a place like Lubbock, contrasted with the cult of personal liberation and general critique of American foreign policy that emerged from the antiwar movement of the 1960s.

In this sense, Reckner remembers when he met Nguyen Vinh Uoc, a senior military leader in Hanoi and one of the North Vietnamese officials who has spoken at Texas Tech. "I told him, 'You and I have more in common than I have with some American people who favored your side during the war,' " Reckner said. "Devotion to duty, respect for the chain of command, and dedication to service. "The American Kulturkampf, in other words, continues and is deeply felt, even though it so far has not been at the center of the intensifying and ever more emotional arguments taking place in this country about the Iraq conflict and whether to stay in it, or to leave. That of course could change. In the meantime, when future historians study the personal side of the Iraq war, they will, if Reckner has anything to say in the matter, come right to Lubbock. Quietly, he has already begun to collect materials on the Iraq conflict - beginning with some 135 linear feet, or 41 meters, of FBI materials on terrorism

SHORT ROUNDS

A WARM AFTERNOON

By Craig W Tourte
HQ Btry 1/13

I hadn't seen my friend Tommy (Louie) Horchler (HQ Btry 1/13) for quite some and as it turns out, it was one of those days when I just had to get out of town for a little peace of mind. A person can go nuts sitting around for too long, and besides I just felt the need to once again connect to a brother. I know that if things get kind of crazy around here I can always slip up to Chico and be around the brothers and feel at ease, kind of recharge the old batteries and I knew that Tom would be happy to welcome me anytime. He lives on the top of a mountain on 27 beautiful acres of heavenly peace and quiet. Amongst fields of dark green grass and beautiful old growth oak trees. A far cry from where we both served so many years ago.

It was about 0745hrs. and I telephoned Steve Wiese (B/1/26) knowing that he would probably not be doing much himself this day. His wife told me that Steve was still asleep so I suggested that she wake him up because I was sure he would want to take the hour and a half drive with me up to Tom's little farm. I had taken Steve and some other Khe Sanh Veterans up to Tom's a couple of years ago for a mini-reunion and we all had a great time.

The sky was a bright blue with not a cloud visible anywhere, the weather was mild and there was little traffic on the mostly one lane road heading north to Tom's house. As usually, Tom was happy to see us and we were welcomed with open arms and hugs all around. We sat for a couple of hours just kind of shooting the breeze, talking about our time at Khe Sanh and others that we had known. We talked about the upcoming reunion and how much we were looking forward to renewing old acquaintances and making new ones. Tom made lunch for us, another perfect meal as always and then it was time to say goodbye. It's always a little rough to say goodbye to the ones you love and saying goodbye to my friend Tom is never easy. But I'll be back soon.

I felt privileged to be able to ride with Steve Wiese, one of the few survivors of the Ghost Patrol. I think Steve is one of the bravest and most humble individuals I have ever known. I rate Steve right up there with the very few real heroes I have known. Not necessarily for his actions during the Ghost Patrol, but for his 18 months of real combat experience in and around the hills of Khe Sanh.

Last month a local television station did a two or three day segment on PTSD. Steve was featured on the segment and did an outstanding job representing us Khe Sanh Veterans. I was very impressed and telephoned the lady who did the interview. I wanted her to know a little of Steve's background and that Steve was not embellishing his experiences. I didn't tell Steve I had done this nor did I ask for his permission. Anyway, about halfway home from Tom's house Steve told me that the lady who interviewed him had told him that I had called. I didn't respond and waited for Steve to continue. He didn't say anything else; there was just that moment of silence. I told Steve that those of us who served at Khe Sanh and knew of the Ghost Patrol were aware of how difficult it was, and that I thought he deserved what little recognition he and the others received. I dropped Steve off at his house and we talked about getting together for dinner with our wives and then said the usual goodbyes.

I like those little pauses in my life, where I can take a minute or longer to think about those I truly love. To say a little thank you for having had the privilege of knowing people who are truly special. I take that pause, that moment, after every Khe Sanh reunion. It was a wonderful end to a warm afternoon.

INCOMING

USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109)

Submitted By Mike Fishbaugh
FLC-FLSG

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Department of Navy announced March 23 that the Navy's newest Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer will be USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109), honoring the late Cpl. Jason L. Dunham, the first Marine awarded the Medal of Honor for Operation Iraqi Freedom.



The Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Donald C. Winter, made the announcement in Dunham's hometown of Scio, N.Y.

"Jason Dunham, the friendly, kind-hearted, gifted athlete who followed his star in the United States Marine Corps went on to become one of the most courageous, heroic, and admired Marines this great country has ever known," said Winter. "His name will be forever associated with DDG 109. May those who serve in her always be inspired by the heroic deeds of Jason Dunham, and may all of us strive to be worthy of his sacrifice."

Dunham was born in Scio on Nov., 10, 1981, sharing the same birthday as the United States Marine Corps. After high school graduation, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in July 2000, and completed recruit training 13 weeks later at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island.

Following his first duty assignment with Marine Corps Security Forces, Kings Bay, Ga., Dunham transferred to the infantry and was later assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, based in Twenty nine Palms, Calif. Before deploying to Iraq in spring of 2004, Dunham was selected to lead a rifle squad -- a position that ultimately placed him on the front line in the war with the Iraqi insurgency.

On April 14, 2004, Dunham's squad was conducting a reconnaissance mission in Karabilah, Iraq, when his battalion commander's convoy was ambushed. When Dunham's squad approached to provide fire support, an Iraqi insurgent leapt out of a vehicle and attacked Dunham. As Dunham wrestled the insurgent to the ground, he noticed that the en-

emy fighter had a grenade in his hand. Dunham immediately alerted his fellow Marines, and when the enemy dropped the live grenade, Dunham took off his Kevlar helmet, covered the grenade, and threw himself on top to smother the blast. In an ultimately selfless act of courage, in which he was mortally wounded, he saved the lives of two fellow Marines.

In November 2006, at the dedication of the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Va., President Bush announced that the Medal of Honor would be awarded posthumously to Marine Cpl. Jason Dunham.
During his speech, Bush said, "As long as we have Marines like Cpl. Dunham, America will never fear for her liberty." President Bush presented Cpl. Dunham's family with the Medal of Honor during a ceremony in the East Room of the White House on Jan. 11.

In the spirit of this Marine, USS Jason Dunham will continue protecting America's liberty by providing a dynamic multi-mission platform to lead the Navy into the future. Utilizing a gas-turbine propulsion system, the ship can operate independently or as part of carrier strike groups, surface action groups, amphibious ready groups, and underway replenishment groups. The ship's combat systems center on the Aegis combat system and the SPY-Ld (V) multifunction phased array radar. With the combination of Aegis, the vertical launching system, an advanced anti-submarine warfare system, advanced anti-aircraft missiles and Tomahawk cruise missiles, the Arleigh Burke-class continues the revolution at sea.

INCOMING

MY JOURNEY TO HAVING A FAMILY

By Sara Scudder

In order to tell the story of two very wonderful people who came into my life nearly seven years ago, it is necessary to give you a little background information. I was born and grew up in Alaska. My aunt and uncle would come to visit a few times over the years. I knew them as Aunt Pat and Uncle Scoot. They would bring my cousins and I T-shirts with our nicknames printed on them, fruit, cookies etc. We loved it when they came to visit we had so much fun with them. We would go fishing and camping, things that our families didn't do with us.

Eventually I got put into foster care for a few years and was scheduled to get adopted by a native family. My case worker informed me that my Aunt Pat and Uncle Scoot had contacted her and were also interested in being foster parents. I thought back to the times that I traveled with my family to visit them in Oregon. It was like a completely different country. Not at all like Alaska, it was warm and always green with vegetation. I immediately agreed, since I would still be in the family.

I went to visit them on Easter weekend. It was different than I had remembered, maybe because I had done a lot of growing up in the last few years. They welcomed me into their home and showed me what a real family was like. Soon after that I moved to Oregon to live with them.

You'd think my story would end there with a happily ever after, but this was just the beginning. The first time I heard the words Post Traumatic Stress Disorder they didn't mean a lot to me, just a bunch of words that an eleven year old tried to understand. Aunt Pat and Uncle Scoot explained it to me, and I thought I understood, but until you start living with someone who has PTSD, and you witness what it has done to them, you don't fully understand. It was really hard to enter a home where everyone except you have been living with PTSD and understood its symptoms. I had to learn by living in it, to understand it, and work around it the best I could.

About a year after moving to Oregon a wonderful thing happened, they decided they wanted to adopt me. Aunt Pat and Uncle Scoot became my Dad and Mom. We had a few hard times, but the good times outweighed the hard times. We went hunting and fishing, and a few years ago we started attending the Khe Sanh Veterans annual reunions.

My Dad is Lloyd Scudder (Shortround) and my mom is Pat Scudder. At our first reunion I was reserved, just absorbing things that took place. Some might have thought it as being rude, but hanging back was my way of learning. I learned a lot about my Dad and the men he served with in Vietnam. I learned their sacrifices, brotherhood, PTSD, and how my Dad got to be how he is now.

The next year we went to Dallas, Texas for the reunion, and I remember feeling extremely safe, and at home around all my Dad's brothers. The Khe Sanh Veterans made my whole family feel stronger. We now know that my Dad isn't alone in the things he has to deal with, and that my Mom and I aren't alone in helping him to deal with the past. Members of The Khe Sanh Veterans offered a helping hand, and we have taken them up on the offer more than once.

I am extremely thankful to my parents and The Khe Sanh Veterans for helping me heal a broken heart from my childhood. They have helped me break down walls I put up before moving down to the lower forty eight. I better understand the words Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, though I cannot fully explain it to someone who isn't themselves familiar with it.

The 2007 reunion in Washington DC will be my last reunion for awhile, as I am headed off to Oregon State University, where I will major in Medical Technology. I want to thank The Khe Sanh Veterans for being so supportive, and I'd especially like to thank my Mom and Dad, the most wonderful people that have come into my life .

INCOMING

"HEEDING GOD's CALL"

By Fr Daniel Kelley Jr.
CAC-O USMC KSV

Fellow Khe Sanh Veterans,

The month of April will be a busy one for me. I will come out of my preferred "monastic" seclusion of living with my daughter: I will visit my friend Nancy B. in Kimberly, Wisconsin for a week. Then, I will be off to Elgin, Illinois to visit my son and his family for several days. I return to Indianapolis (Carmel) for my grandson's birthday (He will be two years old on April 14th. Then, I will be off to Mt. Michael Monastery in Omaha, Nebraska to visit a monk friend who will profess his final monastic vows. I will also take advantage of the eight days there for a spiritual retreat. Then finally, I go to Chicago on April 26th for my flight to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, an 18 hour flight arriving on April 27th at Tan Son Nhat Airport in Saigon.

I am now receiving Social Security which has enabled me to fund the air-fare to Saigon and to live there. I will set aside money from future S.S. checks for my return home airplane ticket. I will be on a limited budget but I trust in our God.

The decision to go now "seems" right. While I have felt very comfortable living with my daughter's family, I sense it is time to take the next step in God's plan for me. I have been cautious over the years but our God "seems" to be pushing me in the direction of returning to Vietnam. I do sense what is ahead and trust in our God that he will provide in spite of the difficulties I may encounter.

I have spent these past weeks going through old computer back up files and organizing them: reading past communications, deleting redundant files, and adding files. It is amazing the copious number of files that I have accumulated on Khe Sanh, Vietnam, the Bru montagnards, and such Vietnam topics as language, culture, religion and current events over these past none years.

In this process, both trips (February 2005 and August 2006) have provided me with a realistic sense of what I can expect when I live there. I plan to stay with Trung Nguyen's family in Saigon from May until August 2007. My main objective is to develop a conversational ability in Vietnamese. I have been studying Vietnamese on and off for several years. I have developed an English- Vietnamese- Spanish- (some) French glossary database with about 8,000 plus entries so far. This has helped me to acquire some basic reading and writing skills in Vietnamese. I have had limited practice though in listening and speaking in Vietnamese, so I am hoping this trip will enable me to develop these conversational skills.

I have already sent my tourist visa information to "TTT Pro Expert" in Chicago to be processed. If I can resolve the visa issue while I am there in Saigon, I will stay for a year. There are several options: Option 1) I have chatted on the internet with a Filipino teacher working in an international school in Saigon. Every three months he goes over to Cambodia in the morning. In the afternoon he returns to Vietnam with his new tourist visa. Option

2) I can get a sponsor, either a volunteer organization or commercial company, which would hire me to work for them which would entitle me to a long term work visa. Though my major goal is to pick up conversational skills in Vietnamese initially, I will also look for work, whether it be to teach English or do volunteer work. I have some internet contacts (e.g., teaching English to a Christian group) that I will pursue when I arrive there.

If I am able to extend my time in Vietnam beyond three or four months, I will attempt to go back up to Quang Tri and Thua Thien – Hue Provinces. I have read on the internet that Hue University has studies and projects with ethnic minorities. I am hoping to be able to visit Hue University and makes some contacts there. I still marvel that I was able to make the trip to Thailand and Vietnam in Feb.-March 2005, again God's mysterious plan. .
Dan

MEMOIRS

SMALL UNIT ACTION IN VIETNAM
By Captain Francis J. West, Jr., USMCR

THE BATTLE FOR HILL 488
"HOWARD'S HILL"

Preface: The author was on another patrol the night of the Howard fight. He met with the men of Charlie Company, who relieved Howard's platoon, immediately upon their return and taped their comments and reactions. Then he went to the hospital at Chulai and interviewed Howard and his men, talking later with the pilots, the Special Forces officers, and Howard's company and battalion commanders.

The Marine Corps has a tested tradition: it will never leave alone on the field of combat one of its fighting men. It will go to fantastic lengths and commit to battle scores of men to aid and protect a few. This is the story of a few such Marines, of the battle they fought, and the help they received from all the services, not just the Marine Corps. Some 20 miles inland to the west of the Marine base at Chulai runs a range of steep mountains and twisting valleys. In that bandits' lair, the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese could train and plan for attacks against the heavily populated seacoast hamlets, massing only when it was time to attack. In early June of 1966, the intelligence reports reaching III MAF headquarters indicated that a mixed force of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese was gathering by the thousands in those mountains. But the enemy leaders were not packing their troops into a few large, vulnerable assembly points; they kept their units widely dispersed, moving mainly in squads and platoons.

To frustrate that scheme and keep the enemy off balance, the Marines launched Operation KANSAS, an imaginative concept in strategy. Rather than send full infantry battalions to beat the bushes in search of small enemy bands, Lieutenant General Lewis W. Walt detailed the reconnaissance battalion of the 1st Marine Division to scout the mountains. The reconnaissance Marines would move in small teams of 8 to 20 men. If they located a large enemy concentration, Marine infantry would be flown in. If, as was expected, they saw only numerous small groups of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, they were to smash them by calling in air and artillery strikes.

Lieutenant Colonel Arthur J. Sullivan had set high training standards for his battalion. Every man had received individual schooling in forward observer techniques and reconnaissance patrol procedures. He was confident his men could perform the mission successfully, despite the obvious hazards. "The Vietnam war," he said, "has given the small-unit leader -- the corporal, the sergeant, the lieutenant -- a chance to be independent. The senior officers just can't be out there looking over their shoulders. You have to have confidence in your junior officers and NCOs." One such NCO was Staff Sergeant Jimmie Earl Howard, acting commander of the 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. A tall, well-built man in his mid-thirties, Howard had been a star football player and later a coach at the San Diego Recruit Depot. Leadership came naturally to him. "Howard was a very personable fellow," his company commander, Captain Tim Geraghty said. "The men liked him. They liked to work for him." In Korea he had been wounded three times and awarded the Silver Star for bravery. In Vietnam he would receive a fourth Purple Heart and be recommended for the Medal of Honor.

As dusk fell on the evening of 13 June 1966, a flight of helicopters settled on the slope of Hill 488, 25

miles west of Chulai. Howard and his 17 men jumped out and climbed the steep incline to the top. The hill, called Nui Vu, rose to a peak of nearly 1,500 feet and dominated the terrain for miles. Three narrow strips of level ground ran along the top for several hundred yards before falling abruptly away. Seen from the air, they roughly resembled the three blades on an airplane propeller. Howard chose the blade which pointed north for his command post and placed observation teams on the other two blades. It was an ideal vantage point.

The enemy knew it also. Their foxholes dotted the ground, each with a small shelter scooped out two feet under the surface. Howard permitted his men use of these one-man caves during the day to avoid the hot sun and enemy detection. There was no other cover or concealment to be found. There were no trees, only knee-high grass and small scrub growth. In the surrounding valleys and villages, there were many enemies. For the next two days, Howard was constantly calling for fire missions, as members of the platoon saw small enemy groups almost every hour. Not all the requests for air and artillery strikes were honored. Sullivan was concerned lest the platoon's position, so salient and bare, be spotted by a suspicious enemy. Most of the firing at targets located by the platoon was done only when there was an observation plane circling in the vicinity to decoy the enemy.

After two days Sullivan and his executive officer, Major Allan Harris, became alarmed at the risk involved in leaving the platoon stationary any longer. But the observation post was ideal; Howard had encountered no difficulty, and, in any case, thought he had a secure escape route along a ridge to the east. So it was decided to leave the platoon on Nui Vu for one more day. However, the enemy was well aware of the platoon's presence. (Sullivan has a theory that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, long harassed, disrupted, and punished by reconnaissance units in territory they claimed to control absolutely, had determined to eliminate one such unit, hoping thereby to demoralize the others. Looked at in hindsight, the ferocity and tenacity of the attack upon Nui Vu gives credence to the colonel's theory.) In any case, the North Vietnamese made their preparations well and did not tip their hand.

On 15 June, they moved a fresh, well-equipped, highly trained battalion to the base of Nui Vu. In late afternoon hundreds of the enemy started to climb up the three blades, hoping to annihilate the dozen and a half Marines in one surprise attack. The Army Special Forces frustrated that plan. Sergeant 1st Class Donald Reed and Specialist 5th Class Hardey Drande were leading a platoon of CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) forces on patrol near Nui Vu that same afternoon. They saw elements of the North Vietnamese battalion moving towards the hill and radioed the news back to their base camp at Hoi An, several miles to the south. Howard's radio was purposely set on the same frequency and so he was alerted at the same time. Reed and Drande wanted to hit the enemy from the rear and disrupt them, but had to abandon the idea when they suddenly found themselves a very unpopular minority of two on the subject. Describing the reactions of the Special Forces NCOs later, Howard could not resist chuckling. "The language those sergeants used over the radio," he said, "When they realized they couldn't attack the PAVNs, well, they sure didn't learn it at communications school."

Even though the Special Forces were not able to provide the ground support they wished to, their warning alerted Howard and enabled him to develop a precise defensive plan before the attack was launched. Acting on the report, Howard gathered his team leaders, briefed them on the situation, selected an assembly point, and instructed them to stay on full alert and to withdraw to the main position at the first sign of an approaching enemy. The corporals and lance corporals crept back to their teams and briefed them in the growing dusk. The Marines then settled down to watch and wait. Lance Corporal Ricardo Binns had placed his observation team on the slope 40 meters forward of Howard's position. At approximately 2200, while the four Marines were lying in a shallow depression discussing in whispers their sergeant's solemn warnings, Binns quite casually propped himself up on his elbows and placed his rifle butt in his shoulder. Without saying a word, he pointed the barrel at a bush and fired. The bush pitched backward and fell thrashing 12 feet away.

The other Marines jumped up. Each threw a grenade, before grabbing his rifle and scrambling up the hill. Behind them grenades burst and automatic

weapons pounded away. The battle of Nui Vu was on. The other outposts withdrew to the main position. The Marines commanded a tiny rock-strewn knoll. The rocks would provide some protection for the defenders. Placing his two radios behind a large boulder, Howard set up a tight circular perimeter, not over 20 meters in diameter, and selected a firing position for each Marine.

The North Vietnamese too were setting up. They had made no audible noises while climbing. There was no talking, no clumsy movements. When Binns killed one of their scouts, they were less than 50 meters from the top. The Marines were surrounded. From all sides the enemy threw grenades. Some bounced off the rocks; some rolled back down the slopes; some did not explode, but some landed right on Marines and did explode. The next day the platoon corpsman, Billee Don Holmes, recalled: "They were within twenty feet of us. Suddenly there were grenades all over. Then people started hollering. It seemed everyone got hit at the same time. "Holmes crawled forward to help. A grenade exploded between him and a wounded man. Holmes lost consciousness.

The battle was going well for the North Vietnamese. Four .50 caliber machine guns were firing in support of the assault units, their heavy explosive projectiles arcing in from the four points of the compass. Red tracer rounds from light machine guns streaked toward the Marine position, pointing the direction for reinforcements gathering in the valley. 60mm mortar shells smashed down and added rock splinters to the metal shrapnel whining through the air. The North Vietnamese followed up the grenade shower with a full, well-coordinated assault, directed and controlled by shrill whistles and the clacking of bamboo sticks. From different directions, they rushed the position at the same time, firing automatic weapons, throwing grenades, and screaming. Howard later said he hadn't been sure how his troops would react. They were young and the situation looked hopeless. They had been shocked and confused by the ferocity of the attack and the screams of their own wounded. But they reacted savagely. The first lines of enemy skirmishers were cut down seconds after they stood up and exposed themselves. The assault failed to gain momentum any place and the North Vietnamese in the rearward ranks had more sense than to copy the mistakes of the dead.

Having failed in their swift charge, they went to earth and probed the perimeter, seeking a weak spot through which they could drive. To do this, small bands of the enemy tried to crawl quite close to a Marine, and then overwhelm him with a burst of fire and several grenades. But the Marines too used grenades and the American hand grenade contains twice the blast and shrapnel effect of the Chinese Communist stick grenade. The Marines could throw farther and more accurately than the enemy. A Marine would listen for a movement, gauge the direction and distance, pull the pin, and throw. High pitched howls and excited jabbering mingled with the blasts. The North Vietnamese pulled back to regroup.

Howard had taken the PRC-25 radio from one of his communicators, Corporal Robert Lewis Martinez, and during the lull contacted Captain Geraghty and Lieutenant Colonel Sullivan. With his escape route cut off and his force facing overwhelming odds, Howard kept his message simple. "You've got to get us out of here," he said. "There are too many of them for my people." Sullivan tried. Because of his insistence upon detailed preplanning of extraction and fire support contingencies, he was a well-known figure at the Direct Air Support Center of the 1st Marine Division and when he called near midnight, he did not bandy words. He wanted flare ships, helicopters, and fixed wing aircraft dispatched immediately to Nui Vu. Somehow, the response was delayed. And shortly after midnight, the enemy forces gathered and rushed forward in strength a second time. The Marines threw the last of their grenades and fired their rifles semiautomatic, relying on accuracy to suppress volume. It did and the enemy fell back, but by that time every Marine had been wounded.

The living took the ammunition of the dead and lay under a moonless sky, wondering about the next assault. Although he did not tell anyone, Howard doubted they could repel a massed charge by a determined enemy. From combat experience, he knew too that the enemy, having been badly mauled twice, would listen for sounds which would indicate his force had been shattered or demoralized before surging forward again. Already up the slopes were

floating the high, singsong taunts Marines had heard at other places in other wars. Voices which screeched: "Marines -- you die tonight!" and "Marines, you die in an hour." Members of the platoon wanted to return the compliments. "Sure," said Howard, "go ahead and yell anything you want." And the Marines shouted back down the slopes all the curses and invectives they could remember from their collective repertoire. The North Vietnamese screamed back, giving Howard the opportunity to deliver a master stroke in psychological one-upmanship. "All right," he shouted. "Ready? Now!" And all the Marines laughed and laughed and laughed at the enemy.

The North Vietnamese did not mount a third major attack and at 0100 an Air Force flare ship, with the poetic call sign of "Smoky Gold," came on station overhead. Howard talked to the pilot through his radio and the plane dropped its first flare. The mountainside was lit up. The Marines looked down the slopes. Lance Corporal Ralph Glober Victor stared, then muttered: "Oh my God, look at them." The others weren't sure it wasn't a prayer. North Vietnamese reinforcements filled the valley. Twenty-year-old Private First Class Joseph Kosoglow described it vividly: "There were so many, it was just like an ant hill ripped apart. They were all over the place."

They shouldn't have been. Circling above the mountain were attack jets and armed helicopters. With growing frustration, they had talked to Howard but could not dive to the attack without light. Now they had light. They swarmed in. The jets first concentrated on the valley floor and the approaches to Nui Vu, loosing rockets which hissed down and blanketed large areas. Then those fast, dangerous helicopters -- the Hueys -- scoured the slopes. At altitudes as low as 20 feet, they skimmed the brush, firing their machine guns in long, sweeping bursts. The Hueys pulled off to spot for the jets, and again the planes dipped down, releasing bombs and napalm. Then the Hueys scurried back to pick off stragglers, survey the damage, and direct another run. One of the platoon's communicators, Corporal Martinez, said it in two sentences: "The Hueys were all over the place. The jets blocked the Viet Cong off." Two Hueys stayed over Howard's position all night; when one helicopter had to return to home base and refuel, another would be sent out.

The Huey pilots, Captain John M. Shields and Captain James M. Perryman, Jr., performed dual roles -- they were the Tactical Air Controllers Airborne (TACAs) who directed the bomb runs of the jets and they themselves strafed the enemy. The North Vietnamese tried unsuccessfully to shoot the helicopters down and did hit two out of the four Hueys alternating on station.

By the light of the flares, the jet pilots could see the hill mass and distinguish prominent terrain features but could not spot Howard's perimeter. To mark specific targets for the jets, the TACAs directed "Smoky" to drop flares right on the ground as signal lights and then called the jets down to pulverize the spot. Howard identified his position by flicking a red-filtered flashlight on and off, and, guiding on that mark, the Huey pilots strafed within 25 meters of the Marines. Still on the perimeter itself the fight continued. In the shifting light of the flares, the pilots were fearful of hitting the Marines and had to leave some space unexposed to fire in front of the Marines' lines. Into this space crawled the North Vietnamese. For the Marines it was a war of hide and seek. Having run out of grenades, they had to rely on cunning and marksmanship to beat the attackers. Howard had passed the word to fire only at an identified target -- and then only one shot at a time. The enemy fired all automatic weapons; the Marines replied with single shots. The enemy hurled grenades; the Marines threw back rocks.

It was a good tactic. A Marine would hear a noise and toss a rock in that general direction. The North Vietnamese would think it was a grenade falling and dive for another position. The Marine would roll or crawl low to a spot from which he could sight in on the position, and wait. In a few seconds, the North Vietnamese would raise his head to see why the grenade had not exploded. The Marine would fire one round. The range was generally less than 30 feet. The accuracy of this fire saved the life of Corpsman Holmes. When he regained consciousness after a grenade had knocked him out, he saw a North Vietnamese dragging away the dead Marine beside him. Then another enemy reached over and grasped him by the cartridge belt. The soldier tugged at him. Lance Corporal Victor was lying on his stomach behind a rock. He had been hit twice by grenades since the first flare had gone off and could scarcely move. He saw an enemy soldier bending

over a fallen Marine. He sighted in and fired. The man fell backward. He saw a second enemy tugging at another Marine's body. He sighted in again and fired. Shot between the eyes, the North Vietnamese slumped dead across Billee Holmes' chest. He pushed the body away and crawled back to the Marines' lines. His left arm was lanced with shrapnel, and his face was swollen and his head ringing from the concussion of the grenade. For the rest of the night, he crawled from position to position, bandaging and encouraging the wounded, and between times firing at the enemy. occasionally the flares would flicker out and the planes would have to break off contact to avoid crashing. In those instances, artillery under the control of the Special Forces and manned by Vietnamese gun crews would fill in the gap and punish any enemy force gathering at the base of Nui Vu."Stiff Balls," Howard had radioed the Special Forces camp at Hoi An, three miles south. "If you can keep Charlie from sending another company up here, I'll keep these guys out of my position." "Roger, Carnival Time." Captain Louis Maris, of the Army Special Forces, had replied, using Howard's own peculiar call sign. Both sides kept their parts of the bargain and the South Vietnamese crews who manned the 105mm howitzers threw in concentration after concentration of accurate artillery shells.

"Howard was talking on the radio. He was cool," Captain John Blair, the Special Forces commanding officer, recalled afterwards. "He stayed calm all the way through that night. But," he chuckled, "he never did get our call sign right!" In the periods of darkness, each Marine fought alone. How some of them no one died know. But the relieving force hours later found one Marine lying propped up against a rock. In front of him lay a dead enemy soldier. The muzzles of their weapons were touching each others' chests. Two Marine entrenching tools were recovered near a group of mangled North Vietnamese; both shovels were covered with blood. One Marine was crumpled beneath a dead enemy. Beside him lay another Vietnamese. The Marine was bandaged around the chest and head. His hand still clasped the hilt of a knife buried in the back of the soldier on top of him.

At 0300, a flight of H34 helicopters whirled over Nui Vu and came in to extract the platoon. So intense was the fire they met that they were unable to land and Howard was told he would have to fight on until dawn. Shortly thereafter, a ricochet struck Howard in the back. His voice over the radio faltered and died out. Those listening -- the Special Forces personnel, the pilots, and the high ranking officers of the 1st Marine Division at Chulai -- all thought the end had come. Then Howard's voice came back strong. Fearing the drowsing effect morphine can have, he refused to let Holmes administer the drug to ease the pain. Unable to use his legs, he pulled himself from hole to hole encouraging his men and directing their fire. Wherever he went, he dragged their lifeline -- the radio.

Binns, the man whose shot had triggered the battle, was doing likewise. Despite severe wounds, he crawled around the perimeter, urging his men to conserve their ammunition, gathering enemy weapons and grenades for the Marines' use, giving assistance wherever needed. None of the Marines kept track of the time. "I'll tell you this," said Howard, "you know that movie -- The Longest Day? Well, compared to our night on the hill, The Longest Day was just a twinkle in the eye." But the longest night did pass and dawn came. Howard heralded its arrival. At 0525 he shouted, "O.K., you people, reveille goes in 35 minutes." At exactly 0600, his voice pealed out, "Reveille, reveille.'" It was the start of another day and the perimeter had held. On all sides of their position, the Marines saw enemy bodies and equipment. The North Vietnamese would normally have raked the battlefield clean but so deadly was the Marine fire that they left unclaimed many of those who fell close to the perimeter. The firing had slacked off. Although badly mauled themselves, the enemy still had the Marines ringed in and did not intend to leave. Nor did haste make them foolhardy. They knew what the jets and the Hueys and the artillery and the Marine sharp shooting would do to them on the bare slopes in daylight. They slipped into holes and waited, intending to attack with more troops the next night.

Bursts of fire from light machine guns chipped the rocks above the Marines' heads. Firing uphill from concealed foxholes, the enemy could cut down any Marine who rose up and silhouetted himself against the skyline. Two of the .50 caliber machine guns were still firing sporadically. There came a lull in the firing. A Huey buzzed low over the hillcrest, while another gunship hovered to one side, ready to

pounce if the enemy took the bait. No one fired. The pilot, Major William J. Goodsell, decided to mark the position for a medical evacuation by helicopter. His Huey fluttered slowly down and hovered. Howard thought the maneuver too risky and said so. But Goodsell had run the risk and come in anyway. He dropped a smoke grenade. Still no fire. He waved to the relieved Howard and skimmed north over the forward slope, only 10 feet above the ground. The noise of machine guns drowned out the sound of the helicopter's engines. Tracers flew toward the Huey from all directions. The helicopter rocked and veered sharply to the right and zigzagged down the mountain. The copilot, First Lieutenant Stephen Butler, grabbed the stick and brought the crippled helicopter under control, crash landing in a rice paddy several miles to the east.

The pilots were picked up by their wingman. But Major Goodsell, who had commanded Squadron VMO-6 for less than one week, died of gunshot wounds before they reached the hospital. The medical pickup helicopter did not hesitate. It came in. Frantically, Howard waved it off. He was not going to see another shot down. The pilots were dauntless but not invulnerable. The pilot saw Howard's signal and turned off, bullets clanging off the armor plating of the undercarriage. Howard would wait for the infantry. In anger, the jets and the Hueys now attacked the enemy positions anew. Flying lower and lower, they crisscrossed the slopes, searching for the machine gun emplacements, offering themselves as targets, daring the enemy to shoot.

The enemy did. Another Huey was hit and crashed, its crew chief killed. The .50 calibers exposed their position and were silenced. Still the North Vietnamese held their ground. Perhaps the assault company, with all its automatic weapons and fresh young troops, had been ordered to wipe out the few Marines at any cost; perhaps the commanding officer had been killed and his subordinates were following dead orders; perhaps the enemy thought victory yet possible. But then the Marine infantry came in. They had flown out at dawn but so intense was the enemy fire around Nui Vu, the helicopters had to circle for 45 minutes while jets and artillery blasted a secure landing zone.

During that time, First Lieutenant Richard E. Moser, a H34 helicopter pilot, monitored Howard's frequency and later reported: "It was like something you'd read in a novel. His call sign was Carnival Time and he kept talking about these North Vietnamese down in holes in front of him. He'd say, 'you've got too get this guy in the crater because he's hurting my boys.' He was really impressive. His whole concern was for his men." On the southern slope of the mountain, helicopters finally dropped Charlie Company of the 5th Marines. The relief company climbed fast, ignoring sniper fire and wiping out small pockets of resistance. With the very first round they fired, the Marine 60mm mortar team knocked out the enemy mortar. Sergeant Frank Riojas, the weapons platoon commander, cut down a sniper at 500 yards with a tracer round from his M14. Marine machine gun sections were detached from the main body and sent up the steep fingers along the flanks of the hill to support by fire the company's movement.

The North Vietnamese were now the hunted, as Marines scrambled around as well as up the slope, attempting to pinch off the enemy before they could flee. The main column climbed straight upwards. While yet a quarter of a mile away, the point man saw recon's position on the plateau. The boulder which served as Howard's command post was the most prominent terrain feature on the peak. The platoon hurried forward. They had to step over enemy bodies to enter the perimeter. Howard's men had eight rounds of ammunition left." Get down," were Howard's first words of welcome. "There are snipers right in front of us." Another recon man shouted: "Hey, you got any cigarettes?" A cry went up along the line -- not expressions of joy -- but requests for cigarettes. It was not that Howard's Marines were not glad to see other infantrymen; it was just that they had expected them. Staff Sergeant Richard Sullivan, who was with the first platoon to reach the recon Marines, said later: "One man told me he never expected to see the sun rise. But once it did, he knew we'd be coming."

The fight was not over. Before noon, in the hot daylight, despite artillery and planes firing in support, four more Marines would die. At Howard's urging, Second Lieutenant Ronald Meyer quickly deployed his platoon along the crest. Meyer had graduated from the Naval Academy the previous June and intended to make the Marine Corps his career. He had spent a month with his bride before leaving for

Vietnam. In the field he wore no shiny bars, and officers and men alike called him "Stump," because of his short, muscular physique. Howard had assumed he was a corporal or a sergeant and was shouting orders to him. Respecting Howard's knowledge and performance, Meyer obeyed. He never did mention his rank. So Staff Sergeant Howard, waving off offers of aid, proceeded to direct the tactical maneuvers of the relieving company, determined to wipe out the small enemy band dug in not 20 meters down slope.

Meyer hollered for members of his platoon to pass him grenades. He would then lob them down slope toward the snipers' holes. By peering around the base of the boulder, Howard was able to direct his throws. "A little more to the right on the next one, buddy. About five yards farther. That's right. No, a little too strong." The grenades had little effect and the snipers kept firing. Meyer shouted he wanted air on the target. The word was passed back for the air liaison officer to come forward. The platoon waited. Lance Corporal Terry Redic wanted to fire his rifle grenade at the snipers. A tested sharpshooter, he had several kills to his credit. In small fire fights he often disdained to duck, preferring to suppress hostile fire by his own rapid accurate shooting. Meyer's way seemed too slow. He rose up, knelt on one knee, and sighted down slope looking for a target. He never found one. The enemy shot first and killed him instantly.

Meyer swore vehemently. "Let's get that *****. You come with me, Sotello?" "Yes, Stump." Lance Corporal David Sotello turned to get his rifle and some other men. Meyer didn't wait. He started forward with a grenade in each hand. "Keep your head down, buddy, they can shoot," yelled Howard. Meyer crawled for several yards, and then threw a grenade at a hole. It blasted an enemy soldier. He turned, looking upslope. Another sniper shot him in the back. Sotello heard the shot as he started to crawl down. So did Hospital man 3d Class John Markillie, the platoon corpsman? He crawled toward the fallen lieutenant. "For God's sake, keep your head down!" yelled Howard. Markillie reached his lieutenant. He sat up to examine the wound. A sniper shot him in the chest.

Another corpsman, Holloday, and a squad leader, Corporal Melville, crawled forward. They could not feel Meyer's pulse. Markillie was still breathing. Ignoring the sniper fire, they began dragging and pushing his body up the hill. Melville was hit in the head. He rolled over. His helmet bounced off. He shook his head and continued to crawl. The round had gone in one side of the helmet and ripped out the other, just nicking the corporal above his left ear. Melville and Holloday dragged Markillie into the perimeter. From Chulai, the battalion commander called his company commander, First Lieutenant Marshall "Buck" Darling. "Is the landing zone secure, Buck?" "Well," A pause. "...not spectacularly." Back at the base two noncommissioned officers were listening. "I wonder what he meant by that?" Asked the junior sergeant. "What the hell do you think it means, stupid?" Replied the older sergeant. "He's getting shot at." Ignoring his own wounds, Corpsman Billee Holmes was busy supervising the corpsmen from Charlie Company as they administered to the wounded. With the fire fight still going on to the front, helicopter evacuation was not possible from within the perimeter. The wounded had to be taken rearward to the south slope. Holmes roved back and forth, making sure that all his buddies were accounted for and taken out.

The pilots had seen easier landing sites. "For the medical evacs," Moser said, "a pilot had to come in perpendicular to the ridge, and then cock his bird around before he sat down. We could get both main mounts down -- first -- the-tail -- well -- sometimes we got it down. We were still taking fire." Holmes reported that there was still one Marine, whom he had seen die, missing. Only after repeated assurances that they would not leave without the body were the infantry able to convince him and Howard that it was time they too left. They helped the Navy corpsman and the Marine sergeant to a waiting helicopter. Howard's job was done. Another had yet to be finished. There was a dead Marine to be found somewhere on the field of battle. But before a search could be conducted, the last of the enemy force had to be destroyed.

First Lieutenant Phil Freed flopped down beside Melville. Freed was the forward air controller attached to Charlie Company that day. He had run the last quarter mile uphill when he heard Meyer needed air. With the rounds cracking near his head, he needed no briefing. He contacted two F8

Crusader jets circling overhead. "This is Cottage 14. Bring it on down on a dry run. This has to be real tight. Charlie is dug in right on our lines." At the controls of the jets were First Lieutenants Richard W. Deilke and Edward H. Menzer. "There were an awful lot of planes in the air," Menzer said. "We didn't think we'd be used so we called DASC (Direct Air Support Center) and asked for another mission. We got diverted to the FAC (Forward Air Controller), Cottage 14. He told us he had a machine gun nest right in front of him." As they talked back and forth, Menzer thought he recognized Freed's voice. Later he learned he had indeed; Freed had flown jets with him in another Squadron a year earlier.

Freed was lying in a pile of rocks on the military crest of the northern finger of the hill. Since he himself had flown the F8 Crusader, Freed could talk to the pilots in a language they understood. Still, he was not certain they could help. He didn't know whether they could come that close and still not hit the Marine infantrymen. On their first run, he deliberately called the jets in wide so he could judge the technical skills and precision of the pilots. Rock steady. He called for them to attack in earnest. When they heard the target was 20 meters from the FAC, it was the pilots' turn to be worried. "As long as you're flying parallel to the people, it's O.K.," Menzer said. "Because it's a good shooting bird. But even so, I was leery at first to fire with troops that near."

Unknown to them, the two pilots were about to fly one of the closest direct air support missions in the history of fixed-wing aviation. They approached from the northeast with the sun behind them, and cut across the ridgeline parallel to the friendly lines. They strafed without room for error. The gun-sight reflector plate in an F8 Crusader jet looks like a bulls eye with the rings marked in successive 10-mil increments. When the pilots in turn aligned their sights while 3,000 feet away, the target lay within the 10-mil ring and the Marine position was at the edge of the ring. The slightest variance of the controls would rake the Marine infantrymen with fire. In that fashion, each pilot made four strafing passes, skimming by 10 to 20 feet above the ridge. Freed feared they would both crash, so close did their wings dip to the crest of the hill. The impact of the cannon shells showered the infantrymen with dirt. They swore they could tell the color of the pilot's eyes. In eight attacks, the jet pilots fired 350 20mm explosive shells into an area 60 meters long and 10 to 20 meters wide. The hillside was gouged and torn, as if a bulldozer had churned back and forth across it.

Freed cautiously lifted his head. A round cracked by. One enemy had survived. Somebody shouted that the shot came from the position of the sniper who had killed Meyer. The lieutenant's body lay several yards down slope. The F8 Crusaders had ample fuel left. Menzer called to say they could make dummy runs over the position if the Marines thought it would be useful. Freed asked them to try it. The company commander, Buck Darling, watched the jets. As they passed, he noticed the firing stopped momentarily. The planes would be his cover. "I'm going to get Stump. Coming, Brown?" he asked the nearest Marine. Lance Corporal James Brown was not a billboard Marine. His offbeat sense of humor often conflicted with his superiors' sense of duty. His squad leader later recalled with a grimace one fire fight when the enemy caught the squad in a cross fire. The rounds were passing high over the Marines' heads. While everyone else was returning fire, Brown strolled over to a Vietnamese tombstone, propped himself against it with one finger, crossed his legs and yelled: "You couldn't hit me if I was buried here!" His squad leader almost did the job for the enemy.

On the hill relieving the recon unit, however, Brown was all business. He emptied several rifle magazines and hurled grenade after grenade. When he ran out of grenades, he threw rocks to keep the snipers ducking. All the while he screamed and cursed, shouting every insult and blasphemy he could think of. Howard had been very impressed, both with Brown's actions and with his vocabulary. He was not out of words when Darling asked him to go after Meyer's body. As they crawled over the crest, Brown tugged at his company commander's boot. "Don't sweat it, lieutenant, they can only kill us." Darling did not reply.

They reached Meyer's body and tried to pull it back while crawling on their stomachs. They lacked the strength." All right, let's carry him." said Darling. It was Brown's turn to be speechless. He knew what had happened to every Marine on the slope that had

raised his head -- and here was his officer suggesting they stand straight up! "We'll time our moves with the jets." When the jets passed low, they stumbled and scrambled forward a few yards with their burden, then flattened out as the jets pulled up. The sniper snapped shots at them after every pass. Bullets chipped the rocks around them. They had less than 30 feet to climb. It took over a dozen rushes. When they rolled over the crest they were exhausted. Only the enemy was left on the slope. The infantry went after him. Corporal Samuel Roth led his eight man squad around the left side of the slope. On the right, Sergeant Riojas set a machine gun up on the crest to cover the squad. A burst of automatic fire struck the tripod of the machine gun. A strange duel developed.

The sniper would fire at the machine gun. His low position enabled him to aim in exactly on the gun. The Marines would duck until he fired, then reach up and loose a burst downhill, forcing the sniper to duck. With the firing, the sniper could not hear the squad crashing through the brush on his right side. Roth brought his men on line facing toward the sniper. With fixed bayonets they began walking forward. They could see no movement in the clumps of grass and torn earth.

There was a lull in the firing. The sniper heard the squad, turned and fired. Bullets whipped by the Marines. Roth's helmet spun off. He fell. The other Marines flopped to the ground. Roth was uninjured. The steel helmet had saved a second Marine's life within an hour. He was not even aware that his helmet had been shot off. "When I give the word, kneel and fire," he said. "Now!" The Marines rose and their rounds kicked up dust and clumps of earth in front of them. They missed the sniper. He had ducked into his hole. The Marines lay back down. Roth swore. "All right put in fresh magazines and let's do it again." "Now!" Just as the Marines rose, the sniper bobbed up like a duck in a shooting gallery. A bullet knocked him backwards against the side of his hole. Roth charged, the other Marines sprinting behind him. He drove forward with his bayonet. A grenade with the release pin intact rolled from the sniper's left hand. Roth jerked the blade back. The sniper slumped forward over his machine gun.

The hill was quiet. It was noon. Darling declared the objective secure. In the tall grass in front of Riojas' machine gun, the infantrymen found the body of the missing Marine. The Marines paused to search 39 enemy dead for documents, picked up 18 automatic weapons (most of them Chinese), climbed on board a flight of helicopters, and flew off the plateau. The Marines lost 10 dead. Charlie Company and the Huey Squadrons each lost two. Of the 18 Marines in the reconnaissance platoon, 6 were killed; the other 12 were wounded. Five members of Charlie Company were recommended for medals. Every Marine under Howard's command received the Purple Heart. Fifteen were recommended for the Silver Star; Binns and Holmes were nominated for the Navy Cross; Howard was recommended for the Medal of Honor.

If the action had centered on just one man, then it could be considered a unique incident of exceptional bravery on the part of an exceptional man. It is that. But perhaps it is something more. On June 14th, few would have noticed anything unique about the 1st Reconnaissance Platoon of Charlie Company. Just in reading the names of its dead, one has the feeling that here are the typical and the average, who, well-trained and well-led, rose above normal expectations to perform an exemplary feat of arms: John Adams, Ignatius Carlisi, Thomas Glawe, James McKinney, Alcadio Mascarenas, Jerrald Thompson. This document, produced by the History and Museums Division, HQ USMC, is in the public domain.

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MEDAL OF HONOR



S/Sgt Jimme E. Howard

NAVY CROSS



L/Cpl Ricardo Binns
HM-3 Billie Holmes
L/Cpl John T. Adams *
Cpl Jerrald R. Thompson *
Major William J. Goodsell VMO-6 *

SILVER STAR



L/Cpl Alcadio N. Mascarenas *
PFC Ignatius Carlisi *
PFC James O. McKinney *
PFC Thomas D. Clawe *
2nd Lt Ronald W. Meyers C Co 1/5 *
Cpl Ray Hildreath
Ralph G.Victor
Joseph Kosoglow
HM1 Richard Fitzpatrick
Thomas Powles
Bill Norman
Dan Mulivill
Chuck Bosley
Cpl Robert Martinez
PFC Thomas Clawe *

PURPLE HEART



PFC Leo B. Buckholdt VMO-2 *
L/Cpl Terry P. Redic C Co 1/5 *

*** Posthumously**





S/Sgt Jimmie Howard Receiving his Purple Heart while Recovering from wounds suffered on Hill 488



Jimmy Howard receiving his Silver Star during the Korean War





THE USS HOWARD DDG 83
Commissioned November 1999



JIMMIE E. HOWARD
1929-1993
Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery
San Diego, CA.



Corporal Ray Hildreath Receiving his Silver Star from General Wallace for his heroics on Hill 488



Corporal Bill Norman Receiving his Silver Star from General Wallace for his actions on Hill 488



Bill Norman Receiving his Purple Heart from General Fields while recovering from his wounds

SHORT ROUNDS

PLANNED MEMORIAL
Hill Fights
Vietnam Vets Memorial in D.C.

By Mick Hughes
H&S Co 2/3

Preliminary information has been received that those K.I.A. and survivors of the "Hill Fights" (April 24 through May 12, 1967) will be recognized at Memorial Day Services (May 28, 2007) at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

One of the things needed to move this recognition closer to fruition is a head count. Most of the men who participated in this battle were from the following units:

2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines
3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines
"B" Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines
"E" Company, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines
"K" Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines
"M" Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines
"C" Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines
Elements of the 12th Marines
Elements of the 1st MAW
Khe Sanh Tigerhound Site 23rd TASS
Det 13, 15th Aerial Port Sqdn.

Tentatively, the schedule calls for the survivors of the "Hill Fights" to walk a short distance to assigned seating just prior to the commencement of the official program. Speakers will address the assemblage from a podium on a stage just to the front of assigned seating. There will be a main wreath laying after which a small contingent of " Hill Fighters" will place a wreath at the panels that contain the names of our K.I.A. The balance of the "Hill Fighters" will have moved from their assigned seating and walk in a column of 2's behind the wreath laying contingent..

If you are a veteran of this battle, please check your schedule and attend this ceremony if possible. There is no dress or grooming code but please be advised that similar ceremonies have been televised live, have gotten widespread news coverage and are archived in video format by various agencies. We are already a part of history. Our demeanor at this ceremony has the potential to be history in the making. My jungle jacket will stay in the closet this weekend and my sport jacket will get an airing. Let your conscience rule!

Remember that this Service honors the deceased of all wars, especially Vietnam. All planning is subject to change at this juncture. The earlier we get this done the more smoothly all will go. Please take part. Send me your Name, Rank, Unit, current address, phone, e-mail and whether you have special needs and want assistance. Officials in D.C. will get only the info that is necessary and after the ceremony the list that is created will be used only for networking and notifications. If you ever desire to be removed from the list let me know and your particulars will be expunged.

This ceremony is open to the public. However, "Hill Fighters" ONLY please in formation and assigned seating. Assigned seating is limited so it's first come first served. If you don't get yourself on the "Hill Fighters" list in advance, there won't be room for you. The general public will assemble at areas indicated on the grass facing the panels. There should be plenty of room for family and friends who can join their "Hill Fighter" after the Service. Please notify as many "Hill Fighters" as you can of this event.

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SHORT ROUNDS

Mohawk

By Craig W Tourte
HQ Btry 1/13

My 21 year old son called me and said that he was heading home for a few days during college spring break. He warned me that he had a Mohawk haircut. I kind of laughed to myself remembering that during staging; a few of us went into Oceanside and got Mohawks and some tattoos, anticipating our deployment to Vietnam. Sometime during one of the long hot and dry stumbles up and down the hills of Pendleton, a Sergeant come over to us and chewed us. It was fun being just a little different and we figured what the heck, our chances of making it back were slim anyway. The Marine Corps did not like individual behavior, especially if that behavior was from a bunch of lowly privates.

I look forward to my son coming home for a few days. I had him kind of late in life and he means a lot to me. I have tried to give him the love I did not get from my stepfather, seems we were always at war with each other. Now that he is gone, I have finally gotten some sleep and don't have quite the nightmares I had about him when he was alive. I'll admit the dreams about him were pretty bad for me for a long time and to this day they occasionally pop up.

When I returned home from Vietnam I hooked up again with my friend Tom Horchler. I met Tom during the Siege and rode shotgun on the truck he drove out of Khe Sanh. Turns out we had the same Marine Corp recruiter. Anyway my mother and stepfather moved to Chico which just happened to be where Tom was living. I felt pretty lucky to have survived the Siege and I guess I told my mother and stepfather about my feelings of good fortune. My stepfather didn't much care that I made it back and I don't think he was happy to have me in the house. He handed me the house key and said, "That can be taken away." I got the hint. Tom and I went out for the evening and did what most young Marines do when they return from a war. I got home sometime the next morning in the anticipated state of bliss. My mother was not happy with me and my stepfather told me to pack up my stuff (not the word he used) and get out. I left that afternoon and never spent another night in their house.

My point is, I look forward to seeing my son, Mohawk, tattoo or in any other form of hair or clothing attire. He knows he always has a home anywhere I happen to be. Growing up and living with my idiot stepfather taught me a lot about what it means to be a father. And the value of loving a child. At least I know my son does not have nightmares about me, I've got enough for the both of us.

MORE WEB CHATTER

Letter of Thanks

A few weeks ago a Tyler Helmick, a young man came on our Web-Site asking for help with a 5-6 grade Social Studies project. His project was on the history of the Siege of Khe Sanh. His efforts were rewarded with the grand prize. He will go forward to county level judging this weekend. Supporting our youth and keeping this time in history alive is a worth while effort. Below is his thank you letter written to Dennis Mannion.

Chuck Gerrior,
USAF Ret, Team 83-67,
1st Mob Comm Gp

Tyler's Helmick Letter

Dear Mr. Mannion,

This is Tyler Helmick. I wanted to let you know that they finally held our school Social Study Fair today. They postponed it due to us missing a lot of school in Feb and March. Thanks to you and the other guys. I won Grand Prize in my school. Next week I will compete against all other 5th and 6th graders in my county. Wish me luck and pray for me. Thanks again.

"I CARE"

By Steven Wiese

My wife tells me that Roger called; he wants us to meet him at Carvers for dinner. Roger is someone I met through my wife, they have been friends for over 25 years. As a matter of fact Roger's wife

Cathy is and has been my wife's best friend. They have money, and Roger has always been very opinionated and outspoken (money seems to give you that privilege) so with that being said, off we go to Carvers. As we arrived we saw Roger's Mercedes-Benz SL 55 in the valet parking area so we knew that Roger was there.

We proceeded to the outside patio because Roger is a very heavy smoker and we knew that's where he would be, and he was. The waitress came and took our drink orders. There was the usual small talk, our drinks arrived and this being March 30th, I wanted to make a toast to the men of Bravo Company and to the men that didn't make it back, something I do every year. Roger blurted out, "it's been over 30 years, nobody cares, just forget about it and get over it." It took me completely by surprise and I sat there in silence.

My wife looked at him and said, "He's spent over 30 years trying to forget about it. There are some thing's you just don't forget." I looked at him and said, "I care." That was my only response. The rest of the evening was the usual small talk, but it was still bugging me. We said our see you later's and we went home. But I couldn't get it off my mind, how could he have been so callous. I thought back to a World War II vet I met. I see now that he obviously had PTSD although at the time I had no idea what that was, and he probably didn't either. Anyway, I can clearly remember thinking that he probably hadn't had it any worse than I did and I put up this wall. The war was a thing of the past. So why couldn't he? Have I become this man?

I wish I could go back and give him the respect he deserved. Do the younger people of today look at me and think, "what's wrong with this old man, the war ended so many years ago why doesn't he get over it?" Which brings me back to Roger's questioned "who cares." Well I believe the people that loved them care, their families care, the men that new them that stood shoulder to shoulder in combat with them care. It's our responsibility to remember. So every year I will continue to make a toast to these men, the ones that made it back, and the ones that did not, and I care that you DON'T Care.

Bravo Company Lives On

Steve,

You can "get over it" and still care.
Just because you remember the men you met (and the beauty of it is that it was purely random and co-incidental) doesn't mean you haven't "Have over it". I think most of us have lived our lives, worked, been good citizens, husbands and fathers, and still have had a spot in our hearts reserved for those guys who touched our souls on that Red Clay plateau so many years ago. Roger is entitled to his opinion and to speak his mind and his heart because we served our country to preserve his right to do so. I feel sorry for anyone who doesn't CARE because it shows a certain corruption of the soul that must be more difficult to live with than the memories we have of a time long ago in a place far away. I just returned from a visit to Khe Sanh, and believe me; I was treated with great respect by the Vietnamese I encountered because I am a veteran. I think that they CARE, even though we were enemies. I think that says more good about them, than what Roger says demonstrates about him. Thanks, Steve, for prompting me to feel good about myself this day because I CARE.

Jim Dawdy Seabees

I CARE

Steve,

When I was making all the trips to Southern California, for my parent's final days, I got in touch with some childhood friends. One night my oldest friend said "get over it" when Viet Nam came up in a conversation. I can not print what I replied, but he got the message. On another night while having a few drinks he brought it up again. As he did not serve he said he did not get it, why hang on. As it turned out, it was more about why he did not serve. The more he talked about not going, the more I could see there was guilt. Guys like your wife's friend don't want to hear about it as it brings up their short comings. More than once I have listened to guys talk long about why they did not go, trying to convince me they did the right thing. In the end it is always the same. I am OK with myself as they are still explaining themselves. They want us to "get over it" so they do not have to face their own short comings and guilt. I'll bet they still wonder if they

could have held up and made it through. We do not have to question ourselves as we did and are here and still care.

Chuck Teasley
C 1/26

I CARE

Steven,

I was moved by your posting, particularly because, like every Khe Sanh vet, I will forever remain in awe of the courage and enormous sacrifice made by you and the other men of B/1/26 on 25 February and 30 March 1968. We last met on January 21, 2006 at a gathering of Khe Sanh vets in Chico, CA. Since then I have had the good fortune to able to travel around the country fairly extensively; speaking to various groups, including many college classes who have adopted A Patch of Ground in their history and political science courses. Last month Doc Topmiller and I spoke to over 100 people at Bentley University near Boston. When I first started lecturing to these classes, I anticipated the same kind of negative **"who cares,"** or worse, reaction that you recently encountered, from the students and professors I would be facing. I'm sure my trepidation was a hold-over from the early '70s when I was trying to get a college education on the G.I. Bill amid the constant din of anti-war activities. It seemed to me in those days that most of those kids had probably never experienced anything more stressful in their lives than having a pencil break during a test – and I spent several of those years on campus seething with resentment.

Yet to my surprise (and delight) I've found today that students and professors are greatly interested in our war and honestly appreciative of the sacrifices made by the troops who went. This sentiment has, in my experience, held true among students and faculty at both the schools that are traditionally conservative, as well as those that have a more politically liberal history. I believe one explanation for this is because the Vietnam War was so painful to the nation at-large that when it ended, almost everyone shut-up and tried to forget it. Consequently, a whole generation came to know very little about what really happened on the ground in Vietnam (with the exception of a few "Rambo"- type movies). The good news is they are now hungry to know. Every history professor I've spoken to who teaches a course on the Vietnam War has had to turn students away each semester because the interest in the subject is so high. There are more people out there who care about the Vietnam War than there are sources of accurate and available information about it. I would strongly suggest every Khe Sanh vet write down, or record an oral history of their experiences before we all dry up and blow away. It would be an invaluable gift to our grandkids - and theirs.

Sorry to ramble on so long, but I'd like to make a final comment on your Mercedes-driving product of "privilege." It seems to me that people who have every potentially character-building event in their life "taken care of" by their parents or influential friends, live their lives in a world without consequences. My childhood friend Tom Mahoney, who I enlisted with under the "buddy system," was the last Marine to die on Hill 881S. On July 6, 1968, after getting a "Dear John" letter from his girlfriend filled with anti-war epithets ("baby-killer,"etc.,) he made a mistake and was shot and killed by the NVA. After several futile attempts by his platoon (1/B/1/1) to recover his body, his remains are still up there somewhere, just 50 meters outside the west gate. His girlfriend was the daughter of a doting multi-millionaire and so she had never wanted for anything. I bitterly carried that injustice inside me for decades until I realized that many of the hereditarily privileged in our society are developmentally stunted – adolescents for life – and, as much as we would all like to smack our teenagers in the back of the head sometimes, we usually cool down and realize they just don't have the ability to know any better.

Mike Archer

I Care

"I was that which others cared not to be...
I went where others feared to go and did what others failed to do...
I asked nothing from those that gave nothing...
And, reluctantly, accepted the thought of eternal loneliness, should I fail...
I have seen the face of terror, felt the chill of fear, warmed to the touch of love...
I have hoped, pained, cried...

But foremost, lived in times others would say best forgotten...
At the very least, in later days, I will be able to say with greatest pride,
That I was indeed a soldier"...

Thank god we care!!!
We stood together
We bleed together
We cried together
Some died together
I care!!!

Sam Messer
CBMU-301

"Taking The Time To Care"

By Craig W Tourte

I was deeply moved by Steve Wiese's post, **"I CARE"** and I have been thinking about those words a lot since he made that POST. Today I went for a little drive north up Interstate-5 towards Redding, California. There is not really much for the traveler to see between Sacramento and the Oregon State line to speak of. Oh there are a few sleepy little farm towns of a few hundred to a couple of thousand people. Little towns with names like Yolo, Arbuckle, Williams, Maxwell and Willows. Nowhere towns. One would not have any reason in the world to stop and visit if there was not a specific reason.

Maxwell is about an hours drive north of Sacramento. The sign says the population is 500. That sign has not changed for the past 40 years that I know of. Sure it's citizens have come and gone like the wind and dusty fields that surrounds the town, but the population generally seems to stay at about 500. If you were to turn off the busy interstate and drive through the one main street, you'd wonder who in the world would live in this place. One bar and restaurant now where there once were five, a post office and a couple of schools with no more than a total of 100 students. The cemetery is the usual mile out of town located on a few dry acres of too long grass, off the two lane roadway leading up into the foothills. There are no doctor or dentist offices, drug stores, AM/PM's or hardware stores, it's just a small town with one overpriced gas station and where people all seem to know each other. Just folks from a small farming town living out their lives in mostly obscurity as best they can.

The cemetery is a step back into time with dates of the deceased dating back 100 years or so, all at rest next to those who departed recently. As I stood amongst the tombstones, small monuments erected by various family members in memory of the deceased, I thought it a lonely place but yet peaceful and quiet. I walked over to the tombstone of my long departed friend Bill (Buddy) Denman. As I read his tombstone one more time, I thought of what my friend Steve Wiese said to the question, "Who Cares?" Before I left for boot camp in San Diego around August on 1966 I stopped off at Buddy's house. He was leaving for Vietnam and was excited and yes even looking forward to the adventure. I don't think Buddy had ever traveled more than a few miles from Maxwell. As we spoke, I knew I would not be far behind; we talked about our approaching adventures and what we would do when we both returned from our tours, what stories we would tell.

William Luther Denman, PFC, A CO, 2nd BN, 27th INFANTRY, 25 INF DIV, 25 August 1945-05 November 1966.

"Dau Tieng, Tay Ninth Province, 03 Nov 1966- elements of the 196th Infantry Brigade and the 25th Infantry Division got into a heated fight with entrenched and bunkered VC troops, a fight grew into a full-fledged battle fought over a three-day period. Landing Zone Lima Zulu, slightly north of where the 1st Bn, 27th Infantry fought on 03/04 Nov, drew some of the heaviest fighting beginning after C Company, 2/27 Inf, was inserted at about 1400 on 04 Nov." "C/2/27 moved south from LZ Lima Zulu, intending to link with 1/27, but could go only a few hundred meters before being stopped by VC dug into a tree line Unable to move forward, with enemy troops infiltrating to their rear, the battalion and company commanders dead, and under fire from three sides, C/2/27 pulled together after nightfall, using a left flank displacement to get out of the "horseshoe" and avoid encirclement. The maneuver worked, and C/2/27 held out through the night amidst sporadic hand-to-hand fighting. By 1030 on 05 Nov, Alpha 1/27 fought through and relieved C/2/27."

"At the same time, HHC and A Company, 2/27, were coming into LZ Lima Zulu, intending to take the VC from the rear, pounding them against the anvil formed by A/1/27 and C/2/27. It didn't work; the VC anticipated the move and the arriving troops found themselves in a "hot" LZ. As the day progressed additional forces were brought in, eventually encouraging the VC to break contact and withdraw from the field."

"While the engagements cost the VC dearly, with several hundred known dead, the US infantrymen paid a high price of 50 men killed in action over the three day period. William Denman was one of twenty American killed at LZ Lima Zulu on the 3rd day of the fight."

I stood all alone in the cemetery today near a little town out in nowhere, staring down at the tombstone of my friend William (Buddy) Denman. The sky was a clear blue and town was a mile or so away. No cars were on the roadway and no one else was within sight. I repeated the words that Steve had said, "I Care" and it helped.

MEMOIRS

Battle of Khe Sanh
Preliminaries

Publisher Note: With so many new members joining our ranks, I thought it would be a good idea to publish a quick overview of the start, reason, and end of the battle for Khe Sanh. There are no specifics concerning each epic battle that took place, just a general overview. Information comes from many different sources

The Camp

The village of Khe Sanh was the seat of government of Huong Hoa district, an area of Bru Montagnard-villages and coffee plantations, situated about seven miles from the Laotian frontier on Route 9, the northernmost transverse road in South Vietnam. The badly deteriorated Route 9 ran from the coastal region, through the western highlands, and then crossed the border into Laos. The origin of the combat base lay in the construction by American Special Forces of an airfield in August 1962 outside the village at an old French fort. The camp then became a Special Forces outpost of the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG), whose purpose was to keep watch on PAVN infiltration along the border and to protect the local population. In November 1964 the Green Berets moved their camp to the Xom Cham Plateau, the future site of KSCB.

During the winter of 1965, Khe Sanh became the location of a launch site for the highly-classified Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Studies and Observation Group SOG (the site was first established near the village and was later moved to the French fort). From there, recon teams were launched into Laos to explore and gather intelligence on the PAVN logistical system known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The plateau camp was permanently manned by the U.S. Marines during 1967, when they established an outpost next to the airstrip. This base was to serve as the western anchor of Marine Corps forces, which had tactical responsibility for the five northernmost provinces of South Vietnam (I Corps). The Marines' defensive system stretched below the (DMZ) from the coast, along Route 9, to Khe Sanh. In 1966, the regular Special Forces troops had moved off the plateau and built a smaller camp down Route 9 at Lang Vei about half the distance to the Laotian border.

Border Battles

During the second half of 1967, the North Vietnamese instigated a series of actions in the border regions of South Vietnam. All of these attacks were conducted by regimental-size PAVN/NLF units, but unlike the usual hit-and-run tactics utilized by communists' forces, these were sustained and bloody affairs. In early September, PAVN intensified battalion-size ground probes and sustained artillery fire against Con Thien, a hilltop stronghold in the center of the Marine's defensive line south of the DMZ in northern Quang Tri Province. Mortar rounds, artillery shells, and 122mm rockets fell randomly but incessantly upon the base. The September bombardments ranged from 100 to 150 rounds per day, with a maximum on 25 September of 1,190. The American commander in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland responded by launching Operation Neutralize, an aerial and naval bombardment campaign

designed to break the siege. For seven weeks, American aircraft delivered from 35,000 to 40,000 tons of bombs in nearly 4,000 air strikes.

On 27 October, a PAVN regiment attacked an (ARVN) battalion at Song Be, capital of Phuoc Long Province. The North Vietnamese fought for several days, took casualties, and fell back. Two days later, the 273rd NLF Regiment attacked a Special Forces camp near the border town of Loc Ninh, in Binh Long Province. Troops of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division were able to respond quickly. After a ten-day battle, the attackers were pushed back into Cambodia. At least 852 North Vietnamese soldiers were killed during the action, as opposed to 50 American and South Vietnamese dead.

The heaviest action took place near Dak To, in the central highlands province of Kontum. There, the presence of the 1st PAVN Division prompted a 22-day battle that saw some of the most intense close-quarters fighting of the entire conflict. Somewhere between 1,200 and 1,600 North Vietnamese troops were killed while 362 members of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division, the 173Rd Airborne Brigade, and ARVN airborne elements were killed in action. Ominously, three of the four battalions of the 4th Infantry and the entire 173rd were rendered combat ineffective during the battle. American intelligence analysts were quite baffled by this series of enemy actions. There appeared to be no logic behind the sustained PAVN/NLF offensives, other than to inflict casualties on the allied forces. This they accomplished, but the casualties absorbed by the North Vietnamese seemed to negate any direct gains they might have obtained. The border battles did, however, have two significant consequences that were unappreciated at the time - they fixed the attention of the American command on the border regions and they drew American and ARVN forces away from the coastal lowlands and cities.

Hill Fights

The Khe Sanh Valley

Things remained quiet in the Khe Sanh area through 1966. Even so, General Westmoreland insisted that it not only be occupied by the Marines, but that it be reinforced. He was vociferously opposed by General Lewis W. Walt, the Marine commander of I Corps. Walt argued heatedly that the real target of the American effort should be the pacification and protection of the population, not chasing PAVN and the NLF in the hinterlands. Westmoreland won out, however, and the 1st Battalion 3rd Marine Regiment (1/3) was dispatched to occupy the camp and airstrip on 29 September. By late January 1967, 1/3 was relieved by Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. .

On 24 April 1967 a patrol from Bravo Company became engaged with a PAVN force of unknown size north of Hill 861. This action prematurely triggered a North Vietnamese offensive aimed at taking Khe Sanh. The PAVN forces were in the process of gaining elevated terrain before the launching of the main attack. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 9th Marine Regiment, under the command of Colonel John P. Lanigan, reinforced KSCB and were given the task of pushing the North Vietnamese off of Hills 861, 881 North, and 881 South. North Vietnamese forces were driven out of the area around Khe Sanh after suffering 940 casualties. The Marines suffered 155 killed in action and 425 wounded. In order to prevent PAVN observation of the main base at the airfield (and their possible use as firebases), the hills of the surrounding Khe Sanh Valley had to be continuously occupied and defended by separate Marine elements, thereby spreading out the defense.

In the wake of the hill fights there was a lull in PAVN activity around Khe Sanh. By the end of May, Marine forces were again drawn down from two battalions to one, the 1st Battalion 26th Marines. Lieutenant General Robert E. Cushman Jr. relieved General Walt as commander of III MAF in June. On 14 August, Colonel David E. Lownds took over as commander of the 26th. There were sporadic actions in the vicinity during the late summer and early fall, the most serious of which was the ambush of a supply convoy on Route 9. This proved to be the last overland attempt at re-supply for Khe Sanh until the following March. During December and early January there were numerous sightings of PAVN troops and activities in the Khe Sanh area, but the sector remained relatively quiet.

A decision then had to be made by the American high command: either commit more of the limited manpower in I Corps to the defense of Khe Sanh or

abandon the base. General Westmoreland regarded this choice as quite simple. In his memoirs he listed the reasons for a continued effort:

"Khe Sanh could serve as a patrol base for blocking enemy infiltration from Laos along Route 9; as a base for SOG operations to harass the enemy in Laos; as an airstrip for reconnaissance planes surveying the Ho Chi Minh Trail; as the western anchor for defenses south of the DMZ; and as an eventual jump-off point for ground operations to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail."

As far as Westmoreland was concerned, all he needed to know was that PAVN had massed large numbers of troops for a set-piece battle. Making the prospect even more enticing was that the Combat Base was in an unpopulated area where American firepower could be fully brought to bear without having to worry about civilian casualties. The opportunity to engage and destroy a formerly elusive enemy that was moving toward a fixed position promised a victory of unprecedented proportions.

Marine intelligence confirmed that, within a period of just over a week, the 325th PAVN Division had moved into the vicinity of the base and two more divisions were within supporting distance. The 324th PAVN Division was located in the DMZ area 10-15 miles north of Khe Sanh while the 320th PAVN Division was within easy reinforcing distance to the northeast. They were supported logistically from the nearby Ho Chi Minh Trail. As a result of this intelligence, KSCB was reinforced on 13 December by the 1st Battalion 9th Marine. Regiment

At positions west of Hill 881 South and north of Co Roc Ridge, across the border in Laos, PAVN established artillery, rocket, and mortar positions from which to launch attacks by fire on the base and to support its ground operations. They were assisted in their emplacement efforts by the continuing bad weather of the winter monsoon.

During the rainy night of 2 January 1968, six men dressed in black uniforms were seen outside the defensive wire of the main base by members of a listening post. After failing to respond to a challenge, they were fired upon and five were killed outright while the sixth, although wounded, escaped. This event prompted General Cushman to reinforce Colonel Lownds with the rest of the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines. This marked the first time that all three battalions of the 26th Marine Regiment had operated together in combat since the invasion of Iwo Jima during the Second World War. In order to cover a defilade near the Rao Quan River, Foxtrot Company, 2/26 was immediately sent out to occupy Hill 558.

On 20 Jan, a PAVN lieutenant of the 14th Anti-Aircraft Company, 325th Division defected at the base and laid out the plans for an entire series of North Vietnamese attacks. Hills 881 South, 861, and the main base itself would be simultaneously attacked that same evening. At 00:30 on 21 January, Hill 861 was attacked by approximately 300 PAVN troops. The Marines, however, were prepared for the attack. The North Vietnamese infantry, though bracketed by artillery fire, still managed to penetrate the perimeter of the defenses and were only driven back after severe close-quarters combat. The main base was then subjected to an intense mortar and rocket barrage. Hundreds of mortar rounds and 122mm rockets slammed into the base, leveling most of the above-ground structures. One of the first enemy shells set off an explosion in the main ammunition dump. Many of the artillery and mortar rounds stored in the dump were thrown into the air and detonated on impact within the base. Soon after another shell hit a cache of CS tear gas, which saturated the entire area. Hours after the bombardment ceased, the base was still in danger. At around 10:00, the fire ignited a large quantity of C-4 and other explosives, rocking the base with another series of detonations. PAVN forces, however, did not launch a ground attack.

Simultaneous with the bombardment at KSCB was an attack launched against the Huong Hoa District headquarters. There, elements of the 66th Regiment, 304th PAVN Division were opposed by Bru CIDGs, Regional Force (RF) troops led by their Army advisors, and a platoon of Marine CAP. The force managed to hold out until the morning of the 22nd, when helicopters were sent in for their extraction..

This attack revealed that the 304th PAVN Division had just arrived from the DRV with all three of its regiments, the 9th, 24th, 66th, the 68B Artillery

Regiment, and the 14th Anti-Aircraft Battalion. Attached in support was the 24th Artillery Battalion. The division took up positions southwest of the Combat Base. There has been a significant discrepancy, however, as to what infantry units of the 325th Division remained in the Khe Sanh sector. An ARVN document study conducted after the battle concluded that only one regiment, 95C remained at Khe Sanh. According to the study, two regiments of other divisions held blocking positions on Route 9. They were the 31st Regiment of the PAVN 341st Division and possibly a regiment of the 324th Division. Two battalions of the 3rd Regiment later moved south to Hue to participate in the battle for that city during the latter stages of the Tet offensive.

To eliminate any threat to their flank, the North Vietnamese made the decision to attack Laotian Battalion BV-33, located at Ban Houei Sane, on Route 9 in Laos. The battalion was assaulted on the night of 23 January by three PAVN battalions supported by seven tanks. The Laotians were overrun, and many fled to the Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei. This action in Laos, not the attack three weeks later at Lang Vei, marked the first time that PAVN had committed an armored unit to battle.

Due to the arrival of the 304th Division, KSCB was further reinforced by the 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment on 22 January. Five days later, the final the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei. This action in Laos reinforcements arrived in the form of the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, which was deployed more for political than tactical reasons. PAVN artillery made its debut on the battlefield on 24 January, when a bombardment by 100mm and 152mm guns began with Hill 881 South, moved on to Hill 861, and then worked over the main base. The Marines and ARVN dug in and hoped that the approaching Tet truce (scheduled from 29-31 January) would provide some respite. On the afternoon of the 29th, however, the 3rd Marine Division notified Khe Sanh that the truce had been cancelled. The Tet Offensive was about to begin.

During January, the recently installed electronic sensors of Operation Muscle Shoals (later renamed Igloo White), which were undergoing test and evaluation in southeastern Laos, were alerted by a flurry of PAVN activity along the Ho Chi Minh Trail opposite the northwestern corner of South Vietnam. It was due to the nature of these activities, and the threat that they posed to KSCB that General Westmoreland ordered Operation Niagara I, an intense intelligence collection effort on PAVN activities in the vicinity of the Khe Sanh Valley.

Niagara I was completed during the third week of January, and the next phase of the operation, Niagara II was launched on the 21st, the day of the first PAVN artillery barrage. The Marine Direct Air Support Center (DASC), located at the Combat Base, was responsible for the coordination of air strikes with artillery fire. An airborne battlefield command and control center (ABCCC), in the form of a C-130 aircraft, directed incoming strike aircraft to (FAC) spotter planes, which, in turn directed them to targets either located by themselves or radioed in by ground units. When weather conditions precluded FAC-directed strikes, the bombers were directed to their targets by either a Marine AN/TPQ-10 radar installation at KSCB or by Air Force Combat Skyspot MSQ-77 stations. This LORAN-based system could direct aircraft to their targets in inclement weather or in absolute darkness.

Thus began what many considered "the most concentrated application of aerial firepower in the history of warfare." On an average day 350 tactical fighter-bombers, 60 B-52s, and 30 light observation or reconnaissance aircraft operated in the skies near the base. Westmoreland had already ordered the nascent Igloo White to assist in the Marine defense. On 22 January, the first sensor drops took place (Navy Squadron VO-67) and, by the end of the month, 316 acoustic and seismic sensors had been dropped in 44 strings. The Marines at KSCB credited 40 percent of intelligence available to their fire support coordination center to the sensors.

By the end of the battle of Khe Sanh, U.S. Air Force assets had flown 9,691 tactical sorties and dropped 14,223 tons of bombs on targets within the Khe Sanh area. Marine Corps aviators had flown 7,098 missions and released 17,015 tons. Naval aircrews, many of whom were redirected from Rolling Thunder strikes against the DRV, flew 5,337 sorties and dropped 7,941 tons of ordnance on the enemy.

Not even this amount of unleashed firepower was enough to calm the anxiety of American leaders in Washington. On 1 February General Earle G.

Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, raised the issue with Westmoreland of "whether tactical nuclear weapons should be used if the situation at Khe Sanh should become that desperate." Westmoreland replied that their use would probably not be required. He added, however, that if the situation did change dramatically, "I visualize that either tactical nuclear weapons or chemical agents would be active candidates for employment." Westmoreland then established a small study group to examine the consequences of what was nicknamed Fracture Jaw. Westmoreland later wrote that "Washington so feared that some word of it might reach the press that I was told to desist.

Fall of Lang Vei

There had not been much activity (with the exception of patrolling) thus far during the battle for the Green Berets of Detachment A-101 and their four companies of Bru CIDGs stationed at Lang Vei. That changed radically during the early morning hours of 7 February. The Americans had previous forewarning of PAVN armor in the area from Laotian refugees from camp BV-33 (just across the border on Route 9), which had been overrun by an armored assault on the night of 23 January. Although PAVN was known to possess two armored regiments, it had not yet fielded an armored unit in South Vietnam, and besides, it was thought impossible for them to get one down to Khe Sanh without it being spotted by aerial reconnaissance.

It still "came as a shock" to the Special Forces troopers at Lang Vei when 12 tanks attacked their camp. The Soviet-built PT-76 amphibious tanks of the 202nd PAVN Armored Regiment churned over the defenses, backed up by an infantry assault by the 7th Battalion, 66th PAVN Regiment and the 4th Battalion of the 24th PAVN Regiment, both elements of the 304th PAVN Division. The ground troops were specially equipped for the attack with satchel charges, tear gas, and flame throwers. Although the camp's defenses were overrun in only 13 minutes, the fighting lasted several hours, during which the Special Forces men and Bru CIDGs managed to knock out at least five of the tanks. The Marines at Khe Sanh had a plan in place for providing a ground relief force in just such a contingency, but Colonel Lowndes, fearing a PAVN ambush, refused to implement it. Lowndes also rejected a proposal to launch a helicopter extraction of the survivors. During a meeting at Da Nang at 07:00 the next morning, Generals Westmoreland and Cushman accepted Lownds' decision. "

Army Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Ladd commander, 5th Special Forces Group), and the commander of the SOG compound (whose men and camp had been incorporated into the defenses of KSCB) proposed that, if the Marines would provide the helicopters, the SOG recon men would go in themselves to pick up any survivors. The Marines continued to oppose the operation until Westmoreland actually had to issue an order to Cushman to allow the rescue operation to proceed. It was not until 15:00 hours that the relief operation was launched and it was successful. Of the 500 CIDG troops at Lang Vei, 200 had been killed or were missing and 75 more were wounded. Of the 24 Americans at the camp, ten had been killed and 11 wounded.

Logistics And Supporting Fire

Colonel Lownds estimated that the logistical requirements of KSCB were 60 tons per day in mid-January and rose to 185 tons per day when all five battalions were in place. The greatest impediments to the delivery of supplies to the base were the closure of Route 9 and the winter monsoon weather. From the beginning of the battle until early March, low-lying clouds and fog enclosed the area from early morning until around noon. Even then, the cloud cover rarely rose above 2,000 feet, closing the airfield to all but the most intrepid aviators.

Making matters worse, any aircraft that did brave the weather and attempted to land was subject to enemy anti-aircraft fire on its way in for a landing. Once the aircraft did touch down, it became the target of any number of PAVN artillery or mortar crews. The aircrew then had to brave the anti-aircraft gauntlet on the way out. As a result, 65 percent of all supplies were delivered by paradrops delivered by C-130 aircraft. The Air Force claimed that, during the siege, 14,356 tons were delivered to Khe Sanh by air (8,120 tons by paradrop). 1st Marine Aircraft Wing records indicated that the unit delivered 4,661 tons of cargo into KSCB.

The re-supply of the numerous, isolated hill out-

posts was fraught with the same difficulties and dangers. The fire of PAVN anti-aircraft units took its toll of helicopters that made the attempt. The Marines found a solution to the problem in the "Super Gaggle" concept. 12 A-4 Skyhawk fighter-bombers provided flak suppression for massed flights of 12-16 helicopters, which would re-supply the hills simultaneously. The adoption of this concept at the end of February was the turning point in the re-supply effort. After its adoption, Marine helicopters flew in 465 tons of supplies during February. When the weather later cleared in March the amount was increased to 40 tons per day.

As more infantry units had been assigned to KSCB, artillery reinforcement kept pace. By early January, the defenders of KSCB could count on fire support from 46 artillery pieces of various calibers, five tanks armed with 90mm guns, and 92 single or Ontos-mounted 106mm recoilless rifles. The base could also depend on fire support from U.S. Army 175mm guns located at Camp Carroll. Throughout the battle, Marine artillerymen fired 158,891 mixed rounds. Marine analysis of PAVN artillery fire disclosed that PAVN gunners had fired 10,908 artillery and mortar rounds and rockets into Marine positions during the battle.

Final Attacks

On the night of the fall of Lang Vei, three companies of the PAVN 101D Regiment, moved into position to attack Alpha-1, an outpost just outside the Combat Base, held by 66 men of the 1/9 Marines. Under cover of a mortar barrage, the North Vietnamese penetrated the perimeter and pushed the remaining 30 defenders into the southwestern portion of the defenses. For some unknown reason, the PAVN troops did not press their advantage and eliminate the pocket. A relief force set out from the main base and attacked through the North Vietnamese, pushing them into supporting tank and artillery fire.

On 23 February, KSCB received its worst bombardment of the battle. During one eight-hour period the base was rocked by 1,307 enemy rounds, most of which came from 130mm (utilized for the first time on the battlefield) and 152mm artillery pieces located in Laos. Casualties from the bombardment were ten killed and 51 wounded. Two days later, the first PAVN trenches appeared, running due north to within 25 meters of the Combat Base perimeter. That same day, a patrol from Bravo Company 1/26 Marines was ambushed by a PAVN force estimated at battalion-size. Casualties during the contact amounted to nine Marines killed, 25 wounded, and 19 missing and presumed dead.

At the end of February, American intelligence postulated that the 66th Regiment, 304th PAVN Division was in the process of mounting an attack on the positions of the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, on the eastern perimeter. On the night of 28 February, the Combat Base unleashed artillery and air strikes on possible North Vietnamese staging areas and routes of advance. At 21:30, the attack came on, but it was stifled by the small arms of the Rangers, who were supported by thousands of artillery rounds and air strikes. Two further attacks later in the morning were halted before the North Vietnamese finally withdrew. PAVN, however, was not through with the ARVN troops. Five more attacks against their sector of the defenses were launched during the month of March.

By mid-March, Marine intelligence began to note an exodus of PAVN units from the Khe Sanh sector. The 325C Divisional Headquarters was the first to leave, followed by 95C and 101D Regiments, all of which relocated to the west. At the same time, the 304th PAVN Division withdrew to the southwest. That did not mean, however that battle was over. On 22March over 1,000 North Vietnamese rounds fell on the base, and, once again, the ammo dump was detonated.

On 30 March, Bravo Company, 1/26 Marines, launched an attack toward the location of the ambush that had claimed so many of their comrades on 25 February. Following a rolling barrage fired by nine artillery batteries, the Marine attack advanced through two PAVN trench lines, but the Marines failed to locate the remains of the men of the ambushed patrol. The Marines claimed 115 North Vietnamese killed while their own casualties amounted to ten dead, 100 wounded, and two missing. At 08:00 on the following day, Operation Scotland was officially terminated. Operational control of the Khe Sanh area was handed over to the Army's 1st Cavalry Division for the duration of Operation Pegasus.

Cumulative friendly casualties for Operation Scotland, which began on 1 November 1967, were: 205 killed in action, 1,668 wounded, and 25 missing and presumed dead. These figures do not include casualties among Special Forces troops at Lang Vei, aircrews killed or missing in the area or Marine replacements killed or wounded while entering or exiting the base aboard aircraft. As far as North Vietnamese casualties were concerned, 1,602 bodies were counted, seven prisoners were taken, and two enemy rallied to allied forces during the operation. American intelligence estimated that between 10,000 and 15,000 PAVN troops were killed during the operation. These figures, however, should be considered in light of the methods by which they were obtained. The estimates were almost exclusively gathered by indirect means: sensor readings, sightings of secondary explosions, reports of defectors or POWs, and inference or extrapolation.

Relief and Results Operation Pegasus

Planning for the overland relief of Khe Sanh had begun as early as 25 January 1968 when Westmoreland ordered General John J. Tolson, commander of the Army's 1st Air Cavalry Division, to prepare a contingency plan. Route 9, the only practical overland route from the east, was impassable due to its poor state of repair and the presence of PAVN troops. Tolson was not happy with the assignment, since he believed that the best course of action, post-Tet, was to utilize his division in an attack into the A Shau Valley. Westmoreland, however, was already planning ahead. Khe Sanh would be relieved and then utilized as the jump-off point for a "hot pursuit" of enemy forces into Laos.

On 2 March, Tolson presented a briefing and laid out the concept of what became known as Operation Pegasus. The operational plan for what was to become the largest operation launched by III MAF thus far in the conflict, was simple. The 2nd Battalion 1St Marine Regiment and the 2nd Battalion 3rd Marine Regiment would set out from LZ Stud at Ca Lu (16 kilometers to the east of Khe Sanh) and head down Route 9 while elements of the 1st Air Cavalry leapfrogged by helicopter down the road, air-assaulting onto key terrain features to cover the Marine advance. The advance would be supported by the fire of 102 pieces of artillery. The Marines would be accompanied by their 11th Engineer Battalion, which would repair the road as the advance moved forward. Later, the 1st Battalion 1st Marine regiment and 3rd ARVN Airborne Task Force (the 3rd, 6th, and 8th Airborne Battalions) would join the operation.

General Westmoreland's planned relief effort infuriated the Marines, who had not wanted to hold Khe Sanh in the first place and who had been roundly criticized for not defending it well. The Marines had constantly argued that technically, Khe Sanh had never been under siege, since it had never truly been isolated from re-supply or reinforcement. General Cushman was appalled by the "implication of a rescue or breaking of the siege by outside forces."

Regardless, on 1 April, Operation Pegasus began. Opposition from the North Vietnamese was light and the only problem that hampered the operation was continual heavy morning cloud cover that slowed the pace of helicopter operations. As the relief force advanced, the Marines at Khe Sanh moved out from their positions and began patrolling at greater distances from the base. Things heated up for the air cavalrymen on 6 April, when the 3rd Brigade encountered a PAVN blocking force and fought a day-long engagement.

On the following day, the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Air Cavalry captured the old French fort near Khe Sanh village after a three-day battle. The link-up between the relief force and the Marines at KSCB took place at 08:00 on 8 April, when the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry entered the camp. The 11th Engineers proclaimed Route 9 open to traffic on 11 April On that day, the commander of the 1st Air Cavalry ordered his unit to immediately make ready for operations in the A Shau Valley. At 0800 on 15 April, Operation Pegasus was officially terminated. American casualties amounted to 92 killed in action, 667 wounded, and five missing. 33 ARVN troops were killed and 187 wounded. Estimates of PAVN casualties were 1,100 killed and 13 captured.

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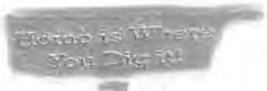

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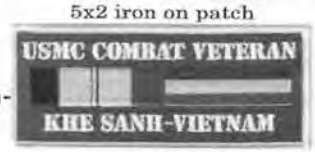

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Mike "Animal" Preston Looks on in awe, as Disaster Strikes Dong Ha.

ISSUE 69

FALL
WINTER

THE KHE SANH VETERANS'

RED CLAY



THE KHE SANH VETERANS ANNUAL REUNION
JULY 3-8 2007, WASHINGTON DC
SPECIAL EDITION

WANTED

BY THE KHE SANH HOLE IN THE WALL GANG



Terrible Tommy
Russ The Butcher
Back Woods Bob
Skin'Em Rita
Chatty Kathy













Who? Khe Sanh Veterans & Their Families & Friends
Where? The Silver Legacy Hotel RENO NEVADA
When? July 28-03 Aug 2008
Reason Khe Sanh Veterans 2008 Annual Reunion

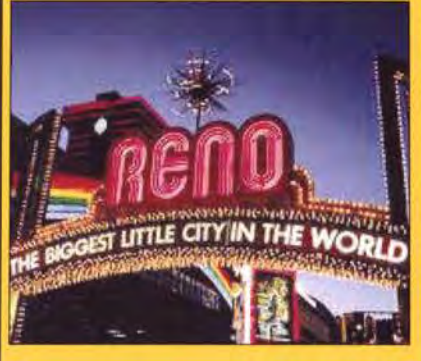





From the President:

I want to thank the membership for their trust in electing me President of the KSVA. I will do my best, as I have in my past positions, to promote and improve the Khe Sanh Veterans Association. The election also resulted with John Pessoni moving from Secretary to Vice President and Robert Moxley (formerly Director at Large) moving into the Secretary spot. Successful candidates for Director at Large include Neil Kenny, Larry McCartney and Luther Upton. WELCOME ABOARD.

Thanks go to Russell Turner for his outstanding leadership and guidance during his two terms as President and Co-Chairman of the Reunion Committee. Thanks also to the outgoing Directors at Large-Ed Feldman & Dale Pack. Last, but certainly not least, a giant Thank You to Colonel David Bulldog" Smith for his unwavering leadership at a Two Term President and Two Term Past President. You've left a tough act to follow!

The reunion was a success regardless of the Snafus caused by the Hotel. We have just returned from Reno Nevada and have completed plans for the 2008 Reunion. It will be held at the Silver Legacy Hotel, Reno NV July 28-03 August 2008. The complete details are included in this issue.



L-R Russ Turner (Past President) Being Presented a Plaque from the KSV for outstanding service as a Two Term President by President Elect Tom Eichler

Those Remembered			Remembered By
1st Sgt Merle Christensen		1972	Jerry Griffin B Btry 1/13 HN
GySgt Eugene E Stout	KIA	28 Dec 66	Jerry Griffin B Btry 1/13 HN
Cpl Jim Snow		2004	Jerry Griffin B Btry 1/13 HN
T/sgt Ed Mosley	KIA	15 Oct 1967	Robert Heppner 309 Air Commando Sqdn
A/1C Larry Berneski	KIA	15 Oct 1967	Robert Heppner 309 Air Commando Sqdn
Sgt James N. Tycz	KIA	10 May 1967	Sharon Pelon Friend

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Neil Kenny..... Member At Large
Dan Fisher..... Member At Large

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A Big Thank You From Russell Turner

I want to thank the membership for their overwhelming support during the two terms I was honored to have served as your President. Your continuing support made my job a lot easier. I know Tommy will continue to improve our organization as he has done in the past. I also congratulate John Pessoni & Bob Moxley on their election to Vice President and Secretary respectfully, as well as our three new Directors at large: Larry McCartney, Luther Upton and Neil Kenny. A thank you also goes to Ed Feldman & Dale pack our outgoing Directors at Large.

From The Vice President

I want to thank the membership for their faith in electing me Vice President of the Khe Sanh Veterans. With my new job I also assumed the responsibilities as Director of the Khe Sanh Veterans PX. I have many plans to expand our inventory and offer many new Items. The new telephone number for the PX is 732-948-9803. Please continue your terrific support of the PX. Profits allow us to publish our Red Clay Magazine, which is consistently improving with your support.

REUNION SHORTS

The Prodigal Bible Finds its Way Home. "A Terrific Reunion Story"

By Tom Eichler

I was approached by former colonel Nick Romanetz and Captain Ernie Spencer at the 2007 KSV reunion in Washington, DC with a very interesting tale. While going through some old memorabilia, the Colonel found a Bible which was given to him at Khe Sanh by a chaplain or his assistant. He observed that the Bible was already inscribed with a name and the following story tells how the Bible was reunited with its original owner

Colonel Nick Romanetz:
Prior to this year's KSV Reunion in DC, I was rummaging through my old military stuff looking for items to donate to the silent auction. One item I came across was a pocket Bible, that had been given to me by a Chaplain or his assistant during the siege. The small Bible was encrusted in red dust and the cover was beginning to separate from the body of the book. I had put my name, rank, unit and time at Khe Sanh inside the front cover of the book. However, my information was placed above the name of a person printed in the "property of" section of the Bible. In recent years, because of visits to the KSV home page, I recognized that name as someone who occasionally posted, but I did not know the individual. Checking the membership directory and the web site for reunion attendees, I saw that John Rowland was a member of D/1/26 and was scheduled to attend the reunion. After the Bible had almost been donated to a Vietnam Museum at MCRD San Diego, I decided to bring the Bible to the reunion and try and find John Rowland and determine how his name came to be in the Bible and explain how it came into my possession.

After getting settled in at DC, I went to a person I knew could help me find John. The always reliable "Macho Man" Ernie Spencer knew John and within minutes, pointed him out to me in the hotel lobby area. I approached John, introduced myself and showed him the Bible. He looked astounded and asked where I got the Bible from, explaining that it had been his and somehow he lost or misplaced it. After some small talk, we went our separate ways and in my mind, a small mystery was now solved, end of story.

Shortly thereafter, Ernie approached me and explained that he spoke to John about the Bible and John shared with Ernie in detail the significance of that Bible in John's life and his Khe Sanh/Vietnam experience. Ernie asked if there was any way possible the Bible could be returned to John and without hesitation, I agreed. Ernie suggested we not let John know of our discussion and Ernie suggested that I present the Bible to John prior to the start of the dinner.

For those of you in attendance at the dinner, you know that I was able to give the audience a brief background on the Bible and, after 39 years, return it to its rightful owner. Once again, membership in KSV and being an active member of the organization has provided someone with a bit more "closure" to our Khe Sanh experience.

Tom Eichler:

I later interviewed John to obtain the full story how John obtained, and lost the Bible subsequent to its return at the reunion.

John stated the Bible was given to him by a chaplain in early January 68 shortly after Tet, along with a rosary, which John still possesses. The Bible was of great comfort to John many times during the onslaught of incoming and the precious times when we had a few moments to rest. Delta was not given much notice when they were told to saddle up and left Khe Sanh after the siege, John was under the impression they would be coming back to the base after the operational sweep they went on. John, somehow, negligently left it behind with a few other personal items. "We never went back," John stated, instead went to the Rock Pile, and a few other places, each worse than the one we left, I would have felt better if it had of went with me. It was a total surprise getting it back...it is an important keepsake, red stains and all, that I will pass on to my grandson with a little history of when and where it was first given to me and how I was reunited with it after all these years."

Thank you Nicholas Romanetz from the bottom of my heart.



Col Nicholas Romanetz at annual banquet Returning Lost Bible to John Rowland



L-R **The "reuniters" Ernie Spencer, John Rowland & Col Nicholas Romanetz.**

MEMOIRS

MY KHE SANH EXPERIENCES

By James Dalto
Kilo Company 3/26 Hill 861

MED EVACTED

During the second week of February 1968, Lang Vei was overrun and a big, silver C-13O crashed and burned on the Khe Sanh airstrip. I was assigned to a working party to dig a foot-deep trench from our Platoon CP down in the main trench located at the Company CP on top of the hill. This small trench would, hopefully, protect the lima-lima line from shrapnel. The lima-lima line was simply a field telephone wire, or land line, which allowed instant communication between the Command Post. Shrapnel from enemy mortars had a habit of regularly clipping said wire and cutting off communications between the Command Post.

I was one of two men assigned the task. The other Marine assigned had been injured, and should have been in a hospital. He had become robot like, and had to be ordered to seek protection when we were being shelled. We decided that the safe way for us to accomplish the mission was to complete the task ASAP. We began digging like a pair of gophers and had finished about 25 feet when we were hit by incoming. None of us was hit by shrapnel but the concussion blew both of us into the trench line. The Marine that was helping me, struck an empty grenade case and suffered a deep gash across the bridge of his nose and was bleeding pretty bad. I landed on my head crushing my face and jaw and injuring my back teeth.

I remained conscious and there was a lull in the barrage. A few seconds later I could faintly hear Sergeant Strong hustling down the trench, yelling, "Is everyone OK? Is everyone OK?" like he always did after an attack, his concern for his men driving him to get help to anyone who needed it ASAP. When he observed us lying in the trench line he began yelling, "Ripple up, Ripple up the coded call for a Corpsman." As soon as he left, mortar rounds started impacting in the trench. I was slowly regaining some of my faculties and noticed we were only a few yards away from gun bunker. After a few attempts, I was finally able to speak legibly, yelling out, "You! In the gun bunker! We need help" Sorry! We don't make

house calls in weather like this", came the disappointing reply.

Though I still couldn't stand, I was by this time able to crawl, and angered by their response. I managed to crawl over my buddy's body. Then, using only my arms, lever his body over mine, closer to the door of the gun bunker. Three times I repeated this process, until I finally heaved him to the doorway. Two sets of arms immediately emerged, the hands grabbing the shoulders of his flak jacket and dragging him inside. I was completely spent, I couldn't even crawl. I was able to rollover onto my stomach, just enough for the men in the bunker to see one of my outstretched arms. A moment later, strong hands gripped my right wrist and I felt myself being pulled inside to safety. I felt a great surge of relief, and then promptly passed out.

The next several days were no fun for me at all. The conditions on 861 were bad and I soon developed a raging infec-tion in my gums. It was bad and the Head Corpsman determined I had to be med-evaced, ASAP. The weather gods, must have had it in for me, the cloud cover rolled in again, completely enclosing the LZ for days. By the time the LZ was usable again, I was feverish and disoriented and it took several attempts to get on a chopper. In fact, I don't even remember boarding any chopper.

I recall wandering around the main Khe Sanh base, looking for the dentist's office. This took quite some time, but I finally wandered into the dentist's office. A dentist administered Novocain and the pain went away. The dentist determined my crushed teeth and swol-len gums were combining to make it impossible for the doctor to be able to extract the infected teeth. The in-struments he needed had been destroyed in the shelling so he ordered me to be transferred to Dong-Ha for treatment. I reported to the Landing Zone Master, who informed me that there were no more aircraft flights due in that day; I'd have to come back the next morning.

I made my way to the Kilo Company rear area, near the Battalion Aid Station, checked in, and settled in for the night. Things were going fairly well until the Novocain wore off. The pain of half-extracted teeth caused me pain beyond the bounds of one's imagination. I spent that eternal night in what can only be described as hideous pain. So intense that I was actually begging people to shoot me, just to make it stop.

Morning finally came and some kind soul drove me down to the airstrip, where the LZ Master took one look at my evac tag and told me that there was a fixed wing due in shortly, and that I was to run onto it the moment it came to a stop. Even in my semi-delirious state, that sounded like the world's most excellent idea to me.

I waited in a large bunker full of other casualties, which was located adjacent to a widened area of the runway; a turnaround area. As we waited, members of the LZ party circulated among us, assigning teams of ambulatory casualties to individual stretcher cases, with instructions to carry said stretcher onto the plane once the LZ Master gave us the signal to move.

Despite my pain and delirium, I was able to reach deep down into my psyche and tap into the last of my physical and mental reserves. Crouching almost like a runner waiting for the starter's gun, I concentrated, focusing all my attention on the LZ Master in the doorway. The wait felt like an eternity, but was probably no more than 15 minutes. Suddenly, the LZ master was signaling us to move out, punctuating his hand movements by yelling, "Move. Move. Move." with each wave of his arm. Parris Island conditioning suddenly kicked in and I found myself up and moving in almost perfect coordination with the other men carrying our assigned stretcher. Out the door we burst, our ears assailed by the beautiful scream of turbo-prop engines. A camouflage painted C-123 loomed into view, dropping its rear ramp as it moved. The plane jerked to a stop just as the first of our gaggle reached the bottom of the loading ramp. Up and in we hustled, barely noticing the disembarking replacements moving past us.

Within moments, everybody was on board, the Crew Chief yelled into his microphone, and the plane jerked into motion, the rear ramp rising as we moved. The pilots hustled that big bird down to the end of the runway, wheeled it around like a Corvette pulling out of a drive-in diner, then, without stopping, pushed the throttles to the stops and we screamed down the strip. The landing gear banged over the seams of the Marston Matting at an ever quickening pace for a few seconds, then went silent as we broke free of the ground. Almost immediately the tail dropped as the pilots put the nose up and clawed that beast up into the sky. As the plane spiraled upward, I caught a last glimpse of Khe Sanh wheeling beneath us. Artillery fire was hitting the airstrip.

Relief seemed to melt my bones at this point, and I, as the saying goes, fell right through my ass, and collapsed to the deck next to my assigned stretcher. I revived somewhat a few minutes later, when the plane's crew began circulating among us, passing out packs of Marlboros, smiling and nodding, offering whatever non-verbal comfort they could. At that moment, I actually loved those guys. I damn near cried.

It then occurred to me that I had a full pack, 20 whole cigarettes. I ripped that pack open, jammed a Marlboro in my mouth, and fired that sucker up. I drew that first delicious drag deep into my lungs, reveling as the nicotine buzz coursed through me and started to dampen my shakes. Satisfied, I turned and grinned at the guy whose stretcher I'd helped carry. In response, he held up two fingers on his unbandaged hand in the wordless universal plea, "Hey buddy, can I get a smoke?" I hesitated a moment, noting the bandages swaddling his chest, then nodded. I pulled out another cigarette, lit it off my own, and gave it to him. We lay there together and chain smoked for the rest of the flight.

A short time later, the C-123 circled and began to descend, almost fluttering down to a nearly glass-smooth land-ing on some huge airstrip. Once we'd taxied to a halt, the engines shut down, and the ramp came down. I could see a bunch of ambulances and several helicopters parked along the tarmac. Air Force medics then hustled aboard and began to gently move us off the aircraft. My smoking buddy and I ended up together on a weird looking silver Air Force helicopter. It had two tilted rotors, mounted side-by-side on top, so the rotors moved through each other's arcs, like the blades of a mix master. As we lifted off, the thing flew weird; in a series of sort of juddering hops. It was a bit unsettling.

We didn't have much time to worry, in just a few minutes we were sitting on a helipad in front of what was obviously a hospital, a real big one. A stretcher-bearing party quickly hustled my smoking buddy away, while a Corpsman took me by the arm and led me into a nearby building. The blast of air conditioning that hit my face when the door opened almost floored me. My escort steadied me, led me over to what I assumed was a Corpsman, and helped me into a chair next to the desk. The Corpsman leaned over, grabbed my evac-tag, and carefully examined it. "You're not supposed to be here." he said. "Huh?" I replied, completely flummoxed. "This evac-tag says you should be in Dong Ha." "I'm not? Then where the hell am I?" "You're in Danang this is the Naval Hospital at China Beach" he added, giving me a look reserved for gibbering idiots. "You have to get up to Dong Ha for treatment." "How do I do that?" I asked in desperation. "Not my problem." he replied, with the calloused tone of a born bureaucrat, and then waved me away in dismissal.

Crushed, almost overcome by despair, I rose to my feet and staggered away. I was so disoriented by this time that I headed in the wrong direction, toward a larger desk sitting by itself at the far end of the office, some tears of frustration coursing down my face. The man sitting behind the larger desk, a salty older Master Chief wearing crisply pressed khakis, noticed my distress. He rose, walked over to me and asked what was wrong. He patiently listened to my tale of woe and, with a sympathetic look in he eyes he reached out to touch my arm, his mouth opening to make his reply. The instant he touched my arm, however, his eyes widened in alarm and his hand flew up to my forehead.

"Holy Shit!" he exclaimed as the back of his hand touched my forehead, "This man is burning up! A second later he spoke again, the tone of command snapping out, "We're admitting this man, stat! Get him a seat. Detail somebody to get him a wheelchair and take him down to Dental Surgery! And, for God's sake, someone get him a cup of coffee!" In a blur of activity, I was lowered into a chair by gentle hands and a cup of coffee was pressed into my hands. This done, The Chief laid a comforting hand on my shoulder, leaned over, smiled, and said, "You just relax, son. We'll take good care of you now." instantly guaranteeing my vote for his sainthood.

Less than 15 minutes later, I was sitting in a dentist's chair, with a doctor and two Corpsmen prepping me for surgery. While one Corpsman started me on an IV set-up, both to rehydrate me and bring my fever down, the doctor began to pump Novocain into my gums, shot after shot, until my entire face seemed to go cold and numb. The numbness devoured my pain, leaving me practically wallowing with relief in the chair.

The doctor talked to me the entire time, explaining in detail everything that was going on. Drifting in pain-free bliss, I wouldn't have cared if he'd started farting out Sousa marches; but I listened raptly as the doctor

explained, in a reassuring voice, how he had the Corpsman starting huge doses of' antibiotics through my IV set-up, and a number of other procedures. I was too giddy with relief to give much of a damn about anything.

Once he was sure that the Novocain had taken effect, the doctor began the extractions. As he worked, I became more and more amazed at how easily my teeth were coming out. From previous experience, I knew that pulling teeth took quite a bit of effort, but not on this occasion. They seemed to be coming out with all the effort it would take to pull the petals off a daisy. The doctor showed me each tooth as it was extracted. The roots of each one were covered, with some sort of white corruption. The doctor explained that the white stuff was the infection itself; and that the teeth had already been detached from the jawbone by the infection, which was why they were coming out so easily.

It took about an hour until the doctor finally finished. He'd extracted all of my top teeth and two of my lower back molars, which, he explained, had been badly broken in my fall. Those lower molars had been the most difficult extractions, since the infection hadn't progressed as far as the others. They weren't detached from the jawbone, but they were too damaged to save. As the doctor stitched up my gums, he told me that all of my remaining teeth had been severely traumatized, and that I would probably lose the rest of them by the time I was forty.

After a bit of rest and once the doctor decided I was stabilized, I was helped back into my wheelchair and taken down to a general ward. One of the ward staff helped me into a hospital bed and I was left in peace. Exhausted, depleted, pain free at last, I fell asleep almost immediately. I woke up the next morning to a blood- soaked pillow with a Purple Heart pinned to the pillowcase, and with absolutely no immediate memory of where I was or how I'd gotten there.

FIELD EXPEDIENT

Once I'd been discharged from the hospital, I was sent back up to Khe Sanh, until such time as a dental plate could be made for me. On my return to Khe Sanh, I reported in at Kilo Company's rear area, expecting to be choppered back up to Hill 861. Instead, after conferring with a doctor up at the B.A.S., Kilo's Top Sergeant told me that I had to stay down in the main perimeter with the rear element Something about there being no 'soft' foods up on the hill. I'ld have to wait until I had teeth again before I could return to the Company. Since the Top Sergeant pointedly mentioned I didn't need teeth to work, and I was otherwise unhurt, the Top decided to give me a job. Assistant Supply N.C.O. For a moment, I was flattered. A real job title and everything, an. ad hoc N.C.O.. My balloon was popped a minute later, when the Top gave me a more detailed overview of what my new job entailed.

It seemed that every day the CP up on Hill 861 would radio down a list of specific supplies that the Company needed for that day. The Top would compile, then scan the list, separating out the items available within the KSCB itself, then pass along the rest. He would then give this 'locally available' list to the Supply N.C.O., in this case, another P.F.C. named Brown (my boss), and order him to transport this stuff down to the staging area down at the LZ. Brown would then grab me up, we'd jump on the Mechanical Mule, and off we'd go.

Now, the Mechanical Mule was a weird little vehicle which everybody seemed to inexplicably, love. Why? I have no idea. This vehicle was as low-tech as you could imagine. It was simply a flat, rectangular deck surrounded by a short rail, with a tubular-steel framed driver's seat welded onto the front. The thing had a souped-up lawn-mower engine, a three-speed manual transmission, and no suspension system; just four rubber tires at the ends of two straight axles. Since Brown, like everybody stuck in that beleaguered perimeter had developed a great aversion to being out in the open, he tended to always drive at top speed. That tendency, plus the lack of a suspension and those myriad holes which seemed to magically appear allover the place, meant that we spent a lot of our driving time airborne. I had to maintain a death grip on the railing to avoid falling off. I didn't complain. My attitude toward being out in the open exactly mirrored Brown's.

While both Brown and I worked together loading and unloading our cargo, my main duty was to hold onto the cargo as we bombed along. As for loading, we always strived to accomplish that just as quickly as possible, since any supply point, like the P.O.L. depot (petrol, oil and lubricants), or any ammo dumps, were all prime targets for the NVA. As for unloading, we worked out methods designed to cut a lot of time out

of the process, since the airstrip was the NVA's #1 prime target. It was no place to linger.

The method we came up with was as we neared the painted circle at the end of the runway which designated Kilo Company's staging point, I would jump off the still-moving Mule and running alongside, start to sling the cargo toward the circle while Brown braked the thing to a stop. Sometimes I was able to complete the unloading before Brown completed stopping. At other times, when our cargo was delicate or more usually liable to explode, we handled it a bit more carefully. That was simply good common sense. While it did take longer, especially when handling an item like a case of 106mm Recoilless Rifle rounds, (which took two people to lift) we would only take a few moments to unload. The LZ landing party had the job of getting the stuff on a chopper or in a cargo net so once we were off-loaded we were free to jump back onto the Mule and bomb on home.

Like anyone else, when not working I tended to jump in a hole and stay there. My hole was a small, tiny actually, one-man bunker that I shared with one of the Company clerks, a Corporal named Andrusi. There was just enough room inside to set up a single folding canvas cot, which the two of us shared. (Nothing romantic, folks.) Andrusi was a fairly organized dude, so he had some amenities available; candles, his own 5-gallon jerry can of water and a case of Kool-Aid. His prize possession was a small, battery-powered record player and maybe three 45 rpm records. Nowhere near all the comforts of home, but all in all not too bad, considering. Add a steady supply of cigarettes and we were in hog heaven.

The fly in the ointment in this little set-up was Andrusi's best friend, another clerk/Corporal named Rogers. Roger's main claim to fame was his aversion to sleeping in a bunker. In deference to his touch of claustrophobia, he'd set up a cot in the large tent that served as the Company office. I always thought of him as a bit of a sarcastic S.O.B., mainly because he immediately nicknamed me "Fang" because of my severe lack of teeth at the time. This raised a few problems for me because Rogers, being Andrusi's best buddy, spent most of his free time hanging out in our bunker. The two of them would sometimes gang up on me, poking fun.

They used to heckle me mercilessly about being a grunt. While most people are aware that inter service rivalries, like the Marines vs. the Army, or the Navy, or the Air Force, exist, they aren't aware that some rivalries exist within the various services. In this particular incidence, the two of them were what we grunts called "pogues". Pogues were rear-echelon types, the ones we grunts called "The guys in the rear, with the beer and the gear." They in turn laid nicknames like "bush beast", on us grunts. They always loudly proclaim that a dude had to be dumb, or crazy, or both, to end up as a grunt. While it wasn't anywhere near as intense as street-gang behavior, they did manage to really tick me off sometimes. I began thinking up ways to get back at them. Lowly grunt my ass.

Andrusi unwittingly provided me with the exact opportunity I was looking for one morning. Brown and I were getting ready to make our daily supply run when Andrusi asked me, in an almost offhand way, to see if I could scrounge up some nails during my travels. He went on to explain that he wanted the nails so we could hammer them into one of the wooden support beams in our bunker, so we could hang our gear on them rather than throw the stuff under our cot. I immediately realized that this was a fool's errand, we didn't have a hammer. Not letting on that I'd realized I was the potential butt of his little joke, I agreed that it sounded like a great idea and promised to see what I could do. Of course,I had something completely different in mind; a plan both diabolical and stunningly brilliant, downright evil, in fact.

That was a terribly difficult morning for me. It was extremely hard to keep a straight face while I was practically gibbering with anticipation inside. Luckily there was no one in sight when I finally did find some nails, so I was able to do a little happy dance to tide me over through the remainder of my little counter scam. I was also able to take advantage of the few moments of privacy to perform the most important part of my set-up; removing the blasting cap from my emergency frag, a grenade that I always carried with me, hanging by its spoon, which was inserted in the little pencil pocket on my flak jacket.

Arriving back at our bunker, I took a moment to compose myself then dropped down into the bunker, to discover that the set-up was absolutely perfect. Both Rogers and Andrusi were sitting there on the cot, grinning at me. "Hey man," I chirped, "I found some nails!" I continued, pulling them out of my pant's pocket and showing them to Andrusi. "Hey, great

man!" he replied, "Now we're all set!" "Yeah" I continued, "Now all I need is a hammer!" "Hammer, we ain't got no effin' hammer!" Andrusi said, still blissfully unaware that I was no longer the butt of his little joke. He and Rogers grinned at each other in anticipation, both of them obviously in on the joke.

Working up a 'thinking hard' face, I hemmed and hawed for a moment, then did a 'Eurekal!' face. Then I took one of the nails, set it point-first against a wooden beam, and, before either of them could react, grabbed my emergency frag and started whacking the head of the nail with the base of the frag, hard enough to pierce the thin metal skin of the grenade. For a moment the two of them froze goggling in horror, then simultaneously bolted for the bunker door, where they had a brief, but extremely vicious little fight to be the first one out the door. Rogers won. He was a short timer down to about two weeks.

I was still laughing several minutes later when the Top stuck his head through the entryway and said, "Hey Dalto! Your buddies tell me you're driving nails with a grenade Don't you know that's dangerous?" "Not when you take the cap out first, Top." I snickered back, quickly unscrewing the ring and spoon assembly and holding it up to illustrate its fuse free status. "Just teaching those fool pogues not to mess with a grunt," I added.

Though he tried not to laugh, the Top just busted up at that. He head back to the CP Bunker, shaking his head and still laughing. My two victims returned to our bunker several minutes later suitably abashed. No more special errands for me. The kidding incidents also dropped in frequency, precipitately. They were especially careful not to say the word " crazy" around me again. As for the nails, I used an E tool to complete hammering them into the beams. Hanging up our gear was really a good idea.

NEW TEETH

February slowly rolled into March, each day seeming to stretch into years. Tedium and terror combined in mind-numbing monotony while tales of close calls circulated among our bunker society. In our Company area, delayed-action fused artillery round had hit between us and the B.A.S. leaving an unbelievably deep and wide crater, which gave anyone who saw it quite the case of the willies. There wasn't a man among us that hadn't had at least one close call.

I suspect it really was our own fault. Andrusi and I were snugly ensconced in our little bunker, doing our Kool-Aid, cigarettes, playing records thing; the Khe Sanh equivalent of an orgy, except without the sex or booze. Dazed by this non-debauchery, it never occurred to us that we were burning a candle, and maybe our light discipline wasn't so good. I have absolutely no recollection of what happened next, having been severely and instantly rendered unconscious. In fact, the entirety of the next two days is really fuzzy. When I try to think back on this period, all I get is the impression that I was inside this gigantic bell. Andrusi filled me in about the details later, once I could hear him again.

According to Andrusi, one of those Katyusha siege rockets exploded right next to our bunker. He said the explosion was so loud he couldn't even hear the start of it. Just, all of a sudden, his ears are screaming and me, he and everything else in the bunker is airborne inside this chunky black cloud, then all of it landing in a single heap in the far corner of the bunker. Andrusi added that while he had not been knocked out, he had most definitely been heavy-duty stunned, so it took him a while to get his fecal material recompacted and start to make sense of things again. One of the first things he noticed was that the really heavy thing on top of him was me. Immediately his priority switched to my buddy's-hurt mode. He said he worked on me about ten frantic minutes before I finally came to. Then he dragged me out of there and up to the B.A.S.

The crazy doctor went over me pretty thoroughly up at the B.A.S. other than a nose bleed and various bumps and bruises associated with taking an unscheduled flight inside a bunker, I was physically unhurt. Most of my problems, including my screaming headache, came from a double dose of concussion. Not only had I taken a very large dose of the semi-solid wall of air type of blast concussion, I had also, since my head had been in contact with the wall closest to the explosion, taken the equivalent of a right haymaker from ground concussion. There was also the possibility that I had landed on my head at some point. While at first I did get a smidgen of sympathy from the crazy doctor, who's current insanity emerged immediately after he'd been a tad too close to the first ammo dump that had blown up back in January, such sympathy quickly evaporated. The second he determined that my injuries weren't life threatening, he completely lost interest in me. He told a corpsman to

give me a big bottle of Darvon and then told me to go away. Like I said crazy.

Andrusi told me he'ld taken me back to our bunker, where, he added, rather than just falling asleep I immediately seemed to lapse quietly into a coma. I was slightly more lucid when I struggled back to consciousness late the next morning, and it was no fun at all. My entire body, every last atom of it, seemed to be vibrating; my head felt like I had an elephant sitting on it. My hearing was like I had a thick gauze bandage wrapped around my ears. I felt like screaming, but I instinctively knew it would hurt too damn much. Andrusi, God bless him, started feeding Darvon to me until the pain faded enough for me to stand up. Bladder pressure then forced me up and out of the bunker. When I turned to start toward the head, I promptly fell into this God-awful crater. My cognitive faculties weren't quite up to speed yet, and it hadn't occurred to me that there might be a big hole nearby and I should maybe look out for it. Luckily, I didn't wet myself, but I was so discombobulated that I instinctively knew that I had no chance of making it out of that hole with dry pants. I was still in the process of relieving myself when Andrusi wandered up, looked down at me, and said, "Yeah, that effin' hole scares the piss outta me too."

He was right. That effin' hole was downright scary. The damn thing was bigger than our bunker. The sight of our tiny bunker seemingly teetering on the very edge of that chasm reduced me to a weak-in-the-knees, gibbering idiot. One full layer of sandbags was nothing but eviscerated ragged tatters. Bad as our bunker looked, the company office tent was much worse. Most of the shrapnel produced by the rocket had splashed forward into the tent, chopping up all the equipment inside. A good deal had hit Rogers' cot, reducing it to kindling and shredding his poncho liner. Rogers hadn't been in his bunk when the rocket had hit. He'd been visiting over at the CP bunker at the time. He was short, less than a week away from his DEROS, and his 'short timer's blues' had him at a level of paranoia so intense that you could almost see an aura. This incident didn't help him any. While it did instantly cure him of his aversion to sleeping in a bunker, it now became a major chore to get him out of a hole. When he did emerge, he scurried a lot.

As I continued to eat Darvon like Tic-Tacs, life swiftly returned to what passed for normal at the KSCB. Though Andrusi and I were pretty tight by then, I was nowhere near the point of forgiving Rogers for the Fang nickname he'd laid on me. I soon reverted back to my normal pagan ways and tormented him in every way I could, mainly tweaking his paranoia at every opportunity. Every morning he'ld wake up looking hopeful, cheerfully chirping about how little time he had until the sacred 'wake-up'. I'ld give him the hairy eyeball and say, "You aren't outta here yet. Those suckers are after your butt, personal-like!" and then cackle like a crazed hyena as I watched his bubble burst. Some people thought I should lighten up on the dude, but he never did stop calling me 'Fang'.

Finally, one very, very good day, two sets of orders came in. One set ordered me down to Danang to get my new teeth. The other set was Rogers' Freedom Bird ticket; he was going back to the "World". I hadn't seen a happier look on a man's face since the first time a lady mistook my face for a saddle. He almost instant-ly disappeared, then reappeared two minutes later with all his gear in hand, literally dragging Brown behind him, and giving me a "Why aren't you ready yet?" glare. You can't argue with a man when he's right, and all I had to do was grab my rifle, so it was less than ten minutes later when Brown dropped us off at the LZ.

After presenting our orders to the LZ Master, we were directed to the staging bunker. We were organized into a boarding stick and told to stand by; the first chopper would be coming in once the ground fog cleared. The wait, like all such waits when something good lies at the end of it, quickly became interminable. Every second seeming to move through glue. Being right next to Rogers was no great treat either. He spent the entire time chain smoking and softly chanting "Lift, Goddammit!" at the fog under his breath. As irksome as this soon became, I didn't bust his chops about it. I figured that if something bad happened to him at that point, it would probably also happen to me. At long last we got the stand-up signal, then the wave-out and bustled outside to see a beautiful Banana Boat touch down as we cleared the bunker. Up the boarding ramp we hustled !(Nobody, but nobody got on or off a helicopter slowly at Khe Sanh.) The last man onboard raised his arm to signal the crew chief, who then yelled into his mike, and the pilot jerked that bird off the ground. Willing the thing up, we passengers fixed our eyes out the back end watching the ground race away from us. Right about the count of five, we saw a mortar round explode in

the exact spot we had just vacated. There was a momentary flash of fear, then relief as we continued to gain altitude without a hitch. A minute later and we were in cloud. We could breathe again. We continued to climb until we popped out above the cloud layer. Khe Sanh was blessedly out of sight.

A short and fairly jubilant flight later and we were on the ground in Danang, a place widely believed by the average grunt to be safer than, say, Cleveland. In contrast to the tension we'd been under at Khe Sanh, we were now relaxed to the point where we were able walk naturally, rather than march or run, amazed at what a pleasure it was to walk erect. Eventually, we sauntered into the M.A.T. (Marine Air Terminal) and presented our orders to a clerk at the counter. Rogers was told that his Freedom Bird was scheduled to take off early the next morning, then directed to proceed to a transient barracks area located near the Freedom Hill PX complex. I was to proceed to the hospital at China Beach; and no, there was no bus. Rogers and I, never expecting to see each other again, split amicably and headed our separate ways.

I spent most of the rest of that morning asking directions as I hitch-hiked across the Danang perimeter, arriving at the hospital about a half hour before lunchtime. Amazingly, I had my new dental plate in time to still have lunch there. As good as it felt to be able to chew again and to have things like condiments available the greatest pleasure of the meal turned out to be simply sitting in a chair, at a table. I felt like Conan the Barbarian the first time he hit the big city.

Once they threw me out of the hospital mess hall, I started hitchhiking back toward the airfield. At one point, I was dropped off near a bridge somewhere around the Deep Water Pier. As soon as I cleared the truck my antennae went up; I could hear gunfire. Confusingly, the firing didn't sound anything like a firefight. It had the steady deliberation of a firing range. As I moved forward, I noticed a long line of Marines spaced about ten meters apart the entire length of the upstream side of the bridge. Each man, in no particular order, was firing down into the river every few moments. Perplexed, M-16 at the ready, I moved up to the first man on the line and asked if he needed any help. Without ever taking his eyes off the water upstream, firing slowly and steadily, the guy explained to me that his unit was the bridge guard. He went on to explain that the enemy regularly tried to blow up that bridge by floating explosives down the river. The guards' job was to shoot at anything floating down the river before it came within 50 meters of the bridge. They did this 24/7, using big spotlights at night. I left that place shaking my spinning head at the complete insanity and perfect sense of their job.

I made it back to the M.A.T. around 1600 hours, only to learn that there were no more flights up to the KSCB that day. I was then directed to spend the night at the same transient barracks that Rogers had headed for that morning. Still being somewhat sane, I felt no great urge to zip back up to Khe Sanh, so this sounded like an idea I could really get behind. Cheerfully unlimbering my thumb again, off I went. Within an hour-and-a-half, I was checked into the transient barracks. I'd had a lot of people staring at me during my travels, very probably because my jungle utilities were a different color than anyone else's; the same rusty Khe Sanh's clay. As a result, I had quite a few things planned; taking a long shower, washing my filthy clothes, sleeping on a mattress, with a pillow and sheets. All such plans were summarily scuttled a few moments later when I ran into Rogers and his new posse of short-timers.

They had several extremely interesting items of information for me. First they told me that the big place across the road was the Freedom Hill PX complex. Then, much more importantly, they added that you could get California-style cheeseburgers, French fries, and, wonder of wonders, beer. My immediate reply was, "We ain't there yet?" We spent the remainder of that evening rapidly drinking ourselves comatose(we called it the Tooth & Freedom Party).

At 0500 the next morning, well before the first blush of dawn some sadistic S.O.B. started pumping reveille through a bunch of large loudspeakers at full volume, the noise of which heterodyned disastrously with our crippling hangovers. Startled into movement, we were herded onto what we called 'cattle cars' open flat-bed trailers equipped with rows of wooden bench seats. Fifteen minutes later we found ourselves standing in the dark very near the end of a line of men more than 500 feet long. This line led into a large mess hall tent, located near both the airstrip and the M.A.T.
Not a big fan of standing at the end of a very long line and savagely hung over, I was not in a good mood. Rogers' cheerful chirping about being so close

to safety and already past the sacred 'wake up' swiftly raised my bile. Overwhelmed by the urge to ply the needle one last time, I said, "Hey man, you're not out of Nam yet. Those effers could still get your skinny ass!"

No sooner were these words out of my mouth than two large Katyusha rockets exploded on the far side of the airstrip, more than a quarter-mile away. The timing couldn't have been better if I'd paid those gunners. The immediate reaction was complete chaos, with hundreds of people scattering in every direction at very high rates of speed. All except me. I'd only run a few strides. Inured to conditions at the KSCB, enemy fire hitting at that distance didn't worry me that much. Besides, I soon noticed that no more fire was coming in so I stopped. I soon found myself alone; everyone else had disappeared.

Since there was no longer a line of men in front of me, I decided no one could hassle me about cutting in line if they weren't there and hustled up to the door of the mess tent. Looking inside I was amazed to find the place completely deserted, even the cooks and servers had run off.

Incredulous, I drifted forward toward the serving line, almost slavering at the feast laid out before meat, eggs, pancakes, sausage, bacon, toast, butter, home fries, boxes of cereal, tapioca pudding, fresh fruit, chocolate milk, for God's sake! Smiling my brand new smile, I slowly scanned over the delicious vista and announced, "Well, well, well! Looks like the perfect chance for me to put my new teeth to the acid test!" Then, rubbing my palms together in glee, I dug in. I took some of everything I liked, just piling the food on my tray, stuffing every pocket I had with fruit and boxes of Post cereals, pouring myself an entire pitcher of chocolate milk. I ate and ate and ate--some more. After awhile, the mess hall staff filtered back in. They glared at me quite a bit, but I didn't care. I paused only long enough to give them the finger, then resumed eating. After a good hour of munching, my jaws aching, I was finally done. Struggling to my feet, I waddled out of there and over to the M.A.T., groaning with pleasurable pain.

As for Rogers; even though I kept an eye out for him, I never did see him again. I figure he must have dived into a hole somewhere and pulled it in after himself; emerging only to run up the boarding ladder of his Freedom Bird, probably cursing me with every step, not that I blame him.

SETTING A RECORD

Like any of my days at the KSCB. Once Brown and I had finished breakfast, we reported in to the Top, who gave us the welcome news that all we had to do was pick up and stage some engineer's stakes and we were done for the day. This had us in a pretty good mood as we set off. Within a half-hour, we were bouncing merrily along toward the airstrip, a dozen or so bundles of short engineer's stakes on board. I didn't even have to lay on the stakes to keep them aboard, so I could hold on with both hands, the extra security definitely a plus in my book.

Down at the LZ, our speed-unloading went perfectly. I had all the bundles off and staged before Brown could get out of his driver's seat and we were heading back, bombing along the end of the runway, relaxing and doing some sight-seeing. I was sitting cross-legged, Indian-style, staring off to our right at a weird looking armored vehicle called an Ontos, which was parked along the perimeter bunker line. When I turned to my left to impart this cogent observation to Brown, he wasn't there. He'd stuck the Mule in neutral and bailed out on me.

A motion caught my eye and I looked up to see three fountains of dirt, exploding enemy artillery rounds, at the far end of the airstrip. The sound of the first explosion reached me about the same time, punctuating the fact that the explosions were walking down the middle of the runway, directly toward me! I was off that Mule and sprinting toward the bunker line cringing as the noise of the explosions got louder, ergo closer, at a truly terrifying rate. By the time I hit the trench line concussion was slapping at me. A heartbeat later just as I was in the doorway of the nearest bunker, an artillery round exploded right next to it, close enough that I found myself deafened and flying through the air, enveloped in the dust ball of the explosion.

Things turned pretty hazy for me then. I'd bounced off the far wall of the bunker. Along with being pretty well jellied by concussion, all I could do was wallow on the deck in sheer terror, barely aware of the continuing barrage as it walked back over the bunker line. After some time, I recovered a bit, there

was a lull in the shelling and I suddenly heard Brown's voice, yelling, "Hey Dalto! You alive?" "Yeah! Still in one piece!" I called back, clapping my helmet back on and sticking my head out of the bunker door, just in time to see Brown come pelting out of the trench. "Let's get the eff outta here!" he called as he legged it toward the Mule, sitting, a few hundred feet away still idling. Sounded like a great idea to me. A stride and a jump and I was out of the trench, but Brown was way ahead of me. He was in the driver's seat, had stuck the thing in gear, and dug out while I was still more than 100 feet away. About the time Brown hit second gear, artillery started coming in again hitting the airstrip. That inspired me to reach down inside myself and hit stripe-assed ape gear, gaining on the Mule. As Brown slapped that thing into third gear, I caught up with him and dived forward, landing belly down spread eagle on the flat deck of the Mule, grasping the deck rail with a death grip as Brown kept the pedal to the metal, practically flying through the shell holes.

Once we cleared the immediate impact area, Brown spared a second to glance over at me, then did a bit of a double-take and said, "Uh, Dalto ••• don't panic or nothin', but I think you're hit!" "What! Where!" I yelled, my lips going numb with panic. "Back of your left knee!" I craned around, frantically scanning down my body, and saw a wet, red stain about halfway down my left leg, setting off a molten wave of shock that seemed to drop my stomach straight through the soles of my feet. I spent the rest of that short trip cursing non-stop. I have no idea what I said, but it made Brown cringe a bit. We very quickly arrived at the Company area, whereupon Brown stuck the Mule in neutral, switched off the engine, jumped off the still-moving Mule, and dove into the CP bunker. I stayed on the Mule until it coasted to a stop, worried about further injuring my leg. With enemy shells still screaming overhead, I sat there for a few minutes, carefully checking my leg. After a very close inspection, I discovered that I was O.K., with no holes in my pants leg or, more importantly, my leg. There was some blood and tissue there, but I concluded it must have come from someone else. Vastly relieved, I instantly became so happy that it didn't occur to me for at least a week that I had a piece of someone else on my pants leg.

Almost giddy, I hopped off the Mule and trotted over toward the CP bunker. As I approached the doorway, I heard the Top's voice angrily berating Brown about "leaving a wounded man out in that shit," which was why I was laughing when I dropped through the doorway. The Top spun around at the sound of my boots hitting the deck and asked, "Dalto, you O.K.?" "Yeah, sure, Top" I replied, happy as a clam in mud. "It's just a piece of someone else," I added, turning and pointing to show him the stain on the back of my pants leg. Giving me a very weird look, the meaning of which went right over my head, he added, "Glad you're O.K" " He then turned back to Brown and continued chewing him a new, and much wider anal orifice; amply proving yet again that senior Marine NCOs can really cuss. I thought it was hilarious.

During another lull, I made it back over to my own bunker. Shortly afterward, the NVA opened up again trying to set a record.. This time they shifted fire, soon hitting the ammo dump about 75 Yards away from our Company area. While they didn't manage to detonate the entire ammo dump in one fell swoop, they did set it on fire. As we watched, the fire began to eat its way through the ammo dump, pallets full of ammo detonating one after another every few minutes. The entry door of our little bunker faced directly toward the conflagration, almost giving us the illusion of watching TV, which is actually a very accurate analogy. Andrusi and Rogers and I sat side-by-side on that canvas cot/living room couch, sipping Kool-Aid, smoking cigarettes, laughing and scratching, whooping and hollering three dudes watching the greatest fireworks show imaginable. And what a show it was. I'm completely sure that most of the American population has never witnessed a real explosion from relatively short range, mainly because doing so is extremely dangerous. At the same time it can be quite impressive as a Show, a spectacular form of entertainment. For instance, a pallet of artillery ammo goes off with an enormous flash, a big, rolling ball of dust, a noise so loud you stop hearing it immediately after it begins a slap of concussion like a hard left jab, and smoking bits of metal arcing through the air. A simultaneous violent assault on all your senses.

A pallet-full of rifle ammo, however, blows in a rapid series of smaller explosions, maybe a box at a time; each burst throwing out a glowing parabola of red-hot lead in every direction. Though not a serious assault it was a visual treat. The whole thing was enormously entertaining, made even better by the caperings of the poor slobs who were fighting the fire. Maybe we three were born without a sympathy bone; or maybe it relates to the fact that I totally got it when Tolkein

used the phrase, "Mad for fun", but we thought it was hilarious as explosions blew those guys off their feet and tumbled them around. Here were brave men, with balls of pure forged brass, trying to put out that conflagration by shoveling dirt on it, some of them using E-tools, for God's sake, and we're sitting there laughing at them until our ribs ached.

I guess it simply never occurred to us that those men were in serious physical danger. In fact, the very idea of physical danger never entered our heads until after a particularly large explosion, the business end of a l06mm recoilless beehive round skipped past the door of our bunker spewing out flechettes, some of which flew in and bounced off us. From then on, through the rest of that day, and all that night, we listened to the rest of the show cowering on the deck in our bunker.

LAPES

The morning after that big shelling we crept tentatively out of our bunkers to see our familiar landscape littered with what looked like tons of expended ordinance. The WIA bunker, home to Kilo's 'walking wounded; looked especially woebegone; covered with soot, with many of its' sandbags shredded. We had been very worried about those guys, since their bunker was much closer to the burning ammo dump than ours. Gratefully, our emergence was greeted by Crazy Tim's insane cackle and the gleam of teeth as everyone inside grinned out of their powder- smoked, grimy faces at us. We'd taken no casualties, an intense relief to everyone. Once the Top had ascertained his men were all OK, he surveyed the scene, tilted back his helmet, scratched his head and said, "Well men, let's get this area policed up." And that's how we spent the entire day; sweeping back and forth over the Company area, nervously picking up blackened bits of ordinance and carefully depositing them in a nearby crater.

Routine quickly reestablished itself over the next several days and our main priority, after staying alive, returned to finding different ways of amusing ourselves. I had Rogers, who'd developed a roaring case of the 'short timer's blues', jumping into holes for an entire afternoon when I discovered that tapping my boot heel lightly against a full 5-gallon jerry can full of water perfectly reproduced the faint little 'bump' noise that announced that the NVA was sending us yet another H.E. round in from Co Roc.

Most of the time, however, our main entertainment was supplied by our flyboys. At any given time on a clear day, you could see every aircraft in the U.S. inventory that could carry armament making attack run after attack run all around the plateau, dropping tons of holy, high hopping hell on the NVA. I know that personally, the thought of the NVA getting their collective asses waxed warmed the very cockles of my heart. Not a very Christian attitude I admit: but those yahoos were trying very hard to murder my young butt. So it was that I regularly joined all the other troopies standing on top of bunkers and screaming, "Yeah, get some" at every explosion. I've always considered this air show the greatest morale booster we had inside that beleaguered perimeter.

Our favorite part of the air show was, by far, the LAPES runs (That's Low Altitude Parachute extraction System). LAPES was a supply delivery system which did not require a fixed-wing aircraft delivering cargo to come to a stop. This was very impor-tant because, with plenty of practice, the enemy artillery could eventually begin their shelling before a fixed-wing aircraft could complete its' land-offload-takeoff cycle. As a result the Khe Sanh airstrip had been closed to fixed-wing aircraft since shortly after that big, silver C-130 had been hit, crashed and burned on the 10th of February. Helicopters could still make it in and out safely, but they couldn't carry enough to supply the 4,000 or so souls we had at the KSCB. Choppers could bring in replacements and evacuate our wounded, but it would take an entire squadron of Banana Boats (CH-46s) to bring in one C-130 load; and we needed several C-130 loads, every day, ergo LAPES.

The LAPES process itself is both fascinating and thrilling to watch. The big plane would come in, wheels, flaps and cargo ramp down, engines whispering on low power. Close to the ground the ship would flare out: raise the nose, with the landing gear seeming to grope for the ground like a bird reaching for a roost branch. Inside the plane the crew would release the stay chocks holding the roller-mounted cargo pallets in place, then the Load-master would pull a drogue parachute release the instant the back wheels kissed the ground. Slipstream would drag the chute out the back end, with said chute inflating almost instantly with a "pop", providing the impetus to start the cargo pallets moving. At a command from the Loadmaster, the pilots still keeping the nose up, would crack the throttles up to a full-engine-power

scream, adding yet another source of inertia to the process. The cargo skids, still attached to each other by a single, wide, nylon strap, would slide out the back end and onto the runway, while the plane would simply take off again; total of maybe ten seconds ground time, and tons of supplies delivered. With not much in the way of real entertainment at hand, we troopies really looked forward to these LAPES runs, so we soon worked up an alert system. There were always some men on watch along the perimeter line. When one of these sentries would spot a C130 pop out of the clouds that always seemed to be hovering over the hilltops, they'd yell out, "LAPES comin' in!", which, in true Marine fashion, would be echoed by everyone who heard it.

In the time it took for the plane to get even with Hill 861, about four clicks out, the tops of every bunker were covered with spectators yelling encouragement. There was an almost festive air to the whole affair, somewhat accentuated by the variously colored state flags individual Marines proudly displayed over their bunkers. Now even though a normal LAPES run was a great spectacle, it was what happened after the skids cleared the aircraft that everyone was actually looking forward to. Each skid was not a single object, but a mating of three various parts: the cargo items themselves, which were attached to the second part, wooden pallets, several of which were, in turn, attached to large, flat, thick, aluminum skid plates, forming what we called skids of about 9 cubic yards. These multiton bricks were moving at more than 100 mph when they touched the runway, at which point all bets were off. Occasionally there would be little irregularities in the runway, like one of those pesky holes that kept magically, and loudly, appearing all over the place. These would impart a touch of English to the trajectories of the skids. They'ld curve. Many times, the new curved trajectory would lead off the narrow runway. The skid would then hit the dirt in a huge ball of rust-colored dust, then an edge might collide with a ridge of hard clay or something and complete chaos would result as the whole assembly separated and scattered all over the area.

Sometimes the single nylon strap that linked the individual skids would fail to break and a second skid would pile into the first, instantly doubling our thrill. We'd whoop and holler and grab-ass for a few seconds, then jump into the nearest hole to avoid the inevitable barrage. NVA gunners already had in the air, headed our way. A few desperate nearby people might run out and steal, I mean salvage the aluminum skid plate, hoping to beef-up a bunker roof, but everybody else was back underground before the dust settled. Another aspect of these LAPES runs that appealed to we troopies was just how slick the operations appeared. That and the sensation of putting one over on the enemy would put a grin on our faces. The daring and skill displayed right in front of our eyes was a distinct thrill, made complete by the sight of the aircraft lifting off and steeply clawing back into the sky, safe and sound, untouched. Safe and sound were the touch words here.

Those aircrews were risking their collective butts to help all of us stay alive. We admired them; loved them like brothers. Nobody hoped to see the alternative to safe and sound. We had already seen that on February 10th and while it had been spectacular, there had been absolutely nothing approaching entertaining or fun about it. Instead there was horror and regret and sympathy and thoughts of families swamped with despair. Almost superstitiously, we refused to think about something going catastrophically wrong, for fear of jinxing them.

MEMOIRS

DREAMS

By Don Meyer

I was asked to expand in my thoughts about dreams. I tried and really don't like it. Nevertheless, here it is.

I dreamed I was back in Khe Sanh last night. It was a dream so realistic that I could almost smell the red clay from a freshly dug trench. I could feel the warmth of the sun on my back and hear the guys cutting jokes as their e-tools cut into the moist ground. I sat on the side of the trench and I was just staring at the surrounding hills. I could feel the dirt against my body and I looked so young and felt so strong. I just sat there and stared at the hills and was struck by the beauty of my surroundings, how the brown and green colors seemed to so natural together in the midst of bomb craters and areas burned from napalm.

I don't know why, but I felt like I had only been in Khe Sanh for a few days. Maybe the fact a trench was in the process of being dug made me feel that way. I was not afraid I was happy and content for some reason. Maybe it was the beauty of the place and being with my buddies I don't know. I felt none of the anger that has eaten away at me for all of these years

and I was full of hope and pride, just a content young man with purpose.

Looking out at the hills I knew there were other Marines on many of the hills looking down on me and hoped that they were safe. I felt a connection to them and knew that them being there was to protect me. I also knew that the enemy was out there but I felt no fear of them, it was just so beautiful and I was so happy.

When I awoke this morning I remembered this dream and it has stuck with me all of this day. Being awake, the feelings from the dream were soon gone replaced by the anger that has plagued me for so many decades now. The anger that is slowly killing me, that has left me numb to all emotions. I truly miss the feelings from last night and wish desperately that they could once again return to me.

I tried to remember when I died inside and could not think of just one event. It finally came to me that each day in Khe Sanh as we were so unmercifully bombarded and each night with the stress of the dark and the lack for sleep from two hour watches we slowly died. It was so subtle that I never realized it and so numb that I did not care.

When was this numbness replaced by anger. What could be so traumatic that it has dominated me so all of this time? Then I remembered after the battle Khe Sanh was abandoned. I felt betrayed and the empty area was replaced with a feeling of anger that came from the sole. All of the sacrifice, all of the pain, the death and for what. The only reward a warrior has for his death is to know that it was for something more important than him. It is a pact between him and his leaders that his efforts have meaning. This is a trust that is sacred and holy in its commitment. Without this trust there can be no battles, no wars. We made this commitment at Khe Sanh and honored the agreement. So many were crippled and died to protect and hold that piece of ground and I remember no complaints. Then when it was over we were betrayed and the base demolished and left to the enemy to take without a shot. The agreement was broken and the terrible losses could not be justified. The anger was born of betrayal and nurtured by deceit.

My emotions have been barren for so long and I miss feelings so much. No amount of medications or therapy have been able to return the good feelings to me only dreams seem to do that. Instead of putting Khe Sanh behind me and focusing on my many blessing, I think of it every day. I go to our Khe Sanh web board like a junkie looking for my next fix to be reminded of this time in my life and relive events that cause the anger I feel. I go to counseling where I have to talk about this time in my life and think this will help heal me. I go to 1/9 reunions to refresh the memories that have been forgotten just to increase the load I already bear. I take medications and alcohol to dull the pain and then seek out places so I can't forget. What a life.

Then the dreams come as they did last night and I feel so happy. In a short while the happiness is replaced again by the anger because the dream only reminds me of what I have lost. Nevertheless, I love these dreams and pray for their return. Once we were young, once we were happy and once we lived a life with purpose. We were not born as we live in old age, we were made this way. The dreams give hope that in our afterlives we will reclaim our happiness and have eternity to sit and look at the hills.

INCOMING

FLAGS

By Craig Tourte

I always fly my flags during the Memorial Day (3 day) holiday. I have a fairly bright American flag and a rather old faded Marine Corps flag. Of course Memorial Day is not the only time I erect the flags outside of my home. I also put them out on January 21st and on the Marine Corps Birthday. I was driving around town yesterday and I noted a rather lack of flags flying from the neighborhood houses and businesses. I don't think it is a lack of patriotism but rather an exhibition new generations have not yet recognized. We all know there is a war going on, but to be perfectly honest the war seems to only touch those who have a hand in the conflict. For the most part, Americans continue to just go about their business and only slightly follow the sacrifices made by so many, a familiar experience I might add.

Years ago I had a small California flag I flew from a pole over our bunker at Khe Sanh before we moved into the trenches. We soon realized that what we thought of at the time as a bunker was really no more than some barrels filled with dirt and a few sand bags over the top of the above ground target, which proved

inadequate. Somehow, in all of the confusion and craziness, that little red clay stained, faded and tattered California flag made its way back home with me. I kept it in the sea bag I had with all of my other Marine Corps memorabilia, too small uniforms, covers and other assorted odd and ends. For some reason I liked keeping the stuff around, but at the time I wasn't sure why. As much as that poor little flag went through; the Vietnam War, the Siege at Khe Sanh, Okinawa, El Toro and back to MCRD San Diego, it somehow managed to survive all the moves I made as a young man finding his way after the war.

Unfortunately, my little flag didn't survive my biggest struggle and greatest failure of all, my first marriage. There was something about" why are you keeping this old junk around the house?" You know, wives can sometimes just drive one crazy, and I'm afraid my little flag didn't survive the marriage either. I don't know why, but I find myself wishing I still had that little flag, something to remember and look back on, a very personal time for me and for so many others. Now when I fly my American and Marine Corps flags, I know deep down and see in my heart, that little flag flying proudly with them.

INCOMING

"OLD JUNK"

By Ron Main

Greg,

When I left Khe Sanh in July 68, I threw my flak jacket into a crate that we had for damaged and worn out 782 gear. A week later, and back on Okinawa, and on my way home, I saw the crate in the VMGR 152 supply warehouse. I stood over the crate looking at all those torn and red clay stained flak jackets and web gear and the smell of Khe Sanh.

I dug through the crate, kicking up a cloud of red dust, and found my flak jacket, and helmet. I took the torn helmet cover, and my flak jacket, put them into my sea bag, and they came home with me. Both sat in the rear corner of my garage on Long Island, New York for 20 years. When I moved to Colorado in the mid 80s, I left them with my Aunt. She put them in her garage. When I came back to Long Island for a visit, I wanted to take them back to Colorado. But I learned that my chronically neat grandfather (Pop), who I loved dearly, had thrown out my flak jacket. I asked him why.? He said, " Why do we need that filthy old thing around. " I pictured my flak jacket sitting in a pile of garbage on the curb and it broke my heart. I don't think " normal people " get it. They often mean well. But they just don't connect with what so many things we feel. Anyway. My cousin, hid my helmet cover so Pop couldn't get to it. He gave it to me and I took it back to Colorado. It sat in my closet for years.

In 2003 my niece went to Vietnam as part of a campus at sea semester in college. My sister Diane went to meet her in Saigon. I gave Diane my helmet cover and told her to take it back to Vietnam and bury it somewhere. Naturally she wasn't going anywhere near Khe Sanh, but I told her that was OK. Just bury it back in the soil of that country where it belonged. She took the helmet cover, and when she was somewhere in the Mekong Delta, a honey farmer buried it with a little ceremony in his family plot. You can't make this stuff up.

Here's where it get interesting... When at Khe Sanh, all my gear got torn up by incoming one day in mid March. I couldn't find my helmet. So I went to a pile of discarded gear near Charlie Med, and got another helmet that had been worn by a marine who had been either wounded or killed. He'd written on the brown side of the cover: " You haven't really lived until you've faced death.. Khe Sanh 68. " Knowing that he might be dead, I couldn't look at it. So, I turned the cover over and put the green side on (didn't stay green for long.)Well, at the last minute before my helmet cover got buried, my sister saw the Khe Sanh inscription. She cut that piece off, and took it back to me. All of the rest of the cover is now back " in country. "

I've been writing screenplays for years, and in 2003 I was at the Austin Film Festival with Kelly, a very pretty friend of mine who also writes screenplays. We were both quarter finalists at the fest competition. Her husband John is a movie accountant and he works on all of the big Hollywood movies. At the fest, she introduced me to screenwriter Bill Broyles, who she met on the set of " Castaway " when John was working on that movie. Being both former marines (Bill was a platoon leader with 26th Marines in 69) Bill said he was writing a screenplay for Tom Hanks about a chaplain at Khe Sanh. I said, " Do you mean Chaplain Stubbe..? " His eyes lit up and he said: " You were at Khe Sanh.. I want to talk with you.." Bill, me, and he and Kelly's mutual writing

coach were supposed to meet for lunch, but Kelly and I went to the wrong restaurant. I never saw Bill again.

In 2005 I asked Kelly how Bill was doing. She said he was very down because the studio Fox 2000 didn't want to make a depressing movie about Khe Sanh because the younger audience wouldn't be able to relate to it. I sent Kelly the piece of my helmet cover with the Khe Sanh inscription to give Bill encouragement. When she opened it Kelly said it smelled, but she would send it to Bill anyway. When Bill received the helmet cover at his home in Wyoming, he became very emotional. He told Tom Hanks about it, and director Ed Zwick(Courage Under Fire, Glory, Blood Diamond, etc) who was to direct the Khe Sanh movie. Bill told Kelly to tell me, that little piece of the helmet cover is now their " battle flag " to someday get their Chaplain Stubbe movie made.

Because of this, last year I made Bill, Tom, and Ed, Associate Members of KSV. I often think of that marine whose helmet I wore, who wrote: " You haven't really lived until you've faced death.. Khe Sanh 68 " Wherever he is, or whoever he was, he has not been forgotten. Should he be alive and a KSV member, and happens to read this posting, he'll remember writing those heart felt words on his helmet cover, that now speak so eloquently for all of us on this Memorial Day Weekend. I have to thank my little sister Diane for seeing the profound message in his words, and bringing that little piece of the helmet cover back, to continue its journey. Perhaps it's because in July 68 when she was 17, and I was again back at Khe Sanh, she went to visit my friend Ronny Vivona (G 2/26) at the Philly Navy hospital 7th floor " white lie ward " after Ronny lost his legs on hill 700. She told me only recently how the sight of seeing so many torn and suffering young marines her own has never left her, and how it was something a young girl shouldn't have seen. Perhaps she became one of us that day. Perhaps she knows the true meaning and message of our " old junk. "

Very Best to all of you on this Memorial Day.. Good to be alive..
Ron

ANOTHER REUNION STORY

Tough Guys

By Craig W Tourte

I met a lot of tough guys at the reunion. Men who I had only met on two occasions (reunions), but who I have known for 38 years. I was kind of a tough guy too. I had a long career dealing with people who had problems and tragedy in their lives. I often had to be the cool, calm and collected one to make sure certain events turned out successfully. I comforted victims of assault and violence. I have had guns and knives pointed at me, cut down the suicide victim from the rafters of their garage while their families stood and watched, removed the gun from the hand of the dead after they had shot themselves. I have dealt with a wide range of troubled individuals in our society. I tried to show compassion certainly, but that compassion was not necessarily coupled with emotion. As the years progressed, I found it a little more difficult to express emotion, even when dealing with my own family issues. The word coldness comes to mind, and there were times when I wondered if I even had the ability to feel any emotion at all, an issue I'll admit, that concerned me.

There were a lot of tough guys at the reunion, perhaps not so much in body any more, but certainly in spirit and character. Combat Marines, veterans of brutal fights and various battles. Men whose toughness was honed by years of hard living and conflict. Men who could easily describe the brutality of war and the witnessing of sometimes-indescribable death of their friends and comrades. Men who had committed the necessary acts of war on other individuals and to coin a phrase, didn't blink an eye. Men who had gone through several marriages, because they were now unable to express emotion to another human being. Men whose families and friends still cannot understand their coldness. Yep, there certainly were a lot of tough guys at the reunion.

I have made an observation about myself at these reunions and it is that it usually takes me about twelve hours or twenty minutes talking with Neil, before this tough guy is reduced to pretty much a blubbering, sobbing idiot. Of course I'm over stating this, but certainly I get overwhelmed with emotion, the tears uncontrollably run down my cheeks, and I certainly feel like a blubbering idiot. I have tried to be circumspect about this unusual occurrence in me, this uncontrolled emotional feeling. It is not depres-

sion, sadness, nor is it sensitivity to anything that is said or discussed. I think it is just a feeling of humanity and humility and respect for those I am around. I think of these men who 38 years ago shared the most personal and intimate moments of their lives together and although it was a long time ago, it seems like yesterday. I think of my friend Chuck, who was one of the few who survived the rocket attack on the CP (in fact he survived two attacks) and Bruce, who was the one who pulled him out. Chuck credits Bruce with saving his life 38 years ago. Chuck said, "I hope Bruce is here, I would like to meet." I was not present when Chuck and Bruce got together that evening at the reunion, but just the thought of that moment, chokes me up.

There were a lot of tough guys at the reunion, you could tell who they were, they were the ones hugging each other with tears running down their faces. I didn't want the reunion to end, I didn't want to leave, and I wanted this moment to always be. I didn't want to leave these fine men who I had met twice before, but who I had known for 38 years. I was humbled to be in their presence and even though I was so proud to be accepted by them. If you're a tough guy and a Khe Sanh Veteran and you have never been to a reunion, you should think about going, there will be a lot of tough guys there, and you'll never be the same.

SHORT ROUNDS

THINKIN ABOUT IT...

By Craig W Tourte

I had a great three days up at my friend and fellow Khe Sanh Veteran Tom Horchler's house this past weekend. I played in a little Memorial Golf Tournament put on by Rich Cueva in memory of Bob Shelton and Jessie Flores, who were KIA during the Vietnam War. After the tournament Rich had most of the folks over to his house for a barbeque, but for some reason I just was not in the mood to attend. Sometimes my "disorder" kicks in and I have a need to not be around others. It is something I battle on occasion, Tommy and the others understand because they all suffer from the same thing.

Shortly before the Tournament began I started to battle those little demons again, so I decided not to ride in the golf cart. I strapped the golf bag over my shoulders and humped up and down 18 holes. I have to admit it felt pretty good, the straps digging into my shoulders and my 60 year old calf muscles and sore back crying out for rest and Gatorade but for some reason I found myself enjoying the pain. I had settled down considerable after the golf game but still was in a funk so thought it best to go back up to Tommy's and be by myself.

Chuck Chamberlin (C/1/26) played in our foursome, I told Chuck that I was heading back up the hill to Tommy's house and would not be going to Rich's. Chuck said that he was going back with me (I appreciated his support); we stopped off for a Pizza and headed back up to Tommy's farm. It was great sitting on the green grass under those huge old growth oaks. We shared some common adult beverages and talked about nothing for what must have been a couple of hours before Tommy Horchler (H.Q. 1/13) Jeff Green (H&S 3rd Marine Div.) Ned Borlaug (I/3/3) and his brother Nell Borlaug (E/2/11) showed up. We spent some time looking up at the big open sky with the full moon shining down upon us and talking about our individual experiences in Vietnam, along with other subjects, but the primary theme seemed to be our memory of our experiences in Vietnam.

As I listened to the various conversations, I was struck how the topic was just matter of fact with little emotion evident. We each shared our stories, mostly in memory and appreciation of others. I was thinking at the time, it is often difficult for me to even speak of Vietnam in the presence of those who were not there and have no connection, if I try to verbally recall those experiences I often get this big knot in my stomach and I am overwhelmed with emotion, so I have found it best to avoid the subject. I was thinking how comfortable it was being around other Vietnam Veterans, not having to explain anything or looking over and seeing that kind of glazed, often confused expression others get when the subject comes up. We all turned in early that night, exhausted from the punishing golf game. On the drive home I realized how refreshed I felt, like a big burden had been lifted off of my shoulders. Ifound myself content and yes, even happy can describe my mood. There is just something uplifting and refreshing about being around other Vietnam Veterans that money cannot buy and therapy cannot heal. It was great being around other Vietnam Veterans who understand my idiosyncrasies and for the most part, are just like me.

SHORT ROUNDS

GOOD PEOPLE AT REUNIONS

By Steven Wiese

Well another reunion has come and gone I had a great time, this year my wife Deborah accompanied me to the reunion. I was looking forward to her meeting some of the people I've talked about over the years, especially Ben Long and his wife Joyce, Ken Korkow and his wife Liz, and a member of my squad and friend Mike McCauley and his wife Ruth. The week went by quickly and I wish I could have spent more time with all of them, but we enjoyed the time that we had with them. I really enjoyed seeing the familiar faces of the people I had met on previous reunions and I felt a little more at ease this year and met some new people, which was great, Craig Tourte took me up to the Delta guys room, they welcome me openly, told me to make myself at home, and help myself to the libations. I had a good time and really enjoyed them, thanks guys for your hospitality.

We took some of the field trips, went to the Marine Corps Museum which was great. We did the 8th and I parade "no comment" although we did enjoy it, we took the subway in the town and saw the Declaration of Independence, and did some sightseeing there. This brings me to the reason that I am writing this, I had the privilege of meeting a gentleman named James Kaylor. To be honest I don't remember exactly how we met, he is just one of those guys that you feel comfortable with right off the bat, you know the type. In our conversation James said weren't you on the payback patrol, to which I replied yes, so James asked me if I had the poster for the payback patrol, I said no that I haven't even seen it, so James says you were on that patrol you should have the poster, he says I'll give you mine, I said that's OK you should keep it but thanks for the thought, James says no before the reunions over give me your address I'll send it to you.

The conversation went on to other things and I really enjoyed talking to James (he's a character to say the least). Over the next couple days we crossed paths with James a couple more times; when he would see us he would greet us with a big smile and talked to us like old friends. Well the reunion came to an end I never did give James my address, but then we all know how it is, we meet new people say give me your address and I'll do this are I'll do that, but somehow the things never seem to happen, I'm ashamed to admit it but that's how I felt about James sending me the poster, so I never really gave it too much thought.

Deborah and I are back at home trying to get caught up on the chores that need to be taking care of after being out of town for a week, the phone rings, the voice on the other end says this is James Kaylor, I just want to verify that your address in the Khe Sanh directory is correct, I tell him it's correct, he says OK I'm getting the poster off to you today, I tell him that it's OK he didn't have to send me the poster, his reply was basically shut up I told you I would send you the poster and it's on the way.

James lives on the coast of California, and he knows Ken Pipes, for those of you don't know Ken Pipes, he was Bravo Co. Commander, he led the payback patrol, he was also wounded that day and Ken was awarded the Silver Star, a true hero.

James takes the poster to Ken Pipes and told him he was sending the poster to me, he asked him if he would sign the poster for me, Ken put an absolutely wonderful dedication to me on the bottom of the poster. I what to give a special thanks to Ken Pipes for taking the time to sign the poster for me, and for his lifelong dedication to us old war dogs. And a very heart filled thank you to James Kaylor for reminding me that there are still some truly good people in this world.

Steven Wiese
Bravo Co. lives on.

GREETING and SALUTATIONS

I am Neil Joseph Kenny. I entered the United States Marine Corps in June of 1967. I served in Vietnam with Lima Company Third Battalion 26th Marine Regiment from January 1968 through December 1968. I was reassigned to Charlie Company First Battalion Fifth Marines for the remainder of my 'Tour of Duty'. It also was the end of my tenure in the Marine Corps, as I was separated from active duty in January 1969.

It was a time when I went from a 'Civilian to a Marine' from a 'Private to a Corporal'. Most importantly it was a time where I went from a 'Boy to a Man' It was a time that brought me from the frivolity of youth to the fruition of adult life and I was still only

nineteen years old whence I was thrust back upon an unsuspecting and often uncaring world.

I was then and am now most proud to have earned the title of Marine. Some of my very good and trusted friends are men who have served this country in various branches of the military. I myself actually did a three year stint in the New York Air National Guard. My Dad served in WWII with the United States Army. He was assigned to pick up dead and wounded while at the 'Battle of the Bulge'. My younger brother served eight years in the United States Navy. He is a plank owner of the USS Platte. My older brother served two years in the United States Air Force. We're still not sure how he managed that. Geez, my middle daughter is a Captain in the United States Merchant Marine. Her first job was as a Third Mate aboard a 'rollo' bringing humvees into Grenada during the military operations that took place there during the last century.

Why is all of this relevant? Well, maybe it isn't; or perhaps it is to demonstrate what one might see as a sense of service that is prevalent with the many that frequent our social circle. One thing that has always been out there is the friendly inter service rivalry that has existed between the various branches of the military. It exists within the various branches of the different branches of the military services themselves. This issue extends down to the Company and Squad levels as a 'can you top this' rhetorical and frivolous folly.

It has become with an increasing amount of vitriolic venom a much more ominous fact that there are those amongst us who would have one believe that their service is of a higher calling and thus more meaningful then that of others. Theirs was and is the greater sacrifice and thus the only service of any valor. This is a point of interest from one whose family has served in most all of the branches, both during times of conflict as well as moments of relative calm.

We as a family have had some serve at the 'Tip of the Spear', while others were asked to perform duty that didn't require as much exposure to the flame of conflict that is in fact the fire which tempers the steel of the person of whom we are today. My family has always respected the difference that each of us has had to endure while in service to this nation. I wonder why it is that not every family can do the same.

At the Marine Corps League Detachment that I belong to approximately ninety percent of our members were never called upon to face the chaos of combat. The ten percent of us who have, are a menagerie of folks who have been to the islands of the Pacific, the tundra like atmosphere of Korea, the steamy jungles of Nam, the urban sprawl of Lebanon, the sweaty Caribbean locations of Grenada and Panama, the mountainous nether lands of Afghanistan, and of course the never ending sandy patches of Kuwait and Iraq.

Does being in all of these aforementioned places make us better or lesser Marines then the ninety percent? Are we more of a Marine, or less of a Marine than those others?
No. I would think not. What may best be said is that collectively we are different Marines.

A young Warrior from Echo Company 2/6 may have said it best when he stated,

"Never above you, Never below you, Always beside you."

I could not have stated it so eloquently if I were to search my dictionary and thesaurus while researching a long overdue term paper.

Presently I spend much if not all of my time working with or for members of the Military Service. I have a fair knowledge of what the government offers as to benefits for Veterans and their families. I spend a good amount of hours on a daily basis assisting Veterans of all branches and eras of service, to obtain what they are entitled to. Since I do not write any checks, I am not concerned with how much or what percent they obtain, my focus is primarily that they get what they are entitled to. Nothing more, nothing less.

Recently I have been extremely busy with the establishment and daily operation of the Corporal Jason L. Dunham Memorial Scholarship Foundation Inc. I am happy to say that we are now a bona fide entity and are pushing forward to assist Marines and Corpsmen who are seeking to obtain or further their college education.

At my most recent reunion, I had the pleasure to bring along with me a young Marine Sergeant who served with distinction in Iraq. It was wonderful to see the collective body of guests and veterans from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines rise as a sin-

gle unit and to applaud this young man's service. I was proud to say that I was a member of this group of 'Gathered Warriors'.

What saddens me is the continuing discourse that prevails with the: I, Me, Mine, mentality of 'can you top this', and I was and am more then you.

At another past reunion someone was selling shirts that stated, "The older we get, the better we were." I bought the shirt. I refuse to buy into the mentality. I was at Khe Sanh, from day one to day done, during the 'Tet Offensive of 1968.'Since we see the world from behind our own eyes, I can only say for myself that I didn't feel that Khe Sanh was the worst place that I was at during my tenure in Nam. I do not believe that neither the Marines of Bravo 1/26; nor the Marines of either Echo 2/26 or Mike 3/26 would agree with my assessment. I was not on the Ghost Patrol or either of their hills during the siege. I know not of their suffering nor pain, or loss on the personal level with which they did endure. I do know that I was there to share the same fate with them if it were that we were to go down. At the end of the day these men – both known and unknown - to me are my Brothers.

"Never above me, Never Below me, Always Beside me."

It is that Espirit de Corps that allowed me to prevail beyond Khe Sanh through the many months of carnage that Lima Company would endure to my own finality with war during Operation Meade River.

What I come away with at the end of the day is the Camaraderie, Love, and Brotherhood that one comes to in the experience of war. War fought by young boys, who become men all too soon and sudden. A War that from our baptism of fire until our last breath tempers our hearts and souls. A War which if left where it was could allow us to be together and rejoice in life with our spouses, children, and grand children; and most importantly with each other. A War that I can leave behind only while in the company of my Brothers.

I would guess this is why that outside of my family there are not many folks who I associate with who are not Warriors and/or those who have served in this Nations Military.

I am getting older and have a desire to share my remaining time enjoying the company of those who would laugh together while remembering those who have given their all so that we could. I would think it prudent and wise to use the time remaining to work for the benefit of those who have followed the path which we have paved for them.

To those who choose to go into the new day, I would ask that you travel the path with me, rather then traverse it alone. For it is our unity that shall enable us to forge a brighter future for all that come after.

Semper Fidelis

THE COIN

By Craig W. Tourte

The month of October is a busy month of traveling for me, seems I'm always out of town this time of year. A few weeks ago it was Dana Point in Southern California then a drive down to San Diego. Last week it was Pebble Beach and these last four days I spent down around Palm Springs, just got home this evening. Next week it's over to Oceanside then down to San Diego and once again to Palm Springs. The week after that it's a few days at a place by the name of Graeagle, a small community in the mountains located just a little East of Truckee which is South of Reno and East of North Lake Tahoe. Just so you'll understand, all of this traveling is not related to any importance I might have but rather it's related to a good friend who for some reason just seems to enjoy my marvelous companionship.

Anyway, during my travels I always carry a few Khe Sanh coins with me. Just in case I might meet another veteran or someone who might have an interest in our experience. As a matter of fact the other night I was talking to a person who asked if I knew of a tax exempt organization which consisted of veterans because his/her company was required to donate a certain amount of money. I am efferting that now, and of course I recommended our association (that's another story). I provided that person with a coin so they would not forget our conversation.

I'm going to try and be vague here to protect the innocent, but I knew that I would be once again meeting our California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger at this particular event I would be attending in Palm

Springs. I had met him last year and the year before that. By meeting him I really mean shaking hands with him as he worked the small crowd of people I happened to be among. The first year I decided not to have my photograph taken with him, I had just witnessed soldiers returning from Iraq at the airport and felt they were more significant and I wasn't in the mood for a B movie star running for office. The second time I saw him he was up on stage, but I knew this time would be different; I would have the opportunity to be right next to him. I had left my camera in my golf bag but I did have a couple of Khe Sanh coins with me.

The time had arrived, here he was coming right at me, the usual hanger on's, ass kissers and photographers and security guards with him. For a few seconds he stood all alone and I was just a few feet away. I placed the Khe Sanh coin in my left hand and approached. I extended my right hand and said, "Nice to see you governor." He took my hand and shook it and quickly moved along. My intention of course was to shake his hand with my right and hand him the Khe Sanh coin with my left. I wanted to say something meaningful and deep, like, "On behalf of the Khe Sanh Veterans I would like to present this coin to you" or something along those lines. But I'm afraid I failed, for some reason this occasion just did not seem appropriate.

As I look back on this failed presentation of mine, I have to ask myself, if I was able to give the Governor one of our coins, would he understand the meaning, the significant of it all. Would he appreciate our sacrifice? If I was able to just slip the coin in his pocket and he came across it later, would he even know what it was, perhaps he would think it was just a trinket of some kind or perhaps a joke of some sort.

While at Dana Point a couple of weeks ago, I had the occasion to sit down with California's former Governor Pete Wilson who I have known for a number of years. I had sent Governor Wilson a Khe Sanh coin and a copy of the "Battalion of Kings" and Ray Stubbe's book, "B5-T8 In 48 QXD, the Secret Official History of the North Vietnamese Army of the Siege at Khe Sanh..." a number of months ago. I didn't have to wonder if Governor Wilson would understand the significant of the coin or if he even knew what Khe Sanh was, or if he was even aware of the sacrifices made by so many, those now long years ago. I didn't have to explain to Governor Wilson what it meant to be a Khe Sanh Veteran. Governor Wilson looked me in the eye and thanked me for the gift I had sent him. For you see, California's former Governor Pete Wilson, had been a Marine Corps Officer.

Publisher Note: The challenge Coins mentioned in the article are available through the KSV PX.





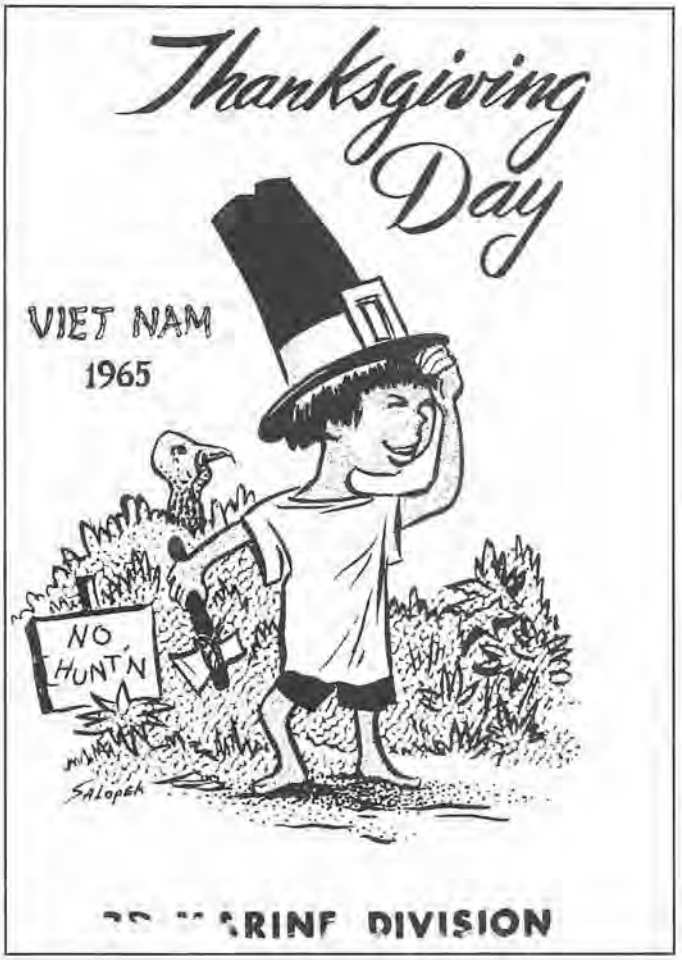

HAPPY THANKGIVING FROM RED CLAY STAFF
Original Drawing Submitted by Jose Bispo

POETRY

HOW IT GOT THAT WAY

Khe Sanh is made of red clay,
some think nature made it that way.
The ground is red that part is true,
but how it got that way some have a different view.
When it's dry it turns to dust,
it covers everything and looks like rust,
When it's wet it turns to mud'
it sticks to everything like some kind of crud.
Troops on the ground have this to say'
it took a lot of their blood to make it that way.
Yea the dirt is red alright'
some of us still see it every night.
Khe Sanh is made of red clay'
40 years later it still won't wash away.

Rick Tam

SHORT ROUNDS

I wrote this some time ago and recently found it with my pile of non-throw-aways. Here goes Brothers!!!

As I watched the show in silence
it seemed like yesterday
The songs the storytellers were singing
were new to you and me
The camera scanned the audience
and the faces looked quite strange
The beads, the flowers, the experience
have all melted away
Where once the Legends of songs stood
grasping for the why's and how's of life

Some have left this world
without control of even their own lives
Twenty years back I was just a kid
trying to grow way before my time
Today I've reached the middle age
and wonder where went my life
The songs that echoed from the tube
reached out and reminded me
Of a time not long ago
which seemed for them to be carefree
To sing of love and freedom was easy for those days
but for some we sang in silence
for death was a heartbeat away
As I watched the audience I see them
trying to relive a portion of their lives
when they were but mere kids
I remember seeing faces much like I see here
of people scorning young men who
survived a deadly scare
Today the thoughts of yesterday
makes some happy to hold dear
for some the sounds of battles still ring too loudly in our ears
The memories are embedded
in all our minds and hearts,
of songs of hope of lyrics,
and of how we left our mark.

Steve Hecknauer
C-1/26
Khe Sanh 67-68

POETRY

FACES AND PLACES

What were their names, I can't remember.

In my mind I see all these young faces.

They are like photographs I will always remember.

Where were we, the names of all those places?

Those are like maps in my mind I still look at.

All those faces go with different places.

I can't stop seeing all those young faces –

Why can't I remember the names of those faces?

Why can't I remember the names of those places?

But every day I walk those places

And I see those faces.

Rick Tam

RICK GETS IT RIGHT AGAIN

On my most recent trip to Washington, DC guiding a group of disabled vets I had this poem by Rick to give to his best Buddy Mark Miles, it is a beautiful piece of prose and I guarantee you that no one at the Wall after reading it had a dry eye .

Mike" Animal" Preston

IT SEE'S ALL

It doesn't mater if you're short or tall,
you can't hide because it sees all.
When you go there you'll find you're among friends,
they are right there with you one and all.
Short at the ends but the middle is tall,
but that's not what's important at all.
You'll want to touch it, to feel it,
young or old won't matter at all.
It draws you in and touches your soul.
sound seems to disappear, time slows to a crawl.
They just keep coming, the lines seem endless,
it stands quietly waiting to see them all.
Some ask how, some ask why,
they whisper as though they are shy.
The words said out loud, the words never said,
the thoughts in your head, it hears them all.
It sees every smile, every tear drop fall,
the boys on the wall see it all.

Rick Tam

The Great Race, Man vs Incoming

By Mike "Animal" Preston

See the man running down the runway? (now you know why they call it a "runway") that could be me, why am I running, look almost straight up, about 60 - 70 feet and slightly to the right, that would be north west, some of you would know that the rest of you would be clueless. That little black line is what was commonly known as "incoming." I think it is a 155 round or a 140 or 122 rocket can't tell from the picture, doesn't matter they are all lethal. Maybe the guy



doing the Khe Sanh "shuffle'' was one of you guys reading this. We all did it a lot if you happened to be a Khe Sanh Grunt.

The only thing is that is almost certain that I can tell about this picture is the branch of service this guy is in, army-no, air force-no, marines maybe, most likely navy, huh? What makes me think the odds on favorite is a naval man. Aren't sailors supposed to be clanking anchors? Well he is more than likely a Seabee out in the V-Ring as we called the runway, looking for arty holes or fixing one, that's the only reason to be out

there on the runway, or maybe he was just suicidal! Given the terminal (that's a fitting term) velocity of a 155 & 70 Foot AGL. That round is going to impact in about 02. Seconds or less. I wonder if the guy got through it unscathed.

Mike "Animal" Preston

MEMOIRS

RED CLAY and DRESS BLUES

By Dennis Mannion

The conclusion of Record Day at the Parris Island rifle range in February of 1967, and I moved slowly away from the 500 meter firing line. I had just qualified with a score of 219 and earned a Sharpshooter badge, but I was barely able to suppress the angry emotions welling up inside. I shouldered my M-14 rifle and tried as best I could to mask my bitter disappointment. The importance of the scores we earned this day had been stressed to the platoon almost from the moment we departed from the Receiving Barracks seven weeks earlier. Time and time again, we had been told by our three drill instructors that it didn't matter what kind of shooting totals we earned in the practice rounds leading up to Record Day. The only points that had any merit would be from our last day on the range, and that score would be entered into our Service Record books.

All week long in pre-qualification target practice, my scores had been consistently in the low 200's. I had had no trouble with standing and shooting at 200 meters and the same was true in the prone position at 500 meters. For me, the stumbling block had been the 300 meter line where sitting and kneeling were the required shooting positions. I had been a weightlifter in high school and in my two years of college, so scrunching into those tight shooting postures had been all but impossible. There were times that week when the DI's actually sat on the back of my neck and shoulders to "get me lower and tighter."

On Record Day, my point total at 200 meters equaled what I had fired all week, but surprisingly my scores at 300 meters were better than they had ever been. So good in fact, that I was eager to get to the 500 meter line. I really felt that as long as I continued to shoot well an Expert badge was now within my grasp. In the prone position, my first few shots were dead center. Then the unthinkable – some shots were out of the center ring! My aim and my focus seemed to be off. I was not hitting the middle of the target as consistently as I had all week. More frustrated with every squeeze of the trigger and struggling to maintain some sense of control, I fired my last bullets and totaled up the score. With an empty feeling, I recorded 219 in my shooter's book. That was better than anything I could have hoped for, and it was higher than any score I had earned all week. Still, to miss out on an Expert badge by a single point – after getting so close – was devastating. It had been in my grasp and I had let it slip away. I had no one to blame but myself, and the few tears that I tried to blink away were self-directed and anger-driven.

Moving off the firing line with others in my squad, I kept my head down as I fought to control my ragged and jumbled emotions. Suddenly, there was a great jolt of pain in my lower back and the sensation of being propelled forward and down. My senior DI had kicked me in the tail bone area, and as I fell to the sand, he was on top of me in an instant. He rolled me onto my back, slapped my face and screamed that I was a disgrace to his Marine Corps. Behind a quick flurry of fists and open hands, he called me just about every profane word that is applicable to women. He hauled me to my feet and shoved me away with the words, "Get off my firing line, you snot-nose bastard."

In the barracks that night, we sat in a circle around the DI's desk. Whatever topic covered that night is lost to me, but as we stood up to go back to our racks, the senior DI angrily singled me out. "They mismarked your target twice today," he said. "Your final score was a 221. Are you happy now, cry-baby?" Even if I had a response, there is no way I would have said anything to any of my drill instructors. I was happy with the 221, but my lower back had an ache that would not dissipate for months and the humiliation of being kicked to the ground would linger even longer.

February melted into March, and Platoon 236 began to recognize that graduation day was less than a month away. In the evenings there was small talk about who might make PFC and, more significantly, who the platoon honor grad would be. With the honor grad designation came a set of Dress Blues. Heading into the last two weeks, I figured I had a chance at PFC and just possibly honor grad as well. I had done very well in many aspects of training and had been

recently assigned as a squad leader. However, I have never been enthralled with uniforms, conformity, and the allure of colors and spit shined polish. In those final days I had made up my mind that if I won the Dress Blues, I'd look to sell them as soon as I could. No disrespect in that; someone else would have had a much greater appreciation for them than I. My sole purpose in joining the service after flunking out of college was to serve in Vietnam as part of a Marine Corps infantry company. There was nothing in my three year enlistment that was even remotely connected to uniforms and colors.

Still, I did have a strong opinion as to who our honor grad ought to be: Carey Lee Johns. Back in early January, when our platoon had first formed up, fate had me standing next to Carey Lee when we approached a line of Navy Corpsmen for a series of medical shots. As the two of us stood abreast with our shirts off, the doctor supervising the corpsman pointed to the two of us and said to the ever-present drill instructors, "Don't you wish they all looked like these two, knuckle dragging ape maggots!?" One of the DI's replied, "If they all looked like these two, I'd be out of a job." It was a real emotional lift for me to be compared to Carey Lee, and from that moment on, I knew that my boot camp experience would be physically tough but not insurmountable. Carey Lee, to my mind, was the best of us in the platoon – he looked, acted, and comported himself as a Marine's Marine. Not a man in Platoon 236 could have been disappointed when he was selected as the honor grad. I was happy for him and proud of him as well. After graduation he and I were inseparable as we completed Advanced Infantry training at Camp Lejeune. A month later, with leave papers signed, we sat next to one another on a bus to the airport in Washington, D.C. We were headed home; he to Alabama and me to Connecticut. We shook hands at the terminal and promised to stay in touch, but as with a lot of friendships in the military, we never saw one another again.

I arrived in Vietnam in September of 1967 and was assigned as the artillery Forward Observer with Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines. In mid-December we were sent to Khe Sanh as part of the Marine Corps response to tens of thousands of North Vietnam Army soldiers advancing into the region. Just after Christmas Kilo hiked up to Hill 861 where we would endure the 77 day siege. That campaign ended in mid-April of 1968, and the company choppered out to the relative safety and comfort of Quang Tri. By the end of May I was transferred out of Kilo and assigned to the 12th Marines as part of a naval gunfire FO team. Using firepower from cruisers and destroyers in the South China Sea, we operated in small groups along the coast of South Vietnam in an area north of the Cua Viet River and south of the Ben Hai River (the DMZ).

In early summer, I was with my FO team waiting for a military barge to ferry us across the Qua Viet. It always took time to off-load and load, and as we waited in the shade for our turn, a platoon of Marines disembarked and set off down the road. Suddenly, one of the Marines stopped, looked over and shouted, "Hey, Mannion!" Puzzled at hearing my name from a stranger, I stood and moved into the sunlight. I could hardly believe my eyes. It was Sgt. Hicks – one of my junior drill instructors! We shook hands and exchanged the customary in-country greeting: Who are you with and when did you get here? We only had a few minutes to talk – his unit was moving south and I had to get on the barge. He walked me over to it, and I asked him about recognizing me and remembering my name. After all, he had been a drill instructor before my boot camp time and for some months afterward. With all those recruits, how had my name and face stayed with him? His answer stunned me. "Because of the Dress Blues," he said. I honestly had no idea what he was talking about and said so. He replied that the honor grad award could just as easily have gone to me, but that that our senior DI wouldn't even consider it because in his mind I was a cry baby. He added that there had to be a consensus with all three drill instructors and my tears on the rifle range had squashed any chance I might have had. "Sgt. Hicks," I countered, "None of that matters to me. It really doesn't. Carey Lee Johns earned and deserved that award. He was the best of us. I probably would have sold those Dress Blues the first chance I got. And here's another thing. I've been here 10 months now and in that time, I've seen plenty of tears on lots of faces." He responded by agreeing with what I had said about Carey Lee. In addition, he said that he had seen those same types of tears himself and that our senior DI had not been in any combat prior to becoming a drill instructor. The barge was ready for boarding and Sgt. Hicks had to rejoin his unit. There was only time for a black and white, Polaroid picture.

The two of us – a former DI and one of his recruits standing shoulder to shoulder with our backs to the

Cua Viet River. Sgt. Hicks: in a jungle shirt, crew cut, and with a squint that could bore holes through anyone; and me: 22, looking years older, deep shadows under the eyes, long hair, red dirt from Khe Sanh still clogging most of my pores, and wearing a non-regulation T-shirt. We shook hands in the mid-June sun, wished each other luck, and he hustled down the dusty road. I have thought of him often in the past 40



years, but I have never seen or heard from him since.

In November of 1982, I went to the dedication of the Wall in D.C. I am not a joiner of groups and I knew no one who was traveling there, but I just felt a need to be in attendance. The day before the dedication, I heard someone say that the phonebook sized books that list all the names on the Wall were going to be available for purchase and I bought one. Over a year later, I chanced across my Parris Island yearbook, and I decided to go through the platoon roster and cross-reference the names with the names in the Vietnam Memorial Directory of Names. As I progressed through the first part of the alphabet, I developed a real sense of foreboding and a gut-sick, empty feeling inside. I almost didn't want to continue because of the listing I felt I was going to see. Sure enough, there it was

Carey Lee Johns, Oneonta, Alabama, 18June 68.

I didn't try to blink back the tears this time. Their source was heartache, not anger, and besides, there was no DI to lash out and reprimand. It would be another two decades before I learned that Carey Lee had died on one of those red clay hills outside of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. It's almost impossible now to remember him and not think of Sgt. Hicks at the same time. After all, when I encountered Sgt. Hicks near the Cua Viet River it was the 3rd week of June in 1968. I take some comfort in the knowledge that around the time of his death, the two of us had been reminiscing about Carey Lee and the honors that had been accorded him. Our 10 minute, chance encounter was, without our knowing it, our funeral service to him and for him. Carey Lee Johns, my boot camp buddy and fellow Marine won a set of Dress Blues, went to Vietnam, and forfeited everything, while I lost out on an award and a uniform but was permitted to live, to remember, and to grieve.

Dennis Mannion
Sgt. USMC – Jan67 to Dec69

SHORT ROUNDS

BRU KIDS
By James Dawdy

How can you ever forget 'em? Those pitiful but smiling little urchins who hung out waiting for food. clothing, and cigarettes ('You give me one Salem cigarette #1 GI?"). Of course, it was somewhat comforting to have them around because we could, correctly or incorrectly, believe that their presence indicated no enemy activity that day.

In the picture of the four kids, you will notice two who have C-ration boxes tightly protected-a very valuable commodity in an area devastated by war.

The kid in the white shirt and USMC soft cover has on what must be at least a size 13W pair of boots (mine were 11R), and the kid in red shorts has what appeared to be empty ammo bandoliers wrapped around his feet. Footwear was apparently at a premium. The kid with the big boots had an empty M-60 ammo bandolier slung across his shoulder with C-rations in it. Nothing went to waste. You can't help but wonder what happened to them. Did they die from errant fire, ours or from the enemy, on their village? Did they grow up to go to school, have wives and kids, and see peace and prosperity for their families? We all hope so. It made us feel good to share our meager resources with them. It restored our faith in our own compassionate humanity, and allowed us to see within ourselves the qualities which keep us sane, even in the midst of the horror, death and destruction of war.



Jim Dawdy & Bru Kids Rock Quarry Dec 1967 Khe Sanh



Khe Sanh NVA Battlefield Memorial Museum Feb 2007



Jim Dawdy & Bru Kids Rock Quarry Dec 1967 Khe Sanh



PT-76 NVA Tank Lang Vei , Vietnam Feb 2007



Seabee Jim Dawdy at Khe Sanh February 2007

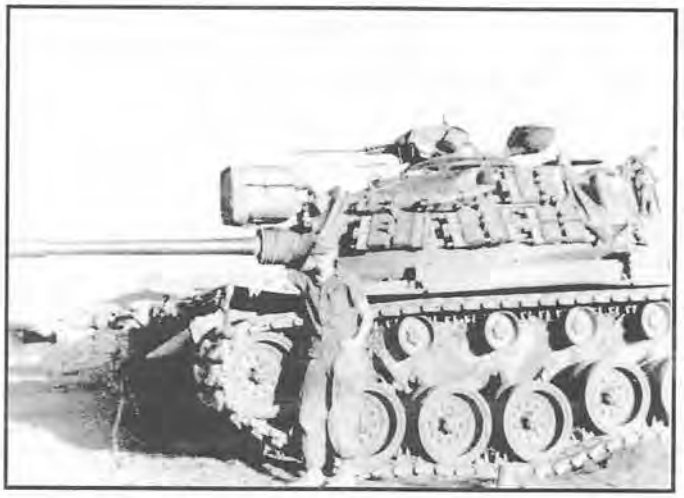

Khe Sanh Dec 1967 Jim Dawdy Seabee .Tank is from 3Rd Tank Battalion



Jim Dawdy Khe Sanh Dec 1967 Ontos from Co A 3RD AT

MEMOIRS

MY STORY

By Sgt Vincent Rios

In 1964, I graduated from Diamond Hill-Jarvis High School in Ft. Worth, TX. I enlisted in the USMC and graduated from MCRD San Diego. In 1965 I reported to Alpha Co., 1st Bn. 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division at Camp Margarita, Camp Pendleton, California for unit training. I embarked with the battalion for Okinawa aboard the USS General J.C. Breckenridge troop carrier in the normal rotation cycle as a transplacement battalion. The 1st Bn., 5th Marines arrived in Naha, Okinawa, and exchanged banners with the 2nd Bn., 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, the battalion it replaced. After undergoing intensive jungle warfare training, the new E/2/9 sailed for Vietnam aboard the USS Pickaway, arriving at DaNang in July. In November, I and several other Marines from my platoon were transferred to A/1/1 where I served until July 1966, returning to Camp Pendleton as a corporal, assigned as a brig guard.

In 1968 I was assigned to the most decorated regiment in the USMC as 2nd Platoon Sergeant and acting 2nd Platoon commander of A/1/5 until I was severely wounded by an enemy explosive device in February 1969. I was evacuated via various military hospitals in Japan to the Oaknoll Naval Hospital in Oakland, CA, where I was medically retired from the USMC and transferred to the VA Medical Center in Los Angeles, to recover from my wounds. My awards and decorations are as follows: three times awarded the Purple Heart, twice awarded the Bronze Star, the Presidential Unit Citation, the Meritorious Unit Commendation and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm. I also received the Vietnam Service Medal with four battle stars.

In the spring of 1969 I found myself near the middle of a string of hospitals that would punctuate my previously relatively undisturbed medical history. I believe it was at the Oaknoll Naval Hospital in Oakland, California that the only photograph taken of me as an in-patient exists. In the photo with me is a Marine lieutenant colonel pinning me with a Bronze Star Medal. Actually it was the second award but the first had not caught up with me nor was I aware that it was coming. I never knew who the colonel was; he was probably the Marine liaison from the 12th Marine Corps District Headquarters, then housed at the Treasure Island Naval Base located in the middle of the Bay on the Bay Bridge, half way between Oakland and San Francisco.

The first Bronze Star Medal Award was for Heroic Achievement; the second was for Meritorious Service. If anyone wants to read about my close encounters in Vietnam in 1968-1969 that back these awards, send me a check for $35.00 to the War Memorial Commission at 401 Van Ness Avenue, Room 101, San Francisco, CA 94102. I will mail you an autographed copy of Doc Hutchings book **"The Names Not On The Wall"**

I have plenty and if anyone recognizes the colonel in the photo let me know I would like to connect with him. Maybe one of our A/1/5ers who come out for this years July 4 Parade in Redwood City can let me know .

INCOMING

Khe Sanh Veterans Son Performs Above The Call of Duty

The son of one of our own has performed a terrific act to assist children of what is approaching 1,000 Marines who have been killed in the line of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. On 8 July, 2007 Travis Pren-

tice swam 20 miles, nearly across the English Channel from England to France, and only missed his goal of a channel swim completion due to a sudden change in the current as he approached the French coast. Travis had wanted to find a meaningful way to contribute to his country after 9/11. Over the years Travis has been well acquainted with the Marine Corps. His father, Glenn Prentice, fought at Khe Sanh with Charlie Battery, 1/13 and was assigned to India Company, 3/26 on Hill 881 South during the entire 77 day siege during the January-April period of 1968. Glenn was both a radio operator as well as a forward artillery observer who helped fend off the nearly 3,000 NV A who were dug into our hill.

Travis dedicated his swim to the children of some of the finest people who have lived in America. His efforts will assist many children who will not know what it is like to receive encouragement and support from their father or mother as they move through life. The funds that are being raised as a result of the heroic accomplishments of this young man are being channeled through the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation. I would like to encourage the Marines who fought with me and Glenn Prentice to make a contribution in Travis' name to the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation 121 S. Saint Asaph Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3119.

Travis Prentice lives in the San Diego area and works for the prestigious investment firm Nicholas -Applegate.

Carlton B. Crenshaw

INCOMING

SOMETHING TO HATE

By Craig W. Tourte

I was reading an essay today by Tony Quinn who was an Army information officer in Saigon in 1966 and 1967. This article was amongst several written by a number of authors comparing the war of today with that of Vietnam in response to the presentation before Congress given by General Petraeus now, and that given by General Westmoreland at another time. Now don't go nuts, although the premise of his article was to make a political point, my post is not going to be a political statement of any sort, so you don't have to prepare to write me nasty responses.

Mr. Quinn made the observation-and I think the same ones made by the numerous Khe Sanh Veterans who have visited Vietnam-that, "Everything the United States wished for in 1967 has happened by 2007. There is not a more pro-American country in Asia than Vietnam, a friendlier people and a more entrepreneurial capitalist society. As in China, communist flags are everywhere, but the real story is an unfettered capitalist economy the government has fostered." "...you can hardly find any sign that Americans were ever in Vietnam." "...a special display marks the collapse of the socialist subsidy economy in the late 1980's and its replacement by, do moi, the free market. "...in the heart of old Saigon-nobody uses its communist name, Ho Chi Minh City." Mr. Quinn goes on to describe a clean, vibrant Vietnam, open and welcoming Americans and other tourists.

I'll admit that since my experience in Vietnam, it has been difficult for me to just "get over it," without feeling that certain kick in my gut when I read the words, "Made in Vietnam" on some of the products I purchase. I am afraid I am just lost in time and unfortunately I still carry some old scars and harbor-I am aware of misplaced-feelings about the-even present day- Vietnamese, most not alive during my little adventure into their country forty some odd years ago. During the reunion, Dennis I think, and others brought albums of photographs of their recent visits to Vietnam. I sat alone at the table where the albums were offered for viewing and looked at each photograph carefully. I noted the people of Vietnam today, the landscapes, the little shops and villages, the streets and houses, I looked at the schools and churches and the children, all clean and well nourished. I noted how much the area around the Khe Sanh Combat Base had changed. I saw the now wide, paved roadways, where once small dirt paths had been, the once dusty dangerous avenues in which Bravo, Delta, Charlie and other proud American fighting units had walked so carefully many years ago and where so many Americans, some I knew, had fallen years before. I was searching for the old and familiar, and I guess I was looking for something, anybody or anything to hate., But I found only the now smiling and welcoming faces of a seemingly emerging and by Asian standards, the now prosperous Vietnamese. While I sat there at the table, open albums in hand, I was looking for something inside of me, a sort of awaking or awareness, anything that would tell my soul that it was over, that was then and this is now. I guess I was looking for something in

myself that said, "get over it." And although I have a fairly well educated understanding of Vietnam and its history of a thousand years of fighting off invaders and the fact that the Vietnam of today welcomes the West and Americans, I still struggle.

There was a short time when I thought I was over these feelings. I mean, how much more of an understanding of the historical view of this situation does one need to change one's mind and to be truthful, I am really talking about my heart. I bought a golf cap the other day. It says White Hawk on the front and I paid twenty dollars for the cap at a really nice golf course and one I could only afford to play once a year. I wore that hat every time I played, but it got so sweat soaked and dirty I stuck it in the washing machine. When I pulled it out of the washer I was kind of stretching it out when I noticed a small label that read, "Made in Vietnam." Something kicked me in the gut and I realized that I have not as yet came to terms with myself and I have not gotten over it, and at my age-rationality aside- I don't think I ever will.

INCOMING

LETTERS

By Craig W. Tourte

I like most of you while in Vietnam, wrote letters home to family and friends. Of particular concern to me at the time of the Siege at Khe Sanh was trying to stay alive, a daily and I must say, hourly endeavor. I must have written about lots of things including my fears, events, incoming and the death and injury to many comrades. I'm sure I must have mentioned the battle of Lang Vei. That event was significant to me as I stood looking out over the wire into the fog clearly hearing the echoes of motors and the raging all night battle occurring just a few miles away.

A few years ago, a man I have known since childhood tried to talk to me about my experience in Vietnam and Khe Sanh, but I'm afraid I just was not ready to share my experience with someone who had not been there, friend or otherwise. He told me that he and his mother, who I wrote to often, had saved the letters I had written from Vietnam. My friend wanted to know if I would be interested in reading them. I declined, but thanked him for thinking that my letters had meaning to him and his family.

I attended a family event last evening; I lived with my aunt and uncle before and after I went into the Marines so my cousins are more like siblings. About half way through this event, one of my cousins, who is now in his late 50's, came over to my table and sat down; he had been consuming a few adult beverages and was friendlier than normal. Although I only see him every five years or so, to this day I appreciate his family taking me in when I had nowhere else to live.

Anyway, he says something along the lines of, "I remember the letters you wrote home from Vietnam, when you talked about Lang Vei and the tanks, and your concern that they might run the wire of the combat base." My cousin had been in high school when I was in Vietnam and later went into the National Guard but did not serve overseas. He closed with the usual; "Gee, I wish I would have served in Vietnam." I overlook that last statement because I have heard it so many times before from the now old partiers who used to laugh at us while they searched desperately for a way to get out of going into the service. I knew there was no hidden meaning in my cousin's statement and that he was just feeling the effects of the liquid depressant.

I was a little stunned at his statement about Lang Vei and it took me a few seconds to recover. I asked myself how a kid in high school would remember anything I wrote in a letter to his family 39 years ago because I certainly didn't remember myself. Then he said, "My sister still has your letters." I then blurt out, "I don't want to read them." Again, I kind of shocked myself with my volunteer statement of not wanting to read those letters. I truthfully thought I had gotten over all of that.

After the event I went home and I thought about me not wanting to read those old letters I had written to family and friends and asked myself why. Was it because I was too embarrassed to read what I know are mostly ramblings of misspelled words, illegible handwriting and illiterate composition or was there something else I wasn't admitting to myself, perhaps something deep down that I have not as yet identified. It may be a little of both, but I am not even curious, not even just a little bit and for some reason the thought of seeing those letters sends a chill down my spine.

Craig,

Last year I handled my parent's estate. In doing so I came across all my old letters. With a nice glass of

wine, or was it more, I sat and read them. Now at six decades of age, I saw a very scared young man. Full of bravado and sharing only stuff that would not upset the folks. I'm sure my parents saw through all of it. Looking back is not a bad thing. It tells us where we have been and gives us a bench mark. As I tell my wife, who wonders why I keep going to this site, it gives me balance. No matter how pissed I get over little stuff now, when I look back it isn't nothing. So go on and read the letters and reflect back to the worst of times. Then you will truly see how good it is now.

Chuck Teasley
C 1/26

Craig,

As usual, I love reading your posts. You are truly a man who speaks from the heart and have the ability to articulate your feelings. You do have a gift.

I would encourage you to check those letters out. I spent 30+ years blocking out the past, but found I was unable to do so. A few years ago I got on the internet and it has changed my life forever. I no longer try to block out the past but readily embrace it. I know I served honorably and in "the moment" did what I felt needed to be done. If I have learned anything in my 61 years on this earth is that the past can not be changed one iota. It is forever cast and can not be altered no matter how much we wish it to be different.

As I have searched and shared those events of so long ago I have found each of us seem to have 3 or 4 events that seem to stand out from other lesser events. In my research I have found some of the players involved with one of those "haunting" events. I was shocked to find that others involved had a different slant on things. Some of the main elements were the same but some of the pieces I had put so much stock in were not as important as I had perceived them to be. In fact, some of my recollect was missing some very important facts. Through the years my memory had twisted things into a form which was quite different from the actual facts. I know this to be true, because one of those involved could verify the events factually because he had an old letter he had written 2 days after the mission I was so troubled about. The fresh, factual events of that day were enlightening. It did not change the outcome but offered a clear picture of the events and things came into a much better focus.

A few years ago I asked my mother if she had any of my old letters. She said no and did not want to be reminded of those awful things that happened back then. I was truly saddened by her comments and asked no further questions. I am still a bit hurt by her comments but will not approach her about it. I know she had no intention of hurting or offending me. I would love to read some of those old letters. I know they would help to add some clarity to some of the things that now seem foggy and distant.

You will have to make the ultimate decision about those letters. A suggestion here: Get the letters, check them out, and if so moved sit down and share them openly with those you wrote them too. My guess, those close to you will see you in a different light. When you share from the heart you connect to loved ones and family in a new way. I know you understand this because you and others who post here do it every day. They share from the heart and if you have been there, you understand at a deeper level. A burden share is a burden lessened.
Semper Fi,
Tom "TJ" Miller

Craig,

Some may remember the small three inch reel of recording tapes good for an hour with their own mailing cases made by 3M corp. A while back I found a small stack of the boxes with tapes in each one in my memory box. One of the tapes was the one I sent my folks from Khe Sanh after being in the thick of it for a month. I felt strange as I listen to the tape because time blurs your memory of things you really do not want to remember.

Also it was funny to listen to my mother and father, plus my younger sisters making small talk. Both my brother and I sent tapes on a monthly back home in Boston. My folks would record on any tape that they had for about 15 minutes. The rest of the tape was my brother's voice. My only problem was that I had to go to the city library to find a machine to listen to the tapes.
Chuck Gerrior Ret USAF Team 83-67, 1st Mobile Com Group

Craig,

My Mom kept all off the letters she received from me (VMGR 152) Ronny V (G/2/26) and Jack Lambert (ASP#1) I still have some of them, and the envelopes. Ronny wrote about not being able to get mail in or out of Khe Sanh, I wrote one where the pen jumped off the page when a flare exploded right over my head, and Jack wrote about how lucky he felt to be at Khe Sanh in 68 as apposed to 67, when the weather was worse.. His letter was dated 3/15/68.

SF
Ron Main

Craig,

Your post reminds me of my own plight with letters I sent home. My parents had saved every letter I sent. They even numbered them as they received them. For many years I did not care to read them either. Several years ago I did read the letters and found them to be mostly uninteresting and lacking any substance. I wrote mostly of how my moral was and benign things, such as digging bunkers and filling sandbags. I would talk of friends and how I missed home, milk and moms apple pie. There was never anything about the firefights, the shelling or the death of friends and how I felt about these things. I wish now that I had written about these things. So that I could have a better understanding of the person I was then. The gory details were left out to spare my folks additional worry.

One letter had a dark blotch on it that could have been mistaken for a dried blood. I circled it and wrote underneath, "don't worry mom this is not blood". As I looked at the letter, checked the date and realized that it was the stain of red clay from Khe Sanh. Many letters were dirty and poorly written as often times I would write them at night with little light. I know that my lack of detail did little to lesson their fears as they had told me that Khe Sanh was on the news nightly. It was during this time that my Dad wrote his Khe Sanh symphony.

Still, the letters were good to read as they gave me a better perspective of time line. Each envelope was marked with my return address that included the platoon and company I was with at the time. They also helped me to remember certain things that I had completely forgotten. I could picture myself sitting in a bunker or fighting hole as I wrote those letters they helped me to remember the strife and hardships of those days and how I overcame them and somehow survived.

My first impression was how could I have written such dribble. I came to realize that the babbling miss spelled sloppy letters were from a scared teenager, who for the first time in his life was on his own. Far away from home and had no idea what the next day or hour would bring. Loved ones don't care how you write, just that you write. Remember how important mail was for us, my guess is that they were just as important to our loved one. Read them, Craig, remember, and never forget. They are part of who you were and what you are now.
God Bless

Gene Weresow

Craig,
Years ago when my parents passed and I was cleaning out my mother's "papers," I was hoping to find the letters I sent home. I do have newspaper clippings, Life and Newsweek magazines of the siege but no letters. My interest in the letters is to look back at the person I was then and to reflect on the scared kid I was and how that experience helped shape me into the person I came to be. I also wrote in general terms, such as "things are a little tough now, but I'm OK." We all know of guys who wrote the same thing and the casualty assistance officers arrived at their house before their letter did.

Knowing it is a personal thing for you, reading your old letters could bring on a whole series of emotions and memories, some better than others. Perhaps reading them would bring some type of "closure" to this thing. I just wish I had mine to read. Best wishes and Semper Fi.

Nick Romanetz

Craig,
After my first wife passed away in 87 I was going through some boxes came upon letters that I had sent to her while I was in Vietnam. To my surprise she had kept every one of them and had them in order as to when I had sent them to her. It took me a couple of months to get up the courage to read them. But I am glad that I did. As I read them I could see a young boy being scared to death at first, but as the months

went by I could see a young boy turning into a man much older than his time. It took me maybe 2 to 3 months to read all of them, but now as I look back, I am glad that I did. Some people don't want to do this and it is easy to understand. Just my 2 cents worth.

Russell Turner
A Co 1/26

INTERESTING ARTICLE ON GUN POSSESSION FOR THOSE WITH PTSD

Veterans Disarmament Bill

Could Come Before the Senate at Any Time
Gun Owners of America (GOA) provides Senators with several pro-gun amendments

Wednesday, September 12, 2007

The Senate could bring up the Veterans Disarmament Bill at any time, as a result of its passage in the Judiciary Committee a few weeks ago. The bill—introduced by F-rated Representative Carolyn McCarthy and Senator Patrick Leahy—is ready to come to the floor.

Gun Owners of America delivered draft amendments to every Senate office yesterday, providing important changes that must be made to the bill. Among others, the most important amendment would make it clear that veterans suffering from PTSD are NOT prohibited persons, and thus, are not to be denied the ability to purchase a firearm simply because of emotional problems resulting from their service to this country.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart is opposed to the McCarthy-Leahy bill, having stated on June 18 of this year, that "For the first time the legislation, if enacted, would statutorily impose a lifetime gun ban on battle-scarred veterans."

Military veterans are justifiably concerned that this bill will legitimize the very thing that President Clinton did over seven years ago, when his administration added 83,000 names of veterans—suffering from maladies such as PTSD—into the NICS background check system.

Proponents of the bill argue that this bill gives veterans a mechanism for getting their names off of the prohibited person list. That's like giving a mugger access to your home, but then stating you can hire a lawyer and pay THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS of dollars to eventually (maybe) get your stolen items back.

If the proponents are right—that this bill will actually help gun owners—then surely they won't object to friendly amendments that are designed to make it unmistakably clear that military veterans or grownups who suffered with ADHD as children will never be denied the ability to purchase a firearm, simply because they once had a "determination" from an anti-gun shrink that said there was the MINISCULE possibility that they could pose a danger to themselves or others.

You can be sure that if the McCarthy-Leahy bill passes, it will just be a first step. Consider some of the bigoted statements made by celebrities and politicians which not only show their contempt for gun owners but their pompous thinking which leads them to believe that we are all crazy for wanting to own a gun:

Ø "I don't know that he's mentally qualified to own that gun."—Democrat Presidential candidate Joe Biden, insulting a YouTube viewer during a debate after the man referred to his semi-auto as his "baby." (July 25, 2007).

Ø "Isn't it possible that we all have that bit of insanity in us? That's why I'm for gun control . . . I don't really believe that a human being who feels [things] should have the option [that is, access to a gun] at their fingertips."—Actress Jodie Foster, quoted in a Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence press release (August 20, 2007).

Ø And then there're the studies which will be, no doubt, used by liberal anti-gunners to strip away the gun rights from more and more law-abiding citizens, using the pretext that a shrink's diagnosis proves these people shouldn't own guns:

Ø "A quarter of the Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans treated with U.S. government-funded health care have been diagnosed with a mental disorder, according to a study published Monday."—AFP news (March 12, 2007).

Ø "The number of American children and adolescents treated for bipolar disorder increased 40-fold from 1994 to 2003, researchers report today in the most comprehensive study of the controversial diagnosis. Experts say the number has almost certainly risen further since 2003."—New York Times (September 4, 2007).

Even before the studies started rolling in, gun haters were already working the legal loopholes as best they could. When the Veterans Administration got caught adding veterans' names into the NICS system during the Clinton presidency, they defended their actions by saying it was "required by law"—a statement which was just flat out false.

But it's notable to hear what a spokesman for the VA said in an interview with World Net Daily on June 27, 2000. He said the most common way of finding a veteran "incompetent" is when he or she receives a formal rating of incompetency from a VA panel of medical representatives or from "a duly authorized VA medical center, government agency, or even a PRIVATE PHYSICIAN." (Emphasis added.)

That's what HR 2640 is all about. McCarthy and Leahy (and others like Senator Chuck Schumer) are forging the legal chains that will be used to keep hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of decent, law-abiding Americans from owning guns . . . not because of what a court rules, but because of what ONE INDIVIDUAL says.

Over two hundred years ago, Patrick Henry warned about the "chains" that were being forged to enslave them. If he were here today, would he not warn us again?

Thankfully, there are many of you who are sounding the alarm. State groups from all over the nation are pumping out alerts to supplement what GOA is doing at the national level. Just yesterday, the New Hampshire Firearms Coalition (NHFC) called its members to action, stating that HR 2640 is a Trojan Horse, which sounds justified on the outside with promises of keeping "mental defectives" from having firearms. But when one takes a closer look at the details of the bill, the group said, it reveals "a huge expansion in those who will become a prohibited person; an expansion that could potentially include most Americans."

In addition to pointing out how many shrinks could prohibit average Americans from owning guns, NHFC points out that many pediatricians could make similar anti-gun "determinations" (using the language of the bill) to disarm their patients—since after all, these docs believe that "any household with firearms is 'dangerous,' even if they are properly stored."

Good point.

ACTION:

1. **Stay informed:** GOA has a mammoth section on it's website which both gives the specifics of the Veterans Disarmament Act and answers the claims made by supporters of the bill. Please go to http://www.gunowners.org/netb.htm to get more information, including the proposed GOA amendments that were delivered to each Senator on Tuesday.

2. **Alert others:** Forward this alert to pro-gun friends and family and ask them to take action as well.

3. **Take action:** Please contact your Senators, even if you have already done so. You can use the pre-written message below and send it as an e-mail by visiting the GOA Legislative Action Center at http://www.gunowners.org/activism.htm (where phone and fax numbers are also available).

----- Pre-written letter -----

Dear Senator:
I oppose the Veterans Disarmament Act, which is being pushed by Representative Carolyn McCarthy (HR 2640) and Sen. Patrick Leahy. This bill will expand the 1993 Brady Law and disarm hundreds of thousands of combat veterans, among others.

I understand that Gun Owners of America (GOA) distributed several amendments recently to every senatorial office to address the mistaken arguments that supporters of the bill have. I also understand that proponents of this bill are claiming it will actually help gun owners.

They argue that this bill gives veterans a mechanism for getting their names off of the prohibited person list. That's like giving a mugger access to your home, but then stating you can hire a lawyer and pay thou-

sands upon thousands of dollars to eventually (maybe) get your stolen items back.

Well, if the proponents are right—that this bill will actually help gun owners--then surely they won't object to friendly amendments that are designed to make it unmistakably clear that military veterans or grownups who suffered with ADHD as children will never be denied the ability to purchase a firearm, simply because they once had a "determination" from an anti-gun shrink that said there was the MINISCULE possibility that they could pose a danger to themselves or others. That is what the GOA amendments are designed to do.

I still believe that the Brady Law has done more to register gun owners and deny guns from of law-abiding Americans than to keep guns out of criminals' hands. But adopting these amendments will at least prevent an anti-gun administration from doing what the Clintons did in 2000 when the Veterans Administration added the names of some 83,000 veterans into the NICS system.

Gun Owners of America E-Mail Alert
8001 Forbes Place, Suite 102, Springfield, VA 22151
Phone: (703) 321-8585
FAX: (703) 321-8408
URL:http://www.gunowners.org/

All Servicemen & Women Aren't "Military Heroes" Saluting Our Veterans

On this Memorial Day, I'm thinking about the comment "military hero" made so casually by any of us who have never been in battle when referring to our troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's incorrect! The dictionary defines a "hero" as: "A person noted for feats of courage or nobility of purpose, one who has risked or sacrificed his or her life." That doesn't apply to 99 percent of the American soldiers who have ever shouldered a rifle. A "military hero" to me is a soldier who charged off a landing craft at Omaha Beach into weathering German machine-gun fire from the cliffs above. With his buddies dying all about him on D-Day, this soldier survived and fights his way through Europe during the final 11 months of World War II in Europe. Finally he stood at the Rhine River in Germany, watching the advance of Russian troops moving westward during the closing days of the war. That's a "military hero."

A "military hero" might also be a member of the 101st Airborne Division stuck in a foxhole at the Battle of the Bulge during the freezing cold winter of 1944, fighting the unexpected advance of the German army in the biggest battle on the Western Front during World War II. Under armed and under clothed, not freezing to death was an accomplishment, and holding the line against a fantastically well equipped German army was almost superhuman.

A "military hero" might also be all of the 177 B-24 "Liberator" bomber crews in the 9th Air Force who flew the low level raid on the German oil refineries at Ploesti, Romania on Aug. 1, 1943. German antiaircraft guns and fighters shot down 54 of these bombers. Pilots of five of the American heavy bombers received the Medal of Honor for their actions "above and beyond the call of duty" while participating in that attack. A "military hero" might also be any of those "leather-necks" who charged ashore at Iwo Jima on Feb. 19, 1945, and spent the next 36 days taking that eight square mile island away from the Japanese. Very few Marines survived the entire battle without being wounded: Some 6,825 American servicemen died on that god forsaken volcanic island, and 19,189 more were wounded The Japanese lost almost all 22,000 of their defenders; only 216 enemy soldiers were captured.

A "military hero" might also be the survivors of the aircraft carrier USS Yorktown that went down during the battle of Midway that began June 6, 1942 and ended four days later. By then, four Japanese carriers had been sent to the bottom by American air power. Carrier based planes from the Yorktown played a key role before she was put out of commission by enemy planes. The Yorktown was sunk after the battle by a torpedo from a Japanese submarine while under tow. This battle was a turning point in the Pacific theater. Never again did the Imperial Japanese Navy go on the offensive in World War II.

A "military hero" might also be any of the members of the 1st Marine Division who marched to Chosin Reservoir and back during the freezing winter of 1950 in the early months of the Korean War. The division was up against a numerically superior army of North Korean and Chinese soldiers who had them

surrounded most of the time. Like the Battle of the Bulge five years earlier, it took a lot of effort in the subzero weather for a Marine not to freeze to death. At one point during the battle, Maj. Gen. O. E Smith, the division commander, was ordered by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, supreme Allied commander in Korea, to retreat. His response: "Retreat hell! We're surrounded and we're just advancing in another direction."

A "military hero" might also be an Army, Navy, Air Force or Marine aviator shot down over enemy territory during the Vietnam War. Many of these pilots, like U.S. Sen. John McCain, were captured and spent years in solitary confinement in a North Vietnam POW camp. In McCain's case, he was offered his freedom by his captures, apparently because he was the son and the grandson of two U.S. Navy admirals. He wouldn't consider it and came hobbling off the U.S. military transport plane in 1974 with the rest of our repatriated POWs from the "Hanoi Hilton" who were true "military heroes."

A "military hero" might also be a Marine who took part in 'the 77 day battle involving their artillery base at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam between Jan. 21 and April 1, 1968. Gen. William Westmoreland took on Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, the legendary North Vietnamese commander. Some 6,000 U.S. Marines were surrounded by an estimated 30,000 North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong troops. The Marines lost 730 killed and 2,642 wounded. It's estimated enemy losses were in excess of 10,000. The siege of Khe Sanh was finally broken when a re-supply column broke through to the besieged fire base.

There are only three recipients of the Medal of Honor that I know about that have any connection to the Sun's circulation area: The late PFC Douglas T. Jacobson, USMC, WW II, Port Charlotte; PFC Hector Cafferata, USMC, Korea, Venice; the late Lt. Clyde Lassen, USN, Vietnam, Englewood. I had the privilege of interviewing Cafferata a few years ago. He was a green Marine recruit in Korea who took part in the Chosin Reservoir campaign. Although badly wounded, he and his buddy held off a hoard of attacking enemy troops during the bitter cold fighting at the reservoir. "I'm no hero," he assured me. "All I did was do my best to save me and my buddies butts." The next morning they found more than 100 dead enemy soldiers in front of their position. Cafferata's commendation says there were only a handful of enemy dead in front of him. Asked about the discrepancy the platoon leader who recommended Cafferata for the Medal of Honor told me/Nobody would believe how many dead there were in front of his spot on the line so we reduced the number."

The next time you use the phrase, "military heroes," make sure that's what the person is you're talking about. To use it indiscriminately is to cheapen its meaning for true "military heroes."

Contact Him

If you're a veteran with a story or you have a friend who has a tale to tell about his part in any war or veterans activity, give Don -Moore a call at 941-681-3000 or 877-827-6204. You can Email: moore@sun-herald.com, or fax: 941-426 3576. To send a letter, write:
Englewood Sun, 167 W Dearborn St., Englewood, FL 34223.

POETRY

A Warriors Heart

Those that say a soldier only wants to fight,
knows nothing of the warriors heart.
It is true he will not hesitate to fight,
a war he did not start.
Soldiers aren`t the ones who decide to go to war,
but are willing to go and bare that scar.
A soldier is not eager to kill,
he doesn't really want to fight.
He does so out of honor and duty,
he does so when the cause is right.
Not many know it but its true,
few things are as fragile as a warriors heart.
During the battles he is hard and cold,
but his torment comes to him late at night.
Often horrible things happen he can not control,
that is when all the terrible stories get told.
In battle often there is no time to think,
all he can do is react.
When it`s over and all is calm,
right or wrong it`s not possible to take anything back
So say what you will, think what you want,
but make sure you get this part right,
few things are as fragile as a warriors heart.

Rick Tam

GENERAL PACE 2nd PLATOON REUNITED

By Cpl. Ryan Blaich, II Marine Expeditionary Force (FWD)

KARMAH, Iraq (Sept. 5, 2007) -- Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Peter Pace, made a unique visit to Marines stationed here, Sept. 4. As far as meetings with four-star generals usually go, this event was much less formal. It seemed more like a gathering of relatives, a way for Gen. Pace to connect the hardened war fighters of today to the heroes of his past. It was evident he saw himself, and his old unit, in the Marines who stood in front of him.

Nearly 40 years have passed since then 2nd Lt. Pace first stepped into a combat zone as a platoon commander. The year was 1968 and the battle was infamously known as the Tet Offensive in Vietnam. It was there he battled against communism and the hand of fate, which made a profound impression on Gen. Pace's commitment to country and Corps. The event marked a time in his life never to be forgotten throughout his career as a Marine infantry officer.

Decades later and less than a month before he retires from office, Gen. Pace returned to the battlefield to join the same platoon of Marines he led into combat as a final salute to the Corps and to those who have ever served in 2nd platoon, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division.

Gen. Pace stood stoically in front of men who have seen many recent battles, some just weeks prior. He shared much of his past with them as they stood silently, gathered around weight benches and dumbbells at their outpost, known as Observation Post 3, near downtown Karmah. Only the hum of a lone generator could be heard as Gen. Pace not only recalled the full rank and names of the men who perished under his command, but his fight to make sense of it all as well.

"Guys to the left of me got shot. Guys to the right of me got blown up and nothing happened to me at all. I didn't understand that. I got out of Vietnam without even a scratch on me," Gen. Pace said. "But, I made a promise to myself back then that I would continue to serve in the Corps, in their memory, and try to do my job out of respect for them." Gen. Pace said he would only retire after he stopped getting promoted, and in his words, "It worked out OK."...

Read the rest to understand what a devastating blow to the military and the US Marine Corps that the PC police and the media have given us.

...Most people would agree it worked out a little better than OK.

On Sept. 30, 2005, Gen. Pace was appointed to his present position, making him the first Marine to ever serve as the president's top military advisor. He also serves as the military advisor to the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council and the Department of Homeland Security. Until recently, no other Marine had ever made it to vice chairman, except Gen. Pace.

Despite the long list of successes on Gen. Pace's resume, he never forgot where and with whom it all started.

"After just over 40 years of service, when I do get out, I will still owe the Marines of 2nd platoon, Golf Company, more than I could ever repay," he said. "I'm so proud to be here with you."

The platoon seemed in awe, almost speechless by his visit. Maybe they were trying to digest the idea of a top-ranking, four-star general who humbly made it his priority to meet each of them individually, hand out coins and take personal photographs while thanking them for their sacrifices.

As Marines maneuvered around the outdoor gym for a group photo with the most distinguished member of their platoon, Gen. Pace said, "I'ld love to be able to show my guys from Golf, 2nd platoon, your picture. I know they'll be proud of you," referring to the Marines of his Vietnam platoon, who he still visits.

It is this close knit bond between Marines, officers and enlisted, which Gen. Pace said is the foundation to the health of the Corps.

After each Marine had their photograph taken with the general, got their coin and asked their questions, he had one final gift to give, a knife. Both symbolic and traditional, the K-bar knife has been a staple of Marine combat gear for generations. It was this he chose to bestow upon the latest platoon leader of 2nd platoon.

"I wanted to give you this. From one 2nd platoon leader to another," he said. "Out of respect for who you are, out of envy for your future time in our Corps and out of envy for your opportunity to lead these Marines."

1st Lt. Chad Cassady, a former sergeant, was the proud owner of the new knife and said he felt privileged to receive such a gift from a man he has long respected. Cassady had met Gen. Pace nearly two years ago at the Marine Corps Ball ceremony, not long after Gen. Pace was elected to chairman. He did not think their paths would ever cross again.

"I didn't think I'd ever see him again," Cassady said. "I never could have imagined we shared a connection."

Cassady does not plan to use the weapon in combat, but instead will proudly display the grand memento in his house. Not everyone there got a K-bar, but perhaps was able to take away a sense of belonging.

As the platoon's Corpsman, Seaman Kyle Bourgeois, put it, "I just feel fortunate."

Silent admiration filled the eyes of lance corporals and captains alike and everyone present received something less tangible than a steel blade or a metal coin. Gen. Pace was handing to each of them an item that never fades or gets dull; a sense of pride and the relentless will to succeed.

The bonds formed and shared between Marines, units, and platoons are timeless.

"Forty years from now, you'll remember these officer's names and they'll remember yours," Gen. Pace said. "A lot of stuff is going to happen between now and then. You are going to have a lot of experiences, most of it is going to be a blur, but you remember this, you'll remember each other and I'll bet you, you'll find ways to get together."

"It'll be very difficult for me to walk away," he said. "I was shaking hands the day before yesterday in Afghanistan and a soldier came through and said, 'Sir, thank you for your service. We'll take it from here.' As I look at you, that's spot on. You have taken it."

Robert A. Hall

INCOMING

COMPASSIOIN

By Craig W. Tourte

More Dreams

Today I found myself talking to this man I have known for over 15 years. We have not been good friends, just happened to work together a few years ago. I knew that he had been in the Army in Vietnam, had a purple heart and had a rather rough time of it but he didn't discuss this with anyone and to tell you the truth when I worked with him was prior to my involvement in this whole Khe Sanh thing and before my first reunion and my understanding of PTSD.

Of course a lot of things have changed for me during these past five years, getting into the PTSD program thanks to Neil Kenny and Tom Horchler and a lot of others I have met at the Khe Sanh reunions. I have been able to get a handle on this thing and manage pretty well now, in fact I have helped others to understand, like others before have helped me. Anyway, this guy and I are having this discussion about Vietnam, I wait for the man next to me to leave, him not being a Vietnam Veteran I didn't want to say anything around him because I knew that he would not have understood our discussion and if he heard our conversation he most likely would have misconstrued what we were talking about.

I start the conversation by asking, "You got a heart in Vietnam, didn't you." He answers, "Yes I did." I tell him my story, about sitting next to this former Marine I knew, telling him I was about to go the my first Khe Sanh reunion but not really looking forward to hearing a bunch of old men talk about the war because it was not something I thought about any more. The guy looks at me and says, "Craig, Vietnam is something I think about all of the time." You have heard this story before from me, but I wanted to lay the foundation for you. When he said this I was shocked knowing that in fact I had thought about Vietnam every day and until he said that to me, I hadn't realized I had in fact had dreams or thought about Vietnam.

Back to this guy I used to work with. I tell him the same story and then I look at him and say, "Those dreams I had every morning and every night are the same dream that you have now, aren't they?" I was

not really sure what kind of reaction I would get from this guy; I mean he is one of those rather formal individuals who keeps his emotions to himself. He looks at me kind of in shock and says, "How do you know what dreams I have?" My response is, "I know because they are the same dreams I and ever other Vietnam Veteran I know has had." He swallows hard and tears come to his eyes. Now this man is 63 years old and it's in a public place in the middle of the afternoon and he has never talked to anyone about his experience before. I was not quite prepared for his response, but his starts to tell me about his experience in Vietnam and how it has affected life. How the smell of the dirt in his yard reminds him of the tunnels he used to go into. How when the top of the tunnel touched his back it scared him and he is always reminded of this when he feels and smells dirt.

We talked some more and I gave him my email address and telephone number and told him to think about what we talked about and to call me later if he thought he might like to file with the VA and perhaps talk further and that I knew what it was like to feel all alone and be in our world, you know the world where you can't explain the pain to anyone else?

The point of all of this is that I think it is important to have compassion for others who are, even after all of these years, still trying to get a handle on all this stuff. It's important for them to know that they are not alone and that what they have dreamed, felt or are going through, is a road that many of us have already traveled.

POETRY

Tell Me Why The Bullet Passed Me By

I heard it pass right next to my head,
why did that bullet pass me by.
No one will ever be able to tell me,
so I'll always wonder why.
It went right by with a rush,
it hit the guy next to me in his head.
Was it not my time,
was it his instead.
Only thing I know is I'm still here,
and he is still dead.
So many near misses,
too many too close to call.
Why did those bullets pass me by,
now their names are on the wall.
I can still see their faces, they look so young,
it some times makes me cry.
No one has the answer,
so I'll always wonder why.
There are a lot of theories and explanations,
but no one really knows why.
Yes those bullets passed me by,
yes sometimes it makes me cry.
I will never know why.

Rick Tam

MEMORIAL DEDICATED TO RAY PRITTIE

Dear Mr. Eichler,

The friends and colleagues of Ray Prittie at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power dedicated a bronze plaque to Ray's memory on Memorial Day, May 28, 2007. We over-collected for the plaque by $196. Ray's family asked that we give the extra money to the Khe Sanh Veterans Association. Therefore, enclosed is a check in the amount of $196 for the Association's general fund.

Please feel free to email me or my colleague John









Miller if you would like more information about the ceremony for Ray.

My email address is wayne.bamossy@ladwp and John's is john.miller@ladwp.com
Sincerely,
Wayne A. Bamossy
Waterworks Engineer
Owens Lake Dust Mitigation Project
Los Angles Department of Water & Power

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE HONORS MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO



In a special ceremony held at the Sand Lake Elementary School, Averill Park, NY the **AVERILL PARK POST OFFICE was** Dedicated in the name and loving memory of **Major George Quamo** KIA 14 April 1968.

There is currently an effort to have him put in for the Medal of Honor for his rescue of the Lang Vei survivors (See Battalion of Kings, Page 163)

MEMORIAL SERVICE HELD FOR ANTHONY PEPPER KIA 06 APRIL 1968 HILL 558 WITH GOLF CO 2/26

My brother, Anthony John Pepper (Tony) served with Golf Company 2/26 and was killed April 6, 1968 at Khe Sanh. I would love to hear from anyone who was there, who might have known him, or was nearby on that day. I am writing a book about him and would love anyone's thoughts. He was never sent home. We had a memorial service for him at Arlington this past April. Several of the Marines he served with came

and paid their respects. It was truly wonderful.

SEMPER FI and God Bless,
Carrie Pepper

HISTORY: In April 1968, Cpl. James M. "Jim" Trimble and PFC Anthony J. "Tony" Pepper were members of Company G, which was conducting a search and destroy operation to interdict enemy activity moving from Laos into the northwestern provinces of South Vietnam. When North Vietnam began to increase its military strength in South Vietnam, NVA and Viet Cong troops again intruded on neutral Laos for sanctuary, as the Viet Minh had done during the war with the French some years before. This border road was used by the Communists to transport weapons, supplies and troops from North Vietnam into South Vietnam, and was frequently no more than a path cut through the jungle covered mountains. US forces used all assets available to them to stop this flow of men and supplies from moving south into the war zone.

On 6 April 1968, Company G engaged a large communist force in heavy combat on a grassy hillside overlooking and in view of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The battle site was located approximately one mile west of Route 608, less than two miles northwest of the combat base, six miles northwest of the city of Khe Sanh, nine miles east of the South Vietnamese/Lao border and 24 miles south of the demilitarized zone (DMZ), Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam.

Cpl. Trimble and PFC Pepper quickly established a fighting position within a bomb crater. During the vicious battle that raged around them, several Marines were killed and wounded, and the bomb crater in which the two Marines were located took a direct hit from a mortar round. After several unsuccessful attempts were made to recover Jim Tremble and Tony Pepper's remains by surviving members of Company G, their unit was forced to withdraw from the grassy hill under fire.

On 7 April 1968, US forces returned to the battle site. During an extensive search and recovery (SAR) operation, the unit recovered the bodies of nine Americans, but found no sign of Cpl. Trimble of PFC Pepper in or around the area. At the time the formal search was terminated, Jim Tremble and Tony Pepper were declared Killed in Action/Body Not Recovered.

On 24 June 1993, a joint American/Vietnamese team under the auspices of the Joint Task Force for Full Accounting (JTFFA) traveled to the area of loss where Company G had been engaged in combat. Team members interviewed local residents, but located no witnesses who had information pertaining to this case. The team also traveled to the battle site to conduct a surface search for the missing Marines, but found no remains or personal effects belonging to either Cpl. Trimble or PFC Pepper.

After completing the surface search, the team determined that Jim Trimble and Tony Pepper died as a result of a direct mortar hit during the battle in which nine others were killed; and that the day after the battle, the area was thoroughly searched and the remains of the other nine men were recovered and subsequently identified. Further, during the original search, no trace of either Marine was found in or around the bomb crater. Based on these facts, the JTFFA team determined, "It is unreasonable to expect that bone splinters could be located 25 years after the incident in a case such as this. The remains of each individual are unrecoverable."

The fate of Jim Trimble and Tony Pepper is not in doubt and there is virtually no chance that their remains are recoverable today. Above all else, these men have the right not to be forgotten by the nation for which they gave their lives.





FLAG ARRIVES



RIFLE SALUTE



FOLDING OF FLAG



CARRIE PEPPER WITH FLAG



CHAPLAIN & GUNNY FINAL SALUTE



2/26 MARINE VETERANS WITH CARRIE PEPPER



THE 26TH MARINE WOMEN

OBITUARY

MOTHER OF KSV MICHAEL WORTH ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A

SMATHERS, LILLIAN WEBSTER - 86, passed away peacefully, with her family beside her, on Friday, April 20, 2007 at Givens Health Care, her caring home for the past five years. She was preceded in death by her husband, Hugh Heron Smathers. Born Lillian Sitman Webster in Knoxville, Tennessee on September 25, 1920, she was the daughter of the late Cora Blanton Davis and Frank Watkins Webster. She attended the University of Tennessee and was a member of Chi Omega Fraternity. Lillian was a former member of Church Street Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church of Gatlinburg. She was an active member, for many years, of the Smoky Mountain Hiking Club, the Southern Appalachian High-Lands Conservancy, and the Retired Citizens of Gatlinburg. Lillian leaves a daughter, Joan Worth of Asheville; a son, Michael Worth and special friend, Lucille Biscaglio of Des Plaines, Ill; granddaughter, Juliellen Sarver of Alexandria Va.; grandson, Jon Sarver and wife, Amanda Mills; and two great grandchildren, Emma and Ellis, all of Asheville. She, also, leaves behind the generous and caring staff at Givens Health Care; Smoky the cat; and AJ the dog. A celebration of her life was held at Givens Estates on April 23, 2007 with Reverend Joe Fulk officiating. Her ashes will be placed in the Jonathan Webster Family Cemetery in Mt. Pleasant, Tenn. in June. Memorial donations may be made to Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, 34 Wall Street, Suite 502, Asheville, NC 28801, or to the Animal Companion Fund, Givens Health Care, 600 Barrett Rd., Asheville, NC 28803. Condolences may be sent to Lillian's family at 149 Wyoming Rd., Asheville, NC 28803. Asheville Area Alternative Funeral & Cremation Services is assisting the family.

BOOKS

WELCOME TO VIETNAM "MACHO MAN"

By Craig W. Tourte

I just finished "...Macho Man," written by Ernest Spencer (Copyright 1987 by Corps Press) and as a result, I'm exhausted and mentally drained. I tend to read more than one book at a time, often moving between books as time allows and the mood strikes me. I settled down on the couch the other day, intending to read just a few chapters of Macho Man but I found I couldn't put the darn thing down, it emotionally consumed me. Mr. Spencer was the Commanding Officer of Delta Company, 1st Battalion 26th Marines during the Siege of Khe Sanh, occupation of Hill 881 South, along with other battles and operations. It is his story written in the raw-and to some I'm sure shocking-vernacular of a combat Marine. Within the first few pages we learn that Mr. Spencer's college major was philosophy, which explains his often subtle philosophizing interjections.

When I was a young police officer soon after returning from Vietnam, I used to have dreams about firing my service weapon, I could see the bullet leave the barrel of my weapon in slow motion as another undesirable pointed his gun at me, the dream ended there, never completed, I woke up sweat soaked and agitated. It may have had something to do with almost getting shot on more than one occasion, you know those alley's, armed suspects, dark houses, walking down the hallway, that sort of thing, those days before SWAT was introduced into law enforcement agencies. I thought mine was an unusual dream until I had a conversation with a friend and patrol partner who told me he had the same dream. In fact one day at the range when he fired his weapon the bullet did just that, left the barrel of this service weapon in seemingly slow motion and traveled about 20 feet before it fell onto the ground, a failure on his part to properly maintain his weapon and ammunition.

I have had many dreams about my time at Khe Sanh, none that really frightened me, but they were there none-the-less. Within the last year or so, I have been having the same dream about Vietnam, peculiar since my experience at Khe Sanh has been so long ago. I was thinking I was the only one who has had this dream-as I thought I was the only one who was having that dream when I was a police officer-which seems to be occurring more frequently. What is also odd, I spent my tour in Vietnam as a "Poge" synonymous with REMF. In the chapter titled, "Fantasy," I was shocked to read Mr. Spencer's dream has been my current dream. Mr. Spencer has a right to our dream; I'm not so sure I do. "...I am invisible...I go out alone at night...I make my way silently and invisible through enemy lines..." Why I ask myself, is our dream so similar when our experience was so different?

I was particularly fascinated with the chapter titled, "Crazy." When I was a young police officer and too soon after my experience at Khe Sanh, I responded to a possible bomb at a bank, a common call in those days and a very real possibility in the 70's. I took the package outside and stuck my face real close and then opened it up. I didn't care, what happens, happens. As I now reflect back, I think that act may have been something left over from Vietnam. Mr. Spencer relates in "Crazy,", "...I can't think of any guy who goes through Khe Sanh who doesn't get strange...I never take a guy out of the field for just being strange...I also know I am strange." After all of these years, I now feel vindicated for my occasional "strange" behavior and I am certainly aware that I am still a little crazy.

I thought "Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man" was an outstanding read. Upon reflection, I think regardless of one's MOS or experience there is a little Macho Man is all of us. One cannot read this book without seeing some of themselves in its characters, sense the dangers or recall the sounds of incoming and remember the horrors of war. Mr. Spencer was truly the Macho Man.

There are a few first editions still available, which I am sure Mr. Spencer would be more than happy to send to you if you were to contact him via his address in the directory. I know the publishing and bindings of the hard back editions are expensive to produce, so you might consider that when ordering, but your historical copy will be autographed by the author. The paperback edition can be purchased by going to Amazon or www.corpsproducitons.com. Just for information, I purchased mine and Mr. Spencer was kind enough to autograph it for me.

KHE SANH VETERANS HONOR IRAQ WAR HERO

By Tom Eichler

The KSV had the honor of the presence of one of our newest Marine Veterans from the war in Iraq at our annual Awards Banquet at our reunion in Washington DC. Neil Kenny introduced Sergeant Jeramiah Workman to our organization. Jeramiah was our Honored Guest and warmly welcomed by the membership.

Sergeant Workman was awarded the Navy Cross for his Heroic actions while serving as a squad leader Mortar Section Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion 5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Team 1, 1st Marine Division. His Citation is attached.



Sgt. Jeramiah Workman With Neil Kenny



Sergeant Jeramiah Workman



The President of the United States
Takes Pleasure in Presenting
The Navy Cross
To

Jeremiah W. Workman

Corporal, United States Marine Corps

For Services as Set Forth in the Following

Citation: **For extraordinary heroism while serving as Squad Leader, Mortar Platoon, Weapons Company, 3d Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, 1st Marine Division, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM on 23 December 2004. During clearing operations in Al Fallujah, Iraq, Corporal Workman displayed exceptional situational awareness while organizing his squad to enter a building to retrieve isolated Marines inside. Despite heavy resistance from enemy automatic weapons fire, and a barrage of grenades, Corporal Workman fearlessly exposed himself and laid down a base of fire that allowed the isolated Marines to escape. Outside the house, he rallied the rescued Marines and directed fire onto insurgent positions as he aided wounded Marines in a neighboring yard. After seeing these Marines to safety, he led another assault force into the building to eliminate insurgents and extract more Marines. Corporal Workman again exposed himself to enemy fire while providing cover fire for the team when an enemy grenade exploded directly in front of him causing shrapnel wounds to his arms and legs. Corporal Workman continued to provide intense fire long enough to recover additional wounded Marines and extract them from the besieged building. Although injured, he led a third assault into the building, rallying his team one last time to extract isolated Marines before M1A1 tanks arrived to support the battle. Throughout this fight, Corporal Workman's heroic actions contributed to the elimination of 24 insurgents. By his bold leadership, wise judgment, and complete dedication to duty, Corporal Workman reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.** Home Town: Richwood, Ohio

We have instituted a new magazine section to thank those members who contribute so generously to the" Khe Sanh Veterans. Their contributions allow us to continue to expand and improve our Red Clay magazine. There will be four levels of contributions: DIAMOND over 1,000, PLATINUM over 200-1,000, GOLD over 50-200 and SILVER 20-50. Each member will receive a new membership card, corresponding with their level of contribution

DIAMOND

BODENWEISER, Alec
DAWDY. James H. Jr.
TOURTE, Craig W.
FOSTER, Gary

PLATINUM

ALLEN, Lewis J
CHICONE, Roger D
COLE, James F
FELDMAN, Ed
FRUGONI, Charles
GABLE, Vincent L
PATRICO, Sid
PIERCE, Thomas A
KUBLEY, Lawrence W
SCOTT, Michael D
STACK, Geoffrey L
WELLS, Jack

GOLD

ALLEN, Lewis J
BROPHY, Michael W.
CAMPO, Carl C
CATON, Louis W II
CHANDLER, David
COOK, Michael H
COSNER, Leonard G
COWAN, John R Sr.
DESETA, Louis J
DONAGHY, Richard E
DUBOIS, William H
DUNLAP, Lee C
EICHLER, Thomas J
ESSLINGER, John T
FOLEY, Richard M
GERARD, Charles G
GILLESPIE, Donald J
GRANT, James D
GRIFFIN, Jerry
HALLER, Tom
HANNA, Robert W
HERNANDEZ, John G
JACHIMIAK, Daniel L
KAHENY, John M
KAYLOR, James
KEATON, Thomas
LARSON, Larry L
LEE, Dale
LOERSCH, Phillip E
MAIN, Ronald G
MANNION, Dennis M
MCCANN, Timothy N
MCNEELY, Milton L (Mac)
MERCADO, Saturno
NOYES, Richard C
PADLEY, Shirley W
PATTERSON, Charles E
PELON, Sharon
RAIT, Donald M
ROBBINS, John L
ROGERS, David G
SHANKLIN, Dean E
SLATTERY, Robert J
SMITH, Patrick W
SMITH, Walter J
SPIVEY, Martin B
STUDT, John C
TATE, William R
WACHSMUTH, Robert W
WILKINSON, James B
YATES, William R

SILVER

AMBROSE, James F
APPLEBAUM, Robert S
BOLAND, Thomas
CAMPO, Carl
CHASE, James L
DACKERMANN, William P
DEARING, Richard M
FOSMO, Harold D Jr.
FRUGONI, Charles
HALL, Robert A
HARRIGAN, Joseph E
HICKS, Tommy J
HOFFLER, John T
HOLMGREN, Duane K
KAZIMIR, Edward J
KEATON, Thomas
KENDIG, Dennis R
LARSEN, Larry L
LEWY, Bruce S
MAHONEY, Brian
MAPEL, Randall D
MCCULLOUGH, Richard
MELLON, David L
MEYER, Donald J
MORGAN, Robert I
MOSEBAY, Watson T Jr.
MUDD, Ronald B
NEWSHAM, Robert G
PELON, Sharon
RINEHART, Earlin R
ROMANETZ, Nicholas S
SMITH, Patrick W
STAHL, Richard E
SWEARENGEN, Mark A
TAKACS, Richard E
UPSHAW, Leland
VIVONA, Robert T
WILLIS, Robert E

KHE SANH VETERANS VISIT TO WASHINGTON MEMORIALS

The membership traveled to Washington DC for a visit to the War memorials. Although the entire area was closed to the public for a scheduled 4th of July parade and activities our group was allowed to have a private viewing of the memorials. The group also visited the Iwo Jima Memorial for a group picture.













































JUL 2007





































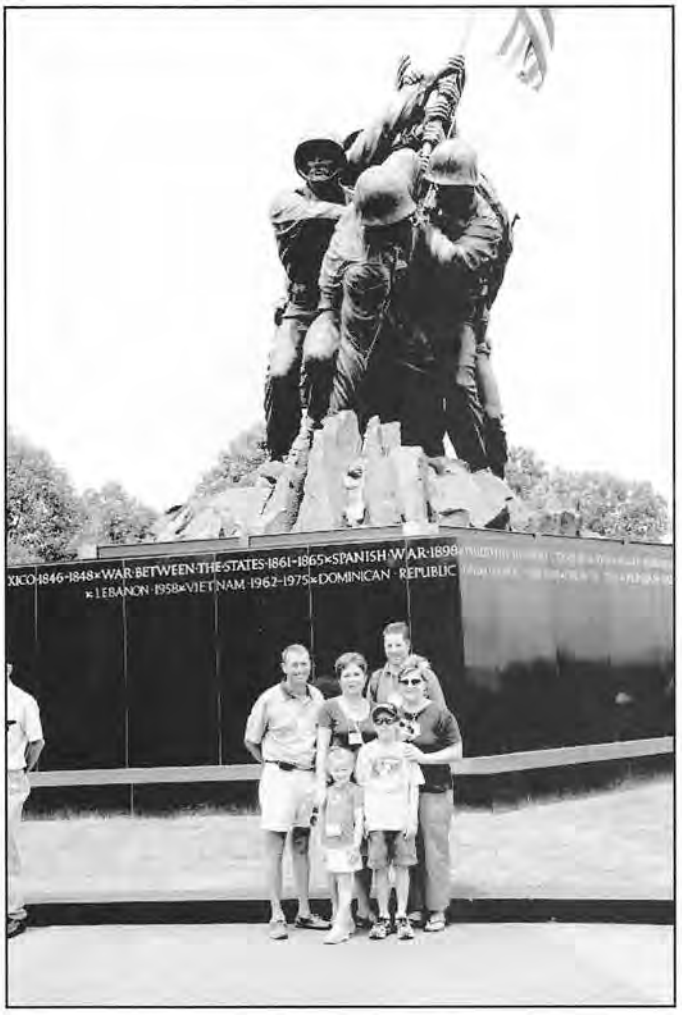
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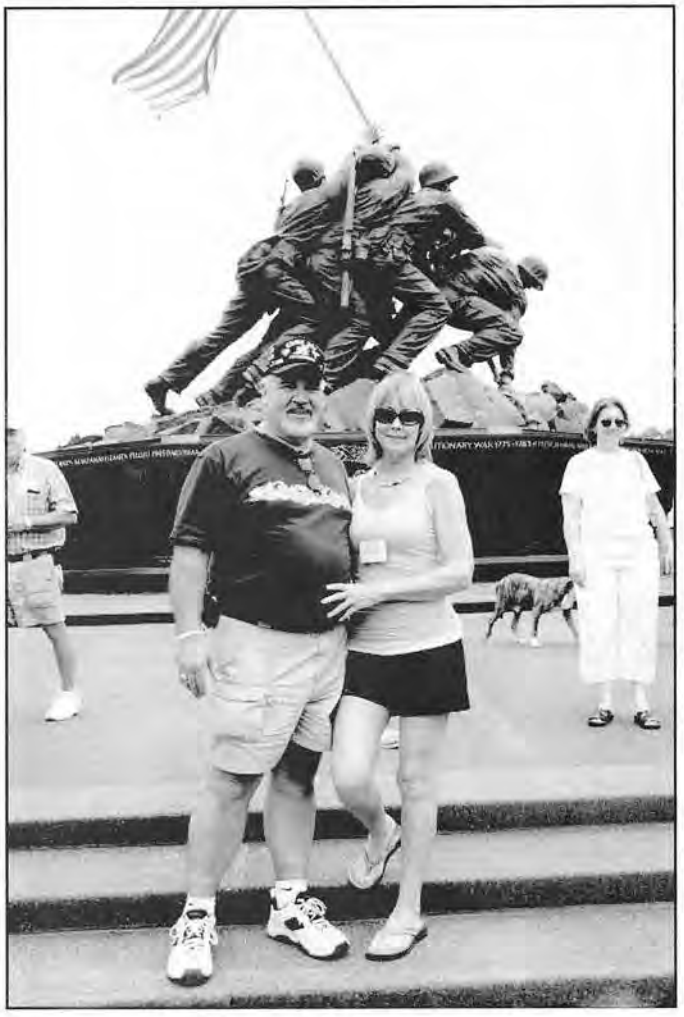

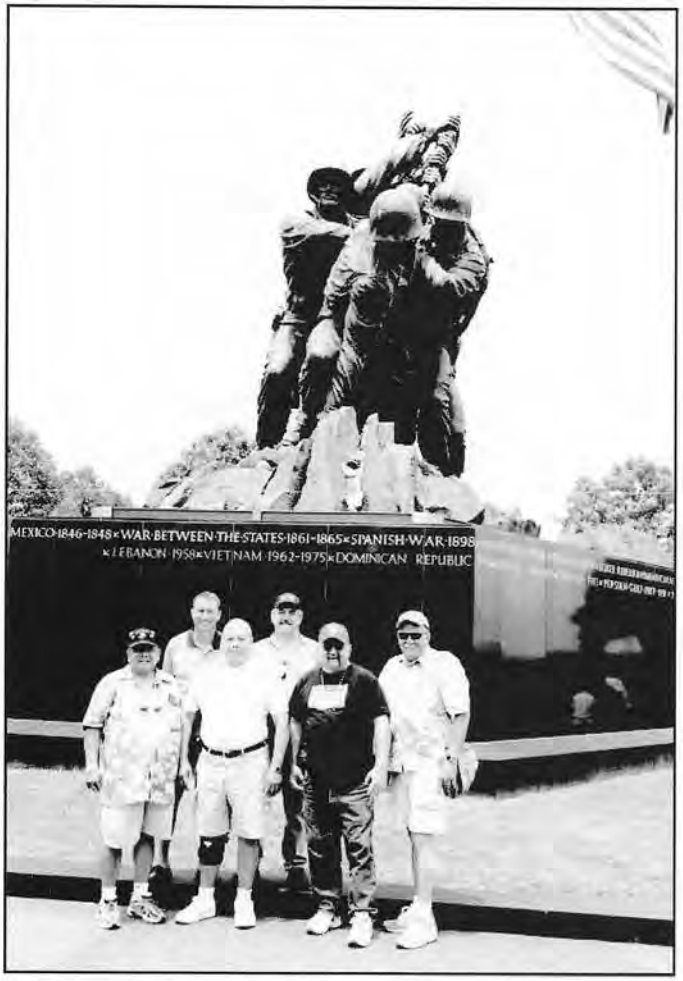
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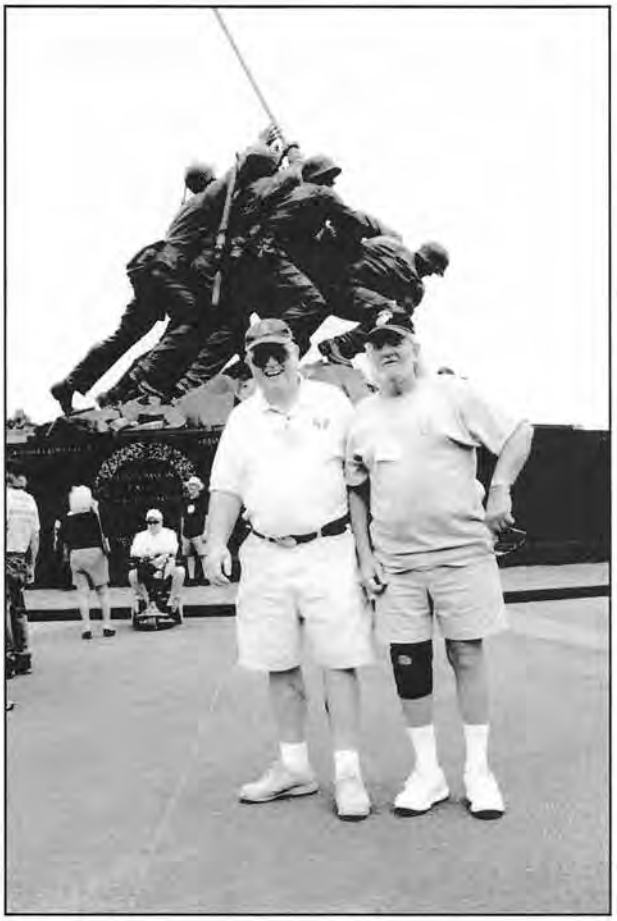



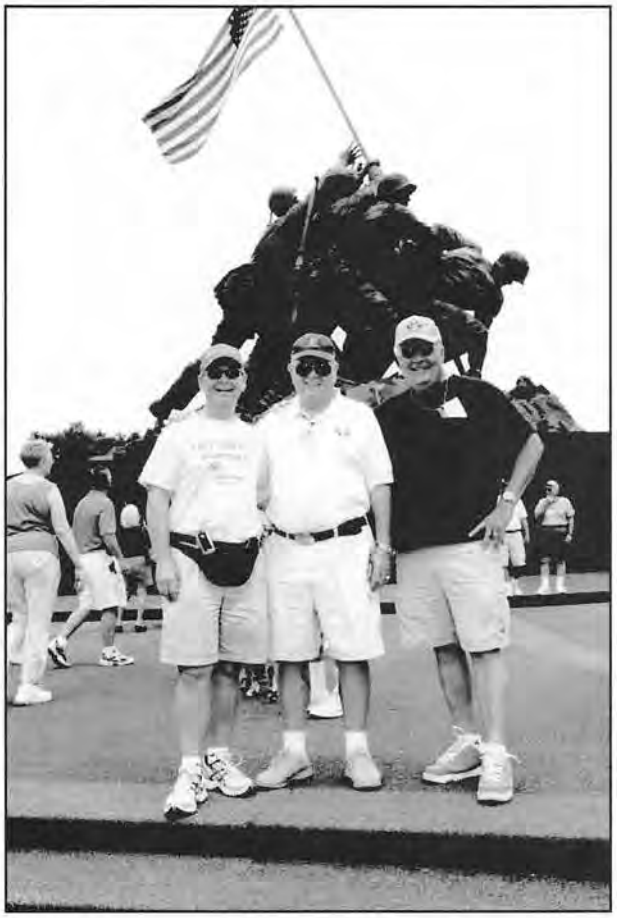

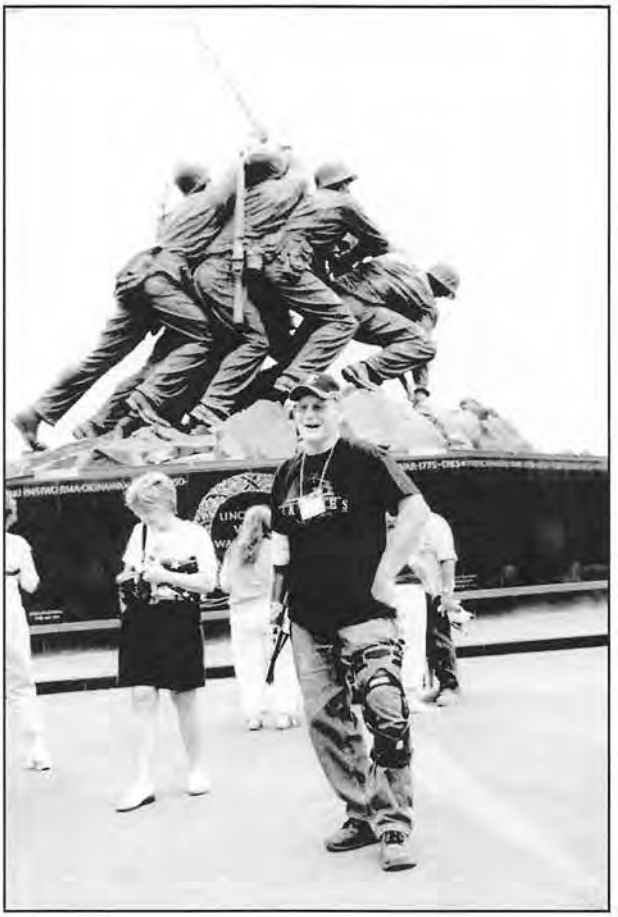

KHE SANH VETERANS VISIT TO THE NEW MARINE CORPS MUSEUM

The Marine Corps Museum Staff closed the New Marine Corps Heritage Museum for a Private viewing by the Khe Sanh Veterans. Here are a few photos of our visit































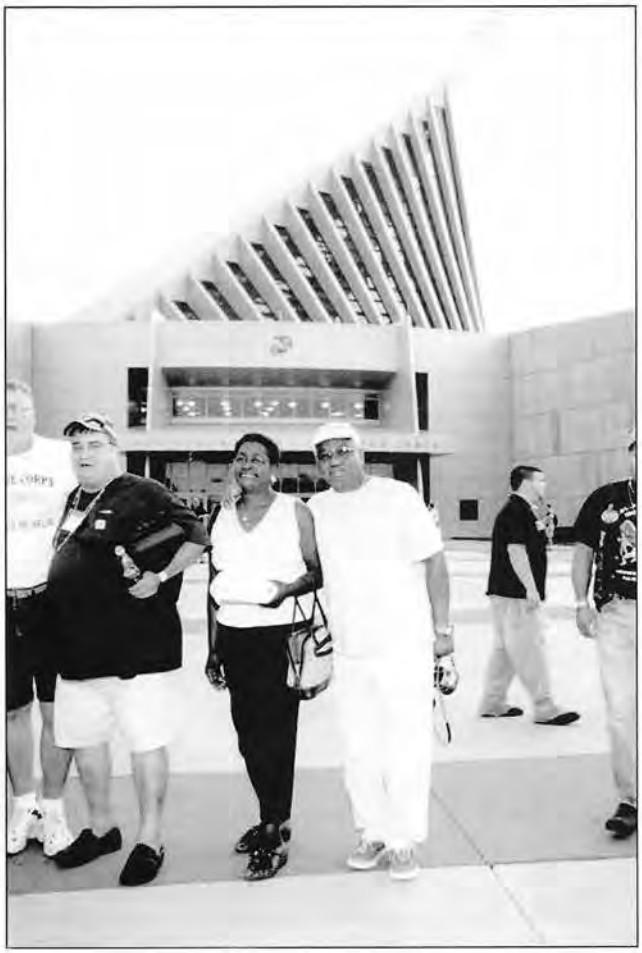

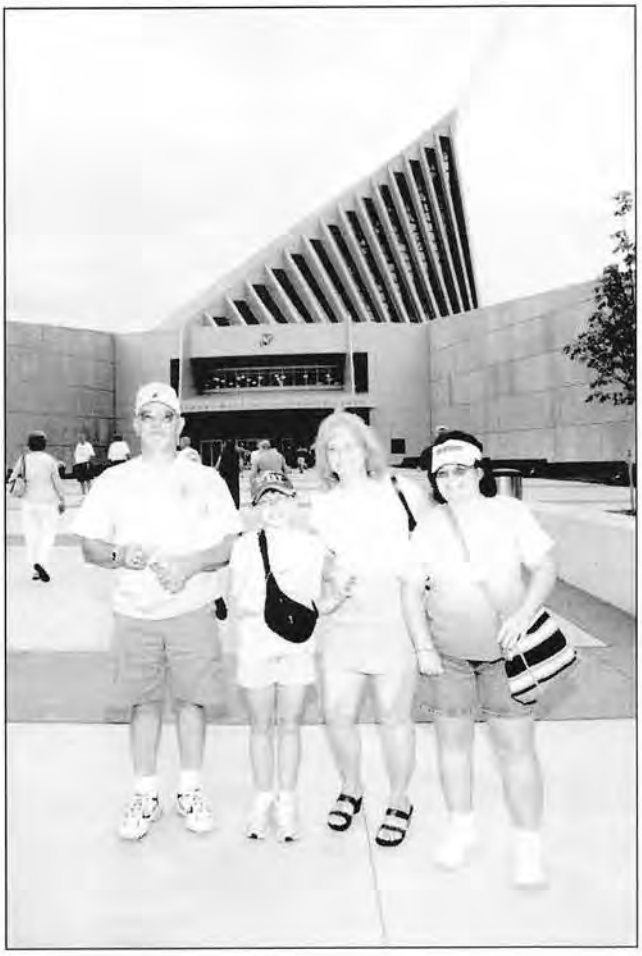












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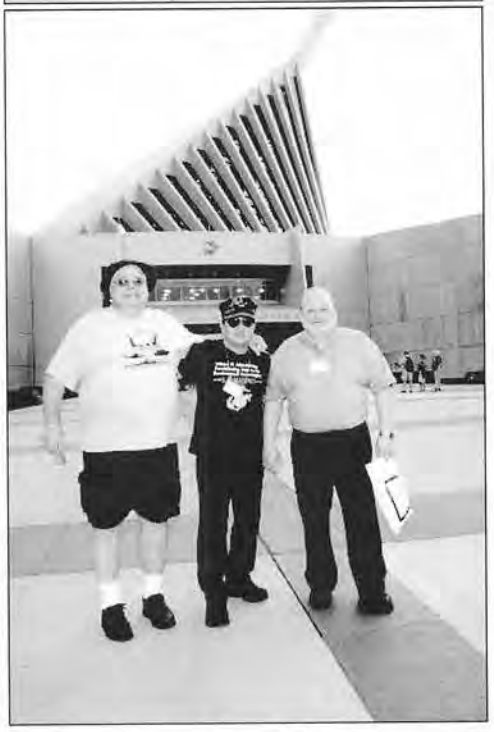






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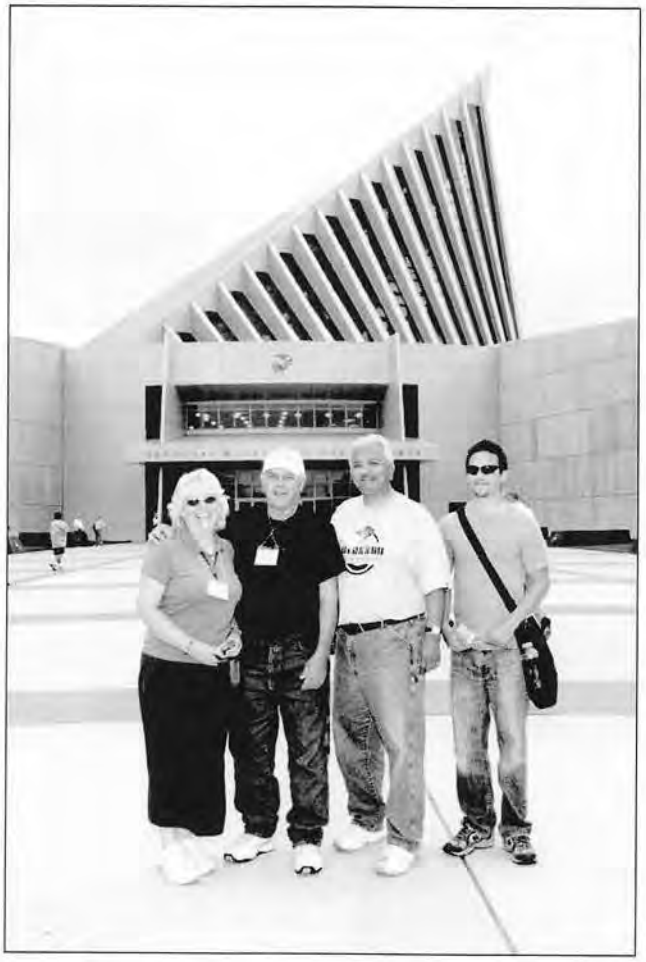





The Membership Visit's Marine Corps Barracks, 8th & I St Washington DC, for the 50TH Anniversary of the Evening Sunset Parade



























































OUR ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET KSV REUNION WASHINGTON DC



Outgoing President Russ Turner Welcomes Membership



President Elect Tom Eichler Takes Command



Captain Ken Penn Plays Taps For Fallen Brothers



OUR OWN COLOR GUARD



RECOGNITION OF SGT. JERAMIAH WORKMAN





KAITLYN WELLS, NEICE OF WENDELL WELLS D/1/26 SANG THE NATIONAL ANTHEM





ROLLAND KUTZBACH SEABEES USN



SGT/MAJ NORMAN KIDD USMC



SAM BENOIT USA



RON PARSONS USAF





























































































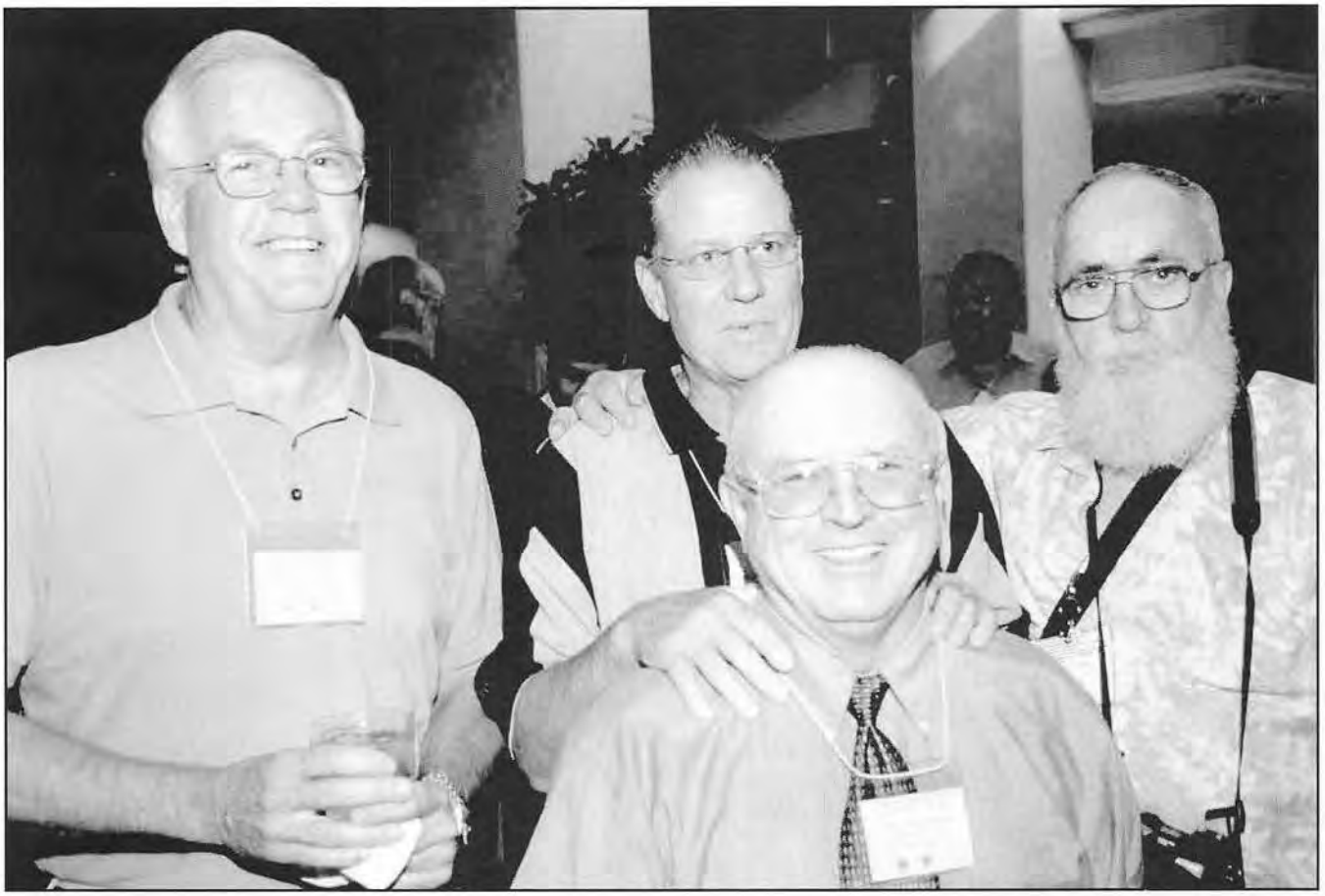

KHE SANH VETERANS JUST CHILLIN AND MAKING NEW FRIENDS






















KHE SANH
"DOC"
















Khe Sanh










KHE SANH




USA

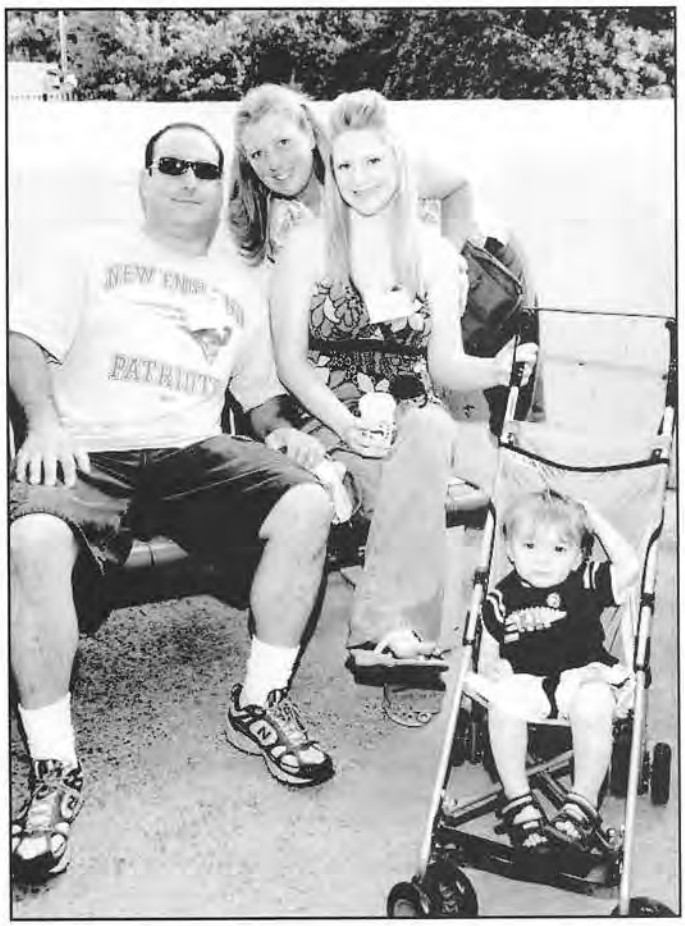









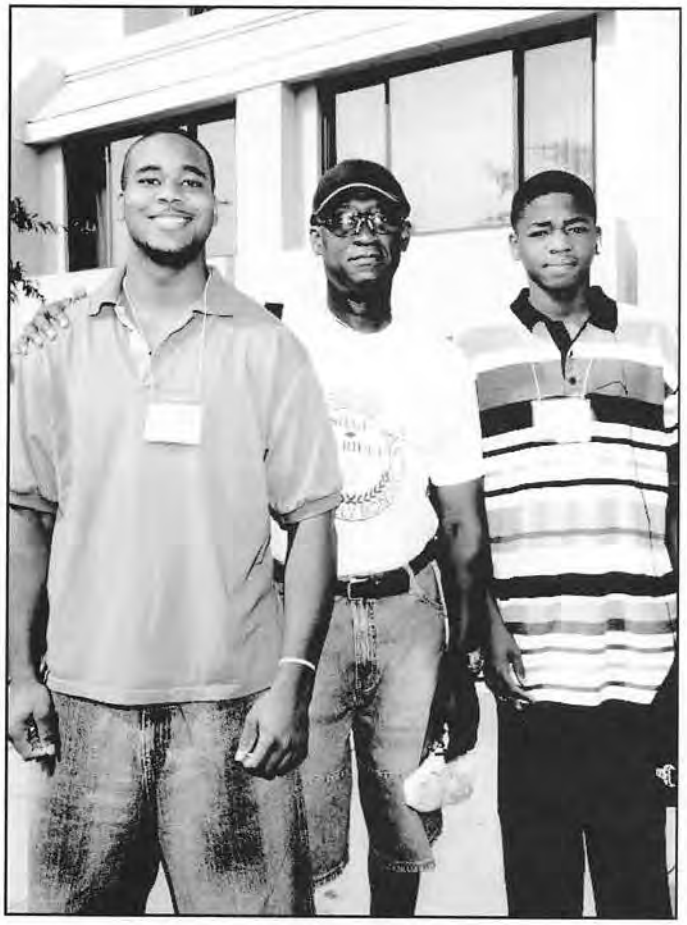






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KHE SANH




THE PRICE OF FREEDOM
IS WRITTEN ON THE WA
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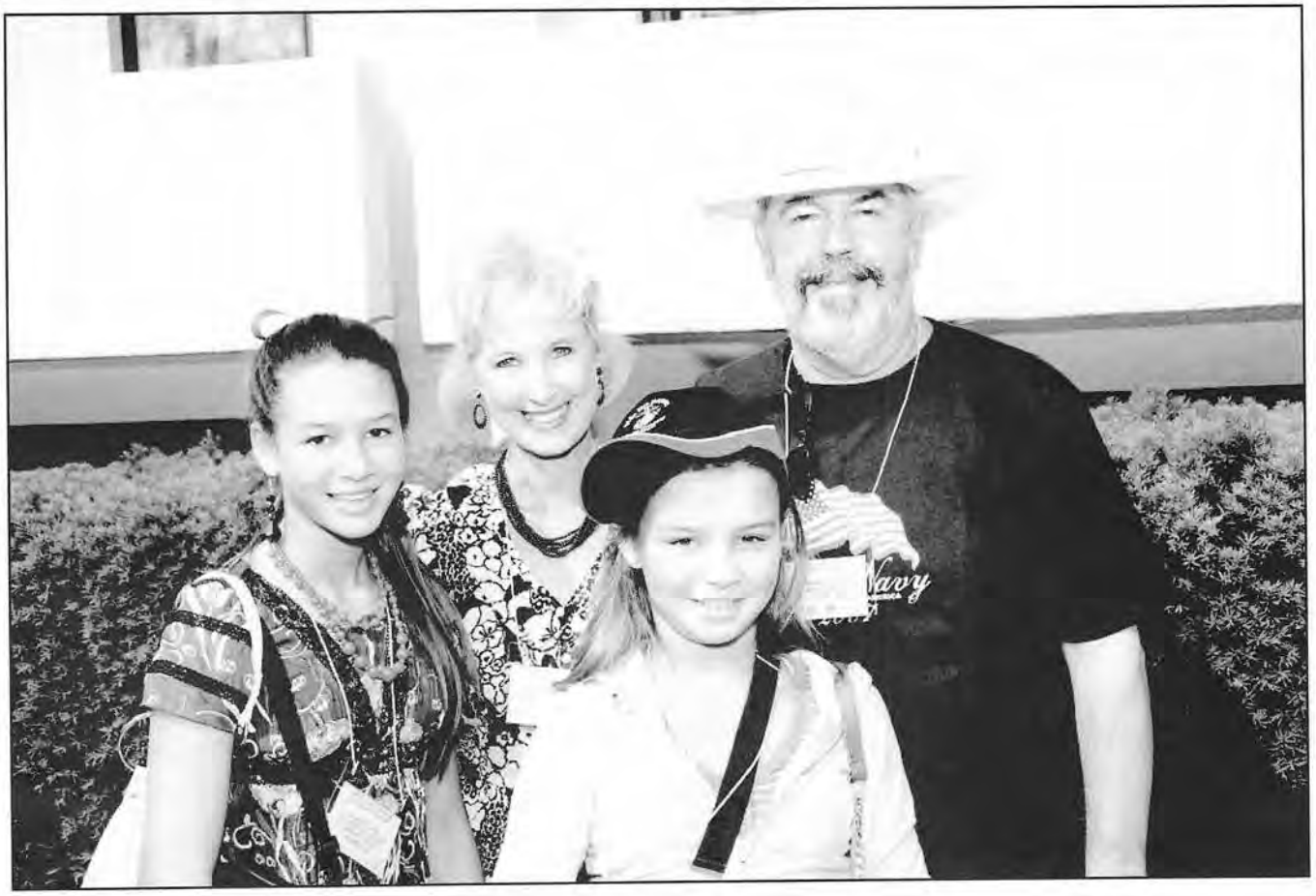
Navy

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Sweetwater Cafe Coffee shop
Victorian Buffet

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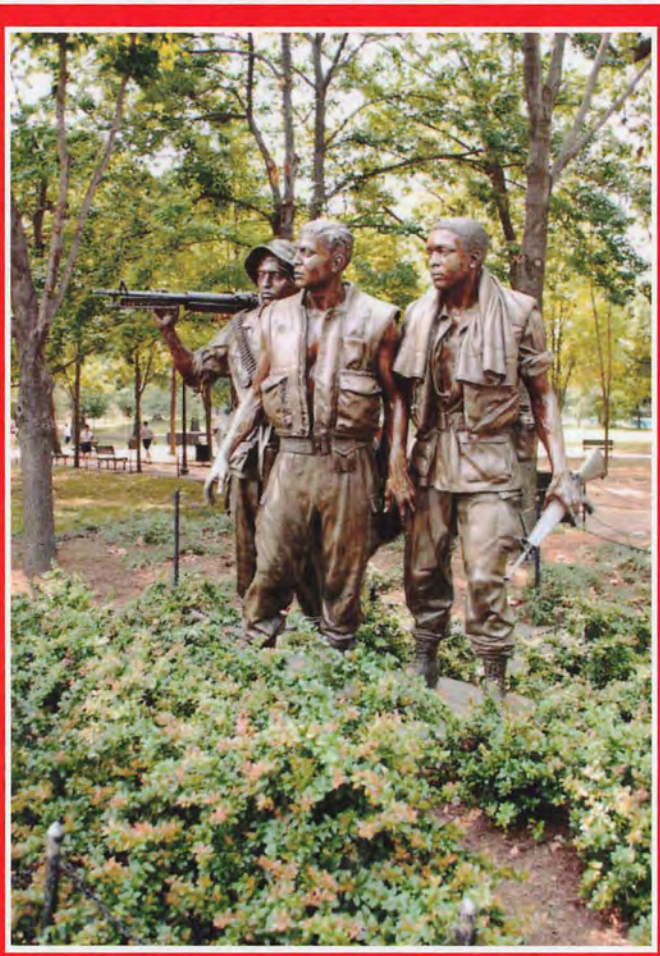






THE PRICE OF FREEDOM
GONE BUT NOT FORGO

SPRING
2008

RED CLAY

ISSUE 70

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH
SPECIAL EDITION



KHE SANH CAVALRY

See Story on Page 86

WANTED

BY THE KHE SANH HOLE IN THE WALL GANG



Terrible Tommy
Russ The Butcher
Back Woods Bob
Skin'Em Rita
Chatty Kathy













Who? Khe Sanh Veterans & Their Families & Friends
Where? The Silver Legacy Hotel RENO NEVADA
When? July 28-03 Aug 2008
Reason Khe Sanh Veterans 2008 Annual Reunion







Presidents Message

Several years ago Terry Redlin, the most renowned painter of Americana, donated all the proceeds from one of his paintings titled "His Last Goodbye" to the Khe Sanh Veterans. This painting is the last in a series he painted honoring his Brother-In-Law Charles Langenfeld, a corpsman who was killed serving with Echo Company 2/26. Charles was decorated for his actions on 05 Feb 68 when Echo Company's positions on Hill 861A were attacked and partially overrun.

This picture is depicted on several of the Khe Sanh Veterans publications; "The Khe Sanh Veterans Book of Poetry" and Ray Stubbe's Book "Battalion of Kings". In case our members are interested the Redlin's Art, "His Last Goodbye" is available in 2 sizes: Limited Edition (signed by Terry Redlin and limited to 3500 prints, measures 18-1/2" X 32" and sells for $ 195.00. An Elite Edition that measures 14" X 24" sells for $ 75.00 and is not signed by Terry Redlin. Both versions are available framed. Any questions can be directed to Julie K. Ranum, 605-882-3877 or via email at redlinac@redlinart.com.

Remember all proceeds from this beautiful painting go to the Khe Sanh Veterans, through the generosity of the Redlin family. So far the fine Redlin family has donated over $ 22,000 to our organization from the sale of this painting.

Vice President Reunion Reminder

The Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion in Reno Nevada on July 28-03 August, is expected to be the largest attended reunion in the history of the KSV. Please submit your registration forms and make Hotel reservations as soon as possible. We also have many new items in the Khe Sanh Veterans PX. All proceeds from the PX are used to support our Red Clay Magazine, so your continued support helps the magazine continue to grow.

OTHER REUNIONS

Delta Co 1/26 will hold their reunion in Las Vegas Nevada on 8-14 Sept 2008. Contact Parris Curry at PDCURRY126@HOTMAIL.COM

The Third Marine Division will hold its annual family reunion July 30-Aug 03, 2008 in Iselin, NJ. For information & Registration contact Bill Kruger at 703-451-3844 or website www.caltrap.com

Those Remembered	Remembered By
Alfred Pino L/Cpl USMC B/1/9 KIA 16 Mar 67	Richard J. De Lotto (A Friend From Clifton)
Robert Kruger PFC USMCE/2/3 KIA 03 May 67	Richard J. De Lotto (A Friend From Clifton)
George McClelland S/Sgt USMC B/1/26 25 Feb 68	Richard J. De Lotto (A Friend From Clifton)
Matt Dwyer L/Cpl USMC A/3rd Engrs KIA 28 Feb 68	Richard J. De Lotto (A Friend From Clifton)
Rich Corcoran Capt USMC HQ Co 3/Div KIA 07 Jun 68	Richard J. De Lotto (A Friend From Clifton)
Leonard Bird 1/Lt USMC VMFA-115 KIA 13 Jun 68	Richard J. De Lotto (A Friend From Clifton)
Reuben C. McMakins Cpl USMC KIA 14 Apr 68 881N	Thomas A. Pierce L CO 3/26

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Dan Fisher.....	**Member At Large**

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OBIT

ERNESTO "GOOIE" GOMEZ

On November 26, 2007 Gooie received a full military funeral conducted by the Marines of Henderson Hall in Arlington National Cemetery. From across this nation 70 plus individuals gathered to pay their last respects. In addition to Gooie's family there were, numerous Vietnam veterans that Gooie had served with from HMM-364 and HMM-262, two men representing Colonel Dabney's Warriors of Hill 881S, two active duty Marines who had served with HMM-364 during Operation Iraqi Freedom, the photographer who captured the essence of Hill 881S, a representative of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation and a contingent of the Patriot Guard Motorcycle Club.





(ABOVE) LtGen Henry W. Buse, Jr., presented the Navy Cross to Cpl Ernesto Gomez for extraordinary acts of heroism while serving as a helicopter crew chief in Vietnam.



Navy Cross Citation

For extraordinary heroism while serving with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On 25 January 1968, Corporal Gomez was the Crew Chief aboard a CH-46 transport helicopter assigned an emergency medical evacuation mission on Hill 881 near the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The pilot proceeded to the designated area and landed in the zone as two Marines began leading a casualty, whose head and eyes were covered with bandages, toward the helicopter. When the entire landing zone was subjected to intense enemy fire, the two men were forced to drop to the ground. Observing the blindfolded casualty attempting to reach the aircraft unassisted, Corporal Gomez Gomez unhesitatingly left the helicopter and rushed across the 25 meters of fire-swept terrain to the side of the injured man. Quickly pulling the Marine to the ground, he selflessly used his own body to shield his comrade from the hostile fire impacting around them, and as the enemy fire continued, he took cover with the casualty in a nearby rocket crater. Corporal Gomez remained in this exposed area until another crew member rushed to his assistance. Then the two Marines, protecting their wounded comrade from further injury, carried him to the helicopter. The pilot was quickly informed that the injured Marine was aboard, and the aircraft lifted from the hazardous area for the medical facility at Khe Sanh. Corporal Gomez's heroic actions were instrumental in saving his companion's life and inspired all who observed him. By his courage, selfless concern for the safety of his fellow Marine, and unswerving devotion to duty at great personal risk, he upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Corporal Ernesto "Gooie" Gomez's Internment
Arlington National Cemetery

















Pat Donovan, who flew many missions with Gooie, one of which earned him a Navy Cross also, submits the following in remembrance: Carleen, we are with you now and always recalling Gooie's voice at Hill 881S who now lives on at the Marine Corps Museum. You are all in our thoughts and prayers of praise for the life and presence of Gooie who remains with us always.

OBIT

Passing of Lt/Col Dave Caldon 2/26
By Mike Fishbaugh



David Lee Caldon, 65, passed away in his home December 14, 2007. Mr. Caldon retired from the United States Marine Corps as a Lieutenant Colonel and served two tours in Vietnam. He was the recipient of the Silver Star Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with Gold Star and 18th Award, Combat Action Ribbon, Navy Achievement Medal with Valor, Presidential Unit Citation with Bronze Star, Navy Unit Commendation, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Humanitarian Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal and Vietnam Service Medal with two Stars. He was an investment associate with Merrill Lynch for the past 21 years and attended St. Stephen Martyr Catholic Church in Chesapeake. He is survived by his wife, Susan P. Caldon; two sons, Christopher C. Caldon and wife Heather of Virginia Beach and James P. Caldon and wife Alisha of Ramona, California; four grandchildren, Delaney, Caitlin and Noah Caldon and Alexis Williamson; father, Clifton Mailes Caldon; brother, Brian Edward Caldon and wife of East Berne, New York; sister, Janet Kochanowski and husband Jack of Avon, Connecticut; and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his Mother, Eleanor Esterbrook Caldon.

OBITS

Lieutenant Colonel James W. Warner USMC

Lieutenant Colonel James W. Warner, a decorated veteran of the United States Marine Corps, died on March 13 at the Western Medical Center in Tustin, CA. He was seventy-four. Born in Redwood falls, Minnesota, the son of Verona and Roy Franklin Warner, he graduated from Redwood Falls High School, and then attended Hamline University in St. Paul in 1951, leaving school to volunteer for the Korean war. Training as a naval aviator in Pensacola, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. Among his early assignments as a helicopter pilot, he won the coveted duty of flying President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Promoted to the rank of Captain, his outstanding service was recognized with an award for Honorable Service at The White House.

A Major during the Vietnam war, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, for heroism in combat on March 15, 1968. At war's end, he became Director of Facilities Management at the Marine Corps. Air Station, Santa Ana, and won a commendation for "exceptionally meritorious service". Retiring from active duty in 1972, he entered the University of California at Irvine, majoring in Classical Civilization. In an unprecedented action, the Classics Department, including the entire faculty and fellow students, commended Lieutenant Colonel Warner. They wrote: "All differences in age, background and outlook between you and your fellow students evaporated in your obvious enthusiasm for the acquisition of knowledge. Your presence in the classes and in the Department in general has been greatly beneficial".

His late wife, Rosalie Ogden Warner, passed last year. Lieutenant Colonel Warner is survived by his sister, Judith and her husband, Marvin Penski, his daughters, Leah Labrador and Louise Griffin, and his sons, James Warner, Jr. and Daniel Warner. His grandchildren are Kelly, Theresa, Sarah and Wendy Warner, and Spencer James Griffin. Col. Warner's wishes will be granted and his ashes will be flown to Avalon Harbor where they will join his beloved wife Rosie of 49 years. Catalina Island was their home away from home

TWO HEROES

By Beryl H. Bushaw

This is remembrance of two fallen Marine heroes who died 23 years apart in two different Wars. First, my Uncle, Sgt. Ray E. Bushaw 3/24 Reg. 4th. Marine Div. KIA on March 3rd. 1945 during the assault on Hill 382, Iwo Jima, Sulpher Islands in WWII. My Uncle Ray was my main inspiration to join the Marine Corps in 1966.

Second, my friend Don Saunders who was KIA on March 4th. 1968 during the Siege of Khe Sanh. I served with Don with 1/13 from July 1967 until his death. Don was a good and loyal friend to all; it was my honor to have known and served with Don at Khe Sanh.

L/Cpl.Beryl H. Bushaw
USMC 1966-1968

"VERY INTERESTING"

By Craig W. Tourte

Interesting about life and the little twists and turns it takes. Beryl called me on the telephone today. Those of you who receive the Red Clay magazine might remember the photo that Tom Horchler took of our little unit standing in front of the truck after the Siege and just before we loaded up and left Khe Sanh, although I'm afraid I may have misidentified Beryl in the photo. It was the first time I had talked to Beryl since Quang Tri where we all ended up some forty years ago. We talked about an hour, an emotional moment for the both of us I'm sure. Beryl asked about Fred Thomas Jr. He said that he had made several attempts at contacting people by that name but without any luck. We were all pretty close at Khe Sanh and made various promises to visit each other should we survive. It was with great sadness that I told Beryl that Fred had extended his tour and was KIA in the early part of 1969. Mike Fishbaugh sent the story to me and I wrote a little article about it in Red Clay and posted something on the board about it.

I asked Tom Eichler to send Beryl the new edition of Red Clay and a few past editions. Beryl recently got a computer and just found our web site, this is his first POST. It's good to have another join out family and a pretty nice surprise to have on our

birthday. Welcome home Beryl and welcome to the brotherhood.

OBIT

Passing of KSVA Member Forrest McFarland Jr. By Mike Fishbaugh

McFarland, Forrest "Spanky" Jr.

Spanky served with 15th Aerial Port--- Rest in Peace

Services for Forrest "Spanky" McFarland, Jr. were held October 10, 2006 in Blanchard St. Denis Chapel, Natchitoches with Rev. Wayne Morrow officiating. Burial was in Fern Park Cemetery, Natchitoches with military graveside rites.

Forrest "Spanky" McFarland, Jr., 59 of Natchitoches died Sunday, October 8, 2006 in his residence.

He was a native of Robeline. He was a former weather traffic controller in Butte, Montana. He was a member of Trinity Baptist Church. He was a member of Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion. He was a member of Renaissance Organization, an old west theatrical gunfighter group. He was a veteran of Vietnam serving in the U.S. Air Force having served in Khe Sanh and Da Nang. His mother, Gloria Lee Solomon; his father, Melton Forrest McFarland, Sr. preceded him in death.

Those left to cherish his memory include his daughter, Shelia Baecht and husband, Jimmy of Pittsboro, Texas; son, Russell McFarland of Denison, Texas; grandson, Taylor James of Becht; step-father, Allen Solomon of Natchitoches; two sisters, Kathleen McFarland and husband, Richard of Natchitoches and Betty Willet and husband, Robert of Dry Prong; four brothers, Richard McFarland and wife, Kathleen, Joe Solomon and wife, Brandy, Tommy Solomon and wife, Laura and David Solomon, all of Natchitoches.

OBIT

Jim Melanson B Co 1/26



By His Son Tony Melanson

My Dad, Jim Melanson was born April 30, 1946 of Wilson and Helen Melanson in Manchester NH. He was 61 when he died on December 15 with my sister Karina and I by his side.

He graduated from Weare High School in 1964 where he played basketball. My Dad loved basketball, and actually was a huge fan of the Boston Celtics during the Larry Bird era. I remember watching those games with him and enjoying every moment.

He served as a Marine from 1966 to 1968. Upon his dispatch to Khe Sanh in Vietnam he served with Bravo Company, First Battalion, 26th regiment. He reported in July of 1967 and was an Infantryman in the second platoon. To quote his commander Ken Pipes "His service during the 77 day Siege of the Khe Sanh combat base exposed him to the single most intense, sustained, extremely dangerous and stressful fighting of the Vietnam War".

Over time my Father learned to be proud of his Vietnam service and later in life you would almost

never see him without one of his Vietnam caps perched on his head. Once a Marine, always a Marine. To say he saw active combat would be an understatement. For his service he received the following medals:

Purple Heart with 1 Gold Star
The Combat Action Ribbon
The Presidential Unit Citation with one Bronze Star
The National Defense Service Medal
The United States Vietnam Campaign Medal with at least two Bronze Stars
The Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm and Frame
The Republic of Vietnam Civic Action Ribbon with Palm and Frame
and the Republic of Vietnam Service Medal with Device

His commitment to our country, the Corps and to our freedom is incontestable.

On August 30th 1969 he was wed to my Mom, Donna who is here today. What a hope for the future she would bring into his life. The hope she supplied would always light his life. Thanks Mom.

He graduated from the NH Technical College and began a career as a welder. He gave birth to two children, Karina on September 7 1972, and I on April 16 1971.

He moved to Oregon for a few years in 1987, returned to the New Hampshire around 1992 where he would live in Belmont, and then Concord for many years. For a brief time in the final two years he lived with Karina and her husband Robert where they lovingly cared for him as his health was becoming increasingly fragile due to liver disease. He then lived at Epsom Manor Nursing Care facility in Epsom NH.

For those of you who knew my Dad you saw many facets of a man.

His humor was really special. Jump up and sit down sort of funny. In fact it was only a few days ago that I connected with a combat marine who served with my Dad and his humor was one of the things he mentioned with emphasis. Combat and funny don't usually mix. I remember seeing him make other people laugh with dry side-stepping wit. Even my friends found my Dad's humor contagious.

He was charming. I think his genuine gentle spirit, appreciation for people, and his humor endeared him to those he met. This was so true at Epsom Manor Nursing Home. You should have seen the way they loved my father.

He was creative. Did you know my father has a patent to his name? We had dropped ceilings and wood paneling in our house...necessity being the mother of invention he patented a special picture hanging device that would clip to the frame of the dropped ceiling to keep us from banging holes in that really sacred and special wood paneling...that wood paneling is still there...with holes I might add.

He was an outdoorsman. He would fish for just about anything. Have any of you sat on a 5 gallon bucket at night with a flashlight fixed to a bobber

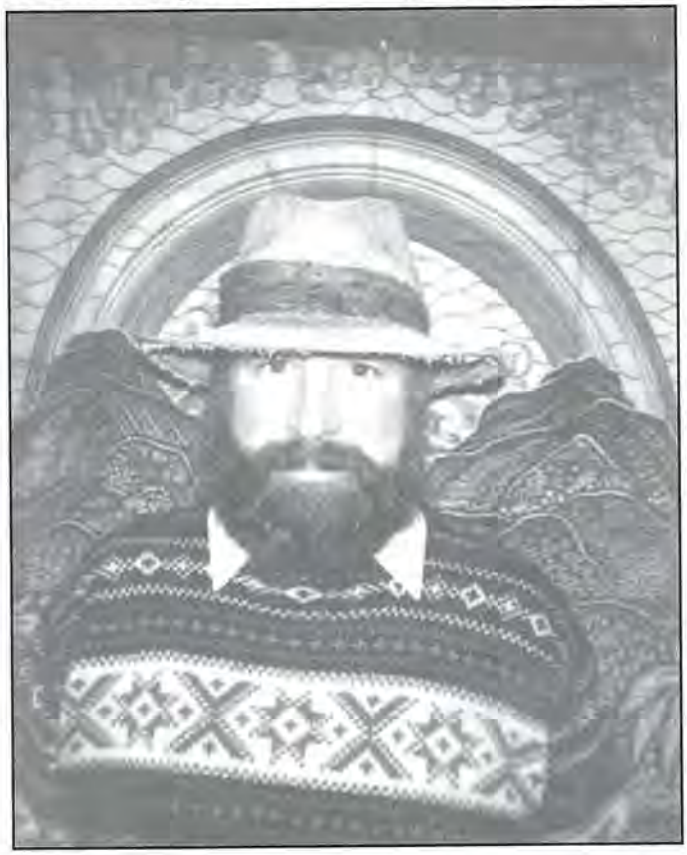

waiting for a catfish – or hornedpout as we call them - to bite while listening to the hiss of the gas lantern and the only thing between you and the swarm of mosquitoes was the smoke from your dad's stogie? Ok. That was a family outing.

Have any of you stayed up in the evening getting your ice fishing traps untangled so you could go out at dawn on a winter morning, cut through 30 inches of solid ice with a chisel and wait for the flag to spring up? Ok. That was a retreat. Have any of you been struck by lightning...twice at different times... while camping? My Dad was...and I am not exactly sure what that was all about...but twice??

He was a thinker. He loved poetry. Some of his poetry was published in the Union Leader. He loved art and things that were delicate and beautiful.

He was creative. In fact I credit him with my innovative spirit. I also remember this picnic-basket-with-pulley contraption he set up. We lived on the second floor of a duplex and he rigged this thing up so we could have BBQ's outside without carrying all the stuff up and down the stairs.

He was content. He never was one to complain. He found pleasure in the simplest of things. Give him the Boston Herald, a Stogie, a few diet cokes, a front porch, sunshine and a scratch ticket...and he was in the lap of luxury. His favorite meal was a fried fisherman's platter. He loved a fire in the fireplace on Tremont street in Concord and later at my home in Vermont.

He was a survivor. Oh my goodness. The stories we can tell. He was a survivor to the very end. Even on December 14th as he was dying he said to me OH MAN TONE...IM HAVING A BAD DAY. He was a master of understatement too.

He was troubled. He struggled with debilitating mental illness, no doubt a result from his experience in Vietnam. He was a drinker much of his life and nearly all of mine. It took a little piece of everyone, but it certainly cost him the most. God's grace has been alive in the people who loved my Dad. Thank you for loving him.

You know, he was a man chasing freedom. Freedom for his country, freedom in the outdoors, freedom of expression, and freedom from pain and mental anguish. That pursuit of freedom made the man we know, and took the man we love.

Surrounding us here are symbols of freedom. The first time I drove in I was struck by the rows of American flags waving. I was impressed with the beauty of this place. It is an honorable and fitting place for those who have fought for freedom.

Many of you here have served in the military. Some of you have seen active combat and have fought for our freedom in foreign places. Some of you have experienced personal sacrifice in some way because of this noble pursuit. Perhaps others of you are a child, brother, sister or spouse of one of those who have put themselves on the line for freedom. We thank you and are grateful for your service, sacrifice and support and that you have come to honor a good soldier and a loving man.

My Dad was captivated by this thing called freedom. He fought for freedom, He hoped for freedom as he began a new life with Donna after his tour in Vietnam. He lived it out through his love for the outdoors. He saw freedom born in new life through his children Karina and I.

Ironically, he is more free now than he ever was while here on earth. This is often used as a trite cliché. But I can assure you it is not trite, nor a cliché. It is the most powerful truth known to human kind. True freedom is everlasting, breaks bonds and lets you discard the baggage of life. That's what my father wanted more than anything - to drop his own baggage and live a life of freedom.

I want you to close your eyes for a moment. When I say the word freedom what comes to you mind first? Maybe it's an American Flag waving against a bright blue sky, a peak athletic experience, financial freedom, a 4th of July parade, an adventure to the deep wild, or the Statue of Liberty. These are all good things. But for each of us, including me, freedom can be just a symbolized concept.

Sometimes those things that we think will make us most free make us most captive.

What does true freedom – the kind from God himself - What does that look like in our lives? Where does our freedom come from? Can you count on it? Is it infallible? Because my father made a profession of faith in Jesus and chose to believe in Him, our hope rests in God's promise that he is now experiencing true and complete freedom in eternity.

POETRY

WOUNDED IN ACTION

I'm a good girl I am
don't eat much, don't smoke
won't take up much room
can sleep on the floor

I've noticed the scar
that seams you in two
puckered burn marks of war
purple tracks on your arm
unseen wounds in your mind

I can cool with my hands
soothe with my mouth
let me draw out your pain
make you whole once again
heal you

crack open your door
so I can slip in
close it tight
lock it well
keep me

Dianne Piankian Geiger

WAR WOUNDS

there's a hole in my chest
where my heart used to be
I palpate the edges
assess the damage
worse than I feared

music hurts, sunlight blinds
can't eat, can't sleep
don't speak, barely breathe
frigid torso, frozen limbs
far too painful to think

wash your hands
wash them well
don your greens
glove up
my gurney is near

numb me more
replace my heart
tuck it in
make it fit
suture me

anoint the wound
check my pulse
blanket me
leave
hands wet with blood

Dianne Piankian Geiger

WHY I GO TO REUNIONS

By Neil Kenny L Co 3/26

I have been going to the Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion since 2000 in San Diego. If I am honest I would have to admit that my hope was to reconnect with at least one of the many Marines with whom I had served with in the many hills and rice paddies of the land know as the 'Nam'.

During my stays with the members of the association at the various locations across the country, I have only met one or two members of Lima Company 3/26. Neither of those folks were people whom I had the pleasure to serve with. At the second reunion that I attended in Dallas, I was able to convince my absolute best friend Phineas to attend. It was indeed grand.

Just prior to this years reunion, I received an email from a fellow who stated that he knew several folks who had served with Lima. I had read the email and marked it to be reread and responded to. I did not however do so prior to the trip to Washington, D.C.

Standing in the hospitality room, I was approached by an unassuming gentleman in the company of an extremely attractive woman. He politely inquired if I was NJ Kenny and did I know or recognize any of the people in the photographs that he flashed in front of me.

Looking at those photos was the opening to a window in my mind and a light upon the darkness of my heart. I knew damm near every name on the sheet. It was a moment of raw, unnerved emotion as my psyche raced back thirty nine years to the play-

ground of my youth and I was immediately overwhelmed.

Andy Bryant. Jesus H. Christ! He and I walked point for the Marines of 3/7 on some shithole hill that Lima company had previously explored and bled on. When we were first dropped in on these guys, someone escorted us up to the senior officer there who first demanded that I receive brand new jungle boots, and then nearly went completely apoplectic when I introduced PFC Bryant who immediately and loudly in his very best Amos & Andy persona waved his right hand across the sky while telling this man, "You can just call me Andy." I had everything to do to keep myself from not fall down laughing. I know without a shadow of a doubt that Captain Bennet would have responded with an equally humorous retort.

This Colonel, on this day, on this hill, failed to see the humor, or the humanity, or the honesty, or the love, or the 'Spirit of the Grunt'; in that moment and in that response. Too Bad.

I on the other hand would go to my grave with the memory of the moment and a deep unbinding love for my Brother Marine, PFC Andy Bryant.

I continued seeing PFC, later Cpl. James laughing while surrounded by Mike Hill and Roger Broughman. Wow!

I watched James get killed on December 8th, 1968 during Meade River. I saw clearly Roger writhing in pain as a second round tore through him as they sought to patch up his first serious hit.

I recall with vivid detail that moment when I knew I was going to lead Marines as Mike Hill, shattered by the wounds to his best friend and mentor stated, "Rogers hit. What are we going to do?"

I felt the uncontrolled rage as the new Sergeant who knew nothing about infantry and/or Grunts stated, "Put out your panels." "Mark your lines I called in Air." Turning to this moron this lowly L/Cpl told him to call it off as we still had Marines down and in the drop zone. Seeing his pathetic facial expression, I moved forward with several Marines whilst gleefully peppering the area with a sustained rate of fire in short eight to ten round burst. God, I so love the passion and finality of combat.

Glancing at the group shot and seeing Ronnie Morse who carried an M-14, who collected gold teeth and cracked some Air Force dude in the snot locker for taking flicks of 'Real Marines' without prior permission are all fond and cherished memories that flooded out of the hidden valleys of my mind and race to the surface of my face while standing in the hospitality room.

Later, back at home I would unfold a hidden thought and then with precise clarification recall Ed Cowfer. Not standing in that group photo, but rather; leisurely strolling down the line during a barrage of incoming back at Khe Sanh and when challenged as to what the ____ he was thinking; his simple response was, "Nice day for a walk." Someone said, "He is shell shocked." No one knew or heard of PTSD, it was after all Tet of '68.

As quick as these memories overloaded my sensory capacity, someone rattled the doors, shouted out for all to mount the buses and we'd be off to the Museum. This unassuming Gent with the pretty wife grabbed his photos exited the room the doors were shut, and I stood there thinking; 'Was this some sort of ghost from my past who'd come to stir my emotions and then disappear?'

For the love of me, I could not locate this couple and was confused, dazzled, and bewildered by my emotional controls that now were abounding with every conceivable sensation any human being could experience. All of this, and in nano seconds. Incredible!

Entering the museum, I spotted Lima Six - Captain Dick Camp - my first CO. Then after a few moments located Bill Correia and his lovely bride Pam. These weren't ghosts at all. These were the affirmations that I was alive. That I did indeed survive and that I would have many more conversations to recover and recall the many parts of my Heart and Soul left behind in the rice paddies and hills of that place we all called the 'Nam'.
Yeah!

This is why I go to reunions. I am already packed for Reno. How about You?

MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY

By Craig W. Tourte

I was shopping in a large sports store the other day and approached the counter with my articles for purchase. I happened to be wearing the black "Khe Sanh, USMC" T-shirt I had purchased through the Khe Sanh Association PX. The clerk was a young man with short hair and a very intense look on his face. As I placed my items on the counter he mumbled something which I couldn't understand because now everything pretty much sounds like a mumble. I had to ask him several times what he said, and he repeats, "How long were you in."

I realized he has observed the lettering on my shirt and I say, "Two years." That was the end of the conversation but we conveyed a lot of information to each other with those few words. I said "Semper Fi" as I turned and left the business. I went to the neighborhood grocery store after that, and there was a young man bagging up my groceries at the check out counter. He looked at my shirt and says that after college he is either going into the Navy or Marine Corps, he hasn't decided which one yet, I just smiled at him and say, "Good for you, try to go in as an officer."

About 10 of us celebrated the Marine Corps Birthday this year in a little watering hole (not Ernies). There was a birthday cake and a small cake cutting ceremony. The oldest Marine was 82 and the youngest Marine in attendance was 58 and owns the local Coke bottling plant and the distribution system, obviously the most successful of the bunch and after he arrived no one purchased any more adult beverages, the tab was taken care of. I had one beer the 3 hours I was there, because I don't drink and drive any more, but I still had a good time. It was a shame Steve Wiese and Marco Soto could not make it, I always enjoy spending time with other Khe Sanh Veterans this time of year.

As I look back now, these many years since I have returned from Vietnam, there was a time when I would not tell anyone I had been a Marine or had gone to Vietnam. I certainly never attended a military celebration of any sort in a public place, bar or otherwise. Perhaps the old veterans were all over at the VFW, but I was never invited to join them. Also for many years military service was something to be avoided by most young people. I recall a time when it was "Go to war or go to jail" and serving was not necessarily a privilege, calling or personal preference, but rather an alternative to incarceration, and for us going nowhere who had few opportunities. Aside the fact that my step-father told me it was time to pack up my stuff and get out, I volunteered. The Marine Corps and yes, even the Vietnam war pulled at me, it was something I knew I had to do (although as I look back now, I am not sure why), besides I was certainly not headed down a bright career path.

I think things have changed now, at our little party we did wonder why there were no young veterans, but what young person would want to hang out with a bunch of old geezers anyway. I hope those young veterans and active duty personnel were somewhere celebrating the Marine Corps Birthday and Veterans Day that followed. How proud they must feel for the acknowledgement they receive for their service and sacrifice and not trying to be inconspicuous, like so many of us had to be for so many years.

BOOK REVIEWS

EXPENDABLE WARRIORS

Clarke's purpose is to set the record straight, clarifying reports and stories that have failed to accurately depict what happened.

Clarke describes the experiences of himself and his colleagues in the battles around the Khe Sanh Combat base in 1968, during the Vietnam War. He looks at the decision-making at multiple levels surrounding the battle, which he judges to have been a bloody tactical victory and a strategic defeat for the United States. Reference & Research Book News:

"Expendable Warriors reveals a little-known chapter in the story of the siege of Khe Sanh--how the battle really began and who was targeted in the first and biggest North Vietnamese assault in the opening round of an epic clash." - Joseph L. Galloway, co-author of We Were Soldiers Once...and Young and Triumph Without Victory: The History of the Persian Gulf

"Warrior, professor, deep thinker, and highly engag-

ing and articulate writer, Bruce Clarke has written with compassion and wisdom borne of his personal experience in the village of Khe Sanh, 38 years ago. Good war stories take a long time to write, and this one is worth the wait. I am fascinated by the tale and the wonderful new insights that this major historian and military analyst brings to the reader. His sharing of the battle before the battle, the defeat of an NVA Regiment before the main Khe Sanh battle ever began, is masterfully told. A real page turner. And the lessons learned that he shares are well worth noting at a time when we are again, as a nation, engaged in war." - John K. Swensson, Dean, Language Arts Division; De Anza College and Custodian, The DeCillis Viet Nam Conflict Collection

"Most books studying the 1968 siege of Khe Sanh focus on the Marine Corps' defense of the base and the hilltops to the north. Other books examine the fall of the nearby Lang Vei Special Forces Camp overrun by North Vietnamese tanks. To most Khe Sanh was a Marine battle. While heavily shelled and the hilltop outposts fought off attacks, the main base experienced only minor ground attacks. There was another battle though, unheralded in most books, the vicious fight for Khe Sanh Village south of the main base. This fight saw 25 Army and Marine advisors and 175 Vietnamese irregular troops fighting off a North Vietnamese regular battalion. Bruce Clark aptly describes the valor and spirit of the defenders as they beat back repeated assaults with little support from the main base. This is a first person account of a virtually unheard of battle characterized by heroism and dedication to duty." - Gordon L. Rottman, author of Khe Sanh 1967-68

"I'm honored that Bruce Clarke has portrayed the bravery of not only the Americans but all of us who fought and won the largest ground battle of the siege of Khe Sanh. We believed in our cause and dedicated our lives to it and this book clearly illustrates what many efforts about the Vietnam War do not--the bravery and efforts of the warriors who fought beside the Americans in the Vietnam War." - CP Nhi, Vietnamese District Chief

For those with a vivid memory of the Vietnam war, there is consolation in knowing that the impact of that war altered and shaped politics and warfare for the next generations. But in that altering we must take the lessons and apply them to new situations, new challenges and new policy dilemmas. To fail to do so would mean that the warriors at Khe Sanh and all of Vietnam were truly expendable, The battle of Khe Sanh was won and the Vietnam war was lost at the same time. Expendable Warriors describes at multiple levels the soldiers and marines who were expendable in the American political chaos of Vietnam, 1968. On January 21, 1968, nine days before the Tet offensive, tens of thousands of North Vietnamese regulars began the attacks on the Khe Sanh plateau, which led to the siege of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Gen. Westmoreland was fully aware that the North Vietnamese would attack but he declined to alert or warn the small unit of American soldiers and marines serving at Khe Sanh in an advisory capacity, considering them expendable in the greater strategy. Not just an analysis of the battle, Expendable Warriors also ponders the question of how to win an unpopular war on foreign soil, linking battlefield events to political reality.

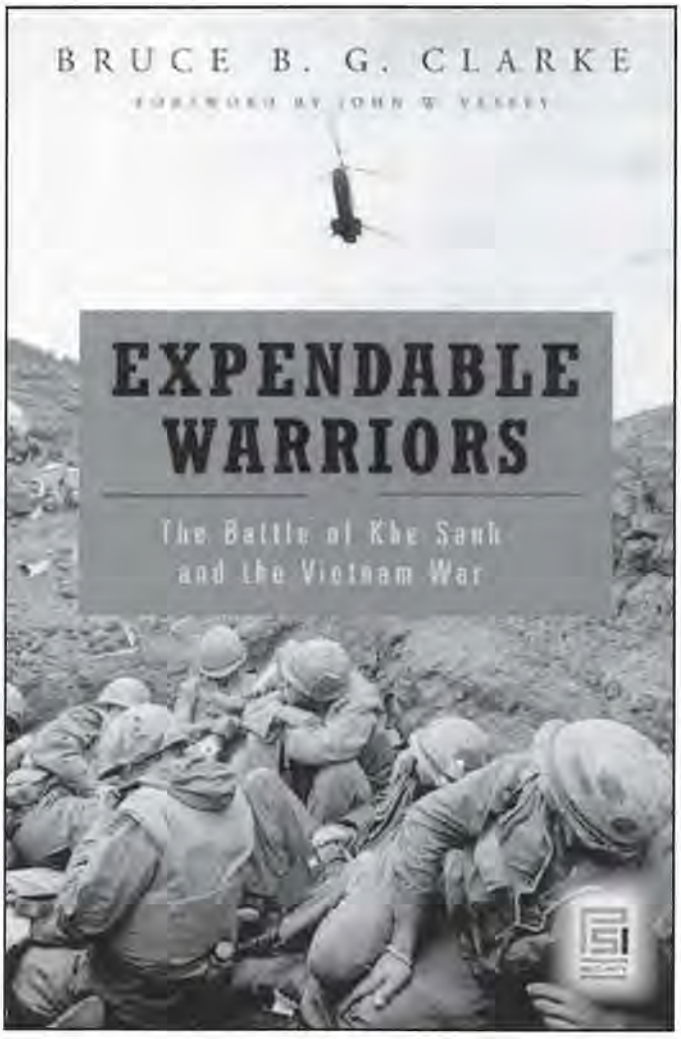

BRUCE B. G. CLARKE (Col., U.S. Army, ret.) was Director of National Security Studies at the U.S. Army War College, and is the author of Conflict Termination: A Rational Model (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College).

LETTERS FROM TOMMY J.

EXCERPT:

Chapter Three

In Country: Da Nang

The 1st Regiment of the Marines in 1966 were stationed in I Corps, the northeastern part of South Vietnam. Pronounced "eye" corps, the area comprised the five northern-most provinces and contained the port city of Da Nang, just south of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) at the 17th parallel. Fighting had been heavy in that zone throughout the year, and in October, U.S. Army combats units were introduced to provide reinforcement. The enemy had more than doubled in size, from 23 battalions in midsummer to 52 by the end of the year. During this era, refugees swarmed into Da Nang from the embattled countryside. Tommy J.'s first encounter with its population would be in the form of children, who begged for (and were given!) his dinner before he could eat it.

The next encounters he would have were not so innocent. The area surrounding Da Nang was heavily infested with Viet Cong, who were conducting a form of combat almost unheard of at that time. Prior to the war in Vietnam, American soldiers fought in an orderly manner, on battlefields, and in rows of troops. That was how it had been done in World War II and in every other war prior to that. But in Vietnam, everything changed.

Guerrilla warfare against American troops used three main tools: ambush, sabotage, and espionage. The jungle and mountain terrain in Vietnam facilitated this approach, making hiding and ambushes easier. Sympathetic villagers hid and protected the Viet Cong, allowing them to set mines and hide rice caches and weapons nearby which were the life blood of the guerrilla fighters. Battles were almost always sudden and unexpected. The North Vietnamese objective was to destabilize American troops

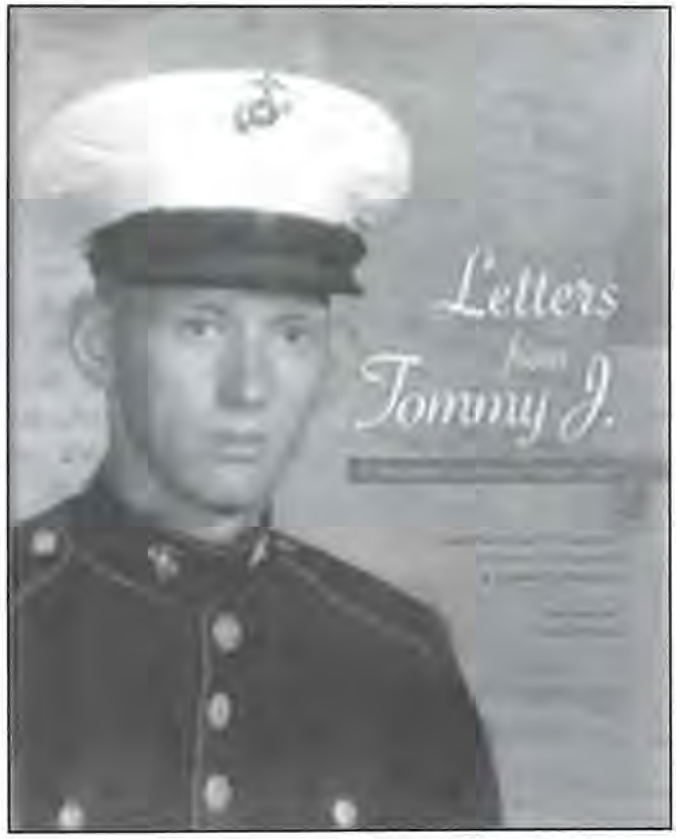

through extensive, low-intensity confrontations-to tie them up in unexpected battles for no real reason-a tactic that lowered morale, caused psychological terror, and gave the NVA the upper hand.

Finding the enemy was one of the biggest challenges to the American forces. The Viet Cong had created extremely complex and intricate tunnel systems over vast regions of South Vietnam, built over a period of 25 years, beginning in the 1940s when they fought the French and Japanese. The tunnels allowed the Viet Cong to control a large rural area, and formed an underground city with living area, kitchens, storage, weapon factories, hospitals, and command centers. They could be several stories deep and house up to 10,000 people.

For the North Vietnamese troops, these tunnels were fighting bases, capable of providing continuous support. The bases were well hidden from American spotter planes, and the remote swamps and forests provided ample cover from air and ground alike. Vents were installed in order to hear approaching helicopters. Smaller vents were used for air. There were hidden doors and punji traps. At deeper levels, there were chambers for arms factories and a well for a steady water supply. There

were storage rooms for weapons and rice, and hospitals for guerrillas. Communication tunnels connected one base with another. The tunnels not only allowed guerrilla communication, but they allowed surprise attacks, even within the U.S. military bases. Weaponry changed. The Viet Cong arsenal-handmade but deadly-included booby traps, pits, rocket-propelled grenades, mortars, and recoilless rifles. Recovered American shells and bombs were turned into traps, mines, or another explosive devices. One of the most common, and hated, mines was nicknamed the "Bouncing Betty." It was triggered by the release of pressure on the mechanism. The soldier could stand on a Bouncing Betty, hear the arming mechanism operate and know perfectly well that if he moved his foot, the mine would jump in the air and blow up at chest height. Mortars were easily portable and easy to operate, their main appeal being their extensive flight time. A mortar team could set up a position out of the sight of the enemy, fire a number of rounds, and be moving away from the firing sight before the first rounds even hit their target.

The list of non-explosive booby traps was just as deadly, including punji stakes, bear traps, crossbow traps, spiked mud balls, double-spike caltrops, and scorpion-filled boxes. The punji stake was by far the most common booby trap weapon. It was a shoot of bamboo or metal with needle-like tips that had been hardened by fire. These tips were often coated with excrement, poison or other contaminants to cause infection. Designed to "fix," or locate American troops, punji stakes caused a wound that, if not treated within 24 hours, often required amputation. When victims were medivaced out, the Viet Cong often shot down the helicopters.

When Tommy J. arrived at the Da Nang air force base, he was assigned to Fox Company, 2nd battalion. The second Battalion, 1st Marine Division had recently completed its participation in Operation Hastings during which many of its members had been wounded or killed, including the commanding officer. Captain Gene Deegan assumed command of Fox Company during late August 1966. Deegan was well-liked and respected, with a genuine concern for his men. In Fox Company, Tommy's job would be to conduct search and destroy missions, and run ambushes and combat patrols.

LETTERS

Thursday, Dec. 28

Dear family,

I am here! We got off the ship this morning at Danang and were split up to our different organizations. They then trucked me to my Battalion area and I was assigned to a company and platoon. My platoon is out in the field right now on a mission. They won't be back till tomorrow. Only 6 boys are in the platoon with me from the whole draft and I don't know any of them.

Viet Nam was quite a shock. The people, the houses and stores and everything. I was trying to eat dinner, but all the kids kept begging for it, so I gave most of it away.

They only have tents for us to sleep in and there is only mud and rain right now. The monsoon season is still on. I was issued a rifle immediately when I got here and told I must carry it everywhere. To eat, sleep, and anywhere I go. We get our combat and jungle gear in the morning.

I don't know if I will ever get the mail you have mailed before this letter, or if it will take a long time if I do. Use the new address to get it here faster. Tell Kaye about it for me.

I am just north of Danang a little ways. It is not too nice right now. I see patrols going out tonight and they are all wet and muddy. Loaded down with ammunition and wearing all kinds of gear. I guess I'll be doing it soon.

I'll have to get all the U.S. money I have changed into some kind of Viet Nam money. I don't know

why.

I guess I'll close and mail this. Don't worry.
I love you all.
Tommy J.

Sunday, Jan. 1, 67
Dear family,

I hope you have started off the New Year in good humor and spirits. I was standing guard on our line when the New Year came in. There were no horns or yells but it started a new year. It has rained every day I've been here. Just mud and rain. You can't keep dry or clean. It sure is a miserable feeling. The monsoon season should end next month, I hope.

We will be leaving this area I am in now about tomorrow to move to a new location. We are going to an artillery location for 6 weeks. Then we come back here to the company area.

I will finish a 3 day indoctrination period today, in which you have to stay in the battalion area before going to the field. It is just a rule.

This is a different war than I expected. You not only fight the V.C., you also fight the weather, snipers, and booby traps. Most of the company's wounds come from traps.

The platoon stands on a notice to be ready to go to an emergency anytime. They have 4 + 5 missions all the time. I guess I'll not get to write very often.

I have seen them bring in V.C. suspects, and dead V.C. It sure makes you that much more scared. I guess I'll overcome it though.

Well, I must close now. Will write again later. I love you all.

Your son,
Tommy J.

P.S. We just got the word to pack up only essentials to move out tomorrow.
Happy New Year

January 4, 1967
Dear Pat,

I hope this finds you well and in good spirits. I am in a new and exciting place. I guarantee you don't get bored.

All it has done is rain everyday. It will rain till the end of this month. Then the hot weather comes in.

We live in tents when we are not in the field. They don't stay in the tents too often. This is a bigger war than people think. Every time the platoon goes out, they get in a firefight with the V.C. I am just trying to get a little experience, but it sure is nerve-wracking. I get awful scared when I hear those bullets.

We are just north of Danang right now. The Regiment moves around a lot.

I sure miss home now. I am really learning how to appreciate home and those everyday things you don't think about. Maybe this will be a fast year.

Everywhere I go, I have to carry my weapon and ammunition. I eat, sleep, and go to the bathroom with it. Some friend. I hope it does its job.

How's your school coming along? I hope you and

Patsy are getting along O.K.
Well I'll close for now and go hunting later on. Raise Hell for me! Write if you get a chance. Your old pal,
Tommy J.
corresponding from the big rifle range.
Sunday Jan. 8, 67
Dear family,

I have just been lifted up in spirits this evening, when I finally got a letter from you. It was written Dec. 31 and had the Kool-aid in it. Thanks a lot.

I haven't written lately because I have been becoming a veteran. We left Friday on a search and destroy mission - my first - and have just come back. Friday we captured 4 V.C. suspects and sent them to be interrogated. Friday afternoon we were helicoptered to an area where they had some V.C. trapped in a area. After landing, we were crossing about a 500 meter rice paddy when the V.C. opened up on us. My heart stopped, I know. I jumped into a rice paddy and was under water. Then I came to my senses and began to return fire. We assaulted their position and they fled. We killed 4 of them and that was my worst part. I am certain I killed one, because I aimed and shot at him when he ran. It is a awful feeling. I still can't get over it. They told a couple of us to put them in some raincoats and move them to a pick-up area.

I just couldn't do it. I couldn't even look at them. The Sgt. didn't make me do it. He said all new ones were like that. I am trying to look at it as if I had to kill him or be killed. This is a crazy war. I never thought war could be so nerve-wracking.

The rain still comes everyday. I can't keep dry clothes. I am going to need those socks you are sending. I have stopped wearing underwear; too much to dry out and it gives you a rash.
I haven't gotten the candy yet; I hope I get it though. I hope I get all the back mail. If you had anything important to tell me in those letters, tell them over.

We are on 10 min. standby right now. That means if they give the word, we have to be ready to move out in 10 min. I hope we don't go. I am so tired and feel still wet.

I will close and hit the rock; I mean cot. I love you all so much.

Your 1st son,
Tommy J.

Monday, Jan. 9, 67
Dear family,

I am writing this short letter just to ask you to send me a few articles I need and can't get here, because they don't have a P.X. where I am. I hope you don't mind and you can get some money out of the bank to pay for this and 2 packages of film I am sending home to have developed. They were taken at home, Camp Pendleton, Disneyland, and while on ship. Send me the ones of you and Kaye back please.

I'll close now.
Articles
1. Tooth brush
2. Lighter fluid
3. Small piece of steel wool
4. 1" paint brush
5. Pack of Razor Blades
6. About 6 Air Mail stamps for sending home film
7. Writing Paper (like this)

8. A candle for use for light. About 6" or 8" tall

Jan. 10

I didn't get to mail this off yesterday. I got 5 letters and a box of fruitcake last night. Sure feel a lot better. I finally got one from Kaye and Mom Davis also wrote. It was real nice of her - she said it was her first letter of the New Year. She also sent a dollar in it. I was surprised but glad. The Bowman's sent the cake.

We went out all last night and guarded a bridge that the V.C. had been firing at. They didn't come last night. I just got ate up by mosquitoes.

I guess we will have a patrol later on today. I'll close now. I love you all.

Tommy J.

P.S. Packages under 5 lbs. come by air mail. I hope you don't mind sending these things. They are just necessities. Don't worry if you can't send them.

Jan. 10, Tuesday
Dear Mom and Pop Davis,

I received your letter and was real glad to hear from you. It was one of the first letters I have gotten since I have been here.

The weather right now is rainy and cool. The monsoon season will not be over till Feb. Then the hot really begins. This rain makes it a big problem to keep clean and dry clothes. I'll be glad when it stops raining I think.

I spent Christmas on the ship and we got to Da Nang, South Viet Nam the 28th Dec. We had a turkey dinner and church services that day.
My company is now just north of Da Nang. We are working all around the Da Nang area. The Viet Cong are everywhere. We live in big tents and have to use cots to sleep on. But we can get pretty comfortable sometimes.
Mother and them send me everything I need so don't worry about me. Say hello to everyone and I'll write more later.

Love always,
Tommy J.

January 12, 67
Dear family,

I hope this finds you all well. I received your letters you had to re-mail today. I also got one from Kaye.

We have been on a 2 day operation called "Sparrow-Lark." A search and destroy mission. Bombs were dropped and then we started sweeping through. Guess where we got hit again. You're right, in the rice paddy. We opened up firing like 3 or 4 divisions. We got to the other side and found 4 wounded V.C. women. The most of them had fled. We also captured one man. Women fight along with the men. It is hard to picture. After that action, we didn't see any more the rest of the time. Now I am back at the area and we have to guard the camp tonight. I guess I'll have a hard time catching up with my rest.

I am glad you and the Bowmans got the packages I sent. I hope they were good. Kaye told me about the present you gave her. It sounds real nice. How is O'Keefe's soccer doing now? I guess they play as many games as we did last year.

Well I have to close and get ready to guard. I'll write more later.

By the way, I hate to ask again for something, but would you please send me a combination lock for a footlocker I made. Master lock will be fine. Thanks.

I love you all.

Tommy J.

Jan. 13, 1967

Dear family,

I didn't get to mail these as soon as I thought I would but maybe it is for the better. I got a big story to tell about what happened when we went out on the ambush this morning.

We had been out since about 4:30 a.m. and had not done anything. Then we started walking through some jungles around some villages which run along a river. It was about 7:30 a.m. and just as we came upon a hut, we spotted V.C. in it. They saw us, opened fire and took off. We returned fire and began to chase.

Just as we had almost lost them, we saw one of them just going down a hole in the ground. We had a hand grenade fixing to throw when one of our bullets got him and the grenade blew up. We started firing on the hole, throwing in grenades and smoke and everything. Then we thought all were dead. We only expected 2 in there. I guarded the hole as our squad leader started in. Just as he had got a little ways in the hole, a grenade came rolling out. We all jumped for our lives. The grenade went off and one of our boys got fragments in the cheeks and mouth. We fired more ammunition in the hole and started in again. We asked them to surrender and they said nothing. Finally, the squad leader pulled one of them out and he was dead. He had an American made weapon. We thought that was all, but when we went in further, we found two more and another American weapon with American gear and grenades. All, except one, were dead and blown all apart. I really got sick. We tried to keep him alive, but he finally died. We then radioed in our success and Headquarters was real happy. Just as we thought all was over, we started getting automatic fire from snipers across the river. They really had us in a fix. The bullets were hitting all around. The boy who was beside me got hit in the leg. He was from Georgia. I was shaking and in shock, because the bullets had me pinned down. I almost froze. Then some finally started firing back. I crawled up to the edge of the river and sprayed the whole area with bullets. We saw the V.C. running and we really laid it on. I don't think we killed him, because they couldn't find him. We had been fighting for about a hour or more. Finally, reinforcements got there because we only had 11 men out there. We called in a helicopter and got the wounded out. Both boys are going back to U.S. because it is their 3rd purple heart. One has only been here 4 months.

The communist V.C. had all kinds of documents, N. Viet Nam money and other stuff. They were in pitiful shape. I won't describe it. never thought I could be so scared. I don't think I can take this place. We only have 7 men in our squad now.

I am praying like I never prayed before.

I am now kind of ashamed to send this letter, because I know how you will start worrying. Please don't. It is my battle now. I have come back in and trying to rest. It is awful hard to believe war. I know why Daddy hates to see war pictures. I jump at the slightest noise now. I'll be unbelievable when I do come home.

I will close now. Just pray and please don't get upset. It will be awful if I knew I was harming you.

I love you all.

Your son,

Tommy J.

Bandera Honors its Veterans, Reunites Friends

Don Jennings A 1/9
By Mike Fishbaugh

Zeke MacCormack
Express-News

BANDERA, TX — On a trip from Hillsboro to reunite with Marine buddies from the Vietnam War, Don Jennings chanced upon veterans who may have made his reunion possible.

At Saturday's "Bandera Honors Veterans" event, Jennings saw an exhibit with photographs of helicopters shown flying out of Khe Sanh - where he saw combat with the unit known as "The Walking Dead." "We were looking at their display and realized they probably evacuated some of us during the siege of Khe Sanh," said Jennings, 60, one of about 20 members of the 1st Battalion, Ninth Marines squad gathering here.

The pictures belonged to Charlie Baker, 62, of Medina. As a Marine helicopter crew chief, Baker repeatedly swept in amid heavy enemy fire to take troops out of the military base near the Laos border that came under siege by North Vietnamese troops in 1968. Handshakes ensued as men bonded by battle decades ago and exchanged names. The belated introductions were just one of many touching moments at the commemoration to local military personnel that this small town began in 2005. "I'm glad to see people remember and care," said San Antonio resident Martin Martinez, 58, who served in an Army artillery unit in Vietnam.

County Judge Richard Evans, one of several speakers, implored the crowd to thank the veterans on hand "for my country ... for my freedom ... for my way of life." A middle school choir serenaded an audience of about 100 gathered beside the Bandera County Courthouse. Prayers were heard for those felled in combat long ago, and for those now in harm's way - or headed there. Dennis Sykes, who traveled from Denver to see Jennings and other friends, called the event an unexpected - and pleasant - surprise. "It's such a homey feeling and such a tight community," said Sykes, 60. "This is a microcosm of the best of America."

Vets like Raymond Baker praised organizers of the event for raising awareness about military conflicts that have lapsed from public consciousness. "Most people do not know history. This is history," said Raymond Baker, 59, one of three brothers of Charlie Baker who also served in the military. At a nearby table, Glen Bishop shared photos he took of fellow Army Air Corps paratroopers filling the sky above post-war Germany in the 1950s. "It brings back a lot of memories," said Bishop, 72, of Pipe Creek. "I'm glad to be part of it." Looking over the table laden with documents and keepsakes from a half-century ago, his wife, Laura Bishop, said, "It means everything to him because this is his history."

They learned of the event only Friday from a neighbor, Dawn Mayorga, who's three vibrant children in the Army smiled from dozens of exhibited photos. Her 19-year-old son, Austin Medley, was deployed in September to Iraq with the 10th Mountain Division. "He called yesterday, Morale is good. He said 'Send candy and chips,' " said Mayorga, 52. Her 22-year-old son, John Medley, is an infantryman stationed at Fort Hood who will be deployed in 2008 to Iraq. Daughter Jackie Mayorga, 19, is a medic who's deploying from Hawaii to Iraq next month. Despite the obvious hazards facing her kids, Dawn Mayorga said she's at peace because their fates are in God's hands. And, she said, "Every time one of my kids is deployed I know someone else's kid comes home. That's what keeps me going."

SHORT ROUNDS

WHAT I NEVER HAD..

By Craig W. Tourte

I never...

I was sitting around my favorite watering hole yesterday after playing a game of golf, shooting the stuff with a few old guys my age. Because of the little event planned for the birthday coming up the discussion got around to "where were you and what did you do." One of they guys talked about his time in the Air Force and how he saw the world and the various bases and countries he had been in. Another talked about his time in the Navy and the food on the ships and how his bunk was right under the flight deck and the noise it made. Another said that

he was in the Corps but never made it Vietnam but had spent time at Twenty Nine Palms and Okinawa. Then one of the guys smiled and asked me where I was, while I was in the Marine Corps. Of course everyone knew where I was and I didn't want to disappoint anyone. I tried not to make my story into a whine but I knew what they all wanted to hear. I started out with "I Never…"

I figure I spent, give or take somewhere around ten or eleven months, in Vietnam. Eight of those at Khe Sanh. The other times in Quang Tri after the Siege, guarding something way off away from everything. Anyway my story started off, "I never sat on a flush toilet, I never spoke to a Vietnamese, I never was in a town or large village, I never went into a bar, I never took a bath or shower from a forced water pipe, I never had hot running water, I never walked on cement or asphalt, I never saw a women except from a distance, I never slept in a bed, I never had a pillow or blanket, I never slept in sheets, I never saw a television, I never listened to a radio, I never sat in a chair, I never wore any under clothing, I never had my cloths washed except from a bucket, I never ate a hamburger or had French-fries, I never had any shaving crème, I never walked on a rug, I never had more than one pair of boots, I never stood near a heater, I never had more than one pair of socks, except for two occasions of warm beer I never had any alcohol, I never went to a USO show, I never went anywhere without a weapon, I never had nor wore civilian clothes, I never saw nor did I talk to any civilians, I never rode in a car…"

I think I stopped at that and looked around, I was kind of shocked to see the look on all of their faces, mouths were open and eyes were wide and strangest of all, no one said anything. I said, "I think it's time for me to go home" and I stood up and walked out. When I got home, I thought a great deal about what I had said and oddly the list got longer. I looked around my house and the list of "I never" just seemed to continue on forever. I hate the "my time was tougher than your time" thing because each has their own individual crosses to bare and after all, I was a REMF, so I know that my deprivation was much less than many and certainly less than those up in the hills of Khe Sanh. But for bar speak, it turned out to be a rather interesting topic, not a boast, perhaps more of a whine.

What I Did Have

By Craig W. Tourte

Did Haves...

Well if I "Never had" than what is it that I did have. Before the Siege we had some wood pallets down on the floor of the tent we called our "Bunker." But we didn't really have a bunker so to speak, more of an above ground tent with a few barrels filled with dirt and sandbags on top. I did have a rubber lady for a mattress but she didn't last too awful long after I took her to the trench line and laid her down on the dirt. I did have some kind of left over sleeping bag from Korea but it got kind of wet and moldy and I finally ended up with a poncho and liner to place over me. I didn't have a candle or electric light but I did have a lighter I think, or matches that came in the C Rats. Before the Siege we had a roll of toiler paper at the 3 holler but after the siege started it was those small pieces of paper again from the C Rat packet.

We didn't have any way to wash our clothes except a barrel cut in half and hand soap, we hung our clothes on the concertina wire to dry. After the Siege we didn't wash our cloths at all because of the lack of and value of water. I must have had a comb because I notice what hair I had was combed in the picture that Tom Horchler took of what was left of us, before we loaded up and left Khe Sanh. I must have had a T shirt of some kind because that is what I had on in the picture. I don't think I had a uniform fatigue shirt any more by that time. I noticed none of us had a smile on our face in the photograph, but we did have our lives and at the time that was good enough. Also none of us are holding weapons, you know those hero photographs some of us took when we wanted to look like real warriors, I guess we had gone way past that after the Siege. I don't think we felt very warrior like, mostly exhausted I think.

I've sat here trying to remember a few of those little conveniences that we did have before and after the Siege. We had hot food of course before the Siege, but as I said, I never thought is was very good. No sweets that I can remember and the water tasted pretty bad, even after we poured in the Kool-Aid type of mixture, and it was always warm. No movies but there were a few magazines flouting around, I think I had Miss month in my fighting position on

the line before a rocket roared into it a few seconds after I had gotten up and out of it. No more Miss month, to bad I really enjoyed her and no more such magazines. I had a small camera that I was able to take a few photographs with, but that was stolen by the Army when they came up and saved us. I apologize about the lack of information in this little essay, I really thought I would have been able to come up with a few more "Did Haves..." Perhaps I just can't remember the goods, only the bads, but then there was nothing good about Khe Sanh.

What I Had!

By Mac Milton McNeely

What I had was being a part of history on the making end as a doer not a spectator.

What I had was the chance to see if I would stand and serve or cut and run.

What I had was much more than those that have not been there can possibly ever understand.

What I had far outweighs what I did not have.

What I had is what has made the person I am.

What I had was the opportunity and honor of serving God, Country and Corps with some of the finest individuals and greatest true heroes that our nation has ever known.

The older I get the more I recognize it.

POETRY

Vietnam Pilot's Reunion

A gathering of Eagles
who long ago
flew in harmonious synch together
in carefully arranged formations
as they performed
their noisy ballet over the trees.

Now grey or defoliated,
larger and weathered,
wrinkles and folds abound,
all sadly closer to the ground.

Come together in one place,
These remain -
Not gone to the Father -
still here to live each long day
among those blue, cloudy skies,
recalling those dances with white puffs of moisture
along the way to battle.

Memories good and bad
Now buried or twisted
Come rising back to the surface
as barely recognized faces,
All changed except for eyes or smiles,
awaken to recollections long since buried.

Joy abounds,
old friendships renew.
Excitement captivates
as thrilling recollections return to life
from places no one ever gets to see anymore.
Sadness consumes
on learning of early departures
or bad tidings befallen.
Fear rises
and is pushed back hard
avoiding ugly memories
buried way back when.

Can those feelings be shared?
Camaraderie, isolation,
fear, bravery,
bad luck, good luck,
quick thinking, poor judgment,
God's mercy.
Bear them alone my friends.
You own them completely forever.
Heavy or light,
you carry them yourself –
only to be shared with God.

Reunion yields a great gift.
A common destiny is shared
as we volunteer once again,
facing truth at long last

with no lies possible.

Eagles we were –
Eagles we remain -
standing tall within our lives,
raising those memories
Of doing the best that we could.

Jack Baumgarten
Poetry Round Table
San Francisco, CA
9/28/06

INCOMING

ANGELS

By Craig W. Tourte

Fate, destiny or angels, what do you think? I was in the car the other day with my friend Steve Wiese. As most of you know, Steve is one of the few survivors of the Ghost Patrol and participated (make that volunteered) in the revenge patrol a month later. Now Steve is around 6 foot 4 or so, and is a huge target for anyone looking for something big to shoot at. How he survived an 18 month combat tour is beyond me.

As we're riding along, Steve starts telling me the story of his small squad of 6 to 8 Marines out on patrol. They were heading in a certain direction towards 881 (my best recall), and as Steve and his squad approach a ridge, with the objective of climbing the next hill, Steve stops the patrol and gazes out at the objective. A chill, voice or just his experience as a combat veteran told Steve to avoid the hill and go around. The following week a large combat unit attacked the hill Steve avoided that afternoon. A fierce battle ensued as the Marines attacked the well fortified enemy positions dug into the sides of the hill. If Steve and his small squad of Marines had ventured forward that afternoon, neither he nor his men would have survived. Steve participated in the attack the following week and was lucky, once again, to have survived the brutal assault.

My little fighting position on the line located near the southwest corner of the Khe Sanh Base was nothing more than a few sandbags and some type of overhang cover. Just a small turn or notch in the long trench. I still had a rubber lady, she wasn't much but she was better than sleeping in the mud. I dug this little position out with my small entrenching tool, filled every sandbag and put what little I possessed inside. It was one of those clear days you could see forever, unfortunately so could the NVA. For some reason, a voice, a feeling or destiny I got up out of this position and walked just a few feet west when I heard the familiar sound of rockets leaving their tubes. I jumped into the trench just a few feet away and buried myself as deep as I could. By this time, I had the experience to be able to determine in just milla-seconds the anticipated trajectory of the rocket which I knew was heading right at us. Rockets are split second things and it was all over very quickly. With a huge explosion of noise, smoke, dirt and whizzing of shrapnel it was over. I got up and looked at the ground just a few feet from me. There was a huge hole in the ground, the sides of which were black and the hole still smoking, and to my amazement, there was not just one hole but three in succession. I climbed out of the trench and glanced over at the next rocket impact only to see that it dove sideways into my fighting position, which I had occupied just seconds before.

As I stumbled in that direction, I observed that sadly my rubber lady did not survive the attack and I knew that my nights of sleeping up out of the mud were over. I remember laughing wilding at the sight and I was soon joined by others who apparently also saw the humor it what was not humorous at all, but I think we were all a little crazy by then. Who knows the reasons for our survival, was it fate, destiny or does each one of us have an angel sitting on our shoulder, whispering in our ear, into our brain. Perhaps we were spared for a reason or we were just lucky. I'd prefer to believe in the Angel theory.

Angels

By Sam Messer

I believe in Angels!

I had numerous escapes from death at Khe Sanh. I believe that God gave my angel orders to save me and he/ she did just that! Blown off my bull dozer, a rocket hit my rough terrain forklift, when it blew me off. A mortar hit in back of my 2-1/2 ton dump

truck on the strip, artillery round hits right outside our fighting hole, a buddy sits on me so I can't get out of the hole, and saves my life! We all had close calls numerous times! So why are we alive? I BELIEVE my ANGEL and GOD had some reason to this that day I don't understand. With all the Pain in the body and the PTSD, I sometimes believe (wish) I had died. The old me did die so why is the new me still here? I hope I have served their purpose for keeping me alive!
Sam Messer
CBMU301
Seabee

Angels
By Phil Nuchereno

Sam. I do believe in a higher source, possibly an angel, that too saved me from some really close calls in my 13 month tour in Nam. In addition to having served in Khe Sanh during the siege, in other areas of Nam I had some really close calls with stepping on foot mines. On two occasions I was right next to fellow Marines who had stepped on them blowing their feet off. I had just walked in the same location missing stepping on the mine by inches. I contribute my mother's prayers helping a lot when I was over there.

Phil

Angels
By Butch Brown

Angels, YOU BET!! One morning on Hill 881 South at approx 5 minutes to 6, my buddy Ed Woolverton was standing in the trench line facing the opening of our FDC bunker. We were with 81's, out of my right peripheral vision, and up about 2 O'clock I saw a black object coming in fast, only to hear the ziiiiiiiiip of an 82mm mortar round coming in. I yelled "incoming" we hit the deck, the round impacted on the top of our FDC bunker; Ed and I were already on the ground, low crawling/running around the corner to my bunker. That little bunker I had hand dug into the side of the trench wall, and sand bagged the crap out of the top with my own 2 hands. We stayed there for quite a long time. Eventually we came out with Sgt Mack, our squad leader taking one look at us with eyes the size of silver dollars, grabbed us and said "Woolve, Brown"!! I believe he thought we'd been blown away. I crawled on the top of the bunker retrieving the fin assembly of the one lone 82mm mortar round, and said, "This will make a nice souvenir". That round hit maybe 3 feet above us and almost dead on to our front. One click left, we'd been vaporized. Angels, YOU BET I BELIEVE IN THEM!! I packed that fin assembly all over Nam with me, until I rotated out, then, rather than mess with some phony paper work to keep it, I left it, on Okinawa in a garbage can, when we sealed our sea bags. Semper FI

A FEW CHRISTMAS STORIES THAT MISSED ISSUE 69

Christmas At Khe Sanh
By Lt/Col James B. Wilkinson, USMC (Ret)

In the spring of 1965, units of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade arrived in South Vietnam. As they stormed ashore, ready for battle, lovely young ladies welcomed them with floral bouquets. The Marines were given the mission of protecting the airfield at Da Nang and were soon patrolling the surrounding villages and paddies. Their enemy, clad primarily in black pajama-like garments, supported the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and were called Viet Cong. Armed with single-shot rifles, punji stakes and other rudimentary weapons, they were a formidable foe, blending in with farmers and villagers when not setting up ambushes or planning other actions against the Marines. Identifying Viet Cong was a major challenge. It was reminiscent of a vintage Western with John Wayne as the grizzled, old Indian fighter. When a cavalry officer reports, "We just saw a patrol of Apaches!" Wayne replies, "Sir, if you saw them, they weren't Apache."

By 1967 American forces in South Vietnam numbered approximately 500,000 troops. Marines included the First and Third Marine divisions plus supporting forces, including a variety of Marine aviation units. The Marines were assigned to I Corps, in the northern portion of South Vietnam. The enemy also had grown from a poorly equipped but effective group of Viet Cong into a far more capable force. Large numbers of well-trained and -equipped units of the North Vietnamese Army had moved into South Vietnam. Their arsenal included

the old reliable AK47 rifle, rocket-propelled grenades, rockets, field artillery and an up-to-date communications and command structure.

Like the Viet Cong, the North Vietnamese units proved hard to locate. But in the spring of 1967, friendly patrols detected enemy forces in the extreme northwestern corner of I Corps. The enemy was present in well placed fighting positions and bunkers in the vicinity of Hills 881 South, 881 North and 861. Several Marine infantry battalions were tasked with destroying the enemy units. The ensuing conflicts became known as "hill battles" with both sides suffering heavy casualties.

When the fighting ended, the Marines occupied Hills 881 South, 861, 950 and Khe Sanh Combat Base. Hill 881 North was not occupied. The enemy withdrew, probably across the border into Laos where they could regroup and take on replacements that moved south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

American leaders at very high levels decided to maintain a force at Khe Sanh Combat Base. Their strategy was to lure the North Vietnamese into a set-piece battle, where air and artillery coupled with the courage of the individual American fighting man would prevail.

The enemy viewed a future battle for Khe Sanh as another Dien Bien Phu—the French outpost the North Vietnamese had battered day and night with artillery and ground attacks. The French surrendered Dien Bien Phu in 1954 after suffering extremely heavy casualties. This decisive battle led to the defeat of French forces in Vietnam. Like Khe Sanh, Dien Bien Phu was located close to Laos. In August 1967, Colonel David E. Lownds assumed command of the 26th Marine Regiment. During most of 1967 he had only one battalion under his command. The 26th Marines were part of the 5thMarDiv. However, when additional forces were needed in Vietnam, the regiment was moved from Camp Pendleton, Calif., and became part of the 3dMarDiv.

For the last half of 1967, up until Christmas, life at Khe Sanh Combat Base was uneventful. The defense of the base, Hills 861, 881 South and 950 remained with 1st Bn, 26th Marines. That battalion also was responsible for security of the bridge over the Rao Quan River. A rifle company was given the mission. Every six or seven weeks, companies would be reshuffled to and from the hills, to the base or to the bridge.

Life on the hills was far more Spartan than life at the base, with C-rations delivered by two ancient UH-34 Seahorse helicopters. The helicopters were so old their Marine passengers joked that the old "birds" suffered from mental fatigue.

When the squad-size patrols left the hills, the triple-canopied jungle, which began a few hundred yards from each hill position, enveloped them. Patrols oftentimes stayed out for several days, even during heavy monsoons or "cratchins." (The French used le crachin to describe light rain, coupled with fog.)

Christmas Best Forgotten

By Craig W. Tourte

OK so I'm not going to post my Christmas at Khe Sanh story this year. You know the one where Ann Margaret shows up on the well lighted stage placed over the ammo dump...yea, that one. Although I still think that story is one of my better BS pieces, I guess because I see such hilarious absurdity in the possibility or probability. I still can't get over the number of people who believed it could have actually occurred. One even said that he must have been up in the hills because he missed it.....Oh please. Still others demanded that I no longer write fiction, so that was the end of my fiction novel period.

Anyway, I was out driving around this evening in the dark (no not aimlessly) and the rain was really coming down. Now I realize California rain is not the same rain you folks get in other climate locations, I mean I played golf on Tuesday, but please try to follow the story here. Anyway it's cold and wet and the wind is blowing and I'm trying to remember how miserable I was 40 years ago at about this time. Now because of personal issues I had with my now deceased mother and step-father, Christmas was never much of a thrill, so I can't look back and remember how wonderful it was sitting around the old living room with the folks and grandma, you know the warm and fuzzy Christmas feeling, but I really envy those who can.

I do have some pretty vivid memories of a number of years ago spending Christmas with a few other lonely and bitter drinking buddies hanging out and complaining about this time of year, seems everyone else was so darn happy and filled with the Christmas spirit, which of course I never had, and to tell you the truth, I'm not so sure to this day I know what it is. Now getting back to my story. I guess for Christmas our mess must have put out a pretty decent meal, because if we didn't I am confident that Tom Horchler, Paul Turnbull and a few others, who had the privilege of eating in our mess, would even to this day, tell me about it. Tom always relates how good he thought the food was (he even kept a few of the menus) however others were not so complementary.

Anyway you look at it, Christmas at Khe Sanh was lousy, the food was rotten, the weather cold and wet with that damp fog rolling in and staying all night. No heaters, no lights, no blankets, wet clothes, socks and boots, and no radios or televisions or Christmas carols. The red clay mud stuck to your boots making them 5 pounds heavier and you became 3 inches taller. I didn't think about Christmas at home, I didn't think about mom because I knew that she was not thinking about me, and I'm sure Christmas was just a little more enjoyable for her knowing that I wouldn't be hanging around. But worst of all, worst of all about Christmas at Khe Sanh, was that tall, leggy Ann Margaret with the dancing girls from the USO show, who never showed up on the stage that was never built over the ammo dump.

Christmas best forgotten.....not for me. It was my most memorable

By Dennis Mannion - K Co 3/26

Some time in the 80's our local newspaper sponsored a "Memorable Christmas" contest. I submitted the following and earned a first place award. It has been in Red Clay before (and Leatherneck Magazine) but not for some time, and since the event is approaching 40 years & because Craig called it "best forgotten" I decided to copy it here. It will always be the Christmas that stands out in my memory...even today. S/F

CHRISTMAS at KHE SANH

Like weary travelers, who finally get to rest in the comfort of their own homes after a week of constant motion and movement, the members of Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment spread out into the foxholes and bunkers that made up the company's perimeter at Khe Sanh.

It was Christmas Eve 1967, and we had just returned from a four-day operation that had taken us west of the combat base into the rugged hills and terrain of the Khe Sanh Plateau. Despite minimal creature comforts at the base, it was a relief to know that we didn't have to hike those hills for a while. That alone was a legitimate Christmas present.

In terms of the physical setting and the expected sounds and colors, this was sure to be my bleakest holiday ever, but it remains the Christmas that stands apart from all the others, and the one which memory doesn't confuse, over decades later.

My radioman, Dave Krom, and I headed straight for the position that we had constructed the previous week. Even though it was just two foxholes covered with a tent-like affair of scrounged parachute silk, we felt elated to be home for the holidays. At midday, a rumor which had been circulating since the previous morning turned into reality. An arriving helicopter touched down just outside the company area, and mailbag after mailbag began to spill out onto the ground!

The distribution of our Christmas mail, which had been held in storage for nearly two weeks, required the work of scores of Marines as there were thousands of letters and hundreds of "care packages." More than anything else, it was the sheer volume of these packages that brought a festive, holiday atmosphere to our corner of the war. Denied a chance to be in the real world, it was as if its realities had been sent to us, and each package opened helped to reduce the tensions and the fears accumulated during the previous week. By late afternoon, Kilo Company was almost giddy with child-like happiness and Christmas spirit.

Since Dave and I had not drawn perimeter guard that night (another present), we settled in under our parachute hooch to feast on our collective packages

and to recall Christmas memories from earlier years. With our military gear relegated to the sides of the tent, the war almost seemed to have been replaced with plentiful food, laughter, and friendship. Considering how the previous four months had been spent, we had another gift to be thankful for – we were still around for the holiday while a number of our companions were not. Sometime after midnight, wrapped in a poncho-liner and surrounded with gentle memories of home and the holidays, I drifted off to sleep thinking of my family and mostly my mother.

I was jolted out of my sleep on Christmas morning by the sound of "Jingle Bells!" Two Marine Corps helicopters with Santa's painted on their sides were making repeated passes over the combat base, and loudspeakers mounted in the doors were playing one Christmas song after another. It was incredible! Within seconds, people from all over were up, out, and on their feet to cheer and to wave. The show didn't last more than 10 minutes, but it was enough to get our day off to a magical start.

At noon, a Catholic chaplain celebrated mass out in the open, and as I sauntered over, I was suddenly struck with the thought that 12 noon on Christmas Day in Vietnam corresponded exactly with 12 midnight on Christmas Eve in Connecticut. While I knelt with rifle in hand in the red dust of Khe Sanh, my family was kneeling in the pews of St. Mary's Church in New Haven for midnight mass. It was the only time in my 13 month tour when I knew exactly what members of my family were doing at a given moment. I used to wonder and guess at their actions and activities from time to time, but in this short period of mass and remembrance, I was linked to them with a bond that stretched over 15,000 miles. In spite of the distance, I never felt closer to any of them as I did at that moment, and the simple act of closing my eyes seemed to move me out of the war and into the comfortable surroundings of family and home.

By nightfall, Christmas morning in Connecticut, I was strapping on the weapons and gear of an infantryman and preparing to move to an ambush position outside our protective barbed wire. Our route out the gate took us directly across the very ground where mass had been said earlier, and where, through the miracle of Christ's birth, I was permitted to stand for a moment at a window to the world.

A Different Christmas Story

By Michael Preston

Every year around Xmas time I get to thinking about those Christmas's I spent away from home, three in total, what a drag ! C-rats ala-king for Xmas dinner, O-Boy , yum-yum ! I think about all the guys who did it before me to keep this country free, wow! Just think how lucky those guys in Korea were to be there for Xmas, it was really cold and snowy just like it is supposed to be at Christmas, that probably helped to cheer them up, ya think ?

And how about those lucky guys in " Belleau Woods" in the big war! I think the guys who probably had the most fun at Christmas were those guys who were taking boat rides across the Potomac with that big guy who kept pointing at the icebergs ahead, these guys had the finest equipment that the revolutionist could afford, what fun. Well we ended up sitting in the steaming jungle, 90 degrees or what ever, 90 % humidity or whatever it was, doesn't matter-there wasn't much Christmas atmosphere in the Nam. It would have been nice to have some snow, don't ya think? Well, on second thought maybe not. Anyway, every year at Christmas I offer a message to my fellow veterans whether it be something I have conjured up or something someone else has. This year someone sent me this one and it was good enough to bring tears to my eyes so I figger it is good enough to send to you tough guys .
MERRY CHRISTMAS, SEMPER FI "ANIMAL"

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.
Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.
The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.
My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.
In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.
The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,

But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know, Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.
My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,
And I crept to the door just to see who was near.
Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.
A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,
Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.
"What are you doing?" I asked without fear,
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!
Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,
You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts.
To the window that danced with a warm fire's light
Then he sighed and he said "Its really all right,
I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night."
"It's my duty to stand at the front of the line,
That separates you from the darkest of times.
No one had to ask or beg or implore me,
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.
My Gramps died at ' Pearl on a day in December,"
Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram always remembers."
My dad stood his watch in the jungles of ' Nam ',
And now it is my turn and so, here I am.
I've not seen my own son in more than a while,
But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile.

Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,
The red, white, and blue... an American flag.
I can live through the cold and the being alone,
Away from my family, my house and my home.
I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.
I can carry the weight of killing another,
Or lay down my life with my sister and brother
Who stand at the front against any and all,
To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."
"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."
"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,
"Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?
It seems all too little for all that you've done,
For being away from your wife and your son."

Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.
To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.
For when we come home, either standing or dead,
To know you remember we fought and we bled.
Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,
That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

PLEASE, Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to our U.S.
service men and women for our being able to celebrate these festivities. Make
people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us.

LCDR Jeff Giles, SC, USN
30th Naval Construction Regiment
OIC, Logistics Cell One
Al Taqqadum, Iraq

SHORT ROUNDS

From a "Doc"

By Mike Fishbaugh

BURY ME NEXT TO A MARINE

Bury me next to a Marine,
When my time comes to an end,
So I can spend eternity
Beside my brother and friend.
I've served beside them for years,
And they inspired me every day,
They've never ask for anything
So a debt I can never repay.
None of them served for money,
None for glory or fame,
But they've served in every clime and place,
Heroes with but one name.
No will ever out do them,
Their honor is never outdone,
They will go down in history
As America's favorite sons.
Marines will never fail you,
And their guard will never cease,
Please bury me next to a Marine,

So I may rest in peace.

Written by Robert L. Owens, a 2nd Class Corpsman serving with Marines in Iraq
WELL SAID ROBERT!

Many Times I have tried to express my feelings about the Marines I served with!! Even the Marines of today, I have a bond with! You just have to had been there to understand how corpsmen respect Marines.
Doc Jim Thomas

THE COMEDIAN

By Craig W. Tourte

I attended another social function last night comprised of approximately 200 lobbyists and business types. This event took place in a nice restaurant which was completely reserved for the occasion. Most of the folks were younger than myself as they should be, since I am now old and retired. The seating were tables that held six people of which I knew only one other. The lady sitting next to me engaged me in conversation and revealed that her son was 27 years old and was in the Army and currently serving in Iraq. She told me that he had served 4 years in the Marine Corps but because of his extensive tattoos the Marine Corps refused his request to reenlist, so he joined the Army. When he left the Marine Corps he was a Lance Corporal and when he went into the Army they made him a Sergeant. She continued that this was his 3rd tour in Iraq as he had served in Iraq once as a Marine and this was his second tour as a solider.

I told her that I was sure that she was proud of him for his warrior spirit, which just could not be explained. That there are those who are called to serve, who just have to go where the action is. Not that he wanted to go but that something deep inside told him that he had to go. We discussed how hard those decisions were on the family and love ones but it was an unfortunate reality for those that have that spirit. She had a tear running down her cheek about then so I thought it best to move on to something else, but I knew she appreciated my understanding of how she felt.

The conversation continued and her husband (not the father of her son) asked me if I had served and where. So of course the subject of Khe Sanh came up. He told me that he was familiar with Khe Sanh. Although he had not served in the military his father and uncle had. He was very interested in Khe Sanh and compared the experience to Belleau Woods and other Marine Corps battles. I asked him how he was so aware of that event and he told me that he was a student of history and was very familiar with the Siege. He was very kind and I hate to say this, but seemed kind of awe struck and enthralled with me and kept saying "I cant' believe that I'm sitting here with someone who was at Khe Sanh." We discussed the little book of essays I'm putting together and of course he said he wanted to buy one as soon as it was published (I put him on my list).

The entertainment for the evening was a well known comedian of political satire. I normally stay away from these types because they inevitable say something that just gets me, but since it was a primarily conservative crowd and I was a guest, I hung in there and tried to maintain a pleasant smile. Of course he got around to George W and the Iraq war. Now I don't want to make a political statement because we all have our opinions on these issues but he mentioned with great laughter all of "the lies" (you have heard them before) about why we were in Iraq, why we're staying on and on. I glanced over at the lady who was sitting next to me and her face was stone cold and from where I was sitting I could feel the chill running down her back. You see, regardless of how one feels about this whole situation, if you're a parent and your child or loved one is in danger, you want, you need to feel that their potential sacrifice is worth it. At the very least, you don't want to be sitting in a room with 200 other people who are laughing about it, knowing they don't understand your pain and to you, it's not a laughing matter.

She handled the situation better than I would have been able, given the circumstances and I'm sure she expected something like this and she did not seem to take it personally. But when the event was over and she and her husband got up to leave, I saw the look on her face. The look that said she was all alone, and no one else would understand, except I did.

POETRY

Rain *(Southeast Asia Monsoon)*

Talisman Submission
Jack Baumgarten, CW162
650 594 0511
3/16/06

Once I was where it rained all of the time.
Canvas sagging against tent poles
under pools of water trapped above.
Floors of mud underfoot,
cold with ridges of black walls and dams
holding each little pool in place.
Sickening warm breezes turning cold
on my wet shivering face.

Joy is sleep
in sodden bed role
on canvas cot
head buried in damp pillow
of bad smelling rags and clothes
hiding from the tiny lizards
seeking comfort too.

Sadness is morning,
somehow warm in my damp reverie.
Socks and shorts warm with me
hidden under my feet.
Boots camouflaged in dirt
hiding under my cot
and calling to me from their puddle.
Rise I must,
me and that lizard,
shivering again as cover is cast aside.
Arms and legs enter the mildewed cloth
of yesterday's garments.
Toes feel moisture rise up between them
from saturated inserts below.
The morning cleanup ceremony begins
with wet face staring back out of the small mirror
between running beads of rain.
All of that water
and nothing to brush my teeth with!

Quietness comes
from the sound of rain falling on mud and skin
from boots pulling out of sucking holes
from canvas too wet to complain
about the beat of the rain.
from eyes peering between dripping brows.
from wet pant legs rubbing each other.
from knowing that it will rain again tomorrow.
from when I fall in the mud
to join the rain in that sad hole
as my warm fluids
help fill the space around me.

Soon I will be riding away
On a wet canvas litter
Between two sets of hands
The rain will stop as the zipper pulls
the plastic bag together
across my moist face.
I ride away from that cold damp home
lying amid my brothers
In the misty rain
that never ends.

STRESS and PTSD

By Craig Tourte

I'm really pretty new at this PTSD stuff, I didn't know much about it until I connected with Tom Horchler about four years ago. Of course Tom insisted that I file for PTSD but it was not until I attended my first reunion and talked to Neil and others that I came to realize what all of this really meant. I know that some see it as just a means for others to receive VA benefits and it's hard to describe its effects and ramification to those not so well informed and in particular to discuss it with those who deny having any form of the disorder themselves. Subsequently, I have read a great deal on the subject and of course I have now gone through the process. As I talk to others who are currently working through the system trying to obtain the assistance and help they need, I find that one of the many issues they face is having to describe what combat action they saw. Questions like, "How many dead did you see, did you kill anyone, did you help anyone who was wounded, what was your MOS,

what citations did you receive." And provide names and letters from associates who can vouch for their experience. I think what they (whoever they are) are really asking, is how much gore (death and injury) did you see and why can't you just get over it?

Chaplain Ray Stubbe wrote a wonderful letter of support for someone a number of years ago. The letter is quite long as he describes the experience of being at Khe Sanh (and the hills) during the Siege. But I think the most important aspect of this letter reads in part:

"The emotional consequence of all of this involved: a constant awareness of imminent personal danger and death, feelings of abandonment, a deep awareness of vulnerability, and inability to do anything, and the frustrations of helplessness..." Now here is what I feel is the most important issue in his letter.

"I'm sure you are aware of Lt.//Col Dave Grossman's book on killings where... Swank and Marchand's much-cited World War II study, determined that after sixty days of continuous combat, 98 percent of all surviving soldiers will have become psychiatric casualties of one kind or another...also found a common trait among 2 percent who were able to endure sustained combat: a predisposition toward "aggressive psychopathic personalities." Having been in contact with many hundreds of the survivors of the Siege battle at Khe Sanh, I have been made aware that almost all are 100% service-connected for PTSD, as one might conclude from the experience..."

What I get from the information provided in this letter is that PTSD is not about exposure to death and injury, although that is an important aspect, but rather how long and intense was the sustained and continuous stress of the experience. Of the many individuals I have spoken to about this subject, I cannot recall one saying in truthfulness that after their experience at Khe Sanh, life has been a bowl of cherries and everything has been grand. But rather we have spoken about broken marriages, dependent abuse, dreams, anger and you know the rest. For those who don't have PTSD, or just deny having it, may I suggest they read and learn as much as they can about this disorder and then talk to those who have been diagnosed. You might find a common thread and perhaps then you might understand what this is all about, and who knows, you might even find that you have just a little PTSD yourself.

A REBUTTAL

All service men and women are heroes in some eyes.

I am an associate member of the Khe Sanh Veterans and have been for several years. I look forward to receiving the Red Clay Magazine.

While I was not there it is extremely interesting reading about the war through a Marines eyes, for some of us that were not there we can only imagine what it was like. To me, every man and women that came home from Viet Nam was a hero. Every one of them has a story to tell of the hell they endured. I had many friends who served in Viet Nam and some that never made it home. They were all heroes in my eyes, and to many who knew them.

In your issue 69 Red Clay there was an article by Mr. Moore and his concern on how loosely the term hero is used. In all honesty I do not feel that many of the American people would agree with him. There are many men and women in Iraq, Afghanistan and many other parts of the world that are risking all for their country and the American people. While some of those military personnel will not see battle, a large majority will and have. My nephew has just recently returned from Iraq. While injured in battle he is one of the lucky ones that came home alive. He was injured while trying to help three wounded soldiers that were taking heavy fire; I would call him a hero. Listening to his stories of the war in Iraq was the same as listening to the Khe Sanh veteran's talk of their experiences in Viet Nam.

I truly do not know the statistics of the war in Iraq or Afghanistan and the brave men and women there defending our country, but I am sure that more than 1% of them have shouldered a rifle to defend them selves or one of their comrades. As Mr. Moore pointed out, the dictionary defines hero as: A person noted for feats of courage or notability of purpose, unless we are there we can not know how many times one of these brave people have fired a gun, Flew a Jet, guided a tank or any other form of put-

ting themselves in harms way. A military (hero) might be one of these people.

The other term of hero that Mr. Moore alluded to was, one who has risked or sacrificed his or her life. Unless you know or knew someone who is serving or has served in Iraq or Afghanistan, you can not possibly know how many times one has risked his or her life. They might also be a hero. My nephew is a Captain in the rangers and had seen his share of battle. He said when you are with a platoon of men and women and you are the responsible one, you do not think of your well being or safety, you think of theirs. He explained to me that his entire platoon felt the same way, think of the person next to you in battle and doing what you can to keep them safe. These types of people may be heroes.

While Mr. Moore gave many fine examples of a hero in his opinion, which I agree with, there are many other examples that we never will know. We will not know them unless you know someone who has gone through it. Whether it be, Omaha Beach, The Battle of the Bulge, The Bomber crews, Leathernecks, Survivors of the USS Yorktown, 1st. Marine Division, The Viet Nam War, or any other conflict that has seen U.S. military men and women on foreign soil. These people are truly heroes.

But please do not cheapen the meaning of hero by saying that 99% of the young men and women who serve our country today are not heroes because they have not shouldered a rifle in battle, you do not know that as a fact. While some of them may not be or have not been in harms way during their time at war, they are still in someone's eyes a hero, because they did indeed go to war. By Mr. Moore saying they are not heroes is the same slap in the face that the brave young men and women coming home from Viet Nam went through. They were indeed heroes, they came home to a country for the most part that did not appreciate what they did or had gone through. I know that simple attitude has changed in today's society by the support for the military men and women seen all over the United States. While some do not agree on the war it seems that we all agree on the support of the military men and women; well most of us anyways. These men and women may be heroes.

The word hero is not misused in most cases in my opinion. I do not call someone a hero unless they deserve it in my eyes. I belong to an organization called the Patriot Guard Riders. We have buried many, many Heroes; we have done many memorial rides for WW1, WW2, Korea, Viet Nam and Iraq veterans. We do many send off rides for heroes going to battle, and many welcome home rides for those coming home from battle. In every aspect of what we do, the people we deal with think that their loved ones are indeed heroes. Who are we, or who is Webster to say that these people are not heroes. The interpretation of the word is better left to those who use it and not for anyone person to say they are not. Many of the words in today's society have several meanings; this must be one of them because it seems to me that an awful lot of people I talk to see these brave men and women as heroes.

Mike Skrekia

POETRY

Nha Trang

A white sand beach
fed by the south China Sea.
Sky as blue as blue can be.
The sun high and hot
beating down on that hot sand.

A peasant woman with leathered skin
smiles as she approaches our little group.
Crows have walked on the corners of her eyes.
Paths to her ears have been carefully sketched
across her forehead.
A curved wooden beam lies across her shoulders –
each end supporting a basket hung with coarse hemp.
The baskets carefully loaded,
balanced between her bony shoulders.

Lips covering teeth blackened from beetlenut
open to ask: "You buy pineapple DiWi?"
Machete in her left, pineapple on her right,
her hands deftly peel brown skin from the fruit-
carefully carving out the eyes,
and quartering the center into four popsicle shapes.
"10 Piasters DiWi. You numba one G.I. for sure!"
as she pockets our script.

The juice runs down our chins and fingers
onto the hot sand.
Our palates water from the sweetness
as we whittle those popsicles down.

Suddenly, artillery rounds explode in the distance
And bracket double reports of giant howitzers.
Oily smoke bellows across the palms on the wind.

We wipe the sugary juice from our faces
as we watch the jets scream over the trees,
wings bending, unloading gifts of napalm.

She turns back to us –
barefoot on the hot sand - -

Jack Baumgarten

BOOK REVIEW

ONE DAY AS A LION
True Stories of the Vietnam War Heroes From Collin County, Texas
By Ronnie D. Foster

"It is better to have lived one day as a lion, than to live ten thousand years as a sheep."From an ancient Tibetan proverb

The era of the sixties was a turbulent time in America. Nowhere was the impact any greater than in my home of Collin County, Texas. During the 1860s, it was a war between the states of the North and the South that divided the country so drastically. Hundreds of local men and boys left their families, ranches, and farms to form up in the town squares, and march off to battle. Just over 100 years later, in the 1960s, the country was again divided over a war between the North and South. But this time the battles were being fought on the other side of the world in the rice paddies and jungles of a small obscure country in Southeast Asia called Vietnam, a place that was practically unknown to the average American at the time. Nonetheless, America was again going to war, and again called upon her young men to wage the fight for freedom. And just like 100 years earlier, the young men of America answered the call and proudly wore the uniform into battle after battle.

I was just one of hundreds of those boys pretending to be men who left in search of adventure, the chance to be a living participant in the making of history, and to always have the inner feeling that we fought for our country. When World War II hero and US Navy veteran, President John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country," many of us took him literally and accepted that challenge. Twenty-one of those boys from Collin County, Texas, who did take that challenge, did not come home.

Those men, the ones who did not come home, paid the ultimate price so that the rest of us could live another hundred years as free thinkers and doers. Freedom does not come free; it comes with a heavy price.

This book is an attempt to tell the stories of those 21 young men. Through the details of available official military records, history books, veterans' websites on the Internet, photographs, maps, personal and eyewitness accounts, letters to family and friends, and my own experience as a Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, I have attempted to tell the stories of their young lives to the best of my ability. As I began to write this book, my war had been over for 35 years. For some of the guys, I found an abundance of information, and for others not much at all. I have tried my best to tell their stories with the honor and dignity they have earned and deserve. Many of them were friends of mine, some I had never met, but we are all brothers in an elite family of warriors, freedom fighters, and adventurers.

In January of 1961, President Kennedy explained the presence of American military personnel who were involved in a war in that obscure little country in Southeast Asia: "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty..."

A small section of the population of the United States was becoming vocal in their opposition to our intervention into what they saw as another country's

war. On September 2, 1963, the President answered those critics: "... These people who say that we ought to withdraw from Vietnam are wholly wrong, because if we withdrew from Vietnam, the communists would control Vietnam. Pretty soon Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Malaya would go, and all of Southeast Asia would be under the control of the communists and under the domination of the Chinese...."

After President Kennedy was assassinated on Friday, November 22, 1963, in downtown Dallas, Texas, 15 miles south of the Collin County line, the problem of Vietnam fell into the lap of another Texan, Lyndon B. Johnson. The President was the son of a Collin County girl who was born just three blocks south of the square in McKinney, the county seat. On August 3, 1965, his reply to the growing number of war critics on why we had 16,000 military advisors in South Vietnam was: "If this little nation goes down the drain and can't maintain her independence, ask yourself, what's going to happen to all the other little nations?"

On the eve of the presidential election in 1964 between Johnson and his Republican opponent, Barry Goldwater, the Viet Cong (VC) staged a rocket attack on the American air base at Bien Hoa, in the southern part of the country, killing American personnel there. The United States' Ambassador to Vietnam, General Maxwell Taylor, urged a retaliation bombing on Hanoi, but the President refused. The VC attacked again and again, becoming bolder each time, and instead of their traditional guerrilla style of hit and run fighting, they began showing the influences of their training advisors from North Vietnam, China, North Korea, and Russia, as they utilized more battalion-sized operations.

At the time, the only large American military installations housing American troops were air bases, and they, as well as the aircraft on the ground, were becoming more and more vulnerable. The protection of the bases had been left up to the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN), and it was becoming increasingly apparent that they could not be counted on to do that job. On March 8, 1965, the President ordered 3,500 US Marines to land and deploy in a position to protect the air base at Da Nang. Three weeks later, the VC attacked the American Embassy in Saigon, as regular troops of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) began pouring into the South by way of what would become known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

President Johnson, in a speech to the nation on January 12, 1966: "How many men who listen to me tonight have served their nation in other wars? How many are not here to listen? The war in Vietnam is not like these other wars. Yet, finally, war is always the same. It is young men dying in the fullness of their promise. It is trying to kill a man that you do not even know well enough to hate. Therefore, to know war is to know that there is still madness in this world. For we have children to teach, and we have sick to be cured, and we have men to be freed. There are poor to be lifted up, and there are cities to be built, and there is a world to be helped. Yet, we do what we must. I am hopeful, and I will try with the best I can, with everything I've got, to end this battle and to return our sons to their desires. Yet as long as others will challenge America's security, and test the dearness of our beliefs with fire and steel, then we must stand, or see the promise of two centuries tremble."

And just like that, the politicians of the world had gotten us into another war. And just like that, boys from all over Collin County answered the call the same way that our fathers, grandfathers, and great grandfathers had. Some volunteered seeking an adventurous opportunity to see the world and to be a part of history; some dutifully went when their names were called. Some went kicking and screaming all the way, but once they got there, they did their jobs with honor and dignity. Those called, served with just as much duty and honor as the volunteers. According to the most decorated soldier of that war, the late Colonel David Hackworth, US Army (Ret), he could tell no difference between the regulars and the draftees in the soldiers who served under him. They were equally good soldiers.

A good friend of mine, Frank Seals, joined the Marines after he had graduated from McKinney High School in 1965. At the completion of boot camp, and just before he shipped out for Vietnam, he came home wearing his summer tropical uniform and was a changed man, not a boy anymore. Frank was slim and trim with an attitude and a look in his eye that I didn't quite understand at the time. He was a Marine, by God. Just like those legendary guys I had

read about on Guadalcanal. Although he was only 18, having earned that famous Eagle, Globe, and Anchor on his hat, Frank would never have to prove his manhood again.

He told me stories about what it had been like so far. Yes, boot camp had been hell on earth. I was totally fascinated. In fact, I wanted to hear all about infantry and jungle warfare training with live ammunition in the hills and on the beaches of Camp Pendleton, California, the same place I had read about in the novel "Battle Cry," written by Marine Corps veteran Leon Uris. Frank told me that Pendleton was where they had filmed the movie that was made from the book. I could easily picture myself wearing that uniform, but I didn't know if I had what it took. Not just anybody could wear those clothes. But he told me if he could make it, I could make it. Honestly, I wanted to go, and it scared the hell out of me.

My dad, his brothers, my mom's brother, and my two older brothers, had been soldiers during WWII, Korea, and the Cold War against communism. I decided there was no way I was going to miss this one, a real genuine shooting war. What an adventure, and what stories I would have to write about when some far-off day I did get ready to settle down and remember it all for my kids and their kids to read about. And I was not the only kid who felt that way. The Marine Corps was full of them, 17 and 18 -year-old guys like me, most of us from the poor side of town, never having been anywhere, and ready to see the wonders of the world, and be just like Audie Murphy, the most decorated soldier of World War II, who was from my hometown of Farmersville, Texas.

We soon learned, however, there was no glory in war. That fallacy comes from those Hollywood movies where men die without pain, without spilling blood and guts, or missing limbs or heads, terrible sucking chest wounds, or crying and screaming. And the movie soldiers always seemed to have time to say a few last meaningful words.

In Vietnam not everyone was involved in direct combat, although no one place in the country was ever totally safe from death and destruction. Our war was basically one in which there were no front lines like there had been in all the ones before. It was a new kind of war in which the score was kept not by the amount of ground gained and conquered, but by body counts, a daily tally of the number of soldiers killed by each side.

Everyone who went there has a story to tell. Twenty -one young men from Collin County went and never returned. Someone has to tell their stories. Out of those 21 heroes, there were 13 soldiers of the US Army, one sailor, and seven Marines.

On March the 5th, 1966, the Vietnam War hit home for the first time. One of the Marine Corps' mottoes is "First to Fight." That usually also means first to die. Our first casualty was an 18-year-old Marine, PFC (Private First Class) Royce Glen Scoggins of McKinney.

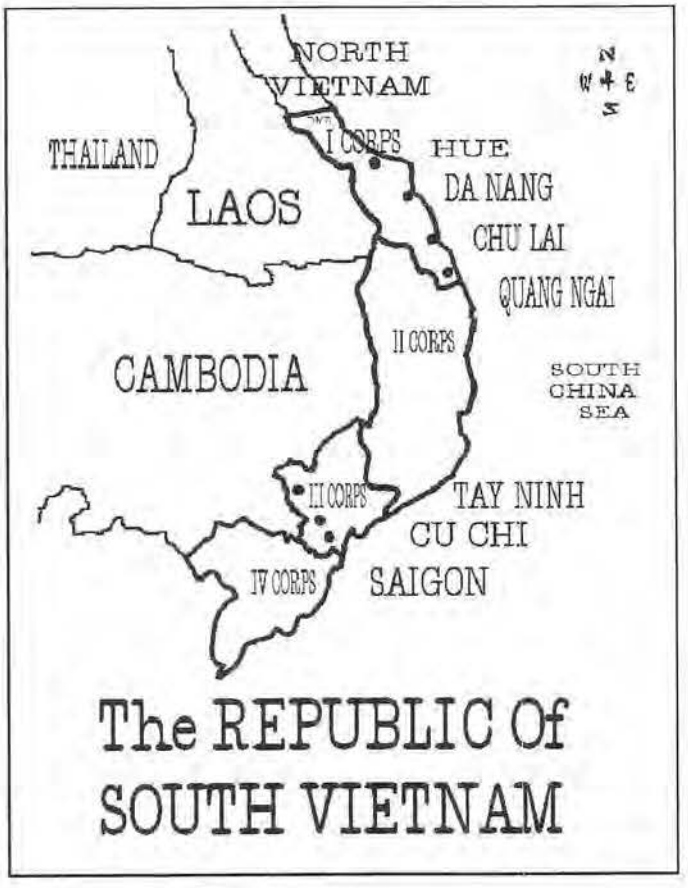

Map of Southeast Asia

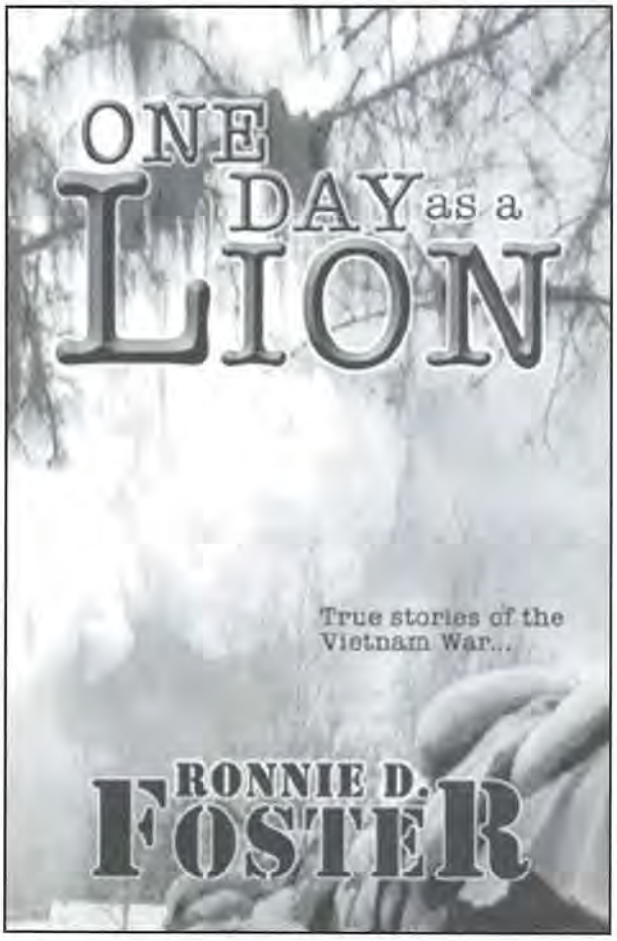



Chpt 1	First to Fight, First to Die	Royce Glen Scoggins
Chpt 2	The Summer of Love	Darrel Uldric Mahan
Chpt 3	Riverines	Robert Ray Brown
Chpt 4	The Fighting Farmer	Thomas Glenn Caraway
Chpt 5	Ambush on Go Noi Island	Thomas B. Holdbrooks
Chpt 6	Hill 881 North	Charles W. "Bill" Bryan
Chpt 7	Tet LZ Jane Screaming Eagles	James Edgar Malone
Chpt 8	The Battle of Lo Giang	Lanny Earl Hale
Chpt 9	Combat Medic	Charles Edwin Hoffman
Chpt 10	Sky Soldiers	Lawrence Edward Jones
Chpt 11	One Day on the DMZ	Wayne Fraze
Chpt 12	The last Patrol	Wylie Hutchings
Chpt 13	The Ben Cui Rubber Plantation	Jerry Wayne Combest
Chpt 14	The Last Thanksgiving	Joe Alan Johnson
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Chpt 17	Black Virgin Mountain	Vernon Wayne Moody
Chpt 18	Congressional Medal of Honor	Russell Alan Steindam
Chpt 19	Flame Out	Martin Leroy Rogers
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Chpt 21	Lost in Cambodian Jungle	Bobby Glenn Harris
Chpt 22	The War is Over	
Chpt 23	The War that Never Ends	
Chpt 24	36 Years Later a Marine Comes Home	
Chpt 25	Missing Dog Tag Found & Returned	

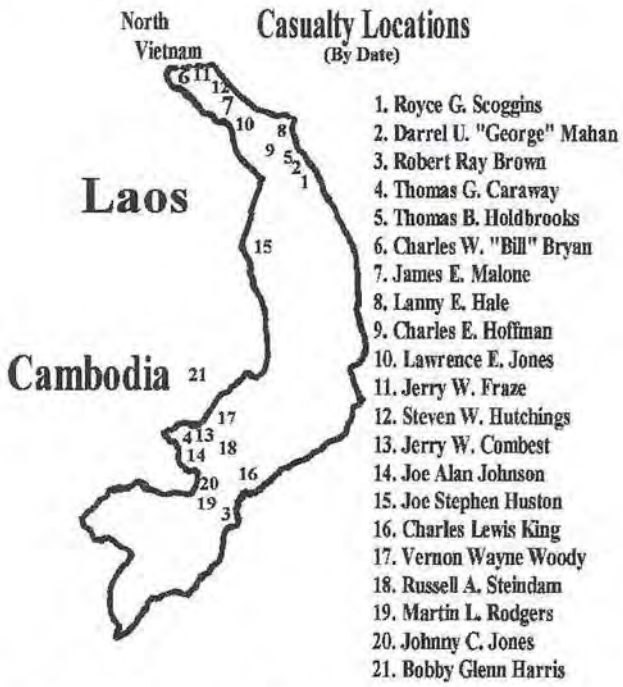

MAP OF COLLIN COUNTY CASUALTY LOCATIONS IN VIETNAM

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LATE OBIT

COLONEL CHARLES KENNETH GRIMES, USAF

Charles passed away on January 24, 2008 at the Tennessee Veterans State Home in Humboldt. He had turned 85 on January 9. He leaves his wife, Joyce Callaway Grimes; his daughter, Deborah Anne Marston; his son, Charles K. Grimes Jr.; his sister, Dorothy Owens; eight grandchildren and seven great- grandchildren and Rosie his pet Chihuahua. Ken Grimes was born in Memphis, Tennessee on January 9, 1923. He spent his childhood in Memphis and attended Humes High School, succeeded by Elvis Presley two years later. He enlisted in the service near the end of World War II and volunteered for pilot training. He qualified to fly the B-17 just before the end of the war but never flew a mission. **His military career spanned nearly 30 years during which time he served in the Korean War and Vietnam War. He became a command pilot and reached the rank of Colonel. His final combat tours were served in Vietnam flying missions in the C-131 including dangerous low-altitude parachute extractions in Khe Sanh during the siege of 1967-68.**

After retiring from the military in 1973, he worked for 5 years at Boeing Corporation in Wichita after which he fully retired to become a passionate golfer. Ken had a parallel academic career beginning as an undergraduate at the University of Alabama where he received his BS in engineering. He later obtained a Masters degree from M.I.T. and a Ph.D. in aeronautical engineering from Caltech. He became an instructor at the Armed Forces Institute of Technology at Wright Patterson Air Force Base and headed the Structure and Materials division of the Flight Dynamics Laboratory there. He was married to his first wife, Celena M. Grimes in 1941. In spite of the vicissitudes of three wars and periodic separations, they remained a devoted couple for 45 years, living together as newlyweds, parenting two children, and enjoying an early retirement traveling to Hawaii on three occasions. Perhaps their most cherished role was as grand-parents. He steadfastly took care of Celena throughout her long bout with pulmonary disease. Ken was remarried to Frances Larrison Grimes in 1987.

Their life together was tragically cut short when Fran succumbed to ALS in 1999. Subsequent to Fran's death, Ken was extremely fortunate to meet and marry Joyce C. Nichols in 2001 with whom he happily shared the last several years. The visitation was held on Saturday evening, January 26 from 6-8 p.m. at Memorial Park Funeral Home. The interment took place in Memorial Park Cemetery at 2 p.m. on Sunday January 27 under a military honor guard.

MEMOIRS

Michael Fishbaugh turned up the following articles and photos that were published in "The Vietnam Airlifter" Newsletter April of 1971. It is a tribute to those Air Force Heroes who kept Khe Sanh Rolling

Freight specialists are probably among the hardest working men in the Air Force. These men keep the supplies moving in one of the hottest spots at Khe Sanh.

S/Sgt. Gerald Bickford, a freight specialist at the Khe Sanh Air Base, recently found himself surrounded by a news team from one of the television networks in Vietnam. "How long have you been in Vietnam?" the correspondent asked Bickford who is something of a legend "for being where the action



is." "Forty-eight months," came the crisp reply. The startled newsman asked what the men who unload the aircraft in the unprotected areas did when the shells began coming in. "We run like hell," Bickford replied.

"I beg your pardon," remarked the correspondent. "We run back to the bunkers.'" Then the newsman asked why he hadn't seen the freight crew running when some enemy shells hit the base a few minutes before. Sergeant Bickford, replied, "We have to get the aircraft unloaded before we take off." The Staff Sergeant later commented, "I hope he understood that without supplies we wouldn't be winning this war."

They're a rough crew, dressed in whatever will keep them warm and dry. Often, mud that is four and five days old will cover their fatigues. According to their first sergeant," they're doing one helluva fine job." What MSgt. Donald Haselrig, First Sergeant of the 8th Aerial Port Squadron was referring to, was the performance of the 16-man mobility team that is handling the freight at the forward supply base. "I've seen them at work and at play," he said, "and, I can guarantee you they do both just as hard."

Even as the C-130s taxi toward the off-load area, the cargo crew moves in with fork lifts to unload the huge aircraft. All the men who hustle the freight at Khe Sanh are volunteers. Besides the long hours,



As one forklift hauls cargo off the C-130, another prepares to move in. Teamwork like this meant that planes spend only a few minutes on the ground.

the work is dangerous. In recent days, enemy rockets and artillery shells have fallen on the base. The airmen who work along. The exposed section of the runway makes tempting targets for the gunners.



S/Sgt Bickford found some cold water a refreshing break from the hard work. The water containers lid sufficed as a cup for the thirsty men

"However, A/lC freight specialist Arlos Anundson said, "This really doesn't bother us. We're too busy to think much about it." Usually the members of the team spend about two weeks al Khe Sanh and then return to Tan Son Nhut for a short rest. M/Sgt. Walter Moore, in charge of the Squadron's detach-

ments explained that after a short time at the forward base, the men become exhausted. "We try to



A/1C Eddie Koller rolls in with another load of artillery

give them as much of a break as possible," he said. Lt. Col. James Rock, who is in charge of the Air Force ground effort at Khe Sanh, praised the work of the freight specialists. He noted that an aircraft was rarely on the ground for more than ten minutes and it isn't unusual for a plane to be turned around in less than five minutes. This means that if the weather holds, the Air Force has been able to bring in 500 tons of badly needed supplies a day. The re-



Another C-130 roars into Khe Sanh past a damaged fork lift. Parts from the damaged vehicle were used to keep the other lifts running smoothly.

cord for one day here has been 1,000 tons of cargo.

Living and working at Khe Sanh are three maintenance men who are at Khe Sanh to perform emergency repairs on aircraft that have problems. Fortunately, these are few and far between. Sgt. Michael Marabelle explained that he and the other two maintenance men spend most of their time helping to move cargo. "Everyone helps out here," he remarked. "That's important." The men of the mobility team seem to thrive on the hard work. Sgt James Dausch explained, "I volunteered for mobility, to be, where the action is. I really enjoy it. I wouldn't want to do nothing else."

They're all Volunteers. The Work is hard and dangerous. Yet, without them the airlift into Khe Sanh wouldn't work.

"Any man who works for me had better be an individualist and hard headed to boot, if he wants to be a success as a combat controller," asserts Capt. Donald R. Howie, OIC of the Combat Control Team (CCT). After nine months as chief of the 834th's CCT, the captain should know what it takes to be a winner. He's seen action all over Vietnam and was operating near the Laotian border at Khe



A/1C Thomas Arndt and S/Sgt Gerald Bickford remove straps from a pallet of artillery shells.

Sanh.

A combat controller is the first man into a forward location. Equipped with a radio jeep and a supply of gasoline, he sets up shop as soon as he arrives and proceeds to guide aircraft into the field. He has complete responsibility for contacting each aircraft by radio, giving them landing instructions and talking them "around" any hostile fire in the area. He must be able to make decisions based on what he knows, and once made, he must stick to this decision. "Sometimes a two-striper will have control of all aircraft at a particular airfield," added the cap-

tain, between bites of a C-Ration breakfast. "In this case he must be able to make decisions on what he has been taught and overrule the recommendations of senior men not in his career field ."

"Me? I love my job." he explained. "This is the only place in the world where a combat controller can perform as he was taught. I'd like to come back for another tour but since there is only one officer slot in Southeast Asia, I'm pretty sure I wont be able to."

"Since there are no other officers with my specialty over here, I have a free hand in how I deploy troops. We're allowed to operate pretty much the way we want to, as long as the job gets done. It's more meaningful than some other jobs because you are in on both the planning and executing stages." Finishing the C-Ration ham and eggs he tossed the can into the fire and strolled back to the radio jeep and a session of reminiscing about the past nine months.

"It's a fairly exciting life over here. I've never been in a firefight or had anyone shooting directly at me, but I've had my share of rocket and mortar attacks," "There was the time at one base when enemy mortars blew up a fuel bladder not 100 yards from our jeep. Exciting wouldn't be the word. I guess scared would come pretty close to how I felt".

During one operation, he was controlling airlift operations into an isolated airfield on the border when the strip came under attack, "They were shooting helicopters off the end of the runway," he related. "You feel pretty lucky to get out of a situation like that without losing any aircraft."

"The aircrews put a lot of faith and trust in the controllers when they are coming into a field," he continued, scanning the skies with an unconscious habit. "Anytime a field I'm working comes under attack and I can get the aircraft off safely, I feel like I've done my job."

NOTEWORTHY DATE IN HISTORY
"MISSION AT KHE SANH"
MEMORIES ON THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE START OF THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH
By LT/COL DAVE HARMON USAF 314 TAW

February 29, 2008, marks the 10th anniversary of one memorable day in a 31-year military career, occurring during what became known as "The Tet Offensive" in the Vietnam War. That battle now celebrates its 40th anniversary.

My C-130E crew was stationed at CCK Air Base, Taiwan and flying out of a forward operating location in Tuy Hoa Air Base, Republic of South Vietnam. Our mission was to fly Airland and Airdrop missions delivering personnel and equipment throughout Southeast Asia.

We reported to Operations at "O'Dark Thirty" for mission assignment and briefing and were told we would be dead-heading up the coast to Da Nang and flying three round-trip "B3" (Bullets, Beans and Band-Aids) Airland sorties from there to Khe Sanh. We had flown the same mission six months earlier (while flying out of Cam Ranh Bay) without a hitch; but this was different.

I said to the briefing officer that I thought C-130 landings at Khe Sanh had been suspended due to the intensity of the attack being waged against it by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). I was told that 834th Air Division (Air Force tactical airlift command and control in Saigon) had decided to try a "test" mission to see if it might be successful. We finished the ops and intel/threat briefings, checked out extra flak jackets (to put under our seat cushions) and got underway.

Air Force Aerial Port units are responsible for preparing cargo and passengers for transport, rigging airdrop loads, and the on-loading/off-loading of aircraft. Upon our arrival at Da Nang the Aerial-Porters were ready for us and we were quickly loaded and on our way. Khe Sanh was manned by components of the 3rd Marine Division and other various attached units. It was located on a small plateau in the mountainous northwest corner of South Vietnam and positioned as an interdict on one

of the main Communist infiltration routes into South Vietnam. North Vietnamese General Giap had committed several Divisions in the attempt to do to our forces at Khe Sanh, what had been done to the French 34 years earlier in the siege of Bien Dien Phu. He surrounded Khe Sanh and began a series of continuous bombardments and attacks. However, he did not reckon on two differences: modern air support and the character of the US Marine Corps.

B-52's, fighters and helicopter gun ships rained death on the NVA forces surrounding Khe Sanh and the Marines gave as good as they got with outbound firepower and ground attacks. Key to the Marines' effort was aerial resupply, without which they would have been defenseless, since all ground lines of communication had been severed. That is where Tactical Airlift came in.

In the years before the Vietnam War, Tactical Airlift forces (C-130's, C-123's and all the supporting adjuncts for battlefield aerial delivery) had been improving tactics, equipment, and training for a mission that all planning indicated would become a major factor in modern warfare. A number of exercises were carried out in Florida, the Carolinas, Missouri and the desert Southwest developing new formation and short-field landing tactics and aerial delivery methods such as the Ground Proximity Extraction System (GPES), the Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System (LAPES), the Container Delivery System (CDS), the Parachute Low Altitude Delivery System (PLADS) and improved personnel and heavy equipment airdrop capability.

Unfortunately, one factor missing in these exercises was a ground force willing to place its logistics requirement in the hands of aerial re-supply in order to stress the Tactical Airlift system to the point of realism. Army trucks were organic, plentiful, and unhampered, so ground commanders (with other agendas) preferred surface resupply in these exercises. The result was a lack of the realism of a Bastogne or a Khe Sanh scenario. (Fifteen years later, I tried to get ground forces participating in a "Century Independence" exercise to agree to such a scenario and it was still like pulling teeth.)

Fortunately, early in the Vietnam War, a situation was reported to have occurred when cargo was seriously backlogged in the marshalling yard of Tan Son Nhut Airport in Saigon. A visiting Four-Star General asked the Aerial Port Chief Master Sergeant how many more C-130's were needed to move the cargo to all the forward locations in South Vietnam that needed it. It was rumored that the Chief told the General that if one more C-130 were sent to Tan Son Nhut, they would have to begin vertical parking. It was a good thing that the wrong question was posed to the right person. The Chief took the General to the Aerial Port Squadron loading equipment yard and showed him the broken loading equipment awaiting replacement parts and repairs. The General got the message and that was the beginning of a new look at how to use the C130 in a combat theater. The answer was simple: do whatever you have to do to minimize ground time between sorties. That meant that aircraft maintenance, refueling, and loading capabilities would have to be supported <u>first</u> if they were to be able to support the airlift mission.

(At this point, I am sure some of you "snow on the roof" types are thinking: "good grief, didn't we learn anything from the Berlin Airlift?" Well, the wheel <u>does</u> have to be reinvented from time to time now, doesn't it?)

By the time the siege of Khe Sanh and the Tet Offensive came about, the Tactical Airlift system may not have been a "well oiled machine," but it was pretty close. Even at Khe Sanh we had a hard surface planked runway over 3,000 feet long with an adjacent hard surface ramp and a Marine, radar Ground Controlled Approach (GCA) in operation. When the weather was lousy (which was most of the time) we could get an instrument approach for a landing or extraction. A procedure was even developed to get a GCA approach to the drop zone (DZ) west of the runway when the weather was too low to land or the threat level was too high for Airland ops. It was a really fluid situation. Our side didn't always own the entire DZ and the GCA would adjust a flight path accordingly. Considering the environment they were operating in, these GCA controllers were the best I have ever seen.

My Squadron (776th TAS) lost one crew and aircraft, on a GCA to Khe Sanh in bad weather, when they hit the upslope just short of the runway and skidded onto the runway on the side of the aircraft. A picture of a Marine fire fighter trying to chop his

way into the cockpit appeared in Life Magazine; but only one crewmember made it out of a forward window.

As I mentioned above, my crew was not without Khe Sanh experience before the day that has kept so much of this era vivid in my memory. We had flown Air-land missions into Khe Sanh in August and December of 1967, and had made four heavy equipment airdrops at an outpost (Lang Vie) west of Khe Sanh. The materials we airdropped there were used to build a bunker which enabled the unit to survive a subsequent armored attack and make it back to Khe Sanh during the initial phase of the siege. We also made GCA-guided, CDS airdrops to the Khe Sanh DZ during the siege.

As I recall, the weather at Khe Sanh on this Leap Year day was about 4,000 foot overcast with good visibility. We broke out several miles east of the field with a clear view of something that looked to be out of a movie set. There was smoke in several locations from incoming ordinance, pieces of this and that here and there, a badly damaged C-123 along side the runway and another on the runway. There were also people shooting at us from off the east side of the field. The tower said it would be a few minutes before the C-123 would be clear of the runway and we would have to go around.

As we were making the go-around, we were still taking hits from the ground fire. I tried as much evasive maneuvering as possible as I pulled up to the right. The field was under attack, the runway was blocked and we had unknown battle damage. No one would have faulted us for aborting the mission at that point. But a quick query of my crew showed that they still wanted to try to land and off-load as much as I did. So we came around again on a steep approach with a lot of side slipping to attempt to get the folks shooting at us to aim at where they thought we were going as opposed to our actual flight path.

This worked somewhat and we made it to touchdown on the runway end where I applied full reverse and stomped on the anti-skid braking in order to make the mid-field turnoff into the off-load ramp. Everything at Khe Sanh sloped uphill from east to west so that all that had to be done in the off-load area was for the loadmaster to open the aft ramp and door and pull the emergency cargo release handle while the pilot taxied out from under the palletized load.

As I turned into the ramp, I saw a Marine motioning us towards him. I was distracted by something (I think it was noticing our Cargo Door Open light coming on) and looked away from him momentarily. As I looked back, all I saw was a large explosion just in front and on the left side of the aircraft, which rocked the aircraft to the right. Stunned, I instinctively made a quick inventory of my personal parts, glanced over my shoulder at my crew and made a quick scan of the engine instruments; everything appeared OK and then I thought, "Oh shit, that Marine." I looked out to the left and, as the smoke cleared a little, on the other side of a newly formed 10 to 12-foot wide crater a foot or two deep in the ramp (more than likely from a 122mm rocket) was that Marine giving us the "get that mortar magnet out of here" wave-off. He must have heard or seen the incoming rocket and dove for cover behind one of the metal Conex Containers along the ramp.

That seemed like good advice since more incoming could be on the way and they seemed to have us pretty well zeroed in. I taxied onto the west end of the runway and advanced power to the BTTW position. Somewhere in all this our loadmaster got the ramp and door closed and I elected to accelerate in ground effect and fly off the east end of the field at brushing-the-tree-top level, dropping down into the valley to the east and getting out of the immediate area before climbing out. I guess this tactic worked, since we didn't feel ourselves taking any more hits. However, while beginning the climb-out I discovered that I couldn't get nose-up elevator control much beyond neutral.

We set up a long straight-in approach for a landing to the south back at Da Nang using trim, flaps and power to help with pitch control and made an uneventful landing. Post-flight inspection revealed evidence of a fire in the right aux tank and lots of holes. One of our maintenance officers later gave me a note listing 104 hits in the aircraft.

Air-land operations were once again suspended at Khe Sanh, but a successful Air Drop/Extraction program continued until the siege was finally broken.

The DFC I received for flying this mission did not mean as much to me as another medal I received for that mission, even though it ranked below the DFC. The 3rd Marine Division took the time to find the names of other service members who had been on the ground at Khe Sanh during the siege and allowed us to share the Navy Presidential Unit Citation, which the Division was awarded. Wow, a Navy medal for a "Blue Suiter."

I transitioned to the C-130A model and flew another Southeast Asia tour out of Naha AB, Okinawa. And by the end of the Vietnam War I had flown in 9 of the 11 Air Campaigns into which the conflict was divided. But every Leap Year day since then (and 2008 is the 10th since 1968) my thoughts go back to the 3rd Marine Division and the siege of Khe Sanh.

MORE MEMORIES

By Chuck Gerrior USAF 1st MOB COMM GRP TEAM 83-66

On the 40th Anniversary of the start of the siege of Khe Sanh Chuck Garrior submitted this speech to his local newspaper,. He also supplied Photographs from Khe Sanh.

Today, January 21, 2008, marks the 40th anniversary of the start of the Siege of Khe Sanh in South Vietnam and the TET 68 Offensive. Unlike the 40th anniversary of D-Day at Omaha and Utah Beaches where the Presidents of the Unites States and France speeches were noted around the world, I fear this date will past in history without the same fanfare.

The 77 day siege and the other major TET 68 battles for the Cities of South Vietnam were victories for the US Military at a heavy cost of life and many thousands wounded. Some of these wounded are today still carrying the scars and memories of these battles on a daily basis. The Siege of Khe Sanh was fought by the Marines with support from the Navy Corpsmen (Field Medics) and Seabees, plus the airlift and B-52 Arc Light bombing missions of the USAF. There was also close air support by the USAF, Navy and Marines. It was not a pleasant experience to be on the receiving end of day after day heavy incoming rounds number in the hundreds or better than a thousand, Everyone's primary worry was to hoping one of the rounds didn't have your name on it. Incoming rounds were serious business, but to have a sniper round miss you by a few inches could make you very uneasy you for a quite a while.

The North Vietnamese military commander, General Giap recently stated in his book that his army of soldiers was signifantly defeated by the pressures brought to bare by the US Military. He was just about to sue for peace when he saw hundreds of thousands demonstrators in the streets in cities across the United States. He also knew that Uncle Walter "C" on the CBS Nightly News told the home front we had lost the war. General Giap then knew that he still could win as long as the United States was a divided country. General Giap just waited for thing to go his way.

When the Marines, Soldiers, Airmen, and Sailors came home in 1966-1973 there were no welcome home speeches or parades. Today if you see a Vietnam veteran take the time to tell them "THANKS" for your service to your country, even if it is 40 years late.

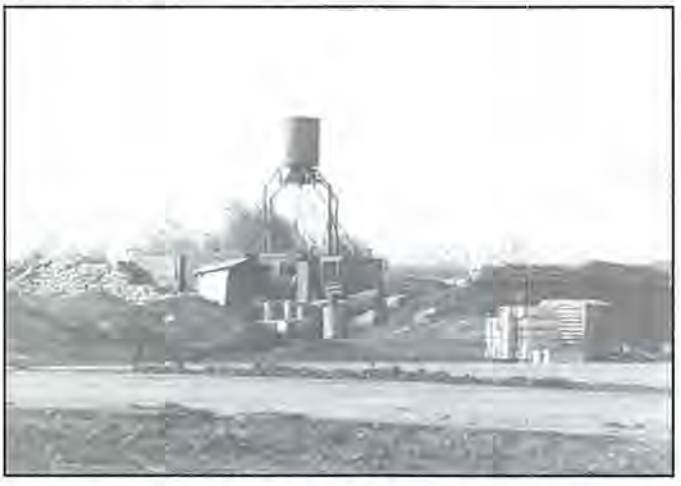

TRN-6 TA CAN 1st MOB Measuring equipment for aircraft landing at Khe Sanh Plus B-52 for the Arc Light Runs



MARINE CONTROL TOWER

MEMORIES

COUNTER MORTAR RADAR AT KHE SANH

By Richard McCullough

On the morning of 22 Jan 1968, the US Army field artillery detachment (radar), 1st battalion 40th artillery was located at C-1 just south of Gio Lin, when we were notified of a movement. We were instructed to move to Dong Ha. A couple hours later the battalion radar officer showed up and informed us that a helicopters would be arriving shortly to airlift us to Khe Sanh. Our radar was slung beneath a CH-53 and we hopped aboard.

We arrived at Khe Sanh around 1400 hrs, There was nobody around the airfield. I had my guys get into the trenches until I could find somebody from the 13th artillery. I found my way to the COC and met Lt/Col Hennelly the arty commander. He arranged for a truck to get our radar moved off the airfield and we set up the radar in the 13th arty motor transportation area. Our 2nd helicopter arrived with our jeep and trailer with a generator and spare parts. We had the radar up and running within hours. It was time to sand bag the radar, luckly we were given ammo boxes to fill instead of sand bags.

We were housed with Gunny Drakes mortar section, and my guys helped then when they could. We shared everything together. On the second night, we could hear a special forces team in Laos requesting an air strike on an NVA convoy, which they did not receive. The next morning I went to the daily briefing at the COC. We did learn that a air strike was later made on the empty convoy going back north.

After the briefing, Col Lownds took me aside and introduced me to Major Hudson and Capt Baig so they could give me enemy weapons locations that they knew about. Capt Baig informed me that he was expecting a rocket attack out of the north. I went back to our radar and briefed my guys on what to expect. A couple hours later we got hit with about 200 rounds, we tried to call in weapons locations on our PRC-25 radio, but it turned out, other radio antennas were down and only a few forward observers were left on the net, so we both had no luck talking to the guns that afternoon.

With the attack over, it was time for us to move our radar console into a fox hole. This was no fun with the Khe Sanh hard dirt, but we got it done. The FCC had the wire team install a hot line to the radar.

I instructed my guys to switch over to the radio if the land lines went down. I can't say enough about the wire teams that repaired the lines during the attacks. They took their share of casualties. As we were situated at the NW end of the runway, we could watch the planes land and the pilots taking pictures with their cameras until the motor rounds starting landing off their wing tips. They dropped their cameras and took off, I have seen foot lockers and helmets come off the tailgate on take off, but never a body.

I remember when one of Gunny Drakes guys time was up and the gunny had to go with him to bring back his flak jacket and helmet, he only did that once. Our seven man detachment, and the mortar crews shared everything, especially when our battalion courier arrived with spare parts. My boss, Major Thomas always sent loafs of bread and a couple cases of beer. The engineers were next to us and I also became close with them. I remember the time Bill Gay got wounded when the female French reporter didn't get in the bunker quick enough. Actually we were close with everyone around us. We even went to the drop zone with the mortar crews to help them unload supplies.

We had the army riggers from 109th QRTRMSTR and even stars and stripes reporters stayed with us for a couple of days. Our detachment was given a letter from the 26th marines for outstanding performance of duty on 4-5 Feb 68. Our seven man detachment stayed the whole time of the siege and later moved to Quang Tri with the 1/13th arty. Lt/Col Hennelly came down to our radar every morning to see how we were doing. During our stay, we appreciated all the support we got from the Marines. Cannot say enough for mortar battery who were always ready to shoot fire missions when we called them in. Especially when we had aircraft in the area and we couldn't get artillery fire missions. The USA 238th field artillery detachment received the following awards for our service at Khe Sanh:

SP5 Patrick Harrington, Bronze Star for Valor
SP5 Patrick Odgen, Purple Heart
SSG Richard McCullough, Army Commendation for Valor.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 108TH ARTILLERY GROUP
APO San Francisco 96269

AVGL-CO 23 March 1968

SUBJECT: Outstanding Performance of Duty

THRU: Commanding Officer
1st Battalion, 40th Artillery
APO 96269

TO: SSG Richard McCullough
238th Field Artillery Detachment (Radar)
APO 96269

1. The following message from the Commanding Officer, 26th Marines to the Commanding General, 3d Marine Division has been brought to my attention:

"1. Request you pass to the 1st Bn, 40th Arty our most sincere appreciation for the outstanding performance of duty of the 238th Field Artillery Radar Detachment this location during the night of [illegible] Feb 68.

"2. Weather prevented OP's from determining azimuths to rocket/mortar sites thereby eliminating the possibility of obtaining a grid intersection. By their aggressive search operations they were able to track and plot some fifteen active mortar and rocket sites providing extremely accurate data for arty suppression fires, thus contributing significantly to breaking the enemy attacks with minimum friendly casualties."

2. I add my commendation to that of the Commanding Officer, 26th Marines for this example of outstanding professional competence. Performance of this caliber, under unusually adverse conditions, not only contributes immeasurably to our success in combat but adds to the high esteem in which Army artillerymen are held by the Marine Corps.

AVGL-CO 23 March 1968
SUBJECT: Outstanding Performance of Duty

3. Please pass to all personnel of your detachment my personal appreciation for their fine performance on this occasion.

DAVID L. JONES
Colonel, Artillery
Commanding

AVGLA-CO McCULLOUGH, Richard 1st Sgt
(23 Mar 68)
SUBJECT: Outstanding Performance of Duty

Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 40th Artillery, APO 96269 26 March 1968

TO: SSG Richard McCullough, 238th Field Artillery Detachment (Radar)
APO 96269

1. It is indeed a pleasure to add my commendation for the truly professional manner in which the 238th Radar Detachment has performed while supporting the 26th marine Regiment at the Khe Sanh Outpost.

2. Please accept my thanks for a job well done.

/s/Lee R. Roper
LEE R. ROPER
LTC, Arty







THE GENERAL of VAL VERDE

By Bill Sonjag
Feature Writer

From the small back yard of his comfortable home, high on the bluffs overlooking the Devils River, Maj. Gen. Gerry Prather (USAF, retired) enjoys the tranquility of cactus gardening, bird feeding, and people watching on boats below. His hours of serenity on the desert high above Lake Amistad are limited by Prather's hectic, self-imposed schedule of public service.

"God has blessed me with a good personality. I smile a lot, and get along well with people." Maj. Gen. Gerald Prather (U.S. Air Force, retired) understates the impact he's had on those around him in his fruitful and gratifying 73 years. Prather is well-known in nearly all Del Rio civic, military and business circles, but only a fortunate few have come to understand the vast career foundation of his military success. Fewer still may appreciate those underpinnings as the source of Prather's contributions to the community which he and his wife, Carolyn, chose for their final approach and landing in 1986. Before

he completed his 32 years of service to the U.S. Air Force, Prather was honored with a Bronze Star Medal with "V" device, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and an ascent through ranks from airman first class to major general in record time. Since his retirement, Prather continues to serve and be honored



for his leadership. But his story begins in a one-bedroom tarpaper shack in the stubborn, red clay of Troup County, Georgia.

His first recollection of home was outdoor privies, heating and cooking over coal in a pot-bellied stove, going barefoot all summer, and getting a fresh, single pair of shoes at the beginning of each school year. The Prather home – sited inconspicuously behind his step-grandfather's house in La Grange – was barely a rifle shot from the Chattahoochee River where it wends south to become the border between Alabama and Georgia.

One of Prather's prized memories is this portrait sent to his father, Pate Prather, from his training days at Hondo Air Base in the U.S. Air Force Aviation Cadet Training Program. There, Prather trained in the same type of aircraft, the AT-6 "Texan" used by the namesake of Laughlin Air Force Base, Jack Laughlin, a decade after Laughlin went down in the Pacific during World War II. (Contributed photo/ Gerald Prather)

Prather pauses to recall the details of his C-130 "Hercules" combat supply missions in Vietnam, discussing his 13 months in service during the heat of that conflict, 1967-1968. Prather was awarded both the Bronze Star and the Distinguished Flying Cross for his bravery and skills before he returned to the United States with the rank of major.

A crisp, confident Capt. Gerald Prather pauses for a snapshot on entry to his C-130 "Hercules" cargo and tactical airlift plane at Ton Son Nhut Air Base, Saigon. "I think this was just before a mission," Prather said. "I look too clean here for it to be afterwards."





"A friend of mine at Khe Sanh shot this while I was dropping supplies to the base. This is my aircraft, but I don't remember what the cargo was. It was taken in 1967 on a mission when we didn't have time or safe enough conditions to land there," Prather said.



Pate Prather strove to keep his family clothed and fed, but with a fourth grade education, he jumped from meat packing to automotive repairs, and finally to the mills. Cotton was still king in Georgia, just as sheep were the four-legged monarchs of south Texas, and Gerald remembers his dad starting as a weaver, tending the shuttles and bobbins of Callaway Mills, while his mother, Hazel Belle, spun cotton in the same plant. "My great grandparents were Creek Indians, and my grandfather died in the 1920s, plunging the family into poverty. My folks married when they were very young, and my mother only went through the seventh grade. We lived in pretty sparse conditions," Prather recalled. "But we didn't even know we were struggling." He is the eldest of four children of Pate and Hazel Belle Prather.

The Prather's moved to a slightly larger house on Orchard Hill, where Pate had long walks to work at the mills, next to a four-acre farm from which Gerald rode a plow mule to school, and climbed trees to catch 'possums to sell for a quarter apiece. When he was in the fourth grade, the family moved to Murphy Avenue in town, and stayed put until he graduated from high school. "My teacher told mom I wasn't doing well, so she sat me down in the kitchen with the multiplication tables and said if I moved from there, she'd get the biggest peach tree switch I'd ever seen. So, I became kind of a math whiz," Prather said, chuckling at the memory and how it sounded when he talked about it. In high school, Prather was center for The Grangers, wearing blue-and-white football jerseys, played trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone and base in the band, "And I wrote the school song which they still sing today," Prather laughed. He was class president in both his junior and senior years, and won a Callaway Mills music scholarship to Oglethorpe University, Atlanta.

But the scholarship had strings. Parents had to work at the mills, so when Prather's parents divorced, he lost the scholarship. "But I stayed busy all the time. I've always lived by the words of Charles Wendt. 'Success in life is not so much a matter of talent or opportunity as of concentration and perseverance,'" Prather said, adding, "...and damned hard work." So, he sold insurance, waited tables until, "One day a buddy of mine drove by and said he was going down Valdosta to take a test to see if he could be a pilot in the Air Force. Well, I'd never even seen an airplane. It was 1953, 1954, Korean War time, and I was invited to take the aviation cadet test, an all day battery. It wrung us out."

Brig. Gen. Gerald Prather, en-route to a combat communications exercise at Mildenhall England, flew several British officers and a couple of his own junior officers in a Royal Air Force helicopter. "All I remember was that when we got there it was cold, raining and snowing," Prather said, adding that, though a British officer was co-pilot, he flew the bird himself to Mildenhall. He waited half an hour for the results with 40 other boys. On a list of 10 that passed the Aviation Cadet test, Prather was included, his friend was not. "He was pretty torqued about that," Prather said. At the age of 19, and with only a year of college under his belt, Prather enlisted in Atlanta and was sent immediately to Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, for basic training. It was his first trip exceeding 75 miles from home.

He got his airman first class stripe, was sent to Goodfellow Air Force Base, near San Angelo to help maintain the B-25 Mitchell "Heavenly Body" fleet there. Then, back to Lackland for pre-cadet training. "I liked it. They gave us a place to sleep, clothes to wear, food to eat, and $40 every two weeks," Prather said with a chuckle. Then, Prather began a seeming unending series of training assignments for a phenomenal range of kinds of aircraft, beginning with the AT-6 "Texan" trainer at Hondo Air Base, followed by the T-33 "T-Bird" at Laughlin Air Force Base. Here he met Carolyn, only three weeks before graduation, and things got serious quickly. At his 1956 graduation from Aviation Cadet pilot training, on Laughlin's flight line, Prather's mother pinned on his new rank insignia, and Carolyn pinned on his silver pilot's wings. "First thing a new 2nd lieutenant does is buy a new car, and I bought a two-tone green, 1956 Pontiac for $3,200, and I proposed to Carolyn in it on a hill overlooking Lake Walk [smaller lake inundated 13 years later by Lake Amistad]," Prather said. "I told her I'd probably be dead before I turned 26 because I intended to be a fighter pilot." Also on her mind was the lifestyle of fighter pilots as "hard-drinking, hard-living, hard-working, risk-taking, where every man was a tiger."

While stationed at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., Brig. Gen. Prather was keenly aware that many troops in the U.S. Readiness Command were airborne qualified, so, at the age of 45, he took a few weeks to go to Fort Lee, Va. to learn parachuting. He also packed his own parachutes, and graduated – seen here – with three enlisted men, a lieutenant and



two majors, Oct. 24, 1980. Then came F-84 fighter training at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. The nickname of the single-seat, swept-wing beast was "Thunderjet," but Prather and his comrades called it "a ground-loving whore," an indictment of the jet's legendary heavy weight and poor engine thrust. "But I was a damned good pilot, and could make just about anything fly. And I still can. That served me well, and has kept me alive," said Prather. Carolyn took a train to meet him at Luke and they were married in November, 1956, at the base chapel. He had no money at the time, so Carolyn bought the Arizona marriage license. After a three month temporary duty assignment, island-hopping an F-84 across the Atlantic to Avino, Italy, Prather came home and learned to fly the country's first supersonic fighter, the F-100 "Super Sabre." But not for long. With the close of the Korean War and increasing tensions with the Soviet Union, different kinds of pilots were needed, and Prather and his F-100 buddies were assigned to B-52 crews at Mather Air Force Base, Calif. Expecting to be stuck on a ground radar assignment, Prather was pleased when he ended up in the cockpit, first as a co-pilot, then as a pilot and finally as aircraft commander.

Was the transition from a sleek, fast fighter to a monster bomber daunting? "Absolutely!" Prather exclaimed. "It scared the hell out of me!" Moreover, the big bombers carried massive ordnance. "This was Cold War time, and any one of them could have won a war if they got through. They were loaded for bear," Prather said. But high-altitude patrolling was the mission. The 24-hour patrols took Prather and his crew from California to New York, then to Greenland, the North Pole, down to Alaska, across the Aleutian Island chain, and along coast of Washington and Oregon, and back to Mather in California.

Prather points with pride to his diploma from the Air Force Technical Institute, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, graduating with a Master of Science degree in electronics and communications that set the course of his career in re-engineering the entire Air Force communications systems with integration of all data automation components. By 1961, Prather was aircraft commander, then his was a "lead crew," next a "select" crew in the top 10 percent of the hierarchy of the Strategic Air Command (SAC). He was eligible for the rank of major, but spurned it so he could return – with Air Force tuition – to Auburn University. He finished his electrical engineering degree in two years, graduating in 1966. Though he hoped to get back to fighters – specifically the F-4 "Phantom," Prather ended up in the C-130 "Hercules," a four-engine turboprop cargo and tactical airlifter.



In 1967, he began flying combat support missions in Vietnam. "I flew everything from lettuce to ice, fuel in big bladders, ammunition from Da Nang, Saigon and Plei Ku to Khe Sanh and little bitty airstrips all over South Vietnam," Prather said. He was awarded the Bronze Star with a "V" device (for valor) during the infamous 1968 Tet Offensive. At Tan Son Nhut Air Base, near Saigon, rows of aircraft became vulnerable to incoming mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and rockets. A C-130 took a direct hit, and Prather, under fire, scrambled to the flight line to move adjacent aircraft from the threat of fire.

Prather's medals were assembled for him for presentation when he was awarded the Order of the Sword, Oct. 17, 1986, by the enlisted men and women in his last unit, the Air Force Communications Command. Two medals he values highly include the Distinguished Flying Cross, third from left, top row, and the Bronze Star with "V" (Valor) device, just below the DFC medal.



In the chaos of incoming ordnance, a fire extinguisher was dropped, exploding in Prather's face. He was hustled away and irrigated with water. "They saved my eyes, but not my skin, so they took me to a hospital, but there I saw all the seriously wounded being brought in and I just walked right back out. Those guys were in much worse shape." He was then sent to Cam Ranh Bay, setting up operations centers and briefing rooms for three days with no sleep. Finally a lieutenant colonel ordered him to bed, threatening court martial if he refused.

Later in 1968, Prather ferried fresh marines and ammunition from Phan Rang to Tam Ky, a marine-controlled village south of Da Nang, along the coast of the South China Sea. The marines on the ground and nearby Army units were under attack, and badly needed the re-supply, but they and the landing strip were concealed under dense cloud cover. Prather flew out to sea to descend below the clouds, and then flew back to the marines underneath the overcast receiving small arms fire. "I was hearing this 'thump, thump … thump,' and heard another pilot scream, 'I'm getting fired on,'" Prather said.

Prather verbally guided the other pilot into Tam Ky, then followed using the same procedure. On landing, his flight engineer pointed out dripping holes in the bird's fuel tank, and Prather ordered them jammed with segments of carved broom sticks. Prather's plane and the other craft, also with plugged holes, sustained more hits on takeoff. Landing in Saigon, both aircraft were pulled aside for repairs. Prather's plane had taken 48 hits. "And no one was hurt. Isn't that wonderful?" Prather enthused. For this successful mission, ingenuity and bravado, Prather received the Distinguished Flying Cross, awarded for "Heroism or extraordinary achievement … in aerial flight." "But my favorite mission, was one to Khe Sanh during monsoons after the Tet Offensive of 1968. No one could get in there because of the clouds, but I finally found a little hole in the clouds one day, and dropped through it with re-supply of ammunition," Prather recalled. Hoping for a quick exit, he ordered the cargo kicked out the back door, but got a message from his loadmaster. "We've got a problem back here, Boss. I've got a load of 100 marines back here packed and ready to go." The war-weary troops had scrambled aboard before the cargo door could be closed. "Our authorized load was about 60, but these guys were all red with mud, so we just jammed them in there and took off anyway. And I'd do it again," said Prather.

Maj. Gen. Gerald Prather, in "mess dress" uniform, and Mrs. Carolyn Prather pause for a portrait during an annual, formal Christmas dinner for all officers



and their wives and senior leaders in the community at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., about 1985. "The missions I hated the most over there were carrying out the body bags. With a lot, all you can do is stack them up like cordwood, and their body fluids are leaking onto the airplane, and the stench was horrible because the bags had been lying out in the sun for who knows how long. When you're carrying 50 or 60 KIAs out at one time, it's just bad news all the way around," Prather said, eyes moistening. Prather flew 500 support missions in Vietnam in the C-130, commenting, "And none of them were routine." Pinning on the brass oak leaves insignia of major, he returned to the United States, after 13 months "in country" in July, 1968.

Back-to-back directed assignments were to commands of communication squadrons at Chanute Air Force Base and Scott Air Force Base, both in Illinois. "When people ask how I got into the communications business, I say, 'I don't know, can't even spell it," Prather quipped. In truth, his degree in electrical engineering and an Air Force on the threshold of sweeping, global changes in communications technology forecast the marriage. Promoted to lieutenant colonel a year earlier than protocol permitted, Prather was sent back to school, to the Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. In less than a year, Prather completed his Master of Science degree with a thesis on communications electronics meteorological program management, for which he received the Commandant's Trophy because it revealed systemic efficiencies that could actually be implemented, Air Force wide.

With the Strategic Air Command at March Air Force Base, Calif., a trio of colonels interviewed Prather and asked, bluntly, "Do you want to make general?" to which Prather – shocked – replied, "Yes, I think I'd make a good general." He was promoted to colonel – seven years ahead of the norm – and was reassigned to Air Force offices in the Pentagon. "So I went to Washington D.C. in 1972 with my wife, four kids, a dog, and a cat. I'm just a little country boy trying to get along in the big city, and I was a little nervous. They called me up there to implement my thesis," Prather explained.

Maj. Gen. Prather at his desk in the Pentagon, serving as assistant chief of staff of Air Force informa



tion systems in which he planned and merged all communications and data automation systems for the service. "It was an extremely challenging job for three years, developing the first satellite communication systems for the Air Force. For example, we needed to be able to send code words during the Cold War to all the B-52s flying, and we had to have cryptographic security for all the communication systems, from telephones to the satellites." At Offutt Air Force Base, Omaha, Neb., Prather went underground. In the command post beneath SAC headquarters, Prather was deputy chief of staff for communications and electronics, always in communication with – and sometimes riding in – a command-post-modified KC-135 "Stratotanker," always airborne to take over command of SAC if nuclear war destroyed the base. For his work in support of below-ground missile bases scattered in remote locations across the northern tier of states, Prather was awarded the Minuteman Missile Badge. Prather became first commander of a Strategic Communications Area – 1975-1977 – then transferred to Ramstein Air Base, Germany, as deputy chief of staff for U.S. Air Force Europe (USAFE), in charge of all communications in European and Mediterranean countries – 1977-1980 – and was promoted to brigadier general in 1979.

Prather's official U.S. Air Force portrait following the 1983 announcement of his rank as major general. In 1980, Prather left Germany for MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, becoming the senior communications officer for the U.S. Readiness Command – now U.S. Central Command, CENTCOM, running the wars in the Middle East – in which he developed the first war plans for an invasion of Iraq. "We also had plans for invasion of all the Middle Eastern countries to respond to any tactical needs that may



arise there where we have potential for certain levels of conflict; they've all been modified many times, but we began the planning back then," Prather explained. At MacDill, Prather received the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.

Back to the Pentagon in 1981 with broadened communications responsibilities, Prather was awarded his second star (1983), and ordered to implement his plan to merge all Air Force communications and data automations functions throughout the service. He was named assistant chief of staff of information systems. Two years later, Prather was moved into the top slot of his career, commander of the Air Force Communications Command, assigned at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. Here he was leader of one of the most pivotal organizational transitions in the history of the Air Force, and oversaw an immense command of 60,000 people in 747 units, squadrons and wings. "The communications command is still everyplace the Air Force is, and a whole lot of places the Air Force isn't," Prather said with a wink. In 1986, Prather retired, closing out a 32-year, immensely gratifying and productive career. "They wanted me to go back to Washington for a third star [lieutenant general] and another five years, but I just didn't want to go back to that political environment, and we were tired," Prather said. "The kids call Del Rio home, and I love the people here. I don't regret a bit of it." But his troops wouldn't let Prather slip away easily. NCOs in his last command started a petition among 50,000 enlisted personnel in the communications command, worldwide, to honor Prather with the Order of the Sword, a commendation from the enlisted ranks for service rendered in a distinguished career. "Chief Master Sgt. Jeremiah T. Hayes started a petition before I even left, and I knew nothing about it. It's a thing where all the enlisted personnel have to sign the petition or at least not say 'No.' Even a single blackball kills it," Prather explained.

There was no blackball, only overwhelming support from the enlisted ranks, and the sponsors bought airline tickets for the Prather's to return to Scott on Oct. 17, 1986 for the presentation. "They reserved



the entire officers' club, and it was completely full of visiting troops who put on a show that watered my eyes, literally," Prather said. "It was an absolutely beautiful, formal military ceremony." In the history of the Order of the Sword, only 226 men and women have been selected, including comedian Bob Hope, Gen. Curtis LeMay, and Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger. Prather was number 111. When he moved to Del Rio, he was immediately hired as a defense contractor's consultant, and was traveling more than he wanted. He launched a second career in civic service to an imponderable list of organizations, all aimed at improving the community of Del

Rio in a dazzling variety of tasks. At the behest of Val Verde County Commissioner James S. Leonard, Prather became Precinct 3 Justice of the Peace, serving for a decade. He created the Justice Juvenile Court with the help of Administrative Assistant Otila Gonzalez. In the first year, he heard 401 juvenile cases, requiring the participation of parents or guardians. In 1997, Prather was elected president of the Del Rio Chamber of Commerce, and he remains an active life member of the board of directors. He also participates on the Convention and Visitors Bureau committee and the Special Projects Committee of the chamber, and is also a life director and vice president of the Military Affairs Association.

In the 1990s, Prather was on the board of the United Way, and was president for two years. He is Eagle Scout advancement chairman for the Amistad District of the Boy Scouts of America and was district chairman for three years. Prather has been a member of Lions Clubs for 50 years, has served here as vice president of the Host Lions Club, and still serves as chaplain. Ordained as a lay Eucharistic minister, Prather served in that capacity with St. James Episcopal Church for three years, as senior warden of the vestry for three years, and as a trustee for five years. He was also a chaplain for the Juvenile Detention Center, 1994-2005, and continues as chaplain at Val Verde Regional Medical Center. "My philosophy has not been to seek employment, but to seek service to the community. The major result, of course, is that I know almost everyone in this community, and they know me, and I pride myself on that," Prather said. His pride extends to continuing warm relationships with Laughlin Air Force Base, including the last 15 commanders of the 47th Flying Training Wing. Brig. Gen. Tod D. Wolters, commander of 325th Fighter Wing, Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., and Prather were good friends when Wolters commanded here at Laughlin, 2004-2006. "Tod used to call me the secretary of defense of west Texas," Prather said, chuckling.

Though Prather is gratified about his service to youth in Del Rio with the juvenile court system, ROTC at Del Rio High School, and the Boy Scouts, the military man will not let go. He serves now on the board of directors of the Laughlin Heritage Foundation, and remains available for military service if needed. Though retired, Prather is never completely off the hook if his nation needs

A COMBAT STORY

By Lt/Col C.T. Anthony

As I sat there on Christmas Day 2007, I couldn't help but recall Christmas celebrations of the past. I'm sure that you do the same. Many bring back very pleasant memories and others, maybe not so good. One Christmas which always comes to mind for me is Christmas, 1966.

The date, December 24, 1966. As a Staff Sergeant 0369, I had recently arrived in Vietnam and was assigned to Delta Co. 1/26 which at that time was operating off of Hill 55 southwest of Danang. The Company was short of Lieutenants so I was assigned as Platoon Leader for the 1st Platoon. My Platoon Sergeant was a Sergeant with lots of experience in Vietnam and the Marine Corps. He had almost as much time in the Corps as I had but was not what you would call a "garrison Marine". He had been busted a couple of times for relatively minor offenses but was an outstanding combat leader.

On Christmas Eve, my platoon was given the mission of setting up ambushes on Liberty Road to prevent the VC from laying mines and planting booby traps. There was supposed to be some type of truce in effect but the VC still placed mines and booby traps out regardless of any truce. This would be my first time to take the platoon out as their leader and to say the least, I was a little nervous and apprehensive. I didn't really think that we would see any real action but the thought was still on my mind as to how I would react if we did encounter the enemy. I had been in the Corps for a little over 12 years and although I had extensive experience in the infantry field, those were years of relative peace. I had never experienced any type of actual combat. Yes, I had been on many live fire ranges where we did a lot of firing of various weapons but never had I been on the receiving end of enemy fire. I had heard of how others had reacted, some very bravely and others, totally terrified. As leader of the platoon, I hoped that I wouldn't be one of the latter.

Around 2000 hrs, we left the Hill and were about 500 yards from the Hill on Liberty Road when we received automatic fire from a small village to the west of the road. With columns on both sides of the road and well spread out, two Marines were still wounded. Needless to say, when the initial rounds

came into our formation, my ass puckered but I was happy to find out that the training I had received allowed me to automatically react as I had been trained to do. Sure there was a certain amount of fright but this didn't keep me from doing what needed to be done. I passed the first test. A great feeling. The automatic fire stopped after we returned fire with our own weapons as well 81MM mortar fire which because there had been problems in that area before, were ready to respond as soon as we made the call for support. We evacuated our wounded back to the Hill then continued to move down the road where we then set in our ambushes. We never received any more fire that night nor did we see any of the VC. It rained all night and with just a poncho to try and stay dry and warm, made for a miserable evening. That was how we welcomed Christmas, 1966. In the morning, we hiked back to Hill 55 and spent the day there cleaning our gear, getting some rest and wishing each other a Merry Christmas. No snow but lots of rain.

That also was my introduction to leading a platoon in combat. I was happy with the way that I had reacted but happier with the Marines in the platoon. Many of them had been in Country for some time and had lots of combat experience. They knew exactly what to do. In fact, several of them were combat tested vets of Operation Hastings, the first major Marine Corps operation conducted in the fall of 1966 in the DMZ area, so to them, taking just a few rounds of incoming fire was not a big thing. "Pineapple", my Platoon Sergeant, was so calm I don't think he even hit the deck when the rounds were coming into our position. I can't say that I did the same. That also was my introduction to the frustrations of fighting the VC in the area of Hill 55. Lots of planted mines, booby traps and hit and run tactics with seldom ever having the chance to really engage the enemy. It seemed that every time we went out on patrol we suffered casualties of some type to either enemy fire, booby traps or mines and most times, never saw the enemy. For me it was very frustrating and seemed like a hell of a way to fight a war. They were like an invisible enemy.

So as we take time to celebrate Christmas, this is also a time to remember those service men and women of all wars not here to celebrate with us, but especially those with whom we fought. For many Marines and other service personnel serving in Vietnam on December 25, that Christmas of 1966 would be the last Christmas they would ever know. They gave all while fighting a War that they didn't fully understand or maybe didn't even agree with, but still continued to serve their Country with pride. The question that haunts those of us who survived that War is why them and not us? Such a question doesn't really have an answer but haunts all survivors of war.

I know that each of you have your own stories and memories but I just wanted to share this one with you. This is special to me.

To all, have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year. Continue to pray for and remember those on the frontlines of defending our great Country. They too will have their own special memories of their Christmas of 2007.

BATTLES REMEMBERED

FOXTROT RIDGE

By Captain Rob Robinson

A narrow ridgeline 1,000 feet high, just south of the DMZ, now has a name. **FOXTROT RIDGE**. Until a company of US Marines moved up onto the ridge in December it was just another unnamed hill. Overgrown with thick jungle. But the men of 2nd Battalion, Fourth Marines can tell you about it. And somewhere in the hellish green tangles on other DMZ ridge, elements of a battered NVA battalion can well remember it too.

Behind the Ridges new name came a tale of courage and grim determination

Waiting on the ridgeline Was an estimated company of fully-armed, well trained, hardcore NVA. They were prepared to defend a bunker complex housing their battalion headquarters: explained Lt. Col. Joseph C. Hopkins commanding officer of the Marine battalion. Crouched inside their bunkers with automatic weapons, the enemy had their orders. Defend the hill to the death was the plan, later revealed by a prisoner captured inside one of the bunkers.

Three days of sporadic fighting, constantly moving forward, had placed an infantry company by Captain Richard J. Murphy in a position atop a nearby mountain. We dug in for the night, put out our lis-

tening post, and all was quiet except for our Marine Mortars and artillery, firing to seal off possible avenues of enemy movements, " said Cpl Richard E Durkee, a radio operator." About 7:30 a.m. we started to move eastward along the ridge. The hilltop dropped of into a saddle and started up again toward another crest, said Durkee. "As soon as the point man reached the top and started down, the enemy took the lead element under fire."

The narrow trail with sheer cliffs on both sides, made it impossible for leathernecks to deploy immediately. They continued to press forward on the path, despite the enemy fire. "At first the firing came from several bunkers hidden among the trees on a slope halfway up the next hill, "added Durkee, who was on his second tour in Vietnam. The initial burst of fire subsided. Captain Murphy got his men on line with two platoons assaulting down into a draw and up towards the bunkers already observed. Murphy, who was due to leave Vietnam and return home the next day, alerted the Battalion commander by radio and began the attack. The foe waited.

When we got into the draw deep in a wooded area thick with jungle growth and vines, all hell broke loose, said Cpl Thomas L. Kilduff who was following the action and keeping abreast of it on the radio he carried. A machinegun immediately pinned down a squad on the left flank. On the other flank another gun opened fire, killing the platoon commander and pinning down the rest of the Marines, "Kilduff continued. " By that time it was 9:00 a.m. and the bullets were thicker than anything I had ever seen in my 12 months in Vietnam." Marines kept moving forward into the fire from the bunkers. A platoon was called up from another company and moved down the trail. They headed into the ravine to maneuver around the bunkers.

"They passed right by two enemy bunkers without, seeing them. They were just too well hidden," said Kilduff. The bunkers opened fire catching some of the men in crossfire. Back up on the' ridge, Marines quickly set up the machineguns and mortars to give covering fire to those in the draw.

"As the battle grew in intensity. Cpl. Durkee and two others made it down the trail and got to one of the enemy bunkers," added Kilduff. "Using the bunker for protection they fired at other bunkers below. Even while shooting, Durkee, who had been wounded in the hand continued to talk on the radio. He was concerned about his wounded buddies in the ravine and was trying to get them out

Hearing cries of the wounded below. Durkee radioed to a Marine twin engine Bronco circling overhead and called for the pilot to fire smoke rockets directly at his position to screen the wounded with thick smoke. Screaming in at treetop level, the Bronco pilot fired his rockets, the exploding rockets sending thick smoke in every direction. The wounded that could walk got up and started to help the others up the hill. Our gun had been fired so fast that it had burned out and we were out of ammunition. I radioed up to the crest and asked for another weapon and more ammo:'

While waiting for the ammo, Durkee threw grenades at several of the bunkers while other Marines rushed in to assist the wounded. Kilduff heard Durkee's call for ammunition and radioed him to "hang tight", a weapon and ammunition were on the way down to their position. Kilduff put down his radio and with two volunteers, 2nd Lt George B. Rogers, and L/Cpl John R. Donnley, ran to Durkee's position.

When they got there, Durkee was now firing at the enemy with his pistol. Lt Rogers after reaching Durkee's bunker dashed several times to the ravine to assist the wounded. One of the enemy soldiers who had been routed from his position managed to creep within 30 yards of Kilduff, Donnley and Durkee before opening fire on them. Donnley threw a grenade and killed him.

The wounded had all been removed from the ravine and Marine & Navy jets went into action, firing rockets and dropping their bombs just in front of the Marine advancing on the enemy bunkers. The Arial support was magnificent, the best we have ever seen, exclaimed Lt/Col Hopkins.

On some of their runs the pilots placed their ordinance only 50 yards ahead of our men. At times the Marines ran out of signaling devices and resorted to lighting heat tablets to mark their positions for the planes.

The ridge looked like a wild moonscape, with broken and charred trees, split by bullets and large pieces of shrapnel., giving silent evidence of the fierce battle that took place.

There are not enough words to describe the pride I felt for the men who took that ridge, concluded Lt/ Col Hopkins.

The Marines left the ridge with 3,000 enemy uniforms, 2,000 pounds of Rice, a complete enemy mortar, and enough ammunition and weapons to keep a NVA regiment from waging an all day battle. They also accounted for 46 Enemy dead.

Near Self-Destruction

By Gene Weresow

February 1967, Mike Company Third Battalion 26th Marines were on a search and destroy mission, as a part of Operation Chinook. We were operating near the Co Bi-Than Tan Corridor of the Thua Thien Province South Vietnam. Only weeks before, Company M was engaged in one of the first battles against the 802nd Viet Cong Battalion. Which saw the death of Marine Lance Corporal Paul Evans, KIA firing the 3.5 rocket launcher, while he repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire. Camp Evans was later named in his honor. It was initially a Marine base later taken over by the Army.

On this day the monsoon rains fell relentlessly. It seemed the more miserable we became the more the rain fell. It was our job to sweep a certain area to clear it of VC activity. The sweep started out routine, with no contact. As the day progressed we were subjected to more and more sniper fire. Later we were to sweep through a Hamlet that was suspected of harboring VC. It was late in the day and we had little time to reach our objective before nightfall, some nameless hill where we would set into a defensive position for the night. Our progress was slow because of numerous booby traps that took their toll. We encountered every thing from punji traps to buried 105 MM rounds. It was at this time that we lost one of our M-60 gunners, L/Cpl David Frischmann, a good guy with a big heart; I knew him well, as I did other KIA and WIA from that day. His death stands out in my mind more than the others because I was very close to him when he set down his M-60 onto a rice patty dike. He hit a 105 round, the concussion sent me sprawling into the rice patty as I watched his charred remains sail over me. To my amazement I survived without a scratch. The image of those charred remains, of a friend and fellow warrior will be with me always.

Because of casualties and med evacs we were running further and further behind in reaching our objective for the day. Moving through the village we came upon a several underground shelters, not much more than a hole in the ground with room for maybe 2 or 3 people, I guess they were used by VC or the locals to avoid shelling or to hide from anyone who was perceived as enemies. The monsoon rains continued to fall; it was near dusk as we sloshed through the mud, clad in ponchos which did little to keep us dry. I came across one of those holes in the ground as I looked down I could see a small entrance with support timbers on either side. At this point rather than going down or doing further investigation, we were told to just throw a grenade into it and keep moving. Recalling my training, I figured I would wind up and throw it hard so that it would either bounce around or stick in the mud, not giving the enemy any time to pick it up and throw it back. Yelling "fire in the hole", I wound up and gave it a mighty heave. I watched the grenade fly down the hole, strike one of the supports and just as quickly fly right back out. Yelling grenade I started to run, tripped on the poncho and fell face first into the mud. I thought, oh no, I'm dead. Luckily there was no one else nearby. Thinking get up and run-no not enough time-so I buried my face in the mud and hoped for the best. The explosion was deafening but I survived unharmed. There was a lot of confusion from other guys thinking that we had an enemy throwing a grenade at us. Once I explained what happened I thought I was in a world of trouble, the platoon commander just said, lets move out. We did roll another grenade into the hole.

I often thought about that day, and wondered how many guys actually died by their own hand, I would guess that this experience was not unique in combat. It was one lesson learned the hard way. It was my first, but not my last, close encounter with a hand grenade.

SHORT ROUNDS

28-18-36

by Craig W. Tourte

I'm sure I have forgotten more than I remember. I can't remember the important stuff, let alone loads of useless information I have heard over the years. I can't remember my first wife's middle name or even when I married or divorced her. I can't even remember the date I married my current wife, but I do remember her middle name and I wrote down her birthday so I wouldn't forget.

I have moved around a lot over the years, throwing out junk and even stuff I didn't want to get rid of, but the EX got tired of seeing some of the stuff around the house and to avoid another argument I gave them a toss. I miss that little California flag I flew at Khe Sanh. It was a sorry little rag, full of shrapnel holes and red stained from the clay earth. For some reason I think about the little flag even to this day, I see it waving proudly in the fog, kind of lonely but bravely making a statement that American's are here. It all seems so long ago.

Before I went to Vietnam I put some little tokens in a box and kept them in the closet out in the garage at my aunt and uncles house. I'm not sure why I kept them, I guess at the time they seemed important to me, things I knew I'd never use again, but all the same, they had become a part of my life and the mere possession of them, picking them up, handling them brought back memories. These little trinkets were of no value really, just silly little things that were only important to me. When I'm gone whoever comes across them will have no idea of their value and meaning to me, it will all die with me, just as well I suppose. I'm sure they'll ask, "Why did he keep these?"

I came across a couple of those little useless items the other day. They were in a dusty box stuck way back in the corner. I didn't know what it was at first, until I opened the box up and saw them. I sat there for almost half an hour with tears running down my face for some reason; old man's sentiments I suppose. They brought me back to boot camp and platoon 1145 at MCRD San Diego. Mike Powers (D/1/26) and Bill Poland (HQ/1/13) were in my platoon and we all three served at Khe Sanh during the long bloody Siege 40 years ago.

One of the objects was the little red plastic shaving kit we'd carry to the showers. It had a small rip on one side but other than that it was in fairly good shape. The thin plastic isn't holding up well, but I think it'll survive what years I have left. It serves no purpose now, just a memory of those cold walks to the showers and the shouts of, "Hurry up recruits." The other object was a small combination lock that we placed on our footlockers. Some would forget to lock up and all of their belongings would be thrown on the deck by the drill instructor. I never forgot to lock mine; the punishment was much too severe. I learned quickly. I have not looked at, nor held that little combination lock since I got out of boot camp in 1966. I apparently packed it around during my various moves, and it was one my few possessions that survived my first marriage, but I didn't remember even having it. I certainly haven't spun the combination for over 42 years. I noticed how clean and shiny the chrome was as I picked it up and took it out of the old brown box. It looked as if it had been issued to me today, not 4 decades ago. I turned it over in my hands a couple of times, each turn in my hand was another memory as I gazed at the hard plastic combination dial. Without hesitation I quickly turned the dial, 28-18-36 and the little lock sprung opened; I guess there are just some things you never forget. Yep, that little lock opened up a lot of memories.

MEMORIES

VOICE of THE TIMES
KSV In The News

Forty years ago a handful of United States Marines, Army, Navy and Air Force warriors spent more than 77 days defending a small set of outposts in northwest Vietnam. The place was Khe Sanh and the enemy was led by Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) commander who defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu. He had three divisions, with an estimated 30,000 troops to attack us at Khe Sanh.

Richard Dworsky I CO 3/26

The mission of India Co., Third Battalion 26th Marines, was to hold a Hill known as 881South and act as a combat outpost for the 26th Marines on the Khe Sanh plateau. When it appeared that the enemy was attempting to close on the hill, India requested and received permission to make a company reconnaissance-in-force north on Jan. 20, 1968. India, with more than 200 Marines and corpsmen, jumped off before dawn and before it had gone 1,000 yards, the 1st Platoon made heavy contact with a sizable NVA unit. There were several casualties, and the platoon consolidated its position, but the first helicopter sent to evacuate the casualties was shot down, crashing about 200 yards down the slope Another assault by the 3d Platoon succeeded in seizing the objective, but at high cost. Its lieutenant and several others were killed, and for a time the platoon held the hill against strong counterattacks, with a lance corporal in command.

At about this time, an NVA lieutenant surrendered to the Marines defending the base. He was immediately interrogated and reported that all outlying positions around the base would be attacked that night. India was consequently ordered to break contact immediately and return to its previous position. It arrived shortly after dark. That night, all outlying positions around the Khe Sanh Combat Base were assaulted except 881S. The force that had been designated to attack 881S had been met and mauled that afternoon and, having been located, was shelled throughout the night. Additionally, 881S provided more than 1,000 rounds of fire support to another hill that was attacked. That evening began the siege that lasted until April

In addition to standing watch, digging deeper trenches and fighting positions became the daily routine. The title of this column, "home is where you dig it," became the Khe Sanh motto. In some ways it was like trench warfare in World War 1. Lack of supplies, digging equipment, bunker material, constant battles with rats, rain and mud, cold, fog, and all under constant artillery, mortar and sniper fire and observation of the enemy seemed to be the order of the day. But, we were never outside the range of our own artillery support, air power and communications. Logistical support by air also became so hazardous that only the plight of the Marines and the president's order to "Hold Khe Sanh" could justify the terrible losses of aircraft encountered in resupply attempts Several C-130s and C-123s were destroyed on Khe Sanh's airstrip while attempting to bring in the supplies, but the enemy siege became so tight that C-130s were finally prevented from landing and were forced to resort to par dropping the supplies. This still did not solve the problem of re-supplying the ever-more-besieged outposts around Khe Sanh, where water and food became secondary to ammunition. Helicopters still had to brave the heavy mortar, artillery, rocket and automatic weapons fire to carry the critical supplies from Khe Sanh to the surrounding hilltop outposts. New delivery methods were designed.

Heroism was routine. The helicopter zones were always "hot." The enemy's weapon of choice to attack them was the 120mm mortar, which was always deadly. Most dangerous were the medical evacuation missions. It took time to carry badly wounded men from cover to the helicopter and then return to cover, and the mortar rounds were often already announced as being "on the way." Yet there was no occasion when men had to be ordered to carry stretchers. To the contrary, it was often necessary to restrain too many men from lending a hand and exposing themselves unnecessarily. Seven helicopters were shot down, yet we never called for a medevac that didn't come, weather permitting.

There was never a climactic day or event. Rather, from Jan. 21 through April 17, the threat to life and limb remained essentially unchanged. The dangers were greatest during helicopter operations because those offered the most lucrative targets to the enemy's gunners. The potential for catastrophe, however, was greatest at night or during the frequent foggy weather when we could not see to detect the enemy's approach or to bring our massive supporting fires to bear against him. That potential took a psychological as well as a physical toll. To stand in a trench for eight hours on a given night without relief, in total darkness, in a fog so thick that even a magnesium flare could not pierce it, all senses focused on detecting any sound, any smell, any hint of movement to the front. It was trying in the extreme to the Marine required to do it. To require all hands do so nightly for three months was to stretch the limits of resolve.

Forty-two Marines or Corpsmen died on or near the hill and nearly 200 were wounded, not including aviation casualties whose numbers, being reported separately, were unknown to us. Our commanding officer, Bill Dabney, noted that none of these losses occurred in a single pitched battle, but rather in discrete incidents scattered over the course of the siege. Incoming was constant, and although we learned to cope with it to a point, a lucky round in a trench line or active medevac zone was just as deadly in April as in January. Through it all, the troops did their duty. We stood our watches. Others flew their aircraft or serviced helicopter zones, manned outposts, engaged the enemy and raised the flag daily as zealously at the end as at the beginning. We were never asked to stand back-to-back against the flagpole with fixed bayonets, but rather to endure. By enduring, we triumphed.

I didn't pick the men I fought with but I have an attachment to them that cannot be described — and I have the same attachment to those who carry on today. Never have I given anyone the trust I gave these men. As William Manchester wrote after his fighting service at Okinawa, and after all these years, I also recognize that these men and women, and I mean all who served in Viet Nam from all branches of the services, in the end, didn't fight for their country, their government's mission and not even their branch of service but for each other. I salute those warriors of the past and those of today and I am proud to have been one of you.

Richard Dworsky. Ph.D., was a platoon commander with India Company on Hill 881S during the siege until he was wounded and medevaced. He has several decorations for bravery including a Bronze Star and Navy Commendation Medal and 3 purple hearts as a result of his tour in Viet Nam. He has lived and worked in Anchorage for almost 30 years.

MORE MEMORIES

KSV Veteran's In The News

By Keith Edwards
Staff Writer
Morning Sentinel

Randy Worthley A Btry 1/13
Ralph Sargent Hq Btry 1/13

Randy Worthley took shrapnel in his neck and upper leg during heavy enemy shelling June 27, 1967, in Khe Sanh, Vietnam, which killed two of five fellow Marines assigned to a 105-millimeter howitzer. Today, some 40 years after the siege of Khe Sanh, Worthley, then a lance corporal, figures he made it out of Vietnam in pretty good shape, considering how many didn't come back alive.

He was treated in an underground hospital on the Marine base at Khe Sanh and returned to duty shortly thereafter. He said he still has nerve damage and lacks feeling in much of his thigh.

"I'd say I came out OK, physically," said Worthley, who received the Purple Heart. "It could have been a lot worse. We lost what, 58,000 there?"

Monday is the 40th anniversary of the start of the siege of Khe Sanh, in which about 6,000 Marines and other service members were cut off from ground support and held off persistent attacks on their base by North Vietnamese forces totaling around 34,000.

Worthley, who left the Marine Corps in October of 1968 and is now a master electrician, also received the Presidential Unit Citation and Combat Action Ribbon for his service in Vietnam. He served at Khe Sanh from June of 1967 until January of 1968, before the "official" 77-day Siege of Khe Sanh occurred between Jan. 21 and April 8, 1968.

But that doesn't mean Khe Sanh was a peaceful place when he was there. "We were some of the first troops sent there to beef it up," Worthley said.

"We fired thousands and thousands of rounds there -- 1,200 in one mission."

When enemy fire came in, rather than hiding out in bunkers, his unit's job was to go out to their howitzers and return fire. Their targets were often enemy troops moving ammunition on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Ralph Sargent, 72, of Augusta, managed to escape injury during his time in Khe Sanh, but just barely. On March 9, 1968, a North Vietnamese rocket struck the headquarters tent where he spent most of his waking hours in Khe Sanh, injuring three Ma-

rines and killing a lance corporal who was due to return home in just 13 days. But Sargent, an Augusta resident and Gardiner High School graduate who fought in the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh against an estimated 34,000 North Vietnamese, wasn't there. Instead, he had jumped -- literally -- onto the back of a moving C-130 cargo plane nine days earlier on emergency leave so he could help his family back in Maine deal with the death of his brother-in-law, Guy Robert Bean, who was killed in combat in Vietnam at the age of 21.

Monday, the 40th anniversary of the start of the siege of Khe Sanh, Sargent said he plans to do what he usually does every year on that day. He'll flip through some of his old photo albums and books of mementos and commendations and think about his experiences and lost buddies in the Vietnam War. He figures he's lucky to be around to reflect, and not just because of the rocket that killed his unit's machine gunner, Lance Cpl. Wilbur Stovall, whom Sargent said was like a son to him. Sargent almost didn't make it out for his emergency leave. Due to persistent incoming enemy rocket and mortar fire, the few planes that did land on the crater-marked airstrip at Khe Sanh usually never came to a full stop. Their loads of supplies were attached to parachutes, which pulled the pallets of supplies out the back of the C-130s. Then the planes, after touching down, without stopping, would take back off. So Sargent had to run out onto the airstrip to board a plane out.

"I ran and jumped for the tail, but my pistol belt got held up on the ramp," Sargent said. "It was stuck. I couldn't get in and I couldn't get out."

Another service member saw what was happening, grabbed Sargent and pushed him up into the plane. But in so doing, the man was left hanging from the ramp as the plane began to takeoff and left the ground. The other man fell to the ground.

"The last thing I saw was him landing and rolling on the ground," Sargent said of the other service member. "I don't know if he made it or not. I still see that guy, rolling on the ground, today."

Another close call came when a 152-millimeter artillery shell flew over his foxhole, close enough **so** he could feel the heat coming off it. Other than a touch of shell shock which caused Sargent, for a time even after he'd left a combat area, to yell "Incoming!" and dive to the ground when he heard loud, explosive-sounding noises, he made it out of Khe Sanh without getting injured.

Both Worthley and Sargent spent most of their time on the base, as most fighting at Khe Sanh consisted of exchanges of artillery fire, not direct, face-to-face combat. Both Marines said the defensive assignment of holding the base while under siege was frustrating for many of their fellow Marines because, they said, Marines are used to being on the offensive.

The steady barrage of enemy shelling led to them spending most of their time underground in bunkers. Worthley said they filled large wooden ammunition boxes with dirt to build up their walls and strengthen their bunkers from attack. Sargent said they used nearly anything they could find, because proper supplies were hard to come by in Khe Sanh, which was surrounded by the enemy and reachable only by aircraft. "We didn't have proper protection for our bunkers," Sargent said. "All of our corrugated steel went to the north, thanks to Robert McNamara (U.S. Secretary of Defense from 1961-1968). We had nothing to stop anything more than an 82 millimeter mortar. They (the North Vietnamese) were using heavier shells than that. They had 152s. We had sandbags, 55-gallon drums and empty ammo boxes so we'd fill them full of dirt for protection. Anything we could find."

Sargent was battery gunnery sergeant and platoon sergeant of a 36-man reactionary platoon. During his service in Vietnam he was awarded a Navy Commendation and the Bronze Star with a Combat V for heroic achievement, for his role in an attack not at Khe Sanh. He said he didn't want the award because he received it for his actions in an attack in which 35 Marines died.

"I did nothing but do my job and get the wounded out of there," he said of the Bronze Star. "I didn't want it. I wear it in memory of the Marines who got killed that night."

Marines made up the bulk of forces at Khe Sanh but all branches were represented. Sargent said sometimes they were short on supplies so weren't al-

lowed to use water to shower, and were limited to two C-ration meals per day., The first wave of what many consider the official siege of Khe Sanh started with a major attack at 5:30 a.m., Jan. 21, 1968. "They hit us with rockets, mortars, everything," Sargent said. "The third round hit our ammo dump. We had all kinds of stuff in there. It was quite a Fourth of July display. It was two or three days before it settled down."

Worthley came into and left Khe Sanh, which is on a plateau surrounded by the Coroc Mountains located near the North Vietnam and Laos borders, by helicopter. Bullets were coming through the bottom of the helicopter when he was flown out.

A native of Mexico, Worthley attended technical school on the GI bill after the Marines and became a master electrician. He and his wife Carol have two adult daughters. Sargent was in Khe Sanh from September of 1967 to April 18, 1968. He was in the Marines until he retired from the Corps, Sept. 30, 1976.

Later he worked for the state and Digital in Augusta, before retiring. He's been married to his wife and high school sweetheart, Onise, 53 years. They have two daughters and five grandchildren. One grandson joined the Marines, though Sargent noted he did not pressure him to do so. The number of casualties suffered by both sides at Khe Sanh has long been disputed. The official count of deaths released by the Marines counts 205 deaths and 1,668 wounded. The Khe Sanh Veterans Association, founded by Vietnam historian Ray W. Stubbe, a Navy Chaplain at Khe Sanh and founder of Khe Sanh Veterans Association, estimates there were 730 Americans killed in action in Khe Sanh. More than 2,500 were injured, according to multiple accounts. Khe Sanh was abandoned by U.S. troops and leveled by July of 1968.

"The powers that be decided it wasn't of important strategic use," Sargent said. "All this waste of blood and human lives, and they turn around and level it."

I Get Pictures



Aftermath of Chow Hall after Incoming Direct Hit



OLD CHOW HALL BURNING AFTER INCOMING HIT



MEMORIES of Khe SANH
Pictures Submitted By
David "Doc" Johnson 2/1





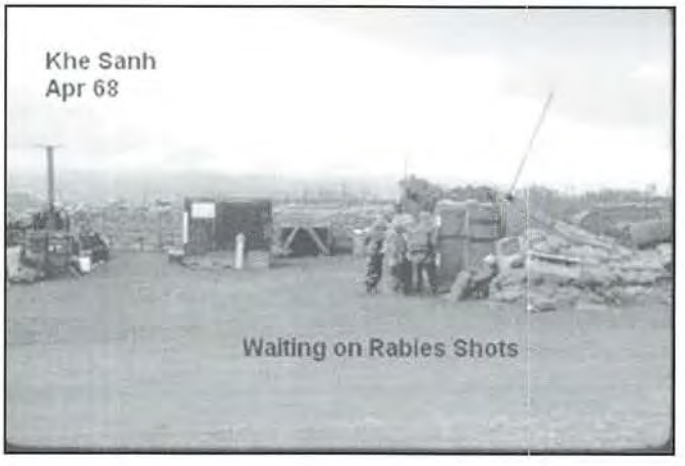



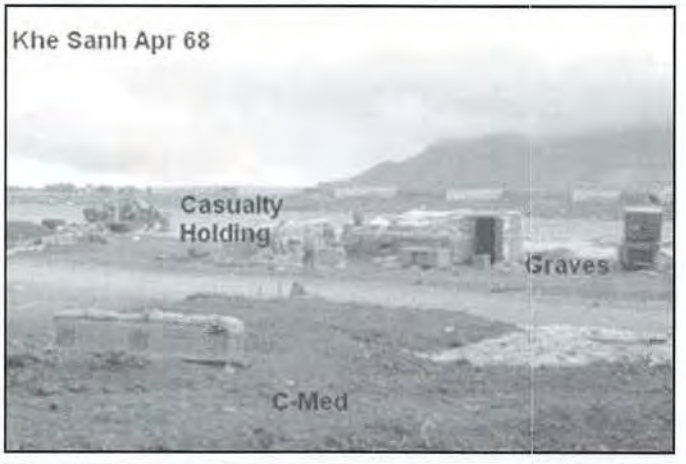













CPL JAMES LERTOLA S-2 2/26





MADELEINE POILANE 1967





PAT BUCKLEY ON HILL 861







All "The Guys" on Hill 861





Submitted By Rich McCullough "Crash At Khe Sanh"

The Army's Best Invention

Story by Major Renita Foster

THE P-38





WWII & KOREA



VIETNAM

It was developed in just 30 days in the summer of 1942 by the Subsistence Research Laboratory in Chicago. And never in its 52-year history has it been known to break, rust, need sharpening or polishing. Perhaps that is why many soldiers, past and present, regard the P-38 C-ration can opener as the Army's best invention.

C-rations have long since been replaced with the more convenient Meals, Ready to Eat, but the fame of the P-38 persists, thanks to the many uses stemming from the unique blend of ingenuity and creativity all soldiers seem to have. "The P-38 is one of those tools you keep and never want to get rid of," said Sgt. Scott Kiraly, a military policeman. "I've had my P-38 since joining the Army 11 years ago and kept it because I can use it as a screwdriver, knife, anything."

The most vital use of the P-38, however, is the very mission it was designed for, said Fort Monmouth, N.J., garrison commander Col. Paul Baerman. "When we had C-rations, the P-38 was your access to food; that made it the hierarchy of needs," Baerman said. "Then soldiers discovered it was an extremely simple, lightweight, multipurpose tool. I think in warfare, the simpler something is and the easier access it has, the more you're going to use it. The P-38 had all of those things going for it." The tool acquired its name from the 38 punctures required to open a C-ration can, and from the boast that it performed with the speed of the World War II P-38 fighter plane.

"Soldiers just took to the P-38 naturally," said World War II veteran John Bandola. "It was our means for eating 90 percent of the time, but we also used it for cleaning boots and fingernails, as a screwdriver, you name it. We all carried it on our dog tags or key rings." When Bandola attached his first and only P-38 to his key ring a half century ago, it accompanied him to Anzio, Salerno and through northern Italy. It was with him when World War II ended, and it's with him now. "This P-38 is a symbol of my life then," said Bandola. "The Army, the training, my fellow soldiers, all the times we shared during a world war."

Sgt. Ted Paquet, swing shift supervisor in the Fort Monmouth Provost Marshal's Office, was a 17-year -old seaman serving aboard the amphibious assault

ship USS New Orleans during the Vietnam war when he got his first P-38. The ship's mission was to transport Marines off the coast of Da Nang. On occasional evenings, Marines gathered near Paquet's duty position on the fantail for simple pleasures like "Cokes, cigarettes, conversation and C-rations." It was during one of these nightly sessions that Paquet came in contact with the P-38, or "John Wayne" as it's referred to in the Navy. Paquet still carries his P-38, and he still finds it useful. While driving with his older brother, Paul, their car's carburetor began to have problems. "There were no tools in the car and, almost simultaneously, both of us reached for P-38s attached to our key rings," Paquet said with a grin. "We used my P-38 to adjust the flow valve, the car worked perfectly, and we went on our merry way."

Paquet"s P-38 is in a special box with his dog tags, a .50-caliber round from the ship he served on, his Vietnam Service Medal, South Vietnamese money and a surrender leaflet from Operation Desert Storm provided by a nephew. "It will probably be on my dresser until the day I die," Paquet said. The feelings veterans have for the P-38 aren't hard to understand, according to 1st Sgt. Steve Wilson of the Chaplain Center and School at Fort Monmouth. "When you hang on to something for 26 years," he said, "it's very hard to give it up. That's why people keep their P-38 just like they do their dog tags. ... It means a lot. It's become part of you. You remember field problems, jumping at 3 a.m. and moving out. A P-38 has you reliving all the adventures that came with soldiering in the armed forces. Yes, the P-38 opened cans, but it did much more. Any soldier will tell you that."
Courtesy Soldiers Online Magazine

Sgt/1st Class Chuck Tredinnick by Mike Fishbaugh

A virtual salute, but the pain still very real

It was Jan. 29, 1968. Sgt. 1st Class Charles "Chuck" Nichol Tredinnick, formerly of Dallas, was serving in the U.S. Army as a combat engineer in the Special Forces in Vietnam. In just one day, Tredinnick and his group were to return to Okinawa, Japan, and then back to the United States. Before their scheduled departure, the soldiers volunteered for one more mission: to recover American bodies and retrieve an MIA/POW from another special forces team on Hill 471 outside of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. That turned out to be a deadly decision. Tredinnick was killed in combat when he was shot in the chest. He was 33.

Like the 50,000-plus Americans who perished in Vietnam, Charles Tredinnick is listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. He is also listed on a Web site called the Virtual Wall Vietnam Veterans Memorial. His widow, Joy, never remarried, and lived in the couple's North Carolina home until her death in 2005. In 2002, she posted this message on the Virtual Wall:

"They say that time heals all wounds, so why won't this one heal? It's been over 34 years now and you are still in my dreams all the time. I still miss you so much. We used to talk about growing old together ... sitting on the front porch in our rockers and watching the rest of the world go by. It's not much fun sitting there alone."

While serving in Vietnam, Charles Tredinnick often wrote home to Joy, telling her not to worry because "only the good die young." Two days before he died, he wrote: "Well darling that's about it for today. I don't know when I'll get the time to write again.... So until then know I love you very much and always will."

Keeping his memory alive Charles Tredinnick's older sister, Jean Tredinnick Donnora, 77, of Cocoa, Fla., remembers the day she found out her brother had died. "I worked for the telephone company in Dallas and I got a call from his wife's uncle and he told me he was missing, and of course I got scared and I started to cry and they let me go home," Donnora said. Donnora went home and called Joy Tredinnick, who said that Charles Tredinnick's body was found. "I was just crushed," Donnora said. "I don't know how else to explain it. In fact, I still miss him."

Charles Tredinnick wanted to be a Marine, but they would not accept him because he had flat feet. So he joined the Army. Later, Charles Tredinnick advanced to a ranger and then a member of the Green Beret Special Forces. He served in Germany and did two tours in Vietnam, was awarded the Purple

Star, two Bronze Star awards, Silver Star, National Defense, Vietnam Service, Vietnam Campaign, Combat Infantryman Badge, MACV-SOG Presidential Unit Citation Commemorative Coin, and the Army Master Parachutist. He also was given the Ranger Special Forces Airborne and MACV-SOG patches.

Donnora was close to her brother and named her son Charles after him. Sadly, little Charles passed away in 1960 at age 5 after being run over by a school bus in Shavertown. Donnora does not own a computer and has never seen the Virtual Wall, but says she saw the moving wall and has pictures of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington.

Charles Tredinnick's cousin, Dennis Tredinnick, is the contact for Charles Tredinnick on the Virtual Wall. Dennis Tredinnick, 62, of Glen Gardner, N.J., never met his cousin but feels it is important to honor him because he, as the most decorated Tredinnick, is the family hero. Dennis Tredinnick, also a veteran, stays in touch with about seven men who served with Charles Tridinnick, including Jim Taylor who was with Charles while he died.

"I was interested in what they thought of my cousin and what experiences and things they went through in 'Nam," Dennis Tredinnick said. "I guess I was learning more and more about Charles, who I didn't know." Charles and Joy Tredinnick are buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Charles Tredinnick is listed on Panel 35E Line 063 on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

At the end of Joy Tredinnick's posting on the Virtual Wall, she included a poem she wrote about her husband titled "My Green Beret." The last stanza reads, "So, as the lonely days and nights pass, And I re-read that letter. ... his last, I tell him, "You're right as always, my darling. ... Only the very best die young."

Navy Pilot Returned to US

By Mike Fishbaugh

In the late summer of 2002, a team of Defense Department MIA hunters in Ho Chi Minh City got a call from their counterparts in the Vietnamese government. Some Vietnamese fishermen had discovered human bones and airplane wreckage off an Phu Quoc island in the Gulf of Thailand. They wanted to turn over the remains and believed that it would guarantee them an opportunity to immigrate. The Americans took the remains and wreckage given to them and attempted unsuccessfully to get to the underwater site a few miles offshore. Some months later, the bones were flown to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command in Hawaii, where they stayed in a laboratory for five years.

On Monday, those remains come home, to a hallowed ground that overlooks the old Naval Air Station in Dallas, where a young Fort Worth man took the naval officer's oath in 1964. That was before Lt/jg. Frank E. Hand III left for the war in Vietnam, before he and 11 other young men went down trying to find Viet Cong gun-running boats.

Growing up Frank Hand could be found most days in the mid-1950s on the playground of Oakhurst Elementary School, leading a touch football game of neighborhood boys. His parents' house backed up to the school, and it was there and at the Riverside Baptist Church where Frank and his younger brother Bruce spent much of their youth. Frank was born in 1942 in Charleston, S.C., when their father was an instructor pilot for the Navy during World War II. The family had moved to a house on Westbrook Avenue in the summer of '51 when Frank Hand Jr. took a job with the Federal Aviation Administration in Fort Worth.

He was an outgoing boy at Carter-Riverside High School, an Eagle Scout, and an accomplished swimmer. He, and later his brother, worked summers as lifeguards at the Ridglea Country Club. "He made enough money to buy a nice car," his brother said. "He was mechanically inclined, so he could work on it. It was a black, two-door Pontiac Bonneville, a '58, if I remember. Talk about a cool car." After graduation in 1960, Frank started at what was then Arlington State College to study architecture. He did that for three years but decided to take a break and work for an architecture firm to earn money. The draft board noticed the change and reclassified him as eligible.

So Frank Hand, presumably unwilling to chance the Army or the infantry, went to NAS Dallas to com-

pete for a spot in officer candidate school and a shot at naval aviation. Romance in Florida Linda Merriman, a local girl in Pensacola, Fla., thought she had met the most gorgeous man in the world. A Texas boy, a Navy officer candidate and pilot in training. He drove a new Corvette. He was, without a doubt, living the high life. "It was like Officer and a Gentleman," Bruce said of his brother's relationship.

After a year of dating, Linda and Frank Hand wed on a warm August day in 1966 in the First Baptist Church in Pensacola, an arch of crossed swords over their heads when they left the sanctuary. They moved frequently over the next several months, going from flight school to more flight schools. Finally in 1967, he was assigned to Patrol Squadron 26 in Brunswick, Maine, and immediately prepared for deployment to Southeast Asia.

He wrote Linda a letter every day he was gone, beginning in November 1967. "He just wanted me to stay busy and pass the time because I had so much free time on my hands," she said. "He would tell me all was going well and 'I wish I could be with you.' They were great love letters. I kept all of them. "He called me at Christmastime. I believe that's the last time we were able to speak."

The last flight

When Frank Hand, 26, took off on April 1, 1968, with three other officers and eight sailors in a P-3 Orion from an air base in Thailand, the biggest news in Vietnam centered on the military's efforts to break through the siege at Khe Sanh. Hand's crew was on a routine mission, scanning the waters off Vietnam for Viet Cong.

On his airplane he served as the co-pilot -- was hit by anti-aircraft fire from a Cambodian gunboat, according to news accounts. The pilots attempted to fly to land to improve their chances for rescue, but the four-engine aircraft didn't make it. No one survived. Search and rescue crews recovered something from every man on board, so none were ever listed as missing in action. All searchers found of him, according to the Defense Department, was a boot bearing his name.

On April 24, 1968, he was laid to rest in Barrancas National Cemetery in Pensacola, where Linda wanted him buried. The service was held in the First Baptist Church, 20 months after his picture-perfect wedding. Hand's parents went on, of course, though they grieved terribly. His mother, Dottie, was especially close to Frank. His father, Frank Jr., grieved more quietly, choosing to channel his feelings into a years-long search to find out more about his son's last flight. Years later, his son Bruce discovered paperwork indicating that his father had been planning a trip to Vietnam to go to the crash site. "Dad was very quiet," Bruce said. "He was of that generation where you kept your feelings to yourself."

Linda and Frank Hand had planned exactly six children. They would all be boys, they decided jokingly. After a few years, Linda remarried and started a family. She now lives in North Carolina. But Frank has never left her. "I still share his love and will forever," she said. A memory revived thirty-eight years after Hand died. An official with the Department of the Navy called Bruce and requested a blood sample. To say it was a surprise is a wholly inadequate description for what it did to Bruce, who felt as if he had been struck by lightning on a cloudless, sunny day.

"I got excited," Bruce said, Frank's closest living relative. "But then I had to tell myself to sit down, nothing is going to come of this." It did. The Navy followed up a few months later, at the beginning of the summer, to tell Bruce the story of the Vietnamese villagers and the successful DNA match with several bones of Frank's. No other crewman's remains were found. Larry Greer, a spokesman for the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office in Washington, said finding additional remains of servicemen happens more often than people would think. "It amazes me when I hear that Vietnamese villagers or fishermen have gone to the trouble of finding who to give these to," Greer said. "It tells me that they are very much aware of the U.S. commitment to the recovery effort."

Bruce called Linda, other family members, members of the Patrol Squadron Association. He heard from officers on active duty today in Frank's old squadron in Maine, and he learned about the memorial there with an etching of Frank's name from the Vietnam Memorial in Washington. For the first time in many years, Frank and his memory had been very

much alive. "The Navy wanted to know what I wanted to do, but I needed to take a breath and consider all this," he said. "Well, the summer went by pretty quick, and I decided that the fall would be a nice time for this."

The Department of Veterans Affairs gave Bruce permission to place Frank's remains in a columbarium at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery, ordinarily not allowed because he already has a spot at a national cemetery. "While this has presented a unique situation, for reasons of compassion, we decided to honor the Hand family's request," said Ron Pemberton, director of D-FW National Cemetery.

The Navy agreed to provide four F/A-18 Hornets to perform the "missing man" formation over the cemetery on Monday, a particularly special gesture for Bruce. The executive officer of Patrol Squadron 26 is coming to Texas for the service.

"This has all been good," Bruce said. "Everything has just come together beautifully."

Linda Shoemaker will be there, too, with the friend that introduced her to Frank 42 years ago.

"I never, ever dreamed of something like this," she said. "I've shed many tears since we got the information. I am thrilled to bring him home. But it opens up a lot of hurt, and a lot of happiness, too."

MIA/Air Force- Brought Home

By Mike Fishbaugh

Air Force Captain Stephen Rusch was in his aircraft over Laos in 1972 when he was shot down. Rusch was 28 years old and never heard from again. Bob Heath knew the Captain's late father well and remembers the anguish he endured. "His father was obviously distraught for the loss of his son," Heath said. "And not knowing where he was." They have now found where he was. After years of excavating the wreckage and testing remains that were recovered, two teeth have been positively identified as those of Captain Stephen Rusch.

His daughter Sharon was just 6 years old when his plane was shot down. She is now an Air Force Colonel and is escorting her father's remains home from the pacific. "I've missed my dad," she said. "I miss my dad every day of my life. I think about him all the time. The Colonel can't help but pay tribute to the military teams who made it possible for her dad to buried, properly.

It wouldn't have mattered if it was his whole body or two teeth. The fact of the matter is these people worked very hard to bring him home to us." There is a plaque hanging at Lambertville City hall with Captain Rusch's picture. City Clerk Marie Rossiter sees it all the time.

God gave my Dad the gift of true freedom. Because he is a gracious, loving God he wanted my Dad, and indeed each of us is to know we are accepted, secure and significant. Let me repeat that in case you missed it: Because he is a gracious, loving God he wanted my Dad, and indeed each of us is to know we are accepted, secure and significant. In this we are free to live life fully and experience eternity.

"The family can finally put everything to rest. His daughter will know where he is now," Rossiter said. Jim Conover is a former Marine and Vietnam War veteran. He knew Stephen Rusch when they were kids attending First Presbyterian Church together. "He was just a wonderful kid and just a great guy," Conover said. He too says this is a case of the U.S. military, never forgetting those left behind. I would have had a hard time delivering this message if I didn't believe it.

"Just the idea that they kept looking and looking and looking and digging and digging," Conover said, this country goes to great expense as they should, because these people are the true heroes of this country, they should not be forgotten." After so many years missing in action, Captain Stephen Rusch will have a final resting place at Arlington National Cemetery.



WELCOME HOME

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM
VMA-542 "TIGERS"

THE AMERICAN FLAG WHICH ACCOMPANIES THIS CERTIFICATE FLEW THROUGH THE SKIES OF A FREE IRAQ IN A U.S. MARINE CORPS AV-8B II+ SUPPORTING MARINES, SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AND MULTI-NATIONAL COALITION FORCES IN THE II MEF AREA OF OPERATIONS

"The rise of a free and self-governing Iraq will deny terrorists a base of operation, discredit their narrow ideology and give momentum to reformers across the region. This will be a decisive blow to terrorism at the heart of its power and a victory for the security of America and the civilized world." **President George W. Bush**

Date: October 27th, 2007

Location: Al Anbar, Iraq

Call Sign: Resolute 12

Flown For: **KHE SAHN VETS**

Flown By:

Captain Johnny J. Widener

"Double"

Diana F. Fecarotta, USMC 66-68 teaches with the sister of S/Sgt Oakley currently serving in Iraq, who obtained this American Flag for KSV. Thank You "TIGERS"

MEMOIRS

MEMORIES

By Denny Bowers B Co 1/26

Forty years ago, Ocean Pines resident Denny Bowers and many other veterans were surrounded by the North Vietnamese in the Battle of Khe Sanh, one of the many battles caused by the Tet offensive of 1968.

"We were surrounded by somewhere between 20 and 30 thousand North Vietnamese," Bowers said. "When you're surrounded, you're surrounded."

Bowers said where he was stationed was a very small part of the entire country, and the country as a whole saw attacks due to the Tet offensive.

"Historians are still trying to figure out what the North Vietnamese really wanted to do," he said. "There are two schools of thought -- either create a diversion or take and overrun the combat base -- but no one really knows."

Sarge Garlitz of the Worcester County American Legion said events that transpired were misinterpreted by the press and subsequently American citizens.

"Many have not been honored because of the way the liberal press had it turned around," Garlitz said. "When the soldiers returned they were shunned."
But Garlitz wants to honor them now on the 40th anniversary of the Tet offensive.

"It is not to celebrate the Tet but to recognize the anniversary," he said.

On Thursday, Jan. 31 a wreath was placed on the Worcester County Veteran's memorial in memory of the beginning of the Tet offensive.

"I just want to give them a nice pat on the back and thank them," he said. "I was not at the Tet offensive; I was in other parts of the world, but I just think it is right that we can honor those who were there."

Garlitz came to the decision to honor the anniversary through a discussion with a colleague.

"An associate of mine was at the Tet and he got the silver star for it," he said. "He informed me of a rededication and I couldn't attend so I thought, why not have recognition in Worcester County?" To his knowledge, Garlitz is the only person holding a service on the 31st.

"Kansas proclaimed recognition of the 30th anniversary and wanted to get the governor of each state to recognize it in the future but someone dropped the ball," he said. "I'm just picking it up as county commander."

Now that he's started it, Garlitz is receiving feedback from veterans who want to attend.

"People are coming out of the woodwork for the way they were treated when they came back from Vietnam," he said. "We have a lot of people around that really are in awe because Worcester County is going to recognize those for serving in a victory that was called a defeat at the time in 1968. Instead of making those guys heroes they made them into martyrs."

He hopes a member of each service will give a short prayer at the memorial and then veterans can come to the American Legion post on Saturday, Feb. 2 to share their stories.

"I just want the public to know that these people are heroes and I think it is serious," he said.

Bowers, who is not only a veteran but the Vice President of the Veteran's Memorial board, agreed and wanted the public to just have the knowledge.

"If nothing else, the purpose of this is to bring the American people to the realization of its occurrence, and it shouldn't be forgotten," he said.

We have instituted a new magazine section to thank those members who contribute so generously to the Khe Sanh Veterans. Their contributions allow us to continue to expand and improve our Red Clay magazine. There will be four levels of contributions: SILVER $ 20.00-50.00, GOLD over 50.00-200.00, PLATINUM over 200.00-1,000, and DIAMOND over 1,000. Each member will receive a new member-ship card, corresponding with their level of contribution.

DIAMOND

BODENWEISER, Alec
DAWDY. James H. Jr.
TOURTE, Craig
FOSTER, Gary
MCNEELEY, Milton L (Mac)

PLATINUM

ALLEN, Lewis J
CHICONE, Roger D
COLE, James F
FOSTER, Gary W
FRUGONI, Charles
GABLE, Vincent L
HARRINGTON, David S
PATRICO, Sid
PIERCE, Thomas A
KUBLEY, Lawrence W
SCOTT, Michael D
STACK, Geoffrey L
STUBBE, Ray W
WELLS, Jack

GOLD

ALLEN, Lewis J
BROPHY, Michael W.
CAMPO, Carl C
CATON, Louis W II
CHANDLER, David
COOK, Michael H
COSNER, Leonard G
COWAN, John R Sr.
DESETA, Louis J
DONAGHY, Richard E
DUBOIS, William H
DUNLAP, Lee C
EICHLER, Thomas J
ELARDO, Nick
ESSLINGER, John T
FOLEY, Richard M
GERARD, Charles G
GILLESPIE, Donald J
GRANT, James D
GRIFFIN, Jerry
HALLER, Tom
HANNA, Robert W
HERNANDEZ, John G
JACHIMIAK, Daniel L
KAHENY, John M
KAYLOR, James
KEATON, Thomas
LARSON, Larry L
LEE, Dale
LOERSCH, Phillip E
MAIN, Ronald G
MANNION, Dennis M
MCCANN, Timothy N
MCCARTNEY, Lawrence
MERCADO, Saturno
NOYES, Richard C
PADLEY, Shirley W
PATTERSON, Charles E
PELON, Sharon
RAIT, Donald M
ROBBINS, John L
ROGERS, David G
RUSHFORTH, Toby
SHANKLIN, Dean E
SLATTERY, Robert J
SMITH, Patrick W
SMITH, Walter J
SPIVEY, Martin B
STUDT, John C
TATE, William R
WACHSMUTH, Robert
WILKINSON, James B
WOODARD, Jeff
YATES, William R

SILVER

ALEXANDER, Clarence F
AMBROSE, James F
APPLEBAUM, Robert S
BECKHAM, Daniel E
BOLAND, Thomas
BRADBURY, Michael D
CAMPO, Carl
CHASE, James L
COOK, Michael H
CORBETT, Jack
DACKERMANN, William
DEARING, Richard M
DE LOTTO, Richard J
FINCH, Michael T
FOLEY, Richard M Jr.
FOSMO, Harold D Jr.
FRUGONI, Charles
GERRIOR, Chuck
HALL, Robert A
HARRIGAN, Joseph E
HARRIS, Theodore S
HICKS, Tommy J
HOFFLER, John T
HOLMGREN, Duane K
JOHNSON, John L
KAZIMIR, Edward J
KEATON, Thomas
KENDIG, Dennis R
LARSEN, Larry L
LEWY, Bruce S
MAGUIRE, Danny A
MAHONEY, Brian
MAPEL, Randall D
MCCULLOUGH, Richard
MELLON, David L
MINEER, Philip D
MYER, Donald J
MORGAN, Robert I
MOSEBAY, Watson T Jr.
MUDD, Ronald B
NANCE, Reuben F
NEWSHAM, Robert G
PROVENCIO, Ramon
RINEHART, Earlin R
ROMANETZ, Nicholas S
SMITH, Patrick W
STAHL, Richard E
SWEARENGEN, Mark A
TAKACS, Richard E
UPSHAW, Leland
VIVONA, Robert T
WILLIS, Robert E

THANK YOU ALASKA

By Mike Fishbaugh

State of Alaska -Governor - Proclamations - Full Proclamation Tet Offensive 40th Anniversary Remembrance Month.

WHEREAS, in early 1968 there were Alaska men and women serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, in uniform or as civilian employees within the military environment, during a time of armed conflict in Southeast Asia.

WHEREAS, these citizens of Alaska in Land, Air, and Sea forces who with countrymen, Republic of Vietnam forces, and international allies, all stood fast together and did what was right when the enemy launched a massive surprise assault early in 1968 against the populace and the legitimate government of the Republic of Vietnam.

WHEREAS, the fighting raged for long months at fixed installations and outside the perimeter wire from the delta to the DMZ, in bambooed hamlet, ancient city, along forested tracks and rice paddy dikes, in red clay valleys, up sheer hills, under triple canopy, in the air, on brown rivers, and out on blue water close to white sand beaches, and to twisted canals in massive swamps growing from the mighty Mekong.

WHEREAS, our forces properly and completely held at every point around the compass, in spite of heavy direct and indirect fire; first, stopping, defeating, and then pursuing the enemy in their many thousands from Hue, Dong Ha, and Khe Sanh, among others, in the north, and in the central highlands around Pleiku, Nha Trang, Cam Rahn, Dalat, Tay Ninh, Cholon, the ends of the runways at Tan Son Nhut and Bien Hoa, the joyless streets of the capital city, down through the Rat Song to the southernmost tip of an embattled land.

WHEREAS, because it was so far from U.S. shores, families and friends in Alaska homesteads, people overseas, as well as citizens all across our land, heard fragmentary reporting of the great Tet battles, without context: and other than direct communication with those who were there, the American people at large have often been saturated with faulty accounts coming from the self-serving of media and academia. It is time for the bottom line truth of Tet 1968 to be told: the enemy's battle was lost, and freedom – at least for a time – was sustained.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sarah Palin, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim February 2008 as: Tet Offensive 40th Anniversary Remembrance Month in Alaska, and encourage all Alaskans to remember the courage brought forth in support and defense of freedom and render long overdue honor and respect to those who were there, drew fire, and sacrificed so much and tell them **WELCOME HOME.**

Dated: January 10, 2008

POETRY

I THOUGHT IT WAS OVER

I thought my war was over when I left Viet Nam,
little did I know that it had only just begun.
Seems like I've been going a hundred miles an hour, backwards ever since.
Its like chasing a ghost,
or trying to out run the sun.
Working hard to stay busy all the time,
helps to keep the demons inside the fence.
I like to do things I can do alone,
I don't like to go where there might be a crowd.
I miss a lot not going along,
but I avoid places that are loud.
Being alone is safer when the anger comes,
it comes instantly over nothing and is quite strong.
I'm on alert seemingly all time time,
jumping at every sound to see what's wrong.
Successfully avoiding idol thought,
keeps me from thinking about all the guys that didn't come back.
All those sights, smells, and sounds you don't want to be around,
because what you really don't want is another flash back.
Yea I thought the war was over,
but the private war had just begun.
I know now that this war will never be over,
and trying to live with it is no fun.

Rick Tam

A FOREST FOR THOSE WHO FELL IN VIETNAM



Khe Sanh Veteran Geoffrey Steiner, H CO 2/9 Buried his anger and hurt and made a place for vets to heal

Ten years out of Vietnam Geoffrey Sterner was still fighting. He tried suicide, did time in a VA psychiatric ward, wrestled with an alcohol problem, got divorced. He ended up in a trailer on a dead-end dirt road near Cushing. "I walked out of society and into the woods, just like so many vets," he says.

And there, at last, he found peace: by planting one tree for each American who fell in Indochina. The forest on his 100 acre plot is now Minnesota's official testament to the veterans of the Vietnam War; it may be the nation's only living memorial.

Steiner has planted some 32,000 trees so far-'more than 35 varieties, from one-foot-high pine seedlings to six-foot poplars-burying his anger and hurt about the war in each hole he digs. He draws strength, too, from the visits of other vets and their families. A minister from Minneapolis stopped by recently; he'd lost a son in Vietnam.

"It did him good to see the trees," Steiner says. "People can come here and heal."

The State of Minnesota donated some saplings, but Steiner, 37 then pays for most of the trees out of his disability check. That can be a strain, but he and his new wife say they trust the Lord to provide. 'Says Steiner,
"I am here if there's hurting, if there's any way I can help."

WEB-CHATTER

DREAMS
By Craig Tourte

Dreams, My son came home from college this past Christmas. His friends came over to visit and they all sat around kind of excited and talked about their various adventures since they got out of high school in 2004. Several girls came over that evening and the excited voices and stories they all told about their lives were quite interesting. They have so much to look forward to, so innocent in their anticipation of the future. I had a hard time realizing that most were older than I, when I returned from Vietnam in 1968, worn out and exhausted, an old man in a young man's body.

I played golf with a group of men today, they are all my age, some are veterans, most are not. The guy I was riding with asked me what I did when I got home, he was interested to know if I went out right away and found some girls, partied, had a good time. I thought about that for a few minutes. I told him that I don't really think I even thought about girls when I got back. I remember I drove up to Chico and Tom Horchler and I got drunk, I don't remember much else about that night, now that I think about it, we were both pretty crazy and didn't know it, but for the most part, I have little recall of the years after my return.

Tom and I have discussed how we both were pretty much in shock for a few years when we got back and agree that those years are a bit clouded for us. Sure I had dreams for years upon my return, but I just don't recall what those dreams were. All I remember is that I had a hard time sleeping and a lot of perspiration, having to get up several times during the night and change my T-shirt. It was not until I recently read Ernie Spencer's book "Welcome to Vietnam Macho Man" that I realized I had exchanged dreams from the one I could not recall, for the persistent dream that I could recall, the same dream Ernie has. When I went in for my Social Se-

curity Psychiatrist evaluation I discussed this dream with the shrink, it wasn't long after, that I received my full percentage.

I told my golf partner today about my dream, I think he is still in shock, he didn't say much to me after the game, but he did buy me a drink at the bar. I am certain of a few things though, when I returned from Vietnam and the long Siege at Khe Sanh, I didn't sit around with friends and fresh faced girls and excitedly talk about our adventures and the future. I was mostly numb, exhausted, confused, and pretty much just wanted to be left alone. I'm much better now, the years have mellowed me, I don't sweat at night like I used to. I occasionally still have that dream, but like I told the Psychiatrist, they're nine thousand miles away.

By Gene Weresow

Once you have experienced combat, you will never be the same innocent person you were before. I too had some bad times upon my return to CONUS. I was glad to be home and not living in a hole in the ground. Yea things were different , friends who did not serve no longer related to you, maybe out of guilt or because they didn't see things your way. "The world" had changed, but I think that we had changed more. That is why the adjustment was so hard. All in all most of us became better people in the long run.

By Chuck Gerrior

Like many Khe Sanh veterans, we had great dreams coming home but many bad dreams. Back in the spring of 1971 my wife and I moved into our new home in Honolulu. Something happened early one morning when I woke up, telling my wife to get on the floor and keep as quiet as possible. I rolled out of bed laying flat, and kept telling my wife to do this because of the VC, and I don't have my rifle. While laying on the floor, I went back to sleep while she was wide awake not knowing what was going on with me. After about a half hour she came over to my side of the bed to find me in a very deep sleep. She left me alone and went back to bed.

Sometime about 5:30, I woke up finding myself on the floor, not remembering how I got there. My wife was in bed sleeping. I got up to get ready to go to work at Hickam. I was in the kitchen when she asked me if I had made her a cup of coffee. She did not say anything and gave me a good-by kiss as I left the house. Three days later after she talked to our neighbor (an USAF 1st Sgt) about what to do, he talked to me about what happened for about an hour or so. All I could tell him was that I did not remember the incident.

There were a several other bad nights when I woke up screaming and/or she found me dripping wet on the sheets. As time went by the incidents faded making my wife a happier person. It took about five years that before I could stand to be around persons firing off fireworks. In Honolulu there were two fireworks date, New Years Eve and July 4th. My performance reports at Hickam between 1972 and 1974 reflected that I had aggressive behavior problems needing adjusting. My major problem was that I was the only one of six enlisted personnel that had been exposed to combat duties in Vietnam.

The office NCOIC was a flake who made remarks that I was too slow and got hit by incoming rounds. Looking back on my life between 1967 and 1975, in the 80's I felt bad and sad. Today I look at those years as my adjustment time of my life. My wife now complains that I sleep too good.

By Don Meyer

Coming home, what a trip that was. I remember, other than the joy of being safe, it was not what I had dreamed about in country. Don't get me wrong, I was happy but I just felt out of place. I even went back to my high school to visit my old teachers and everyone seemed to stare and they treated me different. I couldn't think of a thing to talk about and really felt uncomfortable. I never went back. All of my buddies were gone, either drafted or in school, so I had no one to talk to.

I did however, chase every women that stood still and acted like a dog in heat. My girlfriend, from before, had written me a Dear John and was gone which is probably good. To fill the days, I sat in the same bar each day by myself and drank until closing. Each day I ate Mexican food because I had missed it so. Actually I was very lonely at home. Don't get me wrong it was really good to see my

parents again, but things were just different. I wished for any of my buddies from Vietnam to talk to so I could relate. As far as dreams, I think we all have had them over the years, many being bad. I take meds now to help with bad dreams. Home just wasn't what I had dreamed of in country, but it was better than being in a war.

By Ernie Spencer

For the sake of your families, you all should write down your memories. My book started as a present for my parents. I never talked about the war, until after I went full blown PTSD.

On Jan. 5, 1985. I went to a shrink for the first time and he had me write down what eventually became my book. It was cruel in looking back, but for Christmas of 1985 I gave my parents the manuscript and said words to the effect: "Here mom and dad, you wanted to know what happened to me in Vietnam? Merry Christmas," then left. My late mom told me when I went to visit them several weeks later: "Thank you my son (she always referred to me that way, the possessive case "my son"), NOW I understand your anger." She told me that my manuscript so unnerved my late father that it literally screwed him up for two weeks. Years latter after mom died, daddy asked while we were on a cruise: "why didn't you tell us what happened to you over there earlier?" I said: "I just assumed you knew, what with Khe Sanh being in the news everyday." "But we had no idea how bad it really was," daddy said. I just shrugged my shoulders and said: "well, now you know."

ROBERT ELLISON REMEMBERED

By Kevin Lynch

Young, gifted and white, Robert Jackson Ellison heard the majestic, dreamlike voice of the Rev. Martin Luther King speaking about a better world to young students and thousands of others on the vast National Mall in Washington on that day in August 1963.

Maybe that better world is what Ellison, the child of a military family, started searching for. He would say that King's dream became his, and he promptly dropped out of the University of Florida. And in the best of his photographs, you see the complexities, the situations and the spirit of humanity. Racial injustice was the backdrop, just as the inhumanity of war may have led him to Vietnam and the Dominican Republic.

Since childhood Ellison had been fascinated with small reptiles, and he majored in herpetology. Now he would try to capture something larger. The move was, perhaps, rash and demonstrably dangerous. Ellison gave up tuition payments for the daring life of a freelance photographer and paid for it with his life. In March 1968 he died, at 23, in a military incident fraught with miscommunication.

We are left with extraordinarily compelling and beautiful photography that has been collected as "An Instinct for Light: The Photography of Robert J. Ellison," currently showing at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum through June 15.It is an exhibit worth seeing and pondering during this Black History Month and in this dark era of America as a nation at war.

It's easy enough to see that this young man was committed to American ideals. He was inspired, all right, as the photos also show. But that was cold comfort to his mother, Miriam Eaton, and all those who loved him and his potential. Today his mother has built an edifice of pride on her loss. "Many times I wished he could have been my friend instead of my son," she tells a nearly packed lecture hall on a yet another snowbound Madison evening. "We were in sync in so many ways. He didn't want to come back a basket case. If he would have been drafted it would have been a whole different story." Eaton, now 86, expresses poignant irony while recounting her son's creative willfulness.

"He wasn't an easy child to have, but what an experience he was," she laughs.

She recalls that her son was an instinctive daredevil who had tried to catch poisonous sidewinders in the Mojave Desert. Eaton is a trim, petite, still-practicing artist who has lived in Milwaukee for many of the years since her son's death. She clearly encouraged her son and helped him not to judge others by their skin color. "I know how it was back in my day, the separate bathrooms and water fountains and everything," she says. "I never saw Negroes as different. Bob was the same way. He just

cared about people, so much."

Big donation

Eaton recently donated a large amount of her son's prints, contact sheets, diaries and other personal documents to the Veterans Museum. She had contacted museum officials to donate the letters of her first husband, Jack Ellison, a World War II veteran. Then the museum staff learned what her son had accomplished and found out she had more.

The exhibit includes 16 excellent photographs by Ellison, including some stunning color prints from Khe Sanh in Vietnam, superb black and whites from the civil rights movement and political and military upheaval in the Dominican Republic, a touching family scrapbook, and several well-wrought narrative panels with photos of Ellison himself.

Museum exhibition curator Jeffrey Kollath says there's enough for another exhibit, and, indeed, one longs for more of Ellison's civil rights-era photos, shot for Ebony magazine and others. But the ones here are masterful. One views King from right under his podium, in a stylized fish-eye lens shot from below, through a battery of microphones. As King reaches out, his arm becomes a perfectly circular limb, signifying the virtually global reach of this man. King's speech came on the 200-mile "March Against Fear" in Mississippi in June 1966. Ellison is also there later in the dramatic march, close up to clearly angry activist Stokley Carmichael as he exhorts the crowd with his famous "black power" speech, shortly after a sniper shot civil rights activist James Meredith.

A third photograph peeks in on a young African-American boy on the famous Selma, Ala., march in 1965, eyeing the photographer with a wary defiance as his mother's gloved hand tunes in a radio he is holding. Several years later, Ellison found himself in Vietnam, shooting for Newsweek. The Web site Digital Journalist features several of Ellison's war photos from this show in "Requiem," a documentary tribute to fallen photojournalists.

Rockets bursting

Correspondent Peter Arnett, renowned for his Gulf War television reporting, recounts in "Requiem" seeing Ellison lying on top of a bunker "with rockets bursting 30 or 40 feet away. I ran out and yelled, 'What the hell are you doing up there?!' Ellison only shrugged and said, 'How else am I going to get shots of the night fighting?' "

Arnett's story helps explain how Ellison got the amazing photograph at Khe Sanh that ended up on the cover of Newsweek magazine. A bomb hits an ammo dump, and scrambling soldiers freeze reflexively. The scene blazes white hot and hellish red, with fire and debris spewing skyward. The explosion is framed in the foreground with a slashing ridge and back dropped by a hunkering mountain and a cherry sky. Ellison's instinct for finding a perfect cinematic setting is amazing.

Finally, one can see the whole story of Khe Sanh in the exhausted, ravaged face of an American GI. Here, in red tones of muddy facial contours and empty eyes, the young photographer sees his fellow man with extraordinary insight, compassion and courage."He was there longer than any other journalist, about 14 days," says Ellison's photographer compatriot Jim Caccavo, in an interview at the exhibit opening. Ellison had just delivered the eight color photos that ran in one edition of Newsweek, an unprecedented accomplishment at the time, says Caccavo, who had met Ellison when both men, aged 23, had covered the "spy ship" USS Pueblo in Korea earlier in 1968.

Ellison had decided to deliver beer, cokes and cigars as gifts to men he had met in Khe Sanh. So he hopped onto a two-engine C-123 troop transport plane loaded with 48 reinforcement troops, flying into the heavily embattled region. A small Vietnamese plane mistakenly landed just when the C-123 should have. So the pilot of the American plane circled to re-land. In the brief duration, intense enemy gunfire hit one engine, and the plane spun out of control and crashed. There were no survivors.

HEALTH NEWS
GETTING OUT THE NEWS
Submitted by Charlie Taliaferro
By Bobbye C. Jerone.

Yesterday I assisted a Vietnam veteran in filing a claim for an increase in his percent of service connected disability for a medical issue he has had since he was on active duty; and which has become much worse. As we talked he mentioned that he had had prostate cancer several years ago and still had some residual problems. He was shocked to find out that prostate cancer is one of the 11 diseases which are "presumed to be service connected" if a person served in Vietnam — or has been exposed to certain herbicides, most notably one called "Agent Orange."

We filed a claim for the residuals of the cancer and medical problems, which are secondary to the cancer. The sad thing is that this Veteran, who has already suffered so much for our country, had no idea that he could be compensated for these medical problems. Last week I met a lady who lost her husband to cancer as a result of his exposure to herbicides in Vietnam. He was ill for over a year, and died in November of 2007. He never knew that he was eligible to file a claim for compensation for this 'presumed service connected' medical problem. The VA compensation would have been a godsend to this family when the man became too ill to work.

We are currently helping several young veterans who have been injured, or are ill, from their service in Iraq or Afghanistan. Most of the time they have no idea what the 'presumed to be service connected' disorders are that pertain to them. And no one seems to be standing in line to get the word out to them.

There are four lists of 'presumed to be service connected' medical conditions which are published by the VA. They are also listed in a VA Benefits Handbook, which is published every year by the government. The VA medical Centers, Regional Office, and Outpatient Centers have made these books available for no fee in the past. Unfortunately these Handbooks are scarce in printed form since the VA made the information available on the internet.

The four lists are, Former POW's, Vietnam Veterans (and those exposed to Herbicides, i.e., Agent Orange); Atomic Veterans (Exposed to ionizing radiation) and Gulf War veterans. Because of the space constraints of this column, we are unable to print them all here. If you, or someone you know, is a former POW, or has been exposed to Ionizing Radiation please consult the appropriate list for disorders which may affect you.

Following are the two lists which affect the largest number of veterans in our area:

Vietnam Veterans (or any veteran who can prove exposure to herbicides-most notably Agent Orange)

Soft tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma); Hodgkin's disease; multiple myeloma; respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx, trachea); non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; prostate cancer, Type II Diabetes; Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, Chloracne or Porphyria Cutanea Tarda and Peripheral neuropathy (other than as secondary to diabetes).(with the last two disorders to be diagnosed within one year of exposure.)

Gulf War veterans: (Anyone who served in the first Gulf War and or the current War on Terrorism)

Medical unexplained or undiagnosed*, chronic multi-system illnesses defined by a cluster of signs or symptoms that have existed for six months or more, such as; Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, Irritable Bowel Syndrome; any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that the secretary of VA determines warrants a presumption of service connection; Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), otherwise known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

* Symptoms of an 'undiagnosed illness' include: Fatigue, skin symptoms, headaches, muscle pain, joint pain, neurological and respiratory symptoms; sleep disturbances, GI symptoms, cardiovascular symptoms, unexplained weight loss and menstrual disorders.

If you or anyone you know, has been diagnosed with any of the above disorders you should get your medical records together and file a claim for compensation immediately!

MEMOIRS

CLIMBINGHILL 881S FROM THE SOUTHERN SLOPE

By Reverend Ray W. Stubbe

Hi Tom:

Just a short note. I was cleaning our some piles of papers in my basement you know what an absolute mess of quantity of "stuff" there is in my basement! I came across this "Beetle Bailey" comic strip that 1 had copied this summer. You perhaps don't know this personally from your time at Khe Sanh, but perhaps you do, since many hills in Vietnam were this way. But I do recall that on the very first time 1 accompanied a patrol off of Hill 881-South, a platoon from A Co 1/26 (commanded at the time by Captain John Raymond), that we returned to the hill via the south slope. We had left by the very steep north slope, which is about a 60-degree (or greater) slope, mostly falling down rather than "walking" down, and this was the slope by which the hill was attacked by our Marines during the 1967 Hill Battles! I found it very difficult to comprehend how Marines could fight UP the hill in that situation.

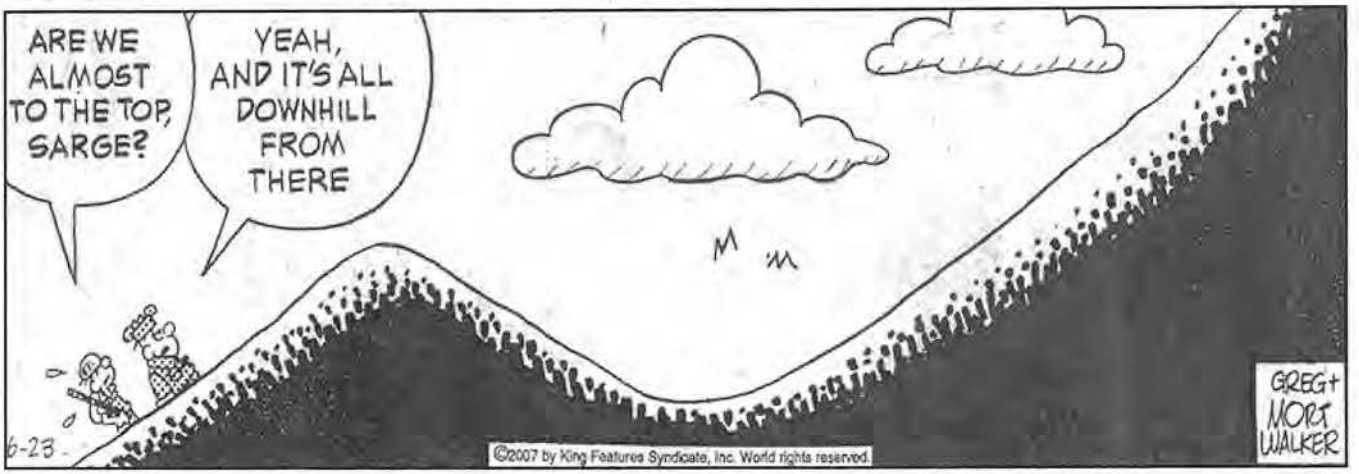

Beetle Bailey Mort, Greg & Brian Walker 23 June 2007

Anyway, the SOUTH slope is like that portrayed in this comic strip. After about eight hours of solid up and down sharp hills, through rivers strewn with very large boulders, through thickets of bamboo and elephant grass so tall I frequently lost sight of the Marine in front and the Marine behind me, and became temporarily lost (in an area where we all knew enemy might be lurking), elephant grass that painfully cut like sharp razors, as we were all panting heavily, leg muscles aching, somewhat delirious and nauseated, we were approaching our position on Hill 881South. It was the late afternoon and I was so very, very relieved!

Then, as I got to the top of what I thought was Hill 881South, I suddenly realized I had climbed only part of the approach-another hill with a much longer and also steeper slope, lay before me! How discouraging, how dispiriting, how outrageous!! At that point, I didn't think I could go on. I was 29, grossly out of shape (I had just come on active duty after about a week's notice while finishing up a year at the University of Chicago in a Ph.D. program on "ethics and society", and before that, a year organizing a new congregation, and before that, seven years in college and the seminary so I was flabby, and overweight!) A corpsman on that patrol gave me some of the water in his canteen, and when I finally reached the company CP on top of Hill 881-South, Captain Raymond gave me some precious fruit juice and I gradually became re-hydrated.

That experience, however, determined how I lived for the next several months, mid-July through November of 1967. I'd fly out to one of the outposts (Hills 881-South, 861, 950, Lang Vei Special Forces Camp, or walk out to the nearby CAP OSCAR CP just outside KSCB, visit with the men there, hold a worship service after the evening resupply, and after the platoon patrol returned, re-

mained overnight in one of the troop's bunkers, before I'd go out on re-supply to the next hill. I did this Monday through Saturday, returning to KSCB Saturday, in order to hold three worship services on the main base.

On Sunday (at the 1/26 mess hall, at Ponderosa area for 3/26 (until September, when they left for Operation KINGFISHER), at and HQ Battery of 1/13 in the western area of the base). On Sunday night I went out to CAP OSCAR-3, spent the night with them after a worship service, and usually accompanied a CAP patrol into the Bru Villages on Monday morning.

I thought of all these things because of this simple-drawn cartoon from "Beetle Bailey!" Those who served on Hill 881-South and patrolled from it (mainly the different line com-mies of 1/26, and perhaps some from 3/26) are the ones who might also recall that southern slope of that hill.

A Vietnam War nightmare: Purple hearts on Valentine's Ridge

By Steve Luhm
The Salt Lake Tribune

Valentine's Day memories:

George Lindell nearly died on the holiday in 1968 in During his half-completed tour of duty in Vietnam, U.S. Navy corpsman George Lindell had seen enough combat to recognize the "pop" of a mortar being fired and to calculate where the shell would hit. This one was headed directly at him. In the late afternoon of Feb. 14, 1968 - Valentine's Day - Lindell glanced at his squad leader, Corporal Dennis Fleming. They shouted a warning to each other and dug their fingers into the ground, hoping for the impossible, trying to somehow burrow themselves out of harm's way. The explosion sucked the air from Lindell's lungs, and the intense wave of searing heat that accompanied the bursting mortar round made those oppressively humid Midwestern summers that always enveloped his hometown of Wautoma, Wis., seem like an ocean breeze. "It felt like I got smashed in the chest with a sledge hammer," Lindell recalled, 40 years later. "I couldn't catch my



breath. I was numb all over. I couldn't move. I just flopped around, like a fish out of water. My ears were ringing." Only a few feet away, Fleming had been killed instantly. As Lindell struggled to regain a sense of his surroundings, a lightening bolt of pain from his shredded left leg raced through his body. "I heard someone screaming - above the ringing in my ears," Lindell said. "Then I realized it was me."

Not wanting to draw unwelcome attention to himself or his location, Lindell forced himself to stop. He didn't want to look at his leg, fearing it might not be there. Another corpsman arrived to help and asked where he had been hit. Lindell welcomed the question: "I figured my leg was still there. Otherwise, he wouldn't have asked." Nearby, Marine Steve Miera tried in vain to conceal his position. Like Lindell, he found himself in the crosshairs of this fierce North Vietnamese army attack - a far cry from his carefree elementary-school days in Ogden. Without warning, a "potato-masher" hand grenade known as a chi com" hit the ground next to him and rolled once, stopping about 18 inches away. "There wasn't anything I could do," Miera said. "I just pulled my helmet down and pulled my shoulders up and waited for the explosion." It never happened.

"I waited and waited and waited," Miera said, "but all it did was smoke a lot. It was a dud." For Miera, Valentine's Day was just beginning

Deal with the whatever is out there

For most people, Valentine's Day is flowers and chocolates, cards and special meals with loved ones. For Miera, Valentine's Day is a bloody jungle ridge in a long-ago war. During the Vietnam War, the Ca Lu combat base was spread over low rolling hills, where a narrow dirt road known as Route 9 comes up from the south and bends toward Khe Sanh, a besieged U.S. outpost about eight miles to the west. this was dangerous country, just a few miles from North Vietnam. Thousands of the enemy's best troops thrived in the surrounding mountains and jungles. "Morale is high," Staff Sgt. John Edwards wrote at the time, "partly because we live at the edge of civilization but mostly because of our XO, Major John Oliver. . . . He has our confidence. We feel safe with him. He knows the ropes."

Because North Vietnamese attacks had made Route 9 a treacherous supply route, the U.S. troops at Ca Lu did not have much to eat. Breakfast often consisted of a peach slice or dry cereal bar. In early February, American patrols along Route 9 and in the mountains west of Ca Lu started coming under increasing mortar and small arms fire. A company-sized patrol, about 170 men, was ordered into the area to "deal with the whatever is out there," Edwards wrote. Another Marine, Gene Miller, heard the same thing. "We had been getting incoming from those ridge lines and I guess they wanted to find who was sniping at us," he said. Asked what he remembered about the orders for Kilo Company, Lindell shrugged and said, "Most of us didn't know what we were doing - never did."

As a communications chief, Edwards could have stayed in the relative safety of the combat base. Instead, he asked Major Oliver if he could go on the patrol. "He gives me his blessings," Edwards recalled, who also secured needed permission from Capt. Alexander Ward. "He gives me a warm welcome and said, 'We're just going out to get that mortar.' I think it's optimistic to believe the NVA only have one mortar out there, but I keep that counsel to myself." After dark, Edwards became restless. He rose from a fitful sleep before dawn, stuffed a can of fruit cocktail into his pack, put on a flak jacket and helmet, holstered his .45-caliber pistol and decided to pick up an M-14 rifle. As a non-commissioned officer, Edwards had the option of carrying a rifle into the field. On Valentine's Day, he took one along.

Not alone on the mountain

Kilo Company left the sanctuary of the combat base through the north wire, turned west and inched its way through thick brush alongside Route 9. The pace was maddeningly slow, but one designed to prevent a careless rush into an ambush. Lindell remembers stopping only to fill canteens with rain water that had collected at the bottom of bomb craters. Edwards transferred his .45 from holster to pocket, fearing the thick brush would rip it from his side. By mid afternoon, the patrol reached an unremarkable 200-meter mountain about one mile west of Ca Lu. Kilo Company was standing - uninvited - in the NVA's living room.

The Marines, along with their Navy corpsmen, circled the mountain before starting toward the top. Miera had the unenviable job of "walking point," meaning he led his comrades into the unknown. "He was very good at it, being the outdoors-type," Miller said.

Miera was the first to realize the Marines were not alone on the mountain: "We were coming out of dense jungle - toward a big ravine, and heard a metal clicking sound. Like hitting pipes with a hammer. So I stopped the column and called for a fire team." Instead of receiving support to deal with a possible attack, Miera was pulled off the point and sent "about three guys back" in the column. "The C.O. made up his mind, I guess, that nothing was going to stop us," Miera said. Word of the clicking noise and Miera's request for a fire team trickled back to the other Marines on the patrol. "They told us not to worry about it - to keep going," Miller said. "We didn't like that very much." The young American who replaced Miera as the column's point man inched forward. He didn't get far, Miera said, before "all hell broke loose." This anonymous place in Vietnam had just gotten a name: **Valentine's Ridge.**

No more jokes

Lindell was wounded just above the ankle - the back of his leg torn open. Fleming, his squad leader, was not as fortunate. The direction of the mortar fire and the slope of the ground at its impact point hurled most of the shrapnel at him.

"Only a short time before, we'd been joking as we hugged the ground, joking to keep the fear from overcoming us," Lindell said.

Another corpsman came to Lindell, tore off his boot and hastily dressed his wound. Lindell heard the screams of others all around him. Suddenly, a wide-eyed lieutenant slid down next to him "like Pete Rose."

He shouted an order to retreat because of the advancing North Vietnamese and ran down the mountain. The corpsman helped Lindell stand and, together, they followed the lieutenant - enemy bullets crackling around them every step of the way. Lindell felt "tremendous guilt" about leaving Fleming's body behind, but there was no choice. In the gathering darkness, getting away from an enemy who did not take prisoners alive was a matter of survival. Crashing through the brush, Lindell lost his .45, which because of its worn condition had always made him think it was World War II vintage. "My hope," he said, "was that some NVA would find it, try to fire it and it would blow up in his face."

Lindell had been wounded by a faceless enemy. Others were not. As soon as the firefight began, Miera "saw a bunch of NVA" and opened fire. "I killed two of them," he said, though he quickly turned and started down the mountain because "there were too many of them. It was total chaos. We were getting hammered from both sides. ... I made it down on my belly." Trading his now-jammed rifle for one off "a guy who'd been killed," Miera moved forward again to search for the Marines who had replaced him at the front of the column after he reported the clicking noise. There no sign of them - just the enemy.

Backing down the ridge on his stomach, Miera ran into a guy from my squad," who started shouting when the NVA began throwing rocks from the top of the ridge. "In hand grenade school, you are taught to holler if you saw one coming in," Miera said. "Maybe the NVA knew this because they started throwing rocks and this guy starts yelling, "May Day, May Day" - like they were real grenades. I told him, 'Shut up, man. If you holler again, they're going to kill us.' In the confusion and under heavy fire, Miera lost track of the panicked Marine. He made it down the mountainside but decided to make a final search of the initial firefight area and moved forward again. "There was nobody there, not even the NVA," Miera said. "I wondered what the hell was going on."

The enemy spotted Miera during his final retreat and opened fire. Miera dropped behind a tree. A burst of bullets passed through the pulpy trunk, just over his head, spraying him with "an acid-like juice. I could feel in burning." On the move again, Miera ran into two more NVA soldiers. The first "saw me and fired but nothing happened. I guess his gun jammed." The second "fired and missed. I returned fire and killed him. But I put another burst into him, just to make sure." Darkness now claimed Valentine's Ridge, and Miera was alone. He felt for one bullet he had put in his pocket. It was still there. He sighed with relief. "They told us - because of how the NVA treated captured Americans - to save the last round for yourself," Miera explained. "So that's what I did." When the firefight began, Miller saw his squad leader, Cpl. David Schneider "got killed right off the bat. I was close to him and went over the checked on him. But" The enemy fire increased. Along with several others, Miller withdrew but stopped to help a Marine who had been wounded. They talked about home. "I didn't know the guy," Miller said. "But he was telling me about his car." Miller wasn't finished giving first aid when word came to continue the retreat.

The Marines in the group started to do so, but Miller screamed for them to wait until he was done with his corpsman-like task. He threatened anyone who thought about leaving. The others waited. Headed down the mountain again, Miller saw "several NVA popping up out of the brush and firing at us. So I fired back. I don't know if I hit any of them, but they were not far away - not at all." Miller's group reached the base of the mountain. "We set up in kind of a defensive perimeter, but we were so far

from the rest of the platoon, there was no way to get back," Miller said. "And it was pitch black by then." Edwards was also caught in the chaos, despite his position near the rear of the column. A tear-gas grenade forced him to gasp for breath. Shrapnel from a mortar shell grazed his left temple. Another nearby mortar blast killed Lt. William Reese and wounded Capt. Ward, who later died.

Edwards, who always brought maps and critical communication frequencies into the field with him, found a radio. He contacted Maj. Oliver, who told him to gather everyone he could find and withdraw to Route 9. Edwards happened upon Miera, Miller, Lindell, a communications wireman from his platoon named Wilson and another Marine. (In the confusion, in such complete darkness, Miera, Miller and Lindell didn't know about the other two members of their group until years later.) According to Edwards, "Everyone was wounded to some extend. We took stock of our situation in a gully at the bottom of the ridge." Edwards radioed for an evacuation helicopter. None were available. He told the others and called for a vote on a course of action. Do they spend the night at the base of Valentine's Ridge, or do they try to hack their way through the pitch-dark jungle and reach Route 9?

'Let's get off this hill'

Bleeding from a shrapnel wound near his eye, Miera wasn't sure what he wanted to do, so he asked Edwards if they should try to search out and rejoin the rest of the company still fighting on Valentine's Ridge. Miera didn't like the answer: "John said, 'If we try walking to their perimeter, 100 grenades are going to come our way.' Since he had the highest rank, I said, 'Well, you're in charge.' And he said, 'Let's get off this hill.' " George Lindell recalls "a couple of guys were thinking about trying to reach the road beside the hill." His training took over. "They asked if I wanted to go," Lindell said. "Since one of them was wounded, I figured they may need a corpsman, and I still had my corpsman bag, so I went." It was a terrifying journey.

The group started up the mountain, slipped over the top and dropped down the backside, mostly on their knees and stomachs. Their pace was glacial because of the darkness, the terrain and fear of stumbling upon an enemy that was all around them. We were just trying to find a way out," Miller said. "And in that situation, you are scared sh-less." Miera started as the point man. He used a sheath knife his father had sent him from home in Taos, N.M., to cut a tunnel through the jungle vegetation. Even at such a slow pace, Lindell had a difficult time keeping up. His pants were soaked in blood from ankle to groin and, he was missing one boot, leaving his foot prickled with thorns. "I was falling behind when I heard, very close to me, a large animal breathing," Lindell said. "I assumed it was a tiger or a rock ape. But I wasn't armed and I didn't want to yell out because there was fighting go on all around us. So I kind of whispered to the guys, 'Hey, hey, hey.' They held up until I stumbled up to them."

Edwards replaced Miera as the group's point-man, and Miera dropped behind Lindell, who feared he was becoming a burden. "My leg was cramping and I was exhausted," Lindell said. "I remember telling them, in my best John Wayne voice, to leave me there because I knew I was slowing everybody up. I said they could come back for me. They laughed, quietly of course, and said they'd move as fast as I could. Thank God." Because he still had the radio, Edwards was able to talk to Maj. Oliver and others along Route 9. They kept shooting flares, so any stragglers on Valentine's Ridge would know where to head. "Later," Edwards wrote, "the mortar guys told me they $4,000 on flares." Hours into their journey, Miera "heard someone behind us. So I told John, 'Why don't you guys go about 30 paces and I'll sit here and see what the hell is following us.' Then I thought I'd just rig a grenade with some fishing line my dad had sent. But I thought about that and said, "Sh-, it might be a Marine and I don't want to kill one of our own guys.' "

Edwards was not interested in a confrontation. "We do not fire," he remembered. "They might be Marines and, if they are the enemy, we are in no condition for a fight." Said Miera: "We stopped. They stopped. We stopped. They topped. Then I heard a crack in the brush and a little rock rolled down into the big ravine next to us. That was it."

No love for Valentine's Day

As the pitch darkness at Valentine's Ridge grudg-

ingly surrendered to dawn, the exhausted group inched its way down a stream bed when Edwards heard the voices of Marines patrolling Route 9. Miera's first thought: "I was afraid somebody was going to open up and cut us to pieces." Safely on the road, Miera asked Edwards for his sheath knife - the one they had used to slash their way through the jungle. But it was missing. "Losing that damn buck knife," Edwards wrote, "was the lowest I felt all night." Thirty-five years later, Edwards met up with Miera again.

One of the first things he did was give him a new knife. Edwards, Miera, Miller, Lindell, Wilson and the unidentified sixth Marine were escorted back to Ca Lu for treatment for their wounds and - in Lindell's case - medical evacuation. "Without those guys," said Lindell, who still lives in his Wisconsin hometown, "I would not be here today." A short-timer with only three months left in Vietnam, Miera was "sent to the rear" and served as a military policemen on a bridge in Quang Tri where, he said, "I got shot at more times than I did during that ambush." Miera returned home to New Mexico in July. Miller replaced Cpl. Schneider as a squad leader for a short time before being pulled from his in-country duties to work in "company supply, for some reason." Asked if his experience on Valentine's Ridge still impacts his life, Miller fell silent. After a brief pause, he said, "I never get too happy on any holiday." Tribune reporter Steve Luhm is the first-cousin of George Lindell.

INCOMING

By Mike Archer

Todd Wermager, a senior geography major at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire, is working on a Historical Geographic Information Systems (GIS) project with Professor Joe Hupy. Joe is a well known geographer who, along with his wife, specializes in soil and terrain disturbances caused by high-explosive artillery and bombs. A few years ago they studied the WWI battleground at Verdun, France and last year, with the assistance of Glenn Prentice, surveyed the Khe Sanh battlefield.

Hupy is inspired to translate the fighting at Khe Sanh into an atlas of maps depicting the precise location and description of fighting. His hope is to allow people to understand the battle at Khe Sanh not only chronologically, but also spatially. He envisions a time when students can, as an example, move a computer cursor to the map location of Hill 861A and learn (from information provided by those who were there) a first-hand description of what took place.

Professor Hupy has chosen the Khe Sanh battlefield, over the many great battlefields of past wars with which he and his wife are familiar, because, as Joe once told me, "students of today's generation should be educated on the Vietnam War and it should be remembered to the utmost degree. " He envisions maps with various themes to help students better comprehend the battle conditions. As an example, one map might indicate where the artillery firing from Co Roc was located and show the range of those guns as opposed to the range of our Howitzers (as they say a "picture is worth a thousand words.")

I hope you KSV members will all consider assisting in this worthwhile project. To do so, or to get further information, please contact Mr. Wermager at WERMAGTA@uwec.edu. Should you have concerns that there might be a hidden agenda here, please check with Ray Stubbe or Glenn, both of whom are familiar with Hupy's work.

Incidentally, Joe recently advised me that he is trying to obtain funding from the university to attend the reunion in Reno this year in order to personally provide Khe Sanh vets with more information about this project.

INCOMING

PUBLISHER NOTE:

I do not know where this article originated or who wrote it. It was sent to me by several members of our organization, who requested it be included in Red Clay.

In a message dated 2/16/2008 5:48:06 P.M. Eastern Standard Time, Nam Vet6 writes:

As I came out of the supermarket that sunny day, pushing my cart of groceries towards my car, I saw an old man with the hood of his car up and a lady sitting inside the car, with the door open. The old man was looking at the engine. I put my groceries

away in my car and continued to watch the old gentleman from about twenty-five feet away, when I saw a young man in his early twenties with a grocery bag in his arm, walking towards the old man. The old gentleman saw him coming too and took a few steps towards him. I saw the old gentleman point to his open hood and say something. The young man put his grocery bag into what looked like a brand new Cadillac Escalade and then turn back to the old man and I heard him yell at the old gentleman saying, "You shouldn't even be allowed to drive a car at your age." And then with a wave of his hand, he got in his car and peeled rubber out of the parking lot.

I saw the old gentleman pull out his handkerchief and mop his brow as he went back to his car and again looked at the engine. He then went to his wife and spoke with her and appeared to tell her it would be okay. I had seen enough and I approached the old man. He saw me coming and stood straight and as I got near him I said, "Looks like you're having a problem." He smiled sheepishly and quietly nodded his head. I looked under the hood myself and knew that whatever the problem was, it was beyond me.

Looking around I saw a gas station up the road and told the old gentleman that I would be right back. I drove to the station and went inside and saw three attendants working on cars. I approached one of them and related the problem the old man had with his car and offered to pay them if they could follow me back down and help him.

The old man had pushed the heavy car under the shade of a tree and appeared to be comforting his wife. When he saw us he straightened up and thanked me for my help. As the mechanics diagnosed the problem (overheated engine) I spoke with the old gentleman. When I shook hands with him earlier he had noticed my Marine Corps ring and had commented about it, telling me that he had been a Marine too. I nodded and asked the usual question, "What outfit did you serve with?" He had mentioned that he served with the first Marine Division at Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima and Guadalcanal. He had hit all the big ones and retired from the Corps after the war was over.

As we talked we heard the car engine come on and saw the mechanics lower the hood. They came over to us as the old man reached for his wallet, but was stopped by me and I told him I would just put the bill on my AAA card. He still reached for the wallet and handed me a card that I assumed had his name and address on it and I stuck it in my pocket.

We all shook hands all around again and I said my goodbye's to his wife. I then told the two mechanics that I would follow them back up to the station. Once at the station I told them it was appreciated that they had interrupted their own jobs to come along with me and help the old man. I said I wanted to pay for the help, but they refused to charge me. One of them pulled out a card from his pocket looking exactly like the card the old man had given to me. Both of the men told me then, that they were Marine Corps Reservist. Once again we shook hands all around and as I was leaving, one of them told me I should look at the card the old man had given to me and I said I would and drove off. For some reason I had gone about two blocks when I pulled over and took the card out of my pocket and looked at it for a long, long, time. The name of the old gentleman was on the card in golden leaf and under his name..... "Congressional Medal of Honor
Society."

I sat there motionless looking at the card and reading it over and over. I looked up from the card and smiled to no one but myself and marveled that on this day, four Marines had all come together, because one of us needed help. He was an old man alright, but it felt good to have stood next to greatness and courage and an honor to have been in his presence.

America is not at war. The U.S. Military is at war. America is at the Mall.
Semper Fi

MEMOIRS

EASTER SUNDAY 40 YEARS AGO

By Mike "Animal" Preston

Do any of you have any memories of Sunday April 16th 1968? I sure do. I remember that day with great clarity, or so I thought until I read a letter at home that I found amongst my mothers papers. She

passed a while back and some boxes didn't get examined at that time. About 9 months ago I was doing just that when I came across all the letters I had written my folks during my tour, WOW! what a revelation!

It made it very apparent how the mind and memory can get things screwed up in 40 years. Amongst her letters was letter from a lady friend who lived in Shreveport, La. who informed my mom that I was in an AP wire story in the Shreveport Times. The article was written by Jurarte Kazickas for AP wire services. I called the Shreveport Times and they were glad to send it to me .

This was Jurate's 2nd trip to Khe Sanh, she was there the first time the 7th to 8th of March. She was wounded along with Lt. Bill Gay and 3 others. She went down to Dong Ha to D med I think. Well this ballzy lady came back with operation Pegasus for more. She interviewed three of us, myself, Frank Faur, and Cpl. Al Brewster. Amazing courage to come to a place like Khe Sanh when one did not have to be there; reminds my of Sean Flynn and Dana Stone.

Jurate was a tall (6') raven haired beauty, certainly memorable. Frank Faur remembered her with great clarity. I had a little fun with Frank by calling him up anonymously and asked the question **"How Many Easter Eggs Did You Get In 1968!** He of course thought this was some kind of nut (he was right) or a crank call. I yanked his chain for a few minutes until I didn't figure he was going to take any more, then I told him who I was. You are now wondering what the hell am I talking about, huh? Well when you read the following article it will become clear and then you can have a good laugh too! Give him a call he lives in "Joysey" now, not far from "Big John".

EASTER EGGS

By JURATE KAZICKAS
KHE SANH, Easter Sunday 16 April 1968

Six thousand Easter eggs arrived by helicopter at Khe Sanh this foggy Sunday morning. Two minutes later six mortar and rocket rounds exploded on the air strip, wounding three Marines.
"They told us there were Easter eggs on the strip," said Marine PFC Frank Faur, Easton, PA. "I went to check them out and then those rounds started coming in. They say the siege of Khe Sanh is over. Who are they trying to kid?"

This was Easter at Khe Sanh. Religious services were held at the base early in the morning, but the men in the field, outside the barbed wire perimeter, had no time for organized prayer. Five miles away, on Hill 881 North, units of the 26th Marine Regiment were fighting an estimated battalion of North Vietnamese soldiers in a bitter struggle to take the hill. Contact continued all day. More than a dozen dirty men with bandaged hands, heads and feet came limping off the choppers from Hill 881 to await evacuation to the medical station at Dong Ha. They had missed the incoming rounds by only a few seconds.

The sun finally broke through the thick clouds, and the uneasiness brought on by the morning attack diminished. Billows of red dust from Jeeps and trucks covered the Marines as they worked near their bunkers, packing their gear. The Marines have been relieved at Khe Sanh by Army troops of the 1st Air Calvary Division. The Leathernecks are expected to be gone in three or four days. " Easter? Yeah, I heard about it on the radio," one Marine said. "I celebrated by jumping into a hole."

Word spread that Easter eggs were to be flown up from Da Nang and distributed. By mid afternoon Marines were carrying pink and green tinted eggs in their helmets. Most of the egg shells were cracked. Some eggs were raw inside, but the men didn't seem to mind."The last time I had eggs was three months ago," said Cpl. Al Brewster, of Delhart, TX. "I can't believe we got them. Its a nice surprise."

Waiting to leave, the Marines made jokes about the eggs, and about the 1st Cav painting their insignia all over the base like they had been there all along or had "saved" the Marines, and joking about the end of two long months of incoming artillery."Am I glad to be getting out of this place," said Seabee Mike Preston of Arnold, California, both of his hands bandaged."That is what happy Easter means"
End of Article

Well now you know about the Great Easter Egg Hunt , why didn't they bring beer? Oh, I remember, they already had beer to go along with their steak

sandwich's. I tried to buy some of their beer but they just laughed and said no. Well what was I to do ? Being a SeaBee, I had attained the rank of "Master Comshaw Artist" so I offered them a bottle of "Mikie's Magic Elixir" which was furnished by Sean Flynn for rack rent in the "Hilton", and it worked . I hope they all got drunk.

While I am on the subject of comshaw I just have to stray from Easter for a moment and relate a little episode involving myself and "Flash" Mytnic,(I think). We had a conex box buried for a supply bunker in our equipment yard. A young Marine appeared and said he needed some nails for the CP, I replied, " what do you have to trade?" He informed me that Col. Lownds wanted the nails and he could not believe that someone would shake down a Colonel. He left only to return later with a large can of "real" coffee! I bet the Colonel never knew. I always wondered? One thing for sure is the coffee came from "officer country" and we celebrated with a good cup and some stashed pecan rolls.

Back to Easter Sunday: I am not sure of exact days and dates that things happened, any input would be welcome. I think the siege was officially over on the 8th, and the incoming all but stopped, I recall it got "spooky" quiet. Enter the "Cav." I remember them going around without pots and flak jackets; we on the other hand wore ours even to the "chic sales"; they thought we were nuts.

We had a area for people waiting to be flown out. It was a square of sand bags 4-5 feet high in a square 20 foot square. I was not hurt all that bad, and just hung out letting others who were hurt badly go on to DaNang. When the incoming came in, I thought to my self, yes "Sir Charles" just sprung the trap, let some people get complacent then "Kerblaam". If memory serves me correctly they "walked" the rounds down the runway from about the center of the strip, 150 yards or so from us, towards the south east end of the runway where the "Cavs" helos were staged. I remember a bunch of guys running to the helos and then getting the hell out of there. Did they ever come back ?

I don't know because I got a flight out a couple of hours later. If someone has an answer for me, I'd sure would like to know. I recall reading something about it in Ray's book but it escapes my mind. Whomever said the "siege " was over sure as hell didn't think about hills 881 and 689, and others too many to mention. There was a young Marine on a litter laying next to me who had come off of 881. I don't think he even owned a razor, yet his career in the NFL as a place kicker wasn't going to happen, that was for sure. I held a smoke for him as best I could, he never shed a tear or complained once, brave young man, real Marine grit.

My outfit lost one of our own that day (even though the siege was "over"). SWF2 Edward "Cody" Adams was KIA by arty. I must have a leak in my roof because there are water drops hitting my key board as I write. I sense I will move away from this morbid subject now, and compose myself and regain my sense of humor.

The Marine Corps is certainly the stepchild of the services, when it comes to budget! The helo that I got a ride out on was a CH-34 piston engine job. I am pretty sure, some were retrofitted to gas turbine but I don't think this one was. This was definitely Korean vintage aircraft. Just think it was probably older than most of its passengers! Not me, I was 24. After surviving Khe Sanh your mind starts doing strange things. I started to think of all the guys who died leaving in a chopper or a plane!

My outfit lost a First class BU Charles Spillman just that way! As I gazed at this flying antique it struck me funny that the pilot was sitting right above a big red cross. I thought wow, what a good aiming point for the NVA. Hells-bells why not a cross-hair or a bulls-eye "YIPE"!

Well here is the punch line to this whole article, I have perfect clarity about that day. I can see it in my minds eye at will. But to semi steal a quote from a past president who said **"I do not remember that women"!** How could I not remember a beautiful round-eye after not seeing one for 5 to 6 months? To much morphine? Distracted by more important things-the wounded around me-concern for them? That is what I remember most vividly for sure, the frustration of not being able to do more for them. I have that same feeling now when I assist a disabled vet now, wishing I could do more, but I do get a lot of satisfaction from what I can do for them. I am really sorry I don't remember Jurate, but with any luck I will meet her some day, maybe in Reno.

About The National Memorial Day Parade

The National Memorial Day Parade, presented by the American Veterans Center, is held annually in Washington DC, and is an opportunity for thousands of patriotic Americans to come together. They honor those who have sacrificed so much in service to our country. The event celebrates all those who have served in uniform from the American Revolution to Operation Iraqi Freedom, and seeks to educate the public about the meaning of this hallowed day.

Over 250,000 patriotic Americans lined Constitution Avenue for the 2007 parade, in honor of all who have served and sacrificed. The Grand Marshals of the 2007 National Memorial Day Parade, our wounded service members from Iraq and Afghanistan, pictured with Honorary Marshal Gary Sinise, star of CSI: New York and Forrest Gump.

For nearly 70 years, Washington, DC—our nation's capital and headquarters of our military—was without a parade on our Armed Services' most sacred day. This despite the fact that parades on Memorial Day have been a tradition in towns across America for well over a century. Sadly, in recent years, many of these parades have been fading away, as the true meaning of Memorial Day is being increasingly forgotten. In 2005, the American Veterans Center decided to bring this great tradition back to the nation's capital by creating the National Memorial Day Parade. Not merely an event for Washington, the National Memorial Day Parade is an event for the entire country—a major parade which seeks to draw the attention of Americans to the real meaning for the holiday: honoring those who have served, and died, to preserve our liberties. The National Memorial Day Parade has quickly become a tradition in which Americans of all ages and generations can share. In only its second year, the parade drew over 250,000 spectators, a testament to the public's desire to honor our heroes in uniform. The parade includes nearly 200 elements, units, youth groups, and parade floats—as well as hundreds of veterans from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Pictured on the front cover is our own Khe Sanh Veteran Thomas Tompkins, H&S Co Comm 26th Marines, leading the parade. Thomas is a Civil War re-inactor and was met with thunderous applause when it was announced he was a Khe Sanh survivor. He was also honored by being invited to sit at the podium with VIP 's participating in the Memorial Parade.





VETERANS FROM ALL WARS AND ALL UNITS ARE HONORED IN THE MEMORIAL DAY PARADE



Letter Submited by Sergeant Major Carlton W. Kent
By Dave Kniess



HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS (Jan. 28, 2008)

"I am an NCO dedicated to training new Marines and influencing the old. I am forever conscious of each Marine under my charge, and by example will inspire him to the highest standards possible. I will strive to be patient, understanding, just, and firm. I will commend the deserving and encourage the wayward. I will never forget that I am responsible to my Commanding Officer for the morale, discipline, and efficiency of my men. Their performance will reflect an image of me."

(Noncommissioned Officers Creed, Headquarters Marine Corps Promotions Branch)

I can remember the day I got promoted to NCO like it was yesterday. Pinning on that extra stripe didn't just mean extra pay or privileges, it meant I'd achieved a rank that is not taken lightly and is highly respected by all throughout the Marine Corps. That promotion will always be one of the proudest moments in my career.

I have no doubt that getting promoted to NCO is as momentous an occasion for junior Marines nowadays as it was for me back when I got promoted. It was for that reason alone that I felt just as insulted as all of the NCOs around the Corps when I read the "Baby NCOs" story in the Marine Corps Times a couple months ago. Regardless of the story subject, there will never be a time and a place that the words "baby NCO" could be used to accurately describe junior Marines – never!

Getting promoted to any rank in the Marine Corps is an accomplishment and to insinuate that the Corps' new batch of NCOs is going to be any less deserving than their predecessors is absurd. If anything, Marines of this day and age are just as combat hardened and have as great a responsibility as their predecessors. Undeniably the Marine Corps Times supported its story with a memo from the Center for Naval Analyses, but even the analysis didn't show the reader the complete Marine.

About half of the Marine Corps is made up of Marines in the ranks of private through corporal; nearly 70,000 Marines are ages 21 and below. It's these young, junior Marines – through the mentorship of the Corps' great staff noncommissioned officers – who will be carving out the future of the Marine Corps for all to follow. As the senior enlisted Marine in the Corps, I have witnessed the great things the Corps' small-unit leaders are doing both on and off the battlefield.

I have seen Marine NCOs serving in combat in billets one, two, even three ranks higher than their rank dictates – and in some cases, officer billets. I've witnessed junior Marines barely old enough to vote and definitely not old enough to drink, make split-second decisions on the battlefield that saved the lives of many of their fellow Marines.

I've read countless award summaries describing heroic acts by Marines wearing the very rank the Marine Corps Times insulted. I've seen severely wounded Marines more concerned with not letting their fellow Marines down by leaving the battlefield, than they were with receiving life-saving medical treatment. I've visited numerous hospitals where Marine NCOs struggled to rehabilitate themselves in order to simply walk 10 feet after surviving an IED blast in Iraq.

And sadly enough, I've said a silent prayer for the more than 300 Marine NCOs who have given their lives during Operations Iraqi/Enduring Freedom. I'm confident that in five, 10 or 15 years, it will be Medal of Honor recipient Cpl. Jason Dunham or the more than 30 junior Marines who have received either the Navy Cross or Silver Star who will grace the pages of Marine Corps history books. These are the kinds of Marines that are going to be filling the future ranks of the Marine Corps, regardless of what some reporter wants to imply. So when I read a story that mentions anything but praise for the thousands of Marine NCOs around the globe, I feel it is my duty to speak out – it is the right thing to do. I will never sit idle and let anyone speak negatively about the Marines serving in the Corps. he Corps is extremely proud of the Marines serving today and I'm especially proud of the junior Marines who, as I once did, strive to achieve the rank of NCO – one of the best ranks in the Marine Corps. I trust that when promoted, each new NCO will take the NCO Creed to heart and will never let the Corps down.

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JOHNSON, FREDERICK C
Change Phone: 972-865-1453

KASMINOFF, ROSS
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JOHNSON CITY TN 37615

KEELEY, WILLIAM M
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KERSHNER, JERRY L (LT COL)
Correct Spelling of Last name should read as Above

KLIDONAS, JAMES
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LARSEN, LARRY L
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LAVAN, HARRY J
Add Email: HARRYL@Q.COM

LEE, DALE
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LEE, HON K
Change Address: 1607 STOWE RD
RESTON VA 20194
Phone: 703-689-3589

LEAL, JOSEPH
Change Email: RECONJOE@MAC.COM

LEMIEUX, LORNE A
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Change Email LORNE&ROBIN@MAILBAG.COM

LEVERTON, DAVID W
Change Email: PERKLEV@NETINS.NET

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MT VERNON WA 98273
Change Email TONY.LIPPE@YAHOO.COM

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BOISE ID 83704
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Email MDR2J@AOL.COM

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Add Nickname HIPPIE
Change Email:
MATTHEWS-CHARLES @SBCGLOBAL.NET

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MAZZANTI, JAMES A
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O'FALLON IL 62269-7339
Phone: 618-624-0908

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MCCRACKEN, HUGH D
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MONTGOMERY AL 36116
Phone: 334-288-1263
Cell: 334-301-4855

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CINCINNATI OH 45209
Phone 513-319-8999

MCEWAN, FREDRICK J Jr.
Change Address: 1105 HARBOUR SOUTH
LIGHTHOUSE LN UNIT 1105
HILTON HEAD SC 29928
Phone: 828-713-7024

MCKINNIS, HOWARD C
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HMCKINNIS@WINDSTREAM.NET

MCMINN, WILLIAM P
ADD "SCOUTS" TO UNIT DESIGNATION

MESSNER WILLIAM J SR
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MOORE, JAMES E
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Email MERLE MORITZ@TOAST.NET

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PARR, TERRY L
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THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2008 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

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SANCHEZ, EDWARD
Change Address 2346 TOMLINSON TRAIL DR

SANDERS, STEPHEN T
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MURFREESBORO TN
37219
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ZEITTS, JOHN C
Change Phone: 402-345-3992

ONE HOUR OF SLEEP
Steven Wiese B Co 1/26

Sleep-------Will tonight be the night that my sole will rest? Tonight like so many before, will the sounds, the smells, not let me sleep? I hunger for that hour of sleep, where I do not hear, I do not see, the battles of so long ago. The ones I will fight again tonight I'm sure.

How I hunger for that hour of sleep, where my sole will not weep, please let tonight be that night. The one I do not hear the cries, the one I do not lay and wonder why so many years ago I did not die. One hour of sleep for my sole to rest; will tonight be like so many before-the blood and gore, the horrors of war. The memories of those left behind. Please let tonight be the night I capture that hour of rest.

Craig Tourte Writes:
Steve was one of the few survivors of the Ghost Patrol and I know this is a very difficult time of year for him. I also know that his post, was really hard for him to write, I could feel the pain in his words. Some thought it was just a poem and added theirs. I wanted the readers to know who Steve was so I wrote a little story and posted it alongside of his post. I wanted to share it with you.

I read Steve's Posting with a heavy heart. Steve said many things in his short post of around one hundred words. A simple post really, and not so unlike many others that have been posted on this board. Sure I whine and complain a lot, I disagree with some and applaud others' opinions. You've read my postings about how difficult it was for me, food, cold, and deprivation. But come on, we all know that in comparison to others, my experience was really nothing at all. In around one hundred words, Steve said so much more than I have ever said in the thousands of words and stories I have written on this board. Sometimes I say to Steve, "Did I ever tell you about the time I burnt my finger on hot grease." We both laugh, and Steve knows it as my little way of acknowledging the sacrifices and battles Steve went through during his 18 month combat tour in Vietnam, while acknowledging my own lack of combat experience. He kindly never responds with anything more than a smile.

With that said, for those of you who don't know, Steve was a squad leader with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, and one of the few survivors of the "Ghost Patrol" ambush that took place on February 25, 1968, just a few hundred meters outside the wire of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. I don't want to restate the facts of that horrific and ill fated Patrol, but Steve's personal account of survival is one of the most fascinating recollections I have ever heard in my life. From the on line march forward towards the tree line, to the conversation he had with 2/Lt. Donald Jacques just moments before the overwhelming forces of the North Vietnamese Army practically annulated the Patrol. The devastation caused by the accuracy of the countless automatic and crew-served weapons fired by the enemy, how Steve survived when most around him fell, to his crawling from one dead Marine to another, his desperate attempts to help the wounded, and his long lonely crawl back to the wire of Khe Sanh as he struggled to persevere.

As most of you know, Bravo Company reconstituted itself in the days and weeks that followed and on March 30, 1968, attacked the same tree line. Another horrific battle ensued which is often referred to as the "Revenge Patrol.' What most don't know is that Steve volunteered for that Patrol and once again led his men into the arms of battle, this time, soundly defeating the enemy, but with the unfortunate loss of many heroic Marines. A personal remembrance, just as fascinating as the first, as Steve recounted the many individual acts of heroism amongst the Marines, while minimizing his own efforts."I hunger for that hour of sleep, where I do not hear, I do not see, the battles of so long ago. The one's I will fight again tonight I'm sure." "...will tonight be like so many before-the blood and gore, the horrors of war. The memories of those left behind."

I could not say that in a thousand words and have them mean anything. Steve can write a hundred words and make most of us feel the pain he feels in his heart each and every day. It's a difficult time of year for all of us, full of long, lonely sleepless nights, dreaming those dreams and seeing those young faces, still hearing their screams and cries for help, slowly turning whitish pale as life leaves their battered body, their silent cry of desperation, of trying and wanting to live, and we remember it all, as if it were yesterday. "Sleep---Will tonight be the night my soul will rest?" I think that might be the question that will never be answered.

Apparel

See order form for description, color, sizes and price



Golf Shirt

 # S01



Sweat Shirt

 # S02



T Shirt

 # S03



T Shirt

 # S04



T Shirt

 # S05



T Shirt
NEW
Home is Where
You Dig IT
printed on Bac

 # S06



Men's
Windbreaker

$ 25.00
 # J01



Ladies
White Rose
Windbreaker

$ 20.00
 # J02



Ladies
KS
Silver Pendant
18" Silver Cha

$20.00
#PE01



KS
Bolo
Tie

$ 5.00
 # B01

Miscellaneous Items

Coins, Key Chains, Window Decals, Bumper Stickers



PEWTER
COIN
KS TAOR
Map on
Back

$ 6.00
 # MC01

Special 5 for $25.00
Item **#MC03**



KHE SANH
VETERAN
BRONZE COIN
KS TAOR
Map on Reverse

$ 7.00
 # MC02



Window
Decal

$ 3.00
 # MW01



Window Decal

$ 4.00
 # MW02



Bumper Sticker

$ 2.00
 # MB01

More PX Items
Coming Soon

Khe Sanh Veterans PX Catalog

Call John "Big John" Pessoni at **(732) 948-9803** or visit **www.khesanh.org/px.html** for assistance.



B5-T8 in 48QXD
NVA's Version of Khe Sanh

$10.00
 # B02



Valley of Decision
By Ray Stubbe

$ 25.00
 # B01



Battalion of Kings
By Ray Stubbe Updated Edition of Final Formation

$30.00
 # B03



Khe Sanh Veterans Book of Poetry

$5.00
 # B04

Covers

See order form for hat and inscription color



 # H01
 # H02
 # H03



#H04
 # H05
 # H06
 # H07
 # H08



 # H09
 # H10
 # H11



 # H12
 # H13



#H14



#H15



#H16
#H17



#H18
#H19

Shoulder/Jacket Patches



Khe Sanh Survivor
2"x3"

$ 5.00
 # PA01



26th Marines
4"x4"

$ 5.00
 # PA02



1/26th Marines
4"x4"

$ 5.00
 # PA03



2/26th Marines
4"x4"

$ 5.00
 # PA04



3/26th Marines
4"x4"

$ 5.00
 # PA05



Khe Sanh
3x3"

$ 5.00
 # PA06



Khe Sanh
PUC
2¾x1"

$ 2.00
 # PA07



Jacket Pa
USMC PU
5x2½"

$ 10.00
 # PA08

Hat/Lapel Pins



Lapel Pin
$ 5.00
 # PIN01



Lapel Pin
$ 7.00
 # PIN02



Lapel Pin
$ 5.00
 # PIN03



Lapel Pin
$ 5.00
 # PIN04



Lapel Pin
$ 5.00
 # PIN05



Lapel Pin
$ 5.00
 # PIN06



Lapel Pin
$ 3.00
 # PIN07



Lapel Pin
$ 6.00
 # PIN08



Lapel Pin **$ 7.00**
 # PIN09

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. PX Order Form www.khesanh.org

ITEM #	DESCRIPTION	COLOR	SIZE	PRICE	AMOUNT	TOTAL
# B01	Valley of Decision, Book	By Ray Stubbe		$25.00		
# B02	B5-T8 in 48 QXD	NVA Version of KS Siege		$10.00		
# B03	Battalion of Kings, Priority mail	By Ray Stubbe		$30.00		
# B04	KS Veterans Book of Poetry	Poetry by KS Vets		$5.00		
# H01	"VETERAN"	Red/White Letters		$15.00		
# H02	"VETERAN"	White/Red Letters		$15.00		
# H03	"VETERAN"	Black		$15.00		
# H04	"COMBAT VET"	Red/White Letters		$15.00		
# H05	"COMBAT VET"	Red/Gold Letters		$15.00		
# H06	"COMBAT VET" SOLD OUT	Black/White Letters		$15.00	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT
# H07	"COMBAT VET"	Light Blue/White Letters		$15.00		
# H08	"COMBAT VET"	White/Red Letters		$15.00		
# H09	"THE SIEGE"	White/Red Letters		$15.00		
# H10	"THE SIEGE"	White/Black Letters		$15.00		
# H11	"THE SIEGE"	Black/Gold Letters		$15.00		
# H12	"USMC"	Red/Gold Letters		$15.00		
# H13	"USMC"	Black/Gold Letters		$15.00		
# H14	"MARINES"	Black/Gold Letters		$15.00		
# H15	"HILL FIGHTS"	Hunter Green/Gold Letters		$15.00		
# H16	"DOC"	Navy Blue/Gold Letters		$15.00		
# H17	"DOC"	Black/Gold Letters		$15.00		
# H18	"USMC VETERAN" Nam Ribbon	Black/Gold Letters		$15.00		
# H19	"USMC VETERAN" Nam Ribbon	Red/Gold Letters		$15.00		
# PA01	KHE SANH SURVIVOR	Shoulder Patch 2X3in		$5.00		
# PA02	26th MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$5.00		
# PA03	1/26 MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$5.00		
# PA04	2/26 MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$5.00		
# PA05	3/26 MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$5.00		
# PA06	KHE SANH VETERAN	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$5.00		
# PA07	KHE SANH VIETNAM RIBBON	Shoulder Patch 2.75X1in		$2.00		
# PA08	USMC COMBAT VET RIBBON	Jacket Patch 5"x2"		$10.00		
# PIN01	KHE SANH SURVIVOR	Hat/Lapel Pin		$5.00		
# PIN02	HOME IS WHERE YOU DIG IT	Hat/Lapel Pin		$7.00		
# PIN03	KHE SANH 1967-1968	Hat/Lapel Pin		$5.00		
# PIN04	KHE SANH VETS W/EGA	Hat/Lapel Pin		$5.00		
# PIN05	YELLOW RIBBON W/EGA	Hat/Lapel Pin		$5.00		
# PIN06	26th MARINES "The Pros"	Hat/Lapel Pin		$5.00		
# PIN07	US FLAG	Hat/Lapel Pin		$3.00		
# PIN08	US FLAG MARINE CORPS PIN	Hat/Lapel Pin		$6.00		
# PIN09	KHE SANH VETERANS	Lapel/Hat Pin		$7.00		
# S01	GOLF SHIRT W/Black Trim	Sizes L, XL, XXL, XXXL		$35.00		
# S02	SWEATSHIRT "USMC" Black	Sizes XL, XXL		$30.00		
# S03	TEE SHIRT "USMC" Black	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL		$16.00		
# S04	TEE SHIRT "USMC" Gray	Sizes L, XL, XXL XXXL		$16.00		
# S05	TEE SHIRT "DC REUNION"	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL Blue		$10.00		
# S06	TEE KHE SANH HOME DIG IT	Sizes L, XL, XXL, XXXL		$18.00		
# J01	MEN's WINDBREAKER JACKET	Red, Black Sizes M, L		$25.00		
# J02	WOMEN'S WHITE ROSE WINDBREAKER	Navy Blue or Black Sizes M, L, XL		$20.00		
# PE01	LADIES SILVER PENDANT	W/18" Silver Chain		$20.00		
# B01	KHE SANH BOLO TIE	Green or Red		$5.00		
# MC01	KHE SANH MAP COIN	Pewter		$6.00		
# MC02	KHE SANH MAP COIN	Bronze		$7.00		
# MC03	Pewter Coin Special	Pewter Coins Only	5 For	$25.00		
# MW01	KHE SANH WINDOW DECAL	Four Branches		$3.00		
# MW02	KS VETERAN WINDOW DECAL	HOME IS WHERE DIG IT		$ 4.00		
# MB01	KHE SANH GET SOME USMC	Bumper Sticker		$2.00		
# MK01	KHE SANH KEY CARABINER	Red, Blue or Green		$3.00	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT

See S&H Chart Below Right for Shipping and Handling Charge:

Ship Items To: **Total Amount Of Order:**

Name:

Address:

City
State, Zip:

Phone
Number:

Fill order form above then
Send With Check, Money Order to:
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C/O **John Pessoni**

1920 Powder Horn Rd.
Toms River, NJ 08755
Call "Big John" @ **(732) 948-9803**
Visit our website @ **www.khesanh.org**

Shipping & Handling:
Up to $12.50 = $5.00
$12.51 - 20.00 = $6.95
$20.01 - 30.00 = $8.95
$30.01 - 40.00 = $9.95
$40.01 - 60.00 = $10.95
$60.01 - 100.00 = $11.95
$100.01 -174.01 = $12.95
$175.01 and UP = $13.95

Office Use Only: Check #: Amount: Date Received: Date Shipped: Total Items Sent:

KHE SANH VETERANS 2008 REGISTRATION FORM RENO NV

Reunion Registration	Price Per Person	Number Attending	Total
Registration Includes Hospitality Room & Administrative Cost	**$ 25.00 Per Person Children Under 18 N/C**		
Monday 28 July 08 Free Day (Early Arrivals Enjoy Reno)	No Fee		
Tuesday 29 July 08 Registration Begins 0900-1800 Free Day—Hospitality Room Opens	No Fee		
Wednesday 30 July 08 Registration 0900-1800 Free Day—Hospitality Room Opens	No Fee		
Thursday 31 July 08 Registration 0900–1800 Free Day—Hospitality Room Opens	No Fee		
Friday 01 Aug 08 Registration 0900-1800 General Membership Meeting 1000 Hours Free Day—Hospitality Room Opens	No Fee		
Saturday 02 Aug 08 Memorial Service 1000 Banquet 6:00 Cocktails & Dancing	**$ 25.00 Per Person Under 18 N/C**		
Sunday 03 Aug 08 (Check Out)			

Make Check or Money Order Payable To: **KHE SANH VETERANS Inc (Credit Cards will not be accepted at the Reunion only for early registration (Cash Or Check Only at reunion)**

OFFICE USE ONLY
Check #_____ Date Received_____

Name Tag Completed_____

Send Check, Money Order Or Credit Card Info To:
Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.
3168 Meadow Field Dr
Arnold Mo, 63010-3751

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Name On Card:	Visa	Master Card	Discover	Amex
Card Number:	Other Card Types:			
Expiration Date:	Three Digit Code On Back Of Card			

NAME TAG INFORMATION PLEASE PRINT

Name:	Unit Served With:
Spouse Or Companion's Name	
Other Guest Names: (1)	(2) (3)
Address:	City: St: Zip:
Email:	
Phone	Emergency Contact:
Special Needs:	
Arrival Date:	Departure Date: Are You Staying At Hotel Yes____ No____

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Over 150 Junior Suites available for upgrades



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407 Virginia St.
Reno NV 89505
1-800-687-8733
Rooms: 1720
Hotel Class: ★★★★

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Award-winning Health Spa, featuring Swedish sauna, spa steam room, cardiovascular and weight equipment
Outdoor sun deck with seasonal pool and spa
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Amenities

Complimentary airport shuttle service 24-hour valet parking and free self parking garage Children stay free (12 years and under) Rum Bullions Island Bar, dueling piano entertainment Catch a Rising Star Comedy Club Boutiques and shops, including the Barbary Beauty Salon

6 Featured Restaurants

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Fresh Express Food Court
SIPS Coffee and Tea
Sterling's Seafood Steakhouse
Sweetwater Cafe Coffee shop
Victorian Buffet

There are many different rooms available for members with Special Needs and all the Casinos are handicapped accessible

LESS WE FORGET

HILL 55, 64, 471, 516, 558, 700, 715, 861, 861A, 881N, 881S, 950, 1015

CARLOS AGUIRRE-RODNEY ALFANO-EDWARD ADAMS-ROBERT BAKER
DONALD BARNES-FRANCIS BENOIT-ERLE BJORKE-CURTIS BUGGER

GLENN CALVIN-ALEXANDER CHIN-ALLEN COURTNEY-RICHARD CUTBIRTH
JAMES DELAPLANE-MICHAEL DALEY-JIMMY DELANO-ERIC DICKSON

FERDINANDO DISTEFANO- JERRY ELLIOTT- HARRY EDWARDS
WILLIAM FIX- ARNOLD FERRARI- JOHN ELLIS- SHELLY EGLY

LOUIS GOY-BERNARD GAINES-JAMES GAYNOR-MICHAEL GIBBS
WALTER HALL-KENNETH HANNA-SAMUEL HUGHES-JAMES HOLT

DI REYES IBANEZ–TIMOTHY IVES-WAYNE IRSCH-RICHARD IANIERI-DONALD JACQUES-GERRIE JEFFERIES
STEPHEN JOYNER-PAUL JENKINS-JAMES JONES-RANDOLPH JOHNSON-EDDIE KELLY- DENNIS KEEFE

MYRON KOT-DONALD KNUTSEN-LARRY KIER-MELTON KIDD-ROBERT LITTLEFIELD-CHARLES LYNCH
CARL LYONS-WALTER LEWELLEN-CHARLES LAGENFELD-MICHAEL LADEROUTE-DONALD LABONTE

THOMAS MACMILLAN–JEFFREY MC CLATCHEY JR.– JULIAN MCKEE-REUBEN MC MAKINS–ROY MEIR
MICHAEL MAHONEY–EDWARD NIEBUR–MAX NELSON–DAVID NASH–CHARLES NEAL-DAVID MURPHY

GEORGE OLSEN–TROY OLIVER-STEPHEN OROSCO-TIMOTHY OWENS–EDWARD PARSLEY–ROBERT PAYNE
STEPHEN PERKINS–THOMAS PRUIETT–ALVIN PRESTON-DANIEL PHILLIPS–LARRY PLILER-FRED PINO

GEORGE QUAMO–EDWARD QUINONES–JOHN QUATTLEBAUM–DONALD RASH–TERRY RAMPULLA
ROBERT REX-JAMES RILEY–AUGUST ROMANO–DONALD RUDD-JOHN RUSSELL–ALDO RYDER

DON SAIN–DANIEL SANDOVAL–MICHAEL SCANLON–BENNIE SISSON–DAVID SEXTON–RICHARD SMITH
DARYL TERHUNE–MANUEL TONER–CHARLES TREDENICK–JAMES TYCZ-LOUIS TONER–TED TAYLOR

JAMES TAYLOR–FRANK UZZELL–ANTHONY VALENTE-PATRICK VASQUEZ– REGGIE VANCE
EMORY VOORHIES– RICHARD VEDDER– NICHOLAS VRANKOVICH– GUNTHER WALSH– THERMAN WALLER

DONALD WANN–GEORGE WALBRIDGE–KENNETH WILLIAMS– EUGENE WIRE–EDDIE WILLIAMS
GILBERT WILEY–RICHARD WHITESIDES–RICHARD WORTHINGTON–WILLIAM WYMER–ROBERT

ROBERT YAGUES–ROGER YAMANKA–HENRY YORK–JAMES YOUMANS–WILLIAM YOHN—JEFFREY YERION
GILBERT ZERBST–LAWRENCE ZIEGLER– DAVID ZIMMERMAN– ROGER BAXTER– DALE DEHNKE

FORTY YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH

LANG VEI

KHE SANH VILLAGE
LZ HAWK
TA CONG HAMLET
ALAMO



CAP-OSCAR 1-2-3

CO ROC
MOUNTAIN
CA LU COMBAT
BASE

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2011 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY VOLUME 5

FREEDOM WAS NOT FREE















THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2011 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

FOR DEDICATED SERVICE ABOVE AND BEYOND

CHAPLAIN RAY W. STUBBE

Ray W. Stubbe served as a chaplain for the 26TH Marine Regiment at the Khe Sanh Combat Base, from July of 1967 until the siege was lifted in 1968. When Ray returned to life in the United States he had never forgotten. the men who fought and died during their tenure at Khe Sanh. He had a dream that all those brave men, from whichever branch of service they had served in at Khe Sanh, should always remain as a family, to maintain the bond which will always and forever keep them in each others hearts. Ray also felt that an organization was needed to promote renewed fellowship of those who survived the Khe Sanh and RVN experience. Ray's other goals included: collecting and preserving an accurate history of service in and around Khe Sanh, honoring and preserving the memory of those who were either lost at Khe Sanh, later killed in action, or later died of wounds received there, reaching out to the loved ones of those who died, so that they might better understand the nature of their loved ones service at Khe Sanh and also, to promote research and understanding of the Khe Sanh experience to help heal wounds both physical and mental, of our Khe Sanh experience.

Legend has it that the organization started at a local watering hole in 1983, when Ray provided other members with a list of 19 other Khe Sanh Veterans. These Khe Sanh Veterans formed the association and elected a board of directors, with of course, Ray becoming President, and Earle Breeding being elected Treasurer. When asked how he was chosen, Earle will tell you that when they passed the hat around for donations; they used his hat. From those 19 names, people began being contacted, thus other new members joined. By the following year, membership had doubled; in February of 1986, the first newsletter was mailed out to 350 members. These men reached out to other veterans they had known, and the list rapidly grew. On September 1, 1988, the Khe Sanh Veterans were legally incorporated. Through the continuing efforts of Ray Stubbe, we now have a membership of over 3,000. Ray had not only reached, but exceeded every goal he had set out to accomplish for our organization. He is, and will always be, the HEART & SOUL of the KHE SANH VETERANS.

THIS DIRECTORY IS DEDICATED TO REVEREND
RAY W. STUBBE
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT EMERITUS

FIFTH EDITION OF KSV MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY
DONATED BY TERRY REDLIN & FAMILY IN MEMORY
OF HM-3 CHARLES T. LANGENFELD KIA 17 APR 68 KSCB

KHE SANH VETERANS

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TREASURER	THOMAS EICHLER
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	THOMAS EICHLER	(CO CHAIRMAN)
PUBLISHING	THOMAS EICHLER	(CHAIRMAN)
SCHOLARSHIP	DANIEL FISHER	(CHAIRMAN)

IN MEMORY

We remember now, our brothers who died because of what happened at a place called Khe Sanh in the country of Vietnam. It is appropriate for us who are veterans of those events to do so. It is incumbent upon us who carry the precious memory, however also painful, to ensure that these men, and what they did, are not forgotten.

For those who served at Khe Sanh, this list may assist you to piece together just what happened in the chaos of battle. This list may prompt you to face your pain and, knowing the truth, be freed. This list may help you find a name of a close friend, perhaps even someone who saved your life, a name that you perhaps have since forgotten-so when you visit the Memorial Wall in DC you may be able to pay your respects- to touch the name, make a rubbing, place a flower or memento, shed a tear, say a prayer, to pause, to reflect. Hopefully this list will facilitate closure of open, unhealed wounds.

Names cast in bronze, engraved on a wall
Faces branded upon our hearts
We cannot forget; we know them all
Soul-seared scenes that n'er depart.

Perhaps this listing will finally put to rest the questions of casualties at Khe Sanh: how many there really were. Perhaps this may enlighten others to appreciate however limited, your experience there, as a World War I poet (E.M. Walker) put it:

Now you are one with us, you know our tears..
You have tasted of our hopes and fears.."

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2011 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

For those who did not serve at Khe Sanh, this list will reflect the cost of battle; it indicates the burden and the price of serving. When President Kennedy declared in his Inaugural Address of 23 January 1961: " we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.. And so ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country," perhaps we really did not comprehend the magnitude of the price and the greatness of the burden when these words motivated so many to go to Vietnam.

How can one read through these pages without realizing just how good and decent these young men were who gave so much, who cared so deeply about others? Although the full story surrounding each loss is not provided-not enough books could contain a full description of the degree of caring, sacrifice, giving, service and dedication that was the common characteristic of all who died. Alongside such dedication, however, remains the horrible nastiness and, brutality of war, of which US Confederate General Robert E. Lee once remarke4 in 1862 after watching the slaughter at Fredericksburg: "It is well that war is so terrible or we should grow fond of it." For those who were not at Khe Sanh, may this confrontation with the specter that jolts into greater appreciation those who fight the wars to which politicians and civilians send as so many "hot hearts for chilling deeds" [Sophocles, Antigone], and greater soul-searching deliberation before committing them.

In a much greater purpose, however, this special listing is neither to prove a point to posterity, nor to benefit those of us who still remember and cannot forget; this document is really for our brothers. It is to honor these men who died "because of Khe Sanh," that this listing has been compiled, out of love to them and respect for them.

KHE SANH
FIRMLY STOOD
THE FEW
COURAGEOUS SHARING LIFE IN SERVING
SERVING LIFE IN SHARING
VICTORIOUS
SEMPER FIDELIS

By far the greater number are those who died thinking of others, that others might live. Not all died in some especially heroic manner, some were simply ensnared in webs of death spun by others, and yet were involved in living to serve which is why they were there. For the most part, these are ordinary men involved with their destiny of extraordinary deeds and circumstances. Heroes always change what is, confront that which means life-or-death for others, and transform the situation by their personal involvement in it. These are real people yet great people, ordinary people yet extraordinary. These are people who make a difference.

One Khe Sanh vet stated: "..he was more than just a battlefield statistic. It's funny how an average person reading books about a particular battle-these KIA's are just statistics or names. But every KIA had somebody in their outfit that could tell you a personal story about them. "[Daniel O. Allen] Kevin Macaulay says: We are all better persons for having known them.

Another reason for these lists is to note the trauma of those who were near their friends who died and who have carried these memories. "Surely, he hath home our grief's and carried our sorrows." [Isa 53.4]. One vet declares: "We are the tears of those who died." May those who read this document gain a greater appreciation of those who lived these experiences and now carry these memories since for some, the memory is like a scratch in an LP record that repeats the same portion of a melody. Maybe this list will enable the picking-up of the playing arm so that the song may continue.











Listen

Listen close

there is a voice for each and every name
a silent picture for a distant friend
a memory shared with subdued words
timeless conversations easing the pain of loss left behind

yet carried where weary feet drag
through the passage of time
And its sudden stopping
imparting a message to the stunned
the living those stumbling for meaning
crying in their relief
mourning the loss
Avoiding the answer
of when

of who

for some even yesterday
And then there is the future
the utterance of all
of companionship
And love.

Poem by Talis Kaminskis, 1994

Of those left behind
By those who remain
Memories of comrades
Of blood, and of pain

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2011 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF THOSE KIA AT KHE SANH

-A-

ABERNETHY, Reginald Joe	PFC	22 MAR 71	4W 65
ABEYTA, Ernest	PFC	01 JUN 69	23W 34
ABOLINS, Janis	PFC	04 Jan 69	35W 32
ACALOTTO, Robert J	SSGT	20 FEB 71	5W 122
ACKERMAN, Rex William	PFC	19 APR 69	26W 5
ACUNIA, Esgar	LCPL	06 MAR 69	30W 51
ADAME, Gilbert Jimme	PFC	07 APR 68	48E 38
ADAMS, Edward Cody	SWF2	16 APR 68	50E 10
ADAMS, Lee Scott	2LT	06 APR 68	48E 26
ADDICE, Frank Paul	HN	11 APR 68	49E 18
ADDINGTON, Zach Taylor	LCPL	16 MAY 68	61E 7
ADKINS, John	CPL	07 APR 68	48E 38
AGUIRRE, Carlos Cruz	CPL	24 FEB 68	41E 6
AHLMEYER, Heinz Jr.	2LT	10 May 67	19E 77
AHRENS, Russell George	SP5	18 MAR 71	4W 57
AKINS, Ronald Paul	L/CPL	25 FEB 68	41E 15
ALDRICH, David Alan	CPL	30 MAR 68	47E 7
ALDRIDGE, Herbert Ray	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 12
ALENCASTRE, Anthony Albert	PVT	14 APR 68	49E 50
ALFANO, Rodney Arthur	1LT	02 FEB 68	36E 64
ALLARD, Paul Edward	PFC	19 APR 69	26W 7
ALLEN, Charles David Jr.	CAPT	16 MAR 71	4W 53
ALLEN, Dale Charles	2LT	27 JUN 67	22E 67
ALLEN, Eddie Hugh	PFC	27 MAY 68	65W 3
ALLEN, Herbert Marshall	SGT	19 JUN 68	57W 31
ALLEN, Kenneth Jeffrey	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 22
ALLEN, Paul James	CPL	11 APR 68	49 E 18
ALLEN, Richard James	PFC	17 MAY 68	61E 22
ALLEN, Robert Christian	LCPL	31 MAY 68	62W 12
ALLEN, Terry Lee	CPL	09 JUN 68	58W 5
ALLERBY, Milton Richard	HN	11 JUN 68	58W 21
ALMEIDA, Richard Henry	LCPL	03 MAY 67	19E 20
ALMON, William Russell	PFC	30 JUL 68	50W 33
ALMONEY, John Stanley	CPL	03 MAY 67	19E 20
AMESCUA, Steven Epefanio	PFC	15 MAY 68	60E 18
AMMON, William Resor Tenney	1LT	16 APR 68	50E 10
ANDERS, Richard Allen	PFC	14 APR68	49E 50
ANDERSON, Charles Richard	1LT	03 MAR 71	4W 18
ANDERSON, David Bruce	PFC	30 MAR 68	47E 7
ANDERSON, David George	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 24
ANDERSON, James (NMI)	PFC	03 MAY 67	19E 21
ANDERSON, James Theodore	PFC	13 MAR 69	29W 27
ANDERSON, John Louis	2LT	21 JUL 69	23E 97
ANDERSON, Michael Francis	LCPL	24 MAY 68	67E 4
ANDRUS, Daniel Francis	LCPL	11 JUN 68	58W 21
ANGEL, Michael Eugene	PFC	03 MAR 69	30W 18
ANSELMO, William Frank	SSGT	06 MAR 68	30W 62
ANTONACE,J ohn Jr.	LCPL	07 JUL 68	53W 31
ANTRIM, Tommy Edward	SGT	08 FEB 68	38E 20
APONTE, Edwin	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E 117
APPLETON, John Burdette	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E 117
APUTEN, Leslie George	PFC	15 MAY 68	60E 18
ARD, Bobby Joe	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 118
ARD, Randolph Jefferson	WO/1	07 MAR 71	4W 30
ARMENTROUT, Raymond Lee	SSGT	23 FEB 71	5W 131
ARROYO, Ramon Jaime	PFC	07 MAR 69	30W 62
ARTHUR, Lawrence Kenneth	PFC	28 MAY68	64W 4
ASHLEY, Eugene Jr.	SFC	07 FEB 68	37E 77
AVERITTE, William Clayton	CPL	16 APR 68	50E 11
AYERS,DOUGLAS, Edward	SGT	24 MAR 71	4W 72
AYERS, Leslie Steven	LCPL	08 FEB 68	38E 20

-B-

BABCOCK, Ronald Lester	1LT	27 FEB 71	4W 8
BACON, William Ivor	SSGT	29 JUN 68	22 E 82
BACOTE, Moses June	LCPL	28 MAY68	64W 4
BADER, Arthur Edward	SFC	30 NOV 68	37W 9
BAER, Max Irwin	LCPL	20 MAR 69	29W 86
BAILEY, Joseph Thomas	LCPL	19 FEB 68	40E 17
BAKER, Donald	LCPL	09 JUN 68	58W 6
BAKER, Richard Thomas	SSGT	18 FEB 71	5W 114

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2011 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

BAKER, Robert Nelson	SFC	01 FEB 68	40E 51
BAKER, Steven Dewitt	CPL	28 MAY 68	58W 6
BAKER, Tony Anderson	PFC	05 JUL 68	53W 15
BALADES, David Zavala	PFC	28 FEB 68	40E 51
BALDWIN, Clarence Jay	PFC	24 MAY68	64W 5
BALKIT, Donald	PFC	25 APR 68	52E 2
BALL, Robert Lee	PFC	18 JUN 68	56W 17
BANEY, Charles Lynn	SGT	15 OCT 67	28E 11
BAPTISTE, Michael Bradford	PFC	25 FEB 68	1E 15
BARBER, Ronald Lee	LCPL	24 APR 68	18E 79
BARBOUR, James Wesley	PFC	05 JUN 68	60W 15
BARDET, Raymond Frederic	PFC	28 MAY 68	56W 17
BARKER, Jack Lamar	MAJ	20 MAR 71	4W 59
BARMER, Timothy Michael	L/CPL	30 JAN 68	35E 65
BARNES, Donald Joseph	EOCS	06 JUN 67	21E 60
BARNITZ, Douglas Wanner	LCPL	04 JUN 69	23W 61
BARNETT, Robert Russell	CAPT	07 APR 66	6E 91
BARNITZ, Douglas Wanner	LCPL	04 JUN 69	23W 61
BARRETT, Michael Barry	HN	08 FEB 68	38E 20
BARRINGER, Ardrey Watts Jr.	PVT	09 JUN 68	58W 6
BARRON, Jeffrey Michael	CPL	25 FEB 69	31W 42
BARROW, Thomas Melvin Jr.	PFC	26 APR 67	18E 90
BARROWS, Irving Donald	PFC	21 APR 68	51E 16
BARRY, George Francis Jr.	WO	23 MAY 70	I0E 83
BARTH, Wayne Robert	LCPL	24 APR 67	18E 78
BARTON, James Eugene	SP5	23 FEB 71	5W 132
BATCHELOR, John Elsey Jr.	LCPL	07 APR69	27W 28
BATTLE, Joseph Chriss	PFC	05 FEB 68	41E15
BATTLE Ronald Kenneth	CPL	20 MAR 69	29W 86
BATTLE, William Alfred	LCPL	07 JUL 68	43W 32
BAUCHERIO, Harold	LCPL	20 AUG 67	25E 18
BAUER, Daryl Charles	PFC	11 MAR 69	29W 4
BAUER, Karol Raymond	SSGT	30 APR 67	18E 118
BAXTER, Bruce Raymond	MSGT	08 NOV 67	29E 47
BAXTER, Roger Bruce	WO	06 MAY 70	11W 108
BAYES, Thomas Joseph	PFC	07 APR 68	48E 38
BEACH, Sam Festis Jr	CAPT	17 JAN 68	34E 61
BEALE, George Eugene	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 13
BEAN, Donald Wayne	SMAJ	11 MAR 68	44E I3
BEAN, Richard Raymond	LCPL	09 MAY 67	19E 77
BEAN, Stephen Lewis	PFC	24 MAY 68	67E 4
BEASLEY, Luzon	CPL	30 MAR 68	47E 8
BEAUFORD, Willis Jr.	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 13
BECK, John Theron	PVT	24 FEB 68	41E6
BECK, Norma Elmer	PFC	23 MAR 69	5E 56
BECKWITH, Harry Medfor III	SSGT	24 MAR 71	4W 72
BECKWITH, William Arnold	LCPL	04 JUL 68	53W 11
BEDDOE, Paul Melvin Jr.	PFC	21 JAN 68	35E 2
BEECK, Ronald Marvin	SP4	06 APR 68	48E 23
BELCHER, Robert Winslow	CPL	11 APR 68	49E 19
BELCHER, Robert Arthur	MAJ	28 MAR 69	28W 65
BELL, Marvin Earl	SSGT	30 JUN 70	9W 102
BELL, Ronald Eugene	PFC	09 JUN 68	58W 6
BELLAMY, Paul Robert	PVT	21 JAN 68	35E 2
BELLER, William Russell Jr.	PFC	30 APR 67	18E 118
BENGE, Larry Wayne	LCPL	01 MAR 68	42E 15
BENIGNI, Alfredo	CPL	28 FEB 68	41E 59
BENITEZ, Rafael Rivera	SGT	08 FEB 71	5W 86
BENNETT, George Willy Jr.	CPL	06 MAY 70	11W 108
BENNETT, James Harrell Jr.	CAPT	30 OCT 67	28E 100
BENNETT, Richard Royce	SGT	02 MAY 69	26W 96
BENOIT, Francis Arthur	HM3	16 MAR 67	16E 88
BENSON, Robert John	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 23
BERDAHL, David Donald	PFC	20 JAN 72	2W 98
BERG, Bruce Allen	SGT	07 AUG 71	3W 125
BERG, George Phillip	CWO	18 FEB 71	5W 114
BERGENSTEIN, Dennis Paul	CPL	03 MAY 67	19E 21
BERGER, John Edward	PFC	27 FEB 68	41E 48
BERNARD, Donald Lee	PFC	26 APR 67	18E 90
BERNESKI, Lawrence, A	A1C	15 OCT 67	28E 13
BERTRAM, David Michael	PFC	15 JUN 68	57W 22
BESSENT, Samuel Alonzo	SP4	25 APR 69	26W 46
BETTENCOURT, Daniel Stephen	CPL	09 MAY 67	19E 69
BETTS, Albert Leon	SP5	02 FEB 68	36E 65
BIEHL, Gary Ladd	LCPL	03 MAY 67	19E 21
BIERLEIN, Patrick M R	PFC	12 APR 68	49E 28
BILBREY, Edmond David	CAPT	11 MAR 71	4W 36
BILLIINGHAM, Frederick A Jr.	LCPL	25 FEB 68	41E 16
BIRCH, Thomas H	CPL	23 FEB 68	40E 72
BIRD, Leonard Adrian	1LT	13 JUL 68	52W 21
BIVENS, Frederick Wood Jr.	CPL	30 APR 67	18 E 118
BIXBY, Thomas Eugene	PFC	27 MAR68	46E 44
BJORKE, Erle Lawrence	CAPT	15 0CT67	28E 7
BLAZ, James Lujan	LCPL	07 JUN 67	21E 65
BLOOM, Ronald Norman	SGT	02 AUG 68	50E 48

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BOBO, Charles Glen	SGT	08 FEB 71	5W 86
BODA, James Albert	LCPL	29 APR 67	18E 112
BODDEN, Timothy Roy	MSGT	03 JUN 67	21E 42
BODZICK, William Joseph	SP4	02 DEC 66	13E 12
BOFFMAN, Alan Brent	1LT	18 MAR 71	4W 57
BOGARD, Jack Crosby	PFC	05 FEB 68	37E 31
BOICOURT, Jess Burton Jr.	CPL	11 MAR 68	44E 14
BOLGER, Lawrence Joseph	2LT	27 JUN 67	22E 68
BOND, Ronald Leslie	CAPT	30 SEP71	2W3 1
BOND, Theodore Charles	LCPL	16 JUN 68	56W 1
BORDUAS, Raymond Arthur	PFC	04 JUN 68	60W 8
BORRELL, Clifford Glen	PFC	24 FEB 68	41E 7
BOSHEERS, James Larry	LCPL	01 MAY 68	53E 27
BOTT, Russell Peter	MSGT	02 DEC 66	13E 3
BOULE, Thomas Michael	PFC	04 APR 69	27W 8
BOURDEAUX, Lee Joseph Jr.	SP4	02 DEC 66	13E 3
BOWEN, Grover	PFC	21 SEP 69	18W 119
BOWERS, James David	CPL	24 MAY 68	67E 5
BOWLIN, Paul Madison	LCPL	08 JUN 69	23W 109
BOYD, Wayne	PFC	03 APR 68	47E 46
BOYE, Henry Joseph Jr.	PFC	31 MAY 68	62W 5
BOYER, Alan Lee	SFC	28 MAR 68	46E 52
BOYER, Charles Goodhue	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 14
BOYNTON, Charles B Jr.	HM3	16 APR 68	50E11
BRACK, David Allan	PFC	01 JUN 69	23W 35
BRADLEY, Kenneth Robert	CPL	28 FEB 68	41E 59
BRAKE, Boyd Lawrence	LCPL	05 MAR 69	30W 41
BRANAM, Ronnie Franklin	SGT	10 APR 68	49E 8
BRANDT, Keith Allan	CAPT	18 MAR 71	4W57
BRANNAN, James Curtis	SFC	31 MAR 69	28E 96
BRANNON, James Edward	PFC	25 MAR 69	28W 33
BRAUN, Harry Walker Jr.	PFC	19 MAY 68	63E 5
BRAZIER, John Kenneth	SSGT	06 JUN 68	60W 25
BRELLENTHIN, Michael J	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 17
BRENKE, Frederick Joseph	PFC	27 JUN 67	22 E 72
BRENNEMAN, Richard Eugene	CPL	26 MAR 69	28W 44
BRERETON, Raymond James	PFC	26 FEB 68	41E 35
BRETT, Robert R Chaplain	LTJG	22 FEB 68	40E 58
BREUER, Donald Charles	CAPT	20 NOV 72	1W 91
BREWER, Don Raylan	PFC	13 MAR 69	29W 27
BRIDGES, Ernest Larry	SGT	04 APR 68	47E 59
BRIGGS, Ernest Frank	SFC	05 JAN 68	33E 41
BRIGNAC, Joseph Paul	CPL	06 MAR 68	43E 14
BRINDLEY, Thomas Drew	2LT	20 JAN 68	34E 83
BRITT, Ted Dennis	PFC	30 MAR 68	47E 14
BRITTIAN, Charles Henry	CPL	05 JUN 69	23W 78
BROGAN, Robert Henry	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 43
BROTZ, Danny Ray	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E119
BROUGHTON, Robert Ballard	PVT	05 JUN 69	23W 70
BROWER, Ralph Wayne	CAPT	08 NOV 67	29E 51
BROWN, David Dee Jr.	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 12
BROWN, Dennis Lee	LCPL	29 JUN 68	54W 14
BROWN, George R	SGT	28MAR68	46E 53
BROWN, Gerald Bernard	PFC	05 JUN 69	23W 71
BROWN, Joseph Gordon	CWO	18 FEB 71	5W 115
BROWN, Joseph "L" Jr.	PVT	06 JUN 68	60W 26
BROWN, Marcus Jr.	LCPL	28 AUG 67	25E 55
BROWN, Richard Samuel	CPL	05 JUL 68	53W 16
BROWN, Theodore Jr.	PFC	21JAN68	35E 3
BROWN, Vaughn Lee	PFC	08 JUL 68	53W 42
BROWN, Wilbur Ronald	CAPT	03 FEB 66	4E 134
BROWN, William Franklin	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 24
BROWN, William Leo	SSGT	10 FEB 68	38E 65
BROWN, William Theodore	SFC	03 NOV 69	16W22
BRUDER, James Robert	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 17
BRUIN, John William	SP4	23 FEB 71	5W 32
BRYAN, Charles William	CPL	20 JAN 68	39E 83
BRYANT, James Roy	PFC	23 FEB 68	40E 72
BUCIOR, Andrew Zbigniew	CPL	05 APR 68	48E 15
BUCK, William Andrew Jr.	CPL	04 JUN 69	23W61
BUFFINGTON, Fred	LCPL	30 JUN 68	54W 25
BUGGER, Curtis Burke	PFC	21 JAN 68	35E 3
BUMSTEAD, Donald Royce	PFC	06 MAR 6	43E 15
BUNGARTZ, Fredrick W	PFC	14 FEB 68	39E 29
BUONO, Matthew Joseph	PFC	04 APR 68	47E 59
BURCH, Steven Ralph	WO	05 MAR 71	4W 23
BURDICK, William F Jr.	PFC	09 JUN 68	58W 56
BURGARD, Paul Edward	PFC	06 JUN 68	60W 26
BURGESS, Alex Leroy	LCPL	19 FEB 68	40E 18
BURGESS, RUBEN Anthony	PFC	23 FEB 68	40E 73
BURGESS, Russell David	PFC	26 APR 68	52E 15
BURGORFER, Stephen Walter	SP5	06 MAR 71	4W 27
BURKE, John Roland	CPL	06 JUN 67	21E 60
BURKES, Bruce Wayne	PFC	06 JUN 68	60W 15
BURKHEAD, Jerry Clark	CPL	08 FEB 68	38E 22

BURLESON, Michael Finnie	LCPL	19 MAY 68	63E 6
BURNETT, Sheldon John	LTCOL	07 MAR 71	4W31
BURNHAM, Joseph Francis	PFC	19 MAY 68	63E 6
BURNLEY, Earl Rosemond Jr.	HM3	16 MAY 68	61E 6
BURNS, Victor L	LCPL	27 JUN 67	22E 68
BURROWS, Larry (Civilian)	DNA	10 FEB 71	DNA
BURTON, Horace Lee	SP4	06 MAR 71	4W 27
BUSH, Paul William	1LT	22 MAR 68	45E 54
BUTLER, Larry Wayne	L/CPL	26 APR 67	18E 91
BUTTENBAUM, Gary Richard	PFC	09 MAY 67	19E 69
BYARS, Steve Eugene	LCPL	23 MAR 69	28W 17
BYNUM, Franklin Delano	CAPT	27 JUN 67	22E 78
BYRD, George Benjamin Jr.	PFC	30 APR 67	18E 119
BYRNES, Robert Howard	CPL	15 MAY 68	60E 20

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CAHILL, Edwin Lewis	HM1	09 JUN 68	58W 7
CALDWELL, Robert Edward	CPL	28 FEB 68	41E 60
CALHOUN, Edwin Gerald	SGT	25 MAR 71	4W 76
CALHOUN, Franchot Tone	PFC	24 MAY 68	67E 5
CALVIN, Glenn Henry	SSGT	10 FEB 68	38E 65
CAMPBELL, Thomas Francis	PFC	09 APR 68	48E 56
CAMPESTRE, Albert John	PFC	07 MAY 68	62E 1
CARACCILO, Anthony Joseph Jr.	CPL	19 FEB 71	5W 20
CARBAUGH, Woodrow F	SGT	05 JUN 68	60W 15
CARMICHAEL, Dale Eugene	PFC	25 APR 67	18E 83
CARNEY, Tyrone Edward	PFC	17 JUN 68	56W 12
CARPENTER, James Alvin	PFC	14 MAR 79	29W 37
CARR, Robert George	PFC	18 JUN 69	22W 73
CARROLL, Fergus Joseph	CPL	18 JUN 68	56W 18
CARSON, John Harvey	1LT	05 JUN 68	60W 16
CARTER, Anderson Jr.	PFC	02 MAY 6	19E 10
CARTER, Jack David	PFC	25 MAR 69	28W 34
CARTER, James Basil	PFC	16 FEB 71	5W 110
CARTER, James Louis	LTCOL	03 FEB 66	4E 134
CARTER, John Lewis	LCPL	03 JUL 68	54W 42
CARTER, Ralph Winfield	PFC	24 APR 67	18E 78
CASAREZ, Raul	PFC	24 APR 67	18E 67
CASSELL, Kevin Ray	PFC	21 APR 68	51E 21
CASTELOT, Robert Sheehan	PFC	11 JUN 68	58W 22
CASTILLO, George Ralph	CPL	24 JAN 68	3E 20
CASTILLO, Jose	SGT	21 JUL 67	23 E 97
CASTRO-RAMOS Justino Enri	LCPL	24 APR 67	18 E 78
CATLIN, Norman Richard	PVT	16 MAR 67	16 E 89
CAUDILLO, Pedro Jamie	WO/1	19 MAY 68	63 E 6
CAVAZOS, Ronald Thomas	PFC	04 APR 68	48 E1
CECIL, Alan Bruce	SP5	21 SEP 69	18W119
CERVANTES, George Andrew	LCPL	30 APR 67	18 E119
CHABERT, Gary August	PFC	21 APR 68	51 E 17
CHAMBERS, John Luther	SP4	04 APR 68	48E 1
CHAMBLIN, Donald Ray Jr.	SGT	08 MAR 68	43 E 52
CHANEY, Arthur Fletcher	WO/1	03 MAY 68	54 E 24
CHANEY, Donald Lee	SFC	17 JAN 68	34 E 62
CHAPP, Robert Anthony	SGT	14 APR 67	18E 25
CHARLES, Edward William	LCPL	18 JUN 69	22W 73
CHASE, John Joseph	LCPL	07 JUN 67	21 E 65
CHAVEZ, Gregory Anton	SP4	06 MAY 70	11W 110
CHEARNLEY, Joseph Michael	PFC	09 JUN 68	58W 7
CHEEKS, John Herbert	CPL	28 APR 67	18 E110
CHERVONY, Eddie Edwin	SGT	05 MAY 68	55E 6
CHILDRESS, Lewis Clayton	CPL	16 NOV 68	29 E 104
CHIN, Alexander Scheleph	PFC	22 FEB 68	40 E 58
CHISHOLM, James	PFC	23 FEB 68	40 E 73
CHRISTIAN, Daniel Keith	LCPL	16 APR 68	50 E 12
CHRISTIAN, Thomas Barry	LCPL	06 AUG 68	49W 19
CHRISTMAN, Ronald S Jr.	LCPL	28 FEB 68	41 E 60
CHUBB, John Jacobsen	PFC	20 MAR 71	4W 60
CHUBB, Richard Charles	PFC	14 MAR 69	29W 36
CHUTIS, John Vincent	SSGT	30 APR 67	18 E 119
CICIO, Robert Daniel	PFC	16 APR 68	50 E 12
CINOTTA, Thomas Antone	PFC	28 JUN 69	21W 27
CLAIRE, Kenneth William	CPL	25 FEB 68	41 E 18
CLARK, John Howard Jr.	LCPL	06 MAR 68	43 E 15
CLARK, Thomas Osborn	HM3	21 JUL 67	28E 97
CLARKE, James Phillip	PFC	18 APR 68	50 E 37
CLAY, Doyle Gregory	PFC	25 FEB 68	41 E 18
CLAY, Eugene Lunsford	SSGT	08 NOV 67	29E 57
CLAY, Ralph Wayne	CAPT	08 NOV 67	29E 56
CLAYBOURNE, Milton Gay	LCPL	16 MAY68	61 E 5
CLAYTON, Michael Marshall	LCPL	20 APR 68	51 E 6
CLEAVE, Lonnie Leonard	PFC	05 JUN 68	60W 16
CLEMENCIA, Jean Roger Jr.	LCPL	11 MAR 69	29W 5
CLEMSON, Gerald Richard	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 23
CLEVE, Reginald David	WO	22 MAR 71	4W 66
CLIFTON, Layne Farell	PFC	09 MAY 67	19E 70

COCHRAN, James Clifford	PFC	14 APR 68	49E 51
COFFEY, Robert Allen	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 45
COHRON, James Derwin	SFC	12 JAN 68	34E 35
COKER, David Langston Jr.	CAPT	24 MAR 71	4W 72
COLEGATE, William Karl	PFC	08 FEB 68	34E 23
COLEMAN, John Lee	PFC	21 APR 68	51E 17
COLEMAN, Lynn Bailey	PFC	19 MAY 68	63E6
COLEMAN, Michael John	LCPL	27 JAN 68	35 E 44
COLEMAN, Richard Freeman	PFC	21 JUL 67	23E 98
COLEMAN, William Frank	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 12
COLES, Kyle "J"	LCPL	28 FEB 68	41 E 6
COLLINS, James Alfred	PFC	20 JAN 68	34 E 84
COMBS, Lowell Thomas	CPL	14 FEB 68	39E 30
CONCANNON, Richard Neil	CWO	15 FEB 71	5W 105
CONLIN, Jeffrey Francis	SGT	06 MAR68	43E 16
CONNELL, Edwin Douglas	SGT	08 APR 68	48E 52
CONNELL, Vaughn Wadsworth Jr.	CAPT	07 MAY 72	1W 14
CONNOR, Glen Marshall	PFC	08 MAY 68	56 E 36
CONSOLVO, John Wadsworth	CAPT	07 MAY 72	1W 14
CONTRERAS, John Jenaro	PVT	21 JAN 68	35 E 4
COOK, Ronald John	HN	24 MAY 68	67E 7
COOL, Mark Douglas	CPL	02 MAR 68	42E 34
COOLEY, Ocie Daniel	PFC	21 JUL 67	23E 98
COOPER, Donald Nathaniel	CPL	28 FEB 68	41E 062
COOPER, James William	PFC	19 MAY 68	63 E 7
CORBIN, Russell B Jr.	LCPL	07 FEB 68	37 E 81
CORCORAN, Richard Francis	CAPT	07 JUN 68	59W 20
CORLEY, Thomas Eugene	LCPL	06 FEB 68	37E 52
CORNELL, Robert Leslie	PFC	30 APR 67	18E 120
CORRY, Charles Michael	SP5	15 APR 68	50 E 3
COTTRELL, Darrell Wayne	LCPL	04 MAY 68	54 E 32
COTTRELL, Thomas Lee	LCPL	22 JAN 68	35 E11
COURTNEY, Allen Wesley Jr.	1LT	17 MAY 68	62 E 1
COX, Gary Allen	LCPL	05 JUN 69	23W 71
COX, William Gayle	SGT	29 MAR 71	4W 91
CRAIG, Bruce Keith	PFC	16 APR 68	50E11
CRAIG, Thomas R Jr.	PFC	08 FEB 68	38 E 24
CRAMER, David Arthur	PFC	22 FEB 68	40 E 59
CRANDALL, Gregory, Stephen	WO	18 FEB 71	5W 115
CRANEY, Leslie Lee	PFC	03 APR 68	47E 48
CRASE, Lionel Russell	LCPL	07 APR 68	48E 40
CRAUN, Gale Eugene	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 13
CREAR, Willis Calvin	SP4	15 FEB 71	5W 105
CRENSHAW, William Anderson	CAPT	04 MAY 67	19 E 36
CRICKENBERGER, Richard W	PFC	26 MAY 68	66W 4
CHRISTMAN, Frederick Lewis	CWO	19 MAR 71	4W 58
CRITCHFIELD, Reece A Jr.	PFC	21 JAN 68	35E 4
CRONE, Gary Lee	SSGT	29 JAN 68	35E 68
CRONE, Donald Everett	SP4	15 FEB 71	5W 106
CROOKS, Ronald Lee	CPL	29 JAN 68	35E 58
CROSBY, Bruce Allen Jr	SGT	30 MAR 72	2W 125
CROWDER, Harold Edward	PFC	03 MAR 69	30W 21
CROWELL, Arthur Albert	CPL	26 MAY 68	66W 4
CRUITT, Michael Douglas	PFC	21 JAN 68	35E 4
CRUSE, James Dale	HN	15 JUN 68	57W 24
CRUZ, Frank	LCPL	18 JUN 69	22W 74
CUNNINGHAM, Bruce Edward	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 24
CUNNINGHAM, William L	PFC	01 MAR 68	42E 14
CURRY, Roy Jerry	SP4	18 JUN 69	22W 74
CUTBIRTH, Kendell Dwayne	SGT	25 FEB 68	15E 89
CUTBIRTH, Richard Eugene	LCPL	28 MAY 68	64W 7
CUTRI, Michael John	LCPL	28 MAY 68	64W 7
CZARNY, William Eugene	LCPL	09 MAY 67	19E 71

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DABREU, Daniel John	PFC	04 JUN 68	60W 8
D'ADAMO, John Jr.	MSGT	10 FEB 68	38E 66
DALEY, Michael James	PFC	16 MAR 67	16E 89
DALTON, Bill Norman	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 24
DAMIAN, Allen Norman	PFC	27 JUN 67	22E 69
DANAY, Jerry Lee	PFC	12 MAR 71	4W 40
DANBERRY, Charles Labaw	PFC	23 MAY 68	66E 8
DARDEN, Larry Euel	LCPL	01 APR 68	47E 31
DARNELL, Dana Cornell	LCPL	26 APR 67	18E 91
DAUGHERTY, James	LCPL	09 MAY 68	57E 13
DAVENPORT, John Sanford	PFC	28 APR 69	26W 69
DAVID, Jeffery Jay	LCPL	27 JUN 67	22E 69
DAVIDSON, Dennis Robert	PFC	11APR 68	49E 20
DAVILA, Jose	PFC	24 MAY 68	67E 7
DAVIS, Charles Cecil	PFC	03 MAY 67	19E 23
DAVIS Clifford Gordon	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 120
DAVIS, David Lee	PFC	20 MAR 69	29W 87

DAVIS, Duane Ross	PFC	12 APR 69	27W 62
DAVIS, Gary Ray	PFC	18 MAY 68	62E 16
DAVIS, John Clinton	SP4	28 APR 69	26W 69
DAVIS, Kenneth	HM2	25 FEB 69	31W 45
DAVIS, Randall Mark	PFC	04 JUN 68	60W 11
DAY, Douglas Wayne	CPL	06 MAY 70	11W 110
DE WILDE, Peter F Jr.	PFC	05 MAR 69	30W 43
DEAN, Michael Frank	SSGT	30 JUN 70	9W 103
DEARING, Jerry Wayne	PFC	26 JAN 68	35E 37
DEGNIS, James Edward	PVT	18 JUN 68	56W 19
DEHNKE, Dale Willard	SGT	18 MAY 71	3W 39
DELANEY, John Patrick	CPL	30 JUL 68	50W 34
DELANO, Jimmy Lynn	L/CPL	13 MAR 68	44E 34
DELALPANE, James Charles	HN	17 APR 68	50E 27
DELGADO, Raymond Rodriguez	LCPL	01 MAR 69	30W 1
DELISLE, Rodney Jerome	PFC	06 JUL 69	21W 69
DEMARCO, Michael Gregory	LCPL	11 APR 68	49E 20
DEMPSEY, Ronald Lee	CPL	28 FEB 68	41E 63
DEMPSEY, Walter Edward Jr.	SP 4	18 FEB 71	5W 115
DENNING, Dwight Thomas	PFC	26 JAN 68	35E 38
DENNIS, Paul Leslie	LCPL	25 APR 68	52E 4
DENTON, Robert Anthony	SSGT	06 MAY 70	11W 110
DES LAURIERS, Phillip Gene	LCPL	09 AUG 69	20W 117
DEVIK, David Ralf	LCPL	10 FEB 68	38E 66
DEWBERRY, Jerry Don	LCPL	05 JUL 68	53W I7
DEXTER, Ronald James	SGM	03 JUN 67	31E 43
DI GENNO, Michael	L/CPL	11 MAR 69	29W 6
DIAZ, Francisco	PFC	15 MAY 68	60E 21
DICESARE, Anthony Jr.	CPL	27 JUN 67	22E 69
DICKEN, Perry	LCPL	11 APR 68	49E 20
DICKENS, Odell	PFC	25 FEB 69	31 W 46
DICKERSON, Bernard W Jr.	CPL	11 JUN 68	58W 24
DICKIE, Guy Douglas	PVT	08 FEB 68	38E 25
DICKSON, Eric Voughn	LCPL	31 MAY 68	62W 8
DIEHL, Harry G	PSGT	18 JUN 69	22W 75
DIEUDONNE, Carroll Stephen	PFC	05 JUL 68	53W 21
DILLENDER, William Edward	SGT	30 MAR 71	4W 60
DILWORTH, Arthur William	LCPL	05 JUL 68	53W 18
DISCEPOLO, Anthony Albert	L/CPL	24 MAY 68	68E 1
DISTEFANO, Ferdinando	2LT	24 FEB 68	41E 8
DIXON, Morris Franklin Jr.	CPL	09 MAY 67	19E 70
DODD, James William	CPL	29 APR 68	53E 1
DODSON, Jerry Lee	L/CPL	25 FEB 68	41E 19
DODSON, Robert Gerald	1LT	07 JUL 68	53W 34
DOLAN, Thomas Albert	SSGT	10 AUG 71	3W 127
DOLAN, William John	PFC	17 APR 68	50E 35
DOLBY, Melvin Lester	PFC	07 APR 68	48E 40
DOLVIN, James Richard	SGT	18 JUN 69	22W 75
DONOVAN, Michael Leo	CAPT	30 SEP 71	2W31
DOODY, Thomas Patrick	WO1	08 FEB 71	5W 87
DOOLEY, Robert Ellis	PFC	22 FEB 68	40E 61
DOORNBOS, Don Michael	CPL	14 FEB 68	39E 31
DOUGLAS, Paul Melvyn	SSGT	21 FEB 68	40E 52
DOWNING, William Kelly	CPL	03 MAY 67	19E 24
DOWNS, Jack Dennis	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 25
DRAKE, Michael Leon	PFC	08 MAY 68	64W 8
DRIGGERS, Arthur H Jr.	PFC	21 JUL 67	23E 99
DRUZINSKI, Karl Walter	CPL	22 MAR 71	4W 65
DUGAN, John Francis	CAPT	20 MAR 71	38E 26
DUNDAS, Jerry Richard	SGT	05 MAY 68	55E 10
DUNLAP, Darrell Edward	PVT	08 FEB 68	38E 26
DUSEAU, Richard Frank	PFC	05 MAR 69	30W 43
DUTY, Charles Howard	PFC	30 APR 67	18E120
DWYER, Matthew Maurice Jr.	LCPL	28 FEB 68	41E 63
DYE, Ralph Victor Jr.	CPL	02 MAY 67	19E 12
DYE, Ronald Harvey	PFC	02 AUG 68	50W 49
DYER, Irby III	SGT	02 DEC 66	13E 4

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EAKINS, Melvin Warren	LCPL	02 MAY 69	26W 98
EARLY, William Dail	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 121
EASTON, David Everett	SP5	11 MAR 71	4W 38
EATON, Clifford Lyman	PFC	05 JUN 68	60W 16
EBRIGHT, William Raymond 0	CPL	06 JUN 68	59W 1
ECHEVARIA, Raymond Louis	SGM	03 OCT 66	11E 39
EDIE, Kurt Charles	HM3	03 MAY 67	19E 24
EDMONDS, Arthur Lee Jr.	PFC	13 FEB 68	39E 20
EDMONDS, Joseph	LCPL	14 APR 68	4 9E 52
EDWARDS, Harry Jerome	SP4	20 JAN 72	2W98
EGGER, Walter Jacob	CAPT	22 MAR 68	45E 55
EGLY, Shelly	PFC	26 APR 67	18E 92
EICHELBERGER, Barry Lee	PFC	20 MAR 69	32W 97
ELDERS, Ernest Franklin	LCPL	20 MAR 69	29W 88

ELIZONDO, David	SGT	18 MAR 71	4W 58
ELLIOTT, George L III	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 17
ELLIOTT, Jerry W	SSGT	21 JAN 68	35E 5
ELLIS, John Patrick	CAPT	28 FEB 68	41E 64
ELLISON, Robert (Civilian)	DNA	06 MAR 68	DNA
EMMERT, Charles William	SP4	18 JUN 69	22W 75
ENCLISH, Steve Craig	PFC	12 FEB 71	5W 98
ENDERBY, Robert Francis	LCPL	07 JUN 67	21E 66
ENGEN, Robert Joseph	SP4	18 FEB 71	5W 115
ENIX, Jack Gene	LCPL	06 JUN 68	59W 1
ENSIGN, Walter Lyman Jr.	PFC	18 MAY 68	62E 17
ENTRICAN, Danny Day	CAPT	18 MAY 71	3W 39
ENZINNA, John Joseph	CPL	24 MAR 68	46E 4
ERB, Patrick Douglas	MAJ	15 MAR 71	4W 48
ERWIN, Richard Eugene	PFC	11 APR 68	49E 21
ETHERIDGE, Colie Jr.	PFC	02 JUN 68	61W 12
EVANS, Clifford Melvin	SGT	09 JUN 68	58W 8
EVANS, Haydn	PFC	31 MAY 68	62W 5
EVERETT, Bobby Joe	PFC	20 AUG 69	19W 78
EWING, Lon Barry	PFC	19 MAY 68	63E 18
EWING, Michael Lee	PVT	11 JUN 68	58W 24

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FAHRENBRUCH, Richard L	SGT	03 APR 68	47E 49
FALCONBURY, Earl Fern	PFC	14 MAR 69	29W 36
FARRIS, Dennis Claude	1LT	23 FEB 71	5W 135
FAULKNER, Elmer Lee, Jr.	PFC	18 JUN 68	56W 20
FEATHERSTONE, Richard H	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 27
FEIT, Cristian Franz II	HN	25 JAN 68	35E 31
FELLOWS, Allen Eugene	COL	20 MAR 68	45E 39
FELLS, William Henry	SP4	22 MAR 71	4W 65
FELTON, Melvin James	SGT	09 FEB 71	5W 91
FERGUSON, David Charles	2LT	05 MAR 69	30W 45
FERGUSON, Ralph	CPL	31 MAY 68	62W8
FERNANDEZ, Dennis	PFC	04 JUL 68	53W 9
FERRARI, Arnold Jay	SGT	31 MAR 68	47E 21
FERREN, Jerry Wayne	LCPL	01 MAR 68	42E 15
FERRY, Ray Leonard III	LCPL	09 SPR 68	49E 55
FESER, Jeffrey Evan	LCPL	05 JUN 68	60W 17
FIGUEROA, Fernando	SP5	24 JAN 72	2W 100
FIGUEROA, Javier Puentes	CPL	28 JAN 68	35E 54
FINLEY, Charles Richard	PFC	11 APR 68	49E 21
FIRST, Michael Bruce	PFC	08 FEB 71	5W 87
FITTS, Richard Allen	SSGT	30 NOV 68	37W 10
FITTS, Richard Lee	PFC	15 JUN 68	57W 25
FIVELSON, Barry Frank	WO	15 FEB 71	5W 106
FIX, William Joseph Jr.	PFC	26 APR 68	52E 17
FLAHIVE, William Joseph Jr.	CAPT	31 JAN 68	36E 8
FLANNERY, Robert Edward	PFC	03 MAY 67	19E 24
FLEMING, Dennis K	CPL	14 FEB 68	39E 32
FLEMING, Morris Lafond	PFC	05 MAY 68	55E 11
FLETCHER, David Foster	LCPL	08 MAY 68	57E 2
FLINT, Raymond Lloyd	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 46
FLORES, Felix Frank	LCPL	06 JUN 68	59W 1
FOILES, Francis Ivan	PFC	07 MAY 68	65W 7
FORBES, Kevin Lynn	PFC	18 MAY 68	62E 17
FORD, Clifford Eugene Jr.	LCPL	09 JUN 68	58W 08
FORDHAM, Benjamin S	2LT	15 APR 68	50E 3
FORSBERG, Douglas Bruce	PFC	25 FEB 69	31 46
FOSTER, James Lester	CPL	19 MAY 68	63E 9
FOSTER, Julius Cartwright	LCPL	22 FEB 68	40E 62
FOUTZ, Kenneth Lee	SSGT	06 MAY 70	11W 111
FOWLER, Robert Allen	SMAJ	04 MAY 68	54E 33
FOX, David Nelson	CAPT	08 FEB 71	5W 87
FRALEY, David Forrest	CPL	09 MAY 67	19E 71
FRANCAVILLA, John F	LCPL	09 APR 68	49E1
FRANCE, Ronald Lynn	LCPL	12 MAR 69	29W 18
FRANCE, Lindell	PFC	09 MAR 69	30W 88
FRANCISCO, Patrick Phillip	L/CPL	07 JUN 67	21E 67
FRANKENSTEIN, Jackie	L/CPL	06 JUN 68	59W 2
FRANKS, Ernest Richard	PFC	14 MAR 69	29W 37
FRAZIER, Ronald Leon	LCPL	09 APR 68	49E1
FRAZIER, Timothy Joseph	LCPL	06 JUN 68	59W 2
FREDERICKSON, Paul Lowell	CPL	09 May 68	57E-21
FROMME, Frederick W Jr.	LCPL	09 MAY 67	19E 71
FUNK, Bruce Elliott	LCPL	02 MAY 69	26W 99
FURLONG, Edward Francis Jr	CPL	07 JUN 67	21E 67
FURR, Frederick Edward	HM3	29 APR 69	26W 77
FURTADO, Edward Jr.	PFC	15 MAY 68	60E 22

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2011 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

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GAGNON, Patrick John	LCPL	25 APR 67	18E8
GAINES, Allen Joseph	PFC	07 APR 68	48E41
GAINES, Bernard Laverne	PFC	24 MAR 68	46E 5
GALABIZ, John Rosalez	LCPL	08 JUL 68	53W 43
GALINDEZ, Manuel Antonio	LCPL	16 JUN 68	56W 2
GALINDO, Edwin Gene	CPL	04 MAY 68	54E 34
GALLAGHER, John Theodore	SFC	05 JAN 68	33E 48
GANNON, Eugene Richard	CAPT	11 APR 68	49E 22
GARBER, Charles W Jr.	CPL	09 APR 68	49E 1
GARCIA, Joe Cecillo	PFC	30 APR 67	18E 121
GARCIA, Ludin	PFC	01 JUL 68	54W 28
GARCIA, Ricardo Martinez	SFC	19 MAR 71	4W 58
GARCIA, Steven Vargas	LCPL	25 FEB 69	31W 50
GARCIA-FIGUEROA, Juan F	LCPL	05 JUN 68	60W 17
GARD, Danny "D"	CPL	28 FEB 68	41E 65
GARDNER, John Garrett	CAPT	03 JUN 67	21E 45
GARIEPY, Robert David	CPL	04 MAY 68	54E 34
GARLO, Michael	PFC	20AUG 69	19W 78
GASTON, Juan	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 47
GATES, James Wayne	CAPT	06 APR 66	6E 89
GATEWOOD, Charles Hue	LCPL	31 MAY 68	62W9
GAUGHAN, Austin, Michael	PFC	15 MAR 68	44E 59
GAYNOR, James Thomas	SGM	25 FEB 68	39E 47
GEERDES, Donnie A	LCPL	06 JUN 68	57W 09
GEIGER, Gary George	SP4	25 MAR 71	18E 93
GEIGER, Larry Frederick	PFC	26 APR 67	18E 93
GELLER, Charles Gregory	LCPL	25 FEB 68	41E 20
GEMMATI, Oronzo	CPL	06 APR 68	48E 26
GENTRY, Robert Barry	WO	08 FEB 71	5W 87
GERO, John Anthony	CPL	29 JUN 68	54W 16
GETTINGS, Guy Clifton	PFC	26 APR 67	18E 93
GIAMBRONE, Richard Lawrence	1LT	01 APR 68	47E 32
GIBBS, Michael Gerald	HM3	26 APR 67	18E 85
GIBSON, William Terry	PFC	18 JUN 68	56W 21
GIFFORD, William Gary	LCPL	30 MAY 68	62W 9
GILLESPIE, Albert Aloysius	PVT	19 MAY 68	63E 10
GILLIAM, George Harvey	PFC	03 APR 68	47E 50
GILLIAM, Kenneth Ray	LCPL	25 FEB 69	31W 47
GILLILAND, Dennis Albert	SP4	20 FEB 71	5W 123
GLASPER, William L	LCPL	08 FEB 68	38E 28
GLENN, William Stuart	PFC	22 MAR 71	4W 66
GLIDDEN, Arthur	SFC	09 NOV 66	12 E 47
GODINEZ, Alejandro Ray	L/CPL	27 JUN 67	22E 70
GODING, Robert Earle	PFC	03 MAR 69	30W 22
GOEGLEIN, John Winfred	MAJ	30 JUN 70	9W 104
GOEN, Richard Dean	LCPL	02 AUG 68	50W 50
GOETZ, James Gormon	LCPL	16 MAR 67	16E 90
GOI, Louis Charles	CPL	18 MAR 68	45E 22
GOLZ, James Roland	PFC	27 JAN 68	35E 46
GOMEZ, Amando Abel	PFC	20 FEB 68	40E 39
GONANO, James Martin	PFC	09 MAR 69	30W 88
GONZALES, Robert	PFC	03 APR 68	47E 49
GOODMAN, Kenneth Virgil	PFC	24 JAN 68	35E 21
GOODWIN, Raymond Ray	LCPL	03 MAR 67	16E 10
GORDON, Lawrence Lee	CPL	06 MAY 70	11W 111
GORDON, Richard Dale	PFC	28 JUN 68	54W 10
GORE, Harold Douglas	CPL	31 MAY 68	62W 9
GORMAN, Paul James	PFC	30 JUL 68	50W 35
GORRERA, George Medford Jr.	PFC	20 MAR 69	29W 89
GOSS, Larry Jo	HM2	14 FEB 68	39E 32
GOTTI, Gale Edward	PVT	07 JAN 67	21E 67
GRAFF, Thomas George	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 121
GRAHAM, Robert Lee	SGT	18 JUN 69	22W 76
GRANTHAM, Robert Eugene	SGT	08 MAR 71	4W 32
GRASSIA, Joseph Jr.	PFC	09 MAR 69	30W 88
GRATEN, Frederick Dunham	CPL	11 APR 68	49E 22
GRAVEL, Bobby Joe	SP4	06 APR 68	48E 26
GRAY, John Patrick	LCPL	31 MAY 68	62W 9
GRAY, Michael Douglas	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 19
GRAY, Ruzell	PFC	31 MAY 68	62W 10
GREB, James J	SGT	14 APR 68	49E 52
GREEN, Claude Hewitt	PFC	09 APR 68	49E 1
GREEN, Norman Morgan	LTCOL	09 JAN 68	34E 7
GREENE, Danny Marvin	LCPL	09 MAY 67	19E 71
GREENE, Kenneth John	SP4	14 MAR 68	44E 55
GREENIDGE, Michael R	L/CPL	31 MAR 68	47E 22
GREENLEAF, Joseph Gales	LT	14 APR 72	2W 36
GREENWOOD, Dale Edward	PFC	07 MAR 69	30W 62
GREGORY, Frank Edwin	LCPL	06 JUN 68	59W 3
GRIFFIN, Walter Joe Louis	PFC	18 JAN 69	22W 77
GRIJALVA, David Centeno	CPL	27 APR 67	18E 102
GRIMSTAD, Sigard Richard	PFC	19 MAY 68	63E 10
GRIST, William Anthony	LCPL	28 MAY 68	64W 9

GROHMAN, John Joseph	GYSGT	22 MAR 68	45 E 56
GROSHONG, Allen Eberly	HN	08 APR 68	48 E 52
GRZEGOREK, James Andrew	PFC	06 MAR 68	43 E 19
GUENTHER, Carlyule Lloyd	SSG	05 MAY 68	55E 14
GUILLORY, Wendell	PFC	16 APR 68	50 E 13
GULA, Paul Richard	PFC	30 MAR 68	47 E11
GULLUNG, Joseph Frank III	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 27
GUNN, Charles Edward	L/CPL	16 MAR 67	16 E 91
GUSTAFSON, James Ernest	HM3	22 APR 68	51E 30
GUTHRIE, Steven Allen Jr.	SP4	31 JAN 68	36 E 12

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HABERMAN, David	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 14
HACKETT, David Spence	1LT	30 APR 67	18E 122
HAEFNER, David Allen	CPL	05 MAY 68	55E 16
HAGAN, John Robert	MAJ	06 MAY 69	25W 11
HAGARA, Leslie Paul	SGT	16 APR 68	50E 14
HAGEN, Loren Douglas	1LT	07 AUG 71	03W 125
HALE, John Douglas	1LT	08 MAR 71	4W 32
HALEY, Harrison LeRoy	CAPT	26 MAY 68	66W 7
HALL, Blucher Ray	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 19
HALL, James Michael	SSGT	01 JAN 69	35W 15
HALL, Lindy Ronald	CPL	26 APR 67	18E 93
HALL, Walter Ray	SP4	22 MAR 71	4W 66
HALL, William Gardner	LT	24 MAR 68	46E 6
HALLER, Leroy Clayton	PFC	31 MAY 68	62W 10
HALLOCK, Douglas Paul	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 122
HAMEL, Wayne Douglas	PFC	05 FEB 68	37E 36
HAMILTON, Dennis Clark	CWO	05 JAN 68	33E 49
HAMILTON, Douglas Blake	PFC	24 APR 67	18E 77
HAMMONS, James Luther	PFC	06 MAY 68	56E 7
HAMPTON, Frederick Jordan	LTCOL	06 MAR 68	43E 20
HANCOCK, William Tyler	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 27
HANDLEY, Anthony William	CPL	08 FEB 68	38E 29
HANNA, Kenneth	SGM	07 FEB 68	37E 83
HANNINGS, William Elwood	LCPL	06 JUN 68	58W3
HANRAHAN, Jerome M Jr.	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 122
HANSON, Robert	LCPL	01 JUN 68	61W 1
HANSON, Stephen Paul	MAJ	03 JUN 67	21E47
HARAN, Rory Timothy	PFC	05 JUN 69	23W 72
HARPER, Donald Eugene Jr.	SGT	16 MAR 67	16E 91
HARPER, Ralph Lewis	LCPL	06 JUN 68	59W 4
HARRELL, Lenwood Thomas	PFC	05 MAY 68	55E 15
HARRINGTON, John Charles	PVT	04 JUN 68	60W 10
HARRIS, Earl Wayne	PFC	28 FEB 68	41E 65
HARRISON, Donald	WO	02 DEC 66	13E 5
HARTNESS, Donald Harry	LCPL	07 JUN 68	59W 26
HATTER, Larry Richard	CPL	18 FEB 71	5W 116
HAUSHERR, Charles Raymond	SP4	23 FEB 71	5W 134
HAWES, Wayne Lindsay	SP4	01 JAN 69	35W 16
HAWKINS, Don Albert	SGT	01 NOV 67	29E 3
HAWLEY, Richard A Jr.	CAPT	06 MAY 70	11W 112
HAWYER, Donald Robert	LCPL	15 JUN 68	57W 27
HAYDEN, Michael Pym	1/LT	16 APR 68	50E 14
HAYES, Phillip III	LCPL	25 FEB 68	41E 21
HEALEY, Louis Glenn	PVT	05 JUL 68	53W 19
HEALEY, Richard John	CPL	14 JAN 68	34E 48
HEALEY, Thomas Michael	PFC	07 JUN 67	21E 68
HEATH, Lloyd Lavern	HN	02 MAY 67	19E 14
HEAVIN, Willis Ray	SGT	03 MAY67	19E 25
HEDGPATH, William Thomas	PFC	26 APR 67	18E 94
HEIFNER, Edward William	PFC	25 JAN 68	35E 32
HEISER, John Louis	L/CPL	03 MAR 69	30W 24
HELGESON, Ellis Eugene Jr.	1LT	06 MAR 68	3E 20
HELWIG, Roger Danny	CAPT	11 SEP 69	18W 69
HELLWIG, Steven Louis	L/CPL	21 JAN 68	35E 6
HELMKE, Darrell Bruce	PFC	2 MAR 68	20E 76
HELMSTRETLER, Michael D.	1LT	19 JUN 68	56W 31
HENDERSHOTT, Thomas E	PFC	21 MAY 67	20E 76
HENDERSON, John Michael	LCPL	02 MAY 67	19E 14
HENDRIX, John Russell	SP4	05 APR 68	48E 17
HENNESSEY, James Dale	SP4	18 JUN 69	22W 77
HEPNER, Stephen Thomas	2LT	02 MAY 67	19E 14
HERNANDEZ, Frank Sanchez	SGT	06 MAY 70	11W 112
HERNANDEZ, Richard	PFC	30 APR 67	18E 122
HERNANDEZ, Robert	PFC	10 JUL 68	52W 10
HESTER, William Walter	PFC	01 JUL 68	54W 29
HETRICK, Raymond Harry	CAPT	24 FEB 66	5E 72
HICKS, Norman Edward Jr.	CPL	31 MAY 68	62W 11
HICKS, Paul Everett	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 21
HIGGS, Ralph Edward	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 21
HILL, Billy David	SGT	21 JAN 68	35E 6
HILL, James Edward Jr.	PFC	02 MAY 67	19E 14
HILL, Jerry James	PFC	24 MAY 68	68E 3

HIMEBAUGH, Lee Edward	CPL	27 MAY 68	65W9
HIMMER, Lawrence	CAPT	16 APR 68	50E 14
HINKLE, Jack Lee	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 14
HINSCHBERGER, Lawrence K	PFC	24 JUN 69	21W 7
HINSON, John Robert	PFC	16 AUG 67	25E 1
HISCOCK, Stephen Mayo	CWO	23 FEB 71	5W 134
HODGE, Michael Leonard	SSG	18 JUN 69	22W 78
HOLDEN, John Parker	2LT	11 APR 68	49E 23
HOLDER, Carl Lewis	PFC	03 JAN 69	35W 27
HOLDWAY, David Keith	LCPL	03 MAY 67	19E 26
HOLLAR. Howard Leslie	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 22
HOLLIMON, Billy Michael	PVT	05 MAR 68	43E 6
HOLLINGSWORTH, Gary Lynn	SP5	18 MAY 71	3W 40
HOLLIS, Thomas William	LCPL	28 JAN 68	35E 54
HOLLOWAY, James Owens Jr.	LCPL	04 APR 68	48E 5
HOLMES, David Hugh	LTCOL	15 MAR 66	6E 10
HOLT, James William	MSGT	07 FEB 68	37E 84
HOLTZCLAW, Gary Earl	1LT	02 MAY 69	26W 99
HOOD, Jerry Wayne	PFC	30 APR 67	18E 122
HOPKINS, Gary Wayne	CPL	05 JUL 68	53W 20
HORNBAKER, Kenneth Eugene	CPL	19 FEB 68	40E 22
HORSLEY, LaMonte Van	CPL	09 MAY 68	57E 23
HORTON, Robert Bernard	PFC	07 JUL 68	53W 35
HORVATH, Robert John	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 22
HOTTENROTH, James Randall	1LT	15 OCT 67	28E 9
HOUSTON, John Davis Jr.	PFC	17 APR 68	50E 29
HOUSTON, Marvin Lynn	LCPL	09 JUN 68	58W9
HOWARD, James Byron	HN	06 JUN 68	59W 5
HOWARD, Rodger Dale	PFC	08 FEB 69	33W 85
HOWARD, Sydney Claude	LCPL	14 MAR 69	29W 38
HOWLETT, Norman L Jr.	LCPL	30 MAR 68	47E12
HUBBARD, Charles Austin	BUL3	06 JUN 67	2IE 62
HUBER, Leon Fairden	SP4	02 FEB 68	36E 74
HUBER, Randy"S"	LCPL	28 MAY 68	64W 11
HUDSON, Roy	LCPL	31 JAN 68	36E 16
HUET, Henri (civilian)	DNA	10 FEB 71	DNA
HUFF, Richard Elliott	PFC	11 APR 69	27W 56
HUFF, William Edward	CPL	25 FEB 68	41E22
HUGHES, Samuel Reuben	SP5	21 APR 68	51E 21
HUMMEL, John Floyd	CWO	06 MAR 71	4W 28
HUMPHREYS, Larry Don	PFC	12 JUN 68	58W 32
HUNT, Joseph Thomas	CPL	27 JAN 68	35E 47
HUNT, Ralphe Edward, Jr.	1LT	07 JUN 68	59W 23
HUNT, William Howard	2LT	25 FEB 69	31W 49
HUNTER, Charles Lewis	SP4	18 JUN 69	22W 78
HUNTER, John Clark	1LT	20 FEB 71	5W 124
HUNTER, Russell Palmer, Jr.	CAPT	10 FEB 66	5E 22
HURD, Roger Michael	L/CPL	21 MAY 67	20E 75
HURLBERT, Roy Douglas	CPL	16 APR 68	50E 15
HURST, John Clark	CAPT	13 JUL 68	52W 21
HURST, Ronald Lynn	PFC	04 MAY 68	54E 40
HUSTON, Charles Gregory	SFC	28 MAR 68	46E 55
HUTCHINS, Frank John	SGT	02 MAR 68	42E 33
HUTCHINSON, Paul Lee	PFC	24 MAR 68	46E 7
HUWELL, Michael Francis	PFC	03 MAY 67	19E31
HYATT, Wayne Reuben	MAJ	18 FEB 71	5W 116

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IANIERI, Richard Joseph	LCPL	09 JUN 68	58W 10
IBANEZ, Di Reyes	GYSGT	05 JUN 67	21E 58
IMPERIALE, Ronald Joseph	LCPL	16 MAR 67	16E 92
IRSCH, Wayne Charles	1/LT	09 JAN 68	34E 7
IRWIN, Robert Joseph	LCPL	11 JUN 68	58W 28
ISLER, Reid Allen	HM3	17 MAY 68	62E 6
IVES, Timothy James	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 123
IVES, William Allen	PFC	24 MAR 68	46E 7

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JACKSON, Andrew	L/CPL	06 MAR 68	43E 23
JACKSON, Billy Lee	SSGT	09 APR 68	49E 2
JACKSON, Curtis Darrell	HM3	27 JUN 67	22E 71
JACKSON, James Wesley Jr.	LCPL	21 SEP 69	18W 121
JACKSON, Leonard Jr.	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 30
JACKSON, Nathaniel Earnest	CPL	16 APR 68	50E 15
JACOB, Robert Michael	PFC	04 APR 68	48E 5
JACQUES, Donald	2LT	25 FEB 68	41E 22
JAGGERS, Thomas Murl	CPL	04 MAY 67	19E37
JAMES, Mark Everett	LCPL	14 FEB 68	39E 48
JANNETTA, Rodney Alan	CPL	24 JUN 69	21W 8
JANOWICZ, Joseph Anthony	SP4	14 APR 68	49E 54

JASNOCHA, Alfred, Ladislaw	LCPL	15 MAY 68	60E 24
JAMES ,Mark Everett	CPL	15 FEB 68	39E 48
JAY, Robert Vern	CPL	05 MAR 68	30W 48
JAYNES, James Oakley	LCPL	25 APR 68	52E 6
JEFFRIES, Gerrie George	LCPL	24 FEB 68	41E 10
JEFFRIES, James Herbert	LCPL	20 MAR 69	29W 89
JENKINS, Earl Dale Jr.	CPL	16 NOV 67	30E 3
JENKINS, Michael Lee	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 50
JENKINS, Paul Laverne	MSGT	30 JUN 70	9W 105
JENKINS, Robert Henry Jr.	PFC	05 MAR 69	30W 46
JEREMIAH, Randall Craig	PFC	30 MAY 68	63W 16
JOHNS, Carey Lee	LCPL	18 JUN 68	56W 23
JOHNSON, Charles Timothy	LCPL	04 MAY 68	42E 67
JOHNSON, Charles William	LCPL	09 MAY 68	57E 24
JOHNSON, Daryl Linn	PFC	03 MAY 67	19E 26
JOHNSON Donald Vern	PFC	19 MAY 68	63E 11
JOHNSON, Edward A Jr.	SP4	18 FEB 71	4W 5
JOHNSON, Eugene Melvin Jr.	LCPL	07 APR 68	48E 42
JOHNSON, Freddie Lee	LCPL	27 JUN 67	22E 71
JOHNSON, Gary Lee	SP4	18 FEB 71	5W 116
JOHNSON, George Dennis	PFC	15 MAR 67	16E 92
JOHNSON, Gerald Lee	PFC	05 MAY 68	55E 18
JOHNSON, Harrell Wayne	LCPL	31 MAY 68	62W 11
JOHNSON, Havert Earl	PFC	12 JUN 68	57W 1
JOHNSON, Howard Leon	CPL	22 JAN 68	35E 11
JOHNSON, Kenneth Michael	PFC	07 JUN 67	21E 68
JOHNSON, Kenneth Richard	LCPL	16 FEB 68	39E 62
JOHNSON, Kim Williams	1LT	23 FEB 68	40E 77
JONSON, Randolph Leroy	SFC	20 FEB 71	5W 124
JOHNSON, Terry Melvin	PFC	21 JAN 68	35E 6
JOHNSON, Zebulon	SP4	15 FEB 71	5W 106
JOHNSTON, Dennis Neil	HN	16 APR 68	50E 19
JOHNSTON, Richard William	PFC	16 APR 68	50E I6
JONES, Bruce Edwin	LCPL	25 FEB 68	41E 22
JONES, Clifton Randal	LCPL	21 JAN 6 9	35E 6
JONES Donald Ernest	PFC	08 MAR 68	45E 56
JONES, Howard Lemuel Jr	LCPL	24 FEB 68	41W 10
JONES, Isaac	LCPL	26 APR 67	18E 94
JONES, Jack Pahl	LCPL	05 JUL 68	53W 21
JONES, James	SGM	03 OCT 66	11E 42
JONES, Jimme Lee	PFC	30 MAR 68	47E 12
JONES, John Robert	SGT	05 JUN 71	3W 66
JONES, Joseph Richard	PFC	05 JUL 68	53W 21
JONES, Larry Allen	PFC	24 APR 68	51E 47
JONES, Melvin Lewis	PFC	14 FEB 68	39E 34
JONES, Sam	LCPL	11 JUN 68	58W 26
JONES, Terry Augusta	PFC	30 DEC 67	33E 3
JONES, Walter Chapman III	CAPT	04 APR 68	48E 5
JORDAN, Allen Harold	1LT	06 APR 68	48E 28
JOYNER, Stephen Douglas	1LT	15 JUN 68	57W 27

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KAMINSKI, Kenneth	PFC	26 MAR 68	46W 36
KARAU, Ronald Dean	1LT	07 AUG 71	4W 061
KATZ, Ronald Christopher	SSG	13 MAR 69	29W 30
KAULBACK, Peter Jon	LCPL	31 MAY 68	51E 22
KEARSLEY, Ronald Charles	PFC	21 APR 68	51E 22
KEEFE, Dennis Michael	CPL	11 FEB 68	38E 78
KEEFER, Kenneth Ray	LCPL	07 JUN 68	21E 68
KEETLE, Jeffrey Charles	CPL	23 MAR 71	4W 70
KEGLOVITS, Edward Joseph	2LT	30 MAR 67	17E 22
KEITH, Daniel Scott	PFC	10 APR 69	27W 50
KELLUM, Norman Wade	LCPL	25 FEB 69	31W 51
KELLY, Eddie Jr.	CPL	17 MAY 68	62E 7
KENNEDY, Larry Scott	CPL	06 MAR 68	43E 23
KENT, Daniel Wilder	CPL	24 JAN 68	35E 23
KENT, Gregory Patrick	LCPL	28 MAR 68	46E 55
KERCHNER, Robert Bard	SGT	06 APR 68	48E 28
KESSLER, Jukis Allen II	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 123
KESTLER, Gary Lyle	LCPL	28 MAY 68	64W 11
KETCHIE, Scott Douglas	CAPT	09 APR 72	2W 134
KIDD, Melton Lavone	PFC	09 JUN 68	58W 10
KIDD, Phillip Meredith	PFC	09 APR 68	49E 3
KIEFEL, ERNST Phillip Jr	CAPT	09 APR 72	5E 23
KIER, Larry Gene	SSGT	06 MAY 70	11W 112
KILDERRY, Michael Joseph	LCPL	06 Jul 68	53W 27
KIER, Larry Gene	S/SGT	06 May 70	11W 112
KILGORE, Danny Ray	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 16
KINCAID, Paul Eddie	SGT	27 JUN 67	22E 71
KING, DeWayne	LCPL	14 APR 68	49E 53
KING, George Louis Jr	PFC	05 JUN 68	60W 19
KING, James Michael	PFC	21 MAR 69	29W 101
KINGSTON, Thomas Lloyd	LCPL	21 JAN 68	35E 7

KINNE, Allen Gene	SSGT	06 MAY 70	11W 114
KINNEY, Richard Lee	HN	30 APR 67	18 E 1123
KIRK, Robert Lee	WO	06 MAY 70	11W 114
KISSLING, Benjamin Kaon	CPL	09 APR 68	49E 3
KLEIN, Joseph	CPL	05 JUN 68	60W 19
KLEMENCIC, Joseph Gordon	PFC	09 MAY 67	19E 72
KNIGHT, Hubert Charles	PFC	16 MAY 68	61E 12
KNOLL, Anthony	PFC	25 MAY 68	68W 4
KNUTSEN, Donald Paul	SP4	22 MAR 71	4 W 67
KOENIG, David Bruce	LCPL	03 MAY 67	19E 27
KOMAN, Lawrence Ryland	2LT	30 MAR 68	47E 13
KOPP, Patrick Daniel	PFC	07 JUL 68	53W 36
KOT, Myron	CPL	07 FEB 68	38E 5
KOTIK, Robert john	PFC	30 APR 67	18E 13
KRISELL, James Lee	LCPL	10 MAY 68	63E 13
KRUGER, Robert Henry	PFC	03 MAY 67	19E 27
KURILICH, Robert Vaso	MAJ	07 JUL 68	59W 25
KURTZ, Lloyd Nelson	PFC	16 MAR 67	16E 92
KUSICK, Joseph George	SGT	08 NOV 67	29E 51

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LA PLANT, Kurt Elton	LCPL	06 JUN 68	59W 6
LA VIGNE, Steven Bruce	LCPL	18 JUN 68	56W 23
LABOHN, Gary Russell	SFC	30 NOV 68	37W13
LABONTE, Donald Arthur	HN	28 FEB 68	41E 68
LABOWSKI, Leonard William	SGT	25 MAR 69	28W 37
LACEY, Franklin D	PFC	28 MAR 68	46E 56
LANDEROUTE, Michael John	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 23
LADEWIG, Melvin Earl	1LT	24 AUG 68	46W 5
LAFAYETTE, John Wayne	MAJ	06 APR 66	6E 90
LAFOND, Roland Robert	CPL	02 MAY 68	54E I0
LAGENFELD, Charles T	HM3	17 APR 68	50E 30
LAMARR, Walter Loren	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 52
LAMITIE, Tyrone Francis	LCPL	05 FEB 68	37E 38
LAMON, Francis William Jr.	PFC	17 APR 68	50E 30
LAMON, William Charles Jr.	L/CPL	16 MAR 67	16E 93
LANCASTER, David Clyde	WO	21 MAR 71	4W 63
LAND, Sylvester	SGT	16 MAR 67	16E 93
LANDERS, Ronnie Ray	LCPL	09 MAY 67	19E 73
LANDERSHEIM, Larrie John	WO	23 MAY 70	10W 86
LANDI, George Francis	CPL	08 JUN 69	23W 111
LANE, Austin Clifford	LCPL	03 MAR 69	30W 26
LANE, Gerald Bruce	PFC	05 MAR 69	30W 47
LANE, Louis Michael	SGT	09 APR 68	49E 3
LANEY, Billy Ray	SGM	03 JUN 67	31E 48
LANGFORD, James Minter	SP4	03 APR 68	47E 52
LANGLEY, David Franci	SGT	05 JUL 68	53W 17
LANGSTON, Melvin Doyle	PFC	06 JUN 68	59W 6
LANGSTON, Michael Gary	LCPL	05 MAY 67	19E 43
LAPORT Leonard Oscar	LCPL	26 APR67	18E 94
LARIMORE, John Richard	PFC	24 NOV 68	38W 50
LASSITER, John Alford	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 24
LATSHAW, Harry K	PFC	06 MAR68	43E 25
LA VIGNE, Steven Bruce	L/CPL	18 JUN 68	56W 23
LAVOIE, Gerald Henry	CPL	15 JUN 68	57W 28
LAVOY, Eugene Louis Jr.	PVT	03 MAR 67	16E 11
LAWRENCE, Larry Eugene	LCPL	06 JUN 67	21E 62
LAWRENCE, William Aubrey	PFC	17 APR 68	50E 32
LAWS, Delmer Lee	SFC	29 JUL 66	9E 87
LE BLANC, Alfred Leroy	CPL	16 APR 68	50E 16
LE COMPTE, John Ault	LCPL	01 JUL 68	54W 31
LEAGUE, Roy Barry	SGT	04 MAY 68	54E 36
LEAHY, Robert Michael	PFC	07 JUN 68	59W 25
LEASURE, Delbert Louis	CPL	23 FEB 68	40E 76
LECASTRE, Kenneth John	CPL	09 MAY 67	19E 73
LEONARD, Kent Alan	PFC	24 APR 67	18E 80
LEONARD, Marvin Maurice	CWO	15 FEB 71	5W 107
LESAGE, Armand Paul	LCPL	07 APR 68	48E 42
LETSON, Gary Wayne	2LT	18 JUN 69	22W 79
LEVULIS, John Joseph	SP4	21 FEB 71	5W 28
LEWELLEN, Walter Edward	SGT	18 FEB 71	5W 117
LEWER, Thomas Charles	CPL	08 FEB 68	38E 32
LEWIS, Clarence Henry	CPL	14 MAR 63	44E 63
LEWIS, Donald Randall	LCPL	25 FEB 69	31W 52
LILLIE, Richard Arthur	SGT	18 FEB 71	5W 117
LINDBERG, Brian Victor	LCPL	04 APR 68	48E 7
LINDERMAN, Mark Thomas	PFC	21 JUL 67	23E 101
LINDEWALD, Charles W Jr.	MSGT	07 FEB 68	38E 5
LINDSEY, Philip Trieste	PFC	09 APR 68	49E 4
LINDSTOM, Ronnie George	CAPT	02 JAN 70	15W 115
LINK, Frederick Beard	LCPL	01 MAR 68	42E 19
LIPSIUS, Michael Glenn	PFC	19 APR 68	50E 49
LIPTAK, Charles Lewis	PFC	12 APR 69	27W 66
LISLE, Terrill Michael	PFC	04 APR 69	27W 11

LITTLE, Donnie Hugh	CPL	09 JUN 68	58W 10
LITTLEFIELD, Robert H	CPL	16 APR 68	50E 17
LIVINGSTON, Billy Dale	PFC	26 FEB 68	41E40
LLOYD, Kenneth Edwin	PVT	02 MAR 68	42E 35
LOCKETT, Lloyd	PFC	05 JUN 68	55E 23
LOCKHART, John Thomas	SP5	11 MAR 71	4W 38
LOFSTROM, Leland Eddy	LCPL	15 MAY 68	60E 25
LOGAN, James Dwight	LCPL	25 FEB 69	31W 52
LOHMAN, Herman Augusta Jr.	CPL	06 APR 68	48E 29
LONG, Leonard	HN	26 MAR 68	46E 37
LONG, William Louis	1LT	20 JUN 69	22W 99
LOOMIS, Richie Allan	PFC	06 JUL 69	21W 71
LOONEY, Paul Thomas	CAPT	10 MAY 67	19E 84
LOPEZ, Jose Angel, Jr	HN	18 APR 68	50E 40
LOPEZ, Robert Francisco	PFC	15 JUN 68	57W 29
LOUIS, Robert Youngdale Jr.	PFC	03 MAY 67	19E 28
LOVATO, Michael Leon	PFC	09 FEB 68	38E 55
LOVETT, Terry Wayne	PFC	12 JUN 69	22W 33
LOWE, Barry	PFC	09 JUN 68	58W 10
LOWE, Louis Cardell	LCPL	14 MAY 68	60E 14
LOWERY, James Allen	PFC	05 FEB 68	37E 39
LUEBBERS, Ralph Joseph Jr.	LCPL	28 MAY 68	64W 11
LYNCH, Charles Aaron	LCPL	27 JUN 67	22E 71
LYNN, Roy Eugene	PFC	03 MAR 69	30W 31
LYON, Donovan Loren	MAJ	22 MAR 68	45E 58
LYONS, Carl	PFC	22 MAR 68	45E 59
LYONS, Chester George	SGT	20 FEB 71	5W 125
LYONS, Marion Wade	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 53
LYVERA, Ronald Lee	PFC	25 APR 67	18E 86

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MACAGBA, Edilberto Dula	HM3	13 MAR 68	44E 38
MACMILLAN, Thomas	LCPL	06 MAR 68	43E 28
MACON, Samuel Cornelius	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 53
MAGERS, Paul Gerald	1LT	01 JUN 71	3W 61
MAHARG, Evert Ralph	PFC	26 APR 67	18E 95
MAHONEY, Michael Thomas	SP5	29 JAN 68	35E 61
MAHONEY, Thomas P III	LCPL	06 JUL 68	53W 27
MAKIN, Woodrow Jr.	PFC	28 MAY 681	64W 12
MALONEY, Jeffrey Raymond	CPL	26 APR 67	18E 95
MANGOLD, Leo Joseph	PFC	03 MAR 69	30W 27
MANTHEI, James Walter	WO	21 MAR 71	4W 64
MARC AURELE, Lionel Lucien	SP4	18 JUN 69	22W 79
MARCANO, Carlow Albert	CPL	19 APR 68	50E 4
MARCOTTE, Andre Edward	LCPL	01 JUL 67	22E 92
MARIN-RAMOS Hector Ramon	SGT	14 APR 68	49E 53
MARIZ, Robert J	1LT	30 JAN 68	35E 75
MARSHALL, Clifford Wayne	CPL	19 FEB 71	5W 121
MARSHALL, Joseph Henry III	1LT	18 FEB 71	5W 118
MARSHALL, Roland Trent	PFC	17 MAY 68	62E 8
MARSON, Rickey Joe	PFC	07 APR 68	48E 43
MARTEL, Normand Richard	PFC	02 MAY 67	19E 28
MARTIN, Gary Alan	LCPL	01 MAR 68	42E 20
MARTIN, Harry Pemberton	PFC	09 JUN 68	58W11
MARTINEZ, Mauro	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 18
MARTORELLA, Gary Mario	LCPL	31 MAY 68	62W 4
MARTURANO, Joseph Anthony Jr	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 25
MARX, Robert Garry	CPL	27 MAY 68	65W 11
MASSIE, George Edgar	PFC	24 MAY 68	68E 5
MASTERS, Edward Ulyses	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 30
MATHEWS, James Michael	CPL	18 JUN 68	56W 25
MATTHEWS, Charles Toney	SGT	19 FEB 71	5W 121
MATTHEWS, William Lawrence	LCPL	15 APR 68	50E 6
MAY, David Murray	CAPT	20 FEB 71	5W 125
MAYBERRY, Squire Newton Jr.	PFC	31 MAY 68	52W 13
MAYER, Paul Evans	MGSGT	28 MAR 68	46E 57
MAYSAY, Larry Wayne	SGT	08 NOV 67	29E 60
MAZARIEGOS, Francisco Albe	LCPL	27 JUN 67	22E 68
MAZILLO, Peter Jr.	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E 124
MC CABE, Marc Wayne	SGT	28 FEB 68	41E 70
MC CALL, Billy Ray	SGT	22 Feb 68	40E 66
MC CANN, James Kevin	LCPL	03 Feb 68	37E 10
MC CARTHY, Loyd Van Jr.	CAPT	16 MAR 71	4W 52
MC CASKEY, Robert Walter	MAJ	07 APR 68	48E 44
MC CASKILL, William	PFC	26 APR 67	18E 96
MC CLAIN, William David	SGT	16 MAY 68	61E 15
MC CLATCHEY, Jeffrey Jr.	SP5	01 MAR 68	42E 12
MC CLELLAND, Aubrey David	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 19
MC CLELLAND, George	SSGT	25 FEB 68	41E 25
MC CLINTOCK, Gerald	PFC	15 JUN 68	57W 29
MC CLUNG, Ronald Olin	PFC	24 Sep 67	27E 5
MC COOK, Gregory Madison	SGT	09 MAY 67	19E 73
MC CORMICK, Michael P	2LT	20 MAR 69	29W 91
MC COSAR, Winford	LCPL	06 MAR 68	43E 28

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2011 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

MC DANIEL, Roy Dean	CPL	08 FEB 68	38E 35
MC DONALD, Henry III	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 26
MC DONALD, Lewis Levi	PFC	07 MAR 69	30W 62
MC DONELL R D	SSGT	25 MAR 71	5W 125
MC ELFRESH, Allen Keith	SGT	18 FEB 71	5W 118
MC ELRATH, Winston	LCPL	31 MAY 68	62W 14
MC GARVEY, Patrick George	CPL	12 APR 68	49E 35
MC GRATH, Edward Albert	CPL	06 APR 68	48E 31
MC GRATH, Thomas Howard	LCPL	25 FEB 69	31W 64
MC HENRY, Paul Vincent	LCPL	15 JUN 68	57W 30
MC INTOSH, IAN	W/O	24 NOV 70	6W 79
MC KAIN Bobby Lyn	CW2	03 MAY 68	54E 27
MC KEE, Julian Allan	LCPL	16 MAR 67	16E 95
MC KEEVER, Michael E	LCPL	23 FEB 68	40E 75
MC KENZIE, Richard W	LCPL	25 FEB 68	41 E 26
MC KIBBAN, Michael James	SSGT	01 JAN 69	35W 17
MC KINLEY, Allen	PVT	08 FEB 68	38E 35
MC KINNEY, Bernard B. Jr.	SSGT	08 FEB 68	38E 35
MC KINNEY, Clemie	LT	14 APR 72	2W 36
MC KINSEY, Gerald Leroy Jr.	WO	21 JAN 68	35E 8
MC LEAN, Ronald Walsh	1LT	08 JUN 69	23W 113
MC LEMORE, John Wilson Jr.	PFC	22 MAR 71	4W 68
MC LEOD, Arthur Edward	CWO	12 FEB 71	5W 100
MC MAKINS, Reuben Carl	CPL	14 APR 68	49E 54
MC MANUS, Truman Joseph	LCPL	05 JUN 68	60W 20
MC MILLAN, Bruce Francis	CAPT	11 APR 68	49E 24
MC MULLIN, Charles	PFC	17 MAY 68	62E 9
MC MURRAY, Fred Howell Jr.	1LT	07 APR 68	48E 45
MC MURRAY, Peter Hinchman	1LT	27 AUG 69	19W 125
MC NAMAR, Carl	HN	17 APR 68	50E 32
MC NAMARA, Donald Woodward	CPL	21 JUL 67	23E 102
MC NAMARA, William James	LCPL	27 MAY 68	65W 12
MC NEILL Kenneth Rex	PFC	02 JUN 69	23W 46
MC PHEE, Randy Nea	PFC	30 APR 67	18E 125
MC RAE, Jimmie Lefon	PFC	28 MAR68	46E 57
MEACHAM, Richard W. Jr.	CAPT	22 MAY 70	I0W 81
MEAD, Dennis Michael	PVT	06 MAR 68	43E 26
MEADE, Thomas Allerton	CPL	06 FEB 68	37E 62
MEADOWS, Artis Wilbur Jr.	CPL	07 APR 68	48E 44
MEADS, Kim Elmer	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 25
MEDEIROS, Dennis J.	CPL	06 MAR68	43E 26
MEDEIROS, William Correia	LCPL	16 APR 68	50E 18
MEGGS, Marion Lee	LCPL	16 NOV 67	30E 4
MEIER, Roy Alan	PFC	02 MAR 68	42E 36
MEIER, Terrance Leo	SSGT	21 JUL 67	24E 104
MEIN, Michael Howard	SSGT	30 NOV 68	37W 13
MEISTER, David William	LCPL	08 MAY 68	57E 6
MEIXNERI, Edwin F	MAJ	28 FEB 68	41E69
MENNINGER, Robert Patrick	PFC	01 MAR 69	30W 6
MENTON, Charles Russell J.	LCPL	16 MAY 68	61E 13
MERCER, William Ivan	HM2	15 JUN 68	57W 129
MEUSE, John Richard	PFC	03 MAY 67	19E 29
MEYSEMBOURG, Daniel L	PFC	11 MAR 68	44E 18
MIDTHUN, Roger Wayne	PFC	15 MAY 68	60E 25
MIECZKOWSKI, Joseph	L/CPL	30 APR 67	18E 124
MIKELS, James Herbert Jr.	SGT	28 FEB 68	41E 69
MILES, James Edward	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 27
MILLARD, Kenneth Arthur	LCPL	27 JUN 67	22E 72
MILLARD, Loren Ray	HM3	06 JUN 68	59W 8
MILLER, Charles Claude	L/CPL	04 APR 68	48E 7
MILLER, Charles Wayne	HN	24 JAN 68	35E 24
MILLER, Eugene Stuart	CAPT	23 MAY 70	10W 86
MILLER, Malcolm Thomas	HM3	10 MAY 67	19E 72
MILLER, Michael Andrew	1LT	28 MAR 69	28W 72
MILLER, Tommy Neal	CPL	25 FEB 69	31W 53
MILLETT, Steven Lawrence	PFC	07 JUN 67	21E 69
MILLINER, William Patrick	CWO	06 MAR 71	4W 29
MILLS, Arthur Lee	PFC	12 APR 68	49E 34
MINCH, Roger Carl	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 26
MINER, James Allen	CWO	23 FEB 71	5W 135
MINES, James Jr.	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 125
MIRACLE, James Jr.	PFC	03 APR 68	47E 52
MIRAMONTEZ, Enrique	CPL	18 JUN 69	22W 80
MITCHELL, Joseph Robert Jr.	2LT	30 APR 67	18E 125
MIZNER, Darrell, Condie	PFC	09 JUN 68	58W 11
MOCK, Donald Ray	PFC	05 MAY 68	55E 25
MOFFETT, James Delton	CPL	04 JUN 68	60W 11
MOFFITT, Thomas Carroll D	PFC	13 MAR 69	29W 31
MOISE, Heme Jean	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 18
MOLAISON, Gordon, Thomas	CPL	19 MAY 68	63E 13
MOLE, Malcolm Geoffrey	HM3	21 JAN 68	35E 7
MOLETTIERE, Joseph Anthony	LCPL	18 JUN 68	56W 25
MONAT, Donald Henry	HM3	25 APR 67	18E 87
MONCAYO, Jose Roberto	SGT	18 JUN 68	56W 25
MONNETT, Leonard Allen	SP5	19 FEB 71	5W 121

MONROE, Wilbur Dean	LCPL	11 JUN 68	58W 26
MONTGOMERY, Michael Mallory	CPL	05 MAY 68	55E 27
MONTIJO, Michael	CPL	02 JUN 69	23W 45
MONTZ, Roger Ellis	PFC	19 MAY 68	63E 13
MOODY, Charles Wilburn	SSG	06 APR 68	48E 30
MOONEY, Fred	SFC	27 FEB 71	4W 10
MOORE, Dallas Henry	SGT	06 MAR 68	43E 27
MOORE, Harry Truman	LCPL	31 MAY 8	62W 13
MOORE, James Ezra	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 27
MOORE, Larry Gene	PFC	16 MAR 68	50E 19
MOORE, Lewis Wayne	PFC	10 MAR 68	44E 1019
MOORE, Lloyd Whitfield	HN	25 FEB 68	41E 25
MOORE, Wayne Paul	LCPL	30 MAR 68	47E 14
MOORE, William Roosevelt	CPL	03 MAY 67	19E 29
MORAN, David Alfred	SP4	23 JAN 72	5W 99
MORAN, Walter C. B	SP4	23 JAN 72	2W 100
MORDEN, Robert Nelson	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 7
MORELAND, James Leslie	SFC	07 FEB 68	38E 7
MORELOS, Catarino Jr.	PFC	06 JUN 68	59W8
MORGAN, Charles Lewis	LCPL	31 MAY 68	62W 14
MORGAN, Michael Roy	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E 125
MORIARTY, Peter Gibney	CAPT	22 MAR 71	4W68
MORRIS, Larry Lee	PFC	07 JUN 67	21E 69
MORRIS, Wayman Dewey	PFC	31 MAY 68	62W 14
MORRISSEY, Thomas Jr.	CPL	05 JUN 68	60W 20
MORROW, Harold Eugene	GYSGT	21 JUL 67	23E 101
MORTON, David Eugene	LCPL	02 AUG 68	50W 52
MOSES, Clifton	PFC	07 APR 68	48E 44
MOSLEY, Edward	TSGT	15 OCT67	28E 10
MOSS, Thomas John Jr.	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 27
MOSSO, Robert Bruce	SGT	26 MAR 68	46E 39
MOTTOLA, Vincent Antonio	PFC	23 FEB 68	40E 77
MOUNT, John Edward	LCPL	07 APR 68	48E 44
MUELLER, Marco Francisco	LCPL	15 MAY 68	60E 26
MULGREW, Kevin Spear	LCPL	09 APR 68	49E 4
MULLET, Steven James	PFC	21 JUL 67	23E 102
MURDOCK, Carl Thomas	LCPL	15 MAY 68	60E 26
MURFF, William Edward	PFC	21 JUL 67	23E 103
MURPHY, David	CPL	23 APR 68	51E 40
MURPHY, Patrick Michael	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 34
MURPHY, Richard Brian	L/CPL	15 JUN 68	57W 29
MURRAY, James Francis	CPL	26 APR 67	18E 95
MUTZ, Dennis Howard	LCPL	04 MAR 68	42E 69
MUVICH, Dennis Robert	2/LT	19 MAY 68	63E 14
MYERS, David Gephart II	LT	08 JUN 67	21E 75

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NACCA, Carl Jr.	WO	20 FEB 71	5W 126
NARVAEZ, Paul Reyes	SGT	18 JUN 69	22W 81
NASH, David Eugene	SGT	09 JUN 68	58W 12
NASH, Thomas Steven	PFC	07 APR 68	48E 45
NAUGHTON, Thomas Daniel Jr	HN	18 JUN 69	22W 81
NEAL, Charles Marion Jr.	LCPL	25 APR 67	18E 87
NEAL, William Edward	SP4	24 MAR 71	4W 73
NEELEY, William Merritt	PFC	21 APR 68	51E 24
NELSON, Max Alvin	LCPL	24 FEB 68	41E 11
NELSON, Roger Miller	HN	07 APR 68	48E 45
NELSON, Stephen Carl	PFC	25 APR 67	18E 87
NEWFIELD, Jimmy Charles	LCPL	12 JUN 68	57W 2
NEWTON, Leonard Lee	PFC	19 JAN 68	34E 80
NICKLOW, Danny Eugene	PFC	16 MAR 67	16E 95
NIEBUR, Edward Leroy	HM2	27 FEB 68	41E 52
NIELSEN, Charles Joseph	LCPL	14 APR 68	49E 52
NIELSEN, Harold Richard	CPL	21 JUL 67	23E 103
NIGHTENGALE, Timothy James	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 31
NILES, Ronald Edward	CPL	09 MAY 67	19E 73
NINOW, William Charles	HM3	03 MAR 69	30W 28
NIXON, John Arleigh	CPL	11 APR 68	49E 24
NORMAN, Marion Henry	1LT	30 MAR 68	47E 15
NORTON, Kenneth Bradley	CPL	08 MAY 68	57E 7
NOVEMBRE, Carmine	CPL	25 APR 68	52E 9

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OBREGON, Raul Albert	PFC	28 MAY 68	64W 14
O'CONNOR, Dennis Alfred	CPL	27 JUN 67	22E 72
O'CONNOR, Michael Maurice	1LT	04 JUN 69	23W 66
ODOM, William Clinton Jr.	SGT	18 FEB 71	5W 118
OESTEREICH, Tilo Rudolph	CPL	07 APR 68	48E 45
OGATA, Terrance Aki	SP4	23 FEB 71	5W 133
OGDEN, David Ellis	SSGT	06 MAY 70	11W 115

O'HARE, Richard James	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 29
OLIVER, Erskine Jay	LCPL	30 MAY 69	23W 22
OLIVER, Troy Robert Jr.	CAPT	19 MAY 68	63E 15
OLNEY, Steven Ira	CPL	02 JUN 68	61W 15
OLSEN, George Charles	PFC	01 MAY 68	53E 39
OMMEN, Peter Richard	PFC	30 APR 67	18E 126
ORBINO, Dennis Michael	SGT	25 MAR 69	28W 39
ORNELAS, John Carl	SGT	05 FEB 68	37E 41
OROPEZA, Manuel Garcia	PFC	02 JUL 68	54W 38
OROSCO, Stephen	PFC	18 JUN 69	22W81
ORTIZ, Randall Isaac-Jed	LCPL	05 JUN 68	60W 21
ORTIZ, Kenneth William Jr.	SGT	20 AUG 69	19 W 81
ORTON, Kenneth William Jr.	SGT	26 APR 67	18E 96
OSBORNE, David Franklin	PFC	02 MAY 69	26W 101
OSTAPCHUK, Walter Michael	LCPL	05 APR 68	48E 19
OUTWATER, Albert Aleya	SGT	21 JUL 67	23E 102
OVERTON, Doyle Wayne	PFC	14 JUN 68	57W 21
OWENS, Elwood	LCPL	18 JUN 68	56W 26
OWENS, Robert Franklin	CPL	16 APR 68	50E 19
OWENS, Timothy Eugene	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 19

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PACE, Gary Lynn	SGT	31 MAR 69	28W 100
PADILLA, David Esequiel	LCPL	18 MAY 68	62E 22
PADILLA, Gary Teofilio	CPL	03 MAR 71	4W 20
PADILLA, Ralph Henry	PVT	12 JUN 68	57W 2
PAGAN, Miquel	PFC	15 MAY 68	61E 1
PAKELE, Fred Dale	SSG	09 FEB 71	5W 92
PARACIOS, Luis Fernando	LCPL	06 JUN 68	59W 11
PALMA, Francis Michael	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E 126
PALMIERI, David Harold	PFC	12 JUN 69	22W 35
PAMPLIN, John Mac	CPL	16 MAY 68	61E 16
PARCEL, John William	LCPL	22 APR 68	51E 32
PARENT, Jeffery Mark	LCPL	04 MAY 69	25W 1
PARKER, George Joseph Jr.	SGT	20 APR 69	26W 15
PARKER, James Edward	SSG	20 JUN 69	22W 100
PARKER, William Hill	LCPL	06 JUN 68	59W 11
PARSLEY, Edward Milton	A1C	03 FEB 66	41E 135
PARSONS, Charles Edward	SGT	28 FEB 68	41E 69
PATRICK, Albert Earl	PFC	14 FEB 68	39E 37
PATTERSON, Jerry Leroy	PFC	30 JUL 68	50W 37
PATTERSON, Patrick Chasie	PFC	15 APR 68	50E 7
PATTERSON, William Anthony	PFC	09 JUN 68	58W16
PATTON, Barry Michael	LCPL	02 APR 68	47E41
PAUL, James Lee	WO	05 FEB 71	5W79
PAYNE, Robert Paul	CPL	18 MAR 68	45E 74
PAYNE, Troy David Jr	CPL	26 APR 67	18E 97
PEARCE, Dale Allen	WO	17 MAY 71	3W39
PEARCY, Robert Leslie	PFC	04 JUN 69	23W 67
PECK, Darrell Vernon	PFC	01 JUN 69	23W 39
PECK, Steven Russell	WO	15 MAR 71	4W 51
PECKHAM, George Robert	LCPL	04 APR 68	48E 8
PEDA, Robert Charles	1LT	07 APR 68	48E 46
PEDERSON, Roger Alan	SP4	29 MAR 71	4W 92
PEMBLETON, Ronald Lee	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 36
PENETTI, Francis	LCPL	24 JAN 68	35E 26
PEOPLES, Perry Lee	LCPL	26 APR 67	18E 97
PEPPER, Anthony John	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 32
PEPPLE, Carl Franklin Jr.	CPL	05 JUN 67	19E 44
PERETTA, John Rocco	CPL	15 FEB 68	39E 52
PEREZ, Daniel Torres	LCPL	24 APR 67	18E 81
PEREZ, Jesus Albert	PFC	24 JUN 69	21W 9
PERILLO, Donald Lee	PFC	04 APR 68	48E 8
PERKINS, Charles Harold	GYSGT	17 MAY 68	62E 09
PERKINS, Stephen John	SP4	23 MAY 70	10W 67
PERRY, James Earl	PFC	16 MAR 67	16E 96
PESCHEL, James Douglas	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 55
PETAL, John Darryl	PFC	20 MAR 69	29W 91
PETERSON, Carl Elving	COL	10 FEB 68	38E 71
PETTITT, James Allen	SP4	14 APR 68	49E 54
PHEARS, Ronald Gene	WO	04 APR 68	48E 9
PHELPS, Randall Carl	PFC	08 APR 68	48E 54
PHILLIPS, Daniel Raymond	SFC	07 FEB 68	38E 10
PIAZZA, Robert Gary	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 33
PICANSO, Leonard Jr.	PFC	03 MAY 67	19E 30
PICHON, Herman Edward	PFC	24 MAR 71	4W 73
PIETRZAK, Joseph Ray	SGT	10 FEB 71	5W 93
PINALES, Lawrence	LCPL	04 JUL 68	53W 11
PIANATELLI, Thomas Michael	PFC	09 FEB 68	38E 71
PINO, Alfred	LCPL	16 MAR 67	16E96
PINSONNAULT, Richard Norman	HM3	07 JUL 68	53W 38

PITTS, Freddie Richard	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E 126
PITTS, Wayne Monroe	PFC	07 JUN 67	21E 70
PIZARRO, Vic Manuel	CPL	06 MAR 68	43E 30
PLANCHON, Randall T. II	CPL	15 JUN 68	57W 30
PLILER, Larry Dean	SGT	31 MAY 68	62W 15
PLUNKETT, Raymond Louis	CPL	30 MAR 68	47E 15
POE, Clifford Earl Jr.	CWO	06 MAY 70	11W 116
POILANE, Eugene (Civilian)	DNA	20 APR 64	DNA
POILANE, Felix (Civilian)	DNA	13 APR 68	DNA
POLK, Robert Louis	LCPL	09 JUN 68	58W 13
POLLARD, William Alfred	PFC	21 JUL 67	23E 103
POLT, Erwin Andrew	PFC	24 MAR 68	46E 10
POMERLEAU, James Gerald	CPL	24 APR 67	18E 81
PONDOFF, John Christopher	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 36
PONIKTERA, Stanley F. Jr.	LCPL	28 MAY 68	64W 14
POPOWITZ, Gregory Francis	LCPL	24 JAN 68	35E 26
PORTER, Lawrence Eugene	LCPL	06 JUN 68	59W 12
PORTER, Richard Lee	PFC	07 APR 69	27W 33
POTIER, Milton Phillip	CPL	05 JUN 68	55E 27
POTTER, Kent Biddle (Civilian)	DNA	10 FEB 71	DNA
POWELL, David Lee	LCPL	23 JUN 68	55W 22
POWELL, John Dee Jr	LCPL	30 JUN 68	54W 24
POWELL, Peter Earl	SP5	11 APR 68	49E 25
POWELL, Robert Clyde	SGT	03 MAY 67	19E 30
POWELL, Troy Everrett	LCPL	02 MAY 69	26W 102
POWERS, John Lynn	SP4	15 FEB 71	5W 107
PRESCOTT, Milton Emmett Jr.	SGT	30 APR 67	18E 127
PRESLEY, Avey	PFC	25 MAR 69	28W 39
PRESLEY, Ronnie Calvin	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 30
PRESTON, Alvin Lewis	PFC	08 MAY 68	57E 9
PRICE, Dwight Anthony	PFC	11 JUN 68	58W 28
PRIEBE, James Edward	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E 127
PRUIETT, Thomas Pierre Jr.	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 30
PRUITT, George Alan	CPL	08 APR 68	48E 54
PRZYBLINSKI, Gerald	LCPL	25 FEB 69	31W 56
PUENTES, Manuel Rameriz	SSGT	25 MAR 71	4W 78
PYLE, Timothy Howard	LCPL	02 MAY 69	26W 102

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QUAMO, George	MAJ	14 APR 68	50E 1
QUATTLEBAUM, John Franklin	PVT	07 APR 68	48E 46
QUIGLEY, James Michael	CPL	09 MAY 67	19E 74
QUINONES, Edward	CPL	03 JUN 68	60W 5
QUINTANILLA, Jeffrey Iglesias	SGT	23 MAR 71	4W 71

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RAMIEREZ, Juan Jose	LCPL	03 MAY 67	19E 30
RAMOS, Bernardo Kealoha	CPL	24 MAR 71	4W 75
RAMOS, George Michael	SGT	03 MAY 67	19E 30
RAMPULLA, Terry James	LCPL	16 APR 68	50E 20
RAMSEY, Milton Hardin	MAJ	01 MAR 71	4W 14
RAMSEY, Randolph, Raymond	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 56
RANDALL, James Arthur	PFC	30 APR 67	18E 127
RANEY, Steven Leon	SP4	02 FEB 68	36E 83
RANSBOTTOM, Michael Lee	CPL	07 APR 68	48E 46
RASH, Donald Ray	PFC	30 MAR 68	47E 15
RAUEN, John Vernon	WO	20 FEB 71	5W 126
RAY, Franklin Daniel	PFC	23 FEB 68	41E 2
RAY, Kermit Anthony	LCPL	26 APR 67	18E 97
READ, Charles Harold W. Jr.	MAJ	24 AUG 68	46W 7
REAGAN, Dickie Walter	SP4	06 MAY 70	11W 117
REATHER, Wallace Lee Jr.	PFC	22 JAN 68	35E 50
REDENIUS, David Gary	CPL	16 APR 68	50E 20
REECE, Walter James	SGT	19 MAY 68	63E 17
REED, James Clayton	PVT	20 APR 69	29W 92
REED, Larry Bruce	PFC	06 JUN 68	59W 12
REESE, William Robert	2LT	14 FEB 68	39E 38
REGNOLDS, James Randolph	PFC	21 MAR 69	28W 2
REID, James Alfred	PFC	06 JUN 68	59W 12
REID, Jon Eric	CW2	20 FEB 71	5W 126
REVLAND, Ricky Don	PFC	05 MAY 67	19E 45
REX, Robert F	CAPT	09 MAR 69	30W 95
REYES, Ronald	PFC	30 MAR 68	47E 16
REYES, William	LCPL	05 JUL 68	53W 23
REYNA, Samuel	CPL	20 APR 68	51E 13
REZENDES, Paul Allen	HM3	18 JUN 69	22W 82
RHOADS, David	PVT	16 MAR 67	16E 97
RICE, John Climath	PFC	03 MAR 67	19E 31
RICE, Robert	SGT	16 APR 68	50E 20
RICHARDSON, James Douglas	PFC	07 APR 68	48E 47

RICHARDSON, Scott Douglas	PFC	30 APR 67	18 E 127
RIDENHOUR, Darwin Bruce	SSG	01 APR 68	47E 36
RIEDE, Ronald Edgar	1LT	11APR 68	49E 25
RIGSBY, Barry Lane	PFC	14 FEB 68	39E 38
RILEY, James Thomas	CAPT	22 FEB 68	40E 68
RILEY, Larry Lloyd	LCPL	24 MAY 68	69E 1
RIMEL, Melvin Lewis	GYSGT	21 JAN 68	35E9
RIMSON, Martin Luther	PFC	05 FEB 68	37E 43
RIORDAN, Patrick Carlisle	PFC	19 MAY 68	63E 17
RIOS, Noel Lewis	SSGT	06 MAR 68	30W 69
RIPORTELLA, Frank J. Jr.	LCPL	26 MAR 67	18E97
RIVERA, Arnold Javier	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 27
RIZO, Albert Martinez	CPL	12 MAY 68	59E 12
RIZZO, James Patrick	L/CPL	08 FEB 68	38E 38
ROACH, Terence Raymond	2LT	08 FEB 68	38E 38
ROBERTS, Ben	PFC	03 MAY 67	19E31
ROBERTS, Gary Kenneth	L/CPL	06 JUN 68	59W 13
ROBERTSON, Gerald William	PFC	14 FEB 68	39E 38
ROBERTSON, John Ernest	CPL	08 FEB 71	5W 89
ROBERTSON, Leonard	MAJ	07 JUL 72	1W54
ROBERTSON, Mark John	WO	10 FEB 71	5W 94
ROBINSON, Lance Allen	CPL	23 MAR 71	4W 71
ROBINSON, Lionel Lareau	CPL	10 APR 68	49E 15
ROBINSON, Samuel Percell	CPL	06 MAR 68	43E 31
ROBINSON, Walter R. J	L/CPL	30 APR 67	18E 127
ROBITAILLE, Paul Edward	GYSGT	23 FEB 68	41E 2
RODRIQUES, Joe G Jr.	SGT	03 MAR 69	30W 29
RODRIQUEZ, Domingo Jr.	PVT	06 MAR 68	43E 31
RODRIQUEZ, Manuel Jr.	PFC	02 JUN 69	23W 47
RODRIQUEZ, Paul M. Jr.	PFC	27 JUN 67	22E 72
ROE, Royce Evert	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 56
ROGERS, Douglas Manue	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 128
ROLDAN, William Junior	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E 128
ROMANO, August	PFC	09 JUN 68	58W 14
ROMERO, Manuel Villareal	LCPL	06 APR 68	48E 33
ROSA, Juan Antonio	LCPL	24 JAN 68	35E 27
ROSSANO, Richard Joseph	PFC	25 MAR 71	4W 78
ROTH, Frank Theodore	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E128
ROUNTREE, Ronald Corbin	LCPL	08 FEB 68	38E 38
ROWE, Arthur Mortimer	PFC	01 JUN 68	61W6
ROWE, Sharber Mayfield	SGT	07 JUL 68	53W 38
ROZELLE, David Thomas	LCPL	21JAN 68	35E 9
RUBY, Blane Markwood	PFC	05 JUN 68	60W 21
RUDD, Donald Lee	HM2	03 MAR 69	30W 29
RUDD, James Earl	PFC	06 AUG 68	49W 20
RUDD, Richard John Jr	PFC	21 APR 68	51E 25
RUFF, Willie Jerome	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 28
RUIZ, Antonio Elizondo	PFC	14 MAR 69	29W 40
RUIZ, Gilbert	PFC	21 MAR 69	28W 3
RUIZ, Jose Jr	PFC	30 MAR 68	47E 16
RUIZ, Jose	CPL	16 APR 68	50E 20
RUIZ, Thomas	LCPL	01 JUL 68	54W 32
RUNKLE, Robert Leslie	LTCOL	04 APR 68	48E 10
RUSH, Ervin Lee	LCPL	03 APR 68	47E 54
RUSH, Marvin Gene	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 21
RUSSELL, David Adams	SGT	09 MAR 68	43E 69
RUSSELL, James Lowell	LCPL	11 MAR 68	44E 20
RUSSELL, John Malcolm Jr.	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 32
RUSSELL, Larry Gene	LCPL	17 APR 68	50E 33
RUTGERS, David Lynn	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 57
RYAN, Ronald Royce	CPL	06 MAR 68	43E 32
RYAN, William Cornelius Jr	1LT	11 MAY 69	25W 54
RYDEN, Gary Ardean	PFC	03 APR 68	47E 54
RYDER, Aldo Eugene	PFC	04 JUN 68	60W 12

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SACHEN, William George Jr.	LCPL	19 MAY 68	63E17
SAIN, Don Rue	SP4	29 JUL 66	9E 88
SALLEY, Hank	PFC	05 JUN 69	23W 79
SAMUELSON, Robert L	SGT	07 APR 68	48E 43
SANCHEZ, Javier Arturo "E"	SSGT	03 MAY 67	19E 32
SANCHEZ, Jose Ramon	PFC	06 JUN 68	59W 13
SANDERS, Gerald Jude	LCPL	05 JUL 68	53W 23
SANDERS, Glenn Edward	LCPL	29 JUN 67	22E 85
SANDERS, William Stephen	CAPT	30 JUN 70	9W 107
SANDOVAL, Daniel Flore	SP5	15 APR 68	50E 10
SANFORD, Albert Russell	CPL	30 MAR 68	47E 16
SANSEVERINO, Anthony	CPL	29 APR 67	18E 116
SANTISTEVAN, Benny Manuel Jr.	PFC	02 APR 68	47E 43
SARGENT, George Thomas Jr.	LTCOL	21 MAR 69	28W 3
SATTER, Donald Stephen	PFC	06 JUN 68	59W 13

SAUER, Phillip Howard	1LT	24 APR 67	18E 81
SAUNDERS, Bruce Allan	LCPL	25 FEB 69	31W 57
SAUNDERS, Donald Baron	PFC	04 MAR 68	42E 71
SAXTON, Gary Lee	LCPL	22 JAN 68	35E 11
SCANLON, Michael John	CPL	18J AN 67	14E 50
SCARBOROUGH, Russell	HM3	06 APR 68	48E 34
SCARBOROUGH, David Clifton	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 28
SCATES, Charles Edwards Jr.	PFC	18 MAY 68	63E1
SCHAEFER, Thomas Koenig	PFC	03 MAR 69	30W 30
SCHAFER, Marvin Albert	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E 128
SCHANEBERG, Leroy Clyde	CAPT	30 JUN 70	9W 107
SCHARNBERG, Ronald Oliver	MAJ	17 MAR 71	4W 56
SCHAVELIN, Hugh Ernest	LCPL	16 APR 68	50E 21
SCHELL, William Leroy	SP4	23 MAR 71	4W 71
SCHLEY, Robert James	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 128
SCHLUTTER, William David	1LT	17 MAR 71	4W 56
SCHMALTZ, Douglas Ralph	CPL	07 FEB 71	5W 84
SCHMITZ, Richard Travis	CPL	30 APR 67	18E 128
SCHNEIDER, David Francis	CPL	14 FEB 68	39E 39
SCHOLZ, Klaus Dieter	SFC	30 NOV 68	37W 14
SCHROEDER, Donald Ray	CPL	07 APR 68	48E 47
SCHROEDER, Joe Lawrence	PFC	16 MAR 67	16E 98
SCHUCK, Donald Phillip	PVT	28 MAY 68	64W 15
SCHULTZ, Gerald Wayne	PFC	03 MAR 69	30W 31
SCHULTZ, Sheldon, Duane	WO	05 JAN 68	33E 53
SCHURRER, Jon Rodney	CPL	18 JUN 68	56W 28
SCOTT, Edward Drake	LCPL	12 JUN 68	57W 4
SCOTT, James Frank	LCPL	08 FEB 68	38E 38
SCOTT, Jeremiah	GYSGT	01 FEB 68	36E 60
SCOTT, Walter Michael	PVT	11 FEB 68	38E 80
SCRIBNER, Gary David	LCPL	24 JAN 68	35E 27
SCULL, Gary Bernard	MAJ	12 MAR 70	13W120
SCULLEN, Thomas James	PFC	02 MAR 68	42E 41
SEALL, George Melvin	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E121
SEARS, Michael	CPL	06 MAR 68	43E 33
SEDILLO, Juan Natividad	CPL	08 APR 68	48E 54
SEE, Otto William	SFC	07 APR 68	48E 47
SEEL, Walter Phillip Jr.	HM2	25 FEB 69	31W 58
SEGINE, Ronald Eugene	LCPL	29 MAY 68	63W 13
SELDERS, William Dean	PVT	05 FEB 68	37E 43
SELLERS, Floyd Eugene	PVT	30 JUL 68	50W 37
SEVELL, Robert Lee	CAPT	28 FEB 68	41E 72
SEXTON, David Mason	SGT	15 MAR 71	4W51
SEYMOE, Joseph Phillip	LTCOL	21 JAN 68	35E 8
SGAMBATI, Paul Anthony	SP4	03 MAR 71	4W 20
SHAFER, Francis Leo Jr.	CAPT	30 MAR 68	47E 15
SHAFER, Marvin Albert	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E 128
SHANNON, Stephen Craig	LCPL	22 MAR 68	45E 60
SHARP, Allen Morris	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 58
SHARP, Lufkin Scott	CAPT	19 JUN 68	55W 2
SHARP, Samuel Arthur Jr.	LCPL	10 MAY 67	19E 86
SHATTUCK, Harold Leon Jr.	PFC	15 JUN 69	22W 54
SHAUM, Ray Thomas Jr.	PFC	03 MAR 69	30W 33
SHAVER, Ronald Lee	HM3	22 JUN 68	55W 20
SHAVELIN, Hugh Ernest	LCPL	16 APR 68	50E 21
SHELTON, Henry Earl	PFC	26 MAY 68	66W 12
SHEPARD, James Merrill Jr.	CPL	27 JUN 67	22E 73
SHERIDAN, Phillip Francis	LCPL	14 APR 68	50E 1
SHERREL, David Frank	CPL	06 JUN 67	31E 63
SHIMAMOTO, Keisaburo	DNA	10 FEB 71	DNA
SHINAULT, John Michael	1LT	07 MAY 69	25W 29
SHINKAWA, Roy Yasushi	WO	23 FEB 71	4W 1
SHIVER, Charles Jr	LCPL	30 APR 67	18E 129
SHOCK, Jack Dean	CPL	14 JAN 69	34W 2
SHOVLIN, Frank Joseph	PFC	07 JUN 67	21E 70
SHUE, Donald Monroe	SFC	03 NOV 69	16W 24
SHULL, Sandy Lee	LCPL	16 FEB 68	39E 66
SIKORSKI, Larry Joseph	LCPL	25 FEB 69	31W 58
SILER, Jimmy Louis	PFC	15 FEB 68	39E 53
SILVA, Rito	LCPL	18 JUN 68	56W 30
SILVEIRA, Leonel Mendonca	LCPL	21 SEP 69	18W 123
SIMMONS, William	PFC	06 JUN 68	59W 5
SIMOES, Anthony	SP4	01 APR 68	47E 36
SIMON, James Martin	SP4	16 FEB 71	5W 112
SIMON, Michael Wayne	L/CPL	05 JUN 68	60W 22
SIMONSON, Larry Arnold	SP4	25 MAR 71	4W 78
SIMPSON, Morris Alfred	1LT	28 FEB 71	4W 12
SINGER, Michael Ernest	PFC	07 JUL 68	53W 39
SINK, Melvin Francis	CPL	13 OCT 67	27E 101
SISSON, Bennie Joe	PFC	22 MAR 68	45E 60
SKAGGS, Harold Alonzo	PFC	04 JUN 69	23W 68
SKANSON, Louis James	PFC	04 JUL 68	53W 14
SKINNER, Phillip Craig	LCPL	03 MAY 67	19E 32
SKINNER, Walter Francis	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 30
SKIPPER, Michael Ray	PFC	22 APR 69	26W27

SKUZA, Arvid Burdeen	LCPL	08 FEB 68	38E 39
SLACK, Steven George	PFC	14 FEB 68	39E 39
SLAWEK, Joseph Dennis	PFC	04 APR 69	27W 13
SLOAT, Gregory Alec	SGT	18 FEB 71	5W 118
SMITH, Alan Ray	PFC	05 FEB 68	37E 44
SMITH, Author "C"	LCPL	30 MAR 68	47E 17
SMITH, Cary Carson	1LT	22 FEB 68	40E 69
SMITH, Charles Daniel	LCPL	15 JUN 68	57W 31
SMITH, Dennis	PFC	04 APR 68	48E 11
SMITH, Donald Lee	LCPL	06 JUN 68	59W 15
SMITH, Douglas Wayne	PFC	25 FEB 68	41F 30
SMITH, Harold Archer	PFC	03 APR 68	47E 55
SMITH, James Herbert Jr.	LCPL	06 MAR 68	43E 35
SMITH, James Lee	PFC	13 MAR 69	29W 32
SMITH, Jimmy Herman	LCPL	10 JUN 68	58W 20
SMITH, John Archer	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 39
SMITH, Joseph Frederick Jr.	SP5	18 JUN 69	22W 82
SMITH, Larry Michael	CPL	30 APR 67	19E 1
SMITH, Lyle Elton	SGT	19 FEB 71	5W 121
SMITH, Matthew Edward	PFC	11 APR 69	27W 59
SMITH, Michael Stephen	LCPL	28 MAY 68	64W 15
SMITH, Richard John	HN	08 APR 68	48E 55
SMITH, Richard William	PFC	14 MAR 69	29W 40
SMITH, Rickey Gene	PFC	30 APR 67	19E 1
SMITH, Robert Lee	LCPL	31 MAY 68	62W 17
SMITH, Terrence Glenn	SGT	21 JAN 68	35E 9
SMITH, Terry Lee	CPL	20 FEB 68	40E 48
SMITH, Willie Franklin	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 59
SMITH, William Ward	CAPT	07 APR 66	9E 64
SNEAD, Bernard James	PFC	11 JUN 68	58W 29
SNYDER, Gary Foster	SFC	06 MAY 70	11W 117
SNYDER, John Herbert	A2C	15 OCT 67	28E 12
SNYDER, John Marshall Jr.	LCPL	07 APR 68	48E 48
SOBEL, Irwin Ross	PFC	27 MAR 68	46E 50
SOLDATO, Shane Nunzio	MAJ	23 FEB 70	10W 88
SOMERS, Gregory S	PVT	24 FEB 71	5W 77
SOUTHER, John Martin	WO	26 FEB 71	4W 7
SOUTHERN, Rickey Dale	CPL	26 APR 67	18E 98
SOYLAND, David Pecor	CWO	17 MAY 71	3W 39
SPACH, Jimmy Russell	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 35
SPANGLER, Larry Keith	CPL	12 FEB 68	39E 13
SPARKS, Jon Michael	CWO	19 MAR 71	4W 58
SPARKS, Ronald David	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 35
SPARKS, Steven Lee	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 35
SPEIR, Dale Lloyd	CPL	06 JUN 67	21 E 63
SPICER, Jonathan Nathaniel	PFC	14 MAR 68	44E 54
SPICZKA, Aloysius Francis Jr	PFC	15 JUN 68	57W 34
SPILLMAN, Charles Otto	BU1	28 FEB 68	41E 74
SPINDLER, John Gates	2LT	21 APR 68	51E 25
SRSEN, Steve Albert	PFC	27 JAN 67	14E 89
STACKS, Raymond Clark	CAPT	30 NOV 68	37W 14
STAFFORD, James Hubert	SFC	16 FEB 71	5W 112
STAHL, Roger William	CPL	22 MAR 71	4W 68
STALLINGS, Franklin Delano	1LT	04 MAY 67	19E 41
STAMPS, Johnny Green	PFC	13 MAR 69	29W 34
STANCIU, Kenneth Allan	L/CPL	06 MAR 68	43E 35
STANTON, Emmett Charles	PFC	28 FEB 68	41E 74
STAPLES, James Arthur	PFC	07 APR 69	27W 34
STAPLES, Louis, Franklin	L/CPL	05 FEB 68	37E 45
STARK, Willie Ernest	SMAJ	02 DEC 66	13E 7
STAYER, Harry Sherman	SP4	01 APR 68	47E 37
STEARNS, Roger Horace	CAPT	11SEP 69	18W 73
STEDMAN, Paul Francis	L/CPL	26 FEB 69	41E 44
STEFFEN, Frederick George	HN	24 MAY 68	69E 3
STEIN, Ronald Marvin	CPL	09 MAY 67	19E 75
STENBERG, Jerry Oscar	LCPL	21 JAN 68	35E 10
STEVENSON, Charles Robert	PFC	05 FEB 68	37E 45
STEWART, Paul Clark	CWO	08 FEB 71	5W 89
STEWART, Rick James	PFC	27 JUN 67	22E 73
STEWART, Tommy Lane	PFC	08 FEB 68	38E 40
STICKEL, Gary Stephen	PFC	22 DEC 67	32E 48
STITT, Richard Wesley	PFC	18 MAR 69	29W 73
STOLLAR, Larry David	LCPL	02 MAY 69	26W 103
STOLLEY, William R Jr.	LCPL	14 MAR 69	29W 41
STOOPS, Jonathan Lynn	PFC	06 JUN 68	59W 16
STORZ, George William	SGT	08 MAR 68	43E 62
STOUDT, Gordon Edward	LCPL	30 APR 67	19E 1
STOVALL, Wilbur	LCPL	09 MAR 68	43E 62
STRAUSBAUGH, Howard Albert	LCPL	09 MAR 68	44E 1
STREET, Leonard Jr.	PFC	03 APR 68	47E 56
STRONG, Gridley Barstow	PFC	21 APR 68	51E 25
STRONG, Stanley Grant	CPL	06 MAR 68	43E 35
STROUD, Roger Lee	CPL	07 JUL 68	53W 40
STUCK, Ransom Lee	PVT	26 FEB 68	41E44
STULL, Jay Webster	CAPT	28 FEB 68	41E 69

STUPAR, Michael Nick	LCPL	06 JUN 67	21E 64
SULANDER, Daniel Arthur	WO	02 DEC 66	13E 7
SULLIVAN, Neil Brian	CPL	18 MAY 68	63E 2
SUMNER, James Howell	1STSGT	02 MAY 69	26W 103
SUNIGA, Michael Edward	LCPL	22 DEC 67	32E 48
SUTTER, Richard Furlong	CPL	21 JUL 67	23E105
SUTTON, Bryan James	LTC	17 MAR 71	4W 56
SUTTON, Jack Lenn	LCPL	24 APR 67	18E 82
SWAIN, Craig Francis	PFC	02 AUG 68	49W1
SWANGVARIM, Lawrence Alfred	PFC	06 APR 68	48E 36
SWEENEY, Thomas James	LCPL	26 FEB 68	41E45
SWEET, Jerry Alan	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 24
SWISHER, Clifford Lee	PFC	22 MAR 69	28W 15
SWOPE, Charles Fredrick	CAPT	09 NOV 66	12E 49
SZMANSKI, Frank Adam IV	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 31

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TAGLIEBER, Leonard Joseph	LCPL	05 JUL 67	23E 16
TALLENT, Garry Glenn	LCPL	20 AUG 67	24E 21
TATE, Lyle Scott	CPL	09 MAY 67	19E 75
TAYLOR, Albert Russell II	SSGT	18 JUN 68	56W 28
TAYLOR, Bobby Allen	CPL	03 FEB 68	37E 14
TAYLOR, Danny Gene	SSGT	28 SEP 66	11E 27
TAYLOR, Dennis Lee	PFC	05 JUN 69	23W 79
TAYLOR, Ernest Vernon	PFC	05 FEB 68	37E 45
TAYLOR, Homer Jr	CPL	18 FEB 68	40E 14
TAYLOR, James	LPL	05 JUL 68	53W 25
TAYLOR, James Harry	2LT	15 FEB 71	5W 109
TAYLOR, James Otis	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 36
TAYLOR, Louis Gaines	LCPL	06 MAR 68	43E 36
TAYLOR, Phillip Joseph	PFC	03 MAR 69	30W 33
TAYLOR, Robert L	SFC	04 APR 68	48E 13
TAYLOR, Steven Earl	PVT	14 APR 68	50E 2
TAYLOR, Ted James	CAPT	15 JUL 71	3W 108
TEETH, Austin	PFC	28 APR 69	26W 75
TERAN, Refugio Thomas	SSGT	06 MAY 70	11W 117
TERHUNE, Daryl Bert Jr.	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 36
TERRELL, William Lee	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 36
TERRY, Allen Lee	CPL	30 APR 68	53E 24
THEYERL, Clayton Joseph	PFC	25 FEB 68	41E 31
THIBAULT, Jeffrey, Allen	PFC	15 JUN 68	57W 32
THOMAS, Barry Don	LCPL	07 MAY 67	19E 54
THOMAS, Charles Wayne	CPL	05 MAR 69	30W 50
THOMAS, Clyde	CPL	15 MAR 71	4W 52
THOMAS, Gary Joseph	CPL	18 MAY 68	63E 3
THOMAS, Joseph Eugene	PFC	07 JUL 68	53W 40
THOMAS, Michael Howard	2LT	20 JAN 68	34E 92
THOMAS, Nathan	PFC	15 JUN 68	57W 32
THOMAS, William Phillip	PFC	02 MAY 69	26W 104
THOMPSON, Kenneth David	PFC	11 APR 68	49E 26
THOMPSON, Louis Kenneth	LCPL	05 JUL 68	53W 24
THOMPSON, Phillip Bruce	PFC	21 MAR 69	28W 5
THOMPSON Randall Alan	CPL	25 MAR 71	43W 7
THORNTON, Alan Wayne	PFC	14 MAR 69	29W 41
THORPE, Dennis Ray	SGT	15 APR 68	50E9
THORPE, Gary Wilford	CPL	23 FEB 68	41E 5
THOTLAND, John Alfred	LCPL	28 FEB 68	42E 1
TIJERINA, Albert Jr.	CAPT	01 MAR 71	4W 15
TILLSON, Cardner Jr.	HM2	09 MAY 67	19E 75
TINGLEY, Thomas James	LCPL	30 DEC 67	33E 5
TINO, John Francis Jr	HN	30 Apr 67	19E 1
TIRADO, Daniel	PFC	07 MAY 69	25W 19
TODD, Robert Jacy	PVT	09 MAY 67	19E 75
TONER, Louis Joseph	HN	06 MAR 68	43E 37
TOOMEY, Samuel Kamu III	MAJ	30 NOV 68	37W 15
TORRES, Manuel Prieto	CPL	08 FEB 68	38E 42
TOTH, John Paul	SGT	28 FEB 68	42E 2
TOTTEN, Kenneth Romaine Jr.	PFC	30 MAR 68	7E 17
TOWSLEE, Edward Lawrence	PFC	04 APR 68	48E 12
TRAIL, Robert Hill III	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 60
TRAINOR, Paul William	PFC	02 AUG 68	49W2
TRANTHAM, Donald Ray	LCPL	31 MAY 68	62W 18
TRANTHAM, Raymond Farley	LCPL	19 MAY 68	63E 15
TRAVER, John Grove III	WO	22 MAR 71	4W69
TRAVIS, Edward Burke	CPL	27 JUN 67	22E 73
TREDENNICK, Charles Nichol	SFC	29 JAN 68	35E 63
TREVINO, Rudolph Robert	PFC	02 JUN 69	23W 34
TREVINO, Savas Escamilla	PFC	02 JUN 69	23W 48
TRIGALET, Robert Ernest	1LT	02 MAY 69	26W 104
TRIMBLE, James Mitchell	CPL	06 APR 68	48E35
TROYANO, Roland Dean	PFC	07 FEB 71	5W 85
TRUJILLO, Felix Marcial	SGT	03 APR 71	4W 104
TUCKER, James Eric	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 60

TURNER, Michael Glenn	LCPL	21 APR 68	51E 26
TURNER, Robert Lawrence	1STSGT	11 FEB 68	38E 82
TURNER, William Oliver	CPL	28 FEB 68	42E 1
TWOMEY, Raymond Lee	PFC	24 APR 67	18E 82
TWOREK, Gerald John	SSG	08 FEB 71	5W 90
TYCZ, James Neil	SGT	10 MAY 67	19E 88
TYRCZ, Walter Fred Jr.	HM3	04 MAR 68	44E 54

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USHER, Terry Maxwell	1LT	23 FEB 71	4W 1
UUTELA, Derris Lee	PFC	05 JUN 68	60W 23
UZZELL, Frank Nelson	PVT	27 JAN 68	35E 51

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VALENTE, Anthony Nicholas	GYSGT	26 FEB 68	41E 56
VALRIE, Dwight, Theodore	PFC	19 MAY 68	63E 19
VAN BEUKERING, Ronald Dale	SP4	06 MAY 70	11W 118
VAN DER SHANS, Donald Ed	HN	01 APR 68	47E 37
VAN DEUSEN, Phillip Andren	PFC	07 JUN 67	31E 68
VAN TASSELL, James Warren	CPL	05 JUL 68	53W 24
VANCE, Reggie Lee	PFC	22 FEB 68	40E 70
VANDERHEID, Mark Edward	LCPL	28 JUN 68	54W 8
VANN, Ronald Bryson	1LT	25 APR 69	26W 51
VASQUEZ, Jesus Roberto	SGT	30 JAN 68	35E 83
VASQUEZ, Patrick John	LCPL	21 JUL 67	23E 105
VAUGHT, William H. III	SGT	23 MAY 70	I0W 88
VEDDER, Richard Jerome	SGT	16 MAR 67	16E 103
VERCOUTEREN, Edward Arnold	LCPL	07 JUN 67	21E 71
VERCRUYSSE, Gregory Paul	HN	07 JUN 67	21E 71
VESER, Edward	SP4	06 MAY 70	11W 118
VICKERS, Robert Lee	LCPL	06 MAR 68	43E 37
VIX, Stephen August Jr.	PFC	02 MAY 69	26W 104
VLASAK, William James Jr.	LCPL	02 MAY 67	19E 19
VOORHIESE, Emory David	CPL	09 JUN 68	58W 16
VORENKAMO, David R	PFC	02 JUL 69	21W 49
VRANKOVICH, Nicholas Samuel	L/CPL	24 MAY 68	70E 1

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WAFER, David Earl	PFC	29 JUN 68	54W 21
WAGNER, James Joseph	PVT	24 APR 69	26W 41
WAINZ, Robert Michael	LCPL	24 APR 67	18E 83
WALBRIDGE, George Wilcox	SSGT	10 FEB 68	38E 73
WALD, Gunther Herbert	SFC	03 NOV 69	16W 25
WALDRON, Howard Bert	MSGT	06 MAR 68	43E 37
WALKER, Richard Lee	CPL	27 JUN 67	22E 74
WALKER, Thomas Taylor	CAPT	07 APR 66	6E 93
WALKER, Tommy Dale	SP4	10 APR 68	49E 17
WALLACE, Jackie Elmore	PFC	15 JUN 68	57W 33
WALLACE, Michael Walter	LCDR	28 MAR 68	46E 60
WALLER, Therman Morris	A1C	03 FEB 66	4E 135
WALSH, Charles Sumner	PFC	15 MAR 68	44E 62
WALSH, Donald Kevin	HN	25 FEB 69	31W 60
WALSH, Jeffrey Michael	LCPL	08 FEB 68	38E 41
WALTERS, Craig Collins	SP4	05 MAY 68	55E 34
WALTERS, Tim Leroy	SSGT	09 MAR 69	30W 97
WANN, Donald Lynn	CWO	01 JUN 71	3W 61
WARD, Alexander Kearney	CAPT	16 FEB 68	39E 68
WARD, Walter Leonard	CPL	07 JUN 67	21E 71
WARREN, Donald Albert	CPL	30 MAR 68	47E 18
WASSENICH, Stephen George	CPL	27 JUN 67	22E 74
WEBER, Joseph Alan	PFC	24 FEB 69	31W 41
WEED, Donald Edmond	CPL	27 JAN 68	35E 51
WEINTRAUB, Neil William	PFC	22 JUN 68	55W 19
WEISS, William Conrad	SP4	06 MAY 70	11W 118
WELD, Julio Cesar	PFC	11 MAR 69	29W 17
WELDY, George W Jr.	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 61
WELLMAN, William Martin Jr.	CPL	04 JUN 69	23W 69
WELLS, James Randall	LCPL	07 APR 68	49E 49
WELLS, Robert James Jr.	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 23
WENGER, David Allen	PFC	09 JUN 68	58W12
WENTZELL, Jeffrey Raymond	LCPL	15 FEB 68	39E 41
WESSLER, Daniel Guy	PFC	19 MAR 69	29W 86
WEST, James Edward Jr.	LCPL	31 MAY 68	62W 19
WEST, John Thomas	CAPT	02 JAN 70	15W 117
WEST, Seth Lee Jr.	SSGT	16 APR 68	50E 24
WEST, Stephen Alan	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 38
WESTCOTT, Gary Patrick	SP5	30 MAR 72	2W 125
WETHINGTON, David L. Jr.	HN	02 MAR 68	42E 45
WHEELER, Joseph Keith	PFC	31 MAR 68	47E 28
WHISENHUNT, James Henry	CPL	30 APR 67	19E 1
WHITAKER, Donald Eugene	CPL	25 FEB 68	41E 32

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2011 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

WHITE, Charles Clinton	LCPL	11 JUN 68	58W 30
WHITE, Larry Frederick	LCPL	21 JAN 68	35E 10
WHITE, Michael Matthew	PFC	12 JUN 68	57W 5
WHITE, Wesley William	LCPL	02 APR 68	47E 44
WHITESIDES, Richard Lebrou	CAPT	26 MAR 64	1E48
WHITLOW, Ronald David	HM3	06 AUG 68	49W 2
WHITNEY, Blake Dominic	PVT	09 FEB 71	5W 92
WHITTED, Joe Ray	SGT	15 MAY 68	61E 5
WHITTEN, Tommie Joe	GYSGT	09 MAY 67	19E 76
WHITTICOM, Jonathan Charles	LCPL	27 JUN 67	22E 74
WICKLIFFE, Robert Logan	HM3	22 JAN 68	35E 13
WIDEN, John George	SGT	06 MAY 70	11W 119
WIEDEMAN, Robert Arthur	CPL	25 FEB 68	41E 33
WIENCKOSKI, David Raymond	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 39
WILEY, Gilbert	LCPL	07 APR 68	48E 49
WILKINS, Gary Lee	LCPL	19 MAY 68	64E 2
WILKINSON, Clyde David	CAPT	12 FEB 71	5W 100
WILLEY, John James	SSG	06 MAY 70	11W 119
WILLIAMS, Derex, Jr.	CAPT	23 AUG 67	25E 36
WILLIAMS, Dorsey Burwin	PFC	30 APR 67	19E 2
WILLIAMS, Douglas Candit	SGT	19 FEB 68	40E 34
WILLIAMS, Doyle	PSGT	02 APR 68	47E 44
WILLIAMS, Eddie Lee	SGM	03 OCT 66	11E 40
WILLIAMS, Hollis, Jr	LCPL	06 MAR 68	43E 39
WILLIAMS, Ira Winard	LCPL	27 JUN 67	22E 75
WILLIAMS, James	SGT	04 AUG 67	24E 79
WILLIAMS, James Alec	LCPL	01 JUL 68	54W 34
WILLIAMS, Kenneth R Jr.	CPL	09 MAR 68	44E 1
WILLIAMS, Maxie Raymond	1LT	10 APR 68	49E 17
WILLIAMS, Nathaniel Mearlo	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 22
WILLIAMS, Richard Earl	PFC	05 APR 68	48E 22
WILLIAMS, Robert Earl	PFC	09 MAY 67	19E 76
WILLIAMS, Robert Eugene	LCPL	05 JUL 68	53W 25
WILLIAMS, Samual	CPL	31 MAY 68	62W 19
WILLIAMS, Thomas Hansford	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 39
WILLIAMS, Ted	LCPL	16 MAR 67	16E98
WILLIAMS, Thomas Earl Jr.	1LT	02 MAY 69	26W 105
WILLIAMS, Thomas Hansford	PFC	06 MAR 68	43E 39
WILLAMS, Tommy Dorsey	PFC	17 APR 68	50E 35
WILLIAMS, William Jack	PFC	27 JUN 67	22E 75
WILLIAMS, Woodrow	LCPL	03 MAY 67	19E45
WILLIAMSON, James D	SFC	05 JAN 68	33E 54
WILLIBER, Gerald Paul	CPL	19 MAY 68	64E 1
WILLS, Robert John	LCPL	15 JUN 68	57W 31
WILSON, Carl Richard Jr.	2LT	21 MAR 69	28W7
WILSON, Eugene	PFC	06 JUN 68	59W 18
WILSON, Reginald Eugene	PFC	21 JUL 67	23E 106
WILSON, Ronald Eugene	PFC	01 APR 68	47E 37
WILSON, Wayne Michael	CPL	30 MAY 69	23W 24
WILSON, Wilmer Dwayne	HN	16 APR 68	50E 24
WINGENBACH, Glenn S Jr.	PFC	06 MAR 69	30W 61
WIRE, Eugene Charles	GYSGT	23 FEB 68	41E 6
WITHEY, Howard Hugh	CPL	06 JUN 67	21E 64
WITMER, Omar David Jr.	PFC	17 SEP 67	28E 86
WOLF, Monsieur (civilian)	DNA	01 FEB 64	DNA
WOMBLE, Wilham Thomas Jr.	LCPL	03 MAY 67	19E 34
WOOD, Carl Mitchell	WO	05 FEB 71	5W80
WOOD, James Anthony	LCPL	25 FEB 68	41E 33
WOOD, Strather Franklin	1LT	18 FEB 71	5W 119
WOODALL, John Braxton	1LT	30 APR 67	19E 2
WOODARD, Jon Robert	SSGT	15 MAR 68	53W 25
WOODARD, Paul Leroy	SSGT	15 MAR 68	44E 63
WOODARD, Wayne Howard	CPL	30 APR 67	29W 2
WOODEN, Charlie K	SGT	11 APR 68	49E 28
WOODS, Cordell Emanuel	LCPL	16 FEB 68	39E 68
WOODS, David Alexander	SFC	01 NOV 67	29E 8
WOODS, Gerald Ernest	WO	18 FEB 71	5W 119
WOODS, John Kevin	1LT	11 FEB 68	39E 1
WOOLSEY, Jack Lee	LCPL	09 JUN 68	58W 16
WORTHEN, Larry Eugene	PFC	07 JUN 67	21E 72
WORTHINGTON, Richard Charles Jr.	CWO	06 MAY 70	9W 125
WRIGHT, Arkie Junior	SGT	19 FEB 68	40E 35
WRIGHT, Edward Taylor	GYSGT	11 JUN 68	58W 30
WRIGHT, Michael Dale	SP4	24 MAR 71	4W 75
WRIGHT, Michael Vincent	PFC	26 FEB 68	41E 46
WRIGHT, O'Neal	LCPL	31JAN 68	36E 44
WRIGHT, Robert	CPL	16 APR 68	50E 24
WURTZ, Emil John	HN	22 FEB 68	40E 71
WYMER, William Wayne	PFC	16 APR 68	50E 24

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YAGUES, Robert Gene	PFC	03 MAY 67	19E 34
YAMANAKA, Roger Kimo	L/CPL	04 MAR 68	43E 2
YBARRA, Ricardo	PFC	27 MAY 68	64W 4
YEARY, Randall Douglas	2LT	14 JAN 68	34E 48
YERION, Jeffrey Allen	PFC	04 MAY 68	54E 41
YORN, William Leon	LCPL	07 APR 68	48E 50
YORK, Henry	CPL	08 FEB 68	38E 42
YOUMANS, James Nelson	PFC	18 MAY 68	63E 2
YOUNG, James Ray	PFC	18 MAY 68	63E 3
YOUNG, John Curtis	LCPL	27 MAY 68	64W 4

-Z-

ZAPIA, Michael Lee	PFC	25 FEB 69	31W 63
ZAWADZKI, Gerald David	CPL	25 FEB 69	31W 63
ZERBST, Gilbert Leroy	PFC	07 APR 68	48E 50
ZIEGENFELDER, Frederick P	SSG	06 MAY 70	11W 119
ZIEGLER, Lawrence Goric	GYSGT	15 MAY 68	61E 5
ZIMMERMAN, David Paul	LCPL	21 APR 68	54E 27

NOTE:

THE FOLLOWING ARE MIA AND PRESUMED KIA. ON 15 MAY 1971 THEY WERE PART OF A RECON PATROL INSERTED SW OF KSCB THAT ENGAGED THE ENEMY IN A FIERCE FIREFIGHT. SEVERAL WERE KILLED, AND DURING A RESCUE ATTEMPT, THE HELICOPTER WAS ALSO SHOT DOWN.

DEHNKE, Dale Willard	SGT	18 MAY 71	DNA
ENTRICAN, Danny Day	1LT	18 MAY 71	DNA
HOLLINGSWORTH, Gary Lyn	SP5	18 MAY 71	DNA
PEARCE, Dale Allen	WO	18 MAY 71	DNA
SOYLAND, David Pecor	WO2	18 MAY 71	DNA

ON 18 DEC 2001, I ADDED THE NAMES OF TEN MARINES AND ONE CORPSMAN FROM KILO CO 3/9, TO THE LIST OF MEMBERS KIA WHILE SUPPORTING THE KHE SANH COMBAT BASE. THIS ACTION TOOK PLACE WHILE KILO CO WAS ENGAGED IN A BATTLE FOR A STRATEGIC HILL, WEST OF THE CA LU COMBAT BASE, 14-16 FEB 1968, IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP HIGHWAY 9 OPEN FOR SUPPLIES TO REACH THE KHE SANH COMBAT BASE.

BUNGARTZ Frederick William	PFC	14 FEB 68	39E 29
COMBS, Lowell Thomas	CPL	14 FEB 68	39E 30
FLEMING, Dennis K	CPL	14 FEB 68	39E 32
GOSS, Larry Jo	HM2	14 FEB 68	39E 32
JAMES, Mark Everett	CPL	15 FEB 68	39E 48
JONES, Melvin Lewis	PFC	14 FEB 68	39E 34
REESE, William Robert	2LT	14 FEB 68	39E 38
RIGSBY, Barry Lane	PFC	14 FEB 68	39E 38
SCHNEIDER, David Francis	CPL	14 FEB 68	39E 39
WARD, Alexander Kearney	CAPT	16 FEB 68	39E 68
WENTZELL, Jeffrey	LCPL	14 FEB 68	39E 41

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ENJOY YOUR FREEDOM



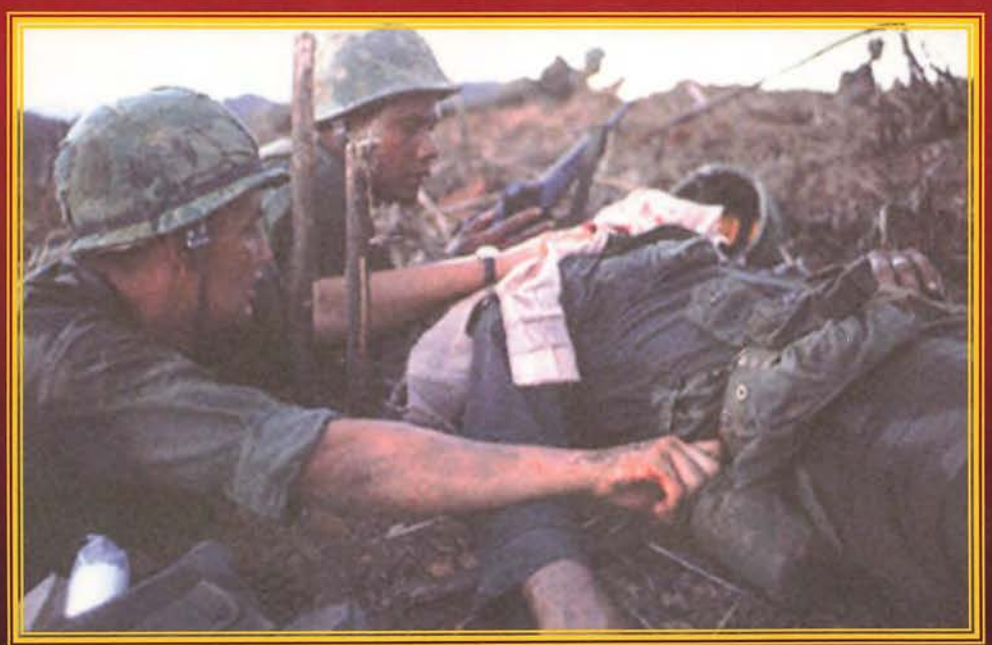

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2008

RED CLAY

ISSUE 71













SPECIAL EDITION KHE SANH VETERANS
ANNUAL REUNION RENO NEVADA
COVERAGE STARTS ON PAGE 63



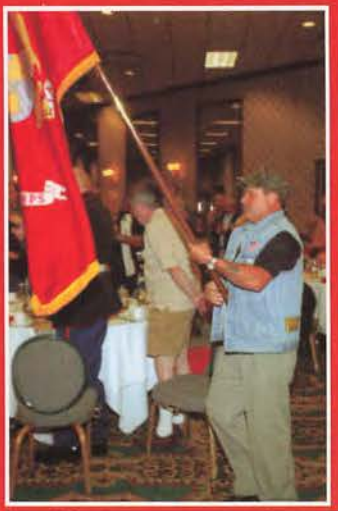








President's Message

I would like to thank all those who contributed their time and effort in making the reunion in Reno Nevada an enormous success. I believe everyone had a great time, especially the un-named member who won $ 25,000 at the Keno game. We had a lot of first time attendees, several of which joined the Khe Sanh Veterans.

An election was held for the position of Member At Large which resulted in the election of David Smith, Dale Pack & Leland Upshaw. A big thank you to outgoing Members At Large: Cliff Treese & Dan Fisher for their contributions. Dan Fisher moved over and was voted in as the Chairman of the newly formed Scholarship Committee. Monies to fund the scholarship fund will come from the sales at the Khe Sanh PX, (Silent Auction) and from individual donations. Bill Jayne & Richard Noyes have already contributed to the fund. Richard sent his contribution in the Memory of Robert "Doc" Topmiller. Details of applying for funds and eligibility will be ready in time for the forthcoming Denver Reunion

Vice President

To All my Khe Sanh Brothers and their families: This past reunion was the best reunion we've ever had. I want to thank Tommy Eichler, Russ & Cathy Turner, and Bob and Rita Moxley for doing a great job at the Registration table and for helping make this reunion be the best ever. I also want to thank Russ Turner for putting in his time at the PX table with me, helping out with sales; it made my job a little easier. I hope everyone will keep up the support of the PX throughout the year. I am going to add a lot of new stuff this year to the PX and I hope you are as excited as I am. Don't forget to pay your dues this year to help pay for the Red Clay Magazine. Next year we are going to Denver, and I hope to see you all there.

Semper Fi
PX Manager and
Vice President Big John Pessoni
A Co 3rd Combat Engineers

Those Remembered	Remembered By
Donald E. Whittaker Cpl USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Bill Jayne Bravo Co 1/26
Joseph C. Battle L/Cpl USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Bill Jayne Bravo Co 1/26
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Leland Upshaw.....Member At Large
Dan Fisher.....Scholarship Chairman

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Reunion Committee:

The 2009 Khe Sanh Veteran reunion will be held on 19-27 July 2009, in Denver Co. It will be held at the :
Marriott Denver Tech Center located at 4900 S Syracuse Street, Denver CO 80237
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There is a 14.85 % State Tax
There is No Fee For Parking
As we discussed at the reunion there is no easy way to get to the Hotel from the airport. The bus fee is 13.00 per person one way. We could find no other form of transportation at a lower cost. There is a Hertz Rental Agency at the hotel so we may be able to rent a few vans and some of the early arrivals could volunteer to pick members up. We will have to see if we can work something out. It is a beautiful hotel and all the rooms have been newly remodeled. They offer amenities: Heated Pools, an atrium large enough to seat the entire membership, a large outdoor lounge that will stay open until there are no customers (for you Late nighters), salon, health spas, and the public transportation to downtown Denver is 5 minutes from the Hotel **(See Enclosed Brochure).**

Many of the rooms are equipped with a balcony so I suggest you smokers make early reservations since they will go fast, and Denver is a Non Smoking State. You can smoke on the balconies.
Tom Eichler & Russell Turner

OBIT



Phil Mineer
USMC Bravo Btry 1/13

Ron Shouse has informed me that he has decided to turn the property where his good friend Phil Mineer suffered a tragic accident, into a memorial park bearing his name. It will be available to anyone just seeking a little peace and quiet, and a place to rest. Phil's wife agreed with his decision seeking to honor Phil, not mourn him. Khe Sanh Chaplain Owen Matthews conducted a heart wrenching memorial service at the Reno Reunion for Phil. Many of his friends and fellow members of Bravo Btry 1/13 were in attendance. Phil was a fun loving guy and will be sorely missed by the Khe Sanh Veterans.



L-R Phil, Ron, and Cliff at one of the many functions they donated their time to, representing the Khe Sanh Veterans.

OBIT

Michael J. Healy USN (MD)
Life Member Khe Sanh Veteran.

Mike passed away on September 8, 2008. at his home in Hilton Head Island, SC. Michael was born and raised in Chicago, IL. After graduating from Fenwick High School with honors. He enlisted in the US Navy and went into the V-12 Program. Michael's passion for medicine was in the field of Addiction Medicine. He was Medical Director at Baylor-Parkside Lodge from 1983-1988 and recruited to Charter Behavioral Health, Plano, TX. from 1987-1998. He then served as an Addiction Medical Specialist at Baylor Richardson Hospital from 1998 to his retirement in 2003. Dr. Healy was a member of the American Society of Addiction Medicine from its inception. Additionally, Michael served in the Korean War as a Marine Medical Battalion Surgeon. Returning as a Lieutenant Commander, he stayed in the Reserves until the 1970's. For his valiant services while in Korea, he was awarded the Silver Star, Navy Commendation Medal, and 2 Purple Hearts. He was very proud to have served his country.

OBITS

Dr. Robert Topmiller, USN
Charlie Med RAS
Khe Sanh

Doc Topmiller Eulogy

September 2, 2008

We are here today to bid farewell to Bob Topmiller and in doing so, attempt to cope with the unimaginable tragedy and bewildering circumstances of his passing. The meaningfulness of Bob's life is measured in as many ways as the people it touched. He was a husband, father, grandfather and brother and a son, who lost his mother in his early teens and whose father passed away less than a year ago.

When I met Bob, during the first weeks of the 1968 siege of Khe Sanh, he was fresh out of Navy corpsmen school; yet had already witnessed more carnage and human suffering than any 19-year old American boy should be called upon to do. Bob was twice wounded by shrapnel ministering to the wounded at Khe Sanh. As such, it would be easy to explain last week's tragedy by concluding that he also received a mortal wound to his spirit -- and just did not succumb until last Wednesday. However, I believe it would be a great disservice to oversimplify his extraordinary life in that way.

Navy corpsmen are called "Doc," by the Marines they fight to save. Yet, that seemingly trivial monosyllable carries with it volumes of respect for the dedication and bravery of these individuals. To be called "Doc" is one of the highest accolades in the Corps. Therefore, I will henceforth refer to my friend by that title.

Just last month at the Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, Doc reunited with Rick Noyes, a former Recon Marine at Khe Sanh. Rick, who was wounded while patrolling outside the base, would be the first combat injury Doc treated. Strangely enough, of all the hundreds of wounded who would eventually be carried to the Regimental Aid Station, Rick and Doc had been high school friends in Cincinnati, and up to that point had been unaware each was billeted just a hundred yards from the other. Though Doc initially found my lame attempts at humor during the siege to be inappropriate, which they were, we soon became great friends. When he left Vietnam five months later, a large group of us Marines attended his going away party near Phu Bai and paid him the ultimate honor by singing Anchors Away (though not having taken the time to learn the song, we replaced every lyric other than the chorus "Anchors away my boys" with "la-la-la.")

I would not see Doc again for another 37 years – but he was in good hands. Upon returning to Great Lakes Naval Station, he met Terri Nicks, a fellow corpsman. Though Terri had not gone to Vietnam, she was spared none of the wretchedness of treating wounded, for many of the most severely wounded, burned and mentally unhinged victims of the fighting were medivaced directly to that distant hospital. It was Doc's great good fortune that they fell in love and married; because Terri could share some of the heartbreak and pain of that war with him. Sadly, she too would be forever haunted by her patient's screams of pain and the helplessness of not being able to heal them all. Terri would go on to give life to four wonderful children, but in a very real sense, she gave life to Doc as well -- probably decades of life – decades throughout which other lives, like my own, would be so profoundly changed for the better. Without Terri as the anchor in his life, Doc may have drifted away before many in this room today would have ever had the opportunity to know him. Doc himself recognized this in the Preface to his recently published memoir Red Clay on My Boots, when he expressed his gratitude to her in these words: "Most important, my wife Terri, who has fought the battle of Khe Sanh by my side for close to 40 years."

With the support of his family, Bob left two decades of retail marketing behind and entered the halls of academia; earning his doctorate in history here at UK in 1998. He went on to become an inspiring university professor, who possessed a prodigious intellect and was fearless in the pursuit of truth. As his friend and fellow Khe Sanh veteran, Steve Orr, commented recently, he never spent even a short amount of time with Doc when he did not come away from the encounter having learned something new. I have had the opportunity to come to Kentucky each of the last three years and speak to history classes at EKU. There I was able to observe

Doc in the classroom. His serious-minded and accomplished students gave him enormous pride; though he never stopped trying to reach them all, and, I think, recognized that even the more unremarkable kids were taking something away that would forever change the way they viewed their world. As the 19th century historian, Henry Brooks Adams, once wrote: "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." Of all that he accomplished in his life, this may well be Doc's principal legacy.

Doc's numerous visits abroad, living with Terri in Korea, and later traveling alone, more than a dozen times, throughout South East Asia, not only expanded his student's horizons in a unique and personal way, but also his own. He soon became an admirer of the teachings of the Buddha, with their focus on the pursuit of enlightenment through searching and self-discovery. Doc endured a highly emotional return to Khe Sanh alone in 1996, when most of the terrain features, recognizable to those who served there were still visible. As his awareness grew, he befriended numerous monks and nuns, writing The Lotus Unleashed, about the Buddhist Peace movement 1964-1966. A derivative of this was discovering the incredible number of children suffering from the residual effects of herbicides during the war. He and Terri have sacrificed in order to provide an ongoing endowment to a facility, The School of the Beloved, in Hue. Steve, Doc and I visited there last December, and the happiness of those poor children, whose profound neurological disorders would otherwise condemn then to lives of unspeakable degradation -- is a powerful testament to human kindness.

Doc also became an active supporter of human rights, especially the religious rights of persecuted Buddhists in Vietnam. His voyage of enlightenment led him to champion the cause of world peace, and his writings to that end earned him the international Peace History Society's prestigious Charles DeBenedetti Prize in 2007. His quest for knowledge and enlightenment led him to some disturbing places as well. His interview with survivors of the 1968 My Lai Massacre, as described in Red Clay on My Boots, is as unremittingly painful to read as anything now in print. Before long, Doc was traveling up the Mekong River to the killing fields of Cambodia. I will never forget his despondency while describing Phenom Penh, a city run by murderous thugs and teeming with starving families and a seemingly endless parade of amputee beggars, whose injuries were caused by the unbelievable amount of unexploded ordnance still lying about from the war. It was a harrowing and depressing experience; one which took him months to recover from physically, spiritually and emotionally.

Earlier this year Doc ventured further up the Mekong, into regions of northern Thailand and the Golden Triangle, where bandits, insurgents and drug lords held sway; a place where few native Thias, let alone a single American traveler, would dare go. So driven was Doc to continue upriver, he made the very dangerous decision to enter Burma (Myanmar) and observed living conditions in the world's most closed and oppressed society. "The worst I've ever seen," he later said. Had Doc been captured by the military forces of that paranoid regime, it is unlikely he would have ever been heard from again. Somewhat ominously in retrospect, it was here Doc's passage up what the locals had for thousands of years called the "The Great Mother River" -- came to its conclusion.

Life often imitates art and it is hard not to see the similarities between Doc's ever more perilous ascents up the Mekong River and that of the protagonist Marlowe in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness (or for those who prefer film to books, Martin Sheen in the Vietnam war movie Apocalypse Now). Only Doc's journey was not fiction.

Ironically, it is the fictional character, Marlow, who provides a most valuable insight: "It is when we try to grapple with another man's intimate need," Marlowe said, "that we perceive how incomprehensible are the beings that share with us the sight of the stars and the warmth of the sun."

Doc became increasingly frustrated by what he perceived to be his failure to inform a generally apathetic and self-absorbed American public about what he now so intimately knew to be the consequences of that war. This was particularly true in what he felt was the shameful treatment disabled U.S. military veterans received from our own government. To help remedy that, Doc was nearing completion of a book detailing the history of the Veteran's Administration, and their systematic ef-

forts over the years to deny benefits to vets suffering from the effects of nuclear testing, Agent Orange, PTSD and Gulf War Syndrome.

As a result of this frustration, Doc's courageous pursuit of the truth seemed to take on a redemptive quality. It was as if he had decided to shoulder for us the peril and pain of learning these things. He would not avert his eyes, so we might. He would absorb and endure, for as long as he could, the guilt and remorse at how that war, so long ago, had inflicted such unrelenting human suffering. He would spare us the horror of the truth.

I discussed this hypothesis with him a few months ago. He pondered it for a few moments and then said, "Mike, that's just your beer talking." Yet, I think I caught a flicker of acknowledgment in his eyes, and was suddenly gripped by a heartbreaking reality. Then, the profoundest of all biblical absolutes popped into my mind: "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for a friend." Bob Topmiller was my hero. How could he not have been? In the short time I had to know him again, he restored within me a belief in the nobility of human character. His extraordinary intellectual gifts and his confidence in the empirical process were always tempered by a calm spirituality, which caused even a cynical, old pagan like myself to recognize there might be a place in this universe for both.

I am eternally grateful for that; for the honor of his friendship; and for the simple pleasure of his company.

I was honored to be a part of the final tribute to 'Doc" yesterday in Lexington, Ky. The visitation/ Memorial Service was well attended, overflowing into the isles.

Those who attended from the KSVA :
Ron Rayner from MI (KSVA Chaplain)(A-1/26)
Rick Noyes & Wife from OH (B 3rd Recon),
Jack Haigwood and Wife from OH (CBMU-301)
Mike Archer from NV (Comm 26th Marines)
Steve Orr from ID (Comm 26th Marines)

Tributes were given by his daughter, Jamie, Rick Noyes & Mike Archer, a former student of Doc's and by Todd Harch, a co worker from the College (EKU), where Doc recently retired from.

The American Legion Post (Man-O-War Post 8),Honor Guard, commanded by John Kalbfleisch, did an outstanding
job at the grave site. with the final farewell activities.

A little get together was then held at Doc's favorite pub, right across the street from his house. It was well attended also.
Rest In Peace "Doc" Topmiller

PS. Two of the 3 sons of Doc were Marines ,serving in the Gulf War. Terri, his wife was a Navy Corpsman, serving at the Great Lakes Naval Hospital, where Doc met her, married her, and spent the last 39 yrs together.

CHAPLAINS CORNER

I wish to thank Chaplain Owen Matthews for nominating me and President Tom Eichler, for appointing me to the position of Chaplain for the Khe Sanh Veterans. I believe it to be both an honor and a privilege to serve such an outstanding organization. It is my goal to write an article for the general good of the membership for each edition of RED CLAY. I certainly recommend to everyone that can, to attend next year's reunion in Denver. The reunion this year in Reno has made a tremendous impact on my life and my view of my role in the war. My heart was warmed by the fellowship of the people who shared life-changing experiences with me 40 years ago. We are "Eternally Bonded".

The Real Problem Concerning Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder
By Ron Rayner Chaplain:
Khe Sanh Veterans, Pontiac, MI Fire Dept., and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 133 Oakland County, MI

It is front-page news when a police officer, firefighter, marine, soldier, airman, sailor, or coast guard personnel risks his or her life to save a comrade or a perfect stranger. There is an abundance of evidence that there is courage and self sacrifice among the United States military personnel and community emergency responders in America.

In many cases when there is exposure to extreme danger or horrific images and no proper counseling afterward, something called post-traumatic-stress-disorder develops. As I am not a doctor, I will define PTSD as mental wounds from unusual situations. (Google PTSD or go to eagleprep.com for full definition)

The real problem with P.T.S.D. is not that people are mentally wounded from a traumatic life-threatening event and suffer from Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder. The real problem is that most of the victims are in denial and will not seek help for this life threatening disability. These courageous individuals who risk their lives for others cannot accept that they may also need help from a mental health professional. The minds of military personnel and emergency responders are wounded each time they see or handle things like maimed friends, dead babies, and mass casualties. Near death and extremely frightening experiences are also on the list of events that can wound a person mentally. The effects are accumulative. Long service and many mental wounds increase the possibility of PTSD.

I know that I personally was in denial. I always thought I was a tough guy and didn't need help. Being tough is definitely part of the job that these occupations demand. But what I have learned and what these brave people have to realize is that mental wounds can ruin your life and kill you just like a physical wound. These individuals who spend much time in harms way commonly accept depression, divorce and estrangement from their children as occupational hazards.

I have PTSD. I was diagnosed in 2000, 32 years after Vietnam and 6 years after retiring from the fire service. The only reason I am getting help for my problem is that when I went to my county Veterans Services officer to fill out the forms to receive hearing aids, he looked at my combat record and convinced me to seek help for PTSD. My story on how I handle this problem is on my website at eagleprep.com.

While taking chaplain classes sponsored by The International Fellowship of Chaplains in 2003, I was shocked to learn that over 170,000 Vietnam veterans had committed suicide by 1987. This is almost triple the deaths that had occurred in the war itself. In November 2004 a firefighter friend of mine committed suicide. He was in denial right to the end. I also knew two firefighters who drank themselves to death. Congress is investigating the numerous suicides among today's US military.

My secular purpose as a chaplain has been to convince veterans and emergency responders who may have PTSD to seek a mental health care professional's opinion on their mental health.

Just like diabetes, without daily care, PTSD can be a killer. I believe that unlike diabetes, it is contagious. (This is debatable in the mental health community) The people that risk their lives for complete strangers on a regular basis quite often infect their families with this mental heath problem. It is a strange phenomenon that people, who will give their families almost anything material they ask for, will not make a visit to a mental health provider to insure the mental health of their family.

One of the symptoms of PTSD is outbursts of anger at little insignificant things. I used to accept my bad temper as a normal condition as my grandfather and my father had certain things that set them off also. Duh! My grandfather was a police officer for over 20 years and my father was a firefighter for 35 years. The family legend has always been that a bad temper was just hereditary.

The Khe Sanh Veterans 40th Anniversary Reunion of the Siege of Khe Sanh was held July 28-August 3, 2008 in Reno, Nevada. A recurring theme during the reunion was veterans who were being treated for PTSD trying to get the other veterans to seek help for PTSD.

A friend of mine who was in my machine gun squad in Vietnam came to see me at the reunion. We hadn't seen each other since December 1968. We talked and discovered we had similar lives. He had been a police officer and I had been a firefighter. We both had lost our tempers more than once and were involved in physical altercations. We both had suffered from road rage. We both had problems relating to our families. Emotional numbness also seems to be a problem with the both of us. We both have recurring suicidal thoughts.

This Marine on June 5, 1968 exposed himself to

enemy fire and rescued a wounded Marine from extreme danger. He received a Navy Commendation Medal for that. On June 7, 1968 he helped rescue two marines in a similar situation. He received a Bronze Star for that. I believe this same Marine would risk his life to help someone today if the situation presented itself.

All I am asking my friend and all other veteran and active duty military personnel and emergency responders to do, is to be evaluated by a mental health care professional for the possibility of PTSD. It can't hurt and can only help. I can almost guarantee that no one will be shooting at them on their trip to the clinic. Sometimes the seemly easiest tasks in life are the hardest to accomplish.

A part of PTSD therapy is a technique called "thought stopping." When a troubled individual identifies that his or her thoughts are headed in the wrong direction he or she should call a halt to the negativity. They may even yell "STOP" out loud. They must then replace those thoughts as described by Marcy Blochowiak in her book No Glass Ceiling, Just Blue Sky from Simple Truths.

"One powerful technique that can stir your emotions and change the way you feel is to use 'emotional triggers.' Our emotions are powerful motivators

IN MEMORY OF A GOOD FRIEND

By Larry McCartney

Robert Marvin Reed, Sr.
E Co 2/26
Born: November 29, 1948
Died: August 14, 2007

As with the many of the rest of us, every year at this time I experience "anniversary dates" which trigger memories, today is one of them. Forty (40) years ago today, Thursday, March 7, 1968, the experience I have come to know as Khe Sanh ended for me, I was injured and medivaced; first to the Khe Sanh Combat Base, then to Quang Tri, Da Nang, and finally Camh Ranh Bay. I was extraordinarily fortunate though, I was not seriously injured and was hospitalized for just three (3) weeks, I was released from the hospital on Thursday, March 28, 1968 and made my way back to Echo Company and Hill 861-A, by Sunday, March 31, 1968. It just wasn't the same as before. Probably because there was a "hole" in time, a three (3) week hiatus during which I lived like a normal human being.

This year the "anniversary dates" have been particularly poignant. This year has been more emotional than most for a lot of reasons, not the least of which is because of the time span, it's been forty (40) years now. Where has the time gone? However, it's also been poignant because it's the first anniversary of the "Tet Offensive" since I lost my dear friend, my mentor, my hero, Robert Marvin (Bob or Bo) Reed.

While I first met Bob Reed on Hill 861-A, I didn't get to really know him until the Summer of 1968, when he became my squad leader. We became inseparable friends, a friendship that transcended the years. Being in touch with Bob through the years helped me immeasurably; particularly during the yearly Tet anniversary. Thanks to Bob I knew I wasn't alone. I knew others were experiencing the exact same feelings as was I and I knew others cared. Thanks to Bob I knew others were continuing to do their best and make the most of the opportunities the good Lord gave them.

It was tough for Bo because he physically suffered so much from the effects of his many wounds, as well as his Agent-Orange related illnesses, but he never gave up and he never gave in. Like the rest of us he suffered more than a few setbacks in life, but he kept striving to achieve, he kept a positive attitude and he led by example. To the very end he was a United States Marine. I've been fortunate to maintain contact with Harrison Reed, one of Bob's sons, and Harrison recently sent me the following poems written by his fiancée, who helped care for Bob up to the very end. Thank you Harrison and thank you Alana!

He whispers, he speaks, he tells his story,
He laughs, he smiles,
Memories fade as quickly as they came,
He's trying to hide fear.

He lays there sleeping, dreaming,
His chest rises,
His breathing slows,

He knows these dreams will end soon,
Even when he's at peace, he's terrified.

Bathing, soaking everything up,
His eye wanders,
His heart searches,
Thoughts pass through his mind,
The danger is real and he knows it.

We stand there being strong like he always was,
He cried for us, never for himself.
He's learned to let go,
As the ashes scatter across the field,
The danger is gone, his battle is over.

He watches us now, waiting and guarding,
We were his life and he was ours,
He's happy now, he's safe,
He enters our dreams now and is a memory never to be forgotten,
But he's not scared now, he's finally at peace.

© Alana DeHart

I miss him,
I need him,
I feel him,
He's here.
I can't stop,
I don't want to forget,
My hero, my soldier, my Marine.

He visits,
I see him,
I sense him,
He's home now,
But where is home?
I want to be with him,
My hero, my soldier, my Marine.

It's all starting to fade,
His laugh,
His voice,
His face,
It hurts to know he'll never come home.
He struggled, he fought so hard!
My hero, my soldier, my Marine.

They may have forgotten,
Your medals,
Your war,
Your life,
But we can't and we won't,
You are our world; this is our fight now,
My father, my hero, my soldier, my Marine.

© Alana DeHart

OBIT

My father, Dale Lee, a member of Khe Sanh Veteran's Organization, passed away on 03/21/2008.

Dale Lee
Born: 7/31/1946, Vernal, Utah
Death: 3/21/2008, Moab, Utah

Dale Lee, 61, passed away suddenly on Friday, March 21, 2008, at Allen Memorial Hospital in Moab, Utah.

Eulogy

Dale was born in Vernal, Utah on July 31,1946, the 6th son of Glenn and Marie Lee. His five brothers were generally good to him and he idolized them because of the athletics they were involved with. Dale grew up in Vernal and married Patsy Ann Colobella in May 1964. They had one daughter, Cindy Rae Lee. They were divorced in 1966. He married his dear, loving Sharron Lea Sharp Feb. 18, 1967. She stood by him through "thick and thin," good and bad times. Sharron was always there for him. Sharron was his wife, friend, and lover. They had two wonderful and diverse children, Tracey Dickerson and Benjamin Lee.

Dale joined the U.S. Army in March 1966 and became a Special Forces "Green Beret" and served in Vietnam. During his time on earth he was always proud of his accomplishments as a Green Beret. Vietnam did rule his life though. Dale worked most of his life in the oil fields. He started in the summer of 1962, and other than the three year Army stint and a short tour of working in Southern California, he worked over 40 years in the "patch" as they call it, retiring as a nuclear safety officer. Most of that time he was in the employ of Halliburton.

Dale love hunting, the Rim of Diamond - especially early in the morning and toward evening, and music by the Doors, Beatle's Sgt. Pepper Lonely Heart

Club Band, Pink Floyd, Jefferson Airplane, Bee Gees, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, Bread, Eagles, Marty Robbins.

He is survived by two daughters: Cindy Nelson of Rock Springs, WY; Tracey Dickerson of LaSal, UT; a son Benjamin Lee of Albuquerque, NM; Four brothers: Dennis, George, Art, Morgan; and five grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, wife Sharron, and a brother Larry.

Tracey Dickerson.

OBIT

DOUGLAS EUGENE PEDRICK
FOXTROT CO 2/26

Today was a day like no other. I, Darlene Pedrick watched my loving husband of 27 years pass in the comfort of our home. A very long battle with hopes of a liver transplant, since going on a list in 1998, ended today for Him. With all of your Prayers, they gave him wings to fly tonight, home to his mom dad and brother. I thank you ! I am going to take some time to set up a grave site service, but I just wanted to share with you all. You have listened to me go on and on for so long and now his final chapter has end. GOD BLESS MY LOVE !
Semper Fi

KHE SANH CORPSMAN TO PHYSICIAN

Walter F. Schlech III, M.D.
By: Craig W. Tourte

It was just a short notation on the "View Our Guest Book" section of the public web site, "Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page." Nothing special really, one of many posted every day by various visitors, including Veterans of the Vietnam conflict, those who had served at the combat base, students, family members of Veterans and little memorandums from the public who wanted to make a comment relating to Khe Sanh or the Vietnam War.

The writer identified himself as Wally Schlech, MD, Nova Scotia, Canada. Under comments was the notation: HQ Btry (1/13) Jan-Aug 1968. Since I had served with the same unit at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh from July 1967 to April 1968, I was naturally curious about Doctor Schlech and contacted him.

Wally Schlech told me he had served as a Hospital Corpsman at Khe Sanh. During the ensuing years he has contacted several he had served with including Corpsman (Doc) William Ballew, and was aware that Lieutenant Hal Lasker, the now deceased battalion surgeon, had become a psychiatrist in New York. I was familiar with Doc Ballew and Doctor Lasker as they treated me for a rather serious medical condition at Khe Sanh. I have since spoken to Doc Ballew and thanked him for taking such good care of me. Mr. Schlech continued that he has also spoken to Gunny Klidonas (Sergeant Major James Klidonas) whose shoulder he treated before taking the Gunny to the air field for medical evacuation.

Wally Schlech said he left a small New England college and joined the United States Navy where he served his military tour as a Navy Corpsman at Khe Sanh. When he returned home he monitored the events of the Vietnam War through the Navy Times. He noted that Lance Corporal William Robert Yaskanich was killed in action on February 23, 1969; a Marine Mr. Schlech had served with at Khe Sanh. Mr. Schlech said that Yaskanich had received a Navy Commendation with V for running communications lines at Khe Sanh during the Siege.

Wally Schlech returned home and went back to college in 1969. While attending a social event he inadvertently became engaged in conversation with Jim Munroe who had just returned from Vietnam. It was during that conversation Mr. Schlech learned that Jim Munroe had also served with Headquarters Battery of the First Battalion, Thirteenth Marine Regiment. Munroe told Wally Schlech that he had joined the Thirteenth Marines in Da Nang after the Siege and had in fact served with Corporal Yaskanich who had been killed in action. Jim Munroe discussed the events leading to the death of Lance Corporal William Yaskanich, describing how the unit had been overrun, how he and Yaskanich had jumped into a hole together when a Chicom grenade was thrown in and exploded killing Yaskanich. The injuries to Munroe ended his combat tour in Vietnam, which was why he was attending college and subsequently the event that evening. Mr. Schlech told me Jim Munroe is now the Very Reverend James Munroe, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Springfield, MA., a long way from a foxhole in



L/CPL DADO, ME & SCHLECH

Vietnam.

Wally Schlech related that he lives in Halifax, and describes it as a small community. He recalls the day he happened to meet Dick Murtha an attorney from New York who had moved to Halifax. During their conversation Dick Murtha revealed that he had been an infantryman with the Third Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment and had also served at Khe Sanh. Mr. Schlech believes he and Mr. Murtha may be the only Khe Sanh Veterans currently residing in Canada.

This issue has been discussed by many who served at Khe Sanh, I thought it was interesting that Doctor Schlech mentioned it to me and I certainly understand how that event would leave an impression on his memory. One of the things that bothered Wally Schlech was that since Headquarters Battery was the Regimental Headquarters, those going to various Thirteenth Marine Regimental units had to fly into Khe Sanh as transients, and then report to units elsewhere. He recalls a billeting tent near Headquarters which took a direct hit from a 152mm artillery shell. Corpsman Schleck was called to treat the wounded and tend to the dead and remembers how tragic it was, as so many had just arrived in country and were waiting orders to go elsewhere.

I noted that Donald Saunders was killed in action at Khe Sanh, who was a member of our small detachment and recalled that incident to Doctor Schlech. He remembered that Donald's body was brought to him on a small cart, and that an 82mm round impacted near Saunders who took shrapnel up under this armpit where his flak jacket didn't cover. The Corpsmen tried to insert a chest tube but tragically Donald Saunders died quickly. I told Mr. Schlech that I had spoken to Saunders just minutes before he was killed and that I packed up Donald's few personal belonging in preparation for them being sent home to his family.

(Corpsman Wally Doc Schlech) Walter F. Schlech III Medical Doctor, is currently an internist and infectious disease specialist and a full time faculty member at a medical college in Canada and now a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association. Welcome home and to your Khe Sanh Veterans Association Doc Schlech.

Craig.

As a PS I am ongoing in my rehab. I do not intend attending the reunion in Reno. I found this picture which was taken at our new location in Quang Tri of Doc Ballew.

Doc, just wondering how you're getting along and if your going to make the reunion in Reno this year. I was reading the guest page on the Khe Sanh Veterans Home page then I came across a post by Wally Schlech. He noted that he was a corpsman with HQ 1/13, did you know him?. He identified himself as an MD living in Canada now. Hope this finds you well.
Craig W. Tourte

THE 30TH.

By Craig W. Tourte

I was reading a little article describing "closure" for families and I was reminded of the POST Steve made many months ago about his friend telling Steve to "just get over it" relating to the memory of those who were lost. I hate that word "closure," it's like closing a book, the word is just too darn simple and it is usually said by those who will never understand.

Here we all are some forty years later, still in pain, still remembering the faces, the smells, tastes and fear. Heck, we still remember the weather and the

time of day, but I think worst of all, we still feel the loss. No, loss is not a strong enough word to describe that gut kicking, heart pounding emotion we feel, when we remember those who were with us. I think one of the difficulties is, we just can't describe the pain to someone else, to someone who thinks we should just find "closure," who wants us to, "just get over it."

I have talked to many people over the years about their hardships, love, death, jobs, relationships, children, divorce, and illnesses. Some I have admired, some were not so admirable. In all of those years and in all of those occasions I have never heard anyone outside of our family here, use the words that Steve used to describe the men he knew. "...honor of knowing...,' and "...acts of courage..." and not once have I ever heard the use of the word "closure" used when those events or memories of those fine, brave men who were discussed amongst us. I fear that some families have gained closure, perhaps the names of those who died in battle are never spoken anymore, perhaps the weeds grow thick about the tombstone, perhaps no one recalls, remembers or even cares about their memory. Some may have just gotten over it.

But we remember, we remember that it was an honor to know them and we remember their acts of courage and we'll never have closure.

Thanks Steve

WHEN YOU LEAVE THE JOB

By Sam Messer
CBMU-301 (Seabees)

The following is how this Seabee feels about those I lived with while in the service and especially at Khe Sanh.

When a good Veteran leaves the "job" and retires to a better life, many are jealous, some are pleased, and yet others who may have already retired, wonder. We wonder if, they know what they are leaving behind, because we already know. We know, for example, that after a lifetime of camaraderie that few experience, it will remain as a longing for those past times. We know in Military life there is a fellowship which lasts long after the uniforms are hung up in the back of the closet. We know even if he throws them away, they will be on him with every step and breath that remains in his life. We also know how the very bearing of the man speaks of what he was and in his heart still is. These are the burdens of the job. You will still look at people suspiciously, still see what others do not see or choose to ignore and always will look at the rest of the Military world with a respect for what they do; only grown in a lifetime of knowing. Never think for one moment you are escaping from that life. You are only escaping the "job" and merely being allowed to leave "active" duty.

So what I wish for you is that whenever you ease into retirement, in your heart you never forget for one moment that "Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called children of God," and you are still a member of the greatest fraternity the world has ever known.

Not unlike a lot of other Vietnam veterans in general, and with Khe Sanh Veterans in particular, do I have Survivor's Guilt. For me it's intense, particularly so during this time of year. Why did I survive? Have I lived an honorable life? Have I minimized my mistakes and corrected those which I could? Have I made the most of the opportunities I've been given that others never had? Have I done right by the memories of my fallen comrades? Would they be proud of what I've accomplished with the time they never had? They're unanswerable questions. We live with them. We don't whine or complain; well most of us don't at least, after all, with but a few exceptions, we're Marines! We just go about life and do the best we can.

THE LITTLE MEN

The men who sneer at honor,
The men who scoff at pride,
The men who think those foolish
Who went and served and died.

The men who know not greatness,
The men who know not strife,
The men for whom self-interest
Is all there is to life.

What could they know of courage,

How could they find the nerve,
When self is all they worship,
And ego all they serve?

As mice despise the eagle
That leaves them bound to earth,
Our uniforms and ribbons
Remind them of their worth.

We know their haughty sneering
Is born of self-contempt,
For we have lived in danger,
And they have only dreamt.

Ignore the little slanders
That come from puny souls.
Disdain the empty critic,
Despise their petty goals.

For you who served with honor
Would choose to serve again
Your worth by far surpasses
Ten thousand little men.

Robert A. Hall
Former SSgt, USMC

2007 LEFTWICH TROPHY FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP
Captain Jon Smith USMC

By Ken Pipes
C/O B Co 1/26

Col. Morris and Mac:

I got a heads up on the above a few days ago, from a good friend out of the old era! A superb selection as we know Captain and Mrs. Smith personally. They live just a few streets above us in beautiful down town Fallbrook! As you know, this is the single highest, professional Honor a Marine Rifle Company Commander, can attain. Capt. Jon has also spent time with the East Coast Marine Recon family!

Additionally, as small as this world has shrunk; Capt. Jon Smith's father was our Arty Liaison Officer in 1/26 before, during, and after the Siege at Khe Sanh! He was the late Harry Baig's strong right hand in planning the fire support for the entire Siege --across the spectrum! I know Captain Smith's father extremely well as do many others. We spent many months together from Khe Sanh to the Go Noi and all places and gun battles in between. Father, Captain Smith was awarded the Silver Star and other decorations during his tour with our Battalion in those tough years; 1967/68--TET!

As evidence that the apples do not fall far from the tree; Captain Bill's other two son's are also career Marines and Outstanding examples of our young Combat Brethren! One son is an H-53 pilot with a bunch of air time in Iraq and other garden spots in that desert, where he was shot down! Believe the oldest is a long serving Gunnery Sgt.--Meritoriously promoted to that rank and the recipient of at least one Bronze Star with Combat "V." Not sure what the Gunny does, but it is somewhere in the Special Ops Community. Captain Bill's last two son's I have not met--looking forward to the honor, hopeful, in the not too distant future.

Captain Jon has a beautiful wife and two precious young children, a boy and a girl. At any rate, this is such outstanding news that I felt it should be shared with all our Marine Family across the boards!

Congratulations to Captain Jon Smith and the entire Smith Family! Semper Fidelis!

DOWN & BACK

By Craig W. Tourte

I had some personal business to attend to in San Diego this weekend so I asked Steve Wiese (B/1/26) if he would like to accompany me on the flight down and drive back up to Sacramento. Steve said he would be more than happy to go with me as long as I fed him sufficiently. I really needed another driver so I relented and agreed not to stop at fast food establishments on the way back. He was talking steaks and I was thinking soup and sandwich. Steve managed to get in touch with (now retired) Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Pipes (then Captain and CO B/1/26) who lives in Fallbrook, which is just outside of the East gate of the Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base. Colonel Pipes graciously requested that we stop by for a little visit.

I was able to complete my business in San Diego, obtained a car and we drove the forty or so miles to

the Skippers house arriving early afternoon. Before we left Sacramento I had called the golf course on the Camp Pendleton Base and asked if we could play, being disabled Vietnam Veterans and all, but we were denied. We took our golf clubs anyway, anticipating on finding a course to play somewhere on the return drive home.

During our visit with Colonel Pipes I think I mentioned to him our being denied playing on the base and he immediately got on the phone and had a conversation with someone at the course. What do you know, "they can come on over and play anytime," the guy told the Colonel.

Neither Steve nor I had been on the Camp Pendleton Base for forty some odd years, and to tell you the truth, I didn't remember much about the place except a lot of hard training and humping up and down the hills. The Colonel drove us all over the place, even at $4.60 a gallon for gas. I was amazed at what I saw and all that I did not remember. We stopped by the golf course and made a tee-time for the following day and it was once again, "come back anytime" as the Colonel looked over our shoulders.

That evening Colonel Pipes and his wife took us out and bought us dinner. We could have stayed for hours and talked and visited, and we did cover a lot of territory during our rather lengthy discussions and reminiscences. Although I had never met Colonel Pipes before, I felt as if I had known him for the last forty years. I think Khe Sanh Veterans are like that, it just takes a few minutes to connect. Private or Colonel, in old age we are now equals and it's our experience during that time which bonds us.

Steve and I played golf the next day, hooking up with a married couple to complete our foursome. Of course he was a retired Marine and had been an aviator who flew off a number of different carriers during the Vietnam War and after his service tour flew for Continental Airlines. Somewhere around the eleventh hole our discussions turned to Vietnam and what we did and where we were. Steve and I mentioned that we had been at Khe Sanh during the Siege and the guy almost started crying. He said that he had seen the wounded from Khe Sanh come in to Da Nang; they were in poor condition with that "thousand yard stare." He thanked us several times and then hugged both of us when the game was over. I was very moved by the experience and Steve and I talked about how much we appreciated the recognition.

We pulled in last night around midnight both pretty exhausted. We got along fairly well during our time together and I appreciated Steve driving the last 200 miles of our nine hour, 500 mile trip. I so enjoyed meeting and visiting with Colonel Pipes and his wife. Colonel Pipes was severely wounded during the March 30th Revenge Patrol and I was truly honored to have been in the same room with he and Steve. I look forward to seeing Colonel Pipes again during the reunion in a few weeks.

A DAY AT KHE SANH WITH A CO. 3RD SHORE PARTY

By Cpl Jerome Howell

I have always contended that there was humor at Khe Sanh. It was sometimes hard to come by, but it happened. A few days after the day we took over 1300 rounds, around February 21st, 1968. I had only been in Khe Sanh about a week, digging bunkers and air lifting supplies on the re-supply LZ to the hills. I learned that there were three places on the base where you had to be very alert: the Navy shower, outhouse, and med station. Anywhere on the base was dangerous, but some areas seemed to attract a lot more incoming: the West Turn Around Point, our Company area, and the LZ where I air lifted supplies, especially at the height of the siege, when we were getting hit with so much artillery.

The LZ was a very dangerous area. We had a couple of names for the LZ, we called it the "Impact Area," or the "Saddle." We didn't have any cover, and standing on top of a load of small arms ammo, army Logs and water, under a chopper, or where one couldn't hear anything. If one could hear the report of a firing, it only took about 4 seconds to get to you. If we had time, we would join others in the trenches, or hide between the rock crushers the Seabees left near the LZ.

I do not know how many knew the story behind that big hole and the C-123 that was hit on the West Turn Around Point. It was drug off the Turn Around Point and deposited in that hole big enough to except much of the plane. This hole was about 30 feet

from my bunker where Sgt. English, and L/Cpl Ron Kieger resided. One day, someone left a pallet of anti-personnel mines there, and as the day wore on we became concerned about it. I decided to finally take a shower, and wash my lovely socks, that were so stiff I could have bounced them off the wall inside of the bunker.

I am enjoying a rare occasion at Khe Sanh, a shower. A Rocket came in and hit near the West Turn Around point. I suddenly got the feeling I had better abandon the shower. I made it to the closest bunker, a small one, the smaller the better I thought, and jumped in. It was occupied, but I do not remember his name. I did learn he was from Minnesota. He looked at me astonished that I was almost naked, and he said " What the heck!" I said " No matter bud, showers are dangerous around here!" He and I spent the next 15 minutes that seemed like an hour, hugging each other counting these rounds coming in. Then all of a sudden there was this huge explosion, the bunker we were in collapsed on us, and the lights went out, I was stunned for a few minutes. After it was over the Marine in the hole with me says, " Man, we will have to quit meeting like this." My reply was, " Don't worry about it, I will take a spit bath from now on." So I had to get enough courage to get back to the shower again, but this time I took my uniform with me.

The explosion left a very large hole, as I said about 30 feet from my bunker, and as I said before, a C-123 ended up in it!. A few days later I was standing next to it looking at it, and a Major came by and asked me what caused the hole. I thought I would be a smart ass and told him, "Well sir, didn't you hear about that 300mm Chinese artillery piece they brought down here?" He turned white in the face and walked way mumbling to himself that he would have to check it out. Heaven only knows what reaction he received on his inquiry.

Every now and then nature has her call, and I grabbed a Play Boy magazine that I had stashed away, and off to the old outhouse I went. I wasn't in there 5 minutes and a 130mm round came in and hit behind it in the 3rd Engineer area. It helped me out the front door, and I crawled to the Navy shower to pull up my pants. Here sat the Bn. Chaplain with a smile on his face. He says " Well, it looks like they caught you with your pants down."

I said, " Well sir, it's nice meeting you, but I must be on my way, this Navy shower and I do not get along too well." I left him there as I crawled to a bunker. I never could find that Play Boy magazine.....I have written Ray Stubbe and he can't remember if he was that chaplain or not. He did say that this explosion of the anti-personnel mines, was heard all over the base.

In boot camp, they can never prepare one how to react to death. Khe Sanh was spooky at times. When the wind would blow, there was this aroma that came from the west side of the base facing Laos, that we called "no man's land." This area was totally barren of trees, just craters. The NVA had a hard time removing their fellow soldiers off the battle field, so they began to rot in the hot sun. We did notice much of our pet rats, who were the size of a medium sized cat, began to thin out when they ate these bodies.

Of course the ARVN Co that was dug in along this side of the perimeter were eating the rats. Then there was a rumor going around that there was an out break of Bubonic Plague going around where these dead bodies were; we surmised that must have put a crimp in their eating habits. One day going by their area from the drop zone, I noticed them skinning them over an open fire in a pot, and they even had their women with them. That must have been cozy, with all the incoming. I would throw grenades at the rats, one bite from them and it was off to Da Nang for shots in the gut. One never dared to sleep on the deck, we could hear them at night scratching their way to get inside our bunker. Sometimes we thought it sounded like the NVA digging tunnels into the base, as they did at Bien Ben Phu.

The dirt at Khe Sanh was red clay, it stuck to everything. My socks were red, my letters home had red dirt on them, and when it rained, we lived in red mud. And not being able to shower much, left the inside smell of bunkers quite up lifting.

At times, at night when trying to write a letter, the incoming would come in and you could hear the rounds hitting close. The sound would come through our air vents, muffled a bit. We always wondered which one was going to become a part of your bunker. We knew our bunker probably would-

n't take anything over an 82mm mortar. Even though we had layers of sandbags, steel sheeting, and big rocks on top of the bunker. We wanted the round to explode on top instead of inside. One thought we did have, was that the NVA were tunneling in, and would run around throwing sacks of C-4 into our bunkers. At times there were fire fights along the west side of the base, it was quite a light show, along with B-52 drops along the Laotian border. The tunneling I mentioned and the rats, made for quite a stress factor, wondering if it was a rat or NVA. We slept mostly above the deck, often hearing rats scrambling around.

I arrived at this moon scaped terrain on February 18th ,1968, and as soon as I got out the back of the C-46, we scrambled for cover. The zone we were dropped in became the work area I would be assigned to. Whenever a chopper came in or near this area it was either mortared or hit with artillery fire. So I found a hole to lay in until the mortars laid off. I found my way to where 3rd Shore Party's company area was located. I was greeted by Sgt. English who had a big smile on his face. He took us to where he had a small crew filling sandbags and building a large bunker that had been hollowed out by the Seabees. I set up camp in Sgt. English's bunker. Every 5 to 10 minutes an artillery round would come in, and we all would hit the ground. This went on most of the day. That night I didn't get much sleep, listening to incoming hitting all over the base. The next morning, Sgt English picked me to go with him up to the drop zone to cut down some tree trunks to support the ceiling in this bunker of steel skids he had relieved off the strip after a skid drop was performed. This tree extraction was performed outside the perimeter and made me quite uneasy.

On February 21st, right after the fog lifted, the incoming started. That day we took a record amount of incoming, estimated about 1300 or more rounds of artillery, mortars, and 122mm rockets. I learned they had 120mm Chinese mortars. It blew down any tents we had standing, and made shambles of the base. I had been told Khe Sanh was an R&R resort before the siege where ARVN soldiers came to relax, and one of the tents we had in our Co area had some gambling going on.

After February 21st, life changed on the base. We lived strictly underground. If one thinks about it, this base was only 1 mile long and 1/2 mile wide, an easy target for artillery.

My life on the re-supply zone was one stressful ordeal, with very little cover from the constant shelling. L/Cpl Kieger and I were pinned down in between these two ground crushers the Seabees left near the zone. One round came in and hit in the middle of one. It was so loud our ears rang for hours. I crawled around it to see where the round hit. In the middle was a hole with smoke coming out of it, the round went off inside, if they had not been there, they would have been picking our body parts off the ground.

Another close call that really blew me away was the day I was at the other end of the zone next to the conventments. I was airlifting supplies to hill 861, and while a CH-46 chopper hovered over me I felt a brush of wind and rocks hit me. I looked over and saw a round had gone off inside the conventments so I flagged off the chopper for a 2nd try, and jumped into this small bunker. Another round came in and hit next to the bunker, as I peeked out the bunker I saw this hole with smoke coming out of it right where I was standing when I tried the lift. I began to feel as if someone had my number. I was thinking, I had to get back out there and attempt another lift that was successful. This was the way things happened out on the strip and re-supply zone.

Same with an Otter that came in all shot up, which had holes in it that I could put my fist in, it looked like Swiss cheese. All I could think about was the Marines inside of it. It took me three tries to get that thing out. The zone was nothing more than raw terror. After awhile one became numb, and only had one thing in mind, listening for that report to come from Co Rock mountain where the big guns fired from, the 152mm guns.

At first we would count how many seconds it took to hit us-it was 12 seconds, including the 130mm self propelled guns, later I discovered they had 168 of them out there. Then it went down to 7 seconds then 4 seconds. This was the time one had to decide what to do. So the Khe Sanh stupor became the habit. Walking or running, one's body would be hunkered over listening for that report. This went on for me until March 14th, when I was hit with shrapnel, along with L/Cpl Kieger and another Marine,

whom I cannot remember his name who was killed on the zone by 82mm mortar fire. The Marine that died was in country two weeks. The night before he talked about his girl friend from home; he was a nice guy, and I felt somewhat responsible for him. So I told him to stick close to me and be mindful of what I said. The next day we were airlifting out parachutes from the drop zone laid on steel skids destined for Da Nang to be re-folded. When airlifting parachutes I always hung out among them so in case of incoming they might suck up the shrapnel instead of me. This young guy wondered out in front of them and a mortar came in and hit near him and, he received a head wound. The next two incoming hit Kieger, taking out a part of his calf the size of a tennis ball. Sgt English and I took him to the med station.

I left the med station quickly knowing it was on the NVA hit list and staying around there was a hazard. I first jumped into a fighting hole and observed three journalists with their cameras hanging around their necks. All I could think of saying was, "This is not the place to be," and headed for the company area first, then across the strip to the zone. About 30 minutes later I was hit, I flew up a few feet and came down flat on my face. Sgt English came over and like out of a John Wayne movie, takes out his K -bar and cuts my uniform open near my left thigh and says, "Well Howell, you still have your jewels," with this big smile on his face. I ended up in Dong Ha medical center, Kieger went to Japan. The other Marine went to Da Nang to graves registration. This was one of the two ways one got out of there, other than being bit by a rat-wounded or dead.

As I lay on the table in Dong Ha they started to dig for the metal in my leg. We started receiving incoming, and they all left the room. So I rolled out from the table and crawled into the bunker with them. After it was over we went back in, and they decided they would leave the metal in my leg. I spent three weeks in Quang Tri near the airstrip in A Co's rear area with a gaping hole in my leg with a drain in it. I had a tremendous charley horse and had a heck of a time walking around. They finally decided to sew it up. To this day I still have that NVA calling card In my leg.

I found A Co's supply tent laying on the deck with big boxes laying all over in a big mess. So myself and a couple of Marines put the tent back up and organized it, inventoried it, and made it functional. The Staff Sgt in charge told me if I did a good job he would see if I could stay and run it. It did not happen, for as soon as I was able, they sent me back to the land of enchantment. I came back in May and operation Pegasus was kicking off and the 1st Air Cav was making their appearance.

After I got back in May of 68', things were tailing down. Just a few sporadic rounds would come in now and then, so we went to airlifting out damaged jeeps, one Cobra that was hit sitting in the conventments, and one stripped down 46 chopper, etc. By the end of May or beginning of June, we airlifted out to Dong Ha. This is when old Kieger (while we sat in the little watering hole we had,) decided to extend his tour 6 months after receiving a "Dear John" letter from home. I tried to talk him out of it, go home, straighten it out, and if he wanted to extend, do it then. He was stubborn and stayed there. That was the last time I ever saw Kieger or Sgt English.

A couple of Marines that were on Hill 881 in A Co, 3rd Shore Party Bn. that knew him said he went bonkers. I was re-assigned to FLC in Da Nang, Rations Company Supply BN, and met Larry Day, a Marine I went to boot Camp with. Another person I have lost contact with. Khe Sanh was a life changing event for all who served there.

My time at Dong Ha from Nov 25th to Feb 18th and FLC from June to Dec 68' are another story. I developed a dislike for the way the war was being fought. The manner in which mail was being delivered at Khe Sanh really made us mad. Mail was delivered and the bags were left on the turn around point. Incoming attempting to hit the plane ruptured the bags, and the mail was blown all over the landing strip. They made us get out there to pick it up, we just didn't feel risking our lives for mail was hard to take, even though I never received any.

A REUNION STORY

By Craig W. Tourte

I had a great time at the reunion this year. It's doesn't matter where the reunion is held, the extravagance of the accommodations or lack there of, it's the comradeship that is important to me. On Thursday Steve Wiese (B/1/26), Mike Fishbaugh (FLSU-1 & FLSG-B), David "Tony" Tonick (A/1/26) and myself, drove over to Genoa Nevada, a little town about forty miles south of Reno, tucked up against the high Sierra Nevada Mountains. David served eight months in Vietnam before he was shot in the back, the projectile exiting through the front right side of his neck. A jagged scar remains and is a reminder to all of his service, bravery and sacrifice. Genoa was named after the birth place of Christopher Columbus in Genoa Italy. We stopped off for a cold one at the Genoa Bar, said to be the oldest and first established bar located West of the Mississippi (or something like that). I bought Mike a T-Shirt, him being from Kentucky and all; I wanted Mike to have a little souvenir from his Nevada Travels. I can almost guarantee that no one in Kentucky has ever heard nor been in the small little dusty and hard to find town of Genoa. Like the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh, if you're in Genoa, you're no where.

For many years Steve Wiese owned and operated a successful construction company and did a great deal of traveling, I was surprised to hear that he had never heard of, nor been to Genoa before that day because he certainly has been everywhere else. We continued our travels, driving up the steep 11.2 mile Kingsbury grade, climbing to over 7000 feet above the desert floor to South Lake Tahoe where we stopped in at the Beacon Restaurant and gazed out over the world famous deep blue lake while we had lunch. We continued our trip with a slow drive around the east rim of one of the most beautiful lakes in the world, onto highway 50, descending down to the desert floor then on to Carson City, the state capitol of Nevada and back to Reno. It was a great afternoon.

On Friday evening Steve Wiese, Tom Horchler (H.Q. 1/13) and myself, were the invited guests of Khe Sanh Veteran and Association member Michael Archer (Author of "A Patch Of Ground") who lives in Reno. Mike's guests included the two sons and the grandson of the late Lieutenant Colonel John A. Hennelly, Commanding Officer of the First Battalion Thirteenth Marine Corps Regiment at Khe Sanh. Both men are former Marines and the grandson is entering Marine Corps boot camp in late August. There was an array of various dignitaries, scholars, writers and academics amongst the professionals present. As the twenty five or so of us gathered in the back yard, Mike stood and introduced each guest, announcing their name and giving a brief personal history of each and their individual achievements. It was one of the most amazingly articulate and even humorous oral presentations of introduction and recalled personal information I have ever heard, and I was privileged to have been present and to have been invited to his home. Mike introduced me as a Khe Sanh Veteran and writer, perhaps a bit gratuitous, but I appreciated the introduction.

It was the first reunion for many, often a difficult and lonely time for some. Marco Soto, Chuck Teasley, Andres "Pete" Torres, David "Tony" Tonick and Phil Nuchereno were just a few who attended the reunion for the first time. Marco and Pete are from Sacramento and I know they attended the reunion because I asked them to come. I appreciated them taking the time to drive over from California. Both attended the reading of the names at the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial along with myself, Steve Wiese, Ernie Spencer, Carrie Pepper and others.

Steve Wiese asked my wife and I to join his table for dinner. I was honored to have sat with Ken Pipes, Ben Long, Ken Korkow (all with B/1/26)), Chuck Teasley (C/1/26) and their wives. I tried to keep an eye on Pete Torres and Marco Soto because I knew they had arrived late to the reunion and I didn't want them to feel left out because they didn't know anyone. I observed that Pete had connected with the others at his table and was pretty engaged. Marco and his wife sat a couple of tables away from ours. I introduced myself to Marco's wife and thanked them both for coming. Marco told me that when he signed his name on the reunion sign up board he noted the name of David Tonick, and asked if I knew who he was, as both David and he had served in the same company in Vietnam and he had not seen David for over forty years. Marco took out his wallet and showed me an old color photo-

graph of David taken during the war. At that point my heart skipped a few beats and I had to take a couple of breaths. I'm just assuming here, but I had to believe that Marco and David had been rather close in Vietnam. My understanding is that the last time Marco saw David was when he and David were severely wounded and Marco was told to grab any other wounded and get on the chopper. David was removed from the field of battle with a rather large wound to his back and neck. In June of 1968 Alpha and Charlie Companies were attached to Delta Company, all with the Twenty Sixth Marine Regiment, when they assaulted up a small hill containing spider holes, towards an enemy held trench line. Marco sustained a wound to the back of his neck and had his M-16 jam during the assault. Many who survived the Siege at Khe Sanh were killed and wounded.

I took four steps to my left, less than ten feet. As I stood in front of the next table. I told David that there was someone at the next table who he should meet. David stood up and followed me the few feet to where Marco was sitting. I noticed that David had a photograph of himself taken in Vietnam attached to his reunion name tag. The exact same photograph that Marco had showed me just seconds before. It was a private moment and I left them alone to get reacquainted.

I sat down at my friend Tom "Louie" Horchlers table. Tom had talked me into attending our first Khe Sanh reunion some five years ago. I asked Tom what he thought of this reunion and Tom said it was the best one so far. I considered that for a minute, recalling how difficult those first reunions were for me and how each proceeding reunion was a little easier and more enjoyable. I told Tom he was right, it was a great reunion, perhaps because we were just emotionally prepared for it, Tom just smiled knowing it has been a long road traveled. I glanced over at David and Marco knowing it was their first reunion, and was sure they would feel the same way.

THE POWER OF REUNIONS

By Neil Kenny L Co 3/26

Four years ago in Dallas, I hijacked a young Army Captain in the hotel lobby; by the name of Pete Chambers. Seems Pete was with Special Forces, a Surgeon, and had just returned from Afghanistan. He was somewhat reluctant to join me and perhaps was thinking this was some sort of Marine Corp scavenger hunt or other such trick we 'devil dogs' are oft known to play on 'soldiers'.

I assured Pete it was all good and that he would do well to spend some time with Warriors like himself. The rest is as they say, History. I recall at the end of the reunion saying to Tom Ford and a few other, "Imagine if four days back from Nam we walked into a room full of Marines from Iwo? Imagine how different our lives might have been?' I was thinking of course of that soothing balm for our Heart and Soul that you can only get with and from a Kindred Spirit.

Well, imagine my surprise when returning from Reno to have received the following email :

Hey Neil,

Pete Chambers here. MAJOR type, one each, US Army SF, O.D. Green... I am over here in "the show" again. This time Kabul, Afghanistan. Hard to believe it's been four years since Shannon and I attended the Khe Sanh reunion with you guys in Dallas. I have been back and forth now, four times. Have not collected any more wounds, but, the emotional scars are starting to be felt.

I retold the story of how I met the Marines of "the siege" last week. How you all brought me in like one of your own. How I was able to meet real heroes and be in the company of brothers. How, the best de-brief / psychological healing took place on one night in Dallas. I reflected on how I was given the honor to carry a flag during the opening ceremony, and how humbled I was when Doc Ballard placed the "Doc" medal over my neck. I told them of how broken I felt when I spoke to your crowd, and how understood I felt when a voice from the back said, "that's OK bro, we know how you feel."

When I was through speaking to these gentlemen there was not a dry eye at the table. The guys at my table were all veterans of years of service, all but two. I spoke with an "old guy" like me, a SF Master Sergeant, a Ranger 1st Sergeant and an old SF guy who was recently demoted to SSG for telling

off an officer. (Who probably needed it)...

But, the two young guys sat in awe of the old grizzled vets and took it all in. One guy, a 1st LT who is here with New York State National Guard, on his first tour out of the gate. He is biting at the bit for some "action."We just hold his reigns and tell him to beware of what you wish for. The other guy, a Navy corpsman just sat and listened as we each told stories of guys we've lost, and how it was the toughest on those back home. Hell, to us there would be no better way to go.

Well, the young corpsman was spending a little time with me in the aide station here, getting his feet wet, and prepping to go down range. Quiet kid, not much to say, just did his job. This past week he went out west to support operations in that AO. How can I say well, I guess I'll just say it. We heard that he lost his life in an IED. He was supporting the Marines.

How many more times will I sit at a table with a bunch of old vets and talk about our heroes to wake up the next day to loose another? I know, this is war, but, this $h!t ain't easy. Thank God I only have 67 days and a wake up.

You know, each time I meet a new young kid, I kind of feel bad. Cause, they want to get to know me. But, I hold 'them off. Just don't want to get to know too much. I try to lead by example, but, not let anyone in too close. It hurts less that way.

Over all, the mission here is going well. The country appears to be better. The bad guys have less places to hide. Things get a bit sporty at times, but, I believe there is light at the and of the tunnel. I hope all is well with you and yours my friend. Say hello to the guys. I hope to see you all some day at a future reunion. I need to decompress.
God Bless.
Pete

Please keep this Fellow Warrior in your Prayers as we await his arrival back home.
Semper Fidelis,

Neil

POWNEY BW USMC

By Charles Taliaferro

I came across the below in the guest book of "The Wall" http://thewall-usa.com/guestbook.asp and thought it might be of interest to you.

Date: September 3, 2008, 5:48 pm, MDT
Name: Michael Sweeney
Email: Sweeney_m@hotmail.com

I have a USMC Dog tag that was found at Khe Sanh in 2004 the name on it is POWNEY BW USMC, Can anyone help me in locating this man or his family. Thanks Mike Sweeney USMC

Re(1): POWNEY BW USMC
Posted on September 6, 2008 at 10:30:49 PM by Mike Fishbaugh
POWNEY, Bruce W E2 0311 2385936 A CO 1/9 Khe Sanh

UPDATE- POWNEY BW USMC
Posted on September 9, 2008 at 06:30:21 PM by Mike Fishbaugh

Hello Mike,

Glad to hear from you, I located Cpl Bruce Powney at 115 Lurie Street in SE Grand Rapids, Michigan 816-734-9026, I found him with assistance from 2 other KSV veterans, I spoke to Bruce he was on Khe Sanh for one year and has no idea where his Dog tag disappeared.

I accompanied 2 Marine Mothers back to Vietnam, One Son Ted Johnson was in my Platoon and was KIA in Hoi An in 1967. Ted was awarded the Bronze Star after his death. We travelled to Khe Sanh where another Mother's Son died defending a Bridge, He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions prior to his death.

While in Khe Sanh a young boy approached me and gave me a rusty Medal From a North Vietnamese Soldier, and Cpl Powneys Dog tag, he said that he found both of them while digging in the hills around Khe Sanh. The ribbon actually had cloth on it which would appear that it had been buried for years, possibly while still on a Deceased NVA Soldier. The Dog tag was with it so it could have been in the pos-

session of a NVA Soldier that died during the siege. I called a M/Sgt Ron Olsen at 517-719-6717 in SE Kentwood Michigan, he was very enthusiastic about the find and stated that he would present it to Cpl Powney in a dignified manner when I send it to him. I sent it Fed Ex today. I was unaware of your organization or I would have attempted contact, possibly you would like to call M/Olsen and somehow participate in this little ceremony, if even only by letter to Cpl Powney.

M/Sgt Olsen's address is 4475 Lantana Drive in SE Kentwood, Michigan, 49512.
If you forward your address I will send you a copy of the letter that I sent to Sgt Olsen regarding the find.
Regards
Michael J. Sweeney
Sgt USMC 1964-1968 Vietnam 1967-68 Semper Fi !
Cell Phone 203-214-6764.

From: smfishbaugh@mikrotec.com
To: Sweeney_m@hotmail.com
CC: smfishbaugh@mikrotec.com
Subject: ref found dog tag
Date: Sun, 7 Sep 2008 14:51:20 -0400

Was forwarded the message in regards to found dog tag. I do research for the Khe Sanh Veterans Assoc.

POWNEY, Bruce W
E2
0311
2385936
A 1/9 Khe Sanh

I will try to find out if he is still living and where. May take awhile. He did serve in Khe Sanh in 1968. He is not a member of our Assoc. Can you provide any further details or history of how you can about the tag. Please keep in touch and advise if you receive any father information in regards to the tag
Best Regards, Mike Fishbaugh

WE GET LETTERS

Good Morning Tom;
Issue #70 of the Red Clay arrived in my mailbox this morning. Having read the first half before lunch I will finish it after supper this day for sure. Rereading the issue 70 for a second time will happen sometime next week.

Please find the enclosed check to be placed in the Red Clay fund account to defray your printing and postage requirements. Since my tax rebate will be here next month, I decided to spend it early.

As things look today participating in the 40th Reunion will not come to pass for this member as my wife's medical condition only allow me out of the house for an hour or so every other day. Having attended the 40th anniversary of the "D Day Landing" event at Omaha and Utah Beaches, I have seen just what can happen at any 40th reunion.

My wife and I were at Omaha Beach for the 1:00 PM ceremonies to start. There was a man asleep in a lawn chair a couple of rows in front of our position. Behind us was a couple from Texas. My wife, a Texan was talking away when the fellow in the lawn chair awoke from his nap and stood up. He looked at the couple behind us yelling at the man, what are you doing here? It seemed that the fellow behind us had been hired by the gentleman in 1948 to teach in his school where he was the principle. Asking where he was on D-Day, he said he was in the Navy operating a landing craft while the other fellow was a soldier assaulting the beach. The fellow who was the principle asked him why he never told him he had been on Omaha for the twelve years he worked for him. His answer was "you never asked."

That exchange of words made me think of how many Americans have gone to war, never to speak about it. This is more prevalent for the Vietnam Veteran than most others many would say.

CARLES S. (CHUCK) GERRIOR
pohakoloa@aol.com

THE COMMANDANT AND I

By Craig W. Tourte

I stayed at the Marine Memorial Hotel in San Francisco. A fine hotel with a long history, located in the

heart of that historic and graceful city. While there, I visited the library and museum and walked the hall dedicated to the Commandants of the Marine Corps. I paused in front of the photograph of the current Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James T. Conway, remembering back to when I attended the Khe Sanh Veterans Annual Reunion held July 3-8, 2007, in Washington, D.C. It was drop dead hot and humid in Washington during the month of July



and I wore the obligatory garb favored by most California's and other tourists to Washington at that time of year, shorts and t-shirt (this one happened to have the Khe Sanh logo on it).

One especially hot afternoon, Neil Kenny asked if I would be interested in visiting the Pentagon, Neil followed that question with the pronouncement, "we're leaving right now." I did a quick survey of my appearance, wrinkled and stained shirt, tattered shorts, gut hanging over my belt, probably needed a shave and bath and who knows what other personal hygiene attention I required at that moment. I was a bit embarrassed about my appearance and attire but the words, "we're leaving right now" took priority over my flaws. I wanted to take advantage of this once in a life time opportunity, so off we went to the Headquarters of the United States Department of Defense.

Sergeant Jeremiah W. Workman who was the guest of honor at the Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, was kind enough to provide myself and one other person with a very personal tour of the Pentagon. Sergeant Workman was awarded the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism while serving with the 3d Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment during the battle for Al Fallujah, Iraq. His assignment during the time of the reunion was aid and driver to the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

We walked the hallowed halls of the Pentagon which was dedicated on January 15, 1943. It is generally considered one of the world's largest office buildings. It houses approximately 89,000 military and civilian employees, has 3,000 non-defense support personal, five sides, five floors, two basement levels and corridors that total 17.5 miles. We entered the location where American Airlines Flight 77 hit the wall of the Pentagon, now the location of



a memorial and chapel dedicated to those fine Americans who were lost that fateful day. While walking along the corridor containing the various offices of the Marine Corps we paused in front of the office which had a small gold plaque next to the door proclaiming, "Commandant of the Marine Corps." The door was open and Sergeant Workman asked if I would like to go inside. Now look, I was a private in the United States Marine Corps from 1966 to 1968, okay so I was promoted to corporal a few of months before I was discharged, but all the same, I always had the heart of a private. I was never asked for my opinion, never put in charge of anyone or anything, - in retrospect, a smart move on the part of the Marine Corps - never spoke to anyone over the rank of lieutenant and here I was, about to enter "God's" office. Pot belly, stained shirt, ratty shorts, needing a shave and bath and certainly not "squared away" by anyone's standards… I stepped inside.

As we entered, we were met by a young major with a high and tight haircut who almost stood at attention when he saw that the person who entered the office was Sergeant Workman. As they visited for a few minutes I could sense the enormous amount of

respect this officer had for Sergeant Workman and noticed several other officers peeking around the corner, speaking amongst themselves, their attention was directed towards Sergeant Workman, I was confident their conversation was regarding his combat experience and heroic deeds. Sergeant Workman told the major that he wanted to show a "Khe Sanh Veteran" the Commandants office and asked if it would be alright. The major's response was "of course" - the Commandant was not in - and opened up the door. Then this once very sorry excuse for a private in the Corps of forty years ago, proudly walked into the office of the Commandant of the United States Marine Corps.

I gazed at the large oak desk, my mind was racing with thoughts of all the decisions that must have been made in this office. I wondered how many times, some forty years ago, those who controlled the fate of 6,000, had uttered the words "The Siege at Khe Sanh." I wondered if these men of power and command really understood the sacrifices so many made. I wondered if they themselves had endured rocket after rocket, mortar after mortar, and the drenching incoming of artillery week after week and month after month. I wondered if these great men who stood in this office would have been as brave as those I had left at the hotel but a few miles away.

I asked if I could have my photograph taken behind the Commandants desk and was granted permission. As I stood behind the Commandants desk where so many great generals and admirals, important politicians, various world dignitaries and even presidents have stood, I reached over and picked up a business card from it's holder. The card read, "James T. Conway, General U.S. Marine Corps, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 3000 Marine Corps Pentagon, Washington, D.C. 20350-3000." I was humbled by the experience, most appreciative to Neil Kenny and Sergeant Workman for the opportunity and I still felt like a private. However, I was filled with pride that I had been a Marine and was honored to be able to say I had served at Khe Sanh with some of the finest men I had ever known and I was proud to be an American.

As I left the Pentagon, knowing that in my lifetime I might never return and certainly I'd never again step into the office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, I turned to Sergeant Workman and observed this tall, strong and proud Marine who had done all that was asked of him and so much more. I asked him what he thought the future had in store for him. He had done so much in such a short life. Led men in combat, seen comrades die, eliminated the enemy and suffered numerous wounds himself. I didn't know what to expect and was looking forward to his response. His answer was surprisingly simple, he turned to me and said, "I want to go back."

I understood his response completely, I have heard it many times before. I hope he understood mine, "you've done enough."

NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES

By Reverend Ray W. Stubbe

There are at least half a dozen times I should have died. The verse of the hymn, "Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come, 'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far," really rings true! Then there are the words of many of the Psalms: "I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord." (Ps 118.17); "You have rescued me. I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." (Ps 22.21b-22). "I will thank you in the great congregation: in the mighty throng I will praise you." (Ps 35.18).
Some of these were so minor; at the time, it was hard to discern that I was rescued, that it wasn't just fate or accident.

• I was a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago, in the field of "ethics and society." Following classes the morning of Friday, 27 January 1967, I started driving home despite a snowstorm that had been dropping snow from the previous day. It was only as I entered the Dan Ryan Expressway that I realized I should not have started the weekend journey home, for there were numerous vehicles in the three lanes of traffic stopped here and there in the different lanes and the exits, having an upward incline, were clogged with no possibility of exiting the freeway. In addition, balls of snow began to accumulate on the ends of my windshield wipers so that

the wipers were unable to remove accumulating snow on the windshield. Desperately, I wove from lane to lane to avoid stuck vehicles while having my left arm outside the window, attempting to brush away accumulating snow while steering with the right hand! This continued all through the city of Chicago, the extent of the Dan Ryan and Edens Expressway, and the large flakes and large amount of snow continued until just past the Illinois-Wisconsin border, with only light snow falling in Wisconsin. The danger after entering Wisconsin, however, remained. Although there was less snow, it was still slippery, and while traveling on a two-lane stretch of Interstate 94, with no vehicles in front or behind me, my car suddenly skidded 180 degrees, facing in the opposite direction. Just then I noticed two large trucks, one in each lane as one was passing the other, approaching me! I had no time to get out of the car and run for what appeared to be a certain collision! At the last minute, both trucks miraculously moved to pass me using the shoulder of the highway, on either side! By the time I arrived home, my nerves were completely shot. Classes at the University [of Chicago] were cancelled for a week.

* I landed in DaNang at 1222, 14 July 1967, waiting for further transportation to 3rd Marine Division HQ at Phu Bai. Around 1700, word was passed there would be no further flights. We went to the Air Force officer's mess for supper and were told that there would be an Air Force C-130 going to Phu Bai at 2100. I met a Captain Harper L. Bohr, Jr., who was going to Khe Sanh to be the Intelligence Officer. He opted to remain at DaNang while I decided to take the USAF plane. It didn't depart DaNang until 2312. When I finally arrived at Khe Sanh several days later, Bohr noted that just after midnight, the DaNang Air Base was raked with rockets creating horrible devastation. The Stars & Stripes for 16 July 1967, reads: "At least 12 Americans were killed. Witnesses said the Communists fired about 50 rounds of 120 and 140mm rockets from two directions and with pinpoint accuracy ... Destroyed in the attack were three big Air Force C130 transports which cost $2.5 million each .. "

*On 16 December, 1967, our regimental Intelligence Officer, Captain Harper L. Bohr, Jr., asked me to accompany him to the home of John and Carolyn Miller in Khe Sanh village. He had received 4 boxes of toys and clothing to give to the children there, and was going to give them to these missionaries to distribute. We caught a ride by jeep to the Miller's home. After visiting awhile, we walked back to the base. I remember climbing Hill 471 and going through the various Bru villages. Bohr was point, John Miller was in the center, and I was "tail end Charlie." I didn't think anything of it at the time, although some of our recon teams were making deadly contact at the time in the general area, and Bohr later told me that he shudders when he thinks of what we were doing at that time: that the NVA were in the area and we could have been killed or captured.

*Someone stole my camera just as the siege battle of Khe Sanh began [on Sunday, 21 January 1968] when I laid it down while carrying some dead on stretchers to Graves Registration. When I returned, it was gone. It was a camera my grandpa Stubbe had given to me, and it took some very good photos even though it wasn't a single lens reflex. It really bothered me for many years, especially since I had photos on the film in the camera of people that I knew who died. One of my friends told me that whoever stole the camera saved my life, because during the incoming rockets and mortars, I probably would have been taking photos when I should have been keeping my head down. That was very true.

*I was getting ready to visit all over the combat base which was always taking incoming when someone yelled to me that I had a phone call! It was the Chaplain of one of the other battalions (Jack Heino, chaplain of 1/9). I don't even recall the conversation. As I was talking with him on the land line telephone, a mortar round exploded just where I would have been had I continued walking and not returned to take his phone call. He saved my life and didn't even know it!

* I had blood in my urine and was sent to a hospital at DaNang, but returned to the siege battle after a couple of days-only after I promised I'd return for more testing. When I returned to Parris Island after Vietnam, I went to the hos-

pital where they did a kidney biopsy and determined I had "glomerulo-nephritis" which is an auto-immune disease in which the body attacks itself (as in lupus). They said that it would clear up, and then return sometime within 20 years and that was fatal that I had only 20 years left to live at the most. They offered me a medical discharge, but let me remain on active duty. I had made a decision at that time, not to marry or take a civilian congregation. Well, I'm still here!

* On Tuesday, 06 February 1968, I was in my bunker for the evening. Diary entry: "Turned in early, about 2030. At 2345 the base began receiving incoming rockets and mortars. At 2415 I heard one whistle in. The hooch shook briefly but violently. Silence, A dud? A delayed fuse? From the shaking of the hooch, did it land on the top or become embedded in the side? Then a tremendous WHOMP! I thought the hooch was going to collapse. I had wondered all along whether I should go out and check if there were a round on the top or in the side unexploded, so as to seek other safety. Yet that would expose me, though it was total darkness outside. I thought maybe I should just run anyway, to another bunker. Had I done that, I would have been caught in the WHOMP. I shined a flashlight inside, still laying down on my rack. Everything was in a dense fog of dust. All the remainder of the next few hours we kept receiving rounds, many very near us. Then our artillery would blast away, and they'd be silent. Then they would begin again. This alternating situation prevailed for some time. But I slept most of the time." In the morning, I saw a crater about three feet from the entrance of my bunker where a rocket had exploded. [Diary, p. 604]

* Friday, 23 February 1968. The base took some 1300-incoming rounds today. According to my diary entry, I was in my bunker at noon, eating a "Ham, with water added, and eggs, chopped, canned." "I was eating the cookies and drinking the cocoa from the B-3 unit when arty came in-heavy arty. One whizzed and the whole hooch shook violently. It sounded like it was stuck in the wall. Things were falling-dirt, pieces of wood. I immediately thought of a delayed fuse. If it were embedded in the wall of dirt outside my bunker wall, the whole hooch would explode. Yet, if I dashed out, a new round might come in and then I'd get dinged by shrapnel." Later that evening, I noticed that the wall had crumpled inward, right next to my rack, where I was sitting. It had been draped with a camouflaged parachute, so I didn't notice it previously. My diary entry: "Hit the pad and noticed that the wall was bent. It wasn't merely the top piece caved out, but the whole wall! There was an engineering stake bent inside, also. This is what came in during my lunch! -while I was sitting with my back only two feet from it, on my rack! I was most uneasy about it all. Called up Major Hudson [the Regimental S-2], who said I should call up the EOD man. I was concerned that a nearby explosion might detonate it, were it a dud .. The Major said it might. The EOD man said it was safe to sleep. [He probably didn't want to attend to this at the moment, there being so many other duds strewn about the base from the extraordinarily large amount of shelling today. So I slept all night right next to the "questionable wall." [Diary, pp. 700-701].

* On 20 June 1968, I was on the Dong Ha Combat Base in the afternoon to visit a man from "C" Company, 3rd Shore Party Bn, to deliver a death message. My PC vehicle became stuck in the ammo dump there and some Marines from FLSG "B" volunteered to bring a wrecker, but after waiting an hour or so. I decided to get a truck to take me to 9th Motors where I was able to get in a "bread run" vehicle back to my stalled PC. They managed to fix it, and I returned to Quang Tri Combat Base. At about 1630 some very loud bangs and immense clouds filling the sky alerted us to gaze north to Dong Ha Combat Base where the ammo dump was exploding-where I had just been in my stalled vehicle! Large balls of fire billowed into the sky. (There were, amazingly, no people killed. One tower with 2 Marines in it collapsed. Chaplain Fenning, the Division Chaplain, mentioned later that the explosion destroyed 10 million dollars worth of ammo).

*I was walking in the Marble Mountains of DaNang on the 19 August 1968 with my new clerk who had just come off a Navy ship

[Richard Straubel]. He wore his blue Navy dungarees and a white sailor hat. We checked with the S-2 of the amphibious tractor unit there who said it was quiet. I wanted my clerk to see some of the carved Buddha statues I'd heard were there. So we spent most of the day walking in and out of various caves and grottos. A little Vietnamese boy joined us and was whistling-sometimes noticeably louder and with more agitation than at others. (I was aware of this at the time, but disregarded it). There was one time when I started to go into a cave area, but noticed a lot of tin cans and debris, and it didn't look too interesting, so I walked back out. It was at this point that the boy really whistled loudly and even darted away! After I came out, he rejoined us. My clerk, in the meantime, was photographing some statues. The next day, the Special Forces camp, the headquarters for the SOG units in northern I Corps (CCN, Command and Control North), just at the base of the Marble Mountains, was penetrated and almost overrun. Some of those who had been at Khe Sanh were stationed there and killed including a couple Sergeant Majors. I was told that there were about 70 of the NVA inside the Marble Mountains when I was going through it!

* While serving as a Chaplain at the recruit training at Parris Island after Vietnam [1969-1970], I was walking along the rifle range. While I was out, a Sergeant came into my office on the rifle range and in a strange voice (according to my clerk) asked, "Where is the Chaplain?" As it turned out, I had never met the Sergeant. My clerk noticed that he had a M-16 and that the selector was on "semi automatic." I was unaware of all of this. I went to our Chaplains center on the base to get my mail at lunch time, and couldn't get near the building, because it was surrounded by MPs. I later discovered that the Sergeant thought if he shot a Chaplain, that he'd get transferred off Parris Island! So I'm here today because I wasn't in my office, but was among the troops!

* 25-29 June 1999: Patient at VA Medical Center, Milwaukee, WI. On Thursday, 24 June, I went to the VA, very sick, asking for a nurse to take my temperature, but was told to telephone in to the nurse by phone! Instead, I went to the emergency room where one of the young intern doctors took a blood test and then poked in the abdomen. He said that if I had appendicitis, I would have leaped from the gurney in pain, and I didn't. He said to return "tomorrow, if the pain persists." It did. I returned. After a CT scan, the doctor said, "We're admitting you immediately. Your appendix is ready to burst." It's miraculous that the appendix didn't burst!

WE GET LETTERS

FROM WEBSITE:

www.Always-faithful.com
August 8, 2008
Vol 9 Issue 8

Editor's note: I'm sure many of you know who, my hero, Vince Rios is. If not, you can find out much about Vince at our website.

Vince Rios stepped on a rigged mine six days before he was to go home after his second tour of duty in Vietnam. He lost two legs, an arm and some fingers on his other hand. But instead of feeling sorry for himself and just existing on his disability pay he made lemonade out of lemons

"FROM THE BOULEVARD"

Submitted to the Castro Valley Forum .
By Thomas E. Lorentzen
May 27,2008.

"USS San Francisco, Vietnam and Elvis"

"Experience is not what happens to a man. It is what a man does with what happens to him." (Aldous Huxley)

It is very easy for most of us to view Memorial Day Weekend as a time for relaxation and pleasure. Thoughts of cooking hamburgers and hot dogs over an open grill, visiting with friends and relatives, or perhaps, despite the high cost of gas, taking a trip to a nearby location of attractiveness, such as Santa Cruz come to mind. These thoughts also dominated my mind as I looked forward to the recent holiday weekend. Then, an envelope arrived at my home. Inside was an invitation to attend a memorial cere-

mony at Lands End at Fort Miley in San Francisco. It is where a memorial exists for the crew of the USS San Francisco from WWII. It was not just an invitation, however, as there was a hand-written note at the bottom from my long-time friend, Vince Rios. He was the Chair of Honor. The event was dedicated to him as· an "American hero."

The note said, "I really want to see you there and later at the Marines Memorial Club." It was signed, Vince," and to the left was a caricature of his face drawn by himself. His artwork was simple, two eyes, a mustache and upper lip. With that, I changed my plans knowing I must attend to honor my friend, as well as others who have worn the uniform of our armed forces, particularly those who have given lives and limbs for our nation.

The USS San Francisco was at Pearl Harbor during the attack on December 7th, 1941, and participated in seventeen major sea battles, including the last one at Okinawa. Its greatest recognition, however. was perhaps at the Battle of Guadalcanal on December 13th• 1942. 100 sailors and 7 Marines died during this battle. From the beginning of WW II to its end the ship and its noble crew fought valiantly for this nation and the cause of freedom. Several of the survivors were present for the event, and the humility of being present with these heroes ensconced the 250 or so people in attendance.

About 10 minutes before the ceremony started, however, we saw flashing lights at the end of the street.

It was an entourage of motorcycle officers from the San Francisco Police Department. Was it the Mayor? Perhaps it was a rock star? People speculated. I noticed that they encircled a van and knew that yes indeed, it was a rock star. It was person of "high standing" in the minds of all of us who were there. It was Vince Rios.

As the police entourage and van approached people started quietly saying, "It's Vince." For veterans of Vietnam, as well as from other wars, Vince is Elvis in Marine clothing. Vince is a well-decorated U.S. Marine, and a man who surrendered three limbs during combat in Vietnam. The year was 1969 and Vince's life would change forever, and he would embody the ultimate in 'human courage, dignity and generosity.

Despite the loss of limbs Vince went on to earn several college degrees

Vince went on to earn several college degrees. He would become an advocate for the disabled and for minorities, as well as for all who have served this nation in uniform. When Vince speaks, people turn quiet, not only out of respect, but because he speaks with an insight into the human experience that is stunning. He speaks with humor, reflecting his outlook on life. He speaks of courage, duty, honor and country - also reflecting his outlook on life. He has two sons who have followed in his footsteps, both serving in the Marine Corps, including service in our nation's present military conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

After the event ended, people moved forward to say hello to Vince and to shake his hand. People posed for photos with him, recognizing that he is both a celebrity and hero. When he spoke he talked of the importance of caring for the men and women who now wear the uniforms of our nation's Armed Forces - of helping them when they return home, recognizing that there have been more than 4000 that have already given their lives for our nation. Others, like Vince, have been severely wounded, and need our care, compassion and respect.

Vince and his wife, Cheryl, left the next day to return to Texas where they now live. Being with him and his wife, along with the others who have given their limbs and lives for our nation made me realize that Memorial Day should always be about them - not us.

Henceforth, when I visit with Vince I will tell him that from my perspective he is bigger and more important than Elvis. He will laugh. He will then smile and say, "You're Damn right!" From what I know of Elvis, I suspect he would also say, "You're damn right! Thank you very much Vince." You and your colleagues are Memorial Day.

Thomas E. Lorentzen Regional
Director Region IX.
Immediate Office of the Secretary US
Department of Health and Human Services

MEMORIES OF KHE SANH

By Clarke H. Wylde
C/O FLSG-A LSU

I am not sure why I am writing to my brothers at this time, unless its February and I have been recollecting what transpired many years ago in the Months of February & March of 1968.

I found an old red Clay magazine (Spring 2006 Issue 64) and it featured the combat correspondents and photojournalist. That really brought back memories. I remember Juarte Kazickas, it was really an exciting experience having her in the LSU compound. As the LSU Commander during the Siege, I had the pleasure of meeting her. My friend Jim Madara would have really enjoyed meeting her but did not get the chance. One of the few luxuries we enjoyed was our own shower. It had been constructed out of an Immersion burner in a 50 Gallon drum fitted atop a structure which resembled an old wooden outhouse. Members of Charlie Med & the Seabees as well as the Marines located in and around the LSU compound learned that if they brought a 5 gallon can of water they could use the facility and enjoy a hot shower.

In early March Marine Corporal Cobb informed me that a lady was inquiring about taking a shower. I quickly agreed and waved the required 5 gallons of water rule. If you can picture this, here we had this very attractive women going to take a shower in our home made structure that had more holes than wood. What to do.? Solution? I had all the Marines I could locate in the compound form a circle around the structure and gave them an "about Face" command. They remained in that formation until she had completed her shower.

I later learned that she had been wounded. I did not learn of her fate until reading the article in Red Clay. The only recollection I have of Robert Ellison was observing him lying in the prone position taking pictures about a hundred yards away from where I was fighting a fire in the ammunition supply point ASP # 3. I never saw him again and learned that he had died in a plane crash from the same article in Red Clay.

An LSU is a miniature supply and maintenance unit supporting the command. Ammunition was our most valued commodity. It was Para dropped onto a Landing Zone and brought to the ASP by Shore Party Marines. They sustained numerous causalities from incoming Mortar fire while performing this task. When the enemy blew the ammunition dumps at Danang & Phu Bai, they were quickly re-supplied. At Khe Sanh, we did not have that luxury.

Staff Sergeant Peterson and I decided we had to fight the fires and save as much ammunition as possible. When the NVA struck one of the ammunition berms, my ammunition technicians got into the adjoining berms surrounding the one which had been hit and kept the burning embers from starting a fire in the adjoining berms. Using this technique my techs fought three ammo fires and only lost the berm that had been originally impacted by incoming fire. No other command could make that claim.

While fighting the fire at ASP # 3, Robert Ellison captured a moment in history that changed my life and those who fought the fires with me. I remember those Marines risked their lives to save the ammunition so badly needed by the troops defending Khe Sanh. I cannot remember all of their names after all these years only a few come to mind, Cpl Cobb, S/Sgt Peterson, S/Sgt Davis and another corporal I only remember by his nickname " Pig Pen." Also my radio operator who never left my side no matter how critical the situation became. To those Marines and all the rest I want to give a belated "Well Done."

Sometime in late March one of my Marines gave me a copy of News Week magazine with the picture taken by Robert Ellison. "Hey Lieutenant, you made the cover of News Week, he exclaimed I would like to hear from any of the Marines I served with."

HALT WHO GOES THERE?

Sgt Vince Rios, USMC (Ret)

The field Marines in Viet Nam relied totally on the USMC issue hand-held compass at least once for finding their way in and around hostile areas. Marines became totally lost at least once, especially in the dark, was Corporal Barnard among them.

My squad was Third Squad in Second Platoon and my squad leader was Corporal Hugh Donald (H.D.) "Barney" Barnard. There was a no more squared

away Marine than Barney - boots, brass, M14 rifle and magazines-spotless, teeth brushed and clean shaven-always and skives neatly folded and pressed. He was this way in garrison as well as in the field. Barney guarded a very personal spray can of WD-40 all-purpose metal lubricant and rust remover that he used sparingly on everything. It wouldn't surprise me in the least to learn that he still has that same can 42 years after leaving the Corps and that it is still half full! You had to love Barney. Barney insisted that his squad members meet his standards though we never did. David Schmidt, one of the younger Marines in our squad, confided in me years later that Barney was so demanding that he scared the heck out of him. Schmidt asked me if Barney scared me and I said no. He ticked me off a lot but he did not scare me because I knew I could clean his clock! Schmidt just laughed.

Our platoon commander was Second lieutenant Robert Andrew "Andy" Beeler. We nicknamed him "The Chin" because of his protruding chin. Actually another Marine, Lee Scalzilli gave him the name and the rest of us just picked up on it.

In those days, all enlisted Marines went to the Infantry Training Regiment (ITR) after Recruit Training and before unit assignment at Camp San Onofre aboard the Camp Pendleton Marine Base. We received compass classroom and field training along with other field survival training there. I found that the compass classroqm lectures and field exercises were mostly academic; we rarely found what we were seeking in daylight, let alone at night although we followed the compass march directions to the letter and avoided simple mistakes like shooting an azimuth close to or around anything metal. In the Marine Corps the equipment is never wrong and is never to blame for mistakes.

Marines need more than instruments to survive in combat, though. Marines need common sense, instinct, a good sense of direction, guts and a willingness to employ them all generously in night movements, as needed. The Corps insists that every recruit show these qualities albeit their endowment is as varied as are height, weight, shape, and form. Another trainee in ITR proved this point to me. He was chosen to lead our group on the night mine field and booby trap march but lost his nerve early on. I offered to take the point which he readily relinquished and our group came through in flying colors! To the chagrin of our trainers, we also found the Surprise trip wire discretely set well away from the path that if tripped would give out a loud "boom," thus my point man "endowment" was discovered.

Andy may have suffered from that affliction that affects second lieutenants making it difficult for them to bond with their compasses but if he did, it never showed because he always trusted my point man instinct and gave me free rein.

We arrived in Viet Nam in July, 1965 and for a short while we ran short-range squad size patrols along the coast north of Danang. Now it was late summer and we were further inland toward the west. Our squads were running longer range night patrols and night ambushes. We had to know where we were at all times which was difficult enough among the many look-alike rice paddies, tree lines and tiny villages. More importantly, we had to know where our "friendlies" were. Our friendlies included other Marine units and the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam (ARVN) units. Later we were also around and worked with U.S. Army units, but not now. Our unit; Alpha Company, First Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment (A/l/5) was recently designated Echo Company, Second Battalion, Ninth Marine Regiment (E/2/9) in May in Okinawa. It was my first tour of duty in Viet Nam.

On one of many dark moonless nights our squad had night patrol. Barney at the helm and I at point with eyes peeled and ears cocked. I felt secure at the head of the column, with the patrol route memorized, away from the squad distractions with only me and the Gooks sharing the sights and sounds of the night. Occasionally Barney would come forward, tap me on the shoulder and point me in a different direction. After a few changes I realized that we were meandering aimlessly and had now wondered onto an ankle-deep wet rice paddy. We were no longer on our patrol route.

Finally I told Barney we were going in the wrong direction and insisted that we go in the direction I knew to be correct; he insisted that I lead the squad in the direction he knew to be correct and pointed me toward some high ground up ahead. Off I went

moving as silently as possible in water with the rest of the squad in tow, fully exposed in the open rice paddy. Suddenly, as I approached the high ground, an unfamiliar voice called out "Halt, who goes there." I stopped in my tracks, motioned for the squad to squat down and said "E/2/9 patrol coming in." The voice said "advance and be recognized."

I could already see me reporting in to Saint Peter at the Pearly Gates and my great satisfaction was in knowing what The Chin would say ("What were you trying to prove, mister?") when Barney would have to report in to him, if he survived the barrage of 7.62mm rifle and machine gun fire that would surely follow my advance. (with M-14 at the ready, to be recognized.) Would this be my demise.

I was "recognized", and spared. As it turned out, the voice was from a Marine from one of our sister companies-Golf or Hotel. We were way off Course! I asked Barney how could he be so wrong and he said, "I don't know, something must be wrong with this compass. Look, this is the correct direction." As he brought the compass to his right eye, to my dismay, he was wearing his helmet the whole time! Now humbled by his blunder he let me do my job though ticked off but composed, as point man without anymore interference back to our platoon perimeter.

The Chin never knew.

OFF TO QUANG TRI

By James Dalto Kilo CO
3/26

Our last terrible night at Khe Sanh was spent in the ARVN section of the perimeter, which added to our general misery and anxiety. Rats, the stench of garbage, and some bad vibes were not conducive to a good night's rest. The remnants of Kilo Company greeted the new day with an unspoken question "what's next?" I personally discovered that I had set a new standard of malaise, a triple headache: my normal I got to wear this G/D helmet all the time headache, a concussion headache, topped off with a tension headache. I had some Darvon and coffee for breakfast.

With a little free time, I decided to take a little self inventory. This was a big mistake. While I had all the gear I was supposed to have, my physical state was a distinct shock. I was far beyond filthy. I had a beard, and both my new beard and head of hair were a matted mixture of grease, sweat, and Khe Sanh's red dirt. A noticeable layer of this filth had also coated all my exposed skin. My clothing was worse. They looked like tattered rags, covered with that same crusty red dirt. My utility trousers were crusted with crud on both legs where I had been wiping my hands. And since my buddy had slit the pants legs the day before to check how badly I had been wounded, the trousers now looked like I was wearing a skirt. When I walked I wrinkled like an old piece of linoleum. Both my utility jacket and T-shirts were also about rotted away. Of course, the last of my underwear had rotted away back in late January, so every errant breeze produced a bit of a live sex show.

Some people might think the worst thing about this situation was the exposure of a larger portion of my skin to the predation of ravenous insects, they'd be dead wrong. Others might think the jibes and snide comments of my squad mates was the worst part of the appearance. Again, they would be way off the mark. The worst part about the entire situation was the reaction of the ARVN's we shared the trench with. They seemed to really enjoy the show. Altogether, not a great way to start a day, I'll admit I spent quite a bit of time mentally kicking myself in the butt for getting drunk, rather than doing something constructive, that last night I'd spent in Danang the only thing that ended my masochist mantra was the word echoing down the line, saddle up Choppers would soon be along to ferry us down to Quang Tri, we were back in the Corps.

In short order, Kilo Company was organized, and told to stand by for incoming choppers. In the true tradition of 'hurry up and wait" it seemed like an eternity before the choppers arrived. They landed and picked up Kilo Company Marines about every 45 minutes. It appeared we were going to be on the last chopper out. It seemed like forever before we finally got the signal to move out. Up and out of the trench we scrambled, hustling forward toward the chopper's loading ramp. I had a spot of trouble involving the blast from the rotors blowing my tattered clothes in my face. Once the last man boarded, he gave the crew chief a thumbs-up, the crew chief

then shouted into his helmet mike, and the engine screamed up into full power. The chopper lifted up a foot or so and bounced back down. The bird hopped along a couple of more times, when the engine noise dropped. The crew chief turned and signaled the last two men on to get out, the ramp dropping for emphasis. They wasted no time debarking and the pilot tried another take-off. This time we did manage to lift off, slowly, but cleanly.

Our confidence level wasn't high, but we collectively willed that thing to stay in the air and climb. Climb it did and we all gazed rapidly as the ground fell away behind us. Up and Up we spiraled a last panoramic view of the Khe Sanh plateau. Long gone was the verdant riot of plant life I'd seen on my first flight in. What revolved below us now looked like the moon on a bad afternoon, cratered to the point of seeming sterility. Finally we were in the clouds, Khe Sanh faded away behind us, and we all seemed to melt back into our nylon seats, reveling in the release of tension and the cool and moving air. It seemed like only minutes before our Banana Boat began a downward path to what looked like green-fringed sand dunes. Moments later we were on the ground watching our chopper lift away. Looking around, we discovered we were in the middle of a big empty; a long black runway, with no people in sight, the only sign of civilization was a small shack perched next to a closed up hangar in the distance. Disgusted, severely disappointed, we began slowly making our way toward that distant shack a small gaggle of dispirited, raggedy-assed Marine grunts dragging their heavily laden bodies along with a complete lack of enthusiasm. When we finally arrived at the shack it appeared to be closed and deserted. Just as our mood was about to drop straight into despair, we spotted a drift of cigarette smoke around the far corner of the shack. Shuffling forward, we discovered a natty-looking Marine Gunnery Sergeant leaning against the wall. "you men with 3/26?" He asked with a smile. "Yeah Gunny!" we chorused back. "Well then, welcome to Quang Tri. Smiling broadly, he continued, "If y'all are interested, there's hot showers, clean clothes, a steak dinner, and cold beer waiting for you over in that direction!" jerking his thumb back over his left shoulder.

If that Gunny said anything else, we weren't there to hear it. Our mood seamlessly shifting into rollicking, we instantaneously galvanized into a full sprint, heading in the indicated direction. The sound of music further quickened our pace and we soon spotted a barbed-wire enclosure ahead of us. The 8-foot barbed-wire fence barely slowed us down. In too much of a hurry to bother looking for a gate, we swarmed over the barrier, then, whooping and hollering, pelted across the compound toward what we could now see was an outdoor shower set-up. Our way was suddenly blocked by Sgt. Christian. Attracted by the ruckus we were raising. He hurried over and physically inserted himself in front of us, shouting us to heel. "Whoa! Whoa! Whoa, God damm it! What do you think you are doing?

Start acting like Marines this instant. Christian was a big linebacker of a man, with not an ounce of fat on him. He also had a pretty good ring of command in his voice; the type whose very tone promised instant dismemberment if not obeyed. In short, we stopped. "Alright, that's better!" he continued, once we'd settled down, "Now listen up, line up and stack your gear and weapons in front of you, then empty your pockets! All, and I do Mean all of your clothes go in those burner barrels over there he concluded, pointing out some trash barrels by the shower entrance.

Obediently, we quickly formed ranks, shed and piled up our gear, yanked our boots off, emptied our pockets, and threw the stuff haphazardly on top of our gear. We snapped to and smiled eagerly at Sgt. Christian. He let us stew for a minute, and dismissed us with a nod. With a whoop and a holler, we ran towards the showers, ripping off our clothes and pitched them, into the fires as we ran past.

Right before the shower entrance, there was a small trailer packed with cans of beer and ice. Standing next to the trailer was our Battalion Commander, passing out cans of beer to everyone who came near him. Our Battalion Sergeant Major was pressing bars of soap into our hands as we entered the showers. Beer and soap in my hands, I was in the shower. Seconds later, swilling my beer and reveling in the feel of clean, hot water beating down on the top of my head. For quite a while I just scrubbed and lathered. About the time I started in on my third beer I stopped and took a few moments to take a good look at my surroundings. A completely insane spectacle. In the center of the scene several hundred Ma-

rines, wearing only dog tags were noisily cavorting under the showerheads. To one side was the 3rd Mar Div brass band, pumping out every march Sousa ever wrote! Between the band and a line of parked trucks, the entire command group seemed to be engaged in a drinking contest with the troops.

The entire scene was playing a few yards from what appeared to be the main drag into Quang-Tri City. We were in plain sight of all sorts of Vietnamese civilians flowing by in a steady stream. Men Women, Children of all ages enjoying the show. I had a bit of an epiphany right then and there. I realized that I was in the middle of an insane situation and wasn't very likely snapped back to reality anytime soon. The way I saw it, I had two choices. I could simply go nuts, go with the flow, or I could try to hold on to what I had always thought was sanity and end up completely insane. I decided to go nuts. Chugging the last of my beer I slung the empty can in the direction of the audience, screamed out a few choice words, and dove back under the showerheads. I remained there until the water ran out.

The next step consisted of us drawing fresh clothing from the back of the trucks. What a pleasure it was to have new, precious, clean socks, not stiff with accumulated sweat full of holes. T-shirts, utility trousers and jackets, even underwear, for the few who wanted them. I wasn't one of the men who drew underwear. Rotting out my underwear way back in early February had left me with a screaming case of crotch rot which matured into a case of jungle rot. Producing a misery so intense I have never worn underwear since.

Once dressed, we stuffed our pockets and filled our hands with cans of beer and cheerfully marched over to a mess hall tent, where we had a sit-down steak dinner. An hour's gorge later we picked up our gear and were led over to some fly tents, where we were told to billet ourselves. We happily installed ourselves in one of these, spread out our poncho liners on the soft, deep sand, then proceeded to while away the twilight while drinking ourselves even further into a stupor.

My next memory was of suddenly jerking awake to complete darkness, panicked, with no idea where I was and what had awakened me. A moment later a large and uncomfortably close explosion almost scared me out of my skin. Flopping over onto my stomach, I raised my head a bit and stared back toward the sound of the explosion just in time to see a large rocket round make a direct hit on a tent across and three tents down from ours. Horrified, I attempted to wiggle myself deeper into the sand like one of those desert lizards on Animal Planet. Two more rounds came in, walking past our tent, and then the barrage stopped. Four men were killed. It seemed the enemy was just trying to tell us there was no safe place in Vietnam, and they had not forgotten us.

POETRY

the dash

1947-1968
the dash carved
below his name
on a plain white marker
reveals nothing

disregards
his mother's soothing
soft bedtime voice
dinner at grandma's
second helping of
candied yams
boy scout camp
toasting marshmallows
beneath bright stars

passes over
triumphant slide
to home plate
high fives all around
buffing the hood
of his prized
Dodge Charger
kissing his dream girl's
warm sweet mouth

leaves out
boot camp's
brutal exhaustion
flight to Da Nang
sweltering runway
staticky calls home

cut short
combat's searing images
acrid smells
harsh sounds

doesn't tell of
slicing through
tangled jungle vines
dodging mortar rounds
artillery shells

on Khe Sanh's
cratered hills
young man's dreams
lost to a sniper's bullet
bleeding out too fast
to whisper mother

he can't rest in peace
under the white marker
not now
not ever

he's lost with his brothers
forever young
eternally bonded
always faithful
semper fi

Dianne Piankian Geiger
New Rochelle, NY
September 2008

MEMORIES OF CAM VU

Tom:

That day in April, so many years ago, still haunts many of us who survived the battle outside Cam Vu because it changed most of us forever. But, "it is what it is" and we can't live in the past or so I tell myself. But, I cannot forget it either. Those dear Marines and Corpsman who lost their lives that day will live on in our memories for as long as we do...and I hope for many more carried on by our descendents. They will be forever young in our minds as we age and eventually pass on to our eternal reward. I pray we will see them again one day and all will be revealed to us.

There are some days when I feel like Lt Dan in *Forrest Gump*...that my name should have been on that Wall too! Then I would have been forever young too! That only seems to happen around this time of year for some darn reason. But that was not to be our fate...instead, we are responsible for carrying on the memories of our *"Brothers in Arms"*.
As always your brother.
S/F
John Kurth

Never been as scared before or since so glad there were marines around me!

Doc Milz

40 years ago on this date was the worst day of my entire life as it was for others as well. It started OK but went steadily downhill from there damn that place called Cam Vu near Dong Ha-we've still not found Bruce Staehli

Tom Scheib



WE SHALL NEVER FORGET

WE GET PICTURES

Col Donahue who was assigned to MACV SOG OP 35 C&C DET, as a Captain, submitted the following photographs taken while he was at Khe Sanh in 1967.
More Photos on page 90 & 91



ME AT C&C BEFORE MISSION



USMC CHOPPER PILOTS



C&C DET MY ID BADGE



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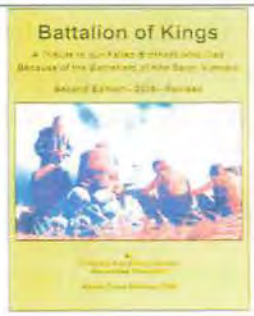

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See order form for description, color, sizes and price



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Style-10-08

NEWS YOU CAN USE

S2617,the Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2008, was signed into law by President George W. Bush today; Wednesday, September 24, 2008. S2617, will provide for a cost-of-living increase in disability compensation for disabled veterans and their families, effective December 1, 2008--you'll see it in your January 1, 2009 compensation--so as to protect the benefits from the impact of rising inflation.

This year's cost-of-living increase, which will be equal to the annual Social Security increase, has yet to be determined; but will most likely be in the 6% range, which is twice the normal VA COLA increase.

Mack

The COLA increases provided by the VA or SS are not "normal" or predetermined. These increases are also "not automatic." They are tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as determined by the US Department of Labor. This index is determined based of surveys on the "cost of living." Increases is SS are "hard coded" into law whereas the increases for VA compensation has to be voted on by Congress and signed into law by the President. Although COLA increases have always been granted to recipients of VA payments, it is conceivable this legislation and approval by the President may not occur in the future, Just a thought .

Leland Upshaw

As far as I'm concerned it's election year politics. So I totally agree with Leland's comment, ". . . it is conceivable this legislation and approval by the President may not occur in the future." The Long and the short of it is that this is what disabled veterans and their families will get THIS year. Will worry 'bout next year if/when it comes.

Mack

MEMORIAL DAY MEMORIES

A previous written story, one published in Red Clay, but I think it still speaks for the moment.

FLAGS

By Craig Tourte

I always fly my flags during the Memorial Day (3 day) holiday. I have a fairly bright American flag and a rather old faded Marine Corps flag. Of course Memorial Day is not the only time I erect the flags outside of my home. I also put them out on January 21st and on the Marine Corps Birthday. I was driving around town yesterday and I noted a rather lack of flags flying from the neighborhood houses and businesses. I don't think it is a lack of patriotism but rather an exhibition new generations have not yet recognized. We all know there is a war going on, but to be perfectly honest the war seems to only touch those who have a hand in the conflict. For the most part, Americans continue to just go about their business and only slightly follow the sacrifices made by so many, a familiar experience I might add.

Years ago I had a small California flag I flew from a pole over our bunker at Khe Sanh before we moved into the trenches. We soon realized that what we thought of at the time as a bunker was really no more than some barrels filled with dirt and a few sand bags over the top of the above ground target, which proved inadequate. Somehow, in all of the confusion and craziness, that little red clay stained, faded and tattered California flag made its way back home with me. I kept it in the sea bag I had with all of my other Marine Corps memorabilia, too small uniforms, covers and other assorted odd and ends. For some reason I liked keeping the stuff around, but at the time I wasn't sure why. As much as that poor little flag went through; the Vietnam War, the Siege at Khe Sanh, Okinawa, El Toro and back to MCRD San Diego, it somehow managed to survive all the moves I made as a young man finding his way after the war.

Unfortunately, my little flag didn't survive my biggest struggle and greatest failure of all, my first marriage. There was something about "why are you keeping this old junk around the house? You know, wives can sometimes just drive one crazy, and I am afraid my little flag didn't survive the marriage either. I don't know why, but I find myself wishing I still had that little flag, something to remember and look back on, a very personal time for me and for so many others. Now when I fly my American and Marine Corps flags, I know deep down and see in

NEW PX ITEMS

Ray Stubbe has just completed the New Second Edition of Battalion of Kings. There will be a limited amount of them printed so if you want to receive a copy you must order early. You can utilize the order sheet on page 96, or call Big John at the PX and reserve a copy. **732-948-9803**

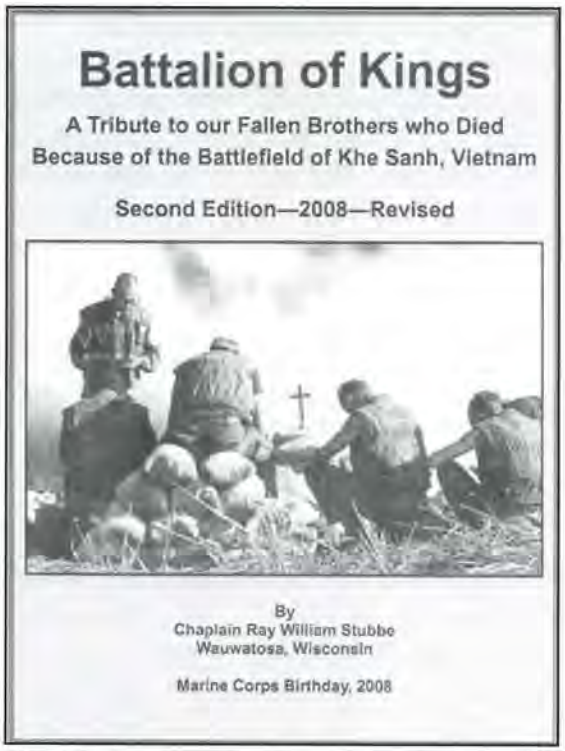



PUC CERTIFICATE PERSONALIZED WITH RANK AND UNIT NAME SEE PAGE 34

THE PICTURE
BY CHAPLAIN RAY WILLIAM STUBBE

By Sunday, 28 January 1968, the Khe Sanh siege battle had raged exactly one week. Once a lush area, full of life, Khe Sanh no longer appeared "a thing of beauty, a joy forever."[1] Friends died. Friends were wounded.[2] Suddenly, all was transformed into a moonscape, a wasteland, as all above-ground structures, now piles of rubble, reminded some of World War I trench warfare, Ezekiel's vision of the battlefield valley of dry bones,[3] or one of those ghost towns of the wild West, except that this place teemed with life. Khe Sanh was alive with death, with the force of death which, with a spiritual power of super-human force devouring all life to feed its ravenous, ravaging raptor appetite. "The earth is broken, broken down. The earth crumbled to pieces. The earth trembled and tottered. The earth reeled to and fro like a drunken man."[4]

Everyone, now emotionally numb, faced the jaws of the dragon of death, went through it (like Jonah devoured by the monster),[5] and emerged enabled to live—to live on a different dimension of existence: dashing out to drag a wounded man to safety while mortars and screeching rockets still exploded, oblivious to danger, giving a last drop of precious water, a last morsel of C-ration food to another, thirsty, hungry soul—giving to Jesus Himself,[6] maintaining a sense of humor bravely living free of fear, giving and sharing, affirming humanity in a "courage to be"[7] in the face of the abyss of death and negation, as spectacular plums of yellow napalm's billowing fire balls, as sudden spikes of white phosphorus fireworks exploding right in front of us on the ground, and clumps of earth flung skyward then plunging to the earth to break the leg of a Marine,[8] endlessly played symphonic battle music resonating within our soul. An army of rats increased proportionally with an army of reporters and an army of enemy surrounding us. Everyone dug, deeper, deeper.

We learned that life is short, precious, and fragile. We learned that life lives as it is connected to other life. We learned we could never again depend on the probability of another day, another moment, as life moves through a minefield. We learned who we were. Many learned that God is always present;

and ministers, attributing their calling to experiences of God's presence in this horror, within this devastation, on the cross, or as James Russell Lowell put it, "truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne / yet that scaffold sways the future / and beyond the dim unknown / standeth God within the shadows, keeping watch above His own."[10]

A wounded man on a stretcher asks for the words of the 91st Psalm, words which resonated our life experience at that time, in that place: "He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler [the one who catches birds in a cage, like the NVA encircling, caging us] and from the deadly pestilence [of ever-present death, illness, wounding]... You shall not fear the terror of the night [in the form of 40,000 NVA creeping closer, closer, attacking] nor the arrow that flies by day [rockets, artillery, mortar shells, sniper bullets], nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side [friendly casualties],[11] ten thousand at your right hand ["right hand" referring to our power: the NVA casualties] [12]...He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.. I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him.. "[13]

Colonel Wilkinson informed me that gatherings of more than half a dozen or so were prohibited: "One mortar round could get all of you," he said. Worship now became a matter of going from trench to trench, bunker to bunker, throughout the combat base, with numerous small congregations and a worship service not more than ten minutes long—a prayer, a Bible reading, a two or three-sentence sermon, distributing Communion, the Lord's Prayer, and blessing, followed by listening, conversation, and perhaps if the shelling were too intense, simply a few hugs.

Everything about Saturday, 27 January 1968, and Sunday, 28 January 1968 was to have lasting impact on my life.[14] My diary entries:

> ***SATURDAY, 27 January 1968**: I woke up extremely sick—nausea, headache, diarrhea, etc., and walked over to the COC, providentially in time for the morning briefing. I didn't know whether I could take it, feeling I might have to vomit at any minute, but managed to remain. Lt/Col Wilkinson mentioned we have dropped 500-pound bombs with 3, 6, and 9-hour delays, and many "bomblets" to prevent the enemy from coming into our position. The Air Force can give us 1,000 sorties a day. Last night, Co Roc, the mountain range in Laos, was Arc Lighted at midnight, and the fires kept burning until 0300... Returned to my bunker about 1000 and slept, exhausted, until 1500! At that time I decided to visit our BAS. Dr. Feldman examined me and said I had some swollen lymph glands in back of my neck and gave me some pills for the nausea and some orangeade. Hit the pad early.*
>
> ***SUNDAY, 28 January 1968**: I got up and walked past the regimental S-4 where two reporters, camera dangling, asked if I could help them with some good pictures. I told them to walk with me as I planned to move about the base. I carried a brass cross and a wad of "A Message for the Day." My plan was to have a short opening prayer, read the appointed scripture lesson, distribute Communion, lead the Lord's Prayer, and conclude with a blessing. We started out, walking across the airstrip to arrive at the C Company, 1/26, lines in the Blue Sector on the north side of the base. It's always an emotional challenge to cross this wide-open space of aluminum metal with no place for cover should a barrage of incoming suddenly erupt. The first worship service was attended by five from the 2nd squad, 3rd platoon, which was clearing new lines east of the other positions where two ARVN Ranger battalions would set in today. I walked west to the first regular bunker. We had a fairly large gathering that got larger until some mortars came and we all scattered, one landing only about 25 feet away. So we waited and then I held a service for the 81mm mortar people (2nd squad, weapons platoon, C Co.), attended by 3. Half-way through the Lord's Prayer I felt the blood drain out*

of my head. I was about to faint, but struggled until after the benediction, and then collapsed. After a short rest, I conducted another worship service a few feet away for others (consisting of C and B *Co., 1/26, Marines and "flashlight" section), attended by 5. We came under sniper automatic fire. After that, the two reporters and I walked to our 1/26 COC. I went in and told Lt/Col Wilkinson I couldn't continue today. I had hoped to be able to get everyone, holding over a hundred worship services today. I must have looked sick and pale because he rushed me to the 1/26 BAS; he wouldn't let me walk there. My temperature was 101.6. (My "normal" temperature is 97). I was completely exhausted. Reporters of all agencies—UPI, Time, NY Times, Washington Post, Chicago, and even a lady from Germany, were living in the 1/26 BAS and mentioned to me that refugees from the 33rd Laotian Battalion, located just inside Laos, came for refuge to Lang Vei village. They were butchered by NVA units.*

The two news photographers, SSGT John A. Reid USMC, from III MAF staff of *Sea Tiger*[15] and Richard Swanson of Black Star, took photographs of the worship service on the Blue Sector, took photographs which eventually appeared in hundreds of publications, making that scene perhaps one of the hundred-most printed photographs of the Vietnam War.

The official USMC photo by SSGT Reid[16] **(Page 43)** is black and white, depicting only two Marines,[17] and clearly shows Hill 950 (off my right shoulder, a radio-relay position occupied by Marines during the siege battle) and Hill 1015 (off my left shoulder, a position occupied by NVA forces during the siege battle), the latter an identifying landmark which verifies photos taken at Khe Sanh! The usual morning ground fog forms a background for the cross. The colored photograph by Richard Swanson **(Page 45A)** shows a background of fog and five Marines. Another photograph by Richard Swanson, black and white and unpublished, depicts the faces of the Marines. In both, the altar and the "pew" are piles of sandbags. **(Page 47B)**

The photo appeared in various publications in sub sequent years, jolting me back to those days and those experiences and to feelings not then consciously felt but felt now with jarring intensity. It was only about three decades after the photograph was first published that I first "saw" it. The famous author, G.K. Chesterton, once wrote (something like), "Stare at something long enough until it becomes strange; you are seeing it for the first time." Suddenly, a horror bristled hairs at the back of my neck as I noticed I wasn't wearing a helmet, despite orders from Colonel Lownds three weeks earlier to wear one[18] and despite the obvious danger of which I was oblivious! Even more shocking, neither were any of the Marines wearing theirs! They obviously followed my example of remaining uncovered during prayer and worship! I had done this unconsciously and by habit , and now, as *I* saw the photo, with great gratitude, thanked the Lord none of us were wounded! Gunny George Bailey, NCOIC of the small Detachment, 1st Radio Company of III MAF, later remarked: "I saw you leading a small group of Marines near C Med. None of you were wearing helmets! I thought to myself, the audacity! I came to see what was going on. I joined the group and felt a peace in the midst of the chaos and battle, like being in the eye of a hurricane, while all around destruction raged." The true meaning of "peace" involves not the absence of conflict, war, noise, or disturbance, but the presence of strength in these conditions.

Those appearing in the photograph are:[19] LCPL Huey Lee ("Ray") Ishman[20] (KIA 19 Nov 1969), PFC Daniel L. Hobart,[21] PFC Kenneth Pae[22] (who has "Chicago Ill The Best Place is Home" on his flak jacket, WIA 02 Feb and 18 Mar 1968), and LCPL Charles H. Fox.[23] (Next to Ken Pae is a man Dan Hobart identified as PFC James A. Loesch[24]but whom Charlie Fox felt to be too small, and identified him as PFC James D. Heath[25] (WIA 02 Apr 1968), but Heath denies being in this picture.[26] According to Charles Fox, Ishman was medevaced shortly after the photo was taken with a "sleeping sickess," and Ken Pae was "a tough street kid from Chicago."[27]

SSGT Reid's photograph first appeared in print in the III MAF newspaper, *Sea Tiger*, 16 February 1968;[28] the Swanson photo first appeared in print in *Life* magazine, 9 Feb 1968, p. 27. The Reid photo

appeared in numerous military newspapers noting the 193rd anniversary of the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps in 1968, and many others.[29] **(Back Cover Issue 71)**

The Reid photograph, in the form of a line drawing by Sgt Henry Casselli[30] depicting a Marine with a M60 machinegun superimposed on the top appeared on the front cover of the December, 1969, issue of *Leatherneck* **(Page 44A)** (with a green background) and the December, 1976, issue of the Marine Corps *Gazette*[31] **(Page 44 B)** (in dark blue). The original, titled *Christmas Vietnam*, is an orange-toned tissue paper overlay highlighted with cream acrylic. "He painted it on the scene while serving a regular Vietnam tour as a Marine sergeant and combat artist where he won the Bronze Star with Combat "V".[32]

Among the numerous printings of "the photo," one cropped off my head at the nose;[33] I could now authoritatively say, "See, I really did loose my head at Khe Sanh!" **(Page 47A)**

Maria Raffaele, an artist living in Oregon, painted a large version of the Swanson photo she saw in the *Life* magazine for the National Cemetery in Willamette, Oregon.[34] **(Back Cover Issue 71)** She looked with deep sadness at flatbed truck after flatbed truck carried lone caskets up the road to the cemetery with no cars following them, and wanted to do something "for the boys." The large painting, in the small reception room of the cemetery, was painted in 90 days and donated to the cemetery. She altered the sky: "It's all kinds of warm browns and then you can see the sun beams breaking through. I wanted to give a vision of hope."[35] A newspaper article noted: "The Vietnam War trudged past her doorstep, and she felt helpless, until she fought back with her tools: a brush, a canvas and tubes of oil paint. She painted soldiers [*sic.*, Marines!] bowing on their knees with a chaplain leading them in prayer. A shaft of light hovered overhead, illuminating her vision of hope. She gave the 4-by-8-foot painting to the cemetery... It's a metaphor for what matters to this artist: the needs of others. Making a difference."[36] Vergori had studied in Florence, Italy, and for more than half a century has painted character studies and landscapes.

Mr. Ken Burnett, a Marine who served with the reinforcing platoon from Delta Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Co., augmenting the lines of Bravo Company, 3rd Recon Bn, at Khe Sanh during the siege battle, returned to Vietnam in 2002 and saw an enlargement of "the photo" in a Vietnamese War Museum[37] with a caption that read: "Marines pray for their lives at Khe Sanh, but all were eventually killed."[38] **(Page 46B)**

One evening, while leisurely watching a DVD of the last episode , "The Root of all Evil," of the TV series, *Profiler*, second season series, I suddenly was jolted back to the siege battle at Khe Sanh by the sudden (and totally unexpected!) flash of the Swanson photo! It appeared five times in the program which focused on "pictures of pain!"[39] Sudden PTSD!

Then, during an evening drive down one of our local Milwaukee streets one dark December, thoroughly drained of all energy after an intense workout boxing , suddenly a cut-out, enlarged reproduction of the Reid photo filled my vision like some billboard! The property was occupied by Mr. Joel Paplham, a man I had never previously met who, although not a veteran himself, devotes much of his time and energy to assist veterans. Mr. Paplham had also erected a "larger-than-life" cut-out depicting the photo on the Veterans Park at the lakeside of Lake Michigan in downtown Milwaukee, **(Page 46A)** but was later forced to remove it. He was also forced to remove it from his front yard display by his alderman, Marty Weigel.[40]

Another enlargement, based on the Swanson photo, of multi-layered cut-outs, formed a large portion of a special exhibit in the Wisconsin State Veterans Museum, Madison, Wisconsin, a first-class museum visited by over 30,000 a year, mainly students. The exhibit, "In the Belly of the Dragon," was on display 23 September 2006—18 April 2008. **(Page 45B)** A similar enlargement forms part of the Chaplain Corps display at the National Marine Corps Museum, Quantico, Virginia. **(Page 44C)**

The photo continues to appear, unexpectedly. A recent CD and DVD package of music and pictures in tribute to Vietnam Veterans by "Dr. Sam" called *Before You Go* has the photo on the cover of the CD/DVD package and is the initial photo.

NOTES:[1]John Keats, *Endymion*, Book 1, line 1.
[2]45 Americans died and 330 casualties were treated at "C" Med during the week of 21-28 January 1968.
[3]Ezekiel 37.1-14
[4]Isaiah 24.19-20.
[5]Jonah 1.17
[6]Matthew 25.35.
[7]Cf. Tillich, Paul, *The Courage To Be*, (Terry Lectures, Yale University), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952.
[8]Identified as Peter Manovich by CPL Gilbert Wall (Conversation of 13 May 1989) who described him as a German national who had attended Northwestern University and regarded his Marine Corps experience as preparatory to his return to Germany to become a German military officer. The explosion was from an explosion of a TPQ-10 directed air strike. He was older, about 22.
[9]Psalm 139.8.
[10]Lowell, James Russell, *The Present Crisis*, lines 38-40.
[11]Friendly casualties, 20 Jan—11 Jul, were 990 KIA (402 for 20 Jan—31 Mar, 165 for 01-15 Apr, 43 for 16 Apr, and 380 for 17 Apr—11 Jul, when the base was abandoned).
[12]NVA casualties were estimated to 10,000—20,000 KIA. "Bru villagers south and west of Khe Sanh reported at least 2,000 and possibly 10,000 were killed by bombing. Casualties due to secondary explosions and fires from destruction and damage to guns, bunkers, supply dumps, headquarters, and structures, although not capable of being accurately counted, must have been high. Assuming 2 NVA soldiers per secondary explosion, with over 6,000 secondary explosions and fires, 12,000 may be conservatively estimated. Some of these explosions continued several hours. Approximately 900 bunkers were destroyed, some of which must have been occupied. 300 gun positions were destroyed. Forward Air Controllers (flying 01 and 02 aircraft counted 1,400 bodies, and approximately 1,000 bodies were killed on the wires of KSCB from three attempted assaults on the combat base in March, 1968. [MACV, "Khe Sanh Analysis," 8 July 1968, p. 13; Gen. Wm. C. Westmoreland, speech of 13 June 1968, to 3rd Air Division, in *History, 3rd Air Division, Jan—Jul 1968*, Vol. 1, Exhibit #180, MACV, *Command History, 1968*, Vol. 1, pp. 423-424]. Reference: Stubbe, Ray William, *Battalion of Kings*, 2005, p. 266.
[13]Psalm 91.3, 5-7, 11, 15.
[14]Lasting effects included: physical symptoms (blood in urine, fever, etc.) eventually became diagnosed as membranous glomerulonephritis by biopsy. A Navy doctor (Dr. Stan Jurgenson, Naval Hospital, Beaufort, SC.) asked me, "Do you want to stay in the Navy? We can give you a medical board. This disease will return within twenty years and kill you." On this basis, knowing that at any time I may die, I made a decision to remain in the Navy, avoid a civilian parish, and avoid marriage and children, for I thought it would not be loving to enter marriage and fatherhood when, at any time, I might die. Of course, as I write this in 2008, I'm still very much alive and give the Lord the glory "who heals all your diseases." (Psalm 103.3). Another lasting result of these days was Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which caused, among other effects, decreased short-term memory loss due to shrinkage of the hippocampus in the brain, a malady suffered by exposure to intense and sustained combat, and also such debilitating effects as inability to develop intimacy and closeness to others, a devastating effect for pastors!
[15]A newspaper distributed free to troops of III MAF.
[16]#A190294, promulgated in III MAF Press Release 3M-09-0150-68.
[17]PFC Daniel L. Hobart on the left and PFC Kenneth Pae (with "Chicago Ill The Best Place is Home" on his flak jacket) on the right.
[18]Col. Lownds, comments at regimental briefing, Saturday, 13 January `1968. Other orders at the same time: All personnel will have fighting holes where they work and where they live; these holes will be so built one can fight from them and they will be covered with air matting to be brought up from the south; the holes will be supplied with rations and all water cans will be filled at all times since the water point probably will be hit; beginning Monday [15 Jan], all personnel will wear flak jackets and carry a weapon; and wire will be laid for internal security throughout the base.
[19]Identification of those photographed was supplied by Charlie Fox in Letter of 10 Nov 1996.
[20]Ishman, 2268708.
[21]Hobart, 2309193 of Moravia, NY.
[22]Pae, 2347503, of Chicago, Il.
[23]Fox, 2237662, of Lewisberry, Pa.
[24]Loesch, 2344934 of Brenham, TX.

[25]Heath, 2358231 of Homer, NY.
[26]Conversation with James Heath, 05 July 2008.
[27]Conversation with Charlie Fox, 01 Nov 1996.
[28]III MAF: *Sea Tiger* 4:7 (16 Feb 1968).

National Register 44:46 (10 Nov 1968), "Chaplains Observe Birthday." *Pacific Stars & Stripes*, 27 Nov 1968, p. 9, "Navy Chaplains Right in There." Naval Construction Battalion Center, Po9rt Hueneme, Ca.:" *Seabee Coverall* 26:23 (22 Nov 1968), p. 6, "Chaplain Corps Celebrates Birthday." Marine Corps Air Facility, El Toro, Ca.: *Flight Jacket* 25:45 (22 Nov 1968), p. 5, "Navy Chaplain Corps to Celebrate 193rd Year." *The Military Chaplain* 41:6 (Nov/Dec 1968), p. 4. Naval Supply Center, Oakland, Ca.: *Oak Leaf*, 18 Nov 1968. Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il.: *Bulletin*, 44:47 (23 Nov 1979) p. 3. Miller Brewing Company, Milwaukee, WI. *Military Highlights* 15:2 (1969), p. 1. Mothers of Servicemen, South Pasadena, Ca.: *We Care, A Newspaper for Serviceman* (January, 1969), p. 4. Boettcher, Thomas D., *Vietnam, The Valor and the Sorrow, From the Home Front to the Front Lines in Words and Pictures*, Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Co,., 1985, p. 272. U.S. Navy, pamphlet, *The Chaplain, Extending Your Reach*, RAD 70291, GPO 880-195. Lutheran Church in America, pamphlet, *Our Life and Mission Together*, 1977, p. 11. Bergsma, Commander Herbert L., *Chaplains with Marines in Vietnam, 1962-1971, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps,* 1985, p. 106. Ewing, Michael, *Khe Sanh (The Illustrated History of the Vietnam War)*, Toronto, New York: Bantam Books, 1987, pp. 106-107. [Cropped off my head at the nose, so I could say, "See, I really did loose my head at Khe Sanh!"]. Prados & Stubbe, *Valley of Decision*, Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1991, following p. 360. [in the edition by New York: Dell Publishing, 1993, following p. 302]. 3rd Marine Division Association, *Two Score and Ten*, 1992, p. 231. Dabney, William H., review article on *Valley of Decision*, in U.S. Naval Institute, *Proceedings*, 118/9/1,075 (Sep., 1992) p. 112. Richardson, Herb, "With Faith and Devotion," *Leatherneck* 80:4 (April, 1977), p. 16. "What Qualities Father Mulcahy and Chaplain Ray Stubbe Have in Common,": Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il.: Bulletin 47:45 (19 Nov 1982) p. 8. Ewalt, Susan, "Vietnam: The Pain Lingers on," Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Il.: Bulletin 59:19 (11 May 1984) p. 1.

The Swanson photo likewise has appeared in numerous publications, e.g.: Leroy, Catherine, ed., *Under Fire, Great Photographers and Writers in Vietnam*, New York: Random House, 2005, p. 55. Carroll, Andrew, *Grace Under Fire*, New York: Doubleday, 2007, on front book jacket cover.**(Back Page Issue 71 Red Clay)** Carroll, Andrew, "Why They Pray," The *Wall Street Journal* 249:56 (9 Mar 2007) p. W11. Brush, Peter, "Re-counting the Casualties at Khe Sanh," *Vietnam* 20:1 (June, 2007), p. 37. Cover of CD/DVD package, Dr. Sam and the Managed Care Blues Band: *Before You Go, A Tribute to the Veterans of the Vietnam War. 2005.*

[30]Sgt Casselli was Staff Artist with the Marine Corps Association, Quantico, Va.
[31]60:12.
[32]Marine Corps Association: *Marine Corps Gazette* 60:12 (Dec., 1976), p. 17.
[33]Ewing, Michael, *Khe Sanh (The Illustrated History of the Vietnam War)*, Toronto, New York: Bantam Books, 1987, pp. 106-107.
[34]The Willamette National Cemetery serves as the northwest's largest national cemetery and commands spectacular views of Mount St. Helens, Mount Rainier, Mount Adams and Mount Hood. The cemetery was established in 1950 and dedicated in 1951.
[35]Conversation with Marie Raffaele, 15 Feb 1997.
[36]The *Oregonian*, Wed., 12 Feb 1997.
[37]Mr. Burnett couldn't recall which (of the several he visited) museum contained the picture.
[38]Conversation with Ken Burnett, 09 Apr 2002, and photo of the exhibit.
[39]At 0:46:35, 36, 39 and 0:49:12 and 25; date of original airing, July, 1997.
[40]Letter from Mr. Joel Paplham, 11 May 2007.





Photo taken by S/Sgt John A. Reid 28 Jan 1968 # A190294 and III MAF
Release 369-68 of 06 Feb 1968
A time for prayer-Marines defending Khe Sanh take a break to be led in prayer by Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe



Cover of leatherneck, Dec 1969, Painted by Sgt Henry Cassselli (A)

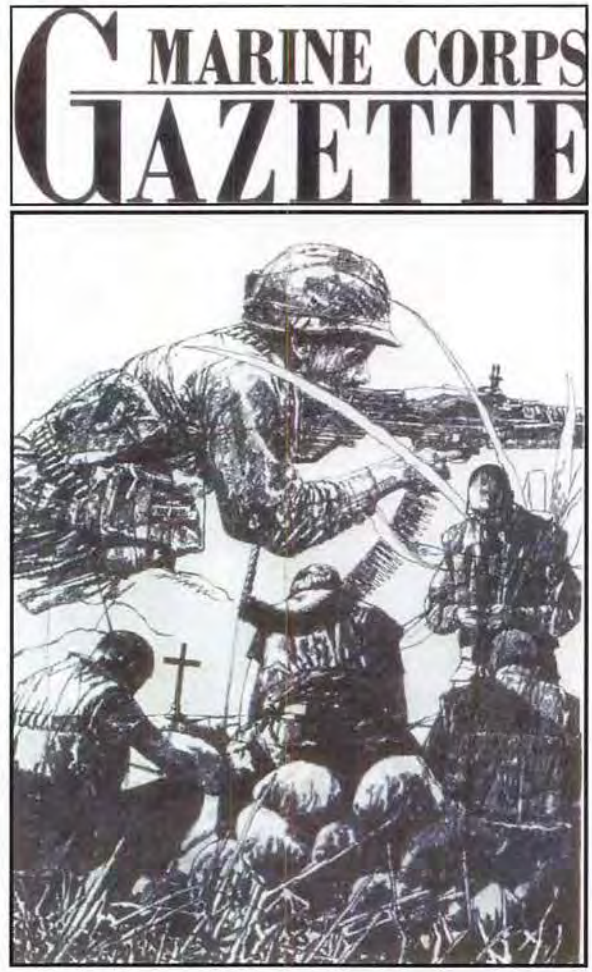

December 1976 (B)



Photo from Tom Francis, Apr 2008 (C)
Chaplains display in National Museum of the Marine Corps, Quantico, VA.



Photo taken by Richard Swanson of Black Star which appeared in Life Magazine Feb 9, 1968 P 27 (A)



Photo of Display "In The Belly of the Dragon," Wisconsin State Veterans Museum, Madison WI. Displayed 23 September 2006-18 April 2008. Photo taken by Ms Kristine Zickuhr of the museum staff, 18 Apr 2008. (B)



(A) Display in front yard of Mr. Joel Paplham, West Allis, WI , in 2007



(B) Photographed by Khe Sanh veteran Ken Burnett. Ken states that the description beneath the picture says: Marines pray for the lives at Khe Sanh, but all were eventually killed. Photo hangs in Vietnamese War Museum

KHE SANH

Road to nowhere

HOME IS HOPE: A Marine bows his head in prayer during a hilltop service conducted by Chaplain Lt. Cmdr. Ray W. Stubbe during the siege. But the prayer scrawled on the Marine's flak jacket speaks volumes for what's in his mind: "Chicago, Ill: The best place on earth is HOME." Personal grafitti added much to bunker culture which in time gave birth to Khe Sanh songs, limericks, and black jokes.



single case, the North Vietnamese failed to achieve their principal objectives. General Giap had made it clear what those objectives were before he sent his

Twenty-seven thousand North Vietnamese died in the attempt—compared with 920 Americans, 1,733 South Vietnamese troops, and 54 other allies, a kill-ratio of eight Communists to every Allied KIA. Add

pp. 106-107 of Ewing, Michael, *Khe Sanh (The Illustrated History of The Vietnam War)*, Toronto, New York: Bantam Books, 1987. *[Note: I used to quip to others, "See, I really did 'loose my head' at Khe Sanh!"]*

47A

Viet Cong in groves, the population

them with open arms; and the Americans would be left to fight on alone.

He was sadly mistaken. Soundly thrashed.

headquarters in Saigon—and none at all in the Situation Room at the White House—could deny the old fox his

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A front view of Picture that appeared in time magazine, taken by Richard Swanson

47B

MEDICAL NEWS UPDATE

By Michael Fishbaugh

ALS AS A PRESUMPTIVE COMPENSABLE ILLNESS

VA Secretary Establishes ALS as a Presumptive Compensable Illness September 23, 2008 Cites Association between Military Service and Later Development of ALS WASHINGTON Veterans with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) may receive badly-needed support for themselves and their families after the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today that ALS will become a presumptively compensable illness for all veterans with 90 days or more of continuously active service in the military. Veterans are developing ALS in rates higher than the general population, and it was appropriate to take action, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake said. Secretary Peake based his decision primarily on a November 2006 report by the National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine (IOM) on the association between active-duty service and ALS. We are extremely grateful to Secretary Peake, Congressman Henry Brown and Senator Lindsey Graham for standing on the side of veterans with ALS across the country, said Gary Leo, president and CEO of The ALS Association. Thanks to their leadership, veterans with ALS will receive the benefits and care they need, when they need them. Thanks to their efforts, no veteran with ALS will ever be left behind

The report, titled Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis in Veterans: Review of the Scientific Literature, analyzed numerous previous studies on the issue and concluded that there is limited and suggestive evidence of an association between military service and later development of ALS.

ALS is a disease that progresses rapidly, once it is diagnosed, the Secretary explained. There simply isn't time to develop the evidence needed to support compensation claims before many veterans become seriously ill. My decision will make those claims much easier to process, and for them and their families to receive the compensation they have earned through their service to our nation.

ALS, also called Lou Gehrig s disease, is a neuromuscular disease that affects about 20,000 to 30,000 people of all races and ethnicities in the United States, is often relentlessly progressive, and is almost always fatal.

ALS causes degeneration of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that leads to muscle weakness, muscle atrophy, and spontaneous muscle activity. Currently, the cause of ALS is unknown, and there is no effective treatment.

The new interim final regulation applies to all applications for benefits received by VA on or after September 23, 2008, or that are pending before VA, the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, or the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit on that date.

VA will work to identify and contact veterans with ALS, including those whose claims for ALS were previously denied, through direct mailings and other outreach programs.

To a large degree, "thought stopping" will control our behavior. For example, if we find ourselves thinking negative thoughts, we can replace the thoughts with something that we know will stir our emotions in a positive way. It may be listening to your favorite song, it may be a love letter from your spouse, a card from your child, a beautiful poem, or a passage from your favorite book."

"Thought stopping" has saved my life and family relationships on numerous occasions. Just learning this simple technique to change the direction of your thoughts could make the difference between a long marriage and divorce, or suicide and life.

I believe the following scripture addresses some of the issues I have mentioned. I believe God gives mental health professionals their skills.

"Today I give you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you and your descendants might live! Choose to love the Lord your God and to obey him, for he is your life. Then you will live long in the land... Deuteronomy 30:19-20
New Living Testament

"Others died that you might live. I traded their

lives for yours because you are precious to me. You are honored, and I love you."
Isaiah 43:4
New Living Testament

There have been over one million men and women who have sacrificed their lives serving the United States of America. What the rest of us owe these individuals is to live a happy, healthy, and purposeful life so that they have not died in vain. If there is a possibility that the problems in your life are caused by PTSD, do yourself and your loved ones a favor and please seek professional mental health care. PTSD is treatable. As hard headed as I am, I did it and it is well worth it. My daily goal is for my grandchildren to know a better person than the one my wife and children have had to endure.

DAV ANNOUNCES NEW PRO BONO PROGRAM AT VETERANS COURT

By Mack

Before you hire a lawyer to fight your claim with the VA, try looking into this. I've been fortunate, I've had pretty good luck with the VA thanks to the DAV; however I readily recognize that not everybody has been so fortunate. It all boils down to the effectiveness of the individual Veterans Service Officer (VSO). We at the Khe Sanh Veterans Association are fortunate in that we have one of the very best VSOs, David Lord. So use every asset available to you to fight for what you've earned before spending any money.

DAV Announces New Pro Bono Program at Veterans' Court Disabled American Veterans 807 Maine Avenue, SW Washington, D. C. 20024 Phone (202) 554-3501Fax (202) 863-0233
Washington, D. C.

The Disabled American Veterans has accepted a proposal from Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett and Dunner, one of the nation's leading law firms, to offer free representation at the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to certain veterans referred by DAV.

"This new arrangement will provide even more resources to disabled veterans seeking to obtain benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs," said DAV National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. "In a number of cases, they will now be able to access the resources of Finnegan and its very talented lawyers in exercising their right to independent judicial review of benefit decisions."

Under the agreement, Finnegan will offer pro bono representation at the U. S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to certain veterans referred by DAV. All in all, Finnegan will likely handle between 100 and 200 cases each year at the court, all of which will be selected from the thousands that DAV handles and will continue to handle at VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals.

"The DAV's foremost concern continues to be ensuring that disabled veterans have the very best representation possible as they pursue their claims for disability compensation and other earned benefits from the VA," said Wilson. "We are very pleased that a prestigious firm such as Finnegan has volunteered to provide pro bono services to our nation's veterans and their families, services that will complement our cast program of representation by National Appeals Officers, National Service Officers, Transition Service Officers, Department Service Officers and Chapter Service Officers."

The DAV was the first veterans service organization to submit an appellate brief to the veterans court after it was established in 1988 and was the first organization to present oral argument by a non-attorney practitioner. The DAV also won the first fact-based decision handed down by the court. The DAV also has long been a leader in developing programs to provide pro bono representation to veteran claimants. For example, in 1992, that DAV partnered with the Veterans Consortium to establish a pro bono program that continues to this day.

The 1.4 million-member Disabled American Veterans, a non-profit organization founded in 1920 and chartered by the U. S. Congress in 1932, represents this nation's disabled veterans. It is dedicated to a single purpose; building better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families.

For more information visit the organization's Web site, www.dav.org.

I GET LETTERS

Gerald Bickford, SSgt, USAF, 8th Aerial Port Squadron

I want to personally thank the association for publishing the article in the Spring 2008 edition of "Red Clay" concerning the Air Force Aerial Port mobility teams and their efforts. Most gratifying was the story of one person in particular, SSgt Gerald Bickford shown in two separate photographs. The man was a legend among Air Force Aerial Port personnel. On one hand he was as mean as a striped snake and on the other he was as gentle as a lamb. I know that Gerald stayed in Vietnam for at least five years (1966-1971). I have been told that he was there in 1972, but I'm not sure of that. He extended his tour time after time and simply wouldn't go home as long as our boys are in the bush. That was his philosophy. He would say "they need me out there", and that's where he stayed most of the time.

I don't know if it is true but legend has it that he once fell out of a Chinook about forty feet to the ground and when the dust cleared he could be seen standing there without a scratch motioning the chopper to sit back down to pick him up. I did not witness that so I cannot attest to the authenticity of the story. One thing I did witness first hand was him opening a tin of c-rations with his teeth and did just as good a job as a P38. He was the strongest and toughest man I ever knew.

About 2-3 days before Christmas of 1970, someone told me that he was out of the bush and was cooking on a barrel out behind the MOB hut at Tan Son Nhut. I was within just a few days of DEROS and knew this would probably be the last time I would get to see him. I rushed over there and I've always been glad that I did because it was indeed the last time I ever saw the man. Gerald is gone now. He died of cancer in 1995, at age 55, a terrible loss. Like many Vietnam veterans, time seems to erase my memories of certain places, events and people, but there's always a person or two that will stick with you all the way to the grave and Gerald Bickford is one of those. The man would make any sacrifice and bear any burden to get supplies to the Army Special Forces and to the Marines. He loved them all like brothers. Maybe Gerald should have been a Marine because he certainly lived Semper Fi every day of his life.

WAYNE R. TALLENT, S/MSGT, USAF (Ret.) 8th Aerial Port Squadron, RVN

It is tough getting old; alright I know you have heard this before and most of us are just lucky to be here. I'm certainly not ungrateful to have made it this far, but as I scan the obituaries, I realize we are next. I pull into the parking lot of the grocery store, struggle on old tired knees and sore back to get out of the car, slowly rise into an upright position, and on wobbly legs stumble a little hunched over, towards the store entrance. To my left I notice an unusual number of folks standing behind another vehicle. I don't know what has drawn my attention to them, it is certainly not unusual to see people in the parking lot of a grocery store, but there was something going on out of the norm which I couldn't quite make out.

I walked into the store, took a grocery cart and stopped at the window as I once again glanced in the direction of the group of folks who grabbed my attention. There was a man and woman about my age, a couple of teenage girls and four or five young men in their late teens or early twenties. Nothing unusual about that except one of the young men had a real short hair cut. I noticed that he seemed to be receiving a great deal of attention from the others. I watched as the older lady reached up and rubbed the hair of this young man. I could not hear what they were saying but I did notice all were looking at him with what appeared to be great admiration.

I observed the other young men were wearing their hair a little longer than the one receiving all the attention and I seemed to notice a certain amount of respect in their faces as they looked at their friend standing in the middle of this little group. As they said their goodbyes and started to break up and get into their cars I was able to see the young man who was the center of everyone's attention. Besides his short hair he was wearing a dark shirt that had gold and red letters USMC on the front. It all made sense to me, all the admiration, attention and smiles of approval.

I thought back when I graduated from boot camp in

1966. A half dozen or so relatives showed up at the MCRD San Diego Recruit Depots. I remember the photograph of them all around me as we stood just outside the doors of the theater. I must have been very proud of myself. Of course those folks are all gone, and I am older now than everyone in that photograph was then. My uncle was there, he served on submarines during the 2nd World War. You remember that one, the war to end all wars; just a little over twenty some years prior to my graduation in 1966, that war seemed so long ago to me then.

I stumble and complain as my body parts slowly fail and I am reminded once again of my mortality. As I paused and glance at the gathering in the parking lot, I see a little of myself those many years ago, so full of hopes and dreams and looking forward to a great adventure in the Marine Corps. I take a moment to reflect and I'm appreciative of those who went before me and for those whom I served with. I wonder if years from now that young Marine will take the time to reflect back to this moment and remember how proud he was and how he was so admired. He'll never know an old man was watching his little group, wondering about all of this. Just as well I suppose.

GOING BACK

By Craig Tourte

I was watching television the other night viewing the story about a Marine Corps Sergeant who had lost his leg in Iraq. The focus of the story was that the Sergeant now with a prosthesis, trained really hard and was now back in Iraq doing what he loved, once again participating in combat operations.

Steve Wiese (B/1/26) was on his eight month extended tour while he served at Khe Sanh during the horrific 77 day Siege of the combat base and was one of the few survivors of the Ghost Patrol and then volunteered for the savage Revenge Patrol some weeks later. I asked Steve why he extended, why he pushed his luck so to speak, after engaging in so many combat operations during his regular tour. I'm not sure I received an adequate answer from him, perhaps he didn't have one, perhaps he didn't really know himself. It was just something he did, no that may not be strong enough; it may have been something he just had to do.

I went all through the 77 day grind of the Siege with Fred Louis Thomas, Jr. only to find out years later he had extended his tour and was KIA. I have asked myself why he extended. It was not like Fred was unaware of the danger and deprivation. He certainly was experienced and knowledgeable of the possible consequences of battle. I guess it was something he had to do, the answer died with him but I'm sure the question with his family remains.

I was very proud to have had the honor of meeting Jeremiah W. Workman at our last Khe Sanh Reunion in Washington D.C. Corporal Workman received the Navy Cross for heroic action in support of Iraqi Freedom. Although injured, he led a third assault into the building, rallying his team one last time to extract isolated Marines. Corporal Workman was kind enough to give me a private tour of the Pentagon. We walked down the long hollowed hallways and into the office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. I was very impressed with his spirit and love of the Corps and so were the Marine Officers who stood up when he (we) entered. During our conversations I asked Corporal Workman about his current assignment, which seemed like a dream to any enlisted Marine. At the end of one of his sentences he said to me, I want to go back. What I asked, you want to go back to Iraq? As I looked at the expression on his face I saw the same expression Steve Wiese had when I asked him about why he extended his tour. It's just one of those things that doesn't make any sense to some people, but of course to others, it makes all the sense in the world. One could say it's all about being a Marine, but of course it's much more complicated than that.

When Tom Horchler drove us off the plateau after the Siege, I knew it was over for me. I did not feel I could have survived another tour in Vietnam. Going back to Vietnam to serve another tour never made sense to me; I guess I never had that expression on my face, the same expression I have seen in so many others. I was never asked, nor did I have to try to find an answer to explain the unexplainable. Explaining and describing my first and only tour, is difficult enough.

MEMORIES ARE ALL WE HAVE

By Craig Tourte

It seems that some folks just want and need to be

seen as somebody. As I scan the television programs of today, most of the military situation stories are related to the current involvement in the Middle East. Vietnam, well that's old tired news I'm afraid. I've tried to get over this Vietnam thing, certainly I have read more books about that conflict than I can remember and I have tried to see and judge people as individuals. Come on, it's been forty years since I was involved in that historical event; certainly my heart is healed at this advanced stage in my life. I was watching the news yesterday and the story was about a Vietnamese born man who is now a Captain in the Local Sheriff's Department. Speaking in a heavy accent he told how he was born in Vietnam but came over to the United States for a better education. I thought back, looking for a positive and found that the man and his family would never have come here - for that better education - had it not been for men like you and I who sacrificed so dearly for him - and his countrymen - to have been granted that privilege. I have to confess my heart skipped a few beats and my stomach turned as I saw the guy wearing the same uniform I once wore and I am at a complete loss as to why I would have such a reaction.

Memories are all we have, and as we slowly die off as a result of various age and exposure related illnesses, I sense an increase in the squabbling, threats, verbal attempts at intimidation and disagreements we are having. In short, in our advanced years we're just darn hard to get along with, even amongst ourselves. And I'm quite sure I fit all of the above. Seems I'm mostly in a rotten mood; of course it's not my fault.

I have a Khe Sanh sticker on the back of my truck; a few years ago I'd get some honks and waves from people in other cars. Occasionally one would pass and I'd see a Marine Corps sticker on their vehicle and I'd wave back. But I don't get waves anymore; no one honks or acknowledges the words Khe Sanh. The sad truth is, the world has turned over many times since our gallant stance against overwhelming odds, and for the most part, our time of recognition has passed as more recent battles, conflicts, losses and tragedies have occurred.

That said - I am still amazed at the number of those who claim to be Vietnam Veterans and in particular having served at Khe Sanh. So there must be something about us - something special - that draws those our age to our experience, who so want to be associated with that experience that they risk arrest and ridicule for their misstatements about their participation. I'm occasionally shocked that some claim not only to have served at Khe Sanh but to have been involved in heroic action and formally recognized with awards, ribbons and medals, making the claim they were heroes.

My once proudly worn uniform is way too small, hanging in the closet gathering dust, a sad reminder of my own deterioration. My REMF/I was there, ribbons and medals have long been stored away. I was not a hero nor was I recognized for any heroic deeds. I have few stories of any real combat experiences to share with anyone, mostly digging and trying to survive. The Khe Sanh sticker on my old truck is peeling away, looking like I often feel. I'm afraid memories are all I have left, along with a few darn good friends I have had the privilege of serving with.

MEMORIAL DAY
A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

By Craig W. Tourte

Memorial Day in Sacramento

I have been thinking about this all night, And was just going to let it pass because there has been so much acknowledgement of the Memorial Day of recognition. Some attended parades; many wrote on the board, some made reference to articles and events. There was attention drawn to individuals, units and battles and the memory of those lost. I'm sure each in their own way paid tribute to their fallen brothers.

The state of California paid a high price in lost heroes to the War in Vietnam. Around 10 percent of the total casuality figure, over 5,800 brave Californians lost their lives in Vietnam. Countless were wounded and many retain the physical and emotional scars of that brutal conflict. But regardless of the state they were from, each of those lost in that distant and now long ago war, is just as important as the other, and especially on Memorial Day, do we remember them all.



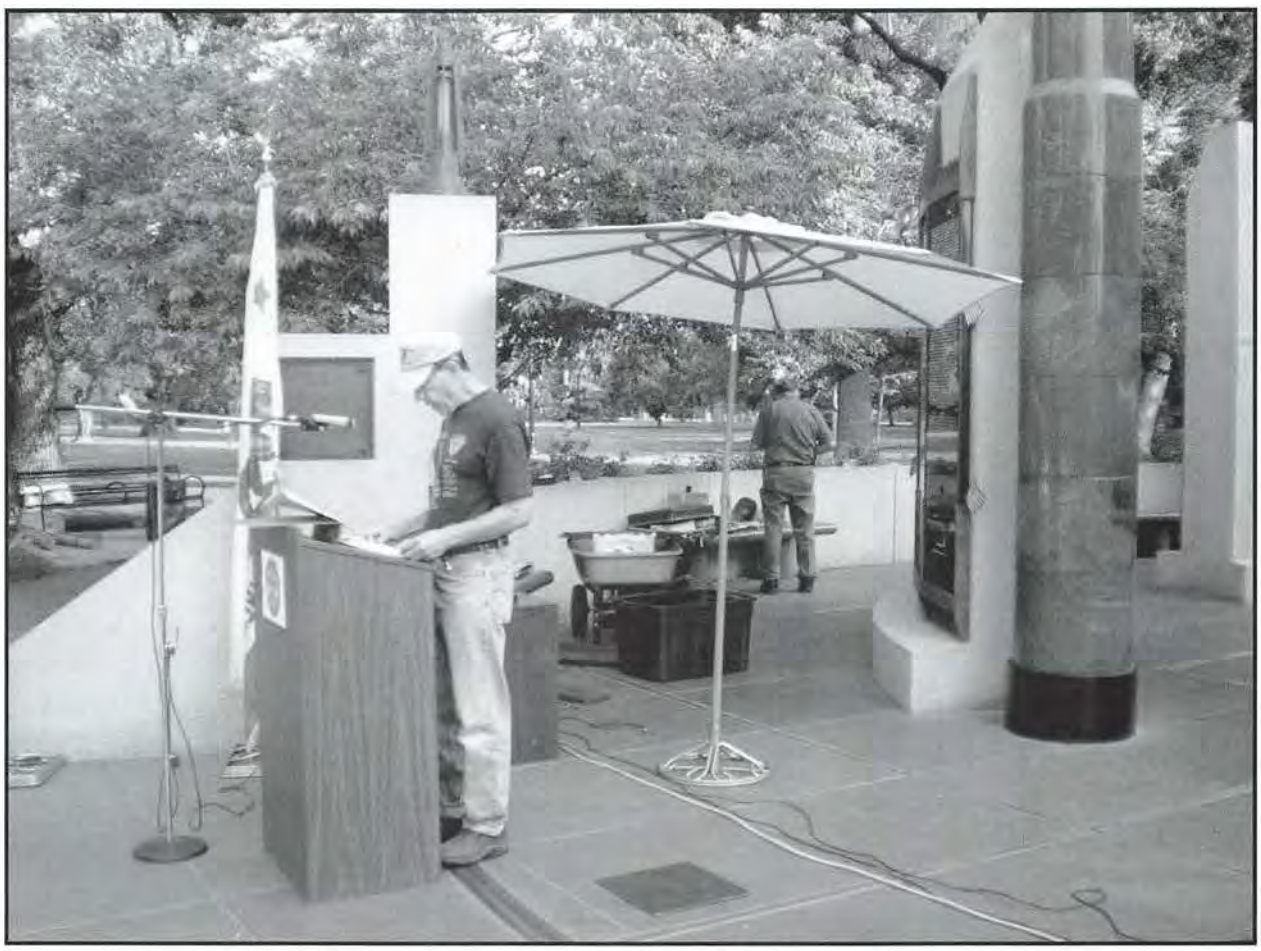

ERNIE SPENCER FROM DELTA CO 1/26 READING NAMES OF THOSE ON MEMORIAL WALL

Like most states, California has a Memorial dedicated to Vietnam Veterans and the names of those killed are inscribed on large copper plates. Each Memorial Day the local chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America gathers volunteers to read each name at the Memorial which takes approximately twelve hours. Each name is read slowly with the rank and military service the deceased served with.

Ernie Spencer who is the former Commanding Officer of Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment invited us to attend the reading of the names. This is a public event and I don't know why I have never attended before. I took my "Khe Sanh Veterans, Home Is Where Dig It" banner you have seen at the reunions, and set it up near the garden in full view. Steve Wiese (B/1/26) drove over to the Memorial with me. Pete Torres (G/2/26) was there with his wife, as was Marco Soto (A/1/26) and Robert Leon, a former Marine friend of Ernie's. Ernie very reverently read the names for half an hour, we realizing it took an emotional toll on him, as it also affected the rest of us.

Carrie Pepper was kind enough to join our small group of Khe Sanh Veterans. As a reminder, Carrie's brother Anthony John "Tony" Pepper was a member of G/2/26. "On April 6, 1968, G Company engaged a large communist force in heavy combat on a grassy hillside (861) overlooking and in view of the Khe Sanh Combat Base." Tony was killed and unfortunately his body was never recovered. I had never met Carrie before this day but of course I knew her immediately as she approached and introduced herself. You know, we say when we first meet another Khe Sanh Veteran that it seems like we have known each other for years (a conversation I had with Marco Soto who I also had met for the first time.) A few minutes talking to Carrie and I knew she was one of us. I was deeply moved observing that she had placed a photograph of her



L-R Steve Wise B CO 1/26, Marco Soto A CO 1/26, Pete Torres G Co 2/26 , Ernie Spencer D CO 1/26 & Craig Tourte HQ BTRY 1/13

brother on the Memorial wall. Carrie was kind enough to sign the banner in remembrance of her brother. He too was with us that day.

Steve and I only remained a couple of hours, but returned later that evening. I think the second visit was a bit more personal for us. Perhaps a little quieter, giving the both us the opportunity to reflect and remember. A Memorial Day that was difficult but fulfilling for all of us, a Memorial Day that I am sure each of us will always remember.

SEA TIGER

May 19 1967

MEMORIES FROM SEA TIGER May 19, 1967
(What They were Saying)

ASSUALT AGAINST KHE SANH TOPS
APRIL MARINE ACTION
By Gy/Sgt Ron Harwood

Until the last six days of the month, April had few significant contacts between Marines in I Corps and enemy forces.

From the 24th on, however, the action was furious as elements of the Third and Ninth Marine Regiments foiled the North Vietnamese Army's planned assault and take over of the Khe Sanh Area.

In the action at Khe Sanh, the artilleryman and jet pilots were a prime element in dislodging the North Vietnamese from their bunkers on Hills 861, 881North and South. The guns fired more than 11,000 rounds at the enemy positions while Marine air was dropping more than 1,000 tons of ordnance in five days.

Other enemy attempts in the northern most province of South Vietnam to silence Marine and Army artillery came almost nightly as they poured mortar shells and rockets into Gia Linh and other points south of the demilitarized zone. Their efforts failed, however, and the big guns continued their accurate support of ground units throughout the month.

Enemy mortars and rockets also struck at Chu Lai, Dong Ha, Phu Bai and Khe Sanh during the month. Little damage was caused by any of the attacks.

In all, the Marine air-ground team killed 1,649 enemy soldiers during April. Also 248 individual and 11 crew served weapons were captured by Leathernecks.

To the south, Task Force Oregon, a multi brigade U.S. Army force commanded by Maj/Gen William B. Rosson, started operating in Quang Ngal and Quang Tin province.

Four days later, Chu Lai based Task Force X-Ray, 1st Marine Division, was dissolved, and its operating elements moved northward to bolster other Marine units in the northern three provinces of South Vietnam.

In significant small unit action, a company of the 1st Marine Regiment made contact with a large enemy force 20 miles south of Danang on 22 April. Two other companies of the 1st Marines were lifted in to help as were elements of the Fifth Marine Regiment. With the arrival of reinforcements, the enemy broke contact.

In the air, Marine Jet pilots flew 369 missions north of the DMZ, and 6,860 sorties in South Vietnam. There were 38,348 helicopter sorties flown by Marine aircraft, and Leatherneck C-130's.

ENEMY FOUGHT REAL HARD

"The enemy fought real hard, was well coordinated, well armed and a pro," Lt/Col W. J. Masterpool (Solway, NY.) operation officer for Marine operations west of here," said as he summed up the capabilities of North Vietnamese troops in the area. He compared the enemy's fighting qualities with those of the NVA that Marines opposed during operation Hastings.

In 10 Days of action Marines killed a total of 551 North Vietnamese near here.

"The enemy used every weapon available said Lt/Col E.R. Delong, commander of the 2nd Bn. Third Marine Regiment, following the assault against 881North.

Captain R. W. Swigart, company commander of M Co , 3rd Bn. Ninth Marines, who took part in the assault on 881South, described the enemy as "hard, hard core."

"they had staying power that was unbelievable , they were good."

Major W.E. Fogo, operations officer at Khe Sanh said aerial observers had spotted well fortified bunkers on almost every ridge line in the area.

KHE SANH MARINES SUPPLIED; SUPPORT GROUP DOUBLES EFFORT

Since the intense enemy action began against Marine forces in the Khe Sanh area April 24 a Logistic Support Unit has been support the "In Action" Leathernecks with over 60,000 Lbs of supplies daily.

The Khe Sanh LSU, an extension of Force Logistic Support Group "Alpha" at Phu Bai has been doubling their supply efforts to effectively support the battalions in addition to artillery batteries.

Originally the LSU established in December, 1966, and designed to support one battalion, the LSU specialist, some 60 Marines, are meeting the needs of the Marines engaging the enemy forces in the northwest section of I corps.

"The Marines were never out of anything," said Major John Weeks of Willard, Ohio, and officer in charge of the LSU, "and they were probably better supplied than any other previous operation," he added.

The initial supply and resupply operations to some 3,000 Marines in the field, was completely airlifted by Marine helicopter units operating from the Khe Sanh Airstrip.

In addition to supplying the troops in the field, the LSU provides enough class "A": food to feed over a thousand people housed at the Khe Sanh compound.

Most of the supplies received at the airstrip staging area were flown into Khe Sanh on a "round the clock" schedule by Marine and Air Force transport aircraft. The major portion of cargo came from the Force Logistic Command units at Danang."The single mode of resupply by helicopter was not the first time an operations was not provided additional means of resupply transportation," stated Major Weeks, "since the action was some 5,000 meters from our supply staging area, no vehicle convoys or surface ships could gain access to the troops in the field," he added.

We could fully load a helicopter with "C" rations, water, individual equipment and ammunition and get it out to the action sites within 15 to 25 minutes," said Lt. Robert E. Johnson of Northfield, Minn., assistant office in charge of LSU. "When the operation began, we had some problems trying to make stable LZ's for cargo deliveries,: Johnson said. "The troops were moving at such a rapid pace the LZ's were changing constantly, stretching the supply route and requiring immediate supply needs as they moved ahead."

"We frequently had to pace our resupply runs in between artillery firing missions and helicopter medevac flights, "stated Johnson.," but we managed to meet all the demands from the field."

Captain James Ross of Seattle Washington, an artillery battery commander for the Twelfth Marines, is a firm believer in the supply efforts made by the LSU Marines.

"My artillery batteries has been firing an average of 1,500 rounds a day and there seems to be an endless stockpile of ammo," he said. "It's a dam good feeling."

Although the primary mission of the LSU was resupplying the troops in the field, another task equally important was the repair and maintenance of battle damaged equipment.

Increased combat activity dictated the increased need for rapid repair of weapons, communication equipment and disposing of captured enemy ordinance.

Contact teams trained in the repair of artillery tubes burned out from constant use, arrived to "beef-up" the LSU's increasing commitments. After the equipment was repaired, it was immediately airlifted to

Bronx, N.Y. "We keep the gear moving as long as our guys on the hills need the stuff. If we can't get it done in 24 hours, we'll do it in 25."

"This Kid Was Fantastic"

SEVEN MAN RECON PATROL FIGHTS OFF NVA COMPANY

By Cpl. Ray Wilkinson

KHE SANH... A seven man Marine reconnaissance patrol aided by an armada of gunships, fixed wing fighter bombers, and heavy artillery fought off an estimated North Vietnamese Army reinforced company for 12 hours in the heavy jungle west of here.

The NVA, operating from well-concealed bunkers, at times within two feet of the marines, were constantly driven back by the ring of fire.

After three unsuccessful attempts the beleaguered patrol was lifted out by a Huey helicopter.

Four members of the patrol were killed, and three seriously wounded. A CH-46 pilot tried to extract the team and was also killed. Several crew members of other helicopter were wounded.

Although wounded four times, first time at the beginning of the firefight, 18 year old PFC, Steve P. Lopez, of Silver Springs, MD., maintained unbroken radio contact with his parent unit of the 3Rd Force Recon Bn. And also directed air and artillery strikes.

"This kid was fantastic," said Captain A.B. Crosby of Annapolis, MD.

"He was the coolest individual I have ever seen. He kept calling in artillery closer and closer to his position. Back here they were actually scared to drop them closer. But he kept repeating "drop it closer, drop it closer."

Throughout the firefight Lopez never once mentioned that he had been hit. He kept saying, I'm alright."

"The first thing he said when he arrived back here was " check my camera I took some good flicks out there, and want to get them developed." It was amazing

Lt. C.A. Mumford, Francesville, Indiana, pilot of the Huey gunship who patrolled the skies over the besieged Marines constantly for 12 hours, except for refueling, said, " Lopez was unbelievable. For 12 hours he was cool, calm, and never got exited. He told us where to shoot and passed on valuable information. The whole mission would have been impossible without him. He was the only one who could fight down there for several hours.

"He kept telling us he was alright and would not admit he had been hit in the head. He coordinated the whole mission."

The patrol was inserted about 5: 50 p.m. on May 9, eight miles from Khe Sanh to check out trails in the area. The Marines found several NVA bunkers then returned to a nearby hill to look for the enemy. The patrol came under heavy small arms fire for the first time around midnight.

At first they estimated the enemy strength at 30 to 50, but later increased their estimate to a reinforced company. Lopez on his fifth patrol, said he was hit in the head as soon as the action began.

"I then received wounds in the chest, leg and head again,"
He said. "The enemy was about two feet from us at all times. There was at least a company out there. They walked right up to us."

I shot the first NVA and the last one. One of the ones I shot looked very young, like in his teens. He walked right up to me. I looked at him and knew if I did not shoot him he would shoot me.

"I was laying down on the ground and he did not see me until he was right on top of me."

"They were all over the place, I saw at least 15 dead NVA in front of our positions. A lot of credit goes to my M-16, it worked fine and never jammed once, "he said..

Crosby said at one time Lopez thought all his buddies were dead, but checked and found 4 of them still breathing.

For several hours Lopez was the only member of the patrol able to fire his rifle. At about 2:30 A. M. the patrol ran out of ammunition. Gunships had to drop bandoliers of ammo to the fighting Marines.

The first gunship to arrive over the area was piloted by Mumford who pounded the hill with machinegun and rocket fire. At 2:45 a.m., a CH-46 made an unsuccessful attempt to recover the trapped Marines.

"But the ship took a tremendous battering," according to Mumford. "Several crew members received shrapnel wounds. Every time we stopped firing, the enemy would start moving up on the Marines."

" When we opened up again they would retreat back to their bunkers. They were underground all over that hill. All they had to do was retreat into those bunkers. We could not kill anyone there.

Several hours after the first rescue attempt, a second CH-46 tried to pick up the Marines. It was waved off, but still took numerous rounds flying away, and the pilot was killed. The two crew members were wounded but the co-pilot managed to bring the crippled chopper back to Khe Sanh.

When daylight came, fixed wing fighters were called in and they plastered the hill with ordinance.

At midday, as several Huey gunships continued to hit the hill with rockets and machinegun fire, another Huey landed beside the Marines and extracted them.

NEW LIEUTENANT PLAYS MAJOR ROLL IN THE BATTLE FOR HILL 861

By Sgt. Roger Ynostroza

KHE SANH.. 2nd Lt. James D. Carter, Jr. arrived in South Vietnam, April 21 and assumed duties as platoon commander with a company of the Ninth Marine Regiment April 23.

In the next four days, Lt. Carter was to play a major role in the battle for Hill 861, fast becoming the heaviest enemy contact to date in this far northwest ern corner of South Vietnam.

Carter received his baptism of fire April 24, his first full day with his 57 man unit.

"We were part of a two platoon sweep of a North Vietnamese Army cave complex about 1,500 yards from Hill 861," said the Lieutenant. "En route there we spotted about NVA in Khakis. We opened fire and they ran from us, so we called in 81mm mortars and hit them with our own 60 mortars."

" My squad leader took a Fire team around to try to block the NVA escape, but he was hit with a white phosphorous grenade and killed, and the smoke covered the enemy escape." said Lt. Carter. " we rigged up a stretcher and started for Hill 700, where our command group was located."

En route, the unit was hit by fierce enemy fire and was pinned down.

" My men reacted quickly and my M-79 man killed several with his accurate shots and another man hand held a 60mm mortar tube and put rounds on the enemy," said Lt. Carter.

An OE1 spotter plane circling overhead marked the enemy positions for fixed wing air strikes. High explosives battered the NVA positions while the Marines found better defensive positions.

"They have really been dug in because the air strikes passed and they began firing at us again," said Lt. Carter.

The platoon moved to a landing zone and were able to evacuate four wounded before the helicopters were driven off by heavy enemy fire. The unit moved to a new LZ and another chopper evacuated more wounded before it, too, was driven off.

"We had no entrenching tools with us, so we dug in as best we could for the night, using canteen cups and whatever else we could find to dig holes," said Lt. Carter.

Surprisingly we were not assaulted that night. Air strikes and artillery pounded the areas around us on 861 for most of the night."

Shortly after midnight, the platoon observed NVA mortar tube and rocket flashes. Effective artillery fire was called in from "F" battery, Twelfth Marines, based here.

WE set out the next morning on NVA trails toward 861 again and made sound contact with the other company," said Lt. Carter. " But when we moved toward their positions, we received heavy barrages of enemy mortar and automatic weapons fire from the top of 861. That is when I was hit by shrapnel in the left arm," he said. Thirteen of us were separated from the rest of the unit. We tried to get four more wounded out of the impact area but we could not reach them. They were later recovered safely by the rest of the unit. Meanwhile, we finally linked up with the rest of the platoon. While gunships pounded 861, we called for medevac choppers."

A C-46 chopper came in but was driven off by ground fire before it could take on wounded. One wounded Marine gained evacuation by hanging onto a strut of the chopper as it hovered over the LZ.

Then, NVA mortar fire began raking the Marine LZ. The Marines left the LZ crossing fields of elephant grass which afforded little cover from enemy machinegun and automatic weapons fire.

OUR OWN VIETNAM "RED BALL" EXPRESS

CONVOYS PASS OVER 110 MILES OF DANGER
By Gy/Sgt. Jim Northrop

Marine truck drivers of the 3rd Divisions 3rd Motor Transport Bn.. Faced possible death so that needed supplies may be trucked to fighting Marines.

The mission on which only volunteer Marine are accepted is that of driving the mine truck at the head of the armed truck convoy hauling supplies from the huge Marine supply depot at Danang to the fighting Marines.

To meet the problem of mines placed by the VC over the 110 miles of highway 1, the longest convoy route in Vietnam, the solution is a simple one– sandbag the floorboards fenders and the rear bed of a 2-1/2 ton truck and start driving to clear the way for the rest of the convoy.

The lead driver is trained to detect suspicious looking mounds of dirt on the pot-marked blacktop, freshly filled chuck holes, wires across the road blocks. In addition, he is alert for snipers and possible enemy ambushes.

Enemy troops have passed out leaflets to village and hamlets along highway 1, warning civilians to stay off the road. Saying they were going to mine the highway to destroy the American truck convoys.

When told of this development just before starting on a trip, PFC Robert L. Franklin, driver of the mine truck, stated, "This is a job that has to be done and I am ready."



SANDBANGER— Marine PFC Robert L. Franklin, (Woodbury NJ.) stacks sandbags on his lead truck before starting on a Marine convoy. Franklin is a volunteer mine truck driver with Marine 3rd Motor Transport Bn.. The mine truck is sandbagged heavily to ward off injuries in the event a mine is detonated on the convoy route.

With that statement Franklin started hi struck and launched a convoy of more than 80 trucks.

Convoy commander, 1st Lt. William E. Thompson, checked his radio and gave the signal to start the trucks rolling.

Following the mine truck in a jeep the convoy commander led a U.S. Army 2-1/2 ton truck carrying bed mounted quad .50 cal machineguns crew served by U.S. Army troops, one of several in the convoy.

Scattered on trucks throughout the convoy were Marine riflemen, on the alert in case of enemy ambush by snipers or any other trouble en-route.

Once of the road, the mine truck sets the pace for the convoy.

At designated points along the route, radio checks were made with Marine headquarters, giving progress reports on the convoy. Overhead, Marine helicopter and observation planes kept a look-out on both sides of the route for enemy activity.

The light aircraft also serve as spotters for Marine artillery batteries, standing by in case of attack. In addition, U.S. Navy ships are standing off shore, their guns ready, to assist the Marine truck unit. Huey gunships buzz overhead, giving assurance that quick, devastating fire power is also available as the trucks enter " Enemy Territory."

Another village and another checkpoint, this time Marines are at the check point. The Marines are members of one of the Combined Action Companies CAC, that served with Popular Forces troops (PF's), throughout I Corps, guarding strategic hamlets, villages and points along the highway.

Franklin has been in Vietnam for four months and said this was his first time to drive a mine truck on a convoy. He has been in Motor Transport since arriving in Vietnam and finds his job very interesting. At home he worked on cars and has a "souped up" '50 Chevrolet for drag racing.

The convoy cautiously approached the village of Phou Loc, one of the danger areas. Just the day before, an ARVN truck was mined and a bridge blown up. Marine Engineers were there to repair the bridge and they also lost a truck that hit a mine. And wounded three Marines.

The enemy have started to plant plastic mines that escape detection from the held hand mine detectors. Marine engineers made a sweep of the bypass around the blown bridge and said the road was clear ahead.

The trucks drove through with no incidents. Franklin., commenting on the hazards of driving in wartime, said "I feel motor transport plays a very important part in supplying troops in the 3rd Division. I like the job of driving and feel I am contributing something to the war in effort in Vietnam.

He expertly drove his truck around to mine craters in the road, evidence that other mines had been detonated within the last couple of days either by civilians or military vehicles.

Further along Franklin shifted down for the long hard climb up through Hai Van pass. The road narrowed, the curves were sharper as the long line of trucks made their way up the 3,500 elevation.

Keeping in radio communication at all times, the lead truck made the summit and pulled over to stop. The ARVN interpreter checked with the Vietnamese and Marine security forces to see if the road was clear of traffic coming up the other side. Loads were checked, ropes tightened and tires checked before the downward leg of the journey.

One way traffic now descending the high mountain. Drivers were busy now braking their trucks going down the steep mountain road until the flatlands are in sight.

A representative of the supply depot met the lead truck to guide the convoy into the huge depot.

The trucks are unloaded, serviced and checked prior to being loaded with critically needed supplies. More trucks are added until the convoy totals more than 100 for the return trip.

The drivers grab a hot meal and a few hours sleep and are ready for an early morning start on their "Beans, Bullets and Bandages," run.

INFANTRYMEN PRAISE JET SUPPORT ON 861

By L/Cpl Woody Price

"When you're pinned down by heavy enemy fire, with wounded Marines who need medical help, there's nothing in this world that looks as good as a couple of Marine jets screaming out of the sun to tear up the enemy," Says Cpl Arnett Lewis Jr.

The 23 year old from Lexington Mississippi was on Hill 861 near the demilitarized zone when F-4 Phantom jets arrived to provide close air support for the besieged Marines.

"We were sent up the Hill to reinforce a unit that had suffered casualties and were pinned down by enemy fire," said Lewis, a fire team leader with the 3rd Battalion Ninth Marine Regiment.

"We got part of the wounded out during the night but when daylight came we still had a long way to go and the enemy was making it hot for us. We had wounded Marines who really needed help, but we could not get down the hill.

" Then we heard a helluva roar and looked up to see jets swooping down toward the hilltop, said Lewis. "Once they started on that hill they didn't stop until it was just a mass of rubble.

" We got out okay, and for nearly two days, Marine jets just kept coming in to pound that hill. When they were finished it looked entirely different that when we first went up.
" When we went back up the hill, the top was practically bare and the enemy was gone. I guess we owe our lives to those jets," Lewis said.

Since I've been in Vietnam I've heard a lot of guys say the same thing," said Lewis. When you're pinned down those jets are a beautiful sight, and when you are wounded a helicopter looks like an angel."

BATTLE PRESSURES FELT BY FLIGHT LINE CREWS

By Sgt Bob Pitner

The action was miles north, but ordnance and flight line crews of Marine All Weather Fighter Squadrons 232& 235 felt the pressure along with the infantrymen battling North Vietnamese near Khe Sanh, just south of the demilitarized zone.

As the infantry units called for more and more close air support by F-8E Crusader jets of the two 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Squadrons, the demand on ground crews who arm, refuel, and check each plane before it can return to action increased.

Sorties flown by VMF (AW) 232 on May 1, rose from an average of 24 per day to 38, while tonnage of bombs dropped on the enemy almost doubled.

The battle "up north" gave the aviation Marines the " busiest day we have had since we got to Vietnam," according to Gy/Sgt J.H. Howard, Middleburg, FL., and VMF(AW) 232 ordnance chief.

It was the kind of day when L/Cpl Kenneth I. Heist, of Deland, Fl., "only had time to smoke a quarter of a cigarette at a time," between readying the jets for their next mission.

The effort paid off. Throughout the period of the battle for Hill 861 and the twin peaks of 881, aviation and artillery units were credited with 75% of the enemy confirmed killed from April 24 to May 5th. In all Marine Jets from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Squadrons flew more than 790 sorties and expended more than 1,150 tons of ordnance in the twelve days.

TWINS POSE NAME PROBLEM FOR MARINE

KHE SANH- Marine Corporal Daniel A Wisley (Northfield, MA.) has a problem.

When he left the states he asked his wife to name their expected child after him-she had twins.

Wisley had just been evacuated, after being wounded in the savage fighting on Hill 881, when

she found out.

A squad leader in the 3rd Marine Regiment was waiting for a medavac helicopter when a Marine from his unit broke the news.

" You're wife just gave birth to twins and she is doing fine," the Marine said.

"How about that,: said Wisley. "I'm a daddy, I have been expecting news like this but... two boys.... Twins!"

NEWS YOU CAN USE

DOD DEVELOPS COMPENSATION & BENEFITS HANDBOOK

By Charlie Taliaferro

DOD announced today it has developed a comprehensive handbook describing compensation and other benefits service members and their families would be entitled to upon separation or retirement as a result of serious injury or illness.

"The Compensation and Benefits Handbook is the one source of information that covers everything a seriously ill and injured service member will need during his or her recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration," said Ronald A. Winter, principal deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force for manpower and reserve affairs.

The handbook was compiled in cooperation with the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and the Social Security Administration. Additionally; there are references to assistance provided by other governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations.

"The handbook describes the disability eligibility process, various program qualifications, application procedures, and numerous resources with associated contact information," said Sharon Gunselman, policy and resource analyst for the Department of Defense.

Web sites and toll-free numbers are provided, and the electronic version includes hyperlinks. The electronic version of the handbook will be updated frequently and the hard copy of the compensation and benefits handbook will be updated annually. You can download the handbook here...

http://www.transitionassistanceprogram.com/portal/transition/resources/PDF/Compensation_and_Benefits_Handbook.pdf

NEW ITEMS IN THE KSV PX SUPPORT YOUR PX



KHE SANH VIETNAM NAM PUC RIBBON SEE PAGE 34



USMC COMBAT VETERAN SEE PAGE 34



HOME IS WHERE YOU DIG IT TEE SHIRT (GREY) SEE PAGE 35

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2008 REUNION RENO NEVADA



GATEWAY TO RENO

By Tom Eichler

The reunion in Reno was a great success. It was attend by 325 people. For many of them it was their first reunion. I think everybody had a great time. The hotel was great and we were treated with the utmost respect. Many members joined forces, rented some vans and took in all the sites in neighboring cities.

At the general membership meeting the vote was taken for the 2010 reunion and the city of San Antonio, Texas was chosen. We were already committed to Denver for 2009 from the 2007 vote by the general membership. Our chaplain Owen Matthews, held a special memorial service for Phil Mineer and several others that was quite moving and brought tears to many members.

Chaplain Matthews, invited Dennis Puleo, a motivational speaker and former combat Marine, as a quest speaker. The son of a machinist and hotel housekeeper, Dennis joined the Marines to fight in Vietnam. During his last engagement as a machine gunner, he took a direct hit by a hand grenade, was shot twice, and then torn apart by a mortar. After being awarded 3 Purple Hearts, Dennis spent a year recuperating in a VA hospital.

He left the hospital determined that hard work and a positive attitude would make him rich. An aggressive entrepreneur, he turned a home-based business into a multimillion dollar franchise. Yet all his success couldn't remove the emptiness that

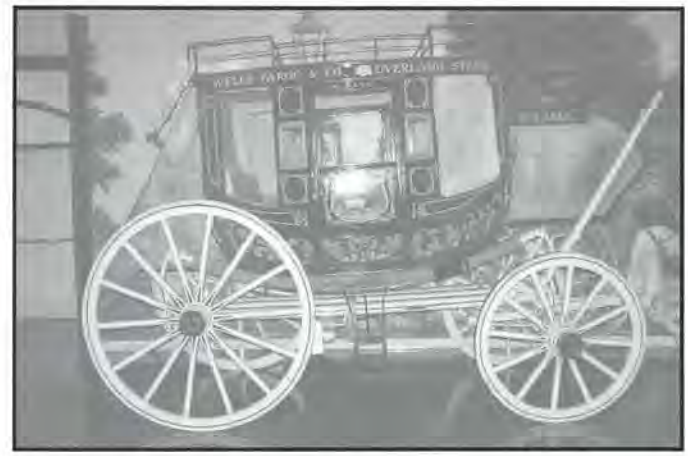

plagued him deep inside.

Today, Dennis shares how he discovered success that really matters through Jesus Christ. Dennis is not a theologian or seminary graduate ... he draws from his experiences in the foxholes of war and



DENNIS PULEO

business to encourage others toward a life of hope and purpose.

Dennis and his wife Joanne reside in Orlando, Florida where he is both the director of the Chairman's advisory Council and a Faculty Member for "Man In The Mirror" (Author Patrick Morley) presenting *Success that Matters,* a seminar for Men.

Owen also had 300 of Patrick's books delivered and presented to the membership at his own cost.

Dennis was well received by the membership and we want to thank him from the bottom of our

hearts, for his valuable time to inspire our membership.

Chaplain Owen Matthews sadly announced he had to step down from his position as Khe Sanh Chaplain due to family commitments. He has performed well above expectations in his position, and did an outstanding job. He will be missed by all and we wish him the best. He leaves with our heartfelt thanks. He recommended another outstanding member of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Ron Rayner (Whose column appears on page two) to be our new chaplain and I quickly moved to appoint him.

Ron Korkow B Co 1/26, who was responsible for sending the Khe Sanh Veterans membership the "Peace For The Vietnam Vet Bibles" at his own expense. He also brought with him the original painting for the cover of the 2nd Edition, which will represent all veterans and all wars. It will be



titled "Peace For The Veteran" The cover is focused on Khe Sanh and makes a direct reference to the Marine Corps. **(Color Picture Inside Back Cover)**

Ron unveiled the new cover and also brought with him over 200 of the large (Expensive) numbered paintings signed by the artist prints (free) to all Khe Sanh Members. Many members in attendance signed a copy of the framed print and I personally presented it to our founder Reverend Ray Stubbe, at his home in Wauwatosa, WI.

The banquet was outstanding, with our being treated to a banquet fit for a king. (The Hotel really outdid itself). The DJ was great and had the membership doing Karaoke. We really have some talented members. The Dance floor was packed and everyone young and old kicked up their heels (see pictures on following pages).

At the banquet we also presented a plaque to Sid Patricio for his outstanding contributions to the Khe Sanh Veterans. It was a long overdue tribute and it could not have been given to a more deserving member. It was presented by his good friend and Vice President of the Khe Sanh Veterans, John Pessoni, and myself.



We also appointed David Lord as the Khe Sanh Veterans Service Officer. David Lord served with 1/26 and was wounded at Khe Sanh. He is currently serving as a representative of all veterans south of the U.S. border before the V.A. and the Board of Veterans Appeals.



David will be writing a column for the Red Clay and he can be reached at:
044(322) 205—1323
Email: david.lord@yahoo.com

You know the old saying, "it is a small world." It really came to pass at the reunion. While we were enjoying ourselves in the hospitality room, in walked a police Officer from Reno, NV. I said, "what did we do now." Turns out the Police Officer Sergeant Michael Lessman, (Former USMC) is the brother of Eugene P. Lessman Jr. a KSV and member of the Khe Sanh Veterans from FLSG-A, FLC-FLSU-2. Eugene, you have a great brother who made a lot of friends.









































































































SURVIVOR








COVEY 252
COVEY 153
















SILVER
LEGACY
















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USMC
COMBAT
ENGINEER






WALKING DEAD


The Sanh
VET


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ANNUAL REUNION
CHICAGO

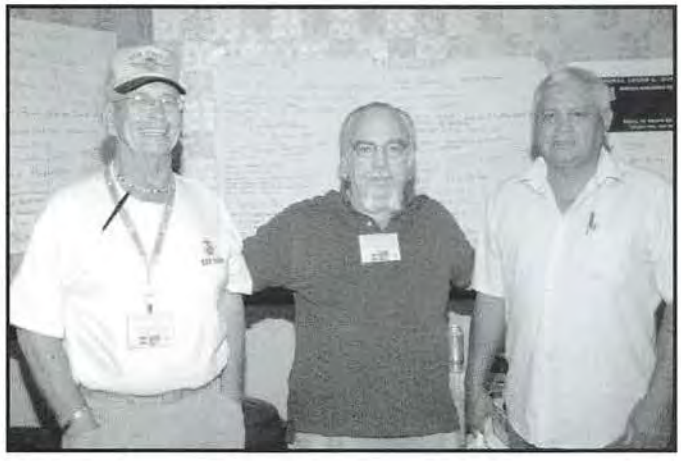










PAYBACK POKER!
SILVER LEGACY



























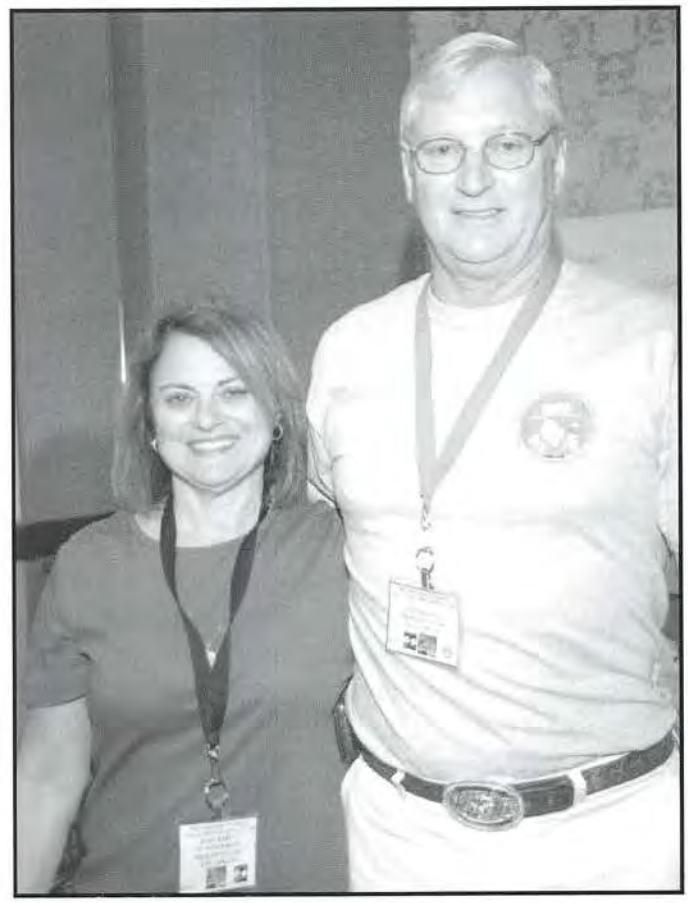







Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

WAUWATOSA, WI
APRIL 3 2008
"NOW SUPPLEMENT"
69 YEAR–OLD BOXER TRADES PRAYERS FOR PUNCHES

By Tom "Sky" Skibash

Considering Wauwatosa resident Ray Stubbe earned a bronze star after serving as chaplain In the Vietnam War, it was not sur-prising that he wasn't afraid to step into a boxing ring at the ripe, young age of 69. Stubbe, who spent most of his Vietnam tour with the First Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment from July 1967 to March 1968, has been a boxing enthusiast for a while.

So when local attorney Mike Tarnoff, a year younger and Stubbe's occasional sparring partner, called Stubbe three months ago and asked if he would be interested in boxing in a charity exhibition, the punching pastor jumped at the chance.

"I quickly said yes,'" the soft-spoken Stubbe said. "It's difficult for both of us to box because of the national amateur rules. You must be within 10 years of each other to box." Stubbe quickly began to prepare for his match, held at the Italian Community Center on March 28 to raise funds to restore artwork that had been donated to Our Lady of Pompeii and St. Rita churches.

More than 400 people at $125 a head attended the event.

"I always was interested m boxing;" said Stubbe, who moved to Wauwatosa in 1986. "When I was in the navy at Great Lakes, I worked out on a heavy bag. I want to box; I have a passion for it.

Stubbe had an opportunity to make his dream come true when he discovered the Duke Rofus Gym in 2001 and started taking classes. He survived the pushups and situps and made it through the first session, and stayed with it four to five times a week.

"It was excellent conditioning;' Stubbe said, "and I had a chance to meet good people:"

When the big night arrived last Friday, Stubbe and two of his friends, Joe Campbell and Peter Tycz, showed up at the center filled with anticipation.

"When I went to weigh in and see the doctors, I was wearing my minister's outfit because there was a formal dinner. Several of the young boxers were wondering what's going on and were taken aback".

Stubbe was eating his pre-match bowl of soup seated next to Tarnoff, when they were approached by the promoters and asked to move their match from eighth on the card to third.

"Though the place was filling with smoke and getting worse, and neither Mike nor I were nighthawks, we agreed," Stubbe said.

Stubbe who wore camouflage trunks, was given a corner man, who wrapped his hands and helped him get into his gear.

"I felt like I was going to war," Stubbe said. "With all the people watching us while we ate, I knew how Roman gladiators felt (fighting each other), while the audience dined. My adrenaline was really going."

As Stubbe was awaiting his match, which was billed as the main event, he said a little prayer.

"I asked myself, "Am I really doing this?" I didn't pray for a win he said. I prayed that no one would get injured and we would do our best. I didn't want to let all these people down."

Stubbe's corner man, told him to keep to the basic-left, left right, and Stubbe felt he landed quite a few jabs and some good left crosses in the second and third round.

I was pumping adrenaline but I took too many body punches," Stubbe said. " one of my mistakes was to get too close to him, I lowered my right hand in excitement; that's when he got me."

When the three round match ended, Stubbe lost by a close decision.

I thought I actually won, but I was not disappointed," Stubbe said. "It was an odd sensation. I was greatly relieved, since it was my first boxing bout, I was filled with enthusiasm."

And Stubbe, at age 69, earned his first boxing trophy.

"I lost the battle, but not the war," he said. " I did a very credible job. I'm looking forward to my next bout."

FIRST FIGHT

By Ray W.Stubbe

My hands have been carefully wrapped in gauze and adhesive tape by John Stayton, a trainer from another gym, to prevent injury. Vaseline had been applied to my headgear, and to my lips, nose, and eye-lashes, to prevent cuts. My teeth bit down on my mouthpiece. I'm wearing old school boxing boots and a steel cup. Camouflaged trunks proclaim my combat past (which is always present). Brand new gloves are slipped over my hands. I am ready to do battle. I smash the gloves together a few times to break them in-and to discharge a surge of adrenalin rushing through my blood. "Hot hearts for chilling deeds," a line from the ancient Greek play, *Anti-gone* by Sophocles, comes to mind. Dane Ashley, a young boxer from the Medina Boxing Club gym where I now work out, slips on flat focus pads and invites me to throw a few left jabs, right crosses, and left hooks. It's time. I walk into a very large room, now filled with smoke, with a feeling I'm advancing to the FEBA (forward edge of the battle area) to engage in war!

Four hundred people in attendance, each of which has paid $125.00 to attend, fix their eyes on me as I climb into the boxing ring. It's my first fight. I've sparred at various boxing gyms over the past five years, but this is the real thing. I feel a strangeness; how did I get to this point?

That it's all for a good cause, even a religious one, somehow seems to be in congruency with being a "man of the cloth, gentle and kindly in demeanor.' *A* fund-raiser to restore a dozen paintings formerly of the Pompeii Catholic Church which were donated to the Milwaukee County Historical Society. The printed program bears the slogan, "We Fight to Preserve our Past."

I sometimes have mused that St. Paul must have been a boxer too. He Writes; "I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. (1Cor.9.26). Given his robust health (surviving shipwrecks, beatings, and extensive travels) and also the impact of Greek culture in his society leads one to conclude this. Furthermore, he doesn't write, "it's as if I were a boxer," but, "I box." Only a few hours earlier, I ate two hard-boiled eggs for protein, knowing I wouldn't be eating the supper at the event.

Two of my very good ,Vietnam vet friends, Joe Campbell and Peter Tycz, arrived and we drove to the Italian Community Center in downtown Milwaukee. Arriving a bit early, we saw men from la societal' dl san Giuseppe were all wearing black suits, are setting things up. Some kiss each other in European style camaraderie. Am I among Mafia? In a way I fit in also wearing a black suit and my minister's collar.

After awhile, a few young men is sweat shirts, T-Shirts, jeans, and other such treads, filter through to another area. I follow them and find myself in the area with boxers. I'm directed to a man named "Angel" who takes me under his wing to weigh in and see the doctor. I weigh in at 174. My blood pressure, normally 110/68, now read 130 something over 80 something! Several young men also weigh in and have their BPs taken. Some gaze at me rather strangely, like, why is this old man in a minister's outfit here? A few ask, "Are you going to box?" They're flabbergasted when I tell them I am.

I then walk to the table where we'll be eating dinner. My opponent and friend, Mike Tarnott, a respected local lawyer, arrives with a couple of his friends. They're assigned to eat at the same table! Mike turned 70 in September.

We are close in age and weight. He's a southpaw; I recall the Latin word for left-handed is "sinister,'" and wonder if this isn't an omen? He is a rather formidable foe possessing athletic prowess. He recently won a race in a Senior Olympic competition. Not only is he a southpaw, but, as

the evening's program indicates, he has a dozen fights under his belt. He has fought in Chicago, New York, and London!

I know from the times we sparred together a year or so ago at the Duke Roufus Gym that he also attended boxing camps in New York, working with world class boxers, and that he has an athletic background spanning decades. Perhaps I'm a fool even to imagine fighting him. Yet, sparring sessions with him did not intimidate me. Furthermore, due to amateur boxing rules, boxers must be within ten years of each other, as we are.

Who else is there to box? With years so swiftly passing, I might never again have the opportunity to experience a real boxing fight in the ring!

Mom always voiced disparaging, innuendoes at boxing, which she saw as two men attempting to knock each other out, as a stupid, brutish and senseless enterprise, she'd remark the same, as her dad, grandpa Mueller, watched Friday night boxing from Madison Square Garden on the old black and white TVs in the 50s.

Amateur boxing, although it validly and medically presents caution of possible brain injury, does not aim at knockouts, but scores on the basis of contacts. The skill of the sport involves effective punches with the ability to parry, block, or slip the opponent's punches, scores based on technique and skill. The sport, and training for it, develops strong aerobic ability along with quick reaction, abdominal and core strengthening, along with intense exercise of arm, shoulders, and legs. Excess fat in the blood, any fog of depression, or fires of smoldering rage, all are exorcized in intense exercise.

Our County Executive, Scott Walker, walks to our table to chat. I've seen him at various veterans events where I've shook his hand and talked with him. Dinner begins after everyone stands and says the "Pledge of Allegiance." A thought intrudes that all of this is a déjà vu of an ancient Roman circus in which gladiators fought and killed each other while others reclined on their sides, gorging themselves in a sumptuous feast! I'm reminded that I need to have an element of anger, yet relaxation and meditation. Someone appears with a listing of the bouts, and asks if it would be OK to have us as the third bout instead of the originally planned seventh. Both Mike and I agree. We leave the table to go to the area to prepare to box.

BACKGROUND

As I walk back to change out of my minister's garb into fighting garb thoughts race back to 2001 when this boxing journey began. During the previous year, while caring for my dad in the last months of his life with "home-hospice" I had eventually "ballooned-out" to 220.

I learned of the Duke Roufus Boxing Gym and met there a young man Jason Strout, and asked him if it might be possible to train there since I had been attracted to boxing for many years. .

The first session, 21 May 2002, reminded me of the grueling training I experienced at the U.S. Army Airborne Jump School at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1973. A deep surge of pride and satisfaction filled me as I completed the hour session of that first boxing session. Verse 5 from Psalm 103, the Psalm that begins with "Bless the Lord, 0 my soul:" "who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's," immediately arose in my mind and I deeply thanked the Lord for being able to do this. Intense joy fitted my soul!

Like some Medieval pilgrimage in which people bond together, like small units in intense and prolonged combat, a deep friendship developed with other boxers as we engaged in very intense physical exercise, and I came to "know" boxing through emotional commitment, experience, and life. Not knowledge "about" boxing, but knowledge "of" boxing, the kind of "knowledge" one attains in war, relationship with God, and sexually. Knowledge of horror, terror, helplessness, and fear learned in combat, already ameliorated by knowledge of God's Presence, strength, love, forgiveness and mercy, now lost additional impact in a new passion for boxing. The emotional and physical benefits of boxing created a chiastic slogan that emerged from my psyche: "Fighting to live by living to fight." My total cholesterol had been 238 with triglycerides; as high as 279 and LDL of 163. After boxing training, as of October 2007, total cholesterol was 151 with HDL at 58 and LDL at 60 and triglycerides at 151. My weight also dramatically dropped, and my doc-

tor enthusiastically endorsed boxing because of its obvious health benefits to me.

As I walked to the changing area, I recalled the many good people I met at the boxing gym: Don Arneson, Marvin Cohen, Jonathan Costello, Jan Pierce, Tony Randazzo, Michael Hermann, Ceva Katz, Todd Lynch, Casey Garza, AI Rozanski, Joe 'Nicols, Michael Regione, Sean and Rebecca Mahin, Julie Vance, John Murray, Russel Ledvina, Derek Drellos, Craig Dilley, Kelly Kuschel, Maciej Gulinski ("Machie"), Froiland, Adam Tellier, Guy, Rico, and many more.

About a year ago, in January, 2007, some physical symptoms pressed a fear of stroke. intra-cranial bleeding, or other nefarious pathology. Thus I ceased boxing training on 30 June 2007, and joined the Wisconsin Athletic Club. I embarked on a rigorous regimen of weights and machines three times a week and cardio six days a week. Following a thorough check up at the VA hospital which disclosed no serious problems, I again started boxing 24 November 2007. Unfortunately, the gym ceased its boxing program on 05 January, but I began individual sessions with Dan Downes, a Marquette senior, in preparation to box Mike Tarnoff.

Quite by accident, I learned of the Medina Boxing Club. There was a news story in the local newspaper of a coach from the Medina Boxing Club who was shot and killed at a gas station. A visit to that gym and with "Benito" convinced me to join. On 19 February, I visited the VA hospital due to a very painful back, and loss of flexibility. It had become extremely difficult to bend to put on socks or tie my shoe laces! X-rays disclosed scoliosis, or a curvature of the spine (which I attribute to impacts from parachute jumps), arthritic changes in the lower spine, and a stenosis (narrowing) of the nerve passage. I was put on arthritis medication. Within a few days, normal flexibility returned without pain. I did my first session at the Medina Boxing Club 25 February. I learned something about myself: I'm persistent and cling to life and will not admit defeat. I immediately liked the gym and joined for six months. I arrive at the changing place. John Stayton prepares me, and Dane Ashley discharges my anxieties with the punch pad drills. I walk to the ring, following John. There's no flashy music or announcement as in some other amateur bouts, and I climb into the ring. I've arrived!

THE FIGHT

John is my corner man. Dane is also there. John tells me to relax, to jab, jab, cross. Someone blurts out the short biography of Mike Tarnoff and then mine from the printed program which lists us as "Our Special Event, Attorney Michael Tarnoff vs. Chaplain Ray Stubbe." The referee comes to me to look at my headgear, see that I have a mouthpiece, and asks if I'm wearing a cup. Mike and I go to the center where he says something that I no longer recall . We return to our corners. The bell chimes. We advance towards each other. We box.

During round, I feel I'm landing quite a few effective punches on Mike's forehead, mainly left jabs. Attempts to hook or deliver body punches are effectively blocked. I keep thinking: cross hook, right uppercut-hook, move to my left. I'm getting exhausted, but know from previous workouts that initial weakness passes after a few moments, and I'm then aerobically able to sustain extended and severe exertion. We exchange a few blows, nothing serious. We're actively engaged, no "pitty-pat" or waltzing around, providing entertainment for those there, I surmise. At the end of the round, I return to my red corner and sit. John waves a towel to cool my face while Dane gives me water to swish in the mouth and spit into a pail. John tells me that he thinks I've got him, that I'm winning, and to keep to the simple jab-jab-cross routine, nothing fancy, no hooks.

During rounds 2 and 3 I regain my wind. Mike lands a couple of hard left hooks. In my super-energized state, I've forgotten to maintain a proper distance. My advantage in arm reach is negated by getting too close to Mike. I do remember, to move slowly to my left to avoid his "power," his left. Neither of us gets pinned against the ropes or corner, or falls down during the three rounds. Both of us continue to deliver "bunches of punches." There is no dancing around, no time spent feeling out each other's timing. I'm not focusing as much as I should on his movements, eyes, face, and I pay the price. I'm still landing effective blows to his face, however.

At the end of the bout, I notice there are two tro-

phies in the center of the ring. John, my corner man, says I did a very good fight, and Dane congratulates me. They unbuckle and remove my headgear and gloves. As both Mike and I approach the center, I feel I might just have won the fight. The referee grasps our wrists. Then the announcement: the winner is Mike Tarnoff in the blue corner. Unexpectedly, I feel no disappointment or anything negative to dampen a feeling of great accomplishment. Actually, I'm elated, happy that I actually had the opportunity to box in a real competitive bout. that I'm am able to box, which is a very strenuous activity, and that neither of us were injured-an answer to my prior prayer. Perhaps I should also have prayed to win, but somehow felt that most inappropriate.

As I walk down the stairs from the ring, the doctor asks if I'm OK. I tell him I feel great! I continue walking through the crowd to the dressing area. At least a dozen people shake my hands and say things like, "I thought you had won," "Thank you for a good fight," "You did real well," and so on. Some of this, I realize, might be just a polite way of making me feel better, but when so many voice similar thoughts, I realize that there must be some truth to it.

There are no showers; so I use the towel to wipe off perspiration, remove my boxing boots, camouflaged trunks, steel cup, and then put on my black suit, clerical shirt and collar. I return to the table with Joe and Peter, a little ashamed that I may have let them down. Not so! They say they are real proud of me! My hands remain bound in gauze and adhesive tape as I tell them, "See, I'm still a man of the cloth!"

In the hours and days that follow, I'm consumed with a passion to box as frequently as weekly. The spirit of boxing infuses my blood. I fear I may have to see the psychologist at the VA for aggressive tendencies, enjoying fighting other people! I may have lost this particular fight, but only increased my zeal to box. I may have lost the battle, but not the war! Now my only concern is how to find opportunities to box since any opponent would have to be under 59 years old-and there are so few boxers at that age to box!

SEQUEL

When I returned to the gym on Monday, 31 March, I encountered only very positive reception, despite losing the bout as everyone said I did real well and should have won. Even my coach, Oscar Medina, was pleased.

I wrote and thanked everyone who put the event together. Mike Tarnoff called me, thanking for the letter, noting that I kept up the pressure instead of some boxers he has boxed who "danced around," and mentioned a possibility of a future fight in Chicago.

RAY STUBBE'S BOXING CREDENTIALS

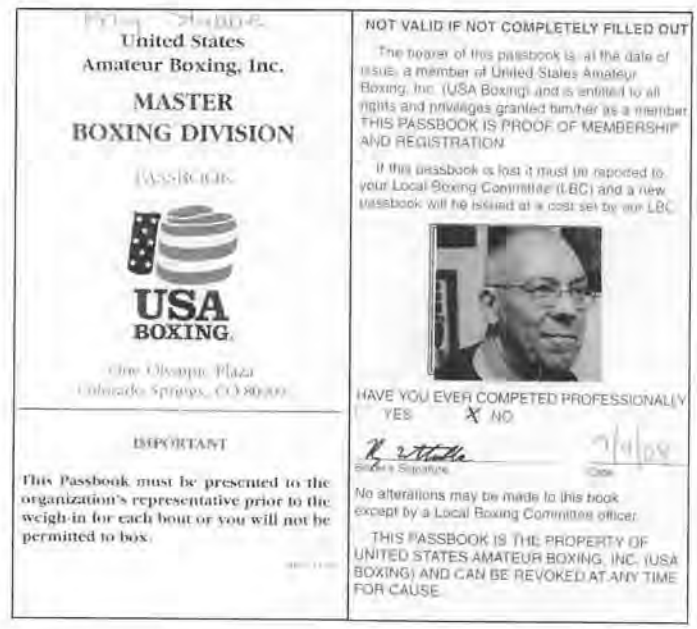

United States
Amateur Boxing, Inc.
MASTER
BOXING DIVISION
PASSBOOK
USA BOXING
One Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

IMPORTANT

This Passbook must be presented to the organization's representative prior to the weigh-in for each bout or you will not be permitted to box.

NOT VALID IF NOT COMPLETELY FILLED OUT

The bearer of this passbook is, at the date of issue, a member of United States Amateur Boxing, Inc. (USA Boxing) and is entitled to all rights and privileges granted him/her as a member. THIS PASSBOOK IS PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION

If this passbook is lost it must be reported to your Local Boxing Committee (LBC) and a new passbook will be issued at a cost set by the LBC.

HAVE YOU EVER COMPETED PROFESSIONALLY
YES X NO

Signature

No alterations may be made to this book except by a Local Boxing Committee officer.

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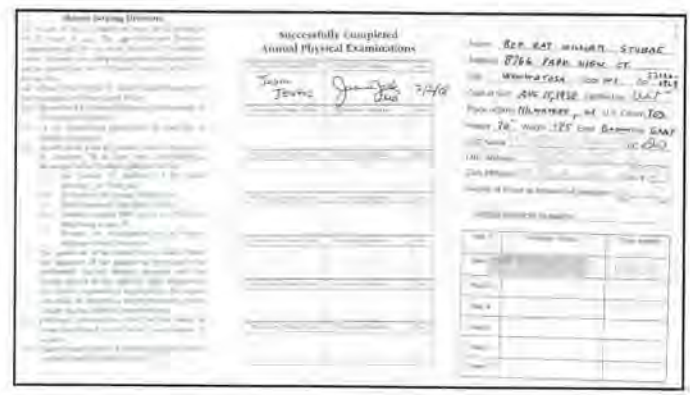

Successfully Completed
Annual Physical Examinations

We have instituted a new magazine section to thank those members who contribute so generously to the Khe Sanh Veterans. Their contributions allow us to continue to expand and improve our Red Clay magazine. There will be four levels of contributions: SILVER $ 20.00-50.00, GOLD over 50.00-200.00, PLATINUM over 200.00-1,000, and DIAMOND over 1,000. Each member will receive a new member-ship card, corresponding with their level of contribution.

DIAMOND

BODENWEISER, Alec	TOURTE, Craig	MCNEELEY, Milton L (Mac)
DAWDY. James H. Jr.	FOSTER, Gary	STUBBE, Ray W.

PLATINUM

ALLEN, Lewis J	GABLE, Vincent L	PIERCE, Thomas A
CHICONE, Roger D	GAEDE, Charles S	KUBLEY, Lawrence W
COLE, James F	HARRINGTON, David S	SCOTT, Michael D
FOSTER, Gary W	NOYES, Richard C	STACK, Geoffrey L
FRUGONI, Charles	PATRICO, Sid	SWELLS, Jack

GOLD

ALLYN, Robert	GERARD, Charles G	MAIN, Ronald G	SMITH, Walter J
ALLEN, Lewis J	GILLESPIE, Donald J	MANNION, Dennis M	SPIVEY, Martin B
BROPHY, Michael W.	GRANT, James D	MCCANN, Timothy N	STUDT, John C
CAMPO, Carl C	GRIFFIN, Jerry	MCCARTNEY, Lawrence	TATE, William R
CATON, Louis W II	HAIGWOOD, Jack	MCEWAN, Fredrick	WACHSMUTH, Robert
CHANDLER, David	HALLER, Tom	MERCADO, Saturno	WILKINSON, James B
COOK, Michael H	HANNA, Robert W	NOYES, Richard C	WOODARD, Jeff
COSNER, Leonard G	HERNANDEZ, John G	PADLEY, Shirley W	YATES, William R
COWAN, John R Sr.	JACHIMIAK, Daniel L	PATTERSON, Charles E	
DESETA, Louis J	JAYNE, Bill	PELON, Sharon	
DONAGHY, Richard E	KAHENY, John M	RAIT, Donald M	
DUBOIS, William H	KAYLOR, James	ROBBINS, John L	
DUNLAP, Lee C	KEATON, Thomas	ROGERS, David G	
EICHLER, Thomas J	KINSELLA, David R.	RUSHFORTH, Toby	
ELARDO, Nick	LARSON, Larry L	SHANKLIN, Dean E	
ESSLINGER, John T	LEE, Dale	SLATTERY, Robert J	
FOLEY, Richard M	LOERSCH, Phillip E	SMITH, Patrick W	

SILVER

ALEXANDER, Clarence F	FINCH, Michael T	KEATON, Thomas	MUDD, Ronald B
AMBROSE, James F	FOLEY, Richard M Jr.	KENDIG, Dennis R	NANCE, Reuben F
APPLEBAUM, Robert S	FOSMO, Harold D Jr.	LARSEN, Larry L	NEWSHAM, Robert G
BECKHAM, Daniel E	FRUGONI, Charles	LEWY, Bruce S	PROVENCIO, Ramon
BOLAND, Thomas	GERRIOR, Chuck	MAGUIRE, Danny A	RINEHART, Earlin R
BRADBURY, Michael D	HALL, Robert A	MAHONEY, Brian	ROMANETZ, Nicholas S
CAMPO, Carl	HARRIGAN, Joseph E	MAPEL, Randall D	SMITH, Patrick W
CHASE, James L	HARRIS, Theodore S	MCCULLOUGH, Richard	STAHL, Richard E
COOK, Michael H	HICKS, Tommy J	MELLON, David L	SWEARENGEN, Mark A
CORBETT, Jack	HOFFLER, John T	MINEER, Philip D	TAKACS, Richard E
DACKERMANN, William	HOLMGREN, Duane K	MYER, Donald J	UPSHAW, Leland
DEARING, Richard M	JOHNSON, John L	MORGAN, Robert I	VIVONA, Robert T
DE LOTTO, Richard J	KAZIMIR, Edward J	MOSEBAY, Watson T Jr.	WILLIS, Robert E

WE GET PICTURES

Col Donahue who was assigned to MACV SOG OP 35 C&C Det, submitted the following photographs taken while he was at Khe Sanh in 1967.



KS WILLIE THE VIET SUPPLY HELPER



ME & C&C DET OUTSIDE CLUB



Army Chopper Pilots at Khe Sanh

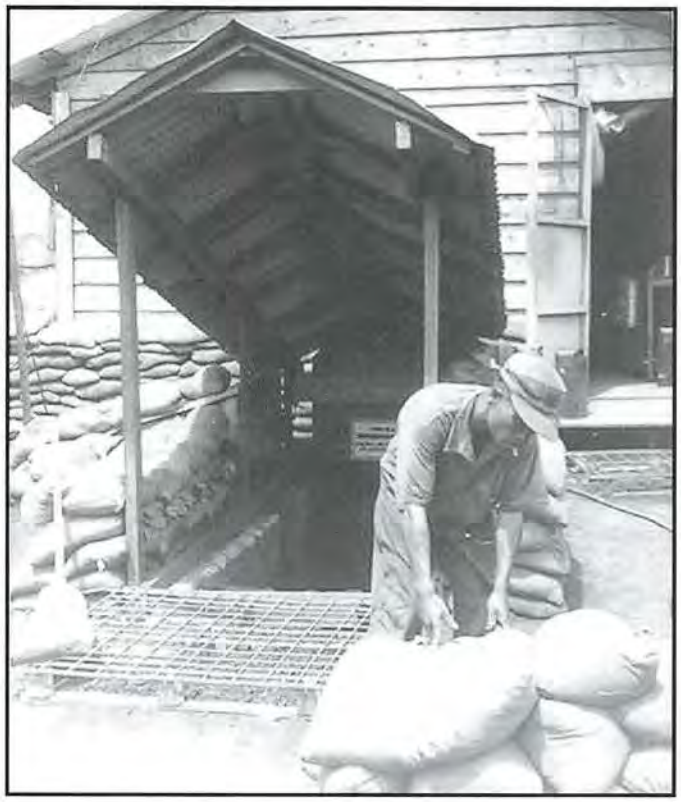

KHE SANH C&C BUNKER



USMC CONTROL TOWER KHE SANH



KHE SANH SUPPLY AREA



KSV LICENSE PLATE COVER
SEE PAGE 35



KHE SANH NEAR MISS



40Th & 20Th Anniversary Beer Steins
(Supplies Limited) **See Page 35**

MORE NEW ITEMS FROM KSV PX



MC WELCOME SIGN



SURVIVOR TEE SHIRT HEAVU DUTY COTTON (BLACK **SEE PAGE 35**




EDGAR
68
VIETNAM

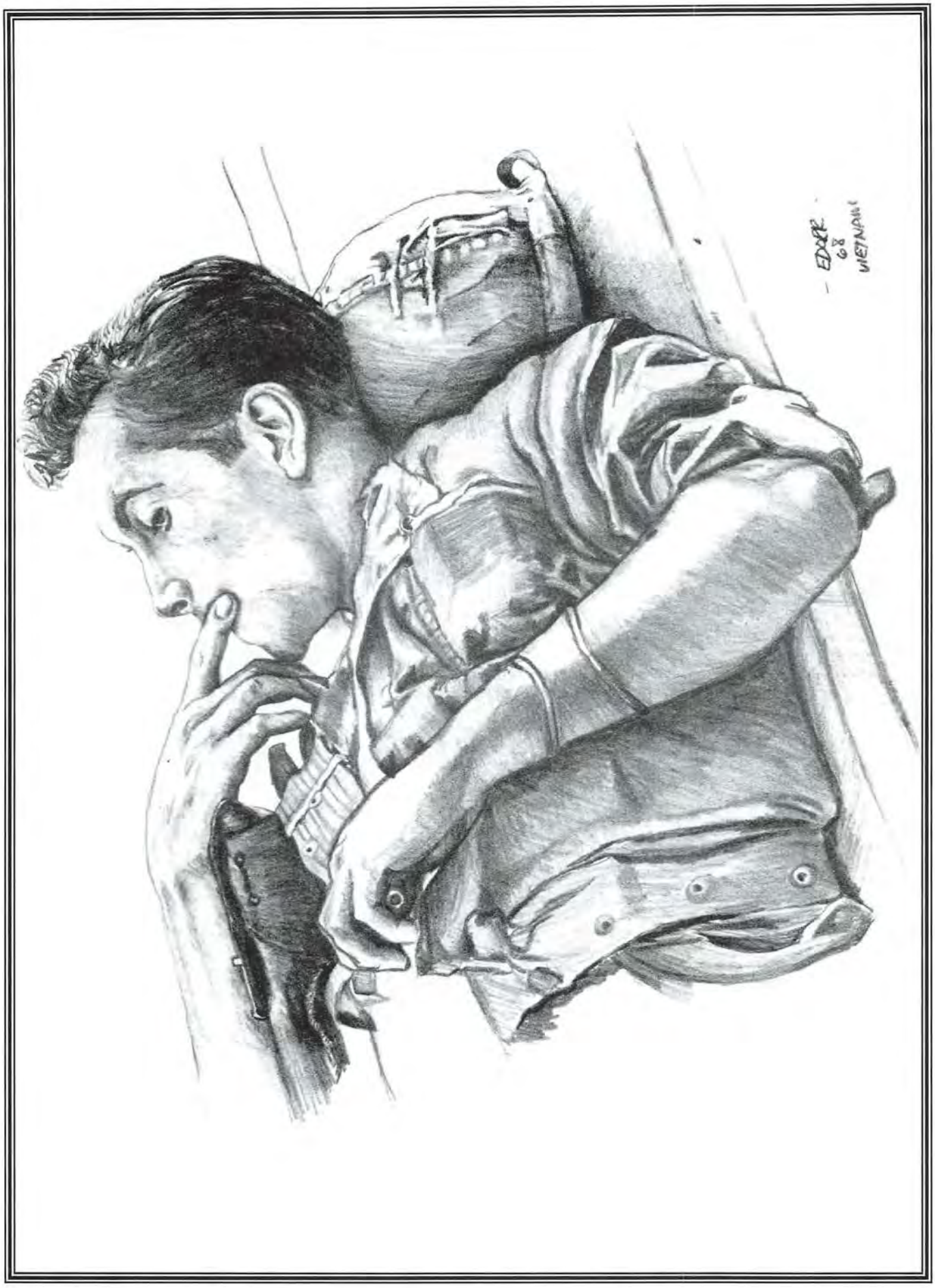
EDGE
68
VIETNAM

PRESIDENT TOM EICHLER & VICE PRESIDENT JOHN PESSONI HONORING SID PATRICIO FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE KHE SANH VETERANS

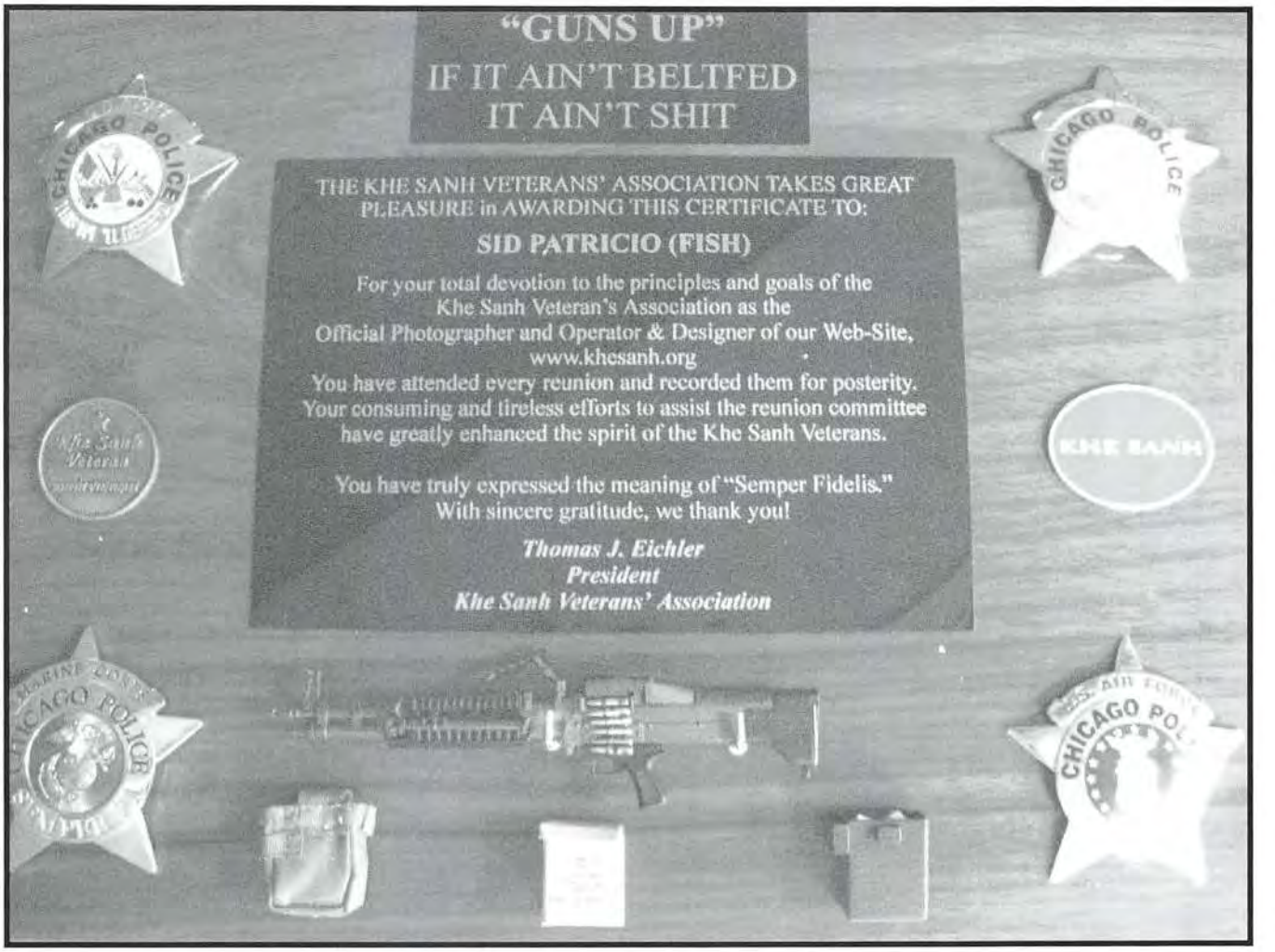





KHE SANH VETERANS INC. PX ORDER FORM 10-2008

WWW.KHESANH.ORG

CUT OUT AND MAIL OR PRINT & MAIL

Item #	DESCRIPTION	COLOR	SIZE	PRICE	AMT.	TOTAL
# PUC	PUC CERTIFICATE SPECIAL ITEM	W/NAME, RANK, UNIT		$ 10.00		
# B01	Valley of Decision Book	By Ray Stubbe		$ 25.00		
# B02	B5-T8 in 48 QXD	NVA Version of KS Siege		$ 10.00		
# B03	Bn. of Kings, Priority mail	By Ray Stubbe		$ 30.00		
# H01	"VETERAN"	Red/Silver Letters		$ 15.00		
# H02	"VETERAN"	White/Red Letters		$ 15.00		
# H03	"VETERAN"	Black/Silver Letters		$ 15.00		
# H04	"COMBAT VET"	Red/Silver Letters		$ 15.00		
# H05	"COMBAT VET"	Red/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H06	"USMC"	Tan/Black Letters		$ 15.00		
# H08	"COMBAT VET"	White/Red Letters		$ 15.00		
# H10	"THE SIEGE"	White/Black Letters		$ 15.00		
# H11	"THE SIEGE"	Black/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H12	"USMC"	Red/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H13	"USMC"	Black/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H14	"MARINES"	Black/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H15	"HILL FIGHTS"	Hunter Green/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H16	"DOC"	Navy Blue/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H17	"DOC"	Black/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H18	"KHE SANH/USMC VET" Nam Ribbon	Black/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H19	"KHE SANH/USMC VET" Nam Ribbon	Red/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H20	KS VET "ARMY" W/Nam Ribbon	Black/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H21	KS VET "AIR FORCE" W/Nam Ribbon	Black/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H22	KS VET "NAVY" W/Nam Ribbon	Black/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# H23	KS VETERAN W/Nam Ribbon	Black/Gold Letters		$ 15.00		
# PA01	KHE SANH SURVIVOR	Shoulder Patch 2X3in		$ 5.00		
# PA02	26TH MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$ 5.00		
# PA03	1/26 MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$ 5.00		
# PA04	2/26 MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$ 5.00		
# PA05	3/26 MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$ 5.00		
# PA06	KHE SANH VETERAN	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$ 5.00		
# PA07	KHE SANH VIETNAM RIBBON	Shoulder Patch 2.75X1in		$ 3.00		
# PA08	USMC COMBAT VET RIBBON	Jacket Patch 5"x2"		$ 7.00		
# PA09	13TH MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$ 5.00		
# PA10	5TH MARINE DIVISION	Shoulder Patch 4X4in		$ 5.00		
# PIN01	KHE SANH SURVIVOR	Hat/Lapel Pin		$ 5.00		
# PIN02	HOME IS WHERE YOU DIG IT	Hat/Lapel Pin		$ 5.00		
# PIN03	KHE SANH 1967-1968	Hat/Lapel Pin		$ 5.00		
# PIN04	KHE SANH VETS W/EGA	Hat/Lapel Pin		$ 5.00		
# PIN06	26th MARINES "The Pros:	Hat/Lapel Pin		$ 5.00		
# PIN07	US FLAG	Hat/Lapel Pin		$ 3.00		
# PIN08	US FLAG MARINE CORPS PIN	Hat/Lapel Pin		$ 6.00		
# PIN09	KHE SANH VETERANS	Lapel/Hat Pin		$ 7.00		
# S01	GOLF SHIRT KHE SANH VETS LOGO	White, Yellow, Black		$ 35.00		
# S02	SWEATSHIRT "USMC" Black	Sizes XL, XXL		$ 30.00		
# S03	TEE SHIRT "USMC" Black	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL		$ 16.00		
# S04	TEE SHIRT "USMC" Gray	Sizes L, XL, XXL XXXL		$ 16.00		
# S05	TEE SHIRT "DC '07 REUNION"	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL Blue		$ 10.00		
# S06	TEE KHE SANH HOME DIG IT	Sizes L, XL, XXL, XXXL		$ 18.00		
# S07	TEE SHIRT SURVIVOR "Black"	Sizes L, ALL SIZES		$ 18.00		
# S08	TEE SHIRT "RENO '08 REUNION"	Sizes L, XXL ONLY		$ 10.00		
# BMUG	30oz. BEER STEIN "08 REUNION"	WHITE W/BLACK LETTERS		$ 15.00		
# MC01	KHE SANH MAP COIN	Pewter		$ 6.00		
# MC02	KHE SANH MAP COIN	Bronze		$ 7.00		
# MC03	Pewter Coin Special	Pewter Coins Only, 5 FOR		$ 25.00		
# MW01	KHE SANH WINDOW DECAL	Four Branches		$ 3.00		
# MW02	KS VETERAN WINDOW DECAL	HOME IS WHERE DIG IT		$ 4.00		
# MW03	NAM RIBBON WINDOW DECAL 3X2	OVAL DECAL		$ 4.00		
# PLATE	LICENCE PLATE COVER	Vietnam Khe Sanh		$ 15.00		
# MB01	KHE SANH GET SOME USMC	Bumper Sticker		$ 3.00		

SEE CHART BOTTOM RIGHT FOR SHIPPING AND HANDLING

SHIP ITEMS TO:

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone # Email:

TOTAL AMOUNT OF ORDER

Fill PX order form above send with Check, Money Order to:

KHE SANH VETERANS Inc.
C/O **John Pessoni**
1920 Powder Horn Rd.
Toms River, NJ 08755
"Big John" **(732) 948-9803**

Shipping & Handling:

Up to $12.50 = $5.00
$12.51 - 20.00 = $6.95
$20.01 - 30.00 = $8.95
$30.01 - 40.00 = $9.95
$40.01 - 60.00= $10.95
$60.01 - 100.00 =$11.95
$100.01 -174.01 =$12.95
$175.01 and UP = $13.95

For Office Use: Date Received: Check # Amount: Date Shipped: # Items Shipped











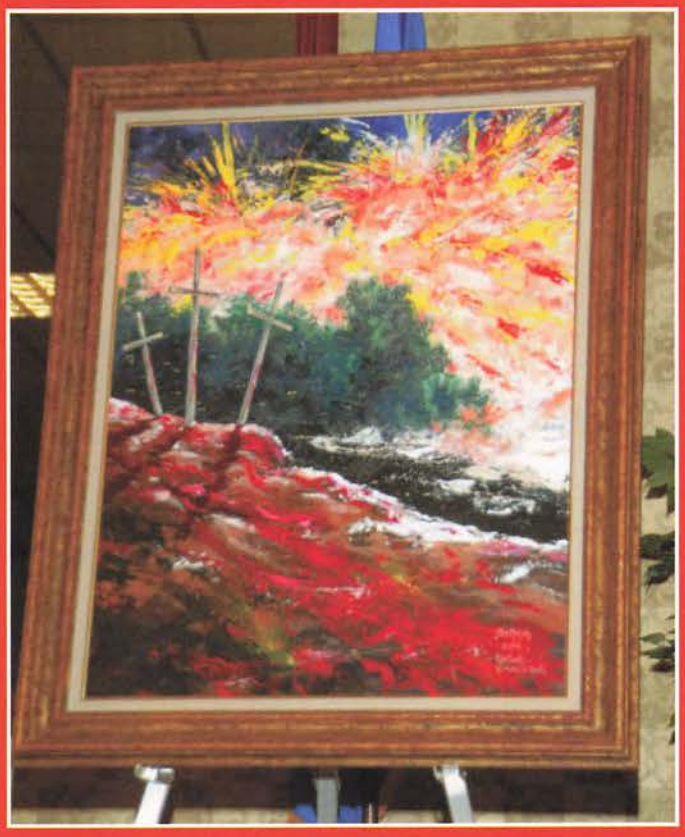



Chaplain Ray Stubbe leading services at Khe Sanh

Painting by Maria Rafael at Willamette National Cemetery, Portland, Oregon



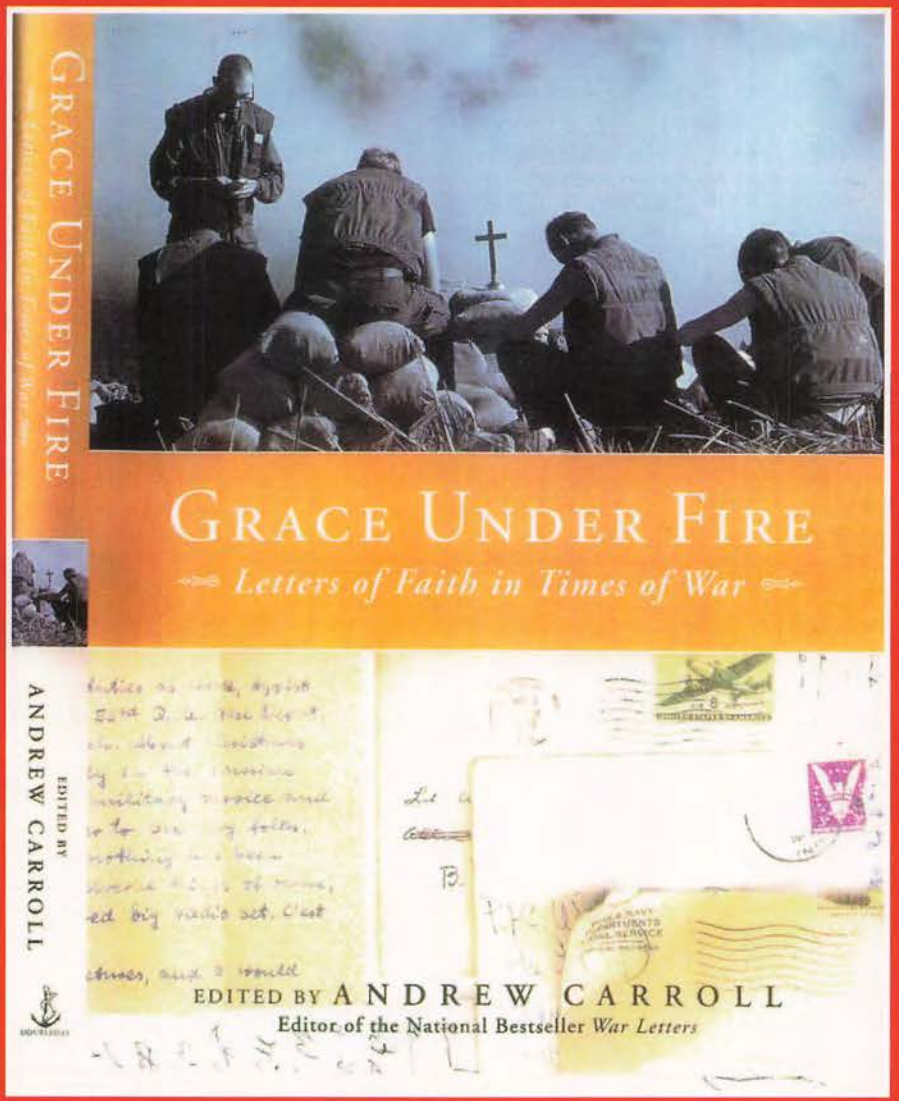

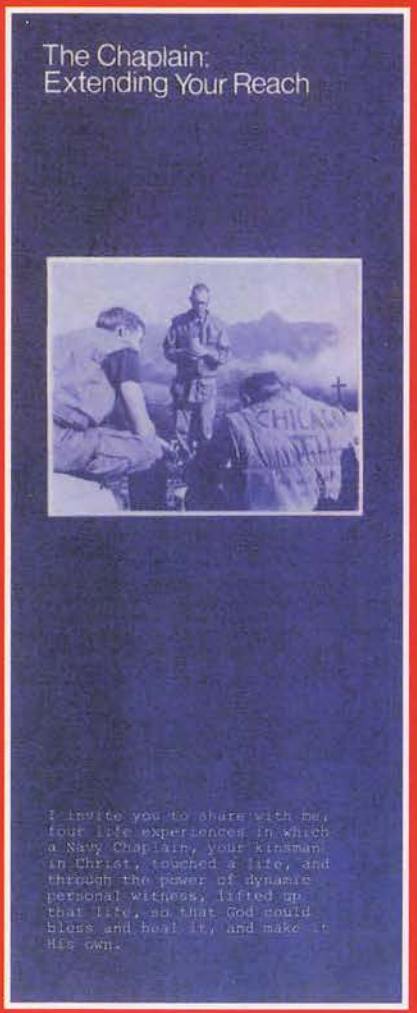

SPRING
2009

RED CLAY

ISSUE 72

HONORING HEROES PAST AND PRESENT



SERGEANT MICHAEL A. MARZANO
18 May 1976 - 07 May 2005 KIA IRAQ
PAGES 10-13



COLONEL JOHN RIPLEY
29 Jun 1939 - 28 Oct 2008
PAGES 2-7

















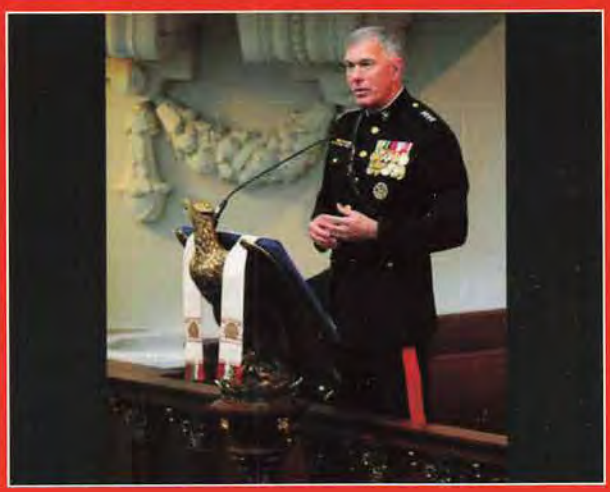

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This issue will be the last you will receive prior to the July reunion. Enclosed you will find another registration form. Please get these sent to Russ Turner ASAP. We have two trips planned and need to provide the tour company with an estimate of attending members who signed up for the tours. If you are not sure if you can attend the reunion, book your rooms and send in your reservations, you can always cancel.

I also printed the forms for applying for funds from the newly established KSV Scholarship fund. The chairman Dan Fisher, and his committee, did a superb job of putting it together in a very short period of time. However, we are still open for any suggestions prior to implementing the fund at the reunion in Denver. By then, hopefully, family members of our members will have already applied for assistance. Through the generosity of the membership we hope to quickly expand the amount of funds now available from the scholarship fund.

With the resignation of our treasurer, James Wodecki, I have temporarily assumed the position. We will also hold an election for openings on the KSV BOD. Those wishing to run for any of the following positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, and five Members at Large positions, let me know prior to the reunion. I want to also thank the membership, especially those Life members who so generously contributed to the RED CLAY magazine.

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

I want to again thank the membership for their outstanding support of the KSV PX. It has enabled me to purchase many new items and greatly expand the inventory. It looks like we are going to have another great reunion in Denver and I am looking foreword to seeing a lot of new faces as well. Denver is a beautiful City with majestic scenery. We have two great trips planned and hope the membership takes advantage of them.

FROM DESK OF THE SECRETARY

Just a reminder that we are always in need of items for the silent auction. If you cannot attend the reunion and still wish to donate, mail your donated items directly to me.

Robert Moxley
69566 Haefer Ln
Cove, OR 97824

CHAPLAINS CORNER (See Pages 93-95)

COME JOIN US IN BEAUTIFUL DENVER COLORADO

The 2009 Khe Sanh Veteran reunion will be held on 19-26 July 2009, in Denver Co. It will be held at the: Marriott Denver Tech Center located at 4900 S Syracuse Street, Denver CO 80237
Phone # 1-800-266-9432 (Code Khe Sanh)

Room Rates $ 89.00 For Single Or Double There is a 14.85 % State Tax (Rates Apply 3 Days Before & 3 Days After) Reunion Dates. There is No Fee For Parking.

It is a beautiful hotel and all the rooms have been newly remodeled. They offer amenities: Heated Pools, an atrium large enough to seat the entire membership, a large out-door lounge that will stay open until there are no customers (for you Late nighters), salon, health spas, and the public transportation to downtown Denver is 5 minutes from the Hotel.

Many of the rooms are equipped with a balcony so I suggest you smokers make early reservations since they will go fast, and Denver is a Non Smoking State. You can smoke on the balconies. (There is a Slight increase in room rates for these rooms). We will have reduced rates for lunch & Dinner at the Hotel Restaurants. The Hotel also provides free shuttles within a 5 mile radius for shopping at the many large malls. There are also several other restaurants and stores located near the Hotel.

SEE ENCLOSED BROCHURES

GIANTS OF THE CORPS



OBIT

Colonel John W. Ripley, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired

John Walter Ripley was born June 29th, 1939 in Radford, Virginia. Colonel Ripley served 35 years active duty in the Marines. Graduating June 1957 from Radford High School, Ripley served one year of enlisted service in the Marine Corps before entering the United States Naval Academy upon obtaining an appointment from the Secretary of the Navy. In June of 1962, Ripley graduated with a Bachelor's of Science degree in electrical engineering and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant of Marines.



Upon completion of The Basic School for Infantry Officers, Lt. Ripley was assigned Sea Duty with Marine Detachment, USS Independence. Lt. Ripley was next assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, commanding a Rifle Platoon, then Weapons platoon. In May 1965 Lt. Ripley was transferred to 2nd Force Reconnaissance where he completed the US Army Airborne Course, Jumpmaster course and US Navy SCUBA School. Ripley next attended the US Army Ranger Course as a part of Class 05-65. Successfully completing Ranger training, now Ranger Ripley was recognized as the Distinguished Officer Graduate and awarded the coveted RANGER Tab. Upon completion of his Special Operation training, Ranger Ripley deployed overseas with his Force

Reconnaissance platoon.

Captain Ripley arrived in Vietnam in October 1966 and took command of Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment (L 3/3) just below the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in the northern sector of South Vietnam's I Corps. Ranger Ripley's Lima Company saw extensive combat action in the famous "Leatherneck Square" area of Dong Ha, Con Tien, Khe Sanh and the "Rock Pile". Because of Ranger Ripley's exceptional leadership and command capabilities, commanders constantly committed Lima Company to active battle sites all along I Corps's DMZ. Ranger Ripley was wounded in action on four separate occasions, finally being forced to medically evacuate and recover from his wounds. Each event qualified for the Purple Heart, but Ranger Ripley skillfully avoided the paperwork and settled for a single award of the medal. According to Ranger Ripley, *"Three Purple Hearts on three occasions would mean mandatory removal from the field, and worse, command!"* Ranger Ripley insisted on returning to command his Company and did so providing experience and leadership until end of tour.

Ranger Ripley next attended the Amphibious Warfare School and on completion of the course became the Infantry Officers Monitor, Headquarters, US Marine Corps. In October 1969 he was selected to serve as the Exchange Officer to the British Royal Marines. He attended the Marine Commando Course at Lympstone, England, then served in Singapore with the 3rd Commando Brigade and with 40 Commando in northern Malaya, campaigning for several months with the famous Gurkhas, the 1st of the 2nd Gurkha Rifles. Ranger Ripley also served with the Special Boat Service (3rd SBS) and with "Zulu" Company Group in Norway. Ripley then commanded "Yankee" Commando, a light infantry company, as they deployed throughout England, Scotland, and Wales. Ranger Ripley returned to Norway for his second winter to complete the Mountain and Arctic Warfare Course at Elvergardsmoen. He also completed the Joint Warfare Course at Old Sarum, England.

Ranger Ripley returned to Vietnam in 1971 and served as Senior Advisor to the 3rd Vietnamese Marine Battalion, which operated along the DMZ. Ripley was at Dong Ha with his battalion during the 1972 North Vietnamese Easter Invasion. It was during this invasion that Ranger Ripley heroically performed the action at the Dong Ha Bridge, for which he was awarded the nation's second highest honor, the Navy Cross. John G. Miller's book, The Bridge at Dong Ha, documents this action.

Returning from Vietnam in 1972, Ranger Ripley became the Marine Officer Instructor at Oregon State University. In 1975 he attended American University in the Advanced Degree program. Upon earning a Master of Science, Ripley was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Staff, Headquarters Marine Corps, serving in Special Projects Directorate then later as the Administrative Assistant/Aide to the Chief of Staff.

Ranger Ripley next commanded 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines from July 1979 to May 1981. During this time they deployed for Combined Arms Exercise 2-80, then to Mountain Warfare Training Center and winter operations.

Upon completion of his tour with the 2nd Marines in 1982, Ranger Ripley attended the Naval War College. Upon graduation he reported to the Joint Staff, Joint Chiefs of Staff, serving as Political-Military Planner and Branch Chief, European Division, J-5. Ranger Ripley was next assigned to his Alma Mater, the U.S. Naval Academy where he served as Senior Marine and Director, Division of English and History from 1984-1987. During this period he established a record of commissioning more than 500 Academy midshipmen into the Marine Corps. Ranger Ripley next spent a year as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3 with 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force in Japan.

In July 1988, Ranger Ripley assumed command of the 2nd Marines and twice deployed the Regiment to Norway. Ranger Ripley also commanded Regimental Landing Team 2 (RTL 2), a combined reinforced infantry regiment, with armor, artillery and Marine Air, deploying over 10,000 Marines to the Arctic Circle, the first Marine unit ever to do so. Upon leaving the Regiment, he commanded the Navy-Marine Corps ROTC Unit at Virginia Military Institute. During his time at VMI, Ranger Ripley created the largest, most productive NROTC unit in the country.

Ranger Ripley has earned six valorous and fourteen personal decorations including the Navy Cross, the Silver Star, two awards of the Legion of Merit, two awards of the Bronze Star with Combat "V", the Purpose Heart, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the President Unit Citation, the Navy Unit Citation, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Vietnamese Distinguished Service Order and the Cross of Gallantry with Gold Star.



Ranger Ripley's heroic action at the Dong Ha was selected as a single act to memorialize all Naval Academy graduates during the Vietnam War. In Memorial Hall at The Academy, a large diorama titled "*Ripley at The Bridge*" represents the noble and gallant actions of all Naval Academy men who fought there.

Following his retirement in June 1992, Col. Ripley became president of Southern Virginia College in Buena Vista, VA. While there he was credited with saving the financially-troubled college. After turning the College over to new management, Col. Ripley was asked to remain as Chancellor where he received resolutions and citations from the Trustees, the City of Buena Vista, and the Office of the Governor.

In 1997, Col. Ripley assumed the responsibilities as President, Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, VA. While serving in this capacity, he shored up parental confidence in the program of instruction, refocused the financial plan on infrastructure improvement, dormitory and classroom modernization, updated curricula to include additional offerings thereby enhancing the overall program and established innovative sources of revenue through positive change and sound management practices.

In June 1999, Col. Ripley was selected by the Commandant to serve as the Director of Marine Corps History and Museums and Director of the Marine Corps Historical Center, a position he held until his final retirement from the Corps in 2006.

Col. Ripley has been elected to Phi Alpha Theta, a history honorary, and to Who's Who Worldwide. He also holds the distinction of having commissioned more officers in the Marine Corps than anyone on record. During his years of Vietnam service he participated in 26 major operations which included numerous battles at the Rifle Company, Battalion and Division level. He has the distinction of more direct combat command experience at the rifle company and battalion level than any other Marine. He is the subject dozens of books and film documentaries and has lectured widely on combat leadership, performance in adversity and the value of humanities, classics, and liberal arts. He was in high demand as a motivational speaker and participates in numerous national seminars. His testimony before Congress as part of a Presidential Commission on the role of women in combat, and numerous writings, has been entered into the Congressional Record.

As a result of combat action, Ranger Ripley contracted a disease that would require a liver transplant in the summer of 2002. On his death bed with little life left and having twice received Last Rites, one of the Marine Corps' greatest living heroes lie dying. Once a liver had been located in Philadelphia, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, calling Col. Ripley a living symbol of pride, dispatched helicopters from the MARINE ONE squadron, the Presidential Fleet, to ferry the transplant team to the University of Pennsylvania hospital to remove the donor liver and then transport the doctors back to Washington for what became a successful opera-

tion.

In October 2006 Col. Ripley returned to the site of the Dong Ha Bridge to film a documentary of his exploits. The documentary was hosted by Oliver North and featured on an episode of Lt/Col. North's 'War Stories" on FOX.

Colonel and Mrs. Ripley resided in Annapolis, Maryland. They have four children. Two sons are graduates of VMI and each served as Captains of Marines.





CITATION

RANGER JOHN W. RIPLEY
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)

Colonel Ripley is inducted into the Ranger Hall for Fame in recognition of his extraordinary and illustrious military career both in combat and command. During 35 years of military service, Ranger Ripley lead troops with distinction at every unit level from Rifle Platoon through Regimental Commander. As a Reconnaissance Officer with the 2nd Force Reconnaissance Co., Ranger Ripley attended the Ranger Course as member of Class 5-65 and was recognized as the Distinguished Honor Graduate.

Commanding a Rifle Company with 3rd Marines in "I" Corps just below the DMZ, Ripley saw extensive combat from the famous "Leatherneck Square" area of Dong Ha to the 'Rockpile'. He was involved in warfare at every DMZ Fire Base from Laos to Khe Sanh. Wounded four separate occasions, Ripley refused evacuation on the first three events while managing to avoid the paperwork and 3 Purple Hearts which would have mandated his removal from the fight. Seriously wounded a fourth time, Ripley was forced to evacuate and upon recovery insisted he be returned to his Company to complete the mission of leadership to his men. In addition to the Purple Heart, Ripley was awarded the Silver Star Medal and Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V" for Valor.

Ranger Ripley next served as an Exchange Officer with Royal Marine Commandos and saw action in Singapore with the 3rd Commando Brigade; in Northern Malaya with 40 Commando and campaigned with the famous Gurkha rifles. Ripley was privileged to command the RM's Recce Troop (Reconnaissance) in the Artic and Malaya as well as 'Yankee' Commando, Royal Marines, a light infantry company deployed throughout Great Britain and Norway.

Ripley's most famous tour of combat duty was as a Senior Military Advisor during the 1972 North Vietnamese Easter Invasion. NVA troops and Soviet T-54 tanks had crossed the DMZ and were approaching a strategic bridge over the Cam Lo River. For over two hours and under withering small arms fire, **Ripley swung hand-over-hand out to the spans and stringers under the bridge setting over 40 pounds of explosives. Exhausted and with enemy troops and equipment on the bridge, Ripley blew the bridge. It is written that, "What Ripley did was simply impossible". Ripley was awarded the Navy Cross for heroism.**

During his two years of Vietnam service, Ranger Ripley participated in 26 major operations and holds the distinction of more field combat command experience than any other Marine commander of that era.

In retirement Col. Ripley was President and Chancellor of Southern Virginia University and served as President of Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, Virginia. In 1999 Col. Ripley became the Director of Marine Corps History and Museums, Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. Col. Ripley's exploits have been chronicled in the book The Bridge at Dong Ha; His action is forever memorialized at the US Naval Academy with a diorama titled "Ripley at the Bridge"; Col. Ripley was the first Marine officer to be honored with the Naval Academy's Distinguished Graduate Award; The Naval Academy Prep School dedicated a dormitory as "RIPLEY HALL" in perpetual honor of their former graduate; Ranger Ripley's heroic actions in Vietnam are a subject of Oliver North's "War Stories" titled "The Furious Fight for Dong Ha"; "Ripley's March" was written honoring Col. Ripley for his military service, valor in combat and contributions to the United States; "FOB Ripley" is a Firebase located in south central Afghanistan named in honor of Ranger Ripley.

John Ripley died last week. It's hard to find the words to express emotions upon hearing of his death - "devastated," "empty," "like a kick in the solar plexus." He had a brilliant Marine Corps career. He loved being a Marine. From an enlisted man to a Naval Academy graduate, to Recon Training to battle planning, to company commander to brilliant advisor to the South Vietnamese forces during Vietnamization, and numerous outstanding posts, including retiring as a senior Marine officer at Annapolis along with his work at the Marine Corps museum. Despite all of that for us, he was our company commander, the leader of "Ripley's Raiders" with a well prepared, quiet, but exceedingly effective leadership style. For most of us, what we feared more than anything was disappointing John W. Ripley.

In the CP, the gunny, the XO, and his platoon commanders affectionately referred to him as "Rip the Skip." Someone even wrote that on the heel of his shower shoes when we were in Payable and we walked down to the river to take a bath or to the showers. Unlike other units, he required us to wear helmets and flak jackets. The helmets had to have the chinstrap fastened at all times. We had to shave everyday whether we needed it or not. We often came across other Marine units in the field, chinstraps flapping back and forth in the wind, three to eight days growth of beard. We secretly wished that we could look so salty, but these disciplinary rules had a purpose in a coherent, whole leadership theory that kept us together and made us effective.

There was grumbling sometimes that Ripley seemed ready and willing to lead us into harm's way at the drop of a hat. He often lobbied for the most dangerous missions and more than sometimes got them. We learned over time that when he lead us into harm's way (and often it was much bigger harm than we were battalion, even regimental size harm), harm usually got the shit kicked out of it if it didn't turn tail and run like a rabbit.

Ripley could take risks because of his confidence, because of his competence, because of his preparedness, because of his knowledge of what his officers and men could do, what the weapons systems could do that were available to him and what North Vietnamese units that we ran into could do. Those NVA, in time, learned of Ripley's skills and Ripley had a reputation among them. They didn't like going up against him.

He is mentioned almost parenthetically in the book The Nightingale Song as one of the young Marine (Naval Academy graduates) officers, who served as platoon or company commanders in Vietnam, who it is intimated were of higher quality or among the best, than perhaps the subjects of the book, includ-

ing McFarlane, Oliver North, John McCain, et. al. Of course, we knew the high quality of our company commander first hand.

I first arrived in Vietnam in January. We were at the Punch Bowl (Lima Hill). We got hit up on the Razorback. There was small arms fire that came zipping and popping over our heads during the engagement. Don Shipley happened to be at CP when this was going on and came back to us and told us what he observed, that Ripley coolly, calmly managed the situation. He had three or four radios going at the same time, talking to artillery, close air support, the unit on the Razorback, the unit on the Rock Pile, and his platoon commanders. Shipley said that a calm came over Ripley in this crisis situation as he managed it. Shipley was amazed at the obviously apparent competence and professional abilities of this Marine, who had only recently come to command Lima company. Perhaps he was not the "perfect" company commander in Vietnam, but in leading us and with us at his back he was damn close.

I once sent him a photograph taken at Camp Carroll probably 35 years earlier. He was in the photograph along with Sgt. Chancey and Sgt. Jarvis. There were four or five others that I tried to identify. He responded by pointing out to me who the others were and that I'd been mistaken in my identification of them. "I remember them all," he said, "I remember them all." Many of us, perhaps all of us at times had wondered if we'd lived up to his expectations. He addressed that issue at a public speech before a hall of Marines in Washington, D.C., one year when speaking about Lima Company in 1967. "My Marines never disappointed me," he said. "Never! Not once!"

I wish we had more time with him. I wish I had written to him more often. I wish that I'd spent more time sitting with him at the reunions. I wish that he, as he was planning to do, could have made the trip back to Vietnam that Al Niece has worked with him to put together. But he has cheated death many times. His wonderful family and his Marines and his Marine Corps and his country had him a lot longer than perhaps we had any right to expect.
He was incredibly lucky, but to a great extent he made his own luck through hard work, preparedness, honing his skills, and professionalism.

We have the memories of him walking among us, defending us, supporting us, still leading by example. God knows that we appreciate it.

John Ripley never became a general, but his example of leadership and personal and professional courage will serve the Marine Corps down through the generations, keep alive the finest military leadership arts honed by the Spartans, lived by the Marines, and very well may have a larger effect on the future Marine Corps than that of many who made it into the general ranks. He was never awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor although many have felt that his actions in 1972 during the Easter Offensive at Dong Ha Bridge, clearly deserved it. I asked him about it one time. He said, "No. That's been settled." Had he been killed at the Bridge of Dong Ha, he probably would have gotten the Medal of Honor, but we're glad we had him alive instead.

He was humble about his many high personal decorations, lamenting the fact that others, who were just as deserving in his words did not receive the recognition, but he wore those personal decorations well and he honored all of us in doing so.

Thank you, John Ripley, for the leadership you gave us, for the legend you made, for the honor given to all of us and those who gave their lives in your command by the exemplary life and Marine Corps career that you've lived and made. Thank you for being Always Faithful.
Semper Fi,
John M. Solbach

WARRIOR AT REST
GENERAL ROBERT H. BARROW
27TH COMMANDANT OF
THE MARINE CORPS
05 Feb 1922 to 30 Oct 2008

Reprinted With Permission Leatherneck Magazine January 2009

General Robert Hilliard Barrow passed away 30 Oct. 2008. Another giant of the Corps is gone but will never be forgotten. He was buried, alongside his wife, Patty Ann (Pulliam) Barrow, with full Marine honors at Grace Episcopal Church Cemetery, St. Francisville, La., 3 Nov. 2008





1st/Lt Robert H. Barrow spent six months with the Sino-American Cooperative Organization fighting alongside Chinese soldiers and guerrillas against the Japanese in China during WWII

In his eulogy delivered at the funeral, General Carl E. Mundy Jr., 30th Commandant of the Marine Corps, noted that although Gen Barrow was widely respected as a three-war Marine, his favorite assignment was at MCRD Parris Island, S.C.., shaping the Corps of the future. Gen Mundy said:

"From his earliest days in the Corps, he gained the firm and oft articulated belief that it is people who make the difference. Tanks, ships, airplanes and rifles are all important tools-but without the right people, they're useless.

"Even numbers didn't count with him. A favorite saying was, 'In battle, it's not how many show up ... it's who they are.'

"He believed that fairly ordinary young Americans-properly molded by the Corps into Marines-are different, and in times of trial make the difference. He put a sign over the entrance to Parris Island that stated, simply: 'Where the Difference Begins.'

"His focus on people would continue throughout his remaining important as-signments in the Corps, and he would say, on more than a few occasions, that if he had it to do again, he would forego the additional stars that would come to him in favor of remaining at Parris Island as long as he could. It was his favorite post, and appropriately, its headquarters today is named for him: Barrow Hall.

"He became Commandant of our Corps in 1979 and would continue until retirement four years later to shape his Corps, and to perpetuate the unique culture and character that comes with being a Marine.

"History has already measured Bob Barrow and marked him as one of the finest ever to have worn the uniform he wears in his casket today. Among the 34 men over the history of our nation who have been privileged to lead the Marine Corps, he most assuredly stands near the pinnacle.

"So, as we bid farewell to this magnificent American ... devoted and loving husband ... father ... grandfather ... friend ... and above all, Marine ... let us do so with gratitude that our nation produces men the stature of Robert Hilliard Bar-row; that he chose to become a Marine; and that we have been privileged to know him.

"His likes do not often pass our way. "Semper Fidelis, General."

LT GENERAL VICTOR "BRUTE" H. KRULAK DIES AT AGE 95

Jan 1913– 30 Dec 2008
UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF
December 30, 2008

Lt. Gen. Victor H. Krulak, who entered the U.S. Naval Academy as an undersized 16-year-old and rose to commander of all Marine Corps forces in the Pacific, died Monday night at the Wesley Palms Retirement Community in San Diego. He was 95.



Rising barely 5 feet, 5 inches, Gen. Krulak was jokingly nicknamed Brute by his academy classmates. The moniker stuck, reinforced by his direct, no-nonsense style. And, as Time magazine later said, "There was nothing undersized about his brain." A sign in his Honolulu office while he commanded Pacific forces expressed Gen. Krulak's disciplined leadership: "The harder I work, the luckier I get."

While commanding more than 100,000 Marines in the Pacific from 1964 to 1968, Gen. Krulak took part in a critical stage of America's buildup of forces and involvement in Vietnam. Before his retirement from the military after 34 years in 1968, he was considered a strong candidate for commandant, the top Marine post that his oldest son, Charles, attained in 1995. Gen. Krulak became, at 43, the youngest brigadier general in Marine Corps history up to that time. By then, he was a decorated veteran of World War II and the Korean War and had been wounded while directing a Marine parachute battalion in the South Pacific against overwhelming odds.

When Gen. Krulak retired from the military, he received the second of two Distinguished Service Medals. For the next nine years, he was employed by Copley Newspapers, serving at various times as director of editorial and news policy and news media president of Copley News Service. He retired as vice president of The Copley Press Inc. in 1977 and contributed columns on international affairs and military matters for Copley News Service. He also wrote the book "First to Fight," an insider's view of the Marine Corps. A tenacious critic of the government's handling of the Vietnam War, he wrote that the war could have been won only if the Vietnamese people had been protected and befriended and if enemy supplies from North Vietnam were cut off.

"The destruction of the port of Haiphong would have changed the whole character of the war," he said two decades after the fall of Saigon. Gen. Krulak once summed up the U.S. dilemma in Vietnam by saying, "It has no front lines. The battlefield is in the minds of 16 or 17 million people." His first-hand knowledge of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam was enhanced by his 54 visits there during the 1960s. Before assuming command of Fleet Marine Force Pacific in 1964, Gen. Krulak served as principal adviser on counterinsurgency warfare to then-Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "I never got enthusiasm out of war, and I'm convinced that the true pacifists are the professional soldiers who have actually seen it," he said many years later.

Gen. Krulak, a native of Denver, received his appointment to the Naval Academy before finishing high school. "I was underweight and little – so they called me 'Brute,' " he said. Gen. Krulak received a

waiver to bypass the Marine Corps height requirement of 5 feet, 6 inches. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps after graduating from the Naval Academy in 1934. All three of Gen. Krulak's sons followed him to the Naval Academy. Each served in Vietnam while Gen. Krulak was commanding the Hawaii-based Fleet Marine Force. The leadership Gen. Krulak exhibited in combat during World War II marked him as star on the rise. On the island of Choiseul, he led his outnumbered battalion during an eight-day raid on Japanese forces, diverting the enemy's attention from the U.S. invasion of Bougainville. Gen. Krulak's troops destroyed hundreds of tons of supplies, burning both camps and landing barges. He was wounded on Oct. 13, 1943, and later received the Navy Cross for heroism along with the Purple Heart. The PT boat that transported Gen. Krulak off Choiseul was skippered by a young Navy lieutenant, John F. Kennedy. Years later, then-President Kennedy chose Gen. Krulak as a special adviser on guerrilla warfare in Vietnam. Gen. Krulak's distinguished service in World War II as assistant chief of staff of the newly formed 6th Marine Division earned him a Legion of Merit with a combat V. He received a Bronze Star at the end of the war for his role in negotiating the surrender of Japanese forces in the area of Tsingtao, China. In May 1998, Gen. Krulak was inducted into the Navy Department's Acquisition Hall of Fame for his work in developing landing boats that were crucial to the success of scores of amphibious landings in World War II.

Gen. Krulak worked with Andrew Higgins, a New Orleans boat builder, to produce a model of what became the Landing Craft, Vehicles and Personnel. More than 2,000 of the craft were built for the U.S. military and its allies. As chief of staff with the 1st Marine Division during the Korean War, Gen. Krulak earned a second Legion of Merit with a combat V. He also received an Air Medal for reconnaissance and other flights in Korea between Aug. 1950 and July 1951.

In December 1959, Gen. Krulak, then a two-star general, assumed command of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, a position he held until his appointment in 1962 as an adviser in the Kennedy Administration. In 1963, he was described by his World War II commander, Gen. Holland M. "Howling Mad" Smith, as "the most brilliant officer I've known in my 58 years in the Marine Corps." A longtime Point Loma resident, Gen. Krulak was honored in 1968 as San Diego's "Citizen of the Year" by San Diego Uplifters, a group of 400 professional and business leaders. Gen. Krulak was known for writing his own military speeches and was a popular speaker before civic organizations. He received several national awards for his patriotic writing and speaking, including one in 1978 from the Freedoms Foundation. He was active in many community organizations and was a former president and trustee of the Zoological Society of San Diego. He received honorary degrees from the University of San Diego and Loyola University.

Honoring a Fallen Hero
Sgt. Michael A. Marzano, USMC

May 18, 1976 — May 7, 2005
By Doc Cahill Delta Co 1/26

November 1, 2008 was a beautiful autumn day, as my wife and I drove into the Shenango Valley of Western Pennsylvania. We headed towards the small city of Hermitage, over the rolling hills and scenic countryside to attend the dedication of Mercer County VA Outpatient Clinic. The sun was shining and the temperature in the mid 60's. I thought to myself, what a gorgeous day to be honoring one of our fallen Heroes from the Iraqi War. The honor was to name the clinic after Sgt. Michael A. Marzano. Sgt. Marzano was killed in action by a vehicle borne improvised explosive device, while conducting combat operations in Haditha, Iraq on May 7, 2005. According to central command the combat operation was to retake a civilian hospital, held by insurgents.

We met up with Al Marzano at Denny's Restaurant for a breakfast at 9:00 am. Al is the father of Michael Marzano and served with Delta Company, 1st Battalion 26th Marines in Vietnam. In attendance were Al's Delta Co. Brothers and sisters; Doc Cahill and wife Joyce, Bill Purdy and wife Kim, and Chuck Tomer and wife Gloria; along with Al's niece, 2nd Class Petty Officer Denise Darling.

After an enjoyable breakfast, we headed for the VA clinic in Hermitage where the ceremony was to begin at 11:00 am. We arrived a bit early, but you couldn't tell by the crowd of people grouped together planning to attend the ceremony. It was

humbling to see the many young and old wearing T-shirts, buttons and lapel pins with Michael Marzano's picture on the front, some saying "My hero and cousin, My hero and nephew, My hero and friend". Also in the crowd were many family, friends, towns' people, clinic personnel, members of military organizations, and Congressmen Phil English and Jason Altmire to celebrate this young Hero.

The Patriot Guard Riders were arriving on their motorcycles from which they dismounted and began to line the perimeter, holding American Flags near the main street passing the clinic. It was a pretty awesome sight for me…I was feeling so proud to be in attendance with the crowd of over 200-300 people. Before long, the Ceremony of Dedication to Michael Marzano began with a prayer and the playing of the National Anthem. I noticed quite easily that Patriotism was evident with most joining in and singing the National Anthem, how exhilarating. Words were spoken about Michael by the Master of Ceremony and the Congressman in attendance. Flowers were bestowed to Michael's father, Al Marzano and mother, Margy Bons; as tears streamed down their faces during this bitter-sweet moment. Most in the crowd were wiping tears and grabbing for their handkerchiefs and tissues; a very moving moment, indeed. After some words by the two Congressmen, a beautiful gold framed portrait of Michael was unveiled; to be hung in the clinic for all to see as they enter the clinic reception room. A Benediction was said followed by Taps, bringing all to tears. It was a very well organized Dedication fitting of one of this country's fallen warriors, Michael A. Marzano. A tour of the state of the art clinic soon followed.

After the Ceremony and tour of the Michael A. Marzano VA Outpatient Clinic, a small group of family and friends, along with Al Marzano, went to the local VFW. We then proceeded to the cemetery in Greenville, beautifully set on a rural low incline; to pay our respects at the grave site of this young Marine hero. I was amazed, as were others, to see such a gorgeous site. It was a black granite bench with Michael's picture engraved, also engraved were a pair of boxing gloves along with Michael's name, date of birth, date of death and "Sgt. US Marine Corps, KIA Operation Iraqi Freedom, Our Son, Our Friend, Our Hero". There is also a Marine NCO sword etched between Michael and Al's names. A fitting site for this brave young Marine, the first casualty from Mercer County. From there, we traveled to a local restaurant for an honorary dinner with many of Michael's family and friends. It was a great closing to a memorable day. **(See Back Cover For Photos)**

I learned a lot about this young American Hero by talking with family and friends. I asked Al: "Did your son always want to be a Marine." With a smile, that many of his comrades know, he answered; "Not always, I think he was about two when he decided." Al also commented; "I miss him every day and I am sure he was a much better Marine than I was." I also learned Michael would dress in his Dad's uniform when he was a youngster, pretending to be a Marine as his Dad was. From many relatives and friends I learned Michael was well liked in high school, he was described as polite, fun to be with and a great high school athlete in football, wrestling and boxing. Michael was a very good boxer winning several Golden Gloves tournaments in Youngstown and Cleveland, Ohio and Erie, Pa., including the Ohio Regional Championship Title. Michael had tried to join the Marine Corp after high school, but was not accepted due to a torn Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) of his knee, from his participation in high school sports. Michael was determined to be a Marine, working tirelessly for 4 years to rehab the knee, which included replacement of the torn ligament. In 1999 he tried again to join and passed the physical to be on his way to becoming a United States Marine. His dream had come through. Michael served his four years and was discharged from active duty. After his discharge he attended college in Arizona. He then joined the Marine Reserves, and volunteered for duty in Iraq. Michael is the true meaning of Hero, and his love for his country is evident by the life he lived.

I am so grateful to feel a part of the Marzano family and to call Michael's Dad, a Delta Brother for life. Please join me in a prayer for Michael and his family and give thanks to Michael and brave young men like him who are willing to give up life defending America. May God bless them all and Godspeed to the Marzano family and friends.
Submitted with great respect and humility,
Doc Cahill

Memorializing a Fallen Hero:

VA clinic renamed for
Sgt. Michael A. Marzano USMC
Son Of Al Marzano
By Joe Pinchot
Herald Staff Writer

To Margy E. Bons, it seemed that her son, Michael A. Marzano, had wanted to be in the military since he was a baby.

His father, Albert B. Marzano, was a Marine, and young Michael, who could barely walk, would put on his dad's uniform and trip over the too-large clothes, she said."He always talked about being a Marine," Ms. Bons said. To know that their son



lived out his dream was only partially comforting for Ms. Bons of Desert Hills, Ariz., and Albert Marzano of Greenville, who attended Saturday's dedication of the renaming of the Mercer County Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic in Hermitage in honor of their son, a Marine sergeant.

"I would rather have him here than be here for this," Albert Marzano said. But, both parents said they were honored that their son was being memorialized for his service.

"It helps to keep talking about him," Ms. Bons said. "It keeps his legacy alive." "I know he would be proud of this," Albert Marzano said.

Marzano, 28, a Greenville native and 1995 graduate of Sharon High School, was killed in a suicide bomber attack May 7, 2005, in Haditha, Iraq.

Marzano was the first soldier from Mercer County to die in the war on terror."I have read the report of his commanding officer," said U.S. Rep. Phil English, Erie, R-3rd District, who introduced the renaming bill in the House. "His heroism saved the lives of a number of people in his company."

The renaming was a lengthy process bogged down in congressional politics, but English and Jason Altmire, Wexford, D-4th District, said the unanimous support of Mercer County veterans advocates led to the passage.

"Thank you for keeping the faith and helping us to make this dream a reality," English said.

English presented Marzano's parents copies of the renaming legislation and pens that President Bush used to sign it.

We're here because Michael earned the right to have his name on this building," Altmire said. Two Marines escorted Marzano's parents to a place below the American, military, state and prisoner of war flags, where his portrait was unveiled, and then taken inside the clinic to be hung.

"We are gathered here to honor a young man who honored us with his life and his service," said Gary G. Solander, Mercer County director of veterans affairs. "Michael Marzano gave his life for his country in the service of freedom, which is the very highest payment any human being can make."

The event was attended by 200 to 300 people, including members of Veterans of Foreign Wars posts from all over Mercer County, members of the Yellow Ribbon Families support group, and local, county, state and federal elected officials.

Albert Marzano, a Vietnam War veteran who gets medical care at the clinic, said Vietnam War-era friends and acquaintances came from as far away as Texas for the dedication.

Speaking of the VFW attendees, he said: "I expected maybe the local one. I didn't expect all of them. That was very nice."

OBIT

Forrest W. Leasure USMC
Brother of Delbert Leasure USMC KIA at Khe Sanh, Hill 881S

Forrest W. Leasure, age 71, passed away Saturday. November 1, 2008 at his residence with his family at his side. He was born on December 15, 1936 in Columbus, OH, the son of Alfred and Ida Mae (Froelich) Leasure. Forrest lived in Georgetown for the past 15 years, coming from Lansing, MI. He was the Division Manager for the Coca Cola Bottling Company serving the Columbus, Lansing, and Jackson areas for 35 years. He truly loved his family, drag racing, street rods, salt-water fishing, and



traveling with his wife, Linda. He served in the United States Marine Corps during the Korean War and was honorably discharged on January 25, 1957. On June 14, 1975 he married Linda M DeYarmond in Brooklyn, MI whom she survives him. Also surviving are three daughters, Kim (David) Lambert of Georgetown, SC., Karen (Russell) Bratcher of Georgetown, SC., and Jeri Sue Leasure of San Diego; one brother, Norbert (Sandra) Leasure and one sister, Karen Arms, all of Ohio; three grandchildren, Amy Lambert, Russell Bratcher, and Olivia



(Michael) Atkinson. He was preceded in death by his parents, one brother, Delbert Leasure, and two sisters, Lillian Winger and JoAnn Leasure.

OBIT

Former Marine Corporal William A. Roble, USMC, 44-years-old, of Costa Mesa, California, an associate member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, died while he was on vacation in Peru, when he apparently suffered a brain aneurysm while hiking. Bill is the brother of Lance Corporal Joseph E. Roble, USMC; a member of Echo Company on Hill 861-A during the 1968 Tet Offensive who was KIA at LZ Margo on September 16, 1968. Many Khe Sanh veterans knew Bill through his attendance at several reunions as well as the book he wrote about his brother, "Just One", an attempt to learn of the brother he barely knew since he was only 3 1/2 years old when Joe left for Vietnam in the Fall of 1967.

Bill was the one who arranged the award ceremony for his brother at Arlington National Cemetery dur-

ing the 1998 reunion when the Bronze Star Medal with Combat Distinguishing "V" Device was awarded to Joe for his heroism the day before he died.



Bill is still in Peru, services are pending. The family plans to hold services and inter him with his father and brother in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, approximately fifty (50) miles east of Pittsburgh, after arrangements can be made to return him to the United States.

I always had a special feeling for Bill; because Joe was so good to me in 1967 and 1968, taking a



"boot" under his wing as he did, and since I have a brother Bill's age; so I always thought of how it would have affected my brother had I not returned from Vietnam.

I spoke with Mrs. Roble, "Mickey Mom", earlier today and she is doing as well as can be expected. My heart goes out to the Roble Family. Rest in Peace Marine. Semper Fidelis!!!

Posted on December 18, 2008 at 01:05:11 PM by-Larry McCartney

Thanks to the unselfish advice and assistance of several members of our Khe Sanh brotherhood, associate member William A. Roble, 44-years old, younger brother of the late Lance Corporal Joseph E. Roble, USMC, Echo Company on Hill 861-A during the 1968 Tet Offensive, KIA at LZ Margo on September 16, 1968, is finally coming home.

Remembrances be sent to Mrs. Anna M. Roble at 1111 Jefferson Street, Apartment 303, Latrobe, Pennsylvania 15650-1912. A memorial to the entire Roble family—father, sons and daughter—which so proudly served our country during World War II, Vietnam, the Cold War and the War on Terror between the 1940s and the 2000s is planned.

For further information, please contact Larry McCartney @ Lawrence_E@McCartney.net or (419) 340-6155.
Rest in Peace my friend. SEMPER FIDELIS!!!

OUR FALLEN KHE SANH BROTHERS ARE FINALLY COMING HOME

Missing since 6 June 1968 H&S 1/4

Marines Missing From Vietnam War Are Identified

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced that the remains of four U.S. servicemen, missing from the Vietnam War, have been identified and will be returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

They are Lance Cpl. Kurt E. La Plant, of Lenexa, Kan., and Lance Cpl. Luis F. Palacios, of Los Angeles, Calif. Remains that could not be individually identified are included in a group. Among the group remains are Lance Cpl. Ralph L. Harper, of Indian-

apolis, Ind., and Pfc. Jose R. Sanchez, of Brooklyn, N.Y. All men were U.S. Marine Corps. Palacios will be buried Friday in Bellflower, Calif., and the other Marines will be buried as a group in the spring in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

On June 6, 1968, these men were aboard a CH-46A Sea Knight helicopter that was attempting an emergency extraction of elements of the 1st Battalion, 4th Regiment, 3rd Marine Division then engaged against hostile forces in the mountains southwest of Khe Sanh, Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam. The helicopter was struck by enemy ground fire and crashed, killing 12 of the 23 crewmen and passengers on board. All but four of the men who died were subsequently recovered and identified.

Between 1993 and 2005, joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), investigated the incident in Quang Tri Province, interviewed witnesses and surveyed the crash site three times. The team found a U.S. military boot fragment and wreckage consistent with that of a CH-46 helicopter.

In 2006, a team began excavating the site and recovered human remains and non-biological material evidence including La Plant's identification tag. While at the site, a Vietnamese citizen turned over to the team human remains the he claimed to have found amid the wreckage. In 2007, another team completed the excavation and recovered additional human remains, life support material and aircraft wreckage.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA and dental comparisons in the identification of the remains.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/ or call (703) 699-1420.

WHO WERE YOU WITH

By William R. Miller

A few years ago I was strolling with my wife through a fall festival in a small Kansas town. I was wearing a red ball cap with an eagle, globe, and anchor logo on the front. I noticed another man with a similar hat as he passed us in the crowd. He stopped, turned to me, and said, "Who were you with?"

"1st Marine Aircraft Wing, MASS Duce [Marine Air Support Squadron 2], Dong Ha on the DMZ '68–'69. You?" I answered without thinking.

"2/5 , Hue City, Tet '68, Semper fi," he said and walked on.

"Who was that?" my wife asked.

"Just another Marine," I said. Just another Marine, what an understatement I thought. At other times that day, I saw a cruise jacket, a sweatshirt, and two more ball caps all representing the Marine Corps. I saw the emblems of no other Service. Since then I have become more aware, and I have noted that I see Marine Corps bumper stickers and rear window decals, not Army.

I see Marine Corps flags outside homes, not Air Force. And I see Marine caps and jackets, seldom Navy. I started counting, and I actually see about 20 Marine symbols to each display of the other Armed Forces. Yet, the Marine Corps is still the smallest of the Services. Could it be that "once a Marine, always a Marine" is true? Could it be that there is a greater pride in having been one of the few?

For the last 5 years I, too, have asked the question, "Who were you with?" I have always gotten an answer; no one has ever asked, "What do you mean?" Marines understand the question. A few times the ball cap has represented a son or daughter. But even their parents know the units with whom their children are serving. The pride of their being with the Marines is also in the parents.

This year, at the same festival, I met four Marines. One young man said he spent the Marine Corps birthday, 10 November 2004, in Fallujah with 1/3; the second had helped the 2d Marine Division take Kuwait City in 1991; and the third served with me

in Vietnam, only farther south at Chu Lai in 1970. But the one that I remember the most was the man in a worn, faded cruise jacket, walking slowly with a cane, and being passed by the crowd.

I walked to his side, slowed to his pace, and asked, "Who were you with?" He stopped, turned, stood up straight, and looked me in the eye. "5th Marine Division, Iwo Jima, 1945," he said. A chill went through me and I knew I was in the presence of a history maker. "Thank you," I said. He smiled and said, "You?" As we talked I told him that I had been an air control officer in Vietnam and that my son had just completed three tours in Iraq with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 2. Before I knew it, he was thanking me. He continued to tell me how much harder it is today to tell who the enemy is and how much he admires our young Marines.

Today I teach biology at Baker University in Kansas, and I often tell my students that they have not yet had history happen to them. They do not remember Pearl Harbor or know what happened at the Chosin Reservoir or even where to find Con Thien on a map. At times I get to tell them about Marines whom I have met and the history they helped make. But still it is hard for them to understand what an injured Army captain I met on China Beach meant when he told me, "The most beautiful sight in the world is a Marine F–4 rolling in hot with snake and nape."

These events are not just part of history; they are history. Had their results been different, the world would be different. "Who were you with?" says more than "Where were you when . . . ?" or "What were you doing when . . . ?" It says participant not spectator. It says Marine.

So the next time you see an eagle, globe, and anchor on a hat or shirt pocket ask the simple question, "Who were you with?" Listen to the answer of a unit, a place, and a time and think about that moment in history. But more than that, listen to the pride saying, "I am a Marine."

Dr. Miller served with the 1st MAW, Marine Air Control Group 18, MASS–2 in Vietnam from 1968–69. He is currently working in the Department of Biology, Baker University, Baldwin City, KS

RARE REUNION

The Daily Progress

Matthew Rosenberg In the pilot's seat of his Huey for the first time in 40 years, Bob Ford recalls memories good and bad.

By David Maurer

Published: November 8, 2008

For just a moment Bob Ford paused in mid stride, stock-still, as if he had felt a trip-wire touch the lace of his jungle boot. Not 40 feet away was the UH-1 Iroquois "Huey" helicopter he had flown on hundreds of combat missions during the Vietnam War. The very ship that had once been so full of wounded Marines that their blood had run under his seat, into the cockpit and coagulated in a rust-colored smear beneath his feet.

The same magnificent machine that had behaved so admirably while being torn and slammed by shockwave concussions from mortar rounds exploding just yards away. The exact chopper he had affectionately called the "Bell Hotel," in reference to the company that manufactured it. Ford would later say seeing his old ship after 40 years was, "Just like seeing home." But in the first radiant flush of reunion the man from Okeene, Ok., expressed the inexpressible with a singular, "I'll be doggone."

On a recent Friday morning, in the silence of a Greene County warehouse, a helicopter pilot who became a miller, and a flying machine that became much more than the sum of its parts, reunited. "It's not even a machine," Ford said as he stood back to admire it. "It was really something you strapped onto your body. "Every part of that machine was as close to you as anything you've ever been around in your life. I can still remember the smell of the fuel when you hit those igniters.

"That machine was so wonderful to me, it really was. I loved everything about it. I loved the sound of the turbine when we'd start it. Everything about that aircraft just encompassed my whole being."

Owen R. "Dick" Thompson was also a Huey pilot in Vietnam. He made the trip from his Gordonsville home to witness the get-together. "I think this is a

first," Thompson said. "There's a number of organizations that are Vietnam related and people get aircraft, pull them out of bone yards and fly them. "But to get into the aircraft with the same tail number as the one you flew in combat — the odds of that are astronomical. At one time there were 6,000 Hueys flying during that era. "This one was on the way to the bone yard when Craig found it. To be able to pull it out, and then find the actual pilot who flew it."

Craig LaMountain saved the Huey in 1996 from the jaws of a junkyard crusher. The government gave it to him with the understanding that he would use it as a historical teaching aid. The Huey is now the centerpiece of a museum exhibit that LaMountain has created on his property to honor Vietnam veterans. School children and veterans alike have seen the displays of artifacts and machines from the Vietnam War, but Ford's recent visit was unprecedented.

"Just to see Bob's reactions when he walked in and saw the helicopter," said LaMountain who also served in Vietnam with the Army. "He saved lives with this ship. He was one of the cowboys of Vietnam.

"His daughter said all he talked about this last week was about coming here and being reunited with his ship." A flying workhorse The Huey had been an all -purpose workhorse. It attacked enemy positions, evacuated wounded from battlefields, ferried troops into combat and delivered supplies. As Ford approached No. 754 for the first time in decades, he was drawn to two framed photographs in its cargo area. The 64-year-old former aircraft commander picked up the one that showed him standing at the front of the helicopter in 1968.

"That's me," Ford said quietly as he looked at the younger version of himself staring back at him. "Can you believe it? "We had flown several missions that day, and we had just come back from a really tough one. After I got out I walked to the front and said, 'You big son of a bitch, you got me back again.' "My copilot said, 'Hey boss, let me take your picture.' I'm wearing the same uniform today as I was wearing then."

Ford picked up the other photograph showing a gathering of eight young men, himself included. Inked across the front of their flight suits and T-shirts were their names and fate — five of the eight were either wounded or killed in action. "A radio kid had come in with a Polaroid camera and took a few pictures," Ford recalled. "I asked him if I could have this one, because I realized I might never be able to get all the guys together like that again.

"This guy here, Jerry McKinsey, was a great guy. During the siege of Khe Sanh he was trying to get some guys out when he was shot down and killed. His dad was the chief of police of Modesto, Calif." Ford had sent the photographs to LaMountain after reading a story about the helicopter that appeared in The Daily Progress in January. He felt they should be with the ship. Toine Wyckoff, a Charlottesville resident, read the story first and sent it to her daughter-in-law, Amy Ford Bradley, who lives in Alexandria.

When Ford's daughter saw the photograph of the helicopter and the numbers 282 on its side she knew it was from her father's unit. The Black Cats Ford had flown with the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company based in Da Nang, South Vietnam. He had become the commander of the unit's detachment stationed in Hue. The outfit's nickname was the Black Cats. Serial numbers, log books and maintenance records verified that this was the actual helicopter Ford flew in Vietnam.

"I grew up knowing the Black Cats," Bradley said as she watched her dad go over the machine with the careful scrutiny of a preflight check. "Even today when I hear a helicopter flying over I have to stop, look up and see it. "It's that connection to my dad. We went to see the Huey at the Smithsonian and that was a real moment. But I had never seen him in the cockpit of one before. "So to see him in the helicopter he flew in Vietnam is hard to put into words.

It really is. The thing that resonates with me is that he never questioned serving in that war. It's something I don't want my kids to ever forget. I'm so proud of him. " Without straining a button on his vintage uniform, Ford climbed into the left seat where the commander sits. He reached under it, pulled a lever and slid the seat all the way forward.

"People asked me why I'd always have my seat so far forward and down," Ford said as a smile spread across his face. "I'd tell them I made a smaller target that way."

Ford started through the start-up sequence, explaining what he was doing as his daughter looked on from the copilot's right seat. When he did something that made the main rotor blades waggle for the first time in how long, they beamed at each other.
"The first thing I would do after getting in a helicopter was pull this circuit breaker right here to make sure nobody accidentally turned on the windshield wipers," Ford said. "If you wanted to make a crew chief mad, turn your windshield wipers on and scratch the Plexiglas. "When the sun is out you can't see through it when it's scratched. But if bullets hit it, it wouldn't shatter. The bullets would just make clean holes."

Thompson smiled as he watched and listened to Ford talk to his daughter about what it was like to fly Hueys in war. He later reflected on it. "I loved watching Bob go through the start-up sequence," said Thompson who retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel. "It's good for his family, too. "You don't understand what people have gone through unless you hear someone talking about it. Then seeing him in the actual aircraft he flew, that really makes a big difference.

"That's why I brought my grandkids here. They're too young to know anything, but just to have them sit in the seat of a Huey and see the flight helmet I donated here with my name on the back of it. They'll remember a little of it."

CLOSE CALLS IN COMBAT

As Ford looked through the scratch-free windshield of No. 754, his memory served up one of the most vivid images he came away from that war with. It occurred while he was picking up a small Army Special Forces reconnaissance team off a mountainside in Laos. "We had two Cobra gunships supporting us," Ford said. "The team was completely surrounded, and the incoming gunfire was just God awful. "The last two guys got on and I lifted off, putting all the power to her. I was just starting to get some altitude when all of a sudden right in front of us a Cobra went diving straight down just shooting the sh— out of everything. "Honest to God he was so close I winced in my seat, because I though his blades were going to hit us. He couldn't have missed us by more than a few feet. It was absolutely unbelievable."

The Huey was remarkably resilient and capable of enduring tremendous punishment. At different times Ford had limped them back to friendly territory with holes through the main rotor blades, through the rear rotor blade, in the fuel tank and throughout the fuselage. "Unless you got hit in a real vital place, that thing would keep on flying," Ford said. "One critical place I got shot was right through the 42-degree gear box. "I was at about 500 feet, and the second I got hit the ship started shuddering and I lost about 300 feet almost instantly. It shook so violently I couldn't read the instruments. "I thought, 'This is it.' But then it smoothed out and we went on to complete the mission." Just a bump in the road for a Huey helicopter pilot in Vietnam. They, along with their crew chiefs and door gunners, were revered by the combat ground troops they supported. Untold numbers of Vietnam veterans are alive today because of their heroics.

CONFRONTING TET

Courage doesn't mean not being scared. Ford's year-long tour of duty was from July 1967 to July 1968. Some of his most dangerous missions were conducted during the Tet Offensive in support of Marines engaged in fierce fighting for the city of Hue.
"During the Tet Offensive I would have to go back into Hue time and again," Ford said. "I had made it through a dozen or so missions without a break, and I was sitting on my bunk when this private comes in. "He said, 'Lt. Ford, you have to go back, you're the only one who can do this mission.' I remember getting so scared that I could hardly walk to the aircraft.

"Honest to God, I thought I was either going to pass out, cry or throw up. The only way I got over it was I diverted from the aircraft and walked over to the platoon hooch. "I walked in and those guys looked at me like death had arrived. I said I wanted another aircraft commander to go with me on the mission. Are there any volunteers? Colburn? I liked Bart Colburn. "He said, 'I'll go with you boss.' We did the mission, and when we got back I thanked him

for going. He said, 'You did all the flying.' I said, 'I know, but I couldn't have done it without you.' "

Joe Sumner was Ford's crew chief on many missions flown in No. 754. The pilots flew the Hueys, but they belonged to the crew chiefs. "Many times after a day of flight operations we'd have to work into the night to get the ship ready for the next day," said Sumner, who lives in Georgia and works for Delta Airlines as a technical manager on the 737 aircraft. "We got real skinny over there. "Bob Ford was a very good pilot, and he took care of the guys who worked for him. He couldn't have been better. And that helicopter means a lot to me, too. "I spent a year taking care of that thing, and it took care of me. We picked up a lot of wounded soldiers in it and carried them to the hospital in Da Nang or out to the hospital ships in the gulf. It saved the lives of a lot of people."

Sumner plans to reunite with his old helicopter as well. He still has the bullet that nearly took them both out during a mission 10 miles south of Da Nang. "We started taking fire from some sampans on a river, and I could see the green tracers coming up at us," Sumner said. "One went right by the left side of my head. "I heard a big bang and felt something hot on my neck. I looked to my left and there was a big hole in the side wall where the bullet went through. After we got back to Da Nang I found the bullet up by the engine."

AFTER THE ARMY

Ford never bothered to count the day and night missions he flew in Vietnam, but said it was no less than 1,200. He didn't bother about medals either, and the Air Medal for valor he was awarded came as something of a fluke. "The only reason I got the medal was because a major wanted to fly on a mission into Hue, and he wrote me up," Ford said. "He actually went a little crazy on me. "I had to turn his radio off, because he kept screaming, 'We're getting hit, we're getting hit.' It was a terrible situation, but it was only about a fifth as tough as most of the missions were." After serving three years in the Army, Ford left with the rank of captain.

Within five days of being discharged he went to work for the flour milling business his grandfather, J. Lloyd Ford, started in 1906. The former helicopter pilot was as successful in civilian life as he was in the military. He and his older brother, Bill, continue to run the family business that grinds about 20,000 bushels of wheat a day. And like their grandfather before them, the brothers continue the family legacy of giving back to the community whenever they can. As much good as Ford has done as a civilian, he said he has never stood as proud or accomplished as much as when he was serving his country in Vietnam.

After spending a couple hours with his old warhorse, Ford said goodbye again. Outside in the sunlight he tried to sum up what he had just experienced. "I didn't think I would ever sit in a Huey ever, ever again," said the executive vice president of the Shawnee Milling Company. "I never even thought about it until I read the newspaper article. "Then it just consumed me to get back here, and look at this aircraft that meant so much to me. It represents a part of my life that was by far the most profound, and by far the most rewarding. "Being part of a team, a crew, that flew these day in and day out for more than a thousand combat missions. It means everything. It really does."

THE STORY OF THE UNKNOWN BOOTS

The Army boots appeared at the entrance to Stanislaus the week before Veterans Day, just as they have every November for the past 10 years.

They were placed on top of a monument, with a small American flag inside the leather, canvas and laces. The boots were there to both honor and remember, standing guard at one of Macon's busiest intersections (Vineville and Pio Nono) and fronting one of its loveliest neighborhoods.

By today, the boots will be gone. They will reappear around Memorial Day, then report for duty again next Veterans Day.

Tuesday was a day marked by 21-gun salutes and moving refrains of taps across the city. But, for every public recognition of those who serve and have served our country in the armed forces, there were hundreds of other silent, yet powerful, tributes like this one.

For years, nobody was sure who left the boots there every May and November. They would arrive on top of the granite marker under the cloak of darkness. Eventually, the neighbors figured out those shoes had Jack Cartwright's fingerprints all over them. He could never deny his feet would fit inside those size 8.5 C-width jungle boots.



He continued placing them there twice a year, along with the flag, maintaining the tradition even after he moved from the neighborhood. At first, the thought of Jack having anything to do with the large marker at the Stanislaus entrance was somewhat amusing. The marker had been moved there from the property near Bonita Place sometimes known as the Grotto, a rocky area once used as a retreat for the monks at St. Stanislaus College.

The Jesuit school and its 40-acre campus was once located where the Stanislaus neighborhood is now. A fire destroyed the college in 1921, and the property was sold to developers five years later.

The marker was inscribed with a sword and Bible. Jack first thought it looked like a tombstone. Of the 55 votes cast by the neighborhood association, he was the only one to vote against it. He called himself the lone "contrarian."

Maybe it does look like a tombstone, but Jack would later transform it into the tombstone of the unknown boots. Only a few folks have ever known the real story behind them, about how Jack has always written the names of some of his buddies who were killed in Vietnam and tucked them deep inside the soles. It didn't matter that he was the only person for almost 275 miles who even knew his five high school classmates from the coal mines and tobacco fields of Bristol, Va.

Jack spent some time in the Army after college at Washington and Lee, but missed serving in Vietnam because of circumstance and timing.

His family wasn't at all rich, but they had greater financial means than many others in the community. Jack was able to go to college.

Like others of his generation, "there is also some guilt there, too," he said. "Some of my friends were drafted. I received a student deferment."

Jimmy Farmer sat behind him in algebra class. Jack would lean to his left and let him copy the answers over his shoulder. Jimmy was a good athlete, a gap-toothed poster boy for the Marines. He was killed in March 1968. Jimmy's father went out to the plane when it returned home with his son's body and saluted the flag-draped casket.

The others were Lonnie Burchett, Charles Duty and Charles Buchanan, also Marines from Bristol. Jack remembers hearing about how Buchanan's sister began screaming when she looked out the window and saw the notification officers coming up the long, winding driveway with the sad news.

And there was Michael Charles. He was one of the first black students at Jack's high school. He was in Jack's home room, but he dropped out of school, and the Marines shipped him from southwest Virginia to Southeast Asia.

He was killed less than a year from the spring he would have graduated from high school, during some of the heaviest fighting of the war at the siege at Khe Sanh.

We never knew them. They never knew us. But the boots provide a powerful reminder of their sacrifice, a silent epitaph to make sure they will never be forgotten.

Reach Gris at 744-4275 or gris@macon.com

HUMILITY, HEARTBREAK MAKE VETERANS DAY

John Kass
Chicago Tribune
November 12, 2008

The old Marine stood alone outside at the Veterans Memorial in Orland Park on Veterans Day, waiting for the service to begin. He wore a brown jacket and a brown Marine cap, and there was a tiny medal on his jacket. As he waited, he squinted at the low black granite walls of the memorial, reading the names carved into it, the names of the living and the dead.

"I know some of these," said Timothy Cash, 75, who said he served in the 1st Marine Division. "Some are alive. Some aren't."I asked: Are you going to have your name carved into the wall? "No," said Cash. "Hell, no. No offense to those with their names up there. That's fine if they want their names on the wall. That's great. But I don't need my name on the wall to tell me where I was. I know where I was."

Where were you?
"Korea. God was it cold."

The November rains were beginning to slant and crowds gathered, veterans and their families. A little boy and his mother showed up, Jennifer Carroll and her toddler, Daniel, and she, too, read the wall, looking for a special name.

When she found it, she pointed it out to the boy and he crouched and touched the stone. The child, open-mouthed, was excited at the feel of it on his palm, the way toddlers are constantly astonished at tactile sensations, the touch of leaves or puffy wool, of sandpaper, silk. His tiny hands marveled at the touch of cold black granite at the memorial that is called the Place of Peace.

"Phillip J. Brodnick was my cousin," Jennifer Carroll said. "He was killed on Aug. 22, 2007, in Iraq. They said it was a helicopter malfunction. There were 13 other soldiers. They all died."

Cpl. Brodnick was a graduate of Lincoln-Way High School. He was a wrestler and a musician who was on his second enlistment when he was killed. He had joined the Army in 2000, hoping to use the service to get a better education. He'd served in Kosovo. He died in northern Iraq.

"He was a good boy," Carroll said. "I just wanted to take Daniel, so Daniel could see."

She fought back tears and took Daniel up into her arms and carried him inside the Orland Park Civic Center, for the Veterans Day memorial service that was being held indoors on account of the weather.

The service was simple and good. Like Veterans Day services across our nation Tuesday, this one was crowded with military service families, with old soldiers and young ones, and mothers, wives and children.

Folks put their hands over their hearts when they sang the national anthem. The young woman who sang it didn't involve herself in jazzy histrionics. There was no ostentatious look-at-me singing. Rather, she sang it clearly, enunciating each word, then letting each word fall, and most everyone joined in.

"I sang it that way because it's not about me," she told me later. (I'm sorry that I forgot to write down her name.) "It's about the words."

There were bagpipers and the elderly gentlemen of the American Legion and of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and their wives. There were also about 200 students from the nearby Orland (Park) Junior High School. The students live in a country of unlimited choices. It was nice that they were taught who paid for all the choices they can make.

There were prayers, and letters were read and a list of new names on the wall, including young Brodnick's. For a donation of $250, a veteran's name can be added to that wall.

And I wanted to talk to that old Marine I'd met outside, Timothy Cash. That's part of Veterans Day, too, the remembering and the listening.

"What do you want to hear? How cold it was in Korea?" Cash said. Sure, I said.

"Every winter morning, I have my coffee and look

outside and think about how gosh darn cold it was then," Cash said. "Fifty-two below zero, and we put snow around our sleeping bags and you'd sleep with your rifle so it wouldn't freeze. It was so cold that, well, there are a lot of jokes about how cold it was."

As he spoke, he pointed to a service medal pinned to his jacket. "They sent it to us. After 50 years, they sent us a medal that we were in Korea. Some Korean people run the cleaner where I take my shirts, and their girls, young girls, they thanked me. They said they appreciated what we did there. I guess that was OK. It was OK to hear it from them."

I asked about his family, and he was quiet for a moment. Cash's son, Timothy, died last year, at age 40. Cash's two daughters are also dead; Pamela in a car accident at 23 in 1978, and Tracy, a nurse, of hypoglycemic shock in 1985. His wife, Carole, died in 2006.

"She was the best. So she's gone, and they're all gone. And I'm by myself now, and it sucks," Cash said.

He wasn't whining. I asked and he told me. He was merely stating facts, and the facts were terrible.

"So I don't need my name up there on the wall," the old Marine said. "Who'd read it anyway? There's nobody to stand there and touch my name. All of mine are gone. What I've got left is this great country of ours. That's what I've got now."
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AGAINST THE ODDS

By David Lord

My story started a few days ago, I received a simple email with the heading "41 years ago", it was something I nearly didn't open, thinking it some past event or old news item from a stranger. The contact was made by the wife of the most important combat Marine I had ever known, a Marine who showed courage under fire, in a war that had no glory.

The Marine Corps gave a twenty day leave to enlisted men to say our goodbyes to friends and families in 1968, it was then that "the culture of Peace and Love" being made up our peers, made sure we "the enlisted" were held apart, ostracized for merely wearing our military uniform in public. We learned about the protesters on this leave, they marched against the war as we headed over to S.E. Asia. If you thought the suspensions were one sided by the protesters it wasn't, because in transit aboard chartered aircraft, wearing our combat gear, (except for weapons) we were watched by armed Military Police, preventing any Marine from leaving the terminal at Anchorage, Alaska. The civil unrest grew and was boiling over after the assassination of Dr. King, we were forgotten by America during the civil riots at home, despised by some. In this war we Marines were alone, Americans had not yet separated us from the Politicians that ordered us there, support the troops was yet to come.

Uncommon valor amongst the Marines of Charlie Company,1st Battalion, 26th Marines of the 5th Division went unnoticed as we struggled during the Siege. The Fifth Marines had fought at Iwo Jima in the Pacific, now twenty five years later, the 5th Marines manned the combat base at " Khe Sanh". Under this Siege we endured more incoming than all the munitions fired in all the battles of the Pacific, by all forces during W.W. II. The tonnage of bombs dropped, rockets impacting, mortar rounds incoming, projectiles fired was compressed into 77 days and nights of mind numbing hell. This Siege by forty thousand hard and battle tested North Vietnamese Troops were General Giap Divisions, they had us surrounded, in a ever tightening noose, we must hold or be overrun. Two young Marine's, who had entered boot camp together, trained side by side while preparing for the Viet Nam War, were going to live or die in each others company. Bill Meade and I are now 40 years past that longest battle of the war, I searched for him for decades, turns out we both made it home, were both wounded and disabled from gunshot and both surviving against the odds, this is our reunion as it happened.

Dear David,

A friend of ours (Bill Buford) sent us a link with your website. What a surprise! Do you remember my husband, Bill Meade? He was with you when you were shot in Viet Nam. I had met you before your trip to Viet Nam. Bill & I will celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary in Feb. We are in Oklahoma, have two children and two grandchildren. I am still working, but Bill is re-

tired! A couple of years ago he was awarded 100% disability from the VA.

Bill was shot a short time after you were. Occasionally he will tell "stories" about the two of you.

I wrote.
Bill, I have thought of you a million times, thank God your o.k., and please keep in contact, I have looked for you for so long, you were the only one to have the guts to come pull me out after getting hit. Jesus, how long I have worried if you were o.k.. I am so happy to hear from you. (I then gave details of my family.)
Semper Fi Brother
David

Dear David,

It's great to hear from you. I'm sorry that I haven't replied sooner. It's taken some time for me to adjust to this. I've lived in a world with nothing but memories for 40 years. Then all of a sudden I find the real deal, my friend. It's kind of like a new world. Now I've got to learn how to live in it. I'm glad that you've got your legs. Viet Nam has played through my head like movie reels, night and day. I've dreamed about it at night and wake up looking at a world obscured by barbed wire. I only say this, because after all this time I have forgotten more than I know. Sometimes, I don't know if things really happened, or if I dreamed them. So if I get something wrong, forgive me. It's not intentional; I'm sorry but I don't remember Simms. I know I should since he was right there with us. I guess it's one of those blanks. Do you remember Adolphus? He was the new guy that had only been there a couple of weeks. He was the one that told us he wasn't going to make it. Well, he didn't. He went in about 20 feet to the right of us and straddled a spider hole. Charlie shot him up through the groin and blew him away. Do you remember when we got caught on top of that mountain by an incoming barrage. We both dove for the same hole and barely made it. You had your M-16 by the sling but couldn't get it in the hole. It blew everything away except the end of the butt stock, swivel, and part of the sling. The new Marine with the Mohawk haircut was 5 or 10 feet in front of us and was killed. The last memory that I have of you was when I glanced over my shoulder as I went back in. You were lying hurt below the drop off, and had a 1911 A-1 45; pointed dead on at some Marine or corpsman (telling them to help you). I couldn't hear the



words but I got the message. That's the man! A Marine's Marine! Somehow, I knew you'd make it. David, you said you owed me. You got that all wrong. If you ever owed me anything, you paid it back a long time ago, and many times over. I'm proud to have served with you, and would do it again. To live or to die

Semper Fi,
Bill

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

Dan Pultz doesn't want this column to be about him, and it won't be, but more than 400 people are sitting down this morning for a Veterans Day breakfast to support Friends of Danang, and the story must begin somewhere.
We'll start with my neighbor.

Mr. Pultz graduated from Lehigh University in 1966, enlisted in the Marines, became an officer after training in Quantico, Va., and had a 13-month tour of combat duty in Vietnam that lasted from late 1966 into early 1968.

He married Holly on a rest-and-recreation pass to Hawaii in August 1967 and remembers leaving her in that hotel bed, "so beautiful,'' then being back in

the jungle of Vietnam less than 24 hours later, thinking, "This is crazy."

He was in some of the bloodier battles of the war. He fought in Khe Sanh not long before he returned home.

For Dan and many more Americans at home, the fierce fighting of 1968 wiped away any previous notions that the war might end soon. With the Tet Offensive, the enemy "didn't win any single battles but they clearly demonstrated they could wage a war for a long time," he said.

Mr. Pultz came home. He and Holly had children. He became a successful businessman. He and Holly became grandparents.

Saigon fell to the communists in April 1975, but some American veterans never forgot their mission to help the Vietnamese people. Lewis B. Puller Jr., a Marine officer who lost both legs and most use of his hands to a land mine in 1968, founded the Vietnam Children's Fund in 1993.

By then Mr. Puller had won the Pulitzer Prize for his autobiography "Fortunate Son," but he would take his own life in 1994, the same year the first school, in Quang Tri province, was dedicated in his name.

For Tony Accamando Jr., 64, an Army lieutenant in Vietnam and now a resident of Eighty Four, the mission is what it was 40 years ago: "helping the Vietnamese people." He and his old friend George D'Angelo, an Air Force captain and pilot in Vietnam, joined with others to form the Friends of Danang after they visited Vietnam together in 1997. They partnered with the Vietnam Children's Fund and, 10 years ago today, began a drive to raise $50,000 to build a school in Danang. There weren't three dozen people at that first Veterans Day breakfast but within a year they'd raised $50,000. They returned to Vietnam to dedicate the school in 1999. "That's all George and I wanted to do." But others on the trip -- Shirley Hruby, Deb Tulak and T.J. McGarvey among them -- were so moved they asked, "What can we do next?"

"That's why we formed Friends of Danang," Mr. Accamando said.

They've since built a medical clinic and helped more than 1,000 disabled children. Dan Pultz told me over coffee in his kitchen that he'd been hesitant to bring up his work with this group to his fellow Marines at the biennial reunions of his unit, India Company, 3rd Battalion, Ninth Marines, the "I-Three-Niners." Men who served in this unit in various wars and generations convene because "those risk-and-trust relationships formed intensely in battle" aren't everywhere to be found.

This past August, Dan Pultz brought Mr. Accamando to his reunion in Northern Virginia and they showed a video of the school-building trip to Vietnam. Mr. Pultz told his fellow Marines that the Vietnam Children's Fund in Washington and Friends of Danang would cover two-thirds of a new school's $150,000 cost, and wondered if his old unit might cover the last $50,000.

Lon Getlin, who lost his brother in Vietnam, stood up and said, "If my brother Mike was here, he would want us to do this." A former corpsman, Dr. Jerry Behrens, made a contribution in the names of five corpsmen who lost their lives.

"This is about kids" was the prevailing sentiment. Before he left, Mr. Pultz said, he knew "we're going to build a school."

If he returns to Vietnam next year when the school is dedicated, Mr. Pultz doesn't care to retrace his steps in battle, but he'd love to see Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, because he never got there the first time. He wants "to be a tourist."

The late Mr. Puller's dream was to build to educate enough Vietnamese children to account for the more than 58,000 Americans who lost their lives in Vietnam. There are now 43 schools, each with as many as 600 children, Mr. Pultz said, "so we're getting close."

The money has been raised through spaghetti dinners, jewelry and hoagie sales and breakfasts, but donations in the form of checks to the Vietnam Children's Fund may be sent to Friends of Danang, 4017 Washington Road, No. 152, McMurray, PA 15317-2520. Or visit friendsofdanang.org to see more about their work.

1st/Lt Daniel M Pultz Served at Khe Sanh With H&S 2/26

CHRISTMAS AT KHE SANH
November 11th, 2008
Marion Star
Sgt. James C. Oyster

During my time in Vietnam I kept a diary and would write in it at the end of each day. I would write down not only what happened that day but



also just how I felt physically, but more importantly how I felt emotionally. Sgt. James C Oyster, Christmas at Khe Sanh Combat Base 1967.

Vietnam was a tough place but even tougher on holidays, especially Christmas. I was wounded twice while in Vietnam and received a Bronze Star for just doing what all Marines do. Here is the page from the diary dated Dec. 25 and just how I felt that day. Since Vietnam I have done pretty well working in education for 36 years. I just retired this past July 31.

Dec. 25 It's a beautiful day here. We had our Christmas Day and it was really something special. First thing is the morning, Sharp, Moe and Lanny left. That was kind of sad, but they are on their way back to the world. They left on one of the choppers that brought up hot chow. The choppers that brought the chow had Santa Claus posters on the front of them. One had "Merry Christmas from the Ugly Angels" on its side. It was neat to see. It's not raining, the sun's shining and you can just see forever. It's just beautiful.

We've been outside all day just kind of messing around and we had a spotter plane fly over playing Christmas carols. Sitting there listening to that was kind of sad; kind of melancholy I think. You know that back home the family is opening the Christmas presents and I hope they are thinking of me. But it is just not the same. This is not the first Christmas I have spent away from home. This is the first Christmas that I was in a position I couldn't at least get on the phone and call them. But I'm sure they are thinking of me. I hope that they are praying for me, too.

There is nothing like being home for Christmas. When they flew overhead playing that Christmas song, "I'll be home for Christmas," it made us all feel pretty crummy. A couple of the guys said something about trying to shoot it down. I don't think anybody really would. It was nice to hear the Christmas songs anyway. If you have to spend a Christmas in Vietnam, I guess this was as good a place as any.

We got the word late this afternoon that we should be heading back down to the Khe Sanh tomorrow. We are going to hump back down. I am looking forward to it. I won't miss this hill very much. It does look better than when we came up and a little safer, too, but I'm glad to be leaving.

I feel really sad right now. I wish I could do something about it, but I know I can't. Hopefully, it will be gone tomorrow when I won't be thinking of Christmas so much. The only thing I can do about it now is lay down on this cot and quietly cry myself to sleep.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY REMEMBERS ITS VETERANS

Thousands Across San Diego County gather to Honor Veterans
San Diego Union Tribune

Thousands of people across the county gathered at events large and small to honor the legions of veter-

ans who have served their country. In downtown San Diego, huge crowds turned out for the annual Veterans Day parade on Pacific Highway. Police were unable to provide a crowd estimate, but parade co-chairman Joe Brunner pegged the number in excess of 35,000.

"We had probably as many as we've had at the last five parades put together," Brunner said. "It was just amazing."

In Fallbrook, Marines led a procession down Main Avenue in an old-fashioned celebration in a town closely tied to neighboring Camp Pendleton .



Retired Marine Lt. Col. Ken Pipes chokes up while serving as featured speaker at a Veterans Day parade in Fallbrook. Pipes, who retired from Camp Pendleton in 1982 after 25 years of service, was awarded (among others) the Silver Star, Bronze Star with Combat V, Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon and three presidential citations for combat.

Nov 17 06:00
From Colonel Ken Pipes

"Thank each of you for the honor of serving along side you all those years ago. Prayers and Remembrance to you and to those that did not make it back with us–and too their families. With some editing, I would like to send you my closing comments from the Veterans Day Event in Fallbrook, Ca. for it is YOU! The poem is by Australian Gunner George L. Skypeck, as follows:"

A MARINE

We were that which others did not want to be.
We went where others feared to go and did what others failed to do!
We asked NOTHING from those who gave NOTHING!
We reluctantly accepted the thought of eternal loneliness should we fail.
We have seen the face of terror,
Felt the sting of cold fear and enjoyed the sweet taste of love.
We have cried, felt pain and hoped–But, most of all,
We have lived times that others would say are best forgotten!
At least someday we will be able to say that we were Proud of what we were–
A MARINE

To each of you, I am Honored to say that I served with the finest Men and Marines–THOSE WHO WERE AT KHE SANH, that I have ever known! Thanks again and God Bless each of you and your families–now and through all eternity!

THE WAVERLY DEMOCRAT
November 10, 2008
By Stepanie Abal

MISSING DENVER PILOT HONORED FOR BRAVERY IN VIETNAM

It's Feb 27, 1968 in North Vietnam. It's the height of the Vietnam War and Navy Commander and Pilot Paul L. Milius of Denver and his U.S. Navy Observation Squad 67 (VO-67) crew of eight are gearing up for a highly classified mission to penetrate hostile enemy territory in Laos.

Their job, along with a 12 man plane crew, is to drop sensors over the Ho Chi Minh trail, a 400 mile stretch of the enemy's main supply line for war. The sensors would detect truck movements so the U.S. could attack and cut weapon supply into the country.

Their OP-2E plane is loaded and the flight crew's journey begins. Looking below at the dense canopy of the jungle, the crew knows the mission is dangerous, as two planes in the VO-67 had already

been shot down by the heavy artillery scattered along the trail and highly camouflaged by the heavy foliage.
At 5,000 feet, 18 year veteran pilot Milius and his crew are nearing their drop zone. In a matter of seconds, the plane takes a direct hit to its radar, killing crewman John Hartzheim immediately.

With his hydraulic and electrical systems severely damaged, Milius struggles to keep the plane in the sky. He knew flight crews were in jeopardy of being captured if their planes were shot down.



USS MILIUS DDG69

As the aircraft fills with smoke, Milius orders his crew to bail out on parachute. He remains at the helm of the controls until he believes all seven men successfully make it out. Then he jumps.

It Isn't long until each downed man's location device is activated and the Jolly Greens (rescue helicopters) are in sight. They rescue all the crewmembers, but are unable to find and reach Milius. A beeper is heard and believed to be Mi location device. A team is ordered to go on a rescue mission to extract him, but approval from the U.S. ambassador in Laos could not be obtained for 24 hours. The next day, the team goes in but are met by strong opposition and the aborted. Milius is never found.

A week after the incident, a Navy captain arrived at the Waverly doorstep of Christine Milius, Paul's mother, to deliver the heart-breaking news. With her husband passing away only two years prior, the news was an even harder blow.

Paul was declared missing in action (MIA), a status he shared with 1,836 Vietnam soldiers for nearly two decades until the government declared them killed in action (KIA).

For years, Christine and Paul's wife, Darlene, his two children and family in Bremer County held out hope for a miracle that would bring Paul home. Paul's nephew Lauren -Butch" Milius of Denver recalls that in 1970, Darlene and the kids were watching a newscast that included clips from the war.

It was a mess there in Vietnam," explains Butch. - And they wanted to show Americans how supposedly well they were treating captured soldiers ... guys were in shackles on their way to a Christmas program. They swore they saw Paul. Darlene immediately contacted Christine. They went to the news station in Waterloo, where they took a closer look at the clip.

I guess it really looked like him," says Butch. "But they were unable to tell for sure." Even if they had identified the man as Paul, Butch wonders what the family could have done.

He probably got captured, and the higher up the rank, the worse they were treated over there," says Butch. They probably figured he knew some important stuff ... but he would have never talked." Butch often thinks about the groups the federal government sends to Vietnam to search the area for missing people.

They will send a mountaineer, a doctor and what not," says Butch. they keep finding people. With new DNA testing, they just might find him some-

day.

Christine died in 1973, never fully realizing the vital impact her son had on the Vietnam conflict. She knew he risked his life to save seven of his comrades, but knew nothing of his mission's priorities or the significance of his job that day. The squadron's heroic acts in preventing weapons from reaching the enemy's hands saved countless soldiers.

That information was classified for nearly three decades. The story was told for the first time in 1989, in the book Wings of Gold Over the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

As an Army veteran, Butch spent many weekends with Paul while they both were stationed on the East Coast around 1966.

He used to take me around Philadelphia and show me the sights, says Butch. "We had a lot of fun." Butch describes his uncle Paul as a very serious man who was highly dedicated to his Navy career, and that It was his whole life, which is why he didn't get home that often. But that was part of why he was so loved and respected by the family.

With no one to bury and no headstone to visit, Butch and Paul's sister, Mildred Beisner, wanted to do something to commemorate the fallen hero at home. In 1989, Butch spent over six months corresponding with the government to get a memorial plaque he could place in Harlington Cemetery.

It took a lot of paperwork to get that plaque, because until then everything was classified and he was MIA for so long: The bronze plaque was placed between the grave markers of Paul's parents. In their resting place, Christine and Paul's father Christopher who lay alongside Paul, had watched from above, alongside Paul as his name became legendary over the years. Wings of Gold describes Paul as a hero. The government agreed when they awarded him the Purple Heart and the Navy Cross.

In 1995, a U.S. Guided Missile Destroyer was named the USS Milius in honor of Paul.

And most recently, in May, the members of the VO -67 Association were given the Presidential Unit Citation. Presented by the President in Washington D.C., this award is the highest unit distinction a military organization can receive. It is the personal Navy Cross award, and no aircraft squadron has ever received it until 2008.

Every couple of years, the members and extended family of the VO-67 have a reunion to honor its members and commemorate its lost comrades. At the last reunion in 2005, Butch brought his wife, daughter and granddaughter to meet with families of his uncle's squadron. While there, they visited the USS Milius, an experience Butch says he will never forget. In the mess hall where everyone meets, a table set for one sits with a candle in memory of Paul.

It was really touching to know that everyone, when they go to eat, understands who the ship is named after and that the table stands for him, Butch said. He was very impressed.

One particular part of the ship still chokes him up every time he pictures it. In the captain's quarters hangs a large photo of Paul. Underneath it, a motto reads in Latin, "Others before me."

WAR VETS KEPT IN THE DARK ON AGENT ORANGE

By Sam Cook

Submitted By Mike Fishbaugh

Audrea Anderson has been a spokeswoman much of her career in higher education, yet she hasn't brought a message more important than now. "My husband died as a result of Agent Orange," she says. "The government is not doing a good job of telling Vietnam War veterans about the dangers they will face in their later years."

Isaac Anderson, 61, a Fort Myers native who served as county and circuit judge for 26 years, died Dec. 15, 2007, after battling prostate cancer.

"It makes me so sad to know that Isaac did not know what caused his condition," says Anderson, 61, associate vice president for community relations and marketing at Florida Gulf Coast University. "It

was all a puzzle to him."

The judge served in the U.S. Air Force from June 8, 1965, to Sept. 10, 1968. He entered at 19 and served as a communications specialist in Vietnam. "Any ground personnel during those years when Agent Orange was sprayed were exposed from 1962 to 1971," Anderson says. "Our Vietnam veterans need to get screened and see if they are in danger.

"They are eligible for treatment and benefits."

The military developed herbicide Agent Orange to deny enemy cover by stripping trees and shrubbery in Southeast Asia. A research paper published in 1970 detailed the dangers of Agent Orange. Its use was discontinued in 1971, but it was too late for many of 1.5 million American soldiers exposed to cancers and diabetes.

Dr. Robert A. Wascher, director of surgical oncology at Newark (N.J.) Beth Israel Medical Center, writes the link between Agent Orange and prostate cancer is strong.

"Agent Orange contains chemical contaminants known as dioxins, which are organic chemicals that tend to persist in the environment, and within exposed humans and animals, for many years."

These dioxins, Wascher writes, are referred to as "persistent organic pollutants."

Anderson says the judge was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2000 at age 54. He underwent radioactive seed implantation, a treatment where tiny pellets containing radioactive material are implanted into the tumor-containing organ, according to Cancer News.

"Isaac was fine until March of 2007, when prostate cancer came back," she says. "The doctor said the malignant strand was a very different kind of cancer - highly aggressive and highly resistant to treatment. "It was different from the original cancer."

Researchers found veterans exposed to Agent Orange have a 48 percent increased risk of prostate cancer recurrence following surgery than their unexposed peers, according to a May 2007 report on the Medical News Today Web site.

Anderson says the judge received treatment at the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa and M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. Neither arrested the disease. His fight lasted nine months.

VA SOLVES PUZZLE

The puzzle continued until David Lockhart, veterans service counselor for the Department of Veterans Affairs in Fort Myers, saw that the judge had died. "I was a juror in Judge Anderson's court in the early 1990s," says Lockhart, 62."The obituary mentioned he was Vietnam veteran and died of prostate cancer." Lockhart put one and one together and got Agent Orange.

He contacted Judge James Adams, a friend of the Andersons, and asked him to contact the judge's widow. "I was totally shocked when I got the phone call," Anderson says. "I had no idea his disease could be service-related."

Lockhart, who served three tours of Vietnam and has Type 2 Diabetes, told Anderson she was probably eligible for death benefits from the government. Anderson filed a claim for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation in January. The VA granted it in October, retroactive to her husband's death. She also is eligible for Dependents' Educational Assistance, a health-benefits program, Armed Forces Commissary and Exchange privileges.

"As you can see, I learned about the government's responsibility by accident," she says. "If Isaac had not been a high-profile person of this community, chances are that I would not have learned about this at all." Anderson says the government's method of disseminating Agent Orange information is archaic and inadequate.

"I understand that the government sent notices to the American Legions and other veteran haunts," she says, "but many veterans do not frequent those places." A document Anderson received from the VA in St. Petersburg confirms her theory.

"We sent a copy of this letter to your representative, American Legion, whom you can also contact if you have any questions or need assistance," writes B.C. Gibbard, veterans service center manager.

"Vietnam veterans are not joiners like soldiers were from World War II and the Korean War," Lockhart says. "When we came back, participation was not as widespread in Veterans service clubs."

STOLEN MEMORIAL PLAQUE HONORING LANG VEI MIA SFC. JAMES L. MORELAND REPLACED.

December 16th, 2008
SFC. James Leslie Moreland
(A-101) Army Medic
MIA Lang Vei 07-Feb-68
By Bethania Palma
Markus Staff Writer

HACIENDA HEIGHTS - Army Medic James L. Moreland grew up in Anaheim and died fighting far from home.

While no one is sure why the Special Forces soldier's memorial plaque was placed in Hacienda Heights, the community's Improvement Association board knew what to do when it was stolen several months ago. With a grant from L.A. County Supervisor Don Knabe, the HHIA had the plaque replaced and remounted last week. "When a kid gives his life for this country you don't just forget," said Hacienda Heights Improvement Association president Mike Hughes.



Memorial plaque at the US Bank parking lot in Hacienda Heights for Spec 5 James Moreland who was killed in South Vietnam in February 1968

James Leslie Moreland was 20 when he joined the Army in 1965. He landed in Vietnam in October 1967 and was killed only a few months later in Khe Sanh after North Vietnamese troops overran his base at Lang Vei. HHIA officials said their attempts to find Moreland's family and friends have been fruitless so far, but they hope someone will come forward to tell the rest of the young man's story.

Hughes said all that is known is the plaque was installed in the southeast corner of Hacienda Boulevard and Halliburton Road in 1973, where a shopping center now stands. "We have no idea who made it or why he was of consequence to the people of Hacienda Heights," Hughes said. "Somebody went out of their way to put it in, we just don't know who."

In 2002, the plaque was taken from its stand and lost in the bushes during construction. It was found and replaced, but then stolen several months ago. Supervisor Knabe provided a $300 grant to replace the plaque and secure it. "He was a soldier and the community out there felt it was necessary not to forget his service and we agreed," said David Sommers, spokesman for Knabe. "The supervisor was happy to give the grant to replace the plaque."



From left, Troy Goodspeed and May Chu are board members for Hacienda Heights Association, Dickie Simmons, Deputy Field representative for Don Knabe Supervisor, Fourth District County of Los Angeles County, Hacienda Heights Association, Christopher Kakimi, board member Hacienda Heights Association, unveiled the plaque at the rededication ceremony for Spec. 5 James Moreland who was killed in South Vietnam in February 1968 at US Bank Parking lot in Hacienda Heights December 11, 2006.
(Walt Mancini SGVN9Staff)

Troy Goodspeed, a retired Marine and HHIA board member, put the plaque in so that it can't easily be

chiseled out again. "This time," he said, "I bolted it down with stainless steel bolts.
bethania.palma@sgvn.com
(626) 962-8811, Ext. 2236



AWARD OF THE SILVER STAR

Moreland, James L. RA-1 9857053 SPECIALIST FOUR E4 United States Army, Company C,
5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, APO 96240
Awarded: Silver Star
Date action: 6 February 1968 and 7 February 1968
Theater: Republic of Vietnam
Reason: For gallantry in action while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam: Specialist Four Moreland distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 6 and 7 February 1968 while serving with the Special Forces during an attack on the Lang Vei Camp. North Vietnamese Army tanks and infantrymen launched a ravaging attack on the compound on the night of 6 February and inflicted numerous casualties on the defenders. Braving withering cannon, mortar and machine gun fire, Specialist Moreland moved through a hail of bullets and shrapnel to treat the wounded. When the at-tackers overran the outer perimeter, he secured anti-tank weapons and grenades, joined a hastily formed tank killer team and moved to engage, the hostile armor. He advanced to point blank range and assisted in destroying one tank with highly effective fire. With bullets striking all around him, he then maneuvered to the command bunker to re-supply himself with ammunition.

He was seriously wounded when the position received a direct hit and was neutralized.

Specialist Four Moreland 's gallantry in action was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of the Act of Congress, approved 9 July 1918.

By Lisa Newlander

I am the neice of Jim Moreland known to his family as Les. I am very hurt that someone would even think of destroying a memorial of such a great man who died fighting for his country. I would like to thank the people who replaced his plaque and hope that others still remember all those lost and who have not returned home.

PROFESSIONAL VETERAN

By Craig W Tourte

I try not to been seen as a professional Vietnam Veteran looking for some type of special recognition. A few years ago I placed the older blue Khe Sanh window sticker on the rear of my truck along with a Marine Corps sticker. I did receive a few waves along the way and I appreciated those. That said, my old truck now carries not only the old blue sticker and the Marine Corps window sticker but additionally has the new red Khe Sanh "Home is where you dig it" sticker and the egg shaped Vietnam Ribbon window sticker (purchased from our PX).

To top that off, I have the new Khe Sanh license plate cover on the front of my truck which I find myself calling the "Vet-mobile." I have observed that many Vietnam Veterans I have known are now exhibiting various unit and branch of service identities on their vehicles.

For years we seldom mentioned Vietnam to anyone else, occasional one of us might say something under our breath but there was little discussion that I can recall about our experience in that conflict. Now, all seem to have various stickers and devices that show their contribution to that effort. I have found that since I have placed the "Home is where you dig it" sticker on my truck, I am often spoken to by middle aged men (and others), asking if I was there. We engage in small talk, none tell me they were at Khe Sanh (wonder why) and most show a type of unspoken admiration and respect.

To top that off, I find myself wearing a Khe Sanh shirt and various beads and other paraphernalia identifying myself as a Vietnam Veteran. Sometimes the unknowing will ask, often with a little crooked mocking smile and when they can be heard by others, what the beads are for and if I thought I was a hippy. No I respond, "it's a Vietnam thing." I enjoy watching their little smile disappear and their face flush with embarrassment as they just admitted to everyone, they did not serve.

As I take time to look at the facts here - compensation for various issues, identifying veteran paraphernalia on the "Vet-mobile," shirts, beads and trinkets worn. Personal associations with mostly other veterans, I must conclude that my identity now is that of a Professional Vietnam Veteran, which I think at this stage of my life, is not necessarily a bad thing.

Brother Craig,

I have to disagree with you as to your terminology of being a "Professional Vietnam Veteran"

I would most definitely refer to you as a very 'Proud and Honorable Veteran'; but alas never a professional veteran'.

Why? You may ask.
Allow me to expound Here on the right coast there are many, many fellows who adorn themselves with every pin, medal, patch, and thrift store camouflage garment that they can scrounge up. Quite often they will mix and match items from various branches of the service. Always the mismatched items would reflect something of the sort such as : Force Recon, Seal, Ranger, etc.

They are always the elite and never the ordinary and mundane. You would think, that regardless of the job that they performed while in the service, they would be proud of that service. These buffoons are most likely spotted in the street disheveled and even appearing homeless. At other times they can be spotted at the nearest VA or Military facility espousing useless information or regaling those inclined to listen with their heroic misadventures while on some as still classified operation.

The Professional Veteran is not quite unlike the Wannabe - save the fact that more then likely they did some actual military service. So... You are my Friend and a Great Marine & a True Nam Veteran. In essence a 'Warrior'.

I would never refer to you as a 'professional veteran.' I would guess that we just have different takes on the use of the words. Isn't that how it always is? Same word = two or more polar opposites in the meaning and understanding of same. LOL

One last thing. Mike I really disagree with your assessment. I was and have always been proud of my time in the Corps and my service in Nam. It has always been the Honorable thing.

Assholes like William Ayers are still now trying to justify their insignificant existence by disparaging those who served in that most difficult of wars and times.
Be Proud, Stay Proud, Now and Forever.
Semper Fidelis,
Neil Kenny

Craig,
What's with the beads? I never was issued any--is it a west coast deal?.
Terry Charbonneau



Terry, the beads are kind of a new thing. Ron Shouse made a bunch of them up and handed them out at one of the reunions. He was kind enough to send me a number of them. One can wear them as a necklace or bracelet.

The bead colors are yellow and red for the South Vietnamese flag, black and white for the MIA and red, white and blue. Some have all the colors mentioned and some are just yellow and red. Others are just red, white and blue and black and white for those who are not veterans but wish to show their support for Vietnam Veterans.

I am asked all of the time where I got them and if I could get some more. They're a real big hit with all the vets I have come into contact with. I've tried to get the same color beads in California but so far have been unsuccessful. Not sure I could string them together anyway.

Craig

Craig,

I think it was matter of bad timing for the Vietnam Vet. The 60's were a very unique time for this country, kinda like growing pains. Everything in the country was changing, music, race relations, idea's and culture. We came back from fighting a war in the jungle and rice paddy's to fighting a war in our own living room with family members and friends. Defending what we did as honorable and for the good of the country. We had everything figured out, it took this country 40 years plus to figure everything out. Lessons should have been learned. You don't send young people off to war and when they return from battle, the country turns their back on its warriors.

Bob Greenwood

EXCELLENT ARTICLE ON DOC TOPMILLER

By Bruce Geiger

Having been stunned by the news of his passing after the Reno reunion, I just want to thank Mike Archer for his eloquent tribute to Doc Topmiller in the latest issue of Red Clay. I am honored to have known Doc Topmiller and will always remember him as a courageous and compassionate gentleman.

By Brother Wes

I read the article, the Eulogy, and now I'm rereading Doc Topmiller's book and finding new meaning in his chapters.

It's known how I've been over the past years. Things are getting better in some areas of my life, and in other areas it's going to you-know-where. A friend of mine said last night in our AA meeting here in WV..."Rule number # 1: Don't sweat the small stuff. Rule # 2: The rest is small stuff...take care of number # 1..Your self !!

After reading the Doc Topmiller article, I wept like a baby from pent up emotions and it isn't easy to admit that here with all these macho men who read this message board. But I am who I am and I'm never going to be too proud to admit that I have feelings..some held back for way too long.

I would love to read what Doc Topmiller wrote about the V.A.

Good job, Red Clay Staff! Excellent issue!

I wanted to add to Wes's post by saying that Mike Archer wrote the article relating to Doc Topmiller in the issue of Red Clay. As usual, Mike wrote an eloquent tribute. I know he was very close to Doc and his loss has touched us all.

Craig Tourte

By Tom Vosnick G/2/26

I purchased a Red Clay book written by Doc Topmiller. He signed it for me. I put it away and several months ago I picked up and read it. The first part was about Khe Sanh, the blood and guts. Second part about the political aspects of the war and of Vietnam itself. Third portion about what we left behind. I could feel Doc Topmiller's pain of what we left. After reading the book you will feel like you have known Doc for years. We are lucky to have had a brother like him.

By Mike Archer

Gentlemen,

I appreciate you sharing your poignant recollections of Doc Topmiller. I'd like to pass along something I mentioned to Craig Tourte in an email. It was tough

for both Rick Noyes and myself being at the podium in Lexington that morning. Yet, we managed to fight through our tears and constricting throats long enough to get said what needed to be said. In truth though, there are no words with which to convey the acuteness of this loss in both the U.S. and Vietnam. I still receive messages each week from Vietnam, including professors, monks, nuns, social workers, guides, and sundry admirers of Doc.

In fact, just yesterday I received a holiday card from, Mr. Chieu Ho an octogenarian former-history -professor and author who spent 8 years in a communist "reeducation camp" after the war. While there, Ho learned he had lost 2 daughters who drowned in the South China Sea trying to escape the country. Ho, who Doc visited in the Saigon suburb of HCMC two years ago, was deeply saddened by Doc's passing and asked if he could use the eulogy to instruct "the young" about suicide. After the torment Ho, endured and in many respects Doc endured, as a result of their commitment to truth, you can imagine how humbling such a request was for me.

When Steve Orr and I traveled through Vietnam with Doc last December, many of these folks referred to him as "a buddha" -- which I thought at the time was just a grand expression of respect. However, the tenor of these messages — shock, disbelief and despair -- now make me think some of them believed, (perhaps in "their heart-of-hearts"), that he was truly a living buddha. If anyone ever deserved the somewhat mawkish title of "universally beloved", it was Topmiller. Boy, do I miss that guy.

A few years ago, I struck up an acquaintance with gifted novelist and editor Wayne Karlin. Wayne served in Vietnam as a Marine helicopter door gunner in 1967-68. One of his books was glowingly blurbed by Tim O'Brien, who I consider to be the finest writer produced by the Vietnam War.

I recently received a message from Wayne. Though he had never met Doc Topmiller, he felt a kinship with him through Doc's reputation as a passionate advocate for peace and his intellectual approach to resolving the lingering problems from the Vietnam War. Moreover, I'm sure my unconcealed admiration for Topmiller spilled over in every email I sent to Wayne.

Anyway, I'd like to share with you Wayne's eloquent (and heartrending) observations:

"I was shocked and saddened to get your email describing how Doc Topmiller died. Shocked, because I would have thought if there was ever a case of someone who seemed to have pulled through the memories in a positive way, he was that person, with the work he did, the way he dedicated himself to examining and extracting the significance of that terrible past and using what he learned to promote peace and healing. We always saw the corpsmen (and that was what he remained as a scholar so passionate to communicate the complex humanity of the Vietnamese: still a healer) as the strongest, the ones you could turn to, and there is some kind of sickening shift in the heart when you realize how each wound they touched, physical or not, became their own. I have always felt--and maintained to others--that the way to truly heal is not to forget, but to bring out the memories, articulate them, examine them, put them into your life in a constructive way. It's disheartening, but necessarily realistic, a needed but hated slap in the face, to realize that there are no pat formulas, not even that one, that the war still has that power to reach over the stretch of 40 years and snatch such a good person back. I didn't know him but I mourn him."

Again: My thanks to Wes, Craig, Tom, Bruce, Mike and all the rest of you who esteemed Doc Topmiller and invite you to visit
http://www.apatchofground.com/contributions.html for photos of our extraordinary December 2007 journey to Khe Sanh and Hill 881S.



VIETNAM VET WITH PTSD GOES TO WAR IN IRAQ:

'It made me worse' Story Highlights

By Wayne Drash CNN

Army veteran went to Iraq hoping to expunge "Vietnam demons"

Bob Konrardy spent four days on patrol in March 2007 as an embedded journalist "I couldn't sleep before, but now it's worse. I hate to see it get dark," he says.

DAVENPORT, Iowa (CNN) -- Bob Konrardy carried the guilt with him for more than 40 years. A platoon commander in Vietnam, Konrardy was wounded when shrapnel tore through his body. Four comrades carried him to safety in a poncho for more than an hour while the firefight raged.

Bob Konrardy says the fallen soldier monument outside his home honors soldiers killed in Iraq like Dave Behrle. 1 of 4 "These four guys went back to help the platoon because they were still fighting, and all four of those guys got killed," Konrardy says. "I felt guilty for 40-something years."

Two years ago, Konrardy got to thinking: He'd be a Santa of sorts for soldiers in Iraq as a way to help him deal with his conscience. He would collect autographed college and pro footballs, letters from local kids and other mementoes from home to help inspire the troops in Iraq. Then, he would have the goods delivered to his old platoon serving in Iraq, the First Cavalry Division.

He initially thought he'd have the material shipped. But his plan changed when the military signed off for Konrardy to deliver the goods in person and work as an embedded journalist for a local paper. The 65-year-old grandpa was about to head to one of the world's most dangerous places. "I could have been killed" "I wanted to maybe bury some Vietnam demons and just make a difference with this platoon and maybe make up for what I didn't do with my old platoon," he says. "I thought it was going to go one way. It went the other. It made me worse."

He adds, "I couldn't sleep before, but now it's worse. I hate to see it get dark. I get extremely nervous. I get uptight. I just don't like to see it get dark. And once it is dark, I'm on edge until it gets dawn." Konrardy's story is one of patriotism, heroism and torment -- a war veteran unable to escape what happened in 1965, when he was just 23.

"Here's a guy who is a true American hero in his own right. He was wounded in action in the Idrang Valley, and he comes into a combat zone 40 years later," says Major Chris Rogers, the operations officer of the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, when Konrardy embedded with them."In my opinion, he's a guy who has done it all -- bled for his own country - and he's more interested in telling the story of today's generation of young heroes than trumpeting his own horn."

Konrardy was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder shortly after he retired from John Deere in 2002, when he says his disorder really kicked in. He Once in his sleep, drove to a Wal-Mart about 20 minutes from his home at 3 a.m. He doesn't recall how he got there or how he got home. He only remembers a guy mopping the floor asking if he could be helped.

Other times, he'd patrol the neighborhood in the wee hours of the night with his loaded 9-mm pistol on his hip. His counselor with the Department of Veterans Affairs once asked what he would do if the police ever stopped him.

"I said, 'I'll just shoot out his windows and escape and evade back to the house. I think it'd be fun.' She didn't like that answer," he says with a laugh. "So I'm lucky because that's probably what I would've tried to do."

Konrardy checked himself into a VA facility in Des Moines, Iowa, to get help for his PTSD. He explains more when he recounts trying to escape from the place and police approached him. "I rolled down a hill and started running so they couldn't catch me. They said that was the wrong thing to do." We learn about PTSD and how to get help .

He says he was then put in an isolation ward for 11 days and nights, and eventually released. In August 2005. Fast forward to the fall of 2006. That's when Konrardy spoke to his grandson's eighth-grade class about his war experience. They thanked him for

serving his country. He started e-mailing members of the Army's First Cavalry Division as part of his grandson's "adopt a platoon" project. He got autographed footballs from the Green Bay Packers and Indianapolis Colts, as well as from the University of Tennessee and University of Georgia.

Even the players at local St. Ambrose University chipped in with a football of their own: the game ball from their championship game. "I just wanted to do something and make up for what I didn't do for my guys," Konrardy says. His family gathered for Christmas that year and he told of his plans to travel to Iraq. "Everybody cried," he says. "I said, 'Hey, this is a chance of a lifetime. I have to go.' "Quizzed about why a man who was held in a VA facility a couple years earlier was cleared to travel to Iraq, was first asked by CNN.

But he adds the original plan was for him to not go into combat. "On the way over, I didn't think I'd be going out."By March 2007, the old warrior's boots were on the ground in Baghdad. His plan was to hand out the 95 pounds of goods and kick back with the soldiers at base camp, collecting their stories and gathering video to give to their families back home. Konrardy handed the St. Ambrose football to a soldier named David W. Behrle, a 20-year-old from Tipton, Iowa. He scooped it up and cherished it.

Konrardy was officially in Iraq as an embedded journalist to file blog posts for "The Quad-City Times." He had not intended to go into combat, but that quickly changed. He says the commander said if he wanted to get to know the troops "you've got to be proactive."

Konrardy says he hopped into a Humvee and began patrolling the tight streets of Baghdad with the unit. He was assigned the back right seat for four days. His Humvee once struck a dud of a roadside bomb that blew the tire out underneath where he was sitting. Gunfire erupted. "Looking back, I'm thinking, 'Wow, I could have been killed,' " he says. He's still haunted by another time in Iraq -- not because of what happened, but because of what he didn't do. "I'm going to the bathroom and I hear somebody crying. My first instinct was to be a grandpa: I'm going to go in and I'm going to hold this young kid whoever it is and just say, 'I know where you're coming from. I've been there. Let's just talk,' but he didn't do that. Now, he wishes he would have.

A few weeks after he left Iraq, soldiers he befriended were riding in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle on patrol around Baghdad. He says the soldiers had recently saved a young Iraqi girl who had been shot in the head from insurgent crossfire. But on this day, May 19, 2007, a roadside bomb went off, killing all six soldiers inside. One of those killed was Spc. David Behrle, the soldier who loved the football hand-delivered by Konrardy.

"I took that hard. It still bothers me," Konrardy says.



Outside his Iowa home, a flagpole stands on Konrardy's lawn. A fallen soldier monument sits at its base with a pair of boots, rifle facing down and helmet with the name "Behrle" on it. Behrle's family was so moved by Konrardy they had it built for him. Kneeling next to the monument, Konrardy said, "It reminds me of Dave. But it also reminds me of the Behrle family and how close we've gotten with them and how great they've been in my grieving for Dave and trying to readjust.

Konrardy, who is still getting PTSD treatment, wishes the rest of the nation could better understand what it's like.

"I just want them to realize the life of a soldier could change the rest of your life."

NEW MARINE

By Tom Hennelly

Gentlemen,
I am proud to announce that, Brendan Hennelly, the grandson of the late Lt/Col. Jack Hennelly was awarded his Eagle, Globe, and Anchor last Thursday at Camp Pendleton, making him an official 3rd generation Marine. He Graduates from MCRD San Diego this Friday. We had the privilege of meeting

many of you at the reunion in Reno. Neil Kenny gave me one of the Khe Sanh coins to hold onto until Brendan had "earned" the right to carry it. I FedEx'd that coin to his Senior Drill Instructor last week. S/Sgt Harry Milbin was kind enough to present it to Brendan this past weekend. I cannot tell you guys how inspired and grateful both Brendan and I are for having the privilege to meet you all. Thank you and Semper Fi.

OLD ODD FEELINGS

By Joe Beebe

I was a member of a large group of wounded, healthy enough to move from the hospital on Guam. Our vacancies were quickly filled. The Vietnam War provided an endless supply of victims. We were strapped tightly to stretchers and stacked on a plane en-route for the continental United States.

Every two hours, during the sixteen-hour flight, a nurse would untie our restraints and roll us from back to stomach or vice versa. Some of the men took advantage of the rotation system by trying to get better acquainted with the female caretakers, but to no avail.

My mind wrestled with what I was leaving behind. The war held me tight. Maybe steeping foot on the home turf would sever my attachment to Vietnam.

I grappled with what to expect when landing in the U.S. After all, I was coming home from war and, according to my country, I had been defending her and protecting her citizens against aggression. It should be worth at least some flag waving and a hearty "welcome home." I could hear some of the men above the drone of the propellers, excitedly sharing thoughts, entertaining ideas about being carried off the plane to a chorus of cheers.

As the airplane descended and prepared for landing at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey, I grew anxious. However, nothing happened. I was carried off the plane to an empty airstrip, answered "here" when my name was called, and was immediately assigned a bed.

"Visitors must be out of the hospital and off the base by 9 PM," the nurse informed us. "There are telephones down the hall, if you boys want to make a call." The subtle atmosphere suggested we were top secret and no one was suppose to know we were here.

I hesitated before calling home, then gave it a ring. After a few carefully chosen words with my mom and my older brother, they decided to come and see me. My visitors arrived a little before nine. I hugged them loosely, then idly stood before them, not knowing what to say, swamped with uncomfortable feelings.

"How are you, Skeeter?" my mom asked calling me by my childhood nickname. I truly wanted to blurt everything out, however I was too removed. "Okay," I said restricting my answer and unknowingly covering my emotions with another layer of cement. I really wasn't "okay."

The Cardinals won the World Series," my brother informed, knowing my taste for baseball. Then he quickly fell back, resuming his unsure position. The three of us stared at one another. They wondered at me and I returned their amazement with a vacant stare. Neither of them asked what it was like to be in Vietnam. Maybe that was for the best. We all seemed to be experiencing a similar numbness.

After a short and disquieting period, the hospital dimmed and began to grow dark as the light switches were flicked off. We shared good-byes at a distance and they quietly left.

As I watched them walk away, my body ached to yell out and tell my story, but something held me back. For now, it would remain hidden.

Thanks for listening Joe

OLD ODD FEELINGS

By Gene Weresow

Nicely put Joe, it seems that many of us who came home during those times, wounded or not, came home anonymously. I remember wanting to tell my story to someone but no one was interested. Even the VFW wanted nothing to do with me. No one seemed to be truly interested in what a VN vet was all about back then. We made do and most , not all, got on with life and made further contributions to

this country. But the resentment remains just below the surface.

Old, odd feelings, we all get them, but I think most of us have learned how to cope. It seems that these days the VN vets are all hero's at last, but somehow to me at least, it's not enough, the public has no clue, but we band of warriors know who we are. Continue the good fight Joe and we'll get our just due in the end.
God Bless,

Gene W

THE CORPSMAN'S CHRISTMAS POEM

'"Twas the night before Christmas as I flew o'er the Marine Base, when I spied a young man who seemed out of place.

His eyes showed compassion, his hair a bit long, but his head was held high and his body was strong.

His air was confident, his uniform smart, but what impressed me most was the size of his heart.

For he embodied honor, one of this country's best, and the words U.S. NAVY showed large on his chest.
As I stood there in wonder and gazed into his eyes, the words that he spoke took me quite by surprise.

"What's wrong Santa, haven't you ever seen a sailor before?" I sensed something special and longed to know more.

"To be honest, this field thing wasn't part of my plan, but God didn't give me a boat or tin can."

The words he spoke next surprised me all the more, "But I'm as proud of my Navy as I am of the Corps!"

"Don't worry Santa, that I'm a sailor you see, for when a Marine goes down they will still call on me.

They'll forget I'm a sailor, they'll call in my stock. At the top of their lungs they'll yell ,"Get me the doc!"

"And I'll answer that call, anytime, anywhere. Though I know I'm a target I really don't care.

I'll face incoming fire as I race cross the land, and use my very own body to shield a downed man."

"Working long hours and into the night, my unit's battle is over, but I'm just starting to fight.

For the life of every Marine is sacred to me. I refuse to surrender them to death, and in that I'll find victory."

"And yet I'll take the time to comfort a dying man, to sit down by his side, to reach out and hold his hand.

For it takes as much courage to care as to fight. For just as the poem says, many don't "go gently into that night."

"Santa, it's not any one uniform that makes you a man, but rather it's those ideals for which you choose to stand.

I draw my line here, it's long and it's plain. For pain, hurt and suffering are the things I disdain."

I know very well that I may lose my life, so that a Marine may see an unmet child and young wife.
So Santa, it really doesn't matter if they don't like my hair. I'm a Navy Corpsman, their Doc, and I'll always be there."

"I follow the brave docs who have come long before, from Belleau Wood, Iwo, and Lebanon's shore.
As history proudly shows, they all gave their best, and for those who have died, surely they're blessed."

"At Inchon, the gulf and times during Tet, our brothers have fallen, but we carry on yet."

For we carry their honor and legacy still." As I held back my tears it took all of my will.

I had to leave him there for I had other plans, but I knew in my heart that the Corps is in good hands.

As I flew away I heard his laughter, it rang so loud and clear. Hey Santa, how 'bout a nice pair of boots for the 26 miler next year

THE PILOT FOR A NEW, JOINTLY DEVELOPED DOD-VA DISABILITY EVALUATION SYSTEM

By Sam Messer

Doesn't help the millions waiting over past 20 years or those that died waiting! It's a start.

Disability reforms bring higher ratings, faster pay http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=59357 By Tom Philpott, Special to Stars and Stripes
Pacific edition, Saturday, December 13, 2008

The pilot for a new, jointly-developed DOD-VA disability evaluation system (DES), set to expand from five to 22 military bases by May, does much of what proponents hoped it would.

It allows more injured or ill service members to win higher disability ratings, to see VA payments start faster and, through greater transparency in the process, to feel they have been treated more fairly by government.

But there have been enough kinks and challenges uncovered by the pilot to persuade designers in the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs not to expand so quickly that the program outpaces the additional staff that needs to be hired and trained, particularly at the largest military bases.

Sam Retherford, director of officer and enlisted personnel management in DOD, has overseen phase-in of this landmark disability reform, starting in November 2007 in the Washington D.C. area, including Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Bethesda Naval Medical Center. He said nearly 900 disabled service members have been through the improved DES. As many as 700 a month will process through the expanded pilot.

The centerpiece of the reformed DES, reflecting recommendations of last year's various wounded warrior studies, is the partnering of the two departments for diagnosing, rating and compensating disabled members.

The aim is to end the wasteful, time-consuming and confusing practice of DOD and VA both conducting their own disability evaluations, one before and one after discharge or retirement. Under the pilot, VA conducts the single, comprehensive physical examination while members are on active duty, and prepares a single disability evaluation used by each department.

The military service uses the findings to determine fitness for duty. Those members found unfit are separated or retired. But the service continues to base its decision and disability rating only on medical conditions that make the member unfit for duty. A rating for unfitting conditions of 20 percent or less qualifies for a lump sum severance payment. A rating of 30 percent or higher on those conditions qualifies a member for military disability retirement, which means a lifetime annuity, access to military health care and base stores and facilities.

The VA simultaneously awards an overall rating based on all service-related conditions to set its compensation payment. The member then can choose, before leaving service, between the DOD or VA outcomes. In a report to Congress on the pilot, DOD and VA officials last month said the "initial reviews...are favorable,"citing improved "outcomes" on level of ratings, timeliness and the transparency of the process.

With VA doctors using VA protocols to evaluate and rate disabilities, pre-discharge rating have risen 10 to 20 percent, Retherford said. VA doctors, he said, are trained to document conditions more thoroughly with an eye toward long-term effect. Military doctors, by contrast, focus their evaluations on diagnosis and treatment.

The pilot will expand to 17 bases outside the D.C. area over the next five months. They are: for Army, Fort Carson, Colo., Fort Drum, N.Y., Fort Stewart, Ga., Fort Richardson, Alaska, Fort Wainwright, Alaska, Brooke Army Medical Center, Texas, and Fort Polk, La; for Navy: Naval Medical Center (NMC) San Diego and Camp Pendleton, Calif., NMC Bremerton, Wash., NMC Jacksonville, Fla., and Camp Lejeune, N.C.; for Air Force: Vance Air Force Base, Okla., Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska., and Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

Retherford said these bases will provide more diverse data to better judge the effect of the new DES. The D.C. area processes a high number of severely wounded members leaving service from Walter Reed or Bethesda.

The pilot imposes a heavy document workload on facilities and on Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officers (PEBLOs) or case managers. But a consensus among all involved affirms "this is a good thing," Retherford said.

Randy Reese, national service director for Disabled American Veterans, both praised and criticized the DES pilot. To have VA conduct physicals and awarding ratings for DOD is "a marriage made in heaven," he said. "The results of the decisions are better. They are definitely more consistent," Reese said, and ratings awards before discharge have "definitely improved."

Also VA compensation begins immediately after discharge, eliminating a huge hassle and long waits for disabled veterans to receive first payments.

The pilot doesn't address a need that disabled members have for advocacy counseling, either by trained JAG officers or by veteran organization representatives, from the start of the DES, Reese said.

The PEBLO will provide information but they are not an advocate."

Army SFC James F. Babin of Arlington, Va., went through the pilot after recovering from surgery last February for a deteriorated leg injury first sustain in combat in 2003. Babin said he didn't get his ratings -- a combined 30 percent for leg and head injuries from VA or 20 percent from Army – until late October. Babin, 31, said he was surprised that it took eight months.

He was more disappointed that his PEBLO had left documents out of the packet evaluated by VA which likely resulted in a lower rating. The mistake was caught by a DAV advisor at Walter Reed, and the PEBLO was reprimanded. Babin didn't find her "very knowledgeable or very useful in this process," reinforcing Reese's worry of a counseling gap in the pilot DES.

The issue of lost compensation by administrative error was voided in Babin's case when the Army approved his request to stay on activity duty. A medic, he will retrain to a more sedentary specialty like intelligence analyst.

"DOC" COMES HOME AS A USMC CORPORAL IN 1968

By "DOC" Dave

Got back to Camp Hansen, OK in the late evening.....they gathered the Marines and frisked them and marched them off to get sleep somewhere so they could get haircuts and fall in for ranks for reorientation to the world. How those Okinawa Marines could yell at those that were 0311 field Grunts going home was beyond me. I yelled at them to stop harassing these heroes. They then proceeded to ban the "DOC"S from the area. I guess the Grunts would put up with any kind of "Mickey Mouse" to get travel orders back to the world. When we got back to the world they did not want us and we no longer fit in.

As an E-5, I said to the other "DOC"S, upon arrival, lets sneak of to the GEDUNK where we chowed down on Burger after Burger.....darn they were good.

Spent the next day trying to get rid of the $10 red MPC I found in my pocket...the FNG's thought I was messing with them. Finally a Sgt on his 2nd tour took the 10 spot in exchange for greenbacks.

AT THIS TIME I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE MARINES THAT DRAGGED ME OUT OF A DRINKING CLUB NEAR THE BASE....THEY TOLD ME THAT I JUST ASKED AN UGLY, TOOTHLESS GAL TO MARRY ME!

Anyways, we threw away our green dress Marine hard cover (wore the piss cutter home and did not have room anymore in our sea bags), bought 2 suits from the Chinese Tailor for shipment home that never fit because I was well fed at home. Dropped my Khaki's shirt off to the dry cleaner to have my new Marine colored Navy rank sewed on.

Refused to cut our hair....they started to cut us from flights to EL TORO and we shaved each others heads.

Got scheduled on an earlier flight and ran to the dry cleaner. She said so sorry....khaki shirt not cleaned yet...I reached over the counter and grabbed the first shirt I could reach....that us how this "DOC" came home as a USMC Corporal....REGRETS to the Marine Corporal who never did get his shirt. Xin Loi!

Four of us bribed a cabbie to get us out of El Toro and he whisked us off to LAX where we got a flight to Chicago. I saw my gal the next morning and we eloped. 40 years of her suffering with my PTSD. A real winner who gave the Marine Guards at the Naval Hospital Gate the finger every morning since she felt I deserved a full salute like the officers. After a year and a half of it...the Marines surrounded my car and threatened to detain her....she gave them the finger!

"DOC" Dave

COMING HOME
" Hansen Decontamination "

By Ron Main

In late July 68 at Camp Hansen on the way back to The World, they had a formation in the street and told us if we didn't change out of our filthy, stinking Nam utilities and boots they were going to have the base Okinawan fire crew hose us down. We ignored them, and wandered away. I remember the tall thin black marine standing in front of me. He didn't even have a utility jacket; only a torn white T shirt that was so yellow and orange you'd have never known it was once white. Another marine had comm wire for boot laces. My left knee was hanging out of my trousers, and I looked better than most of those standing around me. So they made us toss our old utilities and boots into a storage room in the barracks.

I'll never forget the thin suffocating cloud of putrid pale red dust coming out of that little room piled high with our no longer proper uniform of the day. They told us this was all part of something called, " Decontamination. "Felt like humiliation. Felt like what was waiting for some of us on the other end of that long flight home. Sure didn't feel like" victory.. " for any of us.

Maybe "Decontamination" was about getting us ready for the disappointment and confusion that awaited us back in The World; not the thing we'd hoped, and be searching for the rest of our lives, only finding it in ourselves, each other, thoughts of those we served with; those we love, love us, and call us friend; accepting that this "Marine thing" is a blood thing, a family thing, a brotherhood thing, and will always be the defining thing in our lives, because far too many "of us" didn't make that long ago return trip through the BS of Hansen, and our memories of them, will always remain uncontaminated, and connected to ours..

COMING HOME

By Chuck Gerrior
USAF Retired
Team 83-66, 1st Mob Comm Group

Was reading about guys heading home getting haircuts for getting ready to back to the World. I'm sure I and a lot others who got off at El Toro MCAS had a little different experience. I was sent to some barracks showered, and went to sick bay. I thought it was for a physical before going home, instead a Corpsman took my blood pressure. And sent me to end of line and picked up malaria pills. Went to Dispersing for pay and back to some HQ where we got our travel orders. Told us the bus would take us to town to further go on our way. Most of us just looked dumbfounded as we looked at each other on the bus to town. After arriving, everyone went their own way. I grabbed another bus to LA then a Shuttle to LAX. Flew to Boston in Khakis. They said they could not locate our Sea bags in Okinawa and if they were found they would send them to us. Still waiting ... Welcome Home

GOOD TIME IN DALLAS

Chuck Gerrior

Wednesday this week my wife wanted to go to Dallas to visit the family grave sites. Before leaving Lubbock, I wore my new white with red letters ball cap that says Khe Sanh Combat Vet. On the back I have stitched the letters USAF and my call sign "Charlie Tuna".

On Thursday evening my wife and I were walking through a mall full of shoppers when three young Marines in Greens came walking towards us. The Staff SGT very loudly said Semper Fi and I returned

it back. This caused a crowd of shoppers to stop and just look as we trade words for about a minute.

The Staff Sgt told the other two younger Marines what Khe Sanh was all about. They both stated they knew a little about Khe Sanh. The younger Marines still had a funny looks on their face when I told the three I was retired USAF, and the USAF had also went through the siege.

My wife commented as we walked away that the USMC takes history very seriously. When you wear any of the K/S Veterans gear, you will always get a second look.

BOOK REVIEW

WAR TORN

This is a wonderful book, exhilarating, poignant, tragic, heroic and above all full of courage. From the very first page I felt proud to follow in these women's footsteps." Christiane Amanpour, CNN War Correspondent'"[A] superb gathering of talent whose work presents an overlooked perspective on the war.... [A] path-breaking collection of essays." Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

"This fascinating book chronicles the experiences of nine women reporters who covered the Vietnam War from 1966 until 1975....All nine share vivid recollections of danger, loss, and anguish and relay how covering Vietnam changed their lives professionally and personally." Booklist.

http://www.wartorn.net/pages/author4.html

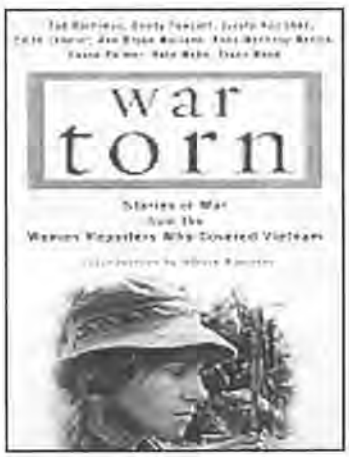

JURATE KAZICKAS (KHE SANH VETERAN)

In **"These Hills Called Khe Sanh,"** Jurate Kazickas writes about being a freelance reporter covering some of the most dangerous battles -- marching on long-range patrol in the hills controlled by the North Vietnamese, her disturbing visit to Con Thien ("Con Thien was my first encounter with war at its most obscene. What shook me to the core was the devastating sight of so many dead Marines who had been lying in the sun for three days – their bodies bloated, their faces black as if charred by fire."), taking action to help the wounded near Dak To and being wounded herself at Khe Sanh. "Even during the months of covering battles and witnessing the carnage of war, I had avoided tears. I had convinced myself that if I broke down, it would prove that women didn't belong in war. Now, however, I reached the limit of my emotions....The repressed sadness and weariness that had filled my soul for the last year in Vietnam suddenly surfaced in a painful flow of vivid memories."

Jurate Kazickas, a former newspaper reporter in New York and Washington, has co-authored several books on women's history, and is now a writer living in New York with her husband and three children.

These Hills Called Khe Sanh
By Jurate Kazickas

From their base at Khe Sanh, the [Marines from the two-hundred man Lima Company of the 3rd Battalion, 26th Regiment, based in South Vietnam's I Corps] were planning a secret foray to the Laotian border, where they hoped to engage the enemy and intercept a suspected North Vietnamese supply route. As a properly accredited journalist, I was entitled to cover any military mission in Vietnam. However, securing permission to join this long-range patrol had not been easy. While male correspondents sometimes went into the field unaccompanied, there was no way the Marines were going to let a woman move around on her own, as I had been used to doing with army units. The military brass insisted I have an official escort.

I tried to object, but eventually there was no choice. To my chagrin, the man assigned to watch over me,

Staff Sgt. Les Johnson, an overweight, out-of-shape desk clerk, looked woefully inept. He seemed nervous at the prospect of going out on patrol as we flew by helicopter from Dong Ha to a small landing zone hacked out in the wooded staging area by Captain [Franklin Delano] Bynum's men.

We woke early, and before the sun had risen far into the sky that morning, Captain Bynum had his patrol on the move. He set a hard pace, insisting we hike for hours without a break in the oppressive heat, which was reaching 110 scorching degrees. Several men complained of dehydration. But they pushed on, hacking their way with machetes through clumps of bamboo and ten-foot-high elephant grass. Sometimes the only way the lead men could get through was by hurling themselves forward and falling against the stalks of grass. The sharp edges slashed at our skin like a million paper cuts as we stumbled up the steep hills. Coming down the treacherous slopes, encumbered by packs weighing as much as one hundred pounds and filled with weaponry such as mortar rounds, grenades, and machine guns, the men slid and fell, shredding their fatigues on the sharp rocks. I got an eyeful of hairy bare bottoms that day.

My escort was beginning to fade. Panting for breath and barely capable of putting one foot in front of the other, Johnson was clearly suffering. Soaked with sweat, he lagged far behind and slumped in an exhausted heap every chance he got.

As we slogged on, I concentrated on staying focused and keeping up without complaining. But I could not stop worrying about my lagging escort. Then, late in the afternoon, after more grueling hours of scaling impossible ridges, Johnson pulled a muscle in his groin and collapsed. Writhing in pain, he said he could no longer walk. A burly Marine offered to carry him up the hill. Johnson looked miserable.

Clearly exasperated, Captain Bynum checked on the crippled sergeant. "We'll have to call a chopper to get him out of here," he said. Then he added that I too would have to leave the patrol.
"I was promised a five-day patrol," I argued.

Bynum, however, was insistent. "No escort, no reporter."

The last image I had of the men of Lima Company that evening was of several Marines turning their heads away from the dusty downdraft of the chopper.

Watching the darkening hills of Khe Sanh recede in the distance, I became so angry that I could hardly look at Johnson. I resented having to leave that patrol. I was sure that a firefight would erupt before the mission was finished. Intelligence reports had indicated that several battalions of NVA were massing in Laos to assault the area near the demilitarized zone.

Now I would miss the action that I might have photographed and reported with an exclusive byline that could have been flashed across the world. Instead, I was heading back to Da Nang with nothing but sore muscles and bloodsucker bruises, all because of my hapless escort.

A few days later, back at the press center, I was studying a map to figure out where to go next, when a fellow reporter called out to me.

Weren't you on a patrol near Khe Sanh?" he asked. "Lima got hit. Company commander was killed.""What?" I was stunned. "I can't believe it."As soon as I confirmed it was Captain Bynum, I was overcome with anxiety. I wondered if the company had been discovered by the NVA because the resupply chopper had appeared to extract me and my ailing escort.

I had typed up my notes from the operation, but I couldn't complete the story. Fear and grief prevented me from further checking out the details of the Marine officer's demise. It was a story I didn't want to write. Nor did I want to open a Pandora's box of my own mixed emotions concerning the events of that hot June day in the jungle near the border of Laos.

Jurate Kazickas was a freelance reporter in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968.

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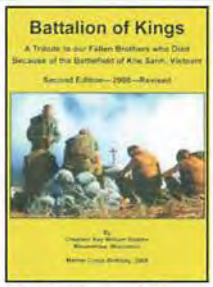

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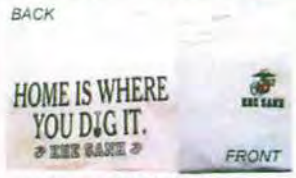

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Style-10-08

LAST VISIT TO KHE SANH

By Gary W. Foster
26 October 2008

Everything is different. Khe Sanh is no longer that sleepy little town at the western end of Highway 9 that I first encountered in 2000. No, it's different. It has become a different place. Oh. I still remember the little muddy side streets, the Khe Sanh market, the bumpy road to the Combat Base, the surrounding hills, the restaurant with the dirt floor where I drank a few beers while waiting for a huge rain storm to pass, the scrap metal dealer with fingers missing from each hand and whose yard, even today, is full of bombs, shells, and shrapnel and other junk of war, the horseshoe bend over the Rao Quan River and the restaurant east of town overlooking a cliff that falls away steeply to the Rao Quan River. These and other landmarks that pertain to me and my visits are still there.

But Khe Sanh has changed, and I have changed too, moved on. The construction of Highway 9 is finished. In fact, construction finished two years ago. I was unable to visit the road or the official opening at that time. I felt a definite lack of closure, a slight sense of melancholy, perhaps even a loss. I hoped I could visit this little corner of Quang Tri Province again one day. That one day came on July 9th, 2008.

Having visited Khe Sanh so many times, I didn't have any expectations of the weather this trip. Why worry about it? This was the only chance I had to visit the road, to see it in its finished state. The weather, horrible during most of my many visits yet so perfect at other times, is unpredictably variable. It is what it is.

When I left Vinh headed south for the DMZ, I felt a tinge of sadness. I wasn't gripped by depression, certainly not, but I was reflective on all I had learned, all I had experienced since my first visit to Vietnam and my first travels along Vietnam's narrow highways. I thought back to all the people I had met since my first visit. When I made the drive for the first time, Highway 1 was a disaster. Highway 1 was characterized by washed out pavement and shoulders. It was falling apart. Narrow road width, potholes, long stretches of muddy, unpaved road, detours and accidents all made up the main north-south transportation artery. At the same time, the road was also under construction, over practically its full length from Hanoi to the Ben Hai River. I knew that within a year or two, Highway 1 would be vastly improved. This came to pass but briefly.

Now, driving on the same road, I noticed a sharp deterioration in the finished product. Again bridges were under major repair, the road pavement has vanished in places. It was being paved again. Concrete sections were cracking. Guardrails were missing. I noticed that the embankment had eroded or subsided. The road surface undulated. In such a short time, about 6 years, the investment in a new road as well as the new road itself was in jeopardy. It was reverting to its old self: a decrepit highway in continuous need of repair. In less than an additional ten years it will be consumed by age, over use, and lack of maintenance. So this is what happens to investments in infrastructure in Vietnam, I thought. I wondered.

Construction is everywhere in Vietnam. But I can never tell, still, if something is under construction or destruction. Everywhere one looks there are piles of sand, dirt, rubble, gravel, abandoned equipment, bricks and concrete blocks, wood, metal; you name it. The place is as untidy as it can get. I have never understood this about certain parts of Asia. Bangkok's not like that. Singapore is vastly better, Hong Kong perfect. So why are places like India – and India takes the cake and will never change – and Vietnam, a close second - so unruly, so untidy, so, well, messy? I'm perplexed. Vietnam exudes exoticness. It is mysterious, intangible, a place of deep, convoluted history that evolved over thousands of years, influenced only recently by the French, a history that involves the interactions of its people with many outsiders, Americans not least of all. It has a history that is not easily revealed, not easily given up.

Piles of clutter and debris notwithstanding, Vietnam is moving fast into the new millennium. The economy is booming, large corporations are moving into Vietnam, its infrastructure is undergoing improvement. Vietnam is a big tourist attraction. Tourists, mostly from Korea, Japan and Taiwan, are flocking to Vietnam. So why cannot inhabitants of large towns and neighborhoods dispose of their rubbish and debris without throwing everything into the gutters or along the roadsides? There must be an an-

swer of course, probably many. For one thing, Vietnamese can own property but the parcels allotted are small. Hence, a home also serves as a restaurant or a store or it supports a repair shop or small manufacturing facility. The debris and clutter generated by that business finds its way on the verge of the roadway. The front of each shop is the repository of debris and clutter generated by that business (or home). Interestingly, if one ventures behind the roadside shops, there is very little in the way of de bris. This is a curious trait of roadside Vietnam.



AUTHOR GARY FOSTER

I stayed the night in Vinh. Like the Phoenix, it has completely risen from its ashes of the Vietnam War. Aside from the war museum that is there – a nice museum I might add – there is nothing to suggest that a war or, more appropriately, the aerial bombardment ever took place there. Vinh was rainy and the highway through town covered with mud. The hotel rooms at the Saigon Kim Lien Hotel looked and felt the same: small bed and chairs, dim lights, noisy air conditioner, small bath towels, smaller bars of soap, a fuzzy TV. The room smelled the same too with the tropical dampness and the resulting mold.

Next day, I continued south. The drive was pleasant. Hoang Tran Dung, my ever-present Vietnamese companion and I shared stories. I am always interested to hear about the war from his perspective. He tells me many stories. He never saw an American soldier or Marine during the war but he heard them.

"American soldiers make too much noise," he said. "Sound same like cows. "Moo."

"Moo," I say right back, making an indecent gesture with my middle finger.

Hoang throws his cigarette out the window. We drive on south past the hand-dug tunnels and caves of Vinh Loc.

We arrived at the Ben Hai River, the Seventeenth parallel. The tall flag pole with the large North Vietnamese flag sporting a single yellow star on a sea of red has been moved to the south bank of the river. A large war memorial has been constructed there. We didn't stop.

We headed now for Dong Ha arriving there about dusk. I gave Hoang instructions to the hotel thinking I remembered the way perfectly. Hoang asked me if I remembered where the hotel was. "Of course I do."

We crossed over the Cua Viet River and entered the city. I told Hoang to turn right at the market and then left at the tall red and white communication tower and then proceed straight and then turn...uh oh...I didn't know where I was. Hoang began to laugh. "You talk like cow soldier but not know where are." Just then Hoang turned back in the opposite direction. In front of me there was a landmark that I recognized: The Tank Restaurant, so called – at least that's what I called it - because when I arrived there in 2000, there was an M-41 and an M-48 tank parked next to it alongside the railroad tracks. The tanks had been moved. What? I mean, they moved those tanks? To where? How?

I met Yen, one of the daughters of the owners of the restaurant. She remembered me and gave me a hug. Her English had vastly improved. The rest of her family; sisters, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews all sat and stared at me.
"Yen, where's David?"

"He's in Morocco. I am going there next month to be with him."

David Hetherington was my project manager on the Highway 9 project. He took his meals in the Tank Restaurant everyday. He met Yen, fell in love with her, and guess what?

"No!" I said, shocked. "You're married? Morocco? You're going to Morocco?" I could not believe my ears. A little country girl from rural central Vietnam is going to Morocco, North Africa? Really? Married to an Englishman? Really? But it was true.

All the memories came back: Dave and I traveling along the highway, Yen sitting in the car next to him talking non-stop, us stopping at Lao Bao and having a few Huda beers, visiting Khe Sanh, visiting Lang Vei and stepping down into deep bomb craters, finding mortar shells, a 2000 pound bomb



that we tried to remove only to be told by the villagers that the bomb belonged to the village, stopping at the Rao Quan River where decades ago Marines used to swim and bathe, climbing Hill 861 while Dave waited patiently in the car at the base of the hill - all the time Yen talking with Dave and Dave teaching her English. Now she was almost fluent with an English accent.

There is a subtle irony in Vietnam. The younger Vietnamese living in the north want to learn English. They don't want to speak Russian or French. They want to speak English. They are jealous of their southern counterparts because as a result of the war, many Vietnamese in the south learned English and passed it on to the next generation. Young street kids in Saigon sound like they're from California. "Hey mister, why not buy this cool t-shirt? You'll like look good in it, man. Awesome"

I continued to visit with Yen while Hoang ate some kind of boiled animal with a side plate of white rice. I had my usual plate of green onions and French fries. I have often wondered if I am being exposed to Agent Orange when I eat the local vegetables. Could it be that trace or residual chemicals can still be found in the soil after all these years? Hoang ordered some tea and smoked a Vinataba cigarette – "Not like NVA officer's cigarettes in war. Different," he once commented.

"Not like Marlboros either, Hoang."

Dinner finished, we said good bye to Yen, wished her well in Morocco – congrats on being married, a kiss on each cheek - and left for the hotel.

Now with my bearings back on course, we arrived at the same hotel I stayed at eight years ago. It was under re-construction – the usual pile of debris recklessly strewn around everywhere. I am not sure the reason for this great expansion in Dong Ha. Dong Ha is experiencing urbanization, yes - that's happening everywhere around the world - but there is really no growing commerce in the city. None that I could see, anyway. It's not exactly a great tourist destination. American vets are returning to "Eye Corp" but they are returning in less numbers. The majority stay the night in Hue or Danang and not in Dong Ha.

When we pulled into the hotel parking lot, the tea shop in front of the hotel on the street where I used to take morning tea was empty, Ha, the young owner, gone. We checked in. The people behind the desk remembered me. I got a room on the third floor

overlooking a residential part of the city. I knew the chickens in people's yards would wake me at five the next morning with their crowing. Next morning, they didn't fail.

Next stop: Khe Sanh via Highway 9. I remembered the first time I made my way west on Quac Loang 9. It was very mysterious. We had left Dong Ha before dusk, or maybe just at dusk. It seemed the world was swallowing me. I remembered thinking that the landscape was so uninviting and daunting, that we could never build the road. Construction took longer than we anticipated, but we did succeed. However, at the time of my first visit, it was not lost on, me as I was accompanied by two complete strangers, two people who had been and were now ex-NVA.

Now, I was impressed with the new, improved road. The quality was excellent, the riding smooth. The bridges, over-designed I've always thought, were nicely constructed. The sweeping bridge over the Rao Quan was magnificent. The ascent to and later, the descent from the Khe Sanh plateau was effortless. We cruised at 50 miles per hour. Driving time to Khe Sanh: not quite 50 minutes.

The smugglers from Laos are still operating on the road. I'm not sure they're not more prolific. They're so nonchalant – no - blatant about their smuggling activities. Bundles containing cartons of cigarettes, hair dryers, liquor, electronic goods, even an occasional small Samsung refrigerator or microwave or air conditioner are carried along the road each day by motorbike.

You can get anything from the smugglers. It's an amazing phenomenon. They work in pairs. The driver is male and his companion, carrying all the goodies, is female. It must be a niche culture because what's interesting is that the female passenger who manages all the bags and boxes of consumables is always knock-down, lights-out, fantastically gorgeous. They dress in tight fitting, sometimes revealing designer clothes, heels, Chanel makeup, Calvin Klein sunglasses and all kinds of gold jewelry. They've got the chic bling thing going, that's for sure. Ever see a race car driver with an unattractive woman? The same is at work here: a fashion cult sub-genre - status among smugglers.

I wanted to see Hills 861, 881S, 537, 950 and 1015 but couldn't. Low clouds.

I visited the Combat Base. It looks about the same. The museum area is overgrown with weeds, a blade on the Chinook helicopter placed there years ago has been torn from its mounting and hangs down to the ground, the 155mm cannon is there and the M-41 tank hull continues to rust away. Hoang and I sat beneath the A-frame museum. He had tea and I drank a cold beer, made colder with the addition of chunks of ice in a glass. The pyramidal Vietnamese monument is still there. The coffee plants have grown to about seven feet tall. The area is falling into disrepair. The place seems drab to me. It is too quiet, even too lonely. I took some photos and left.

We made our way back through Khe Sanh ville to the old reservoir west of town built just after the war. And within a short time, we are outside of the ville.

"How's Donna?" I was surprised by Hoang's question. He recalled Donna Elliott. He remembered the time he and I stopped beneath a tower to examine some MIA excavations. He remembered that Donna's brother was MIA during the siege; "mea," he says, not knowing how to say "Em Eye A."

"She's fine, Hoang. Still working on her book about her brother's case."

We arrived at Lang Vei. The Russian tank monument has been moved about 50 feet from where it was and upgraded. The monument is impressive but the area is littered with shards of broken, discarded pieces of marble used for the facade. The highway now passes behind the monument. I looked around because now with the new highway there, it was difficult to gain one's bearings. The landscape had changed noticeably. I looked at the area of where I believed the Special Forces bunker was and I recognized the rise in the land. I saw a piece of a concrete slab just off the roadside jutting out from the embankment. I realized it was a remnant of the Special Forces bunker. There was no other reason for that concrete to be there. Other than that, there was nothing there to suggest any kind of camp ever existed there.

Off to the west, I saw a small hut. People were clearing the brush. I walked over to them and said

hello. They pointed out several large bomb craters. They were overgrown of course but I could still see the depth of each crater. I learned my lesson years ago. I stayed out of them.

Hoang and I continued all the way to the Laotian border. We saw the new customs post. Impressive. We stopped in Lao Bao for refreshment. So many times I had stopped there with Dave for refreshment in a very breezy restaurant. Lao Bao is the same but the free economic zone is thriving. We returned to Khe Sanh.

Back through Lang Vei we drove. Past the reservoir and, along the main street of Khe Sanh, we continued past the Khe Sanh market. I noticed the mamas are still bringing scrap iron to the junk metal dealer. He had his scales on the left side of the street weighing out the baskets of shrapnel and other metallic scraps the local women had dug up or collected. We stopped at the intersection of the road that leads to the Combat Base with Highway 9 to see the new large granite-looking monument memorializing the Khe Sanh battles. The reliefs are almost comical: Glorious NVA soldiers juxtaposed against depictions of forlorn-looking American soldiers and crashing American airplanes. How'd they bring this huge megalithic monument here?

The clouds had lifted a bit so we drove towards Hill 861. I still could not see it but what I did see was the dam. My God! Construction of the dam is finished. The backside of Hill 537 was turned into a quarry and a construction camp. The whole area has changed. The labyrinth of construction roads was disorienting.

We passed a small restaurant situated atop the embankment. I recalled the time I witnessed an assembly of mostly men there. About 25 aging Vietnamese men wearing their uniforms, replete with hats and medals, were having a reunion. I recall Hoang was worried that I may find myself in a precarious position if I visited with them. I did anyway. To my astonishment and Hoang's, I was welcomed and we shared some tea.

Hills 950 and 1015 finally became barely visible through the obscuring but lifting clouds. Only the bases of Hill 861 and others could be seen. I would not see the top of Hill 861 that day, maybe never again.

We left the hills and the Combat Base behind us. Hoang and I drove east off the Khe Sanh plateau. I had to stop at the roadside restaurant to see the effects of the dam in the valley below. I walked through the open restaurant to the back. In so doing, I left a trail of mud on the freshly-mopped floor. The owner was not pleased. Hoang walked around the tiny building to the back and laughed at me. "You same like cow. Make mud in store. Moo!"

I looked behind me and the owner was busy mopping the floor again. "Yeah, but you have mud on your shoes and now make mud in car." Hoang laughed.

"Let's go Hoang, there's nothing left to see here. My Khe Sanh days are over."

We drove towards Dong Ha. I passed through the Montagnard huts in the Valley of Blue Light. I remembered the hue of a blue light at night emanating from each hut as its occupants watched TV. I was reminded of the sudden appearance and just as sudden disappearance – like an apparition - of the young girl on the Combat Base just prior to a rain storm in 2003. Later on, we passed through Da



Krong and Cam Lo. We drove through Dong Ha, past the Tank Restaurant. I saw Yen in the doorway. Still, I could not believe she was on her way to Morocco.

Now headed south on Highway 1, we would later drive through Hue and much farther on through the new tunnel at the Hai Van pass. We would spend the night in Danang before returning to Hanoi.

Khe Sanh, a lonesome place full of heartbreak, intense conflict between two determined opposing forces and resulting devastation forty years ago – in an area referred to by one antagonist as Leatherneck Square and by the other as the Meat Grinder - was now recovering. Darkly mysterious, at times foreboding, a lonely, rural place in an obscure, odd corner of Vietnam. A place of soft, opaque verdant hills, of ominous clouds. A place that speaks silently exhorting one to come; ever beckoning.

History teaches us that the final outcome of military engagements results in short term gains or losses but overall, through time, there is little change. The Crusades changed nothing. The boundaries of the countries in Europe have not been altered as the result of the Napoleon campaigns or two great world wars. Japan is confined once again to its islands. The Israelis gave back Sinai. So much suffering and for what? It is good to visit such places as Khe Sanh. If nothing else, they serve as reminders.

In addition to meeting my friend Hoang (who once told me that "…40 years ago, we kill each other, now we drive in same car and laugh"), through my first visit to Khe Sanh, I have met Dennis Mannion, Ernie Spencer, Donna Elliott, Big John Pessoni, Ray Stubbe, Bulldog, Mike Archer, Tommy Eichler and so many others. Khe Sanh is now a part of me. My visits to Khe Sanh are timeless. Khe Sanh entered my consciousness, never to leave, becoming a remnant in the recesses of my memory, to be recalled at various times when I want to mentally revisit a small part of my own history that took place in a tiny crook of Quang Tri Province, Vietnam; or as Mike Archer referred to it, a place that was nothing more than a patch of ground.

Au revoir, Khe Sanh.


















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Tom:

I thought I would take advantage of this data update to contribute to the General Fund and drop you a line.

I was the OIC of the Marine O-1 Det. Of Mag-16 flying 0-1 Cessna "Bird Dogs" out of Dong Ha and then Quang Tri for most of the battle. My call sign was Fingerprint 23. I was the pilot that first located the trenches South of the base. We flew every day from one to three flights and were engaged fighting the NVA running air-strikes and directing artillery all around the AO until the end. You may remember we lost two airplanes, one crashing just off the North end of the runway.

I have read many stories and personal experiences but none about our detachment and the many NVA we killed as we administered air power and reported intel through the air observers who were riding with us. Throughout we did our best to protect the base and our brother Marines there. We did our best to search for and destroy any NVA as they drew closer to the base. We also observed and reported to the base commander and the Division Commander as our sightings began to wind down as the NVA gave up the fight.

I stayed in the Corps for 28 years and flew many kinds of aircraft from fighters to helos, but, nothing could compare with the little "Bird Dog" flying at 600 feet running air-strikes on NVA who were doing their best to kill my Marines and getting us out of their sky. I haven't been to a reunion yet but hope to soon. I appreciate everything you have done to keep our story alive.

Semper Fi
John L. Clark
Colonel USMC (Ret)
Email: jlclarkjr@comcast.net

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR FIFTY

ALL,
THE FOLLOWING IS AN EMAIL FROM THE COMMANDER OF MARINE FORCES, IN IRAQ, MAJ GEN JOHN F. KELLY. THIS IS HIS THIRD TOUR OF DUTY IN THAT COUNTRY.

VIC

I thought you might want to hear the rest of the story of the two Marines who earned the Navy Cross out here last April. I believe it will be awarded in a joint ceremony early in 09. This went to a reporter friend who is writing their story. I really do think it's a Rockwell image. Not the killing part, Rockwell was better than that. It's the picture of the two of them in the early morning heat getting settled into their watch with the 21 year old "veteran" Corporal Yale showing the "new kid" the ropes and encouraging him that he'd be OK when his first action came and how to stay alive in Iraq - seven seconds before they died.

When I dug into the deaths of these young men, as I always do, it became obvious to me that there was something more here than just the "normal" bravery of a couple of young Grunts out on the streets of Ramadi doing what they are trained to do, what they are paid a measly amount of money to do, but infinitely more importantly what they join the Marines to do. Their unit commander knew their deaths were something different, but was in a quandary as there were no eye witnesses. Everything pointed to great bravery and an irrational disregard for their own lives. Then we thought of our allies the Iraqis. Surely Iraqi policemen must have seen something as it was a Joint Security Station (JSS). We had to try.

As you well know incredible bravery is routine among these guys and much of it goes unrecognized because it is so routine. It's everywhere. They do it naturally and without thought, but this just sounded different.

I drove down to the JSS from Fallujah two days after the blast and spoke to a number of police officers and we were right, there were some eye witnesses. They were actually survivors who were only alive to tell their stories because of these two Grunt Marines who would not save themselves. I inter-

viewed six or seven cops, but three were most important and among those who barely survived. A summary of their statements is below written and signed by me. At the time of submission for Navy Crosses it was the only "justification" for decorating these men. Subsequently my computer techs were able to download the entire event from a security camera that was all but destroyed in the blast. It documents the event clearly.

This is in many ways a Norman Rockwell story, and I think can only happen today in our Armed Forces. These men were from different battalions (1/9 and 2/8) doing their "right seat - left seat" turnovers, and from different worlds. Yale was a very poor country kid from western Virginia, Haerter from Long Island. They didn't know each other, they'd probably only met a few minutes before they were put on post but they were closer than brothers because they were Marines. Yale was a few days from going home, Haerter just a few days in country. As civilians they had very-very little in common. As Marines they were DNA close and viewed the world through exactly the same lens. Parris Island and the School of Infantry were their common experiences. What made them different from everyone in their families and from everyone they'd grown up with was their desire to serve as Marines even to their death. As my three condolence letters below the statement point out (father of one, mother of the other, sister of one) they were different than all the rest, because they stepped forward when they didn't have to.

If they were still with us they would not think of themselves as heroes. They would tell you they were doing their job, that their lieutenant told them to stand the post they were assigned and let nothing pass. They wouldn't elaborate much about the event but would only say that "someone tried to pass...he wasn't authorized to pass by their lieutenant's order...so we killed him." They had no time to think about heroics. The truck turned down the alley way (~60 meters in length) from the main street and accelerated through the jersey wall serpentine. They knew exactly what was going on. They had it drilled into them that my greatest fear out here, the biggest threat against us, the only thing that keeps me awake at night, was a Beirut type suicide-truck bomb. I lost my best friend in that blast back in 1983, and it was seared into my soul that this was the only means they (terrorists) had left to really hurt us here in Iraq in a way that would change everything. The entire event as it appears on the tape was perhaps six seconds. Six seconds to see the truck, make their calculation as to what was going on, then decide what was going on, then make their individual decisions at exactly the same time while flipping their M-16s off safe and opening up. Six seconds. No time to talk it over. No time to call the lieutenant. No time to think about their own lives or even the lives of the American and Iraqi lives they were protecting. More than enough time, however, to do their duty. They never hesitated or tried to escape. They never stopped firing until the tape goes black. We know they are heroes, Tony, but they would not see it that way.

You ask if you can teach this kind of bravery. The answer to that is a resounding no. To those of us in uniform who do these kinds of things, or are expected to do these kinds of things, it's not bravery, but duty. What you can teach, or better instill, is a sense of esprit, a sense of commitment to Corps and country, a sense of belonging to something bigger and more important than any one of us are individually. It's what the Greek citizens had. What the Roman legionnaires had. What General Washington's boys had. What the Greatest Generation had, and what a few of this generation still have. If you can successfully instill these traits, and the Marine Corps does it better than anyone else, then what you have is men and women of character that think in terms of courage, honor and commitment...about selfless devotion to duty. They don't say it that way, or express it that way, but they live it in their hearts.

As you know the arithmetic commanders deal with in war, from the second lieutenant to the commanding general, is not zero deaths and zero wounded, but how many is too many. Every time you see a convoy move, or the Marines and our precious Docs at an entry control point, or clearing a house in Fallujah, it's the same. Commanders do the mental math and make the deadly calculation. Is five "acceptable"? Perhaps. Depending on the stakes. Is six too many? Same calculation. In this case two was what the mission required, and thank God they knew what they were about. Little consolation for their families I know, and it's the terrible burden commanders who make these calls carry in their hearts forever. In the tape an Iraqi policeman can be

seen standing about 20 feet from where the two Marines were firing from inside a little enclosure. He scrambled like hell and got out of the way before the huge metal gate, jersey walls, mosque and several houses were all but consumed--but he survived. "No sane man would have stood there," they said. Afterwards my interpreter (30ish, an Iraqi born Kurd but has lived in the States since he was 13) asked me if I thought they were crazy. They were not crazy was my response, because not even a crazy man would have stood his ground like they did. They were nothing more than a couple of ordinary Marines doing an extraordinary act of selflessness. They were doing what their lieutenant told them to do and they were doing their duty, and 50 American families are tonight spending Christmas Eve with their sons who didn't die that day in Ramadi.

Semper Fidelis, and Merry Christmas.

WE GET PICTURES

Submitted By Jim Roth 2nd Plt Lima Co 3/3. If you can identify anyone not listed please let him know.



DENNIS WATSON & STANLEY SKOWRONSKI
L CO 3/3



L.B. JOHNSON



JIM ROTH L CO 3/3



DAVE SCHMOYER L CO 3/3



SGT CHUCK JULIAM L CO



SGT NEU L CO 3/3











MORE KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

Captain Frank Tomeo 26th Marines Khe Sanh
By Mike Fishbaugh

Friday December 26, 2008
Former Marine Corps track star
of Danville to be honored

A Danville man is one of two former New York track and field stars who excelled as collegians and in the U.S. Marines to be honored at a Marine Corps meet Saturday.

Frank Tomeo, who grew up in Queens, N.Y., and now lives in Danville, will be recognized in ceremonies during the Marine Corps Holiday Classic in New York.

Tomeo ran for Fordham University and later represented the Marines as part of a 1965 national team that ran the second-fastest indoor time in the 800 meters.

He was an Armed Forces champion and an NCAA All-American in the 800, a member of the Armed Forces-champion 400 relay team and an all-Marine champion at 400 and 800 meters. He was also a four time relay champion in the Millrose Games and a Marine Corps record holder in the 2-mile and sprint relays.

He was twice named Fordham's athlete of the year. He was the national indoor champion at 1,000 meters, ran on a national championship two-mile relay team, an Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America mile relay championship team and mile and two-mile relay champions in the Penn Relays. He is a member of the school's hall of fame.

Tomeo was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1963. He attended graduate school at the University of Bonn and became platoon commander at the school's demonstration troops at Quantico, Va. He was promoted to first lieutenant, served as regimental intelligence officer for the 26th Marines, promoted to Captain at Okinawa and served as regimental intelligence officer at Khe Sanh, Vietnam.

He will be honored along with Charlie Buchta, who competed for Holy Cross. Both are graduates of the same high school, Brooklyn Prep. Copyright:The Advocate-Messenger 2008

A Marine Hero's Legacy



S/Sgt. Karl Gorman Taylor
Medal Of Honor
INDIA CO 3/26

Leatherneck Magazine
December 2008
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The low, rolling hills and wooded valleys of western Pennsylvania present a picturesque view for visitors any time of the year. Proud and patriotic, the folks of tiny Avella, Pa., are descendants of hardworking coal miners, whose livelihood meant enduring years of sweat, dirt, darkness and danger to keep America's industries running. There are no coal mines now. There are no expensive homes, no shopping centers, no signs of wealth. Instead, there is peace and tranquility.

Avella also is the home of a Marine hero's widow and children.

During December 2008, 40 years will have passed since one of Avella's finest was mortally wounded on one of Vietnam's many battlefields. Webster's New World Dictionary defines a hero as "a man of great strength and courage, favored by the gods and in part descended from them." Staff Sergeant Karl Gorman Taylor Sr. embodied these words. As the only member of the 26th Marine Regiment to be awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam



War, SSgt Taylor's conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity has never been forgotten.

On a lovely spring day, two members of SSgt Taylor's Marine Corps family journeyed to Avella to meet the Taylor family and to remember their brother in arms. Retired Captain Ron Hoover had been commanding officer of "India" Company, 3d Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment during the early days of December 1968. Richard Townsend, then a private first class, had been one of the company's radio operators.

Sitting among a group of modest houses on a ridge overlooking scenic valleys, the Taylor home, like

others in Avella, had an American flag flying in the yard. Shirley Ann Taylor warmly greeted her guests and invited them into her small but homey kitchen. The Taylor family consists of two sons and a daughter. Karl Taylor Jr., the oldest of the boys; his wife, Diane; and son, Steven, were there. Powerfully built and square-jawed like his dad, Karl proudly pointed out the framed Medal of Honor and pictures of the Taylor kids and grandkids that are displayed in the living room. Sheryl is the oldest and then Karl. Kevin, the youngest, followed in his dad's footsteps and became a Marine.

On one corner of a wall, a large, beautiful portrait of SSgt Karl Taylor in his dress blues and wearing the Medal of Honor is displayed prominently. The painting shows his rugged determination, indomitable spirit and modest pride. "From a picture of Dad in his blues, a friend did the painting," Karl Jr. explained.

To the two members of her husband's Marine family, Shirley Taylor began to describe the Marine she'd married and lost to war. Born 14 July 1939, in Laurel, Md., SSgt Taylor dropped out of high school after three years. "His family needed the money," Shirley admitted. "Later, he saw the value of education and received a high-school equivalency diploma."

Because service to country was considered a duty in the Taylor family, Karl Sr. and his brother enlisted in the Marine Corps on 15 Jan. 1959. They were promptly sent to Parris Island, S.C., for boot camp. Following recruit training at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Taylor was assigned to Alpha Co, 1st Bn, 6th Marines. He participated in Mediterranean and Caribbean cruises, performing various infantry duties.

During his stint with the Second Marine Division, he met and soon married Shirley Ann Piatt from Avella. Haltingly, Shirley said: "Karl loved the Corps, but he found time for his family. He was considerate, a disciplinarian, a very good father."
Because he realized that Marine drill instructors personify the best of the Corps, he asked for and was accepted to DI School at Parris Island in 1961. He was a corporal. "Being a DI's wife was stressful duty," Shirley recalled. "Hours were terribly long for Karl, and he had duty every other day. Marine wives don't complain, and I didn't."

His core values were apparent on the drill field. Retired Sergeant Major Pete Seagriff remembers Cpl Taylor as extremely fair but firm and revered by every recruit.

Cpl Taylor and Sergeant John J. McGinty III were junior DIs of Platoon 258 in the 2d Recruit Training Bn. Sgt McGinty won the Medal of Honor in 1966, while serving with the 3d Bn, 4th Marines. He later was commissioned. Sgt Ron Hoover was a DI in the 1st Bn. He, too, was commissioned from the enlisted ranks. In their wildest dreams, Sgt Hoover and Cpl Taylor never could have imagined being linked together in Vietnam in 1968.

During August 1964, SSgt Taylor began a tour on Okinawa with Golf Co, 2d Bn, 3d Marines. After the decision was made to send Marine ground forces to Vietnam, the battalion was one of the first to land at Da Nang in early 1965.

Upon his return to the States, Taylor was sent to Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. Assigned to Officer Candidates School, his exemplary leadership skills and combat experience helped in training future officers for Vietnam. Like all career Marines at the time, he knew another Vietnam tour was inevitable.

"Karl's orders to Vietnam arrived in late 1967," Shirley said. "We made a decision to buy this house. He often said of Avella, 'This is God's country. We'll retire here.' "

Young Karl recalled those days. "Dad called me the skipper of the ship. The day he left, he instructed, 'OK, Skipper, you're the man of the house now.' Maybe he had a premonition."

Shirley's eyes glistened, as she described that cold January morning when Karl left for war. "We hugged, kissed and said good-bye ... and he left. There was a snowstorm. His dad and brother drove him to the airport. Karl wouldn't let them go to the departure gate.

He really believed we were fighting in Vietnam for all the right reasons."

On 21 Jan. 1968, the Marine base at Khe Sanh was plastered by enemy rockets and mortars. SSgt Tay-

lor joined India Co, 3/26 on that day. Capt William "Bill" Dabney, Lieutenant General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller's son-in-law, was the commander. The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) had encircled the base; the Marines at Khe Sanh were in for weeks of tough fighting. While performing duties as platoon sergeant and platoon leader, Taylor participated in the defense of Hill 881 South.

After the siege at Khe Sanh had been broken, 3/26 moved to the Da Nang area and was involved in several combat operations. SSgt Taylor had experienced many intense battles and close calls, but the worst was yet to come. His DI friend, now-First Lieutenant Ron Hoover, was India Co's commander in October 1968. "I needed a good 'gunny,' " Hoover recalled. "Karl was all of that and more."

Idolized by his Marines, Taylor was called "Gunny T." Second Lieutenant Chris Tibbs, India Co's 2d Platoon leader, said, "Gunny was always helping, guiding and teaching. He was what every staff NCO [noncommissioned officer] should aspire to be.

"Gunny taught us infantry leaders the tricks of fighting the elusive NVA and VC [Viet Cong]. In both tactics and weapons, he was the perfect teacher," 2dLt Tibbs added.

In late November 1968, 3/26 participated in Operation Meade River. Launched during the monsoon season and in the mud and weeds southwest of Da Nang, the multi-battalion operation was considered the largest helicopter assault in Marine Corps history at that time.

Intelligence sources had indicated that four battalions of the NVA's 38th Regiment would be trapped inside a Meade River cordon.

As the massive encirclement gradually tightened, the fighting became increasingly intense and casualties mounted on both sides. The enemy desperately tried to break out of the trap. Late in the day on 8 Dec., India Co was ordered to attack what was a series of in-depth bunker positions. The company fought to within a few meters of the bunkers. From these hidden positions came a torrent of unexpected accurate and deadly automatic-weapons fire.

Second Lt Brian Webber, 3d Platoon leader, was mortally wounded; his Marines were pinned down and taking casualties. Many of India Co's Marines vividly recall SSgt Taylor's indomitable courage, inspiring leadership and selfless dedication. Cpl Felipe Torres, the platoon sergeant for 2d Plt who later would receive a commission and retire as a colonel, said: "Gunny T didn't hesitate. He said, 'My Marines are in trouble!' He grabbed his M79 [grenade launcher] and extra rounds, and he crawled through the hail of fire to the beleaguered platoon."

With a companion, SSgt Taylor repeatedly maneuvered across an open area to rescue Marines who were too seriously wounded to move themselves. Learning that there were other wounded Marines lying in an exposed area, he led four other Marines forward across the fire-swept terrain in an attempt to rescue the wounded.

When his group was halted by the devastating fire, he directed his companions to return to the company command post, whereupon he took his M79 and, in full view of the enemy, charged across the rice paddy toward the enemy position, firing his weapon as he ran. Although wounded several times, he succeeded in reaching the enemy bunker and silenced the fire from the sector, moments before he was mortally wounded.

Operation Meade River was terminated the next morning. On that day in Avella, the Taylor family was beginning to think about Christmas and anticipating the return of their loved one in only 42 days.

Karl Jr., called "Skipper," was 5 years old, but the memory of the soft knocking on the Taylor door forever will be embedded in his mind. He explained: "Sheryl was at school. The light tapping came from the back door. That was unusual because in these parts folks go to the front door. There were two solemn-faced Marines and a chaplain standing there. I knew something was terribly wrong. Mom called Grand pappy at the mill and told him the bad news."

Tears filled Shirley's eyes at the memory of those difficult days and nights. Her voice, unsteady but clear, she said: "This whole community was and still is family. We don't lock our doors. We take care of our own. We band together."

Skipper described growing up without a father: "Grand pappy Piatt became the father figure. He didn't make it far in school, but he was smart. When us kids got in trouble, he'd whip our behinds real good. Grandma was the mediator."

A proud smile appears on Shirley Taylor's face. She said: "All the kids grew up in this home, and they all graduated from high school. That would have delighted Karl. But there's something else I want told in this story. The Marine Corps, Karl's other family, took care of us too. When we needed something, his band of brothers cared for us. Everywhere we went in Washington, his Marines did the escorting."

The Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously to SSgt Taylor on 17 Feb. 1971. His wife, children and parents were invited to the White House for the ceremony.

Laughing, Skipper remarked: "Kevin was 4 years old, and he figured he'd be the life of the party. A Marine sergeant was given the job of babysitting us kids. Kevin decided to go swimming in the hotel's water fountain in his clothes. Then, he tested the sergeant's patience by climbing in and out of the barrels of some big cannons. One morning he turned up missing. After looking high and low for him, we found Kevin on the Marine driver's bed watching cartoons."

During the award ceremony, Kevin decided to liven up the proud but solemn occasion. Grinning, Shirley Taylor described the story: "Skipper shook President Nixon's hand, but Kevin had his own idea. He popped to attention and saluted, causing people, including the President, to chuckle."

While presenting a nationwide address a few months later, President Nixon mentioned both SSgt Taylor's gallantry and Kevin's sharp salute. The President also said in the address that "he wanted the war to end in a way that would be worthy of Staff Sergeant Taylor's sacrifice."

Kevin enlisted in the Marine Corps in late 1983 and graduated from Parris Island in early 1984. "Our Marine family invited us to the graduation," Shirley acknowledged. "I guess they thought it was a big deal. We're proud but private folks, and we declined the offer. Karl would have wanted Kevin to make it on his own. And he has." Kevin retired as a gunnery sergeant in 2004. He has a daughter, Rylee.

Sheryl lives in Alexandria, Va. She and her husband, Kenneth, have two children, Jacqueline and Wendy. The nieces all call their Uncle Karl "Skip."

Skipper, his wife, Diane, and son, Steven live near Avella. On 2 Sept. 1992, they lost an infant son and brother, Jason Mathew. He is buried next to Grandfather Karl Gorman Taylor Sr.

Before Capt Hoover and Richard Townsend began the long drive home, they had one more duty to perform. Even though a memorial service for their fallen brother in arms had been held in Vietnam in December 1968, the two went to Avella to perform a more fitting farewell. And so, SSgt Taylor's Avella family and two members of his Marine family drove to the cemetery.

Matching the modest nature of the Marine who rests there, the small cemetery is located on a hill off a quiet, country road. The Taylor family often visits there to ensure the place is kept in Marine shape. An engraved gray stone at the cemetery's entrance reads: "Buried In This Cemetery Is Congressional Medal Of Honor Recipient Karl Gorman Taylor, Sr." His grave site is a short distance up the gravel road. The grave is marked by a plain government-issue marker for a Marine who was anything but ordinary.

Because the two members of SSgt Taylor's Marine family were with him in those final days and hours before he sacrificed his life for others, their moments at the grave were especially emotional. No one wanted to leave. Finally, Capt Hoover stood at attention, saluted the Marine hero who rests there and said, "Farewell, my brother.
Semper Fidelis."

Editor's note: Capt Hoover and the author served together in 3/26. While Hoover was skipper of India Co, Duane Crawford commanded Mike Co.

Marine Hero's Legacy A Veteran And a Refugee Remember The Horror

By Andy Bromage
New Haven Register New Haven CT.
Sunday, May 1, 2005

Memories of a blood stained battlefield near Khe Sanh, Vietnam, have shadowed Dennis Mannion for the last 36 years.

Scenes from the four months he spent defending Hill 861 near the Laos border, and the nightly mortar attacks his company of marines endured, follow Mannion on every trek through Sleeping Giant State Park, and to every high school football game.

"It's a sound track that keeps running through my head all the time," said Mannion, 59, of Cheshire, a retired English teacher and football coach.

Eight miles away, in a tree-lined Hamden neighborhood, Khanh Tran is coping with his own visions of Vietnam— the homeland he fled at age 15 just hours before the country fell to the North Vietnamese communist troops Mannion was fighting. Tran says his family still gets harassing messages left on his answering machine. He assumes the voices are angry veterans scanning the phone book for Vietnamese last names. Tran says he fully understands the soldiers' pain.

"I feel like I owe the American people something," said Tran, 44, an architect. "It's a guilt you always carry. I keep myself busy all the time. That's my way of coping with it."

Saturday marked the 30th anniversary of the fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War. More than 2 million people, including 58,000 Americans, died over the course of the 20-year conflict, half of them civilians. For Mannion, Tran and countless others, time has only scarred the wounds of Vietnam, it has not fully healed them. Memories are never far out of reach, but anniversaries bring them into clearer focus. The pain each has endured for the last three decades is a testament to the chaos of the war and the complex imprint it has made on the American psyche.

"NOT A DAY GOES BY ..." Mannion has been a leader in his community since returning from combat.

For 30 years, Mannion coached football and taught English at Sheehan High School in Wallingford, and now travels to area schools to share his wartime experience with students. Mannion did a 13-month tour from September 1967 to October 1968 as an artillery forward observer with Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment. He was 21 at the time.
The company was sent to Hill 861, outside Khe Sanh, in northwest South Vietnam near the North-South demilitarized zone. For four months, Mannion's company withstood heavy mortar and sniper fire protecting the post from communist assault. Mannion's job was to spot artillery shells, a dangerous assignment that required emerging from his hillside bunker under heavy fire.

Mannion was wounded twice, received two Purple Hearts and was among 26 Marines in his company honored with the Presidential Unit Citation. I've gotten away from the bad parts," Mannion said. "Some guys might have used alcohol or drugs to mask that. I try to deal with it up front and honestly."

But the horrors of Hill 861 weren't easily set aside. Mannion keeps a trunk full of items from the war and each conjures a vivid memory. There's the army green wash towel, shredded by shrapnel from a mortar round that exploded just a few feet from where he hunkered down in a foxhole. His topographical map is a maze of squiggly lines and numbers, but Mannion looks at it and sees peaks, valleys and enemy soldiers.

Mannion knew he had to confront his past firsthand, so in 2000, he boarded a plane for Vietnam to revisit Hill 861."It shrunk the experience for me, and made it slightly more manageable," Mannion said.

"Having been back once, it's not as bitter 30 years later," he said.
"The feeling is tempered by the fact that I went back, and never once did I see an unfriendly face."

Anniversaries like this one dredge up pictures and sound clips in the media, but Mannion said Vietnam

is never far from his thoughts. "The 30th anniversary will be a block of time to look back, but by 1975, I had left Vietnam five years earlier. My war was already over by then."

"IT'S ABOUT THE SOLDIERS"

Khanh Tran was playing with friends on the streets of Saigon when his parents scooped him up, brought him to a military base and hustled him on to a Chinook helicopter fleeing Vietnam. The date was April 29, 1975, just hours before Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese.

Tran's father, a South Vietnamese Air Force intelligence officer, rushed his family onto the escape craft, but he was forced to stay behind."I was sitting there playing and my mother said we had to go and to say goodbye to my friends," said Tran."We drove right onto the tarmac, there were armed soldiers everywhere, just lined up there with machine guns. They didn't care if you were young or old, they just pushed you into the helicopter."

The chopper ferried them to the Philippines, and then to Guam, where they spent a month waiting for word from their father."Every day we would go to the main office to look for my father's name on a newcomers' list," Tran said. "I thought he was dead. Then one day, he shows up. He is shot in the leg and the arm. I was just jumping for joy. It was the happiest time of our lives."

Tran's family and other refugees were brought to an Arkansas Army base before the family relocated to Dumas, Texas. Ironically, Tran's first daughter was born April 29, 1985, the 10th anniversary of his flight from Vietnam. The next year, in 1986, Tran moved to Hamden.

Tran has spent the last 30 years trying to repay the debt of gratitude he says he owes American veterans. He volunteers with Vietnam veterans' groups and helped design the home of a doctor who treats Vietnam vets. "I want to dedicate my thoughts to the Vietnam vet," Tran said. "I want to tell them how much I appreciate what they gave up for my country.

"For me, it's just a way of reminding me that I need to be grateful and humble and understanding the deep meaning of freedom," he said.

Tran has not returned to Vietnam since leaving. The 30th anniversary is making Tran reconsider."I planned to go back two years ago," he said. "Maybe now I can. Maybe 30 years is closure for me. I don't know. I feel I have to be at peace with myself."

BA HUMBUG

By Craig W Tourte

"A Christmas POST from 2007"

OK so I'm not going to post my Christmas at Khe Sanh story this year. You know the one where Ann Margaret shows up on the well lighted stage placed over the ammo dump...yea, that one. Although I still think that story is one of my better BS pieces, I guess because I see such hilarious absurdity in the possibility or probability. I still can't get over the number of people who believed it could have actually occurred. One even said that he must have been up in the hills because he missed it.....Oh please. Still others demanded that I no longer write fiction on this web site, so that was the end of my fiction novel period.

Anyway, I was out driving around this evening in the dark (no not aimlessly) and the rain was really coming down. Now I realize California rain is not the same rain you folks get in other climate locations, I mean I played golf on Tuesday, but please try to follow the story here. Anyway it's cold and wet and the wind is blowing and I'm trying to remember how miserable I was 40 years ago at about this time. Now because of personal issues I had with my now deceased mother and step-father, Christmas was never much of a thrill, so I can't look back and remember how wonderful it was sitting around the old living room with the folks and grandma, you know the warm and fuzzy Christmas feeling, but I really envy those who can.

I do have some pretty vivid memories of a number of years ago spending Christmas with a few other lonely and bitter drinking buddies hanging out and complaining about this time of year, seems everyone else was so darn happy and filled with the

Christmas spirit, which of course I never had, and to tell you the truth, I'm not so sure to this day I know what it is.

Now getting back to my story. I guess for Christmas our mess must have put out a pretty decent meal because if we didn't I am confident that Tom Horchler, Paul Turnbull and a few others, who had the privilege of eating in our mess, would even to this day, tell me about it. Tom always relates how good he thought the food was (he even kept a few of the menus) however others were not so complementary.

Anyway you look at it, Christmas at Khe Sanh was lousy (for me), the food was rotten, the weather cold and wet with that damp fog rolling in and staying all night. No heaters, no lights, no blankets, wet clothes, socks and boots. no radios or televisions or Christmas carols. The red clay mud stuck to your boots making them 5 pounds heavier and you 3 inches taller. I didn't think about Christmas at home, I didn't think about mom because I knew that she was not thinking about me and I'm sure Christmas was just a little more enjoyable for her knowing that I wouldn't be hanging around. But worst of all, worst of all about Christmas at Khe Sanh, was that tall, leggy Ann Margaret with the dancing girls from the USO show, never showed up on the stage that was never built over the ammo dump.

POETRY

"Hospital Corpsman Prayer" by Sam Messer

"Hospital Corpsman Prayer"

Grant me, oh Lord, for the coming events; Enough knowledge to cope and some plain common sense.

Be at our side on those nightly patrols; And be merciful judging our vulnerable souls.
Make my hands steady and as sure as a rock; when the others go down with a wound or in shock.

Let me be close, when they bleed in the mud; With a tourniquet handy to save precious blood.
Here in the jungle, the enemy near; Even the corpsman can't offer much lightness and cheer.

Just help me, oh Lord, to save lives when I can; Because even out there is merit in man.

If It's Your will, make casualties light; And don't let any die in the murderous night.

These are my friends I'm trying to save; They are frightened at times, but You know they are brave.

Let me not fail when they need so much; But to help me serve with a compassionate touch.
Lord, I'm no hero -- my job is to heal; And I want You to know Just how helpless I feel.

Bring us back safely to camp with dawn; For too many of us are already gone.

Lord bless my friends If that's part of your plan; And go with us tonight, when we go out again."

Semper Fi
Can Do
Sam Messer
CBMU 301

QUALIFIED

By Craig W. Tourte

It didn't take much to be qualified for military service during the war in Vietnam. The right age, no dependents, not currently in school, a trigger finger and you were good to go, of course qualifications have changed since that time. A number of years ago, before the current conflict, on business it was necessary for me to visit one of the local Marine Corps Recruiters. As I waited for the recruiter I could not help but over hear him discussing an



enlistment with a young man who was seated at his table. The recruiter told the prospect that he needed to finish high school before he came back. The recruiter said, "If you quit high school you might quit us and the Marine Corps does not take quitters." I was duly impressed.

I happened to be attending a rather large gathering of various friends and acquaintances the other evening when I observed a Marine dressed in uniform. The Marine wore the stripes of a Sergeant E5, three rather impressive long rows of colorful ribbons - which included the combat action ribbon - adorned his uniform. I walked over and introduced myself, he of course just happened to be a Marine Corps recruiter. I was wearing my new black Khe Sanh Survivor shirt so he knew we had a connection. We shared a few stories and I found that Sergeant Mike Green had been in the Marine Corps for six years



and had served two tours of duty in Iraq, one of those tours with the Third Battalion, First Marine Corps Regiment. In addition, Sergeant Green had served at the Navy base of Guantanamo Bay and in various assignments in South and Central America. He was accompanied by Gunnery Sergeant David Hudson, who although not in uniform, was never-the-less easy to spot as a Marine. I told them how difficult the Marine Corps was in "my day" and that my impression was that "we" were a bit "tougher" than today's youth. I just needed to throw that in, because I had heard it from so many others who had gone before me. I'm sure he smiled inside and thought "here we go again." As a Marine in uniform, I thought it was kind of his job to have to listen to another old guy.

The following day I asked Steve Wiese (B/1/26) if he would like to take a short drive over to the Marine Corps Recruiting station located not far from our homes. Steve hesitated somewhat, told me that he'd have to lose a little weight, that his back was really hurting him, and he could not run like he once did. I assured Steve that the Marine Corps was not interested in his return to duty.

I picked up the Fall/Winter issue 69 of our Red Clay magazine, printed a small label that read, "Donated by Vietnam Veterans of the 77 day siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base at Khe Sanh" a couple of coins, and then Steve and I headed for the Marine Corps Recruiting office.

Sergeant Green and I talked for about an hour. Ramrod straight, committed to the principles of the Marine Corps and interested in only recruiting those who were qualified to wear the uniform of the Marine Corps, Sergeant Green and Gunnery Sergeant Hudson were gracious with the time they took to talk to a couple of old jarheads. I mentioned the siege at Khe Sanh and Steve's participation and survival of the Ghost Patrol. Sergeant Green acknowledged our service and thanked us for "paving the way." I told Sergeant Green my little story about the recruiter telling the prospect to finish high school because the Marine Corps did not take quitters, he related that it was at times difficult to tell young men they were just not qualified.

Sergeant Green and Gunnery Sergeant Green were kind enough to have their photographs taken with us as we presented them with the copy of "Red Clay." I also was able to get them to stand with my "Khe Sanh Veterans - Northern California" banner.

We were both quiet and a little depressed on the ride home. Steve spoke first and mentioned what we were both thinking, as painful as it was, we realized years ago, that we were old and no longer qualified.



MEMORIES OF THE HILL BATTLES

Monday, December 1st, 2008
Article First Posted at VietVet.org Web Site, 1997
by Jim Wodecki
for Lt. James Epps



02 July 1944-18 Jan 2000

As we draw near the 30th anniversary of the major operations in Khe Sanh, my memory is of my first operation as a brand new Second Lieutenant in Vietnam...the Hill Fights in the Spring of 1967.Because of the potential danger of the siege and its high media profile, the battles of the previous Spring have not yet received their due recognition. Being an eyewitness to the final phases of the battle and its aftermath, I have known that ever since. Just as the Vietnam Veterans built their own monument, now is the time to illuminate this battle, for us to tell our own story.

The official Marine Corps history, as recounted in "Marines in Vietnam 1967," describes the battle as "...First Battle of Khe Sanh, one of the bloodiest battles and hardest fought battles of the Vietnam War." Lt. Gen. Victor H. Krulak, USMC (Ret.), speaks of the initial engagement: "The results were the bitterest fighting of the entire war for the Marines."

First, the hills. These are ancient hills, formed by volcano, rounded by time, overgrown by triple canopy jungle, overspread by vast acreage of dense elephant grass, stands of bamboo scattered at random. Here and there are footpaths made by generations of Montagnards that wind over ridges and valleys, only wide enough for small people in single file. In some areas, the terrain is impassible; in other areas, the terrain and the vegetation deny passage.

Now my story. When I arrived in country, I was assigned to 1/26 which had been located at Hill 55 for some months. From the time I joined, there were rumors that we were due to be rotated and would be moving. About 10 days after I joined Charlie Co., we received move-out orders, wound up in Phu Bai, and were being briefed to move to the rim of the Ashau Valley as escort for 175s (Howitzers).

The operation was to be called CUMBERLAND. Without any prior warning, we received a warning order to move out and were sent to the air strip. After hanging out in the blazing sun, C130s showed up; and we loaded up where we were going. When we landed, the pilot reversed the thrust of his engines and braked so hard that it threw us around the cargo bay. As the high-pitched whine if the motor lowered the ramp, the first thing that greeted us was the air full of artillery smoke and the turn-out at the west end of the strip was lined up with litters.

While we were milling around, my second squad leader recognized someone on one of the litters; and that is how we found out there was a tremendous battle going on in the hills, and the casualties were terrible. Shortly, we were assigned the western sector of the base to defend, the area that became known as the Ponderosa. The original road to the base from Highway 9 entered there, and young Montagnard boys were selling crossbows and bracelets.

On the other side of the road, the jungle began. For the next few days, we ran patrols during the day and were base security at night. On Charlie Company's second day in Khe Sanh, the third platoon was detailed to escort an artillery battery with an added section of 155s (Howitzers) about two kilometers outside the base to a location near what became known as the Rock Quarry. The 105s were nearly at maximum range firing out beyond 881N; displacing the battery allowed better coverage.

The first night we were just kind of set in a loose perimeter around the battery with hasty fighting holes. It was that night that is remembered by everyone in the Hill Fights as the night of the rainstorm. I was new to Vietnam, and this was my first thunderstorm; and, naturally, it overwhelmed me. It also made a lasting impression on seasoned grunts. My hasty fighting hole was three feet deep and the rain filled it up in less than ten minutes. Water poured out of the sky.

For the next 5 days we patrolled all around Khe Sanh Combat Base.

There were times, during lulls in the battle, between helicopter flights or resupply and medevac, between prolonged barrages by the artillery, in the quiet, away from the Combat Base, that the beauty of the Khe Sanh Valley emerged to touch us — a lush tropical paradise with birds and monkeys...and swirling cones of circling buzzards. From a distance, the hills look smooth as California foothills: fields of grass scattered with clumps of trees and interspersed with stands of forest.

On the 10th of May the artillery battery struck its position, and we returned to the Combat Base. Rumors flew. We were broken down into helo teams and dropped off on the ridgeline to the east of the crest of Hill 881N. The hilltop was confusion, as there was a reinforced battalion lifting off after patrolling and pursuing the enemy after the fall of Hill 881N five days earlier. We were replacing them.

The next impression, after all the milling around, was the smell of death. Everywhere Overpowering everything. Everything was shredded. Big trees had been splintered by big bombs. The ground was pulverized. Big trees had been splintered by big bombs. The foliage was finely sliced by all the shrapnel of a big battle. There seemed to be a fine powdery dust scattered over everything. While we were checking out the LZ, which really was a rounded ridgeline across a draw from 881N, I ran into two classmates from the Basic School. We had graduated just 3 months before. They told me their story of the Hill Fights. A fellow classmate had tripped off the battle some 3 weeks earlier when he had climbed Hill 861 from the backside, up the ridgeline that went across Hill 861-Alpha.

He and I had been to recon school at Camp Pendleton just before leaving the States and had learned not to use the easy route of approach to any terrain feature. Apparently, his little FO team had scaled Hill 861 turned into a ridgeline that ran west to 881N&S. He had caught them by surprise, and they reacted with fury. His Marines had pulled him back severely wounded. There were Marines missing. This became characteristic of the phases of the Hill Fights. Units who took over from the initial assault units were charged with recovering the missing.

My basic-school classmates continued to tell me their story. They took 861. Then fought their way along the backbone ridge that runs from 861 to 881N&S. The crest of the ridge runs in a line from east to west. Sloping away from the backbone are intersecting ridgelines that are steep up and down and broad on their tops. Some were forested. The main ridgeline was so steep and thickly overgrown at it was impassible; therefore, any route of approach from east to west had to follow the military crest of the ridgeline, across the secondary ridges that ran perpendicular to it. The Lieutenants told of taking these ridge lines one by one, only to have to back off each one in turn so artillery and air could bombard the next ridge. There were five of these secondary ridgelines. It took days.

The conversations I am recounting took only a few minutes and for 30 years has stayed clearly in my mind. My fellow Lieutenants told me about how the NVA they fought were much bigger than the South Vietnamese and how some of the dead did not look like Vietnamese — maybe Cubans. They talked about snipers tying themselves in trees and fighting to the death. And how some of them appeared to be drugged on something because, in the final counter-attack, they charged out of their bunkers at the attacking Marines in a agitated delirium, seeming to foam at the mouth, with their weapons at high port. They had excellent weapons, good uniforms and web gear and even some wore steel helmets.

For the last 5 days, they had been patrolling to the west and northwest — out to the Laotian border — and had occasional, but serious contacts. The NVA had not completely quit the field of battle; they had only changed the tempo of their operations. Then it was their turn to take the CH-46s. The reinforced battalion was gone. A rifle company, C/1/26, was alone on 881N. We left the LZ and marched single file to the actual hilltop of 881N and set in for the night among the jumble of trees blown off at knee level by one and two thousand pound bombs during the taking of the Hill.

We were on our own. Here and there, some intact NVA bunkers offered protection. We also used fighting holes vacated by the assault companies. During our assumption of the battlefield, and for weeks after, details emerged which illuminated the nature and disposition of the fighting units and the

ferocity of the battle, not just giant trees strewn around like matchsticks, not just the dirt and lesser vegetation shredded but the detritus and debris of big military units in a desperate battle; ammunition wrapping, cardboard rocket and mortar shipping tubes, piles of spent brass mixed with machine gun links, ragged battle dressings, food garbage, dead batteries, ragged web gear and shards of uniforms, tattered ponchos, a NVA bush hat in the low branches of a denuded tree, burned out smoke grenades, loose rounds, charging clips, empty wooden ammo boxes.

As the companies of 1/26 replaced the assault companies, we patrolled and swept and searched the entire area around the hilltops and much of their slopes. This process commenced immediately and continued for months. During this time, we continued to make contact with the NVA, at first regularly and seriously, then more sporadically as time continued. This was one of our missions, as well as occupying the hilltops, denying easy access and maneuver to the NVA and continuing to search the battlefield because, a number of times during the Hill Fights, dead Marines had to be left behind while assaulting units regrouped. They were missing. Any time we discovered previously uncharted remains, we shut down the patrol, set up security, and Graves Registration people choppered out from Khe Sanh in CH-34s to inspect and remove the bones.

This description of our mission commenced during the consolidation phase of the attack on the Hills. In our narrative, C/1/26 is in its first 24 hrs. on Hill 881N. The next morning, during resupply, a CH-34 lost power on lift off and crashed. While two platoons of C Company climbed off 881N to 881S, the Third Platoon was detailed to guard the 34. This was on the intermediate crest of 881N, just to the south of the geographical crest. On the terrain maps, it looked like a starfish with a rounded body from which four or five ridges emanated like the legs of a starfish. They sloped away into ravines. This had been the scene of the NVA counterattack just before the final assault of 881N. It was to figure prominently in the opening battles of the siege. It was a natural stepping stone from 881S to the north and from any approach from the east.

The ridgelines that runs from 861 to 881N&S does not lift up gradually to those hilltops. It ends in almost a "T," and the ground falls off steeply to a large low area at the base of Hill 881N&S terrain complex. There is a low saddle that runs over to the starfish hilltop. It is in the vicinity of the cross bar of the "T" of the east-west ridge where we had landed the day before. We had walked across the saddle to the starfish before turning north to go up Hill 881N. The actual crest of 881 was too heavily forested to land a helicopter. Now we are guarding a helicopter in a ravine of the starfish-shaped hillock, one platoon where there had been three companies. A long night.

We waited all next day for a CH-53 to lift out the CH-34. We ran local security around the hilltop. We discovered that wherever there weren't bomb craters, there were bunkers. The night the NVA had counterattacked the assault companies, they had reoccupied some of these very bunkers and had rooted out again in an 8-hr fight. Many of them were filled with dead (now putrefy) NVA and their gear. This area was still littered. Huge areas of all the surrounding terrain had been burned off by napalm and white phosphorus. By 1915 the chopper was lifted out, and we received water and chow resupply. We thought we were going to spend another night there, but the company on 881S radioed over to us; and we had to secure chow call, saddle up, and hump the 5-gallon water cans that had just been delivered. It was now dusk.

When we got to the bottom of the steep ravine that separates 881N&S, we were nearly overpowered by the stench of death. This must have been why the NVA had been burying their dead during the initial assault of Hill 881S. It took an hour and a half in the deepening dusk to reach the friendly positions on 881S. We stayed inside the lines of the company on 881S. Their CP group occupied some of the NVA bunkers. Marine fighting holes and bunkers tend to be ragged holes torn in the earth. These were dug plumb and straight, lined with matting, and deep. By this time, almost all of the log and dirt roofs had been blown off by engineers as the mop-up continued The next day, we walked to 861 with the assaulting units which had been occupying 881S since its fall on May 1st, 1967. A/1/26 on 881S and C/1/26 on 861 then settled into a week's long program of occupying our hills and daily patrolling the terrain complex of hilltops, denying to the NVA the reoccupation of the hilltops and sweeping the area

for fresh activity and still looking for residual material from the battles, especially for any trace of the missing.

C/1/26 began to clean up, then fortify Hill 861. The entire top was buried in loose soil the air campaign had blown over 20 feet of the crest, and that soil was strewn all over. The entire topographical crest was pocked with craters from big bombs. Some of those craters were big enough to hold a 2-story building.

As we dug in, monsoon rains began to wash away all the loose dirt; and NVA remains began to appear. Digging fighting holes often resulted in unearthing the bones of dead NVA and their gear. Our routine in the weeks following was to run a company minus patrol every day out to 881N. On a 3-platoon rotation, that meant two days out and one day in. These were day patrols; we returned to our hilltop each night. We walked the original axis of attack over and over for weeks. Every time we varied our route, we found new bunkers and more debris. Slowly, we were able to reconstruct the original fights, including the rally and chow points, medevac landing zones, and firing positions of crew-served weapons. We went over and around the 5 ridges that were perpendicular to our route. We even found at least two rusty M-16s that had been thrown away. One still had a cleaning rod in it. Over the weeks, it became apparent how well the NVA had prepared the battlefield and how merciless the Hill Fights had been. Had the NVA not been discovered prematurely, it would have taken untold men and casualties to take those hills.
Jim Epps
Charlie 1/26

POETRY

The Ground

They appeared out of no where,
they looked dirty, weathered and worn.
No one knew where they came from,
there clothes where stained and torn.
They walked slowly, deliberately and with purpose,
they stopped in front of a dirt mound.
There eyes looked hollow and sad,
not one of them made a sound.
One took a rifle and fixed the bayonet,
he stuck it on-top of that dirt mound.
Another put a helmet on the butt of that gun,
still another went down on one knee.
Strangers stopped what they were doing and watched, soon every one stopped everything so they could see.
The one on his knee put his head in his hand, some who were watching started to cry.
No one knew who they where, but everyone knew that was hallowed ground.
Suddenly I recognized them, it brought a tear to my eye.
You see I realized they were us, it's true we were them.

Rick Tam

LATE OBIT

STEVE DADO HEADQUARTERS BTRY 1/13

Stephen J. Dado, 63, of Chippewa Falls, formerly of East Chicago, passed away Friday, Jan. 2, 2009.

He was U.S. Marine veteran in Vietnam. He was in the Battle for the Rock Pile and the siege of Khe Sanh. Stephen received the national defense medal, the Vietnam service medal, Vietnam campaign medal with device, 3 presidential unit citations and the good conduct medal. He was a member of the Khe Sanh Veteran's Association, the Disabled American Veterans and the Croatian Fraternal Union Lodge 856.

He is survived by: his daughter Debra (Ray) Clayton; three grandchildren, Gaby, Jaiden and Nadia; mother Mary Dado; sisters, Rosemary (Anthony) Salczynski, Barbara (Cesar) Morales, Helen (late Tony) Olton, Elizabeth (Fernando) Martinez, Joan (Gus) Guerrero; brothers, Robert (Rose) Dado and John Dado; brother-in-law William Friant; numerous nieces and nephews; dear friend, Roger Dressel; and Dale Schick.

He was preceded in death by: father Steve; sister Catherine Friant; and niece Starr Martinez.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDA TION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to graduating high school students who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student or who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited curriculum following high school graduation.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans. Inc., a 501 (c) (19) charitable organization.

3. **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 4/21/2009 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:**

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid member of Khe Sanh Veterans. Inc. who has been a member in good standing for a minimum of three years. This includes deceased life members of KSV, and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA in Vietnam if family members are associate members of KSV Inc. Children of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, Character, Citizenship, leadership potential, and financial need. A point selection system is included in the application forms. Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities, or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review, and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the **"Red Clay"** Newsletter.

THE AWARDS

The award will be $300.00 per school year for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each year applied.

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to:

Mr. Dan Fisher
Chairman KSVSF Committee
6050 52ND ST N
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

1. The money is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees, and books at an accredited institution of the candidate's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant.

3. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

4. The Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the award amount to the selected students upon fulfillment of proof of registration sent to the Review Committee Chairman when it becomes available.

5. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of June of the current school year.

6. Scholarship Applications must he received by the Committee Chair on or before April 21of the current school year to be attended.

7. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points (attach last school GPA transcript)

GPA 4.0 = 40 points
GPA 3.5 = 35 points
GPA 3.0 = 30 points
GPA 2.5 = 25 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 35 points total
Military Veteran = 15 points
Student Government = 10 points
Community related services = 5 points
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 5 points

c. Short essay (60 words) on education goals and self= 10 points

d. Financial Need. Max = 15 points (the Fund is designed to help those in need of educational financial support).

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation Application Form

(A Copy Is Enclosed in this Magazine .Please Keep For Further Reference)

Date: _____

1. Applicant Information:

Name: Last_____ First_____MI____
Address: Street_____, City_____St___Zip_____
Home phone: AC_____/ _____/ _____E-mail address:_____
Birthdate: Day____ Month_____ Year_____

2. Sponsor Information (Khe Sanh Veteran. Inc. Member):
Name: Last _____First_____
Relationship to applicant _____
Branch of service_____
Unit served at Khe Sanh _____Dates_____

3. School Information:
School name: _____
School Address: Street _____,City_____St__ Zip Code _____
Phone number: AC_____/_____/_____
Curriculum/intended course of study _____
School year to be funded _____

4. Applicant Personal History
a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, offices held, etc)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. List school honors, prizes, community activities participated in, military service, volunteer service to community, church, or government.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. ENCLOSE THIS APPLICATION FORM, A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF, GPA TRANSCRIPT, AND A BRIEF PERSONAL SUMMARY (60 WORDS) TELLING OF YOUR VOCATIONAL PLANS AND FINANCIAL NEED, ADDRESSED TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.

BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL FILLED FORMS FOR YOUR RECORDS!

I SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant Signature of KSV Parent, Grandparent, or Guardian

Note* APPLICATION DEADLINE June 21ST OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR

- **IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, ALL INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

APPROVED:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, KSV Scholarship Committee

_____

Thomas Eichler, President KSV

CHANGES TO KHE SANH VETERANS DIRECTORY

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Change Email: CSARBOGAST@AOL.COM

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SONORA CA, 95370

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EDMOND, OK 73083

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FIRE & RESCUE
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Cell 707-326-4425

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ENNRKING, DENNIS
Should Read **ENNEKING, DENNIS J**
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MY SIX MONTHS WITH THE BRUTE
A Memoir by Major Sam Moyer, USMC (Ret)

Submitted By Lt/Col Tony

This memory by Major Moyer was written into a response from someone who was going to write a book on General Krulak. The book has not been published but in view of the General's death, Major Moyer thought it appropriate to allow people to read about his memories now. The General's funeral was held at the MCAS Miramar Chapel. I believe the service was held there rather than the MCRD Chapel because of size. There was an overflow crowd.

Tony A

"Okay, Moyer. You can stop begging. I just got the word that Red Greene is done with his school boondoggle, and should be here in less than a month. You'll be free. Where do you want to go?"

It was the summer of 1960, and so ended my six months as then, M/Gen Victor H. (Brute) Krulak's driver at MCRD, San Diego.

I think the whole thing can be blamed on my special drill platoon. As an instructor at the Sea School, I had created and trained a special (silent) drill platoon from what was at that time an extremely large pool of school graduates who had no ship's detachment to go to. We had them on burial details at the national cemetery at Ft. Rosecrans (six or eight funerals a day), we had them on flag-raisings, we had them in parades – anything to keep them occupied and out of trouble.

So I came up with the grand idea of creating a "special drill platoon" from the sea pool. I floated the idea to the boss, he approved it, and then gave me a free hand in selecting and training. I chose only men who were at least six feet tall, eliminated those with two left feet or no sense of rhythm, and began training. We drilled about five hours a day. Five days a week. And eventually I had a platoon of tall, sharp, young, good-looking Marines in their dress blues who could – following a single command from me – perform nearly 20 minutes of silent drill including several different Queen Ann salutes, rifle tosses, separation into squares, marching "to the winds" and return, and so on.

This led eventually to no small amount of publicity, and performances not only for the Depot commander and his staff, but also at events throughout the greater San Diego area. Which meant, as the trainer and NCOIC, I also received a certain level of exposure.

So it was that around December of 1959, I was anticipating a summer return to infantry duty at Camp Pendleton after my four years at MCRD (two on the grinder, two at Sea School). My thoughts were interrupted when the OIC called me into his office and directed me to proceed post haste to the headquarters building, and to report to the chief of staff. Since I didn't know the chief of staff, and to the best of my knowledge he didn't know me, my first thought was "what have I done wrong lately?" (This was a common reaction for someone who had survived two years on the grinder during the mid-50s, following the drowning tragedy at Ribbon Creek. Drill instructors fell like flies during that period....)

After checking myself in the mirror, straightening my uniform, dusting my shoes, etc. (this was, after all, Sea School), I presented myself to the staff secretary. He looked me up and down, told me to take a seat. Within a few minutes a staff sergeant I didn't know emerged from the chief's office. The staff secretary told him he was free to return to his unit, and that someone would be in touch with him. Then he turned to me.

He said, "Do you know why you're here, sergeant?" I told him I didn't. He said, "A new commanding general will be arriving next month, and he needs a driver. His regular driver apparently has gone off to some school somewhere, and the general needs a temporary driver until the regular driver can get here. Probably some time this summer." Hmmm. Okay. I remained silent.

"The word was sent to commands on the base to nominate suitable candidates for the job. You, in particular, were identified as a volunteer. Apparently the chief of staff noticed you at some kind of drill performance." (Apparently also, the staff secretary had not seen the brilliant performance of my platoon.) "One of the general's absolute require-

ments is that his temp driver must have successfully completed a tour as a drill instructor, and it must have been recent. I understand that you completed your tour last year. Is that correct?" (Yes sir) "Were you subject to any disciplinary action while you were on the grinder?"

Hmmm. Like all drill instructors of that era, I'd been relieved for investigation of alleged maltreatment two or three times, but had always been exonerated, and was never charged. "No sir!"

He leaned toward his intercom, depressed a lever, and told the chief that Sergeant Moyer was there. Then told me to go in.

After my chat with the chief, I left his office. I didn't want the job, but of course I wasn't going to dog the interview, either, so I'd done the best I could. The staff secretary told me to return to my unit, and that someone would be in touch with me. I noticed another staff sergeant was waiting to go in.

I should have dogged it.

A few days later I was told to go back over to the headquarters building and report to the staff secretary. This couldn't be good news. By that time I'd learned that the name of the new commanding general was Krulak. I sensed, vaguely and uncomfortably, that my 0369 MOS couldn't possibly have prepared me for the next six months. The hills of Camp Pendleton began to take on a luster and attractiveness that I'd never assigned to them before.

There was no Internet, no worldwide web for me to go to. About the only thing I could learn about General Krulak was that he was an Academy graduate, had earned a Navy Cross in WWII as the commander of a parachute battalion, and that his nickname was "Brute." ("Brute?") What kind of Marine general is called Brute? More importantly.... Why is a Marine general called Brute?

No one felt it worthwhile to tell the Brute's new driver that the Brute was five feet, four inches tall, which may account for my gaping mouth the first day I was ushered into his office.

Although the chief of staff had made it clear that personal chemistry would also be a factor in this job, and therefore if General Krulak wasn't comfortable with me as his driver I could still be replaced, it seems that the Brute found me at least tolerable. He kept me.

In the process of creating his own "team," General Krulak also hired a new aide and brought in his own chief of staff (Colonel Merrill M. Day). The aide had been a series officer in one of the recruit battalions, and I believe that experience was also a credential that could not be waived. After interviews with likely candidates, he chose Captain Louis H. Buehl III. Captain Buehl and I were very close to the same age, and we were both feeling our way into a job we knew nothing about. Our relationship was occasionally prickly (which was not a good thing for me, but didn't seem to affect his career at all, since he eventually achieved the rank of lieutenant general).

And thus began one of the most interesting, most educational, and most exasperating six months of my Marine Corps career.

I had no one to teach me. No one to coach me. No one to advise me on protocol (who gets in the damn car first, who gets in last, who gets out first, what to do when the get-out-first person will be on the traffic side of the street instead of the curb-side when you arrive at your destination, what to do with ladies, do I shake hands first or salute first (or do I EVER shake hands?), do I also hold the door for the aide when he's going to ride in the front seat, or should I hustle to the driver's seat so I can take off as soon as the aide closes his door, etc.) Then there were the two-star plates on front and rear, and when to display them, when to remove them altogether and put them in the trunk, when to just cover them. When to wash the car (an every day chore, but always subject to interruption half-way through the job when the orderly came rushing down from the office telling me the general wants the car in front of the building in two minutes!).

Still. What interesting things I learned about the Marine Corps, and about the interactions between flag and general officers, and about the protocol they had to observe. The aide was constantly leafing through the Blue Book and its Navy counterpart, checking dates of rank. Which general officer would pick up his phone first? Which aide would

tell the other aide, "General XXX is on the line – please inform General YYY." And with rear admirals having a lower half (one star equivalent) and upper half (two stars), constantly having to check their book to see who was what, and what military protocol dictated for that particular event.

General Krulak was an absolute hands-on guy. He wanted to know what was happening on his base at all hours of the day and night. It wasn't uncommon for him to tell me at the end of the day, "Moyer, pick me up at my quarters at 0500." (He usually spared the aide these early morning jaunts.) With three rug-rats under six years old in my house and only one car, that meant I'd have to get my family up at 0400, get the little ones all bundled up and moved to the car, and head for the base by 0415 or so. My wife would drop me off at the motor pool, I'd kiss everyone goodbye (not really – didn't want to wake up the kids, but did need to wake up my wife), go in, get the car, wipe it down inside, and get to the general's quarters by about ten 'til five.

He'd come bounding out (never saw anyone so constantly in motion, so full of energy, always, under all circumstances and all conditions), jump in the back seat, and say, "Let's start at the bakery!" And at 0500 the two of us would walk in the back door of the depot bakery. Most of the bakers didn't know what General Krulak looked like, and he usually wore a field jacket on these early morning jaunts, so I got to observe (and enjoy the hell out of) a wide variety of reactions when we strolled in.

The first guy to see us would invariably (and predictably) see this six foot tall Marine, and this five-foot-four Marine coming down the dim passageway from the back door, and snarl, "What the xxxx are you doing here? Who the hell are you? Get the hell out!" Just as the last phrase ended, we'd be close enough for him to see the two stars on the field jacket and the scrambled eggs on the cap visor. First, he'd do a double-take. Classic. Like he couldn't believe what he was seeing. Of course, he had no rank insignia on his white baker's clothes, so we didn't know what his rank was, but General Krulak would usually say something like, "Good morning, sergeant. Is the chief baker in this morning?" By now the baker is believing what he's seeing. He pops to attention and screams, "Attention on deck!" It's noisy in there, of course, and the other early-morning bakers are scattered throughout the bakery and don't hear him, so he screams it again. "ATTENTION ON DECK!!"

This usually got everyone's notice, but they weren't sure why they would be coming to attention at 0500 while they were in the midst of baking bread and rolls and pies and such for the entire depot, so they usually wandered over to where we were standing, mostly out of curiosity. The casual postures gave way immediately to rigid attention.

General Krulak usually observed all this silently, and before anyone could go into a complete state of shock he calmed them with a few friendly words, a casual attitude, told them to relax, and assured them that he didn't want anyone to change his morning routine. Before we walked out of there a half hour later, all the bakers were eating out of his hand, telling him what was good and what was bad about their jobs, what equipment needed replacing, what frustrations they had. (I was the note-taker.) Before leaving, the general and I and the chief baker would invariably sit down, tear apart a hot, steaming loaf of bread, slather pieces of it with butter, and drink a cup of coffee. It almost made the early-morning disruption in my young family's life worthwhile.

Then the general would jump up, thank everyone, promise them he'd look into their grievances (if there were any), and head for the door. I'd dart ahead of him so I could open the back door, and then run to the car so I could open the rear door. He'd look at me and say, "Let's go to the grinder. Stop by the flagpole. I want to watch the morning PT." So we'd do that.

He'd constantly ask me questions about life as a drill instructor, and life as a recruit. They were penetrating, important questions, not superficial. He asked about duty hours. I explained that for most of my tour I worked platoons with only two drill instructors (due almost entirely to the extreme attrition). And that one time (due to my junior drill instructor being relieved for investigation of maltreatment), I was the only DI with my platoon for five days. There simply were no spare drill instructors in the battalion, and I had to be with the platoon 24 hours a day for five days before they could get me someone. He asked about duty hours when there were only two DIs for a platoon. I explained that in

such circumstances married drill instructors were actually with their families only about four waking hours out of every two days.

He asked how this could be so. So I explained. I go to work Monday morning after having the weekend off. I'm there by 0700. I work all day with the other DI following the training schedule. This is my duty day, so the other DI goes home about 1700, maybe 1730. I get them fed, do counseling and coaching and training, supervise their evening head call, hold final formation, get them bedded down. I return to the duty hut, shine my brass, shine my shoes, break out a clean uniform, get the ribbons and badges mounted, and get to bed by 2300. I'm up at 0430, get dressed, and am on the platoon street at 0500 shouting for the platoon to fall in. We march to the grinder where we do PT for 30 minutes. Return. Squad leaders report everyone present, I dismiss the platoon to shower, shave, use the head, return, make up their bunks, get dressed, and fall back in on the platoon street. March them to chow. Return from chow, do morning police and maintenance details. Inspect. By 0730 the training schedule resumes, the other DI is there, and we go through our day.

I go home at the end of the day, Tuesday. I arrive home by 1800. I'm tired, worn out, annoyed. I try to play with the kids while my wife fixes dinner and tries to talk with me about the kids or about her day or about her problems. I'm distracted. After dinner, I begin working again on my shoes and brass, and get two clean uniforms put together to take with me the next morning, which will be my duty day again. This is my non-duty day. By ten o'clock I'm ready for bed. I've actually "been with" my family for four hours. I've tried to be good to the kids and my wife, got my uniforms ready, and at 0630 the next morning I'm on my way to the base again. I won't see my family again until the following day, Thursday, about 1800, at which time I might spend four waking hours with them again before going to bed. Then back to the base again the next morning, Friday. This time I'll be there for three days – Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and won't get home until Monday at 1800. That's my off-duty day again, and again – I'll "be with" my family for four hours..

I don't believe General Krulak really understood the stress DIs were under until he asked me to explain that sequence. And then you add onto that, the intense competition to produce the best platoon in your four-platoon series – since your fitness reports are a direct reflection of the performance of your platoons – and one can see that there's a lot of potential for DI burnout and bad behavior.

But back to watching hundreds of recruits doing morning PT on the grinder with the Brute. It's completely dark out, of course, so no one can see the general and me standing beside his black staff car near the flagpole, which is centered on the huge macadam parade deck (grinder), off to one side. Again, he asks questions about life as a drill instructor. And about the life recruits lead. I answer as honestly as I can, trying to sidestep sensitive issues in order to avoid telling outright lies. (E.g., how DIs really feel about not being allowed to lay hands on a recruit, how they feel about profanity being proscribed, how they feel about being "spied on" by lieutenants and captains from what was euphemistically called the "Monitor Section" at the recruit training command.)

And after observing morning PT, once or twice he even told me to drive around closer to the recruit Quonset huts, where he wanted to get out and walk through the area, observing recruits running frantically to the heads and back to their huts. I thought this was a bad idea, and told him so. Only drill instructors in the recruit area walk – everyone else runs, pell-mell and recklessly. I was sure we would get knocked down by running recruits. And that would be a bad thing. I also told him I thought this would be too close to "spying" on drill instructors. The recruit areas were their sanctum. They felt protected. They felt secure. They "owned" the recruit areas. If a drill instructor wanted to stop a recruit and get nose-to-nose and scream at him, he should be able to do it without finding his commanding general standing in the dark ten feet away.

General Krulak pondered that for a few moments. In the end, he decided to make the walk anyway. I believe we did that twice. But after observing the complete pandemonium of early morning recruit routine, he decided not to go there any more. I felt a bullet had been dodged, and it was probably by one of the drill instructors whose area we had been in, and on whom good fortune had smiled those mornings.

In my driver duties I also spent a good deal of time at the general's quarters, which at MCRD San Diego were (to my eyes) quite magnificent. I got to know his cook, I got to know his steward, and best of all, I got to know Mrs. Krulak. A more gracious, personable and genuinely friendly woman would be hard to find. Everyone on the general's personal staff fell all over themselves trying to please her. She treated them (and me) like family. She was solicitous, caring, considerate and thoughtful. Compared to General Krulak's brisk, energetic and direct personality, Mrs. Krulak presented exactly the opposite side – relaxed, amiable, conversational.

Yet, General Krulak wasn't without his own considerate side, either. I recall a large parade we once had. Lots of local dignitaries and flag officers and their ladies. Following the parade, General and Mrs. Krulak were hosting a large reception and cocktail party at their quarters. It was late spring of 1960, and the weather was gorgeous. Officers wore their whites.

I was standing near the reviewing stand as the troops passed in review. One of the officers, a major leading a formation, unfortunately hit the bill of his white cap with his sword as he approached the reviewing stand and rendered the sword salute. In front of this large group of VIPs and their ladies, he knocked his cover completely off his head. It was stomped and kicked to and fro as hundreds of Marines continued to pass in review. Everyone felt bad for the major. There was no laughing, no joking, no glee.

Later, during the reception at the quarters, I found myself in the kitchen sampling all the goodies that were being enjoyed by the attendees. (No "fish-house punch" for me though, which was a special rum drink that was famous at Krulak parties.) While standing there talking to the cook and the steward and munching goodies, General Krulak appeared. He was carrying a very dirty, mauled white field grade officer's cap. He walked over to me.

He said, "Moyer, Major XXXXXXX didn't come to the reception, even though he and his wife were invited. I'm sure he's embarrassed. Please find out where he lives, and deliver these to him. Right away." He handed me the cap, and a small envelope with the major's name on it.

I learned where the major lived (a civilian community about 30 minutes from the base). When I arrived about 45 minutes later, I parked in front of the house. Got out, walked to the front door, rang the bell. A woman opened the door. Saw me. Saw the hat. Turned away, called to her husband. This tall, thin major came to the door, a drink in his hand, looking like someone had beat him with a stick. It was clear that this wasn't his first drink since getting home from his disaster. He was still in his whites, although they were unbuttoned and his tee shirt was visible. He looked miserable.

He opened the screen door. Said, "Yes, sergeant?" I handed him his hat. He looked at it, and its condition, and I'm sure I could see him re-living the entire incident. He finally reached out and took the hat. I said, "With General Krulak's compliments, sir." He thanked me. I then handed him the envelope. I said, "Also with General Krulak's compliments, sir."

I think he might have thought it was a reprimand for blowing off the reception, because he was reluctant to open it. I hadn't received any instructions for what I should do after I delivered the note, so I told the major that I'd wait to see if there would be a reply.

He nodded. Slowly, reluctantly, he lifted the flap and removed the note. As he did so, I saw relief flood his face. Tension literally drained out of him. He looked at me. He said, "Sergeant, have you seen this note?" I said, "No sir." He handed it to me. It was two sentences, and I remember exactly what it said.

"Dear Major XXXXX:
In 1934 a young Marine second lieutenant knocked off his cap when passing in review in front of President Roosevelt. I don't think it seriously affected my career.
Semper Fidelis,
VHK"

I thanked the major for sharing the note with me. As I walked back to the car, I could hear him excitedly telling his wife to come read the note. He was transformed. He was a happy man. And it showed me a side of my boss that I'd not seen. This is not to say he was cruel or harsh with people. While he didn't

suffer fools gladly, and I observed a few fools learn that the hard way, I'd still describe him as energetic, quick and direct. And also curious. I believe his intense curiosity may have been his most important character trait. He asked questions endlessly. He wanted to know every detail about everybody's job. He wanted to know how this piece of machinery worked, why we couldn't use this cheaper item instead of that more expensive item. When he ran across officers-in-charge of a section or of a unit, and asked functional questions about that unit's operations, woe be unto the OIC who didn't know the details of what his men were doing.

One of his favorite stories – well, at least one I heard him tell more than once or twice – was about his height. If the subject of his height came up, he was known to tell the story about taking his physical for entry into the Naval Academy. The minimum height was five feet, four inches. He always told the story with humor so his listeners were never uncomfortable. It seems the corpsman or nurse or doctor – whoever was measuring his height – simply couldn't quite stretch it to the five feet, four inch mark. When he asked the person how much he was missing, this person replied that it was a quarter of an inch. So then-candidate Krulak arranged to return at a specific time the next day to be measured again.

Just before going in for that measurement (as he told the story), he identified the exact spot on the top of his head where the measuring stick touched, smacked himself on that exact spot with a baseball bat – nearly knocking himself unconscious – waited for the knot on his head to form, then marched to the dispensary to complete his physical qualification for entry into the United States Naval Academy.

General Krulak and I were in the car together often – which is to say, without the aide – and as spring turned toward summer, I took those opportunities to continue to implore the general to let me return to the infantry, where I belonged. I couldn't raise the subject when Captain Buehl was in the car, because the one time I did it when he was there, he snapped me off and told me not to bring it up again. At any rate, it was not uncommon for General Krulak and I to chat if it was just we two in the car, and he knew how badly I wanted to return to what I considered a more "normal" Marine Corps life.

One day around May or June I was taking him to a golf course. It may have been a Saturday. And that's when he said, half-jokingly, "Okay, Moyer. I'm tired of hearing your complaints. I just got the word that Red Greene (a tech sergeant, his long-time driver) is done with his school boondoggle, and should be here in less than a month. Where do you want to go?"

I was a happy boy. I had always assumed that when he was done with me, he'd just send me up the road to 1stMarDiv. Cheaper, less trouble, all that. So I wondered if he really meant it when he asked me where I wanted to go. I said, "Well, that's good news, sir. Do you mean it? Do you really mean, 'where do I want to go'?" He said, yes – where do you want to go?

Well, hell. I knew I had to get back to the FMF, but did he really, really mean it? Seemed like it. So I decided to take a flyer. I said, "Well, general – I'd like to go to the Brigade in Hawaii."

Long pause. Then I heard him chuckle from the back seat. I figured I had over-reached, and that I would soon be at Camp Joseph H. Then he said, "Yeah. I bet you would." And he chuckled again.

I dropped him off at the golf course. He told me Mrs. Krulak would pick him up, and that I could secure for the day.

The following Monday morning I was sitting next to the aide when General Krulak's voice came over the intercom. "Lou? Get me Gus Larson on the phone." I knew General Larson was the head of personnel at HQMC – I suppose at the time he was still called the AC/S, G-1 – but didn't think anything further about it. After a few conversations I watched the aide depress his lever and tell General Krulak that General Larsen was on the phone.

Ten minute's later the intercom sounded off again, and General Krulak told the aide to send me in. I went in, centered myself in front of his desk, said, "Yes sir?" He said, "I just got off the phone with General Larson. You'll be getting orders to the 1st Marine Brigade in Hawaii. Plan on leaving next month."

And that was that. A couple of months later I was a rifle platoon sergeant in A/1/4, my life was back to normal, and I was running up and down hills, making amphibious landings, and remembering how to be a grunt again.

The things I learned while driving for Brute Krulak aren't things you can write down. They aren't things you learn from a book. They're things you absorb. By watching. By listening. By observing. By seeing the reactions of others. By overhearing the comments of others. These small, disparate pieces all fuse into a whole body of learning. I'm a much better man for my experience as General Krulak's driver. I believe I became a much better Marine as a result of spending six months with him. He never set out to "teach" me anything. He never "counseled" me, he never mentored me. I was just his young temporary driver, not particularly happy doing it, yet my exposure to him changed me for the better in nearly all aspects of my life, both personal and professional.

And I suspect that – I'm not the only one whose life or career gained significant traction as a result of spending time with "The Brute."

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THE CORPS TAKES CARE OF ITS OWN(AND AT TIMES DESERVING OTHERS) GREAT POP-POP GETS HIS MEDAL

([a true story dedicated to my great wife)

In 1986, one week after the birth of our first born child, a special ceremony took place on the grounds of the Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Virginia. This was a unique ceremony, but not un-similar to others, I'm sure, that have occurred before -- and since. This particular ceremony the Marine Corps conducted was in honor of an enlisted U.S. Army soldier who had performed honorable service to his country during World War I. Now this individual wasn't a great war hero of any sorts in the military sense. He saw combat and did his duty to the best of his ability. He bravely fought America's fight, before returning home to become a chemist with the DuPont Company for the majority of his life. He was just one of many citizen soldiers who answered his country's call to arms in "The war to end all wars" -- The Great War.

Now a little more background on this is probably in order. During 1986 I was completing a tour as an instructor at the Marine Corps' Amphibious Warfare School at Quantico. I had been married a year and we had just welcomed the arrival of our first child. My wife's grandfather, Albert D. Reidinger, had served in the U.S. Army as a private during World War I. He had fought with the 78th Division (The Fighting Demons) as part of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). He saw action at St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, and the Defensive Sector. 'Great Pop-Pop', as he was called within the family, did not return to the states with his unit when the war ended. A Princeton man, he was given an opportunity to stay behind for a few months to take some academic courses at a prominent university in Paris.

[Fast forward to 1985....]

One weekend, while visiting Great Pop-Pop at his home in Wilmington, Delaware, I was helping sort through some of his belongings. Great Pop-Pop, a widow, and now 89, was beginning to get a little forgetful. It was time to move him into a place where he could get better attention and care. My duty assignment that weekend was to take care of the attic. There were a lot of old newspapers lying around that I began gathering and stuffing into plastic trash bags. After working intently for several minutes I was about to throw another piece of paper into the bag. But there was something about it that caught my attention. I stopped and unfolded it. It was a military map of the Argonne dated 1918 with a penciled FEBA (forward edge battle area) line annotated, along with observation points and other position information. The 68-year old map looked practically new despite the fact it had been laying exposed to the elements in a humid attic for at least 58 years. Also, among the clutter in the attic, was Great Pop-Pop's World War I 'Dough Boy' helmet, and a German bayonet he had secured as a souvenir -- items which remain two of my most prized possessions today.

Coming down from the attic, I began quizzing Great Pop-Pop on his military service. Fortunately, Great Pop-Pop's long-term memory was still good. In fact, it was great. He recalled in great detail events of a war long ago. (Combat seems to leave an indelible imprint in the minds of those who have experienced it.) Great Pop-Pop showed me his dog tags and



some medals the state of New Jersey and his hometown of Morris Plains had conferred on him when he did eventually return from France. When asked where his U.S. World War I Victory Medal was, he stated that he had never received one. Since he did not come back with his division, I guess the processing of his medal fell through the proverbial crack.

A few day after returning home from the Delaware visit, I set to work contacting the U.S. Army about getting Great Pop-Pop his medal. Within about three weeks, the medal arrived. We were close to the delivery date of our child and knew that a Christening would take place the first Sunday in April. Great Pop-Pop would be coming down for that. And that, I thought, would be a good time to give him his medal! But in thinking it over, it came to mind that perhaps a little more pomp and circumstance would be in order. After all, a veteran of World War I who has waited more than 67 years for it should be entitled to have someone certainly more distinguished than myself present it!

Now during the course of my instructor tour at Quantico, the Commanding General, Lieutenant



General David Twomey, had taken an interest in my dating habits. He was noted for that, according to friends of mine who had previously served under any number of his various commands. In the course of wooing my future wife, I'd take her to the numerous receptions, presentations, and other social get-togethers that come with the territory. Considering the numerous events we attended, it was only a matter of time before the general got to know Madeline well. And before too long, my boss, Colonel J.J. Carroll, would call me into his office periodically and tell me the general had told him to tell me to "...not let that girl get away!" Of course, being the dutiful officer I was, I soon complied.

Now those particular sojourns into Colonel Carroll's office (relative to the general's interest) were in stark contrast to the usual ass-chewings I'd normally get when invited "to see the colonel." Those "bonding sessions" Colonel Carroll and I had were

special, to say the least -- especially the one I got the day they raised the garrison flag UPSIDE DOWN at the headquarters building, when I was the command duty officer (CDO). (Fortunately, General Twomey was out of town that day.) Calling colors in the morning was one of the CDO's tasks. But that's another story...

One morning, during early-March, I got the courage up to visit Lt/Gen Twomey's office. I asked if I might have a moment of the general's time. My request was granted. But to my chagrin, most of the staff's senior colonels were in the general's office when I entered. The general asked me what I wanted. I explained the story about my wife's grandfather and asked if the general might be so kind as to let us bring Great Pop-Pop into his office so that he could be presented with his medal by a real live Marine Corps general.

"No, Major!" the general replied abruptly.

Snapping quickly to attention I replied: "Aye, aye sir. Thank you for your time." I was about to turn and exit the general's office when he cleared his voice and said "No Major, we'll have a parade!" Stunned, I looked at the colonels in the office and could see them looking at each other with raised eyebrows.

[Another note in order here... It might be interesting to note, at this point, that the Chief of Staff who reamed my you-know-what out the day of the flag raising incident, was among those colonels present. I could tell he was trying to figure out where he knew me from. Perhaps, I thought, I wasn't the only Marine major aviator-type who had been perceived to have "screwed up" as CDO. Needless to say I avoided all eye contact with him. But back to the general's office scene....]

"Oh no," I thought to myself, "what can of worms have I opened here?"

"Sir," I stammered with some hesitation, "that REALLY isn't necessary. A simple office..."

Sternly, the general cut me off and replied: "Major, we'll have a parade. That is all. You are dismissed."

"Aye aye sir" I answered, and then departed. (Let it be said, let it be done!) The general and his staff went back to working on whatever it was they were doing when I originally entered his office.

So, on one fine, beautiful cool Spring Friday morning at Quantico Marine Corps Base (not far from the Chapel where my wife and I had our wedding ceremony), immediately following the posting of the colors, a special ceremony took place in front of the Commanding General's headquarters building. A compliment of two companies of Marines, staff, guests, curious onlookers, and the Quantico Marine Corps Band assembled by the flag pole to pay tribute. (I should probably add that the colors did go up correctly that morning. Well done CDO!)

A white haired, dapper, gentleman (in every sense of the word), Albert D. Reidinger, Private, U.S.



Army, emerged from the crowd (when summoned) to be recognized by the United States Marine Corps for service and dedication to country -- albeit 68 years after the fact. A citation, written by the staff, was read and presented. General Twomey pinned on Great Pop-Pop's medal adding that this was a special honor for him to bestow, particularly since his own father was also a recipient of the victory medal for services set forth in "The Great War". Private Reidinger, to his family's delighted surprise, then popped the general a sharp salute which General Twomey, matter-of-factly, returned. Following the presentation, General Twomey directed Private Reidinger to 'bout face before stepping into position next to him. A special serenade of World War I songs, performed by the band, followed. At the conclusion of "Over There" the band transitioned into a rendition of "Happy Birthday," in honor of Albert Dudley Reidinger's 90th birthday -- that same 30th

day of March 1986. It was a great morning to be an American!

Now I really felt bad about the imposition being laid on the Headquarters staff and its Marines that day --



having to participate in the extended morning formation-standing activity. But I must have been the only one that felt that way! After the ceremony concluded, the Marines didn't leave. One by one, a significant number of them formed a line in order to file by and shake Private Reidinger's hand. And this wasn't orchestrated in advance! They did it because they wanted to. Now you'd think it couldn't get any



better than that -- but it did! Not only did the young Marines file by to shake his hands; several took the time to say wonderful things to Private Reidinger. I was suitably impressed. Where were we getting such Marines I asked myself? (Our recruiters were obviously doing one heck of a job!) There were no dry eyes among the Reidinger clan that day. Nor, might I add, a certain Marine major named Johnson. Both twin sons of Albert Reidinger (one a World War II Marine Corps lieutenant; the other a World War II naval officer) witnessed the event with great pride, passion, and pleasure. Additionally, one brand new week-old great grandson, a little confused about the whole procession, also looked on. [I might add here that that great grandson is now an Army lieutenant currently attending Army Ranger School.]

Following the ceremony, we hosted a reception in our home to any and all interested. Great Pop-Pop, as I mentioned, was becoming a little forgetful. But the gravity of the ceremony he had just participated in was still with him. He knew this was a special day, not just because it was his birthday. My close friend, Curt Rastetter, was stationed at Quantico at that time and also attended the ceremony. A World War I buff, Curt asked if he might have some time later in the day for an interview with the grand old man. Prior to Curt and I going down into the basement to tape the interview, Great Pop-Pop and I were sitting in our living room talking. At the time, I was holding my new born son -- his third great grandchild. The conversation was going nicely when he paused and noted: "You seem like a nice young lad, do you live around here?" Well, that kind of caught me by surprise. But I smiled and told him, yes, I did live nearby. I began wondering if the interview Curt would be having would be fruitful. Amazingly, Great Pop-Pop's long term memory was still fine (at that point). We heard some interesting stories and enjoyed talking "to history."

Prologue...

Albert Reidinger would live close to another four years, dying peacefully, and with typical grace, at age 93. At his memorial service on a rainy, but chilly, July morning in Wilmington, three fragile, stooped World War I veterans appeared. Their arrival was quite conspicuous. Proudly sporting their blue VFW caps, which denoted World War I service, they arrived together in the biggest, darkest, non-black sedan I had seen in quite awhile. These gentlemen arrived with no assistance, although they probably could have used some. Instead, they roared up in that big sedan. The coke bottle-bespectacled driver was barely able to peer over the steering wheel. Parallel parking that monster-of-a-car into the premium space they had staked out was a sight

to behold. Missing the fore and aft parked cars, which bracketed their space, by mere nano-inches, the lurching vehicle finally came to a rest -- perfectly centered I might add! Helping each other out of the car like the Three Musketeers they were, it was clear these men had developed friendships many years earlier. Each seemed to know the other's limits, capabilities, and challenges. As we looked on in awe, the gents hustled themselves past us and into the warmth of the church. After the service was over, the Three Musketeers paid their respects to the Reidinger family, climbed back into their sedan and then roared off in reckless abandon! Where were they going? We didn't know. But it was a departure to behold -- a hell-bent-for-leather departure that left us gasping, not only in fear for their safety, but also in just plain amazement. They seemed in a hurry. But maybe, when you're their age, you look at time as premium and make the most of every minute. But maybe they were just horrible drivers!

I think most of us there that day, who observed these men, realized that they were ultimately on a rendezvous with a destiny that has since surely claimed their souls. Indeed a sight to behold, these gents knew who they were, what they had done and, presumably, where they were going. They came to wish one of their brothers off to the Promised Land. These gentlemen; the ones that came before them; as well as all the others who continue to follow, will always represent America to me. God bless them all!

Our family will forever remember, with great pride, the special event that took place on that great Spring day during March of 1986. The Marine Corps looks after its own, but it seems there is always plenty of room for them to look after others also. But that's really one of its missions if you think about it. Just one more essence of a Corps that serves this nation splendidly.

Well that's my story and I'm sticking to it! Was fun to recant again. Think that will do it for another evening. Thanks for indulging me.

GREG JOHNSON

THE KHE SANH VETERANS LED BY LT. BRUCE GEIGER USA, PLACE THE KHE SANH VETERANS WREATH AT THE VIETNAM MEMORIAL ON VETERANS DAY.





ED NOTE: As the president of the Khe Sanh Veterans I want to personally thank Bruce Geiger (USA) who each year travels at his own expense to organize the dedication of our Memorial Wreath at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C..

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THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
William C. Aalberg FLC USMC Passed Away	Khe Sanh Veterans
SGT Terrence G. Smith USMC Scout/Sniper KIA 21 Jan 68	Vince Gable HQ CO Scout/Snipers
L/Cpl Max Nelson USMC E CO 2/26 HILL 861A KIA 24 Feb 68	Kelly Nelson BROTHER
HN William Reyner USN	Pat Buckley C CO 1/26
PFC Edward Heifner USMC F CO 2/26 2nd PLT KIA 25 Jan 68	Kenneth Duncan F CO 2/26 2ND PLT
L/Cpl James Edward West Jr. USMC E CO 2/3 KIA 31 May 68	June Austin SISTER
L/Cpl Roger Yamanaka USMC H&S CO 3/26 KIA 04 Mar 68	Jack Howe H&S CO 3/26 COMM
L/Cpl Alex Burgess USMC H&S CO 3/26 KIA 19 Feb 68	Jack Howe H&S CO 3/26 COMM
Cpl Raymond G Potter USMC L CO 3/26 KIA 10 Sep 67	William "Doc" Miller L CO 3/26 2ND PLT
2/LT Larry Bolger USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 27 June 67	Khe Sanh Veterans
1ST LT Maxie R. Williams USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 10 Apr 68	Geoffrey L Stack A CO 1/26
Cpl Terry L. Smith USMC I CO 3/26 Hill 881S KIA 20 Feb 68	Robert Arrotta 1 CO 3/26
All Those who Fell From A Btry 1/13	William Dubois A Btry 1/13
1ST LT Rodney A. Alfano USA 37TH SIG BN KIA 02 Feb 68	Roccco A. Alfano FATHER
PFC Jack C. Bogard USMC E CO 2/26 Hill 861A KIA 05 Feb 68	Lt Donald Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A
PFC Alan R. Smith USMC E CO 2/26 Hill 861A KIA 05 Feb 68	Lt Donald Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A
2ND LT Ferdinando Distefano USMC E CO 2/26 KIA 24 Feb 68	Lt Donald Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A
L/Cpl Louis F. Staples USMC E CO 2/26 Hill 861A KIA 05 Feb 68	Lt Donald Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A
L/Cpl Wilbert Stovall USMC HQ Btry 1/13 KIA 09 Mar 68	Robert Holscher H&S CO 1/13
HN Frank P. Addice USN KIA 11 Apr 68	Larry Sherer HMM 262
1st LT Kim W. Johnson USMC H&S CO 1/26 KIA 23 Feb 68	Michael F. Barber C CO 3RD ENGRS
1st LT Marion "Hank" Norman USMC A/1/13 KIA 30 Mar 68	Michael F. Barber C CO 3RD ENGRS
And any other members of OCS Class 10/66 KIA In Vietnam	Michael F. Barber C CO 3RD ENGRS
ALL Those From India Company 3/26	Richard Gallegos I CO 3/26
HM3 Robert L. Wickliffe USN H&S Co 3/26 KIA 22 Jan 68 Hill 861S	Michael Ray I CO 3/26
L/Cpl Paul F. Stedman USMC H&S CO 3RD SP BN KIA 26 Feb 68	C.T. Green A CO 3RD SP
All Those KIA & WIA From Delta Co 1/26	John Finn Delta CO 1/26
PFC Vincent A. Mottola USMC B Co 1/26 KIA 23 Feb 68	Bill Jayne B CO 1/26
In Memory of All those KIA at FOB-3	Pierce Durham FOB-3 CCN
1st LT Paul W. Bush USMC C Co 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Charles Chamberlin C Co 1/26
GySgt John J. Grohman USMC C Co 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Charles Chamberlin C Co 1/26
Capt. Walter Egger USMC C Co 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Charles Chamberlin C Co 1/26
L/Cpl Joseph Bailey USMC C Co 1/.26 DOW 19 Feb 68	Charles Chamberlin C Co 1/26
Sgt. James Neil Tycz USMC A Co 3Rd Recon KIA 10 May 67	Sharon Pelon

We have instituted a new magazine section to thank those members who contribute so generously to the Khe Sanh Veterans. Their contributions allow us to continue to expand and improve our Red Clay magazine. There will be four levels of contributions: **SILVER** $ 20.00-50.00, **GOLD** over 50.00-200.00, **PLATINUM** over 200.00-1,000, and **DIAMOND** over 1,000.

DIAMOND

BODENWEISER, Alec
FOSTER, Gary W
DAWDY, James H. Jr.
HARRINGTON, David S
MCNEELEY, Milton L (Mac)
POWERS, Michael
TOURTE, Craig W
STUBBE, Ray W

PLATINUM

ALLEN, Lewis J
CHICONE, Roger D
COLE, James F
FRUGONI, Charles
GABLE, Vincent L
GAEDE, Charles S
MATTHEWS, Owen S
MULLIGAN, Michael J
NOYES, Richard C
PATRICIO, Sid
PIERCE, Thomas A
KUBLEY, Lawrence W
RIORDAN, Robert W
SHANLEY, Donald
SLATTERY, Robert J
SCOTT, Michael D
SPIVEY, B. Larkin Jr.
STACK, Geoffrey L
STUDT, John C
TIPPNER, George S
WELLS, Jack

GOLD

ALLYN, Robert F
ANDRES, Richard D
BARBER, Michael F
BROPHY, Michael W
CAMPO, Carl C
CATON, Louis W II
CHANDLER, David
COOK, Michael H
COSNER, Leonard G
COWAN, John R Sr.
DAGNER, Michael F
DESETA, Louis J
DONAGHY, Richard E
DOTTERY, Leslie L
DUBOIS, William H
DUNLAP, Lee C
EDDOWES, Barbara
EDWARDS, Eric L
EICHLER, Thomas J
ELARDO, Nick
ESSLINGER, Thomas J
ESTES, Leo L
FOLEY, Richard M Jr.
FORD, Thomas C
GERARD, Charles G
GILLESPIE, Donald J
GRANT, James D
GRAY, Alfred G
GRIFFIN, Jerry D
HAIGWOOD, Jack D
HALLER, Thomas
HANNA, Robert W
HARE, John F
HERNANDEZ, John G
JACHIMIAK, Daniel L
JAYNE, Bill
KAHENY, John M
KATES, Bruce E
KAYLOR, James N
KEATON, Thomas
KENDIG, Dennis R
KINSELLA, David R
LARSON, Larry L
LEE, Dale
LOERSCH, Phillip E
MAIN, Ronald G
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MARCEAU, Stephen M
MARTIN, Larry K
MCCANN, Timothy N
MCCARTNEY, Larry
MCDONOUGH, Frank
MCEWAN, Fredrick J
MCNEW, Michael S
MERCADO, Saturno
NELSON, Kelly J
PADLEY, Shirley W
PATTERSON, Charles E
PELON, Sharon
PESSONI, John J
RAIT, Donald M
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ROGERS, David G
ROGERS, Robert
RUSHFORTH, Toby
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SWEARENGEN, Mark A
TATE, William R
UPSHAW, Leland S
WACHSMUTH, Robert
WILKINSON, James B
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YATES, William R

SILVER

ALEXANDER, Clarence F
ALFANO, Rocco A
AMBROSE, James F
APPLEBAUM, Robert S
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ARMBRUST, James D
ARROTA, Robert J
AUSTIN, June L
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COOK, Michael H
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THE COP & THE MARINE

Last days for a Marine were truly Finest hours.
P.O. And P.B.A. Delegate Susan Porcello
Is: a real Heroine.

By Denis Hamill, The New York Daily News,
Tuesday, December 9th, 2008

NYPD officer Susan Porcello's big heart gave elderly Marine Gaspar Musso friends and care in his final days. Sometimes when old Marines die they do fade away into unmarked graves in Potter's Field.



Such might have been the case for Gaspar Musso, USMC 25050, who fought in the Battle of Tinian in the Marianas Islands in 1944, and who died Nov. 15, at age 84 in a Brooklyn nursing home.

Enter Police Officer Susan Porcello, a PBA delegate at the 68th Precinct in Bay Ridge, and one of those big-hearted New Yorkers who still make this the best city on Earth.

"No way was I going to let this brave old Marine who fought for his country in WWII get buried in Potter's Field," she says. Porcello first met Musso back in July when she responded to a 911 ambulance call to the retired insurance broker's one-bedroom apartment on, appropriately, Marine Ave.

"When my partner, Eddie Ennis, and I arrived at his apartment Gaspar seemed a little bit down about himself," Porcello says. "He said he felt alone in the world. We talked to him a bit and as I looked around his tidy apartment I noticed that he had served in the military - the Marines to be exact."
Porcello asked him about family and friends. "Look around you, what do you see?" Musso said. "I have no family or friends."To which Porcello said, "Well, I'm your friend. "Right there, with those four beautiful words, Gaspar Musso was destined to die with the dignity he'd earned with a rifle in his hands, fighting in a USMC uniform, in a war that saved civilization.

If she didn't already wear a badge, you'd want to pin a star on Susan Porcello. Musso, a diabetic with a host of other age-related maladies, had accidentally overdosed on his prescription medications. Porcello

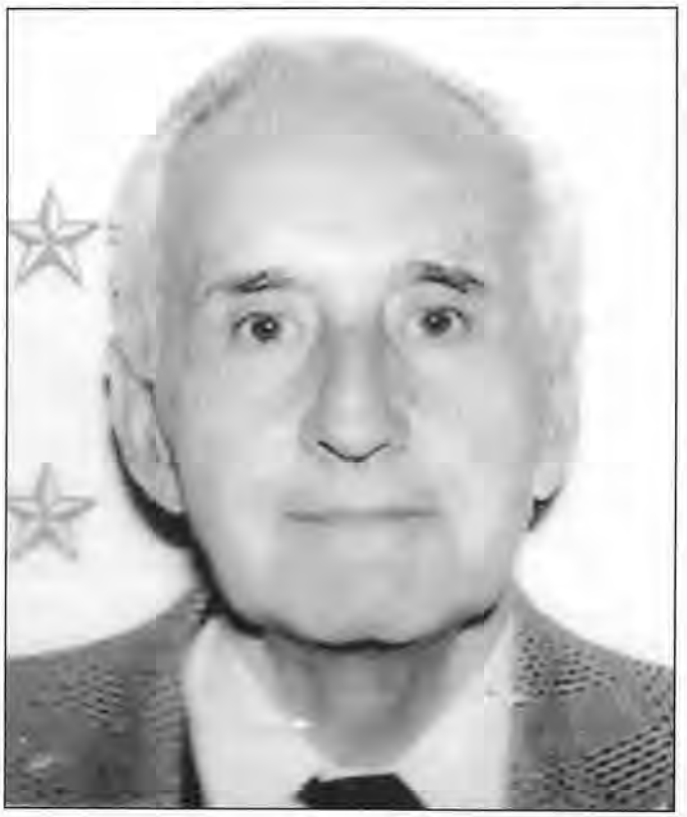

accompanied him to Lutheran Medical Center."I told him I'd be back to visit him and take him to a senior center where he could make some friends," said Porcello, who comes from a big Italian family with a mom, dad, three sisters and a brother."I told him I was making him my 'Grandpa,' and if he liked, he could spend Thanksgiving with my family.

Eddie and I discussed alternating holidays with Gaspar so he wouldn't be alone for any of them."Two days later Musso was placed in critical care. Porcello asked hospital staff where he'd be buried if he didn't make it. "Potter's Field," said one administrator."This infuriated me," said Porcello. "There was no way I was going to let a man who fought for our country be buried in Potter's Field. Not on my watch.

Porcello told the hospital to keep her apprised of Musso's condition.

she had a local priest visit him. Porcello even asked NYPD's Missing Person's Squad to search for next of kin. No luck. Musso had been an only child to Anthony and Marie Musso, both deceased. He had no other relatives. Musso's only friend, an upstairs neighbor, had died the year before.

After his health improved, Musso asked Porcello to become his official health proxy. She transferred him to Caton Park Nursing Home, where he was treated extremely well. She visited him often, learning that Musso was born May 7,1924, joined the USMC in December 1943, finished training at Camp Lejune in March 1944, and was fighting with the 2nd Marines on Tinian Island by July1944. "I visited Gaspar on Nov. 13, bringing him rosary beads, a Bible, and his reading glasses," she said.

The next day, Nov. 14, I returned and found Gaspar sitting up in a chair, dressed in his own clothes, looking great. "Porcello washed his hands and face, trimmed his nails and eyebrows and asked if he was coming to her house for Thanksgiving. "I'm trying!" he said. He also asked Porcello to bring him a Christmas wreath for his room.

The next morning Porcello received a phone call saying that Gaspar Musso had died peacefully in his sleep. No way was she going to let her good friend be toe-tagged and buried in Potter's Field. Porcello paid out of her own pocket for a wake at McLaughlin's on Third Ave. and a mass at St. Patrick's Church in Bay Ridge, where a crowd of good-hearted cops from the 68th Precinct filled the pews, six serving as pallbearers.

Sgt. Angel Rosa of the 68th, also a Marine, arranged for a USMC honor guard at Musso's funeral. Then taps blew over Gaspar Musso, United States Marine, as he was buried next to his mother at Resurrection Cemetery in Staten Island. With the dignity he deserved.
Semper Fi.
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ED NOTE: I served as a Police Officer in the Chicago PD retiring as a Sergeant in 2003, after 35 years of service. I thought after all the negative police stories our liberal press seems to enjoy printing, one of the thousands of good stories that happen every day, throughout the country about Police Officers, would be a nice change.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER CHANGE

By Chaplain Ron Rayner

Change was a big word in the November election. It has been my prayer that the 40th reunion helped to change and improve the lives of the reunion attendees and everyone that has been touched by the reunion's messages.

My article in Issue 71 of Red Clay talked about the possibility of combat participants and emergency responders having Post-Traumatic- Stress-Disorder. The symptoms could include: guilt over surviving where others did not; anxiety or nervousness; trouble sleeping; trouble concentrating; the need to calm down by using drugs or alcohol; and trouble getting close to other people. Not everyone has to get PTSD from a traumatic incident or incidents, but if you believe that you have to accept a less than abundant life because of your past experiences please consider this:

"If you don't change your beliefs, your life will be like this forever. Is that good news?"
Douglas Adams

"The first step toward change is acceptance. Once you accept yourself, you open the door to change. That's all you have to do. Change is not something you do, its' something you allow." **Will Garcia**

If you are living the perfect life that you always wanted, that is great. If you have self-destructive thoughts and can't seem to communicate well with family and friends, you may want to think about making things better.

Dennis Puleo, as noted in Tom Eichler's reunion article on page 63 of the last issue of *Red Clay,* relayed a great message to the attendees of the memorial service. Dennis volunteers his time to motivate and inspire men through the *Man In The Mirror* organization. Man In The Mirror www.maninthemirror.org) is a nonprofit corporation helping men find purpose in life.

"You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. **You show that you are a letter from Christ**, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."
II Corinthians 3:2-3 (NIV)

Dennis was a letter from Christ to THE KHE SANH VETERANS.

I am a non-denominational Christian chaplain. I believe Jesus has helped improve my life and leads me day by day to the answers I seek. Life is not perfect, but I am given strength to handle problems and enjoy life more. To improve your life you have to get out there and look.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Matthew 7:7-8 New International Version

For veterans, your county Veteran Services is a very good place to start finding secular help. Churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, medicine men, shamen, priests, and rabbis can help you according to your spiritual beliefs. My personal savior is Jesus Christ but I have performed funeral services for non -believers and a Jewish veteran. There is power in spiritual belief.

I visited *Man In The Mirror* headquarters in Orlando, Florida while visiting Disney World with my grandchildren. I recommend the following books that are distributed by *Man In The Mirror*.

The Treasure Principal by Randy Alcorn. This book suggests ways to profit from contributing your time and money to good causes.

Wild at Heart-Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul by John Eldredge. Eldredge makes a very good scriptural case to explain the reasons men are the way they are. You don't have to be a wimp to be a Christian.

The Young Man in the Mirror by Patrick Morley.This book will help young men and their fathers (mentors) navigate the rite of passage into manhood.

The Dad in the Mirror by Patrick Morley & David Delk-Christian and moral responsibilities of the father.

Devotions For Couples by Patrick Morley. Opening up good communications for couples. Marriage rejuvenation.

Most people are looking to improve their life in some manner and these books from *Man In The Mirror* may have some of the answers you are looking for. All but *The Young Man in the Mirror* can be obtained through the *Books for about a dollar* program at *www.maninthemirror.org*. You can receive 48 books of the same title for $55 plus shipping.

"In human life there is a constant change of fortune; and it is unreasonable to expect an exemption from this common fate." Plutarch

For those of us that have been affected negatively by our life experiences, we have to search for a positive direction daily to enjoy the abundant life that our predecessors and friends died for.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Jesus John 10:10 (KJV)
Jesus Christ also died that we might have an abundant life.

VET CENTER PTSD THERAPY GROUP

By Chaplain Ron Rayner

I attend a VA sponsored PTSD therapy group that is run by a Detroit, Michigan Vet Center therapist. The group is the most helpful portion of the treatment I receive from the VA, as I fellowship and can communicate with men that have had like experiences and similar problems.

Members of my therapy group are associated with various charitable organizations. The following quotes point out what we in the therapy group have found to be true.

"The generous prosper and are satisfied; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed."
Proverbs 11:25 New Living Translation

"It is one of the most beautiful compensations in life … we can never help another without helping ourselves." **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

"Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves."
Sir James Barrie

A perfect example of this was members of the group helping out at a warming shelter for the homeless in Pontiac, Michigan. Group members worked in the kitchen, checked people in, and handed out blankets at the center. It was a very uplifting experience for a group of men who have PTSD problems with self-esteem and depression. It was very nice to help someone who needed it and hang out with friends who we're comfortable with.

Some of the group is also involved handing out food baskets and presents between Thanksgiving and Christmas and other charitable projects over the year. The bottom line here is avoiding isolation and having a feeling of purpose in your life.

"Share each other's troubles and problems and in this way you obey the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 New Living Translation

KSV IN THE NEWS
Colonel Bruce Meyers
by Mike Fishbaugh

The U.S. military is most commonly associated with strict training and life-or-death combat. But for retired Marine Col. Bruce F. Meyers, the hallmark of his long and distinguished military career was the extensive education he received, preparing him for life in and out of service.

After 28 years in the Marines, Meyers retired from the service with a bachelor's degree and a law degree. He used his education to help innovate the Marines and his work ; as he put it, "save lives."

"The GI Bill is one of the best things that could have happened to give the opportunity of education to all these people who had busted their tails on behalf of the U.S.," Meyers said. "We had people who would have never had the opportunity to go to college had they never had the GI Bill."

He served briefly in the Pacific near the end of World War II and then in Korea as a leader for Korean line crossers and then as a rifle company commander. But it wasn't until after the Korean War that he would leave his lasting mark on the Marines.

On June 18, 1957, Meyers took command of the Marines first force reconnaissance team, the 1st Amphibious Reconnaissance Co. His team was tasked with delving deep into enemy territory to gather intelligence and positioning on the enemy for America's front-line troops. It was the first American military outfit of its kind.

"We were young, educated. We were the cream of the crop," Meyers said. "We wanted to be with an elite unit, and we were elite. The rest of the Marines got upset when we said we were the best of the best."

The unit still exists, under the name Marines Special Operations Command. Meyers did most of his deep reconnaissance work during the Vietnam War, where he took part in the Battle of Khe Sanh, one of the major offenses staged by the North Vietnamese during the war. Meyers spent 68 days under the jungle canopy nearby and commanded more than 6,000 troops during the engagement.

Marines defending Khe Sanh base were supported by an Air Force aerial strike, and Meyers' company was tasked with retrieving remains that may be used as intelligence from bombed out targets, putting themselves at risk to the bombings.

Other times, threats came from the jungle itself. While camping in enemy territory, half the unit slept while the other half stood guard, often for threat of tigers, who were known to snag sleeping soldiers and drag them into the jungle. Of course, there was also the People's Army of Vietnam to worry about.

"There were plenty of times when I thought I wouldn't have a wake up," Meyers said. "After awhile you figure, 'Well, they haven't gotten me

yet,' but it's always in the back of your mind that you're going to get zapped one of these days doing the crazy things you're doing."

Back home, Meyers had a wife and three children. Jo Meyers, who met her husband, now of 61 years, on a blind date at the University of Washington, said she did her best to make the time pass while he was overseas in combat situations. She also had help from fellow military families experiencing the same situation.

"A military community is a very close community," she said. "We look after each other, so we don't dwell on stuff like that."

After retiring from the military in 1970, Meyers became an attorney and practiced law for the next 30 years. Being born in Seattle and raised in Bellevue, the Seattle area has always been Meyers' home when he hasn't been commissioned elsewhere for military service.

He said he is most proud of the innovations he brought to the Marines, which included a new type of jungle boot for use in Vietnam, a new way of ascending troops for reconnaissance from a submerged submarine, and parachuting the reconnaissance unit in, rather than using rubber boats, leading to the first force reconnaissance unit. "We were trying to do the best job we could to develop the tactics and techniques to save major unit lives," Meyers said.

In 2003, Meyers released his first book, "Fortune Favors the Brave," which details the beginnings of deep reconnaissance in the Marines. His second book, "Swift, Silent and Deadly: Marine Amphibious Reconnaissance in the Pacific, 1942-1945," came out a year later. He said he wrote the books so the lessons learned in those early years of reconnaissance would not be lost on current and future generations.

Even with all of his accomplishments, Meyers keeps his military memorabilia tucked away in the office, save for an officer's saber with an ivory hilt kept hanging over the living room fireplace.
"My wife won't let me have any of the 'I love me' stuff here," he said.

Still, he maintains much of the modesty himself, acknowledging his work as simply the result of 28 years of service in the U.S. military.



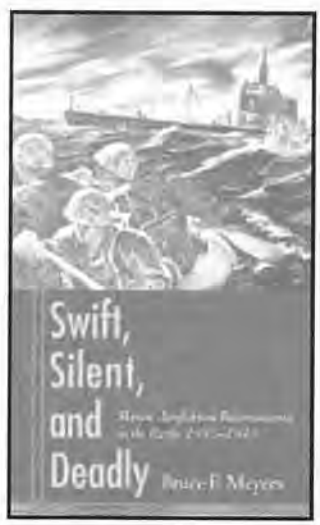

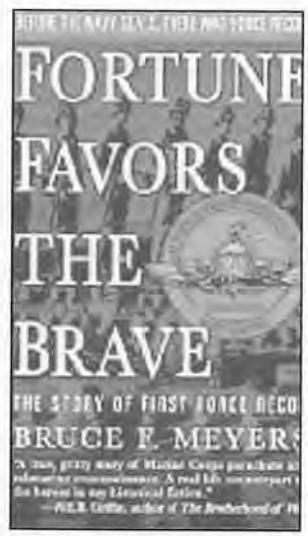


MERCER COUNTY
VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC




MY
COUSIN
HERO











WELCOME ABOARD





Lt Gen Victor H. Krulak

Rising barely 5 feet, 5 inches, Gen. Krulak was jokingly nicknamed "Brute" by his academy classmates. The moniker stuck, reinforced by his direct, no-nonsense style. And, as Time magazine later said, "There was nothing undersized about his brain."

Gen Robert H. Barrow

A true leatherneck legend, knew where he wanted to take the Corps as Commandant, and he moved quickly to increase readiness in all areas.









LT GENERAL VICTOR H. KRULAK USMC

07 Jan 1913 - 29 Dec 2008

SEE PAGES 9-10 & 78-84

GENERAL ROBERT H. BARROW USMC

27TH COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

05 Feb 1922 - 30 Oct 2008

SEE PAGES 7-9

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SUMMER
2009

RED CLAY

ISSUE 73



TOMMY WHEELER



RAY CALHOUN





DON HOSSACK

ALL THREE MEMBERS OF MIKE CO 3/3 FINALLY RECEIVED LONG OVERDUE REGOGNITION FOR THEIR HEROIC DEEDS ON 30 APRIL 1967 WHILE ATTACKING HILL 881 SOUTH, AT KHE SANH



THEIR PERSONAL STORIES AND PUBLISHED ACCOUNTS OF THEIR MEDAL PRESENTATIONS WITH PHOTOS, APPEAR ON PAGES 91-95

HEROES, PAST & PRESENT















Petty Officer Second Class (Seal) Michael A. Monsoor
Posthumously Awarded the Medal of Honor for actions on 29 September 2006, AR RAMADI Iraq. Citation & Story on Page 96

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the

SILVER STAR MEDAL to

CORPORAL
THOMAS C. WHEELER
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving as a Squad Leader with Company M, Third Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on 30 April 1967. Corporal Wheeler s company (-) was advancing to secure Hill 881 South in the first Battle of Khe Sanh when a numerically superior enemy force attacked and inflicted heavy casualties on his platoon. The Platoon Leader was killed and in the chaos of battle, Corporal Wheeler assumed command and rallied the remaining platoon members. He sustained a severe wound and was medevaced to a bomb crater for treatment and concealment. After refusing medical aid, Corporal Wheeler concluded that the wounded Marines in the crater were becoming a primary enemy target. Unable to walk, he crawled from the crater to a forward attack position, where he single-handedly killed six or more enemy soldiers and halted numerous enemy attacks against his wounded comrades. In the ensuing battle, Corporal Wheeler killed 15 to 20 more enemy personnel and ensured the safety of the Marines and Corpsmen in the crater. Repeatedly exposing himself to enemy fire, he relentlessly attacked the enemy from multiple sites, thus confusing them as to his position and the diminished capability of his platoon. Although the pain from his wound was intense, and despite substantial blood loss, Corporal Wheeler again refused medical aid. Seeing the ferocity with which he fought inspired his platoon to rally and repulse multiple attacks until the enemy force was defeated. By his steadfast resolve, courageous fighting spirit, aggressive and confident leadership, and unwavering dedication to duty, Corporal Wheeler reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

For the President, Donald C. Winter Secretary of the Navy



TOMMY WITH PROUD SON



RECIPIENT TOM WHEELER



TOM WHEELER WITH CORPSMAN FRIENDS





HIS SGT/MAJOR "CRYSTAL"



M/GEN JOHN H. ADMIRE & LT/COL LEWTON PRESENTED AWARD



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Please complete your reunion registration form and get it sent to Russ Turner ASAP. We have two trips planned and need to provide the tour company with an estimate of attending members who signed up for the tours. If you are not sure if you can attend the reunion, book your rooms and send in your reservations, you can always cancel.

I also printed the forms for applying for funds from the newly established KSV Scholarship fund. The chairman Dan Fisher, and his committee, did a superb job of putting it together in a very short period of time. We had three applicants apply, and all were accepted, see Pages 44 & 45.Through the generosity of the membership we hope to quickly expand the amount of funds now available from the scholarship fund.

We will also hold an election for openings on the KSV BOD. Those wishing to run for any of the following positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, and five Members at Large positions, let me know prior to the reunion. I want to also thank the membership, especially those Life members who so generously contributed to the RED CLAY magazine.

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

I want to again thank the membership for their outstanding support of the KSV PX. It has enabled us to purchase many new items and greatly expand the inventory. It looks like we are going to have another great reunion in Denver and I am looking forword to seeing a lot of new faces as well. Denver is a beautiful City with majestic scenery. We have two great trips planned and hope the membership takes advantage of them.

FROM THE DESK OF THE SECRETARY

Just a reminder that we are always in need of items for the silent auction. If you cannot attend the reunion and still wish to donate, mail your donated items directly to me.

Robert Moxley
69566 Haefer Ln
Cove, OR 97824

CHAPLAINS CORNER

SEE CHAPLAINS CORNER REPORT IN NEW TAKE OUT BROCHURE

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Dan Fisher..... Scholarship Chairman

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY	
CPL JIM THEIS USMC D CO 1/26 Passed Away 03-26-76	Dan Fisher	D CO 1/26
SW2 Edward "Cody" Adams Seabee CBMU 301 DET B 04 16 68 KIA	Larry Kubley	CBMU 301-DET-B Seabees

OBIT

William J. O'Connor, 68, of Dartmouth, died Friday, January 30, 2009 after a courageous battle with cancer. He is survived by his loving wife of 43 years, Marcella (Pease) O'Connor, his sons Kevin J. O'Connor of Kissimmee, FL, and Matthew J. O'Connor of New Bedford; his sisters, Joan Reicherter and her husband Charles of Tinton Falls, NJ, and Dorothy Mullen and her husband Edward of Wading River, NY; along with many nieces and nephews.

Born in the Bronx, NY, the son of the late Joseph V. and Katherine (Walpole) O'Connor, he graduated from St. John's University with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. He also pursued graduate studies at George Washington University.

Mr. O'Connor worked for many years in the metallurgical industry. He and his family moved to Dartmouth in 1982 while he was employed at Teledyne Rodney Metals. For the past 10 years prior to his retirement in 2007, he was employed as a loan officer at Compass Bank and Sovereign Bank, and also a senior loan officer at First Horizon Home Loans.

William joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1961 as a 2nd Lieutenant, serving in Vietnam as an Aerial Observer with the 12th Marines in Northern I Corps, and as the Commanding Officer of Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion 13th Marines during the historic siege of Khe Sanh. He left active duty in 1969 and was honorably discharged as a U.S. Marine Corps Major.

He received many military commendations for his distinguished service, including the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 3 Gold Stars, the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V", the Presidential Unit Citation with 1 Star, the Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Vietnam Service Medal with 4 Stars, the National Defense Service Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm, the Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation with Palm, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

He enjoyed giving back to his community through various volunteer works, including Treasurer of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, Past Vice President of the Country Club of New Bedford, Commissioner of the Dartmouth Housing Authority, member of the Dartmouth Veterans Advisory Committee, and member of the Dartmouth Community PreseNation Committee. He also participated in many charitable fundraising organizations, including the Easter Seals.

In his spare time, Mr. O'Connor was an avid golfer. He also enjoyed spending time with family and friends and was a loving husband and devoted father.

Bill was also Honored as Veteran of the Day, during a flag retreat ceremony.
Story Below Photo



L-R Ed Mullen, Dorthy Mullen, Bill O'Connor, Marcella O'Connor, Kevin O'Connor and Rhonda Matthews

William J. O'Connor of Dartmouth, a Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, was honored as Veteran of the Day during the flag retreat ceremony at Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom in Florida. The ceremony began with a fanfare by Disney's Main Street Philharmonic Marching Band.

The ceremony continued with The Dapper Dans, Disney's strolling barbershop quartet, which led the crowd in singing "God Bless America." Disney's color guard security detail and Mr. O'Connor marched to the flag in the center of Town Square. The band played the National Anthem as the American flag was folded and presented to Mr. O'Connor. The whole detail, including Mr. O'Connor's family, marched down Main Street, where the veteran was

presented with a commemorative certificate and limited-edition Veteran of the Day pin. Present were Mr. O'Connor's wife, Marcella, son Kevin O'Connor, sister Dorothy Mullen, brother in-law Edward Mullen, and Rhonda Mathews.

Mr. O'Connor, known as Bill to his friends and family, served in the Marines from August 1961 to May 1969. He was honorably discharged Oct. 9, 1974, as a major. He fought in Vietnam in Phu Bai from April to June 1967; in Dong Ha from July to November 1967; and in Khe Sanh from December 1967 to May 1968.

REMEMBERANCES
CAPTAIN BILL O'CONNOR

By Dennis Mannion
KCo 3/26 & C Btry 1/13

I know that when he left active duty in 1969 William O'Connor held the rank of Major, but to Glenn Prentice and myself -- and others in Charlie Battery 1/13 he was and still is Captain O'Connor. He was our CO during the siege and the name and the rank has remained that way four decades later.

I drove with Captain O'Connor from my house in CT to the 1998 reunion in Washington, and we were half way down the New Jersey Turnpike when he threatened to leave me at a rest stop if I wouldn't stop calling him by "rank and last name." So, it became Bill then and also at other reunions and in phone calls or emails, but it was never easy or natural for me, and when Glenn and I speak about him it's always "Captain O'Connor."

43 days ago, I left home just after dawn and drove to New Bedford, Mass for his funeral and burial service. I know that I could have written a different report of this immediately after my return to Connecticut, but in the days after, I struggled with what I wanted to say and how to say it, and then I decided to wait for a more appropriate time. So, it's no coincidence that this gets posted on March 17th a day when just about everyone has a bit of Irish in him or her. However, to Khe Sanh siege personnel, St. Patrick's Day will always be linked to this man; especially if you can trace your roots directly back to the Emerald Isle.

As I crossed from Connecticut into Rhode Island on February 8th it began to snow and by the time I arrived at the funeral home in New Bedford, the lines in the parking lot of the funeral home were almost impossible to distinguish. The forces of nature outside served as stark contrast to the setting within, and other than the funeral home staff I was the first person there. I had left CT very early for two reasons: the stormy weather forecast and my clothes.

Despite my disdain for getting dressed up, a tie and jacket in honor of this man was a given, and I needed time to change out of travel-mode jeans and a T-shirt.

Properly attired, it was just my former CO and me for almost an hour. I signed my name in the Guest Book thick with signatures from the wake the night before -- and added "Khe Sanh Vets" since I was there for all of us. Said my goodbyes to my Captain and moved to the back of the room and took a seat. Later, a few others began to enter the viewing area from the front hallway. One man stopped at the casket and then slowly made his way towards the back of the empty room. Had there been others around, I might not have said anything, but since it was just the two of us, it seemed appropriate to ask, "Excuse me, but how did you know him?"

Closing the distance between us, he replied, "He was my best friend for years and I am going to miss him terribly. You?" "He was my Commanding Officer at Khe Sanh."

He began to cry...me too...we shook hands and that was how I chanced to meet Adrien Aaube. Momentarily stunned when I told him that I had driven up from Connecticut for this day, he introduced me to his wife, other friends, and eventually Marcella O'Connor and her two sons -- Kevin and Matthew.

Many of them, upon hearing of my connection to Captain O'Connor -- and the fact that I drove from CT to be there -- got teary-eyed. It took concerted effort on my part to blink away my own at each introduction.

Minutes later, Adrien stood next to the coffin and beautifully spoke to the entire room about his friend and then it was out to our cars. The wind had really picked up by then and the snow consisted of frozen

pellets more than flakes. Windshields needed to be scraped, cars were moved into line, and the procession to St. Julie Billiart Church in the town of Dartmouth (a few miles away) commenced. As I proceeded in line near the end of the column, I began to wonder about the upcoming drive from the church to the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne on Cape Cod some 43 miles away. It wasn't going to be easy in this weather.

A beautiful mass and memorial service....fitting words from the priest, in addition to Kevin (who quoted Rudyard Kipling) and Matthew (who recited a poem of his own)...and all three mentioned Khe Sanh in their remarks.

At the conclusion of the service, the organist began to play the Marine Corps Hymn barely audible at first and then louder -- as the casket was moved towards the vestibule of the church.

Outside, the contrast with the colors of the American flag on the coffin and the wind-driven snow was remarkable and that same image repeated itself an hour later at the cemetery. It is the policy of this cemetery that final prayers and leave-takings occur in an outdoor Committal Shelter -- a roofed structure open on three sides -- and not at the actual burial site. That was a God-send as by now the ground was snow-covered, the temperature had dropped well below freezing and new snow was being driven sideways and even upwards by powerful gusts of wind. The extended family centered themselves around the coffin and the rest of us filled in as best we could...some of us just outside the protective roof. There was an honor guard of Marines too many to count and a priest. A short prayer service and then the Marines took over.

After a Present Arms the firing party left the shelter, marched across the roadway and almost disappeared in the swirling snow. Only the bright blue and solid reds of their uniforms stood out. A 3 volley salute and the NCO in charge of this formation then played Taps. The smell of cordite and the sounds from the bugle commingled in the air and despite the winds both were carried back to us. A Chosin scene in honor of this Siege Marine, it seemed to me. The firing party reemerged out of the snow, the flag was removed from the coffin and in movements that seemed to be in slow motion it was folded, inspected, saluted and presented to Marcella. Family and friends began the slow, emotional disconnect from the moment, but I held back.

One more thing to do on this day of memory and connection and shared experiences. I approached the coffin, said my goodbyes, and reached for my pocket and a small medicine bottle filled with Khe Sanh red clay from my return there in July 2000. The coffin had a groove around the top and in that narrow space I inserted a few nuggets of that historic dirt. The nuggets crumpled as I pressed them in and the wind took some of it away, but there was enough for him to have forever. I saluted once and headed for my car slowing only to thank as many of the Honor Guard Marines as I could. In the severe weather, it was not a day to linger.

Now, on this March day 6 weeks later --with the snows all gone and spring just around the corner -- March 17, 2009 -- this is my leprechaun wish:

Captain O'Connor, It is my sincerest hope that some tendrils of those green smoke rounds that you fired 41 years ago this day at Hill 881N were there to mark your way from this life to the next. You deserve no less. Happy St. Patrick's Day and Semper Fidelis.

Dear Dennis,

Once again my eyes are filled with tears on reading your tribute to my brother, Bill. It truly was a pleasure to have met you during the time of Bill's funeral. He certainly was a wonderful brother and a dedicated Marine. My husband Ed and I took the trip to MA last weekend to be with Marcella and Matt to attend Bill's favorite Friendly Sons of St. Patrick dinner, which he was the Treasurer and so proud to be a member of the "Friendly Sons." Once again, he was singled out not only at St. Julie's on Saturday morning, but also at the dinner. They dedicated a single page in Bill's honor as a "tribute to their dedicated friend and Treasurer." We are all so proud of him. Thank you for sharing your experiences with my brother. We cherish your friendship.

Dennis,

That was a beautiful tribute. I know Uncle Bill al-

ways loved his memory of the military and loved to tell us stories of his experiences. He will be missed, Dearly

Nicole (Ed Jr's wife)

OBIT

CAPTAIN & CWO4
WILLIAM J. FERRAL
H&S CO 1/26 S-1 ADJUTANT

Lt/Col Ken Pipes B Co 1/26

Received a call from Mrs. Ferral that their and our Captain, and CWO4 Bill Ferral just crossed the river to join ranks with those Brave and Courageous Warriors that have been forming on the other side since January 1968. As most of you know, Capt. Bill was the S-1 of 1/26 before, during and after the Siege. We in 1/26 were Blessed to have such a Great Marine and Man in that most vital position during those difficult and soul searing times. Please, place the Ferral Family in your prayers. First Sgt. Pete Ferral will be on his way home from Iraq, son and retired Corporal Joe Ferral will be coming in



from the Far East--the rest of the family are in the states and are headed home to help their mother. Daughter Elizabeth is with Mrs. Ferral

e-mail is ok at: t.ferral@adelphia.net. May our Lord hold Bill and his family in the palms of His Loving Hands, now and always.

Hand Salute and Semper Fidelis Captain. Save us a place at the CP. more reinforcements will keep coming.

OBIT

JOHN T. CROSBY
B Co 1/26

By Ken Pipes

I am again deeply saddened. Phil Wright informed me one of Bravo Company's finest passed away, Brother John Crosby. John was wounded twice, the second time on March 30, 1968. His Courage that day was later recognized with the presentation of the Bronze Star Medal, with Combat "V". John and his wife, Sharon, live in Georgia. It is ironic that John's passing was on the day that Khe Sanh was mentioned by the incoming President. It is my prayer that our Lord holds this fine Man and Courageous Marine in the palms of His Loving hands, now and through all eternity. Please remember John's wife, Sharon and their family in your prayers.

Hand Salute and Semper Fidelis to one of Bravo's Brave Riflemen.

OBIT

L/CPL MIKE HAYNES

By Gene Neeley H&S 1/26

Another marine has passed.

Mike, of Amarillo, and formally of 1/9 passed away on 2/14/2009. we went to school together and hung out together before and after Nam. After Nam We never talked about it. I doubt she see's this but his lady (Cindy) stayed by his side until the end even though he was in bed at the VA,

for the last 3.5 years. People like that are hard to find and a blessing. Please say a prayer for Cindy and GOD speed to mike for me. Mike was A good friend and will be missed.

THE GENERAL

By Craig Tourte

This weekend I head down to San Diego - Wife has a business meeting, after, we'll visit our son and play a little golf. So we're on the National Car Rental Bus heading for the rental lot when a very distinguished looking gentleman accompanied by another male and a couple of ladies get on. Of course I have on my red Khe Sanh USMC hat. This gentleman sits across from me, notices my hat and asks if I had been at Khe Sanh. Yes I say, he asks if I had been with the 26th Marines, 13th I respond. After a few minutes I asked where he lives, he responds San Francisco, Noticing his Marine Corps lapel pin, I asked if he had ever been to the Marine Memorial Hotel. He tells me that he was the CEO.

Of course I know that the CEO of the Marine Memorial Hotel happens to be a general officer and I ask for his business card - which I cannot read because I don't have my glasses so I place it into my pocket. We engage in a little conversation and he introduces me to a movie director by the name of Norman Lloyd. Then the General hands me two items. The first is a DVD titled "Commitment & Sacrifice A True Story" and another DVD titled "Cover Me." I just got home this afternoon (Sunday) and have not yet viewed either. Anyway, the General asks me to stop by and see him the next time I'm in San Francisco. I say my thanks, then tell him I have a little gift for him and hand the general one of our Khe Sanh Coins.

I noted he looked it over pretty good before he placed it into his pocket. I did a little research via Google on the good general and was duly impressed. I asked him if he had known or had ever me Col. Lownds or knew Ken Pipes. He told me that he had met Lownds once and was not sure if he had ever met Col Pipes. When I get the new Red Clay I'll send him a magazine along with a letter addressing what a privilege it was to have met him and Mr. Lloyd and that I enjoyed the DVD's. I told the good general that I had provided the Marine Memorial Library with one of our magazine but that I'd send the next one directly to him.

VETERANS HELPING VETERANS

By Earl Clark A Co 1/26

Our Marine Corps League Detachment 1296 out of Chandler, AZ, had a surplus of funds from our Marine Corps Birthday Ball. We had a cart made up from this surplus, of two separate golf carts and inserted a wheel chair ramp in the center. Its purpose is to get our injured brothers and sisters to wherever they need to be at Camp Pendleton, including the NCO Club.

A few of us convoyed the cart over to Camp Pendleton and donated the cart to the Wounded Warrior Battalion at the Base. There was a presentation ceremony. The golf cart company did an excellent job with the vehicle. I extended an invitation to Col. Ken Pipes to attend the ceremonies, and he accepted. It was a privilege for me to have him present.





Some of the staff and wounded gathered around the vehicle for a photo. What a bunch of great young men and women we have in the Corps.

MARINES COME TO AID OF WOUNDED

By Marissa Belles

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Once a Marine, always a Marine. That mantra inspired the East Valley Marines to work tirelessly on a project to help wounded veterans at Camp Pendleton, Calif.



ANDREA BLOOM/THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

East Valley Marines (from left) Richard Hippner, John Maggio, Michael Rice, Phillip Loersh, Bob Hicks, Kathy Maggio, Rob Baier and Chuck Crist show off the seven-passenger, handicapped-accessible modified golf cart they made available to Camp Pendleton, Calif.



The Chandler-based group, which draws members from across the Valley, raised $14,000 for a specially built golf cart that will be used to, carry injured soldiers around the base.

On Wednesday, a 20-person convoy transported that cart to California as part of the Wounded Warrior Program, which provides assistance to combat victims throughout their recovery.

The convoy culminated a project that drew together Marines and several companies from across the Valley.

East Valley Marine member Will Oravetz of Maricopa said it's difficult for many wounded Marines to get from their barracks to treat-ment centers and other facilities on base.

"I would think that opportunity of mobility for someone wounded in action is one of the best things we can give," Oravetz said.

Richard Hippner, commandant of the East Valley Marines, said the outpouring of com-munity support has been uplifting.

"We have had assistance from allover the state, which was really nice to see," 'Hippner said.

"These young people do so much for our country and this organization wants to sup-port those who have given and lost for us."

Some of the money used to acquire the cart was left over from an East Valley Marines fund drive last fall to bring 60 Marine veter-ans of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan to their annual ball.

Greg Holland, owner of Creative Works in Star Valley, helped build the golf cart by fusing two carts together.

"The vehicle can transport seven men," Holland said. 'We also installed a ramp to make it easier for the disabled."

James Rhodes, owner of Highways Custom Canvas and Upholstery in Apache Junction, which did all the fabric work on the golf cart, said, "After everything these soldiers do for our country, they should be taken care of and I' am happy to have contributed."

The construction of the transport cart was coordinated by Hippner and fellow Marine Chuck Crist, a driver for AI Golf Carts, a Chandler company that helped front the cost.

"I have not been close to being in the state that some of these young people are," said, Crist, a wounded Vietnam veteran.

"They deserve all the comfort and convenience we can possibly give them."

I GET MAIL

Dear Tom:

This letter is in response to the article regarding S/Sgt. Karl Gorman Taylor that appeared in the Spring 2009 issue of "Red Clay." I very rarely submit any written responses to articles; however, I was moved to do so in this particular instance.

My story begins on a cold March day in 1966 on the banks of the Potomac River in Quantico, VA. For the first time our OCS platoon (A Company, 2nd Platoon) was being formed, and we had our initial face to face with our Drill Instructors. One of these instructors happened to be S/Sgt. Taylor, who was, by an stretch of one's imagination, a very powerfully built and imposing physical specimen. After he made some very "colorful and memorable" comments, my journey began as a future Marine.

During the next 10 weeks S/Sgt. Taylor did a masterful job of breaking us down, weeding out the "unacceptable," and then restoring us to fully functioning individuals. From the hill trails, to the "O" course, to the squad bay, he was ever present, always professional, always leading by example. When I came down with an infection, he took me to sickbay. He pushed me to the max during our PT sessions. Finally, he chose me to lead our platoon during our last drill competition.

For our graduation ceremony in May, none of my family was able to attend. I asked S/Sgt. Taylor to pin on my new Lieutenant's bars. He accepted my invitation, stepped back, saluted smartly, and said words that I've never forgotten: "Lieutenant, I would be honored to serve in your command, anytime, anyplace." That day was the last time I saw him.

However, that day in May is not where this story ends. Since that time, I have come to find out just how connected we were and of the tremendous impact that he had on my life. We share the same birthday: July 14th. Both our wives are named Shirley.

Perhaps the most significant event happened on January 21, 1968 when S/Sgt. Taylor joined India Company 3/26 at Khe Sanh. Early that same morning, I was on duty inside the perimeter when the

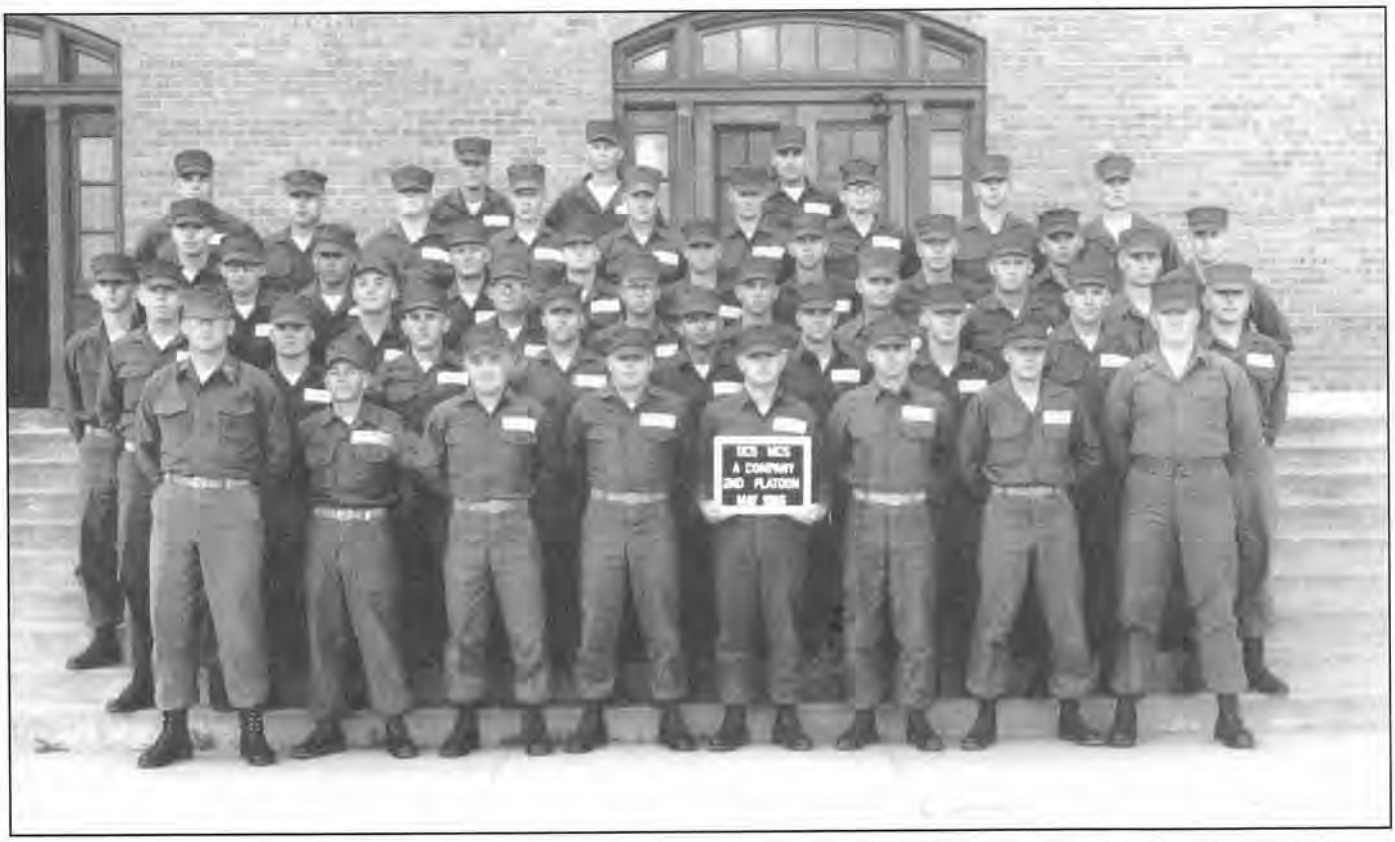

KARL GORMAN 1ST ROW FAR RIGHT , BILL MCEWEN LAST ROW FAR LEFT (GRADUATION CLASS)

first round hit. **See my article in issue #44, summer 1999 of "Red Clay."** At that time I had no idea of the whereabouts of S/Sgt Taylor. In the following weeks I directed numerous aircraft bombing missions and expended tons of ordnance in support of 3/26 and sister units. (MASS-3, Air Support Radar Team, call sign "Carstairs Bravo.") I would like to think that in some small way I repaid some of the debt that I owed to my former DI. When I learned of his sacrifice and subsequent Medal of Honor, it was a very sad and emotional day for me.

It's been almost exactly 43 years since I first met S/Sgt. Taylor. In those years I've had the privilege of serving in various leadership roles. However, I never forgot those words he said to me at that OCS graduation ceremony. Hopefully, I never betrayed that confidence and trust in those whom I served.

Karl Taylor may have never realized the impact that he had on the many lives he touched. He simply led and gave his life by example, by modeling our core values of courage, honor, and commitment along with character and competence. And in so doing, perhaps, that was his greatest gift to those of us who knew him. I'm sure Ron Hoover and Richard Townsend would both agree.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Karl Taylor's family, for your loyalty, dedication, and many sacrifices. He was a true American hero, and you were most fortunate to have him in your life. Thank you for carrying on his legacy.

Sincerely,
Bill McEwen



Submitted By Mike Fishbaugh

Another Photo sent to me by Donna Elliott. Mike Snapped this photo hanging on the wall of the Lao Bao prison museum in 2003.According to Dennis Thompson (POW-released) the guy with his arms tied is William McMurry USSF. He was captured at Lang Vei 7 February 68.

Name: William G. McMurry, Jr.
Rank/Branch: E4/US Army Special Forces
Unit: Company C, Detachment A-101, 5th SFG
Date of Birth:
Home City of Record: Scottsdale AZ
Loss Date: 07 February 1968
Country of Loss: South Vietnam Loss Coordinates: 163602N 1064058E (XD795360) Status (In 1973): Released POW
Category: Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground:

Personnel In Incident:
Dennis L. Thompson; William G. McMurry; Harvey G.Brande; (all released 1973). Kenneth Hanna; Daniel R. Phillips; James W.Holt; James Moreland; Charles Lindewald; (all missing); Eugene Ashley Jr. killed)

REMARKS: RELEASED 730316 BY PRG Source: Compiled from one or more of the following: raw data from U.S. Government agency sources, correspondence with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews. Updated by the P.O.W. NETWORK.

SYNOPSIS: The Lang Vei Special Forces camp in the northwestern corner of South Vietnam along Route 9, a mile and a half from the Laotian border. had been established in late December 1966 as a result of the Special Forces Detachment A101 having been moved out of its former Khe Sanh location. It seemed ill fated from the beginning.

In March 1967, one of the worst tragedies to befall the Special Forces CIDG program during the war occurred. U.S. Air Force released napalm ordnance on the nearby village which spewed exploding fire over the camp, landing zone, minefield and village. 135 CIDG and native civilians were killed, and 213 were horribly wounded, burned or disfigured.

Only two months later, on May 4, a Viet Cong night attack on the camp wiped out the Special Forces command group, all in one bunker, and killed the

detachment commander and his executive officer, as well as seriously wounding the team sergeant. This attack was a prelude to the larger siege of Khe Sanh, and was a grim reminder of the dangerous neighborhood Special Forces had moved into.

By January 1968, several North Vietnamese Army divisions had encircled the Marine combat base at Khe Sanh, placing the more westerly Lang Vei Special Forces frontier surveillance camp in imminent danger. The camp was occupied by Detachment A101 commanded by Capt. Frank C. Willoughby. Willoughby was rebuilding and reinforcing the camp at the time, while soldiers and dependants from the Kha tribal 33rd Laotian Volunteer Battalion streamed into the camp after being overrun by NVA tanks across the border.

On the evening of January 24, the camp was pounded by mortars in conjunction with a heavy shelling of the Marine Khe Sanh base, which prevented any effective artillery support for Lang Vei. 1Lt. Paul R. Longgrear had only recently arrived with his Hre tribal 12th Mobile Strike Force Company to help shore up defensive firepower.

The influx of the Laotians caused some problems. For example, the Lao battalion commander refused to take orders from the American captain, forcing the Company C commander, Lt/Col. Daniel F. Schungel, to come to Lang Vei on his first Special Forces assignment on February 6 to provide an officer of equal rank. Camp strength on February 6 totaled 24 Special Forces, 14 LLDB, 161 mobile strike force, 282 CIDG (Bru and Vietnamese), 6 interpreters and 520 Laotian soldiers, plus a number of civilians.

Shortly after midnight on February 7, 1968, a combined NVA infantry-tank assault drove into Lang Vei. Two PT-76 tanks threatened the outer perimeter of the camp as infantry rushed behind them. SFC James W. Holt destroyed both tanks with shots from his 106mm recoilless rifle. More tanks came around the burning hulks of the first two tanks and began to roll over the 104th CIDG Company's defensive positions. S/Sgt. Peter Tiroch, the assistant intelligence sergeant, ran over to Holt's position and helped load the weapon. Holt quickly lined up a third tank in his sights and destroyed it with a direct hit. After a second shot at the tank, Holt and Tiroch left the weapons pit just before it was demolished by return cannon fire. Tiroch watched Holt run over to the ammunition bunker to look for some hand-held Light Anti-tank Weapons (LAWs). It was the last time Holt was ever seen. Lt/Col. Schungel, 1Lt. Longgrear, S/Sgt. Arthur Brooks, Sgt. Nikolas Fragos, SP4 William G. McMurry, Jr., and LLDB Lt. Quy desperately tried to stop the tanks with LAWs and grenades. They even climbed on the plated engine decks, trying to pry open hatches to blast out the crews. NVA infantrymen followed the vehicles closely, dusting their sides with automatic rifle fire. One tank was stopped by five direct hits, and the crew killed as they tried to abandon the vehicle. 1Lt. Miles R. Wilkins, the detachment executive officer, left the mortar pit with several LAWs and fought a running engagement with one tank beside the team house without much success.

Along the outer perimeters, the mobile strike force outpost was receiving fire. Both Kenneth Hanna, a heavy weapons specialist, and Charles W. Lindewald, 12th Mobile Strike Force platoon leader, were wounded. Hanna, wounded in the scalp, left shoulder and arm tried to administer first aid to Lindewald. The two were last seen just before their position was overrun. Harvey Brande spoke with them by radio and Hanna indicated that Lindewald was then dead, and that he himself was badly wounded. Daniel R. Phillips, a demolitions specialist, was wounded in the face and was last seen trying to evade North Vietnamese armor by going through the northern perimeter wire. NVA sappers armed with satchel charges, tear gas grenades and flamethrowers fought through the 101st, 102nd and 103rd CIDG perimeter trenches and captured both ends of the compound by 2:30 a.m. Spearheaded by tanks, they stormed the inner compound.

Lt/Col. Schungel and his tank-killer personnel moved back to the command bunker for more LAWs. They were pinned behind a row of dirt and rock filled drums by a tank that had just destroyed one of the mortar pits. A LAW was fired against the tank with no effect. The cannon swung around and blasted the barrels in front of the bunker entrance. The explosion temporarily blinded McMurry and mangled his hands, pitched a heavy drum on top of Lt. Wilkins and knocked Schungel flat. Lt. Quy managed to escape to another section of the camp, but the approach of yet another tank prevented

Schungel and Wilkins from following. At some point during this period, McMurry, a radioman, disappeared.

The tank, which was shooting at the camp observation post, was destroyed with a LAW. Schungel helped Wilkins over to the team house, where he left both doors ajar and watched for approaching NVA soldiers. Wilkins was incapacitated and weaponless, and Schungel had only two grenades and two magazines of ammunition left. He used one magazine to kill a closely huddled five-man sapper squad coming toward the building. He fed his last magazine into his rifle as the team house was rocked with explosions and bullets. The two limped over to the dispensary, which was occupied by NVA soldiers, and hid underneath it, behind a wall of sandbags.

At some point, Brande, Thompson and at least one Vietnamese interpreter were captured by the North Vietnamese. Thompson was uninjured, but Brande had taken shrapnel in his leg. Brande and Thompson were held separately for a week, then rejoined in Laos. Joined with them was McMurry, who had also been captured from the camp. The three were moved up the Ho Chi Minh trail to North Vietnam and held until 1973. The U.S. did not immediately realize they had been captured, and carried them in Missing in Action status throughout the rest of the war, although Brande's photo was positively identified by a defector in April 1969 as being a Prisoner of War. A Vietnamese interpreter captured from the camp told Brande later that he had seen both Lindewald and Hanna, and that they both were dead.

Several personnel, including Capt. Willoughby, SP4 James L. Moreland, the medic for the mobile strike force, and Lt. Quan, the LLDB camp commander, were trapped in the underground level of the command bunker. Lt. Longgrear had also retreated to the command bunker. Satchel charges, thermite grenades and gas grenades were shoved down the bunker air vents, and breathing was very difficult. Some soldiers had gas masks, but others had only handkerchiefs or gauze from their first aid packets. The NVA announced they were going to blow up the bunker, and the LLDB personnel walked up the stairs to surrender, and were summarily executed. At dawn, two large charges were put down the vent shaft and detonated, partially demolishing the north wall and creating a large hole through which grenades were pitched. The bunker defenders used upturned furniture and debris to shield themselves. Willoughby was badly wounded by grenade fragments and passed out at 8:30 a.m. Moreland had been wounded and became delirious after receiving a head injury in the final bunker explosion. Incredibly, the battle was still going on in other parts of the camp.

Aircraft had been strafing the ravines and roads since 1:00 a.m. Throughout the battle, the Laotians refused to participate, saying they would attack at first light. SFC Eugene Ashley, Jr., the intelligence sergeant, led two assistant medical specialists, Sgt. Richard H. Allen and SP4 Joel Johnson as they mustered 60 of the Laotian soldiers and counterattacked into Lang Vei. The Laotians bolted when a NVA machine gun crew opened fire on them, forcing the three Americans to withdraw.

Team SFC William T. Craig and S/Sgt. Tiroch had chased tanks throughout the night with everything from M-79 grenade launchers to a .50 caliber machine gun. After it had become apparent that the camp had been overrun, they escaped outside the wire and took temporary refuge in a creek bed. After daylight, they saw Ashley's counterattack force and joined him. The Special Forces sergeants persuaded more defenders fleeing down Route 9 to assist them and tried second, third and fourth assaults. Between each assault, Ashley directed airstrikes on the NVA defensive line, while the other Special Forces soldiers gathered tribal warriors for yet another attempt. On the fifth counterattack, Ashley was mortally wounded only thirty yards from the command bunker. Capt. Willoughby had regained consciousness in the bunker about 10:00 a.m. and established radio contact with the counterattacking Americans. The continual American airstrikes had forced the North Vietnamese to begin withdrawing from the camp. Col. Schungel and Lt. Wilkins emerged from under the dispensary after it was vacated by the North Vietnamese and hobbled out of the camp.

The personnel in the bunker also left in response to orders to immediately evacuate the camp. They carried Sgt. John D. Early, who had been badly wounded by shrapnel while manning the tower, but were forced to leave SP4 Moreland inside the bun-

ker. 1Lt. Thomas D. Todd, an engineer officer in charge of upgrading Lang Vei's airstrip, held out in the medical bunker throughout the battle. That afternoon, he was the last American to pass through the ruined command bunker. He saw Moreland, who appeared to be dead, covered with debris. Maj. George Quamo gathered a few dozen Special Forces commando volunteers from the MACV-SOG base at Khe Sanh (FOB #3) and led a heroic reinforcing mission into Lang Vei. His arrival enabled the Lang Vei defenders to evacuate the area, many by Marine helicopters in the late afternoon.

Sgt. Richard H. Allen - Survivor
SFC Eugene Ashley, Jr.- Awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for Lang Vei.
Harvey Gordon Brande - Captured released POW in 1973.
S/Sgt. Arthur Brooks- Survivor.
SFC William T. Craig- Survivor
Sgt. John D. Early -Survivor
Sgt. Nikolas Fragos - Survivor
Kenneth Hanna - Missing In Action
James William Holt - Missing In Action
SP4 Joel Johnson - Survivor
Charles Wesley Lindewald, Jr. - Missing In Action
1Lt. Paul R. Longgrear - Survivor
SP4 William G. McMurry - Captured - released POW in 1973
James Leslie Moreland - Missing In Action
Daniel Raymond Phillips - Missing In Action
Maj. George Quamo - Killed in Action April 14, 1968
Lt. Quy - Survivor
Lt/Col. Daniel F. Schungel appointed deputy commander of the 5th Special Forces
Dennis L. Thompson - Captured - released POW in 1973
S/Sgt. Peter Tiroch - Survivor
1Lt. Thomas D. Todd - Survivor
1Lt. Miles R. Wilkins - Survivor
Capt. Frank C. Willoughby - Survivor

December 1996 William McMurray retired from the United States Army as a Master Sergeant. He lives in Arizona.

Deadly struggle in the hills: the first battle of Khe Sanh: in the spring of 1967, elements of the 3rd and 9th Marines clashed with the North Vietnamese Army in the "Hill Fights."

VFW Magazine, Sept, 2004
by Al Hemingway

Khe Sanh, tucked away in the northwest section of South Vietnam, overlooked a major infiltration route during the war. In 1966, the Marines constructed a combat base in its vicinity to patrol Hills 861,881S and 881N. With no initial hostile contact, it seemed enemy activity had subsided. Early in 1967, however, Leathernecks would discover that the 325C North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Division had returned.

Opening Shots on 861

On April 24, a platoon from B Co., 1st Bn., 9th Marines, left Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) and established an 81mm mortar position on Hill 700, just south of Hill 861. The mortars were to provide additional support to the remainder of the company searching for caves.

A five-man patrol climbed Hill 861 to establish an observation post. Nearing the top, the NVA ambushed the small party. Only one Marine survived. These were the opening shots of the first battle of Khe Sanh.

Mortars and 105mm howitzers from KSCB pounded NVA positions atop Hill 861. Capt. Michael W. Sayers ordered his remaining platoons to hit the enemy from the rear. As the riflemen moved forward, bullets tore into their right flank.

"My fire team proceeded up 861 when I heard a loud crack," Lance Cpl. Chris Harte said. "I saw the point man reach for his head and crumple to the ground."

Placing a mortar tube between his legs, Lance Cpl. Dana C. Darnell lobbed 60mm rounds at the NVA. On more than one occasion, he braved enemy fire to obtain more shells. He was killed two days later and was posthumously awarded a Navy Cross.

Ring of Steel

Casualties mounted as automatic weapons fire poured from cleverly concealed bunkers. As they tried to move forward, shrapnel from an 82mm mortar round wounded Harte and another Marine."My arm and leg were burning," Harte said. "The Marine to my right had blood pumping out of his mouth."The cannons of the 12th Marines (an artillery regiment) sent thousands of rounds crashing into the hills to support the infantry. "Artillery put a ring of steel around my defensive position that was so tight we were taking dirt from the impact," Sayers recalled. "No doubt it saved our lives."

Harte remembered, "Night fell and word was passed we were moving out. It was damp and very dark. The moans and cries of the wounded only made it more eerie. A light rain started to fall. We had no water, so I licked the raindrops off my rifle. It gave me some relief."

K Co., 3rd Bn., 9th Marines, arrived later and had the unenviable task of retrieving the casualties scattered on 861. "As gentle and as caring as we could, we helped bring Marines down the face of the hill," PFC Larry D. Stevanus wrote in a letter. "Some were in so much pain they screamed if we moved them the wrong way."

Choppers from Helicopter Marine Medium (HMM) 164 had a difficult time trying to evacuate the wounded and drop off supplies. "We were like magnets," Cpl. Sam Beamon said. "We only had so many seconds on the ground before their mortars would start coming in. They were really accurate, too. Some choppers were riddled with holes."

On April 28, the 2nd Bn., 3rd Marines, advanced on Hill 861. The mountain was saturated with 250- and 500-pound bombs. When the riflemen reached the crest, however, they discovered the elusive NVA had retreated. Amid the stench of decaying bodies, shattered trees and blackened earth, they found 25 mutually supporting bunkers and more than 400 fighting holes. They were virtually impenetrable to air and artillery strikes.

'They Were Killing Us' on 881S

Attention now shifted to Hill 881S. Shaped like a peanut and running east to west, the hill was "rough going" for the Leathernecks. Suddenly, "everything went off," and members of M Co., 3rd Bn., 3rd Marines, were fighting for their lives.

"Myself, 2nd Lt. Joe Mitchell and Lance Cpl. Lester Ray Calhoun were taking cover behind a log when an 82mm mortar landed near us," said PFC Don Hossack, the company radio operator. "The blast destroyed the radio and sent a 9-inch piece of shrapnel into my head and broke my arm in two places. Thank God for my helmet. It saved my life."

Hossack realized the NVA were attempting to flank his platoon. "They were closing with us," he said. "I heard whistles, and they emerged from their tighter bunkers. A Russian-made RPD machine gun had us pinned down. They were killing us."

Commandeering another radio, Hossack called KSCB for artillery support. "They were right on the money," he said. "The barrage wiped out 30 to 50 NVA."

A short distance away, K and M companies, 3rd Bn., 9th Marines, also were involved in heavy, combat. "We finally reached the top and began tossing hand grenades into bunkers," said Lance Cpl. Harry O'Dell of K Company. "Bullets were so close they sounded like cracking whips. A mortar round hit and blew me back into one of their bunkers. I was dazed, and my uniform was soaked in blood."

Lance Cpl. Joe O'Neill and PFC Leslie Wyeth of M Company were retrieving the body of a dead Marine when snipers cut them down. "Rounds struck Wyeth in his legs, and one got me in the shoulder and the throat," O'Neill said. "I was gasping for air, and I tried to yell to clear my passageway. Our corpsman, Mike House, came out of nowhere to assist me." House would receive a Silver Star for his gallantry and O'Neill a Bronze Star.

After four days of bloody fighting, Hill 881S was secured. The victory, however, was bittersweet. "You can't say we took the hill," O'Dell said. "They just left."

Bodies Everywhere on 881N

One hill remained in NVA hands--881N. Two companies from the 2nd Bn., 3rd Marines, assaulted it from the south and east. The enemy let loose with everything they had. Even experienced combat Marines had never known such heavy fire. Late in the afternoon, the Leathernecks consolidated their positions.

Early the next morning, hundreds of NVA soldiers struck E Company's lines. Fighting was hand-to-hand as the enemy breached a portion of the perimeter. A composite squad of combat engineers was quickly organized to bolster the weakened defenses. Artillery and 106mm recoilless rifle fire finally stopped their attack.

2nd Lt. James R. Cannon was stunned. In The Hill Fights: The First Battle of Khe Sanh, author Edward E Murphy quotes him: "'There were bodies everywhere, mostly NVA. About 80 enemy dead littered the ground in front of the 1st and 2nd squads' positions. No doubt others had been dragged away by their comrades. Dead Marines lay there, too. I couldn't tell a black from a white Marine. Four hours in the sun had already badly decomposed the bodies.'"

Cannon was extremely proud of his men. "The actions of Echo Company earned them two Navy Crosses, five Silver Stars, six Bronze Stars with Combat V and 150 Purple Hearts," he later recorded. "We killed 236 NVA."

On May 5, the embattled Marines finally seized Hill 881N. The Hill Fights officially ended on May 12. The NVA's plans to overrun KSCB failed. The Leathernecks and corpsmen sustained 168 dead and 443 wounded. An estimated 940 NVA soldiers were killed. "It was the toughest fight we had in Vietnam," Lt. Gen. Victor Krulak reckoned.

This seesaw action along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) would continue throughout the war.

"Through months of bloody fighting between Route 9 and the DMZ, the Marines never conquered the North Vietnamese Army," historian Murphy wrote in The Hill Fights. "At best, they managed a stalemate."

Al Hemingway, a VFW member in Connecticut, served with the 3rd Marine Division in Vietnam in 1969. This is his fifth contribution to the Vietnam Battle Series.

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THE LAST STAND OF KHE SANH AREA UNITED STATES ARMY

Mission: reconnaissance "prisoner-snatch" Awarded Medals : Army Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, three Silver Stars

The once bustling Khe Sanh Marine Base in South Vietnam's extreme northwest had been a ghost town for more than three years by the summer of 1971. It was, however, used briefly that February to support the South Vietnamese invasion of Laos. After that bloody debacle, they abandoned not just Khe Sanh, but the entire region, yielding immense areas to the NVA. Almost overnight, the North began extending the Ho Chi Minh Trail highways into South Vietnam.

In late July 1971, U.S. intelligence began tracking a large enemy force shifting across the DMZ a dozen miles east of Khe Sanh, threatening the coastal cities of Hue, Danang and Phu Bai where the last sizeable American ground units were based.

MISSION

It was essential to learn what was happening near Khe Sanh, the mission was assigned to a shadowy organization called "SOG". Created to conduct covert missions deep behind enemy lines in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam, the top secret Studies and Observations Group had shifted most of its operations incountry in 1971 to cover the continuing U.S. withdrawal.

From among its clandestine assembly of Army Green Berets, Navy SEALs and USAF Air Commandos, the Khe Sanh mission eventually became a prisoner-snatch assigned to Recon Team Kansas, an 11-man Special Forces-led element, which included eight Montagnard tribesmen.

But how do you grab a prisoner in the midst of 10,000 or more NVA? Headed by an easygoing, lanky Midwesterner, 1st Lt. Loren Hagen, along with Sergeants Tony Andersen and Bruce Berg, the RT Kansas men had brainstormed through several scenarios until settling upon the best option: They would land conspicuously on an abandoned firebase which obviously would draw some sort of NVA reaction, put up a short fight, then extract by helicopter.

Except half of Hagen's men would stay hidden on the hill. When the NVA sent a squad up to see if the Americans had left behind sensors or bombing beacons -- as SOG teams often did -- the hidden men would ambush the NVA, seize a prisoner and come out.



Date : August 1971
Company :Recon Team Kansas, Studies and Observations Group (SOG)
Group leader : 1st. Lt.Hagen (3rd from right)

In case a serious fight developed, Lt. Hagen reinforced his team with three more Green Beret volunteers, Staff Sgt. Oran Bingham and Sergeants Bill Queen and William Rimondi, eight Montagnard tribesmen and six U.S. Special Forces troops -- a total of 14 men.

DEPLOYMENT

Landing at last light on Aug. 6, 1971, Lt. Hagen surveyed the scrub brush and bomb craters below them and split his defense into three elements to cover three slopes. Immediately they went to work restoring the old firebase's two dilapidated bunkers and shallow trenches. The enemy must have seen them land, and Hagen reckoned to be ready.

Foreboding Night It was well after dark when the SOG men noticed campfires on two facing ridgelines: unusual because the NVA normally masked itself. By midnight, enemy probers were at the base of the hill, firing provocatively from the north, south, east and west.

At 1 a.m., a USAF AC-130 Spectre gunship arrived, walking 40mm and 20mm fire around the hill nearly all night. Never once did the team fire their weapons, staying blanketed in darkness. Then at 3 a.m., the SOG men heard trucks and tailgates dropping. This was odd, very odd.

Beneath the hill, dismounting NVA soldiers formed up into platoons and companies, which their leaders marched through the darkness to their assigned attack positions, to wait for dawn. Just before sunrise it became forebodingly quiet. Then Lt. Hagen heard more trucks arriving.

Fifty miles away at a coastal airbase, a USAF forward air controller (FAC) and a flight of helicopters was lifting away for the false extraction; they would be above RT Kansas in 30 minutes.

Encircled by the NVA as darkness gave way to light, Lt. Hagen detected glimpses of NVA on one slope; then on another slope pith helmets appeared, bobbing in the fog. When his men reported NVA on the third slope, too, Hagen realized the hill was completely encircled by NVA -- but that would require a whole regiment, at least a thousand men.

The NVA regimental commander understood he had to dispatch the Americans quickly. They'd inadvertently landed almost within sight of the Hanoi High Command's most critical new venture, the first six-inch fuel pipeline laid across the DMZ.

It would be absolutely essential in a few months when entire tank battalions rolled through there for the war's largest offensive. Already the 304th NVA Division was massing there. Moreover, a regiment of the 308th Division was preparing for the 1972 Easter Offensive.

A fourth battalion moved into place; then, concealed in the ground fog, a fifth battalion arrived. Later, SOG's commander, Col. John Sadler, would learn an entire regiment had stormed the hill, supported by a second regiment. It was a mass assault by approximately 2,000 enemy infantrymen.
As the clearing ground fog disclosed that terrible truth, Lt. Hagen had no time for inspiring words, just serious soldier work; in those final moments he repositioned weapons while his men readied grenades and stacked magazines. The Catholic Montagnards made the sign of the cross.

THEN THE NVA CAME

Four KIA in Four Minutes A well-aimed RPG rocket smashed into Bruce Berg's bunker, collapsing it and signaling the attack -- fire went from nothing to 10,000 rounds per second. Andersen could see dozens of NVA rushing in lines up his slope, meeting them with his M-60 machine gun.

Hagen hollered that he was going to check Berg. And then he ran directly into a ferocious maelstrom, bullets ricocheting and slamming the earth in front of, behind, and beneath his dashing feet. He made it a dozen yards when fire from the other slope cut him down, killing him.

Then Klaus Bingham left a bunker to reposition a claymore and a bullet struck him in the head, apparently killing him. One Montagnard in a trench below Andersen fired several bursts then jumped up to pull back and fell into Andersen's lap, dead. Four men had died in less than four minutes. It was up to Andersen, now the senior man.

Small arms fire rattled closer on all sides and grenades lobbed up from below the hillcrest where waves of NVA were scurrying behind small rises and rolling from bomb crater to bomb crater. Andersen dashed over the hill to look for Hagen, but couldn't see him anywhere -- just 100 khaki-clad NVA almost at the top.

He fired one M-60 belt at NVA advancing up his own slope, then sped to the other approach and ran belt after belt on the 100 assaulting enemy. By then, grenades started coming from behind him as NVA closed in from his rear. Just a dozen yards away, beyond the curvature of the hill, enemy heads popped up, cracked a few shots, then dropped back down.

Still a dozen minutes away, the approaching Cobra gunships went to full throttle, leaving the slower Hueys behind.

Meanwhile, RT Kansas had just run out of hand grenades when a North Vietnamese grenade exploded beside Andersen's M-60, rendering it useless. He spun his CAR-15 off his back and kept shooting, then he tossed back another grenade, but it went off in front of him, nearly blinding him, yet he kept shooting. More shrapnel tore into him, then an AK round slammed through his web gear and lodged in his elbow, knocking him down. He stumbled back to his knees and kept firing.

The perimeter was pinched almost in half when Andersen grabbed his last two living Montagnards, circled below the nearest NVA and somehow managed to reach the survivors on the opposite side. He found Bingham, started to lift him, and saw he, too, was dead from a head wound. All around him he heard, "zzssss, zzssss, zzssss," as bullets flashed past his ears.

LAST STAND

He dragged Bingham back to where Bill Queen lay, wounded. Only Rimondi wasn't yet hit and still fired furiously. Andersen put them in a back-to-back circle just off the hilltop where they would make their last stand. AK bullets had destroyed their team radio, another slug had shot Andersen's little survival radio out of his hand, so Rimondi tossed him another survival radio -- their last.

Now the NVA were streaming, rolling over the crest like a tidal wave, their rattling AKs blending together into one never-ending burst. Andersen's men were firing not at NVA, but at hands wielding AKs over parapets and around bunkers. There was no place left to fall back. Andersen was shooting NVA little farther away than the length of his CAR-15 muzzle. The time it took to speed-change a magazine meant life or death.

From the air it looked like an ant mound, with moving figures everywhere. Cobra lead rolled in and sprinkled 20mm cannon shells around the surviving

SOG men, and at last fighters arrived, adding napalm and Vulcan cannons to the melee. Then at last the assault ebbed, turned, and the NVA fled for cover, just as the Hueys arrived.

Though wounded repeatedly, Andersen crawled out to fire his CAR-15 to cover the landing Hueys. With Rimondi's help, Andersen dragged as many teammates' bodies as he could to the first Huey, then helped the wounded Queen and others aboard the second.

ALLIED KIA COUNT: 64%

In one hellacious half-hour, nine of Recon Team Kansas' 14 men had been lost. Lt. Hagen had died, along with Bingham; Berg was presumed dead; six Montagnards had died. Rimondi and Queen both suffered multiple frag wounds, Andersen had been struck by both small arms fire and shrapnel, and their other Montagnards, too, all had been wounded.

"It's amazing that any of us came through it with the amount of incoming that we were getting," Tony Andersen says today, 25 years later. He attributes their survival to his deceased team leader, Lt. Loren Hagen. "He epitomized what a Special Forces officer should be -- attentive to detail, a lot of rehearsals, followed through on things," he explains. "We were ready. I think that was probably the only thing that kept us from being totally overrun. Everybody was alert and knew what was happening and was waiting."

As for Hagen's bravery, dashing into a wall of AK fire to try to save Bruce Berg, that didn't surprise Andersen, either. "Lt. Hagen was that kind of officer. He was a good man."

Against the loss of most of his teammates, Andersen learned, the USAF counted 185 NVA dead on that hill -- little RT Kansas had killed half a battalion and probably wounded twice that many NVA. But that gives Andersen little satisfaction compared to the loss of most of his team.

Perhaps Andersen's most difficult duty was carrying the bodies of his six Montagnard teammates -- his "family" he called them -- to their home village."As soon as they saw us driving up in the truck, they knew. Wailing and moaning started, and all the grieving." The villagers gathered in a circle around the headman's stilted longhouse. "Through one of the interpreters I tried to explain how proud we were of them, what good fighters they were, that they had died for a good cause."

That would be borne out a few months later when the intelligence generated by RT Kansas' spirited defense helped U.S. analysts read enemy intentions, enabling American airpower to counter the NVA's Easter Offensive.

And though details of this incredible fight would remain classified for decades, enough was disclosed that 1st Lt. Loren Hagen's family was presented the U.S. Army's final Vietnam War Medal of Honor. Tony Andersen, who held together what remained of RT Kansas through those final mass assaults, received the Distinguished Service Cross. Queen, Rimondi, Berg and Bingham were awarded Silver Stars. And now, today, with full disclosure, we can appreciate the significance of their noble stand.

LATE OBIT

Laura Lynn Locke Morris

May 13, 2009

Daughter of John Locke B Co 3RD Shore Party

Laura Lynn Locke Morris, 43, of 323 W. Centre St., Shenandoah, died Wednesday at her residence. Born in Girardville, March 20, 1966, she was the daughter of John and Karen Lorah Locke, Frackville. She was a 1984 graduate of Shenandoah Valley High School and attended McCann School of Business. She was a member of Trinity United Church of Christ, Shenandoah.

Preceding her in death were grandparents, John and Mary Locke, Girardville, and Roy Lorah, Shenandoah. Surviving, in addition to her parents, are her husband, John Morris, whom she married in 1999; two sons, Army Spc. Harry J. Fisher, who served one year in Iraq and is now stationed in Bauhamer, Germany, with his wife, Nadine Koenig Fisher, and Steven Brill, Shenandoah; a brother, John L. Locke, Frackville; a grandmother, Jean Markert, Hamburg; parents-in-law, Victor and Shirley Morris, Branchdale; aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews.

Medal of Honor

HAGEN, LOREN D. 1Lt, US Army, Infantry US Army Training Advisory Group.

Action: Republic of Vietnam, 7 Aug 1971
Inducted: Fargo, N. Dakota
DOB 25 Feb 1946, Fargo, N. Dakota

Citation: 1st Lt. Hagen distinguished himself in action while serving as the team leader of a small reconnaissance team operating deep within enemy-held territory.

At approximately 0630 hours on the morning of 7 Aug 1971 the small team came under a fierce assault by a superior-sized enemy force using heavy small arms, automatic weapons, mortar, and rocket fire. 1st Lt. Hagen immediately began returning small-arms fire upon the attackers and successfully led this team in repelling the first enemy onslaught. He then quickly deployed his men into more strategic defense locations before the enemy struck again in an attempt to overrun and annihilate the beleaguered team's members. 1st Lt. Hagen repeatedly exposed himself to the enemy fire directed at him as he constantly moved about the team's perimeter, directing fire, rallying the members, and resupplying the team with ammunition, while courageously returning small arms and hand grenade fire in a valorous attempt to repel the advancing enemy force. The courageous actions and expert leadership abilities of 1st Lt. Hagen were a great source of inspiration and instilled confidence in the team members. After observing an enemy rocket make a direct hit on and destroy 1 of the team's bunkers, 1st Lt. Hagen moved toward the wrecked bunker in search for team members despite the fact that the enemy force now controlled the bunker area. With total disregard for his own personal safety, he crawled through the enemy fire while returning small-arms fire upon the enemy force. Undaunted by the enemy rockets and grenades impacting all around him, 1st Lt. Hagen desperately advanced upon the destroyed bunker until he was fatally wounded by enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire. With complete disregard for his personal safety, 1st Lt. Hagen's courageous gallantry, extraordinary heroism, and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty, at the cost of his own life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon him and the US Army.

SYMBOLS

By Craig W. Tourte

At the 2006 reunion held in Mobile Alabama, John Pessoni gave me several necklaces made by Ronald Shouse, consisting of colored beads representing service in Vietnam and Missing-In-Action. I wore mine proudly and was inundated by friends and acquaintances wanting their own beads to proudly show others their service in and support of - those who served and who were lost in Vietnam. (At the 2007 reunion, LeLand Upshaw was also kind enough to make and distribute similar necklaces to those who were interested).

I shared the few extras I had with close friends who were also Vietnam Veterans and wrote Ron a letter asking where I could purchase the beads so that I could make my own. Ron responded by sending me some more necklaces and bracelets. It's interesting that when I wear a shirt or cap indicating Khe Sanh I get few comments, but numerous recognitions in response to the beads.

One encounter of significance occurred in a little - off the main street - bar in downtown San Diego. I'll admit to being a bit under the influence that evening, experiencing one of those dark moods many of us find ourselves in. With few words exchanged, I gladly gave the necklace I wore to a Native American, who I observed was silently suffering

that too often unexplainable depressive disorder so many of us are afflicted with.

From grocery clerk, waitress, strangers on the street and in the taverns, folks have recognized the very distinctive yellow, white and red beads. What is most surprising is that most seem to understanding the meaning. A couple of weeks ago I happened to once again find myself in one of those out of the way places in downtown Honolulu. A little place tucked away from the hustle and bustle of the main thoroughfare. As I walked in I noted that the only vacant stool happened to between a fairly attractive young lady and a couple of young, thin, clean cut men who I at first assumed were of a different political and sexual persuasion than myself.

I was surprised when one of the men looked at the yellow, white and red beaded bracket on my wrist and made the statement, "Vietnam." It took me a moment before I responded "Yes", wondering how these guys knew anything about Vietnam. Turns out both were in the Navy, one was married and they knew a great deal about Vietnam and the Siege at Khe Sanh.

I realize some are uncomfortable wearing these beads and necklaces, but it is something that I am proud to do. Many years ago, way before the Marine Corps and Vietnam I spent a summer at the Hoopa Valley Indian Tribe Reservation near the Klamath River in the far North Western corner of California. Although an outsider, I was treated with open arms and respect and had a great time. My mother had told me on several occasions that I had a "little Indian in me" but for some reason, I never asked her what that meant. My father had passed away shortly after I was born and his name was seldom mention.

At the 2007 Khe Sanh Reunion held in Washington D.C., Raymond Palmer, a proud Marine of Delta Company, First Battalion, 26th Marine Corps Regiment and Native American who resides in Fort Apache, Arizona, presented me with a wonderful hand made necklace. Ray told me that it was an Indian tradition to exchange gifts and that he had read the article I had written - which was published in the "Red Clay" Magazine about the necklace gift to a Native American when I was in San Diego - (Issue 66 FALL 2006 "The Necklace And The Indian").

The necklace is hand made with green, yellow and red beads. On one face, in stitched beads are the words, "Tourte Khe Sanh" on the other side in hand stitched beads are the words, "68 SIEGE USMC." The necklace is a beautiful work of art and a memento I'll always cherish.

I usually wear various necklaces and bracelets beads I have described. I have in fact, even wore the necklace that Ray presented to me to the 2008 reunion held in Reno Nevada. But usually that necklaces rests in a glass case high up on a book shelve where it is proudly displayed in my front room. For some indescribable reason I sense a certain power from that necklace as it watches over me from its lofty perch and it reminds me of the quiet and too often forgotten Native Americans who have given so much to this country during times of conflict and in particular, during the Vietnam War. To me, that necklace is a priceless symbol of their bravery and sacrifice. I can never repay Ray Palmer for this most cherished gift.

A DOG TAG FINDS ITS WAY HOME

HARPERS FERRY - Buried for more than 40 years amidst the rubble of an abandoned U.S. Marine Corps fire base in Vietnam, 61-year-old Sgt. Cecil Tucker's dog tag seemed lost forever to history.

A member of the 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines, 3rd Marine Division - an artillery battalion - Tucker lost the dog tag during the daily enemy artillery bombardment while he was stationed in Khe Sanh.

The lost dog tag was likely later buried along with the base itself, when the Marines left the installation and tried to wipe it off the map using 500-pound bombs. The thought of anyone ever finding, let alone recovering, the lost dog tag seemed impossible - or so Tucker thought.

Last month, Tucker received a phone call from halfway around the world. On the other line was 34-year-old Jon Nizan, an Israeli who had searched for Tucker for months.

"He called me one Sunday morning and he said 'I

think I've got something that you might like to have'," Tucker said. "The first thing he asked me was 'were you on a fire base in Khe Sanh?' and I said 'yes sir, that was a long time ago'."

It was then that Tucker learned Nizan had found his dog tag while visiting Vietnam. Amazed at what he had just heard, Tucker asked the man on the other end of the phone if there was a service number engraved on the dog tag.

"2350267 - I memorized that ever since I came out of boot camp. ... I still never forgot it. It's remarkable," Tucker said.



The story of how Nizan, a native of Cleveland, found Tucker's long lost dog tag began last year. Nizan moved to Israel in 2000 and now lives in Ramat Gan, a suburb of Tel-Aviv. He and his wife traveled to Vietnam for a vacation in the summer of 2008. It had been Nizan's dream since he was a child to travel to Vietnam. When they first arrived, Nizan noticed dog tags were being sold at the War Remnants Museum in Saigon.

"I thought the whole thing was a bit disturbing - them selling dog tags of possibly fallen U.S. servicemen as tourist trinkets. At the same time I was a bit curious," he said.

He decided not to buy any dog tags in Saigon, but a few weeks later he visited Khe Sanh. The situation seemed less "touristy" there, Nizan said, because there were no other Westerners around. While he was there, he met a local man who was selling wartime relics that he had found with a metal detector. The artifacts included spent shell casings, uniform pins, bullets and a few rusty dog tags - some of them illegible.

"At that point I decided to help the guy out, and decided that maybe I could track down either the previous owner or, at least, the family of the previous owner and return it," Nizan said.

When Nizan returned to Israel he began searching for Tucker. It was a search that would take him more than two months, he said. He began surfing the Web, first looking to see if Tucker was killed in action. He then began scouring Web sites for Vietnam veterans and used general search sites.

"I posted a few notices on some sites asking if anyone knew a Cecil Tucker who served around Khe Sanh. I got no response, except for a guy who said that the tag was probably a fake," Nizan said.

The selling of fake dog tags to tourists had become a cottage industry in Vietnam, Nizan learned. He didn't let that deter him from his search and he continued on and off to search for Tucker. He tried cold -calling a few Cecil Tuckers spread out around the country, but got nowhere. With no leads, Nizan gave up his search for a while, when one day, out of the blue, he received an e-mail from a man who also bought a dog tag and managed to track down the owner.

"He had done some searches and found two Cecil Tuckers who he thought were good candidates," Nizan said.

Nizan called one of them and discovered the man was one of Tucker's relatives. He in turn gave Nizan the phone number to one of Tucker's good friends. That man then provided Nizan with Tucker's phone number.

"I had all but given up on the search when this guy e -mailed me. The whole idea that I could find a tag in the middle of the jungle in Asia, track down the guy who lost it 40 years ago from the other side of the world and return it to him is simply amazing," Nizan said. "You have to marvel at what the Internet is capable of."

Tucker offered to pay Nizan for the man's time and trouble, but Nizan refused, saying he wanted Tucker to have the dog tag back. It belonged to him, he

said. Last week, nearly a month after Tucker received the phone call, a business-size envelope with postage from Tel-Aviv and the message "do not bend" written in two languages on the back arrived in Tucker's mailbox.

"Just as soon as I looked at it, I said 'I can't believe it. Here it is'," Tucker said.

Inside he found his long lost dog tag, slightly malformed with a little rust and small, black blotches like axle grease on old chrome. Tucker's name and service number are still clearly visible, as well as traces of the dark orange dirt of Khe Sanh. Just looking at the dirt and the faded color of the dog tag told Tucker it was authentic.

"There's nothing fake about it because of that old dirt. There's no dirt around here to describe that dirt. It was just that dark. I was just like orange, the dirt, because of being torn up so much over there," Tucker said.

The black scorch marks are from napalm dropped from U.S. planes, he said. Sometimes they dropped the napalm so close he could feel the immense heat from incendiary weapons on his skin, he added.

Simply gazing at the dog tag opened up a wellspring of memories from Tucker's two tours of duty in Vietnam, he said.

Tucker joined the Marine Corps at age 19 in November 1966. A member of Platoon 322, Tucker graduated from boot camp in February 1967. He arrived in Dan Nang on Aug. 13, 1967, and from there went to Camp Evans. During his two tours, he served in 48 operations. He spent nearly half a year at the Marine Corps fire base in Khe Sanh, were he was among the servicemen who operated 155 mm howitzer artillery cannons.

The immense guns weighed 26,000 pounds and had a range of about 13 miles - 19 if they were new. A full gun crew consisted of 13 men, though most of the time, Tucker said, they were just eight, sometimes six, men to each gun. Each artillery round fired from the guns weighed 98 pounds and took two men to load.

"Up there in Khe Sanh it was a hot fire base. We got hit every day up there. They'd wake us up in the morning and they'd put us to bed at night. There wasn't a day that went by that we didn't get hit," Tucker said.

Enemy units had entrenched artillery positions dug into tunnels in the nearby mountains, which were protected by 2-foot thick steel doors.

Nizan's determined search reminded Tucker of his own journey in tracking down servicemen he served with in Vietnam. One man used to live in Baltimore. They had reunited 25 years ago, but Tucker lost track of him. With the help of his son, who is also a veteran, Tucker managed to find the man last year via the Internet and has since met up with him four times.

It took Tucker 17 years to track down another good friend, John Bruce, who moved from Kansas to Colorado after the war. Tucker and his wife went on a road trip two years ago for a reunion with Bruce. "We've got a lot of good memories between us. I wouldn't trade them for nothing," Tucker said.

Now, thanks to Nizan's efforts, Tucker has something forever linking his memories to those he served with in Vietnam.

"It's just amazing, especially for him to take the time out to find me. He never gave up. I want to thank him for never giving up," Tucker said.

Today, Tucker is member of the Harpers Ferry-Bolivar District Veterans organization where he serves as chaplain. The group maintains veterans' cemeteries, provides military funeral services and other volunteer services for local veterans.

Nancy, his wife of nearly seven years, said it's amazing that after 40 years, her husband's dog tag still survived, and she thanked Nizan for devoting so much time to find her husband.

"He wanted him to have it back. It's very special to my husband and I just think it's absolutely amazing," she said. "I think it's a wonderful thing for a human being to do for another."

Nizan said it felt great to finally be able to return Tucker's dog tag back to him.

It allows him to reconnect with something from his past, giving him something to pass on to his kids and gives both of us a great story to tell," Nizan said. "The whole process was very fulfilling."

Staff writer Edward Marshall can be reached at (304) 725-6581, or emarshall@journal-news.net

I GET MAIL

Dear Mr. Eichler,

First, let me thank you and your staff for the great job you do putting together every issue of Red Clay. I look forward to every issue.

Second, I would like to thank the Khe Sanh Veteran's Chaplain, Ron Rayner for his help with a very difficult situation here in New Jersey. For the record I am a career firefighter in Clifton, N.J. On 06 January, 2009, Elizabeth firefighter Gary Stephens was killed in the line of duty.

At times like these, all efforts are made to deal with the grief that follows. I contacted Ron to see if we could publish his article on PSTD that was published in issue 72 of Red Clay, in our February State newsletter.

Ron was more than helpful and his article appeared one month after firefighter Stephens death, it was greatly received. So to Ron, many thanks from the firefighters of New Jersey.

On page 92 of the same issue there was a terrific article about a New York Cop and a WWII Marine. What caught my attention was the writer Denis Hamill of the New York Daily News. Mr Hamill has written many articles about veterans in his career including one from my town honoring Bill Malcolm, a Clifton soldier who was killed in action during the Vietnam War. Denis Hamills brother also served in Vietnam with the 173rd Airborne.

I would appreciate it if Red Clay could remember Sgt. Bill Malcolm and publish the article written by Mr. Hamill. His mother still lives in Scranton, PA., and enjoys hearing or reading anything nice about him.

Denis Hamill still cares about our veterans and continues to write about their heroic actions. He deserves a little mention, whenever possible.

Yours Truly
Rich DeLotto

ED NOTE:

Rich, no problem, my pleasure. Although you requested not to be mentioned or given any credit for insuring our veterans are remembered in Clifton, NJ, you do deserve a shout out for all the time and energy you spend to insure their sacrifices are never forgotten.

LET'S GIVE THANKS FOR THE VETS, TOO

By Denis Hamill

Today is the 40th anniversary of the burial of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. More has been written about the murder of this legendary President in the last week than an average person could read in a lifetime.

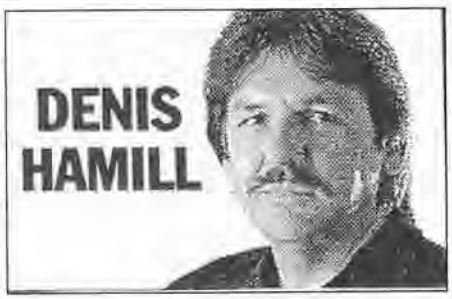

So today, a few words are in order about another heroic American who was there the day John Fitzgerald Kennedy was lowered into the moist soil of Arlington National Cemetery. His name was Bill Malcolm and he was in charge of the 21-gun salute fired over President Kennedy's coffin that somber day of Nov. 25, 1963. To honor one of their native sons, the veterans of Clifton, N.J., VFW Post 7165 presented a plaque in Bill Malcolm's honor at Clifton High School.

Today, 40 years after JFK's burial, Malcolm is someone else we should remember. And on Thursday, he is another dead war hero for whom we should give thanks before we indulge in the bounty on the American table in a time of war. William Edward Malcolm Jr. was born on Sept.

4,1941, in Clifton, a small city of 78,000 across the Hudson not much different from a neighborhood in Brooklyn, Queens or Staten Island.

In 1960, the year John Fitzgerald Kennedy took office, Bill Malcolm graduated from Clifton High. A year later, as the new President's famous inaugural words still echoed from sea to shining sea, this patriotic young man asked not what his country could do for him but rather what he could do for his country.

He joined the Army, and within six months, Pvt. Bill Malcolm, an only child, began walking the honor guard detail of the 3rd Infantry Division at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington.

"Over the next three years, Bill participated in

WILLIAM EDWARD MALCOLM JR
SERGEANT, FIRST CLASS U.S. ARMY.



ED MALCOLM STANDING GUARD AT PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY'S GRAVE, ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETARY

over 3,000 funerals, including Gen. Douglas MacArthur's," says Rich DeLotto, a Clifton firefighter who initiated the plaque ceremony.

On Nov. 22, 1963, Sgt. Bill Malcolm stood guard detail in the East Room of the White House after John Fitzgerald Kennedy's body was flown home from Dallas and lay in state as the nation mourned.

Two days later, Sgt. Bill Malcolm marched in front of the horse-drawn carriage carrying Kennedy's body from the White House to St. Matthew's Church for the Low Mass and then up Pennsylvania Ave. with dignitaries from 220 nations to the slow beat of muffled drums, passing" the weeping crowds. And then Bill Mal-colm led the honor guard through the 21-gun salute that still echoes in history.

"His contributions to the President's burial were recorded in William Manchester's book, '[The] Death of a President "says DeLotto." He was only 22 years old at the time."

But soon the war in Vietnam that Kennedy had started would escalate under newly sworn-in President Lyndon Johnson, and 1st Sgt. Bill Malcolm wound up in Vietnam with the 101st Airmobile Division, in a place called Thua Thien.

"Tragically, 6-1/2 years after JFK's funeral, Bill Malcolm was killed in action on May 5, 1970, in Vietnam," says DeLotto. "He was only 28 years old."

It was a time for other young honor guards to salute Bill Malcolm. The funeral was attended by his wife and three children. **"He received the Silver Star posthumously," says DeLotto**. "His mother, who is alive today, still grieves for her only son."

Sgt. 1st Class Malcolm is etched on panel 11 W line 103 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington. Now he will be remembered on another wall, this one in his old high school.

"Six of us will be going down to the high school to present this plaque," says. Clifton VFW Post Commander Rich Eickhoff. "We don't forget our heroes in Clifton. Rich DeLotto, who works as a firefighter, makes sure of that. He is forever keeping the memories of the Viet-

nam vets alive in this city."

Often, lost in the headline frenzy are the unsung heroes who were a vital part of history. Brave young guys like Bill Malcolm who come from our small towns and cities and working-class neighborhoods, who graduate from fine little high schools and make it a part of their life's work to serve their country, sometimes become small but important parts of our historical milestones. And then sometimes they give their lives in our wars and are awarded medals and are buried with mournful taps and cracking rifles and then forgotten in the dust of time. Not Bill Malcolm.

Not in Clifton, where 40 years after he led the 21-gun salute over the coffin of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Bill Malcolm is being remembered by the people from his hometown in Clifton High School, which helped prepare him for his short heroic life. "This ceremony will mark 40 years to the day - Nov. 25, 1963 - when an American soldier served his country," DeLotto says. Bill Malcolm - another one for whom to give thanks .

As a kid growing up in the Lakeview section of Clifton, Bill loved to fish, any time and anywhere he could. He participated in the Boy Scouts and attended St. Paul's Church. After graduating Clifton High School, class of 1960, Bill enlisted in the Army, took basic training in Fort Dix, NJ and advanced training in Fort Benning, Georgia. He applied for and received appointment to the "Old Guard" 3rd Infantry Regiment, Fort Meyers, Virginia. The 3rd Regiment performs funerals at Arlington National Cemetery and guards the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Bill Malcolm reported for new assignment in January 1961.

In 1964 Bill was transferred to Germany and served with the 2nd Armored Division until 1967 when he returned state side. He then became a drill instructor in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. During his time in Europe and Fort Campbell, Bill became an expert pistol shooter, competing in Army competition. He won a total of 9 trophies and 2 medals. In 1969, he asked and received transfer to active duty with the 101 st Airborne Division. He received his orders for Viet Nam and arrived on September 22, 1969. During his first 6 months Bill received the Combat Infantry's Badge and was awarded the **Bronze Star**. On May 5, 1970, Sergeant First Class William E. Malcolm while acting as field First Sergeant for Company "C", 502 BTN, 101st Airborne, was killed by hostile gun fire while assaulting an enemy position. He was awarded the **Silver Star, posthumously** for his actions. He left behind his parents, a wife and 3 children and a sister. On May 5th 1970. Sergeant Malcolm became the last Clifton man to sacrifice his life in Viet Nam.

MARINE SPREADS WORD OF BAD WATER



John Hartung unfurls a Marine Corps flag at his Waukesha home. A Marine stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C., in the 1970s, Hartung attributes a number of ailments to exposure to toxic chemicals in the drinking water there.

FOR 30 YEARS, CAMP LEJEUNE EXPOSED TROOPS TO CHEMICALS

By Meg Jones
mjones@journalsentinel.com

Waukesha - John Hartung thought something was wrong with the water while he was stationed at Camp Lejeune.

The Milwaukee native joined the Marines in 1977 and spent six months at the Marine Corps base in North Carolina. He drank from the bubblers and the water tanks brought out to troops training in the field, brushed his teeth, ate in the chow halls and swam in the pool.

Unfortunately for Hartung, his suspicions would not be confirmed for decades.

"I said, 'This water tastes funny.' They said, 'That's how it tastes down here,'" said Hartung, who got cysts on his neck and was sent to the infirmary. "I saw others with boils and rashes, and they didn't know why."



Hartung, in the office of his Waukesha home, has started a Web site to spread the word about toxic chemicals at Camp Lejeune to others that were stationed there. The Marines say as many as 500,000 may have been exposed.

Something was very wrong with the drinking water at Camp Lejeune. Before wells were closed at the base in 1984 and 1985, tests showed drinking water was contaminated by toxic chemicals, in-cluding very high concentrations - more than 40 times the current EPA limit - of industrial solvents trichloroethylene and perchloroethylene.

Hartung didn't find out until a few years ago about the high incidence of canters in people who worked and lived at Camp Lejeune, and of birth defects and illnesses of children born at the base, Now he's trying to get the word out to Marines living in Wisconsin who spent time at Camp Lejeune from 1957 to 1987, the years the government has identified as the period when toxic chemicals tainted the drinking water.

Hartung, who now lives in Waukesha, has started a Web site ***www.lifeaftercamplejeune.com*** to alert others about the problem. "I want to see people get their benefits and to say, 'I was poisoned, but at least they took care of me and my family,' " said Hartung, 49, who, has chronic fatigue as well as other ailments and can no longer work.

Under a law signed last year by President George W. Bush, the Marines are required to notify those who may have been exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune. The military says an off-base dry cleaning business, now closed, was to blame, as well as chemicals leaking from underground storage tanks and unsafe disposal practices at the base.

Tracking Toxic Exposure

The Marines encourage anyone who served at Lejeune or worked there during that time to participate in a registry. Studies are under way by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to determine if there's a link between the health problems of those who drank the tainted water.

Women who were in their first trimester of pregnancy when exposed seem to have been affected more than others, said Jeff Dimond, health communications specialist with the agency.

Tracking as many people as possible "is a task the complexity of 'which gets more and more difficult every day. Understand that problems with the dry cleaner dumping the (trichloroethylene and perchloroethylene) into the ground and contaminating the ground water happened at the height of the Vietnam War," . Dimond said. "The good thing, if there is such a thing, is that the Population was transient at the time, so they weren't exposed as much. But the bad thing was they were exposed."

Allen Menard got a letter from the military last year. It was the first he had heard of water problems at the base, where he spent three years in the early 1980s.

The Green Bay man was diagnosed in 2001 with mycosis fungoides, a rare skin cancer. And his wife suffered a miscarriage in 1984, losing their daughter's twin; while Menard was stationed at Lejeune and the couple lived near the base.

"I started looking at what the heck we were exposed to. I looked at the chemicals and I thought, 'Oh my God, that's where I got my skin cancer from.' It's

very rare for someone my age," said Menard, 45.

Joe Alexander spent most of 1978 at Lejeune serving with the 6th Marines. He didn't suffer any health problems until 2000, when a cyst was discovered on his pancreas. He was hospitalized for a year, followed by several months in a nursing home to relearn how to Walk, swallow and talk.

CAMP RESIDENTS SOUGHT

People who think they might have been exposed to toxic drinking water at Camp Lejeune, the Marine base in North Carolina, between 1957 and 1987 should contact the Marines. The military is compiling a registry of people who worked. lived or visited the base during that time period and drank the water. For more information or to register. call or go to:
c1water@usmc.mil
(877) 261-9782;
or **https://clnr.hqi.usmc.mil/clwater/.**

Other Web sites dedicated to Camp Lejeune water are: **www.lifeaftercamplejeune.com**
and **www.tftptf.com.**

Alexander 50, learned last year about the water he drank at Lejeune. "I Worked for Wisconsin .Electric for almost 17 years, and I'm familiar with trichloroethylene and I know how hazardous it can be," said Alexander, of Milwaukee. "It's used to. strip paint off metal. I can imagine what it will do to your insides."

It's unknown just how many people drank the tainted water, but a Marines spokeswomen said the military estimates it could be as many as a half million.

When finally finished Dimond said, the registry will be the largest in the history of the U.S. government. The Marines hope to reach as many people as possible through a Web site and call center, direct mailings, contacting local and national media and notifying veterans groups.

"More probably could have been done in the past. Fortunately, today we have a lot more resources to get the word out and notify people," said Marine Capt. Amy Malugani.

Those who think they were affected by the tainted water can file a claim by going to *www.marines.mil* and clicking on "Camp Lejeune Water Study" under links.

For Menard, Alexander and Hartung, efforts by the Marines to reach out to them are too late.

"The Marine Corps motto is *Semper Fi.* That means always faithful," said Menard. "They're not being faithful. They knew this back in the '80s. They finally got in touch with us in 2008? That's a joke."

BOOK REVIEW

LURPS
(2nd Edition)

Subtitle: A Rangers Diary of Tet, Khe Sanh, A-Shau, & Quang tri

Author: Robert C. Ankony (Khe Sanh Vet)

Lurps is the revised edition of the memoir of a juvenile delinquent who drops out of ninth grade to chase his dream of military service. After volunteering for Vietnam, he joins the elite U.S. Army LRRP / Rangers--small, heavily armed long-range reconnaissance teams that patrol deep in enemy-held territory. It is 1968, and the Lurps find themselves in some of the war's hairiest campaigns and battles, including Tet, Khe Sanh, and A Shau. Readers witness all the horrors, humor, adrenaline, and unexpected beauty through the eyes of a green young warrior. Gone are the heroic clichés and bravado as compelling narrative and realistic dialogue sweep the reader along with a powerful sense that ***this is actually happening.***

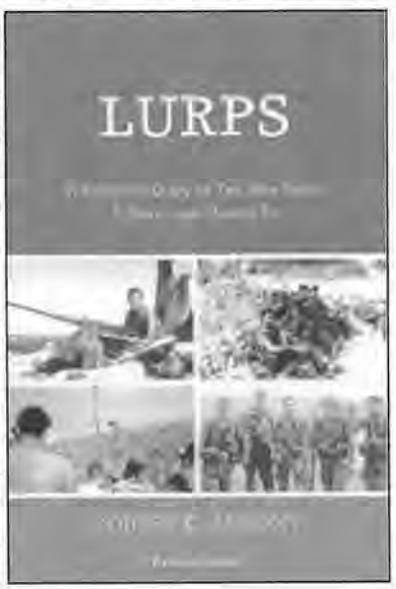

This poignant coming-of-age story explores the social background that shaped the protagonist's thinking, his uncertain quest for redemption through increased responsibility, the brotherhood of comrades in arms, women and sexual awakening, and the baffling randomness of who lives ,and who dies.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: **Robert C. Ankony** served in the U.S. Army from 1965 to 1968. He was honored with a Bronze Star Medal, an Air Medal, and a Combat Infantry Badge for his military service. He was a Detective/Sergeant in Detroit's Wayne County Sheriff Department before his retirement in 1984. Presently, he is the Director of CFM Research. Dr. Ankony received his PhD in Criminology, MA in Sociology, and MS in Criminal Justice from Wayne State University; and a Master of Correctional Sciences from the University of Detroit. He has published multiple journal articles on military history and criminal justice.

PRIEST PLANS BOOK ABOUT VIETNAM EXPIERENCE

By Mike Fishbaugh

From noon till 1800 today, KSCB and surrounding out post received about 70 rounds of incoming, 2 KIA & 8 WIA

(Battalion of Kings- page 251)

The faces drift back to Houston Matthews from across four decades. Marines he fought beside in Vietnam are with him always, especially on Memorial Day, when he salutes fellow riflemen killed at such places as Con Thien and Khe Sanh.

It was during the 1968 Siege of Khe Sanh – one of the most controversial battles of the Vietnam War – that Matthews received the wounds that cost him an eye and a leg.

A retired Episcopal priest from Gastonia, Matthews kept the war bottled up inside for years, haunted by memories of friends who didn't come back.

About nine years ago, he first got professional help for post-traumatic stress. Recently, he started counseling soldiers back from Iraq and Afghanistan. Now, he's about to launch a project friends have been urging him to do for years: Write a book that blends his experiences in war and the ministry.

"I want to encourage any veteran who is still struggling," said Matthews, 62. "I want to help broken people get in better shape emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. To help them get things under control."

Getting his own life under control took years. His first marriage ended in divorce and even after he became an Episcopal priest in 1977 he struggled with suppressed anger.

It helped to talk about the war in an interview he did for the 1990 book "Landing Zones: Southern Veterans Remember Vietnam" by James Wilson.

But the healing process had a long way to go. Memories were still too fresh for him.

Matthews grew up in Gastonia, where his family managed the Belk store that later became Matthews-Belk. After a year at Wingate College, he dropped out.

"I was unsettled and needed a little more maturity," he said. "I needed to do some soul-searching." In January 1967, Matthews joined the Marines; six months later, he was in Vietnam, a demolition specialist with the Third Marine Division. On his first patrol, he tried to help a young Marine who'd been wounded, but the man died within a few minutes.

At Con Thien, a combat base on the Demilitarized Zone, rockets, mortars and artillery shells showered down almost nonstop. On his third day there, sitting a few hundred yards from a command bunker where about six people were talking, he heard "the screaming sound rockets make."

"Then – boom – it landed right on top of the bunker and blew it to smithereens," Matthews said. "Everybody died. People I knew."

Khe Sanh was even worse. The remote base with 5,000 to 6,000 U.S. forces was under siege by a North Vietnamese army of more than 20,000. Matthews arrived in January 1968 at a camp on the base perimeter.

It was a deadly landscape. Matthews helped pick up the bodies of about 60 Marines killed when their outpost was overrun by 400 North Vietnamese sol-

diers. On March 28, walking back from a bunker, Matthews heard the whistle of an incoming rocket.

Seconds later, he was on the ground, bleeding. Shrapnel had sprayed the front of his body. Carried by stretcher a mile to the main base, he was evacuated by helicopter while the aircraft came under heavy fire. After surgery aboard the hospital ship Repose, Matthews reached down to feel his left leg and found "it was just a stump."

The loss of his right eye was also a price he paid at Khe Sanh. The physical wounds healed. But the spiritual mending took much longer because Matthews had to reach deep inside and figure out how to move on with life. Starting the book is another step in the journey.

Pat Cheshire is glad his old friend is finally writing about his experiences. In 1971, Cheshire and Matthews taught Sunday school together at Gastonia's All Saints Episcopal Church before Matthews entered seminary. Later Cheshire became an ordained Episcopal deacon and worked with Matthews at All Saints.

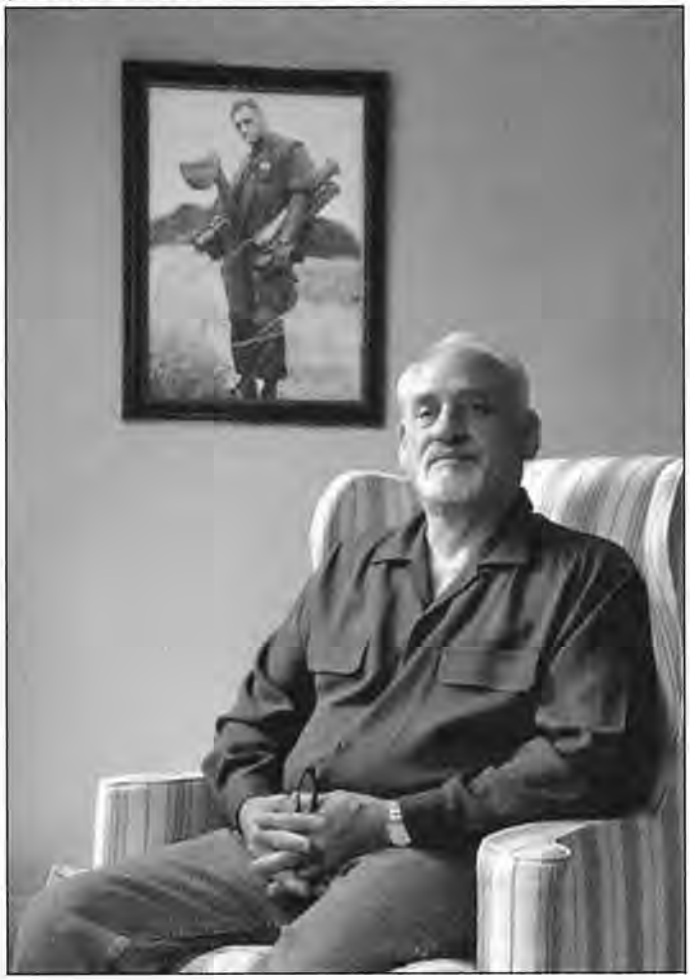

Cheshire, 58, has been nagging Matthews to write a book. "I guarantee it'll be deep and passionate," he said. David Burns, who has known Matthews since childhood and joined the Navy the same summer his friend joined the Marines, feels the book will have particular meaning for severely wounded veterans.

"Houston's been through it," said Burns, 62. "He's lived it. He's a good preacher, but he's an even better teacher."

Matthews hopes his story will be a guide for veterans who are still struggling, and also be a memorial to the Marines he fought with and remembers

LATE OBIT

DENNIS R. HERB
KHE SANH VETERAN
BRAVO CO 3RD RECON

Dennis R. "Denny" Herb, 55, of Anne Ave" Lebanon, died suddenly of natural causes Tuesday, Nov. 27, 2001, in Lebanon's Good "Samaritan Hospital, He was the husband of Linda Lerch Herb.

Born Nov. 4, 1946, in Lebanon, he was a son of Sara Jane Kerkensinger Herb of Lebanon and the late Austin Herb. He was the chief of security at the Lebanon VA Medical Center, a Marine veteran of the Vietnam War and wor-shipped at the chapel at the VA Medical Center,

Surviving, in addition to his wife and mother, are sons Robert, husband of 'Tessa Herb of Lebanon, and David, husband of Suzanne Herb of Myerstown; a daughter, Jennifer, wife of J' Brian Schies of Richland; a brother, James Herb of Chicago, IL a sister, Joan Marie, wife of Samuel Leedy of Gettysburg.

POETRY

"Angel Wings"
He was an angel
He was a gift
Just when the country
Needed a shift

Cracks in the sidewalk
Buildings reduced to toast
No food when people
Needed it the most

With hands held out
Ready to go
In the distance
A burning glow

A flame shot out
Killed the saint
Surrounding people
Could only faint

As they looked
Upon the man
All they could see
Was a burnt hand

He had only
Tried to help
But all that he did
Was make them yelp

To this day
We still try
To make that place
Flourish and fly

We don't mean harm
We only give
All we ask
Is for the angels to live

Ally Curry
Daughter of KSV PD CURRY D CO 1/26

DEDICATED TO THE FALLEN SOLDIERS OF THE U.S. ARMED SERVICES. WE HONOR YOU.

I GET PICTURES

From Donna Elliott
Sister of Jerry Elliott (MIA)



THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD TO KHE SANH 2000



KHE SANH GATEWAY TO HELL 1999

BAS-ACKWARD DAYS AT KHE SANH

By William Crapser
A CO 3RD FORCE RECON

It is quite true what philosophy says: "that life must be under-stood backwards. But then one forgets the other principle: that it must be lived forwards. Which principle, the more one thinks it through, ends exactly with the thought that temporal life can never properly be understood precisely, because I can at no instant find complete rest in which to adopt the position: backwards." - Soren Kierkegaard, Papers and Journals.

I served with the 3rd Marine Division in Vietnam from Oct. '68 to Oct. '69. I'm always amazed that for the past forty years whether I'm watching the History Channel or any Viet-nam documentary that

they always jump from the Tet Offensive of 1968, including the siege at Khe Sanh, right to the Cambodian Invasion of 1970. What happened to the year 1969? We all went through one hell-of-a-Tet Offensive ourselves in February, 1969. It was called Operation DEWEY CANYON, and instead of fighting the NVA in the cities like Hue, or allowing some siege somewhere, our Commanding Officer, General Raymond Davis, sent us into the Ashau Valley, to fight the NVA there on their home turf, and keep them on their own turf.

We took horrendous casualties during the year 1969. Yet that entire year doesn't exist, either in books on Vietnam or documentary films. Where'd it go? I was there. I know I was! Because for forty years now I've never been able to forget my bas-akward days of doom in Vietnam!

Let me try to explain myself. Since they were bas-akward days let me start at the end of my tour and work, of course, backwards!

In October, 1969, Richard Nixon was President and he began withdrawing troops from Vietnam. In the case of the 3rd Marine Division and us 'up-northers' he took everybody first who had more than ten months in the bush. I was almost through my twelfth month, so away I was going. I wanted to be bas-akwards, left behind, to be alone, and get blown up with Hill 950.

I just wanted to be destroyed with the rest of it, while drunk of course, while looking down off that hill at the abandoned Khe Sanh airstrip as my last vision, and while looking at it, I was going to be praying for all the Khe Sanh vets, the living and the wounded and the dead. And all the brothers who had died on Hill 950 and Hill 1015 and on Hill 881 North and South, also Hill 861, Hill 861-Alfa, Hill 689, Hill 471, the battle of Khe Sanh Village, and, and-all the hills, and the Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei, too! Well, my friend, let's keep going bas -ackwards, as it really was for me and my comrades.

On my last patrol with Alpha Company, 3rd Recon Bn, I was as usual walking point for my team, and of course because of the high casualties and rotations, I hardly knew the team leader. I didn't know any of the team. Since we never won any ground and we never lost any ground, I was walking and hunting the NVA on the same ground I had walked eleven months before.

When it was near nightfall and time to set up our harbor site for the night, I halted the team and made my way back to the new team leader. I told him I had been there before and we had a good spot near the top of the hill to the right. We went up there and jumped into some abandoned grunts fighting holes.

I ate my C-rations and dug a hole in the corner of my hold to bury them, and there were my rusting C-ration cans I had buried in the exact same spot ten months before! just added my new cans to the old, rusting pile. I was spending the last weeks of my tour of duty up on Hill 950 which was code-named Romeo Relay for the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion.

I had been with Alpha Company, 3rd Recon until I was short. Since everything was bas-ackwards during my tour, my last month was spent with Headquarters Company, 3rd Recon, and there I was, up on Hill 950, when the so-called withdrawal news arrived.

I wasn't too thrilled by the idea. Too many of my buddies had been killed or horribly maimed by then, and my own head was constantly spinning around inside itself, and I didn't want to give up. I wanted to win that war! But I, along with everybody else, would have to settle for something far less than victory.

So I decided to settle myself down on top of a bunker that was the farthest down, and closest to where I could clearly see the abandoned Khe Sanh airstrip below me, with Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD for short) wired up Hill 950 to blow it up after we were all taken off it.

I didn't want to be taken off it. So I took a case of real beer, a warm one at that, and started to get drunk. Real drunk!

I remember that I occasionally glanced back over my shoulder to watch the EOD guys running detonation cord and explosives from bunker to bunker. I even lifted my legs once so the Det Cord would-

n't tie me down in any way.
Now, since we're going bas-ackwards, let me continue my forward to back story, so it stays true as I knew it. As they say, "Marines never retreat! We just relocate to more strategic ground!" I agree. But I must add, "Going bas-ackwards," of course!

When I was on my first or second patrol in late October or early November, 1968, we were out patrolling the small hills in the Khe Sanh valley. At night we set up our harborsite in abandoned NVA trenches that had, just nine months before, been occupied by them. So this is also a sort of bas-ackwards birth of our defeat it seems. The NVA had occupied them as Forward Observers to call in artillery onto Khe Sanh airstrip, occupied by Marines. We were in their trenches to call in artillery on the NVA on Khe Sanh airstrip. Remember, we were far enough away to have to use binoculars. My 3rd Platoon Commander was with us and spotted NVA campfires, small ones; and I looked too, and yep, there they were. I was on the radio; he called out the coordinates and we rained hell down on the Khe Sanh airstrip. The small fires disappeared and there were secondary explosions, so we got them the same way they got us!

But tell me, my friend, what's wrong with this picture? Where did 1969 go? Why am I moving bas-ackwards all the time? Yet this is the truth as I remember it. Backwards of course. That's it, really, except for that being the beginning of my very dizzying tour of duty in Vietnam.

Now for the end of the story. The Army EOD teams had the whole hill wired for the big explosion. Chopper after chopper came in and landed to pick up Marines, CH-46s as well as Huey slicks. This all happened behind me. A chopper would approach and a senior NCO with a bullhorn would announce who they would be picking up and that group would run and board. This went on for a couple of hours.

But then the whole of Hill 950 was strangely quiet. While I, strangely drunk to the gills, was all alone and down to my last three cans. I opened one of them and took a good swallow, and I could only hear the wind rustling the loose shelter halfs, and making ghostly whispering sounds through the wire.

I was the last Marine on Hill 950. I said the Lord's Prayer, then the 23rd Psalm, and waited to go home. But, to my disappointment there was a final overflight by a Huey and they spotted me down there. They landed and dragged me, screaming and kicking, and threw me on board and took off.

When we were directly over Khe Sanh airstrip, flying east, I looked one last time at Hill 950. It blew up like a volcano exploding.

And I never did get to go home. Instead they sent me back to America where I've never found home since. And this is my bas-ackwards story of trying to get high enough to escape the doom of days in Vietnam.

ED NOTE: William "Bill" Crapser is in the fight of his life battling a very painful disease. He is the author of a book "Remains" that won national awards several years ago. He recently sent Ray Stubbe a manuscript of another book, and gave permission for the proceeding chapter to be published in RED CLAY. It covers the time he was on Hill 950 when it was about to be destroyed.

The following is a review of his first book and included is an essay he had written for a previously published article.

REMAINS

Editorial Reviews
From Publishers Weekly



Crapser joined the Marines in 1967, was assigned to a reconnaissance battalion and eventually became a point man for patrols. Remains is his catharsis for what he witnessed in Vietnam, told with an intensity, a vividness, that gives voice to the terrible absurdity of war. In the prose-poem "The Descent," which opens this remarkable debut collection, a drill instructor at

boot camp yells at the young men in training, "Become strong! There's fightin' an' dyin' waitin' for ya!" And Paul Timons, the character that the pieces follow from his induction to after his release from the war when he becomes a self-described malcontent and pacifist, finds the DI's exclamations to be horrifyingly true. The reader will participate vicariously in Timons's "Baptism of Fire" and read his letters home, in which he writes to a friend, "How do we win? . . . I haven't any idea except we're supposed to fight to the death. Death has the clearest meaning here." As a point man, Timons relies on his disciplined fear to stay alive as the sounds of artillery and explosions shatter his sleep, concertina wires slice into unsuspecting soldiers and traps, and mines and the Viet Cong keep up a relentless aggression against the unwanted American soldiers. In "Wild Child," Timons returns home and fights his nightmares, rage and disillusionment without any hope of winning, to find himself, ultimately, in a veterans' hospital under sedation.

Product Details

- **Paperback:** 175 pages
- **Publisher:** Sachem Press (September 1988)
- **Language:** English
- **ISBN-10:** 0937584142
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0937584149
- **Average Customer Review:** 4.5 out of 5 stars
- Available At Amazon.com

ESSAY

By William Crapser

Returning From Vietnam

I had been trying to come home from Vietnam since 1969; more than eighteen years. Over the years it seemed I had been condemned to death in Vietnam, and that I was slowly dying with the nineteen-year-old marine I was when I fought there. Over the years the young marine I was kept a tight hold on me and lived in anguish inside me. He took tighter and tighter control of my life until, toward the end of my refusing him, of my guilt over him, of my refusal to recognize him, his full anger exploded. The doctors told me it was a flashback. But I saw only him.

Still refusing to accept his existence inside me, I took vast amounts of drugs to suppress him, subjected myself to being strapped down and injected with Thorazine. "This will keep him in check!" I thought. But he did not go away.

His anguished screams rose up inside and became mine. My mouth would open and the sound I made was not a grown man's.

The way I conducted my life — living on the edges of society, looking and dressing like an angry nineteen year old, acting out my crisis like and adolescent — only strengthened his grip. I became numb with my own anger, doubled with his anger, the two of us facing down each other inside me, resembling a father and son who don't like each other but are stuck together in their blood.

The first decision I made which led to my recovery was to recognize him as me. That, yes, I was the nineteen -year-old point man lying flat on my face in terror and fear as the enemy rounds impacted around me. That, yes, I was the nineteen-year-old marine who had killed and, at times, killed without remorse. I realized I could not fight him anymore or deny him. I realized I would have to make peace with him and bring him home.

So I began to meditate on him, think about him-the "me" who was a nineteen-year-old in Vietnam-until I could see him very clearly in my mind. He looked sad and he was very tired. When I really focused on him, I too felt sad for what he had gone through and I realized how badly I wanted him out of the war. Then an idea dawned in me.

I decided to bring him home. I began by picturing the nineteen-year-old "me" stopping, then dropping his rucksack, his suspender straps and web-belt, his gas mask and K-bar knife. Then I watched him (in my mind) throw his rifle on top of the pile. Then I watched him take off his camouflage utilities and wipe the camouflage grease-paint off his face. When he was finished, I placed a men's clothing store in front of him (I realized, too, I could really think anything I wanted) and had him go in and pick out some nice civilian clothes. I watched him dress in jeans and a sports shirt and a light jacket (he also picked out a suit). As I watched him dress I could see some of the pain and exhaustion lift from his face. When he was done, I told him he was going

home, that he didn't have to fight anymore, that he was being discharged. He burst into laughter and tears and ran toward me, his arms wide as if to embrace me. And inside me we embraced. Then I put him on a plane and sent him to someone I knew would love and care for him, someone who would listen to his stories and calm him through his frights. Someone who would always be there for him.
I sent him home to me.

BOOK REVIEW

Bruce B.G. Clarke is a retired Army Colonel with extensive strategic, operational and tactical experience. Since his retirement from active duty in 1995, Colonel Clarke has advised U.S., European and Middle Eastern companies on issues including national security, military modernization and integrating advanced technology into military operations.



Immediately prior to his retirement from the Army, Colonel Clarke was the Director of National Security Studies at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania where he held the General Dwight D. Eisenhower Chair in National Security. Before that he commanded 2d Brigade, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas. Colonel Clarke also served in the State Department during the Reagan Administration as a senior military officer in arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union. In the early 1980s, Colonel Clarke commanded 2d Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment where his troopers were responsible for patrolling over 150 kilometers of the East-West German border at the height of the Cold War.

Colonel Clarke is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and holds a Master of Arts degree from the University of California Los Angeles. He is also a graduate of the Command and General Staff College and the National War College.

Colonel Clarkes numerous military awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal with V for heroism in ground combat, the Army Commendation medal with V for valor, four Meritorious Service Medals, two Presidential Unit Citations, the Combat Infantrymans Badge, the Parachute Badge, the Ranger Tab and numerous foreign awards and commendations for valor.

Colonel Clarke is a native of Wichita, Kansas. He and his wife Sue split their time between homes in Topeka, Kansas; Wichita, Kansas and Los Angeles.



Retirement ceremony in 1995 after being decorated with the Legion of Merit by Army Chief of Staff General Gordon Sullivan



LT/ COL Clarke at a recent book signing



LT Clarke shortly before Thanksgiving 1967

REVIEWS

"Expendable Warriors reveals a little-known chapter in the story of the siege of Khe Sanh--how the battle really began and who was targeted in the first and biggest North Vietnamese assault in the opening round of an epic clash."

***Joseph L. Galloway**, co-author: We Were Soldiers Once...and Young and Triumph Without Victory: The History of the Persian Gulf War.*

"Presented here in graphic detail is an autographical account of the preliminary battle of Khe Sanh, the opener for the Tet Offensive of 1968, by the genuine American hero who commanded the American and South Vietnamese side. This under reported and close fought preliminary battle was engaged well outside of the famous Khe Sanh siege perimeter. As such, the work is both a primary historical source and interesting reading material for its own sake."

Military Magazine

"Warrior, professor, deep thinker, and highly engaging and articulate writer, Bruce Clarke has written with compassion and wisdom borne of his personal experience in the village of Khe Sanh, 38 years ago. Good war stories take a long time to write, and this one is worth the wait. I am fascinated by the tale and the wonderful new insights that this major historian and military analyst brings to the reader. His sharing of the battle before the battle, the defeat of an NVA Regiment before the main Khe Sanh battle ever began, is masterfully told. A real page turner. And the lessons learned that he shares are well worth noting at a time when we are again, as a nation, engaged in war."

***John K. Swensson**, Dean, Language Arts Division; De Anza College and Custodian, The DeCillis Viet Nam Conflict Collection*

"Most books studying the 1968 siege of Khe Sanh focus on the Marine Corps' defense of the base and the hilltops to the north. Other books examine the fall of the nearby Lang Vei Special Forces Camp overrun by North Vietnamese tanks. To most Khe Sanh was a Marine battle. While heavily shelled and the hilltop outposts fought off attacks, the main base experienced only minor ground attacks. There was another battle though, unheralded in most books, the vicious fight for Khe Sanh Village south of the main base. This fight saw 25 Army and Marine advisors and 175 Vietnamese irregular troops fighting off a North Vietnamese regular regiment. Bruce Clarke aptly describes the valor and spirit of the defenders as they beat back repeated assaults with little sup-

port from the main base. This is a first person account of a virtually unheard of battle characterized by heroism and dedication to duty."

***Gordon L. Rottman**, Author, Khe Sanh 1967-68*

I'm honored that Bruce Clarke has portrayed the bravery of not only the Americans but all of us who fought and won the largest ground battle of the siege of Khe Sanh. We believed in our cause and dedicated our lives to it and this book clearly illustrates what many efforts about the Vietnam War do not--the bravery and efforts of the warriors who fought beside the Americans in the Vietnam War. The spirits of the ARVN soldiers who lost their lives at Khe Sanh would smile and say " Cam ơn Đại Ta Clarke (Thank you COL Clarke) because their sacrifice has not been totally forgotten.

***Major Tinh-A-Nhi**, District Chief Huong Hoa District, RVN, 1966-68.*

"Expendable Warriors' is an autobiographical account of the battle of Khe Sanh by one of the genuine American heroes of the 1968 Tet Offensive. That alone makes the work both a primary historical source and interesting reading material...[B]eyond history and autobiography, Col. Clarke offers two significant criticisms of the way the Vietnam War was fought: the lack of unity of command, and the misguided attempt to measure victory by body count. Professional and amateur historians will appreciate this text, and so will teachers of political and military science, as well as teachers of international relations."

***Dr. John L. Safford,** Professor of Political Science, University of South Carolina*

Colonel Clarke's analysis of the events around Khe Sanh is must reading for future combat leaders. In fact, it should be read by everyone. We should all heed Bruce s admonition that We need to learn from our mistakes and ensure that we don t repeat them. We owe it to the next generation of brave soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines that they will not have to endure similar tests of their courage and determination.

***General Jack Vessey**, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 1982-85, from the forward to Expendable Warriors*

"Clarke's purpose is to set the record straight--clarifying reports and stories that have failed to accurately depict what happened."

ARMY

"Clarke describes the experiences of himself and his colleagues in the battles around the Khe Sanh Combat base in 1968, during the Vietnam War. He looks at the decision-making at multiple levels surrounding the battle, which he judges to have been a bloody tactical victory and a strategic defeat for the United States."

Reference & Research Book News
Purchase an autographed copy of ***Expendable Warriors*** directly from the author for $20 (shipping and handling included). Click on the button below to email the Colonel Clarke.

Expendable Warriors is also available from all major booksellers including Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

BATTLE ON HILL 564
DUSK ON RIDGE 700

By Joe Beebe
F/Co 2/26

I think today is the right time to share this with my brothers.

Regardless of the senseless command, I stood, and charged across the ridge thinking Sanch was next to me, but he had gone elsewhere. Nothing was making sense. I didn't know where or what I was charging. My mind raced with confusion. Where's my gun teams? Where's the enemy? Who's screaming? Should I keep running? Running to where? I frantically looked about.

Through the dust and morbid desolation, a shadowy figure came into view. He lay on his back, in the open, by himself. I ran toward the body and dove, landing alongside of it. I stared in shock. It was Moses. His left leg had been blown off just below

the knee, revealing a jagged bone dripping with reddish, purple flesh. Twisted in an outrageous direction, his right leg was still attached, but his foot was missing.

I let out a violent scream, "Corpsman up! Corpsman up! You're going to be all right, Cliff. We'll get you out of here," I muttered almost crying. I hastily tied a tourniquet around his left thigh and another around his right shin. "There, there Cliff Moses, you're going to be just fine." But I knew he wouldn't make it. I looked into his eyes; he was alone, far from the battlefield. Cradling him in my arms, I again screamed for relief, "where's the ######## corpsman? "Moses was delirious and mumbling. "What, Cliff?" I asked insanely thinking he was getting better. "What is it? Here take some water." I lifted my canteen up to his lips and allowed the water to dribble into his mouth.

Doc Updike finally scrambled over to us but arrived late, much too late. Moses' once muscular body now lay shattered, motionless, and lifeless.

A voice echoed, "let's go Corporal! We've got to get out of here! C'mon, let's go!"

"Who's talking to me? Who's calling me?"

Piercing sounds of teenagers crying and screaming broke through my fog ending the trance. The doc had moved on hoping to squelch some of the wailing. The enemy maintained a ferocious barrage of mortars.

What about Moses, I just can't leave him here. I slung my rifle over my shoulder and wedged my hands under his armpits. His head flopped forward, his sawed-off legs bounced on the earth as I dragged his battered body across the battlefield. I came to the edge of a crater and Moses and I toppled in backwards landing on the floor of the bombed out hole.

We were not alone. The captain, (Divelbiss) radioman, Zimmo, Sanch and a Marine, whom I did not recognize, had found the safety of the crater and shielded themselves against its side.

Taking a chance, I nudged my head above the crater's edge and peeked out over the ridge. Its width and length amazed me. Evil columns of smoke curled up from various locations. No Marines were in sight. I had yet to see the enemy and was completely oblivious of my men's whereabouts. Time had vanished. It had to be early in the evening, maybe six, seven o'clock. I don't know. A ghostly calm settled over the battlefield. The incoming tailed off, only sporadic pops of rifle fire crackled the air with tension.

Captain Divelbiss propped himself on his elbows and peered through his binoculars.

"Corporal, over here!" he called. I slid around next to his side. Sir?""Take a few men and search the ridge for any missing Marines. Battalion wants us off this wretched mountain top before dark," he emphasized. "Yes, Sir," I answered without any thought. I turned and glanced around the crater.

"Take a few men? We only have few men," I murmured.

"Take this Marine with you and go down the right side," I ordered Zimmo, and pointed to the unknown Marine. "Sanch and I will work the left edge. If you find anyone, bring them back to the crater."

"See you dudes when I get back," Zimmo assured us. "Let's go," he said to his new comrade. (Zimmo did make it back, pulling PFC Ford, who had been wounded in the legs, across the ridge using his cartridge belt.) Zimmo didn't hesitate. With a running start, he dashed up the side and over the rim of the crater heading for the open area. His partner tensely waited and then bravely followed. When he reached the top of the pit, a bullet slammed into him spinning him backward to the crater's floor.

Sanch and I shed our rifles and bandoleers, and grabbed a couple of grenades. With some hesitation, I asked, "Ready old friend?" "Ready, Joe."Let's go."

We cautiously crawled over the far rim and slithered along side by side. Unsure of the enemies' whereabouts, we continued our snail-like pace nervously gazing across the ridge looking for bodies and stopping often to hug the ground.
"Joe, we're not going to make it aback, are we?" Sanch whispered.

"Probably not," I expressed in honestly. "Well then, let's just get up and run for it," he offered."What the hell, why not?" I agreed. Surrendering ourselves from the safety of the earth, we rose to our feet and took flight across the ridge. It was probably the single greatest decision I ever made in my life. What made it easy was that we were all in it together. All of us had one thing in common: given the chance, we always put the other guy ahead of ourselves.

My helmet bounced wildly as I pulled ahead of Sanch and raced across the hilltop expecting to be driven back to the ground under the impact of an AK-47 round. Shot, killed. I screamed while dashing in despair, or anger, or maybe in pain. I spotted a slight indentation in a fold of the ridge and dove for cover.

"Over here, Sanch! I screamed. "C'mon, man, you can make it!" I encouraged.

Sanch flew in, landing next to me. Cautiously, I peeked above our semi-protected site and scanned the ridge. "There's Sgt. Connell!" I blurted out.
We're coming to get you, Sarge," I yelled to him.

Sanch and I jumped to our feet and charged across the short distance. Fortunately, we settled into a slight impression directly below the Sarge unharmed.

"Sanch, I'll lay on my stomach and you pull the sarge on top of me. I'll take him back to the crater and meet you back here."

Sanch reached up, grabbed the Sarge by his flak jacket and rolled him toward us. Whoosh! Whoosh!

Two bullets viciously ripped their way into the sergeant's chest. He fell limp on top of me; I struggled to my feet and staggered my way in the direction of the crate.

"You'll be okay, Sarge. I've got you," I mumbled. And, at the same time, I couldn't rid my mind of the terrible sound the bullets had made when they tore into Sergeant Connell. Like stabbing a watermelon.

The distance seemed forever with the refuge finally coming into view. I stumbled to its edge. "Here's the Sarge," I gasped dumping him into the arms of two Marines.

Without delay, I turned to retrace my steps. I wove a jagged pattern, following what I though was my previous route to hook back up with Sanch, but failed. He was nowhere to be found.

Darkness had closed in and almost completely curtained the sun. The ridge looked dead. Dead Marines, dead trees, dead dirt, everything had taken on a silent shrill of death. No rifles sounded. No more thump of mortars. Maybe the enemy was dead too. Everything just lay horribly still.

I was completely void of attitude and felt moderately at peace, like I was the lone survivor in the world and world consisted of only the ridge. I strolled across the wide expanse surrounded by the eerie walls that hemmed me in, heading somewhere, but nowhere in particular.

A Marine appeared on the far side. Or was it a delusion? He lay on his back, waiving one arm aimlessly. I broke into a quivering trot, thinking that maybe it was Sanch. Kneeling at his side, I turned his head to face me. My heart was already at an all-powerful low, yet I still felt a sharp piercing. "Beebe," Corporal Schroeder gurgled. In a panic, I unsnapped his flak jacket, spread it open, and stared in disbelief. I skimmed my hand over his cold, scarlet stained torso and then held it in front of my face. It was dry. Don hemorrhaged from the inside. He was filling up with blood. Drowning in his blood. Poor, Don, far from home, so very far.

"I'm taking you back. You'll be in a nice, comfortable bed tonight," I whispered in his ear. I hoisted him over my shoulder and dizzily tramped on. Tiredness racked my body down to my bones. Physical exhaustion took over causing me to fall and drop my friend. "I'm sorry, Don. I've got you," I muttered picking him back up. I stumbled forward under the weight of my load and at last arrived at the crater.

Corpsman up! Corpsman up!: I called out in a tender scream. "I've got Corporal Schroeder. He's still alive. We've got to get him out of here." My plea bounced off the dirt walls of the cavity and returned to me empty. stared down into the crater. It was empty. Maybe I'm in the wrong place. No, this is

right. And then with a cold chill it dawned on me, Foxtrot Company had all left. In the darkness of the night, I sat at the bottom of the gloomy hollow, cradling Don, trying to soothe him. He began to choke and belch up blood. Then his head sagged forward and his body fell lifeless. I tried to revive him, but realized Don had slipped away. Again, thank you men for listening. It feels very good to vomit the Vietnam experience. Peace, Joe (Sanchez, Zimmerman also earned Bronze Stars w/V on this day)

ED NOTE: Joe Beebe received the Bronze Star W Combat V for the above listed actions on Hill 564.

BOOK REVIEW

LIONS OF MEDINA

Late afternoon, Thursday, October 12, 1967. Marine Lance Corporal Kevin Cahill stepped onto a trail deep in the Hai Lang National Forest, Republic of South Vietnam. The trail was worn, ominous and disappeared into the dense jungle. All was still. All was quiet. The enemy was there, watching...



In Cahill's footsteps followed the men of Charlie Company, First Battalion, First Marine Regiment, First Marine Division. True patriots. True heroes. True Marines. All held an appointment with destiny at the end of that trail.

In his book, ***Lions of Medina***, historian Doyle Glass tells, through the eyes of the men who fought on Operation Medina, an account of Marine courage at its best. Courage in the face of overwhelming odds. Courage that defined the generation of men who fought in Vietnam.

Lions of Medina is a tribute to those who fought the Vietnam War, a reminder that freedom is never free, and a testament to the valor of the American soul.

OBIT

MASTER SERGEANT RAMON PROVENCIO USMC INTELL CHIEF TASK FORCE GLICK

Master Sergeant Ramon Provencio, USMC Ret., born in El Paso, Texas, on January 4, 1936, passed away on May 20, 2008, surrounded by his wife, all of his children and grandchildren.

He lived in San Diego, California, for the past 60 years. Ramon was the fifth son of Sergeant Pedro A. Provencio (U.S. Army) and Magdalena Provencio. He had seven brothers and one sister: Corporal Luis Provencio (U.S. Army), Private First-Class Patricio Provencio (U.S. Army), Staff Sergeant Ricardo Provencio (USMC), Staff Sergeant Lorenzo Provencio (USMC), Corporal Gabriel Provencio (USMC), Sergeant First Class Pedro Provencio (U.S. Army), Jesse Provencio, and Susie Lopez. He is survived by his loving wife of 52 years, Celia; his four sons, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ramon Provencio Jr. (USMC Ret.), Sergeant Pedro Provencio (USMC), Gunnery Sergeant Alvaro Provencio (USM(Ret.) and Corporal Robert Provencio (USMC); his daughter Captain Sally Chand (USMC Ret.) md son-in-law Sergeant Major Michael Chand (USMC Ret.); his 10 grandchildren Samuel, Lance Corporal Antonio Provencio (USMC), Roberto, Raymond, Alvaro, Daniella, Christina Mahon, Second Lieutenant Michael Chand Jr. (USMC), Brenda Chand, and Ryan Chand; and two great-grandchildren Emily and Matthew.

Master Sergeant Ramon Provencio proudly served in the U.S. Marine Corps with the Marine Helicopter Squadron 161 in Korea; the 3rd Light Anti-Aircraft Missile Battalion during the Cuban Missile crisis; Task Force Hotel as the Intelligence Chief during the Siege of Khe Sanh in Vietnam; and the 3rd Marine Division as the Intelligence Production Chief. He also participated in Operations Scotland I, Scotland II, and PEGASUS. Ramon took great pride in his service to his country and in being a life-long Marine. After retiring from the Marine Corps, he worked for the Sears Company, followed by the U.S. Border Patrol as a Maintenance Supervisor for 15 years. Ramon was a loving husband and father.

He taught his children the value of hard work and service. Each of his children followed his example and proudly served in the U.S. Marine Corps. He attended church at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church.

EDIT NOTE: Ramon had a large family Heritage of those who served in the Military, read following article

FOUR GENERATIONS OF MILITARY

Four generations of Military veterans, including the United States Army, United States Marines and United States Navy.

These veterans come from a military family, which spans four generations. Their father, Sergeant Pedro "A" Provencio, the first generation of military servicemen, served under U.S. Army General John Pershing with the U.S. Cavalry in the 82nd Field Artillery during General Pershing's expeditions into Mexico after the elusive Doroteo Arango. Doroteo Arango was commonly known as Pancho Villa the "Robin Hood" of Mexico during 1916-1919.

The 2nd generation of military servicemen included seven brothers. The first brother, Corporal Luis Provencio a World War II Veteran with the 118th Infantry Regiment, served as an infantryman during WWII and as a Military Policeman escorting German Prisoners during the occupation of Germany after WWII under the famous General Patton. PFC Patricio Provencio a Glider pilot and paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division was the second to follow in his father's footsteps in the U.S. Army. Thereafter came the three Korean War Veterans, all former U.S. Marines. Staff Sergeant Ricardo D. Provencio enlisted as a Marine Corps Reservists.

He was activated for duty prior to receiving his recruit training after his high school graduation. He was assigned to B Company 1 st Tank Battalion. Staff Sergeant Ricardo Provencio was sent to Korea where he received his recruit training which turned out to be on the job training *(OlT),* during the Inchon landing, Wolmi-do, Kimpo Airfield, Seoul, Wonson, Hamhung, and Chinhung-ni. He was transferred to the frozen Chosin for cold weather training between Hagaru-ri, and Koto-ri, where he received his training in extreme freezing temperature survival under heavy enemy fire while surrounded by ten Chinese Divisions to one U. S. Division. After the successful breakout he was shipped down to Pusan to reorganize and then sent out to east central Korea to further his training in North Korean guerrilla warfare. He participated in the mousetrap operations and in the punchbowl. In 1953 he served with the 3rd Antitank company 3rd Marine Division and was on his way to Korea again when the "Truce" was signed. Staff Sergeant Lorenzo Provencio, a reconnaissance and infantryman, was the next to enlist in the Marine Corps and served with the 5th Marines in the battle for the "Hook" (Hill 19). He was wounded when the Chinese and North Koreans attempted to overrun his unit's position in an all out enemy attack and was evacuated to a Hospital Ship.

He was meritoriously promoted to Staff Sergeant and subsequently returned to duty and assigned as a Tank Commander in support of the Turkish Brigade. Master Sergeant Ramon Provencio was the next family member to join the Marine Corps, and was assigned to Marine Helicopter Squadron 161 as a military policeman in Korea for a period of six months, but was later transferred to Japan as an underage Marine. Master Sergeant Provencio (Retired) remained in the Corps and participated in the Cuban Missile Crisis with the 3rd Light Anti-Aircraft Missile Battalion. He also served in Vietnam as the Task Force Hotel Intelligence Chief during the Khe Sanh siege and as the Intelligence Production Chief for the 3rd Marine Division. He participated in Operations Scotland I, Scotland II, and PEGASUS.

Of the two younger brothers, former Corporal Gabriel Provencio, a Field Radio Operator, served with the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines, 1 st Marine Division in Vietnam. The last brother, Sergeant First Class Pedro "A" Provencio Jr., a retired U.S. Army Medic, was assigned to the 9th Infantry in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. As a Senior Army Medic, he was responsible for insuring that serious casualties were given the proper care, prior to, and during their transport to the nearest Field Hospital. His wife Julia Theresa Provencio was also a Medic and Specialist 6 Class in the U. S. Army. Both also

served with the USAREUR in Germany.

The 3rd generation of servicemen, stem from the children of MSgt Ramon Provencio, which includes 4 sons, a daughter, and a son-in-law. The eldest son CW04 Ramon Provencio Jr., USMC Retired, was an Administrative/Personnel Officer and former Drill Instructor, who served with the 31 st Marine Expeditionary Unit in the Persian Gulf during the Iranian Hostage Crisis. He also served in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm with VMF A-314. He retired after 24 yearsof service.

Sergeant Pedro J. Provencio, a Motor Transport Operator served with various support units of the 1 st Marine Brigade and MCB Camp Pendleton, CA. He served for 9 years. Gunnery Sergeant Alvaro A. Provencio, USMC Retired, was a Helicopter Mechanic and former Drill Instructor. He served in the Republic of the Philippines in support of MAGTF 4 -90, and participated in earthquake relief operations. He also served in Somalia during Operation Restore Hope, and later retired after 20 years of service. Corporal Robert Provencio served as an administrative clerk/chief with the 1 st Marine Brigade Headquarters, and 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines as part of the 31 st Marine Expeditionary Unit with his brother CWO Ramon Provencio in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf during the Iranian Hostage Crisis. He served for 6 years. Captain Sally A. Chand, USMC Retired, worked her way through the ranks as a former Gunnery Sergeant, Chief Warrant Officer 3 and Captain.

She served in the Philippines in support of MAGTF 4-90 with her Brother Gunnery Sergeant Alvaro Provencio and her husband Sergeant Major Michael Chand, and participated in earthquake relief operations. She retired after 22 years of service. Her husband Sergeant Major Michael K. Chand, an Active Duty Infantry Marine, served with various Marine Expeditionary Units in the Persian Gulf, including the Philippines in support of MAGTF 4-90. He was also assigned to 4th Marine Regiment during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm as part of Task Force Grizzly. His last duty was with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163 where he set up security for Camp Rhino and Kandahar in the republic of Afghanistan during operation Enduring Freedom in support of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit. He is the latest member of the 3 rd generation to retire from military service after 26 years, retiring on July 31, 2002.

The 4th generation of military is represented by Lance Corporal Anthony J. Provencio U. S. Marine Corps Reserve, son of Sergeant Pedro J. Provencio and the grandson of Master Sergeant Ramon Provencio. Electronic Technician 3rd Class Sean E. Mahon, U.S. Navy, also represents the 4th generation, and is married to Captain Sally Chand, Sergeant Major Michael K. Chand's daughter and granddaughter of Master Sergeant Ramon Provencio, Christina A. Chand.

He is also 2nd generation Navy, and the son of Operations Specialist Master Chief Jess Mahon, U. S. Navy Retired (a former River Patrol Boat Captain in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam). Electronic Technician 3rd Class Mahon recently returned to Japan with his ship, the USS Kittyhawk after serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and the liberation of Iraq. He is presently stationed at the U.S. Naval Air Station, North Island, San Diego, California. On July 24, 2006, Michael K. Chand Jr., son of Captain Sally Chand, Sergeant Major Michael K. Chand and grandson of Master Sergeant Ramon Provencio, was sworn into the U. S. Marine Corps and left for Officer Candidate School, Quantico, Virginia on October 7, 2006. He graduated and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U. S. Marine Corps on December 15, 2006.

MIKE Jr. is now a 1st Lieutenant and XO of Lima Co 3RD BN 1st Marine Division

I GET LETTERS

Editor, Red Clay Magazine:

Sir,

I read with great interest two of the articles in the Spring 2009 issue of Red Clay. First was the tribute to General Krulak. I met, in a sense, the General on Nov. 10th 1967. I was a Corpsman serving with the 2nd platoon, Bravo Co., of 1/26 on Hill 881 (may have been 861, the years have taken their toll). The word came down that 'Krulak' was coming and the Officers and NCO's were all over us to police up

the area, spruce up ourselves, blouse our boots, and be prepared to assemble at the LZ. Now I will have to admit, I didn't know who or what a Krulak was, all I knew was that Krulak was coming, and it was the Marine Corps birthday and this was a big deal.

In due time I figured out that Krulak was General Krulak, and he was coming to address the Marines on the occasion of their 192nd birthday. Ultimately we assembled, the chopper arrived, and the General appeared. I must say I remember a speech that was more like a father talking to his sons about goals, and duty, and honor and the tradition that all Marines share. I was standing with my platoon, and as he finished his talk, and began to walk away, he looked up and must have seen my Corpsman shield on my soft cover, and he looked me in the eye and said, paraphrased, Doc, I want you to know that everything I said today about the Marines includes you because as far as I am concerned you are a Marine just like the rest of these men. Well, after he left I took a little ribbing from the guys, but from that day to this, when November 10th rolls around, I think of 'Krulak' and how proud I felt to wear the EGA and be a Doc, not only then, but every day since. So Marines, if you will permit me, Semper Fi!

Gary 'Doc Slade' Sallade
B CO 1/26, '67-68

Also, I am from Sharon, Mercer County, Pennsylvania, and was pleased to see a VA clinic opening in Hermitage, which borders my home town. When I was growing up, Hermitage was called Hickory, and we played ball against the Hickory Hornets high school teams. I didn't know the Marzano family and I don't remember if he or Doc Cahill served with the 26th Marines at the same time I did, but I do know that bond we share of having served in Viet Nam, and the closeness we feel in times of sorrow or joy. I appreciate the Red Clay and the work that goes into keeping us connected. Thanks.

THE REST OF THE STORY

By HM-2 William "Doc" Miller
L CO 3/26 USN/Ret
Re: Jurate Kazickas These Hills Called Khe Sanh

I read the article Jurate wrote in the Spring edition of Red Clay. It really got my juices going. I remember her being out in the bush with Lima Co. 3/26. According to her story, she was flown to Da Nang after her Marine escort went down. So our Captain Frank Bynum told her no escort, no reporter. She went on to lament about our Captain being killed due to the medivac giving away our position. Jurate, your leaving had nothing to do with his demise. As it happened, we were ordered to assault Hill 689. A patrol from CAC-03 had been involved in an earlier fight and had left several dead an injured Marines behind, after they had withdrawn.

As we assaulted the Hill, all hell broke loose. A sniper hiding in a spider trap, popped up and shot Captain Bynum. The Company gunny quickly unloaded his .45 cal pistol into the spider trap. That brought about an explosion that wounded the gunny. On the way to the top of Hill 689 we ran into more rifle and automatic weapons fire. Several spider holes were found. On top we found two dead NVA along with the remains of the the two CAC-0 Marines. The NVA had escaped through tunnels dug into the hill. A couple of other Marines were wounded. One of them was our 3rd Platoon leader Lt. Frank McCarthy. Our XO was Jaak Aulik who took over the Company until replaced by Captain Camp. Camp's book **"Lima 6"** tells of his adventures with Lima Co. in the following months.

Me? I wound up on Hill 950 for my last 40 days in country, but that's a whole other story.

I GET MAIL

Dear Tom,

Please accept my donation to help with the printing of Red Clay. I have managed to locate many of my old platoon members through the magazine and members listings. I would like for the membership to become aware of a Liver Disease called P.C.T., which affects many Vietnam Veterans. One of the main symptoms of this disease is "Polycythamia" i.e. too many Red Blood Cells. The VA Does not run a 24 Hour urinalysis which is the only method to discover if the real problem is P.C.T.. They just treat the first symptom.

It took me 20 years for the VA to finally recognize my P.C.T.. It was originally diagnosed at Penn. State Medical Center in Hershey, PA, in 1984. If this disease us not treated properly, it can and will cause liver failure. Please do not take this lightly. Ask the VA to do a 24 Hour urinalysis if you suspect you may have this disease.

HM-2 William "Doc" Miller
L CO 3/26 2ND Plt. 1966-1967

LOOKING FOR C BTRY 1/13 MARINES

Tom,

This article recently appeared in my local newspaper. I would appreciate it being published in Red Clay. We are attempting to have more of our brothers from C Btry 1/13 in attendance at the next reunion.

Vietnam veteran Paul Choclis, a Northumberland native, recently attended two reunions, comprising Marines from the Regimental Combat Landing Infantry Team of the Third Battalion 26th Marines and its Artillery Support Unit, . First Battalion, 13th Marines.

Choclis is an original member of the 3/26 Regimental Combat Landing Team. He served as a scout/ forward observer for "C" Battery 1/13 Marines, attached to both Lima and Mike Companies. In addition, he was temporarily attached to 1st Anglico Liaison Naval Gun Fire Unit, 2/9 Marines, and served as a regimental F/O. at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. He is a life member of Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

For their actions against enemy forces in the Republic of South Vietnam, the Third Battalion 26th Marines were awarded three Presidential Unit citations and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

In June, 2008, Choclis went to Green Bay, Wisconsin, to reunite with original Marines from Charlie Battery 1st Battalion 13th Marines. Charlie Battery was the main supporting arms for 3/26 Marines.

On July 19, 2008 ,Choclis attended a memorial service for 3/26 Marines at Quantico's Base Chapel, followed by a reception and banquet in the Hall of Honor at the National Marine Corps Museum. Former Marine commandant, General Carl Mundy, was the guest speaker.

Plans were made to install a permanent monument at Semper Fi Park, surrounding the National Marine Corps Museum, honoring the service and sacrifice of the 3rd Battalion 26th Marine Regiment.

To My Friends, Thank You

By Earl Clark A Co 1/26

I haven't written anything on our message board in quite awhile. I was taking care of my parents for two years, and after that I was too bummed out and burned out to gather any thoughts. I miss them very much.

The last several months, however, I've occasionally thought about the passing of Dr. Robert Topmiller. I recall the evening when I got on the computer, checked out the message board and read that he had decided to leave this world and continue on his journey. I was in despair, but what occurred soon afterward was something I didn't anticipate.

I left my office and went into the family room to watch TV with my wife. I sat there in silence for a few minutes with "Doc" on my mind, watching the television, but not really. The next thing I know I'm holding my face in my hands, tears falling. My wife came to my side frightened, wondering if I was in some sort of pain. I recall repeating the words, "what happened to us, what happened to us, I don't know what happened to us there," all the while my wife holding me to her shoulder. It was a sad and lonely moment for me.

Introducing myself to Robert "Doc" Topmiller a couple of times at reunions, I recall that our conversations were always interesting and on the lighter side of things. I also remember that I had a smile on my face each time as we parted.

Remembering a particular smile from a particular time is a good thing, don't you think?

To "Doc": Thank you for touching my life ever so briefly.

My reaction to the news of his death was totally un-

expected, but I think I know why it happened. During those moments of grief I began to think of some of my friends I have lost in the last several years and it just built up inside of me. A couple of months ago some of us were writing about an HBO film titled Taking Chance, and I believe it was Sam from Kansas who mentioned that tears seem to fall more easily and frequently these days. At least I find that to be true for me.

A couple of years ago I lost two Marine brothers, David Spradlin, an Alpha Company 1/26 brother, and Virgil Crunk from Bravo Company 1/26 within a three week period.

Dave was one of the first Marines to respond to my posting on the Khe Sanh message board in 1997, and he was a Godsend. Dave explained to me many of the emotions and behavioral experiences I was going through. At that particular time I was isolating for about six years and in recovery for alcohol abuse. Everything sucked!

I still don't know if David died from a broken heart or a lonely heart. All I know is that we wrote each other for years, until one day I received an email from him telling me that he was having a tough time and that I wouldn't be hearing from him for a while. There wasn't any communication between us for years until he popped up on the message board a couple of times. He never acted the same again. I think David just wanted to quit living.

To David: Thank you for telling me about the demons within.

Virgil was my friend; we traveled on R&R together to Australia and had a blast. He was also one of the bravest Marines I was privileged to know, performing his duties constantly under fire, and doing the "Khe Sanh Shuffle" on a daily basis throughout the siege.

We lost contact with one another a year or so after we left Vietnam. I didn't get in contact with him again until my friend Mac McNeely gave me his number.
The last couple of years were tough on Virgil. With his body betraying him it was necessary for Virgil to keep returning to the hospital. Medical staff was constantly draining fluids from him, but whenever I spoke to him he always seemed in good spirits and we always talked about Australia and Khe Sanh.

I Miss Him.

To Virgil: Thank you for being the best R&R buddy a Marine could ask for. I know if I had done something stupid you would have been there to get me back on track.

When Donna Elliot posted on the message board that my email buddy Ray Prittie had ended his life, I was stunned and numb for a while after reading the news. Ray and I had written each other many times through the years. I appreciated his sincerity and his ability to make me laugh. What a great human being.

To Ray: Thank you for all the laughs and enjoyable conversations we had via the internet. My days seemed fresh after reading your mail.

There are some things that are just difficult for my mind and heart to process, my buddies dying too soon is one of them.

I know why I'm writing this message. I'm feeling my own mortality. I suppose some, most, if not all of us, are thinking about it at this time in our lives. Perhaps it has to do with the circle of life.

I am sure of one thing, and that is I had the privilege of serving with the some of the bravest Marines, FMF Corpsmen, airmen, and soldiers on the face of the earth. I think when we all joined the Marines we thought we were invincible. But I wonder if something happened to us in Nam and at Khe Sanh. I wonder if somehow we became vulnerable in a way, that perhaps we became more "fragile" in our later years. I'm not a psychologist or a philosopher so it's just a random thought.

God only knows for sure.



The Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation
A message from the Chairman, Dan Fisher and the Committee

We successfully kicked off our KSV Association's' Scholarship Foundation at the start of 2009. With some hustle on the part of the KSVSF Review Committee the forms and procedures were finalized and in place for the first applicants. The good news is that three applicants came forward to request grants and have met the requirements. Below are short statements from these three young scholars.

We have started 2009 with a financially healthy Scholarship Fund due to the gracious contributions of our members. The 2009 Denver Reunion silent auction will be another source of Fund income so be sure to bid high. That, in turn, increases our grants to applicants in 2010.



ELIZEBETH HENNES IS THE DAUGHTER OF KSV HM2 JAMES HENNES USN 2/26 WPNS & BAS

What do you want to be when you grow up?" That is a question that almost everyone is asked when he or she is a child. Now that I am in college, this question is becoming more and more important. I began my college career in fall of 2008 attending the University of Wisconsin - Madison, and then transferred to the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point. I currently have no declared a major, there are many areas I would like to pursue, but it's hard to just pick one or two. Throughout college I want to not only learn about the subjects of my classes, but also I want to learn about myself. I have plans to study abroad and would like to do some volunteer work both locally and internationally. I will be paying for most of my college career with minimal help from my parents, which to me makes sense because it is my education and I think paying for it mostly myself will make me value it even more. So far I have paid for most of my college costs with student loans except for two small scholarships for first semester, but every little bit helps.



MOLLY FAUVER IS THE DAUGHTER OF KSV JERRY FAUVER USMC DELTA CO 1/26

I am a sophomore at Murray State University working toward a literature degree. I enjoy writing and hope to work at a publishing house or as a newspaper editor upon graduation. I have extended volunteer experience with seniors, Big Brother, Bible School, Food Drives and nursing homes. I am a member of the National Honor Society.

ED NOTE:

Molly would you please hurry, I need all the help I can get with the magazine. The committee and I also decided to increase the scholarship from $ 300.00 to 500.00, these deserving, beautiful, and smart young ladies will each receive a $ 500.00 check. Good luck.

Tom Eichler, President KSV



BRITTANY NORDEN IS THE GRANDDAUGHTER OF KSV RUSSELL TURNER USMC A CO 1/26

I am a senior planning to attend Jefferson College Nursing Program to train to be an RN at a children's' hospital. I am active in Pep and Cheer Leading Club, Future Business Leaders of America, HS National Honor Roll, and assisted at the KSV 2007 (DC) reunion registration table.

LATE REUNION NEWS

By Peter Erlandson

I am a Khe Sanh Vets member and live north of Denver. I was Air Force and served in the spring of '67.

I would like to offer something for the upcoming reunion. I have contacted the owners of a local gun range (members only) and I asked them if some of you could use the range when you are in town. They said that they would be honored to host you.

There could be an M-14 (M1A) semi automatic only, and AR-15 semi auto only, an EARLY 1911 (circa 1913), a newer 1911 and some other weapons available.

Ammo will be supplied by me. The range is approximately 25 miles from the hotel.

I emailed Robert Hazlet, whose son just returned from Iraq, and Cy Soto, WHAC president: "I have a really "unique" idea, I wrote.

The Khe Sanh Veterans organization from Vietnam are having their reunion in Denver this year. I am a member, but I have never attended a reunion. These Marines went through hell.

I was thinking of asking some of them if they would like to go to the range for a part of one day, probably during the week. These are the guys who survived the siege. Good men. I will vouch for them. They will be coming from all over the country. This is all that I can offer them. They covered my (arse) several times in Vietnam. Wish that I could do more for them."

"Pete, I think that's a cool idea." Cy answered: "I am sure that I speak for every WHAC (club) member when I say that it would be a true honor to have such a distinguished group of heroes come visit us.

Invite them and, when you do, ask them to RSVP so I know if we need to make any special arrangements to receive them. The only thing that I ask is that they sign a waiver before they handle any firearms at the range. That way, our insurance is aware that this is a club activity and everyone is covered in the unfortunate case of an accident.

The Club is about 10 miles East of the Brighton Justice Center, at mile marker 22. On Hwy 85. just go about nine miles East. There is a large dog leg about 1 mile turning south and then back to the east. The club is the first gate on the left. Turn south and go about 1/2 mile on a dirt road and you are there.

Peter Erlandson
1251 Beth Lane Northglenn, CO 80234
Cell 720-234-9168
Home 303-451-5032

ED NOTE:

We will have one or two vans available for members attending the reunion. If you get in touch with Pete and set up a schedule, you may use them for the trip to the gun club.

CHANGES TO KSV DIRECTORY

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EDMOND OK 73083

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Gary,
Saw your article in Red Clay ... nicely done.

Attached are aerial photos marked up by Dennis Thompson. Do you think you could put a line on it that approximates the new road alignment? I think North is approximately in the direction marked as "Egress." The new road grazes the TOC .. I'm trying to figure what positions would be north of the new highway, and which remain on the piece of plateau where the tank monument is.
Kindest Regards,
Bob Jacobs

Letter to Bob Jacobs
06 April 2009
By Gary Foster

Dear Bob,

I received your email of March 27. Also, as attached to your email, thank you for the aerial photograph of Lang Vei and the new highway. I have not seen that photo before now.

The whole Lang Vei area has been changed to the point that even I no longer recognize it from when I first went there in 2000. The Co Roc Mountains still loom ominously in the distance through the mist, early morning fog and dampness of the humid atmosphere. The sometimes dark or grey obscurity of the mountains highlighted only by the faint profile of the ridgelines makes them all the more forbidding. Even through the distance, the mountains still exude a presence over Lang Vei as if they owned the entire valley on both sides of the border. The first time I saw the mountains, so visible, or at least noticeable from the Specials Forces camp on the Lang Vei ridgeline, I recall thinking that these mountains had to be of strategic importance to the NVA. On very clear days or when the wind is just right, the mountains stand out so vividly that valleys, gullies, peaks and other topographical characteristics are clearly discernable. Indeed one might feel the mountains could be touched. **(Pic # 1)**

The lower hills that surround Lang Vei and the lush, but steamy, green valleys are still there too. The immediate area around the camp location has been mostly destroyed or totally altered. Highway 9 in its new alignment slices through the ridge. The amount of earth and rock removed to make the road cut, the scale of which is beyond human understanding now, has completely changed the topography of the immediate area. In essence the Special Forces camp has been obliterated, forever gone.

A few years ago, Donna Elliott sent me an aerial photo of Lang Vei after the battle. I recognized the valley and the steep hillside sloping into the valley and three or four prominent bomb craters (because when we cleared the area with the bulldozers, the craters were readily visible). But the position of the road completely threw me. I began to wonder if the photo was developed backwards from the negative. It was confusing. Once, I spent a complete Sunday afternoon at Lang Vei just walking around, up and down the roadway with the photo trying to orient myself. The immediate area is not large. I explored pretty far down the hillside. I had one heck of a time climbing back up. Still, although I had a general idea of the location, orienting the photo was not a certainty and remained a bit of a puzzle to me.
(Pic# 2-3)

You see, highway No 9 has been built and rebuilt several times since 1968. The road we replaced supposedly was built by the Cubans. It could be that their alignment altered the alignment from what was in the photo that Donna sent me. I do recall one thing, the road link between the Khe Sanh reservoir west of town and the border station at Lao Bao was extremely bumpy. It seemed to take forever to reach Lang Vei from Khe Sanh due to the need to greatly reduce your speed. Now, you can drive from Khe Sanh to Lang Vei in about ten minutes

In the aerial photos you sent to me on 22 March, I would say the line that has been drawn is a good estimate of the new alignment of the highway.
(Pic # 4) But it sure seems to me that the camp is on the wrong side of the road so I still wonder if the photo was reproduced backwards of the negative. As one faces Lao Bao, the terrain to the left rises sharply and then falls quickly to a deep valley. To the right, the terrain undulates but does not fall as fast and would be more plausible as being able to support an encampment. I am not convinced that the road that is shown in the photo has not been destroyed and re-aligned several times. At one point some contractor had built a rock crushing plant on the north side of the road and had excavated the

area to some extent for aggregate. The only way I know to reconcile the terrain and the layout of the old base is from about 3000 feet up in the air. This probably is not much help to you, Bob. Now, with the new alignment and road cuts, it is difficult to remember what the old road looked like or its precise location.

Thanks for the compliment on my article "Last Visit to Khe Sanh" in Red Clay. I am pleased you liked my story. I didn't really know whether anyone would be interested to read it but since I have contributed to Red Clay many times before, I thought I would like to record my last impressions of a place I may never visit again and to document my own last moments there. Perhaps others would enjoy reading about them. I have received "thank yous" from many people so the article must have resonated with the readers and made a good impression. That's all I can ask for.

There is much more I could have included in the story like walking to the water point down the steep, muddy incline from the combat base on the same path used during the siege that is there to this day and coming face to face with a big water buffalo at the stream; or following the defensive trench lines at the very edge of the western part of the base and almost falling into large bomb craters concealed by elephant grass; or how some Vietnamese man holding a palm frond aloft tried to shade me from the sun while I walked on the base; **(Pic # 5)** or recounting how, half way up Hill 861, I realized I had no water and was parched and all scratched up and bleeding from the cuts but knew I had to complete the climb - that it would be my only chance; or once on top of Hill 861, viewing the distant hills and green valleys and trying to wonder what it was like at the height of the siege; or watching as workers on the road with metal detectors **(Pic # 6)** walked up and down the road every day scooping up old mortar shells and a few grenades from the excavations or grading and how the workers seemed little concerned; or walking into the ammo dump on the base and seeing so much unexploded ordnance **(Pic # 7)** only to fully realize how stupid I had been to walk into the pit, **(Pic # 8)** then, with a bit of nervousness, backed out by retracing my steps; or how at the time of my first visit to the Combat Base, I realized I was seeing something quite special and being so taken I bought 30 dog tags **(Pic # 9)** that I realized only later through a severe email drubbing from Dennis Mannion that they were fake (still have them); or how a dog chased me on the base and tried to attack but I warded him off; or stopping on the highway to smoke a cigar at a high point overlooking the Quang Tri River as its dark water, funneled into a narrow chasm, rushed straight through the cataracts.

I still have my first Entrance Ticket to the Combat base. It cost 25,000 Dong or, at that time, about $1.30. The monument pictured on the ticket resembled a church to me. **(Pic # 10)** I would learn later what was transcribed on its sides. I was the only one on the base that day, except for a few souvenir hawkers.

And of course there were the red and white road markers on Quoc Luong 9 that would say Khe Sanh and gave a "distance to" in black print and, depending on the origin of the marking system, a "distance from" in red. **(Pic # 11)**

At the time of my first visit to the Combat Base in 2000, as I was exploring around through waist-high scrub grass, I was startled to see so many unexploded 105 and 155 shells littering the east end of the base. Shells were literally everywhere on the ground There were hundreds of them, rusted, just lying around and with no coffee plants at that time the ground was void of dense vegetation. Hundreds of shells could be seen everywhere I looked. I had just finished reading Donovan Webster's "Aftermath" about how the landscape is altered after a big battle. Well, I was seeing it first hand.

When I signed the guest book in the dingy, dusty museum, I had no idea what to say so I merely signed the guestbook as sweat rolled down my face. **(Pic # 12)** Later, Dennis Mannion, who I had yet to meet and who, a few months later, also signed the same book, was much more pointed or at least more colorful. He stated it the way he saw it.

At the beginning of the project, one day I had to leave Dong Ha for Hue/Phu Bai to catch the plane to Hanoi. I called for a taxi. Within an hour one arrived. But I had another plan. I was very early for the airport so I told the driver to take me to Camp Carroll fire support base only about 20 kilometers from Dong Ha. He had no clue where it was but I

had a map and I showed it to him. We left Dong Ha on Highway 9 for the turn-off to Camp Carroll. But the problem was my client saw me go, not towards Hue, but towards Khe Sanh. He was curious as to what I was doing since he knew I was returning to Hanoi from Hue/Phu Bai. He followed me. Later he semi-accused me of spying or that I was always a spy who had returned. I had some explaining to do on that one. I don't think he ever stopped thinking I was a spy but the issue never came up again. Perhaps it was the cigarettes and scotch I continued to buy for him.

From the air, it would be easy to spot the original Marine runway. The area is not quite yet that overgrown as to conceal a 3000 feet runway. But I was elated one day when I made a simple discovery. I discovered the compacted rock that had been covered in some tar emulsion. I found compacted rock in many places all in a line and I found the lateral limits of the rock spread or what was quite literally the edge of the runway; and of course this confirmed for me the runway location even though I pretty much knew where it was. Still, regardless of how elementary the discovery was, I felt some satisfaction. **(Pic # 13)**

I recall one incident specifically that occurred to me at the old museum on the Khe Sanh Combat Base. I believe I have recounted this before. Just before a trip to Vietnam, I received a tiny American flag from Jacob Krygoski. He wanted me to plant it somewhere on the base the next time I returned. I told him I would do that. During my subsequent visit, I decided that yes, I would plant it but I would remove it after I had taken some photos of it. To leave it seemed pointless since some peasant would just take it. So I left the museum and walked not far away to a waist-high red clay berm, probably the remnants of some bunker, and planted the flag. I started to take a picture of it and some guy in the museum came out all in a huff and yelled and gestured at me to remove it. He was adamant and I could not reason with him. OK, I stopped. Silly man. I drove out on the Red Clay runway (not the original USMC runway) and behind some trees, I managed to plant the flag again and this time I was able to take the pictures unbothered.**(Pic # 14)**

One day, somewhere near Cam Lo, or maybe it was in Da Krong, as I drove to Khe Sanh with my constant companion, Hoang Tran Dung, the traffic slowed. A wedding was in progress. A band played, people were parading, and everyone was dressed in traditional clothes. The scene was very colorful. I told Hoang I wanted to see what could be seen. I wanted to stop. I was invited into the ceremony tent and there stood a lovely young woman elegantly dressed for her wedding. I had to take a picture of her which I did. **(Pic # 15)**

On another occasion, at the ground breaking ceremonies for Highway 9 **(Pic # 16)** just west of Cam Lo two days before Christmas 2002, I recall that after all the pomp and ceremony, our shoes and lower legs were literally covered in mud. It had rained heavily just about two hours before the ceremony and the location was just one big mud hole. Nobody seemed to mind or pay attention. I recall I had to prepare a speech. I had to stand in front of 300 people and deliver a speech about Highway 9. What would I say? Finally the words came to me.

I was a bit nervous at the beginning of my speech. I was the next to last speaker. It would not have been good protocol to linger on the war in Quang Tri Province but I felt compelled to make reference to the area's history. I did not know how the audience would respond or react. After all, many in the crowd were my age and had fought the Americans in I corp or the meat grinder as they called it. This was going to be interesting. I knew that because I was the only American present, all eyes would be on me and each person would hang on my words that were interpreted by a young Vietnamese girl named Huong. Dressed formally in traditional blossomy, white silk slacks and a long, purple side-slit, tight-fitting dress cinctured up to just below her chin, known as the Ao Dai, Huong stood beside me while I spoke. After my speech, I recall the applause was long. I was relieved.

This is part of what I said that day.

"*Mister Vice Minister, and distinguished ladies and gentlemen, understanding the sorrowful past of this area and a time that must never again occur, let us recognize the historical importance of Quang Tri Province and Highway 9 and take pause to understand and reflect on the significance of this groundbreaking event - for we break ground today not only*

for the two highways (Highway 9 and the Dong Ha Bypass) but for the future of Quang Tri Province.

Today, we assign to Quang Tri Province and to the people of Vietnam a new chapter and a new role in the economic development of Vietnam. Construction will begin soon and with it a new flourish of economic activity will follow. Citizens of Quang Tri Province will benefit in ways not envisioned before."

That night at the dinner celebration I do recall one thing: the Vietnamese could sure consume alcohol and everyone thought I was their long lost buddy. And they all smoked like chimneys - all of them.

And then, in early summer of 2003, back in the USA, I had made up my mind I would meet the Khe Sanh vets at the annual reunion in Charleston, South Carolina over the Fourth of July weekend. I also remember I would participate in the event with some trepidation because I had no idea how I might be received. I went anyway.

In short, I had a terrific time and met a lot of people not least of which were John Pessoni **(Pic # 17)** who would not let me buy a beer and Dennis Mannion, smiling,**(Pic # 18)** who chided me in a good-natured way about those damned dog tags. Man! It was all great fun and well worth the effort and visit.

I visited Ray Stubbe in his home in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin in 2004. I found Ray totally engaging on many topics, not just about Khe Sanh. His home had been turned into a repository of Khe Sanh archives with bankers boxes filled with archival material all related to Khe Sanh sitting in orderly rows. If one reads his book "Valley of Decision" anyone would understand why Ray had so much stuff. In one bedroom of his house, he had a mini-museum dedicated to Khe Sanh. Ray and I maintained a regular correspondence. **(Pic # 19)**

I still recall the little girl on the combat base who appeared and disappeared as quickly - an apparition. **(Pic # 20)** I will always remember seeing late one night when I first arrived in Dong Ha the tanks at the tank restaurant. These images are indelibly etched in my mind. **(Pic # 21)**

Over the years, on several occasions, I wound up driving back to Dong Ha from Khe Sanh at late dusk or immediately after dark. It was a bit spooky. The traffic had died down and of course the road was not lit except on one occasion by a full moon or on another in an isolated location by soft blue light from televisions in the Montagnard huts. My favorite part of the road is just coming off the Khe Sanh Plateau back to Dong Ha, through the switchback over the Rao Quan River and along the Quang Tri River. Sometimes I would stop the vehicle on the cliffs overlooking the river and just listen to the muted roar of the churning water as it sluiced its way towards the sea.

Closer to Cam Lo, the road is very similar to and about as lonely as those found in remote Tama County, Iowa.

I recall on more than one occasion sipping coconut juice through a straw from a coconut at many places between Khe Sanh and Hue. **(Pic # 23)**

I could have recounted all the above stories in my "Last Visit to Khe Sanh" in Red Clay but alas, the story was already becoming too long. I suppose this letter is too long too.

Yet all of my remembrances of Khe Sanh, Lang Vei and Highway 9 pall in comparison to the experiences and memories of Americans who fought there. To write this letter, I dug into my boxes of Khe Sanh mementos and as I did, I saw all the things I collected over the years – shrapnel, red clay, photos, etc. The assortment of memorabilia is, in itself, quite a collection of junk.

I have no personal account of sweating profusely while carrying an M60 humping around the hills through giant elephant grass knowing I could not see anything even two feet in front of me and at any moment, terror could and did often reign. I was not bombarded or shot at and I sustained no injury as a result of bullets that whizzed through the sky or shrapnel that tore through the humidity and shredded the air and human flesh alike. I have no remembrance of having to leave a wounded comrade behind because of withering gunfire. I didn't suffer from lack of sleep for days on end, knowing that an enemy assault was probably imminent. I didn't dig foxholes or bunkers that would become cesspools after the monsoon rains. My feet didn't rot and I

didn't catch malaria (not there anyway) or dysentery. I didn't see a helicopter gunship or the results of an aerial bombardment from B52s flying so high one can't see them. I didn't see a line of American dead, now converted into inert cargo, being readied for evacuation and their final trip home. I never saw a napalm attack and I never shot someone as the battle raged around me. I never dueled with rats as they scurried around in search of food. I never hunkered down in some wet trench during a rocket or artillery attack. I never smelled the rank odor of foul, decomposing, maggot infested NVA bodies that littered the slopes of the hills so close to the wire.

No. I was not there when so many Marines had no option but to stay and fight for their lives against a tenacious enemy for over two months sometimes for days without provisions or water while the enemy dead piled up outside the wire. I can't recall any of these things because I was not present.

But none of us were at Gettysburg either and still we visit the battlefield and we try to conjure up the intangible images of the battle that are recorded for history, never to be experienced today but never to be lost either. I am reminded of a book I just finished about the battle of Cold Harbor during the Civil War. Essentially the outcome of the battle, favorable to the Confederates, was decided before 8 o'clock in the morning in early July, one year after Gettysburg. General Grant charged the entire Confederate line and within less than 30 minutes 10,000 soldiers lay dead or dying. None of us were there. The leaf-covered trenches at Cold Harbor, just like the trenches around the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, are still visible and serve now as a mute testament to and a silent reminder of the carnage that occurred.

The Civil War is but a blip as time rushes past weeks and months and consumes years, decades, centuries. Khe Sanh, more recent in historical perspective but now too in the past, is fading into time's deepest recesses, a blip on the calendar of eons. One day there will be none of those who fought there, or me, or anyone who will remember anything about it or who can recount any of the stories first hand. My days there can be measured by nothing more than a blink of the eye when compared against the onrush of time. Infinity erases, washes everything in the past and treats all of us equally. We are returned from where we came: star-dust.

Several people who read "Last Visit to Khe Sanh" felt there was a tinge of sadness, despair, or loneliness in my story. There was. Perhaps it resonated so well because so many people have had the same feelings. And now that have I re-read it in Red Clay, I still feel a pang of alone sadness. Probably because the adventure, now in the past, was so vivid and current for me even though the siege took place so many years before my time there. Yet, it's all still there: the base, the runway, the hills, the river, the water point; the weather, the red clay - dusty when dry, clinging when wet - and the ghosts. Hill 1015 still dominates the landscape and serves as a silent sentinel over the valley. And there is the silence and the silent witness of time punctuated only by the wind as it wisps through the skinny eucalyptus trees that line the runway, their silvery green leaves rustling - a slight wind that wanders through space-time, stops to visit, perhaps to refresh as it caresses our faces, and vanishes without a trace like some lost, wayward spirit.

Tim O'Brien once penned:

Vietnam was full of strange stories, some improbable, some well beyond that, but the stories that will last forever are those that swirl back and forth across the border between trivia and bedlam, the mad and the mundane.

...and of his description of Mary Anne Bell, The Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong, O'Brien wrote

The war intrigued her. The land too and the mystery... If the girl was nervous, she did not show it. She seemed comfortable and entirely at home, the hostile atmosphere did not seem to register

I was reluctant to think at the time of my last visit - I could not admit the realization - I may never go back. I may never be there again. Why are my memories of Khe Sanh so special? Why would I have such feelings? I have been to many places all over the globe that I will never visit or see again. I doubt I will ever again visit the Kalahari or Goa or Cochabamba or Chittorgarh or the Isle of Dura. I am not bothered by this; in fact give it little thought.

But to know that I may never visit Khe Sanh again is an un-definable, strange realization. Was it the highway? The base? The history? The landscape? Was it the mystery? I doubt anyone can describe or explain the sensation. And I'm Ok with that.

I have no need to ever return to Khe Sanh now. But a part of me, like a part of so many Marines, is still there. I can say, that part, for me at least, is manifested by the road we built, a road and its bridges that will be there for many, many years. No, I did not fight at Khe Sanh. I was not a Marine. But many years after the siege, I did contribute to the recovery of the area and left behind a monument many times more important than the stone slab monument the Vietnamese erected at the intersection of Highway 9 and the road that leads to the Combat Base that commemorates the NVA's purported glorious victory over sorrowful, forlorn, defeated American soldiers.

And of course when I saw the overly-dramatized friezes or carved reliefs on the monument and the image they project, I was reminded of the words that Dennis Mannion wrote in the guestbook in the museum on the combat base about 4 or 5 years ago

"*Let me get the facts straight. We, the Marines, left because we were through kicking ass in this area. I have much respect for the 15,000 plus NVA soldiers who died here. They were terrific, brave men---but they lost! Sorry, but that's the way it was.*"

Dennis signed the guestbook and added *"wounded twice."* I will never forget reading those words for myself in that hot, airless museum.. **(Pic # 22)**

The past nine years of visiting Khe Sanh, Lang Vei and Highway 9, in general, has been a great, rewarding and satisfying experience for me. Let's leave it at that. If I contributed to helping find one or two sets of remains of American MIAs due to our excavation at Lang Vei, then what more can I ask for or do?

Highway 9 was a terrific project, my favorite in fact, but with difficult and sometimes rancorous, certainly unorganized contractors. But the project was worth all the sweat and vexations. To have learned, through visiting and reading, something about the area that was the scene of so much drama and bloodshed many years ago was sometimes slightly overwhelming. And then later, to have applied my own small talents and been a part of something much more positive, much more constructive; to meet so many interesting people who fought there; and to have forged so many – well - good friendships, to be very honest, what else is there?

I thank you again for your kind compliments but, perhaps more importantly, I also thank you, and, through you everyone who fought at Khe Sanh, for your steadfast service to and personal sacrifice for our great country.

I send my best personal regards to you, Bob and, with much respect for all who served, to all others as well.



Pic # 1



Pic # 2

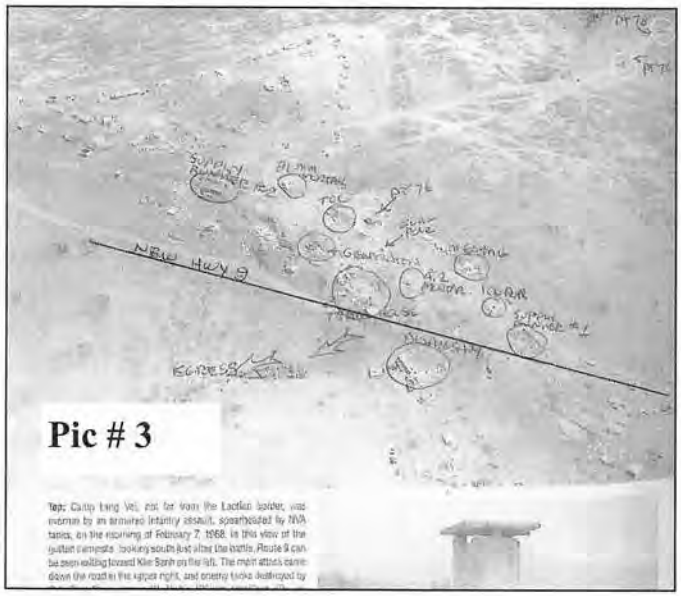

Pic # 3

Top: Camp Lang Vei, not far from the Laotian border, was overrun by an armored infantry assault, spearheaded by NVA tanks, on the morning of February 7, 1968. In this view of the gutted campsite, looking south just after the battle, Route 9 can be seen exiting toward Khe Sanh on the left. The main attack came down the road in the upper right, and enemy tanks destroyed by



Pic # 5

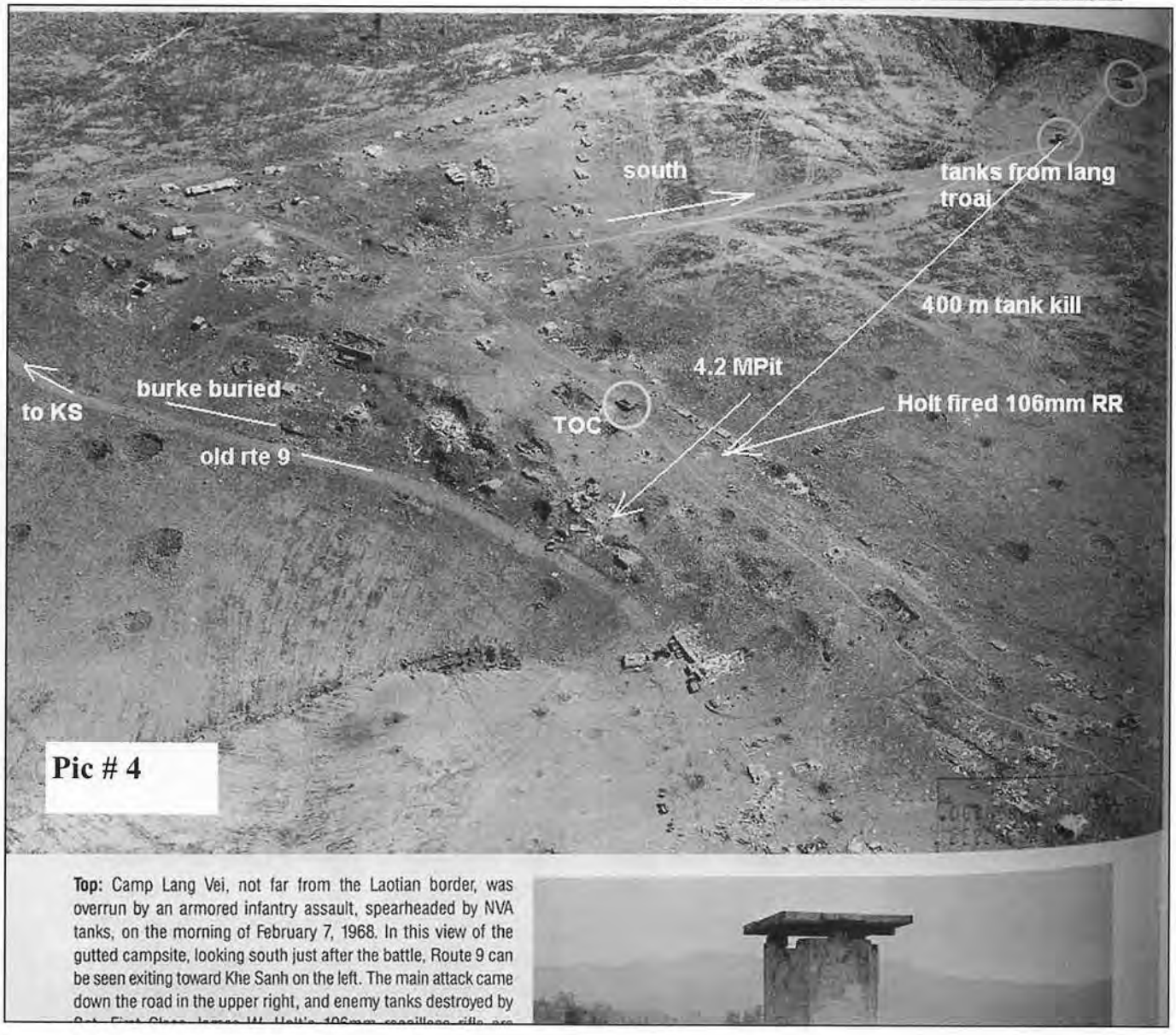

Pic # 4

Top: Camp Lang Vei, not far from the Laotian border, was overrun by an armored infantry assault, spearheaded by NVA tanks, on the morning of February 7, 1968. In this view of the gutted campsite, looking south just after the battle, Route 9 can be seen exiting toward Khe Sanh on the left. The main attack came down the road in the upper right, and enemy tanks destroyed by


Pic # 6


Pic # 7


Pic # 8


Pic # 9



Pic # 10



Pic # 11

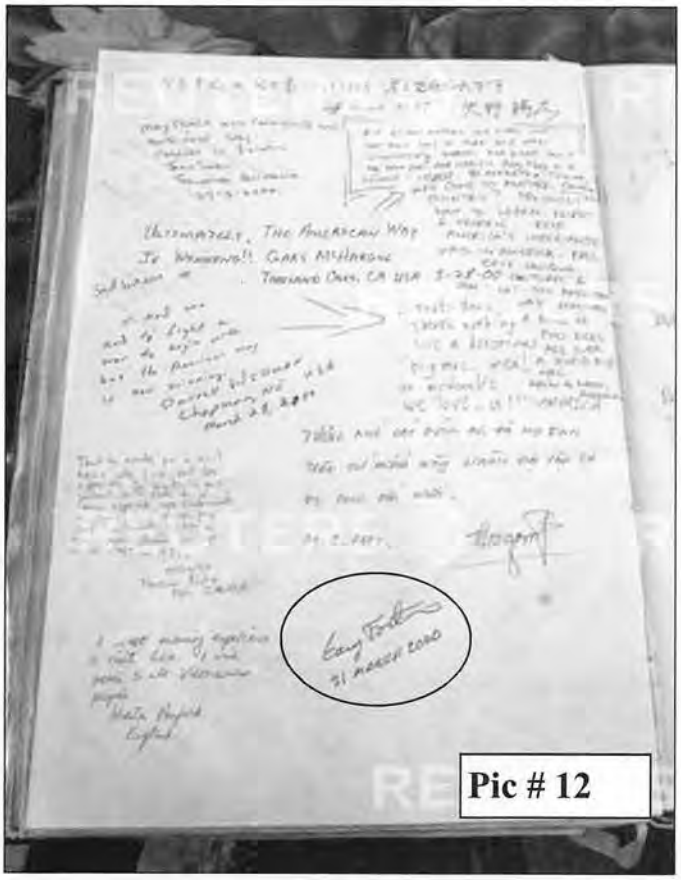
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Pic # 13

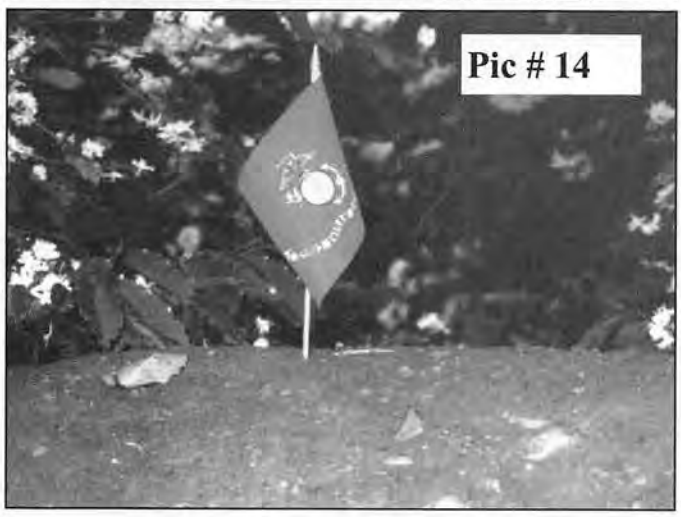
Pic # 14


Pic # 15



Pic # 16

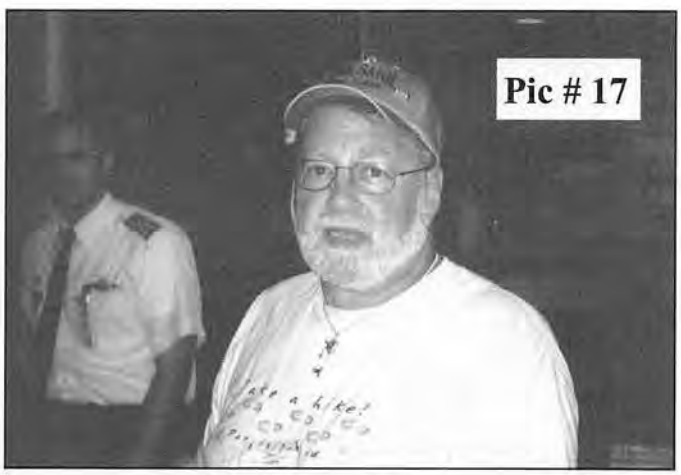
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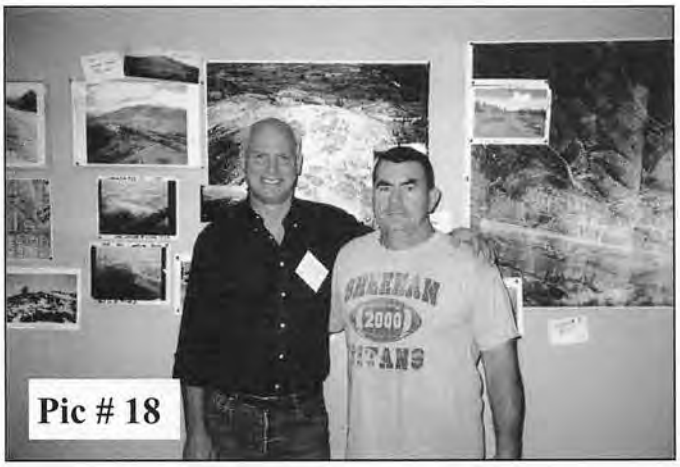

Pic # 18


Pic # 19


Pic # 20


Pic # 21

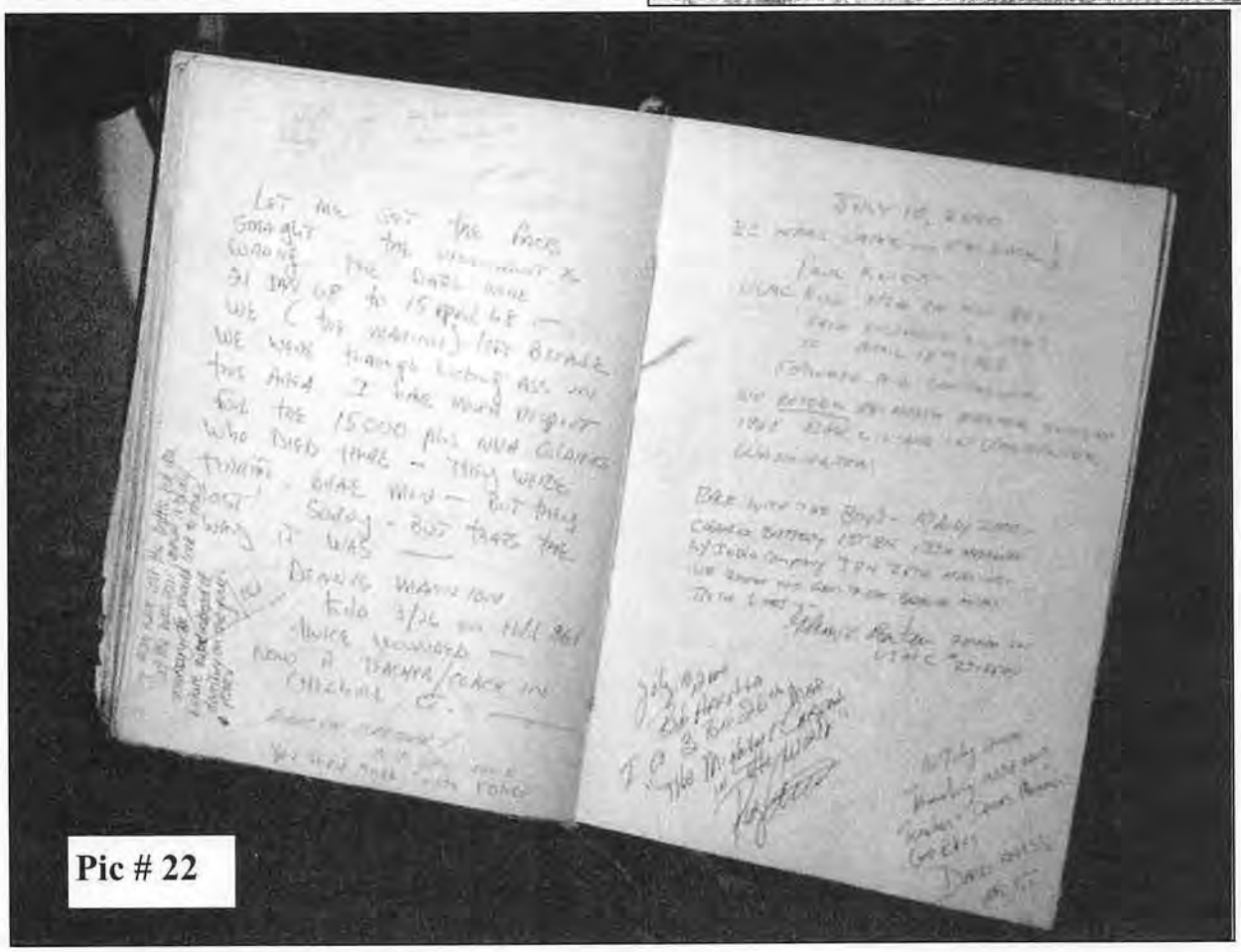
Pic # 22

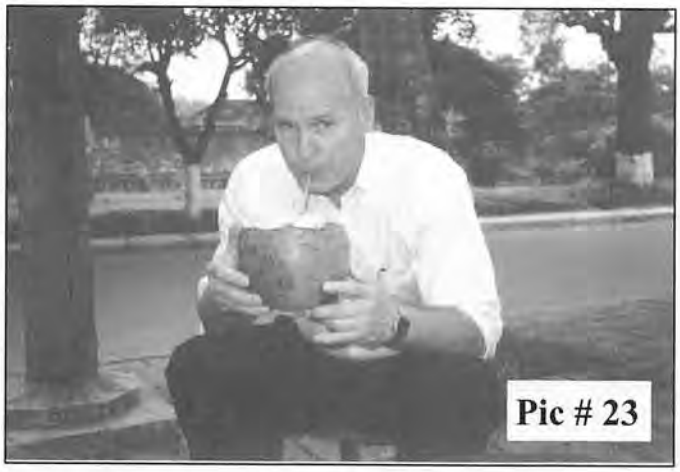



Red Dirt– This is the Red Clay Runway. Not the USMC Runway



Davis Hetherington, Project Manager for Highway 9 and his assistants on Highway 9.



Vehicle with sign– searching for Camp Carroll on Highway 9.



Prop & Howitzer on the KSCB 2001



Remains Of The USMC Runway at Khe Sanh



Gary Foster with his client at a party after Highway 9 Groundbreaking ceremony in Dong Ha



Plants at the Khe Sanh Base



Gary at Rao Quan river crossing



Construction of one of the bridges on Highway 9



Gary with 155 Shell at Khe Sanh Ville



Hills 950 and 1015 from KSCB on a rare clear day

Letter To Jacob Krygoski From Gary Foster

Jacob,

On March 20, I planted your tiny USMC flag at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. I could not get to 558. The clouds were so low that I could put my hand in them over my head while on the base and it rained constantly. I could not see 861, 881, 950, 1015, or 558. So I put your flag on the base and took photos of it.

BUT!I was watched and was told to remove the flag. I did so and went to another spot and replanted it and took more photos of it. But then I thought to myself: I could leave it and someone would take it, or I could bring it home and send it back to you. It is stained with red clay from Khe Sanh. I decided to hell with them and I brought it back with me, but it was planted in the earth on the Khe Sanh Combat Base at several places in your honor. I was the only one on the base after I alluded my spies. Windy and wet and quiet. I visited the ammo dump that blew in 68. Hundreds of 105 shells all over the place. Talk to you soon and best regards.

Gary Foster

Hey Gary:

The coincidences that spin around my life continue to blow me away Last night my son Blake sends me an email that says, "Dad is this your handwriting in the attached link?" I try to open the link but it is a Reuters news site and private citizens are not admitted. I try to register (cause you have to be a business person to obtain access) but that won't work cause I have no business address or business email or business phone. I write back to Blake and tell him that. He -- being a modern, computer kid manages to do a "work-around" (or maybe his rugby company employer has access) .. In either case, he sends me the picture and the short text that goes with it. No explanation for what Blake was looking for when he came across it or what the context of the pic was set around. You just be prepared to be **stunned!** :) :) I hope all is well. Think Easter in CT! Regards,

Dennis Mannion

FOR RELEASE WITH BC-VIETNAM-ANNIVERSARY-ROW - A page of a visitors book shows a "war of words" among the guests of a military museum at the former U.S. military air base in Khe Sanh, the scene of some of the most bitter fighting during the Vietnam War. The debate and feelings expressed go deeper than broadsides fired by Americans and non-American visitors at each other over the merits of Vietnamese soup "pho" and the king of American hamburgers. Vietnam celebrates the 25th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam war on April 30. CC/DL

(See Picture 22) and Page 56 , Column one Paragraph Four Preceding Article By Gary Foster For Text that Dennis wrote.

2009 Jefferson Award Winner Geoffrey Steiner

KSAX hosted the Jefferson Awards banquet, to honor local volunteers. Geoffrey Steiner took home the 2009 Jefferson Award, along with a pretty nice trophy.

Geoffrey will head to Washington D.C. to compete at the national level. We received several letters about Geoffrey volunteering his time with Boy Scouts, kids with disabilities, the Humane Society and helping with suicide victims. Geoffrey is most noted though for his work with Vietnam veterans.

And to this day, Geoffrey has planted over 200,000 trees for every dead and missing soldier from the war He was truly deserving of this award.

I'm not one to sit by and see an injustice. It's in my makeup. If I see hurt – I will do anything to stop it," says Geoffrey Steiner when asked why he volunteers so much of his time. He is a disabled Vietnam Veteran, however, despite his disability, for the past 30 years Steiner has been planting trees for every dead and missing soldier from the Vietnam War. He has planted over 200,000 trees which are displayed on his 100 acre home in Cushing, MN. People come from all over the world to see this living Memorial and to this day, he continues to plant new trees and replace old ones.

Along with planting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Forrest, Steiner is also dedicated to helping im-



prove the lives of living Vets. As a trained psychotherapist, Steiner has done 33 years of suicide volunteer work. He has received filing cabinets full of letters and hundreds of phone calls from suicidal, hurting vets and their families. Not one person was left unanswered. He made sure to write everyone back and called every single person who had ever left a message – even though it racked up his phone bill so high he couldn't afford to pay it. Vets would come to see him in his small town of 65, many of which were homeless or had just gotten out of prison. No matter whom they were, Steiner would put them up in his house and get them clothes by volunteering at the Little Falls Clothing Review. On top of his work with Veterans, he has also volunteered with Boy Scouts, Sea Scouts, Cadet Squadron, Big Brother of Morrison county and working with mentally Handicap children.

Steiner is the only person to be recognized as an "Unsung Hero" by People Magazine, Newsweek and Readers Digest three years in a row. He has survived alcoholism and suicide attempts in his struggle with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and is now fighting the debilitating effects of Lime Disease. He says he will still do whatever it takes to educate others on PTSD so they never have to experience the pain he went through.

Ceremony Recognizes Vets Not On The Wall

WASHINGTON (AFRNS)

One-hundred twenty-three American heroes from the Vietnam War era were honored posthumously during the annual **In Memory Day** ceremony, according to Jan C. Scruggs, founder and president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

In Memory Day was created to pay tribute to those who died prematurely from noncombat injuries and emotional suffering caused directly by the Vietnam War, but who are not eligible to have their names inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The 11th annual In Memory Day ceremony was held at 10 a.m. April 20, 2009 at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Nearly1,000 family members, friends and fellow veterans attended to participate in this year's event.

In Memory Day allows The Wall to do what it does best: provide a healing environment for family members and friends," Mr. Scruggs said. "It also allows all of us to pay tribute to these brave Americans who served and sacrificed for their country."

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial bears the names of 58,260 men and women who died while serving in the U.S. armed forces in the Vietnam War.

"The Department of Defense developed specific parameters that allow only the names of servicemembers who died of wounds suffered in combat zones to be added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial," Mr. Scruggs said. "The In Memory program recognizes those men and women who have died prematurely as a result of the Vietnam War, but who do not meet the criteria. Many of their deaths are a result of Agent Orange exposure and emotional wounds that never healed."

During the ceremony, family members read aloud their loved ones' names in chronological order by date of death. Following the ceremony, participants laid tributes at the base of The Wall corresponding to the honorees' dates of service in Vietnam.

With the addition of this year's honorees, more than 1,800 people have been honored in the In Memory Honor Roll. Established in 1979, the nonprofit Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund was authorized by Congress to build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Since then, the memorial fund has evolved into an international nongovernmental organization dedicated to preserving the legacy of The Wall, pro-

moting healing and educating about the impact of the Vietnam War.

Its initiatives include educational programs, a traveling Wall replica that honors veterans and a humanitarian and land mine-removal program in Vietnam. The fund also is building The Education Center at The Wall, an underground educational facility near the memorial.

Here is a list of this years honorees in alphabetical order

2009 IN MEMORY DAY HONOREES

NAME		DOB	DOD
Abel Lloyd Allen	Montevideo MN	19-Oct-49	3-Nov-04
Allen Leo Peter	Sterling Heights MI	11-Dec-41	22-Jul-04
Ashby Dennis Robert	Denver CO	29-May-4 1	22-May-94
Badger Philip David , Jr.	Columbus OH	6-Jan-43	19-Sept-02
Baker Jerry Wayne	Marked Tree AR	14-Sept-47	18-Dec-02
Ballard Dennis James	Vinton IA	3-Nov-47	28-Jan-02
Bassarab Frank Anton	Bridgeport CT	01-Sept-50	05-Jan-09
Buchan Douglas John	Chicago IL	20-Nov-47	4-Jan-91
Buckley Lynda V.	Arlington VA	27-May-47	15-Nov-02
Burghart Peter Nelson	Guilford CT	27-Mar-47	11-May-04
Becker Ronald Joseph	Anaheim CA	27-Dec-46	19-Aug-71
Blanco Woodrow Rentas-	Brooklyn NY	22-Jul-46	23-Dec-01
Cody, Louis Webster Sr.	Knoxville TN	27-Sept-42	7-Dec-04
Coleman Russell Denton	Deford MI	18-Feb-48	25-Mar-08
Corbin Joseph Roger	Van Buren ME	5-Nov-47	3-Apr-08
Coughenour Dale Edward	Uniontown PA	10-Nov-46	12-Dec-07
Dalton Robert J.	Inwood WV	24-Jan-50	15-Oct-02
Darbonne Davis	Ville Plane LA	24-Sept-47	26-Jul-01
Day Edgar Lee	Thorsby AL	31-Dec-37	9-Apr-02
Davila John Flores	Fort Worth TX	25-Jan-53	2-Jul-05
Decker James Francis Jr.	Graysville PA	5-Oct-51	28-Oct-08
DeCamp Michael	Chicago IL	20-Jul-50	12-Nov-85
Demeduc Gregory C.	Novato CA	5-Jan-48	16-Nov-98
D'Ottavio John Jeremiah	York PA	5-Mar-47	12-Jan-08
DeThorne Raymond J.	Westchester IL	24-Oct-34	30-Mar-85
Doherty Shaun Emett	Fort Myers FL	19-Jun-47	15-Aug-07
Donnick Terrence G.	Crawfordville FL	4-Oct-48	2 4-Sept-06
Downey Richard Sheridan	Boise ID	18-Nov-46	16-Aug-08
Emery George R.	Maywood NJ	8-Jan-49	24-Sept-93
Engel Carl Robert	Portland OR	25-May-34	6-May-07
Engler Michael Jay	Akron OH	10-Jan-48	30-Jul-06
Evans Lawrence Edward	Sandusky OH	15-Sept-41	11-Jan-08
Fajbik Ronald Richard	Warren PA	12-Feb-49	-Nov-05
Flannery George Edward	Waukesha WI	26-Mar-17	12-Apr-75
Fowler Deene M. , Jr.	Cranesville PA	22-Jul-49	27-Dec-02
Fedalei Albert Francis	Philadelphia PA	9-Nov-33	30-Jun-81
Ford Michael Roland	Graham TX	1-Dec-47	4-Mar-02
Glenn Otis Herman , Jr.	Asheville NC	6-Apr-46	25-Dec-07
Gordon Douglas	Bernd Ramona CA	21-Nov-46	7-Aug-08
Gray James	Falcon CO	28-Feb-32	23-Feb-94
Gravino, Leonard Francis Jr.	Columbia SC	5-Jul-46	12-Jan-82
Harris George Rice	Andover MA	19-Jan-47	16-Feb-05
Hall Charles Richard	Buffalo WY	14-May-38	24-Aug-06
Hatzenbuhler Richard E. Sr.	Rapid City SD	21-Jan-31	1-Sept-03
Howard Frank J. Much Inickel	Bemidji MN	29-Aug-50	16-Jan-07
Hudson Stanley L.	Raymond WA	15-Oct-46	11-Oct-66
Hunt James	Kellerton IA	23-Feb-39	6-Jun-08
Jarman enneth	Niles MI	4-Feb-48	11-Jan-08
Johnson Dean Arthur	St. Paul MN	15-Jan-46	5-Apr-00
Johnstone William Frederick	Sodus NY	5-Apr-43	26-Dec-07
Justice John Louis	Fort Pierce FL	6-Apr-37	9-Sept-76
Kemp Terrance Clay	Howell MI	25-Mar-44	29-Jul-86
Key Charles	Rantou IL	20-Jun-41	10-Jun-07
Kraus Robert George	Neenah WI	22-Nov-46	14-Feb-04
Kremer Kirk Bailey	Warren Grove NJ	14-Dec-48	27-Sept-07
Layton Hershel	Tanner UT	6-Jan-29	20-Oct-88
Lietz Max Emil , Jr.	Minneapolis MN	30-Dec-42	4-Mar-06
Litchfield Lou	Macomb IL	8-Jun-46	27-Apr-08
Macher Robert John	Pittsburgh PA	20-Sept-45	22-Sept-03
Magaldi Edmund George	Hartford CT	27-Aug-34	2-Sept-06
Marsh David Joseph	Millburn NJ	21-Jun-43	13-Mar-08
Meadows Ellis Eugene	Cartersville GA	18-Dec-46	23-May-06
Meadows, Michael Earl Sr.	Pineyview WV	9-Jan-47	27-May-08
MesserJohn Jeffrey	Mt. Morris IL	10-Jan-50	25-Feb-91
McClain Bernard	Philadelphia PA	7-Nov-461	0-Feb-89
McColpin Perry Michael	Burleson TX	2-Oct-45	10-Feb-08
McCowen Richard Lee	Syracuse UT	2-Dec-42	10-Jun-01
McGuffin Robert Wayne	Louisville KY	10-Apr-49	27-Sept-04
McKechan Richard A.	Newark NJ	14-Apr-491	0-Jan-08
McLoughlin Kevin Joseph	Tucson AZ	25-Aug-43	26-Jan-03
McLaughlin, Charles III	Wethersfield CT	23-Sept-37	21-Nov-08
Merriken Steven Gerald	Los Lunas NM	9- Dec-51	29-Nov-04
Miller Danny Joe	Fletcher OK	25-Apr-47	23-Sept-08
Moran Paul Joseph	Scranton PA	8-Feb-48	28-Feb-94
Nester Marvin Eugene	Wolfpen WV	14-Apr-36	12-Oct-99
Norris Julian Pierce	Mt. Sterling KY	24-Jun-40	29-Nov-03
Ohlund Gerald Kenneth	Eagan MN	1-May-51	1-Mar-08
Olsen John Ross	Mexico ME	28-Mar-49	23-Feb-07
Olszanecki John Lawrence	Ellenville NY	24-Jun-44	10-Jun-02
Otto Gregory John	Milwaukee WI	15-Feb-47	14-Feb-08
Perez Paul Leopoldo	San Antonio TX	10-Jul-37	12-Jun-07
Peugh Jimmy Lamar	Porter Dale GA	17-Apr-48	21-Apr-86
Phillip Joseph G.	Leavenworth KY	22-Feb-27	6-Aug-91
Post Richard Raymond	Geneva NY	2-Jun-43	25-Nov-70
Reinhardt John Allen	Roselle Park NJ	27-Aug-30	10-Jan-01
Reynolds Homer Jr.	Tacoma WA	31-Mar-32	13-Jun-07
Riddlebarger Paul Maywood	Dayton OH	18-Nov-50	14-Feb-06
Rineker Ronald Wayne	Essex MD	13-Jul-46	17-Jun-92
Ruiz Juan Carlos	Lawrence MA	13-Jul-45	29-Jan-04
Roberson Harrol Lee	Texarkanna TX	30-Jun-43	29-Jul-07
Robert William Stevenson	Scottsdale AZ	18-Mar-42	10-Apr-08
Robinson William Alan	Saugerties NY	17-May-48	27-Nov-06
Rogers Richard Lee	Lewiston PA	18-Mar-46	3-Apr-96

Romero	Roberto M.	Tierra Amarilla NM	7-May-42	27-May-06
Russell	Benjamin Alden	Constantia NY	5-Feb-40	12-Aug-07
Salanoa	Kaio Finauga	Fresno CA	16-Apr-34	4-Feb-99
Sare	Dale Lane	So Lake Tahoe CA	0 2-Jun-45	3-Jul-08
Sarette,	Paul R. Jr.	Jefferson City MO	7-May-46	19-Jul-94
Saum	Ralph Richard	Junction City OH	20-Aug-35	14-Jul-06
Sawtell,	James F. Jr.	Marcellus NY	12-Nov-47	19-Oct-07
Schuck	Ronald	Middletown NY	22-Mar-47	3-Aug-06
Service	Robert William	Winter Park FL	19-Jul-33	15-Oct-07
Shepherd	Roi	Lawton OK	6-Feb-22	3-Mar-76
Shepherd	Stephen Patton	Lexington KY	26-Jun-48	16-Feb-08
Sirmans	Stan	Pensacola FL	4-Jan-39	28-Jun-06
Slemp	Jackie Charles	Mountain City TN	9-Jan-49	21-Nov-07
Smith	Lloyd Reynold	Jackson TN	21-Jul-48	13-Sept-07
Snyder	Joseph Martin	Trenton NJ	7-Feb-48	15-Jun-73
Spath	Gerald Carl	Cincinnati OH	22-Oct-30	12-Jun-03
Spindler	Robert Henry	Bradford PA	24-Jul-37	17-Nov-04
Stepp	Jimmy Dale	Tahlequah OK	24-Oct-49	16-Feb-87
Stephens	James Richard	Chicago IL	10-May-47	21-Feb-08
Stevens	Jerome Francis	Athens GA	11-Jan-45	11-Oct-06
Stolarcek	William Glen	Dover FL	22-Jul-441	7-Jan-97
Sullivan	John David	Star City AR	27-Nov-43	25-Mar-07
Vigliotti	Russell	New Eagle PA	24-Jul-51	8-Dec-00
Vining	Francis E.	Wareham MA	23-Aug-40	8-Oct-07
Vousboukis	Peter M.	Tamworth NH	25-Sept-43	29-Jul-07
Wagasky	Damian	Las Vegas NV	19-Dec-49	16-Sept-07
Wilkie	Carroll Richard	Clifton NJ	22-Sept-29	20-Sept-67
Wills	Roderick Michael	Bellingham MA	7-Apr-47	17-Mar-06
Wolfe	Chester Mark	Shickskinny PA	12-Apr-45	6-Aug-08
Yeske	Paul Bennett	Thomson GA	7-Dec-42	7-Mar-08

"IT WASN'T EASY"
A Khe Sanh Veteran's Wife Fought Hard To Fulfill A Promise.

Otis H. Glenn Jr. was a tough guy, a U.S. Marine who would earn a Purple Heart and a presidential citation for bravery after being shot in the chest and left for dead in a rice paddy in Vietnam. A tall specimen dubbed Big O by his fellow Marines and later his friends and family, he was a man who read everything about World War II that he could get his hands on, loved driving his long-haul rig and soothed his soul creating beautiful treasures from wood But he was also a man who left tender letters of love on his wife's pillow or nightstand on just an ordinary day. You're good to me and for me how could I not help but love such a beautiful person, one of those letters reads. I'll try and complement you in every way I possibly can so that I may hold and cherish you as long as I can, forever and ever. With all the love in me, Big O.

Glenn cherished his wife, Judith, for 27 1/2 years, until the moment he died on Christmas Day 2007 of lung cancer, a disease linked to the Agent Orange he was exposed to in 1967-68 in Southeast Asia. That cancer followed side effects from floating shrapnel, skin cancer and kidney cancer, also linked to the toxic herbicide that killed or maimed thousands of other American troops during and after the war in Vietnam, in addition to the harm it did to the Vietnamese. Before her husband died, Judith Glenn made him a promise: She would honor him for the rest of her life. She went to Washington, D.C., to keep that promise. Judith Glenn and her remaining family members stood in front of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, known as The Wall, and read her husband's name during the annual In Memory ceremony held by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund.

A certificate bearing Otis Glenn's name, and the personal memorabilia Judith provides, was placed at the memorial, to be collected later by the National Park Service and stored in its permanent archive. His name was also added to the In Memory honor roll book to serve as a lasting reminder of his service and sacrifice.

But although he suffered for 40 years from the injuries that earned him military honors, and may have eventually died as a result, Glenn's name is not one of the 58,195 engraved on The Wall.

The annual In Memory ceremony was created to honor those who died as a result of the Vietnam War but whose deaths do not fit the Department of Defense criteria for inclusion on The Wall.

Judith Glenn, a retired schoolteacher who now lives in Morganton, worked through reams of official paperwork to ensure her husband would be one of just 123 soldiers and the only one from North Carolina to be recognized at this year's ceremony.

The hours of paperwork were a labor of love for Judith Glenn. It was complicated and sometimes frustrating, but I promised him that I would honor him for the rest of my life, Glenn said. When your heart is in it, it's not hard at all. She was anxious about seeing up close the haunting, linear tribute that is The Wall, the somber reminder of the U.S. soldiers who lost their lives in Southeast Asia some

40 years ago. Big O visited the memorial numerous times, always with sheets of paper to take rubbings from the engraved names of his fallen comrades from Bravo Co., 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, 3rd Division.

Judith Glenn was there to acknowledge not only those who died in the war, but also all the others, including her husband, who came home still alive but on borrowed time. The reality hasn't set in yet, she said. When I saw that cold, hard marble, that's going to be very difficult. But I have to think it's full of life, it's actually breathing life, because it has the names of the brave Vietnam veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice. And I'm so proud that we will be able to honor my husband, that he will get the honor and respect he deserves, she said.

And that's long overdue for all Vietnam veterans. Big O Glenn served in Khe Sanh and Con Thien, on the front line at the demilitarized zone so close to the enemy the Marines could look into North Vietnam. He said, We could hear (the Viet Cong), and we could see things moving, but we could never actually see them,' Glenn recalled. He said, We were on their territory, and they knew how to fight in the jungles and rice paddies.' He said that if you ever saw them, it was too late, because it meant that they had shot you.

They did shoot Glenn, in the chest, in August 1968. He was rescued, taken to a medical ship and eventually sent home. But he was never the same. He was so outgoing and personable and very friendly as a man, but he was very, very private as a Marine, Judith Glenn said. He never talked about it, never shared anything about it until years after we were married. He had (post traumatic stress disorder), and that was devastating to him the nightmares and flashbacks never stopped. And it's still taking its toll on all the other veterans who were there.

After he married Judith and my family, she laughed. We breathed new life into him for 27 1/2 years

The couple loved camping together, and both relished the summers when Judith was out of school and they could travel the country together in his rig, covering 40 states in five years. He was like a second son to Judith's mother, and a brother not a brother-in-law to her twin sisters and brother.

He liked to say, "A man is like a fine piece of wood you just have to bring out his character,' Glenn said. Like he always said about bringing out the best in a man, he tried to bring out the best in everybody. Everybody he met, he tried to find the good in them, and he did. He brought out the best in us.

The woman Big O referred to as Kid was by his side during the cancer treatments, the kidney dialysis, the nightmares and flashbacks, as well as the happy times camping under the stars or cruising down America's highways. And she is still with him today, en route to a ceremony that will mix an emotional ####tail of pride, grief, longing and, mostly, love..

He never wanted a brass band. He never wanted a parade. He never wanted the spotlight on him, Judith Glenn said. If he were here, he'd say, You're doing way too much.' And I'd say, No, I'm not doing half enough.' But he would say, You promised me that you would honor me, so I will accept this, Kid, because you're keeping your promise. 'Kid smiled as she wiped tears from her eyes.

I'm doing this for him. I'm keeping my promise.

MORE PICTURES FROM DONNA ELLIOTT



NVA WAR MEMORIAL
Proclaiming their Victory over American Forces at Khe Sanh

We have instituted a new magazine section to thank those members who contribute so generously to the Khe Sanh Veterans. Their contributions allow us to continue to expand and improve our Red Clay magazine. There will be four levels of contributions: **SILVER** $ 20.00-50.00, **GOLD** over 50.00-200.00, **PLATINUM** over 200.00-1,000, and **DIAMOND** over 1,000.

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WOLFE, Robert A

**** DENOTES 2 CONTRIBUTIONS**

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDA TION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to graduating high school students who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student or who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited curriculum following high school graduation.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans. Inc., a 501 (c) (19) charitable organization.

3. **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 4/21/2009 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:**

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid member of Khe Sanh Veterans. Inc. who has been a member in good standing for a minimum of three years. This includes deceased life members of KSV, and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA in Vietnam if family members are associate members of KSV Inc. Children of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, Character, Citizenship, leadership potential, and financial need. A point selection system is included in the application forms. Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities, or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review, and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the **"Red Clay"** Newsletter.

THE AWARDS

The award will be $300.00 per school year for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each year applied.

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to:

Mr. Dan Fisher
Chairman KSVSF Committee
6050 52ND ST N
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

1. The money is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees, and books at an accredited institution of the candidate's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant.

3. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

4. The Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the award amount to the selected students upon fulfillment of proof of registration sent to the Review Committee Chairman when it becomes available.

5. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of June of the current school year.

6. Scholarship Applications must he received by the Committee Chair on or before April 21of the current school year to be attended.

7. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

<u>Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 points</u>

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points (attach last school GPA transcript)

GPA 4.0 = 40 points
GPA 3.5 = 35 points
GPA 3.0 = 30 points
GPA 2.5 = 25 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 35 points total
Military Veteran = 15 points
Student Government = 10 points
Community related services = 5 points
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 5 points

c. Short essay (60 words) on education goals and self= 10 points

d. Financial Need. Max = 15 points (the Fund is designed to help those in need of educational financial support).

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation Application Form

(A Copy Is Enclosed in this Magazine .Please Keep For Further Reference)

Date: _____

1. Applicant Information:

Name: Last_____ First_____MI ____
Address: Street_____, City_____St___Zip_____
Home phone: AC_____/ _____/ _____E-mail address:_____
Birthdate: Day____ Month_____ Year_____

2. Sponsor Information (Khe Sanh Veteran. Inc. Member):
Name: Last _____First_____
Relationship to applicant _____
Branch of service_____
Unit served at Khe Sanh _____Dates_____

3. School Information:
School name: _____
School Address: Street _____,City_____St__ Zip Code _____
Phone number: AC_____/_____/_____
Curriculum/intended course of study _____
School year to be funded _____

4. Applicant Personal History
a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, offices held, etc)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. List school honors, prizes, community activities participated in, military service, volunteer service to community, church, or government.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. ENCLOSE THIS APPLICATION FORM, A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF, GPA TRANSCRIPT, AND A BRIEF PERSONAL SUMMARY (60 WORDS) TELLING OF YOUR VOCATIONAL PLANS AND FINANCIAL NEED, ADDRESSED TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.

BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL FILLED FORMS FOR YOUR RECORDS!

I SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant Signature of KSV Parent, Grandparent, or Guardian

Note* APPLICATION DEADLINE June 21ST OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR

- **IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, ALL INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

APPROVED:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, KSV Scholarship Committee

_____

Thomas Eichler, President KSV

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS ON MEMORIAL DAY ACROSS THE COUNTRY

KHE SANH VETERAN CLIFF TREESE LEADS MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Armed Forces Day was celebrated in East Penn Township by dedicating the veterans' monument which was removed from the community center to Marvin Gardens by student Hal Resh as a senior project.

The Gardens Park is along Route 895, the main highway through the township. The monument now stands as a beautiful entrance for people entering the township. A car and motorcycle cruise that had been scheduled to precede the dedication was cancelled because of the possibility of rain. The American Legion Riders of Slatington Post 16, founded three years ago, did ride up to participate in the dedication. **Cliff Treese, USMC retired, a veteran wounded in the Khe Sanh Siege, trucked his 1978 Malibu from Florida to lead the cruise. His arm swings freely both back and forth with the damage to the elbow and he raises his shirt to show the scar near his waist where he was sewn back together. Treese said he was nearly cut in half. He is a native of Allentown.**

Flags, which are lighted and will fly day and night, were raised by Ori Handwerk for the POW flag and Bernie Dugan for the United States flag. Both are members of the Riders. National Guard Unit A Co. 228th BSB of Bethlehem formed an honor guard during the flag raising and singing of the National Anthem. Harold Resh, Hal's father opened the program by introducing Supervisor William Schwab, who was master of ceremonies. Schwab thanked Hal Resh and his family, acknowledged the volunteers who were "everywhere" and the road crew who helped with the landscaping. He said they were recognizing the veterans' service all over again because it had been done at the original dedication at the community center.

Resh went to the supervisors and asked for permission and land to move the monument when the property where it stood was sold by Dinkey Church. We old folks would have said it couldn't be done but young people can do anything," he said. The American Legion Riders donated the flags and flag poles, said Schwab. He concluded by thanking the four veterans in attendance and Hal (Resh Jr.). Resh said he had been taking care of the monument at its former site when he found the land had been sold and the monument was to be knocked down. Because his grandfather's name, Albert S. Wilk, is included, he said, "Absolutely it means a lot to me. It is safe now. It is on township property and will not be moved again."

Wilk was in World War II with the 7th Armored Division He said the monument was taken down in 30 days and stored in the family barn until it could be restored. Stone mason Larry Arndt was hired to put the puzzle back together beginning in fall 2008. Resh thanked 38 people listed in the program who helped in addition to the volunteers. When the township said it could be placed at Marvin Gardens it was considered a fine place. The monument was pressure washed before being sealed. Pencor donated the money raised at a dress-down day. Resh said, "I'm just so thankful this is finished."

He read the names of veterans on the monument, though Joan Frank had asked if she could read her husband's name, Frank "Nick" Frank. There are 14 from WW I and 62 from World War II, four of whom had died in battle. State Senator David Argall said he had read about the monument in the TIMES NEWS but had not realized the scope of the project. "Why keep these memories alive," he asked, and then gave the reason. He had been in Germany and saw where the Berlin Wall had been torn down. We drove through the Brandenburg Gate. Now it is no big deal. I asked a cab driver what it was like and he said, 'I have a whole new life,'" Argall said. That freedom is due to the veterans. He congratulated all of the armed services for the "amazing project." President Denise Reeser of the American Legion Riders said she was the daughter of a veteran and it was an honor to be at the dedication. She called for a moment of silence to honor all in the Armed Forces.

Hal Resh Jr. did a near impossible task. With the support of his family, rebuilding the monument was a "job well done," said Reeser. She called for a round of applause for Resh. Members of the Na-

tional Guard placed wreaths at the monument. Taps" was played by Henry Long, a bugler with the United Veterans' Organization of Lehighton.

Nancy Resh, Hal's mother, said, "He's amazing. I'm proud of him. He did a great job. It's his grandfather who gave him the initiative."

His sister, Amanda, provided both the opening and closing prayers and, as her senior project at Lehighton High School created the program which includes a history of the project, 26 photographs and a list of the names on the monument. In the opening prayer, she said, "Thank you for the men and women who are fighting for us now."

REMEMBER THIS DAY

By Jerry Giles CO KILO CO 3/9
Submitted By Hank Melanson

I read a news release regarding the astronauts working on the Hubble space telescope and came across this quote: "My friend Leonidas has a couple of words for you guys that are appropriate right now," shuttle commander Scott Altman told the spacewalkers, jokingly referring to the ancient Spartan king. "Remember this day, men, for it will be yours for all time." King Leonidas is said to have died in a battle in 480 B.C. alongside a force of 300 men who held off the Persian army.

The "Remember this day, men, for it will be yours for all time", seemed so appropriate for our journey through Vietnam. For us it was not only just one day but a series of days, weeks, months and for the fortunate too few; a time that will be remembered for all time. "This Day" was April 30th for many, will be May 20th for too many and will be July 4th for many others. After I left Kilo another 'day for Kilo', was Valentine's Day in '68 on Valentine's Ridge.

Before I joined Kilo there was another battle on July 4th, 66 that is another 'day for Kilo' to remember. I'm embarrassed to say to family and friends how much time I spend reliving my days with Kilo – the good, great, bad, and ugly days. Tonight I'm sitting here with music from the 60's playing in my headphones and drifting off to Vietnam. Simon and Garfunkel just played "The Sound of Silence" which Spanky reminded me a few years ago was part of the only record John Krohn had for his record player purchased on Okinawa in January 67. John's "Day for all time" was May 26th. After making it through 881S and Hill 70, an NVA mortar round found his fighting hole just behind the Gunny and me. One of John's first questions he asked me at a reunion was: "Who in the hell stole my record player?" Evidently it was not sent home with his personal belongings. I'm guessing that 'others' in the Headquarters group enjoyed that one record for some time after John was evacuated.

Henry Rose's "day" likely was May 20th as he found himself and his rocket team as the point squad for Kilo leading up the narrow trail to Hill 70. (That happened when we were ordered by battalion to reverse our route of march and "Get our#####on top of Hill 70 – NOW!". So Henry, instead of bringing up the rear became point man with a rocket rather than an M-16. Interesting picture.) Henry was fortunate enough to have passed through the ambush zone and recall looking down the trail and watching grenades sail back and forth through the early evenings hours.

For Orville it was April 30th and he, "Mad Dog" was going to 'take Hill 881S' by himself – if necessary – until I ordered him off the hill. Orville was not impressed or pleased.

For Stew it was also April 30th as he had the "honor" of being the first Kilo Marine wounded on the hill.

For Spanky it was the 'days' of 20 -21 May as he struggled throughout the night taking care of Kilo Marines though he was wounded five times. Typical of corpsman, Spanky still, to this day, believes he should have stayed on the hill the next day to "take care of my Marines" rather than being medevaced.

For Art Gennaro the Day was April 30th. He had been point man but for the assault on Hill 881S he was the 11th man in his squad to crest the hill. All those forward of him were killed or seriously wounded.

For Bob Purro it was April 30th and May 20th. Wounded on Hill 881S "Little Joe" returned in time to join Kilo on the afternoon of May 20th only to be wounded again that night.

For Salty, like Orville, it was likely April 30th as he and Sgt Butterworth crested 881S with leading elements of the 2nd platoon only to discover that they were now alone. Frustrated and with Butterworth now wounded they retired from the hill.

For Ray Felle it was the battle for Valentine's Ridge on February 14th with brave Marines poorly led and families left to wonder about their loved ones for two long weeks.

The stories could go on and on. They are our stories. My request, Remember these days with pride for they are ours for all time." And, if you can, do as Salty recently did, go to the Travelling Wall and say a prayer of respect and love for the brothers of Kilo that did not return.
Semper Fidelis, Kilo 6

Ran across this story and was trying to confirm. I did not see this Marine listed in Rev Rays book, but I may have overlooked it. If correct, he needs to be added to those Heros who died in regards to Khe Sanh.

FROM THE DAILY ADVERTISER



ABBEVILLE - The Abbeville Cultural and Historical Alliance (Museum & Art Gallery) will add three Silver Star recipients to its Wall of Valor exhibit on Saturday to honor war veterans receiving military service medals for gallantry in battle.

Added to the list are Sgt. 1st Class Ludwest J. Bouillion (Korea-U.S. Army), Lance Cpl. Howard C. Williams (Vietnam-USMC) and Capt. Osborne K. LeBlanc (WWII-USMC). The exhibit includes pictures of the veterans and information on their citations.

The museum, located in the Vermilion Parish Veterans Memorial Building, developed the exhibit in 2007 honoring nine Vermilion Parish war veterans. With the assistance of retired Brigadier General Robert LeBlanc, the permanent display was assembled to honor Vermilion Parish war veterans who received the Army Silver Star, Distinguished Service Cross and Navy Cross medals. These honors rank just below the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Veterans honored in 2007 were: Silver Star recipients Cpl. Henry Mack Creswell (WWII- USMC), Pfc Edward J. LeBlanc (WWII-Army), T5G Jonas D. Nunez (WWII -Army), Capt. Shelton C. Picard (WWII-Army), SP4 Farrell J. Vice (Vietnam-Army) and SP4 Donald R. Wadlington (Vietnam-Army). Navy Cross recipients Sgt. Richard F. Abshire (Vietnam-USMC) and 2nd Lt. Conrad C. Derouen (WWII-USMC), Distinguished Service Cross recipient 1st Lt. Joseph Verbis LaFleur (WWII-USAAC/Chaplain).

In addition to the exhibit honoring the valor award recipients, a Book of Remembrance is also on display. This book includes the names of Vermilion Parish veterans serving in World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Visitors are encouraged to offer additions and corrections to the information listed and to submit photographs of veterans from these wars.

WILLIAMS, HOWARD C. (KIA) Citation:

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) to Howard C. Williams (2384892), Lance Corporal, U.S. Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as a Rifleman with Company A, First Battalion, First Marines, FIRST Marine Division, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam.

In the early morning hours of 8 July 1968, during Operation SCOTLAND II in Quang Tri Province, Company A was counterattacking a large North Vietnamese Army force which had penetrated the Marines' defensive perimeter on Hill 689. Informed that one platoon was pinned down by intense automatic weapons fire delivered from an enemy occupied bunker, Lance Corporal Williams and another Marine unhesitatingly volunteered to destroy the position with light antitank assault weapons. Disregarding his own personal safety, Lance Corporal Williams fearlessly commenced maneuvering

across the fire- swept terrain toward the hostile emplacement when the enemy suddenly pinpointed his position and attempted to halt his attack with hand grenades and a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire.

Ignoring the hostile rounds impacting near him, he resolutely continued his determined assault and, fearlessly exposing himself to the intense fire, employed his weapon with maximum effectiveness, silencing the hostile fire and killing approximately eight North Vietnamese soldiers.

While attempting to withdraw from the hazardous area and rejoin his squad, Lance Corporal Williams was mortally wounded by enemy fire. His bold initiative and resolute determination inspired all who observed him and were instrumental in his company ejecting the hostile force from the Marines' perimeter. By his courage, aggressive fighting spirit and unwavering devotion to duty, Lance Corporal Williams upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

Home Town: Gueydan, Louisiana

FIRST CASUALTY FROM OTTAWA COUNTY KILLED IN VIETNAM

By Dick Mullins

William L. Matthews Jr., a Port Clinton native and PCHS graduate of the class of 1966, followed his life-long dream to be a Marine just like his father who fought in the South Pacific battles of WWII.

Bill enlisted in the United States Marine Corps immediately following high school. The Marine Corps trained Bill for combat and to be a wireman in Khe Sanh, Viet Nam, now part of the illustrious Marine Corps History. Khe Sanh was involved in a continuous bombing of the base and surrounding hills for the "77 Day Siege". Most of Bill's time in Khe Sanh was spent at the combat base. He was supposed to rotate within 30 days with other 3rd battalion 26 Marines wireman on the surrounding hills of Khe Sanh. The hill that Bill eventually went to was called Hill 881 South.

With the start of the siege, January 20, 1968, it made it impractical for unnecessary trips from the Khe Sanh base to the outpost hills. It was during this period that Khe Sanh was under siege by a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) force which reached a peak of more than 30,000, or six times the number of US Marines which were garrisoned there. Logistical support by ground had become impossible due to the concentration of NVA forces and the monsoons washing bridges away. Logistical support by air also became so hazardous that only the plight of the Marines and the President's order to 'Hold Khe Sanh' could justify the terrible losses of aircraft encountered in re-supply attempts.

Several C-130s and C-123's were destroyed on Khe Sanh's airstrip while attempting to bring in the supplies required to 'Hold Khe Sanh.' The enemy siege became so tight that C-130s were finally prevented from landing and were forced to resort to paradropping the supplies, some of which fell to earth outside the perimeter of Khe Sanh and became sustenance for the enemy.

Helicopters still had to brave the heavy mortar, artillery, rocket and automatic weapons fire to carry the critical supplies from Khe Sanh to the surrounding outposts. The losses of helicopters in the attempt became so numerous it was obvious a less costly method had to be developed if the outposts were to be held.

An imaginative plan, the "Supergaggle," was developed to re-supply the beleaguered outposts by helicopter from Dong Ha. The plan had one very serious drawback - the heavy monsoon weather prevented VFR (visual flight rules) through the high hazardous terrain between Dong Ha and Khe Sanh. Another detrimental factor was the Khe Sanh TACAN (tactical air navigation) and GCA (ground controlled radar approach) facilities were inoperative most of the time due to constant enemy bombardment.

The plan was a bold one. Fully aware of the aeronautical skill required and the hazards that would be involved, the courageous pilots of HMM-364 a unit called the "Purple Foxes" readily accepted this tremendous challenge. Through their valiant efforts, and only through their efforts, were the outposts around Khe Sanh sustained and provided with the

means of holding the area and maintaining constant surveillance of the enemy.

Finally about mid-March during the siege, thanks to the "SuperGaggle", Bill was to relieve his fellow wireman on hill 881 South. He made it through the official (January 20 through April 9th) days of the 77 day Siege. He was about to leave the Hill 881 South when the NVA made a last big go at the hill, a mortar round ended his life on the 15th of April. Bill's name along with 45 other "Warriors of Hill 881 South" are on a plaque dedicated at the National Marine Corps Museum in Quantico, Virginia on November 10th of 2006. No one in Bill's family knew of this dedication until recently. A member of Bill's family, Dick Mullins, Bill's cousin and also a Marine, saw a lonely post on a Khe Sanh Veterans web sight that simply said " KIA". Dick opened the post, it read "L/Cpl William L. Matthews Jr. KIA 15 Apr. 1968 RIP Earl." Dick emailed Earl and asked him how he knew of his cousin Bill. Earl Huse was a fellow wireman and a friend from the Khe Sanh Combat Base. More than likely according to Cpl Earl Huse, Bill was his replacement on Hill 881 South. Earl showed Dick the web sight for the "Warriors of Hill 881 South", and now the entire family knows.

Earl has never forgotten his friend and "Brother" from Khe Sanh. Dick Mullins thought the city of Port Clinton should also know about the first casualty from Ottawa County killed in Viet Nam, L/Cpl William L Matthews Jr. died as a very proud Marine, and "A Warrior on Hill 881 South .

ARROW OF DEATH

TIME MAGAZINE
May 12 2009

Forced to rationalize defeat after defeat in South Viet Nam, the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese army have been desperately searching for a major military or psychological victory. They have lately been emboldened in the search by highly exaggerated reports from their commanders in the South, who often multiply the number of U.S dead by ten or 15 in order to please their bosses up North.

The Communists have massed troops in unusually large numbers in and around the Demilitarized Zone, have directly threatened the provincial capital of Quang Tri and even the ancient Vietnamese capital of Hue 32 miles to the south. In an area where their strength is great, they gambled on a set battle with the U.S. Marines. Last week they came off second best in one of the war's bloodiest series of battles

In a valley near Khe Sanh in the extreme northwest tip of South Viet Nam, only eight miles from the Laotian border and twelve miles south of the DMZ, North Vietnamese commanders thought that they had found a tactical situation that somewhat resembled Dien bien phu, where they inflicted the decisive defeat on the French in 1954. Before the Communists discovered that they, and not the U.S. Marines, were to share the fate of the French, several fierce battles were fought up and down hills so worthless that they had only numbers (representing elevation in meters above sea level), not names.

In a Korea-like seesaw of hand-to-hand combat, two battalions of Marines took 1,000 casualties: nearly 200 dead and 800 wounded. The cost to Hanoi was 1,200 dead and countless wounded among the North's freshest, best-trained troops.

The Strategy. The terrain looked promising to the North Vietnamese. Near Khe Sanh, a shaft of the Ho Chi Minh trail comes out of Laos, headed by three hills that form an arrow. Hill 861 is the tip, aimed east into the heart of troubled Quang Tri province, around which some 35,000 Communist troops are drawn. Hill 881 North and Hill 881 South form the arrow's flukes.

An area of choice coffee plantations and twelve-foot-high elephant grass, the Khe Sanh Valley was defended by a company of U.S. Marines guarding its airstrip and three companies of South Vietnamese in the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei. The North Vietnamese, hidden from air observation by monsoon clouds and rain, had stealthily and expertly moved in through Laos and fortified the three hills into a vast redoubt for at least two regiments of the 325th NVA Division.

The twelve-day-long battle began when a five-man U.S. forward-observer team went up Hill 861 for a look; only one man came back alive. Two Marine platoons that followed were stopped at the base of the hill by heavy fire. With that, Marine Commander Lieut. General Lewis Walt pulled out all

the stops, ordered two battalions into action.

The Army's big 105-mm. and 155-mm. guns swung round to zero in on the enemy hilltops. Marine jets began flying sortie after sortie with 1000-lb. and 2,000-lb. bombs and napalm, eventually dropped more than 1,000 tons on the North Vietnamese. From the outset the Marine strategy was to take the hills at any cost, denying the enemy the killing high ground that would control the entire Khe Sanh area. Hill 861. The first hill the Marines charged was 861.

They reached the top but could not hold it under heavy fire from the entrenched Communists, who refused to break and run as they have so often done in Viet Nam once U.S. troops closed with them. The Marines withdrew and let the air and artillery knock off the top of the hill, blasting away foliage and great chunks of earth and rock. After that, the Marine tactic became, as Lieut. Colonel Gary Wilder explained, "to use just enough Marines to fix a target, then pull back and use our ordnance."

The lethal rain of ordnance that they called in worked on Hill 861; two days later the Marines took it without difficulty. The enemy dead were larger and better fed than usual, and their uniforms were new khaki or tiger suits. Some even wore steel helmets, and many had been using high-powered sniper rifles with scopes.

One battalion of Marines then moved toward Hill 881 South, the other toward 881 North. Both hills had been mercilessly shelled, bombed and burned off, and Wilder's 3rd Battalion moved up the steep slopes of 881 South, fired on only by stray snipers. By early afternoon, one company was moving up a draw to the summit itself when the North Vietnamese struck.

Protected from the bombing in their log-roofed bunkers, the Communists had let the Marines advance into their very midst. Popping out of spider holes and bunkers everywhere, they opened up a murderous crossfire. Those Marines caught out in the open were cut to pieces by small-arms fire, grenades and mortars. One Marine's canteen, found later on the battlefield, had six bullet holes in it. Pinned down, the Americans heard the North Vietnamese calling out in English: "Put on your helmets, Marines; we are coming after you!"

It was several hours before the Marines could shoot their way back down the hill, able to carry with them their wounded but not their dead. Fifty Marines had been killed, another 150 wounded. All the next day the jets streaked in, backed up by 6-525 whose bomb clusters turned hills into volcanoes as they raked along the Laotian border and the DMZ to seal off the area. Next day, Hill 881 South was a blasted moonscape of stumps and craters; the Vietnamese finally withdrew, and the Marines at last claimed the summit and their dead.

A Cold Rain. The northern peak of 881 proved nearly as difficult for Lieut. Colonel Earl ("Pappy") DeLong's 2nd Battalion. Halfway up the slope, the Marines ran into heavy fire from bunkers, and bedded down. A cold rain blew up during the night, and just before dawn the North Vietnamese came charging down from the summit, penetrating a company perimeter. Jerking on their boots, the Marines repulsed the attackers. But 28 Marines were killed and 61 wounded.

Once again, the Marines waited and watched while air and artillery slashed at the Red bunkers dug in above them, reducing the hilltop to a bare burnt knob. A captured prisoner warned that the Communists planned to hit DeLong's line again that night. Instead they hit the Lang Vei Special Forces camp, cutting through its defenses and blowing it up with satchel charges; they killed 39 of its defenders, including two Americans.

The Marines listened helplessly to the attack, unable to leave their own positions to aid. It turned out to be the last North Vietnamese thrust near Khe Sanh. When the Marines stormed up 881 North, twelve days after the battle for the valley had been joined, the Communists had withdrawn into Laos.

The Marines counted 575 enemy bodies on the three hills and estimated that air and artillery had taken at least another 600 Communist lives—a "tremendous" toll, said General William Westmoreland, who visited the battlefield. "I don't think the battle is necessarily over," he added. "I anticipate further fighting in the area."
General Walt helicoptered into Khe Sanh several times in the course of the fighting and came under

fire himself— to the extent that he was once forced to dive into a foxhole. The series of battles constituted, he said, the seventh time since the February Tet truce that his Marines had stopped an enemy offensive aborning. From the Laos-supplied arrow of Khe Sanh, the Communists would have had a straight shot east across Quang Tri province. By vigorously denying them that shot, the Marines may well have frustrated an even larger invasion directly southward across the DMZ.

I GET MAIL

I had recent contact from editor of **SEABEE** magazine, a publication of CEC/Navy Facility Engineering Command. The following link was sent over by the editor showing a Former Marine and Khe Sanh Veteran Marion Stuckey, touring in Viet Nam.

One of Marion Sturkey's photos shows the remains of Liberty Bridge at Song Thu Bon River. The caption indicated that it was built by United States Marines. I had to write and correct that caption. Yes, the Marines supplied the defense perimeter but in 1967 my battalion, USNMCB-4, built the **"Liberty Bridge,"** the longest timber bridge in Asia (See my attached photos) but it's all gone now. It was 4 times the size of the Kwai Bridge in Thailand; seen in the 1957 film, Bridge on the River Kwai.



Marion Sturkey's photo with caption that appeared in the Heritage Press.

Downstream from An Hoa towards Hoi An, the Marines had constructed the huge "Liberty Bridge" across the river. Now, over a quarter-century later, Sturkey stands among the remnants of the bridge pilings. Nothing else remains.



A BRIDGE IS BORN





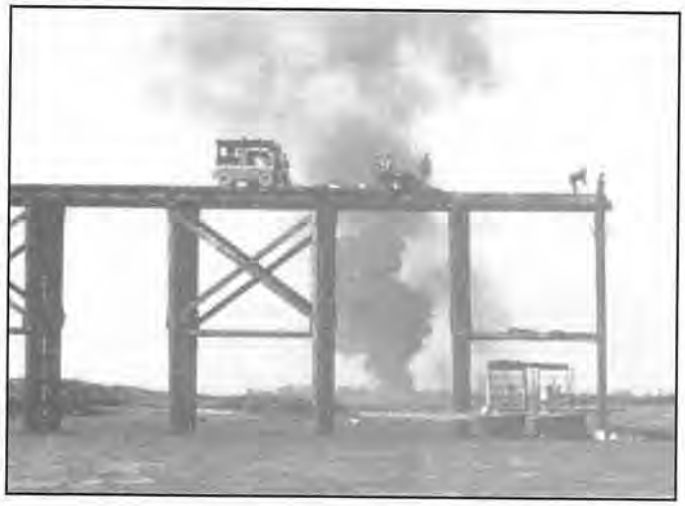

THE VC WERE NEVER FAR AWAY



"PAPPY" LOOKS THE SITUATION OVER



MCB FOUR'S "JOHN HENRY'S"

POETRY

He's Just 18

Posted by Mike Fishbaugh

He's just 18
Really just a boy
He's been sent out to fight
The whole world's war

His innocence was lost
Nineteen and forty-three
Then came the bullets
And his body bag was free

He's just 18
Really just a boy
First came Korea
Then that Vietnam War

His first few hours
Nineteen and seven-one
There was blood on his hands
His friends both lost and won

He's just 18
Sent to a Gulf war
There was a city of Kuwait
Off some distant shore

In a sea of deserts
He was fighting people from there
But he's dying with them now
In darkened oil fields right here

He's just 18
Really just a boy
Sent away from home
Gonna fight a war

In a city of Baghdad
For the price of a gun
He gave it all he had
Then came a friendly's bomb

With just a rifle and a bayonet
Just a bullet in a gun
Now there's body bags filled
Has he lost or has he won

The plane rides home

Fly to or from
The only cost is freedom
For a body bag or the mind of a son

His innocence is lost
His innocence is gone
There's blood on his hands now
His friends have both lost and won

(unknown)

DEATHS IN THE NEWS

The Colorado Springs man who designed the black and white POW/MIA flag flown everywhere from federal buildings to Harley-Davidson fenders died Thursday at his home



Newt Heisley was 88 Newt wanted no hoopla. All he wants is a celebration," his fiancee, Donna R. Allison, said That's what he'll get on Flag Day, June 14, from 1-4 p.m. at the American Legion Post 38 in Security. The public is invited. He will be entombed at Shrine of Remembrance next to his wife of 61years, Margaret "Bunny", who died in 2005

The prolific image he sketched in pencil in 1971 has the silhouette of a man under a guard tower and behind barbed wire. It's a symbolic reminder that not every soldier returned from the war in Vietnam.

The flag flew over the White House when resident Ronald Reagan marked the first POW/MIA Recognition Day. Biker groups adopted the flag, tattooing the image on their bodies, patching it on jackets and flying it from their bumpers.

Newt Heisley sported the image on his hat, lapel and license plate "Everyone knew its Newt's flag," Allison said. "He would personally sign them for people, that's what he would do for years .He never dreamed it would be a national icon. He was simply "the ad guy" around town.

He was just working for an ad agency. He came up with the rendition of the flag," said his son, James Heisley. "At first he was almost embarrassed, but he got kind of used to it. It defined his life.

Newt Heisley was proud of what the flag meant. He was a C-46 transport pilot in World War II in the Pacific."It was typical to present it in black-and-white and his idea was to go back and do some color," James Heisley said. They came and looked at it and said, 'That's it.'

Newt Heisley worked in advertising for 25 years in big Manhattan agencies before moving to Colorado Springs to start an his own advertising firm "He decided there had to be greener pastures," James Heisley said. "He almost took a job in Bermuda, but my mom was a little leery of living on an island. They said, 'Let's head West and see what we can see.' They were on the way to California and pulled into a hotel room in Colorado Springs in the dark. In the morning he saw Pikes Peak and said, 'Bunny, we aren't going any further.'"

He retired from Heisley Design and Advertising in 1987."He didn't expect to get any recognition. If he had a nickel for every time that image appeared, he and I'd be multi-multi millionaires," James Heisley said. "Newt always said it was better as public image." He is also is survived by another son, Jeffrey N., who modeled for the silhouette on the flag; daughters-in-law Susan Heisley and Deborah Heisley; and granddaughter Sara Heisley.

History of the National League of POW/MIA Families' POW/MIA Flag

In 1971, Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife and

member of the National League of Families, recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs. Prompted by an article in the Jacksonville, Florida Times-Union, Mrs. Hoff contacted Norman Rivkees, Vice President of Annin & Company which had made a banner for the newest member of the United Nations, the People's Republic of China, as a part of their policy to provide flags to all United Nations members states.

Mrs. Hoff found Mr. Rivkees very sympathetic to the POW/MIA issue, and he, along with Annin's advertising agency, designed a flag to represent our missing men. Following League approval, the flags were manufactured for distribution. On March 9, 1989, an official League flag, which flew over the White House on 1988 National POW/MIA Recognition Day, was installed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress.

In a demonstration of bipartisan Congressional support, the leadership of both Houses hosted the installation ceremony.

The League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda where it will stand as a powerful symbol of national commitment to America's POW/MIAs until the fullest possible accounting has been achieved for U.S. personnel still missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the League's POW/MIA flag and designated it "as the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation".

The importance of the League's POW/MIA flag lies in its continued visibility, a constant reminder of the plight of America's POW/MIAs. Other than "Old Glory", the League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House, having been displayed in this place of honor on National POW/MIA Recognition Day since 1982. With passage of Section 1082 of the 1998 Defense Authorization Act during the first term of the 105th Congress, the League's POW/MIA flag will fly each year on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day on the grounds or in the public lobbies of major military installations as designated by the Secretary of the Defense, all Federal national cemeteries, the national Korean War Veterans Memorial, the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the White House, the United States Postal Service post offices and at the official offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense and Veteran's Affairs, and Director of the Selective Service System.

VIETNAM VET FINDS CLOSURE IN RETURN TO VIETNAM

By Jill Moon
The Telegraph

ALTON - Vietnam War veteran Michael Eugene Weber recently revisited the country that broke him, but this time he came home whole. On Memorial Day, Weber thought back on the more than 20 years he spent in the U.S. Army, his harrowing days of service and his recent trip back to Vietnam to help build a school.

Weber graduated from East Alton-Wood River High School in 1969 and joined the Army so that he could further his education. But the education he received was not exactly what he planned. While in the service, Weber went to Northwestern Oklahoma State and received a bachelor's degree in business administration, but he also received lessons in humanity in Vietnam that he would realize later.

"I volunteered for Vietnam," said Weber, who retired as a sergeant major and who recently returned from a sort of pilgrimage to the Southeast Asian country. "I thought I was (in the Army) for a reason, so I volunteered. I was a young 19-year-old from Illinois - like I knew what the world was all about."
Today, the highly educated and militarily decorated Alton man is involved with the Vietnam Veterans Restoration Program through the Veterans Administration Hospital, where he has attended veterans' group sessions for the last six years.
Vietnam Veterans Restoration is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that raises funds and

builds schools in Vietnam, among other things. Weber returned to Vietnam with a team from the group, and they helped build a school while they were there.

"I think I've always wanted to go back to Vietnam," Weber said. "I felt I left some doors open I needed to close."

For years after his service in Vietnam, Weber suffered from nightmares so intense that his wife, Peggy, would wake him cautiously with a broom handle, in case he woke up swinging.

Weber was in Vietnam for less than 18 months before a Viet Cong mine blew up his tank, killing one of the soldiers on the tank's four-man team that day. Weber belonged to the First Battalion 77th Armored Division in the Demilitarized Zone, up north in Quang Tri Province in South Vietnam. When he entered the conflict, he was an E4 specialist, but Weber became a sergeant by the time he left Vietnam in 1971.

His unit reopened Khe Sanh and Lang Vei. The war was fought in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia from 1959 to 1975."I had more good times than bad. It's just when the bad times came, it was real bad," Weber recalled.

"I had a lot of bravado at the time. It's not until years later it comes back to visit you."

Weber was wounded twice in Vietnam and received two Purple Hearts, as well as a Bronze Star for valor. Even getting shot at did not deter the young soldier from extending his tour of duty for six months and re-enlisting for six years during his tour in Vietnam.

But the mine that blew up his tank ended his tour just a week before he was coming home to East Alton, where he was born and raised."I was sitting in the commander cupola. I always had a flak jacket under me and my legs on the gun shield. If I had my legs down ....." he recalled before quieting the thought. The driver died, while the two side gunners survived.

"Still today, I don't remember their names," said Weber, who ended up with metal shrapnel through-out the back of one of his legs. "It would come out over the years."

The Army sent Weber to Da Nang for medical attention, then to Japan, and finally to Fort Lewis in Washington state. The whole thing took less than a week."Interestingly, when I came home, I was pretty proud and would wear my uniform," He said. "But it didn't take long to realize no one really gave a rat's ass.

Things weren't going well in the war. I began thinking, 'Gee whiz, what did I do?'"

He admits he was not a very good soldier after that while stationed in Fort Hood, Texas, and he wanted nothing to do with tanks. That's when the future environmental science doctorate got into explosive ordnance disposal."EOD kept me on sane footing," said Weber, who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. "I believe if I hadn't stayed in the service, I would not have done well. The discipline, focus and organization carried over into civilian life."

In 1983, Weber developed and wrote curriculum for a training program on how to defeat an improvised nuclear device; he has been published repeatedly in journals and magazines. He received a master's degree in environmental science from Chadwick University in Alabama and his doctorate from Loyola University in New Orleans.

When Weber was 38 years old, he woke up one day and decided to get out of the military."It was the biggest mistake of my life," he said. "Twenty-four, 25 years later (after Vietnam), I start having issues because of Vietnam."

Through his involvement with the Vietnam Veterans Restoration Program, he became part of 10-member Team 24 to Vietnam with veterans from all over the United States. Team 24 met in California and flew to Hanoi for a trip that lasted from March 27 to April 22, with nearly three weeks in Vietnam. "I'm glad I didn't go by myself on these tours," Weber said. Team 24 visited Vietnam during the 50th anniversary of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and met the Vietnamese general who created the covert military route to Laos. The same general also helped design the Ho Chi Minh Highway, a two-lane blacktop road from Khe Sanh to the end of the A Shau Valley

near Saigon.

While visiting the North Vietnamese prison dubbed the "Hanoi Hilton," where U.S. Sen. John McCain spent time as a prisoner of war, Weber became incensed when he looked up from the prison courtyard to see a Hilton Hotel."The first three days in Hanoi, the anxiety was pretty high," he admitted. "This was so inappropriate of the Hilton (Hotels). I was ready to pack my bags and leave. This didn't help."

Another thing that bothered Weber was what the Vietnamese call "Relics of the American War," which included a monument made from downed U.S. military aircraft. The Vietnamese version of the war in its military museum and on "Hamburger Hill" also agitated Weber, but he stuck it out.

"I did not go there to ask for forgiveness or give forgiveness," he said. "Any animosity I had for North Vietnam disappeared years ago."When he visited youngsters in a Vietnamese school for children with birth defects caused by Agent Orange and injuries because of unexploded ordnance, his emotions began to change.

"We didn't know Agent Orange caused cancer," he said. "At the time, we thought it was just two ingredients used in agriculture, and it worked the best."

Then, Team 24 went to Hue, about 20 kilometers off the coast of the South China Sea. They spent the weekends in Hue but worked during the week in the A Shau Valley, building a school for children ages 3 through 5. Weber gave Frisbees and about 30 piccolos to the children for whom the school was being built and spent much time with them and the chool's teachers.

"My granddaughter is 5 years old, so that's another reason it was special to be building this school," he said. After Hue, the team went to A Luoi, which is 3 kilometers from Hamburger Hill. Weber climbed Hamburger Hill, becoming one of 13 Americans to do so since the end of the war, he said. Eventually, Weber did his final act of closure, although he had performed several small steps throughout Team 24's trip.

He took his jungle fatigue pants from the Vietnam War and buried them in the jungle, where he put a small U.S. flag on the burial site."There's a whole bunch of reasons why people go back," he said. "I love the children. A lot of issues I had, once I was there with these kids, (the issues) just went away. I didn't go back for anything other than closure and the school project. It was better than being on a tour bus, and interacting with the Vietnamese people was fantastic."The Webers will be married 37 years in August. Their son, Michael E. Weber Jr., is married to Erin, and they live in Alton with their daughter, Kaitlin, 5.

REMEMBER HIGH COURAGE BLOODY HILLS OF VIETNAM

Cobb H. Hammond
Memphis Post May 24, 2009

Forty years ago this month, soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division assaulted An Bia mountain -- better known as Hamburger Hill -- for 10 grueling days.

Two years earlier, in May 1967, men of the 3rd Marine Regiment and elements of the 9th Marines fought to claim a lesser-known, but no less contested series of mountaintops. These bloodied hilltops were known only by their height in meters -- Hills 861, 881 South and 881 North.

The desperate battle, which commenced in late April and ended unceremoniously May 11, became known as the "Khe Sanh Hill Fights."

On Memorial Day weekend, when we commemorate those Americans who gave their lives for freedom in all our country's wars, we should remember the almost 170 Marines -- including one Memphian -- who died in the battle for the Khe Sanh Hills.

The three hilltops were defended by two regiments of the North Vietnamese Army, better known as the NVA. They had had approximately six months to build the bunker and trench fortifications that overlooked the growing Khe Sanh combat base several miles away.

The NVA had every intention of defending their strategic vantage point. Their interlocking set of defenses were barely noticeable to the naked eye

unless one stumbled into them. Hundreds of bunkers were constructed with much precision for the steep defense that lay astride the Laotion border, allowing easy re-supply for the necessities of battle.

As Marines advanced, sometimes rifle companies abreast, murderous enfilade fire would pour down from light and heavy machine guns from bunkers with up to six feet of overhead protection, seemingly impervious to American supporting fire, except by direct hits from 1,000-pound bombs.

The terrain the leathernecks faced was cloaked by 100-foot-high jungle canopy with dense foliage below, and a combination of undergrowth and vines so thick that it was difficult for machetes to hack through. Elephant grass, 6 to 8 feet tall and razor-sharp, was prevalent. Spider holes dotted the landscape, allowing the enemy to pop up only feet away to release a barrage of fire, only to melt back into the earth. Mortars had pre-positioned fire on most of the tactical advances up the fingers and face of the hills, making the Marines' advance that more treacherous.

By May 4, after two Marine rifle companies had basically been decimated, the overall commander spread his forces to widen the attack, and unleashed the full weight of his arsenal, including B52 strikes, fire from every available artillery battery and dozens of napalm strikes.

It is at this point that the story takes on a local perspective, as a young Marine who had been born in Crenshaw, Miss., and raised in Memphis took his last breath on May 2, 1967. Cpl. Ralph V. Dye Jr. was not the only Memphian present that day, but he was the only one who gave his life for his country.

Born 50 miles south of Memphis, Ralph had lived in Memphis during his formative years and had taken a wife before the draft notice came from Uncle Sam. The Corps was his destiny, and he proudly went and served. He was struck by small-arms fire that hot, humid day, 25 years, two months and one day after he was given the gift of life. Ralph died while attempting to rescue someone in his squad who had been hit earlier.

As the battle continued, heavy, intermittent fog in many cases prevented helicopter fire support and extraction, as the pilots could not see who was who. As different rifle companies neared the various rests in support of engaged units, the maelstrom took on the characteristics of a meat grinder.

When the last skirmishes ended, the final toll was 168 Marines killed and more than 500 wounded, with two missing. Among the North Vietnamese enemy, 940 were killed, with possibly hundreds more killed in collapsed bunkers and in the deadly napalm strikes.

One particular Marine rifle company (Echo, 2/3) was subjected to some of the toughest fighting and exemplified their effort in valor and blood: two Navy Crosses, five Silver and six Bronze Stars and 150 Purple Hearts -- leaving about 30 physically unscarred souls from this group to fight another day. Most of these men would go on to "earn their Heart" in the following weeks and months.

None of the Marines' actions was performed in nationalistic pride, but simply to follow orders, implement the strategic plan and fight for their fellow Marines. And successful these American fighting men were.

On Memorial Day weekend, we should memorialize their sacrifice, courage and honor -- knowing that these men, most of them only 19 or 20 years old, did their duty, and died for their country's call. It was a call that only recently has been fully and legitimately appreciated.

Cobb H. Hammond of Memphis is an investment broker with Carty & Company Investments who writes on military history.

2ndLT Cannon James R Silver Star
Cpl Downing William K 19E 24 Silver Star
Capt Lyon Alfred E Silver Star
PFC Meuse John R 19E 29 Navy Cross
L/Cpl Monahan Frederick G Navy Cross
L/Cpl Womble William T 19E 34 Silver Star

TEAM VIPER 1966 KHE SANH

by Mike Fishbaugh

The following is an excerpt from "Gone Native"; a book by retired Special Forces First Sergeant

Alan G. Cornett , who served in Vietnam from 1966 to 1973. This excerpt is located in Chapter 5 from pages 74 to 79.

"Team Viper We're Hit Bad"



The next evening, Wednesday, 29 November 1966, I watched as Sgt. Russ Bott and Sgt. Willie Stark and four Vietnamese loaded into a waiting UH-1H helicopter. Their call sign was Team Viper, and their AO (area of operation) was tucked up close to Laos and North Vietnam. Everybody was camouflaged and dressed to kill.

The weather was "dog****", with rain showers, gusting winds, and a very low cloud ceiling. When the team left to be inserted, the flying weather was marginal, and I thought that the mission should have been aborted, but knowing how many people respected my opinion, I wasn't going to say a thing. I learned later that as the insertion helicopter got closer to the operational area, the higher elevation put the team right into the cloud ceiling. That forced the helicopter to weave around the mountains as the pilot tried to maintain a course to the designated LZ in the growing darkness.

The pilots could have aborted the mission, but they were under intense command pressure to insert the team. From so low a altitude the pilots made a critical navigational error, mistaking a swollen stream for a river checkpoint. When the helicopter pilots returned to base, the consensus was that they must have missed the LZ and inserted the team somewhere in Laos.

At Khe Sanh, the winds howled that night as sheets of rain blasted my tent. Command was in the **** because of potentially embarrassing political fallout of having a United States Army helicopter land operating ground forces outside the borders of South Vietnam. An honest mistake made in the midst of high-risk combat operations was being aggravated by distorted politics.

The next morning, Thursday, an Army radio-relay plane from Da Nang arrived on station and reported that the entire operational area was socked in. Team Viper had made contact with the relay and wanted to know its exact position. They had realized that they were in the wrong area, and wanted a forward air controller (FAC) to pinpoint the team's location. During the early morning the team reported a brief contact and firefight with the enemy, but broke the contact and reported that it was moving east and north.

By midmorning at Khe Sanh, the winds had died down to about twenty knots. I could see about two hundred yards, and the clouds were at two hundred feet. A FAC plane, piloted by John Flanagan and carrying a Delta recon sergeant in the backseat, left at midday to try to locate Team Viper. After some exceptional flying by the FAC, the team was pinpointed in Laos but close to the DMZ (demilitarized zone) - and in the center of a suspected North Vietnamese regiment.

On arriving back at Khe Sanh, the pilot pointed out on the operations map that Team Viper was four or five clicks northwest of where we'd thought they were. Flanagan also informed command that he had sighted numerous armed NVA around Team Viper. But the team's mistaken position on the operations map was not changed to reflect the FAC's information. The winds that night were so strong that I had to go out and secure the tent to keep it from blowing away.

Friday dawned to horrendous weather. A thirty-knot wind was blowing clouds across the Khe Sanh plateau . It was raining intermittently, but the rain was coming in horizontally due to the weather. It was extremely bad weather, and my thoughts were with Team Viper and another recon team led by Staff Sergeant St. Laurent that was also out in the storm. The radio relay plane from Da Nang had picked up a garbled radio transmission from Team Viper and understood that they had again made contact with the enemy, and in the ensuing firefight, several members of the team had been wounded.

Just prior to my learning of Team Viper's new problem, one of the Vietnamese rangers had came over to me, and asked if I would remove a cyst from his leg. I removed the cyst, and as I was suturing him

up, Master Sergeant Stamper came into the tent, and told me to get my aid bag and be ready to go at a moment's notice. At the same moment, Sgt. Irby Dyer walked into the tent, and Stamper told him that he would have to go, not me. That hurt.

The commander had decided to launch a rescue extraction. Involved were a pickup ship, a spare pickup, a command-and-control (C&C) helicopter, and two gunships. Stamper went back to the TOC to monitor the radios, and Dyer went to the helicopter pad. He was to be the belly man on the extraction helicopter. More important, he would be able to help with the wounded. I quickly finished up with the Ranger, then hurried over to listen with Stamper to the radio transmissions between the rescue ships and Russ Bott. We could only hear the C&C's portion of the radio transmission as it repeated what was being transmitted by Team Viper. The team was asking if the choppers had launched, and reported that one American (Willie Stark) was badly wounded, and that the team was unable to move.

A short time later, we heard another one-sided conversation. Team Viper was receiving sporadic fire. By then they had one seriously wounded, and two others with lesser wounds. That news was fueling our anxieties. Adding to Team Viper's problems was the fact that the rescue ship couldn't locate the team. Occasionally, the team w could hear the sounds of choppers, but they couldn't figure out which of the five helicopters they were hearing. Finally, a radio transmission was relayed back to Khe Sanh, asking if the FAC (John Flanagan) could fly out in his aircraft and pinpoint the team.

Some incredible brave flying was done that day by Flanagan. With Delta recon Sergeant Tommy Tucker outfitted in ass-kicking gear in the backseat, they took off into a vicious shearing wind. The winds at Khe Sanh were gusting to fifty knots. When Flanagan arrived in the operational area, the helicopters had only twenty minutes of fuel left. Talking to Team Viper, Flanagan recognized Russ Bott's voice immediately, and he heard the background chatter of automatic weapons and grenades exploding as a vicious firefight was in progress. Bott told Flanagan that Stark was hit bad, that the Americans had become separated from the three Vietnamese on the team, and were completely surrounded.

Flanagan told Bott to key the handset on his radio so that the FAC could home in on the signal. Guided by the signal, Flanagan overflew Team Viper's position, and Russ Bott gave him the codeword "payoff." Flanagan then told Bott to pop smoke so that he could direct the rescue ship in. Purple smoke was observed and confirmed, and Flanagan saw that the team was located in elephant grass on the crest of a small knoll. When Flanagan overflew the team's position, he drew no ground fire, so he cleared the pickup helicopter in. When a rescue helicopter came to a hover about ten feet above the team, the whole world exploded. The elephant grass parted, and from dozens of camouflaged spider holes and gun emplacements, vicious automatic weapons fire was brought to bear on the helicopter. It had been a trap, and Team Viper had been the bait.

The FAC launched a marking rocket so the gunships could pour fire into the enemy positions to protect the pickup helicopter. But the pickup helicopter rose, banked left into the air for about two hundred feet, then continued banking to the left, finally rolling over , and plunging straight down, auguring nose-first into the ground. It burst into a ball of flames as it continued to roll down the small knoll, killing the two pilots, the two door gunners, and Sgt. Irby Dyer in the process. On the second pass, the lead gunship had its fire control system shot out. That was a bad day for our Project Delta.

Back at Khe Sanh, we were catching bits and pieces of the horrible drama as it unfolded. We heard the commander order Team Viper to break up, and escape and evade. Then the helicopters transmitted that they were at critical fuel levels and returning to base. The team was being abandoned, and not by choice. It was a gut-wrenching moment, and I could see gears churning in Master Sergeant Stamper's head. He looked at me, and voiced something like "We've got to help them." I knew then that I was going to be a part of it.

Meanwhile, above Team Viper's position, Flanagan was witness to a heartbreaking moment. The last radio transmission from Russ Bott was, "FAC, please help us, we're hit bad." It was from a brave soldier that wouldn't abandon his best friend even though he had been told to do so. Alone, armed with only marking rockets, and smoke grenades,

Flanagan tried what he already knew was futile, but try he did. He expended his rockets on the active gun emplacements, and then flew a wide turn around back over the team's position. All he saw was trampled grass. He found no sign of the team. When he flew over the downed helicopter, all that he saw was a wisp of smoke rising from the charred hulk of the helicopter wreckage. There was no movement, and no sign of life. Flanagan flew back to Khe Sanh. I witnessed the hair-raising landing he preformed in a vicious fifty-knot crosswind. So many brave men.

THE FALLEN ARE THE HEART OF THIS STORY

By Robyn Adams
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

When Marine veteran Joseph F. O'Neill of Waterbury rises to represent Vietnam veterans Monday at the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, he will have 10 minutes to tell the story of what seemed like an eternity on Hill 881 South.

The Hall of Honor, an effort to collect and preserve the stories of Purple Heart recipients from all branches of the military, opened in New Windsor, N.Y., on Nov. 10, 2006. The very next day, O'Neill walked in and sat down for an interview that is now preserved digitally for others to share.

"He came in and was interested in sharing his story," said Tom Lange, coordinator of digital history at the Hall of Honor. "It lasted about 30 minutes. It is a very moving interview."

Lange wasn't on the staff when O'Neill was interviewed, but he has heard O'Neill's accounting of what happened on April 30, 1967, on Hill 881 South in Khe Sanh, not far from the border with Laos.

The hill was the site of heavy fighting. U.S. Marines battled to deny the enemy control of the hill because of its strategic firing position.

Many Marines died in that effort. O'Neill, a fire team leader, was nearly among them. He was awarded a Purple Heart for trying to retrieve Marines from another company who had been injured or killed in the battle.

"There were so many casualties that our unit was affectionately known as Medevac Mike throughout the Ninth Marines," O'Neill said.

O'Neill and another Marine from his unit — Company M, Third Battalion, Ninth Marine Regiment — volunteered to retrieve the soldiers, both living and dead.

"I had just grabbed a dead Marine by the arm when I got shot," said O'Neill, who retired in 2006 after 38 years delivering mail on Wolcott Street in Waterbury for the United States Postal Service.

O'Neill fell face down, gasping to breathe. "I gave myself up for dead. My neck was broken. I didn't know it. I couldn't breathe in or out," said O'Neill, who now delivers flowers for Margot Flower shop in Prospect.

"I thought about my mother and everyone getting bad news. There was a picture of Jesus on the kitchen wall (at home) that came toward me and I yelled, turned, got up and began walking in shock."

He was evacuated by helicopter and taken to the Naval Aid Station at Danang. A fragment of the bullet remains in his neck.

O'Neill, who was 20 at the time, was presented the Purple Heart aboard the hospital ship Repose, off the coast of Vietnam. About six months later, at age 21 he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

O'Neill prefers to talk about the Marines who died during battle, which is what he focused on in his speech. He will list the names of the 13 Marines from his unit who were killed on Hill 881 South, and speak about their actions in war. He will recite every name listed on the George Lynch Veterans Memorial Park on Thomaston Avenue in Waterbury.

1stLT Hackett David S 18E 122	Silver Star H 2/3
HN House Michael A	Silver Star M 3/9
HN Kinney Richard L 18E 125	BS w/v H 2/3
2ndLT Mitchell Joseph R 18E 125	BS w/v M 3/3
L/Cpl Morgan Michael M 18E 125	Silver Star M 3/3
Cpl Schley Robert J 18E 128	Navy Cross M 3/3
Cpl Smith Larry M 19E 1	BS w/v M 3/3
L/Cpl Whisenhunt James D 19E 1	Silver Star M 3/3
PFC Williams Dorsey B 19E 2	BS w/v M 3/3

1stLT Woodall John B 19E 2 Silver Star K 3/9

KSV CARLTON CRENSHAW REMEMBERS ON MEMORIAL DAY

by Mike Fishbaugh

Carlton was with C 1/13
Russ Armstrong was with I 3/26

The Daily Progress
By Brian McNeill
Published: May 25, 2009

SCOTTSVILLE — More than 100 veterans and family members of military casualties gathered Sunday in Scottsville to remember those sailors, soldiers, airmen and Marines who gave their lives in defense of the United States.

"We offer solemn tribute to all our comrades, wherever they may rest," said Lewis. E. Farrish, commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8169 in Scottsville. "... To you comrades who have departed, we offer our solemn salute."

Farrish led the Memorial Day service at the old Scottsville School gymnasium. The crowd sang "God Bless America," "The Star Spangled Banner" and listened as former servicemen recited a poem titled "I am a Veteran." Scottsville resident Margaret Tooley recited Johnny Cash's "That Ragged Old Flag." And nearly two dozen officials each presented a red-white-and-blue wreath.

"On behalf of the town of Scottsville, I lay this wreath in memory of those who died in the protection of freedom around the world," said Scottsville Mayor R. Stephen Phipps. Shirley Roundtree of the Fluvanna County NAACP presented a wreath on behalf of her group. "We pay homage to all our veterans — all those who died, all those who were injured and all those who are still at war," she said. "God bless them all."

In the ceremony's invocation, the Rev. Rudy Ramsey of Scottsville thanked all of the men and women who have served in the military, but particularly those who died in combat.

"They have paid the ultimate price for the freedom of this land," Ramsey said. "We don't want to take it for granted." Veteran Carlton Crenshaw of Palmyra told the crowd a couple of stories from his time as a Marine serving in Vietnam during 1967 and '68. Crenshaw told the tale of how he was one of 6,000 troops surrounded by some 35,000 Northern Vietnamese Army members at the Battle of Khe Sanh.

And he spoke about the sacrifices in Vietnam made by his friend Russ Armstrong. Armstrong's platoon walked into heavy artillery and mortar fire. The company commander, the radio operator and a third of the platoon were killed in moments. Fifteen out of 50 Marines were quickly dead, another 15 or 20 were wounded.

"The one thing we don't do is leave Marines," Crenshaw said. "Russ did what he had to do, which was basically circle the wagons — with no cover."

Armstrong pulled his wounded comrades into the center of the area and helped fend off the surrounding attackers. Armstrong took serious wounds in both legs from mortar fire, but continued to coordinate the defense throughout the night until they were rescued in the morning.

"He refused to be evacuated until every single one of his Marines was accounted for," Crenshaw said. "About 40 percent were dead."

Armstrong received the Navy Cross for his actions that day. Armstrong recuperated after 18 months and went on to college and eventually married. He died in 2007 when a truck crashed into his motorcycle.

WASHINGTONIANS CELEBRATE MEMORIAL DAY
KSV BILL JAYNE A KEYNOTE SPEAKER

By LEVI PULKKINEN
SEATTLEPI.COM STAFF

"Let no neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic."

That was Gen. John A. Logan's command in 1868, when he ordered that day in May be set aside to re-

member slain soldiers of the Union Army. Then called Decoration Day, it is now Memorial Day.

Drawing on the spirit of Logan's words, hundreds of veterans joined families and friends Monday at Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent to remember the nation's war dead. Addressing the gathered crowd, Marine Corps Lt. Col. James Stocks called those killed in service "our nation's most precious treasure."

Stocks, commander of the Marine Corps contingent at Fort Lewis, noted that combat casualties now laid to rest at the 12-year-old Kent cemetery span generations. A member of a U.S. Colored Infantry regiment during the Civil War, 2nd Lt. Jesse T. Barrick was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor having been killed in 1863. Barrick is joined at the cemetery by Sgt. 1st Class Nathan Ross Chapman, a Special Forces soldier based at Fort Lewis who became the first American to die from hostile fire early in the war in Afghanistan.

Striking a tone that would be held throughout the 90 -minute remembrance, Stocks asserted that those who died fighting abroad did so to defend liberty at home."They did not choose death, but they accepted death as the cost of these freedoms," Stocks said. "They did not value their lives more than honor, so they did not shrink from death."

The Veterans Administration-run cemetery has seen 26,000 veterans interred there since it opened in 1997. Nearly all of those survived their service before dying later in life. Between interludes of patriotic music during Monday's remembrance, speakers recognized those in the crowd who had served. One, former Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary head Virginia Carman, noted the contributions to the nation's defense made by women; in Iraq alone, Carman said, 99 servicewomen have been killed performing their duties.

Bill Jayne, a Khe Sanh Veteran and V.A. cemetery development coordinator and former Marine infantryman, noted the differing circumstances under which American soldiers, sailors and airmen have served and died. In what he called "an effort to make some sense of the place we find ourselves in," Jayne shared two stories with the crowd.

First was that of his father, who served aboard destroyers in the Pacific Theater during World War II. He then offered that of a man he never knew, a 19-year-old Marine killed during the battle of Khe Sanh.

Our Echo company brother, Joe Roble who survived the siege only to die later in his tour. Joe wrote home to his family before his death in which he says, in effect, he is willing to give his life so that others may have the rights and privileges enjoyed by his younger brother, Bill, who, sorrowfully, has also passed away.

"Joe Roble's idealism enobled us all." Our veterans, especially those who died in service, have given us a heritage to guide us in this dangerous new world

His father and other World War II vets, Jayne said, fought to save and remake the world. Per Jayne's telling, those who served in the nation's later wars fought for something more ephemeral - to allow other peoples the freedoms enjoyed in the United States.

Our world remade, saved and remade is being remade again," Jayne said. "To this new generation of heroes, we say thank you."

LONG OVERDUE HONORS TO KHE SANH VETERAN MARINES

(From Front Page)

BILLINGS - A Montana Marine received a long overdue military honor Tuesday for bravery during the Vietnam War.

Private First Class Donald A. Hossack was awarded the Silver Star Medal 42 years after serving in Vietnam. Hossack was injured numerous times in the first battle of Khe Sanh, and helped save many men in his platoon by shielding others with his body and radioing information to headquarters. He said, if he had to, he'd do it all over again.

"These are my brothers and we'll always be brothers, every marine in here," Hossack said. "It all goes by the term Semper Fi. That we're always faithful to one another."

Then PFC Hosscak was with M/3/3 in the battle on

4-30-67

55 KIA's
3 MIA's (2 recovered later)
1 Navy Cross 5 Silver Stars

Donald Hossack was just 18 years old when he led his platoon to safety after his commander was killed.

During the battle, Hossack suffered severe wounds, and was medevaced to a bomb crater. When an enemy grenade landed in the crater, he used his body to shield fellow marines from the blast.

In the end, 38 men died there that day and Donald was wounded three times different times during this battle. Sergeant Hossack said: "It a situation like that you have no regard for your personal safety you just do what ever it takes to get your fellow soldiers home alive because we are all brothers".

Despite intense pain, Hossack assumed command of the company and called for artillery strikes when he realized an enemy attack was imminent. The timing and accuracy of the strikes forced the enemy to retreat and saved the company from certain defeat. Don Hossack. Tommy Wheeler and Lester "Ray" Calhoun were all recently awarded the SS. They were all members of Mike Co, 3/3 and their Stars are for the same date, April 30,1967 for their actions on 881S. At our next reunion there will be an awards ceremony for them.

Hero Finally Gets His Due

Vietnam veteran to receive Silver Star for bravery in battle 42 years ago

By Steve Liewer
Union-Tribune Staff Writer

Nighttime cloaked Hill 881 South in a blackness that filled the Marines of Mike Company with a well-founded dread.

Lance Cpl. Ray Calhoun's platoon had drawn the job of leading an assault in this northwest corner of South Vietnam on the morning of April 30, 1967. They knew the enemy was waiting for them. Some of the North Vietnamese soldiers shouted taunts in accented English.

"All night long, they're telling us: 'Put on your helmets, Marines. You're gonna die in the morning,' " recalled Calhoun, who now lives in Scripps Ranch. The enemy didn't lie. Three-fourths of the men in Calhoun's platoon were killed or wounded.

Throughout the battle, the 19-year-old Calhoun alternately aimed grenades at enemy bunkers and bandaged his dying buddies. Twice he passed out from his own wounds, only to wake up and resume the fight.

Today, nearly 42 years later, Calhoun will receive a Silver Star – the nation's third-highest award for combat bravery – during a ceremony at Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego.

Two of Calhoun's platoon mates also were awarded Silver Stars recently. Don Hossack of Kalispell, Mont., received his medal last month, and Tommy Wheeler of Lutz, Fla., will get his April 13.

The presentations follow six years of Pentagon review, through a process approved by Congress to recognize overlooked valor from past wars. The law has been invoked to credit ethnic or religious minorities whose heroism was ignored or initially downgraded.

In this case, though, the delay happened because the 1967 battle wiped out so many in Calhoun's chain of command.

"There were very few that remained alive to write up the awards," said retired Maj. Gen. John Admire, who commanded Calhoun's platoon until shortly before the battle and who ultimately crafted the three Silver Star nominations. "A lot of Marines did a lot of great things, but they never got the recognition they deserved."

Calhoun's road to Hill 881 started one day in February 1966, when he and seven of his college-football buddies were playing a poker game. They grew angry when they heard an anti-war march outside, and they vowed to join the military. All but one eventually did.

Calhoun, a native of Encino, enlisted in the Marine Corps the next day. Four months later, he arrived for boot camp in San Diego. The first night, a re-

cruit committed suicide in his barracks by slitting his wrists.

"I had no idea what I was getting myself into," Calhoun said.

Assigned that fall to the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment at Camp Pendleton, he was sent to Vietnam almost immediately. Mike Company saw action from the start.

But nothing matched the battle that came the next spring. The North Vietnamese hoped to lay siege to the U.S. military outpost near Khe Sanh, which was on a vital supply route.

The Marines countered with a series of assaults on the uplands surrounding Khe Sanh that came to be called the "Hill Battles." They succeeded, but at a frightful cost.

On April 30, 1967, the men of Mike Company set out through the tall grass about 8 a.m. They reached a saddle between two hilltops, and two platoons fanned out across a clearing.

The North Vietnamese opened fire from bunkers that honeycombed the hillside. Calhoun and his platoon mates took shelter behind some fallen trees, which they quickly realized was a trap when mortar shells started falling directly on top of them.
"They set us up. We were in a killing field," said Joe Cordileone, a San Diego assistant city attorney who was with Calhoun that day. "It was a massacre."

One mortar round killed the platoon's leader, 2nd Lt. Joseph Mitchell; wounded Hossack; and knocked out Calhoun. But he woke up and got to work, dragging survivors into a bomb crater and patching up wounds with battle dressings salvaged from the bodies of the dead.

Calhoun's eagle eye had earned him the job of platoon grenadier. He watched for muzzle flashes, aimed his M79 grenade launcher at them and took out four sniper's nests.

One bullet pierced his helmet, knocking him out a second time and wounding his scalp. But he woke up again and returned to the fight.

"You get so scared, you just start living off of adrenaline," Calhoun said. "You think, 'I'm gonna die, and I'm going to kill as many of these guys as I can first.' "

U.S. bomb strikes pushed the North Vietnamese off the hill, and reinforcements reached the clearing after a few hours. The few wounded survivors left Hill 881 and the war behind.

Calhoun recuperated at China Beach and Camp Pendleton, then left the Marines a few months later. "I kind of wanted to forget about it," he said.

He used his GI Bill benefits to earn a bachelor's in accounting and became a certified public accountant. He married in 1977, and he and his wife, Donna, raised three children in San Diego.

Calhoun also started Beam One, a company that harnesses electron beams for medical uses.

His outward success disguised chronic nightmares and frequent insomnia. The sound of rain set him on edge; it reminded him of the monsoons in Vietnam. He hated the smell of fresh earth. He could be short-tempered and abrasive. Hill 881 never quite left him.

"The first thing you do is you stuff it. . . . (Then) you start looking at your life backward and realize that maybe you aren't truly normal," said Calhoun, who still attends therapy sessions twice a week
He lost touch with all of his Marine buddies. Then in 1996, he read a newspaper article about Admire's appointment as commander of the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton. He sent a congratulatory note, and they reunited.

Over several years, they used the Internet to track down other Mike Company veterans and started to hold reunions. Calhoun and Cordileone, close friends in the Marines, were stunned to learn they had both moved to San Diego.

"We got together, had some beers," Cordileone said. "It was like starting all over again."

Admire came to learn that, despite the heroic conduct on Hill 881, none of the survivors from his old platoon had received awards for their bravery.

"I was fairly convinced there were some significant acts of valor that were not recognized," Admire said.

He compiled statements and submitted Silver Star nomination packets for Hossack, Wheeler and Calhoun. They were reviewed at Marine Corps headquarters in Quantico, Va., and by a board advising the secretary of the Navy. All three nominees won approval this year.
Calhoun had never asked for the honor, but he's proud to return to the recruit depot to receive his medal.

"The nicest thing is that I've had the recognition of my peers," Calhoun said.

Admire said there's another reward: The Silver Star will remind younger generations of what Vietnam War veterans endured.

"The sons and daughters of these Marines will now know that they are true heroes," he said.

HERO FINALLY GETS HIS LONG OVERDUE HONOR SGT. THOMAS WHEELER M CO 3/3

By Doc Rod Hardin - Apr 18, 2009

On Monday, April 13, 2009 The Silver Star Medal was presented to Sgt Thomas C Wheeler, USMC at the Unites States Marine Corps Reserve Training Center on West Gandy Boulevard in Tampa, Florida. At precisely 1300 hours a brief and colorful ceremony took place to properly honor a warrior after forty-two years. The award was presented by Maj. Gen. John H. Admire! (USMC Retired) and Lt. Col. Lewton, commanding officer of the 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, who forfeited their day off to honor our 3/3 brother, Tommy.

In attendance were numerous representatives from the Tampa area Marine Corps League, VFW and American Legion, members of the Khe Sanh Association and several of Tommy Wheeler's 3/3 brothers from 1966-67.

There was a reception after the ceremony at the nearby VFW Hall. Doc John "Snake" McBride and his wife Pam were there representing Lima 3/3 and Ripley's Raiders. From Mike 1966-67 second platoon: Thomas Wheeler and his family, Bob Moffatt, Joe Cordileone and then Second Lieutenant John Admire with his lovely daughter Kaitlin.

General Admire was their 2nd Platoon Commander in late 1966 and early 1967 prior to the Hill Fights at Khe Sanh. 1st Platoon Mike 3/3 1966-67 was represented by Paul Benson, Doc Mike Brown who was TAD to 3/9 and was on Hill 881S at the same time as Wheeler, Moffatt and Cordileone April 30,1967.

Doc Rod Hardin and Doc Nathan Jones were also guests in attendance. It was a special honor and privilege for us to be there an see Tommy receive this award.

Doc Nathan Jones, for those who came in late, was an Air Force Tech Sergeant (Medic) at Clark Air Force Base Hospital in the Philippines during the Vietnam era for two of eight years active service. He served on the Neurosurgical Unit for eighteen months and probably cared for a few of our 3/3 medevacs. Tiny Lindholm was probably a patient there when Doc Jones was aboard. Doc Jones had 278 men die on his watch. He also flew some medevac flights in-country.

Tommy and his "Sgt major," Crystal were the consummate hosts at their digs in Lutz, FL. Doc Brown was kind enough to drive us to Florida from RDU. We knew we had the right driveway when we saw the "Keep Out" postings and barbed wire. We expected sandbag bunkers and concertina, actually.

Much love and camaraderie at Fire Base Admire. We were regaled with stories of love, war and peace from Joe C. I have to remember to take a tape recorder to these events. We also need to be there in mid-February next time, so the oranges don't go fallow on the tree. We even got to see Tommy's war wounds. It gives a whole new meaning to "tearing someone a new asshole." HAW!

EDIT NOTE:
I did not know if Tommy Wheeler wanted this letter published, but I thought the family of Mike Kotic would like everyone to know how much Mike meant to Tommy and the rest of the members of M Co 3/3.

To: Anne, Mike, Nick and nephew John.

Enclosed is a Silver Star awarded to me for the battle that took place on 30 April 1967. This is considered one of the Marine Corps' crown jewels. The blood of many are on this star, including my own. The lives of so many were lost. No award can ever replace your loss or bring peace to your sweet mother.

There has never been a day that has passed that I've not thought about the sacrifice your brother made for us on that hill at Khe Sanh all those years ago. Too many lost best friends that day. Your brother was mine. His loss still brings tears and grief even after all this time. If you could accept this star from us as a symbol of the love, respect, and loyalty that all of us have in our hearts for your brother and what he means to us, it would mean so much. How proud I am to have had your brother as a friend. Until the day I die, I'll never forget him. Every day of my life has been a gift, because of his unselfishness and bravery.

Those of us who were lucky enough to have made it home owe a debt to your brother that can never be repaid. There is no one on this earth who deserves this star more than your brother. I would be so proud, if you would accept this with the same spirit in which it is given. If anyone should ever ask me, "Where's the Star?" I'll say it is in good hands. It's where it belongs. It's what your brother would think about this that matters most to me. Looking down from heaven on us, I hope there's a smile on his face. God bless your mother.
Semper Fi

Tommy



Tommy's Pit Bull "BO" just like Tommy, intimidating but sweet.



Ray Calhoun third from left, with fellow Marines Mike Kotic (From Left) Tommy Wheeler & Don Hossack



L-R Tommy's MCL Friend "The Doc" who served in Korea & Vietnam, Tommy, Doc Nathan Jones USAF, & Joe Cordileone



The cake was a little late arriving at the reception. It had an Air Force emblem that had to be to be swapped out before it could be delivered. Doc Jones did not have a problem with that.



MASTER-AT-ARMS SECOND CLASS (SEA, AIR AND LAND) MICHAEL A. MONSOOR UNITED STATES NAVY

For service as set forth in the following CITATION:

FOR CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY AND INTREPIDITY AT THE RISK OF HIS LIFE ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY AS AUTOMATIC WEAPONS GUNNER FOR NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE TASK GROUP ARABIAN PENINSULA, IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2006. AS A MEMBER OF A COMBINED SEAL AND IRAQI ARMY SNIPER OVERWATCH LEMENT, TASKED WITH PROVIDING EARLY WARNING AND STAND-OFF PROTECTION FROM A ROOFTOP IN AN INSURGENT HELD SECTOR OF AR RAMADI, IRAQ, PETTY OFFICER MONSOOR DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY HIS EXCEPTIONAL BRAVERY IN THE FACE OF GRAVE DANGER. IN THE EARLY MORNING, INSURGENTS PREPARED TO EXECUTE A COORDINATED ATTACK BY RECONNOITERING THE AREA AROUND THE ELEMENT'S POSITION. ELEMENT SNIPERS THWARTED THE ENEMY'S INITIAL ATTEMPT BY ELIMINATING TWO INSURGENTS. THE ENEMY CONTINUED TO ASSAULT THE ELEMENT, ENGAGING THEM WITH A ROCKET-PROPELLED GRENADE AND SMALL ARMS FIRE. AS ENEMY ACTIVITY INCREASED, PETTY OFFICER MONSOOR TOOK POSITION WITH HIS MACHINE GUN BETWEEN TWO TEAMMATES ON AN OUTCROPPING OF THE ROOF. WHILE THE SEALS VIGILANTLY WATCHED FOR ENEMY ACTIVITY, AN INSURGENT THREW A HAND GRENADE FROM AN UNSEEN LOCATION, WHICH BOUNCED OFF PETTY OFFICER MONSOOR'S CHEST AND LANDED IN FRONT OF HIM. ALTHOUGH ONLY HE COULD HAVE ESCAPED THE BLAST, PETTY OFFICER MONSOOR CHOSE INSTEAD TO PROTECT HIS TEAMMATES. INSTANTLY AND WITHOUT REGARD FOR HIS OWN SAFETY, HE THREW HIMSELF ONTO THE GRENADE TO ABSORB THE FORCE OF THE EXPLOSION WITH HIS BODY, SAVING THE LIVES OF HIS TWO TEAMMATES. BY HIS UNDAUNTED COURAGE, FIGHTING SPIRIT, AND UNWAVERING DEVOTION TO DUTY IN THE FACE OF CERTAIN DEATH, PETTY OFFICER MONSOOR GALLANTLY GAVE HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY, THEREBY REFLECTING GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF AND UPHOLDING THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE UNITED STATES NAVAL SERVICE.

SIGNED GEORGE W. BUSH

The Moving Funeral of Petty Officer Mike Monsoor

At his funeral in San Diego, California, SEALs lined up on both sides of the route of the pallbearers and loudly slapped gold tridents from their uniforms on the wooden casket as a tribute to their fallen comrade who was killed while serving in Iraq on September 29, 2006. He died after throwing himself on a grenade to prevent it from killing others whom he had been assigned to protect on a rooftop. A fellow Navy Seal who knew and trained with Monsoor Stated Michael had already earned a Silver Star for Bravery and a Bronze Star for separate acts of valor.

His funeral took place in October 12, 2006 at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego. Other Navy SEALs lined the procession and slapped the trident devices from their uniforms to affix them onto the casket. The ttrident is a U.S. Navy special warfare badge worn by SEALs. It represents the three aspects of SEAL special operations, sea, air, and land..As his coffin was being moved from the hearse to the grave site at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery , SEALs were lined up on both sides of the pallbearers route forming a column of twos, with the coffin moving up the center. As Mike's coffin passed, each SEAL, having removed his gold Trident from his uniform, slapped it down embedding the Trident in the wooden coffin. The slaps were audible from across the cemetery; by the time the coffin arrived grave side, it looked as though it had a gold inlay from all the Tridents pinned to it. This was a fitting send-off for a warrior hero.

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the



SILVER STAR MEDAL to

LANCE CORPORAL
LESTER R. CALHOUN, JR.
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving as a M-79 Grenadier with Company M, Third Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on 30 April 1967. Lance Corporal Calhoun s company (-) was advancing to secure Hill 881 South in the first Battle of Khe Sanh when a numerically superior enemy force attacked and inflicted heavy casualties on his platoon. Advancing with the Platoon Headquarters, Lance Corporal Calhoun was rendered temporarily unconscious from an enemy mortar barrage that killed the Platoon Leader and severely wounded the Radio Operator. When he regained consciousness he assisted in medevacing casualties to a bomb crater and providing effective counter-fire. Repeated enemy attacks inflicted heavy casualties and created a gap in the Marine defensive line. Recognizing the danger of possible enemy penetration, he attacked an enemy bunker complex and destroyed four positions with accurate M-79 fire. He then advanced to a position too close to fire his M-79, but delivered M-16 suppression fire and threw grenades into more enemy bunkers, thus preserving the line. As Marine artillery strikes temporarily prevented an enemy counterattack, Lance Corporal Calhoun again exposed himself to danger by moving throughout the battlefield to assist the wounded, collect and redistribute weapons and ammunition, and secure battle dressings from the dead to treat the wounded. Lance Corporal Calhoun persevered despite grenade and mortar explosions until receiving a severe head wound that rendered him unconscious for a second time. Amazingly, he recovered yet again and continued to fight the enemy. Lance Corporal Calhoun s courageous actions in disregarding his own safety and collecting and redistributing critical resources enabled his platoon to continue to fight and directly led to the Marine line holding. By his resolute determination, selfless sacrifice, and unwavering dedication to duty, Lance Corporal Calhoun reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps the United States Naval Service.

For the President, Donald C. Winter Secretary of the Navy





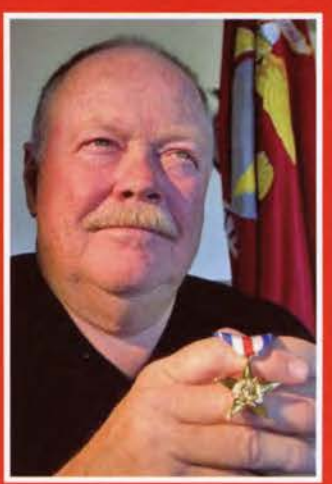

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the

SILVER STAR MEDAL to

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS
DONALD A. HOSSACK
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS



for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy as Platoon Radio Operator with Company M, Third Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on 30 April 1967. Private First Class Hossack s company (-) was advancing to secure Hill 881 South in the first Battle of Khe Sanh when a numerically superior enemy force attacked, killed the Platoon Leader, and inflicted heavy casualties on his platoon. Private First Class Hossack s radio was destroyed by mortar fire in the attack, and he sustained a severe chest wound, broken arm, and multiple shrapnel wounds. Despite the severity of his injuries, Private First Class Hossack secured a squad radio as he was medevaced to a bomb crater. When an enemy grenade landed in the crater, he used his body to shield his fellow Marines from the blast and received a second severe shrapnel wound. Despite intense pain, he assumed command of the company on the hill and coordinated company positions and actions, maintained radio contact with higher headquarters, and controlled supporting fire. Upon realizing an enemy attack was imminent, he called for artillery strikes. The timing and accuracy of these dangerously close strikes inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy, forced them to retreat, and saved the company from certain defeat. Private First Class Hossack was wounded a third time by an AK-47 round when he exposed himself to enemy fire to assist a wounded Marine. Although suffering from three severe wounds and fighting to maintain consciousness, he was able to prevent the deaths of fellow Marines due to friendly-fire by canceling an air strike that would have been too close to his company s position. Private First Class Hossack s courageous actions, total disregard for his own life and unwavering devotion to duty reflected great credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

For the President, Donald C. Winter Secretary of the Navy





FALL
2009

RED CLAY

ISSUE
74



Back Row: L-R: Toby Rushforth-FAC, Jim Biltz-FAC, Chuck Thom-A-1, Ted Hill-A-1, Bruce Marcus-A-1, Jay Stone-Intel, Zip Rausa-A-1, Tim Kirk-Helo, Ed Kufeldt-Helo, George Rosental-Helo, Bob Shippen (Medic), Paul Longgrear-USSF

Front Row: L-R: Bill McMurray-USSF-POW, Dale Pellot-A-1, Ron Bolt-A-1,Sam Robison-Helo, Joe Johnson-USSF, Allan Fleming-Helo, Al Nichols-A-1-POW,Dennis Thompson-USSF-POW

LANG VEI REUNION ARTICLE & PICTURES PAGES 76 TO 92

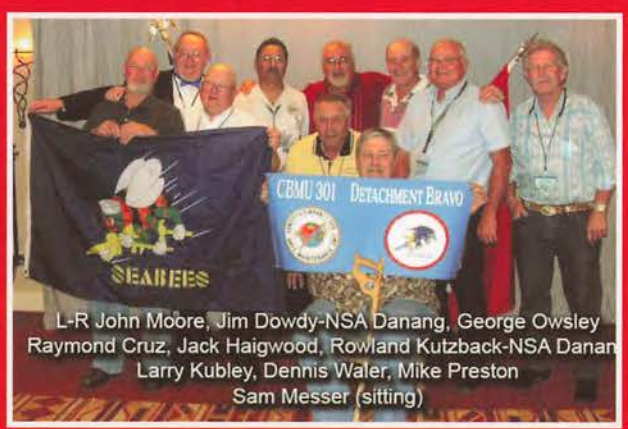

L-R John Moore, Jim Dowdy-NSA Danang, George Owsley
Raymond Cruz, Jack Haigwood, Rowland Kutzback-NSA Danan
Larry Kubley, Dennis Waler, Mike Preston
Sam Messer (sitting)



REUNION ARTICLE & PICTURES BEGINS ON PAGE 46 TO 71








07/24/2009








JUL 21 2009

EDITOR NOTE:

The reunion in Denver was a great success. I want to personally thank Russ Turner and his lovely wife Kathy for the outstanding job they did with organizing the reunion and taking care of the registration desk. We had almost a hundred walk-in attendees which were handled quickly & efficiently.

Thanks to the efforts of Toby Rushforth (Tass 20) we were honored to host the first get together of the survivors and gallant fighters from the battle of Lang Vei. This was the first time all participants (Ground Troops, Carrier Pilots, FAC's and Rescue Units) were actually together. Their exploits were written about in the book titled "The Night of The Silver Stars" **Thanks Toby.**

John Pessoni and I had a lot of new items designed for the KSV PX. You responded, and made it a huge success. Those funds are utilized to support our magazine and continually improve the merchandise we purchase.

Our members were also very generous in contributing and purchasing items for the Silent Auction. It brought in almost $2,500 for the newly established scholarship fund.

REUNION COMMITTEE:

Thanks to all who contributed their time to make the Denver Reunion a huge success. Next year we will be in San Antonio and we hope to see all those who made Denver. (But Please Register Early). The membership cast their votes for the years 2011 & 2012. A team from Rochester Minnesota took the time to come to our reunion and present their case with reasons why we should come to their fair city.

They were successful, and the membership voted overwhelmingly to have the 2011 reunion in Rochester Minnesota and the 2012 reunion in Tennessee.

Russ and I traveled to San Antonio to select the hotel for the 2010 reunion. We toured 8 Hotels that fit our criteria. We narrowed the search down to two hotels, and asked the membership for a little help via the KSV website. The majority felt we should stay at a hotel close to the River Walk which is the Cities main attraction.

We finally chose the Newly remodeled flagship of Holiday Inns, the El Tropicana which is located in the heart of San Antonio. The doors open directly onto the River walk. It is a real nice place and very military friendly. The 3rd Mar Div & 2/9 just had their reunion there. The reunion dates are from July 11-18 2010. All the details are included in brochures with this issue of Red clay.

On a personal note I want to thank the family of Forrest Leasure, who unfortunately passed away a short time ago. He was a Gold Star Life member of the KSV. His brother Delbert Leasure was a member of C Btry 1/13 and killed in action by a sniper on Hill 881S on 23 Feb 1968.

Forrest has provided the KSV with a $ 25,000 gift in his will. Our founder Ray Stubbe has written his lovely wife and personal representative Linda to express our deepest gratitude. He will be remembered in the memorial section of each issue of Red Clay.

CHAPLAINS CORNER

The 2009 Reunion
By KSV Chaplain Ron Rayner

The 2009 reunion was a true success in my mind. The clearest indication of this was the smiling faces of the majority of the attendees. More than any thing else, and this was mentioned at the Board of Directors meeting, the veteran reunion attendees did an excellent job of greeting and making new attendees feel welcome and comfortable. This was only my third reunion and I felt accepted, as well com-

MEMORIALS

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
L/Cpl Wilbur Stoval HQ Btry 1/13 USMC KIA 09 Mar 68	Robert Holscher HQ BTRY 1/13
John W. Greene C Co 1/26 USMC	John M. Moon C CO 1/26
Forrest Leasure Gold Star Brother of Delbert Leasure KIA	The Khe Sanh Veterans

fortable with the people I spoke to. The reunion committee went far beyond the call of duty on this one, and provided an excellent venue and program.
KSV Chaplain

I showed up for the Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion Memorial Service in Reno, Nevada, ten minutes early and talked to KSV Chaplain Owen Matthews. I mentioned I had been serving as a chaplain for the fire department I had retired from in Pontiac, Michigan. He said he was retiring after five years serving the Khe Sanh Vets as chaplain. Owen explained the job. He then asked if I would take over the job. After a discussion with then KSV President, Tom Eichler, I was then appointed KSV Chaplain by Tom. Newly elected KSV President David "Bulldog" Smith has appointed me to the position of KSV Chaplain for the next year.

I want to thank Tommy Eichler for being a hard working President, inspirational leader, and a great friend.

I am a non-denominational Christian. I believe all people are children of God and as a Christian I should be available to serve them, regardless of their beliefs. As a chaplain for the KSV, I most certainly serve all members and their families. What brings this subject up is the fact that the last prayer I publicly prayed at the 2009 reunion was the Blessing at the Saturday night dinner. I referenced "we" in the prayer, meaning the whole group and I ended the prayer by saying, "In Jesus' name we pray. Amen." Although, as a Christian that is how I normally end my prayers, I do not believe it is proper for me to say that when I pray for the whole group. A non-Christian member of KSV pointed this out to me in a most gracious manner after the prayer. I will strive in the future to pray in a manner that represents all present at the KSV functions.
"A person of character is someone who is respectful of others, their values, their customs, and their traditions."
Robert M. Sherfield, Ph.D.

THE EVERYTHING SELF-ESTEEM BOOK

It is my goal, in human relations is to emphasize everyone's common good traits such as in the Golden Rule. The following was on the program for the Memorial Service at the 2009 reunion. I believe being kind and fair with one another is the one thing that we can pay forward to people in the present and future generations, **in memory of all who have sacrificed their lives serving in the Armed Forces of the United State of America**. We are free today because of their sacrifices.

Mankind's Golden Rule

A single theme runs through the scriptures of seven of the world's leading religions, expressed in astonishingly similar form.

Brahmanism: This is the sum of duty; Do naught unto others which gives pain if done to you.
Mahabharata 5:1517

Buddhism: Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.
Udanavarga

Christianity: "Do for others what you would like them to do for you. This is a summary of all that is taught in the law and the prophets."
Matthew 7:12 New Living Translation

Confusianism: Is there one maxim which ought to be acted upon throughout one's whole life? Surely it is the maxim of loving-kindness ; Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you.
Analects: 1523

Islam: No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.
Sunan

Judaism: What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.
Talmud, Shabbat 31a

Toaism: Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your loss.
T'ai-Shang Kan-Ying P'ien

Whenever I speak or write as the KSV Chaplain, I may quote any number of scriptural or secular sources. The criteria are going to be whether or not the quote is helpful and makes sense. The above quotes on the "Golden Rule" are the perfect exam-

ple. I do not claim to have an abundance of original ideas, and I just plain like using quotes.

"The key to success in life is using the good thoughts of wise people." Leo Tolstoy

In my role as KSV Chaplain I plan the Memorial Service, send sympathy cards, get well cards and provide spiritual support and guidance. It is my job to be available and listen more than anything else. (home phone 248-634-8289, email www.eagleprep) I have found more than anything else, people need to be able to have someone to tell their story to, me included. I listened at this reunion and people listened to me. I have learned much about a major news event that I participated in forty-one years ago.

The knowledge I have gained from reading *Battalion of Kings* and attending the last two reunions has been tremendous. I want to thank the many reunion attendees who spent time with me and enlightened me on the large picture that was "The Siege."

I also want to thank 1/26 Chaplain and KSV founder Ray Stubbe for all that he has done. I stopped in Wauwatosa, WI and visited Ray on my way to the reunion. Ray was happy, healthy, and preparing to box in Kansas City in a national boxing tournament. He told me that he was tuning 71 years old on August 15 and he would be retiring from the sport. He said that he was planning on attending the 2010 reunion in San Antonio, Texas.

I am looking forward to meeting more Khe Sanh Vets at the next reunion as well as old friends.
May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind always be at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face, the rains fall soft upon your fields and, until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand.



DOC TOPMILLER REMEMBERED

By Michael Archer

ED NOTE: August 25 th of this year was the anniversary of "DOC" Topmiller's death. Michael Archer (A Patch of Ground) had written a piece for a chapter in a planned sequel to his book, regarding a trip to Hill 881 taken by himself, Doc Topmiller, and Steve Orr. Michael, wishing to again honor Doc Topmiller, has graciously decided to share that experience with our membership.

MICHAEL'S TRIBUTE

Last year, our friend Robert "Doc" Topmiller took his own life just three weeks after returning home to Lexington, Kentucky from the Khe Sanh Veterans Association reunion in Reno. Many in this organization knew and respected Doc and still feel the void his death left in its wake.

August 25, 2009 marks the first anniversary of his loss, and we are still no closer to understanding what happened. Nevertheless, among the outpouring of shock and sympathy I found two messages that proved to be incredibly helpful to me, if not understanding, in better accepting this tragedy.

The first was from Wayne Karlin, former Marine helicopter door gunner in Vietnam, author of both fiction and nonfiction books about the war and its aftermath, and Professor of Literature at the College of Southern Maryland.

"I was shocked and saddened to get your email describing how Doc Topmiller died. Shocked, because I would have thought if there was ever a case of someone who seemed to have pulled through the memories in a positive way, he was that person. Especially, with the work he did, the way he dedicated himself to examining and extracting the significance of that terrible past and using what he learned to promote peace and healing.

We always saw the corpsmen (and that was what he remained as a scholar, so passionate to communicate the complex humanity of the Vietnamese: still a healer) as the strongest, the ones you could

turn to. There is some kind of sickening shift in the heart when you realize how each wound they touched, physical or not, became their own. I have always felt--and maintained to others--that the way to truly heal is not to forget, but to bring out the memories, articulate them, examine them, put them into your life in a constructive way. It's disheartening, but necessarily realistic -- a needed, but hated slap in the face -- to realize that there are no pat formulas, not even that one. That the war still has that power to reach over the stretch of 40 years and snatch such a good person back."

The second message was passed along to me by Khe Sanh veteran, and current Police Chief of Lewiston, Idaho, Steve Orr. In the course of training his officers, Steve has come to know and respect Dr. **Kevin M. Gilmartin, former Marine, psychologist and author of *Emotional Survival for Police* who wrote:**

"I can only imagine how shocking and painful a loss that was for you. I do hope you do not beat yourself up with a need to reconstruct minute to minute your last visit with Doc in search of seeing if you missed something that might have caused you to do something different. That was not the nature of your friendship with him.

It is also almost impossible to detect suicidal intent with the person who is considering suicide but not from a crisis-situation. I suspect Doc was a deep thinking philosophical man capable of very intense and self- contained contemplation who probably had reviewed and lived with his decision internally for years. This was not a spur of the moment impulse, or knee-jerk act. I guess a man who had seen what he had seen, and thought as deeply as he thought, probably had a psychological checklist of things he completed and when he reached the decision point took whatever action he felt compelled to take.

I imagine being a helper-healer, as he no doubt was, he would not want others feeling responsible for his actions even if others wish he had reached a different conclusion. It was his alone to make and, boy, that can be real hard for survivors to accept. The impulsive, superficial-issue based suicides we are pretty good at intervening with. Doc's situation, I suspect, was not impulsive or superficial, but terribly tragic."

Doc Topmiller was indeed a "helper-healer." His deep sense of dedication to those injured physically and emotionally by the war would manifest itself daily across a broad spectrum, both in the United States and Vietnam. At the time of his death, he was in the midst of writing a book on the history of Department of Veterans' Affairs policies toward disabled veterans. Thanks to the efforts of some of Doc's university colleagues, particularly Professor Kerby Neill, the book will likely be published posthumously in the coming months. It is shaping up to have enormous potential value to policymakers in Washington, D.C. How fitting it is that, even in death, Doc is helping improve conditions for his fellow disabled vets.

Probably no example of Doc's compassion had a more profound impact on me personally, than his effort in 2007 to locate the remains of my high school friend, the last Marine to die on Hill 881S, LCPL Thomas P. Mahoney III. Below is a detailed description of those events, which I hope will further illustrate the enormous scope of Doc Topmiller's humanity.

TO FIND A WANDERING SOUL
By Michael Archer

On December 16, 2007, an extraordinary convergence" of Americans and Vietnamese occurred at the spot on the old Khe Sanh battlefield where Thomas Patrick Mahoney III, a fellow Marine and my childhood friend, met his end. Tom and I enlisted together in the United States Marines and, though assigned to different regiments in Vietnam, both fought at Khe Sanh in 1968.

During the abandonment of the Khe Sanh Combat Base in July 1968, Tom (who had recently received a "Dear John" letter from his girlfriend) inexplicably left the relative safety of the U.S. Marine position on **Hill 865 (End Note 1 Page 19)** and inadvertently walked into a unit of North Vietnamese Army **(NVA) (End Note 2 Page 20)** soldiers who were hiding nearby.

Now exposed, the NVA soldiers shot Tom and hast-

ily repositioned his body in front of their fighting holes. When Marines subsequently attempted to reach him, a fierce firefight ensued and lasted into the evening. Several of Tom's buddies were wounded in the rescue attempt. Sixteen others were wounded by enemy mortar fire on another part of the hill. As dusk fell, Lt. Frank Ahearn, Tom's platoon commander, appealed to the company commander Captain Robert Black to be allowed to remain behind with some volunteers and continue their efforts to recover Tom's body. This was an extremely dangerous proposition given the superior number of enemy troops in the area. In addition, Black had recently received a direct order by radio from **OPCON regimental commander (End Note 3 Page 19)** directing him to abandon the hill immediately and move by helicopter to support other Marines who were being attacked on nearby Hill 689.

As such, Black refused Ahearn's request and the Marines reluctantly obeyed. Evacuation of their many wounded took several hours. The last two off the hill, Captain Black, and an enlisted man responsible for coordinating the movement of aircraft in and out of the landing zone, were finally air lifted from the hilltop well after dark. So close was the enemy mortar and small arms fire to them , the helicopter did not completely touch down, and these two men were required to hang from the aircrafts skids for several hundred feet until the helicopter pilot locate a relatively safer spot on a nearby knoll to land and allow them to scramble onboard.

The only Marine not evacuated that evening was Lance Corporal Tom Mahoney whose lifeless and shattered body could not be retrieved without risking the lives of everyone. Tom would have the sad distinction of being the last U.S. Marine to die on that legendary mountain outpost. Hill 881S had been wrested 14 months earlier from an entrenched North Vietnamese Army regiment in a bloody four-day battle that resulted in hundreds of Marine casualties, and was held at great additional cost of life until the throbbing blades of the last evacuation helicopter receded in to the night of July 6, 1968.

On July 12, 1993, 25 years to the day the U.S. abandonment of the Khe Sanh Combat Base complex was completed after days and nights of fierce combat on Hill 689, a Joint Task Force – Final Accounting (JTFFA) team traveled to the site of Tom's death (at map coordinates XD 773441). After performing a survey of the area, but no digging, the JTFFA concluded that:

> "A surface search of the U.S. record site yielded no remains or burial sites discovered at the site."

No other activity on Mahoney's case (#1224) was recorded again until July 2003, when the Joint Field Activity (JFA) Research and Investigation Team located a text at the People's Army of Vietnam Library in Hanoi entitled The History of the 246th Regiment, 304th Division, 26th Corps, Military Region 1 (Quang Trung, 246), in which there was a distinct reference to Tom Mahoney's death. After listing, on page 193, the names of five of their soldiers who moved into position near the top of Hill 865 on the evening of July 5, 1968, the narrative resumes describing events on page 223:

> "Finally they arrived at the main entrance of the outpost on **Hill 845 (End Note 4 Page19 .** While sitting in the fortified positions they could clearly hear the voices of the Americans and smell cigarette smoke from the bunkers. They waited for the enemy all night long.
>
> At 1400 on the following day (July 6, 1968), we saw one American walking outside the entrance to the outpost. His face was red and his eyes were blue like a mean animal. He was looking toward Mr. Luong's team. The sounds of AK weapons roared immediately, and the American fell. Mr. Luong and Mr. Long jumped out of their positions and dragged the American's body down. They placed the body in front of them to create an ambush for the other Americans coming out of their bunkers."

In August 2003, the Office the Secretary of Defense -Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (OSD-DPMO) made this report available to the public. I obtained a copy of it in late 2004, just in time to in-

clude the information in my book A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered (Hellgate Press, May 2005). The release of A Patch of Ground, nearly 40 years after Tom's loss, generated an amazing outpouring of interest in his story from around the United States and in Vietnam. Some, who were with Mahoney at the time of his death, and had made valiant efforts that day to retrieve his body, were surprised to learn that Tom's remains had not been recovered by a Marine Reconnaissance unit a few days after his death, as they had been told by their Battalion Headquarters acting administrative officer.

By the end of the first year of the book's release, the series of often-implausible, often-poignant, interpersonal connections had grown so numerous and so complex that it would be impossible for me to adequately describe them here; though I hope to so in the forthcoming sequel to the book.

However, one important "reconnection," occurred in December 2004, when I sent a message to Robert "Doc" Topmiller. Doc had been a corpsman (medic) in the 26th Marines Regimental Aid station during the siege of Khe Sanh, as well as a close friend of mine during our tour in Vietnam. As often happened among veterans of this war, Doc and I lost contact after returning home. Doc had gone on to earn a Ph.D. in history and was now a professor at Eastern Kentucky University. Though our once 19 year-old Khe Sanh "Doc" (a title of respect used by Marines for their Navy corpsman) had now received the academic title of "Doctor" – he clearly delights in being referred to by the former designation.

Topmiller and I resumed our friendship as if the last 36 years had been but the blink of the eye. I soon learned he had earned a reputation as a world-class scholar of Vietnamese history; publishing two books, including a harrowing memoir called Red Clay on My Boots: Encounters with Khe Sanh 1968 to 2005 (Kirk House, 2007). What emerged from the government's search for Tom Mahoney's remains would soon summon us to that country on an improbable journey, which before it was over, would require the full range of Doc's expertise and "connections."

The discovery of The History of the 246th Regiment in July 2003 triggered a second effort to locate Mahoney's remains. During the last week in August 2004, the Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP) sent Detachment 2 of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) back to the area. The stated "Investigation requirements" for this mission were to "search for veterans of the 3rd Battalion, 246th Regiment," particularly Messrs. Luong and Long and the three others specifically mentioned in the PAVN military record. The reasoning being that if any of these men could be found, they might recall where Tom's remains were last located and if they buried him.

On August 26, 2004, three members of the VNOSMP went to Huong Tan village near Hill 865 and spoke with Mr. Nguyen Quoc Tru, secretary of the Huong Hoa District Veterans' Association and Mr. Ho Xuan Long, former political officer of the district military unit during the war. However, neither had heard of the men being sought. On August 27, the team met with the Veterans' Association of Quang Tri Province, but none of the soldiers they were looking for was on the rolls of that organization. On August 28, the team went to Military Region 1, in order to learn more about the 246th Regiment, 26th Corps. There, they were informed the 26th Corps had been disbanded long ago, and there was no information about the people named.

In completing his report, the VNOSMP team leader concluded:

> "This is a very difficult case. There are no direct witnesses. The people who fought in this battle were main force troops. When they were done fighting, they left, leaving (responsibility for the area) to the locality. Furthermore the dead American was not buried, so there is no way to find the remains."

The report was transmitted to the DPMO in February 2005 and I became aware of its existence in December of that year.

It became increasingly clear from these three DPMO reports, particularly the most recent; that they appeared to be ignoring some important information. Captain Robert Black, Lt. Frank Ahearn and others who attempted to recover Tom's remains

that July afternoon in 1968, had provided a great deal of detailed information regarding the disposition of Mahoney's body and where it was last seen, including precise map coordinates. The information they provided in the days immediately following Tom's loss were included in a comprehensive report prepared by Lt. Stuart Dorow, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment Assistant Personnel Officer. This report included a map sketched by Dorow (who had not been a witness to the events) showing where he believed Tom's remains to be in relation to other points of reference on the hill. Despite the steepness of the terrain where Mahoney's remains likely existed, the JTFFA's reluctance to dig at the site, as early as 1993, was baffling.

Doc Topmiller had by this time become quite interested in Tom Mahoney's case, and upon reading the final VNOSMP report was exasperated by the results; particularly with their conclusion that "there is no way to find the remains." He was soon on the phone to me. Having been educated in the Catholic schools of Cincinnati, Doc was now a Buddhist and knowing me to be an avowed skeptic, he delicately suggested that we should "now try doing things the Vietnamese way and see what happens."

In researching his book The Lotus Unleashed: The Buddhist Peace Movement in South Vietnam, 1964-1966 (The University of Kentucky Press, 2002), Topmiller spent months living in Vietnam and gained an unusually profound understanding (for a westerner) of the subtle nuances in Vietnamese culture and religion. Their "way," he patiently explained to me, is one of unwavering ancestor worship and works essentially like this: The soul of a deceased person whose remains are not returned to his or her family is always sad and wandering. If the "wandering soul" can be contacted, often though the services of a telepath, there is a good chance that

The NVA referred to the combination Hills 881S and 865 as a single location they called "Hill 845." (End Note 4 Page 19)

whatever physical remains still exist, can also be located with the assistance of the soul. If physical remains cannot readily be located, the "wandering soul" might then be enticed away from the area it now inhabits among unknown and unfriendly souls (as in the case of a battlefield) and dwell in a happier place where it would be prayed for and loved until the remains were located. Once the remains are found and returned to the family for proper interment, the soul would then reside in that place where family members would honor and care for it in perpetuity. It is then that the once-wandering soul will dwell in peace and happiness — and the surviving family members' duty is fulfilled.

Doc, knowing I had no desire to return to Vietnam, cautiously continued pitching his plan to me: His contacts in Vietnam would make all the arrangements for hotels, guides, translators, drivers, the telepath and necessities for the Buddhist religious services. All I had to do, he urged, was show up — and keep an open mind.

After consulting with my wife Becky, I decided to go (she, was most adamant about not wanting to accompany us "on this one"). I then contacted two people who I strongly felt should join us. The first was Steve Orr, my best friend. Steve and I had survived the siege of Khe Sanh and the remaining eight months of our tours in Vietnam unscathed -- flying back to the U.S. side-by-side on the same Continental Airlines Boeing 707. Defying the norm for combat veterans of the Vietnam War, Orr and I remained close friends after returning.

After I had explained Doc's idea to Steve, who, as fate would have it, had just accepted the job of Chief of Police for the City of Lewiston, Idaho, he unhesitatingly wanted to join us. He would reschedule his reporting date. Three old friends returning to Vietnam together after 40 years in search of the "wandering soul" of a fellow Marine was just too intriguing for him to miss.

The other person I contacted was Claudia Harris, Tom Mahoney's sister. The Buddhists who would be assisting us in Vietnam, Doc advised me, would expect a blood relative to make the journey. Connecting with Tom's wandering soul would be far more difficult without the presence of a close family member. In lieu of that, something from Tom's past which held strong sentimental value, might be of help.

Claudia graciously declined the offer to travel to Vietnam and climb Hill 865. I respect her decision and appreciate the encouragement and genuine appreciation she demonstrated for our efforts. Claudia

provided me with Tom's old baseball glove to take to the séance. It is a sad, sweat-stained relic; with a proprietary machine-stamped Ted Williams "autograph" on the front, though more authentically inscribed by Tom on the back strap with a patient redundancy of blue ink strokes; indelibly etched in lettering so large it could have been read from the bleachers. For me, nothing more embodies the hope and longing of an American boy from that era than his own ball glove: the sweet mingling of rawhide, neat's-foot oil and innocence. I tried to slip it on my hand, but it was far too small; suggesting Tom was, perhaps, 12 years old when it was still the stuff of his dreams.

In addition to the glove, I had two plaques made for the trip. One was an 8" x 12"polished black enamel tablet with gold-colored engraved lettering. I intended to bring this back from the hill and present to Lt. Frank Ahearn on behalf of the men of Bravo Company who tried to save Tom that day. The other plaque was an 8" x 6" rectangle of lesser quality, which I intended to bury at the site. Each contained the identical text: (See Picture)

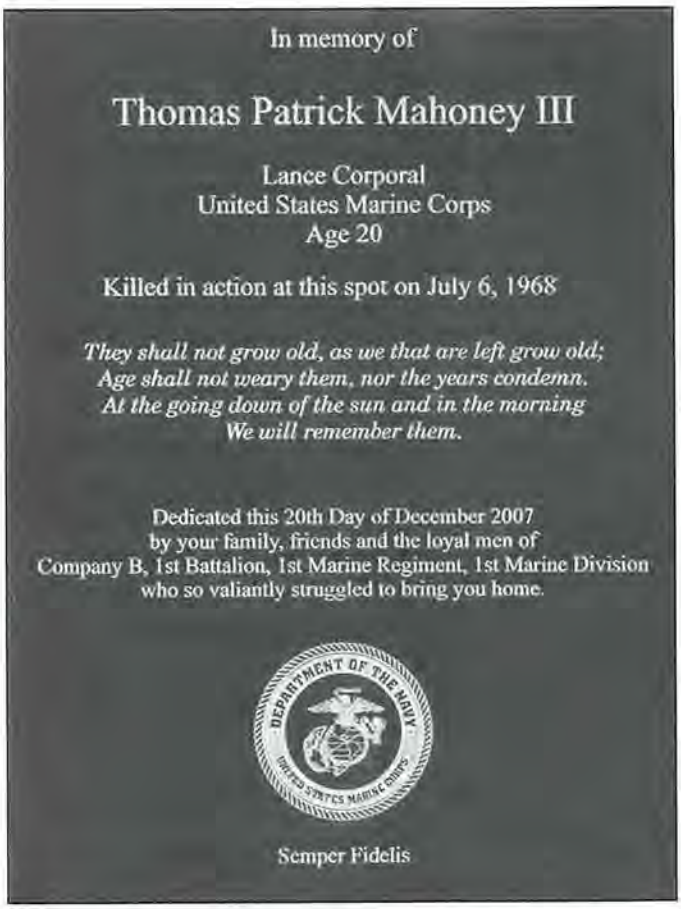

On the morning of December 9, 2007, I found myself squeezed into an economy-class seat between Doc and Steve onboard a United Airlines 747 winging westward on a quest both chillingly familiar and strangely incomprehensible. I could not conjure up even the vaguest imagery of the events to come as I clamped my eyes tightly shut in an unsuccessful effort to sleep. Soon our airplane approached the International Date Line — and into tomorrow.

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Shortly after 9 a.m. on December 13, 2007, Dr. Dinh Van Toan (pronounced Twahn) met us in front of our hotel in Hanoi. He had arranged for a taxicab and we were soon on our way to The Center for the Investigation of Human Capabilities (CIHC) at the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Association Office in north part of the city. (Pic # 1) Toan, in addition to his responsibilities as a professor and head of the Geophysical Department of the Institute of Geological Sciences at the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology, also volunteers his time at CIHC and had arranged our meeting with the telepath. Our connection with Toan was the result of his brother having been a professor at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, and Doc Topmiller's Vietnamese language tutor while he was pursuing his doctoral degree.

Not unlike many young Americans in the 1960's, Toan (then age 16) joined the military because he thought it would be a heroic undertaking. He also came to believe that if the North Vietnamese did not stop the Americans in the South, they would soon conquer his native North. Ironically, many young Americans joined the military then (me included) for similar reasons. We had grown up in a society where battle was generally considered a noble and exhilarating enterprise; amid the then widely accepted belief that the fall of China, and more recently Cuba, to communism was a trend that must be reversed at the next opportunity — regardless of where in the world that occurred.

Toan was assigned to the PAVN 24th Regiment as a 40mm antitank gunner and was part of the force that overran the Lang Vei Special Forces camp near Khe Sanh in early February 1968. During the subsequent siege of Khe Sanh Combat Base, he sustained multiple and serious wounds during a B-52 bombing and

was completely deafened for nearly a year thereafter. He was subsequently discharged from the army.

As gracious and engaging an individual as I have ever met, Toan is exceptionally fluent in English. After we had spoken for a while about Khe Sanh, he turned to us with an expression of unconcealed sorrow and haltingly uttered: "We are all very lucky to be alive." Toan's words perfectly articulated all our feelings at that moment. This simple yet profound observation, coupled with the knowledge that we had all simultaneously shared the often-horrific experience of the Khe Sanh battleground, was followed by a long silence while each of us fought back the unexpected tears welling in our eyes.

Several cleared throats later, we returned to making small talk and learned, despite his self-effacing demeanor, Toan is a world-renowned geologist currently engaged in seismic wave experiments with colleagues at the University of Texas, El Paso. This project, he explained, requires the team to detonate a series of one-ton explosive devices at different locations throughout Vietnam. Toan bemoaned the fact that there had been several delays in the experiment because it was difficult to find potential sites for the explosions that would not "disturb a local population." I did not say anything, but found that whole idea of people being especially sensitive to loud explosions quite plausible; especially among those "local" citizens who were alive during the war when we Americans virtually "carpet bombed" the country from one end to the other.

We arrived at the university about 9:30 a.m. The CIHC office was located on the same floor as the Department of Physics; an indication, I think, of the Center's stature within the university system. We were met by a female secretary and a professionally dressed woman in her mid-50's by the name of Nguyen Thi Tuyet Mai. Ms. Nguyen is a journalist, who also acts as Deputy Director of the CICH.

Doc, Steve and I were soon led to a meeting room and seated at a long table with Dr. Toan and seven members of the CIHC. Also in attendance, were two videographers, one from a local TV station, two office secretaries and the telepath Mr. Nguyen Buu Thuan (also pronounced Twahn). Doc later pointed out to me that his middle (clan) name of "Buu" indicated he descended from Vietnamese royalty.

Thuan, I would also later learn, is a married 33-year old father of two girls, who became aware of his "gift" only 5 years ago after surviving an illness that nearly took his life. He was a bit vague on exactly what the illness was when I later asked him, but it apparently involved a high fever, listlessness and loss of appetite. It took him some time to understand his new telepathic capabilities, but he now dedicates almost all his time to helping locate the souls of missing civilians and soldiers. He has been hugely successful, and proudly rattled off some figures for me which included his identification of over 3,000 wandering souls and the location of over 1,000 graves. As such, he has earned a level of respect, just short of national celebrity status, among the Vietnamese.

Once Doc, Steve and I were seated at the table, we made our introductions and small talk while tea was served. Many of the older participants spoke English. The group consisted mostly of highly educated professionals, such as journalists, educators and scientists. They were admittedly excited about the prospect of Thuan reaching a wandering American soul. There was to be an international convention of telepaths coming to Hanoi soon and I had the distinct impression this group wanted very much to be able to present to the delegates in attendance at that convention the results of Thuan's "successful" effort to locate Tom Mahoney's soul. Video footage of today's meeting, Ms. Nguyen advised us, would be used as television advertising to promote the upcoming convention. Their excitement also seemed to stem from the fact that, while almost all Vietnamese believe in the ability of telepaths to locate wandering souls, they knew we Americans were, to varying degrees, skeptical. This, then, would represent a unique challenge for Thuan.

During this preliminary conversation, Thuan sat silently; occasionally staring at an atlas which he had opened to a page displaying a map of central Vietnam. Though not rude to us, Thuan had a definite air of detachment about him. It is difficult to explain, but when he looked at me, it was as if his eyes were focusing on something just behind my head. Ms. Nguyen, sensing that I found this a bit disconcerting, explained that Thuan was in the process of communicating with the spirit world and so

wasn't really observing much around him at the moment.

After several minutes, Thuan, through an interpreter, asked me several questions about Tom Mahoney including whether he had "a long face." The answer to such a question is, of course, entirely subjective. I did not answer immediately because I was trying to envision Tom's physiognomy. Doc then whispered to Ms. Nguyen that he had observed a folder in front of her which contained, among other documents, the copy of Tom's high school yearbook photo that, he (Doc) had sent to Toan the previous November. Ms. Nguyen, who appeared to have forgotten the photo was there, immediately produced it for Thuan. After studying it briefly, Thuan seemed satisfied that this was the same face as that of the wandering soul with whom he was currently communicating.

Once the face was identified, Thuan then seemed confused about Tom's exact age (The Vietnamese believe everyone is one-year old at birth). When Doc had sent information to Toan in November, he had assumed Mahoney and I were born in the same year — 1948. I then advised Thuan that Tom was born in 1947, but died in 1968 about two months before his 21st birthday. This information seemed to clear up whatever inconsistencies were bothering him.

Soon Thuan was writing what appeared to be driving directions on a piece of plain white typing paper. When he finished, took another piece of paper and drew an elaborate map. This process took about 10 minutes and Ms. Nguyen explained that it was okay for us to talk among ourselves quietly while he drew, because he was so focused now on information he was obtaining from Mahoney's soul; he could not hear us. We used this opportunity to ask questions, which the group was eager to answer. Toan acted as our interpreter for those in the group who did not speak English. Despite the fact that it was the end of the school year and Toan had an enormous amount of work to do back at his office, he decided to attend this meeting. I was delighted Toan stayed because the young man the CICH had originally asked to interpret for us spoke English in such an unusual dialect that I could scarcely understand him (Doc later jokingly speculated that the man appeared to have learned his English from a German who had learned his English from a Cajun).

After Thuan had finished drawing the map, he asked Toan translate it for us. The three of us could clearly see it was a drawing of the Khe Sanh Combat Base and the area south to Route 9. He pinpointed the ammo dump, airstrip, revetments, even the location of Doc's small regimental aid station (in its original location, before it was blown up and collapsed). Thuan pointed out the location of two cannon batteries and even some tanks parked on the southwest side by the U.S. Army Special Forces Forward Operating Base; about where I recalled once seeing them during the siege.

The three of us were asked how accurate we thought the map to be. We all spontaneously agreed it was probably 90 to 95 percent accurate for what it showed and for the relative location of those places. The attendees all seemed visibly elated by that news. Thuan even smiled a bit. I was asked to sign and date the original map and write on it that I believed the map, as described to me, to be about 95 percent accurate.

Thuan then began drawing another map of the area leading up to Hills 865 and 881S from Route 9. Since Doc had just been in that area last May, and had climbed those hills, I asked him to check the completed map for accuracy. Doc replied that as he understood the translation of the points of reference on the map as described to us by Toan, it was 90 percent accurate. I subsequently signed and dated the map and wrote on it that it was 90 percent accurate.

This map showed Tom Mahoney's remains to be at the very base of the hill, near a village not far from the home of a man by the name of Mr. Nguyen. This was at the very bottom of a ravine below Hill 865 and several hundred meters from the spot Tom was last seen. Though this immediately seemed highly improbable to me, I was resolved to keeping an "open mind."

Mr. Thuan than wrote out a list of reference points and the items we would find at the site of his remains. All that remained of Tom, he said, were 3 very small teeth (he illustrated the size by covering up all but the very tip of his right baby finger with his left hand). He said we would also find a canvass ammo pouch with a deteriorated metal M-16 magazine containing the remnants of bullets. Thuan illus-

trated, by pointing to the left side of his abdomen, that Tom had been wearing the pouch on that part of his utility belt. These items were to be found 1.6 meters below the surface. Thuan then repeated, for emphasis, that the teeth were very small. The significance he placed on the size of the teeth underscores what I had been previously told by others familiar with the search for such remains; to wit, the climate and soil composition of the country have, over the last 40 years, thoroughly decomposed all large bone. Most remains now being located are very small bone fragments, teeth or pieces of durable clothing, like boots. Thuan would later claim to have located many remains that had completely decomposed into only a thin layer of "black earth."

Thuan asked me to close my eyes and think of Tom for five minutes. As I did, my images of Mahoney raced in an unusually rapid manner, like someone quickly riffling through the pages of a book. I felt very calm and heavy-lidded during that time, but had no other unusual sensations such as that of "a presence" or revelation. Doc later told me that Thuan had been staring intently at me, nearly unblinking, for the entire time. When I opened my eyes, after what Doc said was about 4 minutes, Thuan then asked me if I felt unusually warm or hot (it was a relatively cool day in Hanoi). He said that Tom had "visited me" and I would get that same feeling when I was above the spot he believed the remains were located. I told him I was not getting the sensation he described. I was, however, perspiring, though I believed that to be the result of not having yet acclimated to the ubiquitous humidity.

At my reply, Thuan showed no frustration, but instead turned to the group and spoke quietly with them for several minutes. Toan then translated the conversation for us. On the following Sunday, December 16, Thuan was scheduled to escort two families to the same region, one to A Luoi near the infamous A Shau Valley and the other further west into Laos. The trip would take them past Khe Sanh and Thuan was willing to stop there on the way, in order to lead us to the spot where he believed the remains were located and "bring your friend (Tom) to visit you."

We heartily and gratefully accepted his offer. As the meeting ended, Steve and I felt a great sense of relief. Not as familiar with the Vietnamese people as Doc now was, we had no idea how we would be received; particularly by the older ones who survived the war, and most particularly by those here in Hanoi who spent a good part of 9 years living in bomb shelters. The relief we felt soon turned to appreciation for the sincere amity and helpfulness of all those in the room. We cordially shook hands and said our goodbyes. Outside, on our way to catch a cab, we again thanked Toan and hoped he would join us for lunch. Knowing that lunch among men in Vietnam often involves drinking several beers, he gratefully declined — citing the enormous amount of work that required his attention — and hurried off toward his office.

Doc Topmiller was a highly trained and methodical historian renowned for his Vietnam histories. Steve Orr, now the Chief of Police of Lewiston Idaho, was for many years an accomplished police detective. I am a life-long skeptic. We are all veterans of the Khe Sanh battlefield and none of us is prone to what one might call "mass hysteria." With that said, we left the meeting amazed at Thuan's accuracy and knowledge of things known to us, but not otherwise previously published. I suddenly felt that we were being "summoned" to the hills of Khe Sanh by something beyond my recognition.

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The three of us flew from Hanoi to Hue the next morning and waited for Sunday. We tried not to discuss things too much to avoid over-anticipating. We did however, set some rules. The most important of these being to avoid presenting Thuan with any verbal or nonverbal cues while on Hill 865. Doc and I both thought we knew precisely where Tom was last seen because of the extraordinary memory of Captain Robert Black. Black had assisted Doc in preparing for his visit to Hill 865 the previous May. It was not that we had any particular reason to be suspicious of Thuan; we only wanted to be sure that we did not inadvertently "taint" the process just in case we had to analyze later how some inexplicable event might have occurred.

On Saturday morning, our travel agent, Nguyen Thi Dieu Van, whose office is in Hue, received an email from Toan containing instructions on where to find Thuan the following day. It was decided we would pick up our own interpreter in Quang Tri City on

the way there and then meet Thuan in Dong Ha, which was a few kilometers farther up Highway 1, at the junction of Hwy 9. Dieu Van would also make arrangements for the Buddhist religious ceremony to be held at the site of Tom's remains. This would require her to shop for an assortment of flowers, fruits, prepared foods and beverages to be set out as offering in the hope of enticing Tom's wandering soul from the battlefield.

Toan also wanted to be sure that we understood there was to be no digging at the site located by the telepath. He did not want anyone to get in trouble with the authorities. Technically, we (foreigners) were supposed to check in at a government office in Dong Ha before proceeding to Khe Sanh. There we would be assigned an "official" guide. Doc, however, noticed during his last few visits to this area that the rules had become lax and he and his driver could freely pass the army's gated checkpoint on the highway just east of Khe Sanh town, as long as the vehicle had an unexpired government-issued chauffeur registration tag on the windshield.

Toan need not have worried, because we had never intended doing any digging ourselves, regardless of what happened. Steve, Doc and I had already discussed this issue at great length. Steve, as a veteran crime scene investigator, pointed out that such activity by non-professionals might inadvertently destroy or lose important evidence. In addition, a finding and report by the Joint Task Force would carry far more credibility in official circles than one produced by a group of Tom's friends.

Doc echoed Toan's concern that both the Vietnamese and U.S. governments would frown upon a group of Americans digging up part of Vietnam without permission. He also added that Dieu Van had warned him that our driver, Mr. Phouc, would, for legal, cultural and religious reasons almost assuredly refuse to carry the remains of a dead body in his car back to Hue — regardless of how minuscule they might be. Doc further concluded that smuggling such remains out of Vietnam and back into the U.S. would be problematic. I added to our discussion the practical consideration that we did not have the archeological expertise or proper tools, such as sifting screens, to locate the tiny fragments described by Thuan. Moreover, the thought of banging a shovel blade into an unexploded shell or grenade was most unappealing.

Our driver picked us up in front of the Morin Hotel in Hue at 6 a.m. on Sunday morning December 16. It was raining steadily as we drove north on Highway 1 along the stretch of highway made famous by Bernard Fall as the "Street Without Joy." With the exception of a few houses and shops clustered at intervals along the way, the area appeared to be one long military cemetery. After the war the communists built numerous, elaborate and, to this day, well -maintained cemeteries for their war dead; while at the same time plowing up the cemeteries of their adversaries in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) with bulldozers. Such an act has catastrophic spiritual implications for the Vietnamese because now the ARVN souls will wander forever. Doc informed us that this was nothing new in Vietnamese history. Centuries ago, after a ruler ascended to the throne following an exceptionally bitter war, he ordered the bodies of all his enemies and their families exhumed and had his troops urinate on them.

I wanted to ask Thuan if he also searched for ARVN souls, but knew this was a politically-charged issue and decided to save him the discomfort of having to avoid answering such a question. I had already learned from my short time in communist Vietnam that it was never a good idea to discuss things with the Vietnamese that even remotely carried a political context.

We picked up our interpreter, Mr. Tam, at a travel agency office in Quang Tri City and proceeded further north to Dong Ha. I vividly recalled my last trip along that stretch of road. I was coming back from R&R and had hitch hiked a ride at Dong Ha on an ARVN truck heading south in the direction of my unit's location outside of Quang Tri City. Dressed in my summer service khaki uniform, a garrison cover, often referred to as a "piss cutter," pulled down tight over my head to avoid it blowing away and shiny dress uniform shoes, I sat alone perched high atop a load of grimy 55 gallon drums of diesel fuel — a target even the most myopic Viet Cong couldn't miss if he tried. Fortunately for me, none did.

After about 20 minutes, we arrived in Dong Ha and found Thuan in the parking lot of a hotel with the other group he was leading up to the mountains to

find their own lost soldiers. Thuan chose to ride in our van. It is here that I obtained most of my information about him and what he hoped to accomplish. When not in the process of communicating with souls, Mr. Thuan is friendly, confident and informative. During our ride, he advised me that his images of wandering souls were often vague and they sometimes behaved as if reluctant to be found. This is why he always needed to obtain as much information as possible to be sure he was dealing with the soul he was seeking.

When I asked him why he was doing this for us he explained that Vietnam had a "national problem" because there were still too many American remains, and consequently too many American wandering souls remaining there. Thuan then asked me how many U.S. MIAs there were. I told him there were about 1,800. He commented, with no hint of animosity, that this was an extremely low figure compared to the number of missing Vietnamese. He went on to remark that the U.S. government spends millions of dollars each year trying to locate these remains and was seldom successful anymore. He, and other telepaths, would be happy to locate all of them — at no cost.

In fact, telepaths cannot take any money for their efforts or the Lord Buddha will remove their "gift." Over the course of the day, Doc would ask Thuan several times if we could at least help pay the cost of his expenses for food and lodging. Each time he politely refused. The university apparently covers his salary and expenses. Thuan concluded by saying that Tom's was the first American soul he had attempted to reach, and would be pleased if it led to more "unhappy" souls of our war dead returning to happiness back among their families in the United States.

As we drove west on Highway 9, Thuan offered information about the countryside we were passing. As we drove past a large military cemetery west of Cam Lo, Thuan recalled that while once looking for a lost PAVN soul there, he came across three other souls wandering near the place where they had been killed. Two were Vietnamese (he did not clarify whether they were ARVN or PAVN) and the other was the soul of an U.S. Army artilleryman. Also near Cam Lo, I noticed that the rain had stopped. We were later to discover that it had not rained up at Khe Sanh that day and so our hike up the hill would be a mud-free one. This was a relief, because the last December we had spent here (in 1967) the entire area was gelatinous, rust-colored mire.

Highway 9 is a high quality and well-maintained asphalt road (in better repair than most rural highways I have driven in the U.S.) which we cruised along through the less densely populated areas at about 40 miles per hour. As we began, out ascent into the mountains an infamous landmark called "The Rockpile," appeared in our windshield. The sight of this dark, distinctive, lone pinnacle, with its sheer rocky slopes tangled in vegetation, produced a simultaneous sensation of foreboding for us three Khe Sanh veterans. During the siege of Khe Sanh in 1968, The Rockpile had represented the western boundary past which no one ventured. Now, as we sped by it, the words of Dante came to mind: "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here."

Within a few miles Montagnard hamlets began dotting the banks of the Da Krong and Rao Quan Rivers; growing in size and density as we neared Khe Sanh town. There were far more Montagnards, what the Vietnamese refer to as "Minority People," than I recalled having been there in 1967-68. I was elated to learn of their incredible comeback, considering the many thousands who were killed by bombs and artillery during the siege. The Montagnards still reside in clan enclaves, with their traditional houses built on stilts with woven reed walls and few windows. Doc reminded us that the Montagnards were still largely animists (though Christian missionaries had made some progress in converting them) and the architecture of their dwellings is designed to keep the evil spirits who inhabited the tall grass from entering at night and making mischief. Absurdly, nearly every one of these homes now has a TV satellite dish attached to its thatched or corrugated metal roof.

After successfully passing by the army checkpoint east of Khe Sanh, we drove into the town. I was astounded by the size and economic vitality of the place. It was a virtual metropolis compared to what it had been when I had briefly lived there in January 1968. About two kilometers into the town, Thuan ordered our driver to turn right onto a non-descript road that soon changed from asphalt to pounded red earth. After proceeding along the road for about 4

kilometers, Thuan asked our driver to stop at a Montagnard house where he questioned the farmer for several minutes about directions. We then proceeded another 500 meters, where he had us stop at a "Y' in the road, similar to the one he had sketched during our meeting in Hanoi.

Here Thuan appeared lost. He walked up one road for several hundred meters and then back. He apologized to us for the confusion, saying he often became temporarily disoriented when he arrived at a place that he had previously envisioned remotely — but he was confident he would work things out. Thuan now realized the Nguyen house he had described on his map in Hanoi, near where he had believed Tom's remains to be, was not accurate but merely a reference point on the way to the actual location.

Thuan then asked me where the "airfield" was located. When I told him it was about 2 kilometers in the opposite direction from Hill 881S, he politely disagreed (this odd exchange will be explained shortly). We then got back into the van and drove northwest for about another kilometer and into a fertile little valley at the base of both Hill 881S (to the northwest) and Hill 689 (to the south).

Suddenly, while I was not conscious of anything other than the incredibly beautiful scenery passing by my window, I began to weep -- silently, but uncontrollably. My first reaction was to hide this inexplicable onset of emotion from the others in the van. I made quick, surreptitious hand movements to wipe away the tears. However, after a few poorly stifled sobs, I realized everyone else in the car knew I was crying and were avoiding eye contact with me in order to make me feel less uncomfortable. I have no idea why I began weeping at that moment. Only that some vaguely defined yet overpowering sorrow had engulfed me. I was over the episode in about five minutes and later discussed it with Doc and Steve. Both told me they would have been more surprised had I NOT done something like that.

We soon stopped at the Montagnard hamlet of Lang Ta Tuc. While Tuan and Tam were speaking to the Montagnards about leaving our vehicles there, Steve Doc and I noticed a man from the other van who was about our age. He was wearing a 1960's-era gabardine dress uniform of the NVA, necktie and highly polished leather formal dress shoes. There were no medals, insignia of rank or unit on his uniform. We introduced ourselves and learned he was traveling with family members to locate his brother, an NVA soldier who had been killed during the war near the A Shau Valley, about 20 miles south. Doc asked him if he, too, had fought in the war. The man replied that he had, against the Americans at Tay Ninh, located between Saigon and the Cambodian border. Despite the potential for an awkward moment, he was quite friendly and sympathetic with our mission and wanted to join us on our hike up the hill to pay his respects to our fallen friend. We agreed.

Once the group had reassembled, we began the hike up the hill. In addition to the NVA soldier, and we three Americans, our group consisted of Thuan and two fellow telepaths. One, a female, had attended our meeting in Hanoi on the previous Friday. The other, was a man who I had not seen before. Also with us for the climb was our driver Phouc, and Tam the translator. We also hired two Montagnard guides; one armed with a machete and the other a long-handled hoe, who I later each paid 200,000 Vietnamese Dong (about $12 USD). This, Doc later told me, represented more than they might make in an entire month.

After leaving the hamlet and still on relatively level ground, we passed along the rim of several rice paddies and then into a small grove of coffee bushes. After crossing a 30-foot-wide stream, we began ascending a steep jungled trail for about 1500 meters, then on to a somewhat wider dirt road through open grassland for about another 2 kilometers. The road became increasingly steep as we approached the summit. The climb reminded us of how much respect we had for the incredible moxie of those Marine line-company troops who regularly patrolled these hills loaded down with gear; in stifling humidity under a searing summer sun (such imagery makes it clear why they tagged themselves as "grunts").

As we approached the steepest part of the climb, Doc talked of the April 1967 fight to seize this place and we were again humbled by the courage of the Marines who scaled these tortuous slopes in the face of withering enemy gunfire — sustaining nearly 400 casualties before all the hilltops were finally se-

cured.

Doc had made this climb the previous May and, using information from the July 1968 "Dorow investigation" of Tom's loss, found what he believed to be the place where Tom's remains were last seen. As we approached the top of Hill 865 from the west, we made sure not to give Thuan a clue as to where we thought the location might be. Though I had by now concluded that I would not be surprised if Thuan located the exact same site, I still wanted to keep the process as free of doubt as humanly possible.

So the three of us intentionally walked past the position where we believed Mahoney was last seen, part way down into the saddle between Hills 865 and 881S, and waited for the others to arrive. I took the opportunity to walk up to the site of the Marine main position on Hill 881S. Just northeast of that, the trail crossed a knoll before descending the hill roughly in the direction of Hill 881N. This knoll was the one to which the last evacuation helicopter on the evening of July 6, 1968 had carried Captain Black and the enlisted HST man hanging from its skids to safety.

Now, nearly 40 years later, the knoll was covered in a thicket of high trees and an abundance of dense jungle vegetation. It was a bit spooky looking into the shadows of that grove; yet for some reason I decided I needed to be in there - alone. So I left Steve at the top of Hill 881S and walked into the trees. When I was in the densest part, I stopped and said aloud: "Okay Tommy, if there is anything to all this, please make it known to me now." I then peered into the dark recesses of the forest for a few minutes; a bit frightened I would see something; yet unable to stop looking for movement. Nothing happened. It was a strange thing to do and definitely out of character for me. However it was a strange day; one that was about to get even stranger after we returned to Hill 865 where Doc was standing and watching Thuan and his entourage as they approached from the west.

As he passed the point that has been the location of the main gate into the fortification on Hill 865, also called the "western gate," Thuan stopped and squatted by the road and peered intently down the south slope. It was there, on Dorow's sketch, that Tom's body was shown to have been last seen on. Thuan concentrated for about a full minute and then turned his head toward me, smiled enigmatically and gestured down the hill three times with his right forefinger as if to say: He is down there. While Steve was photographing all this, Doc and I remained poker-faced and whispered to each other out of the corners of our mouths like two inept ventriloquists: "Holy crap!"

Thuan then stood up and walked to the opposite, or north, slope, and looked down the hillside for a while. Then, as if confused, he began walking farther up the hill, past us in the saddle, and part of the way to the former Marine main position on Hill 881S. He was clearly looking for something specific. After about five minutes, he came over to me and, as he had done about an hour earlier when we had stopped our van on the road, asked: "Where is the airfield?" This question immediately lowered my expectations. I pointed in the direction of Khe Sanh Combat Base and replied, "Eight kilometers that way." Slightly frustrated now, Thuan asked to see the map he had drawn three days before in Hanoi. I took it out of my backpack and spread it on the ground, holding it down against a steady breeze that was starting to blow in from the southeast.

Thuan pointed to a spot on that map and repeated his question. I gave him the same reply. It seemed to me at the moment that he was confusing the Combat Base with this hill, and I was fast becoming disappointed. Thuan then slightly rephrased his question to the interpreter, who then asked me: "Where did the aircraft land here?"

It immediately occurred to me, Doc and Steve how difficult it is to precisely translate certain expressions from Vietnamese to English. This is exacerbated by the fact that no one in our group, except we three and the NVA soldier, had even been born by the time the war ended and so were unfamiliar with the expressions and jargon of that era. However, it was all now becoming clear and so I replied, "Do you mean the "landing zone (LZ)?" Thuan became excited again, "Yes, was there a landing zone near this spot?" I replied that we were very close to what had once been the western-most LZ on the hill, the very LZ from which the evacuation of the Marines from both Hills 865 and 881S was to have taken place.

Seemingly reenergized, Thuan lept up from where he had been squatting at the map on the ground. His gaze traversed nearly 270 degrees of horizon before facing southwest and coming to an abrupt stop.

He then walked rapidly in that direction, up to the edge of the hill and, without hesitation, started down the slope. Doc, Steve and I watched as he made short switchbacks in the 2-foot high elephant grass. **He stopped beside a lone, nearly leafless tree approximately 50 feet down the slope, almost exactly where the Dorow sketch showed Tom's remains were located**. Thuan then looked up the hill at me, his eyes revealing no emotion other than earnestness, and said quietly: "Your friend is here."

Having uttered those four words, Thuan turned to his left, curled up on the ground and began to retch violently for several minutes. His assistant, who was standing nearby, advised me that this happened to him after every successful effort. After vomiting, Thuan became noticeably ebullient for the remainder of the day.

I was still confused because the location of Tom's remains, as described by Thuan in Hanoi three days earlier, was much farther down the hill. So I immediately asked him if "the three small teeth and ammo pouch" were at this location next to the tree. He replied that they were, indeed, right here — 1.6 meters under the ground. He then told me a "rocket" (again that could be at translation issue) as well as a bomb had struck Tom. Thuan walked down the slope toward the southwest about 20 meters and called to me, moving his arm over the top of his head in an arc. This, the translator said, was the direction from which the plane with the bomb had arrived.

Being a person who had never given much credence to spiritual or paranormal phenomena, I will admit to be astounded at that moment. Few people in the world knew the location of the 1968 incident, let alone what the area would look like 40 years later.

As if this were not amazing enough, while waiting for the Buddhists to bring their offerings down the slope for the religious service, Steve noticed a large clump of elephant grass, taller than the surrounding vegetation, about 12-15 feet southeast of the site. He asked the Montagnard with the machete to hack down the high grass. As he whacked away the grass, we found ourselves looking down into an old NVA "spider hole." It was about 2 feet wide and measured about 3.5 to four feet deep, using the hoe handle to measure, with perfectly cut perpendicular walls on three sides, (the downhill side of the hole had been eroded away by water). We could clearly see striations on the interior walls of the hole left by the blade of an entrenching tool. What made this find appear so **astonishing** was that it corroborated the PAVN military record found in 2003 which described Luong and Long dragging Mahoney about 30 feet from the point he was originally shot, to a spot directly in front of their "fortifications," as bait for an ambush.

After everyone finally arrived at the site, we asked a Montagnard guide to hack away some of the elephant grass with his machete. I then laid the plaque on the ground and Doc, Steve and I had a moment of silence for Tom and other the Bravo Company Marines who will never forget the afternoon of July 6, 1968.The Vietnamese then began the Buddhist service, covering the spot around our plaque with an assortment of flowers, fruit, candy and other pleasing foods and smoldering incense sticks, in order to lure Tom's soul from the perpetual misery of the battlefield. Among these offerings were several stacks of imitation paper money, which was burned at the end of the ceremony, ostensibly for Tom's use. One of the two telepaths who accompanied Thuan from Hanoi chose the nearby "spider hole" in which to burn the money. I recall wondering at the time if his using that hole had some ritualistic significance; though more than likely it was selected to prevent the steadily increasing wind from spreading flames along the slope.

Once the makeshift altar of flowers, food, "paper money" and even a bottle of Vietnamese vodka was laid out on the ground, I was asked by Thuan to stand before it and think of Tom in order to help bring his soul to that place. While doing that, several of the Buddhists, including Thuan, Doc and the NVA soldier, sidled up to me and began praying; some rolling the stem of a single burning incense stick between the palms of their hands. I began to weep again, but this time it came on slowly and predictably, unlike the unexpected burst of emotion I had experienced earlier in the day. At the end of the

service, while the "money" was still smoldering in the "spider hole," some of the Vietnamese began picking up the offerings to take back, as was customary in the case of such temporary and remote altars.

One of the Montagnard guides began to dig and had gone down about 18 inches before we stopped him. Into that hole I placed, the smaller of the two plaques. The events of the day had so broadened my perspective that I no longer cared if someone knew the location the plaque and returned to dig it up. It now seemed to be such a trivial concern.

As I placed the plaque in the hole, Mr. Tam put the vodka bottle in there for what I guess he thought might make an interesting photo op. However, when he went to remove it, the old NVA piped up sternly and Tam immediately replaced the bottle alongside the plaque. I then asked Tam what the man had just demanded of him, and Tam replied: "He said, 'Leave it for the soldier.'" This NVA soldier's simple and spontaneous **words of respect were profoundly moving to us three Khe Sanh veterans.**

Standing there amid the waving elephant grass and swirling smoke, honoring the last Marine to die on the murderous slopes of this legendary hill, alongside a former enemy from a war nearly forgotten by most Vietnamese and Americans, was an image none of us will ever forget.

Just as the Montagnard was about to cover the plaque and bottle with dirt, Doc's billed cap, with the USMC emblem on the front, blew off his head in a gust of wind and landed upright in the middle of the hole. As he reflexively leaned down to pick it up, the Vietnamese cried out, as if in a single voice, for him to leave it there. They told us that it was not uncommon for wandering souls to be "playful." **Tom,** they continued, **was happy his friends had come for him** and had knocked the hat off Doc's head as a sort of prank (an act definitely in keeping with Tom's personality). So the hat was buried along with the plaque and vodka.

Before leaving that spot, Thuan lit five incense sticks and told me to carry them off the hill so that Tom's soul could follow the smoke. After about 15 minutes, and the incense sticks now being about half burnt, Thuan took them from me and snuffed them out. He advised me to keep them "safe" and I would receive further instructions about what to do with them after returning to Hue. As we straggled off the hill, I looked back at the line of people who had met in this remote place (remote even for most Vietnamese) to help one lost soul among the countless of Vietnam. I will forever be touched by their sincerity and compassion. We stopped back up by the site of the western gate for a water break and to munch on some of the offerings for Tom. Never, in my wildest dreams, did I imagine I would one day be sitting on the ground near the spot of my friend's death, sharing a Ritz cracker with him, and trying to absorb the incredible proceedings I had just witnessed.

As we began to descend the trail to southwest, the ominous mass of Hill 689 comprised most of that horizon. I knew of its long and bloody history, from the day in April 1968 when forty Marines of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marine were killed in battle there, to a similar fate barely avoided by the 1st Battalion, 1st Marine regiment the day after Mahoney was lost. The crest of the hill appeared to be unusually devastated, unlike most of the others in the area; a dark and barren ellipse seemingly denuded of all but the meanest vegetation. I knew it still contained the unrecovered remains of Marines, who had suffered the same fate as Mahoney (even in the same week) and hoped to have the opportunity to ask Thuan if he sensed anything up there. However, Thuan was in a "zone" all the way down the hill, squatting periodically to stare off into the valley below, deep in concentration. At one point, he told me, sweeping his hand across 90 degrees of the small valley: "There are many ghosts down there." In the end, I did not find a propitious moment to ask him about the souls of those abandoned Marines on Hill 689.

On the way down the trail, Doc, Steve and I briefly discussed the possibility of the two Montagnards returning to dig for Tom's remains. Doc, whose Vietnamese language skills are good enough to understand most conversations, believed these Montagnards did not comprehend enough Vietnamese to understand the significance of the spot. They more than likely thought we were there to honor the place of Tom's death, rather than identify the location of his mortal remains. He further conjectured that, as animists, they are highly superstitious and deathly afraid of spirits. As such, they would probably not

venture back there if they fully understood the significance of that spot. Bottom line: They would likely go back and dig up the plaque, hat and vodka — but nothing else.

On the way to back to the village, Doc slipped on off a crumbling dike and flopped into a rice paddy. That night, over beers in the courtyard of the Morin Hotel in Hue, he tried to convince us that, as with the loss of his hat, Tom's mischievous spirit was responsible for his awkward plunge. Steve and I think not.

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Two days later, on December 18, we visited a Buddhist temple in west Hue to thank the nun, Thich Nu Minh Tanh, for initially urging us to make this trip to Vietnam. She had just received a telephone call from Thuan, who provided her with instructions on what to do next. After removing our shoes and entering the temple, I was amazed to see, immediately off to the right, an elaborate altar dedicated to Tom Mahoney's wandering soul. His black-framed high school graduation photo was surrounded by offerings similar to the one's we had brought to Hill 865. Incense sticks burned perpetually, replaced hourly by young novitiate nuns. Thich Nu Minh Tanh asked me if I had brought along the five half-burned incense sticks from the hill, which I had done. She then proceeded to reignite each of them and have me place them in a holder on the altar. Tom, she said, will now be able to follow them to this place and his soul will reside here among his "friends" until such time as his mortal remains are recovered. If they are not, his soul will remain in this temple forever.

She then asked us to sit on cushions at a low, highly lacquered table that had been set up in the main part of the temple, just in front of the wide-open front doors. A novitiate soon appeared and commenced burning a great deal of incense in a brazier on the front step. Soon a haze of incense smoke floated in the wide doorway. Upon the table was a delightful variety of foods and nectars, including two round western-style layer cakes. One was decorated in frosting with the words "Merry Christmas - A lot of friends." The other read "Happy New Year — A lot of friends." All, a charming effort designed to lure Tom's wandering soul inside. We spent the next several minutes silently contemplating the recent events. Shortly thereafter, eight nuns in yellow and white robes arrived from behind the main altar and for the next 30 minutes chanted an ancient hymn for the safe arrival of Tom's soul. Lost in the soothing cadence of the chant, I finally conceived the thing we had been hoping for all along — a sense of peace after 40 years.

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After returning from Vietnam on December 22, 2007, I would receive a telephone call from Captain Robert Black. The Captain advised me that the sketch of the terrain produced in conjunction with the July 1968 investigation of the loss of Tom Mahoney had not been drawn by him, as Doc and I surmised, but probably by Lt. Dorow. While Dorow had not been an eyewitness to the tragic events of that afternoon, records show he had been charged with conducting the subsequent investigation. Black further indicated that this map must be inaccurate because Mahoney had definitely been dragged down the north side of ridgeline, rather than the south. After reexamining Dorow's map in light of Black's observations, it became clear the directional reference arrow of "North" on that map — was actually pointing east. Since Doc Topmiller had used this map during his visit to the hill the previous May, and we were now relying on it again during this December 16, 2007 visit, it is apparent that Mahoney's remains were last seen on the opposite slope, 30-40 meters due north of where we now believed them to be.

Though I was initially skeptical of the telepathic aspects of this journey, I cannot say that I am still — even though it appears Thuan picked the wrong location. During those three days, I forced my mind open to the possibility of there being such a reality beyond the empirical world. It was a good thing for me; one that felt far more logical, in its own way, than I would have earlier imagined. It was not what one might call "a life-altering event," though I do not know if such change would have happened to this "old dog" even if things had concluded on a more miraculous note. Yet the humility, sincerity and quiet dignity of these people and their genuinely compassionate effort to ease the misery of single soul, among millions, made me wonder during the long plane ride back to the United States if Lt.

Dorow's flawed map, with which I so confidently searched in all the wrong places, might not be a metaphor for my journey back to the place where my youth and innocence were lost. Perhaps there were two "wandering souls" on their way home.

The end of this story has yet to be told. If, because of our efforts, Tom's spirit now resides in a more caring and harmonious atmosphere within the pagoda at Hue — it is still but halfway to its final destination. Now that we have made the necessary corrections to Lt. Dorow's sketch and have had that information corroborated by Captain Robert Black, who was within a few meters of Tom's body on the afternoon of July 6, 1968; our next stop is to contact the OSD-DPMO and request they send a Joint Task Force team to the site. I also intend including the information provided by Thuan. While the contribution of a telepath may not have relevance to the Americans on the team, it will to the Vietnamese. Doc Topmiller so strongly feels we are near a resolution to this case, that he has agreed to return to Vietnam, at his own expense, to identify for the Joint Task Force team the exact location of the site, should they wish to dig.

In retrospect, I find it interesting that at our meeting of December 13, 2007 in Hanoi, Thuan's second map showed a hamlet just at the base of Hill 865. He originally said Tom's remains, which consisted of three small teeth and deteriorated M-16 magazine pouch, were near the base of the hill, not far from a farmhouse on the outskirts of that village. When we were extrapolating from Lt. Dorow's sketch that Tom's body was last seen on the southwest slope of Hill 865, then Thuan's map information seemed unreasonable since the nearest village in that direction, Lang Ta Tuc, where we had left our van, is over 2,000 meters away —a ridiculously long distance for human remains to migrate.

However, in light of the new information about Mahoney's last location, that information now appears more realistic. Only 50-75 meters below the steep drop-off near where Tom was actually lying on the north side of the hill is the head of a small and relatively flat valley. About 200-300 meters beyond that is the village of Lang Ruon. In 1996, the JPTFFA team went to "Ruon" and asked villagers there if they knew the whereabouts of Tom's remains. None said they did. However, given the force of the bomb blast that damaged Tom's body, the steepness of the slope and the possibility of a farmer's hut now being on the outskirts of that village near the base of the hill; the location of the remains identified by Thuan on the second map fall within the realm of possibility.

There is not a day that goes by when I do not shake my head in wonder at the remarkable chain of events that has occurred since the publication of A Patch of Ground nearly three years ago. I have been a reluctant participant most of the way. Yet having witnessed for so long now the nobility of spirit demonstrated by Tom Mahoney's family, friends, fellow Marines, total strangers and former adversaries, I have come to relish the opportunity to do whatever I can to speed his destiny on to a successful conclusion — whatever that might be. Perhaps, in the end, we will find the story was never about a tiny piece of Tom still resting on some remote hillside in Vietnam; but rather about the tiny piece of him carried in the hearts of these most human of beings.

Mike Archer

1 The westernmost Marine position within the Hill 881S fortification, often referred to as Hill 881A, also has the geographic designation of "Hill 865." To avoid reader confusion in trying to distinguish between Hills 881S, 881A and 881N, I will henceforth refer to this position as Hill 865 (The numeric names given to these hills are based on their elevation in meters above sea level).

2 During the war, Americans most often referred to these troops as being in the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). The proper designation, however, is People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN). While I will continue to use the term most familiar to the reader (NVA), be aware that some quoted references will refer to them as PAVN.

3 Col. Robert H. Barrow, Commanding Officer 9th Marine Regiment, later 27th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

4 The NVA referred to the combination Hills 881S and 865 as a single location they called "Hill 845."

ED NOTE: Photos of the trip back to Vietnam to Honor Thomas Patrick Mahoney III are on Pages 44-45

WISHING UPON A SILVER STAR

By Dennis Mannion
C1/13 & K 3/26

They came single file across the top of Hill 861 sometime after first light, passed within 5 feet of me, and headed down slope towards the northwest gate. It wasn't a gate in the literal sense but instead a narrow passageway that zigzagged through the protective barbed wire. As we watched them go, I said to my radio operator, "Screw that business! I'm glad that's not us going out there," and he emphatically agreed.

It was January 26, 1968 -- five days since the hill had been partially overrun by the NVA -- and this was the first combat patrol heading onto the very terrain that had been the NVA's main avenue of approach. The fighting hole that Dave and I occupied was atop 861 -- the FO team needed to be able see as clearly as possible -- and had great, unobstructed views especially to the west and north. Our little section of red clay real-estate was within 5 feet of a huge bomb crater left over from the Hill Fights, and anyone taking the shortest route across the top of the hill would inevitably walk in the narrow space between us and the bomb crater. Had we wanted to, we could have reached up and touched any of those Second Platoon, Alpha 1/26 Marines as they walked by but we did not; nor did we speak with any of them, because, after all, there was nothing to be said. Nor did we make any eye contact because they approached us from behind and our focus was on the dangerous terrain where they'd soon be. From where we stood shoulder-deep in our fighting hole, it was less than 50 yards to the gate, and as the patrol passed, the usual clinks and clunks of their 782 gear was masked by larger, distinctive clicks as charging handles on their M-16's were engaged and safeties thumbed off.

Since the 21st, Dave and I had called in numerous artillery missions northwest of the hill into the exact area this platoon was headed -- active machine guns, RPG's, mortars, and even, we thought, a recoilless rifle. It wouldn't take a combat patrol to convince us -- or anyone else -- that the NVA were still out there in good numbers and still active. However, someone higher up the chain-of-command decided that the location needed to be probed and these Marines from Alpha were given that task.

Along with having unobstructed views, I also had my USMC issued, Bausch & Lomb 7x50 binoculars. The patrol was easy to follow as it moved out the gate, over a small knob of hill, veered to the left, and headed down into a narrow draw. The binocs were a help as the magnification made the Marines appear 7 times closer than they actually were, but they were not essential for me to visualize the trail, because I had made that same trek numerous times in late December and early January. The last time I had been on that same section seven days earlier, I had been so at ease that I wore my Converse Black Low sneakers instead of jungle boots! But that was pre-siege posturing, and this was now the real thing.

The patrol came up out of the draw and headed uphill into an area that had been heavily wooded just a few days earlier. When Kilo took over the defense of 861 in late December that trail was impossible to see once it entered the trees -- nor was it possible to see 861 if you were on that section of trail -- but now, after seemingly constant shelling and air strikes, most of the trees were gone and the trail was easily discernable through the shattered branches. As the line of Marines began their ascent, Dave yelled, "Jeez! Movement! Gooks!" I swung my binocs in the direction of his pointing hand, and 50 yards to the right of the Marines and hidden behind some splintered tree trunks, 2 groups of NVA began to emerge seemingly out of the ground. They were not advancing; instead they began to spread out parallel to the men of Alpha.

To this day I do not know which side fired first, but the Marines reacted quickly, turned to their right, dropped to the ground for cover, and began moving off the trail and up towards the NVA. The intensity of the gunshots from both sides increased. The distance from them to me -- just over 300 meters -- provided a weird, almost time-lapse experience as I'd see a grenade explode or a stream of tracers fired, but it was seconds later that those sounds reached my ears. The AK-47 fire was as intense as ours, but it was only the Marines who began to maneuver forward. They were halted for a time by the withering, return gunfire, pulled back to the trail itself, and then the 81mm FO in the bunker next to mine worked up a fire mission for them. Soon after

that, Marines began to move forward again and in my binocs I watched with fascinated horror as one individual stood and fired his M-79 grenade launcher. I expected the gunner to drop back to the ground while he re-loaded, but instead he kept moving forward. Every pull of his trigger sent another grenade in among the uprooted tree trunks and brought him further towards the NVA! He seemed oblivious to the bullets that were stitching the dirt around him as he progressed. Suddenly, he lurched violently backward, arms flailing up, the M-79 falling to his side. He landed on his back and remained motionless. By now, it was hard to see clearly even with the binoculars because the dust and smoke enveloped the entire slope. There was a discernable lull in the gunfire from both sides and the platoon began to move back onto the trail. When they turned to their left, and began to move downhill, I knew they were coming back home.

I closely watched their slow but steady progress towards 861 and it was clear that 4 Marines in the middle of the column were carrying someone. I hoped for a survivable injury but I expected the worst as I had seen his movements when the bullet hit. It was only after the first few Marines zigzagged back through the gate that I lowered the binoculars from my eyes. No longer a combat patrol, the returning Marines began to individually spread out and move across the top of the hill and down towards the LZ. The four men carrying the grenadier passed directly between our position and the bomb



crater for the second time that day. There had been no time to place him onto an improvised litter of some sort -- so he was being held off the ground and carried up 861 by his arms and legs -- but I knew instinctively that there was no life left in this young man. He had forfeited everything to help his fellow Marines and I had watched it happen 7 times larger than life and less than 300 yards away. It is one of my specific Hill 861 memories that has never faded or blended with other events from those weeks and months even after forty-one years. Yet, in all that time I never knew his name.

I learned in May of this year -- 2009 -- from John Rauch, 2nd platoon Alpha 1/26, that the Marine's name was PFC Dwight T. Denning and that his actions that day earned him a Silver Star. I have been thinking about that name and that decoration a lot in the last months. I have read many accounts in other Silver Star citations but his is the only one where I actually witnessed the actions that cost him his life and earned him this award.

Growing up, I was taught to wish on the occasional shooting star -- still do -- and if I could wish on this Silver Star, I'd request a simple trade. The medal goes back into a storage container somewhere in the United States and Dwight Denning gets to progress towards old age with memories, holidays, relationships, and a life well-lived.

I know it can't happen, but I do wish……I do wish.

Semper Fi
Dennis Mannion

I GET MAIL

Tom,

I would first like to thank you for your efforts on behalf of 1st Sergeant Bill Malcolm and his military service published in this summer's issue of Red Clay (Pages 22-23); I will get copies to his Mother.

On pages 64-66 the article (IN MEMORY DAY), listed the names of 123 veterans from Vietnam who died prematurely from Non-Combat related injuries and emotional suffering caused directly by the Vietnam War. GySgt Carroll Wilke was one of those men, and I felt compelled to pass on his story. Gunny Wilke already with 20 years of service in the Marine Corps, suffered a heart attack in the Danang area on approximately 18 September 1967. He was flown back to the United States but expired on 20 September 1967. Due to the circumstances of his death he was not eligible for his name to be inscribed on the Vietnam Memorial. It obviously has happened to hundreds of other veterans, but was especially frustrating to me, since Gunny Wilke was from my hometown of Clifton, NJ. So it was a pleasure (a small one) to have his name read aloud at the wall where I felt his name should have been added a long time ago.

Rich Delotto

LATE OBITS

is with deep sadness that I must post of the passing of my father SSgt Robert H. Zeliff on Thursday September 17th, 2009, after a long battle with heart disease and diabetes. He served in country from 1967 to 1968 with the 5th Marines and with 1/13/ HQ Comms. He was on active duty with the USMC from 1959 to 1969. He also served as a civilian employee at MCLB Barstow from 1975 to 1994, retiring as director of MWR. Semper Fi dad, we love you and will miss you. Chris Zeliff PO2 USCG, 1988-1998.



MOM & DAD

He was a USMC veteran, served 1959-1969 and in Vietnam in '67 and '68. He served at Cam Lo and

Khe Sanh combat base. He was at Khe Sanh during the siege and battle in 1968, medvaced out shortly after the offensive started. Dad turned down a purple heart, being 100% Marine he felt that getting peppered by shrapnel from a 120mm rocket was nothing compared to the price many of his mates paid.

He made it through a major heart attack at 38 and kept on trucking. Stroke in 2001 and several other surgeries over the years but time finally caught up with him. Above all he showed me to always stick to your guns and to your word. Integrity was important with pops.

LATE OBITS

Captain Alec "Jeff" Bodenweiser, USMC Echo Co 2/26 Hill 861A

Ed Note: I had the extreme pleasure of serving with, and fighting alongside 1st Lt Jeff " Bodie" Bodenweiser in Echo Co 2/26 on Hill 861A at Khe Sanh. He was also a personal friend and a wonderful & caring person. I spent time with Jeff at Quantico as his house guest, and to really describe him,"He was a Perfect Gentleman". I will miss him.



Fellow Marines, TB S 6-67 classsmates, and all....My friend, and fellow Marine, A.J..(Jeff) Bodenweiser passed away. His battle was very courageous just as his fight was so many years ago against the NVA at Khe Sanh. We visited many times over the past few years, and I will miss him until the end of my days. Jeff was not only a great Marine, but also just a wonderful human being. His troops in Vietnam fondly called him "mother" because he did care about their welfare.

John A. Alstad

ELIZABETH LARSEN WIFE OF KSV LARRY LARSEN SUB UNIT 5

Mrs. Elizabeth Larsen, age 66, of Greybull, Wyoming passed away on Tuesday, September 22, 2009 at the Billings Clinic in Billings, Montana of natural causes. Elizabeth Larsen was born on April 8, 1943 in Council Bluffs, Iowa the daughter of Virgil and Ruby (Severn) Fetty. She was raised and educated in Wyoming. Liz married Harvey Kimbrough,having had three children. The couple later divorced. Elizabeth marring Larry Larsen on September 5, 1969.

She graduated from beauty college in Casper, Wyoming. Larry got transferred to Riverton, Wyoming and Liz worked in a few beauty shops and also at a nursing home. The couple then moved to Jeffery City, and she opened her own beauty shop. The couple then were transferred to Hulett, Wyoming where she opened "Balloons and More" gift shop and also worked at a grocery store in the bakery. The couple moved to Dacono, Colorado, when she was not able to work because of her health. Larry retired and they moved to Greybull, Wyoming. Elizabeth was active in Jeffery City Fire Department Aux. , Lions Club Aux., and the American Legion Aux.

She enjoyed doing crafts including, sewing clothing, and crocheting (she started when she was 6 years old). Liz collected recipes, stamps, coins, ducks, and frogs of all sorts. Liz had a green thumb and was very interested in all kinds of flowers. She was a collector of cartoons on life issues, so she could pass them on to family and friends. One of her favorite holiday's was Christmas. Liz's family was always foremost in her life, spending time with them was a great joy in her life. She had a very big heart and will be missed by all who knew and loved her. Elizabeth is survived by her husband of 40 years, Larry Larsen of Greybull, Wyoming; children: Christine Kimbrough, Benjamin (Brandi) Kimbrough, and Nancy Kimbrough, all of Gillette, Wyoming; brother, Walter Fetty of Fulton, California; sister, Leona (Bob) Adsit of Sheridan, Wyoming; brother, John Fetty of Gillette, Wyoming; six grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren.

A FEW PHOTOS FROM THE FIGHT FOR HILL 881N BY GOLF CO 2/3



Capt. James P. Sheehan talks on the radio just before the final assault on Hill 881 N on April 30, 1967. The Hill was one of several strategically important hills surrounding Khe Sanh in western Quang Tri Province in Vietnam's I Corps. The Marines were from Golf Co., 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division.



A Marine runs for cover while under fire on the top of Hill 881 N.



Navy Corpsman Dave Boucher Left, & Staff Sgt Ruben Santos treat wounded Pvt. William Vizzerra, 21, Phoenix, Ariz., near the crest of Hill 881 N



A Marine points out a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) position on the top of Hill 881 N.



Marines take a break after the worst of the fighting had ended



Marines use a poncho to carry the body of a Marine killed during the fierce battle for Hill 881N.

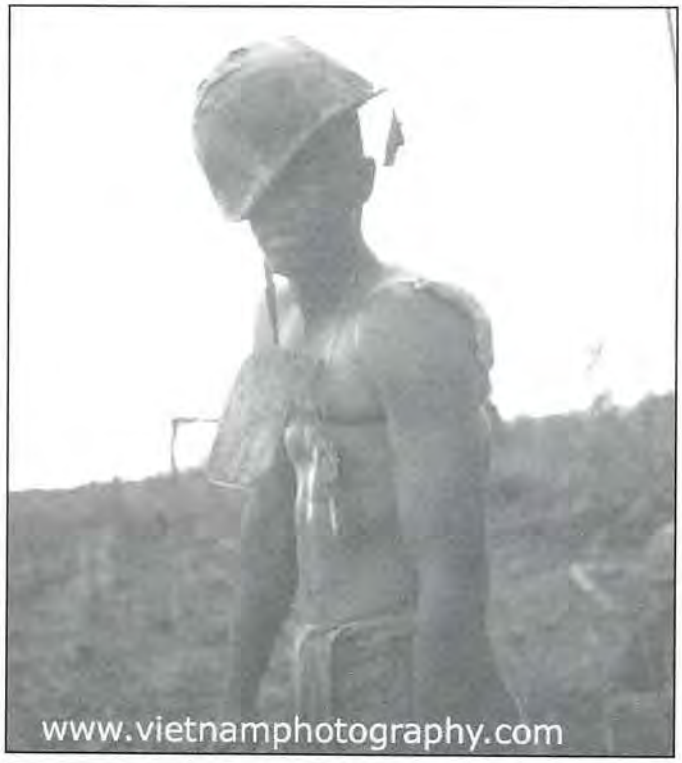

Marine J.K Johnson stands atop the bombed out face of Hill 881N



A Marine Officer Radioing in a report at the end of the fierce fighting



Marines at the top of Hill 881N after the fierce battle.



Marine Lt. Pete Hesser drags a mortally wounded Lcpl William Junior "Rock" Roldan down from the top of Hill 881N



A wounded Marine crawls along the bombed out face of

Bastard Bravo On The Move Again

By Cliff Treese

I want to inform everyone that I am a grandfather again. My youngest daughter had a baby girl on January 16, 2009. Her name is Mikayla Lynn Jean. I flew up to Penna. to be there for the birth. I was honored to feed her the first bottle. Her first daughter is now 2 years old and her name is Summer Rain Jean. Both are healthy and doing fine. (Pic# 1)

I finally got my 1978 Malibu finished and had the graphics put on. I stopped by Hooters of Melbourne, Florida, to get some pictures of my two cars for a flyer they made up for a Car Show we had a few months ago.

As everybody knows we lost Phil Mineer last July. After a lot of red tape and a final DNA test, his family held a funeral service for him in Mays Landing, NJ. (Pic # 2) The members who attended from B 1/13 were Mike Haight, Ron Shouse, Tom Keaton, and myself. Leroy Matlock from Echo Co 2/26 also attended. All of us were friends with Phil and all served in Khe Sanh together. (Pic # 2a) All of our wives attended the services with us. (Pic # 3) We met Phil's sisters and his brother (Pic # 4) along with his twin daughters. It was a nice service and we were hoping that more Khe Sanh Veterans could have attended. Phil was loved by many and will always be remembered by those who knew him.

During the third week of April every year, Wickham Park in Melbourne, Florida host, the Vietnam Veterans "All Veterans Reunion". This year Tom Keaton and Ron Shouse accompanied by their wives, Mary and Lynn respectively came down to enjoy the festivities. Tom's daughter Lisa also attended.

We started the day at the Palm Bay High School where we gave a little talk to the History class regarding Khe Sanh, and our experiences there. One student in the class who was confined to a wheel chair, and was wearing a Marine shirt. This boy was intrigued about Viet Nam and asked more questions than any other student.

By the end of the session he had everybody in tears informing the class how he came to be confined to a wheelchair, and his unbridled wish to become a Marine. After the Reunion ended, we gathered a few things to give to him. I returned to the school and gave him several personal things from the three of us. He was so happy that we thought about him, and that he started crying right in the class room.

Our next project the three of us tackled was something that we started last year, when Phil was at my house for the Reunion. I said that each year we would raise a new USA and Marine flag on my flag pole in front of my house. After the flag raising, (Pic # 5) we went to my back yard, and sat around the bar. Some of us went for a swim in my pool. Tom's nephew who lives in Palm Bay, is a retired Gunny Sgt from the Corps, who came over, while we all sat at the bar, and had a few beers. Ron was very tired and went to bed.

After he fell asleep, we decided to have some fun with him. Ron's Lizard walking stick was placed by his side, and four fox pelts were placed on him, and if anybody remembers the rats from Mobile, Alabama, that was also placed by his head. A very nice photo was taken of him and so he will never be able to forget his little nap. (Pic # 6)

On the 15th we all went to the local Hooters in Melbourne for a Car Cruise that I helped get started a few months before. While we were having a few beers, our wives went to the local Good Will store and did some shopping. My car was one of about 40 or 50 cars there. The week before I had won the best car voted by the Hooter Girls and won a 50 wings dinner and a free t-shirt. The three of us ate the wings while the women went shopping. I then talked to several of the girls and had them stand with Ron and Tom to take a picture.(Pic # 7) We had a great time and the sights weren't to bad either.

On the 19th of April we all went to Cocoa Beach for the Escort of the WALL to Wickham Park in Melbourne, to officially start the Reunion. My Malibu only has two seats, and Tom said he wanted to ride with me. (Pic # 8) So I talked to a friend of mine from Rolling Thunder Chapter 1 in Florida and got Ron a ride on a Harley for the Escort Ride. There was over 1400 motorcycles and more than 60 cars in the run. We came right down US 1 the Police had every intersection blocked for miles, and didn't allow any vehicles to cut in or go around the entire parade. The WALL was transported in a 5th wheel

trailer along with an enclosed trailer that housed the Vietnam and All Veterans of Brevard Mobile Museum items. As Tom and I drove down US 1 into Wickham Park, we were greeted with cheers and salutes from Marines and other vets, and civilians. It was a very proud feeling. After it was all over, I asked Tom if he enjoyed it and he said he had a great time.

Because of having the flags on the back of the car, I was one of the last cars in the parade. After some picture taking, all the vehicles were parked. We walked over to the area where the venders, and the beer wagon were set up. Doc Holiday the local DJ, was already playing music at the stage area. We got a beer and started mingling with the Veterans that were milling around. Ron and I met several Khe Sanh Vets whom we had met last year, and introduced them to Tom. They hit it off like they had known each other for years. Since the WALL was escorted on Sunday, and the Reunion actually didn't officially open until Thursday, several vendors were opened for some early bird sales. On Monday volunteers helped assemble the WALL so it would be ready for the official opening.

On the 24th I took my Malibu over to the entrance to the vending area and put my car and my personal memorabilia on display. (Pic # 10, 10a, 10b, 10c I had it set up from 9:00 am until almost 9:00 pm,. Hundreds of people took pictures of the car ,and checked out the things I had on display.

The next day we all went up to Cocoa Beach to the Pier. We walked along the beach and just chilled. Ron, Tom, and I had a picture taken at the display where they make it look like you were surfing. After we left the Pier we drove down to Patrick Air Force Base, and went to the PX. We also drove around the Base and saw all the C-130's on the runway, and the Hueys setting outside the hangers. Last year when Ron came down we were at Patrick and saw Air Force One sitting on the runway.

We made several trips to the Reunion. The nice thing about this reunion is you can come and go as you please. There is no charge for parking, and there is much to do in Central Florida. Disney, Sea World, Universal, Daytona Beach, or any number of places that are within an hours driving distance. Cape Canaveral is just north of Cocoa Beach, and it is a great place to visit. Also by Cape Canaveral is Port Canaveral were there is a lot of very good restaurants, and where many cruise ships sail out from. We all went for an Air Boat ride where we saw over 200 alligators. This place is only about 15 minutes from my house. It is about 100,000 acres of state land with about 200,000 alligators ranging from baby gators to 12-14 feet long. This is an experience that young and old will never forget.

Ron and Tom both had to leave on Saturday and both missed the Marine Charge of the Hill that is only done by Marines every year on the last full day of the Reunion. I went over to the Reunion after they all left and had a great time participating in the Charge and the singing by everybody there of the Marine Hymn. They have a fly over by many different types of Viet Nam era aircraft.

This is a Reunion that if one attended, would be remembered for a long time. It isn't just for the Veterans but their entire family. There are so many Hotels and Motels in the area that accommodations are no problem. There are three airports to fly into: Melbourne Airport, Orlando, and the Orlando Sanford Airport. The Melbourne Airport is local and only about 20 minutes from the Reunion area. The two Orlando Airports are about one hour from Melbourne.

On May 13th I left Florida with my Malibu on my trailer, and went to Pennsylvania for a rededication of a WWI and WWII memorial that a friend of mine and his son rebuilt on a new site. On my way I stopped at Concord, N.C. to see Lowes Motor Speedway. I stopped for lunch at Hooters and when the manager saw my car on the trailer, he had several girls come outside and take a picture up on the trailer by the car. (Pic # 11)

After I left there I drove to Ron's house in Winston-Salem, N.C. where I spent a day with Ron and Lynn, and then drove to Allentown, Pa. I got there on the 15th and went to my brothers house with the truck and trailer for the night. The next morning I drove to Jim Thorpe, Pa. to the Carbon County Votech School where I was met by my buddy Hal Resh who is the auto mechanics shop teacher.

We were met by a local newspaper reporter and photographer from the Morning Call out of Allen-

town. They were there to do a story and get some pictures of my car, and of the kids in the shop doing some work on the car. They did a front end alignment on the car and checked out a few other odds and ends. From there I took the car to Hals house where I left it on the trailer. The next day we went on a cruise and rededication for the Memorial that was torn down, and relocated to a new site in West Bowmanstown, Pa.

Since it was Armed Forces Day I was supposed to go to the local stock car track at Mahoning Valley Speedway run by an old friend Doug Hoffman and his wife. From the days when I used to race I would be the Pace Car for all the divisions that they had there. Unfortunately it rained and the races were called till the following Saturday. The following Saturday I trailered the car to the race track and unloaded it and parked the car in the staging area. It looked like rain again but I told everybody we were going to have the races. My younger brother races there and he said it was going to rain. It seemed like I was the only one confident about having races that night. I was told to take my car out to the start-finish line after the warm-ups were complete for the National Anthem. A short time after the song the Heat races started. They completed all the heat races, and after intermission I was called to the track for the first feature event. We no sooner got the cars lined up and it started to rain.

I pulled to the infield while the cars continued around the track to dry it off. Luckily the rain only lasted for a few minutes and the track was dry again in no time. Once again I was back out on the track and the races resumed. After pacing the cars for a few laps the starter waved me off and the first feature began. (Pic # 9) I pulled into the pits and waited by the staging area for the rest of the features one at a time. I had a great time and after the races were over many people came down to the pit area to see my car up close.

As I left the track the traffic on the road was all backed up and moving one car at a time. About 1/2 mile up the road I observed a DUI check point. As I got to the check point, there were about 20 cops all around. One of them looked at my truck and immediately said 'pull it over'. I asked him why and he said that my truck didn't have an inspection sticker. I told him that I don't need one that I live in Florida. I must have said something that he didn't like, and he asked me if the truck is registered in Florida. I just looked at him and told him if the plate says Florida that must be where it is registered.

He then walked to the back of the truck and came back and again told me to pull it over. When I asked what for he told me that my tow chains weren't crossed and they have to be crossed in Pennsylvania. I pulled over and got out and crossed the chains and another officer came to me and asked what I was pulled over for. I told her and she said she had to see my license, registration and proof of insurance. After I showed her she told that I was good to go. I took the car to my brothers house and parked it in his driveway for two days. I then went to a WWII Battle of the Bulge luncheon and took the car on the trailer to show Lou Reda from the History Channel who was a guest at the luncheon. I sat and talked with several men who fought in the Battle of the Bulge and it was very interesting to hear some of their stories.

I visited with my children and grandchildren that week and attended my grandaughters second birthday on May 31st before heading back to Florida the following day. I again stopped at Ron's house on my way back to Florida. I got back home on June 2nd and it was great to be home.

Hope to see more of you in Florida at the Vietnam Veterans and All Veterans Reunion next April in Melbourne, Florida.



NEW PX ITEM " SORRY CHARLIE PIN" SEE ATTACHED PX BROCHURE FOR ACTUAL COLORS & PRICE

A LOT OF METAL FLYING AROUND

Sea Knight pilot braved enemy fire to keep Marines supplied during siege at Khe Sanh

By Robert F. Dorr
Special to the Times

The chances of the Marine combat base at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, surviving the 77-day siege that ended April 15, 1968, would have significantly lessened without Maj. David Althoff's bold flying, say Marines who fought there.

Althoff, now a 71-year-old retired lieutenant colonel in Tempe, Ariz., flew 1,080 combat missions and logged 1,000 combat air hours in Vietnam. He piloted the CH-46A Sea Knight helicopter, the initial version of the CH-46E flown by Marines today.

Althoff and crews from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262 nicknamed Tiger Air; flew frequent supply runs to Marine mountain outposts that served as the eyes and ears of embattled Khe Sanh.

The flying was done at low altitude where, as Althoff said in a series of interviews, there was a lot of metal flying around

His aircraft was hit four times so that he had to land immediately and many other times when he could just barely make it back to a base. You could sometimes count 100 or 120 bullet holes in the chopper

Cpl. Travis Flowers, a member of Althoff's helicopter squadron, said, when we inserted a reconnaissance team into a hostile area, Major Althoff would tell the guys to keep their heads and arms inside the chopper because we were going in low and fast and he didn't want any of them getting something knocked off by a tree. He really meant it. You had to look up to see the trees.

Althoff repeatedly credits his crew with his achievements and survival because there would have been no getting out of a hot zone without them. Sea Knight crews shared the constant risk of being hit, something that doesn't come naturally to those trained in aviation.

The CH-46 had superb visibility forward, but there's no visibility aft. You need to rely on the crew chief for that. Althoff said.

You're going into a hot zone, he remembered. They're firing at you from 360 degrees. You start to take hits. You know you're taking hits. The crew chief is telling you, Okay, we're leaking here. The gas lines hit there. If they're shooting into the pit, the gas lines are under the gauges so they're leaking all over your feet. You can hear the bullets cracking into the fuselage.

Second Lt. Michael Mullen, another pilot in HMM-262, said in 1968 that Althoff was the squadrons idol. He would never ask one of his junior pilots to fly a mission he had never flown. When we went on a hairy mission, we went with the knowledge that it could be completed because [Althoff] had already done it several times before.

Althoff earned the first of his three Silver Stars on Feb. 1, 1968, as flight leader of a section of two CH -46s assigned to extract an eight-man reconnaissance team surrounded and pinned down by 100 North Vietnamese soldiers near Dong Ha.

Althoff holds numerous other military awards and was presented the Alfred A. Cunningham Award in 1968, making him the Marine Aviator of the Year.

A decade ago, he was inducted into the Arizona Aviation Hall of Fame. Althoff and his wife, Phyllis, have five grown children.

Robert F. Dorr, an Air Force veteran and author, lives in Oakton, Va. His e-mail address is robertdorr@aol .com.



NEW PX ITEM KSV CHALLENGE COIN ENCLOSED IN PLASTIC FOR EASY DISPLAY SEE ATTACHED PX BROCHURE FOR ACTUAL COLOR & PRICE

OBIT

William R. Hartnett, age 64 yrs., died suddenly on December 28, 2008. He was the husband of Carol (Ogden) Hartnett and father of William R. Hartnett II and his wife, Amy; of Charles R. Hartnett; and to stepson Ricardo N. White and his wife, Peggy. Bill was also a loving grandfather to Billy, Cura, Jovanna and Adrian Hartnett. Also to Justin, Rebecca and Isabella White. He is sadly missed by his brothers, John Hartnett and his wife, Jackie; Bernard Hartnett and his Marlene; and James Hartnett and his wife, Mary Ann.

Bill had a real zest for life. He was an extremely positive person with a wide grin and laughter that impacted the lives of all that knew him. Family was always a priority but he had a sincere willingness to offer and help anyone that needed it. He held a deep appreciation for possessions passed down through the family and enjoyed sharing stories about each item. He enjoyed watching NASCAR, spending time with his grandchildren, and fixing things. He was also a good cook and loved to help prepare holiday meals.

Bill retired In 2004 after working 35 years in the pharmaceutical industry. He continued to keep busy with projects and hobbles, the most recent being making beeswax candles with a couple of the grandkids. His kindness, selflessness and caring attitude will be remembered by all that knew and loved him.

Military Service

William R. Hartnett enlisted in the U. S. Navy in 1965. He went to San Diego California for basic training. After testing, they found he was well suited for medical service. The Navy sent him to Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland for further training. After intense field training for war causalities, he was sent to camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base, in North Carolina for combat training.

He left in 1967 for Vietnam, and joined Charlie Company,1st Battalion 26th Marines. Bill's battalion was involved in fights with the NVA on hill 950, 861,881N and 881S. One of the longest and fiercest battles was to protect the Khe Sanh Combat Base, which was under very heavy siege by thousands of North Vietnamese. The Marine's held fast under fierce ground attacks of mortars and rocket fire day and night for days.

My brother William R. Hartnett was presented with the Presidential Unit Citation for heroic service along with other awards for bravery and outstanding service to the Marine Corps and his country. He also received the Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with two gold stars.

We his family are very proud of his will to endure the great pain and sacrifices he made for us.

His Brother, TIM

POETRY

Hand to Soul

The navy medic
raised
His hand to me,
bloody

And bent.
I left my door
gunner's

post to take it.
We joined as
brothers for

seconds for
life. All
those he had
held, helped

and saved flowed
from
his fingers
through mine

and into my
soul....forever.

Bob Allyn
315th Air Commandos
12th SOS
1968

THE SALUTE

Raymond Cruz
CBMU 301 Det. Bravo

There are moments in time that make an impression for life. This is one of those moments.

One day this past summer 2005, I was returning from visiting relatives on the other side Washington the State. All should know of that traffic here in the Puget Sound area, is the worst. Driving that late afternoon, northbound on 1-5 between Fort Lewis and Tacoma, there was fairly heavy traffic moving about 50 mph and slower.

I drive an old, used, 1990 F-150 4X4 long Bed, with a canopy, that has huge flat iron bumpers. It can be used for pushing anything out of the way cruising at 50mph in the fast lane. The HOV lane on 1-5 in this part of the state, is on the left side of a 3 lane highway.

I observed a motorcyclist slowly coming up through traffic, in the HOV lane. As he pulls up along side me, I notice the bike is a black Harley softail. On the tank in Gold lettering is USMC. The leather jacket he is wearing has several patches; some are USMC with Semper Fi in red lettering, and on the Black helmet as well. The rider does not look old enough to be a 'Nam vet. but old enough to have possibly served in the first Gulf War. With hair flowing from underneath the helmet, he has the label of a proud Former Marine. Traffic begins to slow in the HOV lane and the motorcyclist is now riding to the rear of my truck. I notice him looking at the sticker on the bumper of my truck.

Now first let me say that almost every American recognizes the USMC logo that hangs on many vehicles. My little Seabee decal goes ignored except by another Seabee. For the most part am usually asked what does the little bee represents. On the rear bumper is also the Khe Sanh Vet "Home is were you dig it" sticker. On the hitch cover I have a cap with the word Seabee and a Seabee decal on the side.

In my mirror I see the leather clad ex-Grunt intensely looking at the stickers, then suddenly he looks forward and guns the bike in and between other vehicles to pull up alongside again. This time he looks directly at me, stands on the pedals of the bike, while still moving in traffic. He faces me and gives me one of the most perfect Marine salutes, nods his head at me, and roars off. I was stunned and overwhelmed with mixed emotions.
That is respect and honor.

I share this with you all, because that episodic moment honors us all.



ODD HAPPENINGS

RECOLLECTIONS OF MY DAYS WITH GOLF 2/26 ON HILLS 558 & 560

By Robert M. Crabb

We move to hill 558, and hill 861. We dig in, running trenches and digging holes. This hill has very little trees or elephant grass cover. to hide our movement from the eyes of the enemy.

One night, an ambush went out at dusk. We had been running them in the gully just down the hill. Another Marine and I are standing in the twilight watching explosions in the gulley near the ambush site. I remarked that our mortar section was doing a good job. We quickly discovered it was not our mortar section, but the NVA attacking the Marines at the ambush site. We dove for cover in our nearby holes.

Fortunately for us, they had changed the previous location where they had been setting up the ambush site, and no one was injured. That was the last ambush to go out until the siege was almost over.

"Get in your holes and just be ready", was the word

that came down from headquarters. Two jets came over and blasted a nearby hill where the NVA had Fox Company hung up.

Morton, the name we gave to the mad NVA mortar man, kept dropping 3-6 rounds a day on us. We could actually hear the rounds leaving the enemy's Mortars. When you hear that whoosh, you ran like hell for your hole.

We actually could observe the NVA building bunkers on nearby positions. We waited until they had finished then one of the F/O's would call in an Arty strike and destroy them.

.

During the early days on 558 and 560 , jets returning from raids on North Vietnam, which still had their ordinance would drop them in the gulley near our hill where the NVA had been observed.

We first came under 122-mm rocket fire, on 558. I was standing with another marine, looking out at the valley. A 122 rocket coming in sounds like a tornado rumble then train crash. We had learned to hit the ground at all unexpected noises.

You lay in the dirt, trying to catch your breath. Slowly, move one arm to check your head, then the other arm, your side, your crouch, and then feel if your legs are still there. Then get up and see if anyone was hit. I hated those damm rockets.

When we first set in on 558, a lot of marines were constantly firing at NVA infiltrators trying to come up through a marshy area. At times a whole line began firing. I think they did it to get some new ammunition since we had been carrying our ammo long before we got to Khe Sanh. This practice continued until we were informed that ammo we brought with us was all we would be getting. Our command group took charge and began rationing out any ammunition we did receive.

I took to throwing empty C-rat cans full of dirt at all noises out front. Once in awhile we would throw a real grenade to keep the NVA guessing.

During the day, I would go to my old position and talk to the Cpl., bragging of my night adventure of throwing clods and cans at the NVA. The first time I said this, four l22-mm rockets hit the trench. Close to where we were standing. I got up, checked myself and ran down the hill.

Next day, I am again BS'ing about the nightly Bob Crabb can attack, when another four 122 rockets hit the hill.

Before I ran off to my to my hole down the trench line I heard the Cpl say "Quit throwing those damm cans, I think you are the one pissing them off". Really, we see 3 or 4 by your wire at night." I then go back to throwing my Cans of dirt. Wishing I had an extra had a grenade or two.

Martin was a marine always hearing things move at night. He became pain waking his Cpl. up every night asking for permission to throw a grenade. Finally, just to keep him quiet, the Cpl said, "OK. Just one."

The noise was as if a heard of elephants were charging down the hill. The "Zero brain" marine was a hero that day, for breaking up a NVA ambush with blood trails leading off the hill.

Martin, looking around one morning sees his Cpl., nude stepping out of a sleeping bunker. I guess the Cpl. was trying to dry out his one pair of UT's or just air out. Martin goes over and tells another Marine, "I think those two are Gay".

I thought you knew about Golf Company replied the grunt, "the Air Force has whole bases that are only for Gay airmen, and so does the Army. I think the Navy keeps all the gay Sailors on a certain ship. So in the Marine Corps most Gay Marines are assigned to Golf Company".

Martin runs down to another old timer who keeps the joke going, telling him, "it used to bother me but it doesn't anymore, it's ok, none of our officers are Gay. So Martin goes to live with the Lt. for a week until the Lt. kicks him out to stay on the lines.

'When C-rations arrived, 3-4 boxes are handed out to each Marine. Usually 4 boxes are good for only 4 meals. Where we where, those 4 boxes had to last 6-8 days! They always tell us, "Re-supply in 4 days."

To extend this, the first day chow comes, it is not

handed out until the next day. Marine Corps policy is bullets, bandages and beans. We did not seem to get much of anything.

Some Marines ate all 4 boxes in one day, then survived on coffee packets. Chow was handed out by the Squad leaders. They mixed up the boxes and turned them face down. And each man would pick four meals. Fruit came in 4 of the boxes and pound cake in 2 meals There was always some trading going on. I tried to eat a little each day, big 8 oz can of something one day, crackers and old looking peanut butter the next. Everything was eaten down to the cream packets. I did get to know which suppliers had a better grade of food. Still cold Scrambled egg and grease was hard to choke down .

I was going to take up smoking, your going to die here anyway and it did seem to take the morning chill away but trading C-rat fruit for smokes broke out. I would rather have a small can of peaches than a Marlboro. With little food and a good variety of worms I slimmed down to 155 lbs.

We used a NOD to spot the C-rats supply, which was under Marine guard. They had to stop using grunts from the lines because they would not stop anyone from stealing extra chow. They instead used office personnel to guard the food supply. Threatening them with being transferred to a line company if they left anyone get away with any extra chow.

Our 1st Lt. is checking the minefield and steps on a little mine, which blows his heel off and is medivaced I hear of this and scoot up to the CP not to inquire about the LT. foot but, "when are we dividing up his chow?" The CP thought I was crazy but I thought it was a fine joke.

February and March getting ready to be Over Run

In February-March there was a feeling that we would be over run. We heard rumors that NVA planes stationed in North Vietnam had been moved closer to Khe Sanh so not to be targeted by our bombers, and they could possibly make a run at us under cover of the fog. We begin to build air raid bunkers.

When Tank sounds were heard on the lines. (We set up tank hunter killer teams.) We then get orders to burn everything you can not carry out. Field jackets, ponchos, rain gear, any extra clothes, all should go into the fires. "Stand down from that order", comes the word from headquarters and we go back into our defensive positions still anticipating an attack.

Our artillery begins to fire closer to our positions on the hills. There is nightly H&I fire doing nothing but keeping us awake. One Marine with only 45 days left on his tour stayed in his hole 24 hours a day. He just kept digging deeper and deeper. He said he already used up all his luck when on a previous patrol an NVA machine gun round went through the side of his flak jacket, hit his web gear and just caused a huge burn that resembled a zipper. No work details for him, he spent his time hiding and counting the days.

One foggy night the NVA hit Hill 861A. All hell broke loose, and a heroic helicopter pilot attempted to land on Hill 861A at night under fire. The next day we sent up replacements for their dead and wounded. They had no luck at all after they left their Hill they were down by a water hole , when an NVA rocket killed a whole squad including several corpsman.

I think the most dangerous time was coming back to the hills from the base. The planes did not stop on the runway, you just kicked of your gear, jumped from the plane and ran like hell to the trench line that ran alongside the landing strip. Those new to the experience, who stopped to retrieve their gear right away, were wounded our Killed most of the time.



NEW PX ITEM BUTTON DOWN DENIM EMBROIDERED SHIRT SEE PX BROCHURE FOR COLOR & PRICE

A MARINE'S CHRISTMAS STORY
That Missed Last Years Red Clay

By Earl Clark
A Co 1/26

I find shopping with my wife excruciatingly painful, and try to avoid it as much as possible. How in the world someone can go into a store and not know what they want is beyond me. When I want something, I'm in and I'm out.

For instance, I was one of the last guys to get a flat screen television. I took note of all the ones I had seen at other people's homes, asked a bunch of questions and decided I didn't want any of them. I saw a commercial on TV about an LG "Scarlet" brand and chose that one. I'm in and I'm out.

Since this is a Christmas story I have to mention that I go with my wife to shop for our little ones, but only with certain parameters in place to keep peace in the family. We have to go in the morning when the doors first open in order to beat the mobs. People in stores at Christmas time are nuts. Ninety nine percent of the people have forgotten what Christmas is about anyway.

I sort of just go through the motions during the holiday season. I get into a blue funk. I think about you guys a lot and the brotherhood we shared when all we had was each other. I miss that. I think about our brothers on the Wall, too. I appreciate solitude and peace, and I enjoy being with my family – nothing more, nothing less.

We know what Christmas is all about.

For years my shopping for the grandchildren consisted of me purchasing or ordering something that had to do with the Yankees, Indy Colts, Arizona State or the Marines, be it clothing, toys or blankets and such. I still get some personal shopping in. I just bought a little T-shirt for my newest grandson that said, "Lean & mean just like grandpa," with a little guy next to a bulldog. Pretty cool!

Anyway, last Christmas we found ourselves pulling up in the parking lot just a few minutes after the doors opened and entered the store. My wife grabbed a cart and we began to walk toward one of the aisles. There were some chairs just inside the entrance with several people sitting in them. I think they had the right idea, let someone else do the shopping while they sit and read, or whatever.

With my wife ahead of me, I had just passed these chairs when I thought I heard in a soft, barely audible voice, "Semper Fi." I kept walking a bit because I still wasn't quite sure what I heard. I had a Marine Corps baseball cap on so I stopped and turned just to be sure. A Marine never ignores or passes up a Semper Fi; I mean we're talking about the brotherhood here. Sure enough there was an elderly gentleman with this very old, beat up cap with the Eagle, Globe and Anchor on the front. I walked toward the gentleman, extended a hand and said, "Semper Fi, Sir." Without a doubt he was World War II Marine and I greeted him with the utmost respect. We had a short conversation about this and that, shook hands and exchanged a Merry Christmas to one another. He mentioned to me that he was here with his grand daughter doing a little shopping. I told him I would stop back by on our way out if he was still there.

After walking around aimlessly we found some items that we thought the children might enjoy wearing. We stood at the check out stand, paid for our merchandise and mercifully headed toward the exit. Sure enough, there was my brother Marine. The wife headed toward the doors while I veered toward him. I knelt down where our eyes could meet so as to not appear that I was standing over him. We both extended our hands to shake but ended up embracing one another. I wished him a Merry Christmas and he said to me, "Merry Christmas and God bless you." I walked away thinking this is one of those special moments you get to have in life when you are a United States Marine.

I caught up with the wife just as she was entering the parking lot. She asked me, "Who was that gentleman you were speaking with?" I put my arm around her and just said, 'one of my heroes.' She smiled at me and nothing else was said as we walked to the car. She knew.

I want to wish all my brothers and sisters a happy holiday season.

Peace.

ORDINATION CEREMONY FOR KHE SANH VETERAN RICH AHO-DELTA CO 1/26

Five Khe Sanh Veterans of Delta Company 1/26 came together to celebrate the ordination of one of their own to Deacon of the Catholic Church on August 22, 2009 in Winona, Minnesota. A total of eleven deacons were ordained in the packed Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. Among the Deacons ordained was Khe Sanh Veteran, Rich Aho. The witnesses included Rich's wife Joann, his immediate and extended family including four of his Delta brothers, Tom "Moose Russomano, Chuck Tomer, Ron Bellantone and Dan Fisher and their spouses Connie Bellantone and Geri Fisher.

These five Marines originally came together as replacements to 1st Platoon, Delta Company, 1/26 in late 1966 at Hill 55, and served together throughout their tours to Khe Sanh. Thirty years of professional careers and raising families separated them until finding each other at the Khe Sanh Veterans' reunions in Dallas, Chicago Mobile and Washington, DC.



Joann and Rich hosted a fine reception at their home following the ordination ceremony. At Sunday Morning Mass they listened to Rich's first sermon and as they left the Church an eagle soared high above the parking lot. A good sign
Semper Fidelis
Moose, Chuck, Rich, Dan and Ron

STILL SAVING LIVES
CORPSMAN RECEIVES PURPLE HEART

By Sarah Fortney, National Naval Medical Center Public Affairs

BETHESDA, Md. (NNS) -- A Hospital Corpsman assigned to National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) received a Purple Heart Medal presented Sept. 14 by the Marine officer whose live he saved when their convoy was ambushed in Afghanistan.

Holding back tears, Marine Corps Lt. Col. Ty Edwards presented Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Stephen Albright with the Purple Heart at the NNMC's Command Suite. "You're my hero," Edwards told Albright.

On Oct. 18, 2008, Edwards and Albright were on a routine mission to deliver supplies in Afghanistan when the humvee they were riding in was ambushed. At the time, Albright was driving the vehicle and Edwards was the team commander.

During the ambush, Albright saw Edwards on the ground, not moving — he had been shot in the head. Albright attempted to push the vehicle in front of Edwards to offer protection from the heavy rounds of fire.

Albright, who was shot in his lower left leg in the attack, treated Edwards, bandaging and applying pressure on his head wound and checking him for further injuries. As he continued to monitor Edwards' vital signs, Albright constructed a makeshift litter and a C-collar to stabilize his neck during the bumpy trek to a nearby helicopter pad. "Without him, I wouldn't be here," Edwards said.

Albright, who now works in Health Promotion Office at NNMC, was honored to accept the Purple Heart, he said, but didn't believe his war wounds constituted him receiving the award. Therefore, he chose to have Edwards present him with the award.

Edwards pinned the purple-clothed military decoration on Albright's uniform in front of family members and NNMC staff.

Albright's wife, Emily Albright, said it was difficult when he deployed to Afghanistan, but knowing he was able to use his skills to help others and make such an impact made it all worthwhile.

I was really scared for him when we heard the news [about the ambush]," Emily said. Over the last year, she has kept track of Edwards' progress while he

was in treatment at NNMC and the Tampa Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center. She said she is amazed at how well he has recovered.

Anna Edwards, Edwards' wife, said she couldn't have asked for better treatment and support. She brought their children, Mason, 8, and Alaina, 6, and Edwards' father to watch him present the award to Albright. "It has been a challenging and difficult year," Anna said. "It's wonderful to see them together again and to know how much [this award] means to both of them."

NNMC Commander Rear Adm. Matthew Nathan congratulated Albright on his achievement and noted that the two are now both Purple Heart recipients, having both shed blood for their country.

"They are why I stay in the service, to work alongside heroes like these two," Nathan said. "What a great opportunity it is to have you here now … God bless you for what you do."

BOOK REVIEW

" IN THE COMPANY OF MARINES"

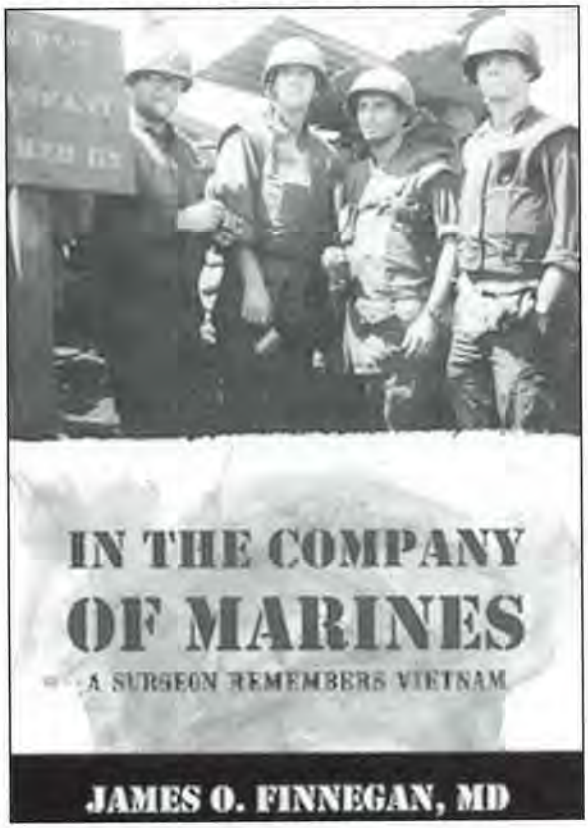

James Finnegan, M.D., says one of the happiest moments in his life was seeing the cover of his recently

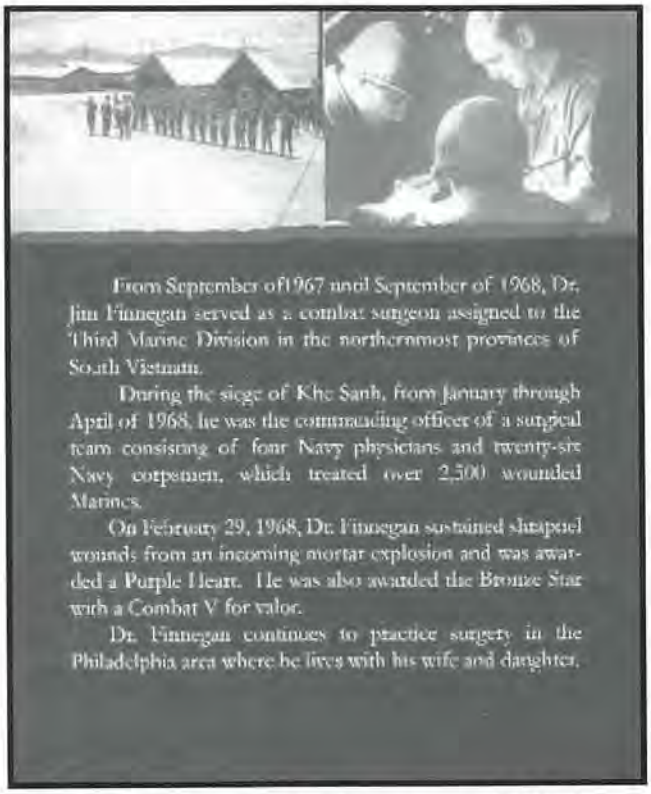

From September of 1967 until September of 1968, Dr. Jim Finnegan served as a combat surgeon assigned to the Third Marine Division in the northernmost provinces of South Vietnam.

During the siege of Khe Sanh, from January through April of 1968, he was the commanding officer of a surgical team consisting of four Navy physicians and twenty-six Navy corpsmen, which treated over 2,500 wounded Marines.

On February 29, 1968, Dr. Finnegan sustained shrapnel wounds from an incoming mortar explosion and was awarded a Purple Heart. He was also awarded the Bronze Star with a Combat V for valor.

Dr. Finnegan continues to practice surgery in the Philadelphia area where he lives with his wife and daughter.

published book, "In the Company of Marines: A Surgeon Remembers Vietnam." The practicing surgeon, whose previous publishing has been limited to medical journals, has printed some of his stories and reflections from his year serving as a combat surgeon in the Vietnam War, part of which was during the famous battle of Khe Sanh. Over the years Finnegan occasionally wrote down the moments and memories from his year in Vietnam as a Navy surgeon assigned to treat members of the Third Marine Division in the northernmost provinces of South Vietnam.

The book was written for a small audience of family and friends but has gained interest from outside parties, including the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Va. At a dinner a few years ago, Finnegan found himself talking about his experiences in Vietnam from September 1967 to September 1968. His daughter commented that it was the first time she heard him talking about that time. "My own kids didn't know what I did," Finnegan said, adding that he then realized that "I really do want everyone to know" about his year as a combat surgeon.

That year included serving as the commanding officer of a surgical team in the heart of the siege of Khe Sanh, where he encountered daily bombard-

ments, constant danger, and saved, and lost, uncountable young American men. Finnegan, still a full-time surgeon at a medial clinic in Camden, N.J., harkens back to Vietnam as a "pivotal point" and "watershed moment" in his life and the lives of his friends with whom he still keeps in touch.

At that time in America, social unrest was at a boiling point, and although there are many unanswered questions about the war in Vietnam and the siege at Khe Sanh, which accounted for hundreds of U.S. deaths and thousands of injuries, Finnegan's book focuses on his individual experiences and those of the men he encountered. At "Charlie Med," the term used for some bases medical unit, Finnegan recollects, the doctors were always well-stocked with medical supplies. Navy corpsmen and those fighting on the lines all worked together for a common cause, even if they didn't quite understand the whole picture. The cause was to keep each other alive.

Writing about the siege, which took place roughly from January to April 1968, Finnegan writes, "It soon became difficult to distinguish one day from another. The wounded arrived at all hours, sometimes one or two at a time and other times one or two dozen, totaling over 2,500 during the three months of the siege. It seems impossible to believe today, but we took care of each one of them in a timely and appropriate fashion. To this day we repeatedly affirm and reaffirm that no wounded Marine ever received anything but the best possible treatment even under unrelenting incoming fire.

I fear I may overuse the phrase 'incoming fire,' but it would be impossible to tell the true story of Charlie Med without emphasizing that much of the story unfolds while the base underwent almost constant bombardment by enemy gunners." Finnegan was a Navy physician assigned to the Marines (standard as the Marines don't technically have their own medical staff) but states in his book that he has always felt like a Marine, even if he can't say that he really was one.

Still, many have recognized what he and other Navy physicians and corpsmen did in those jungles of Vietnam. Finnegan served in the Third Medical Battalion of the 3rd Marine Division. Recently, a man at Finnegan's golf club whom he has known for years saw his book in the golf shop and approached him, saying, "I'll call you a Marine, and I was a Marine," Finnegan said.

The war in Vietnam marked an advanced stage of helicopter technology in war, in which many casualties could be brought in at same time, and the quick transportation ushered in a new era of combat casualties – those who might have died earlier in the field were rescued, but sometimes in unthinkable, unsalvageable conditions. Still, holding Khe Sanh was so important to those overseeing the war that the medical unit was well stocked, even when it came to blood. If they needed something, they got it, Finnegan said, adding that once the Marines flew jets to Okinawa to get them some catheters.

Death didn't happen because of lack of care in the medical combat base, which included a triage bunker, operating rooms, helo pad and graves-registration tent. During this year of his life, death was all around Finnegan – inexplicable, gut-wrenching death. No doubt this included the possibility of his own and those to whom he had grown close. "The message is certainly there, but you can't let that paralyze you," he said of the chance of being killed. "You do what everyone else does." And that is to get their jobs done while dodging artillery.

To this day, Finnegan keeps in touch with many men he knew back in that watershed year. The Marine magazines he subscribes to are filled with men and loved ones trying to find someone who knew them or their relative in Vietnam, and in reunions, so many people just trying to reconnect to those who can understand, those who were there. As for Finnegan, "I'm trying to get my act together and write another book because there are so many stories left out," he said. "So many untold stories." In the epilogue to his book, Finnegan writes, "Here's what I know. Nineteen-year-old corporals do not declare war. Young lieutenants and captains who lead platoons and companies into battle do not choose those battles. They just fight them. Presidents and senators and congressman declare or authorize war. They seldom ever fight them. They love making speeches about them. Many of them have never served in the military. The majority have never seen combat. "Here's what I wish. I wish there would never be another war."

"In the Company of Marines" is available at the Readers Forum in Wayne, Ardmore Paperback Book Shop and online. URL: http://www.mainlinemedianews.com/articles/2009/09/09/main_line_suburban_life/news/doc4aa7d138962dc777698270.prt © 2009 mainlinemedianews.com, a Journal Register Property

ANOTHER UPCOMING BOOK FROM A KHE SANH VETERAN

Advance Promotional Excerpt

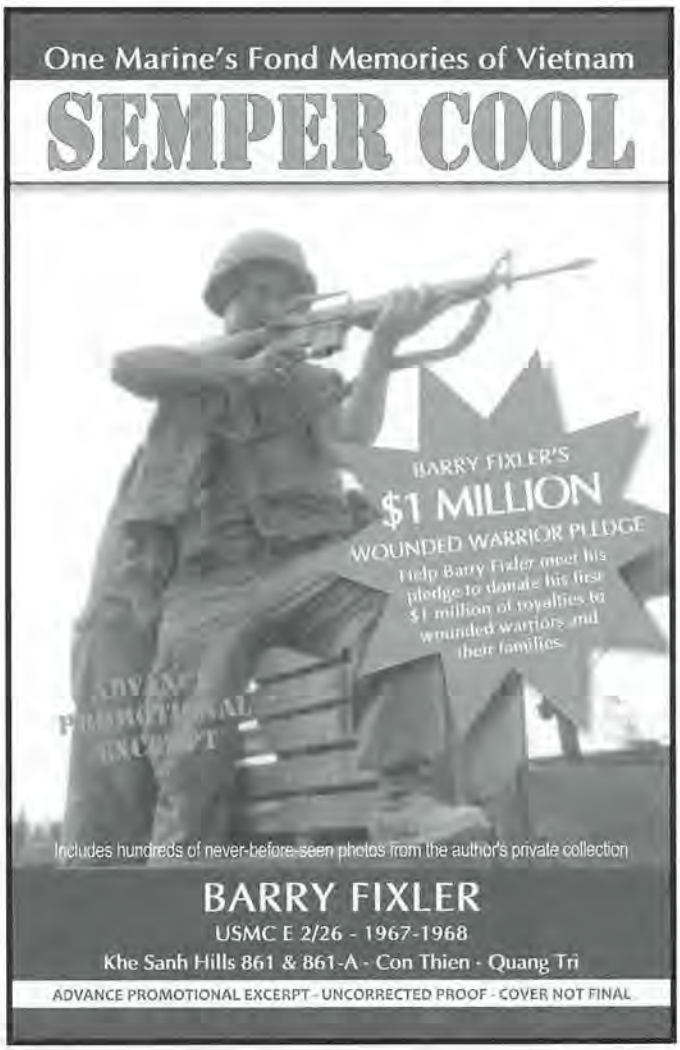

ON SALE FEBRAURY 14 2010

Vietnam was a helicopter war. Choppers were the main trans-ports for food, ammunition, mail and men. Get in fast. Get out fast. That was the helicopter pilots' mantra. If the bad guys zeroed in on a landing zone with their rockets and mortars, the helicopters wouldn't land, not even to pick up our dead.

One day, during the siege of Khe Sanh, two of our guys got hit real bad. When that happens what you do is take the Marine who's seriously wounded and put him in a poncho, maybe 100 feet from the landing

One guy takes the poncho by the feet and the other guy gets it by the head and you run to the Medivac chopper. You try to coordinate it so you get there just as the helicopter touches down.

I was holding one of our wounded guys by the head end of his poncho, making eye contact with him. His entire body was soaked with blood. How he was still breathing I don't know. He was turned inside out. All of his organs were exposed, but he was still alive, and his eyes were fixed into mine.

"You're going to be fine; you're going back to the world," I said to him. "You're making it back fine. Back home. You'll be fine. You'll be fine."

But I was thinking, "Just die already," because the guy was already in shock, and he wasn't going to make it.

The helicopter was on approach and four of us ran out carrying the two wounded Marines. We were catching heavy fire from mortars and rockets. The two guys carrying the first Marine scurried straight inside the helicopter. I was last on the ramp, and as soon as I got there, the pilot started taking off because the helicopter was being riddled with shrapnel. The cockpit glass was a mess. Pieces of it were in the co-pilot's face. Mortar shrapnel sliced through the hull of the chopper.

I was barely on the ramp and the helicopter started lifting off. Next thing I knew, I was dangling from the ramp clinging to the poncho, and I couldn't reach anything else to hold.

I lost my grip. For one quick second, I opened my eyes and actually saw the tops of trees. I was falling from the sky, and the only thing I could think of was that I was above the trees.

I had enough time to tell myself to curl in a ball, like doing a cannonball at the swimming pool, and close my eyes and wait to hit the ground.

That's what I remember, waiting, waiting for the pain ... But when I hit I bounced straight up. Swear to God, just like a trampoline.

I was thinking, "What the ... ?!" I had no idea what I had landed on.

The first time, I must have bounced 10, 15 feet, but it felt like jumping out of a six-story building onto a trampoline. Like I hit and bounced up three floors, then two floors, then one.

At the same time my helmet flew off, and-how I was thinking to do all of this, I don't know-I tried to flatten myself out so I wouldn't be such an easy target for the enemy.

I was still wondering what I had landed on by the time I reached cover. Well, for about six weeks, none of us had wanted to get our mailbags. The helicopters would come and drop mailbags, but no one wanted to run out the hundred feet under fire to get them. We had to get our ammunition and food, but screw the mailbags. We weren't gonna get killed for mailbags.

So the mailbags piled up. They must've been stacked four, five feet high, and I'd landed right in the middle of them. That's why I bounced:
Those mailbags that nobody wanted to risk their lives for saved, me.

The three guys who got stuck on the chopper made it back the next afternoon while I was eating C-rations in one of the trench bunkers where we slept. They thought I was dead. I could hear them talking to the other guys.

"We seen Fix get blown out of the helicopter! We seen Fix get blown apart." Their eyes saw me fly out the back of a helicopter in mid-air while under heavy fire, so they assumed I was dead. When they finally saw me sitting in the bunker they looked like they'd seen a ghost.

"But we saw you get blown out of the helicopter!" "That's right, but I'm right here. Yo! I'm fine." We always appreciated the mail.

This entertaining, sometimes disturbing and always honest military memoir, Barry Fixler, the mild-mannered jeweler whose Valentine's Day shootout with armed robbers captured the nation's attention, tells his uncensored war stories from some of the deadliest battles of Vietnam.



At 9:05 AM on February 14, 2005, Fixler found himself facing the wrong end of a loaded gun, again. Even though almost 40 years had passed since his last patrol as a squad leader in Vietnam, Fixler's combat instincts were still razor sharp. The widely broadcast surveillance tape shows Fixler turn the tables on his would-be killers and go on the attack.

To Fixler, the shootout wasn't heroic despite the numerous awards and citations he received, but rather a result of mental toughness he gained fighting in the trenches of Khe Sanh, rice paddies of Con Thein and Quang Tri, and jungles just south of the DMZ.

This is a story about a young man who enlisted in the Marines to gain his father's respect and discovered the value of life, extraordinary examples of brotherly love, and core values of America: leadership, responsibility, sacrifice, service, honor, and optimism.

EDIT NOTE: I ran the story in Red Clay with pictures of the Heroic shootout Barry had with the two Armed Robbers. He was just as Heroic when he served in my weapons Platoon on Hill 861A with E Co 2/26.

Barry is donating profits from the sale of the book to the wounded warriors program. He is a generous supporter of the program and holds many events at his place of business to raise funds.

RANDOM THOUGHTS ON A SUMMER NIGHT

By Earl Clark

The other day I was watching my ten-year-old grand daughter's fast-pitch softball team play for their league championship. The name of her team is the Funky Monkeys. Their uniforms are black and pink with little pink monkey faces on their white knee socks. It's just about the sweetest thing you'll ever want to see. The sun was just beginning to set as the game began, and what had been a warm day turned in to a gorgeous Arizona evening. I was at peace.

My mind acts like a tape recorder, many times in the fast-forward position, with images and thoughts racing past my eyes with lightning speed.

Does this happen to any of you, or is it just me? Sometimes I get into trouble when engaged in conversation and I lose track of the subject, or I move on to another subject without the other person knowing what the hell, I'm talking about. It drives my wife and sister crazy, and I'm sure I've seemed rude toward family friends, but I think they know what's going on.

Anyway, this occurred for a few moments during an inning of the game. I traveled far distances without leaving my chair.

The tape begins: My first thought was that it was good to be breathing and able to take in all the excitement around me, little girls with ponytails playing softball in America. How Norman Rockwell is that?

I then traveled back to Washington D.C., to 2004, when I had gone there with Operation Freedom Bird for the Marine Corps Birthday and Veterans' Day. I had the honor and privilege of being with Bruce Geiger and Tom Ford as we placed the Khe Sanh Veterans' Wreath at the Wall, but the night before I had been to the Wall to talk with our fallen brothers because there was something that was eating at me and I had to tell them.

I told them I was sorry for pissing away twenty some years of my life while looking at the world through the distorted, abstract visual presented by the bottom of a bottle, and not leading the sort of life they would want me to. I was ashamed that I was given the opportunity to live my life, and blew it, when they were not able to.

I promised them I would change my life; I promised them I would be a better grand parent than I was a parent; I promised them I would be a better person and always try and do the right thing. I also promised them I would try and help people who needed it.

These thoughts are always with me each day. I knew just making these promises wasn't going to hack it with these guys. I had to do it. That moment has had a profound effect on my life.

My final thought the other night--while the tape's still playing--was to give thanks to My Shield for protecting me from being blown into oblivion by a 152mm artillery round.

The next thing I heard was the sound of my daughter's voice saying, "Dad, Dad, Mia's up to bat," and I returned to the present. She looked at me knowing what had just happened and held my hand. My children have witnessed this sort of thing before. It never goes away.

For those of you who took the time to read all this, I thank you and hope I didn't intrude on your day. I know some of this has nothing to do with Khe Sanh; yet for me it has everything to do with Khe Sanh.

Oh, by the way, my grand daughter had a single and an RBI. The Funky Monkeys won the game 3 to 2 in extra innings to win the league championship. Proud grandpa, indeed!
Semper Fidelis to all my brothers.

PROMISE FULFILLED

By Bruce Geiger

It had been nearly 41 years to the day I left the embattled combat base at Khe Sanh on 14 April 1968. The harrowing and deadly ordeal was finally over, although in the months that followed, new seedlings in my dark forest of nightmares would continue to emerge.

Seven weeks earlier I met Sgt. Manuel Floyd Marti-

nez for the first time since transferring into A Btry/1st Bn/44th Artillery as 2nd Platoon CO. I had flown into the besieged Marine base in February with supplies and several replacements to take command of the two Duster and two Quad 50 crews that had defended the northern perimeter of the base since the 77 day siege began. Sgt. Martinez was a sharp, confident, 22 year old squad leader who was admired and respected by the men he served with. My instincts told me I could count on this young NCO to effectively lead his crew despite the daily pounding by NVA artillery, rockets and mortars. Along with the other Duster and Quad 50 crews, he would stand fast providing the heavy direct fire support critical to the Marine effort to defend against overwhelming NVA ground forces planning to overrun the base.

After the grueling convoy back to Dong Ha, my men and I got a much needed break before we took on new assignments escorting convoys and mine sweeps and providing fire support for Marine and ARVN operations. Little did I know that exactly eight weeks later on a Sunday morning, Sgt. Martinez would be struck down by a sniper's bullet.

On the morning of Sunday 6 June 1968, Pfc. Morris Johnson was talking with Sgt. Martinez as they waited for word to 'saddle up' at Dong Ha. Sgt. Martinez was supposed to be off duty that morning but had been asked to fill in for someone else. He proudly showed Johnson a small wallet sized photo of his newborn daughter that he had just received in a letter from his wife. As they talked, they heard the music of 'Amazing Grace' being played on speakers by the Chaplain at the small chapel across the road from A Btry. Headquarters. Sgt. Martinez said he would sure like to go to church. At that moment, Lt. Nelson gave the word to mount up and climbed into the commander's hatch as Pfc. Johnson drove the Duster to his position in the convoy. Sgt. Martinez took a position inside the gun turret atop the other Duster.

About halfway between Dong Ha and Gio Linh, the operation took the tracks east off Hwy. 1 into the sand flats and small sand dunes. Not far off the road, they took enemy fire from an old village. As Johnson's track turned their guns to fire over the engine compartment, Lt. Nelson climbed out of the hatch in order to direct their fire. They had walked into a vicious trap, a horse shoe shaped ambush. They were pinned down; the ARVN soldiers in chaos were of little help. Seconds later, their sister track radioed they had taken a KIA. Sgt. Martinez had been sitting in the fold-down seat to the right of the guns when a sniper, tucked behind a mud wall beside a pagoda, fired a shot that struck him in the head, killing him instantly. Morris Johnson listened to the radio message in disbelief.

Lt. Nelson had just moved around to the M60 machine gun when Johnson heard a snap. As he looked up, Lt. Nelson opened his flack jacket to look at his upper chest where a neat, small red hole appeared. He closed his jacket and then fell off the side of the track.

Sgt. Davis and Johnson dragged him to the protected area in front of the track where a medic checked him. Johnson was ordered back into the driver's compartment; Lt. Nelson was hoisted onto the front of the track to protect him from enemy fire. His shoulders lay over Johnson's head with his knees over the commander's hatch. Johnson drove the Duster out of the kill zone to an area where Lt. Nelson was unloaded onto a stretcher and medevaced by chopper within five minutes. The sister track, driven by Pfc. Monroe 'Barney' Barron, made its way back where Sgt. Martinez was lifted from the floor of the turret and handed to others on the ground. He was laid on a stretcher with a body bag draped over it. After a brief examination by the medical staff, the bag was zipped closed.

It took three different air strikes to break the attack that morning. F-4 Phantoms dropped napalm, scorching the enemy positions. Cobra gunships strafed and rocketed the area and ARVN prop-driven A-1 Skyraiders dive bombed and destroyed the pagoda and dug-in NVA positions.

Morris Johnson recalled the last words he heard from Sgt. Manuel Martinez were of the love he had for his family, especially his newborn daughter. He was touched by the music from the chapel as they sat and talked early that morning. It was so peaceful. Within a matter of minutes Sgt. Martinez would be dead, leaving behind a young wife and a precious child who would never know her father.

I felt terrible guilt upon learning of the death of my

young squad leader. A feeling of helplessness consumed me. The circumstances that placed me with another section that day were of no consolation. If I had only been there the events might have been different; he might still be alive. Most disturbing to me was the fact that I never got the chance to say goodbye. I promised myself that when I returned home I would visit with his family and pay my respects at his gravesite.

Over the years, not a week went by that I didn't think of Sgt. Martinez. Over the years I tried to locate his family but was never able to track them down. When 'The Wall' in Washington, DC was being built I visited the site whenever a business trip took me to the area. I remember standing in the rain before the walkway was finished, mud up to my ankles, tears streaming down my face, searching desperately to find his name.

It wasn't until a visit years later that the addition of locator directories led me to his name on Panel 58W, Row 11. I have visited that panel on Veterans Day every year since, to touch his name etched in the shiny black granite and to tell him that I miss him and will never forget him. I will continue to do so for as long as I am physically able. Although I have lost too many brothers in combat, and visit to touch their names on 'The Wall', it is the memory of Sgt. Manuel Floyd Martinez that holds the most meaning for me.

Now 41 years later, I made my reservations to attend the Khe Sanh Veterans reunion in Denver, CO. After an internet search a few weeks earlier, I had confirmed that Sgt. Manuel Floyd Martinez was laid to rest at the Ft. Logan National Cemetery in Denver. I printed a map showing the location of his gravesite; the opportunity to visit and fulfill a promise I made so many years ago was finally at hand. I was apprehensive but remained determined on that Friday morning in July when I had hoped to borrow a friend's vehicle to make the ten mile trip from our hotel to the cemetery. Although my plan was to make the trip alone, my Marine friends Craig Tourte and David Tonick insisted on accompanying me on my pilgrimage.

Ft. Logan National Cemetery was much larger than I had expected, with nearly 100,000 internments. It was beautiful and well maintained. After a few minutes of searching we located the gravesite at a peaceful spot beside the shelter of a shade tree. A rush of emotion came over me; I was thankful my Marine buddies were with me. I reached into my pocket to retrieve a shiny new Khe Sanh Veterans challenge coin, protected in a vinyl pouch, to leave as a remembrance. With the help of Craig's pocket knife I dug out a small slit at the base of Manuel's headstone and pushed the coin deep beneath the sod.

We stayed for a while gazing out over the legions of white markers that stood row after row at attention, on the vast green parade ground. We thought of those we served with who did not return and wondered who, if not us, would be there to remember these many thousands of brave men. After all these years I had finally stood at the gravesite of my brother Sgt. Manuel Floyd Martinez, to shed tears for his loss and to honor him for his bravery. I had finally fulfilled my promise.



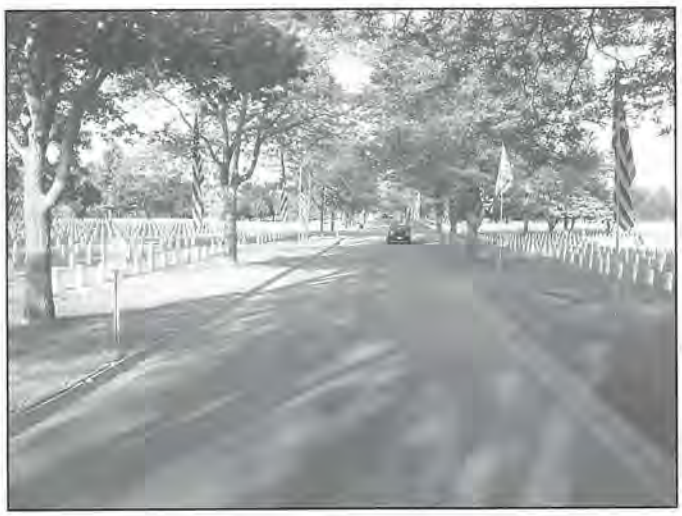

CHANGES & ADDITIONS NOT IN KSV MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

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The Center for the Investigation of Human Capabilities (CIHC), Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Association Office at the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology, Ha Noi, Vietnam



Me and Dr. Dinh Van Toan, renowned geologist, professor and director of the Geophysical Department of the Institute of Geological Sciences at the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology. Toan was assigned to the 24th PAVN (NVA) Regiment as a 40mm antitank gunner and was part of the force that overran the Lang Vei Special Forces camp near Khe Sanh in February 1968. During the subsequent siege of Khe Sanh Combat Base, Toan sustained multiple and serious wounds from a B-52 bombing and was also completely deafened for nearly a year thereafter.



The telepath, Nguyen Buu Thuan (in light blue jacket) explaining to Dr. Dinh Van Toan how to translate to us in English a map he just drew. Note Mahoney's baseball glove on table.



Plaque at Site



Paying our Respects



Doc & Mike trying to figure out what's going on



Me & Doc Topmiller in the Montagnard Hamlet of Lang Ta Tuc before Starting hike up 881S



Steve Orr standing on the SW slope of Hill 865. It was Steve's second visit to this hill; the last being April 14, 1968, the day 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines moved out to attack the NVA stronghold on nearby Hill 881N.



The group is just outside what was once the western gate into the Marine fortification on the western ridge of Hill 881S (often called Hill 881A and which I will refer to by its geographic name Hill 865 to avoid confusion by readers trying to understand the difference between Hills 881S, 881A and 881N). Tom Mahoney, was mortally wounded on this trail close to the spot where the people in this photo are standing. Two NVA soldiers immediately dragged his body off to the right and about eight meters down the draw. Because of an error in directions on a map drawn in late July 1968 for the USMC investigation of Tom's loss, we ended up holding his memorial service about 10-15 meters down the opposite (left) slope, near the last barren tree at the far left. Tom's exact whereabouts will remain a mystery



Thuan consulting the map he drew 3 days before in Hanoi



Thich Numinh at Mahoney's Altar Temple in Hue



Doc Topmiller & Steve Orr at table of offerings prepared by the nuns to entice Tom;s wandering soul into the Buddhist Temple where it would repose among "Friends" until his Mortal remains return to his family.



Me, Doc and a former NVA soldier taking a break on the road up to the base of Hill 881S on December 16, 2007. Thuan was taking him and his family to search for his dead brother who had been killed during the war around A Luoi, near the A Shau Valley, about 20 miles south of Khe Sanh. During the war, this NVA soldier fought against .













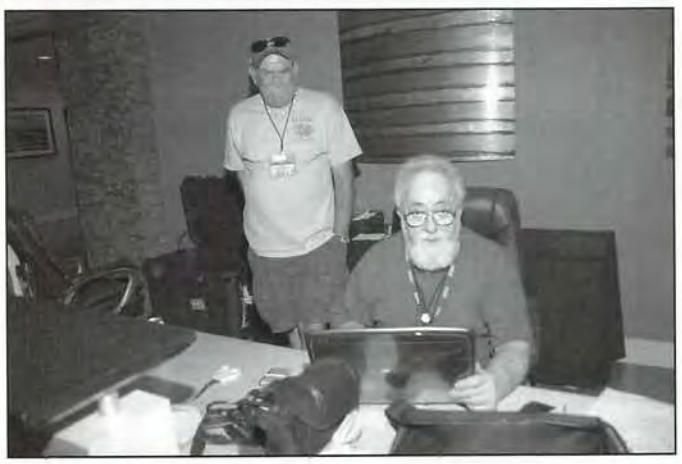
























KHE SANH Veterans


KHE SANH VETERAN
SIEGE
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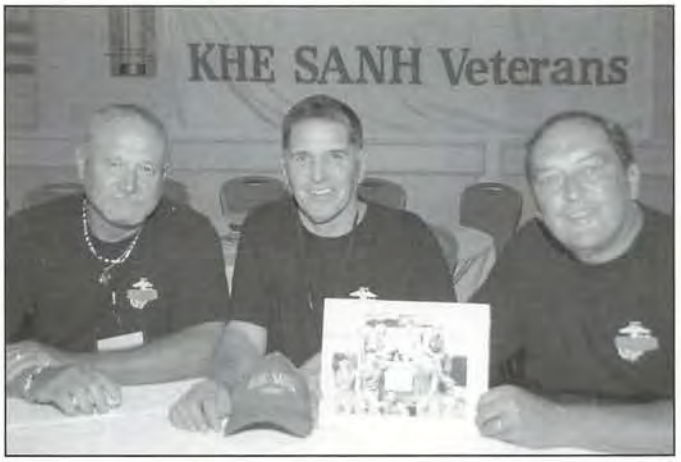
KHE SANH Veterans




USMC
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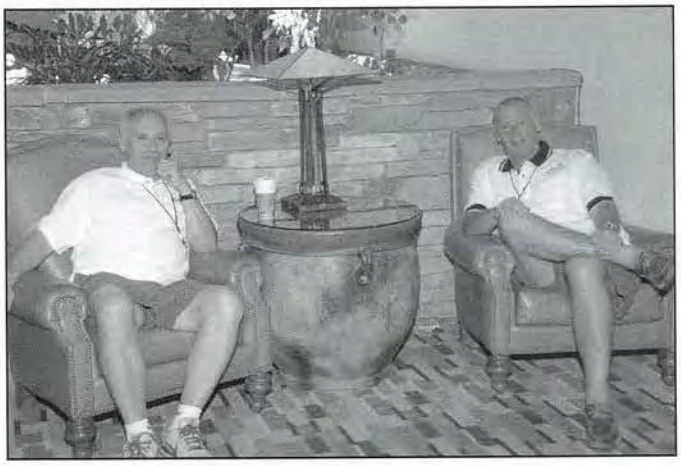


USMC


















ALCOHOL
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ALCOHOL
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VIETNAM














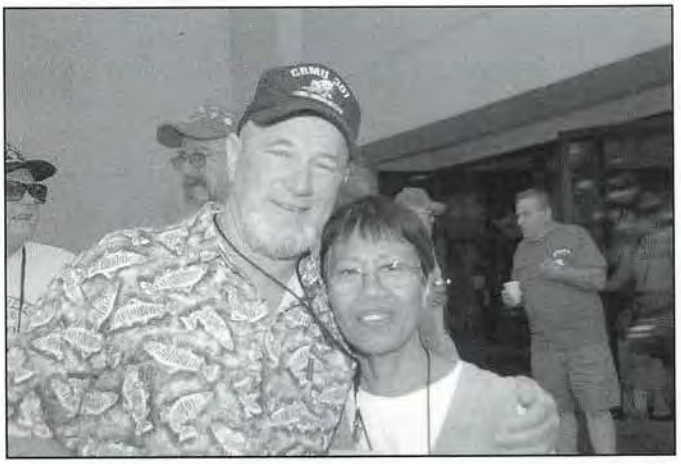




USMC
KHE SANH VETERANS
SIEGE
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KHE SANH
MARINES















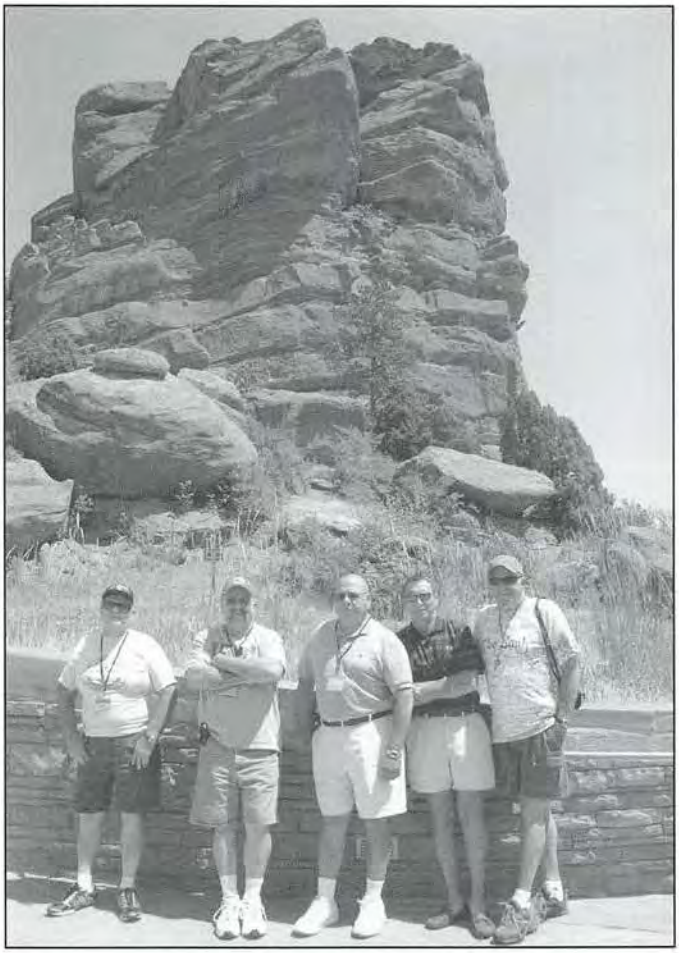








Booth
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EXIT







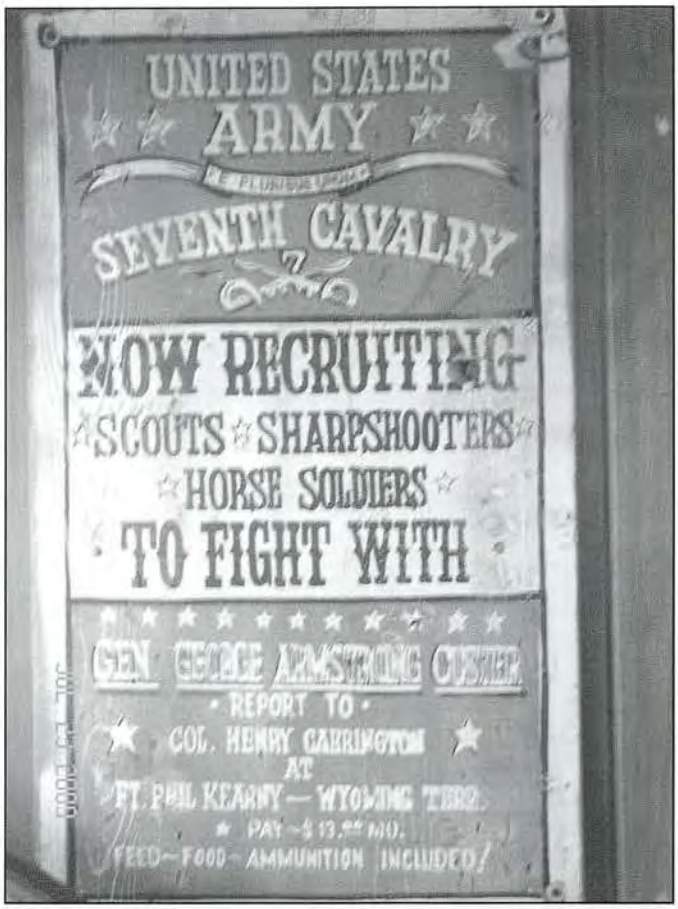
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FEED ~ FOOD AMMUNITION INCLUDED!


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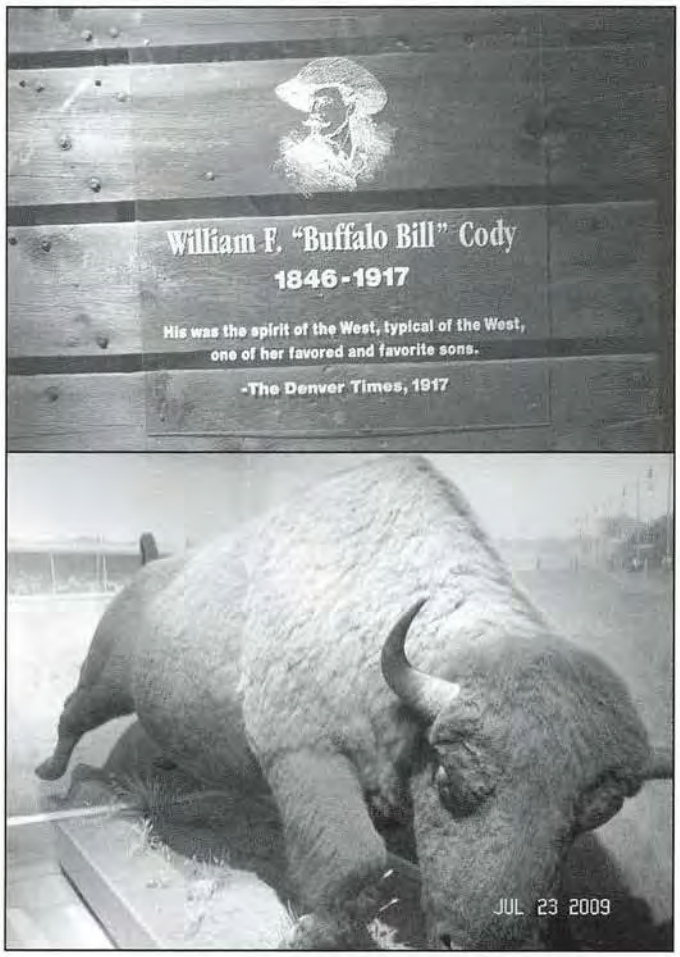
William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody
1846-1917
His was the spirit of the West, typical of the West,
one of her favored and favorite sons.
-The Denver Times, 1917
JUL 23 2009


"INDIAN BATTLEFIELDS"




KHE SANH
MARINES

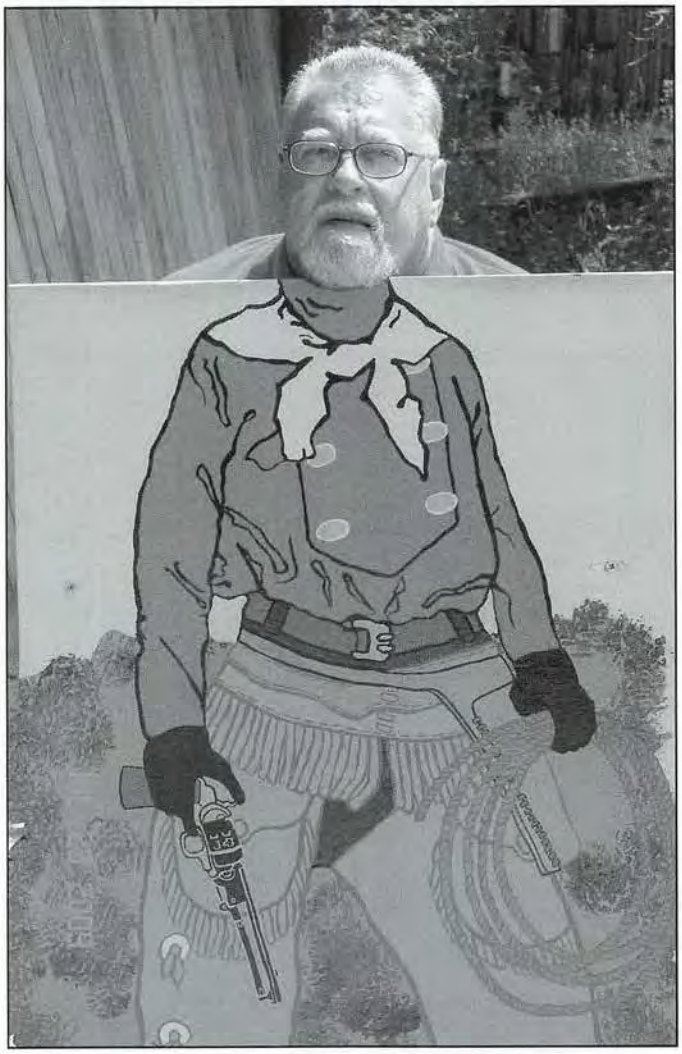


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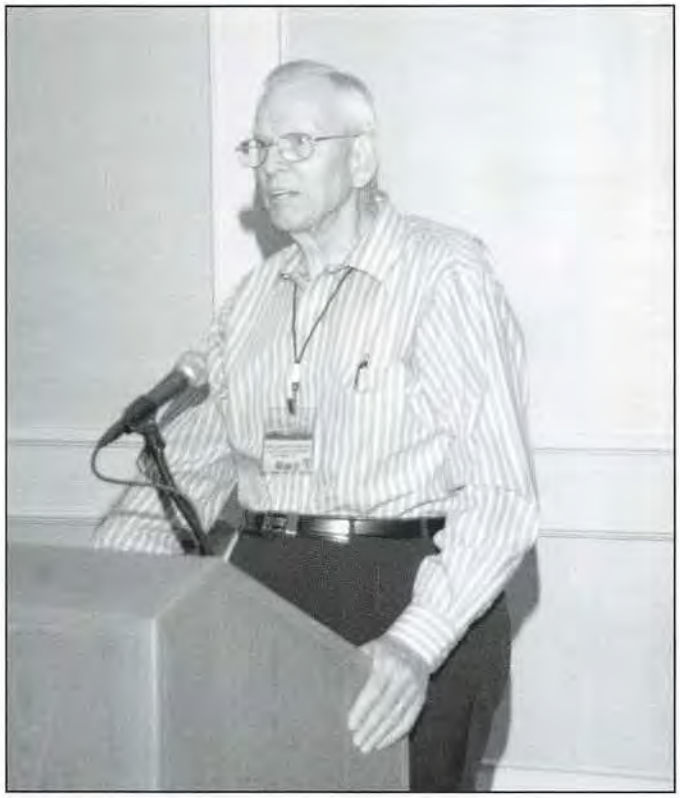


BRIEFINGS














EXIT




































































































POETRY

Hand to Soul

The navy medic
raised
His hand to me,
bloody

And bent.
I left my door
gunner's

post to take it.
We joined as
brothers for

seconds for
life. All
those he had
held, helped

and saved flowed
from
his fingers
through mine

and into my
soul....forever.

I Guarded Your Body

I guarded
your body and
unloaded bags
of black
plastic from a
chopper. all
I wanted was
to help you move
on. the
ceiling
fan hovers over my
bed. did I do
my best?

Bob Allyn
315th Air Commandos
12th SOS 1968

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST
Alleged Marine Faker Kept High Profile

September 22, 2009
Associated Press

SABILLASVILLE, Md. - On a sultry day in July 2008, Marine Sgt. David W. Budwah strode in his battle fatigues to the front of a picnic pavilion to tell three dozen young boys what he did during the war. With his clear gaze, rigid posture and muscled, tattooed arms, Budwah looked every inch the hero he claimed to be. He said he was on his second tour of duty in Afghanistan when a homemade grenade exploded, wounding his face and arm when he dove to shield a buddy from the blast.

"We're here to make sure of the freedom you have every day," Budwah told his audience at Camp West Mar, a wooded American Legion compound about 60 miles northwest of Washington.

But the Marines say Budwah is a liar, a fraud and a thief. They are court-martialing the 34-year-old Springhill, La., native, alleging he was never in Afghanistan, wasn't wounded and didn't earn the combat medals he wore - or the many privileges he enjoyed.

Budwah joined the Marines in October 1999 and spent nearly all of the next six years with a radio communications unit in Okinawa, Japan, according to the Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Va., where Budwah has been stationed since February 2006.

Phony heroes aren't unusual. Thousands of complaints pour in annually to the FBI and civilian groups about impostors flaunting store-bought medals. Their very prevalence exposes something else - a nation so eager to embrace its war fighters, especially the wounded, that it sometimes fails to discern between the real heroes and the fakes.

"In every society in history, the warrior is glorified," said phony-hero debunker B.G. "Jug" Burkett of Plano, Texas. "The second you say you're a warrior who has performed heroically in combat, everybody perceives you differently."

Burkett, 65, a Vietnam veteran and author of the 1998 book, "Stolen Valor," said the urge to honor the wounded can cloud a person's judgment.

"I tell reporters that when you've got a guy who's vocal - 'Let me tell you how I won my Silver Star' - your antenna should go up," Burkett said. "The real guys typically don't talk about it."

Budwah's case is remarkable because he is an active-duty Marine facing military justice, not a civilian charged with wearing unearned medals. Of nearly 3,100 courts-martial last year in the four major armed services, only 27 were trials for wearing illegal decorations. Just two involved Marines.

Prosecutors say Budwah wore unauthorized medals and accepted VIP invitations to rock concerts, major-league baseball games, banquets and other events meant to fete wounded warriors.

He faked post-traumatic stress disorder in hopes of leaving service early and was sent to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, where he bluffed his way into 33 events from late July through November 2008, according to charges obtained by The Associated Press through an appeal of its Freedom of Information Act request.

Bethesda hospital spokesman Chris Walz said the staff tries to involve as many patients as possible in such activities, which range from free NFL tickets to speaking engagements like Budwah's at Camp West Mar.

The charges include making false official statements, malingering, misconduct, and larceny. Budwah faces up to 31 1/2 years in prison and a dishonorable discharge if convicted on all eight counts at a trial set for Oct. 20. at Quantico.

Budwah, who declined to enter a plea at his Aug. 5 arraignment, denied wrongdoing in a brief telephone interview in April. "The allegation is not even true," he said, declining to comment further.

Defense attorney Marine Capt. Kelly Repair and prosecutor Marine Capt. Thomas Liu also have de-

clined to comment.

Recent prosecutions of active-duty service members include Dontae L. Tazewell, a Navy hospital corpsman sentenced in January 2008 in Norfolk, Va., to two years in prison for wearing an unearned Purple Heart and other decorations. Tazewell falsely claimed he had rescued six Marines and recovered the bodies of four others in Iraq.

Prosecutors portrayed him as a failing sailor so desperate to remain in service that he fabricated the story.

Navy corpsman Robert White, got 45 days in the brig after pleading guilty in December at Great Lakes Naval Station, Ill., to wearing a Purple Heart he bought. A former girlfriend testified White obtained the medal after he was shunned by his peers for assaulting her, the Navy Times reported.

People fabricate military injuries for many reasons, including laziness, greed, sympathy and psychosis, said Loren Pankratz of Oregon Health & Science University, who wrote about PTSD impostors in his book, "Patients Who Deceive."

"A more common theme would be somebody who would represent sort of the antihero - the guy who's given his all and yet been abused and misunderstood," Pankratz said.

Burkett said others are simply con men.

Walter E. Boomer, who served as assistant commandant of the Marine Corps from 1992 to 1994, vaguely remembers meeting Budwah in November when they were guests at a Grand National Waterfowl Association benefit on Maryland's Eastern Shore. They shot at ducks, drank and dined with other VIPs and shotgun manufacturing executives.

"I accepted his story at face value," Boomer said. "Nothing that I recall would have set off alarm bells."

Budwah again managed his way to the center of attention at a September 2008 boxing event in Glen Burnie, Md. Organizer Scott Wagner said the highlight of the night was when he brought Budwah and dozens of other military hospital patients into the ring for a standing ovation.

"Were they injured or not? I don't know and I really don't care. If half of them were injured, I still feel good about it," he said.

A year after Budwah's speech to the youngsters at the American Legion camp, Spencer Shoemaker sat stunned in the family's kitchen as he read the charges against his Marine idol for the first time.

Shoemaker, then 10, was so impressed he had his picture taken with Budwah and kept a treasured newspaper clipping about the visit. He said Budwah's talk made him want to join the Marines.

"Well, it's better that I know," the boy said after a long silence. "It did tear me down, but I'll still join the Marines."

His father Michael, a construction worker, seethed at the news about Budwah.

"He scammed America," Shoemaker said. "He scammed a kid."

BOOK REVIEW

ED NOTE: Jeremiah Workman was An honored guest at the Khe Sanh Veterans Washington DC Reunion, and I sincerely believe he finally came to grips with the demons that were troubling him, after being with our members and realizing he was not alone.

"SHADOW OF THE SWORD"

A MARINE'S JOURNEY OF WAR, HEROISM AND REDEMPTION

By Jeremiah Workman
with John R. Burning
Presidio Press, $26, 272 pages

REVIEWED BY JAMES C. ROBERTS
Marine Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Workman's "Shadow of the Sword" is the story of two battles.

The first battle was intense, but, compared to the second, relatively brief. On Dec. 23, 2004, during the Battle of Fallujah, then-Cpl. Workman's platoon

came upon a house occupied by 40 heavily armed insurgents.

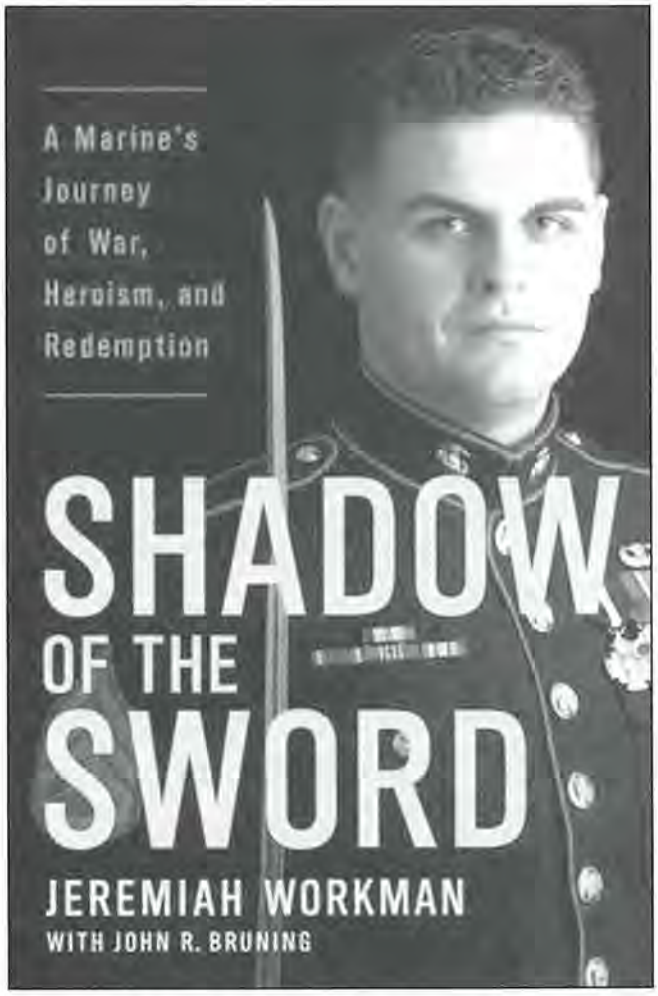

Five of the Marines climbed the stairs to the second floor and were immediately pinned down by superior forces. Workman led his squad in three separate assaults to rescue the five trapped Marines, repeatedly exposing himself to enemy fire during the hours-long battle. In his second assault, he was seriously wounded by an enemy grenade that left his arms and legs lacerated by shrapnel. Despite his wounds, Workman led a third attack. Here is how he describes his situation after hours of battling the insurgents:

"I feel myself falling down the stairs. I hit a step two or three above the landing, unable to breathe. A sudden onrush of smoke fills the landing. Everything flammable now burns with a hellish glow. It casts crazy shadows through the smoke. … "Allah Akbar!" An insurgent's victory cry. Where's my weapon? I still can't breathe. My lungs feel compressed, like a balloon a child has squeezed hard and drained of all helium. …

"I try to get to my feet, but I slip and fall. I have no balance. I'm reduced to crawling on my hands and knees. I tumble to the landing and sprawl chin-first into the broken glass under the window. …

"The shouting fades until it merges with the sound of my heartbeat in my ear. … Like a dream, a scream pierces the background noise. They're coming for you, Jeremiah. … I try to breathe but my muscles refuse to work. I'm suffocating. The last of my strength starts to flow away. … I'm left in darkness now, unable to even gasp for air … Finish this. Get up there and die as you intended. Don't let them shoot you like a dog, on all fours … my cammies are torn and blackened. My hands and arms are slick with blood. The hum of background noise becomes a staccato melody of gunfire. I listen to it, unable to find the will to move, unsure if I am even conscious. … Am I dying?… Consciousness slips away like a ship in its death throes. A wave cascades over me. I feel loose, adrift. Free. I float away into the blackness."

Exhausted and only semi-coherent at this point, Workman was dragged from the building by a Marine officer. Workman's efforts contributed to the elimination of 24 jihadists, and his heroic actions saved two of the five trapped Marines, but three were killed.

In recognition of his heroic action, Cpl. Workman was awarded the Navy Cross, the nation's second highest award for valor.

Although celebrated in the Marine Corps, in his hometown and indeed nationally as a hero, Cpl. (now Sgt.) Workman was engaged in a second, desperate battle, however. The enemy this time was as lethal in its own corrosive way as the jihadists he had faced in Fallujah — post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It is a battle that continues to this day, almost five years later.

Much of the book is a brutally honest account of Workman's daily struggle against this insidious disorder which, as the author reveals, has destroyed or crippled the lives of hundreds of thousands of combat veterans of America's wars.

In the aftermath of the battle of Fallujah, the specter of the three dead buddies he was unable to save

came to haunt Workman, causing first nightmares, then persistent insomnia, anxiety and depression.

He resorted to self medication with alcohol, then prescription drugs, including the powerful sedative Clonopin, that enabled him to sleep but left him groggy and dazed much of the time.

Workman became subject to wild mood swings when the Clonopin wore off, going from passivity to wild rages. He was relieved of his duties as a drill instructor and was ostracized by fellow Marines. His pregnant wife, traumatized and exasperated by the ordeal their marriage had become, left him.

Then, on a cross-country heroes bus tour with Vets for Freedom, Workman discovered that many of his fellow heroes were suffering from PTSD as well.

His feelings of isolation lessened, he sought counseling and focused on saving his marriage and becoming a dad to the son he had fathered. With enormous effort, he broke his dependence on Clonopin and gradually got control of his anger. He and his wife began talking on the phone with increasing frequency and they eventually confessed that they still loved each other.

The story has a happy ending, at least provisionally. Jeremiah and his wife, Jessica, have reunited and he dotes on his son, Devon. He has an associate college degree (the first in his family to achieve this) and hopes to have his bachelor's degree in two years.

Professionally, things are going well for Workman as well. He has been assigned to work with a program at the at Marine Corps base in Quantico, Va., that treats injured Marines including those suffering from PTSD. He has become an expert on the disorder and the statistics he cites are astonishing.

Workman notes that 25,000 World War II veterans are still being treated for PTSD, 65 years after the war's end. Thirty percent of Korean War combat veterans continue to suffer from PTSD and almost 500,000 Vietnam War veterans — 30 percent of those who saw combat — were affected by PTSD. "For a shocking number of our veterans," Workman writes, "The wars they fought never ended. Never." The percentages for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are even worse. Workman reports that approximately 300,000 of the veterans of these conflicts suffer from PTSD or major depression while another 320,000 have suffered from traumatic brain injuries that often cause symptoms akin to those of PTSD.

The military had prepared to treat only 8,000 cases, however, rather than the almost 700,000 cases that actually resulted. As a result, the system was overwhelmed, with the VA reporting 600,000 unprocessed claims at one point. That situation, fortunately, has improved dramatically as a result of a policy change at the top. The military has dramatically expanded its treatment program for PTSD and aggressively encourages those who have the symptoms to seek treatment. The Marine Corps has adopted an official policy that no Marine suffering from PTSD will be denied a promotion because of it.

Still, Workman notes, because of the stigma of PTSD, an estimated 60 percent of PTSD sufferers decline to seek help, insisting on fighting "the shadow war" in solitude, in many cases self-medicating themselves with drugs and alcohol. Workman's mission is to battle this stigma by speaking about PTSD around the country — and by writing this book.

"They called me a hero, and yet, I needed help," he writes, hoping by his candor to encourage others suffering from PTSD to come out of the shadows. Despite his struggles, however, he refuses to succumb to victim status. He has no use for political correctness, is a staunch defender of the U.S. mission in Iraq and Afghanistan and is proud of his service in the Marine Corps and would do it again. The way to deal with PTSD, he shows, is to acknowledge the problem and confront it.

For Jeremiah Workman, the battle against PTSD continues on a daily basis, yet he is optimistic about the long-term outcome, made more determined by the love for his wife and son.

At the end of the book, he recalls kissing his infant son on the forehead and vowing, "I will never give up the fight, Devon. That's my promise to you."

Then he adds, "I follow my son into a deep and comforting sleep."

FAC Support 1968: Battle for Lang Vei - Khe Sanh Hill 64!

By Toby Rushforth (Charles P. Rushforth III)
20th TASS, 1967-1968

It was late last Century, in fact, late in 1999, that I first became aware of the Khe Sanh Veterans' Association. I couldn't imagine how I missed it over all those years. I had been a Forward Air Controller, flying O-2 aircraft out of Hue Citadel and Danang AB in 1967-68. That was a very vital time in my life, as it certainly was for all of us.

I looked forward to my first Khe Sanh Veterans Association Reunion in San Diego, during September, 2000. In preparation, I had a baseball cap embroidered with a FAC badge and my radio call signs. The idea was to help anyone who might have something in common, come up and talk. That way I wouldn't have to go around tapping everyone on the shoulder to introduce myself and explain how an AF FAC ended up at a mainly Marine and Army/ Special Ops type Reunion. I was somewhat prepared, because I had traded some correspondence with Ray Stubbe about the Association and about combat operations in and around Khe Sanh. I had also read his book, "Valley of Decision," and recognized a number of operations in which I had taken part. So, the idea of maybe getting to talk to guys that were on the ground during the Siege, while I was overhead, was curious and exciting.

My first KSV Reunion:

After I had checked into the Hotel in San Diego, I prepared for the cocktail hour around the pool in the courtyard. As I passed a profusion of guys, with lots of red on hats and shirts, bearing unit designations, it was a very comfortable feeling (for a guy who was virtually a total stranger to all). As I strode out by the pool, I hadn't gone more than 25 steps before I heard someone yell "Covey!" Geez! Did that feel good. I turned to be greeted by Jim Speer who had been on the USAF Combat Control Team there at KS. He was well acquainted with a number of FACs that we knew mutually, who had been in and out of KS early in the Siege. It was a neat way to start out the Reunion, as I noted with some satisfaction, that my "hat trick" had worked. Jim had apparently been to previous Reunions and quickly began to fill me in.

As the conversation moved between people, places and events, I mentioned that I had been at Lang Vei the morning it was overrun. Jim quickly pointed out a fellow a couple of tables away and said he was there during the battle. I thanked Jim and quickly moved over to stand next to this fellow who was engaged in conversation with a couple others. There was a certain intensity, yet off-handedness about him. I must have moved in such a way that he got a hint I was waiting to talk with him. He briefly paused and looked up at me. I asked if he had been at Lang Vei when it was overrun. He looked at me with both surprise and curiosity and said, "Why yes I was." I explained that I was an AF Forward Air Controller who had been there that morning after the North Vietnamese had overrun the camp. As we ran through a quick Battle chronology of that fateful morning of 7 February, 1968, he talked about how he had evaded during the battle, and showed up later in the PM after much of the process of evacuating survivors was about concluded. At that point, I blurted out: "Wait a minute, you aren't 'Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo' are you?" He looked startled and said "yes I am." I paused, then said "we had assumed you were killed by the North Vietnamese!" It's hard to explain, but this turned into quite an emotional moment. Who knows how and where that wells up from? Let's go back to recount events long past.

My FAC perspective of the Battle for Lang Vei:

I had been in country and at Danang AB for a few months and by that time, was feeling pretty confident about myself as a Forward Air Controller. By that I mean I had not only survived getting shot at pretty regularly, but managed to live through some episodes of "the stupids" in which I was lucky not to have killed myself. Early in the tour, I sometimes even wondered if I wasn't as much a threat to friend as to foe. In any event, at this point, Captain Rushforth was more of a steely-eyed predator (in his own mind).

In January '68, along with other FACs, I was shifted from the "Tally Ho" mission, above the DMZ to "Operation Niagra" over Khe Sanh and its approaches. As we became better acquainted with our new mission area, it was clear that something unusual was in the offing. Signs of enemy activity on

the approaches from the North and West were particularly revealing.

On the night of 25 January, the Laotian community at Ban Houaysan (otherwise called "Elephant") was overrun [several miles West of Lang Vei, along Route 9]. Among the intelligence reported by us FACs was that there were tracked vehicle impressions all along Route 9, both East and West of "Elephant." In fact, it was later reported by a FAC that we had killed a tank during that battle (however, the tank quickly disappeared). After the battle, the Laotians and their Vietnamese (ARVN) Ranger liaison retreated to the Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei.

7 February, 1968: Lang Vei:

This account of happenings on 7 and 8 February, 1968 is from my diary and reflects the facts as I knew them and my feelings at the moment.

Well! Gerry Harrington and John Buckles had their work cut out for them last night. Lang Vei was being overrun by a large enemy force supported by at least 9 tanks. They said it was an unbelievable sight, walls of tracers, explosions, what looked like flame throwers, yelling on the radios and tanks rolling right over the tops of friendly bunkers. They had difficulty sorting out targets on the ground, but said they did have a B-57 drop some what we called "funny bombs" (a frag and hot chemical explosive pattern) on tanks breaching the Camp's Southwestern perimeter. They thought the tanks were disabled by that strike?

I got up about 0500. After a fairly inclusive Intelligence briefing on what little was known about the battle, I moved quickly for the flight line and finished the preflight. Aircraft # 396 was in good shape. It had a standard wing load, two pods of 2.75" white phosphorous rockets, a total of 14. The sense of urgency began to grow as I made the radio calls and taxied for takeoff at Danang. The weather was not that good. I'd have to climb on instruments to get on top and cruise to the Khe Sanh area, then figure out how to get under the clouds and over to Lang Vei. I took off at 0710. After about 40 anxious minutes enroute I used heading time and distance to get down through the clouds West of Lang Vei. Cloud bases were ragged at about 1000 feet above the terrain. Following Route 9 back to the East, I approached the Camp, and checked in with "Covey 688," a FAC from Ubon, Thailand who was currently in charge of air operations over the battle area. I could see his O-2 ahead, between cloud layers (forming a sort of fishbowl), circling over patches of occasional trees and brush, which were intermittently visible. Columns of smoke drifted up through the low clouds that were virtually settled on the Camp and the rolling terrain around it. It was about 0800 as I fell into loose trail formation with 688 to listen and try to figure out what was happening. I would be taking over shortly.

Our Special Ops personnel, call sign "Spunky Hanson," were holed up in their Tactical Operations Center (TOC). They were talking to 688 via FM radio. The NVA were swarming all over the TOC, throwing satchel charges, plus smoke and frag grenades down the ventilation shafts and any place they could find access. Spunky Hanson 15A and some CIDG, who had stormed the Camp to rescue the troops, were pinned down by machine gun fire. 688 told them to withdraw so he could bring in some A-1, Skyraiders (Canasta Flight) with lots of guns and ordnance to get the NVA off the TOC. He had the A-1s hold while he dove his O-2 through a "sucker hole" to see if the A-1s could work under these conditions. The terrain was actually in and out of the clouds, an extremely treacherous operation to attempt. I virtually held my breath waiting for him to pop up through the clouds, all the while fearing a flash and column of black smoke would appear instead.

After what seemed like forever, his O-2 popped up through the clouds and he began to talk with the A-1s. It was very risky. They would be in and out of the clouds and in the tree-tops. All the Canasta pilots (4) agreed to give it a try. They formed a "daisy chain" behind 688 and one after the other, dove through the hole in the clouds to see if 688 could lead them close enough to engage the NVA on the TOC. After a short time 688 came back up through the cloud deck. Now we had four A-1s in a tree-top free for all, ripping up the landscape, mainly with their guns, strafing the TOC and area around it. I again held my breath, while from an altitude of about 800 feet, except for the drone of my engines things seemed ghostly quiet. Time was suspended. Again, the tell-tale smoke of an air ground disaster

was almost an expectation. When the A-1s came back above the clouds, time started again.

Spunky Hanson, in a quiet tone, said they were apparently successful, as the enemy activity on the TOC had ceased, at least temporarily. I was greatly relieved that the Canasta flight got the job done and were all still flying. It was an amazing feat of airmanship. The A-1 guys were all balls. It was not hard to envision those four A-1s ripping through the treetops, in and out of the cloud bases, high-G turns at treetop level, firing away at the TOC and somehow not hitting each other.

By now, the inside of my cockpit windows was getting pretty well covered with my grease pencil notes about what was going on and who all the players were. That was a pretty standard practice for FACs, trying to keep track of what is happening on the ground while managing all aspects of the air support.

The clouds were beginning to break up, revealing much of the Camp. The TOC had a tank on its side adjacent to it, and the trail/road coming up from the river, down by Route 9 (at the Laos border) had two tanks knocked out at about the Camp perimeter. I took pictures of the Camp and the tanks with my Intel Nikon Telephoto. At about this point, 688 had an engine acting up and had to depart for home. I took over the air operation. The A-1s, bless 'em, were still able to loiter and had napalm and 250/500 lb. bombs remaining.

Meanwhile, we had been trying to coordinate a rescue effort from Khe Sanh. First word was that a ground team would not be sent, because the NVA had certainly set up ambushes at advantageous points along the way. It was also stated that a Helo-Assault Evacuation would not be attempted for awhile due to weather conditions. As disappointing as this was to us, it made our course of action clear. We had to conduct a holding action to keep the NVA away from the TOC until help arrived. Perhaps Spunky Hanson 15A and the local troops could fight their way in?

It wasn't long before Spunky Hanson (SH) came up on "Fox Mike" (FM) again, relating that the NVA were back. "They're all over us out there. Give 'em everything you've got," SH said. At this point, he seemed calm and almost resigned to his fate. Initially the fighters were pressing so hard to be effective that after release, the bombs didn't even have time to arm and hit the ground as duds. In one case that may have saved us an A-1. I had aligned myself, coming right "down the chute" behind him on his bomb run. His bomb release was very close to the ground, a dud, which kicked up the dirt. The dirt then briefly swirled behind as the A-1 flew through the dirt plume. If it had gone off, it might have nailed him. The A-1 pilots quickly adjusted and managed to keep the NVA occupied with their remaining ordnance.

I asked SH if they could come out and make a run for it. "We've got badly wounded people down here that can't move, some may even be dead. We're not coming out until you come and get us." We periodically continued our calls for reinforcements and hoped for a helo evacuation task force. It wasn't happening and we were hearing words like it wasn't going to happen for awhile. I couldn't understand what the problem was? It was frustrating!

Meanwhile, Spunky Hanson 15A was having a hell of a time getting the CIDG and Elephant people to move against that machine gun and mortar fire. SH15A, a Sgt Ashley, went back to get a 37MM Recoilless Rifle to bring fires upon the NVA positions. He subsequently knocked out at least two of the NVA gun positions with the weapon. Even then, he and the Bru / Elephant troops were again driven back. At about this time, I noted a green smoke on the Northeast perimeter of the Camp. Even from 500 ft., I couldn't determine its origin. Was it a friendly trying to let me know he was there? Was it the NVA trying to spoof me so I wouldn't bomb him/them? I never did figure that one out, but elected not to bomb that area unless I determined it to be the enemy, or absolutely had to.

Hobo 01 and 02 then arrived to replace the Canasta Flight. I had them work on the West side of the compound, around the TOC with CBU (cluster bombs), napalm and strafe. They did a terrific job, but the NVA were still not ready to back off.

At this point, my own front engine overheated, coughing and sputtering from being run at full throttle for hours. That really caught me in the gut. I could just see a forced landing among the NVA

down there, after beating them up all morning. Not good!

Major John Seats, another Covey FAC (Bruce Goodhue I believe) took over for me and continued the holding action, while waiting for the reinforcements we assumed would be coming sometime soon. The engine continued to shudder and sputter, but held together well enough to climb out of the area enroute to Danang.

The landing was uneventful, and I proceeded directly to the Intelligence debriefing room where I was told to call directly to Headquarters 7th Air Force in Saigon. A Colonel answered the phone and began the debriefing. When I mentioned tanks, he fired off and as much as called Captain Rushforth a liar or maybe just mistaken? After all we had been reporting that day and for weeks prior, I thought it incredible that he was questioning me like this. He was so adamant I became adversarial in tone, if not in words, and described the vehicles as "ya know, they have tracks on both sides, this thing that looked just like a turret on top, with a big long thing sticking out of it (like maybe a big gun)!?" Not only that, I was only 500ft. above them. To my amazement, he still wasn't buying it? I played my Ace of Spades -- "I have pictures!" "Pictures," he shouted! You get them right over to the photo lab and we'll divert a plane to pick them up immediately! I did, and he did, like within the hour. I'm sure the pictures were great on the briefing circuit (they came out well), but we never heard about them again.

Note: So far, the most comprehensive account I have read, of what happened on the ground during this battle is "The Night of the Silver Stars," by William R. Phillips, published in 1997 as part of the Naval Institute Special Warfare Series. It was indeed a night of heroism and gallantry. Among decorations the defenders received: a Medal of Honor, a Distinguished Service Cross, 19 Silver Stars and 3 Bronze Stars with "V" for valor as well as numerous other awards and decorations.

8 February, 1968: Hill 64, Alpha 1 Firefight and day after Lang Vei:

These are the thoughts and experiences recorded on 8 February, the day after the Lang Vei Battle. Back in my quarters at 2200, after a full day at Khe Sanh, then debriefings and planning.

0550: It was hard getting up. The bed (eat your heart out guys) really felt good. Got mission briefing for the KS area and things had apparently gotten quiet. The expectation was that the NVA were repositioning for another direct assault in strength, on Khe Sanh. The weather at Danang, enroute and on the Khe Sanh plateau was poor. At Personal Equipment, Scottie, was in rough shape, really bleary eyed. He'd been up for about 24 hours. I had some maintenance problems, but pressed on. Aircraft #331 was really in pretty good shape. (Note: this is the O-2 currently on display at the USAF Air Museum at Wright Patterson AFB.)

0645: Take off and climb enroute was all weather until on top at 10,000 feet. Using the same procedure as yesterday, I went out into the flatlands in Laos so I could let down through the clouds without hitting anything. I broke out of the clouds at about 1000 feet above the terrain, found Route 9, and followed it back toward Lang Vei. Joe Johnson, Covey 251, was in the area ahead of me and we began to coordinate areas to Recce so we wouldn't be hitting each other in the low clouds.

Lang Vei appeared to be abandoned. There were several hundred refugees on Route 9 between Khe Sanh City and Lang Vei, headed West? Guess they know where the action will be. The Marines didn't know who they were and were seriously thinking of putting artillery on them. I had to make sure - low pass on the tree tops - ooops! Damn trees all around me, zipping by the wings. The tops were defoliated and I hadn't seen them - very tall. The refugees were mainly women & children carrying belongings, etc. - old men, some younger. That sure tore at me. Those poor people just don't know where to go - getting it from both sides, one way or another. So - so sad! I felt as though I could actually see it on their faces.

Garden Valley 14 Actual at Khe Sanh called - need air to hit mortar and rocket positions just WSW, off the runway, on the ridgeline. Joe Johnson, Covey 251, went out to the West, along Route 9 at about the border to escort some fighters into the area through the cloud layers. We got Canasta 403, a flight of 4 A-1Hs (Navy). They were loaded with

bombs (250lb & 500lb) and 20MM strafe. After pre -briefing the fighters, and discussing tactics, I marked the ridgeline targets with one of my 2.75" "Willie Pete" (white phosphorous) rockets and cleared them in "hot." We quickly got two secondary explosions indicating that the bombs had indeed found worthy targets. However, at this point, Garden Valley 14 Actual asked us to hold off on the airstrike and to my amazement, briefed me on a firefight on a nearby hill last night.

HILL 64: Garden Valley 14 Actual described the hill and events as they knew them. The hill wasn't apparent on my map, but there was no doubt that there was still a firefight of some sort going on just to my South. The NVA assaulted the hill in force during the night (mortars, rockets and ground assault) and there was ferocious hand to hand combat as the night wore on. The main base supported the marines in the hilltop defensive positions with direct fire on the East face of the hill (toward the main base) from heavy weapons. However, the NVA simply moved to the back side of the hill to continue the assault.

Garden Valley 14 Actual had not talked to the defenders for some time. Apparently their radios were destroyed or lost in the battle. GV14A said " We don't know what is going on up there. We don't know if our guys are still defending in the trenches, or whether they were driven out of the trenches and are trying to get back in?" My immediate reaction was "How come you didn't tell me this sooner? Here we were dropping bombs on a ridgeline, when we had nearby troops in contact?" Couldn't dwell on that. Had to get busy.

I decided that the only way to sort out who was where, was to make a low pass and look in the trenches. From about 1500 feet, I could see explosions and tracers on the hill, but not much more. I planned to get that little sucker going as fast as I could, in a dive from the base side of the Hill where there were fewer NVA. I dove, at full power, on the Eastern base of the hill, then snapped it up over the defensive trench lines in about 90 degrees of bank at about 150-200 feet. As I flashed over the trenches at about 230 knots I saw troops in hand to hand combat, grenades going off in the trenches, and about a grand total of 60 troops. The NVA were caught off guard by the pass, but hosed me down real good anyway. As I dove down the opposite side of the hill I thought, "how do I get back to altitude with this little thing without giving the bad guys a great tail shot at me hanging on a sky hook? I flew away for a while, dodging trees, then began my climb while I tried to digest what I had seen.

The predominance of the guys in the trenches were wearing flak vests, and a number had on US style helmets. "That's it!" The good guys are still dukeing it out in the trenches with the bad guys. I notified GV14A of my conclusions and told them we were going to start putting the fighters on the exterior of the hill and its North and West approaches. I briefed the A-1s on the situation and what we were going to do about it. I had them come in from the North to strafe the bases of the hill and work the strafe up the hill toward the trench lines. These guys really got down in the weeds for this one, so they could see the whites of their eyes. The A-1s looked beautiful, terrific, skimming through the treetops, blazing away. Sure wish I had one of them. Next it was the bombs in the trees and brush along the Western base of the hill. Seemed like this suppressed the NVA for awhile, but they were soon up and at it again. I know we got a mess of 'em, but they were still ready to join the fight.

We had put in an emergency request for prop aircraft that could operate in these mountains, ridges, valleys in this weather. The A-1s were always preferred, because they could carry so much ordnance and loiter for 4 hours or so (depending upon how far they had to travel). Joe Johnson, again went West to rendezvous and escort them back to the battle area. However, we were getting short on fuel.

Bruce Goodhue, Covey 226, arrived and took over air support for the Hill. He had some A-26s en-route (twin engine, WWII, Korea vintage). They are also great for close air support, working close in bad weather, and being able to hang around for awhile.

As Joe Johnson and I were preparing to leave, we spotted some troops in the open on the backside of the hill headed for the adjacent ridge to the West. With great satisfaction we both unloaded 27, 2.75" white phosphorous rockets on them. We were on target, but had to RTB (Return to Base) due to lack of fuel, and did not get a good assessment of the situation after our attack.

En-route Danang: I get a crazy feeling flying around watching those poor guys in the trenches getting blown up. How would I feel if I was down there. Hard to think about. Got a touch of that invincibility complex again too - I was awful low and they were shooting like hell. I'd have given anything for a mini -gun. I was about fired up enough to strafe with my M-16 out the cockpit window. Maybe we shoulda gone to Dong Ha for a load of HE rockets from the Army guys? Hell! For awhile there we were about the only ones that could fly in that weather (500'-1000' overcast, scattered to broken scud from 500' to 1700').

Had trouble letting down into Danang for landing. The base was shrouded in a thick overcast. Their radar was overloaded, so I had "Panama" GCI Radar vector me down over the South China Sea. Broke out of the clouds at about 500' above the water. Hmmm! An aircraft Carrier right over there! If I had come through the clouds a little further to the left, I might have made a real mess. Really had to piss bad - went right there on the O-2 maintenance ramp.

Called the Tac Air Control Center to debrief, got something to eat and went back to Intel for a detailed debrief for the rest of the troops. My pictures of the tanks at Lang Vei yesterday came out very well and are a great hit on the briefing circuit. Blah!

Yesterday, Spunky Hanson 15A, a Sgt Ashley, was killed on the 5th assault to rescue the troops in the TOC at Lang Vei. There were more than 9 guys rescued, not sure exactly. Tony Sazanovics was the FAC in charge for the chopper evac, yesterday afternoon. He did a hell of a job. They got the crap shot out of them, but got all but one of the troops out? They also got some CIDG and Elephant people out, though I understand it was ugly. Initially the Helos couldn't take off because they were overweight with people hanging on the skids. Had to knock (shoot?) some off or lose the whole mission and get everyone killed.

During all this Tony Sazanovics was contacted by a Special Ops troop who had apparently been evading after the Camp was overrun. His call sign was "Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo." SH28B came out of the trees at the old Lang Vei Camp to where Tony could see him. The Helo Evac force was already fully (over) loaded and pulling out to head for Khe Sanh. It became apparent that the Helos were out of the picture and Tony was preparing to land on the torn up, bombed out, airstrip at the old Camp. However, a large number of NVA arrived first and chased SH28B back into the trees and brush. Tony related that it looked like a lot of shooting during the chase. Last transmission from SH28B was "They're coming up from the other side of the strip." No way SH28B will come out of that alive. If Tony had tried to land for SH28B, it would have been nothing short of a miracle if they made it off the ground. The front prop had only 10" clearance and the ground was too irregular. It would have caught in the dirt and debris.

Meanwhile, today on the hill West of Khe Sanh, Bruce Goodhue worked some more A-1s (Canasta flight), A-26s (Nimrods) and T-28s (Zorro) on the NVA around the hill. They did a great job. When it was over, the good guys were able to get up, clear the outpost, and walk off the hill. After discussions with the relief force from the main base, they went up and reoccupied the hill. After the battle, first glance showed about 50 NVA bodies, plus plenty of captured weapons. [Understand that later a total of 150 NVA bodies were found, along with a number of machine guns, etc.]

Fingerpaint 50 (Marine FAC) did trap 2 tanks in the river Southwest of Lang Vei, and Covey 672 had some "tracked vehicles" pinned down near "Elephant." Hope this weather breaks soon. If it does, we could really clean their clock.

POSTLOG: At the KSV Reunion in San Diego - September, 2000

So here I am, with a lump in my throat and a tear in my eye, shaking hands with Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo - after all these years. His name is Dennis Thompson. I have since found out that he was captured and escaped several times during the next few days. He was a rather belligerent cuss and not amenable to being a prisoner. For this, he got lots of broken bones and worse. After a nightmarish 6 month trek to Hanoi, he was incarcerated with the other POWs, until the end of the war.

Dennis is a retired Command Sergeant Major of the Special Operations Command and, wouldn't ya'

know, he was the featured speaker at our KSV Reunion Banquet. We've gotten a lot better acquainted since then. Dennis has a line on all the survivors of the Lang Vei Battle and some of us who supported in one way or another. We plan to meet this September in Las Vegas.

On the other hand, we have been trying very hard to find Tony Sazanovics, the FAC who was flying over Dennis when he was captured. No luck yet. We'd also like to find that "Covey 688," from Ubon, who was there at Lang Vei that morning.

So why do I like Reunions? Gee, hard to figger out! This is only one story.

Note: For those that haven't read it, the best account I've found of the Battle for Hill 64, on 8 February 1968, is in Chapter 16 of Eric Hammel's book, "KHE SANH, Siege in the Clouds." It was only during the reading of this book that I began to realize that the 8 February, 1968 entry in my diary was about "Alpha-1" in this Battle.

Battle for Lang Vei Special Forces Camp, RVN Survivors' Reunion, Denver Colorado, In Conjunction with the Khe Sanh Veterans' Reunion, 21-23 July 2009.

SUMMARY/OVERVIEW:

This is an account of the "Reunion" of U.S. Forces involved in the Battle for the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp on 6-7 February, 2009. A main feature of this "Reunion" is that although some attendees had fought together over 40 years ago, they had never met personally. In particular, the A-1 Skyraider pilots had never met any of the people they supported and worked with in that battle. There was an initial Reunion of many involved in the battle in Las Vegas in 2004. Most of the Special Forces survivors attended, as well as a few who provided Forward Air Control (FAC), Helo assault and artillery support. As at this second Reunion, this account begins with some summary and background information on Lang Vei and the forces that fought in that Battle. This provides an initial idea of who was at the Reunion.

Next, there is some information on how the Reunion actually happened. The Reunion attendees then related their experiences during the battle in the following order: A briefing on the history of the area and the events leading up to the current war was given by Jay Stone, the Air Intelligence Officer from VA-25 (the A-1 Squadron aboard the carrier, "Coral Sea"); The Special Forces in the ground battle, The Forward Air Controllers (FACs) who directed the air support, the A-1 Skyraider pilots that provided direct air support, the transition part of the battle as the survivors repositioned for rescue, and the helo rescue assault team that actually pulled survivors of the battle out of Lang Vei. Note: In this account, of the Battle at the Reunion, there is really no attempt to rewrite the book on the Battle for Lang Vei in any detail. That would be impossible. This article is simply to characterize the Reunion and what it meant to those that attended. Similarly, only a few of those who fought in the Battle are mentioned by name. The real (7 hours of) detail of the Battle related by the Reunion attendees, has been captured on a set of DVDs that will be provided to veterans of the Battle. Each individual story told at the Reunion was remarkable, even spell -binding.

BACKGROUND:

In January, 1968, the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp, on the Laos border West of Khe Sanh, was preparing for a pending assault by North Vietnamese (NVA) troops. It was seen as potentially the beginning of the major NVA assault of the Khe Sanh "Siege" in early 1968. Lang Vei was defended by 24 Special Forces and several hundred indigenous personnel. That assault began late at night on 6 February 1968 and lasted for about 20 hours. The assault was conducted by a very large force of NVA regulars, led by about a dozen NVA PT 76 (Russian built) tanks. It was the first time the NVA used tanks in the Vietnam War. They ultimately overwhelmed the troops in the camp. This account provides some brief highlights of how portions of that battle were recounted at the Reunion by the men that fought in it.

THE SECOND LANG VEI REUNION, July 2009:

After the first Reunion in 2004 it seemed that an-

other would eventually happen, but it wasn't really coming together until, in early 2008, a "Skyraider" pilot named "Speed" Ritzman, found the website http://www.langvei.com/, established by (Sgt.) Rich Allen, one of the Lang Vei vets. In subsequent emails it became clear that the Skyraider pilots of VA-25, from the carrier, "Coral Sea" were indeed the A-1 support provided to Lang Vei all day on 7 Feb 09. Eventually it evolved to a proposed Reunion associated with the Khe Sanh Vets (KSV) Reunion in Denver during July 2009.

Tom Eichler, the KSV Association President, made an offer we couldn't refuse. The Association would host the Lang Vei Reunion during the few days prior to most Khe Sanh Vets arrival. The Lang Vei Reunion would likely not have happened if Tom hadn't offered KSV Association hosting of the room, the set ups, the lunch, the video recording (Msgt Dave Meyer) of the several hours of discussion and a photographer (Sid Patricio) to capture some still photos of the event - even the name tag registrations for which Tom is so well known. The Lang Vei troops were deeply and uniformly grateful for this wonderful, heart warming support.

Attendees:

In the end, many, but not all Lang Vei Vets were able to attend. Five Special Forces survivors (2 of which had been POWs), Two O-2, Forward Air Controllers (FACs), 7 A-1 Skyraider pilots (one of which had been a POW) and their Intel Officer, plus 5 or the Helo "Hatchett" force that conducted the rescue assault in the late afternoon of 7 Feb 09. That totals 20 vets performing various air and ground missions during the Lang Vei Battle.

THE GROUND TROOPS PERSPECTIVE (from 5 USSF Survivors):

Weather: Overcast clouds near the surface, and layered up to about 10,000 feet. The clouds over the battle, were prohibitive for initial close air support. It was only after about an hour of daylight that they began to slowly disperse.

The Battle began late at night on 6 Feb 09, when tracked vehicles were heard and subsequently tanks were discovered "in the wire," followed by NVA assault forces. Defenses were quickly breached and the battle ensued within the Camp. There were problems with "Light Anti-Tank weapons (LAWS)" that often misfired and/or were ineffective at stopping the tanks. As the Battle progressed, the cohesion of the Camp defenses was fractured and the USSF and indigenous troops ended up providing individual pockets of resistance that apparently confused and even delayed subsequent NVA ground operations. In the end, while some friendly troops became holed up in the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) bunker, others were separated and evading on the Camp perimeter. Meanwhile, several of the USSF and a number of indigenous troops were located outside the Battle at the main Camp in the nearby "Old Lang Vei Camp." After daylight, they made a total of 5 assaults throughout the day of 7 Feb in an attempt to rescue those that were trapped in the TOC. Sfc. Eugene Ashley was subsequently posthumously awarded the "Medal of Honor" for his part in that action. This was one of three major thrusts of the ground battle after the Camp had been overrun. 1. The friendly troops trapped in the TOC 2. The troops from Old Lang Vei trying to rescue them. 3. USSF troops and other "friendlies," evading in and about the perimeter of the main Camp. There were US Special Forces troops from each of these portions of the battle present at the Reunion to relate their part of the story.

The most desperate situation was in the (mostly underground) TOC bunker where, through the early morning, the NVA were swarming like ants at all points of access, with: grenades, small arms fire, explosives, gas, the works.

FAC - AIR SUPPORT PERSPECTIVE (from 2 FACs that were there):

The two FACs at the Reunion each supported air ops at Lang Vei, for up to 3 hours. Covey 252 for most of the morning, starting at dawn, and Covey 685, in the late afternoon leading up to the rescue assault at about 1700. The on scene FAC, directing air ops at dawn, was Covey 688, along with a "Canasta Fight" of A-1 Skyraiders. Covey 688 was in contact with the friendly forces in the TOC, when (Sp4c) Frank Dooms radioed that the aircraft must attack the NVA on the TOC right away or they were finished. Covey 252, an attendee at the Reunion,

was also flying overhead and captured some telling pictures of this part of the battle. At that point, Covey 688 led the Canasta flight (led by "Zip Rausa") down into the lower clouds to accomplish this task. While in and out of the clouds at tree top level, the A-1s strafed the NVA forces until they withdrew. This was a particularly impressive close air support feat!

Since, for a number of reasons, there was no immediate prospect of a rescue operation, the entire air support operation for the rest of the day was to shoot up and bomb the NVA to keep them away from the TOC until there was a prospect of rescue forces arrival. It was also to support the several assaults by the troops from the "Old Camp" that unsuccessfully attempted to reach the TOC to evacuate the troops trapped there. Throughout this period, it was not known in the TOC, that there were additional USSF survivors of the battle evading outside the TOC.

CANASTA FLIGHTS - A-1s FROM THE CORAL SEA: (7 PILOTS and the Squadron Intel Officer attended the Reunion)

This portion of the Reunion was led off with special recognition of "Speed" Ritzman, the A-1 pilot who, with great anticipation, helped initiate the process for, and coordination of the Reunion. He passed away on 16 June, just prior to the Reunion.

The A-1s from the Coral Sea were providing the primary air support for the Lang Vei battle, starting at about day break on 7 February, 1968.

Initially it was Zip Rausa , with his flight's first attack on the NVA besieging the TOC, then a scheduled progression of A-1s from the "Coral Sea" throughout the day. There were also a few other fighter aircraft dispersed throughout the rest of the day. During this part of the battle, the A-1s responded to FAC directions by chasing the NVA away from the TOC and by supporting the assault force from "Old Lang Vei," attempting to relieve the TOC. When the troops trapped in the TOC decided to make their move to escape (rather than spend another night in the TOC), the A-1s were for the most part out of ammunition, or "Winchester" as fighter pilots often refer to it. That being the case, the A-1s were put into the mode of making "dry runs" to chase off the NVA as the troops from the TOC tried to make their way to "Old Lang Vei" to rendezvous with the Helo rescue "hatchett" force.

TRANSITION TO THE RESCUE EFFORT:

In later afternoon, when HHQ suggested that the troops in the TOC might need to remain there for another night, Lt Longgrear, the senior officer in the TOC, emotionally stated with lots of expletives, that they are not going to do that. They are coming out (of the TOC) NOW!

One of the very memorable moments of the Reunion is when Paul Longgrear, the first to exit the TOC, related making eye contact with an A-1 pilot, Ron Post, that was just then passing by the TOC entrance, in a bank at ground level. Paul said that at the moment, he "knew" they were going to make it. Just after that, Paul experienced another life changing event that was virtually spellbinding to those present. Due to his wounds and exhaustion, he had fallen and was having trouble getting moving again. Only Paul can tell it, but he had an encounter with GOD, in which, he was twice asked, "What are you going to do now Paul?" Overcoming paralyzing fear, Paul got up and continued. At the time, he took note that the NVA on both sides of the route were just watching, not shooting!? Fear of the A-1s? Intervention? Professional respect? All of that? Who knows?

THE HELO FORCE RESCUE ASSAULT (5 Rescue force personnel attended):

After much procrastination, maybe even confusion at senior staff levels, a grass roots "helo force" pulled itself together for the rescue assault. Three USSF SOG helo crewmembers from FOB 3 at Khe Sanh and 2 USMC crewmembers from VMO-6 recounted their rescue attempt. One pilot reflected that as they made their approach to land for the pickup, a young NVA troop stepped out, right under their nose and sprayed them with a clip from his AK -47. Fortunately, none of the hits were vital and they pulled the helo out of what would certainly have been their "final landing."

The rescue itself was heart rending. Although the surviving USSF troops were loaded on the helos, the indigenous troops swarmed the helos and grabbed anything they could to survive. The helicopters were all overloaded and unable to take off as the NVA ground fire increased in intensity. The aircraft were taking many hits. To save the mission, those hanging on to the helos had to be beaten, even shot off the skids.

Dennis Thompson, one of the troops who had been evading outside the TOC almost made it to the rescue helos. He was perhaps within 60 feet of the helo when a force of fresh NVA troops arrived, chasing him away, to be captured later and held as a POW in Hanoi. Dennis' recollection of the rescue force departure creates quite a mental image: The overloaded helos, trying to become airborne and get away from the ground fire were thrashing through the trees and brush like wild animals. Stuff was flying off the rotors all over the place. Then bodies were falling like rain.

REUNION WRAP UP:

The proceedings of the Reunion were indeed captured in 7 hours of video and numerous still photos. These will be provided to Lang Vei vets as soon as they are finalized into a set of 3 DVDs.

The Reunion was very meaningful to attendees. Typical comments were:

"As one of the VA-25 guys present at the reunion I must tell you it was a life changing event. Hearing in detail the ordeal the USSF men had to deal with is the stuff of legend. The fact that they were so beholden to the Spads for helping clear their way to freedom made all of us feel very humble and very proud. I can't speak for all the Canastas but for me the reunion was a singular event which I, and my family, will never forget. "

"I have nothing but admiration and respect to everyone that participated in the battle for Lang Vei. I just wish we could have had this meeting at Lang Vei on or about 10 Feb 68. Thanks to each of you that came. You are my heroes."

As William Phillips, in his book "The Battle of Lang Vei -- *The Night of the Silver Stars*" related: "The United States Army expressed its thanks for a job well done during the Battle. Every one of the Special Forces present received an award for valor. The 24 Green Berets received one Medal of Honor, one Distinguished Service Cross, nineteen Silver Stars, and Three Bronze Stars with Combat V. The rescue force from MACV-SOG at FOB-3 received recognition for their heroism with one Distinguished Service Cross, Two Silver Stars, seven Bronze Stars with Combat V and two army Commendation Medals with Combat V.

The DVDs on which the entire Reunion was captured are in the final stages of editing, by Msgt Dave Meyer, USMC, Retired, who filmed the entire days activities. They will be distributed to veterans of the Battle.

ED NOTE: Toby Rushforth sent the following information from Lt Commander William "Speed" Ritzman which was posted on Rich Allen's Lang Vei Website. Speed had a lot to do with the planning of the Lang Vei Reunion prior to his death on 16 June 2009, just 5 weeks before the Denver Reunion.

William H. Ritzmann, Jr. Lieutenant Commander, USN(Ret),

for which "thank you" is far insufficient.... If it wasn't for the air support from these fine men, I would not be typing this today. (RA)

Last November, Attack Squadron 25, (VA-25), United States Navy, held a reunion in Pensacola, Florida. We, the veterans of the squadron, are under the impression that VA-25, (now re-designated VFA-25), has the longest continuous service of any squadron serving aboard Aircraft Carriers in the Navy today. The history of the squadron may be found at; http://www.fistofthefleet.org/

First, although I ventured into "Harms Way" periodically, ("it was my job"), I always considered; Medics/Corpsman, Rescue Helo Pilots and Crewmen, Special Forces/Seals, and Forward Air Controllers on a higher rung of the "Ladder of Risk" than I ever was. Again, thank you for your service to our country.

Secondly, the research of the on-line documentation, (including the post war testimony of the North Vietnamese), that we did to prepare our presentation at last Novembers Reunion, persuaded some of us that the Battle of Lang Vei was arguably as pivotal as say, the Battle of the Bulge in WWII. Therefore, we are kind of proud we were able to do what we were trained for in support of your efforts.

Sadly, I do not have any photos of the Lang Vei area on the battle day. Nor do I think any of my squadron mates had any time to snap any pics either. The type of runs we made under the overcast were too much of a handful to permit me the use of a camera. Due to the number of assets that were there when I arrived, I was directed to make a single pass, and salvo my two Mk 117's and six Mk71's "on the bunker". I did however, notice two of the tanks that were destroyed and numerous bodies on the ground. I could not tell whether those bodies were friendly, enemy, or alive during my one pass.

I have attached a pic, "NL405onCVA43". I believe it was taken to recognize the young man, Ltjg. Ted Hill, as the pilot of the last A-1 Skyraider attack mission in the U.S. Navy. After his mission on February 20, 1968, all other Close Air Support and Rescue Combat Air Patrol missions were flown by the USAF Sandy Skyraiders. A few days later, the Coral Sea and its Air Wing departed for home via The Sea of Japan to "show the flag" during the USS Pueblo incident.



The picture is from the USS Coral Sea, CVA-43, taken circa February 21, 1968. The occasion was a presentation to Ltjg. Ted Hill, for piloting the final combat mission of VA-25, in the last U.S Navy, A-1H/J Skyraider, Canasta 405, Bureau (Serial) Number 135300. The pic includes all the VA-25 squadron pilots and the other officers in the squadron.

Presenting the award to Ltjg. Ted Hill, (6-4,1500), (standing center), are (standing left), Cdr. Cliff Church, CO VA-25, (3-1-0945) and (standing right), Capt Bill Shawcross CO, USS Coral Sea, CVA-43.

In the picture I have been able to identify the fourteen squadron pilots who flew in the six missions in support of the battle. I've italicized the numbers of their flight, the position in that flight and a time. (ie. "(1-2-0100)", indicates the first flight - wing position - approximate time each flight came under the FAC's control). The listing below, identifies each pilot that flew in our six support missions.

Sitting on the wing are(l to r) Lcdr. Carter Moser, Lcdr. Ralph Smith, (5-1-1330), Lt. Al Nichols, (5-2-1330), Ltjg. Bob Hagen, (3-2-0945), Ltjg. Bruce Marcus, (4-2-1215), and Lt McGee.

Standing in same order, CDR Stu Skelton, XO, (6-1-1500), Lt. Zip Rausa, (1-1-0730), Ltjg. Dale Pellot, (2-2-0930), Lcdr Speed Ritzmann, (4-1-1215), Ltjg. Larry Gardiner, (1-2-0730), Ltjg. Chuck Thom, (2-1-0930), Lcdr. Ron Bolt, (6-3-1500), Lcdr. Jack McDermott, and Ltjg Jay Stone. Missing from the photo is Lt. Jack Jordan, (6-2-1500).

As an aside, that airplane was in the flight that scored the first air-to-air cannon kill of a North Vietnamese MiG in June of 1965. Since Canasta 405, (Bureau Number 135300), flew the last Skyraider attack mission, it was retired and now sits in the Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola. (They still allow us that flew her to climb into the cockpit when we visit.)

Toby, It would appear from your e-mail that Bruce Marcus and I checked in with the FAC about 1215, which would be after you departed at 1100. It's doubtful we shared air space with you then. My log book indicates I flew Canasta 405 in the pic above on that mission.

THEN & NOW



CAPT ZIP RAUSA A-1
SKY RAIDER PILOT USN RETIRED



SGT WILLIAM G. MCMURRAY JR.
DET A-101 LANG VEI (POW)



SGT FRANKLIN H. DOOMS DET A-101
LANG VEI TOC COMMUNICATIONS



CAPT TOBY RUSHFORTH USAF FAC
PILOT RETIRED LTCOL USAF



SFC EUGENE ASHLEY JR. DET A-101
LANG VEI (KIA) AWARDED (MOH)

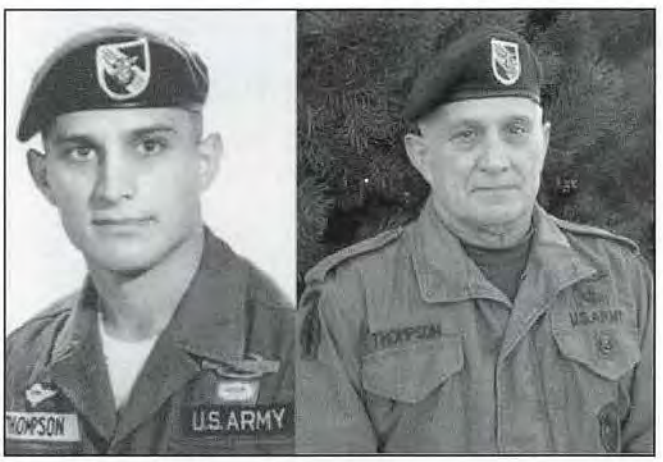

SSG DENNIS L. THOMPSON DET A-113
12TH CO MSF (POW)



SGT RICHARD H. ALLEN
DET A-101 LANG VEI



CAPT FRANK C. WILLOUGHBY
DET A-101 LANG VEI (DECESSED)



LT. MILES R. WILKINS DET A-101 LANG VEI



LTCOL DANIEL F. SCHUNGEL
DET A-101 LANG VEI (DECEASED)



SFC HARVEY G. BRANDE
DET A-113 12TH CO MSF (POW)



JOHN EARLY DET-A-113
12TH CO MSF



SSG PETE TIROCH DET A-101 LANG VEI
DECEASED



1ST LT PAUL R. LONGGREAR DET A-113
12TH CO MSF USA RETIRED LTCOL



SEABEE TEAM THAT BUILT THE TOC THAT
LASTED THROUGH THE BATTLE



SGT DANIEL R. PHILLIPS
DET A-101 LANG VEI (MIA)



1ST LT THOMAS E. TODD DET A-101 LANG VEI



SFC KENNETH HANNA DET A-101 LANG VEI KIA



SFC CHARLES W. LINDENWALD Jr. DET-A-113
12TH CO MSF (KIA)



SFC JAMES W. HOLT DET A-101 LANG VEI



SSG EMANUEL E.. PHILLIPS DET A-101
LANG VEI DECEASED

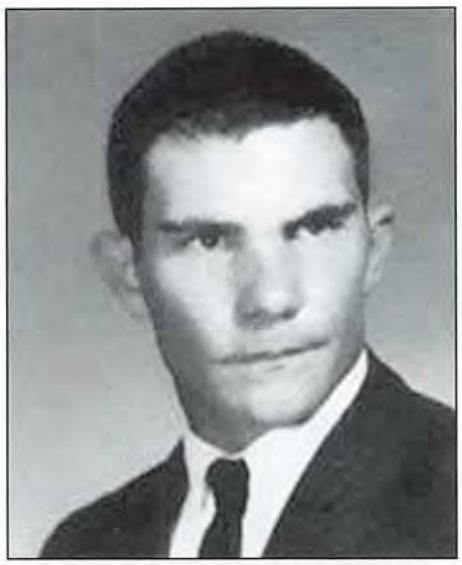

SGT JAMES L. MORELAND
DET A-113 12TH CO MSF (MIA)



SSG ARTHUR S. BROOKS DET A-101 LANG VEI



CAPT JIM BLITZ FAC COVEY 685



2 SKY RAIDERS SPEED RITZMAN PILOT OF #405



CONVENTIONAL 0-2 FAC PLANE



Taken By Toby Rushforth with hand held camera during the battle of Lang Vei. Destroyed tank left of flagpole and the TOC where SF & indigenous troops are trapped.

LANG VEI DENVER REUNION PICTURES JULY 2009

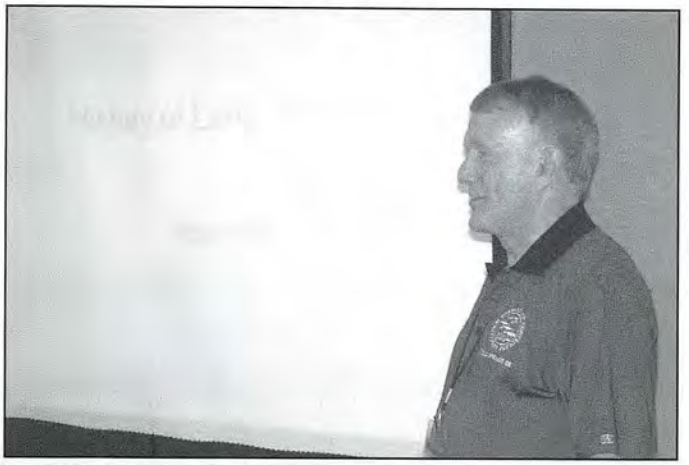



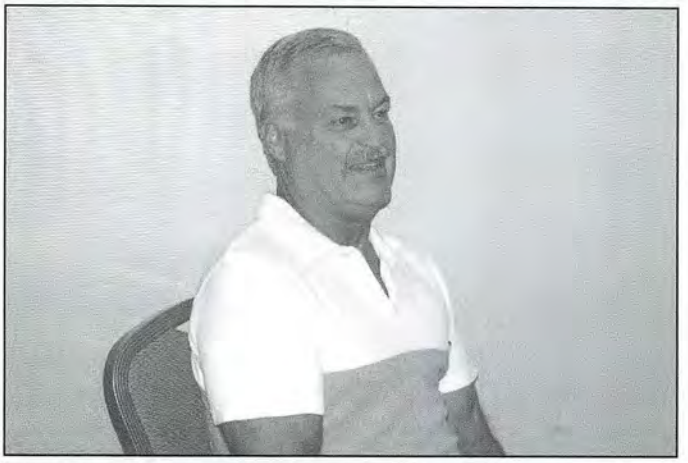



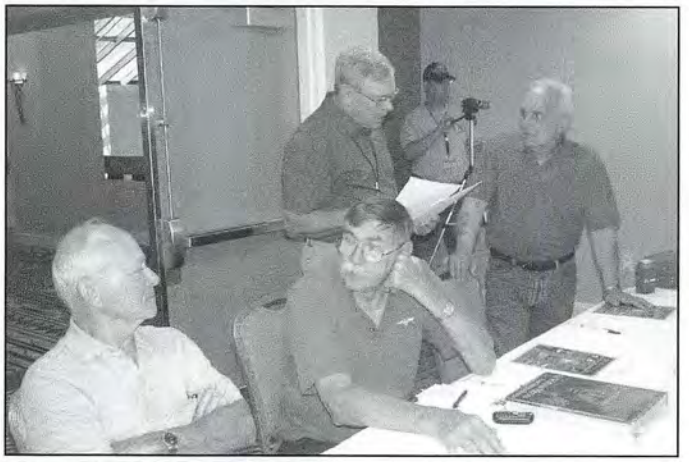

















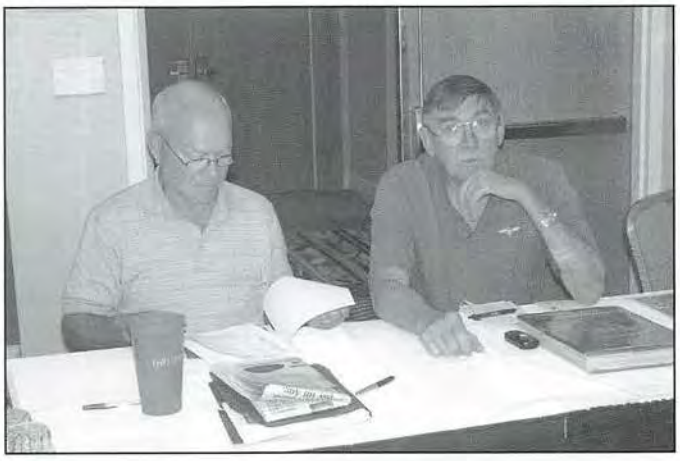





KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDA TION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to graduating high school students who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student or who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited curriculum following high school graduation.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans. Inc., a 501 (c) (19) charitable organization.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 6/1/2010 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid member of Khe Sanh Veterans. Inc. who has been a member in good standing for a minimum of three years. This includes deceased life members of KSV, and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA in Vietnam if family members are associate members of KSV Inc. Children of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, Character, Citizenship, leadership potential, and financial need. A point selection system is included in the application forms. Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities, or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review, and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the **"Red Clay"** Newsletter.

THE AWARDS

The award will be $300.00 per school year for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each year applied.

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to:

Mr. Dan Fisher
Chairman KSVSF Committee
6050 52ND ST N
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

1. The money is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees, and books at an accredited institution of the candidate's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant.

3. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

4. The Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the award amount to the selected students upon fulfillment of proof of registration sent to the Review Committee Chairman when it becomes available.

5. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of June of the current school year.

6. Scholarship Applications must he received by the Committee Chair on or before April 21of the current school year to be attended.

7. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points (attach last school GPA transcript)

GPA 4.0 = 40 points
GPA 3.5 = 35 points
GPA 3.0 = 30 points
GPA 2.5 = 25 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 35 points total
Military Veteran = 15 points
Student Government = 10 points
Community related services = 5 points
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 5 points

c. Short essay (60 words) on education goals and self= 10 points

d. Financial Need. Max = 15 points (the Fund is designed to help those in need of educational financial support).

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation Application Form

(A Copy Is Enclosed in this Magazine .Please Keep For Further Reference)

Date: _____

1. Applicant Information:

Name: Last_____ First_____MI____
Address: Street_____, City_____St___Zip_____
Home phone: AC_____/ _____/ _____E-mail address:_____
Birthdate: Day____ Month_____ Year_____

2. Sponsor Information (Khe Sanh Veteran. Inc. Member):
Name: Last _____First_____
Relationship to applicant _____
Branch of service_____
Unit served at Khe Sanh _____Dates_____

3. School Information:
School name: _____
School Address: Street _____,City_____St__ Zip Code _____
Phone number: AC_____/_____/_____
Curriculum/intended course of study _____
School year to be funded _____

4. Applicant Personal History
a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, offices held, etc)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. List school honors, prizes, community activities participated in, military service, volunteer service to community, church, or government.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____



c. ENCLOSE THIS APPLICATION FORM, A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF, GPA TRANSCRIPT, AND A BRIEF PERSONAL SUMMARY (60 WORDS) TELLING OF YOUR VOCATIONAL PLANS AND FINANCIAL NEED, ADDRESSED TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.

BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL FILLED FORMS FOR YOUR RECORDS!

I SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant Signature of KSV Parent, Grandparent, or Guardian

Note* APPLICATION DEADLINE June 1ST OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR

- **IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, ALL INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

APPROVED:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, KSV Scholarship Committee

_____

David Smith, President KSV



FIVE OF US WITH PHIL'S SISTER JEANINE



WIVES L-R LYNN SHOUSE, LINDA TREESE, BECKY MATLOCK, MARY KEATON, JAMIE HAIGHT



POP WITH SUMMER & MIKAYLA



FLAG RAISING



PHIL MINEER'S FUNERAL SERVICE



AT PHIL'S SERVICE L-R MIKE HAIGHT,RON SHOUSE,LEROY MATLOCK, TOM KEATON, CLIFF TREESE



RON PASSED OUT WITH HIS FRIENDS & WALKING STICK



CLIFF & TOM IN PARK



MALIBU ENGINE COMPARTMENT 350 V8



RACE CAR INTERIOR



TRIBUTE ON TRUNK FROM A MAN AT DALLAS REUNION



PARKED IN WICKHAM PARK CLIFF & MALIBU



AT HOOTER'S NEAR LOWE"S MOTOR SPEEDWAY CONCORD NC



LEADING RACE CARS AS A PACE CAR FOR ALL RACING DIVISIONS



THE WIVES WENT SHOPPING

SPRING
2010

RED CLAY

ISSUE
75













THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO HONORS THE KHE SANH VETERANS WITH A SCENIC HISTORICAL MARKER LISTING THOSE SONS FROM NEW MEXICO WHO PERISHED, DURING THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH, DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. ARTICLE ON PAGES 40-43

















FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

Due to the numerous changes in the Khe Sanh Veterans Unit Directory, it was necessary to upgrade and print Edition # 4. I sent out notifications asking the membership to complete a new personal history form, and if possible donate $ 5.00 for printing & Postage.

The response was outstanding, not only were there sufficient funds to print & mail the Directory, I was also able to Print & Send out Issue # 75 of Red Clay. In addition we were able to purchase numerous, outstanding new items for our PX. Your generosity is beyond belief. I want to personally thank each and every member whether you sent the minimum $ 5.00 or Hundreds of dollars which some did.

I also went through my data base and wrote a memo to over 1,500 members who had kind of dropped out of sight in the last 6 years. Through this effort we now have 500 more current active members. The new Directory should be at this point about 85 % accurate, and I am still working with a goal of over 90% Accuracy. The active membership is now at 65%, and still growing. **(Not Bad for a Bunch of Old Farts.)**

Tom Eichler
Editor-Publisher Red Clay
Chairman Membership & Publishing
Committees Co-Chair Reunion Committee
Treasurer

REUNION COMMITTEE

Don't look now, but the Khe Sanh Veterans 2010 Reunion in San Antonio Texas, is right around the corner. Please try to get your registration forms in ASAP. It makes it a little easier on the committee who have to plan events which require the amount of attendees be known in advance.

It is a great Hotel, very military friendly, and within walking distance of almost every sight San Antonio has to offer. We have a **FREE** Luau planned for Friday night, so bring your Hawaiian outfits. They have a Straw Hut outdoor venue which fits the event to a Tee.

Please call the Hotel ASAP and make your reservations. Remember, you can always cancel if something comes up at the last minute. With all the little notes members have been sending with their yearly dues, it looks like we are going a have a large attendance this year.

FROM THE DESK OF THE VP

Due to the membership's outstanding support of our PX, and generosity with their contributions we have been able to design and purchase many new items for the PX. We have strived to produce high quality, affordable items. All the items we have designed for are members, Navy, Marines, Army & Air Force, our one of a kind, manufactured strictly for Khe Sanh Veterans.

We are also contemplating purchasing Hats Like the American Legion & MCL wear. They would have a new KSV Logo Embroidered on one side and the newly designed Branch of Service Pin on the other. Our supplier has agreed to manufacture Pins designating the various reunions each member has attended. We need advice, and recommendations for this idea so please contact John Pessoni At 732-948-9803, or Tom Eichler 773-625-2101.

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John Pessoni & Sid Patricio Web Page Editors
For www.khesanh.org
Diana F. Fecarotta.....Editing Director
Michael Fishbaugh.....Article Research

MEMORIAL PAGE

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
CPL Delbert Leasure USMC C BTRY 1/13 KIA 23 Feb 68	THE KHE SANH VETERANS
Forrest Leasure Brother of Delbert Leasure Passed Away	THE KHE SANH VETERANS
LCPL John Francavillia USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 4/9/68 Hill 881S	David Steinberg I CO 3/26
SW2 Edward"Cody" Adams USN Seabee KIA 16 Mar 68	Larry Kubley CBMU-301 DET B
PFC Theodore Brown Jr. USMC K CO 3/26 KIA 21 Jan 68 Hill 861	Steven Malson K CO 3/26
Dwight Detmer USMC WIA 18 June 68 Died 24 Sept 1999 Age 51	Eric Bergland C CO 1/9
LCPL Roger M Hurd USMC A CO 1/26 3RD PLT KIA 21 May 67	John M. Kaheny A CO 1/26
PFC Thomas Hendershott USMC A CO 1/26 3RD PLT KIA 21 May 67	John M. Kaheny A CO 1/26
SGT Roger Arnold USMC W BTRY 1/13 KIA 18 Aug 68	Willie Roe W BTRY 1/13
LCPL Samuel Lightman USMC D CO 1/26 KIA 02 Nov 66	John F. Peterson Original D CO 1/26
CPL William E Wyrosdic USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 08 Oct 68	John A Laibinis Sr. H CO 2/26
1ST LT Hank Norman USMC H&S CO 1/26 KIA 30 Mar 68	Michael Barber C CO 3RD ENGRS
1ST LT Kim Johnson USMC A BTRY 1/13 KIA 23 Feb 68	Michael Barber C CO 3RD ENGRS
2ND LT Michael Thomas USMC 2ND PLT I CO 3/26 KIA 20 Jan 68	Michael Mahone I CO 3/26
All Those KIA From 2/1	Philip Leslie G CO 2/1
2nd Lt Fernando Distefano USMC E CO 2/26 KIA 24 Feb 68	Michael Fleming E CO 2/26
All Those From E CO 2/26 Who Did Not Come Home	Michael Fleming E CO 2/26
LCPL Roger Hurd USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 21 May 67	Joseph Oliver HMM-163
SGT Terry Smith USMC Scout/Sniper HQ 2/26 KIA 19 Jan 68	Vince Gable HQ CO 26Th Marines
2ND LT Donald Jacques USMC 3RD PLT B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Pedro Osimanti B Co 1/26
LCPL Larry Lawrence USMC HQ 26th MARINES KIA 06 Jun 67	William Balzano HQ Security Plt
Doctor Robert Topmiller CHARLIE MED RAS Passed away Last Year	Kevin Cotter MACG-18
CPL Robert Arrota USMC FAC HILL 881S Jan-Apr 68 Passed Away	Col William Dabney I CO 3/26 C/O
CPL Victor Pizarro USMC A Btry 1/13 KIA 02 Mar 68 C-130 Crash KSCB	William Dubois A Btry 1/13
Chester "Doc" Fontenot USN H CO 2/1 KIA 17 May 68	Michael Pipkin F CO 2/1
18 Marines From F CO 2/1 KIA 19 May 68	Michael Pipkin F CO 2/1
2nd Lt Michael H. Thomas USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 20 Jan 68 Hill 881N **(NC)**	Robert Tipton I CO 3/26
LCPL Walter Ostapchuk USMC A CO 1/9 M-79 Man KIA 05 Apr 68	Kenneth Veseskis A CO 1/9
PFC Philip T. Lindsay USMC A CO 1/9 Fire team Member KIA 09 Apr 68	Kenneth Veseskis A CO 1/9
LCPL William L. Yohn USMC G CO 2/26 KIA 04 May 68	John T. Vosnick Jr. G CO 2/26
PFC Anthony Pepper USMC G CO 2/26 KIA 06 Apr 68	John T. Vosnick Jr. G CO 2/26
In Memory of Gilbert "Many Guns" Wall- Blackfoot Warrior B CO 1/26 81 F/O	Bruce T-Bone Jones B CO 1/26
LCPL James E West JR. "Rusty" USMC E CO 2/3 KIA 31 May 68 KSCB	June L. Austin (Sister)
SGT Charlie Fox USMC C CO 1/26 Passed Away	David J. Meyer C CO 1/26
CPL Reuben C. McMackins USMC L CO 3/26 KIA 14 Apr 68 Hill 881N	Thomas A. Pierce L CO 3/26
HM-3 Walter Tyrcz USN A CO 1/26 KIA 14 Mar 68 HILL 861	Rick Zunino A CO 1/26
HN Joseph Lopez USN E CO 2/26 KIA 18 Apr 68 Hill 861A	Rick Zunino A CO 1/26
LCPL Kevin Coyne USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 07 Jun 68 Hill 861	Rick Zunino A CO 1/26
LCPL James M. Wilkins USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 31 July 1968	Rick Zunino A CO 1/26
All those from the Early "Hill Fights" Before & up to Easter Sunday 1967	Larry Hester E CO 2/9
LCPL Roberto Mendez USMC (Pointman) C CO 1/26 KIA 27 Oct 68	Pedro Juarez C CO 1/26
PFC Greg Weaver USMC KIA 26 May 1966	Robert A. Heppner 309THAC
TSGT Edward Mosley USAF 314TH TAW KIA 15 Oct 67	Robert A. Heppner 309TH AC
AIC Larry Berneski USAF 314TH TAW KIA 15 Oct 67	Robert A. Heppner 309TH AC
LCPL Paul F. Stedman USMC H&S CO 3RD SP BN KIA 26 Feb 68	C.T. Green H&S & A CO 3RD SP
PFC Woody Cronkite USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 10 Sep 67	Michael P. Rummel 1ST FSR/FLC
CPL Albert Sanford USMC B CO 1/26 F/O KIA 30 Mar 68	Victor Hoffman A/CO 1/26 F/O
Gilbert Wall USMC B CO 1/26	Victor Hoffman A CO 1/26 F/O
SGT Pablo R. Gonzalez USMC KIA 18 July 67	Benjamin Gonzales B CO 3RD Tanks
LCPL Keith D. Taylor USMC KIA 18 June 67	Benjamin Gonzalez B CO 3RD Tanks
SGT Charlie Fox USMC C CO 1/26 Passed Away	James Heath C CO 1/26 3RD PLT
1ST LT Rodney Alfano USA 37TH Signal BDE KIA 02 Feb 1968	Rocco Alfano FATHER

MEMORIAL PAGE

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
LCPL Robert R. Rogers USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 07 Sep 67 (Only 7 Days IC)	John Ortiz H&S & I CO 3/26 81MM
CPL Tommy W. Lassiter USMC M CO 3/26 WIA Passed Away 19 Apr 2004	John J. Lassiter M CO 3/26 (Brother)
SP4 George G. Hutson USA 1/77 Armor KIA 11 Feb 1971	Gary Lee D CO 75th Spt Bn 1st BDE 5TH Inf Div
SP4 Lucio J. Reis USA 1/77 Armor KIA 11 Feb 1971	Gary Lee D CO 75th Spt Bn 1st BDE 5TH Inf Div
SGT Charles P. Montross USA 1/77 Armor KIA 11 Feb 1971	Gary Lee D CO 75th Spt Bn 1st BDE 5TH Inf Div
CPL Geoffrey R. Taylor USMC E CO 2/4 KIA 02 May 1968	Jack McCormack E CO 2/4
CPL Robert Arrota USMC I CO 3/26 Hill 881S F/O (Passed Away)	Paul Knight K CO 3/26 Hill 861
CPL John W. Green USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 04 Jul 68	John M. Moon C CO 1/26 3RD SQD 3RD PLT
THE VALIANT DEFENDERS OF HILL 64 On 08 Feb 68	COL. H.J.M. Radcliffe A CO 1/9
PFC Rick Stewart USMC A BTRY 1/13 KIA 27 June 67	Robert Sullivan A BTRY 1/13
CPL Edward Travis USMC A BTRY 1/13 KIA 27 June 67	Robert Sullivan A BTRY 1/13
TO ALL THOSE WHO SERVED IN DELTA CO 1/26	John P. Finn D CO 1/26
MARINES & CORPSMEN KIA SUMMER 1967 IN I CO 3/26	Col. C.T. Anthony I CO 3/26
Wally Schaffenberger Passed Away a Great Friend	Melvin E. Sopp H&S & K CO 3/26 Hill 861
GYSGT Frank Vinning Passed Away a Great Friend	Melvin E. Sopp H&S & K CO 3/26 Hill 861
Joe Gounsolin Passed Away A Great Friend	John McCrossen A BTRY 1/13
Patrick Smith Passed Away A Great Friend	John McCrossen A BTRY 1/13
Members of 1ST PLT D CO 1/1 KIA Hill 689 05 July 1968	William Ring D CO 1ST PLT 1/1
PFC Leslie G. Aputen USMC G BTRY 1/12 KIA 15 May 68	Brian P. Heslin G BTRY 1/12 105's
SGT Bruce Krage USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 07 Sep 67	Bill Cowan I CO 3/26
PFC Jon R. Woodard USMC D CO 1/1 KIA 05 July 68	Jeffrey L. Woodard D CO 1/1
CPL Donald A. Warren USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 30 Mar 68	Wood Lathrop (Frency) B CO 1/26
1stLt John H.Carson USMC E CO 2/9 KIA 05 Jun 68	Timothy C. De Wolf E CO 2/9 FAC
Chaplain Lt Robert Brett USN H&S CO 2/26 KIA 22 Feb 68	Larry Ballard H&S CO 2/26 81's SQD LDR
PFC Alexander Chin USMC H&S CO 2/26 KIA 22 Feb 68	Larry Ballard H&S CO 2/26 81's SQD LDR
CPL Raymond L. Plunkett USMC D CO 1/9 KIA 30 Mar 68	Larry Ballard H&S CO 2/26 81's SQD LDR
LCPL James W. Durham Jr. USMC H&S CO 2/26 KIA 07 Feb 68	Larry Ballard H&S CO 2/26 81's SQD LDR
GYSGT Henry M. Bruce USMC H&S CO 2/26 KIA 04 Aug 68	Larry Ballard H&S CO 2/26 81's SQD LDR
LCPL Lancaster Brown-Bey USMC H&S CO 2/26 81's KIA 01 Oct 68	Larry Ballard H&S CO 2/26 81's SQD LDR
PFC Montie Henderson USMC H&S CO 2/26 81's KIA 01 Oct 68	Larry Ballard H&S CO 2/26 81's SQD LDR
LCPL James D. Rinehart USMC F CO 2/26 KIA 19 Sept 68	Edward Sanchez F CO 2/26
LCPL David B. Freed USMC F CO 2/26 KIA 19 Sept 68	Edward Sanchez F CO 2/26
Lamont Britt USMC H&S CO 2/26 81's Gunner Murdered 14 July 1990	Larry Ballard H&S CO 2/26 81's SQD LDR
Carl Ballard Sr. USMC H&S CO 2/26 81's Section Ldr Passed Away 2002	Larry Ballard H&S CO 2/26 81's SQD LDR
Patrick Sullivan USMC H&S CO 2/26 81's Gunner Passed Away 13 Dec 2007	Larry Ballard H&S CO 2/26 81's SQD LDR
HM-2 Robert "Doc: Topmiller USN RAS Passed Away 25 Aug 2008	James Miles HQ CO 26 Th MARINES RAS
2Lt Lawrence J. Bolger USMC A CO1 /26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
SGT Paul E. Kincaid USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
LCPL Victor L. Burns USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
LCPL Allen J. Damian USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
PFC Paul M. Rodriquez Jr. USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
LCPL Ira W. Williams USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
PFC Frederick J. Brenke USMC L CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
CAPT Franklin D. Bynum USMC L CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
HM3 Curtis C. Jackson USN L CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
PFC William J. Williams USMC L CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
LCPL Jeffrey J. David USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
CPL Anthony Dicesare USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
LCPL Alejandro R Godinez USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
LCPL Freddie L. Johnson USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
2Lt Dale C. Allen USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
LCPL Kenneth A. Millard USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
CPL Richard L. Walker USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
CPL Stephen G. Wassenich USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
LCPL Charles A. Lynch USMC CAC-O KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
CPL Dennis A. O'Connor USMC CAC-O KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26

MEMORIAL PAGE

THOSE REMEMBERED					REMEMBERED BY
LCPL Francis A. Mazariegos		USMC	CAC-O	KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
CPL James M. Shepard Jr.		USMC	CAC-O	KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
PFC Rick J. Stewart		USMC	A BTRY 1/13	KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
CPL Edward B. Travis		USMC	A BTRY 1/13	KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
LCPL Jonathan C. Whitticom		USMC	H&S CO 1/26	KIA 27 Jun 67	James M. Collins A CO 1/26
LCPL Michael J. Coleman		USMC	B CO 1/9	KIA 27 Jan 67	Ricky J. Compton I CO 3/9
1st Lt Maxie R. Williams Jr.		USMC	A CO 1/26	KIA 10 Apr 68	Martin T. Smith A CO 1/26
1st Lt Maxie R. Williams Jr.		USMC	A CO 1/26	KIA 10 Apr 68	Dave Aday A CO 1/26
1st Lt Maxie R. Williams Jr.		USMC	A CO 1/26	KIA 10 Apr 68	Robert Spurgeon A CO 1/26
LCPL Wilbur "Willie" Stovall		USMC	HQ BTRY 1/13	KIA 09 Mar 68	Robert J. Holscher HQ BTRY 1/13
1st Lt Marion H. Norman		USMC	A BTRY 1/13	KIA 30 Mar 68	Tom Quigley B CO 1/26
PFC Ronald C. Kearsley	USMC	Hill 689	H CO 2/3	KIA 21 Apr 68	David F. Brombaugh Sr. H CO 2/3
PFC Kevin R. Cassell	USMC	Hill 689	H CO 2/3	KIA 21 Apr 68	David F. Brombaugh Sr. H CO 2/3
LCPL Paul O. Evans		USMC	L CO 3/26	KIA 22 Dec 66	Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C BTRY 1/13
CPL Gary G. Schneider		USMC	L CO 3/26	KIA 31 Dec 66	Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C BTRY 1/13
LCPL Ferrell Hummingbird		USMC	L CO 3/26	KIA 14 Jan 67	Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C BTRY 1/13
CPL Patrick S. Cochran		USMC	L CO 3/26	KIA 21 Aug 67	Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C BTRY 1/13
CPL Raymond Potter		USMC	L CO 3/26	KIA 10 Sep 67	Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C BTRY 1/13
SGT Ronald L. Black		USMC	L CO 3/26	KIA 11 Sep 67	Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C BTRY 1/13
CAPT Ralph E. Hines		USMC	L CO 3/26	KIA 18 Feb 67	Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C BTRY 1/13
PFC Bradley A. Nelson		USMC	C BTRY 1/13	KIA 24 Apr 67	Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C BTRY 1/13
CPL Daniel B. Duffy Jr.	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 24 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
PFC Ronnie H. Bintliff	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 09 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
PVT Richard C. Grant	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 07 Dec 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
PVT William R. Devore	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 28 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
PFC Jack D. Gilbert	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 04 Mar 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
PFC Ralph H. Livesay	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 15 Mar 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
PFC Victor Morales	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 01 Aug 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
LCPL Jose A. Pacheco	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 13 Mar 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
PFC Charles L. Roberts	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 09 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
SGT Molimau A. Tela	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 30 Mar 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
SGT Robert L. Vaden	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 14 Mar 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
LCPL Bobby L. Eaton	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 07 Aug 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
LCPL David E. Hornby	USMC	I CO 3/3 1ST PLT 1ST SQD		KIA 03 Mar 66	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/3 1St Plt 1st Sqd
2nd Lt John P. Cullinan	USMC	Combat Engineers		KIA 10 Jan 68	Gene Hardman 1st ENGR Bn1 st MAF
2ndLt Randy Yeary	USMC	B CO 3RD Recon KIA 14 Jan 68 Hill 881N			Michael E. Waddell B CO 3rd RECON
HM2 Cecil W. Carothers	USN			KIA 09 Nov 68	James Mooney H&S CO 2/26 COMM
CPL Stanley Pettit	USMC	E CO 2/26		KIA 15 Sep 68	Stephen D. Treat E CO 2/26
SGTMAJ James T. Gaynor	USMC	H&S CO 1/26		KIA 15 Feb 68	Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11, MAG-11
CAPT Daniel J. Coonon	USMC			KIA 08 Oct 68	Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11, MAG-11
Dennis Herb	USMC	B CO 3RD RECON Passed Away			Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11, MAG-11
Phil Mineer	USMC	B BTRY 1/13 Passed Away , We Miss Him Dearly			Thomas Keaton B BTRY 1/13
2nd Lt Dale C. Allen USMC Officer Basic School Class 3/67 I CO 3/26 KIA 27 Jun67					James Cole Plt Cmdr B CO 3RD Tanks
2nd Lt Larry J. Bolger USMC Officer Basic School Class 3/67 A Co 1/26 KIA 27 Jun 67					James Cole Plt Cmdr B CO 3RD Tanks
1st Lt Steve Joyner USMC Officer Basic School Class 3/67 L CO 3/4 KIA 15 Jun 68					James Cole Plt Cmdr B CO 3RD Tanks
Gilbert Wall "Chief" B CO 1/26 Passed Away -You Are Not Forgotten					Peter J. Mudrinich B CO 1/26
God Bless All My Comrades Still With Us & Those That Have Passed					Peter J. Mudrinich B CO 1/26
Major Jerry Hudson HQ CO 26Th Marines S-2 Passed Away					Mark A. Swearengen 2nd Bn 94h Arty
William O'Connor C/O C BTRY 1/13 Passed Away					Mark A. Swearengen 2nd Bn 94h Arty
CPL Bruce Mangan USMC Bronze Star Passed Away May 2005					James D. Armbrust Charlie Med
All Those Killed orv Wounded During The Hill Fights					Dave Hendry B CO 1/9
PFC Larry Geiger		USMC	B Co 1/9	KIA 26 Apr 67	Dave Hendry B CO 1/9
All Those at the "Market Place" on 07/02/67					Dave Hendry B CO 1/9
Brian "Red" Delory USMC L CO 3/26 PH Passed Away Apr 2004(My Best Friend)					Arlon Tibbetts M&L CO 3/26
LCPL William T. Womble Jr		USMC E CO 2/3 KIA 03 May 67			Frederick G. Monahan E CO 2/3
All The Marines KIA on Hill 700 April 6&7 1968					Carlisle Grissett G CO 2/26

MEMORIAL PAGE

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
CAPT Gerald S. Sampson USMC B CO 1/3 C/O Navy Cross KIA 28 Aug 69	Raymond Page H&S CO 1/3 81MM
PFC Wayne Burkhart USMC D CO 1/26 KIA 20 Jan 66	James R. Nelson D CO 1/26
LCPL Gary Lindsay USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 07 Sep 67	Richard Gallegos I CO 3/26
CPL Andrew Z. Bucior USMC C CO 1/9 KIA 05 Apr 68	Frank A. Bucior (Brother)
LCPL Alan E. White USMC B BTRY1/13 KIA 30 Nov 67	David OToole B BTRY 1/13
CPL William Wyrosdic USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 20 Oct 67	William W. Morris H CO 2/26
CAPT Robert L. Sevell USMC HMM-262 KIA 28 Feb 68	William L. Barba Hmm-262– VMO-2
SGT Donald Chamblin USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM KIA 08 Mar 68	James H. Baker HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM
LCPL Wilber Stovall USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM KIA 09 Mar 68	James H. Baker HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM
PFC Gridley B. Strong USMC H CO 2/1 3RD PLT Hill 861 KIA 21 Apr 68	Richard E Ashford H CO 2/1
CPL William Terrell USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 06 Mar 68	Angelo M Nicorvo Jr. A CO 1/26
PFC William J. Williams USMC L CO 3/26 HILL 689 KIA 27 Jun 67	John L. Hager C TRP 3 SQD 5th CAV
CAPT Frank Bynum USMC L CO 3/26 HILL 689 KIA 27 Jun 67	Frank Rios L CO 3/26
CPL Joseph A Silon Jr. USA KSB KIA 04 Mar 71	Frank Rios L CO 3/26
All Those Fine Young Men From 1/26	Anthony E Sibley A CO 1/26, CAC-0
SGT Dale Kremsreiter Khe Sanh Veteran AO Cancer Victim 03 Aug 2009	David M. Baumann 3rd Force Recon
Leo F. Wright USMC L CO 3/26 Passed Away 1998	Eddie Seyfarth L CO 3/26
PFC David I. Forner USMC A CO 1/26 Passed Away 1997 at Age 49	Daniel A. Erwin A&C CO 1/26
LCPL Joseph L. Freeman USMC KIA Mar 1969	Joseph W. Reeves C CO 1/26
CAPT William J. Flahive Jr. USMC OIC MATCU-62 KIA 31 Jan 68	John M. Barry MATCU-62 1ST MAW
CAPT Richard J. D'ambrosio USMC WIA 07 Feb 68	John M. Barry MATCU-62 1ST MAW
SGT Richard G. Rassmusson USMC WIA 12 Feb 68	John M. Barry MATCU-62 1ST MAW
CPL Thomas H. Burch USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 23 Feb 68	Robert Harrison A CO 1/26
CPL William L Terrell USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 06 Mar 68	Robert Harrison A CO 1/26
LCPL Robert L. Vickers USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 06 Mar 68	Robert Harrison A CO 1/26
SSGT Walter K. Singleton USMC A CO 1/9 Medal Of Honor KIA 24 Mar 67	Dennis M. Checkett A CO 1/9
All those Brave Fallen Marines From Bravo Company 1/26	Kenneth W. Pipes C/O B CO 1/26
Sgt James Neil Tycz USMC A CO 3RD Recon KIA 10 May 67- And All KSV	Sharon L. Pelon



PHILLIP WRIGHT USMC B CO 1/26
KHE SANH VETERAN
February 1, 1947 - February 23, 2010



Phillip James Wright, age 63 of Delavan, passed away Monday, February 23, 2010 at Clement Zablocki V.A. Medical Center in Milwaukee. He was born February 1, 1947 in Chicago, IL, the son of Edwin and Helen Wright. He married Diane Alfredson in February of 2004 in Delavan. He was a carpenter for Turner Special Projects Construction. He served with the U.S. Marines during the Vietnam War.

He is survived by his wife, Diane of Delavan; 2 sons, Daniel (Lana) Wright of Ohio and Christopher (Krislynn) Wright of Ohio; 1 grandson, Cadyn of Ohio; 1 daughter, Valerie Szczepanski of Delavan; 1 sister, Tracy Wright of Arizona; and 1 nephew, Brendan. He is preceded in death by his parents and his son Patrick. Graveside Services with Full Military Honors will be held at Darien Cemetery in Darien at a later date. MONROE FUNERAL HOME, Delavan, is assisting the family.

OBITS

1ST SGT WILLIAM V. EAST USMC
3RD FSR EOD PLT AMMO FLSG

Bill passed away November 23, 2009, in Arlington. He was born to George and Louise Donley East on February 18, 1935, in Champaign, IL. Bill married Jane Beeler on August 15, 1970, at the EI Toro MCAS in California. Bill was a career Marine of 23 years, primarily serving in the Explosives Ordinance Division (EOD), before retiring in 1977. His military career took him to many places, including several stints in Korea and Japan. He served in the Vietnam War and was involved in the Siege of Khe Sanh and the fall of Saigon for which he received several commendations. After his retirement, Bill worked as an explosives consultant which allowed him the chance to travel to 60 countries and every continent, including work in Kuwait after Operation Desert Storm. He was featured in the I MAX film "Fires of Kuwait" and in a National Geographic special. Bill was also a tireless volunteer for Toys for Tots and veteran's activities. He was a member of VFW POST 8561, Elks Lodge 2114, and Moose Lodge 1818. Left behind to cherish his memory are his wife of 39 years, Jane East of Grand Prairie, daughters Karen Hale and husband Dan of Arlington, and Andrea Phillips and husband Lance of Carrollton, brother Carl East of Michigan, and grandchildren Alex & Katie Hale and Avery & Brady Phillips, his greatest joys. Bill was· preceded in death by his parents, brother Jack East and sister Shirley Phillips.



Remembering
Bob Arrotta &Terry Smith

Like many of my Khe Sanh brothers, I was shocked and saddened by the death of Bob Arrotta. My friendship with Bob was separated by a gap of over thirty years. (I know a lot of you knew him as Bobby, but I met him as Bob, so that's what I continued to call him and will do so here.) We shared a bunker on Hill 881 South from February 10, 1968, until we rotated off the Hill on April 15. I got to know Bob pretty well during that time, but we lost track of each other, because shortly after we got to Quang Tri I was medevaced to the naval hospital in Guam. Needless to say, I was floored several years back when I got a phone call from Bob. He had tracked me down through the Khe Sanh Vets Directory. He wanted to tell me about his then recent return to the Khe Sanh and Hill 881 with Dennis Mannion, Paul Knight, and Glenn Prentice. We had a nice long talk and caught up on what had happened to us after we left Vietnam. Bob told me about the cancer that eventually took his life, but he downplayed its seriousness then, and every time we talked after that first call.

As a result of that call, Bob sent me the footage he shot on the trip to Vietnam along with the raw footage of what would become the fine documentary of the trip produced by Dennis's former student David Kneiss. We also exchanged photographs of our time together at Khe Sanh and on 881. When we last talked, about ten months ago, Bob told me that he was working on an article for **Red Clay** about the day Terry Smith was killed in an LZ on 881. We talked about what we remembered about that day, and Bob told me that he would send me the story for any editing I felt was necessary. That was the last time that we spoke, and I regret the number of times I put off a phone call to see how he was doing and how the story was coming. I don't know what Bob's finished piece would look like, but I want to honor him by saying what I can about Terry and the day he died. I have puzzled over how to do this because so much of my experience up to the day Terry died is intertwined with both men. The most logical approach, I decided, is the brief narrative that follows.

When I arrived on 881, I was fortunate enough to be placed in a bunker with Bob and a wireman named Higgins, if I ever knew his first name I forgot it long ago. I believe that Terry Smith also lived in that bunker; at least he spent a lot of time there in the short time I knew him. My good fortune wasn't just related to the good companions I lucked upon. It was also related to the bunker itself, which was palatial by the housing norms on the hill. Many of the men on 881 lived in "bunny holes" carved into the sides of the trench that circled the hill. (Some good pictures of the bunny holes can be found on the Hill 881 Warriors website: http://www.hmm-364.org/warriors.html.)

Forty-plus years have clouded my memory, but I believe that I was sent up to 881 to take over for Terry while he went on R&R. Terry was the first person I encountered on my arrival because he was working the LZ the day I arrived. When I was pushed out of the door of the UH-34 by the crew chief, I was carrying two batteries for the PRC-41 Bob was using in directing close air support, and I was also carrying my willy-peter bag. My rucksack carried four batteries for the PRC-25 used by Terry. When I was exiting the chopper, someone on a stretcher was being shoved into the chopper. I was trying to maintain my balance and turn back to look into the chopper, which was already lifting off, when Terry shoved me into a shallow trench in the LZ and told me to stay down. He jumped into the trench in front of me. I soon saw why when a couple of mortar rounds landed in the LZ. Over the next few days, Terry and Bob showed me how to estimate the time between a chopper landing in one of the three LZs on the hill, and mortar rounds landing in the LZ. This was an important skill because the sound of the incoming chopper was often used by the NVA to hide the sound of a tube popping.

I spent my first nine days on the hill mostly shadowing Terry or sitting on the battalion radio net in the COC. Two important skills Terry taught me related to hooking up the cargo nets that had brought food and material up to the hill, and which needed to be returned for future use. First, he showed me how to keep from getting tangled up in the nets and lifted off with them. Next, he taught me how to use the shoulder of my flak jacket to cancel out the static electricity that could knock me on my ass when the metal rings of the cargo net hit the cargo hook on the chopper.

The few times that we had the chance to sit around and shoot the bull, Terry told me about his home in Tennessee, his sister, his girl, and his upcoming R&R trip to Hawaii to see his girl. During our talks, Terry often sharpened his Bowie knife, which he called his Tennessee toothpick. (Years later, his mother told me that she was disappointed that his knife and some other things were missing from his personal effects. I like to think that it was someone way back in the rear that stole them.)

On February 20th, I was in the bunker finishing up a letter that I started the night before on radio watch. Terry and Bob were working the LZ. I heard a chopper coming in and shortly after that, I heard a mortar round land. Then Bob ran into the bunker and yelled at me to grab my radio and follow him, that Terry had been hit. Terry's Silver Star citation covers the situation better than I can, so I'll repeat it here:

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the SILVER STAR MEDAL posthumously to

CORPORAL TERRY L. SMITH
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidty in action while serving as a radio operator with Company "M", Third Battalion, Twenty-sixth Marines, Third Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force in the Republic of Vietnam. On 20 February 1968, on Hill 881S near Khe Sanh, Corporal Smith observed a Marine helicopter landing in a zone on which he knew North Vietnamese Army gunners had registered heavy mortars. He realized that the aircraft would almost certainly be destroyed if it remained in the landing zone, and attempted unsuccessfully to contact the pilot by radio. Aware that the enemy rounds were probably already on the way, he restrained a Marine junior to him from going out on to the zone, and leaving the safety of his bunker, ran

across the open ground signaling manually to the helicopter crew to take off immediately. As the helicopter took off and before Corporal Smith could reach cover, he was fatally wounded by mortar fragments, gallantly sacrificing his life so that the crew might live. By his extraordinary courage in the face of over whelming odds, his uncommon concern for others, and his self sacrificing efforts, Corporal Smith reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

For the President,
J. William Middendorf
Secretary of the Navy

I helped to put Terry on the chopper. Although I had been in country since late November, Terry was the first person I had seen who had been seriously wounded. As we were loading him into the chopper, all I could think of was how colorless he seemed to be. He died before reaching the combat base.

After Terry's death, I spent most of my time working the LZs under Bob's guidance and hauling the PRC-41 around the hill for him and learning the trade of close-air support. I had gone to Air and Naval Gunfire School in Hawaii before starting my tour in Vietnam. I learned the theory of close air support there, but Bob taught me the reality of close-air support in a combat zone. When he felt that I was ready, he let me call in some close-air missions while standing next to him.

I'm not sure what Bob had in mind for his article on Terry, but Terry's death affected us both deeply. Bob was the Marine whose life was saved by Terry, and I'm sure that he had some survivor's guilt. For me, Terry was the first person that I really knew who was killed in Vietnam, and his was the first body I really saw. I know that when we talked about that day we talked around it more than about it. I think that maybe Bob felt that if he could get it down on paper it would help us both rest a little easier.

I haven't said much about Bob's service on the hill, but much has already been said about that on the Khe Sanh Vet's website. Also, the Warriors of Hill 881 site mentioned above has a lot about Bob there (and also some good pictures). Along with Glenn Prentice, Bob also worked recently with Marine air and ground forces in training sessions and workshops, but that has also been covered on the website. Bob was both proud and a bit embarrassed when the title "mightiest corporal in the world" was hung on him by a reporter covering Hill 881, but those of us who had the honor to serve with him and to know him, understand his true greatness.

Ron Smith

ROBERT ARROTA

Dubbed the "Mightiest Corporal" by Newsweek and his fellow Marines, Robert Arrotta was born on June 22, 1946 and grew up in Bethesda, Maryland. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1966. Upon his arrival in Vietnam, Bobby saw action at Con Thien where he witnessed first hand what the North Viet-



namese could do in battle. He would later arrive in Khe Sanh on Hill 881S where he served as a forward air controller with India Company, 3rd Battal-

ion, 26th Marines, under the command of Captain Bill Dabney.

Bill Dabney, Colonel USMC (Ret), comments on Robert Arrotta "Cpl." Arrotta had the official tactical call sign of "India 14" which identified him as the close air support (CAS) representative of the company. The troops, in recognition of the tremendous amount of fire power he was capable of calling to bear on the NVA, referred to him as "The Mightiest Corporal in the World." Corporal Arrotta remained our Forward Air Controller (FAC) for the entire Siege, directed about 300 CAS missions, all Supergaggles, and in coordination with the helicopter support team (HST), all medical evacuations. Hell of a Marine! Got end-of-tour Bronze Star. Deserved better. Did captain's job superbly under fire for three months."
Robert Arrotta died on November 7, 2009.
NOTE:For pictures of the funeral at Arlington Cemetery see back page.

LCPL ROBERT E. HARDENBURGH USMC B BTRY 1/13 KHE SANH VETERAN

Robert E. Hardenburgh age 64 of Manistee, died Tuesday morning, Dec. 15, 2009 at West Shore Medical Center in Manist. He was born Oct. 15, 1945 in Muskegon, and was the son of the late Robert L. and Ruth M. (Yoder) Hardenburgh. Bob served as a Lance Corporal in the United States Marine Corp during the Vietnam War from Nov. 8, 1965 until Nov. 8, 1967.

He married Doris J. Miller on Oct. 17, 1989. Bob was a member of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, the Manist Walsh Post #4499 Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Salt City Chapter # 43, Disabled American Veterans, the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge #1128 of Manistee, the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks Lodge #250 of Manistee, the Little River Warriors Society and the National Rifle Association. During his lifetime Bob was an avid hunter.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Doris J. Hardenburgh of Manistee, his children, David (Mary) Church Jr. of Milwaukee Wis., Derek (Sarah) Church of Fennville, Lori Church of Muskegon, Kristy (Steve) Austin of Muskegon, his adopted Son Scott Plumhoff of Fruitport, and Jason Schaub of Muskegon, his grandchildren, Jonah, Isaac, Max, Brian, Hunter, Drew, Jam and Ryan, his brothers, Allen (Peggy) Hardenburgh of Muskegon, and Albert (Judy) Hardenburgh of Kaleva, his nieces, Christine (Dan) Powell, Jennifer Hardenburgh, Valerie Webster, Tammy (Don) Chiles, Melissa (Trevor) Smiley and Tess Duer, his nephews, Scott (Danielle) Hardenburgh Robert (Marcia) Hardenburgh and Roy Miller, his mother in-law, Genevieve Miller of Manistee, and his sister-in-law, Cecelia (William) Bonny of Newaygo, and Kim Miller of Houston, Texas. He was also preceded in death by his father in-law, Earl Miller in 1995.

OBITS

HN WILLIAM O. BALLEW USN
HQ BTRY 1/13 BAS KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed Away 11 JUNE 2009

MICHAEL S. WALCZAK USMC HQ CO
26TH MARINES KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed Away 13 DEC 2009

DENNIS PARDEE USMC A BTRY 1/13 KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed Away 29 MAY 2009

HARRY J. ODELL USMC K CO 3/9
KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed Away 03 Nov 2008

FRANCIS E. VINING USMC B CO 3RD TANKS
KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed away 08 Oct 2005

TERRY L. MEEK USMC E CO 2/26 HILL 861A
KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed away

SHERMAN "SAM" BUSSE USMC
H&S CO 2/26 106 PLT
KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed Away

PAUL E MILBURN USMC BLT 1/26 COMM
KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed Away 27 July 2009

ROBERT A SCHOONDEMARK USMC
M CO 3/26 KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed Away 10 Jan 2010

HENRY E. RHODES USMC D CO 1/9
KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed Away 16 Jan 2010

DUANE K. HOLMGREN USMC
374 SECURITY POLICE SQDN
KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed Away 13 April 2009

KENNETH O. HILLIARD USMC M CO 3/26
KHE SANH VETERAN
Passed Away 13 Mar 2010

OBIT
ROLAND F. BEHNKE USAF
314TH TAW

Roland F. Behnke, 77, a retired Air Force major who became the president of a plant nursery and chain of gardening centers, died Jan. 16 at his home in the St. Mary's County town of St. Inigoes. He had corticobasal degeneration, a neurological disorder similar to Parkinson's disease. From 1980 until his retirement in 1995, Mr. Behnke was president of the Behnke Nurseries Co., a family-owned chain of gardening centers and flower shops that his parents began in 1930. At its peak in the late 1980s, Behnke's was the largest chain of gardening centers in Maryland, employed more than 200 workers and grossed more than $6 million a year.

It still has outlets in Beltsville and Potomac and a plant-growing facility in Lothian. Roland Frederick Behnke was born in Washington and grew up in Beltsville. Early on, the floral business struggled, and the family lived in a tarpaper shanty without electricity or running water, according to a 1986 Washington Post article. They got by with oil lamps and water drawn from a neighbor's well. After World War II, the nursery expanded and eventually became one of the largest in the country, according to the article.

Mr. Behnke graduated from Beltsville High School in 1950 and joined the Air Force. After several years piloting B-47 bombers, he left the Air Force and graduated from the University of Maryland in 1961 with a bachelor's degree in history. During the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, Mr. Behnke was recalled to active duty. He flew cargo planes during the Vietnam War and stayed in the Air Force until his retirement in 1976. His military decorations included the Silver Star and Distinguished Flying Cross.

While stationed in Puerto Rico, Mr. Behnke built a small plane in his garage. He never flew it but later donated it to the flying club at Laurel High School, according to his family. He was a member of Good Samaritan Lutheran Church in Lexington Park. Survivors include his wife of 52 years, Eleanor Fitter Behnke of St. Inigoes; three children, Jeanne B. Byrnes of Glenn Dale, Mark Behnke of Perry Hall and Carl Behnke of Lafayette, Ind.; and 11 grandchildren

BEHNKE's ACTIONS WHERE HE WAS AWARDED THE SILVER STAR

Per the 1989 Article Airlift to Khe Sanh By John L. Frisbee, Contributing Editor: It definitely was not a day like any other for Howard Dallman and his crew. Khe Sanh will go down in history as a great victory for the isolated, surrounded, and outnumbered Marines who, from late January to early April 1968, defended an outpost some 10 miles from the DMZ in western South Vietnam. It was a victory made possible by air resupply. Of the more than 1,100 missions to Khe Sanh flown by tactical airlift, one of the most remarkable was that of Lt. Col. Howard Dallman and his C-130E crew.

In his monumental 1983 study of tactical airlift in Southeast Asia, Col. Ray Bowers wrote: "Lt. Col. Howard M. Dallman was an experienced pilot who was admired for his personal qualities by the younger officers serving under him." In World War II, Dallman had flown 45 missions as a bomber pilot in Italy before he was shot down on Oct. 23, 1944. The morning of Feb. 5, 1968, Dallman's C-130, assigned to the 345th Tactical Airlift Squadron, left its temporary base at Tuy Hoa for Da Nang, where a load of ammunition and a medical evacuation team awaited.

The weather at Khe Sanh, Dallman's destination about thirty minutes' flight time to the northwest, was forecast to be at minimums, which made landing at the mountain-girded strip a challenge. The

first of several unpleasant surprises came as copilot Capt. Roland Behnke checked in with Khe Sanh control. The GCA was out for an indefinite period. Navigator Major Gerald Johnson was confident he could find the runway with an airborne radar approach, though none of the crew had landed there before. Dallman and Behnke started their letdown. At a sweaty 300 feet they broke out of the overcast, the strip directly ahead. Then as the C-130 ground and bucked to a stop, the big bird was hit by a shell that ignited ammunition boxes in the cargo compartment. Johnson and loadmaster SSgt. Wade Green immediately began fighting the fire, assisted by Behnke, who had called the tower for a fire truck, and flight engineer SSgt. Charles Brault. Seventeen tons of ammunition could explode at any moment, closing the runway and flattening the built-up area of Khe Sanh, with many casualties. Dallman began backing the Hercules to a safer area at the far end of the runway, where the five-man crew, with help from the fire truck, finally extinguished the fire and helped offload still smoking ammo boxes.

All was not yet over. As the last pallet of ammunition was unloaded, one of the tires was blown by a sniper's bullet, and a mortar attack bracketed the C-130. Dallman told the crew to leave the plane, which was drawing most of the fire, but every man remained with the aircraft as it was towed for a short distance, then taxied to a maintenance area. There Brault repaired an aircraft jack and managed to change the damaged wheel, all the time under fire from mortars, rockets, artillery, and heavy machine guns. While the wheel was being changed, Dallman agreed to fly a Marine corporal and his out-of-commission bulldozer back to Da Nang. The 'dozer was loaded and the aircraft positioned for takeoff when one engine, which had ingested debris from an exploding mortar round, quit. The 20,000-pound bulldozer and a disappointed corporal were unloaded and Dallman left the bird to get permission for a three-engine takeoff. In the 10 minutes it took to get clearance from Airlift Control Center, Behnke and Brault got the fourth engine started. Dallman sprinted back to the C-130 as Behnke, a qualified aircraft commander, opened the throttles for takeoff.

The Herk was hit again as it took off, but without serious damage. Dallman and his crew had saved a valuable transport plane, delivered a load of ammunition to the surrounded Marines, and prevented major damage to a battered outpost. For dealing heroically with a series of crises that day, Dallman was awarded the Air Force Cross, the first tactical airlift crewman to be so honored. "I was well aware," he said..... that an equal part of the award belonged" to the other four crew members, all of whom received the Silver Star. The tactical airliners lost 122 aircraft and 230 crewmen while supporting US and allied forces in Southeast Asia. Without them, there would have been few successful campaigns in that long, bitter war. Dallman and his crew set an example of teamwork and valor by their determination to complete a mission under circumstances that would have justified abandoning their aircraft and its perilous, but desperately needed cargo. As the Marines at Khe Sanh would have put it, "Semper fi!"

PHINEAS E. SMITH USMC L CO 3/26 KHE SANH VETERAN

Phineas E. Smith, a Santa Rosa youth sports coach and umpire who served in the Marine Corps in the



Vietnam War, has died. He was 60.
Smith was a Santa Rosa Stallions football coach and Little League and softball umpire from the late 1980s until recently, said his son, Jordan McGowan-Smith of Santa Rosa.

He enlisted in the Marines in 1967 and was in the 1968 siege at Khe Sanh with his unit, Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, said his friend and fellow Vietnam War veteran, Neil Kenny.

He was all heart, said Kenny. He would do anything to help a brother. And he was very proud to be a Marine. Smith died Oct. 30 at his Santa Rosa home from multiple ailments including congestive heart failure and hypertension, Kenny said.

He was buried with full military honors at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon. A memorial service was held at 2 p.m. Sunday at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Hall, 1351 Maple Ave. Smith was born and raised in San Francisco. He graduated from Balboa High School in 1966 and enlisted in the Marines the next year.

In Vietnam, he saw heavy combat and was awarded the Purple Heart for a shrapnel injury, Kenny said. He said Smith also suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and exposure to Agent Orange, a toxic herbicide used to remove leaves from trees that provided cover for enemy forces.

Smith returned to civilian life in the Bay Area and worked as an operating engineer. In the 1980s, he moved north to Cotati and earned a degree at Sonoma State University.

He became disabled in 1987 but was able to pursue his love of coaching and umpiring. He never married but had a son in 1990. He was very charming, a people person, his son said. He loved to talk and he was very sociable. Starting about 10 years ago, he began to suffer other health problems and traveled frequently to the Veterans Administration hospital in San Francisco, Kenny said.

In addition to his son, he is survived by a grandson, his sister Kim Daniels of Tracy and brother Charles Smith of San Francisco.

GO HOME MY ANGEL

Go home my angel, though I may grieve
You deserve all of the love and riches
Heaven will bring
You have served and fought.
Always remained faithful
Semper Fidelis, peace to you my angel,
May your trip be graceful
To live & to love,
You gave it all to your closest
We all wish your presence
But that's only because our
Tears distort our focus
Go home to thee Lord
My angel, my father, best friend
Fly to heaven with Godspeed,
Shower us with your love
Your smile always sends
LOVE JO-JO

COMMENTS:

Craig Tourte

I don't want to make this a long story, to step on Neil's toes here. I know he would like to tell his own story. Some of us did attend the remembrance at the National Cemetery on Friday November 27th for Neil's dear friend and Lima brother, Phineas E. Smith. Tom Horchler (HQ 1/13) and Lucy drove down from Chico, David Tonick (A/1/26) came and Steve Wiese (B/1/26) drove over with me. Marco Soto (A/1/26) attended with his wife and their son. Neil introduced us to Phineas's son Jordan and to Jordan's wife and mother. It was a simple remembrance, hence intimate and personal. With minimal suppressed emotion, Neil expressed what affection and respect he had for Phineas. Where and when he met his friend and the importance of their friendship, for all these many years. The only one of the Khe Sanh Veterans present who knew Phineas personally was Neil, but we knew Phineas's spirit and soul. It is the same spirit I have noticed in all of the Khe Sanh Veterans I have met over the years. Unexplainable to the outsider, but we know deep in our hearts what it is.

During the short remembrance, Neil was recalling an event and said something like, and I'll paraphrase here, "When I first met Phineas, he was

standing in the trench on the Lima line...." and of course, that pretty much said it all. It explained the loss, the void, the emptiness we were all feeling. All of us had soul-stirrings emotions. The emotions we felt were for the loss of Phineas, but also I think for the too many of our brothers who have gone before us, for those who stood in the trench line with us, for their memories, for our youth and for our own destiny.

CHAPLAINS CORNER

By Chaplain Ron Rayner

The KSV Chaplain has found a new helper to help him do his job better. The message board at www.khesanh.org I have saved most of my ***Red Clay*** magazines over the years but apparently I had not read them closely enough to catch on about the message board.

A sad part of my job as chaplain is sending sympathy cards, flowers and memorials. The message board has helped me do this in a more efficient manner. It also helped me to realize that I need to make the most of each day. It has helped me realize I am not the only one fighting PTSD on a daily basis.

The loss of Khe Sanh veteran Roland F. Behnke reminded me of the following poem written by a member of my VVA Chapter in Oakland County Michigan.

Soldiers
By Lindsay Wynn

Soldiers grumble, soldiers wait, soldiers stand and face their fate.

Soldiers young, soldiers old, soldiers do as they are told.

Soldiers watch, soldiers see, soldiers forge history.

Soldiers listen, soldiers note, soldiers remember when they vote.

Soldiers wander, soldiers stay, soldiers work and soldiers play.

Soldiers laugh, soldiers love, soldiers pray to God above.

Soldiers march, soldiers sing, soldiers do so many things.

Soldiers wound, soldiers heal, soldiers know the battlefield.

Soldiers kill, soldiers save, soldiers mourn beside the grave.

Soldiers struggle, soldiers die, soldiers live...and wonder why.

Lindsay Wynn served with the 1st Combat Evaluation Group directing B-52 Bombers over Khe Sanh, South Vietnam during the siege. He and the B-52 bombers played a major role in keeping the North Vietnamese Army from overrunning my position on the east end of the runway. I was manning a M-60 and I had been told to expect approximately 20,000 of the enemy to come visiting.

I wish to thank Lindsay and all the supporting units for their efforts during the siege of Khe Sanh.

The story of Roland Behnke, Howard Dallman and their crew was posted by Mike Fishbaugh on the message board. Dallman received a DFC and the rest of the crew received Silver Stars for landing and taking off at Khe Sanh in impossible conditions on Feb. 5, 1968.

I learn more and more about the siege daily through the message board, ***Red Clay*** and most importantly the friendships that have developed through the last two reunions. Mike Fishbaugh is a fabulous resource for info on most anything.

The last line of the aforementioned poem; "Soldiers struggle, soldiers die, soldiers live...and wonder why." covers a lot of territory in what is going on with the Khe Sanh Vets I have corresponded with. Many wonder why many are dying; I for one was struggling, living in a shell.

One of the keys to handling depression and PTSD is getting inner thoughts out in the open. Everybody needs to share their good and bad thoughts with somebody. Fellow Khe Sanh Vets who have had similar experiences are someplace to start. Your

county veteran services can point you in the right direction for professional mental health providers. I know I keep repeating the same message but holding in misery does not help. The last two reunions have helped me tremendously.

The New Orleans Saints' mantra for their Super Bowl winning season was "Finish Strong". That is my wish for all of us. "...may your strength match the length of your days." Deuteronomy 33:25
I can be contacted at (248) 634-8289 or www.eagle.prep.com. I hope to see you all this July in Texas.

I GET LETTERS

Tom, Enclosed find a donation to help with the cost of our Red Clay Magazine. Through our magazine I was able to locate our company corpsman William "Doc" Miller. Doc had located several members of Lima Co 3/26, 2nd Platoon. Before we received orders to Khe Sanh, Lima Company spent several months at Cobi Thanh Tan Valley, during the monsoon rains of 1966-67.

That experience was a nightmare for the 2nd Platoon. We had operated for weeks without bathing, having hot food, or a decent nights rest. When we finally emerged from the shadow of that valley, due to our assignment we earned the nickname: "The Filthy Few."

Doc Millers efforts in locating members of the second platoon, led to us holding several Mini-reunions in the mountains and forest of Central Pennsylvania. There, we finally had the chance to hear the words we were previously denied: **"Welcome Home Marine."**
Thank You Khe Sanh Veterans
SSgt Paul Choclis
Scout/F/O C BTRY 1/13 Att to L& M Co 3/26

WEB BRIEFS

HOUSE OF BROKEN DREAMS

By Craig W. Tourte

I always feel compelled this time of year to post something related to the events of January 21st. This posting thing for me started around 2003 and as you well know, I have posted hundreds of stories and little antidotes and responses. The posts around this time primarily pay tribute to the ones we lost, the ones we remember and reflect the heartbreak and pain we continue to feel in our hearts. I pulled out the folder I keep my past articles in and looked through them to see if I could find something of interest and perhaps just post that as my tribute, but I have moved on now and what I have written in the past was just not sufficient for today. You have read it all before, the where I was, what I was doing things I thought, and the ones we lost the first day the rockets made their way over the top of 881N screaming across the open sky onto the little base at Khe Sanh. You know because you were there, and there is nothing new to tell. I considered my return home from Vietnam and Khe Sanh, thinking it was all behind me. I never thought about Khe Sanh and the war in Vietnam.

Ron Main said in a recent post that he hardly remembered the 70s. Thinking back now I too hardly remember that decade after my return. A foggy blur of bar stools, graveyard shifts, depression, anger, marriage and divorce, and a house I lived in where Veterans of that war came and went between jobs and marriages, a house we called the House of Broken Dreams. One of my roommates who had been in the army was dating a girl who later was on the morning Today show for many years - no I'm not going to tell you who it is. A classy girl even then, between marriages like the rest of us, he liked to laugh, and like the rest of us, she found this dead beat interesting and funny. It's been decades now since I lived in the House of Broken Dreams and I'd like to think I have moved on from all of that left over pain.

A little more stable, not quite so angry and now I can now remember the few bar stools I have occasionally occupied. Some from the House of Broken Dreams were not so lucky. My friend who dated - at that time - a future star of the Today show went on to get married again, and again divorce, another killed in an automobile accident, still another after attempting marriage a few more times just gave up and drowned in the river. Many more gave marriage another shot to find happiness, but most failed, others just kind of drifted away. I envy the life of youth, with hopes, aspirations, thoughts of getting

married, settling down, having children. For others, rockets screaming over a mountain changed all of that. No longer innocent, no more pleasant dreams of girls, of home and mom, a future - now just broken dreams, even after all these many years. Not all of course, but too many.

Craig,

Everyone of us fits the above scenario perfectly. Shattered dreams, hopes, failing of marriages, job changes and the like. I don't know about placing blame, I do have anger towards our Congress and Senate who gave us the orders to march, and then labeled us "BABY KILLERS" when we came home. That weighed a lot on everyone. I mean look America, I just did the job requested of me. Why then did you despise me so? And why have you so diligently worked against me when I came to you asking for help? I don't have an answer. I do know that people like you, Dennis Mannion, Neil, and many others, are very successful in life by helping their fellow Khe Sanh brothers. You guys need to know how encouraging your words are, and how you bring people back from the edge of despair!! Finally, I don't know how you look at yourselves as successful, but to me you are heroes in my eyes, and I thank you for every time you stepped up to the Plate.

Doc Jim Thomas

SMALL WORLD STORIES

Hospital Appointment

By Craig W. Tourte

I was at the VA Hospital in Mather California yesterday getting my monthly vitamin B-12 shot; I wore my Khe Sanh ball cap and not my Delta Company hat which I sometimes wear. The Delta hat is one of my favorites; it's the old red and black hat that Mike Powers gave to me a few years ago. If asked, I'd mention that I was not in Delta Company - a frightening thought by them if I had been - but that I am only an associate - meaning paid - member, but that has never come up yet, and rest assured I'm always sober and an exemplifier representative of Delta when I do wear their hat.

Now moving along here, as I'm in the waiting room another guy sits next to me and tells me he was at Dong Ha with 3rd Recon during the Siege, and says he had a friend by the name of Donald Niemeyer who served with Delta Company 3rd Recon at Khe Sanh, and he asks me if I knew him. Of course I did not, but I told him I'd look up the name in the Khe Sanh Directory and see if he was a member of our Association - I did and his name was not listed. Before I leave the hospital I head down the hallway towards the rest room and happen to meet a rather attractive lady about my age walking towards me from the other direction. She walks up to me and asks - seeing my ball cap - if I had been at Khe Sanh of which I respond in the affirmative. She then asks me if I happen to know a rather tall, blond - here we go, she almost blurted out the word good looking but managed get control of herself before she said it - man who was also at Khe Sanh, and I interrupt her and say Steve Wiese, (B/1/26) Why yes, she says.

We talk about Steve for around twenty minutes; Steve was on a local television station a couple of years ago with some other veterans relating their Vietnam experiences, a fine piece which was a positive for our veterans and community education. I confirm to her and we agree that Steve walks on water and tell her that Steve is a close friend. Turns out the lady is second it charge of the hospital and tells me that if I ever need anything or have any problems to come and see her personally. All because I happened to be wearing my Khe Sanh ball cap, you just never know.

Craig,

I love these kinds of "small world" stories. You tell them better than any of us. We all have them, and there seems to be a kind of magic when it comes to Khe Sanh. On March 28th, I was waiting to leave Khe Sanh, still not sure if it was going to be on a 46 to Quang Tri, or a C-123 to Dong Ha. As I waited, I briefly spoke with a marine also from Long Island, NY, doing the same. Five minutes. Most.. A year and a half later I was in a West Islip, Long Island bar that Ronny Vivona G/2/26 and I hung out at before, and after the war is called The Yellow Bird.

I was with a Corpsman, "Doc Casey" who had served with 1/26 in late 69 and 70 and had come to visit Ronnie, and I. Doc Casey had been Ronny's Doc at the Philly Navy Hospital 7th Floor in 68 be-

fore going to Nam. Anyway.. Doc and I are at the bar, and Doc says:" There's a guy over there at the pool table staring at you. I turned and looked, and he was already on his way over to me. You guessed it. It was the Khe Sanh Marine I'd spent a few moments with on March 28. Tossed down a few that night. Never saw each other again. Don't recall his name. Long time ago..

Ron Main

LUCK
THE FINAL ARBITRATOR

Submitted By Craig W. Tourte

This article showed up in our local newspaper on Sunday, and it was a heart stopping read. I spent a few minutes reflecting on the article which was written by a C. J. Chivers from the New York Times and in a few lines I'll tell you why. I've spent more than a few hours wondering why some of us survived Khe Sanh and why others did not.

Fate, luck, predestination or just the simple will of God. I speak often of my friend Steve Wiese who survived the Ghost Patrol while with Bravo Company. What many don't know, is that patrol for Steve was just one incident in many very close calls



he had during his 18 month service in Vietnam as a Combat Infantryman. Ernie Spencer (CO D/1/26) once told me that in his opinion Steve had more trigger time in Vietnam than almost anyone else he knew. Meaning of course, that Steve most probably experienced more direct combat than many others.

Not often, but on occasion, Steve has shared with me some of those horrific experiences. I am sure there are many men like Steve who, for what ever reason, survived the brutality of war and wonder why me. Of course no one has an answer to that question because there just isn't any, at least an answer known to us mortals. Like why we survived Khe Sanh and other battles and close calls, the why me question is never answered except by the use of some philosophical phraseology - no one knows why, they just learn to live their lives without the answer.

Now back to the article - The first sentence in the article titled: **Luck Aids Marines in Afghanistan,** reads like this - If luck is the battlefields final arbiter - the wild card that can trump fitness, training, teamwork and skill - then Lance Cpl. Ryan Mathison has experienced its purest form.

No, that does not answer the why me question, but it comes darn close. For you see luck can mean many things to different people. It can mean fate, predestination or just simply, the will of God. But above all, like the author of this article states, luck is the final arbiter.

SUBJECT OF STORY:

On a marine foot patrol through the predawn chill of Friday morning, Lance Cpl Ryan Mathison stepped on a pressure plate rigged explosive device enough to destroy a pick up truck or tear apart several men. The powerful device filled with Eastern Bloc mortar rounds, and homemade explosives spiked with motorcycle parts, rusty spark plugs and jagged chunks of steel, gave off an audible " Pop, " and tossing small stones it... failed to ignite.

LONG OVERDUE HONOR

Vietnam War veteran Lory Segawa will finally receive his Purple Heart 42 years after he was wounded in battle.

Segawa, 61, of Mililani, tried to get the medal three times without success over the last seven years. A reunion with a fellow Vietnam veteran in September unexpectedly led to Segawa getting help from city and congressional officials to expedite the applica-

tion process. To his surprise, he recently received a call from a staff member of Sen. Dan Inouye's office who told him he will be presented with the medal by Inouye tomorrow.



"I was just really ecstatic," he said.

In May 1968, Segawa, then 19, was in Khe Sanh when a grenade exploded while he was in the trenchline. He suffered injuries to his neck and face from a few pieces of shrapnel.



He entered Khe Sanh with 140 men of the Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment and left with 40.

"It was the worst," he said.

Three months later, he and other veterans headed to Leatherneck Square, an area with four Marine outposts just south of the demilitarized zone along the border with North Vietnam.

While there, a bullet grazed his chest and went through his right arm during an attack that occurred 15 feet away. "We were really getting blasted," he said, recalling his platoon commander was one of the casualties in the attack.

Segawa had only 55 days left before returning to Hawaii when he was shot in the arm. He was transported to Quang Tri before he was flown to Tripler Army Medical Center.

During a reunion with fellow Vietnam veteran Jaime Vazquez at Honolulu Hale in September, Segawa mentioned that he never received his medal.

Segawa recalled that a fellow injured veteran told him officials were distributing Purple Heart medals after he was released from Tripler.

His first attempt was seven years ago when he sent a application form to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs in St. Louis, Mo. He received a letter that he was eligible for a Purple Heart, but he never received it. He tried again, but still no medal arrived. In his last attempt, Segawa was told they were out of stock.

City managing director Kirk Caldwell heard about the conversation between Segawa and Vazquez, who is the Jersey City director of veterans affairs and a former deputy mayor. Caldwell then called Inouye's office for assistance.

Segawa said he is honored to be presented with the medal by Inouye, of whom his late father, Peter Segawa, veteran of the 100th Battalion, spoke highly. "I was always proud of my dad. My dad was always proud of me. To receive the Purple Heart from Sen. Dan Inouye, I just wish my dad was around," he said.

"That would make his day."





SOME GOOD MEMORIES
Thank You, Mr. Kerr
By Dave Rogers

My wife and I wish to extend our condolences to the family of Mr. Kerr, and will keep in our thoughts and prayers his wife of 66 years, Millie. Mr. Kerr certainly was a man of character who influenced the lives of several thousand students and athletes over the course of his long teaching and coaching career in Marion County. He served his family, community and country, and was a highly respected person. Many thought of him as a quiet person, but once you became familiar with him he was a jovial, talkative, charismatic individual who could bring out the best in others, be it in a classroom environment, coaching situation, or simply socializing. His passing saddens all of us, but he will always be remembered by the many people he touched during his 90 years of productive and meaningful life.

The success of the football, track and wrestling teams at Fairmont Senior High School were the result of his superior coaching and motivational skills. In football practice I remember he would start with basic fundamentals for the linemen. Among his sayings was, "Head up, neck bulled, bend the knees, not the back, and Wilson made the pads for the shoulders, not the arms." Then he would drill, drill, and drill his athletes until the fundamentals became natural instincts. Next he would mold his athletes to play together as a team. I still recall him saying more than once, "If we have 4 or 5 who really want to play football, we'll have a good team. But if we have 11 who really want to play, there won't be another team in the valley who will beat us." He expected his athletes to always give it 100% and play together as a team -- slackers and grand-standers need not even consider trying out for his teams.

Mr. Kerr produced many winning teams during his coaching career at FSHS. However, on one occasion we were losing rather badly in football, and I will never forget his composure and comments. Having upset Moundsville 20-18 at home the year before after they were ranked fifth in the state, the game was one of revenge on their home turf my senior year. Three members of the backfield later became starting varsity players for WVU. At halftime he addressed the team by saying we should continue playing our hearts out if for nothing more than pride. Take pride in the fact that you are a football player who won't just lie down and acknowledge defeat no matter the circumstances. Without playing with pride there would be no self-respect, and certainly no respect from our opponent. Although we lost 37-6, I have always carried that lesson with me.

I always admired Mr. Kerr not only for his coaching abilities, but also for how far he climbed the ladder of success. During my junior year at Fairmont State College in 1963, he was hired as an assistant football coach and head wrestling coach after having coached and taught at the junior and senior high school levels and performing assistant principal and principal duties. One could sense back then that the football program and coaching staff had just gotten a tremendous boost and big things were about to happen. The football teams continued to be more and more successful under the helm of head coach "Deacon" Duvall and Mr. Kerr that resulted in a NAIA national championship for FSC in 1967. They put FSC on the map and sports pages that year. One can imagine what it was like to play football for two of the best college coaches in the country. Later Mr. Kerr became head football coach and continued to have successful teams, one of which won the conference championship in 1974. He truly went a long way in his career after starting off in his small home-town of Mannington.

There were plenty of memorable experiences while playing sports for Mr. Kerr and working for him and Millie at the municipal swimming pool. I kept in contact with the Kerr's for many years afterwards. We exchanged Christmas cards and letters yearly until failing health prevented further correspondence by them. They visited my wife and me in our new home in Arlington, TX in 1989, and were our first overnight house guests during a trip to Arizona. While dining together the question was asked of Mrs. Kerr, "How did you two meet?" Her reply was quite lengthy, most of the details of which have been forgotten. However, towards the end of her answer she said, "I knew a good man the first time I spotted him and beat out the other girls." The always observant Mr. Kerr teasingly replied, "Listen to her. Are you going to believe everything she said?" We all four burst into laughter after his comments.

As the years passed by I felt Mr. Kerr and I had become good friends. During my yearly visits to Fairmont we would meet on occasion, greeting each other with a handshake and engaging in congenial conversation. The coach/mentor/teacher days had all but disappeared, and a different type of relationship had evolved. I guess I could have addressed him as "Bill" like many of his friends and peers. Instead, I chose to always address him as I did when he first became my coach out of sheer respect.

So how does one say a final farewell to somebody whom you've respected for nearly 50 years? In all those years I had really never said thank-you to him for being the great person he was. For being a Navy veteran of World War II; for being an outstanding coach and mentor to the many young athletes; for bringing community pride to Fairmont because of successful sports programs; for being a family man; for being an educator; for inspiring young people to do their best; for always having time to talk to his former students and athletes; for being a good listener; for being an example for others to follow; for providing many memories of times past. Thank you, Mr. Kerr.
Dave Rogers
July 28, 2005

DONALD A. SLATE: A REMEMBRANCE

By David G. Rogers

The year 1995 has been a major year for anniversaries, pilgrimages, reunions and remembrances of various historical events: witness the 50th anniversary since the dropping of the first atomic bomb, the end of World War II and the 20th year after the communist takeover of South Vietnam. These events have been covered extensively by the news media during the year.

Unfortunately these tragedies resulted in the deaths of millions of people involving both combatants and innocent civilians. On a more personal level for me is the fact that one of those victims was a former Fairmont native as I am. The date November 29, 1995, marked the 25th anniversary of his death. His name was Donald Slate, and he was one of 26 servicemen from Marion County to lose their lives in Southeast Asia in a conflict called the Vietnam War. Having known Donald in my youth and being a veteran of that war, I submit the following as a memorial tribute to him.

I still remember receiving a telephone call from my mother 25 years ago in late 1970 and being informed that Donald had been killed in the war in South Vietnam. Few details were provided during the conversation, but I still recall my reaction to learning about his death. Although I had not seen or talked to him in the past few years, I remembered him as a very pleasant, personable individual. Why had life been cut short for such a fine person? In short, I was shocked and did not want to accept the reality of his death.

Of the ten Vietnam War casualties from Fairmont, Donald was the only one I knew personally. Being three years older than Donald, I had different friends and never ran around with him. Rather, I would occasionally see him at a baseball or football game or elsewhere. He was always very friendly to me and everyone around him so he was popular among his peers.

Donald Anthony Slate was born in Fairmont on June 3, 1946, the son of Patsy and Mary Ross Slate who resided on Beverly Road, now known as Mary Lou Retton Drive. During his younger years, "Donnie" attended Watson Elementary and Fairmont Junior High School, and in 1964 he graduated from Fairmont Senior High School. Interested in athletics among other things, he was a member of the West Fairmont Polar Bear football and baseball teams. During his senior year at FSHS, Donald was co-captain of the football team and selected as the "Senior Player of the Year." While playing a halfback position at 5' 8" and weighing 148 lbs., he led the team in scoring during the second half of the season and was an honorable mention choice on the All-Big Ten Team. Donald also excelled at playing right field on the baseball team.

I recall attending several high school football games in which my younger brother Jim and Donald played as teammates; Donald was one grade ahead of Jim. My other brother John, a twin to Jim, was a manager of the team. As this was some 30 years ago, I've forgotten most of the highlights of the games. I do remember, however, a game played against Philip Barbour High School in which Donald intercepted a pass while playing defensive back

and had excited Polar Bear fans on their feet screaming and rooting excitedly. "Duck," a nickname he was tagged with in his early years, scrambled down the sidelines with the football for a long return.

After graduating from high school, Donald attended Fairmont State College and graduated in May 1968 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. While a student at FSC, he was a member of the Tau Beta Iota fraternity and recipient of TBI's "Man of the Year" award.

In October 1969, Donald entered the Army and received orders for overseas duty in early 1970. On March 14, 1970, he arrived in South Vietnam and was assigned duty as a Personnel Specialist. At the time of his death, he had obtained the rank of SP4 (Specialist 4). According to information received from the National Archives located in College Park, Maryland, Donald was killed outright in a plane which crash-landed while he was flying as a non-crew member. The exact location of this non-hostile incident within Ninh Thuan Province was not given, and no further pertinent details were provided. This province is located on the South China Sea southwest of Cam Ranh Bay in the southern portion of the country. Its capital city is Phan Rang, a small seaside town of about 50,000 people.

In 1985 I was working temporarily in Washington, D.C., and spent one weekend with my wife and daughter touring the downtown area and viewing the local sights. We made our first visit to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial located on two acres of land in Washington's Constitution Gardens near the Lincoln Memorial. By that time "The Wall," dedicated on November 13, 1982, had become one of Washington's most popular and visited monuments. As we joined the crowd of people filing past the names engraved on the chevron-shaped black granite walls, we soon found ourselves at the memorial's midsection at Panel 6W, Line 95, where one of the names read "Donald A Slate." Preceding his name was a diamond symbol indicating confirmation of death. It turned out to be a solemn, reflective moment standing at that location.

The past 25 years have seemingly gone by at a quick pace since Donald unfortunately became a Gold Star serviceman. Surviving him are his mother and two older sisters, Patti Slate Koon and Carol Slate Bock. He was only 24 years old at the time of his death. His name became one of 58,196 names inscribed on "The Wall." These names represent many of America's finest men and women whose lives were never allowed to be completely lived out. I wish for all those who pass by and read his name today that they could have experienced his friendliness. Yes, Donald was among the best the United States sent to fight the war in South Vietnam, and even after 25 years I remember him and wish he were still here with us.

David G. Rogers
November 29, 1995

YOUTH SETS AN EXAMPLE

Eagle Scout John Morse, 18, has painted four murals to honor veterans at the Veteran's Restoration Quarters. He officially presented the murals at a dedication ceremony on Dec. 29.

Morse is a member of Troop 53, based at East Asheville United Methodist Church, and the murals were painted for his Eagle project. He said he wanted to do something to honor and show respect for the veterans dedication and for the work that Asheville-Buncombe Community Christian Ministry does to help veterans in need at its Restoration Quarters.



Morse spent 225 hours on the project. Lowes donated all the paint.



Morse is the son of True and Jane Morse, of Asheville, and a senior at Reynolds High. He is the brother of an Eagle Scout and grandson of an Eagle Scout. He plans to attend college in the fall and major in graphic design.

The Veteran's Restoration Center is the first nationally chartered center for homeless veterans. The murals were mounted on the wall of the cafeteria.

THREE SHINING SILVER STARS

By Dave Rogers

The recent awarding of three Silver Stars to Khe Sanh Veterans Donald Hossack, Ray Calhoun and Tommy Wheeler for their heroic actions on Hill 881 South on April 30, 1967 was most deserving. I would like to express my congratulations to them, and thank General John Admire for his efforts to pursue the nominations of these gentlemen for such a high honor. All three attended the fortieth anniversary ceremonies at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on April 30, 2007 in front of the bronze statue titled "Hill 881 South" at Veterans Plaza in San Antonio. It was a pleasure to see the three of them participating in reunion activities after having fought together as Marines in Vietnam.

Twenty years earlier I attended the first of three reunions of veterans from the Hill Fights of 1967. Before the ceremony began, I was asked to stand inside a building close by while my wife and daughter mixed in with the crowd of people attending. As I walked in I met a person who identified himself as Donald Hossack. I had read earlier about the dedication of the memorial in a local newspaper and was familiar with the name Donald Hossack, the Marine depicted in the statue as the individual rendering aid to dying Marine PFC James Arthur Randall. We started talking about our experiences from 20 years earlier. As we talked we kind of stared at each other for at least five minutes. He explained that he had been 2nd Lt. "Bussy" Mitchell's radioman. Then his face starting coming back to me and I said, "Yes, I remember you." And then he said like words to me. Except for one person, I never thought I would ever meet a veteran of the battle except by chance.

We participated as members of the stage party in the memorial service conducted with military honors on April 30, 1987, six months after the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated. We were in attendance as invited guests of John Baines, National Co-Chairman of the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program, as were several others. The memorial service included a musical salute from a military band, uniformed military personnel in formation from nearby Lackland Air Force Base, a wreath-laying ceremony, and the playing of Taps. Colonel Harry W. Jenkins, Jr., USMC, was the guest speaker.

After the ceremony I met Joe Cialone, who was the executive officer of M/3/3 the day of the battle. The three of us, Donald's wife, my wife and daughter later had dinner on the San Antonio Riverwalk. Needless to say, the primary topic of discussion revolved around the events of that infamous day when life and death became more than mere words. We were survivors of a horrific battle, now dining together in peacefulness twenty years later, and bonded in a way only fellow veterans would understand.

Donald suggested we have a thirtieth reunion. He was going to locate, or perhaps had already located, Ray Calhoun and Tommy Wheeler so that they too, and hopefully others, would be a part of the next memorial service and reunion activities. Also, he was interested to see if veterans from K/3/9 would like to have a combined reunion with veterans from M/3/3. He was very interested in preserving the history of the battle and remembering those who had fought in it. We left San Antonio with high expectations of having another reunion with more veterans attending.

During the years between reunions, we exchanged

Christmas cards and contacted each other to say hello and wish one another merry Christmas. We would discuss how our families were doing in Kalispell, Montana and Arlington, TX. He would also provide me with updates as to his success about making new contacts. And always, as was to be expected, we would discuss the battle. Each time we talked he would tell another interesting fact or two about what took place or something he had witnessed or read about, or who did what during the deadly fighting.



L-R 1987 -Unknown, Unknown, Joe Cialone, Dave Rogers, John Baines, Austin Deuel, Brig. Gen. Harry W. Jenkins, USMC, Donald Hossack, Rev. Leroy E. Muenzler

The thirtieth reunion was within a year or so of taking place in 1997. Donald had located Ray Calhoun who told Donald that he would attend the reunion. During a discussion with Donald I mentioned how fulfilling it would be to invite "Bussy" Mitchell's wife and daughter to the reunion. Donald started searching around for possible family contacts. He was able to get the telephone number of somebody who knew Bussy's daughter, Laurie, who she had worked for in Alabama, who was also a Marine. Using that contact, we were able to locate his wife and daughter at the same time since his wife just happened to be visiting Laurie in North Carolina. It was less than a month before the reunion when the telephone call was made. That was short notice, but I called Laurie back a few days later and yes, they wanted to come to the reunion to hear first-hand from the Marines he served with as to how Bussy became a casualty. Needless to say, there was closure for the family when we all met and told our separate stories about Bussy. Donald had been at Bussy's side when he was killed, and the same mortar round also wounded him.



L-R 1997 -Austin Deuel, Paulette Mitchell, Donald Hossack, Lorie Mitchell, Dave Rogers, Ray Calhoun, Joe Cialone, John Colvis.

During then next decade Donald made contact with former members of K/3/9 and Jerry Giles, commanding officer of K/3/9 at the time of the battle. A reunion of both companies, which had fought together at Hill 881 South, was organized by Donald and others from K/3/9 and was held on April 30, 2007 in San Antonio. After forty years, members of both companies met and exchanged war stories and experienced the camaraderie of true combat veterans. Recent Silver Star recipients Ray Calhoun and Tommy Wheeler were present. In attendance were the mother and another family member of PFC James Arthur Randall, who is depicted as the dying young black Marine in the statue, being cared for by Donald. Former Marine combat artist Austin Deuel, who witnessed the combat scene depicted in the statue he sculpted, was also present.

Having been a participant in the battle, I will never forget people like Donald Hossack, Ray Calhoun and Tommy Wheeler, and many others who received little or no recognition for their heroic actions during their tour of duty in Vietnam and after they returned home. The belated citations of all three recent recipients speak for themselves as they describe the terror and brutality of warfare. Their courage, honor, and tenacity during those trying times are noteworthy. Albeit late coming, their heroic actions are now publicly recognized and will always be a part of Marine Corps history.
Semper Fidelis

POETRY

Beaches , Peaches, and Leaches

It's sometimes hard to stay alert as you're plodding along, humpin through some swamp trying not to think of sandy beaches.
Struggling through the muck and the bush, looking forward to eating your stash of pound cake and peaches.
At last you stop for the day and all you want to do is rest and eat, but first you have to strip down and get rid of the those not so friendly leaches.
You know you had a pretty good day, when the biggest events were beaches , peaches, and leaches.
If you weren't there you can't understand the importance, of the simple things likes beaches peaches, and yes, even leaches.
At night before going out on an ambush patrol, you listen to your lieutenants worn out speeches.
Well sort of, because you're head is still, back in the world thinking of beaches.
Maybe tomorrow if you make it back, you can have some more pound cake and peaches.
If you're lucky there won't be any muddy murky water, so you don't even have to think of leaches.
Oh how sweet those very few days were, those days of beaches, peaches, and leaches.

Rick Tam

A NOTEWORTHY DATE

By LtCol David S. Harmon
314TAW

February 29, 2008, marked the 10th anniversary of one memorable day in a 31-year military career. It occurred during what became known as "The Tet Offensive" in the Vietnam War. That battle now celebrates its 40th anniversary.

My C-130E crew was stationed at CCK Air Base, Taiwan and flying out of a forward operating location in Tuy Hoa Air Base, Republic of South Vietnam. Our mission was to fly Airland and Airdrop missions delivering personnel and equipment throughout Southeast Asia.

We reported to Operations at "O'Dark Thirty" for mission assignment and briefing, and were told we would be dead-heading up the coast to Da Nang and flying three round-trip "B3" (Bullets, Beans and Band-Aids) Airland sorties from there to Khe Sanh. We had flown the same mission six months earlier (while flying out of Cam Ranh Bay) without a hitch; but this was different.

I said to the briefing officer that I thought C-130 landings at Khe Sanh had been suspended due to the intensity of the attack being waged against it by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). I was told that 834th Air Division (Air Force tactical airlift command and control in Saigon) had decided to try a "test" mission to see if it might be successful. We finished the ops and intel/threat briefings, checked out extra flak jackets (to put under our seat cushions) and got underway.

Air Force Aerial Port units are responsible for preparing cargo and passengers for transport, rigging airdrop loads and the on-loading/off-loading of aircraft. Upon our arrival at DaNang the Aerial-Porters were ready for us and we were quickly loaded and on our way. Khe Sanh was manned by components of the 3rd Marine Division and other various attached units. It was located on a small plateau in the mountainous northwest corner of South Vietnam and positioned as an interdict on one of the main Communist infiltration routes into South Vietnam. North Vietnamese General Giap had committed several Divisions in the attempt to do to our forces at Khe Sanh what had been done to the French 34 years earlier in the siege of Bien Dien Phu. He surrounded Khe Sanh and began a series of continuous bombardments and attacks. However, he did not reckon on two differences: modern air support and the character of the US Marine Corps.

B-52's, fighters and helicopter gun ships rained death on the NVA forces surrounding Khe Sanh and the Marines gave as good as they got with outbound firepower and ground attacks. Key to the Marines' effort was aerial resupply, without which they would have been defenseless, since all ground lines of communication had been severed. That is where Tactical Airlift came in.

In the years before the Vietnam War, Tactical Airlift forces (C-130's, C-123's and all the supporting adjuncts for battlefield aerial delivery) had been improving tactics, equipment and training for a mis-

sion that all planning indicated would become a major factor in modern warfare. A number of exercises were carried out in Florida, the Carolinas, Missouri and the desert Southwest, developing new formation. Short-field landing tactics and aerial delivery methods such as the Ground Proximity Extraction System (GPES), the Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System (LAPES), the Container Delivery System (CDS), the Parachute Low Altitude Delivery System (PLADS), and improved personnel and heavy equipment airdrop capability were developing as well.

Unfortunately, one factor missing in these exercises was a ground force willing to place its logistics requirement in the hands of aerial resupply in order to stress the Tactical Airlift system to the point of realism. Army trucks were organic, plentiful, and unhampered, so ground commanders (with other agendas) preferred surface resupply in these exercises. The result was a lack of the realism of a Bastogne or a Khe Sanh scenario. (Fifteen years later, I tried to get ground forces participating in a "Century Independence" exercise to agree to such a scenario and it was still like pulling teeth.)

Fortunately, early in the Vietnam War, a situation was reported to have occurred when cargo was seriously backlogged in the marshalling yard of Tan Son Nhut Airport in Saigon. A visiting Four-Star General asked the Aerial Port Chief Master Sergeant how many more C-130s were needed to move the cargo to all the forward locations in South Vietnam that needed it. It was rumored that the Chief told the General that if one more C-130 were sent to Tan Son Nhut, they would have to begin vertical parking. It was a good thing that the wrong question was posed to the right person. The Chief took the General to the Aerial Port Squadron loading equipment yard and showed him the broken loading equipment awaiting replacement parts and repairs. The General got the message and that was the beginning of a new look at how to use the C130 in a combat theater. The answer was simple: do whatever you have to do to minimize ground time between sorties. That meant that aircraft maintenance, refueling, and loading capabilities would have to be supported first if they were to be able to support the airlift mission.

(At this point, I am sure some of you "snow on the roof" types are thinking: "good grief, didn't we learn anything from the Berlin Airlift?" Well, the wheel does have to be reinvented from time to time now, doesn't it?)

By the time the siege of Khe Sanh and the Tet Offensive came about, the Tactical Airlift system may not have been a "well oiled machine," but it was pretty close. Even at Khe Sanh we had a hard surface planked runway over 3,000 feet long with an adjacent hard surface ramp and a Marine, radar Ground Controlled Approach (GCA) in operation. When the weather was lousy (which was most of the time) we could get an instrument approach for a landing or extraction. A procedure was even developed to get a GCA approach to the drop zone (DZ) west of the runway when the weather was too low to land or the threat level was too high for Airland ops. It was a really fluid situation. Our side didn't always own the entire DZ and the GCA would adjust a flight path accordingly. Considering the environment they were operating in, these GCA controllers were the best I have ever seen.

My Squadron (776th TAS) lost one crew and aircraft, on a GCA to Khe Sanh in bad weather, when they hit the upslope just short of the runway and skidded onto the runway on the side of the aircraft. A picture of a Marine fire fighter trying to chop his way into the cockpit appeared in *Life Magazine*; but only one crewmember made it out of a forward window.

As I mentioned above, my crew was not without Khe Sanh experience before the day that has kept so much of this era vivid in my memory. We had flown Airland missions into Khe Sanh in August and December of 1967, and had made four heavy equipment airdrops at an outpost (Lang Vie) west of Khe Sanh. The materials we airdropped there were used to build a bunker which enabled the unit to survive a subsequent armored attack and make it back to Khe Sanh during the initial phase of the siege. We also made GCA-guided, CDS airdrops to the Khe Sanh DZ during the siege.

As I recall, the weather at Khe Sanh on this Leap Year day was about 4,000 foot overcast with good visibility. We broke out several miles east of the field with a clear view of something that looked to be out of a movie set. There was smoke in several

locations from incoming ordinance, pieces of this and that here and there, a badly damaged C-123 along side the runway and another on the runway. There were also people, shooting at us from off the east side of the field. The tower said it would be a few minutes before the C-123 would be clear of the runway and we would have to go around.

As we were making the go-around, we were still taking hits from the ground fire. I tried as much evasive maneuvering as possible as I pulled up to the right. The field was under attack, the runway was blocked and we had unknown battle damage. No one would have faulted us for aborting the mission at that point. But a quick query of my crew showed that they still wanted to try to land and off-load as much as I did. So we came around again on a steep approach with a lot of side slipping to attempt to get the folks shooting at us to aim at where they thought we were going as opposed to our actual flight path.

This worked somewhat and we made it to touchdown on the runway end where I applied full reverse and stomped on the anti-skid braking in order to make the mid-field turnoff into the off-load ramp. Everything at Khe Sanh sloped uphill from east to west so that all that had to be done in the off-load area was for the loadmaster to open the aft ramp and door and pull the emergency cargo release handle while the pilot taxied out from under the palletized load.

As I turned into the ramp, I saw a Marine motioning us towards him. I was distracted by something (I think it was noticing our Cargo Door Open light coming on) and looked away from him momentarily. As I looked back, all I saw was a large explosion just in front and on the left side of the aircraft, which rocked the aircraft to the right. Stunned, I instinctively made a quick inventory of my personal parts, glanced over my shoulder at my crew and made a quick scan of the engine instruments; everything appeared OK and then I thought, "Oh shit, that Marine." I looked out to the left and, as the smoke cleared a little, on the other side of a newly formed 10 to 12-foot wide crater a foot or two deep in the ramp (more than likely from a 122mm rocket) was that Marine giving us the "get that mortar magnet out of here" wave-off. He must have heard or seen the incoming rocket and dove for cover behind one of the metal Conex Containers along the ramp. That seemed like good advice since more incoming could be on the way and they seemed to have us pretty well zeroed in. I taxied onto the west end of the runway and advanced power to the BTTW position. Somewhere in all this our loadmaster got the ramp and door closed and I elected to accelerate in ground effect and fly off the east end of the field at brushing-the-tree-top level, dropping down into the valley to the east and getting out of the immediate area before climbing out. I guess this tactic worked, since we didn't feel ourselves taking any more hits. However, while beginning the climb-out I discovered that I couldn't get nose-up elevator control much beyond neutral.

We set up a long straight-in approach for a landing to the south back at Da Nang using trim, flaps and power to help with pitch control and made an uneventful landing. Post-flight inspection revealed evidence of a fire in the right aux tank and lots of holes. One of our maintenance officers later gave me a note listing 104 hits in the aircraft.

Airland operations were once again suspended at Khe Sanh, but a successful Air Drop/Extraction program continued until the siege was finally broken.

The DFC I received for flying this mission did not mean as much to me as another medal I received for that mission, even though it ranked below the DFC. The 3rd Marine Division took the time to find the names of other service members who had been on the ground at Khe Sanh during the siege and allowed us to share the Navy Presidential Unit Citation, which the Division was awarded. Wow, a Navy medal for a "Blue Suiter."

I transitioned to the C-130A model and flew another Southeast Asia tour out of Naha AB, Okinawa. By the end of the Vietnam War I had flown in 9 of the 11 Air Campaigns into which the conflict was divided. But every Leap Year day since then (and 2008 is the 10th since 1968) my thoughts go back to the 3rd Marine Division and the Siege of Khe Sanh.



WE WILL NEVER FORGET THEIR SACRIFICE

On July 13, 1968, 1st Lieutenant Leonard Adrian Bird, while serving aboard an F-4 Phantom jet, out of Chu Lai, was killed when his aircraft was struck by enemy ground fire, crashed and exploded. He left behind his parents, a wife, 2 brothers and many friends and relatives in both Clifton and Wilmington. A letter from his commanding office to his parents is included with this article.



Although what happened to Lenny is obvious, the Department of Defense was never able to recover his remains. Because of this, Lt. Bird and his pilot are listed as being "Missing in Action". Lt Bird is one of 3 men from Delaware that are listed as being MIA. Finally, the New Jersey Viet Nam Veterans Memorial in Holmdel, lists 57 men from NJ as being MIA to this day.

Lenny was born at Passaic General Hospital in 1943. His father's parents had moved to Clifton's Dutch Hill section many years earlier from Holland and had even changed their last name from De Vogel to Bird to become more Americanized. The Bird family lived at 215 and then 261 Madison Avenue until the 50's when they moved to Wilmington Delaware. Lenny finished his secondary education here, and then enrolled at the University of Delaware to study engineering. He swam on the freshman swimming team, became president of his fraternity, and married his college sweetheart. He spent the summer of 1965 at Quantico, Virginia in an officer training program. Upon his graduation from college he began advanced training and then flight school as a radar intercept officer.

His brother Tom served in the Air Force in Korea, and he and Lenny had many" ... service arguments, as to which branch was better", this according to his mother, Mrs. Wilhelmina Bird, now of Holland Michigan. Mrs. Bird remembers Lenny as a " wonderful, loving son, always happy, who could only see the good in all his friends." Lenny hoped to attend the Wharton School of Business after his discharge. He received his orders and arrived in Viet Nam in January 1968.

MARINE FIGHTER/ATTACK SQUADRON 115
Marine Aircraft Group 13
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMF, Pacific
FPO San Francisco 96602

It is most difficult for me to express the regret and sorrow felt by myself and the Marines of Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 115 over the loss of your son, First Lieutenant Leonard A. Bird, U. S. Marine Corps Reserve, on July 13th, 1968, in the vicinity of Khe Sanh, Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam.

Len was flying as lead Radar Intercept Officer with his pilot, Captain John C. Hurst, as they attacked an enemy mortar position. The aircraft was hit by enemy ground fire just as the bombs were released on the target and was observed to be on fire as it continued across the target in a shallow dive and exploded on impact with the ground. This sequence of events occurred in just a matter of seconds, and there was not enough time for either Len or his pilot to eject. They both were killed instantly.

Len was a promising young officer whose cheerful personality, devotion to duty, and courageous acceptance of the hazards he encountered while flying two-hundred and fifty-three missions in the defense of his ideals earned for him the deepest respect and admiration of all those who knew him.

I realize that words can do little to console you at a time like this, however, I do want you to know that every Marine in this Squadron shares with you the sorrow and grief of this tragic loss.

A memorial service is planned for Len, to be held in the Marine Aircraft Group 13 Chapel at 10 A.M.. on July 15th, 1968, so that his many friends here may pay their final respects.

Please, if I can be of assistance in any possible way, let me know.

Sincerely Yours,
G.W. Vaughan
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding

WAR BUDDIES, LOCALS GIVE ANOTHER BRAVE CORPSMAN THE GRAVE DISTICTION HE EARNED

Powell rushed into a Vietnam battlefield to aid wounded and was killed.

By Harold Gwin
VINDICATOR STAFF WRITER

YOUNGSTOWN -. Richard Powell may have died 41 years ago in Vietnam, but memories of him and what he sacrificed for others remain as fresh for some as the day he was killed.

On Aug. 29, 2009 Marines who served with Navy Corpsman "Doc" Powell, his 1965 Chaney High School classmates and family gathered at Lake Park Cemetery on Midlothian Boulevard in Boardman to dedicate a new stone on Powell's grave - one that bears the notation that he was awarded the Navy Cross.

It will be 41 years to the day that Powell was killed while aiding wounded Marines in a battle in an area of Vietnam Just south of DaNang called "Dodge City." He was two weeks shy of his 21st birthday. He had enlisted in May 1966 when he was 18.

The Navy Cross, second only to the Medal of



CORRECTED HEADSTONE

Honor in this country, was a posthumous recognition, presented to his family in April 1969, eight months after his death, said his sister, Pattie Powell Scoville.

By that time, Veterans Affairs had already placed a stone on his grave, minus the Navy Cross desig-



Second Platoon Commander, Lima Company, Byron Weber, right, and Al Brochios, center, a life long friend of Powell's, look on as Powell's sister, Pattie Powell Scoville and her husband, Scott Scoville, left are presented an American Flag during the service

nation, she recalled. George Adams of Cortland, a Marine who served in the same unit as Powell's,

visited Powell's grave regularly for 25 years to pay his respects.

Adams, who grew up in Struthers, said he never had any contact with the men with whom he served in Vietnam until about 14 months ago when he came across his former commander, Byron Weber on the Internet.

Adams said he took a photo of Powell's gravestone and sent it to Weber, who noticed it bore no mention of the Navy Cross.

"That started all of this," Adams said, explaining that he contacted the local Veterans Affairs office and was told he would need to find a member of the Powell family to make a request for a new marker.



Richard "Doc" Powell, Left who was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his actions aiding wounded Marines in 1968, is pictured with George Adams, one of the Marines in Doc's Company. Adams was instrumental in getting the new marker for Powell's grave that displays the military honor.

That proved difficult, he said. He was aware that someone was periodically placing flowers on the grave, so he left a note there asking for that person to contact him:

He didn't get a response but learned later that Pattie Scoville was living in West Middlesex, Pa., where he was finally able to contact her.

Scoville said she didn't realize the designation was supposed to be on the gravestone, and she was surprised by the sudden, recent outpouring of support to have a new stone placed. She'll participate in the dedication ceremony by placing a wreath on her brother's grave, she said.

Adams said the occasion was expanded to include a reunion, perhaps the first, for Lima Company, Third Battalion, Seventh Marines, First Marine Division.

About three dozen Lima Company veterans and corpsmen were there, based at the Holiday Inn in Boardman, they came from as far away as Florida and Oregon, for an Aug. 28 reunion and the dedication the next day. Many of them were in the field with Powell the day he died.

About the same number of Chaney Class of 1965 graduates, many of them also veterans, were at the dedication as well, said Kathleen Seifert of Youngstown, class secretary. "

She remembers Powell as being "gentle, very soft spoken with ,an astute sense of humor."

Many of those classmates coming for the ceremony were unaware of what Powell had done, she said.

The citation accompanying Powell's Navy Cross recognizes his "extraordinary heroism" Aug. 29, 1968.

The unit to which he was assigned came under heavy fire as it crossed a large field during a battle. They sustained numerous casualties.

"With complete disregard for his own safety, Hospitalman Powell unhesitatingly rushed forward and commenced treating the men," the citation said.

He moved through the field of fire from one injured man to another, and at one point was hit by enemy machine-gun fire that immobilized one of his arms. "He ignored his painful injuries as he steadfastly continued to render life sustaining fist aid to his fallen comrades," the citation read.

"Observing a casualty who lay within 15 meters of an enemy machine-gun position, Hospitalman Powell fearlessly advanced into the hazardous area and was mortally wounded by hostile fire while providing vital medical treatment to the injured Marine."

the citation said.

Six marines died in that battle, and about two dozen others were injured.

"I was a member of his squad. I was with him the day he died." Adams said. He saw what Powell was doing and realized the risk.

"I wanted to stop him because I knew he was going to get killed. I told him, 'Don't do it: He just took off and did it," Adams recalled.

Jeff Lannan of Newark. Ohio, the platoon squad leader, was there as well. Lannan said he took to Powell right away because they were both from Ohio and he saw Doc as a "homeboy."

"He was just a very, very nice fellow," Lannan said'. "We became good friends," adding that the images of what happened that day still haunt him.

"He was helping everybody, exposing himself. It cost him his life," Lannan said.

Powell ignored calls from others to return to safety. Even after he was shot in the arm, he was tying a guy's bandage using one arm and his teeth, Lannan said. Lannan said he reached Powell moments after the medic suffered a fatal head wound. "Doc died in my arms. He was trying to tell me something. He couldn't get it out. That haunts me to this day," he said.

Lannan was also wounded in that battle and said he didn't find out until a few months ago that Powell had been awarded the Navy Cross.

That event meant a lot to me," he said of the reunion and dedication ceremony. "I'm just tickled to death they had it for him."

That Powell died during an act of helping others didn't come as a surprise to classmate Alfred "Skip" Brocious, who now lives in Debary, Fla,., but came back to Youngstown for the ceremony.

"That's just the kind of guy he was," Brocious said, explaining that he essentially grew up with "Dick" Powell from first grade through high school and Bible classes at St. Andrews.

"It's not surprising what he did," Brocious said, recalling an early example of Dick's character.

When volunteers were needed to help collect Lenten boxes that children had filled with coins to provide help to needy children, Dick, who was in first or second grade, stood up immediately while most kids were trying to shrink out of sight to avoid the task.

"I went with him. That was really unexpected for me," Brocious said. "He just kind of brought that out in people. It was a sign of his character very early,"

Brocious said she didn't see Powell after high school but learned that he had been killed in Vietnam, only recently learning of the details.

Doug Dobransky of Los Angeles, another classmate and also a veteran who came for the dedication, said he remembers Powell as being small in stature. He came across the Navy Cross award while working on a class reunion in 2007.

"When I began to read the account of how Powell came to be awarded the Navy Cross, our nation's second-highest decoration for bravery, I Stood there sobbing visualizing his last minutes, and how he went about serving fallen buddies on that hill in Vietnam," Dobransky said.

"Richard was taller and braver than any other person in our class that day," he said, adding that he wrote an account of Powell's death for the class reunion program.

"His great sacrifice that day should be made known," he said.

"We're not finished," Seifert said, explaining that there will be additional efforts to make the community aware of Powell's sacrifice.

Both she and Adams said they would like to see a highway interchange, perhaps along 1-680, named in his honor.

"This is an all-American story that can be repeated across this country," Seifert said ..

NEW HOPE EASES DECADES OF GRIEF
VIETNAM WAR MIA HONORED AT FUNERAL

By JOSEPH AX
STAFF WRITER



1st Lt. Albert Graf

The mourners made their way to the white grave marker one by one to pay their respects to a man long gone, and still missing - but not forgotten.

Marianne Graf Thomas remained motionless for a moment, clutching a folded American flag to her chest, her eyes fixed upon the name etched in the tombstone: Albert Stephen Graf, lst Lt.

Forty years ago, the Bogota native was shot down in an F-4B Phantom II above a Vietnamese jungle. He was honored with a full military fu-neral at Arlington National Cemetery, as those who loved him paid tribute to a man whose irrepressible optimism and indomitable will remain undimmed by the passing decades.

"I feel like a cocoon that has been wrapped so tightly, and now the cocoon has opened, and I get to be a butterfly," Graf Thomas, his widow, said.

One thing has always eluded his family and friends however: a body to mourn. There is no grave underneath the marker. The remains of Graf, 24, a radio in-tercept officer, and Jerry Zimmer, a 25-year-old pilot from upstate New York, were never recovered.

All hope of finding them appeared lost forever - until now. Thanks to the efforts of Graf Thomas and "Elaine Zimmer Davis, Zimmer's widow, the military agency assigned the task of locating missing American servicemen and servicewomen has reopened their case and sent an investigative team to what is believed be the crash site in search of their remains, Zimmer Davis said.

"I've lived for all these years linking they were not recoverable," Zimmer Davis said. "I would like to think that we have a chance now to do something for the guys. If they're not recoverable, I will know



Marianne Graf Thomas holding the flag from the funeral at Arlington National Cemetery for her husband, 1st Lt. Albert Graf.

that we all did our very best to try to make this happen."

Graf Thomas still remembers the day that a black car pulled into her driveway bringing the news of her husband's presumed death.

"I met them on my knees at the door, begging them not to tell me e was gone," the Georgia native said. "The hardest part was when I asked them, 'When will you bring him home?' And they said, 'We are not."

But last year, when Graf Thomas visited Vietnam with an experienced tour guide, retired Marine Bob Burke, it became clear that the original coordinates did not match the crash site described in the 1993 report that declared the Zimmer Graf case in the "No Further Pursuit" category, Zimmer Davis explained.

Burke's expertise in the local topography led him to

conclude that the crash site was elsewhere. With the help of a declassified report written days after the crash, Burke determined that the. site was actually 6,000 meters - about 3-1/2 miles - from the place where It was previously thought to be, she said.



Headstone that marks 1st Lt. Albert Graf's Grave

Earlier this year, Zimmer Davis and an old friend and former Marine comrade of her husband, Gene Mares, traveled to Vietnam as well Though Zimmer Davis was forced to turn back during the arduous hike through thick vegetation and 100-degree heat, Mares was able to make it to what they believe is the crash site.

He and their Vietnamese guide a former Viet Cong , recovered half a dozen pieces of a jet. Zimmer Davis' husband, Ron Davis, also a retired Marine, sent pictures of the debris to a network of Marine plane experts, who concluded that five of the six pieces belonged to an F-4B Phantom II.

No other F-4Bs were shot down in the area, said Zimmer Davis, who lives in San Diego. Combined with Burke's analysis, the findings were enough to persuade the Joint POW-MIA Accounting Command to reopen the case and send a team to the site, she said.

The results of that team's visit are not yet known. Officials at JPAC did not return calls for comment, and a spokeswoman said she did not have any information to release regarding the case.

Zimmer received his own full military funeral service at Arlington, nine days before the 40th anniversary of the Aug. 29, 1969, crash. His marker stands beside Graf's in a section of the cemetery dedicated to those still missing.

Gunnery Sgt. William Dixon, the Marine Corps funeral director for Arlington and for the Washington region, said many families are not aware that they are entitled to a full honors service if their relatives' bodies were not recovered.

"It's a blessing for those families to have some closure," he said.

The ceremony took place on what would have been Graf's 65th birthday, drew some of his closest friends, who reminisced about a man whose name is still known in Bogota.

High School, where Graf was a standout in track. There was Rusty McInerney, who roomed with Graf in flight school and recalled their lives as carefree, confident young men. Graf bought a Pontiac GTO, McInerney a Corvette, and the two friends would chat up single ladies at the local bars.

There was Bernie Fowler, who ran track with Graf at Bogota High and remembered Graf's infectious smile.

"He was the most upbeat person I've ever met in my life," Fowler said. "I was always unhappy - but you couldn't be that way with AL. He just wouldn't allow it."

There was Dave Ells, Graf's childhood friend, who helped organize the ceremony and was happy to be around to see this day. He suffers from emphysema and was given three to five years to live. That was

10 years ago.

"I resolved to live my life as they would have lived," he said of all his friends who died in the war. "Now I can put AL to rest. 1 know he's in a good place."

But most of all, there was Marianne Graf Thomas, who may finally have found the healing she has awaited for 40 years - even if she never has a chance to bury her late husband's body.

"There was such a peace that came over me," she said. "I saw all these people that loved AL and respected him. 1 thanked him for our life together, and grieved that we were not together now.

POETRY

My Officer, My Gentleman

on a new soft sofa in blank beige rooms you call home
I found you
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

concocting canned foods, fare like Marine C-rations
eating all alone
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

sleep wracked with wretched dreams
haunted by terror
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

war too real warping Now's mysteries
present far away
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

42 years later thoughts straying there
every single day
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me
a forever wounded heart
sears your soul
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

here we could not know life as
it was there
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

Khe Sanh
with no escape
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

77 days of bombs blasting but 100 feet away
shrapnel spewing everywhere
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

I rallied to end the war to bring you home
you fought fearlessly
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

I never imagined seeing hearing tasting feeling beside us
buddies blowing up
My officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

huddling in rat-infested dank dark airless tunnels
eating only fear
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

42 years with new bare beige rooms far from that place
so long ago
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

as winter slips to spring summer surges submerge yourself
today playing softball
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

play like a warrior every day for sport for fun
be the best
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

our chance encounter auspicious mystery
one autumn day
My officer, My Gentleman

waiting for me

our eyes lock briefly soul searching soul
warrior meets dreamer
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

I see your wounded heart
lover of living
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

Love born in an instant grows
opening one another
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

your hands warm mine your breath tingles
your touch ignites
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

with you finally no judgments criticisms just
me here now
My Officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

for the first time I surrender to receive to give
fate finds destiny
My officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

for it is I who await
loving you today
My officer, My Gentleman
waiting for me

By Judy Landfield

EDNOTE: This poem was written By Judy for Ernie Spencer Delta Company 1/26

LZ LAMBEAU MAY 21-23, 2010 WELCOMING HOME WISCONSIN'S VIETNAM VETERANS

L.Z. ™
LAMBEAU
WELCOME HOME MAY 2010

A wide-reaching statewide effort to honor Wisconsin Vietnam War Veterans culminates in a weekend of recognition and celebration of their service and sacrifice for veterans and their families at Lambeau Field in Green Bay.

All veterans, family members, friends and other Wisconsin residents are invited to attend.

Find event details, local information and details on the statewide kick-off motorcycle rally from La Crosse to Green Bay and more online at LZLambeau.org.

LZ Lambeau is a partnership of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, the Wisconsin Historical Society and Wisconsin Public Television, along with an extensive group of veterans organizations statewide.

Initial major funding for *Wisconsin Vietnam War Stories* and LZ Lambeau has been provided by Don and Roxanne Weber of La Crosse, Associated Bank, Wisconsin Public Service Foundation, Oneida Nation, Ho Chunk Nation, and Ron and Colleen Weyers.

ED NOTE: This is a great Event, and I will be attending with our founder, Reverend Ray W. Stubbe. Lambeau Field in the State of Wisconsin, is just an hours ride from the City of Chicago. For those who have not met Reverend Stubbe this will be a great opportunity to do so.

ANOTHER GREAT COMING EVENT IN THE CHICAGOLAND AREA

The 25th year Anniversary of the Chicago Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Parade that took place in June of 1986will again grace Chicago next year. It will be a three Day event: June 11th Saturday, June 12th Sunday, June13th Monday, 2011. These dates are not locked in.

This is what is being planned or being talked about for those days, not in any particular order:

1) Art Show - pictures taken by Vietnam Veterans and their families during the June 13th, 1986 Parade in Chicago - they will be CD's or 11 X 14 photos.

These displays will be at the Vietnam Veterans Art Museum 1801 S. Indiana, and a very good possibility at other venues in the City of Chicago and surrounding Suburbs.

Samle locations: Oak Park, IL. Library, The Chicago Cultural Center at Randolph & Michigan, and other areas to yet be determined.

2) A Dinner to honor Tom Stack, Gene Connell, Col. Plummer - who have since passed, but were on the executive committee of the Welcome Parade. To be done at a major hotel in downtown Chicago.

3) A Concert at Millieum Park - with bands such as Dennis DeYoung. Lt. Dan Band, The four Tops and others. This will be the Vietnam Veterans tying together the Welcome Home of the Iraqi/ Afghanistan Veterans, and passing the torch to the next generation of Veterans, and the Never Again One Generation forgetting the next Generation of Veterans. Now this might also take place at Navy Pier - it will depend on a lot of things.

ED NOTE: I will keep the membership apprised with the schedules for this event. Those of you who attended the Chicago Welcome Home Parade, know how great our City opens itself to our veterans, both past and present.

LOCAL HONOR FOR KHE SANH VETERAN DAN ORR HQ CO 1/9

(Editor's note: This speech was written and given by JCHS teacher Dwain Michael during a Veterans' Day Star* of *Character ceremony honoring former JCHS teacher Dan Orr).

By DWAIN MICHAEL

Good morning students of Jay County High School, staff, administra-tors and guests.

I count it a privilege and honor to stand before you today and present this year's recipient of **the *Star* of Character Award for Citizenship.**

This award honors a person who has one, but generally all, of the traits of a person of character-trust worthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. This year's winner joins Jeffery McLochlin and Andrew Whitacre in receiving this award at JCHS.

Nominated by the student council, our honoree was born in Jay County, educated at Dunkirk High school, and attended Hanover College, where he played baseball and worked his way through school by waiting on cafeteria tables.

He was recruited by the U.S. Peace Corps, and spent two years volunteering in Kenya, Indonesia and the Bahamas.
He spent two years at the University of Missouri and another at Penn State gaining more knowledge in social and biological sciences. He received his love of learning from his mother Jean and work ethic from his father, Karl Ed.

He is the father of two children: Sarah, a teacher in California, and Andrew, a helicopter pilot in Montana. He is husband to Anita, who helped make his swine and farming operation a success.

He has served on numerous boards including, but not limited to, the Jay County Hospital Board, Jay County Soil and Water Conservation District board of supervisors, Jay County Arts Council, Limberlost Wetlands committee and the Jay County Council.

He spent 30 years teaching in the Jay School Corporation, with 25 of those in the biology department at JCHS.

His elocution, rhetoric and loquaciousness will forever be legendary in the halls of JCHS. He is a consummate supporter of Jay County athletics, arts and academics, and has attended nearly every home football and basketball game for 35 years. He can be found sitting near the home basketball bench, generally wearing a red sweater.

After serving in the Peace Corps, Uncle Sam requested his service during the Vietnam war. The Marine Corps had something called the pacification and protection of the population program. You would guard the villagers by night and assist them. with farming during the day. This sounded like a worthwhile program, so he signed up.

Wars have a way of changing things, and things changed on Jan 21, 1968. He found himself, with 6,000 other Marines, surrounded by a force of 30,000 North Vietnamese in a remote air base called Khe Sanh.

Enemy soldiers began a continuous artillery, mortar and rocket shelling of up to 150 rounds per hour. In the first few hours the main fuel supply, tear gas, C4 supply and ammo dump were hit.

With all above ground buildings destroyed, the Marines dug in. For 77 days, under constant harassment from mortar attack, he lived in a hole he had dug in the side of a hill.

The only supplies to reach the embattled soldiers had to be dropped from the air and with intense anti-aircraft fire, only 10 percent of the intended supplies actually reached the defenders..

He changed his uniform once during those 77 days, and his mission was staying alive.

On April 1, 1968, he was called upon to carry a wounded soldier from an underground aid station to a medivac helicopter. As he was helping carry the stretcher to the waiting helicopter, an artillery round exploded close by. You need to understand that the enemy had the entire based zeroed in. with their artillery and any object that landed on the runway was an easy target. Under those circumstances, leaving the safety of an underground facility just wasn't in one's best interest. But he was a Marine and he had a duty to help save the other soldier's life.

Seriously wounded by the shrapnel from the blast, he then had to be medivaced to an aid station, then to a hospital ship, and eventually back to the U.S. for weeks of rehab. For his service during this battle, he was awarded two Purple Hearts.

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The battle of Khe Sanh lasted seven more days. The enemy had been repelled, often with intense hand-to-hand combat. Finally, Marines broke through enemy lines and ended the Siege. The Marines who fought at Khe Sanh suffered a high casualty rate.

It can be said that you will be remembered for the sacrifices you make for yourself, sacrifices you make for you, or you can be remembered by the sacrifices made by those in whom you have made a difference.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to present the winner of the 2009 Star of Character Award for Citizenship, a man who has made and continues to make a difference: **Dan Orr**.



KHE SANH FOUNDER RAY W. STUBBE, HONORED FOR HIS SERVICE BY ST. MATTHEW'S PARRISH



Cross tangible symbol of the presence of God; Enlisted men take comfort, gain strength through prayer in the battlefield

Pastor Ray Stubbe served as Chaplain to the Navy during the Vietnam War. Recently in preparation for the publication of a book as well as a Vietnam veterans celebration at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Pastor Stubbe was asked to be photographed with an object from his time of service that held special meaning for him. The cross he holds was used several times during worship and prayer in Vietnam with the enlisted men he served. James Gill of Wisconsin Public Television took the photo. The photo on the right shows one of the times that Pastor Stubbe used the cross, Christmas Day of 1968 in DaNang, atop one of the Marble Mountains.



RAYS CORNER

Tommy,

"Bagpipes" Jim Taylor, of the CAC unit at Khe Sanh, called me yesterday and said that he discovered I was on U Tube--the boxing event from a couple of years ago when I fought Mike Tarnoff. It was my first fight and Mike's 12th or so. Mike was a southpaw who had trained with Gleason's in New York and had fought there and also England.

I wasn't intimidated, however having sparred with him previously. I know my competition. Although he won by points, most there told me at the time (and since) that they thought I had won. Be that as it may, when I watched the replay on U Tube, I was a bit ashamed of my performance, seeing how slow I was. Nevertheless, I was the aggressive one and used proper techniques. It sort of surprised me, however, that someone still is able to view this! Taylor thought I had done quite well, and that lessened my embarrassment over the fight.

On another subject, our organization should petition the United States Postal Service to issue a stamp, perhaps part of a set remembering Tet that might include Khe Sanh, Hue City, and the Tet Offensive in general.

The reunion for 2018, the 50th anniversary year, might appropriately be a time to invite prominent people to give an address. If they're still around, people like General James L. Jones, for example, might be a good choice

Suggestions for stamp subjects should be sent to: Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee U.S. Postal Service 1735 North Lynn St., STE 5013 Arlington VA 22209-6432. The timing of the request would involve submission a year or two before it was due to be issued (in this case, 2016). They do the design.

ED NOTE: Ray attached an article outlaying the requesting and submission requirements for having a stamp issued. Due to space availability I will post it in the next issue.







Chaplain Ray Stubbe
U.S. Navy
3rd Marine Division, 26th Regiment, 1st Battalion
July 1967 to January 1969

So it was, it was grim and it was unfeeling grimness. Marines had asked me, "Where is God in all of this?" I talk about the humor in maintaining life in a situation of death. I guess because we knew we were going to die anyway, we were somewhat free to live. You don't have to worry about getting wounded or worrying about dying. So some guy's out there by himself, wounded, and the rounds are going off. Well, you just go run out, dash, and drag him in. I tell people, "God gives us courage to go on. God gives life, and by having humor, by having courage in death situations, God is giving us life. God is present in sharing and caring for each other. Everyone who was there knows about that. God is present in ways-not in a spectacular show of force, but blessing us with life and courage and love of each other, Love is always an action, not an emotion, basically, biblically anyway.

Chaplain Ray Stubbe 2009

"LITTLE SAIGON"

By Craig W. Tourte

See, the problem is that I am just a sensitive guy. I happened to notice in the newspaper this morning a full page article about the local Vietnamese community, their trials and tribulations, and contribution to the local community in the form of restaurants, etc. and that they have established themselves in a part of town that at one time was filled with crime and gangs. Oh sure there continues to be problems, but at least they were giving it a shot. One of the politicians recalled seeing that "Little Saigon" sign down in Santa Ana (Ca) along the freeway and thought it would be a wonderful idea to place a similar sign along the roadway as one entered the area where the Vietnamese are now the majority of residence.

I tried, but I just couldn't help myself and shot off a "Letter to the Editor", you know, something like this: "City Councilman Kevin McCarty initiated the campaign after seeing a 'Welcome to Little Saigon' freeway sign in Santa Ana." "A few years ago I drove to San Diego and visited the Marine Corps Recruit Depot where I had spent a number of grueling weeks in 1966. I was overwhelmed with memories, as I stood alone on the huge parade ground recalling the young men I had trained with who were looking forward to serving their country and becoming Marines.

On my drive back to Northern California I too noticed the sign in Santa Ana that read "Little Saigon." I knew why the sign was posted there; it denoted a portion of that city which had welcomed the multitudes of Vietnamese who had settled there after the war. The Vietnamese prospered, raised their families, started successful businesses and sent their children off to the finest American schools. I'm sure the ceremony was well attended when the sign was set in place, as it will be when a similar sign is set in place along Stockton Boulevard. When the sign in Santa Ana was placed, there must have been quite a show of politicians and proud community leaders, all saying wonderful things about the opportunities America had to offer.

I wonder if anything was said about the thousands of Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice which allowed these new immigrants to come here and live their American dream. I am not aware of a Little Italy, Little Korea, Little Russia, or Little China sign in honor of the hundred of thousands of other immigrants who have migrated to the Sacramento area, nor am I aware of any type of official government sanctioned sign along the various downtown corridors denoting the many contributions of our Gay and Lesbian communities. Perhaps the Vietnamese community is special, or perhaps it's just another political gimmick."

Of course I can't write anything less than 500 words and I was forced to cut this down to 200 which was much like cutting my wrists , but I did my best. I was lucky enough to take the majority of the story from the one I had written about my trip to Albuquerque, New Mexico at the unveiling of the Khe Sanh road memorial and twist it a little to match this story. Look, we all know the "Little Saigon" sign is going to be a big hit with the local politicians and do gooders and not one word will be said about the thousands who sacrificed and bled for the opportunity given the Vietnamese to come here. I have to tell you, I am terribly small minded and unforgiving when it comes to certain issues, and I'm afraid, this is one of them.

NEW MEXICO HONORS KHE SANH VETERANS WITH HISTORICAL MARKER ON NW 124.

By Helen Davis
Cibola County Bureau
The Independent, Thursday Nov 12, 2009

BUDVILLLE -Just east of tiny Budville on N.M. Highway 124, on the day before Veterans Day, the New Mexico Department of Transportation helped to set a memorial to the often forgotten.

The department, working with Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and Kirkland Air Force Base, unveiled a monument to veterans Tuesday, at mile marker 16.3 on the road also known as Historic Old Road 66.

The Official Scenic Historic Marker is dedicated to the memory of 10 New Mexico servicemen killed in the Battle of Khe Sanh, Vietnam. Delane Baros, media officer for the District 6 NMDOT *said.*

"The ultimate sacrifice of these 10 servicemen will remain In our hearts forever. This historic marker will remind us of the sacrifices our veterans have

given, and the sacrifices our military continues to give while defending our country."

The small battle memorial speaks for many more than the American soldiers killed in the battle or who died later of wounds Sustained. Baros said in a news release, that the battle killed 2,097 U.S. servicemen.

District 6 Transportation Commissioner Jackson Gibson underlined debts owed to service personnel in saying "Many New Mexicans from all walks of life served in war-torn countries, and many paid with their lives, so we can remain free. like many, I am proud to be a Vietnam Veteran, but we need to recognize, and remember all those who served, not only In Vietnam, but elsewhere in the world at different times and in different conflicts, and wars."

Transportation officials, Sergeant of Arms Harold Lockwood of the National American Indian Veterans Organization, Tom Eichler, Past president of Khe Sanh Veterans,. Inc. as well as representatives of the United States Legislature attended the public ceremony unveiling the historic marker. Tom Eichler acted as emcee for the ceremony.

NMDOT Transportation Commissioner Gibson, a Vietnam veteran himself, was presented the American flag folded in the traditional 13-fold triangle, Baros said. District 3 Transportation Commissioner Doug Peterson and NMDOT Adjutant Secretary Rebecca Montoya spoke for the unveiling.

New Mexico's United State senators and congressmen were represented by Sarah Cobb for Senator Tom Udall, and Dan Armijo for Congressman Harry Teague, who both spoke.

After speakers concluded, the Laguna Elementary School Dancers performed for those assembled.

At a reception following the unveiling, the Grants High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC performed at the Silver City Casino Pinon Room. The event also honored the Marine Corps' 234th Birthday, with traditional cake, and other refreshments, Baros, said. The Marines were established November 10, 1775, at Tun's Tavern in Philadelphia.

Baros added that approximately 300 people, including veterans from many parts of New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and California, among others, attended the events.

The Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc was established on Christmas Eve 1983 by retired United States Navy Chaplain, Ray W. Stubbe.

ED NOTE:
When I was invited to New Mexico to emcee the dedication of the Historical Marker honoring the Khe Sanh Veterans, and those 10 members from New Mexico who perished there, I was deeply honored. I was also undecided on what I would say to the multitude that I anticipated would attend.

I then remembered a short piece Craig Tourte had written regarding Highway Markers and what they meant to him. I felt the same way and his feelings did echo those of Khe Sanh Veterans. I was deeply moved by his story and asked him to expand on it and represent the Khe Sanh Veterans at the unveiling.

He graciously Accepted and the following is his presentation of what this monument means to the Khe Sanh Veterans.

"A PLACE THAT ALWAYS WAS"

On Tuesday, November 10, 2009, the state of New Mexico dedicated and unveiled an Official Scenic Historic Road Marker honoring those who died at "The Battle of Khe Sanh, Vietnam 1968." The beautiful wooden marker is inscribed: "The Battle of Khe Sanh claimed the lives of 2,097 United States servicemen. This historic marker is dedicated to honor and preserve the memory of New Mexico servicemen who were killed in action or later died of their wounds. The Khe Sanh Vietnam veterans will forever live in each others' hearts." **In addition, the marker is inscribed with the names of nine of those who were killed from the State of New Mexico. I am sure more names will eventually be included, as that information becomes available.**

I, Tom Eichler, David Tonick, Bob Greenwood and numerous other Khe Sanh Veterans assembled at the ceremonial site, along with a gathering of sev-

eral hundred, including but not limited to, Rebecca Montoya representing Transportation Commissioner Gary L.J. Giron, Sarah Cobb representing U.S. Senator Tom Udall, Dan Armijo representing Congressman Harry Teague, and National American Indian Veterans Commander Don Loudner. It was a privilege and honor for me to have been introduced as a Khe Sanh Veteran and afforded the opportunity to offer a few remarks.

"A few years ago I drove to San Diego and visited the Marine Corps Recruit Depot where I had spent a number of grueling weeks in 1966. It was the first time I had returned since I earned the right to wear the coveted Eagle, Glove and Anchor of the United States Marine Corps. As I stood alone on the huge parade ground I was overwhelmed with memories recalling the young men I had trained with. They came from all over this great nation and were looking forward to becoming Marines and serving their country. It was evening when I started my drive back to Northern California, and was dark when I reached the West side of Los Angeles on the 408 Freeway. As my mind wandered back to the Recruit Depot, Quonset huts and drill instructors, I happened to glance to my right and noticed a road sign caught in the beams of my headlights that read "Little Saigon." I knew why the sign was posted there. It denoted a portion of that city which had welcomed the multitudes of Vietnamese who had settled there after the war.

The Vietnamese prospered, raised their families, started successful businesses and sent their children off to the finest American Schools. I'm sure the ceremony was well attended when the "Little Saigon" sign was set in place, and there must have been quite a showing of politicians and proud community leaders, all saying wonderful things about the opportunities America had to offer. I wonder if anything was said that day about the thousands of Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice which allowed these new immigrants to live their American Dream."

"When I saw photographs of these Historic Markers honoring fallen Khe Sanh heroes erected along the roadway in this wonderful and great state of New Mexico, I thought of that sign I had observed near the Los Angeles freeway and I knew I had to come here and attend this dedication to America's finest. I had to stand alongside this highway and in some small way join the souls of those whose names are inscribed here. I had to hear their names recognized and I wanted their surviving families to know that the greatest sacrifice made by their loved ones truly mattered.

The mention of Khe Sanh along with the great battles of Concord, Gettysburg and Normandy in the president's inaugural address, forever confirms to our nation and the world that the Battle of Khe Sanh holds a significant place in American history. Though many years have passed, we will always remember and we will forever mourn those we lost, from all branches of the military. We'll never forget the one's we stood shoulder-to-shoulder with in the trench lines, those who faced incredible hardships on the surrounding hills, those who flew above in desperate attempts to extract our wounded and dead and supply us with the critical material necessary for us to persevere. All will be forever cherished in our hearts. We survivors of that long and horrific battle will never forget the fallen. We will never forget how and why they sacrificed for us, for you, and for our wonderful country. We will never forget where they served or who they are. The fallen hero's of Khe Sanh will continue to be a part of who we are, for the rest of our lives."

CRAIG FURTHER WROTE OF HIS EXPERIENCE

"As a representative of the Khe Sanh Veterans, I am proud to have been a part of this special dedication - whose primary sponsor, recognition and driving force has been this area's Native American Community."

The location of the "Official Scenic Historic Marker" is identified as being at New Mexico 124, Mile Marker 16.5. In actuality, it sits along the old Historic Route 66 Highway, North of Interstate 40 at the 104 Exit in an area identified as Acoma, New Mexico. It was an approximate 50 mile drive along Interstate 40 from the City of Albuquerque to reach an area known as "The Sky City." The Sky City is actually an area where the Acoma people lived centuries ago atop a mesa to protect themselves from enemy attacks by neighboring bands. The Native American's who live in the area are identified as the

"Acoma" which means "Place of readiness." According to a little research, "Native American legend" describes Acoma as a "place that always was." Native history says "...it was first inhabited about 700 A.D." "Archaeologists agree that it has been continuously occupied from at least 1150 A.D. to the present." Acoma, New Mexico is generally considered "America's oldest continually inhabited city."

The drive from Albuquerque to "The Sky City" where the Historic Marker is located is not unlike any other drive I have taken along a desolated high desert highway. Long, straight and lonely for the bored and weary traveler who too often focuses attention on what's over the next rise. One could pass Acoma in the blink of an eye and never know anything was there except sand, sagebrush and red dirt. I wondered why a monument honoring these heroes would be erected in such a desolate location and not in a more densely populated area.

It was early evening when Tom, David and I drove out to the site of the Historic Road Marker where I met Harold E. Lockwood (HMH-CH-53 Sea Stallions) for the first time. Harold is a tall, proud Native American, former Marine and Vietnam Veteran who is the Sergeant at Arms of the National American Indian Veterans. We stood together as darkness approached, surrounded by red sky with a few wispy clouds off in the distance and tall red table top mountains rising up from the desert floor. Harold identified his house a quarter mile or so away from where we were standing. With the swing of his arm in a wide arc he told me about his cousins, friends, other relatives and Native Americans who lived nearby and identified those who had served and those who had made the ultimate sacrifice, all from the Reservations. We talked about the arrival of the early Missionaries, the Native American children who had been taken from their parents and even to this day, the hardships his people face.

We spent a few minutes talking about his service in the United States Marine Corps and the three years he served in Vietnam. The tragically brutal injuries and death he had observed as a helicopter machine gunner, too often recovering the dead and wounded. The missions off of ships made by young boys who eagerly entered combat for the first time, all dressed in new green uniforms and combat gear and his painful recovery of their remains after the battles. Harold remembered all of these events clearly and with great sadness as he looked up into that red evening sky, silently remembering the pain that is often overwhelming, as he searched for the words that would somehow explain to the outsider, the horrors he had witnessed. Remembrances I knew were still prevalent.

The following day during the dedication ceremony there were a group of young children from one of the local Native American schools who preformed a dance. Adorned in Native American costume, I observed they all had very intense looks on their faces. I realized that the dance these children performed was a serious cultural interpretation of events and beliefs that had been handed down from one generation to the next. The dance was significant to the Native People and fitting in that it was performed in memory of those who had sacrificed for their people and our country.

As I stood alone looking out across the Acoma, viewing the red earth color of the valley and hills, not so dissimilar in color to the red clay of Khe Sanh, I glanced up into the very wide open sky and understood why fate had brought "The Battle of Khe Sanh" marker here. Somehow fate had brought this remembrance marker to this spot, because this place is a "Place That Always Was," A "Place of Readiness" and in a way, a place of safety for those who we will never forget.

Along with Tom Eichler and David Tonick we assisted Harold Lockwood (National American Indian Veterans Sergeant of Arms) and Jackson Gibson (District Six Transportation Commissioner) with removing the American Flag from the marker and presenting the ceremonial flag to the New Mexico Department of Transportation in recognition of their dedication to Khe Sanh Veterans and to those Veterans from the great state of New Mexico whose loss will be forever recognized and mourned.

Tom Eichler emceed the ceremony and introduced the various speakers, honored guests and provided Certificates of Appreciation from the Khe Sanh Veterans Association to all involved with making this historic event possible. In addition to those mentioned, Tom's effort included recognizing individual transportation employees who worked so hard

on this project along with the 377th Force Support Squadron, Kirkland Air Force Base and the Grants High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC program, along with many other participants and supporters. Tom's generous effort as an ambassador and representative of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, was nothing short of Herculean as he worked late into the evening hours coordinating speakers and honored guests, gathering those participating in the ceremony in preparation of the flag unveiling, obtaining the necessary material to be included in the various Certificates presented, and reading the name's of the deceased inscribed on the Historic Marker. This event was a testament to Tom's dedication to our Association and I was proud to have been a participant.

Craig W. Tourte
Hq Btry 1/13

ED NOTE: After the dedication of this Historical Marker I received this letter from James R. Cannon, Retired Major, and former XO of Echo Company 2nd Bn 3rd Marines, addressed to Rebecca Montoya, Adjutant Secretary NMDOT.

The letter references the omission of
PFC JOE C. GARCIA USMC KIA APRIL 1967
CEDAR CREST, NM

New Mexico Department Of Transportation Adjutant Secretary Rebecca Montoya
P.O. Box 1149
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

Enclosed please find the supporting documentation to make an addition to the Battle Of Khe Sanh Historic marker located on Rt Old 66 between Daning Eagle Casino and Sky City Casino. Enclosure (1) is a copy of the Unit's Unit Diary. This is the official notification to Headquarters United States Marine Corps of an event within a unit. High lighted in green is the name of PFC Joe C. Garcia 2238385/0311.

The entry reads:30 April 67 Drop KIA shrapnel wounds both legs right side of torso entire top portion of head missing. Huang Hoa Dist Quang Tri Province, RVN. He was hit by an NVA mortar round.

The entry that should be added to the marker is:
PFC Joe C. Garcia USMC 30 April 1967
Cedar Crest , NM

If I can be of any further assistance to you in this matter I can be reached by phone, mail or email.
James R. Cannon Major USMC (Ret.)
Historian VA Assistance Officer WEC (Former XO, Echo Company 2nd Bn. 3rd Marines)















UPCOMING DEDICATION OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS BRIDGE NEAR THE SITE OF OUR NEWLY DEDICATED HISTORICAL MARKER IN THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO

ED NOTE:
I recently received the following notification from Johnny Gallegos who was greatly instrumental in obtaining the KSV Historical Highway Marker in the State of New Mexico on November 10th 2009. It is addressed to I, and Harold Lockwood (KSV) who came up with the whole original concept

Tom/Harold

I spoke with Commissioner Jackson Gibson today and the preliminary approval to name the 104 Bridge **"KHE SANH BRIDGE"** went well. According to Mr. Gibson the approval will be announced on **April 15th, 2010,** during the Commission meeting in Albuquerque NM. Mr. Gibson would like to have both of you at this meeting when the announcement is made if possible. Also, we are looking at having the dedication for the Bridge on Friday May 21st, 2010. We only have about 2 1/2 months to prepare so we have to get busy and we will keep you posted.

It looks like we will have an approval by April. We will start getting things together for the dedication possibly on July 2.

Thanks for all you help,

Johnny Gallegos

ED NOTE:When we were planning the dedication of the Historical Marker I personally notified all the members of the KSV who resided in the State of New Mexico, and kept them informed of plans, and dates for the event. I will do the same thing for the upcoming Bridge Dedication. Any member of the KSV or the general Public is invited to the event. We had a great turnout for the highway marker as you can see, and read from the afore written article.

KHE SANH VETERANS PX CATALOG

Call John "Big John" Pessoni at **(732) 948-9803** or visit **www.khesanh.org/px.html** for assistance.



B5-T8 in 48QXD
NVA's Version of Khe Sanh
$ 10.00 ea.
 # B02



Valley of Decision
By Ray Stubbe
$ 25.00 ea.
 # B01

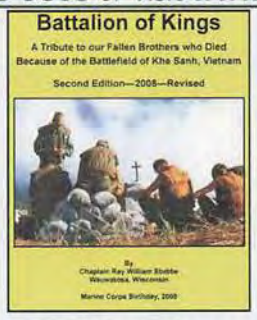

Battalion of Kings
By Ray Stubbe Updated Edition of Final Formation
$ 30.00 ea.
 # B03



PUC CERTIFICATE
Personalized with Rank Name Unit
$ 10.00
"CERTIFICATE ONLY"
 # PUC

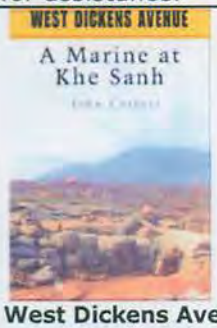

West Dickens Ave
By John "Jack" Corbett
$ 15.00 ea.
#B04

All Covers, $15.00 ea
See order form for hat and inscription color



H01 H02 H03



H04 H08



H10 H11



H12 H13



H1 4



H15



H16 H17



H18 H19 H20 H21 H22 H23
ALL BRANCHES



H24



H2 5

Shoulder/Jacket Patches



SURVIVOR 2X3"
 # PA01 $5.00
ea.



26th MARINES 4x4"
 # PA02 $5.00
ea.



1/26th 4x4"
 # PA03 5.00
ea.



2/26th 4x4"
 # PA04 $5.00
ea.



3/26th 4x4"
 # PA05 $5.00
ea.



13th Marines
4x4"
 # PA09 $5.00
ea.



5th MAR DIV 4x4"
#PA10 $5.00 ea.



SORRY CHARLIE
Patch 5x2.5 Gray
PA11 $ 4.00



SORRY CHARLIE
Patch 5x2.5 Color
PA12 $ 7.00



KS VETERANS 3x3"
PA06 $5.00 ea.



KS VIETNAM
NAM PUC RIBBONS
2¾x1"
PA07 $3.00 ea.



USMC
COMBAT VETERAN
Jacket Patch 5x2"
PA08 $7.00

Hat/Lapel Pins



 # PIN01
$5.00 ea.



#PIN-02
5.00 EACH



 # PIN03
$5.00 ea.



 # PIN04
$5.00 ea.



 # PIN06
$5.00 ea.



 # PIN08
$6.00 ea.



 # PIN09
$6.00 ea.



#
PIN10
$6.00
ea.

MORE PAGE 45

Apparel See order form for description, color, sizes and price



GOLF SHIRTS
White, W/Yellow and Black Trim (embroidered)
 # S01 $25.00 ea.



GOLF SHIRTS
Red
Sorry Charlie (embroidered)
 # S15 $35.00 ea.



GOLF SHIRTS
Red
Sorry Charlie (silk screened)
 # S13 $25.00 ea.



GOLF SHIRTS
Black
Sorry Charlie (silk screened)
#S14 $25.00 ea.



Tee Shirt
Light Blue
Sorry Charlie (silk screened)
#S11 $ 12.00 ea.



Tee Shirt
Dark Blue (not pictured)
Sorry Charlie (embroidered)
#S12 $ 16.00 ea.



DENIM LONG SLEEVE
(embroidered)
#S10 $35.00 ea.



SURVIVOR TEE SHIRT
HEAVY DUTY COTTON BLACK
 # S07 $19.00 ea



TEE SHIRT "USMC"
GRAY
 # S04 $15.00 ea.



HOME IS WHERE YOU DIGIT TEE SHIRT
GRAY
 # S06 $18.00 ea.



DENVER 09 REUNION TEE SHIRTS RED MEDIUM ONLY



SWEAT SHIRT "USMC"
HEAVY DUTY BLACK
#S02 $25.00



TEE SHIRT "USMC"
HEAVY DUTY BLACK
#S03 $15.00

Miscellaneous Items Coins, Window Decals, Bumper Stickers



40TH and 20TH ANNIVERSARY COMMERATIVE BEER STEIN
"SUPPLIES LIMITED"
 # BMUG $10.00 ea.



KS VETERAN COIN
Sorry Charlie
Branch Seals on Reverse
 # MC04 $8.00 ea.



KS VETERAN COIN
SORRY CHARLIE IN ACRYLIC DISPLAY
#MC05 $ 20.00



KS VETERAN BRONZE COIN
KS TAOR Map on Reverse
 # MC02 $7.00 ea.



KEY FOB, MARINES
#KEY01
$5.00



WINDOW DECAL
4X4"
 # MW01 $3.00 ea.



BUMPER STICKER
#MB02 $3.00



CAR MAGNET
VIETNAM VETERAN
#MD01 $3.00



KHE SANH VETERAN LICENSE PLATE COVER
 # PLATE $16.00 ea.



CARMAGNET
USMC Yellow Ribbon
#MD02-3.00



USMC LANYARD NAMETAG HOLDER
#L01 $5.00



WINDOW DECAL 4X4"
#MW02 $4.00 ea.



WINDOW DECAL 3X2"
 # MW03 $4.00 ea.



GET SOME BUMPER STICKER
 # MB01 $3.00 ea.

THE HIGH GROUND

By Robert Clark

A couple of years ago someone asked me if I still thought about Vietnam. I nearly laughed in their face. How do you stop thinking about it? Every day for years, I wake up with it, and go to bed with it. But this is what I said "Yea, I think about it,. I can't quit thinking about it. I never will. But, I've learned to live with it. I'm comfortable with the memories. I've learned to stop trying to forget and learned instead to embrace it. It just doesn't scare me anymore. A psychologist once told me that not being affected by the experience over there would be abnormal. When he told me that, it was like he's just given me a pardon. It was as if he said, " Go ahead and feel something about the place, Bob. It ain't going nowhere. You're gonna wear it for the rest of your life. Might as well get to know it." A lot of my "brothers" haven't been so lucky. For them the memories are too painful, their sense of loss too great. My sister told me of a friend she has whose husband was in Nam. She asked this guy when he was there. Here's what he said, " Just last night." It took my sister a while to figure out what he was talking about. Just last night. Yeah, I was in Nam. When? Just last night. During sex with my wife. And on my way to work this morning. Over my lunch hour. Yeah, I was there. My sister says I am not the same brother that went to Vietnam. My wife says I won't let people get close to me, not even her. They are probably both right.

Ask a vet about making friends in Nam. It was risky. Why? Because we were in the business of death, and death was with us all the time. It wasn't the death of, "If I die before I wake." This was the real thing. The kind where boys scream for their mothers. The kind that lingers in your mind and become more real each time you cheat it. You don't want to make a lot of friends when the possibility of dying is that real, that close. When you do, friends become a liability.

A guy named Bob Flanigan was my best friend Bob Flanigan is dead. I put him in a body bag one sunny day, April 29, 1969. We'd been talking, only a few minutes before he was shot, about what we were going to do when we got back to the world. Now, this was a guy who had come in country the same time as myself A guy who was loveable and generous. He had blue eyes and sandy blonde hair. When he talked, it was with a soft drawl, Flanigan was a hick and he knew it. That was part of his charm. He didn't care.

Man, I loved this guy like the brother I never had. But, I screwed up. I got too close to him. Maybe I didn't know any better. But I broke one of the unwritten rules of war. Don't get close to people who are going to die. Sometimes you can't help it. You hear vet's use the term "buddy" when they refer to a guy they spend war with.

"Me and this buddy of mine" "Friend" sounds too intimate, doesn't it. "Friend" calls up images of being close. If he's a friend, then you are going to be hurt if he dies, and war hurts enough without adding to the pain. Get close, get hurt. It's as simple as that. In war you learn to keep people at that distance my wife talks about. You become so good at it, that forty years after the war, you still do it without thinking. You won't allow yourself to be vulnerable again. My wife knows two people who can get into the soft spots inside me. My daughters .. I know it probably bothers her that they can do this. It's not that I don't love my wife, I do. She's put up with a lot from me. She'll tell you that when she signed on for better or worse she had no idea there was going to be so much of the latter.

But with my daughters it's different. My girls are mine. They'll always be my kids. Not marriage, not distance, not even death can change that. They are something on this earth that can never be taken away from me. I belong to them. Nothing can change that. I can have an ex-wife, but my girls can never have an ex-father. There's the difference.

I can still see the faces, though they all seem to have the same eyes. When I think of us I always see a line of "dirty grunts" sitting on a paddy dike. We were caught in the first gray silver between darkness and light. The first moment when we know we've survived another night, and the business of staying alive for one more day is about to begin. There was so much hope in that brief space of time. It's what we used to pray for "One more day, God. One more day." And I can hear our conversations as if they'd only just been spoken. I still hear the way

we sounded, the hard cynical jokes, our morbid senses of humor. We were scared to death of dying, and trying our best not to show it.

I recall the smells, too. Like the way cordite hangs on the air after a fire-fight. Or the pungent odor of rice paddy mud. The mud of Nam smells ancient, somehow. Like it's always been there. And I'll never forget the way blood smells, sticky and drying on my hands. I spent a long night that way once. That memory isn't going anywhere. I remember how the night jungle appears almost dream like as the pilot of a Cessna buzzes overhead, dropping parachute Hares until morning. That artificial sun would flicker and make shadows run through the jungle. It was worse than not being able to see what was out there sometimes. I remember once looking at the man next to me as a flare floated overhead. The shadows around his eyes were so deep that it looked like his eyes were gone. I reached over and touched him on the arm; without looking at me he touched my hand. "I know man, I know." That's what he said. It was a human moment. Two guys a long way from home and scared shitless. "I know man" and at that moment he did. God I loved those guys. I hurt every time one of them died. We all did. Despite our posturing. Despite our desire to stay disconnected, we couldn't help ourselves. I know why Tim O'Brien writes his stories.

I know what gives Bruce Weigle the words to create poems so honest I cry at their horrible beauty. It's love. Love for those guys we shared the experience with. We did our jobs like good soldiers, and we tried our best not to become as hard as our surroundings. We touched each other and said "I know." Like a mother holding a child in the middle of a nightmare, "It's going to be all right." We tried not to lose touch with our humanity. We tried to walk that line. To be the good boys our parents had raised and not to give into that unnamed thing we knew was inside us all. You want to know what frightening is? It's a nineteen-year-old boy who's had a sip of that power over life and death that war gives you. It's a boy who, despite all the things he's been taught, knows that he likes it. It's a nineteen-year-old boy who's just lost a friend, and is angry and scared and, determined that, some @@%@#*s gonna pay". To this day, the thought of that boy can wake me from a sound sleep and leave me staring at the ceiling.

As I write this, I have a picture in front of me. It's of two young men. On their laps are tablets. One is smoking a cigarette. Both stare without expression at the camera. They're writing letters. Staying in touch with places they would rather be. Places and people they hope to see again. The picture shares space in a frame with the one of my wife. She doesn't mind. She knows she's been included in special company. She knows I'll always love those guys who shared that part of my life, a part she never can. And she understands how I feel about the ones I know are out there yet. The ones who answer the question, "when were you in Vietnam?" "Hey, man, I was there just last night."

WHAT A SMALL WORLD

By Willie RO Yates W/1/13

The best I remember, Mitchell White and I were sitting near the back row in a small mill village Church in La Grange, Georgia, called Dunson Baptist Church. I'm guessing that, like me, Mitchell didn't want to sit near the front when Pastor Buddy York started walking the isles during his sermons. It seemed like he was talking directly to us when he did that.

This squared away young man dressed in a sharp uniform walked in and sat down. I did not know his name due to the fact that he was 5 years my senior. Asking questions, I learned his name was Jimmy Rogers, United States Marine Corps, on his way to Vietnam. Wow! The uniform, the stripes, USMC!

Mitchell had a brother-in-law in the Marine Corps, and had mentioned to me about going after we graduated high school in 1967. Thanks but no thanks was my answer.

Same situation only one year later, Jimmy has more stripes. He was home on leave before returning to Vietnam. I had just graduated, and was wondering, had this thing called USMC affected his mind? He was going back because he wanted to?

Less than a month later I was wondered about my own mind.

Life is strange, after having a disagreement with my girl friend, I decided to punish her, I joined the Ma-

rine Corps. You figure that out...

The last part of January of 1968, I was in Khe Sanh with Whisky 1/13. Someone had to go up to hill 861. I was the new man and Khe Sanh was too hot for me, so I was sent to hill 861.

Forty years have passed, I ran across some of Jimmy's family and I asked about him. Where was he in Vietnam, and who was he with. They told me he was on some hill. Well, there are thousands of hills in Vietnam.



L-R Jimmy Rogers and Willie Ro Yates

About a year later after that, I crossed paths with his family member again. He had just returned from West Virginia visiting Jimmy. "Jimmy was on hill 861," said Hollis." "When, and with what outfit?' I shout. He got there in 1967, and left the later part of March in 1968. He was with Kilo 3/26. It was so hard to believe. I was there the same time, 10,000 miles away from Dunson Baptist Church. Hollis and Glen both said, "I don't understand why you didn't see each other and talk." Well, you don't just go bouncing around in the open looking for someone you might know. Especially if you didn't know they were there.

Thanksgiving 2009, Jimmy is in Georgia visiting. He and I got together. It was great! We shed some tears, had some laughs, and opened our hearts to each other. I played some music, one being, "Nowhere to run Nowhere to hide."

That small Church prayed both of us home safely but, unfortunately, one was lost. His name was Mitchell White, USMC, he was killed in action May first 1968 at Cau Viet with 2/4. Two out of three ain't bad, I guess? It would have been better if it could have been three out of three. I sure wish Mitchell could have been with us to celebrate Thanksgiving this year. That would have been a greater reunion.
Semper Fi
Willie Ro (Yates)

I GET MAIL

THE GHOSTRIDER FOUNDATION

By Tim DeWolf
H&S & E CO 2/9

Tom,

As usual my renewal is a little late but I have enclosed a donation in memory of Lt. John H. Carson, CO of Echo 2/9. John was my CO and my friend and he died just west of a little bridge on the road between LZ Stud and KSCB. June 1968 - he was there and then he wasn't. Isn't that the way it was in those days?

I read the newsletter in little spurts mostly because I can only take in so much at one time - the memories and emotions seem stronger now than they did years before. Judging from what I read there are many who see things as I do.

I have another anniversary to remember now - January 6th 2007. Sgt. Joe Lorek a 3 tour (2nd LAR) OIF vet took his own life. He was like a little brother to me - I taught him to shoot while he was in High School. He wanted to date my daughter. We rode in the same motorcycle club.

I was a mentor to him as he entered the USMC and while he was active. Later when he was discharged I was a mentor as he went through struggles with PTSD. We made promises to each other but sadly he couldn't keep his last promise to me.

He went out for a few drinks, gassed up his car, bought some cigarettes and then went home and shot himself. Just before he killed himself he called his brother and his brother called me - it took us less than 15 minutes to get to Joe but it was already



GHOSTRIDER FOUNDATION
7456 Sherwood Drive
Mentor, OH 44060
ghostriderfoundation@gmail.com
www.ghostriderfoundation.org

too late - eternally too late.

Joe's road name was Ghostrider - it was the only song he could play on his guitar without moving his lips and counting. We laughed about that a lot before.

We (my family) started a foundation to work with returning vets from all services. Right now we are just local and although we have a 501c3 IRS registration I don't feel we have done all we can. The website has some good information and although we operate just in NE Ohio now maybe we can expand.

It took me 30 years to recognize my problems and accept the cause was based in my memories and experiences from Vietnam. I suppose that in memory of Ghostrider I hope I can make a small difference in another vets life before he gets to where Joe and I went.

Visit our foundation for more information. This is not a solicitation, we are pretty good at funding ourselves.

Timothy C. DeWolf
Executive Director

THE VALLEY OF BLUE LIGHT

By
Gary Foster
May 14, 2003

The week in Quang Tri Province promised to be beautiful. Such a welcome change from my previous visit. The farther I drove south from Vinh and the closer I got to Dong Ha, the more excited I became. As usual the weather in Vinh was lousy and due to the high humidity there, I felt wet all the time. But now, as I drove south on National Highway No.1, the air roared through the car as I rolled down the windows to feel the much drier sunshine-filled air. My spirits began to soar as the sun rose higher, lingering at its apex before starting its slow descent back to the horizon, all the while causing shadows to lengthen, shorten, and lengthen again. I drove across the Ben Hai River, stopping briefly to reflect on the significance of an American driving across the DMZ unescorted. I had arrived in Quang Tri Province, Leatherneck square, the geographical top of Eye Corps. I was in the meat grinder.

Not much longer, at around two in the afternoon, I arrived in Dong Ha. The date was March 19, 2003. This date is important only to me because it was one week short of three years when I arrived, for the first time, at close to midnight, in Quang Tri Province. Since that time, my company had been working on the design and construction tendering of Highway No. 9 from Dong Ha to Lao Bao, and a bypass that swung north of Dong Ha from Cam Lo to access the Cua Viet Port directly. The total project entailed some 98 kilometers of two lane asphalt road and about 20 new bridges. Finally, construction on the highway had begun in February 2003, just a month before my arrival. I wanted to see the progress for myself on this historic – in some ways the most historic highway in Vietnam, even arguably, throughout the world. But I also had other interests for being there. I wanted to try to locate any remnants of the USMC bridge over the Rao Quan River. I had seen photos of Bridge Number 9 on the KS Veterans web site and I wanted to see the actual site myself. I also had another mission: I wanted to try to climb hills 861 and 558 and place a tiny USMC flag on the latter.

My previous trip to the hills was spoiled due to

gloomy, rather doubtful weather and I was so pressed for time that I was precluded from making the necessary effort. Now, I had two days (today and tomorrow) to myself so I was looking forward to this return. In addition to the two objectives, I would also continue to help Donna Elliot find information about her brother if I could, though I knew there was not much that I could do.

After a quick lunch of french fries and onions, I drove straight to the Rao Quan River where Highway 9 makes a sharp left turn into a horseshoe bend across the river and just below the Khe Sanh Plateau. But along the way, I had to stop at Dau Mau and try to orient myself with a photo taken during the NVA attack on that South Vietnam military base in 1972. I identified ridgelines, but everything else had changed and I found no evidence of any occupation, NVA or otherwise. I drove on. I passed the cable-stayed bridge across the Quang Tri River that leads south along Highway No. 14 to the A Shau Valley. It was under construction three years ago but has been completed for over a year. I like the bridge but I must admit, it is out of proportion to the surrounding scenery and environment. The sign pointing the way to the "Vestige of Tacon Base" (Khe Sanh) is still there.

The weather continued delightful, but it was getting late. As I drove, I thought back to the many lengthy telephone conversations I had with **Dennis Mannion** weeks before regarding photos seen on the KS web site. Dennis asked me many questions about the landmarks and where KS was in relation to the bridge and vice versa. The places in the photos I had seen were so familiar that I told Dennis I knew and had stood exactly where each shot was taken. Dennis sent me copies of his old military maps and after I received them, we had very lengthy, lively telephone conversations. His wife Joan and his family must think we are totally nuts. Dennis recounted so many stories and places. Because of that and some other photos I had sent to KS Vets taken on previous trips, I had stirred up some lengthy e-mails and telephone calls, mostly with Dennis. The photo that intrigued me the most was that of the pontoon bridge over the Rao Quan River. I knew I could find the exact location of the bridge. I wanted to see if I could match the exact spot from where the photo had been taken showing the pontoon bridge placed next to old bridge piers. I decided I had to see the place for myself. Even if I had been there a number of times, my memory precisely of the landmarks was a little tarnished. I confused the Rao Quan and Quang Tri Rivers at their junction and farther downstream; me thinking that the Quang Tri River was a continuation of the Rao Quan River. But I did not mistake the Rao Quan bridge crossing and I went directly there.

I stopped at several places along the Quang Tri River and along the short Rao Quan River. Finally I reached the bridge, labeled by kilometer (km56) in the Vietnamese system and labeled number 9 in the USMC or Seabees designation – at any rate a famous bridge and one that cannot be missed. I walked down the embankment on both sides. I could see the remains of an old road that was bulldozed down to the water from the main road. There was no evidence of anyone having been there at anytime other than the road which had eroded over time. After considerable stomping around and looking, and searching, and adjusting positions, I finally located the exact spot from which the original photograph was taken and I took a photo in the same direction. Again, like at Dau Mau, except for the ridgelines and the old abandoned bridge piers built by the French, much had changed. I would send these photos to Dennis. I spotted a 12x12 piece of lumber that was badly deteriorated so I supposed this was part of a bunker at one time or another. Traffic was minimal as I walked back up to the main road, now paved. There were no sounds at this time of the evening, and there was no breeze. The sun shone brightly, so I had nothing to worry about for the next day.

I had only a little more than an hour of sunlight left so I decided to drive hurriedly on to Khe Sanh Ville and then on to Lang Vei. I had heard that recent construction on Highway 9 had begun ironically at Lang Vei. I knew I could not make it to the Khe Sanh Combat Base that evening before nightfall, and would not try.

I drove through Khe Sanh Ville, not veering off the highway towards the base but kept on towards Lang Vei. It does not take long to drive there. Sure enough as I topped a hill, I could see the Lang Vei Vietnamese tank monument and some construction equipment. The crews were simply scraping the ground, beginning their initial earthwork cuts, and

clearing the vegetation for the alignment survey and cross sections. "Interesting," I mused to myself. I pulled off the road and stopped the car next to the tank monument and opened the door and climbed down on the ground. Then it hit me: I stopped dead in my tracks. Right there in front of me, the bulldozers had unearthed what had to be the rectangular concrete roofs of concrete bunkers from the Special Forces camp that was overwhelmed by attacking NVA on February 7, 1968. This date marked the first time tanks were used by the NVA in the war. The two concrete slabs were positioned at an angle to one another. So surprised, I thought "This couldn't be the Special Forces bunkers." But sure enough, just in front of me, totally uncovered, there they were. Logic told me I was looking at history, literally being uncovered, before my very eyes. I did not know whether I was seeing the roofs or the floors but the concrete slabs, scraped bare, were completely smooth and there were no wall stems or protruding reinforcing steel that would indicate a wall or a remnant of a wall. "Had to be the bunkers," I said audibly, then looked around to see if anyone was in earshot. I didn't know how many bunkers there were, but I had heard a rumor that there were remains of an American MIA, James Leslie Moreland, possibly still inside one of the bunkers. I had no way of knowing, and do not know now whether there were any American MIA remains there, but I have regretted, ever since this visit, that I myself could not take the time to explore the situation further. It still bothers me that I was not able to do so. The whole issue of MIAs in Vietnam is not a welcome topic among the Vietnamese, and one has to be careful.

I walked around the denuded site and spotted three very large bomb craters behind the tank monument on the ridgeline facing Laos. I was to learn that the equipment operator had almost toppled his bulldozer into the largest one (25 feet in diameter and 10 feet deep).

I have always wondered how de-miners work and what equipment they use. Not far from the tank monument, emerging from behind a small hill, a Vietnamese man was waving a metal detector in front of him just a few inches above the ground. He made long sweeps from left to right and back again as he walked slowly forward. He was de-mining. I walked over to him and tried to take his picture but he was a little wary of this and kept turning away. Finally I was able to take a shot of him as he worked. Then he waved me over to the side of the hill and pointed at 2 mortar shells. I was to learn later these were 40mm and 60 mm shells. We also found a 105mm shell and lots of metal fragments. I told him I wanted a piece of shrapnel and he took me to a place and waved his detector just above the ground and reached down and scooped up some dirt with his small crooked shovel and, bingo, up came a sizeable piece of shrapnel. He handed me the piece of rusting metal, which I pocketed and decided I would bring home and give to Frank Willoughby, the Special Forces commander of Lang Vei during the siege in 1968 (I learned later that Mr. Willoughby passed away in 1998, so I sent the shrapnel to Ray Stubbe for his Khe Sanh archival collection). I returned to the tank monument and then back to the bomb craters. I began spotting mortar shells everywhere and I saw one in the bottom of the largest bomb crater. It had evidently rolled down there when the bulldozers cleared the area. I walked into the crater and, much to my surprise, had a very difficult time climbing back out – another one of those life experiences out of the way, with no need to repeat it.

The sun began to close with the horizon and I loaded back into the car, but just before doing so, I noticed a large billboard sign, dominated by the smiling face of an obviously optimistic Vietnamese woman, placed by the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism across the road from the tank monument. The sign read half in Vietnamese and half in English, the English version stating, "Vietnam – A Destination for the New Millennium." Yup, right here in Quang Tri Province, central Vietnam, next to Laos, adjacent to the Ho Chi Minh Trail, down the road from Khe Sanh; yes sir, right here on top of a ridgeline at Lang Vei. I stopped and pondered the irony of such a sign.

I drove back to Khe Sanh Ville as it was getting late, in fact now already dark. I decided to return straight to Dong Ha. The weather remained balmy so surely the weather would be as pleasant the next day as it had been today. I enjoyed the drive on Highway 9. There is hardly any traffic to speak of and the scenic vistas are wonderful to behold. I cruised along, not slowly but not at a fast pace either. It was a very pleasant drive. Along the banks

of the Quang Tri River as I approached a small Bru village, I noticed a vague blue-azure tint along the roadway. I did not pay much attention to it and basically forgot about it. I would be reminded of it the next day. I drove on. Back past Dau Mau and the Rockpile, through Da Krong, past the turn off to Camp Carroll (still have not found the fire base), and through Cam Lo, finally arriving in Dong Ha. The day was over and I looked forward to the next day when I would visit the combat base again and try to climb Hill 558 and maybe some of 861. But the weather was not to be.

To back up, through e-mail correspondence, I had made promises to two US Marine KS Vets: John Pessoni and Jacob Krygowski. Now I reminded myself that the next day I had to carry out the promises. These were not big acts of skill, or sacrifice, or courage or bravery, or deeds that would place me in harm's way. The promises were more symbolic than physical so they should present no problem for me. For John or "Big John" I promised to bring back to the USA some red clay from the base. Before I left the states, I made sure to include in my luggage some plastic zipper-locking sandwich baggies with which to collect the red dirt. For Jacob, I promised to place on top of hill 558 a small USMC flag that he had sent to me. That evening in Dong Ha, I collected the plastic bags and located Jacob's letter containing the rolled up miniature flag.

There isn't much for one to do in Dong Ha, but there was one nice bar about 200 feet up the street from the hotel. The beer was so cold, I consumed it in 5 seconds flat, or so it seemed, and ordered another one. But the second beer was as warm as the first beer was cold. What a disappointment. But that is how things work in Vietnam. The bartender replaced the cold beer with a warm beer in the frige, and then when he received an order for another beer, merely grabbed the one he had just put in the frige. Beer is beer, right!? But the third beer was cold again. Two out of three. Not bad.

My hopes of good weather were dashed as soon as I woke up the next day. The morning dawned gray. So dark was it that I became depressed thinking that it would ruin my day and interfere with my planned trip back to the Khe Sanh Plateau. I had only one free day remaining. For the second trip in a row to KSCB, the day would probably be murky and wet, the base muddy. Disappointed, I consoled myself with the thought that, "Well maybe up on the Khe Sanh Plateau it would be clearer…maybe….."

After the usual four cups of very bitter coffee, brewed Vietnamese style - using a small aluminum percolator, really more of a strainer, placed over the mouth of the glass - at a small café outside the Dong Ha Guest House, sitting on a piece of concrete sidewalk listening to the truck traffic and watching the kids walk to school with their backpacks slung over their backs, I drank my coffee and shuddered somewhat against the cool early morning wind. Why it seemed so cold to me was a mystery. Anyway it did. Must have been the dampness.

In the courtyard of the Dong Ha Guest House, I met an American woman named Sandy Northrop. She is an independent film maker and was filming a documentary about Vietnam people under thirty years of age and their lives after a war they don't remember. I was to meet Sandy later the next morning and we exchanged many stories about Vietnam and Africa. She made a documentary film about Pete Peterson, who was shot down over North Vietnam, became a POW for a number of years, and later served as the American Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, eventually marrying a Vietnamese woman from Hanoi.

I left Dong Ha for Khe Sanh at around 8AM and soon passed again the familiar sounding place names, Cam Lo, Da Krong, etc. I have been that way and on that road now so many times within the last three years but I never tire of reciting the place names out loud when I see them, especially as they appear on the red and white concrete road markers: Khe Sanh - 56 kilometers, Lao Bao - 83 kilometers, Da Krong - 20 kilometers, Cam Lo -12 kilometers, Lang Vei – 35 kilometers, and so on. I remain attentive to the landmarks and constantly remind myself of the grim history that ensued here 35 years ago. In a very real sense, I have convinced myself, all of Quang Tri Province is hallowed ground, just as much and to the same extent as is Gettysburg. To the Vietnamese, it's haunted - and I'm not so sure it's not, as I was to sense and feel later.

To my increasing chagrin, the weather seemed to be deteriorating the farther west I drove. "The Rockpile should be about here, right?" But where was it?

Very low clouds and dense fog just above the roadway. Headlights on. Now to the Quang Tri River, water low in its banks. Cloudy. Not looking good. Turning to the right to diverge from the Quang Tri River and merge with the Rao Quan River, still no visibility. Over the Rao Quan Bridge where I had visited the day before and start uphill towards the plateau. Ears feeling the pressure change just like the first trip three years ago. The weather now - well, quite literally, to use a pilot's vernacular - was finally and quite "on its ass." "Dammit!" Reach the plateau, passed the new customs station and into Khe Sanh Ville. Clouds sprinkling rain. Turn right on the road to the base, make my way to the entrance, see sign pointing the way. Site appears abandoned. No one in sight. I park in front of the new museum: an A-frame structure, its concrete floor elevated about 10 feet above the ground. It appears still unused. Strange. Then I see a person emerge from the door of the old museum located adjacent to the new elevated museum. I pay my 25,000 Dong and talk to the curator. His English is quite good.

I go into the museum room. It has not changed one inch in three years. All the junk is still there. I pick up the same M16 that Paul Knight picked up a few years ago. I am alone and I find the guest registry and thumb through it; and this time I leave a message for Donna Elliot, who would return to Khe Sanh at the end of April in search of her brother Jerry, MIA, as a result of a downed helicopter near Khe Sanh, since January 68. "Donna: Welcome to Khe Sanh," I wrote and signed my name (The recent SARS epidemic got in the way of Donna's plans and Donna postponed her April trip with Danny Williams until later.)

The man inside the museum accompanies me to unlock and open the gate to allow me to enter the area of the base that has been fenced off behind the old and new museum buildings. The fence was not here three years ago. The new museum will open in June at some Vietnamese ceremony commemorating their imagined victory, I suppose. The man follows me some distance but I quickly elude him only to be met by the omnipresent souvenir hawkers – "Ah, no dog tags this time buddy." – ever reminded of the chiding I received from Dennis Mannion over my having bought, what were probably phony dog tags there three years earlier. "Yo Bro. Not this time, Dennis."

I indicate with an abrupt gesticulation that I am not interested and the souvenir man walks back to the museum. Now I am really alone. Where to go? And what's with this weather anyway? Wind, clouds, fog, and thunder in the valley below the base. The hills. Where are the hills? In the clouds. Cannot see them, any of them - 950, 1015, 861 and 861Alpha, 881N and 881S, 558, all concealed, or perhaps they disappeared.

Resigned now to the fact that my chances of standing on top of 558 are ruined, I reflected on my previous visit there. I could not make it to the top of 558, but on the road to and from the hill (same road to 861), I encountered about 30 ex-Vietnamese soldiers, NVA to be sure. They were dressed in their best uniforms complete with medals. They were having a reunion. I stopped and I talked with many of them. They could not speak English but Hoang helped me. At first he was hesitant to stop. He told me he did not know how they would react to me – I never hesitate to say I am an American, and Hoang knows that. I said "Stop the car." After only ten minutes, we were drinking tea and beer and each man shook my hand many times and showed me where he fought. They were all old men now, scrawny, and looking hungry. I posted a photo of them on the KS website and an ex-Marine said in an e-mail "The only thing holding up their uniform is their pride." A fitting comment.

I decide to explore the base. But it was going to rain. Unlike my first trip there, I now know exactly where I am. I decide to find the water point in the valley between the base and the Rao Quan River. Easy. I crossed the USMC runway – the real runway, not the red clay, or what I termed the imposter runway. The path descending to the water point is still there and I begin the muddy, slippery descent. I encounter a man with a machete and, for some reason, with a sudden cutting swipe of his arm, buries the machete in the side of a tree. He smiles and indicates he will join me. It does not take long to walk to the water point down the steep incline where steps have been carved in the dirt, now mud, to make walking a little easier. Once there, I was struck by its simple scenic beauty. The miniature, enclosed area is pastoral, serene, and very green – a world of its own. Across the stream, widened in places to grow rice, a small boy stood holding a long pole. He was herding his cows (only a few)

into the stream. They stood peacefully and drank from the stream unconcerned that I was there. The young boy crossed the stream and stood motionless in the opening where I am sure the Marines had placed pump equipment many years earlier. I could see up and down the small valley for a short distance. I could also see the clouds were descending even more. It was time to make my way back up the hill to the base. The man who had buried his machete in the tree trunk followed me chattering about something. He retrieved his machete and, with a wave of his free hand, went his own way towards the west, towards the helicopter revetments. Alone again. Wind starting to kick up, clouds racing over the base. The eucalyptus trees begin to sway, their leaves rustling. It's going to rain now for sure, I thought. No raincoat. I would get soaked. Time to get Big John some red clay dirt. I crossed back over the USMC runway and walked back towards the red clay runway (parallel to the USMC runway) and then turned east and walked towards the ammunition dump. I found remnants of trenches and I supposed small bunkers with shreds of sand bag material all around. I noticed that where I was now standing, the ground remained dry, unlike elsewhere on the base. If I was going to get some dirt for John, I preferred it to be dry. I knelt down and scooped red dirt into the self-locking baggie that I had not forgotten to bring with me, and tried to put it in my pocket. It wouldn't fit so I carried it in my hand Now my hands were stained dirty red and, as I was to find out later, it seemed I could not get the stain out for a couple of days. But now at the west end of the base, the heavens had opened up and I could see sheets of rain slicing earthward at a wind induced slant. I was dry but would I stay that way? Well, I still had some things to do, so to hell with it.

I retraced my steps and walked back to the USMC runway. I wanted to find the ammo dump from the perspective of that runway, not from the perspective I had originally found it three years earlier - from the red clay runway. Walking back towards the perpendicular path to the water point, at the junction of the runway and the path, I passed two huts that had been built side by side. A dog started to run after me and was barking. I lived in Africa for 7 years and have been in the company of more than a few lions. One thing I learned: never run from a lion. If near a resting lion, and for some crazy reason you want to get closer to him, turn your back on him and you can walk backwards towards the lion to almost within touching range; just don't turn around. If you do, you're dead. But, if at a distance and being stalked or eyed, never run. It just entices and emboldens the animal and he will get you. Never run from a dog either. It encourages them more. I stopped cold and just looked at the animal and, as I thought would happen, it stopped in its tracks and merely continued to bark at me. No big deal.

I walked again along the path to the water point and then turned right, onto the USMC runway, heading east. I was the only person on the base. There was no trace of anyone near me. Not quite true of course. Another herd of cows was sauntering along the runway towards me and they were being herded this time by an older man, unlike the small boy at the water point. I let them pass and they continued on. I myself continued on towards the ammo dump along the tarmac. I spotted what appeared to be the tread marks probably of a tank. The parallel lines of the tank tread indented into the cemented crushed stone reminded me of the ruts left by chariots in the stone streets of Pompei. Those are clearly visible after thousands of years. So here too, is visible evidence of military occupation of the site at some point in the past. I walked on to find the ammo dump.

And there it was, off my right shoulder. A deep depression in the ground, unchanged from when I was there before: the remains of the ammunition dump that was struck by NVA artillery during the siege in 1968. One Oh Five and One Five Five shells everywhere. There were more shells lying on the ground than what I had remembered from before, but there they were, still scattered all over the place. I walked down into the depression and walked around gingerly. A little scary here. I was reminded of Lang Vei the day before: one never knows what is under foot in the meat grinder. I stayed for about 15 minutes and then climbed out of the depression the same way in which I had entered it. I stood on the edge of the crater and noticed that the wind had stopped, the rain farther west having also ceased. The base was silent, absolutely silent. Not a sound. Quiet as a tomb. I looked west along the runway and I saw a solid layer of clouds not more than 8 feet above the runway deck. The delineation of the clouds parallel to the earth was so remarkably clear, and without any other landmarks visible, I was

transfixed. I was in a strange place filled with such ominous foreboding that it created an aura of suspense, a feeling of unknowing, subterfuge, the calm before the storm, a land filled with deep mystery and mystique - the heart of darkness. I raised my arm and could put my hand into the thick dark cloud just above my head.

I stood gazing westward at the upside down horizon along the entire length of the runway as far as I could see, which could not have been more than 500 feet or so due to the height of the trees the tops of which themselves were enveloped in the horizontal grayness. The base remained quiet, eerily so, and I continued to stand motionless, turning my head to see if there was a whisper of a breeze. Nothing. Then I turned around and faced the east end of the runway, and was startled to see a young girl not more than 20 feet from me wearing a purple jacket and a hat. She was staring right at me. She neither smiled nor did she move. She didn't seem afraid but she didn't seem overly curious either. I waved at her and said "Tsien Chao," meaning hello, but she did not respond. Her skin was dark like most Vietnamese and her hair escaping from beneath her hat was unruly. But her expressionless eyes were penetrating. We stood staring at each other for about 20 seconds. I knelt and placed the bag of dirt on the ground and adjusted my camera and took a couple of photos of her. She did not flinch or react. I stood up and then she raised her right arm and pointed in the direction of hills 950 and 1015. I turned around to see what she may be pointing at and when I turned back to look at her, she had disappeared like a phantom, I supposed into the coffee plants. At that precise moment the leaves in the trees in the area in which I was standing began to stir as evidently the wind once again picked up. Interestingly, I did not feel the wind, but I saw it move the leaves on the trees. The clouds began to move again, perpendicular to the runway. Now, without question, it was going to rain at this end of the base. It was going to pour buckets. I headed back to the cover of the museum, a long walk or run in the face of imminent downpours. I made it to the new museum and walked under the elevated floor slab out of the rain that was beginning to stream, in big droplets, from the clouds. I was safe from the deluge.

The man in the old museum, braving the intense rain, came out and walked towards me and asked me "You American?" I said, "Yes." He said to me. "America now bombing Iraq." Not surprised by the timing of events - everyone had known for months that time for Saddam Hussein was coming to an end - but taken by the irony of where I was in relationship to world events, I looked away and said back to him "So, it starts again."

After awhile the rain stopped. I had one mission left before I returned to Dong Ha. I could not see hill 558 but I could not return without placing Jacob's tiny USMC flag somewhere on the base. But this turned out to be tricky. From the museum, I walked to a secluded place, or rather what I assumed to be a secluded place. I bent down and unfurled the flag and stuck it in the red clay, then I stood back to take a picture of it for Jacob at which time a Vietnamese man, who I had not seen before, approached me from behind talking loudly. I knew instantly what he was talking about. I gestured that all was OK. And he said "No! No! No!" So I tried to indicate I just wanted to take a picture. He yelled at me some more. So I said, "Ah, OK," retrieved the flag, and acted as if I understood. Satisfied, he returned to the empty museum. Undaunted, I walked about a hundred yards away towards the east behind some trees, well out of sight, and placed the flag in the red muddy Khe Sanh soil again and this time succeeded to take several pictures of it. But then, the decision: do I leave it there, knowing it's not been placed on 558 as Jacob had requested, or do I bring it back with me to the USA? I decided that, if I left it there, someone would find it and simply take it, so what's the point? Decision made, I pulled the flag out of the ground - the bottom of the slim wood flagpole now stained red - rolled it back up and put it in my pocket. I would bring it home and mail it back to Jacob. As Jacob later wrote to me in an e-mail after he had received the flag: "To Khe Sanh and back. Thank you, Gary." Precisely. And, thank you Jacob.

Believe it or not, I had been on the base all day and now evening was approaching. I climbed in the car, and drove out of the base onto Highway 14 and turned left towards Khe Sanh Ville. At the intersection I stopped at a small café to have a beer and entered a small room. The family living there were all watching TV. So I saw with my own eyes right there in Khe Sanh Ville, on a CNN, or perhaps BBC, feed to Vietnam national television, bombs exploding in Baghdad. The TV showed B52s leav-

ing an English airbase and I thought to myself, "The Vietnamese are no strangers to these things." Darkness was falling fast now and the area was foggy and still rainy. I paid for my refreshment and I got back into the car and started back towards Dong Ha, about an hour's drive. Down off the Khe Sanh Plateau, past the smugglers who ply the back jungle paths between Laos and Dong Ha sitting nonplussed on the side of the road on their Honda motorbikes (the passenger is usually a beautiful woman), down the hill and around the Rao Quan corner, and back along the Quang Tri River. The air was misty, dark, and still somewhat foggy, though not like up on top.

My thoughts returned to the girl in purple and how she had disappeared as suddenly as she had appeared. I wondered what it was she was pointing towards. I have heard stories that the area has taken on mystical proportions and is inhabited by ghosts. Even my usual traveling companion Hoang Tran Dung, is uneasy in Khe Sanh or Con Thien after dark. Sometimes he is very quiet. He would prefer to be out of the bush at night. I wondered to myself: was she an apparition? Thinking about it as I drove, I couldn't remember whether I had noticed if her feet left any marks in the damp spoil. Apparitions, even purple ones, float, they don't walk – and they don't need parkas, right? She was no ghost but she did appear very stealthily from nowhere and disappear equally as fast, apparently also to nowhere. I sensed I was never alone on the base, but rather was being closely watched. Of course I didn't try to look for her. I just thought she lived there somehow in one of the shanty houses constructed from odds and ends on the base. How weird.

And to add another dimension to the weirdness, I noticed again the same intriguing, surreal, certainly alluring phenomenon I had observed the night before while returning to Dong Ha. While approaching and entering the same Bru village along the Quang Tri valley that I had passed through the night before, the same strange light-blue tint suffused the road and surrounding area - a faint azure hue - but it seemed to be more intense than the night before, like it was glowing. And as I drove closer, the intensity increased, seemingly beckoning me closer, deeper - as if there would be no escape. Couldn't be the sun. It's long down. No moon. There aren't any lights, there's no traffic. What is this slight, but increasing blue glow that I see enveloping the area? I drove on and approached the village and drove into the blue light. It was like a blue fog.

I was hesitant to divert my eyes from the road but caught sight of something interesting. As if by chance, I looked to my right and could see right into the doorway of a Bru home. The inhabitants were watching TV. I could see the images on the screen clearly; the hut was that close to the road. Of course! It dawned on me in an instant. There were no supernatural forces at work. The light that bathed the area in blueness was just the collective glow from the television sets in each hut. Amazing. Each and every single Bru hut had a small television set! And, all the sets were turned on! Probably everyone was watching the war. I had never noticed that before, and never even thought they had access to such conveniences. Soon I emerged from the valley of blue light and, continuing on to Dong Ha, saw the light fade in the mist in the rearview mirror. I continued on alone on Highway No. 9 in the darkness towards the Rockpile in Quang Tri Province. The day was over. In some ways it was disappointing but in many other ways very enlightening and completely unforgettable. The rain continued to fall. America was at war again. Go USA!

ED NOTE:
The foregoing manuscript was written by Gary W. Foster who is a Vice President of Stanley Consultants, Inc., headquartered in Muscatine, Iowa and who works in their international division. He travels often to Vietnam, Africa, and the Caribbean. Mr. Foster has visited Vietnam 16 times since 1973.

Gary is an outstanding supporter of the Khe Sanh Veterans, and has contributed several outstanding articles for Red Clay. He regularly attends our reunions and supports them with his generosity.

His address is 1200 N Veitch St Arlington VA 22201 Tel: 563-264-6305, if one cares to discuss this article or find out more information about Khe Sanh or Highway No. 9 in Quang Tri Province. His E-mail address is fostergary@stanleygroup.com.

HEADLINES FROM THE SEA TIGER NEWSPAPER YOU MAY HAVE NEVER READ
February 16, 1968

MACHINE GUN FIRE SUPPRESSSES ATTACKING ENEMY ON HILL 861

KHE SANH-"Yeah, it was hell ... there 'ain't' no getting around that," said **LCpl. Billy R. Moffett** (Henryetta, Okla.), describing a battle on Hill 861. "Everyone may not have been as calm as they could have," he added, "but everyone did their best, and we beat them NVA good."

The battle erupted at 3:30 a.m. when an estimated battalion of North Vietnamese regulars assaulted the positions of the 26th Marines. The Marine rifle com -pany was dug in on the slopes of Hill 861, the strategic ridge northwest of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Moffett was manning 50 Cal machinegun assigned to his 4.2 inch area hardest hit by the NVA. His assistant gunner was killed beside him, and the NVA broke through and came upon his position from the rear-but he managed to keep his gun in action throughout the battle.

"If it weren't for Billy, things might have gotten real bad," said his platoon sergeant, **Sgt. 'Mike Stahl** (Del Rio, Tex.), "that big machinegun really held the enemy back."

The NVA had struck with an intensive barrage of mortar and RPG rounds directed primarily at a small section of the company's perimeter. The sector was located next to a deep, jungle-covered ravine on the northwest part of Hill 861. Moffett's heavy machinegun was located about 20 meters above the main perimeter on the steep slopes of the hill.

"It was real foggy that night," he said. "We started firing down along our own lines, over the heads of our troops. The NVA spotted our position right off. They began firing RPG Rockets at us. About 20 to 30 landed in our sector.

But, the NVA managed to break the lines by concentrating their heavy weapons fire at one point of the perimeter. Moffett kept firing. Suddenly, his assistant gunner pitched forward after being shot from behind by infiltrating enemy soldiers. Moffett saw the NVA standing a few feet in back of his emplacement, but he couldn't move the big gun, so he grabbed his own rifle and opened up on him.

The Marine returned to the .50 cal. and fired into the breech the NVA had made In the lines He stayed on the gun until the enemy broke contact early that morning.

In the morning 14 enemy dead were found and another seven were captured. The break through had been mended before daylight.

A MIRACLE AT KHE SANH

KHE SANH - A well-placed miracle here and there during an enemy rocket attack never does any harm. One such 'miracle' occurred at Khe Sanh, late January, in the Twenty-sixth Marine Regiment's aid station, according to **HM3 Robert J. Topmiller** (Cincinnati, Ohio).

An artillery round detonated as it hit roof of the aid station in which a doctor and six corpsmen were treating three wounded Marines. The explosion knocked down some of the medical personnel and dropped the roof into the room, however, there were no casualties from the blast.

The aid station had been hit at least twice before. The first time a white phosphorus shell started a fire in a medical store room.

A chief hospitalman dashed into the burning room and extinguished the blaze to prevent serious damage to the supplies

A second round struck a combined living and storage area The living quarters were shambles but cabinets, built by the Seabees only a week earlier, prevented serious loss to the medical supplies.

CLOUD COVER, ENEMY MORTARS MAKE MISSION ON 881 ROUGH

QUANG TRI-Marine resupply helicopter's operating from Quang Tri found flying conditions difficult when diverted to pick up a wounded Marine near Hill 881.

Two C46 Sea Knights of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262 flew under almost impossible weather conditions.

Two separate attempts were made by HMM-262 pilots to get into the landing zone. The first was by Capt. S. Dickey (Tacoma, Wash.). "The area we were called into was so cloudy that you could hardly see he said

We made three attempts to get into the zone but just couldn't make it. I brought the copter to the base of the hill and as trying to hover my way up to the landing zone when we started receiving fire. Two mortars went off below us and as we were pulling off, a third just missed, he continued. After the unsuccessful attempts by Dickey and his crew, another try was made to reach the Marine by another HMM-262 helicopter.

The pilot, Capt. R.F. Yeager (Roslyn Heights, N.Y.), and his co-pilot, 1stLt. C.L. Corookall (Staten Island, N.Y.), under the cover of darkness, tried to locate the landing zone-this time with success.

"By flying at night we had hoped that the clouds would have lifted and we would have no problem getting in and getting the wounded man," said Corookall.

"When we arrived in the area," he continued, we" found it almost impossible to see. We had some idea of the zone's location but we weren't sure. After making three passes at the area we finally spotted the zone, thanks to the help of a flareship and illumination by. Marines on the ground.

The wounded Marine was then transported to Khe Sanh and later taken to Dong Ha for treatment. A Marine helicopter crew at-tempted to evade North Vietnamese mortar rounds on Hill 881 to medevac Leatherneck casualties. They ended up displaying more heroics when a round trapped them on the hill, gaining the gratitude of the casualties' friends.

1stLts. Russell E. Hohman (Colorado Springs, Colo.), the pilot, and co-pilot Anthony M. Davitt (Des Moines, Iowa), were flying a UH-34D helicopter while resupplying the Marines at Khe Sanh and surrounding hill outposts.

A emergency medevac call found the Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 362 aircraft nearest to 881.

The Marines on the hill advised Hohman of the situation and that every copter that had landed there that day had drawn NVA mortar fire.

Immediately after the copter landed, Marines were lifting one casualty aboard when a well placed mortar round landed behind the aircraft. It sent fragments into the tail section and wounded Cpls. David W. Routon (Corpus Christi, Tex.), the crew chief, and Ronald A. Johnson (Bow, Wash.), the gunner. Hohman tried to take off but discovered that the controls were damaged. The wounded corporals grabbed the Marine ground casualty and moved him to safety. Johnson collapsed from his wounds and efforts of moving the casualty.

Later, another helicopter was able to safely land to evacuate the casualties, including Johnson. As the remaining three crew members waited for a third air craft to pick them up, Marines individually crawled to them to offer thanks for the effort of trying to evacuate their friends.

The three crew members have returned to duty at Phu Bai Johnson is expected to recover and be on duty within a week.

SNIPER ROUNDS HAMPER REPAIR

Leathernecks of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron-463 had to weather the **Khe Sanh** barrages to repair a downed CH-53 Sea Stallion for return flight to Marble Mountain.

Major Donald A. Dalrymple (West Yarmouth, Mass.), and a crew of four maintenance men plus a crew chief, left the air facility to repair the Sea Stallion.

For the major, it was his first trip to the northwestern-most combat base in I Corps. The maintenance crew had been working in the Khe Sanh area for three days on the disabled helicopter.

GySgts. Charles Fields (Fulton, N.Y.), and Jerril H. Davis (Birmingham, Ala.), headed the repair section

consisting of Sgt. Duane W. Petree (Indianapolis, Ind.), Cpls. Harold J. Blappert (New Orleans, La.), and Daniel Charillo (Utica, N.Y.), crew chief of the downed helicopter.

These men had begun work othe CH-53 before the attacks on Khe Sanh. Although they returned to Marble Mountain each evening, they volunteered to return to Khe Sanh to perform the repairs necessary to fly the aircraft.

"At one time, the crew was standing on pallets on top of a fork lift, replacing the blades while sniper rounds were coming in," Dalrymple said. He found two holes in the aircraft caused by snipers.

The Sea Stallion was in a revetment near the run-



RUNWAY ATTACK– PVT Robert Williams (Watertown Conn.), Thirteenth Marines, picks mortar fragments out of the matting at the Khe Sanh Airstrip

way during three separate rocket attacks. Because of the action the Marines were not able to use the proper hoist to place the new blades on the helicopter but managed to complete the job. It was dark at 7 p.m. when they were ready for a test hop to determine whether the Sea Stallion could be flown back to Da Nang.

"We got up power and lifted," Dalrymple said, "but as we knew we might get hit at any moment. Things looked pretty good so we just kept right on going."

With no brakes, no compass and a landing gear down, the repaired copter was guided by . another



ARTILLERY ACTION— Marines of Whiskey Btry 1/13 load a 155mm howitzer before blasting North Vietnamese around Khe Sanh.

CH-53 from HMH-463 standing by as a chase plane.



RE-SUPPLY a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter swirls the dust a Khe Sanh as it descends with a sling load of supplies Jan 23 at the northwestern-most combat base in I Corps.

FROM NEWSWEEK, MARCH 4, 1968 AN INTERVIEW WITH OUR OWN KHE SANH VETERAN Retired Colonel Toby Rushforth USAF Tass 20

Though few of the 6,000 U.S. marines besieged at Khe Sanh are really aware of it, they owe much of what scant security they have these days to the forward air controllers (FAC's) of

the U.S. Air Force-men who prowl over enemy-held territory in small propeller-driven planes, gathering intelligence and calling **in** ***air strikes*** on ***promising*** **targets.** ***Last week, Newsweek's*** **Robert** ***Stokes flew with*** **a** ***FAC pilot*** **on** ***his daily rounds and cabled this report:***

In the past month, the wild mountains around Khe Sanh have taken a terrific pounding from American planes and artillery. Raw scabs of red earth slash across the green ridges, and the jungle is streaked with ashen scars left by defoliant chemicals. But the thick canopy of banyan trees still gives the enemy plenty of cover, and the keen-eyed pilots of the spotter planes depend almost as much on intuition as on eyesight to find their hidden targets.

Circling our 0-2 "Bird Dog" over an area northwest of Khe Sanh, the pilot, **Capt. Charles (Toby) Rushforth, 29, of Wethersfield, Conn.,** suddenly spotted fresh tire tracks on a dirt road. Taking his little plane almost to treetop level, he marked the spot with a white smoke rocket and called in the waiting jets. Swooping down out of the sun, three F-8 Crusaders pasted the suspected enemy position with rockets, 750-pound bombs and 20-mm. cannon, adjusting their fire to Rushforth's directions.

When the strike was over, Rushforth. explained: "I look for new ruts in the road, dust in the trees, trails that seem to disappear into thin air. The North Vietnamese are art-ists at camouflage, and when you can catch them at it, you're really beginning to know the terrain."

The FAC planes have assumed new importance in recent weeks. The massive North Vietnamese buildup around Khe Sanh and the capture of the U.S. Special Forces camp at Lang Vei have made it all but impossible for the Americans to send out ground patrols around Khe Sanh. Thus, American intelligence now must rely heavily on the FACs for information about enemy activities there.

From FAC reports and other sources, the U.S. command has pieced together what it thinks is a fairly complete picture of the enemy's order of battle in the northern provinces of South Vietnam.

Deployment: Khe Sanh is surrounded by the 304th North Vietnamese Army Division, the 325C Division and elements of two more NVA regiments. Further east, the 324B North Vietnamese Di-vision has taken up positions near the U.S. bases at Con Thien, Cio Linh and Camp Carroll. The North Vietnamese have also placed a fourth division-size force near the coast of the South China Sea. All told, these Communist units number about 50,000 men. Against them are arrayed some 40,000 American Soldiers and Marines.

No one on the U.S. side can say for sure why the North Vietnamese have n not yet launched a major assault against Khe Sanh. One theory is that the Communists are building up their stocks of food and ammunition while the current bad weather prevents extensive U.S. air strikes.

Whatever the explanation, the Marine defenses at Khe Sanh have gained little from the delay. Many of the trenches are still shallow, there is a a shortage of barbed wire, and most of the bunkers lack adequate overhead protection. And Communist guns constantly probe these weaknesses; late last week, in the enemy's biggest bombard-ment of the siege, 1,300 shells slammed into the base in a single day.

Most American officers expect a major attack before March 15, when the monsoon clouds will begin to lift. Khe Sanh will probably be the focal point, but the enemy offensive may well have an even more ambitious objective. In addition to the NVA troops already in South Vietnam, U.S. intelligence reports that another two or three enemy divisions are lurking just north of the Demilitarized Zone.

All these units could be flung at Khe Sanh, but the gut feeling of most Ameri-can officers is that the enemy forces in the DMZ area will aim to seize the two northern provinces-Quang Tri and Thua Thien-and then try to hold the ground. American commanders are relying on their planes and guns to chew up the attackers. ("I'd bet the casualty rate will be at least six to one in our favor," says one Marine officer.) But the ugly fact remains that U.S. ground forces are spread painfully thin trying to protect all the potential targets. The situation in the northern provinces, in short, it's critical-and it may get worse.

NICE STORY

The short essay below is by Jordan Blashek, Princeton 2009, who decided to turn down acceptance to medical school to join the U.S. Marine Corps and enter its Officer Candidate School, from which he graduated in December 2009. Written originally as an explanation of his decision for his high school classmates, it is worth reading – and appreciating – by us all.

"You Joined Us" -- That phrase is carved into a steel plaque that tauntingly guards the entrance to the Officers' barracks at Camp Barrett in Quantico, VA. As I hobbled inside, exhausted from another 15-hour day, my roommate half-jokingly pointed to the plaque, "Why did we do that again?"

I smiled. Today had been a long day. Waking at 4 AM, we spent the next 9 hours outside in the pouring rain learning hand-to-hand combat and outdated bayonet techniques. Without warming layers, hats or gloves, our hands quickly went numb and our bodies started shaking uncontrollably in the 30-degree temperature. Finally, we were sent back inside to clean our rifles, which must be spotless before we can wash off our bodies. As 8 PM rolled around and we were still cleaning on a Friday night – when my high school and college friends were out at Happy Hours – I thought about that plaque on the wall: Why exactly did I join, again?

It's a question I have tried to answer many times for my family and friends, but never feel as though I have fully conveyed my reasons. I made the decision to join the U.S. Marine Corps at the start of my senior year at Princeton, turning down an acceptance to medical school in the process. I kept the decision to myself until I broke the news to my shocked parents over Christmas Break. I ran through the litany of justifications for them: I wanted to serve my country. I wanted the camaraderie and the pride of being in the Marine Corps brotherhood. I needed the challenge to test my true capabilities and strength. I would receive the best leadership training on the planet, which would help me in any future career I chose. I wanted adventure and the chance to be a part of history in Iraq or Afghanistan. I wanted to exude that same confidence that I saw in every Marine officer I have met. Whether I convinced them or not, in the end, none of these "reasons" alleviated my parents' understandable anxiety.

When I told my plans to anyone else, I felt as though I were talking to a brick wall – the Military, especially the Marine Corps, was simply outside their reality. My closer friends would nod their heads and say something to the effect of "Wow, that's cool;" but since I was the perennial flake of the group, most did not take my decision very seriously. And to be honest, even I was not quite sure that I would follow through with the choice. In the comfort of my college dorm, the decision to become a Marine Corps officer seemed glamorously abstract. However, on October 1, 2009 my decision suddenly became very real when I arrived at the Marine Corps' Officer Candidate School (OCS) in Quantico, VA.

My OCS experience was surreal. Along with 407 other "Candidates" – all college graduates with newly shaved heads – I ran around for 10 weeks carrying an M16 rifle, while the Marine Corps' famous drill instructors screamed increasingly creative insults at us. In reality, we were beginning the painful, yet deliberate process of transforming from civilians into Marine officers through some of the most intense training that exists in the US military. Meanwhile, the drill instructors continually evaluated our leadership potential as part of the time-honored tradition whereby enlisted Marines select the officers that will eventually lead them in combat. After nearly half of the officer candidates were dropped or dropped out on their own, we emerged from OCS standing a little taller and a little straighter on graduation day, December 11, 2009. That afternoon, I raised my right hand to swear the oath of office and receive my commission as a second lieutenant. That oath obligates me to serve a minimum of four years in uniform.

Ultimately, I joined the US Marine Corps because I believe that officers bear the most solemn responsibility in our nation, and that was a duty I could not, and should not, leave for others to assume. To say that I wanted that responsibility is not quite right, because being a Marine officer is not about one's self, wants or needs; it is about guiding the young 18 and 19 year-old Marines fighting this country's wars on our behalf. I decided that serving them was

the highest honor and responsibility I could have at this point in my life. As one speaker at my commissioning ceremony explained:

"As second lieutenants, you must have a strong sense of the great responsibility of your office; the resources which you will expend in war are human lives. This is not about you anymore. This is about the young Marines who will place their lives in your hands. It is your job to take care of them, even when that means placing them in mortal danger. That awesome responsibility – the weight which now rests on you – is reflected in those gold bars which you will soon place on your shoulders."

That is why the plaque hangs in every portal through which we pass – You Joined Us. We chose to bear this responsibility and we must make absolutely sure we are prepared to fulfill it, because young American lives are at stake. If that means being cold and miserable; studying for ungodly hours; and going for days without sleep, then so be it. That is the price of the salute we receive from our Marines.

Five months into my service commitment, I have not regretted my decision for a moment. I already have unforgettable memories from my experience and new friendships with diverse and exceptional peers from all over the country. We have had moments of pure fun together and laughed harder than I ever thought possible. We have also been humbled by the stories and portraits of brave Lieutenants – those who fought and died after roaming the very halls where we now stand and their portraits hang. Most of all, I am immensely proud to bear the title of 'United States Marine,' an honor that I will carry with me my entire life. Semper Fi.



REMEMBERING A GREAT FRIEND & OUTSTANDING MARINE
BY MIKE SOMMERS

CAPTAIN
ALEC "JEFF" BODENWEISER E CO
2/26 HILL 861A





L-R Mike Sommers, Tim, (Unknown) Nick Elardo, Jeff Bodenweiser, Mike Hastings



NICK & PAT



1st Sgt F . King and MGen J.O. Butcher greeted Julius Foster at Camp Lejeune after he walked 404 miles to re-enlist

February 21, 1968

A young Marine who walked 400 miles in 30 days to attract support for the United States effort in Vietnam has been killed in the Fighting there.

The Marine, Lance Corporal Julius C. (Corky) Foster, 28 walked from his home at Welch, West Virginia, to Camp Lejeune last summer with a 40 pound pack on his back

A Marine reservist, Foster was going to Lejeune to re-enlist for active duty in hope of being assigned to Vietnam

He said he decided to take the hike " to emphasize the effort being made by other Americans. I hope to register the intent of the American people to win the war-not to talk about it or buy it, but to win it."

Word of Foster's death came from Captain Richard Titus, the Marine officer who swore in Foster at Raleigh after he completed his hike to Lejeune.

FEBRUARY BRINGS BAD MEMORIES

By Larry McCartney
E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

February 22nd of every year since 1968 brings back a flood of memories, not just for those lost that day, but for all those lost in the following days through the end of the month; Lance Corporal J. C. "Corky" Foster from Echo Company, Fr. Brett and Lance Corporal Chinn from H & S Company on the 22nd, the Echo Company XO, Second Lieutenant Ferdinando Distefano, Corporal Carlos C. "CC" Aguirre, Lance Corporal Gerrie Jeffries, Lance Corporal Max Nelson, and PFC Cliff Borrell, on the 24th, Lance Corporal Jim Wood on the 25th, PFC Mike Wright on the 26th, and PFC Earl Harris, who was WIA on the 26th and DOW on the 28th.

There were of course many other casualties before as well as after that, but the last week of February was particularly intense on Hill 861-A. While I'm sure all the deaths and injuries impacted all of us, the death of Julius "Corky" Foster was significant for me since he was the first person I had actually known "back in the world." After he had completed his four hundred (400) mile walk to Camp Le-Jeune—Camp Geiger—North Carolina for Infantry Training (ITR), he was assigned to Camp Pendleton—Camp Horno—California for Basic Infantry Training Specialty (BITS), where he was our Student Company Gunny in Zulu Company.

Corky Foster took an interest in all the Zulu Company Marines as we trained together during those three (3) short weeks. We then parted ways, me for "Boot Leave" and he for Vietnam. Upon my assignment to Echo, 2/26 in Vietnam, I was surprised to

see Corky, who immediately recognized me; he greeted me with a smile. Over the few months, during patrols in the Phu Bai area as well as at Khe Sanh, he was a constant source of encouragement; after all he was ten (10) years older than most of us. Corky Foster took a medivac off Hill 861-A on the 22nd, the same "bird" Fr. Brett and Lance Corporal Chinn used after spending three (3) or so days with us, as well as with the Marines of 3/26 who were on Hill 861. We heard later that day that Corky was killed with Fr. Brett and Lance Corporal Chinn shortly after their arrival at the Combat Base.

What a hollow, empty, feeling; so many fine young men lost that month. The realization that men I knew were now dead; human mortality was slowly starting to sink in. While I had known others who were KIA previously, the death of Corky Foster was the first of someone I could call my friend. A year or so later the main road into Camp Geiger was rededicated and named Foster Boulevard in Corky's honor. Every time I've been to Camp LeJeune since then I make the trip to Camp Geiger to pay my respects to him at the memorial marker near the main gate. God bless and keep you Corky Foster. God bless and keep all those fine young men who gave so selflessly of themselves; those who paid the ultimate price as well as those who survived the events of January through April, 1968 only to die later, or suffer the physical and/or mental infirmities of war. Rest in Peace Marine!!! ~~ Semper Fidelis!!!



BRAVO CO 1/26 REMEMBERS

Black Bud Bravo 6 Radio Operator
Steve Hellwig
KIA 20 Jan, 1968

Cpl. Hellwig was a fine man and Marine, a professional, fearless, loyal and a Charger. We survivors of the Command Group remember and cherish his memory to this day. Steve was among the first to go down on the morning that the Siege began. His younger Brother enlisted in the Marines several months later. Like Steve he went to Comm School, then to RVN--he was, like his older brother, assigned to the H & S Company, Comm Platoon 1/26 and, as I recall, become the Comm Operatior for--B 1/26--just like Steve--all un-planned.

Today, Steve Hellwig Jr. is a Marine Rifleman in the Third Marine Regiment, has returned from Iraq and is now in Hawaii training up to deploy the Afghanistan--Three Generations--May our Lord Bless and protect Steve, Jr. as he, like his Father and Uncle, prepares to go, once more into the breach
In His Name, Semper Fidelis

Ken and Bravo Company

Article which appeared in Seattle Times, Seattle WA, 24 Jan 1968 "Seattle Man Killed at Khe Sanh"

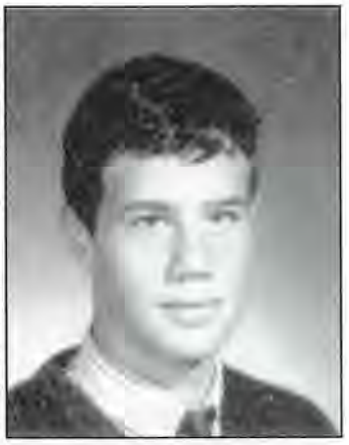

Marine Lance Cpl Steve Hellwig, 19, was killed in action Sunday in Khe Sanh, Vietnam. Hellwig was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hellwig 1809 N. E. 171st St. Hellwig, a Seattle native was a 1966 Shorecrest High School graduate. He enlisted last February and went to Vietnam in August. He was a radioman. Surviving, besides his parents are two brothers, a sister, and his grandparents.

Prepared to Give Life "Letter From Marine Recalled At School After Death Report"

I can think of no thought which makes me prouder that I am an American citizen fighting for God, Corps and Country. The feeling that I am fighting for the freedom of fellowmen is equally strong. "For these I am prepared to give my life if need be... We will not run from the fight we face. "Those words were written in November by Marine Lance Cpl. Steven L. Hellwig, 19, in an open letter to Shorecrest High School, from which he graduated in 1966."

His letter was recalled poignantly after his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hellwig, 1809 N. E. 171st, were

notified that he was killed in action at the Khe Sanh, Vietnam, last Sunday.

Young Hellwig had written the letter after reading of the violence at the anti-war demonstration at the Pentagon. **"To us here," Hellwig wrote, 'these protesters and 'draft card burners' are cowards with no national pride. They hide their lack of courage behind the words, 'The war is wrong.' "They don't deserve the right to be called an American. Does it not say in the laws governing our country open acts against our country are 'treason'? "We here are just as afraid to die as they are -- maybe more since we are here. But do you hear us crying? No! We have confidence enough to fight for what we think is right."**

To add to the totality of this conversation, is this bit of information most of you know nothing about. LtCol Pipes who wrote the words in the original post has kept touch with Cpl Hellwig's brother for quite some time. Isn't it ironic he would serve at the same station with 1/26 at a later date?

About this time last year I was at Ken's visiting. Shortly after I left his youngest son Tim had been in a serious motorcycle accident. Tim had been living and working in the Port Angeles area north of Seattle at that time. Tim is a very gifted woodworker and had gone up to that area in search of work. He was doing cabinet work on some of those multi-million dollar yachts. He had to be airlifted to Seattle and #### near lost his leg. It would be some time before Ken and his wife Sharon could go to Seattle to help Tim tie up his affairs and get back to San Diego.

He was hospitalized for quite some time. Mike MCCauley, from Bravo Co paid a number of visits to see Tim in Seattle to check on him for Ken, but it was Ray Hellwig who was there virtually every day seeing what Tim needed if anything and keeping the intel heading south on a regular basis. I know from the many conversations I have had with Ken how deeply appreciative he was for everything Mike and Ray did until such time as Ken and Sharon could arrive on sight to tend to family business. Three generations of Marines in the Hellwig family and they have never forgotten their oath of Semper Fidelis. I think it would behoove us all to keep the youngest Hellwig Marine in our prayers. They have given way more than their share now. And God Bless Cpl Steven Hellwig Bravo 1/26

A NOTE OF THANKS

Neil Kenny
L CO 3/26

I want to personally thank everyone for their response and contribution to my request to raise some funds for Jordan. Thank You.

Jordan is the son of the best friend I have ever had and in all probability ever shall. Phineas and I met at Khe Sanh early on in the siege. Through thick and thin we remained true to each other from that time till this.

At the end of his life Phineas was beset with many ailments as a result of a life lived hard and the aftermath of his military service. I can tell you that while Phineas served his country well, his country did not always serve him so well. I am not spreading sour grapes, just saying how it was.

He dedicated his life to Jordan and raised him as a single-dad for the last seventeen of Jordy's nineteen years. I can tell you that you wou'ld be proud of my and your Brother Phineas, as Jordan is a fine young man.

These past four years have been quite the adventure. We lost Charlie Fox in August of 2005, his beautiful and only daughter Lynn less then four years later, this past June Eighth. Both had a form of leukemia that somehow isn't connected to 'Agent Orange'. Go figure.

On October Thirtieth Phineas lost his struggle against the 'war' and was called home, and just recently on November Seventh we watched as sadly Bob Arrotta joined the ranks of those who with dignity, honor, and valor fought the 'war' to its bitter end.

I say this not so much to stand and curse the inevitable mortality that we all face, but rather; to stress that how important it is for each of us to treasure each day with our Brothers who stood shoulder to shoulder with us at the pinnacle of our youth.

I am reminded, how it is incumbent upon each of us to share our love not only with the families we have today, but also with those from that family that we shared while our darkest hours covered us with 'fog' and we faced eternity side by side.

Ours board and our reunions are a vital link for each to find the other on every level, especially on the Spiritual level.

Semper Fi

THE JORDANS THANK YOU

I wanted to thank everyone for the donations they made to my family and I, during our hard time. I know many of you did not know my father personally so I'd like to give you a little background. He grew up in San Francisco and joined the Marine-Corps in 1967. After boot camp he was sent to Nam, where he met Neil Kenny. I'm sure you all know him, he is a real character. They formed a bond few will ever know. At Khe Sanh pops was wounded and received the purple heart and I believe 2 PUC's.

After returning home dad bounced around from city to city until he met my mother. I was born shortly after. My dad never left my side, we stayed together while my mother struggled with a drug addiction, and eventually left us. My father raised me as a single-parent from the time I was two years of age, until I graduated high school.

My father was very strict but also very loving; like I'm sure any Marine father would and should be. He was my role-model, and even with him gone, he is still someone I look to as an example of how I should raise my 3 sons. The same discipline, values and morals dad established in me which his mother, and the corps established in him. It has all played a huge role in my life, which I would not change for the world.

In conclusion, I would just like to again thank everyone for the generosity you all extended my family and I. We are all in school at this time. My wife does hair, and recently returned to finish her degree and become a teacher. I am a full-time student-athlete. With the costs of 3 boys, school books, bills and paying for storage for my father's things and the memorial , things were awful tough, The donations you made gave us huge financial relief.

ORDINARY PEOPLE

By Craig W. Tourte

My protagonist has always been the ordinary person who has done the extraordinary. We see these ordinary people all the time, we stand in line with them at the grocery store, they are filling their cars at the next gas pump, they're with their families at the table near us at the restaurant and they sit next to us at the movies. We pass hundreds and perhaps thousands of them each day in our comings and goings. Ordinary people just like ourselves; trying to get through this thing we call life, as best they can. Although ordinary, some have done extraordinary things. Most are just small things; some would not even give these events a second thought, perhaps not even aware that it was extraordinary. It was my privilege today to sit and have lunch with four ordinary men.

Why if you didn't know them, you wouldn't even remember they were there. Just five older men, sitting, talking, and having lunch together. Four ordinary men, each one having done something extraordinary. Before I go any further let me say that all of these men do have one thing in common, and that is that they are all veterans of the war in Vietnam and served on the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh during the 77 day Siege in 1968. That fact alone makes each extraordinary, but many who served during that conflict experienced difficult and horrific events, they too are extraordinary, none of which has much to do with this story other than it has brought all of us together. As we sat and talked about events and people we knew, talking together as if we do this often instead of seldom, I took a few minutes and thought about each one of them, and how individually special and extraordinary each of them were.

I met Tom Horchler (H.Q. 1/13) at Khe Sanh and through these many years, I have gotten to know Tom quite well. Tom is one of those guys who lives his life for Veterans, which is way too simple of a statement. How can I put this; my association with

Tom has changed who I am, how I think and relate to others. I certainly don't have enough room here to tell the full story but I will say that Tom looks at life and Veterans just a little different than others. If you were to listen to him closely and see how he reacts and supports and cares about so many others, and askes for absolutely nothing in return, you too would see that Tom is extraordinary.

Dave Tonick (A/1/26) is one of those guys who shows up. Dave flew to New Mexico with me for the roadside Khe Sanh sign dedication which was a personally expensive venture. Dave has driven hundred of miles to attend the funerals of those veterans he never knew. He is one of those guys who just knows how to get stuff done and is happy to lend you a hand. Where ever there is a need, Dave shows up. Not because he is asked, but because that is who Dave is - one of those who rushed into the burning building types, who would think it strange if you thanked him for sticking his neck out for you. Dave is extraordinary, doing what others will not do.

Steve Wiese (B/1/26) is one of those quiet fascinating and interesting guys,whom others just like to be around. There has always been something about Steve that I haven't quite been able to put my finger on. Steve carries a lot of weight in his heart - and he understands the pain others feel. I think they know that he understands what is often indescribable. Steve is extraordinary because of his silent bravery, compassion, and his ability to understand the pain of others. Most importantly, he provides support; few are truly able to do that for others. I'll conclude with who I think was the most extraordinary of all of us who were sitting at this table.

He isLloyd "Shortround" Scudder (B/1/26) whom most know him by his physical issues, and why? now here is the story. The conversation turned to prosthetics and a new hand that has recently been developed which allows an individual to manipulate their fingers and wrist. Lloyd said that he had been offered a fitting for this device. I thought it was a wonderful thing and was stunned when Lloyd told me that he had lived so many years with the way things are, and that perhaps it was time for younger men, who have suffered so much, to be fitted first. He would wait a little longer for his. A chill ran down my back and it was all I could do to keep the tears from running down my cheeks. Lloyd is certainly a most extraordinary man.

Just five old guys sitting down for lunch, four were extraordinary and what was most interesting, all expressed the guilt they have carried these many years, of not having done enough.

OUR CORPSMEN, STILL AT THEIR BEST

Medals mark Navy corpsman's courage By Matt Orr, Stars and Stripes Pacific edition, Thursday, February 4, 2010

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class William J. Harris is congratulated by a fellow service member after receiving two Bronze Star Medals, a Navy Commendation Medal and a meritorious promotion during a ceremony Monday at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa.

Two Bronze Stars and a Navy Commendation Medal, all for Valor, are commonplace at awards ceremonies these days. But when the three medals are pinned on the chest of a single person - who also is meritoriously promoted- people notice.



"HM3 Harris proves you can not only do the right thing once, but you can do it continually," Maj. Gen. Raymond C. Fox, commanding general of 1st Marine Air Wing, told the more than 200 Marines and sailors in attendance.

The three medals were for separate actions against hostile forces while Harris was assigned to Embedded Training Team 5-4 to assist the Afghanistan National Army.

According to his first Bronze Star citation, Harris participated in more than 60 combat operations and was involved in more than 50 engagements with enemy forces On Jan. 17, 2009, Harris provided heavy machine gun fire to ward off insurgents who were closing in on a downed CH-47 in the Korengal Valley. "The insurgents rushed the aircraft to see if there were any survivors, "the 24-year-old Monroe,



Petty Officer 3rd Class William Harris, a hospital corpsman with Marine Air Control Squadron 4, salutes Lt. Col. Daniel Fennell (middle), commanding officer, MACS 4, Marine Air Control Group 18, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force after being promoted to Petty Officer 2nd Class and awarded two Bronze Stars with Combat V devices and a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with a Combat V device. Harris was deployed to Afghanistan as an embedded advisor with Embedded Training Team (ETT) 5-4, 3rd Kandak, 2nd Brigade, 201st Corps, Afghan National Army. (Photo by LCpl. Abigail M. Wharton).

Mich., native recalled Monday He "jumped up on the guns" and kept the enemy at bay, allowing helicopters to evacuate the casualties.

The Navy Commendation Medal was pinned on for moving an Afghan National Army element "to a safe and covered location allowing them more effective engagements with numerous enemy force positions" during a firefight July 1, according to the citation. During the same battle, he treated a wounded Afghan soldier and brought him to safety.

But Harris wasn't done. On July 30 he "risked his own life to move 400 meters under heavy fire to secure and treat a wounded U.S. Army soldier," his second Bronze Star citation reads. He then organized a litter team and led it more than 500 meters, again under heavy fire, to a secure location where he provided first aid until the soldier could be evacuated.

"Harris was an astonishing warrior and sailor throughout his entire ETT deployment to Afghanistan," Capt. John Farris, Harris' officer in charge in Afghanistan, said in an e-mail from Hawaii. "The bottom line is that what led Harris to his receiving three awards at once was his leadership and courage during the most ferocious of times." After the ceremony, the newly frocked Petty Officer 2nd Class Harris reflected on his time in Afghanistan. "I loved it out there," Harris said. "I loved working alongside the ANA. I ate, worked and slept alongside them. If there was another billet opening up, you can sign me up."

POETRY

THE GROUND

They appeared out of no where,
they looked dirty, weathered and worn.
No one knew where they came from,
their clothes were stained and torn.
They walked slowly, deliberately, with purpose;
they stopped in front of a dirt mound.
Their eyes looked hallow and sad,
not one of them made a sound.
One took a rifle and fixed the bayonet;
he stuck its barrel down on top of that dirt mound.
Another put a helmet on the butt of that gun,
still another went down on one knee.
Strangers stopped to see what they were doing and watched, soon everyone stopped everything so they could see.
The one on his knee put his head in in his hand,
some who were watching started to cry.
No one knew who they were,
but everyone knew that was hallowed ground.
Suddenly I recognized them,
it brought a tear to my eye.
You see I realized they were us,
its true we were them.

Rick Tam



MEDICAL NEWS

AUSTIN, Texas — Drugs known as HDAC inhibitors may prove useful in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), according to a study conducted by faculty at The University of Texas at Austin's Waggoner Center for Alcohol and Addiction Research.

The study, the results of which were recently published in ***Neuropsychopharmacology,*** may point the way toward new treatments for PTSD, a severe anxiety disorder which is estimated to afflict as many as one in eight returning Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans.

"The HDAC inhibitors are already being used in clinical trials, but in relation to other neurological diseases, like Alzheimer's and Huntington's," says Igor Ponomarey a research assistant professor in the College of Pharmacy and the Waggoner Center. "They've never been tested in PTSD. The results of this study suggest that they should be."

PTSD occurs as a result of exposure to severe stress—from battle, for example, or a natural disaster—and its symptoms, including flashbacks, an excessive startle response, depression, anxiety, and insomnia, can persist over long periods of time.

Researchers believe that PTSD occurs when the brain's system for regulating stress overloads to the point where it can no longer revert to a normal state, even after the cause of the stress disappears. Particularly affected is the amygdala, which is one of the critical structures in the brain related to learning and memory, and in particular to fear-related learning and memory.

Those suffering from PTSD can end up with an amygdala that is on high alert for mild stressors and stimuli that are evocative of the original source of the stress.

Ponomarev and co-author R. Adron Harris a professor of neurobiology, used a rat model of PTSD to trace these broad changes in the amygdala down to the level of gene expression.

"What we found were that genes that are known to be involved in excitation and inhibition changed their expression three weeks after stress," says Ponomarev. "The overall result is an amygdala that's unable to normally respond to stressors."

One of the most potentially useful findings of the study is that severe stress—like the kind that produces PTSD—can result in the increased expression of certain genetic elements that had, until recently, been dismissed by neuroscientists as "junk DNA."

These particular DNA sequences may prove significant, says Ponomarev, because they seem to be involved in, or indicative of, a process known as "chromatin remodeling," which helps determine which genes are or are not expressed in a given cell. It's precisely this process that seems to be responsive to the HDAC inhibitors.

"It's a hot area in neuropsychiatric disorders," he says, "because there are some pharmacological compounds that can block or promote chromatin remodeling. It's possible to imagine that some of the long-term changes in gene expression, which we've seen result from severe stress, could be reversed or modulated by the drugs."

For more information, contact: Daniel Oppenheimer College of Natural Sciences, 512 232 0682; Igor Ponomarey Waggoner Center for Alcohol and Addiction Research, 512-471-512

KHE SANH

By Ray William Stubbe

[The following are the first two chapters of my manuscript on Khe Sanh, completed 06 June 1989, per my input to John Prados who reworked it into the book, published with my suggested title, Valley of Decision. Khe Sanh was attacked on Sunday, 21 January. One week later, 28 January, two photographers took a picture of me conducting worship for Marines of C/1/26 on the BLUE sector. At the time, I had a 100 degree fever. On 30 Jan, Lt John Kaheny called me on the LIMA LIMA; I got up too quickly and collapsed. Corpsmen from C Med manhandled me onto a stretcher, and I was medevaced to DaNang. My weight had gone from 185 when I arrived in July to 142 (and was to go to about 129). As I tell people, "The 'battlefield diet' really works, but I don't recommend it; it has too many side-effects!" By 3 Feb, my protests at being away from Khe Sanh convinced the doctor,DR Vokonis at NSA Hospital, DaNang, to release me. My medical record states: "At his request, the patient was released to duty, to return to the Khe Sanh area." , The doctors wanted to do more tests, but I was anxious to return to Khe Sanh, and was able to return on 5 February 68.

CHAPTER 1
THE ENCOUNTER

It was as though he were from a different land, even a different world or different dimension, an alien who had emerged from being a border-person, from the border of Laos/Vietnam, to the border of life/death. This borderers of consciousness/unconsciousness--of feelings, the border of sanity/insanity and peace/fragmentation.

He was caked full of the mud so red that it blended with the stains of the blood of his buddies. The deep red clay of Khe Sanh, violently volcanic, so stained that weeks of showers never really seemed to remove it entirely from his body. It seemed to penetrate through skin pores into the very soul with a sort of interpenetration of natures producing something related, but not entirely of this world. Perhaps it was a mud soaked with the blood of centuries of centurions, and their blood cried so desperately from it, from within us who had been so stained.

He had not showered for over a month; like his brothers, he lived on a canteen cup of water a day. A gas mask dangled at his lower side, and a helmet emblazoned with a large cross made of fleshettes--those small darts, 9,000 of them in a single "Beehive" round of 106mm that were to be fired at the hoards of enemy troops in the event of an assault. Hundreds and thousands of some sort of anti-personnel nails that nailed to invisible crosses of pain of those sacrificed in war--were a sort of symbol of the pain and suffering and sacrifices of war, which seemed a fitting symbol for this chaplain. He wore lower body armor, a flexible diaper-like item to protect one's rear and one's manhood, and a flak jacket with the usual extra battle dressing in the pocket. Jungle boots caked with mud, rotting trousers appearing like oil-cloth since they had not been removed in over a month and a half, and eyes that opened any on-looker into a soul cavern light-years deep, completed the impressions of this surrealistic presence. He was the presence of Khe Sanh.

The room was the Officer's Mess at the hospital of the Naval Support Activity in Da Nang. It was time for lunch. There were small tables covered with white table cloths. There was silverware and plates and real glass glasses. There were people discussing the banalities of everydayness and everyone was dressed so properly.

None of the accoutrements were removed. That which defended one in war was never easily shed upon leaving the actual area of conflict, if ever. Those who fight in a war never really leave the war, and many retain their defenses--such as not getting really too close to other people because they too may die, and it's just too painful, even dangerous, or they were unable to feel emotions because they'd get in the way of survival, or instantly reacting to certain sounds. The gas mask, helmet, flak vest, and lower torso armor were not easily removed, and this "creature from another world" became an object for photographs to be taken of by the curious medical staff seated there for their lunch. No one came and sat with him or talked with him. And he felt so very alone, so rejected, and like the biblical leper, so unclean and defiled by the violence, the good and evil he now knew, were objects of fear and abhorrence

that made it impossible to reenter paradise to a man who saw through the illusions of everyday life. The life, of clean linen table cloths and glass glasses, of polished boots and smart appearances, seem to be a shadow side accompanying the reality that is mud, blood, pain, horror, and terror. Polished boots and military smartness were indeed the shadows that everyone in the cave of the world knew; corpses without heads, limbs that detached from bodies left on the battlefield for several weeks to rot away, fearful First Sergeants wearing a dozen Saint Christopher Medals--these were the realities behind the shadows. When one reentered the caves to proclaim the reality, such a one was in far more danger of his life than on the battlefield!

Only a few months earlier, the day he first arrived in "the Nam," he recalled two Marines standing at the Air Force Airbase in DaNang. It was 14 July 1967. Their difference made them conspicuously present, like characters on a stage illuminated by a spotlight. The highly-polished stateside leather boots and brass of everyone else there who spoke of the safety of the place, were dull, inconspicuous, and artificial, compared with these two very dirty-looking, grit-impregnated, brownish-red-skinned men, wearing no skivvy shirts under their half unbuttoned blouse. Their jungle boots caked with mud shined far more than the highly-polished stateside leather boots of the others in the sense that they attracted more eyes, more soul-doors into heart halls. They were from Khe Sanh and did not talk of safety at all, but of eagerness to return there so they could be part of a planned operation to assault Hill 918, an assumed stronghold of the enemy force there. They were the young men of every generation on their quest to slay the dragons.

We departed Da Nang about 2312H in the safety of a large C-130 "Herky Bird" aircraft. A minute or two later, this secure and "safe" area of Da Nang was violated with shrieks of rockets and screams of men as fifty rounds of 120mm and 140mm rockets from two different directions and with pin-point accuracy, killed at least a dozen Americans and destroyed three C-130s standing there.

CHAPTER 2
THE DREAMSCAPE

As if having departed the United States and arrival at Vietnam were not enough to disorient totally any new-comer, the vast half-way around the globe and the hours upon hours of air-travel crossing the international Date Line, was the immediate entrance into a different reality. Even to the point of not being able to purchase a soda in all the oppressive heat with normal American money. One had to use "Funny money" or MPC (Military Payment Certificate). Indeed, what was so evident to anyone traveling over this area of northern South Vietnam were the contrasts--blinding, sun-reflecting sands in the eastern Phu Bai area, and dark, very dark forests near Khe Sanh, with low flat lands in the east and precipitous cliffs and torturously twisted gorges in the west at Khe Sanh, Vietnamese in the east and the very primitive Bru mountain tribesmen near Khe Sanh with their twisted faces, seemed to be the outward expression of an inner tortured, anguished soul that lived in constant fear. Cities with their centuries-----old art work which miraculously survived centuries of warfare such as the six-foot high porcelain vases and gold throne in Hue City in the east, to savage beasts and caves in Khe Sanh, existed. Debilitating heat in the east, in contrast and coolness at Khe Sanh--cold, in fact, could be compared to one who grew up in the mean winters of the upper American Midwest,yet it never felt as cold as in Khe Sanh. For several months during the monsoons, one could never be dry and warm, with snow that even fell on the hills!

Most evident was the reality of the Viet Nam experience not usually portrayed by the manufactured images of it--the polarity of peace and serenity and the absolute terror, horror, and fear in battle that one could suddenly experience as fast as flicking on and off the light switch. Periods when nothing seemed to happen other than the dull daily routine of long patrols and digging deeper holes, suddenly transformed into frantic frenzy of deafening loud explosions and the facing of one's own death. Thus there emerged the consequent contrast of 18 year-olds becoming 60 year-olds in an instant, as they faced their own death. The contrasts and polarities created energy, with the area being a place of extreme violence, a plateau of terror, a terrain of the soul on which one seemed stuck for awhile that seemed for-

ever. Likeness the red planet named for the Greek god of war, Mars, and the two moons of that planet, the sons of Mars, Phobos and Deimos (Greek words for "fear" and "terror").

To observe the area from the distance of a flying helicopter, left one with an impression of the beauty of it all. Rolling hills with a greenish-velvet-like covering. An occasional stream visible between the thick vegetation, even small waterfalls off the eastern end of the runway at Khe Sanh Combat Base--all made this place so different, so special. One young Marine Lieutenant recalls: "There were some powerful, almost spiritual ties to the place we were in. I thought I was in a magical kingdom. It was sacred. And when we walked out after the siege on that operation and we did the sweep back up to 881, literally would take us a day or more to get through what we walked in a couple of hours. As I looked at that moonscape, and remember all the wild boar and deer, I saw what we had done. I mean it drove me crazy! It was a spiritual place." [Comments of Ernest Spencer to the author, 4Jan87].

Here, lungs breathed-in welcomed air with delightful satisfaction because it was remarkably cooler here than at other places in Viet Nam. Here, there was the strength of peaceful quiet, with only the soothing loud chorus sound of locusts in the jungles. Here was a beauty that made Khe Sanh a place of fantasy; it was like being in a dream. It was our dreamscape.

The name of the District, "Huong Hoa," referred to "pretty flower." No one there could not but be deeply impressed with the colors--the luxuriant green, the rich, red soil, the magnificent clouds and sharply-rising mountains, the beauty of red hibiscus flowers at the nearby French coffee planter's house.

For some, Khe Sanh was a Garden of Eden, a paradise. It was beautiful and innocent, like the people who were there who saw the beauty because it was what they were--one sees by what one is. For the Marines who lived in the hamlets as part of Combined Action Company OSCAR or the Army personnel of the MACV Advisory Team #4 who lived in Khe Sanh Village itself, a walk in the nearby area was a matter of sheer delight. If one were hungry, a banana was picked off a nearby tree, usually one of the pigmy types that although sweeter than those "in the world," contained unsuspected very hard seeds. One Could pick the equivalent of our grapefruit, and munch on the sweet, large, meaty tidbits. One could lay down in one of the numerous streams and let the water flow over one's body.

We were to learn that evil is dressed in awesome beauty. Life feeds on life, and the lush, luxuriant vegetation meant a lot of death in order for there to be so much life. It was our destiny too, once we entered into this ecosystem. We were never to feel more alive than in the presence of this beauty, and later, the probability of our death. Speaking for many others, one Marine said, "I've never been more alive." [Comments of Frank Iodice to the author 30 Oct84], and another, "I lived more a year there than I've lived anywhere." [Comments of Michael R. James to the author, 13Oct84]. An Army soldier recalls: "When we were there, we would walk into the bush and it was so magnificently beautiful--I mean the colors, the bushes, everything about that land was beautiful one minute, and the next minute it could be so horrible, you would lose your breath over it. Every bush, every leaf, everything had its own color. And one of the things that I noticed in particular was immediately after a rain: we'd get a quick rain shower--how everything would illuminate with such beauty. Then five minutes later it might turn into a living hell." [Comments later it might turn into a living hell." [Comments of Phil Montaldo to the author, 23 Jul86]. A thing of beauty is not a joy forever--when it is Khe Sanh!

The only way to know Khe Sanh was to descend from the heights of the plane and live there. It was always the feeling of those there, that these others in the "rear" echelons, called "pogues," never appreciated our situation our need for food, bunkering materials, support The bravery of what we accomplished each and every day was invisible to them and went unrecognized. This angered us. We weren't understood by those who didn't share our experience. Those in the rear gazed at their maps in their operations centers and briefing rooms, but as the philosopher Wittgenstein once wrote, "The map is not the terrain."

Upon descending and living there, suddenly the pleasant sight of a green-blanketed, rolling hill became a matter of standing in grass taller than peo-

ple, called "elephant grass," which restricted visibility and cut into the skin of hands and arms with its razor-sharp edges loaded with bacteria that later festered into large red and seemingly incurable sores. We were always told to keep an interval of fifteen feet while on patrol so that a single mortar round would not kill and wound more than one person. But this meant easily becoming lost, not being able to see the person ahead in order to know where to go, and the anxiety of keeping the person behind in sight, lest all the others following become detached, lost, or find himself the "tail end Charlie." We were all responsible for each other, dependent on each other. We were our brother's keeper. It was a commitment forever. The tall grass shrouded any enemy who might be lurking in an ambush site ready to fire on any passerby, so we always moved with apprehension. The enemy was invisible, almost a spiritual force. Cover and concealment could not have been better.

The gentle rolling hills were not gentle at all. With slopes of hills generally between 40 and 60 degrees and often 100. [3rdMarDiv, Spec Intel Study 4-67, 10Jun67, p. 2]. For those who were required to climb them day after day after day, it was a strenuous exercise in controlled falling down or pulling oneself up mud-slicked slopes, grabbing a large rotten or banana tree only to have the whole tree give-way as though it were a single blade of grass., Often frantically in exhausted delirium, one grabbed onto a bush with long spiked thorns, or perhaps grabbed a buddy's rifle held out to pull up the next person. Sometimes it was a matter of climbing down a tree and, upon reaching its base, grabbing onto the top of an adjacent tree and going down that way--so steep was the cliff. There were numerous vines that caught in one's boots and legs, causing one to fall as though tackled, and bamboo thickets like so many rods of steel bunched up, almost impenetrable. There were waist-high fallen logs, wet and slippery, with too much underbrush under them to move, requiring strenuous effort to climb over them again and again. There were numerous caves throughout the area, like so many openings through which the subterranean contents of the underworld and the unconscious spewed volcanically into the area.

Then there were the streams that appeared as small strips of tinsel from the air or a small blue lines on a tactical map. To the man on the ground, however, they were raging, violent rapids, full of cube-shaped boulders five or six foot in size. Many times there were no river banks, only slippery rocks or muck that oozed over the top of the boot and clung to the bottom of the sole until each foot picked up twenty pounds with each step. Khe Sanh clung to the soul. [*The foot in green mythology referred to one's soul, for example, Oedipus, whose foot was injured.*] It was frequently necessary to move along a narrow stream by stretching out both arms and legs and move along a ledge four or five inches wide. The main river in the area just north of the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB), the Riviere de Rao Quan, killed two Marines in late 1967.

Many areas do not contain streams, and there is little water while on patrol. In the heat and in the exhaustion of climbing the hills, one learns to ration very carefully and to savor each precious mouthful of water. When the canteen is empty, one is offered a swallow from another man's, for out here we all take care of each other. We are one with each other.

The daily patrols in this area devour all of one's strength. The body tells us it cannot possibly move another step--after only the first hour of a patrol--and then continues on for eight more hours of the same. One learns very quickly that it is possible to do far more than what is merely thought possible. After returning to the hill outposts after a patrol, there are watches to be stood and positions to be improved--more digging in the hard clay. One feels like diarrhea or vomiting, but nothing emerges. One battalion commander noted, after being in Khe Sanh a couple months:

"Commanders must insure that only the very ablest and fit personnel are allowed to participate in a jungle operation. Known weaklings must be singled out because they create evacuation problems as non-battle casualties. They will not be able to keep up. Over a six-day period, weight loss per man averages 12 - 15 pounds."

What does all this mean? Being shot at isn't enough; the daily routine rigor of the life here is so demanding in itself. These are those who deserve daily showers but only can clean their bodies every six weeks or so. These are those who deserve sodas and beers, but none are received. These are those

who deserve so much and receive so little. Who appreciates their effort?

There are several significant hills in the area near KSCB. Dong Tri Mountain looms north of the base with its inverted coffee-cup shape. The Marines refer to it as Hill 1015, being 1015 meters above sea level. All the hills were referred to by numbers. This was the war where only numbers-quantities, were regarded by those in the rear as real--where abstractions were reality and reality was abstractions, where "body count" and killing ratios were the realities for those in the rear and had nothing to do with the reality the trooper experienced.

About a "click" (that is, one grid square on the tactical map, or 1000 meters) west of 1015 was hill 950, the end of a mountain range that we always felt to be infested with enemy forward observers gazing down on our every movement on the combat base. Hill 950 was the site of a radio-relay station. The radios used on patrol, the PRC-25 (called "Prick-25") were "FOX MIKE" ("FM"), and line-of-sight. While in valleys, it was as difficult to communicate with others as it is for those who are in the valleys of life, when in a depression. A large, nearby hill solved this problem.

From Hill 950 one could look directly down at Khe Sanh Combat Base, and frequently see it shrouded in a blanket of clouds. Locals of the area frequently asked why we had built an airstrip there since there was frequently a cloud layer there while other areas nearby were usually clearly visible. Mr. John There was what the Air Force called a "fog factory" off the eastern end of the airstrip--a ravine which dropped some 800 feet forming a trough through which the prevailing winds carried the warmer moist air to the airstrip. One of the Recon radiomen, Kevin Macaulay, perched atop Hill 950 for many weeks, frequently saw the sun rising in the east over the base, blanketed with fog. He used to remind those with problems that they were like that scene: temporarily the warmth of life and the light of understanding of the sun was blocked out, but it is still shining, and when the layer of cloud burns off, the sun will shed its warmth as usual.

Significantly higher hills stood further north and not too distant, one as high as 1739, a granite mass called "Dent du Tigre" ("Fang of Tiger," or simply "Tiger Tooth"), but these were not seen from the Combat Base, being blocked by hills of lesser height--lesser things and people blocking our awareness of the greater that is always there. When climbing a hill like 881-South from the southern slope, or 471 from the eastern slope for the first time, after a very long patrol, one looks at what he assumes to be the summit. Upon reaching that point, however, it is seen that there is another peak further that was not previously visible.

To the west and a little north of the Combat Base was Hill 861 and to its west, Hill 881-South. From May of 1967 to about May of 1968, both 861 and 881S were usually manned with sizeable infantry units to protect the Combat Base itself. And there were many more hills, remembered by the officials only by their numbers, but remembered by those who were there in terms of desperation, death, anxiety, spookiness--471, 552, 689, 918, and perhaps the most spooky of all, the one recon teams never like to stay on overnight, Hill 881-North.

Note: Many hills are erroneously designated, which indicates all the more how "unreal" such numerical designations are, not referring to the reality of the hill itself! After our artillery did not clear Hill 950 to strike targets on its northern slope or in the valley to its north [This happened on 26 July 1967], a topographic unit arrived in August, 1967, and determined that 950 was really 963.29. At the same time, the blasting of hills we fought for earlier that year had made 881S really 856 and 861 really 837. The Combat Base at the main gate was 495 and at the eastern end, at the garbage dump, 475, making an odd rise in the airstrip for landing planes which flew uphill after touchdown. In terms of feet, multiplying the meters by 3.28, the Combat Base at the main gate was 1623.6 ft.; 950 (really 963.28) was 3139 ft.; 1015 was 3329.2 ft.; Hill 881S (really 856) was 2807.68 ft.; 861 (really 837) was 2745.36 ft.; and Hill 1939 was 5703.92 ft., or over a mile high.

In the midst of twisted and torturous terrain were five valley or plateau approaches to the Combat Base, avenues through which an enemy force could attack: (1) from the northwest of the camp at the Laos/South Viet Nam border near XD 6653 along the stream and valley that join the Riviere de Rao Quan at XD 7949 and continuing southeast to Route 9 at XD 9140; (2) Also from the northwest of the

camp, from the Laos/South Viet Nam border at XD 6646 and then southeast along the ridgeline to Hill 881S (XD 7743); (3) Along Route 9 itself; (4) Southeast of the camp from the Da Krong Valley which enters the Area of Operations (AO) at YD 0035 and then northwest until it joins Route 9 at XD 9241; and (5) Northeast of the camp from just south of Hill 1123 (XD 8551) and running southwest along the Khe Xa Bai River to a point just north of Hill 558 (XD 8245). [26MAR AAR CROCKETT p. 6].

Note: From a need to be accurate and specific within a geographical area, and also to indicate the "strangeness" and difference from what is normally experienced "in the world," the designations of location are indicated by a group **of** letters and numbers as they appear on military maps. The Khe Sanh area lies within a 100,000 meter square on the surface of the earth designated as 48QXD, according to the Universal Transverse Mercator Grid (UTM) in which the world is divided into large geographical areas extending 6° in longitude and 8° in latitude.

These areas are subdivided into 100,000 meter squares. Since interest is rarely focused in two fairly distant areas simultaneously, only the identification "XD" is used. To the east of XD lies another 100,000 meter square, "YD." Each of these squares is further divided by imaginary vertical and horizontal lines, each of the 100 lines indicating 1,000 meters. To locate the number indicating a location on the map, one reads from left to right and bottom to top. Thus, Hill 558's location (at the center of the map) is indicated as XD 8245. Since most places do not lie at the intersection of the designated grid lines, and since it is desirable to provide a location accurate to within 100 meters, each grid square is further divided (in the map-reader's imagination) by ten additional criss-cross lines. Thus, Hill 881-South lies a little more than halfway between lines 77 and 78, or at 777, and it lies slightly above the mid-point between lines 43 and 44, or at 438. Its location, within 100 meters accuracy is indicated as XD 777438. This is the usual designation for infantry usage. Artillery and intelligence usually desires designation to be accurate within 10 meters, and therefore provides an 8-digit number. [Dept. of Army and Air Force, TM 5-241, *The Universal Grid Systems*, Aug51, pp. 9-13; Dept. of the Army, FM 21-26, *Map Reading*, Jan69].

The next chapter deals with the exotic animal life in the area followed by a chapter on the Bru, then a chapter on the French coffee plantations, and so on.

NAMES WILL BE ADDED TO THE VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, D.C. INCLUDING ONE OF OUR OWN

This is to advise that the following Marines who have died of wounds received in Vietnam will be added to the "Wall" in early May 2010. The official ceremony will take place at 1pm on Memorial day where a member of each family will read the name aloud of their loved one who is added to the wall.

KHE SANH VETERAN

Cpl. Ronald M. Vivona Golf CO 2/26
WIA 6 April 1968, Hill 700, Ronkonkoma NY

LCpl John Granville wounded
6/12/68 Los Angeles, Ca.

LCpl Clayton Hough wounded 2/22/69
Holyoake, Mass.

There are also 2 other names being added from other service branchs. Anyone wishing further info may contact me at
rvivonaafba@comcast.net
Thank you and Semper Fi.
Bob Vivona

I GET MAIL

WOUNDED WARRIOR MARINE DOWN

By Chad Harris
B CO 1/26

I was sent to war when I was 18 years old. I was a Fire Team Leader, running patrols. I was sent over to a camp called Khe Sanh. The Siege lasted 77 days. The way a battle is fought is to hammer hard in the beginning. I was in the beginning and got

medivaced out on the third day of the 77 day Siege. A battle that had no mercy. A battle that remains in the minds of those wounded warriors that survived .

Those wounded warriors still suffer with (PTSD). This Disorder is still trying to be understood by the medical profession, and seeks a means to treat it without meds and psychotropes. Some of the effects of PTSD are button words, triggers, or sounds. A smell, a sight, a certain sound can trigger me right back to Khe Sanh. When that happens it causes me to lock up and revisit the war. The images and emotional stressors that were endured at the battle are not meant for humans to endure, and the effects are lifelong.

My cry to America is this: of all the charitable organizations that people contribute to, whether it be to hurricane disasters, the Red Cross American Heart Association, etc., the, disabled combat veterans are the ones that are forgotten. Even though there are organizations within the VA that are set up to work with veterans that are disabled, there are still numerous vets that are homeless and diving in dumpsters. These individuals, the ones that put their lives on the line for the American Dream, to own a home and a piece of property some place, what we would call a piece of the pie.

The VA took 15 years to acknowledge the fact that besides the physical limitations I have, there is something more. Because the eye cannot see into the mind, it seems to be a difficult place for people to understand the mental anguishes and struggles that are in some cases more limiting than the physical.

My decision maker is broke. I was told to do something when I was at Khe Sanh, and when I returned, to America, was told something else. As a result, I checked out of society for eight years. I lived under bridges, out of my car. and avoided any interactions with people at all costs. The decision maker is still broke. Sometimes one decision can take me out a whole week.

I came back trying to find America, trying to find freedom. I came back with medals that you cannot eat, you cannot live in them.

On the wall are the names of the dead in Washington; we cannot help them. We cannot do anything for those folks. The POW-MIA's are not forgotten, but these guys, these wounded warriors are forgotten. I was a leader of men. I still often wonder what happened.

The people that served in the military and came out without any injuries, and got their education ... they do not need your help. But the wounded warrior does.

There has been discussion on whether some of these guys that are living under the bridge don't want your help; maybe they are caught up in alcohol and don't want to be helped. If they are thrown a life jacket, they will receive it. There is enough land in this country, and they would gladly accept their piece of the pie.

If one person has a candy bar and there are six that are hungry, and you give each one a little piece and they have to make it for a month, they will probably all die. But if you give the candy bar to one and he eats it and then expends his energy to run get help to bring back, it will probably work for everyone. Each wounded warrior needs to take his story or his card and get his help from a local church or a community of people. The help has to be adequate for it to really work.

A book has been published by author Michael Archer, named A Patch of Ground. Please read the book for further understanding about wounded warriors.

THE UNCOUNTED
By Craig W. Tourte

Start of Tour: Wednesday, July 26, 1967
Date of Casualty: Monday, March 4, 1968
Age at time of loss: 20
Casualty type: (A1) Hostile, died Reason: Artillery, rocket, mortar (Ground casualty)
Country: South Vietnam Province: Quang Tri

So said the official documents given to Maisie & Williams Saunders that cold March day in 1968, notifying them that their son, United States Marine Donald Baron Saunders had been killed while fighting in Vietnam, was just a piece of paper with the date, province and country of death, and nothing

else. Just a simple notification that their son had been killed - some how - by one of the following; artillery, rocket or mortar.

I wonder how many other families received similar notifications of the loss of their loved one. You know, just kind of like, well he's gone, and that's all the detail we are going to give you. Somehow I don't think that would suffice today - a few simple lines announcing a loss like that. Now more is demanded and more details to be given - but then, times were different. I've heard many estimates and different accountings of the number of causalities at Khe Sanh. Something tells me the official count - if there truly was one - of those killed at Khe Sanh may not reflect the accurate number of losses. Some were wounded at Khe Sanh, and medically evacuated to triage before they died of their wounds. Others survived for many months and sometimes years before their horrible wounds took their short lives. All listed as a causality of Khe Sanh as if they had been killed outright.

Still others like Donald Saunders were killed immediate when a mortar landed at his feet while he selflessly exposed himself to incoming, while assisting other Marines in fortifying their bunker from the continuing onslaught of the enemy's guns, ever raining down upon the base. Given that the President mentioned Khe Sanh during his inaugural address, I think that it is important his family, friends and community know a little more about the death of their son and brother. Information that Donald was killed at Khe Sanh is noted someplace, because it is a significant location and historic battle. I wonder how many others were not counted as a causality of that epic Siege and how many families wonder to this day - what really happened those many years ago. I wonder how many others weren't counted as one who stood with us, but are simply included as another casuality.

ED NOTE: Since so many new Khe Sanh veterans have joined our organization in the last several years, I have decided to reprint articles from past editions of Red Clay which I felt were memorable.

Our Historian Mike Fishbaugh, has researched and found a previous article written by Craig Tourte which significantly fits this endeavor.

The article, relates to THE UNCOUNTED which appears above. So I guess this is the right time to began.

DONALD BARON SAUNDERS (KIA)
March 05, 2005 (Red Clay)
By Craig W. Tourte

I told myself I was not going to do this because every single one is important and all should be remembered. All that died there continue to affect us to this day. How can we forget, and should we forget. While we remember them all, there are the personal ones, men who we were with, that we can still see in our thoughts and dreams. The ones whose young faces we still see and whose voices we still hear.

Their quick death was a reminder that it could come to us just as suddenly. We're the ones who now speak for those who cannot. We're the ones who can tell our story while they cannot. We're the ones who can try to make the others understand, because they cannot. We're the ones who can tell their families that they loved them and thought about them every day, because they cannot.

Donald Baron Saunders was just another Marine private at Khe Sanh who died on today's date, as did many others. I would like to post a small piece taken from the Belleville Sons Honor Roll (New Jersey) Dated March 14, 1968.

"Since "he had to leave this world, I'm glad he left it the way he did, with courage and fighting for his country." There was little else for William D. Saunders of High Street, Belleville, to say. He is the father of PFC Donald Saunders who was killed in action in Vietnam recently. The young Saunders, only 20, died of wounds to the head and body from enemy mortar fire in Quang Tri (Khe Sanh) last week.

Saunders enlisted in the Marines two years ago on September 28th. It was a day that William Saunders will never forget as it was the elder Saunders' birthday. Donald completed his basic training at Parris Island, and advanced Infantry training at Camp Lejeune N.C. He volunteered for duty In Vietnam.

'When asked why, Mrs. Maisie Saunders, his mother, said, "Donald was never to talkative, he

made his own decisions. I think he felt the boys were doing a good job and he should back them up." "It was a job that had to be done for him," added Saunders, and he never complained.

In all his letters there was never a word of complaint. He tried to reassure us, in fact." Mrs. Saunders states that Donald did mention in one letter that he did not know whether it was the last letter or not and that they were surrounded by the enemy."

Of course the article goes on, but what I wanted to tell you was that I went through what little personal belongings he had which they sent home to his family. When I got home I wrote his family a letter and they returned a letter to me, thanking me for my thoughts.

I have not heard from the family again, but I often think about them. You have read items from Tom Horchler on this board. Tom put Donald's body into his truck end drove him to graves registrations. Although that chapter in Donald's life ended that day at Khe Sanh, it did not end for us, and in fact started a new chapter in our lives.

The point is, we all have personal accounts like this. And to us their loss is not just a number or a name, but a real hit you in the gut memory. I think a lot of us are still waiting to see how this is going to turn out as we continue to turn the pages in our lives.

WEB BRIEFS
"Were There Seabees At Khe Sanh? "
Larry McCartney E Co 2/26

Since the 2008 reunion in Reno, Nevada I've had a good time ribbing Mike "Animal" Preston by asking; **"Were there any Seabees at Khe Sanh?"** Knowing full well the Seabees were not only there, but did one hell of a job. I've related my personal experience and appreciation for how the Seabees helped me when I was on my way back to Khe Sanh after a brief hospital visit in March of 1968; so my ribbing has **ALWAYS** been with admiration and gratitude; just hope it was taken that way.

Well today I was surprised when I stopped at Wal-Mart on Jefferson Davis Highway, just north of the Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Virginia. Something I SELDOM do, was getting a real lesson regarding the Seabees. I Was wearing a Khe Sanh Veterans Eternally Bonded shirt—thank you Big John—as I walked to the automotive section, I needed a mat for the bed of my new pick-up truck, when I heard "Hey Khe Sanh!" Looking around, I saw an elderly gentleman spryly walking towards me. He stuck his hand out and introduced himself, he was a retired Seabee Master Chief with several tours in Vietnam, having served with **Detachment B-301 at Khe Sanh** early during the war, and also serving with a Special Forces detachment.

During the course of our conversation I learned this gentleman, who retired after thirty (30) years as a Seabee in 1977, was the Assistant Officer-in-Charge (AOIC) for Seabee Detachment STAT 1104 at Dong Xoai; he was there and participated in the battle in which Construction Mechanic Third Class Marvin G. Shields became the **ONLY** Seabee in the history of the United States Navy to receive the **Medal of Honor.**

I Did some research when I got home and found a photo of the Master Chief, next to Petty Officer Shields. I Also found a photo of the Master Chief at another site at a memorial service on 04 July 2010. There is no question; I was in the presence of, and learned from a true hero. I Have the contact information for the Master Chief, Johnny McCully, should any of the Seabees know him personally and want to reconnect, or want to invite him to join the Khe Sanh Veterans.
Semper Fidelis and Can Do!!! . . .
Larry McCartney

ED NOTE:
Here is that story of the Seabees Heroic stand at the battle of the Special Forces Camp Dong Xoai.

Veteran's Story: The Last American Out

Written by REBECCA KOMPPA

Matt Mattick and his wife Jane reside in rural Menahga. Recently Matt shared his military experience in Vietnam at the battle of Dong Xoai.

Matt Mattick and three fellow American soldiers quickly loaded their wounded comrade onto the first "chopper." The plan was that as soon as the critically injured Seabee was safely stored away, they would make a dash for the second chopper and get



Members of S.T.A.T. 1104: (back row, L-R) John Klerfen, Dale Brakken, William Hoover, Frank Peterlin, Matt Mattick, James Keenan, Lawrence Eyman, Johnny McCully, Marvin Shields; MOH(front row) Richard Suyczack, F. Alexander, James Wilson, and Jack Allen. Klerfen, Suyczack, Alexander and Allen were not with the unit during the battle of Dong Xoai. Hoover and Shields were killed in the fight; the other seven members were wounded.

out of the fight.

Mattick, who found himself as the last man in the dash, was waved away from the second chopper. They were full, overloaded in fact. No big deal, Mattick thought, he would just get in the third chopper.

He quickly discovered, however, that there was no third chopper. It had been shot down enroute to rescue them.

Mattick stood there, small arms fire from the Vietcong kicking up dust all around him. As far as he knew, he was the last American soldier – alive, that is – standing in the midst of the battle at Dong Xoai.

It was the last and only battle he would fight in as a U.S. Navy Seabee.

Douglas Martin "Matt" Mattick was less than a year out of high school and 18 years old by only a month when he joined the Seabees in January 1961. He had graduated from Albert Lea High School the summer before.

His four and half years of naval duty would carry him all over the world – Bermuda, Puerto Rico,



MATT MATTICK & WIFE JANE

Antarctica, Okinawa, and Vietnam. He traveled back and forth between the East and West coasts as well, receiving training. As a Seabee he was trained to build, but he was also trained well to fight. The motto of the Seabees is **"We build. We fight. Can do!"**

He built ammo dumps in the jungles of Puerto Rico, corrals and cages for Wendell seals in Antarctica for a zoologist, and renovated quonsets at Okinawa. He helped build everything from barracks to gymnasiums. He was trained to be a carpenter, but in the 1960's being a carpenter meant you "did it all," from the foundation up.

Mattick was stationed in Puerto Rico, when his battalion was awakened in the middle of a night in October 1962. It seems President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev "had gotten into a shouting match" over some Russian nuclear missiles placed in Cuba. The Cuban Missile Crisis had put all U.S. military on high alert.

After being briefed, guns were issued to all the soldiers and the ammo handed out to the squad leaders. Mattick's squad leader was away at the time, and as assistant squad leader, the 19-year-old suddenly found himself coping with the reality of possible, imminent war.

The next night found all the soldiers and Seabees moved from the barracks to the beaches, and the following day he was on a LST (Landing Ship, Tank) headed for Cuba. Mattick said they were expecting to unload on the southern shoreline, as they were coming up from the south, but Kennedy and Khrushchev resolved their "disagreement" and the LSTs were turned around at sea. They went instead to USMC Camp Lejeune in North Carolina for six weeks of military training.

From Lejeune he was transferred to the Seabees base at Davisville, Rhode Island. While stationed there, he applied for a transfer to the Antarctic Support Activities. His transfer was approved and after four more months of training, he left in September 1963 for New Zealand and from there onto Antarctica. He served the summer there (September to March 1964), where the Minnesota farm boy found himself herding seals instead of cows.

On a return trip to Antarctica from New Zealand for some R&R, Mattick experienced his first plane crash. The pilot, believing he could make it in before "whiteout" conditions covered Antarctica, butwasn't that lucky.

The whiteout was not caused by a snowstorm, but by diffused lighting from overcast skies that causes all surface outlines to disappear. It becomes impossible to tell how far away the snowy surface is and whole snow-covered mountains can become invisible against the backdrop of white clouds.

The radio tower crew tried unsuccessfully to "talk" the pilot through a safe landing. It was too far to return to New Zealand on the plane's fuel, so when finally the fuel was exhausted, the C-130 cargo plane basically fell from the sky and skidded to a stop just yards from the base's fuel station. Mattick and his fellow travelers exited out the back of the plane the moment it touched ground. The pilot and co-pilot, on the other hand, had to ride it out.

Leaving Antarctica before winter set in, Mattick was sent to San Francisco in March (1964) for new orders. He was assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 11, which was stationed in Okinawa. By now Mattick had become what is known as a "short-timer." With his tour of duty with the Navy set to end in January (1965), renovation work on Okinawa seemed an easy way to end his Navy service. He was eager to get home to Minnesota and go to college.

Lt. Frank Peterlin was heading up a Seabee Technical Assistance Team to go into Vietnam. He harangued Mattick about joining his group. Peterlin needed a "builder" to finish out his 13-man team. BUH2 Mattick had the qualifications he needed, but Mattick resisted until a "Dear John" letter arrived from back home. The day after the letter arrived, he volunteered for Peterlin's S.T.A.T. 1104.

Four more months of training followed. This time it included survival training in the mountains of California and intensive physical conditioning. In January, when he would have been getting his discharge from the Navy, he was instead flying into Vietnam. It was the early days of the Vietnam War. There were not many U.S. soldiers in the country (only about 16,000), and most were assigned to advisory roles over US-trained South Vietnamese special forces (Luc Luong Dac Biet, LLDB) and militiamen (Civil Irregular Defense Force, CIDG).

The first month was spent readying equipment left by the previous team at an airport near Saigon. Their first building assignment was at Ben Soi where they built gun ports, barracks, and ammo structures at the Special Forces camp there. Sniper fire could be heard, but they didn't take part in any combat, although the Army lost two soldiers.

Their next job was at a Special Forces camp at Dong Xoai, about 60 miles north of Saigon. The camp was manned by LLDB and CIDG, with only 11 Americans – 10 Special Forces officers and one warfare psychiatric officer. The camp was formed like a lazy L, with the CDIG and Vietnamese Special Forces in the Ranger Camp to the east (upper camp) and the district headquarters camp to the west (lower camp).

Mattick and three other S.T.A.T. members arrived there June 4, after another harrowing plane trip. This time the plane didn't crash, but Mattick got to watch the tops of 50-ft. trees pass by his plane window. The Seabees had underestimated the weight of the cargo and the plane fully loaded with fuel and taking off on a 2,000 ft. runway, was barely able to lift over the trees. The pilot was not a happy man.

Seabees and equipment continued to filter into the Special Forces (SF) camp at Dong Xoai for several days. However, two members were on R&R in Bangkok and two others were still in Ben Soi overseeing the convoy to move their heavy equipment to the new camp.

The A-Team, overseeing the camp improvements, had commissioned the Seabees to expand the building complex into a mine field that had been laid by the South Vietnamese adjacent to the camp. The Seabees finished removing all the mines sometime in the afternoon of June 9.

Prior to the attack, the Seabees heard small arms fire and occasionally a mortar round landed in the camp. But the night of June 9 – at a quarter to midnight – the Vietcong (VC) hit and hit hard. Within seconds, four or five bombs struck the upper camp. The first mortar took out the first aid bunker where the supplies were; next the communication shack blew; one bomb landed in the barracks killing one American asleep in a bunk.

Seabee Johnny McCully had just finished rounds and was having a cup of coffee with Army Sergeant 1st Class James Taylor when the mortars struck without warning. McCully grabbed his M14 rifle and 300 rounds of ammunition. He ran to where fellow Seabees William Hoover, Lawrence Eyman, and Marvin Shields were returning fire. Both Hoover and Shields had already sustained injuries.

Lt. Peterlin, awakened by the blast, grabbed his weapons and ammo and was soon engaged in the fight. For nearly an hour, the compound was pummeled by machine-gun fire, heavy mortar and grenades. During a lull, Shields sprinted to a burning shed to retrieve more ammo. McCully took a .50-caliber round through his shoulder but managed to keep his 57mm recoilless rifle in action.

At 02:45 June 10, waves of VC accompanied by flamethrowers overran the upper camp. Shields, Eyman and Taylor, along with two U.S. Army soldiers, withdrew, sprinting through enemy fire. Shields and Taylor carried a gravely injured Army officer. Peterlin, Hoover and SF Staff Sgt. Donald Dedmon became separated from the others. As they maneuvered across the camp, Peterlin was knocked to the ground by an explosion and wounded in the foot by a bullet. He managed to crawl through barbed wire, where he found a foxhole outside of camp and burrowed into it. He remained hidden away there until he was rescued on June 11. Hoover and Dedmon, unable to find foxholes, died fighting.

At the lower camp, Mattick, Dale Brakken, Jim Wilson, and James Keenan (corpsman) were fighting furiously. Shields and Eyman were able to reach the lower camp to join them, but Eyman was seriously wounded in the process.

McCully and two CIDG troops moved to the east in hopes of locating a buried cache of weapons and a radio. Instead they found 500 VC sitting over the cache, eating breakfast and having a "good time." Heavy fire prevented them from returning to their original positions, so they pulled back and hid under a house in the nearby village. The CIDG troops had rifles and fired on the enemy until their ammo was exhausted. McCully passed out from his wounds.

Even after being wounded twice, Shields volunteered to accompany the commander to knock out an enemy machine gun placement. They were successful, but Shields was mortally wounded. Five of the 20 Americans at the camp were killed (two Seabees and three Special Forces); all the rest were wounded.

During the night, Mattick reports that they were given phenomenal air support. Mostly it was flares to keep the battlefield in light so the Americans could see their enemy to shoot. The Navy and Marine fighters offered the best ground support, Mattick said, adding that he believes if he had a 20-ft. stick he could have touched their planes – they flew that low to the ground bombing and strafing the enemy with their machine guns. It continued all night.

With morning light, the air support pulled back. Two companies of South Vietnamese sent as relief were met by the VC and annihilated. With no ground support available for hours, word was received that three helicopters were coming in to pick up the surviving Americans. Carrying Shields on a poncho, the Seabees and soldiers pulled him under the barbed wire fence with them and reached the landing site for the choppers. Only two choppers made it, and left Mattick stranded.

On board the choppers, Mattick's buddies asked the pilot to return for him. They couldn't; they're were overloaded, but they would make sure help was sent.

Standing alone in the field with bullets flying all around him, Mattick ran back to the pit and found the field radio they were using to communicate. Not knowing if the voice on the other end of the conversation was friend or foe, Mattick told him he was the last American left in the battle. The response was an astonished "holy cow," which assured Mattick that the speaker was American.

Mattick was told it would take the choppers a hour and half to return. His response: I can't make an hour and half; 10-15 minutes at the very best. I can't hold out by myself.

Then Mattick got some good news: there were five Huey helicopters in the area. The radioman assured Mattick that they would come in over the area and one would come down to pick him up.

The Hueys came in five abreast, noses pointed to the ground and their 40 mm cannons laying down a wall of fire. Just before they reached Mattick, the two Hueys on the outside made a circle and started laying down a wall of napalm. The flames quickly formed a chimney out of the napalm and the middle chopper came down the chimney

Mattick took off from his pit, but stopped and ran back to get his hat, then with his adrenalin pumping, he ran as fast as an Olympic sprinter toward the Huey. Seeing the dust in front of him riddled with VC bullets, he jumped the last 20 feet and landed belly high in the chopper. The gunner grabbed him by the belt and pulled him in, all the while his machine-gun blazing.

Mattick saw the middle Huey hit on its nose, rock back to the end of its skid, and then hit on the nose again, but by that time he was on board and the chopper was off. It never had to land. Mattick heard later that the chopper had 80 bullet holes in it when it reached its home base, but no one inside was hit. They had gotten the last American out safely. On June 11, American forces regained control of the Special Forces camp at Dong Xoai from the fleeing VC. At that time, Peterlin and McCully were also rescued from their hiding places. Mattick estimates that 1,000 South Vietnamese troops and 2,000 VC were killed in the fight.

S.T.A.T. 1104 became the most decorated Seabee unit in the history of the Bees. **Their unit received one Congressional Medal of Honor, two Silver Stars, seven Bronze Stars with Combat V's, 13 Navy Unit Commendations (the smallest unit to ever be awarded this), 11 Purple Hearts, 13 National Defense Service medals, 13 Vietnam Service medals with Bronze Stars, 13 Combat Ac-**

tion ribbons, 13 Republic of Vietnam Campaign medals with Device, and 13 Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross medals with Palms.

Construction Mechanic Third Class Marvin G. Shields (picture, right) died on board the evac chopper. He is the only Seabee to ever receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry above and beyond the call of duty. A destroyer escort has been named after him, the ***USS Marvin Shields*, as well as new barracks at the naval Great Lakes Training Center in Illinois**.

The seven Seabees surviving the battle plus the other four in the unit have been honored many times for their service and deservedly so.

"We did not do anything that any other Seabee or soldier would have done if placed in the same circumstances," Mattick said. Like other veterans, he shies away from the label "hero."

"We had a job to do, we did it," said Mattick. and that is in the finest tradition of a U.S. Navy Seabee.

Here Is The Ceremony Attended By Retired Master Chief Johnny McCully

Veteran's Day, Washington, DC

Nov. 11, 2009



There was a smaller than usual turn out for the Annual Veterans Ceremonies sponsored by the Navy Seabee Veterans of America , but for what we lacked in attendance we made up in patriotism, in front of the SEABEE Memorial.

The weather was once again cooperating with us with temperatures in the 40 degree range. Commander David J. Buchanan had welcoming remarks



L to R, Admiral Shear, Bear Holland, "Ice Pick" Lazzeri, EQCM Johnny McCully , FMC Holdcraft

for everyone and Admiral Shear addressed the gathering. Three wreaths were laid, one by the Viet Nam Veterans, one by the Navy Seabee Veterans of America and one by NSVA members Admiral Shear and Force Master Chief of the Seabees James Fairbanks representing the CEC.

At the close of our ceremony we assembled at the Tomb of the Unknown for the presentation of the



wreath by Vice President Cheney, and in the Rotunda where the Vice President addressed the Veterans. The SEABEE flag and American flag were carried by Joe Tack of New York and Rick Abernathy of Michigan, both men retired Master Chiefs volunteering to carry the flags.

The last ceremony to attend was the laying of a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown by the various

Service Organizations. This year it was my great honor to represent the NSVA along with Vice Commander Bear Holland in presenting the **NAVY SEABEE VETERANS of AMERICA's** wreath to the guard at the Tomb.

This is a very special day commemorating VETERANS all over the world for their contributions to keeping the world a safer place for us and generations to come. If you have never had the opportunity to attend the Washington D. C. Veterans Day Ceremony please make arrangements to do so, you will be impressed.
David J. Buchanan, Cmdr.

LATE OBITS

KHE SANH VETERAN
JAMES J. EVERLY USMC G CO 2/26

Everly, James Joseph, 63, retired US Postal Service machine operator, passed away, Monday, March 8, 2010. James was born February 25, 1947 to Arling and Charlotte (Davis) Everley in Concordia, Kansas. He served as a Lance Corporal in the US Marine Corp during the Vietnam Era. Survived by: brother Raymond (Janice) Everley of Pensacola, FL; sister Sue (Terry) Esselman of Glen Burnie, MD; cousins Beverly (Bruce) Lamendola, Mark, Annie Lamendola all of Wichita; nephew Greggory Peck, niece Shannon Flores.



FOND MEMORIES
By Neil Kenny L Co 3/26

LYNN MARIE FOX

"Never blame the rainbows for the rain
And learn to forget the memories
That cause you pain
The last whispered wish of age
Is to live it all again.
So never blame the rainbows for the rain"

Sitting alone with only my thoughts and the music of the universe, I have come to reflect upon the lives of two of our Khe Sanh Family.

In this journey we call life we each encounter many different people, places and things. I have come to the conclusion that the places and things, while of interest, are merely the accoutrements of the important part of life, that being the people.

Having said this I have the remorseful task to report the passing of our family members. In living as in dying, we each go through the circle of life. Every part of the journey has its great tragedies and indescribable joys.

Knowing this we celebrate the rainbows of each life when we recall the radiant smile that only they could generate. Remember too the many birthdays and holidays when we gathered as one and glowed within the light of love. The school years, the formative time of each path we choose to travel, and thus at the end of the journey we come to pass.

Those of us who are left behind inevitably state that we wanted just a moment more and that these great loves of ours have gone from us all to soon.

Two of the people who I have had the wonderful pleasure of knowing and loving in this life have gone to their final rest.

On the morning of June 8, 2009 at the tender age of Twenty- eight Lynn Marie Fox passed away after a gallant struggle against a debilitating form of Leukemia and a bone marrow transplant.

Lynn was, and is, the light in the eyes of her late father *Charles 'Scott' Fox* of Charlie 1/26, and *her Mom Kathy*. She was the iron fist behind her Little Brother Grant, and the best Little Sister to her Big Brother Todd.

Many of the members of the Khe Sanh Family have grown to know and love the *'Little Foxes'* as more than any family I have known in my association with this organization; they are the Kids we have all watched grow up.

The Fox Family in some configuration or other, has been to every reunion that I have been to since 2000. This is more than many, if not most of our present membership.

Lynn was always an inspiration to me as we traveled back and forth to her chemo and medical appointments. I can honestly state that I never once heard her complain. Quite the opposite, Lynn would always ask, "How are you?"

If it is possible to have a daughter whom you love and care for as much as any child of your own – then that would be and is – Our Lynn.

When we lost Charlie, I wrote how so many members of the Khe Sanh Family attended his services. I have to tell you that we were present in equal numbers for Lynn's services as well. It was amazing to see how many young girls, as well as their parents, lamented the loss of their beloved ***Cheerleader Coach.*** Like her father before, and her Brothers now, Lynn was an integral part of the Redland Midget Football Organization here in the heart of South Central Pennsylvania.

While Lynn is sorely missed, I know that she shall never be forgotten.



PHINEAS E. SMITH
L CO 3/26

On the evening of October 30, 2009, I received the call I had been dreading. Jordan called to tell me that Dad had passed quietly. His Dad was, and shall be forevermore, the very Best friend and Brother I have ever had.

Phineas Everett Smith is someone whom most people feel they know if they know me. I can state without any question that the same was and is true, of the many people who knew him when it came to me.

We met in the trench line of Khe Sanh. From the moment we met till this, our Spiritual bond hasn't been, nor shall it be broken. It is, as we say, and more importantly, as we live: ***'Semper Fidelis'.***

Phin had been sick from Nam related injuries and service connected illnesses since the early nineties. After Nam he obtained an Associates Degree and went on to be an Operating Engineer up until the time when he became disabled.

He raised his son Jordan as a single parent from the time he was two. He was a really Great Father and dedicated his life to Jordan.

Phineas was only able to attend one of our reunions as travel was a tremendous burden due to his illness. If you spent any time with me however, you also spent it with Phin. LOL.

I am grateful that as we talked prior to his passing, he thanked me for keeping the promise we had each made to one another, to always be there for each other. That is truly the bond of Brothers who have walked hand in hand toward eternity in a very distant past, which somehow seems like only yesterday.

The day after Thanksgiving we laid Phineas to rest. The ceremony was a small but significant and meaningful experience for Jordan.

We arrived at the Sacramento National cemetery at around eleven a.m. As we exited the offices, having filed the necessary paper work (it is a government

operation), we were approached by Marc Soto, his wife and son who had come to pay respect, to a fallen Brother. I was moved by their presence. The director informed us that we had to wait till eleven-thirty to commence with the ceremony.

At exactly eleven-twenty-nine, I looked to my right and observed a small convoy of vehicles rolling gently but affirmatively through the main gate. Bounding from their vehicles were Craig Tourte, Steve Weiss, Tom Horchler, Lucy Horchler, and Dave Tonick.

The director said, "It is eleven-thirty and we must proceed." So without further delay and interrupted introductions, I bellowed, "Saddle Up!" Like a well oiled machine we each returned to our vehicles and proceeded to the area for the final pass and review.

A Marine Honor Guard folded the Flag and presented it to Jordan, followed by Taps.

A few words were spoken and of course the only interruption was my cell phone ringing – but alas – it was merely another Brother calling to be present and accounted for, as 'Little John' (as Phin always called him) reported in.

Jordan declined the offer for lunch with the troops more out of stunned disbelief than any other explanation, as the full realization had finally hit home, that Dad his best friend, mentor, counselor, pain in the ass, and true love was not going to answer his calls anymore.

It was a quiet ride back to Santa Rosa.While there is much to say and even more to think about, I am left with only the thoughts from so long, long ago. *Life is for living* and into that future I shall travel. I realize that I am a better person for having the joy of knowing and loving Lynn and Phineas in this life. They are the brilliant color within my rainbow, and they shall shine again, but alas now they appear as but a gray rainstorm in my heart.



I shall see you both in the Morning and as each of you had the Twenty-third Psalm in your service, I too, "… shall fear no evil: For thou art with me…"

"So never blame the rainbows for the rain
Never blame the rainbows
Never blame the rainbows for the rain"

MORE LATE OBITS

ROBERT L. HOLLISTER, USA
KHE SANH VETERAN A TRP 2/17 CAV
101ST AB DIV



Robert L. "Lurch" Hollister Sr., 63, of Carlisle died with family by his side on Saturday, Jan. 30, 2010, at Carlisle Regional Medical Center.

He was born on Wednesday, March 13, 1946, in Oakland, Calif., and was a son of the late Douglas J. Hollister and the late Felicia De Figueroa Hollister.

Bob graduated from high school in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, in 1964 and soon thereafter entered the U.S. Army. He was a Vietnam War veteran and served one tour as a door gunner onboard a "Huey" from 1966-68 and served another tour as a crew chief onboard a "Cobra" from 1970-72. Bob earned many medals and honors for his faithful service to our country. He received the Purple Heart Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross, Marksman Badge (M-14), Expert Badge (M-16), Air Medal (1-10 Olive Cluster), National Defense Service Medal, Aircraft Crewman Badge, Good Conduct Medal with Clasps Bronze with two Loops, the Army Commendation Medal with two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Vietnam Service Medal with six Campaign Stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal with 60 Device, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm Unit Citation Badge, Republic of Vietnam Civil Actions Honor Medal, First Class Unit Citation Badge, six Over-

seas Bars and the Meritorious Unit Emblem. Bob served in the Tet Offensive.

He retired from the Defense Distribution Regional East-Mechanicsburg after 15 years of service and was a former corrections officer for Cumberland County Prison and a former C. H. Masland and Sons employee.

Bob was a member of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church in Carlisle and was also a member of the 101st Airborne Division Association, the **Khe Sanh Veterans,** Mt. Holly Springs American Legion Post 674, Alpha Troop 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Association, the Association of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade (Red catcher Inc.), 25th Infantry Division Association, Tropic Lightning, Distinguished Flying Cross member, Little Bear Diamondhead Clipper Association, and the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Member Association.

He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Ginger L. (Woods) Hollister; a son and daughter, Robert L. Hollister Jr. and Jennifer L. Hollister, both of Harrisburg; and many loving and caring nieces, nephews, family members and friends from Claremont Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, Health South, Holy Spirit Hospital, Carlisle Regional Medical Center, Manor Care and Special Events Emergency Medical Services. Bob is also survived by his loving canine companion, King Lee Hollister.

Funeral services were held on Friday at 11 a.m. at Ewing Brothers Funeral Home, 630 S. Hanover St., Carlisle, with the Rev. Timothy Sadler officiating. Burial with military honors provided by Cumberland County Honor Guard in Mt. Holly Springs Cemetery.

MAJOR GENERAL NORMAN J. ANDERSON USMC, INOVATOR, SUPER GAGGLE CONCEPT KHE SANH

Norman J. Anderson, 96, a retired Major General in the United States Marine Corps, who served for 37 years, and then ran the MacArthur Memorial Foundation after his retirement, died on September 6, 2009 in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Although he had a distinguished career, and was a pioneer in close



air support in three wars, his military career was nearly aborted before it began - shorter than the minimum required height, he was initially rejected by the recruiters, and was only accepted after a friend whacked him on the head with a flat piece of wood hard enough to bump him up to the required height! General Anderson, the son of an engineer and a piano teacher, was born in Manitowoc, Wisconsin on February 7, 1913.

He was raised in Wisconsin and Florida, and graduated from high school in Glendale California. He then attended the University of California at Los Angeles where he was a member of the ROTC unit, and graduated in 1934 with a B.A. degree in History. He also completed one term of postgraduate study in East Asian Affairs at Stanford University. One of the original pilots of American Airlines, he was an aviation pioneer for nearly 40 years, focusing an innovative mindset on developing (and defending) Marine Air's team approach to the support of ground troops. On Guadalcanal he led the famous SCAT effort to resupply Marines on the ground at a time when Japan controlled the sea around the island. As memorialized in a 1992 article in the Ma-

rine Corps Gazette, "When this, the first of the SCAT aircraft, rolled to a stop..., the U.S. Marines had inaugurated a totally unique combat air service." SCAT also set a world record for the longest mass flight of twin engine aircraft in history. Later, he flew over 100 bombing missions as Commanding Officer, Marine Bombing Squadron 423, in the Bismarck Archipelago, and Philippine campaigns.

For heroism and distinguished service during this period, he was awarded three Distinguished Flying Crosses and seven Air Medals. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel at the age of 31, in March 1944. In Korea, he led air cover during General MacArthur's famous Inchon landing -- executing the close air support tactics, based on decentralized decision-making, that characterized Marine Air's approach to war. As a pilot flying with VMF-323 based aboard the Badoeng Strait (affectionately known as the Bing Ding), he was famous for endurance, often landing only to refuel and take off again. He earned the Silver Star Medal, his 4th DFC, and his 8th through 10th Air Medals.

His approach was the Marine approach, making sure that troops on the ground were safe, well-supplied and successful. In 1956 he was appointed to the Hogaboom Board, overseeing a re-design of the Marine force structure, particularly including the optimal role of helicopters in supporting ground troops. In the early 1960's he was named Director of Marine Corps Aviation, and stationed at Headquarters Marine Corps. General Anderson was also active in Vietnam, arriving in June 1967, he assumed duty as Deputy Commander for Air, Ill MAF and CG, 1st MAW, and earned the Distinguished Service Medal and his 11th Air Medal.

He was instrumental in the Marines successful defense of Khe Sanh during the 1968 Tet offensive, brainstorming with close friends from World War II and Korea the razzle-dazzle Super Gaggle concept which saved countless lives, and brought helicopter capacity safely into the contested battlefield in a new way. The idea of the Super Gaggle "was to establish a small task force consisting of 8 to 16 resupply CH-46 helicopters, about a dozen A-4 Skyhawks and four Huey gunships to fly cover, a Marine KC-130 to refuel the aircraft, and a TA-4F with a TAC (A) in the backseat to orchestrate the entire affair." Once again, as with SCAT at Guadalcanal 24 years earlier, he brought mission critical benefits of air power to Marines on the ground. "If it weren't for the Gaggle most of us probably wouldn't be here today," according to Bill Dabney, probably the most shot at Marine at Khe Sanh.

General Anderson had a strong moralistic streak throughout his life. He famously fought William Westmoreland in defense of the Marine's approach to close air support, with the backing of his superiors winning the day for Marine Air's decentralized, team, approach to the battlefield. Westmoreland noted that this was the one point in the war when he seriously thought of resigning, and later recalled that General Anderson became 'very emotional' in pressing his argument. And in mid-1941 he lent the famous ace and close friend Greg "Pappy" Boyington $1000 so that he could go to China and fight with the Flying Tigers, money that, he proudly recalled, 'was paid back in full and on time.'

After retiring from the Marine Corps in August 1972 he authored a series of articles on close air support with soaring titles like "Marine Aviation Ready for any Emergency: Air-Ground Team Concept Value is Hailed," and "Laurels at Low Tide," describing the Inchon landings." After retirement he was involved with the MacArthur Memorial Foundation in Norfolk, Virginia, for 28 years - for the first 10 years as Executive Director, and then as a member of the board, helping to turn what had been a forgotten museum into a civic center for the rebirth of a dilapidated downtown area, as well as a world-class memorial for one of America's greatest warriors. He remained a Director Emeritus until his death.

Major General Anderson's medals and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal with gold star; the Silver Star; the Distinguished Flying Cross with three gold stars in lieu of subsequent awards; the Presidential Unit Citation with two bronze stars in lieu of second and third awards; and 22 additional awards. He was predeceased by his brother, Dr. Thomas F. Anderson, a pioneer in the use of electron microscopy, and is survived by his sister Amy Duling, and his wife of 55 years, Irene Fernandez Anderson, a former professor of Romance Languages at Middlebury College and Syracuse University, and later an employee of the CIA. Survivors

also include two sons, Norman F. Anderson, of Fairfax, VA, and Dr. Kirk C. Anderson, of Flagstaff, AZ; and four grandchildren. A Memorial Mass was at 10:00 AM, Wednesday at St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church. Burial with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.hdoliver.com

MOS AND CASUALITIES

Craig W. Tourte

Wilbur Stovall was the H.Q. 1/13 Company Clerk. Tom Horchler - from the book Battalion of Kings - "..remembers (he) was tall, thin, Willie was a short-timer, having only about 15 days to go until he rotated back. One of my last memories of him was his statement, 'I can't wait to get some of Ma's fried chicken.' He was really excited and anxious to get back to his family. Paul Turnbull and I ended up taking Willie to graves registration and helped to survey his gear." MOS AND CASUALITIES Marines are pretty much Marines, regardless of any particular Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). I never fixed my bayonet like Marines Mike Powers and John Rowland who served with Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment. I never charged an entrenched enemy bunker or ridge line like Marine Steve Wiese who served with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, did during his 18 month Vietnam combat tour.

I never sat month after cold isolated month on the top of a lonely hill in an isolated corner of Vietnam, like Marine Phil Nuchereno, watching his friends being picked off one at a time, wondering when and how his time would come. I never commanded men on an isolated entrenched hilltop, like Lieutenant Ernie Spencer, Commanding Officer of Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment. To say that I was particularly brave or extraordinary would be a stretch. After all, I was just a private and did the job the Marine Corps assigned to me; I was just a regular Joe.

I knew a lot of just regular Joes at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh in 1967 and during the terrible 77 day Siege of that base in 1968. Marines like Bill Poland and Beryl Bushaw who went about their very dangerous job with little sleep and little food. Men who fought their own battles for survival everday and somehow, perhaps through just plain luck, persevered. Some are surprised to learn that there were, "other than infantry (grunts) at Khe Sanh." Marines like Donald Saunders, Ken Williams, and Wilbur Stovall, the Company Clerk of Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marine Regiment. All Killed in Action at Khe Sanh during that long and bloody Siege.

None assigned to infantry units, but all three were Marines. Although my personal knowledge of the Marine Corps Combat Base at Khe Sanh is somewhat limited to the period of time I was there, roughly August 1967 to sometime in April 1968, as I look back it seems like I was there forever. To this day, certain experiences remain vivid in my memory and dreams. I have read extensively about the events of the Siege and have spoken to numerous individuals who were there with me. Each recalls a somewhat different, yet similar experience. Certainly the Military Occupational Specialty of the men in the various services were dissimilar, however I am quite sure infantry and supporting arms made up the majority of those on the base and surrounding hills. As such, it would make sense that most causalities were to those that held the MOS of an infantryman or related combat specialty.

It is generally assumed, there were anywhere from 5,000 to 6,000 men at the Khe Sanh Combat Base in late 1967, a fair amount of military personnel, at least by Marine Corps standards. But regardless of the exact number of U.S. and allied personal at Khe Sanh, it is accepted that the number of North Vietnamese Army troops in the area was somewhere in the neighborhood of 40,000 men with supporting arms including tanks (Attack of the Lang Vi Special Forces Base by NVA tanks.) I don't know the ratio of infantry to other Military Occupational Specialties on the base, but there were certainly many different and varied military specialties present among the Marine, Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel. Cooks, truck drivers, office clerks, engineers, Navy Seabees, medical personnel, electricians, mechanics, wiremen, artillery, forward observers, graves registration, supply, radar, fork lift drivers, heavy equipment operators, air traffic control, tanks,and supporting arms (50's and twin 40's), to name just a few.

To look at those who were present, you could not tell one from the other, they all looked the same. Each carrying their individual weapon wherever they went. Red clay stained ratty green uniforms, tired, scared, skinny, undernourished and exhausted, grunts, clerks and cooks. Each MOS took casualties and all faced the same dangers together. All had their time in the V ring, not one safer nor job easier than the other. Marine Tom Horchler was a truck driver with Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marine Regiment, who risked his life daily, taking rounds while he drove his truck to the dump, hauling water, C rations, sandbags, and artillery shells from the landing strip to the guns, and picking up the dead, gently transporting their lifeless bodies to Grave Registration.

A moving exposed high value target, no trench, armor, sandbags, or overhead to protect him, unable to hear the rounds leaving the guns of the enemy, unable to run, hide, or even hope, all he had was just luck and a prayer. Continuing his very dangerous duty all day and then standing guard half the night in the trench line waiting for the expected ground attack. Tom Horchler knew he had a dangerous job; no one had to tell him it was dangerous and no one had to thank him for his effort at supporting "them."

It was the job the Marine Corps assigned to him, and at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh, it was just as valuable, just as necessary and just as dangerous as any other. There were many at Khe Sanh during the 77 day Siege of 1968 just like Tom Horchler, not an infantrymen, but a Marine, doing a job which was just as dangerous, just as dirty, and just as necessary as the rest of the jobs that had to be done.

At Khe Sanh we were all the same and it did not matter what MOS the military had given us. There were no safe places, no place to rest, to hide or sleep, no place safer than another. We were all the same at Khe Sanh no matter the MOS, officer, enlisted or civilian contractor. We all shared in the danger equally and our casualties reflected our presence.

THIS VIETNAM MEMORIAL IS A FIVE MINUTE WALK FROM OUR HOTEL IN SAN ANTONIO

Vietnam Veterans Memorial San Antonio's Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated Nov. 9, 1986, in a ceremony attended by about 6,000 persons, including the former commander of ground forces in Vietnam, retired Army Gen. William C. Westmoreland. The war's top soldier said it was one of the most impressive and largest crowds he had seen. Westmoreland gave the keynote address at the event, stating that the memorial's unveiling represented a coming home for veterans. "Before, they were physically at home but didn't feel accepted -- now it's a reality," he said. The memorial depicts a radio operator comforting a wounded comrade while anxiously searching the sky for a medevac helicopter. The bronze sculpture stands about 10 feet tall at its highest point and is 23 feet long and 12 feet wide. With a weight of more than 10 tons, it is the largest sculpture of its kind in the country. The memorial is located in front of Municipal Auditorium, in a portion of the facility's parking lot that has been transformed into the Veterans Memorial Plaza. A monument to Korean War veterans was added later at the other end of the plaza. "Hill 881 South," as the memorial is officially called, was created by Scottsdale, Ariz., artist Austin Deuel who served as a Marine illustrator during the war.

On April 30, 1967, the dramatic sight of radioman **Donald Hassock** helping an injured soldier inspired Deuel to draw the picture that 19 years later would become the model for San Antonio's memorial. Businessman and Vietnam veteran John Baines, chairman of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial of San Antonio Inc., led the effort to establish a monument to honor the area's war veterans. In January 1986 Deuel and his staff in Arizona began working on the sculpture, and on May 2, 1986, the San Antonio City Council approved the memorial's construction plans. But funds were still needed to pay for the sculpture and the surrounding plaza.

So San Antonians went to work, taking part in a number of events to raise the money. A radio station held a radiothon and groups sponsored a Walk for the Vietnam Veterans, during which participants raised money by taking pledges for each mile they walked. Comedian Bob Hope performed at a benefit

show held in the auditorium. These activities eventually raised the $600,000 that was needed. On Nov. 4, 1986, the sculpture left Scottsdale on a flatbed truck and arrived in San Antonio three days later. It was dedicated on Nov. 9, just two days shy of Veterans Day. This is what is inscribed on the front of the sculpture's base: "Permanently encased within the memorial is an air tight compartment that contains a complete list of the names, serial numbers, branches of the military and dates of service of the men and women from the San Antonio area who served in the Vietnam War. Over 60,000 fine young Americans from our community served in Vietnam. This memorial is a tribute to all of them." On the other side of the base is a poem titled "Death at My Door



Day is over and danger hastens
Young Marines at their battle stations
Instruments of war outline the sky
Means of death are standing by
Can it be true on this high hill
Forces will clash only to kill?
Silence fills the near moonless night
Restless thoughts of a bloody fight
Endless memories for those awake
Meaningful discussions experience would make
Though silent world in which we live
Permit only God's comfort to give
Somewhere through the darkness creeping
A date with death is in the keeping
Alone I sit and question why
Life itself to be born to merely die?

David Rogers (KSV)
1st Lt USMC
April 30, 1967
Hill 881 South Republic of Vietnam
A 1/13

OTHER NEARBY VIETNAM MEMORIALS OF INTEREST

The Kelly AFB Veterans Monument

The Veterans Monument at Kelly AFB in San Antonio was dedicated in May of 1992. It was originally meant to honor service members who took part in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, but, later, base officials decided that it should be dedicated to all veterans. The monument is located near the main gate to the Southwest San Antonio base.

The metal monument is designed in the shape of the U.S. flag and rests on a black marble base on which are inscribed these words from Oliver Wendell Holmes: "One flag, one land, one heart, one hand, one nation evermore." At night, the flag's stars light up and the silhouette of a colonial minuteman with musket appears on the face of the monument.

The floor of the small plaza where the monument sits is covered with 16x16 inch bricks. Kelly employees raised funds for construction of the monument by selling the bricks, which buyers could then have inscribed with their names or the name of a vet. Information on the brick includes the veteran's branch, rank and dates of service.



LEAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

In the same general area of town where the Edgewood and Kelly monuments stand is another memorial -- perhaps the best kind. It is Leal Middle School, a living monument dedicated to education and progress. Formerly called Southcross Junior High School, after the street on which it is located, Leal was renamed in honor of a former student who was killed in Vietnam. The school is in the Harlandale Independent School District, a working-class area of South San Antonio. Leal Middle School is the first and, so far, only institution in the city to bear the name of a Vietnam vet.

I understand that Armando G. Leal Jr. was well-liked and considered a "good guy" around his tough Southside neighborhood. A photo of the smiling young man posing proudly in his Navy uniform is displayed in a glass case near the school's main office. Also displayed is a copy of the citation that accompanied Leal's Navy Cross.

The citation reads in part: **"Armando G. Leal, Jr., Hospital Corpsman Third Class, U.S. Navy, awarded the Navy Cross posthumously for extraordinary heroism on 4 Sep 67 while serving as a corpsman with the 2nd platoon, Company "M", 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division (REIN), FMF . . . "**

The citation goes on to describe how Leal went to the aid of Marines who had been cut down in an ambush during Operation Swift. Although he suffered a number of wounds himself he refused any treatment and continued to work on his comrades. But in helping others he left himself vulnerable to attack and was killed by an North Vietnamese Army machine gunner.

ED NOTE:

I want to apologize to all of those members who contributed so generously to the KSV. I originally had planned to recognize each member in a special article in this issue of the magazine, but due to the late obituaries of those who so supported us at Khe Sanh, I ran out of the necessary space. I will again post the list in issue 76 of Red Clay (Summer) Edition

NEW ITEMS IN OUR KSV PX

New "Home Is Were you Dig It Pin" Embossed & In Color.

Our Own Design " Marine Corps Pin" Simply Gorgeous.

Embroidered "Sorry Charlie" T Shirts DK Blue

Embroidered " Sorry Charlie" Polo Shirt (Red)

Olive Drab "26Th Marines T-Shirt"



Full Color Silk screen

Reunion T–Shirts (Front)Light Blue





Full Color Silk screen

Reunion T–Shirts Back

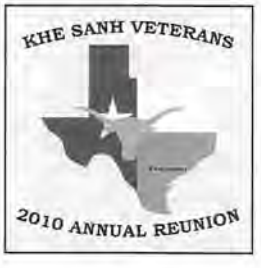

Full Color Silk screen

We also have some beautiful new Khe Sanh Veteran Wind Breakers. Call "Big John" at 732-948-9803 (KSV PX)







c. ENCLOSE THIS APPLICATION FORM, A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF, GPA TRANSCRIPT, AND A BRIEF PERSONAL SUMMARY (60 WORDS) TELLING OF YOUR VOCATIONAL PLANS AND FINANCIAL NEED, ADDRESSED TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.

BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL FILLED FORMS FOR YOUR RECORDS!

I SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant Signature of KSV Parent, Grandparent, or Guardian

Note* APPLICATION DEADLINE June 1ST OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR

- **IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, ALL INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

APPROVED:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, KSV Scholarship Committee

_____

David Smith, President KSV

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation Application Form

(A Copy Is Enclosed in this Magazine. Please Keep For Further Reference.)

Date: _____

1. Applicant Information:

Name: Last_____
First_____MI____
Address: Street_____, City_____St___Zip_____
Home phone: AC_____/ _____/ _____E-mail address:_____
Birthdate: Day____ Month_____ Year_____

2. Sponsor Information (Khe Sanh Veteran. Inc. Member):
Name: Last _____First_____
Relationship to applicant _____
Branch of service_____
Unit served at Khe Sanh _____Dates_____

3. School Information:
School name: _____
School Address: Street _____,City_____St__ Zip Code _____
Phone number: AC_____/_____/_____
Curriculum/intended course of study _____
School year to be funded _____

4. Applicant Personal History
a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, offices held, etc)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. List school honors, prizes, community activities participated in, military service, volunteer service to community, church, or government.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to:

Mr. Dan Fisher
Chairman KSVSF Committee
6050 52ND ST N
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

1.The money is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees, and books at an accredited institution of the candidate's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant.

3. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

4. The Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the award amount to the selected students upon fulfillment of proof of registration sent to the Review Committee Chairman when it becomes available.

5. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of June of the current school year.

6. Scholarship Applications must he received by the Committee Chair on or before April 21of the current school year to be attended.

7. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points (attach last school GPA transcript)

GPA 4.0 = 40 points
GPA 3.5 = 35 points
GPA 3.0 = 30 points
GPA 2.5 = 25 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 35 points total
Military Veteran = 15 points
Student Government = 10 points
Community related services = 5 points
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 5 points

c. Short essay (60 words) on education goals and self= 10 points

d. Financial Need. Max = 15 points (the Fund is designed to help those in need of educational financial support).

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDA TION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to graduating high school students who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student or who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited curriculum following high school graduation.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans. Inc., a 501 (c) (19) charitable organization.

3. **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 6/1/2010 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:**

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid member of Khe Sanh Veterans. Inc. who has been a member in good standing for a minimum of three years. This includes deceased life members of KSV, and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA in Vietnam if family members are associate members of KSV Inc. Children of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, Character, Citizenship, leadership potential, and financial need. A point selection system is included in the application forms. Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities, or in service to the community, church, or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review, and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the **"RED CLAY"** Newsletter.

THE AWARDS

The award will be $500.00 per school year for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each year applied.

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2010 REUNION, SAN ANTONIO TEXAS JULY 11-18, 2010
AT THE BEAUTIFUL HOLIDAY INN EL TROPICANO HOTEL
110 LEXINGTON ST- SAN ANTONIO TX 78205
PHONE 866-293-1842 FOR RESERVATIONS CODE (KSV)
There Will also be a Direct Link to reservations on the KSV Website www.khesanh.org
$99.00 A DAY 2 Days Before & 2 Days After (Free In & Out Parking)








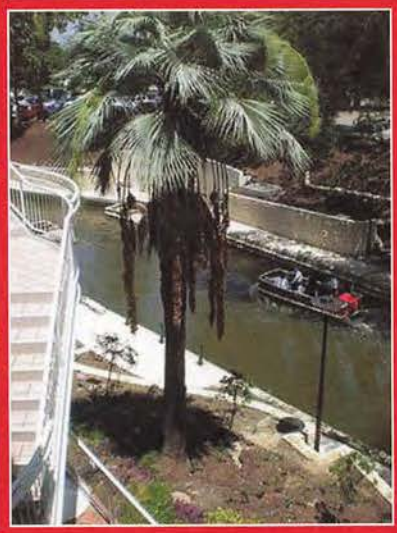


San Antonio International Airport (SAT)

- Distance: 9.5 MI
- South to Hotel
- Shuttle Charge (one way): $18.00
- Taxi Charge (one way): $22.00
- Time by taxi: 20 minutes

Take 281s to 35s take 1st exit Mccullough turn left go 2 lights right on St Mary's to 1st light turn left on Lexington hotel on left side

- **On-site Guest Self-Laundry Facilities** (washer/dryer)
- Hours of Operation: 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM
- Dry Cleaning Pickup/Laundry
- Same Day Dry Cleaning
- STUDIO
- Outdoor Pool
- Live Entertainment
- Service Dogs Welcome
- Free Parking (In & Out)
- Balcony Rooms (Smokers)

This San Antonio River-walk hotel features a full-service restaurant called Mangos, where guests can enjoy Latin and American-inspired dishes, friendly service Also visit Expreso, our lovely lobby-level cafe for a smoothie or latte.
Buffet Breakfast $9.95




HORNER




CARLETON






LETTRICH



SUMMER
2010

RED CLAY

KHE SANH VETERANS' MAGAZINE

ISSUE
76



VFW 76 THE OLDEST VFW POST IN THE STATE OF TEXAS PHOTOS ON PAGES 67-73



SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 58 To 60 FOR DETAILS OF TRIP TO LBJ LIBRARY (PHOTOS INSIDE COVER)

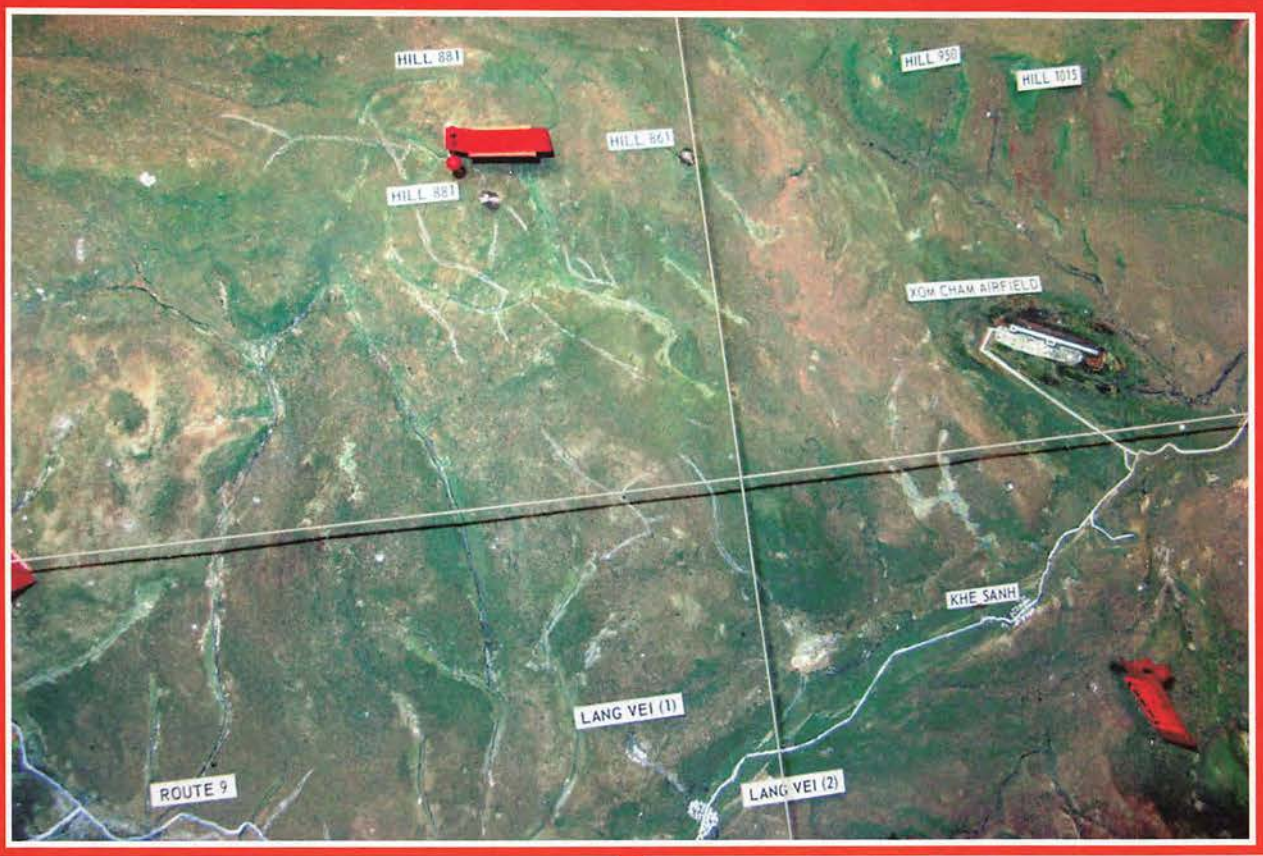







DENNIS MANNION K CO 3/26 WHO LED THE TRIP TO THE LBJ LIBRARY IN AUSTIN TEXAS

FROM THE PUBLISHER & REUNION COMMITTEE

We hope everyone had a good time at the reunion. There were a few glitches here and there, but as several of our members have said: the reunion is not really about the size of a room, activities that did not go as planned, a bad meal etc. They are about good friends getting together, reliving past adventures (Good or Bad), and making new friends. If that is the criteria for a good time, we had a great reunion.

We did use a T shirt printer who obviously did not pay attention in spelling class. On this same note, I have had the reunion T Shirts redone and any member who wants a corrected version can Email or call me, and I will get you out a new one. Remember to add your size to the request. Also You can purchase additional corrected shirts from our PX.

We want to personally thank the following members for their invaluable assistance at the reunion. Dave Meyer & His lovely wife Carol, Tom & Evelyn Ford, and Sid "Fish" Patricio, and Michael Fishbaugh. As always, thanks to the beautiful Kathy Turner who really puts it all together. A shout out to Russ & Fay Evans for setting up the static display and organizing the Ladies Luncheon, which was a great success; and to Ken & Betty Rodgers for setting up the Bravo Co Interviews.

We are also grateful to the men and women from VFW Post 76, who held a welcome home party and barbeque for our membership, everyone had a great time. Pictures are on pages 67-74.

We are in the process of planning events for the 2011 reunion in Minnesota. We will have a Luncheon on the Riverboat, and a fantastic Memorial service at one of the best Memorials we have ever visited. It is called the Soldiers Memorial, which you really have to see in person. It is unbelievable and the service (Candle Light) will include live videos of those who have past, with our members to be invited to speak while photos of their honorees are being shown. The ceremony will have a lot more effect, which we would rather have the membership experience in addition to being read about.

We had an election to fill two vacant seats on the KSV Board of Directors, due to resignations. Craig Tourte & Jack Haigwood, the only members who submitted nominating letters, assumed those two positions; no vote was required from the membership. We want to thank Robert Moxley, Dale Pack, and Frank Taggart for their service to the Khe Sanh Veterans.

All other board members whose terms had expired, will also serve another term since no one had filed to run for their positions. Next year there will be an election for President, Treasurer, and Member-At-Large Positions. All those who wish to run for any of those positions must notify the Secretary, Jack Haigwood of their intentions, prior to the Minnesota reunion.

A real big thank you to our Vice President John Pessoni, for the outstanding job he did with the Khe Sanh Veterans PX. With all the new items he purchased, and the generosity of our Members, we raised over $12,000 for our general fund, which supports the Red Clay Magazine, and other amenities, we provide to our members at our reunions, which helps keep our cost to a bare minimum.

Russ & Tommy

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Chaplain's Corner

By Chaplain Ron Rayner

The message board at www.khesanh.org has provided a wonderful picture of this year's reunion and the people who attended it. This is just as I am sure Ray Stubbe intended when he started The Khe Sanh Veterans, it sounds like everyone was positive and encouraging to one another.

As I write this article Larkin Spivey's daily devotional for July 24 in his *WWII Battlefields and Blessings* provides the perfect quote for how the reunion has been described on the message board; "To have your work judged positively by someone you respect is one of life's great rewards."

I am sure that Tommy Eichler, Russ Turner, Big John, Fish, and the rest of the committee appreciate the applause that they have received.

It was with great disappointment that I had to cancel my flight reservations on Tuesday July 13. I had received a phone call that morning from my cousin telling me that my Uncle Bob had moved on to his reward in heaven. We visited the funeral that afternoon and made the arrangements for the visitations and the service.

During the visitations I reflected on how everyone would enter rather somber but within moments have smiles on their faces or be or laughing out loud. The funeral service brought many happy memories. That is just how Uncle Bob would have wanted it. He had lived 91 happy years even though he had more than his share of unhappy days.

Uncle Bob spent more than 60 years as a Boy Scout and Boy Scout leader. As a teenager he became the main provider for his family when his father died at an early age before the depression was over. He flew over 50 missions as a waist gunner on a B-17 in Europe and was wounded in the head. He lost three of his four children at childbirth. He lost his beloved wife 4 years ago.

I performed the funeral service for Uncle Bob as I had for his wife, my Aunt Glenden.

Four years ago I was taking care of my father, who had Alzheimer's disease, one day a week. After my aunt died, Uncle Bob joined me in that task. After my dad passed away Uncle Bob and I still found something to do together at least one day a week. Quite often we would help at a local charity picking up food or clothes from donors. Even though Uncle Bob walked like Tim Conway playing the little old man, not taking a step over 6 inches, he was a big help. He was a tremendous help in teaching me that I needed assistance in keeping my PTSD mind headed in the right direction. He showed me that one can find ways to be helpful to others, even in your 91st year. He attended almost every one of the reunions for his bomber group and he was instrumental in getting me to attend the KSV reunions.

The following scripture give us all a very good reason to attend future reunions.

"Without wavering, let us hold tightly to the hope we say we have, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds. **And let us not neglect our meeting together,** as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near." Hebrews 10:23-25 (New Living Translation)

The message board has mentioned many fond memories of our group who have passed on. Many of those memories included past reunions.

I personally have met only one person at a reunion that I knew from 1968. I have met and made many new friends with people who I shared an experience with over 42 years ago. Old friends and new friends are what the reunions are about. I try to encourage more old friends to attend but the new friends I have made at the reunions make them worthwhile.

I used the following prayer at my Uncle Bob's funeral. I have used it in sympathy cards for our members and at numerous other military funerals.

O Loving God, please be with us as we honor the life of one who served our nation, for Bob has been taken from our midst and is now in your care. We are pained by the gap in our lives. Yet love is strong as death; the bonds love creates are eternal. And ours is the blessing of memory, through which the lives of our departed continue to be with us.

Please accept our prayers on behalf of Bob. May he rest in peace, and may light perpetual shine upon him. Look with mercy upon those among us, family, friends, and comrades, who are bereaved by this passing. Please comfort and console us all with your presence and tenderness. Amen.

When I think of my Uncle Bob, I smile. I believe the legacy of the Khe Sanh Veterans reunions will always be friendship, love, laughter and smiles.

"... Let every thing you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them...Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. Instead be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." Ephesians 4:29-32 (New Living Translation)

"We Are Eternally Bonded." It is my prayer that I will see old friends and meet many new friends in Rochester, Minnesota next year.

OBITS

ALBERT KOSS USMC FOXTROT CO 2/1 KHE SANH VETERAN

Albert Richard Koss joined our Father in heaven at 11:33 p.m. Friday, May 21, 2010, at Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana.



Albert was born Oct. 26, 1948, in Danville, to Frank Koss and Ruth Rogers Koss. He was married to Nancy Carol Hix on Sept. 15, 1973, and they lived many happy years in Catlin.

He was a beloved father to Connie Bartos and grandfather to William Bartos and Jennifer Bartos. Siblings include, Ruth, Connie, Reba, Treva and Charlie and Suzie Koss of Sidell, Ill.

He was preceded in death by his father and brothers, James and Frank Koss.

Albert Koss was a proud United States Marine who served his country in the Vietnam War from July 1967 to August 1968 with Foxtrot Co 1st Marine Division. Staff Sgt. Koss participated in battles at Con Thien, Khe Sanh, Hill 881 and Hue City as well as participating in Operation Pegasus and Scotland. Staff Sgt. Koss was wounded Jan. 22, 1968, at Con Thien and May 19, 1968, at Khe Sanh, receiving two Purple Hearts, a Presidential unit citation with a Bronze Star and many other meritorious unit citations. He went on to serve the Marine Corps Reserve for 10 years following active duty.

Staff Sgt. Koss also founded and served as vice president of the Danville Chapter of Viet Now, a national Vietnam veteran's organization, whose only goal was to support veterans and their families in any way possible. He helped raise money for the erection of the Vietnam Wall Memorial in Washington, D.C., and the Illinois Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Springfield, Ill. He also was one of the founding members of the Kenneth D. Bailey Marine Corps League in Danville and was a member of the National Marine Corps League.

Albert had retired from General Motors, where he had worked for 25 years at the Tilton Central Foundry Plant.

He was very proud of his daughter, grandson and granddaughter, treasuring every moment he was able to spend with them. He enjoyed his longstanding friendships with Robert Cole and Johnny McMahon and so many more. Albert loved working in his yard, his fish pond and watching football. He attended every Salt Fork Storm football game he was able to, being recognized by the team as the number one fan last season

Albert Koss lived his life by the belief in God, family and country. He made an enormous difference in this world and touched the lives of more people than he was ever aware of. He will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him

STEVE HEIM USMC DELTA CO 1/26

EDGERTON--- Steven T. Heim, age 61, of Edgerton, died on Sunday, June 6, 2010, at home. He was born in Janesville on March 19, 1949, the son of Luvern and Edith (Alderson) Heim. He served in the U. S. Marines during the Vietnam War from 1966 to 1970. Steve married Diane H. Whaples Feggestad in Janesville on July 31, 1975, and she preceded him in death on March 11, 2008. He owned and operated Clean-All of Wisconsin for over 30 years. He was a member of the VFW Post 1621 and Vietnam Veterans of Wisconsin. Steve enjoyed hunting, fishing, flying his ultra light and spending time with his grandchildren.

He is survived by his 4 children: Douglas (Melissa) Doerr of Kansas City, MO and Brodhead, Kimberly (Tim) Adams of Janesville, Kristi (Patrick) Fidler of Edgerton and Traci (Ryan) Fitterer of Sun Prairie; daughter-in-law, Darci (Todd) Feggestad Coomer; 11 grandchildren: Devin, Brody, Jacob, Brittini, Mackenzi, Stephani, Sydni, Kortney, Gaven, Kaiden and Payten; brother, Duane (Linda) Heim of Edgerton; 2 sisters, Kay (Ronald) Pulcine of Okeechobee, FL and Debra (John) Schumacher of Edgerton; and sister-in-law, Sue (Jeff) Sheldon. He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, and son, Rick Feggestad.

WAR MEMORIES

Augusta Marine Still reflects on Khe Sanh Siege, 40 Years later

By Keith Edwards, Staff Writer
Kennebec Journal

AUGUSTA -- On March 9, 1968, a North Vietnamese rocket struck the headquarters tent where Ralph Sargent usually spent most of his waking hours in Khe Sanh, Vietnam, injuring three Marines and killing a soldier due to return home in 13 days.

But Sargent, an Augusta resident and one of about 6,000 Marines who fought in the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh against an estimated 34,000 North Vietnamese, wasn't there.

Instead, he had jumped -- literally -- onto the back of a moving C-130 cargo plane nine days earlier on emergency leave so he could help his family back in Maine deal with the death of his brother-in-law, Guy Robert Bean, who was killed in combat in Vietnam at the age of 21.

Monday, the 40th anniversary of the start of the siege of Khe Sanh, Sargent plans to do what he usually does on that day every year. He'll flip through some of his old photo albums and books of mementos and commendations and think about his experiences and lost buddies in the Vietnam War.

He figures he's lucky to be around to reflect, and not just because of the rocket that killed his unit's machine gunner, Lance Cpl. Wilbur Stovall, whom Sargent said was like a son to him.

Sargent, now 72, almost didn't make it out for his emergency leave.

Due to persistent incoming enemy rocket and mortar fire, the few planes that did land on the crater-marked airstrip at Khe Sanh usually never came to a full stop. Their loads of supplies were attached to parachutes, which pulled the pallets of supplies out the back of the C-130s. Then the planes, after touching down, without stopping, would take back off. So Sargent had to run onto the airstrip to board a plane out.

"I ran and jumped for the tail, but my pistol belt got held up on the ramp," Sargent said. "It was stuck. I couldn't get in and I couldn't get out."

Another service member saw what was happening, grabbed Sargent and pushed him up into the plane. But in so doing, the man was left hanging from the ramp as the plane began to takeoff and left the ground. That soldier fell to the ground.

"The last thing I saw was him landing and rolling on the ground," Sargent said of the other service member. "I don't know if he made it or not. I still see that guy, rolling on the ground, today."

Another close call came when a 152-millimeter artillery shell flew over his foxhole, close enough so he could feel the heat coming off it.

Other than a touch of shell shock which caused Sargent, for a time even after he'd left a combat area, to yell "Incoming!" and dive to the ground when he

heard loud, explosive-sounding noises, he made it out of Khe Sanh without getting injured.

Randy Worthley, of Winslow, a past commander of the state Veterans of Foreign Wars and current commander of the VFW in Winslow, wasn't fortunate enough to escape injury in Khe Sanh.

Worthley, 62, took shrapnel in his neck and upper leg during heavy enemy shelling in a June 27, 1967 attack that killed two of his five fellow Marines assigned to their 105 millimeter howitzer.

He was treated in an underground hospital on the Marine base at Khe Sanh and returned to duty shortly thereafter. He said he still has nerve damage, and lacks feeling in much of his thigh.

"I'd say I came out OK, physically," said Worthley, who received the Purple Heart. "It could have been a lot worse. We lost what, 58,000 there?"

Worthley, who left the Marine Corps in October of 1968 and is now a master electrician, also received the Presidential Unit Citation and Combat Action Ribbon for his service in Vietnam.

Both Worthley and Sargent spent most of their time on the base, as most fighting at Khe Sanh consisted of exchanges of artillery fire, not direct, face-to-face combat.

Both Marines said the defensive assignment of holding the base while under siege was frustrating for many of their fellow Marines because, they said, Marines are used to being on the offensive.

The steady barrage of enemy shelling led to them spending most of their time underground in bunkers.

Worthley said they filled large wooden ammunition boxes with dirt to build up their walls and strengthen their bunkers from attack.

Sargent, a Gardiner High School graduate, said they used anything they could find, because proper supplies were hard to come by in Khe Sanh, which was surrounded by the enemy and reachable only by aircraft.

"We didn't have proper protection for our bunkers," Sargent said. "All of our corrugated steel went to the north, thanks to Robert McNamara (U.S. Secretary of Defense from 1961-1968). We had nothing to stop anything more than an 82 millimeter mortar. They (the North Vietnamese) were using heavier shells than that."

Sargent said sometimes they were short on supplies so weren't allowed to use water to shower, and were limited to two C-ration meals per day.
The first wave of what many consider the official siege of Khe Sanh started with a major attack at 5:30 a.m., Jan. 21, 1968.

"They hit us with rockets, mortars, everything," Sargent said. "The third round hit our ammo dump. We had all kinds of stuff in there, it was quite a Fourth of July display. It was two or three days before it settled down."

Sargent was battery gunnery sergeant and platoon sergeant of a 36-man reactionary platoon. During his service in Vietnam he was awarded a Navy Commendation and the Bronze Star with a Combat V for heroic achievement, for his role in an attack not at Khe Sanh. He said he didn't want the award because he received it for his actions in an attack in which 35 Marines died.

"I did nothing but do my job and get the wounded out of there," he said of the Bronze Star. "I didn't want it, I wear it in memory of the Marines who got killed that night."

Marines made up the bulk of forces at Khe Sanh but all branches were represented.

Worthley served at Khe Sanh from June of 1967 until January of 1968, before the "official," 77-day siege of Khe Sanh occurred between Jan. 21 and April 8, 1968.

But that doesn't mean Khe Sanh was a peaceful place when he was there, as his wounds can attest.
"We were some of the first troops sent there to beef it up," Worthley said. "We fired thousands and thousands of rounds there -- 1,200 in one mission."
Being in artillery, when enemy fire came in, rather than hiding out in bunkers, his unit's job was to go out to their howitzers and return fire. Their targets

were often enemy troops moving ammunition on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Worthley came into and left Khe Sanh, which is on a plateau surrounded by the Coroc Mountains located near the North Vietnam and Laos borders, by helicopter. Bullets were coming through the bottom of the helicopter when he was flown out.

Worthley, a native of Mexico, Maine., attended technical school on the GI bill after the Marines and became a master electrician. He and his wife Carol have two adult daughters.

Sargent was in Khe Sanh from September of 1967 to April 18, 1968.

He was in the Marines until he retired from the Corps Sept. 30, 1976. Later he worked for the state and Digital in Augusta, before retiring.

He's been married to his wife and high school sweetheart, Onise, 53 years. They have two daughters and five grandchildren. One grandson joined the Marines, though Sargent noted he did not pressure him to do so.

The number of casualties suffered by both sides at Khe Sanh has long been disputed. The official count of deaths released by the Marines counts 205 deaths and 1,668 wounded.

The Khe Sanh Veterans Association, founded by Vietnam historian Ray W. Stubbe, a Navy Chaplain at Khe Sanh and founder of Khe Sanh Veterans Association, estimates there were 730 Americans killed in action in Khe Sanh.

More than 2,500 were injured, according to multiple accounts.

Khe Sanh was abandoned by U.S. troops and leveled by July of 1968.

"The powers that be decided it wasn't of important strategic use," Sargent said. "All this waste of blood and human lives, and they turn around and level it."

MARINES LAST REQUEST

Leland Upshaw found this story on the 8th & I website and thought it worth sharing. What more can I say. Marines care about each other. I know that I am biased but I just couldn't pass up the opportunity to share this.

Oldest Post Fulfills Marine's Last Wish No Evening Parade but gift of pageantry
By Timothy Wilson

Julian Galindo wanted one last memorable moment with his wife, but he had grown so weak from a debilitating brain disease that even holding a telephone for a few minutes made him tremble uncontrollably.

Galindo, 51, a former Marine warrant officer, found it difficult to eat or bathe without his wife's help. Even getting out of bed some days seemed to be a painful chore.

So traveling about 1,200 miles from Nebraska to the District to visit the Marine Corps' oldest active post seemed just the place to allow them to experience their last ooh-rah.

The Dream Foundation, a wish-granting organization for adults battling life-threatening illnesses, made it possible for Galindo and his wife, Vicky, to attend the Evening Parade. The free ceremonial event is Friday evenings at Marine Barracks Washington, also known as "8th & I," in Southeast. But the Galindos were not able to experience the pageantry of the parade. The performance they attended was canceled because of a severe thunderstorm. Officials said that lightning posed a danger to the Marines and audience members, who sit on aluminum bleachers.

"It was a little disappointing, but I was still in awe of being at 8th and I," Galindo said.

Although the parade was called off, the Galindos were invited to stay afterward and sat in the library of Center House. From time to time, Julian Galindo would be approached by a Marine with whom he would share the purpose of his visit.

He told them he suffered from progressive supranuclear palsy, a degenerative brain disease that affects nerve cells that control balance, mobility, vision, speech and swallowing. His doctors had given him a limited prognosis for survival. They were stunned when he revealed that his last wish was to visit 8th & I.

Capt. Michael Deal, commander of the marching company scheduled to perform, wondered whether anything could be done to salvage Galindo's trip. An opportunity occurred when the storm stopped. "Let's see if we can pull off the Silent Drill Platoon," Deal said.

Sensing the significance of the occasion, Col. Andrew H. Smith, commanding officer at the barracks, granted Deal's request for the 24-person platoon to perform.

Galindo and his wife were escorted from Center House to an area on the grounds where the commandant of the Marine Corps sits.

The performance featured the Marines in a series of calculated drill movements while handling their rifles with precision. The routine ended with an unusual rifle inspection sequence, complete with elaborate rifle spins and tosses.

"For them to come back and give up their time, that was something that touched my heart," said Galindo, who shook each platoon member's hand after the performance. "I can never say how grateful I was for that."

Vicky Galindo, 46, said she saw something that she hadn't seen from her husband in almost 20 years, since a training accident exposed him to a live nerve agent that they think caused his illness.

"It gave him some peace," she said. "It's like the Marine Corps wrapped their arms around him again. I don't think I've seen him that happy in a long time."

The parade, which can draw hundreds of spectators, features music and precise marching from the U.S. Marine Band, Drum and Bugle Corps, Color Guard, Silent Drill Platoon, and Ceremonial Marchers on the grounds of the barracks. The event has been held Friday evenings from April to November for more than 50 years.

"This is the home of the corps," said Capt. Lisa Lawrence, a barracks spokesman. "To see the impact we have on people who come here, its unreal."

MAY 31, 2010
CORPORAL RONALD M. VIVONA GOLF CO 2/26 JOINS HIS DEPARTED BROTHERS ON THE VIETNAM MEMORIAL WALL
By Bob Vivona

Thank You Mike and Mike for posting the photo of panel 50 east line 36 showing Mike (Animal) Preston pointing to my brother's name Cpl. Ronald M. Vivona, G/2/26. Mike Preston, Ron Main, Larry McCartney, and Myself, along with my brother's wife, 4 children and spouses, as well as 7 grandchildren were all present at the official dedication ceremony held at the wall on May 31, 2010. It was my honor and pleasure to have spent 3 days with all of these beautiful people. I will never forget the gratitude I share with them for being there in this very emotional time for my brother's family. Thank you



all and God Bless each of you. Bob Vivona





VIETNAM VETERANS FIND FRIENDLY LZ

By Reverend Ray W. Stubbe

Dear Tom:

Last weekend's Vietnam reunion at LZ Lambeau in Green Bay, Wisconsin, blew me away. There were numerous hugs and a few tears as everyone was emotionally moved and, I'm sure, given a good dose of healing medicine to their spirit and soul. The entire time was filled with happiness and healing.

Many met friends they hadn't seen in a very long time. I personally met Donna Elliott, whose brother, Jerry, was lost as a MIA at Khe Sanh. We had corresponded for well over a decade, but I had never met her. She has just completed a book and was able to give me a copy of the printed book--along with some coffee grown at Khe Sanh! I met Bill Maves, a former FO with E/2/26 on Hill 861-Alfa (your unit, Tom!) and who also served in Iraq. He said, "They not only tried to kill me at Khe Sanh; they tried to kill me in Iraq, too!" Now, I've heard the phrase: "For those who fight in a war, it never ends," but in Bill's case, this is a matter of reality and not simply old wars still exerting their influence, like the effects of a microwave oven lingering long after the microwaves have turned off. I met again Bruce "T-Bone" Jones and Carl Oxney! Carl, as you might recall, so proudly and aptly represented Khe Sanh Veterans and reminded the general public of us through his mobile PX many years ago.

The several-day event was filled with surprises and opportunities. There was an immense map in the parking lot of Lambeau Field, on which one could write his name with a magic marker. There was a static display of memorabilia from Vietnam. included was a display that had my combat jungle boots still caked with Khe Sanh mud and my helmet on which I had made a cross from numerous fleshettes I came across while moving about the shambles of the base following our Sunday morning fireworks display with our ammo dump going up. There were, of course, the usual opportunities to purchase T-shirts, caps, patches, etc., and information booths to give helpful information on benefits to veterans. There was one of our new "Dry Hootch" places. These are coffee-house, non-alcoholic, places where vets can gather together socially in a safe place, and there is one in downtown Milwaukee--and perhaps others of which I'm unaware.

There was a ceremonial parade of Native Americans, Lao, and Hmong veterans, in colorful regalia. There was music. There was a static display of Vietnam-time vehicles (quarter ton, jeep, mule, jeep with 106, quad 50s, etc., and even a Lister bag and water buffalo!). There were numerous Iraq and Afghanistan soldiers in their utilities (or "fatigues" for Army) and I was moved to tell many of them "thank you for your service." I was amazed that younger people took an interest in us old farts. I'm going to be 72 this August and most of the rest of my brothers there were in their 60s. But they seemed perfectly at home. There is a bond between brothers (and now, sisters) in arms that breaks boundaries of age and other social classifications!

I got up every morning at 0530 and had the distinct pleasure of running about 45 minutes in a route that included circling the Lambeau stadium. Oddly (I thought), I encountered NO other runners--and I'll be 72 on 15 August, and most everyone else was obviously so much younger! The run was invigorating not only physically but there was a certain thrill of being in proximity to the football stadium and running through our Vietnam area--large map, motor "T" area, tents, etc.

The high point was a special gathering inside Lambeau Field of some 30,000. I was asked to give the prayer and did. It's the first time I did some religious "thing" for so many! What impressed me was that the next day, dozens came up to me recalling specific lines or phrases from it and saying that it was "right on." One man even had tears in his eyes as he expressed thanks.

The next day, Sunday, I conducted a worship service there for several hundred. We had, at my invitation, a Roman Catholic priest and also a Jewish lady (who has a son going off to Afghanistan this summer and another son graduating from USAF training, and whose husband is a Vietnam veteran). We had a bag piper and a girls chorus. We had several dozen members of Patriot Guard Riders standing on three sides with American flags. These men provide the Colors at funerals for the KIA of Iraq and Afghanistan and also are present at "send-off" and "welcome home" events of Iraq and Afghanistan soldiers and Marines. Some Wisconsin National Guard members served as ushers. I conducted the service and gave the sermon, focusing on Khe Sanh and some Biblical texts that seemed to apply to our situation at Khe Sanh and Vietnam, generally.



Tom, I'm not sure you were there since I didn't see you but knew you had planned to be there. There were so many tens of thousands, of course. It's miraculous that I connected with Donna Elliott, Bill Maves, Bruce "T-Bone" Jones, and Carl Oksnee!

Semper Fi,

REVEREND RAY W. STUBBE LZ LAMBEAU
Bruce "T-Bone" Jones

Bill Maves(E/2/26) and I met Rev. Ray at LZ Lambeau also and it was great to see him. He had a "shinner" in one of his eyes from his last boxing match (BTW...he won it!) and he looked very good. He gave the benediction at the Sat evening event and then he led the memorial service on Sun morning. He was magnificent! I spoke to him after the memorial service and in his very self-deprecating manner he asked me if he "did good". I responded with tears in my eyes; "yes, you always do a great job; it was beautiful, Ray". What a fine man and such a wonderful representative to KSV. Semper Fi; and enjoy the Memorial weekend. "T-Bone"



BILL MAVES E CO 2/26 HILL 861A



REVEREND RAY STUBBE ADMIRING GIFT OF-COFFEE BROUGHT BACK FROM VIETNAM BY DONNA ELLIOTT



GIANT MAP OF VIETNAM FOR VETERANS TO SIGN IN AREA THEY SERVED IN



ARVN VETERANS FROM SOUTH VIETNAM



EMOTIONAL RETURN TRIP



MEMORIES

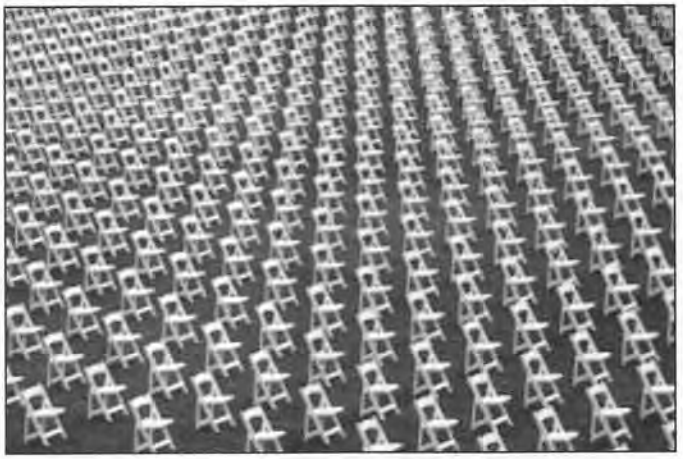

1,244 EMPTY CHAIRS HONORING THOSE FROM WISCONSIN WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

OBIT

LTCOL JOSEPH A. DONNELLY USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN XO H & H&S CO 1/9

Retired Marine Lt. Co\. Joseph Augustine Donnelly, 76, of Beaufort, husband of Catherine Deegan Donnelly, died Friday, Dec. 1,2006.

Lt Col. Donnelly was born Dec. 24, 1929, in Bronx, N.Y., a son of Joseph Augustine Donnelly and Agnes Douglas Donnelly.

He began and ended his Marine Corps career at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, from recruit training in 1948 to retirement to Beaufort as lieutenant colonel in 1972. His tours included attachment from the Eisenhower White House to Camp David from 1959-61, including a summit meeting with Soviet Premier Nikita Kruschev. He served as the battalion executive officer with the 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment in Vietnam at Con Thien and at the siege of Khe Sanh. Upon return from Vietnam in 1969, he commanded the Weapons Training Battalion at Parris Island.

He received a bachelor's degree in science from the University of Maryland in 1961 and a master's degree in education from Pepperdine University in 1976.

He chaired the automotive department at the Technical College of the Low country from 1973-81. He performed crane inspection and certification training for the Tennessee Valley Authority and served as an adviser to the Saudi Ordnance Corps in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, teaching English language proficiency from 1983-89. Upon return to Beaufort, he became a tax preparer and partner of the local H&R Block franchise.

He was a past commodore of the Beaufort Yacht and Sailing Club, former State Co-Regent of the Clan Douglas Society and an active member of St. Peter's Catholic Church, where he chaired the first revived Church Bazaar at St. Peter's. He also served on the board of directors of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines Network.

Survivors include his wife of Beaufort; three daughters, Margaret Donnelly of Durham, N.C., Mary Catherine Dubois of Charleston and Elizabeth Donnelly of Port Royal; two sons, William Donnelly of Lithonia, Ga., and Brian Donnelly of New York; a sister, Agnes Marie Hartman of Rifton, N.Y.; and eight grandchildren.

OBIT

SHIRLIE MAE FISHBAUGH



Shirlie Mae Fishbaugh, 61 of East Point, passed away from complications of an extended illness on August 23rd in the Our Lady of the Bellefonte Hospital at Russell, KY. She was born on June 2, 1949 in Martin, KY and was the daughter of Della Rose Mitchell who preceded her in death. She is survived by loving husband, **Mike Fishbaugh.** She is also survived by daughter, Lara Lynn (John) Kromer of Boons Camp and sons William David Hull, Hagerhill and Michael Ray Fishbaugh, East Point. Also surviving her are grandchildren Hannah (Britton) Spradlin, Liberty King, Waylon Whitson, Dakota Fishbaugh, Collin Fishbaugh, Hannah Grace Cantrell, Taylor Crawford and Denicia Hull. She was also blessed with and is survived by two great grandchildren Hannah Cheyenne and Gabriel Britton Spradlin.

The family requests that donations be made in her name to the American College of Rheumatology Research and Education Foundation at http://www.rheumatology.org/ref or to the Khe Sanh Veteran's Scholarship Foundation at http://www.khesanh.org/fund/fund.html.

"RENUNION STORY(SIC)"

By Craig Tourte

You'll note the intentionally misspelled word "Renunion" and I am not going to tell you why. If you were one of the fortunate who attended the outstanding reunion in San Antonio you would get the soon to be known, and I am sure to become quite popular, inside joke. That aside, let's gets down to some serious business. I expect this to be one of more than a few articles I'll write about this reunion.

I'll start with the first story which involves a trip to the Alamo. Although a commonly hot and muggy San Antonio Saturday morning, Tom Horchler (H.Q. 1/13) and Lucy, David Tonick (A/1/26), Marco Soto (A/1/26) and myself, paid a visit to the Alamo before the crowds arrived. There is not much that remains of the original structure but what has been preserved and rebuilt allows the visitor to get a sense of the mission as it was in 1836. There are the usual rusted artifacts, trinkets one can purchase in the gift store, photographs to be viewed and articles of historical importance.

The real story at the Alamo is contained in various plaques, markers and monuments displayed on the grounds, for example the letter to Major General Sam Houston dated February 24, 1836, attributed to William Barret Travis, LtCol., Commanding, which



Photo Submitted By Dave Doehrman

reads in part. "...Our numbers are few and the enemy still continues to approximate his works to ours. I have every reason to apprehend an attack from his whole force very soon; but I still hold out to the last extremity, hoping to secure reinforcements in a day or two. Do hasten on aid to me as rapidly as possible, as from the superior numbers of the enemy, it will be impossible for us to keep them out much longer. If they overpower us, we fall a sacrifice at the shrine of our country, and we hope prosperity and our country will do our memory justice. Give me help, oh my Country! Victory or Death!"

As I stood on the grounds of the Alamo, now with crowds and traffic starting to settle around me, circling humanity taking photographs of the structures, family and friends, so many looking in and few looking out, I stood still and heard the hooves of a thousand horses and felt the dusty ground beneath my feet and saw the two hundred brave men of the Alamo standing, facing the enemy who outnumbered their small command 300 to 1. I saw the line in the dirt and heard the offer, that any who chose to leave could step over and knew, not one boot moved. As if from an old grainy black and white newsreel film, I reflected on a time not so long ago of a few thousand men who stood shoulder to shoulder, facing overwhelming odds with no choice to leave, no line to cross, no where to run or hide. Men who also stood, knowing that the enemy was superior in number. I saw the many thousands in the hills and the few on the plateau who stood facing a "superior number of the enemy" and I understood the fear, anticipation of battle and desperate defense these men of the Alamo faced 174 years ago, as did those who defended that little Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh.

Moving along to another marker titled "The Defense of The Alamo" my eyes filled with tears as I read the final few lines. "...It was here that a gallant few, the bravest of the brave, threw themselves between the enemy and the settlements, determined never to surrender nor retreat they redeemed their pledge to Texas with the forfeit of their lives - they fell the chosen sacrifice to Texas Freedom." Knowing in reality these words were spoken about the defenders of the Alamo, my heart was reading defenders of the small Marine Corps outpost of Khe Sanh.

Saturday evening as we all sang the National Anthem, most with voices cracking and tears running our cheeks, I stood in the back of the room and peered over those ever fewer aging defenders of Khe Sanh and thought to myself, these few men,



Photo Submitted By Dave Doehrman

these gallant few, the bravest of the brave threw themselves at the enemy, determined never to surrender nor retreat and all were willing to forfeit their lives for their comrades and their country and I was proud to be standing with them. I recalled the letter written by William Travis, "...If they overpower us, we fall a sacrifice at the shrine of our country, and we hope prosperity and our country will do our memory justice..."

I pray our country remembers those fine brave men who defended the hills and combat base at Khe Sanh and "...will do our memory justice."

CRAIG,

Great piece of writing Craig! You brought back probably my fondest memory of this reunion. I will never forget standing in the rear at the banquet, while 'God Bless America' played (After 'The ANTHEM' & 'TAPS'), watching one of our members struggle to get out of his scooter to stand at attention, while at another table a member was putting his arm around his buddy who appeared overcome with emotion. And I thought I was the only one.....
Tom Ford

CRAIG,

I always read your postings and I always look for your next. Tho' I was unable to take part in this year's reunion of Brothers, thoughts of all you Brother's walked in my mind. Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me Craig and I look forward to your next.
Steve

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS
BILL WEBER MCB-4 SEABEES

The Record
STAFF WRITER
BY JUSTO BAUTISTA

Students who've been to the wall never forget it. The wall at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Vietnam Era Education Center in Holmdel, which recently celebrated its 15th anniversary, pays tribute to the 1,562 New Jerseyans who were killed or listed as missing in America's longest and most controversial war.

May is the center's busiest month, but each year, almost 9,000 students, from New Jersey and around the country, take the 45-minute tour of the center, guided by Vietnam veterans like Bill Weber, 62, of Little Ferry.

And most leave with a better understanding of what their fathers or uncles or aunts who served in the war went through.

"I understand the emotion of war now," a Clifton High School student said. "Coming here today was more moving that we could have ever imagined," said a student from Long Branch. "A beautiful remembrance of those who gave their all," said a student from Fairfax, Va.

What I find is that it's a life-changing event for many of the kids who come through," said Bill Linderman, a Vietnam veteran and the center's executive director.

"Most of the students are only a year or so younger than the guys whose names are on the wall," Weber said.

Unlike many veterans who returned from the war, Weber doesn't mind talking about it. Weber, who served in the Navy Seabees, is only one of 36 Vietnam veterans who volunteer as tour guides at the center.

Some Vietnam veterans volunteer as tour guides only to find that their war memories are too painful. They decide they can't be volunteers. For others, volunteering has had a cathartic effect. They open up after years of silence.

"My daughters ask me about the war, I tell them," Weber said. "Some guys don't like to talk about it. Some go to the other extreme. All they want to do is talk about it, embellish a little. Then you have the wannabes."

Weber was wounded in a rocket attack at the big Marine base at Khe Sanh in June 1967. He was sleeping in a tent that took a direct hit.

"That was a wake-up call," he said. Two buddies were killed and a dozen others were wounded in the attack.

Weber's specialty in the Seabees was plumbing. "Our first project was a jail for the 1st Marine Division," he said. "I remember we had to do it 24/7. The only thing you could see were big bright lights while working. We were out in the middle of nowhere, west of Danang. It was like a big target, but nothing ever happened."

Marines welcomed the Seabees because they built rest and recreation centers, USO buildings, PX buildings and airstrips.

Again, unlike some of his Vietnam brethren, Weber, who retired from the Bergen County Police Department last January after 30 years, didn't shun military fraternal organizations such as the VFW or American Legion. In fact, he joined the local VFW post while he was still in Vietnam. Weber will be the new commander of VFW Post 809 in Little Ferry, and is the commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 522 in Paramus.

Weber admits that he sometimes "gets choked up" on the tours. "But you recover right away, hopefully."

I AM A NAVY CORPSMAN

By Mark A. Wright, HMC(SS) USN

I am a navy corpsman. I possess the stamina and enthusiasm of youth and the wisdom and experience of an old man.

I am 3 parts doctor, 1 part nurse, 2 parts marine, 1 part yeoman and 3 parts mom, yet I am 100% sailor.

I am unemployable to the civilian world in my given profession yet have been the very life line for countless marines, soldiers and sailors since 1778.

I have carried marines from the battle field ... and have been carried reverently myself by marines who mourned my passing like that of a brother or sister.

I am young. I am old. brave, scared and scarred. my title has changed over the years: loblolly boy, surgeons steward, pharmacist mate, hospital corpsman, IDC, yet with all the changes I am still simply know as "doc".

I have celebrated peace; yet felt the sting of war on the seas, in jungles, in foreign cities, in Washington D.C. and on beaches of every shade of sand... white, tan, coral and black.

I have raised hell on liberty; hope in the midst of battle .... and Old Glory on Iwo Jima.

I have removed appendixes on submarines and limbs in the midst of battle and many other procedures far above and beyond what I am expected to do by the normal practice of medicine because it had to be done in order to save the life of a marine or sailor in battle or under the ice, far from a doctors care.

I have ignored my own wounds to the point of death in order to stay at my station treating the wounded of my nations Navy, Marine Corp, Army and Air Force.

I have the highest number of Medal of Honor recipients of any corp in the Navy .....most of them presented to my wife, child or mother because I was already in heaven at the time.

I am proud to know in my heart that every marine who has ever fought and every sailor who has gone to sea on ships owe their very lives to those they simply, yet respectfully know as "doc"



Combat Entry: Arrival in Baghdad

By Gary Foster
Vice President, Stanley Consultants

"Attention! Secure your gear, bring your seatbacks to the upright, stow your tables and secure your seatbelts. Prepare for combat entry beginning in three zero minutes." The loudspeaker in the cold, cramped passenger deck of the Air Force cargo plane crackled sharply to life interrupting the monotonous drone of the four cruising jet engines and shattering the dark silence that prevailed within the passenger cabin. My alarm clock at home in the early morning hours is bad enough. However, after more than six hours torturously jammed into the upper deck of a plane that had winged its way east through the night over the Mediterranean, north up through Turkish airspace, and then south, deep into Iraq crossing over the Tigris and Euphrates rivers unseen below us, finally descending into the Baghdad area, the young service woman's piercing voice, acutely amplified by the loudspeaker, and the foreboding, onerous, in-your-face message she intoned caused a worse awakening.

Not really asleep, I nonetheless bolted straight up in my seat along with everyone else and looked all around - nothing to see. Dark, no lights, except the light behind the female sergeant who was standing facing us and issuing more instructions, none of which I listened to. Having tied her hair up behind her head, she was wearing earphones and a mouthpiece both of which were attached to a cord that connected her audibly to a small control panel on the interior wall of the dark fuselage. Her silhouette, made rumpled by her oversized utility fatigue-type uniform, was clearly outlined by a single yellow/amber backdrop light. "What? Combat entry?" I asked myself. "What does that mean? This isn't a fighter plane or a bomber. This is a cargo transport plane. And we're going into combat?! What are we supposed to do besides strap in?" At the same time I rather supposed, hoped, that the crew knew what they were doing. Evidently, by the young woman's composure, she must have done this more than a few times before and I assumed she knew what to expect. I certainly didn't know what to expect. How could I? I've never flown into a combat zone and in this instance I couldn't even see out. I took solace in her casual, almost serene disposition that we would land safely. Nonetheless, the frank baldness of the words was more than a little unsettling. Any chance the refreshment cart could come down the aisle? – I looked around furtively - just one more time? Just a thought, not a clever one. There wasn't a refreshment cart on this plane, hadn't been one on the entire flight from Dover, Delaware, or earlier from Charleston, for that matter. "Prepare for combat entry." I will never forget these words or the ironically calm manner in which the young Air Force woman spoke them.

While she stood in front of us aloof, unmoving, non-plussed, her instructions were the catalyst that caused turmoil around her. The issuance of those words transformed the passengers from an inert sleeping mass to a heightened peripatetic state of transience characterized by some chaos and certainly lots of confusion, like so many sub-atomic particles that had been agitated by some exogenous force. Everyone immediately bustled quickly about: sorting, stowing, packing, putting away, moving around, murmuring, standing, sitting then standing again, sneezing, coughing, the running sound of zippers on bags being zipped open and then zipped shut again, the ripping sound of velcro as flaps other bags were being secured, people talking, searching for lost items, yawning, flashlights turned on, their precise beams cutting across the interior of the cabin casting incongruous shadows, people stretching, person gets hit by outstretched arms, another person stumbles on a bag that had been placed at his feet that was not there earlier, hats put on, hats taken off, poncho liners rolled up, pandemonium, etc., and finally, buckling up in our seats. Calm again. An ignoble end overshadowing an even more ignoble beginning. After so long an arduously long, tedious journey from Muscatine, Iowa and Virginia via South Carolina several days earlier, now ending at Baghdad, our dubious arrival terminated a trip that held little more than the promise of the unknown. The improbable flight had ended. But the beginning of the voyage to Baghdad ten days earlier was seemingly as strange.

My vacation in Chicago in late September 2003 was cut short when the telephone rang in my hotel room, with a seeming tone of urgency. It was Chris Broders, International Coordinator for Stanley Consultants, telling me in an anxious, quickened voice to call Jim Hollatz (Senior Vice President) immediately. When I asked if the call involved something

to do with Iraq, she replied "Yes. Call Jim right now. You're going to Iraq immediately!" Events in Iraq were unfolding at a fast pace and Stanley Consultants was destined to be part of it.

I knew I may become involved in Iraq with the company but didn't know to what extent. My sojourn to Iraq had begun in early September. Jim told me he needed my help and asked me whether I would be interested in going to Iraq for an unspecified length of time. Without hesitation, I said "Yes, of course." Now as I talked to Jim from Chicago, he told me to be in Baghdad within one week for a stay of as long as perhaps six months. The company had received the mobilization order on a recently awarded government task order to assist the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to identify and develop infrastructure projects for the reconstruction of Iraq. Stanley Consultants, and an associate firm, Baker Engineering, would be sending 15 people to Iraq within 2 weeks. I was to be the lead person. I agreed that I could go and I would be ready to leave Muscatine for the Middle East on Monday morning.

Having checked out of my Hotel on the Chicago River, I left Chicago driving west on I88 on a cloudless Sunday morning at 4AM, arriving back in Muscatine about three hours later. I was flying. I had lots to do and my mind was spinning and I had no time to lose. I had made a list of things that had to be taken care of and I kept adding to the list as I drove west. The CD changer was at full blast with an eclectic of CDs: Foreigner, Madonna, Fleetwood Mac, Britney (love OOPS!). Then somewhere just west of DeKalb past the last toll booth on I88, I hit the button for CD No. 5 - Crosby Stills and Nash: "*On the Midnight watch I realized why twice you ran away...*" I pulled into Muscatine, and stopped for breakfast at HyVee. My first stop was the Stanley office on Iowa Avenue where I picked up my briefcase, computer and an electronic ticket confirmation that Melanie Koch had arranged for me through Muscatine Travel. Debbie Martin, my secretary, had arranged notes and messages and left them tidily arranged on my otherwise untidy desk. My mind continued to race, I had less than 24 hours to pack, get ready, make all arrangements, and pay bills before I was to leave on a plane for Washington, DC, and then on to Iraq. Any traveler knows that the biggest pain of traveling is making sure your bills are paid while you are away and maintaining continuity of one's personal administrative responsibilities. How was I going to do this for three, to possibly six months? I made arrangements to automatically prepay all bills and I contacted Tim Nelson and Sandy Bean at First National Bank to help me. I contacted various individuals to take care of my house, my cars, leaf and snow removal, and in general look after things. Kevin McCauley agreed to look after my house and cars. Bill McGowan would take care of my yard. I prepaid him. I asked Chris and Melanie to make contact with my parents on a regular basis to check on their health. I called my sister and folks and told them I was leaving the next day which caused lots of anxiety, but they understood, and in fact were great supporters. I called Kathy Keane and Tom Bankhead to say goodbye and to tell them to keep bourbon on the shelf for when I returned. Then I bundled my things up and left the office, only to abruptly stop myself, turn around, and state out loud "What a mess!"

I spent the next hour cleaning my office and arranging it neatly. Now, back home, I turned my attention to packing. What should I take with me? The temperature in Iraq would be in excess of 125 degrees so I would need light clothes, but I will be there through winter so I will need heavier, warmer clothes too. I would most likely meet with high level ministerial or CPA officials so I would need a suit or two and some ties. Shoes? Let's see. I need two pairs of dress shoes, sneakers, work boots – no, not those. And shirts, plenty of shirts. Shaving cream, toothpaste, razors, and a few bottles of cologne - well maybe only three on this trip. Books, yep – I learned long ago, always travel with something to read. Now for the house, need to secure all doors and windows, keep heat low, AC off, each room cleaned and straightened, make sure all floor drains in the basement are full of water, furnace turned down, cars secured, house locked.

Next morning, after a hug from Chris, Melanie, and Debbie, saying goodbye to Jim Hollatz, Julie Graham, Steve Teraberry, Rich Stump, Larissa Wilson, Dick Hutmacher, Molly McGuire, Tim Edwards, Gayle McCauley, and Schooners, and after giving a big African handshake to Gregs Thomopulos, I left the Stanley office by the back door and was off to Iraq. But my first stop was Washington DC, then Winchester, Virginia for my processing and what

would be a subtle, well not so subtle, indoctrination to the military way of things.

Key members of the team including Bennett Reischauer, Senior Vice President of Stanley Consultants, met at the Baker offices in Alexandria, Virginia for one day and then the next day I drove a rental car to Winchester, Virginia. I had learned that the Stanley team would include John Sayles, Brian Roth, George Gardner, Don Bain, who would become my roommate in Baghdad, Dean Stange, a Muscatine native now working for Stanley in Denver, and two people from Stanley's Minneapolis office: Alan Palmer and Craig Johnson who would serve as Team Leader.

Leaving Arlington on I66 at 6AM, I made my way through Roslyn and on to Manassas. The Virginia countryside was as I had remembered it from years before. The vegetation, still green in mid-September, was as lush as I had ever seen it but the development of the rolling countryside that is northern Virginia was, quite frankly, alarming. I eventually arrived in the Shenandoah Valley and, turning right, thirty minutes later I arrived in Winchester, Virginia to begin my processing.

Processing would entail inoculations (shots), being issued military gear and some equipment, obtaining a government identification card, receiving a complete physical, and receiving some instruction as to emergency procedures. I had to accomplish all this in only three days. It would be easy to accomplish all this in one day, but as soon as I arrived at the offices, I realized I was just another person in the multitudes waiting in line for processing. This facility was processing hundreds of people all bound for Iraq. I had to take my turn.

On the second day, after my physical, I was scheduled for my shots. The nurse had laid out on the table before her a series of syringes and for the next ten minutes both my arms were like dartboards. "And this one is a general flu shot," she said, as she held the syringe with the thin shiny needle vertical in the air. I told her, "If it's OK, I really don't want a flu shot," to which she responded, "I don't care what you want," and boom, she plunged the needle into my right arm. And then the gamma globulin shot - or whatever it's called - right in the butt. All I know is that afterwards the thick, molasses like serum doesn't dissipate through one's body that fast and it's like sitting on a golf ball. By the time I left I had been given every type of inoculation imaginable including anthrax. Everyone of the team would experience the same ordeal.

Now for my gear. "Here," the sergeant said, "hold the duffle bag and follow me." Gas mask and filter, canteens, cup, poncho liner, and sleeping bag, and more gear. My arms were full and the duffle bag was overflowing with stuff. "What about a uniform?" I asked. The sergeant looked at his list and said "Nope, no uniform for you." "What about a hat or a camouflaged shirt?' "Nope." Stopping at the last bin, the sergeant said "Here, try this on. It may stop a nine millimeter, but doubt it will stop an AK." Looking at me, he said "Fits fine." "I guess," I said as I slung the twenty pound flak jacket over my shoulders. "Try this on," he said as he placed a kevlar helmet on my head. Slamming the palm of his hand down on top of the helmet, shaking my whole body, he said "You look great. Sign this sheet and you're outta here." Now fully loaded down, I was ready, or at least I thought I was ready. On to Iraq. But first a steak at an Irish Pub on the promenade in historic downtown Winchester. Located in the northern Shenandoah Valley, Winchester is historic because, I am told, the city changed hands over one hundred times during the civil war, and sometimes several times in one day. I had set the alarm in the room of my hotel located not far from the city center and closer to USACE headquarters for midnight. I packed some items, or, rather, I laid them out on the second bed for packing later and drove into the city center to enjoy dinner. The meal and wine and the conversation with some English people at the end of the bar were delightful. But I couldn't stay for long and I returned to the hotel to finish packing and to get some sleep.

After I returned, however, I could not sleep – usually can't on days that I travel - and at 11:00PM, or twenty-three hundred (got to get used to that) I decided to just continue on with the day, even though one day was ending and the next one, marked by the sunrise, would not happen, in theory, for another six hours. I prepared to depart. I packed all the things I had not packed earlier in the evening, and began lugging the bags to the car which I had parked near the hotel entrance. I was weighed down with items with which I usually do not travel, namely, a duffle

bag filled with a sleeping bag, canteens, cooking utensils, a poncho liner, and a few other odd assortment of things that were alien to me. But on top of all this, I had to carry my newly acquired flak jacket and helmet (without a chin strap), camouflage cover, liner and a foam rubber doughnut that fit inside the helmet that would cradle the top of my head. All issued to me by the US Army. Where was I going to pack all this stuff? How was I going to carry two suitcases, a garment bag, a computer, brief case, duffle bag, helmet, and a flak jacket all at once? I didn't have a clue. Taking everything to the car would be easy – one item or two at a time - but what about transiting through airports? I loaded all this into the trunk of the car and returned to check out. The man behind the counter said "You're off to Baghdad, aren't you?" "Yes," I said. "Many people come through here on their way to Baghdad with the Corps of Engineers." I nodded my head as I realized I was another person, another number sent into the void. In fact, I was nothing more than a social security number: 242-76-6485, a number I have had since I was 12. "Good luck." the man said. I thanked him and walked through the doors to my rental car. Time was oh-one-hundred. I drove to a seven-eleven and bought coffee and then drove to the Army Corps of Engineers building to meet Lt. Colonel Victoria Mouras (pronounced the same as Morris) at the well lit main gate. Lt. Colonel. Mouras would lead the team to Iraq for the US Army Corps of Engineers and, for traveling purposes, because I was on another USACE contract, I was attached to her group until my arrival in Baghdad.

I had made arrangements to meet her at the main gate prior to our departure. She was picking up her weapon and I was going to leave my rental car behind in the Corps' compound and then ride with her to the departure point. The Corps people would take care of the car and return it for me. I transferred all my gear into the Lt. Colonel's car while she collected her weapon. I thought she was going to be issued an M16, but she picked up a 9 millimeter Beretta pistol instead, a pistol the deployment of which is not without controversy. We drove to the Sleep Inn not far away to meet the rest of the troops and to board the bus. The bus to where, exactly? Charleston AFB in Charleston, South Carolina; that's where. Imagine, an eleven-hour bus ride to catch a United States Air Force plane to Baghdad. So we loaded all our gear in the bottom storage bay of the bus. There were 35 people in all on the passenger manifest: 34 Army types and 1 civilian – me. I was in the latter group.

The bus driver, accompanied by his granddaughter wrapped in a blanket in a seat, closed the big bus door and started the diesel engine. A minute later, after he prepared some notes and put them away, he put the bus' transmission into gear and we departed from beneath the hotel portico on our way to Charleston. The bus with 35 Iraq-bound SOBs (Souls on Board) left Winchester, Virginia at 2:00AM, or oh-two-hundred, right on time. We left Winchester driving south down the Shenandoah Valley on Interstate 81 south to Roanoke, then somewhere near there we would intercept I-77 and on to Charlotte, then Colombia, and then southeast on I-26 towards Charleston. Not much happened on the trip. Everyone slept. Everyone except me. I was too keyed up. We passed through Roanoke with its famous Roanoke Hotel brightly lit up.

We continued on reaching Charlotte just before sunrise. Of course now we were not far from the state line. We stopped in South Carolina for breakfast at a Cracker Barrel. We invaded the restaurant all at once and overwhelmed the staff. I remembered that my brother-in-law likes to purchase ice tea with tons of sugar in it especially from Cracker Barrel. I think he knows where every Cracker Barrel in the country is located. And does he ever have a sweet tooth! Me too, to a lesser degree. I bought a jar of fireballs. Why not? Loaded up again and on to Columbia. We passed Columbia airport on our right and made our way to Charleston. I remembered I had made the same trip with my folks when I was 15. At that time the road was two lane concrete and the constant noise from the tires hitting the joints in the pavement slabs drove us crazy.

We arrived at Charleston Air Force Base around 11:00AM. The bus pulled into a vacant lot across from the terminal building and everyone climbed out. We received instructions from the Lt. Colonel as to where to place our things. "Over there on the grass, lined up. Keep everything tight. The pallets will be here soon." I put everything where I was told, along with everyone else and looked around. "Hey buddy," I called out, "Any beer on the base?" "Over at the bowling alley," he yells back, pointing

behind me through some tall trees with whispy Spanish moss, typical of the south, hanging down from the limbs. "That's for me." The Lt. Colonel instructed us to return to the air terminal no later than "fifteen hunnert" for the flight at "eighteen hunnert." Again, the twenty-four hour clock. I thought "NLT fifteen hundred hours for ETD eighteen hundred hours." I was catching on. We had time for a leisurely lunch. But not to be. One hour later, halfway through my burger - no onions - and my second beer - I think, a Busch - the Lt. Colonel entered the building and made exaggerated sweeping circular movements of her arms over her head. "Time to go: flight is early! Hoowuh!" Hoowah? From where did this expression spring?

Those of us in the bowling alley restaurant, having already paid for our lunch, wolfed down what was on our paper plates and virtually sprinted for the terminal through the moss laden trees and across an open field, which we had originally avoided, soggy from the previous night's rain. My loafers became soaking wet. I worried that I would fall and damage my computer or drop my briefcase in the water. I did neither. A lieutenant next to me slipped, however, and almost fell down. The bus on which we had arrived was long gone and our bags, palletized and covered with plastic, had been moved to the aircraft and loaded on board. Where we had arrived and deposited our things, there was now nothing. But wait a minute, where is my helmet and bullet proof vest? I became disconcerted because if I lost either one or both, believe it or not, I had to pay for them. And, if I arrived in Baghdad without both of them, I would not be allowed to deplane, or so I was told, or be allowed to ride into town without them on. I would be stranded at BIAP (pronounced By-Op, meaning Baghdad International Airport). This would be a small embarrassment.

All helmets and vests looked the same and, not knowing originally how the luggage would be carried or transported, I had failed to identify helmet and vest. I thought I would carry them with me, but no. Everything was now on a pallet on board a cargo plane located somewhere behind the terminal on the Charleston AFB flight ramp. I immediately recognized I was the new kid on the block, a "newbie" as they say, because everyone else, I had noticed, had expertly identified theirs. In an attempt to console myself, I thought if all vests and helmets are identified, then the ones that aren't must be mine. Still, I didn't know for sure. I put the whole issue behind me, recognizing further there were many things new to me that were outside my control and this would probably be the case for the next several months. Just get used to it and deal with it.

We lugged our hand luggage through the door, through security, and into the terminal waiting room. Pretty austere place compared to other terminals I have been in. After thirty minutes, we were herded onto buses and driven to the flight ramp and to our waiting plane. Whoa! A C5A Galaxy. "I'm gonna fly to Baghdad in a C5A?" All new to me. Good Lord, was it ever big. I've only ever seen one in pictures.

Everyone disembarked from the bus. We lined up perpendicular to the C5 under the South Carolina sun, the sky dotted with white puffy semi-tropical clouds, to board the aft door located low on the fuselage. There I was in the middle, but more towards the end of the line, with US Army personnel in front and behind. I was wearing blue slacks and a light blue shirt, which contrasted markedly with the desert tan of the fatigue uniforms of the troops who would be my traveling companions for the next many hours. At least my sleeves were rolled up just like theirs. I was trying my best to fit in but failing miserably. Standing there in the shadow of the monster cargo plane, its lifeless engines slung below its drooping wings and with people milling all about under it and to its side, I knew now I was on my way. There was no turning back. The trip would happen and me with it. The line, momentarily still, shuffled, its people grabbing their belongings and inching forward to board the colossal plane.

One by one, we clambered aboard, up some stairs and inside the aircraft. The pallets carrying our gear were placed at the back of the plane. But what about our hand gear? The loadmaster told us to leave it on the deck at the extreme end of the plane, on the ramp. He would secure it. So we threw whatever we were carrying to the rear deck and climbed another single ladder up to the upper deck and this is when it became interesting. Some of the people who, let's just say, were a little wide, had difficulty climbing the steep narrow steel stairs. It was surreal in effect and I seemed transfixed in this new capacious environment, as if I could not escape. I was being swal-

lowed by this monster. I climbed the steel internal stairs to the top - stairway to heaven – and climbed up through, what appeared to be a wire-meshed cage type structure with a gate that served as a protective door. As I climbed above the pallets, I noticed the Lt. Colonel's duffle bag had been placed on top of the pile of bags on the pallet and strapped down securely. Her bag was placed on top because she was carrying a weapon and although she was not allowed to carry it on her person, she had to know where it was at all times. No one else carried a weapon so I assumed everyone was to receive theirs "down range" or in "theater" and not in CONUS, meaning Continental United States (new expressions for me). Of course, continuing with the logic of acronyms, if a person were outside CONUS, he would be OCONUS.

At the top of the ladder, we entered the passenger deck and I noticed the seats were facing backwards. Now why would that be? This was strange for me because all other airplanes I have ever ridden in, the seats face forward. But then, how would one know front from back? There are no windows. So it makes no difference. The passenger deck is anything but first class, or business class, or even economy class. The only good thing is that there was little leg room, somewhat anyway. The flight time to Dover – are we going to Dover? – was about 1 hour thirty minutes. Dover?! I thought we were going to Baghdad. Seems we were to make a stop at Dover before proceeding on to Baghdad. The upper deck was cold and I remembered what the Lt. Colonel had said. The poncho liner is a man's best friend. Even women say "man's best friend." So the poncho liner must not be a woman's best friend… well, not quite like diamonds anyway. Her point was that the poncho liner can serve as a wrap or a blanket or a shawl or whatever to keep a person warm. I needed it on that flight and regretted I had not carried it with me.

The inside of a C5 is incredible. It is nothing more than a flying box, long in length and short in width, but still wide enough to carry a tank and a few other things. The plane was full of pallets of material and equipment all enshrouded in plastic, netting, tarps, and what have you. On this flight we were carrying trailers, tires, steel in varying shapes, large wood boxes, helicopter blades, bundles, odd shaped boxes, more boxes, bins filled with parts, etc. Each container or box was marked with just a unit number and some sort of coding, and destination in Iraq and other indecipherable numbers. No one knew their contents. Our gear was the least of volume and weight. The cavernous insides were lit with small lights and gave the appearance of a large warehouse at night with industrial lights providing a blanket of light but without illuminating anything in particular. There are all kinds of interesting statistics about the C5: world's largest airplane, 20 (or is it 30?) stories tall, longer in length than the distance of the Wright brother's first flight at Kitty Hawk, and on and on. I think until a person stands next to a C5, these statistics are lost and really impart little meaning as to the overwhelming size of the aircraft. When one sees a person standing in the opening of the fuselage door accessing the upper deck, and realizes that above him the tail towers another 60 feet, the dimensions and magnitude of the aircraft really make an impression and only then does one realize just how extra-human the outsized scale truly is. The tiny windows at the front of the aircraft that denote the cockpit area are nothing more than tiny slits when compared to the overwhelming size of the behemoth. Straight out of Star Wars, it's not difficult to imagine that the C5 is a giant star ship type machine big enough for sustained communities traveling through the universe and into deep time/space.

As it is, the plane is so big, 20, maybe 30 families could live inside comfortably, assuming proper plumbing were installed. The floor is difficult to stand on firmly because it's covered with swiveling rollers that allow pallets to be slid in any direction, and for that same reason, walking fore and aft of the flying warehouse is not easy. There are gizmos that spin, and latch and turn and secure, hooks and rings and ropes and slides and gadgets and whissits and tie points with their designated location numbers, and piping and tubes, and cords, and cables, and signs and switches and panel boxes, and more latches and handles and pulleys, tie down points, and swivels and rollers, shackles, pins, clamps, on and on. Upstairs, the passenger deck, dimly lit, is equipped with two bathrooms, a kitchen (or rather a galley), seats, life vests, ropes, and other things that I could not identify. The insides did not bespeak of luxury or comfort but rather utility. Painted military gray, or some officious special-use colors, etc., the interior imbued a business ambiance about it.

The engines are about the size of those on a 747. One airman pointed out to me that they are much more powerful. I was soon to learn how much more powerful when we rolled down the runway and lifted into the sky.

We all strapped in backwards, and received our flight and safety briefing – on civilian planes, it's called a demonstration - and the young woman read aloud each item that we were to learn. I still have no idea how to inflate a raft or even a life vest. The seatbelt and the location of the bathroom, those, I had down cold. Everything else was a blur to me.

The pilots started the engines one by one and slowly the low howl of the turbines and compressors of each engine began to increase and resonate through the metal fuselage. First the right engines, then those on the left came to spinning life. Finally all engines, alive, were turning, consuming fuel, spitting out hot gases, shaking the plane, and filling the plane's guts with a hint of burnt jet fuel and an interminable hum over which nothing could be heard. We taxied and taxied. It seemed that we crawled along the taxiway forever before finally feeling the plane turn onto the end of the runway. We could see nothing, could only imagine our existence through other senses. The plane sat still for a few moments with the engines running. The smell of the jet engine exhaust of burnt kerosene was more pronounced. We sat, I imagined, each of us thinking about what we were doing, why we were there, and could we get off the plane. Too late. No one spoke. The silence was broken by the immediate increase in high pitched whines as the turbines spooled up and then the sound became a screeching horrendous roar. The plane was restrained fully against its brakes, shuddering, when all of a sudden, with brakes released and the engines taking full command, we were rocketing down the runway gaining speed with every ten feet of distance. The plane shook and bounced along the uneven runway before lifting off heavily into the South Carolina sky. We saw nothing but we new we were airborne. The rest of the flight was smooth.

Not long it seemed, we were lowering the landing gears and flaps and making our approach to Dover Air Force Base. We turned final - at least I think it was final because I do not recall any other turns - landed on the runway with a long sustained thud that was more like rolling thunder or a train wreck as the plane's landing gears hit the tarmac, either singly or in tandem. The sound was a low rumble that seemed to get closer and louder as more of the gears and tires collided with the concrete. The crunching sound of the landing ended abruptly, it being replaced with a steady deep rolling sound as we sped down the runway. Then the high whine and roar of the engines began again as the throttles were pushed forward and the thrust reversers of each engine actuated to slow our forward progress. With the physics of inertia ever an influence, we were pushed into the back of our seats now as the forward moving plane decelerated. Finally, everything seemed to stabilize but we were still rolling forward. The flight was over. We taxied to a slot in the flight line and stopped, the engines shut down.

We were informed we would disembark from the top portal via a motorized extendable staircase. Actually that was a relief because descending the C5's internal steel stairway would be more dangerous than the ascent. But once on the ground again I was amazed at how dwarfed we were next to this starship. I turned and watched the people exiting from the top portal at the rear, they looked like puppets as opposed to people, they way Captain Ahab must have looked trapped by harpoon ropes on the back of Moby Dick. I noticed for the first time, the front landing gears had four wheels. Not one or two, but four. Incredible.

Arriving at Gate 2, we were told departure would be in four hours. That is, the turn around time for the next flight is a standard 4 hours. Even with the urgency of war, schedules prevail. We were told not to leave the area. After a couple of hours of wandering between Gates 2 and 3, and the vending machines, and the USO for coffee, we sensed the situation was deteriorating. Three hours slipped to four, slipped to five, then to six. Lt. Col Mouras decided to investigate and was told the plane was delayed but that we would be going soon. And soon, it happened. The bus pulled up in front of the terminal and we were all told to board the bus. Away we went back to the flight line. We pulled up to the back of the plane and, uh oh, there were mechanics inside the wheel well with an access plate off and another batch of mechanics working on something behind the wheel wells. I have flown enough to know this spells delay, if not disaster. As it turned

out, I would be proved right. Events would not be different here. We sat on the bus for an hour as the APU started up, filling the air with a high pitched shrill turbine sound and burnt fuel fumes, then shut down, then re-started, and then shut down. A mechanic, using both arms and with the help of a mate, removed a large cowling from the lower side of the fuselage and poured some fluid from a can into some opening on the APU. I said out loud in perfectly incorrect English, but barely audibly, "This is it. We ain't goin' nowhere." Sure enough, after another hour, the bus, with us sitting in it, turned around and started back towards Gate 2 behind and past the tail sections of about 15 C5s lined up and illuminated by the stark white light of the flight ramp. We drove past a 747 being loaded with jet engines. We entered the holding area, and waited. Four more hours we were told. Three hours, four hours, then five hours slid by – same scenario as before. An Air Force officer entered the waiting room and told us the situation was fixed, BUT – oh no, here it comes again - there was a new problem. Wouldn't you know it? The pilot had spotted a hydraulic leak in the front landing gear. Well, this sounded strange. But what did I know? Would it be unreasonable to assume these guys just don't want to fly? Then the bus arrived again and further instructions were issued: "We are going to the aircraft to collect your belongings and return to the gate. The load is being taken off and reloaded onto another C5. This will take three hours." Three Hours? I thought, no way! It'll take all day. No, all night. Back to the plane. We all climbed on board to collect our gear.

It was an amazing experience. There were loud thuds, and bangs, more bangs, as the heavy locking latches were being unlocked. The sound emanated from nowhere in particular but seemed isolated at the aft end of the plane. The mammoth cargo doors were being unlocked and were about to be opened. As a result of loud continued knocking sounds and deep metallic thuds, the back end of the airplane opened like a clamshell and *voila,* the plane opened to the flight ramp and the outside lights. It was like stepping outside of a beach house through large French doors. The hot humid swamp-smelling air rushed into the back of the plane and the entire world opened before our eyes. Some people had to move quickly because they were standing on the ramp as it began its slow descent to the pavement below, even when they were told to "Stand Clear." Pretty amazing watching this thing open up in preparation for unloading its contents. It would take more than three hours to transfer all this material and pallets, I thought.

We un-strapped our belongings. Lt. Colonel Mouras, being sure to retrieve her duffle bag (the weapon you know), told everyone what to do. One by one, each computer, briefcase, suitcase, vest, helmet and bag was passed along a human fire-bucket line to a waiting truck. It took an hour to unload our things. That left two hours for the rest of the cargo. "No Way." I told the Lt. Colonel. "We aren't going anywhere soon." It was midnight. Back to Gate No. 2.

In situations like these, there are two options: Try to sleep or forget about it. I chose the second option. I ate four apples, had two cokes, six cups of coffee, chewed gum and watched the TV monitor for departing flights. Our flight to Baghdad was listed as leaving "on time." This listing never changed but of course was totally inaccurate.

It was interesting to see how creative people can be when sleep overcomes them. Chairs were pulled together, poncho liners - man's best friend - were pulled out, beds were made on the floor, in the chairs in the corners, everywhere. The Lt. Colonel bounced from place to place to try to find a place to lie down. She finally curled up on some chairs in the corner of the waiting room with her legs protruding through the arms of the assembled chairs with her poncho liner over her head. Snoring in the room was inevitable and it drove one to distraction. The sun came up finally. But Dover was overcast, cool, gray, and threatening rain. We never knew the exact departure time for Baghdad but the Lt. Colonel established a time when we had to be back in the gate area, and gave everyone leave to take a shower and find something to eat. I didn't find anything for breakfast but I did manage a shower at the base health club

"Hey!" I yelled at a guy standing in a doorway. "You open?" I asked. "Not yet," came the reply. "We don't open till eleven." "Eleven!? That late!?" I was incredulous "Man, I'll be gone by then." It had taken me an hour walking around on foot and many requests for directions to find the place, but I

succeeded. The guy I was talking too was the bartender and I was standing in front of the Dover AFB Officers Club. After lots of talking, pleading, supplicating, I convinced him I was an "OK" guy and that after a very long night at Gate 2, and an even longer journey to Baghdad, it would be only fitting for him to provide me with a refreshment. "Come on in," he says. He closed the door and locked it. What could be better than a cold Becks at Dover AFB on a Sunday morning at 9AM after a sleepless night? I ordered a second one. "But you haven't gotten your first one yet," he said, raising his eyebrows. "Never mind," I said as I moved closer to the bar, ever on the offensive, "Just give me two." I consumed them in rapid order and paid up.

I walked back to the terminal. It had begun to rain, the sky was cloudy and the eastern horizon even more so. The tall, lonely looking tails of the C5s on the flight line stuck up above the low-lying buildings, their profile as gray as the sky. The flight had been delayed even longer, due to the change out of aircraft, and now we were scheduled to leave at 8PM – twenty hundred hours. We would arrive in Moron, Spain the next morning sometime around 5AM – oh-five-hundred. The bus came, we climbed on board, drove down the flight line, got off the bus, walked up the telescoping stairways, secured our belongings and strapped in. The pilots started the plane's big engines. With the high pitched whine, we rolled slowly down the taxiways, turned onto the runway and accelerated. Sitting backwards, we felt the plane lift off. It shuddered and moaned as it began its slice through the sky and we heard creaks and felt the shudders when, not far out over the Atlantic Ocean, the flaps, slats, and landing gears were retracted. Within a short while, we were above thirty-five thousand feet flying basically east.

After a couple of hours, we were fed a meatloaf dinner with soft drinks. The meal, in fact, was not bad, or maybe I was just starved, or bored, or both. No wine but plenty of Sprite. The flight was uneventful. We could see nothing. Of course over the ocean, there is nothing to see anyway. Most everyone fell asleep, but I could not. I tried to sleep but each time I fell into some unconscious state, I would almost immediately wake up to the drone of the engines which continued to propel us toward the rising sun. I wondered what my life would be like over the next several months. As a result of my volunteering to go to Iraq for my company, my life back home was placed on hold. I walked around and looked at all the sleeping bodies, more like odd-shaped irregular lumps, and realized that although my life had been disrupted, I was not alone - a thought that would reoccur to me several times. As I met more and more people bound for Baghdad over the next many days, I took solace in the fact that we are all in the same boat, if not the same plane. The mix of people included almost as many women as men but in their military uniform everyone looked identical, except me, as I was not issued BDUs (Battle Dress Uniform, or what used to be called fatigues).

I listened to the engines churn as I have on so many trans-oceanic flights. They are all the same regardless of flight, that constant hum and sound of rushing air. I have sat in economy in a window, aisle and middle seat, in business class, and in first class. Obviously first class is the best, but as long as I have an aisle seat, economy class is tolerable, especially on a 747 because the size and space of the interior allows one to roam around. Not so, on the C5. The passenger deck is really quite small and access to the cargo deck is restricted to passengers. There is nowhere to walk or roam around. And the lighting is very poor. So I sat and thought. About what really, I can't remember, but mostly about trivial things. I was to recall other previous adventures of my going to Australia, Zaire, Israel, and other destinations. The fact that I have traveled all my life stemmed from a trip I made as a young boy of 6 with my mother and sister to California through the Mojave desert and how we left home at 4:00AM under a partially full moon that beamed light into the car, a light green 1954 Chevy to be exact, as we trundled west along Highway 66.

I was captivated by New Mexico and Arizona and the desert, having never seen anything like it. Still love the desert. So Iraq is a desert, right? Should be OK there. With my mind really wandering now, I thought about what I had brought with me and what I had failed to bring. As much as I have traveled I never seem to bring the right thing. I always carry a knife and scissors – but not in my briefcase these days - a small flashlight, and aspirin, etc. I like the clean taste of Listerine so I had purchased a large plastic quart bottle of Listerine, and fearing it would split open in my suitcase, lugged it with me. Hard to imagine. But these sort of logistical issues become

major considerations when one travels. It can't be any different from going to the moon. One takes what one needs and packs it accordingly, commensurate with the length of trip and what's available at the other end. One finds that storage space in suitcases becomes an issue, a scarce resource. To be expert at packing is essential to a traveler. What did Marco Polo do? He had servants of course.

I worried about my mother and father and their health, and guilt began to creep into my mind when I realized I would not be close to them for a period of time. But my sis would be there to help them. Not that my parents are a burden or are in very bad shape or can't get around, it's just that they are not that mobile these days, and they like our company, and my sis and I like to be around them too. Why not?

I worried about my house and the leaves and the grass, all this nonsensical, inconsequential stuff. Did I bring Q-tips? Damn, I packed a bottle of cologne in my soft side suitcase. It'll get broken and everything will smell like *Monsieur Rochas*. The plastic bottle of rubbing alcohol! I left it in my suitcase. It'll leak and it's flammable. Stupid me. Listerine, well protected with me, not flammable, and rubbing alcohol, unprotected in my bags, flammable. Bad arrangement: bad decision. Further, all this liquid but, neglectful me, not a drop of bourbon. Stupid me again. Where was my brain? Where were my calculator and my palm pilot? I remembered packing them. Did I bring my charger for my digital camera? Oh yeah. I remember. I put the charger in the second suitcase. That's good - whew. My passport, wallet, and traveler checks are secure. That much I knew. What was the temperature at our current cruising altitude? About 57 degrees below zero, I thought. I worried about a package I sent to a friend. Would it arrive? I supposed it would. How would I submit my timesheets for work? Did I unload the dishwasher before leaving home? Couldn't remember. Does Kevin have my keys? Inconsequential thoughts with which to concern and amuse myself while at idle.

Bucephalus! I had been wrangling with the name for hours but could not remember it. Bucephalus was the name of Alexander the Great's horse. Alexander died in Babylon, south of Baghdad in 332 BC, or there about. Historians are not sure exactly how he died, from what malady, but to me, having had the disease, the descriptions of the symptoms indicated he died from malaria. But what was the name of his horse? Don't know why I thought of that, just not too much to ponder inside the plane at forty thousand feet. Robert E. Lee's horse was named Traveler, then there was Seabiscuit – just saw the movie – then there was Trigger, and Rosenante, Don Quixote's horse. At the Battle of Barasino in Russia, just south of Moscow, Napoleon's horse was named Marengo and Wellington's horse was named Copenhagen. But the name of Alexander's horse, for the life of me, I could not remember. The name escaped me. Then bingo: Bucephalus, that's it! Wide awake, rubbing my face and scratching my head. Looking around. Everyone asleep. No lights, cold inside. No noise except the engines. No voices. Perpetually dark.

I thought of my patio in late summer and the many dinners I have had there. The barbeque always ablaze, steaks and mushrooms, music, the table set with crystal and silverware and a tablecloth, great food and great friends. I remembered Kathy Keane and Tom and Alex, their grandson jumping on the pillows he had placed on the floor. I remembered the many times Tim and Hootie or Kevin would come by for coffee or beer, walking across the street to the Club, and the snow and the leaves, those, I would not miss. I thought of the Blooms next door and the deer in the yard. I thought of the parties I had given and how the police would come by to arrest drunken teenagers who, as they would discover, were older than the police.

My mind turned to my Afla Romeo – Alfa's can only be red, no other color -and how I would miss Sunday afternoons in August or early morning drives through the countryside, shifting through the gears at just the right RPM, listening to the engine, and how I have yet to perfect the gear transition from 5th down to 2nd and back up in a particularly tight "S" curve culminating in a sweeping left turn slightly uphill that I discovered on a secluded road in western Illinois. Like driving at Watkins Glen. Already in second gear having shifted down from 5th so that the torque of the engine as it's transferred to the rear wheels will carry me through the turn, I am accelerating with RPMs increasing to a matchpoint to begin shifting upwards again, first into 3rd and then, just at the apex of the exiting curve but

just before exiting, into 4th. RPMs should be about 4500. But the turn is so acute and the shifting sequence so tight, I have never mastered it. Well, I almost did once but almost spun the car. Hope Kevin takes good care of the cars, especially the Alfa - it does leak oil a bit. Kevin always takes good care of the cars and my house so should be OK.

Regardless of all those idle thoughts and concerns, with which I entertained myself, I was on a C5 at forty one or forty two thousand feet; west to east, should be at an odd or even altitude, can't remember. Then again, the realization: none of these thoughts are consequential, and in fact are rendered moot. Nothing I can do now. Surely as Bucephalus carried Alexander east from Greece through Iraq to the Indus River and beyond 2300 years ago, in an attempt to capture the eastern sun and conquer everything beneath it, my own Pegasus was now carrying me and 34 other people plus a crew of about 10 east towards the rising sun too. But we had nothing to capture, nothing to conquer. All we had to do was our job and return home safely.

Still, my mind continued to ramble, stillness everywhere, can't read, nothing to drink, no cashew nuts, nothing to do but sit. The darkness pervaded. The plane droned on.

I looked at all the lumps in the seats. Some were moving, some were not. One soldier arose and stumbled to the bathroom tripping over gear and duffle bags and other things. Slowly, more people began to wake up. I looked at my watch, couldn't see it in the dark and couldn't remember which little button I had to depress to illuminate the dial. I couldn't tell if it was light or dark outside. All I knew was that we had not changed altitude. Regardless of how well I sleep on a plane, the slightest change in flight attitude or altitude, I am awake. So far, we were level. The USAF flight attendants – airmen, or rather air women – were awake and stirring around and I could smell something cooking in the ovens. Breakfast was soon to be served. I arose from my seat, and made my way to the galley for some coffee. No breakfast for me - not that early, whatever time it was - but coffee definitely. I tripped over the same bags that the soldier had tripped on. For such a big plane, there was so little room in the passenger deck. Breakfast was served and consumed by the uniformed passengers and quickly taken away. Pretty efficient. After breakfast and the long line for the bathroom, the air woman said through the loudspeaker laconically, "We will begin our descent in two zero minutes, landing in four zero minutes. Secure your belongings." With that the cabin came to life with everyone busy rearranging their things. Poncho liners were being rolled up, bags were re-packed, and in general everyone was in everyone's way. There was no riot – no need for that - but there was chaos as each of us tried to find our way in the dim light and find things and store belongings. But in time, we all settled back into our seats, with everything restored. We felt the change in altitude in our ears, and we could sense the plane's attitude as it dipped and leveled off and dipped again, and turn to new headings. Then the loudspeaker spoke to us again "Secure your seatbelts, we will be landing in Moron, Spain in one five minutes." I never felt the plane turn to its downwind or base leg of the landing approach but I heard the variable whines of the engines as the pilot made power setting adjustments on the big engines to control altitude and descent. Up and down, then down more, then up again to maintain the plane on its landing glide slope. I heard the flaps and leading slats being extended and then I heard the wheel bay doors open and the large clunking noise of the landing gears themselves being extended and locked into position. There was a loud rushing sound as the air swirled around the wheel wells and landing gears. Spain. What a way to come to Spain, I thought. The song: "Blue Spanish Eyes." How long will we be here? I wondered to myself. Warm weather, Barcelona, Spanish taverns, Spanish days, beaches, bright sun, wine, more beaches, elegant clothes, Sitges, Las Pampas, guitar music, warm Mediterranean sea, more beaches, …my mind was on fire. Spain! I was ready.

The C5 touched down on the runway as it had done in Dover. But C5s don't really touch down. That is, they don't exactly kiss the runway. They impose themselves upon it, they thunder onto it making the ground beneath it shudder, with swirls of vortices spinning off the wingtips making tornado-like noises, moving the air mass to the side with a sudden rush, stirring up dust, scaring all the birds, and making itself known, inserting itself on an otherwise tranquil scene. Smoke from the tires, I imagined, would bathe the entire area in blue smoke. Spain. We had arrived in Spain. Let me out. Which

way to the beach?

We deplaned via the steep metal stairway, still dangerous but everyone made it out safely and we were loaded onto a bus and taken to the transit terminal. I had heard we would be there 12 hours. Fantastic! Where's the beach and where are the women? I sat right behind the bus driver and asked him, what there was to do here. "Nothing." "What?" I was incredulous! Spain? Nothing? Can't be. "Transit passengers can't get off the base." "Can't get off the base?" "Nope" "You mean I am in Spain for twelve hours and can't get off this base?" "You got it buddy. That's what I said" Ever resourceful, I asked, "Any Cerveza? "Not till noon at the restaurant around the corner." "Not till noon?" What kind of country is this?" The day was not starting very well for ole Gar.

The Lt. Colonel rounded us all up and, pointing over her shoulder, said "Breakfast is over there," and pointing in another direction, continued "showers are way over there across the courtyard. Be back at this location no later than eighteen hundred hours for a twenty-one hundred hour departure." I looked at my watch. Useless. I had not changed time to account for the time zone difference. What time is it? I asked. "It's oh-six-thirty," came the reply from an airman, or rather a ground man. My mind wasn't working. I, as well as everyone else on the plane, had a half day to kill in Spain, at a nowhere place called Moron, on a joint US/ Spanish military air base. This would be a long day. Make the most of it. Stashed my things, along with everyone else, in a corner of the terminal, sought out the showers. Found some nearer than across the courtyard. "Are you an officer, sir?" "You bet." "Right this way, towels are on the shelf." "Thanks." I was really getting in to this. Back for some more coffee, had a coke instead and walk around. Lots of US military people. Another C5 landed from the east, having entered the landing pattern at a classic 45 degree angle, turning downwind to the west, then onto its base leg, and final landing with the usual thunder. Then another. Now there were two C5s from Dover and one from Travis AFB all in single file. I could tell where the planes were from because the markings on the tail spelled out their home base. There were more aviation assets in one place here than in most air forces in the world. Not by number, but by value and certainly by size.

I walked around the entire base and stopped to look at two airplanes on display. One was an F5 trainer sitting at a slight upward angle on a concrete pedestal. What a tiny airplane. The other was some sort of sea-capable albatross, so low to the ground the grounds people could not cut the grass from beneath the fuselage. I looked at my watch that I had corrected for the correct time zone. Two hours to go: two hours to cerveza. Some guy had a satellite phone. I asked to use it and called Melanie at her home and told her where I was. "How are the beaches?' she asked. "Can't get off the base," I responded. "You're in Spain and can't get off the base? Maybe you're too old," she said. "Nope, no can do." She laughed. I inquired about her new house and her bowling game. "I don't bowl until Wednesday night," she said. I knew that. I just like to rib her and make her laugh.

By 10:00AM I had had enough. It worked in Dover, it'll work here. I strolled around the main terminal building and across a wood bridge that spans a very tiny creek, dry, and around another corner to the café. There it was, in typical European style: small Mediterranean-type tables outside, red and white table cloths - there's hardly a restaurant in the States that has table cloths anymore - condiments placed on the tables, and the door to the café open with more tables and a revolving ceiling fan. This is looking good. "*Aberto*?" No, that's not right. That's Italian. *C'est Ouvre?"* Can I say that here? Not correct in either language. What is Spanish for "Are you open?" A waiter, or maybe he was the maitre d', with a mustache and a white apron wrapped about his waist, asked me in perfect English "Would you like to have a beer?" Surprised, I asked "But are you open?" "No, came the response, but if you would like to have beer, I'll get you one. Have a seat." "Fantastic. Is it cold?" "Sir, I have been around you Americans here too long not to know that you all like your beer cold." What a treat. "Large or small?" he asked. Silly question. "Large please, or should I say *por favor?*" He smiled, went inside while I took a seat at one of the small tables outside. He returned with a cold mug and a large bottle of Spanish beer. Then he said "Actually the bar is not open. If you wanted draft beer you would have had to wait, but with bottle beer, there is no time limit." "You mean to tell me I have been walking all around here with not a thing to do and I could have come here before now and had a beer?"

"*Si Senor.*"

By noon all 35 of us were congregated around the outside tables enjoying one cold beer after another. The steak lunch with French Fries was, of itself, not bad. By one o'clock, the place was packed with Americans and Spaniards alike in various uniforms and civilians clothes. Love the European style of dining. The Americans rushed in, wolfed down their meals, while the Europeans sat about drinking wine, liqueurs, and smoked a variety of cigars and cigarettes. Meals are a social affair. Europeans never seem as uptight as do we Americans. I wonder why that is. With all the freedom we have, why are we so uptight? Though we were far from the beach, the scene resembled a beach side café at a small resort. Had to use my imagination, admittedly. We stayed there all afternoon. The camaraderie was great and to be honest, I think that's what we all needed. The previous days had been hectic and sleepless and very inconvenient and we all needed a break. I didn't feel sleepy.

We eventually boarded the bus for the short trip to the plane and went through the same routine to find our seats on the upper deck, dark as usual, same smells, same dingy paint scheme, same utilitarian environment. We were in the same dark passenger area, with the same dimly lit capacious cargo bay below and same crew. All on board, seated, same safety briefing, seatbelts, life preservers. No one was listening. With the scream of the engines shattering our ears, we blasted down the runway, lifted into the dark sky, finally this time, to Baghdad.

Never one for boredom and always seeking some sort of adventure, I asked an airman if it was possible to see the cockpit. He called forward on the intercom and then nodded that it was OK. We unlocked the gate to the stairway and, step by step, descended the stairs. We crept along in between the cargo to the front of the plane and up another flight of steel stairs to the control center of the airship (you know, a C5A is really not an airplane, it's a flying ship).

We entered the cockpit through a narrow door. The cockpit was dark, being illuminated only by green, yellow, and red lights from the gages and other smaller lights of various other colors around the cockpit denoting the position of this or that. It was all business. The flight engineer's massive panel with thousands of gauges for the engines and other flight systems and panel switches and diagrams sat to the right. Two flight engineers sat at the console. One was in training. In front of the flight engineer's deck sat the pilot and the copilot separated by a large console filled with more switches and the four throttles and other levers. In front of them were TV screens filled with all sorts of visual flight data surrounded by intricate hi-tech stuff. The pilot handed me a set of headphones so I could talk to and hear them. I put them on, and the pilot showed me how to key the mike with a button on the cord. I keyed it and said "How are you guys?" It's always strange to hear my own voice through a headset. The pilot answered, "Fine sir, how are you?" The pitch of the voice surprised me. The pilot was a woman. I have met women pilots before, mostly on commercial flights: the first one being Laura Boswell on an American Airlines Flight, a Boeing 757, between Chicago and Miami 10 years ago. Then of course there was that female B52 pilot, Kelly Flynn, I believe, or some such name, who was surplussed a few years ago for having an affair with another officer. This, when Clinton was in office, I think. Maybe not. Wasn't he in office then? Seems like it. Can't remember exactly. But a C5A pilot? Wow! I was startled to hear a "her" voice and not a "him" voice in the cockpit of the C5. It was more or less unexpected. The pilot showed me all the instruments, some I knew, some I didn't, and told me about the flight path, etc. All very interesting. There was a huge lightning storm to our left over Sicily that would light up the entire night sky. We plowed along across the Mediterranean Sea forever and inexorably towards Iraq and fate of the unknown.

I stayed in the cockpit for about an hour and then returned to my seat; down the stairs from the cockpit, along the cargo deck, back up the stairs, and back into the tunnel which I came to call it, because it was always so dark. Found my seat, and tried to sleep but still could not. Nothing else to do and nothing to see.

I was still awake when we entered Iraq Air space from Turkey by my watch, lit now by my flashlight I had retrieved. Estimating, I somehow figured we had just maybe two hours or so to go, maybe less. There was some coffee - well instant coffee - and I had a few cups. No more meals were to be served.

The engines continued their low song and the plane jostled slightly.

Then came the startling combat entry announcement that would signal the end of the long voyage. Seeing nothing, we felt the plane lose altitude and then plunge. The sudden drop forced our bodies up in the seatbelts as the pull of gravity was lessened and we became lighter in our seats. The plane twisted left and right, not violently, but very noticeably. We were wing high on the left (my right) and wing low on the right (my left). Then the pilot pushed the throttles forward and we were now out of the free fall and climbing fast, then left wing down, then right, then left again, then right again, the power off and down we went, left and right, then descending very quickly, we were now slipping along at a fast pace. I could tell because the engines accelerated and we felt the plane lunge ahead. Left, then right, then left again. Jesus, a person could become air sick up here, especially since there was no reference horizon. Quite frankly, we were along for the ride. Seems to me I have used that expression to describe the situation a friend of mine found himself in over Thanh Hoa, Vietnam in 1967 As the backseater of an F4 that had been hit, he then, like me now, was along for the ride. The landing gear doors opened and the wheels were extended. I could hear the motors as they actuated the mechanical screws to move the flaps and the slats out from the body of the wing. We maintained a high speed and I could feel the plane dip, then flare slightly and the familiar thunder of the landing enveloped our senses, sending shudders through each of our bodies as we sat strapped inside. Then the brakes and the reversers as the throttles revved the engines up to slow us down; and then stop. We had landed at BIAP – Baghdad International Airport- BIAP. There was no denying that the woman major who flew the plane was an expert. She had done that many times before. She knew what she was doing every inch of the way and we landed safely. There was also no denying that we were here. The trip was over. We were in Baghdad. The date was September 30, 2003. Time: oh-three hundred.

The C5 taxied to what I assumed would be the terminal and parked. Engines shut down, for a moment there was stunned quiet. I think no one was particularly ready to disembark from the plane. But within the next few seconds, the Lt. Colonel made a brief announcement that a) we had arrived, b) be sure to collect all your things, and c) be safe when descending the stairs. Again, we would not be descending from the top portal like normal human beings. We would be exiting the plane down the internal stairs more or less like monkeys swinging through threes with all of our things encumbering each of us. Had to be careful. The door opened and one by one we left the C5 from dark into dark. There were no lights. We were not parked even near the terminal. In fact we were on the extreme other side of the airport. The silhouette of the terminal could be slightly discerned. The dry night air was redolent of the desert. I could smell it.

Once on the ground, the Lt. Colonel gathered us all up, and we climbed onto a waiting bus and other military vehicles that would take us to the "other" terminal. We rode for about 2 minutes, without headlights, to a small area that was a cross between a deserted dilapidated ranch, a ramshackle junkyard, and a dump like what one may imagine might exist in Nogales. But, the dump was inhabited with strange people in uniform with an American flag on their right upper arm. We climbed down from the bus and other vehicles and stood wondering where we were. To the right there were big pallets. Behind, some conex boxes, to the right, more conex boxes, and in front, the processing place. I would like to say processing hall or room, but it was neither. The tent that posed as a building with screen doors and plywood floor was so covered in dust that it looked like a brown façade building. We went inside for no real reason and were immediately met with a large screen TV with CNN – have come to dislike CNN – and chairs for comfortable viewing, chairs covered with dust and footprints from soldiers sleeping on the them as they waited for a flight to some other destination.

There was a counter with soldiers and computers behind it and opposite the counter, there was a bank of 4 or 5 telephones that connected to no one. Next door was another tent for passenger services. And in between the two there were make-shift tents with cots on the ground and soldiers sprawled all over them, some stripped to their t-shirts. It was that hot at 3AM. Guns, helmets, and vests were strewn about but no doubt they were all accounted for. It was difficult walking in between the cots because there were soldiers sleeping on the ground too. They

must be exhausted. Dust was so thick that in a matter of moments everyone was coughing and sneezing. Me too. There were few lights and the light inside the tent rooms was very dim and eerie. Soldiers came through and processed. Processed for what I am not sure. Outside, the team of soldiers with whom I had arrived had found places to lie down. Some in the chairs, some on pallets, and one on a broken cot. The Lt. Colonel laid down on an empty pallet and was out like a light but her hand was on her weapon. We all knew where she was and no one disturbed her. The C5 was being unloaded and the only lights on the tarmac were those provided by the internal light systems of the plane. Forklifts began bringing the pallets to the marshalling area stirring up the dust even more, and there was a constant stream of vehicles between where we were and the plane.

After about 2 hours, the crew closed the cargo doors of the C5 and began its start up procedures. Now for the first time I heard the engines from outside the plane. The plane lumbered to the end of the runway with its landing lights on and turned and immediately accelerated and lifted off the runway. The pilots extinguished all lights and the plane disappeared in the darkness of the Iraqi night.

An amazing site to behold: a MIG 25 *sans* wings and tail was being loaded into a C17 cargo plane. The MIG-25 was designed and built to counter the SR71 spy plane. The engines are 5 feet in diameter and the plane must be 80 feet long. What an amazing piece of machinery. The plane was found wrapped in plastic and buried along with three other MiG-25s somewhere in the desert. This one would find a new home in Ohio at Wright Patterson AFB. I imagine the wings and tail section were shipped on another flight. I walked all around the plane as the crew was tying it down with cables and chains. The only other cargo item in the plane was a mountain bike. After awhile, the C17 closed its doors and taxied and lifted off into the air and disappeared in the darkness of the Iraqi sky, bound for the USA via Spain.

The earth, rotating east, rendered the post-midnight sky dark gray and then a lighter shade. Finally, snoring lumps could be seen clearly spread all over the place and soon these lumps began to rise, and yawn and cough and stagger around. What was the name of that book by James Jones? "The Thin Red Line" In it, he states there is no sound equal to that of a rifle company waking up in the early morning. What a racket!

Dawn was here and not long afterwards the sun slipped up over the horizon and suffused the area with a yellow glow. The true essence of the cargo and passenger receiving point was revealed by the dawn. The area was a mess with debris and disorganization of things: pallets, equipment, material, vehicles, piles of debris, piles of gravel and sand, wires, pipes, shipping containers, barbed wire, revetments of sorts, everything. Helicopters began to land and take off and the dust in the air became thicker due to the rotor blades and ground vehicles that met the landing helicopters. The relative quiet of the early pre-dawn morning was now a stir with the noise of various pieces of equipment and aircraft departing and helicopters landing. The closest thing I ever came to this scene was the movie "MASH." Flies were now awake and aggressively flying around our faces. A pall of smog hung over what I supposed was the city located to the east (I at least knew the airport was west of the city). How bizarre everything was. What a strange environment I now found myself in. The Lt. Colonel advised us we would convoy into town at ten hundred hours and we had to "form up" at oh nine hundred. By eight o'clock, there were so many vehicles that the dust became intolerable. Everyone was carrying a rifle or machine gun. Lots of military people were milling around and we civilians – me - looked totally out of place with flak jacket and helmet but no uniforms – not that I wanted one, but hey, gotta fit in.

"Everyone gather around," came the instructions. We met Sergeant Major Gary Thompson replete with a Clint Eastwood type cigar dangling from his mouth. Actually, I was told he's not a sergeant major at all, he just plays the role. He began: "You do as I say and you will arrive safe in Baghdad." Not safely, but rather, safe. Then he looks at me. "You with this chalk?" (I know what "chalk" means. It means group or squad or platoon. They used to say "stick," I think, but now its "chalk." I'm a quick learner.) "Yes sir," I say. He looks me up and down taking careful notice of my attire, and then continues, "This is a six vehicle convoy into town with humvees fore and aft of the chalk (chalk again). We have 50 calibers in front and M240s behind and I

think a grenade launcher bringing up the rear. Is this right, Major Cory? All drivers are expected to maintain their positions. Everyone will wear their kevlars. Put all your things in the truck There is no room in the bus or the other vehicles. You can collect your gear when we arrive at IPC. Now let's see…," as he points to me. "You there, you come with me. I'll have to drop you off at another place but we need to take these people to their billets first." The sergeant major stood slumped shoulder, smoking his cigar and looked at me as he scratched the stubble on his face, and, with the cigar still in his mouth, said in my face "You got BDUs?" "No sir," I said, "They didn't give me any in the States, but I have my helmet and my vest." The temperature was already 90 degrees. I wondered whether I should salute. Not going to. And just how does one assemble this helmet? I had a problem. My gear was issued in Virginia, but I was not issued a chin strap. A person has to be resourceful in moments like this. Undaunted, I walked around and approached a soldier who had worked through the night. He was sitting on a pallet. "Say, do you know where I can get a chin strap for my helmet?" Sure," he says. "Come with me." He took me to a shipping container and opened the door. About a hundred things fell out. Like a scene straight out of MASH, he says "Lost and Found." The container contained abandoned equipment. He rummages through the container and finds a helmet and takes the chin strap off of it and gives it to me. "There you go, guy. Be cool." "Thanks," I said. Back to my formation and within 20 minutes we were loaded into buses and SUVs for the ride into Baghdad from BIAP.

I was with the sergeant major and the Lt. Colonel and Major Cory Spencer who were wearing all their gear. I think he even had a canteen. With his M16 loaded, the Major climbed into the SUV, closed the door and then turned to us in the backseat. We will go fast, if anything happens we will drive through it. Get as low as possible. Fasten your seatbelts." Then turning to the sergeant major, seated behind the steering wheel, he asked, "Do you have anything Mr. Thompson?" Throwing the cigar out the window, the sergeant major just said "Keep your head down. Let's go." He threw the SUV into gear and we formed up within the convoy: a 50 caliber machine gun mounted on the humvee in front, then the bus, then us, one other vehicle, and then the rest of the military vehicles. Never saw the humvee with the grenade launcher. Away we went into Baghdad. We left the airport cantonment area and we were among them: Iraqis were everywhere, unbelievable traffic, noise, dust, confusion, traffic, exhaust fumes, more dust, and heat. The major turned to the Lt. Colonel and asks "Mam , do you have a weapon?" "Yeah, but I don't have any rounds." And with that response, the major takes from his pocket a clip of 9mm bullets and hands the clip backwards over his right shoulder to the Lt. Colonel, who smartly inserts it into the handle of her Beretta. Oh man. An M16 out the window a Beretta pistol next to me, and a 50 caliber machine gun up ahead. This is the real McCoy, I thought. We literally bounced through traffic, around road blocks manned by Americans, past a waiting M1 Abrams tanks, past other humvees, and up on curbs, on the shoulders, and around traffic. We caused a small collision but kept on going.

The sergeant major – again, he's not really a sergeant major but, he did act the part – could take a few lessons in driving. Not that the driving environment was the best but his handling of the clutch and the brake and the accelerator, were, at best, uncoordinated. Not knowing where we were but, unlike the C5, at least we could see out. Iraqis were less than three feet from me. We were held up by a huge traffic jam. Just like LA, I thought. Now what would keep a would-be terrorist from just walking up to us, at a standstill, and just blast away? Not a nice thought. We made it through the *emboutillage* and plowed on through traffic first to the left, then to the right. Not much talk in the vehicle, just cigar smoke and guns out the window. Everything had a thin layer of dust and the buildings were all brown. Just to our left I saw the crossed swords that were always shown on TV. Paris has the Eiffel tower, NYC has the Empire State Building, Rome the coliseum. Baghdad has crossed swords. We approached a large arch, heavily guarded by tracked vehicles and soldiers. Driving beneath it, we entered the green zone, and apparently, relative safety. We continued along a barricaded street and drove past the Palace with the bust of Saddam Hussein on top. We drove through another arch, around barricades and then turned to the right to the IPC headquarters, stopped in front of a white building and unloaded everyone and everything. We stayed there for about 2 hours and then the sergeant major turned and pointed at me. "You're with me." I said "Yes Sir."

Back into the SUV, all gear accounted for and we went to the Palace and my new home for the next many months. We parked in a large dusty lot and unloaded my things and lugged and pulled them to the security gate several hundred feet away. The sergeant major assisted me through the gate with the aid of my military ID card that was issued to me in Virginia, and I met my escort. The sergeant major said "See ya. Have fun. Be careful." With the assistance of Paul Dobie and Captain Brian Song, I found my way past the guards to wherever: billeting, office keys, ID badge, in-processing, travel orders, name, rank. "Oh you're a civilian. Sign here." Papers attesting to this and that, forms to be filled out - last name first, first name last, but the very next form was reversed: first name first and last name last. Scratched out my name to re-write it. Social security number. "Want my passport number?" "No just your social." Confusion, barb wire, blockades, fences, signs, noise all around, helicopters flying overhead, soldiers everywhere, guns all about, humvees, dust, noise, more noise, more dust. I was at the Palace. A man approached me. "Come with me, I'll show you your billet." My last billet, the night before, I remembered, was, in fact, a pallet. Things can only get better. Outside the gate, past another gate and sandbags and rows of barb wire and armed soldiers, down a path two inches deep in dust, past white trailers all lined up nice and neat, past row 6, turn right, all the way down row 5, to unit 10, left side or, rather, 5/10Left. Key in the door. Enter; air conditioner full blast to combat the intense heat from the Iraq sun.

"Ok," the man says, as he fumbles with his clipboard, turning some pages and removing the cap from his Bic ballpoint pen with his teeth. "Foster, Gary, social 242-76-6485, civilian, room 5/10 Lima." I stood dumbfounded. "Confirm with me," he said, as he gestures around the room: Bed frame. One each. Mattress. One each, Sheets, white, blanket, gray. One set. Pillow. One each. Curtains. One set, blue. Closet with four shelves. One each. Nightstand, one each with two shelves. Night lamp with working 25 watt bulb, One each." The man checks to be sure it turns on. "Keys to room and closet. Don't lose them," he says as he hands them to me. "All in order, sign here, and initial each item." I take the clipboard and do as I am told and hand it back to the man. "Take care and have a good day and welcome to Baghdad." The man leaves, I look around at my new home: nine feet by nine feet, by eight feet high. Wow, and the closet has four shelves! Imagine. Hey, and a night lamp. With a 25 watt lightbulb! Unbelievable. This is truly living. And, further, I get one window with blue curtains. I look out and see another trailer three feet away. Great view. The air conditioner works. "Ka-chunk." The air conditioner compressor kicks in. Helicopters fly overhead, shaking the world to pieces. What a din they make! I look at my watch. It's 3PM. No, it's fifteen hundred hours, I unsling my computer from my shoulder and drop it to the floor. I move my other luggage and kick off my shoes covered in dust and lie down on the bed – one each, I remind myself - and close my eyes. The helicopters returned, flying right overhead, rattling the windows and shaking the box I now live in. The whacking noise of the rotor blades faded slowly into the distance. I opened my eyes, burning from the dust and lack of sleep, and looked straight up at the stark ceiling. With my mind blank, my body drained, I asked myself: what was it the man said? "Welcome to Baghdad." I fell asleep.

KHE SANH IS STILL MAIMING & KILLING

Do Thien Dang, a victim of unexploded ordnance is seen at his mushroom farm in Vietnam's central Quang Tri province, 600 km (372 miles) south of



Hanoi, Feb. 28, 2007. (Kham/Reuters)

KHE SANH, Vietnam — Swishing his metal detector across the red dirt of his backyard, Le Van Thang points to the spot where he buried two grenades. He found the explosives about five years ago while plowing the family garden. He says he called authorities to take them away, but they refused. "The soldiers said two grenades weren't enough to

bother with," Thang explains. "They said to call them back if I found more."The explosives have been sitting there under a tree, just a couple of yards from his back door, ever since.

Thang lives just outside Khe Sanh, in Vietnam's Quang Tri province. His two-room concrete home sits on a jungle-covered hilltop about 15 miles from the former demilitarized zone (DMZ). Until 1975, the DMZ divided the communist north from the pro-Western south. It was the site of some of the fiercest fighting of the Vietnam War, and as a result, is littered with explosives.

Unfortunately, Thang's situation is not uncommon. Thirty-five years after the end of the war, families across the central provinces live in fear of explosions that happen on a regular basis.

In early 2010 alone there were several blasts. Locals were burning a stump when a bomb rocked a schoolyard in Dong Ha, about 30 miles east of Khe Sanh, shaking walls and shattering windows. Luckily all 550 students were in class at the time of the blast and escaped injury.

About a week later, a man was seriously injured while weeding a coffee plantation beside the former U.S. Marine base outside Khe Sanh. Then, in February, just before the Vietnamese New Year, a 40-year-old man was killed while clearing weeds from his banana trees.

Many of the accidents involve unexploded cluster munitions, large weapons often deployed from the air that release dozens, sometimes hundreds, of smaller, baseball-sized "bomblets," or "grenades." They were widely used in the central provinces during the Vietnam War.

Cluster bombs blanket large swaths of land and have a high "dud" rate, meaning they don't explode on contact and go on injuring and killing civilians long after wars officially end. Experts say the cluster bombs used in Vietnam are estimated to have a "dud" rate between 5 and 40 percent.

Three years ago, while digging for scrap metal, Thang came across a cluster bomb and carries the scars of that encounter with him today.:

POETRY

FACES

Faces,
forever young and eager, hearts aglow,
of a time gone by and days of long ago.

Faces,
etched in memories, burned into the mind,
men of Honor and Courage are their kind.

Faces,
never mind their color, race or creed,
they were always there in the hour of need.

Faces,
Into the breach they willingly go,
For their fellow man they charge the foe.

Faces,
they die today to right the wrong,
for Fallen Warriors gone to long.

Faces,
for them they set the standard high,
and on this day they do or die.

Faces,
they sacrificed for those who went before,
as they have done since times of yore.

Faces,
Of the fallen, never to fade away,
'till on the morn of calling,
when we shall be called away.

In Solemn Tribute to the Men of Bravo Company, 1ST Battalion, 26TH Marines
19—KHE SANH RVN——68
Michael E. O'Hara 2010

3 STARS

By Craig Tourte

I continue to visit my old hangout of Ernie's Interlude even though I have moved out of town. I return once a week to play golf with the boys but no longer consume adult beverages because I now must drive home, unlike the old days when I could simply walk a couple of blocks to my house. I realize I am much better off for it, but I sure had a lot of fun in those days. Ernie's had not changed much since it open in 1959, but eventually all things must change and so it is for Ernie's, having been sold early this year to an interesting young lady who doesn't much care about keeping the place as it was. The photographs of the now gone and mostly forgotten have been removed from the walls, replaced by new paint, brighter mood lights and low cost pictures of adult beverages purchased from a discount retailer and a much cleaner restroom.

The day and early evening crowd has pretty much remained the same but I heard the crowd that comes in the later hours is much younger. I'm fairly well known now, having gone through most of the stories of how I almost single handed won the war, and I have handed out various necklaces and bracelets I have made to the few Vietnam Veterans who are still around and to a couple of civilians who served in Vietnam as contract employees supporting the military effort.

Yesterday just before I left, one of the guys said that he wanted to talk to me and asked if he could speak to me privately. I was just a little reluctant as the last time we spoke, he spent way too much time telling me how he found the Lord, not that there is anything wrong with that, when one is in the correct frame of mind. Anyway, we go outside and sit on the bench and I'm hoping this is not going to take a whole lot of time and he is not going to invite me to learn more about the Lord or ask me to loan him money. As he is talking my mind is wandering off some where and I'm not really tracking the subject matter. He pulls out a business card with the name of a Marine Corps General on it and then shows me a Challenge Coin.

I'm still not focusing on the connection between he and the General, something about a family gathering or wedding or something. I smile and try to look interested. My friend then asks if I would mind making a necklace and bracelet for the General and write a little something about the bead colors. I tell him sure, I'll be happy to do that and confirm that the General served in Vietnam.

At home that evening I started to think about the colors used in the necklaces and various stickers with the green, yellow and red colors. I come up with my own theory which I knew was wrong and POSTED a little something on the board hoping for some correct input, which was kindly provided by Leland. I managed to put together a pretty impressive necklace and bracelet and then wrote the below note to my friend. "Please find the packet I have made for General XXX which includes a necklace and bracelet and three Khe Sanh Challenge Coins, two gold and one silver. One of the gold coins is for you. Along with these I have also placed a couple of issues of our Khe Sanh Veterans Association magazine "Red Clay." Please note the numerous articles authored by yours truly. You'll also note there are no advertisements and most, if not all of the stories and articles are first hand accounts.

The Khe Sanh Veterans Association is open to any member of the military or civilian who served on, near, over or around the United States Marine Corps Combat Base during the years of that war 1962-1972. During the Siege of that base, roughly the months January 21, 1968 to mid April 1968, it is estimated that around 6,000 service members served on the base and the surrounding hills.

Many years have passed and unfortunately a great number of us who endured the Siege have passed away. If the Association were limited to those who served only during the Siege, the Association would be few in number so we accept anyone who fought in the area of operation included air crew members flying above and those who fought at the Army Special Forces Base at Lang Vei which was just a few miles away from the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The battle of Lang Vei, which occurred on February 7, 1968, was significant in that it was the first time the North Vietnamese used tanks while assaulting a fix position. That story is chronicled in the book "Night of the Silver Stars" by William Phillips. Many survivors of that desperate fight attend our annual Khe Sanh reunions." "Vietnam Veterans have taken to placing various items on their automobiles, wearing

jewelry or other trinkets which identifies themselves to other Vietnam Veterans. Most notable these include something with the colors green, yellow and red aligned in the order of: Green, yellow, red, yellow, red, yellow, red, yellow and then green, all usually aligned in a vertical fashion.

The South Vietnam flag was yellow in color with three spaced red horizontal lines. You'll notice that when Americans use these colors the outside borders are green and the red lines are vertical. Seems there are a number of opinions on why this is, but most likely it is because these stickers and other devices - including the necklace and bracelet - are modeled after the Vietnam Service Ribbons/Medal with the red horizontal lines rotated 90 degrees. The green seems to be a carry over from the green Vietnam Campaign Ribbon/Medal which is green and white with vertical stripes. In addition to those colors mentioned, the necklaces and bracelets that many American Vietnam Veterans wear - and those who support and recognize the sacrifice of these veterans - often contain the colors black and white to symbolize those "Missing in Action" and not forgotten.

On occasion you'll also see some blue beads or something blue in color which represents the red, white and blue of the flag of the United States and again, everyone has an opinion on this and I guess it is up to the person who made the device to make the call on what the colors mean to him." "I invite anyone who is interested to visit the private membership web site, "Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page" and the official Association site "Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc." "That said, here is the "Quid Pro Quo," I'd like an autographed business card and photo from General XXX and perhaps he could send me a short note I could submit to our magazine for publication consideration.

I recently met John L. Estrada the 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps **(Page 35 & 36)** who was kind enough to send me his Challenge Coin along with an autographed photo and business card. In July of 2007 I was honored to have a personal tour of the office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James T. Conway at the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and was presented with one of his business cards." "Hope this meets your requested. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do for you." I called my friend on the telephone and told him that I'd drop off the items at the bar this afternoon. I was listening to him now and discovered that his friend the General was currently on active duty and was a 3 Star Lieutenant General in the Marine Corps currently stationed in Washington D.C. I wonder if I'll get an autographed photograph from him and one of his challenge Coins, I'll let you know.

FOLLOWUP ARTICLE 3 STARS GENERAL PANTER

You'll recall my June 30th POST titled "3 Stars" - in which an acquaintance requested that I make a necklace and bracelet for his friend Lieutenant General Frank A. Panter and along with that, provide a little account describing the history of the green, yellow and red colors. Of course I was happy to comply with his request. I made up a little packet which included not only a necklace and bracelet but in addition, I included a couple of "Red Clay" magazines and one of our Khe Sanh Gold Challenge Coins. I wrote a little brief which I knew he would



LTGEN FRANK A. PANTER

forward along to the General and requested that in return - kind of a Quid Pro Quo - I would like an autographed photograph of the good General and one of his business card. In today's mail I received a wonderful autographed photograph of General Panter, a business card and a beautiful Marine Corps Challenge Coin with the inscription "Headquarters Marine Corps - Washington DC - Deputy Commandant - Installations and Logistics." The writing on the photograph reads, "To Craig Tourte and all the Khe Sanh Veterans. Thank you sincerely for your sacrifice and dedication. Semper Fi, Frank Panter, Lt. Gen USMC."

MEET WITH SGT MAJOR ESTRADA

David Tonick and I left New Mexico after the dedication of the "Khe Sanh Bridge" on May 27, 2010. The Acoma Native American People, as will as all the others we had the pleasure of meeting in New Mexico were more than hospitable and we found the countryside rugged, colorful, historic and strangely inviting.

We both wore the new Khe Sanh shirts that we received from Tom Eichler in appreciation of our traveling to New Mexico from California and assisting in the dedication ceremony. It was early afternoon as we sat in the Albuquerque New Mexico airport waiting for our flight home when a man approached and thanked us for our service. He continued that he had also served in the Marine Corps and mentioned that we, and all of those who went before us, set the standard for today's Marines.



CRAIG TOURTE & SGTMAJ ESTRADA

We voiced our appreciation of his recognition and sat back down as he walked towards his flight gate on the other side of the building. A few minutes later the same man returned and told us that he had retired from the Marine Corps two years ago and then he presented us with a challenge coin. I held it in my hand as I looked it over and noted the words "John J. Estrada, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps." I was a bit taken back and terrible impressed that he would thank us for our service. We visited for a few minutes and he gave both David and myself his business card and promised to provide a second coin so we both would have one.

When I got home I found that Sergeant Major Estrada was originally from the nation of Trinidad and Tobago and immigrated to the United States at the age of twelve. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1973 and did his recruit training at Parris Island. He served the majority of his early years in the Marine Corps in various air wings and in 1982 as a Staff Sergeant, became a Drill Instructor the Recruit Depot in San Diego.

In 1990 as a First Sergeant he served in Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance in Okinawa Japan and later with Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton. From 1995 to 1998, Sergeant Major Estrada served with BLT 2/1 and then deployed with the 11th Marine Expeditionary and 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit to the Western Pacific and the Arabian Gulf. He participated in Operation Southern Watch and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Sergeant Major Estrada assumed his post as the 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps on June 26, 2003. On April 25, 2007, Sergeant Major Estrada stepped down from his post as Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, turning over the post to Sergeant Major Carlton Kent. He retired from the Marine Corps in June 2007. I have met many during my various travels, at times just wearing something that identifies the Marine Corps brings a "thank you for your service" greeting. On the occasion that I wear a "Khe Sanh" shirt or hat or other means of identifying myself as a Khe Sanh Veterans, I am most often offered a hand shake or personal comment or greeting. Of course, I appreciate them all and I am most appreciative that the former Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps took a few minutes to

thank all of us, when he took the time to talk to David and myself. On behalf of all Khe Sanh Veterans, thank you Sergeant Major John L. Estrada for showing your appreciation for those who fought so hard at the "Battle of Khe Sanh."

PAST SERVICEMEN HONORED AT BRIDGE DEDICATION

Published Thursday, May 27, 2010

CIBOLA COUNTY - On May 26, transportation officials were joined by members of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, Vietnam Veterans of America and local officials to pay tribute to veterans at a dedication ceremony for the new Khe Sanh Bridge.

The bridge was dedicated to honor and preserve the memory of those servicemen who were killed in action or later died of their wounds while fighting at the Battle of Khe Sanh, Vietnam. The Battle of Khe Sanh claimed the lives of 2,097 U.S. servicemen.

In November 2009, an official scenic historic marker was erected alongside Highway 124 (the historic Route 66) about one mile east of the Khe Sanh Bridge. The historic marker was dedicated to the ten New Mexico servicemen who lost their lives at the Battle of Khe Sanh. In April 2010, the State Transportation Commission approved naming the structure to the Khe Sanh Bridge. The structure will symbolize bridging the gap that bonds all veterans and their families together and will forever keep them in each other's hearts.

Transportation officials and dignitaries such as Representative Ken Martinez, Allen Weh, a veteran of the battle and a Republican governor candidate and Cibola County Commission Chairman Eddie Michael were among the speakers at the event that drew a crowed of more than 100 people. Weh is a retired colonel who spoke at the event of his first assignment experience at Khe Sanh.

"Many veterans from all over the country fought and lost their lives at this battle," said Transportation Commission Chairman Johnny Cope. "The Khe Sanh Bridge is dedicated to their courage and sacrifice."

"I am deeply honored to dedicate this bridge to those who served at Khe Sanh and gave the ultimate sacrifice," said District Six Transportation Commissioner Jackson Gibson. "As a Vietnam veteran, I am also proud that the traveling public will be reminded of our freedom and the price that comes with that freedom, every time they drive along the Khe Sanh Bridge."

"Our veterans are heroes and the Khe Sanh Bridge stands as a symbol of their battle for freedom," said Transportation Secretary Gary L.J. Girón. "Their sacrifice and service will never be forgotten."

The Khe Sanh Bridge, located along I-40 at Exit 104, was reconstructed in 2008.

BRIDGE DEDICATION TO HONOR VETERANS

Story Delane Baros
Photography Jake Schoellkopf

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KHE SANH BRIDGE DEDICATION

By Craig W. Tourte

On May 26, 2010, it was an honor to once again return to the great State of New Mexico (Red Clay Magazine, Spring 2010, Issue 75, Khe Sanh Memorial Road Marker) and stand with Tom Eichler, David Tonick, Ray Palmer, Earl Clark and numerous other veterans for the dedication of the "Khe Sanh Bridge" in recognition of those who were lost during the "Battle of Khe Sanh." Those appearing on the Agenda represented a wide range of dignitaries' from the state and surrounding Native American lands.

As noted on the agenda schedule, "The Posting of the Colors was preformed by the Vietnam Veterans



of America, Northern New Mexico Chapter 996. The invocation by Pueblo of Acoma 2nd Lt. Governor Ron Charlie. Past President Khe Sanh Veterans Tom Eichler. District Six Transportation Commissioner Jackson Gibson. Rebecca Montoya for Transportation Secretary Gary L.J. Giron. Message from Transportation Commission Chair Johnny Cope. Sarah Cobb for U. S. Senator Tom Udall. New Mexico Representative W. Ken Martinez. Cibola County Commission Chair Edward Michael. Tom Wagner for New Mexico Veterans' Services Secretary John Garcia. Colonel (Retired) Allen Weh. Native American Indian Veteran Sergeant of Arms Harold Lockwood. Closing Prayer by Pueblo of Laguna 2nd Lt. Governor Marvin Trujillo, Jr."

I met Harold E. Lockwood (HMH-CH-53) for the first time on November 10, 2009, when Tom, David and I traveled to New Mexico for the dedication of the "Khe Sanh Memorial Road Marker." Harold is really the unsung hero and driving force behind these two memorials. As I watched Harold stand at the lectern, addressing visitors and various state and local dignitaries, speaking of "Our Spirit World," and how significant this memorial was to his people, I was struck by his commanding presence. His sweeping arm gestures and a clear voice demanded attention, recognition and respect. Khe Sanh Veterans and especially the Veterans from the state of New Mexico, can thank the Native American People and in particular Harold Lockwood, for his gallant effort, persuasive abilities, intelligence and perseverance in prevailing on the state of New Mexico to name these two memorials in honor of those who fought and died at Khe Sanh.

The invocation was given by Pueblo of Acoma 2nd



Lt. Governor Ron Charlie and the closing prayer by Pueblo of Laguna 2nd Lt. Governor Marvin Trujillo, Jr., a former Officer in the United States Marine Corps. Both spoke in the beautiful Keresan language of the Keres Pueblo People. Although I



did not understand the words, I certainly understood the meanings and was especially moved when Mr. Trujillo translated some of his message into English and used the word "Creator" in his litany, which was a wonderful way to address the beliefs of all who were in attendance.

I was particularly impressed that New Mexico Representative W. Ken Martinez took time in his busy schedule to drive some one hundred and fifty miles to personally attend this dedication. The reasons were clear, and his sincerity impressive when he said, "Western New Mexico honors our Veterans."



He was there as proof of those statements.

Once again Tom Eichler emceed the dedication, introducing the various speakers, honored guests and dignitaries. Tom presented no less than twenty-nine individual plaques of appreciation from "Khe Sanh Veterans" which he personally authored, had printed, framed and then read each inscription as he made the presentations. In additional to all of his



individual effort, Tom gave the following remarks on behalf of Khe Sanh Veterans:

The Battle of Khe Sanh has been described as the longest and deadliest battle of the Vietnam War. Forty two years ago and nine thousand miles away from home, the attention of this nation was focused on the Marines, Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen who stood shoulder to shoulder on the hills and in the muddy trench lines and collapsing bunkers of the United States Marine Corps combat base located in the far North West corner of what was then South Vietnam. So isolated was the Khe Sanh combat base that Brigadier General Lowell English once complained that "when you're at Khe Sanh, you're not really anywhere." For seventy seven horrific days and nights, these brave men, comprising one reinforced American regiment of less than six thousand, held out against an overwhelming North Vietnamese Army force of more than two divisions of hardened combat soldiers.

At the time, President Lyndon Johnson said about Khe Sanh, "...more than any other stretch of territory, it is a place where the meaning of this war is clearly revealed. This is a decisive time in Vietnam. The eyes of the nation and the eyes of the entire world - the eyes of all of history itself - are on the little, brave band of defenders who hold the pass at Khe Sanh..."

With little food and water, the ammunition depot destroyed, facing frontal assaults on the defensive perimeter by the North Vietnamese, thousands of artillery, rocket and mortars shells raining down twenty four hours a day, the defenders of the combat base at Khe Sanh were virtually cut off from any outside support and were absorbed in an hourly struggle for their very survival. According to calculations accompanied by names and dates of death, it has been determined that over one thousand United States Servicemen lost their lives during that infamous seventy seven day siege.

The mention of Khe Sanh along with the great battles of Concord, Gettysburg and Normandy in President Obama's inaugural address, forever confirms to our nation and the world that the Battle of Khe Sanh holds a significant place in America history.

Today the name Khe Sanh holds a special place in the hearts and minds of those of us who participated in that battle. For those who survived those long and deadly months on top of the Khe Sanh plateau and on some of the surrounding hills, the name Khe Sanh denotes a place of reverence and is consider by many to be hallowed ground. For many of us who were there, Khe Sanh is a place where the souls and spirits of our fallen bothers will forever reside.

It is amongst the Native American Acoma People that the great State of New Mexico chose to honor the memory of those who faced such incredible hardships at Khe Sanh, by naming this bridge in their honor. As we stand here looking out across the Acoma, viewing the beautiful unbroken red earth valley and hills, not so dissimilar in color to the red clay earth of Khe Sanh and glance up into the wide open sky, we understand why fate has brought "The Battle of Khe Sanh" road marker and the naming of the Khe Sanh bridge here. Somehow fate has brought us to this spot, because this ground is also a sacred and hollowed place. It is a place where Native American People have also faced great hardship and sacrifice and a place where their ancestors, including those who fought at Khe Sanh, will forever be. Hallowed ground, a roadside marker and now a bridge, a connection, a passageway, with a name and a place that honors those who sacrificed so much.

On behalf of all Khe Sanh Veterans, I want to thank the state of New Mexico and the Native American people for remembering Khe Sanh by naming this bridge in their lasting honor."

As the dedication was coming to a close, I once again took a few minutes to reflect on this place. The statement made in Tom's speech attributed to Brigadier General Lowell English came to mind, "When you're at Khe Sanh, you are not really anywhere." That may have been true then, but what makes Khe Sanh some place that is significant is the memory of the fallen, now forever remembered by a Road Marker and a Bridge not far from Mt. Taylor, or Tspina "Tsoodzil" the turquoise mountain, sacred to Native Americans. I am confident, that from the day of this dedication, not one of the ten's of thousand who pass by will forget who we were, what we did, that so many were lost and that we all loved America.

ED NOTE: Photos on Inside Rear Cover & Rear Cover & 37 & 38, 40












Khe Sanh Bridge





I GET PICTURES

Dear Tom,

Really enjoyed issue 75 of RED CLAY. Over the years, I've sent in photos that I took in March of 67. In particular shots of a memorial service held on 23 March for the men of E 2/9 and B 1/9 KIA on and near to Hill 861(16 March 67). Actually Danny Schuster (E 2/9) had one printed with a letter he submitted to RED CLAY, but he forgot to ask for my permission, and didn't really know that I had taken it. That was OK with me since he got my photo published. Well, I'm going to try again. I've always believed that these photos represent a tribute to all those who died at Khe Sanh. Thank you for your consideration.

Robert J Slattery
Echo 2/9 1966-67



ED NOTE: Robert, Sorry For the Delay



BOOK REVIEW

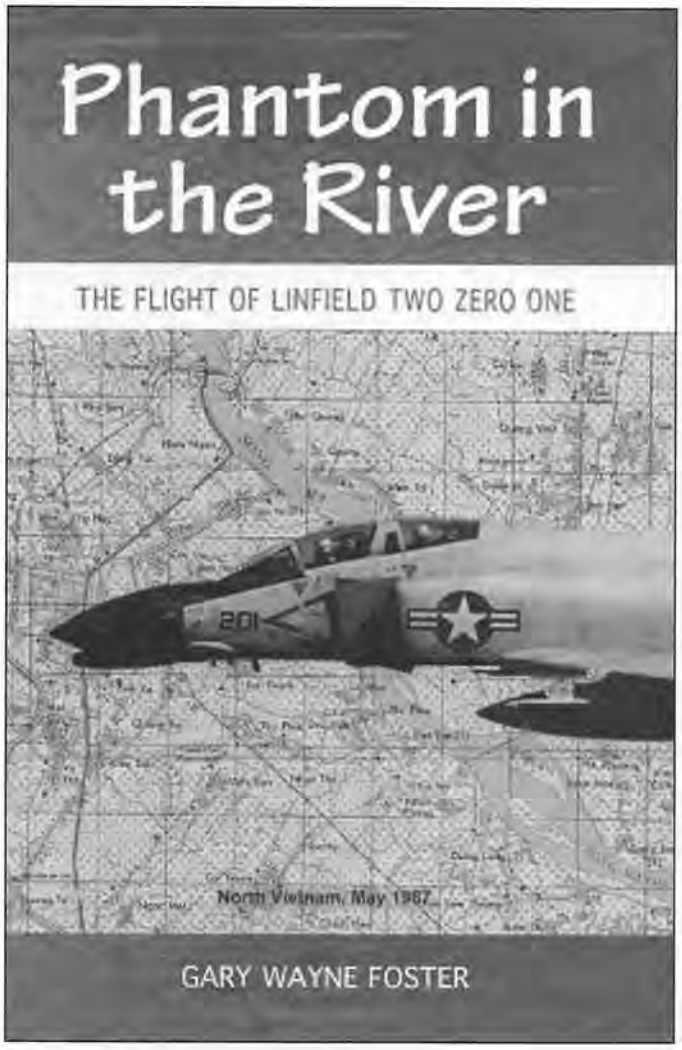

INSPIRING –WELL DONE!

As the non-technical daughter of Herman Barkey, the "Father of the F-4", I was impressed and fascinated by the detailed account Gary Foster portrayed in "Phantom in the River". His chronology of the mission to destroy a critical bridge should be of interest to both the military professional and aerospace enthusiast. Gary's in– depth interviews especially with the downed pilots effectively portray the human emotions of our lengthy conflict in southeast Asia. It also reflects the mind set of the enemy. Congratulations, Gary, on a difficult task - well done!
P.S. Having also worked at McDonnell Douglas where the F-4, F-15. F-18, etc. originated, "Phantom in the River" is inspiring.

Bonnie Barkey Moore

Phantom in the River

Who amongst those of us who survived the Siege of the United States Marine Corps Combat of Khe Sanh could forget the awesome power of the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps F-4 Phantom II jet war planes with bombs, bullets and napalm, working the hills, valleys and the creeping ever closer trench lines of the North Vietnamese.

In his book "Phantom in the River," Mr. Foster offers a short 217 page history of that fine aircraft from inception, forward thinking design of Herman Barkey, development, production and the delicate "danger management" intricacies of carrier combat operations to the moment to moment description of the shoot down in North Vietnam on May 14, 1967, of Linfield Two Zero.

One from the USS Kitty Hawk and the flight crew comprised of Charles Everett Southwick and David John Rollins and their desperate attempt to save their fatally stricken Phantom. Within the first few pages, Mr. Foster acknowledged the many who assisted in his nine year research of facts and writing effort including, but not limited to Khe Sanh Veterans John Pessoni, Reverend Ray Stubbe, Bob Arrotta, Tommy Eichler, Mike Archer and Dennis Mannion.

Mr. Foster's professional writing ability, engineering experience, attention to detail, vast amount of research, which included visits to the crash site in Vietnam of Linfield Two Zero One and conversations with those who were present during the shoot down and in-depth interview of the crew who revisited their Phantom some 35 years later, as it now sits at the Air Defense Museum in Hanoi, is a compelling composition of that beautify aircraft known as the F-4 Phantom and the air war in Vietnam

Phantom's Story

I found the Phantom in the River: Flight of Linfield Two Zero One an entertaining easy read. The author has blended the personal stories of the people involved on both sides with a thorough and complete technical analysis of the flight and what brought the aircraft down. I enjoyed the mix of the personal stories with the technical details. I was first totally engrossed in the personal stories in the beginning of

the book. They are very well written making me feel like I was there talking with them in person. The many photos made the stories and the people come alive.

The details of how the flight took place were also very interesting. I got the feel of the aircraft carrier and what it must have been like taking off day after day to go on the next mission. Mr. Foster also provides great insight into the aircraft itself. He has spent time in Viet Nam and has personally climber all through the wreckage. This was coupled with research into the aircrafts design and construction.

This work has been painstakingly researched and is very well written. I picked the book up and read it through in one day anxious for the next part of the story. I thoroughly enjoyed this account of an actual event that needed no embellishment, it just needed to be told well and Mr. Foster delivered.

A fascinating story from the Viet Nam War This story, about the May 1967 attack on a bridge in what was then North Viet Nam by planes from the US carrier Kitty Hawk, grabs the reader from the beginning and doesn't let go to the end. The author skillfully weaves the human story together with fascinating details about the machines and the methods of war in that time. The people involved include the two crew members of the F-4 Phantom of the title, Linfield Two Zero One, who were shot down in one of many attacks on North Viet Nam's Thanh Hoa bridge; how they spent years as POWs in North Viet Nam; and how they were released and then ultimately, and poignantly, returned in 2004 to the site of their capture and imprisonment. Also shown are the Vietnamese who defended the bridge and then dealt with the American captives.

The author does not judge the combatants; he only tells us what happened and lets the reader reach his own judgments. Every bit as interesting is the tremendous technical detail the author provides-- on the design of the F-4, the procedures for handling planes on a US carrier in the Gulf of Tonkin, the anti-aircraft defenses at the bridge, and many other aspects of the story. Focusing on those details bring the story to life, and makes the story more real and affecting than a more general description would. This is a fine book, and it is highly recommended for anyone who wants a window to that time and place 43 years ago.

Fascinating Story of two American Navy Airmen I enjoyed Phantom in the River, The Flight of Linfield Two Zero One by Gary Wayne Foster.

The Author found the wreckage of a U.S. Navy F-4B Phantom II jet fighter in Hanoi and decided to investigate the history of the plane. After finding the official history he decided to fill in the gaps with research and personnel interviews. The result is a fascinating story of two American Navy airmen who were downed while trying to bomb the Ham Rong Bridge in North Vietnam on May 14, 1967, captured, repatriated and 37 years later returned to the spot where they were shot down.

The Author provides a detailed historical perspective of what led up to the downing of Linfield Two Zero One. Foster leads the reader through the rational and development of the F-4 Phantom; the design and construction of the Ham Rong Bridge by the North Vietnamese; rational for the air war over North Vietnam; and carrier and flight operations on the USS Kitty Hawk in the Tonkin Gulf in 1967. His development of the background details in basic terms was especially helpful in understanding the story

I thought the Vietnamese perspective was interesting and could only have been obtained by careful field work collecting bits of information which the author points out did not always agree

I thing it is a remarkable book and gives true insight into the varying aspects of the air war over Vietnam in 1967. It is a good story. The Author provides basic details for someone not familiar with military jargon. The book contains a great collection of past and present photos that support the story. It should be required reading of anyone interested in the history of the Vietnam War.

ED NOTE

Gary is a frequent contributor to this Magazine. I have read the book, and agree with every review listed above. It is a fascinating book, as are all Gary's articles in Red Clay.

SOME OF THE BEAUTIFUL KHE SANH LADIES AT THEIR LUNCHEON









L-R FISH, TOMMY, BIG JOHN, RUSS
Some Colorful Khe Sanh Guys
(Not That There Is Anything Wrong With That)









One of our New Members Jose Reyes , E Co 2/26 with Daughter Lauren Cornell who is a Cpl in the USMC, Holding His Grand Daughter, Presley Jeanne, With Marines From Recon. Jose's Son In Law, Jeff Cornell is also a Sgt in the USMC, currently serving with West Pac. Lauren is now at 29 Palms. Welcome Aboard



MEMORIAL FRONT VIEW

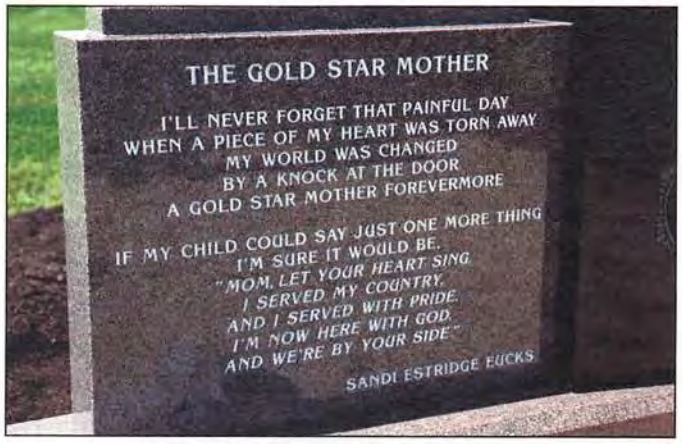

POEM BY SANDI ESTRIDGE EUCKS



FLAG PLACING



BERTHA BALSEY AT MEMORIAL



UNION TOWNSHIP POLICE HONOR GUARD



CAROL PRAZYNSKI LOCATING HER PAVER



JACK HAIGWOOD, PAST PRESIDENT VVA 649



FLAGS BEING PLACED NEAR PAVERS

CONTRIBUTIONS BEGINNING 01 AUG 09 TO 30 JUNE 2010

The below contributions were made after I requested just $5.00 to cover the cost of shipping volume four of the new KSV Membership Directory. Some sent in a lot more as detailed below. The only reason I posted the amount contributed on this occasion, was to ensure the membership that a record is kept of every dime they contribute.

Wesley Caton II	60.00	Check# 721
Robert Holscher	50.00	Check# 13318
Barry Fixler	100.00	Check# 1335
Louis Deseta	20.00	Check# 4049
Duane Kepler	10.00	Check# 2811
George Gratzer	100.00	Check# 7391
Doug McEver	10.00	Check# 8001
Linda Forrest	25,000.00	Check#
Ramon Provencio Jr	300.00	Check# 5262
Paul Choclis	25.00	M/O
Lawrence Luther	25.00 **	Check# 6270
Larry McCartney	100.00 **	Credit Card
Donna Elliott	50.00 **	Check# 2553
Dave Doehrman	500.00 **	Check# 135
Ronald Rayner	50.00 **	Check# 2137
Thomas Eichler	200.00 **	Check# 1458
Khe Sanh Veterans	200.00 **	Check# 1080
George Smeltzer	100.00	Check# 4678
David F. Brombaugh	20.00	Check# 1297
David Shurter	5.00	Check# 4316
Tom Quigley	25.00	Check# 4325
Michael Fishbaugh	25.00	Check# 3337
Larry E. Bilbrey	25.00	Check# 5210
Thomas W. Donnelly	10.00	Check# 828
John Hargesheimer	10.00	Check# 1377
James M. Collins	225.00	Check# 5532
Daniel Fisher	10.00	Check# 12653
Marty Larsen	25.00	Check# 203
Ray Stubbe	5.00	Check# 11368
Robert A. Hall	25.00	Check# 4200
S. Allen Wilson	10.00	Check# 4393
David Harrington	50.00	Check# 4232
Patrick B. Buckley	20.00	Check# 3003
Charles A. Byram	50.00	Check# 6570
Paul G. Lojkovic	10.00	Check# 1560
John J. Gustin	150.00	Check# 3142
William W. Maves	10.00	Check# 1261
John P. Williams Jr	5.00	Check# 4342
Wayne L. Deverney	10.00	Check# 3706
Chris W. Georgehead	100.00	Check# 1109
Norbert L. Leasure	10.00	Check# 5030
James W. Lertola	5.00	Check# 2230
Saturno Mercado	50.00	Check# 6216
Frank E. Virchow	10.00	Check# 31974
David Assum	10.00	Cash
Ernie Husted	5.00	Cash
Bill Foster	5.00	Cash
William Wonders	150.00	Check# 4176
Thomas E. Harvey	10.00	Check# 2398
Robert J Holscher	40.00	Check # 13539
Raymond E Palmer	25.00	Check# 1078
Kenneth Zebal	100.00	Check# 3640
Charles B. Hartzell	5.00	Check# 1615
Craig Tourte	50.00	Check# 443
George I Davis Jr	10.00	Check# 8300
Ben Long	10.00	Check# 5194
Paul Choclis	10.00	M/O
Martin Smith	10.00	Check# 450
Albert R. Pfeltz	50.00	Check# 1464
Robert J. Green	10.00	Check# 1254
Robert Kubilus	5.00	Check# 2149
Shirley Padley	25.00	Check# 8647
Allan F. Fleming	10.00	Check# 3080
Hammond M. Salley	5.00	Check# 4209
Bruce M. Pilch	10.00	Check# 2988
Mark A. Swearengen	30.00	Check# 5426
Charles Gerard	50.00	Check# 1366
James Armbrust	20.00	Check# 118
James O. Finnegan	100.00	Check# 1013
Steven Shupp	30.00	Check# 1498
William S. Miller	25.00	Check# 5626
Thomas Keaton	15.00	Check# 2341
Donald Rait	100.00	Check# 0668
James F. Cole	5.00	Check# 480
Anthony Nazzario	5.00	Check# 2374
James E. Wright	10.00	Check# 4680
Jack Haigwood	5.00	Cash
James L. Hair	5.00	Cash
Ken Bartels	10.00	Cash
Michael P. Rummel	50.00	Check# 5986
Daniel L. Horton	20.00	Check# 1601
Dr. Jack Wise	200.00	Check# 1499
Matthew R. Walsh	100.00	Check# 784
Walter W. Correia Jr	10.00	Check# 2070
Charles Frugoni	100.00	Check# 479
Allen Ferg	100.00	Check# 1268
John J. Lassiter	5.00	Check# 7827

John A Ortiz	25.00	Check# 3733
Marcus G. Monk	5.00	Check# 1047
Kenneth A Owen	25.00	Check 2632
Anthony Lukeman	5.00	Check# 3137
Michael P. Matey	20.00	Check# 2718
Thomas J Lynch Sr	10.00	Check# 5086
Carl L Haynes	20.00	Check# 1796
Victor C. Hoffman	200.00	Check# 2551
J.S. Deer	10.00	Check# 2096
Michael J Rooney	5.00	Check# 6750
Bruce E Griesmer	5.00	Check# 1740
James T. Nangle	10.00	Check# 785
John W. McElroy	50.00	Check# 1201
Charles J. Gallagher	20.00	Check# 2365
Earl Clark	25.00	Check# 115
Paul Desruisseaux	10.00	Check# 3010
Benjamin Gonzalez	10.00	Check# 6208
Steve W. Starkovich	5.00	Check# 1147
Alexander J. Sadowski	5.00	Check# 4395
Gary F. Lee	25.00	Check# 2248
Steven A. Johnson	20.00	Check# 2159
James Heath	20.00	Check# 1166
A.G. Alexander Jr	5.00	Check# 7419
Donald B. Lacy	25.00	Check# 3826
Richard E. Donaghy	50.00	Check# 3190
R. M. Fink	25.00	Check# 6933
John F. Rowe	25.00	Check# 14334
James W. Brown	50.00	Check# 1067
W.E. Seneff	10.00	Check# 4060
Leonard G. Cosner	10.00	Check# 5040
Harold D. Fosmo Jr	10.00	Check# 6620
Claude Vargo	10.00	Check# 1820
C. M. Thomson	5.00	Check# 3715
Russell B. Longaway	5.00	Check# 8459
Edward Kazimir	5.00	Cash
Michael Mahone	5.00	Cash
Robert Singleton	10.00	Cash
John Peterson	10.00	Check# 4305
Michael Mahone	100.00	Check# 2692
Jan K. Strieter	20.00	Check# 3140
Carlton Cannon	5.00	Check# 2329
D. L. Goodin	25.00	Check# 507
David M Steinberg	35.00	Check# 1294
Elwin Bacon	20.00	Check# 2108
Thaddeus Szczesniak	20.00	Check# 1404
LC Dunlap	25.00	Check# 1796
Robert F. Birtcil	50.00	Check# 4726
Peter D. Hoban	5.00	Check# 2808
Eric O Bergland	20.00	Check# 3410
Tom Grose	10.00	Check# 6182
James H. Smith	10.00	Check# 5164
Melvin Lucas	20.00	Check# 4671
Donald Ballard	5.00	Check# 4169
Owen Matthews	50.00	Check# 1962
John M. Kaheny	25.00	Check3 2011
Lawrence Luther	10.00	Check# 6287
Dallas Kirchoff	10.00	Check# 2178
Steven D. Malson	50.00	Check# 546
Robert D. King	10.00	Check# 7566
Louis F. Armbruster	10.00	Check# 3504
Lawrence Kubley	200.00	Check# 356
Walter J. Doroski	100.00	Check# 1326
David Tonick	100.00	Check# 4117
William R Yates	25.00	Check# 6670
Edward T. Webster	20.00	Cash
Hal O. Watts	10.00	Cash
Robert D. Tipton	5.00	Cash
Geoffrey L. Stack	100.00	Check# 26518
Robert E. Willis	10.00	Check# 3108
Nicholas S. Romanetz	5.00	Check# 6925
James M. Gordon	10.00	Check# 300
Michael L. Reath	25.00	Check# 3029
Steven A. Riddle	100.00	Check# 4478
Michael Worth	5.00	Check# 5967
James A. Terrell	20.00	Check# 1202
Philip D Leslie	100.00	Check# 4164
Gerald L. Gerndt	25.00	Check# 1358
Frank J. Kennedy	10.00	Check# 5286
Michael M. Sigman	20.00	Check# 1113
John T. Vosnick	10.00	Check# 8576
Gary B. Ross	50.00	Check# 4256
Edward E. Wertz	5.00	Check# 6965
Carlton D. Crenshaw	10.00	Check# 3980
Larry Hester	25.00	Check# 1504
Robert M. Bryant	10.00	Check# 6781
Gregory A Gibbons	5.00	Check# 6528
Richard Carmer	10.00	Check# 1728
Daniel McGravey	10.00	Check# 1708
Allen D. Shoup	5.00	Check# 3487
Pedro Juarez	20.00	Check# 3184
Gregory Martin	5.00	Check# 1795
William R. Aylward	5.00	Check# 2440
Glenn E. Prentice	5.00	Check# 257
Pietro Osimaniti	10.00	Check # 0788
Kenneth F. Veseskis	5.00	Check# 360
James O. Lea	5.00	Check# 7136
Rick C. Zunino	100.00	Check# 4633
Tom Mansbach	25.00	Check# 240
Pietro Osimanti	100.00	Check# 0789
Michael Pipkin	25.00	Check# 1855
Michael D. Fleming	68.00	Check# 3734
Ralph E Marshall	5.00	Cash

Robert Shippen	5.00	Check# 3859
Keith W. Seibold	25.00	Check# 2285
Michael W. Preston	5.00	Check# 649
Kenneth R. VanPatten	5.00	Check# 813
Jeff Woodard	55.00	Check# 2409
John McKee	10.00	Check# 1819
Henry R. Gagne	10.00	Check# 1606
Don Bigler	100.00	Check# 1827
Jerome L. Hess	50.00	Check# 6517
Glynn M. Domingue	20.00	Check# 1983
Lawrence R. Petrie	5.00	Check# 1643
William H. Jordan	5.00	Check# 1638
Edward Sanchez	10.00	Check# 1946
Floyd J. Graham Jr	10.00	Check# 896
Charles N. Chamberlin	20.00	Cash
F.R. Johnson	5.00	Check#6915
John Giddings	90.00	Check# 1141
William W. Morris Jr	100.00	Check# 5016
William Farrell	25.00	Check# 419
Steven W. Orr	25.00	Check# 5143
Charles Luhan Jr.	10.00	Check# 2454
Charles B. Shephard	10.00	Cash
Milton L. McNeely	1,000.00	Check# 106
John W. Wright	25.00	Check# 1417
W.R. Wildprett	25.00	Check# 5797
James H. Gottmann	25.00	Check# 2362
Daniel L. Hobart Sr.	30.00	Check# 570
Manuel A. Escalante	5.00	Check# 3920
John A. Potter	25.00	Check# 2960
James M. Collins	25.00	Check# 5551
Daryl Fisher	50.00	Check# 3312
William P. McMinn	25.00	Check# 8569
Ward J. Jarvis	150.00	Check# 9642
Ronald L. Gatewood	5.00	Check# 4363
Ramon E. Rodriquez	10.00	Check# 1092
George B Peterson	5.00	Check# 8233
Earl E. Case Jr.	35.00	Check# 5743
Vincent J. Rodriquez	40.00	Check# 15132
Matthew P. Caulfield	100.00	Check# 2266
John P. Ward	10.00	Check# 15704
Martin D. Bronston	50.00	Check# 1834
Stephen M. Jenkins	5.00	Check# 1990
Richard H. Habeck	10.00	Check# 9902
Bryson L. Allen	25.00	Check# 3834
William P. Dackermann	25.00	Check# 1381
William Carpenter	5.00	Cash
Robert Stachyra	100.00	Check# 1242
Jerry A. Jones	15.00	Check# 2300
Don Shanley	300.00	Check# 1001
Anthony E. Sibley	25.00	Check# 3235
Robert W Hanna	50.00	Check# 5726
Richard Gallegos	30.00	M/O
Charles T. Kelly	50.00	Check# 559
CT Anthony	25.00	Check# 9652
Richard A Peloquin Sr	5.00	Check# 1764
William D. Moore	50.00	Check# 5261
Terry E Avery	25.00	Check# 10096
Robert R. Seibert	5.00	Check# 3842
David OToole	50.00	Check# 1878
Michael C. Loehrer	25.00	Check# 1254
Stephen Rexrode	5.00	Check# 3000
Masato Mitsuda	10.00	Check# 1685
Thomas Siejutt	20.00	Check# 3441
Thomas L. Horchler	500.00	Check# 2613
Robert W. Riordan	250.00	Check# 5537
William A. Weber	10.00	Check# 6832
James A. Hennes	5.00	Check# 1627
Adelbert A. Chamberlain	50.00	Check# 1195
Richard L. Hamilton	10.00	Check# 2861
L. Seavy-Cioffi	5.00	M/O
Jan R. Blochlinger	50.00	Check# 1309
Carla Phillips	20.00	Check# 1243
Patrick Harrington	10.00	Check# 1176
Kenneth Pipes	30.00	Check# 6696
James Peterson	200.00	Check # 1118
Thomas Soerensen	30.00	M/O
David Bowman	25.00	Check# 2882
Robert G. Robertson	25.00	Check# 4735
Brad J. Borrell	5.00	Check# 3545
Charles Almy	5.00	Check# 667
Joseph A Derian Jr	30.00	Check# 1511
William (IO)	204.00	M/O
Timothy Dwyer	10.00	Check# 8951
Robert S. Magdowski	10.00	Check# 1243
Robert W. Ott	10.00	Check# 7749
Barry Fixler	100.00	Check# 1695
Hugh W. Olson	5.00	Check# 1329
Rodney Hermanson	100.00	Check# 424
Charles Gerrior	25.00	Check# 1215
R. K. Hellwig	100.00	Check# 10990
Michael D. Perry	25.00	Check# 2999
Samuel Weaver	20.00	Check# 1398
Charles Coppess	5.00	Check# 4006
Michael D. Perry	25.00	Check# 2999
Richard Zdunczyk	150.00	Check# 1358
Mitchell Piestrzynski	30.00	Check# 2026
Gary Foster	200.00	Check# 1009
Gary Foster	200.00	Check# 1010
David Smith	300.00	Check# 8397
Bruce Geiger	350.00	Check#
Craig Tourte	500.00	Check# 563
Lawrence Kubley	250.00	CASH

Francis Brown	10.00	Cash
Edward F Bischoff Jr	5.00	Check# 1198
Robert A Wolfe	25.00	Check# 1499
Thomas B. Steinhardt	50.00	Check# 5541
J.C. Studt	100.00	Check# 3301
Allen F Van De Bogart	50.00	Check# 2019
Bob Heppner	25.00	Check# 3454
Myles Rohrlick	5.00	Check# 2360
Robert Menzel	10.00	Check# M/O
H.J. Demaagd	50.00	Check# 1820
John A Laibinis Sr	50.00	Check# 4602
B.J. Seiber Jr	20.00	Check# 2999
Michael J. Mulligan	100.00	Check# 2643
Leland Upshaw	25.00	Check# 388
Vince Gable	150.00	Check# 3442
Joseph Oliver	50.00	Check# 167
Michael Barber	100.00	Check# 1560
Michael Barber	50.00	Check# 1559
Carol M. Hartnett	40.00	Check# 3036
David J. Meyer	60.00	Check# 3978
Wendell Wells	5.00	Check# 5360
Vincent Griffith	5.00	Check# 11662
C.W. Davis	25.00	Check# 1646
Bruce Jones	200.00	Check# 10186
Alan B. Green	5.00	Check# 2845
Jerry W. Fauver	5.00	Check# 4935
Daniel L. Sickman	10.00	Check# 914
William R. Lefevre	25.00	Check# 6745
Lynn W. Dornan	25.00	Check# 844
Charles Gerrior	5.00	Cash
Martin Traiser	20.00	Check# 1826
Edmund T. Ronan	50.00	Check# 2104
Joseph E. Harrigan	30.00	Check# 6381
B. Larkin Spivey Jr	100.00	Check# 6900
June L. Austin	20.00	Check# 4969
Richard E. Hillman	50.00	Check# 4945
Toby P Rushforth	100.00	Check# 1063
Herman C. Brown	5.00	Check# 328
Cecil R. Young	10.00	Cash
Paul C Burton	5.00	Cash
William C. Balzano	10.00	Check# 1075
Nick Elardo	25.00	Check# 1063
Robert L. Cavanaugh	10.00	Check# 1302
Charles A. Bennett	5.00	Check# 4307
William H. Dabney	100.00	Check# 7190
Joseph Viturale	20.00	Check# 1715
William H. Dubois	25.00	Check# 1306
James E. Thomas	10.00	Check# 2913
C.T. Green	50.00	Check# 2601
Dennis L. Shacklock	5.00	Check# 5111
James Updike	5.00	Check# 1321
John E Fedyszyn	5.00	Cash
James J. Zechman	10.00	Check# 582
Anthony P. Astuccio	25.00	Check# 2320
Duncan Chaplin	5.00	Check# 2824
Samuel T. Smith	50.00	Check# 3561
John F. McCormack	10.00	Check# 190
Paul N. Knight	50.00	Check# 2877
Thomas L. Horchler	500.00	Check# 2586
E. Terry Charbonneau	25.00	Check# 7634
James & Linda Beall	20.00	Check# 5198
Johnny M. Moon	5.00	Check# 1003
John Sabol	25.00	Check# 2816
Charles Delcastillo	10.00	Check# 93
Charles B. Wright	5.00	Check#
John P. McCrossen	25.00	Check# 1404
Donald F. Santner	10.00	Check# 2597
W. Thomas Huckaba	5.00	Check# 1273
Henry J.M. Radcliffe	25.00	Check# 452
J. Thomas Esslinger	250.00	Check# 1340
Thomas C. Ford	50.00	Check# 4092P
James E Rouch	100.00	Check# 1011
Robert J. Sullivan	50.00	Check# 181
Douglas N. Roesemann	5.00	Check# 524
Louis P. Naple Jr	5.00	Check# 3018
Melvin E. Sopp	50.00	Check# 3780
Michael S Williams	5.00	Check# 9876
Russell J. Wagner	5.00	Check# 3504
Daniel Fisher	40.00	Check# 12715
Richard Delotto	25.00	Check# 3017
C.T. Anthony	25.00	Check# 9625
John Finn	10.00	Check# 2133
David Rogers	10.00	Check# 4768
James B. Wilkinson	100.00	Check# 5656
Ronald G. Main	300.00	Check# 2035
Edward W. Bausman	25.00	Check3 2019
Jacob W Hughes	25.00	Check# 4124
Raymond A Edwards	25.00	Check# 774
Ray A. Addington	35.00	Check# 003708
Richard F. Dworsky	15.00	Check# 101473
William V. Cowan	100.00	Check# 1083
Michael A Ray	10.00	Check# 1425
William J. Ring	25.00	Check# 4337
KARL, Karl	10.00	Check# 6053
Ronald F. Marcella	50.00	Check# 993
Michael H. Cook	25.00	Check# 10606
Robert J. Arboleda	20.00	Check# 3078
Douglas L. Bronzie	5.00	Check# 7608
William H. Jordan	5.00	Check# 1637
Wood W. Lathrop	5.00	Check# 3055
Edward I Prendergast Jr	5.00	Check# 276
Laurence A Ballard II	5.00	Check# 1418

DONATIONS LISTED BELOW ARE IN ADDITION TO THEIR DUES

Michael Bilovecky II	10.00	Check# 5329
Rick Anderton	20.00	Check# 1012
Dennis Kendig	20.00	Check# 2029
Howard McKinnis	20.00	Check# 3551
Carl Campo	20.00	Check# 1790
Raymond Semkow	20.00	Check# 3720
Brian Farrell	45.00	Check# 3344
Michael Archer	20.00	Check# 1899
Leland Upshaw	50.00	Check# 387
Thomas Pierce	270.00 #	Check# 1105
Randall Mapel	30.00	Check# 2760
Kevin Cotter	70.00	Check# 4598
Bruce Kates	100.00	Check# 2370
Barbara Eddowes	30.00	Check# 3121
Timothy Dewolf	50.00	Check# 1553
Keal Reavely	20.00	Check# 1200
Raymond Cruz	60.00	Check# 2485
Larry Martin	20.00	Check# 2349
James Arnold	5.00	Check# 1716
Andrew Miceli	20.00	Check# 1544
Harvey Sullivan	10.00	Check# 11301
John H. Keehn Jr.	30.00	Check# 7226
Charles Lemke	50.00	Check# 9584
William Dakin	20.00	Check# 1074
George S.Owsley	20.00	Check# 3041
David Hendry	10.00	Check# 5637
Glenn Chandler	5.00	Check# 2356
Ned J. Borlaug	5.00	Check# 3052
Charles H. Fetter	10.00	Check# 1896
Stephen Sanders	5.00	Check# 2038
Daniel Droog	30.00	Check# 7273
Gary Antoine	5.00	Check# 4822
Michael A. Garoutte	30.00	Check# 8535
Bernard Cole	20.00	Check# 1066
Carl Millock	20.00	Check# 3994
Stanley Kerlin	5.00	Check# 5738
Kenneth Knoke	5.00	Check# 1994
Marshall R. Wells	10.00	Check# 3876
James Baker	50.00	Check# 110
William Hoffman	30.00	Check# 128
Richard Ashford	25.00	Check# 682
Dennis Westover	20.00	Check# 9737
Russell Mann	70.00	Check# 7104
Sharon Pelon	20.00	Check# 6187

*** Donations To The Phinias Fund To Be Given to Neil Kenny (NOTE)

Paid $ 1, 125.00 to Jordan McGowan on 28 Dec 09 Check # 1081 That covered the contributions made to him and deposited in the KSV Checking Account.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS AS OF 30 JULY 2010 45,107.00

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Ray Stubbe	**$ 500.00**	
Craig Tourte	**500.00**	
Bruce Geiger	**350.00**	
David Smith	**300.00**	
Evelyn Ford	**250.00**	****
Thomas Pierce	**270.00**	
Mindy Baker	**150.00**	
Elizabeth Devine	**50.00**	
Gary Foster	**200.00**	
Lawrence Kubley	**250.00**	
Lawrence McCartney	**250.00**	
Dr. Michael Heggeness	**20.00**	
Michael O'Hara	**50.00**	
Silent Auction	**2,000.00**	

 # Portion Of Dues For Scholarship Fund
****** Won on 50/50 Raffle Donated To Scholarship Fund**



OBIT

LTCOL THOMAS H. TIMBERLAKE USMC

LtCol. Thomas H. Timberlake Jr., U.S.M.C., retired, 66, passed away Tuesday, April 13, 2010. He was the beloved husband of Linda Garrett Timberlake; father of Meredith L. Timberlake and brother of Stewart Timberlake. He was a native of Greenwood, Miss., and a longtime resident of Slidell.

He retired from the U.S. Marine Corps after 30 years. He served in Vietnam for two tours and was an infantry officer. He was a member of the Marine Corps League, Military Order of the Purple Heart, M.O.A.A., the VFW and the American Legion Post 185.

AN EULOGY

By W.R. "Rut" Whittington Colonel, USMCR Ret. , 19 April 2010

Remembering Tom Timberlake, LtCol. USMC Ret.

Tom and I first met in the summer of 1968 when we began training as 2d Lts in "B" Company, The Basic School at Quantico. It wasn't smart, but they formed platoons according to the alphabet. Our 5th Platoon started in the "S" names and went through "Z". Since many things in life and particularly in the Corps are done by alphabet, those of us who spend excessive time in the rear of pay lines and chow lines get a bit "strange". In other words, don't form a platoon from people at the last of the alphabet. Tom and I were the only two former enlisted Marines in 5th Platoon. He had been a Sgt and was returning from Viet Nam and recovering from wounds. I had been a Cpl then gone to college and would be on my way over following TBS. Tom, therefore, could take a more relaxed attitude about TBS than the rest of us. With Tom being from Mississippi and me from Louisiana, plus our prior service, it was natural that we would be buddies. I can recall many scenes from those days, but I will mention just a couple that have that true "Timberlake stamp" on them.

TBS makes the land navigation training unnecessarily difficult. All features are removed from the training maps except for contour lines and natural features. Each Lt is assigned a unique series of calculations to make, requiring numerous, 1,000 meter plus "legs" going through the dense brush to find numbered boxes. Boxes are all over the place and too close together. Once you get one box wrong, the rest of your calculations will be off. Tom asked me: "Whit, are you going to run that course"? I told him yes. What other choice did I have? Tom had devised a plan where he stood in place, stopped Lts walking by, asked them what box they were coming from, and how far away it was. Somehow he compiled all of those responses, determined his answers and passed the exercise. I spent all day beating the brush, failed and had to repeat. To this day, I don't know how Tom did it. He explained it to me, but I still could not understand it. I'd say it was luck, but I know him too well. It was genius.

One other "Timberlake special" from TBS was the Saturday when there was an outcry on the 3d deck of the BOQ. One of the Lts had walked into the shared toilet between the rooms and found a dead deer hanging from the shower head. Tom calmly explained that there was a married Lt whose pay was messed up and he could not feed his kids. Tom palmed a 7.62 round from the rifle range, took his issued M-14, shot the deer near Camp Barrett, and was preparing it. Those kids got venison to eat. Tom took a great personal risk to do a good deed. No one in "officialdom" ever found out about it. Can you imagine that happening today?

We headed in different directions following TBS graduation. Tom went on to serve with Recruiting in New York City, as a Company Commander in OCS, Range Officer at Parris Island and attended Command and Staff College. Years later, I was in my first year as C.O. of 3/23 and "word" came in that our new, incoming Inspector-Instructor would be the departing C.O. of Marine Barracks Panama, a Tom Timberlake. Sometimes you just get lucky!

No one has ever been a better Battalion I-I than Tom Timberlake. He knew just how to play that role. He toiled tirelessly to make 3/23 look good while he quietly and unselfishly operated in the background. Col. Jack Garcia, former C.O. of the Command and Staff College, was our Regimental Commander. While Col. Garcia and Tom were very different individuals, they knew each other and had

mutual respect and rapport. I managed to fit into the middle of all of that.

Everywhere we went for conferences and training, Tom knew people and they knew him. His contacts were invaluable to us. In Operation Solar Flare in 1987, 3/23 was attached to the 2d Marines. The C. O., Col. Mike Byron, knew Tom and that helped us integrate and operate successfully. Tom provided wise advice and counsel at all times. Most of the time I listened. Sometimes, especially when dealing with the 23d Marines Regimental staff, I did not. I recall walking back from a meeting with Col. Garcia at Camp Rilea in 1988 when Tom looked over at me and said words to the effect: "If you could just learn when to keep your mouth shut, we'd do a lot better". We both laughed. I knew he was right. I just wanted to have some fun! He forgave me.



We stayed in contact these 20 years following the 3/23 days. Tom provided professional advice on several major State Police initiatives during my command there. When we designed the huge range and training complex now called the Joint Emergency Services Training Center, Tom helped with the design and showed us how to lay it out on the ground. He would not sign a contract. You could not pay him. He just helped. When we had a fatal shooting during training, Tom reviewed our safety procedures and provided counsel. He had been there and done that. His assistance was invaluable.

Our last contact was approximately three weeks ago when Tom called. He wanted to know how William was doing. William, my youngest son, is a 2d Lt and Platoon Commander in "G" Co. 2/8 at Camp Lejeune. Tom, knowing that 2/8 is ramping up for another deployment to Afghanistan said: "You know, they have too many rules over there. If William gets hurt, the two of us will go over there and use our own rules to deal with some folks". I said I'd go. Heck, I'd follow Tom anywhere!

Tom departed this life a bit early. He's younger than I am. But, he lived life to the fullest and was a true patriot. Tom Timberlake was a family man, a man's man, and a Marine's Marine. Anyone who can say they were a friend of Tom's has been blessed and is indeed fortunate. Tom was the embodiment of our motto, Semper Fidelis.

OBIT

Peter Annal sends from Marines TWS: Fletcher's son Allen sent me a message concerning Fletcher's passing. Since many of you here know Fletcher I thought I should paste the message here. Fletcher was a fine Marine and I'm glad I got to meet and hang out with him a couple times. Here's Allen's message: Allen Culver June 26 at 10:44pm Hi Peter could you please do me a favor Dad passed away today from lung cancer and some others things around 2pm is there a way you can post something on the marines forum and also let Kathy Elquist know also to let them know what happened he will be cremated Monday morning. if you can help me out I sure would appreciated it very much. Thanks Allen Culver Sylacauga, Alabama



Khe Sanh Veterans Visit the 'Center for the Intrepid' and 'Warrior & Family Support Center' at Brooke Army Medical Center

By Bruce M. Geiger



Last summer I hosted a very successful annual reunion of the National Dusters, Quads & Searchlights Association in San Antonio, and I was eager to return this year to enjoy San Antonio's hospitality without the anxiety and stress that goes along with this responsibility. When the KSV first attempted to arrange a visit to the Center, they were rebuffed for several reasons by members of the Staff of the Intrepid Center. Neil Kenny took up the Endeavour and contacted officials he has met during the many events he sponsors for service members at his own expense throughout the year. His efforts were rewarded, and he asked if I would again lead a delegation from the KSV. I knew instantly that my personal desire to see the Khe Sanh sand table at LBJ Library would have to be put aside in favor of this important mission to visit with and to encourage the dedicated, recovering Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Sailors.



On Friday morning our group of about a dozen Khe Sanh veterans and wives formed a small caravan of vehicles, and departed the hotel for the short trip to Ft. Sam Houston. We were met at the entrance by Norma Guerra, the Deputy Chief of Public Affairs & Community Relations who has been with the facility since 2007 when it was turned over to the Physical Medical Service at BAMC. At the time I did not realize that those in our visiting group had not been appropriately briefed beforehand in anticipation of the severe head trauma and burn disfigured patients we would visit with. For anybody unprepared to see these disfiguring injuries for the first time it was an understandable shock.

Unfortunately for a few in our group the initial shock was too overwhelming and any human being could be expected to have the same reaction. Having made five previous visits to this facility, Brooke Army Medical Center, and Walter Reid I was able with some difficulty to control my emotions barely enough as not to make the patients feel uncomfortable. Craig Tourte and a few others did not want to take the chance that the inability to conceal their emotions might have an unintended negative effect on the patients, and their compassion led them to discontinue the tour. **(See Craig's Article Page 55)**

Those of us that remained visited and talked with the rehab patients and were both inspired and humbled by their dedication, perseverance and positive attitudes. It was wonderful to have Lloyd Scudder with our group. He talked to the kids like an experienced older brother, all the time smiling and joking. With his own experience and knowledge of the difficult rehabilitation he was able to put them at ease and give them hope for a full and productive life ahead. We did our best to convey our personal gratitude to each of the warriors we met and handed each of them a Khe Sanh challenge coin. We were also inspired by the compassion and dedication of each and every staff member we met.

The tour included all of the center's facilities and the rehabilitation process which begins immediately upon the patient's release from the hospital. Under the direction of the Physical Medicine Service at BAMC, physiatrists work closely with orthopedic surgeons and other physicians to coordinate all care. The Military Performance Lab (MPL) analyzes human motion with particular emphasis on amputee

gait (walking). The Computer Assisted Rehabilitation Environment (CAREN) is a 21 foot dome with a 300 degree screen upon which a variety of "virtual realities" may be displayed. The patient is fitted with a harness and stands on a computer controlled force plate as he navigates the variety of "virtual" paths, trails, hills and even balances in a rowboat. The simulator is the first of its kind in the world and holds much promise for the patients at the center. In the Gait Lab up to 24 cameras use infrared light to track the position of reflective markers placed on a patient's body. Joint angles are calculated and analyzed and force plates in the floor, parallel bars, and treadmill measure ground reaction forces in three directions. Information gathered ultimately helps physicians, physical therapists, and prosthetists adjust their treatment plans and improve patient function.

In addition to the latest physical therapy equipment and techniques, patients are given occupational therapy that focuses on restoring health and function following injury or illness. Treatment activities are designed so that patients can successfully perform tasks and activities of daily living like bathing, dressing, shopping, cooking, writing, performing household chores and everything needed to function on a day-to-day basis. A community integration program gives patients access to a wide variety of activities including horseback riding, paint-ball, archery, kayaking, golf, and skiing among others.

Specialized equipment includes a tread wall and a 21 foot climbing tower with auto-belay to promote strengthening, agility, and aerobic conditioning. A natatorium includes a six lane pool for pre-running activities, kayaking, water basketball and volleyball, and general swimming. The 'Flowrider', a unique indoor activity adjacent to the pool, is used to improve balance, coordination, strength, motivation, and confidence.

A state-of-the-art on-site prosthetics lab is staffed by expert technicians. They use computer assisted technology and high-tech materials in combinations of acrylic resins, carbon fiber composites and titanium to fabricate artificial limbs customized for each patient and a variety of unique specialty limbs for sports and other activities.

Individual case management is provided for each patient and their family. This includes a behavioral medicine service with comprehensive psychiatric support services for each patient to maximize their potential for emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical recovery

Upon conclusion of our tour, all in our group were left in awe of these courageous warriors and this amazing facility. We were unanimously humbled by the experience and honored to have participated. Upon departing the Center for the Intrepid we visited the nearby **Warrior and Family Support Center** that provides a comfortable, welcoming and friendly environment for wounded warriors and their families to relax, have fun, participate in activities and find support as they transition to their new 'normal'.

The director of the facility, Judith Markelz greeted us, gave us a brief history of the facility before having a staff member take us on a tour of the facility. The initial idea came from physicians at BAMC who saw a need for family members to be intimately involved in the rehabilitation of their service members. A vital part of recovery meant providing a "safe" environment away from the hospital. The concept of the WFSC was then developed by a committee established to support troops who were in combat operations and on the road to recovery.

The WFSC opened in a small and cramped meeting room in December 2003. Through the extraordinary generosity of the greater community led by local developers Steve and Les Huffman, a 12,000 square foot, state-of-the-art $5.6 million facility was built solely by donations. It was completed in less than 18 months and opened its doors on December 3, 2008. Since its beginning in 2003 the old and new centers have seen 360,000 visitors. In 2009 alone the WFSC has had more than 81,000 visitors The Ft. Sam Houston WFSC is the only one of its kind in the military offering a safe and caring environment for military families to reconnect during medical treatment.

The WFSC offers a wide variety of services including information and referral to both military and civilian organizations, educational classes, state-of-the-art computer lab and business center, large kitchen and dining area for cooking and eating with friends and family, big screen TVs and entertain-

ment room for video games and movies, beautiful outdoor patio and garden area for relaxing, free long distance calls to anywhere in the continental U.S., camaraderie with other Wounded Warriors through events at the center and in the local area, free DVD checkout with the latest releases, donations and support from the local community through food, small personal items, goodies, blankets and special events. Although it has a small staff and receives minimal funding from the Army for utilities and maintenance, the WFSC receives overwhelming support from its many volunteers and donations of services and funds from the local community in San Antonio.

The Khe Sanh Veterans Board of Directors is currently considering a proposal to make a substantial donation of $50 Walmart gift cards on behalf of the organization to be distributed to patients at BAMC, at the Center for the Intrepid rehabilitation facility, and at the Warrior & Family Support Center.

MY VISIT TO THE INTREPID CENTER

By Craig Tourte

I had the privilege and extreme honor to visit the Intrepid Center (named after the aircraft carrier Intrepid), a $50 million dollar rehabilitation center for wounded warriors located at Fort Sam Huston. We were a group of about a dozen led by Bruce Geiger. I should not say "led" that would be incorrect. Guided, would be a much better word, for Bruce has done this before. I didn't know anything about the Intrepid Center, thinking is was just another tour hastily put together at the last minute.

Bruce addressed the injured and conveyed our gratitude as Khe Sanh Veterans. A tour was provided of the state of the art facility and the group was able to speak to many. I don't want to make this about me, but I was not able to go on the tour. I tried and I wanted too, but I just could not. For the most part I was in shock and I don't know why. My heart cried out and I was sure I would be unable to check my emotions for much longer. I felt out of place and was thankful that Lloyd Scudder was with the group. He talked to the kids like a brother, with a smile on his face and a knowing heart, he was the voice of experience and comfort. He belonged, I certainly felt like I did not, more intruder than a guest so I thought it best that I return to the hotel.

I talked to Bruce about this later in the evening and he assured me that the men and women at the center were very positive and enjoyed talking to the visitors who came by and I know Bruce was correct, it was my pain, my weakness and my heart that ached for them all and I was not prepared. I was glad I went, although I didn't get much past the front door, and it is something that I will remember and think about for many years to come. A reminder of how so much is given to so many by so few. During the dedication ceremony General Peter Pace stated in his remarks. "There are those who speak about (wounded warriors) today - He lost an arm. He lost a leg. She lost her sight, I object, Pace told the injured troops in attendance". "You gave an arm, you gave a leg, and you gave your sight as gifts to your nation that we might live in freedom."





I thought the Intrepid Rehabilitation Center was so moving and so important, I posted my story on our Web Site. I wanted those who were not connected with our group and happen to come across the web board to have as much information as I could provide. I invite anyone who is interested to go to the web and type "Intrepid Fort Sam Houston" for more detail of this wonderful facility.

PHILLIP WRIGHT USMC B CO 1/26
KHE SANH VETERAN

February 1, 1947 - February 23, 2010

Phillip James Wright, age 63 of Delavan, passed away Monday, February 23, 2010 at Clement Zablocki V.A. Medical Center in Milwaukee. He was born February 1, 1947 in Chicago, IL, the son of Edwin and Helen Wright. He married Diane Alfredson in February of 2004 in Delavan. He was a carpenter for Turner Special Projects Construction. He served with the U.S. Marines during the Vietnam War. He is survived by his wife, Diane of Delavan; 2 sons, Daniel (Lana) Wright of Ohio and Christopher (Krislynn) Wright of Ohio; 1 grandson, Cadyn of Ohio; 1 daughter, Valerie Szczepanski of Delavan; 1 sister, Tracy Wright of Arizona; and 1 nephew, Brendan. He is preceded in death by his parents and his son Patrick. Full Military Honors were Held In Delavan Wis. Photos By His Friend L Larsen





WELCOME HOME PHIL









MEMBERS FROM THE 4TH RECON BATTALION, SAN ANTONIO TEXAS, HONORED US WITH A STATIC DISPLAY OF WEAPONS CURRENTLY BEING USED BY THE USMC & RECON













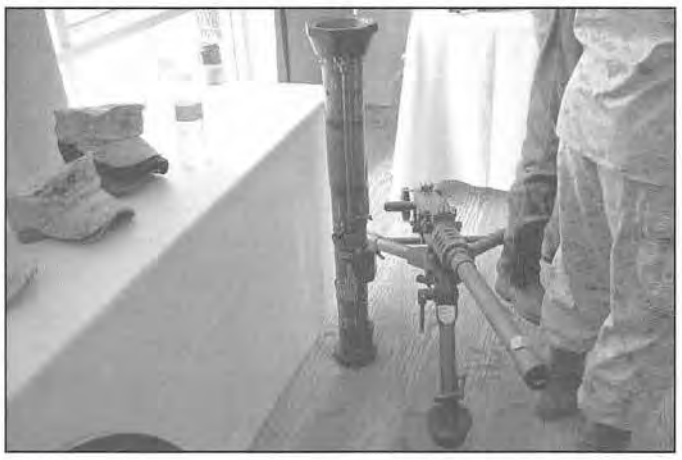

INTERESTING TRIP TO THE LBJ LIBRARY
LBJ's SAND TABLE MODEL:
A MOVING ARTIFACT FOR KHE SANH VETERANS



SEE GUYS THERE IS WHERE I TOLD LBJ, I LIVED ALL THOSE MONTHS

STORY BY DENNIS MANNION K CO 3/26

During the 2010 Khe Sanh Veterans reunion, twenty-two vets (and a few civilians) set out on a road-trip from San Antonio. It would be a journey not just through space, but through time as well. The destination was the LBJ Library in Austin, and the mission was to revisit Khe Sanh, in a sense, by viewing the battlefield model that their Commander-in-Chief and his aides had agonized over in 1968. The Khe Sanh sand table is now housed in the archives at the LBJ Library & Museum, but just over 4 decades ago it was a permanent fixture in the White House Situation Room. In the days leading up to the siege, President Johnson was having a difficult time visualizing the terrain in and around Khe Sanh, and an aide suggested that constructing a sand table -- in reality a 3-D map -- might help. There was a big fight shaping up around Khe Sanh; it was not a matter of *if* the NVA might attack, but *when.* As U.S. military planners prepared their defenses and brought in battalions of Marines, NVA commanders were marshaling their forces in the mountains and the approach valleys leading toward the Khe Sanh plateau. The sand table gave those in the White House the ability to track enemy troop movements and troop locations in relation to the Americans dug in at the combat base and on some of the hills. Crude by today's standards of computer generated imagery, scans, and high definition satellite photography, the sand table was what the President used week after week in order to be kept informed of the ever changing battlefield conditions. It is said that he often wandered into the Situation Room late at night to stare at the sand table as results from the siege (already the next day over in Southeast Asia) were being reported back to the Pentagon.

Most, if not all, of the twenty-two of us had the same, immediate reactions when we walked from the basement corridor of the library into a brightly lit workroom and saw the historic artifact for the first time: "It's so small!" I am sure that in our minds we were expecting to see something the size of a ping pong table at the very least! I know I was. I had looked forward to seeing trench lines, artillery pieces, Army quad-40's, big bunkers, cleared fields of fire, the water point, and even the 235 empty Ham & Lima Bean C-rat cans surrounding Neil Kenny's fighting position. However, as we were soon to learn that morning, fine detail was not what this special map was all about.

We had gathered in the front lobby of the library just a few minutes before and met Mike MacDonald the library staffer who would be our guide when we viewed our own history. After a few introductory remarks and a gentle but firm admonition that it was permissible to get as close to the sand table as we desired but not to touch any part of it, we were in the elevator heading down. One more pause, another request that we not touch anything on the table, and the doors to the workroom opened. That initial shock at the small size of the sand table

caused the group to pause at the door, and there were a few awkward moments before the group closed in on the White House version of our collective Khe Sanh experience. Suddenly, there were 22 voices all seeming to talk at once. There was a bit of nervous laughter and good natured kidding. Questions were asked, terrain features pointed out, and exclamations of surprise and excitement. On more than one face, I saw tears.

I held back as the others surged forward because I really wanted to gauge their reactions. The sand table wasn't going anywhere and Mike had assured me that he'd give us all the time we needed. I knew I'd get my chance. So, I waited and watched. We are a society of cameras of every size and shape, but in the initial minutes, cameras were not being used at all. I sensed that the veterans needed just to be close to the sand table because an unspoken, emotional link said, "I was down there somewhere at the very same time that the President of the United States was staring down at this map!" Hearing the excitement in our voices, my wife Joan turned to one of the library aides and said, "You may think you are looking at a group of middle-aged men, but if you close your eyes and listen carefully, what you are hearing are the voices and feelings of 19 and 20 year olds."

When a space opened up, I moved closer to the table and got my first glimpse. Real small, I thought again, but terrain features that have been locked in my head all these years were suddenly right <u>below</u> me in three dimension. Some were marked with white flags and others I just *knew*. Tiger Tooth Mountain (1371m), 881 North and South, the 689 ridge line, 558, 950 & 1015, 700, 918, and of course, 861. Also visible in miniature detail was the ridge line 500 meters to the west of 861 where the NVA had been dug in for the most of the siege -- and took a horrendous pounding -- as well as the solid, green knoll that would soon become known in USMC siege-history as 861a. The artist who created the sand table had painted the perimeters of 881s and 861 in exactly the same shape they had been, but greatly reduced in size. 881s was accurately created as two hills connected by a sloping saddle of land that ran east-west, and 861, now the size of small button on the sleeve of a shirt, was realistically depicted as a pork chop shaped hill with the bigger bump to the north and the lower bump (and the LZ) to the south. "Amazing," I said out loud but really to myself. Easily discernible, too, was the Rao Quan River and its tributaries north of the combat base as well as the Xe Pon River and its distinctive oxbows over by Lang Vei. This river served as the border between Vietnam and Laos, and tucked distinctly above one of those oxbows on the Laotian side was a steep thrust of terrain. I had only spent 4 days down at the combat base in 1968 and that was when the siege portion of Khe Sanh conflict was over, but that sinister land formation on the sand table took my breath away. I was looking down on the Co Roc massif. Missing of course, were the 130 and 152 mm guns that the NVA had fired from inside those formidable cliffs. I opened my right hand as wide as possible. I put my thumb directly over Co Roc and lined up my little finger towards the north east. Just beyond that outstretched finger was the painted-on perimeter of the combat base, no bigger than a wooden match. In real life, the distance between the big guns and the runway was 14,000 meters, but LBJ's view of that same distance was just a bit wider than my open hand. "1000's upon 1000's of enemy shells crossed this space," I thought.

Suddenly, cameras were out and being pointed everywhere. There were close ups of the sand table, individual poses, small groups, even the entire group at one point as well as non-posed, informal photos. Replace the digital cameras with Kodak Instamatics, load in real film, skip the large group shot, and it could have been us doing the same thing 42 years ago. With the photo session concluded, it was time to close this window to our past, say goodbye, and head back to San Antonio.

I purposely delayed with Mike MacDonald as I wanted to be the last vet to see the table before the cover went on. I paused at the door and watched as 3, white-gloved library staff carefully placed folded up lengths of tissue paper over the entire Khe Sanh Area of Operations. Standing nearby were two others who would carry the cover over and clasp it in place. "Farewell," I thought. "Not sure if I'll ever have the opportunity again." I felt connected to the sand table but more to what wasn't visible than what was. I had hoped to see the 81mm mortar pits on 881s and the 105mm parapets down at the combat base because their respective crews had saved all of us on 861 when the siege began just after midnight

on 21 Jan 68. I really wanted to see Jerry Elliot, an Army door gunner who, on 21 Jan 68, left his own intact Huey and raced across open ground to help others from a crashed Huey near the Old French Fort and was never seen again on this earth. I wanted to see the section of trench line at the combat base where Father Brett and Cpl Chin lost their lives in February; they had been on 861 & 861a just the day before. I wanted to see Captain Bill O'Connor's green smoke sifting over 881n on the 17th of March of that year. I wanted to pinpoint those multiple NVA mortar tubes located northwest of 861 whose muzzle blast directions told me in an instant whether it was going to be us on 861 or the Marines on 861a who were going to be hit in the next 14 seconds. It was terrifying if the muzzle blasts were angled toward me, yet I always felt relief, horror, and guilt if they were pointing toward E 2/26's positions.

I was hoping to see the U.S. flag that Kilo 3/26 raised on Easter Sunday on 881n after Lima, Mike, and Kilo companies conducted a personal Easter Egg hunt on the 14th of April. I wanted to locate the exact spot of terrain between 881s and 881n where Kilo's Lt. Fordham died the very next day. President Johnson had been in Vietnam back in October of 1967 and had awarded Lt. Fordham his first Purple Heart at a military hospital in Cam Ranh Bay. I have the photograph. Did that same, big hand that pinned the medal on the Lt's bathrobe also grip the edge of the sand table on 15 April 68? I sure hope so.

I wanted to see all of that and much, much more. But I couldn't. Nor would I ever even if I were to take up permanent residency in the LBJ Library. In the early 1960's, ABC had a prime time, TV, cop show set in NYC entitled **"The Naked City."** Every episode concluded with the following: ***"There are eight million stories in the Naked City. This has been one of them."*** Only 8 million? Hell, I know of a small sand table in Austin, Texas that has 10 times as many stories.
Semper Fi.

Honored and Privileged to be there on 16 July 2010:
There are a few Women there whom I cannot ID

Mike Archer	**HQ COMM 26th Marines**
Bill Foster	**HQ COMM 26th Marines**
Floyd J. Graham	**HQ COMM 26th Marines**
Joe Haggard	**HQ COMM 26th Marines**
Raul "Oz" Orasco	**HQ COMM 26th Marines**
Steve Orr	**HQ COMM 26th Marines**
Michael Reath	**HQ COMM 26th Marines**
Richard Vaughn	**H&S COMM 26th Marines**
Dave Smith	**HQ BTRY 1/ 13 Marines**
Jim Kaylor	**E CO 26th Marines**
Larry McCartney	**E CO 26th Marines**
Bill Maves	**E CO 26th Marines**
Merle Moritz	**E CO 26th Marines**
John Mattern	**C CO 26th Marines**
Chuck Chamberlin	**C CO 26th Marines**
Lee Rimkus	**C CO 26th Marines**
Nick Romanetz	**C CO 26th Marines**
Steve Wiese	**B CO 26th Marines**
Dennis Mannion	**K CO 26th Marines**
Leland Upshaw	**Bravo CO 3rd Recon**
John Wolfe	**3/26 9 MAB**
David E. Harper	**50 TAS USAF**

Civilians:
Joan Mannion
Rita Moritz
Gary Foster



THE ACTUAL SAND TABLE USED BY LBJ

WHY WE REMEMBER

By Craig Tourte

It was one of those evenings at Tom Horchlers house. I, Tom and Ned Borlaug were sitting under a giant Oak tree in front of Tom's house. It was a beautiful evening, large open sky and Tom's two large Golden Retrievers lying at our feet. The mention of Vietnam seldom comes up when we gather, there is really not much to be said that we have not already discussed and sometimes bringing up the subject of Vietnam is just to painful a memory.

However when that rarity does occur, there are no heroic stories, no stories of adventure or humorous memories at these gathering, which on occasion are attended by quite a number of Veterans, all friends of Toms. That is unless someone has the need to vent, it builds up you know, and sometimes it helps to release what is in your heart, if the right people are around, there are not many outsiders who would understand. Anyway, it was one of those moments.

Ned Borlaug served in Vietnam during the early years, was involved in some nasty firefights which involved numerous loses. Ned served with India Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Corps Regiment, 1st platoon and 1st squad, from March 15th to December 15th, 1966, the days of M-14 rifles and newly issued jungle boots. Ned remembers that the M-14 he was issued had been used by another Marine, and still bore the blood stains of the previous owner.

1966 was a difficult year for the 3rd Regiment, under strength and involved in the early battles around Da Nang, Chu Lai and the Hills around Khe Sanh and the DMZ. From the book "The Hill Fights, The First Battle of Khe Sanh" - "...under fire, trapped in a hell of sudden death meted out by unseen enemies, they fought impossible odds with awesome courage and uncommon valor."

Ned told us that some of the dates of death and one of the names were misstated on the list in the magazine, but he understood that putting the magazine together was a difficult task and that mistakes can and do happen, but he appreciated the opportunity to memorialize their memory. I knew this was an important issue for Ned - it was important because he was all some of them had, many now forgotten by family and friends. Ned and I discussed their loss and the circumstances of each death.

1966

On April 3rd, LCPL David E. Hornby was shot by a sniper as David and Ned were digging a fox hole in Elephant Valley, located in the A Shau Valley.

On April 4th, PFC Jack D. Gilbert was on Operation Orange when he was killed by a snipers bullet.

On April 13th, LCPL Jose A. Pacheco was killed by a hidden 155 mm artillery shell booby trap mine near Hill 55.

On April 14th, SGT Robert L. Vaden was wounded by a hidden booby trap mine in the same explosion that killed Jose A. Pacheco, dying of his wounds the following day.

On April 15th, PFC Ralph H. Livesay was killed by a hidden booby trap mine near Hill 55.

On April 24th, CPL Daniel B. Duffy Jr. was killed by a hidden booby trap mine near Hill 55.

On April 30th, SGT Molimau A. Tela was killed by a hidden booby trap mine hear Hill 55.

On August 1st, PFC Victor Morales was shot and killed by a sniper

On August 7th, LCPL Bobby L. Eaton was killed by a booby trap near Hill 21.

On November 9th, PFC Ronnie H. Bintliff was killed along with Charles Roberts by a Chinese hand grenade near Mutter's Ridge along the DMZ.

On November 9th, PFC Charles A. Roberts was killed along with Ronnie Bintliff by a Chinese hand grenade near Mutter's Ridge along the DMZ

On November 28th, PVT William R. Devore was killed by a snipers bullet as he stood next to Ned.

On November 29th, LCPL Michael A. Baronowski was killed by rifle fire along the

DMZ. * The Vietnam Tapes of Lance Corporal Michal A. Baronowski - " In 1966, a 19 year-old Marine took a reel to reel tape recorder with him into the Vietnam War. For two months, until he was killed in action, Lance Corporal Michael A. Baronowski made 3 inch open reel tapes of his friends, of combat, of life in the foxhole. 34 years later, his comrade Tom Duffe brought those tapes to Lost & Found Sound." Producer Christina Egloff with Jay Allison - Links, The Vietnam Tapes on NPR's Lost & Found Sound.

On December 7th, PVT Richard C. Brandt was killed by rifle fire during a firefight near the DMZ. It was his 3rd Purple Heart which was awarded along with a Bronze Star - both posthumously.

I didn't count the names listed in the Memorial Page, I wanted to, but I couldn't. Each name is so important, each a hero. Some killed in war and others survived their tour but left us too early. A reminder of how temporary this all is. Everyone should have a friend like Ned, who after so many years, remembers each so clearly, mourns their loss and knows how important it is to memorialize their memory.













MEMORIAL PAGE (SOME CORRECTIONS FROM ISSUE 75)

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
CPL Delbert Leasure USMC C BTRY 1/13 KIA 23 Feb 68	THE KHE SANH VETERANS
Forrest Leasure Brother of Delbert Leasure Passed Away	THE KHE SANH VETERANS
LCPL John Francavillia USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 4/9/68 Hill 881S	David Steinberg I CO 3/26
SW2 Edward"Cody" Adams USN Seabee KIA 16 Mar 68	Larry Kubley CBMU-301 DET B
PFC Theodore Brown Jr. USMC K CO 3/26 KIA 21 Jan 68 Hill 861	Steven Malson K CO 3/26
Dwight Detmer USMC WIA 18 June 68 Died 24 Sept 1999 Age 51	Eric Bergland C CO 1/9
LCPL Roger M Hurd USMC A CO 1/26 3RD PLT KIA 21 May 67	John M. Kaheny A CO 1/26
PFC Thomas Hendershott USMC A CO 1/26 3RD PLT KIA 21 May 67	John M. Kaheny A CO 1/26
SGT Roger Arnold USMC W BTRY 1/13 KIA 18 Aug 68	Willie Roe W BTRY 1/13
LCPL Samuel Lightman USMC D CO 1/26 KIA 02 Nov 66	John F. Peterson Original D CO 1/26
CPL William E Wyrosdic USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 08 Oct 68	John A Laibinis Sr. H CO 2/26
1ST LT Hank Norman USMC H&S CO 1/26 KIA 30 Mar 68	Michael Barber C CO 3RD ENGRS
1ST LT Kim Johnson USMC A BTRY 1/13 KIA 23 Feb 68	Michael Barber C CO 3RD ENGRS
2ND LT Michael Thomas USMC 2ND PLT I CO 3/26 KIA 20 Jan 68	Michael Mahone I CO 3/26
All Those KIA From 2/1	Philip Leslie G CO 2/1
2nd Lt Fernando Distefano USMC E CO 2/26 KIA 24 Feb 68	Michael Fleming E CO 2/26
All Those From E CO 2/26 Who Did Not Come Home	Michael Fleming E CO 2/26
LCPL Roger Hurd USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 21 May 67	Joseph Oliver HMM-163
SGT Terry Smith USMC Scout/Sniper HQ 2/26 KIA 19 Jan 68	Vince Gable HQ CO 26Th Marines
2ND LT Donald Jacques USMC 3RD PLT B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Pietro Osimanti B CO 1/26
LCPL Larry Lawrence USMC HQ 26th MARINES KIA 06 Jun 67	William Balzano HQ Security Plt
Doctor Robert Topmiller CHARLIE MED RAS Passed away Last Year	Kevin Cotter MACG-18
CPL Robert Arrota USMC FAC HILL 881S Jan-Apr 68 Passed Away	Col William Dabney I CO 3/26 C/O
CPL Victor Pizarro USMC A Btry 1/13 KIA 02 Mar 68 C-130 Crash KSCB	William Dubois A Btry 1/13
Chester "Doc" Fontenot USN H CO 2/1 KIA 17 May 68	Michael Pipkin F CO 2/1
18 Marines From F CO 2/1 KIA 19 May 68	Michael Pipkin F CO 2/1
2nd Lt Michael H. Thomas USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 20 Jan 68 Hill 881N **(NC)**	Robert Tipton I CO 3/26
LCPL Walter Ostapchuk USMC A CO 1/9 M-79 Man KIA 05 Apr 68	Kenneth Veseskis A CO 1/9
PFC Philip T. Lindsay USMC A CO 1/9 Fire team Member KIA 09 Apr 68	Kenneth Veseskis A CO 1/9
LCPL William L. Yohn USMC G CO 2/26 KIA 04 May 68	John T. Vosnick Jr. G CO 2/26
PFC Anthony Pepper USMC G CO 2/26 KIA 06 Apr 68	John T. Vosnick Jr. G CO 2/26
In Memory of Gilbert "Many Guns" Wall- Blackfoot Warrior B CO 1/26 81 F/O	Bruce T-Bone Jones B CO 1/26
LCPL James E West JR. "Rusty" USMC E CO 2/3 KIA 31 May 68 KSCB	June L. Austin (Sister)
SGT Charlie Fox USMC C CO 1/26 Passed Away	David J. Meyer C CO 1/26
CPL Reuben C. McMackins USMC L CO 3/26 KIA 14 Apr 68 Hill 881N	Thomas A. Pierce L CO 3/26
HM-3 Walter Tyrcz USN A CO 1/26 KIA 14 Mar 68 HILL 861	Rick Zunino A CO 1/26
HN Joseph Lopez USN E CO 2/26 KIA 18 Apr 68 Hill 861A	Rick Zunino A CO 1/26
LCPL Kevin Coyne USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 07 Jun 68 Hill 861	Rick Zunino A CO 1/26
LCPL James M. Wilkins USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 31 July 1968	Rick Zunino A CO 1/26
All those from the Early "Hill Fights" Before & up to Easter Sunday 1967	Larry Hester E CO 2/9
LCPL Roberto Mendez USMC (Pointman) C CO 1/26 KIA 27 Oct 68	Pedro Juarez C CO 1/26
PFC Greg Weaver USMC KIA 26 May 1966	Robert A. Heppner 309THAC
TSGT Edward Mosley USAF 314TH TAW KIA 15 Oct 67	Robert A. Heppner 309TH AC
AIC Larry Berneski USAF 314TH TAW KIA 15 Oct 67	Robert A. Heppner 309TH AC
LCPL Paul F. Stedman USMC H&S CO 3RD SP BN KIA 26 Feb 68	C.T. Green H&S & A CO 3RD SP
PFC Woody Cronkite USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 10 Sep 67	Michael P. Rummel 1ST FSR/FLC
CPL Albert Sanford USMC B CO 1/26 F/O KIA 30 Mar 68	Victor Hoffman A/CO 1/26 F/O
Gilbert Wall USMC B CO 1/26	Victor Hoffman A CO 1/26 F/O
PFC William J. Williams USMC L CO 3/26 HILL 689 KIA 27 Jun 67	Frank Rios L CO 3/26
CAPT Frank Bynum USMC L CO 3/26 HILL 689 KIA 27 Jun 67	Frank Rios L CO 3/26
CPL Joseph A Silon Jr. USA KSB KIA 04 Mar 71	John L. Hager C TRP 3 SQD 5th CAV

"CEREMONY"

By Craig W. Tourte

I made two trips to the state of New Mexico to honor the hero's of the Siege of the beleaguered Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh, the hill fights and other battles in the Khe Sanh area of operation. The Memorial Road Marker and Bridge are now forever standing tributes to both the fallen and to those few survivors of those long ago battles.

Two trips by air and an hour drive out to the Laguna Reservation located west of Albuquerque, didn't really take up much of my time and it was an honor and privilege to have been able to attend both of those dedications. After the first dedication of the Memorial Road Marker I wrote a short article about that event which was published in Issue 75/Spring 2010 of the Khe Sanh Veterans magazine "Red Clay."

My second trip out to the Laguna Reservation for the Khe Sanh bridge dedication was likewise inspiring and once again, I felt privileged to have been able to attend. While attending this second dedication, Ray Palmer (D/1/26) a Native American from Fort Apache Arizona walked over to me and handed me a small blue book with the title "Ceremony." He didn't really say much about the little book other than it was something he thought I would be interested in reading. I looked it over and found that it was a story about the Laguna people and their lands, the very land where we stood that day.

When I returned to California, I set the little book aside because I wanted to finish the several others I was currently reading. For some strange reason my emotions continued to reflect on my two visits to the Laguna and I was having a rather difficult time understanding why my mind was always drifting back there. At the strangest times I'd just kind of feel and sense the Laguna, like a spirit that was whispering to me, in words I could not understand. I would see that red sand, the bellowing white clouds in the wide open sky and the large open wind swept canyons over and over in my subconscious. I would remember the words Harold E. Lockwood (HMH-CH-53 Sea Stallions) told me about those from the Reservations and about the early Missionaries taking the Native American children from their parents and the hardships his people even now continued to face.

I finally devoted time to that little book Ray Palmer gave to me, as a gift, he said. It was a sad and painful read about one culture dominating another and Native American Soldiers from the Laguna Reservation who returned from the war in the Pacific and faced the nightmarish demons so many of us have faced ourselves. I am not new to the hardships faced by the Native American people and for a short period I lived on a Reservation in North West California. Although a novel, the book had some inspiring lines, for example, "It took a great deal of energy to be a human being." "The dreams did not wait any more for night, they came out anytime." "As long as you remember what you have seen, then nothing is gone." "As long as you remember, it is part of this story we have together." I thought of many of us when reading this book and specifically when I happened to come across those lines.

Though first written in 1968 by a female Native American about her people, I certainly found those lines applicable to many Khe Sanh Veterans. Our stories and memories of the ones we lost will not die, as long as we remember them, their deeds, their sacrifice and their heroics, "Then nothing is gone." As long as we remember what we saw, "It is part of this story we have together." It takes work to continue on with this thing we call life, "It took (takes) a great deal of energy to be a human being." Perhaps the author "Leslie Marmon Silko" was talking about all of us when she wrote this little 240 page novel, and didn't even know it. I usually keep the books I have read, putting them up on a shelf when I am finished with them. Something about just seeing them there is comforting. I guess it's kind of like friends or neighbors you once knew.

Most of the books I read are about people's lives and their conflict. If I got rid of them I would feel like I was abandoning their soul. However this book from Ray, I'll not keep. It has a spirit and I know it will never belong to me. It does not belong on a dusty bookshelf hidden from others, but rather with a Native American, to perhaps share with someone else or at the very least, to be home, to be kept dry and safe with it's own people. It needs to be treasured and cared for and perhaps its spirit can once again be shared with others.



Gold Star Mothers Memorial Dedicated

Former Khe Sanh Seabee Veteran Jack Haigwood, Past President of VVA Chapter 649, Honors Gold Star Mothers With New Memorial

Gold Star Mothers Memorial Dedication Clermont County, Ohio May 8, 2010
Story and Photos by Ken Williamson *1

There's nothing more special than a Mom. This May, on the day before Mother's Day, VVA Chapter 649 and the Clermont County Ohio community of Union Township recognized a group of special moms with the dedication of a Gold Star Mothers Memorial. Erected in Union Township's Veteran Park, the black granite memorial with its gold star against a gleaming white background and an engraved poem by Sandi Estridge Eucks, stirred the emotions of all who viewed it, especially the forty plus Gold Star Mothers who attended the dedication ceremony.

With tears in her eyes, Vietnam era Gold Star Mother Bertha Balsley remembered the day her son Bob was killed. "I came here today to honor my son. It seams like yesterday when I got the news that he was killed during a rocket attack on November 16, 1968. He would be 64 this May."

The pain of their loss never goes away", said past VVA 649 President, **Jack Haigwood, who served with Detail Bravo at Khe Sanh during the siege of January 1968. The monument was a two-year dream of his.** "We have thousands of monuments dedicated to our fallen heroes", he commented, "but not many to the mothers who still bear the pain of their loss after decades have passed". Teaming up with AVVA member Regina Herbolt, the two sought design help and funding for the project. "The funding, over $18,000, came from three significant donors, plus other smaller gifts and a donation from Chapter 649. Union Township provided all of the infrastructure and landscaping and the two major donors were Edward Nurre and the Clermont County Veterans Service Commission", Jack reported.

"No one wants to be a Gold Star Mom", commented an emotional Carol Prazynski. "My stepson was killed on May 9, 2005 in Iraq. All he ever wanted to be was a Marine and he believed what he was doing was right and I find some peace in knowing that. We never doubted that Taylor would come home, we just didn't know that he would bypass ours."

Following the ceremony, a 21 gun salute by the Southwest Ohio Memorial Team, and taps, the Gold Star Mothers and guests placed American Flags around the monument in honor of their fallen heroes and their moms.

Bertha, staring off into the distance said, "Always honor your son. He's always there with you."

*1 About the photojournalist: Ken Williamson served as a photographer with the 815th Engineers at Pleiku, Vietnam in 1969 and with the 26th PIO, USAECAV 1969-70.

ED NOTE: JACK HAIGWOOD ALSO SERVES ON THE KHE SANH VETERANS BOARD OF DIRECTORS. MORE PHOTOS OF THE DEDICATION ARE ON PAGE 45







VFW POST 76 HOSTED A WELCOME HOME PARTY & BARBEQUE AT THEIR POST, WHICH IS THE OLDEST POST IN THE STATE OF TEXAS. EVERYONE HAD A WONDERFUL TIME. OUR HOST WERE THE MOST KIND AND GIVING PEOPLE WE HAVE EVER MET. THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS















OUR HOST ALBERT MIRELES & DELIA CASIAS
VFW 76, SAN ANTONIO TX.
















PIERZYNS












Khe Sanh





















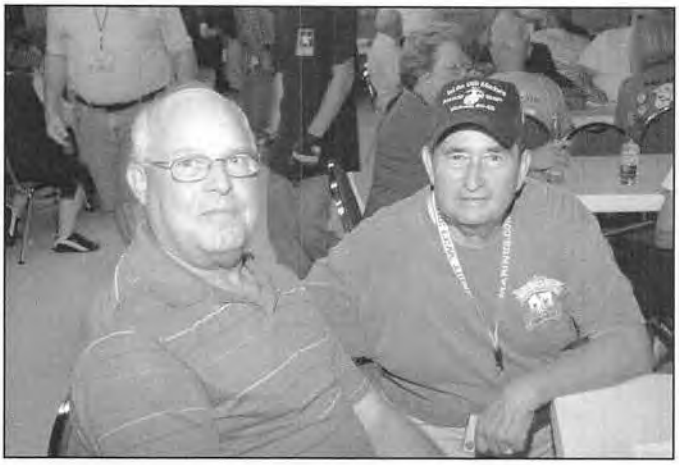




VFW


HE SANH








MARINES





























MEMBERS JUST "CHILLIN" MEETING OLD FRIENDS, MAKING NEW ONES











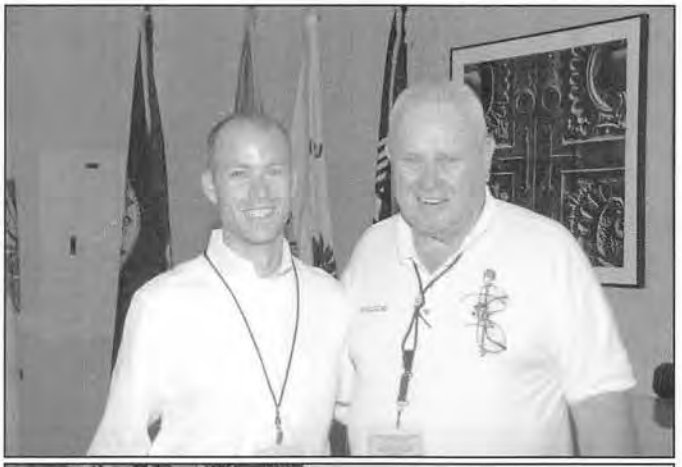








DETB
FMF




KHE SANH
FMF
FMF
FMF









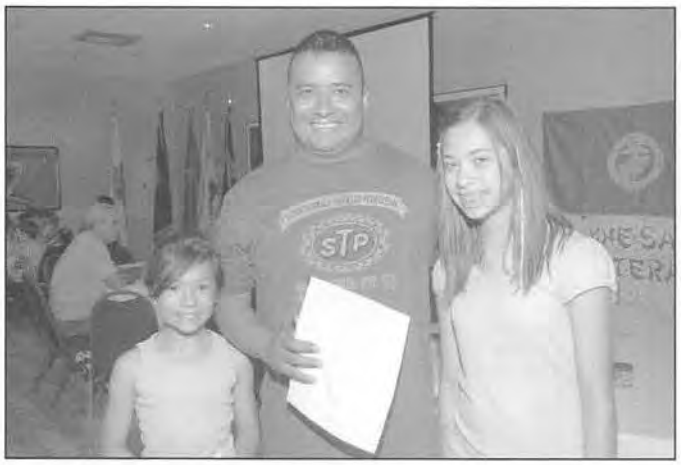
STP













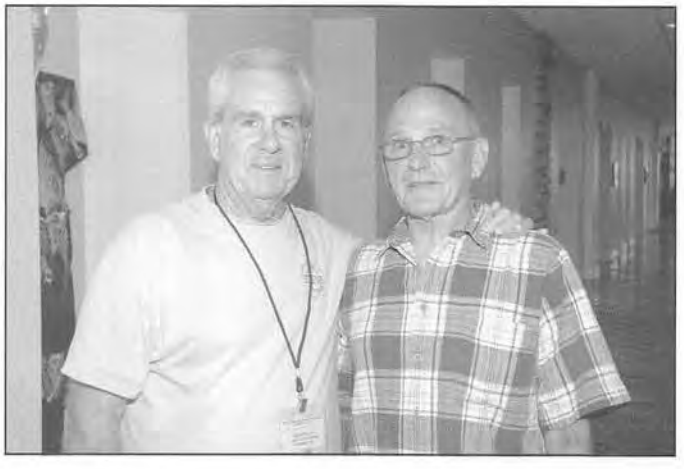





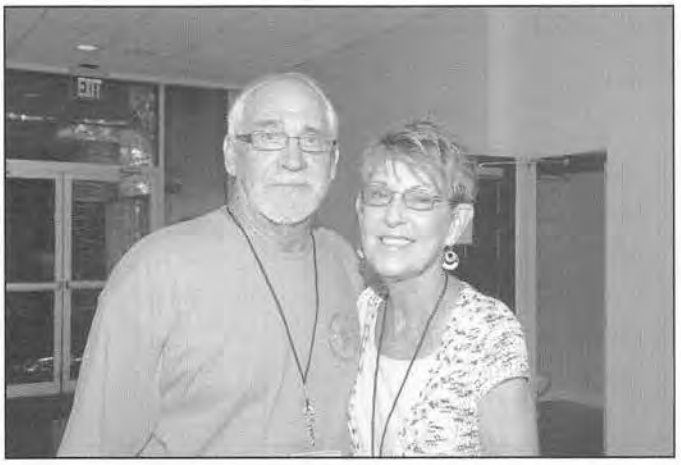










KHE SANH

















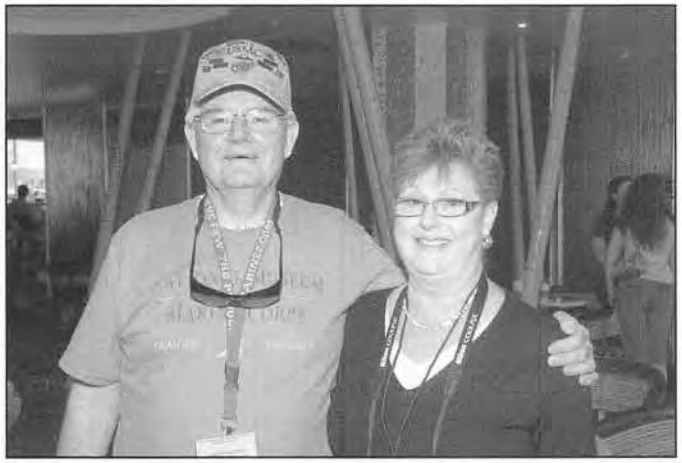













KHE SANH








3RD MARINE DIVISION

BANQUET 2010 KHE SANH REUNION SAN ANTONIO TEXAS



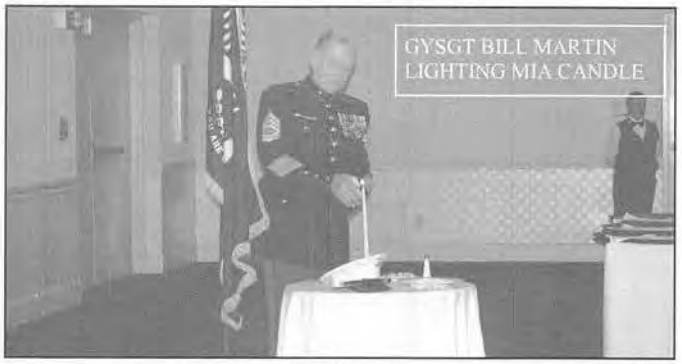



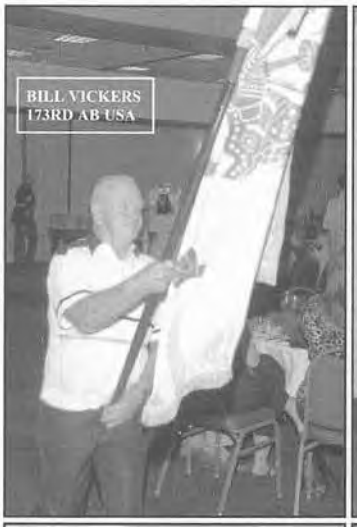











KSV UNIT STANDARD BEARERS









GYSGT BILL MARTIN HONORING MIA'S









TOM HARVEY & WIFE ROSE



RUSS & TOMMY HELP SHORTROUND
WITH HIS KARAOKE SONG



SHORTROUND ENTERTAINING WITH ONE OF HIS
NEW KARAOKE TUNES

SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE: KSV HAS TALENT





































BRAVO COMPANY 1/26

ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A



L-R Back Row Tom Eichler, Bill Maves, James Kaylor, Merle Moritz
L-R Front Row Larry McCartney, Jose Reyes, Barry Fixler





























KHE SANH VETERANS ENJOYING THEMSELVES AT PIG ROAST









































































KHE SANH







OBIT
LUCY'S LAST SWIM
By Tom Eichler

Having had dogs all my life I knew the pain Tom was going through, having experienced the grief several times with my past 3 pets whom I had to put to sleep. In fact I have all of my pets who have past away, buried in my back yard. They all have granite tombstones and are buried in individual little crypts in oak coffins. This might sound a little extreme, but those of us who love our pets will not find it so.

I called Tom to express my sorrow about Lucy and although extremely broken up he informed me of one of Lucy's last acts. Tom stated that Lucy had never been in the water since she had been his companion. He always assumed she was afraid of the water. Recently he was at a swimming pool with Lucy, and she was laying next to the pool doing a breast stroke, but would not go in the water.

She then circumvented the entire pool observing that there was not a place for her to climb out, if she had jumped in. When a friend of Tom's moved the rubber tube he was in, and Lucy saw the stairs leading into the pool, she just dived in and swam a few laps. Tom still had to help her out of the pool.

Tom related his last days and hours with his beloved pet, but I cannot write them without reliving what I had also gone through with my pets. We both were crying like little babies. There is no shame to admit that; as Craig wrote: the love we have for our pets is as strong as it is to any human being.

The following are condolence messages left on the Khe Sanh Veterans Website with the passing of our beloved KSV Mascot.

CONDOLENCES:

I've had three dogs during my adult life and absolutely loved them all, to this day I morn the loss of each one of them. When Tom and I became reacquainted, some 35 years after Vietnam, I found him living by himself in a little one bedroom house tucked in an old and tired section of town. Not really wanting a dog, or pet of any kind for that

matter, fate brought Lucy and Tom together. Lucy was there, not just for Tom but for all of her "uncles" who visited Tom and grew to love and admire his little golden companion. Lucy only had friends, and I don't think she ever met animal or human she didn't like.

For those of us who have pets, simply stating that we love our animals, is insufficient to describe our emotions or our attachment to them which is as strong and as it is to any human being. The ravages and painful memory of Vietnam took its toll on Tom, as it has on all of us. Lucy was not only his constant companion but his support, comforter, protector of emotions, guardian of his psyche and I think, one of his main reasons to preserve. I don't have any pets because I just can't take pain of their loss, but I loved going to Tom's house and to spend just a few minutes laying on the carpet next to Lucy, it brought me great comfort.

She always seemed happy to see me, no matter if she remembered me or not, she always made me feel just a little special. Tom often brought Lucy out to the golf course with him and I enjoyed her company on many a fine course. She was well behaved and at times, a much better golf partner than I was. I recall one afternoon when she was sitting on the grass and I was addressing my golf ball getting ready to hit,when she walked up to my ball and placed it in her mouth and moved it about 5 feet closer to the pin and dropped it on the ground. It was the funniest thing I had ever seen and we all had a great laugh. I think she knew my game.

I'll miss her smooth and shiny golden coat, the way she smelled, her smile, and happy face. The way she seemed to remember who I was and her excitement in seeing me again. I'll miss laying on the floor with her; I'll miss the comfort she gave to me. I'll miss petting her and I'll miss seeing her on the golf course. She'll always have a very big place in my heart. But as painful as it is for me, I know Tom will miss her even more…..

Craig Tourte







FROM FRIEND to FRIEND

You've giving me a special gift,
So sorrowfully endowed,
And through these last few cherished days,
Your courage made me proud.

But really, love is knowing
When your best friend is in pain,
And understanding earthly acts
Will only be in vain.
So looking deep into your eyes,
Beyond, into your soul,
I saw in you the magic, that
Once more makes me whole.

The strength that you possess,
Is why I looked to you that day,
To do this thing that must be done,
For it's the only way.

That strength is why I've followed you,
And chose you as my friend,
And why I've loved you all these years...
My partner 'til the end.

Please, understand just what this gift,
You gave me, means to me,
It gave me back the strength I've lost,
And all my dignity.

You took a stand on my behalf,
For that is what friends do.
And know that what you did is right,
For I believe it too.

So one last time, I breathed your scent,
And through your hand did feel,
The courage that's within you,
To grant me that appeal.

You cut the leash that held me here,
Dear friend, ... you let me run,
Once more a strong and steady dog,
My pain and struggle done.

Please don't despair my passing,
For I'm not far away,
Forever here, within your heart,
And memory I'll stay.
I'll be there watching over you,
Your ever faithful friend,
And in your memories I'll run, ...
a young dog once again.

Author Unknown

With heartfelt condolences on your loss and with hopes that the sentiment in this verse helps some. It helped me.
Lucille Biscaglio

Tom,

I'm sorry for your loss. I didn't know **LUCY** but I know I would have liked her. Below is something that I wanted to share with you . . .

When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable. All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor.

Those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing; they each miss someone very special to them, who had to be left behind. They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent. His eager body quivers. Suddenly he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster.

You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart. Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together....

Author unknown...

Charlie Taliaferro



MEMORIAL TRIBUTE





EARL CLARK A CO 1/26



RON TAYLOR HQ BTRY 1/11

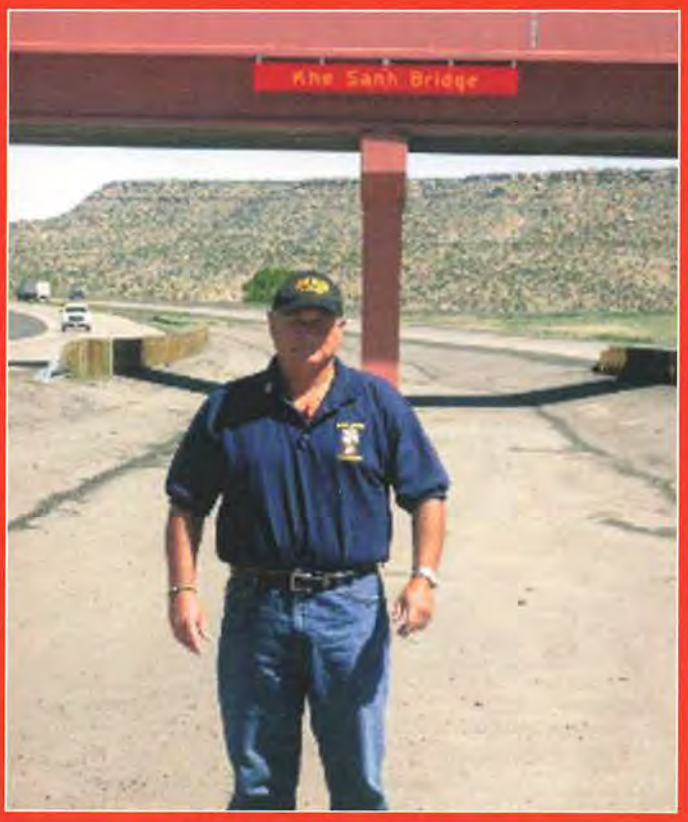

CRAIG TOURTE HQ BTRY 1/13

















WINTER 2010

RED CLAY

ISSUE 77





FORMER CHICAGO POLICE OFFICER &KHE SANH VETERAN HELPS DEDICATE PLAQUE FROM CHICAGO POLICE OFFICERS TO USO CHICAGO O'HARE AIRPORT HONORING ALL BRANCHES OF THE ARMED FORCES (ARTICLE AND PICTURES PAGES 42-45)

MERRY CHRISTMAS

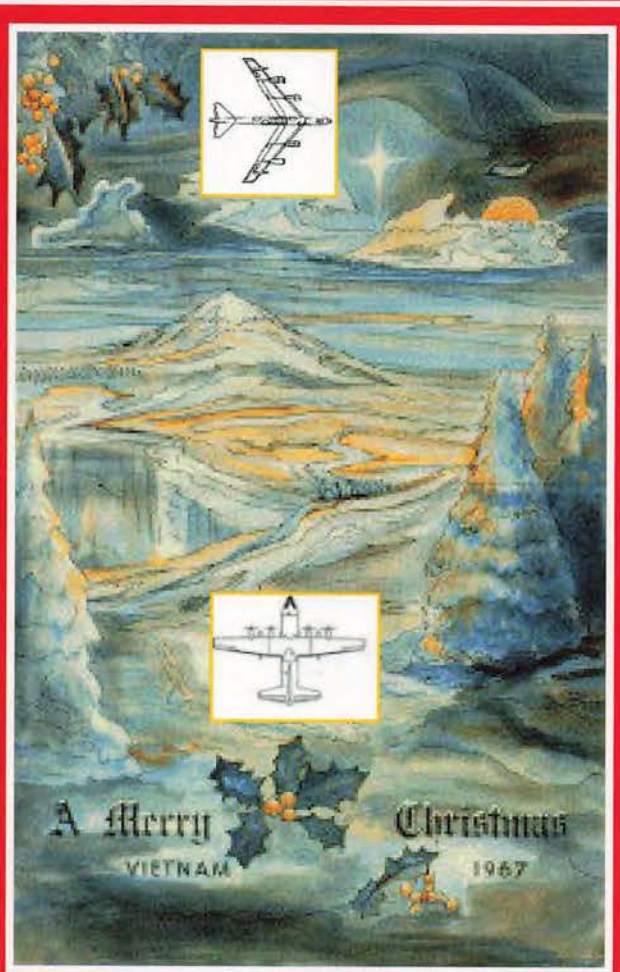

HAPPY NEW YEAR



REAL PET FRIENDLY









THE KAHLER GRAND HOTEL















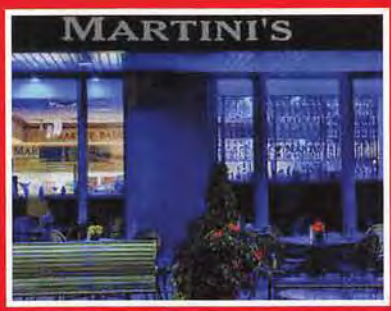



Chaplain's Corner Winter 2010-2011
Chaplain Ron Rayner

I have pretty much drawn a blank on what I personally can write for this issue. So I have put together some quotes that I use to influence how I behave and control my Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder. I have been blessed with a family that has stuck with me through thick and thin.

All of us need to take the time to show appreciation to those close to us.

Selected Verses Proverbs 31:10-31
New Living Translation
Who can find a virtuous and capable wife? She is worth more than precious rubies. 11 Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life. 12 She will not hinder him but help him all her life… 17 She is energetic and strong, a hard worker. 18 She watches for bargains; her lights burn late into the night…20 She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy…25 She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs with no fear of the future. 26 When she speaks, her words are wise, and kindness is the rule when she gives instructions. 27 She carefully watches all that goes on in her household and does not have to bear the consequences of laziness. 28 Her children stand and bless her. Her husband praises her: 29 "There are many virtuous and capable women in the world, but you surpass them all!" 30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly praised. 31 Reward her for all she has done. Let her deeds publicly declare her praise.

"Love and Death- Death sweeps everything away. It yields to no one, and once you are in its power you cannot escape. So with love: it takes control of your life, and like a gigantic fire, it cannot be doused. **Love must be treated with the greatest caution and respect**." Unknown

"It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters." Epictetus

"Regardless of what came before or what has yet to come, what matters most right now, is how I choose to respond to the challenge before me. Will I lie down or will I fight? The choice is mine and I choose to finish strong." Dan Green in *Finish Strong*

"Life is 10 percent what you make it and 90 percent how you take it." Irving Berlin

"In human life there is a constant change of fortune; and it is unreasonable to expect an exemption from this common fate." Plutarch

"We must become the change we want to see in the world." Mahatma Gandhi

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. 7 If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen." I Peter 4:10-11
Deuteronomy 33:25 (NLT) ...may your strength match the length of your days.

"No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit." Helen Keller
My goal is to stay and look at things on the bright side.

OBIT

JOHN F. PRINCE
1943-2010
KHE SANH VETERAN
USMC L CO 3/26

John Frederick Prince Jr., 66, was born in Phoenix, Ariz., at St. Joseph's Hospital on Oct. 29, 1943. He was the oldest son of John F. Prince, Ph.D., and Margaret Ovens Prince. He passed away Sept. 6, 2010.

John attended St. Gregory's Elementary School,

Brophy College Preparatory, Phoenix College and graduated from the University of Arizona with a degree in history in 1966. While at St. Gregory's, John was active in sports and the Boy Scouts of America. At Brophy College Prep John participated in football and baseball. While a student at Phoenix College, John was active in the wrestling program. He also was a tackle on the football team, receiving the Most Improved Player Award his sophomore year. At the University of Arizona John was a guard on the Wildcats football team during his junior and senior years.



Upon graduation from the University of Arizona John volunteered for the United States Marine Corps and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in December of 1966. After further officer training, John was deployed to Vietnam as an Infantry Platoon Commander. John served two tours of duty in Vietnam. He served with the third battalion, 26 Marine Regiment, during which time John saw continuous combat action in Northern "I" Corps along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), most notably in defense of the Marine Combat Base at Khe Sanh. John was the recipient of the Purple Heart for being wounded in the service of his country. He was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps at, Camp Pendleton, Calif., in 1970.

After the completion of his honorable military career, John entered the banking industry specializing in commercial and residential financing in Phoenix. This banking experience prepared him for a real estate career in both the rapidly growing Phoenix and Prescott areas. While in Prescott, John worked for Realty Executives. He was also active in the community and with Veteran's Affairs.

John was a kind, loving brother, uncle and godfather. He will be sorely missed by his family and friends. John is survived by a brother, Michael; sister Terry Prince Sims and her husband Bill; sister Mary Martha; six nieces and nephews, Jonathan Sims, Christopher Sims, Jacqueline Prince Sims, Matthew Prince and his wife Tiffany, Brittany Prince, and Hawley Prince; and a grand-niece, Kylee Prince.

John was interred with full Marine military honors at Arlington National Cemetery on Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2010. Contributions may be made in memory of John Frederick Prince Jr. to the VA, 500 Highway 89 North, Prescott, AZ 86313, or to the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, 3800 Fettler Park Drive, Suite 104, Dumfries, VA 22025.

OBIT



LT COL JAMES H. CHAMPION
1934-2010
KHE SANH VETERAN
USMC C/O B CO 1/26
Patrick Wayne

LtCol James H. Champion, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired) died peacefully on Monday, October 25, 2010 after an eleven year battle with three different cancers

A decorated Vietnam veteran, Mr. Champion was born on December 26, 1934, in Paducah, Ky. He was born to the late "Jack" and Josephine (Hampston) Champion.

Following graduation from St. Mary's High School in Paducah, KY in 1953, he enlisted in the Marine Corps, serving in Japan and Hawaii. Upon discharge he attended Peabody Teachers College in Nashville (now part of Vanderbilt University), graduating in 1958. He was employed by Southern Bell Telephone prior to returning to active duty in 1962. A Marine infantry officer, he participated in operations in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and was assigned as Security Officer on USS Simon Lake, forward deployed in Holy Loch, Scotland in support of ballistic missile submarine nuclear deterrent patrols.

Deployed to the Republic of Vietnam in 1968 and 1969 he participated in combat operations as a rifle company commander at Khe Sanh and during the 1968 Tet Offensive. He completed his tour as a

Combined Action Program (CAP) team leader, including operations during the 1969 Tet Offensive. His combat decorations included the Bronze Star (two awards), the Combat Action Ribbon and the Presidential Unit Citation (two awards). Later assignments included the Naval War College where he also earned a Masters of Arts in International Re lations from George Washington University, command of a Marine Infantry Battalion, 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade Operations Officer in Okinawa, and Headquarters Marine Corps. He retired from active duty in 1981. Following retirement, he and his wife settled in Smithland, KY but later relocated to Aransas Pass, Rockport and Houston, TX.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 53 years Sylvia (Murphy) Champion; son Samuel James Champion (NYC); daughter Teresa Champion; son in law John Quigley; and grandchildren Sydney and James Quigley, all of Springfield, VA.

A service was held November 4 at the Semper Fidelis Memorial Chapel adjacent to the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Burial in Quantico National Cemetery followed.

In lieu of flowers the family respectfully requests any memorial donations be made to MD Anderson Cancer Center in the name of LtCol J. H. Champion, PO Box 4486, Houston, TX 77210 or to Virginia Autism Project at Virginia AutismProject.org.

OBIT



EDWARD O. MORISSETTE
1949 - 2010
KHE SANH VETERAN
USMC E CO 2/26 HILL 861A

Edward O. Morissette, age 61 of Orlando, passed away Saturday, September 25. He was born June 26, 1949 in Bath, ME and grew up in Cambridge, MA. He was a veteran of the US Marine Corps., having served in the Vietnam War and he was a member of VFW Post 4287. He worked in the construction industry for 40 years and was an avid boater and fisherman. He was preceded in death by his parents and is survived by his wife of 41 years, Judee; two sisters, Doreen Middleton and Monica Young (Bill); niece and goddaughter, Hope Middleton and nephew, Matthew Martell; niece, Faith

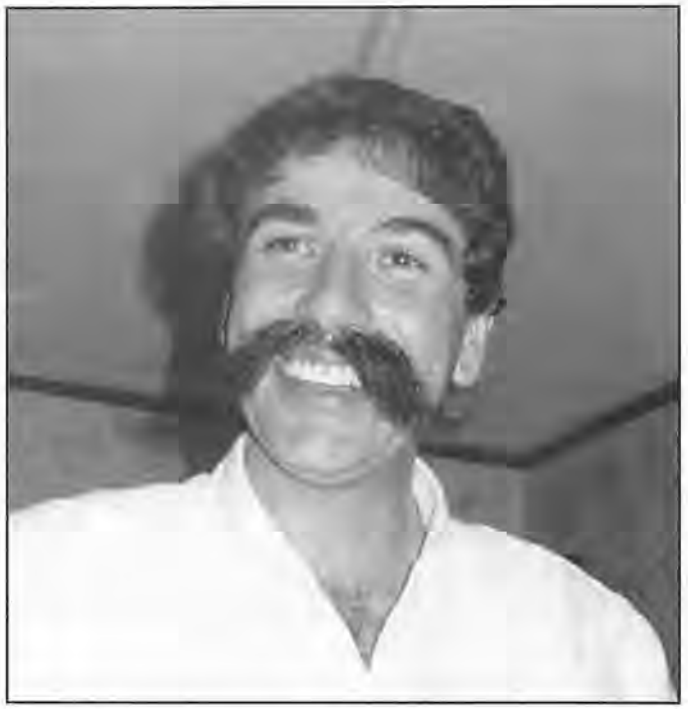

Young; brother-in-law, Jim Cronan (Rosemarie); niece, Michelle Cronan. A memorial service was held October 4, 2010 at VFW Post 4287, 3500 S. Goldenrod Road, Orlando 32822.

OBIT



DANIEL L. HORTON
1948-2010
KHE SANH VETERAN
USMC B CO 1/26

Born in Detroit, MI on Sep. 29, 1948 Departed on Nov. 10, 2010 and resided in Garden City, MI.

Burial was held on Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2010 at Great Lakes National Cemetery 4200 Belford Holly, MI. Danny is survived by his daughter Shari (Tony) MacDonald, Son Scott and grandson Derek. Shari & Scotts mother, Diane Landskroener and his dog and buddy Otis. Brothers Jim (Colette) Pat (Lorent) and sister June (Bud). He was preceded in death by parents Richard and Christine, Sister Kristena (Joe) Toms. Also survived by many nieces & nephews & many, many friends, former comrades in arms and former co-workers. He was a longtime City of Westland employee until he retired in the late 90's. He was a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, and served with them in Vietnam during the siege of Khe Sanh in which he received the Purple Heart. May God Bless Him and keep Him in our hearts forever.

OBIT



GEORGE F. HILLHOUSE
1947-2010
KHE SANH VETERAN
USMC C CO 1/26

George Frank Hillhouse, age 63, passed away on November 21, 2010. He was born in Jasper, Florida, to the late Frank Jesse, and Eloise Padgett Hillhouse. He had lived most all of his life in Perry, Florida. His occupation was a welder, and he retired from Martin Electronics Maintenance Department. Mr. Hillhouse was a U. S. Marine and a member of the Purple Heart Association, and the N.R.A. He enjoyed hunting, and riding his Harley. He was preceded in death by a sister, Ruth Gray. Survived by his wife, Gail Hillhouse of Perry, FL, (2) daughters; Kimberly Skinner of Perry, FL, Tori Hillhouse Walker and husband Daniel of Perry, FL, (1) brother; Kenneth Hillhouse and wife Nancy of Perry, FL, (4) grandchildren. Funeral Services were held at Joe P. Burns Funeral Home on Wednesday, November 24, 2010 at 11:00 A.M. with Pastor Tim McDonald officiating. Interment followed at Carlton Cemetery.

Remarks from his Brother posted on the TWS website: He was my brother. Because we had the same father, and also because we both belonged to a fraternity of brotherhood that only a few will ever know. We were both United States Marines. He was Marine SSgt. George F. Hillhouse. Two tours in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968. He was at the Battle of Khe Sanh. Awarded two Purple Hearts, Cross of Galantry, and the Navy/ Marine Corps Achievement Medal with Combat V, among his many awards.

He was a Drill Instructor, a Tunnel Rat, and the best older brother a man could ask for. He died doing what he loved. He had a massive heart attack sitting in his tree stand with his rifle still in hand when we found him. We buried him today at the Carlton Cemetery in Perry Florida. He was laid to rest with a full Marine Corps Honor Guard, and me, his little brother standing guard over his body until I was sure he was home. I'll miss him greatly, but I know that tonight he is checking in for duty with the Lord for the ultimate duty station. Guarding the Gates of Heaven with my father, Marine Sgt Frank J. Hillhouse and all the brother Marines that have gone before us.
Semper Fi, big brother
SSgt. Billy K. Hillhouse

THE WALL

by
Gary W. Foster

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a conundrum of sorts. Of all the monuments in Washington, D.C., it is the least intrusive, the least obvious, the least prominent and the least adorned or embellished. It has no lavish displays such as Greek Corinthian columns or facades of wreaths or garlands carved in white stone. From ground level, it is not visible from certain angles and even when seen through the trees from afar, it is not conspicuous. One could drive all around the Mall area and never notice it. No flag flies directly from atop and there is no statue at its center as there is in the Jefferson Memorial. It is an understated unprecedented style of architecture that conveys little in terms of the obvious. There is no mistaking the Washington Monument but for a first-time visitor, if he or she did not have some sort of guide he or she could miss the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Wall, altogether.

At each end of the Wall's twin entrances, there are waist-high, lighted stands that protect a thick book that contains the names of Americans killed or missing in Vietnam. The book provides directions as to where to find a name on the Memorial. Other than that, there is little decoration. In some ways, the book of names is as much a memorial as the Memorial or the Wall itself.

The Memorial is the most modest simplicity of a monument that lures, compels one to visit and that drives home a compulsive if not disorienting subversion or bewilderment of consciousness that cannot be dispelled so easily and which will linger for a very long time with anyone who visits the Wall.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, dedicated in 1982, the design of Maya Ying Lin, may be the most famous and most emotionally moving memorial in Washington DC, if not in the United States. It's not a building, not an amphitheater, not a stage, not a dome or an enclosure. It's not an obelisk and it

is not a cemetery. If one were to characterize it, it's a study in open, uncomplicated plane geometry. But of course, it is much more.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a series of one hundred forty-eight vertical granite panels, each measuring forty inches wide of varying heights, but level along the top. They are placed side by side, divided evenly into seventy-four panels in opposite directions, seventy of which, in each direction, bear the names found in the books at the entrances. The division of the adjoining walls is noted by the vertex of an angle, also called, but not quite accurately, the apex. The two series of panels, or vertical walls, conjoin and form an obtuse angle of one hundred twenty-five degrees. Panels are numbered left to right on the east wall and right to left on the west wall. Panel numbering begins with 2E (second panel east wall) and 2W (second panel west wall). The first panels of each wall, panels 1E and 1W, are not identified but rather are deduced from 2E and 2W. The tops of the walls are horizontal while the bottoms of the walls extend down below the top tapering as the slab stone path descends towards the vertex from each pointed end of the Wall. At panel 20E or 20W, the sloping pathway levels out and for the next forty panels, twenty panels in each direction from the vertex, the pathway is flat. It is on this flat portion of the walkway that the significance of the Wall can overwhelm and it's here that everyone stops to just look at the thousands of names. It is here that one can understand why the Memorial and the message it carries are so powerful. It is here, at the bottom of a slightly carved depression in the surrounding terrain, that the Wall is more significant than may have been originally presumed. The monument, known as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial or the Wall, has now swallowed us up.

At the top of panel 1E, at the vertex of the two walls of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the engraved words serve as an introduction to the visitor. They read: "***In honor of the men and women of the armed forces of the United States who served in the Vietnam War. The names of those who gave their lives and of those who remain missing are inscribed in the order they were taken from us.***"

Of course, what follows, equally engraved in the sparkling, highly reflective black stone from southern India, is sobering: the chronological listing of the names of 58,000 Americans who died or are still missing in Vietnam between 1959 and the spring of 1975. The first name on panel 1E (not marked but left to deduction since the next panel is clearly marked as 2E), at the left top, is Dale R. Buis and marks the beginning of the long lineup and endless list of faceless names most of which are unknown to anyone.

Perhaps like the War itself, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial or again, more simply, the Wall, for first-time visitors is confusing, disorienting - so many names, left and right, in no seeming order, certainly not in any alphabetical order, excepting alphabetizing those people who died on the same day. The volume of names grows as a visitor walks along the stone pathway, descending inexorably from either direction to the flat portion of the pathway, to the conjunction of the two wing-like, shiny, obsidian-like, granite slabs constituting the Memorial's walls. It's a descent to the confluence of two rivers seemingly without a beginning, bearing known and unknown names, that begin as tributaries at either end and, accumulating names along the way, ever flowing, eventually spills them unashamedly like an unabated waterfall from the top of the apex of the angle - of the start and end of a horrific event in American history - and inundates with unequivocal proof of what we sacrificed. We are awash with a deep sense of loss, desolation, disbelief, perhaps denial, and bereavement. So many names of Americans gone from this earth. So many.

We are still stunned since 1975. Try as we might to comprehend, we remain perhaps unsure as to what happened. Starting in 1959, how did the war continue to consume, to grind us up for sixteen long years and turn a unified country into a victim of self -loathing and self-destruction. Why were those who served their country who saw duty to country as a first obligation come home to such vehement hatred? Why were they vilified so? Why did they come home as villains and where can they go to repose, adjust, to reconcile and re-unify? And as the conflict in Vietnam now fades, as two generations of Americans have passed with a third on the way, we remain still, to this day, uncertain as to why it even occurred at all; why so many Americans lost their lives in such a faraway place called Vietnam, with so many families destroyed. And now, some may even wonder about the relevancy of it all.

The magnitude of names, as they cascade, panel by panel, into our consciousness in interminable, unquantifiable numbers engraved before us, overwhelms our comprehension and vision and beseeches us to take notice, to pause and reflect. We peer into the endless darkness of the Wall and see ourselves. We cannot turn away. Perhaps we are ashamed of the hurt that has been caused, even in deep pride, perhaps there is a shame that we dare not admit. Like the motorcycles of Rolling Thunder, the culmination of the Run for the Wall, the names keep coming. Endlessly.

At the sharp end of the east entrance to the Memorial, where the stone pathway rises to meet and becomes tangent with the horizontal top of the Wall, a mirror image of the entrance on the west side, an aging man wearing a ball cap that says "Vietnam Veteran" reminds visitors: "Remember, you are standing at neither the end nor the beginning of the War." But then he was interrupted and could not continue his explanation. Neither the beginning nor the end of the War? OK, so where are we?

When Maya Ying Lin designed the Wall, did she really know the significance of her design, the power it would assume? She only had a small model and her imagination with which to work. Standing west of the vertex of the obtuse one hundred twenty -five degree angle that the planes of the adjacent walls form, standing west of the vertex, looking along the westerly wall, one can clearly see the reflection of the Washington Monument in the distance; and east of the vertex looking along the easterly wall, what would be the reflection of the Lincoln Memorial somewhat closer, but obscured by trees. This imagery has been written about so many times that it may seem as if that is all there is to the Wall. But, no.

The two monuments' reflections silently stare at us from the depths of the obsidian reminding us of earth-shattering events for the United States – the struggle for independence and the creation of the United States of America by one man against overwhelming odds, represented by the gargantuan sharp white obelisk; and, almost one century later, the emergency of saving the same republic by another, represented by a rectangular, equally white, Greek-like structure.

The Wall, set in such tranquil, inviting surroundings, takes its place among so many memorials to much more distant times that have evaporated, been relegated to history, sometimes forgotten, and yet in some ways, from the face of the Wall, stare back subtly, yet poignantly at us to remind us of what this country has supremely given, generation after generation, and the sacrifices that have been made by so many Americans for over two hundred years. It is who we are and what our country means and for which it stands.

But reflecting on the Vietnam Vet's comments at the east entrance, the Vietnam Memorial, or rather the War, starts in the middle of the monument at the vertex and extends seventy-four panels, about two hundred fifty feet in both directions, But even then, this depiction isn't quite correct: 1959 is the starting date on panel 1E, and in years, the panels move east, left to right, until the up-angled stone pathway and top of the wall merge at a point. And then, beyond this point, into infinity – seemingly like the War, year after year after year, the fighting and killing would not stop, it would not go away.

To reach the chronological beginning of the Memorial, or of the War, one has to walk past so many names. One becomes enmeshed, even entranced before one starts the historical journey. Walking along the pathway, the names march past as if on a conveyor, first at our feet, such as the first name encountered, John H. Anderson Jr., on panel 70W, and then as we descend, level with our chests, then our eyes, then above our eyes, above our heads, finally from our feet to high above us, the names keep flowing past us by the many hundreds per panel, by the many thousands overall. We started the walk with only a few names, now the quantity of names before us is staggering, surreal.

From either end of the Memorial, we descend slowly into the unknown to the beginning of the War, to 1959, a vague, now distant date, obscured by decades, unknown by increasing numbers. The long, sloping black-granite pathway draws us down, deeper and deeper. While we may feel we cannot exit from the depths of some morass, in so doing, as we descend, without any denouement to guide us, we arrive at the same geographic point as the beginning, to the end of the War, in which we have been consumed for so long, never believing we can climb

out of the chasm; and with the War now over, still a sinking feeling in our hearts that we may never leave the abyss – we are at the alpha omega.

The Wall, even in its simplicity, is forever a reminder of indescribable circumstances, of an era that has almost slipped from our grasp, from any notion of our understanding. The shooting is over; the pain and trauma seem not to be. We linger at the interior vertex of the obtuse angle and we scan the row after row of names, disbelieving, that overwhelm us and while we may never comprehend why, we understand clearly the haunting lyrics of a moving song: "***All the grey soldiers who cannot get older.***"

We enter the Memorial from either end, this is true, but we enter the Vietnam War at the bottom of the depression, at the vertex or conjunction of the wing walls and proceed east to infinity, to a hoped-for catharsis, but the journey is not over. We return to the War from the west and we proceed downward, back to the abyss, back to the vertex, to the War's end. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial has brought us full circle, and we are left with a concise, walking history of the War, a history not in narrative form but, quietly, through tens of thousands of names silently sliding past us, proudly staring at us from the black obsidian in which our faces are vaguely reflected. We are there, but we are not. Those with engraved names are forever.

Finally, standing at the beginning and, simultaneously, at the end of the War, turning left or right, we walk on a level pathway that begins a slow ascent at panel 21E and 21W. We ascend out of the depths of the Memorial, slowly up the same stone pathway in which we descended, perhaps to the last name on panel 1E, Jessie Calba, and again, the question: Did Maya Lin understand the stirring significance of her design? Like so many Vietnam Veterans who only recently have come to terms with their experiences and emotions, having sorted through them, and moved on, the gradual ascent may in some way represent the healing process through which each combatant – for this is a memorial to them and their fallen comrades - may have passed to move on in life, beyond the bloody battlefields of Vietnam, to see beyond the horizon. At the top, at either end of the Memorial, the quiet surroundings of the gentle sweeping, sloping terrain covered in soft green grass, the green trees and foliage, the inviting deep shades and soothing shadows and the white marble of the other monuments emblazoned by the daily sunrises and sunsets embrace us.

At the bottom of Panel 1W – again not marked - to the left, and next to 1E, having now come full circle, we see the date 1975 and the following words: "***Our nation honors the courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty and country of its Vietnam Veterans. This memorial was built with private contributions from the American people. November 11, 1982.***" The last name on panel 1W, the adjacent panel to 1E, at the right bottom, is Richard Vande Geer

Those who survived the War will not be on earth much longer and their names will never be there. The Vietnam War Memorial sends a subtle yet awesome message to all of us. We say goodbye to the three servicemen statue that faces the Wall and the nurses statue not far away each of which again remind us one last time of a horrific past and of courageous sacrifice on the part of so few for so many. We turn for one last look at the Wall. For those who survived and equally for those of us who did not serve, the Wall reminds us to love our country and honor and do good by those who fought for us. That's our lasting tribute to those who fell for us, their names forever seen in black granite; it's our memorial back to them. That is all they would ask.

During the early morning of the day of Rolling Thunder, the raging, roaringly loud, last leg of The Run For The Wall on Memorial Day weekend 2010, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was enshrouded in a light ground fog that slowly crept over the contours and hovered just above the manicured lawn level with the top of the Wall. The area was quiet, very few visitors; those that were there walking along the footpath in slow reflective repose, in deep thought and introspection. The base of the Wall was lined with flowers, mostly red, and some other artifacts that had been placed there. There were pictures, cards, banners, badges, insignias; but mostly there were flowers and quite a few wreaths. The sun had yet to rise on the Memorial but the area was suffused with a goldish glow, the sky was turning its deep blue. The Washington Monument pierced the vacant sky as it pointed prominently upward, dominating the visual scene. Constitution Avenue was almost cordoned off in preparation for the pro-

cession of thundering, V-twin motorcycles at noon that Sunday.

The early morning provides time to walk around the area in solitude and quiet. A splendid view of the Mall awaits a visitor who climbs the steps to the Lincoln Memorial. The wide steps are inviting as the edifice renders each visitor insignificant. The colossal statue of a seated Abraham Lincoln beckons visitors inside.

"***Fourscore and seven years ago, our forefathers***..." Everyone recalls that these are the opening words of the address President Abraham Lincoln gave at the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg; or what is more commonly known as "Lincoln's Gettysburg Address." The Gettysburg Address is forever enshrined in stone on the south or left interior wall of the memorial. Everyone knows these words. Some individuals may have been required to memorize the complete Address in grade school. Lincoln's oratory style was criticized as a truncated, characterless off-handed statement by some. But the words and sentence structure which have been examined in minute detail by scholars are incredibly powerful and will live forever. More so than the equally provocative words spoken by Edward Everett who gave a resounding two hour-long speech at the same ceremony and who preceded Lincoln; and who considered himself a professional orator. Virtually forgotten, nobody remembers or little cares about Mr. Everett's speech at Gettysburg.

It's on the opposing wall of the Lincoln Memorial that words, perhaps of even more significance, are to be found engraved. These are from President Lincoln's second inaugural speech in early March 1865. President Lincoln's words at his second inauguration resonate as strongly today as they did over one hundred fifty years ago. His speech ends with the following: "...***let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan...***"

Rolling Thunder lasted for almost three hours: the incessant, deep throttled rumbling and roaring of sound that was all around us; fading in and out, increasing and decreasing, waxing and waning, loud and not so loud, then loud again, but constantly rumbling, ear-splitting. The deep cacophony emanating from the four-stroke engines of literally thousands and thousands of Harley Davidson motorcycles that had assembled at the Pentagon and were now crossing over Memorial Bridge split the air endlessly as they roared beneath the giant fully-leafed trees, darting into and out of the shade that dance across Constitution Avenue cast by the large trees. The motorcycles passed by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The incessant roar did not stop. The bikes and their riders came from all over the United States. They congregated in towns and cities and places along the way, before making the ride to Washington, D.C. – The Run for The Wall. A collective show of patriotism and in honor of their colleagues and comrades, some riders trailed long American and POW-MIA flags behind their bikes. Some flew multiple flags.

On the front of his motorcycle vest, a Vietnam Vet had embroidered these words: "Loud Pipes Save Lives." The meaning is a little vague but it seems that the loud exhaust from the motorbikes may have been a symbol to remind us that perhaps war may not be the answer and in participating in the Run for the Wall, the loud noise may make us think; thereby to save lives.

While the motorcycles thundered, the Wall kept drawing us back, like some compelling force. Seldom, does one stop to ponder to any real extent all the things that are placed at the foot of the Wall. The amount of mementos placed at the Wall since the dedication ceremony in the early nineteen eighties is staggering. What people leave behind can seem mundane or deeply poignant, full of personal meaning. The full spectrum of remembrances are symbolized by what is brought to the Wall and placed at the base.

More entrancing than the roar of thousands of motorcycles passing nearby, her words were as eloquent and captivating as any to be found. What she had placed at the Wall to the left of the vertex was so compelling that it had to be read in its entirety. Written on lined school tablet paper with three holes punched in the left margin for a three-ring binder, the poem she wrote wasn't lengthy. The paper had been folded into half, then into half once more and into half yet again. The note must have been carried in her purse or her pocket before she knelt down to

place it at the base of the Memorial. The words were precisely written in pencil in capital and small block letters. Succinctly composed, and without errors or cross-outs or mark-overs, the poem, consisted of just twenty-four lines, contained just one hundred nineteen words.

The writer had brought the poem to the Wall and placed it at the bottom of a panel near the apex, on the lip of the channel. The poem was dated May 27th 2010, so it probably had lain there for two nights or so. But the night dampness and early morning fog and wet dew and the heat of the day quickly took their toll on her work and threatened to relegate the flimsy, vulnerable paper to that of trash. The words, still visible, though faded on the wet paper – the ink of the blue lines bleeding through the paper - were from her heart. One could easily see that she had taken time to construct the poem, perhaps having written and re-written it many times until she was satisfied, before transcribing her thoughts onto a final, mistake-free draft. What would have inspired her to take the time to compose a poem and then leave it at the Wall?

The paper on which she had written the words was not sturdy and, exposed to the night's wetness and the heat of the day, was being consumed by the environment. It had begun to deteriorate. It would seem that she had not made a copy of the poem, since it was written in pencil. This had to be the original and only copy of her emotional work. The words would be lost forever. What a shame for her to have spent so much time writing such a touching tribute and compassionate poem only for it to be destroyed or collected by the park rangers and possibly discarded as scrap paper.

Not to be and deep apologies offered and hopefully accepted, but the poem was retrieved and salvaged, the paper dried, and pressed flat, and slipped into a plastic protector, never to be lost or so immediately threatened. It was placed back at the Vietnam Memorial as she intended but this time protected from the elements. But the words should not be lost. The poem by an anonymous woman needs to be preserved for history, to be recorded for all to read; not abandoned.

Poems can be categorized as closed form or free form. Poems written in closed form follow very precise rules, requiring strict adherence to convention. Open form suggests the opposite: non-adherence to any rules (but in fact, open form poems still follow implicit guidelines; if nothing else the number of words per line being one of them). Her poem is significant because of its simplicity and conciseness. It is written in open form but still has a definite style unique to the poem and its flow of words.

Her open form poem contains a series of four-line stanzas that could be likened to quatrains, but not quite. The poem is neither a sestina nor a villanelle. It's not an aubade certainly, not a ballad, it's not an epigram, not an ode, not a limerick, not an epic, but, it is a moving, heartfelt elegy. If one were to look closely, allegory can be found. There is no recognizable meter. Most lines are end-stopped but, in a couple of cases, enjambment would seem apparent.

The poem is written in blank verse with rhyming occurring within the line in three cases and between the lines only in the last stanza. There are no couplets, certainly no heroic couplets, but it does contain caesura, a natural pause. Assonance is present but not prevalent. Definitely not a sonnet, her poem more or less does have a type of octave (setting of the scene) and sestet (some action or cathartic outcome) that characterizes a sonnet. Anapest is not readily seen but there is a rising meter. While the meter is hard to identify, the average length of line is five words, which could be likened to iambic pentameter but not precisely by a strict definition. The poem has a definite rhythm and a definite voice and the connotation is impossible to deny. The poem exhibits few characteristics of classical poetry and follows no particular convention. But the emotion and message it conveys are too powerful to ignore.

Opening with alliteration, the twenty-four line poem conveys deep emotion and perhaps deeper reflection, an inward look to self and outward look, a ponderance as to why. It's a tribute to those who fell in combat and to those who suffered losses and came home, not least to the scourge and non-acceptance by one's own society of a person who served in an unpopular war and returned home to an indignant, impatient and un-thanking society. The average length of a line is only five words. The poem ends with a solemn pledge.

From Scranton, Pennsylvania, carried purposefully

to the Wall, preserved here and forever, the moving poem, precisely written in pencil on lined school tablet paper, that speaks clearly and deeply to a now -remembering, now-indebted; now-grateful and now -humbled nation, the writer speaks to all the Vietnam Veterans - indeed to all of us - in a way perhaps many never could or can understand.

Who knows why this woman placed this untitled poem at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial located next to Constitution Avenue and not far from the Lincoln Memorial? It is not for any of us to know. It's only for her to know. It's not addressed to anyone in particular. Whatever her reason or reasons are, however, the words written by Kayla Reichle should never be lost. Her poem, following no convention of prosody or style but her own, without precise characterization or use of poetic tools, placed at the base of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Memorial Day weekend 2010, reads:

Reflections reflecting realities
deflected only by engraved names
soul by soul, to the whole
the mass majority of men.
Candle Light vigils, midnight visits
they will never truely forget
the booming, blasting everlasting
In the cores of their minds.
Fighting a cause, sealed no applause
They went over, came back judged
Mud wasn't the only thing in which they trudged.
Ghosts now rest here, old friends linger
as those left behind shed tears.
Thinking back on darkness
in their eyes they still carry weight
wear the suit of a different type of business man.
Stand here, I salute
A tribute with tears
To those under these years
men, military peers
who died with their fears
and will NEVER be forgotten.

And to the right of the sixth line, she adds a peace symbol at the end of the following words.

To all those who gave their lives in service; rest in peace.

It was about 3:30pm when the last of tens of thousands of V-twin Harleys passed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The Run for the Wall, Rolling Thunder, now over, had reigned for over three hours in a loud, rumbling tribute to those who served and to those who will never return. As the last motorcycle passed and faded into the distance, silence prevailed at the Wall, leaving only so many mementos left behind and Kayla Reichle's salvaged words to resonate with the emotions felt by all.

Rolling Thunder was over. Visitors to the Wall were leaving. Memorial Day weekend had just about come to a close. What would each person take away from the experience? Perhaps the answer is revealed by some words inscribed on the back of a van parked on a side street near Thunder Alley. ***"For those who fought and died for it, Freedom is a flavor that those who have been protected can never know."***

To be sure, America owes its deepest gratitude to every American veteran, to every American service man or service woman. We should not forget what they did and are doing for us. We cannot forget that it is they who fight for our freedom and our great country.

11 June 2010

Gary Foster is a frequent contributor to Red Clay. He is the author of "Phantom in the River: The Flight of Linfield Two Zero One" about an F-4 Phantom he discovered in Hanoi published by Hellgate Press.

SALUTING OUR VETERANS: JIM KAUFFMAN

Monday, November 1, 2010
By ADELE MALLOY
Correspondent

To many Delaware County military veterans, indeed, many Pennsylvania veterans, Jim Kauffman is a household word. To those who know him well, he's "Super J."

For the last half-century, Kauffman has devoted himself to helping military veterans and to their

causes. He came by the occupational profession the hard way, he earned it.

Fresh out of the service in 1968, Kauffman joined the American Legion and worked his way through the ranks to post commander three times, currently serving as first vice commander, Murray Stuart American Legion Post 566 in Glenolden. He also had served as commander at the county level.

His family moved from southwest Philadelphia to Norwood when he was 10 years old. He attended local schools, graduated from Interboro High School, Class in 1966, and was almost immediately drafted into the Army

Kauffman got his first look at G. I. life at Fort Gordon, Ga., where he marched his hot, dusty way through basic training with a bunch of other green recruits. This turned them into tough soldier material in short order.

His unit was shipped to Fort Bliss, Texas, where they learned all they ever wanted to know about Nike Hercules Missiles, a giant leap in his trek to Vietnam. He never put his knowledge of Nike Hercules Missiles into battle, but he got proficient with automatic weapons, anti-aircraft artillery.

Kauffman spent more than a year rolling in the dust and the mud with the Army's 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery Automatic Weapons Self Propelled attached to the 3rd Marine Division. There were no soft cots, no tents, no roofs over the G.I.s heads. They just made do.

Food was C-Rations, a delectable selection of cardboard room-service three times a day; canned chopped meat, maybe lima beans, often stale crackers, maybe a bit of fruit once in a while. The beverage of choice, or not of choice, was whatever water could be found; often rain water caught in rain ponchos or helmets, boiled or treated to a shot of tasty or not tasty, water purification tablets. On rare occasions, water was transported in, most often, not.

Pay day was scheduled once a week. Sometimes a helicopter delivered the wages, but there was no place to spend the money, so the guys didn't really care.

"Rarely, we found some beer to buy, but not often. Once a helicopter brought the paymaster in under a hail of hostile fire. 'I'm gettin' the hell out of here,' he said, and that was the last we saw of him," Kauffman chuckled.

The five-man crew received its baptism into battle during the Vietnamese Tet New Year's celebration in 1968. When enemy shells came whistling their merry way overhead, the guys would dive, headfirst under their Automatic Weapons Duster, a large tank -like contraption that held their twin 240 mm cannons.

They slept under the same Duster, or tried to sleep, on the hard ground, no matter the weather; hot as hell is the summer, a little cooler in the winter. The men cooled off in the heat by tearing the sleeves off flack-jackets, wearing them only if a commanding officer was in the area.

"The CO's didn't worry too much about what we were wearing. The uniform of the day was whatever we happened to be wearing when we had to engage the enemy...and that was most of the time," Kauffman laughed

Their equipment, old antiaircraft weapons confiscated from the National Guard were first sent to Vietnam in the fall of 1966. The Army deployed three battalions of Dusters, each with a headquarters battery, four Duster batteries, one Quad-50 battery and an artillery searchlight battery

While the Dusters were highly effective warriors, the old equipment needed a lot of maintenance and parts were hard to find. The gas-powered Dusters were susceptible to engine fires. Although a Duster could travel over long distances and rough terrain, such use caused excessive wear on engines, transmissions and suspensions, but the equipment was fairly simple to maintain for a trained crew

Its high ground clearance and sturdy suspension system allowed it to withstand land mine explosions with minimal personnel casualty. It also provided fairly good cover for crew members to catch whatever sleep possible during infrequent lulls in hostile attack

The 40mm shell had an effective blast and fragmentation capability with a highly sensitive point-detonating fuse that limited effectiveness in jungle growth. In dense forest, the Quad's .50-caliber projectile could punch through cover that would detonate the Duster's 40mm shell too early for it to be effective

The 40mm shell was better suited against field formations and was able to furnish indirect fire using data from field artillery fire-direction centers.

GIs in the 44th Artillery gave tremendous support to the Marine I Corps. Both units valued the capability of the 40mm's and the .50-caliber fire in the field and in perimeter defenses to break up ambushes and to provided cover for supply and tactical convoys along contested highways

Dusters of the 44th Artillery led the task force of Operations Pegasus that broke the siege of Khe Sanh Airfield in April 1968; provided critical protective fires during the Tet offensive and later took part in Operation Lam Son 719

Kauffman boasted that his unit earned at least two Presidential Citations and a Navy Department Citation for service supporting the Marine I Corps effort.

Personally, Kauffman remembered he had earned the Vietnamese Service Cross; National Defense Medal; Good Conduct Medal and was made Squad Leader during the Battle of Hue City, receiving a Medal for Valor. Kauffman also earned the Purple Heart, but is still waiting to hear from Washington on that one.

Kauffman was just 20 years old when he made Sgt., Squad Leader, E-5 in just 19 months.

Far more important to him than medals and citations is the memory of the heroics of his comrades, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Kauffman told proudly of visiting the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C. where he found the names of his buddies, but he would rather remember them alive than talk of their demise. Kauffman still keeps in touch with some of his comrades.

"I just had a long talk with my buddy, Garvin Reese in Smokey Town, Alabama. He's still the same laid-back guy I knew in 'Nam," he remembered.

"We never lost any serious battle, but we lost some serious friends," Kauffman said.

He left the battlefield in 1968 by way of Fort Lewis, Wash., and from there to Philadelphia.

After the service, Kauffman worked for the Veterans Administration and as Building Manager, Philadelphia Veterans Administration Hospital.

"I often worked 100 hours a week, three jobs at a time," a habit he picked up in Vietnam where the days often had no beginning and no end.

Kauffman also had his own local bar business where he worked after his regular jobs to support the loves of his life, daughter Diane, sons Tom, Brett, and Kevin.

As for the future, he's looking to slow down a little.

"I'll always be around the Post, but it's time to kick back and let the younger generation carry the ball," he said.

HEALTH NEWS

VA Begins Paying Benefits for New Agent Orange Claims

Submitted by James Sigman

VA Encourages Affected Vietnam Veterans to File Claims

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun distributing disability benefits to Vietnam Veterans who qualify for compensation under recently liberalized rules for Agent Orange exposure

"The joint efforts of Congress and VA demonstrate a commitment to provide Vietnam Veterans with treatment and compensation for the long-term health effects of herbicide exposure," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki

Up to 200,000 Vietnam Veterans are potentially eligible to receive VA disability compensation for medical conditions recently associated with Agent Orange. The expansion of coverage involves B-cell (or hairy-cell) leukemia, Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease

Shinseki said VA has launched a variety of initiatives – both technological and involving better business practices – to tackle an anticipated upsurge in Agent Orange-related claims

"These initiatives show VA's ongoing resolve to modernize its processes for handling claims through automation and improvements in doing business, providing Veterans with faster and more accurate decisions on their applications for benefits," Shinseki said

Providing initial payments – or increases to existing payments – to the 200,000 Veterans who now qualify for disability compensation for these three conditions is expected to take several months, but VA officials encourage all Vietnam Veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and suffer from one of the three diseases to make sure their applications have been submitted.

VA has offered Veterans exposed to Agent Orange special access to health care since 1978, and priority medical care since 1981. VA has been providing disability compensation to Veterans with medical problems related to Agent Orange since 1985.

In practical terms, Veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness do not have to prove an association between their illnesses and their military service. This "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits.

The three new illnesses – B-cell (or hairy-cell) leukemia, Parkinson's disease and ischemic heart disease – are added to the list of presumed illnesses previously recognized by VA.

Other recognized illnesses under VA's "presumption" rule for Agent Orange are:

Acute and Subacute Transient Peripheral Neuropathy

· Chloracne

· Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia

· Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2)

· Hodgkin's Disease

· Multiple Myeloma

· Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma

· Porphyria Cutanea Tarda

· Prostate Cancer

· Respiratory Cancers

· Soft Tissue Sarcoma (other than Osteosarcoma, Chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or Mesothelioma)

· AL Amyloidosis

Veterans interested in applying for disability compensation under one of the three new Agent Orange presumptives should go to www.fasttrack.va.gov or call 1-800-827-1000.

MY TRIP BACK

By Don Gillespie
C CO 1/26

Hey, Lieutenant Nick,

I'm not a computer wizard so don't hold your breath waiting for the CDs. The three of us intend to work on that, but remember we work on Irish time. You'll absolutely get copies of everything.

We landed in Danang on the 1st of October. Twenty -three hours flying is not what I remembered from the first trip. It was exhausting. Commercial lines packed you in like sardines and Air Singapore was no different. The first impression my sons had after touch down, was the heat. The first thing that came to my mind was "Wow it still smells". The airport in Danang was a mess, poor conditions, very dreary looking, and I thought I landed in a bad 1960's B movie. The only signs of Americans there, were single aircraft hangers on the far side of the runways,

which were very old and very run down. They reminded me of open ended Quonset Huts, but bigger. On the way out of the country we saw a few MIGS parked, but couldn't get my camera up fast enough to take a flick. After we got out of the airport it was



MY BOYS AND I AFTER HUMPING HILL 861

the traffic we had to deal with. My son who is in law enforcement said it looked like a traffic cop's worst nightmare. Thousands of motor bikes going every direction; what a free for all, a Chinese fire drill looked more organized.

For the first two days we hung around Danang then traveled to the Hai Van pass area where 2nd platoon operated later in '68. I don't recall too much after Khe Sanh, and before Hai Van. I was injured mid May, and treated in Japan until I returned to the Company four months later. If my memory serves me correctly, you left the platoon after we left Khe Sanh. I recall our paths crossed once again some time in August '68. I was in Okinawa in transit on the way back to the Company and you and another officer walked by me near the base movie theater. You must have been on the way home. You stopped me and were joking with me about looking like a new guy again then wished me well. Do you recall that?

We arrived in Khe Sanh village (town size now) on the 4th of October and checked into the Thai Ninh Hotel, pretty much the only game in town. The hotel was a minus 4 star. The flicks on the internet are very deceiving. For two nights we slept on box-springs, oh my aching back. The food was all local and I wasn't thrilled about that. What I wouldn't have given for a case of C's right about then. The saving grace was son Donald having a case of Nutri-Grain bars and a case of bottled water. I pretty much lived on that and cooked rice for the time I was there. Our first night in the town we walked



STANDING IN THE OLD HAI VAN PASS AREA

around. Streets lights were on, people were out and friendly. There is even an ATM machine on Route 9, the main road in town. The local kids were very curious and we were surprised that some could speak a little English. The next morning we headed to the firebase.

We spent hours at the firebase. My boys got a bit of Marine Corps history. I showed them where I was when I was a new guy. We went down to the area where I went on my first squad size patrol off the



At base of 861 looking back towards Firebase

end of the runway with Cpl Zamecnik (?) and LCpl Tate in November '67. I related to them how I felt during that time being in the middle of that and only four months after graduating high school. Lieutenant do you remember Zamecnik and Tate? I told my boys stories about us and of the Marines who were lost-not just at Khe Sanh but later in the Hai Van area as well. I even recalled names and things I haven't remember for years. I talked more about



DONALD & MATTHEW HUMPING HILL 861

that place to them than I have ever done. I found Charlie Company's positions at Khe Sanh.

The area is now a farm for coffee bean plants, thousands of them. We did see impressions in the ground at certain places and suspect they are remains of bunkers and or trench lines where our platoon was set in. I did see some engineer stakes in areas and took pictures of a few. We saw unexploded ordinance. One looked like a 60mm mortar round. I couldn't tell if it was a dud, defused, or what, but needless to say we danced around that area carefully. I even walked down to where I used to sit on LP's outside the wire at night. The second day we were at the firebase and on top of 861; the boys experienced how fast the fog and rain would roll in & out, the effect of razor sharp elephant grass on skin, and how quickly leeches preyed upon you. We spent more than a few minutes pulling those blood suckers off. And check this out-while moving about Charlie Company's lines, I found the partial remains of a US Marine flak jacket with one plate remaining inside. I brought it home with me. I was surprised no one said anything to me about it when leaving the country or entering the USA.

The country is in sad state. Whoever believes that type of government works, needs to go to Vietnam and see how those people live. It is horrible! The poverty level is as bad as it gets. They have big corporations coming into the country and building 4 star hotels that pay slave labor wages to the people who work there, and think that its a good job. No welfare benefits there Bro! Either you work or starve. If you go outside of the hotel area, it's a Ghetto!

As soon as you leave the hotels you deal with the poor, horrible conditions there, and that constant smell which lingers. Walking the streets is bad. Da nang city is a dump. Once we crossed the river from the city we headed straight for the beaches on the South China Sea. The beaches near Danang were nice. We were told the area called China Beach is like a resort area. We didn't walk in that direction. When we did get to the beach, we walked north to-



L-R Matthew, Me & Donald at USMC KS Combat Base at entrance to NVA Museum

wards Marble Mountain, the beach where it was deserted, yet having clean and warm water. While in Danang city we met a Catholic nun. She worked with the poor and children abandoned by their parents. They have nothing, it was so sad. Traveling around we had to pay tolls or get permits (what a bunch of B.S.) All that was, is an official lining his pockets with our money. We had to pay a fee for permits to hump 861, then another fee to go down the Perfume River in Hue. We decided to travel as the locals did and took the only train from Danang to Hue. Mistake! It was bug infested, smelled and was very dirty. While we were at the station in Danang trying to board, one of the boys turned to

me and said, "Dad look". What had caught his attention was a female who decided to use the tracks as a bathroom. The train station reminded me of the traffic patterns there-total confusion. There was pushing and shoving just to get on and off the trains, if you gave an inch you were screwed.

The living conditions in Hue City seemed a bit better. The city was cleaner and better maintained, maybe because more tourists are there. We saw many more westerners in Hue then in Danang. We saw a few young long hair Americans wearing Communist Star T-shirts similar to the now Vietnamese flag. My sons said to me when they pointed them out, "They just don't get it". I wanted to walk over to them and give them a history lesson. The biggest draw in Hue was the Citadel. Most of it has been rebuilt but if you go to the rear or the far sides in the back, you still can see the damage done in '68. We met and gained the confidence of a few younger people, waiters, waitresses, and drivers. One guy that took us on a boat ride was really a good guy; he didn't try to rip us off. He seemed like a stand up guy and one thing he and others had in common were that they are very curious about America and its people. Most of the people we met were born after the Americans left. I asked some of the younger people what they thought of America and a few thought America is a violent place. That opinion is based mostly on violent American TV shows that are shown there.

Even though, some of the people we met wanted to come here. Most citizens cannot pay for the visa fee required to the government. The average income is just under 1K per year. We found a bar in Hue called the "DMZ", yes that's right DMZ. It caters to westerners, food, music, etc. People who visit the bar could leave a message on the wall. We saw this writing from a former American soldier, 1st Air Cav; he visited there in '03. In big bold letters he wrote on the wall "We didn't lose - we left". Needless to say, I left a few choice words OOH RAH!

I was at a Catholic Church in Quang Tri Province. The church was originally build by the French and damaged during fighting; and is being re-built. From what I understand it is a place where Vietnamese Catholics make pilgrimages, and while I was there, I met this former NVA who is Catholic and visiting from the north with his family. This guy didn't have an arm and was about my age. He kept looking at me and I kept looking at him, when the person who was our driver asked him a few questions. The driver introduced us. We spoke through our driver for a few minutes. My family standing there was looking at him and his family was looking at us. As I was walking away from thinking what just happened. From what I could gather talking to our guide; the military people left from the "Puppet Government", who are the guys treated people worse. When the communist took over in '75 they were kicked out on the street, scorned by everyone, and everything they owned was seized by the new government. I'm not sure how the NVA veterans are treated. I was curious but never got a straight answer about that.

When traveling up North (I Corps), we stopped at two museums. The theme was the people's victory in what is called the "American War". One of the museums was in Dong Ha and the other at the combat base. Both were full of inconsistencies. Most of the photograph's I recognized were shots taken by David Duncan Douglas in his publication of "I Protest". The captions below the photos were things like "American soldiers flee in panic from the people's army", etc. A lot of the equipment displayed was most likely taken in 1972 or later. The M-16's displayed had the newer type flash suppressors and the flack jackets were army type, not the type worn by US Marines during the fighting. When we were at the museums I tried to set the caretakers straight on the facts, but all I got back were stares.

As our time was winding down we tried to get out a day earlier but couldn't find three open seats on a flight to Singapore from Danang. The boys wanted to scope out Singapore for a night. They said they saw and had enough of Vietnam and asked me how we did what we did under those conditions in '68. I still wonder about that.

As we boarded the plane at Danang airport, a soldier or policeman (couldn't tell the difference in uniforms) was standing at the bottom of the steps and the guy said to me "see you soon". I looked at him and said "I don't think so". I really don't think he understood the sarcasm in my voice, he just kept smiling.
Choi Oi! I made it out again!

Since I've been back people have asked me what I got from the trip. The last day at the firebase I walked the length of the airstrip by myself. I remember walking and thinking about the young men who didn't come home from Khe Sanh and Hai Van area. I could vision these guys. I was laughing and crying at the same time thinking of some of the juvenile things we did together and then how fast that would change into a life and death situation. We were only kids. Then it was so quiet and peaceful I could hear myself breath. As I was walking back to meet my sons I kept thinking what **was** the purpose of all that. I know I have always loved my country and have always been proud I served as a US Marine and even prouder I was a 0311 with the 26th Marines. What my sons both said was, if anyone wants to say negative things about The United States of America they should go to Vietnam and see how life is there. The boys also told me that by going there, they have a better understanding of the conditions we lived under and they hold a life long love and respect for all the US Marines who did their duty.

God Bless America
S/F_Carry on!
Don G.

P.S. Hey Lieutenant I didn't find your Zippo J

MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION
By Craig Tourte

It just seems that I run into other Khe Sanh veterans where ever I go. Yesterday while celebrating the Marine Corps Birthday - myself, Steve Wiese (B/1/26), Marco Soto (A/1/26), Pete Torres (G/2/26) and David Lind (H&S 2/4) headed over to the historic California town of Benicia where we got together with around 80 or so other Marines and took a few yachts over to Pittsburg for a little Birthday celebration. Our little sub-group of Khe Sanh veterans tries to meet at least a few times a year and the Marine Corps Birthday is one of those times. Pete Torres invited us and we had a great time with calm water, great food and wonderful companionship. I asked Tom Horchler (H.Q. 1/13) to go, but he said he gets sea sick (what?) and Dave Tonick (A/1/26) failed to give me any adequate excuse, so



I'll have to work on him just a little harder next year. Of course during this little event I happened to run into a former Marine who was also at Khe Sanh and didn't know anything about our Association.

John Pessoni always kids me about this, you know,



always coming across other Khe Sanh Veterans. Anyway this Marines name is Michael McDaniel and he was with the CAP unit at Khe Sanh village. He is the past President of the Diablo Valley Veterans - kind of a unassociated group of Vietnam Veterans in the Bay Area of California. I emailed Mike a copy of our membership application and gave him the addresses of both web sites. With that "Happy Birthday" and have a good Memorial Day. I'll see if I can get Mike Fishbaugh to post the photo of our little group and of myself with Mike McDaniel. Oh, and I'll be the good looking one seated on the far right with the Band-Aid on his nose.

Moving Moments

We celebrated the Marine Corps Birthday at the Pittsburg Yacht Club after an hour or so yacht ride to their Marina from the city of Benicia greeted by a bagpiper playing the Marine Corps Hymn as we sailed into the harbor. This little cruise has been a tradition now for twenty years and at one time I'm told involved over 250 current and former Marines, there were around 80 or so this day and my first cruise with them.

There were the usual speeches made by very bright former officers and enlisted who had a fantastic command of the English language with voices expressing stories that were both witty and words eloquently spoken. Four young Marines in fine dress blues from some local installation preformed the standard raising of the flag and cake cutting ceremony and we all sang the Marine Corps Hymn and pledge to the American Flag.

There was a funny little formation out front with a dress-right-dress and attention, about face, those kinds of things preformed by old men who had not forgotten - all done with smiles and giggles remembering how it was so serious back then. During one of the little speeches I happened to notice a rather small, elderly man standing in the corner supported by a silver framed walker. He looked frail, had on some kind of black baseball cap that was sitting off center. At first I thought he was connected in some way with the restaurant, he didn't look like a former Marine - we have a sort of look about us you know - and then the former Marine who was acting as Master of Ceremonies informed those gathered that for the first five years of this event, everyone would walk over to the little Mexican Restaurant around the corner when they disembarked from boats and have a wonderful lunch, but then the number became too large and the restaurant was not longer able to handle the crowd.

I'm uncertain of this but I think the Mexican Restaurant continued to cater the event even now. Anyway the host introduced this elderly man in the walker as the owner of this Mexican Restaurant. He was handed the microphone and in very broken English and heavy accent, related how he and his family had come to this country, worked very hard and had very little. He went on to describe how he loved American and was so grateful for everything and how he appreciated the sacrifices made by its veterans. Not once did he express anything but his gratitude for what this country had provided to him and his family.

With a guitar player standing next to him, he then sang the National Anthem, of which I do not know all the words, but he did. It truly was a "small world moment" and one of the most moving and memorable moments I can recall having for quite some time and of course I was chocked up as tears rolled down my face. So many folks want and expect so much and this little guy wanted and expected so little and so appreciated what America offered him and those veterans who made it all possible. At that moment, I was so sorry I had left my Khe Sanh coin in my truck back in Benicia and was unspeakable moved by what I had witnessed.

MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY SURPRISE
Meeting Another Khe Sanh Veteran

By Craig W. Tourte

I have met many Marines both young and old, all had interesting life stories. Some pertaining to combat and others involving life's struggles and tribulations. Interesting folks these Marines I have encountered, all exceptional in their own right, most with "Small World Stories" seldom shared with outsiders. I met former Marine Michael McDaniel for the first time at the 235th Marine Corps Birthday celebration in Benicia California. Michael is the past President of the Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley. He served in the Marine Corps for 4 years and served 2 tours in Vietnam from September 1967 to



1969, receiving 2 purple hearts. Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley was instrumental in erecting a 1 million dollar monument in Danville California to honor all those who served their country and is involved with assisting homeless veterans.

After a rather long and personal conversation I asked Michael if I might share his experience with other Khe Sanh Veterans, he was reluctant but finally relented.

Michael told me his first combat experience in the Marine Corps was in September 1967 with the 9th Marine Corps Regiment at Con Thien. Around December 1967 they conducted sweeps in and around Khe Sanh, Camp Carroll, The Rock Pile and out towards hills 471 and 1015. His first encounter with a Combined Action Group (CAG) was in December of that year while working around the Khe Sanh Combat Base. He became friends with a fellow Marine by the name of John Balanco who was attached to a local CAG. One of the prerequisites for application to a CAG unit was that the applicant had to have a certain amount of combat experience. Michael noted that the living conditions in the CAG were much better than those out in the field, Balanco talked him into applying and he was accepted.

He applied for the CAG unit through Oscar 1 and after going through CAG training was assigned to that group, arriving on January 20th, 1968. While attached to Oscar 1 he worked with Lt. Thomas Stamper, Captain Bruse, Sergeant Kasper and Captain Clark instructing the Regional Forces (RF) with a Lieutenant Nhi. Michael spoke Vietnamese, however most of the RF's consisted of Montagnards who spoke only limited or a different dialect of Vietnamese. He assisted these forces in directing South Vietnamese air strikes and artillery strikes from American Forces.

After Khe Sanh Village was attacked by the North Vietnamese Army's (NVA) 66th Regiment the remaining forces walked to the front gate of the Khe Sanh Combat Base but the RF's were denied entry. Not wanting to leave their comrades the Marines walked to FOB-3 located at Lang Vei. Five days after arriving at FOB-3 he was transferred to 3rd CAG and was assigned to Hotel 4, 6 &7. During that attachment his locations were overrun 3 times and of 2 of those, he was in command.

He remained with Hotel 7 the remainder of his time in country. On April 27, 1969, while operating on a patrol with another CAG unit they were hit by two NVA companies and he was wounded 6 times and peppered with shrapnel in a running four hour battle. His RTO sustained forty rounds in his radio but fortunately received only two body wounds. The 101st Airborne was sent to assist them and it took that unit 6 hours to reach them. Because of his wounds he was listed as killed in action on site. It was not until he was moved to a medical unit was it discovered that he was still alive but severely wounded.

Out of the 6 American and twelve RF's who had been in that battle only himself, the radio operator, corpsman and 1 RF survived. He was subsequently evacuated to Japan where his recuperation took 4 months. Michael told me that he only spent approximately 2 weeks near Khe Sanh, a time he remembers as difficult and a place where he was nearly killed.

I was some thirty years later that he became reacquainted with his old friend from Vietnam John Balanco and became involved in the Vietnam Veterans of Diablo Valley, seeing his old friend again for the first time during a 4th of July parade. His friend passed away some years ago due to illness but he remembers that during many conversations there was never any mention or recall of the night of January 21st, when Khe Sanh Village was attacked by the North Vietnamese Army.

MARINES FACE A DIFFERENT KIND OF "ENEMY" AT RODEO RANCH

By Lee Warren
Contributing Writer
The Heartland Gatekeeper

The Korkow Rodeos ranch near Pierre, S.D., is used to accommodating tough men -It has been producing rodeos for more than 60 years-so when a couple of busloads of Marines pulled into the ranch in late July, they fit right in.

The Marines were there because a team of people that included Vietnam combat veterans wanted to

Marines face a different kind of 'enemy' at rodeo ranch



One group of warriors serves another group of warriors

show the men how much they appreciated them. They threw horseshoes, shot rifles, fished, hunted, feasted (including smoked rattlesnake), and participated in a little rodeo action - resulting in two of the Marines going to the emergency room. Other than being sore, they were fine.

While this wasn't a "Christian" event, Christ was present and presented in one-on-one conversations as the Lord led. Ken Korkow of Omaha, regional director of the Christian Business Men's Committee for Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota, spearheaded the event at the family ranch. Korkow is a decorated former Marine and (Navy Cross) Vietnam War vet eran .

Korkow was wounded in combat and lives with what he now understands to be Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Given that many of the Marines who were at the ranch were also combat veterans, he said he knew that many of them would be dealing "with PTSD" at some point in their lives.

He also knew many of them simply needed to know somebody really cares about them.

William "Fritz" Klumpp, a Vietnam veteran who was shot down on his 30th combat mission and went on to fly 106 more, was at the ranch for the same reasons as Korkow.

"I went out there just to love these guys," said Klumpp, who lives in Virginia. "To let them know that there were a group of men, veterans, who not only appreciated the sacrifices they're making, but to be able to serve them, to be able to give them a great time, to have an opportunity to share with them in whatever context, might bring real healing at the hand of God."

Klumpp said PTSD can lead to drug use, alcoholism, pulling away emotionally from family members, divorce and just reckless behavior in general.
"A lot of these guys have experienced things and they may not even be aware that they are dealing with anything like PTSD," said Brian Ascherin, an Arizona resident and decorated Vietnam veteran. "So my focus was to visit with guys and to understand that we have pasts that have had significant and often times traumatic impacts that have affected our lives.

"It's easy to get stuck in the past and even though you may get to the point that you feel like you are a survivor rather than a victim of the past, to move ahead in life and live with a hope for the future, or, for guys who really don't have any kind of a spiritual foundation in their life, dreams for the future.

"A lot of the guys' identities are, 'I'm a Marine. I'm a Marine first and last. I'll die a Marine.' And so, just in visiting with guys and finding out that, 'Hey, there's other things in the world; other things in life, other things in your family that you need to be aware of, be thinking of, be hoping for, be dreaming of, and not being a prisoner of the past or even a prisoner of the present.' "

"My perspective was to be a friend, be a help, serve them, help them have a good time, kick back and ask God for an opportunity to visit with them about the real stuff that makes up life, and ask myself,

'What can I share? What can I do to help you in maybe clearing up some perspectives based on our common experience," Ascherin said.



Korkow pointed out that the leadership team needed to be wise when interacting because each man's experiences were different. Some of the problems they heard about were common, some were not.

Klumpp. spoke to another man who was hurting because he had just been through a divorce and was not able to see his two-year old daughter.

"They were a great group of young men," Klumpp said. "Some of them opened up. Just by things that they didn't say - the fact that they wanted to hang close to a few of us and gave us opportuni-ties to share where we've found our healing and strength -- I felt like that was very meaningful.

"It was an outing for a group of warriors who were served by another group of warriors who now have a new Commander in Chief."

All of the Marines were offered a copy of a book called Wild at Heart written by John Eldredge and a copy of the Vietnam Veterans Bible.

Wild at Heart is promoted as a book that "gives men permission to be what God designed them to be - dangerous, passionate, alive, and free." The Vietnam Veterans Bible is the New Testament (in a camouflage cover) interspersed with testimonies from Vietnam veterans, including Korkow and Klumpp.

Ascherin said many of the Marines climbed back into the buses with tears in their eyes. Klumpp said he heard one Marine say he had never had so much fun in hiSs life. Many stories were left untold. But one thing was certain, the God who knows all things was at work.

Ken Korkow was raised in Blunt, SD by Erv and LaFola Korkow, well known producers of professional rodeos.

Ken served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1966-1968, serving in Vietnam in 1968. He was wounded in combat and received the Navy Cross, the nation's second highest award for combat valor. The Governor of South Dakota named a special day in his honor as South Dakota's most highly decorated Viet Nam veteran.

Ken received a B.S. in Agri-Economics from South Dakota State University in 1970 and graduated from University of South Dakota in 1972 with a Masters of Business Administration.

From 1972-1974, Ken worked with S.D. Industrial



Trap shooting was a popular activity for the Marines at the Korkow Rodeo Ranch

Development and Expansion Agency in Pierre, SD From 1974-1978, he developed a real estate company focused on farm and ranch sales, and then went on to do site selection and development work for national companies.

In April 1984, Ken joined the staff of Christian Business Men's Committee USA. He is currently Regional Director of CBMC Heartland, serving Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota. Regional Director of CBMC Heartland, serving Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota. On August 10, 1968, Ken married Liz Alm of Wahoo, NE. The couple currently resides in Omaha, Nebraska. They have three children.

He is a former member of Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association; former president, Central South Dakota Board of Realtors; and former president, North and South Dakota Farm and Land Institute.



RANCH OWNER KEN KORKOW BRAVO CO 1/26



OTHER RANCH OWNER JIM KORKOW, BROTHER OF KEN

BOOK REVIEW

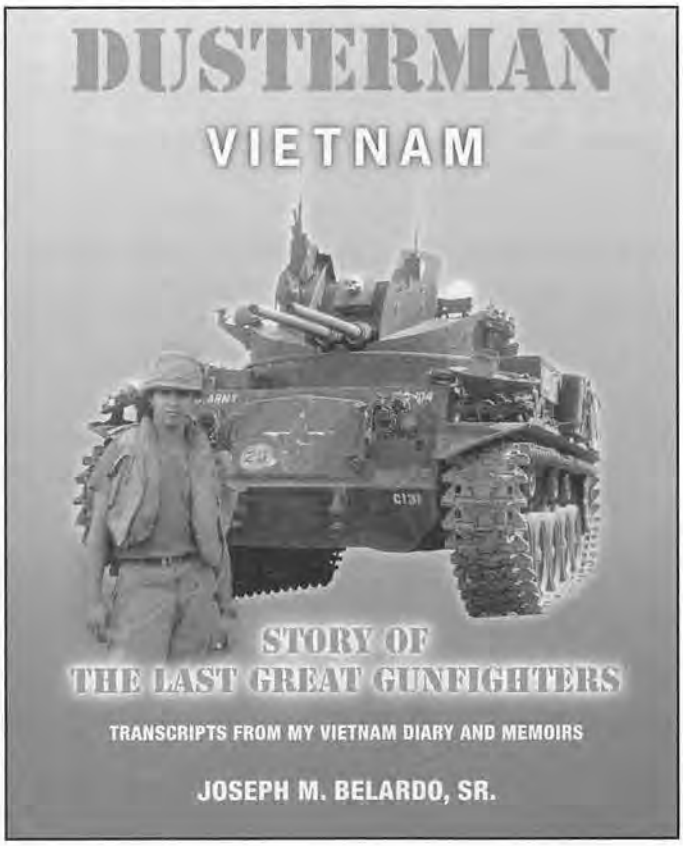

South Plainfield, New Jersey resident and Vietnam Veteran, Joseph Belardo, releases his new book;

Dusterman – Vietnam…. Story of: The Last Great Gunfighters.

Dusterman is a transcript of Joe's diary and memoirs, including photographs, while he served in Vietnam in a specialized Army mobile combat team and body recovery unit called "Dusters" that were attached to the Third Marine Division along the DMZ in 1967 and 1968 during TET.

His book will take you across the DMZ from combat base to combat base and gives a detailed, day-by-day, frontline battle and body recovery narrative of daily combat life while attached to the Marine Corps. His fascinating, introspective memoir reveals a sensitive soul's struggle to be physically and mentally strong amidst unimaginably horrible suffering and dying.

Joe and his crew hold the distinct honor of being the last to leave the finally abandoned Khe Sanh Combat Base.

He has appeared in two television documentaries: The Soldiers Story and Vietnam War with Oliver North. He is an author who has been published in the book The Soldiers Story – Vietnam in Their Own Words, Vietnam Magazine – Dusters Battle for Route 9, The Khe Sanh book of Poetry and the Khe Sanh Magazine "Red Clay."

Joe's medals include the Bronze Star with Valor, Purple Hearts and numerous Marine Corps and Army medals and citations.

STRANGE HAPPENING ON THE JERSEY SHORE
By "Fish"

Took a slow train to the Joisey shore yesterday just for the sh|ts and giggles. Walked around the boardwalk, (planks laying on the beach) looking for the elusive "Joisy Devil" then went to a nearby Joisy Greek type diner for a bit of lunch and what do I see sitting there stuffing their faces.



L-R Larry McCartney (With Jessie) Bill Griffith, Big John



These guys were claiming that they were Khe Sanh Veterans, I doubt that. Jessie the waitress agreed.



L-R Larry McCartney, Sid "Fish" Patricio, Bill Griffith, John " Big John" Pessoni

Here I was minding my own business, just walking 'long da Boardwalk, when I met dese cweatures @ da corner of thoity thoid and thoid. As for Jessie, I can't really say 'cuz I wasn't paying attention, 'bout all I remember is hearing a female voice say sum-

thin 'bout "a real man" and den she plopped in my lap. Hey guys, what can I say; when ya gots it, flaunts it. :-) :-) :-)
GREAT seeing you guys again. Gots to do that more often. Any others in the area wanna join us next time?
Semper Fidelis!
!!Larry

Big John, pulled up his pant leg to show off his Colts Tattoo at the diner, got a couple of old Ladies and Jessie all excited.

Download and print a couple of photos of Gary Bracket and Coach Caldwell, sign it and send it to Big John, the dumb ass will never know, and he'll owe you one. :)

POETRY

A CORPSMAN'S REFLECTION

A Tribute to Medal of Honor Recipient
Richard David DeWert

I woke up yesterday morning with a
sweat-soaked shirt,
wondering what it would be like if I
had been Richard DeWert.
A hardened smile that echoed tears of
pain,
A mother's neglect at leaving her child
in the rain.
He went willingly with visions of
heroism and pride,
To become a Hospital Corpsman in our
Nations' fight.
With hopes of the future, to be a doctor
someday,
A harsh taste of combat and the dreams
fade away.
It was early April with Dog 2/7,
No angels of mercy were looking down
from heaven.
A bitter long trek to the 38th parallel,
When they took enemy fire and his
Marines began to yell.
"Everybody down, were in for a fight",
the smell of fear and death took them in
to the night.
On patrol the next morning as a thick
fog rolled in,
The eerie silence of what was to begin.
Suddenly the fog lifted as quickly as it
came,
The platoon's being cut down by bullets
in vain.
Cries for "Doc" were all that he heard,
Marines gasping for air as they said
their last word.
"Don't go out there Doc, wait until it's
time",
a reply was met with, "You do your
job, I'll do mine."
No time for thinking they're bleeding
fast,
He pulled his first Marine to safety as
he felt the first blast.
His leg burning, a sharp pain indeed,
Ignored for the comfort of his Marines
in need.
Dodging through bullets, a daring
second trip,
He carried the injured from the enemy's
tight grip.
Undaunted by his own condition, his
only thought of saving lives,
Dashing automatic fire for a third gru-
eling time.
Another sharp blast of enemy fire,
Piercing pain to his shoulder and he's
beginning to tire.
Persistent in his commitment of saving
these men,
Out for a fourth time to meet the enemy
again.
Assuring his Marines it was going to be
alright,
Machine gun fire rendered his mortal
plight.
As he lay over the Marine he was to
save,
A thousand angels laid feathers at his
blood-soaked grave.
As for the men who witnessed such
courage and compassion,
They were inspired to move quickly
against the enemy's action.
Some say it was Doc who saved them
all,
His selfless sacrifice in answering the
call.
I woke up this morning with a calm and

grace,
As I looked in the mirror and saw my face.
I realized a few things about my wondering and dismay,
About the legacy Richard DeWert has left us today.
The Hospital Corps can forever stand tall,
For this young man, so fragile, gallantly gave his all.

The Medal of Honor is what they gave,
His selfless deeds so proud and brave.
Long may you rest our brother DeWert,
No longer to bear the pain of those that are hurt.

Written by: Senior Chief Hospitalman Fred E. Kasper, USN

OBIT

All Marines are Rifleman first, but then there were some of us who done a little galley duty also, from time to time please join me in remembering a great icon of the entertainment community. The Pillsbury Doughboy died yesterday of a yeast infection and trauma complications from repeated pokes in the belly. He was 71.

Doughboy was buried in a lightly greased coffin. Dozens of celebrities turned out to pay their respects, including Mrs. Butterworth, Hungry Jack, the California Raisins, Betty Crocker, the Hostess Twinkies, and Captain Crunch. The grave site was piled high with flours. Mrs. Butterworth delivered the eulogy and lovingly described Doughboy as a man who never knew how much he was kneaded. Born and bread in Minnesota , Doughboy rose quickly in show business, but his later life was filled with turnovers. He was not considered a very smart cookie, wasting much of his dough on half- baked schemes. Despite being a little flaky at times, he still was a crusty old man and was considered a positive roll model for millions.

Doughboy is survived by his wife Play Dough, three children: John Dough, Jane Dough and Dosey Dough, plus they had one in the oven. He is also survived by his elderly father, Pop Tart.



The funeral was held at 3:50 for about 20 minutes.

ED NOTE

With all the sad obits, a little levity seemed in order



OUR NEW HOME IS WHERE YOU DIG IT PIN

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ED NOTE: Changes on Pages 26-35 are in response to my recent letter seeking changes for the 5Th Edition of the KSV Membership Directory. There are still many members who did not respond as of 17 Jan 2011. Lets get them in soon, so I may have the new directory printed prior to the upcoming reunion.



LATE OBIT

ERNEST H. COLLETTE
1934-2010
KHE SANH VETERAN
USMC M CO 3/9

Ernest Henry Collette, eldest son of Ernest O. and Mary Florence Stochaj Collette, was born June 2, 1934, in Putnam, Connecticut. He departed this life Sunday, October 17, 2010, in Lake Regional Hospital, in Osage Beach, Missouri, at the age of seventy-six years, four months, and fifteen days.



On April 20, 1968, he was united in marriage to Betty LaVerne Mason Anderson, and to this union one son and one daughter were born. He was preceded in death by his parents; a daughter, Lori Ann Collette; a granddaughter, Caitlyn Cribbs; three brothers, Tom, Bob, and David Collette; and two step-brothers.

Ernie is survived by his loving wife, Betty, of the home; two sons, Ernest R. Collette, and his wife, Pam, of Springfield, Missouri, and Daryl Anderson, of Lubbock, Texas; a daughter, Kristi Cribbs, of Scottsdale, Arizona; four granddaughters, Marisa Maldonado, Dyan Covington, Jesse Cribbs, and Brooke Collette; a great-grandson, Anthony Ynessa; two brothers, Jerry Collette, and Denis Collette, and his wife, Sandra, all of the State of Massachusetts; a number of nieces and nephews; as well as a host of other relatives and friends.

He was born and raised in Connecticut and Massachusetts, where he attended parochial school during his education years. Ernie proudly served his country in the United States Marine Corps for twenty years, with combat in both Korea and Vietnam. **While serving in Vietnam from December 1966 until January 1968, he was involved in combat at Con Thien, Khe Sanh, Hill 881 South, Camp Carroll, Dong Ha, Cam Lo, Cua Vet, DMZ, C-2, Hill 861, and Gio Linh.**

During his tour in Vietnam, Ernie's company was featured in a Life Magazine article by photographer, David Douglas Duncan. He is shown in a couple of the photographs in the article. He is also named in the book Vietnam Sons, for some the war never ended by Dale Keuter. The book is written about his company (Mike Co., 3rd Bn, 9th Marines, Third Marine Division) in a 1967 incident and other combat situations experienced by M/3/9.

After retiring from the Marines, he and Betty made their home in San Diego, California for several years, and Ernie worked as a security guard at Campbell Shipyards. Later, when the family moved to Lebanon, Missouri, Ernie worked as an assembler at Tracker Marine

Ernie was a member of Sleeper United Methodist Church. He had a love for animals and there was usually a cat or a dog as part of their household. For many years he had several tanks of tropical fish that he tended faithfully. His family was very important to him and he especially enjoyed his granddaughters and great-grandson.

Ernie was a loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, and uncle, and was a caring neighbor and friend. We celebrate his life and know that he will be fondly remembered as a devoted family man, a courageous and decorated Marine, and a true patriotic citizen.



LATE OBIT
JOHNNY F. LYON
1937-2010
KHE SANH VETERAN
LT COL USAF C-130E PILOT

Memorial Services for Johnny Foster Lyon, 73, of

Bryan, Texas, were held, Monday, December 6, 2010 at The Texas Hall of Fame in Bryan, Texas. The service was followed with a military burial service at Providence Baptist Cemetery at 3 p.m. Dr. Malcolm Bane officiated both ceremonies.

Mr. Lyon passed away peacefully his loving family, and friends surrounding him, on a beautiful Sunday morning, November 28, 2010 at his home in Bryan, following a courageous yearlong battle with Cancer. Johnny Lyon was a model of grace under pressure he handled an extremely challenging year with courage, dignity, and determination. He remained a "Fightin' Texas Aggie" to the end.



Johnny was born on January 17, 1937 to Johnnie R Lyon and Louise Margaret (Warlick) Lyon, in Bryan, Texas. He was the absolute apple of his folk's eye, and he managed to live a life of accomplishments that clearly illustrated their admiration and confidence in him was justified. The life lessons his parents imparted to him were cherished and often repeated by Johnny.
Johnny served in the USAF from 1960-1 981 as an Air Force Pilot, serving in Vietnam and retired as a Lt. Colonel. He also served at Officer Training School, at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas, imparting maturity, wisdom, and leadership to all he commanded.

Upon his return from the Air Force he built and opened The Texas Hall of Fame, along with life long friend Paul Emola. The Texas Hall of Fame continues today as the premier live Country Music Venue in the Bryan-College Station area. When he was not busy with all the jobs on his plate, he operated his Father's beloved Ranch between Snook and CaIdwell, Texas.

Johnny graduated from Texas A & M University (Class of 1959) with a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration. He later attended Sam Houston State University and earned a Secondary Teaching Certificate. Johnny was a life member of SIGMA CHI.

Johnny Lyon had a little saying" "It's not what you make, it's what you don't spend" And although he was widely known for his frugality, he was the most generous man in Texas, having helped many, many friends, family, and his community in their time of need.

In this spirit of wise spending, the family respectfully asks that in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to Providence Baptist Church and Brazos Valley Hospice Care. He would greatly appreciate any assistance these two fine organizations would receive in his memory.



Johnny Lyon was a lifelong entertainer, with his beloved Country Nu Notes he made the rounds all over Texas and for many of the musicians and fans that adored him, the music stopped on 11/28/2010.

Visit his website to learn more of the man and his music. www.johnnylyon.com

Simply stated: We have lost a man of character, who possessed a million special talents and exhibited splendid behavior throughout his life. He was absolutely wonderful.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a brother; Billy John Lyon, and a son John Ross Lyon.
He is survived by his wife, Suzy Joseph Lyon; and two daughters, Terrilyn Lyon Seale and her husband, Todd and Amber Lyon Clowe and her husband, Duncan, and their two children Emerson and Parker Clowe.

The Family wishes to acknowledge the support, friendship and love shared with Johnny Lyon by his dear friends Joe and Judy Powell. No two people could ever have provided more comfort, assistance, and love than them. They helped provide, "the peace that passes all understanding". God Bless them both for their love and dedication.



LATE OBIT



JILL BORLAUG
DAUGHTER OF NED BORLAUG
KHE SANH VETERAN
USMC I CO 3/3

Jill was born in Redding to her parents Ned and Donna Borlaug and had a younger brother, Erik. She passed away at her home.



She was very involved at Grant School with cheerleading and being student body president. She then went to Nova where she was head football cheerleader. At Shasta High she became involved in swim team and school functions. She also was actively involved with her horses, water skiing, snow skiing and crafts. Her family and friends were very important to her. A memorial for her was held on Friday, September 10, 2010 at 2 p.m. at Allan and Dahl's Funeral Chapel in Redding. . In lieu of flowers please send donations to NAMI Local chapter or your favorite organization.
"Love you as high as the sky, Jill"

NEW ITEM FROM THE VA



The Department of Veterans Affairs is making available a new medallion to be affixed to an existing privately purchased headstone or marker to signify the deceased's status as a veteran. If requested, the medallion will be furnished in lieu of a traditional Government headstone or marker for veterans that died on or after November 1, 1990, and whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker.

The medallion is currently available in three sizes, 5 inches, 3 inches, and 1 ½ inches. Each medallion will be inscribed with the word VETERAN across the top and the Branch of Service at the bottom. Appropriate affixing adhesive, instructions and hardware will be provided with the medallion.

Important: This benefit is only applicable if the grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. In these instances, eligible veterans are entitled to either a traditional Government-furnished headstone or marker, or the new medallion, but not both.

For family members of eligible Veterans interested in submitting a claim for the new medallion, instructions on how to apply for a medallion will be updated on NCA's web site at www.cem.va.gov/hm_hm.asp. Until a new form specifically for ordering the medallion is available, use VA Form 40-1330; Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker.

MEMORIAL PAGE

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
First Platoon Echo 2/9 USMC HILL 861 16 MAR 67	
Andrew Albert Alderman, HM3	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Francis Arthur Benoit, HM3	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Norman Richard Catlin, PVT	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
James Gorman Goetz, LCPL	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Charley Edward G LCPL	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Ronald Joseph Imperiale, LCPL	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
George Dennis Johnson, PFC	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Lloyd Nelson Kurtz, PFC	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
William Charles Lamon JR.., LCPL	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Julian Allan McKee, LCPL	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Joseph Lawrence Schroeder,	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
PFC Richard Jerome Vedder, SGT	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Second Platoon Bravo 1/9 USMC HILL 861	
John Herbert Cheeks, CPL - (DOW) on 4/28/67)	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Michael James Daley, PFC	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Donald Eugene Harper Jr., SGT	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Sylvester Land, SGT	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Danny Eugene Nicklow, PFC	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
James Earl Perry, PFC	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Alfred Pino, LCPL	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
David Rhoades, PVT	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Ted Williams, LCPL	Robert J. Slattery Echo CO 2/9
Michael John Coleman LCPL USMC B CO 1/9 KIA 27 Jan 68	Ricky J. Compton India CO 3/9
Richard J. McCullough USA 1/40 Arty Passed Away 21 Aug 10	The Khe Sanh Veterans
Ted Amato H CO 2/3 USMC Passed Away 12 Oct 2010	Dave "Sgt Bro" Brombaugh H CO 2/3
Veteran of Both Hill Fights	
In Memory of All KIA & WIA Marines & Corpsman From	Joseph R. Wenzel H&S CO 3/3
Companies K&M 3/3 24 Apr 67 To 13 May 67 The Hill Fights	
Reginald L. Vance III USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 22 Feb 68	Michael W. Urban H&S CO 1/26
John "Jack" Scarpinato USMC D CO 1/26 KIA 07 Jun 68	Jerry W. Fauver D CO 1/26
Eddie B. Cook Jr. SSGT USMC KIA 19 Dec 66	Earlin R. Rinehart HQ Btry 1/13
Eugene C. Wire GYSGT USMC M CO 3/26 KIA 23 Feb 68	Earlin R. Rinehart HQ Btry 1/13
Charles Belasco PFC USMC W Btry 1/13 4.2 Mortars KIA 18 Aug68	Howard L. Whitaker W Btry 1/13 4.2
Thomas H. Birch CPL USMC A CO 1/26 3rd PLT KIA 23 Feb 68	Robert A. Harrison A CO 1/26
Wayne Moore LCPL USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 30 Mar 68	Thomas N. Quigley B CO 1/26
Hank Norman 1LT USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 30 Mar 68	Thomas N. Quigley B CO 1/26
Rodney Alfano 1LT USA 37TH SIGNAL BN KIA 02 Feb 68	Rocco Alfano Father of Rodney
Maxie Williams 1LT USMC A CO 1/26 KIA 10 Apr 68	Geoffrey Stack A CO 1/26
Melvin "Bud" Sink LCPL USMC D CO 1/26 KIA 13 Oct 67	Daniel Fisher D CO 1/26
Harold L. Marcum LCPL USMC 2/1 KIA 01 Aug 68	William Latour HQ CO 2/1
Larry W. Howe LCPL USMC 2/1 KIA 01 Aug 68	William Latour HQ CO 2/1
All the Men OF 1/26	Andy Sibley A Co 1/26 S-2,4 CAC
Roberto Mendez LCPL USMC 27 Oct 68 Namora Bridge Henon Pass	James D. Heath C Co 1/26 & F Co 2/7
Eugene P. Lessman Jr. CPL USMC FLC Passed Away 04 Feb 2009	Victoria B. Lessman Wife

MEMORIAL PAGE CONTINUED

THOSE REMEMBERED

Cecil W. Carothers HM2 USN W/BTRY 1/12 KIA 11 Sept 68
W. Cole Herndon 2LT USMC W/BTRY 1/12 KIA 11 Sept 68
William Arthur Beyer HN USN H&S CO 3/26 KIA 01 Feb 67
For The Fallen & Since Deceased From E CO 2/26
Edward Cody Adams SW2 USN CBMU-301 DET B KIA 16Apr 68
Thomas E. Hendershott PFC USMC A CO 1/26 3RD PLT KIA 21 May67
Roger M. Hurd LCPL USMC A CO 1/26 3RD PLT KIA 21 May 67
Lawrence J. Bolger 2LT USMC A CO 1/26 2ND PLT KIA 27 June 67
James T. Gaynor SGTMAJ USMC H&S CO 1/26 KIA 15 Feb 68
Sam Lightman PFC USMC D CO 1/26 KIA 02 Nov 66
Fred B. Link USMC C/ CO 1/9 2ND PLT KIA 01 Mar 68
Randy Worthley USMC A BTRY 1/13 Passed Away May 2010
Paul M. Douglas SSGT USA FOB–3 KIA 21 Feb 68
Blaze Magyar III CPL USMC C BTRY 1/13 KIA 1-7-68
James T. Bracman LTCOL USMC C BTRY 1/13 Passed Away
Michael H. Thomas 2LT USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 20 Jan 68
Thomas D. Brindley 2LT USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 20 Jan 68
Donald J Barnes EOCS Seabee CPO NMCB-10 KIA 06 Jun 67
Charles A. Hubbard BUL-3 Seabee NMCB-4 KIA 06 Jun 67
Bruce Dasiel CN A GOOD FRIEND WIA
Guy D. Dickie PVT USMC A CO 1/9 KIA 2-8-68
Manuel P. Torres CPL USMC A CO 1/9 KIA 2-8-68
James P. Rizzo LCPL USMC A CO 1/9 KIA 2-8-68
Henry York CPL USMC A CO 1/9 KIA 2-8-68
Jerry C. Burkhead CPL USMC A CO 1/9 KIA 2-8-68
Robert H.Littlefield CPL USMC A CO 1/9 KIA 16 Apr 68
George G. Hutson KIA 11 Feb 1970 OP Vandergrifth Dewey Canyon2
Charles P. Montross SGT USA KIA 2/11/71
Lucio J. Reis SP4 USA KIA 2/11/71
Michael H. Thomas 2LT USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 20 Jan 68
Richard L. Holycross CWO USMC KIA 9/10/67
Melvin L. Dolby PFC USMC F CO 2/26 KIA 07 Apr 68
Earl R.Burnley HM-3 USN M/CO 3/4 KIA 16 May 68
Gary W. Lindsay LCPL USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 9/7/67
Alexander (Scotty) Chisholm SGT USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 9/10/67
William E. Wyrosdic CPL USMC H CO KIA 08 Oct 68
Robert W. Belcher CPL USMC H&S CO 3/26 KIA 11 Apr 68
Charles Spillman BU-1 USN Seabee CBMU-301 DET B KIA 28 Feb 68
Edward C. Adams SWF-2 USN Seabee CBMU-301 DET B KIA 16Apr68
All B 3RD Recon Marines who Died and were wounded at Khe Sanh
Bruce Cunningham PFC USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 08 Feb 68
Jeff "Alec" Bodenweiser 1LT USMC E CO 2/26 Hill 861A
Paul F. Stedman LCPL USMC H&S CO 3RD SP KIA 26 Feb 68
Joseph Bailey LCPL USMC C CO 1/26 DOW 19 Mar 68
James Gaynor SGTMAJ USMC H&S CO 1/26 KIA 15 Feb 68
Walter Egger Capt. USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68

REMEMBERED BY

James Mooney H&S CO 2/26
James Mooney H&S CO 2/26
Pat Buckley K CO 3/26-C CO 1/26
Daniel Jachimiak 3RD Force Recon
Lawrence Kubley CBMU-301 DET B
John Kaheny H&S CO 1/26 S-3
John Kaheny H&S CO 1/26 S-3
John Kaheny H&S CO 1/26 S-3
John Kaheny H&S CO 1/26 S-3
John Peterson Original D CO 1/26
Eric Bergland C CO 1/9
Robert Sullivan A Btry 1/13
Robert Strange MACV-SOG FOB-3
Paul Choclis C Btry 1/13 Scout F/O
Paul Choclis C Btry 1/13 Scout F/O
Richard Foley I CO 3/26
Richard Foley I CO 3/26
Hugh McCauley MCB-4 Seabees
Hugh McCauley MCB-4 Seabees
Hugh McCauley MCB-4 Seabees
George Einhorn A CO 1/9
George Einhorn A CO 1/9
George Einhorn A CO 1/9
George Einhorn A CO 1/9
George Einhorn A CO 1/9
George Einhorn A CO 1/9
Gary Lee 1/5 INF DIV MECH
Gary Lee 1/5 INF DIV MECH
Gary Lee 1/5 INF DIV MECH
Mike Mahone & Robert Tipton I 3/26
Ted J. Hummer B Co 1ST SP BN
Ronnie L. Criswell F CO 2/26
Donald Rait M Co 3/4 & A/O
Richard Gallegos I CO 3/26
Richard Gallegos I CO 3/26
John Laibinis H CO 2/26 2ND PLT
Beverly Ricer Sister of Bob
George Owsley CBMU-301 DET B
George Owsley CBMU-301 DET B
Leland Upshaw B CO 3RD Recon
Barry Cunningham Brother
Nick Elardo E CO 2/26 Hill 861A
C.T. GREEN H&S & A CO 3RD SP
Charles N. Chamberlin C CO 1/26
Charles N. Chamberlin C CO 1./26
Charles N. Chamberlin C CO 1/26

MEMORIAL PAGE CONTINUED

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
Paul Bush LT USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Charles Chamberlin C CO 1/26
John Grohman GYSGT USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Charles Chamberlin C CO 1/26
Wilbert "Willie" Stovall USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 KIA 09 Mar 68	Robert Holscher HQ BTRY 1/13
Gerald H. Sampson Capt USMC C/O B CO 1/3 KIA 28 Aug 69 NC	Raymond Page H&S CO 1/3 81MM
Paul L. Frederickson CPL USMC A/O 1/26 KIA 09 May 68	Charles Rost B CO 1/26
Bridget A. Crawford (Nguyen Thi Mai Lien) My Adopted DaughterFrom Danang Now I Know Why My 3 Tours in Nam were worth It.	**Danny Crawford (Father) NMCB**
All The Marines who served on Hill 881S	Ray Addington I CO 3/26
Jeff Bodenweiser 1LT USMC E CO 2/26 Hill 861A Passed Away SS	Bruce Lewy E CO 2/26
Thomas R. Keppen 1LT USMC B CO 1/3 KIA 07 Jul 68 SS	Bruce Lewy E CO 2/26
Thomas J. Hoare Jr. 2LT USMC L CO 3/4 KIA 18 Jan 68 SS	Bruce Lewy E CO 2/26
Randall J. Boyd PFC USA 14TH COMBAT ENGRS KIA 03 Jun 71	Charles A. Sepulveda 14th Combat Engrs Lam Son 719
All Marines who were KIA in the Khe Sanh TAOR 1967	C.T. Anthony I CO 3/26
All The Corpsman With B CO 1/9 Oct 1967-Oct 1968	Duane E. Gielda B CO 1/9
Gary W. Thorpe CPL USMC H&S CO 1/26 KIA 23 Feb 68	William J. Flynn H&S CO 1/26
Donald W. Bean SGTMAJ USMC H&S CO 1/ 26 KIA 11 Mar 68	William J. Flynn H&S CO 1/26
Frank Giron PFC USMC B BTRY 1/13 Passed Away(My Friend)	Henry P. Lopez B BTRY 1/13
Joseph F. Schiller CPL USMC 1/26 Scout/Snipers KIA 16 Jun 68	Steve A. Riddle 1/26 Scout/Snipers
Edmond A. Jablonsky CAPT USA 2ND/94TH ARTY KIA 5/3/68	Mark Swearengen LTCOL 2ND/94TH
Jerry W. Elliott SSGT USA 282ND Black Cats MIA 21 Jan 68	Donna Elliott (Sister)
Ronald H. Rayner USMC A CO 1/26 KSV Chaplain	Ned Borlaug I CO 3/26
William T. Womble Jr. LCPL USMC E CO 2/3 KIA 03 May 67	Frederick G. Monahan E CO 2/3
Thomas P. Pruiett Jr. PFC USMC K CO 3/26 KIA 31 Mar 68	James V. Dalto K CO 3/26
Robert J. Slattery LCPL USMC H&S 2/3 81's KIA 06 Jul 67	Mick Hughes H&S CO 2/3 81's
Delbert L. Leasure CPL USMC C BTRY 1/13 Was originally with 1ST Searchlights KIA 23 Feb 68 Hill 881	Lawrence D. Haas 1ST Searchlights
Forrest Leasure Brother of Delbert (Gold Star Member KSV) Passed Away	The Khe Sanh Veterans Association
August Romano PFC USMC F CO 2/1 KIA 09 Jun 68	George A. Daher F CO 2/1
Theodore C. Bond LCPL USMC F CO 2/1 KIA 16 Jun 68	George A. Daher F CO 2/1
Gerald P. Williber CPL USMC F CO 2/1 KIA 19 May 68	George A. Daher F CO 2/1
Donald Baker LCPL USMC F CO 2/1 KIA 09 Jun 68	George A. Daher F CO 2/1
Robert Lucas PFC USMC F CO 2/1 KIA 27 Mar 68	George A. Daher F CO 2/1
David E Dixon CPL USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 07 Jun 68	Robert J. Kublius C CO 1/26
Louis C. Goi CPL USMC B BTRY 1/13 KIA 18 Mar 68	John G. Conley B BTRY 1/13
Thomas A. Meade CPL USMC D CO 1/26 KIA 06 Feb 68	"Skipper" Ernie E. Spencer D CO 1/26
Floyd "Shortround" McCulley CPL USMC D CO 1/26 Passed Away	Dan Fisher D CO 1/26

THE POOR BOY FELL DOWN

November 27, 2010 Associated Press
AUGUSTA, Ga. - A U.S. Marine reservist collecting toys for children was stabbed when he helped stop a suspected shoplifter in eastern Georgia. Best Buy sales manager Orvin Smith told The Augusta Chronicle that man was seen on surveillance cameras Friday putting a laptop under his jacket at the Augusta store. When confronted, the man became irate, knocked down an employee, pulled a knife and ran toward the door.

Outside were four Marines collecting toys for the service branch's "Toys For Tots" program. Smith said the Marines stopped the man, but he stabbed one of them, Cpl. Phillip Duggan, in the back. The cut did not appear to be severe. **The suspect was transported to the local hospital with two broken arms, a broken leg, possible broken ribs, assorted lacerations and bruises he obtained when he fell trying to run after stabbing the Marine.** The suspect, whose name was not released, was held until police arrived. The Richmond County Sheriff's office said it is investigating.

Rick Smythe Chaplain
Marine Corps League
St Charles County Detachment 725

LATE OBIT

FRANK J.GIRON
1947-2010
KHE SANH VETERAN
USMC B BTRY 1/13

Frank Giron, age 62, of Whittier , California born Thursday, December 4, 1947 to the late Miguel Marrufo Giron and the late Herminia Giron passed away Sunday July 18, 2010, at Menifee Valley Medical Center. He enjoyed golfing, woodworking, traveling, his grandchildren and especially his dog Gezmo. Frank served in the U.S. Marines during the Vietnam War , at the battle of Khe Sanh.



KSV IN THE NEWS
By Diana Fecarotta
Red Clay Editorial Staff
Chicago IL.

O'Hare Airport, located in the City of Chicago, is one of the largest airports in the United States. The O'Hare USO had recently completed a state of the art renovation of their facility.

It is an ultra modern facility with numerous amenities, which include special rooms for veterans traveling with children, hot & cold food, computers, televisions, quiet rooms with recliners, and many more activities and services to aid our traveling veterans. After completion of the project, retired Chicago Police Department, Sergeant Pat Scanlan, who along with his lovely wife Kathy, unpaid volunteers of the USO, made a discerning discovery.

Along with hundreds of souvenirs and mementos left by the many service members, was a plaque from the Chicago Fire department, honoring servicemen. Since a large majority of the CPD are former members of the Armed Forces, Sgt Scanlan felt there should also be a plaque honoring our servicemen from the Chicago police department.

Sergeant Scanlan **Pic #1** brought it up to Chicago Police Department Deputy Superintendent Daniel Dugan, **Pic# 2** who was now the Commanding Officer of the O'Hare Police facility.

Jeff Hoffman, **Pic# 3**, a Lieutenant with the Chicago Police Department, assigned a Watch Commander of the 23rd Police District who volunteered; to assist with the designing of the Chicago Police plaque, which would honor our servicemen.

It was decided that keeping with the Vietnam War Era, the main theme should be the tumultuous years of the many anti war protests held in the City of Chicago.

As pictured in the **Pic # 4**, a 1960's Chicago Police Department's Riot Helmet, flanked by two police batons was chosen. These items were donated by Lt. Jeff Hoffman. All Chicago Police riot helmets include the star number of the police officer. Lt. Hoffman donated the helmet and batons. Now came the

decision of which star number should be placed on the helmet. The criteria for this selection would have to include the selected members service to his country and the Chicago Police Department.

Retired Chicago Police Sergeant Allen Piantkowski **Pic# 6** on page 45 has received many accolades for his volunteer work with the military and police communities, who is also one of their most generous contributors, was asked for his input. His brother, Edward J. Piantkowski, a highly decorated soldier, was Killed In Action during the Vietnam War, while serving with the 196th Light Infantry Brigade. Al Came up with the design of the plaque shown in **Pic # 5 on page 44.**

Al served with Former Marine Tom Eichler on the Chicago Police Departments Tactical Team for over five years. Sergeant Scanlan was aware that there was a picture of Tom in Al's home, of a plaque hanging on the wall of the Pentagon, outside the offices of the United States Marine Corps. This Plaque held a pictured story of the battle on Hill 861A on 05 Feb 1968 for which Tom Eichler had received the Silver Star Medal for Gallantry. **(See Att Picture A to the right)** →

Tom was also one of the most decorated Police Officers on the Chicago Police Department, and in in addition to the Silver Star Medal was the recipient of two Purple Hearts for his Vietnam Service. It was decided to place Tom Eichler's Star Number on the Memorial Plaque.

On 11 November 2010, a small ceremony took place at O'Hare airport in the USO. Several members of Tom's Family were in attendance. In picture # 7, three of his six brothers attended, two of which were decorated wounded veterans from their service in Vietnam. Dennis, who served with the 25Th Infantry Division, is a retired Chicago Police Sergeant, Robert, served with the 1st Cavalry Division, and Donald, who currently is a member of the Chicago Police Department. In **Pic #8** his two sisters Karen & Garnet, are with them. His sister-in-law Rene, is shown in **Pic # 9.** Also in attendance, were many members of the Armed Forces passing through O'Hare and making use of the new facility.

Dan Dugan emceed the dedication, in **Pic #10,**who informed those in attendance, why and how the plaque was designed, why Tom's star number was chosen, and read Tom's Silver Star Citation. Tom & Pat Scanlan then presented the plaque to Jeane Quinn, senior Volunteer of the O'Hare USO in **Pic # 11.**

It was also a special day for Former Deputy Superintendent Daniel F. Dugan, a well respected, decorated member of the Command Staff of the Chicago Police Department, who was serving his last day before retiring. Thank you Dan for your service to our Country and the City of Chicago.



Tom Eichler at Pentagon next to picture outside of Marine Corps Offices. White arrow pointing out Tommy on Hill 861A 05 Feb 68



Tom, Pat & Dan share a moment on this special occasion for all concerned



Retired Chicago Police Sergeant Pat Scanlan

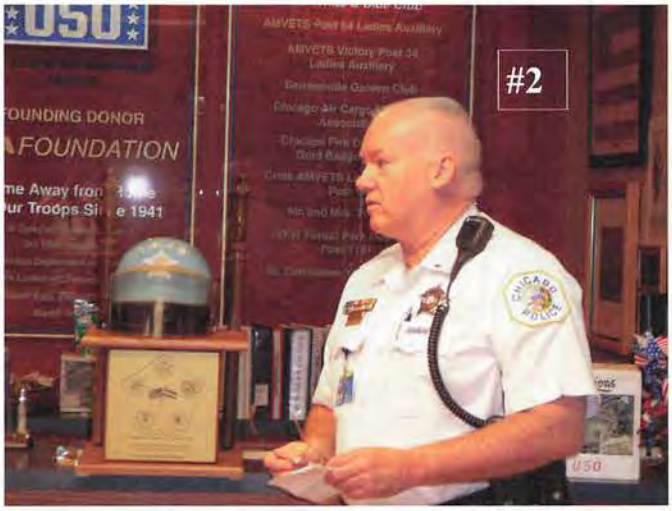

Retired Deputy Superintendent Daniel F. Dugan



Lieutenant Fred Hoffman Chicago Police Department





DESIGNED BY ALLEN PIANTKOWSKI



L-R Retired Chicago Police Sergeants Pat Scanlan and Allen Piantkowski



L-R Donald Eichler, Robert Eichler, Dennis Eichler & Thomas Eichler



L-R Dennis Eichler, Robert Eichler, Garnet Eichler, Thomas Eichler, Karen Eichler, Donald Eichler



L-R Donald Eichler, Thomas Eichler & Rene' Eichler, Tom's Sister-In-Law



Dan Dugan Emceed Event with Tom Eichler & Jeane Quinn Awaiting presentation



Pat Scanlan and Tom Eichler present Plaque to Senior O'Hare USO Volunteer, Jeane Quinn

THESE STORIES NEVER GET TO OLD

A SURVIVOR OF TARAWA

By Craig W. Tourte

During a casual conversation my neighbor mentioned that his 91 year old father had served at Guadalcanal and Tarawa and would be visiting him during the Christmas holidays. I asked if I could have the privilege of meeting his father. He agreed and told me his father had even written a biography of his life which included his war time experiences. My neighbor provided that biography to me which included 15 pages of his fathers experiences in the Marine Corps. I cannot express how privileged I was to be able to read a most interesting account of an extraordinary life. On December 23, 2010, Steve Wiese (B/1/26) and I talked to Captain Bollum, who was just shy of his 92nd birthday, about his experience in World War II. He graciously granted permission to quote extensively from his biography. For purposes of this article however, in many cases

I have shortened the text, excluded words, phrases and paragraphs along with paraphrasing sentences and placing my comments in *italic* in order to condense this story into a manageable piece. What heightened my interest while reading his biography was a little statement in the middle of the story which read, "I do not intend here to go into detail as to the battle for Tarawa, I recommend to you the book by Robert Sherrod, "Tarawa-The story of a battle," which does an excellent job of doing so..." "Rather, I will limit this to what I directly experienced." I was captivated by that statement and it is just the kind of recalled historical event I thought Khe Sanh Veterans would find interesting. Captain Bollum's written biography is articulately composed and compelling and I was privilege to have been able to not only read but hear his first person accounts. With that said, any errors, omissions or editing mistakes are solely mine.

"...I decided I wanted to enroll in the Navy flight program and took the South Shore into Chicago for the physical exam. Having worn glasses since I was about 17, I knew the eye exam would be a problem, so I rested my eyes all the way there. But to no avail -I flunked." "...then came Pearl Harbor. My best friend, Tom Webster, had gone through OCS at Quantico and was now a 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps, so I guess that pointed me in that direction. Anyway, on December 10th, 1941, I said my goodbyes and took the South Shore to Chicago and the U. S. Marine Corps enlistment office. My eyes didn't seem to be a problem and I passed the physical ... we were soon on the train headed for the West coast. As I recall, a Corporal who was shipping over was in charge of us and he certainly used very loose reins. We were just regular passengers and had sleeping car berths and ate in the dining car as we pleased. We went through Kansas City...and during stops we could have beer if we wished. I remember that when we stopped in L.A, that just about everyone got off and had a drink - on the premise that it would be a long time before we could do it again. I believe that the trip took five days."



CAPTAIN ROBERT BOLLUM USMC

"Upon reaching San Diego and the Santa Fe station, we were bussed to the Recruit Depot...it (*training*) was a little tougher than I had expected. Also, it was complicated by the fact that the Marine Crops wasn't quite ready for the massive influx of new recruits. We didn't have any dungarees or other work apparel and had to wear dress greens, because that is all they had. We didn't have dress shoes and had to wear "boondockers" instead. There were other similar shortages. However, the training was there and did the job. I did hate the pith helmets, which not only were used in boot camp, but as the required cover later at Camp Elliot. I don't remember the number of my recruit platoon; however, it (*recruits)*

was probably pretty representative of our nation, although perhaps weighted more from the Midwest area." "...I really liked the number of little, cocky, somewhat illiterate, Polish and Hungarian boys from the Chicago area. Several became my good friends and helped materially in expanding my vocabulary of heretofore unheard-of words. I wouldn't say that boot camp was a breeze, as there were times that it was very, very far from that." "...we made mock shore landings on the shore of San Diego Bay, about where Harbor Drive is now. We were all in eight-man pyramidal tents and the area where we would wash up and brush our teeth was in the open."

"One day I was called out of our training and told to go the office and there was Tom Webster, my longtime friend. He was now a 1st Lieutenant and heard that I was in boot camp and stopped to say hello." *After a number weeks*, "...we moved to Camp Matthews in La Jolla, where UCSD (University of California San Diego) is now located. There we qualified with the Springfield 1903 rifle and the Colt 45..." "Upon completion of boot camp and graduation, I was assigned to the Special Weapons Company in the 4th Battalion of the 10th Marine Regiment, Second Division. It was expected that we were to receive motorized 75 mm guns, but we didn't have them and our training was that traditionally the gun was just fired by pulling the lanyard at a predetermined target. What we were trying to do was to have the gunner sit on the metal area behind the gun and aim at a moving target and then fire. As a result, my lower legs took a real beating."

"The whole regiment went on maneuvers to Imperial County in March of 1942. We set up a new camp, called Camp Dunlap, near Niland and just East of the Slaton Sea. We lived in two-man pup tents, mostly placed in old dry stream washes for some wind protection." "...we went on several very long and very hot all day hikes... There was water to wash your face and hands, but no showers. Every few days we were trucked into Brawley and were able to use the showers at the Municipal Pool-and, of course also the pool." "...while there I made PFC on March 16, 1942, and on April 4, 1942, I was promoted to Corporal."

"We returned to Camp Elliott about the end of April and I appeared before the Selection Board and on May 11, 1942, I was informed that I had been selected for Officer's Candidate School. It was to be at Green's Farm, a complex of buildings and tents a few miles East of Elliott. In the meantime, I was granted 15 days leave..."

"... I started OCS on June 15, 1942, which completed with our graduation on August 4, 1942. (I was 25th out of a class of 77). "...on July 17, 1942, I was discharged from the Marine Corps and commissioned the same date as a 2nd Lieutenant in the USMC Reserve. Then back to Elliott and assignment to K Battery of the 4th Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, Second Marine Division. We then began intensive training, including schooling in fire control tactics using an enormous 'sand table' which gave a fire control officer the ability to practice without actually firing the guns...." "Nellie's Tit was a mountain formation behind the firing area which we used as an aiming point." "In July the Regiment hiked from Camp Elliott to Del Mar and stayed at the racetrack. Officers bunked in the Jockey Club and men in the stable area...we had some entertainers down from Hollywood, including Tyrone Power, who by that time was in Marine uniform."

"In anticipation of our going overseas several of us went...to Los Angeles...I purchased a sleeping bag and a short collapsible air mattress, just long enough to support me from the shoulders to the hips. It would easily roll up in my bedroll and inflate with a few good puffs and turned out to be a godsend."

"In the middle of October we started loading our gear into the Matsonia *(a converted passenger liner)* at Navy Pier at the foot of Broadway in San Diego...on October 19, 1942, we sailed out of the harbor for what turned out to be a fifteen-day voyage. We had no escort ships and depended on 'zigzagging' and maintained high speed to avoid Japanese submarines. Double-decker bunks were crammed into every area of the ship, including the drained swimming pool. Officers were in cabins, but they had been stripped of beds and replaced with double-deckers. The meals were excellent, as the ship had been only recently removed from passenger cruising and the larders were still stocked with excellent food." "On November 2, 1942, we reached the harbor of Auckland, New Zealand only to find out that we were supposed to go to Welling-

ton...(*where we arrived* on November 4, 1942,). The next morning...got on a train and arrived at a little town called Paekakarike" *for training at the former New Zealand Army Camp.*

"Prior to leaving New Zealand - for Guadalcanal - we had been issued Reising guns, replacing the 1945 Colt pistols for the officers and the 1903 Springfield rifles for the men. They fired a .45 caliber bullet and could be set for single or automatic fire. We all qualified before we left, but were not too happy with them. They were short; having a heavy wire shoulder stock that could be snapped out, but just weren't as accurate as we were used to. They were light and easy to carry and I guess that is why they gave them to artillery troops. Then we found out that they rusted easily in the damp weather of the island. So there then was a rush to trade with the army units or anyone else, and we ended up with a lot of shotguns, Tommy guns and M1's that appeared from somewhere. (We did find that some of the infantry really prized the Reising for its capability of being able to spray a lot of bullets at a time, which was handy for patrols). A similar problem was with the ammunition for our 75mm guns. Most of it was World War I issue and we quickly found that we were having duds. But the final straw was when we started having 'shorts.' Most of our firing was close to our own positions and accuracy was vital. So, we arranged to get a supply of newer ammo from the army and then stole some additional and bulldozed a big hole and buried the old."

GUADALCANAL

"In the middle of December we began preparing to ship out and on December 21, 1942, we embarked on the USS President Hays accompanied by other ships carrying the rest of the division and also the usual Navy protective vessels. The President Hays was one of three President Line ships, which carried the Marines to the initial invasion of Guadalcanal and continued to provide transportation for Marines and Army in the area. Unlike the Matsonia, where my cabin was down in the bowels of the ship, I shared a cabin on the main deck with a view of the outside with seven other officers in four double-decker beds and with one head. We stopped at Noumea, New Caledonia for a few days and the 6th Marines did a practice landing..." "On the morning of January 4, 1943, we lay to off the shore of Guadalcanal. I was surprised to find that you could actually smell the island - sort of a musty, unpleasant odor."

"We went ashore in LCVP's (Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel) and bivouacked that night near the fighter strip on Henderson Field. Early that evening we were treated to our first sighting of 'Washington Machine Charlie' as he dropped a few bombs." *(So named because of the broken rhythm of the airplane motor)* "The next day we took over the former position of our brother battalion, 1st Battalion, 10th Regiment and began support fire for the infantry. As the days went by, we occasionally moved our positions westward as the Japanese were pushed back. We supported at various times, different battalions of the 6th Marines and the Army Americal Division and one of our batteries was detached and went by water around behind the enemy as a part of an Army operation. We were relieved to be moving away from the airfield, as it had nightly bombing, sometimes very heavy. We occasionally received counter artillery fire on our battery position from the enemy, but fortunately, not very accurate. We also received a few random shells from 'Pistol Pete' an enormous gun that fired an equally enormous shell" *(Research indicates that this weapon was most likely a 105mm Howitzer type 92. 'A few of these guns made it to Guadalcanal and were known as Pistol Pete for their harassing fire.')* "On the afternoon of February 1, 1943, we moved from our position and put all of our guns on a sloping hill facing the ocean, as they anticipated a Japanese navel attack...it never came..."

"Guadalcanal was a large island, with date palm groves along the reasonably flat shore areas, hills and valleys inland rising into what were some pretty good-sized mountains. It was hot and sticky, with not too many bugs and it almost always rained about 4 PM. The area was full of land crabs and their rustling sound as they moved at night added to the concerns we had about snipers and infiltrators, who were frequently found. Going to the head (*in slip trenches*) at night was a real adventure, particularly during the first days on the island, before men got adjusted."

"A frequent assignment for me was liaison to the CO of the infantry battalion that we were supporting. With a radio man and his TBY backpack radio.

I would stay with the CO until he knew what fire missions he wanted during the day and during the night, we would locate them on the map and send the coordinates and type of fire requested back to our fire control section. As the support assignments changed we would have to take off and find the new infantry group. The only roads were along the shore, so finding them involved the ups and downs of the valleys and hills."

"When we first got there *(Guadalcanal)* the Japanese were trying their best to send in additional troops and supplies. However, that changed in early February and they started trying to remove as many troops as possible and resistance markedly decreased. On February 9th, our command said that hostilities were over and on the 11th we went back to near the fighter strip and started preparations to leave. Our battalion had suffered 3 killed and 20 wounded. (Seven of the wounded came from a muzzle burst in my battery from a communication wire that someone unknown strung in front of one of the guns…").

"On February 25, 1943, we boarded the President Hays and were back in Camp Paekakariki on March 2, 1943." "…while on Guadalcanal I had been notified of my promotion to 1st Lieutenant. When I got the papers, I found that it was effective as of March 1, 1943. On board ship, we were reminded that henceforth we were to be clean-shaven. So, I had proceeded to remove the full red beard that I had grown from December 21st to then - over 9 weeks." "While on Guadalcanal I had heard that - my friend - Tom Webster had been wounded and evacuated. In Wellington I met someone who knew him and was told that he returned and had been killed." *Capital Bollum only recently found that his friend Tom Webster had been buried in the National Cemetery in Hawaii.*

"Our battalion had been designated for rubber boat training and as part of that we participated in Division maneuvers, practicing breaking down our pack howitzers into units that could fit in a 10-man rubber boat. We ended up in rubber boats at Tarawa, but the guns came in on larger landing craft."

TARAWA

"On October 15, 1943, we boarded the USS Feland. It was one of a class of attack transports that had been recently produced and had almost the lines of a destroyer and was capable of high speeds. All of the berthing of the troops was in large dorm-like spaces filled with double-decker bunks and with noisy air-blowers (no air-conditioning in those days) lining the ceilings. On all of the other ships we had fresh-water showers, but here it was saltwater. We were issued saltwater soap, which supposedly would later, but really didn't. After the shower, you still felt sticky."

"The convoy proceeded to Efate, New Hebrides, with more ships joining as we went along. At Efate, the infantry practiced landing, but we stayed aboard. Several days later we were told our destination and briefed on the details. We were part of the 6th Marines, Reinforced, and were to be in reserve."

"On the morning of the 20th, we were off Tarawa atoll and it was quite a site. I have never seen so many battleships, carriers, cruisers, destroyers, transports and other ships…" "First the battleships and cruisers started firing their big guns and then the fighters and bombers from the carriers took their turn. Then the amtracs and Higgins Boats started in and the battle was on."

"With the battle ashore going badly, the 6th Marines were notified that they were taken off reserve and would be landing early the morning of the second day. The landing would be at the West end of Betio and, because of the reef, it would be in rubber boats. My Dog Battery was assigned to the 1st Battalion of the 6th and although the guns would not go ashore initially, my CO, Captain Kittrell and I, with several of our radiomen would go ashore with the infantry in order to locate where our guns could go." ***(Steve Wiese noted that it was his understanding Dog was an army term but Captain Bollum assured us that he was correct in that Dog, not Delta was used at that time by the Marine Corps)*** "That night we had the usual early steak and eggs breakfast about midnight and were ready to go at dawn. We went down the cargo nets and into rubber boats, which initially were to be towed by landing crafts. The line of departure was a long way from the shore and we had been going for several hours when suddenly we were overtaken by our own ship. Apparently the threat from Japanese shore guns was now gone and they moved up the line of departure. Meanwhile

there was seasickness aboard the rubber boats from a combination of the bobbing motion from being pulled and the exhaust from the landing craft. Late in the afternoon we reached the reef and the landing craft left us to paddle the rest of the way in-about 2,000 yards. We reached shore without anything more than sporadic firing at us."

"By that time it was almost dark and we spread out on the sand on the shore side of the seawall. There were several bodies nearby and one of our men nudged one with his foot saying, 'Is this a Jap or a native?' *(Captain Bollum describes the body as not in uniform but rather wearing a loin cloth)* "As he did the body sat up and there was a pop and every-one yelled, 'grenade.' Everyone hit the ground, but nothing happened. It was a dud. Meanwhile the Jap had disappeared over the seawall and no one was disposed to go after him. The order was passed that we were to stay on this side of the seawall and to dig in as much as we could in the dry sand away from the water. Watches were assigned and we tried to get some sleep. However, several hours later we heard the drone of an engine and what we thought was a Betty 80 Japanese bomber dropped its bombs on our moonlit beach. When the confusion was over, we found that one bomb made a direct hit on one of our small group positions, with resulting heavy casualties. With the bomber still overhead, the order came to move to the over side of the sea-wall, where we were not so visible. The rest of the night passed without incident and without sleep."

"The next morning, November 23rd, I tried to eat something for the first time. I had a C ration can of some sort of meat and tomato, which managed to stay down. Then we began to move with the Com-mand Group of 1/6, staying behind the flame-thrower and firepower combination, which was tak-ing care of the pillboxes and blockhouses ahead. When we reached the middle of the island on the South side, we were stopped temporarily by sniper and machine gun fire from somewhere to the North from the airport area. So, we went one by one as fast as we could run from one blockhouse cover to the next. The man in front of me made it almost all the way, when next to a big palm tree he tripped. We thought he had been hit, but he got up and ran to cover. So I followed only to meet a large explosion by the tree. It blew me up in the air and I landed in a state of shock. I didn't feel pain, just sort of numb. The next thing I knew a corpsman was bending over me and wanting to pull me out of the line of fire. I remember being sort of grumpy about the prospect of having to move and I guess I was beginning to feel the pain. Anyway, he did pull me back behind the tree and gave me morphine and sulfa and I guess did what he could to bandage me. I don't know how long I was there, because I was sort of in and out of consciousness. I was told later that I went on a stretcher to the battalion aid station and then was loaded on an amp track and returned to my ship, the Feland and the operating room there. Many months later I ran into a dentist from South Bend that I had know there and who was part of the Feland medical staff. He told me that after they had worked on me that they put me on the floor with another man, so they could watch us, as they were doubtful we were going to make it."

"...my next recollection was lying in bed in a ward of the hospital ship, USS Solace, without any mem-ory of how I got there. I had a cast on my right leg all the way to the hip and found out later that they had drilled holes through my ankle and just below the knee and inserted stainless steel pins in the holes. On the other leg and lower abdomen area I had hundreds of little pieces of shrapnel on the skin surface. The next few days were pretty much of a blur and I slept a lot."

"After about 9 days aboard the hospital ship we reached Honolulu and I moved to US Naval Hospi-tal Aiea Heights. It was, I believe, a 3-story struc-ture, with rooms opening onto a typically Hawaiian breezeway or lanai. While I was there I had a visit from several of the men from my outfit, including the man who had been ahead of me before I was wounded. He said that he tripped over some sort of wire, that apparently was to a delayed fuse and that he had been told that the explosion came from a sea -mine that had been buried there. H also said that the explosion actually sent me up in the air. Nothing much else happed while I was there, except all the little shrapnel bits were beginning to come off and they itched a lot. While there a Marine Colonel also visited me...and presented me with my Purple Heart."

"After two weeks there, on December 16th, they moved me back aboard the USS Solace and into a ward again. Then they took me into an operating

room. Sometime later, after I was conscious, one of the corpsmen explained that they had taken off the cast and cut open the back of my leg in order to remove an infected area that they had detected. He also explained the purpose of the pins and that they placed my leg in a metal frame that had sliding 'U' shaped forms that the pins fit into. They were then tightened in order to hold my leg stable before they removed the cast and then after a new cast was on, they removed the metal frame."

"We were on our way back to the states, and on December 23rd, we arrived at San Diego. I had been overseas just over 14 months, but it seemed much longer." *(Captain Bollum related that in total, he had been in a combat zone for 5 weeks and 3 days)* "In my ward I could hear a band playing outside and, what seemed like a long time, I moved to a stretcher and to an ambulance. By that time the band was long gone and I must admit, I briefly felt a little short-changed. However, upon arrival at the San Diego US Naval Hospital in Balboa Park and being settled into bed, the corpsmen immediately offered to have me telephone home. They rolled my bed out into the corridor and by a phone booth, where I was able to talk to my Mother and Dad. They previously had been notified that I was wounded."

"On June 19, 1944, I received an official award of the Presidential Unit Citation, with star, for the Tarawa Invasion, together with two battle stars on the Area Campaign Ribbons."

I was privilege to have been able to spend time with Capitan Robert Bollum; his convalescents from wounds were long and painful. Capitan Bollums successful post battle recovery is representative of his intelligents and perseverance. He and men like him, set the standard of excellence, bravery and honor for future generations of America's fighting forces. He continues to reside in the San Diego area and I am grateful for the time he spent with us. As a very small token of appreciation, I presented Capitan Bollum with a new Marine Corps cover, a Khe Sanh coin embedded in acrylic and a copy of the summer 2010, issue 76, Red Clay magazine.



L-R STEVE WIESE B CO 1/26, CAPTAIN ROBERT BOLLUM USMC, CRAIG TOURTE HQ BTRY 1/13

BOOK REVIEW

BEYOND MY HORIZON

An Educational Odyssey & Combat Memoir

By **CLAUDE REGIS VARGO**

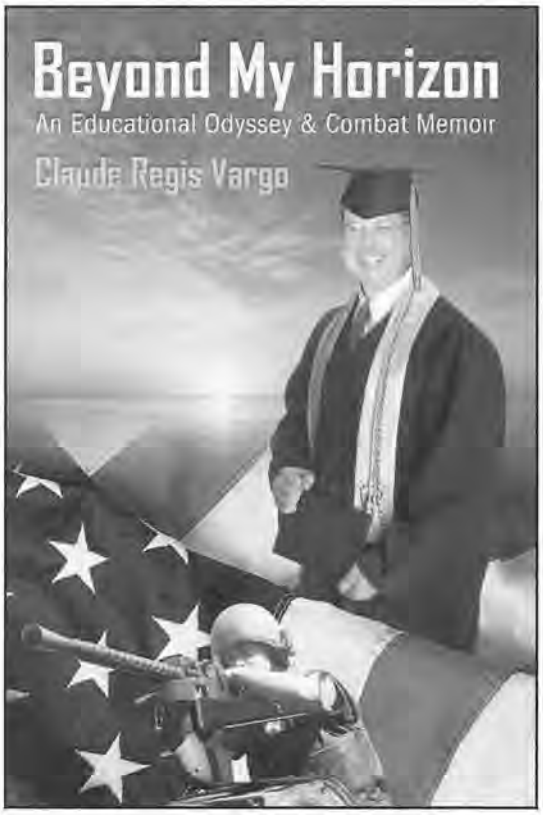

5.0 out of 5 stars A Must Read Book!

"Author Claude Regis Vargo has written a one of a kind book. It doesn't fit neatly into your standard book genres as it takes the reader on an inspiring, informative and entertaining journey. In his book "Beyond My Horizon: An Educational Odyssey & Combat Memoir" he takes us on an inspirational journey. We see how he has survived so much in his life - including a war. His book is not just some self-centered story that looks at his personal life but it blossoms into a self-help road map that readers can follow dealing with higher education, PTSD and even on how to handle college debt.

The author reminds us that if he did it then you can too - and he really means that. He challenges his readers to improve their lives. The book is heavy with self mocking and making fun of his own short comings with education. His late life wake-up call to get an education is certainly inspiring. The book is worth your time and money to buy and read it."

The Military Writers Society of America

CHAPTER FOUR
From Hippy Hair to a Baldini

My brother, Mark, and I were the best of friends until he left for the seminary in San Antonio in the tenth grade. Mark was eighteen months older than I, and my mother trusted him explicitly over me. Somewhere between Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, we were old enough that we were permitted to strike out on our own for sheer adventure in our small township of Bay Village, Ohio. Mark was always the leader and always got blue clothes because of his blue eyes, where I always got what I thought were frumpy-looking brown clothes because of my hazel green eyes. Little did I know then that it would not be too long before I would finally have a completely green wardrobe to match my eyes.

Mark and I would go hiking to such exotic places as our church, the school, the public library, and the post office, where he would always pick up and bring home all kinds of applications that could lead to all kinds of exciting careers all over the world. At church he always picked up the questionnaires for joining a seminary, and at the library I would look in the back of the magazines and copy the addresses of military academies such as Valley Forge and Virginia Military Institute to mail away for admission forms. It seems that even at that young age my brother always saw himself in a priest's tunic and collar, while I saw myself as nothing other than the six-and-a-half-foot-tall cardboard Marine Corps sergeant on display in the local post office.

The cardboard-cutout sergeant was regally outfitted in the Corps traditional dress-blue uniform, with royal-blue trousers and a red stripe screaming down each side. He had a proud chest adorned with several medals, his massive jaw was square, and his eyes were transfixed with determination. Mark and I would go to the post office every Saturday morning—after chores, of course—and I can remember telling my brother, "That guy would look great in our bedroom."

We both agreed and concluded, "They'll probably throw him out anyway." True to my prediction, one Saturday afternoon, Mark and I went to the post office, and found the sergeant gone. When I asked a postman at the post office where they had put my Marine after I saw he was "missing in action," the postman looked at me like I had three green eyes.

Week after week, month after month, Mark and I filled out applications and requested information. But the more postcards we sent out, the more mail Mark received in return, including complete information packages loaded with pamphlets from the Jesuits, Maryknolls, and Oblates, which were all foreign missionaries. I always thought it was amazing how the mailman or the registrars' offices evidently knew that my family could not afford a military academy boarding school and the recruiters always knew that I was too young to join the Marine Corps, because I never got a thing.

Mark and I would trek excitedly to the library each time a package came so we could locate and match up on the map the possible countries that we could go to. The year 1959 was a very exciting time compared to today, and the world was still a relatively young and simple place to us, with plenty of new adventures.

Looking back, I realize now that Mark was always destined to help the needy of the world. He succeeded in doing just that, as, in just a few short years after all of our library trips, he would be stationed in India, Bangladesh, and Thailand. I, on the other hand, never received any correspondence but still retained a burning desire to be that Marine Corps sergeant dressed in the royal-blue trousers with the red stripe down each side and a chest full of medals.

I do not feel very old, but I do remember, in the early days of black-and-white television, when the dancers I envied, such as Jean Murray and Fred Astaire, wore tuxedo slacks with elegant, shiny black-on-black stripes. I guess by then I already knew that I wanted to be a sergeant and a gentleman dressed in that beautiful uniform and respected. I could never imagine the gravity of the situation that would lead me to earn those stripes the hard way. As far as all those military
academy applications I mailed in, it would be about twenty years later, in a mother's sordid confession, that I would learn the bittersweet but horrible truth: it hadn't been the postman, the registrars' offices, or the recruiters who had thwarted and ruined my goals of being a sergeant; it had been my mother, who had been my unknown personal gatekeeper. My goal of being an academy cadet and a tall, blue-uniformed Marine sergeant had been intentionally sabotaged. But despite this, my goal of being a Marine was realized sooner than my mother or I could ever have predicted.

JOINING THE MARINES

"Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world, but the Marines don't have that problem."

Ronald Reagan

It was about a month after my graduation-less graduation ceremony that I decided to join the Marines. At that time, Gloria was barely a sophomore in an all-girl high school. I had decided that because we were still so young, we should just do what we both needed to do for now and, in two or three years, if we still felt we were meant for one another, we could get married. It didn't hurt that both our fathers had got together and mutually decided that we needed to separate and that I should go into the Army and far away to Germany.

But no one tells Claude Vargo what to do, so it was the Marines, and I proudly, but admittedly nervously, left for boot camp on June 23, 1967. I was barely nineteen years old.

After surviving the Incarnate Word sisters, the Basilian brothers, and the Oblate priests browbeating me for years, I was pretty relaxed with my drill instructors at boot camp, and I felt at least a little ahead of my peers in dealing with the initial shock of boot camp. My drill instructors did not do anything to me psychologically that the nuns, brothers, and priests had not inflicted on me and others.

I stood more than a bald headed foot taller than my head drill instructor (platoon commander), Staff Sergeant Lowery, but I looked up to him. He was a great teacher to me. He ruled with an iron fist but was fair-minded, if that was possible under the circumstances of boot camp. I really liked this man; he trained us well, and everything he showed me would eventually help to keep me and my platoon alive. The only thing he ever did to me that I really resented was for some indiscretion on my part one day, when he grabbed me by my collar, crushed my Adam's apple and climbed on my kneecaps, screaming bloody murder down at me while bending me like a longbow. I got over the resentment, though, and I couldn't know it at the time, but just a few years later, he and I would cross paths under more positive circumstances. We would have a very warm and wonderful reunion...because we were both still alive.

During Christmas of 1967, I was at Camp Pendleton, California, and was given five precious days off by my employer, the United States Marine Corps. I had just joined that June, but with six months' worth of the infamous and grueling boot camp, Infantry Training Regiment (ITR), and tank school at Del Mar, I was ready to defend my country. Before our brief Christmas release, we had each signed our last wills and testaments and actual death warrants that said we would not exceed a 500-mile-radius travel limit. A couple hundred miles extra to go home to Houston was no big deal, I figured. Well, maybe it was closer to 700 miles out of jurisdiction, but as just a nineteen-year-old pimpled and lanky

teenager with the prospect of going to war looming, who really cared?

I had a great time home on leave, never sleeping but instead walking around like a proud peacock, as most Marines do on their first leave home. After leave, on the way back to camp, my luck being what it was, when my flight landed on the evening before I was due back on base, it was not in Los Angeles as scheduled. We had to make an unexpected landing in Las Vegas due to a very bad fog. The stewardess cheerfully told all the passengers that we were lucky that the airline was putting us up at a multi-star hotel until the fog lifted. This was to be a seminal moment in my life, because we had been told that Marines missing from their outfits that were shipping out to war zones would be shot the next day at sunrise, per the aforementioned death warrants we had signed. In Marine jargon, it was called "missing a movement." There were absolutely no excuses and it was taken deadly seriously.

I desperately tried everything to get back to Camp Pendleton: bus, train, even a private helicopter. Finally, I started hitchhiking the 300-odd miles left to the deployment center for processing. Naturally, I was a dollar short and an hour late. My outfit had already left. I was condemned and resigned to my fate with a personal firing squad in less than twenty-four hours. I was sure glad they had made us make out our wills before the Christmas break to save time.

I checked in and was immediately put in shackles; my status was now changed to deserter in a time of war. This was a severe military matter, but I had convinced myself that some other unlucky turd had got my seat on the plane over to Viet Nam and I would go on the next available space, no problem. I did not think that the Marines really wanted to make an example out of little ol' me for being a couple hours late. I was wrong, again. This was really serious stuff.

While I was chained to a brick wall in wrist and ankle shackles, I conversed with the officer of the day, who was sitting at a desk, rubber-stamping a stack of papers. The new "brown bar" second lieutenant wasn't too crazy about his assignment and was about as excited as I was about me being latched to the wall. He initiated the conversation by jokingly asking me who I had murdered and was relieved to find out I was just another tardy pimpled teenager. We continued small talk, I think mostly because he felt my captivity looked like overkill for my crime against humanity. After a few more exchanges, I found out he was from Cleveland, Ohio, and had actually distantly known my cousin while at Case Western Reserve College and that they had become closer while in Officer Candidate School (OCS) in Quantico, Virginia. Thankfully, it wasn't long before my dossier was rubber-stamped and I was on an olive-drab dark green school bus headed to 'Nam.

CHAPTER FIVE

Semper Fi or Die—Khe Sanh

Our flight from San Francisco to Anchorage actually slid in sideways on the runway upon landing. I had thought that was the worst flight of my life, until the flight that landed in Danang. We flew right over the world's busiest airport and just dove straight down in a corkscrew to miss the enemy flak. I never knew, or even considered, that a commercial Boeing 707 could dive so steeply, like a dive bomber, straight into Danang, then the world's busiest airport...with my stomach just ahead of the plane. That pilot was amazing, but I guess we were also just lucky that we were not hit by any flak or surface-to-air missiles.

It wasn't long before I was processed in and reported in to our tank battalion headquarters in Phu Bai, South Viet Nam, about halfway to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) from Danang. Once we were in the DMZ, life was all about filling sandbags with monsoon mud, battling constipation and diarrhea, and getting used to being in a war zone. Nothing actually happened for a couple of weeks, until the Tet New Year Offensive started and all hell broke loose all over the country. Then I was quickly headed to the front line in the proverbial Year of the Snake.

Everyone could tell I was a Freaking New Guy (FNG) because my utilities were still vibrant camouflage-green, my boots were still black, and I was limping and dragging one of my legs because of an anti-Hepatitis A gamma globulin horse shot painfully received between my hip and my butt. I think Nurse Hefty had used both fists to cram that spike

into my hip. I had heard her grunt just to inject the extra-thick serum, which had the consistency of napalm and Dep hair gel, but I had known better than to cry out.



"John Wayne" Vargo in front of the dirt cave Khe Sanh Feb '68

When I arrived in Hue City, which had been overrun and was under siege, one of the first things I noticed was the incredibly smelly "Perfume River," which ran through the city. It reminded me of the solid waste treatment plants back home, only a lot stronger and more toxic. The locals all had clothes lines in their backyards, but instead of freshly washed clothes hanging there, dried and rotting fish and shrimp were waving in the gentle breeze.

As I was in Hue without a tank assignment yet, I was swiftly drafted into the infantry. I found myself assigned to a hastily formed provisional infantry unit, running behind a tank and carrying a brand-new M-16 with Cosmoline still glued to the weapon, and two hand grenades hung from a just-out-of-the-box flak jacket. It was a cold, almost-freezing January on the other side of the world, and I now had my nose stuck up the dragon's ass. It was a fifty-two–ton, thirteen foot- high monster whose exhaust of 750-horsepower belched out diesel fumes at an enormous rate, while it intermittently hurled 3'6" rounds onto a stubbornly entrenched opponent. I finally evaded the tank's ear-blistering, unannounced explosions and constant machine-gun chattering when a group of us switched dragons for the back of a "zippo" flame tank, which also added the smell of napalm and burning flesh to the stench covering the area. I ran over pools of blood and wondered whose body parts had been scattered around us as we made street-by-street advances.

The central business district of Hue City had been recently overtaken by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) in the first major Tet Offensive of January 1968 and the first siege of the war. We could see the enemy flags fluttering in the wind but could not rout the embedded troops in the citadel because we were not permitted to carpet bomb or fire indiscriminately on the ancient city, for political reasons, so we just went from street to street, firing point-blank at targets. But politics surely did not stop the enemy from shelling and sniping at us anywhere and everywhere. As we recovered precious military real estate in the middle of the antiquated metropolis, major enemy offensives broke out all over South Viet Nam. Tanks became hot-ticket targets in which crewmen were dropping like flies, but I immediately volunteered for a tank for the protection I thought it would afford me. I would soon find out that, once again, I was wrong.

For my next thrilling military flight with my stomach shoved up into my Adam's apple, I was choppered into Khe Sanh, next to the DMZ, via a couple days at Camp J.J. Carroll. About twenty-five of us were packed in like cattle aboard a CH-46 Sea Knight chopper, or "Phrog."We hovered in the cloudy fog that hung over the plateau for what seemed like an eternity. Finally, the back loading ramp magically opened and a mist drifted in and out, much like our guarded and shallow breathing. There were slowly blinking red lights behind the crew cabin, warning us of the impending danger at hand.

The pilot shut off the engines, and there wasn't a sound except the wind whistling through the cabin and our hearts pounding. We hit the ground and did a dead-cat bounce, and the jet engine turbines on the CH-46 screamed back to life louder than the mortars, artillery, and rockets that were pouring in underneath us and all around us. Adding to the confusion was a blaring bullhorn yelling for everyone to depart orderly but quickly. Was he freaking kidding? It was now every man (and boy) for himself. After the initial recoil from the jets being restarted, the chopper's front end lifted, and all of us newbies fell out on top of one another, like Yahtzee dice on a table. The chopper hit its afterburners and was

gone in an instant, leaving us to fend for ourselves.

I left my duffel bag, along with my lunch, right there on the tarmac, somewhere a couple of miles from North Viet Nam. I didn't ask questions, instinctively diving into the first trench and bunker I could find. The walls were corrugated metal, damp from constant moisture; the lights inside flickered as the gas generators strained to keep up with the electrical demands of war. The odor reminded me of a cross between my high school biology lab and the French Quarter in New Orleans—very noxious and damp, with 99% humidity.

The two punch-drunk ghouls inside the bunker were dressed in half civilian attire, with no visible rank, insignia, or identifying service patch but were calm as cucumbers and passing a joint between them. I smoked cigarettes just like all Marines but had never smoked marijuana. If those ghouls had passed it to me, I would have sucked that whole joint down in one drag to calm my totally shattered nerves. Once the shelling abated and I had started to collect my wits, one of them chucked a packet of C-ration (C-rat) toilet paper at me, ostensibly to clean myself up, then starting laughing profusely. The other said, "Welcome to hell!"

As I hastily left the bunker, I turned and saw a sign that read:

Graves Registration Please take a number.
You might be next!

Already moving into action, several men were dragging the most recent screaming wounded and the dead, either to graves or Charlie Med, the hospital in another dirt bunker. Some of the guys I had just been on the chopper with were, just that quickly, casualties of war. This was the first time I had ever heard human beings screaming in agony, and it all seemed like a surrealistic dream, far from the life-sized Marine posters in the post office at home.

On or near the tarmac were Corpsmen and Army medics dragging bodies onto stretchers and carrying them toward Charlie Med. Behind them were another group of troops quickly repairing the rocket-laden blast holes in the twisted metal tarmac. It all looked methodical, choreographed, and rehearsed. These were the Navy "Seabees" (Construction Battalion, or CBs), and these were absolutely some of the bravest men I have ever seen. They never knew when one rocket or artillery attack would end and another would start but would do their jobs, riding forklifts and Caterpillars with their unit's flags proudly flying aloft, like it was an ordinary day at the job site back home.

One guy I saw had a red target painted on the back of his flak jacket and was running around, yelling at the adjacent mountain peaks. As I looked out from my hiding place in a trench alongside the runway, standing in ankle-deep water with baby rats paddling, bobbing, and floating all around me, I heard the NVA snipers pinging at the scurrying and zigzagging Seabees. My bladder was full, and my urinary tract was burning. There was no sign for a "head" or anywhere else to piss, and I didn't know whether to let it go in the trench, find a nonexistent tree, or run around to try to find a damn head somewhere. This was definitely something they had not taught us in boot camp, infantry training, or my specialized training, tank school.

Khe Sanh, like all military encampments, was divided into different colored sections so dumb-asses and FNGs like me would know where they were going: North was blue, gray was east, and red was west. But I didn't know where I was going. If someone back at Camp Carroll had told me where to go when I got here, I sure as hell could not remember at this point. I just ran perpendicular to the arc of those freaking missiles, and I didn't give a damn which sector I was running to, only what I was running from.

I must have missed the class back in basic training when they had discussed the rockets, missiles, artillery, and mortars now raining down on me. Or when they had described the divisions of tens of thousands of battle-trained and hard-core equipped enemy called the NVA regulars assembling as close as one hundred meters outside our perimeter, ready to close-in and lock horns with us.
Later in the siege, it would be confirmed that several Russian tanks and aircraft had been spotted adjacent to the base. That's when the scuttlebutt began that President Johnson was arguing with some of the Joint Chiefs of Staff about having the nuclear option, just in case. I just never thought of myself as an option or a just in- case.

But on my first day in Khe Sanh, I was sprinting blindly, clutching my duffel bag in front of me, when suddenly I felt something hit the duffel bag...hard. I felt like I was Jerry Ellis holding a punching bag when Mohammad Ali let loose with his best punch to my solar plexus. There was an explosion that I never heard, and amazingly, it probably had my name written on it by some gook on a Co Roc mountainside just inside Laos. The round hit so close in front of me that I ran right into the hole in the ground that it had just created. Thankfully, the only wound I had was to my pride. When I dropped my duffel bag, I saw it was shredded like a gutted stuffed animal, and everything was falling out of it, including my skivvies. I picked all my stuff up out of the mud with both arms and ran away as fast as I could, cradling the remains of my bag like a thirty-pound unwanted tumor. There would be no Red Badge of Courage, no Purple Heart, and no body bag for me on this day...but the war wasn't over yet. For me, it had just begun.

"They are in front of us, behind us, and we are flanked on both sides by an enemy that outnumbers us 29:1. They can't get away from us now!"

Lieutenant General Lewis B.
"Chesty" Puller, USMC

The Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) was about the size of one of the new super regional malls that were springing up back home from coast to coast, which usually had four national anchor tenants. I figured I ran past Foley's, Sears, Montgomery Ward, and J.C. Penney, then all the way out to the last car in the parking lot before I asked directions while the rocket attack abated and my bladder trouble began again. But I decided it was all just burning fear and just another short squirt away.

I ambled all the way back to the west end of the base, the gray sector, where the tank park was located. I got there just as another barrage started up again, and I ran to the tank command post, which was designated by three large, empty ammo boxes covered with a poncho. A haphazardly etched sign read "Bravo Company, 3rd Platoon, Third Tank Battalion." The first thing I noticed was that the tanks were right in the line of fire to those screaming and screeching rounds flying through the air, and the dirt and metal each explosion produced. I was in a mountainside monsoon of light rain and heavy artillery fire with a large red and-white bulls-eye suspended over our position.

I had arrived on a Sunday, without going to church, and wondered if I was going to hell or if I was already standing in it. A Gunnery Sergeant (Gunny) took my orders and in return gave me three boxes of C-rats. Instead of the delectable Spaghetti and Meatballs or Beans and Wieners, I got Ham and Mothers (lima beans), Ham and Mothers, and one more Ham and Mothers. Before I was assigned a tank, I was shown an underground bunker and an elevated shelf nearest the ceiling that was my intended sleeping spot.

I thought my day had already been a nightmare, but didn't know the nightmare had only just started. These were bunker's hours, not banker's hours. I was lying on my back with my nose a little less than an inch from a wood beam that I could barely see. The only light was a flickering diesel lamp set up in the middle of a dozen guys coming and going 24/7 from duty on the perimeter of the base. As there were only three tanks to guard an airstrip and an entire command post (CP), they were always busy in direct-fire support of a very aggressive opponent always watching, always probing.

I clutched the three cardboard boxes of C-rations next to me while the night's barrage of screeching missiles landed over and under our position, when the acid burning in my stomach kicked in. In between the offensive and defensive volleys of artillery, the only sound we heard was of the squealing rats scurrying on the beams above us, when someone in the dark told me to keep my .45 ready. "Ready for what?" I wondered.

Then all was quiet...I thought everybody including the rats had left the bunker, but as I felt a hundred eyes looking at me, I decided this was no Disney movie. In the next instant, I heard a pistol shot and saw a muzzle flash not but a few feet from me, and a dead rat the size of a large cat and his offals landed on my chest and face. I was so close to the flash that I got face and neck burns from the gunpowder. Whatever I felt that was wet, I did not want to know. My first tank commander (TC) had just shot at point-blank range the platoon mascot that had been eyeballing both my C-rats and me. When

the sergeant stepped out of his umbrage, he thought he was cute by blowing the smoke off the barrel of his .45. He jerked his head quickly to the right and said in his drill-instructor-imitation voice, "Topside, Private," for guard duty on the perimeter, I ascertained.

When I saw Gunny Martin again a day or so later, my stomach was growling, with each rumble greater than the previous pang, blaring for some meager degree of nutrition. I asked him when he was going to pass out another round of boxes. I also told him I wasn't too keen on the chef's special of ham and lima beans but would take them if he didn't have anything else. He looked miffed, laughed, and asked me if I had already eaten them all. I told him, "Yes, yesterday, Gunny—breakfast, lunch, and dinner."

He shot back, "Yeah, but they were for Monday, Wednesday, and Friday," and with a shit-eating grin, he said, "Check back with me next Sunday, Private!" It was a very long and very hungry week.

In January 1968, Khe Sanh was an unheard-of outpost, with an airfield defended by a couple of thousand Marines of the 26th Regiment. Shortly after I arrived there, my brother, Mark, the seminarian, mailed me a copy of Bernard Fall's *Hell in a Very Small Place*. Ironically, included with it was a note asking me if I knew where Khe Sanh was. In his note he told me that Jeanne Dixon, a noted prophetess and author of *A Gift of Prophecy*, had correctly foretold and warned then President Kennedy of his impending assassination. Mark further wrote that Ms. Dixon had also predicted that U.S. Marines would be overrun at Khe Sanh...exactly where I was standing. In Fall's book he gave a chronology of how the French had been driven out of Viet Nam after they had been slaughtered and almost annihilated at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. There was such similarity between the enemy garrisons at Dien Bien Phu and Khe Sanh, they were almost indistinguishable. The same General, Nguyen Van Giap, was also in charge of Viet Nam's battle plan for Khe Sanh, and now a lot wiser on how to defeat his second world-class superpower.

I don't think I had even finished reading the first chapter before a friend of mine named Dale Sandifer stuck his nose into the back cover and immediately ascertained these similarities. He was an incessant reader who quickly wanted me to tear the book in half so he could read it at the same time so we could exchange each other's halves later. Before we could do that, however, the scuttlebutt about my book had spread so quickly that in no time, I was sent to the CP bunker and was standing tall in front of "the Man," who asked if he could borrow the book. Who was I, a private, to say no?

The battle for the hills surrounding Khe Sanh started before the Tet Offensive or my second set of back-to-back offensive siege of Hue City and defensive siege at hand. The hills surrounding Khe Sanh were named 1015, 950, 861, 881 North, 881 South, and 64, based on their corresponding elevation in meters. They were called hills but were really jagged mountain peaks with intermittent jungles surrounding them.

In the hills surrounding the "plateau of death," the mist and the clouds hung around the tops like doughnuts on sticks. We only had five tanks at Khe Sanh, three in the main compound and two on Hill 64, the "Rock Quarry," which was where I would be stationed soon. The lack of tanks had occurred because the NVA had "eliminated" the mountain road bridges and then methodically surrounded us with a couple divisions of troops and a couple more divisions (approximately four units of 11,000 men each against our 4,000 total troops) in reserve. The siege was on, and we had to work with what we had.

I remember discussing the battle tactics with a couple of my buddies, Bob Dougherty and Joe Harrigan, not long after and asking, "If you were the North Vietnamese general in charge, where would you attack next?"

They both replied, "Well, the lowest hill, surely not the highest."

We all felt sick as I replied, "Yep, that's what I figured as well."

We then ascertained very quickly that we had better get ready. We were on Hill 64, the lowest and the most vulnerable of the hills.

A few days later in early February 1968, we were hit hard and partially overrun on Hill 64, in what

would turn out to be one of the heaviest single days of fighting in the heaviest battle engagement of the war. We spotted different colored sparkling flares and quickly used one of our tank's radios to call the CP and determine the meaning of the different colors, as this was no birthday party. Next, I distinctly heard the NVA bugles over our wire in the background and knew exactly what they meant. As a young man I had played trumpet in the band, but in the Scouts I had blown a bugle. I could "Name that Gook Song" in three notes, because I knew exactly what those staccato notes and that crescendo meant in any language—*CHARGE!*

We had been assigned and attached to the First Battalion Ninth Marine Regiment, 1/9, respectfully and reverently nicknamed the Walking Dead because of the fierce fighting they had encountered and the number of casualties they had taken. We were constantly at point-blank range and always expected any moment that the NVA's sapper squads and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) units would wipe out our two tanks. But we held our line that day and throughout the siege and never were completely overrun like they had been on other hills such as 881and 861, or like the French at Dien Bien Phu.
The commanding officer, Colonel John F. Mitchell, later wrote about that day:

"The total KIA of NVA soldiers exceeded 150 on this day. The 1/9 battalion received over 350 rounds of enemy supporting arms fire in their [our] command perimeter."

In the two tanks on the Rock Quarry, I was a gunner and a loader. That night, I can remember a senior infantry officer who stuck his head into the turret and said, "Good shooting, boys. Change your skivvies and carry on."

He didn't know how right he was, because I again had bladder trouble. But we would not have to worry about changing skivvies much after that, because, one by one, all our underwear would drop out our trouser legs after having rotted off during bouts of diarrhea and constipation and from us not having taken our trousers or boots off for weeks on end.

BETWEEN ROCKETS AND A HARDER PLACE

After I had been at the Rock Quarry for about two weeks, I was continuously on shitter duty, even after that job should have been rotated, but I acquiesced to get along with living in the dirt cave with several other grungy tankers. I really didn't like the cave for three reasons: the dirt was always lightly falling from the ceiling, which told me it could cave in by itself or with an explosion above; no one could stand up in the cave, especially me; and the cave was on the direct arc path of the incoming rockets, mortars, and artillery from Co Roc, Laos. I



TWO HARD CORPS MARINE BATTLE TANKS, KHE SANH, ROCK QUARRY, DMZ

didn't feel like dying crushed below a mountain of dirt. The other side of the Rock Quarry was just opposite the arc of incoming missiles, and it was all rock. Other tankers had earlier attempted to dig a cave on the other side with several types of explosives, but to no avail.

I thought otherwise sleeping under a probable mudslide or cave-in was not in my best interest and I started digging into the rock side by hand, using a tank chisel and an eight-pound sledgehammer. To protect the blisters on my left hand, I would wrap the hand with grungy rags, which were really just old rotted skivvies and T-shirts too dirty to wear that could stand up on their own as if they were heavily starched. I tried chiseling with the hammer in my left hand, but that beat my knuckles up worse than the blisters, so I wrapped the skivvies around my left palm and continued banging with my right hand.

After about three to four weeks and after developing new blisters underneath all the calluses, I was able

to curl up in a ball and sleep in a fetal position in my newly cut rock womb, uninterrupted save for guard duty. After another couple weeks of chiseling, I was able to almost stretch out my legs without my final teenage growing cramps. Next in my cave, I made a dissecting right turn so a direct explosion outside the cave would not have an effect inside; I didn't worry about my ears at the time.

Another couple weeks went by, by which time I had made a left-hand turn in the mountainous rock and had a descending Z-type configuration. It was at about this time that the other seven tankers on the Quarry also became convinced that the rock side meant a better chance of survival from the rockets and missiles. The first person to ask about joining me in my cave was Dale Sandifer, so I told him we would both dig until we could stretch out. Before Dale was finished with his part of the cave, Larry Basco pronounced, "Three digging is better than two," while jokingly calling me Huckleberry.

About the time Larry came on board, the other tank crewmen decided to dig their own caves as well. As it turned out, before we left the Rock Quarry and our rock caves, the dirt side, which we had by then converted to munitions storage, got hit, and the entrance totally collapsed on top of where we would have been.

When we were digging, the clanging went on twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. What we did not know at the time was that the North Vietnamese were also digging, but more rapidly, in the soft dirt that led up to our defensive lines and perimeter. The perimeter had a triple strand of razor -sharp concertina wire, which we knew would only slow them down in an attack because they had offensive sapper units and RPG battalions that could melt through our defensive positions like a hot knife through butter.

"We've gotta get out of this place If it's the last thing we ever do.
We've gotta get out of this place.
Girl, there's a better life for me and you."

Eric Burdon & the Animals

In spite of the dire situation we were in, life in and around the cave was somewhat tolerable, and the camaraderie almost reminded me of being in the Boy Scouts and the Explorers, the difference being that the worst thing that happened in the Scouts was that you could easily get popped with a wet towel on your bare butt. At Khe Sanh you could get your ass kicked or, worse, die.

At night in our Rock Quarry caves, we would listen to Hanoi Hannah on a transistor radio and see by the light of the homemade, diesel-burning lanterns made from C-ration cans. Because we had no ventilation shaft or any way of circulating the oily smelling air from the diesel fumes, and because we had to cover the cave entrances with ponchos because of the blackout, we were always suffocating in greasy soot. After about an hour of diesel light we would have to blow out the lamp, our faces black with soot, and we spit out black balls of oil crud against glistening shrimp-colored granite walls and a black, greasy ceiling.

We had to stand guard every night, with a three-hour shift per man. Guard level was at a minimum of 25% the majority of the time: 25% equaled one man standing guard, 50% was two men, and so on. We were at 50%, 75%, and, at least once a week, 100%, as the NVA were assembling and a close-in attack was imminent, again.

Besides invaluable sleep, water and food were the other most precious commodities. We could forget about ice or toothbrushes. Virtually nonexistent beer went for $5 per can. The treasured hard liquor was $100 a bottle, but for a twelve-bottle discount, the Air Force boys would give us a bargain deal at $1,000 per case. They bought it tax-free in Thailand for $2.40 per bottle—nice guys, what a bargain. It would be a year before we gave those rear-echelon pricks some inter-military branch payback, when we charged them equally exorbitant prices for NVA weapons and stash that we brought back from enemy arms caches out in the field. The Air Force guys probably took the weapons home to make themselves into frontline war heroes instead of flying pogues.

Before I hit 'Nam I had been about 175 pounds having been chiseled by Marine Corps boot camp, but I would end up dropping about fifty pounds at the Rock Quarry over the next couple of months. The more I cut that rock, the more weight I would lose,

and the whole time I was chiseling my personal cave, I was always wondering if I was digging own grave.

PURPLE HAZE

It was at the Rock Quarry in late March 1968 that I received my first of several wounds. There was always so much metal flying and lying around that we could never tell if we were running over rocks or rocket parts. If we were fairly far away from our tank or cave, we had to hustle at double-time, which *Time* magazine dubbed the "Khe Sanh shuffle." I constantly worried about breaking an ankle or a leg from hitting the jagged metal that protruded up from the ground. It was during one of the hundreds of barrages, while I was running to my tank, that I was caught between two mortar blasts that came in right on top of me. As the first explosion hit, I ducked so fast, my helmet came off. When I tried to scoop my helmet up like a fumbled football, the next explosion tore at the left side of my head. As I realized what had just happened, I also discovered that my arms and face were sitting atop burning, hot metal.

I quickly saw other boys hitting the deck and chewing rocks out of fear; the gooks had our exact coordinates and were dropping rounds in on us as fast as they could load. They were "firing for effect," and we were in their crosshairs...sitting ducks.

Larry Basco saw me get hit and flew out of our cave as the cinders were still pelting down from the blast. He grabbed me by the scruff of my neck and the back side of my flak jacket and pulled me backwards into the cave. Although very skinny, I was still heavy. But he was strong, and he pulled me into the cave as I lost consciousness. Both of us wound up in shock: I from my wound and Larry from the sight of all the blood. What I was really puzzled at was that it didn't hurt, not like I had thought it would. The concussion from the blast had blown me up against the tank and scared the living shit out of me.

I can remember screaming at Larry, asking him, "How much of my brains are left?" as I was afraid to feel the left side of my head.

I reached down and pulled out of my right hand a piece of hot, jagged metal that was burning like hell. At the same time I had been hit, our friend Gunz (Ralph Gonzales) had almost lost his right hand when it was nearly severed by a mortar round, and several more grunts had also been wounded and were screaming in pain.

In all the confusion, I can't remember who started yelling first, Larry or me, but we both screamed, "Medic!" until reality set in that Army medics were not in the Marine Corps, only Navy corpsmen were. The Marine Corps does not have corpsmen, chaplains, or anyone else who cannot pick up a weapon and fight. I don't know what hit us both so funny just then, but Larry and I both began to laugh hysterically. I touched my wound for the first time to see what was left of my head. Larry urged me not to touch anything, but I couldn't resist, as the blood had now filled my left eye. I decided to take a chance. It wasn't as bad as I had thought, but my head had still been split open like a coconut.

Gunz and I and a couple other wounded grunts were stacked on a mechanized flatbed infantry mule and rushed to Charlie Med, the base hospital across no man's land, and then into the CP. I think I was more in shock than hurt, so I really felt for the other Marines I knew were worse off than either Gunz or me. Because of the number of dead and wounded coming in, chaos was the flavor du jour. Someone put a tag on my blouse and scribbled something on it. Gunz and I stayed overnight in Charlie Med, listening to the screaming and puking going on all around us. Everyone knew that no matter how bad the wounds were, no one, not even the dead, could be medevaced, as the NVA gunners were blasting right out of the air anything and everything that could fly.

Gunz and I were reported as missing in action (MIA) because we were not in either tank park, in the CP, or at the Rock Quarry on our tanks. I still believe that Larry Basco should have been honored for his bravery and that because of him I am still here today to write this. His actions saved Gunz and me from further wounds and probably from dying.

While all this was going on, there was no Jimi Hendrix music in the background; Robert Duval was not surfing on the Rao Quan River; and Oliver Stone was not hanging out of a Hollywood chopper, yelling, "Cut!" This was the real deal. Our guys were being cut down, dismembered, and bleeding to

death in the ugliest and most grotesque ways that you can see, hear, smell, taste, feel, or imagine.

As the brutal days and long, eerie nights of the siege passed slowly by, we were totally focused on what the next day was going to bring, and we were becoming ever grungier from the elements.

We had to constantly clean our tank weaponry with petrochemical products, and our clothes were covered with months' worth of oil, dirt, grease, and grime. While at Camp Carroll, I developed a rash and it began producing welts and bumps all over my body. I recall they burned and itched ferociously but would not break. When I went to a field hospital, the corpsman covered almost my entire body with calamine lotion and told me to return later. When the boils still did not break, I was later medevaced, and doctors injected about 100 of the boils on the back side of my body with cortisone. This procedure was extremely painful; I bit down hard on the clean rag stuffed in my mouth. I was asked to return two days later, and the process was repeated on my front side.

As I moved naturally in the normal process of my duties, the boils began to break. Dark purple blood and yellow pus was secreted from approximately 200 open wounds over my entire body, all in different stages of bursting, oozing, and scabbing. After each session of injections and breaking, instead of being wrapped with medicinal bandages, the open boils were sprayed from above with a good concentration of Agent Orange (at Khe Sanh, 43,705 gallons were sprayed, and the Rockpile, 110,050 gallons. This process was repeated several times over the next couple of weeks and months, with less and less cortisone being injected each time. The doctors and corpsmen were astonished that I voluntarily returned to receive this kind of painful treatment, but I just thought of the alternative—infection.

After the war, I would continue to have large grape- or half-golf-ball–sized boils under my armpits that leaked pus and dark blood intermittently. This continued for nine consecutive years, until I finally sought treatment at a private dermatologist in Houston.

During both my combat tours I was out in the field for fourteen major operations, constantly exposed to the dirt, rain, humidity, sun, and heat of the Asian outdoor environment for months at a time without a shower, and I had direct exposure to a plethora of chemical agents.

Sometime during April 1968, my buddy Dale and I had the great idea to take a shower in the next steady rain that came by. After about three or four months of not showering, we thought it would be great to get the grunge off. While we were ferociously scrubbing and withering in the cold rain, Dale reached into one of the storage containers on the tank's fenders and pulled out a wire brush to scrub himself, and we both busted out laughing.

But in the irony of war, at that same moment, on the knoll behind us, the grunts were placing several of their buddies who been killed in the previous night's firefight onto a large net that was hanging from a line attached to a Sea Knight chopper hovering overhead. When we looked up and saw it, we quickly found it petty to worry about not having had a shower for so long.

With that, our moment of lightheartedness ended and we both quickly hustled to get the soap off and get dressed as the rain subsided. As we were trying to put our other dirty, but at least cleaner, clothes on, the chopper took off over us with its lifeless cargo. As we looked up, all we saw were arms and legs protruding from the spinning cargo netting, and as we watched, we were doused with splatters of red and black blood.

About the same time, a couple hundred meters behind us and outside of our lines, an F-4 Phantom was splashing napalm over enemy trenches, and my conscious thoughts were drowned out by the roar of afterburners and the agonizing screams of my dying enemies. This is the reality of war—death and payback.

In another mortar attack, our water buffalo on wheels, the main source of water for all of us on the hill, was hit as well, so from then on, water was rationed. It is no wonder that forty years later I am still rat-holing water for insurance, just in case. In one of the subsequent attacks, enemy artillerymen hit our ammo dump, taking it out, along with most of our tank rounds. Before long, everything was rationed, except for us Marines.

Because we had lost our platoon barber to a rocket, our hair was almost civilian like once again. However, the body lice were plentiful and it was hard to find privacy to shave under the arms and the hairy parts of the body they could latch on to.

The insects in Viet Nam were large, but the rats were humongous, and as someone said, they were faster at opening a C-ration can than a hungry



Two tankers in front of a Rock Quarry cave.

gunny. The rat population was reported to be well over a million, and they would feed on the dead and wounded, regardless of which side they were on. Rat bites were prevalent, so much so that we shot them regularly. But, the word was passed to stop shooting with our pistols, because some grunt had put a bead on a speedy Gonzales and shot his sergeant in the ankle.

Occasionally, one of the tankers would go down from the Quarry for tank supplies and other sundry items like popcorn. The Quarry was sixty-four meters higher than the main CP (hence its official designation, Hill 64) and about the longest quarter of a mile I have ever carried anything. When exchanging and rolling a 300-pound tank wheel that distance, it was a challenge not to dump it over by going too fast on the way down, but it was the trip coming back up that was a real bitch.

One such trip, I'll never forget. I had gotten delayed in leaving the CP for another quarter-mile race up the hill. It seemed like a lifetime before, but it had been only seven months earlier that I had held a trophy in the air after winning the Top Competition Eliminator at the one-quarter-mile drag strip back in Dickenson, Texas. In this race from the CP, I took off rolling one newer 300-pound tank wheel, and my trophy, if I made it, would be the three cans of traded popping corn stuffed into my pockets. Once I was outside the CP, the concertina wire was closed behind me and I was on my own. I was having difficulty rolling the tank wheel, which made my progress slower than I really wanted. But because of the constant barrage of rockets flying overhead and the snipers' pings, I kept moving and rolling that damn wheel as fast as I could.

It was nearly dark by this time, and nighttime always came ultra fast during this, the monsoon season. It got dark so quickly mainly because of the rain clouds and the setting sun, and now I found myself in no man's land in the dark. Any real estate between the CP and the Quarry was considered no man's land at night because both perimeters closed their respective ingress and egress with concertina wires and only let guys in who were coming back from duty on listening posts and had the correct password.

Because I was a tanker and not used to coming and going on foot, I had never thought to ask for the password before leaving. A light rain had now turned into a heavy downpour, and I tried to pump the wheel over my head. When I had been pumping iron as a civilian, I had made the "300 Club" by bench-pressing the "big three," but this awkward, muddy tank wheel was now my grounded 300-pound albatross. When I tried to roll it, the wheel jumped over the ruts in the road one way and then the other, and I had secret thoughts about leaving it and running up the hill without it or a password. By now the mud trench was a running river of red, muddy clay water.

Every night was a complete blackout for both sides, but occasionally we could see a flicker of light on our side as well as theirs. This night I saw no light anywhere. As I progressed up the hill, the thought crossed my mind that I could very easily be shot by one of my own infantry guys or my brother tankers.

Or, even worse, I could run into the concertina wire or walk into our minefield. The rockets and mortars were still intermittently dropping in the rain, and the visibility was almost nil, and I walked smack-dab into an infantry mule.

An infantry mule is like a large, elevated flatbed go-kart with a steering wheel protruding above the bed. I thought this was a good chance for me to put that damn wheel on that mule and get a free ride up the rest of the hill. I was wrong; the driver was dead and in the ditch. Worse than that, a couple of minutes later, I heard some Vietnamese men yelling to one another in the rain. I didn't know if they had seen me or not, nor which side of the DMZ they came from, ours or theirs, but I didn't care. I slid into the muddy, watery ditch with the dead mule driver and partially covered myself with the wheel and a lot of mud.

I was shaking like I had palsy in a cold winter rain, with only a pistol and a tank wheel. Whoever they were, they passed on by like thieves in the night while I continued to shake, and I was not going to ask them any questions. Whether they were friendly ARVNs or enemy PAVNs, the odds were 50-50, and I wasn't taking any chances announcing that I was an American. They could have been North, headed South or South, headed North. I didn't care, I just knew that I was on the DMZ between the two, and I briefly thought about my 20th birthday, which had just blown by without any ice cream, cake, or candles.

I stayed frozen in that watery ditch, with that damn tank wheel and the stiff, dead driver next to me, until morning light. I thought it would be safer to stay there till first light, safely hidden, rather than getting shot or stepping on a landmine. It turned out that my buddies at the Quarry had covered for me, thinking I was still at the CP and the CP had thought I was back at the Quarry. I finally accomplished my "short" mission that morning, when I not only rolled that freaking wheel up the hill and into the Quarry, but still had one of the popcorn cans left to share with the guys.

ATOMIC BOMBS AWAY

The siege of Khe Sanh was a never-ending cascade of bombs, artillery shells, and mortars from both sides. The amount of munitions expended during the siege at Khe Sanh is staggering. It is estimated that the North Vietnamese fired over 40,000 rocket, artillery, and mortar shells on American positions during the Khe Sanh combat phase, which were responsible for a large percentage of the American and allied casualties.

Then there were the munitions we fired at them. Our artillery fired back around the clock, 24/7, from Camp Carroll. The big guns fired around the perimeter an estimated total of around 150,000 rounds into NVA positions from inside the base during the siege. Also were the nonstop sorties from carrier-based A-4 Intruders, and the DaNang-based F-4 Phantom tactical aircraft.

Between March 22nd and 23rd 1968, the NVA decided they had a real treat for us and unleashed the mother of all artillery and mortar attacks. During a ten hour period, a record 1,109 rounds were unleashed and fired on KSCB, for an average of more than 100 incoming rounds per hour.

But the granddaddy of them all were our B-52 Arc Light raids dropping racks of 2,000-pound bombs, each one of which left a crater big enough for a tank or two. According to John Prados and Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe in the book *Valley of Decision: The Siege of Khe Sanh*, "That amounted to almost 1,300 tons of bombs around Khe Sanh, the equivalent of a 1.3 kiloton nuclear weapon, every one of the 77-day siege."

It has also been said that "All the bombs hit their intended target 100% of the time, because they all hit the ground." While we were in our cave during the arc light raids, the bombs were so close that we were popped around in that cave like the corn popped to make our popcorn.

The final push to relieve us and the besieged 26th Marines was named Operation Pegasus. The Army, headed by the 1st Air Calvary, had been staging with the 1st Marines at Ca Lu and arrived at Khe Sanh on April 1, 1968. By the end of that month, the NVA had finally decided they'd had enough of this direct confrontation and would take their four divisions, or what was left of them, to the east along the DMZ. We would now have a great chess move,

in that we would be going from a defensive to an offensive position and would be going from the prey to the predator.

Oddly, the first thing a supper gaggle of Army choppers brought in to us was boxes of apples and oranges. We thought this was all too funny but welcomed the fresh fruit that we had not seen in many, many months. Upon seeing the crates of fruit, I immediately remembered from my health class in high school that scurvy was a result of a vitamin deficiency, and I had to chuckle. When it was our turn to take our tank from our Rock Quarry nook down to the CP, we dismounted and ran to the choppers, where we were given a selection of a couple of apples or oranges. The guy in front of me bit deeply into his apple and left half his teeth in it, spitting out the other teeth and dripping blood. After seeing this, when my turn came, I told the guy passing the fruit out to give me two soft oranges. I savored them slowly, slice by slice, as my gums were mushy and my teeth were wobbly. It had been months since I had last seen my toothbrush, which we had used for cleaning weapons.



Robert M. "Satch" Walkley (KIA) and Dale Sandifer eating a box of precious popcorn, the spoils of war.

PRESIDENTIAL RECOGNITION

The 26th Marine Regiment had been reinforced by elements of the 9th Marine Regiment, and, to a lesser degree, various elements from the Army, Air Force, and Navy personnel, and our five tanks from Bravo Company, Third Tank Platoon. Of the approximately 230 Marines in Tanks alone, there were almost one hundred medals awarded for heroism, from Purple Hearts upwards, including Bronze Stars, Silver Stars, and Navy Crosses.

The twenty-plus tankers who were at the siege of Khe Sanh, along with the 26th Marines and attachments, were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (PUC). (See Appendix A.) During the entire Viet Nam war, only eleven PUCs were presented to Marine units—the Walking Dead were awarded two. The degree of heroism required for a PUC is the same as that which would warrant a Navy Cross to an individual, which is second only to the Congressional Medal of Honor. For the Marines who died and the several thousand more who were wounded at Khe Sanh I have always thought everyone deserved a little bit more public recognition than just the front cover of *Time* magazine. I have also always wondered what the North Vietnamese received for their part.

The total estimated number of bombs dropped, artillery fired, and mortars tubed during the siege of Khe Sanh exceeded 100,000 tons of ordnance during the seventy-seven day siege. The total number of casualties is very hard to determine for various and obvious wartime reasons, but unofficial estimates put NVA casualties at between 10,000 and 15,000 around Khe Sanh and thousands more in the surrounding trails. Official estimates of American dead at Khe Sanh are put at 730 soldiers, and counting. Because soldiers were medevaced directly from



One happy Marine!
Photo Courtesy Jack Butcher

the base to expire elsewhere, it has been difficult to account for them accurately.

Operation Pegasus would officially end the siege, but not the fighting, within the valley or the plateau. The siege of Khe Sanh officially ended on April 11, 1968, when the main supply road, Route 9, was finally cleared and the combat engineers reopened it and supplies began moving through the enemy lines again. Khe Sanh Combat Base was dismantled and officially abandoned on June 23, 1968. The battle for Khe Sanh is historically recorded as the turning point in the Viet Nam War and one of the most notable and proudest battles in Marine Corps history, but one for which both sides have since claimed victory.



B-34 IN FRONT



SOFT DIRT CAVE



KS WATER BUFFALO BEFORE ROCKET



USMC 5 VERUS ARMY 50



B-34 CONFIRMED



LOOKING DOWN TO KS CP



VARGO AIRING OUT THE CRABS



LOOKING DOWN FROM KS ROCK QUARRY



WELCOME– KS TANK CP



DIGGING IN



KHE SANH POST OFFICE



THE ONE HOLER

WEBSITE-CHATTER

A LITTLE LATE MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS IN 1967

I'm in northern California visiting my grandson, and while out on an early morning walk/run thinking about how good life has been to me, I started thinking about past Christmases-and breaking through the fog was Christmas 1967. Al White and I were in Staging Battalion in Las Pulgas, he from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Tennessee, and myself a city boy from the canyons of Manhattan. The folks around Oceanside didn't want us Marines to sit in squad bays on Christmas and bless their hearts that many of them invited us into their homes that day to enjoy a meal and good cheer.

Don't recall much about the day but Al and I enjoyed being civilians for a few hours drinking a few beers and enjoying the meal and festivities. Two weeks later we were both in Khe Sanh and some months later Al was killed during Meade River. So here I was many years later, looking forward to a second Christmas in California, remembering Al had his last one here. I thank the ordinary folks who invited us in so long ago, and said a prayer for Al.
Dave O'Toole

While on a hill at Quang Tri on guard duty, there was a "Special Services" GP tent set up, and we could hear Christmas music playing. Everyone kept up each other's spirits.
Ron 1/11

This has been in Red Clay twice, I think. I'll add it to the memories in case someone might have missed it...or for those who might enjoy seeing it again. S/F Dennis

Christmas At Khe Sanh -- 1967 was like weary travelers, who finally get to rest in the comfort of their own homes after a week of constant motion and movement with members of Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, who spread out into the foxholes and bunkers that made up the company's perimeter at Khe Sanh.

It was Christmas Eve 1967, and we had just returned from a four-day operation that had taken us west of the combat base into the rugged hills and terrain of the Khe Sanh Plateau. Despite minimal creature comforts at the base, it was a relief to know that we didn't have to hike those hills for a while. That alone was a legitimate Christmas present.

In terms of the physical setting and the expected sounds and colors, this was sure to be my bleakest holiday ever, but it remains the Christmas that stands apart from all the others, and the one which memory doesn't confuse, even four decades later.

My radioman Dave Krom and I headed straight for the position that we had constructed the previous week. Even though it was just two foxholes covered with a tent-like affair of scrounged parachute silk, we felt elated to be home for the holidays. At midday, a rumor which had been circulating since the previous morning turned into reality. An arriving helicopter touched down just outside the company area, and mailbag after mailbag began to spill out onto the ground!

The distribution of our Christmas mail, which had been held in storage for nearly two weeks, required the work of scores of Marines as there were thousands of letters and hundreds of "care packages." More than anything else, it was the sheer volume of these packages that brought a festive, holiday atmosphere to our corner of the war. Denied a chance to be in the real world, it was as if its realities had been sent to us, and each package opened helped to reduce the tensions and the fears accumulated during the previous week. By late afternoon, Kilo Company was almost giddy with child-like happiness and Christmas spirit.

Since Dave and I had not drawn any military duties that night (another present), we settled in under our parachute hooch to feast from our collective packages and to recall Christmas memories from earlier years. With our military gear relegated to the sides of the tent, the war almost seemed to have been replaced with plentiful food, laughter, and friendship. Considering how the previous four months had been spent, we had another gift to be thankful for – we were still around for the holiday while a number of our companions were not...including LCPL Mike Suniga. Sometime after midnight, wrapped in a poncho-liner and surrounded with gentle memories of home and the holidays, I drifted off to sleep thinking of my family and mostly my mother.

I was jolted out of my sleep on Christmas morning by the sound of "Jingle Bells!" Two Marine Corps helicopters with Santas painted on their sides were making repeated passes over the combat base, and loudspeakers mounted in the doors were playing one Christmas song after another. It was incredible! Within seconds, people from all over were up, out, and on their feet to cheer and to wave. The show didn't last more than 10 minutes, but it was enough to get our day off to a magical start.

At noon, a Catholic chaplain celebrated mass out in the open, and as I sauntered over, ***I was suddenly struck with the thought that 12 noon on Christmas Day in Vietnam corresponded exactly with 12 midnight on Christmas Eve in Connecticut. While I knelt with rifle in hand in the red dust of Khe Sanh, my family was kneeling in the pews of St. Mary's Church in New Haven for midnight mass. It was the only time in my 13 month tour when I knew exactly what members of my family were doing at a given moment. I used to wonder and guess at their actions and activities from time to time, but in this short period of mass and remembrance, I was linked to them with a bond that stretched over 15,000 miles. In spite of the distance, I never felt closer to any of them as I did at that moment, and the simple act of closing my eyes seemed to move me out of the war and into the comfortable surroundings of family and home.***

By nightfall, Christmas morning in Connecticut, I was strapping on the weapons and gear of an infantryman and preparing to move to an ambush position outside our protective barbed wire. Our route out the gate took us directly across the very ground where mass had been said earlier, and where, through the miracle of Christ's birth, I was permitted to stand for a moment at a window to the world.

Dennis Mannion

Dennis,
Was that Hill 918 we went up or "The Other Hill 950" to the Northeast---I remember when we were briefed, that there was a large NVA force up there---I am glade we had no contact but remember one Marine died by setting off his own bobby trap! Another Marine dropped his M-79--a round hit an "New Guy's" leg broke it--he only had three weeks in country! That same day--Lt. Chuck my F.O., went down from the heat--I had to carry his pack---then I fell down a steep cliff, lost some of my gear---lucky I landed on my a## so I did not get hurt!
Glen Prentis

Glen,
That 4 day op was out to 918. I remember the heat as well and the fact that not one NVA sighting was made by anyone in the battalion....not one but there was plenty of physical evidence that indicated many. Scary. You are correct about there being only one KIA in that battalion operation and it was Kilo's Mike Suniga. We were atop the 689 ridge line on the final night of the 4 days/nights out in the bush. He was new to Kilo (only a few weeks in) and for whatever reason, he decided to rig a grenade out in front of his foxhole as it got dark. In the early light of the next day, he moved out to retrieve it, and in the damp wet elephant grass, he dropped the thing before he could get the pin back in. I have no doubt that he was wet, sleepy, tired, nervous, chilled, shaky, etc. He reached down for it and the explosion took off both arms. Two corpsman worked like mad to save him, but the loss of blood was too much. It happened 30 feet from me -- I was mixing up some C-rat hot cocoa at the time, and in all the years I made hot chocolate for my kids, I always remembered that moment. It's crazy how that stuff stays with you.
Happy New Year
S/F Dennis

I seem to remember a few illumination flares being fired directly over the base. There was no color, just stark black and white, and no sound. It seemed everyone must have been watching in silence. I wondered what they were thinking.
Chas Rost

Dave,
thank you for posting that memory it "jogged" my memory of Christmas 1967 as well; as an eighteen (18) year-old kid fresh out of high school, boot camp and infantry training, it was my first Christmas away form home. Having arrived in Vietnam exactly one (1) week earlier. I spent Christmas 1967 @ the Phu Bai Combat Base with a Jewish Marine from New York, Lance Corporal Barry Fixler; read about it in "Semper Cool: One (1) Marine's Fond Memories of Vietnam."

That Christmas was a "watershed" in my life as I'm sure it was for many of you. For me if was a time that I established and solidified lifelong friendships; many of those men are, like Al White, gone now, but others visit this message board, some come to our reunions and I am in contact with a few more. I'll be eternally grateful for those friendships.

My God bless and keep all of our brothers, now and forever.
Semper Fidelis!!!
Larry McCartney

Christmas of 67'
I was on Hill 950 with Charlie-3. The NVA screwed with us enough to keep us on red alert all night. I remember mud everywhere, cold, it being so foggy that you were lucky to see the first row of wire;there were trip flares being set of by the wind, and the sound of Christmas music coming from a gun bunker to my left. It was one of those nights where you strained your eyes looking into the fog for the enemy and yet your mind wandered to the Christmas' you had as a child and what those at home were doing right then. Ahhh... the years fly bye and yet they don't. I can never forget that Christmas Eve.
Semper Fi
Steve Hecknauer

Big Skip Wells didn't dress up as Santa and sing Christmas carols, did he?
Nick Romentz

Down in Danang we had a little Christmas Eve party and went outside at midnight to watch the light show. On Christmas Day I hitch hiked into Freedom Hill for turkey, and myself and a few other guys commandeered a First Mar Div gunny in a mighty might filled with presents, dressed as Santa, and rode with two grunts riding shotgun wearing red elf caps. We gave the presents destined for HQ First Mar Div to the kids on Dog Patch. First time I ever saw Santa wearing a 45. Splendid Christmas all around.
Ron Main

There is no good place to be away from home at Christmas. A hill outside the perimeter of the Marine combat base at Khe Sanh in Vietnam would surely rank high among the worst. On Christmas day, 1967, Sergeant James Oyster stood duty on this far away outpost. Thankfully, it was a quiet day and hot food was brought up to the hilltop by helicopter. The same aircraft took away three friends rotating back to the states, after a sad farewell for those left behind. An airplane flew overhead playing Christmas carols. When the Marines heard "I'll Be Home for Christmas," several half-joked that they should shoot the plane down. Sergeant Oyster noted his thoughts about all this in his diary.

We've been outside all day just kind of messing around and we had a spotter plane fly over playing Christmas carols. Sitting there listening to that was kind of sad: kind of melancholy I think. You know that back home the family were opening the Christmas presents and I hoped they were thinking of me. But it is just not the same. This is not the first Christmas I have spent away from home. This is the first Christmas that I was in a position where I couldn't at least get on the phone and call them. But I'm sure they are thinking of me. I hope that they are praying for me, too.

I spent a Christmas day in Vietnam at the Phu Bai combat base with a lot more amenities than those enjoyed by Sgt. Oyster. On Christmas day now, I am surrounded by friends and family with all the comforts of home. For all of us in safe and secure places, it is a time to remember those who are not so blessed. At this moment there are men and women on alert at lonely outposts far from home. Some are in danger. All are lonely. All are missing their families and loved ones. They deserve our thoughts and prayers.

The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." **~Luke 2:10-14**

(This story is a daily devotional from the soon-to-be published *Battlefields & Blessings: Stories of Faith and Courage from the Vietnam War.*)
B. LARKIN SPIVEY

ALL

Betty and I have been listening to a stack of oral interviews taped in 1968 concerning the siege of Khe Sanh. Cooks, truck drivers, Major Generals, Privates, ammo techs, armorers, artillery gunners, forward observers, grunts, Captains, Lance Corporals, intelligence staff, First Sergeants, Second Lieutenants, mortarmen, M-79 men, machine gunners, Corpsmen, radio operators, Lieutenant Colonels, and recon marines.

Listening to those voices from forty-two years past I ponder what they tell me now. I lived my own personal hell through the blasts and flashes, the shuddering felt through my own two jungle-booted feet anchored to the damp bottom of the trench, but after hearing these chilling tales, I realize there was more than one way to endure the siege. Trying to make coffee and pastries for the officers at Regiment while incoming pounded around you, wrecking your gas ranges. Trying to pull mortar rounds out of the ammo pit while incoming slammed into the adjacent ground, threatening to light up the whole ammo dump. Trying to call in artillery while bullets snapped by the side of your head. Trying to keep tires fixed after shrapnel has shredded them. Keeping the undetonated incoming enemy rounds cleaned out of the gun pits so your guys could shoot your big stuff back at the bad guys.

Betty and I listened to rationales for tactics, strategies, not saving this patrol, that position, why it was okay for some men to die for the greater good. Like those recon patrols that ran out from Khe Sanh before the siege began. Eight-man teams, no helmets, light weapons, a radio, a lot of tools to signal someone if you were in trouble. Out to our bastion on 881 South then into the jungle, maybe by chopper, maybe in a larger patrol of grunts , maybe by sneaking out at night, onto a trail through the head-high jungle grass that loved to find exposed flesh and slice, slice, slice.

A testy business, recon, running into large groups of the enemy and having to try and hide, or run away, getting shot in the back, leaving comrades' bodies behind for another day (that's a bitter salt tablet to bite into), sitting in tight 360s back to back to back to back firing away at the onrushing North Vietnamese soldiers intent on murdering you.

We ventured up to the spiny ridge on 881North (not 881 South where we lived in muddy bunkers, but 881 North, which was never occupied by the Marines) a number of times in my tour. I always seemed to be on point as we approached, the refuse of the big battle fought there in May 1967 evident. Maws of shell holes and bomb craters, the bush stunted. Snaggle-toothed trees on top of the ridge which reminded me of a razorback the way it cut at right angles to our search and destroy missions. On the demon's spine, I knew, knew, knew, Charlie the Killer hid there, his machine guns, his AK 47s aimed right at my Adam's apple. I could feel it. But no, they never raked us with enfilade fire. They stayed secluded in their spider holes like tarantulas, waiting.

The sky was usually dotted with clouds and the place smelled of mud and mold and damp. A lot of men died on 881 North and the adjacent hills and valleys. I just patrolled around it, over it, climbed it, set up perimeters on it, ate beefsteak and potatoes cooked over a heat tab on it. Smoked Lucky Strikes and Camels and maybe Pall Malls on it. Got soaked.

The last time I was up there was on a patrol on Christmas Eve, 1967. The day started foggy but broke clear. We patrolled up 881 North, down the backside and in the direction of the DMZ. I drank water out of a creek that slithered over tiny flat rocks. The corpsman threatened to write me up for not using Halozone. "You'll get liver flukes and they'll eat your liver up." I drank more and cursed him under my breath. I drank more just to show him—show him what? I don't know.

We walked around fresh bomb craters with red mud shoved up as if giant subterranean dinosaurs had been at work. The trees hung over the trail and the jungle grass attacked us the same as every other day. No rest for our wicked butts, no rest because of Christmas. The same every day, patrols, patrols, fog, rain-soaked utility blouses, red mud stains on the skin, rain-soaked toes, mist. I wished for a cobra, a krait to show up in the trail and threaten one of us, maybe me. Some life . . . some life besides the deadly boredom of waiting, waiting for the surprise, waiting to die.

That night, Christmas Eve, back on 881 South we stood 100-percent due to a red alert even though there was a Christmas truce. Charlie the Killer probed around outside the wire. Fog choked the black morning after midnight and we couldn't have seen Charlie if he'd been sitting ten feet from us.
Christmas day arrived magnificent, like Jesus coming out of His tomb, shards of dawn raking the grove-mottled ridges, the trees with their tops blown off. I led a five man fire-team-sized patrol down around the west side of Hill 881 South along the creek that bubbled and sang in the canyon. An easy patrol, only the imprints of unfamiliar boots in the mud, and here and there unusual ammo pressed into wet, red, muddy spots. Not like the times we patrolled in floods when men were swept down the canyon caroming off boulders as big as stateside houses, or the time the Hueys mistook us for Charlie and pinned us down as they circled around and around like voracious raptors intent on making a kill. They fired rockets and hot snaps from their nasty little mini-machine guns that brrrrrped, brrrped at us as the tracers lit up the dark spots beneath the bluffs. Mr. Dillon on the radio screaming "Cease fire. Cease fire. We are friendlies. We are friendlies." Hidden beneath the lips of huge stones and roots as old as the Renaissance, we did not miss the balky, twisted humor there—friendly fire. But not this Christmas morning patrol . . . just a heated argument between me and Sergeant Deedee about grids and coordinates and clicks and trails and how best to follow the map from checkpoint to checkpoint.

After we struggled through the slick mud and ascended 881 South, hot chow arrived from the cooks at Khe Sanh. The choppers (our friends this day) whap-whapped onto the LZ with just-cooked turkey and ham, and mashed potatoes and gravy and dressing and green beans and hot rolls and pie and ICE CREAM (even though it melted by the time we got to eat it).

We left Hill 881 South the next day, after our two month stay up there, and dreamed of never having to ascend Hill 881 North again, and not long after this, Recon started getting their butts kicked out there on a daily basis. Ones, and twos and threes, they died out there in thick clops of tall hardwoods and the head-high jungle grass and the big red bomb craters. And with their dying, way down where one cannot deny what one knows, we knew it would not be a surprise. But we didn't want to know it, so we acted like we didn't. And ate our chow, and went on patrol and waited for . . . what? The greater good?

Kenneth Rodgers B CO 1/26



Christmas at Phu Bai 1967 in my houch ,Note Xmas Display
Tom Eichler



CHRISTMAS 1967

By RADM Paul L. Lacy Commander, USN

This day, we celebrate the Birthday of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Founder of Christianity. The essential and basic message Jesus Christ extended and still extends to mankind is peace to all men as we travel through life to His Eternal Father.

We are members of a powerful, rich and resourceful nation; our mission is not conquest, subjugation or tyranny but peace to all. The motto of our modern Navy exemplifies this - Peace through Power.

On this great day, as we find ourselves in Vietnam and members of the United States Navy, let us be justifiably proud of ourselves for the simple reason we serve our nation in the land of the Vietnamese merely to bring and to extend that precious gift of gifts - Peace. In such a capacity, then your reward will be great as Christ, the Man, promised, "because you have done this to the least of My brethren, you have done it to Me."
May the Christ Child bless you and yours always.

CHRISTMAS DAY MENU 25 DECEMBER 1967

Fresh Fruit Cocktail Cups Chilled Pineapple Juice
Tomato Rice Soup
Roast Young Turkey
Baked Ham W {Peanut Butter Glaze
Rich Turkey Gravy Pineapple Raisin Sauce
O'Brien Mashed Potatoes Glazed Sweet Potatoes
Cornbread Dressing Orange Cranberry Relish
Buttered F. F. Baby Limas
Buttered F. F. Niblet Corn
Asst. Relish Tray Asst. Fruit Bar
Hot Parkerhouse Rolls Butter
Crisps Chefs Salad Cottage Cheese
Thousand Island Dressing.
Cole Slaw Sweet Cream Dressing
Christmas Layer Cake Fruit Cake
Ice Cream Sundaes' Pumpkin Pie W Topping
Cherry Pie Ala Mode
Asst.. Hard Candy Asst. Mixed Nuts
Iced Lemonade Fresh Milk Hot Coffee

While I was at the hospital in Danang during Christmas, I picked up a menu. In hindsight I now realize this was my big meal before Khe Sanh, which I went to within two weeks of discharge from said hospital.

.

Phil Avvampato H&S CO 2/26

Guys,

I can remember being on the west end of the base just prior to our hike up to 861. It was cloudy, foggy and freezing all day. I remember wondering why it wasn't snowing, it seemed cold enough.

As I recall it was around noon that a "34" made a pass across the base from west to east, along the axis of the runway and at about 200 feet. To all of our surprise, and barely audible above the roar of the roters and engine, the crew of the "34" was playing "Jingle Bells" over a loudspeaker hung out the side of the bird and they leaned out and popped green and red smoke to trail behind ! That was my most memorable Christmas ever !

A much belated "Thanks" and "Merry Christmas" to the pilots and crew for that surreal memory !

Paul Knight

ON TO NEW YEARS EVE 1967

Not much specific recall of most of my New Years Eve days/nights. Most tend to blend together in memory. There was the '73 Sugar Bowl in New Orleans when ND beat Alabama for the national title. My brother and I were there and got onto the field after the Irish win.

However, my most vivid recall is from 1967 when a reinforced platoon was sent south off 861 at 0530 towards the 689 ridge line. It was a long, long day in the elephant grass, and even though we were due back on the hill before dark, there were objective, terrain, and communication issues that plagued us all day.

By late afternoon we were still a long way from "home." The darker it got the slower we moved and it was after 2100 before we considered ourselves close to 861. At that point we were 500 meters west of the hill on the very ridge line that the NVA used to attack us 3 weeks later. That 500 meters was "as the crows fly" and we still had 1000+ meters to cover in total darkness. The mortar crews on 861 began to fire illumination rounds in order to help with visibility, but had the NVA been there on that

31Dec67, it might have proved disastrous. Most of us jogged / ran uphill the last 100 meters to the gate in our protective barbed wire, but it was close to 2300 before my RTO and I staggered into our bunker. Filthy, out of breath, exhausted, hungry, and oblivious to even the attached leeches, we struggled out of our 782 gear, touched canteens, wished each other a better New Year, swallowed some water and fell sound asleep.

Goodbye to 1967 and hello 1968. I hope the attached photo comes through. If not, I'll submit to



one of our computer guys. Taken at mid-day, the 689 ridge line is in the middle distance and our objective was the dark, flat area in the lower left below 689. The distant hills and clouds are in Laos.

Happy New Year to all who read these words.
S/F Dennis

Dennis, How's This?
Mike Fishbaugh

Dennis,
Wow someone still had an M-14 I see! I wonder why the BN CO did not use I 3/26, we were only about 30min. from the 689 Ridge line--We patroled that at least four times a week. We also patrolled Northwest of the 689 toward Laos many times--that was a hump----You should have spent the night on Hill 881S! Then left in the morning when it was cooler Hahah I felt your pain Dennis I made that trip a few times toward Hill 881N and toward your Hill!
Glenn

Can't believe you made both the ND/MSU game in 66, and the ND/Alabama game in 73. I watched the 73 game in a bar in Time Square New York, oblivious to the New Years Eve celebration going on outside. Still have your ND/MSU 66 Game book. Hope to return it to you in person at the next DC reunion. Great photo! Pretty much says it all with an eloquence w/o words. I had an little black Instamatic 126 in Nam myself.
Happy New Year.!S/F
Ron Main

LATE OBIT

MAJOR (Ret.)
RICHARD P. CARLISLE,
1947-2010
KHE SANH VETERAN
USMC C CO 1/26

Major Carlisle was born on April 24, 1937, in Washington County, Pa., to Gus Carlisle and Julia Chernyski Carlisle. He was retired after serving 25 years in the U.S. Marine Corps and was a member of VFW Post 3074 and American Legion Post 8. He earned a business degree from Catawba College and was retired from his second career after 16 years at EPES Transport.

Surviving are his wife, Patricia Dian Jackson Carlisle of the home; daughters Patti Jo Harris and husband Dale and Marsha Perkins, all of Virginia, and Jill Carlisle of Massachusetts; grandchildren Stephen Woodard, Scotty Perkins, Patrick Perkins, MaryBeth Bowling and husband David and Cameron Carlisle; stepchildren Bradley Hart and girlfriend Paula, Brandi Chalus and husband Mike and John Rippel and girlfriend Patti, all of Pennsylvania; two stepgrandchildren, Michael Chalus and Peyton Chalus; brother Jack Carlisle of Virginia; sister Laura Zurrow and husband Ed of Virginia; niece and nephew Lisa Zurrow and Eddie Zurrow; great-niece Julia Zurrow; cousins Dorothy Fuzoni, Jimmy Fuzoni and Bill Sheeka; and his aunt, Nell Roup.

Memorials may be made to Hospice of Davidson County, 200 Hospice Way, Lexington, NC

ED NOTE: TO KSV MEMBERS: I have decided to post the latest list of Donations starting in our Tax Month, of Aug 2009. This was done to first show the membership that every donation, in every amount, is greatly appreciated and recorded . Secondly, it shows how proud we are of your generosity which allows the printing of our magazine, purchasing & designing of new items for our PX, and the maintenance of our Scholarship Fund. We have not abandoned color coded donations listing it just takes much time to adjust and change levels, and should be available for the next issue. Thanks a Bunch

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CATON, Louis W.	DP 01 Dec 10	45.00	Check# 1167 ***
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CUMMINGS, Michael D.	DP 09 Sep 10	30.00	Check# 2069
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DIGATANO, John	DP 29 Dec 10	20.00	Check# 1012
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DORN, Jerry	DP 16 Sep 10	10.00	Check# 14704
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ELARDO, Nick	DP 03 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 2012
ERNFIELD, Harry R	DP 29 Dec 10	100.00	Check# 525
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FISHBAUGH, Michael	DP 22 Nov 10	1,000.00	Check# 3719 **
FISHER, Daniel J.	DP 01 Jan 11	20.00	Check# 13668
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FORD, Thomas	DP 07 Jan 11	150.00	Check# 4365 xxx
FOSTER, Gary W.	DP 28 Dec 10	250.00	Check# 2132 ***
FOSTER, Gary W.	DP 28 Dec 10	250.00	Check# 2131
FRYE, Benjamin	DP 08 Aug 09	100.00	Check# 134 ****
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HARE, John F.	DP 06 Jan 11	100.00	Check# 1509
HARRINGTON, David S.	DP 03 Jan 11	250.00	Check# 4635
HESTER, Larry	DP 26 Dec 10	25.00	Check# 3057
HOLSCHER, Robert J.	DP 03 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 14152
JACHIMIAK, Daniel L.	DP 30 Dec 10	200.00	Check# 3741 ******
JACKSON, Dianne	DP 12 Sep 10	150.00	Check# 1102 **
KAHENY, John M.	DP 31 Dec 10	50.00	Check# 1309
KATES, Bruce E.	DP 29 Dec 10	120.00	Check# 2560
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KELLY, William	DP 06 Jan 11	5.00	Check# 296
KOLLMON, Albert	DP 31 Dec 10	10.00	Check# 3686
KORKOW, Kenneth	DP 28 Dec 10	25.00	Check# 7993
KUBLEY, Lawrence	DP 27 Sep 10	200.00	Check# 10778
KUBLEY, Lawrence	DP 28 Dec 10	200.00	Check# 10827
LAIBINIS, John A SR.	DP 29 Dec 10	50.00	Check# 5005
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LEE, Gary	DP 29 Dec 10	25.00	Check# 2350
LUCAS, Melvin L.	DP 18 Aug 10	25.00	Check# 4824***
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MAHONEY, Brian F.	DP 03 Jan 11	25.00	Check# 1238
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MCCREADY, Daniel J.	DP 01 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 2075
MCELROY, John W.	DP 29 Dec 10	250.00	Check# 1220 ***
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MELANSON, Joseph H.	DP 06 Jan 11	50.00	Check# 2499
MERCADO, Saturno	DP 31 Dec 10	20.00	Check # 6442
MONK, Marcus G.	DP 01 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 1153
MOONEY, James	DP 09 Oct 10	20.00	Check# 1602
MOORE, Bill & Connie	DP 02 Jan 10	50.00	Check# 1045 ****
MOORE, William D.	DP 29 Dec 10	50.00	Check# 5419
MULLIGAN, Michael	DP 28 Dec 10	100.00	Check# 2833
NAZZARIO, Anthony	DP 28 Dec 10	10.00	Check# 2555
OWSLEY, George & Mary	DP14 Aug 09	100.00	Check# 2042 ****
PACK, Lee Ann	DP 02 Jan 10	50.00	Check# 1309 ****
PADLEY, Shirley W.	DP 28 Dec 10	28.00	Check# 8768
PALMER, Raymond	DP 30 Dec 10	50.00	Check# 7764
PEARSON, Scott	DP 07 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 4981
PETERSON, John F.	DP 29 Dec 10	20.00	Check# 4550
PETERSON, Roger M/G	DP 03 Jan 11	100.00	Check# 1969
PRESCOTT, William E.	DP 06 Dec 10	5.00	Check# 3032
PRESTON, Michael W.	DP 06 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 940
RAIT, Donald M.	DP 30 Dec 10	100.00	Check# 717
RIVEZZO, Michael F	DP 06 Oct 10	25.00	Check# 933 ***
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ROGERS, David	DP 27 Dec 1o	30.00	Check# 5017
ROSSER, Richard	DP 01 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 2542

ROST, Charles M.	DP 06 Jan 11	100.00	Check# 685
ROWE, John F.	DP 01 Jan 11	100.00	Check# 14555
RUH, Paul V.	DP 06 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 6501
RUMMEL, Michael P.	DP 07 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 6672
VOSNICK, Tom & Jane	DP12 Aug 09	150.00	Check# 8499 ****
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SENEFF, Walter E.	DP 01 Jan 11	20.00	Check# 4154
SHREVE, Larry	DP 06 Jan 11	20.00	Check# 7426
SIBLEY, Anthony E.	DP 01 Jan 11	100.00	Check# 3316
SINTEK, Steven A.	DP 06 Jan 11	70.00	Credit Card
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SLATTERY, Robert J.	DP 27 Dec 09	300.00	Check# 1928
SMITH, David	DP 08 Sep 10	150.00	Check# 8447 **
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SPIVEY, B Larkin	DP 30 Dec 10	70.00	Check# 5766
STACK, Geoffrey L.	DP 01 Jan 11	250.00	Credit Card
STAHL, Richard E.	DP 26 Dec 10	250.00	Check# 23300
STEINBERG, David M.	DP 25 Dec 10	25.00	Check# 1459
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STUBBE, Ray W.	DP 17 Jan 11	500.00	Check# 11679
SULLIVAN, Robert	DP 29 Dec 10	25.00	Check# 262
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THOMPSON, Frank L.	DP 06 Jan 11	5.00	Check# 297
TOURTE, Craig	DP 31 Aug 10	100.00	Check# 593**
TOURTE, Craig	DP 22 Dec 10	100.00	Check# 651 xx
UPSHAW, Leland	DP 31 Dec 10	25.00	Check# 476 ***
UPSHAW, Leland	DP 31 Dec 10	50.00	Check# 475
VAN DE BOGART, Allan F.	DP 01 Jan 11	50.00	Check# 2262
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WALSH, Matthew R.	DP 27 Dec 10	50.00	Check# 823
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ED NOTE: List Is of 17 Jan 2011

THE FOOT STEPS OF TITANS

By Gary W. Foster
April 2005

No one can explain why it so difficult to relate to people who have never been some place where one has been, or who have not been there under the same circumstances, or experienced the same thing in the same manner. For someone who has experienced something extraordinarily profound, an imperceptible transformation takes place within one's psyche: that person is never again the same. His or her persona and perceptions are altered forever. Life takes on a new meaning.

Along with this phenomenon, there is a tendency to want to return to those places where the experience manifested itself, where the defining moment of our lives emerged and was revealed like an incipient statue being carved from a block of marble. There is a magnetic force that compels us to return to special places; that is, places special to each of us. I doubt anyone knows why for sure but it may be the need to relate to our inner selves free from outside influences or judgments; or, especially since we cannot convey it to anyone else in a manner they will understand, to confirm the story again to ourselves, to convince us that the event did, in fact, occur; that we are a living testament to our own destiny molded from such an event. Reunions seem to fill this need and allow each of us a few moments to relive something in our past with our comrades or colleagues with whom we shared a common experience, as if to make tangible again those elusive moments. In my own life, I have returned to my high school, my college and I have revisited places to which I had traveled years ago, such as the south of France or London, where something interesting had happened to me. But I must admit, I am not quite sure why.

The compelling need to revisit a place that is special seems to be directly proportional to the time spent away from that place: the longer the absence, the more the desire to return. Why is this? An answer to this question perhaps cannot be found. But there can be no disputing it, the attraction to return to someplace in one's own history is very strong.

And now mix this place of deep personal value or emotion with a place of profound international, humanitarian, political, or military significance and the attraction or desire to return is exacerbated. It becomes stronger; cannot be denied. Even as I have come to know certain people and have listened to their tales, vicariously, I have developed a desire or perhaps, at least, a curiosity to visit that place where their saga unfolded, as if I had been there too, by their side. Khe Sanh represents such a place.

Like some of the other nearby geographic characteristics that circumscribe the Combat Base, one hill in particular is one of the more dominant features of the landscape. From the valley of decision, as Ray Stubbe termed it, I have seen it looming on the horizon in the distance, beyond the Combat Base. I have seen the hill in the gray of the early morning hours, through the clouds in the valley, through the rain, and at sunrise and at sunset. I have seen the top as it appeared above the mist of moisture-laden skies. I have seen the hill, on occasion, resplendent in clear weather - a rare phenomenon to be sure because the atmosphere is usually uncooperative - when it seemed the trees were so close I could see the branches and leaves move in the breeze, I could reach out and touch them: they beckoned me. It has happened.

I have been close to it. I have had a desire to climb it but never had the time or, for that matter, the opportunity. My being on top or reaching there has eluded me, like a dream where no matter how hard one tries, one never reaches the destination which always remains out there somewhere beyond one's reach, or when one can never run fast enough to evade monsters, conjured-up captors, or demons of the night. I have stopped thinking about going there, thinking I may never have the chance. The hill is before me always, even in my mind, but as in the dream in which I never reach my destination, I cannot get there. Each time I saw it, it seemed farther away; an unobtainable distant exotic place like Bali Hai. It was a destination seemingly within my grasp but forever slipping away.

But wait, no so fast! What's this? A porthole-size window of opportunity to reach a heretofore-unattainable destination, a place I have never been but a place others have visited, and which keeps calling them back. And now, do I not feel the overwhelming tug of curiosity, the swelling ineluctable need to seize the moment; to be there, if only briefly, and, as an added benefit, without bodily

risk.

Somehow, I knew. Something told me, kept pulling at me; and on 7 April 2005, I embarked on a brief journey that heretofore has so often escaped me. I thought the opportunity would not present itself to me again. For the first time, I had a real chance to truly climb this mountain that lay before me filling the view through the windshield of my vehicle.

"Binh," I said, turning to my driver and pointing through the windshield of our 4-wheel drive vehicle. "See that road up the side of that mountain? Well, drive up there." I continued, pointing upwards through the windshield.

What dramatic changes have occurred in the valleys around and in between Hills 558, and 881. First, a large hydroelectric scheme is being constructed on the Rao Quan River not far from the nearby hills and valleys of the area. This massive undertaking can be viewed from behind a restaurant that serves beer with ice just around the corner from the customs clearance house on the left of Highway 9 as one progresses to Dong Ha from Khe Sanh. But the most amazing thing to see is the number of roads and streets being built in the area around the hills. It was astonishing to see this development. The Yellow Brick Road, which during my first visit was nothing more than a very rough and bumpy cobblestone country conveyance to the Base, has been paved replete with striping and drainage ditches. Driving to the main gate and museum of the Combat Base is easy. Commercial and industrial development is progressing at a rapid pace and it does not appear as if it will stop any time soon. The area is experiencing an economic growth spurt, but I have no idea what's driving it.

As soon as one crests the rise on the road just past the Base, the hill rises dramatically. It fills the horizon; and is unmistakable. The sun, finally having emerged from behind the low clouds, was brilliant and the temperature was not that unbearable, but it was increasing incrementally, inexorably. The hill dominates the area and behind it is Hill 881, and to my right rear is Hill 558 and the clearly distinguishable and indomitable 950 and 1015, each a historical hill so identified by its height above sea level in meters.

Binh turned off the newly paved road onto the smaller road and, bouncing along, we angled up the side of the base of the hill. The road became narrower, but I urged Binh forward. "Keep going," I said, motioning with my hand that we could continue upwards. This hillside road is new, I thought; has never been here before as far as I could tell.

"How far will this road take me?" I mused out loud. The road turned into a trail and then narrowed down even more. Still, we drove upwards. To my right, I spied a small hut with a corrugated metal roof and at that point the road clearly ended. I looked through the windshield and saw a foot trail that proceeded through the thick, lush green coffee plants. "I wonder," I said. I opened the door and climbed down from the 4-wheel drive vehicle. I stood and looked around. I could see the steep sides of the hill before me through the somewhat enshrouding trees and swaying tall grass and ubiquitous coffee plants. To my left there was a valley and then another lower ridgeline and what I thought were the beginning slopes of Hill 881. I turned to look in the direction of the Combat Base and Khe Sanh Ville. I could see the earth cuts being made for the hydroelectric scheme and the ensuing development in the general valley area. Hill 558 was perfectly outlined and now, from this vantage point, I noticed that, whereas before there had been very little human activity, a road has inched its way around the sides to the top. "So, Binh" I said, "I can drive virtually to the top of 558 now." Binh looked at me and nodded his head but I knew he did not know what I was saying. "So there's 558." I said out loud, as I surveyed the area to get my bearings, as if Binh could understand me. "Five fifty-eight," I said again, pointing. I remembered Jacob Krygoski - a Marine I have not forgotten but who I have never met - who had been stationed on 558. I thought of John Pessoni but could not remember if he was on the any of the hills.

But my sights were set on another possibility that dawned on me. "Jesus," I said, "I'm probably a sixth, or even a fifth of the way up this monster hill". I surveyed the area through the trees and coffee plants. I looked behind and all around me. "And here's a foot trail going up! How far does it go?" I knew what I was going to do. I knew with complete clarity of thought what I was doing. I was not fooling myself and I doubt I was fooling Binh. No, I

knew what I was going to do for sure. I was going to the top of this hill! I realized I had known that already as soon as we had turned off the main highway but I did not allow myself to admit it. I stopped myself. Oops! Wrong shoes, wrong slacks, no hat, no water, nothing. I'm not prepared for this. Fuggit, I'm going to the top.

I started climbing. First, through head-high rows of coffee plants. The going was definitely uphill, but easy and with plenty of downward visibility for footing. "So far, so good," I mused out loud. My breathing was easy. Binh followed me for awhile. The last mountain I ever climbed was Mt. Sinai in the Sinai desert in 1988. That was plenty steep then. I found this upward climb to be relatively easy in comparison. I kept going, taking note however that the trail became steeper with each step and the rows of coffee plants more narrow. I was soon surrounded by thick coffee plants. I reached another small trail that climbed an eight-foot high earth ledge. I pulled myself up by tree limbs and, once on top, realized I had left the coffee plants behind. I was on my way now. I was also on my own, and without water, this last fact not sinking in just yet.

Now on the ledge I looked down and could see the metal roof of the hut and the vague outline of the vehicle. Binh was nowhere in sight. Turning to face the mountain, just in front of me was a barbwire fence lined with scraggly trees, that proceeded up and down the hill, the kind of scene one might find around farms or ranches in Colorado. The fence was trampled down and some posts had fallen, but there was a clear delineation of a property line or something. I stepped over the barbwire with the assistance of a low tree branch that I grabbed hold of and found myself in a narrow clearing that went straight down the fall line of the hill. "Foster, there is no turning back now," I said out loud for anyone to hear, although no one was around to hear me; and to reinforce in my own mind that I was about to undertake something significant, if not onerous.

I looked down the trail and thought this must be the brown stretch of earth that runs up the side of the hill that one can see from the Yellow Brick Road, from the crest near the Combat Base. To my right, the trail went straight down and into the canopies of thick trees and brush. But I wasn't going down. No. I could care less about the descending trail. I was going up. I turned left and looked up the ascending trail.

"Let's see, this mountain is a little less than 3,000 feet above sea level. I estimate I am about 800 feet above sea level. So I have only 2,200 feet to climb." I learned to think of climbing mountains in terms of chunks of elevation or increments and not in individual feet. Psychologically, at least for me, it makes climbing easier, as it makes objectives more attainable. So, in ten feet increments, that's 220 increments, or in 50 feet increments that's 44 increments. Let's go with the 44 increments. I can do this. I started uphill.

At first my strides were even and long and I gained elevation quickly. I stopped a couple of times and looked at the valley. This much, so far, had been easy. The hut and vehicle had long disappeared from view. I saw shade farther up the trail and decided I would take a five-minute break there. I made it, no sweat... well; I was actually sweating pretty profusely. I sat down to relax and felt OK, still breathing evenly. There was no breeze and the sun shone intensely through the trees. The shade I had seen was not much shade after all.

I looked up the trail and could see only a steep slope of the mountain in front of me. "Aw come on!" I said, "I've climbed at least 300 feet or so from the fence." I should be able to see the top. But no.

I stood up and began to climb again. The trail did not disappear. It just continued up and it began to run through thick grass that was over my head with a riot of briars intermingled all through it. I continued on and quickly found myself entangled in long thorny limbs and briars. They attacked my shirt and pants and finally, becoming so enmeshed with this vegetation, I was stopped until I could disengage from them, pulling each bramble from my clothes with my fingers. Then onward, ever upward again, and again the same thing happened. I was pulling thorns out of me every inch of the way. They stuck to and became embedded in my shirt, in my pants and in my flesh. Now where was the top? I fought my way through the elephant grass and the briars and emerged into another opening. But now I noticed the trees had lessened and there was now no shade at all. And, there was no water. This thought finally was not lost on me and I was becoming quite

thirsty. "Aw, the top is just ahead," I said. "Get up and push on." I could not see the valley, or the top of the hill, or the trail behind me, or anything. Just tall grass: tall thick grass with incredibly sharp edges and long thorns.

I continued to climb but noticed during brief pauses that my recovery time was increasing in between multiples of increments. The hill was becoming steeper or I was trying to accomplish too much too soon. "Slow down." I reminded, or rather, warned myself. Then the thought occurred to me, and the implications really hit me. First of all, it's against the law to be here without a permit. Second I am alone and no way to contact anyone. And third, as a renewed thought, but one that was becoming more of a concern, not a single drop of water. "What am I thinking?" I felt my pocket. "Cell Phone! I'll call Binh to let him know I'm OK." Dialed in the number, hit the system, but could not hit his cell phone. Well, just great. Put the phone back in my pocket

I looked at my slacks, many pulls of thread in the fabric due to the brambles and thorns. "So be it." I looked at my arms and blood was dripping down both of them from multiple scratches and abrasions. "Funny," I thought, as I pulled thorns out of my skin. I was reminded of "The Red Badge of Courage." For some inexplicable reason, my mind went back to my eighth grade year when I had to have a tutor in introductory English literature. The first book I read under her was Stephen Crane's short but definitive novel of the Civil War. How odd I thought to be reminded of this simply because of some blood on my forearm. But now my mind began to ponder many things as I sat and recuperated. I watched as a trail of ants marched serenely up the hill, over and under leaves, on the ground next to me. How many Marines, much bloodier than me, marched, trudged, and humped through this area on daily patrols like these ants? How many Marines went up and down this same hill once, twice, many times a day? How many firefights, or ambushes ensued here in this mass of vegetation? How could anyone see anyone? A wasp flew next to my head, just out of arm's length, making slow buzzing noises. The breeze had stopped or, rather, I knew the tall grass had stopped its circulation as I sat on the ground sweating.

Sweat now really poured out of me as the sweltering heat spiraled. I was reminded of my second visit to the Combat Base five years ago when I found the ammo dump and confirmed the runway. Sweat poured out of me on that day too. I knew I was dehydrating quickly. I thought, "I either reach the top soon, or I will be forced to climb down." Now, the reality of not having water became very acute. "This is not good." If I could gauge the remaining distance to the top, I could estimate my chances. But I could see nothing. All I knew now was the mountain was sloping upwards in front of me and was snaring me into its steely undeniable grip. Was this tantamount to Kurtz's descent into the heart of darkness? Would this mountain consume me, eat me alive? Would it suck me in and spit me out, spent, exhausted, torn, thirsty, bloody? Apparently so.

Another few increments. Had to sit down. Sweat running out of my body like Niagara Falls. Steeper climbing and rougher going. Looked at my watch: "Let's see, left car at 11:40." Ah, at least I remembered that. "It's now 12:55. Binh must be wondering where I am." And now I wondered whether he may have driven down the trail thinking I may be below him. I reached into my pocket for my cell phone and opened it and dialed his number; hit the system but still cannot hit his phone. "Man! Maybe I better go down. Maybe the authorities followed us here and have taken him in." Though I doubted this possibility, I knew the authorities frowned on such excursions in these hills. "I'm not really supposed to be here." I was in dilemma: a propitious moment of decision. I thought for a few seconds: no water, no communication. Then I thought of Dennis Mannion and his comrades in Kilo 3/26. My mind was made up. Nothing was going to stop me from climbing this mountain! Nothing!

I stood up, blood and sweat everywhere, barbed slacks, and ripped shirt. I turned to look up the trail and words from the children's story "The Little Engine that Could" popped into my mind: "I think I can, I think I can." Not a breath of air. With the steep side slope of the mountain staring me in the face, slowly I put one foot in front of the other and said to myself. "I know I am almost there." I wasn't. This hill, I realized, was challenging me now. Though it may accept my presence, it would not accept it without proof of my worthiness. Joseph Campbell, the great mythologist, I was sure, would have provided me with some mythological parallels.

With little time remaining, I kept trudging upward into and out of thick grass. No trees. Sun crashing down on me now. I lay down in some tall grass, burying my head in the reeds to ward off the insistent sun, listened to my heart pound away, and felt the sweat continue to completely soak my shirt. My pants were covered in brambles and now red dirt. My breathing eventually slowed and subsided but my heart raced furiously. I was very thirsty. I waited for a few more minutes and stood up again. Worthy I may be, exhausted I am becoming. Can't give up "Never have, never will." I have never forgotten that expression I read once in Red Clay after 9/11, three and half years ago.

Still not quite there yet. The trail opened into thinner and shorter grass and I could see the slopes of "eight eighty-one" to my left and the ridgeline of what I thought connected the mountain I was on to an adjacent mountain sort of to my front. Behind me, I could now see the valley and the roads far below. I could see "nine-fifty" and "ten-fifteen" easily and I knew my bearings. I looked at my watch: 1:30PM. Sat down and then lay down and let my heart pound again on the inner walls of my chest till it rested. Becoming impatient and fearful - I thought I would run out of time, or Binh and subsequently myself perhaps would be arrested - I stood up and followed the narrow opening again up and back into thick grass. Man this hill is up! All the way! Where is the top?

Another increment farther and I lay down again. My neck is now bleeding, as is my face. Well, I'm use to that by now. "Landmines!" The thought careened through my mind. "Oh yeah, I'll bet they're some around here, somewhere." Bombs and mortar rounds; at least they don't pose an immediate danger. If they didn't explode then, they probably won't explode now. But landmines, now that's another story. Wonder if there are any around here? Probably not on this trail. Well, I consoled myself, they'll just add to the predicament I now find myself in.

I got up and turned to the top and marched on and up. Sun, almost directly overhead or at least it seemed directly overhead, continuing to pour its bright heat down on me. I looked to the left and, through the tall grass, could make out round depressions in the earth. Must be bomb craters. But now, what's this in front of me? There appears to be a clearing up ahead. There is! I reached it and the slope flattened out and the climbing became easier. I saw trees up ahead but more importantly; I noted the open sky behind them. I saw the same ridgeline to my left that I had seen earlier at about the same elevation I was. I could see the slope of 881 flattening. "Man, I think I'm going to make it! I can't be very far from the top now."

With renewed vigor and enthusiasm, I made the last 100 steps and emerged through the thick grass to a plateau and, knowing the top of the hill was attainable, I rested one last moment. Time was now my enemy. I could not take much more time. I had other things to do this day and this short climb was but a spontaneous interlude. I called Binh on the cell phone but there was no answer. The top of the hill was just a few feet above me.

I raced the remaining distance; not sure why. Became entangled in thick grass again, and found a new route round, next to a small tree. I saw a trench line in front of me covered in tall grass. I knew it was a trench line because I could follow the contour around to my left and back again to my right. I could see the valley and all the hills; and 881 was right next to me. Hill "five fifty-eight," below me, was clearly identifiable. "Ah, but the breeze, the wind." What a relief. I began to hike up the incline in front of me. I was breathing heavily and sweating like there was no tomorrow. But I was there. I had reached the top.

I lay down on the top to recuperate, and as soon as I did, I could not see anything due to the tall grass. Now I thought, "Was I really at the top?" I surmised so except there were lumps of very tall grass off to my left and front. I walked there but didn't have the strength or time to fight more thick grass. No. This is it. This is the top of the hill. I was there.

I walked all around and looked at the valley and to the adjacent hills and pondered Hill 881 so close that I thought I could climb that too. But no: no time, and no water. I noticed that the Vietnamese had planted several rows of small pine trees. This had to be recent, within the last few days. The diggings for each sapling were not smoothed out by rain. Interesting. And then I realized that the going was easier for me here because before they had

planted the trees they had cut down the tall elephant grass with their machetes.

I sat down facing the Combat Base. Hills 950 and 1015, far across the wide valley, were to my left front in clear unobstructed view. I think I was in the approximate area where Ray Stubbe held a service with a rugged cross planted in the ground. The photograph of this is now famous and a mural of it exists in Ho Chi Minh City. I wiped rivers of sweat from my eyes on my shirtsleeve. I could not help but remember that Dennis Mannion, Bob Arotta, Glenn Prentice, Paul Knight, Paul's son, Jeff Knight, Donna Elliott (who lost her brother Jerry (MIA) on 21 January1968 in the Khe Sanh area), Dave Kniess (a former student of Dennis' who recorded the team's visit on film), and Lan Anh, their interpreter had climbed the mountain in July of 2000. Preceding me, they had visited where I now was, some of them for their second time.

The wind died down and I felt a sudden sensation. A slight chill swept over my body. Something seemed strange. I felt I was not alone. I felt as if someone else was on the mountain with me. Sitting still in the hot sun with the panorama of the valley spread out beneath me, I hooked my arms over my knees and stared all around. I stared as far to the horizon as I could. There was not a sound, not a breath of air and the grass and leaves on the smaller trees stood still. I remembered the Vietnamese consider the entire valley and surrounding hills to be haunted. I looked into the sky and saw puffy white clouds floating as they do in the American Midwest on a lazy day in late August. I saw their shadows dance across the valley floor below. I listened for any sound. There was none.

Now totally alone and engulfed in eerie silence, I wondered: were spirits of fallen American combatants swirling around me? I stood up and peered into the grass and along the sides of the hill and toward 881 and back towards 950 and 1015. I felt no wind but I sure felt something. Yes, they probably were present with me. And, if they were with me and confused about who I was, and perhaps worried about my intentions, then I wanted them to know I was there as a friend. I had not come up here to interrupt their solitude, or to denigrate their sacrifice, or to violate their spiritual space. I had come up here to honor them.

I looked at my watch and realized I had been on top for 20 minutes. I had to get down. I didn't have anymore time. I walked back to the small tree where I had crested the mountain and looked down and then back across the inclined plateau. The wind picked up briefly. I turned to begin descending the trail back to the hut and vehicle. But after only a few steps I kept thinking about the Marines who had experienced what I had just experienced; the same thing, same place, many years before, but in circumstances many times worse, far worse, than what I had experienced this day: yes, thorns, humidity, heat, beating sun and interminable rain, tall grass, endless sweat, blood, bugs, wounds; but more; the enemy with their whizzing, stinging, deadly bullets and the thump of their grenades, the crunch of their insidious mortars, and the deep pounding explosions of artillery rounds fired from Co Roc Mountain in Laos and elsewhere. This was a very different and very dangerous place 37 years ago in 1968.

I stopped my descent short and stared out over the broad green valley now punctuated with darker green shades from the shadows of the white hovering indolent clouds, and then back to the top of the mountain I had, on a whim, just climbed. I stood still. "I should say a prayer," I said. But what would I say? I never really pray. Why would I pray now and for what exactly? Somewhat at a loss, I felt I should at least say something to mark this moment and to remember the Marines who had served and died here. In slightly more than a solemn whisper of my voice, I simply and respectfully said the only words I knew appropriate for so many who endured the supreme hardship of this unforgiving, dreadful hill, who never gave up, and who made the ultimate sacrifice: "*Semper Fi.*" I felt honored to be here, albeit in a detached, even morose way. It was a privilege to be where so many brave American men had been years before me. Climbing this lonely mountain in some foreboding, recessed corner of Quang Tri Province in the narrowest waist of Vietnam, taking an opportunity that had presented itself to me and may never present itself again. I knew my life had changed. Yes, climbing this hill was a challenge. Now, having gained the summit, descending it, after but a brief respite on top, made me a little sad. I would not be able to relate this experience to very many in ways they would understand. I knew I was given a gratuitous opportunity to visit the same place so many Marines may have wanted to re-visit

but can't. Knowing all this, and knowing the history of this area, I realized I had been given a chance to walk in the footsteps of giants. "No." I thought. "Not giants." Not quite correct. "Titans" is the better descriptor.

Feeling now the soft warm breeze in my face as it rose from the valley beneath me, and seeing the dry gray-green of the sun-parched thick chaotic vegetation as it enveloped the crest and side slopes, I turned my back on the mountain and started my descent. Retracing my steps and disappearing again into the canopies of tall grass and overgrowth as I walked down, and back into the coffee plants to the vehicle, I had made my way off a non-descript hill that I had climbed only hours before, but a hill indelibly etched into Marine Corps history - perhaps with the other hills collectively in and around Khe Sanh, comprising what has come to be called the Hill Fights, a symbol as historically significant as Iwo Jima - a lonely, grass infested hill in central Vietnam unknown to most everyone; but to a select group of fighting Marines, and now always remembered by me, a hill that will forever be known in numbers marking its height above sea level, and in words: Eight Sixty-One. I had climbed Hill 861 and stood on the very ground where Titans once stood. None of us should ever forget them, the sacrifices they made, and what they accomplished there.

End.

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THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Michael D. Bradbury
K CO 3/26

Cobi Tahn Valley had been a strange operation. We slipped and slid in the monsoon rain and mud from one jungle to the next, with some fairly steep hills in -between, and never once crossed paths with the enemy. "If the truth be known, he was probably "caved-up' someplace and merely had enough sense to "stay in out of the rain." But long range patrols still had to be run.

For me, although cold, wet and miserable, it did eat up a couple more weeks on the calendar, and if the rest of this tour stayed quiet, that would be ok with me. It wouldn't of course, but you had to make the best of what you had.

Back at Camp Evans, I saw the only Thompson submachine gun I would ever see in Vietnam. It was carried by our Company First Sergeant. His name was Goddard, who had fought in Korea plus 3 tours in 'Nam. He was tall, strict, and hard enough to back it up. He hated civilians too, and their ways.

We'd gotten back to Camp Evans somewhere around Thanksgiving. "Thanksgiving" in Vietnam, would come and go without notice. There was nothing to be thankful for over there, unless you were still alive, and you were glad everyday for that.

With the "Christmas season" coming on, Goddard's sister had sent him a pair of very nice thick wool socks to help him keep his feet warm. A very nice gesture. problem was, they were in bright "Christmas" colors. Our tent was about a hundred feet from Goddard's, and right around noon, you could hear him yelling and cursing at the top of his lungs, throwing things around, etc.

A few of us went outside, and one dude came walking by at a fast pace, and warned us all to stay away from the "1st Shirt's" tent.

"What's going on?"

"Goddard just got a package of socks from his sister, and they ain't olive drab, he was I pissed! He threw the whole package in the burn barrel!. Stay out of his way today, if you guys know what's good for you!"

1st Sgt Goddard was one of those "unforgettable people" you'd expect to read about in Reader's Digest. He was a "Marine's Marine." Someone had once asked him if he was married. His answer became common knowledge to the entire camp, "If the Marine Corps wanted us to have wives, they'd have issued them to us!"

He carried that Thompson, barked orders and strutted around with a "Patton" sort of stature, but as we would find out at Khe Sanh, in combat, he **walked the walk**.

Just before Christmas, we loaded up in 6x6's and

headed for some distant outpost up by the DMZ, called **Khe Sanh.** "We were "loaded for bear." I knew this was gonna big a "big one" because all three rocket teams in the Company had been ordered to take the big stovepipes as well as the LAAWs. When the big "crew served" bazookas were coming with us, it meant something.

Larger quantities of ammo, C-rations and water would be flown up after we got there. We got there on Christmas Eve. In the morning, we would have the last hot breakfast we would have for the next 4 months. Looming out beyond the main Khe Sanh base itself, were Hills, 881 North, 881 South and 861.

"K" Company would be relieving another Marine company on 861. Just before we "saddled-up" to begin the long hike up there, this little supply jeep with a small trailer behind it came sloshing down the muddy road on "Main Street." As he got closer, the driver and I just sort of looked at each other as he pulled up and stopped.

"Is that you, Bradbury?" Even under the helmet, that West Virginia accent was unmistakable, it was Ron Patrick from Barstow (the other guy in that phone booth story).

I replied, "What are you doing here Ron?, You're supposed to be in supply someplace!"

He thumbed a gesture behind him to his loaded trailer, and said, "I'm still delivering supplies, but I gotta tell ya, I'd rather be back in Barstow right now! What are you guys doing here?"

I ain't sure yet" I answered, but I guess we're gonna find out soon enough."

"Well", he said, "I gotta go. Maybe I'll see ya later, keep your head down!", and he drove off. I never saw him again. I have often wondered if he made it home.

By early afternoon, "K" Company made it to the top of 861, and the outfit we were relieving looked like a bunch of out-of-work, unshaven bums. They'd been expecting us, gave us the 50-cent tour of the trench line and bunkers around the crest of the hill, and wasted no time vacating the premises, as soon as their Company Commander passed on his "notes" to ours.

We spent the next few hours filling in positions along the trench lines and mortar pits. 3rd platoon was assigned to the stretch of trench line that looked to the south, giving us a pretty good look at the main Khe Sanh base itself, where we had just come from.

2nd Platoon covered the northeast direction, with 1st Platoon watching the northwest.

For the 2nd time in my life, I was living on a hill, but 861 would soon prove to be a lot rougher hill than Potrero ever was. This was not a good "neighborhood" to be in.

Retired Royal Australian Marine becomes honorary US Marine

By Cpl. Rebekka S. Heite, Marine Corps Base Japan

CAMP HANSEN, OKINAWA, Japan — Retired Royal Australian Marine, Col. Ivan J. Cahill, was awarded the title of Honorary U.S. Marine Nov. 19 for his conduct as the company commander of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, from Dec. 1, 1967 to Dec. 31, 1968 during the Vietnam War.

"Wearing the title of United States Marine is challenging, rewarding and earned," said Maj. Gen. James B. Laster, commanding general, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force. "Therefore, after carefully considering and reviewing Col. Ivan J. Cahill's service to our (Marine) Corps, without a doubt, I recommend with utmost enthusiasm he be awarded the title of Honorary Marine.

While with the Marines, Cahill was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device for leading the Marines during Operation Auburn in Vietnam from 1967-1968.

During the operation in the Dien Ban District, Quang Nam, Republic of Vietnam, Cahill moved the company out of the landing zone to assault positions, preparing to attack the assigned objective, according to the citation. Almost immediately upon landing, the company began receiving small arms

and automatic weapons fire from both the front and flank.

"Capt. Cahill, with extraordinary coolness and tactical acumen, deployed the Marines under fire to meet this unexpected threat to the operation and for the next several hours, he directed not only the company's fire power, but the use of air and artillery support."

Cahill didn't stay in a fighting hole during this battle. Instead, without regard for his own safety he " ... courageously moved about the battlefield, encouraging the Marines of the company in their action against the enemy," according to the citation.
As the only foreigner to have direct command of an American rifle company in combat, the battlefield isn't the only place that Marines wanted to be near Cahill.

"His manner of saluting, flat palm of hand facing forward and brought crisply to his hat-brim, reverberating slightly as it snapped to a stop in the British manner, cased whole groups of young Marines to deliberately cross his path so that they could salute him and then watch the spectacle of his return salute," according to Mark Woodruff on www.diggerhistory.info.

"(Cahill) epitomizes camaraderie and esprit de corps," said Laster. "He has lead and inspired Marines not only in a combat zone as a U.S. Marine Corps company commander, but continues to strengthen the bond between Australian and American service members."

"To this day, over 40 years after his service, veteran Marines are unstinting in their praise of both his personal courage and combat leadership," said Laster. "He has proven himself to be a leader of Marines."

SOMETHING ABOUT CHRISTMAS
By Craig W. Tourte

There is something about Christmas; perhaps it is just the commercialization of this otherwise religious holiday recognition that disturbs me. It is certainly a wonderful time for so many, the celebration of the birth of our religious and cultural foundation no matter ones religious preference, a time to remember family, children, friends and those who have passed. I know it is a difficult time for our troops who are away from home. I think most remember where they were at Christmas and what they were doing, perhaps participating in a religious ceremony of some sort, maybe even an exchange of gifts, and it is certainly a time for great meals and for a few, even a libation or two with friends. I wish I had some found memories of the 1967 Christmas at Khe Sanh, I mean the Siege had not yet started, but it was cold, wet and foggy and just plain down right miserable.

A few days ago I was sitting around with 3 other men my age, all veterans of the Vietnam War. Two had been in the Army and one in the Navy. The subject of Christmas and USO shows came up and the question was asked if anyone had seen Bob Hope. There were some funny stories; one guy said it was strongly suggested that he attend the Bob Hope Christmas show although he just wanted to sleep. Another mentioned a USO show he saw and how much he enjoyed it. My vague recall now is that a small contingent of the Marine Corps Band showed up on the Khe Sanh base and a couple of them found there way over to the South West corner were we were located. I'm thinking it must have been around Christmas, for I can't imagine why they would have been there if it was not for that reason. I think that was around the time we were all offered one coke or one beer (both warm of course) but I can't be sure, I was pretty excited about receiving that beer.

For the past several years I have offered my "Christmas at Khe Sanh" story, kind of a little parody on the Bob Hope and Ann Margaret USO Vietnam Christmas Shows. I enjoyed writing the story, a ridiculously impossible event that some actually believed occurred and a few wondered why they did not attend or just could not remember the event. Surprisingly, no one said they had actually seen the show. I'll remember Christmas again this year, not for the commercialization, unneeded gifts or unwanted guests. Not for the **un USO** show that did not occur at Khe Sanh in 1967. Not for my disappointment of never having seen Bob or Ann, but rather for the memory of those who did not return with us, for those who have passed and those of us who have reached the shadow of our years and are

now ill or otherwise confined, lonely, in pain or are just plain miserable, along with those who are in good spirits and health. God bless us all for our perseverance, our pride, courage, and patriotism.



Craig,
In reading our post, "Christmas at Khe Sanh", some may enjoy it, and tell their Christmas tale also. Speaking of the band, I dug this picture out of my photo album. I do not know the exact date, but was informed it was Dec of 67.

I spent Christmas 67 in boot camp (SD), 68 at Dong Ha, 1969 at Camp Books (Red Beach) in Danang, and 1970 at MCAS Yuma....



REUNION COMMITTEE:

We have finalized the KSV reunion, set for the week of 18-24 July 2011. It will be held at the Kahler Grand Hotel, located in Rochester MN. The room rates are 89.00 a day, good for 2 days before, and 2 days after the actual reunion dates.

The registration form & information for events held at the reunion, are included in this issue of the magazine. In Brief, the Hotel is Pet Friendly, there iare no parking fees, including in and out privileges. The Rochester Convention Bureau will be hosting an early bird welcome reception on Wednesday evening. On Thursday, there will be a 2 hour ride on a Mississippi river boat. Lunch will be served, and rather than try to gauge what type of luncheon everyone would like, we decided to provide all the ingredients, several meats, bread, salads, and condiments. While you take in the beautiful sites, having a few cocktails, you can make your own sandwiches as you like. Or, if you are lucky, maybe one of our beautiful Khe Sanh Women will do it for you

Since the boat only holds 129 people, there will be 2 separate tours. The first tour will start at 12:00 Noon to 2 pm and the second tour from 2 pm to 4 pm. The Captain has agreed to allow all of our members the opportunity to be photographed driving the Mississippi River boat.

On Friday, we will have our KSV Memorial . It will be held outdoors at the beautiful Soldiers memorial a few blocks from the Hotel. Transportation will be provided. We will have audio visual equipment at the memorial. Tom Eichler is requesting that each member who may wish to read the name of the person(s) they are honoring at the ceremony, send him a photo so it may be shown on the Black granite panels of the memorial.

The Hotel has recently been renovated, and is beautiful. It and other Hotels are connected to the Mayo Clinic from the lower floor, where there are over 65 unique stores and boutiques; novelty shops and restaurants, are within walking distance. The KSV will also provide transportation for groups of members who may wish to travel to the Mall of the Americas, and other sites not on our regular schedule.

Please send in your registrations as soon as possible as we have to notify our travel vendor & the hotel Food & beverage manager, of the number of attendees, so we have adequate travel means, and food for the banquet on Saturday. The enclosed pamphlet has photos of all the activities we have set up, and of all the other amenities the hotel has to offer. Russ & I had a great time setting it up and everyone from the City of Rochester were just warm & wonderful.

There will be an election for members of the KSV BOD, including the office of president. So if you are contemplating running for office you have to notify the KSV Secretary of your intentions prior to the reunion. Also call to assure the office you want to apply for, is up for election.

Big John's KSV PX has a ton of beautiful new items, specifically designed for the KSV. If you would like to donate items for the Silent Auction, and are not coming to the reunion, you may mail the donated items to John . The proceeds from the PX & Silent Auction allow the KSV to print our Red Clay magazine, maintain our scholarship fund, and purchase items for our PX.

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1387 Naegele Rd
Amelia, OH 45102
jack@khesanhvet.com

Reunion Committee:
Thomas Eichler
3221 N. Opal
Chicago, IL 60634
773-625-2101
teic1448@aol.com

Russ Turner
3168 Meadowfield Dr
Arnold, MO 63010
314-368-5853
rkt88@prodigy.net

RESTAURANTS IN THE HOTEL

LORD ESSEX
Hours of Operation: Lunch is served weekdays 11am-2pm, and Dinner is served 5pm-10 pm., with dinner served at the same time on weekends as well. The dress code is casual and the Restaurant description– is Fine Dining. Pub is located in the lobby.

MARTINI'S
Hours of Operation: Open daily 3:00pm to close. It is open daily, having a casual dress code. Food Served: Appetizers and hors de oeuvres. Lounge and/or Bar Description: Upscale bar featuring over 40 different martinis. **Star Rating** ***

THE GRAND GRILL
Monday– Friday 6:30am-9pm Saturday/Sunday & Holidays, 7am-9pm. Type of food served: American cuisine, sandwiches, having dinner, breakfast, and buffets. Restaurant Description: Enjoy hearty pastas, home style selections, or lite salads.

AMENTITIES:
Complimentary Shuttle to select area destinations, as well as a 24 Hour Business center. Handicapped Rooms/Facilities, AM/FM Alarm Clock, Television with Cable, 24 Hour Front Desk, Pool, Laundry/Valet Services, Parking, Lounge, Business Center, Express Checkout, **Pets Allowed,** Health Club, Safe Deposit Box, Fitness Center or Spa, Restaurants, City Center, No Smoking Rooms/ Facilities, Meeting/Banquet Facilities, Room Service, Telephone, Free Newspaper.

The Grand Shops: Over 65 unique stores and boutiques, novelty shops & restaurants, all within walking distance. Only 1M to JRC airport! ROCHESTER, MN, US, 55902

NOTE:

The hotel is also working on a discount for a buffet breakfast and cocktails.

OBIT

SUSAN SAFFEL
1946-2010
WIFE OF BRUCE SAFFEL
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS

Susan(Riemenschneider) Saffel age 64, of Oakdale Beloved Wife, Mother, Grandmother, Sister, Friend Passed away peacefully November 27, 2010 with family at her side. Susan was born November 26, 1946 in St. Paul, where she lived most of her life. After graduating from Harding High School, she earned a degree in special education at St. Cloud State University. While there she was active in Alpha Xi Delta and retained close friendships with her sorority sisters through the years. She taught in St. Paul, Roseville and WBL until her health forced her to retire early. She was diagnosed with a hereditary lung disease called Alpha 1 Anti Trypsin Deficiency in 1992, which eventually led to a bilateral lung transplant on 5/18/04.

Eternally grateful to her donor, she vowed to live every day to its fullest. She and Bruce loved to travel and made lasting friendships that reached across the U.S. as well as Mexico, Canada and Puerto Rico. Her passions were needlework, gardening, travel work and playing games, but her biggest love was family. She is survived by her beloved husband and caregiver of 44 years, Bruce; daughters, Amy (Jim) Grothaus of Hudson, and Alissa (Matt) O'Hara of Lino Lakes; beautiful and adored grandchildren, Joshua, Alexander and Lauren O'Hara, and Olivia and Oscar Grothaus; mother Nina; brothers, Richard and James (Pat), dear friends and many relatives. Susan was preceded in death by her father, Floyd.



She met her many medical challenges with great strength and courage. A funeral service in celebration of Sue's life was held Friday, Dec. 3rd at 10AM . Interment Fort Snelling National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations in her honor preferred to the Fairview University Lung Program. Thank you to the healthcare professionals at Fairview University Hospital and clinics for the excellent care provided.

OBIT

SGT. JOHN POLLITT
1950-2010
KHE SANH VETERAN
USMC C CO 1/26

USMC Sgt. John "Sarge" Pollitt, age 60, of Palos Hills and Chicago's Eastside, passed away suddenly January 4, 2010. H is a 1967 graduate of Mendel High School.

He joined the Marines in 1967, serving with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division in Vietnam where he was wounded in a mortar attack. Sarge was honorably discharged in 1972.

John was awarded the Purple Heart and Navy Citation, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnamese Service Ribbon, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon and the National Defense Ribbon for his service.

John was a former commander of Frankfort Memorial VFW Post 1493 and Sr. Vice Commander of Post 2791 of Tinley Park VFW. John is the beloved son of George (Esther) Pollitt; loving brother of Donna (Jim) Morsovillo, the late Georgie Pollitt, Debbie (Joe) Howard, Dawn (Bob) Getzloff and Denise (Mike)Onderwater; cherished uncle of Judi (Pat) Stapleton, Nicole (Brian) Malloy, Brandon (Rosa) Getzloff, Michael and Patrick, and Howard, Matthew, Madison, McKayla and Morgan Onderwater; dear great-uncle, nephew, cousin and friend of many; dear friend of Stephanie.



RONS HOUSE PARTY AND THE A SHAU VALLEY

By Craig Tourte

I happened to find myself at my friend Rons - not his real name - house last weekend, Ron had a few friends over and asked me to come over. Ron is my age, an attorney and not a Veteran. Ron grew up in Pacific Palisades California and attended high school with radio personality Michael Medved who Ron describes as being the most intelligent person in his high school and a great guy. Quite a few celebrities lived near Ron while he was growing up. His father was some type of president of an automobile manufacturing plant or something like that. Gregory Peck lived around the corner from him along with other notables; all described as pretty nice, down to earth folks. Ron's friends are affluent and they should be, they are high achievers and work long hours. Writers, attorney's, engineers, lawyers, all kinds of professional people. I have known Ron for some 30 years now, while not running in the same social circles, he is a friend and a decent human being and his friends treated me well and were friendly. Not an easy task for them as I tend to be somewhat reluctant to mingle and converse with those I am unfamiliar with.

Some years ago Ron had mentioned that he had a friend who had also served in Vietnam and that perhaps one day I would meet him. Turns out his friend happened to be at Rons house the day. I was standing listening to three or four others when Ron approached and said that I had something in common with - I forget his name - the man standing to my right. Ron said that we were in Vietnam at the same time. I asked his friend when he served and he told me November 1968 and then mentioned something about 1969 but I failed to follow. We shook hands and that was it, at least for the next hour or so.

I did the best I could with small talk with folks I had never met before we all tried our best to be pleasant and interested in what the other person was saying. I found myself in the kitchen just before I left and Ron's friend walked over to me. We started to talk a little about Vietnam and he told me that he served with the 101st Airborne in the A Shau Valley. I said, Oh, Hamburger Hill, hill 937. I think he was a little shocked that I knew something about it. He kind of opened up and said that he had been wounded and had a hearing loss as a result of his injury. I asked him if he had applied for Veterans Benefits and he gave me the same old line I have heard before, in fact I said the same to Tom Horchler a number of years ago. "I got out alive, and that's all I care about." He did say that he was collecting 10 percent because of a hearing loss. My response to that was the same one that Tom told me those many years ago. "You get your paper work together and I'll take you down to the VA. I'm sure they won't give you any benefits but if they want to give you some money and you don't want it you can give it to me." The guy just kind of looked at me; I could see he was thinking it over. I told him about my situation, and to be honest it is something I have a difficult time talking about without tears coming to my eyes - strange after all of these year, I don't find it getting any easier. I think the guy saw the emotion in me and he kind of softened and said something along the lines of, "No one else can ever understand." It was then that I knew he was one of us, a brother with the pain of remembrance. We hugged - and I'm sure those who saw us wondered why - before I left. It was pretty cool, you just never know at these things when you'll meet one of us.



NEW PX ITEMS



Khe Sanh Veterans', Inc. Scholarship Foundation
A message from the Chairman, Dan Fisher and the Committee

2010 begins the second successful year of our new Scholarship Foundation. Tremendous support through donations from the Khe Sanh Membership has provided the Foundation with enough funds to increase Scholarship awards to $1000 for each accepted, young scholar. Remember that your donations are tax deductible and that you can memorialize a comrade with your donation for publication in "RED CLAY". The reunion silent auction is another source of financial support, *so bring in those special items you think can sell.*

We have seven scholarship awards to announce this year. Four are new applicants and three are second year applicants. Below are short summaries of these scholars. A hearty 'Well Done!' to each of them. Be sure to encourage your children and grandchildren to apply for Scholarship grants from Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

REMINDER! THE 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR CUT-OFF DATE TO RECEIVE KSVSF SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS WILL BE: JUNE 1, 2011 (POSTMARKED)

MOLLOY FAUVER
2nd year award. Daughter of Jerry Fauver, USMC, D CO 1/26. A junior at Murray State in Literature Studies. She is aiming at a career in publishing or newspaper reporting or editing. Molly has already published a short story in MSU publications. She volunteers at the MSU newspaper.



DEVIN MANNION
1st year award. Son of Dennis Mannion USMC, K CO 3/26 F/O. Devin is a University of Connecticut Junior, with a Major in History. His goal is earning a Master sin Education, and becoming a high school teacher. Devin has earned athletic recognition in High School and plays Rugby at Uconn, while volunteering for Blood and MS fund raisers.





BETH NEAL
1st year award. Daughter of Russ Turner USMC A CO 1/26. Beth is a freshman at St. Louis Community College pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice. Beth has restarted her educational goals combined with being a mother of three young children.



NICHOLAS RUSSOMANO
1st year award. Son of Tom Russomano USMC D CO 1/26. Nicholas is a junior at Ramapo College of New Jersey studying Information Systems with a goal of becoming an IT professional in business. Nick excelled in HS swimming and track, which he now coaches to young students. He is a member of Future Business Leaders Assn.



ELIZABETH HENNES
2nd year award. Daughter of James Hennes, USN Corpsman, H CO 2/26. Elizabeth is a Junior at University of Wisconsin– Stevens Point, studying general education, with a minor in Spanish, while still working two jobs. She achieved "High Honors" in her studies.



KATIE BALLANTONE
1st year Award. Daughter of Ron Ballantone, USMC, D CO 1/26. Katie will be a senior at the University of Illinois Urbana, achieving her Bachelors Degree in Theater/Acting. She plans to act professionally. She has acted at local theaters and coaches young students in an actors workshop. She has also served as a US Congressional Page in 2006.



LIBERTY KING
2nd year award. Liberty is the granddaughter of Mike Fishbaugh, USMC FLSG-FLC. Liberty has made the Dean's List in her field of study, Respiratory Therapy. She hopes to intern at a lung specialist clinic while continuing to volunteer in public educational programs and treatment centers.



KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDA TION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to graduating high school students who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student or who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited curriculum following high school graduation.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans. Inc., a 501 (c) (19) charitable organization.

3. **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 6/1/2010 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:**

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid member of Khe Sanh Veterans. Inc. who has been a member in good standing for a minimum of three years. This includes deceased life members of KSV, and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA in Vietnam if family members are associate members of KSV Inc. Children of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, Character, Citizenship, leadership potential, and financial need. A point selection system is included in the application forms. Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities, or in service to the community, church, or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review, and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the **"RED CLAY"** Newsletter.

THE AWARDS

The award will be $1,000 per school year for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each year applied.

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to:

Mr. Dan Fisher
Chairman KSVSF Committee
6050 52ND ST N
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

1. The money is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees, and books at an accredited institution of the candidate's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant.

3. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

4. The Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the award amount to the selected students upon fulfillment of proof of registration sent to the Review Committee Chairman when it becomes available.

5. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of June of the current school year.

6. Scholarship Applications must he received by the Committee Chair on or before April 21of the current school year to be attended.

7. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points (attach last school GPA transcript)

GPA 4.0 = 40 points
GPA 3.5 = 35 points
GPA 3.0 = 30 points
GPA 2.5 = 25 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 35 points total
Military Veteran = 15 points
Student Government = 10 points
Community related services = 5 points
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 5 points

c. Short essay (60 words) on education goals and self= 10 points

d. Financial Need. Max = 15 points (the Fund is designed to help those in need of educational financial support).

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation Application Form

(A Copy Is Enclosed in this Magazine. Please Keep For Further Reference.)

Date: _____

1. Applicant Information:

Name: Last_____
First_____MI____
Address: Street_____, City_____St___Zip_____
Home phone: AC____/ ____/ _____E-mail address:_____
Birthdate: Day____ Month_____ Year_____

2. Sponsor Information (Khe Sanh Veteran. Inc. Member):
Name: Last _____First_____
Relationship to applicant _____
Branch of service_____
Unit served at Khe Sanh _____Dates_____

3. School Information:
School name: _____
School Address: Street _____,City_____St__ Zip Code _____
Phone number: AC____/_____/_____
Curriculum/intended course of study _____
School year to be funded _____ ____

4. Applicant Personal History
a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, offices held, etc)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. List school honors, prizes, community activities participated in, military service, volunteer service to community, church, or government.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____











c. ENCLOSE THIS APPLICATION FORM, A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF, GPA TRANSCRIPT, AND A BRIEF PERSONAL SUMMARY (60 WORDS) TELLING OF YOUR VOCATIONAL PLANS AND FINANCIAL NEED, ADDRESSED TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.

BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL FILLED FORMS FOR YOUR RECORDS!

I SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant Signature of KSV Parent, Grandparent, or Guardian

Note* APPLICATION DEADLINE June 1ST OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR

- **IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, ALL INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

APPROVED:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, KSV Scholarship Committee

_____

David Smith, President KSV

LATEST NEW ITEMS FROM YOUR KHE SANH VETERANS PX



KHE SANH VETERAN DESK MODEL CHALLENGE COIN $ 20.00



HOME IS WHERE YOU DIG IT PIN ,WRITING IS EXACTLY AS ORIGINAL 1-1/2 INCHES HIGH $ 8.00



KHE SANH VETERAN COFFEE MUG $ 7.00



USMC KEYCHAIN CHALLENGE COIN/BOTTLE OPENER $ 8.00



CUSTOM MADE MINITURE K-BAR PIN AVAILABE WITH (KHE SANH or USMC or US ARMY ON BLACK CHROME BLADE) $ 8.00



KHE SANH VETERAN S NEWEST CHALLENGE COIN $ 8.00 (Really Nice)

THE KSV COFFEE MUG, K-BAR PIN & HOME IS WHERE YOU DIG IT PIN, WILL BE AVAILABLE IN APPROXIMATELY 3-1/2 WEEKS. ALL OTHER ITEMS ARE AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE PURCHASE, FROM THE KSV PX. CALL JOHN PESSONI AT 732-948-9803

WELCOME HOME 2011

"Where Sacrifice and Courage Unite Generations of Veterans"

JUNE 17-19, 2011

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

All veterans, their families and all supporters of our Armed Forces are invited to this very special event on the

25th Anniversary of the

Chicago Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Parade

It will be a full weekend of events that includes:

- Veterans Art and Photo Exhibit at the Chicago Cultural Arts Center.
- Presentation by Veteran authors.
- "Moving Wall" on display at Navy Pier.
- Saturday morning kick-off rally at Navy Pier – opening ceremony followed by entertainment.
- Saturday banquet with Bill Kurtis as the Master of Ceremonies, acknowledging the City of Chicago and honoring all veterans with Medal of Honor Recipients as special guests.
- Sunday morning inter-faith ceremony at the Chicago Vietnam Veterans Memorial featuring Reverend John Steer.
- Information booth, vendors, and variety of seminars all weekend.
- Sunday afternoon of music at Millennium Park featuring Dennis DeYoung and the music of Styx, ARRA, Joe Cantafio and the 101st Rock Division, Kimotion, and more.

FREE COMMEMORATIVE PIN

Visit serviceandhonor.org and reserve your room at The Palmer House by February 1, 2011 and receive your free Welcome Home 2011 Pin.

Welcome Home 2011 P.O. Box 2323 Chicago, IL 60664-2323 (312) 925-5506

For more information or to register for this event visit our web site at

www.serviceandhonor.org

SUMMER 2011

RED CLAY

ISSUE 78



WITH BAYONETS FIXED: BRAVO COMPANYS VALIANT CHARGE AT KHE SANH

30 MARCH 1968 & 25 FEB1968 "GHOST PATROL"

(STORY ON PAGES 44,45-60-67 & INSIDE COVERS)

ALL BS W "V"

"SOME GAVE ALL"
BRAVO CO 1/26 KIA
KHE SANH 30 MAR 1968



CPL	DAVID ALLEN ALDRICH	B CO 1/26 PH
PFC	DAVID BRUCE ANDERSON	B CO 1/26 PH/BS
PFC	TED DENNIS BRITT	B CO 1/26 PH/SS
PFC	JIMMIE LEE JONES	B CO 1/26 PH
LCPL	WAYNE PAUL MOORE	B CO 1/26 PH
PFC	DONALD RAY RASH	B CO 1/26 PH/NC
PFC	RONALD REYES	B CO 1/26 PH
PFC	JOSE RUIZ JR	B CO 1/26 PH
CPL	ALBERT RUSSELL SANFORD	B CO 1/26 PH
LCPL	AUTHOR "C" SMITH	B CO 1/26 PH
PFC	KENNETH ROMAINE TOTTEN	B CO 1/26 PH
CPL	DONALD ALBERT WARREN	B CO 1/26 PH
PFC	PAUL RICHARD GULA	D CO 1/9 PH
CPL	RAYMOND LOUIS PLUNKETT	D CO 1/9 PH
CAPT	FRANCIS LEO J. SHAFER	D CO 1/9 PH/BS
2LT	LAWRENCE RYLAND KOMAN	D CO 1/9 PH
CPL	LUZON BEASLEY	H&S CO 1/9 PH/BS
LCPL	NORMAN L. HOWLETT JR	A CO 3RD ENGRS PH
1LT	MARION HENRY NORMAN	A BTRY 1/13 PH/BS

Reunion Committee

The annual Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion in Rochester, MN., is fast approaching. We need to have your registration form completed and your hotel reservations made. You can always cancel if circumstances will not allow you to attend the reunion.

We have to let the hotel and other businesses where we have booked events, know exactly how many members will be attending. Food and transportation has to be ordered, and there is a very small per cent allowed for additional persons attending.

We have an array of beautiful new items especially designed for our membership, available in the Khe Sanh PX. We have also purchased our own Steamed Hot Dog machine in addition to our Pop Corn & Coffee machines, for the hospitality room. These, and other amenities are the result of your generous contributions.

We hope you and your families will take advantage of the Mississippi Paddle Boat ride scheduled for 21 July. Russ & I took the ride while in Rochester negotiating with the hotel, and had a great time. Lunch will be served, and the Captain will allow each member to drive the boat, and be photographed doing so.

There are numerous vendors selling a hundreds of different items and food during the street festivals directly outside of the hotel. There is also live entertainment from several different bands.

If you wish to donate items for the silent auction you may send them to John Pessoni or myself. We want to thank Ron Shouse for again donating numerous hand crafted Vietnam Beaded Necklaces for our PX.

There is also an election for President, and several BOD positions, so let our Secretary know prior to the reunion if you choose to run for any of the offices.

ONE LAST PLEA TO PLEASE GET YOUR REGISTRATION FORMS IN, THE REUNION IS JUST A FEW SHORT WEEKS AWAY

FEATURES

WHERE EVERYTHING TURNED INTO ITS OPPOSITE: Rev Ray W. Stubbe P-12-13
Excerpt From Ray's Newest Book "Pebbles In My Boots"
B CO 1/26 FEB 25 & 30 MAR 1968: Ken Pipes & Steve Weiss P–36-44, 46-47
Story of (2) Epic Battles Of Bravo CO 1/26 Khe Sanh Vietnam
HELL IN THE HILLS OF KHE SANH: Barry Fixler..... P-49-56
Excerpt His Book "Semper Cool"
VIETNAM HONEYMOON: Michael Bradbury..... P 57-59
Return Visit to Vietnam
WELCOME HOME SFC LESLIE MORELAND: Tom Eichler .....P- 63-76
Memorial Service & Burial of MIA From 1968 Battle Of Lang Vei
EVENTS WE EXPIERENCE IN "KEEPING THE PROMISE": Donna Elliott P-86-96
Book Review, and Another Trip To Vietnam By Donna To Locate MIA Brother Jerry

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER SUMMER 2011

29:11-13
New International Version
I pray for safe travel to Rochester for everyone in July. I hope to renew old friendships and make many new ones.

Chaplain Ron Rayner

Memorial Day is a day to remember those who have served our country and passed on. It is also a time to pray for those are serving today.

Almighty God, with reverence and love we pause to pay tribute to those who have served our nation and now rest from their labor.

We also pay tribute to our honored and valiant United States Armed Forces. Please grant that we may be ever mindful of their service to our nation, and that we may be ever aware of our fellowship with all who have served our nation. Please guard our homes, churches and schools, our entire land and all therein from harm and destruction. Please preserve the integrity of this Nation founded on religious principles by protecting it from all enemies within and without. We beseech You, O God to shield and protect our armed forces, in the air, on and under the sea, and on land. Please bless them with victory. May it be Your will that the dominion of tyranny and cruelty be brought to an end and the kingdom of righteousness be established on earth with liberty and freedom for all mankind. Please grant us the strength, courage, and wisdom to fulfill your wishes. We thank you for the freedom and abundance that we enjoy this day. Amen (Taken in part from VVA Ritual Book)

It is so easy to get caught up in the busyness of our daily lives and forget the sacrifices of the people that ensure our safety. The United States Military, police officers, and firefighters lead the way by risking their lives in a dangerous world. I believe daily prayer for those who serve is the greatest gift that we can give. It also is good to provide encouragement by saying thank you when the opportunity presents itself. And of course, cards, letters and packages sent overseas are always appreciated.

"Worry weighs a person down; an encouraging word cheers a person up."
Proverbs 12:25
New Living Translation
"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord, "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me."
Jeremiah

OBIT

MARTIN T. SMITH
USMC A CO 1/26
KHE SANH VETERAN



Martin T. "Smitty" Smith 61, of Prescott, Arizona passed away on June 2, 2010. Martin was born August 6 1948 in Alliance, Ohio; the son of Edwin & Leeanna (Tuel) Smith. Martin served in the United States Marine Corp in Vietnam where he received a Purple Heart and other awards of merit. He is a retired Phoenix Police Officer. Martin was a champion wrestler at Sunnyslope High School, a master wood worker and a master gardner. Martin is survived by his wife of over 42 years and childhood sweet-heart since the age of 12, Kay, his son Jeff Smith and wife Debbie, daughter Monica Peeling and husband Walt. Grandchildren: Sandy, Greg, Sa-

brina, Shelly, Ed, Haley, Stoney, Kristen, Michael, Ryan, Raleigh, Ethan and Elliot. Great-Grandchildren: Wyatt, Colton, Taylor, Valerie and Noah. Sisters-in-law: BeaAnn Kelly (Jim) and Michelle Rader (Steve). Nieces and Nephews: Benjamin Pena (Cecilia), Angela Pena, Donna Rader, Michael Rader (Laura), Kendra Crabtree (Tom), Shanna Niemynski (Doug), Tara Koontz (Forest) and Greg Smith (Kelly). Full Military Honors were held on Monday, June 7, 2010 at the Bob Stump Veteran's Administration Medical Center Chapel, 500 N. Highway 89 in Prescott, Arizona, 86313 86301.

END OF WATCH June 02 2010



SADLY MISSED AND ALWAYS LOVED

You bid no one a last farewell or never said goodbye.

You were gone before we knew it, And only God knows why.

A million times we needed you, A million times we cried.

If love alone could have saved you, You never would have died.

In life we loved you dearly, In death we love you still.

In our hearts you hold a place No one could ever fill.

It broke our hearts to lose you, But you didn't go alone.

For part of us went with you The day God took you home

OBIT

ELEANOR RUGGIERO: MOTHER OF ALICE KENNY, MOTHER-IN-LAW OF NEIL KENNY KSV L CO 3/26



Entered into rest, May 16, 2011, Eleanor Ruggiero, 88 of Huntington Ave.: wife of Michael Ruggiero; mother of Alice (Neil) Kenny, Michael (Phyllis) & James (Alice) Ruggiero, Frances (Sal) Genna & Dorothy Ruggiero; sister of Elizabeth Spirito; also survived by 7 grandchildren & several great-grandchildren; born Aug. 9, 1922, daughter of the late Michael & Laura Parente. She retired from Blue Cross/Blue Shield, enjoyed dancing, bowling, senior clubs and spending time & traveling with family & friends.

OBIT

CHOSIN RESERVOIR DETACHMENT #968
MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

THE CHOSIN NEWS

FLOYD A. LINDSEY
"Short Round" MCCULLEY
CORPORAL, U. S. MARINE CORPS
KHE SANH VETERAN - VIETNAM



Corporal Floyd A Lindsey
"Short Round" McCulley

"MCCULLEY, Floyd A. Lindsey. Dear father of Jonathan A. David McCulley. Survived by 6 brothers, 3 sisters, 1 deceased sister, numerous nieces and nephews, great nieces and nephews and great, great nieces and nephews.

Also survived by numerous dear friends and best buddy Bosco. Monday, January 17, 2011, age 62 years.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend a memorial mass at St. John the Evangelist Church 7121 Plainfield Rd. (Deer Park) on Tuesday at 11 AM. Visitation at the church from 10am until Mass at 11am

He was a member of the Khe Sanh Vietnam Veterans group. Interment at Dayton National Veteran's Cemetery at 3 P.M. Tuesday. "

On 27 July 1966, at the young age of 17 years and 8 months, Floyd enlisted as a Private into the U.S. Marine Corps in Cincinnati, Ohio. Before turning 21 years of age, Floyd was Honorably released from active duty on 8 August 1969 at Camp Lejeune, NC. As a combat Marine, he would rise to the rank of Corporal and serve as a 0341 Mortarman and Rifleman.

Fellow Marine Dan Fisher, who served 7 months with Floyd at Khe Sanh wrote "Floyd McCulley served in Vietnam as a rifleman with 1st Platoon, Company "D", 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, 3rd Marine Division (reinforced) for 2 tours in 1967 - 1968. Floyd saw action at Hill 55, west of DaNang, at Khe Sanh, including the 77 day "Siege" and again at Hill 55 area in later 1968. Floyd was well respected and known by his fellow Marines as "Short Round". Floyd was a member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. and the Delta Co. 1/26 Association." Khe Sanh Veterans: www.khesanh.org



His last duty assignment was with Company "C", 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force. During his 3 plus years of active service, 2 years and 1 month was served overseas as a combat Marine in Vietnam. His Awards and decorations include the Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and the Vietnam Campaign Medal. He also qualified as a Marksman with the Rifle and Pistol.

"In lieu of flowers memorials may be directed to the Vietnam Veterans, P.O. Box 11564, Cin. Ohio 45211. Arrangements by Chas. A. Miller Sons Funeral Home. Condolences may be expressed to the family by signing the guest book at www.chasamillersons.com"

Marines from The Chosin Reservoir Detachment 968 were honored to serve as Casket Guards during the Funeral Visitation Period. The detail consisted of Walter Golladay and Robert Collier.

POETRY

WompWompWompWomp

WompWompWompWompWomp…the sound!
It could be heard faintly in the distance.
It was the same but louder on nearby ground.
The dust filled my eyes, ever unmasked.
I ran to it, I ran from it, maybe I fell down.
When I needed it most my soul danced.

A Silver Bird deserted us in South Vietnam.
It took us home if we made our time.
But that big, ugly Huey was the battle ram.
It rescued us if we bled in the slime.
It pitched and yawed, I swear it even swam.
If there were trees it could even climb.

Old UH-1, in all forms, was OD green, yes.
The men inside had brass 'nads' too.
It was required, and they all were the best.
I never saw a crew that would not do.
Crazy men matched the ships, nothing less.
We Grunts on the ground…we knew!

We saw the Cobras, we prayed for fast fliers.
The B-52s made the earth shake below.
Puff made the sky red and our spirits higher.
The Bumble Bees were spotting a show.
"Chinooks" handled big stuff, major suppliers.
Hueys touched us every day down below.

Those old work horses were tough as hell.
Like a Timex they kept on ticking.
They carried ammo, supplies, men and mail.
We went to hot LZs pulses racing.
At times they carried food we even smelled.
In a firefight they heard our crying.

We watched the horizon for their smoking fallen.
If close to them, we would protect them.
Their sixties were voices to us, angels had spoken.
Those with red crosses were from heaven.
Dead or alive, they were there for us, loving iron.
They are the best horse the Army has seen.

It is hard to believe the best are to be retired.
They are like us, I suppose, and history now.
They are tough and can serve, but not desired.
A reliable, tough old Huey is not enough.
I can pull a trigger but I just can't get there.
Let's go to the bone yard and sit down.

This was written at the request of J.C. Fischer for the retirement of the
Phenomenal UH-1 Huey helicopter that served us so well in Vietnam
And other soldiers for thirty or more years. We salute it and all it has done.
I could write forever. Images keep flashing. It is now the next afternoon and
The old baby is still in my mind. How do I stop it? I cannot. It was too big, too
Much a part of what we did, too huge part of our life on the ground. I was in an
Air mobile brigade and we lived with the machine…and our dead left with it.
Thank God I did not see more of that than I did. I witnessed a lot of wounded
Carried away in its not so gentle hands, but they were relatively safe there,
Soon to be in gentler hands. One vision stays with me. As we ran to her,
We were bent at the waist like subjects approaching their queen.
That was as it should have been and as it should be now as the queen
Retires to her final resting chamber. It should be something grand.

Mike Mullins, 2/6/11

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Delaware County News
A Maine Marine meets the man who saved his life 43 years ago. Wednesday, March 16, 2011
By Anne Neborak

For many the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall is a place to commemorate the dead for Charles "Graves" Roth, age 62 of Collingdale each year he would visit the Wall remembering those who died during the Tet Offensive and his best friend Robert L. Stanek who died on Feb. 4, 1968.

But on this breezy day on March 7, it was a day to celebrate life. Today he would meet the Marine whose life he had miraculously saved forty-three years ago.

Roth was in Graves Registration where he tended to over 2,700 bodies of the fallen soldiers, children and even military dogs in Vietnam. He would retrieve bodies during the day repelling out of helicopters and spend his nights preparing the dead for their trip home. He and another Marine would fingerprint the soldiers and then put them in body bags.

On April 25, 1968 Gil Hernandez, 63, of Elko, Nev. was in the middle of a combat zone riding on top of a tank when he was hit by satchel charges and grenades. He suffered intense injuries to his back, both of his legs, his liver and his arm. He had a punctured lung, six inches of his small intestine was removed and shrapnel was pulled out from his skin. He was brought to Graves Registration for his return home. Roth would fingerprint the left hand and then a fellow Marine; Bob Boutwell would fingerprint the right hand. Roth saw a twitch from a body that was to be fingerprinted. It was Hernandez. Roth's observation would save Hernandez life.

He moved again and Roth remembered that if you hit someone three times you can revive them. He hit him three times and he was breathing. He sent him back to the surgeon, Dr. James Finnegan who again pronounced Hernandez dead sending him back to Graves Registration and called on a second surgeon to concur also pronouncing the young Marine dead.

Roth began hollering "this Marine is alive" They continued working on Hernandez and found a faint pulse. Amazingly, Hernandez was pronounced dead three times before being sent to Japan for treatment. His injuries were so massive he never would have survived the plane ride home to the states.

Roth always remembered Hernandez wondering what the outcome was, wondering if he was alive or a name on the wall. He didn't know his first name and wondered if any of the names of Hernandez on the wall was the man in the morgue. For Hernandez it was like a dream. When he woke up, he only remembered the first time he was revived by Dr. Finnegan.

Neil McCrossen, of Springfield and a member of Roth's Darby's Post 598, was reading an article in VFW magazine about Hernandez and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. McCrossen called Hernandez about Roth and he urged him to get in touch with Roth. After that phone call Roth wrote to Hernandez wondering if this was the man who left Dong Ha alive or if Hernandez, the man he revived had become a name was on the wall.

Though separated by miles, the two have worked for the same cause for years. Roth like Hernandez suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and works to help all veterans reclaim their lives. Hernandez is a member of Post 2350 and was in Washington D.C. on this day in March to lobby for veterans rights and meet the man who saved his life. Roth, with members from Darby Post 598, the Upper Darby Marine Corp League and family members came on bus from Collingdale to meet Hernandez welcoming him home. The two met embracing and hugging as onlookers took pictures with cameras and phones recording the event.

Like super heroes the two had faced staggering odds and now faced each other glad to see a miracle come out of Vietnam at this sacred memorial. After pictures were taken, Hernandez talked about his injuries emphasized the need to help the young veterans returning to American soil.

"All I remember is how I was treated when I came home, " Hernandez said. "People were hollering at me. I want to make sure veterans are not treated like us. I take pride in Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. I will help the vets until the day I die," said Hernandez.

Roth, a member of the Vietnam Veteran Motorcycle Club and a past commander of Darby Post 598 works with a support group helping young veterans cope with Post Traumatic Stress ran through the Upper Darby Marine Corp League.

Hernandez talked about his injuries and how grateful he was to Roth for saving his life.

"I was told I would never walk but you can see I'm walking," Hernandez said. If it wasn't for Graves, I wouldn't be here today. But Roth disputes the acknowledgement.

"I'm no hero. I'm a Marine. It's what we do. The heroes are on the wall. I didn't save his life. Four of us carried him back and forth. The guy who did the surgery saved his life. I was just doing a day's work in a bad place.

" After the two talked the group saluted those on the wall with a special tribute to Roth's friend Robert Stanek with prayers, laid wreaths, played taps and a final salute to those who gave all whose names are listed on the Wall. They exchanged patches and pins vowing to meet again.

"I have finally something positive about Vietnam to talk about, said Roth. You made it brother, welcome home."



WEB CHATTER

DREAMS

by Craig W Tourte

I down loaded Barry Fixler's book "Super Cool" onto my Kindle yesterday and read about a quarter of it. I found Tom Eichler was Fixler's squad leader and his squad called Tom "Ike" and that during a patrol Fixler accidentally took a leak into Tom's helmet and never told him about it, it was pretty darn funny. But this post is not about "Super Cool" I'll save that for after I finish the book, which so far is pretty darn funny, an easy read and can be purchased through the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc PX.

I don't recall now what it was, but last night there was something that Fixler said in his book which triggered the thought of dreams. Now I have had two very vivid and reoccurring dreams during my life. The most prevalent is the reoccurring one I had involving the abuse I suffered at the hands of my step-father - who fortunately for him and me I suppose, is no longer with us - and which unfortunately on occasion still raises it's ugly head in the dark of night.

The second dream that I have is a vivid memory of when I was a young police officer many years ago, I used to dream about someone pointing a gun at me and when I attempted to fire my weapon the bullet would travel a few yards and then drop onto the ground. I have shared this with other police officers and this dream does not seem to be mine alone.

Subsequent to my service in Vietnam I have had other re-occurring dreams about that experience - none pleasant. Now to my point. I have no recall of having any dreams while serving 10 months on the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Now perhaps I did dream, but then with time, age and my current limited mental capacity I don't or can't recall what they were about. I have given this quite a bit of thought and have reached the unscientific conclusion that one must first be asleep in order to dream and sleep was something that neither I nor anyone I knew received in an adequate amount. I was always exhausted, on guard and sleep came in small spurts of time. Not enough I think to trigger my dream mechanism - to use a less than scientific term. So the question is, was it just me or did you dream, and if so, what was

the primary subject matter, excluding dreams of the opposite sex or in some cases I'm sure don't ask, don't tell may apply - especially to some of the Navy guys.

Hey Craig

by Terry Parr

I wasn't a police officer but I have similar dreams. In my dreams I am confronting some sort of enemy, and I either can't find my weapon or I have a weapon, but can't find any ammo for it. In some cases I am actually shooting the enemy, but it has no effect.

Hey Craig, Me To

by Tom Eichler

Craig, I was also a Police Officer for 35 Years. I had the same Dream about the gun fights, and my bullets falling to the ground. Never did find out what it meant

Craig.
by Brian Mahoney

Craig, I am also a retired Police Officer, same dream, either I can't load my weapon or the rounds trickle out the end of the barrel.

Tom & Craig,
by Dave Doehrman

At our age I think it means we're firing blanks .....

All,
by lighthousetwothree

If you guys want a little different perspective on "DREAMS," go to www.bravotheproject.com on 21 March. Read the blog. You might find a little "Oh Yea" there. Until then ??????????????

Craig,
by Bruce "T-Bone" Jones

You are not unusual about not dreaming at Khe Sanh during the siege. I was there for almost eleven months, and I did dream occasionally. But not during the siege. I am by no means an expert, but some of the guys I served with in 81's, and Bravo 1/26 as the FORO told me at reunions they didn't dream either.

I think the constant fear and the incoming had a great deal to do with it. Compound that with each of us losing close friends, I believe we just "Shut down". My nightmares come and go today, and I hardly dream good stuff. One of the most telling discussions about dreaming was with a good Khe Sanh friend who said to the VA Doctors re: PTSD was "My time in Nam has taken away my ability to have good dreams...PTSD has taken them away forever"!

It was after that exchange that they finally awarded him 100% T&P. I'm sure he is not alone and it is another price we pay for the siege of Khe Sanh. I don't have the wonderful writing skills and story-telling that you have but I think you know what I mean by this little story.

Semper Fi Craig and give Brother Weiss a hug for me when you see him.
"T-Bone"

Craig,

by Chuck Chamberlin

Thank you for your service Craig. I am proud to know you, and to call you friend.
Semper Fidelis
Blackbud Charlie Out

Craig, Good Post
by earl

Hard to get some REM sleep at Khe Sanh with one eye open.:)

Craig,
by Steve Hecknauer

Ya know, I don't remember if I dreamt at all while at KheSanh. It's strange but my memory was the second thing that went!!

Semper Fi

POETRY

POW/MIA

How can I get where his head has been?
How can I feel what he has felt in his solitary prison?
How can I see what he has seen through his blood-shot eyes?
How can I know what he knows in the marrow of his bone and flesh?

I cannot.

How can I smell the filth of his body unwashed and bloody?
How can I feel his frayed nerves and pained heart?
How can I taste through his blood and urine?
How can I sleep on his dank, cold floor?

I cannot.

How can I see through the slits in his four by four box?
How can I touch the splinters of his bamboo bars?
How can I scoop the slop from his metal china?
How can I feel creatures crawl on my skin?

I cannot.

How can I know his absolute loneliness?
How can I see the depth of the abyss into which he has fallen?
How can I know the agony caused by his keeper's boots in his ribs?
How can I feel the sting of lashes as they descend on his decaying flesh?

I cannot.

How can I know the torment of thirst with water so near I can smell it?
How can I know the throbbing in his head when he thinks of home?
How can I feel dry tears run down his face when no tears are left?
How can I feel the desolation that fills the absence of hope?

I cannot. I came home.
How can I feel his chill as he wraps himself in his tattered rags?
How can I know his forlorn spirit as he thinks of his lost loved ones?
How can I share his hopelessness as he realizes home will never be again?
How can I fight back the tears as I take myself where he must have been or is?

I cannot. I came home. I am free.

But am I?

As long as he is there am I ever free?
As long as he is imprisoned or missing, am I with him?
Does his spirit cry out to mine asking me to find him somehow?
Have we forsaken him by not demanding more be done than has been?

Perhaps.

Does remembering him in prayer and in thought free him somehow?
Does keeping his memory and absence alive pass through time and space?
Can he know it and can he feel it, and know that we care but are as helpless as he?
Is there a chance thoughts penetrate his cell so he knows he is revered in our guilt?

I pray it is so.

Am I, in my own way, a prisoner in my own land, without respect?
Am I a pawn in the hands of false prophets as they disrespect his sacrifice?
Am I weak; unable to bring him home if he lives, as long as only words are said?
If he lives, does he even want to come to a home-land that left him behind and dead?

I am impotent. All I can offer is the promise that I will never forget.
I cannot feel his pain or know his loneliness and feeling of desertion.
I can tell him I am free but part of me can never be separated from him.
Even if I ignore his plight, I cannot disclaim my country's neglect of him.

It is our guilt. Remembering is our duty; no matter

the war.
But one was worse than all the rest.
It is Vietnam.
In losing him we have lost honor.
In conceding victory we gave up the strength to bring him home.

I am home.
I will always remember.
Am I free?
Part of me can never be free as long as he is there.

Michael D. Mullins, copyright 2007
Author of *Vietnam in Verse*, poetry for beer drinkers

My Unexpected Visit to Khe Sanh Hill 950 or Hill 1015 in April, 1968.

by Hugh D. Cox

(Updated on April 26, 2009) More recent Internet postings and photos about the mountains around Khe Sanh now convince me that I was on Hill 950 or Hill 1015 and not on Hill 861. My own photos show that the helicopter pilot flew to the north from Khe Sanh. I could not see the runway from whatever Hill I was dropped on because of a ridge. See diagram at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kasa.jpg . Good hill photos are at http://www.hmm-364.org/khesanh.html . A superb description of the battle for Hill 950 on June 6, 1968 is at http://www.khesanh.org/redclay/issue-60-memoirs.htm (scroll down).

In April 1968, I was a First Lieutenant with Army Special Forces assigned to MAC-SOG in Vietnam. I was given a mission to fly by Army helicopter to Khe Sanh to deliver intelligence documents to our Special Forces unit located within the Khe Sanh combat base.

The North Vietnamese siege of the base had ended and the U.S. Marines were dismantling much of the base. My flight was a routine one since the air strip at Khe Sanh was not under constant indirect fire. We flew over some of the most historic terrain of the Vietnam war including Camp Carroll, the Rock Pile, Highway 9 before we reached the airspace over Khe Sanh.

When we reached that area, I was astonished to see the bombing devastation on the hills and mountains surrounding the air strip - particularly to the West. Miles and miles of B-52 bomb craters pockmarked the landscape. There were tens of thousands of craters within sight.

As the helicopter descended, the pilot received an urgent mission to undertake a medical evacuation "medevac" from a U.S. Marine outpost. The pilot quickly gained altitude and flew northwest from the air strip to a mountain ridge about 3,000 feet high. When we approached the ridge, I could see that it was almost like a knife edge with very steep ridges dropping away from the long spine of the mountain. The pilot asked me to jump off when we reached the mountain top ridge. He explained that he needed no extra weight and promised he would return for me. As the only passenger, I jumped from about 10 feet above the ridge.

I was on Hill 950 or Hill 1015 I think and it was one of those war experiences one can never forget.

I was not certain how long I was there. Time spent waiting in a war is irrelevant.

This mountain ridge at Hill 861 was manned by "A" company, 1st Battalion of the 1st Marine Division (which had recently replaced K company of the 26th Marine Regiment) (I do not yet know the Marine Corps units on Hill 950 and Hill 1015.) I saw only a few Marines during my visit.

Several Marines were moving about. Each acted in very exhausted slow motion carrying canteens, supplies and ammunition back and forth. Their young faces all had heavy beards and deep set eyes. I simply watched them as I sat down with my briefcase and weapon. It was as if they had always been there in filthy, damp and torn uniforms. They moved deliberately in spite of their distant stares. They seemed so young and I felt so old at age 25. These Marines were experienced combat veterans deprived of adolescence. They carried simple things like water and food as if it was for holy communion. Anyone who saw them on that day in 1968 would

be proud to be with them even for a short period of time.

No one spoke to me. These Marines seemed busy and unconcerned about my presence. It was as if I had always been there sitting on the ground in my clean uniform and green beret clutching my briefcase and M16.

Their defensive position along the mountain ridge was one of the most precarious I had ever seen. These Marines occupied the spine of the ridge for only about 10 meters down the steep ridges from the top. Then there was another 10 meters of cut down vegetation probably filled with mines. Beyond, the heavy jungle loomed just 20 to 30 meters away. The North Vietnamese could have been upon us within seconds. I looked over the other side of the ridge. The defensive setup was the same on both sides of the mountain. Hill 950 or 1015 seemed to be an invitation to attack.

I thought it was best to wait until I was spoken to. The Marines knew I was there. Army types know that Marines are different. I located a position to move to if needed. There were no fortifications on "my" part of the ridge. I tried not to show my growing anxiety.

This strategic combat location was the bloodiest Vietnam ridge I ever visited. Each attack on any of the Khe Sanh Hills was a potential enemy victory. Holding this ridge seemed doubtful to me. I admit I was scared.

I had read the reports of the battles along these mountains and ridges. Hundreds of Marines were killed or wounded in taking these hills. Brave NVA soldiers took even more casualties in those battles. In January, 1968, the Marines had to take some ridges more than once to secure them. Hill 861 came under serious attack again in July, 1968 - after my short visit. Once secured in January 1968, Hill 861 remained firmly in Marine hands.

Finally after a long period of sitting, I was approached by one young Marine who asked me how he could transfer to the Army. He seemed dead serious.

I do not remember my answer. We talked for a half hour in quiet tones while I constantly scanned the tree line below for enemy movement. Everyone knew the elite 324th NVA Division was in this area. Within a few hours, the helicopter returned to pick me up.

During my visit, I knew I was among special men who could be measured by a simple yardstick of courage and trust. Race, class and family background meant nothing on that ridge. I was deeply moved by each man's simple act of sharing with his brothers.

Since that day, I always speak of U.S. Marines in very respectful terms. I will never forget the Corps' finest on Hill 861.

VOICE FROM THE PAST

By Craig W Tourte

One of the Marines I spent 10 months on the Khe Sanh Combat Base with, was Edward Lawida. Ed was one of those give all, poster Marines, tough and unafraid, and the pride of any Marine Corps Recruiter. He quietly accepted all that was ordered of him, I never heard a complaint, grumble nor did I hear fear in his voice. Powerfully built with a funny Massachusetts accent to those lazy California ears of mine. Where he was always squared away, I was frumpy. Where he was an outstanding Marine, I was a sorry representative, where he was brave, I was frightened.

After his Vietnam tour Ed continued in the Marine Corps as an Embassy Guard in Moscow and even later, an additional assignment working with the CIA. I was amazed as we all huddled in the trench line during incoming, to look over at Ed and observe his arm extended upward as he recorded the incoming rockets and artillery shells and to see this big smile. I lost track of Ed after Vietnam, on occasion I'd pull out some old faded photographs and see Ed's face and wonder if he was still amongst us. Through the modern age of computers I found him some forty years later. He has now attended a couple of our reunions and still resides on the East coast. I talk to him on the telephone from time to time and look forward to seeing him once again at our reunion in Rochester Minnesota this July

At the Khe Sanh reunion held in Denver Colorado I reminded Ed about those recording he used to make, wondering if my voice and the voices of others could be heard. I knew the tapes he made were personal letters home but I was always fascinated about those tapes which contained the sound of incoming and wondered if my voice and the voices of others - some no longer with us - could be heard. Ed told me that he had not listened to the tapes since he returned home from Vietnam. I suggested that Ed have the tape recordings transferred to CD so that they would be saved and would not fade with time. A few months later Ed sent those tapes to me along with a small reel to reel recorder and suggested that I have the tapes recorded on CD if I wanted. Turns out the recorder was no longer operative so I had a friend who works in the recording industry make the copies for me.

After almost 6 months I received those tapes back, the voices and sounds now professionally recorded on CD. It took me a few days to get up the nerve to listen to them. I reserved an evening that was dark and quiet and sat alone as I listened to his voice for what seemed like hours. It was haunting and unsettling to listen to the words he spoke so many years ago, as he related to his sister the various actions, his most personal feelings, loss of friends and experiences he was going through and most poignant his desire to return home to family and friends. The CD's were clear as if he was sitting right next to me and as I listened, mysteriously the tears flowed down my cheeks.

There were however, no recordings of the incoming. I was exhausted when I had finished and didn't sleep at all the rest of the night and poorly for the next several. I boxed the tapes and CD's and sent them along to Ed wondering if he would ever listen to them. I am occasionally reminded by a childhood friend that he still maintains the letters I had written to him while I was at Khe Sanh and he has offered to let me read them. Each time I have turned him down, not really having an answer as to why, even to this day, I am unable to read the words I wrote. I know he does not understand and I am not sure I understand myself, but for some unknown reason I can't seem to find the sturdiness to read them. Just something deep down in my psyche, perhaps some day, but not today, nor anytime soon.

BOOK REVIEW

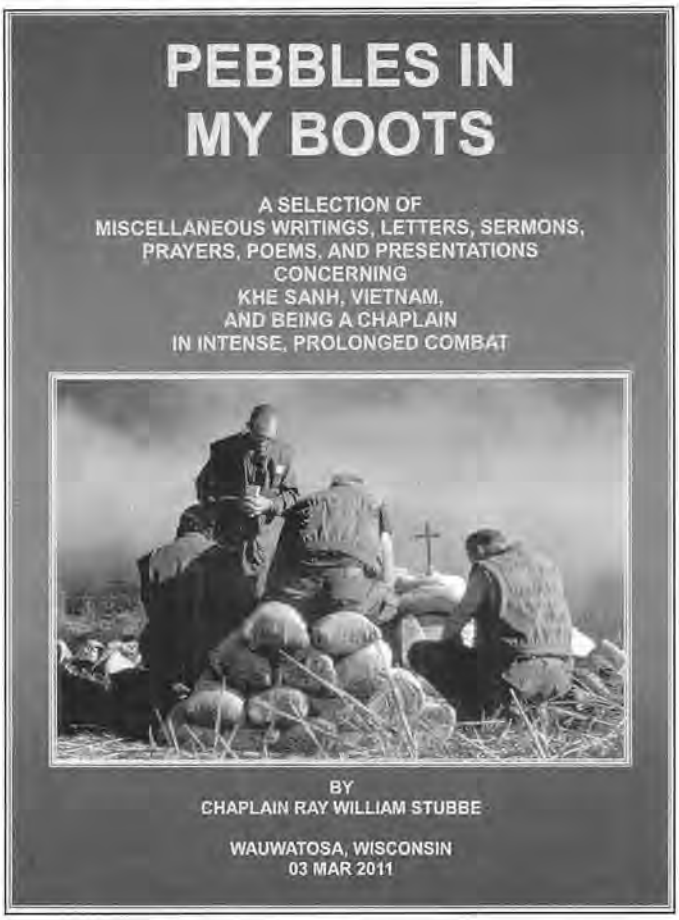



Ray Stubbe's lastest Book is a Selection of Miscellaneous Writings, Letters, Sermons, Prayers, Poems and Presentations concerning Khe Sanh Vietnam, and being a Chaplain in intense, Prolonged Combat.

The various prayers, sermons, talks, presentations, letters, reports, and poems in this collection reflect the experience of intense and prolonged combat as well as an entire 21-year active military service and the attempt to understand and derive meaning of it within the framework of a Christian perspective. In many ways, this collection is a parable for all Christians living in the world, "in the world and not of it," in the world as the channel of God's Presence bringing blessing, peace, love, forgiveness, salvation, healing, call to justice, challenge to become whole and generally maximize the precious gift of a fragile, precious, and tenuous live.

Many ask: What was Khe Sanh all about? What are your Vietnam experiences? How do you deal with it? How has Vietnam affected your life? What is PTSD? Why did you stay in the military? What does a chaplain do? My answers to all of these queries and much more is somewhat, even if dimly, reflected in this collection.

Because this compilation includes several different presentations and talks to widely differing groups, many incidents and stories are repeated.

I am especially grateful to Mr. Tom Eichler who has devoted so many of his years and efforts for our Khe Sanh Vets for meticulously editing this compilation of documents for typographical errors, designing the cover, and getting it printed. Without Tom's dedicated efforts, this book would not have been possible.

Because of the wide variety of "audiences," these will not be understood, of interest, or of value to most, and perhaps the effort of *&:ywv quarens intellectum* lIIagony'-{the Greek word for athletic contest!) seeking understanding," to make rational what is inherently irrational, is as futile as Sisyphus attempting to roll the stone up the hill, only to have it continuously roll down and never to rest on top of the hill!. Yet, the attempt perhaps may be understood in terms of the Greek IlUO't~pLOV ("mystery," not as an enigma to be solved, but rather as something that draws us into deeper and deeper layers of meaning) as one is goaded in an almost Faustian quest to gain a more complete understanding because these experiences remain as pebbles in one's boots, impeding one's progress in the journey of life. It is precisely in this pain that one meets God who is found on the Cross, who is with us no matter where we are. The pebbles must be acknowledged. The quest of seeking understanding or placing them within God's Presence in prayer, discloses my soul, which is reflected in these words as in a mirror.

ED NOTE:

Ray has put his heart and soul into his latest book. The book is beautifully done in vibrant colors (See PX Pictures), and it is only being sold in the Khe Sanh Veterans PX, price $ 10.00. I only printed a few hundred copies so get one as quick as you can before they are all gone. They are currently available for shipping.

POETRY

To my comrades who sleep in the cool earth
under the shadows of monuments,
you do not have to hear the platitudes of politicians,
or shield your eyes from the glare of medals
nor stand interminably in formations under noon day suns

Sleep peacefully while wrens debate
and longleaf pines whisper your names,
reverberating memories in the beating hearts
of those who love you still.

DENNIS WIMBISH 2007



DONATIONS THAT ARRIVED AFTER MAGAZINE WAS SENT TO PRINTER WILL APPEAR AGAIN IN ISSUE 78

AVERY, Terry E.	DP	22 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 10285
BATES, Robert G.	DP	05 Mar 11	20.00	Check# 2288
BERSANO, John	DP	28 Dec 10	30.00	Check# 2493
BROWN, Francis	DP	18 Jan 11	25.00	CASH
CASE, Earl	DP	18 Feb 11	30.00	Credit card
CHICOINE, Roger D.	DP	02 Feb 11	100.00	Check# 3556
CONLEY, John G.	DP	22 Jan 11	20.00	Check# 6752
COX, Hugh D.	DP	26 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 12005
DAKIN, William E.	DP	02 Feb 11	20.00	Check# 1130
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ESTES, Leo L.	DP	22 Feb 11	20.00	CASH
FARRELL, Daniel A.	DP	05 Mar 11	70.00	Check# 3488
FISHER, Daniel	DP	27 Jan 11	40.00	Check# 13743
FISHER, Daryl A.	DP	02 Feb 11	250.00	Check# 3669
GATEWOOD, Ronald L.	DP	28 Feb 11	30.00	Check# 4610
GIBBONS, Gregory A.	DP	20 Jan 11	50.00	Check# 6595
GOWER, Lloyd R.	DP	02 Mar 11	30.00	Check# 1535
HARNISHER, Thomas J.	DP	29 Jan 11	50.00	Check# 3092
KEATON, Thomas	DP	19 Feb 11	50.00	Check# 2689
KUBILUS, Robert J.	DP	18 Jan 11	20.00	Check# 2201
LELAND, Kenneth E.	DP	25 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 1003
LENZEN, Marty R.	DP	02 Apr 11	50.00	Check# 0620
LIND, David T.	DP	26 Mar 11	10.00	Check# 2143
LOERSCH, Phillip E.	DP	07 Feb 11	30.00	Check# 1796
MARTIN, Larry K.	DP	18 Jan 11	50.00	Check# 2581
MILLOCK, Carl	DP	02 Feb 11	5.00	Check #4084
NELSON, James	DP	05 Apr 11	20.00	Credit Card
NUNN, John B.	DP	25 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 139074
OHARA, Michael	DP	02 May 11	75.00	Check# 1748
RIORDAN, Robert W.	DP	05 Mar 11	250.00	Check# 6450
ROSENTAL, George E.	DP	28 Feb 11	25.00	Check# 1756
SHANLEY, Don	DP	28 Jan 11	250.00	Check# 1036
TAUBER, Roger D	DP	22 Apr 11	30.00	Check# 0708
THORTON, Charles C.	DP	28 Feb 11	250.00	Check# 1043
TOURTE, Craig	DP	03 Mar 11	140.00	Check# 710
UNANGST, Robert W. Jr.	DP	18 Feb 11	50.00	Check# 3211
VESESKIS, Kenneth F.	DP	23 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 420
WRIGHT, James E.	DP	17 Jan 11	30.00	Check# 4704

California Military History Museum & Presentation by Col. Bruce Clarke (ret) Author of "Expendable Warriors."

By Craig W. Tourte

On March 19, 2011, I along with Steve Wiese (B/1/26), Marco Soto (A/1/26) and David Lind (H&S 2/4) attended a presentation by Colonel Bruce Clarke (ret) held at the California Military History Museum located in Sacramento, California. Colonel Clarke is the author of the book "Expendable Warriors," "The Battle of Khe Sanh and the Vietnam War." The book explains that "On January 21, 1968, nine days before the Tet Offensive, thousands of North Vietnamese soldiers attacked the U.S. Marine base at Khe Sanh in remote northwestern South Vietnam. The ensuing siege ended seventy-seven days later in a tactical victory for the United States, which eventually abandoned the base, making it a heartbreaking and controversial symbol of American involvement in Vietnam. Bruce Clarke participated in the battle as a young U.S. Army officer advising the Marines, and his book combines his firsthand experiences and archival research to describe the saga of Khe Sanh."

The California Military History Museum is the state's official military museum and houses over 30,000 artifacts as well as a library and archives. The museum also has five satellite museums at Camp Roberts in Southern Monterey County, Camp San Luis Opispo, Fresno Air National Guard Base, the Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base in Orange County and the National Guard Armory in San Diego. I noted the Museum appeared to have an abundance of items associated with the United States Army and was told by Museum Director, Dan Sebby that the Museum was primarily Army focused. All of the war's this nation has been involved in are represented with uniforms and artifices of that time period. (PIC # 1 & 1A)

The lecture was held on the second floor of the museum. I introduced myself to Colonel Clarke and asked him if it would be permissible to hang the red "Khe Sanh Veterans of Northern California" banner I had brought along. Colonel Clarke was kind enough to agree and welcomed our attendance.(Pic # 2) His presentation included a PowerPoint display of various photographs and grafts from his book, his articulate lecture reflected his intelligence and superior education at West Point and the University of California Los Angeles. As is stated in the forward of the book written by John W. Vessy, General, U.S. Army (retired), "As a young Captain and district advisor he (Clarke) led the valiant defense of the District Headquarters (located at Khe Sanh village) against an enemy force of possible regimental size..." "The fight around the village, in my opinion, ranks among the most resounding victories at Khe Sanh, and has never been adequately or correctly reported in extant histories."

Colonel Clarke's lecture covered the full range of that battle and concluded with his describing his command of troops in the defense of the Army FOB -3 compound located next to the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Colonel Clarke and the men under his command at the Khe Sanh Village District Headquarters and later the defense of the FOB-3 compound were all gallant and extremely brave against overwhelming odds. They persevered with courage, sacrifice and honor. As expected, Colonel Clarkes interpretation of events that occurred at the combat base were slightly different than recollections of some of the former Marines who were in attendance, but still, it was interesting to hear his views on the siege and the interaction between the Army and Marine Corps command structure.

Colonel Clarke was presented with a couple of remembrances of appreciation for presenting his lecture in Sacramento and he in turn presented Museum Director Dan Sebby with one of the newly designed gold Khe Sanh challenge coins.
(PIC 3&3A)

















L-R COLONEL BRUCE CLARKE & CRAIG TOURTE

LAM SON 719

This is probably one of the most misunderstood or misinterpreted operations of the entire Viet Nam War.

ED NOTE:

This Article is one of the best synopsis of Operation Lam Son. It was taken From the Military Images Web Site. It best describes the use of the Khe Sanh Base which our membership heroically defended for so long.



As early as 1967 U.S. planners had planned a ground offensive against Laos to interdict the Ho Chi Minh Trail but had determined that 5 to 7 U.S. – ARVN divisions would be needed. Because the troops were not available and the political climate was never favorable, the idea was put on the back burner but kept simmering.

On December 8, 1970, the plan was re-examined because intelligence was following a PAVN logistical build-up in southeastern Laos. The Vietnamization process along with the gradual reduction of U.S. troops was threatened. The plan became known as Dewey Canyon II (the movement of U.S. supporting troops to the border)/ Lam Son 719 (the ARVN controlled incursion) and had two options: if the North Vietnamese fell back under the attack as they did in Cambodia, then the ARVN would move down the Trail destroying everything they came across. If the North Vietnamese put up resistance then the ARVN was to cause as much damage as possible and conduct a fighting withdrawal back into South Vietnam.

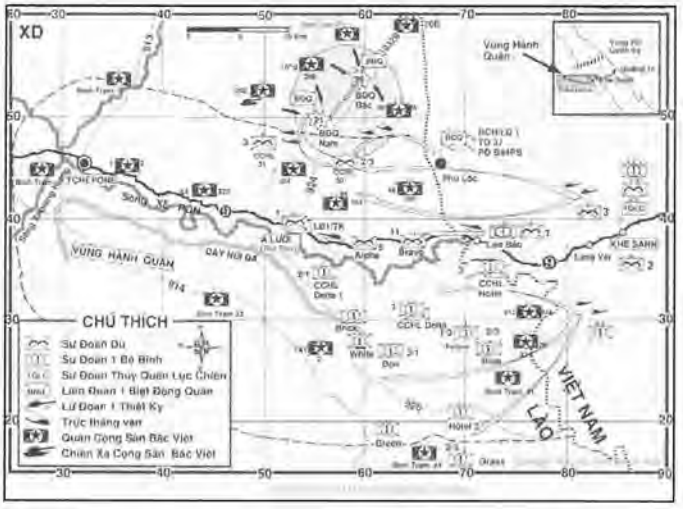

Somehow the 5-7 division estimate was overlooked because in February, 1971, only three ARVN divisions would be involved– the 1st Airborne Division, the 1st Infantry Division, and the Marine Division, supported by the 1st Ranger Group, the 1st Armored Brigade and the 5th Regiment of the 2cnd Division – some of the best troops the ARVN had. What was overlooked was that Hanoi had deployed an entire army corps (70B) made up of the 9th, 19th, 29th and 39th infantry regiments backed up by the 208th, 304th, 320th and 324th Divisions as well as the 202nd armored regiment. The corps was well equipped with 19 or 20 air defense battalions with 23mm, 37mm and 57mm. Hanoi's plan was to smash the offensive and then counterattack along Route 9 towards Tchepone.

The Dewey Canyon II part of the operation began when a task force from the 1st Bde of 5th Mech consisting of elements of the 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry (Mechanized), the 1st Battalion, 77th Armor, the 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry, and Troop A, 4th Squadron, 12th Cavalry left Quang Tri at 0400 29 January with the mission of establishing logistical bases, keeping Route QL-9 open to the border and covering the withdrawal of the South Vietnamese. By nightfall the task force rolled into Fire Support Base Vandergrift. Because Route 9 was known to be in such a poor state of repair, at midnight Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry and two engineer companies led out on foot following a bulldozer with headlights blazing. When a damaged bridge or other obstacle was encountered, a few cavalrymen and engineers were left behind while the rest of the task force moved on. The next morning, the cavalry troop vehicles moved out and joined the group on

foot and arrived at Khe Sanh at 1400 on 1 February. With Highway 9 opened from Vandergrift to Khe Sanh, the road was opened all the way to the border by elements of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cav the following day

Following close behind the 5th Mech task force were four battalions of the US 108th Artillery Group. On 29 January, the 2nd Battalion 94th (175mm/8in) Artillery arrived at LZ Vandergrift along with the 5th Battalion (155mm SP) 4th Artillery. The Battalions were escorted by 1/44th Dusters and Quad 50's with two Dusters assigned to each firing battery, with the Quads and a searchlight going to battalion headquarters. 1/44th was assigned for convoy and perimeter duty. On 1 February, the 8th Battalion (175mm/8in) 4th Artillery moved through FSB Vandergrift to a position on the Khe Sanh Plains that was given the name Firebase Flexible. The 5/4 artillery moved to the old Special Forces camp at Lang Vei

On 4 February, the 2/94 artillery also moved to Lang Vei. A Battery (8 inch) was moved south and located on a forward slope where they had unobstructed coverage of Highway 9 into Laos. The battalion was given a new mission of general support for ARVN I Corps artillery with priority fires to the 1st ARVN Airborne Division. In this capacity on 8 February, the first day of Lam Son 719 A Battery fired a prep on LZ Yellow and B Battery fired on LZ Blue. B & C Batteries with 175 mm guns could shoot an additional 5 kilometers into Laos then the 8 inch guns of A Battery, even though A Battery was located eleven kilometers further west then B & C Batteries. That evening at 2000 A Battery received the first of many incoming rounds they would experience in the next few weeks. 8/4 Artillery occupied positions from Lang Vei north at Ta Bet and Halfway Point as general support for the area north of Highway 9.

There was a big sign at the border, "NO US PERSONNEL BEYOND THIS POINT." The sign, of course, had no relevance for those flying over it. But because no Americans would cross the border on the ground, then the U.S. advisors would remain in South Vietnam and the ARVN would have to do their own coordinating of supporting fires, helicopters and air support. Never been done before. Even though the planning for Dewey Canyon II and Lam Son 719 was a carefully guarded secret and only a few individuals knew what was really being planned, all written plans had to be translated and there were enough communist sympathizers among the translators to provide Hanoi with complete sets of documentation as quickly as it was delivered to South Vietnamese and US Army commanders.

At 1000 on 8 February M-41 tanks and M-113 APCs of the lead elements of the RVN 1st Armor Brigade, the 11th and 17th Cavalry Regiments (fewer then 17 M-41 tanks between them) crossed the border into Laos. Lam Son 719 had begun as the two units, accompanied by two South Vietnamese airborne battalions, moved 9 kilometers down Highway 9. Intelligence reports had indicated that the terrain along Route 9 in Laos was favorable for armored vehicles. The reality was that Highway 9 was a neglected forty-year-old, single-lane road, with high shoulders on both sides and no maneuver room. As the units moved forward they were surprised to find the entire area was cratered by bombs and long overgrown with dense grass and bamboo. The Cav units had to stay on the road.

Here politics had raised its ugly head. Because U.S. low level recon had been forbidden until just one hour before the first airmobile assaults, the condition of the roads would be a complete surprise. All five available air cavalry troops had been consolidated under the control of the U.S. 2d Squadron, 17th Cavalry with the task of locating and destroying antiaircraft weapons, finding enemy concentrations, and carrying out reconnaissance and security missions, including the rescue of air crews downed in Laos. To give them complete autonomy, they were placed under the control of XXIV Corps. Thus, there was no early recon of roads and no recon of North Vietnamese antiaircraft positions, leaving the air cavalry to screening the landing zones just before the assaults. The Air Cav troops performed magnificently. The rule of no Americans on the ground in Laos included the Blues of the air cavalry, so they were replaced with the Hac Bao of the ARVN 1st Inf Div, an arrangement that was satisfactory in all respects

1st Aviation Brigade was reluctant to have too many of its assets transferred to the 101st Airborne Division because the two battalions available were scheduled to stand down and one of the battalions

the 223rd) was a fixed wing battalion, not a combat assault battalion, and needed a quick conversion to a CAB. Quickly, 1st Aviation Bde pulled detachments with helicopter S-3 and S-4 experience and sent them to the 223rd

Assault helicopter companies had been moved from as far away as Ninh Hoa and there was a concern that the NVA might believe that the country had been stripped of aviation assets, so the powers that be added an entire layer of call signs on top of the aviation call signs that had always been used. "Dolphin 26" was now "boats 26." Gunship units stubbornly stuck to their old call signs which made them easier to identify. UHF communications were limited because the battalion hdgt's were located at Quang Tri. This was resolved when battalion forward locations were established at Khe Sanh. From about the middle of February on, the weather became a factor when many of the LZ's were socked in until noon or later.

While the 1st Armored Bde was struggling down Highway 9, helicopters under control of the 223rd and 158th Aviation Battalions were crossing into Laos loaded with ARVN troops. Three battalions of the 3d Regt, 1st ARVN Inf Div air assaulted into FBs HOTEL and BLUE south of Route 9. Two battalions of the 1st ARVN Abn Div air assaulted into LZ 30 and LZ 31 north of Route 9. The 21st ARVN Ranger battalion was air assaulted into LZ RANGER SOUTH. 105mm batteries quickly followed and were landed on LZs HOTEL, 30 and 31 by Chinooks.

As the first troops consolidated their positions on the LZ's, the air cavalry moved out to reconnoiter the front and flanks, seeking landing areas and destroying antiaircraft positions. But the demand for gunships became heavy as units on the ground encountered NVA troops. In the air cavalry, emphasis shifted to locating enemy troop concentrations and indirect fire weapons that posed an immediate threat to South Vietnamese forces. Thus, long-range reconnaissance was sacrificed for fire support. The air cavalry screened the 1st Armor Brigade's advance along Route 9 all the way to Aloui, which the brigade reached in the afternoon of 10 February. Within three days Vietnamese airmobile forces on the ridgelines to the north and south had moved abreast of Aloui.

On 12 February, the 39th Ranger Battalion was airlifted to a location named Ranger North, three km northeast of Ranger South. The two ranger battalions were northern flank security for FSB 30 and 31 protecting the north side of the main attack route down Highway 9. Headquarters of the 1st Ranger Group was located at Ta Bat, and artillery support from the 64th Artillery Bn (105 mm) was located at Phu Loc north of Khe Sanh. The area was made accessible by a secondary road, known as Red Devil Road that ran roughly parallel to Route 9, from Fire Support Base Elliott to Khe Sanh. Constructed by the 3d Squadron, 5th Cavalry, and elements of the 7th Engineer Battalion, Red Devil Road allowed the 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry to continue operations north of Khe Sanh until 7 April.

The main thrust along Highway 9 made by the armored and airborne units halted at Aloui and waited for orders, but orders from I Corps and the Airborne Division conflicted The 1st Airborne Division was unable to keep the route open and heavy rains set in making the road impassable. The armor and airborne troops had to be resupplied by air and in their static position they became a target for intense enemy fire; losses in men and equipment mounted. Eventually a point was reached when the 1st Armor Brigade could not, if it had been ordered, move west of Aloui.

The U.S. 175 batteries were moved from Lang Vei to Lao Bao, a bulge in the border near where Highway 9 crossed. They were now farther west then any U.S. maneuver battalion and began coming under intense artillery fire from 122 and 152 mm guns. Counter battery radar was kept busy

On 14 February, patrols from the 39th Ranger Battalion on Ranger North began making contact with PAVN forces. Artillery from the 64th Artillery at Phu Loc was called for support. By 1600 all the companies of the battalion were engaged and more artillery was called for, this time C/44th located on FSB 30 added its support. Under intense artillery fire, the NVA pulled back allowing the Rangers to consolidate their position. On the following day the Rangers engaged in aggressive patrolling and killed 43 NVA and captured two 37mm AA guns. This was ominous, it indicated a large unit in the area and that the PAVN intended to push the attack. In

fact, three PAVN regiments were closing in on the Ranger positions.

The NVA maneuvered its large units until the 18th when again they attacked in strength. With strong artillery support, this time including 175mm from the 2/94th at Lao Bao, the Rangers held on. During the 19th and 20th the attacks continued until finally on the afternoon of the 20th there was no more contact with the artillery forward observers. The 39th had abandoned its positions and evaded back to Ranger South rather then surrender. For three days the Air Cav had not been able to penetrate the weather and resupply the 39th and had been only able to offer limited support. When Air Cav finally got to the LZ late on the 20th, they counted over 600 NVA bodies in the positions. The CO of the 2/17 Air Cavalry wrote, "We could not re-supply them for three days. When ammunition was about to run out, they got out of their positions, counter-attacked then continued to fight with captured weapons." That night flares lit up the sky over Ranger South and in the morning the attacks started. For four days and nights the 21st Ranger Battalion and the remains of the 39th held their positions. Between NVA attacks, the LZ was bombarded with 122 mm rockets and artillery.

On the morning of the 25th, the Rangers were ordered to evacuate the LZ. Again the 64th and C/44th artillery were directed to maximize fire-support for the rangers. About 1000, a flight of helicopters escorted by four Cobra gun-ships extracted the Rangers and took them to FSB 30. Later, all but one company were evacuated to Phu Loc.

At the same time NVA pressure had begun to build at Ranger North, and the South Vietnamese command was debating whether to continue the drive west, pressure on FSB 31 was increasing. On the morning of 18 February it was obvious a full blown coordinated tank-infantry attack with supporting fire from artillery and rockets was underway. I Corps ordered the 17th Armored Cavalry north from Aloui to reinforce Landing Zone 31. The airborne division modified the order to stop south of the landing zone and wait to see if the site was overrun. Neither headquarters had eyes on the scene. As a result of the confusion, the 17th Armored Cavalry augmented with tanks from the 11th Armored Cavalry did not arrive at Landing Zone 31 until 19 February when some airborne units had already been pushed back.

In the first battle between North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese tanks, a tank in the 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, destroyed a North Vietnamese T54 tank. The South Vietnamese forces retook a portion of the landing zone by the end of the day. Six T54's and sixteen PT76's were destroyed, with none of the South Vietnamese M41's lost. Direct and indirect fire continued to pound the airborne troops, and finally, on the 25th the 17th Armored Cavalry Regiment and the Third Airborne Battalion were pushed off the landing zone to the south. 120 ARVN soldiers were trapped on the LZ and captured as well as the headquarters for the 3rd Bde of the Airborne Division.

After Landing Zone 31 fell, the airborne units were pulled out and the 17th Armored Cavalry was left on its own southeast of the LZ under heavy enemy pressure. A major attack at noon on 27 February was repulsed by the cavalry supported by tactical air and air cavalry gunships. Twelve PT76's and three T54's were destroyed at a cost of three armored cavalry assault vehicles. Still the cavalry remained in its location only to be attacked again on 1 March. This ended up being a night battle supported by South Vietnamese artillery, U.S. tactical air strikes, and cavalry gunships. Six B-52 arc light missions were used on Tac air targets. Fifteen enemy tanks were destroyed at a cost of six armored cavalry assault vehicles.

The commander of the 1st Airborne Division failed to either support the 17th Armored Cavalry or to pull it back, in spite of recommendations from the American advisor of the armored brigade or the acting advisor of his division. On 3 March the Vietnamese Chief of Armor, after consulting with the I Corps commander, intervened by radio and ordered the 17th Cavalry south to more defensible ground under cover of air support from I Corps. By this time the cavalry was surrounded on three sides and would have to retreat through direct tank fire. The move succeeded and the cavalry eventually fought its way back to the 1st Brigade at Aloui.

As February drew to a close, the ARVN I Corps commander assessed his situation. His main thrust was no longer viable, his right flank had disintegrated, but the PAVN attack had lost its momentum

and under heavy pressure from the air had not been able to deliver a crushing blow from the north that could carry beyond Highway 9. The 1st ARVN Infantry Division was intact and relatively undisturbed on the south, and he had the Marine Division in reserve at Khe Sanh. Aviation assets were largely intact. The OH-6's and OH-58's had been withdrawn as scouts because they were too vulnerable in the 12.7 rich environment, but the scout role had been taken over by groups of 2 – 6 Cobra's working with a C in C UH-1H and were very successful, their speed and agility allowing them to avoid the NVA AA fire.

The NVA tanks were a threat in being, but whenever they were spotted the reaction was swift and violent. One round fired by B Battery, 2/94 landed between two PT76's and flipped them both upside down. When the air cavalry encountered tanks for the first time, high explosive antitank (HEAT) rockets were not available, so what was used was whatever ordnance was on board. The Cobra gun-ships opened fire at maximum range, using 2.75-inch flechette rockets to eliminate enemy troops riding on the outside of the tank and to force the crew to close the hatches. As the gun run continued, high-explosive and white phosphorus rockets and 20-mm. cannon fire were used against the tank itself. Eventually HEAT rockets became available, but they were not always effective. Although these rockets were capable of penetrating armor plate, they could do so only in direct hits. Engagements therefore had to take place at ranges of 900 to 1,200 meters, distances that exposed the gunship to the tank's heavy machine gun and to supporting infantry weapons. Between 8 February and 24 March, air cavalry teams sighted 66 tanks, destroyed 6, and immobilized 8. Most of the tanks, however, were turned over to fixed wing aircraft, which could attack with heavier ordnance.

The collapsed northern flank had served its purpose in giving early warning of large PAVN units on the move toward Highway 9. NVA tanks had been unable to close with the 1st Armored Brigade but the brigade in its present position was nothing more then static pillboxes that themselves needed to be protected. The brigade was strengthened with additional units as they became available including three companies of tanks, however, the reinforcement was so piecemeal that it was difficult to tell just who or what was committed. Many units never reached Aloui and simply plugged up the withdrawal. Only one-third of the cavalry squadrons and two-thirds of the tank squadrons available to I Corps were used in Laos, amounting to five tank squadrons and six armored cavalry squadrons total.

As the I Corps commander reviewed the situation at the end of February, withdrawal seemed premature without another attempt on the objective, so the Marine Division was moved into locations vacated when the 1st ARVN Infantry leapfrogged toward LZ Hope. One incident that may or may not have influenced his decision was that the BBC had already announced South Vietnamese troops had occupied Tchepone.

On 2 March, the 7th Marine Battalion, 147th Brigade, was inserted into Fire Support Base Delta. Over the next three days, the 147th Brigade Headquarters and the 2d and 4th Battalions were also brought into Delta. During this same time the 258th Brigade was inserted at FSB Hotel.

The first part of the assault on Tchepone required the 1st Battalion of the 1st Infantry Regiment to be inserted at Landing Zone Lolo, 13 kilometers southeast of Tchepone on 3 March. Twice the landing had been postponed and twice additional prep fires were brought in to suppress NVA fire on the LZ itself. Finally the NVA were driven out of their trenches, retreating west. Still the landing was very hot with 11 helicopters shot down and 44 others damaged by ground fire. Once the LZ was secure, 105 mm howitzers were airlifted in. On 5 March, troops were assaulted into LZ Sophia to protect the south flank of the main attack. The LZ was well protected by anti-aircraft up to 23 mm and the helicopters suffered, with three shot down on the first lift.

6 March would be the day for the final assault into Tchepone. Prep fires for the assault included everything from B-52s to the 175's at Lao Bao. B-52's literally blew the tops off of mountains revealing underground storage facilities. U.S. tactical air strikes or air cover sorties were scheduled every 10 minutes. One hundred twenty U.S. helicopters assembled at Khe Sanh but were forced to depart 90 minutes earlier then planned because of incoming

fire, however, preparations for this part of the operation had been so carefully planned that no problems resulted and when the first aircraft dropped off the 2/2 Battalion at Landing Zone Hope, four kilometers northeast of Tchepone, only incidental gunfire was encountered.

The North Vietnamese had not anticipated such a move and could not react quickly enough to stop it. By nightfall, 276 helicopter sorties (some aircraft making three trips) had landed about 5,000 ARVN troops against a loss of seven helicopters.

Tchepone itself was just a small village but around it the PAVN had established sanctuary base 604, the main base for attacks in Quang Tri Province, and base 611, south of 604 and closer to the border, used to launch attacks against the city of Hue and Thua Thien province. These base areas consisted of many small storage depots and five large storage areas, each between 1 to 2 square kilometers, stocked with weapons, ammunitions, logistic supplies, medical supplies and rations. Other areas around Tchepone were used for troop replacement and training. For a week ARVN troops wandered about the two base camps methodically destroying everything in sight or using artillery, Tac air or gunships to destroy the depots. Over 9,700 secondary explosions were documented, sometimes continuing for a half hour after the initial strike. The NVA were in a state of shock at Tchepone, over 5,000 were killed in the depot area - mostly rear area troops or troops in rest centers - with another 69 captured as air cavalry roamed the area unopposed. Thousands of tons of enemy supplies were destroyed and a POL pipeline was cut in several places. Almost 4,000 captured enemy weapons were airlifted out and brought back to Viet Nam.

As the ARVN troops began moving down Route 914 to the south, the PAVN forces finally began to react and started putting up stiffer resistance each successive day as the NVA 2cnd Division moved north. Generals Abrams and Weyand saw a tremendous opportunity to strike a mortal blow, with the exception of the 2cnd Division, PAVN units were being withdrawn from the battle area, there was no general reinforcement of 70B Corps. Abrams tried to get President Thieu to commit the 2cnd ARVN Division into Tchepone to create what they saw as the only single decisive battle in the entire war, and one that could cripple the PAVN so badly the war might be won. Thieu agreed about the strategic possibilities but settled the question with one statement, he wanted a U.S. division to go also. With the current political climate in the U.S., both knew it would never happen, and so was squandered the possibility of cutting the jugular of all NVA operations in the south. Even though the I Corps commander had control of the 2cnd Division, he would not make the move without Thieu's approval, so he waited while his corps was becoming ever more endangered. Finally, Thieu's response was to order a withdrawal.

The withdrawal began from positions around Tchepone and Sophia West overland to LZ Liz. Two battalions and the 2nd Regiment CP were extracted to FB Sophia East and then on to FB Delta 1. The next day two more battalions moved to LZ Brown. The 1st Regiment continued operations in base area 611 southwest of LZ Lolo while the 3rd Regiment worked southwest of Delta1 and LZ Brown.

PAVN forces were still not organized enough to contest these evacuations but it would be a different story four days later when it was time to evacuate LZ LOLO. The NVA had almost an entire division in place at LOLO to confront the three battalions of the 1st Infantry Division that were being evacuated. The evacuations continued and the attacks grew in intensity until finally the only troops left were 420 men of the 4th Battalion. Over the next two days this unit was reduced to 88 men taking cover in a ravine and commanded by a sergeant. Finally, on the afternoon of 18 March, the last 36 battered survivors were pulled from the LZ.

LZ Sophia East, also known as Sophia II, located east of LOLO was to be evacuated on 20 March. The U.S. Air Force and Army helicopters flew 1,388 gunship sorties, 270 tactical air strikes and 11 B-52 missions dropping 909 tons of bombs, and by 1300 hours, the 3d Battalion, 2d Regiment, 1st Infantry Division was extracted and taken to Khe Sanh. Twenty eight of the 40 helicopters involved in the lift were hit. A short distance away, the 4/2 Battalion was left on the ground when the lead helicopter in the flight was hit by fire and exploded in the air causing the evacuation to be aborted. The 4/2 was later evacuated under fire from LZ Brown.

On 18 March it was discovered that the NVA were gathering a regimental size unit northwest of Aloui, so the 1st Armor Brigade was ordered to withdraw by the I Corps commander. To cover the withdrawal, he allocated two U.S. air cavalry troops to the airborne division. It was at this point that the most severe command difficulties within the ARVN came to light. The 1st Armor Brigade had been placed under the control of the airborne division, but the division had no idea what to do with the armored troops and often they were left to fend for themselves. The airborne division commander was senior to the I Corps commander and was extremely miffed about the situation, even refusing to attend command briefings. And President Thieu tolerated the situation. So as the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment acting as rear guard to the 1st Armor Brigade abandoned Aloui, no Air Cav was to be seen. The Air Cav had been ordered to support airborne battalions in other locations.

Between Aloui and Landing Zone Alpha, the armored column was ambushed at a stream crossing and four M41 tanks were abandoned in the middle of the stream isolating the 11th Armored Cavalry on the west bank. The airborne soldiers abandoned the cavalry and kept on marching east down QL 9. No reinforcements were sent and no recovery vehicles came to remove the abandoned tanks. The 11th fought on alone, and after three hours cleared a way across but had to leave seventeen disabled vehicles on the west side of the stream. The NVA used the vehicles as machine gun positions until the vehicles were destroyed on 25 March.

On 20 March the armor brigade reached Landing Zone Alpha, regrouped, and moved on. Still no air cavalry. The next morning the hapless 11th Armored Cavalry was leading when the brigade was ambushed three kilometers east of Fire Support Base Bravo. Air strikes were called in, one accidentally hitting the South Vietnamese with napalm, killing twelve and wounding seventy-five. The brigade pulled back west to regroup and were informed by a prisoner that two North Vietnamese regiments were waiting in ambush farther east. Less then 5 kilometers from South Vietnam, the column turned south abandoning the road. Unknown to them, the airborne division had combat assaulted troops north of the ambush and cleared it. The armor column was never informed that the road was clear and after two difficult river crossings and a 17 kilometer detour cross country, finally reached South Vietnam and linked up with the U.S. 1st/ 77th Armor. A MACV advisor to the Armored Brigade met the column at the border and counted the vehicles, 25 out of 62 tanks and 64 out of 162 APC's returned; the totals included those vehicles added as reinforcements . Sadly, most had not been combat loss, they had broken down or ran out of gas and been abandoned.

The next day, the 1st Armored Brigade and a paratrooper battalion were ordered to go back and recover the 17 damaged tanks and APCs left behind by the 11th Cav. Once again American air cover had been promised and once again it was diverted. The brigade succeeded in picking up the vehicles and had the 17 vehicles in tow when, once again, they were ambushed crossing a river near Aloui. The four lead M-41 tanks were hit with RPG's blocking the route. For three hours the South Vietnamese fought to survive until the disabled tanks were pushed aside and the column could move. All the vehicles that were being towed as well as the four M41's were left behind and later destroyed by Cobras.

Starting on 18 March, the NVA 324B Division had gradually closed around the LZ's held by the Marines. On Fire Support Base Delta, the 147th Marine Brigade Headquarters received 400 incoming rounds that killed eight marines. The 7th Battalion maneuvering outside the LZ received about the same number of rounds and medevaced five wounded. An NVA defector from the 812th Regiment, 324B Division told the Marines that the entire 324B Division was committed to what the PAVN called the "Route 9 campaign" with its 29th, 803d and 812th regiments. The 29th Regiment had been beaten up pretty badly, but the 812th Regiment was intact and was engaging the 258th Marine Brigade at LZ Hotel. Positioned around Delta were about 10 antiaircraft guns entrenched on the mountain slopes around the base that could not be silenced. The 7th Marine Battalion operating outside the LZ was under constant pressure from fire and ground attacks. They reported that the enemy even used a noxious gas and tank mounted flame throwers.

On 19 March it was discovered that the 308th NVA Division with its 36th, 102d and 88th regiments was

maneuvering to attack from the north. The 258th Brigade on Hotel was constantly under pressure and FSB Delta was encircled. The 2d and 4th Battalions were stopped when they tried to reinforce the base. Five of the ten 105-mm howitzers were out of action due to the enemy fire. NVA troops reached the defense perimeter and dug in making helicopter resupply impossible, but the 7th Marine Battalion and the troops of the 147th Brigade could hold on because they had a ten day reserve of supplies.

At LZ Delta a fierce attack began at dawn of 21 March by the 29th and 803d Regiments of the 324B Division supported by very accurate mortar and direct artillery fire said to be from tank guns. 175-mm guns provided close support as well as 13 Tac air sorties and a B-52 mission that was diverted to the area. A prisoner of war later reported that a battalion lost 400 men from the B-52 strike. The NVA attack was stopped and the base held, but they had used up their reserve of supplies. A resupply effort was successful, seven U.S. UH-1H helicopters brought ammunition and took out wounded but an eighth helicopter was shot down. Two nights later LZ Delta was abandoned under cover of a B-52 strike. The Marines conducted an orderly withdrawal to Hotel that met no opposition.

For 24 March the 14th CAB daily log contains the entry, "LZ Hotel was evacuated without incident." All South Vietnamese military units were now out of Laos, although for more then a week South Vietnamese soldiers, Marines and American helicopter crewmen would be showing up at U.S. firebases after walking out. So ended Lam Son 719.

LAMSON 719 would never have been undertaken without the massive helicopter support available. One question is; did the large number of aviation losses sustained justify the operation? It did raise questions about the use of helicopters in the assault role.

American aircraft losses to inventory included ten OH-6As, eight OH-58s, 53 UH-1Hs, 26 AH-1Gs, three CH-47s and two CH-53s. The VNAF also lost seven UH-1Hs. Combat damage accounted for the loss of 90 helicopters while the rest were lost to non -combat related incidents. Damage not resulting in loss figures are difficult to pin down. There were 644 aircraft damage incidents to 451 different aircraft reported, but this does not impact availability figures because few damaged aircraft were down more then 24 hours. A very effective recovery operation brought back almost all aircraft that were salvageable and more then a few that weren't. Losses to helicopter crews in the 45 days of combat flying over Laos amounted to a total of 210 casualties; of this total 152 were WIA, 26 KIA and 32 MIA.

Flying over Laos created unique challenges to aircrews, one of which was the amount of flight time crews endured. Aviation units OPCON to the 101st could not maintain the level of flight hours required to support the operation and at the same time adhere to the USARV flight time regulation which limited pilots to 120 hours per month. A waiver of the regulation was granted to units directly supporting LAM SON 719.

Combat exposure was greatly increased during the operation. Using sortie information from the Aviation Statistical Summary, combat damage rates were established and then compared for aircraft operations over Laos and the Republic of Vietnam during LAM SON 719. This comparison showed that the threat damage was thirteen times greater when flying over Laos.

Anti-aircraft missiles were rare occurrences over Vietnam, however, over Laos there were 14 occasions when missiles were reported or photographed, and although there were no confirmed shoot downs of helicopters by missiles, there were occasions of aircraft being hit at altitudes up to 4,000 feet AGL.

But there is another way to look at aircraft losses during the operation. Aircraft loss rate was 21 losses for every 100,000 sorties, or a loss rate of one quarter of one percent. Another way of looking at it is one aircraft lost for every 963 flying hours. The final analysis shows this to be a very high rate of accomplishment versus attrition.

UH-1H aircraft made up most of the losses with 53 lost for 369 committed. Most of these losses were UH-1H aircraft in the troop transport or resupply role and more than half of these were lost on final approach to landing zones. Two hundred and thirty-seven UH-1H aircraft were damaged on 344 different occasions. Nearly twenty-nine percent of all the

UH-1H losses occurred on 3 March and 20 March 1971, with respective operations to assault LOLO and to extract forces near BROWN. Altogether there were 84 incidents of damage to UH-1H helicopters on these two days.

As could be expected, the older, slower UH-1C/M gunships suffered much more then Cobras, many of which were hit by 12.7-mm fire but either limped back or were recovered and, eventually, got back in the fight. I have not been able to find exact loss numbers for UH-1C/M aircraft, and can only suspect they are tangled up in UH-1H and AH-1G figures, although combat damage reports record forty-eight different UH-1C/M aircraft damaged on 66 different occasions. The older gunships were the lowest priority for recovery operations and consequently, few were brought back. The required commitment level for UH-1C gunships was 60 aircraft, although more then that were probably committed as replacement aircraft were brought in.

Aviation units involved in Lam Son 719

Division Command and Control aircraft
1st Bde (Avn Det), 5th Inf (Mech) /4 UH-1H, 6 OH-58
1st Bde (Avn Det), 101stABN
2d Bde (Avn Det), 101st ABN
3rd Bde (Avn Det), 101stABN

Medevac Units
237th Med Det/Phu Bai and Quang Tri/Khe Sanh
326th Med Bn
498th Med Co (Air Ambulance) maintained a two ship detachment at Khe Sanh during part of February and March.
571st Med Det Khe Sanh

1st Aviation Brigade units
HHC 14th CAB OPCONed to 101st CAG
71st Avn Co (AHC) OPCONed to 14th CAB /23 UH-1H, 8 UH-1C
174th Avn Co (AHC) OPCONed to 14th CAB /23 UH-1H, 8 UH-1C
116/176th Avn Co (AHC) served 5 - 7 and 22 - 24 Mar OPCONed to 14th CAB / 23 UH-1H, 8 UH-1C / Quang Tri. Only parts of these companies participated with combined assets during the periods indicated.

HHC 223d CAB OPCONed to 101st CAG
220 RAC Kat Killers provided FAC and Aerial Recon support 101st Phu Bai, Unit flew to DMZ and Tri Border area Laos, North and South Vietnam and Khe San. Based at North Phu Bai, with Platoon at Quang Tri and Dong Ha.
48th Avn Co (AHC) OPCONed to 223d CAB /23 UH-1H, 8 UH-1C I Dong Ha/ Da Nang
173d Avn Co (AHC) OPCONed to 223d CAB /23 UH-1H, 8 UH-1C
238th Avn Co (AWC) OPCONed to 223d CAB/ 12 UH-1C, 1 UH-1H
282d Avn Co (AHC) served 5 - 7 and 22 - 24 Mar OPCONed to 223d CAB/ 23 UH-1H, 8 UH-1C
B/7/1 Cav attached to 223d CAB, OPCONed to 2/17 Cav, 101st ABN / 8 UH-1H, 9 AH-1G, 10 OH-6A
C/7/17 Cav attached to 223d CAB, OPCONed to 2/17 Cav, 101St ABN /8 UH-1 H, 9 AH-1G, 10 OH -6A / An Son / Quang Tri

101st Abn Div aviation units
HHC 101st CAG, 101stABN
163dAvn Co (GS), 101stABN/10 UH-1H, 12 0H-6A

HHT/2/17 Cav, 101stABN /8 UH-1H
A/2/17 Cav, 101st ABN /8 UH-1 H, 9 AH-1 G, 10 OH-6A
B/2/17 Cav, 101st ABN /8 UH-1H, 9 AH-1G, 10 OH-6A
C/2/17 Cav, 101st ABN /8 UH-1H, 9 AH-1G, 10 OH-6A

HHB/4/77 ARA, 101St ABN
A/4/77 ARA, 101st ABN /12 AH-1 G supported the operation only when the situation required.
B/4/77 ARA, 101st ABN/ 12 AH-1G supported the operation only when the situation required.
C/4/77 ARA, 101st ABN /12 AH-1G supported the operation as its primary mission and was augmented by assets from the other ARA batteries as the situation required.

HHC 101stAHB, 101stABN
A/101st AHB, 101St ABN /20 UH-1 H
B/101st AHB, 101st ABN /20 UH-1H
C/101st AHB, 101St ABN /20 UH-1H
D/101stAHB, 101stABN/12 AH-1G
235th Avn Co (AWC) OPCONed to 101st AHB / 21 AH-1G, 3 UH-1H

HHC 158th AHB, 101st ABN
A/158thAHB, 101stABN/20 UH-1H
B/158thAHB, 101stABN/20 UH-1H
C/158th AHB, 101st ABN /20 UH-1H
D/158th AHB, 101st ABN /12 AH-1G
D/227th AHB OPCONed to 158th AHB /12 AH-1G

HHC 159thASHB, 101stABN
A/159th ASHB, 101st ABN/ 16 CH-47
B/159th ASHB, 101st ABN /16 CH-47
C/159th ASHB, 101st ABN /16 CH-47
179th Avn Co (ASHC) OPCONed to 159th ASHB, l01stABN /16 CH-47
132d Avn Co (ASHC) OPCONed to 159th ASHB, 101st ABN /16 CH-47
478th Avn Co (HH) attached to 159th ASHB, 101st ABN /10 CH-54A / operated out of their permanent base camp at Red Beach, Da Nang but staged two or three aircraft at Phu Bai each night. Standing commitment was 5 aircraft per day
HMH-463 OPCONed on a mission basis to 159th ASHB, 101st ABN /
16 CH-53 / operated out of their permanent base camp at Marble
Mountain Airbase, Da Nang.
HML367 sent USMC AH-1Gs to escort the CH-53s.



ONE OF THE MANY HELICOPTER CREWS SHOT DOWN DURING LAMSON 719, AWAITING RESCUE.















WHERE EVERTHING TURNED INTO ITS OPPOSITE

A Presentation to Wauwatosa Retired Men's Club
15 March 2011
Rev. Ray William Stubbe

When it was all over, I'd gone from 175 pounds to 128 pounds. My mom saw me and cried.

When it was all over, what had been a lush Garden of Eden paradise was now a moonscape devoid of life. More tons of bombs were dropped in our immediate area for a little over 60 days than were dropped in all of the Pacific in World War II.

When it was all over, well over 20,000 of the enemy were killed, over 10,000 local civilians that lived within five miles of our base, and 475 of our own. Khe Sanh was undoubtedly the bloodiest battle of the Vietnam War. During the prolonged and intense battle, trucks obviously didn't go around collecting trash. As a result, we had a large rat problem--and I mean large "rats," not just a large "problem"!Then it seemed as though the Pied Piper of Hamlin came; the rats mysteriously left us. The opinion of the senior officers was that they left us because there was just too much good food "out there"--all those thousands of dead bodies to munch on!

When it was all over, 19 year-olds were facing and living questions of a 60 to 70 year-old.

When it was all over, I'd completely changed. Many years later, I was told I screamed in my sleep. During the battle, I experienced God's Presence more profoundly than I ever had. At least two dozen men I know of later became priests and ministers because they experienced God in all those black, bleak days of battle. Negatively, as soon as the battle erupted, I was convinced that I couldn't count on living another day, and since then, it's become difficult to make long-range commitments, plans, or projects.

When it was all over, those around me, those who loved me and were greatly relieved I was alive, nevertheless lost much. I gave a talk to 6th Graders of St. Matthew's grade school (13 May 1988). At the end, they asked some very perceptive questions, one

of which was: "How did you being over there affect family back home?" My dad was standing in the rear of the classroom, so I suggested they ask him. He said, "My wife and I were watching the evening TV news when they reported that a Chaplain had been killed at Khe Sanh." Suddenly dad was choked -up; he could hardly talk. He continued, "We didn't know for over a week if Ray was alive or dead." He said my mom's hair turned white. I never knew. I was wrapped up in my own issues, plans, and pain.

Today, I want to talk about a time when everything turned into its opposite

Today, I want to tell you about something that happened over 44 years ago, yet created after-shocks that linger. When President Obama was inaugurated (20 Jan 2009), he mentioned four battles in our nation's history. He said: "For us, they fought and died, in places like Concord and Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sanh."

I want to talk about one of those "far away places with strange-sounding names." Vietnam was, indeed, a strange place. It's literally and exactly halfway around the world. When it's noon in Washington, D.C., it's midnight in Vietnam. Those in Vietnam frequently said they were "in the Nam," while everybody else was "in the world." And when we returned "to the world," having adapted and survived, WE became the ones who were perhaps regarded as strange, and for many of us, everyone else was very strange. To paraphrase an old saying, "You can take a man out of the battle, but you can't take the battle out of the man." Someone observed, "for those who fight in a war, it never ends."

I was a student at the University of Chicago in a Ph.D. program. One day, while eating lunch, I told some of my fellow students, "I'm going to Vietnam as a chaplain." I'd served some years as an enlisted sailor on a Navy destroyer, and felt I knew how it felt to be in the service. They were asking for chaplains, so I volunteered. They were horrified. One of them said, "How can you, as a representative of the church, by your very presence there, be an endorsement of the church on a corrupt Saigon regime?" I said, "I'm going there to help people." A few weeks later, while giving a message to a Marine that his uncle had died--it caused him to cry, for he had been especially close to his uncle--the thought actually came to my mind, "Yeah, I'm supporting a corrupt Saigon regime by being here!"

I traveled to Khe Sanh by helicopter. Below, the hills looked so beautiful--like they were covered with green velvet. The sun shining off an occasional stream gave the appearance of Christmas tree tinsel.

A couple of weeks later, while with a Marine infantry patrol walking those hills, we climbed up and down steep hills, covered with grass taller than a man with sharp, cutting edges; we went through rushing streams with large boulders, we encountered bamboo thickets like a maze of steel rods, vines with spiked thorns that pierced our hands or tangled our feet causing us to fall. I learned that what is seen from a distance is far different than what is lived on the ground, or as the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once observed, "the map is not the terrain."

Vietnam was many things to many people. There is no simple, single image or story of Vietnam A new Catholic chaplain arrived and occupied an old mortar pit that was covered by metal sheets. During his first night in this bunker, a scurrying rat lost its footing, dropped on the Father's bare chest and bounced to the floor. And he screamed "Shit!" as he sat up. As he was telling me this the next morning, he said that he had just been in a rear area where he called on a senior chaplain in the rear area. He said: "He lived in a plywood, air-conditioned hootch. A record player was playing some nice music. A Vietnamese woman was washing his clothes. He told me to go over to the bar and make myself a mixed drink from all the bottles of liquor he had along with ice cubes in his refrigerator. After awhile, he said, 'Well, you can stay here as long as you want, but I have a tennis match to go to.' Then, as he left, he said, 'Vietnam really isn't all that bad once you get used to it.'" The experience of that senior chaplain and the Father who had a rat bounce off his bare chest was obviously a far different experience of "Vietnam" than what he chaplain in the rear area experienced!

The day after I arrived, Navy medics, called "corpsmen," delivered a 5-pound baby girl in the morning. In the afternoon, a barrage of battle casualties arrived, including a Vietnamese soldier with half his face out, just a red cavern in the side of his

face, including one eye out. It was all blood. He also had two puncture wounds in his chest and a shattered leg. Amazingly, he was still alive. The man died despite a desperate fight he made for his life. A birth, a death. A corpsman looked at me: "This is war," he said

I arrived at Khe Sanh in July of '67 and for the first six months there, there was little enemy contact. But we did have rain. About 7-inches a day for several months. All underground bunkers and trenches collapsed. It was cold. The main combat base was 495 meters above sea level (or 1624 ft.), the temperatures were in the 40s. We slept in our wet clothes. Although I grew up in Wisconsin and went to school in Minnesota, I've never felt more constantly chilled than I did during those monsoons.

In addition, all the 31 bridges over the road connecting us to our support bases to the east were washed out, making us completely dependent on air resupply, and that was precarious due to many days of dense fog. Aerial observers were unable to spot signs of enemy troops moving into our area. Two Marines drowned crossing raging rivers. Some were killed and many severely injured as bunkers collapsed.

On Marine Corps Birthday, a helicopter managed to pierce dense fog blanketing one of our outposts. We gathered together in that wet, cold, miserable place, with shriveled skin and caked with mud. He told us, "You all will soon be in the American history books."

About six weeks later, Sunday, the 21st of January 1968, our base came under attack by rockets and mortars, ignited our ammunition dump, and all the structures above ground--which was just about everything--were a shambles.

It was about 5 in the morning. Suddenly, the skies were filled with plumes of yellow flames from burning fuel, streaks of red, and shrieks of loud explosions. Tear gas from our exploding ammo dump filled the air.

A Navy corpsman ran back to the doctors, out of breath, saying, "My casualty outran me to the helicopter. I couldn't pin on his evacuation tag indicating his wounds." What kind of wounds did he have?" "He was wounded in his legs."

As I walked the base, stunned and numbed, I saw a man on a stretcher, his abdomen completely exposed. Only bare intestines were visible. The doctor whispered to me, "He's going to die."

A doctor successfully removed a live mortar that had become embedded in another Marine's gut.

A recon Marine, loading casualties on a helicopter, told me that their scout dog dashed into the helicopter and sat between the pilots. When his handler came to coax him out, he growled. He wasn't about to spend another moment at Khe Sanh. The recon Marine said, "That dog was smarter than all the rest of us!"

Three days after the battle began, a round landed on top of a bunker. One of the survivors of that bunker walked into our medical area in complete shock, shrapnel wounds peppering his back and face with small, black spots, little holes with small burn marks. Blood dripped out of a few of them. Then more arrived and went into my bunker for the night since they were unable to be evacuated by a helicopter. My bunker could hold two comfortably, and there were four Marines sitting on my bed. They fell asleep in a sitting position. One dabbed his bloodied head. The floor of the bunker filled with pieces of blood saturated toilet paper. I curled up on top of a field desk, about 3 feet by 3 feet. A surgeon was lying on the floor. Incoming enemy rounds continued throughout the night.

The next morning I went to the Graves Registration and said prayers over six dead bodies, four from the collapsed bunker. One of the dead was a man I had just seen yesterday with a cheerful, up-beat conversation. I had baptized him a few weeks earlier. As I walked to the area where the bunker had been hit, the Marine with the bloodied head was amazingly there, digging dirt to fill sandbags. He said he didn't have a head wound; the blood was that of others in the bunker.

One night we were told "this is the night; we're going to be attacked." I left my bunker and stayed in a bunker on the trenches with a gun squad. I remember that as I walked to that position, there was a Marine in the trench who didn't see me approaching

He was reading from a small prayer book that I had distributed earlier. During the night, the Marines on duty entered the bunker. Everyone was jumpy. One of them had a small 45 RPM record player that played the Credence Clearwater version of the jumpy tune, "I Heard it on the Grapevine" over and over again. A few days later that position took a direct hit. I ran down there, pulled out, and carried one of the men I had talked with that night. He had no head. Only strings of flesh hung out of his neck. There were small pieces of flesh all over the place—a hand, an arm, a stringy piece of flesh intertwined with cloth and caked with mud and blood.

We were isolated, vulnerable, and under heavy shelling. That battle erupted occupied 25% of all Vietnam film reports on TV evening shows during February and March, 1968. Shocking images of horror appeared in numerous popular print media, e.g.,, "The Agony of Khe Sanh" cover of Newsweek, March 18, 1968. Haunted faces appeared in the media describing Khe Sanh defenders as having a "thousand-yard stare." A possible replay of the famous French defeat at the siege of Dien Bien Phu plagued the minds of many causing President Johnson to demand the Joint Chiefs of Staff declare in writing that Khe Sanh would be held. Nuclear weapons were considered for Khe Sanh's defense.

We received up to 1600 incoming rounds, mainly rockets and artillery a day for a period of about 77 days on our small base about half a mile wide and a mile long. We were down to one C-ration meal a day (we should have had at least three), were without water for several days at a time, and our clothes rotted. Daily, those close to us were killed from the incoming. Bunkers and trenches collapsed, suffocating those in them.

When the enemy started using heavy artillery, we suddenly had craters on our base in which a man could stand and be below the surface of the surrounding ground. A new bunker being constructed for the regiment headquarters--supposedly sufficiently sturdy to withstand these rounds. It was hit before it was occupied, completely destroying it. Two large, deep craters on either side of the mail base road near our battalion aid station were constant reminders; there was no safe place at Khe Sanh. We all knew we were going to die. The enemy used tanks for the first time in the Vietnam war, over-running an Army Special Forces camp about five miles away. Khe Sanh village, the seat of local government, was abandoned the first days of the battle as an indefensible position.

We dropped more tonnage of bombs in the small area surrounding Khe Sanh than were dropped in all of the Pacific in World War II.

B-52s dropped about 1,022 tons a day in our immediate area. Unseen and unheard because they fly at high altitude, suddenly an area about one mile wide and three miles long is completely destroyed in seconds. That's an area about North Avenue to Center (which is about.5 mi.) and Wauwatosa Avenue to Highway 45 (about 3 miles). Because they are so destructive, they had been prohibited from dropping bombs closer than 3 miles of friendly lines, but in our situation, with the enemy digging trenches closer and closer to our lines, they were brought within half a mile. The earth continually shook. Bodies of the enemy were seen tossed far into the air. This was every day for about three months.

Several Marines told me of the base postal clerk. We were still getting paid. They'd give him a hundred dollars and ask for a money order. He'd give the man one for $200.00. Another came with fifty dollars. He'd be given one for a hundred dollars. Everyone was happy. One Marine asked, "How can you do this?" He replied, "Well, all the incoming is burning up all the records. There's no record." The Marines got twice the amount they requested. Everyone was happy. Who said Marines aren't creative?

Everyday heroism was common. While rounds still exploded, it was common to see a Marine dash out to rescue a wounded man. We all knew we were going to die, so why not do something helpful while we can--which is good advice for all of us, isn't it? During incoming, Marines went out to splice severed land lines to restore communications between command centers and the artillery. During incoming, Marines checked on the welfare of their troops. During intense shelling, Marines temporarily took cover, but then emerged to do their job--moving supplies, digging trenches and bunkers, treating casualties. No fear paralyzed us. I didn't see anyone crack up as I moved, constantly, bunker to bunker, trench to trench, day after day.

Determined attacks involving hand-to-hand combat in which the enemy penetrated and almost overran three of our outposts, failed. Marines valiantly fought and held with a determination; as we sing in our National Anthem," despite the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air, our flag was still there!"

Marines shared and cared for each other. It was common to see one give his last drops of water to another, or to share his last bits of food. We were all down to one C-ration a day (we should have had three, of course), and we all lost weight due to reduced rations and the stress of living and working in that situation.

We may have been few against a far-outnumbering foe, but we had just the right people. Officers making very difficult, often painful, decisions that saved us; individual Marines that cared for each other; doctors who didn't have the appropriate training but who did open heart surgery and other things that saved many lives. Having just the right people was no accident. It's truly a miracle that any of us made it out of there alive! It's a miracle that I'm with you here today.

All these young men were brave and resolute, so very, very human. They were, as a group, perhaps the best I've ever lived with. Like Don Quixote who saw the lovely Dulcinea in the common bar maid, the nobility of humanity was disclosed in these grubby, dirty Marines.

God was with us in that darkness, that desperation, in men giving their last drops of water, sharing their food, in the courage in the midst of desperation, in the affirmation of life in the midst of death--pulling in a wounded man while rounds are still exploding. God did not remove us from the pain of battle, but God was certainly with us in it: in men who cared, in leaders who made the right decisions, in awareness that in our isolation we were not alone.

We have a Khe Sanh Veterans group which reconnects many with their long-lost buddies who can fill in the missing parts of their experiences: "Whatever happened to---?" or help heal hurts. One man called me back in 1993 recalling how he attempted to dig-out a collapsed bunker containing our Supply Officer, Lieutenant Kim Johnson. He remembered that he had dug so slowly, and felt so guilty. "If only I had dug a bit faster, perhaps we might have saved him." Then, because of our Khe Sanh Veterans group, he contacted another Marine who was also involved in digging out that bunker. The Marine told him that he dug fast and furious. "How can this be," he asked me. I told him that under the stress of battle, sometimes things move in slow motion. He said that that phone call was the most important phone call in his life. We all need each other!

In the end, we all become wounded healers that heal each other, hungry beggars that feed each other, dying men giving life to each other. In the end, we will all be remembered by what we have given, not what we've accumulated. The meaning of life is in self-emptying service to one another, beholding the presence of God in the face of a friend, being a blessing to each other.

POETRY

Grad Night

Graduation night,
finally out of school.
I'll put of going to college for a year,
this is going to be cool.
Time was up,
have to pick a school.
I had no idea,
that it was the fantasy of a fool.
Because Uncle Sam,
chose me from 2 years of his school
He taught what I need to know,
to become his tool.
For a year I was a foreign exchange student,
in the land of sun and fun.
Where you studied 27-7,
while carrying your gun.
We got to spend a lot of time,
in the jungle and the sun.
But to be honest,
there wasn't a lot of fun.
We all looked forward to graduation,
which meant you survived.
Which meant you could go home,
so you could spend the rest of your
life reliving being away from home.

Rick Tam

MINI REUNION IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, HONORING 43RD YEAR OF THE START OF THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH

By Craig W. Tourte

I asked Tom Horchler (H.Q. 1/13) what he thought about having a little get together this year in commemoration of the 43rd anniversary of the beginning of the Siege at Khe Sanh. We both knew that was friend speak for, why don't you put something together, attend to all of the details, do all of the work - and I'll show up and take a little credit if things go well and have deniability if there is a failure. Tom shrugged his shoulders and in his usual can do spirit responded with an agreeable "Sure." Tom has devoted much of his later adult life to assisting Veterans. He was one of the driving forces behind both the successful and well attended Vietnam Veterans of American and Caring Veterans associations in and around the Northern California Chico area, which means that Tom has not only many friends and acquaintances but understandable is well respected amongst the rather large Veteran community.

Our commemoration was held at the Eagles Hall. It was pretty darn great to be amongst friends remembering a date like this, even though I knew few in attendance they were all brothers to me this January 21st, 2011, whether they served at Khe Sanh, in the military or attended to show their appreciation and support for those who did. Each and every one was a friend of Toms, a magnificent testament of how admired and loved he is by all who know him.

It was both an honor and privilege to have been able to say a few words about why we were all present that day; "Today, on the 43rd anniversary of the Siege at Khe Sanh, we take this opportunity to remember those who fought on the hills, in the valleys and on the combat base. We also take this moment, to especially honor those who did not return home



with us and also to remember those who to this day, carry the wounds and memory of the Vietnam War, in their hearts, minds and bodies.

As LBJ personally sent off Marine reinforcements to I Corps from El Toro Marine Air Station, Calif., on February 17, 1968, he told them: 'This is a decisive time in Vietnam. The eyes of the nation and the eyes of the entire world, the eyes of all of history itself, are on that little brave band of defenders who hold the pass at Khe Sanh....'

The Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh was an historic event. The mention of Khe Sanh along with the great battles of Concord, Gettysburg and Normandy in President Obama's inaugural address, forever confirms to our nation and the world that the Battle of Khe Sanh holds a significant place in American History. Today we remember, not only those who fought at Khe Sanh but also those who have fought other battles and continue to fight this day for the freedom of all Americans."

It was a warm, sunny and pleasant day in Chico. A good day to remember old friends and meet new ones, to recall the sacrifices of others, to appreciated all that we have and another wonderful day to be alive and thankfully to be an American.





BOOK REVIEW

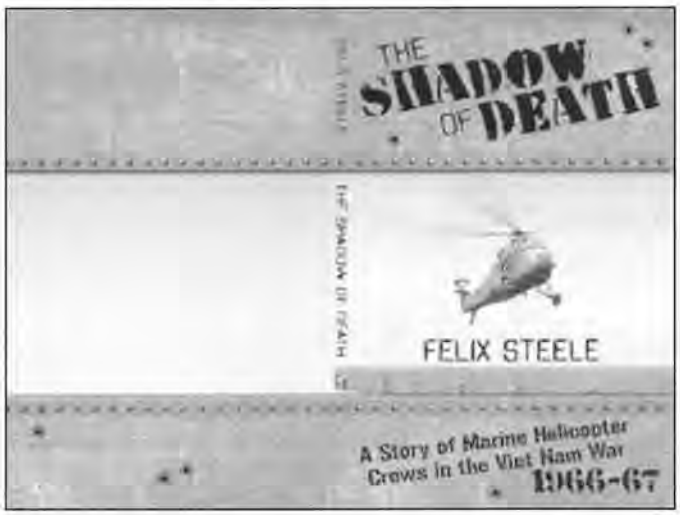

Felix Gideon Steele III was born in Selma, Ala. where he lived until graduating high school, when in 1962 the family moved to Arizona. In 1964, following two years of college, he joined the Marine Corps and spent the next five years flying helicopters. He flew helicopters for Air America for a year after the service, then returned to college, graduating from Arizona State University in 1971. He settled in Pinetop in 1976.

History books seldom tell you what individual combatants experienced during the Viet Nam War. They'll tell you about the politics of war. They'll give you place names, statistics and dates. But statistics don't reveal the shattering sounds, grisly sights, smell of death, emotional devastation and black humor that is the reality of war. Only the best kind of war fiction does.

Felix Steele's novel, The Shadow of Death, shows the battle zone in close-ups. It is a book about war devoid of Hollywood heroics or political agendas. It is the story of Marine helicopter crews in Vietnam in 1966 and 1967. It is not a bedtime story for small children.

One of the main characters is made of metal. It is a UH-34D helicopter like the one author Felix Steele flew for five years during the Vietnam War. The H-34 comes across as a reluctant hero, determined to do its best for the Marine Corps, God and Country. Like the crew, it flies into the battle zone to do a job, even when it is hit, limping and bleeding. The old helicopter is a real "jarhead."

Seasoned Marine Sgt. Berger explains it to young Capt. Street when asked what a "jarhead" is. "A jarhead is a Marine, officer or enlisted, who has experienced combat and is still gung-ho," Berger replies. "Wounded or unscathed," he adds. "Anybody who is fresh out of training can be gung-ho, but after being in combat, people sometimes change their tune and lose their gung-hossity."

Capt. Street has his own kind of admiration for the helicopter he flies. In this episode, the crew is on a medevac mission in the Que San Valley south of Da Nang. To lighten the mood, Street begins talking about the helicopter. "This old H-34 is one hell of a bird," he starts out. "If we didn't have it loaded down with all this armor and radios and fuel we'd be like driving a Cadillac. Also, it has great range. Why you could gas this baby up with a full 1,200 pounds of avgas and fly from New York to Chicago."

Steele begins each chapter with an appropriate quotation, sometimes his own. The chapter called "The Helicopter" starts with his poem: "You can fly through the air with the greatest of ease, but not through the ground, water or trees."

The chapter about the dangers of flying in the DMZ ("Demilitarized Zone") quotes an old mountain man saying: "Some days you eat the bear, and some days the bear eats you."

And, there's the young combat Marine's take-off on the psalm inscribed on his helmet: "Yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for I am the meanest m..... in the valley."

The author's style is intense. He rations out his words with the care of a person saving the last drops in a canteen. It is exactly right for the story he tells, but requires re-reading to absorb all the details.

His descriptions fly by when you're an observer, passing over the country in a helicopter. You sweat when you're sitting on the edge of a cot in a jungle "hootch." In one sentence, Steele sums up the atmosphere surrounding a crew on night duty waiting for a medevac call. "It's a hot sticky humid night, mosquitoes, gnats, flies and whatever else the jungle environment has to annoy us is in full bloom."

The author explains: "Men on night medevac duty, also known as 'death row,' make sure their life insurance is paid up. This is the most dangerous mission chopper crews fly."

He inserts an occasional explanation that adds to the story rather than slowing it down: "Little did the young pilots know in their naivete' that the helicopter crews would have a casualty rate which would far exceed the ordinary foot soldiers. They would be 27 times more likely to become maimed, crippled, horribly burned, killed outright or receive a million dollar wound than a grunt."

Steele's unpolished, cut-to-the-bones style suits his material. His novel may be short on story, but it's long on realism. The book jacket states: "This book attempts to describe the horror of the helicopter crews who spent most of their efforts saving the lives of wounded Americans, Vietnamese, and even enemy soldiers. The author survived over 600 missions as a helicopter pilot during the period when the DMZ was being militarized and the battle of Khe Sanh, when the U.S. Marines took the area "

The vast majority of lives saved during the period when the book takes place were saved in the H-34 helicopter. Steele says, "The crews of these obsolete flying machines were some of the best men to ever come into the field of aviation."

ere he has a land surveying business. He lives in Pinetop with his wife and son.

The Shadow of Death is available in paperback at the Bookworm in Pinetop for $12.95; at Amazon online in paperback, $12.95; ebook at Amazon for $8.99; and Barnes and Noble as a paperback and ebook for the same prices.

A RECOMMENDATION FOR AN ESCAPE FROM THE COLD STORMY MONTHS

Hale Koa Hotel - Oahu, Hawaii

By Craig W. Tourte

Pretty darn cold just about anywhere in America during the winter months. It seems as if it was particularly cold, windy and rainy in all of the continental United States. Strong storms closing airports, schools closed for weeks on end, floods on the plains, travelers stranded everywhere and numerous

don't travel warnings. California was not spared this harsh weather, the Lake Tahoe, Sierra Nevada mountain area had the most snow ever recorded. Global warming of some sort I suspect.

An escape from the cold was mandatory and in early February (2011), escape I did, to the beautiful state of Hawaii, island of Oahu and modern cosmopolitan city of Honolulu. What I like about Honolulu compared to the other islands of Hawaii is the town is open past 8 P.M., diverse, safe and has the best beach in all of the islands. There is another reason why I enjoy coming to Honolulu, and it certainly is an incentive to remain as long as I have the time and funds, and that is the Hale Koa Hotel on Waikiki Beach.

The Hale Koa Hotel which means *House of the Warrior* is owned by the Department of the Army and is an Armed Forces Recreation Center resort hotel. Those returning from the Vietnam War and pervious wars will remember processing through Fort DeRussy and that is where the hotel is located. One would not recognize the place today. The only

commonality is the physical location, the hotel opened in 1975 and a major expansion came in 1991. It has two pools, a beverage bar, luau garden, and two pretty decent restaurants. It is located right next to the Hilton Hawaiian Village and on the best beach in all of Waikiki. The hotel is just a short walk along the safe streets or beach to the newly developed and revitalized down town area. On every Friday night, starting exactly at 1945 Hrs. the Hilton sets off a great fireworks display from the beach, easily viewed from the Hale Koa.

The hotel prices are determined by one's rank at time of service. All of the rooms are decorated and for the most part furnished the same; the price is determined by your rank and location of the room in relation to the beach. The hotel requires that its guests be active or retired military, 100% disabled (VA), DOD employees or their family members. The hotel is self-sustaining and does not receive any government funding. The price of your room is all that is charged, there is no hotel, state, federal or local taxes or hidden fees attached to the bill. Covered parking across the street is $7.00 per day. I think the Hilton charges over $20.00 per day to park. As an example of price, an E-4 at end of service, such as myself, could stay in a Garden View room for around $125.00 per night and the best room which is a deluxe ocean front is $210.00 per night - which you'll have to reserved a year in advance. This hotel is not Fairmont quality, so if ones expectation are such, this may not be the place for you, but having stayed in the Hilton next door, I would certainly say the rooms at the Hale Koa are comparable is quality and size and in most cases, the views are superior and it certainly is not as crowded as the Hilton and other beach hotels.

As one enters the Hale Koa there are few indication the hotel is owned by the Department of the Army. A military identification card to access the hotel driveway, stay in a room or use the PX and restaurants is required.

Although there are a few overt indications the hotel is associated with the military, for the most part, in appearance it is like any other Honolulu hotel. I did however find a small show case located in the lobby near the elevators which contained a few photographs of an Army unit in Vietnam. In addition to the photographs this display case contained a helmet, meals from a C-Raton box and dog tags. There was a shelf just under this display case that had nothing on it and that's where I placed two ***Red Clay khe Sanh*** magazines.(Pic#1) In anticipation of this first and historic act, I placed a tab on the magazines indicating they were not to be removed and that they had been donated by Khe Sanh Veterans.

I kept an eye on the magazines all week and noted they were still on the shelf when I left eight days later. I could see they were being read and replaced. (Pic 1B). I will say that those military folks seem to be able to follow directions. There were mostly retired people staying at the hotel, but there were a few young families and current serving military. Hale Koa has a web site which can be accessed just by typing in *Hale Koa Hotel.* I have stayed at the Hale Koa 5 times now, and I plan on staying there again. There is a lot to see and places to visit on the island of Oahu and numerous military bases with some pretty decent golf courses. I am looking forward to my return to the warm weather, cool tropical breeze, great food and to the Hale Koa Hotel.





FROM THE WEB FEBRUARY 25th 1968, THE GHOST PATROL

Posted on February 24, 2011 by Steven Wiese

February 25th, the date of the Ghost Patrol, arouses many emotions for those who fought at the Marine combat base at Khe Sanh. Memories range from remembering the day, or for some deep depression.

It's a difficult day for me personally, not just remembering the many brave men who died that day. My ghosts are remembering the men who were left on the battle field that were wounded, or the men that who may not have been wounded but just pinned down by extremely heavy gun fire. Marines are known and proud of the fact that we do not leave our own behind, but we were out numbered by thousands that day----but that doesn't make it any easier.
Steven Wiese
Bravo lives on.

Mac posted this on the TWS site last year and am reposting with his permission
Mike Fishbaugh

In 2004 and 2005 I was contacted by the niece of Michael J. Laderoute, MIA/KIA February 25, 1968 while on patrol known as "The Ghost Patrol" during the 77 day siege of Khe Sanh.The following is my response to one of her inquiries.

My Response:

Although it has been years since I read it, I recall that Hammel's book was accurate to a great extent. However, different people sometimes see things from a somewhat different perspective. Another thing is that our own memories sometimes deceive us and some of us have even spent years trying to bury memories that are just too painful to fully acknowledge.

On top of that there is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder eating away at most of us, and let's face it as much as we hate to admit it we are getting older and that takes a huge toll on our memory. Another thing is that I am constantly having to ask myself if I really saw this first hand or was it a dream or was it just described to me in such vivid detail that the memory is etched in my brain as if I was there.

The questions that you raised about Lt. Jacques struck home with me. Because of the loss of life in his platoon and the nature of the incident many questions have arisen about his competence, qualifications and leadership abilities. Another was what was the selection criteria that the Marine Corps had in place for officer selection at the time and was it followed. After some discussion and a little research, I have come to the conclusion that he was qualified, competent and fully met the requirements for an officer and more importantly for a Marine Platoon Commander. He was well regarded by the men that served under him and that speaks volumes in itself. He was also thought highly of and worthy by the Bravo Company Commanding Officer, Ken Pipes.

He had also been Platoon Commander for maybe five months or so and had actually been engaged in at least one firefight prior to the siege. Five months may not seem long to civilians but five out of a total

of a thirteen month tour for a Marine Platoon Commander would be considered seasoned. His level of training and experience was at about par with the other two Platoon Commanders. As to why he was the chosen one, I cannot say for sure, but knowing the others involved they probably all three volunteered and may have even flipped a coin to see who had the privilege of going. If he had been allowed to do so Captain Pipes probably would have led the patrol himself, but that is not the way that it was done, and would not have been considered even if he requested it. Another thought as to why it was the Third Platoon is the depth of leadership and competency of the men in the Third. They were all good men. Not to belittle the other platoons. Actually Bravo Company from Captain Pipes down to the newest arrival was the Best of the Best.

I'm not sure about the request for a delay of the patrol due to weather. That may or may not have happened and my thought is that it really doesn't matter. After the tragic events of the 25th their was a scramble to second guess every single minute and detail of the action. Lots of finger pointing and nit picking blame going around. I honestly do not think that any of it was deserved at any level.

In War Battles are won and battles are lost. Unfortunately February 25, 1968, was one of the battles that the US lost during the Vietnam war. To my knowledge it was the only one that Bravo Company was engaged in that they lost and there were many that Bravo Company was the over all victor including the one that I mentioned that Jacques had been in prior to the siege and the tremendous victory that Bravo Company claimed on March 30, 1968, and we can most certainly claim the ultimate victory for the Battle of Khe Sanh.

Like you, I too for more than thirty-five years now, had somewhat cast a little blame on Lt. Jacques for being out of the assigned area. Some, now I know it was unfounded, rumor had it that Jacques went chasing two NVA like a dog after a rabbit and led his men into an ambush without regard or forethought. I learned a couple nights ago that none of this was true. As was common at the time, the patrol had a number of predetermined checkpoints at which they were to call in. At least a part of the reason for the patrol was to attempt to locate some enemy mortar positions that had been attacking the base and as always the capture of enemy prisoners was a priority.

Somewhere between the second and third checkpoint, Lt. Jacques radioed that he had spotted some NVA that he thought it possible to capture and he ask for permission to try to capture them. He was told to be careful and not get into anything that he could not get himself out of and he was given permission to attempt the capture of the enemy that they had spotted. Jacques and his senior NCO were on site and in agreement about his request to pursue the sighted enemy. Higher authority gave him that permission based on Jacques' observation and evaluation. The approved pursuit of the NVA is what took the 3rd Platoon off the designated route. There is no way that Jacques, any of his men or the approving authority could have known that the NVA were actually the bait that was leading them into a horseshoe shaped ambush that was extremely well planned and well executed.

Several of the men that survived the action of the 25th feel like Jacques got a really raw deal and that he was unfairly criticized by people that didn't know anything about the actual happening that day. Based on this new information and comments of those that were there, I have been able to bury that demon once and for all.

Lt. Weiss and his 1st Platoon did an outstanding job in attempting to reinforce and rescue the 3rd. Several more good men were lost in the attempt as they were also ambushed by NVA . The fact that Lt. Weiss and his men were able to not completely fall prey to the ambush speaks highly of the entire 1st Platoon. Although he was able to do so, it was not his decision to break contact and return to the perimeter. The decision wasn't even from the Battalion Commander as I had previously thought. It probably came all the way from Division. If the whole company had been thrown into the fray, the entire company would have been destroyed.

Another observation that I just became aware of is that Division was also concerned that if the whole company left their defensive position on the perimeter to join in the rescue effort, the entire sector of the perimeter would be so weakened that it could not withstand an NVA counter attack and that Khe Sanh would fall. Personally, I think that Division

had it right. I think that the NVA were massed and ready to make just that very strike. The way and place that the 3rd Platoon was ambushed and the preparations that had been made to ambush the reinforcements indicate that it was a part of the over all NVA strategy to take Khe Sanh. If Khe Sanh had fallen and the hills lost the supporting fire that Khe Sanh provided, the hills would have fallen soon thereafter. This buries another demon for me. The one that ask, did we do what we should have done in regard to reinforcing the 3rd Platoon and were the decisions regarding this the right ones? Did everyone at every level do everything that they could have done?

On the issue of the recovery of the bodies of those lost and left behind on the 25th, I have had several conversations and done a little research but mostly I rely on my personal notes that I made at the time. That's one of the reasons that this reply has taken so long. It took a while to locate and organize my notes. My notes show that there were eight Marines from Bravo Company that were immediately listed as KIA body recovered on February 25,1968. I believe that they were all from the 1st and 3rd Platoons. My notes also show a total of 19 Bravo Marines that were listed as MIA. My notes are very detailed and include name, rank serial number, MOS, and even next of kin. For Michael J. Laderoute, my hand written notes actually show two next of kin entries. One located in Montreal and one in New Brunswick, Canada. I only mention this so that you can see the great amount of detail and effort that went into doing everything possible for our lost Brothers and their families.

Again referring to my personal notes: after the highly successful raid on the enemy led by Bravo's Commanding Officer, Ken Pipes, on March 30, 1968, the status of the 19 Marines that had been listed as MIA on the 25th, was changed to KIA body recovered. After more than a month the decomposition of the remains was very bad. Identification was also hindered by the fact that personal items had been removed by the NVA. Another factor was that in addition to the wounds received that led to their death, the bodies were further torn apart by constant artillery and mortar fire directed to that general area for more that a month. Ten of those recovered were separately positively identified and individually shipped home to their family. Nine others were so commingled and in such a state that they could not be separately identified and they were interned in a mass grave at Jefferson Barracks.
They were Michael Baptiste, Jerry Dodson, Frederick Billingham, Bruce E. Jones, Michael Brellenthin, John Lassiter, James Bruder, and David Scarbrough. The ninth was Ronald Ridgeway. Ron actually was not KIA, he was unconscious, and apparently the enemy had mistook him for dead but when he regained consciousness he was taken as a POW.

One of the reasons that we can be fairly certain that there were no other survivor/POW's from the 25th is because Ron would have seen them while he was taken miles away to a rendezvous camp where he joined up with additional POW's have missed other POW's either on the march or at the POW camp and he most certainly would have told the Corps during his debriefing. He has also been to at least one Khe Sanh Vets convention and has been in contact with a number of us. There has been no mention of other Bravo company POW's because there were none.

As for thoughts that there were many more Marines KIA on March 30, 1968, my notes show that there were ten Marines lost from Bravo Company. I also later added two more names one from A/1/13 and one from H&S 1/26. Each and every one of these men were true heroes and their loss was mourned by all; however, the battle was an overwhelming defeat for the enemy. Their losses were well over a hundred killed and no telling how many DOW or wounded. Considering that a single Marine rifle company was assaulting a battalion of NVA in well fortified positions, the Marine losses were miraculously light. I say miraculously because I truly believe that there was divine intervention that day.

Wendy, thank you again for your persistent effort and questions which caused me to get back into all this. Over the last couple of days I have talked with some truly outstanding men and I probably would have missed that opportunity had not been for your prompting. After gaining new information and some first hand observations from others I have changed my outlook on several major issues. Several of my personal demons have been finally been put to rest. I can only hope that some of this information will help you and maybe a few others.

Mac Milton McNeely

B/1/26 Mar 67-Nov68

Note: There was only one or possibly two of the remains of those lost on the 25th recovered on March 30, 1968. The rest were recovered

Mac,
By Mike Preston

Although he did not physically die that day Ed Rayburn was in fact KIA. He was horribly wounded and lived (If you can call his life Living). For another agonizing 8 years . He like many others history has forgotten, and that should not be happening. I believe he should be honored for his sacrifice as if he died that day 43 years ago. Ed Rayburn joined Bravo on 17 Aug 1967 and was WIA in 25 Feb 68 and sent home. He passed away on Jan



23,1976. With the help of Police Chief Tom Martin of the South Haven PD, MI, he located and forwarded a photo of Ed's final Resting place.

Mac,
by Steve Riddle

Henry McDonald was a friend of mine. We partied in Philly after ITR. Shipped out to NAM and landed at Khe Sanh Base early January 68. Just in time for the "big party". Will always remember that Day, we were so young 19. God Bless Henry and all those other fine Marines and Corpsmen who gave their all. Semper Fi…

Mac,
by Mary Jo Keiter
My uncle, Donald Jacques, was on that patrol. I am forever grateful for the Marines who did bring him home for my family. We mourn his loss. To all of you who did make it home from Khe Sanh - thank you. You are in my prayers, especially on February 25th.

Mac,
by Tom Quigley

I'll never forget that morning, when someone woke me, and the skipper needed me on the radio, because 3rd platoon ran into a hellish firefight. I know we all from Bravo Co. wanted to get our asses out there and help them. Finally the skipper gave me the word to go down to 1st platoon to try and help get some of our guys back. That day will live in my mind forever.

Mac,
by Steve Hecknauer

I think that many of us in Charlie CO wanted to give assistance on that day. I know that I'll never forget that day. To those Bravo Brothers that are still with us and for those that gave everything I salute you.
Semper Fi Steve

RESPONSE FROM CAPTAIN KEN PIPES C/O B CO 1/26

To all who posted, thank you for your messages, sharing history, thoughts, comments and observations. I would like to respectfully add to this thread, something that I seldom do. It is like discussing family business with folks that are not family. There are, of course, exceptions and this is one of those exceptions.

Briefly, and to fill some, perhaps known, yet, not mentioned information gaps I would add the following:

I did and continue to think of and recall Lt. Don with respect and fondness. He was a good, well trained and competent Marine Officer. His background, training and experience exceeded that of most of us who were at Khe Sanh during the Siege. I recall that Don was attending Syracuse University when he enlisted and went to PI for Boot camp. Upon graduation he was nominated for, selected and attended OCS at Quantico. This is number two of the Marine's Big Three. Finally, he completed what

was then and remains, among the most demanding of entry examinations; he attended and graduated from Marine Officer's Basic School.

My point, Don could have remained in college, as many non-hackers of our generation did and not gone through the rigorous requirements needed to attain the standards expected and demanded if one is to join our exclusive Rod and Gun Club! Additionally, he was a Mustang. Only he and one other Officer, as I recall, can/could claim that illustrious title. I think only one other qualified who did duty in Bravo Company just before and during The Battle for the ground that each of you and those that are no longer with us, so valiantly and successfully defended.

This deadly fight was not the first, nor will it be the last Marine battlefield tragedy. On the Canal in WW2, the 1st Marine Division G-2, LtCol Lou Gottage, lead a force of Marines that were ambushed. All but two Marines were killed; their remains were not recovered until long after that battle concluded.

At KoTang Island, our Marines withdrew, accidently leaving approximately a Squad behind, who, to a man. were murdered by the Khmer Rogue.(sic) Those men were not recovered until years later. Don, just as Col. Gottage and the Squad Leader at Kotang, died on the field of battle with his men.

One of Bravo's best and most well know Warriors, CPL. "Chief" Gilbert Wall, now passed, in a letter to me and again when he came to visit in our home in Fallbrook, spoke highly of Don as a Platoon Leader, Man and fellow Marine He remembered that they uncovered the extent of and how close the NVA had entrenched toward our lines.

Additionally, I have discussed this action with several members of our Company both on the phone and at our reunions while trying to address their comments, discussions, questions and concerns. There is a written and unwritten law in our Corps of Marines that the Commander is responsible for everything that his men do or fail to do. That being said "The responsibility" for what happened that day, which none of us who were there will ever forget, by the law, is mine and mine alone!

It is my hope this answers the important question and places that day and those days that came before and after, in the proper prospective, it was and will remain, mine!

Finally, Don was not the first Marine Officer from his family. His sister was Commissioned and served our Corps and Country, well prior to Don following the same demanding and difficult path.

I consider, then and now, that Lt. Don was a decent, dedicated, well trained, loyal and professional member of our "Band of Brothers." We all miss each member of our Clan of Warriors that fell in battle at Khe Sanh. Each Marine is, and will forever remain an important part of us. Thus, it will remain until we are called before our final judgment. My feeling is illustrated in the poem that accompanies the listing of those that we lost in the Siege--"Bravo's Brave Rifles." The words came to me late in the night as I thought of that day and what came before and after. May our Lord Bless them, each one--and their families

I summary and to each that posted on this thread, thanks. We must never forget those with whom it was such an honor and privilege to serve and those Marines who will forever remain our Most Cherished Companions at Arms

In closing and in tribute, we should forever remember that later aircraft photo's indicate that members of Don's Platoon, even after the NVA ambush, continued to assault the trenches--some actually made it before passing to glory, taking many of the enemy with them! What magnificent Marines they were! With admiration and respect to them and to you.

Ken

B CO 1/26

BRAVE RIFLES

You comfort us in the dark of night. We see you in the eyes of our children. You are beside us on the safe, forested trail. You are only a smile, a thought and a tear away. Our hearts ache for your family, even today. We speak proudly of your bravery at our annual gathering. You are the benchmark against which all else is measured. Rest in Peace and Honor~ Brave Rifles. You are NEVER forgotten.



WITH BAYONETS FIXED KHE SANH—30 MARCH 1968

by Lt. Colonel Ken Pipes

One of the most sobering experiences in life is the responsibility of leading young Marines into the teeth of the enemy knowing that some of them will not come out of it alive. It takes courage, faith, an indomitable spirit, and an unfailing trust in the capabilities of the men entrusted to your care. Fighting at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam in 1967–68 was an ongoing, brutal fight to the death between Marines and soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army. This entry in the 'Sting of Battle' series takes us through a particularly poignant episode of combat as seen through the eyes of a young Marine rifle company commander.

On 30 March 1968, Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines (B/1/26) proceeded from the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base to their pre-designated line of departure located near forward units of the North Vietnamese Army's (NVA's) 8th Battalion, 66th Regiment, 304th (Hanoi) Iron Division. Poised against each other in the coming attack were lineal descendants of one of the most famous divisions involved in the siege against the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and elements of the 26th Marines—one of three Marine regiments of the 5th Marine Division that led the assault against Japan's island fortress of Iwo Jima in February-March 1945.

The attack—scheduled for first light—was delayed by heavy ground fog that obscured the entire objective area. As the blinding fog began to lift, our Marines, with bayonets fixed, crossed the line of departure outside the wire of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Immediately upon commencing the assault, the two lead platoons came under extremely heavy mortar, rocket propelled grenade, automatic weapons, and small arms fire from the 8th NVA Battalion who occupied extensive, well-constructed, mutually supporting bunkers and trench systems.

Under the umbrella of withering fire from nine batteries of Marine and Army artillery that pummeled the flanks of the objective area and created a rolling barrage 50 to 70 meters in front of the two attack platoons, the Marines began breaching the NVA positions. The fight for fire superiority hung in the balance until the attached flame section and combat engineer detachment entered the fray. As their predecessors did on Iwo Jima, these units, covered and assisted by Marine riflemen, began to blind, blast, and burn their way into the NVA fortifications

For the next 4 hours the Marines of Company B—some of whom had undergone 70-plus days and nights of continuing, killing bombardment by NVA heavy artillery, rocket, mortar, and concentrated sniper fire—gained some measure of retribution as they routed the NVA soldiers from their fiercely defended positions. Within the breached positions our Marine riflemen were literally walking over the dead and dying NVA defenders.

From the moment of close contact until some 4 hours later when we received the order to withdraw back into the combat base, the fight was hand to hand, bayonet to bayonet, knife to knife, grenade against grenade, and rifleman against rifleman, with the trump card as always—Marines using flamethrowers and combat engineers employing demolitions!

It may seem to some readers that this was just another example of a typical seasoned Marine combat unit doing its job—just another typical day at the office. It wasn't. A significant point must be made here! The rifle company that attacked the NVA that Saturday morning was not the same company that had moved from Hill 881 South 3 months earlier to participate in a battalion sweep toward the Laotian border, and then moved into the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The continuous enemy bombardment while we were in the combat base had hurt B/1/26 more than any other similarly sized de-

fending unit and was exacerbated by the tragic loss of most of an entire platoon on 25 February resulting from an ambush by a reinforced company from the 8th NVA Battalion

Most of the Marines in Company B on 30 March had joined during the siege as replacements after the siege had begun. These young men had traveled a hard road including boot camp, skills training at the Infantry Training Regiment, Staging Battalion at Camp Pendleton, a flight to Vietnam, reporting in to the 26th Marines, exiting the aircraft at the Khe Sanh Combat Base under fire, reporting for assignment to 1st Battalion, and finally—still under fire—joining Company B. To a rifleman, they had no combat experience at the fire team, squad, platoon, or company level.

As it has always been in combat, if it had not been for the leveling skills of a handful of short-timer leaders—privates first class and corporals—led by an experienced company executive officer, company gunnery sergeant, and outstanding platoon commanders—the execution of this company-sized raid on 30 March 1968 would never have moved beyond our frontline trenches.

As noted by the commanding officer of 1/26 and the S–3 (operations officer) who planned the company raid, "The members of Co B performed individually and collectively in a manner normally expected only of seasoned and combat experienced Marines." I believe that their brilliant feat can only be attributed to their deep and overriding desire to avenge the prior loss of Marines of their company—most of whom they never knew or met! To them and them alone goes the credit for executing arguably the first successful company-sized offensive assault outside the wire since the ambush of their mates on 25 February—and for making it such a success!

These Marines totally decimated the 8th NVA Battalion, including the enemy battalion commander and his staff. In so doing, the Marines of Company B killed at least 115 NVA officers and soldiers and wounded an untold number of their survivors, according to information later passed to the company that had been intercepted from monitored enemy radio traffic!

Still later, Marines from B/1/26—none above the rank of corporal—who had participated in the raid, were awarded two Navy Crosses, nine Silver Stars, eight Bronze Stars, and two Navy Commendation Medals with Combat "V" for valor for individual acts of courage, gallantry, and heroism! Additionally, over 100 Purple Hearts were presented, with several of these Marines earning their awards for receiving a second and third wound.

Just like their predecessors from Iwo Jima—to a man—the Marines of Company B remain intensely proud of their 26th Marines heritage! We will always feel that we who were privileged to serve with Bravo's young, inexperienced, Marine infantrymen that fateful Saturday morning were truly in the company of men who were, are, and will always be "The Immortals"!

Subsequent to the fighting on 30 March 1968, the company was the recipient of the following from the commanding general of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam:

Officers and men of B/1/26 USMC deserve highest praise for aggressive patrol action north of Khe Sanh on 30 March. Heavy casualties inflicted on bunkers and entrenched enemy forces indicate typical Marine esprit de corps and professionalism. Well done!
Gen William Westmoreland

And further remarks from our 26th Marines regimental commander:
I add my congratulations to the above well earned commendatory remarks. Col David Lownds sends.

ACTION DATE: 30-Mar-68
KHE SANH VIETNAM

SSGT	Alvarado Gus	BS w/V (2)	B 1/26
PFC	Anderson David B	BS w/V	B 1/26
CPL	Boone Samuel Jr.	Silver Star	B 1/26
PFC	Britt Ted D	Silver Star	B 1/26
HM3	Casey Thomas E	BS w/V	B 1/26
PFC	Collins Edward	Silver Star	B 1/26
LCPL	Crosby John T	BS w/V	B 1/26
LT/DR	Demaagd Harvey J	BS w/V	B 1/26
1LT	Dillon John W	BS w/V (2)	B 1/26
PFC	Edgar Gene E	Silver Star	B 1/26
LCPL	Foster Jerome C	Silver Star	B 1/26
PFC	Frazier Melvin D	Silver Star	B 1/26

PFC	Green Ezell	BS w/V	B 1/26
CPL	Korkow Kenneth A	Navy Cross	B 1/26
1LT	Long Benjamin L	BS w/V	B 1/26
Col	Lownds David E	Navy Cross	CO KSB
CPL	Marshall Thomas D	BS w/V	B 1/26
PFC	Miranda Julio M	BS w/V	B 1/26
PFC	Moguel Albert	Silver Star	B 1/26
PFC	Morrison Lonnie W	Silver Star	B 1/26
CAPT	Pipes Kenneth W	Silver Star	B 1/26
PFC	Rash Donald R	Navy Cross	B 1/26
2LT	Weiss Peter	W Silver Star	B 1/26
PFC	Williams James A	BS w/V	B 1/26
CAPT	Shafer Francis L	BS w/V	D 1/9
1LT	Norman Marion H	BS w/V (2)	A 1/13
CPL	Beasley Luzon	BS w/V	H&S 1/9

OTHER BRAVO COMPANY BRAVE RIFLES WHO PAID THE ULTIMATE PRICE "NEVER FORGOTTEN"

PFC	Aldridge, Herbert Ray	3/06/68	B 1/26
PFC	Beauford, Willis JR	2/06/68	B 1/26
PFC	Berger, John Edward	3/27/68	B 1/26
PFC	Bixby, Thomas Eugene	3/27/68	B 1/26
CPL	Brignac, Joseph Paul	3/06/68	B 1/26
LCPL	Corbin, Russell B. JR	2/07/68	B 1/26
LCPL	Cottrell, Thomas L	1/22/68	B 1/26
LCPL	Kent, Gregory Patrick	3/28/68	B 1/26
HM3	Macagba, Edilberto Dula	3/13/68	B 1/26
LCPL	McCosar, Winford	3/06/68	B 1/26
PFC	Mcrae, Jimmie Lefon	3/28/68	B 1/26
PFC	Mottola, Vincent Antonio	2/23/68	B 1/26
PFC	Spicer, Johnathan N.	3/14/68	B 1/26
PFC	Chisholm, James	2/23/68	B 1/26
CPL	Thorpe, Gary Wilford	2/23/68	H&S 1/26
LCPL	Hellwig, Steven L	1/21/68	H&S 1/26
SgtMaj	Bean, Donald Wayne	3/11/68	H&S 1/26
LCPL	McKeever, Michael E.	2/23/68	H&S 1/26
1LT	Johnson, Kim William	2/23/68	H&S 1/26
PFC	Rayburn, Edward	01/23/76	B 1/26
SGT	Jacobs, Quilles, Ray	4/19/95	B 1/26
PFC	Quinn, Donald	03/97	B 1/26
	Parker, Robert A.	11/05/01	B 1/26
CAPT	Cefail, Norman	12/23/80	B 1/26

TRIBUTE AND TRIBULATION KHE SANH REMEMBERED

To the men who scaled their mountains
and Seized that far flung plateau,
To the men that held the arena
Against the best the enemy could throw.

Who walked the jungle covered valleys
And waded the leach laden streams;
Who moved through the green shrouded alleys,
Till their muscles cramped and screamed.

To those who fell wounded and bleeding,
Yet arose to fight on 'til the end.
To those who fell wounded and bleeding,
Never to rise up again.

To our comrades who carried the rifle; Who fired both cannon and gun.
To those that supplied and fought with us We knew that they'd never run.

To the pilots who flew the fast movers,
And herded choppers all over the sky.
Who calmly watched the green tracers
As they went arching and howling by.

To Gentleman Jim, our commander,
And Jacques, Claire, Morris and Chief.
To Snake, Mike, Korkow and Rash,
And other heroes we respect and keep.

To Stubbe, our brave navy chaplain,
Who intercede for us as our link.
And to DeMaggd, our battalion surgeon, Whose skilled hand drew us back from the brink.

To Blanchfield, and our navy corpsmen,
The finest and most courageous of all
Who daily and nightly fought to reach us,
Refusing to succumb to the law.

So now as we move far from the valley,
And the years march away to the fore.
We and our families remember,
All those who made it happen; and more.

KEN PIPES C/O B CO 1/26



ALL THE GANG FROM BRAVO 1/26



L-R KEN KORKOW & BEN LONG BY BRAVO COMPANY KIA AT MOVING WALL

ALL NEW PX ITEMS



STONE. BLUE LIFE MEMBER-SHIP SILK SCREEN $15.00

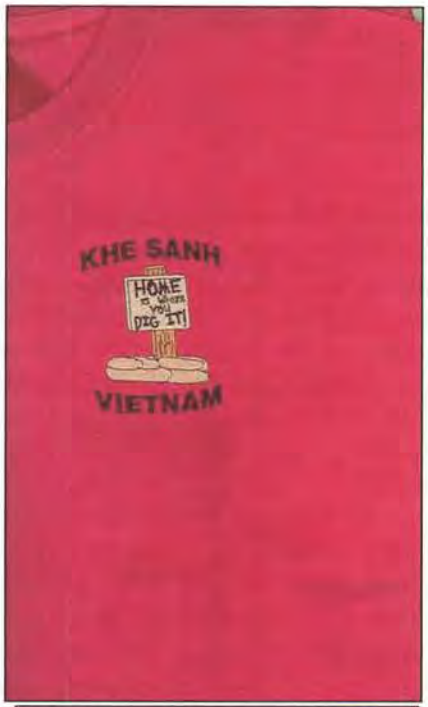

RED HOME IS WHERE YOU DIG IT EMBROIDERED $ 16.00



LIGHT TAN LIFE MEMBER EMBROIDERED $ 16.00



ICY GREY REUNION T SHIRT SILK SCREEN (Home is Where you Dig It) On BACK 12X12 $15.00

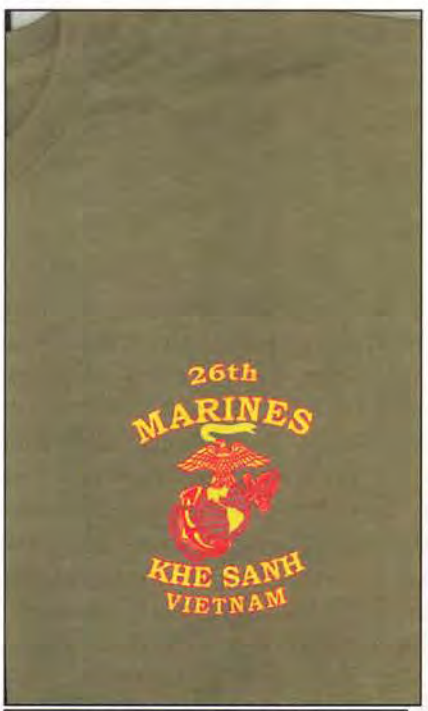

OLIVE DRAB 26TH MARINES SILK SCREEN $15.00



LIFE MEMBER (2) PIN 1-1/4 LAPEL PIN $7.00



LIFE MEMBER IRON ON EMBROIDERED PATCH $ 7.00



1-1/4 EXACT REPLICA K-BAR BLACK BLADE WITH KHE SANH IN GOLD $ 7.00



1-1/4 (2) PIN LAPEL PIN $ 6.00

CAPTAIN
KENNETH W. PIPES
MARINE CORPS



For Service as set forth in the following:

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Captain Kenneth W. Pipes (MCSN: 0-81285), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as Commanding Officer of Company B, First Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, THIRD Marine Division (Rein.), FMF, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On the morning of 30 March 1968, Company B launched an attack on a well-entrenched, numerically superior North Vietnamese Army force near Khe Sanh Combat Base and immediately came under intense automatic weapons, mortar and anti-tank rocket fire. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, Captain Pipes fearlessly maneuvered across the fire-swept terrain deploying his men and adjusting supporting arms fire on the enemy. Although sustaining a serious wound, he ignored his painful injury and led his men in a determined assault, seizing the hostile emplacements. Steadfastly refusing medical aid, he repeatedly exposed himself to the intense fire as he supervised the destruction of numerous bunkers and ensured that all wounded were treated and evacuated. Upon being directed to break contact, he unhesitatingly remained with the rear element of his command and directed an orderly withdrawal from the hazardous area. His resolute determination and heroic actions inspired all who served with him and were instrumental in his company accounting for 115 North Vietnamese soldiers confirmed killed. By his courage, bold initiative and unfaltering devotion to duty in the face of great personal danger, Captain Pipes upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

CORPORAL
KENNETH A. KORKOW
MARINE CORPS



For service as set forth in the following:

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to Corporal Kenneth A. Korkow (MCSN: 2258125), United States Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism while serving as Mortar Section Leader of Company B, First Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, THIRD Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in the Republic of Vietnam on 30 March 1968. During a search and destroy operation in the vicinity of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, Company B suddenly came under intense small-arms and mortar fire from a well-entrenched North Vietnamese Army battalion. Fearlessly exposing himself to the hostile fire, Corporal Korkow quickly deployed his mortar section into firing positions and, moving about the fire-swept terrain from one squad to another, directed heavy barrages of accurate fire against the enemy, destroying four fortified bunkers. Alertly detecting a hidden mortar site which was pinning down elements of his company, he advanced to a position dangerously open to enemy fire and, employing his own mortar, single-handedly destroyed the hostile emplacement. As the battle intensified, Corporal Korkow repeatedly disregarded his own safety as he moved from one position to another, encouraging his men and directing their fire. Observing a Marine fall wounded by an enemy explosive device, he selflessly rushed into the hazardous area and assisted his injured comrade to an aid station established to the rear of his company. Although seriously wounded while returning to the forward area after assisting more casualties to the aid station, Corporal Korkow resolutely continued to encourage and assist his men and comfort the wounded until he was medically evacuated. His intrepid fighting spirit inspired all who observed him and contributed immeasurably to the final defeat of the numerically superior enemy force. By his uncommon valor and selfless devotion to duty in the face of extreme personal danger, Corporal Korkow reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS
DONALD RAY RASH
MARINE CORPS RESERVE



For service as set forth in the following:

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Navy Cross (Posthumously) to Private First Class Donald Ray Rash (MCSN: 2230103), United States Marine Corps (Reserve), for extraordinary heroism while serving as a rifleman with Company B, First Battalion, Twenty-sixth Marines, THIRD Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On 30 March 1968, while conducting a reconnaissance in force near the Khe Sanh Combat Base, Company B suddenly came under a heavy volume of small-arms fire from a numerically superior North Vietnamese Army force occupying fortified positions. Although the majority of the hostile fire was directed at his squad, pinning down his companions, Private Rash disregarded his own safety as he unhesitatingly left a covered position and launched a determined assault against the enemy emplacements. Ignoring the hostile rounds impacting near him, he fearlessly advanced across the fire-swept terrain, boldly throwing hand grenades and delivering a heavy volume of rifle fire upon the enemy force. Although continuously exposed to the intense hostile fire, he resolutely continued his vicious attack until he had destroyed five enemy positions and killed numerous North Vietnamese soldiers. When his company was subsequently ordered to withdraw while under accurate enemy mortar fire, he steadfastly remained behind, and as he delivered suppressive fire to cover the evacuation of casualties he was mortally wounded. His bold initiative and resolute determination inspired all who observed him and were instrumental in his company accounting for 115 North Vietnamese soldiers confirmed killed. By his courage, intrepid fighting spirit, and selfless devotion to duty, Private Rash contributed immeasurably to the accomplishments of his unit's mission and sustained and enhanced the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.



Step Daughter of Earl Clark A Co 1/26 Next to B Co 1/26 Members KIA on 25 February 1968

THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH BRAVO! COMMON MEN, UNCOMMON VALOR

By Francis Rae
Submitted By Thomas Soerensen

Betty Hosford Rodgers grew up at the edge of Sacramento County, just a stone's throw from the border with Sutter County. She and I met in 1961 in high school and quickly became "best friends". As high school girls do, we had long endless conversations about boys, whether we would be asked to the prom, and what our future lives might be like. The Beatles had not yet been discovered, no one had gone to the moon, and we watched black and white television.

One thing we certainly never could have imagined in 1961 was that 50 years later she would be spearheading the making of a documentary film (and I would be covering it in the newspaper) about a battle that had not yet happened, in a country we had not yet heard of.

The siege of Khe Sanh by the North Vietnamese began January 21, 1968, and lasted 77 days, finally ending in April, 1968, when Betty's husband Ken Rodgers, then a Marine lance corporal with Bravo Company, First Battalion, 26th Marines, boarded the helicopter that lifted him from the hills of Khe Sanh when the battle was finally over. Ken says, "I looked out of the chopper, and I could see those hills." And I thought: "There's a story."

Over the years Betty, a photographer, and Ken, a writer who teaches on line writing classes, talked about what such a story might look like, and how one might go about telling it. They even contemplated making a movie about it, although they had no filmmaking experience. But then, during the 1970's and 1980's no one in this Country wanted to hear such a story and most who had lived it weren't ready to talk about it.

Finally in 2010, after a phone call to the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation followed by a letter written by Betty telling them what she and Ken would do, to their shock the Foundation granted "seed money" to begin making the film. The Foundation also offered help with historical aspects of the film, stating they believed that the history of Bravo Company during the siege should be preserved. Suddenly Betty and Ken were film makers and they knew they had some quick learning to do.

In April 2010, 42 years after the chopper plucked Ken from the hills of Khe Sanh, he and Betty began the first series of interviews, close to home in Idaho. This was quickly followed by more interviews of Khe Sanh Bravo Company veterans during an 8,000 mile journey that spanned 18 states, with additional research at Quantico Virginia and the Nation-al archives in Washington D.C.

Back home in Idaho during the last quarter of 2010, as they catalogued photos and archival film clips, and watched interview after interview; reality was setting in. The original seed money was long ago spent, they had used their savings, and Betty had come out of retirement to go back to work to raise money to finish the project. But still there was not going to be enough money to finish the editing process (which will require hiring a professional film editor) and put the final film "in the can."

To make the documentary they had formed a non-profit organization which can take tax deductible donations, and a number of donations have come in, but not enough so far to complete the project. Ken and Betty hope that enough money can be raised to complete the project in time for the GI Film Festival in May, 2011, in Washington D.C.

Yes, as Ken said to himself that day in 1968, there is a story; but he and Betty are keenly aware that it is not merely a "war" story, or a "historical" documentary. It is the story of individual courage and valor, of the will to overcome and persevere against all odds, and to stand tall in the face of unimagined adversity.

Many of the marines who survived the Siege of Khe Sanh are now in their sixties and seventies and time is beginning to run out to document their stories.

Ken and Betty do not debate the war of 50 years ago and whether the men should have been there in the first place ..... that is not the point. The point is, they were there and deserve to be remembered and honored .... for their valor and bravery.

In considering the story Ken and Betty are preserving for future generations, it occurs to me that none of us know when or how circumstances will test us. There can be many different kinds of "wars" and different kinds of "battles" we may be called upon to face and to fight in our lifetimes. We should all ask ourselves; do I have what it takes? Am I up to the challenge, whatever it may be,
when the time comes?

To learn more about the project, or to donate, go to Www.indiegogo.com/Bravo-Common-Men-Uncommon Valor



KEN & BETTY RODGERS

HELL IN THE HILLS OF KHE SANH
Reprinted From Vietnam Magazine

By Barry Fixler
E CO 2/26 HILL 861A

For nearly 80 days, Marines on the hills surrounding Khe Sanh endured one of the war's fiercest fights

The top of what became known as Hill 861-A was just virgin land covered with elephant grass and bamboo when I first saw it. My company, Echo 2/26, had to claw through the dense vegetation and up the steep slopes of what would become a bomb-scarred hilltop with trenches reminiscent of World War I. In fact, over the next 77 days Khe Sanh would earn the dubious record of receiving the heaviest bombardment of a small area in the history of warfare.



All we knew in mid-January 1968 was that we were leaving Phu Bai for a place called Khe Sanh and were loaded down with war gear, all that we could carry. I only knew of it as a company operation, and how it affected me, Lance Cpl. Barry Fixler. I was unaware that we were part of a huge, regiment-size operation. None of us had a clue.

They put our whole company in a mammoth C-130 transport plane, and it seemed that this operation might be a little bigger than most. We knew we were going to an area closer to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) than Phu Bai, so it probably would be worse, but I was a seasoned Marine with six months of combat, so I was unworried, confident.

The DMZ was anything but demilitarized. It was intended to exist as a zone free from any military presence by either North or South for a limited period until national unification elections took place. But history didn't follow the diplomats' script. The zone and the areas around it saw some of the greatest destruction and carnage of the war.

After we landed at the Khe Sanh combat base and organized, we humped outside the lines and into the fields. We dug in on a small hill the first couple of nights. There was no outpost. We were the only Marines there, and we still did not know what our objective was or what actually was happening.

We all had an eerie, uneasy feeling, though. Whatever we were doing, it wasn't routine. We knew that we were in a bad spot; we just didn't know how bad. We finally ended up at the base of a steep hill, a mountain almost, about 2,500 feet high. There was only one overgrown trail, so the 150 or so of us started up it in a single column. The terrain was horrible and took hours to climb.

I carried a rocket launcher that looked like a huge bazooka, my M-16 rifle and ammunition, all my grenades, my gas mask and a minimum of two rockets. That's a heavy load, and we still had to be alert for an ambush at any second.

The hill was very steep and the trail was overgrown, but carrying everything required both of my hands,

so I couldn't use them to help myself up the trail. It was a real struggle, and the heat was oppressive. We were given no breaks to rest. We were screwed—very vulnerable and spread too thin. I still think we were lucky that we reached the top without being slaughtered. The NVA must have been able to see us.



Commanding Vista from a post atop Hill 861A. Marine scans the crater pocked valley below for the NVA

We were the first Marines to reach the top of 861-A, and not a soul was there, just wild grass, bamboo and other vegetation all over the place. We had obscured lines of sight, which would make it difficult to find targets when we had to shoot back at whoever would inevitably start shooting at us. The enemy could have sneaked up to within 10 feet of us and we wouldn't have been able to see him. So the first thing we did was start digging in.

Darkness was falling on us fast, and we were totally out of water. The only moisture that we found was on bamboo shoots that were covered with mites. I remember snapping the bamboo rods and putting our tongues to them to catch the drops of water as they trickled out.

For the next two or three days, we continued to entrench ourselves and clear lines of fire. Someone erected an American flag. We didn't get the barbed wire and concertina razor wire emplaced around our position for about a week, so it was a good thing that the NVA didn't zero in on us quickly.

Hill 861 already was getting pounded and had been overrun once, and within three days we were catching mortars and rockets on 861-A. Each day grew more intense, and we got the feeling that we might be there for awhile, but we had no way of knowing that it would turn into 77 days of hell.

The NVA became increasingly better at aiming their mortars, rockets and artillery. They would rain mortars up and down the lines. Ba-boom! Ba-boom! Ba-boom! We even were hit by our own artillery a few times. Things like that just happened, and we felt helpless against it.



Medevac Helicopter arriving on Hill 861A

The first week of February, the NVA really turned it on. Rockets and mortars were almost constant. On February 4, a chopper came in to evacuate the wounded and bring in replacements and supplies. The new guys ran off the chopper, and I ran on to offload supplies.

Heavy rockets and mortars showered the landing zone, and as the chopper lifted off, I jumped into a trench and ended up next to one of the new guys. He had been in Vietnam for a day or two, and on the hill for all of one minute. He was clearly shaken by the intensity of the situation.

"How long you been in-country?" he asked.
"Six months," I told him.
"How could you live that long? How's that possible?"

I remember the conversation because the new Ma-

rine's name reminded me of the actor Humphrey Bogart. He was killed the next day.

Too many Marines were killed on Hill 861-A on February 5, 1968, when we were totally overrun. The North Vietnamese swarmed in from all directions. They were all over the hill. Three or four Marines were right there when the first NVA popped up, and they just got overrun. The shooting was intense, and waves of enemy soldiers just kept coming, coming, coming.



Dead and wounded Marines gathered at the LZ waiting for Pick-UP, after the battle.

Everything went down at once: artillery, rockets, mortars, small arms, bayonets, even tear gas. It took us all night to kill all the North Vietnamese who had gotten into our lines.

I heard more of the fighting on February 5 than I saw. The enemy was so close, swarming over and through our trenches, that there was a serious risk of shooting one of our own guys. So another Marine and I instinctively ended up with our backs to each other, holding our position in the trench line. It was total chaos, pitch black and the constant explosions from rockets, artillery and grenades created a strobe light effect.

We used gas grenades on the NVA. Tear gas is heavier than air, and it blew back on us and filled our trenches, forcing us to wear our gas masks that night. This limited our vision even more. You're looking through goggles, and one of the first things that you can see is that a lot of your guys are dead or seriously wounded. Our ears rang from the constant explosions, and each flash of light from the blasts briefly illuminated a portrait of death through the goggles.

It was like being blindfolded and spun around 50 times. Then they take off the blindfold, flip the lights on and off, blast your ears with noise loud enough to make your nose bleed and you have to try to identify and shoot the enemy—all night long. We lost a lot of Marines that day. They can't simulate that experience in boot camp.



Marines carry a wounded comrade across a bomb crater to the LZ for a medevac. The Photographer, Robert Ellison, died in a plane crash a short time after photo was taken.

You don't have time in a situation like that to note individual acts of heroism, but as I found out later, my mentor, Cpl. Tom Eichler, was a hero that night. Hill 861-A could well have fallen if Tom hadn't done what he did, and that would have changed the entire course of the war. His actions were emblematic of what made Khe Sanh a part of Marine Corps lore: perseverance against overwhelming odds.

Three of our men manning a machine gun were injured when the NVA overran their position in the initial assault. Three times Tom dodged enemy fire to carry each of the men to safety.

He killed three NVA in hand-to-hand combat, stopping them from firing a rocket into a trench filled with Marines. When the enemy managed to estab-

lish a machine gun position inside our perimeter, Tom wiped it out with grenades, and he sprayed cover fire that allowed our own machine gunners to move into a position to defend us.

He stood above the trenches to throw grenades down on the advancing enemy, and the entire time he made sure that we were kept supplied with ammunition. Tom was seriously injured early in the assault, but his injuries never slowed him.



Fellow Marines struggle to help a severely wounded member to an aid station.

When dawn came, we counted 109 North Vietnamese bodies sliced and diced all over the hill. I remember thinking: "What? Another one? Another one?" Even spread over maybe two acres, 109 was a lot of bodies. We had seven Marines killed, and at least 30 seriously wounded—guys missing limbs, or so damaged that they probably died within a few days. At best, they lived but never fought again.

We waded through the trenches and gathered the wounded and dead. After a corpsman had stabilized a wounded Marine, we wrapped him in a poncho and carried him to a staging area near the LZ, to be evacuated to a field hospital. We just kept lining them up, and helicopters came and choppered them away.

One of the guys I helped suffered multiple severe injuries, and I talked to him to try to keep him from going into shock. He asked me to find his hand.
"I need my hand. Can you look for my hand?"

I asked where his fighting hole was and told him I'd look for it. I meant it, too. But when I got to his area and started looking around, reality set in. Debris and body parts were everywhere. "It's hopeless," I thought. "Even if you find a whole hand, there's no way to know if it's his."
We needed immediate reinforcements, and when they came from other units, they all had looks in their eyes that said: "Oh my God, I'm screwed! I am screwed!"

We didn't put their minds at ease.

"They're definitely gonna attack us again tonight," I told the green Marines. "Be ready because they're coming back. Those mothers are coming back tonight!"

The new guys all were wide-eyed and solemn, and you could tell that they were thinking, "Ah shit, I'm gonna die tonight!" Those of us who had been on the hill since the beginning didn't think that way.

I looked at myself sometimes and couldn't see the green Marine who had landed in the country only six months earlier.



Barry Fixler (No Helmet) posing with members of Echo Company on Hill 861A, all proud of outlasting and defeating the NVA for 80 Days on Hill 861A. As Fixler recalled " We are Marines, we all felt 10 Feet Tall".

In no way could I show fear to the new guys. I had to raise my confidence to a new level. Those guys picked up on that real fast, and pretty soon, the ones who survived, they talked the same shit. They needed to see the example to have that confidence, and then they fed off of it. It rattled us but it didn't scare us.

I was just hell bent to kill the enemy. It was more like, "C'mon, you gave us your best shot yesterday, and now give us your best shot today!"

And they did. The NVA continued to bring it. They never overran our position again, but they laid siege to us for another two months, throwing everything they could at us: artillery, rockets, mortars and grenades.



"Trench Warfare"
Barry Fixler (Left) standing in Hill 861A Trench Line with James Heagy (Center) KIA and James Kaylor later recipient of the Silver Star.

Long after the siege, when my ears had quit ringing, I still thought sometimes that I could smell the gas. Anyone who ever has been gassed will tell you that things can't get much more fucked up. Unless you've experienced it and found the discipline within yourself to apply your training and overcome it, you can't control yourself. You can have the best rifle in the world, but it's worthless against gas.

The night the NVA overran us, I was moving from off watch to on when the skies lit up and we scrambled to organize and fight back, and then I smelled the gas. The odor is distinct and unforgettable. I didn't know that we were using the gas. I assumed it was the NVA gassing us, or that a Marine had been blown up and his gas grenades had exploded with him.

I was seasoned then and thought I was cool, and I'd let my hair grow nice and long. I didn't panic, but as I held my breath and put on my gas mask as I had learned in boot camp, the band of it tangled in my hair, and the only thing that I could do was start yanking my hair out by the roots. It was like pulling clumps of grass out of an overgrown lawn.

My head had been shaved during boot camp, the last time that I had do the gas mask procedure, but doing it with long hair while under enemy fire was a whole different matter. I cleared the tangled spot, fit the mask on and blew to clear the gas from inside and I was ready to fight, but I was pissed at myself for not getting a haircut.

I was promoted to a squad leader at Khe Sanh, and it wasn't long before I began asking myself how long I could last. Second lieutenants and squad leaders passed through a revolving door of death at Khe Sanh.

New second lieutenants were always coming in. More men in that rank were probably killed, by percentage, than those in any other rank, and squad leaders couldn't have been far behind. Second lieutenants had no credibility; that was something that had to be earned. Second lieutenant was the lowest rank for an officer. They had just finished training in the States. What war did they have in the States? No war.

On top of that, second lieutenants came into units full of seasoned Marines who had been in combat for a year or more. The officers probably trained as hard or harder than the enlisted men, though. First they had to go through four years of college, and then through officer's candidate school and training,

but still they had no combat experience.

Second lieutenants had to be in the worst spot at all times because they were leaders. They had to be where the bad stuff was happening at every moment, and so they were vulnerable. The position of squad leader among the enlisted men was based on who had been in the squad longest when rotations came, and on who still was alive and able to fight.
Becoming a squad leader meant the world to me, but I suddenly had responsibility for anywhere from seven to 12 guys. Every morning, squad leaders from my platoon had to report to the command post (CP). The order would get passed down the trench line, "Squad leaders up!"



Mike Lucas, waves three fingers signifying that he received his third Purple Heart at Khe Sanh, which meant he would be taken out of a combat area.

That meant that I had to run as low as possible through trenches to get to the CP, where Captain Earle Breeding waited. I usually was ducking from mortars and rockets. The CP was a little sandbag hut in which six to 10 guys could fit, but we had to sit. There was no room to stand because a taller structure would have been a big target.
Captain Breeding barked out orders, telling us our jobs for the day, what our plan was. "OK, 1st Platoon, you're doing good. Mortars. Where's mortars? Where's machine guns?"

Maybe Captain Breeding would want an extra listening post, an LP. That was the worst of the worst. They sent two men out at night past the edge of our perimeter, the other side of the razor wire, to listen for the enemy and notify us if they heard them. It was like throwing them to the dogs. They were cannon fodder.

Or he could order a squad to go out and clean up C ration cans that were carelessly thrown out past the perimeter. "1st Platoon? Send a squad out to police the area south of your line. We have animals out there scavenging your C rats and we're gonna get complacent. Next time the enemy probes the line, we'll think it's rats!"

Maybe he would order us to repair the concertina wire. A working party. "Third Platoon, send a working party out there and throw more wire."

There was always something to do. We never sat around. We survived by staying busy, and if we weren't assigned to a working party, we had to dig deeper and pile sandbags higher.
Captain Breeding gave us these orders every morning, and as I got used to being a squad leader, I began to notice: "Whoa, another new face! Oh my God, another new face!" I saw the same faces for a few days, and then one would be gone and replaced by someone new. Sometimes guys just got rotated back to the States, but most of the time they were wounded or killed. I'd wonder, "Whoa, who's going to replace me when I get it?"

Years later I saw the movie *Spartacus* with Kirk Douglas, and for some reason one of the scenes reminded me of our morning meetings with Captain Breeding. Before they called Spartacus and his opponent into the ring in which one of them would die, the two warriors sat in a little room and stared at each other, knowing that one of them was doomed.

That's the exact feeling I had when I sat in the squad leaders' meeting. It was just like the two gladiators in *Spartacus*. I would look at the faces and think: "Who's the next one to die? Am I next?"

Strange, but a person gets used to being bombed every day. It's survival of the fittest. It got to a point when we were being mortared that we didn't ask, "Did anybody get hit?" It was, "Who got hit?" We took casualties at all hours and from all directions. Sometimes the helicopters would drop in reinforcements, but they were never enough.

One day in mid-February, during a rare break in the incoming, Mike Lucas called to me from two foxholes over. Mike was one of my best friends.

"Hey Fix! Fix! Fix! Hey Fix, I got something cool!"
"What the hell could he have that's cool?" I thought. Nothing had changed for weeks.
"I have cupcakes!"

"How the hell could you have cupcakes?" I asked him. We were under siege, living in trenches, men dying. How could he have cupcakes?

We would get these tins of compressed pound cake, and every so often our C rations included miniature Hershey bars. Mike got creative.

We always had C4, which is an explosive that's a little like Play-Do. During the day, but never at night, we could use little pinches of it to heat our food. Without a detonator, it wouldn't explode, but it would burn. We would light the C4, place an empty can upside down over it, then put the can with our food in it on top of that. It was like a little burner, and it made the food a little easier to get down.

Mike must have formed the pound cake into three little cupcakes, and then melted his Hershey bars and dripped the chocolate over the pound cake. He presented it to me and another Marine, Lance Cpl. James Anthony Wood, really nice on a piece of cardboard, like he was a chef or something.

Like a jerk, I didn't catch on right away. It didn't dawn on me that he could have just made the cupcakes. "Where did you get those cupcakes?"
"Some helicopter guy just flew them in for us."

It really didn't matter. Mike, James and I probably spent 10 minutes just admiring those little cupcakes, and then we only ate them in nibbles, nice and slow—three tough Marines giggling like school kids and eating cute Khe Sanh cupcakes. That was James Wood's last treat.

On February 25, 1968, the NVA had zeroed in on one area so well that it was almost certain death. Around sunset, one of the corporals found me. "Fixler," he told me, "we lost three Marines; no one has their hole. Give up one of the men from your squad. Someone has to be in that hole."

The position was totally vacant. We had lost so many Marines in that foxhole that I just knew whoever I put in that hole was a dead man.

Mike Lucas and I met back in July 1967 in Phu Bai. We were both from New York, and we hit it off right away. We had similar personalities. We were buddies from then on and stayed on the same operations and in the same platoon.

Then James Anthony Wood was attached to our squad, and he and Lucas became extremely close. They shared the same hole and always were hanging out and laughing. I was 19 years old, and I got a little jealous: "Jesus Christ! I'm losing my best friend."

So when the corporal told me I had to give up a man to replace the ones who had been blown out of that doomed foxhole, I had to make a decision real quick. It was almost a certain death sentence.

I made a call—Wood—and he manned that hole. Mike volunteered to go with him. "We're going in together."

Wood was killed within hours of my decision. The foxhole took a direct hit from a mortar after dark. "Minutes before, we were talking about home, watching through binoculars," Mike said years later, "and the mortars started coming in and he was completely disintegrated, no head at all."

Somehow Mike survived it, and when daylight came, he looked down at his flak jacket and saw part of James Wood's face. There were pieces of flesh, and the stubble from Wood's beard was im-

paled in the protective jacket, little hairs just standing erect.

It was a heavy blow to Mike and I could tell it shook him up. Mike was a tough Marine, a great Marine. That means James Anthony Wood was, too. But as hard as it hit him, Mike had to shake it off, like we all had to. We were fighting a war, in a pitched battle, and we were taking losses daily. There was no time to reflect on our situation. We simply endured what had to be endured.

Adapted from *Semper Cool: One Marine's Fond Memories of Vietnam* by Barry Fixler. Copyright © 2010 by Barry Fixler. Published by Exalt Press New York, LLC. www.exaltpress.com.

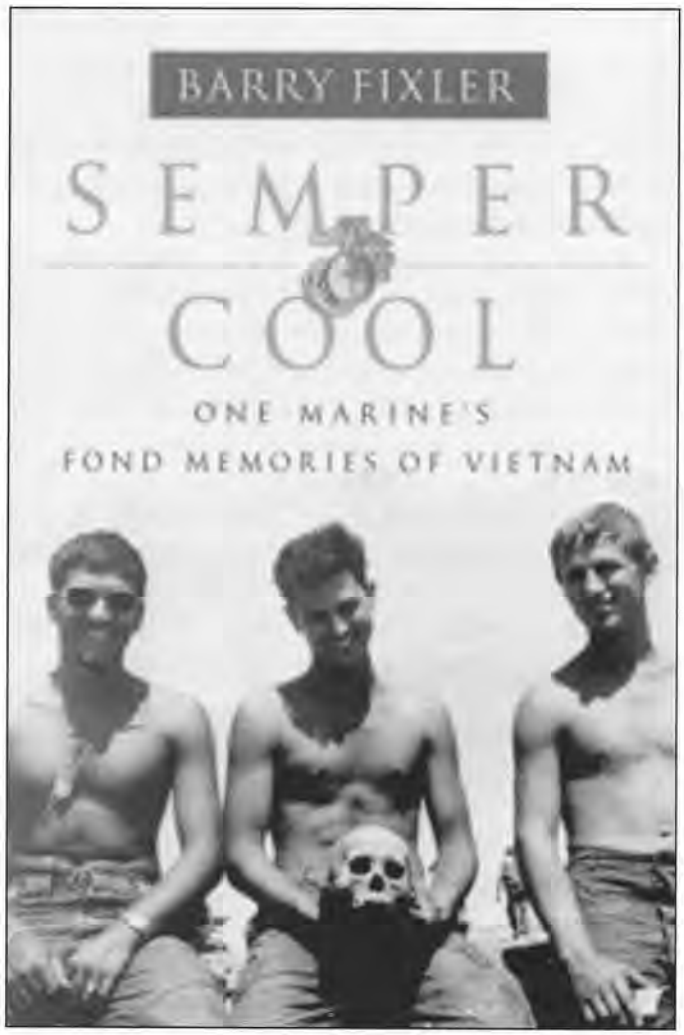

ED NOTE:

All the proceeds from Barry's Book " Semper Cool", are given to the "Wounded Warriors" Foundation. Besides good reading, your purchase of the book helps to rehabilitate those gravely wounded members of our Military serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I urge our membership to purchase a copy for your bookshelf from our KSV PX. It is available in both Soft & Hardcover.



PHOTO OF HILL 861 & 861A

LATE OBIT

TIMOTHY D. SHARPE
KHE SANH VETERAN
D CO 1/26 USMC



Timothy David Sharpe, 64, of Statesville, passed away on Monday, April 18, 2011 at Iredell Memorial Hospital. Mr. Sharpe was born on Nov. 4, 1946 in Alexander County and was the son of the late Glenn Washington Sharpe and Pauline Rhyne Sharpe. He was a graduate of Celeste Henkel School and served in the U.S. Marine Corp. during the Vietnam War. On May 29, 1976, he was married to Judy Galliher Sharpe, who survives of the home and was retired from Norfolk Southern Railway. He was a member of Bethel United Methodist Church and enjoyed the outdoors, hunting, fishing and gardening. In addition to his wife of 35 years, he is survived by one son, David Glenn Sharpe (Torie) and two grandsons, Eli and Lane. Also surviving are two brothers, James Barnard Sharpe (Nellie), Joe Wayne Sharpe (Betty), one sister, Virginia Kay Johnson (Franklin) and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

VIETNAM HONEYMOON

By Michael Bradbury

There was a "third act" of the "Donna/Olds Movie" timeframe.

Shortly after I got back up here from Phoenix, before I ever met Donna, I got a long distance call from Miguel "Pop" Salinas down in Texas. "Pop" & I had served together in Vietnam and were on Hill 861 during the fight for Khe Sanh during the TET Siege.

He said he was planning to go back there for a couple of weeks, and that since Vietnam opened up for visitors, two other guys from our outfit had gone back over there for a visit. We talked at length about it, over the next couple of phone calls. Our trip would not only entail going back to Vietnam, but back to Khe Sanh, and back up to Hill 861.!

I had to "wrestle" with this a bit, but finally called him back and said "Ok, let's do it." Within the next month, there were six of us going, but as time went on, the other four dropped off one by one, as they weren't ready to deal with it again.

"Pop" said he was going no matter what, and asked if I was "committed".....and I said that "I probably should be", but I was going. The trip would be in early July, which gave us plenty of time to get our Passports, Visas, shots, plane tickets, accommodations, reservations and such.

When Donna & I decided to get married a few months later, I told her to pick the date, and whatever it was, would be fine with me. She chose the 30th of June....."Pop" & I were scheduled to fly out of San Francisco five days later on July 5th, and it would be a 2-week trip. Her birthday is on the 13th of July and I'd still be in 'Nam for that as well!

Donna & I had just taken a trip to the coast, and any other trip would have to wait until after I got back. She's a real trooper though, and when I decided to cancel my part of the trip, she stepped-in and said "No Way.....this is something you and Pop need to do....I'll be fine.....just be careful and get back here safely."

"What about your birthday?"
"Believe it or not, I'll have another one next year too!.....You need to go!"

She was right. We got married outside of City Hall on a beautiful day, and my old friend and then-Mayor Joe McNeal performed the ceremony. All of a sudden, I didn't want to leave, but way down inside, I knew she was right.

Pop & I flew into San Francisco on the 3rd, where fellow Khe Sanh buddy Randy Mapel flew up from San Diego to meet us. We three would spend the next day driving around San Francisco in a rental car, then Randy would fly back to San Diego, Pop & I would head for Hong Kong, then on to Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City).

With a rental car, I drove us into San Francisco, and showed 'em around a little. I drove up to Potrero Hill, then out to Galileo High to show Pop & Randy where I grew up with my "hooligan friends." We had lunch out on Fisherman's Wharf, and got as caught-up on old times as we could. It was a nice visit. (we still call each other every now and then, and meet up at the Khe Sanh re-unions from time to time).

On the 5th, Pop & I flew to Hong Kong. We had about a 6-hour layover, before the connecting flight into Saigon (I've always refused to call it "Ho Chi Minh City").

We passed through customs and caught a taxi to our Hotel for a much needed sleep. We were able to make reservations for transportation to Hue City in a few days, then up to Dong Ha, Quang Tri and finally Khe Sanh itself.

I videotaped the entire trip, along with my still-camera shots, and spent the first couple of days shooting film around Saigon.

I also called Donna nearly every night (from Saigon anyway, where we had good telephone access), and I wrote to her in a special "travel diary", everyday Pop & I were over there, no matter where we were (even from the top of 861).

Soon it was time to head north. We flew from Saigon to Hue City, spent the night, contacted our "tour

driver and guide" and headed further north through Dong Ha, Quang Tri, and finally into Khe Sanh, which had now grown into a town, where it was only a "village" the first time we were there. It was the 11th of July. The next morning (12th) we hooked up with our "Hill Guide."

Actually, Neither Pop or I needed a guide from this point. Even through 40 years of jungle re growth, you could still see 861. Guides were required for all "foreign" visitors, due to the unexploded ordinance still lying around on battlefields, and Vietnam was now getting American trade and did not want any "incidents or accidents." Guides were fairly cheap though, and Pop & I had prepared for that.

We visited the little "museum" they had there, and planned for the long hike up to the hill the next day. Then it started raining, it rained long and it rained hard. This was potentially disastrous. We had to climb 861 the next day on the 13th, because we had to be in Danang for the flight back to Saigon on the 14th. In good weather, it was very "do-able." But if it was still coming down the next morning, it might be too muddy & slick to make the climb, and that IS what we had come back over to do.

It was an uneasy night, but we managed to sleep. The next morning, it was cool, a bit foggy but it had at least stopped raining. With guides in-tow, we had a quick bite, threw bottled water in our packs drove as far as we could, to the base of the hill-range, then got out and started up.

Forty years earlier, when we were young and in-shape, we hiked-up there in Company formation, loaded down like mules, but still made it in an hour or so. In 2005, we were a pair of old geezers and the climb seemed like a trek up Mount Everest, particularly in the humidity over there. But, inside of three hours, we finally made it. I carefully filmed it, including the unspent ordinance we had to be constantly watching for. The guides and us had a nice rest, had a little lunch, and we checked out some of the trench line that nature hadn't yet reclaimed. I filled an old water container with dirt from the top to take back, a couple of pieces of protective panels from someone's old flak vest, and our Hill Guide found a spent slug from an AK-47. This came home with me too.

It was really strange being up there again, after four decades. In 1968, it looked like "Craters of the Moon" from all the artillery and mortar barrages, burned-out areas from napalm and Agent Orange. In 2005, it had all pretty much grown over with thick elephant grass, and there were even flowers growing in various places in the valley. Except for the occasional mortar rounds still laying around, you wouldn't have guessed a war had once raged up there.

It was the 13th, Donna's birthday.....after we got to the top, we wished her a happy birthday on the camcorder tape. In a way, this was really insane. I meet the gal of my life, and just five days after we're married, I leave the country! On her birthday, (the 1st one we would spend together), I'm standing on top of this God-forsaken, leech-infested hill about 9,000 miles away!

Pop and I took some time wandering along what was left of the trench line, just sort of remembering, and collecting our thoughts. Finally, it was time to head back down the hill. We were wringing wet with sweat from the climb up, but it felt pretty good going back down.

Several hours later, were we in a hotel in Danang, and then back in the air heading back to Saigon in the morning.

Our last couple of days found us touring around Saigon, filming the traffic (that you'd never believe), and we wound it up with a trip to the "Chu-Chi Tunnels". I'm glad I video'd it all.

When we went through customs before the plane trip back to Hong Kong, I wasn't sure if I'd be allowed to take soil out of the country (I'd filled that water jug with dirt from 861), but I didn't declare it and nobody asked, so we got on the plane back to Hong Kong, a short layover, then the long trip back to San Francisco.

I'd managed a pretty good nap on the plane, and got a commuter plane from San Francisco to Boise. I called Donna from SFO and she was there to pick me up in Boise. What a welcome sight! Long trip, emotional trip, and a new chapter in my life to start when I got home. I'm so glad I got this trip on videotape.That camera, was a story in itself.....and a short one, that I'll share on my next post.

THOSE OLD GUILT FEELINGS, DON'T WE ALL HAVE THEM

By Ray W. Stubbe

My first chaplain's clerk at Khe Sanh, Glenn Waller, recently wrote me and suggested his brief piece might be printed in our ***Red Clay***. It focuses on his guilt feelings over getting out of the field in order to be my clerk. He had been scheduled to become the Company Radioman for the CO of A/1/26, Captain John Raymond, and I snatched him to become my clerk. Little did I realize that my action may have caused him a life-time of guilt!

Like most of us who served in Vietnam, there's always something over which we feel some guilt. Perhaps this is due to some ill-defined, faintly felt, generalized guilt hidden in the darkness and cobwebs of the basement of our self, that is projected, hung-on (like ornaments on a Christmas tree!) something that is right before us, that we can see and realize. It's like the husband who comes home after a bad day at work and takes it all out on his wife and kids. They didn't do anything, but they are there, available, to pin-on all the anger he couldn't take out on his boss or whatever.

So also the guilt many Vietnam vets feel, usually completely unwarranted, that's hears in the "if only's": if only I did this instead of that, if only I was able to remain more alert and stay up all day and night for the whole time, if only I knew that person or that situation better, if only I was a bit more energetic, and so on. The "if only's" will drive us to despair until they dissolve when we get into conversations with others, usually comrades in the same bunker or the same patrol, who let us see things from a different perspective or gain awareness of the bigger picture of what was really going on and what resulted.

Glenn's short piece is about him becoming my Chaplain's clerk. He doesn't realize that the reason the CO of A/1/26, Captain John Raymond, was so angry was that Glenn had been chosen to be the Company radioman, and I took him. Glenn may have politicked for the position, but I'm the one who chose him out of three very good candidates for the position. I'm not going to fall into the trap of now feeling guilty, however! It was an appropriate thing for me to do and it was an appropriate thing for him to apply.

Glenn's Letter:

I left my unit to become the Chaplain's assistant in month seven of my 13 month tour. I politicked hard for the job in order to get out of the field (a survival technique). I Left behind a job as a radio operator, and a reputation of being a slacker, not pulling my weight. To the Marine Corps and especially the 26th Regiment I offers my humble apology.

I carried that guilt for many years and somewhere along the way during a counseling session my counselor caused me to reflect that this was no ordinary war. Most everyone had a goal of completing the 13 month tour and getting the heck out of Dodge. This is quite counter to the motto "Semper Fi" of the Marine Corps. I lived with that hanging over my head as I attempted to make sense of what I did and what I had become. Could I ever have been able to call myself a "Marine?"

Then slowly, and surely I regained my self respect. The captain was very much against losing me to the Chaplain and I always thought it was because of my bad reputation. Later, while I was in Iraq (for the 2nd time) I learned the true reason I had been selected to become the Company radio operator. As I began to write about my Viet Nam experience I came to realize the risk for which I had traded jobs. I drove the chaplain off base several times into the village of Khe Sanh and had only an M-16 for defense.

ED NOTE:

Glenn, I am glad you decided to share that deep felt guilt you carried unnecessarily for all those years. I as many, believe we have all felt some degree of guilt for whatever reason. Welcome to the club.



BOOK REVIEW
Editorial Reviews

The victims of US military campaigns are usually nameless civilians in far away places, but there are also victims closer to home - the soldiers so often used and then discarded by the establishment. Binding Their Wounds is a book about US veterans written by a US veteran - Bob 'Doc' Topmiller. Topmiller fought in Vietnam, founded a school for orphans there, and become a professor of history before he passed away. Close friend and scholar Kerby Neill stepped in to complete the book. The result is a history of US veterans and their treatment by the US

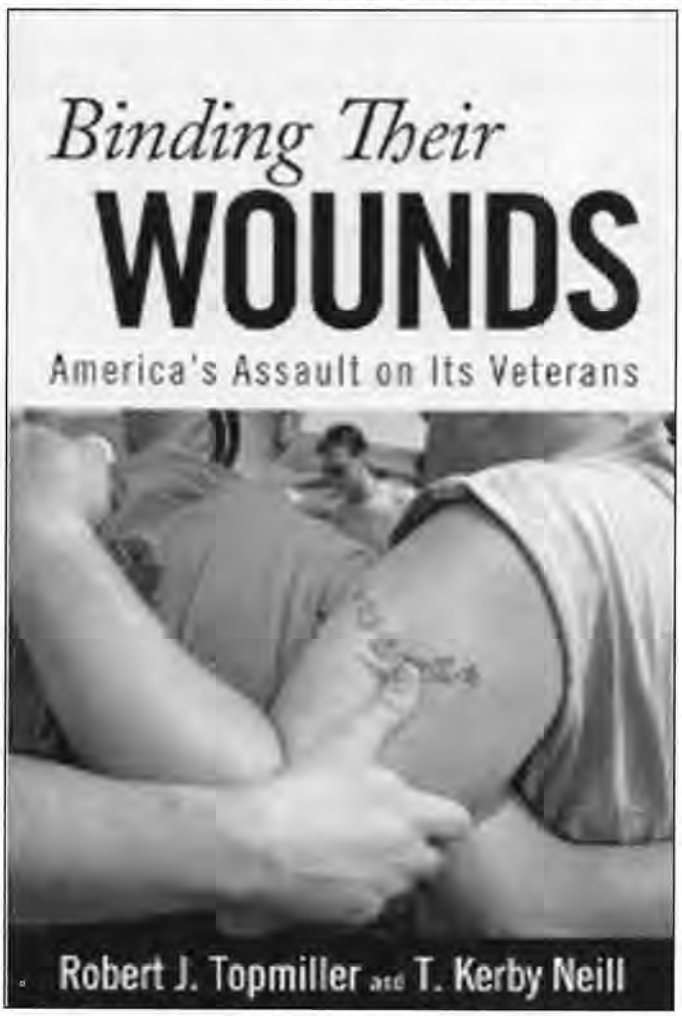

establishment from the early republic to the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Binding Their Wounds offers policy recommendations to improve post The victims of US military campaigns are usually nameless -conflict treatment and care for veterans which are long overdue.

It is in the nature about war that we prepare for combat but rarely for its aftermath. Vietnam vet and historian Robert Doc Topmiller began Binding Their Wounds while he was still struggling with his own PTSD but died before he could finish the book. Completed by his friends, the book provides an engaging account of America s attitudes and treatment of its veterans, from the revolutionary war forward. Major chapters focus on the failures of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs (and its predecessors) to address the needs of vets exposed to radiation in post World War II military experiments, vets suffering from Gulf War illnesses, and vets exposed to Agent Orange during Vietnam. Particular attention is given to the persistent issues of trauma and suicide in soldiers and veterans. This volume documents strengths and shortcomings of military and VA responses to the needs of our servicemen and women and suggests ways that we can do better, including the avoidance of armed conflict. Rich in personal accounts of veterans, Doc's own story is compellingly woven into the narrative.

Robert J. Topmiller joined the Navy at seventeen and served as a hospitalman with the Marines at Khe Sanh, Vietnam. Later a businessman and professor of history at Eastern Kentucky University, Doc Topmiller wrote two books on Vietnam: The Lotus Unleashed: The Buddhist Peace Movement in South Vietnam 1964 1966 (2002) and **Red Clay on My Boots**: **Encounters with Khe Sanh 1968 to 2005 (2007).** He was working on Binding Their Wounds when he died.

He left a wife, three children, and three grandchildren. T. Kerby Neill is a Navy veteran and clinical psychologist. Dr. Neill worked in the VA and later spent most of his career as a child psychologist. He is the author of Helping Others Help Children: Clinical Supervision of Child Psychotherapy (2006). Retired from psychology in 2004, he devotes much of his time to peace education. He is married, a father, and grandfather.



BOOK REVIEW



A must read for any Vietnam veteran, especially marines who fought there. Dr. Finnegan's moving account of the year he spent in the company of marines as a surgeon has to be unequaled in hardship and daily courage. Thank you Dr. Finnegan, for what you did for America's finest and thank you for the historical rendition of how you performed complicated life saving surgery under such primitive conditions for the 77 days of Khe Sanh.

He honed his healing and surgical skills literally under baptism of fire, when in 1968 at the age of 29, he was thrown into one of the worst battles of Vietnam while treating more than 2,500 casualties in a three-month period....." **The Catholic Star Herald**

Poignant, sad, witty and apolitical in tone, In The Company of Marines reads like an experiential anthology of Finnegan's late-'60's tour of duty- one punctuated by three months in an underground bunker tending to wounded soldiers" **Main Line Today**
Everyone should read this, It is not a political story of the Vietnam war, It is the story of one man's time in Vietnam as a Navy surgeon caring for the Marines. Very poignant. Everyone should read it!!!!

I bought this book because I had known the author personally when he was a surgical resident at the Hospital of the University of PA. He was good then, and in his book tells the story of some very skillful and selfless episodes during his service in Vietnam. It is a spare volume and would have benefitted from more detail, more stories, and a more sophisticated writing style. Dr. Finnegan has apparently gone on to a successful career. and I must say it was a pleasure knowing him.

I have read many books regarding the siege of Khe Sanh. Dr. Finnegan's recount of his time in Vietnam was riveting. It was very easy to read and I couldn't put it down until I had finished it. This book gives the reader such insight into the heroic deeds that Dr. Finnegan and his colleagues preformed everyday. It was such a pleasure to read and I highly recommend It.
This is a book written from the heart by a heroic surgeon. His language in the book is basic, direct and conveys in an excellent manner what one medical team did in the Vietnam conflict. His descrip-



ED FELDMAN & JIM FINNEGAN IN UNDERGROUND BUNKER AT KHE SANH, OPERATING ON A WOUNDED MARINE

tions of the action, inside and outside his medical station, is vivid and telling. I recommend this book for anyone interested in the history of the Vietnam war and in history in general.



THEN & NOW, ED & JIM, THE AUTHOR , A LIFETIME OF FRIENDSHIP, BROUGHT TOGETHER BY THE REALITIES OF WAR



FISH, THE KSV "HAPPY WANDERER" OFF ON ANOTHER ADVENTURE

Hey Fish, Where are you going now?



On a spontaneous trip to St John's Newfoundland
Easternmost city in North America
Cold as a witches you know what.

Hey Fish, "What the Hell you doing There"





Watching the ships roll in. With too much time on my hands.

Fish, What the hell are you doing with that lit cigarette?.



"They ought to know better than to leave an artillery piece unattended when there is a grunt machine gunner around."

Hey Fish, where are you going now?



"Way over there, where Big John cannot find me."



WOMAN WEARS POW/MIA BRACLET FOR NEARLY 40 YEARS

Kathy Strong was 12 years old when she put on a bracelet to keep vigil for a solider missing in Vietnam -- now it's time for her to take it off
(CBS News)

WALNUT CREEK, Calif. - While the war raged in Vietnam, POW/MIA Bracelets were all the rage. The metal bracelets, sold by the millions, each bore the name of a soldier who was either still a prisoner in Vietnam, or missing in action.

CBS News correspondent Steve Hartman reports the idea was to wear the bracelet and only take it off your wrist when your Veteran came home.

They were very popular with kids. In 1972, when she was 12-years-old, Kathy Strong got a bracelet in her Christmas stocking.

"I was really excited," Strong said. "I read the paper that came with it. And I just thought. I'm going to keep it on until he comes home."

Strong, now 50, still remembers the name: James Moreland. Moreland was a Green Beret who'd been stationed in LANG VEI.

Moreland went missing in the winter of 1968 after the enemy over took his position. At the time, no one knew much more than that - so Kathy remained optimistic.

"They showed footage of the soldiers coming off the planes, and I always thought wherever he's flying into I'm going to be there and I'm going to give him my bracelet and I'm going to put it on his arm. That's how I always pictured it," Strong said. "But that wasn't meant to be."

After so many years, it became obvious to even the most hopeful, that everyone who could come home alive, had come home alive. Eventually, the bracelets went the way of the pet rock.

However, Strong wore her bracelet much longer than most. In fact, James Moreland's name has been on her wrist every day, without exception, for the past 38 years.

"I just wanted to keep the promise," Strong said.

At this point, Strong says keeping the promise means wearing the bracelet until Moreland's remains are found and returned.

"I knew there was family out there who was waiting for word, and I was just going to wait along with them," Strong said.

Anita and Linda are Moreland's sisters and closest surviving relatives. When they heard about Kathy a few years ago they asked to meet.

"To have worn his bracelet for so long," Anita said, "we just love her to death."

"She did care," her sister Linda added. "And she still does care."

Strong said she thinks about Moreland everyday. "It's usually when I have my hands out in front of me - you know, maybe driving a car or typing on the keyboard and I just think I wonder when he's coming home."

She's been wondering almost 4 decades -- but no more. In January, James Moreland's sisters got word that their brother's remains had been found and identified. In May he'll be buried, between his mother and father, in a full military funeral.

Strong said she's "going to remove the bracelet and have it buried with him."

FOLLOWUP STORY

WALNUT CREEK WOMEN ATTENDS ALABAMA MEMORIAL FOR SOLDIER WHOSE BRACELET SHE WORE FOR DECADES

By Mike Oliver
Birmingham (Ala.) News

BRIERFIELD, Ala. -- They came to pay respects to a fallen Green Beret killed 43 years ago. They came Saturday from all over the country and all over Alabama and even Walnut Creek. About 400 crowded around a gravesite at a little country cemetery about 40 miles south of Birmingham.

They came to pay tribute to James Leslie Moreland, born in Bessemer Sept. 29, 1945, killed in Vietnam Feb. 7, 1968 -- but whose remains were only recently positively identified and brought stateside.

"I hope everyone knows why we are here today," said Col. Paul Longgrear, Moreland's commanding officer, in the eulogy. "We are not here to celebrate a burial. He was already buried in the debris of war. We are here today to celebrate a homecoming."

Moreland was buried Saturday at Ashby Cemetery in Bibb County in a spot long ago reserved for him, between his mother and father.

A 21-gun salute punctured the rural quiet. When taps played, retired and active military, at least one-third of the crowd, snapped salutes.

Then roaring through the clouds came four Navy jets in formation, until one jet dramatically peeled away, symbolizing the departure of this fallen soldier.

Moreland was a 22-year-old Special Forces medic when he was last seen mortally wounded at Lang Vei on the South Vietnamese border in a battle remembered as the first time the Vietnamese used tanks. In 1978, the Army declared Moreland dead, although his body had not been recovered.

His mother, Gladys Parks, went to her grave, knowing her son was probably dead, but refusing to give up, Moreland's sisters said.

"When they asked Mom, 'Do you want him to be declared dead,' she said 'no,'" said Linda Brown, 62. "She wanted him to be brought home first."

Several excavations at the battle site over the years yielded numerous bits of remains that took years to identify. Late last year, DNA from family members was a match for Moreland. The family was notified earlier this year and prepared for the burial in the family cemetery.

Before burial Saturday, a 51-year-old Walnut Creek woman removed her MIA bracelet featuring Moreland's name and put it in the casket. Kathy Strong had worn it ever since she received it as a Christmas present at the age of 12, in 1972.

"Although I'm not wearing the bracelet any more, he will be with me the rest of my life," said a tearful Strong.

After a 2008 Bay Area News Group feature on Strong and the 40th anniversary of Moreland's disappearance, the soldier's family contacted her and they started a relationship. A friend visited the spot where he was last seen and brought her dirt, barbed wire and a bullet from the area, which she kept as mementos.

Strong researched Moreland's Green Beret unit and learned more about the young man whose name adorned her bracelet.

Once his remains were identified, Strong vowed to attend his funeral.

By later afternoon Saturday, her wrist was bare.
The night before the burial there was a standing room only memorial service at the American Village in Montevallo in which Gov. Robert Bentley made a surprise appearance. He gave the family a flag that had flown at the state capital.

"Never in my dreams would I have thought it would be like this," said Moreland's older sister, Edna Anita LeMoine, 73, of Olympia, Wash.

At the cemetery Army officers presented LeMoine with the flag from the casket. They had folded the flag and tucked in three spent brass M-16 shells representing: duty, honor, country.

Moreland's childhood years were spent in Alabama, before he finished high school in Anaheim, where he became an all-county football player at Western

At least two dozen retired and active Green Berets attended from around the country.

"It's been worth waiting 43 years to see this," said William Amelung, a 65-year-old retired Green Beret who trained with Moreland and "earned our berets together"

"If you look at history, there would not have been this kind of support in '68," Amelung said.

Retired Sgt. Major Dennis Thompson served with Moreland at Lang Vei and traveled from Washington state to attend the service. When asked why, the fellow Green Beret said simply, "Because he would have done the same for me."

KHESANH VETERANS ATTEND BURIAL & MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR SFC JAMES L. MORELAND KIA AT LANG VEI

By Thomas Eichler E Co 2/26
Hill 861A

Hundreds of veterans, and people who did not know him, read or learned the story of James Moreland, also attended the memorial services. Among them were many members of the Khe Sanh Veterans association.

Gary Jones, the brother of Scott Jones (KSV Security Plt) and Colonel Longgrear, James Moreland's former Commanding Officer were an integral part in putting together the memorial.

Khe Sanh Veterans came from across the country. Toby Rushforth the F/O Pilot who first observed the tanks attacking Lang Vei, and assisted the defenders, came with his beautiful Wife Audrey, all the way from Hawaii.

Khe Sanh Veterans Jack Haigwood, Dennis Waler, and Ron Miller an army veteran, drove their motorcycles from Ohio to join members of the Patriot-Guard Riders in the memorial motorcade. Ed Kufeldt, one of the Helicopter Pilots who flew the rescue mission at Lang Vei, and Bruce Marcus one of the A-1 Skyraider Pilots at the battle of lang Vei, also travelled long distances to attend the memorial. Rich Green and Bill Balzano, Hq Security Plt, also came to honor James Moreland.

I presented each member of the Moreland Family, a certificate from the Khe Sanh Veterans (See Back Cover), and a certificate to Mary Strong who wore James Moreland's MIA Bracelet for 40 Years. At the memorial service, she placed the bracelet in his casket.

Mrs. Daphney Walker of 899 Rolling Mill Road
Brierfield Alabama Took over 500 Photos and gave

a disc to the Khe Sanh Veterans to use in our magazine. Many of the photos that appear in this issue came from that same disc.



Day is gone, gone the sun.
From the hills, from the lake, from the skies.
All is well, safety rest; God is nigh.

Go to sleep, peaceful sleep,
May the soldier or sailor, God keep.
On the land or the deep, safe in sleep.

Love, good night, must thou go,
When the day, and the night, need thee so?
All is well Speedeth all to their rest.

Fades the light, and afar goeth day,
And the stars shineth bright,
Fare thee well; day has gone, night is on.

Thanks and praise, for our days,
'Neath the sun, neath the stars, 'neath the sky we go, 'This we know, God is nigh.



PUBLIC HONORS CEREMONY & FAMILY VISITATION AT "AMERICAN VILLAGE" PELHAM, ALABAMA'S "WILLIAMSBURG".



KATHY STRONG REMOVES THE MIA BRACELET OF SFC JAMES L. MORELAND, WHICH SHE HAS WORN FOR 40 YEARS, AND PLACES IT IN HIS CASKET. NOW THAT HE IS FINALLY HOME.



PATRIOT GUARDS AWAIT CASKET, AT ROCKO FUNERAL HOME ON ROUTE TO CEMETARY



HUNDREDS OF CITIZENS LINED THE ROAD ON THE ROUTE TO ASHBY CEMETARY



PATRIOT GUARD LEADING PROCESSION TO ASBEY CEMETERY



ARRIVAL OF CASKET WITH SPECIAL FORCES HONOR GUARD





FAMILY WITH ARRIVAL OF CASKET



KSV JACK & DENNIS WITH PATRIOT GUARDS



COLONEL(REV) PAUL LONGGREAR, FORMER C/O OF JAMES MORELAND CONDUCTS SERVICE



EVERY DAY IS MEMORIAL DAY



FLYOVER



SINGLE PLANE LEAVING FORMATION



TAPS



BAGPIPER



HONOR GUARD PREPARING TO FOLD FLAG



FOLDING OF FLAG



PASSING OF THE FOLDED FLAG



PRESENTATION OF FLAGS



HONOR GUARD PREPARING TO FIRE



CONDOLENCES TO FAMILY



FIRING SALUTE



FINAL FAREWELL
DENNIS WALER KSV CBMU-301 DET B
SEABEES, PLACING A ROSE





FINAL FAREWELL
JACK HAIGWOOD KSV CBMU-301 DET B
SEABEES PLACING A ROSE



L-R DENNIS THOMPSON, RICHARD ALLEN, COLONEL PAUL LONGGREAR



L-R COL LONGGREAR & GARY JONES DIRECTORS & PLANNERS OF MEMORIAL SERVICE. GARY IS THE BROTHER OF SCOTT JONES KHE SANH VETERAN



L-R FRANK DOOMS TOC COMM "SPUNKY HANSON", KATHY STRONG WHO WORE JAMES MORELAND'S MIA BRACELET SINCE SHE WAS 12, DENNIS THOMPSON POW AT LANG VEI



L-R FRANK DOOMS (TOC-COMMS) , PAUL LONGGREAR TOC/ OIC, DENNIS THOMPSON, EVADING OUTSIDE TOC COMM (POW)



L-R BRUCE MARCUS A/1 PILOT, TOBY RUSHFORTH FAC 20TH TASS , ED KUFELDT VMO-6, TOM EICHLER E CO 2/26 & MEL SHINHOLSTER USA HELICOPTER PILOT " PELICANS", JACK HAIGWOOD, SEABEE & DENNIS WALER SEABEE.



L-R TOM EICHLER E CO 2/26, SCOTT JONES HQ 26TH MAR SECURITY PLT & DENNIS WALER CBMU 301-DET B SEABEES



L-R RON MILLER USA & JACK HAIGWOOD SEABEE



L-R BILL BALZANO HQ CO SECURITY PLT, BRUCE MARCUS, SKYRAIDER PILOT LANG VEI, TOBY RUSHFORTH 20TH TASS LANG VEI, ED KUFELDT VMO-6 LANG VEI, TOM EICHLER E CO 2/26, MEL SHINHOLSTER USA HELICOPTER PILOT, JACK HAIGWOOD CBMU-301 DET B, DENNIS WALER CBMU-301 DET B



L-R JACK HAIGWOOD, RON MILLER & DENNIS WALER



L-R TOM EICHLER, MEL SHINHOLSTER, JACK HAIGWOOD & DENNIS WALER



**L-R TOM EICHLER USMC &
CHARLIE CINQUEGRANI
USA VIETNAM VETERAN, TOM'S GOOD FRIEND
FROM CHICAGO**





**TOM EICHLER, AUDREY RUSHFORTH &
TOBY RUSHFORTH**





**AUDREY RUSHFORTH, TOM EICHLER &
TOM'S GOOD FRIEND CHARLIE CINQUEGRANI**





L-R KSV ED KUFELDT & JACK HAIGWOOD










U.S. MARINES
PROUD PARENT
SOUTHERN
DISCOMFORT

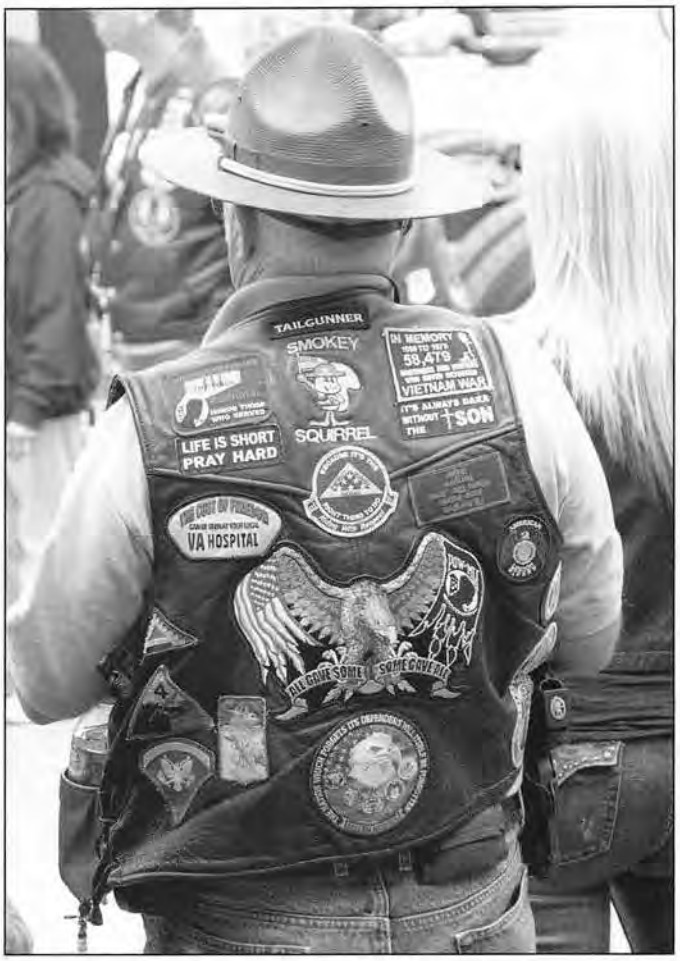
TAILGUNNER
SMOKEY
SQUIRREL
LIFE IS SHORT
PRAY HARD
VA HOSPITAL
IN MEMORY
58,479
VIETNAM WAR
IT'S ALWAYS DARK
WITHOUT THE SON


OF THE


CHAPTER 11 OH.


AMERICAN
LEGION
RIDERS
BW HOWELL POST 171
BIRMINGHAM ALABAMA


LADY RIDER
BACK OFF
DEMOCRACY
COMING SOON TO A THEATER NEAR YOU


HOUND
PATRIOT GUARD
RIDERS
Standing for Those
Who Stood for US
POW
MIA
Justin's Ride 2010
BITCH


BACK OFF


HARLEY-DAVIDSON
MOORE, OKLAHOMA
GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY

















PATRIOT GUARD RIDERS
STANDING FOR THOSE WHO STOOD FOR US

PATRIOT GUARD RIDERS
STANDING FOR THOSE WHO STOOD FOR US

KHE SANH VETERANS MEMORIAL PAGE
CONTINUED FROM ISSUE 77

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY:
All The Marines Who Gave Their Lives On 05 Feb 68 Hill 861A	LT. Don Shanley E CO 2/26 Hill 861A
Fred P. Chavez LCPL USMC KIA 10 Mar 69	Harold Lockwood HMH 463 CH 53
Charles H. Perkins GYSGT USMC K CO 3/26 DOW 17 May 68 Hill 861	Barbara Eddowes Fiance
Donald J. Jacques 1LT USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Jeanene M. Forrest (Sister)
All Corpsman KIA At Khe Sanh	John B. Nunn K CO 3/4 HN
Jeffrey M. Walsh LCPL USMC A CO 1/9 KIA 08 Feb 68	John B. Nunn K CO 3/4 HN
William Mercer HM2 USN M CO 3/4 KIA 15 Jun 68 (Navy Cross)	John B. Nunn K CO 3/4 HN
All My 18 Brothers That Did Not Make It Back 7 June 67 From B CO 1/26	Denny Bowers "Yogi" B CO 1/26
All My Brothers From A CO 3Rd Engineers Killed Or Wounded In Action	John Pessoni A CO 3RD Engineers
Members Of "The Filthy Few" LIMA CO 3/26 2ND PLT	
Paul O. Evans LCPL USMC KIA 22 Dec 66	Jim Cooper L Co 3/26 2nd Plt- B Co 1/26 3Rd Plt
Gary G. Schneider CPL USMC KIA 31 Dec 66	Jim Cooper L Co 3/26 2nd Plt- B Co 1/26 3Rd Plt
Ferrell Hummingbird LCPL USMC KIA 14 Jan 67	Jim Cooper L Co 3/26 2nd Plt- B Co 1/26 3Rd Plt
John R. Hinson PFC USMC KIA 16 Aug 67	Jim Cooper L Co 3/26 2nd Plt- B Co 1/26 3Rd Plt
Patrick S. Cochran CPL USMC KIA 21 Aug 67	Jim Cooper L Co 3/26 2nd Plt- B Co 1/26 3Rd Plt
Raymond G. Potter CPL USMC KIA 10 Sep 67	Jim Cooper L Co 3/26 2nd Plt- B Co 1/26 3Rd Plt
Ronald L. Black SGT USMC KIA 11 Sep 67	Jim Cooper L Co 3/26 2nd Plt- B Co 1/26 3Rd Plt
Charles W. Johnston Jr. CPL USMC KIA 17 May 67	Jim Cooper L Co 3/26 2nd Plt- B Co 1/26 3Rd Plt
Members Of A BTRY 1/13 KIA	
Kenneth J. Allen PFC USMC KIA 08 Feb 68	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Tommy E. Antrim SGT USMC KIA 08 Feb 68	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Leslie S. Ayers LCPL USMC KIA 08 Feb 68	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Bill N. Dalton PFC USMC KIA 08 Feb 68	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
George L. Elliott III PFC USMC KIA 06 Mar 68	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Larry S. Kennedy CPL USMC KIA 06 Mar 68	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Vic M. Pizarro CPL USMC KIA 06 Mar 68	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Gale E. Gotti PVT USMC KIA 07 Jun 67	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Rick J. Stewart PFC USMC KIA 27 Jun 67	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Edward B. Travis CPL USMC KIA 27 Jun 67	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Marion H. Norman 1LT USMC KIA 30 Mar 68	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Phillip A. Van Deusen PFC USMC KIA 07 Jun 67	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Dennis L. Pardee Capt USMC C/O A BTRY 1/13 Died Cancer May 2009	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Bobby R. Pharr SSGT USMC A BTRY 1/13 Died Cancer Aug 2004	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
James L. Cook CPL USMC A BTRY 1/13 Passed Away (Unknown)	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
John Troy MGYSGT USMC PAPA BTRY PROV Died Cancer 2004	Dennis T. Wimbish A BTRY 1/13
Jimmie L. McCrae PFC USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 28 Mar 68	Chad Harris B CO 1/26
Robert F. Enderby LCPL USMC B CO 1/26 3RD PLT KIA 07 Jun 67	Alan J. Winney B CO 1/26
Richard K. Harvel LCPL USMC I CO 3/26 3RD PLT KIA 29 Sep 67	Robert Unangst I CO 3/26 3Rd Plt
Ruzell Gray PFC USMC E CO 2/3 KIA 31 May 68	Stephen Sanders E CO 2/3
Martin T. Smith USMC A CO 1/26 Passed Away 02 Jun 2010	David R. Aday A CO 1/26
Please Remember Wife Kay & Smitty In Your Prayers	
Scott Drishman HM2 USN 3RD MED BN WIA	Douglas Miller 3RD MED BN 2/4
Johnie B. Machau LCPL USMC W BTRY 1/13 Hill 861 KIA 09 Oct 67	Lloyd Gower W BTRY 1/13
Malcolm G. Mole HM3 USN K CO 3/26 Hill 861 KIA 21 Jan 68	Norman J. Jasper Jr. C/O K CO 3/26 Hill 861
Melvin L. Lewis GYSGT USMC K CO 3/26 Hill 861 KIA 21 Jan 68	Norman J. Jasper Jr. C/O K CO 3/26 Hill 861
Gale E. Gotti PVT USMC A BTRY 1/13 KIA 07 Jun 67	Thomas K. Soerensen A BTRY 1/13– I CO 3/26
Philip A. Van Deusen PFC USMC A BTRY 1/13 KIA 07 Jun 67	Thomas K. Soerensen A BTRY 1/13– I CO 3/26
John P. Bobo 2LT USMC A CO 1/9 KIA 30 Mar 68 **MOH**	Thomas K. Soerensen A BTRY 1/13– I CO 3/26
Dale L. Kremsreiter Platoon 138 San Diego Died Cancer 2010	David M. Baumann 3RD FORCE RECON
Michael J. Scanlon CPL USMC 3RD FORCE RECON KIA 18 Jan 67	Thomas Nicholson 3RD FORCE RECON
John F.Francavillia LCPL USMC I CO 3/26 KIA 09 Apr 68 Hill 881S My Best Friend & Schoolmate	Harold W. Pagel K CO 3/26 Hill 861

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THOSE REMEMBERED					REMEMBERED BY:
Louis C. Lowe	LCPL	USMC	K CO 3/4	KIA 14 May 68	Daniel King K CO 3/4
Randall M. Davis	PFC	USMC	K CO 3/4	KIA 04 Jun 68	Daniel King K CO 3/4
Thomas H. Birch	CPL	USMC	A CO 1/26	KIA 23 Feb 68	Peter C. James A CO 1/26
Henry Davenport					Gary Riley C BTRY 1/13
Randall D. Yeary	2LT	USMC	B CO 3RD RECON	KIA 14 Jan 68	Michael Waddell B CO 3RD RECON
James T. Gaynor	SGTMAJ	USMC	H&S CO 1/26	KIA 25 Feb 68	Charles Fetter H&MS-11, MAG 11 1ST MAW
Daniel Coonon	CAPT	USMC	VMF(AW)-115	KIA 08 Oct 68	Charles Fetter H&MS-11, MAG 11 1ST MAW
Jay Brooks	LCPL	USMC	FLSG-A-FLC	KIA 16 Nov 66	Charles Fetter H&MS-11, MAG 11 1ST MAW
Dennis Herb		USMC	B CO 3RD RECON	DECEASED	Charles Fetter H&MS-11, MAG 11 1ST MAW
Jose R. Diana Diaz	PFC	USA	A BTRY 1/44 DUSTERS	KIA 14 May 68	Robert L. Diffoot A BTRY 1/44 DUSTERS

RECON TEAM STRIKER 3A2

John A. House III	CAPT	USMC	HELICOPTER PILOT	KIA 30 Jun 67	Jeffrey C. Savelkoul A CO 3RD RECON
Glyn L. Runnels Jr.	CPL	USMC	A CO 3RD RECON	KIA 30 Jun 67	Jeffrey C. Savelkoul A CO 3RD RECON
Merlin R. Allen	LCPL	USMC	A CO 3RD RECON	KIA 30 Jun 67	Jeffrey C. Savelkoul A CO 3RD RECON
John D. Killen III	LCPL	USMC	A CO 3RD RECON	KIA 30 Jun 67	Jeffrey C. Savelkoul A CO 3RD RECON
Michael Judd	HM-3	USN	A CO 3RD RECON	KIA 30 Jun 67	Jeffrey C. Savelkoul A CO 3RD RECON
Chuck "Gums" Reid	USMC	I CO 3/26	Passed Away 2010		Kenneth H. Resnick I CO 3/26
Jim "Rebel" Rogers	USMC	I CO 3/26	Passed Away 2011		Kenneth H. Resnick I CO 3/26

"HARDEST WORKING JUDGE HONORED"

DAVID O. CARTER
KHE SANH VETERAN
C CO 1/9

SANTA ANA – On a recent Sunday morning, the judge in charge of one of the biggest legal battles in American business walks into his courtroom nursing a McDonald's senior coffee and wearing an untucked button-down shirt, tennis shoes and blue jeans that hide his UCLA Bruins socks.

David O. Carter, a U.S. District Court Judge, may not look the part, but here, in this 9th floor courtroom, there's no doubt who's in charge.



Bleary-eyed attorneys and their assistants, weighed down by boxes of exhibits and documents, stream into the Ronald Reagan Federal Courthouse. And Carter, 66, helps carry one of the boxes. Technically, the courthouse is closed. But that's rarely stopped Carter from holding regular weekend sessions during big cases. He doesn't want the jury to sit through sidebars and delays, so he handles motions and other details of complex litigation when jurors have gone home – on weekends, holidays, early mornings and late evenings.

Within seconds of getting into his courtroom he checks the burnout factor, asking attorneys how they're hanging in. Then, just after 8 a.m., Carter gets to the nitty-gritty of what he wants to hammer out. Speaking rapidly, at times shaking his coffee, Carter, a decorated Marine and the grandson of a onetime bailiff, makes legal point after legal point about the case at hand, Mattel v. MGA Entertainment Inc., an epic multimillion-dollar clash over who has the rights to the popular toys, Bratz dolls.
Judge Carter's isn't a typical courtroom.

HUMANE MARINE

"He will address the most hard core gangster in the same way that he addresses the CEO of a publicly traded corporation," says Kate Corrigan, president of the Orange County criminal defense bar.

"He doesn't demand of the lawyers anything that he doesn't demand of himself," says Santa Monica attorney Mark Overland, who once spent six months in Carter's court, trying a case related to the Mexican mafia. "He's definitely the hardest working judge I've been in front of, and I've been practicing now for 45 years."

That may be a product of his upbringing.
Carter, 66, grew up in Portland, Ore., Oakland and Fremont, attending eight schools in six years. His father left the family when Carter was a baby, and he was raised by his mother and his maternal grandparents. They shared a household with two aunts, one a bartender and the other a dancer.

Carter won a scholarship to UCLA, where he graduated with a 4.0 GPA. After college he joined the Marines and found himself in Vietnam on Christmas Eve 1967.
In Vietnam, Carter's 62-man platoon fought one of the war's pivotal battles, the bloody Siege of Khe

Sanh. On April 16, 1968, Carter and his men scaled Hill 689 to help another Marine company pinned down by intense enemy fire.

A grenade blew off a part of his upper lip. His arm



was shattered in 38 places by sniper fire. Bleeding, he helped other casualties and fought for five more hours until he was forced to leave the battleground. Eight men in Carter's platoon survived. His actions earned him the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

While recovering from his wounds in a hospital he made a commitment to go to law school "simply because I wanted to have some independence, maybe have some small influence in some way, and maybe help somebody who might need help someday."

Carter's grandfather, Melvin Lane, had been a court-



house bailiff in Portland. And as a kid, Carter accompanied him to court once a year.

"I remember leaving – because those judges were so gracious – believing that my grandfather ran that courthouse," Carter recalls.

"So, here are judges who had so much humility and humanness to them that they took their court staff and made a grandson believe that my grandfather was the primary person in the courthouse. I have never forgotten that."

AN IDEALIST, STILL

As the Mattel v. MGA case wound down, with jurors finding that Bratz belonged to MGA, it was difficult to remember that Carter's judicial history as a judge in Orange County has been largely about people, not money.

Carter has duct-taped the mouths of unruly defendants. He has personally inspected junkies' arms for track marks. He has applauded, from the bench, when an offender took what Carter viewed as the right path.

And he's worked to fix his mistakes.
"The thing about him also is when he makes a mistake he tries to remedy it," says defense attorney Overland. "Usually judges rule and they think they're infallible."

Two years ago Carter resurrected the tattoo removal program for ex-cons in federal court that he originally launched in the 1990s when he was on the bench of the Orange County Superior Court.

"Judge Carter believes that some defendants can change their ways," Corrigan says, adding that Carter's optimism isn't blind and that he isn't easily conned.

"For those to whom he gives a chance, they will be reporting to him on a regular basis in his courtroom and keeping him apprised of their efforts to rehabilitate their lives ... I have seen clients really flourish under this model.

This, along with other aspects of his willingness to think outside the box, separate Judge Carter from other judicial officers."
The bench has humbled Carter and he's mindful that his decisions go beyond the legal minutia.

"It's been quite a journey ... I'd sure like to leave the bench with a legacy of having not lost my humanity."

At an age when many near retirement, Carter remains an idealist.

"I think that when you lose your ability to change with the times ...it's time," to make your exit, he says. "You never want to leave the bench with people saying 'what a good judge he or she used to be.

ACCOUNTING FOR ROCKETS
The Attack of May 17, 2007 on the IZ
Baghdad, Iraq
By
Gary Foster

Sometimes they whistle, sometimes, in their arcing flight from one side of the Tigris to the other, they are silent. Sometimes they are rockets and sometimes they are mortars. But in either case, when they hit the ground, the explosion shakes everything. The sound of the detonation is piercing and reverberates far and wide around the entire area sending shivers up everyone's spine. There is no mistaking the sound the replication of which is not possible through the printed word. The word "Boom" would be reserved for explosions that are relatively far away, the pressure wave mitigated by the air; and "Bang" would be more for instantaneous, sharper explosions the sound of which is not insulated by strata of air or nullified or diffused by distance. These impacts are of course much closer in – sometimes - gritting my teeth - right next door.

Some people who arrive in Baghdad and are not attuned to the sounds of rockets and mortars often comment, "Uh, no, I didn't here anything last night. What rockets?" What? One can only wonder. At the other extreme, others react quickly and awkwardly to sounds that are not commonly or frequently heard or are not familiar; such as the sudden loud banging of the lid on a large garbage dumpster. All unfamiliar sounds become the same: rockets. Not true of course, but the trick is to learn to distinguish sounds and be able to discern quickly the specific sound of rockets, if one can, while they're still in flight and gauge where they will fall. But then of course one needs to know where one is in relationship to the launch point. This is the hard part. Then the dilemma: if one were to gauge that the round is going to fall on him or her, it would suggest a rapid departure from the area. That having been said, the real trick is to get inside under cover immediately when one hears the whine or an explosion. There are reasons for this. Rockets and mortars are deadly and one never knows what the intentions or thought processes are of the gunners. They may shoot the first round here, the next round there, etc. There is no way of knowing. Is it a clustered barrage on a specific target or just harassing indiscriminate firing?

Our first night in Baghdad, we heard a long whistle, then silence then a big boom. The projectile went over our heads probably a thousand feet high or so and landed two kilometers away. Then a second one soared overhead and then a third. But it was the fourth one that was a bit different. The whistle was short not shrill and sure enough the rocket landed much closer to us. And, for sure, it went Bang. The round fell very close.

The role of artillery, it has been explained to me, is to cause confusion, disruption and disarray among advancing enemy troops or to cause demoralization among the enemy who may be amassed several miles away. The constant explosions, in addition to the usual destruction that ensues, would be psychologically debilitating: a portent of ominous things to come from the advance of the opposing army. The pounding would be surely unnerving. Rockets and mortars are being used here like mini-artillery. I am reminded of what my friend Dennis Mannion once old me. Projectiles from artillery are usually on range but they can waver left or right. Rockets are usually on their intended azimuth but can fall short or long. Good to know if one is on top of a hill; and good to know in general. But in the IZ, this knowledge does not provide much of a comfort.

Depending on the size of the rocket or mortar shell (usually denoted in inches or millimeters of diameter), the same affect can be facilitated. The problem with rockets of course is that some may be supersonic and the sound of the missile as it flies through the air will be heard only after the explosion at impact. This is not very helpful when accounting for rockets. Too late. Mortar shells, on the other hand, just fall from the vacant sky like giant stones. The situation is not much better. There is little advance

warning.

So when the rockets (actually 122mm mortars) hit us on the 17th they turned an otherwise mundane day into an exciting day – perhaps that's the only benefit of rockets. We kept count. The first impact occurred at about 3:30PM and it shook the building. Then there was a second one farther away and then a third and fourth A slight pause and then number five: BANG! Just outside the building. I turned to my colleague and said, "Alan, they're not stopping." I was right. Then more: boom, bang, boom, bang, BANG - far, close, far and close and then very close. With our bodies tensed, still as mannequins, our hands poised over the keyboards of our computers, like unfinished statues, we looked up at the ceiling - dust settling. A slight pause and they started again. This time Bang... Bang... Bang in rapid succession. They had us in their sights. We could not tell with any certainty on which side of the building they were landing but they were near and we began to realize they have the area targeted and bracketed. They were just dropping the rounds down the launch tube and letting them launch and arc over the river to land among us. We were sitting ducks. Then it turned quiet. We waited for more but none came. Surely there would be more. The barrage was over. Three hours later, after the all-clear, we ventured outside expecting to see devastation. We saw nothing. Then a crowd began running to the back of the building and we followed them. My God! Look at that! The entire area was torn apart. Smashed cars and trucks, shattered windows, punctured tires, scarred vehicles, the smell of gasoline and shrapnel holes in the walls of rooms of trailers where people stayed. Debris everywhere. One car took a direct hit. It was reduced to a pile of smoking, twisted steel.

We walked across the street to the Freedom Tower area. Same thing: big congregation of people and 30 heavily damaged cars. We spotted the impact craters in the parking lot and saw broken glass everywhere; again the smell of gasoline from punctured gas tanks. Cars were splattered with shrapnel. Continuing to look around, we noted the walls of buildings were all pitted and gouged, some windows shattered, palm trees scarred and branches cut off, fronds on the ground. The place was rendered quite the mess.

The impact craters were shallow, about 3 feet in diameter, but the spread of shrapnel, not the depth of crater, is what is important. The pavement immediately adjacent to the craters was gouged in a radial pattern away from the center. This is what tells analyst the direction and angle of impact.

Two people who hear or see the same event never see or hear the exact same thing. The number of shots heard in Dealey Plaza in 1963 range between 3 and 5. Hence accounting for rockets requires confirmation through a ground count. After each rocket attack a sweep is made of the area to be sure there is no unexploded ordnance. Accounting for rockets is an easy counting process: here's one crater...there's two around the corner... now three, up the street to the left... etc. Once all rockets are accounted for, specialists examine the crater and the broadcast of shrapnel. Impact analysis is an oft heard expression. This is somewhat interesting.

Every type of ordnance has a signature explosion and a known range. Knowing the type of ordnance, as may be deduced from the sound, one can ascertain the distance limits from which it may have been fired. That effective radius is now known. But the



direction from which the rocket came, remains a key unknown. The blast scene will reveal this piece of the puzzle. The spread of shrapnel will reveal approximate direction (and distance).

Impacts can be straight down, that is perpendicular to the flatness of the lay of the land, or oblique. If the spread of shrapnel is evenly distributed in a circular pattern away from the blast center, then the trajectory was more than likely a fully developed

parabola. The projectile went up, arced and fell straight down. Depending on the caliber of the round, the launch tube may be near. In this case, maybe coalition forces can kill or apprehend the perpetrators quickly.

If the spread of shrapnel is more lopsided or fan shaped, then the projectile came in at an angle (obliquely) meaning the tube was more likely farther away. This poses a more doubtful arrest. It further raises the importance of the answers to the same set of questions: from where and from what distance? Assuming the launch was not seen, these questions can be answered through an examination of the spread or lie of the explosion and the resulting spray of shrapnel.

We are often perplexed at how small the resulting crater is. This is not too surprising really given that rockets are designed not to destroy facilities but rather to create chaos and to annihilate troops or ground forces. The bang is seemingly more disconcerting than the destruction, but of course it's the reverse that is really more of a concern. This is to neither ignore nor downplay the menacing effects of the shrapnel or its insidious killing behavior.

After the sustained rocket attack of the 17th, we found hundreds of pieces of shrapnel on the sidewalks and streets and on roofs. Everywhere we looked we found shrapnel. One doesn't have to look hard. Shrapnel comes in all sizes: small shards to large chunks. Because of its irregular, jagged shape, shrapnel is easily distinguished from rocks or pebbles of roughly the same size. But when finding shrapnel so far away from the blast center, what one realizes is that within a 500 foot radius of an impact site, the area is lethal. The noise of the explosion, regardless of how loud or muffled, belies the true affect of the ordnance. Its spread of steel-alloy barbs can kill and maim at distances one may consider safe. On a more but very simple level, it's not wise either to walk around barefoot when accounting for rockets. Shrapnel is razor sharp, jagged; and due to its texture and color somewhat difficult to spot. Just because the explosion has past and the shrapnel now lies inert, it can still cause injuries.

And today, the 19th of May, mortars and rockets again - and lots of people caught outside. LTCOL Maun counted eight in rapid succession. The British Embassy compound is being hammered, or so they say. Tony Blair is here. No M&Ms, no licorice, nor twizzlers nor strawberries from the PX today. No tidbits and teasers, nothing at all to while away the day. Accounting for rockets; that's all there is.

BOOK REVIEW

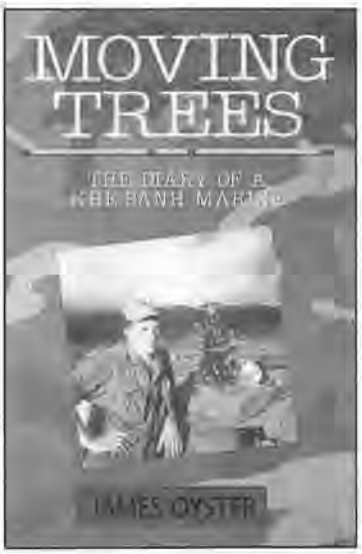

JAMES OYSTER
D CO 1/26

Moving Trees begins with the 20-year-old's trip from his family's West Virginia farm and follows him through the hot, steamy jungles of Vietnam to the final injury that sends him home. Readers can relive his courage at facing another day and mourn with him as he holds a dying fellow Marine. Small luxuries like hot chow and showers mean the world to men living from day to day. Oyster holds nothing back, whether it's descriptions of R&R, impatience about getting back to the action or fear when the enemy starts shooting. Although the young Marine survives the war, it changes him forever.

Author James Oyster received two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star with Valor as a Marine during the Battle of Khe Sanh and other engagements during the Vietnam War. During his tour, Oyster served as a fire team leader, squad leader, right guide, platoon sergeant and platoon commander. He spent eight months at Bethesda Naval Hospital recovering from his injuries. After his discharge from the Marine Corps, he taught middle school and high school and served as principal and coach during an educational career that has lasted almost 40 years.

EAST SIDE PARK NAMED FOR EL PASO MARINE KILLED AT KHE SANH DURING VIETNAM WAR

by Milan Simonich / El Paso Times .



So brave was Marine Sgt. Jesus R. Vasquez that he picked up a burning mortar shell and tried to throw it into a Vietnamese crater before it could detonate and hurt his buddies.

The round exploded before Vasquez could get rid of it, killing him at age 20. He did not know it, but he succeeded in protecting his platoon, just as he intended.

"By his bold initiative, gallant fighting spirit and loyal devotion to duty, he was instrumental in saving his comrades from further injury or possible death by absorbing most of the impact with his own body," Vasquez's citation for the Navy Cross says.

The Navy Cross is America's second-highest award for combat valor, behind only the Medal of Honor. Vasquez died on Jan. 30, 1968, and his parents accepted the medal on his behalf five months later. That was the last time he made news.

Vasquez's story shows that even heroes who give their lives for others can be mostly forgotten.

Manuel A. Gameros, a 72-year-old Navy veteran and retired teacher, wants to change that by shining attention on Vasquez. Gameros has become interested, perhaps obsessed, with Vasquez's short life and terrible death.

He learned about Vasquez on the Internet, scrolling through "the virtual wall" of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It contains the names of the 58,260 U.S. servicemen who died in Vietnam. Included are Vasquez and 125 others from

"I don't know anything at all about him, except what I've read," Gameros said. "But what he did was extraordinary. I would like to see a street or a city park named in his honor."

Gameros has experience in bringing the stories of servicemen to the public's attention.

He was part of a group that sought public recognition for another fallen Marine Corps sergeant, Roberto Ituarte. A rifleman, Ituarte died in combat in Vietnam on Dec. 11, 1965, when he was 24 years old.

After a campaign by Gameros and others, school board members in the Socorro district named a new elementary school in honor of Ituarte in 2005.

Now, Gameros said, his hope is to persuade somebody in government to provide a fitting tribute to Vasquez, whose compelling story never received much attention, perhaps because much of the country had turned against the war in Vietnam by the time he died.

Vasquez's death was reported in a two-paragraph story in the El Paso Times. When his parents accepted his Navy Cross in June 1968, the newspapers covered it with a photo and a caption that misspelled the first name of Vasquez's father, Emilio.

By then, President Lyndon B. Johnson had decided not to seek re-election, largely because he had escalated the war in Vietnam and much of the country was angry about it.

But from every indication, Vasquez died doing the job he coveted.

Born in El Paso on the Fourth of July, 1947, Jesus

Roberto Vasquez became the kind of gung-ho Marine who looked like he belonged on a recruiting poster. His interest in military service defined him as a teen ager.

At Jefferson High School, he was a second lieutenant in ROTC and a member of the rifle and drill teams. Vasquez graduated from Jefferson in 1965, then worked briefly at a drugstore. He enlisted in the Marines at a time when other young men were scrambling to obtain draft deferments.

By April 1966, less than a year out of high school, he was combat ready, having completed training at Camp Pendleton, Calif. His heroics in South Vietnam began after enemy soldiers fired mortars and rockets at the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

Several rounds landed in an ammunition supply area, starting a fire.

Vasquez "rushed to the burning munitions and assisted in fighting the fire," says his citation for the Navy Cross.

It was there that he saw a burning 81mm mortar round. He grabbed it because he knew his buddies' lives were in danger, and he did all he could to keep them out of harm's way.

Before the attack on the ammunition depot was over that day, Vasquez and three fellow Marines were dead. The others were from Minnesota, Virginia and Connecticut, places Vasquez probably never got a chance to see.

As a recipient of the Navy Cross, Vasquez has a place in military history. Gameros wants more. He says a lasting tribute to Vasquez in El Paso is long overdue.

SERGEANT JESUS R. VASQUEZ
USMC, EOD 1ST FORCE SERVICE REGIMENT/FORCE LOGISTIC COMMAND



Citation:

The Navy Cross is awarded to Sergeant Jesus R. Vasquez, United States Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism while serving as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician with the Ammunition Company, Supply Battalion, First Force Service Regiment/Force Logistic Command in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on 30 January 1968. During a mortar and rocket attack at the Khe Sanh Combat Base, several rounds landed in the ammunition supply point, igniting a stack of ammunition. Sergeant Vasquez, unhesitatingly rushed to the burning munitions and assisted in fighting the fire. Observing an 81mm mortar round burning and aware of the proximity of his comrades and the possibility of detonation, he lifted the round in an attempt to throw it into a deep crater where its lethal effects would be absorbed should it detonate. In his attempt to throw the round, it exploded, mortally wounding him. By his bold initiative, gallant fighting spirit and loyal devotion to duty, he was instrumental in saving his comrades from further injury or possible death by absorbing most of the impact with his own body. His great personal valor reflected great credit upon himself and enhanced the finest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

BOOK REVIEW

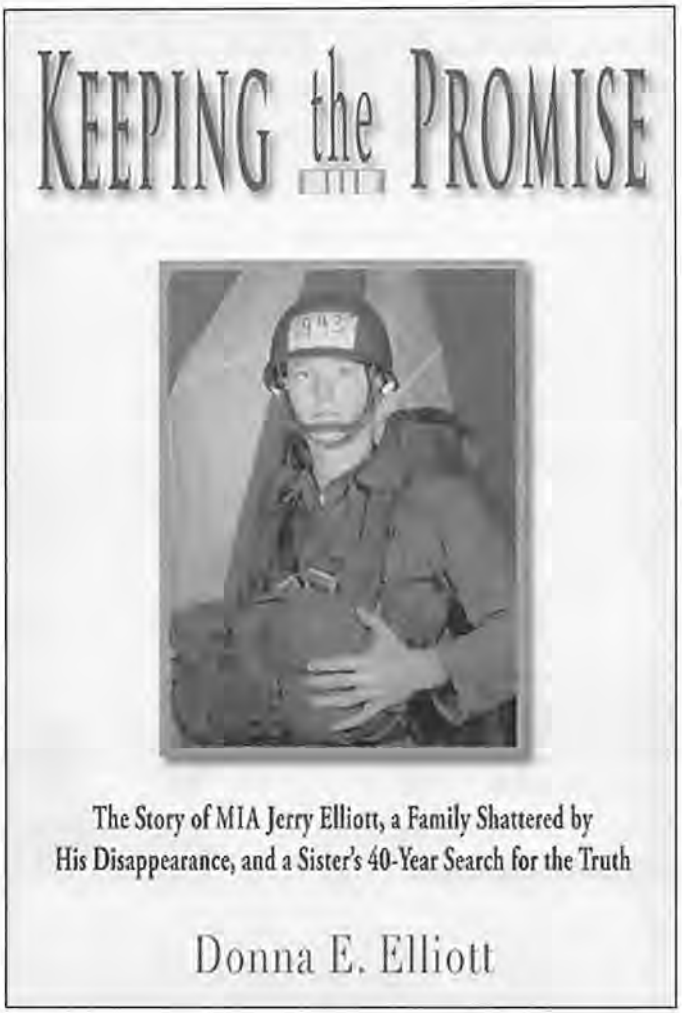

On January 21, 1968, the 282nd AHC was on a mission to support U.S. troops under siege in Khe Sanh village when the lead helicopter was shot down by the North Vietnamese. In the midst of the enemy, Jerry Elliott jumped from his gunner's seat to rescue fellow Black Cat soldiers, and simply vanished. The military listed him as Missing In Action--MIA--a hellish classification that provides neither comfort nor closure to those back home.

Officially designated as "Case 1000" by the Department of Defense, Jerry's fate is still uncertain, despite a determined quest for the truth by his younger sister, Donna. Frustrated at nearly every turn by the POW/MIA bureaucracy, she stoically continues the search--one that has taken her from Washington, D.C. to Vietnam and back again.
Keeping the Promise is a bittersweet tale of a sister's unending dedication to do just that--keep the promise made to her brother, to the families of the POW/MIAs, and most importantly, to those left behind in Southeast Asia: We won't stop until every last man has the fullest possible accounting.

READER REVIEWS

(1)

I just finished this book by Donna Elliot. A story of Jerry, Donna's brother, who was missed in action during the VN war. He still remains as MIA. It also tells about, how Donna has been trying to locate his remains and how she got in touch with Jerry's friends in the army. This book is highly recommended to all, who are interested in the VN but also to all who wants to read a well written book about a family, who has had tragic time but also many happy times. Donna knows how to put a story together. I read the book without a break, from the beginning to the end. Just couldn't stop. I can assure you, that this book is one of the best. So I advise you to get it as long there still are copies available.

(2)

Keeping the Promise is an inspiring and emotional journey of a sister's search for her brother. Jerry W. Elliott, a much loved son, brother, and friend was classified as missing in action (MIA) on January 21, 1968 in Vietnam. Although Jerry's status as MIA set the Elliott family on a path of bitter despair and struggle, his sister Donna's journey in Keeping the Promise is one born out of a tremendous desire to honor a promise and find truth. She's waded through bureaucratic red-tape and trod the hills of Vietnam - all for the sake of bringing our unaccounted soldiers home.

I experienced strong emotions while reading Keeping the Promise. I chuckled at humorous memories shared and shed tears as I imagined being told my big brother was missing in a war. I felt anger and frustration with the lack of answers provided to the Elliott family, but I also felt an overwhelming sense of hope for reconciliation and closure for the families of those still missing because the search continues. The POW/MIA families, the Vietnam veterans, and others who care will not stop searching until there is a full-accounting.

(3)

I highly recommend Keeping the Promise to the military history reader who also enjoys understanding the social effects of war, to everyone with a loved one currently serving in the military, to the families of those still unaccounted for, to those who love their siblings, and to anyone who wants to be inspired by hope and determination.

I have known Donna Elliott for several years after meeting her online through the Khe Sanh Veterans Association (A group of Veterans, of which I am a member, who served at the Khe Sanh Marine Base in Vietnam).

Donna is an excellent writer and wordsmythe. She has that rare talent of putting you right into the events and, at times, it was so real I had to put the book down for a while and come back to it later. I am a Combat Air Force Vietnam Veteran who flew missions into Khe Sanh where Donna's brother disappeared. I cannot fathom the pain and agony she has gone through all of these years while dealing with a government bureaucracy that at times seems to be the real enemy. I respect Donna's tenacity and her fortitude to find out and seek closure on her brother's fate. I pray to God Almighty that she will find the answer to her brother's fate soon.

I consider this book in a "Must Read" category for every American citizen who values the sacrifices and the honor of servicemen like Donna's brother who gave their best effort in a very unpopular war. You will not be disappointed in reading her brother's story. It is one of those books "you just can't put down" until you have finished

Donna, I pray that you find closure and peace in your lifetime and that Jerry's sacrifice will be duly noted and honored at the highest level in our Country and that I will one day see and greet you in person.

your friend and fellow veteran,
Brother Wes Caton
Nokesville, VA

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS FROM DONNA'S LATEST TRIP TO VIETNAM WITH GLENN PRENTICE TO LOCATE HER BROTHER JERRY ELLIOTT MIA SINCE 21 JAN 1968

EVENTS WE EXPERIENCE IN "KEEPING A PROMISE" PART ONE

Glenn Prentice was a 19 year-old radio operator and forward observer attached to India 3/26 during the Siege of Khe Sanh in 1968, one of only 17 out of 350 Marines to serve on Hill 881S who was neither killed nor wounded. In late January, after India Company had tried to take Hill 881N and were getting hit with powerful 122mm mortar rounds, he was part of the working party tasked by CPT Bill Dabney to lower, or dig deeper, the ammo bunker near the top of the Hill 881S where explosive rounds for the 105 gun, 106 recoilless rifles, and 81 mortar rounds were stored.

After digging a few feet into the red-clay dirt, the Marines unearthed hundreds of rapidly decaying bodies of North Vietnamese soldiers, apparently buried during the Khe Sanh Hill Fights during May or June 1967. "It was gruesome and smelled so bad we had to quit," Prentice recalled, "The bodies were black with yellow stuff leaking out—a sickening sweet smell that made you lose your cookies."

Obviously, the smell never left the young Marine's memory because forty-three years later, on April 12, 2011, as Glenn walked atop Hill 881S in order to lead General Thanh Minh Tran and other members of the Quang Tri Provincial Military Command to the general location of a mass NVA burial site, the smell of rotten flesh once again licked his nostrils and sickened the combat veteran. He turned pale in the warm Asian sun, was tempted to turn and leave this place of tragic memories and haunting smells. I knew my friend endured only because due to a strange turn of events, he was there to help the Vietnamese recover approximately 200 of their war dead in exchange for information on one U.S. MIA...my brother, SSGT Jerry W. Elliott.

In July 2010, U.S. Army vet, Joe Schmeling, had accompanied Glenn to his old battlefield on Hill 881S in the company of Duy Thanh Nguyen. Duy [Dwee] is a guide with DMZ Tours in Dong Ha, which appears to hold exclusive rights to the 'special permits' required by tourists to stay out of trouble in Quang Tri Province. He overheard Joe ask Glenn if

he knew were any NVA bodes were buried on Hill 881S, and took particular interest in the response of, "Yes, about 200."

The following August, about three weeks after Glenn had returned to the U.S., he received an email from Duy requesting his assistance. Would he be willing to return to Khe Sanh and lead the Vietnamese military to the mass grave. Glenn's response was two-fold: "Yes, I understand why your government wants to recover the bodies to give relief and peace to the families of the fallen NVA soldiers. I am willing to come back to Hill 881S to assist...I would only ask one thing in return—that you would allow me to talk to a few NVA former soldier's that might know about a former helicopter crewman who was MIA at the Old French Fort in January 1968 named Jerry Elliott. I have been assisting his sister, Donna, for years to find any information regarding her brother."

Glenn's effort was appreciated, but I didn't really think the Vietnamese would agree to his terms, or even had the funds to recover their MIAs. Months went by and we didn't hear a word. Perhaps it was the $1M the U.S. gave to Vietnam in November 2010 to help locate and identify the remains of the Vietnamese soldiers missing in action during the war that generated the February 2010 email from Duy announcing the final conclusion of the Quang Tri Policies Committee of the Provincial Military Command [unit responsible for recovering NVA remains.] The mission was a go!

According to Duy, in March 2011, he and a representative from the Huong Hoa District level would survey the site. From April 21 to May 5, a recovery team from District and Provincial level would begin the excavation of remains, and "...they will help Donna to do something." Duy required that we provide him was completed.

In order to move things along and promote goodwill, I quickly with passport and visa numbers. Glenn and I were told to plan to be in Khe Sanh for the duration of the recovery on Hill 881S, so we assumed any discussion regarding Jerry would come after the recovery provided Duy with information that might be helpful regarding the NVA MIAs on Hill 881S, and in location potential live witnesses relative to Case 1000: ***"It is deeply meaningful for veterans to help veterans find each other's war dead. To assist , I attempted to research records that might help identify the soldiers buried on Hill 881S/High Point 845. Perhaps these approximate 210 war martyrs served with Su Doan 325 and fell in battle between 26 April - 01 May 1967. I find no exact location of a mass grave in the records. Marine's who walked Hill 881S/High Point 845 on 02 May 1967 remarked that only one body of a North Vietnamese soldier remained on the hill. Possibly the comrades of those killed had buried their friends in one of the many bunkers before leaving the area. It is fortunate that Glenn remembers where he found this grave in January 1968 so their families can have traditional burial ceremony when they are recovered.***

Concerning my brother, Jerry Elliott, he disappeared on 21 January 1968, when Tran Dinh Ky, a soldier with the 11th Company, 9th Battalion, 66th Regiment, 304th Division, fired a B-40 round that crashed the lead helicopter at Ku Boc/The Old French Fort, just south of the village of Khe Sanh (location is now next to fire tower by new soccer stadium.) Jerry left his position on a different chopper to aid survivors of the crashed helicopter, and he was left behind alive on the ground. 1st LT Nguyen Dinh Thiep and other members of the Quang Tri 258th Local Force were captured when they tried to escape to Lang Khoai. This is all the knowledge I have regarding my brothers fate."

On April 6, 2011, Duy informed us that Mr. Phien and Mr. Duyet with the Provincial Military Command, and Mr. Tam with the District Military Command, had traveled with him to Hill 881S in a QUAT (Russian 4-WD jeep.) He made mention of land mines and ordinance in the area and told us that a forest guard reported recent explosions on the hill due to heat.

Duy said they also went to the Old French Fort, now known as the District Military Watch Tower. He stated he had told Mr. Phien about Jerry's case and Mr. Phien had promised to contact former Division 304th veterans and organize a meeting. Phien would also attempt to find Mr. Ky, the soldier who had fired the B-40 that caused Blackcat #021 to crash.

Things were looking pretty good, when suddenly Duy began to waffle, claiming he was only a

'middleman' who couldn't decide anything, and he couldn't lose more time from work without financial contribution to the company. He ended the email with, "But finding the lost bodies is a humanitarian face. Maybe you understand my situation. I will let the things to the Military Command to arrange everything my themselves." In an attempt to smooth things over, I invited Duy to lunch when we arrived in Dong Ha on April 20th. He readily accepted and asked if Mr. Phien would also be welcome, to which I agreed. After all, how much could a typical Vietnamese meal in Dong Ha cost?

Cathi Gautreaux and I flew into Da Nang on April 15th and taxied with our friend, Tam [Tom] Le, up to Hue to meet Glenn. I phoned Duy from Hue on the 19th to let him know we would be in Dong Ha the next day for our lunch date. He insisted on sending one of the DMZ Tour drivers to pick us up. The price he quoted seemed fair enough, and tourism was Duy's main income, so Glenn and I agreed to accept the taxi and make the man happy.

Early the next morning, the four of us crowded into a van stuffed with luggage and Khe Sanh survival food, and began our journey with high expectations. DMZ Tours owns a restaurant and a hotel; we had assumed Duy would meet us at his place of business. I knew something was amiss when three or four young Vietnamese boys frantically flagged the taxi down in front of a different restaurant near the Hwy 9 turn in Dong Ha.

When Glenn introduced us, Duy actually stepped back when he realized who I was. He said I did not look as expected. Still not sure what he meant by that. We were quickly ushered to an upstairs dining room prearranged by our host. Basically, Duy was courteous to both Cathi and I, but tended to focus his attention on Glenn. He was not pleased to meet Tam at all, but seemed placated when I told him she was only along to visit friends in Khe Sanh.

Mr. Phien joined us shortly thereafter, but declined to share the lackluster meal placed on the table before us in the stuffy, fly-filled dining room. When the waitress brought the meal ticket, we were shocked to discover the bill was over $2M dong, right at $100 USD! In America we call that a bribe, but what's an MIA sister to do in these circumstances?

We paid the bill, continued onto Khe Sanh, checked into the Tahi Ninh Hotel, unaffectionately nicknamed 'The Pink Palace," and prepared to meet with the Quang Tri military the next morning at 0830 and travel up to Hill 881S by jeep.

At 0800 Glenn knocked on our door and told us to hurry, the brass was downstairs and waiting. Duy ushered Glenn, Cathi, and me into a jeep with him to make sure we had little contact with the Vietnamese military without him present, even though there was an obvious language barrier. By this time we had become suspicious that he might be involved in a scheme of some kind to sell Glenn's MIA information to the Vietnamese government, but without understanding the system we were at a loss to see how he could directly benefit monetarily.

The road to Hill 881S was rough and quite a few washouts. Nothing I don't deal with every winter up here in the Ozark Mountains, but I think our white-knuckled QUAT driver was from the city. We bounced up the hill, expecting the oil pan to drag off anytime as the driver centered the jeep across big rocks, but we finally made it to the base of the hill and eagerly climbed out to hump the rest of the trail. Everyone except Duy that is, he hired the local gate guard to motor him to the top.

As usual in the hills of Khe Sanh, Glenn went into military mode and all I saw of him going up Hill 881S was his back. Even the young Vietnamese soldiers had hard time keeping up with this 'old' surfer-dude Marine. At nine o'clock on a sunny April morning it was already hot, so we ladies decided to pace ourselves. The NVA remains weren't going anywhere, and fortunately, no memory demons were chasing us. Besides, the trail required attention. UXO littered the area. Duy had been advised to have the hilltop burned off and the EOD Squad defuse and remove UXO before recovery operations took place, but it appeared as if someone had spent only enough time with a flamethrower to scorch the tallest elephant grass. No real prep work had taken place and the ground was baked hard as a rock from the sun. Provided the actual grave could be rapidly located, it would still takes weeks with pick and shovel to excavate hundreds of fragile remains.

Glenn pulled out maps and photos, moved from one position to another, and pointed out the Vietnamese

officers the various minefield locations and the approximate location of the mass grave as Duy translated. Cathi, Tam, and I stayed in the background and watched. After an hour or so, I handed the General a copy of a 1967 NVA map of the area. Until that point he seemed only mildly curious and polite regarding the two American and one Vietnamese females. Perhaps he wondered why we were there at all, surely crossed my mind. He was immediately engrossed with the map and it was passed around to each of the military personnel present. Shortly afterwards, Glenn announced we were going back to Khe Sanh for lunch as guests of the military.

After our meal at a local restaurant, which was much better than the Dong Ha slop, General Tran requested Glenn, Cathi, and I sit at a table with him and Duy to drink tea and discuss important matters. Glenn insisted Tam be present because we wanted assurance Duy was conveying exactly what we said to the General. I tried to give General Tran information on a small burial site south of the Old French Fort which I suspected contained 304th NVA, but Duy quickly said, "We have already recovered these men." He placed the Google Earth image on top of his paperwork without explaining the information to the General. With a polite smile, I daintily reached over and pulled it back into my pile.

In summary, Glenn and I were asked to return to Khe Sanh in May or June when the recovery of the soldiers on Hill 881S would be attempted. Since our return home, we've since learned the Vietnamese plan to proceed with the excavation at the end of May without us. Lesson learned: when dealing with Quang Tri officials demand the information we want before providing the information they want.

Was this seventh trip to Vietnam an extravagant waste of energy and money? Probably, but I blame it on the 'middleman.' Would I do it again? Yes, in a heartbeat if I though we could find the truth about what happened to Jerry. If your brother was last seen alive in the middle of a battle surrounded by the enemy, wouldn't you?



People and Events We Experience in "Keeping a Promise" - Part Two

Our trip to Vietnam wasn't all bad. Snow and Phat, our Khe Sanh friends, invited us to their home for a traditional family meal, and the following day we rented motorbikes and rode up to Hill 881N on our own. The Bru living there are poor and not in good health. Tam helped us buy a little food and medicine and distribute it to those who needed it the most.

We bought flowers and joss sticks and rode motorbikes up Duong Hung Vuong Street to the center of the Old French Fort. Cathi, Glenn, Tam, and I climbed to the highest ground on the northeast corner and conducted a brief Ceremony of Remembrance for Jerry. As the red and yellow roses blew to and fro in the wind, I silently called out, "Where are you, brother?"

Even though Cathi and I discovered when we got back to Da Nang we couldn't change our flights and come back home early without heavy change penalties, at least we were able to attend the Dam Gio of Dale Lewis, a dear friend and U.S. Army vet who passed away last year from Agent Orange related cancer. Dam Gio is the occasion in Vietnam's ancestor worshipping culture where family gathers to remember those members who have passed away. Dale was always willing to go the extra mile to help a MIA family member or friend. He is very much missed and will never be forgotten, so it was an honor to be able to pay tribute with his Vietnamese family.

To cheer me up and celebrate my birthday, Glenn took us on an open jeep tour to visit the site of the old Freedom Hill PX and Beer Garden; Hill 55 aka home of the 9th Marines 'Walking Dead'; and Camp Reasoner, dedicated to USMC LT Frank Stanley Reasoner, who posthumously received the Medal of Honor for his actions in the Vietnam War. A hand-lettered sign once stood near the gates of Camp Reasonser which read: "...First Lieutenant Reasoner sacrificed his life to save one of his wounded Marines. 'Greater Love Hath No Man."

We toured Monkey Mountain in the rolling mist to visit the old Marine Air Control Squadron Four LZ on Hill 647. Cathi spotted a bird of paradise on the way back down, and we all bailed out of the jeep for

rare glimpse of a small group of endangered Son Tra *red-shacked doc lingers (pygathrix nemaeus.)*

The tour ended at Tam's Pub with tasty cheeseburgers and mang smoothies. All in all, the jeep tour turned out to be the highlight of our trip. Jeremy and Tam will take you to any long forgotten military site that has special meaning, and find the correct location or your tour down memory lane is free. http://lookingglassjeeptours.com/

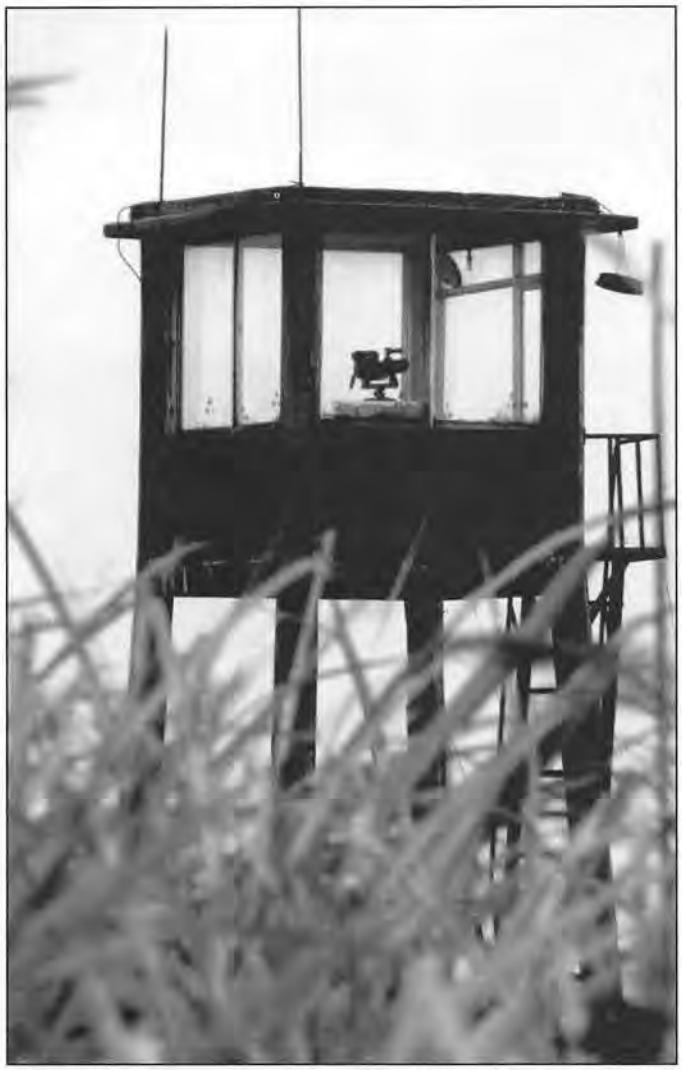

GUARD TOWER FROM OLD FRENCH FORT



LANGUARS ON MONKEY MOUNTAIN



KHE SANH VILLE FROM OLD FRENCH FORT



OLD FRENCH FORT FROM KHE SANH VILLE



MRS TRINH AKA SNOW, A CURIOUS ONLOOKER WITH MRS ANHM



MONKEY MOUNTAIN LANGUAR



BRU MOTHER & CHILD ON HILL 881N



BRU HOME MAKER HILL 881N

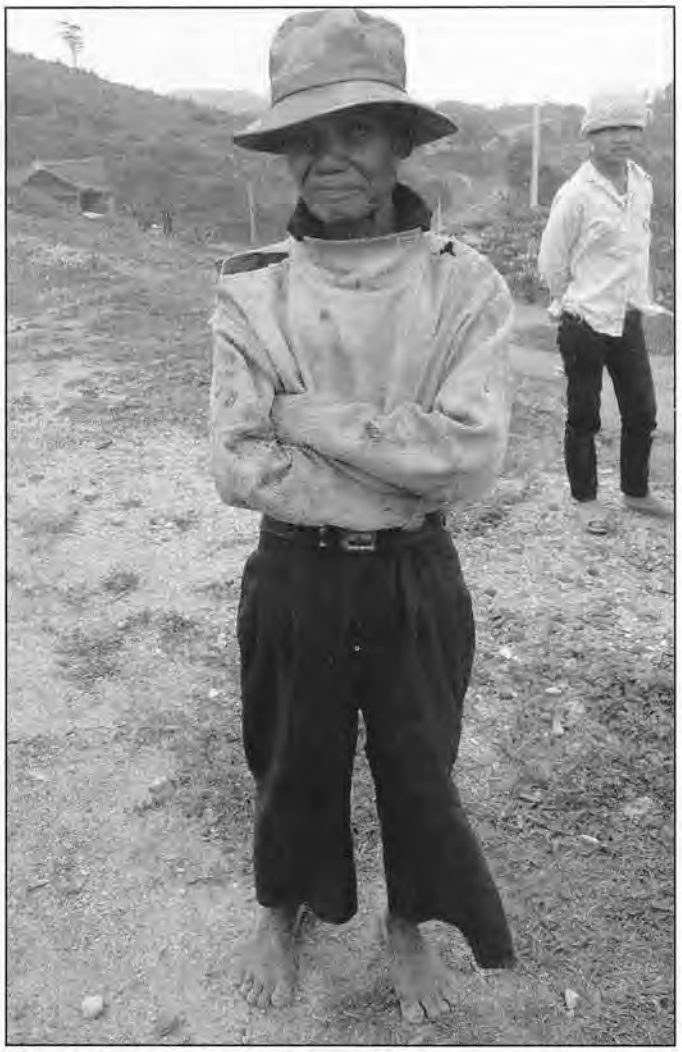

BRU MAN ON HILL 881N



BRU CHILD ON HILL 881N



BRU GRAVE ON HILL 881N



UXO ON HILL 881S







L-R F/O TEAM 1968 HILL 881S LCPL CLARENCE SMITH, LT CHUCK SCHNEIDER & LCPL GLENN PRENTICE



GLENN, TAM, & DONNA WITH BRU ON HILL 881N



GLENN, TAM & DONNA ON MONKEY MOUNTAIN



DANANG HARBOR FROM HILL 55



VIEW TO THE NE FROM HILL 881S



GLENN PAYING RESPECTS TO KIA ON HILL 881S



DONNA, TAM,CATHI & GLENN AT VN MONUMEMT HILL 55

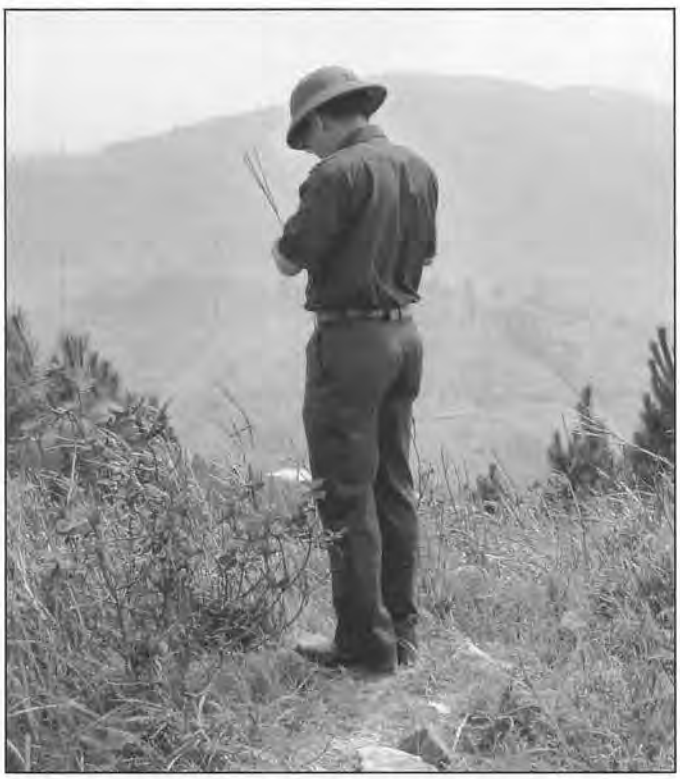

VN SOLDIER BURNS JOSS STICKS TO APPEASE RESTLESS SPIRITS ON HILL 881S



GLENN IN MIDST OF VN SOLDIERS ON 881S



GLENN & VN SOLDIERS WALKING PERIMETER OF 881S



GLENN AND GENERAL TRAN



OLD FRENCH BUNKER ON HILL 55



VIEW TO EAST FROM HILL 881N



TRAIL TO TOP OF HILL 881S



CAMP REASONER GUARD SHACK



CAMP REASONER GATE

"NEVER FORGOTTEN"
25 FEBRUARY 1968
KHE SANH VIETNAM
B CO 1/26



LCPL AKINS, RONALD PAUL
PFC BABTISTE, MICHAEL BRADFORD
PFC BATTLE, JOSEPH CHRISS
LCPL BILLINGHAM, FREDERICK A. JR.
PFC BRELLENTHIN, MICHAEL J.
PFC BRUDER, JAMES ROBERT
CPL CLAIRE, CPL. KENNETH WILLIAM
PFC CLAY, DOYLE GREGORY
LCPL DODSON, JERRY LEE
LCPL GELLER, . CHARLES GREGORY
LCPL HAYES. PHILLIP III
2LT JACQUES, DONALD
LCPL JONES, BRUCE EDWIN
PFC LADEROUTE, MICHAEL JOHN
PFC LASSITER, JOHN ALFRED
SSGT MC CLELLAND, GEORGE
PFC MC DONALD, HENRY III
LCPL MC KENZIE, RICHARD W.
PFC MEADS, KIM ELMER
HN MOORE, LLOYD WHITFIELD
PFC RASH, DONALD RAY
PFC RIVERA, ARNOLD JAVIER
PFC RUFF, WILLIE JEROME
PFC SCARBROUGH, DAVID CLIFTON
PFC SKINNER, WALTER FRANCIS
PFC SMITH, DOUGLAS WAYNE
PFC THEYERL, CLAYTON, JOSEPH
CPL WHITAKER,DONALD EUGENE

IN ADDITION

CPL HUFF,WILLIAM, EDWARD K CO 3/26
PFC SZMANSKI, FRANK ADAM IV I CO 3/26
CPL WIEDEMAN, ROBER ARTHUR I CO 3/26
LCPL WOOD, JAMES ANTHONY E CO 2/26





A SOLDIER FINALLY COMES HOME










SERGEANT FIRST CLASS
JAMES LESLIE MORELAND
DET-B COMPANY C
5TH SFG (AIRBORNE)
1ST SPECIAL FORCES

IS A PERPETUAL LIFE MEMBER OF
THE KHE SANH VETERANS




Tom Eichler
Past President &
Treasurer KSV












THE KHE SANH VETERANS HONOR
KATHY STRONG
IN RECOGNITION OF HER UNWAVERING 40 YEAR VIGIL
FOR THE BELOW LISTED MEMBER OF THE
SPECIAL FORCES GROUP MISSING IN ACTION
FROM THE WAR IN VIETNAM, DURING THE
HISTORIC BATTLE OF LANG VEI, 6 & 7 FEB 1968.

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS
JAMES LESLIE MORELAND
DET-B-16 COMPANY C
5TH SFG (AIRBORNE)
1ST SPECIAL FORCES




Tom Eichler
Past President &
Treasurer KSV



FALL
&
WINTER

RED CLAY

ISSUE
79











KHE SANH VETERANS



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

THE KAYLOR GRAND HOTEL WITH THE ROCHESTER CONVENTION BUREAU HOSTED A WELCOME PARTY FOR THE KHE SANH VETERANS. ALSO INVITED WERE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EAGLE CENTER, WHO RESCUE AMERICAN BALD EAGLES. SEVERAL OF OUR MEMBERS POSED FOR PICTURES WITH ONE OF THE RESCUED BALD EAGLES, WHO ALSO ATTENDED.







TWO OF OUR BRAVE" 3RD ENGRS"







The KSV reunion was quite a success. Although our numbers were somewhat less than other reunions, mainly due to its location and lack of direct airport flights, everyone had a good time.

The City of Rochester and the Grand Kahler Hotel bent over backwards to ensure we enjoyed our stay. The Convention Bureau hosted a welcome party with free food and cocktails, with a appearance by the mayor of Rochester who personally welcomed us.

The Luncheon cruise on the Mississippi River aboard a authentic Paddleboat, was enjoyed by all. The Captain let everyone who chose, to actually take a turn operating the boat.

Rochester has one of the most beautiful Soldiers Memorials, and we decided to have our regularly scheduled Memorial Services,there outdoors at sunset. Wayne Stillman, one of the curators of the memorial, who is also on the committee of the BELL OF HONOR, sat down and helped in the planning. He also arranged for the Bell to be a part of our ceremony.

The ceremony was emceed by our Chaplain Ron Rayner who did a wonderful job. Each of the four services marched in their colors as Ron read aloud the number of personnel that were lost at Khe Sanh from that branch. The ceremony was very touching. Members on Wayne Stillman's staff provided the Audio and music, and seating arrangements as well. After Taps was played and the ceremony ended, the president of the Khe Sanh Veterans, David "Bulldog" Smith, gifted Wayne Stillman, with a new automatic bugle to be used by the Local VFW and Memorial Staff for future ceremonies.

There was an election held for members of the KSV BOD. Tom Eichler was elected President, Russell Turner a Member At Large. All other incumbents retained their seats. Normally I would thank those who did not retain their seat for their services, but Mike Fishbaugh is still aboard in another position so he can continue to contribute his expertise to the KSV. And as always, another shout out to our outgoing president, Bulldog Smith, for his continuing dedication to the KSV.

Every member should have received a package from me, which contained a complete color brochure of all the different items that are available in our PX, and a registration form for the upcoming reunion in Washington DC. However, I neglected to put down Russell Turner's Postal Zone. **The correct zone is 63010. Please get them in early since we are again expecting a very large crowd.**
REUNION COMMITTEE

Last but not least, we have to thank the lovely Kathy Turner who is the real force behind a successful reunion. She would like to stay behind the scenes and not be recognized, but she does too much for the KSV, not to be. Let us not forget Carol & Dave Meyer and all the other volunteers who do so much to help the reunion committee.

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Neil Kenny..... Member At Large
Bruce Geiger..... Member At Large
Tom Ford..... Member At Large
Leland Uphaw..... Member At Large
Larry McCartney..... Member At Large
Ken Martin..... Member At Large
Craig Tourte..... Member At Large
Dan Fisher ..... Scholarship Chairman

Chaplain's Corner Fall 2011

By Chaplain Ron Rayner

The Rochester reunion was fun and educational. The last three reunions I have attended have shown me that Tommy Eichler, Russ Turner and their families are great examples of people who truly give much of their time for the benefit of all. They certainly have my gratitude for a job well done.

"Bravo! Common Men, Uncommon Valor"

Thank you Ken and Betty Rodgers for a job well done! This is a very moving and inspirational program. I hope there is plenty of notice on the message board before it is on television.

The Rochester Veterans Memorial was very inspiring. This beautiful series of engraved stone walls is a very fitting way to honor United States Military personnel, past and present.

Our Memorial Service went well in the heat and humidity. I believe some of the compliments on the service resulted from some advice from George Burns; "The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible."

I quoted parts of Ecclesiastes chapter 3 (KJV) in the service; "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: 2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted; 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build up; 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; 5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; 6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; 7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silent and a time to speak; 8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace."

For those of us who are affected by Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder it is very important to remember what this says. Most of who were involved in a time of war killed, mourned a friend, lost part of himself or herself, and hated. We also wept, embraced and laughed. War is certainly an intense time that teaches us to take every opportunity to love the people we care about.

So many people quote the Ten Commandments saying "Thou shalt not kill." I personally like the New International Version which says "You shall not murder." Many of us were killers, but not murders. Joshua, Gideon, Samson, Saul, and David were all warriors sent forth to kill in the name of the Lord. We killed for our country and in defense of ourselves and our friends. I fully believe now should be a time of peace in our personal lives. We should be supporting those who are now fighting for our country. The Bible does say there is "A time to kill."

Two books that I recommend for the healing warrior are *Stories of Faith and Courage from the Vietnam War* by Khe Sanh Veteran Larkin Spivey and *Wild at Heart by* John Eldredge.

Larkin Spivey uses the daily devotional format to relate 365 short stories from the Vietnam War to Scripture. This book shows how any experience, good or bad, may be turned into positive life changing event. I believe the following quote from Romans 5:3-5 sums up Larkin's book quite well; "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials for we know they are good for us—they help us learn to be patient. And patience develops strength **of character** in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady."

John Eldrege in *Wild at Heart* explains from a biblical point of view why men are the way they are. Eldredge says "in the heart of every man is a desperate desire for a battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to rescue." He quotes Exodus 15:3; "the Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name.

I believe this is so true. It is just too bad political correctness and the people that want to weaken the United States of America push their agenda of just being vanilla to everybody and not offending anyone. A perfect example is France after resisting the Germans for four years in World War I. There was a campaign by liberals after WWI to berate military, heroics and guns as if they started the war. It worked. It took less than four weeks for Germany to defeat France in WWII. I believe the left in America keeps trying to do this same type of thing with anti-

gun campaigns and all the crap that was put on us Vietnam veterans after our return home.

Joshua 1:6-9 (New Living Translation) is quite clear "Be strong and courageous, for you will lead my people to possess all the land I swore to give to their ancestors.

7 Be strong and very courageous. Obey all the laws Moses gave you. Do not turn away from them, and you will be successful in everything you do.

8 Study this Book of the Law continually. Meditate on it day and night so you may be sure to obey all that is written in it. Only then will you succeed.

9 I command you—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

For those of you out there that have mental conflicts going on, these books may help. I pray we can all take "time to keep" the positive aspects of our experience and "cast away" our bad memories.

RAYS CORNER

VETERANS DAY TALK
By Rev. Ray William Stubbe

11 November 2011 - Veterans Monument, Miller -Coors Brewing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Upon entering the remarkable National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, a visitor first sees a large map of France set in the floor below his feet. The map is covered with thousands of red poppies. There are so many, it is as futile to attempt to count them as it would be to count the colored leaves of Fall through which we recently walked. A guide quietly whispers that each poppy represents a thousand killed. It is overwhelming. The scene becomes a window through which we peer at another reality. Like standing in the midst of the black granite Vietnam Memorial Wall, we are silenced, overcome by the enormity of the loss.

When America entered World War I in April, 1917, the war had been going on for three years. When it started, most assumed it would be over within months, but like the fly caught in a spider's web, once started, the agony seemed to have no end. New horrors snuffed soul and spirit as machine-guns, warplanes, bombing, and poison gas, made the conflict a foretaste of hell. Ten months earlier, on 01 July 1916, 60,000 British soldiers marched in parade formation at the Somme River against German strong points, only to be mowed-down by a new weapon of war, the machine gun. The Battle of the Somme raged for four months, only mercifully stopped by rains. It was as if they were tears from God! There were over a million (1,293, 907) casualties in four months, just one battle of World War I. [There were 419,654 British casualties, 204,253 French casualties, and 650,000 German casualties.] During World War I, more than 8 million soldiers died, at least 19 million were wounded, and civilian casualties, obviously in the millions, can only be guessed.

That's why so many poppies cover that map of France in the World War I Memorial Museum at Kansas City, Missouri--over 8,000, one for each 1,000 soldiers killed. One is reminded of Lieutenant Colonel John McRae's famous poem written in World War I after four years' service in that war as he mourned the loss of a friend killed in that war and just before he himself was killed on 28 Jan 1918:

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

Today, we observe Veterans Day, formerly known as Armistice Day. [First observed in 1920, it became a legal holiday by act of Congress on 13 May 1938.] But, because World War I, the "War to End All Wars," only laid the seeds of future wars--World War II and Korea, Congress voted [on 01 June 1954] to change Armistice Day to Veterans Day, a day to honor all veterans, living and dead, of all American wars.

For a brief time, Veterans Day was moved to create a three-day weekend, but the significance of the sacrifice and service of veterans and not a long weekend's personal pursuit of pleasure, soon returned Veterans Day observance to November 11th. [The

Uniform Holiday Act, signed 28 June 1968, made Veterans Day part of a 3-day weekend, along with Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, and Columbus Day. The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed with much confusion on 25 Oct 1971. On 20 Sep 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed legislation restoring the annual observance of 11 November, beginning in 1978.] This year's celebrations are not only the " the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month," but also the year 2011!

*

During a visit with my folks while on active duty, we were sitting quietly at a restaurant. Two ladies were conversing at an adjacent table. One said: "Would you believe, my neighbor served in the military for twenty years, retired, and is now drawing a pension?"

Her comment stunned me, paralyzing a sudden surge of anger. She would never know the six or eight month separations from family while serving overseas on a Navy ship, the regular grind of long watches at night followed by a full day's work, weeks without showers on a ship at sea, separation from growing up with friends over the years, missed job opportunities, not to mention war's horrors, terrors, and ugly scenes seared forever on the soul. You want my pension? Fine! You can also take my nightmares, my wounds, my inability to live a normal life! my lost innocence, my social isolation. You can have these also! Today, in the midst of high unemployment, veterans have an even higher rate. An alarming percentage of the homeless are veterans. Their suicide rate exceeds that of their civilian peers.

As I sat there at that restaurant table, listening to their conversation, my mind raced to a small bunker on a remote hilltop outpost in Vietnam. The Company commander there had taken the stiff cardboard sleeve of a carton of C-rations and written on it:

"God and the soldier we adore,
In time of war and not before;
The battle ended and all things righted,
God's forgotten, the soldier slighted."

The Company Commander was Capt John Raymond, USMC, commanding A/1/26 on Hill 881-South, Khe Sanh, Vietnam, noted in Stubbe: *Khe Sanh Chaplain* (unpublished manuscript), 01 April 1970, diary entry for 18 August 1967. Although Capt Raymond attributed the poem to "Lord Marlborough," it was actually written by Frances Quarles (1592-14), and its original form is: "Out God and soldiers we alike adore / E/en at the brink of danger, not before / Our God's forgotten, and our soldiers slighted." [Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 3d rev. ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 404, No. 9].

*

One of the stories to emerge from World War II tells of a soldier coming home after years of being away in the war. He telephones his parents. "I'm coming home," he tells them. They are ecstatic. He says, "I'm bringing home a friend who was badly wounded." Still overcome with joy, they tell him, "Bring him with you. It will be great to have both of you home!" His voice becomes serious, "But you must know that he has some ugly scars." They say, "That's OK. We know that war does bad things." Softly, he says, "But he also has lost a leg and an arm, and he has difficulty with large groups of people." They say, "Well, son, maybe it might be best if he goes to a hospital for those things where he will be more comfortable. But we are so excited that you're coming home." There's a click. He hung up the phone. He was the "friend," the wounded, damaged man.

At his inauguration, President Kennedy uttered those words: "Let every nation know .. that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty " [Kennedy, John F., Inaugural Address, 20 January 1961] Today, we pause to consider that price, that burden:

WAR	KIA	WIA	MISSING	TOTAL
World War I	116,516	204,002	3,350	320,518
World War II	405,399	670,846	30,313	1,036,245
Korea	33,741	103,284	5,127	137,025
Vietnam	58,209	153,303	2,489	211,512
Gulf War 1990-91	382	849	0	364
Iraq 2001-present	4,404	21,839	2	26,243
Afghanistan	1,135	6,141	2	7,276

[Data as of September, 2011.

Also: COLD WARS-1947, 1956:

92 KIA, 55 WIA, 147 total casualties, 0 missing.

GRENADA, 1983: 19 KIA, 119 WIA, 138 total casualties, 0 missing.
PANAMA, 1989: 40 KIA, 324 WIA, 364 total casualties**, 0 missing.**
REVOLUTIONARY WAR: 4,000 KIA.
WAR OF 1812: 2,000 KIA.
MEXICAN WAR 1846-1848: 13,000 KIA.
INDIAN WARS 1817-1898: 1,000 KIA.
CIVIL WAR: at least 618,000 KIA out of an entire US population of 31 million.
SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR 1989-1902: 11,000 KIA.]

Many of us will be more focused on a family member--a father or mother, brother or sister, a son, a nephew or niece--or perhaps a boy or girl from the neighborhood or church. For, as the German poet, Goethe, once noted: "I am rent to the core by this simple one's suffering; you pass carefree over the fate of thousands." [Goethe, *Faust* II, 439f.]

***Veterans Day focuses not only on the enormity of those lost in war, but on the living veterans who today live lost lives. A recent newspaper article noted there are roughly 107.000 homeless veterans in* America and goes on to state: Many of them are chronically condemned to wander our streets because the trauma they suffered serving our country has left them profoundly brain-damaged or disabled with terrible psychiatric conditions like post traumatic stress disorder.. These wounds of war are physically invisible, but they are no less life-threatening." [Lawrence Tribe and Bobby Shriver, "Why Wounded Warriors Sleep in Dumpsters," The *Wall Street Journal* Thursday, 9 June 2011, p. A21.]**

Following the death of his brother in World War I, the American poet, Archibald MacLeish wrote his poem, "The Young Dead Soldiers:"

The young dead solders ... who has not heard them?

They have a silence that speaks for them at night and when the clock counts.

They say: We were young. We have died. Remember us.
They say: Our deaths are not ours; they are yours; they will mean what you make them.
They say: Whether our lives and our deaths were for peace and new hope or for nothing we cannot say; it is you who must say this.
They say: We leave you our deaths. Give them their meaning
Remember us.

Today, we remember. The word, "remember," as used in the Bible, refers not to mere thoughts in our mind, but bringing something from the past in order to affect present action. In other words, we pause and ponder in order that we might do something now.

Today, we rededicate ourselves to serving others and serving our country
Today, we rededicate ourselves to promote peace and justice.
Today, we rededicate ourselves to care for those who have borne the burden of the battle and their families.
May God bless us all with the vision and the strength to do this. God bless you all!



THE LION OF KHE SANH

OBITS

COLONEL DAVID E. LOWNDS COMMANDING OFFICER 26TH MARINE REGIMENT KHE SANH VIETNAM



David E. Lownds of Naples, FL, born October 4, 1920, passed away peacefully on August 31, 2011. As all good Marines do, the "Lion of Khe Sanh", Colonel David E. Lownds, USMC (Ret) reported for duty on "heaven's scene." A veteran of three wars, Dave Lownds was wounded on Saipan and again on Iwo Jima; braved the enemy and elements in Korea; operated behind enemy lines in the Dominican Republic Expedition; and commanded the Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment at the Battle of Khe Sanh during the infamous Tet Offensive of 1968 in Vietnam. For his actions at Khe Sanh, he was awarded the Navy Cross, our nation's second highest award for valor. Married to his wife, Jean, for 69 years, he is survived by her, seven children, 19 grandchildren, and 23 great- grandchildren. He will be sorely missed. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested memorial contributions be made to Avow Hospice, 1095 Whippoorwill Lane, Naples, FL 34105 or online at www.avowhospice.org. Services will be held at a later date.

TRIBUTES: KHE SANH VETERANS

From Dick Peloquin JR.

I will advise my father Dick Sr. He has great respect for Colonel Lownds. May you go with God Sir. I will not soon forget our brief meeting, I feel privileged that I have had the honor of meeting a legend The Peloquin family offers our prayers and condolences to Colonel Lownds loved ones.

From Craig Tourte

In 2004 I wrote a little article regarding Colonel Lownds which was published in Red Clay, issue 59 Fall 2004. At Ernie Spencer's suggestion I sent a copy of that article to the Colonel. Although ill, Colonel Lownds was kind enough too responded with a personal letter thanking me for remembering him and the kind words. After 4 years and 3 moves I was finally able to put a copy of the article, the magazine and the letter I received from Colonel Lownds into a frame and place it on my wall. Now, one of my most prized possession.

THE STORY
By: Craig W. Tourte

I was just another Private First Class (PFC) during the ten plus months I served at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh in Vietnam. I have a vivid memory of a special moment I would like to share with my Khe Sanh brothers.

I was manning the defensive perimeter trench line located on the southwest side of the base across from the Headquarters Battery, First Battalion, Thirteenth Marine Regiment, a hundred yards or so northeast of the main gate. It was one of those dark dreary nights when I stood looking straight ahead at nothing. Exhausted from lack of sleep, a diet of cold C rations, rain, cold fog, digging and just plain being there. I turned towards a voice behind me, which asked

"How is it going Marines?" I looked up and saw a squared away Marine holding an M-16 rifle. He had a big broad dark mustache and was accompanied by another Marine with a radio strapped to his back. This Marine was obviously an officer of a type which I had never seen before at Khe Sanh. He introduced himself as Colonel Lownds. He said he was just seeing how things were going and asked how we were getting along. I swallowed hard and responded, "Fine." In my surprise at seeing the Colonel I might have mumbled something else, but I don't recall what it was. Colonel Lownds smiled, turned away and continued walking along the trench line.

Of course, I knew the name of the commanding officer on the combat base, but not in my wildest dreams did I ever expect to see him out along the trench line at night, without some type of security detachment and virtually alone except for the radio man and I never expected a colonel to express concern for a lowly private.

That simple act lifted my spirits and for some reason I felt a lot more secure knowing that the commanding officer was in this with us and was exposing himself to the same dangers the rest of us faced. I never saw Colonel David Lownds after that, but I would like to thank him and let him know that moment touched my life. It was a moment I'll forever appreciate and remember

THE RETURN LETTER

Dear Craig.

I recently returned from a few months in Tampa where they took care of some cancer all my head. I regret delay in responding to your letter and I must say Ernie Spencer was correct as I thoroughly enjoyed your letter.

I would have liked to put these thoughts in my own hand writing however my hand writing has deteriorated to such a degree that in most cases I can't read my own hand-writing.

They changed the name of our street a couple of years back so the new statistics are in the letter head.

I thank you for remembering me after all these years and the kind words you had for me.

Semper Fi,
Colonel David Lownds

Another Lownds Story
Lownd's Mustache

I only saw Colonel Lownds on the Khe Sanh Combat Base a few times. I was impressed with his prominent large black mustache, ending in a twisted point. Even then he looked very distinguished with the authority of command, and often a big cigar protruding from his lips. I would say more like a movie character than a Marine Corps Infantry Battalion Commander.

Dennis Mannion sent me a link to an interview Colonel Lownds did some thirty years ago. The interview was thirty-five odd pages and quite interesting. Regarding the mustache, and I'll paraphrase here, and not quote his exact wordings, you'll understand what he is saying about this issue. Colonel Lownds said that a leader is recognized because he knows what he is doing and because people recog-

nize who he is. In order that others know who you are and that you're around you have to have something distinct. My standard trademark in the Marine Corps was to always carry a stick. It wouldn't be anything fancy, it'd be a broom handle, or something I'd pick up and I'd say this is my stick. I didn't use it as a walking aid but the young Marines would recognize me when I carried it around. If I happened to visit another battalion or another company I would sometimes inadvertently leave it there, they would always send someone to my unit after I left and say that the Colonel left his stick behind. This was one of the ways people would know that the Colonel was in the area. I didn't have a stick at Khe Sanh, I couldn't find one, that's a good excuse, so I grew a mustache, and I guess it became quite famous.

So that's the story, the colonel grew his mustache because he couldn't find a stick to carry around. I think the mustache was a good choice. I'd forget someone carrying around a stick back in 1967/1968 on a muddy combat base; I could not forget a very photogenic Colonel with a large black mustache.

CRAIG

By Mac - Milton McNeely
I met Colonel Lownds several times. Having a pair of hair clippers, I once had the honor of trimming his hair. It was sometime in the middle of the siege and as luck would have it we had incoming. My hands were shaking and the haircut was somewhat botched. Not sure if it was the incoming or just the stress of cutting the Colonel's hair. We have lost an outstanding Marine Officer and leader. Prayers of comfort and blessings for the friends and family that mourn his loss.

By Gene Weresow
Rest in peace Colonel. I Salute you sir!

By Chaplain Ron Rayner

I considered it to be an honor and privilege to serve my country in the United States Marine Corps under such a fine officer as Colonel David E. Lownds. A sympathy card has been sent. If anyone has further details on the arrangements, please let me know. Semper Fi,

By Doctor Ed Feldman
Colonel Lownds, I remember you studying the maps in the regimental command post. Your composure set the example for Marine Leadership. Business as usual...Godspeed.
S/F Ed Feldman., one of the C Med Surgeons.

From Dave Doehrman
I spent a few minutes with Col Lownds at the '97 St Louis reunion. We were at the mass grave site at



Jefferson Barracks for the victims of the C-123 crash and the Col was kind enough to pose for a few photos. I was glad he was able to attend at least one of our reunions. He had some rough decisions to make at Khe Sanh but his leadership and composure inspired a lot of people during those days in our history.

By Ken

THE LION OF KHE SANH

When the last wave touches down
and we move to high ground
above a shore no mortal has seen.

Till the last trumpet sounds
and the guns quiet down,
hold fast our Colonel of Marines.
We all will move fast,
arriving at last
to link up with that
Lion of a Man.



We will salute once more
and in unison roar
SEMPER FIDELIS MARINE

Col. Jim Leslie 26 Mar
I served with Col. Lownds 1968 Khe Sanh. He was A great Marine. God be with him and his family. I plan to stop at Quantico 9/15/11.Col. Jim Leslie USMC Ret.

MORE REMEMBERANCES OF THE LION OF KHE SANH

Capt H.J.M. ("Mac") Radcliffe (CO, A/1/9)

remembers that after the Alpha Outpost (Hill 64) had been attacked and A/1/9 lost over 30% of its company on 8 February, he had told his troops, "Nobody gets into the Company perimeter I don't know about it." "They called down and said, 'We got somebody coming into your area.' I said, 'Stop him! We had a lot of press people and others coming in. I said, 'Who is it?' They said, 'I don't know who he is, Sir. He has a moustache and cigar and has his radio operator with him.' Well, I knew right away that was Colonel Lownds. He looked at me and said, 'How you doing, Captain?' I said, 'Fine, Colonel.' He said, 'No.' He pulled me aside, away from the radio operator, and said, 'Mac, how you doing?' And I said, 'I'm hanging in there.' And he said, 'I know you will.' And he gave me a cigar. Just that touch. I knew what I'd known before, but reinforced the fact that we had a caring, concerned, intelligent, super Regimental Commander, who knew what the hell it was to 'take it,' 'take it,' 'take it' and bounce back to be a Marine!"

On one of his walks through the KSCB during the Siege, Colonel Lownds came into the Ponderosa area containing D/1/26 and noticed the men's clothing was getting raggedy. He told George E. Myrick, "Corporal, you get clothes anyway you can get l'em!" "I said, 'Yes, Sir! We stole them off the comm. lines. So I got his shirt. A day or so later, Lownds was again visiting the area, walking around. He saw his shirt, but said nothing at the time. Returning, he simply said, 'Nice shirt, Corporal! You got my sox, too?' and he walked away."

John Hargesheimer (A/3rd AT Bn)

remembers that during the Siege, "I was sent to deliver a message to Col. Lownds. I had to go to the concrete bunker that was his headquarters and was led through the maze to where he was. He was sitting in a chair and he looked exhausted. He didn't look up when I delivered the envelope, but he did thank me. I immediately turned around and left, but it left a lasting impression on me of the enormous responsibility that this one man had to carry and I was humbled. After that experience I prayed every night during the siege for Col Lownds. If anyone needed God's help and strength it was Col. Lownds during the siege.

LtCol Frederick McEwan, the S-4 of Regiment during the Siege

Remembers "Around December [1967], the North Vietnamese Army blew a French bridge across Highway 9. Well, Uncle Dave, who was Colonel Lownds, and the Engineer Officer and myself went to a steel bridge over the river at Route 9, and we swam across that river to check out that area, see if the bridge could be rebuilt. It couldn't. So we got out of there hastily. It was a precarious situation.

LtCol Louis Rann, the Executive Officer of Regiment

Remembers the radioman leaning over and saying: "Colonel, the President wants to talk with you! The President's on the other end of the phone!" Rann notes, "I won't tell you what Colonel Lownds said—you're a minister!" "Shit?" "Well, a few other choice words!" "The next thing I know, Colonel Lownds picked up that phone [and was saying], 'Yes, Sir!.. No, Sir!' He's standing at attention!" Rann thought, "My God, it is the President!" Afterwards, Rann asked, "What did he say?" Lownds:

"He said, 'I made the Joint Chiefs of Staff sign a paper that we're not going to make you guys surrender!'"

Chaplain Ray Stubbe remembers in a few paragraphs from a letter he recently sent to General Ron Christmas regarding the passing of Colonel Lownds

Dear General Christmas:
As I mentioned on the telephone, Colonel David E. Lownds had a profound effect on my life. Although I was assigned to 1/26 and not the regiment, for a long time, 1/26 was the only battalion at Khe Sanh and I came to know Colonel Lownds through informal conversation and the evening regiment briefings. Soon after his arrival at Khe Sanh on 12 August 1967, I noticed his presence at memorial services for a Marine from recon that had been killed while his team attempted an insertion and for a Marine who drowned in the nearby Rao Quan River. His concern and interest in the welfare of the Marines at Khe Sanh was plainly evident. He cared.

I recall an incident during the monsoon rainfall in which a recon team had completed about eight days of patrolling, had run out of water and food, and due to the weather, the helicopters couldn't extract them. 1/26 had alerted an infantry company to move to them and bring them back. (They were south of us, south of Route 9, as I recall). Knowing all the men in the recon team, I had obtained permission and decided to accompany the patrol. Just as we were about to depart the combat base, the skies cleared and the helicopters were able to extract the team. Colonel Lownds suddenly appeared with our infantry patrol and informed us that the team had been successfully extracted and thanked us for preparing to rescue them. He didn't have to do that, of course. His presence there spoke volumes of his concern for his men.

I recall talking to a recon Marine (Kevin Macaulay) who overheard a conversation in the regimental bunker. It was a conversation between Colonel Lownds and the recon commander who was about to commit another team to replace one that had just been shot out. Obviously, we knew where the enemy was! Colonel Lownds told the recon commander, "Don't you care about your men? Why are you sending them to the place where we already know the enemy is located?"

Colonel Lownds had his humorous moments. At one regimental briefing, he had just returned from a visit to 3d Marine Division at Phu Bai, and he jokingly reported to the staff and officers gathered about his trip "to the wonderful world of 'Bai'." I can still hear him talking about how they "actually had sidewalks of wooden pallets so you don't get your boots muddy!" (laughs). "And then there was hot and cold running water--and flushing toilets!" (more laughs). "They actually had air-conditioning--but I don't think they'll ever get it as cool as we have it here at Khe Sanh!" (by now he was on a roll, and everyone was roaring!)

As I mentioned to you, General, I am firmly convinced that I am here today because of some very difficult, agonizing decisions that Colonel Lownds made during that Khe Sanh siege battle. In fact, had I given a short eulogy for him, I might have been tempted to use the text from John 10.10 ("I am come that they might have life, life in its abundance") and noted that while this may be strange to use for a Marine officer, it certainly reflected what Colonel Lownds accomplished. He made numerous decisions that all turned out right. Probably from his earlier duty as a regimental S-2 (in which he had, by the way, two very junior lieutenants who later served him as Captains during the siege--Jerry Judson, one of his S-2 scouts who was, during the siege, his S-2, and Capt Earle Breeding, another scout who was the commander of E/2/26. Earle tells me that when 2/26 arrived at Khe Sanh just a few days before the battle erupted, the officers and staff of 2/26 were in the regimental bunker and Colonel Lownds said, "We will hold." And then spotting Earle, continued, "Won't we, Captain Breeding?" to the astonishment of all the officers of 2/26!))

Kevin Macaulay Remembers his compassion

Kevin Macaulay, a radioman in BRAVO Company, 3rd Recon, recalls an incident: "This brand new Lieutenant—he'd been in country maybe two days—had just exited the [regimental] COC bunker. His utilities were perfectly clean. His flak jacket was green where the rest of ours were red because of the clay. His helmet liner and helmet cover were perfectly green. His jungle boots were the bright green and the dark black that characterizes the jun-

gle boots. And he walked out of the COC bunker and right into the middle of this barrage. He was wounded extremely severely by this 122mm rocket that came in, and we saw him lying on the ground. One of his feet was at a totally impossible angle; his foot was almost severed, and there was a big pool of blood around him.

We were already carrying our company clerk, a fellow by the name of [LCPL Ronald D.] Coleman out of the company office who had taken shrapnel from the same round. Coleman lost, I believe, the major portion of all his fingers on both hands, plus he had a gaping wound over his right kidney. It looked, as we loaded him on the stretcher, that he was in bad shape, but I believe he survived. His kidney, I think, was destroyed though; luckily we have two of them. We ran Coleman up to Charlie Med and then we came back and there was a group around this poor Lieutenant. As we were loading him onto the stretcher, Colonel Lownds came up out of the COC bunker and he spotted us there. Immediate recognition came upon his face as he saw this poor Lieutenant lying, and Colonel Lownds watched us as we picked him up and took him to the aid station.

We came back with the empty stretcher which was now totally covered with blood. Colonel Lownds looked over to us and yelled, 'Hey Marine, how's he doing?' And I looked back over to Colonel Lownds and I shook my head. And you could see the look that came across Colonel Lownds' face; you could see how visibly upset he was by this man's death. It was one of the few times that I had seen Colonel Lownds and had direct conversation with him. I had seen him numerous times in the COC bunker, but it was the first time I had ever really spoken to him, and it just gave me the impression that the man really cared. Not only did he care about the entire base—the worry that he had on his mind that we had anywhere between ten to forty thousand NVA around us, but he was concerned about the individual. And he was visibly shaken by this man's death."



Picture By Colonel Lownds Wife



WE ALL REMEMBER THIS



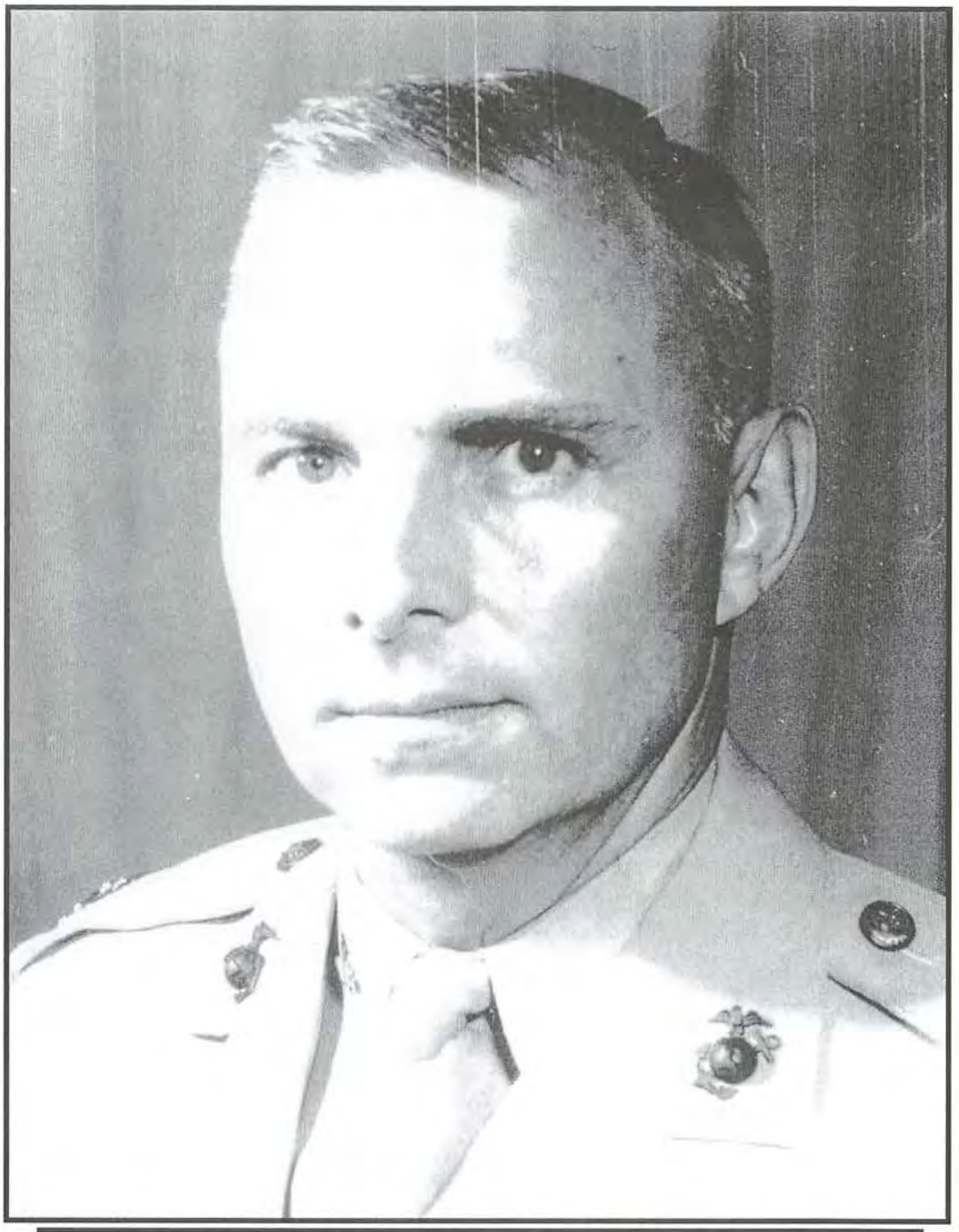

THE LION ROARS NO MORE





L-R Ray Stubbe, Col David E. Lownds, Earle Breeding, John Kaheny (Then President of the Khe Sanh Veterans) at the St. Louis, Mo reunion. Photo taken at Glenn Rappold's Khe Sanh Memorial Monument in the backyard of his home.



L-R Ernie Husted, Ken Pipes, Ray Stubbe, Col David E. Lownds, Earle Breeding, John Kaheny, Glenn Rappold, William Griffith

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to Colonel David E. Lownds (MCSN: 0-15530), United States Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism while serving as Commanding Officer of the Khe Sanh Combat Base in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam from August 1967 through March 1968. Upon assuming command of the vital combat base located in western Quang Tri Province and tasked with the responsibility of interdicting major North Vietnamese resupply routes and blocking any enemy invasion attempt from the west into the northern provinces of South Vietnam, Colonel Lownds immediately established combat outposts on Hills 881 South, 861, and 950, and launched extensive and highly effective patrol activities throughout his area of responsibility. Despite the hazardous, mountainous terrain, thick jungle foliage, and adverse weather conditions, Colonel Lownds' valiant combat leadership and indomitable command ability were the central instrument in achieving and maintaining the superb combat posture of the base. On 28 January 1968, when North Vietnamese divisions launched a coordinated attack on the Khe Sanh Combat Base with rockets, artillery, mortar, and machine-gun and small-arms fire, and with their main attack directed at Hill 861-A, Colonel Lownds' superb knowledge of and appreciation for the terrain and his aggressive utilization of all supporting arms minimized the effectiveness of the enemy attack and resulted in a large number of enemy casualties. During daily enemy rocket and artillery attacks, and on 23 February when the firing reached its peak with more than 1300 rounds impacting on the combat base, his superior tactical judgment, calm leadership, brave demeanor, and resolute endurance were an inspiration to all around him and were a prime factor in maintaining a high level of morale among his men. Giving no thought to his own safety, while exhibiting a compassionate concern for the welfare of his Marines, he gallantly and repeatedly exposed himself to hostile fire making daily visits to outlying units to observe tactical operations and to study conditions confronting his unit commanders. During the period 1 November 1967 to 31 March 1968, Colonel Lownds organized and directed Operation SCOTLAND, a highly effective search and destroy operation throughout the Khe Sanh tactical area of responsibility, which resulted in numerous enemy casualties, the capture of several enemy, and a large number of weapons confiscated. By his gallant leadership, distinguished personal bravery, and selfless devotion to duty throughout, Colonel Lownds upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

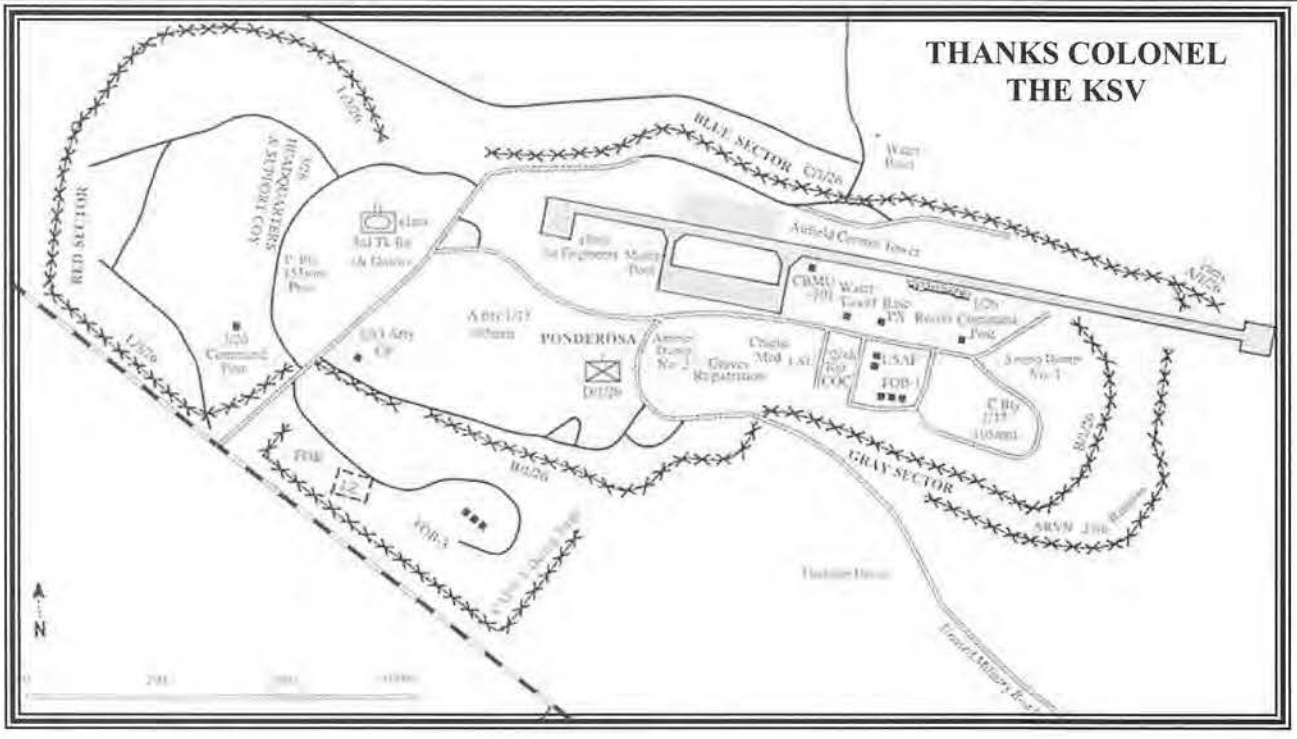

FLEET WEEK, SAN FRANCISCO

October 8, 2011
By Craig W. Tourte

I found myself this weekend with my good friend David Lind (H&S 2/4, battle of Dai Do, April 30 - May 3, 1968) in San Francisco attending Fleet Week. Eight or so ships led by the aircraft carrier Carl Vinson from the United States Navy, a few from the Canadian Navy and the United States Coast Guard came through the fog of the Golden Gate Bridge and anchored in the bay and along the docks. You'll remember the Carl Vinson as the ship which conducted the burial at sea of Osama Bin Laden's body on April 2, 2011. The Blue Angles F/A 18 Hornet aerobatic demonstration awed the many thousands. The United State Marine Corps 1st Expeditionary Force from Camp Pendleton was with the fleet. The Marine Band and Marine Corps exhibits along Pier 39 were big hits with the crowd, many having their photograph taken next to the Hummer painted in Marine Corps scarlet.







David and I were properly attired, I wearing my Khe Sanh USMC ball cap and David with his "Magnificent Bastards" 2 Battalion, 4th Marine ball cap. Both of us wore black shirts with the Marine Corps Eagle, Globe and Anchor.



Our first stop was the "Buena Vista" restaurant and bar located at 2765 Hyde Street near the Hyde Street Pier. There were few in the establishment that time of the morning as we sat alone at the bar. We became engaged in a conversation with Doug the manager who "Thanked us for our service." When we decided to get breakfast, Doug said the breakfast was on the house. I took off a "Home is where you dig it" pin from my hat and pinned in on Doug's shirt. His eyes lit up and he thanked us again. After we finished we decided to have an Irish coffee before we hit the road and Doug told us that was also on the house. We left grateful for his acknowledgment of all veterans.

We next found ourselves at the Marine Memorial Club & Hotel at 609 Sutter Street. Edda Rodriguez the Club manager was filling in for the usual staff that time of the morning. After an engaging dialogue with our new friend Edda she told us that our libations were on the Club and she "Thanked us for our service."

We returned to the Hyde Street Pier to the area of the Historic Ships where the C.A Thayer, Eureka, Hercules, Alma Balcluta and the Epppleton Hall are docked for exhibit. We entered the Visitors Center/ Ticket Boot to pay for our entry, there was a Park Ranger at the counter taking the entry fee, she noted our hats and shirts and said, "Thank you for your service" before handing us a couple of free passes and telling us have a good time.



We next wandered over to Pier 39 where the Navy and Marine Corps had set up various tents and exhibits. About a dozen or so members from the Marine Crops Band were playing some up beat tones and the crowd was really enjoying the sounds when a man who was standing in front of me turned around and noticed my Khe Sanh ball cap. He said that he was also a Khe Sanh Veterans. He didn't have a Khe Sanh ball cap but a division cap. He said that he had been an 0311 with 3/26 on 881. He was not aware of the association. I gave him a card with my name and email and wrote the name of the two web sites (Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page & Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc) and told him to email me his name and address and that I would send him a magazine and membership form. He was pretty darn excited and we spent about twenty minutes talking about our experiences.

We walked over to the Marine Corps exhibit drawn by the loud (rap type) music where hundreds stood around talking to the Marines and trying chin-ups on the bar they had set up to draw in the young people. We stood back about ten yards on a little rise in front of the exhibit. I was suddenly aware of someone standing next to me and turned to see a Marine Gunnery Sergeant. I noted his name tag to read "Garcia." Gunny Garcia "Thanked us for our service" and handed both of us a printed picture - in gold - of the flag rising at Mount Suribachi.

The rest of the day went on like that with many "Thank you for your service." I was stunned having never experienced anything like that before and especially considering I was in San Francisco. All in all is was a wonderful experience I'll not soon forget. When I arrived home at the train station and just before walking to my car I was approached by a young man carrying a backpack. He said that he had notice me on the train and just wanted to say "Thank you for your service." What a day…

IF WE HAD JUST ONE MORE DAY

By Craig W. Tourte

-THEN-

Every time I come to this web site I spend just a few seconds viewing the photograph of our founder Ray Stubbe, ministering to Marines at Khe Sanh. Although I didn't personally have any contact with a minister during my ten or so months at Khe Sanh, there are many who did and all that I have spoken with had infinite praise for those who provided that comfort and guidance. Many have spoken about these fine men, their selfless heroics and sometime tragic and unfortunate loss. It must have been quite a responsibility trying to explain pain, loss, deprivation and suffering - and faith to young men in those circumstances, then again; perhaps just the comfort of devotion was enough.

To Whom Do I Pray

In boot camp (First Battalion, Platoon 1145, M.C.R.D. San Diego 1966) we had a kid by the name of Talbert R. Sakamoto. We all were required to attend Sunday religious services. As we stood in formation, Platoon Commander Staff Sergeant Golubski ordered, "All the Catholics over here, all

the Protestants over there and the Mormons stand there," leaving Recruit Sakamoto standing by himself. "What religion are you?" Staff Sergeant Golubski asks Sakamoto, "Buddhist" was his response. Staff Sergeant Golubski doesn't miss a beat and immediately instructs Sakamoto to attend religious services with the Protestants. You see, the Drill Instructors recognized that it didn't matter whose God the Marine(s) served, whom he prayed too, how he prayed or what name he called his God or religion. What was important was that he had the opportunity to pray - or not - to whomever he wanted and it didn't really matter who was around or where he was. Let me try to make this just a little simpler. One's religion doesn't make one special or better or worse than anyone else, it's the opportunity to serve whom you please, that is what's special, one of our inalienable rights and just one of the many principles Marines have fought and died for these many years.

-NOW-

I first posted the above in April 2010 and happened to come across it again. This is a most difficult time for us who are getting along in years. So many have been ill and left us too soon. Once strong and always brave men who served so gallantly. I said a little prayer at Khe Sanh and it went something like, **"Please let me live just one more day**..." I'm going to a funeral on Monday, the wife of a close friend of mine who I have known for over forty years passed on last week. She was ill for just a few months when her condition became such that she left us. We never know when it is our time and I was thinking if we all had "just one more day." One more day to say the things we had wanted to say, one more day of life, I wish she had just one more day so that I could have hugged her and said goodbye but I waited to long and gave her a little wave at the door, thinking that she was going to be alright. Perhaps just one more day to say, I'm sorry or I love you. Just one more day is all we need, just one more day to make things right. Perhaps just one more day to ask for forgiveness and to tell others we forgive them. But most of us leave without having just one more day to do or say those things that should to be said. If we all only had, just one more day to make things right.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS 3000 MARINE CORPS
PENTAGON WASHINGTON, DC 20350-3000

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

SEP 12 2011

Secretary Panetta, as we explore ways across the Department to adjust to a new period of considerable fiscal austerity, there emerges a clear imperative that our Nation retain a credible means of mitigating risk while we draw down the capabilities and capacities of our forces.

Our Nation faces an uncertain future; we cannot predict where and when events may occur that might call us to respond to protect our citizens and our interests. There have always been times when events have compelled the United States to become involved, even when such involvement wasn't desired; there is little doubt that we will have do this again in the future. Complicating matters is the fact that since the I 990s, our nation has significantly reduced the number and size of our bases and stations around the world.

We are a maritime nation. Like so much of the world, we rely on the maritime commons for the exchange of commerce and ideas. Many depend on us to maintain freedom of movement on those commons; we continue to take that responsibility seriously. Your naval forces are the solution set to fulfilling our global maritime responsibilities.

Naval forces are not reliant on host nation support or permission; in the conduct of operations, they step lightly on our allies and host countries. With the increasing concentration of the world's population close to a coastline, the ability to operate simultaneously on the sea, ashore, and in the air, and to move seamlessly between these three domains represents the unique value of amphibious forces. Operating as a team, amphibious forces provide **operational reach and agility,** they *"buy time*" and decision space for our national leaders in time of crisis. They bolster diplomatic initiatives by means of their credible forward presence. Amphibious

forces also provide the Nation with assured access for the joint force in a major contingency operation. Modem amphibious operations, like the TF-58 assault that seized Kandahar airport 450 miles inland in 2001 shortly after the 9/11 attacks, seek to avoid enemy strengths by exploiting gaps and weaknesses.

When the Nation pays the 'sticker price' for its Marines, it buys the ability to remain forward deployed and forward engaged to assure our partners, reinforce alliances, and build partner capacity. For 7.8% of the total 000 budget, our Nation gains the ability to respond to unexpected crises, from humanitarian disaster relief efforts, to non-combatant evacuation operations, to conduct counter-piracy operations, raids or strikes. That same force can quickly be reinforced to assure access anywhere in the world in the event of a major contingency; it can be dialed up or down like a rheostat to be relevant across the range of military operations. No other force possesses the flexibility to provide these capabilities and yet sustain itself Logistically for significant periods 0.1 time, at a time and place of its choosing.

"Expeditionary" is not a bumper sticker to us, or a concept, it is a "state of conditioning" that Marines work hard to maintain. Given its mission to be the expeditionary force in readiness, a tiered readiness concept is not compatible with the Marine Corps' missions because its non-deployed units are often called upon to respond to unanticipated and varied crises on a moment's notice.

The Marine Corps fills a unique lane in the capability range of America's armed forces. A *MiddLeweight* Force, we are lighter than the Army, and heavier than SOF. The Corps is not a second land army. The Anny is purpose-built for land campaigns and carries a heavier punch when it arrives, whereas the Marine Corps is an expeditionary force focused on coming from the sea with integrated aviation and logistics capabilities. The Marine Corps maintains the ability to contribute to land campaigns by leveraging or rapidly aggregating its capabilities and capacities. Similarly, Marine Corps and SOF roles are complementary, rather than redundant. Special Operation Forces contribute to the counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism efforts of the Combatant Commanders in numerous and specialized ways, but they are not a substitute for conventional forces with a broader range of capability and sustainability.

The Marine Corps was specifically directed by the 82nd Congress as the force intended to be "the most ready when the Nation is least ready." This expectation exists because of the costly lessons our nation learned during the Korean War when a lack of preparedness in the beginning stages of the conflict very nearly resulted in defeat. Because our Nation Cannot afford to hold the entire joint force at such a high state of readiness, it has chosen to keep the Marines ready, and has often used them to plug the gaps during international crises, to respond when no other options were available.

Anecdotally, the American people believe that when a crisis emerges - Marines will be present and will "invariably turn in a performance that is dramatically and decisively successful - not most of the time, but always." They possess a heart-felt belief that the Marine Corps is good for the young men and women of our country. In their view, the Marines are extraordinarily adept at converting "unoriented youths into proud, self-reliant stable citizens - citizens into whose hands the nation's affairs may be safely entrusted." An investment in the Marine Corps continues to be an investment in the character of the young people of our country.

Finally, in an increasingly dangerous and uncertain world, we must continue to provide the protection our Nation needs and to preserve our ability to do what we must as the world's only credible remaining super power. As we face inevitable difficult resource decisions, I believe that we must also consider how we can best mitigate the inherent risk of a reduced defense capacity ... like an affordable insurance policy, Marine Corps and the Navy's amphibious forces, represent a very efficient and effective hedge against the Nation's most likely risks

JAMES F. AMOS
COMMANDANT USMC



IN THIS RED EARTH, BLOODLUST FOR SURVIVAL

A GREEN BERET MEDIC AT KHE SANH "DRUGS AND DEATH"

By Denis Chericone U.S. Army Special Forces Medic 1967-1968

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM BAY STATE VIETNAM VETERAN

It took at least three weeks of raging siege to explode Dada into the relative solace of drugs. He offers no excuses about his drug usage. In fact, he says without the presence of some hard-core drugs at Khe Sanh, he would have probably lost his mind and messed up more than a few wounded guys because the situations were always so nerve-wracking that if he hadn't been under the influence of something, he would have screwed up the sensitive emergency procedures that were necessary to grab back his comrades from the arms of death.

He never even knew he was getting hooked on drugs when he was taking them because the siege had ways of diverting attention from certain evolutions within oneself. I can imagine: A man is laying in the middle of an open and exposed area wounded with shells bursting all around him. He cannot, cannot move because of his wounds and he lays there, naked to the searing metal heating the air and Dada was one of the few men who had to, just had to go out and drag the man to safety. Yeah, safety, a hole in the ground. Dada told it so clearly, as if it was something that had happened to him just moments before and even I knew then that this was a something he was never going to forget.

"We spent the first five days under the shells filling sandbags and learning basics, like knowing when to dive for cover. Yeah, basics, sandbags, we must've filled a million of 'em. We were all so tired, so very, very tired, but we had to get the base ready for the attack we knew was going to come after they stopped shelling us. We had to fill sandbags, dig deep slit trenches, re-enforce the flimsy structures we'd already put up and then, get this, because it was after some guys got hurt while they were taking a dump, we had to bury our shithouse underground. An underground shithouse, hell, even then, so early on, I learned to get in, drop my pants, eliminate and get out in all of about twelve seconds.

Talk about some of the hemorrhoids I saw during the siege. Everyone became an expert quick shitter. I was the one who had to go in take out and pull the wounded guys out. The sight was enough for all us. No one lingered after that, no more daydreaming while eliminating ... Believe me, no one " Dada laughed cynically, "Talk about feeling vulnerable yeah, I love it when people tell me they're feeling vulnerable now days. Just love it...It took us five days around the clock, working to get things in minimal shape for the attack. It seemed the shelling grew more severe every hour, but we worked, until we were ready to drop and I stayed awake for those five days, wide awake, son, wide eyed, wide awake.

We were given the best speed the army had in its drug arsenal then to get the job done. Of course no one said anything about taking the speed because everyone knew we simply had to because we were going to die if we didn't get our area ready for the North Vietnamese and after five days and nights of working, digging, sweating, cringing, cowering, carrying, throwing and lifting, I fell asleep on the nude ground, fell asleep in the middle of one of the worst rocket barrages of the siege and you know, I was so tired, I just didn't care if I died or not. They launched about two hundred of their big one-two-two rockets at us that night and I just didn't give a shit.

I found a very comfortable casualty bag, crawled inside, put my helmet under my head and fell asleep for fourteen hours, from 8 p.m. to 10 a.m. and none of my friends bothered me. When the rockets began coming in they yelled at me to come into the trench with them, but I didn't care, just didn't. I waved at them and said, 'Tomorrow, guys.' I remember them screaming at me that I was going to die, but I just curled up within the sheep-skin of that bag and drifted into my first good night's sleep in quite awhile. They finally got pissed off at me and let me alone and the next morning I could hear them whispering to one another, 'You think he's still alive? Think he got hit?' and when I popped up out of the bag and yelled, 'F_ THE GOOKS CAUSE THEY MISSED !!!!!!' All my buddies laughed and

cheered. I laughed, too, and it was one of the last times I laughed at Khe Sanh.

! liked the speed immediately. I'd never taken it before and this particular kind, was wonderful because they'd added an agent to it that prevented you from becoming depressed once it wore off. Christ Almighty, it was powerful, potent stuff. There were times . . . there were times when 1 was so high on the stuff that I would try to get myself killed. 1 would scream into the face of certain death. One time one of our choppers was shot down inserting a team into Laos and they'd called us for an immediate rescue. I'd just dropped about three of those pills and was feeling real good, real good, so 1 volunteered to go over the line with the rescue team to pull them out and when we hit the crash

I sat in the ,door of the chopper screaming down at the little People who were all shooting at us, 'YOU CAN'T KILL ME! YOU CAN'T Kill ME!' Dada paused a moment, musing, a slow smile growing on his face. "I dunno .. , dunno why I wasn't dropped in my tracks right then. I should've been. I was the perfect target, perfect and I presented myself like that more than once to the Little People.

When I wasn't on some kind of dope, I didn't feel like that, that's for sure. Yeah, the army had a dope for every occasion and I found out about all of' em."

Dada found out about them all right. He found out about them the hard way, stone-cold hard, the hard of necessity, desperation, the dead-end of perspective, the wasteland of no other choices. The amphetamines just didn't do it for him, though, at least not with death. They could handle the boredom, the dangers, the gnawing unknowns even, you know, the moments when the combatant has time to lay back and wonder what dark, black shrouded desolation the sun is going to drag into his smoking and bitter world in what Dada told me should have been spelled "mourning" instead of the one that means a new day.

"Yeah, new day ... I used to look at the prospect of another day of bombs in the same way as if my neighborhood back home had been infested by the plague and it was only a matter of some time, a few moments, yeah, ha-ha, a few moments before it got to my house and started painting the exploding boils on my family ... family and those guys were certainly my family ... and I felt closer to them than I ever did to my own family and for awhile, I'd feel guilty about that, but after a few thousand more pregnant bombs aborting their explosions, I didn't give a shit anymore, it just didn't matter."

Dada's ideas, views, beliefs on the war, his war, from the war, his war, were not always similar to the beliefs of people who think they know something about war. When he talked about the other guys at Khe Sanh being his family, he didn't mean anything else but family, blood family. Their blood ran outside of their bodies and I guess it makes a stronger bond that way. They were his brothers, uncles and in a few cases, his father. He never told me it directly, but I understood, even without his saying anything about it, that he loved those men he lived with during the siege. Life becomes, among other things, compressed in war. There's not much time to edge around friendships just to make sure the potential friend is not going to screw you over. You either make friends or you don't and Dada said there weren't too many guys who didn't make friends.

"I needed friends. Had to have friends, had to. There was one of this 'not make friends' shit because they might get killed. At least friends gave you the illusion that you could maybe survive a little longer or come out of a raw spot with ' your balls still hanging on ... It was so intense having friends, intense . . . it was compressed like everything else, the love of it, I mean . . .' yeah, love . . . I know it sounds strange, but that was it . . . that was all of it . . . I mean . . . what is it that makes a man run out into the middle of exploding metal, white-hot bits of killer steel, hunting for fresh, flesh, yeah, hunting ... it was alive ... what makes someone do that, run out into stalking death to pull a friend to safety? WHAT? WHAT? ... Tell me, it's anything else but love, anything and I'll tell you don't know what you're talking about, at all ... We would do anything for each other, anything."

Dada grew hot, passionate whenever he would tell me of the sacrifices the men would make for each other. His face glowed in a way I can only compare to the faces of old women praying alone in a cool, quiet and softly shadowed church on an autumn afternoon. If this was a belief or an expression of faith, Dada believed it deeply and possessed as

much faith as those women and the people who taught them the fundamentals of faith.

"But friends couldn't do all of it, all that it took to put up with the intrusions, sacrifices, unending sacrifices and insanities that come with combat, war or whatever else you call it when large groups of people are at each others' throats ... Yeah, my buddies could wrap an arm around me or hold me when the tears were sweeping my legs out from underneath me. They could bring me back when I caught the speed of light and traveled a little too far, a little too fast and suddenly found myself out in a place that nobody knew existed and if they did, they sure as shit didn't want to go there ... " Dada's voice grew softer, "Sometimes when I looked at a scene of such extreme horror that it hit me in the chest like a heart attack and then all of a sudden I was looking at pieces of precision, reality, there was a crack in the air, many cracks and it was what was left of my world, the world I knew, had known and there was something behind the fragments of the horror that were splayed before my eyes and death became fractured, fractured like the bodies themselves . . . what lay before my sight was so entirely harsh and merciless not even nature itself was able to portray it in its own reality ... I dunno, I dunno, son, I'm not sure I can describe this as it happened or appeared . I do know that when shit like this occurred I usually wound up desperately, and I mean desperately, seeking out some strong, Jackass narcotics, anything really that would take that scene away or maybe, hopefully, lessen its impact on my heart, soul and mind The first time I needed some medication . . . the first time I the first time ... " Dada went quiet for a moment. His eyes fell or drifted into the stream of years between then and now and finally came to rest on the moment he first needed the drug.

"I drank half a pint of paregoric straight down and I was breathing so hard that I gagged on my own breath, not the drug, but my own breath people think being a junkie is fun or easy or something anything but what it really is .. rough, demanding and very, very unpredictable work ... and most of them think you're just being irresponsible because you're maintaining a habit or wanting to get high; but I never did it to get high, never. I just did it to get to that place where I couldn't see or feel those scenes anymore. Yeah, it'd be nice, so nice if they could walk up to you and go, 'Here's your war pills. Take three a day and one before bedtime and you'll never ever even believe you were in a war after a few weeks. You'll laugh when you hear the word, 'WAR'.' Ha-ha. Ah, f_ what they think ... "

Sometimes Dada would really get going and sometimes he was glorious ... prolific, poetic, proud but not arrogant and most importantly, at least for me, patient. There was so much about the military, especially the war part, that was most impermeable to my understanding. It was another world to me, a world my father had lived in for three years, but one



Special Forces Medic, Denis Chericone worked, and is still working on making this baby well. She had a very bad case of dysentery mimicking cholera. She is getting better, as you can see through tender care and a good diet, it's taking effect.

that was confusing because the things Dada would tell me about the military and yes, especially war, contrasted so dramatically to what my world fed me

about warfare. .

It wasn't quite how popular culture portrayed it, not even close. Bullets and bombs don't play favorites and they don't give a shit how good looking you are or how big your muscles may bulge. Oh, how Dada would laugh when those celluloid soldiers took out the bad guys. Laugh, laugh, laugh. "Yeah, look, John Wayne parting the machine gun slugs like Moses walking through the Red Sea. Ha-ha, ha, ha, ha ... " I often wondered what I myself would have done in Dada's place.

Who would have told him the truth about war and it made me realize that he never stood much of a chance in avoiding it because he never had many choices. He just didn't know there were any choices because there was never anybody in his life to give him any. Everybody was still beguiled by the whipping we gave the Germans and Nipponese. They were bad guys and America helped beat 'em. When Dada was a young kid, people were still proud that they did those nasty Nazis and Nips in and good, too. War accomplished good things in those days, not, at best, moral confusions in the troops and the confusions, while they didn't necessarily make the men hesitate to pull the trigger, get the job done or do whatever it took to survive, did manage to surface once they made it back to the golden shores. And that's what Dada had to live with once he began to understand that things weren't exactly like he dreamed they'd be when he returned home. Horne, it had been a hope, a dream, a desire for so long while he was in the war that once he reached it, he was confused and lost. It wasn't the same place he had longed for. Something, someone had changed, drastically, deeply and it was him.

He thought he would be able to leave the drugs behind in the war once he'd made it; but he was wrong, so very, very wrong. After the rush of happiness began to wear off and he discovered that home was just as confusing and almost as deadly as the combat zone, he reached for the one thing which had provided for him in times of extreme distress while under the gun: drugs.

A CRYING SOLDIER'S PRAYER
1966 VIETNAM
CPL Ronald Gulbronson
A/CO 1/26

By Bette Tranum-Mallow
Tribune Correspondent

"The monsoons had stopped. It was so hot, so very hot, and the war was raging all around us. "June 27, 1967, I had been there for eight months. I was 22 years old when I arrived and celebrated my 23rd birthday on Hill 881 in Vietnam, arriving in Khe Sanh, as a replacement troop with the 26th Marines Regiment A Company 2nd Platoon, 1st Squad, the previous October 1966.



"Eight months of agonizing fighting and watching my buddies and friends blown up with mortar attacks. A horrifying time of life or death in a horrifying place called Vietnam."These words were from the Marine who spent eight long months fighting for his country while knowing each day or minute could be his last - **Marine Cpl. Ronald Gulbronson of Knobley Road, Keyser**."I depended on God, my buddies and letters from my girl friend,

who later became my wife, Peggy, to get me through," he said.

The day had started much like most of the other days - fighting in and around a foxhole and listening to the sounds of war all around and hearing the cry of the wounded everywhere."I jumped into a large foxhole as a mortar round started coming to my right in a barrage of three. Some of my buddies became causalities. My lieutenant came towards me, he said, 'Get your men together, we're moving out as soon as this barrage is over.' As squad leader, it was my job to get them moving. "As we were talking, another round landed directly in front of us, about 100 meters away. Knowing that the North Vietnamese Army was shooting in rounds of three, I told my lieutenant to 'jump in! jump in!,' The third round landed in my foxhole, my lieutenant was dead and I was severely wounded. My legs felt numb, but I got to my feet, dazed.

One of the guys was screaming that his hand was gone. Another buddy, Rodriguez, was screaming with head injuries and reaching for me. Both of my knees had been hit and I couldn't hold him, so we fell back into the foxhole. He was dead."The NVA fired another round directly into our foxhole. I was hit in the stomach, left side of the chest, and the upper part of my arm and shoulder, and both knees. I later found out my lung had been perforated, and the sac around my heart was torn. All around me was the cry, 'Oh my God, Help Me.' It seemed to be coming from everywhere," Gulbronson said. "My friend and good buddy Neil Shaffer was asking 'Gil are you alright?' "'I can't move,' I answered. 'Move Rodriguez off of me.' We knew he was dead, I had felt the life leave his body.. There were other dead bodies on top of Rodriguez and he had to move them also. I mustered all the strength I could and slid out from under them.

"Seven men had died around me and I was covered in their blood and there was a pool of blood forming in the foxhole. Someone was yelling for him to come on. I managed to crawl out. I pulled myself up on my captain's knee, I could feel my blood pressure dropping and I felt that I was going to die. I told him to tell my mother that I had been attending services and praying while I was there. He promised, 'I will,' and I knew that if he survived he would.

"I managed to crawl away and I pulled my New Testament out of my pocket. Pain was setting in and it was agonizing. I was preparing to die. I was screaming, 'God Help me!' and I will never forget that feeling.

"All of a sudden, I had the sensation of floating about chest high, the pain and bleeding actually stopped, and then nothing. Someone found me and placed me on a mule (like a four wheeler with a bed on the back). As we were headed for a first aid station, we were fired on, the driver hit what seemed to be a log and I went flying through the air, and was dragged along by one foot. I yelled and he stopped and put me back on and I lost consciousness again. "I regained consciousness among a pile of dead Marines, they had placed me there for pickup, thinking I was dead. I raised up on an elbow and saw a light coming towards me. A Marine saw me and said, 'We have to get him to an aid station. I lost consciousness again and woke up when we went through the door of the aid station.

"'Are there any doctors here?' I asked. I don't think there were, I think it was just a lot of brave men bandaging the most severely wounded and tagging them. I saw my chaplain, David Menske, and yelled for him. After praying with me he said, 'There's only one chopper coming for the wounded, and we have to get you tagged and out on the airstrip.'



"I think it was only by the Grace of God that I was lucid enough to recognize the chaplain. The doctors told me later if he had not tagged me and got me on that chopper, I would surely have died. I blacked out again, only to wake up and see the bottom of a

large chopper descending. What brave men they were, the medics! While they were loading up, I heard one medic say 'There is only room for one more, the Marine beside me was not moving, so I raised my hand. They stepped over him and picked me up. The last thing I remember was being loaded into an ambulance truck.

"I came to sometime between the chopper ride from Khe Sanh and the Phu Bai Hospital. I had an IV connected to my arm. Lying there in the emergency room on a cot, a priest came over to me, he had his Bible open and was giving me last rites in Latin. The doctor was working on another Marine when my knee started pumping out blood. It was squirting across the floor with every beat of my heart. I hollered and they came over and put pressure on it. The doctor also rolled me up on my side because I was short of breath. He wanted to insert a tube in my left lung. He couldn't get the tube between the ribs because he cut back too far, so he cut again.

"I remember him saying, 'Major surgery with no light. Get him to Danang for abdominal surgery.' "Every thing went dark again. When I came to again, I was still clinging to my little Testament. I was removed from the plane to another chopper. "Amazing enough, God had kept me alive. I don't remember the ride to the Danang Hospital, but when I regained consciousness, I was lying on a marble slab by myself. Every once in a while a Navy corpsman would look around the corner. I guess to see if I was still alive. I was still covered with Rodriguez's blood. I said to myself, the next time I see one of them I'll holler and I did. I said, ' I'm in a lot of pain, I need help.' A short time went by and then two corpsmen came and rolled me over onto a cot with wheels and took me into Xray. I will never forget the pain as they rolled me from one side to the other. I could feel the steel shrapnel cutting the inside of my body.

"I lost consciousness again only to wake up looking at a man's face. I will always remember his face and the comfort his presence gave me. In a comforting voice, he said ' Everything will be all right buddy' I was in the operating room and don't remember anything until I woke up in the Intensive Care Unit. After 10 to 12 days in the ICU, during which time General Cushing presented me with the Purple Heart, I was sent to Bethesda Naval Hospital. I was back on U.S. soil. I spent almost 9 months at Bethesda. I had to have one more surgery for skin grafts and to recover from my wounds. Then I was discharged to go home. I received a medical retirement from the Marine Corps with General Cushing signing my retirement certificate.

"It has been over four decades since the attack at Khe Sanh, and there is never a day that goes by that I don't think about it. And I think about what God and the medics did for me that day. "About two years ago I started dreaming about what happened and how God was there for me. Almost every night I would wake about 2:30 with the thoughts of what I was dreaming, I feel God was telling me it was time to tell my story. I have done a lot of praying, crying and shaking, it has been really hard to recount those terrible days, but after telling and talking about it and giving my testimony for God, the dreams have stopped and I am at peace. My story is told.

"Thirty-eight years later in 2005 I got to meet my chaplain again. I had read an ad for a reunion of Khe Sanh, I called and talked to the present chaplain and he gave me Meschke's phone number at his home in Colorado. To my surprise he was going to be in Altoona, Pa., for a meeting and we decided to meet for lunch. He spoke at my church, Mt Zion, later that year. I had the privilege of introducing him to my family, friends and church family. I said he was my hero, and he responded 'I'm no hero, all I did was console you and pray for you'. "That was what I needed and God did the rest. "My friend, Dalton Rogers, wrote my story as I gave it to him into a song titled 'A Crying Soldier's Prayer,' and the song is sung by Ed Elza, a local musician, with music put to the words by Dick Atkinson, who has a recording studio in Eckhart, Md. "I will always remember the screaming, 'Oh, my God, help me!' and how God smiled on me, allowing me to live. The CD is finished, my story has been told.

"One last thought, my little Testament that was such a comfort; I kept with me always, until it and my suitcase were stole from me in a hotel where I was with my son Charles, who is now a lawyer in Texas. I hope the thief gets the same comfort from it as I did in Vietnam.

"The proceeds from the CD will be donated to a church. I dedicate this story and CD to all my broth-

ers and sisters who served in Vietnam. A special thanks to my mother, Mary, my second mother, Marg, and to my brother, Dr. Tom and to my sisters Nan and Denise, to my wife, Peggy, who had been steadfast throughout the whole ordeal and to my children, Rhonda, Charles and Brian, for all their support and prayers.

"I love you all. To My God…Thank you forever!"

A BIRTHDAY TRADITION

By Mike Bradbury
K CO 3/26

I had left for the cemetery to participate in the lying of the wreaths for Veterans Day. That night we gathered for a time-honored tradition that goes back a lot further than that.

On the 236th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps, Marines everywhere gathered someplace to celebrate the birthday. If there are only 2 or 3 living in the smallest of towns, they'll get together at the local coffee shop on the 10th.

There was a time here in Mountain Home when there were only 6 of us who we knew of, and we'd meet at the old Scrubby's Restaurant



This particular gathering was in 1996. The "bearded guy" on the end is me.....then Dave Labar, Denny Densley, Brian Krazcnavolggi , Chuck Abrahamson and our then Marine Corps League Commandant, Brett Allies.



Over the next 15 years, those of us still in Mountain Home are Marine Corps League members, and include the wives and kids now at our annual birthday celebrations. We had it at A.J.'s that night.

After dinner and the announcements, we all stood and sang the Marine Corps Anthem. My old buddy Irv Levine was our Guest of Honor, and he & I provided the music





Irv, an old F-105 fighter pilot who had flown missions at Khe Sanh, sang Marine songs that he wrote. I sang the "Ballad of Ira Hayes and finished up with a patriotic instrumental medley. It was my

first time in public since the hand surgery---it felt good!. A good time was had by all, and then it was time to cut the cake.....and of course, it can't just be any old cake!.





By Corps tradition, the oldest Marine present, always gets the first piece of cake and hands it to the youngest Marine present. If you have a Guest of Honor, he gets the first piece, so fighter pilot Irv found himself right in the middle of things.

One of the guys , brought a flag his uncle took off a dead Japanese soldier on Iwo Jima, That was a real piece of history



There is no such thing as an "ex"....."Once a Marine, always a Marine".....and Marines will celebrate the birthday every November 10th until the earth no longer exist! his is not a put-down, just a fact.....but I'd bet that most servicemen from the other branches don't know the year their branch was founded, let alone the actual date.....without having to look it up. I doubt that anyone else but Marines get together every year to celebrate the birthday!

It's more than just a branch of the service.....it's a brotherhood, and one I've always been proud to be a part of.
Semper Fi

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

RAY E. TORRES USN
E CO 2/26 HILL 861A

STERLING – Tears flood Ray E. Torres' cheeks as he recalls a nightmare.A wounded survivor of the



Vietnam War's longest battle, the 64-year-old Sterling man appeared in "Vietnam in HD" a documentary airing on the History Channel in three 2-hour segments. Torres served in 1968, the bloodiest year of the Vietnam War, when 16,592 Americans died, according to the documentary produced by Lou Reda Productions. His story will surprise many in the community, Torres said. He almost never discusses the war, to avoid "uncontrollable outbursts of emotion."

"They probably never realized what I went

through," he said. "I know when I see people out in the street now, after they see the movie, that they're going to be coming up to me, and I am going to have a hard time." The documentary will focus on Torres' experience at Khe Sanh. He read that more bombs were dropped there than anywhere else in the history of aerial warfare.

he North Vietnamese Army violated a truce on Jan. 31, 1968, by attacking Khe Sanh and all of South Vietnam on Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, in an action known as the Tet Offensive. At Khe Sanh, the siege lasted 77 days. The 6,000 Marines fought against 20,000 to 40,000 enemy soldiers. "It was probably the biggest battle of all of Vietnam," Torres said. Torres, a 1965 graduate of Sterling High School, was a Navy corpsman with the Marines. Stationed in the dangerous trenches of Hill 861A, he knew the only way down, before the battle ended, would be with a wound or in a body bag.

One day, the North Vietnamese Army hit a platoon hard, and Torres, trained as a medic, rushed to the scene. He found four Marines wounded by grenades. As he checked the men, all wounded or dead, another grenade landed in a foxhole and exploded 2 or 3 feet from him. "In that couple seconds, your whole life flashes before you," he said. The blast lifted Torres off the ground and threw him. He suffered a concussion, multiple injuries to both legs and an arm, and two ruptured eardrums. When he shielded his face, a nail went through his hand. Shrapnel, dirt and rocks also blew into his eyes, impairing his vision. The corpsman, who always tried to rescue others, screamed for someone to save him. Through mortar, rifle and machine gun fire, and exploding grenades, another corpsman heard his cry. The Marine tried to drag Torres to the company aid station, but a large boulder stood in their way. The corpsman told Torres, who did not think he could walk, to hop out of the trench as soon as he yelled and started firing. "To this day, I don't know how I got over that rock," Torres said. "And I don't know if he got out alive or not. ... He saved my life." Marines cut off Torres' clothes to assess his injuries. As the fighting continued, tear gas blew into his wounds.

The Americans eventually overpowered the enemy there in hand-to-hand combat. The next morning, Torres was to be loaded onto a Medevac helicopter. It was crowded, so he was told to wait for the next one. Torres believes someone was watching out for him – the enemy fired at the chopper he almost boarded, and it crashed. "I always feel guilty about making it out; and the other ones ..." he trailed off.

Torres still has ringing in his ears caused by nerve damage, as well as some hearing loss. An irremovable piece of metal is lodged in his knee. And he struggles to sleep soundly. His wife, Caroline, 61, and his family are proud of him. "We feel very fortunate," she said. "Ray's been a very strong person, and a very good leader, and just a very good example through all these tough times for himself, physically and mentally." Torres, who was awarded the Purple Heart, recognizes that many others also were affected by the war. Even unwounded soldiers should be considered casualties, he said.

Overcome with emotion, Torres did not talk about Vietnam for 28 years. His family never knew the details until his son, Ray Jr., asked him to speak to his history class at Sauk Valley Community College in 1996. Honored, Torres agreed. His presentation included war stories before Khe Sanh. With permission, Tom Tegge, the professor, filmed Torres' presentation. Years later, he included footage in a documentary for the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Lou Reda Productions, a company that makes documentaries for the History Channel, saw the presentation and left Torres a message last November.

"I had to play it over and over to make sure it was not a joke," Torres said, according to his biography provided by the History Channel. The company asked him to appear in the documentary. Worried about his emotions, Torres hesitated, but eventually agreed in hopes of leaving a legacy for his children. His family includes Tanya (John) Craft, 37, and Thomas (Michelle) Torres, 31, both of Sterling, and Ray Jr. (engaged to Magen Steele), 35, of Montgomery; and five grandchildren. In March, Lou Reda Productions flew Torres and his wife to Pennsylvania for filming. They enjoyed a fancy hotel and limo, all paid for by the company. "I never in my wildest dreams had ever imagined that something like this could ever happen to me," Torres said, according to his biography. "It is truly humbling, and an honor, and something I will cherish for the rest of my life.

"Scott L. Reda, an executive producer for Lou Reda Productions, praised the Sterling veteran. Talking to Torres, Reda said, helped him realize all the stress and work involved with producing the documentary was worth while. Reda hopes viewers will respond."We want everyone in this country to hug a Vietnam vet," he said. The History Channel will fly Torres and his wife to D.C., on Veterans Day to attend the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Award Ceremony at the Capital Hilton Presidential Ballroom. The all-expenses-paid trips and recognition, however, will not relieve the heavy burden Torres carries. He will never forget the fallen Marines he served alongside. "We didn't need to lose all those lives there," he said, choking on his words. "...They were all so young. ... To this day, I can't get over that." About "Vietnam in HD" "Vietnam in HD" a 6 -hour documentary covering the war from 1961 to 1975, aired on the History Channel. Torres was featured on a segment in regards to the battle on Hill 861A on 05 Feb 1968, when the Hill was overrun by the NVA.

GOD BLESS ALL NURSES

By Lloyd R. GOWER
W/BTRY 1/13



Write Today To Honor The Nurses Who Served Us In Vietnam

In 2010 I attended an Historical camp in the State of Ohio, we referred to it as "The Eastern Primitive Rendezvous." Sitting on a wooden stool by a group camp fire, American and Canadian campers were discussing the current conflicts in Iraq & Afghanistan, and the plight of the many "Wounded Warriors."

When it was my time to speak I informed the group that I served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War and was severely burned at the Khe Sanh Combat Base in North Vietnam. The protective concertina wire we had erected around our perimeter had become overgrown with elephant grass.

Utilizing JP4 & gasoline , during the afternoon heat we had just spread both fuel on the overgrowth, when someone prematurely touched of the fuel before we could all get clear. I became enveloped in a fireball and was burned over my whole body including my Hair, face. Ears, and upper body. Fortunately a corpsman was right there treating my burns and administrating Morphine.

When I awoke, I was on a stretcher in a helicopter being medivaced. I was then transferred to a C-130 and flown to the Air Force Hospital in Cam Rahn Bay. Infection was already setting in, and my skin began to split apart, getting worse by the minute, I fell in and out of consciousness.

A nurse pulled a mattress across the ward floor and placed it between me and another wounded Marine. She continually treated her patients, draining wounds, keeping liquids on my burns, changing bandages, and anything else she could do to make us as comfortable as possible.

At lunch time she brought in food and fed it spoonful by spoonful to myself and another Marine, occasionally taking a spoonful herself, making it a picnic like atmosphere. She worked and cared for her patients 24 hours a day. She constantly reassured her patients that they would recover and never let them give up hope.

After three weeks at the Air Force Hospital I was flown to the 6th Army convalescent Center to complete my recovery. When my wounds finally healed I returned to Whiskey Battery 1/13 at Khe Sanh. I never did get the name of that wonderful nurse, or even get to thank her. But from that day on I held all nurses in the highest regard.

At Khe Sanh things became worse, with the constant enemy barrages. Construction began on a Medical Bunker, and helicopters with medical

markings flew in and out of the base when they could. During one of their runs a Medical Helicopter was shot down near the bunker and numerous Medical Personnel and Marines were wounded. I never did learn how many were actually KIA.

Ned Thompson who was also at the Rendezvous, informed the group that his wife was a nurse in Vietnam on a Medical Helicopter and recalled that incident. She had terrible memories of her Vietnam experiences, and even though he tried to help her, one day she just walked away and disappeared. Just another casualty of the Vietnam War.

I offer this poetry from an unknown nurse, also a victim of the War in South East Asia.

Lloyd R. Gower
Corporal USMC
W/Btry 1/13 -3/26
Khe Sanh

POETRY

A Nurses Tribute:
TAKE MY HAND

I gaze, alone, at my reflection in the black granite wall, The memories of hell, Vietnam, are so very easy to recall. The smells, the wet, the whirring of a Huey's noisy blades, Sweep over me and remind me of a debt that's still unpaid. For it was in that damp, dark land my soul did find its heart,
And my childhood dreams of happy innocence forever did depart. For was there, dying soldiers taught what it really means to give, And through their death I learned what it really means to live.

My journey and my mission in that dark and death-filled land, Was to remain with dying soldiers and to offer them my hand. I never heard their laughter, and I never knew their joy,

I only shared the part of them that war was trying to destroy. But though their bodies were broken, so many beyond all hope The valor of each soldier was courageous above all scope. Their pained and anguished faces, I will forever preserve. With such valor and greatness I, a very young girl served.

And when I heard their prayer, "Please God, let me remain", I promised each and everyone they would not die in vain.

It seemed so simple that first time, after all, just a single name. The promise easy, until the list was proportional to its' shame. My sight now from tears has blurred, my memory has faded. God forgive me, I can't recall one name of a soldier that I aided. So I've come to this special place to make my peace at last.

To say hello, to cry goodbye, to say I'm sorry for the past.

In the quiet early morning from the Wall, a voice did speak. He said "I'm that first soldier whose name you've come to seek. You'll find me on this panel built to honor all who died,

Just place your hand upon the wall and I will be your guide". The soldier had the answers that I had sought so long He told me I had forgiveness, he told me all blame was gone. For it was that first dying soldier who taught me how to live And through his death I learned what it really means to give.

DEAR SOLDIER:
Gentlehawk Talks to Them

My heart remembers you so clearly, like it was yesterday. Your final hours confused me so, I almost lost my way.

I've tried to remember your names but your faces have grown dim. If only I could just recall if you were Vince or Bill or Jim.

I remember your frightened journey from that death filled land

I walked that road beside you and you took my outstretched hand. I now see your face reflected here, reaching out in love to me

You know I would have traded places but it wasn't meant to be.

['m saddened by all the memories, yet I will never let them go, Because soldier, I too, left a piece of me in that war so long ~go. You asked if I'd remem-

ber you, and I promised that I would

I told the world you would have stayed if only that you could.

I ask for your forgiveness, and for you to know how hard I tried. You are in my dreams, my sleepless nights and always when I cry. The memory of your screams come to me even in quiet thought, Screams still, so loud within my soul, I wonder what they bought.

How can I who cared so much forget a name and face so clear,

Of one who shared their soul with me in a long past sad, sad year? So, from the prison of my mind I have come to unlock the door. To talk to you my soldier so I can strive to grieve no more.

Your greatness is forever reflected in the love within my heart Your courage my guide and map from which I will not depart. And when my earthly war is over and life's battle is won at last

I, in death, will call to you and we will travel on the path of past.

I speak as one who went to Vietnam, we share a common pain, We left so many brothers and sisters there and never felt a gain. We have fought the angry demons and tried not to feel their shame We try so to forget those years but we will never be the same.

Our struggle with our dreams and memories never fade with time, We still hear those voices saying our service was a crime .....

But soon our journey will be over and we will leave this land

Our load will be lightened by taking your outstretched hand.

In that quiet early morning on a cold, cold February day, the Wall wet with the tears of many, echoed the soldiers answer to me .

MY BELOVED GENTLEHAWK HEAR ME.....

I couldn't see your face that day, the blood had filled my eyes, But, your beauty though hidden from me, could not be disguised. Dressing my wounds, taking my pain, and I saying I did not sin,

I remember your kindness and I remember your name was Lynne. And though in my heart I knew the answer, I begged you not to lie Please nurse, Is the hell of Vietnam the place that I must die?

You softly said, "Life goes on in death, it simply turns a page", I knew your words were truth, still I struggled with my rage.

How gently you spoke, "Dear Soldier, step to heavens bright light, It is a place of peaceful sleep, where pain gives up without a fight. For God is coming to take you, far from this dark and fearful land, This journey will be less frightening, take my outstretched hand."

You said while I crossed over, you would never leave my side, Your strength gave me courage and helped to stem the raging tide. The years have come and gone yet, you nurse, still mourn for me.

I know you would have traded places, but it wasn't meant to be.

I reach out now and touch your hand reflected in this great wall

I see your tears and hear your prayer and still ever loving call.

I asked you to remember my name, you promised that you would, I know that you have tried and tried with everything you could. Remember, I was much too frightened to make that trip alone,

Thank you nurse, for helping me take that walk to heaven's light. In my peace I'm grateful for your company on that fateful night.

All of the brothers and sisters this wall holds precious and dear, Send you who lived, forgiveness and want to take away your fear. For now we walk beside you, it our time to lead you on your way. We'll give you the strength and courage you will

need for every day. When, my brothers and sisters, it's time to leave your earthly land, We'll walk along your journey, and take your outstretched hand.

In Loving Memory to honor the bravery and courage of Four Eagles who were called home on April I?, 1969 so that I might live •••• to help all know their valor. Now in the autumn of my years, one day soon,

I will reach and take their hands.
Author Unknown

IS WAR HELL

By Denny Bowers
B CO 1/26

OCEAN PINES -- Is war hell?
Was William Tecumseh Sherman, a Union general during the Civil War, correct when he made that historical statement?

"That's putting it mildly. It is just total insanity," Vietnam veteran Denny Bowers said.

The 63-year-old Ocean Pines resident was a young Marine when he was injured twice, during incidents about six months apart. He received two Purple Heart medals.

A citation signed by the Secretary of the Navy honored him for "heroic achievement while serving as radio operator with Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, 3rd Marine Division against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam."

On June 7, 1967, "during a search-and-clear mission near Khe Sanh, elements of Company B came under an intense mortar attack, which was closely followed by an assault from a platoon-size force of North Vietnamese Army Regulars. During the ensuing fire fight, Private 1st Class Bowers observed a fellow Marine engaged by the enemy.

"Realizing the seriousness of the situation and disregarding his own safety, he unhesitatingly exposed himself to the heavy volume of enemy fire to assist his comrade. Although painfully wounded in the leg, he quickly obtained a rifle from a casualty and ran across 30 meters of fire-swept terrain to give it to the beleaguered Marine.

"After returning to his own position, he steadfastly ignored his painful injury and calmly and skillfully resumed his duties as a radio operator until he was subsequently medically evacuated.

"His heroic and timely actions at great personal risk were an inspiration to all who observed him and were instrumental in the accomplishment of his unit's mission," the citation states.

He was honored for upholding "the finest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service."

He was injured again Jan. 21, 1968, when the Khe Sanh Combat Base came under enemy mortar and rocket attack. Bowers was praised for leaving his covered position and exposing himself to intense fire. He "fearlessly ran 25 meters across the hazardous area to the platoon's ammunition bunker. Although wounded by fragments from exploding ordnance and sustaining several burns from burning gasses, he steadfastly continued his determined efforts and reached the bunker," the citation states.

Bowers picked up several rounds of mortar ammunition and carried them to the gun crew, which had been unable to fire due to lack of ammunition because they had to evacuate their original position and seek cover in a trench line. His legs and upper chest were wounded.

But Bowers, a native of Baltimore, doesn't consider himself a hero.

"No, the heroes are those dead Marines we picked up and put on a plane and those guys laying, wounded, calling for their mothers," he said as he discussed his experiences from the kitchen table of the home he shares with his wife, Peggy.

He was 18 when he enlisted in the Marines, and on his 19th birthday, after training, landed in Vietnam. He recalled being surprised by the activity around him, quickly moving people, planes, helicopters.

"I knew I wasn't in Baltimore anymore. Anybody who tells you they aren't scared is a liar. You lose your childhood instantly when the first bullet goes

over your head. Nothing touches, nor does anything make you ready for combat. You can do all the training in the world. It takes your innocence away instantly," he said.

In August 1966, his boot camp training began at Parris Island, S.C. He also had infantry training at Camp Geiger, within Camp Lejeune, N.C. After a 30-day leave, he was sent to California to Camp Pendleton for additional training before going to Vietnam. His job in the Marines, he said, was a basic grunt, an infantryman.

He was first stationed south of Da Nang, Vietnam. The enemies were farmers, women and children with guns and booby traps.

"I knew of children who were killed because they were the enemy. It's horrible to shoot anybody. It's the most horrible thing in the world," he said. From Da Nang, he was flown to Khe Sanh Village and ordered, right off the plane, to "grab the dead Marines and put them on the same plane we just got off of. I had never even seen a car wreck. That takes me back to a time I'd rather not talk about," he said.
Bowers recalled 18 men, fellow Marines, being killed in one day.

"They would give their life for me. They're my brothers," he said.

He remembered exactly how long he was in Vietnam -- 13 months, four days and two-and-one-half hours.

"That's a long time to be frightened to death," he said.

His final months of duty were in the United States, stationed at Camp Lejeune and working as a marksmanship instructor and brig guard. After discharge, he was flown to an airport in California. There, radical Vietnam War protesters threw water balloons filled with urine at returning Marines.

Three days later, he was in downtown Baltimore watching a protest against the war.
"Then, it occurred to me what I had done allowed them to do what they were doing. They had the freedom to do it. It helped me be a hell of a lot less angry," he said.

Bowers earned a Bachelor of Science degree in personnel labor relations from the University of Baltimore and worked for the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program for 31 years, retiring in 2007.

He has helped build a monument to veterans at Arthur W. Perdue Stadium in Salisbury and a memorial to deceased Wicomico County veterans positioned in front of the Wicomico Youth & Civic Center, also in Salisbury.

About five years ago, he helped plan the Worcester County Veterans Memorial in Ocean Pines.

"I carry the same demons as everybody who saw what I saw. As difficult as my military career was, it is the foundation of who I am because, no matter what happens in my life, it is not as bad as being shot at," he said, smiling. "It truly was the foundation of my life, of who I am."

DOCUMENTARY FILMING TAKES LOCAL WAR VET BACK TO VIETNAM

By MIKE FISHBAUGH



RAY CALHOUN
M 3/3 April 30,1967 Hill 881S

SAN DIEGO -- A Scripps Ranch resident who was awarded the Silver Star for his heroic actions during the Vietnam War will soon be returning to South-

east Asia as part of a documentary. Two years ago, Lester Ray Calhoun was belatedly awarded the Silver Star for heroism in Vietnam. Wounded and knocked unconscious twice, he fought back against Viet Cong soldiers while providing medical aid to other fallen Marines near him.

In 2012, he's going back for the first time since he fought there.

In the mid 1960s, he and two friends, Tim Haley and Mike Hogan, enlisted in the Marines as part of the Corps' "buddy plan." Each was sent to Vietnam, separately. They were in different battalions and their tours of duty were during overlapping timeframes. Now, the three friends are reuniting almost 50 years later for a documentary in production titled "Through Their Eyes." Calhoun, a former Marine lance corporal, hopes it will help rid him of some ghosts that haunt him. "Maybe allow me to say more complete, final goodbyes to some guys that didn't make it," said Calhoun. The trio's return to the killing fields won't be easy emotionally for any of them. Haley said, "The thought of going back to Vietnam is scary; to walk on the ground again is going to be tough." Hogan spoke of the pain he's experienced, and said, "Until you've been where we've been, done what we've done, and seen what we've done, don't bug me." The filmmakers want to delve into the impact of the war on the three idealistic young men.

Director Jason Frizado told 10 News, "To really understand what they went through, you need to go back and be there."Producer Tony Mohareb said the goal is "understanding the war they fought; not necessarily the war we know about." Like so many war vets, Calhoun has battled post-traumatic stress disorder. He hopes this will help close the circle. "I'm hopeful it will help me put this all in a box and put it somewhere," said Calhoun."Through Their Eyes" is targeted for national release on Veterans Day 2012. For more information about the film, visit www.indiegogo.com/through-their-eyes.

MIKE,

Interesting that you should post this today. I just got back from visiting the traveling wall here in Bridgewater ,NJ. I went to pay my respects to all the brothers who fought with me and Denny on that faithful day. June 7,'67. I found each name touched it said some prayers and was moved almost to tears by their sacrifice. May they rest in peace.

LCPL	James Lujon Blaz	21E65 (19)
PFC	Lawrence Arthur Brooks	21E66 (19)
LCPL	John Joseph Chase	21E65 (20)
CPL	Crooks, , Ronald Lee	21E66 (21)
LCPL	Robert Francis Enderby	21E66 (21)
CPL	Edward Francis Fulon Jr	21E67 (19)
PFC	Gale Edward Gotti	21E67 (21)
PFC	Thomas Micheal Healy	21E68 (19)
PFC	Kenneth Micheal Johnson	21E68 (19)
LCPL	Kenneth Ray Keefer	21E68 (20)
PFC,	Larry LeMorris	21E69 (20)
PFC,	Pitts, Wayne Monroe	21E70 (19)
PFC	Frank Joseph Shovlin	21E70 (18)
PFC,	Phillip Andren Van Deusen	21E6 (18)
LCPL	Edward Arnold Vercouteren	21E71 (24)
CPL	Walter Leonard Ward	21E71 (18)
PFC	Larry Eugene Worthen	21E72 (21)

OTHERS I VISITED AND PRAYED FOR:

B-1/26 BROTHERS

SGT Jose Castillo	23E97 (20)
PFC William Alfred Pollard	23E103 (19)
PFC Reginald Eugene Wilson	23E106 (22)

M-3/26 BROTHERS

LCPL William Roland Prewitt Aug 31,1967	24E62 (20)
SGT Eugene Richard Kritz, April, 11,1967	18E15 (30)
CPT Richard John Sasek, July 6, 1967	23E23 (30)
LCPL David Joseph Frischmann, Feb 1, 1967	14E103 (22)

Rest in peace brothers you are not forgotten, I still wonder how/why I didn't join you.

GENE WERESOW
B CO 1/26
M CO 3/26

I GET MAIL

Dear Mr. Eichler & Red Clay,

I would greatly appreciate if you could consider telling the story of LCpl Keith Perrelli and the passing of his Mother Emma. After LCpl Perrelli was KIA, his parents became very passionate about supporting the war in Vietnam. His Father Frank, was more than just passionate when it came to War Protesters. He was known to "crack" a few heads , if he observed anyone who even thought carrying an NVA flag was a good idea.

Rich De Lotto

ED NOTE: Rich it would be my pleasure, to include Keith's story in Red Clay. Most of the material you provided was scanned from a newspaper and unreadable. From what I could decipher, after Keith's death, his parents attempted to have his brother, who was serving in the US Army, home from Korea, under the sole surviving son's act. I do not know the income of that request.

LCPL KEITH FRANCIS PERRELLI USMC
KIA 25 September 1967
Con Thien Vietnam

Keith grew up in the Atherua section, where his friends nicknamed him "Buddy".

His grand parents, Mr. & Mrs. Iwanoski operated "Olly's Tavern" on Van Houten Avenue for many years. In 1962, the family moved from Clifton to Oakridge. Keith still remained friends with many from Clifton such as Eddie Freed.

Keith enrolled in Franklin High School which has since changed its name to Wallkill Valley High School He lettered in 3 sports and graduated. Keith's brother Duane had already decided to enter the Air Force when Keith decided to enlist in the Marines. Keith received basic and advanced infantry training during 1966 and was ordered to Viet Nam soon after. He arrived in January 1967, and was assigned to the 3rd Marine Division. Participating in Operation Junction City, Keith Perrelli found himself and his fellow Marines cut off from his company. Acting as a forward observer, Keith called in artillery fire to protect his unit from being over run. During this engagement, Keith was wounded and later received the Purple Heart for his actions.

During this time of the war, North Vietnamese forces were making a concerted effort to invade the northern provinces of Viet Nam and route American forces there, primarily U.S. Marines. During September 1967, in attempting to throw back enemy forces by utilizing B-52's, Navy 7th Fleet fire power, long range artillery and jet fighter bombers, General William Westmoreland was quoted as saying " ... this is the heaviest conventional bombardment in the history of warfare". At the fire base called Con Thien, U.S. Marines would suffer over 1,100 killed or wounded during this month. On September 26, 1967, Marine Headquarters announced that in the previous 24 hours, 2 Marines had been killed in the Con Thien area.

On September 25, 1967 Lance Corporal Keith Francis Perrelli serving with the 3rd Marine Division, was killed in action by an artillery and mortar bombardment of his sandbagged position at Con Thien. He left behind his parents, a brother and a sister.

KEITH'S MOTHER RECENTLY PASSED AWAY

Emma Perrelli Gold Star Mother, of Hudson, Fla., passed away Oct. 21, 2011

A Mass was held at Blessed Katri Church, 427 Stanhope Rd. Sparta, N.J., at 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 19. Repast followed in the community room after the Mass.

A Gold Star Mother belonging to many veterans' organizations, Emma was most proud of VVA Chapter 1003, named after her son, Keith F. Perrelli.

She is survived by her husband of 68 years, Frank; son, Duane; daughter, Deidre Sponheimer; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

VIETNAM MARINES HONOR THEIR CORPSMAN

Written By
LtCol Charles S. Gaede,
USMCR Retired- H Co, 2/3
Vietnam, For Leatherneck
Magazine Dec 2011. Reprinted
With Permission

Vietnam veteran Marines of the 3d Platoon, Company H, 2d Battalion, Third Marine Regiment, Third Marine Division honored their corpsman, Hospital Corpsman Third Class Roy "Doc" Moon, with a surprise presentation of an M 1 carbine at their biannual reunion in Memphis, Tenn., on May 15. Moon's wife, Nancy, accompanied him to the reunion as did his son, Chris, who lives in Memphis.

Five 3d Plt Marines who had been wounded and treated by Doc Moon in Vietnam were at the reunion and spoke with praise about his treatment of their wounds on the battlefield. Former Sergeant Ben "Tex" Williams said: "All of our corpsmen were good; they were great. But as good as all of those corpsmen were, there wasn't any of them that came close to filling the shoes of Doc Roy Moon. We love you, Doc. Semper Fi."

The most seriously wounded man, former Private First Class John "Weasel" Griffin, reunited with Doc Moon for the first time since Doc had treated and prepared him for medical evacuation from the Khe Sanh area on April 30, 1968. "Right after the mortar exploded, I was still numb," Griffin said, "when Doc came over and tended to me, and calmed me and assured



HM3 Roy "Doc" Moon (above in Vietnam on Operation Pegasus in April 1968 with 3d Plt, Co H,2/3 and (below) fifth from the right on the front row, with wife Nancy, by his left side, after reuniting with members of "his" platoon in Memphis, Tn., in May 2011.



me that I was in pretty good shape, even though I was concerned about my fathering ability. Doc, thank you for being right there when we needed you most."

Former Corporal Joe Richardson, wounded in the same mortar attack, said, "This is the bravest man I've ever met. Without any reservation at all about his own life, his own safety, he was professional, and when you yelled for Doc, he was there.

All I can say about Doc is Semper Fi, brother, and thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Former Cpl Patrick "Boot Camp" Hodgkins and the author, then-First Lieutenant Chuck Gaede, also spoke highly of Doc Moon's treatment of their wounds.

Moon arrived in Vietnam on Oct. 5, 1967, and was assigned to the 3d Plt. He stayed with the 3d Plt until May 14, 1968. His tour in Vietnam included the 1968 Tet offensive and operations at Con Thien, An Hoa, north and south of Danang, and Khe Sanh. He was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V" for saving the life of a Marine who was seriously wounded by a Viet Cong explosive device in January 1968. Although Moon narrowly escaped injury when he fell into a punji pit with rotten stakes, he never was wounded.



Doc Moon (above) is surprised by the presentation of a special gift, an M1 Rock-Ola carbine, that is very similar to the one he has with him outside this Montagnard house (below) in Vietnam in December 1967.



At some point during his tour, he acquired an M1 carbine, which he carried with him in the field.

Knowing his fondness for the M1, members of the 3d Plt planned a surprise presentation for their next reunion. One of the Marines, Sgt Joe "Bama" Whittington, located a Rock-Ola carbine with a known history. Whittington refinished the carbine and built a matching wood presentation case. Sgt Williams had a plaque made for the presentation case with a Vietnam-era picture of Doc Moon and the inscription:

"Semper Fi Doc Moon. We knew we could always count on you! Marines, H/2/3 1967-1968."

Doc Moon's relationship with the 3d Plt Marines began in Vietnam and has continued since. He at-

tended the first platoon reunion in 1995 and every one thereafter, including a return trip to Vietnam in 2001. He calls and visits some of the Marines frequently and is friends with many of them. His relationship with the Marines was and remains even closer than it normally is between a corpsman and his Marines.

Holding his new carbine Moon said: "I always wanted one of these. This is what I carried over there. I carried it because it was little, and I could run fast with it. I really didn't know how to use it. They issued me a .45, a first aid kit, a flak jacket and a helmet, and that's what they sent me to the field with. I didn't know a soul there.

"I joined Third Platoon at a place called Con Thien, which is just a short distance from the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone]. It was rainin', muddy; I was by myself. I didn't have a friend in the world. I got off that six-by truck that day, and from that day on, I've been a Marine. I spent all of my time with the Third Platoon. I was fortunate. I was one of the few corpsmen that didn't get transferred from unit to unit."

The 3d Plt Marines were equally fortunate to have Doc Roy Moon with them.

If you served in 3d Plt, "Hotel" Co, 2/3 in 1967-68, contact Chuck Gaede at (512) 759-9265 to reconnect. LtCol Gaede is also listed in the KSV Membership Directory.

LtCol Gaede, an infantry officer and Vietnam veteran, retired from the Marine Corps Reserve in 1998, after 29 years of service. Obtaining his doctorate in 1993, he retired from the University of Texas at Austin in 2007. Presently, he is an officer in VFW Post 3377 and on the board of his local chapter of the Military Officers Association of America. He is also a Life Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans.

KHE SANH VETERANS MINI-REUNION

Khe Sanh Vets
Mini-Reunion - Key Largo FL

For the last several year a group of Khe Sanh Veterans have been gathering in Key Largo, FL in January. About the same time of year January, 21 as the 77 day Siege at Khe Sanh began. The number of folks attending has grown and so has the good time enjoyed when we gather.

The Moose Club in Key Largo (Mile Marker 98.8) is the main bunker (watering hole) where we start out. We enjoy such things as a fishing trip; visit to dolphins sometimes; some good restaurants; some horseshoes; and a ride down to the most Southern point of the US, Key West, and most importantly good brotherhood.

Key Largo is 92 miles South of Ft. Lauderdale and 63 miles south of Miami. If you fly Ft. Lauderdale is a little bit further to drive but flights there are generally cheaper. Jack Corbett (***West Dickens Avenue***) started this tradition and it is certainly worthwhile to continue. Several hotels/motels are available in the area. The Pelican, http://www.hungrypelican.com/ is one that sounds good with 2 doubles at $110 and single Queens at $90. Check website for others. Mention Khe Sanh Vets when calling. There are quite a few others in the area. CALL EARLY TO MAKE RESERVATIONS since things book up early.

This is a VERY INFORMAL gathering and spouses, significant others, family and other veterans are always welcome. Please feel free to call or e-mail with any questions you may have. My telephone number and e-mail address is in the Membership Directory.



COMING HOME TO LESS THAN A HERO'S WELCOME

By Karl MARLANTES C CO 1/4

Karl Marlantes is the author of
What It Is Like To Go To War.



I returned to America in October of 1969 after 13 months as a Marine in Vietnam. While I was there, I would comfort myself by imagining all the girls I ever knew hugging me in a huge warm group embrace. Somehow, I thought something similar would be waiting for me when I came home.

I was totally unprepared for what actually happened. My big brother picked me up at Travis Air Force Base in California. As we started to leave the terminal he put his hand on my shoulder and warned me that there might be trouble outside. "Trouble?" I asked.

I'd just gotten back from Vietnam. But the war held no hurt or humiliation like what happened as we drove through a crowd of protesters shouting obscenities at us, flipping us the bird, and pounding on my brother's 1960 Valiant with their fists and protest signs. I can still see the hate-filled face of a protester snarling at me through the passenger-side window. I can still feel my utter bewilderment and pain.

There were no hugs. My long imagined safe harbor was sewn with mines of hate.

Vietnam) held no hurt or humiliation like what happened as we drove through a crowd of protesters shouting obscenities at us, flipping us the bird, and pounding on my brother's 1960 Valiant with their fists and protest signs.

This kind of thing no longer happens. I'm immensely happy that America has learned to distinguish the kids fighting our wars from the adults making the war policies. But I worry that instead, we have become smugly complacent.

These days, there are yellow ribbons, beer commercials showing people clapping at airports, and banners on freeway overpasses. There is the well-intended "thank you for your service," and a hasty handshake. I've even received these, 40 years late. I know it is done with kind intentions, so I smile and say thank you. But inside I feel hollow — even slightly embarrassed. I know too many people who have died doing what I am getting thanked for. I also know, having gone through four decades of trying to reintegrate into my own culture, that ribbons and handshakes fall way short of what returning veterans actually need. A real "welcome home" is being helped with these challenges.

We veterans are just part of a complex and interconnected web of people who voted for the policymakers who decided war was the right response, who paid their taxes to finance it, who grew the food, who financed the factories where the weapons were built or who taught the scientists who designed them. The veterans' part of this web is that we were the ones who pulled the trigger at the end of the line — and carry the burden of that for everyone else.

I recently shared a radio interview with a young veteran from Afghanistan. He'd been back two years. While we were waiting to go on the air he told me that three of his friends from his own small unit had already committed suicide. Two years. Although suicide statistics for veterans are very difficult to pin down — is a drug overdose a suicide? How about cirrhosis of the liver? — Veterans Affairs statistics from 2010 show that 18 veterans commit suicide a day.

Clapping at airports and a handshake is way better than what happened after Vietnam, but *clearly* it isn't enough.

Our troops are coming home and our part of the killing over there is ending. Our work to end the killing over here is just beginning.



The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to First Lieutenant Karl A. Marlantes (MCSN: 0-103269), United States Marine Corps (Reserve), for extraordinary heroism while serving as Executive Officer of Company C, First Battalion, Fourth Marines, THIRD Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. During the period 1 to 6 March 1969, Company C was engaged in a combat operation north of the Rockpile and sustained numerous casualties from North Vietnamese Army mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, small arms, and automatic weapons fire. While continuing to function effectively in his primary billet, First Lieutenant Marlantes skillfully combined and reorganized the remaining members of two platoons, and on 6 March initiated an aggressive assault up a hill, the top of which was controlled by a hostile unit occupying well-fortified bunkers. Under First Lieutenant Marlantes' dynamic leadership, the attack gained momentum which carried it up the slope and through several enemy emplacements before the surprised North Vietnamese force was able to muster determined resistance. Delivering a heavy volume of fire, the enemy temporarily pinned down the friendly unit. First Lieutenant Marlantes, completely disregarding his own safety, charged across the fire-swept terrain to storm four bunkers in succession, completely destroying them. While thus engaged, he was seriously wounded, but steadfastly refusing medical attention, continued to lead his men until the objective was secured, a perimeter defense established, and all other casualties medically evacuated. Then, aware that all experienced officers and noncommissioned officers had become casualties, he resolutely refused medical evacuation for himself. His heroic actions and resolute determination inspired all who observed him and were instrumental in a decisive rout of the North Vietnamese Army force with minimal friendly casualties. By his courage, aggressive fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of grave personal danger, First Lieutenant Marlantes upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

STORY LEADS EDITOR TO PRO ASSISTANCE WITH VIETNAM FILM

By BILL COATES
Valley Life Editor

Ken Rodgers and his wife, Betty, shot a film about the battle of Khe Sanh in Vietnam and the Marines who fought it. They had footage of interviews with more than a dozen Marines of Bravo Company. All had endured the months-long siege at Khe Sanh in 1968. And they had footage of archival photographs and newsreels by prize-winning photographers. Assembling it all into a coherent narrative was another matter. Rodgers didn't want to tackle editing the film himself. He wanted it done professionally, but he despaired of finding a film editor up to the task. That was late last year.



Bill Coates/Dispatch (2010), Ken Rodgers and his wife, Betty, visited Casa Grande last year. The visit led to a newspaper article about a film they were making. That, in turn, led to hiring a film editor who had worked with George Lucas and Francis Ford Coppola

Then in January, he got a call from John Nutt. It was a call out of the blue for Rodgers. And one of those things that seemed too good to be true, like making $1,000 a week working part-time out of your home. Nutt had too-good-to-be-true credentials, including 40 years' experience as a film editor, working with industry giants like George Lucas and Francis Ford Coppola. Nutt, however, turned out to be the real thing. And he turned the Rodgers footage into a well-honed documentary, one they're submitting to major film festivals. First on their list is Utah's Sundance. From Nutt's end, Rodgers said, it wasn't a call out of the blue. It arose from a series of happy accidents. It led to a screening of the finished film at Lucas' Skywalker Ranch.

Before last December Nutt had no idea who Ken and Betty Rodgers were. He had no idea they had a project that called for a film editor. After all, they lived in Boise, Idaho. Nutt lived in northern California. In December, however, Nutt and his wife, Ann, just happened to be visiting their daughter in Tucson. It was the Christmas holidays, just after a Dec. 19 article about Rodgers and his film project appeared in the Casa Grande Dispatch. The Associated Press picked it up, and it ran in Tucson's Arizona Daily Star. The article came about because the Rodgers had been visiting Casa Grande earlier in December. Betty showed up at the Dispatch offices and said her husband had nearly completed a documentary about Vietnam. She thought it would make a good story. So did I. Rodgers, after all, had grown up in Casa Grande and gone to high school here. As a Marine, he was at Khe Sanh, witness to some of the deadliest fighting in Vietnam. And he made a movie about it. All it needed was some editing. The article mentioned Rodgers was looking for an editor.

By chance, Ann Nutt saw the same article. She suggested he call Rodgers in Boise. Nutt, it happened, was a Vietnam veteran himself. A film like that could resonate. Nutt balked at first, but his wife kept at it. And so he called. So out of the blue came the call from a Vietnam veteran and seasoned film editor. He also offered a good price, a very good price. Nutt got the job. "He edited the movie at his house," Rodgers said. But Nutt went a step further. He took the film to sound editor Mark Berger at Skywalker Ranch in Marin County. "We were there," Rodgers said. "We watched and actually participated a little bit, although we were kind of in awe of the place."

He and Betty spent four days at the ranch while Berger worked on the sound. "It was amazing what they do. These guys can hear stuff that I can't hear," he added, Berger worked with Nutt, who also has lengthy credits as a sound editor. Sometimes they had sharp disagreements, Rodgers said."They were arguing over stuff, then they would look at us to settle it for them," Rodgers said.

Nutt and Berger eventually put aside their differences. They eliminated the distractions of what started out as something of a handmade movie. "We did a lot of these interviews on the road," Rodgers said. "There were buzzes and hums and the lighting wasn't right, and they cleaned up all of that. The interviews, Rodgers said, have an un glossed quality about them. That fits the material.

"It's a documentary about a rough subject," Rodgers said. It's titled, "Bravo! Common Men, Uncommon Valor. "It has had a few informal screenings already, including one for the employees at Skywalker Ranch. Rodgers also showed it to a reunion of Khe Sanh Marines in July. This would be a hard audience to please. They approved, Rodgers said, joking: "They didn't yell and throw stuff at me.

"They also showed the film to most of 14 Marines and one Navy corpsman they interviewed for the movie.

At least one has refused to see it. Another has since died. "That leaves four guys that have not seen it and they don't seem to care."Perhaps for some of them, the Vietnam War has never ended. For others, it's not worth revisiting.

For younger generations, it's a war that has no personal meaning. It's a chapter in the history books, like World War II. The film, in any case, documents a battle that was something of a microcosm of the war itself. Marines took a fierce pounding and the siege was eventually broken. It was an American victory with little strategic value, according to an account in Wikipedia. It was that kind of war. Rodgers had first planned to show the film at the GI Film festival in Washington, but Nutt suggested he aim higher. So he's starting with Sundance. A submission doesn't guarantee entry. Rodgers should hear back on that next month. The Sundance Film Festival is in January. Beyond that, Rodgers plans to submit his film to South by Southwest in Austin and the Tribeca in New York City Film festival rules prohibit public showings in advance, but private screenings are OK. And, in December, Ken and Betty Rodgers will bring their film to Casa Grande for one such showing. For an invitation, contact Rodgers by email at kennetherodgers@msn.com.

BOOK REVIEW

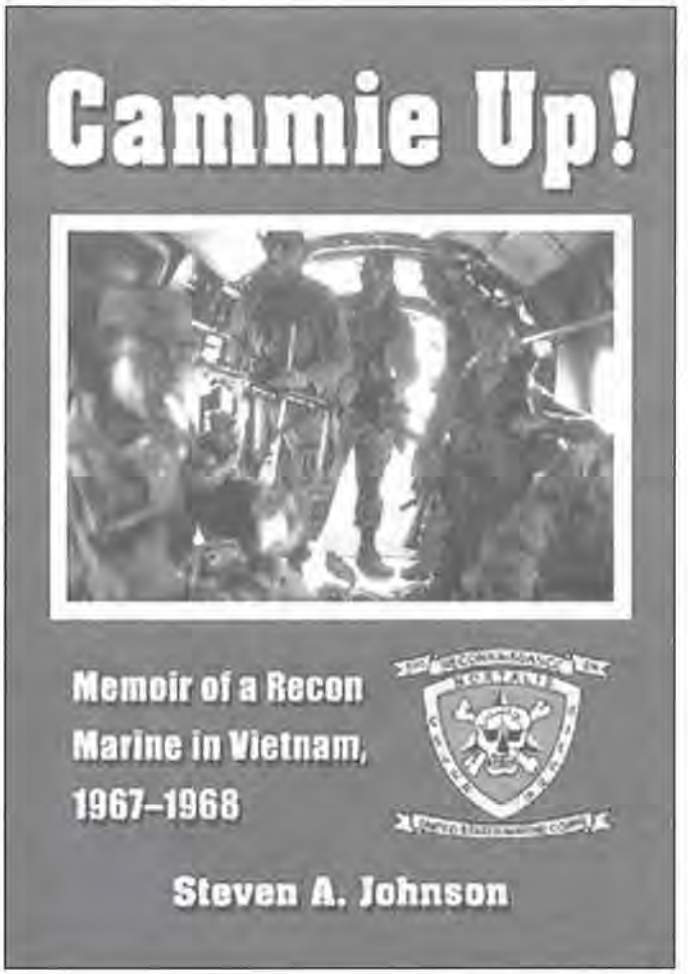

288 pages $29.95 softcover (6 x 9)
27 photos, 4 maps, appendices, glossary, notes, index

ISBN 978-0-7864-6600-9 Ebook ISBN 978-0-7864-8839-1 2012

In this Marine combat memoir, Steve Johnson recounts his service in Vietnam from April 1967 to May 1968. Only 17 when he enlisted in 1964, Johnson deployed to Vietnam with the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, and his tour included such now famous locations as Phu Bai, Khe Sanh, Nha Trang and Quang Tri, among others. With a sometimes humorous tone, Johnson describes a war of often terrified high school and college-aged youngsters faced with exotic plant and animal life, monsoon rains, harrowing reconnaissance missions and death. Details are plentiful about tactics, equipment, geography and, always, fellow Marines.

Steven A. Johnson served more than 17 years in the Marine Corps on active duty and in the reserves (including a call-up for active duty in Desert Storm). He spent 20 years with the Jamestown, New York, Police Department, and six with the Chautauqua County Sheriffs Office. He lives in Jamestown.

AN UNEARNED APOLOGY

Chaplain William R. Hampton

The place was the valley known as Khe Sanh in the jungle mountains of South Vietnam. This valley had been a coffee bean plantation operated by a Frenchman until the war. The 26th Marine Regiment was tasked to cut off the Ho Chi Minh Trail, over which supplies were carried from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. The Marines had built an airstrip and encircled it in a one mile square with trenches, bunkers, land mines and concertina wire to protect the 5,000 Marines and Navy personnel inside.

Thirty thousand NVA (North Vietnamese Army) took positions in the immediate deep jungle and on the surrounding mountains and began what became the famous "Seventy-Seven Day Siege" of Khe Sanh, attacking from all sides and firing rockets and mortars 24 hours a day for 77 days. Continuous fog and clouds made air support extremely difficult.

It was 29 February 1968, a little more than a month into the "siege". Planes were hit by rockets when the landed, so they would sometimes "pretend" to land but push off pallets of supplies and deposit passengers and then take-off again without completely stopping.

On this day there were pallets of mailbags which were quickly distributed to the respective battalions. When my 3rd Battalion received its mailbags, our postal clerk went to work in the mail tent. I didn't think he was sorting the mail fast enough, sol appointed myself to assist him.

At one point I picked up a mail bag and moved it some six feet across the tent floor. Just then a round came through the tent and detonated exactly where I had been standing. Had I not moved, it would have been a direct hit. Even then the concussion from the explosion knocked me to the ground, and I lost consciousness for a few seconds. When I regained consciousness I could see but not hear. I quickly looked around to see if all my body parts were still there, while my hearing was returning.

The mail clerk was shrieking in pain. That round had torn into him, and he was bleeding profusely. A corpsman responded to the cries, and we moved him to the battalion aid station. After some medical attention from the battalion surgeon, we carried him to the airstrip medical bunker and waited for a medevac chopper to take him out to the hospital ship. He was in such bad shape that I was sure he wouldn't make it alive. I never heard from or about him again until ....

On Saturday, 12 Jun 2010, I received a phone call. The caller identified himself as a Marine I had assisted in Vietnam when he was wounded. He described the mail tent incident and said he was calling to apologize!

I was stunned! Apologize for what, I asked. "I know it has been 42 years, but I need to apologize for all the expletives I used when you were trying to help me. When you helped me to the airstrip you looked at my dog tag and said something about me being a "Lutheran" the same as you, and I cursed at you. It's taken me 42 years, but I want you to know that I'm sorry for the way I treated you."

In the following conversation I learned that his name is Bradley Barton and he was from Illinois. He was discharged from the Marine Corps and is a paraplegic. He currently lives in Portland, Oregon and says that he is a "happy camper" and grateful to be alive.

That's all I know as of now. I have sent him a packet of appropriate propaganda-about my return to Vietnam a few years ago, etc. He located my name from the Khe Sanh Veterans Association directory. I'm looking forward to more conversation ....

Chaplain Wm. R. Hampton CAPT, CHC, USNR, RET

DEAD MARINES DOG TAG IN VIETNAM IS DISCOVERED 43 YEARS LATER

Valerie Chinn

NEW ALBANY, IN (WDRB) From outside of the Davis family home, you can see they are Marine proud, as the American flag is flying.

For four decades, Larry Davis has been on a mission to learn more about the death of his brother, Marine Randy Davis. Medals, including the Purple Heart, and pictures of his younger brother, an 18-year-old machine-gunner, are displayed in the home.



Larry Davis was emotional as he said, "It's been 43 years and there isn't a day that goes by that I don't think of him. He was a damn good kid."

Randy was killed by enemy fire in Khe Sanh, in North Vietnam back in 1968. A non-profit organization Tours of Peace Vietnam Veterans amazingly found his dog tag that he wore around his neck when he died. After verifying Larry was his brother, the organization recently sent the Davis family the dog tag. It's still in great condition although it's hard to read and is even dusty from the Vietnam soil.

He says, "It just brings the thing whole circle for me and I can't begin to tell you what it's worth to me...It's like he's right here with me. It's like getting a piece of him back home."

Valerie Chinn asked, "How do you think your parents would feel knowing you have this?" Davis says, "Well, that's another subject. His death actually killed my mother. She died nine months later at 51. She never got over it and we haven't either. But I don't know...they'd be ecstatic to get something back other than what they sent in a sea bag."

They never had a chance to say good-bye because his casket was sealed. His father even questioned if Randy's body was inside. He had wanted to open it to make sure, but didn't.

Even in one of Randy's last letters, it's as if he knew what was going to happen to him. He told his family that his time was running out.

Deidre Davis, Larry's wife says, "I've read all his letters. I feel like I know him. I've got a brother-in-law that was killed in Vietnam and he's in my heart."

Larry says when talking about the dog tag, "He was just a young kid, but he did his job well. There's nothing I'd take for this."

And their search for answers about Randy is not over. They're hoping to talk to the men who served with him, when he died.

LATE OBIT

JAMES J. MILES HM-3 USN
KHE SANH VETERAN
RAS HQ CO 26TH MARINES

Miles, James J. Age 62, Beloved husband and best friend of Carolyn for 41 years. Loving father of James J. Jr. and Stephen (Mary). Proud papa of Jamie III and with one on the way. Cherished son of the late Eileen and Charles. Devoted brother of Pat (Grover) Weiss and Edith (late Donald) Olson and the late Charles, Robert and Mary Agnes. Fond uncle of Susan, Mary Lynn, Carol, Robert, Michael and Timothy. Life time member Khe Sanh Vet., Marine Corps. League Kevin Clarke Detachment Post #2791 and Life time member of Bremen V.F.W. Post #2791. Proud member of I.B.E.W. Local 134. In lieu of flowers memorials to Marine Corps League Kevin Clarke Detachment Post # 2791 17147 S. Oak Park Ave. Tinley Park, IL. 60477 .

THE LIVING MEMORIAL SCULPTURE GARDEN

VISIT BY KHE SANH VETERANS

By Craig Tourte

The Garden is located at the southwestern base of Mt. Shasta, on the Klamath National Forest Land in the Goosenest Ranger District. It was founded in 1988 by a group of Siskiyou County veterans and is sponsored and maintained by the Weed/Lake Shastina Kiwanis Club. A Memorial Wall celebrates the honorable discharged veterans of our nation's conflicts from the Revolutionary War to the present.



Dennis Smith, a Vietnam War Marine Corps sergeant and veteran of the siege of Khe Sanh, is the metal sculptor whose works grace the Sculpture Garden: "Each sculpture has personal meaning for me in terms of life experience and personal incidents. Through the arts we have the means to peacefully consider violence and to ask questions." His work is specific yet symbolic, monumental yet intimate, patriotic yet cautionary. " I don't think the purpose of art is to entertain, but to uplift, edify and educate.



We got out of our vehicles and walked around the 100 or so acres and viewed the 10 sculptures.. As an example, quotes from the literature inspired by the Sculpture Dennis Smith states - A tall figure with one arm raised - The Peaceful Warrior. There must be those who, loving peace, will fight against aggression to preserve that peace The Peaceful Warrior honors those who step forward when asked to do so.





A female figure with hands out holding an American flag - Those left behind. Who can repay those who have lost loved ones in combat. Sculpture depicting the second raising of the flag on Mt. Suribachi, Iwo Jima. The Greatest Generation. A soldier exists in a cage - POW & MIA, outside the cage on a simple metal arch hang POW and MIA bracelets, wreaths, flags and flowers placed by visitors. Dennis states in the literature.









A soldier exists in a cage. Imagine confinement, mosquitoes, leeches, rats, rotten rice, rotten fish, abusive guards, and little chance of survival. Hope is reaching for the will to hang on. Couple embracing - Coming Home. Vets feel a lot of emotional pain upon returning home. Wounded Warrior with amputated left arm - All Wounded Warriors symbolizes all serviced-connected wounds. there are many ways to be wounded. Sculpture of nurses carrying stretcher - The Nurses- courageous souls who bring the healing arts to places rife with injury and death. A tall elegant figure plays a flute.- The Flute player symbolizes peace and tranquility. At the 38th Parallel a sword lays broken - Korean War Veteran who remembers the Korean War Vets? The Memorial also has an area titled Hot LZ Memorial Wall which contains names of veterans etched on Granite Memorial Wall.

We must have spent and hour visiting the sculp-





tures, each with our own interpretation of what an





individual sculpture signified to us. It was fascinating to hear Tom, Dave and Ned discuss how they thought a particular sculpture was relevant to their experience. Dave Tonick placed a Khe Sanh coin at the base of the POW - MIA arch where that coin joined the many bracelets of MIA's, Vietnam colored beads, feathers and other assorted tributes and symbols all with significant meaning to those who placed them there.



2011,the name "Khe Sanh Veterans" will be etched on this granite wall, like the Khe Sanh roadside Memorial in Albuquerque New Mexico, our name, battles and those lost will be perpetually remembered.





STORY AND PHOTOS OF THE ACTUAL CEREMONY WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY NUMEROUS KHE SANH VETERANS, ON VETERANS DAY 11 NOV 2011

Veterans Day, November 11, 2011 - Living Memorial Sculpture Garden, Siskiyou County, California
By Craig W. Tourte

The twice annual dedication of names placed on the granite-clad Memorial Wall located at the foot of Mount Shasta was well attended with 300 of those who paid tribute to the memory of those who served in our military. At this particular dedication the words **"Khe Sanh Veterans LM"** (Life Member) was forever etched into the richly dark granite of the Sponsor Wall which will forever remind all who view that monument of the sacrifice and perseverance of those who served.

The dedication was well attended by over twenty veterans of that Battle.

Master of Ceremonies, Dr. John B. Runnels, Capt. U.S. Navy Retired - delivered the words I presented as a representative of the Khe Sanh Veteran Association.

"All who have served are honored here, their names may not be inscribed in these beautiful granite stones, but they are still remembered for their service and for their sacrifice. We also take this moment to honor those who did not return home with us and to remember those who to this day, carry the wounds and memory of war in their hearts, minds and bodies. Today we remember not only those whose names appear on this wonderful granite memorial but also those who continue to fight for the freedom of all Americans. "

"There is a poem in the Living Memorial Sculpture Garden pamphlet that starts with the words "A place to remember where we have been. A place to remember what we've been through. A place to remember those faces so well of friends and loved ones…." As stated in the pamphlet Dennis Smith, the artist and the creator of these wonderful sculptures is a former Marine and survivor of the historic Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh in what was then the country of South Vietnam. Dennis is quoted as saying "Each sculpture has personal meaning for me in terms of life experiences and personal incidents."

"Please note the presence here of the many who served on the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Through Dennis's vision and creations, this place holds a special and even reverent significance for those who served at Khe Sanh. As an example the "Wounded Warrior" sculpture with right hand reaching up into

the air and the left arm missing a limb was inspired by Dennis's friend and our comrade Lloyd Scudder and the struggles that Lloyd and all the other wounded have had to endure. Lloyd is a Khe Sanh Veteran and an inspiration to all of us for his strength, courage and perseverance. The Sculpture the "The Nurses" depicting three nurses, carrying a stretcher was inspired by the tragic death PFC Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer who was killed in action at Khe Sanh on March 14, 1968, another friend of Dennis and also our comrade."

"We each have our own interpretation of what an individual sculpture signifies and how it is relevant to ones own experience and memory. The Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh was an historic event. The mention of Khe Sanh along with the great battles of Concord, Gettysburg and Normandy in President Obama's inaugural address, forever confirms to our nation and the world that the Battle of Khe Sanh holds a significant place in American History. As a representative of the Khe Sanh Veterans and Tom Eicher, President of our Association, I am privileged and honored to have been a part of this special dedication - to have the name "Khe Sanh Veterans" etched into the granite Sponsor wall. This truly is a special place that remembers all of the veterans of this great nation who have given so much and have asked for so little. Through this inspiring Living Memorial Sculpture Garden, we honor them all. "




THE BOEING COMPANY ★ NOR-
ROTARY CLUB OF WEED (LM) ★
JIM AND LOIS LAWSON ★ EDITH
MARINE CORPS LEAGUE SISKIY
WILLIAM K & SHIRLEY B WOODS
JAN COZZALIO ★ ELIZABETH CH
KHE SANH VETERANS LM












KHE SANH
VETERANS
Home Is
Where You
Dig It!
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA



OUR KHE SANH VETERANS ROLLING ON THE RIVER BOAT QUEEN. "ROLLING","ROLLING"









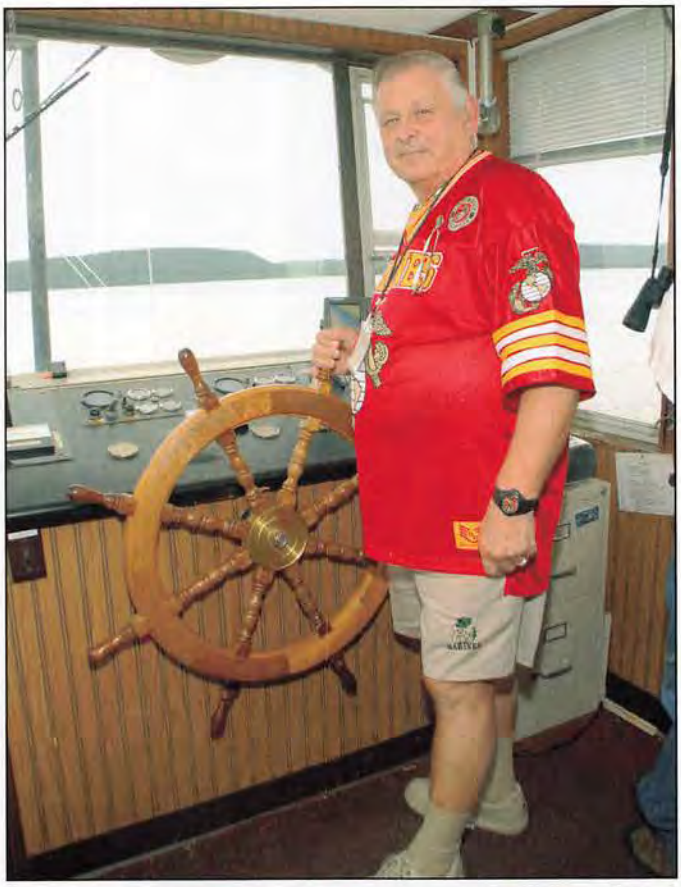

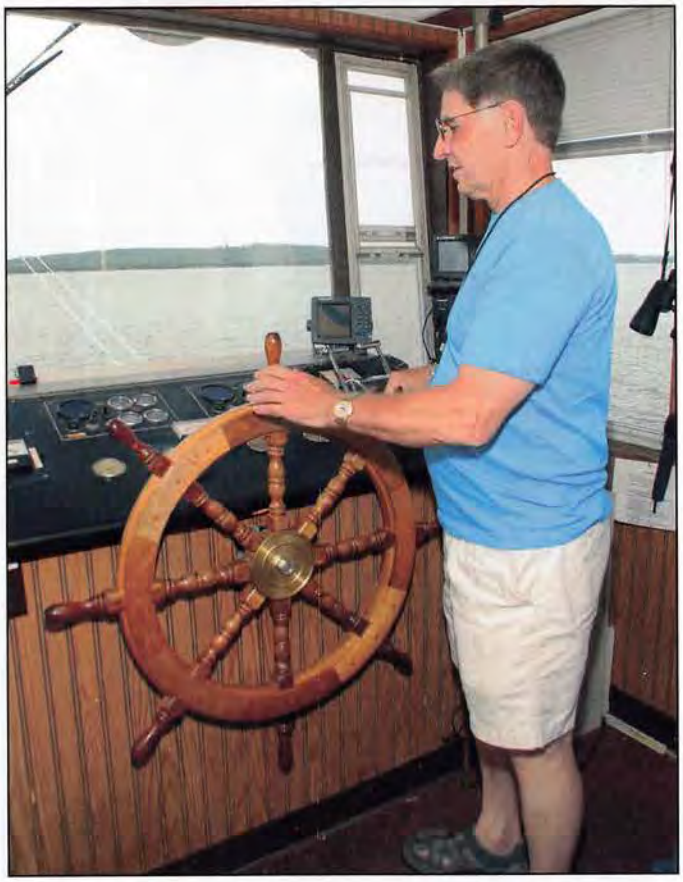








Old Navy
94








































Bell of Honor
Voice of a Grateful Nation

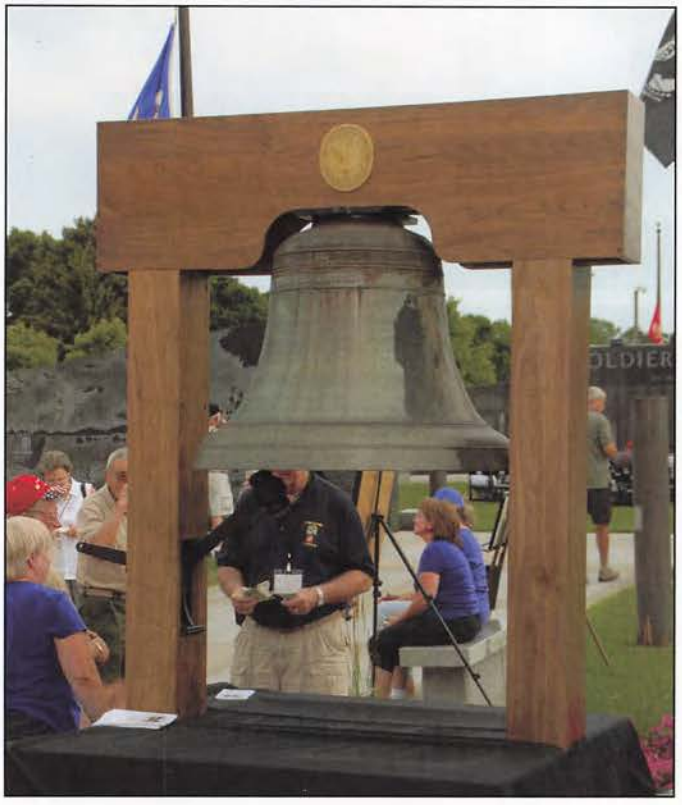

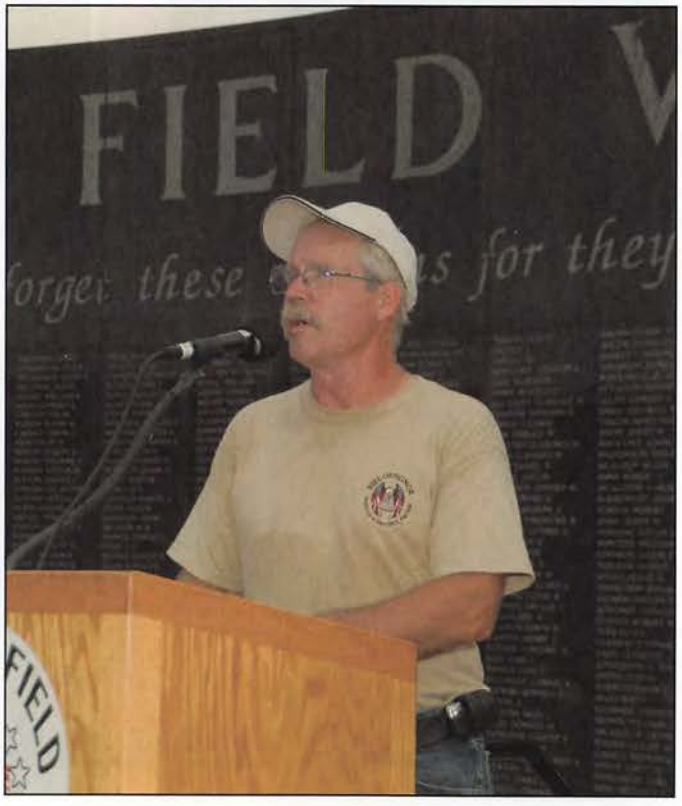
FIELD



KSV PRESIDENT "BULLDOG" SMITH



COLORS BEARER TOM HARVEY

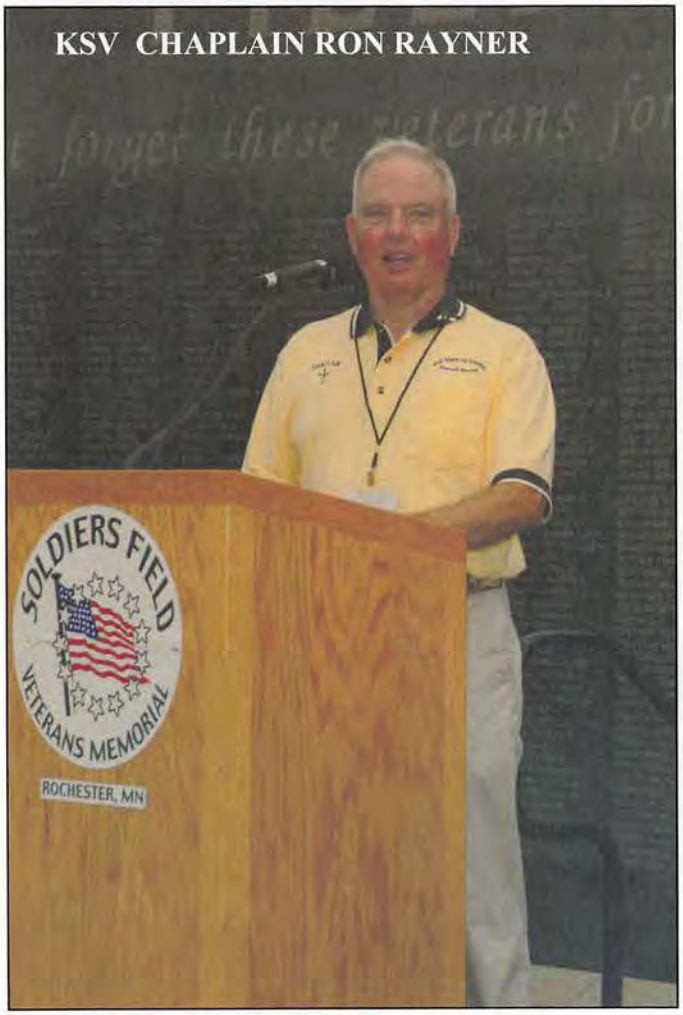

KSV CHAPLAIN RON RAYNER



L-R TOM EICHLER, WAYNE STILLMAN, DAVE "BULLDOG" SMITH, KSV PRESIDENT. TOM & BULLDOG PRESENTING WAYNE WITH AUTOMATIC CEREMONIAL BUGLE, FOR USE BY THE VETERANS AT THE MEMORIAL & OTHER EVENTS.



REPRESENTING THE US ARMY : BRUCE GEIGER A BTRY 1/44 ARTY DUSTERS



REPRESENTING THE USMC: TOM HARVEY HQ BTRY 1/13





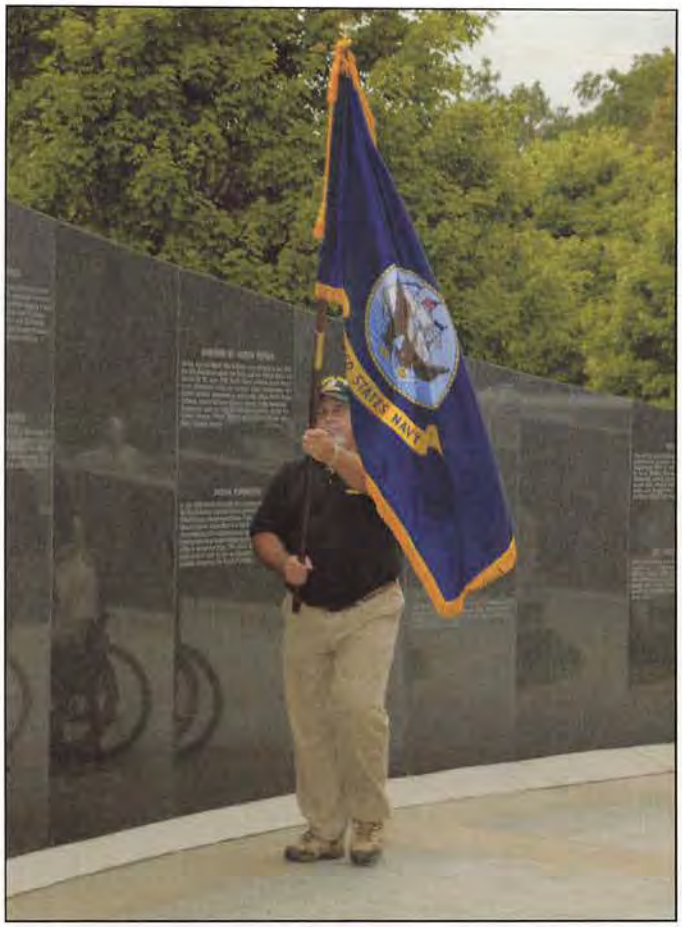

REPRESENTING THE USN : JACK HAIGWOOD
CBMU-301 DET B SEABEES



REPRESENTING THE USAF: RON PARSONS
15TH AERIAL SQUADRON











HONORING ALL THE MIA'S GUNNERY SERGEANT BILL MARTIN HQ BTRY 1/13






















SOLDIERS FIELD

RUSSELL TURNER, REUNION CHAIRMAN & PAST PRESIDENT OF KHE SANH VETERANS WELCOMES KHE SANH VETERANS & EMCEES THE ANNUAL BANQUET WITH THE PRESENTATION OF COLORS & PARADE OF UNIT COLORS OF KSV & MIA FLAG. GUNNERY SERGEANT BILL MARTIN LIGHTS THE MIA CANDLE

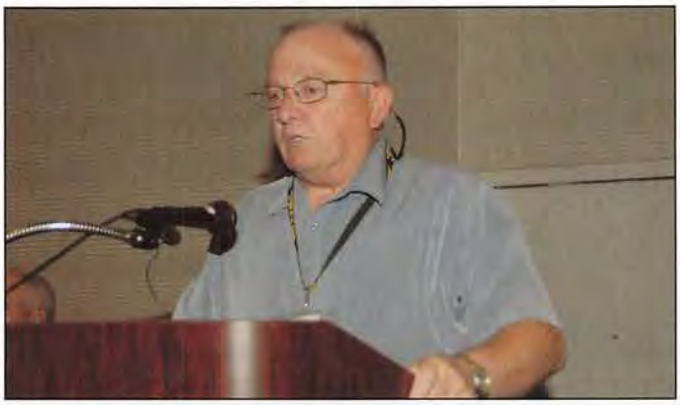















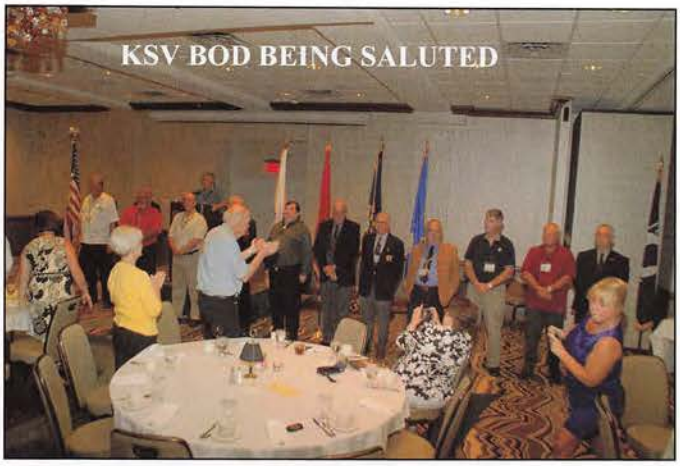
KSV BOD BEING SALUTED


KSV BEING SALUTED BY FAMILY MEMBERS


BRAVO CO FAMILY



AMAZING THEY STILL FIT ?





















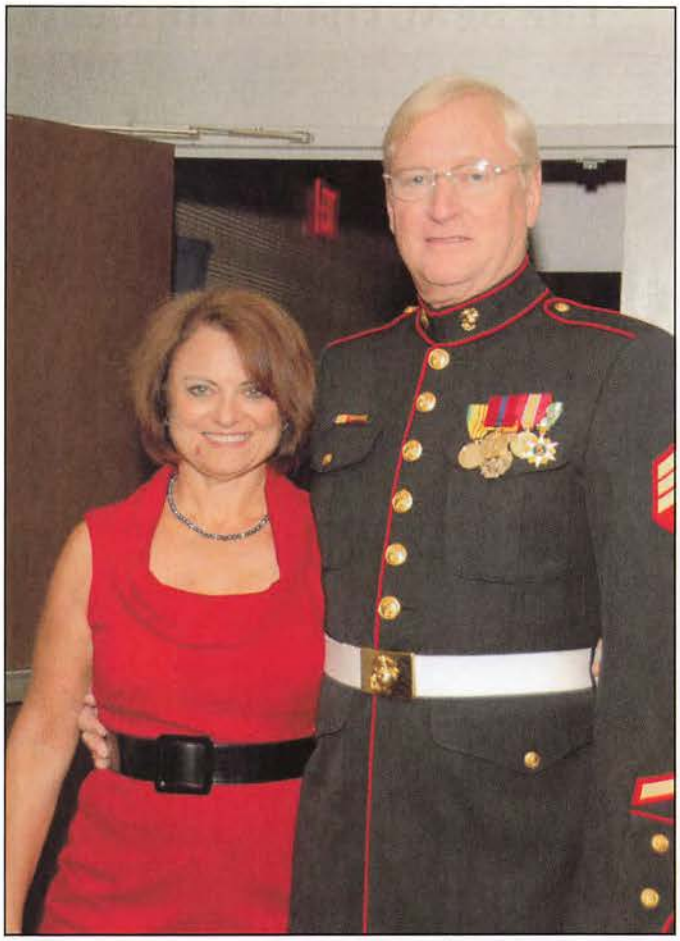

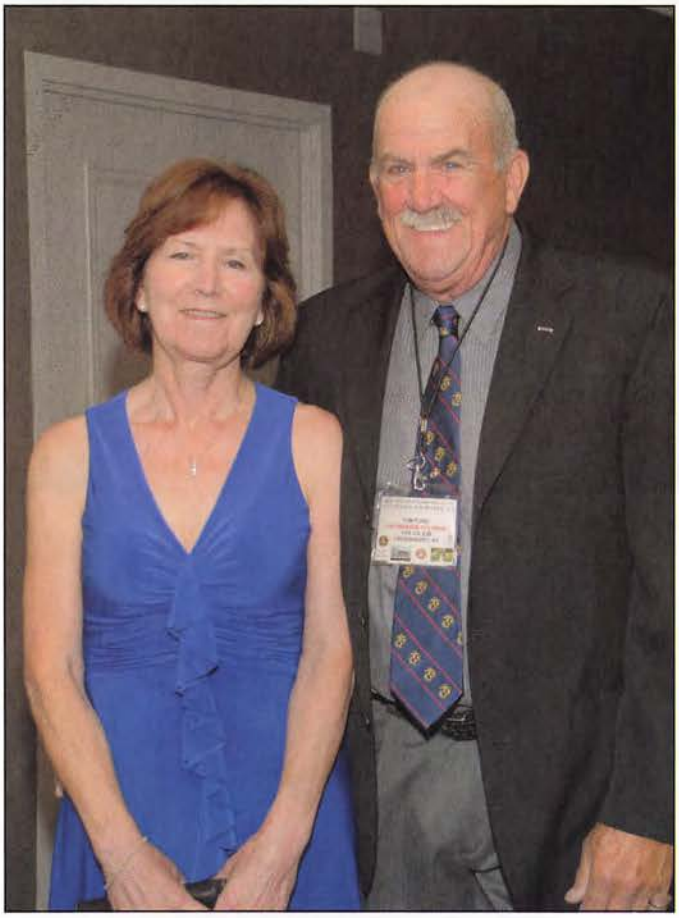



THE BEAUTIFUL KHE SANH WOMEN AT THEIR LUNCHEON















THANK YOU



FROM THE KSV

GOOD FRIENDS ENJOYING THEMSELVES AND MEETING NEW FRIENDS




















FMF


ATLANTIC CITY
USA


SANH VETERANS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA






FMF
FMF
1/13
KHE SANH




MAYOWOOD
GALLERIES



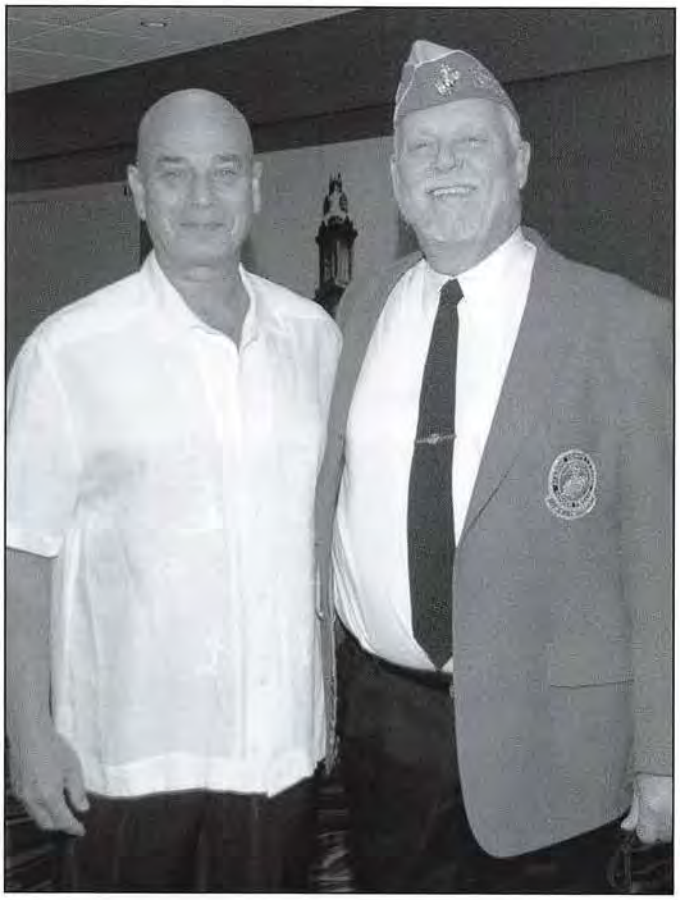





























MVM

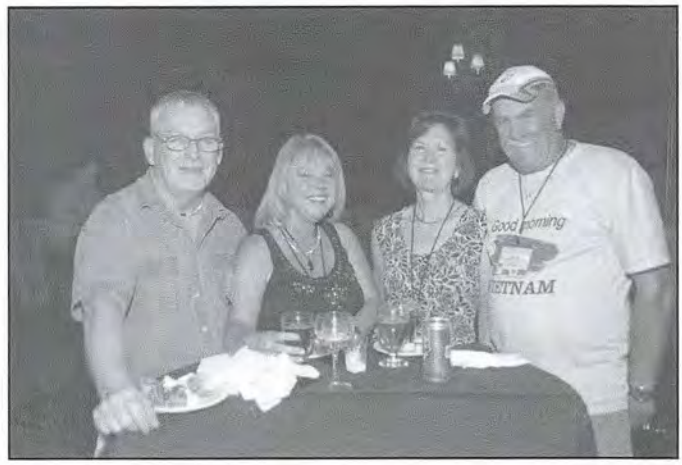

Good Morning
VIETNAM



KHE SANH



HOME IS WHERE
YOU DIG IT.










HOME IS WHERE
YOU D.G IT.

WE MUST ALSO CONDUCT A LITTLE BUSINESS AT OUR MEMBERSHIP MEETING WHILE OUR WOMEN ARE HAVING THEIR LUNCHEON









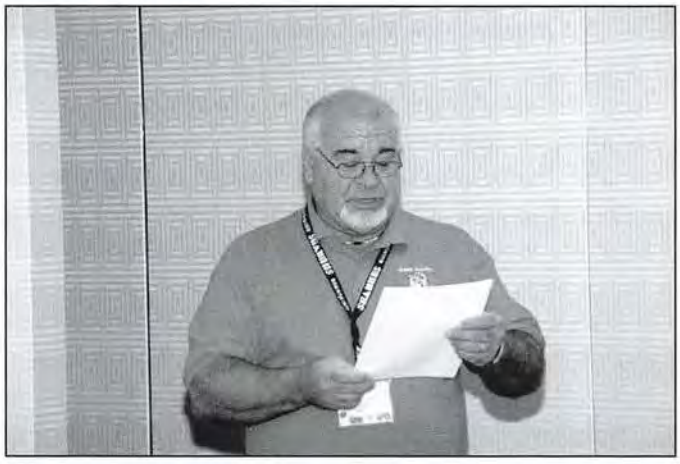







I GET LETTERS

Dear Tom,

I am a Legionnaire and a member of the KSV. Enclosed is a copy of a response I sent to the American Legion Auxiliary Executive Director/ National Secretary, Ms Mary "Dubbie" Buckler, regarding a portion of her article, "Dubbie's Message," in the August, 2011 American Legion Auxiliary Magazine.

In her article she stated that she visited Ground Zero in New York City, and prior to her leaving she asked and gained permission to affix a flag and an American Legion Auxiliary 9/11 Tribute sign on the multi-story high fencing that surrounds the construction site; she said that sign bearing the American Legion Auxiliary Emblem, is the only one there for everyone to see.

I believe Ms Buckler's action should inspire our organization to follow suit and I hope you agree. This is a golden opportunity and should be a national goal for our association.

Sgt. Vincent Rios
USMC (Ret)

THE ARTICLE

A COUNTRY CHANGED:
Reflecting on 9/11-10 Years Later

We are now in the longest period, of war in our nation's history. Sept. 11 marks the 10th anniversary of the worst attacks ever to occur on U.S. soil. Al-Qaida and its 19 hijackers spent about a half million dollars plotting and hijacking planes they used to attack the United States, killing 2,995 people and causing more than $50 billion in direct economic damages. A recent "Costs of War" report from the Eisenhower Research Project at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies assesses that costs associated with the U.S, military response to the 9/11 attacks will exceed $3.7 trillion.

War is indeed costly - at home and abroad. More than 6,000 U.S. military service members have given their ultimate sacrifice in Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Enduring Freedom (OEF), and New Dawn (OND])) under Commanders-In-Chief from both political parties. More than 1,700 who have fought in OIF/OEF/OND are amputees, more than 150,000 have Traumatic Brain Injury, and more than 67,000 have Post Traumatic Stress diagnoses. Federal obligations to care for past and future veterans of these wars will likely total between $600-$950 billion, and the Watson Institute study projects those costs of war will not peak until mid-century.

Our brave Navy SEALs eliminated Osama Bin Laden, but Al-Qaida remains a multinational force that continues to threaten our security. Nearly 10 years after declaration of the War on Terror, we live very differently than we did before we were attacked. Our youngest generation is known as the "Homeland Security Generation." Travel forever changed. U.S. airline passengers annually spend a collective 46,000 years in security lines. Airport security alone grew by the billions. Oil is a confounding cost, off living factor. Costs have driven the exodus of U.S. manufacturing. And our country's "post 9/11 era" debt is beyond what most of us can even imagine.

This summer, I visited Ground Zero in New York City. Before I left, I'd gained permission to affix a flag and an American Legion Auxiliary 9/11 tribute sign on the multi-story-high fencing surrounding the reconstruction site. That sign, bearing our national organization's emblem, is the ONLY one there for everyone walking to Ground Zero to see.

A wave of patriotism engulfed our country 10 years ago. The American Legion Auxiliary keeps patriotism alive. As members, we devote our service to our veterans who served and our troops serving today. They sacrifice dearly to protect us and preserve our heritage of freedom. The American Legion Auxiliary knows that freedom isn't free. I think most of us believe it's priceless. And, so is our right to belong to the ALA. As a member, I positively think that honoring those who make me eligibile to belong is worth an extra $5 bill.

Mary "Dubbie" Buckler
Executive Director/National Secretary

MEMORIAL PAGE

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
SSGT JON R. WOODARD USMC KIA 15 MAR 68	GLENN T. GRIFFIN DELTA CO 1/1
CPL KENNETH B. NORTON USMC FOX CO 2/1 KIA 5/8/68 HILL 881	GEORGE E. FINLAY F CO 2/1
CPL REUBEN C. MCMAKINS USMC L CO 3/26 KIA 14 APR 68 HILL 881N	THOMAS PIERCE L CO 3/26
DELBERT L. LEASURE BROTHER OF DELBERT TO ALL SPECIAL FORCES WHO SERVED AT LANG VEI & FOB-3	THE KHE SANH VETERANS
SGT MAJOR JIM GAYNOR H&S CO 1/26 KIA 15 Feb 68	LAWRENCE T. COOPER FOB-3 CO C 5TH SF

LATE OBIT

MAJOR JAMES R. CANNON USMCR
KHE SANH VETERAN
ECHO CO 2/3
1936-2011

Major James R. Cannon, USMC (retired), of Los Lunas, died on July 14 after suffering a heart attack on the morning of July 7 and was kept on total life support for seven days. Jim was born in King George, Va., on Oct. 2, 1936, and was the son of Clyde and Tishie Belle Cannon of Fredericksburg, Va.

Jim was a 24-year veteran of the Vietnam War and the recipient of the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with Combat "V" and two Purple Hearts. He was an active member of many military associations and enjoyed helping many service men and woman to receive their benefits from the VA.

Jim left behind a wife, Judy. He was the loving father of two sons, Kevin R. Cannon and Corey J. Cannon; two daughters, Dawn C. Smith and Faith C. Cook; and two stepdaughters, Paula Spear and Naomi Spear. Jim had 11 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his brother, Joseph, his former wife, Freda L. Robinson, and wife, Marylin Spear, Jack L. Cannon and Lonnie A. Cannon; and sister, June Trigger.

His funeral service was held at French Mortuary on July 20, and was interred at the National Cemetery in Santa Fe with full military honors. He will be missed by all of the men who served with him, the veterans and their families who knew him, his friends, his brothers and sister and by his children, who thought the world of him. His favorite charity was the Fisher House Foundation, which helps servicemen and their families.

Visit www.fisherhouse.org if you would like to make a donation



WALKING WITH GIANTS-THE TIGERS OF HMM-262

By Beth Crumley

If they ever tell my story let them say that I walked with giants. Men rise and fall like the winter wheat, but these names will never die."

One of the things I love most about my work in Marine Corps history is the opportunity to interact with both active duty Marines, and with veterans. Over the course of the years, I have spent time with many veterans groups, and I have cherished every one of those experiences. This past weekend, however, I experienced something extraordinary. I was a guest at a reunion, held on Marine Corps Base Quantico, of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262. The gathering was much like that of any other unit held aboard Quantico. It was marked by a great trip to HMX-1, the Evening Parade at Marine Barracks, 8th and I, and a trip to the museum. Friendships were renewed, meals were shared, great stories told.

And what, you may ask, was so extraordinary about this? HMM-262 is not one of the more recognizable squadrons. Their history is not spoken in the reverential tones sometimes given to other aviation units. While someone with an in-depth knowledge of Marine Corps helicopters in Vietnam might be aware they operated out of Ky Ha, Marble Mountain, off the USS *Tripoli*, and in Quang Tri, the importance of their mission in Vietnam remains largely unknown. They are, in so many ways, the forgotten squadron, and that is almost criminal. Their accomplishments, their sacrifices, their devotion to duty should be legendary in the annals of Marine Corps history.

HMM-262, under the command of LtCol Ural W. Shadric, arrived in Vietnam on 4 December 1966.



Shortly after their arrival the command moved to Ky Ha, in Quang Tin Province. By February 1967, HMM-262 established a record for CH-46 squadrons in Vietnam by flying some 2198.2 hours in support of combat operations. (A large number of missions were flown in support of Operation Desoto.) Major General Louis B. Robertshaw sent the following message:

"Your monthly record of 2198 hours during February impressive. All time high for CH-46 in combat. Achievement made more impressive by lack of any operational aircraft accident while operating strenuous hours during inclement weather. Record provides sound evidence that operational effectiveness and flying safety are mutually supporting. My congratulations for inspiring squadron performance."

In April, HMM-262 moved from Ky Ha to Marble Mountain Air facility. Throughout the month, the squadron flew 1,425.7 hours, transported 6,602 troops and 737 tons of cargo in support of several operations, prompting General Westmoreland to send a message to all hands which read, "Your achievements mark you as the finest men our nation has ever sent into battle; you deserve the honor, respect, and the support of all the American people..." LtCol Shadrick simply said, "each of you passed through the "valley", and have proven yourselves to be the toughest "Mothah" there..." But it was at this time that the squadron began to be plagued by a shortage a pilots, a problem that would continue throughout the war.

By July 1967, Major David Althoff, a Marine who would come to be described as "the finest CH-46 pilot in the Marine Corps." arrived for his second tour in Vietnam, serving as Operations Officer with HMM-262. It was also during the month of July that the squadron began receiving missions titled "Khe Sanh Augmentation" and "Dong Ha Augmentation" as the war in Northern I Corps heated up.

It should be noted by the summer of 1967, the Marine Corps had ten squadrons of CH-46 helicopters. Of these, approximately half were being equipped with the new "D" model, while the rest were still flying the "A" model. Three of those squadrons were in Vietnam and one was on board the assault ships of the Special Landing Force operating in the South China Sea.

During that same year, there were several catastrophic incidents involving CH-46s. On 3 May, a CH-46D crashed at Santa Ana. Subsequent findings led to the grounding of all CH-46 helicopters. Ten days later all helicopters were released for flight by the Navy. That same day, a CH-46A crashed off the coast of Vietnam when the tail pylon broke off in flight. Over the course of the next few months, other crashes resulted in a comprehensive study of CH-46 problems by order of General Keith McCutcheon. Yet another crash on 3 July resulted in a "CH-46 Reliability Review Conference," scheduled to convene in August. On 31 August a CH-46A of HMM -262 "yawed at 3000 feet and lost the tail pylon." Major General Norman J Anderson, commanding the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, ordered all CH-46s be "restricted to emergency combat requirements which could not be met by other aircraft."

Technicians from Vertol, Naval Systems Command and several other agencies converged on Vietnam in an effort to pinpoint the cause of the failures. They concluded, "although the specific causes of the CH-46 accidents were varied, the ultimate structural failures occurred in the area of the aft pylon." Several structural and system modifications were suggested. The entire modification program was to be performed by personal of the Boeing/Vertol Company, but Marines were required to assemble and disassemble the aircraft.



Ernesto Gomez, Receiving Navy Cross

In Vietnam, rather than undertaking such modifications on airfields under sporadic enemy attack, General McCutcheon established a plan under which all repairs take place at MCAF Futema, Okinawa. The Marines of HMM-262 were selected to move from the Special Landing Force to Futema to prepare all of the aircraft.

On the twelfth of October, a detachment from HMM-262, consisting of 9 aircraft, 19 officers and 25 enlisted Marines embarked aboard the USS *Tripoli* to provide emergency medium lift capabilities to the Special Landing Force. This detachment came to be known as "The Poor Devils." In late November, Major Althoff took command of the detachment, now equipped with modified aircraft.

The modification program was completed in December 1967. On 10 January, the Poor Devils detachment was dissolved and joined her parent unit at HMM-262's new location at Quang Tri Air Facility Once relocated to Quang Tri, the average helicopter pilot was flying 100 hours per week.

Command chronologies for the period covering the siege of Khe Sanh and surrounding hill outposts clearly show that HMM-262 flew almost constantly in support. An entry of 23 January, 1968 clearly states, "HMM-262 continued to put forth an all out effort to Support Operation Scotland and the besieged Khe Sanh." The command chronology for February further states, "The squadron's mission during Operation Scotland was to provide aircraft for resupply and medevac to the Marine outposts on Hills 881, 861, 861A, 558 and 950 as well as the Khe Sanh Airfield." It also notes that near the end of February a strike system was evolved to resupply the outpost near Khe Sanh. (This would be the advent of the SuperGaggle. While many have taken credit for the genesis of the SuperGaggle tactics, there is compelling evidence that it evolved during a conversation between Major David Althoff and two

other officers of HMM-262.) The narrative summary of events in March, 1968, notes, "HMM-262 flew in support of Operation Scotland, Napoleon, Kentucky and Lancaster II, with the majority of operations being in support of Operation Scotland....Generally, three factors were involved in limiting total flight time. From approximately 1 March- 15 March, 1968 numerous hits in support of operation Scotland created a shortage of aircraft." There was also an issue with a shortage of Helicopter Aircraft Commanders. The April command chronology reads, "The squadron's mission, concerning Operations Scotland and Scotland II, was to provide aircraft as necessary, for resupply and medevac to the Marine outposts on Hills 881, 861, 861A, 558, 950, 689 and Khe Sanh Airfield.

All of that said, what made this gathering so extraordinary? The veterans, themselves. These are extraordinary men...I will say again, that their accomplishments, their sacrifices, their devotion to duty should be legendary in the annals of Marine Corps history, but that is not the case. One would expect such giants of the Corps to continually pat


Dave Althoff
Quang Tri
Opns Office

themselves on the back. They do not. They are an incredibly humble group of men, who believe that they were simply doing their job.

Among them, are a number of crew chiefs who did a remarkable job of keeping their birds in the air despite an incredibly grueling flight schedule and severe damage due to enemy fire: Corporal Joseph "Jake" Jacobs, Corporal Kreig "Hip" Loftin, and Corporal Robert "Lead-Ass" Harrison, so named because he was shot down or crashed so often. Said Harrison, matter-of-factly,

"Shot down/crashed... several times....I crashed into 950 and rolled down the mountain once, I was shot down a few times, but got the plane out each time. I was shot down (up) the first 30 seconds of my first combat flight, with Althoff, at Finger Lakes."

Another exceptional Marine served as crew chief with HMM-262. Lance Corporal Ernesto "Gooie" Gomez, received a Navy Cross for his actions during a medevac on Hill 881S, a Marine outpost situated between Khe Sanh Combat Base and the Laotian border, manned by India and Mike Companies, 3d Battalion, 26th Marines:

On 25 January 1968, LtCol Melvin J. Steinberg, commanding officer of HMM-262, flying the medevac mission, told Gomez, "We're going to get bloodied on this one." Gomez later wrote, "The clouds were very low and it was very cold and it was drizzling...On the way there I listened on the radios for any information that would help me complete my mission. I was told that two Marines would load the wounded."

As the aircraft touched down, they began taking enemy fire. Said Gomez:

"There was a lot of action on the hill. Tracers coming in and going out....There were shells hitting the zone we were going to land in. The smell of powder hurt your lungs. Through the smoke I saw two men running towards my bird with the wounded Marine between them....He had bandages over his eyes. I could see the blood on the bandages.... He couldn't see. We were taking .50 cal fire. They started shooting RPGs and mortars. They were trying to get the bird, and they were using the wounded Marine."

Steinberg asked, "What's going on, Gomez?" He replied, "I have to disconnect, I have to go get him." Cpl. Gomez, without hesitation, ran out of the helicopter and rushed across the fire swept terrain to the side of the wounded Marine. Enemy fire followed him. He reached the wounded man and tackled him, shielding him with his body from the hostile fire. Lifting the wounded man to his shoulder, Gomez ran back towards the chopper. "The small arms fire was very, very accurate...it hit him in the leg and spun him around....I covered him and told him, 'We're almost there, I'm gonna get you to the bird." He motioned for the left gunner to help, and together they carried the blinded Marine to the helicopter.

Reconnecting to the intercom system, Col Steinberg said, "Something big has hit us, Gomez…I'm going to try to make it to Khe Sanh. We've gotta get out of here." It wasn't until the next day that Gomez discovered two zippers on his flight suit and part of the heel of his boot had been shot off.

Nominated for the Medal of Honor, Gomez learned in early 1969 that he had been awarded a Navy Cross. Part of the citation reads,

"Corporal Gomez's heroic actions were instrumental in saving his companion's life and inspired all who observed him. By his courage, selfless concern for the safety of his fellow Marine, and unswerving devotion to duty at great personal risk, he upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps."



Bad Scene, Early 1968

Gomez later wrote;

"I'd grown old in this country….It was getting worse around Quang Tri. Not only was there Khe Sanh, but there was Hill 881S, Carol and the Rockpile. You could die at any one of those place. Some of the extracts were so hard to perform, with wounded Marines and hard to land places….Being awakened and told 'you got another mission.' I thought I had just laid down two minutes ago. ….HMM-262 lost twenty crew members in the month of February alone. We had been serving the Khe Sanh area alone….One squadron couldn't possibly do the job. We were ragged and tired beyond words…."

And then there is LtCol David Althoff, an extraordinary Marine, and an extraordinary pilot:

Major Althoff arrived in Vietnam to join HMM-262 in June, 1967, and t wasn't long before he became known as "Balls to the Wall Althoff." First Lieutenant Michael Mullen, a young pilot assigned to HMM-262 once stated,

"He was the squadron's idol. We all thought the world of him as a man, an officer and a pilot…..He would never ask one of his junior pilots to fly a mission he had never flown. When we went on a 'hairy' mission went with the knowledge that it could be


Hill 881

completed, because the Major had already done it several times before."
Corporal Vernon Crews, echoed the sentiment,

"I used to like to fly with the Major because he was so damned cool when the going got rough. I guess it used to rub off on the rest of his crew, too….We got into real scrapes with him, and at times he would return back to base with a chopper full of holes. But in 13 months he never lost a man on a mission. I doubt if you can find a better helicopter pilot in the Marine Corps."

Major Althoff was nominated for the Alfred A. Cunningham Award in 1968. Awarded to the outstanding Marine Corps aviator each year, the nomination package, prepared by LtCol Mel Steinberg, details Major Althoff's service with HMM-262. It includes the following resume of award recommendations:

"On 2 February 1968, Major Althoff launched as section leader of two CH-46s assigned a night emergency reconnaissance team extraction. The ceiling was 700 feet and gave only 300-400 feet clearance over the zone. The recon team was surrounded by an estimated 100 NVA and were pinned down by automatic weapons fire. After making radio and visual contact with the team, Major Althoff com-

menced an immediate approach. Fire was received during the approach in spite of the gunships and the 46's own suppressive fire, however, the approach was resolutely continued. Numerous hits were taken in the controls closet and cockpit as the aircraft landed, but Major Althoff calmly remained in the zone and directed suppressive fire for the gunships on several automatic weapons positions. Not until every member of the team was aboard did he lift from the zone. Immediately the aircraft took several hits causing one boost system to fail, the ramp hydraulic system was shot out, and one fuel quantity gauge fell to zero. Despite the heavy enemy fire and now IFR conditions, Major Althoff was able to return the aircraft to a friendly area and make an emergency landing."

"On 13 February 1968, Major Althoff was leading a flight of Ch-46s resupplying the hills around Khe Sanh. As his wingman took an external load onto Hill 881S, he came under heavy .50 caliber and small arms fire. The drop was completed in spite of this fire, but as the helicopter lifted a 122mm rocket exploded in the zone just behind the aircraft seriously wounding three Marines. As the pilot headed his aircraft towards Khe Sanh, a call for an emergency medevac came from Hill 881S. Major Althoff, having monitored the actions on the radio, and with full knowledge of the enemy .50 caliber and rocket positions, immediately volunteered to pick up the critically wounded men. Approaching the zone under the cover of fixed wing jets, UH-1E gunships, and his own .50 caliber machine guns, he came under intense fire. Resolutely, in spite of numerous hits, he continued into the zone. Still taking fire and more hits, he calmly waited until all the medevacs were loaded before lifting. More fire and battle damage was received while departing the hill, but Major Althoff managed to fly the crippled aircraft successfully to Khe Sanh to desperately needed medical aid."

"On 20 February 1968, Major Althoff launched in below minimum weather from Quang Tri to Khe Sanh to pick up emergency medevacs. Upon arrival the medevacs were not all ready. Given a secondary mission to resupply Hill 881S, Major Althoff proceeded directly to the hill to first pick up external cargo nets and slings. As he approached the zone he saw that no one had been alerted of his coming and waved off. One of the Helicopter Support Teams, however, had seen him approaching and was making his way to the hook-up point. At this time the hill exploded with incoming mortars and .50 caliber fire meant for the helicopter. The exposed Marine was severely wounded. The unit immediately called for an emergency medevac. No fixed wing or gunships were available, however, Major Althoff immediately started another approach to the hill. Upon landing, the Marines in the trenches started forward with the wounded man. Again, the zone came under heavy .50 caliber and mortar fire. The Marines took refuge in a shell crater, still Majotr Althoff remained on the ground. It took at least one minute to get the wounded man aboard. During this time, the aircraft received battle damage to the controls from the mortars and .50 caliber fire. Nevertheless, Major Althoff was able to lift off and get the critically wounded man to medical aid. The aircraft was declared unsafe for further flight due to the severe battle damage."



"On 21 February, 1968, Major Althoff led a flight of two CH-46s to Khe Sanh to resupply the outlying hills. The two aircraft delivered 88,000 pounds of desperately needed ammunition, water and rations. Hostile fire consisting of small arms, automatic weapons, .50 caliber and mortars were received on 15 different occasions during the day and both aircraft received numerous hits. In addition the LSA at Khe Sanh was under constant artillery, rocket, and mortar barrage, making the pickups extremely hazardous. Late in the afternoon, the weather at Khe Sanh deteriorated to the point that all the hills and even the LSA were completely socked in with a large clear area separating the two. The fog and low ceiling, however, did cause the enemy to quit shelling the hills and the LS, giving the hook-up crews a

relative degree of safety. In view of this fact, Major Althoff elected to continue and led his flight for another hour and a half in these hazardous conditions. This was accomplished by air-taxiing from 1 ½ miles out of the LSA in to the pick up point, guiding along a dirt road at an altitude of five feet, picking up the load and departing IFR to the clear area. The drop zones were also obscured and the same air -taxiing procedure was used except this time it was up the side of a mountain. The hazards of vertigo and minimum ground clearance made the successful completion of this mission extremely noteworthy." (It should also be noted that the hills had not been resupplied in three days due to the inclement weather.)

"On 13 May 1968, Major Althoff launched as leader of a two plane section assigned the mission of extracting a four man reconnaissance team. The team had walked into the area the previous night to attempt to recover the body of a Marine killed in an earlier action. As the team searched for the body, they were ambushed and one member was killed and two others seriously wounded. It was determined that additional men would be need to be inserted in order to aid the wounded to a pick-up zone. Major Althoff picked up a quick reaction force and inserted them within 100 meters of where the team was pinned down by mortar and automatic weapons fire. As the reaction force moved toward the recon team, they sustained two wounded, but managed to get the recon wounded. At this time, due to intense mortar and automatic weapons fire, the team became separated into three groups and each headed for a potential landing zone. All of the zones were within 200 meters of known active enemy positions. Major Althoff unhesitatingly landed in the first zone, and while awaiting the team to board received shrapnel from mortars through the cockpit. He steadfastly remained in the zone, however, until all members of this group were loaded. Only then did he lift and proceed to the next zone. Again, the aircraft came under mortar fire, again he waited. The third zone was no zone at all, but a bomb crater on the side of a steep slope. The steepness of the slope precluded entry through the rear ramp, so Major Althoff maneuvered to a position sideways just over the crater and hovered with the crew dropped the side door and pulled the Marines on board. While in this precarious hovering position with only inches of rotor clearance from the side of the hill, the aircraft came under automatic weapons fire and again sustained battle damage. Major Althoff, however, resolutely remained in the zone until the last man was aboard, the departed taking all members to safety." (One of those recon Marines,



Corporal James D. King, later stated, "For Major Althoff to turn and one more time fly straight into what he knew was an extremely life-threatening situation for himself, his crew, and the other Marines on board was far beyond what any Marine would view as duty. If not for his devotion to God and country and extreme bravery, myself and others certainly would have been in God's hands.")

"On 18 May, 1968, Major Althoff was diverted from resupply work at Khe Sanh to an emergency reconnaissance team extraction. The team was located on a steep ridgeline bordered on one side by trees, and covered with 8-11 feet high elephant grass. Mortars were seen impacting in the team's position and by the time Major Althoff arrived, seven of the eight men had been seriously wounded. Neither the team nor the UH-1E gunships or the 01-C Spotter overhead could spot the source of the mortars. Due to the gravity of the situation, however, Major Althoff decided to attempt an immediate extraction. During the approach two mortars landed within ten meters of the team's position, but the approach was resolutely continued. The ridge line could only accommodate two wheels so Major Althoff backed in with only his main mounts touching and the nose of the aircraft hanging over a 200-300 ft. drop to jagged rocks below. Several of the

recon team were unable to help themselves to the aircraft, so the two side gunners left the aircraft and began carrying them on board. The loading was extremely slow, and mortars continued to land within 10-30 meters of the aircraft, Major Althoff resolutely remained in the zone maintaining his precarious position for eight minutes. Automatic weapons fire was received during this time but was quickly silenced by the crew chief using the starboard .50 caliber machine gun. Not until every member was aboard did Major Althoff lift from the zone and depart."

"On 3 June, 1968, Major Althoff launched as section leader of two CH-46s with a mission to resupply Khe Sanh. They were diverted to an emergency medevac mission. The unit was located atop a 1500 ft mountain with the top 1000 ft in a cloud. The unit reported taking incoming mortar fire all morning. Major Althoff then asked the unit's radioman if he could hear the sound of his rotors. He reported that he could. With this Major Althoff disappeared into the cloud as he air-taxied up the side of the mountain (once again one of the most dangerous maneuvers in helicopter aviation) Between this aviator and the ground radio operator, neither of whom could see the other, the zone was reached and the wounded loaded on board. He was further informed that further down the mountain were five more critically wounded men, but that the steepness of the slope would not allow them to be carried to where the helicopter sat. Once again, relying solely on the directions of the radioman, Major Althoff airtaxied, in completely IFR conditions, down the mountain to a point where the wounded Marines could reach the helicopter. The five men were picked up and all were expeditiously taken to medical aid."

During his time with HMM-262, Major Althoff earned three Silver Stars, three Distinguished Flying Crosses and more than 50 Air Medals. (There are any number of Marines who flew with Althoff, or who were rescued by Althoff, that feel those Silver Stars should have been Navy Crosses or Medals of Honor.) Additionally, he was awarded the Cunningham Award and it should be noted that both the nomination package and the award citation clearly credits Major Althoff with the development of the Super Gaggle, despite the fact that many others have claimed to be responsible for it's implementation in resupplying the hill outposts:



"During his squadron's commitment to the support and resupply of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, Major Althoff conceived, developed and coordinated unique tactical concepts to insure mission accomplishment. His development of fixed-wing tactical jet, helicopter gunship, and helicopter transport time sequences and delivery techniques coupled with flawless coordination of the committed air elements before and during each resupply mission made a signal contribution to the survival of this outpost."

It should also be noted, that is was Major Althoff who flew United Press International photographer David Powell onto 881S. Powell's photographs of life on the hill are some of the most notable of the Vietnam War, and captured the grim realities of life under siege. Said Powell, "The best thing I have ever done was photograph the Marines who held the outpost on Hill 881S. I would not have been able to do that without Major Althoff and the Marines of HMM-262."
UPI photographer David Powell

And so I can only ask, why is it, that this squadron's history is not better known? Why is it that David Althoff remains largely unknown except to those very well-versed in Marine Corps history? The Marines who served with HMM-262 represent the VERY BEST of Marine Corps aviation, and this squadron deserves to have their history shouted from the rooftops. Perhaps LtCol Althoff said it best,

"When I first checked into HMM 262 in June of 67 I knew that I was joining a Squadron that had a great combat reputation. After I was there a short while I discovered the reason for that well deserved reputation. I soon had total confidence in all members of the team that made up this top-notch combat

outfit. From top to bottom, or rather from one end to the other, I developed a very deep respect for each and every one of you. I knew I could depend on the quality of the maintenance, the skills of the HACS and the Co-Pilots, the expertise of the crew chiefs and gunners and the support that was provided by everyone else on the "Team" (the bravest and most dependable men I have ever met).

What I saw was complete and total dedication and commitment to the mission that we were assigned. I especially enjoyed the closeness and camaraderie that we shared as we flew, worked, laughed and partied together. We also cried together over those Marines we brought back in body bags or shot to pieces, and our roommates and friends who gave their all in that strange land so far away.

I had the privilege of serving with you on the SLF aboard the Tripoli and the Valley Forge. The "POOR DEVILS". We then went ashore at Quang Tri in December of 67 and supported the troops all along the DMZ from the mouth of the CuaViet river on the coast to Dong Ha, Con Thien, Gio Lin, Camp Carroll LZ Stud, the Rock Pile, Razorback Ridge, Khe Sanh, Lang Vei, all of the hills around Khe Sanh, Hue, Phu Bai, and a whole lot of other "bad assed" spots, too numerous to mention. I left the squadron in July of 68 with tears in my eyes, knowing what those of you that were staying behind would be facing in the months to come.

I will never ever look at a young American in his late teens or very early twenties, and have any doubts about what he can and will do if he is called upon to fight for his country. I saw so many of you risk everything and willingly go far above and beyond the call of duty to rescue your fellow Marines from the most desperate situations; never hesitating to go back and do it again, day after day, night after night.

The Squadron was aptly named the FLYING TIGERS and each of us will carry the mark of the TIGER to our graves because it was so indelibly inscribed on our bodies, our hearts and on our minds. I'm proud to be numbered among the finest group of fighting Marines in the history of the Corps, HMM-262."

Well said, Col Althoff, and to all of the veterans of HMM-262, my thanks for allowing me the honor and privilege of spending time with you, and "walking with Giants." Your accomplishments, your devotion to the mission at hand, your sacrifices, were nothing less than extraordinary.

**** The photos in this blog are courtesy of Colonel David Althoff and David Powell.***

YES THERE WAS ARTILLERY AT KHE SANH

By Brian P. Heslin
G BTRY 3/12

Dear Tom, I do not remember where or when I heard or read the statement "If you were not 0311 you were just support." The author or speaker of that statement could not have really served at Khe Sanh, if they truly believed that. Our unit, G Btry 2/12 had convoyed via route 9 to the KSCB., in late March or early April, 1968.

I do remember that my friend and bunker-mate, Leslie G. Aputen was killed during a mortar attack on 15 May 1968. That was shortly after we arrived, so I guess we were not Siege Marines. We took a great deal of incoming, whether or not that qualified our unit as "Siege Marines".

Our Arty unit saw a lot of action in support of 0311 Marines. I recall one direct fire mission supporting a special forces unit that was being over run about a mile northwest of our position on the base. They requested artillery help with the NVA already in their wire. We informed them that some of their own troops could be hurt, and they still requested the mission, due to the critical situation they were in.

We killed a lot of NVA and stopped the attack, without hurting a single one of the special forces soldiers. The special forces unit C/O gave our C/O an M-14 with an engraved plate, thanking us for our support.

Nothing was ever said about our grubby artillery men's outstanding life-saving mission, so I guess we were just "support". Tom I guess we can't all be heroes so if you ever see the "Rambo" that made the statement regarding 0311's, give him my best.

KSV VETERANS IN THE NEWS

By Craig Tourte

It started innocently enough with a short email from Tom Eichler copying an email to me he had received from a Military Channel documentary producer. Since the producer was in Southern California and Tom lived in Chicago, Tom requested that I assist the producer in any way that I was able. See email:

Hello Mr. Eichler, I hope this finds you well. My name is Greg DeHart. I am producing a series of















three documentaries for The Military Channel titled, Battle Gear. The episodes are Bombers, Armor, and Remote Operated Vehicles. Basically, the series tracks the evolution of each technology. In the bomber show, one of the bombers I am highlighting is the B-52. Specifically, I am covering their involvement at the Battle of Khe Sahn (sic). My hope is to get the perspective of those on the ground during the time of B-52 bombing runs. Respectfully, my hope is that you, or someone you recommend, would agree to do an on-camera interview about their experience with the B-52s. Ideally, that person would be on the west coast. But I am happy to go where ever you see fit. Is this something you might help with?
Thank you for your time. I look forward to your response.
All the Best
Greg DeHart
Producer - Battle Gear: Bombers
Workaholic Productions

After a brief conversation with Mr. DeHart, I made several attempts to find someone who lived in Southern California as Mr. DeHart related that he would be doing some filming at the Marine Corps Base of Camp Pendleton. I tried to interest someone who had expertise as it related to this subject and in-front camera talent and experience, but they all were unavailable. Mr. DeHart told me that he was behind in production, so the last person I recommended was my good friend and close neighbor - of seven miles - Steve Wiese (B/1/26). Steve has done this sort of things on more than one occasion including a local Northern California filing on a Vietnam related subject; his latest experience was the documentary film Bravo, Common Men, Uncommon Valor.

Steve is gregarious and articulate; I on the other hand, am just a bit reserved. I told Mr. Dehart that Steve would do a wonderful job in his oral recall of his experience with B-52 bombing runs around the Khe Sanh Base but that neither of us had anything to do with the planning, directing or guidance of the aircraft. Reminding Mr. Dehart that we were both rather lowly enlisted personnel. Mr. DeHart told me our experience of the bombings was just what he was looking for. I spent a few minutes with Steve discussing the subject and he agreed to participate, not knowing I had already volunteered his participation.

Mr. DeHart arrived at my house along with cameraman Lon Magdich, and set up their equipment. I was a bit surprised when Mr. Dehart said that he wanted to interview me in addition to Steve for the documentary. I explained to Mr. DeHart that my experience on the subject was limited and that because of the incoming during the Siege, my world was small and limited to just what was occurring around me and that I was really not that aware of what was occurring elsewhere on or near the base. Mr. DeHart told me that was what he wanted to hear and the next thing I knew I was sitting on a chair with makeup on my face, a little microphone attached to my shirt and a camera in front of me. The filming was much like having a conversation with a friend, with Mr. DeHart just out of camera view while I answered a few questions.

I hummed and hawed, repeated myself and basically did a terrible job of explaining that my recall of B52 operations around the base was primarily at night when I could hear the bombs falling from the aircraft, the bombs hitting the ground and off in the distance the sound of the high flying planes leaving the area. I'm afraid I made quite a mess of the whole interview but of course Mr. Dehart told me that I did just fine and my recall was what he was looking for.

After Mr. Dehart finished with me they situated the camera on Steve as he sat on a chair. I found it pretty darn funny when they placed a bib around his shoulders while makeup was applied. I thought Steve looked much better with the makeup and suggested that he might consider using it more often ; Steve did a wonderful job during his interview, recalling his many experiences and observations.

I found the whole filming experience both entertaining and educational, but I fear most of my interview will find itself on the cutting room floor, as it should be. I would frame my performance as inadequate and disappointing. I was grateful Steve agreed to participate in this and I did not try to go it alone. Steve's performance on the other hand was Academy Award material. Mr. DeHart told me that he expected the series to be shown on the Military Channel sometime in December.

SUMMER CAMP 1968
Mike Bradbury's Response to a War Critic

Having just posted off from an aggravating blog, the timing is perfect for this one. This was already scheduled to be my next piece anyway, so with that in mind, it's only fitting to "re-title" it, and dedicate it to the JUNKYARD DOG, a contributor who has taken delight in taking "Post-Shots" at the military, retirement benefits, etc. But the snide remark about that "summer camp" I attended in 68, well, you know the old saying, a picture is worth a thousand words, and sometimes you do have to "draw pictures" for some of these liberals, and "ARMCHAIR RAMBO's" .so I certainly wouldn't want to disappoint anybody!!





My Vietnam tour began in September of 1967 with "K" Company, 3/26, here at Camp Evans (not too far from Da Nang). As my 3 room air-conditioned apartment wasn't wired & plumbed yet, I am seen here filling sandbags for a bunker.....at the right are my two other room mates, Randy Mapel and Doug Weber.





While I was over there, the bulk of our air support came from the Marine Air Wing in Da Nang, with their F4-B's.The Marines had airplanes too





There were Skyraiders and Huey Cobra's as well (we didn't have "stealth & drones" back then)





As we had no shower facilities, sometimes we'd get to smelling pretty bad, so we'd get "evicted" from one "campground" to the other, as pictured here, from Hill 55 to Quang Tri





Navy Corpsman Jim "Doc" Thomas. To this day, we're best of friends. "Doc" loved to "camp out" too, so we turned down a barracks in Saigon with "houseboy & maid service", to dig our own apartment here at Dong Ha. (We knew if we did a good enough job, the Colonel might give us our merit badges.)



Women & kids a mile or so on the outskirts of Hue City. I took this shot just before we SLAUGHTERED them all! (We were well-known for "baby-killing" and "village-burning", as any professor from Berkeley can attest to-----those guys know EVERYTHING!)





**" Hey, did you guys hear we're going to Khe Sanh for Christmas?"
NEAT!!.....do they have hot chow and internet service there?**





At Khe Sanh, when Isaac Walker & I found out we were gonna have to HIKE up to Hill 861 with all of our gear, we decided to write the ACLU to PROTEST this kind of treatment by LBJ!





Doc", in the trenchline of our new home on 861.....and our 3rd Platoon M-60 machinegun team, Padgett, Moore & Robinson. "Hey guys, wanna send out for pizza tonight?...and a case of brew?

"



At this point, I'd Like to thank Kodak for building such a solid product. I'd bought this 124 at Camp Pendleton, carried it in my pack, all over 'Nam, and it still works TODAY.....if there were still the old 126 cartridges for it!





We weren't at 861 long, when the NVA's neighborhood "welcome wagon" started inviting us to picnics and BBQ's You should have been there with us, JYD.....beats any high school or college "tailgate party" you've ever attended!





But the smell of burning cordite was so offensive, the Air Force flew C-123's through our valley to give the place a sweet "orange" scent.





As you can see right here from our trenchline, they dropped that crap right in our laps. At right is my Geneva Convention Card. (because I'd enlisted, I never HAD a DRAFT CARD TO BURN!)





Left: expressing my feelings about those "First Aid Kits to the NVA from Berkeley, and the rest of the yellow-bellies back home. And the last shot is Doug Weber & I in Okinawa in November of '68.....13 months later & heading home to the "tickertape parades", free dinners, and minted commemorative coins!" You REALLY MISSED OUT, JYD.....but it's good that the youth of America has all of you well-read professors to keep us all straight about "what really happened at SUMMER CAMP."

PLEASE NOTE THE ZIP CODE CHANGE FOR MAILING REGISTRATION WAS LEFT OFF ORIGINAL WHICH WAS MAILED TO THE MEMBERSHIP

REUNION WASHINGTON DC REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration and event cost. Please enter number of people attending, which event and the Saturday Memorial Banquet. Send amount payable to the KSV. Make a copy of this form before mailing. Your check or money order will serve as your confirmation. Refunds-Cancellations (2) weeks prior to reunion (If Non-Emergency). For questions call Tom Eichler 773-625-2101 Fax 773-625-8021 Email teic1448@aol.com Russ Turner 636-282-2263 Email RKT88@PRODIGY.NET

REUNION REGISTRATION & EVENTS	Price Per Person	Number Attending	Total
Registration Fee Includes Hospitality Room & Administrative Cost, Liquor, & Food Licenses & Snacks. DJ , Van Rental, Etc	**$ 40.00**		
Sunday 26 Aug 12 FREE DAY ENJOY THE SIGHTS OF WASHINGTON			
Monday 27 Aug 12 FREE DAY ENJOY THE SIGHTS OF WASHINGTON			
Tuesday 28 Aug 12 Registration Opens 1000-1700 Hospitality Room & PX Opens			
Wednesday 29 Aug 12 -Registration Opens 1000-1700 Hospitality Room & PX Opens, Beer, Soda, Snacks. Bus Trip To Vietnam, Korean, & WWII , and other Memorials 1200-1700. Group Photo At Iwo Jima Memorial	**15.00**		
Thursday 30 Aug 12 Registration Opens 1000-1200-. Hospitality Room & PX Opens, Beer, Soda, Snacks. Bus Trip To Marine Corps Museum 1200-1600 Lunch Available At Museum Cafeteria. Stop at Marine Corps PX	**15.00**		
Friday 31 Aug 12 Registration Opens 1000-1200. Hospitality Room & PX opens, Beer, Soda, Snacks. 1800 Trip to 8TH & I for the Marine Corps Sunset Parade . Buses Depart Hotel at 1800.	**15.00**		
Saturday 01 Sep 12 Hospitality Room Open 1000-1800.The Memorial Banquet will begin at 1800 Hours (Cocktails) 1900 (Dinner) Music & Dancing after Dinner. DJ	**50.00**		
Sunday 02 Sep 12 CHECK OUT (HAVE A SAFE TRIP SEE YOU NEXT YEAR)			
TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE TO Khe Sanh ASSOCIATION			

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: Khe Sanh Veterans

OFFICE USE ONLY **Check#** _____ **Date Received** **Name Tag Completed**_____	**Send Check, Money Order or Credit Card Information To:** **The Khe Sanh Veterans** **Russell Turner** **3168 Meadowfield DR Arnold, MO 63010**

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

Name On Card:	VISA	MASTER CARD	DISCOVER
Card Number:	OTHER CARD TYPE: OUR BANK DOES NOT TAKE AM/XPRESS		
Address For Credit Card:	THREE DIGIT CODE ON BACK OF CARD:		
EXP DATE:	**NOTE: Address Must Be The One Card Is Issued To:**		

NAME TAG INFORMATION: PLEASE PRINT

NAME:	UNIT SERVED WITH:		
SPOUSE or COMPANIONS NAME:			
Other Guest Names (1)	(2)	(3)	
Address:	City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:	Emergency Contact:		
Email:			
Special Needs:			
Arrival Date:	Departure Date:	Are You Staying At Hotel: Yes — No Circ	

1.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student or who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization. Your contributions are tax deductible.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 6/1/2012 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid- up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA in Vietnam and if family members are associate members of KSV, Inc. Children of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and financial need. A point selection system is included in the application forms.
Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the "***Red Clay***" Newsletter.

THE AWARDS

The award will **be $300.00 minimum** per school year for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each year applied.

2.

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to:

Mr. Dan Fisher
Chairman, KSVSF Committee
6050 52nd St. No.
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

1.The money is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited institution of the candidate's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant.

3. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

4. The Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon proof of registration sent to the Review Committee Chairman when it becomes available.

5. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of July of the current school year.

6. Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair **on or before June 1 of the current school year to be attended.**

7. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points (attach last school GPA transcript)

- **GPA 4.0 = 40 points**
- **GPA 3.5 = 35 points**
- **GPA 3.0 = 30 points**
- **GPA 2.5 = 25 points**

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 35 points total

- **Military veteran = 15 points**
- **Student government = 10 points**
- **Community related services = 5 points**
- **Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 5 points**

c. Short essay (60 words) on education goals and self = 10 points

d. Financial Need. Max = 15 points (the Fund is designed to help those in need of educational financial support).

3.

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation Application Form

Date:_____

1. Applicant Information:

Name: last_____, **first**_____ **MI**_____

Address: street_____, **city**_____ **state**_____**zip**_____
Home phone:_____ **E-mail address:**_____
Birthdate:_____

2. Sponsor Information (Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member):
Name: last_____ **first**_____
Relationship to applicant_____
Branch of service_____
Unit served at Khe Sanh_____**dates**_____

3. School Information:
School name: _____
School Address: street_____, **city**_____
State_____ **zip code**_____
Phone number:_____
Curriculum/intended course of study_____
School year to be funded_____

4. Applicant Personal History
a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, offices held, etc)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. List school honors, prizes, community activities participated in, military service, volunteer service to community, church, or government.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4.

c. ENCLOSE THIS APPLICATION FORM, A COPY OF YOU PROPOSED OR CURRENT TRANSCRIPT, A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF, GPA TRANSCRIPT AND A BRIEF PERSONAL SUMMARY (60 WORDS) TELLING OF YOUR VOCATIONAL PLANS AND FINANCIAL NEED ADDRESSED TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.

BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL FILLED FORMS FOR YOUR RECORDS!

I SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant Actual Signature of KSV Member Parent, Grandparent, or Guardian

Note* APPLICATION DEADLINE June 1ST OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR

* IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, ALL INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Committee

_____

Thomas Eichler, President Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

ADDITIONS AFTER NEW KSV DIRECTORY PRINTED

BOAN, WILLIAM S
Nickname SHERILL
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 81's
Address 2 PELICAN LANE
LUGOFF SC 29078
Phone 803-438-1743
Cell Fax
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CALDWELL, SCOTT
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Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 2/26
Address PO BOX 866
TAMPA FL 33601
Phone 813-245-5548
Cell Fax
Email BEIT79@HOTMAIL.COM

CARTER, NICK
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC L CO 3/1 9TH MAB
Address 2618 WESTRIDGE LN NW
ROCHESTER, MN 55901
Phone 507-280-4000
Cell 507-202-4247 Fax
Email GEROITER@CHARTER.NET

CORNELL, FRANK
Nickname
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Address 660 WOODBY RD
BEAVERTON MI 48624
Phone 989-435-7238
Cell Fax
Email

CRUZ, RICHARD
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC B CO 1/26
Address 3099 W. BROAD ST
COLUMBUS OH 43204
Phone 614-272-2265
Cell Fax
Email

GARCIA, ADRIAN J
Nickname SONNY
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 1/9
Address PO BOX 1717
EL DORADO HILLS CA 95763
Phone 916-870-9411
Cell 916-939-0784 Fax
Work 916-939-2497
Email PF010084@SBCGLOBAL.NET

GOHL, ANDY
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC 1/13 MORTAR SECTION
Address 1308 CHRISTY CIR
ROSEVILLE MN 55113
Phone 651-639-8147
Cell 651-398-7936 Fax
Email ANDY@MNLOTTERY.COM

GONZALES, RAMON O
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 3/26 106 PLT COMMANDER
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ALBUQUERQUE NM 87120
Phone 505-831-4358
Cell Fax
Email

HILL, DAVID B
Nickname DAVE
Branch/Unit USMC G CO 2/26 & L CO 3/9
Address 6705 SW 16TH ST
DES MOINES IA 50315-5444
Phone 515-238-0509
Cell Fax
Email

HILL, DAVID K
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC 2/3 BLT SHORE PARTY
HILL FIGHTS
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MASON OH 45040
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Cell 513-509-7833 Work 513-946-8750
Email DHALL1@CINCI.RR.COM

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Cell 703-477-4074 Fax
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LEE, JAMES R
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MILLER, ROBERT W
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Work 507-288-3388
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STOLTZ, TERRY A
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HUMBOLDT TN
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RECENT CHANGES TO KSV DIRECTORY

ASHFORD, RICHARD E
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Address 2151 INDUSTRIAL BLVD # 101
LAKE HAVASU CITY AZ 86403
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BREEDING, EARLE G (MAJ)
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Address 221 TIMBERLINE DR
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CHAMBERLIN, CHARLES N
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Branch/Unit USMC C CO 1/26 RADIOS
Address PO BOX 131
JEFFERSON CITY MT 59638
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Work 215-699-0520
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73129-8710
Phone 405-672-4582
Cell 405-431-9794 Fax
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Address 5201 BRIXWORTH PL NE
ATLANTA GA 30319-5324
Phone
Cell Fax
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AKDELL BREDE, THE MAYOR OF ROCHESTER WELCOMED THE KSV. HE WAS PRESENTED WITH GIFTS FROM THE KSV







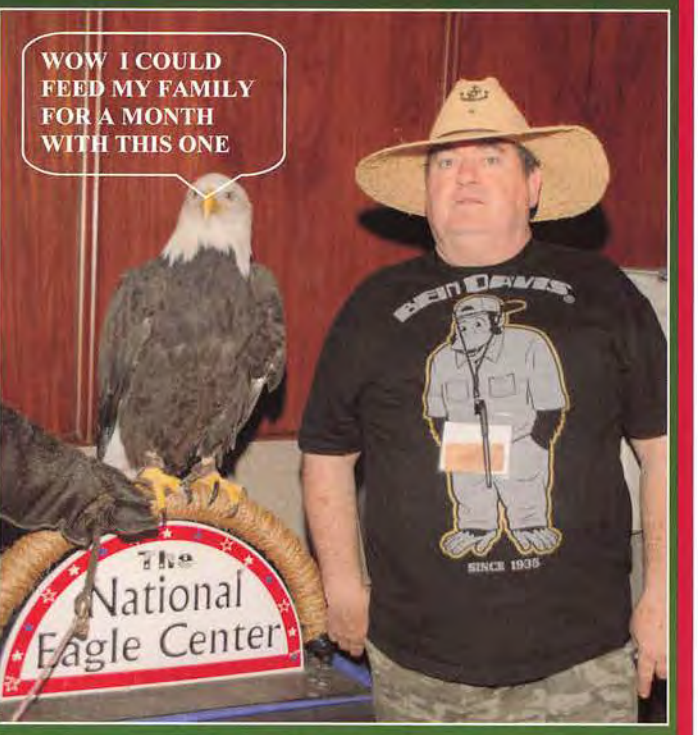





HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND MERRY CHRISTMAS KHE SANH MARINES

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

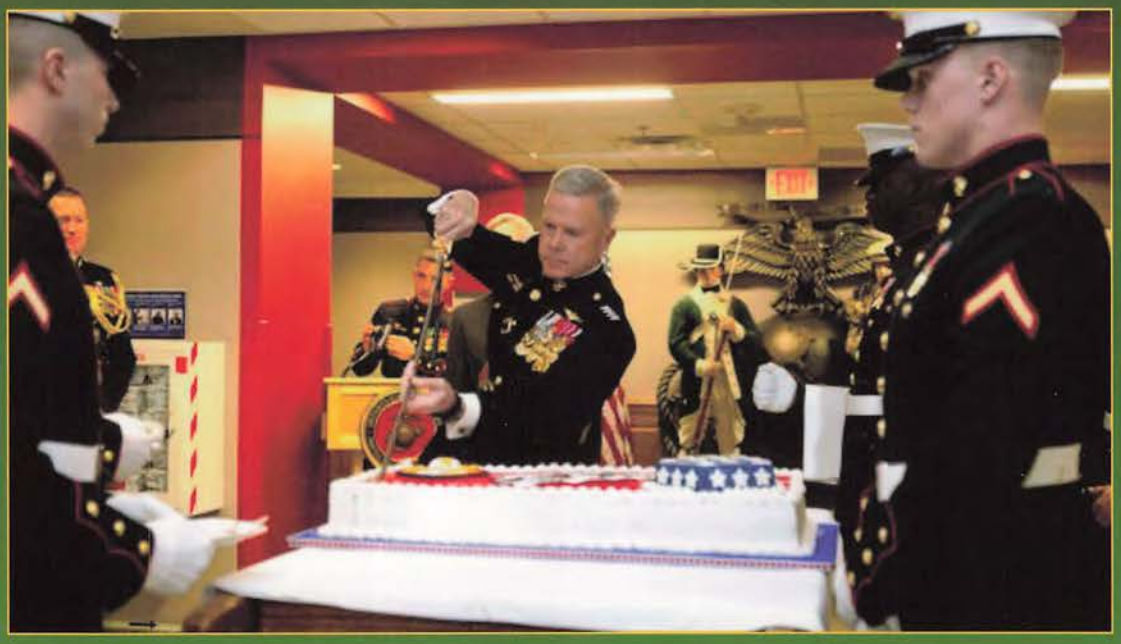

HAPPY 236TH BIRTHDAY



SUMMER 2012

RED CLAY

ISSUE 80



COL WILLIAM H. DABNEY
C/O HILL 881S KHE SANH
SEPT 28, 1934-15, FEB 2012



COL DAVID E. LOWNDS
C/O 26TH MARINE
REGIMENT KSCB
OCT 4, 1920-AUG 31, 2011



COL JOHN W. RIPLEY
C/O LIMA CO 3/3
JUNE 29, 1939-OCT 28, 2008



WELCOME
ABOARD
US MARINES



OUR
LEADERS
REPORTING TO
THEIR NEW
DUTY STATION

When a Marine is assigned to his final squad,
And the man with top rank is none but God,
He knows for his service, his reward will be great,
For it's only Marines who guard Heaven's Gate."

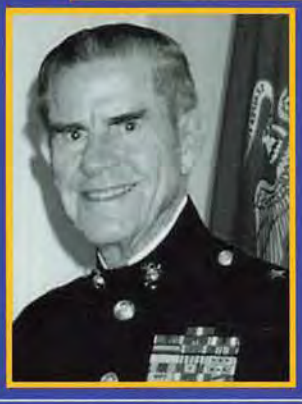

BGEN JACOB E. GLICK
CG TF GLICK
FEB 12, 1920-AUG 24, 2011



COL BERTRAM A. MAAS
VMO-6
JUNE 14, 1931- MAY 28, 2011



LTCOL GERALD F. KURTH
H&S CO 2/26 S-3
1936-to DEC 24, 2011



September 28, 1934 – February 15, 2012
IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF
Colonel WILLIAM H. DABNEY
United States Marine Corps
Commanding Officer Hill 881S
KHE SANH VIETNAM 1968

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to:
William H. Dabney (0-80399), Colonel [then Captain], U.S. Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism while serving as Commanding Officer of two heavily reinforced rifle companies of the Third Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, THIRD Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam from 21 January to 14 April 1968. During the entire period, Colonel Dabney's force stubbornly defended Hill 881S, a regional outpost vital to the defense of the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

Following his bold spoiling attack on 20 January 1968, shattering a much larger North Vietnamese Army (NVA) force deploying to attack Hill 881S, Colonel Dabney's force was surrounded and cut off from all outside ground supply for the entire 77 day Siege of Khe Sanh. Enemy snipers, machine guns, artillery, and 120-millimeter mortars responded to any daylight movement on his position. In spite of deep entrenchments, his total casualties during the siege were close to 100 percent. Helicopters were his only source of re-supply, and each such mission brought down a cauldron of fire on his landing zones. On numerous occasions Colonel Dabney raced into the landing zone under heavy hostile fire to direct debarkation of personnel and to carry wounded Marines to evacuation helicopters.

The extreme difficulty of re-supply resulted in conditions of hardship and deprivation seldom experienced by American forces. Nevertheless, Colonel Dabney's indomitable spirit was truly an inspiration to his troops. He organized his defenses with masterful skill and his preplanned fires shattered every enemy probe on his positions. He also devised an early warning system whereby NVA artillery and rocket firings from the west were immediately reported by lookouts to the Khe Sanh Combat Base, giving exposed personnel a few life saving seconds to take cover, saving countless lives, and facilitating the targeting of enemy firing positions.

Colonel Dabney repeatedly set an incredible example of calm courage under fire, gallantly exposing himself at the center of every action without concern for his own safety. Colonel Dabney contributed decisively to ultimate victory in the Battle of Khe Sanh, and ranks among the most heroic stands of any American force in history. By his valiant combat leadership, exceptional bravery, and selfless devotion to duty, Colonel Dabney reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.



HILL 881S



KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS
GROUP HOPING TO ADD NEW MEMBERS
MARINE CORPS LEAGUE'S KENNEBEC VALLEY DETACHMENT 599

By Keith Edwards Staff Writer

Submitted By Ralph Sargent C & W BTRY 1/13

AUGUSTA -- They wear the uniform proudly, these old Marines.

MEMBERS WANTED

Anyone interested in joining the Marine Corps League's Kennebec Valley Detachment 599 may just show up to one of its meetings, which are held the first Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at Kennebec Valley Federal Credit Union in Augusta. Call Sargent at 622-0316, or email johnpoulin@msn.com.But they'd like others to wear it with them, even those who may have never worn a uniform before.

The Marine Corps League's Kennebec Valley Detachment 599 is 65 members strong, part of a statewide organization of about 500, but it wants to get stronger so they can do more in the community and for their fellow Marines and their families.

The nonprofit fraternal group is made up mostly of retired Marines, but is also open to active duty Marines and even, through an associate membership program, to those who have never been a Marine or even served in the armed services.

The detachment is hosting a statewide meeting of the Marine Corps League on Sunday at the Augusta Elks Lodge at 397 Civic Center Drive. People interested in joining may come check it out to get a feel for the group, according to John E. Poulin, 65, of Augusta, commandant of the detachment. Poulin is a Vietnam veteran who served in the Marines from 1963 to 1967, and in the Army Reserves for 11 years, including time as a drill sergeant.

"We'd like to grow; we know there are a lot of Marines and (Navy) Corpsman in this area, but they don't know we exist," said **Ralph F. Sargent, 77, of Augusta, junior vice commandant of the detachment. He served in the Marines from 1952 to 1976, including the siege of Khe Sanh**, Vietnam, **and retired as a sergeant major.** "We're not in parades. At our age, we're not marchers anymore. We're trying to build this unit up, and have larger participation, so we can do more for the community."

Their community involvements are many, including fundraising and participation in Toys for Tots; the Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care; Good Shepherd Food Bank; Young Marines; Wounded Warriors; a homeless veterans project; and a program donating free, hand-carved canes to veterans.

"We're active; we're not just sitting on our laurels," said Donald T. Brawn, 82, of Augusta, senior vice commandant of the local detachment, an active Marine from 1950 to 1952, including service in the Korean War.

Sunday's events begin at 10 a.m. with training to certify people to serve in honor guards, including the proper care and handling of the flag at funerals. The training will be followed by "pack growl," of the Military Order of the Devil Dogs, which is closed to the public and which members declined to discuss. There will also be a lunch courtesy of the Elks, followed by their regular business meeting from 1 to 2 p.m.

The Marine Corps are the smallest of the armed services and its post-active duty organization tends to have a harder time attracting as many members as, say, the American Legion, said Bill Schutz, 70, of Windsor. Schutz is sergeant at arms for the detachment and a Navy Corpsman from 1960 to 1966 who served with the Marines for the last two years of his service.

What the group offers, in addition to the chance to help others through donations and other activities, is camaraderie, group members said.

"There's that connection you share, because you had the same experience," Poulin said. "Once a Marine, always a Marine. Not a day goes by I don't think, 'What are we doing for vets? Are we doing enough? And how can we raise more and do more?' We need members, younger members. We want to grow and do more."

Through their associate member program, they also welcome men and women who didn't serve in the

Marines, but who share their ideals. Associate members can't hold elected office with the group and face some other limitations, but they may participate in many of the group's activities.

"We welcome them," Poulin said. "We're not a paramilitary organization, though we do wear the uniform proudly."

OBIT

1ST SGT ROY D. LOGAN USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
B CO 1/26
by Mac - Milton McNeely

With heavy heart I must share the sad news that Bravo Company First Sergeant Roy D. Logan Sr., passed January 18, 2012.

Top Logan served with B/1/26 before, during and for a short time after the Khe Sanh siege in Vietnam.

His tour of duty in the Corps includes service during WWII after which he was discharged but called again to serve during the Korean conflict. Choosing to make a career of it at that point later brought him to Vietnam in 1967. He retired from the Marine Corps shortly after leaving Vietnam and returned to his home and family in Pennsylvania.

Ms. Patricia Cummings, Top's daughter, wrote to inform us of his passing and said, ' We had a military funeral with an honor guard from the American Legion & a contingent of Marines as casket guards. He was buried in his dress blues because as you know "Once a Marine always a Marine!"

I have several fond memories of Top, but the thing that stands out the most right now is how much he cared for the men serving with him. One of the first things he talked about after regaining contact a few years ago, was the losses of February 25, 1968, the delay of retrieval of those lost, and the condition of his Marines when they were finally repatriated.

Next is the calming influence he had on those around him even during some of the most stress filled life-threatening times during the Siege. Having served with three different First Sergeants in Vietnam, I can sincerely say that Top Logan was the one that I admire and respect most. The best of the best at a time when it was most needed.

A memorial service was held for Roy David Logan Sr. on January 21, 2012, at Cutright Funeral Homes Juniata Valley Chapel, Alexandria, Pennsylvania. February 17, 1921 - January 18, 2012. The memorial pamphlet pictured the American Flag on the front with the Marine Corps Hymn on the overleaf.

Semper Fidelis First Sergeant Logan -- You are missed.

OBIT

LT COL GERALD F. KURTH USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
H&S CO 2/26 S-3



LtCol. Gerald F. Kurth, USMC, 75, passed away unexpectedly in Scottsdale, AZ on Dec. 24, 2011. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Marta Kurth, his son, T. Christopher Kurth (wife Julie), and 2 grandsons, David and Adam Kurth. Jerry retired from the U.S. Marine Corps after 20 years' service.

He served in Vietnam in the battle of Khe Sanh, receiving the Bronze Star. He was I&I for the 24th Marine Regiment based in Kansas City, MO during the restructuring of the 4th Marine Division. Working as a Financial Advisor for 23 years, he retired from Wells Fargo Advisors in 2009. Jerry's larger-than-life personality was reflected in the energy, perseverance and conviction he brought to everything he pursued. He was an exceptional man with a passion for business, history, politics, sports, fun and people. Dedication to family, country, Marine Corps, business clients and friends were his steadfast priorities in life. Jerry and Marta traveled extensively worldwide and he was in the process of au-

thoring a book about their travels. A funeral mass was held at St. Patrick Catholic Community Church in Scottsdale, AZ followed by burial with full military honors at the VA National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona in Phoenix, AZ. Memorials can be made to either: The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund, http://semperfifund.org or The Marine Corps Scholarship Fund, http://www.mcsf.org.

OBIT

ANN P. MACAULAY WIFE OF KHE SANH VETERAN KEVIN C. MACAULAY B CO 3RD RECON

LEWISTON Ann P. Macaulay, of Lewiston, NY, passed away on Thursday, March 1, 2012, at her home, under the care of her family and Niagara Hospice.

She was born in New York City, on January 5, 1948, the daughter of the late Edward W. and Josephine (Hardecker) Quigley.

Ann graduated from Our Lady of Wisdom Academy in 1965 and from Niagara University, with a degree in Nursing in 1969. While at Niagara she was the captain of Women's Basketball Team. She returned to Long Island after graduation and became a Public Health Nurse with the Nassau County Department of Health from 1969, until retiring in 2006. Ann was also the Assistant Director of the Nassau County's Early Intervention Program from 2003 to 2006. Ann moved back to Lewiston in 2006 and was a member of the Niagara University Nursing Alumni Council, serving as secretary from 2008 to 2011.

She is survived by her husband, Kevin C. Macaulay; they were married in Woodhaven, Queens on October 2, 1971; five sons, Dennis K. (Kara) Macaulay, Brian P. (Suzanne) Macaulay, Kevin M., Patrick E. and Sean T. Macaulay; four daughters, Mary C. (William) Kaminski, Kathleen A. (Victor) DeJesus, Meghan B. and Margaret P. Macaulay; one sister, Mary (William) Shaw; ten grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be made in her memory to the Niagara University College of Nursing Clinical Skills Center, Office of Institutional Advancement, P.O. Box 2008, Niagara University, NY 14109.

OBIT

WATSON T. MOSEBAY JR. F CO 2/3 USMC KHE SANH VETERAN November 28, 1941—January 17, 2012



Watson T. Mosebay,Jr., also known as "Sonny," died in hospital of cardiac arrest, Jan. 17,2012. He was 70 years old.

He is survived by a loving sister, Helen Mosebay Shepperson; his maternal aunt, Madelyn Carter, and uncle, Albert Carter, Sf. Also included are many cousins, allover the USA, and other countries, and many, many friends.

Watson was born in Washington, PA in Nov., 1941. That was a happy day for the Mosebay family. Watson graduated from Washington High School, in Washington, Pa., and received his BS in Political Science from Washington and Jefferson College, Washington, PA in 1965. Right out of college, he was drafted into the Army. He didn't like that so he decided to be, "the few; the proud" and joined the Marine Corp.

After boot camp, at Camp Lejeune, SC, where he turned 25, he was sent to Viet Nam, where he served 13 months, 3 days. When "Sonny" returned from Viet Nam, and finally became a civilian, again, he joined the Xerox Corporation where he became one of its top sales reps. Later he would join Ayrest Pharmaceuticals, where, again, he excelled. When Sonny's mother became ill, he returned to New Jersey, and has remained in South Jersey ever since.

Watson's great love was the Marine Corp, and he was a member of many military organizations, and always encouraged vets, and their wives, to do all they could do to advance the cause of veterans, and especially the ones who had/have seen combat. He

was a life member of the VFW, the MOC, the American Legion, Khe Sanh Veterans, and quite a few others; and he always participated in any way he could. He used to say, "Once a Marine, always a Marine. And that requires all you can give of your time and money."

Watson Mosebay, liked people, and people liked him. He was a wonderful son, brother, and friend. He was also a great patriot.

OBIT

BRIGIDAIRE GENERAL JACOB E. GLICK USMC CG T/F GLICK 3RD MARINE DIVISION KHE SANH VETERAN February 12, 1920-August 24, 2011

Brigadier General Jacob Ezra Glick retired from active duty, July 1, 1971. As Deputy Director for Command/Areas and Deputy Director for Operations (Regional Operations), Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, from September 1968 - June 1971, he earned the Distinguished Service Medal. In this critical position, he directed the Pacific Division in developing policy and operational recommendations, reviewed all plans pertaining to the Pacific Command, and other matters requiring action by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.



Born on February 12, 1920, in Burlington, Iowa, he graduated from Mount Carmel High School (Illinois) in 1937 and from the U. S. Naval Academy in 1941 with a B.S. degree in Electrical Engineering. On graduation from the Naval Academy in December 1941, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps.

During World War II, Lieutenant Glick saw duty in the South Pacific with the 12th Defense Battalion, FMF, as a Company Commander and Radar officer until 1944. He received a Letter of Commendation with Commendation Ribbon from the Commanding General, FMF, Pacific, for meritorious conduct during the seizure and occupation of Woodlark Island, British New Guinea, the assault and occupation of Cape Gloucester, New Britain, and the assault and occupation of Peleliu Island in the Palau group.

Returning to the United States in December 1944, he reported to Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, DC, where he became Radar Officer, G-4 Division, until June 1946. From there, Captain Glick returned to the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis and received his M.S. degree in Electrical Engineering in May 1949. After attaining his Master's Degree, be became Officer in Charge, Marine Corps and Ground Electronics' Design Branch, Bureau of Ships, Washington, DC, and served in this capacity until February 1952. He was promoted to Major in 1947, and to Lieutenant Colonel in July 1951.

During the Korean conflict, Lieutenant Colonel Glick service as the Signal Battalion Commander and Assistant Division Communications Electronics Officer with the First Marine Division, FMF, from April 1952 until February 1953. For service in Korea, he was awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat "V", and the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V".

Upon his return to the United States, he became Atomic Warfare and Guided Missiles Officer, Tactics, Techniques and Training Group, Joint Landing Force Board, and later S-3 Officer, Service Battalion, Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, NC.

From September 1955 until June 1956, he attended the Command and Staff College, Senior Course, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia. He then saw a three-year tour as Chief, Atomic, Biological

and Chemical Instruction Group, Supporting Arms Section, Marine Corps Educational Center, Quantico.

Then Lieutenant Colonel Glick was detached in June 1959, he reported to the 1st Marine Brigade, FMF, for duty as Communications Electronics Officer, and later, Commanding Officer of Service Battalion. While serving in the latter capacity, he was promoted to Colonel in May 1961. He next served as Assistant G-3 (Plans Officer), FMF, Pacific, from July 1961 until June 1962.

Returning to the continental United States, Colonel Glick was ordered to Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, DC, to serve for two years as Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff (Research and Development). In July 1965, he completed the National War College, Washington, DC. He received his M.S. Degree in Business Administration from George Washington University in 1965.

Colonel Glick was assigned duty as Assistant Joint Plans Officer, Staff, Headquarters Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, Norfolk, Virginia. For exceptionally meritorious service during the period July 19, 1965 to April 17, 1967, he was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a second Legion of Merit.

After his promotion to Brigadier General on May 1, 1967, he became Commanding General, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade/Commanding General, FMF, 7th Fleet, and served in this capacity until January 1968. He was awarded a Gold Star in lieu of a third Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious service during this assignment. His next duty was Assistant Division Commander, 3d Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. For service in support of the Republic of Vietnam, General Glick was awarded the Vietnamese National Order Medal 5th Class and the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm by the President of South Vietnam.

A complete list of General Glick's medals and decorations include: the Distinguished Service Medal; the Legion of Merit with Combat "V" and two Gold Stars in lieu of a second and third award; the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V"; the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V"; the Presidential Unit Citation; the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon; the Navy and Marine Corps Meritorious Unit Citation; the American Defense Service Medal with A; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three bronze stars; the World War II Victory Medal; the National Defense Service Medal with one bronze star; the Korean Service Medal with three bronze stars; the Vietnam Service Medal with four bronze stars; the Vietnamese National Order Medal 5th Class; the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm; the United Nations Service Medal; the Korean Presidential Unit Citation; and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

OBIT

COLONEL BERTRAM A. MAAS USMC
VMO-6 KHE SANH VETERAN
JUNE 14, 1931– May 28, 2011



Funeral services were held on Tuesday, December 13, 2011 at Ft. Myer's Old Post Chapel interment followed at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

Colonel Bertram Arthur Maas USMC (Ret.) passed away on Saturday, May 28, 2011 of lung cancer. Bert was born on June 14, 1931 to Lt. Col. Arthur B. Maas and wife Charlotte in Omaha, Nebraska. Raised in St. Paul, Minnesota, he graduated from St. Thomas Military Academy and attended the United States Naval Academy graduating in 1953 and becoming a 2nd Lt. in the U.S. Marine Corp. Two years after meeting on a train coming from Chicago, he married Charlotte Ann Hiser of Bethesda, Maryland on June 9, 1953. They became the parents of six sons, John (Wendy), Michael, Curtiss (D.), Charles, Stephen, and Brad.

Bert was also the proud grandpops of John Henry, Jennifer, Bryan, Jessica, and Nicholas Maas. He also leaves behind his beloved sister Jean Schiefelbein of Eden Prairie, MN and many nieces and nephews. Following flight training at Pensacola, FL, and Corpus Christi, TX, Bert became a fighter pilot. He attended the US Naval Post graduate

School Monterey, CA and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. He later transitioned into helicopters and one of his career highlights was a tour in HMX-1, flying Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy. He commanded gunships squadron VMO-6 in Vietnam for which he received the bronze and silver stars.

Bert's final three years on active duty in the Marine Corp. was as the CO of Marine Aircraft Group 49 at Willow Grove, PA flying A4's and CH53s. After retirement Bert enrolled in George Mason School of Law and was admitted to the bar in 1986. He enjoyed boating and spending time at his beach cottage in Emerald Isle, NC, with his family. He and



wife Charlotte were married for 57 years and were residents of Vienna, VA for over forty years.



WELCOME HOME

VIETNAM VETERAN'S DOG TAG ENDS UP IN NEW JERSEY BACK FROM VIETNAM TOM QUIGLEY B CO 1/26

Tom Quigley has a piece of his past back.



The former U.S. Marine and Vietnam veteran lost his dog tag 43 years ago, most likely when he was wounded on March 30, 1968, at Khe Sanh.

On Thursday, a member of an East Coast motorcycle club devoted to returning dog tags lost by servicemen in Vietnam gave Quigley's back to him. The two met at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 755 on Old Jacksonville Road.

"When you first look at it, you have that momentary flash in your mind," said Quigley, who first learned his dog tag had been found when a stranger con-



Tom Quigley, right, gets his dog tag from Bob Hamilton a fellow Vietnam Vet and member of the Nam Knights Motorcycle club, at VFW Post 755

tacted him earlier this year.

Then Sue Quinn-Morris, president of the ladies auxiliary of American Legion Post 372 Cherry Hill, N.J., sent him a photograph of the tag, and it was an exact match to the duplicate Quigley has in his basement.

"People are always reluctant at first," said Bob Hamilton, a member of the Nam Knights Motorcycle Club "They're leery of what's going on."

Nam Knights' members are former members of the military or law enforcement. The club has about 40 chapters along the East Coast and one in Milwaukee, Hamilton said.

Hamilton made the trip to Springfield to deliver Quigley's dog tag. He then was to go to Battle Creek, Mich., to return another tag to the mother of a Marine killed in Vietnam.

Quinn-Morris, who Hamilton said is in charge of the Nam Knights' website, is dedicated to returning dog tags to Vietnam veterans. She has spent two years trying to locate owners of dog tags found in Vietnam more than a decade ago by retired policeman Manny Santayana.

On a trip to Vietnam, Santayana saw G.I. dog tags hanging in a stall in a marketplace, Hamilton said. "It upset him, and he ended up buying all the guy had — an ammo box full," Hamilton said.

He contacted the Pentagon and found the owner of one of the tags, but the Pentagon wouldn't let him participate in the return of the small piece of metal. So Santayana decided to do the research and return the tags himself. Eventually, the torch was passed to Quinn-Morris.

She found Quigley because of a 2010 story in The State Journal-Register about the former Marine's memories of Khe Sanh.

Hamilton said his club has returned about half-a-dozen dog tags.

"Because I am a Vietnam veteran, it can get very emotional," he said. "I run into more people who served at the same time and in the same area that I did."

"The feeling is indescribable," he said. "It's like giving them a piece of their past."

Hamilton said he and his fellow club members perform the service "because it was something that was never done for us."

"We will not let any member of the military today or in the future be treated like we were," he said. "It's our way of welcoming a Vietnam veteran back. Many were traumatized not only by the war but by how they were treated back home."

Quigley said there's a good chance his dog tag lay in a trench line until scavengers found it after the Khe Sanh base was abandoned and bulldozed.

He plans to put the dog tag in a case, then in his safety deposit box until it is passed on to his children, then hopefully to their children.

"You can't be appreciative enough, thankful enough for what they do," he said of the people responsible for his dog tag's return. "They know how much we appreciate it. It was even more meaningful that it was a fellow Marine bringing it back to me."

Justin Fowler can be reached at 788-1531. Chris Dettro can be reached at 788-1510.

KSV MINI REUNION

THE 44TH KHE SANH ANNIVERSARY REMEMBERANCE LUNCHEON CHICO CA JAN 21, 2012

By Craig W. Tourte

We had another fine gathering of Khe Sanh Veterans, fellow Veterans, friends, neighbors and supporters from the community in Chico California on January 21, 2012, to remember and honor those who endured the Battles at Khe Sanh, the Siege, the Vietnam War and all those who have given their all for our wonderful country and continue to fight this day for the freedom of all Americans. Tom Horchler is the driving force behind the many events focused on the Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of

Khe Sanh. Once again Tom was the inspiration and one of the main reasons for the large turnout. He directed me to inform the various newspapers of the time and place of our gathering and we were fortunate to have the Chico Newspaper Enterprise-Record take up our story, printing a full page of photographs, interviews and history of that Battle.

Tom's interview was particular poignant with words clearly descriptive of the events of which those just reading the article could only imagine. "...Horchler remembers the lush green beauty of the Khe Sanh jungle and mountains, and the clear blue sky when he first arrived. It was a landscape that despite the heat, humidity, bugs and rain, he appreciated. He remembers, too, the horror of watching that landscape transform into a moonscape as the barrage of bombs, artillery...and Agent Orange assaulted the area. I saw it with my own eyes, it went from a living place to a place with nothing but dead, dead plants and trees and people. It was an unbelievable transformation. The killings, the plane crashes, the rats, the dead, the dying, the wounded, the gore and the fear. It was an impossible situation..." "He said



he finds some solace in gatherings, such as the upcoming luncheon of Khe Sanh Veterans."

This luncheon was special, but not necessarily an unusual gathering of Khe Sanh Veterans, all Tom's friends who meet ever few months for breakfast or other events such as the dedication held at the Living Memorial Sculpture Garden in Weed California on Veterans Day November 11, 2011. The Khe Sanh Luncheon in Chico was attended by the usual gathering of friends and acquaintances of Tom Horchler (H.Q. 1/13) which including but was not limited to;

David Tonick (A/1/26),
Richard Cueva (1/11/155's),
Daniel Ferguson (W/1/13),
Bruce Kates (H.Q. 1/13),
David Lind (H&S 2/4),
Ned Borlaug (I/3/3),
Marco Soto (A/1/26),
Andres "Pete" Torres (G/2/26),
Kenneth "Buzz" Sawyer (H.Q. 1/13),
Ty Kittle (1/4),
Mike Perry (1/4),
Chuck Teasley (C/1/26),
Steve Wiese (B/1/26),
George Owsley (USN CBMU-301 DET-B),
John L Moore (USN MCB-301 Seabees),
Thomas Soerensen A/1/13)
to name just a few - I apologize to those I failed to mention.

I was once again privilege to have been able to say a few words on behalf of Khe Sanh Veterans. "Today, on the 44th anniversary of the Siege at Khe Sanh, we set aside this date and this hour to remember and mourn those we lost. We survivors of that horrific event will never forget the ones we stood shoulder-to-shoulder with in the trench lines, those who faced incredible hardships on the surrounding hills, those who flew above in a desperate attempt to extract our wounded and dead and supply us with the critical material necessary for us to persevere. All will be forever cherished in our hearts. We survivors of that long and horrific battle will never forget the fallen. We will never forget how and why they sacrificed for us and for our wonderful country. We will never forget where they served or who they are. The fallen heroes of Khe Sanh will continue to be a part of who we are, for the rest of our lives. We also take this moment, to honor those who to this day, carry the wounds and memory of the Vietnam War, in their hearts, minds and bodies."

"As LBJ personally sent off Marine reinforcements to I Corps from El Toro Marine Air Station, Calif., on February 17, 1968, he told them: "This is a decisive time in Vietnam. The eyes of the nation and the eyes of the entire world, the eyes of all of history itself, are on that little brave band of defenders who hold the pass at Khe Sanh...."

"The Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh was an historic event. The mention of Khe Sanh along with the great battles of Concord, Gettysburg and Normandy in President Obama's inaugural address, forever confirms to our nation and the world that the Battle of Khe Sanh will forever hold a significant place in American History."
"Today we remember, not only those who fought at Khe Sanh but also those who have fought other battles and continue to fight this day for the freedom of all Americans." "On behalf of Khe Sanh Veterans, thank you all for coming and God Bless America. "











Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant Stuart McIntyre & Joe Rosenthal

By Craig W. Tourte

It was just another casual conversation between a couple of old Marines - Stuart (Stu) McIntyre served in the Marine Corps from 1941 to 1968 - but it was this comment that caught my attention. I forwarded to Stu some internet photographs I had received of the battle for Iwo Jima and the next time I saw Stu he told me he had a photograph autographed by Joe Rosenthal of the flag raising on Mount Suribachi (Iwo Jima, February 23, 1945). With that I invited myself to Stu's house to take a look at this most famous and historic photograph.
Stu related that around 1963 he and Gunnery Sergeant Bill Dedic - who at the time was also the night manager of the Marines Memorial Club in San Francisco - were stationed at Treasure Island. They served as Liaison between the courts and the Marine Corps for those members of the Corps who found themselves in trouble and appearing before the judiciary.

On occasion Stu and Bill Dedic - while wearing their Marine Corps uniforms - would visit an establishment which served adult beverages and was located close to Chinatown and near the old Hall of Justice. Stu subsequently became friends with the bartender and during one of his visits he noticed a photograph of the raising of the flag on Mount Suribachi attached to the wall and mentioned it to the bartender. The bartender told Stu that Joe Rosenthal was an occasional visitor to the establishment and would ask Joe if he would sign a photograph for Stu. On Stu's next visit the bartender presented Stu with a photograph autographed by Joe Rosenthal which bore the inscription "With best wishes to a damn good Marine, S/Sgt Stu McIntyre from Joe Rosenthal." Stu told me that it was shortly after he received the photograph that Joe Rosenthal came into the establishment while Stu and Bill were there and Stu personally thanked Mr. Rosenthal.

"Iwo Jim Memorial - The picture inspired sculpture Felix De Weldon, who created a life size model of the photograph. Paid by donations, it was later cast in bronze and in September 1954 it was brought to Washington, D.C. as part of a memorial designed by Horace Peaslee. At the 179th anniversary (Birthday) of the US Marine Corps on November 10, 1954 the memorial was dedicated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower."

While I found that photograph most compelling I happened to notice several other items attached to the wall of Stu's office. One photograph was that of Fleet Admiral Chester William Nimitz in that famous and now familiar photograph of Admiral Nimitz seated on a chair before a desk on the deck of the USS Missouri taken on September 2, 1945 when Japan formally surrendered on board the Missouri in Tokyo Bay. The bottom of this photograph had the hand written inscription "To S/Sgt McIntyre with best wishes, Chester Nimitz."

On December 15, 1947 Admiral Nimitz retired from the office of Chief of Naval Operations and received a third Gold Star in lieu of a fourth Navy Distinguished Service Medal. However, since the rank of Fleet Admiral is a lifetime appointment, he remained on active duty for the rest of his life, with full pay and benefits. He and his wife Catherine moved to Berkeley, California. After he suffered a serious fall in 1964, he and Catherine moved to US Naval quarters on Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay."

Around 1964 and during the time Admiral Nimitz resided on Yerba Buena Island his personal driver was a United States Marine who requested the Admiral sign the historic photograph for Stu to which the Admiral graciously agreed.

I noticed a shadow box on Stu's wall which held three (3) sliver dollars with inscriptions next to each coin. The coins reflected the dates 1933, 1935 and 1938. Stu told me there is a tradition called the "First Salute" and is often referred to as "The Silver Dollar Tradition or Salute" where newly commissioned second lieutenants present a silver dollar to the first enlisted man that salutes them. The coin symbolically acknowledges the receipt of respect due the new rank and position. In 1967 Stu was assigned as Assistant to the Marine Officer Instructor in the Navy NROTC program at Dartmouth College located in Hanover, New Hampshire and gave the first "Salute" to three newly commissioned officers. I observed the inscriptions next to each coin to read, "2d Lt John M. Masters Jr. USMC - Given to him on his 18th birthday by his father General John M. Masters, USMC." "2d Lt Francis B. Lovely USMC - Given to him by his Mountain Warfare Instructor, Army Sergeant Tim Lake." "2d Lt Warren C. Cook, USMC - Found by Lt Cook while on his first watch in the Marine Corps as a PFC."

I also observed a photograph of a young Sergeant of Marines Stuart McIntyre standing before a middle aged man and asked Stu about the significance. Stu told me that he was presented his E6 Staff Sergeant rank while attached to the American Consul General in Hamburg, Germany and was receiving his promotion to Staff Sergeant by Consul General Clare Hayes Temberlake who was married to an Italian Countess and who would later become Washington's first Ambassador to the Congo, later Zaire now the Democratic Republic of the Congo during that country's violent transition from being a Belgian colony. Ambassador Timberlake passed away on February 23, 1982 at the age of 74.

Stu had other just as interesting mementoes' such as a photograph of the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center located at Pickel Meadows in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and a photograph of

the dedication of the Edwin A. Matus field near what was then El Toro Marine Corps Air Base located in Orange County, California. Lieutenant Matus was a helicopter pilot who often took Stu along with him on training flights. On one particular morning Lieutenant Matus asked Stu if he would again like to accompany him on a flight but Stu was unable to make the flight that morning. Lieutenant Matus's helicopter was involved in an accident that afternoon and Lieutenant Matus did not survive.

It has been both an honor and pleasure to have known my dear friend Stuart McIntyre who graciously invited me into his home to share these special memories of great historical significance. Stu is now 86 years old and as the saying goes "Once a Marine always a Marine." I mentioned Stu in an article I wrote four years ago *"Playing golf with the Gunny."* Stu was 82 years old at that time and I made the following observation regarding a golf trip up into the mountains with Stu, myself and two others. *"We crawled out of bed full of creaks and moans, consumed various pain and muscle remedies to endure the rigors of the day. Sore backs, elbows, knees and plenty of complaints from the younger guys. I found myself having to take a moment or two to just kind of stand without falling down....what was interesting was that the three of us, who were under 80 years of age, were the ones who did all of the complaining and moaning. I never heard a word from old retired Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant Stuart McIntyre. He never took a pill of any kind; he just stood without swaying, hit the ball straight, long and never complained of an ache or pain. He didn't say, but I suspect he considered us a bunch of 'None Hackers' perhaps even 'Girly Men,' nor did he correctly call me private."* Stu remains the picture of health and vitality with a regimen of exercise and recuperation.

Stu permitted me to take his photograph holding the framed photographs autographed by Joe Rosenthal and Admiral Nimitz. It was my honor and privilege to present Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant Stuart



McIntyre with a Fall & Winter edition of Red Clay Magazine Issue 79 and a Khe Sanh challenge coin.

BOOK REVIEW

An unknown name on a gravestone is as dead as the person in the grave-until someone tells you a story about that person. John Foster, in **Heroes From the Wall** , has brought dead names on the Vietnam Memorial Wall to life through telling the stories behind the names. With careful research, interviews with people who knew the men, and a story-teller's eye for the detail that captures the character of the person behind the name, Foster reveals the heart, hopes, dreams and ultimate sacrifices that were made by these soldiers and Marines. A Vietnam veteran himself, the author's respect for his subjects is communicated loud and clear. The reader is given a portal through the smooth reflections on the smooth granite into the real lives, the real people, who died so young. These unsung heroes have now been sung.

Karl Marlantes
Author of New York Times bestseller
Matterhorn

When the author John Douglas Foster was wounded while serving in Vietnam during the 1968 Tet Offensive, he received more than a piece of metal in his body haunting memories of comrades opened his soul in a quest to learn more about those who didn't return. Sketching a fascinating portrait of the lives of those who fought and died valiantly, Foster pens a riveting and gut-wrenching read in **Heroes From *the Wall.***

A clear-eyed tale of truly honorable individuals who were not just mere names, numbers and statistics, **Heroes From the Wall** ensures that these unsung heroes will never be forgotten by future generations who didn't know them on the battlefield. Foster seamlessly captures their quirks of personality, playful antics, heroic actions, compassion and care for others, their caring and sharing with their comrades, tender concern for their family, and affirmation of life while engulfed in places of death. Leaving readers with a newfound respect for the nameless heroes upon turning the pages, Foster writes with candor and resonating tone.

Reverend Ray W. Stubbe
U.S. Navy Chaplain
Siege at Khe Sanh, 1968

Whether one served in Vietnam or not, Heroes From the Wall cannot be read without shedding a tear. For those who did serve there, who experienced the bond formed by those serving together in combat and who suffered a loss from among a cherished band of brothers, this book reinforces that which we knew - the bond is never broken. As the stories are told of those lost on Vietnam's battlefields, only a few from among the 58,195 stories on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall, we once again experience the pain of their loss but, decades later, can also join in celebration of their lives as

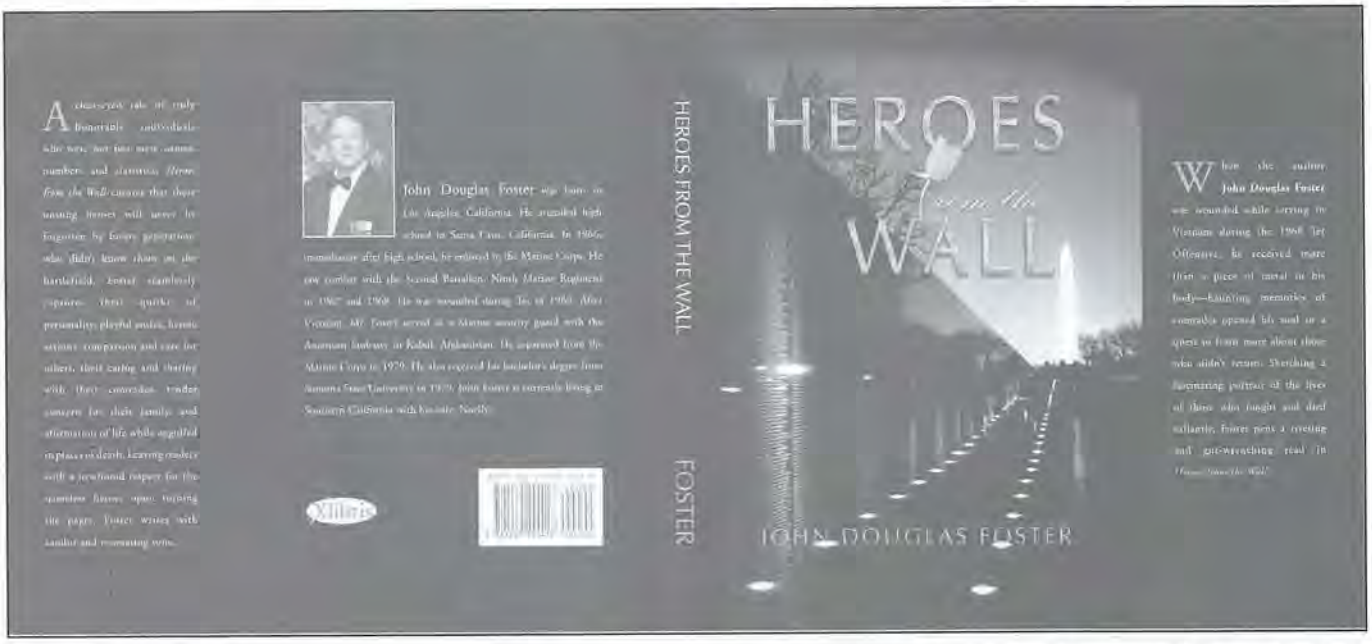

heroes. It is important for young people to read about the life stories of an earlier generation's young men who answered America's call to fight an unpopular war, selflessly giving of themselves. Our fallen brothers cannot be forgotten. **Heroes From the Wall** makes sure the reader will not.

LtCol James G. Zumwalt
U. S. Marine Corps (Ret)
Author of, "Bare Feet,
Iron Will Vietnam's Battlefields

GHOST RIDER FOUNDATION

By Tim DeWolf
Exec. Dir. Ghost Rider Foundation

Ghost Rider Foundation was founded by LTJG K. DeWolf USN Medical Corps. She is my daughter, and was a friend of Ghost Rider. After his death she joined the Navy on a scholarship to become a Physician Assistant with a goal of working in Mental Health. Her first duty station in March will be - MCRD Parris Island SC and she will work at one of the battalion BAS.

I participated in setting up LZ Stud and a couple of arty hilltop positions to support KSCB, and a couple of convoys. I believe one was with Task Force Hotel. I finally ended up on one of the rebuilt bridges between Stud and KSCB during the pullout. My commanding officer and the best man I ever knew Lt. John H. Carson CO of Echo CO died on June 6,1968 while taking replacements out to the bridges, and delivering mail to the outposts.

I am the Executive Director of a small 501c3 Charity that works with veterans returning from the recent conflicts. The Foundation is called Ghost Rider Foundation because that was the Marines nickname who took his own life January 6, 2008. Ghost Rider's name was Sgt. Joe Lorek of 2nd LAR, 2nd Mar Div and he was from Mentor Ohio.

Like many of our generation I was diagnosed with PTSD and have managed to live a troubled but successful life.

Since then we have worked closely with dozens of veterans from all services. Some only require financial assistance but gradually our focus shifted to guiding the most troubled into counseling and back to the VA for treatment. I have spent more than a few nights in bars listening to these men, some have slept on my couch while I sat next to them, we have fostered their dogs while they were away for treatment, we have done the best we could. Our most difficult challenge is often in court and I hope that the next great movement from our fading generation will be to push for veterans courts in all of our towns and counties.

In the nights I have spent with them and listened as they talked about "being done with it" I started hearing familiar and repeated lines. Eventually I wrote these down and when I did the tears and memories came back to me. I have shown this to a few of the men Ghost Rider Foundation worked with and many have asked for a copy. The piece seems timeless as it speaks to me as loudly as it does to them. I have attached this in two formats - if you would like to put this in one of the copies or on the website you have my permission. I am not a poet and it isn't the words that are important - it is the feeling and meaning of those words.

Thank all of you for the fine work you do - keep it up.

The last goodbye

Nights and memories are my enemy. Faces, names, smells and dates are not just memories but experiences.
At night I can feel the shock waves of explosions, hear the ping of bullets and the cries of the Wounded.
Fate spared me - not skill and I refute that luck even exists.
I am home but my heart and memories are elsewhere.
I am the same yet people treat me differently. And I wonder how that can be.
Sleep eludes me and I have no wants or desires and I just long for one day to become the next.
I miss all of them and lament that I returned and not they.
The photos of us together mock me for they are not here but lie silently in their graves
I cannot endure tomorrow without them and I need

more than want to be with them once again.
It is not cowardice to step into the unknown darkness to rejoin them.
It is not selfish, it is not weakness, it is my duty.
I would not do this if it were not taking me to a better place and back among my comrades..
I do not do this to escape or to hurt but to escape hurting.
I love my family but I do not belong to them any longer.
I am going where I need to be – a warriors final peace.
Love - A Veteran with PTSD

Forgive my literary license but this reflects the thoughts of what veterans have told me.
Tim - Ghost Rider Foundation

HONORING A TRUE AMERICAN HERO

By Steve Martin LIMA CO 3/3
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(361) 983-2705

The survivors of Lima Company 3/3, gathered at Quantico, VA to dedicate a memorial to Colonel John Ripley, our Company Commander in 1967. The monument was placed at the USMC National Museum.





A special bond is formed with those who serve together in combat. It was great to see old friends, tell tales, share laughs, cry, remember the fallen, and to again be young and invincible (at least in my mind).

In the photo below we are gathering for a prayer service at the Chapel within the USMC National Museum grounds. The men in the baseball caps are Marines who served with Lima 3/3 in 1967.



The chapel was filled to overflowing for the prayer service.



After the prayer service we walked down a sidewalk through the trees to the site of the monument for the dedication. Kevin Macdonald is pictured to the left and that is me in the center with the windbreaker.



The memorial monument is unveiled after presentation of the colors, as rain commenced to fall.

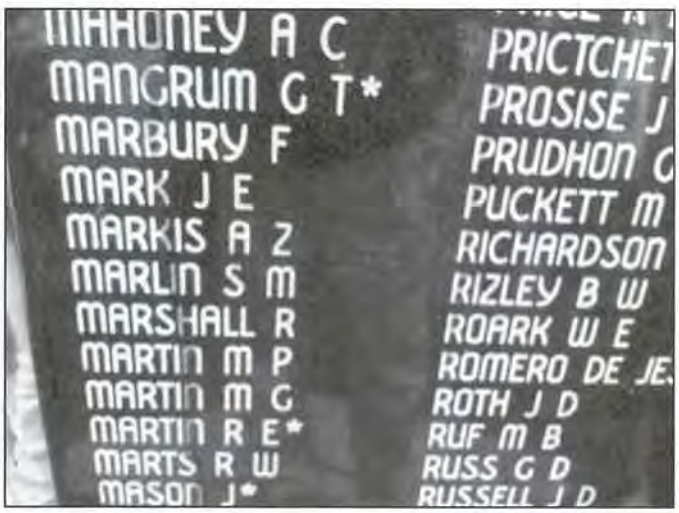

The names of all who served under Ripley's command of Lima Company in 1967 are inscribed on the monument; the fallen have an asterisk by their name. The different color of the letters is a result of rivulets of rain water streaking down the granite.

Pictured below is Bud Wang left, yours truly center and Kevin Macdonald right. Pictured in the backound is the Museum. The museum is world class.





The monument to Ripley is placed next to a small bridge. This is fitting, as Ripley was awarded the Navy Cross, second highest military medal, for blowing up a bridge at Dong Ha, South Vietnam on Easter Sunday, 1972. This action stopped a major invasion by North Vietnam Regular Army mechanized troops. Many believe Ripley should have received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

JUST A FEW AWARDS PRESENTED TO CAPTAIN JOHN W. RIPLEY



The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to Captain John W. Ripley (MCSN: 0-84239), United States Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism on 2 April 1972 while serving as the Senior Marine Advisor to the Third Vietnamese Marine Corps Infantry Battalion in the Republic of Vietnam. Upon receipt of a report that a rapidly moving, mechanized, North Vietnamese army force, estimated at reinforced divisional strength, was attacking south along Route #1, the Third Vietnamese Marine Infantry Battalion was positioned to defend a key village and the surrounding area. It became imperative that a vital river bridge be destroyed if the overall security of the northern provinces of Military Region One was to be maintained. Advancing to the bridge to personally supervise this most dangerous but vitally important assignment, Captain Ripley located a large amount of explosives which had been pre-positioned there earlier, access to which was blocked by a chain-link fence. In order to reposition the approximately 500 pounds of explosives, Captain Ripley was obliged to reach up and hand-walk along the beams while his body dangled beneath the bridge. On five separate occasions, in the face of constant enemy fire, he moved to points along the bridge and, with the aid of another advisor who pushed the explosives to him, securely emplaced them. He then detonated the charges and destroyed the bridge, thereby stopping the enemy assault. By his heroic actions and extraordinary courage, Captain Ripley undoubtedly was instrumental in saving an untold number of lives. His







The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Captain John Walter Ripley (MCSN: 0-84239/1653859), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as Commanding Officer of Company L, Third Battalion, Third Marines, THIRD Marine Division, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On 21 August 1967, Company L was assigned the mission of reinforcing a convoy that had been surprised by a large enemy force and was pinned down. With one rifle platoon, a small command group, and accompanied by two M-42 dual 40-mm. anti-aircraft guns, Captain Ripley was leading the relief column when it suddenly came under intense enemy automatic weapons and recoilless rifle fire. Disregarding his own safety and the heavy volume of hostile fire, he moved to the machine gun mounted on the vehicle and opened fire, pinpointing the location of the well concealed North Vietnamese and enabling the 40-mm. guns to deliver accurate fire on the enemy positions. Directing his unit to dismount, he quickly organized a defensive perimeter while coordinating supporting artillery fire and simultaneously controlling the remainder of his company which was widely separated from his position. Repeatedly exposing himself to the hostile fire, he directed artillery fire and air strikes upon the attacking enemy force and courageously adjusted fire missions to within fifty meters of his position. Throughout the following three hours, his skillful employment of supporting arms and direction of the fire of his men repulsed the determined enemy attacks and forced the hostile units to flee in panic and confusion. His aggressiveness and outstanding professionalism were an inspiration to all who served with him and were instrumental in the successful extraction of his unit from an extremely hazardous situation. By his steadfast courage, superb leadership and unfaltering devotion to duty at great personal risk, Captain Ripley upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

Action Date: August 21, 1967

Awarded for actions during the



The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Legion of Merit to Colonel John Walter Ripley (MCSN: 0-84239/1653859), United States Marine Corps, for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States as Marine Corps Representative and Director, Division of English and History, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, from July 1984 to June 1987. Colonel Ripley's contributions as Division Director and ex-officio member of the numerous high level deliberative bodies had a lasting influence on the course of the Naval Academy and the Naval Service as a whole. As Marine Corps Representative, he spearheaded a dynamic information program whose success was unmatched in the history of the Academy. The heightened awareness of the role and capabilities of the Marine Corps and the enthusiasm for service as a Marine that was generated throughout the Brigade of Midshipmen was attributable directly to his personal involvement and to his superb leadership of the Marine Corps team at the Naval Academy. Colonel Ripley's genuine commitment to the highest ideals of his service, frequently displayed as public forums where he lectured on the values of the military ethic, and his unflagging work to promote the aims of the Marine Corps, led to a substantially improved image of the Marines within the Brigade and within the community as a whole. By his adroit leadership, visionary farsightedness, and inspiring devotion to duty, Colonel Ripley reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.



Awarded for actions during the

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Award of the Legion of Merit to Colonel John Walter Ripley (MCSN: 0-84239/1653859), United States Marine Corps, for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States as Commanding Officer, Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) Unit, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia from July 1990 through June 1992. Through his energetic initiative, superb managerial skills, and dedicated focus on mission accomplishment, Colonel Ripley was responsible for the unit becoming one of the top NROTC units in the country. Using his foresight, innovations, and outstanding leadership, he developed and instituted the only Operational Leadership Naval Science course taught to Marine Option NROTC students which placed the Unit as one of the top producers in the Nation for the Nuclear Power Program with an accession rte of 33 percent above requirements and a ten percent increase in student academic grade point average performance. In addition to his regular duties, Colonel Ripley served on the Academic Board, Admissions Committee, and the Leadership Committee which enhanced the status of Navy programs on campus and contributed to the academic excellence of the institute. Because of his military bearing, exceptional expertise, and esprit de corps, he was respected and admired by all. Colonel Ripley's tireless efforts, notable effectiveness, and total devotion to duty reflected great credit upon himself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

Action Date: July 1990 - June 1992

MILITARY CAREER

John Walter Ripley was born on June 29, 1939 in Keystone, West Virginia and his family lived there until he was five years old. They then moved to Portsmouth Ohio, where they remained for some years before finally settling in Radford, Virginia. John Ripley enlisted into the Marine Corps in 1957 at 17 years of age. A year later, he was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy by the Secretary of the Navy. He graduated in 1962 with a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering, and received his commission as a second lieutenant. After completing the Basic School, he joined the Marine Detachment on the USS *Independence* (CV-62).

After his sea duty, he joined 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines. In May 1965, Ripley was transferred to 2nd Force Reconnaissance Company, and after training, he deployed to Vietnam with his platoon.

In October 1966, Ripley joined 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines in South Vietnam. He served as Company Commander of Lima Company, known as Ripley's Raiders[was wounded in action, then returned to active duty and completed his combat tour.

During his two years of Vietnam service, he participated in 26 major operations. In addition to numerous decorations for extensive combat experience at the rifle company and battalion levels, Ripley was awarded the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism in destroying the Dong Ha bridge during the April 1972 North Vietnamese Easter Offensive (also known as the Nguyen Hue Offensive). That action is memorialized at the Naval Academy with a large diorama titled "Ripley at the Bridge."

While under intense unrelenting enemy fire, Ripley dangled for an estimated three hours under the bridge in order to attach 500 pounds of explosives to the span, ultimately obliterating it. His action, conducted under enemy fire while going back and forth for materials, definitively thwarted an on-

slaught by 20,000 enemy troops and dozens of tanks and was the subject of a book, *The Bridge at Dong Ha*, by Colonel John Grider Miller. He attributes his success to the help of God and his mother. When his energy was about to give out he began a rhythmic chant, "Jesus, Mary, Get me there". His body taxed to its extreme limits, his action is considered one of the greatest examples of concentration under fire in the annals of U.S. military history. It also delayed NVA forces from taking Saigon for another three years.

Following his tours in Vietnam, Ripley served with Marine Force Reconnaissance, was an exchange Officer with the British Royal Marines, and was a Commanding Officer of 1st Battalion 2nd Marines, and the 2nd Marine Regiment. His final tours in the Marine Corps were in charge of the NROTC detachments at Oregon State university and the Virginia Military Institute, and as the senior Marine at the United States Military Academy teaching English and history. He earned the "Quad Body" distinction for making it through four of the toughest military training programs in the world: the Army Rangers, Marine reconnaissance, Army Airborne and Britain's Royal Marines, according to Miller's book. He was also the only Marine officer to be inducted in the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame. Ripley retired from the Marine Corps in 1992 after 35 years of active duty service. He received more than five awards for his acts of bravery in Vietnam.

TRANSITION INTO HELL

Staff Sergeant Bruce E. Kates
By Craig W. Tourte

There are many who slowly transitioned into Vietnam and onto the Combat Base of Khe Sanh. Some attached to the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade arrived via aged ships on a slow sail from Okinawa. The USS Washtenaw County, LST 1166 was just such a vessel. Remnants of the 13th and 26th Marines arrived towards the end of July 1967 and then convoyed west from the rather large Marine Corps Base of Dong Ha on Highway 9 which had the appearance of nothing more than a well worn wagon trail. As our convey entered the main gate located at the south west corner of the base we stopped 100 meters or so just east of the entrance. Upon entering the base I observed a couple of strands of concertina wire, a few hundreds yards of cleared fields of fire and the jungle. No bunkers, trenches or fighting positions were apparent. We disembarked from the overloaded and groaning trucks with our rifles, backpacks and small entrenching tool, and started the process of making habitable the flat clay earth and fortifying our positions. With blistering hands and aching muscles we dug, dug and dug some more, digging trench lines and filling countless sandbags, all the while enduring the too common ailment of dysentery, heat and humidity of the day and cold rain and freezing temperatures of the winter months. As the months passed every so slowly and our bodies adjusted to our environment we gradually became hardened, our hands became callused, our muscles strengthened and our dysentery subsided.

We became accustomed to living in deprivation, I never sat on a toilet seat, never had a shower from a forced water pipe, never slept in a bunk, never had a pillow or sheets, any washing of clothes was done with a cold bucket of water with the clothes hung over the concertina wire to dry. I never walked on cement or asphalt. I never listened to a radio, never sat in a chair, never wore any under clothing, never saw a television, never had any shaving cream and didn't have sufficient warm clothing to endure the freezing nights and this was all before the Siege started on January 21, 1968. We were always exhausted, working some twenty hours a day and then crawling out into the jungle to man an all night listening post or standing guard in the trench line, for month after tiring month. Our transition from soft to hard was long and slow and in some cases mentally challenging. Our dusty and dirty bodies covered in red clay earth and tattered soiled uniforms reflected our long presence in such austere conditions. By January 21st those of us who had remained on the combat for so many months had become to a certain extent, accustomed to the deprivation and hardships of life on one of the most desolated bases in all of South Vietnam.

Any new arrival to the combat base was easily recognizable by their strikingly bright green uniform, in some cases shined leather boots, pre-dysentery body mass, high and tight hair cut, clean shave, light non-tanned nor red clay stained skin color and in a certain manner in which they carried (walked) themselves. The transition from state side to the

Khe Sanh Combat Base must have been unexplainable, unimaginable and horrific, especially so for those who arrived during the Siege.

Sergeant Michael Secli, William (Bill) Poland, Edward Lawida and I were together discussing current events when one squared away Staff Sergeant appeared. It was obvious he was a fairly new arrival to the combat base with shined black leather boots, clean pressed green uniform and white skin. The Staff Sergeant told us that he had recently arrived from San Diego where he had been a Drill Instructor. It was a pleasant conversation and we thanked him for coming by and wished him well. I remembered thinking at the time that it must have been very difficult for the newly arrived Staff Sergeant to come to Khe Sanh right from the states. It was not too long after that conversation took place that we heard the Staff Sergeant had been seriously wounded and another killed. I remember thinking at the time how sad that he had just recently arrived and was wounded in such a short time after getting there.

"Battalion of Kings - March 8, 1968 - page 249." "At 1220H, "A" Battery, 1/13 received one incoming round…Sergeant Donald R. Chamblin, Jr., a wire chief of 1/13 was mortally wounded in the attack…." "Corporal Ernest Frank, one of the wiremen for Headquarters Battery found himself atop a pole holding the black communication wire….in a letter to his parents he writes: Friday…I was climbing poles all day and splicing power lines…I had just put one line up on a pole and was starting up with another line when I heard a pop in the distance. I jumped off the pole and crouched behind a bunker…an artillery round landed about 30 feet away from us. It landed right between 2 bunkers where our Staff Sergeant in charge of the radio operations, our Sergeant. who was chief wireman and our supply Corporal were crouching….the Staff Sergeant and Corporal were pretty mauled up….the Sergeant was only just 20 years old and both his legs were completely blown off at the upper thighs….he had one leg completely blown off and the right leg was hanging on by a piece of skin…he asked "Am I dead"… and I said no, just hang in there…he didn't make it."

On January 21, 2012, I met Staff Sergeant Bruce E. Kates, at a Siege remembrance luncheon held in Chico, California. Of course I didn't realize that Bruce was the same Staff Sergeant I had talk to that day so long ago at the Khe Sanh Combat Base but as our conversation continued it became clear that he was in fact one in the same. Bruce told me that he served as a Drill Instructor at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego from January 1965 to October 1967. Thirty day after he left San Diego he found himself at Khe Sanh arriving on November 18th. Bruce told me that the other Marine who was wounded by the incoming artillery round was Corporal Ross L. Teague, who he has had no further contact with. Bruce told me the round broke his back and his femur bone along with numerous other



permanent related injuries. Bruce said that he heard the incoming round before it hit.

What an interesting experience to once again talk to the same Marine I had spoken to so many years ago. I was thankful he had survived and contacted Mike Secli and the others and told them of my meeting Sergeant Kates again. All who served on the Marine Corps Combat of Khe Sanh, on the surrounding hills or who served in the villages went thought their own transition to Hell. It must have been particularly difficult for those recent arrivals, unaccustomed to the hardships of life in a remote outpost and enduring a long and horrific Siege.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

KSV Chaplain Ron Rayner

FIGHTING POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

I attend PTSD group therapy sponsored by the VA through the Pontiac, Michigan Vet Center. My group is helpful in the fight against PTSD. I recommend seeking professional psychological help for anyone showing the symptoms of PTSD. I also believe the most important PTSD therapy I engage in is the time I spend with God. I presently have two daily devotionals that I start the day reading, *The Upper Room* (upperroom.org) and ***Stories of Faith and Courage from the Vietnam War*** by Khe Sanh Vet Larkin Spivey. The Scriptures help to point my mind in the right direction.

The day I am writing this article, March 22, the scripture from *The Upper Room* is James 5:15 (NSRV): "The prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise them up." This reminds me that prayer and faith can be major factors in the treating of any illness or condition such as PTSD.

The scripture and story from March 22 in ***Stories of Faith and Courage from the Vietnam War*** reinforced this theme. John 3:17: "For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." The story concerned Chuck Dean, the author of ***Nam Vet***. I had read ***Nam Vet*** twenty years previous and it plays a major role accepting that I had PTSD and helping me in my battle. It also provided part of the inspiration to become a chaplain. I highly recommend ***Nam Vet*** to help fight and cope with PTSD.

Chuck Dean's story on March 22 told of Chuck hitting rock bottom with PTSD and asking a friend for help. The friend simply told him, "Chuck, you need the Lord."

Survivor's guilt and guilt over things we have done are two of the symptoms of PTSD. II Chronicles 30:18-20 (NIV) …Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the Lord, who is good, pardon everyone who sets his heart on seeking God—the Lord, the God of his Fathers—even if he is not clean according to the rules of the sanctuary. And the Lord heard Hezekiah and healed the people."

There are two themes here. Those who have faith in God need to pray for and encourage faith in God for those who need help. Those who have problems that won't go away need to seek God.

There are many passages in the Bible that state "seek God" and one of my favorites is Psalm 9:9-10 (NLT) "The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, **for you, "O Lord, you have never abandoned anyone who searches for you**."

The main reason I need daily devotionals is simple. While I am completely satisfied with my material needs; anger and suicidal feeling visit me on a regular basis for no reason that makes sense to me. I believe as Paul describes in Ephesians 6:10-18 (NLT): "A final word: Be strong with the Lord's mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the devil. For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.

Use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy in time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the sturdy belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes put on the peace that comes from the Good News, so that you will be fully prepared. In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers..."

My prayer for all the Khe Sanh Veterans and their families is from Numbers 6:24-26 (NLT): "May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace."



VVMF's Essay Contest Grand Prize Winner is... Donna E Elliott!

Donna wins a care package from VVMF and her essay was read at the 30th Anniversary of the Groundbreaking of The Wall ceremony. Here is Donna's essay, titled

"The Blade and the Cross":

On 21 January 1968, my brother, SSGT Jerry W. Elliott was declared Missing-In-Action in Khe Sanh, Vietnam. When the 55th Joint Task Force (JTF) investigated the loss site in 1999, his buddy, Mike Teutschman and I were present. After interviewing two local residents who had scavenged the Old French Fort, the team presented me with a charred section of rotor blade from Black Cat #027. The blade had survived a B-40 rocket attack, laid undiscovered in the red dirt of Khe Sanh until found by a farmer, and then spent years holding up the corner of a cow pen. Jerry had left his position as door gunner on a different chopper to assist survivors from this crashed and burning helicopter when he disappeared.

I brought it back to America. May 2000, found us in the Pentagon parking lot with Run For The Wall, waiting to ride in the Rolling Thunder parade and carry the rotor blade in a pine box to the Wall. Many notables mingled with the bikers, but I never knew the name of the man I remember the most. He stared at the blade for a long time before he spoke. He was one of two survivors from a chopper crash. The other crewmember had managed to return to the crash and recover a small piece of stainless steel from the helicopter, which he used to make two crosses. The vet reached into his pants pocket and a small piece of silver flashed in his palm. He explained this cross was never out of his sight; he carried it with him at all times as a reminder of the friends he had lost. Tears welled up in his eyes when he choked out, "I don't know why I didn't die that day; they were all such good men." Around noon, the lead bikes began to roll out. As soon as the wheels stopped turning, strong hands reached out to carry the heavy wooden box to its final destination at Panel 35E in an honor guard procession. One by one, the riders touched Jerry's name with bowed heads as a silent statement of respect. Overwhelmed, I left the Wall. Like a moth to a flame, I later returned. While bending over the pine box, which now overflowed with miscellaneous mementos, I lost my balance and leaned into the Wall to break my fall.

That's when I saw it. Tucked deep into a corner of the pine box was the small silver cross! For reasons unknown, the Vietnam vet from the parking lot had chosen to leave his talisman at the Wall in remembrance of Jerry. His gift an anonymous, selfless act, reminiscent of actions I'd heard combat vets share about their brother soldiers on the battlefield. I placed the cross on one end of the blade, where it gleamed boldly. I hope my nameless friend from the parking lot walked away from the Wall that day with as much peace in his heart as I felt at that moment.

LAW WILL EXTEND TAX BREAK TO SPOUSES OF VETERANS

Submitted By Vincent Rios

The cut applies to disabilities that are 100 percent service-related.
By Jim Vertuno Associated Press

AUSTIN - Tens of thousands of spouses of totally disabled veterans in Texas will qualify for significant property tax relief under a law taking effect Sunday.

Texas law already exempts veterans who are declared 100 percent disabled because of combat injuries or other service related causes from paying property taxes on their home. As of Jan. 1, that homestead exemption will also apply to a spouse after the veteran dies.

The change will help some of those spouses, many living on fixed incomes, to keep their homes, said John D. Burkhardt of the Austin chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart veterans group.

Some of our veterans have owned their homes for many years, and when they die, their spouse can get hit with huge bills;' Burkhardt said.

The measure is one of a handful of laws taking effect in 2012. The homestead exemption for disabled

veterans' spouses required an amendment to the state constitution, which voters approved in November.

It won't come cheap. According to a Senate analysis, the exemption is estimated to cost state and local governments about $25 million in property taxes by 2016.

Sen. Dan Patrick, R - Houston, one of the authors of the law, called that an insignificant budget impact compared with the sacrifices made by the veterans and their families.

When they came back from war 100 percent disabled, that's a very special class of soldiers!' Patrick said.

We're not talking about people living in million - dollar houses. For the most part, we're talking about people trying to get by on military benefits!'

Texas has about 300,000 disabled veterans, and nearly 25,000 of them are designated as 100 percent service-related disabled, according to the Texas Veterans Commission. About 16,600 of those are between ages 55 and 75.

The homestead exemption applies to the veterans' primary residence and expires if the surviving spouse remarries. The exemption moves with the surviving spouse to a new home if the home would be an equal or lesser dollar value compared with the old one.

The new restrictions on homeowner associations require them to give homeowners three to 18 months to pay late dues or fines.

Homeowners will also be allowed to contact their association directly about their late payments, even if the association has retained an attorney or collection agent.

The law also allows homeowners to prevent their association from using foreclosure if the ban is approved by two-thirds of its members.

A provision requiring associations to get a court order before foreclosing took effect Sept. 1.

Homeowner advocates say they have been fighting for the protections for years.

This is the first time we got protection that had real teeth:' said Harvella Jones, president of the Richmond-based National Homeowners Advocate Group.

NICE MEMORIAL DAY STORY

By DIANA DWAN POOLE

MAY THE LORD BLESS OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN AND BRING THEM HOME SOON

Growing up, I wanted to be a doctor, but money was scarce so I went to nursing school. In 1966, during my senior year, an Army Nurse Corps recruiter came to talk to us. It all sounded so exciting; I would have a chance to travel, it paid well and most importantly, I was assured that I wouldn't have to go to Vietnam if I didn't want to - which I didn't.

I signed up and after basic training, was assigned to Letterman Hospital at the Presidio of San Francisco. During my two years at Letterman, I received orders for Vietnam three times. The first two times I said no. But the third time, I decided that my two years of experience would

probably be a huge asset over there. We landed in Tan Son Nhut Air Base and when the airplane door opened, I nearly fell backwards, overwhelmed by the heat and the stench.

Suddenly all my experience seemed trivial. Being 23 years old seemed very young.

I was scared, but there was no turning back. After our debriefing, I was assigned

to the 67th Evac Hospital in Qui Nhon. When the helicopter landed on the hospital tarmac, they set my things onto the ground. I climbed out, straightening my skirt. The soldiers in the helicopter yelled, "Good luck, Captain," as they took off. I was in my class A uniform, which meant I was also wearing nylons and high heels. Nothing could have been less appropriate for the surroundings. Miles of barbed wire topped by concertina wire encompassed the hospital compound and the large adjoining airfield,

along with acres of hot concrete.

I squared my shoulders and marched inside the grim cinder block building in front of me.

I was told to get some sleep, because I started tomorrow. I gratefully fell into a bed and in the morning, donned my hospital uniform - fatigues and army boots just like the soldiers.

Because I was a Captain, I was made Head Nurse on the Orthopedic Ward, which primarily held soldiers with traumatic amputations. I took my role very seriously and had a reputation for strictness. Although I had been a nurse in the States for two years, it did not adequately prepare me for Viet Nam. I witnessed a tremendous amount of suffering and watched a lot of men die.

One of my rules was that nurses were not allowed to cry. The wounded and dying men in our care need our strength, I told them. We couldn't indulge in the luxury of our own feelings. On the other hand, I was always straight with the soldiers. I would never say, "Oh, you're going to be just fine," if they were on their way out. I didn't lie.

But I remember one kid that I didn't want to tell. The badly wounded soldier couldn't have been more than 18 years old. I could see immediately that there was nothing we could do to save him. He never screamed or complained, even though he must have been in a lot of pain.

When he asked me, "Am I going to die?" I said, "Do you feel like you are?" He said, "Yeah, I do." Do you pray?" I asked him. "I know 'Now I lay me down to sleep.'"

"Good," I said, "that'll work."

When he asked me if I would hold his hand, something in me snapped. This kid deserved more than just having his hand held. "I'll do better than that," I told him. I knew I would catch flak from the other nurses and corpsmen as well as possible jeers from the patients, but I didn't care. Without a single look around me, I sat on the bed with him. I put my arms around him, stroking his face and his hair as he snuggled close to me. I kissed him on the cheek, and together we recited, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." Then he looked at me and said just one more sentence, "I love you, Momma, I love you," before he died in my arms - quietly and peacefully - as if he really were just going to sleep.

After a minute, I slipped off his bed and looked around. I'm sure my face was set in a fierce scowl, daring anyone to give me a hard time. But I needn't have bothered. All the nurses and corpsmen were breaking my rule and crying silently, tears filling their eyes or rolling down their cheeks. I thought of the dead soldiers mother.

She would receive a telegram informing her that her son had died of "war injuries." But that was all it would say. I thought she might always wonder how it had happened. Had he died out in the field? Had he been with anyone?

Did he suffer? If I were his mother, I would need to know. So later I sat down and wrote her a letter. I thought she'd want to hear that in her son's final moments he had been thinking of her.

But mostly I wanted her to know that her boy hadn't died alone.



THEY GAVE SO MUCH COMFORT

OBIT

EDIT NOTE: When I started to gather information regarding the Life of Colonel William Dabney, and read this article, written by Beth Crumley, the Reference Historian History Division, Marine Corps, I could not have come close to her wonderful History of Colonel Dabney.

September 28, 1934 – February 15, 2012
IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF
Colonel WILLIAM H. DABNEY
United States Marine Corps
Commanding Officer Hill 881S
KHE SANH VIETNAM 1968

In Memoriam: Colonel William H. Dabney

By Beth Crumley



Then-Captain William Dabney, photographed on Hill 881S. (Courtesy of David Powell)

It isn't often that one can look back in time and know exactly when life changed. I can. While serving as a contract historian on the National Museum of the Marine Corps project, I traveled to New York for a meeting with Batwin and Robin Productions.

Also in attendance was Colonel Joseph Alexander. His last instructions to me during that meeting were "Learn everything you can possibly learn about the siege of 881S and the resupply of the hill outposts around Khe Sanh Combat Base." I never imagined that simple tasking would change my life so completely.



India Company's position on 881S, during the siege. To the right of center, 881N can be seen. (Courtesy of David Powell)

Upon my return to Virginia, I began work. I read everything I could find on Khe Sanh Combat Base and the surrounding hill outposts. When I finally felt I had a solid background, I contacted Major Frank Gulledge, who served as the webmaster for "The Warriors of 881S." Over the course of the next several months I spoke at length with a number of veterans, Marines who had served on the ground, as well as those who had resupplied the beleaguered outpost by air. One of these veterans was Colonel William Dabney, who commanded the Marines on the hill. He was more than willing to field any questions I had, to offer his opinion on a variety of subjects. By this time, I was completely hooked on the story of 881S. I asked Colonel Dabney if he would take the time to speak with me at length about his service in Vietnam. He was ... but only if I was "properly prepared." Colonel Dabney proceeded to email me a very extensive reading list! I learned something about Colonel Dabney that day ... he demanded excellence of himself, and expected it in others.

So who was Colonel Bill Dabney?

Born on 28 September, 1934 in New Brunswick, Canada, Dabney was the son of Hugh and Mary Dabney, a Virginia native. After moving to the United States in the 1940s, Dabney enrolled in Yale University in 1953. A year later, he left Yale and

enlisted in the Marine Corps. Upon graduation from recruit training, Dabney reported to the Third Marine Division on Okinawa ... and was promptly put on mess duty for 71 consecutive days. Assigned to the communication station at the northern training area, it was during this time that he decided the Marine Corps would be his life, not as an enlisted man, but as an officer. Said Dabney, "I was so impressed by the dedication and competence of the officers I'd seen, and I thought, 'this would be a great way to spend a career."

Discharged as a sergeant in 1957, Dabney served with 100th Rifle Company, Marine Corps Reserves while attending Virginia Military Institute. There he met and married Virginia McClandish Puller. Her father was also a VMI graduate, and a Marine ... perhaps the most famous Marine of all. Said a friend of Dabney's, "It took a hell of a man even to ask for the hand of Virginia Puller, the daughter of General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller," and a hell of a man to meet with his approval. Bill was that man."



Colonel William Dabney, and Virgina Puller Dabney, photographed during the Navy Cross ceremony. (Courtesy of "The Warriors of 881S")

In 1967, Dabney reported to Vietnam for duty with the 3d Marine Division, serving as company commander with "India" Company, 3d Battalion, 26th Marines. The war was heating up in Northern I Corps.

By February 1967, elements of the 9th Marines moved into the area around Khe Sanh, to protect a detachment of Seabees whose mission was to extend and improve the airfield located there. Increased contact led to reinforcement of Khe Sanh with a second company. By April, the Marines had encountered strong North Vietnamese Army forces in fortified positions. Two battalions of the 3d Marines were committed to the area. In some of the bloodiest fighting of the war, which came to be known as "the Hill Fights," the Marines gained control of the commanding terrain overlooking the combat base.

By October, the North Vietnamese *325C Division* had once again moved into the area. Operation Scotland, the mission of defending Khe Sanh Combat Base, and using it as a base for offensive operations against NVA forces, became the responsibility of the 26th Marines. Said Col David E. Lownds, commanding the 26th Marines, "All indications are that we are going to get hit. How bad, I can't say."

In early December 1967, the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines moved to Khe Sanh and were briefed that the NVA was building up forces in the area. Ordered to sweep the area south and west of the base, the battalion moved from Lang Vei north and west to within 2 kilometers of the Laotian border. The Marines then swept northward, finally arriving back at Khe Sanh shortly before Christmas 1967. They made no contact with the NVA nor did they find any evidence of recent enemy presence in that area. By mid-January, 1968, however, intelligence officers of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) had observed a definite and significant shift in the patterns of movement of the North Vietnamese Army. Instead of moving well to the west of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, the NVA was infiltrating into South Vietnam from Laos and the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and assembling in large numbers in the area of Khe Sanh and its supporting outposts. Any hope the NVA had of a successful attack on the combat base would depend on their ability to seize,

or at least neutralize the hill outposts, especially Hill 881S and its nearby neighbor, Hill 861.

India Company, 3/26 was given the mission of occupying and defending 881S. Dabney's Marines made an overland march from Khe Sanh to the hill. From 27 December through 17 January, India Company patrolled the area aggressively, sometimes to the limit of the range of the attached 81mm mortars (about 4000 meters).



Marines of 3d Platoon, "India" Company, photographed the morning of 20 January, 1968.

At 0500, on 20 January 1968, India Company began a reconnaissance-in-force up Hill 881N, encountering an NVA battalion moving towards Khe Sanh. It was the opening move in a siege that would last 77 long days. That night, India Company was ordered to return to 881S. Said Dabney, "The mission was still to hold 881S ... There were a bunch of guys up there and they'd come prepared to fight. We hosed down 881N and all the ground between it and 881S til dark, with air, 81s, 60s and all the artillery we could get ... For once we knew where they were." That night the enemy hit Khe Sanh and all the outlying outposts EXCEPT 881S.

Veterans of the embattled outpost credit Dabney's leadership with keeping them alive throughout the siege. Lt. Carlton Crenshaw, who commanded the 105mm howitzer detachment on 881S wrote:

"Captain Dabney, being the senior officer on the hill, is in charge of both India and Mike Companies. He is an excellent Marine ... I think I might have mentioned it before, he is the son-in-law of the Marine Corps' most famous general and war hero in the Banana Republic Wars of the 1930s, World War II and Korea -- Chesty Puller ... Captain Dabney has a lot of weight on his shoulders and has grown weary up here. He is thirty two years old and looks like he has aged five years up here on Hill 881. He also leads a magic life in terms of not being hit. He personally supervises every medical evacuation we have. He is there helping to direct the helos in. He gets stretcher bearers moving the minute the wheels touch ground. When we get replacements or the return of our stretcher bearers, he directs them immediately to a nearby trench because it is only a matter of seconds before a mortar round will land. He has had a round land close to him every day for the past three weeks! He is 6 feet 4 inches, like myself, and is also a big target for the snipers. He has had a helmet shot off his head. During a mortar attack the other day, I saw Captain Dabney standing on a trench wall shaking his fist and cursing at the NVA..."



Forward Air Control Team on Hill 881S. LCpl Ulrich, radio operator, Capt Bill Dabney, Cpl Robert Arrotta, and 1stLt Chuck Schneider, Forward Artillery Observer. (Courtesy of David Powell)

What was life on 881S like? It was about digging in, living day to day with no relief in sight. It was about lack of food, lack of water, lack of sanitation. It was about the wounded, and the dying and the dead. And the fog ... and the rats ... and waiting for resupply and medevacs. Said Crenshaw, "Our small force here on Hill 881 is pretty tired -- there is no place to go, constant incoming, attacks at night, inadequate amounts of food water and mail. We are under siege constantly."



Marines on 881S take cover from incoming fire. (Courtesy of David Powell)

Through it all Marines fought and endured and sometimes found humor in life on the hill. And Colonel Dabney never failed to remind me that he was incredibly proud of his Marines. He would often say, "These were AWESOME men, Beth."
Colonel Dabney later wrote:

There was never a climactic day or event. Rather, from 21 January through 17 April 1968, the threat to life and limb remained essentially unchanged. The dangers were greatest during helicopter operations because those offered the most lucrative targets to the enemy's gunners. The potential for catastrophe, however, was greatest at night or during the frequent foggy weather when we could not see to detect the enemy's approach or to bring our massive supporting fires to bear against him. That potential took a psychological as well as a physical toll. To stand in a trench for eight hours on a given night without relief, in total darkness, in a fog so thick that even a magnesium flare could not pierce it, all senses focused on detecting any sound, any smell, any hint of movement to the front, was trying in the extreme to the Marine required to do it. To require all hands do so nightly for three months was to stretch the limits of resolve. We all knew that if the North Vietnamese assaulted there was no possibility of reinforcement or withdrawal. Aside from the preplanned supporting fires, we were entirely on our own. The Marines had daily opportunities to take the measure of their enemy. He was brave, he was disciplined, and he was not suicidal, so they knew that he would assault only when he was reasonably confident of success, and with adequate strength. They also knew that if wounded, they would be evacuated to a medical facility only when and if the weather broke and the helicopters could fly -- that there was little their Corpsmen could provide save comfort and some morphine to ease their pain. Forty-two Marines or Corpsmen died on or near the hill and nearly two hundred were wounded, not including aviation casualties whose numbers, being reported separately, were unknown to us. Seven helicopters were shot down, yet we never called for a medevac that didn't come, weather permitting. None of these losses occurred in a single pitched battle, but rather in discrete incidents scattered over the course of the siege. Incoming was constant, and although we learned to cope with it to a point, a lucky round in a trenchline or active medevac zone was just as deadly in April as in January. Through it all, the troops did their duty. They stood their watches, flew their aircraft or serviced helicopter zones, manned outposts, engaged the enemy and raised the flag as zealously at the end as at the beginning. They were never asked to stand back-to-back against the flagpole with fixed bayonets, but rather to endure. By enduring, they triumphed. They were magnificent!"



Marines raise the American flag over Hill 881S. (Courtesy of David Powell)

Colonel Dabney's leadership during the siege was finally recognized on 15 April 2005, when he received the Navy Cross in a ceremony at Virginia Military Institute. On a clear, spring day, friends, family, and veterans gathered together to mark this occasion. The VMI cadets conducted a parade and pass in review. I shall never forget the sight of Colonel Dabney rising out of his wheelchair to render a salute, or the pride in the voices of "his Marines."

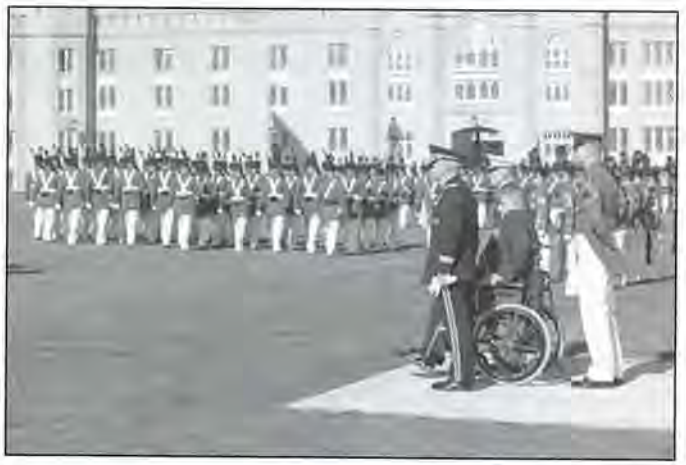

The cadets at Virginia Military Institute conduct a pass in review. (Courtesy of David Powell)

Later that day, the Navy Cross was presented in Jackson Memorial Hall. Before a magnificent mural depicting the battle of New Market, in which the VMI Cadet Corps spearheaded an infantry charge across a rain-soaked wheat field, the Navy Cross was affixed to Colonel Dabney's suit jacket. Colonel William Grace, the Commanding Officer of the NROTC Unit, VMI, read the citation:

"For extraordinary heroism while serving as Commanding Officer of two heavily reinforced rifle companies of the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam from 21 January to 14 April 1968. During the entire period, Colonel (then Captain) Dabney's force stubbornly defended Hill 881S, a regimental outpost vital to the defense of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Following his bold spoiling attack on 20 January 1968, shattering a much larger North Vietnamese Army (NVA) force deploying to attack Hill 881S, Colonel Dabney's force was surrounded and cut off from all outside ground supply for the entire 77 day Siege of Khe Sanh. Enemy snipers, machine guns, artillery, and 120-millimeter mortars responded to any daylight movement on his position. In spite of deep entrenchments, his total casualties during the siege were close to 100 percent. Helicopters were his only source of resupply, and each such mission brought down a cauldron of fire on his landing zones. On numerous occasions Colonel Dabney raced into the landing zone under heavy hostile fire to direct debarkation of personnel and to carry wounded Marines to evacuation helicopters. The extreme difficulty of resupply resulted in conditions of hardship and deprivation seldom experienced by American forces. Nevertheless, Colonel Dabney's indomitable spirit was truly an inspiration to his troops. He organized his defenses with masterful skill and his preplanned fires shattered every enemy probe on his positions. He also devised an early warning system whereby NVA artillery and rocket firings from the west were immediately reported by lookouts to the Khe Sanh Combat Base, giving exposed personnel a few life saving seconds to take cover, saving countless lives, and facilitating the targeting of enemy firing positions. Colonel Dabney repeatedly set an incredible example of calm courage under fire, gallantly exposing himself at the center of every action without concern for his own safety. Colonel Dabney contributed decisively to ultimate victory in the Battle of Khe Sanh, which ranks among the most heroic stands of any American force in history.

By his valiant combat leadership, exceptional bravery, and selfless devotion to duty, Colonel Dabney reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the



Refusing a microphone, Colonel Dabney rose to address those in attendance at Jackson Memorial Hall. (Courtesy of "The Warriors of 881S")

United States Naval Service."

Ladies and gentlemen, these men standing before you, and the Marines and Navy Hospital Corpsmen, living and dead, whom they represent, are the men who, for 77 days at Khe Sanh, held the hill and poured hot steel on a determined enemy. The same forces under the same general besieged Khe Sanh as had overwhelmed the French at Dien Bien Phu. At Khe Sanh, they were faced by these men, and they quit and faded away. These men did their duty and



Marines on 881S endured a 77-day siege, living in bunkers and in "bunny holes." (Courtesy of David Powell)

endured -- Stonewall Jackson would have called it resolve -- and by enduring, they triumphed."

It is the greatest honor of my life to have served



Some of the veterans of 881S stand during the Navy Cross ceremony.

with these patriots in battle. I wear this decoration only symbolically, as their commanding officer. It is these men who earned it."

Colonel Dabney left the stage, aided by his wife Virginia. He stopped by the first rows in the center of the hall, where the veterans of 881S were seated. In a booming voice, he said "Follow me, men." They would have followed him to the gates of hell, had he asked them. He was the recipient of the Navy Cross, a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars and two Navy Commendation Medals ... but I believe he felt one of his greatest rewards was commanding the Marines on Hill 881S.

Later that day, after the reception, many of us had an opportunity to spend time with Colonel Dabney and "his Marines." It was a fantastic day, and one that I shall be forever grateful for ... but my great respect and admiration for Colonel Dabney goes much deeper than the fact that he was an American hero. You see, Colonel Dabney was the kind of Marine who always felt it was his duty to mentor those who came after. I spoke with so many Marines that day who told me stories of Colonel Dabney inviting them to his home, talking with them for hours, mentoring them throughout their careers. Upon hearing of his death, former Sergeant Glenn Prentice, who served on 881S, stated, "I do not have the words to express my feelings. Col. Dabney was my C.O., my teacher, a man we followed into the breach -- taught us of life and death -- showed me how to put others before oneself. Bob Arrotta and I over the years would visit Bill -- cleared up many ghosts we both had. I will truly miss him -- but he will be always with me. Farewell my friend -- be at peace!"

He gave so much to so many ... including me. There was never a time when I asked a question that I failed to receive an answer. There were times I turned to him for his wisdom and guidance and he was always willing to share his insight.

When I first started working in the field of Marine Corps history, all I really wanted to do was write World War I history. After working on several projects over the course of many years, I found that the majority of the projects which crossed my desk were on Vietnam. Although I enjoyed the history of the Vietnam War, I was reticent. I started talking with those people whose opinion I respected. More

than one told me to stay away, that Vietnam was "still a minefield." I spoke at length with Colonel Dabney about this. He was quick to remind me that I had a responsibility to those who served in Vietnam, that their courage, their valor, was no different than the Marines who fought at Tarawa, at Peleliu, at Iwo Jima, at Chosin. The difference was in the way they were perceived by the outside world. Every time I give a lecture on Vietnam, I use those words. Largely because of Colonel Bill Dabney, I embraced the history of the Vietnam War, and it has been one of the greatest gifts in my life.

I never had the opportunity to know Colonel Dabney when he was healthy. He was largely confined to a wheelchair and on oxygen ... but he remained a giant of a man.

Thank you, Colonel Dabney, for giving me the opportunity to walk with giants of the Corps. Thank you for your wisdom and your guidance. You were a true American hero, and you will be remembered as such ... and you will be missed by many.
Rest in Peace, sir.

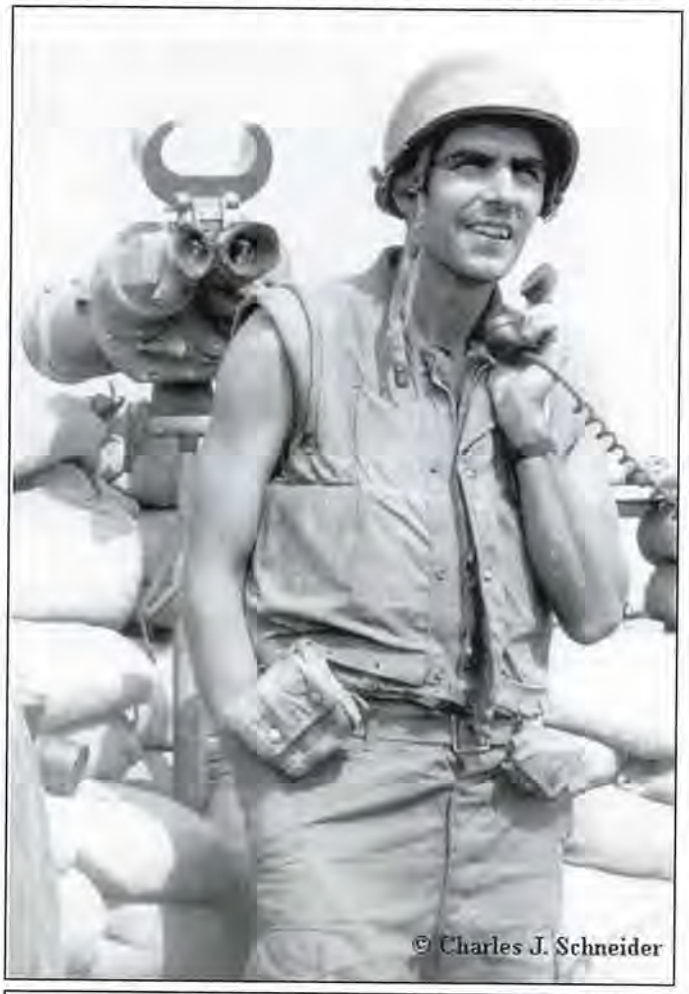

Captain William H. Dabney (Courtesy of Mrs. Joanne Schneider)

Beth Crumley is a regular blog contributor for the Marine Corps Association

Beth is currently a reference historian at History Division, Marine Corps, Quantico, VA. She serves as one of two unit historians within the USMC, responsible for researching and updating the lineage and honors of approximately 435 Marine Corps units. Beth interacts daily with units throughout the Marine Corps, answering questions concerning their lineage and honors, as well as battle streamers. Beth is a regular blog contributor for the Marine Corps Association & Foundation. Her blogs can be found at: http://www.mca-marines.org/blog.

Prior to the above Beth was a curator for the National Museum of the Marine Corps, and also worked as a contract historian and writer. She authored the book "The Marine Corps: Three Centuries of Glory", a battle history of the Corps with emphasis on the 20th century. Beth also worked on the indexes for several other publications including: "US Army: A Complete History", "US Navy: A Complete History", "US Air Force: A Complete History" as well as chronologies of American forces in World War II and Vietnam. Additionally, Beth is under contract to complete an update of the "USMC Chronology" that is contained in "The Marines", scheduled for reprint this summer.

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

VETERAN RETURNS TO VIETNAM FOR CLOSURE, PERSPECTIVE

By Judith McGinnis
Times Record News
Posted February 6, 2012 at midnight

When **Carl "Gus" Gustafson** left Vietnam in 1968, wounded so badly doctors doubted he'd ever walk again, the thought of going back seemed remote. With time and determination, Gustafson beat the odds. He walked, married the love of his life, made a career and raised a family. Still, there were unseen wounds he and 10 other Vietnam veterans set out to salve when they recently returned to the country that changed their lives forever.

Each year the VFW-administered Robert Charles Kahle Fund provides Purple Heart recipients all-expense paid trips back to their battlefields. Everyone in Gustafson's group saw each sight with different eyes.

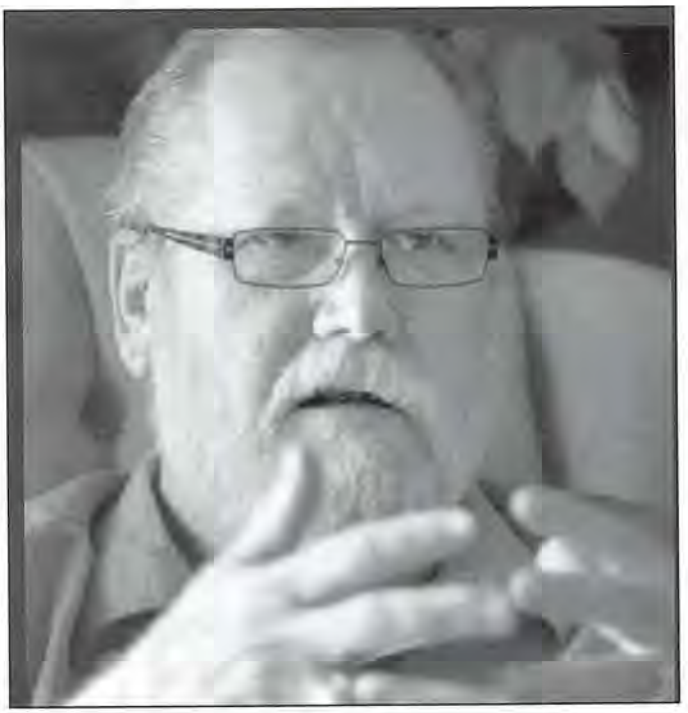

Torin Halsey/Times Record News Carl Gustafson fought in Vietnam in 1967 and '68 with the 1st Battalion 9th Marines. He was wounded and returned home with a Purple Heart. He recently returned from a trip back to the country coordinated by the VFW to help veterans reconcile a very turbulent time in their lives.

"His (Kahle's) hope was that some guys might heal, seek closure from their experiences," said Gustafson, who was a 19-year-old lance corporal with the 1st Battalion 9th Marines the day his platoon was ambushed by Vietcong during the Tet Offensive. "He never served in the military so it's pretty amazing he'd want to do that."

Like any other traveler, Gustafson tells parts of his story in snapshots. Pictures of Hoa Lo Prison, known to the thousands of men imprisoned and tortured there as the Hanoi Hilton. The tomb of Ho Chi Minh — known to American troops as "Uncle Ho" — architect of the North Vietnamese invasion of the South. The beautiful Stilt House where he laid those plans.



A photo of the infamous Hanoi Hilton, a site used by the North Vietnamese Army to house, torture and interrogate captured servicemen.

"We went to Khe Sanh, where I was wounded" Gustafson said quietly. The former Marine tends to talk more about the near misses of that day rather than the nearly 20 wounds he received. "It was my Waterloo."

As they traveled to Ho Chi Minh City, the vets saw evidence of a nation attempting to reconcile its wartime past with its struggle to build a future. Monuments of shattered metal overlooked utility poles burdened by nests of hastily installed cables.
They say 73 percent of the people alive in Vietnam

now "weren't alive when Saigon fell in 1975. But you can talk to lots of people in the U.S. now who don't know anything about the Vietnam war," Gustafson explained.

"We were never ill treated while we were there. A lot of people there still think 'Marine No. 1'. A few gave us dirty looks. We know people we met who were 60 or older could have been on either side of the conflict."

Unlike his return in the late '60s like many soldiers



Contributed photos Carl Gustafson stands in front of a Vietnam temple that was rebuilt after being bombed out in the war. The temple had stood for hundreds of years prior to the war and it was reconstructed to the exact specifications of the original.

he was advised to wear civilian clothing — when Gustafson arrived in Wichita Falls Jan. 19 he was treated to a hero's welcome. Along with scores of fellow veterans and members of the Patriot Guard, Karen, his wife of 42 years, their daughter Shannon Turnbo and son Mattheu, himself a retired Air Force officer with three tours in Iraq and the Middle East, were waiting with open arms.

"If I could go back to Vietnam, go back to my time there and change it, I wouldn't. Had I not been shot, had I not experienced all the things I did I wouldn't have had the life I had," he said, locking eyes with Karen from across his desk.

"There are some wounds that never heal but there were things that made me stronger."



Patrick Johnston/Times Record News Vietnam veteran Carl Gustafson reacts to a crowd of family, friends, and members of the Patriot Guard gathered at the Wichita Falls Municipal Airport to welcome him home. Gustafson was returning from a VFW-sponsored trip back to Vietnam and was greeted with the hero's welcome home he never received in 1968.



ANOTHER "WELCOME HOME" FROM THE KSV

LATE OBIT

PAUL L. PETTIT FORMER MARINE & FATHER OF STAN PETTIT, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN E CO 2/26 KIA LZ MARGO VIETNAM 1968

By Lawrence McCartney E CO 2/26 Hill 861A

Learned Mr. Paul L. Pettit, a World War II Marine and the father of Corporal Stanley R. Pettit, U. S. Marine Corps, an Echo, 2/26, Hill 861-A, Khe Sanh veteran who was KIA on September 15, 1968 @ LZ Margo, passed away yesterday. The obituary, which appeared in the Thursday, February 16, edition of the Anderson Independent-Mail, is below.

Unfortunately, this obituary left Stan's name out, but the newspaper will run the obituary again tomorrow, with Stan's name included. In addition, there is an obituary in today's edition of the Greenville News. Many of you may recall an article in a past edition of 'Red Clay' which detailed how Mr. Pettit raised and lowered the American flag over Stan's grave, for as long as he was physically able, everyday since Stan's burial in 1968. A Marine—he wishes to remain unidentified—who belongs to the same church has continued that tradition, replacing the flag at his own expense when necessary. Since I only live three (3) or so hours away, I intend to pay my respects to the family tomorrow. God bless and keep you and all your loved ones Sir, may you now rest in eternal peace.



LIBERTY- Paul L. Pettit, 90, of 8234 Liberty Hwy, husband of the late Colleen Childress Pettit, died Wednesday February 15, 2012 at his residence. Born July 28, 1921 in Liberty, SC he was the son of the late John Fuller and Emma Baldwin Pettit. He served in the US Marine Corps and was a member of Flat Rock Baptist Church of Liberty. He is survived by his daughters, Paula Hendricks of Pawley's Island, Kathy Finley of Liberty, sons, Ray Pettit of Rock Hill and Rev. Eddie Pettit of Sunset, nine grandchildren, and twelve great grandchildren. He is also survived by sisters, Johnnie Niemeyer, of MD, Myra Winchester of Greenville, and brother Coke Pettit, of Liberty. He was preceded in death by a son, Stanley Pettit, grandson, Christopher Finley, sisters, Bonnie Carter, Leah Rankin and Lela Goetze and brothers, Spurgeon Pettit and Quinton Pettit.

Funeral services were held at 3 PM, Friday at Flat Rock Baptist Church of Liberty with Revs. Doug Goss and Eddie Pettit officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE

NO SMALL THINGS

by Mike Worth

Each year around Mother's Day, I try to visit my Mom in Asheville, North Carolina. Mom, the one who worried as she watched the nightly news, while I was in Vietnam. Wrote faithfully, sent "care" packages, and prayed for my safe return. As she counted the days, she also wrote condolence letters to other parents; those of my boyhood friends and those of too many Echo Company brothers. She said it was just a small thing and the least she could do.

This year I arranged to take a little side trip to Simpsonville, South Carolina to visit with one of my personal heroes, John "Doc" Lancaster, Echo 2/26. Some may remember Commander John Lancaster, USN (Ret) from the dedication at Jefferson Barracks last year--but he is always" Doc" to me. "My" Doc, who when I was wounded on 27 October 1968, ran through a hail of bullets to get to me and patched me up. We spent a day at Laurens High School where Doc Lancaster is now the director of the JROTC program. In his classes, Vietnam became the lesson of the day. The scars from where the bullet went through my arm (having fortunately missed my head), and Doc's fancy patchwork became the "show and tell" for these interested, pulled together and well mannered young people.

Part of our plan was to also visit the parents and the grave of another Khe Sanh Veteran, Stan Pettit, E 2/26, who survived Khe Sanh, but was Killed in Action later at LZ Margo. Stan was our friend and brother then, remembered still--and John is the Doc who tended to Stan when he was killed by machine gun fire as he walked point on 15 September 1968.



Stan Pettit. 3rd Sqd., 3rd Plt., Echo Co., 2nd Bn 26 Marine Regt, 3rd Marine Div June-July 1968, Con Thien area near the DMZ

And so, we traveled along Liberty Highway to a sleepy rural area between Easton and Liberty, South Carolina to visit Stan's parents, Paul and Colleen Pettit. Stan's brothers, Ray and Eddie and sisters, Paula and Kathy, were at a family wedding rehearsal this day, so maybe next time.

Mrs. Pettit is ill and confined to her bed, but we hoped the flowers brought a touch of cheer and a splash of brightness to her day. Sadly, Mr. Pettit tells us that Mrs. Pettit has never quite gotten over the loss of Stan, their oldest boy.

In a devastating set of circumstances, the Marine Corps failed to inform the Pettits in a timely manner of the death of their son. The Pettit family first learned of Stan's death when they received a letter of condolence from a Marine in Stan's squad. Hoping it was a mistake, it was only after Mr. Pettit asked his Congressman to investigate that they finally received the heartbreaking confirmation.

Mr. Pettit, a WWII Marine, who worked in Naval Intelligence and took jungle training in Panama, Central America, is a very warm and most engaging guy, with strong political views and an acute and accurate memory. Paul Pettit is also a loving father whose son fought and died for this country. This father's deep love is evident in the accompanying poem, inspired by a photo of Stan that was sent to the family by a buddy, and was written two days after he buried his eldest son, Stanley.

When we visited Stan's grave, which is in the very center of a small church cemetery near the Pettit home, the roots of the patriotism and sense of duty that was so obvious in Stan, were movingly clear. Rising to nearly 15 feet above the grave with the simple bronze headstone reading Cpl. Stanley R. Pettit, E Co 26th Marines, is a flagpole bearing an American Flag. This powerful symbol of freedom and sacrifice, standing vigil in remembrance of one brave Marine, has flown there for 32 years. For 32 years, Paul Pettit has maintained the grave, reinforced the flagpole, and replaced each fading or tattered flag with a new one. For 32 years, Stan's father has ensured that anyone who visits or drives by this humble churchyard will see this flag--and know that it proudly waves over the resting place of one who gave his life for his country. He says it is just a small thing and the least he can do.

For 32 years this flag tells of duty, honor and sacrifice. May it always fly. May Stanley R. Pettit and so many other brave hearts always be remembered. It is just a small thing and the least we can do.



GOD BLESS AMERICA

OBIT

ANNA L. "MICKEY MOM" ROBLE
KHE SANH GOLD STAR MOTHER &
"MOM" TO MANY KHE SANH VETERANS
HER SON, JOSEPH ROBLE E CO 2/26 KIA

Anna Louise "Mickey" Michel Roble, 88, of Latrobe passed away on Thursday, Dec. 29, 2011, at Excela Health Latrobe Hospital.

Association associate member Anna M. "Mickey Mom" Roble, widow of a World War II veteran, Gold Star Mother--Lance Corporal Joseph E. Roble, USMC--and mother of deceased Marine veteran, William A. "ZBumper" Roble, passed from this life on to her eternal heavenly reward @ approximately 3:45 PM today, Thursday, December 29, 2011. "Mickey Mom" had a most positive and lasting impact on all of us; she cared deeply for all the men who served with her son and greatly appreciated the love and support she received from the association members. She was a "rock" for many who needed a shoulder to lean on just as she relied on us to be her "rock." Please remember her and her family in your prayers. Rest in peace "Mickey Mom." God bless and keep you in his loving arms for all eternity. ~~

Semper Fidelis!!! . . .
Larry McCartney

The daughter of Ernest and Lillian I. (Burkley) Michel, she was born Aug. 20, 1923, in Columbus, Ohio.

She graduated from Blairsville High School in 1942 and went on to work at Kennametal. She was married in 1945 and raised her eight children. When her husband died suddenly she went back to work at Toyad in Latrobe (Derry Township). After her retirement, she also worked at Kenney's Bar and Papa Sal's in Blairsville.

She was a member of Holy Family Catholic Church, Latrobe Senior Center, American Legion Auxiliary Thomas B. Anderson Unit 515, St. Vincent Society and the Golden Agers of Latrobe; honorary member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, and was a Gold Star Mother.

Mickey was an avid traveler who visited at least 28 of our 50 states, Mexico, most of the countries in Europe and also had the need to travel to Vietnam.

In these past years she enjoyed playing bingo with her many friends at the Latrobe Senior Center, American Legion, Fifth Ward Fire Hall and St. Vincent Grove. She also loved attending Mass at Holy Family Catholic Church. Her biggest love, next to God, was her family.

By the grace of God, she will join above, her husband, William Matthew Roble, who passed in 1971; two sons, Joseph Edward Roble, posthumous Bronze Star awardee who was killed in 1968 in the Vietnam conflict, and 'William Arthur "Bumper" Roble, who passed away while exploring in Peru in 2008; her parents, and a stepsister, Lorena Fisher.

She is survived by the following children whom she taught how to smile and stay strong through tragedy: Matthew Roble and his wife, Kathleen, of West Chester Steven Roble of Colorado Springs, Colo., Ann Louise Roble of Latrobe, Toni Apryasz and her husband, Stush, of Blairsville, Rita K. Roble of Latrobe and Beth Sundaram and her husband, Suyra, of Colorado Springs, and her grandchildren who will have the wonderful memory of a very involved grandmother, Charlie Roble, Joseph Roble, Holly Best, Rayymond Apryasz, Joshua Apryasz, Eric Roble, Daniel Roble, Dharninika Sundaram, Chandra Sundaram and Dhena Sundaram. She had five great-grandchildren who will miss their precious "GiGi" Maria and Jaxin Roble and Cecilia, Tyson and Finley Grace Best.

Rest now, Mummy, we've got it from here.

A funeral Mass was celebrated in Holy Family Catholic Church, Latrobe, with the Rev. Chester J. Raimer as celebrant. Interment in St. Mary's Cemetery, Unity Township. American Legion Auxiliary Unit 515, Latrobe, held a memorial service.

EULOGY
Read By Josh Apryasz

There was this skinny little girl who grew up during the Great Depression, she did the usual: went to school, graduated, got her first job and met and married her beloved soldier. She went on to raise their

eight children. We could say that about any usual girl of that time, but this is the story of Mickey Roble; who was most unusual. She had much more in all these years to do, AND to offer. The Roble house was the meeting place for all the kids and relatives in the neighborhood because she welcomed anyone and everyone. The smell and taste of her cinnamon rolls and banana bread always proved welcoming to them.

Mickey would get a little upset with her kids once in a while, when they ate out of the middle of her fresh baked bread, when they sailed their little sister down those old Victorian steps, the frequent fights anyone would have when there are that many people under one roof. There were the times when they brought dogs home to stay, and when there was a fork or two thrown across the dining room table landing in a sibling's hand. But they always knew they were loved, and loved a lot.

She always demonstrated her love. There were many, many hugs and kisses for the kids and when the children married she shared that unconditional love with their spouses and then eventually her ten grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.

There were many happy times at the home and especially at the camp in Ligonier where there were always plenty of visitors by the many relatives. Mickey was not without her share of grief and tragedy, perhaps more than most people do in a lifetime. Ironically, it was at camp where she learned of her first-born son's death as Joe was killed in action in the Vietnam War in 1968. She would demonstrate to her children to be dignified in their grief. They were to be strong and not shed a tear, at least not in front of anyone. There were times when they did hear her crying, but she never would allow them to see it.

Sorrow would come again too soon when her husband of just twenty-six years passed away suddenly in 1971.

Mickey showed her strength when continuing to raise the four younger children while also returning to work. The older kids stepped In to help with the four younger ones, but only under a very watchful eye from Mickey.

After the children were grown, life was happy for Mickey who thrived on knowing her children were finding their own place and independence in life. She moved to Florida for a short time following retirement but learned quickly it was not the place for her. The children were blessed when Mickey followed this short move with extended stays to the homes of each one of her children. These are times her children will always look upon lovingly and with numerous cherished memories.

As always Mickey's faith and fortitude proved strong once again. She lost her youngest child Billy in 2008. When Mickey first learned of the tragedy she was naturally shocked and shed tears for the first time in front of one of her children. She quickly recovered and composed herself. She was going through a parent's worst nightmare of losing a child for the second time in her life. Once again Mickey went on living her life to the fullest; traveling the world, going to Mass, and playing BINGO at the Latrobe Senior Center, 5th Ward Firehall, St. Vincent Grove and the American Legion where she shared love and hugs with her dear friends. She played BINGO until she could no longer.

These are just some of the events that made Mickey into the person we knew and loved. She was hard, but fair, stubborn but caring, and strict but loving. She helped shape many of the lives of the people here today with the life lessons she learned and then passed on to all of us.

So, like her, now her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren will do what she taught them, they will go on and share their love and strength because that is what she would want them to do.
No more goodbyes for you Mickey. We bid you farewell to be with your two sons and husband where there are no more tears.

WRITTEN BY TON I & JOSH APRYASZ



WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES!

By Joe Oliver

I would like to introduce you to a childhood friend of mine Roger Michael Hurd. We both grew up in the working class neighborhood of East Cambridge, Massachusetts.

I met Roger in the first grade of Scared Heart Grammar School and we were friends from day one.

Growing up in East Cambridge was a good thing. East Cambridge was made up of second generation, Italian, Polish, Irish and Portuguese. Everyone I knew was Catholic, in fact while growing up I thought everyone in the world was Catholic. This impression was fostered by The Sisters of Saint Joseph.

If you were Polish you went to the Polish School and the Polish Church, if Portuguese you would go to the Portuguese school and church and so forth. Everyone, that is except us Italians, all went to Scared Heart, the Irish School.

So there I was an Italian going to Scared Heart Grammar School and their Irish church. I wish I had a dollar for every time the Nuns forced me to sing, If Irish Eyes were Shinning.

Growing up in the 50's was great, everyone got along. All of our parents worked, it seemed divorce was not an option and I knew of no one who was divorced.

The only exception to this was my friend Roger. His Mother had been divorced several times. He had three sisters and everyone one of them had a different last name. Also his Mother dated. These were all very strange happenings back then.

Roger and I, as well as my other friends, hung around together all through grammar and high school. In East Cambridge everyone was assigned a street corner to hang out on. I am not sure how this process worked, but my little group of friends from Scared Heart all ended up on the same corner. Maybe the Nuns had something to do with it? Maybe not.

Growing up in the so called inner city, we shared a lot of firsts together. We smoked our first cigarettes together, stole our first car together, and drank our first beer together and so on. We also received communion together and conformation too.

My birthday is the 15th of November and Roger's the 16th. If I was 100 pounds Roger was 80. When I was 130 pounds Roger was 100. When I was 5 feet tall Roger was 4 feet. All during this time we had this little saying between us, "What a Difference a Day Makes".

Along comes 1965 and our lives would be changed forever. One of my friends Mike Lopez and I joined the Marines, wanting to see the world and get out of East Cambridge. A month after I left for Parris Island, Roger also joined the Marines.

The last time I was with Roger was 1966, we were both home on leave. I was a Lance Corporal and Roger was a Private First Class, again we had our little saying going, "What a Difference a Day Makes".

Lance Corporal Roger Michael Hurd was killed in action at Khe Sanh, Vietnam during the "Hill Fights" of 1967. None of us knew how Roger was killed, only the date and the location. Trying to make contact with his family was impossible as his mother had remarried again and tracking down his sisters was impossible.

Several years ago I was reading a magazine from one of the two Marine Veterans Groups that I belong to and came across the following story in The Khe Sanh Veterans magazine "Red Clay".

The story was written just before Memorial Day. I thought I would share this with you. It was written by a fellow Marine that served with Roger, someone I have never met J. M. Kaheny.

The value of the story is the same no matter what day it is. I wanted all of you to know about my friend Roger. I thought how sad would it be if on Memorial Day or Veterans Day or any other day for that matter no one thought of those that have made the ultimate sacrifice?

I am hoping to keep my friends memory out there

and I want to make sure that he is never forgotten. Over the years I have shared this story with many and I am honored to share the story with you. Maybe every once in a while you will have a good thought about my friend LCpl. Roger Michael Hurd. Here is that article;

A MARINE REMEMBERS ON MEMORIAL DAY

By John M. Kaheny

For most of us it is the sure sign of impending summer and it is filled with parades, picnics and beach parties. Children, enjoying the day with their friends, may occasionally ask why a tear forms in their father's eye at the sound of Taps or the sight of Old Glory waiving in the wind.

It is difficult for the young to truly grasp why we set aside this day to honor those gallant veterans who fell at Lexington and beyond, defending our freedom and protecting our lives. So far they have been spared the terrors of the night and the arrows that fall by day.

Not so for the aging warrior whose memory on this sacred day leaps time and space to find a grassy knoll four miles from Laos on another day in May of 1967.

Marines and corpsman on patrol, forty-three strong, are just five miles from the safety of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. To the north, they are the last free men between Hill 881S and North Vietnam. Suddenly, the Cat of Death jumps from a tree line on the exposed flank of the platoon. Two young riflemen, each but nineteen years old, shun available cover; stand up, stand fast and fire into the charging horde. Taking the full force of the enemy's assault, they purchase with their blood a precious gift of reaction time for their fellow Marines and corpsmen. Helmets fade slowly into chest high grass and soon disappear from view.

Eventually forty-one make it back to safety, some bleeding none broken, but the two go on home to rest forever beneath marble crosses. Their names, Private First Class Thomas Edward Hendershott and Lance Corporal Roger Michael Hurd, are now etched in stone beneath Lincoln's watchful eye.

The years have passed but every day I see their sacrifice reflected in the smiling faces of my children and grandchildren. For had not these two brave men held their ground with everything they had, Coleen, Meghan, John Peter, Olivia, Clara and Lauren simply would not be, because one of those they saved that day was me. Now you know why taps brings it all back and makes me think of those young heroes and where they are today and why I know, all too well, the meaning of that World War II epitaph:

And when he gets to heaven
To Saint Peter he will tell
"One more Marine reporting, Sir,
I've served my time in Hell"
What a difference a day makes!

Joe Oliver lives in Central Florida with his wife of forty three years Joanne. They have two sons and four grandchildren. Joe is a former Marine Combat Wounded Vietnam Veteran and a Life Time member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

John Kaheny lives in San Diego CA with his wife of 41 years. They have three children and three grandchildren. John is a retired municipal lawyer and a retired Marine Corps Reserve colonel with service in Vietnam and Desert Storm.

PBY "CATALINA" 5A 2487

By Craig Tourte

"The Makapuu Point Light house on the island of Oahu has the largest lens of any lighthouse in the United States." Makapuu Point is the southeastern most point of "Ohau." It's one of those tourist destination mentioned in the books and catalogs one finds in the lobby of the hotels and restaurants. People who have visited Oahu often ask others if they "visited the light house." There is a sign off of highway H1 that notifies the tourist of the location and directs the traffic into the parking lot. It is a walk of at least a mile up hill on a paved pathway to reach the light house. Most folks are attracted to the whale watching and magnificent views. You really can't get close to the structure but are able to mount a small steel platform to look down on it and out into the far reaches of the Pacific Ocean.

As I approached the platform I noticed off to the side a small cement block with a bronze or dark steel plaque. Upon further inspection I noted that the plaque was in reality a memorial dedicated to "PBY 5A 2487." The text on the memorial read: ***"Not far from here, on April 5, 1942 nine American naval aviators perished in the service of their country."***

Ensign William H. Howe
Ensign George L. Doll
Orren A. Roberts AMM1c NAP
Joseph H. Hayman AMM3c
Jack Parish ARM2c
Billy B. Herrin AMM2c
Delbert G. Berchot AM3c
Charles L. Andrews RM3c
William F. Allen SEA1c



"They crashed their Consolidated Catalina PBY-5A, Serial 2487 seaplane, returning from 12.5 hours of patrolling the waters around Hawaii for enemy forces. They crashed trying to land in foul weather and darkness, mistaking the Makapu's light for Barbers Point light and hit the hillside during low attitude circling maneuver."

"You are not forgotten…"

I did what tourists do and took some photographs, climbed the platform and looked out into the beautiful Pacific. I then climbed back down and stood off to the side for a few minutes. There must have been fifty or so people come and go during the minutes I stood there. All eager to climb the platform and take photographs and then turn and start the long walk back to their automobiles. Less than a few actually glanced at the plaque and none for more than just a couple of seconds. I kept seeing the words "You are not forgotten" and thought of the roadside memorial in New Mexico honoring those fallen at Khe Sanh and wondered it they would be forgotten. I thought of all of the memorials, remembrances, parades and articles which promised that the fallen would not be forgotten. I wondered if Ensign Howe, Ensign Doll, Billy Herrin, Delbert Berchot and the others whose name are engraved on the plaque were remembered by their families and friends or if in the end they too were forgotten. I won't forget them now, nor the others, and perhaps that is enough….

MORE KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

By Robert A. Hall
HQ 26Th CAC-O

Robert A. Hall in the village of Khe Sanh, Vietnam, in August 1967. (Photo provided by Robert A. Hall)

A Des Plaines resident who served as a Marine in Vietnam will be honored later this month by a non-profit organization for his poetry, which captures



the life of the Marines, their courage and what it means to be at war.

In his book, "Old Jarhead Poems," Robert A. Hall

compiled pieces he has penned over almost 50 years, starting as a Marine in the 1960s. Though the majority of his work in the book focuses on the Marines, some are also about patriotism and the War on Terror.

"Sometimes, it kind of just forces its way out of me. I don't know how else to describe it," said Hall, 65, of poetry.

Hall will be honored with the 2012 Robert A. Gannon Award on April 21 by the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va. As many as 400 people from across the country are expected to attend the black-tie dinner and ceremony, which also honors others who have helped preserve and promulgate the history of the Marines.

"I think he's done an excellent job of sort of capturing what it means to be a Marine in war and peace," said retired Lt. General Robert Blackman, president and CEO of the organization. Hall's affinity with words began as a child. Growing up in southern New Jersey, he loved to memorize poems and recite them for friends and family at parties. When he wrote his first poem in fifth grade, Hall's father thought he plagiarized, because all the words were spelled correctly, he said.

After graduating high school, Hall quickly signed up for the Marines, which he felt was his patriotic duty. As a radio relay team chief, he spent time in places across the country, as well as Okinawa, Japan, and Khe Sanh, Vietnam. Through his travels, he carried a battered copy of Rudyard Kipling poems in his pack.

"I didn't have many books with me and it was something I could read and reread," Hall said, adding he still has the paperback book of poems, which are bound together by surgical tape.

In 1968, Hall returned home to attend college. After graduating from the University of Massachusetts, he was elected to the Massachusetts State Senate, where he served until 1982. He was also in the Marine Reserves for six years during that time, he said.

Hall, a published freelancer, has worked all over the country running various associations. He came to the Chicago area in 2008 to become the executive director of the Rosemont-based American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons. Hall, who was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis in 2006, plans to retire in the near future and move to Wisconsin to be near family.

All the proceeds from the book go toward the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund, a non-profit organization that financially supports inured and critically ill members of the U.S. Armed Forces. Hall said he is looking forward to the upcoming ceremony and is excited to meet other writers and Marines who have served the country.

"To be part of that group and part of that dinner will be the real honor for me," he said.

HOW I GOT TO VIETNAM

By Joe Oliver
HMM-163 S-2 Chief

I was stationed at Camp Smith Hawaii in the G-2 section; Hawaii was a two year duty station. When I finished my time there I would not have had the time for a Vietnam tour.

The Intelligence field was new to me and I was busy learning my trade. My responsibilities were keeping the friendly and enemy order of battle and statistics on Marine Operations taking place in Vietnam. We tallied every item captured during an operation. All intelligence was then briefed to the General.

The General at Camp Smith was the CG of FMF PAC, he received daily briefings from our G-2 as well as the other G sections.

I was the bottom man on the totem pole and made E-5 once my MOS was changed to 0211. So all the shit details fell on me, but there was a nice E-6 Women Marine with me and she helped with all the important tasks assigned an E-5 Intelligence Sergeant. My biggest responsibility was making sure the coffee was made before the lifers (sorry about that) showed up in the morning and of course empting trash cans.

It was interesting learning how to keep the Order of Battle and I was enjoying my new trade.

Of course every other weekend we were in the field doing real Marine stuff. I was also in the Color Guard, at Camp Smith they had a drill team/band we did parades and ceremonies at the Punch Bowl and Pearl Harbor. Not bad and getting out of the office was always nice.

Remember now I was 18. When I received word of my childhood friends death (LCpl Roger Michael Hurd) my first reaction was I wanted to go to Vietnam to avenge my friend's death. So I submitted a request and was turned down, the reason stated I was at a 2 year duty station and my 2 years were not up

On my second request I added if I did my 2 years in Hawaii I wouldn't have the time for a 13 month tour in Vietnam. I got turned down again and again and again.

Then I got the idea to just do one request after another, I wouldn't wait for the rejection I would submit a new request twice a week. I figured I would kill them with paper work and they would let me go.

Months went by and I was worried I would be stuck in Hawaii for the whole two years. Funny now that I think about this, I was worried about being stuck in Hawaii. I know you must be thinking too bad youth is wasted on the young.

I worked directly under a Master Gunnery Sgt and he was a great guy, a Korean Marine. He knew what I was doing and figured to let it run its course. One day we were having a heart to heart and I explained that my childhood friend and fellow Marine had been killed and I just had to get to Vietnam for my friend if for no other reason.

My Gunny told me to request Mast and directed me not to talk to the Company Commander in fact he told me not to talk to anyone until he gave me the word.

I like the good Marine, followed his orders. The Company XO put a lot of pressure on me trying to find out what the reason was for my requesting Mast. I kept silent and he passed me onto the CO, I was once again pressured, but I wouldn't discuss my problem with him. Up the chain of command I go, word spreading of my requesting Mast, When the Colonel in charge of my G-2 section called me into his office, wanting to know what was up. I should have told him I was tired making coffee for all the lifers, just to see what his reaction would have been! I told him I would not discuss the matter with him and he was sort of pissed. I then told him it had nothing to do with the G-2 section or my work within the section. This cooled him down and my journey up the Chain of Command continued.

I am working my way up, and now I am going to see a fullbird, my Gunny telling me that after this guy, I would be talking to the General. I was a little nervous about talking to a General, but was relieved when Gunny told me I could discuss my problem with the Colonel, and that he knew the Colonel and knew he would solve my problem.

I reported to the Colonel, the first time I am in a room alone with a Full Bird, he tells me Marine, whatever your problem is I will solve it here and now. He told me there would be no reason to go any further up the chain. The Colonel looks me square in the eyes (I can still see him giving me that death look), and again says Marine, whatever it is, let's get it solved right now.

I take a deep breath and say, "Sir I want to go to Vietnam'! He looks at me and bellows.....what!!!!!! I repeat myself and after he collected himself. He says no problem, you will begin checking out tomorrow. True to his word I started checking out the very next day.

I think he was relieved when I told him my problem, I am not sure what he was expecting but it wasn't that my request was to go to Vietnam. Remember this was 1967 and Vietnam wasn't that popular, although in Hawaii with all the military it wasn't bad. I don't remember any protests or anything like that going on.

I arrived in Country Nov 1967. It seems very childish now that I think back on my thoughts, but I was very sincere. I mean they killed my friend and there I was sitting on a tropical island. That just wasn't right.

After arriving in Vietnam to be honest with you, more than once had I wished I was back in Hawaii making coffee for those lifers!

Today if I met a Marine who was in during Vietnam and didn't serve in Vietnam I'd look at him differently.....know what I mean? I know he is still a fellow Marine, but not a combat Marine.

Ok that's my story and I am sticking to it!

IT CHANGED MY LIFE

By Joe Oliver

High School was coming to an end, the time June 1965. I gave no thought of what my next step in life would be. One day my friend Mike Lopez said a few innocent words grouped together into a sentence, "Hey want to join the Marine Corps"? What a question, join the Marine Corps?

I was never much of a joiner of anything; well there was the Cub Scouts and Junior Achievement. I really had a good time in both of those endeavors.

I figured maybe joining the Marine's would be the same. I mean who doesn't want to join a group and have a good time, right?

Off to meet the recruiters. I can still see them standing ramrod straight in this beautiful uniform. Later I would learn that this beautiful uniform had a name, "Marine Dress Blues"!

My first thoughts, remember I was seventeen at the time, was that the girls are going to love me in that beautiful uniform!

Being a city kid growing up in a row house in a wonderful Blue Collar neighborhood I was what you would call a greaser. Back then one was either a College or a Greaser. I had the DA, black leather jacket, pompadour hairdo, hung on a corner and well I was a city kid and I loved every minute of it.

All I could think about was that beautiful uniform.

Of course I should have maybe given the year 1965 and a little country in South East Asia some thought. Hey forget about the year and some country halfway around the world. My thoughts were of that beautiful uniform and the girls it would attract. My parents were the only thing standing between me and that beautiful uniform. I was only seventeen and needed their permission to join the Marines.

The recruiter arrives at our home and immediately recognizes my mother is in charge.

His presentation was spot on and lasted for forty five minutes. When he finished he asked my mother if she had any questions, she didn't.

My mother turned to my father who had not said a word or asked a question during the presentation and asked, "What do you think"?

My father looked at me and then back to the recruiter and asked, "Is he (meaning me) going to look like you in three months?" The Marine Recruiter answered "Yes Sir Mr. Oliver"! My father then asked the recruiter, "Can you take him tonight?

S/F



"WELCOME MR OLIVER"



THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2012 REUNION WASHINGTON DC, 26 Aug - 03 Sep 2012
THE SHERATON NATIONAL HOTEL 900 ORME ST ARLINGTON VA 22204
ROOM RATE $109.00 GOOD FOR 3 Days Before And 3 Days After Reunion
Phone: 1-800-325-3535 For Reservations (Must Mention KSV)
CUT OFF Date is Thursday 26 July 2012 Free Parking With In & Out Privileges
Hotel is considering reduced Rates at Hotel Restaurant
Hotel is also adjacent to The Old Marine Annex (1/2 Block) which has a recently remodeled PX & Restaurant & Bar (Limited Hours) that will be available to our organization















VISIT SUNSET PARADE FRI 31 AUG 2012



VISIT MARINE CORPS MUSEUM THUR 30 AUG 12



VISIT VIETNAM MEMORIAL WED 29 Aug 2012



VISIT VIETNAM MEMORIAL WED 29 AUG 2012

HOTEL FEATURES FREE SHUTTLES TO & FROM RONALD REAGAN AIRPORT. SHUTTLES ALSO PROVIDE FREE SERVICE EVERY HALF HOUR TO NEARBY SHOPPING CENTER AND ENTRANCE TO SUBWAY INTO DOWNTOWN WASHINGTON, DC

Enjoy year-round swimming in our enclosed, rooftop, heated pool. Catch some rays on our rooftop sundeck, open daily, 9 AM to 9 PM, from Memorial Day to Labor Day. (Winter hours: Labor Day to Memorial Day, Monday - Friday, 4 PM to 9 PM, Saturday-Sunday 9 AM to 9 PM) or work up a sweat in our fully equipped, state-of -the-art fitness center. Usage is complimentary for all of our guests.

Club guests also have special access to the Club Lounge. A relaxing, upscale space, the Club Lounge offers complimentary breakfast, afternoon hors d'oeuvres and a variety of beverage options. Take advantage of the private Club Lounge where you can connect with friends, meet with your team, or simply relax by catching your favorite TV show. Need to get some work done? A copier/fax/printer and complimentary office Supplies are ready to go.

After a day of friends, family, or business, there is one more thing to savor: the welcome of our Sheraton, which is completely smoke-free.

SOME OPINIONS WILL NEVER CHANGE

Walter Cronkite recently passed away, and someone mailed me the following article. It was printed February 1, 1998, in the Chicago Sun-Times, with the topic :

TET: A NO-WIN DEBATE.

It contained the following statement "Soldiers who fought 30 years ago in the pivotal battle of the Vietnam War call it a victory, but critics, including WALTER CRONKITE, remain troubled by the enemy's bold attack.

It Then posted an interview with Walter Cronkite with a question and answer format.

NEWSMAN STANDS BY HIS OPINION

You cannot discuss the Tet Offensive without discussing Walter Cronkite. Before an audience of 40 million, he questioned the wisdom of remaining in a war that increasingly appeared unwinnable. "It seems now more certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate," he claimed. Soon thereafter, President Lyndon B. Johnson was reported to have said, "If I've lost Walter, I've lost Middle America." A month later, Johnson announced that he would not seek re-election. Some still view Cronkite as a hero. Others-especially the soldiers who fought during Tet-look less kindly on the broadcasting legend. Cronkite spoke with the Chicago SunTimes in a brief interview.

Q. What still remains a mystery to you about Tet?

A. Well, the only mystery is the lack of [military] intelligence that permitted Tet to take place in the first place. I've yet to see an adequate explanation of that.

Q. Do you regret your role in Tet?

A. I don't think so. No.

Everything we the press, and I particularly, did was justified at the time.

Q. Do you come across veterans who are angry at you for your role during Tet?

A. Yes. I've made it a point to speak to vets and military groups. I've spoken at West Point about the need for understanding between the media and the military. I understand that they might have a different view of the Tet Offensive. I don't really understand the anger, however.

Q. They're angry because they feel certain they were "kicking the enemy's ass."

A. There was not a point at Tet that anyone in the military thought we were kicking ass. They overran most villages we liberated. It is true they had to eventually retreat because they ran out of men. But no one believed we were kicking ass.

The Author, Bob Kurson then wrote the following Article after interviewing Veterans of the Tet Offensive, including several South Vietnamese Soldiers. Several of those interviewed were Khe Sanh Veterans, Tom Eichler & our Founder Ray W. Stubbe.

THE BATTLE IS OVER

Except in the hearts and minds of those who survived.

"We devastated them during Tet," says a helicopter crew chief from Chicago. "They couldn't stand up to us. We kicked the enemy's ass."

"Look, that's ridiculous," counters retired CBS News anchor Walter Cronkite, long regarded as the most trusted man in America. "We weren't kicking their ass at all. That's a revision of history."

The Tet Offensive-the most dramatic and important episode of the Vietnam War-occurred 30 years ago this weekend, and emotions still boil over. But few dispute that the surprise attacks by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese on 200 cities in South Vietnam continue to rumple tidy American notions of victory.

Ten years ago, you'd need the library to learn about the Tet Offensive; many of the men who fought still weren't talking. Today, on the 30th anniversary of the battle, things are different.

Today, you can discern admiration in the smoky voice of a Chicago Marine who concedes, "These

were not a bunch of ragtags. It was magnificent, magnificently done. Complete silence, not a word was spoken. They fought silently and died without uttering a sound. We never knew we were being overrun."

Today, you can see angry veins bulge from the forehead of a Chicago helicopter crew chief who pounds his desk to insist, "We were unstoppable. Everywhere we went, it was an overwhelming display of how good we were. For the first 10 days it was just carnage. We were ecstatic. We knew we had won. We thought the whole war was over."



Vietnam Veteran Bud Harton stands in a UH-1 Huey Helicopter that is being restored at the Air Classics Museum at Aurora Municipal Airport.

You could always count on Cronkite for an opinion on Tet. Today, 30 years after the battle, you can count on Chicago soldiers for the same.

• • • "Listen to this tape. Guys love this tape. They die laughing. It's hilarious."

Bud Harton has warned you about this white cassette tape, reminded you a couple times that the soldiers who were at Tet can hear things, funny things, on the tape that a newspaper reporter never will.

From the boom box come the unmistakable strains of men among men. Laughing, swearing, Southern drawlers poking fun at Midwestern buddies. One guy keeps practicing a guitar song despite his buddies' negative "reviews." The banter is good-natured, but it's sure not hilarious. You glance to Harton and his pal, another Tet vet, and they aren't laughing, either.

So what's so funny?

Then you hear the explosions. Massive, booming concussions that devastate glass, wood and, one can only presume, flesh. The enemy has struck in the dead of night.

No more guitar, no more teasing. Just the sounds of Americans scrambling for their lives.

Now Harton and his pal are laughing. "This is hilarious!" Harton says. His friend agrees. "When guys who were at Tet hear this, they fall on the floor laughing. Wait ... listen ... now we're firing back."

It is 'an awesome-sounding response. American helicopter engines cough into action, machineguns spit retaliation, sirens cry and rockets zoom with a vengeance.

You want to share in the humor these men are reliving on the tape, but you can only muster a crooked schoolboy grin. "Aren't Americans dying?" you ask.

"Probably," Harton says.

"See, this is why Tet was an overwhelming victory," he explains. "Never mind what Cronkite said. You hear this? The enemy could not stand up to this.

We won that war. We waxed them. We're going to play this tape at our Tet party. The guys will be rolling on the floor. They'll remember this."

America still reels from Tet's political lessons. The United States lost 1,400 men, the enemy 40,000. Yet Tet deeply troubled opinion makers such as Cronkite, who couldn't fathom how the enemy pulled off such an audacious attack, even storming the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. He spoke his mind to 40 million Americans, and Tet became a U.S. disaster.

You expect the men who fought during Tet to describe surprise at the reaction back home or to provide the kind of layered political analysis that comes from 30 years of reflection.

Soon, however, you realize that they haven't spent much time analyzing politics, not do they feel com-

pelled to answer such questions. To these guys, they did their job during Tet, which is to say that they kicked the enemy's behind in a major fashion. If Cronkite didn't get it, they . seem to say with quick shakes of their heads, that was-and still is-his problem.

"Am I a hero? Well, I was there and I did a few things." Hal Fritz is one of only 68 recipients of the Medal of Honor for service in Vietnam. The few things he did with the 11th Armored Cavalry Division defy every instinct that evolution built into sensible human beings.

"I was a platoon leader. I had 28 people with me and seven vehicles, and we were ambushed." Fritz says. "Two of us were killed immediately, and the rest were hurt badly enough so that we struggled to return fire. The enemy was only about 10 feet away .. We could see their faces with the muzzle flashes.

"They tried to rush us, but we managed enough return fire to keep them back. I'm not sure how, since it turns out they were a reinforced company with about 134 men and loads of weapons. The situation didn't look so bright ....

"After a while, I could see a platoon of five American tanks. But they couldn't tell who was American and who was NVA [North Vietnamese Army], since we were all covered with red dust. I had no choice: It was either get to that tank or we'd all perish. So I raced down the road to the lead tank. He had no choice either. He didn't know who I was. So he turned his cannon on me and fired. It blew me into the bushes, but somehow I got back up, made it to the tank and told them quickly what to do, then ran back to my unit . through enemy fire. That turned the tide, and the enemy retreated. That's what I did."

Now 53, Fritz is deputy director for the Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs in Springfield.

His platoon lost only two men that day, but killed 72 enemy soldiers and captured 20 more.

"You know," Fritz says with a chuckle. "It was pretty close. When the enemy retreated, we had less than 100 rounds of ammunition between us. Yeah, that was close."

Ray Stubbe watched hundreds of American teenagers lose limbs, absorb shrapnel and bleed to death on the jungle floors of Vietnam. Somehow, he still has a minister's smiling eyes. The retired Lutheran pastor was a 27-year-old chaplain at Khe Sanh during the Tet Offensive.

On the wooden kitchen table in his Milwaukee home, Stubbe offers for inspection a book he has compiled for the Khe Sanh Veterans Association. It lists the names and stories of those who died defending Khe Sanh.

"So many stories," Stubbe says. "But there's one young kid I remember particularly well: Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer. "Spicer arrived in January, and he looked about 13, very boyish. He came to me, told me he was a conscientious objector. He'd been deceived by recruiters; in those days recruiters told kids anything to get them to Vietnam ..

"I always supported conscientious objectors because I never wanted there to be any doubt they would do what they had to do to protect their fellow Marines. There was absolutely no doubt he was sincere about this; he had never hunted, never been in any fights. I told him I'd help him write petitions.

"A week later, the battle erupts. His first sergeant came to me and said, 'Chaplain, you've got to do something. The other men are beating this fellow up because he won't take up his rifle and clean it.' He asked me to square this guy away. I said, 'Transfer him to me.' I put him in the medical area. When choppers came in, he was one of the fellows who'd move people on stretchers.

"Well, this meek, mild Spicer turned into a real tiger. He would stay out in the field with wounded soldiers even during incoming mortar and rocket attacks. He'd comfort them, even lie over them to protect them. And we saw this constantly. People thought he was crazy.

"On the eighth of March, a mortar round exploded and wounded all the people who were carrying the wounded. Spicer got a piece of shrapnel. in the heart. The doctors did open heart surgery, but he died two weeks later. They gave him a Navy Cross, the second medal to the Medal of Honor, for his bravery. A conscientious objector with a Navy

Cross."

Stubbe pats the cover of the gray book the way you picture him patting Spicer's back the day they met.

"He's in this book," Stubbe says. "Spicer. The eighth of March."

Tom Eichler still has don't- mess-with-me arms. Even at age 57 and carrying a barrel where his washboard stomach used to be, the Chicago police sergeant's forearms look as if they're wrapped with steel bands and leather. The faded green tattoo on his right arm-"To Die a Marine is to Live Again"-



Tom Eichler defied close-range fire to replace machineguns and carry wounded Marines while killing enemy soldiers during Tet.

might be the last thing one North Vietnamese soldier ever saw.

Eichler's heroics in the black fog and confusion of Tet's first morning have been well documented; Those present that day continue to tell Congress about how "Ike" defied close-range enemy fire to replace machineguns and carry wounded Marines to safety while killing enemy soldiers from behind with a grip no human throat could survive. Eichler won the Silver Star that morning, but witnesses won't rest until it's upgraded to the Medal of Honor.

Ask Eichler about those stories, and you hear modest accounts that drift into generalities such as "It was just a battle after that." Ask him point-blank whether he deserves the Medal Of Honor, and he talks instead about his pal Billy Drexel. Bill was my mortar man that night. I'll tell you a humorous story about him." " Eichler's already laughing as he reaches with that thick tattoo arm to remove a framed, yellowed newspaper clipping from his wall.

"Here's Billy," Eichler says, pointing to a man on crutches. "Billy looked at some of the wounded that night, and there was a guy lying there lost both his legs. Billy looked at me; he said-true story, he said, 'Ike, if that ever happens to me, I want you to kill me. I don't want to live like that.'

Some time later, on the next hill 861,-we're only up there about an hour, an incoming mortar takes of both of Billy's legs, below the knee. Before he passed out, the last words out of his mouth, in that crazy Texas drawl of his, he said, 'Ike, is it still there? Can I still [make love]?' He was all tattered and bloody, but I had to look, said, 'Yeah, Billy, you still got it.' He said, '%%@. it, then, I'm going back home.' Talk about heroes. Billy is a hero."

American veterans interviewed for this story were unanimous on two counts. First, that the United States decimated the enemy. Second, that their " South Vietnamese allies fought as, fiercely as any soldiers they'd ever seen.

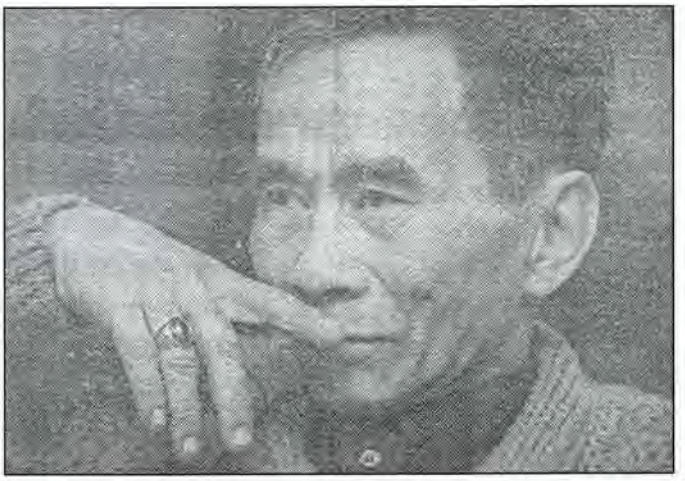

South Vietnamese veteran Chap Khuc fought alongside American soldiers during some of the Tet Offensive's most difficult battles.

Inside a modest storefront on Broadway sit three South Vietnamese veterans, all current or former officers of the Vietnamese' Veterans Association of Illinois. Each fought alongside Americans during some of Tet's dirtiest battles. Collectively, they spent 24 years doing hard labor in "education" camps after the Americans pulled out of Vietnam.

"You may see this picture from a long time ago," says Chap T, Khuc, 54. Khuc pushes forward an endlessly photocopied image showing him kneeling beside two Americans, studying a map. A prisoner stands handcuffed behind him.

"This is me when I was first lieutenant in Tet Offensive. This is one Viet Cong prisoner here. We are going to investigate him."

Neither version of Khuc-the 24-year-old soldier in the photocopy or the 54-year-old gentleman on the couch, looks as if he takes no for an answer. "Was he cooperative? First of all, no. After a few minutes-" Khuc also says the South Vietnamese came up with a novel way of blunting the attack on Saigon: changing the city's street signs the night before so that the Viet Cong got lost.

Kiet Vo, 51, is president of the Vietnamese Veterans Association. In 1966, his parents forbade him from joining the air force, and instead sent him to college to learn English. But things changed after Tet.

"Tet changed my mind," Vo says. "The enemy killed a lot of civilians in Hue. That affected our ideas. I think that they are very, very cruel, not like I thought before. This is different to me. After my final examination, I don't mind if I fail or if I pass; I join the air force again, and this time my parents agree."

Qua Dran, 61, wants you to see a photograph before you leave the building. He guides you to a framed shot of the three friends shaking hands with Gen. William Westmoreland. You cannot help but be touched by the pride that lingers in these men 30 years after .Tet, but you also cannot help reminding them that the Americans left them for capture and inhumane treatment by the enemy. Surely, you insist, they must have some anger.

"No, no, no," Dran says, stepping forward toward the photograph and pointing toward Westmoreland.

"He told us we didn't lose."

A SMALL BUT WONDERFUL REUNION

By Tom Hanks B CO 1/26

I spent a weekend with two former Marine Vietnam platoon mates in FL. It was our second anniversary. Prior to last year we hadn't seen or communicated in 45 years. The internet helped us reunite.

I put a web site together with photos of our brief weekend in Florida. It's just pretty pictures and some beautiful museum pieces. No war shots. We are very close friends and we fought and almost died together, on more than one occasion. We all eventually spent time fighting the NVA at Khe Sanh.

The big guy is Bob Falk and the other is Bob DeVenezia, both machine gunners. I carried what is commonly called a bazooka, combat knife and a 45 Caliber pistol. I was also, a 106 Recoilless Rifle gunner on top of hill 881 outside of Khe Sanh, and I was trained in plastic C-4 explosives and flame throwers for killing bunkers and people.

My job description was 0351 "Anti Tank Man". Since the enemy didn't use tanks I had to take out bunkers and bring in air fire with my "bazooka's" White Phosphorus" rounds, and a do a few other fun things. The three of us trained together at Camp Pendleton and shipped over on the U.S.S. Iwo Jima LPH-2 helicopter assault ship. Our first 60 days off shore we made various helicopter assaults on Viet Cong positions in the south, Mekong Delta, etc

Finally we left the ship, settled in and built a company base near Hill 55 - 50 miles from Da Nang. In early 1967 they broke us all up, most were sent to other units as replacement for wounded or dead Marines, and we all headed for the worst place on earth at that time, Khe Sanh. There are 120 photos on my weekend reunion site and they all have a file number beneath them if you have a question about one, don't hesitate to ask. These are not military photos, just 3 old men having fun in Florida. Pictures are numbered, just look beneath them. Below are some

brief descriptions of a few. The first group were taken while Bob DeVenezia and I were in Saint Augustine

Photo # 2 Lightner Museum
Photo # 10 Harbor Boat Cruise,
Photo # 11 St. Augustine Fort.
Photo # 13 Two new friends former NSA agents we met on the cruise
Photo#14 The Lightner Museum
Photo # 19 Me, at St. Augustine Beach
Photo # 23 A bicycle race coming right at us. I was lucky to get the photo.
Photo # 44 In the Lightner Museum. The building used to be the Alcazar Hotel 1888-1931 and spa for the rich and famous. This is the indoor pool. later on we ate lunch in that pool. It is now drained and a restaurant.
Photo # 48 NOTE # 48 be sure to read this before viewing 49 and 50
Photo # 70 Falk hadn't joined us yet. This is DeVenezia and me in the pool for lunch
Photo # 72 John D Rockefeller's partner in Standard Oil Henry Flagler one of the wealthiest men in America lived here, and his money is all over Florida
Photo # 76 Falk and DeVenezia
Photos 81 to 84 Dinner at a fancy restaurant 619 Ocean View in Ponte Vedra. People from neighboring tables came over and joined us. We had a ball.
Photos # 89-97 Lunch at a fish joint just outside of St. Augustine. As you see, Bob D was overwhelmed by passing women. He was a chick magnet. We finally had to hustle him out. After all, we are all happily married.
Photo # 98 is a 71' year old former Marine, married 42 years.
Photos #100 - 118 last night dinner at the famous golf club TPC Sawgrass Ponte Vedra Home of the famous PGA "The Players" tournament

Photo # 109 Back up to photo 109 the fellow in the stripped shirt became our instant friend. Great guy, Italian from NJ. Most important he has been and still is the Hole 17 Marshall at the tournaments. So watch for him May 10-13 if the camera shoots the 17th hole.

Photo # 122 Bob Falk's mint corvette he keeps it under a cover and only has a few thousand miles on it.

Photos: 123 and 124 were the highlight of the trip. Bob DeVenezia had these wonderful gifts made for me and Bob Falk. They have all our awards, and unit patches. There are a few citations missing but they are on order and the paper name will be replaces with a bronze name tag. In photo 124, DeVenezia had the famous author and poet, Bob Chapin, also a wounded Vietnam Veteran with a Bronze Star. sign a copy for me and Bob Falk of his famous poem "The Wall" The Wall was displayed in The White House in 1983 and as a result received instant success when President Ronald Reagan personally honored Bob for his contribution to all Vietnam Veterans. To date, tens of thousands of copies have been sold. I hope you enjoy the web site pics of our fantastic weekend in Florida. http://bikeatlanta.net/tommyhanks/th/Reunion2012/index.htm

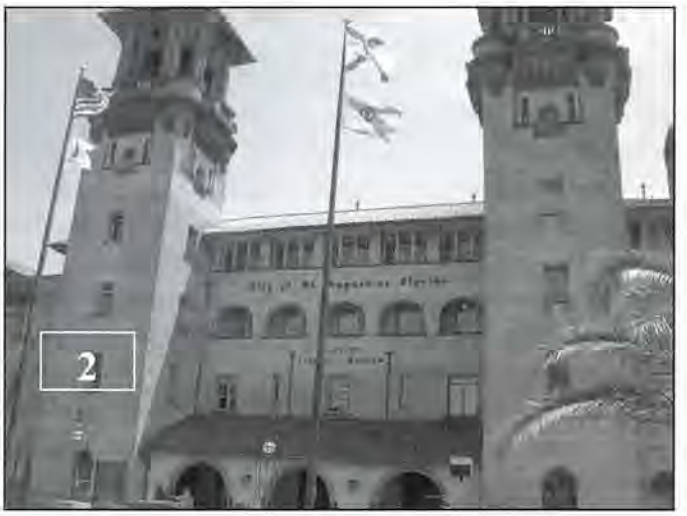


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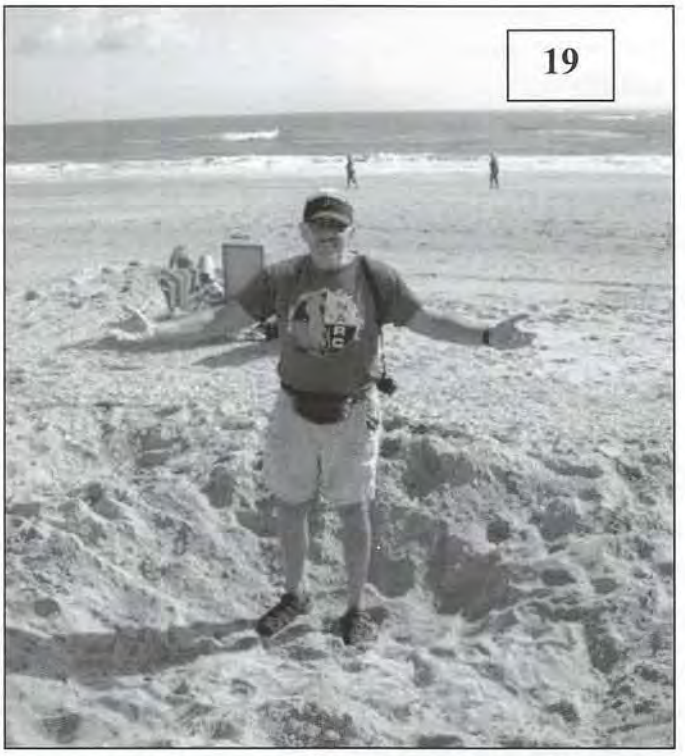
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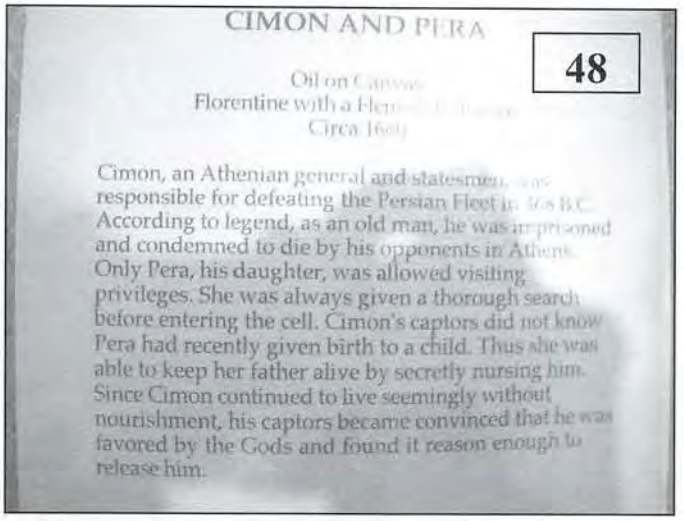
CIMON AND PERA
48
Oil on Canvas
Florentine with a Hen
Circa 16
Cimon, an Athenian general and statesmen,
responsible for defeating the Persian Fleet in
According to legend, as an old man, he was
and condemned to die by his opponents in
Only Pera, his daughter, was allowed visiting
privileges. She was always given a thorough search
before entering the cell. Cimon's captors did not know
Pera had recently given birth to a child. Thus she was
able to keep her father alive by secretly nursing him.
Since Cimon continued to live seemingly without
nourishment, his captors became convinced that he was
favored by the Gods and found it reason enough to
release him.


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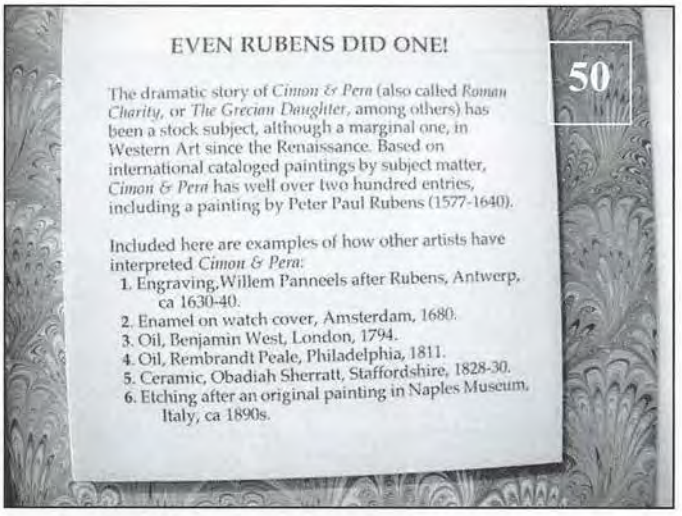
EVEN RUBENS DID ONE!
50
The dramatic story of *Cimon & Pera* (also called *Roman Charity*, or *The Grecian Daughter*, among others) has been a stock subject, although a marginal one, in Western Art since the Renaissance. Based on international cataloged paintings by subject matter, *Cimon & Pera* has well over two hundred entries, including a painting by Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).
Included here are examples of how other artists have interpreted *Cimon & Pera*:
1. Engraving, Willem Panneels after Rubens, Antwerp, ca 1630-40.
2. Enamel on watch cover, Amsterdam, 1680.
3. Oil, Benjamin West, London, 1794.
4. Oil, Rembrandt Peale, Philadelphia, 1811.
5. Ceramic, Obadiah Sherratt, Staffordshire, 1828-30.
6. Etching after an original painting in Naples Museum, Italy, ca 1890s.


70

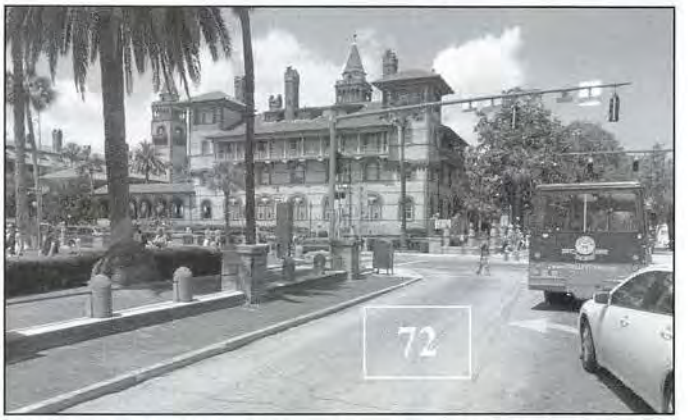
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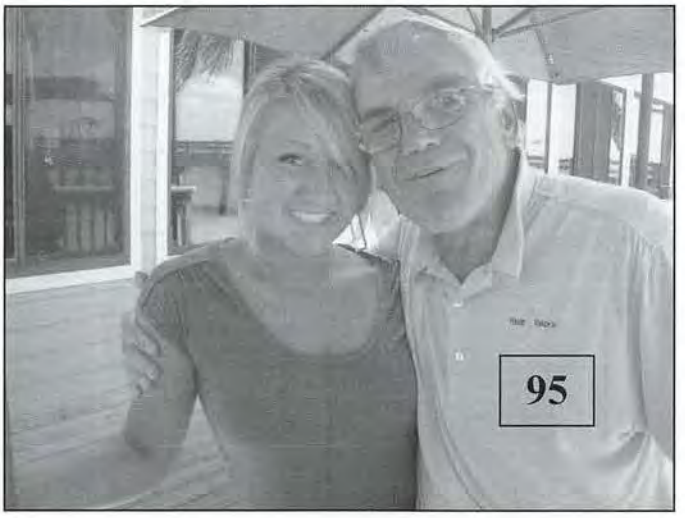
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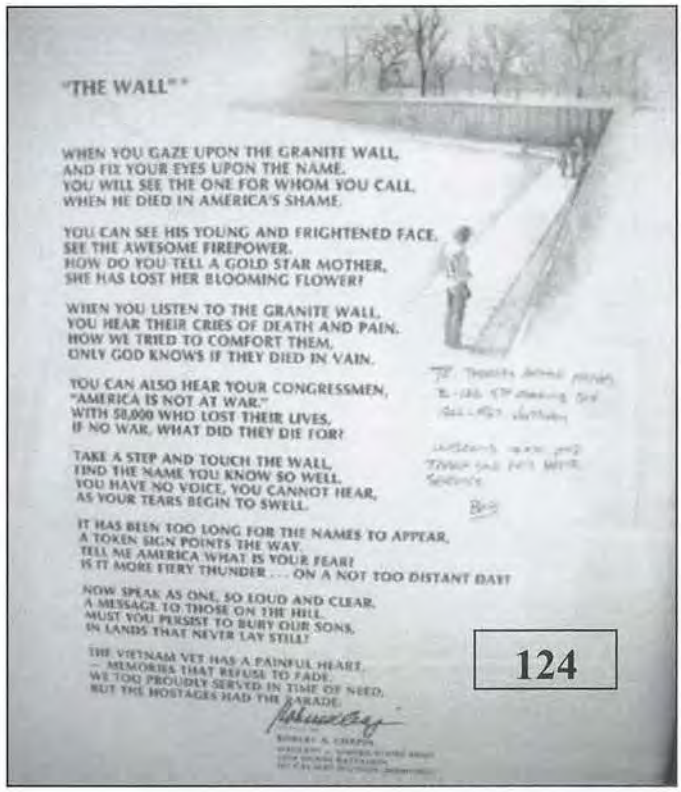

124

A FEW PICTURES FROM THE LIGHTNER MUSEUM











MARINES DO NOT FORGET

By Donna Elliott

Dennis Chomel has been dead for close to 45 years. His mother and father, who never got to bury their son, are also gone. So is a brother Gary, who before his death had ordered a headstone made bearing Dennis' name. He had no grave on which to place that monument but he always hoped there would be a day when that opportunity would come to pass.

Dennis' only surviving siblings are a sister, Angela Higgins, who until recently had lived in Columbus but has since moved to northern Indiana and a brother Kirk, who lives in Guam. They were both children when the 1965 Columbus High School graduate was reported to be missing in action in Vietnam.

In a way that missing in action label was a bureaucratic designation, given because there was no body recovered. Eyewitness accounts surrounding the incident in which the young Marine private first class, six others on his squad and four crew members on the helicopter they were aboard on June 11, 1967 "disappeared" were pretty convincing.

The chopper had crashed in a hot zone known as Quang Tri province. The explosion that consumed the aircraft after it hit the ground was so devastating that there was no chance anyone could have survived.

Eventually the Defense Department changed the status of Dennis and the others on the helicopter to "Killed in Action, Body Never Recovered."

Still, the absence of any physical remains cast a lifelong pall over the Chomel family.

Bringing back the remains of those casualties from the Vietnam conflict was a national priority for several years but as times has passed and other wars have had to be fought, the memories of Dennis, his squad and all those who never returned from 'Nam have faded.

There's one small group of men, however, for whom those memories are still very fresh. You could almost say they're seared into their minds. They were members of another Marine Corps unit that was assigned to the same area in which Dennis' squad was wiped out.

Ray Sullivan, today a newspaper publisher in Clovis, N.M. was a member of that second squad and he had contacted me earlier this week in an effort to find the contact information on Dennis' surviving brother and sister. He and the few surviving members of the squad plan to hold a reunion later this year in Washington, D.C. They want Angela and Kirk to be a part of their gathering.

Kirk has never met Angela or Kirk. Actually, he never met Dennis but there is a kinship in these two Marine squads that transcends familiarity They have an unspoken bond which is as strong today as it was almost 45 years ago. It was forged in an unspeakable tragedy of war.

After the helicopter on which Dennis was aboard went down, efforts were made to send other units into the area to retrieve the victims but enemy resistance was fierce and those plans had to be abandoned.

It would be 18 days before a unit was given orders to go into that area. Ray Sullivan was a member of that squad.

It was a small team of a dozen or so Marines and they had to be inserted several miles from the crash site. The first few miles were covered in uneventful fashion. It was on the second day of their mission that they reached a point where the downed helicopter was almost visible.

They never got there. Ray and his squad had walked into an ambush. A firefight resulted with devastating results. Four men in Ray's unit were killed, seven others were wounded. Ray was one of them.

Relief forces were able to pull the decimated unit out, their original mission unfulfilled.

In some ways it would be understandable had the members of the retrieval unit felt a strong measure of bitterness about their fate. They had been sent to retrieve dead bodies and they became casualties themselves.

The opposite happened. The men in Ray's unit developed a bond with Dennis and his comrades that is especially understandable to Marines. Part of it has to do with the deeply held tradition in the Corps that you never leave anyone behind.

"It didn't matter that most of us didn't know them personally," Ray said earlier this week. "It's what we had to do."

Ray and other members of his squad stayed in touch with each other after the war and they began to hold small reunions to relive old times. But they had something much deeper to do than rehash old stories. They set out on a mission to make sure that those they couldn't bring back were never forgotten.

Ray started the process shortly after a reunion at the Vietnam Wall in 1987. One of his buddies had acquired a list of the men who went down in that chopper crash.

With that list he set out on a mission to personally visit the families of the 11 victims. In 1998 he traveled to Florida where Denny's parents were living and talked to them about their son and his unit's efforts to bring him back home.

He made a point of staying in contact with the Pentagon department assigned to recover remains from the Vietnam conflict and in 2006 he received the word he had waited 39 years for. The Pentagon had reclaimed and identified a set of remains as belonging to Marine Pfc. James Widener, a member of Denny Chomel's unit. In letters to his family in Columbus, Dennis referred to Widener as his best friend.

Some time later, Ray learned that a second set of remains recovered along with those of Widener was positively identified as those of a second member of Denny's squad, Jim Mosier. Ray attended the funerals of Mosier and Widener and invited their family members to a reunion of his squad.

The group will be meeting again this year at the Vietnam Wall in Washington. There will be five members of Ray's squad, and he's hoping that family members of the doomed unit will be on hand as well.

They will gather at a special place on the wall, in front of Panels 21E and 22E. "The names are all there," Ray said earlier this week. "Denny and all of his guys are all together on 21E. The four who were killed from my unit are on 22E."

Harry McCawley is associate editor of The Republic. He can be reached by phone at 379-5620 or email at harry@therepublic.com.

ED NOTE: BELIVE IT OR NOT THERE ARE OTHERS WHO DID NOT FORGET, LIKE COLUMBUS , INDIANA



"EVERY GENERATION HAS ITS HEROES"



...a place to find peace and be with those who gave us peace...

The Bartholomew County Memorial for Veterans is a tribute to all those, living and dead, who



answered the nation's call in the conflicts of the 20th and 21st century.

The founding members Veterans Memorial

Located on the south lawn of the **Bartholomew County Courthouse**, imposing limestone columns serve as sentinels of honor for those of Bartholomew County who made the supreme sacrifice while in service of their country.

The names of 174 men and 1 woman are inscribed at the bases of the 40-foot columns so that their memory will be perpetuated for this and future generations.

The center columns contain messages from and about them, poignant reminders that they were more than names and numbers.

The columns are the centerpiece of a park dedicated not just to those who gave their lives but to all who proudly wore the uniforms of our nation.

The **Atterbury-Bakalar Air Museum** staff and the **95ers** were tasked to raise a large amount of funds from the community to help build the memorial. This group has been the prime mover for many programs and ceremonies conducted at the memorial park including **Memorial Day** and **Veterans Day** programs.



As you walk through the **Bartholomew County Memorial for Veterans** you see the names and letters of the 175 who made the supreme sacrifice while in the service of our country. A visit to the Memorial is an emotional experience for most everyone who walk by the limestone columns. A quiet, personal visit at night is especially poignant.**Jeanne**





Lewellen Norbeck's name is inscribed on the Memorial. The former air base chapel at the **Columbus**



Municipal Airport was dedicated in her honor.
Bartholomew County Memorial for Veterans
Ground Breaking Ceremony

PAST EVENTS AT THE MEMORIAL

Memorial Day 2006 was a two part program with **Zack Ellison** a USMC Vietnam Veteran the featured speaker for the first portion at the Bartholomew County Memorial for Veterans, then the crowd moved across the memorial block to the **POW MIA**



ZACK ELLISON



C DENNIS CHOMEL MEMORIAL

Plaza for the second portion which honored **PFC Charles Dennis Chomel**, USMC, the only MIA from Bartholomew County from the Vietnam War.



MAYOR FRED ARMSTRONG , VIETNAM VETERAN & CLASSMATE OF DENNIS



MILITARY DEPARTMENT OF INDIANA CEREMONIAL UNIT FOLDING THE FLAG



MAJOR GENERAL MARK PILLAR, USAF PRESENTING THE FLAG TO DENNIS' SISTER ANGELA HIGGINS

HUNDREDS HONOR BRAVO COMPANY HERO AT GEORGIA CEREMONY

By Bill Jayne
B CO 1/26

On May 26, 2011, hundreds of people gathered at the Georgia Veterans Memorial Park in Conyers, Georgia, to honor the memory of PFC Ted Britt, a Bravo Company Marine who died heroically attacking the enemy on March 30, 1968 (see "Red Clay" issue 78, Summer 2011, for coverage of Bravo's battles in February and March 1968).



The setting for the ceremony was extraordinary. The Georgia Veterans Memorial Park is an impressive, memorial amphitheater on the grounds of Black Shoals Park in Rockdale County, Georgia, just east of Atlanta. The ceremony was, if anything, even more impressive than the setting. Bravo Company veterans gathered and made presentations in the honored presence of PFC Britt's mother and younger brother, Tim, a retired Army National Guard General. Medal of Honor recipient Col. Harvey "Barney" Barnum, USMC, presented the keynote address. Marines of the Marine Logistics Center in Albany, Georgia, provided the music, presented the colors and attended in large numbers. A C-130 and a vintage UH-1 Huey helicopter provided flyovers.

The Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association (AVVBA) sponsored the event. Each year AVVBA honors a native of the Atlanta area who gave his life in service to the nation in Vietnam. AVVBA member Wayne Witter proposed the memorial to Ted Britt after meeting Bravo Company veterans Ben Long, Ken Korkow and Bill Jayne at a retreat on behalf of active-duty Marines at the Korkow ranch in South Dakota. The ceremony and bronze plaque honoring Ted Britt marked the 25th consecutive year of AVVBA's admirable tradition.

AVVBA heard of Bravo Company's service at Khe Sanh and read of Ted Britt's heroism in his Silver Star citation: "While reorganizing to continue the



attack, his squad was suddenly pinned down by hostile mortar and machine gun fire. Realizing the seri-

ousness of the situation, Private First Class Britt alertly pinpointed the primary source of fire and unhesitatingly left his covered position to assault the automatic weapons emplacement. Fearlessly moving across the fire-swept terrain, he reached the fortified bunker and, delivering a heavy volume of accurate fire, killed four enemy soldiers and silenced the hostile fire. Continuing his determined efforts, he launched another attack against an enemy fighting hole, and while boldly advancing, he was fatally wounded." The Atlanta area veterans marshaled their resources and executed a memorable recognition ceremony.

LtCol. Ken Pipes, former Bravo Company commander led a contingent that included Mike "Mac" McCauley, Ted Britt's best buddy at Khe Sanh, Peter Weiss, Ted's platoon commander, Bill Jayne, a member of the platoon, Ted Golab, artillery F/O from A Battery, 1/13, who served with Bravo Company, and Tom Hanks, an original Bravo Company veteran who came over with BLT 1/26 on the *USS Iwo Jima*. Peter Weiss and Bill Jayne both spoke during the ceremony, with Bill discussing the Khe Sanh campaign and siege to set the stage, and Peter detailing Bravo's attack on 30 March, 1968.
(Additional Pictures On Back Page)

Later, in an emotional presentation, Mike McCauley gave the family a Bravo Company flag that had flown at the USS Arizona memorial as well as several impressive, handmade pieces of woodwork made by Mike with great care and skill. Mike, a Boston native, spoke movingly of the way he and Ted teased each other about their accents and shared their hopes and fears. Mike also presented the family with an enlarged photo of Ted's squad (Mike, a PFC, was the squad leader that day). The photo is the one that is seen as the "cover" for Ken and Betty Rodgers' documentary about Bravo Company. The family and Bravo Company members also received red and gold baseball caps from Mike that say "Bravo Company 1/26 Khe Sanh" on the crown.

To all Khe Sanh veterans, if you find yourself in the Atlanta area, it's well worth the effort to visit the Georgia Veterans Memorial Park and reflect on the plaque honoring PFC Ted Britt. The memorial park is on the grounds of Black Shoals Park, 3001 Black Shoals road, Conyers, Georgia. It's off I-20 (exit 78) east of Atlanta.



PETER WEISS, B CO 1/26, ADDRESSED ATTENDEES



ALAN GRAVEL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AVVBA, INTRODUCES SPEAKER



HUEY FLYOVER





MISSING MAN FLYOVER



Marines From Marine Logistics Center in Albany, Georgia, provided the Music, presented the colors , and attended in large numbers

"AVVBA'S MARK STEELE PRESENTS MEMENTOS OF THE CEREMONY"



PETER WEISS, B CO 1/26



COLONEL BARNEY BARNUM (MOH)



COLONEL KEN PIPES, C/O B CO 1/26



BILL JAYNE, BRAVO CO 1/26

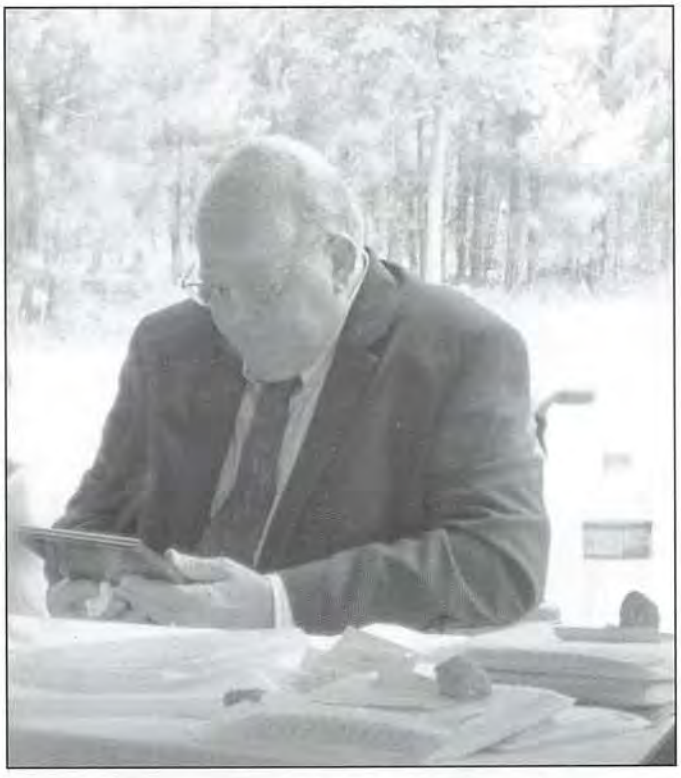

MIKE MCCAULEY, BRAVO CO 1/26



TOM HANKS, BRAVO CO 1/26



TIM BRITT, BROTHER OF TED BRITT



JOYCE BRITT, MOTHER OF TED BRITT



"SKIP DAVIS OF AVVBA PRESENTS MEMENTO OF TED BRITT'S FAMILY"



"SKIP DAVIS OF AVVBA PRESENTS MEMENTO OF TED BRITT'S FAMILY"



TOMMY CLACK, US ARMY CAPTAIN (ret) MANAGER OF GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES



JERRY BORZELLO, AVVBA, HONORED FOR FUND RAISING EFFORT



Carl Bell of AVVBA explains the poster-sized picture of Ted Britt's squad that was presented to the family by Mike McCauley



THE TROOPERS FROM BRAVO CO 1/26
L-R Mike McCauley, Peter Weiss, Ken Pipes, Bill Jayne, Ted Golab

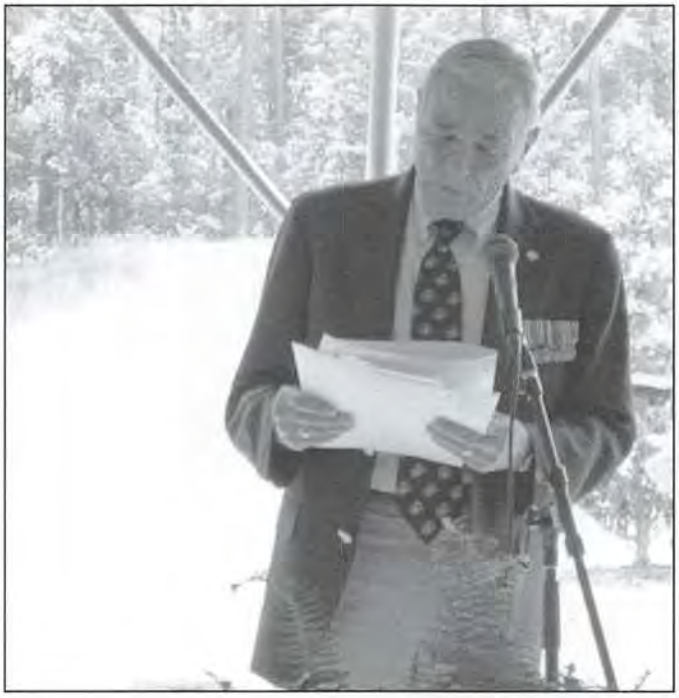

LtCol Ken Pipes, Bravo Co Commander, Led the Contingent of members of B Co 1/26 , to the ceremony honoring Ted Britt



Mike McCauley with Colonel Harvey "Barney" Barnum



JERRY BORZELLO AND FAMILY

"NOT ALL COMBAT IS HELL" THE BATTLE AT HAI-VAN PASS

By Jim Dalto
K CO 3/26

After leaving Khe Sanh I still had 10 months left on my Vietnam Tour. While guarding a bridge just outside of Danang, things got awful boring. Days stretched into weeks and still nothing happened along the highway. I do not remember even a traffic accident. Being on the line so long without any action, was a unique experience. It became very boring. But boring in a way that I found I could live with. I did a lot of recovering in that time; fattening myself up, sleeping as much as I could. Good as life was there, I knew deep down in my Grunt heart it couldn't last. Eventually, Murphy's Law would kick in, and something would happen to ruin it all. Sure enough, one day something did happen ... the Battle of Hai-Yan Pass.

The day started out typically enough. Just after breakfast, three of us ... Nanny, a BNG named Priddy, and myself ... were sent up to the last bunker in our Squad's area. We were to spend the entire day, guarding that particular sector of road, just like we'd done for weeks. Nanny, however, had other plans.

Within five minutes of our arrival at the bunker, he announced that he was going to hitch-hike down into Danang for the day. Priddy immediately volunteered to accompany him.

I didn't argue with them about it, even though it meant that I'd be alone at the bunker all day. It didn't bother me a bit. As soon as they started thumbing their way down the road, I crawled up on top of the bunker and quickly went to sleep.

I slept, basking in the sun, until lunchtime. I didn't want to miss lunch; our daily hot meal trucked down from the field kitchen at the top of the Pass.

After lunch, exhausted by the exertion, I climbed back on top of the bunker and feel back to sleep. An hour or so later, I was awakened by the noise of a huge convoy moving on the road. The convoy was miles long and too noisy for continuing my nap.

The convoy contained tanks, APCs, and ARVN armored vehicles. I noticed two six-bys suddenly slow down, then swerve out of traffic and pull into the turnaround next to my bunker.

About 30 Marines debarked. They were all attired in starched states-side utilities complete with blocked Soft covers.

A gunnery sergeant seemed to be in charge. I watched as he quickly lines up the men alongside the road and ordered them to load their weapons for test firing.

I noticed most all of them had M-14s fitted with Selectors for automatic firing. The gunny was the only one with an M-16. He the looked over the steep edge of the drop off on the side of the road, and made sure the Marines were locked and loaded.

He grinned when he saw all the big, black boulders scattered below him, jutting up out of the greenery.

He yelled at his men, "Let's ding those rocks" then put his 16 in his shoulder and started firing full-auto, his men immediately following suit.

I relaxed as they started firing, figuring, correctly, that they were just a bunch of new guys firing their weapons for the sheer hell of it. They were having a regular party, chattering and laughing like fools as their fire chipped white pieces out of the rocks.

One of the Marines fired his M-14 on full auto while standing on a small rock. He fell backwards every time he pulled the trigger.

I sat on top of my bunker and watched them cavorting around, smiling at their show of ineptitude. After they had run off at least three magazines, I noticed something ... M-14s fired full-auto made the same "Kak-kak-kak!" sound as an AK-47. With that one M-16 firing it sounded like a real firefight.

As this thought entered my brain, I swiveled my gaze a bit afield, wondering if anyone else had noticed the same thing. Sure enough several of the Army trucks pulled over and began firing down the same slope. Several of the tanks also stopped and brought their guns to bear on the same slope.

"Stupid Army" I thought to myself, and grinned at

them. Then I noticed column of men running into sight around the curve 150 yards up the road from me. It was Guerrero and his Squad, complete with an M-60.

They also took up positions and started firing down the slope. I cracked up completely when the M-60 opened up and the rocket team started to break out their LAWS. The radioman began calling in a fire mission and two huey gunships arrived on the scene and began firing rockets into the rock filled slope.

I could not stop laughing, but the gunny who started the whole thing must have realized his mistake. He hurriedly ordered his men back onto the trucks and sped off down the road.

Guerrero noticed them preparing to leave, so he got up and ran down the road, waving and yelling at them to stop, but they were long gone before he'd covered half the distance. Guerrero stopped and watched them go for a minute, then he noticed me rolling on the ground next to my bunker. He immediately assumed that I was hit, yelled for a Corpsman, and ran over checking me for wounds.

It took him a few minutes to realize that the only thing the matter with me was that I was helpless with laughter. As soon as he realized that, he started to shake me, asking me where was the enemy.

"Isn't no enemy!" I finally managed to gasp out, "damn' pogues was test firing!"

Guerrero looked at me for a minute as the situation slowly became clear in his mind. He slowly turned and surveyed the entire scene ... the trucks, the APCs, the tanks, his Squad, the mortars, the Quad-40, and the Hueys ... all blowing the hell out of some completely innocent uninhabited rocks and trees. His jaw sagged down like it'd come unhinged; too shocked to curse. It took the roar of two approaching Phantoms to snap him out of it.

The sight of them starting to circle overhead, galvanized him into action. He dropped me and started running up the road as fast as his legs could carry" him, yelling "No more! No more!" at the Phantoms as I clutched my ribs in agony.

Guerrero's Squad didn't even notice him until he was close enough to scream in their ears. As they finally stopped firing, Guerrero clawed the horn away from the radioman and frantically began to yell check-fires trying to stop the Phantoms before they made their runs.

He managed to succeed at that, but it took him another 10 minutes to get all the firing stopped. It took even more time to get traffic moving on the road.

A few minutes after the road cleared enough for traffic to move, most of the Lifers in the Company converged on my bunker. They were all mad as hell, demanding to know what the hell I'd been firing at.

It took over a half hour to carefully explain everything to them. They just didn't believe me. I finally had to break down my M-79 and actually show them it hadn't been fired in weeks, before they'd believe me. It was the only thing that saved my young ass. It was tense City for me, all those Lifers glaring at me with Court Martial in their eyes.

By the time Nanny & Priddy wandered back from Danang, things had returned to normal. I was back on top of my bunker, and the Lifers had huffed back up to the top of the Pass.

"Hey Dalto ... how'd it go today?" Nanny called as he and Priddy walked up to the bunker.

"Aw, not too bad!" I replied, "Little bitta firefight, but nothin' serious."

"Whaddya mean, firefight? Anyone hit?"

"Nah ..... I replied, then lazily pointed down the slope, "just a couple-dozen confirmed VC rocks."

Nanny's gaze followed my pointing finger, his eyes widening when he saw all those dinged-up rocks and craters on the slope below us. After a minute, he climbed up on the bunker, sat on my chest, and made me tell him the entire tale.

MINI REUNION OF ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A AT MAJOR EARLE G. BREEDING'S HOME

By Dianne Jackson

The week of April, 2012, a group of Marines from Echo Company 2/26, friends and family gathered at the home of Major Earle G. Breeding and his wife Pat, or as the major calls her, "Sergeant Major Patricia Ann." In attendance were Major Breeding, wife Pat, daughter Cheri, and her husband, Skeet, Jim Kaylor, Bill Maves, Larry McCartney, Jim Carmichael, David and Rita McCall, Luis "Cisco" Reyes and his wife Sandy, Albert Miranda, Tom Strain, Lt. Don Shanley, Lt. Col. Shawn ????, Dianne Jackson, County Commissioner Tom Battin, and Free Press reporter Sue Hutchison.

Major Breeding had two ground rules for the four day get together: no discussion of politics and tell no lies. There were many stories of action, fear, bravery and pathos shared with bone chilling and heart warming details, mostly surrounding February 5, 1968, the day Hill 861A was attacked heavily beginning at 0300. A fierce firefight, artillery, bombing and hand to hand combat battle occurred and lasted until about 0730. In a previous quote regarding the incident Major Breeding said the following:

Capt Earle Breeding Company E, 2/26

Marines on the point of the 1st Platoon sector passed the word, "They're coming through the wire." That news spread up the trenchline to the right and left. All the way along the trenchline and up the chain of command, Echo Company was hearing, "They're coming through the wire." Nobody said which part of the wire, and nobody could see anything. The average Marine thought the NVA were coming through the wire in front of him because he had heard it from the guy next to him. So, all of a sudden, within seconds of one another, I got the word from all three of my platoon commanders. It sounded to me like they were coming through the wire all around the hill. I thought I was getting hit from all sides at once. I had the troops throw gas grenades, and I called for all the artillery support the combat base could give me.

My favorite story was one told by Major Breeding. When he was flown out of Khe Sanh on March 8, 1968, he was taken to Dong Ha. Upon arrival, Major Breeding asked for three things...a shower, a clean uniform, and a glass of scotch "in no particular order." His current "uniform" consisted of a green utility shirt, black Vietnamese peasant pantaloons, and no "scivies". The private at the desk of the uniform exchange post informed Major Breeding that he couldn't issue him an exchange as he didn't have the proper garments to return. Major Breeding answered "I don't *think* so" or "words to that effect, the first word beginning with an "f" and the second word beginning with a "y".

Again the private refused, at which point Major Breeding lunged over the counter, grabbed the man by the shirt collar and put a "45" to his head. A Sergeant standing nearby most intelligently said "Give him what he wants."

All those in attendance were there to show their deep and abiding respect for Major Breeding. I asked several people "What is it that makes him so special?" Some of the answers:

"I was willing to lay down my life for him that night because that was my job. I admired his leadership and professionalism. Because he was an enlisted man he knew how to take care of enlisted men. I am here today because of this man." Albert Miranda

[This was the first post-Vietnam gathering that Albert has attended.]

"He took care of his troops His primary concern was accomplishing the mission. How can I best do my job with the least amount of bullshit." Larry McCartney

"My father died when I was twelve. Major Breeding was like a father figure to me. When I showed up on the Hill there were dead bodies everywhere. I was scared to death. Major Breeding came to greet me. 'Do your job, remember your training, do not fall asleep on me and everything will be O.K.' He could calm you down. He personally checked the lines everyday and when he did, he would make idle chit-chat. You knew he was in control and it inspired confidence." Luis "Cisco" Reyes

On the second day of the reunion, Lincoln County

Commissioner, Tom Battin presented a written commendation signed by all the county commissioners which was dedicated to Major Breeding. He cited the major's extraordinary bravery and disregard for his personal safety and some of the specifics that are stated in Major Breeding's Silver Star citation. The Commissioner also thanked all the men of Echo 2/26 for their courage and their service.

Afterward, Major Breeding said a few words. With watery eyes he told the members of Echo 2/26 that they were the finest men he has ever known. He is proud to have had the chance to serve with them. Major Breeding thanked Lt. Don Shanley for "saving his butt" through his extraordinary leadership. The previous day Lt. Shanley had pulled out a small pocket sized notebook that was his Lieutenant's handwritten daily log. As I leafed through the daily record I asked why some of the names were crossed out. Don said those were the ones that were either KIA or WIA. He flipped to one page and pointed to a name...David McCall. David was injured on the hill and as a result is an amputee. David and his wife Sandy were at the reunion. This was the first time Lieutenant Shanley had seen any of his men since 1968.

In addition, Major Breeding mentioned Bill Maves as "the man who almost got him killed." Actually, the story behind the statement is that Major Breeding asked Bill, who was manning the radio, if they could bomb at the bottom of the Hill, which was about 40 yards from their position. Bill said "it can be done." Major Breeding..."Then do it." Bill called in for an airstrike but was told the order had to come from someone of higher rank as it was too dangerous. Major Breeding grabbed the radio and aggressively pressed the issue and finally the strike was called. Before the bombs dropped, Major Breeding had moved everyone back up the hill except a select skeleton crew including himself and Bill Maves. Several minutes later, the bombs dropped and the secondary effects rained huge boulders down on their trenchline, but none were injured. That instance basically described "The Skipper's" attitude...if you are going to fight a war then by God you are going to fight a war.

In addition to thanking the men of Echo 2/26, Major Breeding said "There isn't a day that goes by when you all don't think about Hill 861 Alpha. Privately he told me later..."make that an hour."

Thank you from the depths of our collective heart, to Major Breeding, his beautiful wife Patricia, and his loving daughter, Cheri, for their gracious hospitality and hard work. For those who weren't there, you missed out on some fabulous home made ham and beans, peach cobbler, decadent chocolate cake (from scratch), and the company of one of the finest Marine officers in history.



L-R JIM CARMICHAEL, CISCO REYES, LARRY MCCARTNEY, JIM KAYLOR POSE WITH E CO 2/26 GUIDEON



L-R ALBERT MIRANDA, JIM CARMICHAEL, LARRY MCCARTNEY (BACK) CISCO REYES (FRONT) & JIM KAYLOR POSE WITH E CO 2/26 GUIDEON

RESOLUTION NO. 2011-36
RECOGNIZING MAJOR EARLE G. BREEDING AND ECHO COMPANY SECOND BATTALION, TWENTY SIXTH, MARINES, THIRD MARINE DIVISION

WHEREAS, ,The Board of County Commissioners of Lincoln County wishes to recognize Major Earle G. Breeding and Company E, Second Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, Third Marine Division, who are conducting a reunion of the surviving members of Company E in Ruidoso, Lincoln County, New Mexico, April 23-24, 2012; and

WHEREAS, Major Earle G. Breeding 'is the recipient of the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as Commanding Officer of Company E, Second Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, Third Marine Division, in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam.; and

WHEREAS, During the early morning hours of February 5, 1968, Company E was occupying a defensive position on Hill 861 near the Khe Sanh Combat Base when the perimeter came under a fierce attack by a North Vietnamese Army battalion supported by artillery and mortar fire; and

WHEREAS, Major Breeding re-deployed his Marines to strengthen the perimeter at the point of heaviest contact and coordinated the delivery of a large volume of concentrated fire at the enemy. During the ensuing firefight, he repeatedly disregarded his own safety as he moved from one position to another, directing- and encouraging his men. While his Marines pinned the advancing enemy down on the defensive wire with accurate small arms fire, Major Breeding advanced to a dangerously exposed vantage point and directed close-in artillery and mortar fires with expert precision, completely disrupting the organized attack, forcing the enemy to withdraw; and

WHEREAS, By his courage, extraordinary initiative, and unflagging devotion to duty at great personal risk, Major Breeding contributed significantly, to the accomplishment of his unit's mission and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of County Commissioners of Lincoln County wishes to recognize Major Earle G. Breeding and Company E, welcome them to our community, and honor them and those of their unit who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of our great country.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 17th day of April 2012. Board of-Commissioners, Lincoln County, State of New Mexico

_____
Eileen Sedillo, Chair

_____
Jackie Powell, Vice Chair

_____
Kathyrn Minter, Member

_____
Mark Doth, Member

_____
Tom Battin, Member

ATTEST: _____
Rhonda Burrows



ALBERT MIRANDA, SNIPER ON HILL 861A



SKIPPER SIGNING E 2/26 GUIDEON WITH JOSE REYES & JAMES KAYLOR



JOSE "CISCO" REYES WITH THE SKIPPER



PICTURE OF MAJOR BREEDING ON HILL 861A, IN BOOK "WAR WITHOUT HEROES"



"CISCO" REYES, MAJOR BREEDING AND ALBERT MIRANDA L-R



DIANNE JACKSON & LTCOL SHAWN KEEFE



DAVID MCCALL



L-R LTCOL SHAWN KEEFE, BILL MAVES & DON SHANLEY



L-R LARRY MCCARTNEY, DON SHANLEY & ALBERT MIRANDA



EARLE & DAUGHTER CHERI



GROUP PHOTO E CO 2/26 HILL 861 A, & REFUGEE TOM STRAIN, FROM VMO-2 & A COUPLE OF BEAUTIFIL WIVES WITH EARLE & PAT



EARLE & PAT WITH THE GUYS FROM ECHO COMPANY 2/26



COMMISSIONER BATTIN SURPRISES EARLE WITH RESOLUTION



COMMISSIONER BATTIN ADDRESSES GROUP FROM ECHO COMPANY



(1) JIM KAYLOR,(2) BILL MAVES,(3) EARLE BREEDING, (4) DON SHANLEY, (5) DAVID MCCALL, (6) LARRY MCCARTNEY, (7) JIM CARMICHAEL, (8) "CISCO" REYES, (9) ALBERT MIRANDA, ALL FROM E CO 2/26 HILL 861A



JIM CARMICHAEL, FILMING RESOLUTION PRESENTATION TO EARLE BREEDING BY COMMISIONER TOM BATTIN, AS GROUP LOOKS ON.



L-R JOSE "CISCO" REYES, SKIPPER EARLE BREEDING & ALBERT MIRANDA E CO SNIPER

SALUTE TO VETERANS:
" In Vietnam, I should have been dead 20 times over"
Written by Susan Canfora
Special to the times
Edited by Ray Updike

RAY UPDIKE
A CO 2ND PLT 3RD
ANTI TANK BN ONTOS

OCEAN PINES -- Sometimes Ray Updike thinks he should just write a book, record all the memories of Vietnam in the late 1960s, the horrors, the body parts, explosions, scenes he still clearly recalls. But he doubts anybody would believe it.



Ray Poses With His Honors

Youthful and talkative, the Ocean Pines resident is proud to have served his country, enlisting as a teenager influenced by the John Wayne image of the 1950s, a strong, patriotic man stout-heartedly facing battle.

And that's exactly where the Harrisburg, Pa., native ended up, in the heart of battle.

Updike remembers those tough moments, shaking his head as he sat in the office of the home he shares with his wife, Angela. Suffering from heart disease, ringing in the ears and muscle pain, he was exposed to Agent Orange and advised by his doctor to retire at age 53, 10 years ago. His heart couldn't tolerate a stressful lifestyle.

"In Vietnam, I should have been dead 20 times over," he said, giving a little laugh like he still finds it unbelievable. For a long time, Updike didn't speak about his service.

"I really didn't talk about Vietnam for 25 years," he said, leading a guest to a framed essay written by his 8-year-old grandson, Quinn Raymond Morrow of Roswell, Ga., calling Poppy his hero for fighting in Vietnam.

In conversation, Updike's memories come tumbling. The time on Jan. 1, 1968, that 40,000 enemies surrounded American soldiers. The king cobra snake he hit in the back of head and killed, the second one he saw. The rat as big as a pet cat that walked over Updike's chest as he dozed. He didn't have to open his eyes. He knew what it was and was grateful not to be bitten like some soldiers were. Attracted by decaying bodies, rats were prevalent.

"Khe Sanh was located about 150 miles , by road, northwest of Danang. We were just below the DMZ. It was a mountainous area. In January it would get so cold, if you left a container of water outside it would freeze overnight. Khe Sanh was one of the heaviest area sprayed with Agent Orange because of the thick foliage."

One of his most memorable experiences was, at the end of February 1968 while going on R&R." My lieutenant of second platoon and myself waited at the turnaround, at the west end of the runway, for the C-123 that was landing. We were told that the plane would not stop, be ready to run and jump in at the turnaround. We ran and jumped in while the tailgate was down and the plane still moving. We dove into the plane on top of 10-12 body bags. The tailgate went up. The plane traveled about 150 yds and a mortar round hit and the left prop began smoking & burning. The plane continued down the runway and lifted off. We then took enemy machine gun fire that shot up the rear of the plane, there were bullets flying everywhere.

Despite a burning engine, an Air Force Sergeant said we were still going to make it to Danang. In flight, Updike's lieutenant grabbed a bag he carried containing rosary beads.

"He started putting them on us and on himself. The engine was burning but we were still going. ... When we landed at Danang, there were about 10 yellow crash crew trucks following us down the runway, spraying the plane with foam. We had to exit the plane through the front since the machine gun fire had disabled the hydraulic system that op-



erated the tailgate. I got out of that plane, I kissed the ground. I wore that rosary the next six months. I never took it off," he said, holding a little plastic bag that now contains the beads, still stained with red clay.

"We had incoming all the time. Mortars, rockets & artillery. A mortar landed right next to me and it didn't blow up. I'm telling you, I should have been dead 20 times over," he said, recalling the day an explosion caused shrapnel to spray a buddy's head and back. Updike was thrown back about 8 feet and thinks the roar led to the tinnitus he now suffers, but he wasn't injured.

After he enlisted, Updike went to boot camp at Parris Island, S.C., about 12 weeks of an often brutal experience.

"I thought I was in hell. People would not believe how bad it was. They were abusive as hell, but it prepared me for going to war. If I would have been taken as a prisoner of war, I could have survived anything. What I went through at Khe Sanh, I was thankful for that training," he said.

After boot camp, he had infantry training at Camp Geiger in Camp Lejeune, N.C., then was sent to Camp Pendleton in California for Ontos tank training. In August 1967 he landed in Danang, and departed for "A" CO, 3rd Anti-Tank BN,. He was in Khe Sanh from Aug. 12, 1967, until July 5, 1968. And was on the last convoy out of Khe Sanh. He spent the last 2 months of his tour at Con Thien, before departing Vietnam on September 11, 1968.

"There were times I was so scared I was shaking," Updike said. "Rockets & Mortars coming in. We're wearing gas masks. The Vietnamese had these screaming 122 mm rockets. They were so loud you couldn't believe it. Then there was silence. Then the explosion. I will take that sound to my grave. You would have to be scared. You do stuff in combat you would never do. I've seen guys blown in half."

Continuing his four-year enlisted period after Vietnam, he worked in an office at Camp Lejeune for a few months before being assigned as a top secret security guard for the president's chopper. At that time, Richard M. Nixon was president.



Following discharge, Updike worked in Pennsylvania in a military depot before starting his 30-year career with Bell of Pennsylvania, later Bell Atlantic and now Verizon. He retired in 2001 and is now involved with American Legion Post # 166, in Ocean City, MD, collecting & delivering clothing for homeless veterans.

"You think about those things. I was in hell for six months and I was in pure hell. Somebody was trying to kill me every day. But we had a lot of good times, too, in Vietnam, laughing with those guys," he said, nodding. "It made me who I am today. I appreciate everything I get. If I was 19, I'd go to Afghanistan and fight for my country, even in the condition I'm in today."

MORE KSV IN THE NEWS

ANTHONY S. TISLER,
KHE SANH VETERAN
F CO 2/26

" MY CHOICE"

It was either play college football or go to war.

"I chose war," said Anthony S. Tisler, who will be inducted into the Ohio Military Hall of Fame for Valor on Friday in Columbus

"About 10 or 20 of us went down and joined the Marine Corps on July 4, 1967," he said.

Tisler was an offensive lineman and captain of the 1966 Campbell Memorial High School football team, which featured future college and professional

football player Bob Babich.

Tisler said he had offers to play football from The Ohio State University, the University of Michigan and Youngstown State University but chose instead to enlist in the Marines."But we all wanted to go fight — that was the whole thing. We were gung-ho," he said.

Tisler quickly found himself in Vietnam, where he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with "V" for valor "for heroic achievement" in saving the lives of several Marines on April 7, 1968, while on a search-and-destroy mission assigned to secure Hill 700 near the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

According to his citation, Lance Cpl. Tisler was a fire-team leader with Co. F, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, when his unit came under heavy mortar and automatic-weapons fire from a large, well-entrenched North Vietnamese Army force. Tisler saw several wounded Marines lying "dangerously exposed to hostile fire" and left his covered position and survived enemy fire to bring the casualties to a less-exposed position and "skillfully treated their wounds." But Tisler, who retired from Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. in April 1982, does not consider himself a hero. "The heroes are the ones who died," he said.

Nonetheless, he said tears came to his eyes when he received the call from the Military Hall of Fame for Valor telling him he was chosen to be among the Class of 2012 inductees.

"I feel real honored. I never thought I would get it," he said. Tisler has always had tough jobs.

At Sheet & Tube, he was a billet roller, turning the steel as it came out of the furnace, and a heater helper. Tisler, who started in the steel mill in 1969 when he returned and was discharged from the Marines, said working in the steel mill was worse than Vietnam. But his experience in Vietnam was anything but pleasant. He suffered shrapnel wounds three times. He was hit in the right thigh and head in the Battle of Hill 700 in April 1968. "We went days without eating much more than a few wild onions. We lost a lot of weight. We had to go back the next day to get the bodies. There were rats on the bodies, and they jumped all over us," said Tisler, who is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and has 100 percent disability through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

His right foot and thigh were injured in another Hill battle in May 1968; and shrapnel hit his right hand and buttocks in November or December 1968, when his unit was ambushed near the Rock Pile.

The Rock Pile, an outcropping near the former demilitarized zone of South Vietnam reachable only by helicopter, was an important Army and Marine Corps observation post and artillery base from 1966 to 1968.

Tisler was point man when his unit was involved in an attempt to take Hill 700 from North Vietnamese forces."That's probably why I lived. They let me through so they could ambush the main patrol," he said. Most of the patrol was killed, with only eight or nine men left. "I asked myself what am I doing here? How did I get here and how am I going to get home?" he said. Tisler, married to the former Joann Berardi, a graduate of Western Reserve High School in Berlin Center, is a member of Disabled American Veterans Chapter 2 in Mahoning County and Tri-State Marine Corps League Detachment 494. He has two stepchildren, Michael Senchesak of Columbus and Nicole DeWitt of Youngstown, and a granddaughter, Theresa Senchesak. He is the son of the late Joseph Sr. and Anna Tisler. His mother, of Campbell, died Tuesday.

He has three brothers, the late Frank, who served in the Marines; and George Jr. and Joseph, both of Campbell. After leaving Vietnam, Tisler spent time rehabilitating from his wounds in the states and trained officers at Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Va. He also played a year of football for the Quantico team. When he was discharged in June 1970 at age 20, Tisler was highly decorated and a sergeant.

In addition to the Navy Commendation Medal with "V" for valor and three Purple Hearts, he had received the Combat Action Ribbon, the National Defense Medal, Vietnamese Service Medal, Vietnamese Campaign Medal and Presidential Unit Citation.

"I'm not sorry I went to Vietnam. I was proud to go fight for my country and proud to be a Marine," he said.

THE DUSTY AGONY OF KHE SANH

Newsweek. March 18. 1968

This article appeared in Newsweek Magazine on 18 March 1968. Someone recently sent it to me, and a lot of our members may not have seen it. A few of you might recognize yourself or a good buddy.

FEARLESS: Hugging the floor of their trench during a Communist artillery barrage, the young marines on the opposite page dramatically exemplify the grim realities of life at Khe Sanh. Sadly, this photograph, and the pictures on the pages that follow it, seem likely to prove the final heritage of Robert Ellison, a 23-year-old free-lance photographer. Ellison was returning to Khe Sanh last week after a brief respite from the battle when his plane was hit by enemy ground fire and crashed in flames beyond the Marine lines; Ellison and the other 48 men aboard it are missing and presumably dead.

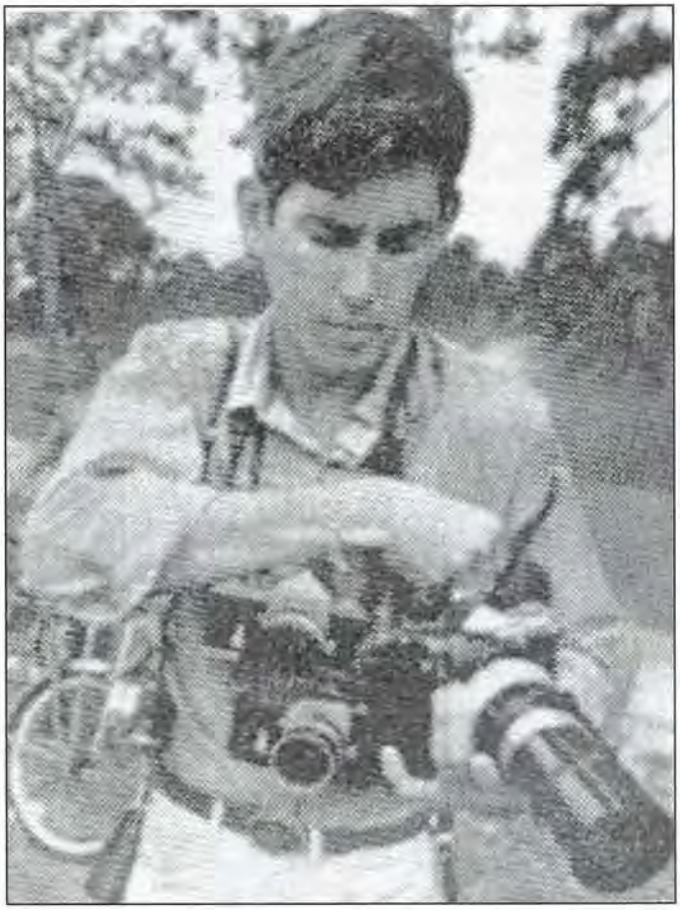

ROBERT ELLISON

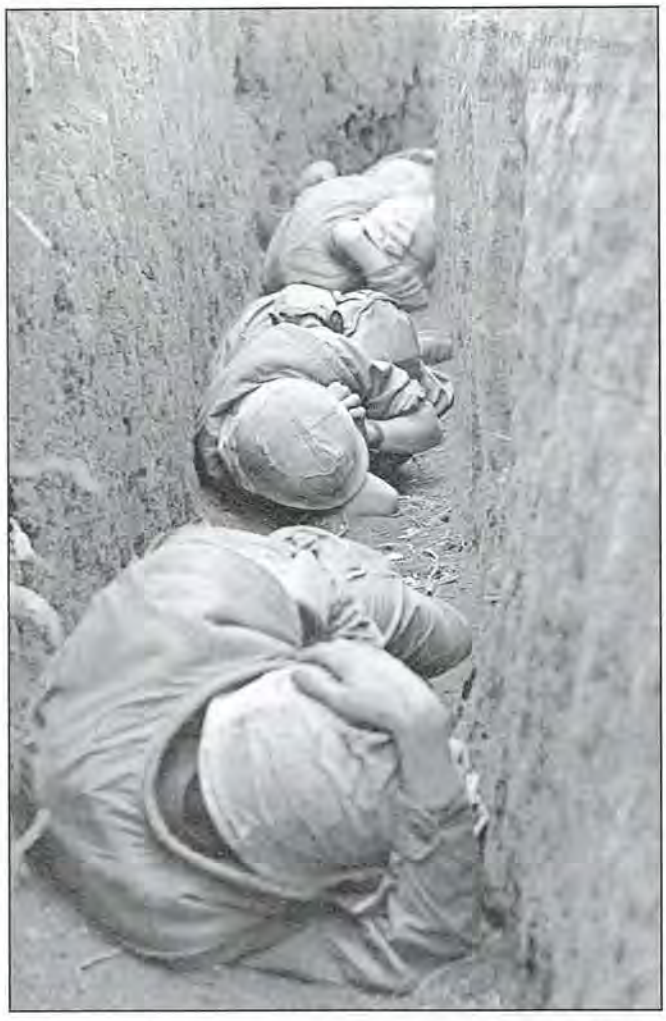

Robert Ellison was surprisingly experienced for a man so young. His photographs of racial violence in Selma, Ala., appeared in national magazines even before he left the University of Florida in 1966. A NEWSWEEK correspondent reminisced last week:

"Bob Ellison had the sixth sense of a great photographer for the most telling picture. He was absolutely fearless, but I never once heard him talk about his war experiences. Bob let his pictures speak for themselves."

War as the strategist sees it and war as it appears to the foot soldier are vastly different things. Last week, after a visit to the U.S. Marine base at Khe Sanh, Newsweek's Merton Perry cabled the following report:

The North Vietnamese are busy all around Khe Sanh. Borrowing from their own military history, they have begun to dig trenches that zigzag up to within a hundred yards of the Marine lines. So far, there are only a few trenches-nothing like the intri



DOOMED PATROL: AFTER RUNNING INTO AN ENEMY AMBUSH. SURVIVORS OF A 30 MAN UNIT SCRAMBLE OUT OF THE JUNGLE. THE CRITICALLY WOUNDED ARE CARRIED ON STRETCHERS OR DRAGGED BACK TO CAMP, OTHERS HAD TO MAKE IT BACK ON THEIR OWN.





cate, spidery maze dug by the Viet Minh at Dienbienphu-but the marines suspect that the Communists have also started to tunnel down toward the base from the back slopes of the ridges that surround the Khe Sanh plateau. "These people are moles," declared Capt. Jack Egger, 28, of Columbus, Ohio, commander of a Marine company on the camp's northern perimeter.

No one knows just how many "moles" are actually outside-or worse yet, under -Khe Sanh. Higher headquarters says there are two North Vietnamese Army divisions in the immediate vicinity, but few of the enemy troops have been seen from inside the camp. From beyond the perimeter, an occasional sniper plinks away at the marines, and there have been five or six battalion-size probes against the defenses. The greatest danger, however, comes from the daily barrage by NV A mortars, rockets and artillery pieces, some of them dug in under the jungle canopy miles away from the base. The constant shelling is not enough to destroy the camp, but it is enough to make the men who live there wonder constantly about what is coming next. And the wonder and the waiting inevitably tauten the nerves of the 5,000 marines who crouch inside Khe Sanh.

Even though Marine morale is high, Khe Sanh is physically and emotionally a miserable place, a noisy, dusty, dangerous hell. The men who live there have a special gait known as the "Khe Sanh double step"-a crouching walk accompanied by a constant swiveling of the head. The point of the Khe Sanh double step is to make sure that there is always a hole within easy reach.

Red laterite dust clogs everything at Khe Sanh your eyes, your ears, your throat. A jeep drives by and the red dust settles on you like talcum powder, making you gag and choke. The longer you stay in Khe Sanh, the redder you get. A Khe Sanh veteran has red hair, red hands and feet and red clothes; when he blows his nose, his handkerchief is stained red.

Rats infest the camp. One marine walked past me with an armload of huge traps. "If these don't work," he said, "we've got this"-he held up a bottle of rat poison-"and if that don't work I got a .45 pistol, and as a last resort we use hand grenades on them."

Napalm: Now that the weather is clearing, jet fighter-bombers roar overhead most of the day, plastering the ridges with napalm that burns off the scrub, trees and elephant grass where the NVA are dug in. But somehow the enemy troops seem to survive, and during the day they can -be seen moving through their trenches. For weeks, one North Vietnamese, armed with a .500caliber machine gun and known to the marines as "Luke the Cook," has been ripping off his deadly bursts at low-flying aircraft

from a foxhole barely 100 yards outside the lines. 0 amount of napalm has been able to burn Luke out.

Several times a day, the ground trembles with B-52 strikes that hit within a mile or two of the camp. During the daylight hours, helicopters flutter in, kicking up massive new waves of the devil dust. Almost everyone of them takes out wounded men. The attrition among the marines is not as high now as in weeks past, but there is still a steady trickle of casualties. The men who remain behind live much like their enemies, the moles. Most hunker down in sandbagged bunkers connected by a trench line that runs around the camp. Beyond the trench, concertina barbed wire lies in tangled coils, supplemented by a new type of German "razor" wire. The prickly strands are studded with explosive charges and Claymore mines-a deadly obstacle course through which the enemy will have to advance if he wants to get inside the camp.

Cold Nights: Along the perimeter, the men sleep in shifts, napping between watches. The nights are cold-when it is really chill, the men say "the hawk is out" -and no one has had a freshly cooked meal since the siege began on Jan. 21. The best meals available are C-rations: slimy chunks of franks and beans or turkey loaf cooked over heat pellets. They are not very good-and the coffee fortified with ascorbic acid (for Vitamin C) is even worse.

The 40 Seabees assigned to Khe Sanh are a little better off than the marines. Trained for engineering jobs, the Seabees have worked longer and more skillfully on their bunkers, and one of their dwellings, an elaborate fortification dubbed the Alamo Hilton, } as timbers and sandbags 6 feet thick overhead. It is the safest place in Khe Sanh and not surprisingly has become the unofficial press headquarters. The grateful journalists import beer and whisky for the Seabees, which does not sit at all well with the marines. "The Seabees have got more beer than we have water," gripes a leatherneck. The Seabees are not embarrassed, however. Says one sailor: "Before the siege began, marines sat on their tails when they should have been digging. They worked 9 to 4, knocked off and went to their beer hall. Charlie [the NV A] missed his golden opportunity - maybe many golden opportunities-by not attacking right away. Perhaps now the marines are dug in well enough." And perhaps they are not. Digging in is not the Marine way of war.

Most of the marines are pretty tough customers, and so far there have been only a few cases of men going around the bend. During my visit, an VA shell landed in a foxhole, killing five marines; the sole survivor was not even scratched, but after brooding all night, the young marine tried to make a desperate one man assault out through the perimeter. He had to be knocked down and carried back. Another marine was killed when he opened a latrine door and set off a grenade that had been attached to it as a booby-trap. "It was either a crazy marine who did it," explained a marine noncom, "or the gooks have got a tunnel in here."

Barbecue: Despite their isolation the vast majority of the marines at Khe Sanh -from the lowliest, tiredest grunt on up to Co!. David Lownds, the camp's 47 year-old commander-remain totally confident. A major factor behind this optimism is the awesome firepower of the U.S. forces. I saw this demonstrated in a sector of the perimeter defended by South Vietnamese rangers. The American adviser to the South Vietnamese, Capt. Walter Gunn, 31, of Columbus, Ga., ordered an air strike on the enemy trenches. His radioman, Pfc. John Burleeson, 22, of Chicago, called higher headquarters and announced: "Captain Gunn wants a barbecue." A while later, when the napalm splashed in on the NV A positions, Captain Gunn remarked to no one in particular, "I don't care what they say back in the States, I say God bless Dow Chemical."

So confident is Khe Sanh's garrison, in fact, that many of its members would almost welcome an all-out enemy assault. "I wish they would come in now," says Pfc. Charles Hughes, 20, of Chattanooga. "We'll kick them around a little, no question about that." The marines feel sure that the U.S. air and artillery attacks have damaged the enemy. "You can still see them out there," says Gunnery Sgt. Freddie J. Morris, 36, of Thomaston, Ga. "But not like we used to. They've had the hurt put on them some."

Optimist: Colonel Lownds, a 20-year Marine veteran who has raised an upswept British-style military mustache since taking over the Khe Sanh command, answers questions with firm, blunt optimism. Isn't it possible that the North Vietnamese could

keep him pinned down with only a token force, diverting major units to a big attack on important northern cities, like Quang Tri, Hue or Da Nang? "I don't think so," he responds. "It's almost inconceivable to me that we won't get hit." Could the marines

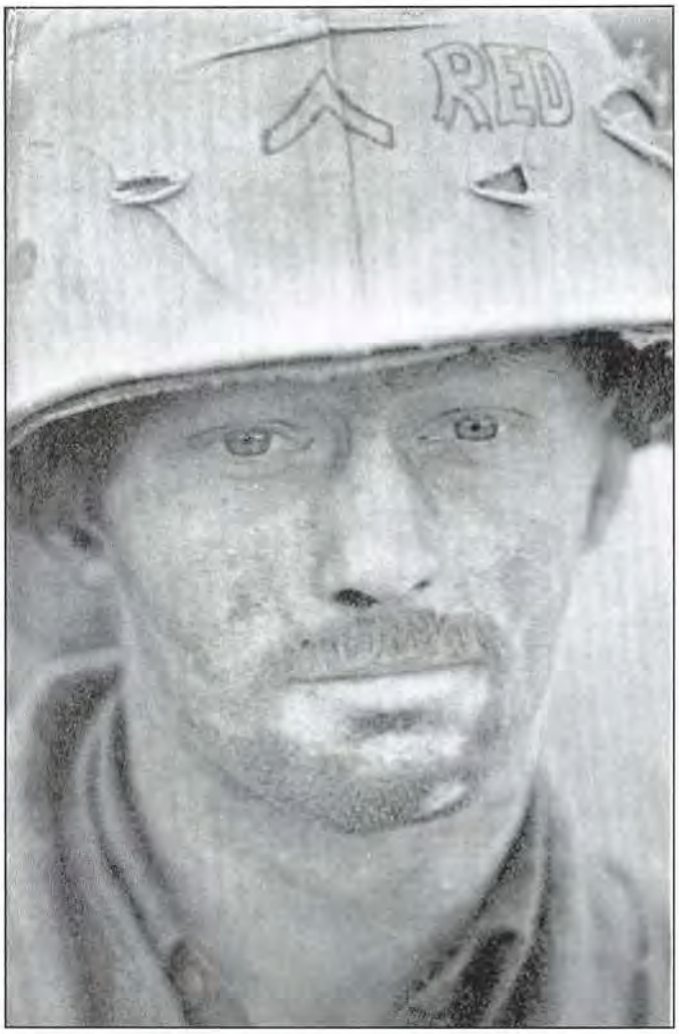



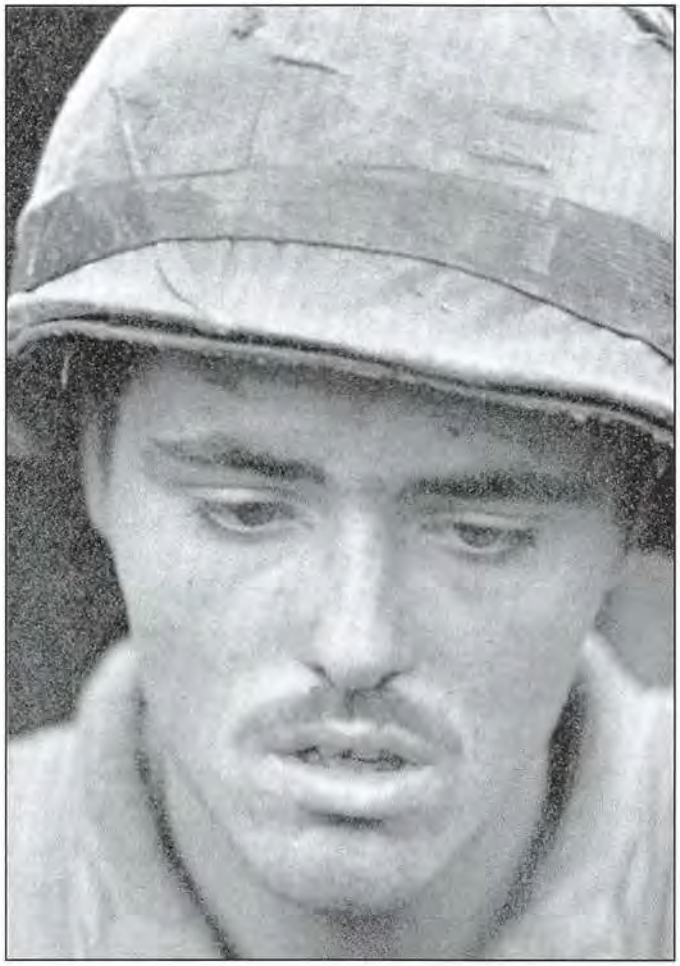

THE FACES OF KHE SANH DEFENDERS REFLECT THE STRAINS OF THE SIEGE.

fight their way out of Khe Sanh on the ground if they had to? "I don't even think about that," replies Lownds. "My mission is to stay here:, damn it, and we're going to stay here.

Lownds, in short, is certain that the North Vietnamese will try to overrun Khe Sanh sooner or later. "It's only a question of how much Giap is willing to lose," he says. "I would hope it would cost him 40,000 or 50,000 men, maybe more. What's there to panic about? We're here to stay. That's our job, that's what we get paid for."



MARINES RACE TO GET BADLY WOUNDED MARINES TO A NEARBY HOSPITAL, VIA THE RESCUE HELICOPTER WHO REMAINED ON SCENE TO RENDER AID.

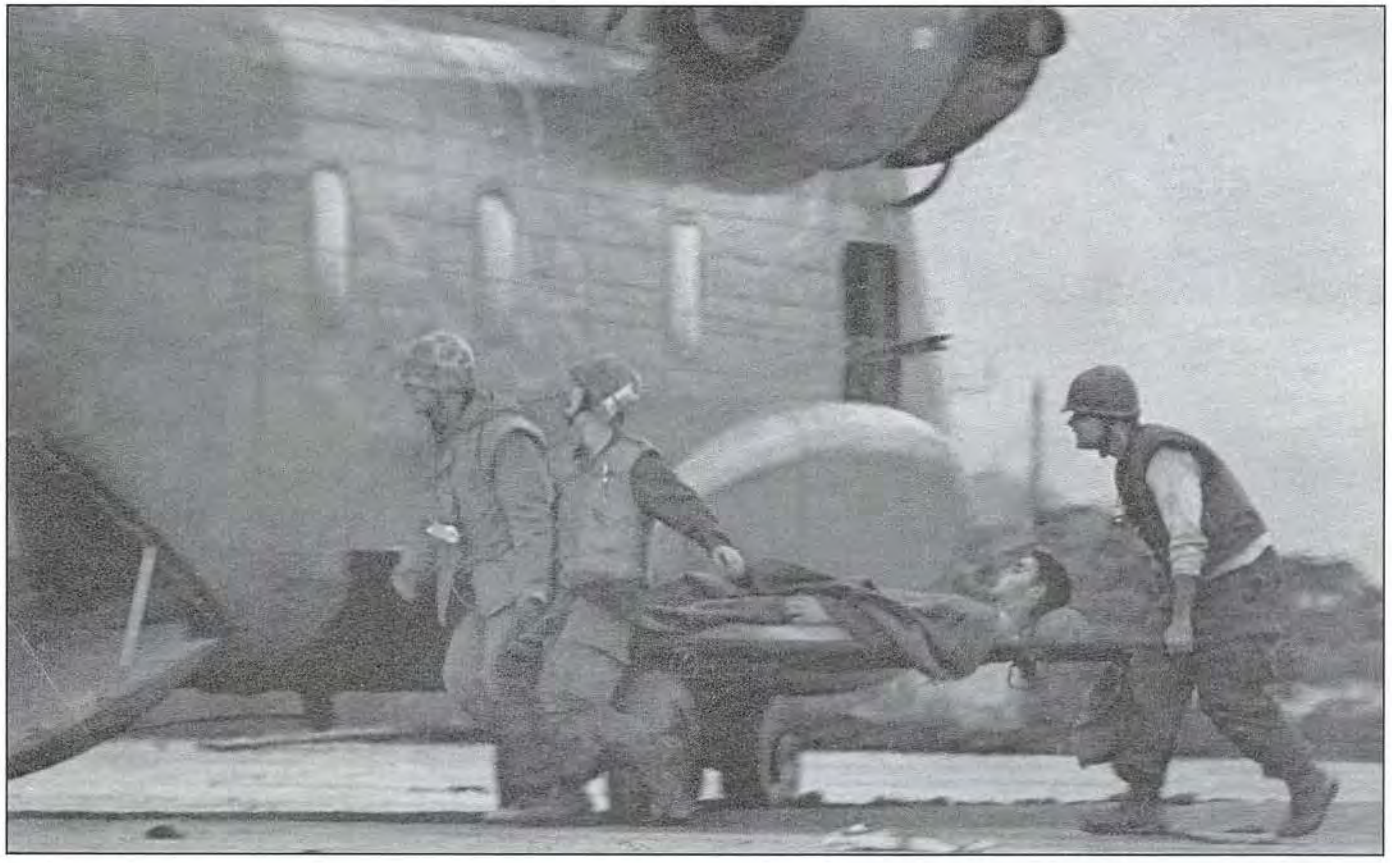



MARINE SHIELDS A WOUNDED CONRADE FROM ENEMY MORTAR BARRAGE



VAST SEA OF SHELL CASINGS TESTIFIES TO THE VOLUME OF ARTILLERY FIRE HURLED BACK AT THE ENEMY





ENEMY SHELLS SCORE A DIRECT HIT ON THE KSCB AMMUNITION DUMP.



South Vietnamese Soldier Aiding a Wounded Comrade



With enemy shells whistling overhead, Marines crouch in the trenches.

REUNION COMMITTEE

Well folks it is that time again. The 2012 Reunion in Washington DC is fast approaching. As usual, many members have not as yet submitted their registration forms, nor registered at the Hotel.

Remember, you can always cancel if you are not sure about actually coming. It makes it so much better for the reunion committee to plan each of our events, by you registering in an early timely fashion. We have to order food & drinks, for the hospitality room, place our order for the annual banquet, buses for the three planned trips, etc. All these things require prior notice and leaves little leeway when members wait till the last minute. so please help us plan accordingly

Russ & I recently returned from Washington DC where we met with the Hotel staff and ensured every thing we had contracted for had not changed. We also visited with the Staff from the Marine Corps Museum & the Heritage Foundation, in regards to having the Memorial Plaques for Colonel Dabney & Colonel Lownds placed in the Marine Corps Memorial Park.

Those Plaques had to be approved by the Marine Corps University. We met with the head of that committee and our submissions were well received and should be approved shortly. Once they are approved we will once again contact the Heritage Foundation to inquire if they would invite members of the Dabney & Lownds families to attend the ceremony on Thursday, 30 August 2012, at the Marine Corps Museum.

We also met with the staff of Henderson Hall (Former Marine Corps Headquarters), which is next door to the Hotel. They welcomed us to the newly remodeled PX & Club located at that facility. They also agreed to keep the Bar open later than usual, and if we show enough interest, even set up a few barbeques or other special treats.

Big John has been shopping & designing items for the PX and has plenty of new articles for sale. Please remember, if you have items to donate for the silent auction, mail them to Big John Pessoni, or bring them with you. All proceeds go to the Scholarship Fund.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2012

10 MAR 12	AMBROSE, James F.	150.00	CHECK# 5378 *
25 FEB 12	ANDERTON, Rick H.	70.00	CREDIT CARD *
10 NOV 11	ARCHER, Michael J.	20.00	CHECK# 1941
28 DEC 11	BAUSMAN, George	25.00	CHECK# 449
06 NOV 11	BILOVECKY, Michael II	10.00	CHECK# 5671
07 DEC 11	BRANFORD HS(MINDY BAKER)	125.00	CHECK# 216 *
19 NOV 11	CAMPO, Carl	20.00	CHECK# 2430 *
29 JAN 12	CASEY, Maurice M.	10.00	CHECK3 2026 *
15 NIV 11	CATON, Louis W.	20.00	CHECK# 1351 *
19 JAN 12	CHAMBERLIN, Chuck	40.00	CHECK# 1523
29 APR 12	CHASE, Roy F.C.	50.00	CHECK# 3932 ##
28 OCT 11	CHERICONE, Dennis J.	100.00	CHECK# 2301 *
06 NOV 11	CONLEY, John G.	10.00	CHECK# 6983
28 DEC 11	COOK, Michael H.	50.00	CHECK# 11185
28 APR 12	CROFT, Susan	20.00	CHECK# 548
10 NOV 11	DAKIN, William	20.00	CHECK# 1163
09 NOV 11	DELAO, John	175.00	CREDIT CARD *
25 FEB 12	DESETA, Louis J.	20.00	CHECK# 4889-4890
28 APR 12	DEVERNEY, Wayne L.	60.00	CHECK# 4254
09 NOV 11	DEWOLF, Timothy C.	50.00	CHECK# 2212
13 DEC 11	DONAGHY, Richard	100.00	CHECK# 1080
21 NOV 11	EDDOWES, Barbara	30.00	CHECK# 3999 *
18 DEC 11	ERNFIELD, Harry R.	100.00	CHECK# 614 *
24 MAR 12	ESTES, Leo	20.00	CHECK# 2325 *
30 NOV 11	FARRELL, Brian A.	50.00	CHECK# 3569 *
14 FEB 12	FINNEGAN, James O.	100.00	CHECK# 1423 *
17 NOV 11	FORD, Tom	100.00	CHECK# 4468 *
23 NOV 11	FOSTER, Gary W.	400.00	CHECKS 1310-1311 *
08 DEC 11	FOWLER, Frank	25.00	CHECK# 0000
11 NOV 11	GALIANO, Robert J.	40.00	CHECK# 185 *
17 MAR 12	GAROUTTE, Michael A.	30.00	CHECK# 8929 *
17 NOV 11	GILLESPIE, Donald J.	100.00	CHECK# 3173 *
10 FEB 12	GOGGINS, James E. Sr.	50.00	CHECK# 154 *
09 JAN 12	HAAS, Lawrence D Jr.	50.00	CHECK# 7683 *
39 NOV 11	HELTON, Michael E.	30.00	CHECK# 1988 *
06 FEB 12	HIGHSMITH, Joseph	20.00	CHECK# 7706
06 JAN 12	HOLSCHER, Robert J.	40.00	CHECK# 14675
23 JAN 12	HUTTON, J.L.	30.00	CHECK 9028
06 FEB 12	JACKSON, Dianne	250.00	CHECK# 1996 *
20 FEB 12	JACKSON, Dianne	250.00	CHECK# 2000 ****
22 JAN 12	JAYNE, Bill	100.00	CHECK# 402 *
15 MAR 12	KARKOSZKA, Henry	20.00	CHECK# 6530 *
03 JAN 12	KATES, Bruce E.	220.00	CHECK# 2736 *
10 NOV 11	KEATING, Michael E.	30.00	CHECK# 1173
09 NOV 11	KERSHNER, Jerry L.	20.00	CHECK# 4928 *
12 MAY 12	KIMBALL, Sue T.	50.00	CHECK# 3703 ##
17 NOV 11	KUBLEY, Lawrence	100.00	CHECK# 10947 *
26 APR 12	LEMIEUX, Lorne A.	10.00	CHECK# 615

04 DEC 11	LINKES, Leonard P.	20.00	CHECK# 1386
10 APR 12	MANLEY, Daniel L.	50.00	CHECK# 2699 ##
23 JAN 12	MAPEL, Randall D.	30.00	CHECK# 4129
04 DEC 11	MCCANN, Timothy N.	50.00	CHECK# 1638 *
08 DEC 11	MCCARTNEY, Larry	100.00	CREDIT CARD *
22 JAN 12	MCCARTNEY, Larry	10.00	CHECK# 5865
20 DEC 11	MCDONOUGH, Frank M.	100.00	CHECK# 6450 *
18 NOV 11	MERCADO, Saturno	20.00	CHECK# 6635
14 NOV 11	MEYERS, Bruce F.	25.00	CHECK# 1770 *
10 NOV 11	MOONEY, James	20.00	CHECK# 1038
14 NOV 11	MULLIGAN, Michael J	100.00	CHECK# 3062 *
23 NOV 11	NAZZARIO, Anthony	10.00	CHECK3 2715
19 JAN 12	NUNN, John B.	10.00	CHECK# 1243 *
04 DEC 11	OLSON, Hugh W.	25.00	CHECK# 1403
02 MAR 12	ORR, Steven W.	50.00	CHECK# 8480 *
30 NOV 11	PEARSON, Scott G.	50.00	CHECK# 5097
09 NOV 11	PIERCE, Thomas A.	300.00	CHECK# 1244*
28 APR 12	POIRIER, Michel P .	100.00	CHECK # 1317 XX
27 JAN 12	RALSTON, Roger	30.00	CHECK# 7809
06 JAN 12	RICE James E.	30.00	CHECK# M/O *
06 JAN 12	ROSENTAL, G.E.	22.05	CHECK# 1790
14 NOV 11	SCOTT, M.D.	70.00	CHECK# 7604 *
20 JAN 12	SEMKOW, Raymond	40.00	CHECK# 4454 *
08 JAN 12	SHERER, Larry	25.00	CHECK# 7626
23 APR 12	SMITH, Raymond & Barbara	50.00	CHECK# 2837 ##
10 NOV 11	SPIVEY, B. Larkin Jr.	70.00	CHECK# 7063 *
18 JAN 12	SWEARENGEN, Mark A.	30.00	CHECK# 5820 *
23 NOV 11	THOMAS, James	10.00	CHECK # 3165
18 JAN 12	TOURTE, Craig W.	100.00	CHECK# 770 *
06 JAN 12	UPSHAW, Leland S.	50.00	CHECK# 567 *
06 JAN 12	UPSHAW, Leland S.	80.00	CHECK# 566 **
16 APR 12	WILK, Robert	100.00	CHECK# 509 ##
12 MAY 12	YOUNGER, Jon	25.00	CHECK# 1534 ##
18 DEC 11	ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	250.00	CHECK# 3970 *

Bob Crabb Memorial Donation
* Scholarship Fund
** General Fund
**** Reunion
XX Contribution For Ken Schauble

NEW LIFE MEMBERS 2012

CURTIS L. FRISBIE Jr.
RAYMOND CRUZ
MICHAEL CUMMINGS
DAVID E.GILL
GREGG R. JONES
MARK T. KRAMER
LAWRENCE L. LECLAIRE
GREG G. L'HOMMEDIEU
HOMER E. LUSHER
FRANK MCCAULEY
WILLIAM J. MESSNER Jr.
FRANK PFISTER
THOMAS ROTTINGHAUS
ROGER L. SANDERS
FRED A. THOMAS
FRANK L. THOMPSON

MEMORIAL REMEMBERANCES

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY:
BU-1 Charles O.Spillman USN Seabees KIA 28 Feb 68	Raymond Cruz CBMU-301 DET B Seabees
SW-3 Edward C. Adams USN Seabees KIA 16 Apr 68	Raymond Cruz CBMU-301 DET B Seabees
Frank Droz 26th Marines Mortar's Passed Away	Raymond Cruz CBMU-301 DET B Seabees
SSGT Jerry W. Elliott 282ND AHC Blackcats MIA 21 Jan 68	Donna E. Elliott (Sister)
LtCol John Hennelly C/O 1/13 Passed Away	Mark Swearengen USA 2/94 Arty LNO
Tom Trapasso 1ST Searchlights Passed Away	Lawrence D. Haas 1ST Searchlights
LCPL Charles L. Gass G CO 2/1 USMC KIA 18 OCT 67	Mike Perry G CO 2/1
PFC Burrnon E. Miller G CO 2/1 USMC KIA 18 OCT 67	Mike Perry G CO 2/1
LCPL Patrick E. Broderick G CO 2/1 USMC KIA 23 Sep 67	Mike Perry G CO 2/1
CPL Arnold Lee Coonrod USA KIA 03 JAN 68	Loren Wheaton M CO 3/26 BLT
HN Lloyd W. Moore USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68 BSM	Bill Jayne B CO 1/26
LCpl Joseph Bailey WIA 15 Feb 68 DOW 19 Feb 68	Chuck Chamberlin C CO 1/26
SGTMAJ James T.Gaynor H&S 1/26 USMC KIA 15 Feb 68	Chuck Chamberlin C CO 1/26
GYSGT John J. Grohman C CO 1/26 USMC KIA 22 Mar 68	Chuck Chamberlin C CO 1/26
1LT Paul W. Bush C CO 1/26 USMC KIA 22 Mar 68	Chuck Chamberlin C CO 1/26
CAPT Walter J. Egger C CO 1/26 USMC KIA 22 Mar 68	Chuck Chamberlin C CO 1/26

KHE SANH VETERANS SCHOLARSHIP REPORT FOR 2012-13

2012-13 Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

2012 marks the beginning of the 4th successful year of the Khe Sanh Veterans Scholarship Foundation helping children and grandchildren of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. members reach their educational goals. In 3 years we have awarded scholarship help to 24 young scholars totaling over $15,000 in school aid.

Many of the early applicants are now completing their degrees in higher education and looking forward to successful careers. All this is due to the generous donations of our Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Membership and proceeds from the annual KSV Reunion silent auctions. The Scholarship Review Committee, consisting of Larry McCartney (E 2/26), Dennis Mannion (K 3/26), Bruce "T-Bone" Jones (H&S 1/26) and Bill Jayne (B 1/26) have worked hard to score student applications and make this a rewarding and successful effort. The letters of 'thanks' I receive from each awardee are heartfelt and recognize the sacrifice of the Veterans of Khe Sanh and Vietnam.

School Year 2012-13 is off to a good start as appli cations are coming in to meet the June 1 deadline. A full report of scholarships awarded for 2012-13 will be made at the upcoming Reunion in Washington D.C. Thanks again to our Khe Sanh Brothers for their support.

Semper Fidelis
Dan Fisher – (D 1/26) Committee Chair



GET THOSE APPLICATIONS IN BEFORE THE JUNE DEADLINE

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student or who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization. Your contributions are tax deductible.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 6/1/2012 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid- up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA in Vietnam and if family members are associate members of KSV, Inc. Children of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and financial need. A point selection system is included in the application forms.
Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the ***"Red Clay"*** Newsletter.

THE AWARDS

The award will **be $300.00 minimum** per school year for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each year applied.

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to:

Mr. Dan Fisher
Chairman, KSVSF Committee
6050 52nd St. No.
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

1.The money is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited institution of the candidate's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant.

3. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

4. The Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon proof of registration sent to the Review Committee Chairman when it becomes available.

5. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of July of the current school year.

6. Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair **on or before June 1 of the current school year to be attended.**

7. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points (attach last school GPA transcript)

GPA 4.0 = 40 points
GPA 3.5 = 35 points
GPA 3.0 = 30 points
GPA 2.5 = 25 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 35 points total

Military veteran = 15 points
Student government = 10 points
Community related services = 5 points
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 5 points

c. Short essay (60 words) on education goals and self = 10 points

d. Financial Need. Max = 15 points (the Fund is designed to help those in need of educational financial support).

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation Application Form

Date:_____

1. Applicant Information:

Name: last_____**, first**_____ **MI**_____

Address: street_____**, city**_____ **state**_____**zip**_____
Home phone:_____ **E-mail address:**_____
Birthdate:_____

2. Sponsor Information (Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member):
Name: last_____ **first**_____
Relationship to applicant_____
Branch of service_____
Unit served at Khe Sanh_____**dates**_____

3. School Information:
School name: _____
School Address: street_____**, city**_____
State_____ **zip code**_____
Phone number:_____
Curriculum/intended course of study_____
School year to be funded_____

4. Applicant Personal History
a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, offices held, etc)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. List school honors, prizes, community activities participated in, military service, volunteer service to community, church, or government.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. **ENCLOSE THIS APPLICATION FORM, A COPY OF YOU PROPOSED OR CURRENT TRANSCRIPT, A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF, GPA TRANSCRIPT AND A BRIEF PERSONAL SUMMARY (60 WORDS) TELLING OF YOUR VOCATIONAL PLANS AND FINANCIAL NEED ADDRESSED TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.**

BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL FILLED FORMS FOR YOUR RECORDS!

I SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant **Actual Signature of KSV Member Parent, Grandparent, or Guardian**

Note* APPLICATION DEADLINE June 1ST OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR

*** IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, ALL INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Committee

_____

Thomas Eichler, President Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

CHANGES

ATOINE, GARY V
Nickname DOC
Branch/Unit USN B CO 1/26 2ND PLT HN
Address 2616 CABRILLO AVE
TORRANCE CA 90501
Phone 310-386-1336
Cell Fax
Email GARY551@EARTHLINK.NET

ARBOGAST, CLARENCE S
Nickname DUMP
Branch/Unit USMC C CO 1/26
Address PO BOX 27
BOWDEN WV 26254
Phone 304-636-5617
Cell 304-642-4701 Fax
Email CSARBOGAST@AOL.COM

BIGLER, DONALD G
Nickname BIGGIE
Branch/Unit USMC K CO 3/3
Address 1885 FM 2673 # 202
CANYON LAKE TX 78133-4765
Phone 830-708-2354
Cell 830-708-2354 Fax
Email DON@BIGLERS.ORG

BREEDING, EARLE G (MAJ)
Nickname
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Address 221 TIMBERLINE DR
RUIDFOSO NM 88345
Phone 575-937-3552
Cell Fax
Email SKIPPER861A@GMAIL.COM

BUSHLOW, DAVID
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Address 1271 LAGUNA SECA CT
BANNING CA 92220—5420
Phone 951-845-8796
Cell Fax
Email DBUSHLOW@AOL.COM

CAMP, RICHARD D JR
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FREDERICKSBURG VA 22401
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CAVAZOS, THOMAS B
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Address 11441 PURCELL RD
LAURIN BURG NC 28352-1253
Phone 910-276-4149
Cell 910-318-1144 WORK 910-276-9234
Email VTC1@ROADRUNNER.COM

CHATIGNY, ROBERT E
Nickname
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Address 1816 PAMELA LN
WEATHERFORD OK 73096-2318
Phone 580-772-2393
Cell 405-512-2306 Fax
Email BOBUSMC1968@HOTMAIL.COM

COPPESS, CHARLES R
Nickname COPE
Branch/Unit USAF 20TH TASS SOG COVEY 5A
Address 9350 N CLINTON TRL
MULLIKEN MI 48861
Phone 517-441-9478
Cell Fax
Email COPPEKAT@MSN.COM

CRISWELL, RONNIE L
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC F CO 2/26
Address 1923 HWY 1009 SOUTH
MONTICELLO KY 42633
Phone 606-340-8678
Cell 606-278-4270 Fax
Email RLCRISW@WINDSTREAM.NET

CRITTENDEN, STEVEN M (LTCOL)
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 2/26 & CO F 2/26
Address 4 TIMOTHY LN
STAFFORD VA 22554-1241
Phone 540-752-1569
Cell 540-845-6364 Fax
Email CRITENS@AOL.COM

CRUZ, RAYMOND
Nickname
Branch/Unit USN CBMU-301 SEABEES DET-B
Address 19659 NE 179TH ST
WOODINVILLE WA 98077-8115
Phone 425-788-2704
Cell 206-713-4032 Fax
Email SCANR2@HOTMAIL.COM

DAVENPORT, WILLARD C
Nickname
Branch/Unit USN C CO 1/3 HN
Address PO BOX 297
WEBSTER NC 28788-0297
Phone 828-586-8447
Cell 828-507-0756 Fax 828-586-8144
Email WCD1946@GMAIL.COM

DELANEY, MICHAEL B
Nickname SNAKE
Branch/Unit USMC E CO 2/26 HILL 861A
WPNS PLT 60 MM
Address 453 N KINGSBURY
DEARBORN MI 48128-1581
Phone 313-792-9400
Cell 313-929-4017 Fax
Email SNAKEDELANEY@YAHOO.COM

EDWARDS, ERIC L
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October 4, 1920 - August 31, 2011

IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF

Colonel **DAVID E. LOWNDS**

United States Marine Corps

Commanding Officer 26th Marine Regiment

Khe Sanh Combat Base and Surrounding Hill Outpost

As all good Marines do, the "Lion of Khe Sanh", Colonel David E. Lownds, USMC (Ret) reported for duty on "heaven's scene." A veteran of three wars, Dave Lownds was wounded on Saipan and again on Iwo Jima; braved the enemy and elements in Korea; operated behind enemy lines in the Dominican Republic Expedition; and commanded the Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment at the Battle of Khe Sanh during the infamous Tet Offensive of 1968 in Vietnam. For his actions at Khe Sanh, he was awarded the Navy Cross, our nation's second highest award for Valor.

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to Colonel David E. Lownds (MCSN: 0-15530), United States Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism while serving as Commanding Officer of the Khe Sanh Combat Base in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam from August 1967 through March 1968. Upon assuming command of the vital combat base located in western Quang Tri Province and tasked with the responsibility of interdicting major North Vietnamese resupply routes and blocking any enemy invasion attempt from the west into the northern provinces of South Vietnam, Colonel Lownds immediately established combat outposts on Hills 881 South, 861, and 950, and launched extensive and highly effective patrol activities throughout his area of responsibility. Despite the hazardous, mountainous terrain, thick jungle foliage, and adverse weather conditions, Colonel Lownds' valiant combat leadership and indomitable command ability were the central instrument in achieving and maintaining the superb combat posture of the base. On 28 January 1968, when North Vietnamese divisions launched a coordinated attack on the Khe Sanh Combat Base with rockets, artillery, mortar, and machine-gun and small-arms fire, and with their main attack directed at Hill 861-A, Colonel Lownds' superb knowledge of and appreciation for the terrain and his aggressive utilization of all supporting arms minimized the effectiveness of the enemy attack and resulted in a large number of enemy casualties. During daily enemy rocket and artillery attacks, and on 23 February when the firing reached its peak with more than 1300 rounds impacting on the combat base, his superior tactical judgment, calm leadership, brave demeanor, and resolute endurance were an inspiration to all around him and were a prime factor in maintaining a high level of morale among his men. Giving no thought to his own safety, while exhibiting a compassionate concern for the welfare of his Marines, he gallantly and repeatedly exposed himself to hostile fire making daily visits to outlying units to observe tactical operations and to study conditions confronting his unit commanders. During the period 1 November 1967 to 31 March 1968, Colonel Lownds organized and directed Operation SCOTLAND, a highly effective search and destroy operation throughout the Khe Sanh tactical area of responsibility, which resulted in numerous enemy casualties, the capture of several enemy, and a large number of weapons confiscated. By his gallant leadership, distinguished personal bravery, and selfless devotion to duty throughout, Colonel Lownds upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.



Colonel Barnum Welcomes Everyone To The Ceremony



Wayne Witter, a veteran of both the Marine Corps and the Army present reading for the flag folding ceremony performed by the Marine Color Guard.



Colonel Barnum (MOH) Presents Flag to Mrs. Joyce Britt, Mother of Ted Britt



Memorial Plaque Unveiled On Memorial Wall By Mother & Brother Of Ted, And Atlanta Vietnam Veterans Business Association



TED BRITT MEMORIAL PLAQUE



Bill Jayne speaks of the context of the Khe Sanh Campaign and the Battles on 25 Feb & 30 Mar 1968.



Mike McCauley, Making Presentation to Britt Family



L-R Bill Jayne, Peter Weiss, Ken Pipes, Col Barnum, Ted Golab and Mike McCauley In Front



Mark Steele of AVVBA Presents a memento of the event to Colonel Ken Pipes C/O B CO 1/26

FALL WINTER
2012

RED CLAY

ISSUE
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MEMORIAL PLAQUES DEDICATED AT SEMPER FIDELIS MEMORIAL PARK MARINE CORPS MUSEUM. PLAQUES (BELOW) ALSO PRESENTED TO COLONEL LOWNDS' & DABNEY FAMILES, DURING KHE SANH VETERANS ANNUAL REUNION IN WASHINGTON, DC ON 30 AUGUST, 2012. STORY & PHOTOS PAGES 49-54.






Iraq










VMO-6





REUNION COMMITTEE

Well folks, we think the reunion went as planned, with no major miscues. The hospitality room was well stocked with food, snacks, beer, soft drinks, and hard liquor. Donna Elliott & Cathi Gaupreaux set up a complete bar inside the hospitality room and stocked it with top shelf Liquor. They operated late into the evening, serving special mixed drinks for every one. Funds for the liquor were provided by Mark Noah from "History Flights." The ladies then donated all their Tips to the KSV Scholarship Fund, in excess of $ 300.00.

On Wednesday KSV members went on a trip to visit the many monuments in Washington DC. (Pages 62-64)

We arrived on Thursday at the Marine Corps Museum to dedicate plaques to the defenders of Hill 881S, and the 26TH Marines Regiment for the wall of honor. We were surprised to be greeted by the entire command staff of the 22nd MEU, with their commanding officer, Colonel James Christmas, the grandson of Colonel David Lownds. (Article on page 49 & 50).

With presentations of the plaques completed, the Marines from the 22nd MEU shared their combat & life experiences with the KSV. Everyone toured the museum and viewed the many exhibits. (Pictures & Article Pages 51-54,68-70).

Friday night we travelled to the Marines Corps Barracks at 8th & I street, for the traditional Sunset parade held every Friday. Unfortunately we had to wait longer than usual, due to it being the last parade of the year, and many dignitaries were late in arriving. The Marines performed as wonderful as they always do.

On Saturday, at the annual Banquet, LtGen Ron Christmas and the daughters of Colonel David Lownds were honored by the KSV. Colonel "Bulldog" Smith, past president of the KSV, presented flowers to the Daughters, and gifts from our own PX to LtGen Christmas for both he and his sons, Colonel James Christmas C/O 22nd MEU and LtCol Brian Christmas. The Lownds' daughters honored us by lighting the POW candle during the opening ceremony.

PRESIDENT

From my own observations and comments from the membership, everyone enjoyed themselves. I have to personally thank all those involved it making the reunion a success. As always Kathy & Russ Turner, Dave Meyer & Wife Carol, John Pessoni our VP and PX Guru, Mike Fishbaugh & his assistants for taking care of the Hospitality room, Tom Ford & Wife Helen, Merle & Rita Moritz for helping out Big John, and all those others who gave of their time. A shout out to Mark Kramer KSV, and his staff at the Museum for all their help.

There were no elections held this year, as no one applied for those open positions. As a result, all current BOD members up for election, regained their seats . **Our By-Laws stipulate that members have to notify our Secretary of their desire to run for any office on the BOD, PRIOR to the REUNION.**

We also had as our guest many members of Big John's Boot Camp Platoon, 2085. There is a letter on page 46 from their spokesman Bill Simons, outlining how much they enjoyed the reunion. Many of their members have pledged to join us in Tennessee.

In this issue there is a brochure outlining the reunion in Tennessee. We have to know how many members want to go to the Grand Old Opry. The price for tickets on the Web-site with transportation comes to about $ 65.00 a person. Russ & I are going back to Tennessee to look at a few trips away from the Hotel. We know we can get a better price if we let them know we have 200-300 people, so let Russ or myself know if you would like to attend the Opry ASAP, by email . We have to have a firm commitment as we have to disperse KSV funds for tickets prior to the reunion.

WEB BRIEFS

"A PLACE THAT ALWAYS WAS"

By Craig W. Tourte

On Tuesday, November 10, 2009, the state of New Mexico dedicated and unveiled an Official Scenic Historic Road Marker honoring those who died at "The Battle of Khe Sanh, Vietnam 1968." The beautiful wooden marker is inscribe: "The Battle of Khe Sanh claimed the lives of 2,097 United States servicemen. This historic marker is dedicated to honor and preserve the memory of New Mexico servicemen who were killed in action or later died of their wounds. The Khe Sanh Vietnam veterans will forever live in each others' hearts." In addition, the marker is inscribed with the names of nine of those who were killed from the State of New Mexico. I am sure more names will eventually be included, as that information becomes available.



I, Tom Eichler, David Tonick, Bob Greenwood and numerous other Khe Sanh Veterans assembled at the ceremonial site, along with a gathering of several hundred, including but not limited to, Rebecca Montoya representing Transportation Commissioner Gary L.J. Giron, Sarah Cobb representing U.S. Senator Tom Udall, Dan Armijo representing Congressman Harry Teague and National American Indian Veterans Commander Don Loudner. It was a privilege and honor for me to have been introduced as a Khe Sanh Veteran and afforded the opportunity to offer a few remarks.

Along with Tom Eichler and David Tonick we assisted Harold Lockwood (National American Indian Veterans Sergeant of Arms) and Jackson Gibson (District Six Transportation Commissioner) with removing the American Flag from the marker and presenting the ceremonial flag to the New Mexico Department of Transportation in recognition of their dedication to Khe Sanh Veterans and to those Veterans from the great state of New Mexico whose loss will be forever recognized and mourned.

Tom Eichler emceed the ceremony and introduced the various speakers, honored guests and provided Certificates of Appreciation from the Khe Sanh Veterans Association to all involved with making this historic event possible. In addition to those mentioned, Tom's effort included recognizing individual transportation employees who worked so hard on this project along with the 377th Force Support Squadron, Kirkland Air Force Base and the Grants High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC program, along with many other participants and supporters.

Tom's generous effort as an ambassador and representative of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, was nothing short of Herculean as he worked late into the evening hours coordinating speakers and honored guests, gathering those participating in the ceremony in preparation of the flag unveiling, obtaining the necessary material to be included in the various Certificates to be presented and reading the name's of the deceased inscribed on the Historic Marker. This event was a testament to

Tom's dedication to our Association and I was proud to have been a participant.

The following is the text of my presentation as a Khe Sanh Veteran:

"A few years ago I drove to San Diego and visited the Marine Corps Recruit Depot where I had spent a number of grueling weeks in 1966. It was the first time I had returned since I earned the right to wear the coveted Eagle, Globe and Anchor of the United States Marine Corps. As I stood alone on the huge parade ground I was overwhelmed with memories recalling the young men I had trained with. They came from all over this great nation and were looking forward to becoming Marines and serving their country. It was evening when I started my drive back to Northern California and dark when I reached the West side of Los Angeles on the 408 Freeway. As my mind wandered back to the Recruit Depot, Quonset huts and drill instructors, I happened to glance to my right and noticed a road sign caught in the beams of my headlights that read "Little Saigon." I knew why the sign was posted there. It denoted a portion of that city which had welcomed the multitudes of Vietnamese who had settled there after the war. The Vietnamese prospered, raised their families, started successful businesses and sent their children off to the finest American Schools. I'm sure the ceremony was well attended when the "Little Saigon" sign was set in place, and there must have been quite a showing of politicians and proud community leaders, all saying wonderful things about the opportunities America had to offer. I wonder if anything was said that day about the thousands of Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice which allowed these new immigrants to live their American Dream."

"When I saw photographs of these Historic Markers honoring fallen Khe Sanh heroes erected along the roadway in this wonderful and great state of New Mexico, I thought of that sign I had observed near the Los Angeles freeway and I knew I had to come here and attend this dedication to America's finest. I had to stand alongside this highway and in some small way join the souls of those whose names are inscribe here. I had to hear their names recognized and I wanted their surviving families to know that the greatest sacrifice made by their loved ones truly mattered. The mention of Khe Sanh along with the great battles of Concord, Gettysburg and Normandy in the president's inaugural address, forever confirms to our nation and the world that the Battle of Khe Sanh holds a significant place in American history. Though many years have passed, we will always remember and we will forever mourn those we lost, from all branches of the military. We'll never forget the one's we stood shoulder-to-shoulder with in the trench lines, those who faced incredible hardships on the surrounding hills, those who flew above in desperate attempts to extract our wounded and dead and supply us with the critical material necessary for us to persevere. All will be forever cherished in our hearts. We survivors of that long and horrific battle will never forget the fallen. We will never forget how and why they sacrificed for us, for you, and for our wonderful country. We will never forget where they served or who they are. The fallen hero's of Khe Sanh will continue to be a part of who we are, for the rest of our lives."

"As a representative of the Khe Sanh Veterans, I am proud to have been a part of this special dedication - whose primary sponsor, recognition and driving force has been this area's Native American Community."

The location of the "Official Scenic Historic Marker" is identified as being at New Mexico 124, Mile Marker 16.5. In actuality, it sits along the old Historic Route 66 Highway, North of Interstate 40 at the 104 Exit in an area identified as Acoma, New Mexico. It was an approximate 50 mile drive along Interstate 40 from the City of Albuquerque to reach an area known as "The Sky City." The Sky City is actually an area where the Acoma people lived centuries ago atop a mesa to protect themselves from enemy attacks by neighboring bands.

The Native American's who live in the area are identified as the "Acoma" which means "Place of readiness." According to a little research, "Native American legend" describes Acoma as a "place that always was." Native history says "...it was first inhabited about 700 A.D." "Archaeologists agree that it has been continuously occupied from at least 1150 A.D. to the present." Acoma, New Mexico is generally considered "America's oldest continually inhabited city."

The drive from Albuquerque to "The Sky City" where the Historic Marker is located is not unlike any other drive I have taken along a desolated high desert highway. Long, straight and lonely for the bored and weary traveler who too often focuses attention on what's over the next rise. One could pass Acoma in the blink of an eye and never know anything was there except sand, sagebrush and red dirt. I wondered why a monument honoring these heroes would be erected in such a desolate location and not in a more densely populated area.

It was early evening when Tom, David and I drove out to the site of the Historic Road Marker where I met Harold E. Lockwood (HMH-CH-53 Sea Stallions) for the first time. Harold is a tall, proud Native American, former Marine and Vietnam Veteran who is the Sergeant at Arms of the National American Indian Veterans. We stood together as darkness approached, surrounded by red sky with a few wispy clouds off in the distance and tall red table top mountains rising up from the desert floor. Harold identified his house a quarter mile or so away from where we were standing. With the swing of his arm in a wide arc he told me about his cousins, friends, other relatives and Native Americans who lived nearby and identified those who had served and those who had made the ultimate sacrifice, all from the Reservations. We talked about the arrival of the early Missionaries, the Native American children who had been taken from their parents and even to this day, the hardships his people face.

We spent a few minutes talking about his service in the United States Marine Corps and the three years he served in Vietnam. The tragically brutal injuries and death he had observed as a helicopter machine gunner, too often recovering the dead and wounded. The missions off of ships made by young boys who eagerly entered combat for the first time, all dressed in new green uniforms and combat gear and his painful recovery of their remains after the battles. Harold remembered all of these events clearly and with great sadness as he looked up into that red evening sky, silently remembering the pain that is often overwhelming, as he searched for the words that would somehow explain to the outsider, the horrors he had witnessed. Remembrances I knew were still prevalent.

The following day during the dedication ceremony there were a group of young children from one of the local Native American schools who preformed a dance. Adorned in Native American costume, I observed they all had very intense looks on their faces. I realized that the dance these children performed was a serious cultural interpretation of events and beliefs that had been handed down from one generation to the next. The dance was significant to the Native People and fitting in that it was performed in memory of those who had sacrificed for their people and our country.

As I stood alone looking out across the Acoma, viewing the red earth color of the valley and hills, not so dissimilar in color to the red clay of Khe Sanh, I glanced up into the very wide open sky and understood why fate had brought "The Battle of Khe Sanh" marker here. Somehow fate had brought this remembrance marker to this spot, because this place is a "Place That Always Was," A "Place of Readiness" and in a way, a place of safety for those who we will never forget.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 21 COLUMN 2

CORPORAL LYLE S. TATE USMC
FOXTROT CO 2/3
FOREVER YOUNG

by Eric Shierman

Yesterday 09 May 1967, marked the forty-fifth anniversary of the day Lyle Tate from Portland was killed in action on Hill 778 near Khe Sanh. Having just recently survived one of the most challenging battles of the Vietnam War, Cpl Tate was one of 24 Marines killed on a joint patrol of two rifle platoons, just over 60 men in size, which was ambushed by a substantially larger North



Vietnamese Army force.

Cpl Tate was a fire team leader in the 3rd squad from the 3rd Platoon of Foxtrot Company 2nd Battalion 3rd Marines (2/3). Built like a fireplug, not tall but with thick shoulders and barreled chest, Tate also carried his squad's radio. Called "toad" by his buddies, they marveled at his ability to carry the heaviest load on the hottest days. Under the hardships they endured, enlisted Marines naturally bond with guys like Lyle Tate who could maintain a positive attitude that transcended the dehydration, fear, and exhaustion.

Together they had just endured one of the most pivotal battles in the Vietnam War, a battle almost forgotten by everyone but those veterans who were there that have been trying to forget it for the rest of their lives. Often called "The Hill Fights of Khe Sanh" this first major battle in that northwestern corner of Quang Tri province got less press at the time than the more famous siege of Khe Sanh did a year later, but this battle marked a major inflection point in America's role in that long war.



In 1966, the Vietnam War was still widely supported in the United States, but in North Vietnam by contrast, the toll of a seemingly endless war was having a material effect on popular support for the Communist regime. A new generation of impatient young guns on the Politburo demanded, over their defense minister's objection, to mount an offensive, seeking to annex enough South Vietnamese territory that could be seen as a tangible victory to raise moral on the home front. That cautious defense minister was none other than General Vo Nguyen Giap who famously defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Giap was wary of America's air power, a factor that would have prevented his victory twelve years before. The patient general was confident greater success would be found in supporting the continued agita-

tion of the South Vietnamese population by political operatives and Viet Cong guerrillas.

Giap placated the orders of his civilian leadership by occupying the virtually unpopulated mountains just across the DMZ and the Laotian border. His plan was to infiltrate an entire invading army by thinly dispersing it in fortified positions across the vast square kilometers of dense jungle so that it could not be destroyed by interdictory bombing. By Giap's reasoning, at worst his superiors would eventually order him to start mounting assaults on nearby American bases, at best however, perhaps the American leadership would order its ground forces to attack his army and its elaborate network of defensive positions.

The commanding General of American forces in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland was no doubt the most brilliant and effective general of his generation. No other four star in the American military constellation of commanders was better prepared to defend Western Europe from a Soviet invasion, and thus all of Westmoreland's professional preparation prompted him to indulge his adversary with the very battle Giap wanted. The NVA were setting up camp in I Corps, the Marine Corps' tactical area of responsibility, so Westmorland ordered the Marines redeploy in defense of the Republic of Vietnam's northwestern borders and clear these remote mountains of the enemy.

Major General Lew Walt, commanding general of the 3rd Marine Division and Lieutenant General Victor Krulak Commander of Marine Forces Pacific objected. Both decorated veterans of the Pacific Campaign of the Second World War, Walt and Krulak did not flinch from a fight, but they understood the counterinsurgency nature of this conflict, warning Westmorland that every Marine sent to assault bunkers in those remote mountains was one less Marine committed to the Marine Corps' effective pacification program. The Marines pointed out that an effective counterinsurgency campaign that continued to protect the population from the Viet Cong would be able to annihilate NVA units that tried to advance beyond their mountain sanctuary, but if forces were deployed to clear the mountains, not only would the Marines be forced to waste manpower occupying indefensible land within easy striking distance from the Laotian border, but the NVA could infiltrate into the population areas with greater ease once the Marines were spread too thin.

General Westmorland's rank, and his vision of big land units fighting a pitched battle won out. The Marine leadership saluted and began building a more elaborate forward operating base at Khe Sanh. In September 1966 a rifle battalion (1/3) was deployed as garrison. As a perfect metaphor of the war, the moment the Marines arrived, the South Vietnamese withdrew their own First Battalion Second Infantry so that General Westmorland's demand for a Marine battalion merely resulted in the ARVN command withdrawing the same sized force from this dangerously exposed location. These Marines aggressively patrolled the area for six months, but the enemy showed no attempts to attack Khe Sanh's defenses. After the scheduled end of their tour, 1/3 was relieved by Bravo Company 1/9, Echo Company 2/9, and a Force Recon Company.

By the beginning of April, the new garrison of Marines at Khe Sanh began seeing more contact with the enemy, particularly around nearby Hill 861. It soon became evident that the NVA was occupying each of the surrounding hills with battalion sized units digging in fortified positions to command the high ground around the Khe Sanh base in preparation for an attack. The Second and Third Battalions of the Third Marine Regiment were rapidly deployed to Khe Sanh by April 27, 1967 and in a matter of hours began mounting frontal attacks to seize the surrounding hills.

These boys of 67 are second to no other generation of Marines. With discipline and courage they employed fire and maneuver against an entrenched enemy under the support of coordinated air and artillery fire. Cpl Tate, like so many Marine NCOs before him and after led by example; he led from the front. Though utterly terrified and

exhausted, the Marines of Tate's fire team followed him up those hills.

While displaying the same common virtue of uncommon valor found on Iwo Jima, these Marines faced two additional challenges. First, some genius somewhere decided to make them the guinea pigs for the first Marine deployment of a new rifle, the M-16. This lighter weapon with its lighter ammunition would become the best service rifle ever made after a few glitches were corrected, but in 1967 the Marine Corps had purchased ammunition with ball powder rather than the IMR powder Colt had tested the XM16E1 prototype with. The carbon residue of the lower grade ammunition made the chamber too sticky for the bolt action to eject spent casings. The only way to clear that brass out was to use a cleaning rod, of which there was only one for every four Marines or to pick at it with a bayonet. This proved a frustrating disaster, and yet these Marines took the hills anyway, making their single shots count.

The second challenge was exactly what Walt and Krulak warned Westmorland of – after inflicting casualties on the Marines as they charged up the hills, the NVA escaped through tunnels. Unlike an island in the pacific where the defending Japanese had nowhere to go, the NVA could maneuver back into the jungle. Consolidating their victory proved impossible for the Marines. They occupied the hills, but the patrols they operated out of them were subject to ambush as the Marines' newly conquered real estate remained threatened by counterattack. Thus the greatest irony was that Cpl Tate's courage in the hill fights was followed by his death on a patrol two days before his battalion was scheduled to be withdrawn from the area.

The situation was so grim upon the end of the 2/3's deployment to Khe Sanh, patrols had to be large enough to survive contact with the large NVA elements they would encounter after leaving the Marines' recently secured perimeter upon Hill 881N. On May 9, 1967 Foxtrot Company ran a two-platoon patrol led by the company commander himself Captain Merle Sorenson consisting of Lieutenant Patrick Carroll's 3rd Platoon in the front followed by Lieutenant Jack Schworm's 1st Platoon. The patrol rout was only a distance of a few kilometers to their objective, the abandoned village of Lang Xoa, but the steep terrain and thick vegetation made the Marines take longer to cover that space than the short distance would otherwise imply. One had to wonder if the battalion's S3 operations officer failed to notice the contour lines on the military map as he created such an ambitious time table that the patrol inevitably fell behind.

Upon reaching Hill 778, the patrol was so far behind schedule that it was forced to take the risk of using the trail, as Edward Murphy in his excellent book *The Hill Fights: The First Battle of Khe Sanh* reports: Carroll's point man came upon a trail that led down the steep southwestern side of Hill 778 toward Lang Xoa. "Everyone knew we shouldn't go down the trail but we had no choice," Carroll recalled. "We had to take it to get to our objective on time."

After descending the hillside, Carroll's platoon entered a wide, flat ravine. A major ridge finger that ran northwest off Hill 778 paralleled their right flank. High terrain leading up to Hill 803 rose off to their left. Carroll halted in the center of the ravine to look at some footprints that one of his men had discovered. Another Marine pointed to a pile of fresh feces. At the same time, the point squad reported it had come to another ravine that intersected its own from the right about a hundred meters from Carroll's position.

"As I stood there I suddenly had this overwhelming feeling we were getting into trouble," Carroll remembered. "The intense feeling affected my entire body with a sense of impending doom. I knew I had to get those Marines out of that spot immediately."

Carroll whirled around. He pointed up the ridge finger running down from Hill 778. "Up there," he ordered his platoon. "Get up there."

Exhausted as anyone else, Cpl Tate led his fire team in a double time out of what was becoming the perfect kill zone. The NVA were in the process of forming a hasty ambush, but Carroll led his men away from the worst of it. Still, while some of 3rd Platoon was given a fighting chance due to their platoon commander's decisive foresight, Cpl Tate's fire team along with the rest of 3nd squad absorbed 10 – 15 minutes of intense NVA fire superiority at almost point blank range as they reached the top of that finger. Their effort prevented the enemy from sweeping down the side of the hill to the patrol's right, trapping both platoons in a turkey shoot from the high ground on both flanks. While leading his fire team's attempt to return fire and maneuver to a better position, Tate was hit by a heavy machine gun round through his arm and into his armpit. With the radio he carried and his customarily heavy load, Tate fell hard. His rapid heartbeat from the uphill sprint quickly drained his body of blood from a severed artery. He would eventually die in his platoon commander's arms when no amount of direct pressure could stop the bleeding.

This patrol of Foxtrot Company faced factors that seemed to guarantee their certain annihilation. They faced a steady rate of fire from NVA AK-47s responding with M-16 rifles that could only get off one or two rounds before jamming. They were surrounded by a numerically superior enemy force that knew every contour of this terrain, and the high ridgelines blocked the Marines' radio transmissions, preventing the assistance of air and artillery support. Twenty-four dead Marines was a high price to pay, but why was it not sixty?

These Marines lived up to the long tradition of the Marine Corps' discipline under fire. Their war fighting prowess showed through in six ways to win this fight. 1) The way 3rd Platoon quickly maneuvered to prevent the NVA from enveloping the patrol's right flank bought time for the rest of the patrol to react. 2) The M-16 failed them, but an M -60 machine gun team attached to 3rd Platoon, led by Cpl Albert Potts, aggressively maneuvered to a good firing position and preceded to mow down the advancing NVA sending rounds down range as fast as his proficient gun team could replace new belts. 3) Just as 3rd Platoon was running out of ammunition, a nearby patrol from Echo Company came to their aid, instantly assessed the situation, and laid down a danger-close base of machine gun grazing fire at NVA soldiers that were overrunning the position of Tate's wounded squad. 4) Despite all the confusion, the Marines managed to identify and take out the NVA mortar section. 5) A F-8 Crusader returning from a bombing run happened to be flying by. The quick thinking company radio man, Cpl Joe O'Connor, used the radio of a wounded Forward Air Controller lying next to him to make contact with the pilot. The Bomber had neither any munitions nor much fuel, but he agreed to brave the ground fire and make two threateningly low passes. Fear of an airstrike appears to have convinced several NVA units to break contact. 6) Ultimately the decisive factor that prevented a terrible situation that day from becoming far worse was the quality of leadership from NCOs like Cpl Lyle Tate and the officers above them. Marine officers and NCOs wear the famous "blood stripe" on the trouser seam of their dress blue uniforms to signify the tendency of Marine small unit leaders to have a higher casualty rate than the men they lead. Every maneuver element leader from the company commander to the fire team leaders earned the Purple Heart that day, many of them posthumously.

A few days later, A Marine detail and a Navy Chaplain notified Lyle Tate's parents that their only son had been killed in action. This somber moment was cut short when Mr. Tate suddenly suffered a heart attack in response. He recovered in time to attend Lyle's burial at Willamette National Cemetery.

The ceremony, featured former Portland Mayor (and former Marine) Bud Clark, Brigadier General Bruce Prunk, and the Oregon Air National Guard had a F-15 low flyby. For those of you who do not have a personal connection, I write this article so that Marines like Lyle Tate will be forever loved and forever remembered long after

their generation of fellow Marines has passed from this earth.



Having attended these ceremonies so long ago as a boy, I remember when it was F-4s flying by. Indeed I was at the very first dedication of this memorial in 1987 with my father who checked into 2/3 just after the Khe Sanh hill fights and fought with them through the Tet Offensive in 1968. He knew many of the names on that wall personally, friends that will be forever young to him.

Eric Shierman lives in southwest Portland and is the author of A Brief History of Political Cultural Change, and also writes for The Oregonian's My Oregon blog.













"FREEDOM IS NOT FREE"

By Craig W. Tourte
HQ BTRY 1/13

Everyone who knew William Denman called him Buddy and that nickname appropriately described who he was. Buddy grew up in the town of Maxwell, located in Northern California. Maxwell is the quintessential example of rural small town America where everyone knows your name, family and most of your relatives if they had lived around those parts for a few generations. There would be no reason for the road traveler to take the exit off Interstate 5 and drive into the little farm community of 500 where most folks live in quiet obscurity. Some have come and stayed and raised their families while many others have moved along and are now mostly forgotten.

From the Virtual Wall - "Dau Tieng, Tay Ninh Provence, 03 Nov 1966 - elements of the 196th Infantry Brigade and the 25th Infantry Division got into a heated fight with entrenched and bunkered VC troops, a fight that grew into a full-fledged battle fought over a three-day period. Landing Zone Lima Zulu, slightly north of where 1st Bn, 27th Infantry fought on 03/04 Nov, drew some of the heaviest fighting beginning after C Company, 2/27 Inf, was inserted at about 1400 on 04 Nov."

Buddy was a popular kid, handsome and athletic with blond hair and light blue eyes and he possessed an independent and adventuresome spirit many admired. Buddy had a difficult and tragic family life; there were many challenges and hardships including a grievous personal experience between his parents that he witnessed at a very young age. After he graduated from high school Buddy volunteered for the Army and attended boot camp at Fort Ord located in Monterey California. He thrived in the Army life with direction, discipline and a sense of belonging. He found a new beginning, writing to many friends about the respect and admiration he had for the warriors he had met, respected and hoped one day to emulate.

In the summer of 1966 I was living with my aunt and uncle in Maxwell and looking forward to going off to Marine Corps boot camp. Going into the Marine Corps was an adventure I was looking forward to even though I knew I would be deployed to Vietnam shortly after my training was completed. Buddy had completed his Army training and was home visiting his mother and sister and preparing for his deployment to Vietnam. I went over to his house with my cousin and walked into his bedroom where a few of his friends were visiting with him. It was mid-morning and he was still in bed, stating that he wanted to rest as much as he could after all the training and before his deployment. He was in high spirits and looking forward to serving his country and all of what that entailed. We talked about his military training and what he expected while in Vietnam. I sensed that he too was in pursuit of action and eager for a new experience. I told him that he would be returning from Vietnam before me and when I returned home we would share and compare experiences. I wished him luck and was a little envious that he would get to the war before me. I left knowing he was doing what he wanted to do and I was looking forward to becoming a United States Marine. I entered Marine Corps Boot Camp (Platoon 1145) on October 29, 1966.

When Buddy arrived in Vietnam his Sergeant asked him what he wanted to be called, William or Bill. His response was "My friends call me Buddy." His Sergeant said, "Then Buddy it is." He was assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry (Wolfhounds), 25 Infantry Division. Within a short period of time he went into combat against the experienced, prepared and determined Viet Cong forces. Tragically only three and a half months after arriving in Vietnam he was killed in action.

"C/2/27 moved south from LZ Lima Zulu, intending to link with 1/27, but could go only a few hundred meters before being stopped by VC dug into a tree line. Unable to move forward, with enemy troops infiltrating to their rear, the battalion and company commanders dead, and under fire from

three sides, C/2/27 pulled together after nightfall, using a left flank displacement to get out of the "horseshoe" and avoid encirclement. The maneuver worked, and C/2/27 held out through the night amidst sporadic hand-to-hand fighting. By 1030 on 05 Nov, Alpha 1/27 fought through and relieved C/2/27.""At the same time, HHC and A Company, 2/27, was coming into LZ Lima Zulu, intending to take the VC from the rear, pounding them against the anvil formed by A/1/27 and C/2/27."

"05 November 1966 - While the engagements cost the VC dearly, with several hundred known dead, the US infantrymen paid a high price with 50 men killed in action over the three day period. William (Buddy) Denman was one of the twenty Americans who were killed at LZ Lima Zulu on the 3rd day of the fight."

The community cemetery of Maxwell is located a mile west of town. William Luther Denman (August 25, 1946 - November 5, 1966) is buried near the flag pole; his final resting place is identified with a brass United States Military Headstone. He was the first to be killed from the small town of Maxwell and County of Colusa during the Vietnam War. He had the largest funeral ever attended with vehicles stretching for a couple of miles leading to the cemetery.

A number of years ago I placed a small note on the A Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhound web site regarding Buddy, just so others would know he had someone who continued to remember him and his sacrifice for this wonderful country.

Similar to the Khe Sanh Veterans web sites - Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc & Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page - which have contributed to bringing together those who fought in the battles on the hills and the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh, the Wolfhounds web site is followed by those with comparable experiences.

A number of months ago I received an email in response to that little notation I had written on the Wolfhound web site. A former Vietnam and Wolfhound Veteran Robert Park, contacted me and said that he was with Buddy during that particular battle and continues to remember Buddy's death with great sadness. Robert said he was the one who asked Buddy what name he wanted to be called. Having been in country longer and with more experience Robert felt an obligation to watch out for Buddy and has carried with him all of these years a feeling of responsibility for Buddy's death during the battle. A few years ago Robert had come to Maxwell to visit Buddy's grave and say goodbye, but was unable to locate his grave at the cemetery. He asked around town but no one seemed to recall who Buddy was nor were they familiar with the location of his grave. Robert has vowed to return someday to say his final farewell.

A few of weeks after my email communication with Robert I received an email from Chuck Dean, another Vietnam and Wolfhound Veteran who told me he had been in communication with Robert and that he had been with Buddy when he fell and was planning on driving to California and visit Buddy's grave. I shared both emails with people I knew were close to Buddy while he was growing up.

Email from Chuck Dean - "I plan on visiting Buddy's grave in May of this year (2012), something I have tried to face for 45 years. Buddy and I were very close friends in Vietnam. We were both Grenadiers in A Co 2/27 Wolfhounds. I was with Buddy when he fell. I only wish I could have done this years ago, but have only been able to come to grips with Vietnam the last couple of years. I have hooked up with some of the other "Hounds" such as Robert within the last year and have been steadily working my way out of the shadows. I will be in the Maxwell area to visit Buddy's grave site in May. Buddy will always be part of the band of brothers called the Wolfhounds, and will never be forgotten. His memory will live on as long as there is one Wolfhound alive."

"Freedom Is Not Free" Reads the program pamphlet provided at the Memorial Day Service held at the Maxwell Cemetery, May 28, 2012 - I attended the Memorial Day Service with 100 or more people from the community sponsored by American Legion Post 218 (Maxwell) - Ronald Azevedo, Commander. The Maxwell High School Band played the Star Spangled Banner and one of the high school girls sang the National Anthem. The service included a bugle playing taps and a rifle volley "Salute to Deceased Veterans." I didn't notice any politicians or back slapping significant officials, just local folks with moist eyes and heavy hearts who attended out of respect and honor for those who served and for those who had fallen.

Chuck Dean arrived for the service and was shown the location of Buddy's grave by Paul Richter (1st Lt. U.S. Army) and Gary Bowen (U.S. Navy) who were childhood friends of Buddy's,. There was a large floral wreath standing at the headstone sent by Robert Park in the name of all of the Wolfhounds Buddy served with. Chuck said that he had driven out from Alabama to finally say goodbye. We had a long conversation where he reflected on the battle and Buddy's loss. Chuck said that Buddy was just a few steps behind him when he was shot and killed. He walked over to Buddy, turned him over and saw that he was deceased. Chuck said that he had the canvas helmet cover Buddy had worn that day. I held the now faded green camouflage helmet cover and observed written in black ink Buddy's blood type, unit and the words "Pat" for his high school girlfriend Patricia. Chuck said that he had kept the cover locked away for 45 years and now it was time the cover should be with Buddy's home town, family and friends.

Chuck handed the helmet cover to Buddy's friend Paul Richter for safe keeping until it could displayed properly in a place of care and honor. I recognized that Chuck's act of presenting Buddy's helmet cover to Paul and the town of Maxwell was more than just transferring some possession of property. It was a spiritual release, a dedication, a shared memory and memorial of an item of hallowed significance to be forever treasured. It was part of Buddy's spirit and represented his life and sacrifice in battle and that significance had been tucked away for 45 years in a corner of Chuck's heart and soul.

Paul told me there were efforts under development to build an appropriate incased memorial with memorabilia dedicated to Buddy which would include the now gifted helmet cover along with his military Bronze Star, Purple Heart, military photograph and additional items relating to Buddy already on display at the American Legion. The new display would not only be a tribute to Buddy but also to the many who have served in the Armed Forces and a reminder to all that, **"Freedom Is Not Free."**

SOLDIERS LOST AND FOUND: STUDENTS REDISCOVER THE FALLEN

SOME PEOPLE DO CARE

Tracing the Stories of Fallen Troops

Article From Wall Street Journal



A generation of Tom Clark's high school history students have been tracking down the families of Indiana's war dead and creating an archive of their mementos, their letters, the stories of loved ones lost in combat and lives lived in grief. WSJ's Michael M. Phillips reports

ST. JOHN, Ind.—Soon after she finished her junior year at Lake Central High School last spring, Marissa Emery visited the American war cemetery in St. Avold, France. Walking in, she could see just the blank backs of the white marble crosses, a vast, grassy field of the anonymous dead.

Only when she was standing among the grave markers did Ms. Emery turn and see that the front of each one bore a name, including that of the man she was there to visit: Cpl. Homer "Binks" Gettler. The 21-year-old soldier was killed fighting his way across France in 1944, while pining for Betty, the fiancée waiting for him at home in Indiana.

Ms. Emery gathered a pile of small stones in her T -shirt. On top of Cpl. Gettler's cross she arranged them in the outline of a heart. She took one dark rock and threw it against the paved pathway until it broke in two. Ms. Emery placed half in the center of the heart. The other half she tucked into her backpack. That was for Betty.

Some 1,750 Indiana soldiers have lost their lives in Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam and many more in World War II. Ms. Emery's high-school history teacher, Tom Clark, wants his students to know that each one comes with a story.

For 27 years, Mr. Clark has had his students track down the families of the state's battle casualties. In hundreds of files jammed with letters, records, telegrams and photos, his classes have mapped the tides of the nation's relationship with its wars and its dead.

The World War II generation was revered. Men who served in Indochina often came home to hostility. Today, with U.S. troops gone from Iraq and packing up their gear in Afghanistan, the country's feelings have evolved again, with a support-the-troops ethic overriding political differences over the wisdom of the conflicts.

Mr. Clark's project began in 1985, when one of his students launched a campaign to erect a memorial for five Lake Central High School graduates killed in Vietnam. Mr. Clark had his students interview the men's families so the plaque could include details of their lives. The project swelled from there.

In August, Mr. Clark, 58 years old, handed out files and told his new students they had a semester to find out as much as they could about the dead servicemen. He held up a history book. "This textbook is going to say 58,142 died" in Vietnam, he told them. "Is that meaningful? No. That's why I do this."

His classroom is like a forgotten corner of the Smithsonian. Mr. Clark has a letter from a Marine asking his mother to mail rain gear to Vietnam, and a photo of the private sitting on a tank wearing the coat she sent. He later stepped off that tank and onto a land mine. Mr. Clark, an Afghanistan veteran himself, also has a disarmed bazooka, the uniform of a U.S. soldier killed in Iraq, a trove of Purple Heart medals and a pile of Afghan army helmets.

He has the golden lieutenant's insignia that one cash-strapped officer gave his girlfriend in lieu of an engagement ring before he died in Vietnam in 1966.

"Are you seeing the war?" Mr. Clark asked his new class. "The war is all around you."

WORLD WAR II

Mr. Clark and his students have been working on Cpl. Gettler's history for years. They spoke to his sisters, now deceased, and collected binders filled with letters to and from the front lines.

Last year, Ms. Emery's first three cases, all Vietnam casualties, went nowhere. Then Mr. Clark asked her to interview Cpl. Gettler's former fiancée, now Betty Kolodziej. The two of them—17-year-old Ms. Emery, with her bouncy enthusiasm

and wavy golden hair, and the 87-year-old Mrs. Kolodziej, with her hunched shoulders and tinted glasses—talked for four hours, the teenager smiling over Betty's stories about her romance.

"Binks" Gettler was a star pitcher at Dyer High School, class of '41. He threw five no-hitters and signed with the Chicago White Sox, to the chagrin of his Cubs-loving father. Betty, whose parents owned an ice-cream shop, would gaze out of geography class and watch him play ball. The teachers frowned upon hand-holding.

"We passed a lot of notes in the hallway," she told Ms. Emery.

Binks and Betty became engaged before he shipped out for Europe with the 35th Infantry Division. Sometimes she would picture him overseas throwing grenades like baseballs.

On Sept. 22, 1944, he wrote to his sister Charlotte: Betty "should know by now that I am thinking of her at all times. All I do is pray for the day to come so we both can be together again, and married."
His letter must have crossed with one from Charlotte. "Write some," she said, "and I'm praying constantly for you."

The envelope, now in Mr. Clark's classroom, came back unopened and marked in red ink: "Deceased."

About a week after Cpl. Gettler had written to his sister, German troops penetrated the division's lines and drove the corporal and other American mortarmen out of position. Armed only with a pistol, he and a comrade pushed their way back to their mortar tube to repel the Germans. Cpl. Gettler was killed by enemy fire, earning a posthumous **Silver Star medal**.

His 15-year-old sister Paula was home alone in Dyer, Ind., when the taxi driver delivered the Western Union telegram that now resides, tinged in brown, in Mr. Clark's classroom.

"THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR SON CORPORAL HOMER A. GETTLER WAS KILLED IN ACTION ON TWO OCTOBER IN FRANCE LETTER FOLLOWS. J A ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL."

Paula screamed at the driver to get off her porch.
"I didn't believe it," Mrs. Kolodziej told Ms. Emery. Even a couple of years later, she thought perhaps he had just been wounded and hadn't returned because he was suffering from amnesia.

The corporal's mother, Alma Gettler, chose to leave his body in France; she didn't want him to come home like that.

"He left four lives here and to know that it wasn't in vain and he saved four people was just overwhelming."

"Thousands of names," Ms. Emery wrote in her journal after visiting the cemetery. "Thousands of soldiers who lost their lives fighting for their country. Thousands of mothers who lost their sons. Thousands of lives, just gone."

In August, after her senior year began, Ms. Emery brought the broken stone and a candle to Mrs. Kolodziej's house in Crown Point, Ind.



Marissa Emery, above left, visits with Betty Kolodzij, whose fiancée died in WWII

Putting her cane aside, Mrs. Kolodziej hugged Ms. Emery. Ms. Emery read from her journal, "so you could feel you had been there and been part of it."

Mrs. Kolodziej held out arthritic knuckles and showed Ms. Emery her wedding ring. The engagement diamond she had received from Cpl. Gettler was set among the stones from the man she ultimately married, Peter Kolodziej, who had fought in the Battle of the Bulge and survived a German prison camp.

"She's making me go back so many years, like I was young," Mrs. Kolodziej told Mr. Clark. She held a photo of Cpl. Gettler's tombstone at arm's length. "I don't want to get any tears on it," she said.

"You did something really very beautiful there," she told Ms. Emery.

VIETNAM

Yolanda Smith-Hess was five when her father, Spc. 4 Wardell Smith, was killed in Vietnam on July 4, 1968. He was 27.

Her mother and grandmother rarely spoke of his death. "I think my mom was just so devastated that her husband was killed over there," said Ms. Smith-Hess. Her uncles kept saying how her father, and the U.S., should never have been in Vietnam in the first place.

Ms. Smith-Hess's memories are blurry and faded: Her mother sitting on a chair across from his casket; of being distracted by a puff of smoke during the 21-gun salute, as the body was lowered into the grave; turning back to see that her father had disappeared. She thought it might be magic.

Relatives always described her father as a natural leader. She grew up angry he was gone.

"It makes you wonder about everything," said Ms. Smith-Hess, now 49. "I was just stuck in the fact that I was a child growing up, not having an opportunity to have her dad in her life."

Mr. Clark and one of his students began researching the case in the late 1980s. They contacted Spc. Smith's mother, Elnora Cast, who lent the class a small formal photo. He gazed straight ahead, betraying no emotion in his black tie and peaked Army hat.

By the time the class tried to return the photo a few months later, Ms. Cast had died, never knowing the circumstances of her son's death.

Mr. Clark eventually tracked down Ms. Smith-Hess. "I've never seen a picture of him in uniform," Mr. Clark recalled her saying. Her grandmother, she figured, had kept it in the wooden chest that she and her three siblings had always been told was off-limits.

Over the years, Mr. Clark's students pried Spc. Smith's military records out of the Pentagon. The records identified him as "negroid" and described his civilian work experience as distributing "sausages to different stores."

In 1997, the Smith case was in the hands of Melissa Wells, a 17-year-old 11th-grader who now describes her high-school self as a "girlie girl," with little interest in the military or history until she took Mr. Clark's class.

That year, she and her classmates discovered that **Spc. Smith had earned the Bronze Star and Silver Star medals,** and that they were never issued. In the spring, Ms. Wells and Mr. Clark drove to Ms. Smith-Hess's home in Gary, Ind., with the official military citations.

The Bronze Star was almost a pro forma consolation prize for dying in battle. But the Silver Star, the nation's third-highest military honor, was awarded for an uncommon act of valor.

Ms. Wells told Ms. Smith-Hess how her father

had been at a base camp when it came under enemy attack. He left a sheltered position, braved a "fire swept area" and sped to the besieged perimeter bunkers, where he brought two wounded men to safety, according to the records she read. Hearing there were more injuries, he raced back to the perimeter, but was thrown to the ground by an explosion.

He got up and despite the "heavy volume of fire" reached the perimeter bunker to begin treating the wounded. Then he dashed to the adjacent bunker in search of more injured men. He was killed by an explosion as he entered the bunker.

Ms. Smith-Hess wept as the teenager talked. "I had actual documentation that I could read about who he was," Ms. Smith-Hess recalled years after the visit. Mr. Clark "was able to give me those last hours of my father's life."

She felt a little ashamed she had been so angry for so long. She wondered whether the men her father helped had made it out of Vietnam alive. She wished she could meet them.

"He left four lives here and to know that it wasn't in vain and he saved four people was just overwhelming," Ms. Smith-Hess said.

Ms. Wells, now Melissa Ferro, is a 32-year-old pediatric-oncology nurse in California. She also raises money for baby showers for the wives of soldiers overseas, volunteer work inspired in part by her experience with Ms. Smith-Hess.

"Every girl wants to believe her daddy is a hero," she said. "I gave that to her."

AFGHANISTAN

When Angie Wagner's father, a Marine sniper, was killed in Vietnam, strangers told her she should be ashamed of him. Ms. Wagner, then just a child, learned to lie and say she didn't know how her dad had died.

Twenty years ago, she received a call from Mr. Clark and his students, who wanted to know about her father. She remembers it as the first time anyone outside the family had said anything nice to her about her dad. Today, her own daughter, Allison, is a senior at Lake Central and taking Mr. Clark's history course.



MR CLARK'S CLASS

One evening in August, Allison Wagner, two of her classmates and Mr. Clark went to the childhood home of Staff Sgt. David Nowaczyk, determined to show the sergeant's parents that they weren't suffering alone. The soldier, a Lake Central graduate, was killed at age 32 on April 15 in Afghanistan.

For more than an hour, they sat in the living room, under Sgt. Nowaczyk's photo and Purple Heart medal, and asked Andrew and Patti Nowaczyk about their son. What was he like? How did he die? How has his death affected the family?

"He's not just another name to us," Ms. Wagner told them.

"Thank you," said Mr. Nowaczyk, a 57-year-old oil-company maintenance supervisor.

The 17-year-old girls—Ms. Wagner, junior Sarah Harnish and senior Natalia Ruiz—heard about the ups and downs of grief still fresh. They heard

about the comfort provided by friends and neighbors who sympathized with the Nowaczyks' loss and respected their son for his sacrifice.

Mrs. Nowaczyk, age 54, an assistant in a law firm, told the girls about David's mischievous youth. How at age 6 he had disassembled the front-door lock. "He was all boy," she said.

That's about how old the girls themselves were on Sept. 11, 2001, when hijackers flew planes into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field. The attack got David talking about the Army. He was 22 years old and working as a truck driver. His mother begged him not to enlist, and he held off for a few years.

In 2005, he joined up, breaking the news to his mother at a restaurant so she wouldn't cry. After his first tour of Afghanistan, he met his wife, Rachel, a nurse with a young son, Conner, from a previous marriage. They had a daughter, Kiley, now 2 years old.

On his third combat tour, Sgt. Nowaczyk's vehicle hit a buried bomb in eastern Afghanistan. Of the five men inside, he was the only one to die.

The Nowaczyks were hosting a barbecue for neighbors in Dyer, Ind., when Mr. Nowaczyk saw a uniformed soldier and a chaplain walking to the house. He apologized to his guests and ushered them out the back, before he and his wife opened the front door to face the news they knew was coming.

The Army flew the couple to the Air Force base in Dover, Del., to meet their son's body. When they returned home, they found their street lined with hundreds of American flags. There was a heart-shaped wreath on the lawn with a photo of their son. Neighbors filled a cooler with ice and soft drinks, and kept it stocked for weeks. A stranger sent a handmade red-white-and-blue quilt.

The wake was a blur. "You want to go hide," Mr. Nowaczyk told the girls. "You want to go vomit. But you have to greet everybody."

At first, they thought they didn't want the attention. The Nowaczyks soon realized the outpouring of support meant their son wouldn't soon be forgotten.

Ms. Harnish asked how Sgt. Nowaczyk's death had affected the family dynamics. Mr. Nowaczyk said he often sleeps on the floor beside his granddaughter, Kiley. For a while, the little girl, having been told her father was in heaven, would let loose balloons and wave at passing planes.

"We're still at the stage where we're still tiptoeing around each other," said Mrs. Nowaczyk, who wears a memorial dog tag around her neck.

You have good and bad days?" Ms. Harnish asked.

"It's not even days," said Mrs. Nowaczyk, "it's moments."

The third student, Ms. Ruiz, had been mostly silent. Then she broke into tears. "I was 11 when my dad died," she said, "and I didn't have the courage to speak at his funeral."

This time the Nowaczyks comforted her: "No child should ever have to bury a father," Mr. Nowaczyk said.

Ms. Wagner told the Nowaczyks of her own grandfather's death in combat and of her mother's battle with bitterness and shame. The Nowaczyks recalled the cold reception that veterans and their families received during Vietnam and how different their experience has been.

"We carry a big black cloud over our heads, and it rains every day," Mr. Nowaczyk told the girls. "The fact that you came here is incredible."

Write to Michael M. Phillips at michael.phillips@wsj.com

Socorro residents want Vietnam War MIA's name on new SISD school

MAUNUEL R. PUENTES SSGT USA
B TROOP 1ST CAV 23rd INF DIV
'It's time to bring Manny back to life'
By Ramon Renteria

Leno Puentes still cries thinking of his younger brother whom everyone called "Pelon."

"He was a good kid who grew up picking and chopping cotton after school, weekends and holidays," he said. "On Jan. 4, 1971, he left for the war in Vietnam. He has not returned."

Socorro Independent School District officials in December are expected to decide whether a new public school will be named after Army Staff Sgt. Manuel R. Puentes, a Socorro soldier missing in action in South Vietnam since 1971.

Puentes' friends and relatives are urging the district's board of trustees to name one of two proposed new schools in honor of the Socorro native - and others missing in action - who dreamed of becoming a professional boxer. They describe him as a war hero with an infectious grin.

"It's time to bring Manny back to life or at least for his family to have something to remember," said Eugene Trujillo, one of about 20 friends and relatives lobbying to have a public school named after Puentes.

A district committee will recommend proposed names to the school board on Tuesday, according to a district representative.

Puentes, a 20-year-old Golden Gloves boxing champion, was an Army rifleman and part of a 12-man patrol in the rugged, jungle-covered mountains northwest of Khe Sahn, Quang Tri Province. North Vietnamese forces ambushed the patrol on March 25, 1971, with grenades, wounding Puentes and patrol leader Jimmy C. Johnson. Three other soldiers were killed - Staff Sgt. R.D. McDonell of Sweetwater, Texas, Cpl. Richard J. Rossano of New York City, and Cpl. Randall A. Thompson of Evansville, Ind. They were attached



to the 1st Squad, Troop B, 1st Cavalry, 23rd Infantry Division.

Survivors said they saw the wounded Puentes, then a private first class, take cover. Outnumbered, the patrol retreated and left Puentes and the other casualties behind.

Search teams later found Johnson, badly wounded and alive, but no trace of Puentes and two soldiers killed. Thompson's body was recovered.

The Department of Defense reported Puentes missing and then declared him presumed dead a few years later. He was promoted posthumously.

Puentes is believed to be the only soldier from Socorro who did not return from the controversial war in Southeast Asia.

The National Archives lists 58,220 U.S. casualties in the Vietnam War. The war ended in 1975 as one of the most divisive wars in U.S. history.

Ricardo Puentes, Manuel Puentes' twin brother, remembers his brother calling from Seattle before leaving for Vietnam. "He was crying," said Ricardo Puentes, a retired educator in Arizona. "He wanted to serve the country and help my parents financially, but he really didn't want to go to Vietnam."

Ricardo Puentes advised his brother to go AWOL even if it meant having to serve a few years in prison for deserting the Army. Manuel Puentes ignored the advice.

The twins were among 15 children born to Mexican immigrant parents.

Maybe it was a strange coincidence but a car ran over Ricardo Puentes in Socorro the same week that his brother was wounded and reported missing.

"I also almost lost my life," Ricardo Puentes said. "They say twins have some kind of connection."

Manuel's father, Matias, died believing his son was still alive. Mother Gavina lost hope and died believing her son had died, according to family members. Ricardo Puentes tries not to think about his twin brother.

"It still hurts," he said. "But what happened to my brother made me stronger. I went back to school and got my GED, and I went to college." Manuel Puentes was drafted soon after graduating from Socorro High School.

Carlos M. Rivera, a family friend and commander of American GI Forum (Paso Del Norte), is optimistic the family will someday learn more about the missing soldier. He pushed for the return of remains of Eduardo Pedregon, a San Elizario soldier reported MIA in Korea in 1950.

"There's no solid evidence to show that he (Puentes) was killed," Rivera said. "I still hold hopes that he survived."



If he survived, Manuel Puentes would be in his early 60s now.

Cesar Rosales Jr. of Omaha, Neb., became acquainted with Manuel and Ricardo Puentes when both were boxers.

"Manuel was a genuine kind of person with an infectious grin and was just a good guy," Rosales said.

Diane McNamara, now living in the Boston area, wore Manuel Puentes' MIA bracelet (which honored MIAs and POWs) in high school in the 1970s. Her father was an Air Force pilot stationed in Vietnam.

"I started wearing the bracelet as my way of showing support for the soldiers who were sent to Vietnam and I think in some way as an expression of the angst I was feeling having my Dad in Vietnam for such a long period of time," McNamara said in an email. "When the war ended and the soldiers started returning home, we were living at Keesler AFB in Biloxi (Miss.). My mother would

often take us to the air field to greet returning soldiers. It was such an emotional event and it brings me to tears if I think about it today."

McNamara kept the bracelet with Puentes' name. She often wondered about the soldier and tried to learn more about him over the years. "I could not bear the idea of getting rid of it (the bracelet) as it meant so much to me," she said.

McNamara recently searched for Puentes' name on the Vietnam Memorial Web page. "It was a bittersweet moment ... it confirmed that he didn't make it home safely," she said.

A few months before he disappeared, Manuel Puentes sent a short poem he wrote, thoughts lamenting that he was going to a distant war and leaving his large family behind. "I live each day in fear 'cause I know death is near," he wrote.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

CORPORAL REGGIE MASON USMC H&S CO 1/9 KHE SANH

Facing death was a way of life for Marines in Vietnam, but for 77 days, Cpl. Reggie Mason had a front-row seat.

The Pocomoke City, Md., native joined the Marines in 1966 at age 18. He spent most of 1967 in DaNang, as a bodyguard and driver for a colonel. He had been putting in transfer requests to be in a combat unit.

In January 1968, he had re-enlisted and joined the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, an infantry unit nicknamed "The Walking Dead" for having so many men killed in action.

"I'll never forget when I checked in," said Mason, 66. "The staff sergeant said, 'You're that crazy-ass bastard from division that wants to go in the field. Get your gear — you're going to see all you want to see.' At 1300 hours, I was on a chopper bound for the DMZ."

When they landed at Khe Sanh, Mason was given a new detail: Casualties.

His job was to shadow medics working with the wounded and dead, and bring them out of the Demilitarized Zone. He would radio in dog tags about who was wounded and how badly. For Marines killed in action, he would collect their personal effects from the body.

A chaplain once told him more than 500 were killed at the Battle of Khe Sanh, though official military casualty counts were lower."You're running from one to another, and you don't have time to think about it," he said. "Most times, there weren't much left of a lot of 'em."

He remembered one Marine's death in particular. "When they unzipped the bag, I said, 'What happened? Where'd he get hit?' They turned him over. One little piece of shrapnel in his jugular vein. He bled to death. One little piece. And when I took his wallet and stuff, he had two little kids and a wife. That one bothered me more," Mason said.

He said there were 1,000 men in his battalion when he arrived at Khe Sanh, and about 700 when they left. His battalion had to put its clerks, cooks and mechanics in the field to boost manpower and hold off the relentless attack by the North Vietnamese.



Mason remembers hearing the dying cries of his fellow Marines, crying out for their mothers. He said there were times when he, too, thought he would die at Khe Sanh.

"I thought I was a pretty tough kid until I got in the war and I found out how tough I really was. It's looking at wounded, dead bodies. Disease, guys coming down with dysentery. I about died twice from dysentery," he said.

For the entire 77-day engagement, B-52s dropped bombs on Khe Sanh. Mason said without that airborne firepower, they would have lost at Khe Sanh. As the bombers made their nightly runs, Mason said, "you're in a 6-foot hole and the Earth is shaking so bad, it's unreal. And you keep praying — don't miss your target."

He does have many other fond memories of time in Vietnam, many of which he chronicled with an Instamatic camera he took everywhere — the times he visited an orphanage, weekends at the snow-white China Beach, tuna sandwiches at a makeshift Thanksgiving dinner

Still, he's haunted by some of those memories. Sleeping, in particular, is a problem.

"Every noise, I get up," he said. "I say my neighbor's got the best bodyguard in the world. I would give anything to be able to sleep eight hours a night."



WEB BRIEF'S CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

ACOMA SKY CITY

By Neil Kenny

Back in the early to mid ninety's I had the great chance to visit with the 'native' population of Acoma. We traversed the route to the mesa top by the very path that had been traversed for the 1200 previous years by the people who lived there then and now Atop the mesa was a small mission, church if you will; it was elaborately adorned with art work of 'the people' from as far back as any could recall. There was no photographs allowed, as to the Sacred nature of this place. It was refreshing to see that even in this hectic world within which we live -- some still choose to keep Sacred that which is so.

After a while in this quiet chamber, we were able to walk out into the courtyard and small graveyard I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of grave markers & crosses that denoted the branch of military service, and that so many had died while in that service while doing the bidding of this country. It was the fact that the overwhelming number of those graves were from as early as WWI, up to the Korean Conflict. The vast majority were from WWII.

I was reminded of the verse from Barry McGuires' song; "... old enough to kill, but not to vote..." Funny how connected I was at that moment in space and time to that land and those people. I was 18 when I arrived in Nam and 19 when I left both Nam and the Corps in January 1969. The first time I was able to vote was in 1972.

The first time the people of Acoma were able to vote was 1954 It makes me wonder if time and history will keep faith with those of us who have passed before the tides of tomorrow. I know that the 'Native People' have done so in a profound manner, which humbles me as I cast my vision upon tomorrow's tomorrow.
Semper Fidelis

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS: KEN KORKOW B CO 1/26

A VIETNAM WAR HERO'S JOURNEY

By Lance Dixon
Capital Journal 19 July 2012

It's March 30, 1968, at a place called Khe Sanh, and a Marine named Ken Korkow from rural Blunt, S.D., is about to make the best shot of his career as a mortar man. He doctors the charge on a 60 mm mortar shell so that it dollops the mortar shell only a few feet away to explode on top of a spider trap where two Vietcong soldiers have been wreaking havoc on American troops with AK-47 rifles.

End of story for two NVA

WARFARE

It's what Ken Korkow was trained to do - take out the enemy. It's part of the reason why South Dakota Gov. Frank Farrar later named a day in his honor as South Dakota's most decorated Vietnam veteran.

But that's not the story Ken Korkow remembers most about Khe Sanh. What he remembers is putting aside his weapons to bring wounded Americans back out from a battlefield blistered with bomb craters, some as deep as two automobiles stacked on top of each other – the work of the B-52s overhead that were supporting the American troops. Korkow first lay down his mortar, then his rifle, then his sidearm, the better to drag wounded soldiers to safety. Finally he was going out to retrieve wounded soldiers with only the added weight of a knife that he could use in hand-to-hand combat or to cut makeshift bandages. Some of the wounded GIs were scared of dying. Korkow had a line that worked great for them.

"I'd tell them, "I'm a doctor. You'll be OK."

On his last trip out Korkow saw his commanding officer, Ben Long, and his radio man off to one side as he ran past them.

"I was invincible and I didn't care. I shouted, 'Come out and enjoy the war.' Famous last words," Korkow said.

The next moment the world exploded under his feet.

The pieces of metal they pinned on Ken Korkow's chest afterward included the Purple Heart for being wounded and the Navy Cross for being courageous. That's the second-highest military honor a soldier could win.

But the pieces of metal Ken Korkow was most concerned about there at Khe Sanh on March 30, 1968, were the shards of shrapnel from three 60 mm mortar shells that had exploded all around him. He was hit in both arms, in the right leg, and under one eye, where a piece of shrapnel is still embedded. Flak panties and a flak vest kept his trunk intact.

But he knew he'd been seriously hit. And what he remembers afterward is that he began laughing - laughing - when he realized what had happened. It seemed funny to him because he was a mortar man himself, and his weapon was the 60 mm mortar

I've got a strange sense of humor," says Korkow. "They'd hit me with the same thing I'd been hitting them with," he said.

SURVIVORS GUILT

He was a mess

They didn't use thread to hold me together, they used wire, I was blown apart so bad," Korkow said. "I had a doctor tell me at one point that I would never be able to walk again or be able to use my hands again, and I almost believed him."

But Korkow the skeptic didn't; he learned to walk again. Afterward, he returned to the States, to military honor, and to his young wife, Liz.

I met Liz when we were both 15. She was a cute 4 -H girl showing calves and we were putting on a rodeo in Wahoo, Nebraska," says Ken Korkow - part of the family that's famous for Korkow Rodeo stock.

Ken Korkow liked what he saw in Liz and eventually asked her to marry him. But, he adds, it amounted to a bait-and-switch routine for Liz. She didn't get what she thought she was getting. That became abundantly clear after Vietnam, and it was only partly because of the war, Korkow said. Instead, Korkow said a lot of what made him a really lousy husband is an old, old idea that Christian thinkers called "sin."

I'm amazed that Liz stuck with me through 10 years of hell," he said. "If there's been a way to make a mistake, I've pretty much done it."

Gradually, Korkow realized that part of what he was dealing with after Vietnam was survivor's guilt. Men have been programmed to lay down their lives in battle from ancient times - they're prepared for that, Korkow said. But nothing has prepared them for surviving the battle where their buddies were killed. And nothing had prepared him for an abrupt change back to civilian life where skills such as dropping a mortar shell just where you want it were no longer in demand.

Korkow returned to the States to earn a bachelor's degree in ag economics and a master's in business administration, then worked with the South Dakota Industrial Development and Expansion Agency. Afterward he began selling farm and ranch property - the only thing besides operating a mortar that he was ever any good at, he says now.

He's a former member of Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association; former president of the Central South Dakota Board of Realtors, and a former president of the North and South Dakota Farm and Land Institute.

Yet despite the success, something was missing. That's why at age 30, Korkow said, he gave his life to Christ.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Korkow went to work full time for the Christian Business Men's Committee USA in early 1984. He is currently regional director of CBMC Heartland, serving Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota. He lives in Omaha.

He and Liz have three children, daughters Cory and Kacy and son, Adam who serves as a pilot in the Marine Corps

In a strange way, Korkow says, the experience in Vietnam - temporary and terrible and unnatural as it was - was good preparation for the Christian life. Most Christians don't understand that they are at war. Korkow does.

In fact Ken Korkow, the Vietnam veteran, begins each day preparing for battle, and says American Christians are woefully unprepared for something he calls "spiritual warfare." Like the apostle Paul and the early Church, or figures in church history such as Martin Luther, Korkow is convinced not only that God is real, but also that the devil is real.

He begins each day by praying God's protection over friends and family for friends and family. He prays for Jesus Christ's purposes to be fulfilled in their lives.

It's the equivalent, Korkow says, of doing what Paul describes in his letter to the Ephesians - putting on the armor of God

The ranch in the Medicine Creek valley, just east of Pierre and south of Blunt, is still vitally important for Korkow.

This is where the wheels fell off of Grandpa's

Wagon, so this is home, "says.

It's also where Korkow now holds Christian retreats. In conversation he emphasizes prayer, Bible reading and - for men - being accountable to a band of brothers. Christians don't understand that as well as soldiers do, Korkow says.

Korkow still has close ties to Community Bible Church in Pierre, a church he helped to found. Community Bible Pastor Harvey Friez said Korkow's faith is deep and real.

Ken still struggles with issues, especially some from what he experienced in Vietnam," Friez said. "He's taken that experience to try to implement a whole program for others coming back from battlefield situations that the military can use to help those soldiers. A lot of it is faith-based, and that's where Ken's heart is."

Korkow said in his experience, God doesn't waste pain – no matter what the pain is.

I thought combat was the ultimate adventure — but now I know there's nothing more exciting than knowing Christ more intimately and living Him more intentionally," said Korkow. "All of life's past pains and experiences are simply His preparation so we might have a better life now and a greater eternal impact."



Vietnam veteran, Ken Korkow, now hosts Christian retreats at his ranch in the Medicine Creek valley, just east of Pierre and south of Blunt.

A PURPLE HEART STORY
By Joe Oliver

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES!
Reprinted From MOPH, July/August 2012

ROGER MICHAEL HURD and I grew up in the working class neighborhood of East Cambridge. MA I met Roger in the first grade- at Scared Heart Grammar School and we were friends from day one.

Growing up- in East Cambridge was a good thing. It was made up of second generation Italian, Polish, Irish and Portuguese. Everyone was Catholic: in fact, while growing up I thought everyone in the world was Catholic. This impression was fostered by the sisters of Saint Joseph.

If you were Polish you went to the Polish School and the Polish Church; If Portuguese, you would go to the Portuguese school & Church, and so forth. Everyone that is, except us Italians; we all went to Sacred Heart, the Irish School.

So there I was, an Italian going to Sacred Heart Grammar School and their Irish Church. I wish I had a dollar for every time the nuns forced me to sing, "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling."

Growing up in the 50's was great; everyone got along. All of our parents worked, and I knew of no one who was divorced. The only exception to this was my friend Roger. His mother had been divorced several times. He had three sisters and every one of them had a different last name. Also, his mother dated. These were all very strange happenings back then.

Roger and I, as well as my other friends, hung around together all through grammar and high school. In East Cambridge everyone was assigned a street corner to hang out on. I am not sure how this process worked, but my little group of friends from Sacred Heart all ended up on the same corner. Maybe the nuns had something to do with it.? Maybe not.

Growing up in the so-called inner city we shared a lot of firsts. " we smoked our first cigarettes together, stole our first car together and drank our first beer together. We also received communion and confirmation together.

My birthday is the 15th of November and Roger's the 16th. If I was 100 pounds, Roger was 80. When I was 130 pounds Roger was 100. When I was five feet tall Roger was four feet. All during this time we had this little saying between us: "what a difference a day makes."

In 1965 our lives changed forever. My friend Mike Lopez and I joined the Marine Corps. We all wanted to see the world and get out of East Cambridge.
A month after I left for Parris Island, Roger also joined the Marines.

The last time I was with Roger was 1966, when we were both home on leave. I was a Lance Corporal and Roger was a PFC. Again we had our little saying, " What a difference a day makes."

Lance Corporal Roger Hurd was killed in action at Khe Sanh, Vietnam during the "Hill Fights" of 1967. None of us knew how Roger was killed, only the date and location. Trying to make contact with his family was impossible; his mother had remarried and we could not track down his sisters.

Several years ago I was reading a magazine article from one of the two Marine Groups I belong to. I came across the following story in the Khe Sanh Veterans magazine, ***Red Clay.***

The story was written just before Memorial Day by a fellow Marine that served with Roger, someone I have never met. John Kaheny. I thought I would share this with those who did not read it. The value of the story is the same. No matter what day it is , I want to make sure that Roger is never forgotten,.

What a difference a day makes!

HERE IS THE ARTICLE

A MARINE REMEMBERS ON MEMORIAL DAY

By John Kaheny

For most of us it is a sure sign of impending summer and it is filled with parades, picnics and beach parties. Children, enjoying the day with their friends, may occasionally ask why a tear forms in their father's eye at the sound of taps or the sight of Old Glory waving in the wind.

It is difficult for the young to truly grasp why we set aside this day to honor those gallant veterans who fell at Lexington and beyond, defending our freedom and protecting our lives. So far they have been spared the terrors of the night and the arrows that fall by day.

Not so for the aging warrior whose memory on this cared day leaps time and space to find a grassy knoll four miles from Laos on another day in May of 1967.

Marines and corpsman on patrol 43 strong, are just five miles from the safety of Khe Sanh combat base. To the North, they are the last free men between Hill 881S and North Vietnam. Suddenly, the Cat of Death jumps from a tree line on the exposed flank of the platoon. Two young riflemen, each but 19 years old, shun available cover, stand up, stand fast and fire into the charging horde. Taking the full force of the enemy's assault, they purchase with their blood a precious gift of reaction time for their fellow Marines and corpsman. Helmets fade slowing into chest high grass and soon disappear from view.

Eventually 41 make it back to safety, some bleeding, none broken, but two go home to rest forever beneath marble crosses. Their names, Private First Class Thomas Edward Hendershott and Lance Corporal Roger Michael Hurd, Are now etched in stone beneath Lincoln's watchful eye.

The years have passed but every day I see their

sacrifice reflected in the smiling faces of my children and grandchildren. For had not these two brave men held their ground with everything they had, Coleen, Meghan, John Peter, Olivia, Clara and Lauren simply would not be, because one of those they saved that day was me. Now you know why taps brings it all back and makes me think of those young heroes and where they Are today and why I know, all too well, the meaning of that World War II epitaph:

And when he gets to heaven
To Saint Peter he will tell
" One more Marine reporting , Sir
I've served my time in Hell"

Joe Oliver lives in Central Florida with his wife of 43 years, joane. They have two sons and four grandchildren. Joe is a former Marine Combat Wounded Vietnam Veteran and a Lifetime member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. He is also a Life Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans, serving with HMM-163, S-2 Chief.

John Kaheny lives in San Diego, CA., with his wife of 41 years. They have three children and three grandchildren. John is a retired municipal lawyer and a retired Marine Corps Reserve colonel with service in Vietnam and Desert Storm. John is a Life Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans serving with HQ CO 1/26 S-3.

OBITS

CHUCK HARVELL, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN B BTRY 1/13

"Chuck Harvell passed away July 9, 2012. A memorial service was held at 3PM, Sun., July 22nd. at Rocky Creek Baptist Church, Greenville, SC. My heart is heavy today. I was thinking I needed to call Chuck. I called and did not get an answer. My heart kept telling me to get in touch with Chuck. That still, small inner voice told to go online to the Greenville News. There I found his obituary.

I GET MAIL

Tom;

I just received the Summer 2012 issue of Red Clay. Thanks for another great issue and continuing record of the valiant defense of Khe Sanh.

I was pleased to see that the Newsweek issue, March 18, 1968 was reproduced in Red Clay and that the members were able to see how challenging the siege was for all who were there. I have digital copies of the pages if you ever need.

It was I who sent the issue to you. At the time of the siege, I was at The Basic School and along with my classmates, closely watching the evening news and the siege of Khe Sanh. Many of us knew that we were on our way to Vietnam shortly.

I joined Fox, 2/26 in October as a Platoon Commander and had the honor of serving with many of the men in Fox Company that had endured the siege and subsequent I Corps battles, including LZ Margo. Captain Stan Hartman was Fox CO and Tim Sabo, XQ.

Thanks For A Great Issue.

Terrence D. Arndt
Fox CO 2/26

OBIT

ROBERT C. PAINTER USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
B CO 3RD RECON

Robert "Wolf" Painter, born May 25, 1947, passed away October 1, 2012. He was a loving father, grandfather and brother. Robert was a hunter and fisherman at heart. He had a huge heart and strong resolve. He loved his home and family in Spirit Lake. Robert joined the Marines in 1966. He was in the 3rd Marine Division, serving his country in Vietnam. He earned many medals, including the Presidential Citation and the Purple Heart.



Although Robert may have left Vietnam, it never left him. He was first and foremost a Marine, never forgetting the brothers he had to leave behind. He was proud to serve his country. Robert is survived by his wife, Lisa Painter, brother Mike (Sunshine) Varges, sons; Michael Gallup(and wife Jamic), Curtis Gallup, and Aries Painter, daughter, Panda Ramsdell. He is also survived by grandchildren; Samantha, Dimitri, Katana, Triniti, & Hailey Gallup, and Athena and Christina Ramsdell and many more adopted children and grandchildren who will greatly miss him. Semper Fi Marine, You Will Never Be Forgotten. Military Honors and Memorial were held at the Spirit Lake Boat Dock on Saturday, Oct 20, 2012.

EVEN IN HURRICANE WINDS

THIS SAYS IT ALL!

GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES MILITARY





SWOOPING FOR THE LIEUTENANT

By Dennis Mannion
KILO CO 3/26 F/O

It's two in the morning when I give my wife a gentle touch on the shoulder, ease out of bed and quietly head for the dark staircase. There is no need to wake Joan as she and I have said our goodbyes hours ago. I have always been able to wake from sound sleep and be in my car and on the road in a relatively short period of time and this early morning departure in October 2010 is no exception.

I dress quickly in the kitchen -- shorts, a sweatshirt, and flip-flops are easy -- small suitcase and travel items already in the car. Reaching into the frig for a small cooler with Arizona ice teas, I think about my Khe Sanh buddy Nick Romanetz and what he casually mentioned to me at the San Antonio reunion back in July. If it were not for his words then, I'd be sleeping now instead of easing my car down the driveway and aiming the headlights south toward Washington, D.C. Yet I'm not upset in the least; quite the contrary, I am elated to be "On the Swoop" while most of Connecticut dreams the night away. I'm about to begin a 24 hour, 600 mile, round trip drive to pay my respects to a Khe Sanh Marine killed on 15 April 68 in the shadow of Hill 881N.

Like many drivers in this day and age, I have a GPS unit, but there is no need to power it up on this trip because I've driven to D.C. countless times, and other than traffic concerns it is no more complicated than the short, daily commute I used to make during my thirty-year teaching career. It's the Merritt Parkway into New York State ... the Cross County and Henry Hudson parkways to the George Washington Bridge ... cross the Hudson .... New Jersey Turnpike south to the Delaware Memorial Bridge ... cross the Delaware ... I-95 toward the Baltimore tunnels ... and on down to the capital. Simple really, especially in moderate to light traffic. With luck and a single pit-stop for fuel and the bathroom, I most certainly will be there by mid-morning. The electronic car device that I do use constantly in the car is my XM satellite radio -- a Christmas gift from Joan. I first plugged it in a decade ago and I have not listened to an AM or FM radio station since. For me it's the commercial-free music from the 50's and the 60's that takes me back in time and allows the miles to ease by whether it's a long trip or running errands around town. Most of my adult life I had steadfastly believed that "my music" had its origins in the 60's, but once I began using my XM I came to understand that my music is more closely linked to the late 50's and the 60's.

I'm at the wheel early on this chilly Saturday and using the remote to alternate between songs from the 50's and 60's because Nick happened to mention that his Basic School Class -- BOC 5-67 -- was going to dedicate a plaque on the grounds of the Museum of the Marine Corps to remember and honor all the officers from BOC-5-67 who had lost their lives in Vietnam. My instant reaction was to ask if Lt. Steve Fordham had been in that class. Nick did not recognize the name, but he said he'd put me in touch with those who were organizing the event. Three emails exchanges later I learned that Lt. Fordham had been in that class, and as I stared at the information on my computer screen from Mike Sommers, I knew immediately where I'd be on that third Saturday in October. I had to make this swoop for Lt. Fordham; I just had to.

For the uninitiated, *swooping* was the term used by Marines who rocketed out of Camp Lejeune every Friday for destinations all over the east coast. It may have been called that by Marines on other bases as well, but my personal swoop meant Jacksonville, NC to Hamden, CT. Not a 4 day, 96-hour pass, swooping was a 60 hour, boomerang-weekend -- depart Friday afternoon when work secured, drive hundreds and hundreds of extremely fast miles to destinations like Boston, Buffalo, Miami, Cleveland, even Chicago, and return to Lejeune in time for Monday morning formation!

In late 1968 and most of 1969 my swoop meant 654 miles -- one way -- from the main gate to my parents' house. Gas was plentiful and cheap; roadways were not all that crowded; local and State police were the biggest threat -- although the red Lejeune sticker on the front bumper often helped, particularly in New Jersey and New York. I had a '68 Camaro then with just about every option Chevrolet offered and it easily handled all those weekend miles. The radio was the basic, 6-button, AM unit, and it became second nature to reach out and punch up a new station whenever a song concluded and the station went to a commercial or to a song I didn't like.

Swooping was always a two-act drama set against a backdrop of speed, miles, roads, and the clock. The first act was always up-tempo, lighthearted and giddy because seeing the main gate in the rear -view mirror late on a Friday meant a free weekend with absolutely no obligation to Uncle Sam's Misguided Children until Monday. Swoops generally began in the late afternoon when a continuous line of "muscle" and "pony" cars -- GTO's, Torino's, 442's, Charger RT's, Firebirds, Cougars and the like -- slowly eased down the long access road to the main gate. Starting in daylight was crucial since the first 110 miles were narrow, back country roads until Rocky Mount, NC and the limited access highways of 301 and I-95. On the radio it might be *Love is All Around* by the Troggs and then *The Boxer* by Simon and Garfunkel. A good start.

Sunset usually around Richmond, VA and the gradual change to night seemed to alter the mood somewhat...somber and more inner-reflective. *Green River* by CCR...that'll do. Topics of conversation -- cars, girls, sports, officers and senior NCO's -- discussed and discussed again until there was little left to say. The only reality now: 400 miles. With conversation eased and mostly empty I-95 out in front, it was pure speed and non-stop music that propelled us north. The Stones and *Honky Tonk Woman* followed immediately by the O'Kaysions and *Girl Watcher*...what a song! Three or four Marines somewhere in Maryland going 80 miles per hour and singing the words at the top of their lungs. *Spooky* performed by the Classics IV. Hearing that one was guaranteed to generate multiple discussions about Spooky in Nam and memories of that continuous line of red from the plane to the ground. The rest of the swoop tended to be even quieter as sleep overtook the passengers and now just cities, landmarks, and the last rest-stop of the New Jersey Turnpike as proof that you were getting close to home. *A Beautiful Morning* by the Rascals...the volume turned down. *The Poor Side of Town* from late 1966. Wow! Johnny Rivers' voice coming out the speakers and me hearing him sing that same song on my way to sign the enlistment papers in October 1966. *How is it possible that it's only been three years when so much has happened since?*

Depending on weather, traffic, speed traps, and passenger drop-offs, arrival time was generally around 4 in the morning. A few hours of sleep and then the freedom to do as little or as much as you wanted through all of Saturday and Saturday night. Sunday mornings were relaxed as well but always with an eye on the clock and the early afternoon departure and Act Two.

Returning always seemed to be heavier emotionally and more like performing a distasteful chore that had to be completed like it or not. The music always helped. *Kind of a Drag* by the Buckinghams sums it up for the driver and the passengers. Every southbound mile meant closer to the Lejeune and the iron reality where our choices and our decisions weren't entirely our own. Still there was some happiness in the return as our weekends got re-lived, compared, and savored. The DJ says, "And now, with one of 1968's big hits we have Bobby Goldsboro and *Hon*... Not a chance we listen to that one. The last 110 miles and the ungodly hour of the morning make that final stretch the toughest of the entire swoop. In those predawn hours the 2-lane country roads are deserted but danger still lurks beyond the high beam's range and you never know. Utmost care is needed because fatigue is at its greatest. Approaching the

main gate and the ever vigilant MP's, the only realities are how much prep time do I have before morning formation and the fact that Friday can't get here soon enough.

My 2010 mini-swoop for Lt. Fordham was not an exact mirror image of those late '60's swoops, but the roadways and the landmarks were for the most part identical. Thanks to the XM radio, the songs emanating from the multiple speakers were exactly the same and help to transport me back to the last three years of the 1960's. I arrived in D.C. at mid-morning and met up with Marines who knew Lt. Fordham personally. Later on that Saturday we drove the 50 miles south to Quantico and the museum. Nowadays in D.C. those 50 miles can take over two hours despite 4 to 6 lanes of highway in each direction! There was an emotional, outdoor dedication ceremony followed by dinner in the expansive museum lobby. At both events I had the honor and the pleasure of sitting next to Barry Kowlaski -- Lt. Fordham's roommate during Basic School. The stories and the memories we exchanged were emotional, sometimes painful, and helpful. I got to learn a lot about Lt. Fordham as he was in that summer of 1967, and I was able to convey to Barry what a terrific officer Lt. Fordham turned out to be even in the most harrowing of times on 861, 881s, and 881n.

I would have gone anywhere for a dedication ceremony that included Lt. Fordham, but having the ceremony at Quantico seemed most appropriate to me. In the dozens of swoops four decades before, I'd zoom by the huge exit signs on Interstate 95 that proclaimed
Marine Corps Base Quantico.

Back then it hurt to see those signs week after week and know that Lt. Fordham would had to have seen them as well during his officer training months. Getting through that 10 mile stretch of interstate in Virginia was never easy for me no matter the mood in the car or the song on the radio. Whether northbound on Fridays or southbound on Sundays, it was always nighttime, and thankfully, the darkness hid the inevitable melancholy expression on my face and the occasional tear in my eye.

Safe swoop, Lt. Fordham. You're always missed and never forgotten.
Semper Fi. Dennis

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER 2012

HAPPY CARDS

By Chaplain Ron Rayner

Congratulations to the reunion committee for a successful gathering in Washington D. C.

Everyone that attended the Saturday night banquet at this year's reunion had a *Happy Card* tucked into their napkin in front of them. This card had an "Eternally Bonded" Khe Sanh Veterans logo printed on it. What made it a *Happy Card* was the fact that most everyone I saw at the reunion was smiling and having a good time. Hopefully, when the attendees see their *Happy Cards* in their wallets or purses, they will smile.

The purpose of a *Happy Card* is to pull it out of your wallet or purse and reference it when you are feeling down and your thoughts are headed in the wrong direction. A *Happy Card* could also be called a *Thought Direction Card, Thought Stopping Card, Good Memory Card*, or a *Feel Good Card*. Everyone needs to be cheered up every once in a while. People who suffer from Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder or just plain depression tend to isolate themselves from others with their thoughts sometimes going out of control. A readily available *Happy Card* can help fill their need to stop bad thoughts and change the direction of their thinking. A *Happy Card* can be made happier by writing the best memories of your life on it. Any thought that can bring a smile to your face can be written there. If you have a hard time thinking up something to put on your *Happy Card* try getting with your spouse or a friend and work on it together. If you have lost a spouse or good friend, review photographs or other objects that

will revive good memories and put a smile on your face. Remember that your lost spouse or friend would wish you a long and happy life.

Khe Sanh Vet Larkin Spivey, in his book, *Stories of Faith and Courage from the Vietnam War*, has a series of POW devotionals for September. September 19th's devotion concerns a POW counting his blessings while being held prisoner. I believe we all are much better off than the POWs of the Vietnam War. Whether or not you received a KSV *Happy Card*, please count your blessings and write them down to help you keep your thoughts headed in the right direction.

Dear God, when we go through wintry days, please help us to see your many blessings so that we feel the warmth of your love. Thank you that everything in our lives can be turned to your purposes and our good. Please help us to cling to your faithfulness. Amen.

KHE SANH VETERANS MEET AGAIN HONORING THEIR HEROIC CORPSMAN

LAUREN COUNTY
Daniel J. Lauer Staff Writer

As 22 Laurens County veterans were inducted into the Hall of Heroes Saturday afternoon, one inductee was thinking about his upcoming retirement. U.S. Navy Commander John Lancaster Jr., a Vietnam veteran who has led the Navy IROTC program at Laurens District 55 High School for the past 18 years, will spend his last day on the job this coming Friday. I get a lot of satisfaction from this job," Lancaster said. "But I am ready to go."

During his 18 years as the naval science instructor at LDHS, Lancaster has seen the program grow from an average of 130 or 150 kids to well over 200 in recent years. This year, enrollment is up to 240 students.

"My main goal here is to show kids that there is more to the world than just Lauren ," he aid. 'There are big adventures out there if they are willing to go for it."

Lancaster had is own share of adventures through the years, stories he told to his students. He was a Combat Navy Corpsman during the Vietnam War, serving as a medic for the Marines. The Marines do not have medical personnel, chaplain, doctor' or dentists; those role arc filled by Navy personnel wearing the Marine uniform.

"The Navy Corpsmen actually had a much higher casualty rate, because when a Marine got hit, that Corpsman is going to get that Marine,"

Lancaster explained. "That is where lead is flying. For that year of my life, I was on the front lines."

Lancaster said too many lives were lost, names he recognizes every time he visits the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC.



REUNION OF FRIENDS– L-R
Larry McCartney, Commander Lancaster and Jose Luis Reyes Jr., known as "Cisco."

"They are grouped by date, so in some places, I know everyone of them. I knew too many of those names."

Lancaster was instrumental, however, in saving many lives. During Saturday's Hall of Heroes ceremony he was surprised by two marines he help treat in Vietnam. Vietnam. Jose Luis "Cisco" Reyes Jr. choked up as he credited Lancaster with saving his life, allowing him to return home, get married and have a family. He was brought to Lancaster by another friend, Lawrence E. McCartney, for treatment. That was the last time Reyes had seen Lancaster until Saturday.

As Lancaster prepares to retire, he is proud of the program he has helped build at LDHS, and is confident it is in good hands with new Commander T.J. Linardi.

"I don't have a long bucket list," Lancaster said. "I can look myself in the mirror and know that I did the best I possibly could."

Now Lancaster joins numerous other Laurens County veterans in the Hall of Heroes.

"It was a very special evening," he said. "And stressful too. I guarantee all those memories (from deployment) were flowing."





RAYS CORNER

Dear Tom,

I'm attaching an article that appeared in the Wall Street Journal about the Marine Corps mascot bulldog at the Commandant's home on 8th and I who stood his ground when the dog of the Secretary of Defense met him. The wives of the senior officers were shaken. In the 19th Century, it would be said that "they swooned." The Commandant, however, was impressed and promoted the dog to Sergeant! It's a rather humorous story which I assume you'll find amusing.

I have a couple of unusual things that have happened to me recently. Soon after my birthday, I had an appointment with the eye doctor at the VA. (One of the reasons, along with my anxiety at crowds, especially at airports, but also, I'm sure, that were in DC, for not attending this year's reunion. In past visits to the VA eye doctor, I was told that I had cataracts as well as a hole in my retina, and that nothing could be done to improve my somewhat blurred vision-the reason I don't drive outside the local area, in unfamiliar places. I really dreaded the appointment, not being sure of transportation to and from the hospital. (A local Vietnam vet friend and a neighbor did say they would take me, but it would be an Imposition). Well, I went and the doctor said my cataracts aren't all that bad, that the retina has not deteriorated further, and that now I could be given a prescription for new glasses which would enable me to see better!). Obviously, I was very greatly relieved.

Then, about the same time, I was walking along that dirt bike trail along the river near my home. We once walked that several years ago. As I walked, I suddenly saw a young man in camouflaged clothing and with a rifle! He was slowly crouching down in some bushes. There were some others along the trail, not in the immediate area, but I was concerned about someone with a rifle-

and, obviously, although I was completely aware of where I was and the situation, I still had feelings as though I were back in the Nam! Seeing a young man, in camouflaged uniform with a rifle did that! It's interesting what I did, as I now think back on it. Instead of running away, I instead slowly walked up to him! In a very n on-threatening, mild tone of voice, I said, "What are you doing?" (Obviously, if we were crazy or meant to do harm, I would have been shot dead!) He replied that he was part of a group of five others that were "playing war." I asked him if he were a veteran. No. I asked him how old he was. 23. I thought "he's too old to be playing war!" He then continued that they all shot bio-degradable pellets. I then walked away.

On the Labor Day weekend, I was enjoying a get-together with my neighbors. They all know me very, very well. We've been neighbors for some 20 or more years. I related this story and then-unfortunately!-said, "I felt like saying to the man (recalling my training with the Seals), "How quickly do you want to die? And how painfully?" Immediately, there was complete silence, an uncomfortable pause in the conversation. Perhaps they thought: he's really crazy. We shouldn't let our children near him. And things like that. I guess there are still some things that so dramatically affect our lives today even after over 40 years!

The night before my birthday (which fell on a Wednesday), I was, as usual, working out at the boxing gym. On this particular night, one of the trainers had some focus pads and I was throwing jabs, crosses, hooks, upper cuts as he moved the pads. Eventually, his back was against the ropes. The ring is larger than normal. Suddenly, he stopped. I turned around" and the ring was completely filled with at least 30 young men, mainly teenagers, and they immediately started to sing "Happy Birthday!"

I might add that a couple of Khe Sanh vets sent me Happy Birthday cards which made me feel very good. Like that singing of the young boxers, I was aware I have connections with those who care, a family. Some of these Khe Sanh vets haven't sent me cards in the past, and one I didn't even know. Realizing that I probably won't have many (if any) more birthdays to celebrate, cards obviously have taken on great significance for me. Some others called. A couple called from the reunion, and one, Chick Kelly (the chaplain who relieved me at Khe Sanh) wrote me. I was told that one of the recon Marines claims that I accompanied one of their patrols, despite my denials. But, I really didn't go out with recon. I tried to-after being with them after one of their Marines drowned in the river just to the north of the base, but was denied. (In fact, I spent so much time with them because of their losses, that my own CO, Lt Col James B. Wilkinson of 1/26, called me in and said, "I will remind you, Chaplain, that you are the 1/26 Chaplain, not the recon chaplain!" I suspect that many "stories" circulate about me-and about others as well!-that really aren't true, but somehow have become part of the "legends!" Well, I write too much. Take care, good friend. Semper Fidelis,

Ray

WASHINGTON-
TONGUES ARE WAGGING AFTER CHESTY'S MARINE CORP PROMOTION

After snub of Pentagon's Top Dog

The Marines won't say it out loud, but everyone knows that Cpl. Chesty got promoted to sergeant this summer not for being a good Marine, but for his in-your-muzzle confrontation with the top dog in the Pentagon.

Just two weeks before his promotion, the Marine Corps mascot, an English bulldog formally known as Chesty XIII, had a run-in with Bravo, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta's golden retriever. Chesty, usually known for happily mugging or photos with kids, revealed his inner grunt when he spotted the larger dog at the conclusion of a pomp-filled military parade held in honor of the Pentagon chief. Chesty growled, barked and ignored his

choke-chain of command as he went nose to-nose with Bravo.

As Chesty's growl erupted into an angry bark, an



SERGEANT "CHESTY" XIII

officer urgently whispered in the ear of his handler, Sgt. Chris Harris: "'Keep the leash tight."



Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and His Golden Retriever "Bravo" Run in with "Chesty XIII "

That kind of breach of decorum at the headquarters barracks, where the top generals and their wives reside, could have been career-ending for most Marines.

Chesty weathered the controversy and came out of it with a new stripe on his uniform. Privately, some wives of senior Marine officers, more focused on politeness than doggedness, let it be known they didn't approve of the promotion. A whispering campaign against Chesty reached the ears of Col. Paul Montanus, barracks commander. Some said Chesty was getting too fat. Some senior wives wanted Chesty relieved of duty in favor of a more pliable bulldog private serving in another unit. .

Other senior Marines worried about the message promoting Chesty might send. In military chain of command, Bravo is second only to Bo Obama, the president's hypoallergenic Portuguese water dog. The Constitution puts the military under civilian control, and some senior officers thought promoting Chesty might appear insubordinate.

"The standards in the barracks had lowered," said one senior Marine officer. "The dog didn't really deserve it."

Col. Montanus, who had the dog's fate in his hands, acknowledges that Chesty was wrong to shove his short snout in Bravo's face. "There absolutely was a protocol break," be said. "We don't bark at guests, whether they are human or the canine variety."

But, the colonel said, much of the opposition was baseless. A barracks spokesman says senior Marine wives love and support the current Chesty. And at 54 pounds, Chesty fits nicely in the dress blues he was issued as a younger dog, thanks to being served half the daily kibble ration of his chunky predecessors.

Nevertheless, in a speech at Chesty's June promotion ceremony, Col. Montanus acknowledged the decision was "touch and go."

"There are some Marines that are destined to be

sergeant:' he said. "Then there are some whose conduct is ... questionable. Chesty is one of those Marines."

Col. Montanus said he had considered formally punishing Chesty for "disrespect to a superior commissioned dog." It is true that "Chesty made threatening gestures:' he said.

"But we decided the body of work for Chesty was enough he rated becoming a sergeant."

Left unspoken: The very act that made Chesty's promotion controversial also made it more likely. Immediately after the parade in honor of Mr. Panetta it became clear that going muzzle-muzzle with the 75-pound golden retriever was going to enhance Chesty's reputation in the ranks.

While Mr. Panetta was present, the top Marines displayed embarrassed grins and laughed nervously. But after the boss left, the high-fives and atta-boys broke out. Far from being denied his traditional post-parade Milk Bone, the bulldog found himself the object of warrior admiration. Even Gen. James Amos, the Marine commandant, approached Chesty and said, "Good job."

There is a reason the Corps has a bulldog for a mascot and that he is named after the famously gutsy Marine Lt. Gen. Lewis "Chesty" Puller. Even within a service that values discipline, there is a certain mystique about a Marine who's willing to poke a paw in the eye of power-particularly in defense of the homeland, or kennel.

Col. Montanus's successor as barracks commander, Col. Christian Cabaniss, made plain the current Chesty had only grown in his estimation.

"Chesty embodies Gen. [James] Mattis's saying about the Marines: 'No better friend, no worse enemy,'" Col. Cabaniss said. "Chesty's great. He is great with kids. Bu if you are impolite to him, if you are wrong, that is when he will defend himself."

Like Chesty, Gen. Mattis has risen through the ranks despite the occasional public display of machismo-comments such as "Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet"-that has raised eyebrows with civilians.

Gen. Mattis, who oversees operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan, said he considers Chesty a "kindred soul."

"He's a fine Marine dog," the general said. "Loyal, hard working and full of fun-while looking mean as all get-out."

Col. Montanus strenuously denies that the confrontation with Bravo helped Chesty's promotion. A well-trained Marine, he said, should be able to recognize a superior.

"I would say Chesty needs some threat-identification classes," he said. "I understand 'No better friend, no worse enemy: But generally we are talking about our enemies, not our superior officers."

Col. Montanus calls the clash with Bravo a minor infraction. Chesty, the colonel says, excels at his main responsibility: Accepting hugs from children with enthusiasm and without biting.

As for Bravo's master, there seem to be no hard feelings. "Chesty may bark a lot," Mr. Panetta said. "But he understands the chain of command:'

In an interview on a hot evening, Chesty was friendly and panted constantly. Although he didn't answer questions about Bravo, he did jump on a reporter's leg.



RAY, JUST DOING HIS THING

With music and narration, members of the 1st Brigade Band, a Civil War brass band, tell the history of the American flag at a Flag Day celebration at the Marcus Center's Peck Pavilion in Milwaukee. Ray Stubbe, a retired Navy chaplain who served with the Marines in Vietnam, shares a laugh with fellow veterans before the ceremony. Stubbe delivered the invocation.







UPDATE ON RAY
HE WRITES:

Dear Tom,

Our college class of 1962 has gathered at St. Olaf College this week, and one of my classmates just sent me a copy of the sermon he will be giving tomorrow at the chapel. The preacher is Rev. Dr. David L. Tiede. I didn't really know him well while we were together at college and I don't even recall talking with him. He eventually became the President of our large Lutheran seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, which has several hundred students, and he called me a few weeks ago, encouraging me to attend. I told him that due to my problem with travel and especially with large crowds, that I wouldn't be able to attend, even though one of my "shrinks" at the local VA told me several years ago that I "must return to St. Olaf since it had such a positive influence on me."

Anyway, I sent Dave a copy of Pebbles and I guess he was impressed by some of what was in it, and the last page of the attached sermon mentions part of it. Interestingly, YOUR words that appeared on the back cover ("Lord give me the strength to watch over these brave men") are quoted! Tom, you had an amazing insight into my thought, feelings, and could capture in a few words the essence of everything that I was living at the time!

Of perhaps some interest is that I was as unable to attend this very significant college reunion (our 50th) just as I'm not attending our Khe Sanh reunion, nor going to the annual boxing tournament at Kansas City nor attended my high school reunion. It's all due to my nervous anxiety over crowds and travel outside the city-and even knowing what's going on doesn't seem to give me a handle on controlling it!

Anyway, I thought you'd be interested in that last page. You are such a good friend that you have a way of looking right into the depths of my soul! Your hand in getting that book printed obviously makes my gratitude to you very profound!

By the way, my legs seem to be fairly fully recovered. I don't have aches unless I walk more than two miles. Running is still out, but perhaps that may be possible in the future. I still go to the boxing gym and sparred on two different days last week, three three-minute rounds. The VA has had me on an antibiotic for about a month due to a blood infection, but physically, I'm doing quite well-for a man who will be 74 in August. I guess you are als0 72. We are both able to look at the rest of our Khe Sanh vets and regard them as "young pups!"(even if they are in their mid or late 60s!)

Take Care, Tom
Semper Fi,

The Last Page Which Ray Refers To:

Our classmate, Chaplain Ray Stubbe could not attend because of his Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. But we had a wonderful phone conversation, and he sent his book, Pebbles in My Boots. It is a stunning collection of letters, sermons, prayers, and poems of a chaplain in intense, prolonged combat, particularly when besieged for two months at Khe Sahn, Vietnam.

His stationery has a cryptic Greek quotation from St. Gregory of Nazianzen.

Ray picked this out of his reading of Gregory, in Greek, while on a troop transport. The gist of the quote is, "What is not taken up, is not healed." This was Gregory's witness against those who said Jesus was not fully human. If Christ didn't take up our mortal life, we could not be healed.

For Chaplain Stubbe in the horror of war and carnage of death, it meant God has taken it all up, even the worst. God is always with us. "If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there"(Ps 139). "God is with us precisely on the cross, precisely in the midst of the horror of war, precisely with us in times when death looms ready to swallow us." (Pebbles, 226). Ray held worship as mortar fire rained slaughter, and he took soldiers in his arms as they bled to death. His prayer continued to be, "Lord give me the strength to watch over these brave men."

It is a wonderful privilege to be in on God's mission of love for the world, but God does not promise it will be easy, or bloodless. Holy Trinity is the story of God taking up our mortal lives that they may be healed and in order that we might be agents of this mission of healing in the world. And here we are together for reunion weekend. Classes from many decades, and God isn't done with us yet.

Come now to the Lord's table. God's love is embodied here in bread and wine. The Triune God has taken it all up, that you may be healed and the world may be healed, in part through your gifts and your struggles. Thanks be to God.



MARINES DO GUARD HEAVENS GATES



ROBERT M. CRABB, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN GOLF CO 2/26



IN HONOR OF ROBERT'S DEDICATION, GENEROSITY, AND COMMITMENT TO ENSURE THE KHE SANH VETERANS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION CONTINUES, THE KHE SANH VETERANS HAVE NAMED THE KSV SCHOLARSHIP IN HIS HONOR.

IT SHALL NOW BE KNOWN AS:

ROBERT M. CRABB SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

On March 15, 2012, Marine Bob Crabb joined the honor roll of heroes who built the noble legacy of the United States Marine Corps reporting to his next duty station with our Supreme Commandant.

A Memorial Service for Marine Crabb was held on Friday, April 27, 2012. Robert M. Crabb was born December 21, 1947, in a small town located in southern Texas. On June 28,1967, Bob enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and subsequently served with the 3rd Marine Division, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines, Company G in Vietnam from 1967-1968. In 1969, Marine Crabb reported to Camp Pendleton for medical treatment subsequently becoming a rifle instructor until July 25, 1969, when he was honorably discharged. Bob Crabb earned the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnamese Service Medal w/1star, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal w/device, Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon, and the Purple Heart Medal.

Marine Bob Crabb, a Vietnam Marine veteran, is a life member of Marine Corps League Casa Grande Detachment 901, Arizona, and a Life Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans.

KHE SANH VETERANS CELEBRATE AT KOKOMO INDIANA, DURING THE ANNUAL VIETNAM VETERANS REUNION HELD IN HOWARD COUNTY, KOKOMO INDIANA, SEPTEMBER 13-16.

In 1981, local Vietnam veterans established the Howard County Vietnam Veterans Organization for the sole purpose of raising funds for a Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Howard County.

With a lot of support in Kokomo and Ho lard County, the funds were raised and the memorial was built on the, Courthouse Square,. After that major undertaking was completed, the group's officers and members were on the hunt for their next project. Someone said half-jokingly, Let's have a hog roast for Vietnam veterans ..... That was the beginning of the Vietnam veterans reunion now held each September on the Hearing Ground's, a 40-acre plot along Ind. 26, 8 miles east of U.S. 31.

Several of our members make the annual trip each year. While there they always manage to locate a few fellow veterans from Khe Sanh that were unaware of our organization. This year they signed up three more. Although it is called a Vietnam reunion, veterans from all previous wars are welcomed with open arms. I will be doing an article on the KOKOMO reunion in issue 82 of RED CLAY. There are a few pictures from this years reunion, on page 84



L-R Daniel Zrinski GOLF CO. 2/26, James Tavares, ALPHA CO. 1/9, Dennis Waler CBMU-301 DET B, Bill Moore 3RD ANTI TANKS (ONTOS), and KSV Secretary Jack Haigwood CBMU-301-DET B,

**MARINE OBSERVATION SQUADRON SIX MEMORIAL DEDICATION CEREMONY
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS
SEMPER FIDELIS MEMORIAL PARK TRIANGLE, VIRGINIA 17 MAY 2012**

HISTORIC MARINE VMO-6 FLYING UNIT GONE, NOT FORGOTTEN

Marine Observation Squadron Six (VMO-6) can trace its origins back to the formation years of Marine Aviation. Active for slightly less than half of the century of Marine Corps aviation, the squadron served during the 1920s' Nicaragua Campaign, World War II, the Korean War, and finally through the 1960s in Vietnam. Thirty five years after it ceased operations, and in celebration of Marine Corps aviation's 100 anniversary, a monument to VMO-6 was dedicated in the Semper Fidelis Memorial Park at the National Marine Corps Museum, near Quantico, VA. It honors the 66 men from VMO-6 who died as a result of hostile actions during the four aforementioned conflicts. Not only was this ceremony a tribute to those who have given their lives for their country, but it was a reunion of many veterans who made VMO-6 more than just a page in a history book.

VMO-6's memorial service and monument dedication ceremony commenced on Thursday, May 17, 2012. A large group of Vietnam and Korean veterans, with many of their family and friends, joined several relatives of deceased squadron members at the National Marine Corps Museum. The first part of the ceremony was held inside the building, in its main atrium. Behind the speaker's podium was a Sikorsky HRS-1 helicopter, the type used in the Korean War. Nearby, a truly historic VMO-6 helicopter is displayed, the actual UH-1E helicopter that Captain Steve Pless flew when he earned the Medal of Honor hangs over the entrance to the museum's Vietnam gallery.

Retired Marine Colonel and VMO-6 helicopter pilot Larry Wright served as the Master of Ceremonies, with the local Marine Corps Base Quantico Color Guard and Marine Band supporting the program. Navy Chaplain Commander John Hannigan gave the opening invocation before Marine Brigadier General Michael Rocco recounted some key moments in Marine aviation history and reminded those assembled that the reason for Marine Aviation is to support the troops on the ground. Then three former VMO-6 members, Larry Wright, Dave Bushlow and Red Trivette read the names of the sixty-six squadron members who were lost in combat, grouped together by the conflict they died in. After each group of names was read, a Marine honor guard member rang a bell three times in a time-honored salute. The indoor ceremony was concluded with a prayer of remembrance and ceremonial music.

SEE PICTURES ON BACK PAGE

The program continued outside of the museum. After the attendees walked in a long rank behind bagpiper Norm Weaver to the black granite VMO -6 monument in the adjacent Semper Fidelis Memorial Park. The monument is shaped like an airfoil cross-section, and has all 66 names of squadron mates lost during conflicts and figures of seven important types of aircraft used by VMO-6 etched into it. The design is the work of Wayne Wright, who incorporated the airfoil because it "is essential to flight and it represents both the core and the vitality of the squadron. The wing has been severed at its tip and rests on edge, rising from the ground. This is meant to depict the disruption of flight; the loss of life and our eventual fall to a place of rest back on earth. While the base of the wing is earthbound, its tip projects skyward, suggesting the desire to rise again to the heavens. And so, through this structure we honor those squadron members who have fallen to rest on earth, but in memory and spirit still soar above."

SEE PICTURES ON BACK PAGE

A blessing as given by Chaplain Hannigan, and a wreath was laid next to the monument. A Marine

bugler played "Taps" from afar, followed by a bag piped version of the Marine Corps Hymn. Shortly after this, a formation of three helicopters flew over the assembly low and loudly; the familiar "wop-wop-wop" of Huey rotor blades brought back memories - some with smiles, others with tears.

The striking black VMO-6 monument dedicated during May's ceremony stands in the Semper Fidelis Park near the birthplace of the squadron at Quantico more than 90 years prior. It represents a small but very important piece of VMO-6's history. The squadron's soldiers were at the forefront of many Marine Aviation firsts, from supplying ground troops during the Nicaraguan Campaign of the 1920s, to medical evacuation in World War II. Squadron members employed Marine helicopters tactically for the first time during the Korean War, and their armed helicopter escort operations in Vietnam paved the way for today's tactics. Although the VMO-6 squadron is inactive today, the people and their deeds haven't been forgotten.

PLANNING

The decision to plan, build and erect a memorial to honor and remember the 66 squadron members killed in combat operations was made at a squadron reunion in July 2010. Shortly thereafter a Board of Directors was formed including Gary Bright, Dave Bushlow, Tom Constantine, Art Friend, Red Trivette, Larry Wright, and Ed Kufeldt as the Executive Director. Bob Whaley volunteered to assist as an Advisor, Katy Stewart agreed to provide administrative support, and Wayne Wright was consulted to design the memorial. LtGen William R. Maloney and LtGen William J. White-who each completed a tour as a squadron commanding officer in Vietnam-agreed to be Honorary Chairmen of the project.

Several early concept sketches were evaluated broadly, from which many more iterations were then considered by the Board of Directors. The selection of the winning concept came unanimously-it was clear the design had embraced the Board's aspirations to properly honor those who had bravely served and died. The meaning of the design as envisioned by Wayne Wright:

"The sculptural shape of the monument is derived from the airfoil of an aircraft wing. This shape is essential to flight and it represents both the core and the vitality of the squadron. The wing has been severed at its tip and rests on edge, rising from the ground. This is meant to depict the disruption of flight; the loss of life and our eventual fall to a place of rest back on earth. While the base of the wing is earthbound, its tip projects skyward, suggesting the desire to rise again to the heavens. And so, through this structure we honor those squadron members who have fallen to rest on earth, but in memory and spirit, still soar above."

Etched into each side of the polished granite of the memorial are the names of those killed in combat operations who served in VMO-6. The design also pays tribute to the proud history of the squadron through the depiction of some of the key aircraft flown by its members.

The final component of the design is the walkway surrounding the memorial. This path not only allows the viewer direct connection to the sculpture, but also an implied connection with the squadron through the inclusion of commemorative bricks within that will bear the name of those who also served in VMO-6.

The memorial was sculpted from a single 3-ton slab of jet black granite, quarried in India. This stone is one of the finest materials used for monuments due to its purity of color, high contrast between etched and polished surfaces, extreme hardness and overall durability. Modlich Monument Company oversaw the shaping, polishing, and etching. They erected the structure with the assistance of the Firvida Construction Company who built the foundation and surrounding walkway.

The outstanding support and generous financial contributions from squadron members and VMO-6 family and friends were key in building the memorial. Thanks to the dedication of the many volunteers, the vision and commitment of the Board of Directors, and the donations made by over 225 people and organizations, the project became a reality in 18 months. As a result, today we are able to pay tribute to VMO-6 within our own lifetime and honor its legacy beyond.

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO DIED FOR OUR COUNTRY



NICARAGUA

NAME	RANK	DATE	HOME INTERRED
BYRD, William Carl	Major	08 MAR 1928	Arlington, VA
FRANKFORTER, Rudolph A.	Sergeant	08 MAR 1928	Arlington, VA
McHUGH, James B.	Second Lieutenant	13 APR 1929	Unknown

WWII

O'DONNELL, Richard J.	Private	06 APR 1945	Arlington, VA
MOYSES, Emanuel	Second Lieutenant	08 APR 1945	Honolulu, HI
PARSONS, John R.	First Lieutenant	08 APR 1945	Rock Island, IL
FRINK, James L.	First Lieutenant	10 APR 1945	Unknown
HANMER, Charles	Second Lieutenant	10 APR 1945	Unknown

KOREA

ALLAN, Glen	First Lieutenant	18 JAN 1953	Buffalo, MN
BANCROFT, Arthur R.	First Lieutenant	29 SEP 1950	Hillsboro, IA
DAVIS, Harold J.	First Lieutenant	27 AUG 1950	Manistee, MI
EUSTON, Thomas J.	Lieutenant (USN)	10 MAR 1953	Los Angeles, CA
FACTOR, Kenneth J.	Second Lieutenant	18 JUL 1952	Wewoka, OK
FREASE, Wilson A.	First Lieutenant	18 JUL 1953	Washington, IL
GOOD III, Rosco F.	First Lieutenant	24 APR 1951	Van Nuys, CA
GOODEN, David T.	Captain	07 FEB 1952	Elizabethtown, NC
LANGTRY, Jr., Charles S.	Technical Sergeant	03 JUL 1952	Rochester, NY
LONGSTAFF, Robert A.	First Lieutenant	03 DEC 1950	Jersey City, NJ
MARINO, Charles B.	Captain	18 JUL 1953	Youngstown, OH
MONTEITH, Robert J.	Technical Sergeant	24 APR 1951	Brooklyn, NY
MORENCY, Adelorde G.	First Lieutenant	11 DEC 1950	Cohasset, MN
MORIN, Arthur R.	Captain	04 OCT 1952	Haverhill, MA
ODENBAUGH, Thomas D.	Second Lieutenant	29 SEP 1950	Ottumwa,IA
OWENS, Robert A.	Major	04 OCT 1952	Hillsboro, TX
RANDALL, Burton W.	First Lieutenant	06 AUG 1952	Denver, CO
RIVES, Edwin E.	Captain	29 SEP 1950	Memphis, KY
TRODER, Jr., Donald K.	Captain	09 SEP 1952	East Liverpool, OH
WALKER, Emile A.	Second Lieutenant	09 SEP 1952	Atlanta, GA
WOOLEVER, Loren W.	Captain	03 JUL 1952	Pickering, OH
ZBELLA, William Edward	Master Sergeant	06 AUG 1952	Wausau, WI

VIETNAM

NAME	RANK	DATE	HOME/INTERRED
ALLEN, Paul James	Corporal	11 APR 1968	Rochester, M N
ARMSTRONG, Walter Lee	Lance Corporal	15 DEC 1967	Tucson, AZ
BENNETI, Daniel Morris	Sergeant	14 NOV 1966	Boynton Beach, FL
BILLIPP, Norman Karl	Captain	06 MAY 1969	Milwaukee, WI
BRENCICH, William Joseph	Lance Corporal	28 FEB 1969	Crest Hill, IL
CAWLEY, James Patrick	Captain	25 APR 1968	Scranton, PA
CHADWICK III, Leon Gordon	Captain	14 NOV 1966	Raleigh, NC
DEAN, Alan James	Captain	05 APR 1967	West Chicago, IL
DEMARCO, Michael Gregory	Lance Corporal	11 APR 1968	Albany, NY
GALBREATH, Bobby Frank	Captain	16 FEB 1968	Amarillo, TX
GONZALEZ, Rodolfo Marciano	Corporal	14 NOV 1966	Harlington, TX
GOODSELL, William Joseph	Major	15 JUN 1966	Seattle, WA
HACK, Benny Glenn Lance	Corporal	25 NOV 1965	Waco, TX
HAGAN, John Robert	Major	06 MAY 1969	Savannah, GA
HALL, William Gardiner	First Lieutenant	24 MAR 1968	Rochester, MI
HUNT, Jr., Ralph Edward	First Lieutenant	07 JUN 1968	Alliance, OH
JACOBSGAARD, David Keith	Captain	28 FEB 1969	Gardner,IL
JENSEN, Paul Andrew	First Lieutenant	16 FEB 1968	Asheville, NC
KEEBLE, Jr., Edwin Augustus	First Lieutenant	28 FEB 1969	New York, NY
KIMMEL, Robert Charles	First Lieutenant	25 APR 1968	East Islip, NY
KRUPA, Richard Didacus	First Lieutenant	29 AUG 1969	Elmhurst, IL
LATIMER, Jr., Richard Eli	First Lieutenant	02 DEC 1968	Tinker AFB, OK
LAYE, J, Edgar Cartha	Private First Class	25 APR 1968	Chicago,IL
MANN, Glenn Dill	Captain	23 NOV 1965	Williamsburg, VA
McMILLAN, Bruce Francis	Captain	11 APR 1968	Walnut Creek, CA
PARKER, Thomas Aquinas	HM1 (USN)	05 APR 1967	Oxford, IN
REESE, James Robert	First Lieutenant	02 DEC 1968	Griffin, GA
RIEDE, Ronald Edgar	First Lieutenant	11 APR 1968	St. Louis, MO
SANCHEZ, Edward Charles	Lance Corporal	28 FEB 1969	Junction, TX
SCHNEIDER, Harry Warren	Corporal	17 FEB 1968	Janesville, WI
SCHOBER, Jack Ervin	Captain	29 AUG 1969	Toledo,OH
SCHRAMM, Brock Rowland	Private First Class	25 APR 1968	San Carlos, CA
SCRUGGS, Joseph Allen	Corporal	05 APR 1967	Hopkinsville, KY
SHADBURNE, Brooke McKay	Captain	05 APR 1967	Ashland,OR
TOLLIVER, Jimmy Ellison	Staff Sergeant	16 FEB 1968	Coromona, KY

SQUADRON HONORS

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION STREAMER WITH FOUR BRONZE STARS

Okinawa 1 APR-21 JUN 1945
Korea 2 AUG 1950--27 JUL 1953
Korea 7 AUG-7 SEP 1950
Korea 15 SEP-11 OCT 1950
Vietnam 1 SEP 1965-24 APR 1967
Vietnam 6 JUN-15 SEP 1967

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (ARMY) STREAMER
Korea 22 NOV-14 DEC 1950

NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION STREAMER WITH TWO BRONZE STARS
Korea 1 AUG 1952-27 JUL 1953
Vietnam 4 SEP 1965-24 AUG 1966
Vietnam 16 APR-16 OCT 1968

MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION STREAMER
Vietnam 17 OCT 1968-30 JUN 1969

SECOND NICARAGUAN CAMPAIGN STREAMER
Nicaragua 16 FEB-1 SEP 1928

ASIATIC-PACIFIC CAMPAIGN STREAMER WITH ONE BRONZE STAR
Okinawa Gunto Operation
1 APR-30 JUN 1945

WORLD WAR II VICTORY STREAMER
20 Nov 1944-31 Dec 1946

CHINA SERVICE STREAMER
12 Oct 1945-3 Jan 1947

KOREAN SERVICE STREAMER WITH TWO SILVER STARS
North Korean Aggression
2 AUG-2 NOV 1950
Communist China Aggression
NOV 1950--24 JAN 1951
Inchon Landing
13-17 SEP 1950
First U.N. Counter Offensive
25 JAN-21 APR 1951
Communist China Spring Offensive
22 APR-8 JUL 1951
U.N. Summer-Fall Offensive
9 JUL-27 NOV 1951
Second Korean Winter
28 NOV-30 APR 1952
Korean Defense Summer-Fall 1952
1 MAY-30 NOV 1952
Third Korean Winter
1 DEC-30 APR 1953
Korean Summer-Fall
1953 1 MAY-27 JUL 1953

NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE STREAMER WITH ONE BRONZE STAR
27 JUN 1950--27 JUN 1954
1 JAN 1961-15AUG 1974

ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY STREAMER Cuba
7 NOV-29 NOV 1962

VIETNAM SERVICE STREAMER WITH TWO SILVER STARS

Vietnam Defense Campaign
1 SEP-24 DEC 1965
Vietnamese Counteroffensive Campaign
25 DEC-30 JUN 1966
Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase II
1 JUL 1966-31 MAY 1967
Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase III
1 JUN 1967-29 JAN 1968
Tet Counteroffensive
30 JAN-1 APR 1968
Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase IV
2 APR-30 JUN 1968
Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase V
1 JUL-1 NOV 1968
Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase VI
2 NOV 1968-22 FEB 1969
Tet 69/Counteroffensive 23 FEB-8 JUN 1969
Vietnam, Summer-Fall 1969 9 JUN-12 OCT 1969

ABBREVIATED HISTORY VMO-6

VMO-6 had a distinguished record and one of the longest combat histories of any squadron in the Marine Corps. It was always in the forefront, utilized new aircraft, tested new ideas and technology, and developed many "firsts" within Marine aviation.

VMO-6 antecedents reach back to 1920; activ ated as Flight E, 3rd Air Squadron and redesignated as VO-6M in 1927. In early 1928, the squadron embarked aboard USS Saratoga and began a nine month tour fighting the Sandinista guerrillas in Nicaragua. During combat operations, pilots flew in the roles of reconnaissance, aerial photography, light attack as well as aerial resupply. Two years later at Quantico, VA, the squadron formed six- and nine-plane flight demonstration teams called the "Helldivers." While the team was a favorite among spectators and the media, personnel and budget constraints caused the Marine Corps to deactivate the squadron on 30 June 1930.

As the need for aerial observation and artillery capabilities increased in the Pacific during WWII, the squadron was reactivated on 20 November 1944 and re-designated as VMO-6. From 1 April to 6 July 1945, the squadron supported the Battle of Okinawa on a variety of missions including artillery spotting, reconnaissance, message delivery, wire laying, and general utility missions. From October 1945 to January 1947, VMO-6 deployed to Tientsin, North China and flew similar missions -often under intense fire--in support of the occupation prior to the communist takeover.

On 2 August 1950, VMO-6 arrived in Korea with six helicopters and eight fixed wing aircraft. The following day, the squadron became the first to fly a helicopter in a Marine Corps combat operation. Within the first week in-country, the squadron flew the Marine Corps' first helicopter medical evacuation and night medical evacuation. Squadron helicopters immediately proved their combat capabilities and worthiness for medical evacuations, search and rescue, reconnaissance, and command and control. Fixed wing aircraft were flown as convoy escorts in addition to observation, artillery and Naval gunfire spotting, leaflet dropping, and reconnaissance.

Beginning 27 July 1964, VMO-6 received the first turbine-powered helicopters in the Marine Corps. From September 1965 through October 1967, the squadron was based at Ky Ha, Vietnam, in combat support of Marine Forces in I Corps. Flying helicopter "gunships" armed with air-to-ground rockets and M-60 machine guns, aircrews of four conducted missions to include: escort of transport helicopters, close air support of ground forces, Tactical Air Controller (Airborne) of fixed-wing aircraft, artillery spotting, Naval gunfire control, reconnaissance, and medical evacuation. In October 1967, VMO-6 relocated to Phu Bai and a month later to Quang Tri. In November 1968, the squadron converted its high wing aircraft to twin engine turboprop aircraft armed with air-to-ground rockets and fixed machine guns.

With the drawn-down of military commitments in Vietnam, the squadron relocated to MCAS Futenma, Okinawa in October 1969.

On 1 January 1977, VMO-6 was deactivated.



WAR STORIES
By Bill Simons
Platoon 2085

Platoon 2085, L Company, Second Recruit Training Battalion, MCRD Parris Island held its first Reunion since graduating in November, 1966. The gathering was held in conjunction with the Annual Reunion of the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. in Washington, DC in August, 2012. Of the nearly eighty Marines who graduated, twenty-one were able to attend at the gracious invitation of the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

Mike Boyle, Bill Simons, and Brian Vanderheyden were able to track down forty-seven of the 2085 Platoon members and at the suggestion of Big John Pessoni, invited all to participate in the get together. The Platoon was especially honored by the presence of First Sergeant Ben Leith, USMC Retired. First Sergeant Leith was Senior Drill Instructor for the Platoon and travelled from Kingman, Arizona with his lovely wife Jackie. It was universally agreed that while First Sergeant was in 1966 thought to be the meanest man alive, he may have softened just a bit. It was also agreed that the rigorous training at PI by then Staff Sergeant Leith limited the loss of life in Vietnam to but three Marines from Platoon 2085. At a Platoon dinner, a moment of silence was observed in memory of Davis A. Jones, Andrew M. Hudak, and William A. Markarian, KIA in Vietnam.

It was agreed that this would be the first of many Reunions. Phil Muth said, "I was most pleased with seeing how good everyone looked and how well everyone is doing." Jose Ruiz stated, "It was much better than I thought it would be." Ray Peterson said, "As much poking fun at each other and sharing tidbits of our lives since Vietnam with each other, I was truly taken by the amount of mutual respect we showed each other during the entire reunion. That was impressive!" Dan Depagnier to SDI Leith, "Thanks for showing us how to stay alive under such terrible conditions. Top, we owe it all to you." Art Caldwell, "Just to go back reliving those memories with the people you shared them with, was much more than I expected." Mike Boyle said, 'Top, thank you for making me the Marine I still am today."

In addition to First Sergeant Leith, 2085 Platoon Marines in attendance were: Michael Boyle, Arthur Caldwell, Daniel Depagnier, Patrick Devine, John Dezso, CWO 4 Peter Frederiksen, USMC Retired, William Genovese, Pasquale Guarino, Ford Kilgallon, Phillipp Muth, Edwin Olavarria, John Pessoni, Raymond Peterson, John (Chris) Rice, Donald Romeo, Jose Ruiz, William Simons, David Thompson, John Tirino, and Brian Vanderheyden; all of whom wish to thank the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc., with special thanks to Tom Eichler, John Pessoni and Russ Turner.

If invited back to future Khe Sanh Veterans events Platoon 2085 promises not to consume **ALL** the supply of *The Glenlivet*.

No war stories were told






USMC


HOME IS WHERE YOU DIG IT
WELCOME
KHE SANH VETERANS




KHE SANH Veterans


HONOR
FMF


USMC


USMC




Bravo!




50


FMF









Marines and sailors with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit hold a welcoming ceremony for the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. reunion at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Va., Aug. 30, 2012. The 22nd MEU spent time exchanging experiences with and learning from those who served at Khe Sanh. (Photo by Sgt. Amber Blanchard)



Story & Photos by
Sgt Amber Blanchard, USMC

In the early morning hours of 21 Jan ,1968, the North Vietnamese Army attacked the outpost of Khe Sanh with a shower of bullets and artillery that instantly killed 18 Marines and injured 40 more. Thus began the Battle of Khe Sanh, the longest and second deadliest battle of the Vietnam War. Marines, sailors and soldiers held the isolated airstrip in the Quang Tri province for 77 days before breaking through and allowing supplies to reach the siege-worn men.

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. is an organization created to commemorate the service members who served in the Khe Sanh Combat Base and tactical area of operations from 1962 to 1972. Marines with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit welcomed these veterans to their annual reunion at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Va., Aug. 30, 2012.

The Khe Sanh veterans and their families took the opportunity to share their experiences with the young Marines and sailors of the MEU.

"I would like to welcome you to your museum," said Ron Christmas. "This is dedicated to every Marine who has ever served and their heritage." When the Khe Sanh Marines, sailors and families arrived, the officers of Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. took a moment to recognize current members and remember the Marines who since passed.

"We remember these people that have passed

away from our units, especially Khe Sanh," said Ron Rayner, chaplain for Khe Sanh Veterans Inc.

"There were over 2,100 guys killed from the Khe Sanh area from 1962-1972, and they did it for us … We owe it to them to live a good life."

After the opening ceremonies, Col. James D. Christmas, commanding officer of the 22nd MEU, greeted the Khe Sanh Marines and encouraged them to share their stories with the young Marines.



Retired LtGen. Ron Christmas, president of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation greeted the Marines and sailors of the MEU.

"Most of my Marines have served in combat now multiple times," said James Christmas. "But they don't know the rest of the story. You are the rest of the story. You've been in combat, you came back from combat and you lived the rest of your lives, and you've lived them successfully … those in uniform today appreciate you, for you made us. You made us who we are and what we are today."

Marines of the 22nd MEU enjoyed interacting with the Khe Sanh veterans and exchanging stories with their brothers. It was a good time, it felt motivating and encouraging," said Sgt. Christopher Williams, a motor transport mechanic with the 22nd MEU, and a New York City native. "It makes you appreciate everything they did in the past so we can have the future we have today."



Members of the Khe Sanh Veterans, tell their stories to Marines and sailors with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit during the Khe Sanh Veterans reunion at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Va., Aug. 30, 2012



Petty Officer 3rd Class Robert Graham, a hospital corpsman with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, and a Cleveland native, shakes hands with members of the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. during their reunion at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Va., Aug 30,2012



Col James Christmas Presented Plaque to KSV President Tom Eichler

DURING OUR VISIT TO THE MARINE CORPS MUSEUM WE DEDICATED PLAQUES HONORING OFFICERS & MEN OF THE 26TH MARINE REGIMENT AND THOSE WHO FOUGHT AND DIED ON HILL 881S DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. WE WERE SURPRISED BY THE OFFICERS & MEN FROM THE 22ND MEU, WHO CAME OUT TO HONOR OUR SERVICE AT KHE SANH.























369


MARINES


416


MARINES


47


MARINES


MARINES


MARINES


USMC

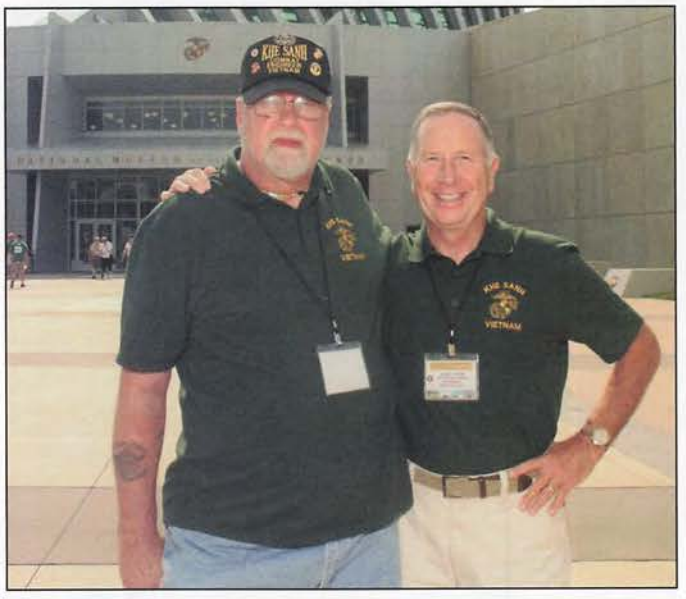
KHE SANH
VETERANS
VIETNAM

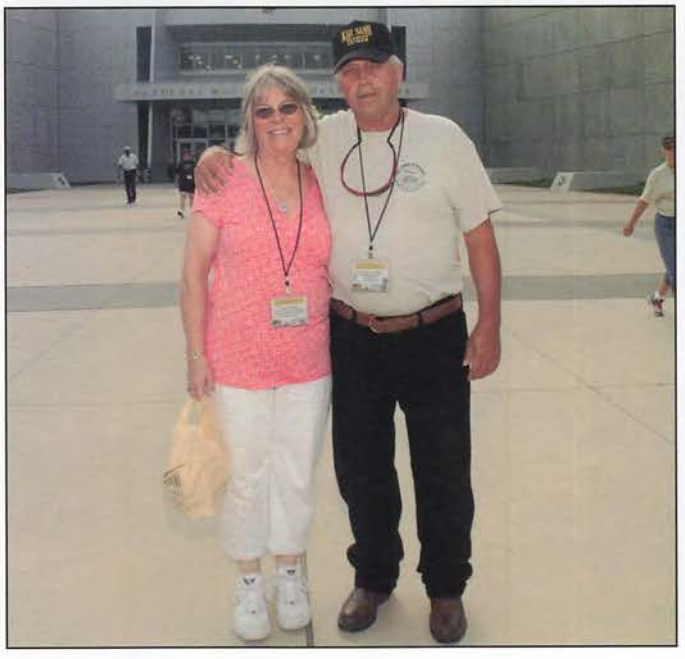

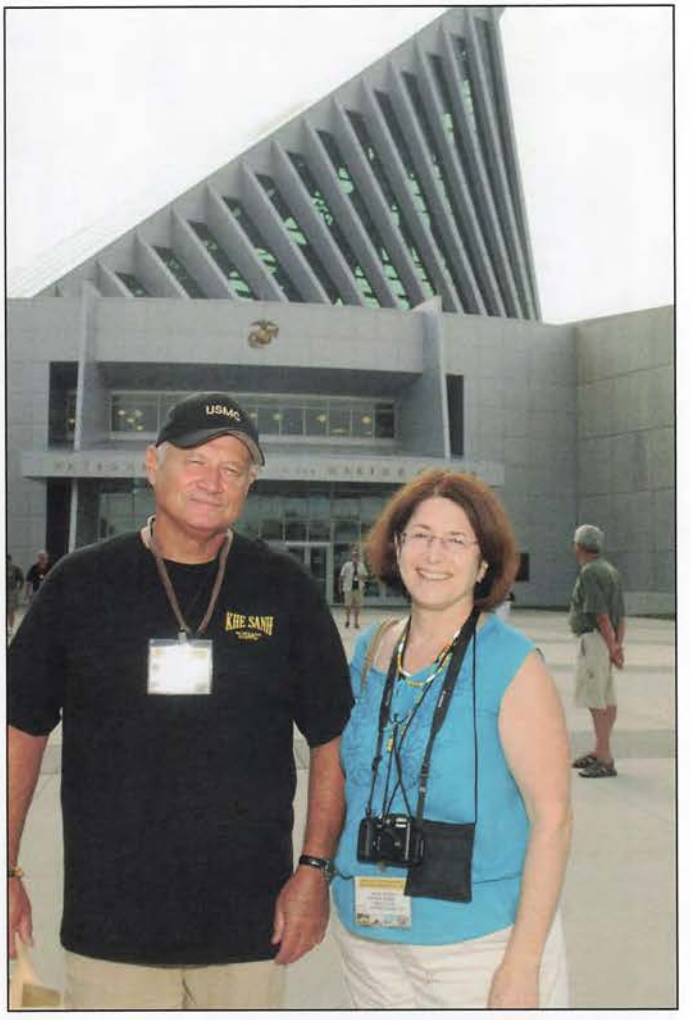
USMC
KHE SANH

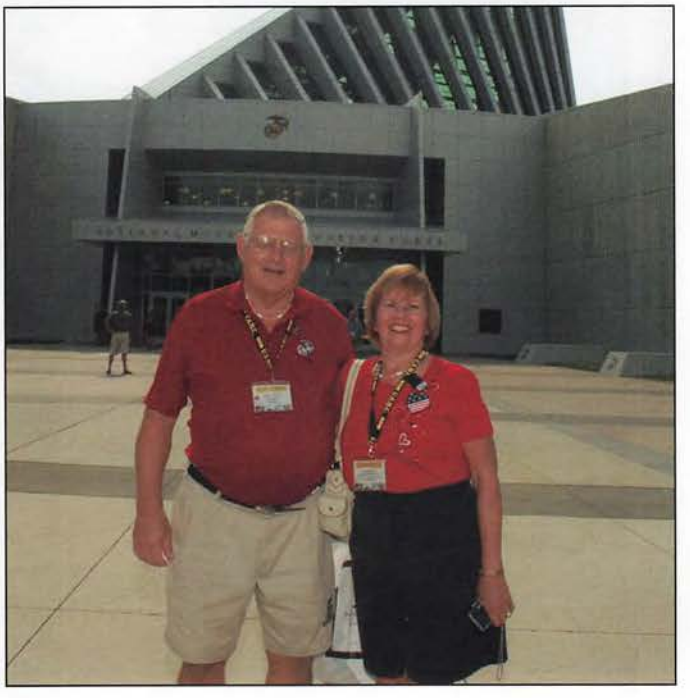

KSV MEMBERS ENJOYED THE LAST MARINE CORPS PARADE OF 2012, AT 8TH & I

































AT OUR ANNUAL BANQUET THE KSV HONORED THE DAUGHTERS OF COLONEL LOWNDS & HIS SON-IN-LAW, LTGEN RON CHRISTMAS. COLONEL "BULLDOG" SMITH PRESENTED BOUQUETS TO THE GIRLS , AND KSV MEMENTOS TO LTGEN RON CHRISTMAS & HIS SONS, COL JAMES CHRISTMAS & LTCOL BRIAN CHRISTMAS.



CHAIRMAN RUSS TURNER PRESIDING OVER ANNUAL BANQUET AFTER UNIT FLAGS PRESENTATION



COL "BULLDOG" SMITH PRESENTING FLOWERS



COL "BULLDOG" SMITH PRESENTING GIFTS



OUR OWN COLOR GUARD:
L-R BILLY MARTIN & TOM HARVEY



LOWNDS GIRLS LIGHTING POW CANDLE























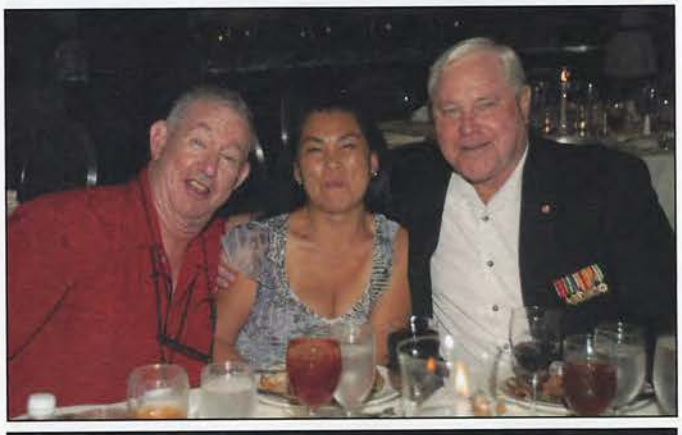


















OUR BEAUTIFUL KHE SANH LADIES ENJOYING THEIR REUNION LUNCHEON

















MEMBERS OF KSV POSE IN FRONT OF MARINE CORPS IWO JIMA MEMORIAL DURING THEIR VISITS TO VIETNAM, KOREAN, WWII & OTHER WAR MEMORIALS TOUR.






















UNCOMMON





















OUR SPECIAL GUEST, MEMBERS OF VP JOHN PESSONI'S BOOT CAMP PLT 2085 & THEIR FORMER DI
















FMF
FMF
FMF
FMF


FLSG-A
SANH
FMF
USMC
3RD COMBAT










KHE SANH Veterans
Khe Sanh
Veterans




KHE SANH Veterans










KHE SANH Veterans

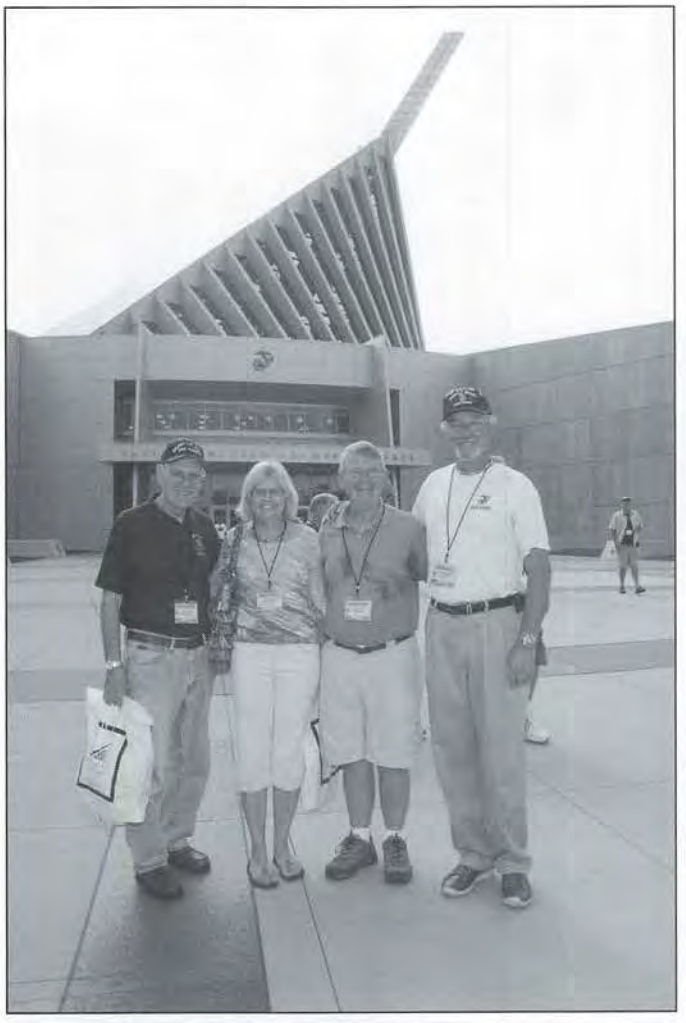

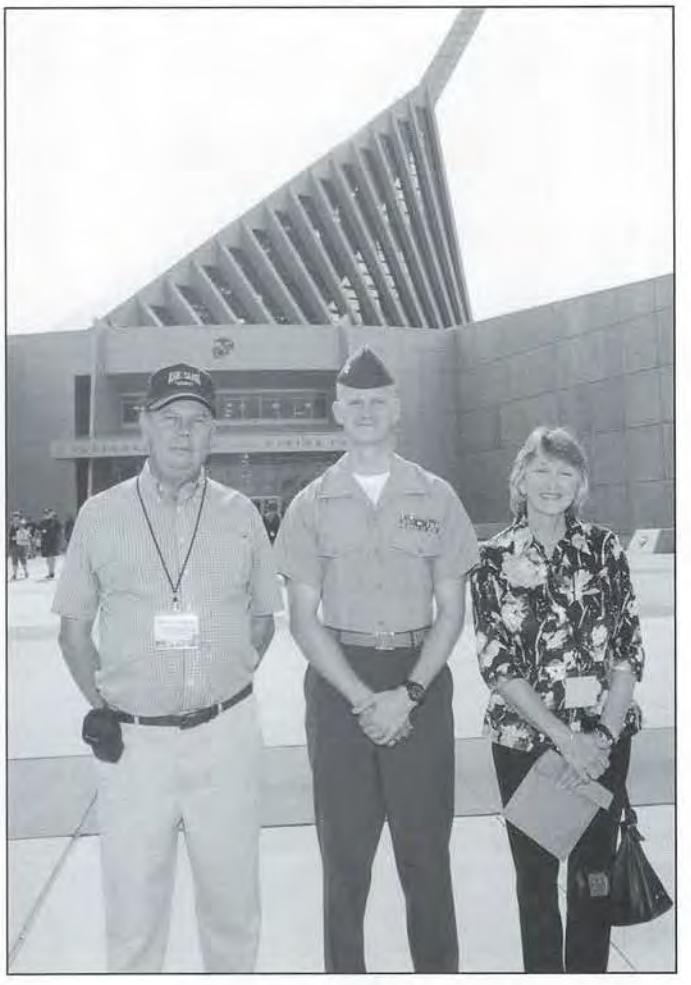

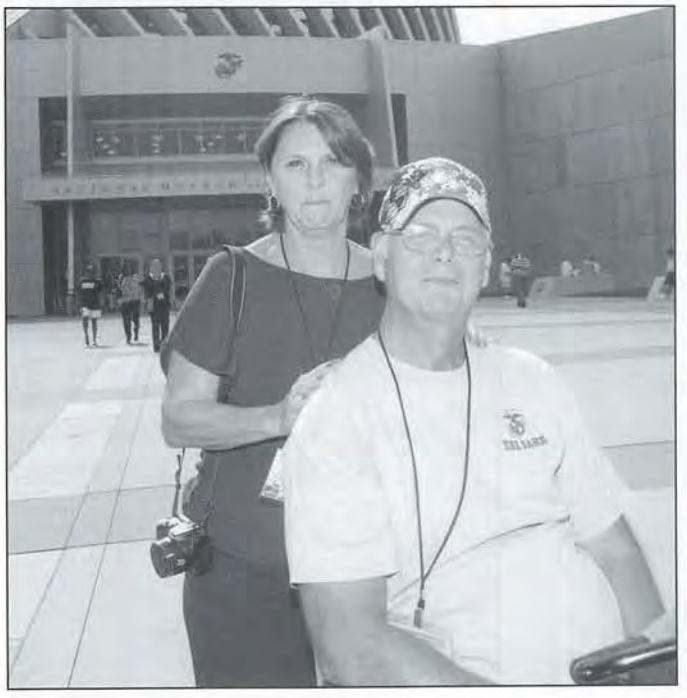

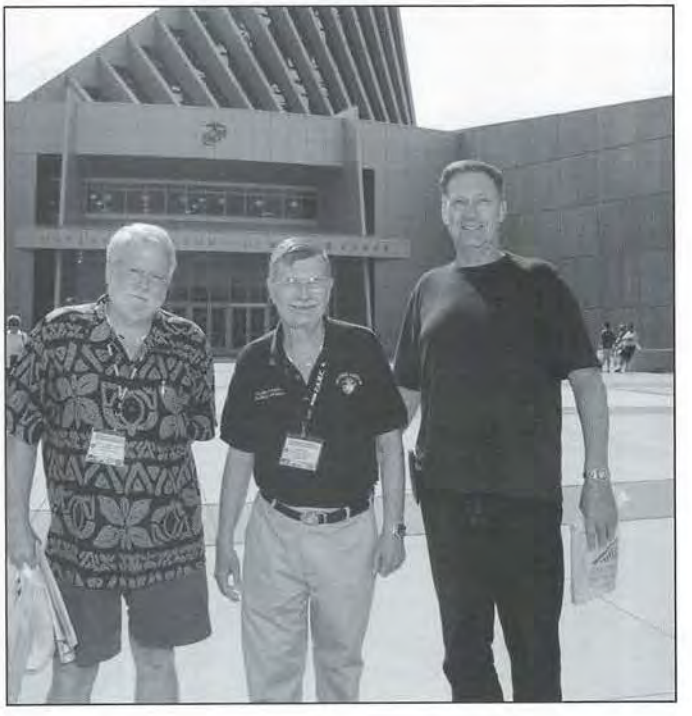



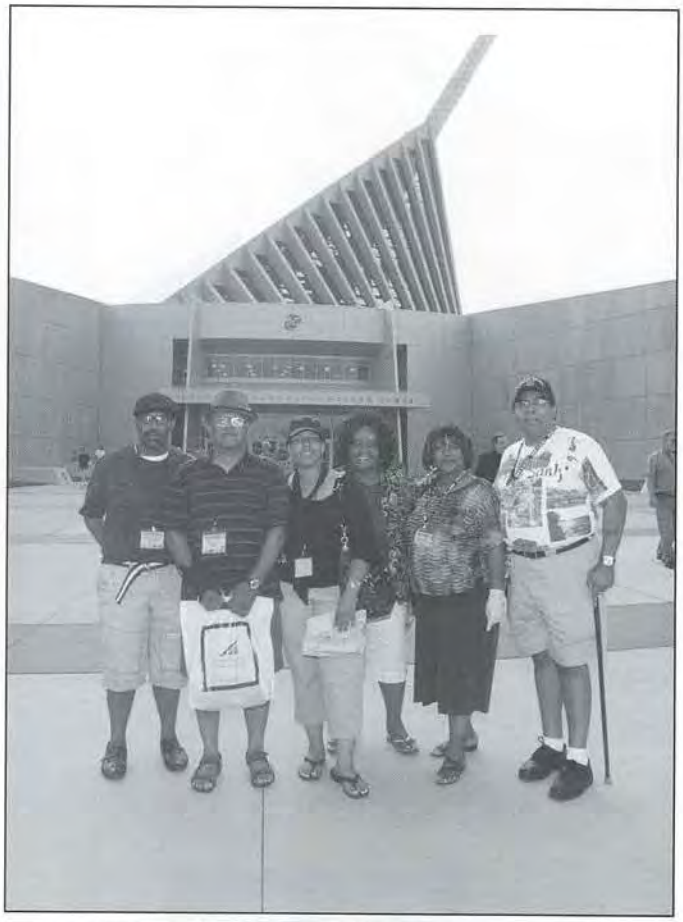

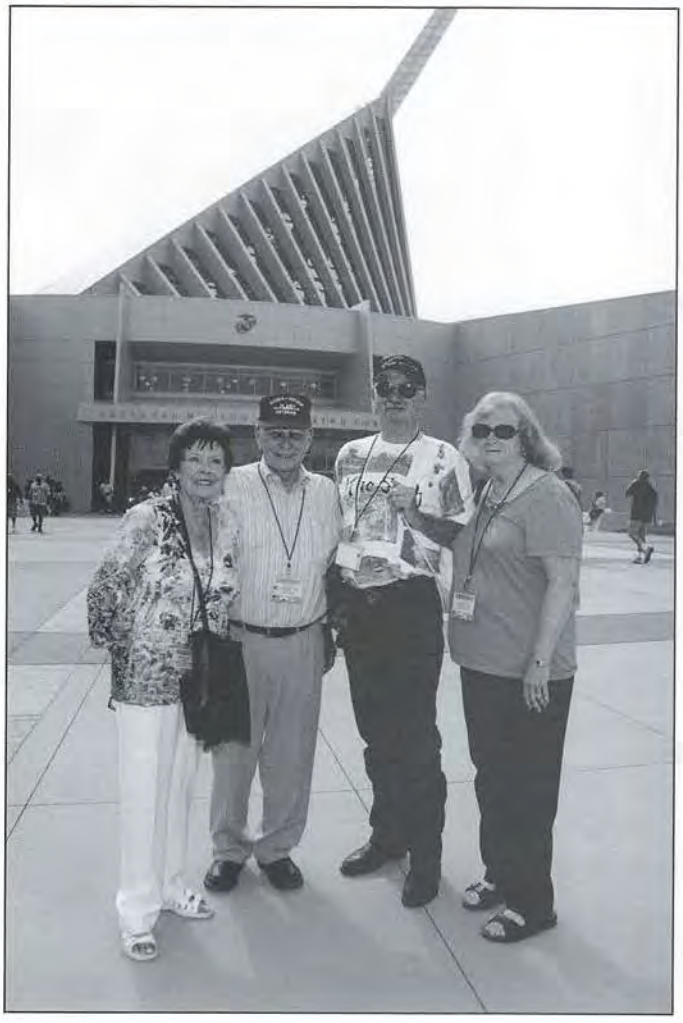



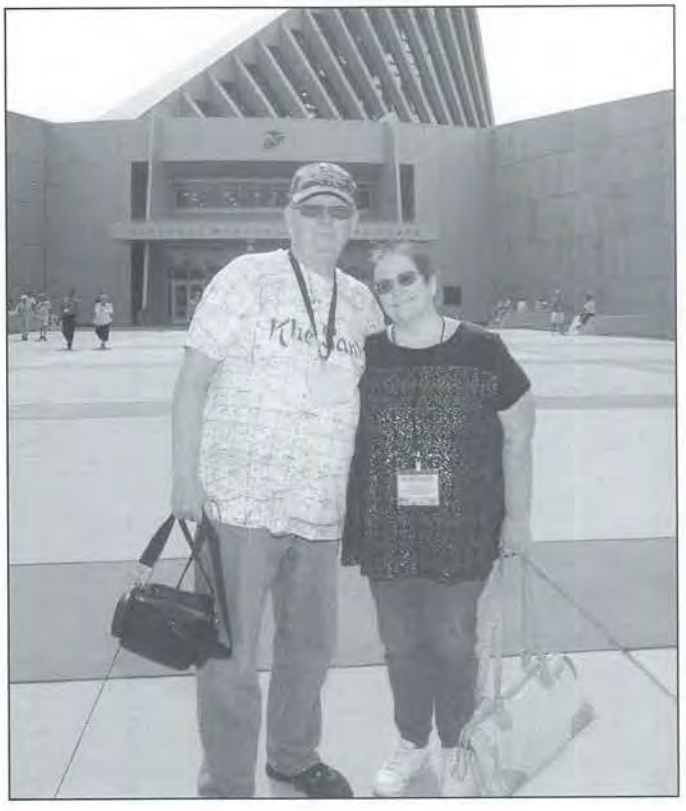

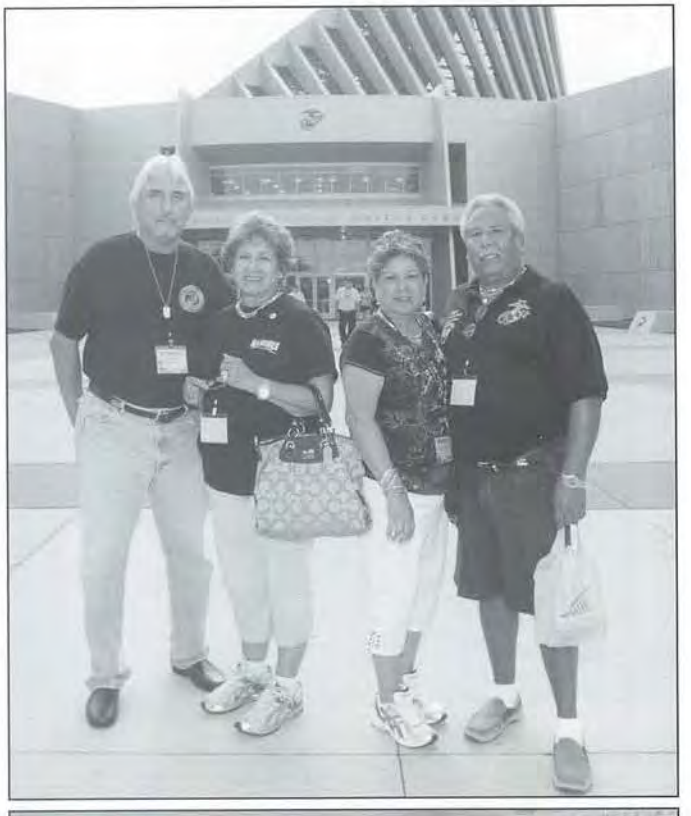








Sheraton National
















UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS




UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS


KHE SANH


75
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS




UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS



KHE SANH VETERAN IN THE NEWS

Deer Creek resident to be inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame

MARINE PILOT SAYS GOD PULLED HIM THROUGH VIETNAM CRASH

On June 8, 1967, Marine Capt. Boyd L. "Bo" Barclay was copilot of a UH-1E helicopter gunship assigned to a visual reconnaissance mission near Khe Sanh. His pilot said he saw something along a tree line and wanted to make a gun run. They made a strafing run on that area and came back around.



"As we were pulling up they opened up on us and the first burst got the engine," Barclay said. "We started going down."

Barclay switched radio channels and started calling "Mayday. Mayday."

"The next burst came through the ####pit and hit me in the hand, blew my hand up and I didn't see any hand there," he recalled. "And I said, 'I'm hit!'"

He reached over to grab a pressure point and the next thing he heard the pilot say is, "I'm dead. I'm dead." He turned and looked at the pilot who was hanging in his straps.

A pilot has procedures to follow if their plane is hit by gunfire and loses an engine, Barclay said. They were pulling up, and normally the action would call for the use of two hands. His hand was gone so he had to use what was left of it to begin the landing procedure.



"I knew I couldn't take it into a clearing so I was looking for some trees," he said. "We're in the mountains. I wanted to be as close to a valley as I could."

He used his leg as well and hung on as they descended through the trees to cushion the landing. They hit and rolled over. Barclay laid there for a minute.

When he smelled smoke he climbed out of the crippled helicopter. The two crewman were on the ground, in a daze. Barclay asked for a tourniquet to put on his arm. A crew member began working on it. Then the enemy began firing on them from the hills. A second helicopter gunship was shooting at the enemy position.

The survivors took cover and talked about getting the pilot out of their downed helicopter. Barclay intended to go get him out by using his survival knife to cut through the canopy of the helicopter, but he took a few steps and fell on his face, thinking his leg was broken (it turned out to be his ankle).

"They pulled me back and said, 'He's dead sir.'"

Barclay said two young Marines started dragging him up the side of the mountain on their hands. As he was being dragged, he noticed his mangled hand was not bleeding.

At the top of the mountain a helicopter landed to pick them up. Barclay was transported to California where he spent about three months in the hospital recovering from his wounds.

For his actions that day, Barclay was awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart.



"By his courage, exceptional presence of mind, and selfless devotion to duty in the face of extreme personal danger, Captain Barclay upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service," his Silver Star citation reads.

THE HIDDEN STORY

Barclay said there's a story behind the story. He spoke about the nature of special operations missions, about how he was told during a briefing about what usually happened to crew members if they were shot down.

A couple of weeks before he was shot down, he was in bed one night and started thinking, getting scared, not about dying, but about how he didn't want to let anybody down.

"So I started praying," said Barclay, who became a Christian at age 16. All of a sudden out of nowhere the 23rd Psalm came to him.

"Literally, in that hooch, there were about eight of us, a bright light came in. It was like the Lord came down, touched me and said, 'Never fear. I will be with you.' And the fear just flowed out of me."

When he was shot down, the valley of the shadow of death, words from the 23rd Psalm, were all around him, Barclay said.

"But I was never scared because a few weeks earlier the Lord had assured me that He was gonna take care of me," he said.

Barclay said when he tells people about the story he says he's alive for three reasons — for some reason God wanted him to be alive, his Marine Corps training and he was rescued by those two young Marines.

CHANGING TIMES

During leave back in the states, flying from airport to airport on his way to Oklahoma, Barclay was in uniform wearing a prosthesis on his arm and a walking cast on his leg.

"It was more or less like I was a leper," he said. "Nobody talked to me."

Today, Americans will go up to troops and thank them for their service, Barclay said. When he travels he wears a Purple Heart shirt and has been upgraded to first class on an airliner as a thank you. He receives thank yous for his service even.

"I'm really happy for these young troops today for the recognition that they're getting as far as what they're doing," Barclay said referring to troops who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. "These

young men and women are 100 percent volunteers."

Barclay said they are well-trained soldiers who make sacrifices for their country including serving multiple tours in war zones.

About a month ago Barclay learned that he had been nominated for induction into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame.

"It's an honor. It really is," he said. "I'm proud of my service to our country and the Marine Corps. That's something special to be recognized in your home state. It makes you feel good."

Barclay said having been overseas, seeing the comparison, he tried to teach his children and his grandchildren about what a great country the United States is. He said he remembers the veterans who fought in previous wars to preserve the nation and its freedoms.

FOR LOCAL VIETNAM VETERAN WAR MEMORIES LINGER

By Kirsti Marohn

ROBERT HOLSCHER HQ BTRY 1/13

A half century has changed so much, but somehow not erased anything. When Bob Holscher describes the mountain plateau known as Khe Sanh where he spent 10½ months early in the Vietnam War, you can smell the dusty red clay, feel the booms of artillery fire, taste the rubbery C-rations.

He can tell you about the day his unit of Marines arrived after a long convoy at Khe Sanh, nothing but a sea of elephant grass. The order came: "Gentlemen, build your city." They began digging the foxholes and bunkers where they would live, and where some would die.

He can tell you the exact day — Jan. 21, 1968, his



21st birthday — when the North Vietnamese attacked the base, leaving craters, destroying the ammunition dump and setting off a chain reaction of earth-shaking explosions.

He can point to a faded Kodak Instamatic photograph of four Marines in dusty fatigues, name each one of his closest friends, tell you where they are now. Jake, injured when artillery hit their bunker, now a retired firefighter in Boston, sends a Christmas card every year. Robbie died two years ago of pancreatic cancer, likely from exposure to Agent Orange. Moose, last heard living in California but fallen out of touch, perhaps because he wants to leave the war behind him.

Holscher can relate. For many years, he never talked about Vietnam. Now he will, but only when asked. When he does, it's with clarity and insight that only time and healing bring.

"It was hard before, but it gets easier as I get older," said Holscher, 65, seated at the kitchen table in his home in Haven Township. "I remember a lot of the good things. I buried a lot of the bad things."

In May, President Barack Obama proclaimed a 13 year commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War that will last until Nov. 11, 2025. Obama called on the nation to "pay tribute to the more than 3 million servicemen and women who left their families to serve bravely, a world

away from everything they knew and everyone they loved."

U.S. involvement in the conflict began in earnest in 1962, when American helicopters carried South Vietnamese fighters on a raid. It marked the first time American forces participated in major combat in that southeast Asian country. Eventually, the conflict escalated to involve more than 500,000 American troops in Vietnam. By the time the last U.S. troops withdrew in 1975, more than 58,000 had died.

There were about 7.5 million Vietnam-era veterans in the United States in 2011, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Many still struggle with the effects of their wartime experiences, including post-traumatic stress. Like so many other veterans, Holscher's experiences fighting an elusive enemy in an unfamiliar country and the bonds he formed with his fellow soldiers left a lasting impact that helped shape the rest of his life.

Holscher never imagined himself a Marine, never imagined spending a lifetime helping other veterans. Growing up in tiny Earlville, Iowa, he'd assumed he would be a career Navy man, following in the footsteps of five uncles who'd served in World War II.

After graduating in 1965, he'd enrolled at the University of Iowa in Iowa City as a physical education major. But after a year, university officials told him if he didn't raise his grades, he wouldn't be welcome back.

The buildup of U.S. troops in Vietnam was beginning. Holscher had a high draft number, but he went to talk to a Marine recruiter. The Marine Corps was offering a two-year enlistment, and Holscher signed up. It was one of the smartest things he ever did, Holscher says, although he knew he'd likely end up in Vietnam.

"At certain times I was afraid. Other times, you get gung-ho and you say OK, let's go," he said. "They have a way of motivating you so you want to go out and do what you're trained to do."

He trained in San Diego, then was sent overseas to Okinawa, Japan, as part of an artillery unit. After two months, he was shipped to Danang Harbor, then to Quang Tri Province, then in a long convoy up to Khe Sanh, a primitive U.S. base near the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

In the beginning, it was relatively quiet.Holscher's photos show Marines dressed casually, no bullet-proof vests or helmets. That changed on Jan. 21, 1968, when the North Vietnamese attacked. From then on, the base was under constant assault One of Holscher's prized possessions is a bulging photo album his mother started while he was in Vietnam, filled with photographs he sent home of the barren landscape and grubby Marines grinning for the camera. There are also dozens of yellowed clippings about Khe Sanh from the local Iowa newspapers.

Photos also cover the wall of Holscher's office: Himself in a sharp Marine dress uniform, blond crew cut, black-rimmed glasses, mouth set in a determined line. Next to it, his son, also a Marine, like a mirror image. In another grainy shot, Holscher and two others huddled around a single bottle of booze smuggled in by a fellow soldier returning from leave, pretending to squeeze out the last few drops from the bottle. Holscher points to a smiling Marine leaning into the photograph. Wilbert "Willie" Stovall, killed just 11 days before he was scheduled to return home to Pennsylvania. Holscher was the one chosen to escort his body and stay with him while the officers went through his personal effects.

Some soldiers said they had a feeling they would be killed, or that a bullet had their name on it. Holscher never had those feelings. He never doubted he was coming back from Vietnam. The day he returned to the United States, his family met at the airport. His family wasn't the hugging type, but Holscher's father hugged him then, the only time he remembers.

No one spit on him or called him a baby killer. But there were no welcome-home ceremonies, either. Things are much different for today's returning troops, and Holscher is glad.

After the war, Holscher returned to the University of Iowa, but his future as a phy-ed teacher or coach looked bleak. After President John F. Kennedy's call for increased physical fitness, many students pursued phy-ed majors, and there were no vacant coaching jobs. Holscher switched his major to recreation, hoping to run an outdoors camp someday. As a class assignment, he helped organize an activity for disabled veterans at the VA in Iowa City. He impressed one of the administrators, who later offered him a part-time recreation job that eventually became permanent.

Holscher got married, divorced, quit college, started again. He finally graduated after 8½ years. He decided to reenlist in the Marines, shaved his beard and went to officer candidate school in Quantico, Va. But an old leg injury came back to haunt him, and a doctor declared him not physically qualified. For the second time, Holscher was honorably discharged.

Holscher asked the VA to give him the first recreation job that opened up, and was assigned as a recreational therapist in North Chicago. For the rest of his career, Holscher would bounce around the country to eight VAs, including Roseburg, Ore., Buffalo, N.Y., and St. Louis, first organizing recreation activities, then as the head of voluntary services.

He met his wife of 32 years, Julia. They had two daughters. Eventually, a job opened up in St. Cloud, and the family moved north.

Holscher worked with members of community organizations to donate their time working with veterans. Many of the volunteers are veterans themselves.

"They want to be useful again," Holscher said. "If they're a veteran, they have the inclination to do something for other veterans. So they come out of the VA saying, 'What can I do?' "

Holscher saw many Vietnam veterans struggle with the same problems, but many don't want to face up to them. He understands.

"When I came back from Vietnam, I put it out of my mind, too. And I tried to join society, because society was just going along the way it was.

"You go from living like a dog and carrying a rifle and waiting to kill people ... And all of the sudden, it's 'Yes ma'am' and 'no sir,' and you couldn't swear, and you had to do things like it was before. And that was a transition. So you just throw Vietnam out of your mind.

"As you get older, it starts coming back to you. And you learn to accept it."

Compared to other veterans he saw who struggled to walk or feed themselves, Holscher would think, God, I'm fortunate. Although his employers often encouraged him to get tested for post-traumatic stress disorder, he didn't feel the need.

When Holscher finally did, the diagnosis was a 30 percent service-connected disability due to PTSD. "My girls were always fond of saying, 'Dad, you're only 30 percent crazy,' " he recalls with a laugh.

Has it affected him? Holscher isn't sure.
"Do I want to go back and do things over? I'd love to do different things," he said. "But I'm happy where I'm at."

Now retired, Holscher has seen the VA's mission expand and change, from once an inpatient program to now almost all outpatient. He's seen new waves of veterans, young but struggling with serious problems, many of them National Guard and reserve troops with families. He worries about the vets who have served multiple tours in Iraq or Afghanistan, something that didn't happen during Vietnam.

He hadn't thought about 50 years having passed since the start of the Vietnam War. In his family, there's a more important date: April 19, the day Holscher returned home from the war. His mother made it family holiday and flew the flag every year on that day. His daughters picked up the tradition. They still celebrate it every year.

For many years, Holscher didn't talk about his war experience, didn't trust those who talked too much about it. His wife and kids bought him books and movies about Vietnam, but he hasn't watched or read any of them.

"Everybody has a different story," he said. "And I have my story, and that's good enough for me. I really don't need to hear about somebody else's story."

Holscher says he's extremely proud of being a Vietnam veteran, but calls it a terrible war and says the United States had no business getting involved.

He recalls that when people were getting killed at Khe Sanh, the leaders told the troops they were doing an important service.

"They kept saying, 'They died for a cause. They died for a cause.' Well, after the siege was over, they closed the base ... They kept making us think it was so important, and all of the sudden they said it wasn't important enough and so they closed the base. And that bothered me."

Still, Holscher never considered joining the protest movement when he returned home.

"That would go against all the people that served there. I want to think that they did something good," he said.

"You fight for your country. Whether your country is right or wrong, you fight for your country. I guess, when called on."

OUR ASSOCIATION

Craig W. Tourte

I have had the privilege now for a number of years of attending the Khe Sanh Association Reunion. I have to tell you that starting off it was extremely difficult for me emotionally, but in the end I knew it would be a positive once I was able to get through the tears and memories. Through this process I have had the opportunity to get know the various members and officers of the Association. Oh I know we all thank the primary officers for all of their hard work for putting the reunion, magazine and apparel exchange together, but I think many do not really understand the commitment involved. I'll mention Tom Eichler, Russ Turner and John Pessoni as the present driving force of this Association and what a finely toned machine of committed, long term directors and board members they are.

I'll crack the door open here just a bit and let you peek into a meeting of the Board of Directors. Now through these many years I have sat in on a number of various meetings on a variety of issue which have been chaired by hard charging CEO's, company presidents, lobbyists and politicians. I'll report the Khe Sanh Association Board of Directors meetings are as fair and committed to procedures, representation and excellence as any that I have attended. I can't say this strongly enough, the commitment of those mentioned in honesty, time and dedication is indefinable and I look forward to many more reunions and the comradely they provide.

COLONEL LOWNDS HONOR AND REMEMBERANCE BRICK

By Craig W. Tourte

The 2012 Khe Sanh Reunion held in Washington D.C. was not only memorable but also historic in terms of our place in American and Marine Corps history. Tom Eichler, President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. dedicated plaques at a ceremony honoring Colonel David E. Lownds and Colonel Wil-

liam H. Dabney held at the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC), Quantico Virginia. The plaques can now be viewed by approximately 500,000 visitors to the Museum and the Semper Fidelis Memorial Park each year.

The location of the plaques placement is on the beautiful stacked stone memorial wall, a few steps from the General John A. Lejeune Rally Point. This dedication and the plaques will forever hold a special place in the history of our Association and the United States Marine Corps.

As those who attended the ceremony gathered together we watched and appreciated the entire Headquarters Unit from 22nd MEU stand in formation in our honor and join us for the dedication. At the entrance to the mile long winding paths at the Memorial Park and along the pathway, engraved bricks are placed with contain names of those others wished to honor or remember.

As I stood in the crowd preparing to walk to the dedication site, Steve Wiese who was standing next to me told me to look down at my feet. As I looked down I noted a brick with the engraving Col David Lownds, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Korea, Khe Sanh. In addition to the brick honoring Colonel Lownds I noted three bricks next to the Colonel placed in honor of Colonel Lownds family who were also in attendance at this dedication. Those bricks were engraved with the following:

Lt Gen Ron Christmas, 1962-1966, Hue City (Son-in-law),

Brian Christmas, Major, USMC (Grandson)

Jimmy Christmas, Col, USMC, (Grandson).

It was an honor and I was sure it was destiny to actually be standing near Lownds engraved brick and those of his family during this most historic occasion.





50 YEARS AFTER ITS START, VIETNAM STILL NOT HISTORY FOR ITS VETERANS

By Matthew Daneman

CHARLES MACALUSO E CO 2/26

For years, Chuck Macaluso lived with a secret.

The Rochester native served his country during the Vietnam War, fighting in the infamous Battle of Khe Sanh as a member of the 5th Marine Division, 26th Regiment, 2nd Battalion, Echo Company. He received three Purple Hearts for various non-life-threatening injuries. And when he came home in 1969, he shut up about it all.



"You didn't even want to wear your uniform home," said Macaluso, 65, of Greece. "In the airports, they used to have these groups, anti-war people, and the least hassle was just not to wear the uniform."

Other vets, meanwhile, "weren't backing Vietnam veterans because they said we lost the war," Macaluso said. "There were a number of (veterans') organizations that wouldn't let Vietnam vets join because they said it wasn't a real war. "So you just didn't say much, just kept everything inside."

Thomas DeMond Sr., who was drafted in 1970, ended up serving with the Army's 18th Military Police Brigade and was based out of the Long Bihn base.

"When I got home, I got told 'take that uniform, throw it away.' The attitude was forget about it," said DeMond, today a retired Rochester School District teacher and commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9251 Pennington-Moye. "Vietnam wasn't a popular war."

The Vietnam War — which polarized and traumatized American society, even as it claimed 58,000 American lives — arguably kicked off 50 years ago this year with Operation Chopper, as Army-flown helicopters took South Vietnamese soldiers to fight near Saigon. That marked United States's first combat missions against the Vietcong. The first American combat troops would arrive three years later. And by 1975, when the last Americans pulled out of Vietnam, an estimated 28,000 Rochesterians had served there, and 280 were killed or went missing.

Today, Vietnam veterans are applauded when they march in local parades. Their sacrifice is immortalized at the Greater Rochester Vietnam Veterans Memorial at Highland Park. And they are remembered on Veterans Day alongside the dwindling numbers of World War II and Korean War vets, the Desert Storm/Desert Shield vets and the growing number of people returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

But that moment was a long time coming. It took years for Vietnam veterans to shake the *Deer Hunter/Platoon* stereotype of the permanently damaged, borderline psychotic warrior.

"(*Rambo* star) Sylvester Stallone set us back probably 20, 30 years," said Dick Grube, 64, of Perinton, who served in Vietnam from February 1967 to September 1968 as a medic with the Army's 44th Medical Brigade. "The movies are funny. But everybody pictures you like that and we weren't like that. There were a lot of guys who came home, got a job. I'll be married 40 years next year. I help in the community. I'm a successful businessman. We didn't all come home and run up and down with a big hunting knife and live in the woods. But that wasn't news."

The twin Iraqi/Afghani conflicts of the past decade have created a generation of another 2.3 million veterans, according to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America.

But there are significant differences between Vietnam-era veterans and veterans today, such as far more women among the ranks, said James McDonough, a retired Army colonel and former CEO of Rochester's Veterans Outreach Center.
Perhaps most significantly is the nation having an all-voluntary force since the end of the draft in 1973, said McDonough, who now is the New York State Health Foundation's senior fellow for veteran affairs.

For Vietnam veterans, McDonough said, "You're off to a foreign land not by your own choice and I think it affects you. It affects you as you watch others around you dodge the draft, as you watch others around you not get your number called. Vietnam veterans, this issue of the draft has a direct link their feeling of being mistreated coming home."

Today, a number of Vietnam veterans still feel they've never gotten their due. "We didn't start getting any kind of credence until the Gulf War," said DeMond. "Certainly when they welcomed all those guys home, that was hurtful. They never said thank you to us."

Unsurprisingly, Vietnam veterans also carry more scars from their time in combat. The Centers for Disease Control's Vietnam Experience Study, which looked at the outcomes of Army veterans in the 1960s and early 1970s, found that Vietnam veterans suffered more from hearing loss and — more significantly — from certain psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety and combat-related post-traumatic stress disorder than their Vietnam-era counterparts who never saw combat.

At the same time, McDonough said, "The majority of individuals who returned from Vietnam — and Desert Storm and Iraq and Afghanistan come back — I don't want to use the word fine, there are issues—but they don't come back (permanently) damaged. The majority return and do just fine."

In dealing with those wartime experiences, local Vietnam vets run the gamut from those who compartmentalize their experiences and go on to live their lives to "the other extreme, where that experience just rules their lives, controls their lives, leads to horrible problems of PTSD, drug addiction, alcohol addiction, homelessness," said Barry Culhane, a Vietnam-era veteran and former president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial of Greater Rochester Inc.

"I'm worried we're going to have much worse than that with these men and women (involved in Iraq and Afghanistan) who've gone three, four sometimes even five deployments," said Culhane, a longtime veterans advocate who was inducted into New York state Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame in May "I can't imagine how they keep themselves together, how they can keep their families together, how they can keep a career together. Down the road were going to face a major crisis for a lot of these returning veterans."

Veterans returning today in many ways face a very different landscape than Vietnam veterans did, from the provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, to a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that has become in recent years far more responsive to veterans needs, DeMond said.

"If you call the VA, in their message, before you punch in where you want to go, it says 'If you're a recent veteran, thank you for your service,'" he said. "We never got that before."

Grube said he spent much of his time in Vietnam as an ambulance driver attached to an Army hospital outside of Saigon, primarily supporting the 25th and 9th infantry divisions. Since returning, he's spent most of his time as a partner running an auto parts supply business. He also helped found the Rochester Regional Veterans Business Coun-

cil.

I think because I was so young (Vietnam) became an adventure rather than an event," Grube said. "If I'd have been 21, 22, I think I might've had a lot of problems. It amazed me one human being could do this to another human being. I kept thinking 'this is insanity' — I looked at it that way.
"I came home, I never had a nightmare, never had a bad dream."

But, he added, "It's with you every day. At some point during the day, maybe for 10 seconds something will remind you of something."

Through the 1970s, Macaluso and his wife, Joan, raised their two children while Macaluso worked at Eastman Kodak Co. And it wasn't until the early 1980s when he and others began being out about their time in Vietnam. Macaluso has been part of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 20 since its founding in 1983. "It probably was in the '90s a lot of the bigger cities were putting in all their own Vietnam veterans memorials and we'd take trips for their openings," said Macaluso, vice president of Chapter 20 and president of the board of the Greater Rochester Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Serving there "definitely affected your life," Macaluso says. "I go back to Vietnam every day. You can never really get all the things that took place out of your head. You think about it but you learn you have to cope and move on. Also it makes you more appreciative ... you realize how lucky you were you weren't killed.

"It made me more ... I don't know know if you'd call it religious, but I make sure to go to church. When you see a lot of people around you getting hurt or dying and it's not you, you figure someone's watching over you."

BILL RIDER USMC KHE SANH VETERAN C CO 1/9 A HERO TO VETERANS

By Jamie Reno
Reno Dispatch

I'm proud to know Bill Rider. A friend and mentor to America's veterans for years, Rider, co-founder of American Combat Veterans of War (ACVOW), has helped thousands of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans make the sometimes tough transition from combat to civilian life

And for his efforts, Bill is finally getting the recognition he deserves. The San Diego Human Relations Commission (HRC) has just announced that Rider is the recipient of this year's Keith M. Turnham Humanitarian Award.

Each year this award honors a veteran who continues to be involved in public service. Bill, a Marine veteran who fought at Khe Sanh, the site of one of the Vietnam War's bloodiest battles, has dedicated his life to helping his fellow warriors.

A no-nonsense, straight shooting kind of guy, but also a man of great humor and warmth, Bill cofounded ACVOW in 2001, and ever since the organization has provided a variety of services to veterans and active warriors, including mentoring, advising and assisting veterans as well as active-duty personnel and military families. Bill and his fellow ACVOW staffers are especially skilled at helping warriors that are suffering from post traumatic stress (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

ACVOW, whose motto fittingly is, "Because sometimes the fight continues... even after the mission is completed," now has three offices in San Diego County.

A worthy recipient of this award if ever there was one, Bill, who'll be honored for both his military service to our country and for promoting human and civil rights in our community, will receive the

special award at the annual Human Relations Commission Recognition Reception on Friday, Nov. 16 from 5:50 to 7:30 at the Balboa Park Club.

In a letter to Rider, commission chair Bruce Abrams and executive director Danell Scarborough wrote, "The commission is inspired by the tireless work you have done to support and assist combat veterans. We would like to thank and appreciate you for your compassionate concern and service."

I second that. Thanks, Bill, for all you do for veterans and their families

As for the namesake of this award, Turnham was a World War II veteran, prisoner of war, and Purple Heart honoree who detailed his story in his book, Death Denied. Turnham's community service included eight years as a HRC commissioner, and membership on numerous community groups, including the San Carlos Community Council, Mission Trails Regional Park and Navajo Community Planners.....

- Depression
- Isolation
- Rage
- Alienation: Avoidance of Feelings
- Survival Guilt
- Anxiety Reactions
- Intrusive Thoughts
- Recurrent, re-experiencing of the trauma
- Avoidance to the point of having a phobia of places, people, and experiences.
- Chronic physical signs of hyper-arousal, including sleep problems, trouble concentrating, irritability, anger, poor concentration, blackouts or difficulty remembering things, increased tendency and reaction to being startled, and hyper-vigilance to threat.

ACVOW staff members also speak on behalf of military personnel and veterans through regular speaking engagements and media appearances. To book an ACVOW speaker for your organization, please email Bill Rider at wrider@acvow.org.

ACVOW has been literally a lifesaver for so many veterans. Its staff members are available to speak, one-on-one, with military personnel and family members to help individuals cope with battlefield related stress. If you or anyone you know exhibits any of the characteristics below, call ACVOW at 858-552-7501:

Jamie Reno, an award-winning correspondent for *Newsweek* for 20 years, has also written for *The Daily Beast*, *The New York Times*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Rolling Stone*, *People*, *Men's Journal*, *ESPN*, *Los Angeles Times*, *TV Guide*, MSNBC, *Newsmax*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *USA Today*. Reno, who's won more than 95 writing awards, was the lead reporter on a *Newsweek* series on the 9/11 terrorist attacks that earned him and his colleagues the National Magazine Award for General Excellence, the highest award in magazine journalism. Reno is also an acclaimed author, singer-songwriter, advocate for cancer patients, and 16-year cancer survivor. He lives in San Diego with his wife, Gabriela, and their daughter, Mandy.

PICURES FROM ARTICLE ON PAGE 39 OF KHE SANH VETERANS AT VIETNAM REUNION KOKOMO INDIANA SEPT 13-16, 2012.













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GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student **OR** who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c) (19) charitable organization.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2013 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms.
Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the ***"Red Clay"*** Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David A. Lownds Award – for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)

The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award – for 2nd place achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award – for 3rd place achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

2. The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF committee Chair and the treasurer of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full year's award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY 1* of the school year applied for. *** (This is an important, NEW change to previous years)*****

6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 regular points or 115 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points max. (attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

GPA 4.0 x 10 = 40 points
GPA 3.5 x 10 = 35 points
GPA 3.0 x 10 = 30 points
GPA 2.5 x 10 = 25 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 30 points total
Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be Specific!);

Student government = 10 points max.
Community related services = 10 points max.
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 10 points max.

c. Personal essay (300 words min.) on educational goals, career goals, and current self-achievement = 30 points max. (neatness, organization and content are important)

d. Bonus Points = 10 bonus points for being a military veteran
= 5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application:_____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: last_____, **first**_____ **MI**_____

Address: Street_____ **City**_____ **ST**_____**Zip**_____
Home phone:_____ **E-mail address:**_____
Applicant Birthdate:_____

2. KSV Sponsor Information (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member):

Name: Last_____ **First name**_____
Relationship to applicant;_____
Branch of service_____
Unit served at Khe Sanh_____**Dates Served** _____

3. School Information: (School to be attending)

School Name: _____
School Address: Street_____ **City**_____
State_____ **Zip code**_____
School Phone number:_____
Curriculum/intended course of study_____
School year to be funded_____

4. Applicant Personal History (Be Specific)

a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, communications, offices held, academic honors and prizes, student government participation, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. Community Activities participated in; (military service, volunteer service to community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Mailing Packet (Due 01 May)

ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS

(1) A COPY OF YOUR LAST GPA TRANSCRIPT
(2) A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF
(3) A PERSONAL ESSAY (300 WORDS min.) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY AND VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS

BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL OUT FORMS FOR YOUR RECORDS!!

I, SWEAR, THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant

Actual Signature of
Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent

NOTE:
IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE MAY 1ST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR APPLIED

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Committee

_____

Tom Eichler, President Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY HOLIDAYS KHE SANH VETERANS
MAY YOU HAVE A HAPPY & HEALTY NEW YEAR





HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL OUR KSV MARINES & CORPSMAN

As we pause to celebrate the 237th birthday of our Corps, we reflect on the rich legacy of service handed down to us, we recommit ourselves to the tasks at hand, and we look forward toward a bright future in service to our country.

Marines exist to fight and win our Nation's battles. We are most proud of our well earned reputation for answering the clarion call first. This was never more evident than at the epic battle of Guadalcanal 70 years ago. Picked to lead the first allied counter-offensive of the Pacific war because they were the "most ready," Marines landed on 7 August 1942 in the Solomon Islands. They persevered through months of unremitting deprivation and bitter combat. By the time the veterans of the Blue Diamond, the Cactus Air Force, our legendary Marine Raiders, and initial elements of the Follow-Me Division gathered together to raise a canteen and toast the birthday of their beloved Corps some three months later, the battle was no longer an issue. The situation was well in hand ... victory was assured.

We carry that same legacy of resolute commitment and valor today. Over the past year, Marines have stood firm in the toughest of circumstances and on numerous occasions. We've taken the fight to the enemy in Helmand and to the Horn of Africa. We've manned the ramparts of beleaguered embassies in the Middle East and North Africa, fought alongside our allies throughout the world, while behind the scenes, afloat and ashore, other Marines did the painstaking hard work required to maintain our high levels of readiness and efficiency.

As we look toward the future, we know that our sentimental place in the hearts of our fellow Americans and critical role in the defense of our way of life are assured. America has always wanted a Marine Corps .. .it's always been that way. Now, more than ever, America needs its Marines as we confront a dangerous and unpredictable world. Faced with difficult days ahead, we will continue to draw strength from our rich heritage and the shared values of the Marines to our left and to our right. We know who we are ... we know what we stand for. As ever we will strive to be found worthy of the legendary trust of our fellow Americans.

I salute the enduring faithfulness of those who have gone before, of those who wear our cloth today, and of the families who stand so resolutely at our sides. Happy Birthday, Marines!

Semper Fidelis,
JAMES F. AMOS
General, U.S. Marine Corps

Dear Mr. Eichler
My Thanks to all the Khe Sanh Veterans for your honor to Colonel Dabney with the installation of Memorial Plaques at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. My thanks for your invitation to attend the dedication and the awards banquet following. Unfortunately due to hip surgery I am moving slowly and must regret the wonderful invitations, but I will be with you in spirit. My thanks and love to you all.

Dear Khe Sanh Veterans,
To all of you who came and wrote and called and gave in Bill's memory. This brings thanks from his grateful wife and children. Our memories and gifts keep alive the lineage he claimed with such faith and pride He was one of the lucky ones who truly loved his life and had fun living it. His greatest attribute was his faith in his "troops," whether they were his family, his cadets, or especially his Marines. I was privileged to share that life. He could have accorded me no greater honor, nor could you by your contribution to his legacy.

With Love and Gratitude
Virginia Dabney

Ron Rayner, the KSV Chaplain Opened the ceremony reading the Plaques hanging on the memorial wall, honoring the 26Th Marine Regiment & Officers & Men who defended Hill 881S. KSV President Tom Eichler presented a personal Plaque Honoring Colonel Lownds to LtGen Christmas, Son-In-Law of Colonel Lownds and the immediate members of the Lownds Family. The plaque honoring Colonel Dabney was presented to Tom Esslinger, and other KSV members who served on Hill 881S. Virginia Dabney could not attend due to a recent injury(Tom Eichler read a letter of thanks Virginia wrote to the members of the KSV.) Colonel James D. Christmas C/O of the 22nd MEU presented a plaque to Tom Eichler, thanking the KSV for their service at Khe Sanh.







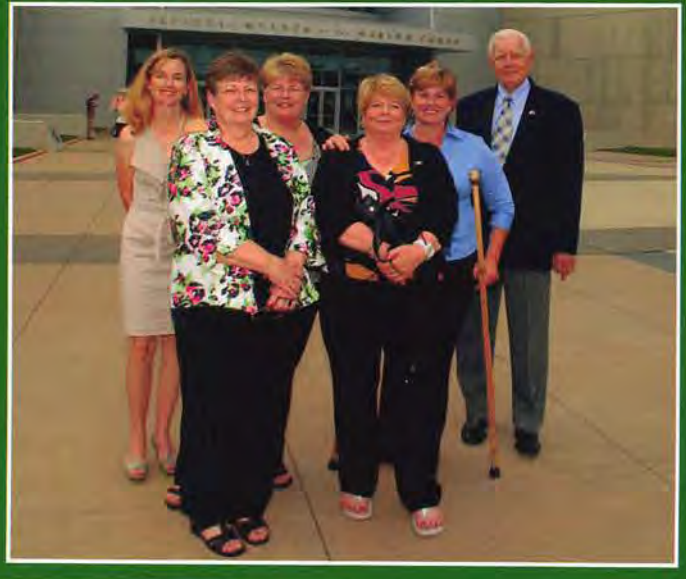




















THE VMO-6 MEMORIAL...THAT OUR BROTHERS IN ARMS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR GOD, THEIR COUNTRY, AND THEIR FELLOW MARINES...SHALL NOT BE FORGOTTEN
DEDICATED 17 MAY, 2012




SPRING 2013

RED CLAY

ISSUE 82



ARTICLE ON PAGES 67-76 HONORS THE 30 AMERICAN POW'S THAT WERE CAPTURED, THEN ESCAPED THEIR CAPTORS. COLONEL, THEN CAPTAIN DONALD COOK, WAS THE FIRST MARINE CAPTURED IN VIETNAM, DIED IN CAPTIVITY. HE WAS SUBSEQUENTLY AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR. CAPTAIN IASSAC CAMACHO, USA-SFG, WAS FIRST POW TO ESCAPE FROM CAPTIVITY, AND AWARDED DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS AND & SILVER STAR MEDAL.





CAPTAIN IASSAC CAMACHO USA SFG. THE FIRST AMERICAN POW TO ESCAPE CAPTIVITY IN VIETNAM.



COLONEL DONALD G. COOK USMC. THE FIRST MARINE CAPTURED IN VIETNAM, DIED IN CAPTIVITY













SEVEN MORE POW'S FROM VIETNAM WHO WERE AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR



REAR ADMIRAL
JAMES B. STOCKDALE
USN





COLONEL
GEORGE E "BUD"
DAY USAF





MAJOR
LANCE P. SIJAN
USAF





MAJOR
WILLIAM K.
THORSNESS
USAF





SSGT JON R.
CAVAIANI USA
MACV-SOG





SERGEANT
WILLIAM D. PORT
USA





CAPTAIN
HUMBERTO R.
VERSACE USA



BOOK REVUE

THE KILLING GROUND
A Novel of Marines in the Vietnam War
Dick Camp

Retired Marine colonel and military historian Dick Camp brings us an action-packed, edge-of-the-seat account of the early 1968 battles for Khe Sanh as follow-up to his first war novel, Echo Among Warriors. The narrative incorporates vivid fictionalized details of Camp's real-life experiences as an infantry company commander and assistant operations officer with the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines, during the hard-fought assault and siege phases at Khe Sanh. It is an expertly drawn saga of war based on the author's expert knowledge of the time, the place, the techniques, and his fellow Marines.

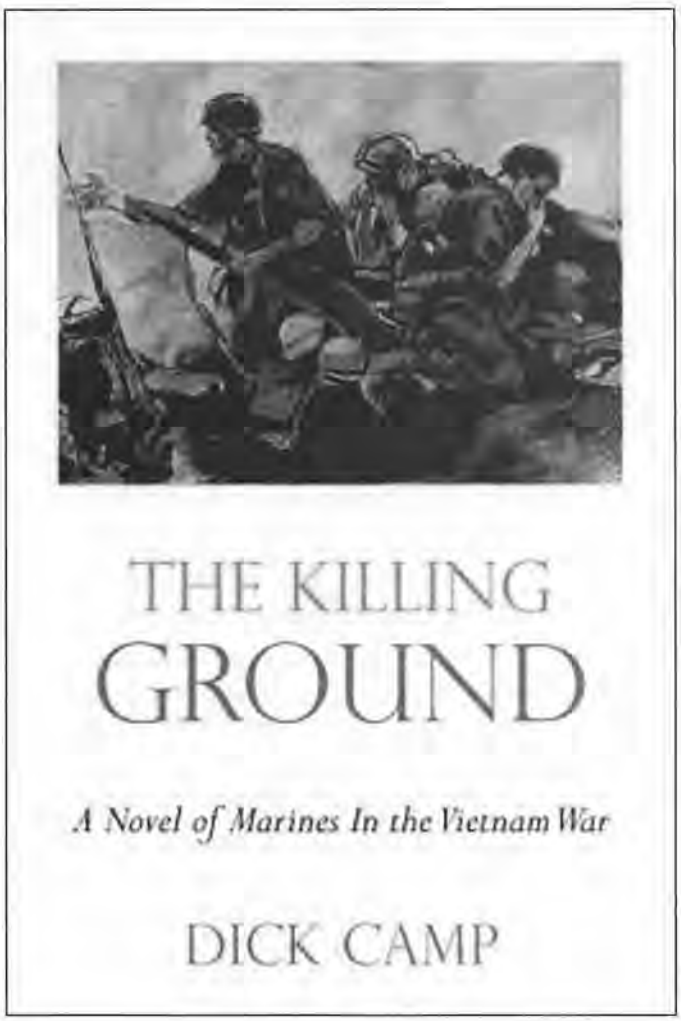

The Killing Ground is a story of close combat in a life-or-death struggle between two opposing, equally committed adversaries. It represents a sequence of deadly encounters that reflect the reality of battle in the Vietnam War—intensely personal experiences that forever changed the participants. By incorporating intimate views of the "other side," this powerful fictional narrative, closely based on stark reality and written by someone who was there, making life-or-death decisions—makes it possible for the reader to experience both sides of the epic siege of Khe Sanh.

The book is available in ebook format at Amazon.com

http://www.amazon.com/The-Killing-Ground-Marines-ebook/dp/B00B3863FO/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1358698085&sr=8-2&keywords=The+Killing+Ground+Camp

BarnesandNoble.com

http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-killing-ground-dick-camp/1114184604?ean=2940016033075

The Killing Ground: A Novel of Marines In the Vietnam War

Excerpts

Lima Company
Defense Sector Red
Listening Post
01:30 2 January 1968

Halfway through his two-hour watch, LCpl Mike Redmond couldn't keep his eyes open. He was bone-tired and couldn't remember the last time he had gotten a good night's sleep. All he wanted to do was close his eyes for a second. The urge was overwhelming and he struggled manfully to stay awake, but gradually gave in to the impulse. His eyelids grew impossibly heavy, fluttering up and down, before finally closing. For a few seconds his head remained upright, then abruptly slumped forward, striking his chest and startling him to wakefulness. "Christ, I've got to stay awake," he groused and thought about waking one of his men but decided against it; they were just as tired as he was—and besides, it was his turn on watch. He forced himself to take another look around. His eyes swept over

the ground in front of their hiding place, trying to pierce the darkness. Scattered clouds obscured the quarter moon but occasionally it broke through the cover and bathed the shrubbery in a pale light that formed bizarre shadows, which often took on the appearance of skulking intruders. The damn shadows played hell with his imagination. Once he frenziedly pulled the pin from a hand grenade when moonlight revealed several man-sized shrubs, swaying lightly in the breeze. He felt foolish and vowed not to let it happen a second time, as he struggled to replace the cotter pin.

As he continued to look, a shadow appeared at the head of the gully and he smiled—"I'm not going to get caught again," he thought, "It's just this tricky light." But this time he sensed it was different. A ghost-like figure materialized out of the darkness. Adrenalin surged through his system and he was instantly wide-awake. He broke out in a sweat—his heart thumped wildly—his mouth went dry—fear threatened to overwhelm him. Other shadowy forms emerged out of the ravine, almost invisible as they crept silently from shrub to shrub. "Gooks, gooks," his mind screamed and he reached out to alert his teammates.

Redmond and two other Marines of his fire team comprised the 2nd platoon's listening post—scouts positioned in front of friendly lines to give early warning. Redmond's team, radio call sign "Lima Two Two," lay hidden in a small clump of scrub growth some sixty long meters from the safety of the perimeter, near an old dead conifer, dubbed the "hanging tree" because of its odd-shaped, bent-up limb. Their concealed position overlooked a narrow ravine that emptied out directly in front of Lima Company's foxholes. The gulch formed a natural pathway, providing the enemy a concealed avenue of approach—and it was Two Two's mission to detect them—if they came. Now five hours into their watch, the enemy was here and the young leader had a job to do.

Redmond whispered a quiet warning to his men, praying that they didn't make any noise. Then he alerted his platoon commander over the PRC-25 radio that he had painfully jammed into his ear to muffle its static hiss. Faint man-sounds grew closer and he struggled to keep his imagination in check. A slight breeze rustled the grass sending a shiver of fear down his back. He imagined a rifle toting Vietnamese springing out of the darkness and fought to bring himself back from the edge of panic. "Calm down," he silently intoned several times. By sheer force of will, he regained control of his emotions and reached out to briefly grip the arm of the Marine at his side. The human contact steadied him even more and he turned his attention to the movement in the gulch. A ghostly form emerged out of the darkness and crouched down beside a bush, becoming invisible in its shadow. Redmond thought for a moment it was a figment of his imagination until other figures appeared, moving stealthily in a hunter's crouch, rifles at the ready. Suddenly the radio came alive, startling the hell out of him. At that moment he would have gladly smashed the damn thing to pieces, along with the operator who wanted a status report on the sighting. "Christ," Redmond thought, "If the gooks get any closer, I'll put'em on the radio and they can answer themselves."



CAPTAIN RICHARD D. CAMP JR. USMC

Redmond's heart thumped wildly and he was sure

the North Vietnamese soldiers could hear it. They squatted in the grass only a few feet away. He could smell them—a combination of wood smoke and fish. A veteran of several close and personal encounters with the North Vietnamese, he immediately recognized the odor for what it was—gooks! He dared not make a sound, willing himself to remain motionless despite the myriad of nighttime insects that snacked on his face and arms. He desperately tried to slow his breathing but the adrenalin pumping through his system demanded oxygen. Sweat covered his face, stinging his eyes but he didn't want to run the risk of wiping it away—movement might cost his life. And, to add insult to injury, his rifle was lying by his side and he couldn't get it without moving. "What a f#####g mess," he bitched to himself. (END)



This photo was taken while he was MajGen Ray Davis' aide de camp in Vietnam. The general is facing the camera and he's on the right in a soft cover. The figure on the left is a company commander that is about to take his men on a helicopter assault. Note that he is not wearing a blouse, just flak jacket with a towel around his neck. This is the typical "uniform" of the 9th Marines in the Leatherneck Square area of the Northern I Corps. The figure behind the general is the Division's Sergeant Major...and if one looks closely, Marines can be seen in the elephant grass, just behind the Sergeant Major. As an aside, Gen Davis was the most highly decorated officer in the Corps...He had every personal decoration that one can receive for bravery in action...the Medal of Honor, Navy Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart...and a host of campaign medals and decorations for professional competence.

MINI REUNION, START OF SIEGE OF KHE SANH. 45TH ANNIVERSARY CHICO CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 21st PRESENTATION

By Craig Tourte
HQ BTRY 1/13

For those who are marking Jan 21st - with an occasion to remember, I thought it might be appropriate to POST the little introduction I'll be giving at our Chico gathering. It is written in a reading/speaking form so if it looks kind of funny with little comma's where they ordinarily would not be found that is the reason.



Thank you for joining us on the 45th Anniversary of the Siege at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh. We are here to honor the over 2,000 who were killed and wounded in that battle and theater of operation. Some have likened that long and horrific Siege to the torturous Pacific hopping battles for Saipan, Iwo Jima, Tarawa and Okinawa. The battle at Khe Sanh stands as undeniable the longest and for those who survived, the most intense battle of the Vietnam War. The mention of Khe Sanh along with the great battles of Concord, Gettysburg and Normandy in President Obama's first inaugural address, forever confirms to our nation and the world that the Battle of Khe Sanh will forever hold a significant place in American History.

The Khe Sanh Combat Base was so remote, isolated and difficult to defend that Brigadier General Lowell English once said: "If you're at Khe Sanh,

you're not really anywhere. You could lose it and you really haven't lost a #### thing." As President Lyndon Johnson sent off Marine reinforcements to I Corps from El Toro Marine Air Station on February 17, 1968, he told them: "This is a decisive time in Vietnam. The eyes of the nation and the eyes of the entire world, the eyes of all of history itself, are on that little brave band of defenders who hold the pass at Khe Sanh..."



Each year we sent aside the date of January 21st to remember those who stood in the trench line with us and to remember those who flew above in a desperate attempt to extract our wounded and dead, and we can never sufficiently express our gratitude to those who supplied us with the critical material necessary to persevere. We will never forget and are eternally grateful to those who made the dangerous,



decisive and in some cases fatal, day and night bombing runs in their successful effort in preventing an estimated 20,000 enemy soldiers from swarming



over the very thin defensive lines of concertina and shallow trenches occupied by the less then 6,000 exhausted, but determined defenders.

We are here to remember and honor those who fought and came home, as well as those who fought and didn't. I am sure I speak for all of the survivors of Khe Sanh when I say… I have never, ever, felt happier leaving anyplace in my life.



Today, let us also remember, not only those who fought at Khe Sanh but also those who have fought in all of our nations battles, and continue to fight this day for the freedom of all Americans. On behalf of Khe Sanh Veterans, thank you all for coming and God Bless America.

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

MAINE MARINES MARK 45 YEARS SINCE KHE SANH SIEGE

Henry R. Gagne, Ralph Sargent and Bill Witt recall 77-day battle at base near North Vietnam border

By Keith Edwards Staff Writer

AUGUSTA -- The last time Ralph Sargent and Bill Witt saw each other, 45 years ago, they were inside the U.S. Marine garrison at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, with about 6,000 other U.S. troops, under siege by some 30,000 of the North Vietnamese Army's best fighters.

Witt's job as part of what they called the pin cushion squad, keeping the base's wire communication system up and running, often left him exposed and unprotected from enemy fire. He had just been wounded for the third time.

Sargent, now of Augusta, gave a direct order to Witt, now of Harmony, to go home. Troops wounded three times were to be sent home, Sargent said. Witt, who said his third wound was a "minuscule" injury to his hand from debris from enemy rocket fire, didn't want to go. He wanted to stay and keep fighting with the buddies he had bonded with on the battlefield.

It was not a pleasant conversation, and Witt left angry.

When the two men were reunited recently, to discuss Monday's 45th anniversary of the start of the siege of Khe Sanh, one of the bloodiest and longest battles of the Vietnam War, they looked each other squarely in the eyes and exchanged a firm handshake.

"It's been a long time," Witt said to the man who rdered him out of Vietnam.

Later in the conversation, after fellow Khe Sanh veteran Henry Gagne, of Port Clyde, speculated that he had survived his time patrolling the surrounding jungle and hills of Khe Sanh because he was "just a lucky friggin' guy; I don't know why I'm still here," Witt spoke up about why he figures he survived the war.

"The only reason I'm still here is this guy kicked me out," he said of Sargent.

U.S. troops held off near-constant artillery and other attacks during the 77-day siege of the inland base just south of the North Vietnamese border. Other than inconsistent air support, they were stranded.

The seige officially started Jan. 21, 1968, and ended April 8 when U.S. and South Vietnamese forces reestablished an overland connection to Khe Sanh.

The number of casualties suffered by both sides at Khe Sanh has long been disputed. The official casualty figures released by the Marines include 205 deaths and 1,668 wounded. However, the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, founded by Vietnam historian Ray W. Stubbe, a Navy chaplain at Khe Sanh and founder of Khe Sanh Veterans Association, estimates 730 Americans killed in action in Khe Sanh. More than 2,500 were injured, according to multiple accounts.

After the battle for Khe Sanh, U.S. troops abandoned the base and leveled it in July 1968.

"That was a slap in the face," Witt said of giving up the base he and others had fought so hard to protect. "It was an exercise in futility. That's the way I look at it today. The loss of all those guys was a waste of humanity."

Gagne, an Augusta native, was in Khe Sanh from May 1967 to March 1968. He's still got shrapnel in his chest from an enemy mortar or grenade.

The point man and leader of a fire team, he spent much of his time outside the base, on patrol in the jungle -- so much so that the jungle, and the tall elephant grass he often had to plow through, rotted his clothes. Lacking supplies, he tied vines to his pant legs to keep them from falling apart.

The troops also lacked supplies, sometimes getting only one meal a day, sometimes two. Water was scarce as well, so much so that some would leave coats out overnight, hoping to catch dew to drink.

Because of the lack of water, the troops couldn't shower. Gagne said after he came out, after 77 days without a bath or shower, it took three showers to remove all the red clay and other dirt.

But some things you can't wash away.

Gagne spent many nights during the siege talking with a member of his fire team from Tennessee who, like him, was just 18 years old. One night his friend told him he had a feeling he wasn't going to make it home alive.

After Gagne took shrapnel in his abdomen, his team went out without him the next day. Gagne's friend took point, which was normally Gagne's position. The friend was killed on the patrol.

"I didn't believe he'd really been killed," Gagne said. "So I went to the morgue tent to see my buddy".



MARINE CORPS VETERAN HENRY R. GAGNE SPOKE ABOUT THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH

Some 30 years later, while he was at a Veterans Affairs hospital being treated for post-traumatic stress disorder, which had made him suicidal, Gagne and his wife went to visit the dead Marine's family and went to the cemetery where he was buried.

"It had been 30 years, and I hadn't cried once since I left 'Nam," Gagne said. "Seeing where he was buried, I cried like a baby. Khe Sanh is with me every day. You kind of take it a day at a time and do the best you can to keep our brothers' memories alive."

All three men said they're glad to see the warm reception veterans of recent wars have been getting upon their return from deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. All of them also said they got no such



MARINE VETERANS RALPH SARGENT LEFT, AND BILL WITT SPOKE ABOUT THEIR SERVICE DURING THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH.

welcome, returning from Vietnam. Sargent said he was once called a baby killer after he'd returned to the United States.

Witt said he has undergone treatment for cancer, which he thinks he got from exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam.

They have each been recognized with various medals for their service, such as the Purple Heart and Silver Star.

Sargent was awarded the Bronze Star for his role in an attack, outside Khe Sanh, in which 35 Marines were killed while on patrol. He risked his own life to get wounded Marines to safety.

It was an award he didn't want to accept.

"At first I refused to wear it," Sargent said. "Now I wear it in honor of the 35 men killed that night."

Each of the three Marines said they have no interest in ever returning to Khe Sanh.

WEB BRIEFS

U.S.S. WASHTENAW COUNTY

By Craig Tourte

I'll admit I receive way too many magazines, pamphlets, advertisements, request for donations and the like. I enjoy reading the Vietnam Magazine I receive every few months and have admired the excellent writings of Khe Sanh Veteran Peter Bush through his many fine articles and even had the pleasure of meeting Peter at our 2011 Khe Sanh Reunion in Rochester, Minnesota. I was doing a quick glance through the just received February 2013 issue of VFW magazine when on page 30, I noticed - the now well published - photograph of the U.S.S. Washtenaw County. "The USS Washtenaw County cruises in Haiphong Harbor on June 29, 1973, proving the channel is safe for shipping..."

I had the pleasurable - sarcastic comment here - experience of sailing on this vessel from Okinawa to Vietnam sometime in the early weeks of July 1967. The U.S.S. Washtenaw Country (LST-1166) is a subject that has been covered a number of times on this board and Red Clay magazine but I continue to find the remembrance of that sail - now - humorous and interesting. Of course when I speak of the experience my stories seems to grow a little bit each time. I'll note just one here: I and another were way down below deck taking a nice long hot shower when a sailor of an unknown rank - brown uniform with one of those bomber hats - appeared and started yelling at us about using up all of the water. He said, "Haven't you ever heard of a Navy shower?" "Why no," we responded thinking perhaps it had something to do with a couple of sailors taking a shower together - you know how they are, those long cruises and all - anyway he told us to wet down, soap down and then rinse off. "Yes Sir" or something like that must have been our response. Anyway, after he leaves we continued with the last of the hot water from a pressurized shower we'd experience for a year. We did not know it at the time, but we were heading for a years long assignment to a small jungle outpost named Khe Sanh.

BROTHER OF MIA SOLDIER KILLED IN VIETNAM REFLECTS ON 2012 BURIAL

KHE SANH VETERAN SGT JOHN R. JONES TF1AE-SOG USA

ODESSA — At long last, James Jones felt "peaceful and calm" after 40 grievous years longing to embrace his valiant brother just as he has done symbolically at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.

His brother's name is etched there in stately granite among the names of 58,200 fallen American warriors in the Vietnam War.

The peace that enveloped Jones in late 2012 was profoundly poignant at the Arlington National Cemetery four decades after his older brother, John Robert Jones, a 22-year-old Green Beret sergeant, had perished in combat on June 5, 1971. He had been missing in action (MIA) throughout those years.

"I always looked up to my brother," Jones, 58, said at his Odessa office of the Ector County Youth Center where he is facility director. "He has been my hero, being in (the United States Army's) Special Forces, something to be proud of, the best of the best."

John Jones was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for valor (gallantry in combat), the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster for heroic action and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross.

"He was my hero, the one I wanted to emulate, cool, laid-back, handsome young man," reflected Jones, who was 17 when his brother was declared MIA. "John was my big brother. We always looked up to him."

His brother, robust, stalwart and hearty at 5-foot-4 and 120 pounds, accomplished what James Jones, 5-foot-10 and athletically stoutly built, had envisioned for himself — honorably serving in the military.

Their late father, Samuel Houston Jones, served in World War II as a member of the Navy Seabees in building aircraft landing fields on Pacific islands and later became a career Army soldier.

John Jones was born in February 1949 in Kentucky and grew up in El Paso after his father was transferred to Fort Bliss.



SGT JONES WITH MONTAGNARD SOLDIER

James Jones' plans to serve in the military where thwarted when he suffered a serious high-school football injury that precluded military service but allowed him to serve in law enforcement.

His soldier-brother remained MIA until late in 2011 when two survivors of his outfit, platoon leader Jon Cavaiani and platoon radioman Larry Page, returned to the mountain-top post, site of Jones' last battle, with the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) to seek remains of Sgt. Jones. DNA markings confirmed his remains not found in previous searches and excavations.

Leading up to that two-day 1971 firefight in which he became MIA, Jones, an expert in light and heavy weaponry, and his platoon and the Montagnard commandos assigned to him were responsible for defending the top-secret "Explorer" radio-relay base atop Hickory Hill 950. The base was deep in enemy -held territory and overlooked the abandoned Khe Sanh Combat Base near the Demilitarized Zone.

The "Explorer" intercepted communist radio transmissions, including enemy troop movements, and was targeted by the enemy for destruction. Most of the platoon's soldiers had been evacuated by helicopter before the mountain-top post got "socked in," thereby leaving Jones, Cavaiani and Montagnard commandos to defend the "Explorer" post.

Cavaiani, who survived, was taken prisoner and later was awarded the Medal of Honor for "conspicuous gallantry" in the June 4-5 firefight.

"John was a real live hero, most definitely the best of the best," James Jones said of his brother. "He loved being outdoors, loved what he was doing (in the military),'" including training the Montagnards (Vietnamese mountain dwellers) commando tactics and skills.

"When he went to Vietnam, he was happy to be there. His whole attitude was he was a warrior. He wanted to serve his country."

Almost 42 years following his death, John Jones was accorded solemn rites at The Old Post Chapel and burial at Arlington National Cemetery across the Potomac River from the nation's capital. The imposing scene was of horseback soldiers attached to the celebrated Old Guard Caisson Platoon honoring the fallen warrior. Seven Old Guard soldiers fired three volleys each in honoring Jones.

"It is a fitting home for my brother, (being) with the other warriors and heroes," said James Jones, who was accompanied by his wife, Kathy, and his sister, Sammie Jones Rider.

The historic cemetery bears the watchword "Where Valor Proudly Sleeps" taken from the 19th-century haunting poem "Bivouac of the Dead" by Theodore O'Hara.

Especially affecting James Jones was meeting his "brother's (Green Beret) friends, great people, nice people, the type of people that this country would be proud of and are proud of, every one of them."

Among the platoon's survivors at the ceremony were Larry Page, platoon radio operator, who gave his John Jones MIA bracelet to the brother; Jon Cavaiani, Roger Hill, Skip Holland and Horace Boner.

For the 40 years after his brother was declared MIA, James Jones had never given up hope that someday his hero-brother would return home.

His faith in America's warrior ethos, expressed in the Soldier's Creed as "I will never leave a fallen comrade behind," remains ever hopeful. The JPAC estimated 88,000 Americans are MIA in the nation's wars since World War II and reportedly 1,200 of those are from the Vietnam War. JPAC's motto is "Until They Are Home."

"It is true," James Jones said gratefully, based on his brother's case, that America will "leave no one behind" and that its warriors "will never be forgotten."

ORGANIZER OF ANNUAL CHAPLAINS MEMORIAL IS RETIRING

EVENT HONORS SACRIFICE IN 1943 SHIP's SINKING

By Andy Fillmore
Correspondent

At least three Purple Heart recipients and three military chaplains who served in the Vietnam War under combat conditions were among the veterans helping conduct the Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony at the Ocala-Marion County Veterans Memorial Park.

The ceremony commemorated four military chaplains who sacrificed their lives Feb. 3, 1943, to help others on a sinking ship transport troops during World War II. The ceremony was held at a memorial marker in the park dedicated to the "unity and sacrifice" of the clergymen.

The marker, placed Feb. 20, 2001, and sponsored by the Greater Ocala Ministerial Association, is the result of an effort spearheaded by Chaplain Lt. Cmdr. Elden H. Luffman U.S. Navy retired, who served in World War II and also was assigned to a U.S. Marine Corps ground combat troop regiment in the Vietnam War.

"In 2000, former county commissioner Tommy Needham, one of the designers of the park, asked me to install and dedicate a memorial to the four chaplains," said Luffman, who wrote the dedication litany for the monument and has organized the ceremony for 13 years.

A plaque on the monument describes the selfless act on the USAT Dorchester 70 years ago by the four chaplains, Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Jewish; Lt. George L. Fox, Methodist; Lt. Clark V. Poling, Reformed; and Lt. John P. Washington, Catholic; according to www.fourchaplains.org.

The men calmed the 902 servicemen, merchant seamen and civilian workers on board the ship as it sank after being torpedoed by German submarine U -223. Six-hundred-seventy-two lives were lost.

Survivors said the clergymen handed out their own life vests with no concern for denomination.

"They simply gave...to the next in line" according to the website, which also quotes survivors as saying the four chaplains were linked arm in arm in prayer as the ship slipped under.

"It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven," said survivor John Ladd, according to the website.

Sunday's ceremony was the last organized by Luffman, 87, who said he is retiring from the volunteer effort because of his age and some health concerns.

Luffman said he was influenced by a chaplain when he first served in the Navy, but did not follow the calling to join the clergy until several years later. He joined the Navy in August 1943, first serving in Jacksonville as an aviation electrician's mate, and

completed that leg of service in 1946.

Luffman returned to his native Ocala and married his wife Joyce - who he met at the McCrory's store formerly on the southwest corner of the downtown square - and worked at the Ocala Post Office.

"By January of 1956 I knew what I had to do," he said about being called to ministry.

He attended Stetson Universality in Deland and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

"I was a reserve Navy chaplain by 1961," he said. Luffman served at the Oceania and Norfolk Naval Air Stations and on Mediterranean and Caribbean sea duty deployments from 1963 to 1967. From January through September 1968, he was attached to the 1st Marine Regiment in Vietnam.

"The Battle of Hue City was perhaps the main battle of the Tet Offensive of 1968. It lasted one month (February 1968). After Hue City came Operation Pegasus, the joint operation of my regiment and the 1st Air Cavalry, to liberate the besieged Khe Sanh. My regiment was involved in a total of nine operations while I was attached," Luffman said.

"I saw far too many wounded and killed. We used to run out to meet the helicopters and help the casualties. I saw wounded Marines who were not religious pray like they never prayed before," he said.

"One soldier came in wounded. As I walked toward him, he started saying the Lord's Prayer. He didn't make it, but I'll never forget it. I can't think of a better way to go out," he said.

"The men made a sacrifice, especially rushing up into the hills around Khe Sanh, knowing they would not come back or come back whole," he added.

Luffman recounted many of his Vietnam War experiences in his book, "Bringing God to War," published in 2006 by Phillips Publications.

Chaplain U.S. Army Col. Lamar Hunt retired, also a Vietnam War veteran, has participated in local Four Chaplain ceremonies since 2001.

"Elden served during the Tet offensive in Vietnam, some of the most severe fighting," said Hunt. "Soldiers love mom and apple pie, but they fight for each other." some of the most severe fighting," said Hunt. "Soldiers love mom and apple pie, but they fight for each other."



Chaplain LtCdr Elden H. Luffman U.S. Navy retired salutes as the national anthem is sung during the Annual Memorial Service for The Four Chaplains at the Ocala-Marion County Veterans Memorial Park in Ocala, Fla., on Sunday February 5, 2012. Sunday's ceremony will the last organized by Luffman, 87, who said he is retiring from the volunteer effort because of his age and some health concerns.

During the ceremony, Purple Heart recipient the Rt. Rev. Arthur C. Rushlow of St. George Anglican Church of Ocala offered an invocation.

Charles F. Schmidt, a Purple Heart recipient with Military Order of the Purple Heart Ocala Chapter 466, and Comm. James A. Curley Sr. of the Brady-Owens Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7193, gave the benediction.

Marion County Veterans Service Officer Jeffrey Askew introduced guests, including the keynote speaker, Chaplain Stan Beach of Leesburg, who is a retired Navy captain, Purple Heart and Bronze Star recipient, and National Chaplain for the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Beach lost a leg in Vietnam in 1966 while serving in combat duty with the 3rd Battalion 4th Marines near Danang.

"The Marines love him because he was real and cared for them. He worked so close with the troops. Some of the Marines came by recently," said his wife, Ellen Beach, who assisted with a phone call to him because he has a hearing difficulty due to the effects of some early medication for his wounds.

"Stan will talk about the Four Chaplains being more of the heroes America needs today," she said.

A building housing the new U.S. Navy Chaplain School at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, has been named Stanley J. Beach Hall, she said.

"Usually, the names are used posthumously," she added.

GOLD STAR FLAGS PRESENTED TO FAMILIES OF FALLEN MARINES IN DULUTH

Dave Anderson

Northland's old soldiers. moved across the Great Hall of the Depot on Sunday to pay tribute to comrades who will remain forever young. This honor guard is helping to remember two Marines who fell in battle years ago.

"It's a gold star flag honoring our KIA's and their families." said Mike LaBelle.

The gold star has long been used to honor families who have lost loved ones in war. Mike Labelle is with a national group called "Honor and Remember Incorporated." His job is to give gold star flags to deserving families.



On Sunday, he delivered two banners to a pair of families who suffered loss. The first honoree was the family of Gerald Caldwell who lost his life in the Korean War. He joined Duluth's Marine Reserve unit at the age of 17. "He left and he was 18 on the ship going over to Korea." said Caldwell's sister, Patricia Breiland. Gerald Caldwell was killed in action a short time later.

The second family was that of Marine Lance Corporal Michael McKeever who fought in Vietnam. He was represented by mother LaVeryn and sisters Patty and Judith. "On his second tour just into a month he was killed at the Siege of Khe Sanh on the 23rd of February." said Judith McKever who was only 7 years old when her brother was killed.

Mike LaBelle of Honor and Remember Incorporated is a Navy vet of Viet Nam himself. That's why he finds it important to give these flags to families even 40, 50 and 60 years later.

"I lost seven of my buddies over in Vietnam when I was there and it's something that has to be done." said LaBelle.

For Gerald Caldwell's sister Patricia, it's something that she is glad is being done. She's touched that some of the vets from her brother's unit were at the Depot to see her get the gold star flag.

"I know they're remembering him, you know? But what else is there?" said Patricia.

Honor And Remember Incorporated is working to get their version of the gold star flag officially recognized by law. You can find out more at www.HonorandRemember.org

To Establish a Tangible National Symbol of Gratitude
as a Visible Public Reminder to all Americans;
Perpetually Recognizing the Sacrifice of
Our Military Fallen Heroes and Their Families.

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

DENNIS MANNION
USMC KILO CO 3/26 F/O

Sergeant Dennis Mannion has been selected as the Coginchaug football team's honorary captain for the Cromwell game on Thanksgiving.

Sergeant Mannion enlisted in the Marine Corps in January 1967. After boot camp at Parris Island, SC and infantry training at Camp Lejeune, NC, he attended Naval Gunfire School in Coronado, CA. In September of that year he departed for Vietnam and was assigned as an artillery forward observer with Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines.

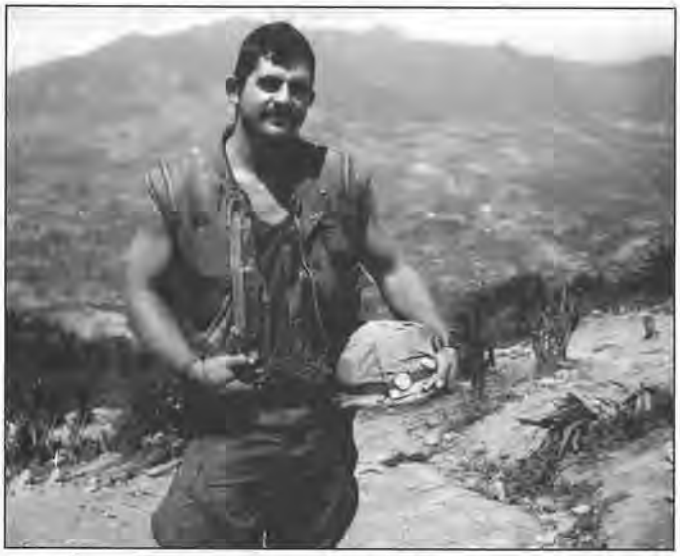

SGT DENNIS MANNION

Kilo Company and other Marine Corps companies were sent to the remote Khe Sanh Combat base in December 1967 in response to a build up of North Vietnamese forces in the area. Kilo Company was tasked with the defense of an isolated hilltop outpost, Hill 861, where Sergeant Mannion was solely responsible for the artillery support for the base at Khe Sanh.

In January 1968, Khe Sanh was attacked by an estimated 40,000 North Vietnamese soldiers. During the 77 day Siege of Khe Sanh that followed, Sergeant Mannion conducted over three hundred artillery missions that helped thwart the NVA attempt to overrun the base and its 6,000 U.S. Marine defenders. Twice-wounded on that hill, Sergeant Mannion was awarded two Purple Hearts. He and the other defenders of Khe Sanh were awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.

When the 26th Marines departed Khe Sanh at the end of April 1968, he was sent to the 12th Marines located at Dong Ha. For the last five months of his combat tour he was part of a small Naval Gunfire team that operated along the coast of South Vietnam above the Cua Viet River near Dong Ha and below the Ben Hai River in the DMZ.



Home from Vietnam in October 1968, he served out the remainder of his enlistment at Camp Lejeune with 2nd ANGLICO. As part of that unit he spent four months in Guantanamo Bay and also took part in a 1969 summer Med-Cruise with Marine and other NATO Forces in Greece and Turkey. He was honorably discharged with the rank of Sergeant in December 1969.

Sergeant Mannion graduated from Notre Dame High School in West Haven in 1964 where he was a two year starter on the football team and a captain his senior year. He began his college career at the University of Notre Dame but he left South Bend after his sophomore year. After his stint in the marines he resumed his college career at the University of Connecticut where in 1973 he graduated with honors with a B.S. degree in English/Education.

That fall Sergeant Mannion began a 30 year teaching career at Sheehan High School in Wallingford, CT when he was hired as an English teacher and assistant football coach. In 1990 he became Sheehan's third head football coach and held that post

until 2002.

In 1992 Sergeant Mannion was awarded the New Haven Football Officials Coach of the Year Award. In 2002 he was presented with the Distinguished American Award from the New Haven Chapter of the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame. In 2010 he was inducted into the Sheehan High School Hall of Fame and into the New Haven Gridiron Club Hall of Fame in 2011.



Sergeant Mannion is a lifetime member of the National Organization of the Purple Heart, the Disabled Veterans of America, and the Khe Sanh Veterans Association where he is on the BOD, scholarship and by-laws committees. His experiences at Khe Sanh have been documented on the History Channel, CBS TV, and the ABC Millennium Series as well as three books and one video documentary. He has made numerous presentations to high school and college classes about this topic.

Sergeant Mannion is the proud father of 4 children -- daughter Brooke (and her husband Charles Davis); sons Jake, Blake, and Devin and grandchildren Grace and Campbell Davis. His wife Joan -- who retired from her own 35 year career as an English teacher and Guidance Councilor at Sheehan -- and his children are visible proof that he has been fortunate all his life.

END NEARS FOR COLONEL-RALPH PARR AS UNIQUE PILOTS DWINDLE

By Scott Huddleston

Ralph Parr, a double ace in the Korean War and one of the most decorated military pilots in U.S. history, will soon "fly west," as military aviators say when a friend is near death. As Americans gather for parades, concerts and ceremonies this Veterans Day, Parr is terminally ill with cancer. His longtime friend and air-to-air flying companion, Frederick "Boots" Blesse, another double ace in Korea, died last month.

Today's increasing use of remotely piloted aircraft and advances in technology have all but eliminated the kind of gutsy, instinctive flying that made them legends among veterans and young aviators, said Gary Baber, a friend and former Vietnam pilot.



Ralph Parr (left)is a Korean War ace. , at the Officers Club at Randolph Air Force Base during a party thrown in his honor. He says good-bye to Capt. Doyle Pompa (right) and Major Geoff Laing (rear), who both thanked him for his example.

"A glorious chapter in aviation history is coming to a close. With modern technology, we will not see the like of Ralph Parr and Boots Blesse again," said Baber, who visits Parr at an assisted living facility in New Braunfels, bringing him a chocolate milkshake once a week.

In one of his last interviews, Parr, 88, recalled his first flight as a boy; the downing of a Russian trans-

port on the last day of the Korean War; and lessons he taught to younger pilots in Vietnam, even while being scolded by commanders for "flying too much."

"I enjoyed flying whatever airplane I was sitting in," said Parr, who also flew in the Pacific during World War II.

Parr, a longtime New Braunfels resident and retired Air Force colonel, flew more than 640 combat missions in three wars and received more than 60 citations. He's the only person to receive the Distinguished Service Cross and the medal that replaced it in 1960: the Air Force Cross. He's one of only a few fighter aces still living in the San Antonio area, Baber said. Ralph Sherman Parr Jr., born July 1, 1924, in Portsmouth, Va., got his first taste of flying as a gift for his fifth birthday from his father, a Navy pilot. Even while being treated for cancer that spread from his lungs to his liver, he recalled moving the control stick of an open-cockpit Navy floatplane over Manila Bay.

"It sort of hooks me intensely" to think about it, he said.

Parr enlisted in 1942 and later recalled seeing Hiroshima and Nagasaki smoldering after atomic bombs were dropped on them to end World War II. His actions in Korea, where he was often outnumbered by enemy aircraft, made him a legend among U.S. fliers. Bob Laymon, a friend and military historian, said Parr faced off with 16 Russian MiG-15 fighters one day; he shot down two and damaged a third.

"In his words, he surrounded the 16 MIGs," Laymon said.

Parr and Blesse, who died Oct. 31 and was eulogized at a funeral last week Nov.8 in Florida, had trained together at Nellis AFB, Nev., going "one on one" in F-86 Sabres, a quick, agile aircraft that performed exceptionally.

"We spent a lot of time weighing the maneuverability of the fighters we were using," said Parr, who keeps a framed copy of a painting of Blesse shooting down a MIG in the room where he'll likely spend his last days.

In the final seven weeks of the war in 1953, Parr destroyed 10 enemy aircraft in 30 missions. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross after he confronted 10 MIGs, shooting down two before escorting a distressed friendly aircraft back to his base.

Parr was credited with the last kill of the war July 27, 1953, when he fired his guns at a Russian Ilyushin IL-12 twin-engine transport carrying officials over North Korea just hours before an armistice ended the war. While details were never officially released, unconfirmed reports have circulated among retired pilots that the incident infuriated the Russians, who were said to have had dozens of military VIPs aboard the plane.

Parr said he has "unofficially" heard similar accounts over the years. When the incident first occurred, he was "ordered not to tell a soul."

"Someone said, 'Why don't we call it a MIG?' I said, 'Why don't we just tell the truth?' said Parr, who has always maintained that he confirmed through his flight leader that the craft was in restricted airspace.

"They were just in the wrong place at the wrong time, doing the wrong thing," Parr said. He said he was proud that he "stayed in fighters and tried to teach" younger pilots in Vietnam. He remembered a call from Gen. Lucius D. Clay Jr., 7th Air Force commander, who bellowed, "My staff tells me you're flying too much."

"That's fine by me, General; I'll go any way you want," Parr recalled saying before pointing out the statistics.

"I said our loss rate dropped drastically, our success rate on sorties was improved and our relations with guys on the ground have vastly improved," he added. Parr received the Air Force Cross for protecting a supply corridor to Khe Sanh. He destroyed mortar positions and heavy-caliber weapons positions, in spite of heavy fire that damaged his F-4C Phantom II.

He retired in 1976 and moved to New Braunfels, where he has lived with his wife, Margaret. In 2008, Randolph AFB renamed its officers' club, now

called the Parr O'Club, in honor of one of the last of a vanishing breed of veterans.

Parr remained weak and frail last week, but was thinking and speaking clearly, despite having probably days or weeks to live, Baber said.
"He wants to be remembered," he said.

Col. Ralph D Parr Ralph passed away 12-07-2012



The Air Force Cross is presented to Ralph S. Parr, Colonel, U.S. Air Force, for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing force as an F-4C aircraft commander near Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, on March 16, 1968. On that date, Colonel Parr participated in a flight providing cover for cargo aircraft. Upon arrival over the target, the forward air controller advised the flight that the airfield was under heavy attack by hostile mortar positions, which were located a few feet below a ridge line. Although the target area was covered with dense smoke and haze, Colonel Parr successfully destroyed one mortar position on his first pass, as six well-camouflaged heavy automatic weapons opened fire on him. Although sustaining severe damage to his aircraft, he pressed his second attack and destroyed another mortar position. Again, completely disregarding his personal safety and the withering hostile gun fire, Colonel Parr succeeded in destroying six heavy caliber automatic weapons positions. In between passes, his accurate and timely directions to his wingman effectively insured the accuracy of ordnance delivery in close proximity to the friendly forces. Only after delivering all of his ordnance at point-blank range in eight consecutive passes did **Colonel Parr terminate his attack. By destroying these strategically located weapons, he not only impaired the hostile force's capability to impede the resupply of Khe Sanh, but also reduced further losses to friendly cargo aircraft and crews.** Through his superb airmanship, aggressiveness, and extraordinary heroism, Colonel Parr reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

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One of America's most distinguished combat veterans, Air Force Colonel Ralph S. completed five combat tours in four different aircraft and flew 641 combat missions in three wars: World War II, Korean and Vietnam. Among his leadership duties were commanding the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing in Vietnam and serving as Chief of Staff of the Armament and Development Test Center, Eglin AFB, Florida. At his retirement (1976), Parr had earned more than 60 decorations, including the Distinguished Service Cross, the Air Force Cross, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, 10 Distinguished Flying Crosses, and 41 Air Medals.





AF CROSS DS CROSS SS MEDAL



LEGION MERIT DF CROSS BS MEDAL AIR MEDAL

3 10 41

FAMED COMBAT PHOTO JOURNALIST SELLS HIS FAMOUS CAMERA

A WAR photographer's battered old camera has sold for a world record £1.18million at auction.

"Pictures taken during the battle of Khe Sanh in 1968 were included in the sale"

American David Douglas Duncan used his Leica M3D-2 while covering the Vietnam war for Life magazine. Pictures taken during the battle of Khe Sanh in 1968 were included in the sale.

The lightweight Leica was made specifically for press photographers, who liked it because it was fast and nearly silent to use. Duncan, 96, is among the most influential photographers of the 20th century.

He joined the US Marines during the Second World War and took photos while fighting the Japanese in the Pacific. His work was so impressive that after the war he was hired by Life.

He is best known for his dramatic combat pictures of the Korean and Vietnam wars as well as his work with his close friend Pablo Picasso. During his time at the magazine he also covered other major world events, including the end of the British Raj in India and conflicts in Turkey, eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

The camera was sold to a -private collector at the Westlicht auction in Vienna.



The price is a record for a production model camera. It was the forerunner of modern cameras and was specially designed for Duncan.

Just four of the cameras were produced in total and were used by the photographer for many years. "

OBIT

CAPTAIN CHARLES V BUSH UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

LOLO, Mont., Nov. 30 (UPI) -- Charles V. Bush, the first black to serve as a U.S. Supreme Court page, and one of the first black Air Force Academy graduates, has died in Montana. He was 72.

Bush's wife, Bettina Bush, said he died from colon cancer Nov. 5 at his home in Lolo, The Washington Post reported Friday.

Bush, who grew up in segregated Washington, was 14 years old when he was named a Supreme Court page in July 1954. Bush worked primarily in the anteroom of Chief Justice Earl Warren, who sought the appointment of an African-American.

Bush was a member of the debate and rugby teams and a squadron commander at the Air Force Academy, before graduating in 1963.

Bush served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968, overseeing intelligence teams during the Tet Offensive and the Battle of Khe Sanh, the Post said.

He left the Air Force in 1970 with the rank of captain. His son, Chip Bush, said the elder Bush left in part because he thought he was overlooked for a promotion due to his race.

Besides his work in the corporate sector, Bush was a diversity consultant to the Air Force and the Air Force Academy, the Post said. His corporate career included work in executive-level positions for companies, including Max Factor and Hughes Electronics.

Survivors include his wife, three children, his mother, a sister, nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

FAIRFIELD RESIDENT RECALLS VIETNAM EXPERIENCE

By Ken Gjerde

KHE SANH VETERAN AL LETTENGARVER KILO CO 3/3 USMC

Published: Tuesday, January 29, 2013 12:57 PM CST Like all truly grateful, non-bravado veterans I know, Al Lettengarver voiced real reluctance to talk about his war experience.

In his words:

"Without gentle probing, this story would have gone to the grave with me. But after thinking about it, I thought maybe this is something my family, kids, and grandkids might be interested in long after I'm gone, because there is no way I could have ever written this. Secondly, maybe this will help family members of other vets understand what their vet has been through and what it takes to transition back to being a civilian. You have this feeling you develop in your chest that is a hard frozen spot that won't let anyone get close to you so it's not so hard on you when they die. This is your armor plating that keeps you from breaking down into a sobbing, slobbering mess. This hardness is why you can look at your dead buddy and say, "Better him than me." It takes years for that spot to finally thaw out. It makes you withdraw from people, drink too much and sit in a daze and stare. It's funny how all the years of memories of your high school days, your wedding, your kids, their births and growing up, your career, all these memories start to fade, but after 47 years of trying to forget, those thirteen months at times can be so vivid. I was asked once what the toughest thing I had ever done was. I answered, "Being directly responsible for the lives of as many as eighteen men on patrol."

With these courageously honest words as a foundation, we go back in time with him to Vietnam.

The enemy weapons of ambush fall silent ...as do your squad's M-14's and M-60 after returning suppressive fire. You feel momentary relief, even as you listen for movement in the silent darkness. Not feeling hit you still check for wounds. "Third fire team check it out, " comes the dreaded, whispered command. You lift your face from the dirt and rise on shaky knees, hoping your fear-wrenched voice won't squeak as you order your team to follow you forward. On this night, you find nothing. No bodies, no weapons, and best of all no more firing or grenades. So it was for twenty year old Cpl. Al Lettengarver early in his tour of duty near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) on the north boundary of South Vietnam.

At eighteen, in 1964, he enlisted in the U. S. Marine Corps after two marines, home on leave, taunted he couldn't survive Boot Camp. Orders to Vietnam came in August, 1966. After thirty days leave and brief training at Camp Pendleton they flew to Okinawa for two week's training specific to Vietnam. Aboard ship for Vietnam in October, they cruised off shore awaiting assignment. On a cold windy night of deck guard duty, he kept a trepid and steely grip on the railing as he nursed some heavy anxiety watching the flashes from artillery fire and explosions in Vietnam. He and four friends, who served together at the Bremerton Navy shipyards, were assigned to the Third Battalion, Third Marine Regiment (3/3 Marines) and flown to its headquarters in Dong Ha. Operation Prairie II was just starting and they were flown to the battalion forward base in the field. Al to Kilo Company, Third Platoon, Third Squad, near Route 9 and a hill, the "Rockpile", close to Hills 400 and 484 and a ridge between known as "Mutter's Ridge" where they would experience hard fighting.

Dug in for the night, a few mortar rounds fell but the first casualty he saw was a marine who accidentally dropped a live grenade in his foxhole. The mortaring would be a nightly ritual of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) in bunkers on "Mutter's Ridge. " Next day their company moved closer and dug into a hillside next to the ridge from which they ran patrols and ambushes. One night his platoon was ordered to patrol up "Mutter's Ridge". Each man had to keep contact with the man in front to not get separated in the blackness of that night. As they crawled down and crossed a creek to start up the ridge it began to rain torrents as the monsoon season geared up. Al's squad stayed back in reserve as the other two squads went up. After being shot off the

hill in two assaults they won a toe hold and third squad was called up to join the fight. It was Al's first combat and a soul rending awakening to "What have I gotten into? " Dug in under a tree that night, in rain and light fog, he heard something hit the tree above and thump down the branches. Fearing it was a grenade, he froze, cringing as it hit the ground beside him. But there was no dreaded explosion. It was a rock thrown by the NVA, trying to locate the marine positions by provoking rifle fire to spot the muzzle flashes. To remain concealed, they threw grenades at movement throughout the night. Returning to the Company perimeter they carried a dead marine down the hill, slipping and sliding in the mud. Reaching what had been the shallow creek they'd crossed earlier, they found it a raging torrent and neck deep. One marine crossed with a rope and secured it to a tree. Gripping that rope, they wrestled all their equipment, and the poncho wrapped dead marine with them. This was not the recruiting poster adventure they had thought about when they joined the marines.

When another short-handed squad was selected for a night patrol they needed a volunteer from Al's squad. It was either Al or a marine named Wilson whose feet were pained with immersion foot but who insisted on going. The patrol was ambushed and one man was killed., when third squad was ordered to assist. The terrain, and being under fire, forced them to crawl over the dead marine to reach the nearby patrol members. They dug in to wait for daylight. They called in illumination rounds (parachute flares) when they heard movement around them. As luck would have it, one of the flares malfunctioned and landed in the bushes right behind their position and started a fire. So, now with their position silhouetted in front of the fire, they burrowed as deep and motionless in their shallow holes as possible, captured in their own fretful suspense. The dead marine was Wilson and they learned he'd had a premonition of death and had told his buddy he wasn't coming back from the patrol alive. Still, he had insisted on being the volunteer. He was a quiet, responsible marine who always did his part. Was he the victim of a strong sense of duty; caught in the grasp of fate, or both?

Significant criticism of the bombing campaign, Rolling Thunder, caused a halt to bombing in North Vietnam and the Ho Chi Minh trail around Christmas, 1966. Al noted that prior to this halt the dead NVA soldiers carried very little food and had as few as 10 rounds of ammunition and no or very few grenades. After the halt, the dead NVA were found carrying a hundred or more rounds of ammunition and good supplies of grenades and ample food. They felt the NVA had used the bombing halt to rush arms and supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. It seemed to make a difference in the stiffness and duration of the fire fights they put up. It may also explain why one night shortly after it they were hit by 100 mortar rounds. Miraculously, no one was hurt and one round had exploded very near the edge of Al's foxhole with a concussing, deafening roar. That was very different than the five or so rounds that had usually come in each night before the halt. The squad Al was in was sent out in an attempt to find the mortars. One man took a bad shoulder wound and was med-evacuated by helicopter.

His forty five man platoon operated on a three day rotation routine. Day one was work parties filling sandbags, improving the company or battalion defensive positions, stringing coiled wire, and policing the area. Day two was patrolling about sixteen klicks (10 miles) from their temporary field base, starting about 0700 and returning at1900 hours. Day three was for rest, writing letters, and personal tasks and then going out to set an ambush that night. When not on patrol or ambush, they occupied two man foxholes nightly on their defensive perimeter. Night discipline required smoking a cigarette deep in your hole or under a poncho as the smallest of light could be seen from afar and draw fire.

That area's monsoon season was late October to May but most intense at Hue, with 128 inches rain per year. The monsoon season included blankets of fog and temperatures that dropped from daytime 90's and 100's to a cold 40 degrees or less at night. During one period it rained on 39 days straight. The men humored themselves with the Bible promise that after the flood it would never again rain on earth for 40 days in a row and sure enough the fortieth day the sun shown with no rain. Rain returned the next day. Ponchos kept them partially dry while active but water soaked their foxholes, bunkers or improvised shelters and would penetrate their sleeping gear. They were always wet from the knees down from mud and crossing streams. "Immersion foot" and shriveling of hand skin created cracking

sores as did the ever present leech bites. Any sore would get infected and medics would tape a sugary powder on them to draw out the infections. Mosquitos were a constant irritant and malaria a constant threat. Awareness of poisonous snakes was essential and Al did come across two Bamboo Vipers on his tour. I have read of two infantrymen in Vietnam pulled from their night defensive positions and killed by a large Bengal Tiger. A member of 3/3's Lima company was mauled at night by a "big cat" in April 67.

Before becoming a squad leader, Al would draw the eerie two to four man night listening post duty, usually about 100-150 yards out from their unit defensive perimeter. Turns to be on watch or to sleep were two hours. Always tired, some taped a straightened safety pin to their rifle muzzle and held the rifle (safety on) with pin just below the chin, hoping if they nodded off their chin would hit the pin and awaken them. Sleeping during your two hour watch could be a court martial offense and it happened once. Al finished his two hour watch, woke the next man, gave him the radio and went to sleep. So did the man now on watch. When they didn't radio the company command post at the designated time a man crawled out following their phone line and awakened them. Next morning all the Lieutenant. said was, "If you pull that stunt again, you'll be doing that same job for a lot less money. "

His platoon had good morale, partly due to the commanding Lieutenant. He was a "mustang" officer, (having previously served as an enlisted man), which could give these officers a first hand understanding of the grunt's situation and needs. The men felt they would have followed him anywhere. Overall, Al feels they had excellent, well trained officers who, though faithfully following orders, were careful with their men's lives. Contributing to high morale was the shared common understanding and attitude among the men that they were stopping the spread of Communism. He arrived in Vietnam a corporal and was assigned as fire team leader for three other men in a fourteen man squad. Not long after, when promoted to Sergeant he became the Third Squad leader. As Squad leader, he did a little less shooting with more time on the radio, maps and maneuvering the squad as ordered or needed. The grunt's existence was a grind of rigorously humping very heavy packs and equipment up and down very rough, rocky, hilly and muddy terrain, in thick and light jungle, razor sharp 12' high elephant grass, bamboo stands and open grassy areas, often shorting themselves in food in favor of ammunition. The tedious grind challenged their alertness to security and signs of the enemy's presence. They found grainy food bars on the dead NVA. Sampling it, they found it markedly increased their energy and so they looked for it whenever they found the enemy. Water was usually supplied, but halizone tablets purified water from puddles or creeks when needed. Even so, water was the least of his worries. His Christmas in Vietnam featured a hot turkey dinner with all the trimmings flown to the field by helicopter. It was good eating, but after a steady diet of cold C-rations, it really messed up digestive systems. Christmas spirit and joy came in a gift of a dozen heavy socks from his sister. He shared them with his squad. "Putting your foot in one of those nice, thick, dry socks was like going to heaven.! "

In early spring 1967, the Marines were relieved of their trusty M-14 rifles for the new, lighter M-16. With its smaller ammunition men could carry 400-500 rounds instead of the 100 or so rounds they carried for the M-14. Al was sent to be trained to familiarize his unit with the M-16. We won't go into the problem details of keeping the early M-16's jam free, other than to note it was more vulnerable to dirt and powder residue in the chamber than the M-14. He recalls being told at the training that you could "wash it in a river. " A good number of dead marines in the Khe Sanh "hill fights" were found with jammed M-16 rifles. In August 1967, the Defense Department finally noted there had been a serious problem with the early M-16's.

About six months into his tour, Al left his company for a week's R&R. It came in late April, 1967 exactly when six companies of the 3rd Marine Regiment were sent to Khe Sanh in support of the fights on Hills 861, 881N and 881S and suffered 160 killed and 746 wounded. Of those casualties, Al's Kilo Company lost 21 killed and 42 wounded in their day and a half attack and withdrawal. As a consequence, he has carried a hard reality known as survivor's guilt, perhaps best understood by veterans. It is intensified when you are absent from the action where buddies are killed. While on assignment in Washington D. C. with the Air National

Guard, he wrestled with going or not going to see the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Wall. Finally, feeling strongly drawn as if some force was pulling him to The Wall, he went. His time there, tracing the names of marines he'd known, provided a sense of healing during which he wept off and on for three days.

After his return from R&R, the Third Battalion occasionally provided security for supply convoys traveling Route 9 from Dong Ha to Khe Sanh. In the spring of 1967, his platoon leader was transferred to the Battalion Headquarters Company and shortly after Al was transferred to the same Company as a battalion scout. In this duty, he joined various units on patrols to gather immediate intelligence which entailed searching all enemy bodies they found. This was in the Cao Lu area near a large old French Fort, and put him in contact with the Montagnards, a tribal people living in the highlands and mountainous jungles throughout Vietnam. They had been abased and abused by the Vietnamese for years in much the same manner as Native Americans in America. Their life expectancy was about 35 years and they willingly fought with the Americans against the VC and NVA.

Al carries troubling pictures of war in the sights and sounds of accidental "friendly fire" casualties. On one battalion sweep, a squad of marines was in a tree line re-conning another tree line from where part of the battalion was taking fire. Air support was called and a mix-up occurred with the Phantom jet hitting the wrong tree line. Al saw it and you can still see the hurt and anger in his face as he shakes his head and speaks of this and other losses from friendly fire, "Twelve marines killed in 5 seconds of rockets and machine gun fire. " Though relatively limited in number, friendly fire accidents always seemed too frequent and were always very agonizing. On a battalion sweep three of the companies set their night defensive positions on line with Al's company in the middle. One company was mortared and the battalion mortars in Al's company fired where the enemy mortars were described to be. In response to this firing, a company of their own battalion called in artillery on Al's battalion mortars whose muzzle flashes they could see. Two rounds landed before it was stopped but seven marines were seriously wounded. Those two rounds sounded to him like a roaring freight train as they came in. Al dove in his shallow trench with the LT diving in on top. The LT received shrapnel in his backside. Nerves and tempers were on edge after ten to fourteen days of constant firefights. Next day, the battalion commander ordered them to walk to a place where trucks could pick them up. They started at 0700 and arrived at the trucks at 0200 hrs the next morning. In their exhaustion they felt they should have been flown out. What kept their weary bodies going on the 19 hour march was imagining their feet tramping on their Lt. Colonel's head. Such is the infantryman's right in hanging on to their own sanity and morale.

1st Lt. David Rogers, now of Arlington, Texas, was a forward artillery observer attached to M Company, 3/3 Marines at the same time Al was in 3/3's K Company. He wrote the following poem in 1967 after the rugged fight on Hill 881 S. It is inscribed at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Plaza in San Antonio, Texas which features a large statue of a radioman kneeling over a dying comrade and scanning the sky for a medevac chopper. That radio operator was Donald Hossack of Kalispell, Montana, the only radioman to survive the battle for Hill 881 S. 1st. Lt. Rogers already has a prophetic sense, as he writes, that the society to which they will return will not want to hear about this watershed experience of their lives, or afford them a welcome home in which they could take comfort. It is printed with the author's permission:

Death At My Door

Day is over and danger hastens

Young Marines at their battle stations

Instruments of war outline the sky

Means of death are standing by.

Can it be true on this high hill

Forces will clash only to kill?

Silence fills the near moonless night

Restless thoughts of a bloody fight.

Endless memories for those awake

Meaningful discussion experience would make

Though silent world in which we live

Permits only God's comfort to give.

Somewhere through the darkness creeping

A date with death is keeping

Alone I sit and question why

Life itself, to be born merely to die?



Al was no stranger to this poem and title. For the first couple months in Vietnam the thought of being killed or maimed was almost overwhelming for him. Then such thoughts seemed to become subconscious, less thought about, and the tasks of war more focused. What stuck in his mind, and never left was the time his tour would end and he could return home which would be early November. His weight dropped from 170 to 135 pounds in Vietnam. Arriving at the Great Falls airport direct from Vietnam, he saw his mother looking straight at him and walking towards him, or so he thought. She walked right past without recognizing him! Leaving for Vietnam, he and a friend tore a dollar bill in two, each keeping half, promising to have a beer together upon his return. You can see in the picture what Vietnam did to Al's half. It mirrors the scars Vietnam also gave to those who fought there as well. Of his four buddies assigned to 3/3 Marines with him, Blender, Smith, and Meyers were killed; Kuffer was wounded twice. Al alone was not hit. A full complement marine battalion had around 1300 marines, though they were never at full strength. In its 54 months in Vietnam, the Third Battalion lost 545 killed and 3,400 were wounded. 104 more were killed while serving second or more tours with other marine units. Early support for the war was wide spread. Just after Al's arrival in Vietnam the American National Conference of Catholic Bishops, on November 18th, 1966, confirmed support for U. S. action in Vietnam. But, less than one year later in October 1967, 100,000 people marched on the capitol in Washington D. C. to protest the war believing the draft favored those with money and connections to avoid the draft.





His Regiment received a Presidential Unit Citation for the accomplishment of its mission to keep the NVA from conquering Quang Tri Province and establishing itself in the villages and people.

Following his Vietnam tour he was assigned to the USS Freemont, a troop transport, as a member of the Marine Battalion Landing Force with the U. S. Navy's Mediterranean Fleet cold war operations against Communism. On one occasion a Russian battleship and The USS Freemont passed close by each other and for about two minutes the crews tossed cigarette packs back and forth. They enjoyed stops in Spain, Italy, France, Sardinia, Corsica and Gibraltar visiting the Greek and Roman ruins and the many cathedrals. He remembers a large marble statue of Jesus where the front part of a foot was worn off from so many people touching it through the years. During a war game exercise they made a practice beach landing with the French Foreign Legion.

Upon his discharge on November 15th, 1968, he returned home to Coffee Creek near Denton where he had graduated from high school. Al joined the Air National Guard in 1987, where he fulfilled his 20 years of military service in 2003 with the Red Horse Unit, a hitch he really liked and enjoyed. He values his careers in the military and hopes as our troops return from their battle zones, we will better understand the hardships they've seen and warmly welcome them home. He doesn't feel he did anything above and beyond the duty that every ordinary Grunt performed. What you've read in this story is what countless numbers of Grunts experienced.

Retired, Al lives with his wife, Vivian, on the Fairfield Bench raising a few cattle. His grown children are Steve (Glena) and their daughters, Lexie and Natasha, and Margie (Scott Andrews) and their children Allysa and Anthony. He also has two great grand daughters Penny and Raine.



REMBERING TET: LOCAL VETERANS RECALL THEIR TIME IN VIETNAM

In January 1968, enemy forces began a massive attack on Khe Sanh during the Vietnam War. Charlie Lehman of Great Falls was there.

He was in his early 20s then and was one of the "old men." Before that attack, his tour had been a picnic. "It was like having a walk in the park before that and going to you didn't know from day to day if you were going to be around or not, all your buddies were getting zapped," he said. ,But what no one realized was that the attack at Khe Sanh was a diversion for something much bigger — the Tet Offensive. Tet was the celebration of the lunar new year and the most important holiday on the Vietnamese calendar. For years, the holiday had meant an informal cease-fire during the Vietnam War.

But 45 years ago today, on Jan. 30, 1968, the Viet Cong attacked 13 cities in the southern region of Vietnam. Throughout the coming days and weeks, more than a hundred were carried out on Vietnamese cities, government buildings, U.S. military bases and those of American allies.

The first days of Tet were the bloodiest during the entire conflict in Vietnam with 246 killed on Jan. 31, 1968. The database of names on the memorial lists 16,899 who were killed in 1968, making it the deadliest year of the long war.

Lehman said that during his time at Khe Sanh, only one person in his platoon didn't have a Purple Heart. two or three, he said. Lehman has one from Tet. He was wounded during a convoy May 19, 1968. The lead tank in his convoy was hit with a rocket propelled grenade and the convoy was ambushed. "We lost a whole platoon of tanks that day," he said. One of the bolder Tet attacks was at the U.S. embassy in Saigon. Johnnie Sweeten was nearby at a base in Saigon when it happened.

He was with the 120th Assault Helicopter Company attached to the 1st Aviation Brigade. Sweeten had been in Vietnam since 1966 and was a gunner on the helicopters. The attack was "miserable," he said.

"We kinda had to shoot a lot of people and tear up a lot of buildings," he said. His was the only gun ship

unit in Saigon, he said, and they stayed very busy during Tet. One helicopter was shot down, but the crew escaped By the time he finished his tour, he'd been in country for "three years, 23 days, 20 hours and 16 minutes." Bill Garberg was a few hours away at Camp Blackhorse in Long Giao near the village of Xuan Loc. He was a combat engineer with the 27th Combat Engineer Battalion. Camp Blackhorse was in an area of dense jungle and was surrounded by mines, Garberg said. When Tet started, they were hit with mortar rounds and rockets. The assault on Camp Blackhorse didn't involve waves of enemy troops attacking the base due to the mines, "But they pummeled us with mortars and rockets," he said. "We just dug in on the perimeter," Garberg said. They took heavy fire all night. The next morning, they took two or three tanks, a few armored personnel carriers and drove out to a village a few miles outside of Xuan Loc.

"We went to that village and formed a perimeter around it. The captain went in and said they had 30 minutes to clear out. They gathered their belongings and ran out past the edge of town," Garberg said. "We brought in a flame thrower, torched the town and then turned tanks on the buildings. We crushed that town. That's where the heavy VC sympathizers were living. We burned it, torched it, smashed it. We didn't kill any of the civilians, but that was their payback for letting those VC get in and rule them."

Garberg said no one really knew Tet was coming, but he thought his leaders might have suspected something because that day they were told to be prepared to move.

"I remember cleaning my weapon right before it happened," he said. "Nothing was a sure thing over there. War is ... kind of pandemonium. You take care of what's right in front of you, that's all you worry about."

He'd been in Vietnam for about six months when Tet started. He spent a year there all together.

When he got home, the Great Falls native said he wouldn't talk to anyone.

Unless you had been there in Vietnam, I wouldn't talk to you," he said.



Vietnam veterans from left, Charlie Lehman, Bill Garberg and Johnnie Sweeten visit during a veterans group meeting at the Vet Center

That's a similar case for Sweeten and Lehman.

Neither talked much about their service in Vietnam and didn't wear their uniforms in public.

All three of them are part of a group of combat veterans who meets weekly to talk about their experiences. The group ranges in age and era of service, but it's helpful, Lehman said.

"It's really the only time that I feel comfortable talking about Vietnam," he said. "It's guys that went through the same thing, that walked down the same road."

KHE SANH MARINE ADDED TO WALL OF HEROES IN HIS HOMETOWN

PFC Jeffrey A. Thibault was a member of the 3RD Battalion, 4TH Marine Division, United States Marine Corps, during the Vietnam War.

He was assigned to the 1ST Platoon, M Co.

Thibault was from Pitman and left high school as a junior in 1968 and entered the Marine Corps in November under the Buddy System with his high school friend, David Dresh, who still lives in Pitman.

He excelled in football and baseball, following his father and uncle, who were stellar athletes during

the '30s and '40s.Thibault was stationed at Khe Sanh, Vietnam.

On June 14, 1968, the Marines spent the day climbing hills and came back exhausted. That night the NVA kept probing their lines and at about 5:45 a.m. June 15, 1968, the area was hit with rocket, mortar and machine gun fire and the Marines had a lot of wounded and killed.

Thilbault's platoon was able to retake the lines that were overrun in the initial assault. Later that morning, Thibault and another Marine went down a slope to see if another Marine was there when a sniper shot the Marine who was with Thibault and mortally wounded Thibault.

Thibault was officially listed as killed in action on June 15, 1968.

His body was escorted to Pitman from Dover Air Force Base by a childhood friend, Barry Weatherby, United States Army, who worked with civilian morticians at Da Nang Air Base.

Barry's father owned the Weatherby Funeral Home in Pitman, where Thibault was to lie in state. At the graveside service at Hillside Cemetery in Hurfville, the United States Marine Corps Honor Guard handed the folded American flag first to Barry Weatherby, who then gave it to Thibault's parents.

The Wall of Heroes honors the Gloucester County men and women who were killed in action or missing in action while serving in the U.S. military protecting our freedoms and rights. The Gloucester County Freeholder Board unveiled The Wall of Heroes on Nov. 11 at the Gloucester County Justice Complex featuring the likenesses of 100 Heroes.

There are at least 350 Gloucester County residents who never made it home so there is more work to be done. The community's assistance in identifying those residents who may be eligible to be placed on the wall is crucial.

The Wall of Heroes consists of framed 5-by-8-inch translucent artistic renderings portraying reasonable likenesses of the persons whom the county is honoring. The wall represents all branches of the military and they are arranged by era.(See Photo)



Because The Wall of Heroes features artistic renderings of those who made the ultimate sacrifice, photographs are of particular importance. If there is no photograph that can be found of the person to be honored, only the name and other key information



of the military personnel will be framed on the wall. Information, applications and eligibility can be found at http://www.co.gloucester.nj.us/depts/v/vaffairs/heroapp/default.asp or by contacting the Gloucester County Office of Veterans Affairs at 856 -401-7660.

A HEALING TRIP

KHE SANH VETERAN KENNETH R. MARTIN B CO 3RD RECON, USMC

The first time Ken Martin was in Vietnam, he was wounded three times in a month and a half, including being burned by a phosphorous grenade.

He returned to Vietnam last month with a group of veterans, and the country was nearly unrecognizable to Martin, 64, of Myrtle Creek.

Seeing a rebuilt Vietnam helped Martin make peace with the experiences he had there 45 years ago as a young Marine.

"I just wanted to see the country as it is and not as it



KEN IN VIETNAM AT KHE SANH

was, and I was not disappointed in that way," he said. "It's not war-torn."

Last summer, Martin, a retired log truck driver, saw in a Veterans of Foreign Wars magazine an advertisement for a return trip to Vietnam. The VFW would cover all expenses for a two-week trip for Vietnam veterans who had received Purple Hearts. Martin's interest grew when he learned the trip included a visit to Khe Sanh, a former Marine base where he served during the siege of Khe Sanh in 1968.

With the encouragement from a veteran friend who'd found solace from returning to Vietnam, Martin applied for the trip.

In October, he learned he was one of 13 Vietnam veterans randomly selected from a pool of 6,000 applicants to go.

"It was my lucky day," Martin said.



KEN MARTIN AT HIS HOME IN MYRTLE CREEK

He and the other veterans toured Vietnam during the first two weeks of January with three VFW officers and a Vietnamese guide.



GROUP OF VETERANS WHOSE TRIP WAS SPONSORED BY THE VFW

They visited places they encountered during the war, including the cities of Hanoi, Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City. The trip was very different from the last time the veterans were in Vietnam, Martin said. The fancy hotels and generous meals contrasted

with the meager accommodations they had as soldiers, he said.

Martin's wife, Linda Martin, said when she heard he was staying in four and five-star hotels, she wished she could join him.

"I was kind of jealous," she said.

When the group traveled to Khe Sanh, it didn't look anything like the last time Martin saw it. A coffee plantation had replaced the trenches, sandbags and makeshift bunkers.

"It wasn't the Khe Sanh I remembered from the siege," Martin said. "It was just bomb craters. That was all gone."

Still, the impact the war made on Vietnam was obvious, he said.

"The one thing we thought was striking when we went through the country (was) there were no men our age," Martin said. "They had all been killed in the war."



KEN EXPLORING TUNNELS BENEATH TOWN OF CU CHI VIETNAM

Vietnam has changed dramatically, he said. Martin thought the landscape would at least stay the same, but in one instance a hill he remembered had been excavated and looked completely different.

"The country that I knew was gone," Martin said. "If you're looking for 45 years ago, it's not there. I think a lot of us exorcised the ghosts we had there."



KEN WITH THEIR GUIDE NGUYEN PHAI

Martin was in the Marines for three years as a young man. He spent a year serving in Vietnam between 1967 and 1968 with the Marines' Kilo Company. While stationed at the Khe Sanh Combat Base, the South Umpqua High School graduate turned 20.



KEN ON BRIDGE NEAR CAMP CARROLL

Before he left Vietnam in April 1968 for treatment for burns from a phosphorous grenade, Martin was wounded two other times.

The first time he was injured, a rocket-propelled grenade bounced off Martin while he and other soldiers were involved in a point-blank firefight.



KEN STANDING NEXT TO C-130 AT OLD KHE SANH BASE

"That I thought killed me. I lost consciousness," he said.

Two soldiers were killed in the firefight and everyone involved was injured, Martin said. "I was wounded everywhere, but not that seriously," he said. "It was a very bad, very dark day."

The second time Martin was wounded was when he was in a bunker that took a direct hit from a rocket round. Martin was one of 22 people in the bunker. Four soldiers died and 18 were wounded.

Shortly after he was wounded in the bunker attack, Martin was injured while he was in trench. A phosphorous grenade landed in his lap and burned through his pants.

"I ran through the trench screaming bloody murder, and there was a step I didn't see and I flat on my face," he said.

To put out the fire and treat his burns, the medics had to cut off his clothes and a new pair of boots he'd got days before. Losing his boots upset Martin more than the burns, because for most of his time in Vietnam, he'd worn a used pair of boots that were two sizes too big.

"I flat out lost it," he said. "They thought I was crying because of the pain."

It was an interesting experience to return with other veterans to Vietnam, a place where he had such traumatic experiences.

"This was a real journey for me to go back. I didn't know I wanted to go back," he said. "We all decided that this was the best way for us to get closure."

Linda Martin said her husband was fortunate to have the opportunity to return to Vietnam.

"This trip was kind of the luck of the draw," she said. "To go back 45 years to the day, I think that's just remarkable."

KHE SANH VETERANS ACCOMPLISH THEIR MISSION

DR BARRY BOOTH USN, AND LUTHER UPTON A CO 3RD ENGINEERS

EVERGREEN, Ala. – Two Khe Sanh veterans joined forces last fall to lead the dedication of a memorial honoring all those from Conecuh County who served in the U.S. armed forces.

Veterans Barry Booth of Spanish Fort and Luther Upton of Evergreen helped organize and commemorate the Veterans Memorial with hundreds of names engraved in the inspiring granite markers.

The central obelisk and American flag waving in the crisp air catch the eye along U.S. 31 North some



LUTHER UPTON INTRODUCES DR BARRY BOOTH AT OPENING OF MEMORIAL,

100 miles northeast of Mobile. On one side of the road, the small town's cemetery reaches into the distance marking the hundreds of lives that have changed this place in distinct ways.

On the other side, however, there's a new monument marking this area's contribution to the many times when deep divisions between nations led to the bloodshed of war. Conecuh County residents stood ready and willing to defend the United States of America and freedom the world over, according to local veteran and City Councilman Luther Upton, and this monument has proved a great uniter of area residents in rural Conecuh County where the population is just more than 13,000. Political battles in the small community can drag on for years with neighbors divided in bitter conflicts--but not when it comes to support for service men and women, not when it comes to honoring veterans according to local officials.

"I guess it was my idea," Upton, a Vietnam veteran said. "I saw the Uriah, Ala., monument and said if a small rural community like Uriah can do it, why can't we?"

Upton and other members of the local Andrew G. Faulk chapter of Disabled American Veterans traveled to see monuments in Andalusia, Ala., Baldwin County, Montgomery and other places and soon set out to raise the money needed.

They didn't use a designer or architect or engineer to build the structure, he said, but rather hired local contractors to do the work. The group called for area veterans, former service members and families to help out, with service members' names carved into granite walls at a cost of $100 each if the names were registered before construction. Now, Upton said, the engraving costs $200 per name.

In all, the organizers raised some $160,000 from private and corporate donations to build the monument that honors those who died in wars – names on the central obelisk honoring the war dead were engraved without charge. There are large granite walls honoring veterans of each major armed conflict or war with room to add more names as people come forward. Another pillar includes names of those who served in the military but not in time of war. So far, more than 800 names have been carved into the memorial's stone.

This covers all demographics," Upton said. "We have men, women, blacks, whites – even one Mongolian. Just about everybody knows someone on the walls."

Another feature at the memorial is an eternal flame made to honor those unknown servicemen who gave the ultimate price for our country.

The memorial was dedicated in a ceremony on Nov. 7 with veterans from across the area gathering with some 300 others. Retired U.S. Navy MCPO James Leon Windham was the master of ceremonies with World War II veteran Woodrow Windham, 96, in attendance as the oldest veteran and Willie George Woods, 87, present to receive a Congressional Gold Medal as one of the Montford Point Marines.

"It's the best in four counties," said local resident Johnette Jones. "All of our hearts and souls went into it. "We have so many here who have served honorably."

And the names jump from the surface as visitors to the monument recall stories attached to each, like Col. John Jones who served in the Korean Conflict, or Brigadier Gen. John Watkins, or Col. Janice McCreary Watson who served in Vietnam and Desert Storm. There's Commander Leslie Addicott, Jr., who served in three wars and J.D. Etheridge who disappeared after serving in Korea but later came back home. The stones record the names of survivors of the Bataan Death March and dozens more, all with stories attached. The project took hundreds of hours of research and planning by organizers with Theresa "Tess" Windham credited with verifying dozens of veterans' names.

Every day, Upton said, veterans come by to look for friends or for their own names on the walls, like Willie R. Salter one day last month

"It looks really nice," Salter said of the memorial, "nicer than I thought it would." Then after walking a few steps, he found his own name.

"It feels kind of funny to see it there. A lot of memories go with all these names. I remember we had all the equipment loaded on a train ready to go,

and they called it off."

Arthur Ingram, who served in the U.S. Army from 1972 to 1982 said seeing his name on the wall makes him feel special, and proud that the community could come together to accomplish the project.

"I have given 10 years to the U.S. Army and served another 15 with the Alabama Department of Corrections," Ingram said. "I will never forget being in Scofield Barracks in Hawaii in 1973. Our unit was ordered to go to Vietnam the next day, but then word came they were ending the war and we didn't have to go. I threw my hands up and said 'Thank God!''

Baldwin County veteran and founder of the Honor Flight program Barry Booth attended the dedication, and said the memorial in Evergreen spotlighted the "overwhelming support" shown by the community for its service members.

"I was honored to get to meet Willie Woods who was very, very gracious," Booth said, "and I felt they did a great job showing all branches of service. Honoring veterans is something that unites people. I don't think race, creed or color or gender are valid divisions when support for our troops is universal."



NEWLY FINISHED VETERANS MEMORIAL IS LOCATED AT THE CORNER OF PERRYMAN & NORTH SHIPP ST IN EVERGREEN, ALABAMA

KHE SANH MARINE POW HONORED

RONALD RIDGEWAY BRAVO CO 1/26

Big Game Gear honors ex Vietnam prisoner of war who was captured 45 years ago on February 25th.

Big Game Gear is honoring ex-Vietnam prisoner of war, Mr. Ronald Ridgeway Sr. next week in honor of his surviving his being captured almost 45 years ago.



There are some people in this world that are unstoppable even when the odds are stacked against them, and one of those people is Ronald Ridgeway, ex-Vietnam Prisoner of War Veteran. Ridgeway is known to be the only American Prisoner of war who has been declared killed in action and was officially buried. The Pentagon said the remains of what where believed to be Ridgeway and eight other members of his patrol caught in a North Vietnamese ambush were recovered and returned back to the United States for burial.

Ridgeway is a man who knows first-hand about sacrifice and hardships. Ridgeway was just seventeen when he joined the United States Marine Corp, and a year later he was serving in B Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment assigned to the 3rd Marine Division right in the middle of the Vietnam War.

On February 25, 1968 near Khe Sanh, he was on patrol when he and his entire patrol were surrounded and under attack. Ridgeway was wounded during the attack and taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese. He was moved during the next eighteen months to several POW camping sites and moved further into North Vietnam.

Ridgeway arrived at the famous Hanoi Hilton, POW Camp where captured American servicemen were held during the Vietnam War including Senator John McCain.

While Ridgeway was in captivity, he suffered like other POW's solitary confinement and other brutalities by his captors but remained steadfast through it all. On March 16, 1973, he was released and returned home. After all he went through as a POW Ridgeway says, "I believe I was more fortunate than thousands of others who were killed or severely wounded in Vietnam."

Ridgeway has spent most of his life, and continues to do so today. helping other Veterans that are still suffering from the effects of war. Recent retirement hasn't slowed him down; he stays busier now by volunteering to help other Veterans. He belongs to several service organizations that provide assistance and organized fishing and hunting trips for Veterans. Ronald Ridgeway has donated time and efforts in helping Big Game Gear and believes in the Give Back program that Big Game Gear offers. Ridgeway says, "A percentage of my purchases have gone back to a couple of Veteran programs and I like knowing my money is doing good for other Vets." He knows through experience how therapeutic a day spent outdoors hunting, fishing or just viewing Mother Nature at her best can be. "It's just good for the troubled soul," Ridgeway says.

Several times during the year, Ridgeway and other Veterans get together with disabled and wounded warriors for breakfast and a day of fishing. A grateful and good natured Ridgeway says, "It wasn't pleasant being a POW, but I do believe I am a better person today because of it. If I can help other men and women Vets come to the same conclusion I did and heal from the trauma they experienced by spending some time with their brothers and sisters fishing or hunting, I'd encourage them to go every day." Ridgeway's advice is, "If you know or have a family member that is a Vet that could benefit from spending time outdoors, invite him and a couple of friends to get together and head out to your favorite fishing hole or hunting site."

Big Game Gear is a Veteran Owned Business and wants to thank Ronald Ridgeway for his service and honor his bravery. Big Game Gear also honors other military men and women both past and present who fight proudly for our country.

Big Game Gear is an easy-to-use yet comprehensive site that puts it all in one place – outdoor outfitter products at great prices, information and outdoor education, giving back to organizations, amazing deals, and an experience shopping for the great outdoors.

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MAJOR GEORGE QUAMO, SOG, and KHE SANH

2012 Peter Brush

Introduction and Background

In May 1968, President Lyndon Johnson presented the Presidential Unit Citation to the 26th Marine Regiment for their "extraordinary heroism in action against North Vietnamese Army forces during the battle for Khe Sanh." Officially, for the Marine Corps, Khe Sanh was one of the most crucial battles of the war, and their account of the battle "is basically a story about Marines." Although both Johnson and the Marine Corps acknowledge the role of supporting units, Khe Sanh is intimately associated in history with Marines. However, U.S. Special Forces (USSF) were the first American troops at Khe Sanh, and Special Forces and Special Operations Group (SOG) personnel were present throughout the battle. This article is about SOG Major George Quamo, one of the most important and interesting Americans at Khe Sanh. Quamo was described in superlatives by those who knew him, a "super man," athletic, brilliant, and charismatic, 'a kind of "Lawrence of Arabia of Vietnam."'

Originally, Khe Sanh was a village located on Route 9, the northernmost east-west highway in South Vietnam. In the early 1960s the Americans and South Vietnamese became concerned about Communist infiltration from the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. On July 8 1962, a U.S. Army Special Forces A Team was sent to Khe Sanh. Their mission was to monitor enemy infiltration and train the local Bru Montagnards. They occupied an abandoned French position near the village just off Route 9. Later that year a Vietnamese engineer unit constructed an airstrip at Khe Sanh. In 1964, the A Team abandoned their original position and established a base near the airstrip. The Special Forces unit at Khe Sanh also established a presence at Lang Vei, six miles to the west along Route 9, next to the Laotian border.

The North Vietnamese Army continued to move troops into the area. In September 1966, a Marine battalion was sent "in response to an expected major offensive by the NVA to overrun Khe Sanh." The Marines constructed a base north of the village and Route 9. In April 1967, the Marines fought a major battle against NVA forces who sought to seize the base.

During December 1966, the Special Forces unit at Khe Sanh (Detachment A-101) relocated to Lang Vei. On May 4 1967, a NVA force attacked the Lang Vei camp, overcame its defenses, destroyed much equipment, and killed many personnel including the Special Forces commander and executive officer.

On January 24 1964, the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, activated the Special Operations Group (later changed to Studies and Operations Group). The purpose of SOG was to conduct covert operations in order to deter the North Vietnamese from supporting the conflict in South Vietnam and violating the neutrality of Laos. In October 1965, SOG was authorized to send US personnel on cross-border operations into Laos. Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) were designated as launch sites for these operations.

FOB-1 was at Phu Bai, with a satellite launch site at Khe Sanh. The Khe Sanh SOG site was at the old French position constructed by Special Forces in 1962. It was too small and too "public" for SOG's covert operational needs. The decision was made to move to the nearby Marine base and construct a new position. This base, which became FOB-3, was built in October 1967 by Navy Seabees of Detail JULIETT from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 10. FOB-3 became operational on November 1, 1967.

Major George Quamo

George Quamo was born on June 20 1940 in Lynn, Massachusetts, the son of Albanian immigrants. Quamo grew up in Averill Park, near Albany, NY. He was a standout athlete in high school, either MVP or captain of the football, basketball, and baseball teams. He was class president and colleges attempted to recruit him. Instead, Quamo enlisted in the Army on October 23 1958. He completed training at Fort Benning, GA. He attended Officer Candidate School, was commissioned a second lieutenant, and assigned to Fort Riley, Kansas, as an infantry officer. He subsequently attended Jump School, Ranger School, Vietnamese and Thai language schools, Special Forces officer training, parachutist training, Pathfinder School, and the Infantry Officer

Advanced Course.

In 1963 Quamo was sent to Vietnam as an advisor to the South Vietnamese Army. He was awarded a Silver Star for gallantry in action on March 27 1963 "while moving through heavy enemy fire to put a friendly machine back in action and rallying the Vietnamese troops he was advising." In March 1964, Quamo became a SOG team commander. He returned to the U.S. where he received a two-year college equivalency in 1966. He arrived at Khe Sanh the following summer, and was promoted to major on October 1 1967.

SOG Operations

The SOG unit at FOB-3 engaged in "Special Projects," a plan to create a guerrilla force that would operate in the area where the Ho Chi Trail entered Laos from North Vietnam. This force was to be made up Laotian soldiers from Bataillon Voluntaire 33 (BV-33), located at a camp in Laos along Route 9 just over the border, about 13 miles west of Khe Sanh. The force at BV-33 was financed by the Central Intelligence Agency. The South Vietnam-Laos border along Route 9 was porous and not well defined. SOG teams, code named PENNSYLVANIA, entered Laos to meet with BV-33 personnel and observe NVA units operating in the area.

Initially, Master Sergeant Charles "Skip" Minnicks was team leader of PENNSYLVANIA. Quamo was sent to replace him. Minnicks was 38, the oldest SOG team leader; Quamo was 27 and probably the youngest SOG major. According to Minnicks, Quamo "looked like a kid! Here comes this new Captain. I resented him! And I made it apparent. And he called me into his tent, and he just sat me down, and we just talked. And he made me aware of my short-comings! He really did." Eventually, Minnick came to admire and respect Quamo without limit, "as did everyone who came into contact with him." According to another soldier who knew Quamo, "The people around him were just magnetized by him, and if you didn't have the magnetism, he somehow transferred it to you."

The NVA buildup in the area continued. According to Minnicks, "We knew that there was a huge, strong force." NVA plans for the upcoming Khe Sanh battle included the establishment of fortified positions at Co Roc mountain, part of a ridgeline that ran roughly parallel to the border. In mid-January 1968, a SOG team including Minnicks and Quamo climbed to the top of Co Roc. From there they could see Khe Sanh Combat Base and Lang Vei. They discovered numerous caves and extensive NVA positions, but no NVA: apparently the enemy had already moved most of their forces closer to Khe Sanh. One complex contained 500 bunkers, including one large enough to be a regimental command post. While reconning the area, a team member was shot three times in the stomach by an NVA soldier. Major Quamo asked the Marines at Khe Sanh to send an evacuation helicopter. SOG was authorized to operate in Laos; the Marines were not, and their mission did not include crossing the border. The reply was "there will be no air extraction with the Marine helicopters at Khe Sanh." Quamo lost his temper, berating the Marines on the command radio network. A Marine pilot, Major Charles Upshaw, heard Quamo's profanity and launched his helicopter in a full fog. Although Upshaw and his H -34 crew successfully extracted the SOG team, that inability of the Marines and Army to coordinate their activities was but a portent.

The tactical area of responsibility of the Marines at Khe Sanh covered a large area, and included the base itself, adjacent FOB-3, various American military units in Khe Sanh village, several Marine hill outposts, and the new USSF camp at Lang Vei. During the period July-August 1967, NVA forces in the Co Roc-Lang Vei area were estimated to be at least one battalion. Due to its location on the Laotian border, the vulnerability of Lang Vei to NVA attack was obvious. Consequently, on September 18, the Marine command issued Operations Plan 5-67 which tasked the Marines with the mission of coming to the aid of Lang Vei if attacked: "a ground force of a reinforced rifle company would be committed" plus additional forces as necessary. In November 1967, the Marines sent a rifle company from Khe Sanh to Lang Vei to determine direct routes through the jungle. Selecting paths that avoided well-used trails in order to avoid ambush, it took 19 hours to make the trip.

By late 1967 NVA in the Khe Sanh area were estimated at 22,000. Counting additional troops in Laos and the central DMZ, total NVA strength was estimated at 35,000-40,000. Major General Rathvon Tompkins, commander of the 3d Marine Division,

recommended the Lang Vei position be abandoned. US military headquarters in Saigon insisted it be retained. On January 6, a Marine forward observer was sent to Lang Vei to register artillery defensive fires. At 0530 on January 21, the NVA began shelling the combat base, beginning the famous battle. Khe Sanh village was overrun that afternoon, followed by the BV-33 camp on January 24. Flying overhead in a helicopter, Major Quamo observed



Seabees & SOG at old Special Forces Camp Lang Vei Commanded by Frank Willoughby A-101 DET

the Laotian survivors of BV-33 as they moved down Route 9. This group included 500 soldiers, 2,200 dependents, and a number of water buffalo. Quamo arranged with Special Forces headquarters in Da Nang to have food, ammunition, and building materials sent to help rebuild the destroyed positions at old Lang Vei, which were occupied by BV-33 personnel. With Khe Sanh village in NVA hands, Lang Vei was cut off from Khe Sanh Combat Base via Route 9.

Khe Sanh and Lang Vei

When the fighting began, the Marine Fire Support Coordination Center was swamped with over 3,000 possible enemy targets within a 15 kilometer radius (artillery, headquarters, anti-aircraft weapons, bunkers, supply dumps). Major Quamo, at FOB-3, on his own initiative, went to the Marine command center to offer his assistance. He had a land line laid to provide a continuous flow of information to the Marines. Quamo knew the locations of NVA positions quite well. Deep inside the Tactical Operations Center at FOB-3 was a communications section. Here four North Vietnamese defectors monitored NVA radio networks and provided translations of intercepted messages. Although the Marines provided security for the soldiers at FOB-3, the two units followed different chains of command. Instead of forwarding information to Saigon, where it would be evaluated, condensed, and then sent to the Marines, Quamo was able to provide information directly and promptly. According to Marine Major Jerry Hudson, the 26th Marines regimental intelligence officer, "Quamo really saved us during the first few days of the attack by giving us all sorts of significant information."

The NVA shelled Khe Sanh continuously. 61 Americans were killed in the first 15 days. In the early morning hours of February 6 the combat base was receiving about six incoming enemy rounds per minute. By contrast, things were quiet down Route 9 at Lang Vei. According to the USSF camp executive officer, Lieutenant Miles Wilkins, "We had very little enemy contact. They basically just left us alone." The situation changed drastically just after midnight on February 7. NVA tanks began rolling over the Lang Vei perimeter defenses, driving into the camp along Route 9 from both directions. At the same time, NVA 152mm artillery at Co Roc was firing at the Marines at Khe Sanh. NVA forces attacked both the new Special Forces camp and the old position where the Laotians had dug in. The American soldiers put up a spirited and heroic defense against a vastly superior NVA force, but by about 0300 the NVA mostly controlled the camp. The USSF soldiers were essentially trapped in their command bunker, where they remained throughout the night. Captain Frank Willoughby, commander



Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe holding services at the construction site for SOG & Seabees at Lang Vei with Seabees from MCB-11.

of A-101, radioed the Marines at Khe Sanh to fire

an artillery barrage on his position, and to execute the relief plan.

The Marines at Khe Sanh felt any relief force moving down Route 9 would undoubtedly be ambushed (in fact, documents taken off a dead NVA office later in the battle indicated they hoped a relief column would be sent so they could destroy it). A helicopter assault was ruled out because the NVA had positioned their tanks to fire on the only suitable landing zone. Lastly, and most important, the Marines knew any force they could send would be vastly outnumbered by the NVA. Consequently, the Marines refused to provide a relief force.



Major Quamo had been up all night at FOB-3 listening to the fighting on the radio net. Quamo discussed the situation with the FOB commander, Major Lucius Campbell, who declined to become involved. At about 1000 hours Quamo went to the Marine Combat Operations Center where he learned no Marine relief force would be sent. Furious, Quamo returned to FOB-3 and asked for volunteers. He vowed, "We're going to do something. We're going to get something done!"

Fourteen USSF volunteers plus forty Bru soldiers went on standby. Several Marine CH-46 helicopters were at Khe Sanh preparing for a resupply mission. Without authorization, Quamo alerted the Marine helicopter pilots of his plan to launch a rescue operation into Lang Vei. At 1500 hours, official authorization was received. The resupply mission was cancelled and the Marine pilots went to FOB-3 for a mission briefing. At 1700 hours, the rescue force departed for Lang Vei, where they rescued the 16 Special Forces survivors. According to Minnicks, who was part of the rescue team, "I thought that Quamo should of got a Medal of Honor for what he did at Lang Vei. He coordinated the whole thing."

In March 1968, Lieutenant Colonel Roy Bahr became commander of FOB-3. Bahr had high praise for Quamo, describing him "one of the most out-



standing officers with whom I have served" and "highly respected by seniors and subordinates alike." However, there was one exception to the high regard felt for Quamo. On April 5 1968, General William Westmoreland, commander of US forces in Vietnam, visited Khe Sanh and FOB-3. According to Bahr, it was obvious Westmoreland and Quamo knew each other, and there was "an intense, palpable animosity from General Westmoreland to Major Quamo," which puzzled Bahr.

The siege of Khe Sanh ended in April. The Marines began discussions on closing down the base. FOB-3 had been engaged in classified activities and possessed top secret documents. Colonel Bahr, having received no orders to relocate FOB-3 and its personnel, became concerned about remaining if the Marine force departed. He was afraid FOB-3 could become another Lang Vei. Bahr instructed his intelligence officer, Captain Hammond Salley, to write a top secret report. This report outlined the consequences of abandoning Khe Sanh and FOB-3 and asked for clarification of FOB-3's future mission. Bahr gave the report to Major Quamo with instructions to hand carry it to USSF headquarters in Da

Nang. At 1535 hours on April 14, Quamo boarded a U-17 airplane with two Vietnamese pilots. The U-17 made contact with air control at Da Nang soon after departing. At 1645 hours, contact was lost in the vicinity of Da Nang. An extensive search was launched, with no results.



Speculation began soon after the disappearance. According to Minnicks, some overzealous CIA analysts considered Quamo might be a spy who had flown to North Vietnam. The CIA sent investigators to interview people who had worked with Quamo and search his belongings, which made Minnicks furious. Major Hudson and others wondered if Quamo was on a secret mission and not really dead. Quamo's remains, along with those of two Asians, were discovered in 1974 by a Vietnamese woodcutter in the mountains. He was quietly buried in Arlington National Cemetery on October 21, 1974.



SOG AT FOB-3 KHE SANH 1968
L-R SFC CAVNAUGH, MSGT MINNICKS, SFC SHERRON, SFC SECOR (KIA), SP5 HARRIS, SFC BAKER (KIA), SSGT MOCHBEE

AFTERMATH

FOB-3 at Khe Sanh was demolished in June 1968. Remaining FOB-3 personnel were transferred to other FOB's at Phu Bai, Kontum, and Da Nang. USSF Detachment A-101 relocated to Mai Loc on June 24, 1968

Khe Sanh Combat Base was officially closed at 2000 hours on July 5 1968.

On April 14 2007, Senator Hillary Clinton attended a dedication in Averill Park, NY, of the Major George Quamo Post Office Building.

NOTE ON SOURCES: I relied heavily on the works of Rev. Ray W. Stubbe, especially *Pebbles in My Boots, Vol. 2.* (2011). Ray was a navy chaplain at Khe Sanh during the 1968 battle. Over the years he has amassed a 100,000 page archive of documents relating to Khe Sanh. Everyone interested in Khe Sanh owes a debt to Stubbe's research and scholarship.

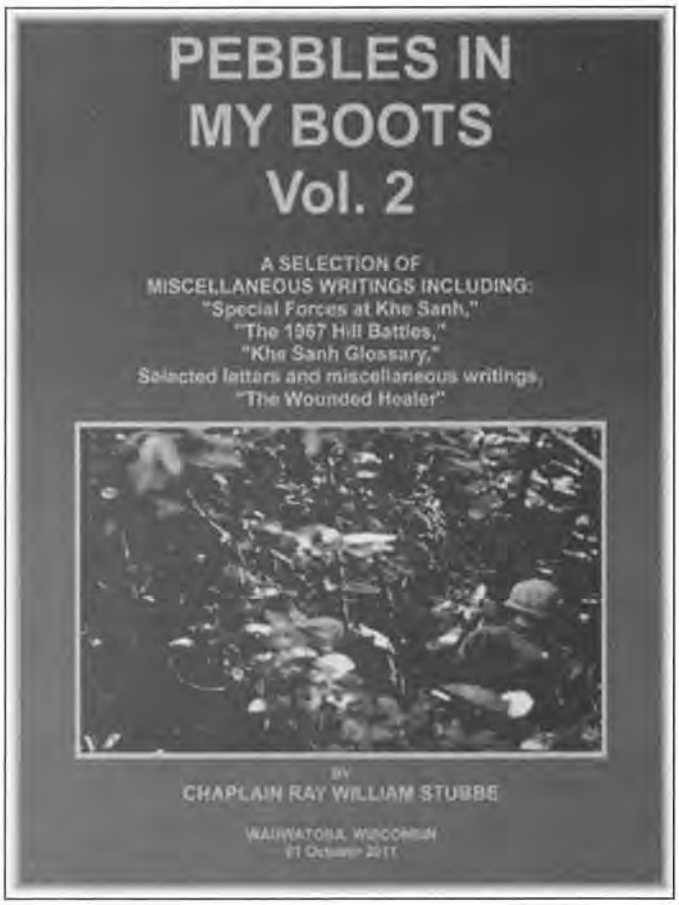

SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE CURRENT DAY VIETNAM

VIETNAM- A COUNTRY TO WATCH

By Joel Brinkley

A mystery pervades this part of the world.

In the Middle East, Africa, Russia, parts of Europe -- even the United States thousands of angry citizens· have stood up to challenge their governments over the last two years. In several cases, of course, they have thrown dictators out of office.

But here in Asia, home to some of the world's most authoritarian nations, we've seen none of that at all. Vietnam, however, may be setting a path for other Asian states. Late last month, the state's communist government arrested Le Quoc Quan, a well-known dissident lawyer who had been writing an anti-government blog.

His was just the latest in a rash of dissident arrests. Last fall the government sentenced three bloggers to between four and 12 years in prison for spreading what prosecutors called "antigovernment propaganda." That's a relatively new phenomenon here.

In China, Cambodia and several other regional states, people stand up and stage loud, angry protests about land seizures, local government corruption, illegal logging, pollution and other abuses that directly affect their lives. But nowhere in Asia recently have we seen large protests challenging the governments' legitimacy.

Even in Burma, where the leaders are making a careful, tentative transition to a more open, democratic society, the impetus for change is the government's own self-interest -- primarily the need to wean itself from near-total economic dependence on China.

Regional experts offer a broad range of explanations for this anomaly -- cultural, religious, economic ... there doesn't seem to be a single, consensus view. And the sudden rash of arrests here in Vietnam may turn out to be nothing more than a few lonely dissidents who get in trouble for challenging the government, like those in China. It's too early to know for sure.

But Vietnam is different from its neighbors. Born of China, a province of its northern neighbor until winning independence in 938 A.D., it's had to fight for survival ever since. The Khmer kingdom of Cambodia occupied southern Vietnam shortly after China withdrew. China has invaded this country 17 times, most recently in 1979. The French occupied Vietnam for six decades, followed by the Japanese during World War II. Then, of course, came the Vietnam War.

Look at historical sites where Vietnamese characterize their own history in drawings and friezes, and you'll see a bellicose people wielding swords, shooting arrows, firing slings -- slaughtering their varied enemies. That has been the nation's fate for millennia, helping to form its character.

So should it be a surprise that a people dominated and abused by invading and occupying forces for almost their entire history should resent a richly corrupt government that sometimes abuses them even now?

An almost invariable rule –governs debates like this. Significant social change in authoritarian states results from economic development. As people become more prosperous, with travel television, the Internet, social media, they begin to better understand how the rest of the world lives, and what they are lacking That' s when people grow dissatisfied . And That is what is happening ere now .

Visit Ho Chi Minh City (still widely ~own here as Saigon) and you'll see dozens of high end Western stores- Dior, Piaget, Louis Vultton. On Jan 3, Starbucks announced it would open its first Vietnam outlet in Saigon.

Much of this new Western retail business is for the fast -growing tourist industry -- more than 6 million visitors a year. But all of that also brings jobs and greater prosperity to one of Asia's most educated countries.

The closed, dictatorial government doesn't permit public dissent, but it's looser than many neighboring states. You can't write blogs, stage public protests or give speeches broadcasting your anti-government views. The press is not free. But otherwise the government largely leaves its people alone. And these

ambitious, aggressive people prosper, just like their kin to the north -- in China.

Government health and education expenditures are among the highest in the region. Literacy is almost universal. Seventy percent of the population still lives in the countryside, growing rice, but at a rate of about 3 percent a year the rural young are moving to the cities, primarily Saigon, looking for better jobs.

Ironically enough, the United States is one of Vietnam's new best friends -- mostly as a counterweight to its historical and current day enemy, China. To that end, Hanoi is also befriending Japan, Russia, Indonesia, Taiwan and others -- understanding that making alliances, not war, is the most effective way to proceed today.

In my view, this is a country to watch -- and perhaps, one day soon, to admire.

-Joel Brinkley, a professor of journalism at Stanford University, is a Pulitzer Prize-winning former foreign correspondent for the New York Times. By Joel Brinkley; Distributed By Tribune Media Services, Inc.

DESPITE INCREASING PROSPERITY, VIETNAM'S APPETITES REMAIN UNIQUE

WHAT WE ALWAYS THOUGHT



You don't have to spend much time in Vietnam before you notice something unusual. You hear no birds singing, see no squirrels scrambling up trees or rats scurrying amongst the garbage. No dogs out for a walk.

In fact, you see almost no wild or domesticated animals at all. Where'd they all go? You might be surprised to know: Most have been eaten.

Of course, as with most states in the region, tigers, elephants, rhinos and other big animals are trafficked to China. At this, of course, Vietnam is hardly alone though the World Wildlife Fund describes the state as the world's greatest wildlife malefactor.

Various reports show that Vietnamese kill more rhinos for their horns than any other nation. Chinese value those horns for their mythical medical qualities like so many exotic-animal body parts.

Animal trafficking explains the dearth of tigers, elephants and other big beasts. But what about birds and rats? Yes, people eat those, too, like almost every animal that lives there. In Da Nang in January, I saw a street-side merchant with bowls full of dead rats for sale -- their fur removed but otherwise intact -- ready to cook.

Last spring, Conservation International reported that several varieties of Vietnamese gibbon, part of the ape family, "are perilously close to extinction" -- all but a few of them already eaten.

All of this raises an interesting question. Vietnamese have been meat eaters through the ages, while their Southeast Asian neighbors to the west -- Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar have largely left their wildlife alone.

In each of these other countries you see flocks of birds that are absent in Vietnam along with numerous pet dogs and cats. There, people eat rice, primarily, and for many people in most of those states their diet includes little more than that.

Vietnam has always been an aggressive country. It has fought 17 wars with China since winning independence more than 1,000 years ago and has invaded Cambodia numerous times, most recently in

1979. Meantime, the nations to its west have largely been passive in recent centuries.

Many anthropologists and historians attribute the difference to the state's origins. Vietnam war born of China, while India heavily influenced the other countries two nations with drastically different personalities, even today.

Well, certainly that played a part. But I would argue that because Vietnamese have regularly eaten meat through the ages, adding significant protein to their diet, that also helps explain the state's aggressive tendencies and the sharp contrast with its neighbors.

Right now, the favored dish is dog. In fact, dog meat is particularly prized. It's considered a specialty because it is said to contain more protein than other meats. For Vietnamese, tradition has it that whenever you have bad luck you should eat dog meat to change your fate. But you shouldn't eat it at the start of the lunar month, or the reverse will happen. You'll actually bring on bad luck.

Now, however, tradition is clashing with modernity -- and the law has changed with it. Thirty years ago, it was illegal to keep a pet dog. The government held the view that dog meat was a nutritional priority that couldn't be ignored. That point of view still pertains, though the government repealed the law years ago.

In fact, still today, driving down the highway it's not unusual to see a flatbed truck hauling dogs curled up in little stacked cages, six cages high, eight deep, off to market -- similar to the way chickens are transported to slaughterhouses in the west.

But now, Vietnam is a rapidly prospering state; more than half the population was born after the Vietnam War (which they call the American war). Per capita income is about $3,400, which may not seem like a lot but is higher than in most neighboring states. And as the middle class grows, so does Western influence -- picked up from television, movies, Face book, Twitter and the rest.

With that has come a new desire among some to keep pets. So now you do see an occasional dog here and there, lounging on the front porch of someone's home but under the watchful eye of its owner. Even now, as Vietnam rapidly modernizes and matures, if the dog wanders too far from home, someone will grab it and then serve dog for dinner.

Visiting Vietnam, many Western visitors despair. As one Western blogger put it: "I can quite honestly say it's the most gruesome thing I have ever seen."

I could not agree more.

Joel Brinkley, a professor of journalism at Stanford University, is a Pulitzer Prize-winning former foreign correspondent for the New York Times. © 2013 By Joel Brinkley; Distributed By Tribune Media Services, Inc.

MARINE LISTED AS AWOL FROM 1974, NOW IDENTIFIED A MURDER VICTIM. HE WILL BE BURIED WITH FULL MILITARY HONORS



LONG BEACH — For the past 37 years, Oral Alfred Stuart Jr. was classified as AWOL and a Marine Corps deserter.

But his family never believed it. Even if Stuart had left his beloved Corps, which he voluntarily joined in 1974 and proudly tattooed on his arm, he never would have left his parents without so much as a goodbye.

"I always believed something must have happened to him. He loved the Marine Corps ... (and) he would have been in touch with our mother," insisted Carl Stuart, Stuart's older brother and one of only a few surviving family members.

Now, after all those years of uncertainty, Stuart's family Oral Alfred Stuart Jr. has been proven right through the work of the Long Beach Police Department's Cold Case Unit.

Stuart, who was from Des Moines and known to his friends and family as "Buddy," didn't desert the Marine Corps in 1974 - he was murdered.

His body was found on Nov. 10 of that year naked and dumped at The Lakes condominium complex on Spring Street, across from El Dorado Park and next to the San Gabriel (605) Freeway. He was classified as John Doe No. 155 until just last year, when they found strong evidence that the body was Stuart's.

Police officially confirmed his identity last week.

"We've notified the U.S. Navy's (Naval Criminal Investigative Service) ... that rather than being a deserter, he's a murder victim," said Long Beach Police Lt. Lloyd Cox.

"We never would have been able to identify him, and clear his record, without the National Institute of Justice Cold Case grant and (without) all of us - the coroner and NCIS - working together this last year."

Though DNA evidence was not available from the original case, it was one that came up for review by the Cold Case Unit, which has been funded by the national grant, Cox said.

Using that funding, police were able to work with Navy investigators to identify a missing Marine who was never found and who was near the Long Beach region at the time of the slaying.

Detectives then tracked the closest living relative, Carl Stuart, to his home in Phoenix, where detectives there showed the older brother an autopsy photo. They also used tattoos and other distinguishing features to identify the victim, Cox explained.

Long Beach Police Department detectives at the time of the murder also noted the close-cropped haircut and the tattoos on the 18-year-old victim indicated military service, Cox said.

The cause of death was initially classified undetermined, though the medical examiner who worked on the case in 1974 came out of retirement to help police and coroner's investigators rule the death a homicide last year with the cause listed as blunt force trauma, the lieutenant added.

The spot where Stuart was found, in public view, was processed for evidence at the time and it appeared as though the victim had been dumped there after being killed elsewhere. Detectives contacted military units in the region and looked for clues or some sort of connection to the body, but Stuart was never identified.

"Most of the coroner's files and our files from that time are missing," Cox said, explaining it isn't clear today why Stuart wasn't identified then, though Stuart had been reported AWOL by the Marine Corps on Nov. 22, 1974, "twelve days after we find the body."

Killer's ID still unknown

Those answers don't sit well with Stuart's older brother, who concedes there was no DNA technology available in 1974, but who insists the military had his brother's fingerprints on file and that police and military investigators could have identified Buddy had they tried harder.

"My parents both went to their graves not knowing what had happened to him and knowing (the Marine Corps) listed him as a deserter," Carl Stuart said. "Now I know he didn't desert, he was taken from us. But I've known that all along."

And though his brother has finally been identified, Carl Stuart said, he doesn't believe police will ever find his killer.

The odds aren't good, Cox admitted, given the length of time that has passed since the killing. Still, Long Beach Homicide Detectives are hoping the release of Stuart's name might jog a memory or strike someone's conscience.

"The chances, I know, are small, but we're hoping maybe someone knew who (Stuart) was with or who has some information about him will come forward," Cox said. "I'm amazed sometimes what people can recall even after that many years."

Carl Stuart believes his brother fell victim to serial killer Randy Kraft. Kraft, who was sentenced to death in 1989 for 16 homicides, is suspected of killing more than 60 young men, many of them military members, in the 1970s and 1980s.

At least one body was found in the Long Beach Marina and many more were dumped along Southland highways, though victims were also found out-of-state. Kraft also preyed on hitchhikers and young men in gay bars.

Kraft himself was discharged from the United States Air Force in 1969 for medical reasons, the same year he told his family he was gay. His victims were often found sadistically tortured and drugged before they were killed. Many were found with missing items of clothing or missing body parts.

Stuart was found nude and his body showed signs of trauma, Cox said, refusing to release further details due to the on-going investigation.

Carl Stuart identified his brother's body after he was shown an autopsy photo and said the grisly condition of the remains seem to fit many of the methods described in Kraft's confirmed murder cases.

An independent youth

It's a disturbing image to carry, Carl Stuart admits. The ailing Phoenix resident, who has emphysema, was quite close to his younger brother when they were growing up, especially after they lost their only other brother in a deadly car crash in 1965. They have a younger sister, who is still alive, and a half-brother, who never knew Buddy.

Carl Stuart said he still remembers the FBI tapping his phone lines for a few months after Buddy was listed a deserter, in case he was lying about not knowing where his brother was located. Buddy had just graduated from boot camp and was given several weeks leave before being shipped out when he disappeared.

Carl Stuart said he could understand why the military wouldn't report his younger brother AWOL right away, because Buddy "did what we wanted. ... He didn't like sitting around and being bored."

Buddy once hitchhiked from the family's home in Des Moines, Iowa, to California, and both brothers had a drinking problem, Carl Stuart said. It wasn't too long before he disappeared that the brothers went drinking and, full of alcohol, squared off in a fight.

"When he came home from boot camp, well, he thought he was tough," Carl Stuart recalled with a laugh. "I guess he thought he could finally take me." Some neighbors weren't amused, however, and called the police. Buddy Stuart was arrested for public intoxication with a blood alcohol measurement 26. His recruiter bailed him out the next day and gave him about a week to report back to base at Camp Pendleton, in San Diego.

"So I can understand why they wouldn't list him missing right away," Carl Stuart said.

What Stuart had a harder time coping with was the lack of interest the Marine Corps had in finding his brother once he was listed AWOL.

"But you don't push the Marine Corps," Carl Stuart said.

At least now, with the identification and homicide ruling, the Marine Corps has changed Stuart's status from deserter to honorable discharge, according to Carl Stuart and the Long Beach Police Department. The military will hold a full honor guard funeral service at the unmarked grave where Stuart, and so many other Los Angeles County murder victims, are buried, and will provide the surviving family with death benefits, though the amount hasn't yet been determined.

"We'll have the John Doe place maker taken out and

a headstone put in so the grave will at least have his name," Carl Stuart said. "We have a family graveyard back in Iowa. Later maybe, I'll go back to Iowa and have a plaque placed with mom and dad."

OBIT

BILLY KEMP STEWART USMC KHE SANH VETERAN A CO 3RD ENGINEERS 11 OCT 1934 TO 28 APR 2013

Billy Kemp Stewart Sr. of 5304 Doles Road, Albany passed away at his residence 28 April, following a lengthy illness. Funeral services were held on Wednesday morning 2 May at 11am at Mathews Funeral Home. He was Buried at Olive Grove Primitive Church in Iron City, Georgia. Mr. Stewart was born 11 October 1934 in Vindex, Maryland to William Albert and Opal Tasker Stewart. He was educated in the Garrett County school system after which he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He graduated recruit training at Parris Island, South Carolina after which he went to Korea and mainland Japan. He spent many years at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina where in 1962 he broke the range record for rifles with a 244 out of a possible 250. For his efforts he was named Leatherneck of the Quarter and for which he received a cash award and a M-70 rifle. He was an Engineer by Military Occupation Specialty and operated all types of heavy equipment.

In 1967 he was sent to Vietnam. He cleared roads by sweeping for mines, graded for runways being built and excavated reservoirs. He helped construct a Vietnam village at MCB, Quantico upon his return. He earned a Navy Commendation with Combat V to add to his other medals. He was on active duty at Marine Base Quantico, Okinawa, Marine Corps Supply Activity, Philadelphia, and in 1974 retired from Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, North Carolina. In 1975 he began work as a Civilian Marine and relocated to Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany where he retired again in 1989.

Mr. Stewart is a member of VFW Post 2785 where he served as Commander 1983-84. In that position he helped the post to become an All-American Post for the first time which caused him to receive a personal award as an All-State and All-American Post Commander. He is also a member of the Loyal Order of the Moose #1285; Disabled American Veterans #27; BPOE #2481; American Legion Post #71; East Albany Chapter AARP; the Marine Corps Engineer Association; Third Marine Division; the Khe Sanh Veterans; and the Marine Corps League #1260.

He is survived by his wife, Cherry Parker Stewart; daughter, Sandra (Wayne) Hancock, Albany; son, Billy Kemp Stewart, Jr., Anderson, Indiana; two step-sons, Joe (Gwen) Miller, Albany; Chuck (Polly) Miller, Iron City; sister, Kathy (George) Savage, Huntingtown, Maryland; brother, James (Sandy) Stewart, and stepmother, Kathern Stewart, all of Oakland, Maryland. Grandchildren are ayne Hancock, Jr., Albany; Danny (Kerri) Hancock, Sylvester; Ericka (Nick) Adams and Joey (Jessica) Miller all of Donalsonville; Amber Miller, Tampa, Florida; Jason Miller, Albany and Stacy (Kris) Hodges, Yokoda Air Force Base, Japan. Mr. Stewart also has seven great-grandchildren whom he loved dearly. They are Riley, Isabelle and Brodey Hancock, AnnaBelle and Beau Adams, Kabe Hodges and Maggie McCall Miller.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a daughter, Cheryl Lynn Stewart; brother Franklin Albert Stewart; and sister Sandra Darlene Stewart.





A LITTLE NEWS FROM VIETNAM



Four pimps involved in a high-end sex ring of actresses, models, and beauties that has recently rocked Vietnamese showbiz were prosecuted Sunday on charges of providing prostitution services.

They are Miss Vo Thi My Xuan, 27, Tran Quang Mai, 40, Nguyen Huu Dat, 43, and Le Quang Tuan Anh, 27.

Actress Tran Thi H., 24, who is believed to be another of the ring's pimps, has been released on bail due to late-term pregnancy. Meanwhile, another suspected pimp named Huy has run away in his attempt to escape police arrest.

Previously, on June 2, police conducted surprise raids two big hotels in the city center and caught four high-class prostitutes having sex with their wealthy clients.

The sex workers were later identified as 20-year-old L.T.T.H, an actress, model, and lounge singer; 23-year-old N.T.M.N, a model; 20-year-old L.T.Y.D, a beauty queen in Ben Tre province; and 25-year-old L.T.H.D, a first-year student at a college in Ho Chi Minh City.

The prostitution ring run by Miss My Xuan has not only shocked local showbiz but also grabbed huge attention from global media outlets like MSN News, Times Live, Tengri News, and 21 CN in China, Britishbusinessfinder and BBC in the UK, and VOA (Voice of America), and Singapore's Straits Time, among others.

It has also attracted thousands of comments on social networking sites like Twitter.

Following a tip-off from the public, authorities in the central province of Quang Tri have dug up two bomb stores with a high number of UXO items situated close to residential areas.



After three hours of searching on January 21, demining specialists discovered 47 UXO items with their detonators still intact on an empty land in Khe Sanh town, Huong Hoa district.

Nguyen Van Cuong, head of the demining team, said they have yet to be able to identify the exact number of UXO items in the two stores – i.e underground holes that store the bombs. Local people said there are an estimated 400 to 600 UXO items in each.

But Cuong added the number could be much higher. It has been reported that 391,500 hectares out of 461,297 hectares in Quang Tri have been polluted with UXO but only 2,300 to 2,500 hectares of them are cleared per year.

More than 2,600 people have been killed and nearly 5,000 injured by UXO since 1975 when the Vietnam War ended, said the provincial Department of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs.

Many international organizations have funded the province in carrying out mine clearance to ensure safety for local residents.

WEB BRIEFS

B-52 "DIGGER" BOMBS AT KHE SANH

By Craig Tourte

I received my April 2013 edition of Vietnam Magazine some weeks ago, lightly perused some of the article and then put it down with the intention of taking another look at it in the future. I picked it back up this afternoon and read an article titled "My War" "William L. Doyle Jr. Major, U.S. Air Force, Strategic Air Command October 1967 - October 1968."

Mayor Doyle relates during WWII his father served on Saipan, also on the island at the time, commanding a Marine platoon, was Lieutenant David Lownds. During the Vietnam War Major Doyle became targeting officer for B-52's. His job was to, "...select points on the earth where ordnance could be dropped from the B-52 force in South Vietnam. David Lownds, now a colonel, was assigned to the Khe Sanh Combat Base as commanding officer of the 26th Marine Regiment..." "During late 1967 and early 1968, before the Tet Offensive... responding to NVA action around Lang Vei and Khe Sanh, we began targeting B-52s with standard 500-pound bombs...." "NVA troops were tunneling to come up inside the wire at Khe Sanh, a tactic that was probably necessary because strategic air employment denied the NVA close above-ground access to Khe Sanh."

"General Westmoreland...reviewed tunneling reports and told us to figure out a response using B-52." "...earth-penetrating 500 pounders...were on Guam." Westmoreland directed an immediate go." "...someone from MACV called Colonel Lownds at Khe Sanh Combat Base to brief him on the plan and ask how close to the Khe Sanh wire we could target. Lownds said to bring them as close to the wire as possible..." "The NVA tunneling effort stopped..." "In the wake of Khe Sanh, Colonel Lownds said the B-52 strikes were a godsend, a miraculous thing." "...according to James S. Robbins in This Time We Win: Revisiting the Tet Offensive," "It's almost scary when you think about it, said Lownds..."

The article concludes with Major Doyle relating that, "It wasn't until I read Robbins book on Tet that I learned...Colonel Lownds went ino Saipan along with my dad. For me, connecting the dots from Saipan to Khe Sanh has again reinforced my pride our armed forces."

We who served on and around the combat base will never be able to forget close air strikes by the B-52's. Steve Wiese once described his hearing the bombs fall as being like, "tears from angels." I thought his was a very profound description

MIKE FISHBAUGH WRITES:



Khe Sanh Resupply Air-Drop

Received this in a e-mail;" about how close the Arclight raids came to the base.

Attached is a photo taken by an HMM 262 pilot of a C-130 drop. Looking to the left, those little " puffs " of smoke are a 52 run at the same time as the C-130 air drop. Pretty dam close... RM

CHARLES ROST

I have a searing memory of being rudely awakened one night by dirt falling from the roof of our hootch, and the deep rumble and flashes of white light, and thinking them poor bastards in their tunnels will never know what hit them. I also remember once coming across about a 3 foot in diameter, very steep, hole in the ground, not 500 meters from the wire, that was so deep you couldn't begin to see the bottom ... could only have been a dud. I'll bet that sucker is still there.

DAVE DOEHRMAN

That wasn't a dud bomb hole - it was just the entrance or exit hole for one of the rats who came in to visit and hide in our bunkers when the NVA arty started.

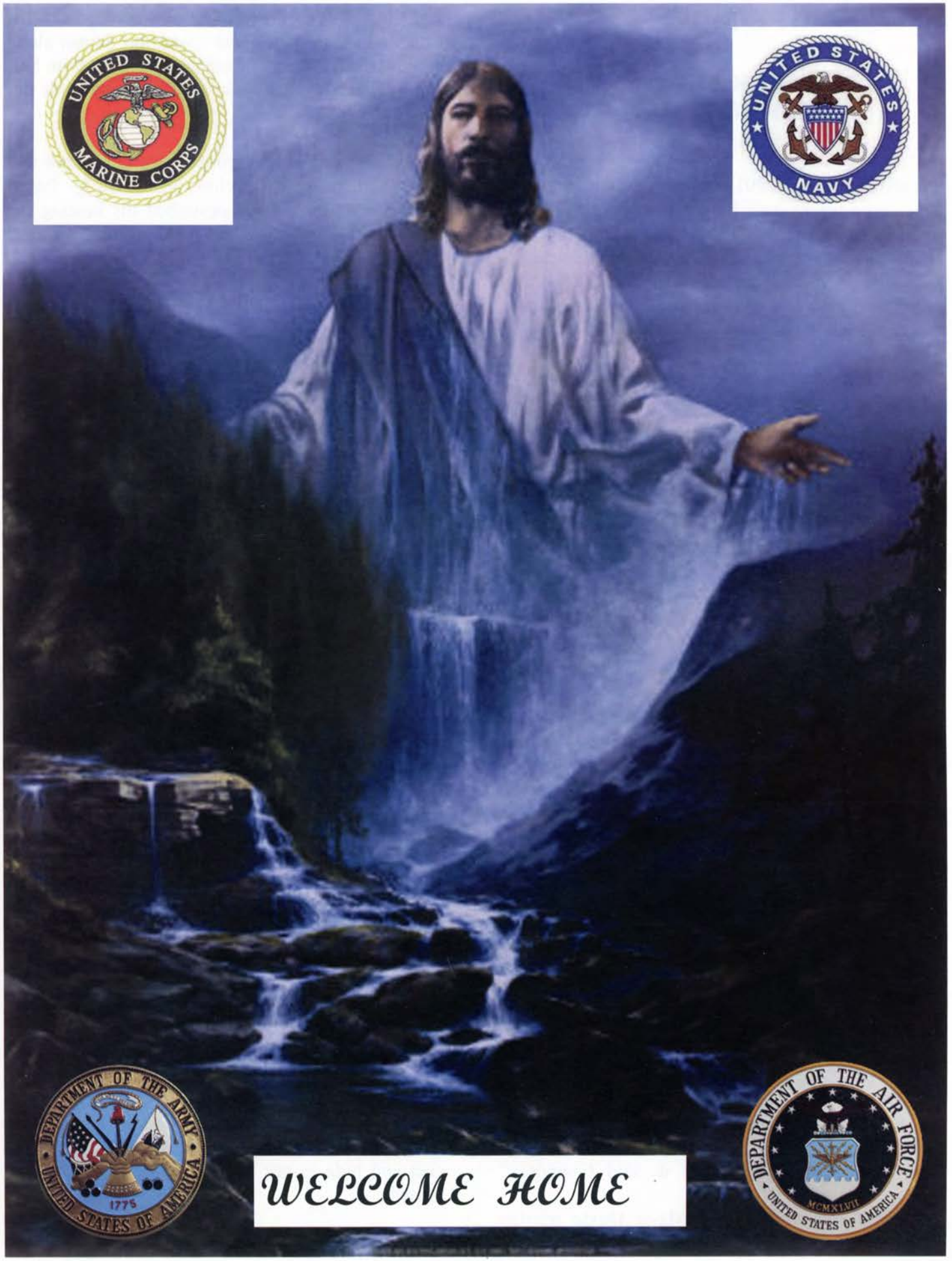
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
UNITED STATES NAVY
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 1775
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA MCMXLVII
WELCOME HOME

KHE SANH VETERANS MEMORIAL SECTION

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
EOCS DONALD BARNES USN CB NMCB-10 KIA 06 Jun 67	Hugh McCauley MCB-4 Seabees
BUL-3 CHUCK HUBBARD USN CB NMCB- 4 KIA 06 Jun 67	Hugh McCauley MCB-4 Seabees
CN BRUCE DASHIEL USN CB MOBILE TEAM WIA 06 Jun 67	Hugh McCauley MCB-4 Seabees
CAPT DANIEL J. COONON USMC VMF (AW) 115 KIA 08 OCT 68	Charles Fetter VMF-314– MAG-11
SGTMAJ JAMES T. GAYNOR USMC H&S CO 1/26 KIA 15 FEB 68	Charles Fetter VMF-314– MAG-11
DENNIS HERB USMC 3RD RECON (PASSED AWAY)	Charles Fetter VMF-314– MAG-11
GILBERT WALL USMC BRAVO CO 1/26 PASSED AWAY	Peter Mudrinich BRAVO CO 1/26
SGT JOHN WAYNE TODD USMC (PASSED AWAY)	John Wertz A CO 1/26 M CO 3/26
PFC KEVIN CASSELL USMC H CO 2/3 KIA HILL 689 21 APR 68	David F. Brombaugh Sr. H CO 2/3
PFC RON KEARSLEY USMC H CO 2/3 KIA HILL 689 21 APR 68	David F. Brombaugh Sr. H CO 2/3
SGT ROBERT BRUCE MOSSO USMC B CO 1/9 KIA 26 MAR 68	Nancy & Tom Mosso
ALL THE SPECIAL FORCES WHO SERVED AT LANG VEI	Lawrence Cooper CO C 5TH SFG
ALL THE MARINES WHO SERVED ON HILL 881S	Robert Coffelt C Btry 1/13 Hill 881S
SSGT JERRY ELLIOTT USA 282ND AHC "BLACKCATS" MIA 21 JAN 68 LAST SEEN ALIVE SURROUNDED BY NVA NEAR OLD FRENCH FORT	Donna Elliott (SISTER)
BILLY K. STEWART USMC A CO 3RD ENGRS PASSED AWAY	Cherry Stewart (WIFE)
JIM DAWDY (SEABEE) & HIS WIFE JEAN PASSED AWAY	The Khe Sanh Veterans

INCOMING

R. SCOTT BERRY USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
A CO 2ND PLATOON, 3RD ANTI TANKS "ONTOS"

In the Summer of 1967, ("The Summer of Love" back in the States), I was one of the two Ontos crews at the temporary steel bridge being built by Engineers over the Rao Quan River, which connected Route 9 at the hair pin turn. We were there with a small contingent of Grunts for just about two weeks.

We had an Ontos crew on each side of the river at the bridge site. Not far away were the remains of an old steel permanent bridge that was down. There were a few memorable times that we had at the bridge.

One day artillery was getting the coordinates to put a "ring of steel" around us when their first rounds came in, they were close enough that the shrapnel was going over our heads through the trees. That was the only time that I took cover in my Ontos from friendly fire. I thought, would 1/2 inch of armor would keep me safe from any shrapnel.

While we were at the bridge site, three Marines came down with malaria within five days. They cooled them in the river awaiting a medevac chopper. I later learned one of the Marines died. Our supplies came in on a CH-34. The only landing place was a small flat area on top of one of the very steep hills. The chopper would hover with just one wheel on the flat portion at the top of the hill, and the supplies of cases of C-rats, five gallon metal water cans, ammunition, etc., would be dropped a few feet to the ground from the helicopter.

The Grunts had to climb up this long and very steep hill to the top, and carry the supplies down. The side of the hill was mostly loose dirt. A Grunt approached the Ontos Commander of my vehicle, and asked if he could take his Ontos up the side of the hill to the top, so they could load the supplies on to it to bring them down. I was the Ontos Driver, and I told my commander that the hill was too steep. I said if there was enough traction to take the Ontos up the side of that hill, there was not enough room in that flat area on top to turn around to bring it back down. The Ontos would have to be turned around, (pivoted), on the side of the very steep hill, and the hill was too steep to do this. There was also a good chance that once the Ontos was sideways on the hill, it could roll over and down the side of the hill.

I had heard about Ontos going over the side of a steep embankment, and rolling over sideways all the way down. On the way down, the turret came off, 106mm recoilless rifles flew off along with other equipment lashed to the outside. A past Ontos accident like that, killed one of the crewmen, and injured the other.

At the time I was a Lance Corporal, and my Ontos Commander was a Corporal. I was a pretty experienced Ontos Driver. And my commander decided the Ontos was capable. I stood my ground, even though he out ranked me, I knew the obvious danger. We came to an "agreement". I told him that if it, would climb it I would drive it up the side of the steep hillside.

But I would not turn the Ontos around on the side of the hill and bring it down. I told him that when I got to the top near the flat area, but still on the steep upgrade, I would lock the brakes on the Ontos, with the front of the Ontos still pointed up towards the top, get out, and he then could get in and turn it around on the side of the hill.

The M-50A1 Ontos weighs 9 1/2 tons. It will outclimb a Tank because it has a more aggressive track with better traction, plus it's a whole lot lighter than a Tank. You steer an Ontos by two control "sticks". They are not hydraulic, they are mechanical, so it takes some effort to operate. It's like the difference in a car or truck of having or not having power steering. You turn an Ontos by pulling back on one control stick, braking that side track, and accelerating. This brakes the track on one side, and the other track is accelerated. The Ontos turns by pivoting. I tried to talk the Corporal out of this, but he could not be persuaded, to recognize the danger.

He said that he would turn the Ontos around on the steep hillside and bring it down with the supplies. (Going down a very steep hill with an Ontos can also get hairy.) As you are going down, it takes a

monumental effort to pull back on the mechanical control sticks to brake this 9 1/2 ton vehicle. As you pick up speed going down a steep hill, you have to make slight steering corrections to keep the vehicle going down straight. And in order to make these steering adjustments, you not only have to slow the track on one side, but you have to accelerate the opposite track to make the turning adjustment. This results in an increase in speed of the Ontos going down the hill.

You might have to make several steering adjustments going down the hill, and I'm talking steeper grades. And each time you make a steering adjustment, you have to accelerate, which just keeps adding more and more speed to your downhill trek. You can't just brake one track without accelerating the opposite track to make a turn or steering adjustment.

The Ontos has a six speed transmission with three forward range positions. There are two automatic shifting gears in each of the three range selections. If you are going down a long steep hill, sometimes the transmission gets to max rpms in the lower gear range when you are trying to accelerate a track to make a steering adjustment.

You need to accelerate to turn, so you have to shift up to the next higher gear range. This causes the Ontos to pick up more speed. It starts getting hairier. So turning that Ontos around on that steep hillside was not the only bad part, but bringing it down that long deep grade and making steering adjustments on the way down, could also not be pleasant.

If you get too far sideways on a steep grade, the Ontos will roll. So, I started driving my Ontos up that long, very steep grade. The ground was pretty solid, so the Ontos was getting good traction without any slippage. I was amazed that it was climbing this steep grade. Common sense said don't do it, but I had agreed to drive it up. When I got near the top, I locked the brakes back and took it out of gear, jumped out of the Driver's hatch. My commander jumped into the Driver's seat, and waited for the Grunts to load the supplies on to the Ontos. The commander started turning the Ontos on the steep hillside, locking one track, while accelerating the opposite track to pivot it on the side of the hill. With some effort, he managed to get it sideways on the steep grade. The track that was facing sideways toward the top of the hill, was the track being accelerated, while the track facing sideways toward the bottom of the hill was the one that was braked to a stop.

That's when it really got hairy. Standing on the hillside up from the Ontos, I saw the track that was facing up towards the hill, spinning and bouncing up and down. It was bouncing up about three inches from the ground, and having a hard time making good contact with the dirt ground to turn.

I looked at his face in the Driver's seat as he attempted to turn the Ontos. His demeanor had changed from self-confident and a little cocky, to fright. I think he finally realized that he was in a touchy situation, with the Ontos not responding very well to trying to pivot on that steep hillside, and it was ready to roll over and down the hill with him aboard.

I was scared for him, as I saw the uphill track bouncing up and down, and not getting enough traction to turn the Ontos. He was actually "getting air" between that track and the ground. I thought at the time, one could probably grab the top edge of the Ontos fender on the uphill side, and roll the Ontos over and down the hill. As the spinning uphill track bounced up and down on the ground, the Ontos started to very slowly pivot and turn, until he got it turned and facing downhill.

He managed to drive it down the hill without getting sideways and rolling it. At the bottom of the hill, he was pretty quiet. I just looked at him and shook my head, knowing he was lucky that he wasn't entwined in the wreckage of a mass of twisted 106 barrels and 9 1/2 tons of steel. Needless to say, that was the last time our Ontos went up that steep hill. I have seen later day photos of that area showing that steep hillside and I think how questionable it was for even driving it up that grade.

Another memorable time for me, involved left over in Vietnam. One afternoon, we observed that the long stretch of the side of a grass-covered hill, (on the other side of the river as steep as the hill climbed by our Ontos), leading up from the road, was on fire. It burned in a long horizontal line upwards, starting at the bottom of the hill. The flames

weren't very high in the short grass, yet there were a couple of ground detonations in the burning area. We were then told that the side of the hill was mined with old French mines. Days before the fire, I had thought about taking a walk up the side of that hill. It was all open. Good thing I didn't. That area with the mines had no wire, warning signs, nor any indications at all that there were old French mines there.

I was at Khe Sanh with 2nd Platoon, Alpha Company, 3rd Anti-Tank Bn. from the middle of May 1967 to the end of the third week of November 1967 when my tour was up. My Platoon Commander, 1stLt. Philip Howard Sauer was KIA in a NVA ambush on Hill 861 on 24Apr67, at the start of the Hill Fights.

At that time, we had two of our Ontos at Khe Sanh, and two at Gio Linh, and short a fifth Ontos. I was with the two at Gio Linh, until we joined the rest of our platoon at Khe Sanh around 15May67.

I have a lot of color slides from my time period there. 81mm mortar crews, artillery guns and crews, a105 artillery gun with "Snoopy" painted on it, and a black Marine Grunt holding up a 6-7 foot long Black Cobra. After we patrolled through the area east of the base in the heavy undergrowth, we met a Black Marine Dog Handler with his German Shepherd, Bird Dog spotter planes,and Hueys in the revetment area and near the Hills.

I have color slides of a C-130on 15 Oct 67 just after it crashed and burned on the runway during the making a LAPES of pallets of sandbags. I think I have a photo or two of the "Air America" larger single engine plane that landed at Khe Sanh. One of the South Vietnamese crew was walking around the aircraft, checking it. The engine was still running with the prop spinning. The guy walked right into the prop, and of course it killed him instantly. And another "prop" or rotor incident. We had a bunker on the North side of the runway, near the west end of the runway. One day I was standing outside that bunker, gazing across the runway to a CH-34 that had just landed, and he kept the engine running and the rotors turning. I saw a Marine by the side doorway of that helicopter, and he was unloading five gallon metal water cans from the helicopters side door. Apparently this was a re-supply chopper that was ferrying supplies to the nearby hill or other nearby locations. The Marine was flinging those empty water cans out as fast as he could throw them. In his enthusiasm, he didn't let go of one fast enough, and instead of the can getting thrown out horizontally, it went up and struck one of the blades of the main rotor. The rotor blade was broken, and the unbalanced rotor started shaking the helicopter until the pilot cut the engine.

If there is any interest in these photos, I will scan them, and put them up on a photo site or here on this website. Too bad we didn't have digital cameras like we have now. I probably would have taken thousands of photos, but back then 35mm film and development was comparatively expensive for 20 to 36 prints or slides. Plus, getting it developed quickly and easily was sometimes a problem.

I first posted a "novel" on the Guest Book of the KSV website back around December1998. It was my first post to any website, as I had just gotten on to the Internet. Later that little "novel" appeared to my surprise, in Red Clay in 2001. I have only been to two KSV reunions, both in Chicago, one in July 2001, and the other in July 2005. Don't know if I will be attending more. At both the 2001 and 2005 reunions, I was amazed and delighted at the warm camaraderie among all who were there. I remarked to others when I got home, that it was the nicest group of people, all in the same place at the same time.

I felt a little awkward at those reunions, even though I was at Khe Sanh for 6 1/2 months, as I was not there during the Siege. If someone asks me where I was in Vietnam, I tell them the different places, including Khe Sanh, but I quickly tell them that I got out of Khe Sanh and Vietnam, two months before the 77 Day Siege started. I don't want to appear as a Khe Sanh "wannabee" or take anything away from those who were at Khe Sanh and the surrounding hills during the Siege. I think I have run out of bandwidth with this "message", so I will stop.

Semper Fi

FOXTROT PAPPA 1 ALPHA: FORMER MARINE SALUTES HIS BUDDIES

PONTOTOC – These days, Scott Black is a family man and businessman. He's been renovating his house in Pontotoc to add another room. A few days ago, he was in the attic and found a box containing a special photograph.



Pontotoc resident Scott Black took this photograph of his fellow Marines in 1967 in Vietnam. Pictured, from left, are Ron T. Curley, awarded the Navy Cross; Jim Allday, awarded the Navy Commendation Medal; Addison, killed in action; Jim Boynton, killed in a motorcycle accident after the war; and Arnie Bruce Rau, awarded the Silver Star for Gallantry in Action

All of the sudden, "these days" didn't matter nearly as much as what took place more than four decades ago in Vietnam.

"I volunteered," 66-year-old Black said. "I was at Ole Miss and decided I wasn't doing much with my life at the time. I thought, I'll join the Marine Corps."

Black had taken the photograph in 1967 near Phu Bai. He doesn't remember all of his buddies' full names, but he clearly recalls what they lived through together.

"I was up Sunday morning drinking coffee on our back porch. The picture was on the table behind me. It was still dark," Black said. "I was just standing there staring at the woods behind our house. I don't know why, but I began to cry out loud and uncontrollably. I don't know when I've done something like that. My wife was holding me and frantically asking, 'What's wrong? What is this picture and who are these people?'"

If you have the time on the day after Veterans Day, Black would like to answer those questions for you, too.

"They were just a bunch of 19- and 20-year-old kids who fought and some died in the mud paddies, the elephant grass and jungles of South Vietnam," he said.

Their radio call sign was Foxtrot Pappa 1 Alpha, and they were 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, F Company, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines. Black said the word "grunt" applied. They were infantrymen, who took the fight directly to the enemy.

"They were real people from all walks of life across the U.S. They had names like Allday, Curley and Rau," he said. "They were heroes. Not movie heroes, but the real thing."

Morgan from Indiana was killed in action; Hangus from Utah was shot in the face but survived; Johnson from Tennessee earned the Bronze Star with a "Combat V" for heroism. The list of buddies includes Pachaco, Smith, Willie and "Doc."

"The names go on," Black said. "Those that were no longer there and those who came to take their place."

Sgt. Ronald T. Curley was awarded the Navy Cross for repeatedly exposing himself to gunfire to lead his platoon during a three-hour battle. He single-handedly assaulted two enemy bunkers, silencing the automatic weapons inside. After the battle, he made three trips under sniper fire to carry wounded to a helicopter landing zone.

(Curley) received a battlefield promotion and was sent back to Quantico, Virginia," Black said. "He served two more tours in Vietnam as an officer. Today, he has a wonderful family and lives in southern California."

Sgt. Jim Allday received the Navy Commendation Medal. He's a retired consultant living in the mountains of California, where he's a family man and "an old tree-hugger," Black said.

Not all homecomings went smoothly for the men of Foxtrot Pappa 1 Alpha.

"I found out that Arnie Rau had become squad leader and that one night there was a 'botched ambush' and five or six of our Marines had been killed," Black said. "Arnie felt responsible, something he never got over. Arnie Bruce Rau died homeless and an addict right here in the United States of America."

Black said he "often wondered how many hundreds of so-called 'normal people' had walked by or stepped over Arnie Rau, while he lay passed out on a sidewalk, never knowing who he was, what he had done and the great sacrifices he had made for this country."

Rau was awarded the Silver Star for Gallantry in Action for his service. Black wondered how many other veterans from Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan had followed Rau's path after combat.

"We all need to realize that there are heroes all around us. We just don't know," Black said. "They may be your neighbor or the young lady at the checkout at Walmart. They could be the police officer that gave you a ticket last week, or the guy that picks up your garbage, or the 20-year-old kid that works on the assembly line at the furniture market."

A photograph found in an attic inspired Black's thoughts about yesterday and today. That same photograph provides a partial explanation of why it can be hard for people to notice the heroes around them.

Curley and Allday are in that shot and received email copies the other day. Black said they saw the young kids they used to be. They didn't see heroes.

"Never crossed their minds," he said.

SHORT ROUNDS

KHE SANH VETERAN JACK DAY, H&S CO 1/9, REFLECTS ON DAY HE JOINED THE MARINES WITH FOUR CLOSE BUDDIES

Veterans Day 2012 is a good time to pay tribute to five United States Marines who entered the Marine Corps together back in August of 1967 after graduating from Moores Hill High School that year, except Ebbie Roberts, who graduated in 1966. These young American patriots were carrying on a tradition that dates back to the beginning of our nation when they would volunteer to gain, protect and preserve our freedoms. Thank God there are men and women today who continue with that pride and patriotism and are willing to make tremendous sacri-



fices to serve in the Armed Forces of the U.S. The five are Tanne Burton, Jack Day, Loyd "Ebbie"



"YEP, SAME FIVE GUYS"

Roberts, Bob Wetzler and Frank Cummins.

TANNE BURTON

Tanne was born Oct. 24, 1948, to Ruth and Kirby Burton and grew up in Moores Hill and graduated from Moores Hill High School in 1967. His dad was a World War II veteran and was on a "Higgins Boat" (LCVP) which supported the amphibious landings in the South Pacific from LST's. Kirby Burton served as a sergeant and participated in many beach landings.

A Marine Corps recruiter came to Moores Hill to talk to students about signing up for the Marines and this got them to thinking about, it but they didn't make any commitments at that time.

would go to Vietnam. They could go in on a delayed entry program too so they could get their affairs in order.

Tanne said eventually Frank Cummins got in on the act too and became the fifth member of the group. It wasn't one of those pacts that kids make in school to do something after high school but it just all fell into place quickly. In August 1967 they went to Cincinnati and were inducted and officially became a part of The Few, The Proud, The Marines! They were off to beautiful San Diego, Calif., for boot camp at Camp Pendleton.

It was a very big change from home life in tiny Moores Hill.

Tanne said the usual 13 weeks of boot camp turned into only eight weeks of very accelerated training and involved a lot of running to get in shape. They stayed in tents instead of barracks too. They were preparing them for Vietnam. They took their Infantry Training Regiment at Camp Pendleton too and then Tanne went to El Toro for deployment to Vietnam.

Tanne was flown to Guam, Okinawa, and finally to DaNang, Vietnam. Tanne served with the 7th Engineers of the 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division in an Engineering outfit and they were exposed to everything you can imagine while trying to build bridges. The enemy frowns on such activities and they became known as the "Purple Heart" Division. Tanne said he was at Quang Tri, Go Hau City near the DMZ, Chu Lai and Hue, building the floating bridges. These emergency floating bridges were very important. He was even in Cambodia.

He participated in such operations as Meade River and Squirrel Hunt. He said he didn't realize it at the time but this was building his future for him too, once he would return to civilian life. He was in Vietnam from February 1968 to April 1969. He attained the rank of Corporal in the Marines and said there were many long and hot days spent in Vietnam. Tanne and Bobby Wetzler had talked about joining the Navy but wound up as Marines. They saw each other in Vietnam and were able to take an in-country R&R together at DaNang. Tanne took his regular R&R at Bangkok, Thailand, for eight days and another one in Taipei.

After his "Tour of Duty" in Vietnam, Tanne returned to Camp Pendleton, Calif., because his MOS was a 'critical' one until he was discharged Aug. 16, 1969. He went to work at the I&M Power Plant but decided after a year that wasn't for him. He went to New Orleans and used the skills he learned operating heavy equipment in the Marines to go to work building canals for 10 years and traveled all over the place and eventually became a superintendent overseeing the construction of the canals and pumping stations.

He traveled around the country after this job with Hamon Power as an explosive expert. He had to take schooling at Penn State University to become

an expert handling these explosives. He decided to stop traveling and started working at the Aurora Terminal, then went to P&G for approximately 10 years working in the boiler house operating power plant equipment. He finally finished up working at Seagram's for about eight years in the maintenance department as a pipe fitter. Tanne said he worked in 48 states, only missing out on Oregon and Washington in his travels around the country.

Tanne said the best thing he ever did was to join the Marines because it gave him the confidence to do anything he set his mind to do. He looks back on those challenging days and knows that's what made him the man he is today.

Some of Tanne's awards include: Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, National Defense Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and the Combat Action Ribbon. Tanne has a twin brother, Shawn, who served in the Army in Hawaii and another brother, Gevan. Tanne has two daughters, Cathleen and Karrah, along with two grandsons and a granddaughter. Today, he resides on Dutch Hollow Road in Aurora. He was honored to be able to go to Washington, D.C., in June with the other four who went into the Marines with him and it was the first time all five had been together at one time since they went into the Marines.

Tanne is also proud that he started going to the Aurora Elementary School in 1992 and enjoyed working with teachers Judy Ullrich and Phee Ellinghausen to promote Veterans Day and continued this Tanne is also proud that he started going to the Aurora Elementary School in 1992 and enjoyed working with teachers Judy Ullrich and Phee Ellinghausen to promote Veterans Day and continued this program for 10 years. It started out with Tanne and Nick Ullrich going to the classroom and showing military items and talking to the students and eventually led to programs taking place in the gym. Thanks to teachers like this they were able to get the word out why our veterans are so important and how many sacrifices they have made. He wanted to make sure the Veterans of today get treated better than when he came home from Vietnam.

Those in Desert Storm, Iraq and Afghanistan have so much support today and he firmly believes that's because of the dedication and support of the Vietnam veterans.

FRANK CUMMINS

Frank was born Dec. 16, 1949, to Rose and Carl Cummins. He grew up in Moores Hill and graduated from Moores Hill High School in 1967.

Frank said all five of them were together at Camp Onofre at Camp Pendleton, Calif., for boot camp and ITR. He said boot camp was such a challenge and so different from everyday life in Moores Hill, but it paid off when he officially became a proud United States Marine.

Frank said it's something you have to experience to understand but he felt so strong and invincible when the five of them were together at Camp Pendleton. Later, when they were separated, he felt like he was "left out to dry" and the close camaraderie they had was gone. But, after all, he was now a Marine and was ready to serve where he was needed. After leaving Camp Pendleton, Frank received orders to go to Vietnam but when his brother, John, was sent there, Frank didn't have to go to Vietnam. Frank is very proud of his brother, John, who volunteered to leave Germany and go to Vietnam. He's proud they both served our nation.

Frank worked in administration and was sent to Okinawa to serve with the 3rd Force Maintenance Regiment with the 3rd Marine Division for one year with ordinance maintenance. After his time in Okinawa, he returned to the U.S. and finished up his time at El Toro, Calif., after a nice 40-day leave back home. He had entered in August 1967, was discharged in August 1969, and attained the rank of Corporal (E-4) and also a NCO.

He has two brothers, John and Ernie, and one sister, Lana Ison, all of Moores Hill. He married his wife, Sara (Burton) ,from Moores Hill, in 1978, and they have three sons, Logan, Brent and Ryan. They reside on Ind. 350 in Moores Hill. Frank works for Monsanto in Addyston, Ohio, and is still employed there but the name of the company is now INEOS and he plans to work two more years and then enjoy retirement. Frank is proud to have served our great nation and fully supports those serving today, especially those in combat situations.

BOB WETZLER

Bob Wetzler is the son of Wanda and Charles "Skeeter" Wetzler and grew up with two brothers, Tommy and Doug, and one sister, Barbara, in Moores Hill.

Bob graduated from Moores Hill High School in 1967. Bob and Tanne Burton were great friends growing up and Tanne said Bob's cousin, Gene Moorehead, watched out for them so they didn't get into too much trouble.

Bob has a strong feeling for the U.S. and believes that patriotism is an essential part of supporting our country.

When Bob graduated from boot camp and ITR he went home on leave and then returned to Camp Pendleton for artillery training. He was ordered to Vietnam where he was assigned to G Battery, 3rd Marine Battalion of the 11th Marine Regiment - known as the "Cannon Cockers." He served as a Corporal at a place known as Hill 10 where they supplied fire support for the 7th Marines. This area overlooked a place known as "Happy Valley" which was a major staging area for the VietCong (VC) and North Vietnamese Army (NVA).

It was an area of intense battles and firepower. They participated in Operation Mameluke, which was a major offensive from May to October of 1968 involving many Marine forces, with many casualties on both sides. Hill 10 was located approximately 10 miles southwest of DaNang. The enemy forces were notorious for firing 122 MM rockets at American forces and camps and they were very powerful weapons. Bob served here from January 1968 until February 1969. He then returned to the U.S. to Camp LeJeune, S.C., until his discharge in June 1969.

Bob worked at Monsanto from September 1969 until his retirement in 2004. He and wife, Sally, were married in 1979 and reside on U.S. 421 at the edge of Versailles. Bob has two children, Sally has three, and they have one child together. They have 15 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Bob said the trip to Washington, D.C., was an eye opener for him and he really enjoyed being with his old buddies to talk about the many interesting things that have happened to them. They sat up late each evening at the hotel discussing their exploits. To be able to be together again and see so many interesting places in Washington, D.C., made the trip exciting. The favorite part of this trip is watching the presentation by four members of the group when they set the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. It was tough to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and see so many names you recognize.

LOYD "EBBIE" ROBERTS

Ebbie Roberts was born June 23, 1948, at Milan, to Curt "Shorty" and Aileen Roberts. He has two brothers, Benny and Randy.

Ebbie attended grade school and high school at Moores Hill and graduated from Moores Hill High School in 1966. Ebbie had checked to see where he was on the draft list in 1967 and discovered he was number one so he came up with the idea to join the Marines and went to see his buddies and as they say, "the rest is history." They were on there way to become Marines!

Ebbie and his wife, Louanna "Lana" (Goff), have been married for 20 years. Ebbie has a daughter, Christy, and three stepsons; Otto, David and Mike Grimes, along with nine grandchildren. Ebbie and Lana reside at 714 Nowlin Ave. in Greendale.

After graduation, Ebbie enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, along with four buddies, Tanne Burton, Bob Wetzler, Frank Cummins and Jack Day. Ebbie was inducted in August 1967 and was discharged as a Lance Corporal in August 1969.

He took his boot camp at Camp Pendleton, CA along with his ITR (Infantry Training Regiment). He was then sent to Vietnam for his 13-month "Tour of Duty" and was assigned to Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines of the 3rd Marine Division (A-1-12, 3rd Marines).

Ebbie was wounded in action at Camp J.J. Carroll near the DMZ in Vietnam April 30, 1968, by shrapnel from an exploding enemy round. He had been in Vietnam for approximately nine months. He was evacuated to Okinawa for 33 days of surgery and

rehabilitation and then was flown to Chicago for follow-up rehab for another six months. After he recovered, he returned to Camp Lejeune for one day and then was assigned to Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, as an instructor for the 155MM Howitzers.

After his discharge from the Marines, Ebbie returned home and continued working for Schenley Distillery for 20 years until it closed. He then went to work for Reliance Medical in Mason, Ohio, and continues in that job today after 23 years.

Ebbie is a member of the Disabled American Veterans (DVA) Chapter No. 75 and the Moores Hill Legion Post No. 209.
Ebbie and Lana's granddaughter, London, is married to local Afghanistan Purple Heart Recipient and American Hero, Brett Bondurant. They are presently in Texas as Brett continues his rehabilitation from his injuries. Ebbie is very proud of his service to our great nation and supports those serving today, especially those in combat situations.

Ebbie Roberts was presented with a Lawrenceburg Fall Fest Purple Heart Honor Award plaque in September 2012.

JACK DAY

Jack was born on March 21, 1949, in Mount Sterling, Ky., to Mr. and Mrs. Harley E. Day and moved to Lawrenceburg, Ind., and attended schools there until he transferred to Moores Hill High School for his sophomore year. Jack has three sisters, Kathy Day Ryan, Patricia (Patty) Day and Regina McConnell. He has two brothers, Harley Glen and Michael. Jack enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in August 1967 along with four high school buddies. He took his boot camp (basic training) at Camp Pendleton, Calif., and then entered his ITR there also. He then completed four weeks of communication training as a radioman and field wire man.

Jack serve 13 months in Vietnam from January 1968 to February 1969 with the 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division in the Northern I Corps, Quang Tri Province, near the DMZ. The 1st Battalion Marines were assigned to the 26th Marines at the Battle of Khe Sanh during the Tet Offensive of January 1968 to April 1968. During this 77-day siege of heavy mortar and rocket attacks, along with enemy ground attacks, Jack was wounded by shrapnel in his left hand from an enemy mortar round. Jack was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries sustained while in a combat situation against enemy forces. Jack was also awarded a Sharpshooter Rifle Badge, National Defense Service Medal with one star, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, U.S. Marine Combat Action Ribbon and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. Jack was an E-4 (NCO) serving as a Corporal.

Upon his return to the U.S., Jack was stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C., with the 10th Marines Artillery Battery until his discharge June 10, 1969.

On July 8 through 10, 2011, Jack was one of 50 veterans from Southeastern Indiana who went on a three-day bus trip to Washington, D.C., where he was one of the four wreath presenters at the Tomb of the Unknowns. It's a very humbling experience and such an honor to be able to participate in that ceremony. When the bus returned to Lawrenceburg Sunday evening, July 10, Jack was met by his family and taken to Lawrenceburg Speedway to watch the races.

While he was there, the announcer introduced him to the packed house of race fans as a "Vietnam Hero and Purple Heart Recipient who had just returned from Washington, D.C., where he had placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns" and the crowd went wild. They were giving him "high fives" and coming up to him and hugging him and shaking his hand. It was quite a tribute for a man who has given so much and is proud to be a United States Marine.

Jack and his wife, Marie, are the parents of two sons; Jack Jr. and Jason. Jack and Marie have one grandson, Wyatt, and two granddaughters, Jordan and Mariah. They have been married for 43 years and reside near Friendship, Ind., on the family farm of 61 acres.

Jack retired from the AEP, Indiana & Michigan, Tanners Creek Power Plant in Lawrenceburg, Ind., in 2008 after 38 years of service as a supervisor. Son, Jason is also employed there. Jack was also the recipient of a Lawrenceburg Fall Fest Purple Heart Honor Award plaque at the 2011 Fall Fest.

SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE
BY CHAIRMAN DAN FISHER



The fourth year of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation continues to be a growing success as shown by our history. (2009 - six scholarship awards, 2010 had seven, 2011 had ten awards and 2012 had 121) That's 35 applications and over $20,000 in awards. Membership donations and proceeds from the silent auction are the sources for the funding of our scholarship. The Scholarship Review Committee consisting of Bill Jayne, Bruce "T-Bone" Jones, Dennis Mannion and Larry McCartney worked hard reviewing applications. Thanks to Treasurer and KSV President Tommy Eichler for his timely approvals and support.

William Berry - 2nd year award. Grandnephew of SSgt. Jerry Elliot, USA, 282nd AHC, MIA 21 Jan. 1968, and grandson of Assoc. member Donna Elliot. "Sam" attends Central Baptist College planning for BS in education while participating in college wrestling.

Laura Haines - 2nd year award. Granddaughter of James Sluss, USMC, 26th Marine HQ Co. Laura plans to study nutrition science and optometry at the Kansas State Univ. and practice optometry in rural Kansas. Laura has achieved an outstanding academic and athletic record in high school and college.

Taylor McElroy - 2nd year award. Granddaughter of George Myrick, D 1/26. Taylor is a junior at Southwestern Oklahoma State University majoring in nursing and plans to become a nurse anesthesiologist. She is active in student government and plays basketball at the university.

Troy Moose - 2nd year award. Grandson of John Wolfe Sr. 3/26. Troy attends Crowder College studying agriculture science and alternative energy. Troy is active in community service projects and agricultural science clubs.

Mari Tibbetts - 2nd year award. Daughter of Arion Tibbetts, L 3/26. Mari attends the University of New Hampshire pursuing a degree in Child and Family Studies and dance. Mari continues her vocation in dance while volunteering in her community for food shelves and diversity awareness programs.

Stephanie Lownds _1st year award. Granddaughter of Col. David Lownds, CO 26th Marines. Stephanie will be attending the Univ. of Wyoming to study Communications and Journalism. She has a strong high school athletic background and involvement in civic projects.

Michele Patton _1st year award. Daughter of Shawn Patton, C Btry, 1/13. Michelle will pursuing a career in geriatric or surgical nursing at Texas Tech U. and is active in community, musical theater and choir.

Dillon Murphy _1st award. Grandson of Richard Donaghy, HQ 26th Marines. Dillon will be attending UCLA to study engineering. He is active in youth ministry and has achieved awards for academics and track.

Shannon Friel-1st award. Daughter of Thomas Friel, G 2/26. Shannon will be attending the College of St. Rose as a music major in performance with the harp. She excelled in athletics and academics in high school and travelled to Cambodia for mission work in 2011.

Shelbi Norden _1st award. Granddaughter of Russ Turner, A 1/26. Shelbi will attend Regeancy Beauty Academy to attain a career in cosmetology and the beauty products industry. She plans to operate her own private business someday.

Drew Turner _1st award. Grandson of Russ Turner, A 1/26. Drew will attend St. Louis Community College at Meramec in general studies courses. He plans for a medical career.

Satchel Wilkinson - 1st award. Grandson of Lawrence Wilkinson HQ Btry 1/13. Satchel will attend California State U to study Spanish. He excelled in athletics in high school and coached youth sports in his community.

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THE 1968 EXHIBIT

By Dan Fisher

1968 THE YEAR OF THE MONKEY.

Few years in modern times capture a decade of turmoil and change as does the year, 1968. Because of the significance of 1968, the Minnesota Historical Society embarked on a project to capture the happenings of each month of that year and provide an interactive exhibit that allowed the public to better understand, remember or reflect on the changes our nation weathered in that decade.

Central to "The 1968 Exhibit" was the Vietnam War which focuses on the month of **February**, 1968, a month of intense combat during the so-called TET Offensive, when casualty lists reached an all-time high and the nation tore itself in apart at home. The other eleven months of 1968 would detail a family living room circa **January**, 1968 with a black & white TV set tuned to Walter Cronckite's nightly war news. **March** witnesses the beginnings of the radical and feminist movements. **April** is dedicated to Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. **May** describes the Civil Rights' 'Freedom' marches in Washington, D.C. Bobby Kennedy's assassination and long train ride back to Washington occur in **June.** The plastic look of American pop culture and hippie fashion occupy **July**. Riots explode at the Chicago Convention in **August**. Olympic and professional sports highlights are **September** and **October**. The 1968 political campaigns and elections are displayed in **November** and finally, in **December** the exhibit ends in another living room flanked by a full sized replica of the Apollo 8 module and a folded American flag in a case on the mantle. Since music and television were so prevalent in America there are interactive settings of the popular songs, movies and TV shows of those times looping for viewers (including huge bean-bag chairs to crash and watch from).

Artifacts for each separate monthly exhibit were donated or loaned by other historical societies, museums or private individuals.

Since Vietnam figured so centrally to the exhibit the History Center's staff decided that the iconic symbol of that war was the Bell, UH1 "Huey" helicopter. Not just a large picture of one, but a real one. Needless to say, by 2010 "Hueys" had become very hard to find or very expensive. So a search went forward to find a non-flying, Bell UH-1 "Huey" airframe. One was finally found at an aircraft boneyard in Washington State. Helicopter UH-1H 66-01008 was hauled by flatbed truck cross country to the Minnesota History Center Workshop in St. Paul, MN arriving on Oct. 14, 2010.

A group of volunteers (here-in called the "Working Party" or "WP") gathered to begin this restoration of "Huey" 66-01008. The "WP", growing to about 30 individuals, included civilian and former military aviation buffs, History Center Staff and a core group of Vietnam Veterans, including several Army "Huey" pilots, air and ground crew, two Navy SAR crew…and one Marine. Two members of the "WP" even shared time on the Khe Sanh Battlefield. Tom H. served as a UH-1B Army, gunship pilot escorting SOG inserts to points west and north of Khe Sanh while the author served as a "D" 1/26 rifleman in the hills and valleys around the Combat Base. During our long hours in the workshop Tom and I sometimes compared notes about our times at Khe Sanh but found our perspective to be 180 degrees opposite of each other, him being way up there and me being way down there.

Our "Huey" 66-01008 was built in December 1966 and entered service in Vietnam in May 1967 and served there until December 1970 as a utility and troop transportation helicopter or "slick" in the 765th Transportation Battalion and HHC 269th CAB. It then returned to the U.S. to serve in a variety of domestic commands. It again saw foreign service in Korea until December, 1975. After being mustered out of military service, "Huey" 66-01008 continued to fly for private owners before being bought for salvage purposes at the Washington State firm. The History Center felt itself lucky to get it.

The "Working Party" immediately dived into the restoration. Deadlines were set and the volunteers met early every Wednesday to share coffee, rolls (thanks to the History center Staff) and stories before starting on their six hour day. "Huey" 66-01008 quickly became a skeleton of itself, stripped of engine, wiring, cargo doors, gas tanks, wall blankets, multi-colored paint jobs, mice and bird's nests. Power washing, grinding and sanding gave its aluminum skin a buffed, dull shine. Missing parts were fabricated.

The restoration phase lasted four months and included new painted surfaces in 'official' Vietnam OD green and gray with detailed painting of aircraft numerals. Severely scratched windshields, green house and chin bubble plexi-glass surfaces were carefully polished out. Huge rotor blades and the rotor tower were reconditioned to look operable. Finally, there sat "Huey" 66-01008 in brand new 'clothes' looking ready to fly as a "medevac" chopper ("Dust-off" in Army terms) with red crosses, stretcher racks and all. The entire volunteer "Working Party" beamed and posed for pictures!

Now came the really hard part. How to dismantle and cut "Huey" 66-01008 into pieces so that it could



PROJECT ARRIVAL

be packed onto 4 - twelve x four foot carts, easily moved into one 40 foot truck trailer, moved up flights of steps, through standard sized museum doors, be reconstructed in one day and look ready to fly! Not an easy task, so the "WP" spent endless hours in front of a white board guesstimating with dry erase pens how it should be done (there were **NO MANUALS** for this operation). Deft work with saws-all cutters, plasma torches, hack saws and drills sliced and diced "Huey" 66-01008 into lengths resembling halved canoe hulls. The tail boom was removed and the rotor tower made to tilt down by hydraulic jack for easy removal. Windscreens were quickly attached and removed by Velcro tape. Sliced sections of fuselage were pinned and buckled together like a life-sized, model aircraft. Finally, after one year and 3000 man hours, it was done.

By fall, 2011 "Huey" 66-01008 was ready to make



ALL CUT UP



ASSEMBLY

its debut at the grand opening of the "1968 Exhibit". On October15, 2011 the exhibit opened to much local fanfare and "Huey" 66-01008 was the success it was expected to be. In fact, the crowds around the helicopter became a chokepoint in crowd flow. Our "Huey" was modified to include a movie projector inside the air frame roof to show Vietnam footage on the opposite, closed cargo door. This was accompanied by voice over of eight Vietnam Veterans' personal vignettes. A nearby sealed display case contained artifacts donated by the "WP" including a unit of C-Rations, dog tags, 'boonie' hats, letters home, a folded American Flag and the author's well -worn, Ka-Bar knife and sheath.

On my several trips to view the "1968 Exhibit" I noticed that the "Huey" was the most popular part

of the exhibit and also the most respectful. The viewers would quietly walk up, stop and listen to the stories and movies, touch the "Huey's" skin and gaze into the pilot cockpits and troop compartment. Many times, middle aged men would stand apart,



PAINT MASKING

arms folded and just look "Huey" 66-01008 over in a knowing way. I only wish that the attendees to the



DAN FISHER & VOLUNTEERS FINISH PAINTING PROJECT

2011 Khe Sanh Reunion in Rochester, MN had been able to view the "1968 Project" when it was ready.

After 18 very successful weeks in St. Paul the "1968 Exhibit" was deconstructed and packed (in one day) and moved to the Oakland Museum of California for a 34 week showing ending on Nov. 25, 2012. It has since moved to Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh and remains there until May, 2013. Other venue openings include National Constitution Center - June 2013, the Missouri History Museum - October 2013, Omaha Durham Museum - February, 2014 and on out to Texas in July, 2014, into Chicago - October, 2014, Denver, CO - February



COMPLETED PROJECT "GREAT JOB GUYS"

2015 and finally Bowers Museum in Santa Ana June 2015. Other museums are getting in line to host the "1968 Exhibit" at future dates. All venues are for roughly 13 weeks each. You can view details of the "1968 Project" and the Minnesota History Center at www.mnhs.org or http://the1968exhibit.org/ .The final word at each museum showing has been that the "1968 Exhibit" is as nice a tribute to the service of Vietnam Veterans as one could ask. It has been a privilege for me to be a part of it.

Semper Fi
Dan Fisher



MINNESOTA HISTORY CENTER
345 KELLOG BLVD
ST PAUL, MN 55102

KSV IN THE NEWS
MADISON COUNTY BOARD HONORS KHE SANH VETERAN

KHE SANH VETERAN SHERRILL BYRD USA 1/5TH INF DIV MECH

Sherrill Byrd now serves as pastor at church in Madison, Illinois.



SOUTHERN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
921 BISSELL ST PO BOX 38
MADISON IL
PH: 618-877-1305
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SHERRELL BYRD
PASTOR SOUTHERN MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH



SOUTHERN BAPTIST FIRST LADY MAURISTINE BYRD WIFE OF SHERRELL BYRD

One thing Sherrell L. Byrd Jr. knows for sure: God has been watching over him.

There was that time in Vietnam: Enemy soldiers stepped over his body, in the dark, and somehow missed stepping on him. And another time, in the darkness of a Vietnam jungle, he found himself face -to-face with four enemy soldiers who also failed to notice him.

More than once he got involved in firefights that lasted from daybreak to sundown, and lived to tell about it. Then there was the time at Khe Sanh when he and his colleagues in the A Company Fifth Infantry Division of the U.S. Army were surrounded and fought for their lives throughout the night.

Byrd, now a pastor at Southern Missionary Baptist Church in Madison, can't explain it, except to say that he feels God has been with him, even on the day he was blown to pieces after a soldier who was trying to commit suicide, wound up nearly killing them both.

That happened on June 13, 1969.

Byrd was born in 1948 in Oakland, Calif., the oldest of Sherrell and Bertie Byrd's four children. Growing up in Madison, he worked at the Chevrolet Assembly Plant in St. Louis and on Sundays he often



HEALING AT FITSIMMONS 1969

drag raced. One day he received his draft notice in the mail, and Byrd came to Edwardsville where he was shipped off to Fort Ord, Calif., for training.

Shortly after landing at Bien Ho Air Base in South Vietnam, his unit found itself under attack, Byrd wrote on his church's web site. "I know what it's like to take a life, see men blown apart, crawl in leech infested rice paddies, see people suffer and die," Byrd wrote. "I've taken out ambushes, blown people away with mines and wanted more excitement. Shooting people was easy."

They made him feel powerful, like he was somebody. It was also scary. The enemy, he learned, seemed happy to die for the cause, and often there was a stench of rotting corpses in the air.

There were things Byrd saw that he hoped he would never see again: snakes, tigers, large poisonous insects, quicksand, apes, booby traps, mines. And an enemy willing to run at you with bombs strapped to their waist. So many ways to die.

Byrd still remembers June 13, 1969. Soon after he was shot, he realized things weren't right. "I could not see! So I used my left hand to feel my left leg. It was gone!" Byrd wrote on his web site. He reached for his right leg and felt bone: the leg was nearly gone at the knee. There was more. "I had no idea that the top of my right arm had been torn off and my chest torn up," he said. He found out later that his left eye was full of shrapnel and dirt and his



ARMOR COLUMN HEADED FOR KHE SANH

right eye had been blown from its socket.

"My face was shredded, leaving a hole in my forehead. And I was dying. My life was about to end all because one of our men tried to commit suicide. He



M-60 TANK FROM A CO 1/61ST 5TH INF DIV DESTROYED AT KHE SANH

blew us both up!"

Recently Byrd was given the Living Legends Community Service Award by Madison County Board



SHERRELL IN A MOMENT OF REFLECTION

member Gussie Glasper, whose district covers Madison and Venice.

But Byrd nearly didn't make it out of Vietnam that



BRASS CHECKING AREA AFTER BLOODY FIGHT WITH NVA

day. A friend, Douglas "Doc" Haney, reached him first. He stabilized Byrd and helped place him on a helicopter headed to the U.S.S. Repose. Doctors and nurses there sat with him, holding his hand and encouraging him for another trip.

"The battalion surgeon declared him dead on the evacuation helicopter but after landing at a Marine base he began breathing again," Glasper told board members. "He gives God the credit for saving his life."

Byrd, Glasper said, spent a year at Fitzsimons Army Medical Center in Denver. He endured 30 facial surgeries, from facial reconstruction to skin grafts to repairing his hearing loss.

In 1970, the Army granted him full retirement. But the trip back to civilian life was arduous. With the physical and emotional wounds still healing, Byrd found he wasn't up to working at Chevrolet Assembly Plant. "He said he was angry and filled with hate," Glasper said. "In enduring these hardships, he knew he had to change his life for the better." Education, he decided, was the key. Not that it was



ARMORED VEHICLE WITH TRACK BLOWN OFF BY MINE

easy. When a university official informed him that he "wasn't college material," Byrd, Glasper said, "became more resolute in his pursuit of a better life for himself."

By 1975 he had enrolled at SIUE. The first quarter he made the Dean's List. But, ashamed of his ap-

pearance and the way he walked, Byrd soon began taking the "back lots and avoiding walking in the hallways," Glasper said.



LT PEABODY WHO HAD FAITH IN SHERRELL

He despised walking around campus, and his stump often bled. Byrd would have dropped out of school, but several instructors talked him out of it. He wound up taking art education classes, and images of the war began pouring out in his paintings and drawings. It was his therapy, and helped set him on the path to recovery, Glasper said. In some of those classes he began sharing his war experiences. "The classes became quiet as he opened their minds to reality," Glasper said.

After his graduation, in 1979, Byrd started teaching. He was at Lovejoy High School for four years, and later he was hired as an art specialist at Madison High School. His body still ached, but Byrd wasn't ashamed to use a cane when he needed to. Byrd got a two-pronged message from that: You can overcome any pain that comes your way; and it's not an option to simply give up and throw in the towel. Three years ago, he retired from the Madison School District.

Asked for his most memorable moments, Byrd names two: talking two students out of suicide, and convincing another to surrender a gun he planned to use on a family member involved in his brother's murder.

Byrd was Teacher of the Year twice at Lovejoy, and at Madison he received the Golden Apple Award for teaching excellence. He was twice nominated for SIUE's Excellence in Teaching Award. And Glasper says the federal government owns several of Byrd's paintings .

Today, Byrd stays in touch with several hundred students and former students. They call him Dad or Granddad. "He loves the people of the Madison area and they love him," Glasper said.

Last year, Byrd was given the Combat Infantry Badge, the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He was also awarded the oak leaf cluster along with a medal for gallantry and heroism. Years after his Vietnam injuries, Byrd learned that the battalion surgeon who helped rescue him – a man named Bernard Master - was curious whether Byrd survived. Eventually the two men met, and Master confided that Byrd had died on the floor of the helicopter that day. He had lost too much blood and gone into shock. And because his veins had collapsed, medics were unable to get another I.V. into him.

At the Feb. 20 Madison County Board meeting, before the start of business, Glasper called Byrd, his wife Mauristine, and several family members down to the front. Byrd wore a dark suit and tie. Glasper spoke first, then Byrd spoke briefly. It was good to return to Edwardsville, he said, the city from which he left to embark on a military career, and the city where he received training to begin his teaching ca-



3RD SQD. L-R Top Row JESUS FUENTES, SHERRELL BYRD, MICHAEL CENKY, RON SKARRIS,
BOTTOM ROW L-R JEFF FULTON, ABRAHAM DRAYTON (THE GUYS WHO TRIGGERED MINE) RTO MAN-FREDDIE & ALAN BUSH

reer. "I always thank God, he's the one who saved me," he added. "I learned a long time ago to get over the anger I had."

AFTER READING THE ARTICLE ON SHERRELL BYRD, DOUGLAS R. HANEY A COMBAT MEDIC WHO ASSISTED IN HIS MEDICAL EVACUATION, WROTE THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO SHERRELL

OPENING UP FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

Reverend/Sherrell:

From what I personally went through in Vietnam, and from how I was literally trained by my dad to face life and hide deeply my emotions, I have for over 50 years been extremely reluctant in accepting accolades or outwardly showing my feelings when someone offers them. However, your account of Vietnam; your near-death (and/or death experience); your incredible courage under extreme adversity; your heroic challenge to overcome what you have been through have reached so far into my soul and touched so many of my emotions that I am literally profoundly overcome. I thought before our discussions and emails that I loved and cherished our God through our Lord Jesus Christ with open mind and heart. This weekend I have been so proud and absolutely elated by the fact that you survived, that my love for God and his unending merciful glory reached a magnitude totally unequaled in my entire life.



DOUG "DOC" HANEY

It is extremely rare that a medic in the field will ever hear of his/her medical training having saved a life, or even patching up a wound again after the fact. And, I surely cannot accept the fact that I assisted in the saving of anyone's life. Instead, I tend to believe that God alone has restored and preserved one's life. In your case, I was simply his conduit at the right time and in the right place. However, this weekend your kind words brought joyous tears into my soul that filled my heart with warmth and a renewed sense of humble dignity. Though I was the first medic to reach you and begin working on you, God allowed Philip "Doc" White perform his magic as well. I wish I could find him and let him know what a hero he was that fateful day. He also knew exactly what to do and when to do it, and was an incredibly efficient medic. I have been trying to locate him for years now without any success. Even at that, our assistance was only a temporary fix to a highly critical and complicated medical situation. Major (Dr.) Bernard F. Master applied the full extent of his knowledge and skill literally through the direct hands of God himself to pull you through. And if there ever was a man I would fully entrust with my life in a medical emergency, it would be that magnificent medical genius! You should have



L-R SHERRELL BYRD, ALAN BUSH, FREDDIE, CURTIS GREEN, JESUS FUENTES

known him as my Commanding Officer and that of all medics in the field. He is/was the very best officer I have ever had the absolute privilege of serving under. I am very proud that you would take the time to call him and be able to discuss your incredible journey with him. I truly admired you in the field as a true soldier's soldier, and I remember your sense



of humor and extremely polite mannerism. You were deeply appreciated by all of the members of the 1/61st 5th Mech. A-Co., and as was Jesus Fuentes, highly respected for his natural skills in leadership and bravery, so were you also. It was very hard to replace you, and I do not to this very day believe we ever did. The men felt as badly about your tragedy as they did our temporary Company Officer, Capt. Robert W. Clirehugh on the day died so tragically. There was also a great deal of contempt and anger over both Abraham and Capt. Humphrey that might have cost the Captain his life had he not been forcibly removed from his command shortly thereafter.

I do want you to know that for the first time in a long time, I actually wept tears of happiness for you; for what you have gone through; for your very blessed family and wife; for your equally blessed congregation, and all of the most fortunate students you have ever been blessed to teach. When we do get to Heaven, and we will one day..., I want to face our God directly and tell him how deeply appreciative I am that on earth I was introduced and became brothers with one of His greatest human miracles. I want to tell him that we, "Band of Brothers" are truly grateful to be His "sons of the universe" through the Amazing Grace of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thank you for being my valued friend, and I very humbly thank you for your testimony. I have never been so profoundly moved. May God continue to Bless you with a healthy lifestyle and a beautiful life.Your Brother in Soul; and, brothers forever.

Doug "Doc" Haney

SHERRELL'S RESPONSE

Hello Doug,

This is my other e-mail address. I can upload larger documents on this one. First, thank you for giving me Major Master's phone number and address. We had a wonderful conversation. He opened my eyes to the seriousness of the situation. He told me that he remembered it just like it was yesterday. He remembered how the Claymore was set off and who had done it. He also told me, like you did, that it was the worst injury that he had ever seen. He tied off three extremities and started two I.V.'s. He tried to keep me alert by talking to me and asking questions. I remember that. But then he blew me away by his next statement. "Sherrell, you died on the floor of the chopper!" "We lost you!"

He said there were no vitals or anything. I had bled to death. He tried to resuscitate me but i did not respond. Then before landing in Quang Tri they had some vitals. After the Marine surgeons took me, he never knew the outcome. Now he does. Doug, he told me that hearing from me was the best Memorial Day gift he could have ever received. This had haunted him for 40 years. He thought he had failed me. You two have brought my life Full Circle! God is Good. I am also sending you my testimonial that was once on my church web-sight. I updated it today. Have a Blessed Day, Your Brother in Christ,

Sherrell

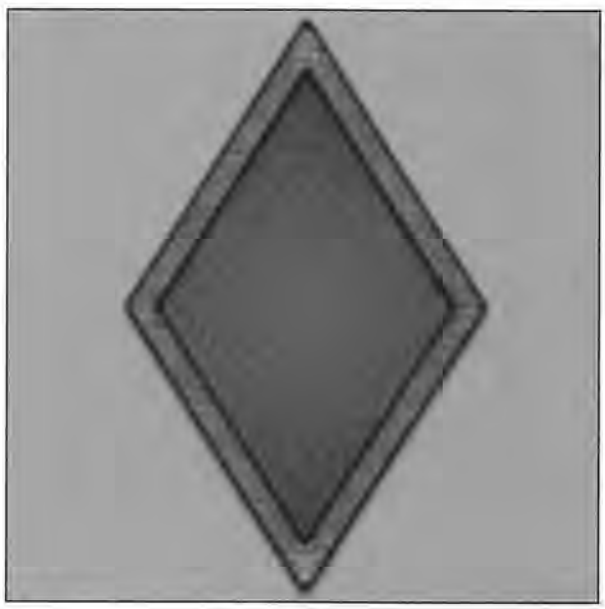

SHORT ROUNDS

With the Article on POW Ron Ridgeway B CO 1/26, I wondered how many veterans who were taken prisoner in Vietnam, ever escaped captivity. Here is a list of the 30 listed as escaping. All were awarded the POW Medal of Valor, as well as other decorations.



THE FIRST POW TO ESCAPE CAPTIVITY: ISAAC CAMACHO USA SFG

Wounded in action by a butt stroke to the head – lined up for execution during a 150KM march to the POW camp. Caged and chained for 20 months. Interrogated by North Vietnamese officials, a Cuban interrogation team, even an Australian journalist, Isaac Camacho never wavered in his quest to escape. He followed strictly the military code of conduct, encouraging other POW's to join with him. Having lost 60 pounds, deathly sick with Malaria, Beriberi, and Hepatitis, Isaac Camacho escaped his POW cage alone on 09 July 1965. Evading the North Vietnamese search patrols seeking to kill him. On 13 July 1965, he made his way to a US Army special forces camp. Finally to cherished freedom. He was awarded a direct commission by the Chief of Staff of the US Army, as well as the



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS (DSC), in 1999 by governor George W. Bush.

Isaac Camacho USA SPECIAL FORCES
Date of birth: 1937
Place of Birth: El Paso, Texas
Home of record: Fabens, Texas
Status: POW
IASSAC was awarded the DSC for actions when he was wounded and captured. He was awarded the **SILVER STAR MEDAL** for actions after he was captured

WALTER W. ECKES USMC
Date of Birth: February 4, 1946
Home of record: New York, New York
Status: POW

Walter Eckes was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured on May 10, 1966. On June 5, 1966, he and fellow prisoner James Dodson, wrested their guards' weapons while they were being fed and escaped, evading the enemy for four days until they reached Allied forces.

JAMES S. DODSON USMC
Date of Birth: July 29, 1942
Date of death: September 2, 1995
Burial Location: Annville, PA
Home of record: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Status: POW

James Dodson was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured near DaNang on May 6, 1966. On June 17, 1966, he and fellow prisoner Walter Walter Eckes wrested their guards' weapons while they were being fed and escaped, evading the enemy for four days until they reached Allied forces.

LARRY D. AIKEN USA
Date of Death:
Died of Wounds: July 25, 1969
Burial Location: Farmingdale, NY
Home of record: Jamaica, New York
Status: POW

Larry Aiken was interned as a Prisoner of War in Southeast Asia after he was captured in South Vietnam on May 13, 1969. Local Vietnamese reported seeing him alive in a Viet Cong hospital and on July

10, 1969, a raid was mounted to recover him. Aiken was found and recovered alive but severely injured and in a coma. He died of his wounds on July 25, 1969.

ROGER D. ANDERSON USA

Date of Birth: November 7, 1946
Date of Death: January 10, 2010
Home of record: Dayton, Texas
Status: POW
Roger Anderson was interned as a Prisoner of War in Southeast Asia after he was captured in South Vietnam on January 3, 1968, and after reports of his live capture by agents in the area, a search was launched by Allied forces. On January 12, 1968, a U.S. helicopter attacked a Sampan containing two Viet Cong soldiers, killing one of them, and enabling Anderson to jump up from the bottom of the boat to attract their attention, enabling his successful rescue.

LEE BREWER USA

Status: POW
Lee Brewer was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured on January 7, 1968 and was held until his successful escape from captivity the following day.

BRUCE A. GRAENING USA

Date of Birth: July 30, 1946
Place of Birth: Akron, Ohio
Home of record: Kenmore, Ohio
Status: POW
Bruce Graening was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured on March 9, 1967 and was held until his successful escape from captivity on March 19, 1967.

DIETER DENGLER USN

Date of Birth: May 22, 1938
Date of Death: February 7, 2001
Burial Location: Arlington, VA
Place of Birth: Wildberg, Germany
Home of record: Hillsborough, California
Status: POW

Dieter Dengler was an American citizen who was born in Germany in 1938. His father was killed and the rest of his family fled the country during the World War II. He arrived in New York City in 1957, drifted to San Francisco and worked as a baker, a forest firefighter and a gold prospector before enrolling at the College of San Mateo and becoming a pilot. Lieutenant (j.g.) Dengler was a Navy pilot when his reconnaissance plane was shot down in 1966 over Laos near the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Captured by communist Pathet Lao forces, he was marched to a prison camp and tortured for five months until his escape on June 30, 1966. He later chronicled his experience in the book "Escape from Laos". He died on February 7, 2001, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He was awarded the **NAVY CROSS** for actions prior and during his capture.

EDWARD C. DIERLING USA

Date of Birth: 2-Feb-43
Home of record: Newark, New Jersey
Status: POW

Edward Dierling was a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured on February 1, 1968, and until his successful escape on February 23, 1968.

North Vietnamese forces captured him after forty-eight hours of savage fighting. He and other POW'were taken to an enemy camp outside the city and held captive there for nineteen days. Throughout the period, Sergeant Dierling remained alert for escape possibilities despite weariness from lack of food and sleep. On 19 February, he and twenty other prisoners began a march to another camp. When a guard became careless after four days of travel, he made a fearless dash into the jungle and fought through the dense vegetation to reach friendly lines with highly valuable intelligence. For actions during the battle and his escape He was awarded the **SILVER STAR MEDAL**.

JERRY L. GUFFEY USA

Date of Birth: November 8, 1947
Home of record: Roanoke, Virginia
Status: POW
Jerry Guffey was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured on March 4, 1969 and was held until his successful escape from captivity later on the same day..

WALTER D. HAMILTON USMC

Date of Birth: February 19, 1942
Home of record: Detroit, Michigan
Status: POW
Walter Hamilton was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he and fellow Marine Joseph North were captured near DaNang on October 18, 1965 and was held until the two men both successful escaped from captivity together on October 29, 1965

PAUL G HATCH USA

Date of Birth: December 19, 1948
Home of record: Seattle, Washington
Status: POW
Paul Hatch was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured on August 24, 1969 and was held until his successful escape from captivity the following day.

ROBERT E. HAYHURST USA

Date of Birth: 2-Feb-41
Place of Birth: New Richmond, Wisconsin
Home of record: New Richmond, Wisconsin
Status: POW
Robert Hayhurst was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he captured on February 1, 1968, and until his escape on February 23, 1968.

For his action prior and after his escape he was awarded the **SILVER STAR MEDAL**

FRANK C. IODICE USMC

Home of record: Fulton, Georgia
Status: POW
Frank Iodice was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he and fellow Marine Albert Potter were captured on May 30, 1968. On June 1, during an attack by South Vietnamese (ARVN) soldiers on the enemy camp where the two of them were being held, both men successfully escaped captivity.

CHARLES F. KLUSMANN USN

Date of Birth: September 7, 1933
Place of Birth: San Diego, California
Home of record: Los Alamitos, California
Status: POW
Charles Klusmann was interned as a Prisoner of War in Southeast Asia after he was shot down over Laos on June 6, 1964 and was held until he and two Lao soldiers successful escaped from captivity on August 30, 1964, evading the enemy for two days until they contacted friendly forces on September 1.

For his action prior to and after his capture he was awarded the **DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS**

DONALD E. MARTIN USA

Date of Birth: December 17, 1944
Home of record: Gary, Indiana
Status: POW
Donald Martin was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured on March 2, 1968 and was held until his successful escape from captivity on April 14, 1968.

STEVEN D. NELSON USMC

Status: POW
Steven Nelson was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he and fellow Marine Michael Roha were captured in South Vietnam on January 7, 1968. Both men escaped from their captors on January 21, 1968, and reached friendly forces on the following day.

JOSEPH S. NORTH JR. USMC

Date of Birth: September 5, 1945
Home of record: Denver, Colorado
Status: POW
Walter Hamilton was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he and fellow Marine Walter Hamilton were captured near DaNang on October 18, 1965, and was held until the two men both successful escaped from captivity together on October 29, 1965.

JASPER N. PAGE USAF

Home of record: Jackson, Mississippi
Status: POW
Jasper Page was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured along with fellow Airmen Samuel Adams and Charles Dusing near Vung Tau, South Vietnam, on October 31, 1965. Two days after their capture Adams and Page jumped their guards in an escape attempt during which Adams is believed to have died. Jasper Page successfully escaped captivity and reached American forces on November 4, 1965.

ALBERT J. POTTER USMC

Date of Birth: May 13, 1945
Home of record: Phoenix, Arizona
Status: POW
Albert Potter was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he and fellow Marine Frank Iodice were captured on May 30, 1968. On June 1, during an attack by South Vietnamese (ARVN) soldiers on the enemy camp where the two of them were being held, both men successfully escaped captivity.

THOMAS H. VAN PUTTEN USA

Date of Birth: 12-Sep-47
Place of Birth: Grand Rapids, Michigan
Home of record: Grand Rapids, Michigan
Status: POW
Thomas Van Putten was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured on February 11, 1968, and was held until his release on April 17, 1969.For His action as a prisoner of war he was awarded the **SILVER STAR MEDAL**

WILLIAM B. TAYLOR USA

Date of birth: January 22, 1948
Home of record: Hamilton, North Carolina
Status: POW
William Taylor was interned as a Prisoner of War after he was wounded when his helicopter was shot down on March 20, 1968. On May 6, U.S. helicopters attacked the camp where he was being held, unaware of his presence. He was again wounded but managed to escape and crawled to a clearing to hail the American aircraft. When one of them came in closer he grabbed the skid but was shot off. The helicopter returned and the crew pulled him aboard, flying him to safety.

MICHAEL R. ROHA USMC

Date of Birth: September 10, 1947
Date of death: March 25, 1997
Burial Location: Santa Fe, NM
Place of Birth: San Diego, California
Home of record: Los Angeles, California
Status: POW
Michael Roha was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he and fellow Marine Steven Nelson were captured in South Vietnam on January 7, 1968. Both men escaped from their captors on January 21, 1968, and reached friendly forces on the following day.

RICHARD F. RISNER USMC

Place of Birth: Iowa
Home of record: Temecula, California
Status: POW
Richard Risner was on August 20, 1968, while on a civil affairs trip one mile north of Chu Lai. After capture he was transported to an area in Quang Ngai Province where he escaped two days later and returned to Chu Lai.

JAMES N. ROWE "NICK" USA

Date of Birth : 3-Feb-38
Date of Death: 21-Apr-89
Burial Location: Arlington, VA
Place of Birth: McAllen, Texas
Home of record: McAllen, Texas
Status: POW
James "Nick" Rowe graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Class of 1956. He went on TDY with the 5th Special Forces Group to the Republic of Vietnam in July 1963, and was captured and taken as a Prisoner of War by the Viet Cong on October 29, 1963. After spending 1,891 days in captivity, he made a daring escape on December 31, 1968, and made his way to friendly forces. He was assassinated by Communist guerrillas in Quezon City, a suburb of Manila, on April 21, 1989.

He was awarded the **SILVER STAR MEDAL** for his actions as a POW

WILLIAM P. TALIAFERRO USMC
AKA: Tallaferno)
Home of record: Los Angeles, California
Status: POW

William Taliaferro (Tallaferno) was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured on February 6, 1968 and was held until his escape six days later on February 12.
For actions Prior to and after his escape he was awarded the **BRONZE STAR MEDAL W/V Device**

DONALD R. BRASWELL USA

Home of record: Smithfield, North Carolina
Status: POW

Donald Braswell was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he captured on August 23, 1967 and was held until his successful escape from captivity the following day.

JERRY L. FANN USA

Home of record: Atlanta, Georgia
Status: POW

Jerry Fann was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured on March 21, 1967 and was held until his successful escape from captivity later in that same day.

EVERETT M. KING JR. USA

Date of birth: August 14, 1944
Place of Birth: Salina, Kansas
Home of record: Oakland, California
Status: POW

Everett King was interned as a Prisoner of War in South Vietnam after he was captured near Hue on February 1, 1968. On the night of February 8, despite a broken ankle and wounds to both legs, he managed to escape into a pile of rubble. The enemy guards were fired on by allied forces when they turned on flashlights to try and find him, and subsequently fled. The following day he made contact with a Marine patrol, successfully completing his escape from captivity.
He was awarded the **BRONZE STAR W/V DEVICE** for actions prior to his capture.

BUDDY WRIGHT USA

Date of Birth: January 15, 1947
Home of record: Ashland, Kentucky
Status: POW

Buddy Wright was interned as a Prisoner of War in Southeast Asia after he was captured while on a long range reconnaissance patrol on September 22, 1968. He successfully escaped from his captors and escaped and evaded for ten days before finally reaching American forces on October 6, 1968.

(FIRST MARINE CAPTURED IN VIETNAM)

DONALD G. COOK USMC

Date of birth: August 9, 1934
Date of death: KIA as a December 8, 1967
Burial Location: Arlington, Virginia
Place of Birth: Brooklyn, New York
Home of record: Brooklyn, New York
Status: POW

Donald Cook was interned as a Prisoner of War in Southeast Asia after he was captured in South Vietnam on December 31, 1964, while serving as an advisor to a Vietnamese Marine Battalion engaged in an operation in Binh Gia, Vietnam. He was reportedly wounded in the lower extremities and taken by the Viet Cong as a live prisoner. In 1970 the PRG/DRV released a list of the names of 20 U.S. POWs who died in captivity, including the name of Donald Cook who it was alleged died on December 8, 1967 of malaria. His remains have never been recovered.
He was awarded the MEDAL OF HONOR for His actions as a POW.

Here are two books detailing the exploits of Captain Camacho and Colonel Cook.



An exciting first-person recounting, by Isaac Camacho of his WIA, subsequent capture, in the US CIDG Camp, of Hiep Hoa, SVN on 24 Nov 1963. 150KM march, with three other US Army Special Forces POWs, to the COSVN POW Camp B-20; where shackled by the leg, chained to a tree, caged like a wild dog - in the triple canopy jungle. He is worked like an animal; tossed into the 'punishment-hole' often; routinely interrogated by a COSVN Commissioner; Interrogated by two Cuban Officials, a Chinese Official, and interviewed by an Australian Journalist, Isaac Camacho suffered from Falcipurm Malaria, Hepatitis "C", and beri-beri, losing 50+ pounds of weight, while a POW for 21 months in the open jungle but – never lost his resolve, determination, or decidedness to escape his cage, for the purpose of living up to the Military Code of Conduct – and to 'fight another day' against an enemy of the United States. This book takes you into the very mind of Isaac Camacho, as he planned daily; then, when his leg shackle was removed to be placed on a new US POW, Isaac Camacho escaped through the upper bars of his cage; evaded search by a Viet Cong patrol with dogs; making his way 50KM to the south, to a friendly US Army Special Forces A-Camp – at Minh Thanh, SVN on 13 July 1965. This is the True Story of a fine American Hero, who should receive the Medal of Honor for his heroic deeds performed 45 years ago. This is the story of Isaac Camacho an American Hero as written by Billy. Website: http://isaaccamachoamericanhero.com

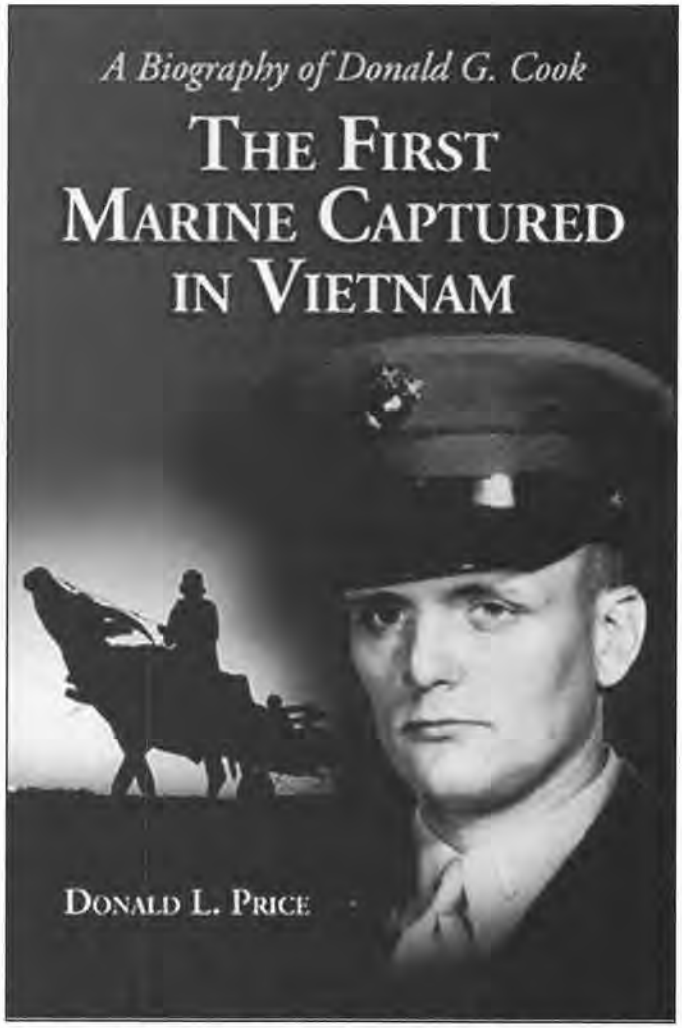

Colonel Donald Gilbert Cook was the first U.S. Marine captured in Vietnam, the first and only Marine in history to earn the Medal of Honor while in captivity; and the first Marine POW to have a U.S. Navy ship named in his honor, the *USS Donald Cook* (DDG-75). On December 31, 1964, while serving as an observer with a South Vietnamese Marine Corps battalion on a combat operation against Viet Cong forces, he was captured near the village of Binh Gia in South Vietnam. Until his death in captivity in December 1967, Cook led ten

POWs in a series of primitive jungle camps. This first book-length biography concentrates especially on Cook's three years in captivity, and is the first book exclusively about a Marine POW held in South Vietnam. Throughout, Cook's adherence to the Corps' traditional leadership principles and knowledge of the Code of Conduct are highlighted. His biography provides a unique case study of exemplary leadership under extremely difficult conditions. Includes 68 photographs.

MORE POW'S THAT EARNED THE MEDAL OF HONOR

GEORGE E. EVERETT "BUD" USAF

Date of Birth: February 24, 1925
Date of Death: Still Living
Place of Birth: Sioux City, Iowa
Home of record: Sioux City, Iowa
Status: POW

Colonel "Bud" Day served 30 months in the South Pacific during WW II as an enlisted member with the US Marine Corps. He served as an Army reservist, and Army guardsman between WW II and Korea, and then in the Air Force during the Vietnam War (3 different services over the span of 3 different wars.) After being shot down on August 26, 1967, and serving 7 years in captivity, Colonel Day was repatriated in 1973. He is the only man to earn BOTH the Medal of Honor and the Air Force Cross. A recipient of virtually every other available combat decoration, he is widely considered the most decorated Airman in history. His autobiography is titled "Return With Honor" and he later expanded upon that book in a second autobiography titled "Duty, Honor, Country."

HUMBERT R. VERSACE USA

Date of Birth: July 2, 1937
Date of Death: September 26, 1965
Burial Location: Arlington, Virginia
Place of Birth: Honolulu, Hawaii
Home of record: Norfolk, Virginia
Status: POW

Humbert "Rocky" Versace graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Class of 1959. He was captured in South Vietnam and taken as a Prisoner of War on October 29, 1963, and was held until he was executed by the Viet Cong. His remains have never been recovered.

LANCE P. SIJAN USAF

Date of Birth: April 13, 1942
Date of Death: Died in Captivity: January 22, 1968
Burial Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Place of Birth: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Home of record: Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Status: POW

Lance Sijan graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy, Class of 1965, and is the only graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy ever awarded the Medal of Honor. He was shot down on November 9, 1967, and escaped and evaded the enemy for 45 days before he was captured on December 25, 1967. He again briefly escaped but was re-captured and interned in North Vietnam, where he died in captivity on January 22, 1968. His remains were recovered and returned on March 13, 1974.

LEO K. THORSNESS USAF

Date of Birth: February 14, 1932
Date of Death: Still Living
Place of Birth: Walnut Grove, Minnesota
Home of record: Walnut Grove, Minnesota
Status: POW
Leo Thorsness was submitted for the Medal of Honor for heroic actions on April 19, 1967. Eleven days later on April 30 1967, he was shot down and interned as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam until his release on March 4, 1973.

JAMES B. STOCKDALE US NAVY

Date of Birth: December 23, 1923
Date of Death: July 5, 2005
Burial Location: Annapolis, Maryland
Place of Birth: Abingdon, Illinois
Home of record: Abingdon, Illinois

Status: POW
James Stockdale graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Class of 1947. His cousin, Robert Dunlap, earned the Medal of Honor in World War II. On August 4, 1964, Squadron Commander Stockdale was one of the U.S. pilots flying overhead during the second alleged attack of the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. On a mission over North Vietnam on September 9, 1965, Stockdale ejected from his A-4E Skyhawk, which had been disabled from anti-aircraft fire. He was interred as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam until his release on February 12, 1973. Debilitated by his captivity and mistreatment, Stockdale could hardly walk or even stand upright upon his return to the United States, which prevented his return to active flying status. Out of respect for his courage, and out of high regard for his intellect, the Navy kept him on the active list, steadily promoting him over the next few years before permitting him to retire as a Vice Admiral. In 1992 he was the Vice Presidential candidate for Third Party candidate H. Ross Perot.

JON R. CAVAIANI USA SFG

Date of Birth: August 2, 1943
Date of death: Still Living
Place of Birth: Royston, England
Home of record: Fresno, California
Status: POW

Jon Cavaiani, a member of U.S. Army Special Forces, was interned as a Prisoner of War in Southeast Asia after he was captured in South Vietnam on June 5, 1971, and was held until his release on March 27, 1973.

WILLIAM D. PORT

Date of Birth: October 31, 1941
Date of Death: Died in Captivity: November 27, 1968
Burial Location: Arlington, Virginia
Place of Birth: Petersburg, Pennsylvania
Home of record: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Status: POW
William Port was not killed in the action that earned him the Medal of Honor, but he was captured by the enemy. After ten months as a Prisoner of War, he died in captivity on November 27, 1968. His remains were recovered and returned in August 1985.

A BIG REMINDER IN CASE ANY MARINE MISSED THE ARTICLE

A Marine is a Marine. I set that policy two weeks ago - there's no such thing as a former Marine. You're a Marine, just in a different uniform and you're in a... different phase of your life. But you'll always be a Marine because you went to Parris Island, San Diego or the hills of Quantico. There's no such thing as a former Marine."General James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps

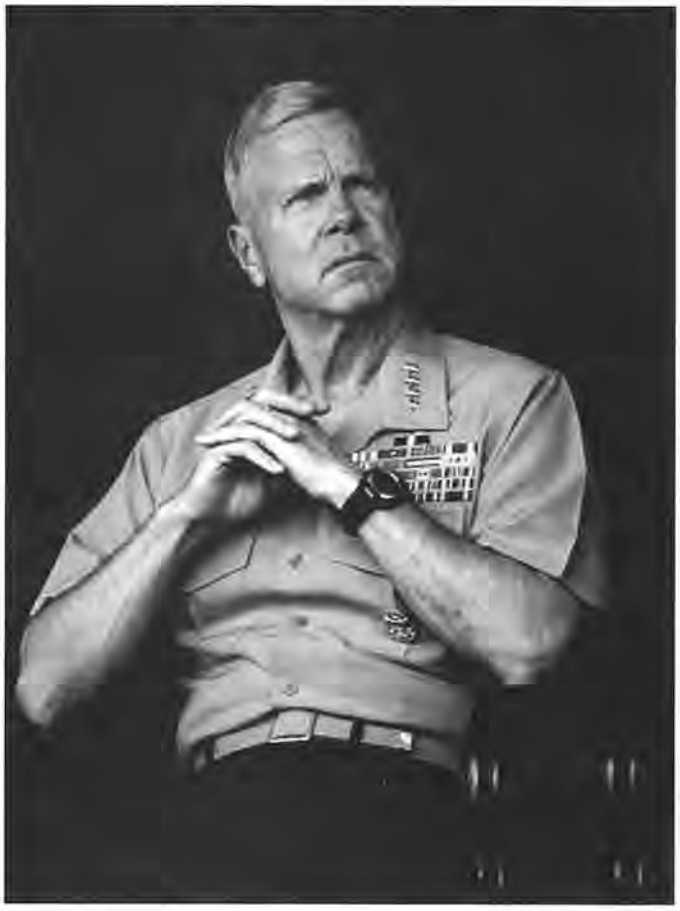

GREAT AIR FORCE STORY

In mid-1967, as a junior Air Force Captain, I was detailed to 7th AF Hq in Saigon as an Air Technical Intelligence Liaison Officer, short name: ATLO (the "I" gets left out, as people look strangely at anyone who calls himself an ATILO, thinking he is somehow related to Atilla the Hun). My job was to provide 7AF and the air war the best technical intelligence support that the Foreign Technology Division

of AF Systems Command (my parent organization) could provide, in whatever area or discipline needed. Also I was to collect such technical intelligence as became available. This was a tall order for a young Captain, and this assignment provided much excitement, including the Tet Offensive.

At that time, Operation Rolling Thunder was underway, the bombing of military targets in North Vietnam . The weather in NVN was often lousy, making it difficult to find and accurately strike the assigned targets, so a radar control system was set up to direct the strike force to their targets.

This system was installed in a remote, sheer-sided karst mountain just inside Laos on the northern Laos/NVN border. The site could be accessed only by helicopter or a tortuous trail winding up the near-vertical mountainside, so it was judged to be easily defensible.

The mountaintop was relatively flat and about 30 acres in size. On it was a tiny Hmong village called Phu Pha Ti, a small garrison of Thai and Meo mercenaries for defense, a helicopter pad and ops shack for the CIA-owned Air America Airline, and the radar site, which was manned by "sheep-dipped" US Air Force enlisted men in civilian clothes. Both the US and NVN paid lip service to the fiction that Laos was a neutral country, and no foreign military were stationed there, when in reality we had a couple of hundred people spread over several sites, and NVN had thousands on the Ho Chi Minh trail in eastern Laos. This particular site was called Lima (L for Laos) Site 85. The fighter-bomber crews called it Channel 97 (the radar frequency), and all aircrews called it North Station, since it was the furthest north facility in "friendly" territory. Anywhere north of North Station was bad guy land.

The Channel 97 radar system was an old SAC precision bomb scoring radar which could locate an aircraft to within a few meters at a hundred miles. In this application, the strike force would fly out from Lima Site 85 a given distance on a given radial, and the site operators would tell the strike leader precisely when to release his bomb load. It was surprisingly accurate, and allowed the strikes to be run at night or in bad weather.

This capability was badly hurting the North Vietnamese war effort, so they decided to take out Lima Site 85. Because of the difficulty of mounting a ground assault on Lima Site 85, and its remote location, an air strike was planned. Believe it or not, the NVNAF chose biplanes as their "strike bombers!"

This has to be the only combat use of biplanes since the 1930's. The aircraft used were Antonov designed AN-2 general purpose 'workhorse" biplanes with a single 1000hp radial piston engine and about one ton payload. Actually, once you get past the obvious "Snoopy and the Red Baron" image, the AN-2 was not a bad choice for this mission. Its biggest disadvantage is, like all biplanes, it is slow. The Russians use the An-2 for a multitude of things, such as medevac, parachute training, flying school bus, crop dusting, and so on.

The NVNAF fitted out their AN-2 "attack bombers with a 12 shot 57mm folding fin aerial rocket pod under each lower wing, and 20 250mm mortar rounds with aerial bomb fuses set in vertical tubes let into the floor of the aircraft cargo bay. These were dropped through holes cut in the cargo bay floor. Simple hinged bomb-bay doors closed these holes in flight.

The pilot could salvo his bomb load by opening these doors. This was a pretty good munitions load to take out a soft, undefended target like a radar site. Altogether, the mission was well planned and equipped and should have been successful, but Murphy's Law prevailed.

A three plane strike force was mounted, with two attack air-craft and one standing off as command and radio relay. They knew the radar site was on the mountaintop, but they did not have good intelli-



gence as to its precise location, It was well camouflaged, and could not be seen ;readily from the air. They also did not realize that we had "anti-aircraft artillery" and "air defense interceptor" forces at the site. Neither did we realize this.

The AN-2 strike force rolled in on the target, mistook the Air America ops shack for the radar site, and proceeded to ventilate it. The aforementioned "anti-aircraft artillery" force - one little Thai mercenary about five feet tall and all balls- heard the commotion, ran out on the helicopter pad, stood in the path of the attacking aircraft spraying rockets and bombs everywhere, and emptied a 27-round clip from his AK-47 into the AN-2, which then crashed and burned.

At this juncture, the second attack aircraft broke off and turned north towards home.

The "air defense interceptor" force was an unarmed Air America Huey helicopter which was by happenstance on the pad at the time, the pilot and flight mechanic having a Coke in the ops shack. When holes started appearing in the roof, they ran to their Huey and got airborne, not quite believing t he sight of two biplanes fleeing north. Then the Huey pilot, no slouch in the balls department either, realized that his Huey was faster than the biplanes! So he did the only thing a real pilot could do -attack!

The Huey overtook the AN-2's a few miles inside North Vietnam , unknown to the AN-2's as their rearward visibility is nil. The Huey flew over the rearmost AN-2 and the helicopter's down-wash stalled out the upper wing of the AN-2.

Suddenly the hapless AN-2 pilot found himself sinking like a stone! So he pulled the yoke back in his lap and further reduced his forward speed. Mean -while, the Huey flight mechanic, not to be outdone in the macho contest, crawled out on the Huey's skid and, one-handed, emptied his AK-47 into the cockpit area of the AN-2, killing or wounding the pilot and copilot. At this point, the AN-2 went into a flat spin and crashed into a mountainside, but did not burn.

It should come as no surprise that the Air America pilot and flight mechanic found themselves in a heap of trouble with the State Department REMF's



in Vientiane . (REMF is an acronym. The first three words are Rear, Echelon, and Mother.) In spite of the striped-pants cookie-pushers' discomfort at (horrors!) an inter-national incident (or perhaps, partly because of it) these guys were heroes to everybody in the theatre who didn't wear puce panties and talk with a lisp. They accomplished a couple of firsts: (1) The first and only combat shoot down of a biplane by a helicopter.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER SPRING 2013

Chaplain Ron Rayner

I have sent my money in and I am planning on a big week of activities at the Khe Sanh Veterans reunion the last week in August. I am looking forward to seeing old friends and making new ones.

At last year's Memorial Banquet, President Tom Eichler mentioned the ***Khe Sanh Veteran's*** had twelve members pass away since the previous reunion. He also mentioned twelve new members joined during the 2012 reunion. I am prayerful that we do not have as many losses this year and have many more people at the 2013 reunion.

Anyone attending the reunion in Nashville, Tennessee can count on a friendly welcome. The hospitality room is as described, hospitable.

DO YOUR FAMILY A FAVOR

It is a fact of life that we Khe Sanh Veterans are not getting any younger. One of my ministries is I volunteer as a chaplain doing committal services at the Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan for out-of-towners and locals without clergy. I also perform funeral services for other individuals who

have no clergy or church connections at other locations.



I have also attended funerals on the Oakland County, Michigan Vietnam Veterans of America's Honor Guard and funerals for homeless veterans. When I go to the cemetery I carry a short committal service with me in case the clergy doesn't show up or the people have no one. Three times I have filled in when no clergy has shown up. Once while attending a service for a Khe Sanh veteran.

When I talk to a family prior to a committal or a funeral service, one of my first questions is what the deceased's favorite scripture was. I realize talking about funerals is not most people's favorite subject but knowing what you believe can give great comfort to your family when you are gone.

I Corinthians chapter 13 are called the "Love Verses". Verses 4-8, 13 state:

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, **always perseveres**. Love never fails…
And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

When your loved ones know about your beliefs they will better understand your faith and hope. I use I Corinthians chapter 13 quite often at funerals. The hope of most people is that they will see their loved ones one day in heaven.

Do yourself and your family a favor and let them know what you believe. Tell them your favorite scriptures from the Bible. It can open up some very interesting conversations.

I did a committal service for a Vietnam veteran that had been in the VA hospital for a long time. His son told me the hospital chaplain had left a note on the man's chart that said the vet was "spiritually confused." I pray that if any of the Khe Sanh Vets are "spiritually confused" they will seek God and that the following scripture and will help.

"You will seek the Lord your God, and you will find him if you search after him with all your heart and soul." Deuteronomy 4:29 (NRSV)

"The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.
Those who know your name trust in you,
for you,
'O Lord, you have never abandoned anyone who searches for you.'"
Psalm 9:9-10 (NLT)

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."
Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV)

Thank you, dear God, for speaking to us through the Bible. As we earnestly seek your will for our lives, please help us listen for your guidance and follow your direction. When we seek You, open our eyes to find You. Amen.

"Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope."
Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)



REUNION COMMITTEE:

The KSV Reunion in Nashville TN is fast approaching. We expect a huge attendance by the membership. Tickets for the Grand Ole Opry and the Showboat cruise are going fast. Rooms of choice at the hotel are also dwindling. If you have not bought your tickets or booked your room, you should do so ASAP. Remember you can always obtain a refund if an unexpected situation occurs to prevent your attendance.

There will also be an election for the KSV BOD including the presidency. According to our by-laws you must contact our secretary and inform him of what office you wish to run for, prior to the reunion.

There are many things to do in Nashville while at the reunion. We have made contact with a tour company that will offer many trips to local venues at discounted prices.

Please try to send in your registration forms ASAP. Since we are purchasing the tickets to the Grand Ole Opry and the Showboat in advance, we only have a week before the reunion to obtain refunds. We could only afford to hold a few tickets to each event for those members through no fault of their own, were not able to purchase them in advance.

Our Vice President John Pessoni has again designed some nice new items for our PX. We will also have the calendars displayed on pages 80 to 82 for sale at the reunion. This years calendar for 2014 will include the years at Khe Sanh from 1966-1968. The following year we will print 1969-1972 for the calendar year 2015. They will be in color.

All the funds we earn from the PX and donations from the membership, go towards our scholarship fund.

There will also be a Luncheon for our beautiful Khe Sanh Ladies on Friday afternoon while we hold our general membership meeting. You do not have to sign up in advance, there is no cost, and you can sign up when you register. See you in Tennessee!

TOM EICHLER
RUSSELL TURNER

HOME FROM THE HILLS

By Dennis Mannion
KILO CO 3/26 F/O

The CP group from Kilo 3/26 barreled down the ramp of a CH-46 amid noise, swirling dust, and confusion and stumbled into a nightmare landscape. It was the early in the afternoon on the 15th of April 1968. Along with the rest of the company we had just been heli-lifted from the saddle of land between Hills 881S & 881N. I had last stood on the grounds of the combat base at Christmas, but the place I had departed from back then was totally unrecognizable to me now on Easter Monday. Hulks of wrecked planes, helicopters, and vehicles were visible in every direction. Fires burned in numerous places; junk and trash littered the landscape; dust sifted everywhere; there was no vegetation of any kind that I could see and except for Kilo Marines filling the trench line just off the helicopter ramp, there was no one around.

Personally, as a forward observer, I was also very self-conscious about not being able to see very far in any direction as the flat ground narrowed my perspective considerably. The hard-to-miss terrain feature of Hills 950 and 1015 loomed to my left, but seemed almost tiny out there on the horizon. Because of leap year, February had 29 days so I had been on the hills for 112 consecutive days instead of 111, but suddenly after all that hill-time, I had to deal with an abrupt change to a single flat, one dimensional viewing perspective. That was really weird but it wasn't going to kill me; however, NVA artillery -- which I had yet to experience -- might.

As we hunkered down in the nearby trenches waiting for someone to tell us where to go, two things happened simultaneously. A fast moving jeep approached from my right and slammed to a stop and a Marine jumped out and moved toward us.. At the same time, the final CH-46 with the last of Kilo's Marines settled onto the runway directly in front of me. More noise, more dust storms, and as the ramp opened, some visibly wounded Marines lurched down followed by two groups of 4 men carrying the bodies of two others: Kilo's last two Khe Sanh KIA's -- Lt. Steve Fordham and his radio operator PFC Pat Patterson. A scant eight minutes before I had been flat on the ground talking to Lt. Fordham

while his platoon provided LZ security for the entire company. He actually shook my hand and wished me luck as I stood up to get on my chopper, and the mortar rounds that killed him and his RTO were probably being dropped down the tube as my helicopter lifted off for the combat base and his helicopter began to feather into the LZ.

Before I could even begin to process the loss of this fine officer who I considered a close friend, there was a hand on my shoulder yanking me around. It was the driver of the jeep yelling in my ear that he had been sent over from our artillery unit -- Charlie Battery 1/13 -- to take my radio operator and me back to the battery. I was in a daze as the two of us followed Glenn Prentice back to his jeep and then a high speed, zig-zag ride back to the command bunker followed. Glenn had provided no real reason why we were being taken away from Kilo so abruptly, but in the CP, I learned that we were being detached from Kilo and retained at the base while the 26th Marines departed Khe Sanh over the next 24 hours.

Someone higher up the chain-of-command had theorized that an experienced FO team might be of some immediate benefit to one of the newly arriving infantry companies. Crap, just our luck! We were offered no place to settle into -- we literally were on our own -- and the only thing we had to do was to check in at the CP every morning and every afternoon and "await further orders." We felt like hermit crabs pulled out of our shells and scrambling to find new homes. We were left to wander around in an unfamiliar, torn up, and dangerous landscape looking for places to sleep and rest. The two of us were essentially new guys and no one was around to offer help, solutions, or even advice. There had been no active arty fired at us that first afternoon, but holed up in an empty trench line that night, we twice heard large, thumping crashes in the dark that shook the ground at what seemed some distance from us. We checked back into the CP in the morning and were told simply to come back in mid-afternoon for "further word."With no place to go, the two we stayed on the western end of the base between the end of the runway and drop zone. Later, while walking out on the open to find a safer place to hole up, we heard a truck horn began blaring, followed in short order by three distinct booms out to the southwest. Incoming! The two of us scrambled for cover in whatever shallow depression we could find, and with arms over our heads we braced for impacts. Two nearby Marines standing -- standing! -- out in the open began to chuckle. The three rounds (from Co Roc) made a dry-leaves rustling sound as they passed overhead and impacted a few thousand feet away at the eastern end of the runway. "What are you two clowns doing on the ground," they yelled, "because it's obvious that those rounds weren't going to hit near us?" My response was that where we had just come from (Hill 861 primarily), any round of any size that detonated inside the wire had the potential to kill or injure anyone on the hill because of our relatively small perimeter. There would be a number of big arty hits in the next few days and no matter where they impacted they sent a chill through me that was almost palpable. There was never anything like these thunderous explosions or heavy impacts on 861.

To be sure, we had more than our share of 82's, some 120's, RPG's, snipers, and NVA troops in our wire and on our hill, but not the large millimeter ordnance. The NVA were on a ridgeline 500 meters to our immediate west and at the same elevation, so we saw them as much as they saw us. It was so common to see them, that using my binoculars to glass the ridgeline one day, I observed an NVA soldier next to a tree using binocs to look at us! Without taking my eyes away from the eyepieces, I gave him the finger and was stunned to see that he gave me the finger right back. It was just different up there....closer, I guess.

With the 26th Marines long departed we stoically waited on a new grunt company assignment. We endured two more days as a nomadic, homeless, FO team before it was decided that it was OK for us to rejoin Kilo Company in Quang Tri. There was one last trip through the approach trenches that bordered the helicopter pad and then the mad scramble to get on board -- a jammed packed CH-53 this time. My adrenaline was up -- like everyone else's -- but I was calm as well. I just knew that my Khe Sanh time was finally over and done with, and that fate -- not skill -- had been my greatest ally.

Semper Fi,
Dennis Mannion
March 2013

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

SPRING HILL VIETNAM VET ORGANIZES WELCOME HOME EVENT AT HOLIDAY VFW POST
TAMPA BAY TIMES
BILL STEVENS COLUMNIST

KHE SANH VETERAN
JOHN DEBOK USMC
BRAVO CO 1/26



At 4 a.m. March 30, 1968, Bravo Company Marines set out from their base at Khe Sanh to recover the bodies of 25 comrades killed Feb. 25 in a North Vietnamese Army ambush.

Pfc. John DeBok, fresh out of boot camp, had arrived just a week earlier. He volunteered for the patrol. At 19, he considered himself "bulletproof." He wanted some "payback."

Pfc. Robert Hanna, 20, carried 60 mm mortar ammunition. He knew DeBok from Chicago, where they had enlisted.

As the sun burned through thick fog, enemy troops who had pounded Khe Sanh since January opened fire from a nearby tree line. Hanna scrambled to move forward and came upon a badly injured Marine. Mortar shrapnel had blown away his left eye, ripped through his legs. Blood covered his face.

Hanna pushed muscle and tissue back into place and closed wounds with bandages. The Marine looked up at him and said, "Bob, don't you know who I am? It's me, John, John DeBok."

Twenty years later, Hanna described that battlefield scene in a moving essay for the *Marine Corps Gazette*. After treating DeBok, he suffered shrapnel wounds himself. He worried that DeBok didn't make it and said that after the Vietnam Memorial wall was completed in 1983, he visited it in Washington, D.C. "The relief of not finding DeBok's name on the wall was indescribable," he wrote.
The two men never saw each other again.

One morning in January 2008, a truck pulled up to John DeBok's house in Spring Hill. A large man with long gray hair and beard stepped out and knocked on the door.

He said he had noticed DeBok's car and, more specifically, the decals honoring the U.S. Marine Corps. He had noticed the Purple Heart license plate.

"The guy handed me a wood coin," DeBok recalled. "On one side it said, "School of Warfare Southeast Asia.' On the other, 'Pass It On.' He drove away."
By coincidence, DeBok had been thinking about a recent congressional resolution proclaiming March 30 a national day of recognition for Vietnam veterans.

"That's the day I got hit," he said. "This has got to be a sign."

DeBok, at the time vice commander of the Chester McKay VFW post in New Port Richey, set out to organize a celebration. He secured sponsors and bought food to serve more than 400 people. Veterans greeted each other with two words that have become standard for all those who served in the war, who returned to a divided country that often scorned them: "Welcome home."

On Saturday, 30 March 2013, 45 years to the day that DeBok's fledgling military career abruptly ended, he will preside over his sixth annual event starting with a color guard ceremony at 11 a.m. at VFW Post 10167 in Holiday.

DeBok, now 64, sipped coffee at the VFW this week and admired an old picture somebody took when he was presented the Purple Heart. "Good looking fellow, eh?" he joked. "All things considered."

His survival had been in question, even after his evacuation from Khe Sanh. He spent six days in a coma at the Da Nang air base. After he awoke, the enemy shelled the hospital. "The hospital staff piled mattresses on me and gave me a .45," he said.

He spent several more months in hospitals as surgeons repaired his legs and gave him a glass eye. He left the service in December 1968 and moved to New Port Richey, where his grandparents had spent winters since 1954. Rather than rely on disability payments, DeBok worked as a shrimper and laid concrete blocks. He was a bouncer at west Pasco nightclubs. "It was part of me wanting to show I was still a man."



JOHN, RECOVERING FROM WOUNDS AT HICKAM AFB, HONOLULU, HI APRIL 1968

The bar scene brought him trouble, including three DUIs. He went through three wives before finding Lynn 20 years ago. "She's my rock," he said. "I'm not always the easiest guy to live with."

He still has nightmares. He wakes up sweating. "I'm in the field and left behind," he says. "That never goes away." That helps him relate to other Vietnam veterans he counsels.

He doesn't blame the war for his missteps. They started at 14 when he dropped out of school and ran away from home, away from a strict father who had driven trucks during World War II for Gen. George Patton. The Marines gave him a reason to be proud. Only 44 of the 77 men who entered boot camp with him graduated. "I still consider that my defining moment."

His love for the Marines drove him to join several veterans organizations. He is currently vice commander for the largest VFW district in Florida and senior vice president of the Vietnam Veterans Association of West Coast Florida. He will be master of ceremonies at this year's Memorial Day service at Meadowlawn cemetery in New Port Richey.

Bob Hanna left the Marines and earned a master's degree in business at the University of Dayton. He has been married since 1974 and has six children and nine grandchildren. He works in the construction industry and spoke by phone Wednesday morning from his office in Cincinnati.
"I've thought of John many times over the years," he said.



ROBERT W. HANNA III BRAVO CO 1/26 IN HIS OFFICE IN CINCINNATI, OH

Unlike DeBok, he didn't join many veterans groups, but is a Life Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans. He said his personality enables him to "look at the better things and put away the bad things."

'But he, too, has recurring dreams in which he can't Find his weapon and ammo. "I have to catch my breath," he said.

He hopes one day soon to catch up with DeBok.
March 30 marks 45 years since that day at Khe Sanh, "he said.Time goes by so fast. We have a lot to talk about."

A SAMPLE OF THE 2014 KHE SANH CALENDARS OUR PX WILL BE OFFERING AT THE 2013 REUNION(IN FULL COLOR)





14 APRIL B CO 1/9 ATTACKS HILL 861
13 KIA
25 APRIL K CO 3/3 CONTINUES OPERATION 7 KIA
26 APRIL K CO 3/3 & 1/9 22 KIA
7 APRIL TO 30 APRIL MARINES FROM B 1/9, K 3/9, E, G, & H CO 2/3,+ M CO 3/3 59 KIA

KHE SANH VETERANS APRIL 2014

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 13 KIA	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 13 KIA	25 7 KIA	26 22 KIA
27 1KIA	28 1 KIA	29 2 KIA	30 55 KIA	31		

APRIL 1967 THE "HILL FIGHTS" AT KHE SANH BEGIN







KHE SANH VETERANS JANUARY 2014

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5 5 KIA	6	7	8	9 2 KIA	10	11
12 1 KIA	13	14 2 KIA	15	16	17 2 KIA	18
19 1 KIA	20 4 KIA	21 21 KIA	22 4 KIA	23	24 8 KIA	25 2 KIA
26 2 KIA	27 6 KIA	28 2 KIA	29 2 KIA	30 3 KIA	31 4 KIA	

21 JANUARY 1968 THE SIEGE OF THE KHE SANH COMBAT BASE BEGINS

But he, too, has recurring dreams in which he can't

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Cell 708-306-1792 Work 708-386-9322
Email JKING@OAKPARKRC.COM

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Phone 205-879-4356
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ROBERT J. CRABB
KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student **OR** who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c) (19) charitable organization.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2013 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms.
Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the ***"Red Clay"*** Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David A. Lownds Award – for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)

The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award – for 2nd place achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award – for 3rd place achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

2. The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF committee Chair and the treasurer of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full year's award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY 1* of the school year applied for. *** (This is an important, NEW change to previous years)*****

6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 regular points or 115 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points max. (attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

GPA 4.0 x 10 = 40 points
GPA 3.5 x 10 = 35 points
GPA 3.0 x 10 = 30 points
GPA 2.5 x 10 = 25 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 30 points total
Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be Specific!);

Student government = 10 points max.
Community related services = 10 points max.
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 10 points max.

c. Personal essay (300 words min.) on educational goals, career goals, and current self-achievement = 30 points max. (neatness, organization and content are important)

d. Bonus Points = 10 bonus points for being a military veteran
= 5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application:_____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: last_____, **first**_____ **MI**_____

Address: Street_____ **City**_____ **ST**_____ **Zip**_____
Home phone:_____ **E-mail address:**_____
Applicant Birthdate:_____

2. KSV Sponsor Information (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member):

Name: Last_____ **First name**_____
Relationship to applicant;_____
Branch of service_____
Unit served at Khe Sanh_____ **Dates Served** _____

3. School Information: (School to be attending)

School Name:_____
School Address: Street_____ **City**_____
State_____ **Zip code**_____
School Phone number:_____
Curriculum/intended course of study_____
School year to be funded_____

4. Applicant Personal History (Be Specific)

a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, communications, offices held, academic honors and prizes, student government participation, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. Community Activities participated in; (military service, volunteer service to community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

ROOM RATES
$109.00
3 Days Before &
3 Days After

SHERATON NASHVILLE
DOWNTOWN
623 UNION ST
NASHVILLE TN 37219
PH: 1-800-447-9825 CODE
WORD KHE SANH

$ 10.00 PARKING
FEE
IN & OUT
PRIVILEGE















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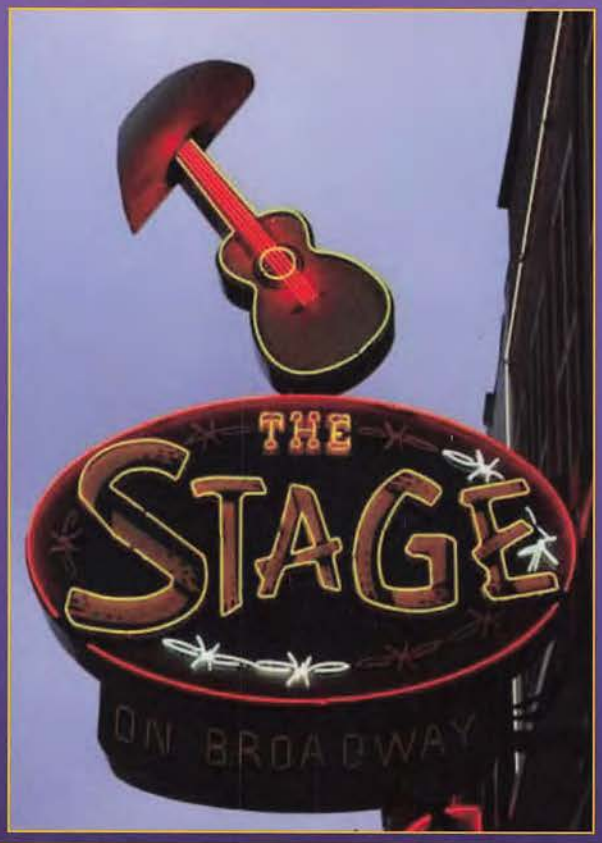

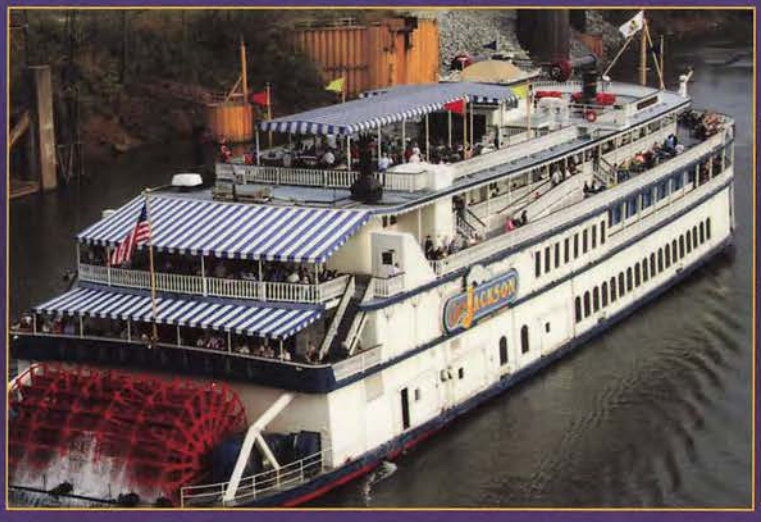

THE GENERAL JACKSON SHOWBOAT







FALL
2014

RED CLAY

ISSUE
84

THE SECOND BATTALION 1ST MARINE DIVISION, DEDICATED A MONUMENT RECOGNIZING THEIR SERVICE IN VIETNAM, AT THE MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS, QUANTICO VA, ON 08 NOVEMBER 2013. PICTURES & STORY ON PAGES 55-62 & BACK PAGE OF FRONT & REAR COVERS

























THE ONE-EYED UGLY ANGEL
A TRUE MARINE CORPS LEGEND

By Elaine Zimmer Davis
www.BringingJerryHome.com

An upside to searching for the remains of my first husband, Capt Jerry Zimmer, USMC, an F4 Phantom pilot shot down in the Que Son Mountains of Vietnam and MIA since August 29, 1969, is my renewed respect for Marines whose countless acts of bravery during the Vietnam War saved the lives of many fellow Marines. One of those heroic acts was recorded on April 30, 1968--the first day of the hard-fought, four-day Battle of Dai Do.

Stationed aboard the Iwo Jima—a Landing Platform Helicopter (LPH) ship, floating about five miles off shore, from the mouth of the Cua Viet River in South Vietnam, Capt Ben Casio and his crew of Ugly Angels (HMH-362) were on medevac standby when the call came from a unit with the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines (2/4), requesting a medevac for five seriously wounded Marines. Within minutes, Ben and his wingman, 1st Lt Robbie Robertson, were at the controls of their H-34 helicopters, en route to Dai Do, a stone's throw from Dong Ha and approximately eight miles south of the DMZ. Flying in the dead of night with 850 missions to his credit, Ben was unaware that the mission they were about to undertake would become a true Marine Corps legend.

As I prepare to write this blog, Ben has one request: "Please don't call me a hero — this mission was a team effort." But even with the passage of time, many of his Marine Corps brethren still credit Ben with an enormous heroic feat that earned him the name, "The One-Eyed Ugly Angel" -- a moniker that Ben wears with pride. I think you'll agree that his story makes us all proud, no matter what we call him.

To put the story in perspective, medevac missions were always dangerous — even when a chopper was called in to pick up a victim with a combat medical emergency during the daylight hours, in what appeared to be a secure area. Nowhere was absolutely secure in Vietnam during that era. But the ante was raised when a call for medevac came at night — these missions were true emergencies, and pilots knew that they likely would be landing in a hot zone during a fire fight to evacuate recently wounded Marines. And although a moonless night could camouflage the big green workhorse, it did little to silence the H-34s huge Wright 1820 radial engine that emitted a loud guttural sound, announcing its arrival to our troops, as well as to the enemy. I asked Ben if he had a gut feeling that everything was going to blow up in his face — literally - on this particular mission. His response: "Doesn't make any difference — you go, no matter what. It's a matter of life and death."

Before Ben and his crew of Ugly Angels -- co-pilot 1st Lt. Larry Houck, crew chief Bob Bush and a gunner -- dropped into the zone, he radioed ahead to the troops on the ground when he was a couple of miles out, telling them to put a strobe light where they wanted him to place his right wheel. They were flying into the zone without lights, and this would become the pick-up point for the medevacs. Ben was told that there had been heavy fighting earlier, but it was quiet at the moment. "When I broke the coast, I told Robbie to stay high and cover," said Ben.

At 0300, Ben dropped into the zone, and Bush immediately began loading the wounded. When he had three to five guys aboard, all hell broke loose. "The enemy opened up, and we started catching fire from all over the zone."

Between the time when the VC opened fire and the wounded were loaded, a minute or two seemed like forever, said Ben, who was wounded also during the barrage. Although unable to see, Ben didn't realize that he'd been hit. "I never felt any pain," he said, describing the sensation as 'being hit with a cold steak.' "Meanwhile, Bob tells me we're okay, let's go. I still couldn't see. I called Larry, my co-pilot, but the noise was deafening from the automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenades. Larry didn't answer, so I reached over and still couldn't get a response from him. I called Bob, my crew chief, and told him that I thought Larry was hit, so I needed him to talk us out of the zone. Meanwhile, Bob is continuing to return fire, getting hit twice in the process." Bush ultimately received credit for 12 kills but was devastated when days later he saw that his plane had taken 500-plus hits and looked like Swiss cheese. Bush also saw something else that caught his interest -- the map case in the cockpit

was destroyed. He realized that when Ben leaned over to get Larry's attention, a round came up through the front panel and went through the map case that was mounted behind the pilot's head. Had Ben not been leaning over, the round would have gone through his head and likely killed him.

Ben knew they needed to get moving quickly. His crew chief was yelling, "Sir, we need to get out of here, or we're all going to get killed." Ben took out his Kabar and broke the glass covering the critical gages on the instrument panel and started adding power. He used his fingers to feel the position of the needles but initially didn't have enough power to get the aircraft off the ground. At the time, he didn't realize that they had picked up eight medevacs, instead of five, and now had too much weight. Ben started rolling forward to get translational lift, with Bob telling him to go straight. There were trees on both sides, as they bounced along a dry, rocky riverbed, before finally getting airborne. I asked Ben if he felt as if they wouldn't make it out. "No, I never thought in those terms," he said.

Once in the air, Ben talked on the radio with his wingman, Robbie Robertson, telling him that he couldn't see and thought Larry had been hit. Due to the volume of fire, Robertson didn't think Ben would be coming out but now flew next to him. The two H-34s headed southeast to the point where the Dong Ha/Cua Viet River emptied into the Gulf of Tonkin. "Robbie had called ahead to the Cua Viet USN/USMC Base, and they refused to turn the lights on, so he told them, 'you either light up the area, or I'm going to fucking light you up.'" Apparently they turned on the lights, said Ben.

As the old saying goes, any landing you can walk away from is a good landing. Tucked in close to Ben, Robertson talked them down, and although it was a hard landing on the beach, it proved much less eventful than everything else that had transpired. At some point as they were getting ready to land, Ben could feel pressure fighting him on the controls. Houck evidently had recovered from being temporarily incapacitated and losing all radio communication during the firefight. When the shooting began, Ben eventually learned that Houck had ducked and ripped the cords out of his helmet and couldn't hear what was going on. Relatively new in-country, Houck had experienced his first medevac mission and first night mission in a baptism of fire. (Years later, Ben found out that co-pilot Larry Houck had not died as a result of wounds received during the Dai Do mission, as he had assumed, but rather in a mid-air crash not long after.)

Once on the ground, several other Ugly Angels arrived from the Iwo Jima to help transport all the wounded to the Repose, the hospital ship that was near-by. The squadron's corpsman, Master Chief "Doc" Jones, immediately performed emergency procedures to keep Ben from bleeding out. "Doc saved my life," said Ben, whose voice quivered for the first time, telling me that Doc and he had remained friends until his untimely death a decade ago, the day after Ben was inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame in New Jersey.

When they arrived at the Repose, Ben was rushed into surgery, undergoing a serious operation to save his eyes. It was confirmed that shrapnel had entered both eyes. "I didn't know if I'd ever see again," said Ben, but thanks to a skilled Navy ophthalmologist, Dr. Barnebe Loreteemola, Ben underwent experimental laser eye surgery, and it was a partial success. Although the left eye was gone, Dr. Loreteemola was able to save the right one. After the doctor's tour of duty ended with the Navy, he returned to New York City, where he was on the staff of St. Vincent Hospital and opened a private practice in West New York, NJ — not far from Ben's hometown. "Dr. Loreteemola was my eye doctor for 45 years, and he never would send me a bill in all those years," said Ben, who credits Dr. Loreteemola with saving his vision.

Following the surgery, Ben spent the next seven days recuperating aboard the Repose, before they let him return to the Iwo Jima to gather his gear and say good-bye to his buddies - everyone was thinking the same thing, including Ben. Would the one-eyed Ugly Angel ever fly again? Enter Walt Casey, a favorite among the Ugly Angels with a wicked sense of humor. He and Robbie Robertson elected to fly Ben back to the Repose for the ride of his life. The guys knew that Ben was concerned that his flying career had come to an end. So Walt decided to shortcut the system. After all, how could the military say that Ben couldn't fly if he already had flown? "Especially if he put one on the back of the hospital ship (a little tricky even on a good day)

without putting the struts through the rotor head or the chopper in the drink," wrote Walt in an email before his death in 2001, to fellow Ugly Angels, recounting the events of that day.

Walt, Robbie, Ben and the crew chief all climbed aboard the H-34, and Walt asked Ben, "Do you want to fly?" Ben pulled the bandages off his good eye and got into the co-pilot's seat, next to Robbie who was the Helicopter Aircraft Commander (HAC) for the mission. Ben could make out large objects, so he took over the controls, while Walt went down below to prepare for a little more drama. The crew chief wrapped Walt's body -- from head to toe -- in battle dressing. Approaching the Repose, Ben called and announced, "Medevac Inbound." The landing went perfectly. Ben greased it on with no problem. Meanwhile, Walt was spread out in the belly of the aircraft, wrapped like a mummy, when the stretcher crew ran over to remove him from the back of the plane. Instead, Walt stood up and started unwinding his bandages, telling them that they had the wrong guy. Out comes Ben, who climbs down from the cockpit, still in his pajamas with one-eye bandaged, and gets on the stretcher. Walt and Robbie made a quick getaway, which was a good thing. Ben said that the Commanding Officer of the Repose was apoplectic, but for Ben it was an unforgettable send-off, before his return to the states. Ben spent the next nine months in Philadelphia Naval Hospital recuperating, before his return to duty. Finally clearing all the red-tape, Ben got back on flight status and remained on active duty for another year, before his retirement in 1969, following a decade of service.

Ben's career may have been cut short because of his vision, but not his flying days. For the past several years, Ben and Capt Rusty Sachs, USMC, Ret. -- a fellow Ugly Angel from their Vietnam days — have been flying a restored H-34 (Ugly Angel, of course) to air shows and Marine Corps bases around the country. And more recently, the two Marines returned to Vietnam for the first time in over 40 years with Military Historical Tours, led by Capt Ed Garr, USMC, Ret. "It was a marvelous experience," said Ben, who spent a full day with Rusty and Ed at the Dai Do battle site, before visiting other areas where the Ugly Angels had left their mark. Although Rusty had left Vietnam six months before the Dai Do encounter, his two final in-country landings were at the exact same location where Ben had landed on the beach in a state of blindness, after the shootout at Dai Do.

Ben said that he never would have gone back to Vietnam had it not been for the invitation he received from Major General James Livingston, USMC, Ret, whose recently published, NOBLE WARRIOR has received excellent reviews for its recounting of the Battle of Dai Do for which he received the Medal of Honor. "When the General asks you a question, it's an order, and I said, "Yes, Sir." "The trip was perfect in every way," said Ben, who remembers that none of the Vietnamese people used to "Today, everyone smiles, and there is no animosity. Vietnam is an outstanding country."

Postscript: For years, Ben wondered what had happened to his eight medevacs from the Battle of Dai Do. In 1978, Gen Weise, who was LtCol Weise, CO, 2/4, during the battle, invited Ben to their 10th reunion at Camp Le June. While there, he learned that all the medevacs had survived, and he had an opportunity to meet five of them during the reunion. Another surprise awaited him. The 2/4 made Ben one of their own, anointing him with the name, "One-Eyed Ugly Bastard" to complement the Battalion's nickname, "The Magnificent Bastards." Like Ben's two extra prosthetic eyeballs, one of which displays a USMC globe & anchor and the other a skull and cross bones, Ben now has use of two prestigious names -- The One-Eyed Ugly Angel, and the One-Eyed Ugly Bastard. "Sometimes it's a dilemma," laughs Ben.



EMPTY BUT MEMORABLE

Marine's Camera returned to family 45 years after Vietnam War

By Chuck Slothower Herald staff writer

The phone rang in Pete Ferrari's 1950s ranch-style home on Crestview Drive, and a man was on the other end of the line. He said he had served in Vietnam with Pete Ferrari's nephew, Sgt. Arnold Jay Ferrari, who was killed by a mortar shell on March 31, 1968.Jay Ferrari had given his given his camera to the man on the phone, once U.S. Marines Pfc. Donald J. Gillespie, now just Don Gillespie of the Philadelphia suburb of Erdenheim, Pa. Ferrari had been unable to find film in Vietnam for the Cannon Dial 35. Shortly before he died, Ferrari gave the camera to Gillespie to take to a rear base for safe keeping.

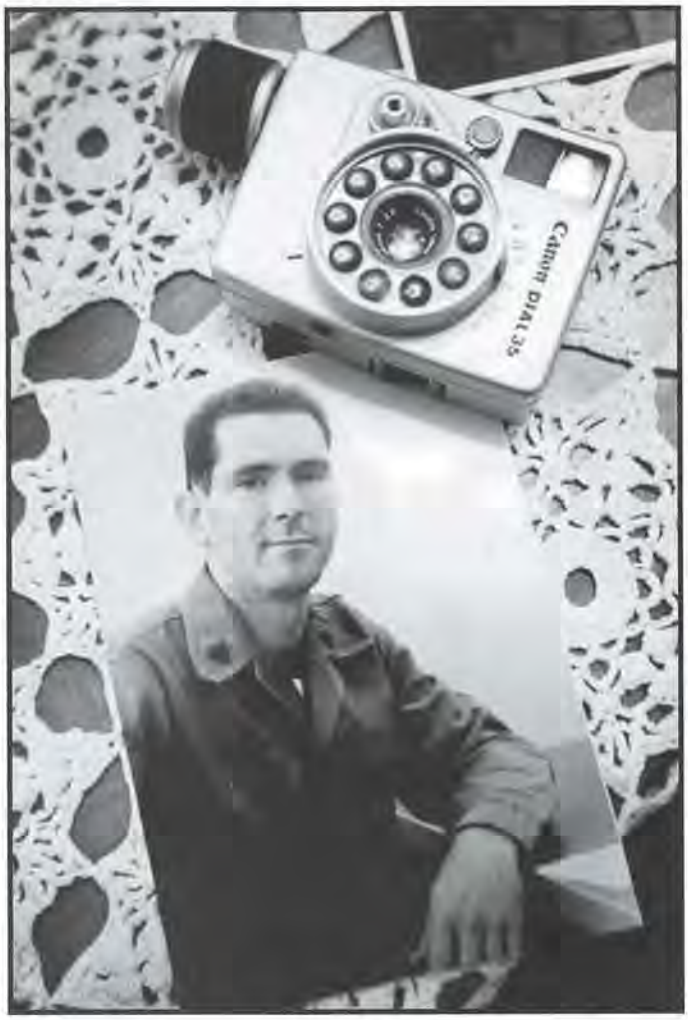

In his short time in Vietnam, Sgt. Ferrari, a 26-year-old volunteer from Napa, Calif., had earned the respect of his Marines. He was killed after less than three weeks in Vietnam when a mortar shell landed near him at the platoon barracks in Khe Sanh. After Sgt. Ferrari's death, Gillespie tried to put the camera in Ferrari's duffel bag to be sent home with his remains. When he was prevented access to Ferrari's surviving effects, Gillespie kept the camera.

I'm happy to be able to return this camera to you after 45 years. I can't believe it has been that long. It has sat in my dresser drawer for 40-something years and each time I saw it, I thought about that time in my life. For me it was another lifetime, but a time I have carried with me all these years. I'm very sorry for the loss your family suffered with the death of Sgt. Ferrari. For the short time I spent with him in Vietnam two things that I recall about Sgt. Ferrari was how he cared for his Marines, and he was the kind of NCO that never asked anyone to do anything he would not. I was a 19-year-old Pfc. when I met him. Sgt. Ferrari was the newly assigned platoon sergeant. I had been in country about four months when he came to our platoon in mid-March '68 and it was during the height of the siege of Khe Sanh.– **Excerpted from Gillespie's letter to Pete Ferrari, Oct. 23, 2013**

Gillespie volunteered for service out of high school. He wanted to prove himself in the mold of his father and uncles, who had served in World War II. Gillespie was sent to Khe Sanh, where the North Vietnamese Army was laying siege to a Marines position. The siege lasted 77 days, Gillespie later learned there were about 40,000 NVA soldiers surrounding 5,000 Marines. The NVA would lob in mortar shells and pepper the base with gunfire every night. He could hear NVA soldiers through the walls at night, attempting to tunnel their way into the Marines' base. Carpet bombing by American B-52 bombers kept the North Vietnamese at bay. "When Sgt. Ferrari arrived, he got there in the thick of it," Gillespie said. "When he got there, it was really, really bad."

Gillespie came to like Ferrari. In Khe Sanh, a small group of Marines would be sent to patrol outside the fence line at night to provide early warning if the NVA attacked. Most noncommissioned officers avoided the dangerous assignment, Gillespie said. Ferrari volunteered for it. "He was the kind of guy that wouldn't ask somebody to do something unless he'd do it himself," Gillespie said. "He was dedicat-

ed, and he cared for his troops. "Ferrari was killed when he stepped outside a bunker and was blasted by a mortar shell. "When he was killed, I couldn't put the camera in his bag because they wouldn't authorize it," Gillespie said.



"They sent all my stuff home. When I finally arrived home and started going through my things, this camera was there. "Gillespie searched in vain for Ferrari's family members for many years. Finally, he came across a mention of Sergeant Ferrari on the website of a California high school where Ferrari had graduated. A staff member at the high school was able to get Gillespie in touch with Sgt. Ferrari's surviving family. In Durango Colorado.

Jay Ferrari, who had previously served in the Marines Corps Reserve, volunteered for active duty and was sent to Vietnam in 1968.His uncle, Pete Ferrari of Durango, also is a veteran, having served in the U.S. Army in Europe during World War II. He was proud when his nephew volunteered for Army service. So was Bonnie Sawyer of Seattle, Pete's daughter and a cousin to Jay. "He felt a sense of duty, and he had friends there (serving in Vietnam)," Sawyer said. "He was very, very proud to be a Marine. "Pete Ferrari is 95 years old and has deep roots in the Durango area. He only rarely saw his nephew Jay, who grew up in Napa, Calif., on visits to Durango. Bonnie said Jay was like a brother to her. She received a letter from Jay shortly after he died. Gillespie's call to Pete Ferrari saying he had the camera seemed to come out of the blue. "We were both thrilled," Sawyer said. "After all these years, it's still emotional. "After finding Pete Ferrari, Gillespie hesitated for a few days before mailing the camera. "Sending the camera was kind of hard because I had it for so long," Gillespie said. "It was like something I could touch. I had a hard time actually mailing it off. I wanted to send it back, but I didn't want to send it back, you know? Now, I'm happy. I'm happy his uncle got it. "Pete Ferrari was glad to receive the camera and some photos and maps Gillespie sent along with it. "It gives you some background on what you're missing," he said.

The camera did not contain any film, so any photos Jay Ferrari took in Vietnam remain lost to history. Gillespie sent the Ferrari family some photos of himself at the platoon barracks near the spot where Jay Ferrari was later killed. Gillespie, a youthful Marine, stands in front of a wall of sandbags. Khe Sanh's Hill 861, an infamous site of bloody combat during the war, can be seen in the distance. Gillespie was wounded by a grenade on May 6, 1968, and was sent to Japan to recuperate. That September, the Marines shipped him back to Vietnam, where he was soon shot in the calf. That finally earned him a ticket home. Durango Colorado "If anything, I hope you get comfort in knowing Sergeant Ferrari is remembered by all who served with him. He did his duty without hesitation and with much devotion. He truly is an American hero.

"Excerpted from Gillespie's letter to Pete Ferrari, Oct. 23, 2013durango Colorado Gillespie went on to a long career as a Philadelphia police officer and later a Pennsylvania state investigator. Like many Vietnam veterans, Gillespie, now 64, has mixed feelings about the war. "I've always been proud that I served," he said. "I have some questions about it now. I was always proud to do my duty, and I was always proud to have been with those guys that I was with over there. I think about those guys every day. "In 2010, Gillespie returned to Vietnam along with his sons to visit Khe Sanh, where he had fought. Vacationing in Vietnam during peacetime, Gillespie said, was "very weird." "It's very peaceful up there now," he said. "It's beautiful up there – the mountains."

REPLIES

By Nick Romanetz

Because of the efforts of Don Gillespie to get in touch with the Ferrari family, I recently emailed Sgt. Ferrari's cousin with the details surrounding his death. I was his platoon commander at Khe Sanh

and was in the immediate vicinity when he was hit and at his side when treated by our Corpsmen. Thanks to Don for bringing closure to this for the family..

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS HOPE SOLDIER REMEMBERED

U.S. Senator Mark Pryor, D-Ar., and Senator John Boozeman, R-Ar., bestowed the honors during induction ceremonies in Little Rock on Friday for Sergeant First Class James W. Holt, of Hope, as a member of the 2013 Class of the Arkansas Military Veterans Hall of Fame.

U.S. Senator Mark Pryor, D-Ar., and Senator John Boozeman, R-Ar., bestowed the honors during induction ceremonies in Little Rock on Friday for Sergeant First Class James W. Holt, of Hope, as a member of the 2013 Class of the Arkansas Military Veterans Hall of Fame.

The induction ceremonies took place at the Embassy Suites Hotel before a crowd of more than 200 family, friends and other veterans who came together to honor the 15 inductees.

SFC Holt, of Hope, has been listed as Missing in Action since he was last seen during combat as he single-handedly attacked an NVA tank formation to draw fire away from other U. S. soldiers during the Battle of Lang Vei in February, 1968. The Battle of Lang Vei lasted two days and was the spearhead of the infamous Vietcong Tet Offensive, the deadliest combat engagement of the Vietnam War.

Holt was posthumously inducted into the veteran's organization "for exceptional military accomplishment" as he fought to repel the spearhead attack of the infamous Tet Offensive during the Vietnam War. Accepting the award in his behalf was his brother, George Holt, of Hope.

SFC Holt was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action, and the Purple Heart, as a result of his presumed death during the combat action on the evening of Feb. 6, 1968. His remains have never been located, according to military records.



WEB BRIEFS

By Craig Tourte

It was an honor and privilege, a few weeks ago, to have had the opportunity to have dinner with Mark Owen - author of "No Easy Day...the firsthand account of the mission that killed Osama Bin Laden." Mark was the team leader and second in line of the squad of Navy Seal Team 6 members who entered the house and climbed the stairs, confronted Bin Laden in the doorway of his bedroom and dispatched him to his reward of 77 virgins. Mark was the guest speaker at the dinner and provided a wonderful PowerPoint presentation of his extensive training - mentioning that he actually had to live in a tent and eat MRE's for a month (and inside joke for Khe Sanh Veterans) - the rescue of Captain Richard Phillips - an about to be released movie staring Tom Hanks in "Captain Phillips" - and a first hand account of his participating in the actually search, training for and dispatch of Bin Laden. His presentation was compelling, inspiring and even at times humorous. I was able to spend a few private minutes with Mark and presented him with a Khe Sanh Challenge Coin and the Fall Winter 2012, Issue 81 of Red Clay Magazine. On the inside cover I wrote - "On behalf of all Khe Sanh Veterans, thank you for your service and sacrifice - Craig W. Tourte."

Mark inscribed a couple of his books for me with a personal note and he was also kind enough to write in one of the books the following: "Khe Sanh Veterans - Thank you for YOUR sacrifice to this country! I'm honored to follow in your footsteps and serve as will!" "One Team, One Fight" "Mark Owen." I'll donate this book, addressed to Khe Sanh Veterans, at the silent auction next year at our reunion in San Diego. "No Easy Day" was a compelling read of which I thoroughly enjoyed and of course once again, it was a honor and privilege to have met Mr. Owen.

MY CHRISTMAS IN KHE SANH

By Bill Cowan
I CO 3/26

This Christmas my oldest son is serving his fourth combat tour overseas. With him in mind, my thoughts wander back to the vivid memories of one of my particular Christmases past.

Like most veterans of today's military, I served more than one Christmas season away from home and those I loved. It's one of the unwelcome prices of military service, yet servicemen and women somehow always seem to find a way to mold the sadness of being away from loved ones at special times into a way of sharing with new friends and comrades.

Never was this truer for me than one Christmas at an isolated combat base in the mountains of Vietnam.

My unit at the time, the 3rd Battalion of the 26th Marines, had endured a hellish September along the Demilitarized Zone dividing North Vietnam from the South. One particular battle had cost us 55 Marine and Navy lives and scores wounded, many of whom were evacuated for medical treatment. The losses rendered the battalion ineffective for combat operations, and we were shuffled to a safe camp along the coast to begin a rebuilding process. Besides those we had lost to the fighting, others had completed their 13 month tours of duty and were going home at last.

By December the battalion was almost up to full strength. Some of us were seasoned combat veterans, but most were new arrivals to Vietnam. As a consequence, we still weren't being given front-line duty. Instead we were moved to a small base along the mountainous border with Laos.

A few Montagnard tribesmen were the only civilians in the area, and an airstrip was the principal avenue of supply and refurbishment. I had already spent three months in the area before September's battles, and it seemed a suitable place for us to rebuild the battalion into an effective fighting force.

As Christmas neared, so did the holiday spirit. The war somehow seemed rather far away. We awoke each morning under cool mountain fog. By noontime it had burned off, revealing the green jungle atop the hills and mountains which surrounded us.

In the far distance, along the coastline, our fellow Marines were still skirmishing against the North Vietnamese units trying to surreptitiously move south. We could often hear the artillery and airstrikes which accompanied the battles, large and small. Somehow we seemed relatively safe at our small base

In our bunkers and foxholes, our small transistor radios would find Armed Forces Vietnam (AFVN), the military sponsored radio station which kept us abreast of the 'real world.' We would often have to point our antennas in every conceivable direction until we found a strong enough signal to hear clearly. In the mountains, when the signal was good it was really good. And, simply listening to a Christmas carol could wistfully take our minds away from where we were.

In the middle of December, Christmas packages from families and friends at home began pouring in. Most were wrapped in foils and papers which glimmered with reds, blues, and golds unfamiliar to our base existence. Other packages came from across America addressed simply to "Any Marine" or "Any American Serviceman in Vietnam." They were simple reminders that anonymous Americans back home still cared about those of us serving overseas.

When Christmas Day finally arrived, the division headquarters sent cases of hardboiled eggs and eggnog to our battalion. Our glee at these unexpected delicacies was almost childlike. Even so far away

from home, Christmas again seemed quite real. A few of us were even prepared to successfully debate the existence of Santa Claus.

As the day went on, some of us sang along with the Christmas carols beaming over AFVN. Others broke out pictures of their families or loved ones and talked about home. Nearly all of us ate eggs and drank eggnog until we were sick.

As was customary, a holiday truce had been called between warring factions. Although neither side was known to be meticulous about honoring such truces, each of us shared a slight sense of relief in believing that we weren't at risk for at least one special day.

Amidst our joy, however, and unbeknownst to us, the enemy was amassing thousands of troops for an attack on our base and the small company outposts on the outlying hills. Even as we sang, talked, and drank eggnog, North Vietnamese scouts were peering down at us from the looming hills to the north and planning their strategy for attack. Within less than a month, the biggest battle of the Vietnam war commenced — the siege of Khe Sanh, our small mountain base.

For many servicemen at Khe Sanh, that Christmas was their last. It was also the last for thousands of North Vietnamese troops who, like us, were away from home serving their country.

Today, 46 years after that Christmas and as if it happened only yesterday, I can still see the smiling faces of my Marine friends, hear the holiday music of AFVN, and taste the eggnog.

This small story of mine can be echoed a thousand times over by other veterans who have served through World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Beirut, Iraq, Afghanistan, and a hundred other places where men and women stood in harm's way in service of their country. The particular place, time, faces, and events may be different, but the memories and feelings down inside won't be.

If you know a veteran, you might want to ask about one of his or her Christmases past. There's probably a story waiting to be told.

REUNION MEMORIES WHY EVERYONE SHOULD ATTEND

By Dennis Mannion

There is real rhythm and pulse to the reunion, and since I was there from mid-afternoon Tuesday to very early on Sunday morning, my recollections are limited to that window. I may not use full sentences throughout this, and if I mention some folks by name do not consider it a personal insult if you're not one of them.

The hotel & lobby is fairly quiet when I check in on Tuesday with Tommy Eichler and Russ Turner as well as Fish and their helpers...where do we get such great, tireless and dedicated people, I wonder, as I drape my name-tag over my neck.

PX open, I ask?" "Roger that, 4th floor." Have to see Big John, but before I can even hit the elevator button, Mike Fishbaugh is coming out of the Hospitality Room. The guy is everywhere all the time...doing anything & everything to HELP...and if the food & beverage station needs something, he's the man to see.

4th floor ...I hear that distinctive, high-pitched, New Joisey use of the F-word before I can even see him, and when I do, it's as if the PX in 2012's D.C. has been transported intact and en masse to 2013... hell, there is even more stuff on display than last year. A bear-hug hello from Big John and I know I'm "home" and I really and truly "dig" the warmth, the camaraderie, and the friendship.

It's such a comfort and a real joy to pass thru the lobby, the hallways, the sidewalk, the elevator, etc, and see a Khe Sanh themed shirt or just the name-tag. Don't even have to know (or have met) the person before...just the nod, the "hi," the "how'ya doing?" and we have that instant red clay connection that certainly separates us from most of the US population and even most Nam vets as well. It's a cool feeling.

Tuesday eve and it's time to get my maps, photos, and charts up on the wall in Hospitality...Tom Ford teases me about it every reunion. Calls it "Mannion's Classroom." Must be the teacher/coach in me, I suppose, as old habits die hard, and I have always felt that a picture is worth a 1000 words. By

the time I have three or four up in place, someone -- friend from other reunions or someone new -- is asking about this pic or that. Takes a lot longer to get everything up, but it's worth every query...every nod of understanding...every bit of enlightenment from 45 years removed. I am no expert on ALL of it -- none of us are -- and I enjoy being "schooled myself. I want the facts to be as correct as possible.

Each day begins with the early birds up and on a quest for coffee and whatever. It doesn't matter if the hotel staff is picking up and vacuuming from the night before, the day has begun. Saw Ken Pipes in there just about every morning. Early arrivals find some goodies on the table as well. One morning it was Hostess Chocolate cupcakes! By noon the Hospitality Room really takes on a life of its own ...most round tables occupied....someone sitting solo? Not for long as those with many reunions in their past, make it a point to sit down and introduce....beverages and snacks mixed in with personal photo albums, albums of previous reunions, maps and best of all a cacophony of words, phrases, sentences, exclamations:

"I remember when the mess hall got crushed and ..."
"It was the 23rd not the 24th!"
"The rounds came from the west, I think..."
"Pete got hit and then..."
"The Lt. told us to..."
"D A M N Straight!"
"I ran for the bunker..."
"There were Army guys with us on the base? Really?"
"The runway ran east to west / not north to south" Went out to the water point a lot."
"Charlie Med.""B-52's...dusters...50 cal..mortars...rockets...bunkers....barbed wire...RPG's...snipers...outgoing & incoming...Arty! Arty, Co Roc!"
"I remember..."
"He most certainly did not!"
"152's, 105's, 130's, 175's, 120's, 81's, 82's, 106's, 60's..."
"I never knew that!"
"Say again?"
"My name is T-Bone Jones and doesn't anyone want to view my photos?"
"When the ammo dump blew..."
"I got hit..."
"I have pics of that C-130 on fire."
"The corpsman ran over and ..."

Just some of the sounds of the week ... many words and memories being repeated again and again, but that's what reunions are for, I think.

Roomed with Glenn Prentice -- been friends for years -- and he doesn't snore much, so that was a plus. (Many KS vets have been back to Khe Sanh, but I am not sure any of them can say that they overnighted in a tent on Hill 861, but we did back in July 00). We did not go on the river cruise or to the Grand Ole Opry, but it was nice to hear that Khe Sanh vets were recognized to great applause. Better than 8th & I in D.C. ever was. Doc Thomas (K 3/26 brother) kindly picked up our breakfast tab at Pucketts one morning. He was three tables away. Glenn & I saw plenty of Khe Sanh shirts there while having 3 breakfasts, 1 lunch and 1 supper.

Friday night when the buses returned from the Opry was a sight to be seen: Food Savages of every size, shape, religion, and race swarmed the Hospitality Food Table for hotdogs, popcorn, beer & soda. We could barely keep up! Even room temperature bottled water disappeared. Saturday, I liked the reverential tone at the Memorial Service, and the give & take at the membership meeting especially Savannah being voted for 2015. Congrats to Russell Wagner for being voted onto the board.

By 1500 on Saturday the Hospitality Room was almost deserted as many folks were getting ready for the dinner. Popcorn and hotdog machines already in their cartons. I took down my "classroom" and as I did, I wondered how much I will be able to bring to San Diego as I'll have to fly. Will have to cut down the size...just like the PX will have to do next year. Banquet was terrific...thought the food was excellent. Said goodbyes to many -- hand shakes, hugs and even a kiss or two -- after the meal as our alarm was set for 0330 on Sunday.

I loved the week and I love the Khe Sanh vets (and their families and friends.) I hope to see you next year.

MORE REUNION MEMORIES
SATURDAY REUNION
MEMORIAL SERVICE

Craig Tourte

I don't want to make this a long dissertation. For the purposes of this story related to the reunion in Nashville, I'll just hit on one point and perhaps sometime in the future I'll reflect on what I thought were a few other interesting experiences and events. Taking the whole reunion into consideration, the fine meals, new people I had the privilege of meeting, the business meeting, my trips to the Country Music Hall of Fame, the visits to the honkey tonks, the boat ride down the river and many more too numerous at this time to mention I'll address, what at least to me, was my most memorable and meaningful experience.

The memorial service at 0900 Hrs on Saturday to remember those who departed us this year is something that to this day I continue to ponder. After the usual prayer, formality and recognition of our departed brothers the podium and lectern where empty of speakers. I was staring at the floor waiting for the next speaker when I heard someone approach the podium and climb the stairs. I looked up to identify the next speaker and noted that the man now standing at the lectern was Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Pipes (Ret).

I have been to many services conduced by those educated and experienced in religious services and remembrances. Without prepared notes or a practiced rote, Colonel Pipes presented one of the most genuinely sincere and soul-stirring remembrances I have ever experienced. I wish I could share with you his articulate words, his sincerity, his emotion and genuine feeling of love and loss for the men he knew, served with and for those who are serving now. But I am just not literate enough to write them, intellectual enough to remember adequately exactly what was said nor talented enough to convey his emotion and sincerity. But I'll never forget that moment or the emotion I felt while they were being spoken.

I'm trying to think of an adequate closing here, something to sum up this little article however all I am able to come up with is what a great and truly wonderfully man and leader Colonel Pipes is, and how fortunate we are as an Association to have him as a member.

OBIT

CHARLES "SKIP" MINNICKS
UNITED STATE ARMY
KHE SANH VETERAN
SOG-SF

Charles J. "Skip" Minnicks, 82, of Greensburg, died



Saturday, Aug. 31, 2013. Born Oct. 6, 1930, in McKeesport, he was a son of the late Charles F. and Jean M. Lamie Minnicks. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a brother, Gene Minnicks, and a sister, Veeann Minnicks. Mr. Minnicks was a

highly-decorated career soldier, serving in the Army Special Forces during Korea and Vietnam. He was a member of Shidle Lodge 601, the Syria Shrine of Pittsburgh, Syria Shrine Gun Club, the Coudersport Consistory, VFW Post 8427, of Herminie, American Legion Post 945, the White Oak Rod and Gun Club, the East McKeesport Hunting Club, the Khe Sanh Veterans Association and the Special Forces Association. He was inducted into the Hall of Valor at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum. He is survived by his wife, Patricia Ann O'Bryon Minnicks; a son, Charles G. Minnicks, of Dunellen, Fla.; three grandchildren, Charles J., Margaret J. and Patricia A. Minnicks, all of Niagara Falls, N.Y.; and a brother, James Minnicks, of Carlisle.

REMEMBERING TOM HORCHLER'S DOG "LUCY"

Craig Tourte

I played golf today with three old friends who I had not seen for some time. The subject of dogs came up and the discussion of Tom Horchler's wonderful dog Lucy was discussed. One of the men said, "Will how is Lucy doing." I responded that Lucy passed away a couple of years ago. I was surprised as all three stopped in their tracks and just kind of stood there and in unison and said, "She passed away?" I was a bit taken back by three harden masculine individuals who were instantly surprised and saddened upon hearing that Lucy had passed away. Lucy had that effect of men, she loved them and they loved her…its difficult to describe that bond between men and dogs. If you have one, you'll understand how dogs affect ones life and how their loss is an emotional loss for us all. Below is the story I wrote about Lucy leaving us, I still think about her…she was not my dog but in her short life she touched all who knew her.

"I've had three dogs during my adult life and absolutely loved them all, to this day I morn the loss of each one of them. When Tom and I became reacquainted, some 35 years after Vietnam, I found him living by himself in a little one bedroom house tucked in an old and tired section of town. Not really wanting a dog, or pet of any kind for that matter, fate brought Lucy and Tom together. Lucy was there, not just there for Tom but for all of her "uncles" who visited Tom and grew to love and admire his little golden companion. Lucy only had friends, and I don't think she ever met animal or human she didn't like. For those of us who have pets, simply stating that we love our animals, are insufficient to describe our emotions or our attachment to them which is as strong and as it is to any human being. The ravages and painful memory of Vietnam took its toll on Tom, as it has on all of us. Lucy was not only his constant companion but his support, comforter, protector of emotions, guardian of his psychic and I think, one of his main reasons to preserver."

"I don't have any pets because I just can't take pain of their loss, but I loved going to Tom's house and to spend just a few minutes laying on the carpet next to Lucy, it brought me great comfort. She always seemed happy to see me, no matter if she remembered me or not, she always made me feel just a little special. Tom often brought Lucy out to the golf course with him and I enjoyed her company on many a fine course. She was well behaved and at times a much better golf partner than I was. I recall one afternoon when she was sitting on the grass and I was addressing my golf ball getting ready to hit and she walked up to my ball and placed it in her mouth and moved it about 5 feet closer to the pin and dropped it on the ground. It was the funniest thing I had ever seen and we all had a great laugh. I think she knew my game."

"I'll miss her smooth and shiny golden coat, the way she smelled, her smile and happy face. The way she seemed to remember who I was and her excitement in seeing me again. I'll miss lying on the floor with her; I'll miss the comfort she gave to me. I'll miss petting her and I'll miss seeing her on the golf course. She'll always have a very big place in my heart. But as painful as it is for me, I know Tom will miss her even more….."









OBIT

KHE SANH VETERAN
MAJOR DANIEL J. MARTIN (RET) USAF

Major Daniel J. Martin, USAF (retired) died at his home in South Windsor on October 25, 2013 after a two year battle with lung cancer. The irony of it being that he was never a smoker. A veteran of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, Dan was a proud native of Holyoke, MA who never forgot his roots or his experiences growing up in the city's Ward 4 section. He often recalled with pleasure his memories of playing baseball in the sandlots of the city, walking to the Boys Club for basketball and indoor soccer matches and swimming in and across the Connecticut River.

Dan was born August 9, 1924 into a loving Irish family, the sixth of eight children born to Timothy and Mary (Kennedy) Martin both from County Kerry, Ireland. He was educated in the Holyoke school system, graduating from Holyoke High School class of 1941. In January 1943, Dan enlisted in the U.S. Army Aviation Cadet Program and after rigorous training was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant and awarded his navigator wings. By the end of his training World War II was winding down and he was released from active duty. Like so many returning veterans, Dan took advantage of the GI Bill to further his education earning a degree in Public Relations and Communications from Boston University in 1949. After graduation Dan worked in sales in Houston, TX until being recalled to active duty by the U.S. Air Force during the Korean Conflict.

He was re-trained as a Navigator on B 29s and flew combat missions over North Korea. For his service he was awarded the Air Medal and other decorations. After that tour Dan decided to make the Military his career. During his years of service he saw duty as a navigator on KC 97s and C 130 aircraft eventually earning his command navigator wings. He also held positions as a community relations officer at several air force bases in the US as well Wiesbaden, Germany. In 1963 Dan was assigned to the University of Connecticut ROTC as assistant professor of air science, a position he held for four years.

Dan's last tour before retirement was to Vietnam where he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The citation accompanying his award reads: Major Daniel J. Martin distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participation in aerial flight as a C-130 B Navigator near Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam on March 17, 1968. On that date, Major Martin's crew was directed to air-drop vitally needed supplies to the besieged United States Marine Garrison at Khe Sanh. His calmness and courage under highly adverse circumstance were responsible for the perfect delivery of the cargo and the subsequent safe recovery of the aircraft and crew. Dan was also awarded another Air Medal with 5 oak leaf clusters.

Upon his retirement from the Air Force, Dan accepted a position as assistant registrar at the University of Connecticut which he held until the mid 1970s. His next career move was into the real estate business in the Willimantic area where he headed the Lawrence, Martin and Park Realtors. Dan is survived by his wife of 63 years, the former Mary Cadigan, daughter Barbara and husband Tom Laflesh of Hartford, Kevin and Susan Martin of Avon, Brian and Suzanne Martin of Wilmette IL, Daniel Sean Martin and Angela Caruso of Manchester, Barry and Ann Martin of Farmington and Stephen T. Martin of San Francisco CA. Also surviving are his brother Thomas Martin and Laura Birks of Chicopee, MA. Dan leaves his seven grandchildren, seven step-grandchildren and five step-great– grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

OBIT

DR JAMES O. FINNEGAN USN
KHE SANH VETERAN
CHARLIE MED

James Owen Finnegan M.D., of Media, passed away October 13, 2013 at the age of 75 at his home from complications from melanoma. Jim was born July 17, 1938 in Pittsburgh to James and Elizabeth Finnegan. He attended Central Catholic High School in Pittsburgh, The University of Pittsburgh, LaSalle University and then graduated from the Hahnemann University School of Medicine. He later received a Master's Degree in Health Administration from St. Joseph's University. After completing his surgical residency at the University of Pennsylvania, Jim enlisted in the U.S. Navy Medical Corp and served as a combat surgeon for the Third Marine Division in Vietnam from 1967 to 1968 where he saved countless young lives.

Jim was awarded a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his service. Thereafter, Jim returned to the University of Pennsylvania and completed his residency in Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery. Jim was a well known expert and Professor of Cardiovascular, Thoracic and General Surgery for over 40 years and was the past Chief of Surgery at the Medical College of Pennsylvania, St. Agnes Medical Center and the Crozer Chester Medical Center. Jim was widely respected and adored by both patients and colleagues for his skill, wisdom, dignity and optimism

His treatment of all of his patients with compassion and respect was recently recognized when he was the recipient of the Healing Spirit Award from Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center where he practiced for the past six years. Jim memorialized his courageous military service in his memoire In the Company of Marines: A Surgeon Remembers Vietnam in which he proudly recounted the bravery and valor of so many soldiers whose wounds he had the privilege to treat. Jim was loved and revered by his family. He was predeceased by his son Michael and his daughter in law Patricia.

He is survived by his wife Linda; his father in law Louis Pinola; his brother Jack Finnegan (Virginia); his sister Elizabeth Ward (Jack); his sister in law Barbara Nelson (Bert); his sons Mark (Joanne), Matthew (Kathryn) and Martin; his daughters Maureen Edelson (Mark) and Caitlin; and also survived by his 15 grandchildren Sean, Kevin, Daniel, Timothy, Owen, Ryan, Liam, Brendan, Genevieve, Bridget, Mary Katherine, Anne, Margaret, Michael and Angela. Interment with full military honors followed at Saints Peter and Paul Cemetery, Springfield.

Replies:

Dr. Finnegan wrote a wonderful book "In the company of Marines" which is currently sold in the Khe Sanh Inc PX. I enjoyed it so much I wrote a little review on Amazon. If you have the time you might

order this fine story about anothers Khe Sanh experience.

This review is from: **In the Company of Marines: A Surgeon Remembers Vietnam (Paperback)** "Dr. Finnegan doesn't give himself enough credit for his many heroic and unselfish acts during the Siege at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh. To some readers this will be merely another book written in the first person about a long ago war time experience. I am not sure many would or could ever imagine the intense terror and deprivation experienced by the men who survived that very long and intense siege. Dr. Finnegan opens up a door every so slightly and allows the reader a peak inside of Charlie Med. and the 24 hour struggles to save the lives of so many young Marines. I enjoyed his style of composition, a sort of diary of individual thoughts and experiences. A short but powerful read which brought back many memories for those few who are still around and survived those horrific awful months."
Craig Tourte

LOCAL VIETNAM VETERAN USES EXPERIENCES TO GIVE BACK

By Stephen Green Staff Reporter

HUNTSVILLE — **On Aug. 28, 1967, Marine sniper Tom Fordyce was on routine patrol near Hill 861 southwest of Vietnam. The next day he was supposed to take 30 days rest before returning for another six months of active duty.**

But it wouldn't end that way.

Hill 861, as well as Hill 881 North and 881 South, had been a major sites for Vietnam troop movement that Charlie Company, First Battalion, 26 Marines, and other troops had been assigned to take and protect.

The Marine base served as the western anchor for Marine Corps forces, which tactical responsibility for the five northernmost provinces of South Vietnam. The defensive system stretched below the Demilitarized Zone from the coast, alone Route 9, to Khe Sanh where Fordyce was stationed.

He was with his two friends, George Dockstader and Jerry Heard, when a bullet ripped through his left arm.

"When I got hit, it was so quick that you didn't have any pain," Fordyce said. "But when I looked down I saw my arm was pretty much mangled. This all happened in a matter of seconds even though it seems like longer than that. The corpsman came rushing over as quickly as he could and took my left hand. He folded it back up underneath my forearm and wrapped it up."

Fordyce now sits on the board of the Trinity River Authority and the Lone Survivor Foundation after being appointed by Gov. Rick Perry after retiring as the Director of Agribusiness in 2005. Before his appointment to the TRA, he also served on the TDCJ Parole Board for four years, and DARS under the Department of Health and Human Services.

He's also a supporter of the H.E.A.R.T.S. Veterans Museum located in Highway 75 North in Huntsville. He is one of the hundreds of veterans that will attend their annual Veteran's Day Banquet on Monday, Nov. 11.

"What the museum and Veteran's Day does for me is just give a reflection of what my friends and family went through so you and I could sit here and talk," he said. "It reflects back on the appreciation for all those that give back. And there's those that have spent a lifetime in the military and still do."

The museum, he said, has a strange way of bringing people together. One example of this is at a previous banquet, Larry Heard – his friend from the war – was flown in to surprise him.

"He and George were instrumental in saving my life in Vietnam and I hadn't seen him in 45 years," Fordyce said. "All of a sudden the doors open up and there's Larry. It was extremely emotional. I usually don't cry, but I was emotional that night. We were able to regain our friendship that we lost 45 years ago; and it was all because of the museum.

Fordyce joined the Marine Corp shortly after graduating high school in May 1966. From there he went through basic training in San Diego, Calif., where his trainers noticed his proficiency with a sniper rifle – something he said today's snipers could scoff at. "When I was in sniper school back then, it was

nothing compared to the school today," he said. "I couldn't hold a candle to the snipers today." After finishing basic training and sniper school, he left for Vietnam, first to Hawaii then to Okinawa, Japan, before finally landing south of Da Nang where he was stationed from Nov. 4, 1966, until Apr. 15, 1967, as a sniper. "We would go out with the platoon," he said. "The platoon would leave and we would stay behind and look for any of the enemy that would come in and look at the area after they left." He, Dockstader and Heard took a week's R&R in Tokyo in April.

When they returned to catch a patrol back to Hill 55, their primary responsibility, they got a different call. "The officers said, 'No, Charlie Company, First Battalion, 26th Marines is headed to Khe Sanh,'" Fordyce said. "We didn't know what Khe Shan was." They took the Apr. 22 helicopter flight to Khe Sanh with the objective to take the three hills, 861, 881 North and 881 South. Fordyce was there from Apr. 22 to Aug. 28: the day he was hit. On Aug. 28, 1967, Marine sniper Tom Fordyce was on routine patrol near Hill 861 southwest of Vietnam. The routine patrol turned into a fight for his life when a bullet ripped through his arm leaving it completely useless. "I knew at that point it was probably going to be lost," he said. "He stayed with me until we got to Khe Sanh, which was a small air base. They took my jacket off and gave me some medicine to stop the pain." The main reason he survived was the help from his two friends, Dockstader and Heard, who carried and protected him until he was out of the area.

"When you get wounded and you have to get a helicopter come and get you out of a combat situation, you want to make sure (other soldiers) get you to the spot the helicopter is going to land," Fordyce said. "They help get you on the helicopter. And they provide security for that helicopter to leave without getting shot down." And that's what they did, he said. "They were very instrumental in making sure I was on the gurney and that I was protected from enemy fire while the helicopter came in. You could hear the enemy rounds hitting the chopper. All that's going through your mind is, 'Oh no. Are we going to get shot down?'" Dockstader and Heard stayed behind after Fordyce left the country. Dockstader eventually got his degree from Sam Houston State University and moved back to his home state of Washington. Heard now lives in Atlanta, Ga. He was rapidly flown from Khe Sanh to Phu Bai, a large-scale military hospital for which a bridge at the H.E.A.R.T.S. museum is named after. "I remember being on the gurney and coming off the gurney," he said. "There was a preacher (to his right) and there was a corpsman cutting my pants and boots off. Taking my shirt off. Next thing I knew I was completely nude on this gurney." He was going into shock. "I remember them taking me to this operating room," Fordyce said. "I was shaking." A doctor, whom Fordyce could only recall as Dr. Dorrin, greeted him in the room and began to examine his still bandaged arm. "Marine, can you stretch your arm out?" the doctor asked. "Yes, sir," Fordyce replied stretching his arm out. The doctor unraveled the hand and unfolded Fordyce's arm out and laid it on a metal plate. That was the first time he saw the wound since he was hit. "It looked like somebody had taken a butcher's knife and whacked it off," Fordyce said.

The doctor then turned to the 20-year-old Fordyce and said, "Marine, we're going to have to take your arm off." "Okay." Fordyce said the doctors gave him several shots to deaden the area and removed the flesh below the elbow, leaving the bone sticking out and exposed. "They took a saw and started sawing," he said. "I couldn't take it. It was hurting so bad. So, they put me to sleep and for how long I was out I don't know." When he woke up, Fordyce said his hand was bandaged up and he was elated that he could feel his fingers on the hand he thought he had just lost. "I started wiggling my fingers," Fordyce said, "and I said, 'Golly, I know he took it off. I saw him. I don't know what they did; they must've sewn it back on. Man this is great I can't wait for him to come back in.'" The doctor did return on his regular rounds, but didn't give Fordyce the news he anxiously wanted. "When he came back in to do his rounds he asked me how I was doing," he said. "I told him, 'Sir, I'm doing extremely well. I don't know what you did but I'm moving my fingers and I'm ready to go.' He said, 'No, Marine, it's not there. You will feel that sensation the rest of your life.'"

He was experiencing phantom pain, a condition where amputees can still feel their limbs long after it is no longer there. "Right now my hand is (sticking out) and I'm wiggling my fingers and this

thumb," he said. "You kind of want to stretch (the missing hand) out, but you can't. There's nothing there." On his way out of Vietnam, the plane stopped in Guam for fuel on Nov. 4, 1967, exactly one year since he first entered the country. The island they stopped on was also the same island his father had defended years before in World War II. They landed at the now defunct Oakland Naval Base in California where he stayed until Mar. 18, 1968, before returning to his hometown of Katy, Texas. He visited the Center for the Intrepid, operated by the Department of Defense, where he received a prosthetic and saw other, much worse, amputees that experienced the same phantom feeling he did. Lucky for him, he said, his was not the worst. "Some of the soldiers said their (missing limbs) feels like it's turned sideways or there foot is turned backwards instead of forwards," Fordyce said. "So, when they try to walk, they're wanting to go this way and their foot goes the other way. I came out pretty fortunate." --

He eventually went to SHSU like Dockstader and got his Bachelor of Science in Agriculture in 1975. He said professors like Jack Parker, then associate registrar, agriculture professors "Dr. Little," Dr. Eddie Dye, David Mormon and Sonny Sikes are the reason he and other veterans could get their degree. "I would say, 'Professor Sikes, I got to go to Houston to take care of this arm and I'm going to have to miss class,'" Fordyce said. "Mr. Sikes said, 'You take care of your arm. I'll take care of your education.' And he did." The town of Katy, unlike other areas that despised the war and soldiers in it, "rolled out the red carpet" for Fordyce upon his return. But, he said, soldiers even today don't want the fanfare that is often given to them. "People today are so appreciative of veterans by doing small things like that," he said. "I don't know of any veteran that's asking for any handout. They just appreciate a pat on the back and a thank you."

Fordyce has his own way of thanking veterans as a member of the Lone Survivor Foundation board, an organization named in 2010 after fellow Huntsville veteran Marcus Luttrell's 2007 book on Operation Redwing in Afghanistan. They provide therapies for members and families dealing with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; outdoor recreational activities to relieve stress; reduce dependency on narcotic pain management; family support; aide in speeding up government aid processes; and generally raising awareness. He also has served as the Director of Agricultural Business Land/Minerals, Commissioner Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, charter member and present Chairman of the Huntsville Economic Advisory Council, charter member of the Huntsville Veterans Advisory Council, and member of the Texas Veterans Commission advisory board. In addition, he is a former member and Vice President Board of Directors for Brownfield Memorial Hospital, Board for Lease (minerals) Texas General Land Office, and former member of the Walker County Grand Jury. But more important than any accomplishment or group he's been a part of, he said, is his family. "Sometimes you need your family to keep yourself in perspective that this is what it's all about," he said. "You talk to your wife or kids and let them know what's going on. Every day when I wake up and I put this wooden prosthetic on, I think of Vietnam. It's a continual healing process."



OBIT

1ST LT LAWRENCE J. BOUDRIA
USMC KHE SANH VETERAN
(September 29, 1944 - November 9, 2013)

Lawrence J. Boudria, age 69, of Wellington, FL, formerly of Kinnelon, NJ passed away on November 9, 2013.

Born in Hartford, CT, Lawrence was the son of the late Alfred and Frances Boudria. He proudly enlisted in the US Marine Corps. during the Vietnam War and achieved the rank of 1st Lieutenant. He served as the commander of the 3rd Marine Division's Kit Carson Scouts in Quang Tri, Vietnam where he used his Vietnamese language skills to repatriate enemy soldiers who then served as scouts supporting the US combat Marines. As a Lt Marine Platoon Commander, he was awarded the Bronze Star for Valor for exposing himself to enemy fire in order to save the lives of his men during the siege of Khe Sanh on Hill 881; one of the fiercest battles of the Vietnam war.

Upon his return home, Lawrence earned his MBA from Columbia University and followed the route of an entrepreneur, where he was a pioneer and innovator in the telecommunications resale industry, starting his own successful businesses - Garden State Long Distance Telephone Company and Universal Car Phone.

Lawrence is survived by his loving wife, Nina; their daughter, Jacqueline; his sister Judith Gottsegen, her husband Michael; his brother-law Randolph Aversano, his wife, Jane and many beloved nieces and nephews.

MARINE RETURNS TO VIETNAM FOUR DECADES LATER

By Brian Livingston
Meridian Star

MERIDIAN — Not 10 minutes after a 20-year-old corpsman set foot in Vietnam in 1968, enemy fire began raining down. It didn't take David Schuurman but just one second to figure out he should be following many of the other U.S. Marines at Khe Sanh who were diving in holes and bunkers to get away from the deadly shrapnel. It was Schuurman's introduction into a war that has since been deemed the least popular conflict in American history and an experience of which he still has vivid memories.

Those memories were one reason why Schuurman decided to return to Southeast Asia earlier this year. Accompanied by his son, Jeff Schuurman, and his daughter, Sonja Girod, Schuurman traveled to the villages, cities and battlefields that for one year of his life left such a strong impression.

"What a difference 40 years makes," said Schuurman, who is a certified nurse anesthetist. "The people there are very friendly and I felt completely safe. It was an amazing experience and I would go back if I could afford it."

It was during a conversation with his wife, Rosie, that Schuurman decided to take the trip. His son, Jeff, is a historian of sorts and Sonja just wanted to go because it was a place her father had served. Schuurman didn't have any expectations when the trio took off from the United States in March of this year. But in retrospect he is glad he made the trip.

In 1968 it was a different story.

After graduating from high school, Schuurman admitted he didn't have very good grades. He didn't quite know what to do with himself but he was certain he didn't want to get drafted to Vietnam. It's not that he didn't agree with the war. Schuurman said he really didn't have a strong opinion either way. He just knew he didn't want to be fighting in the jungles so he tried to join the Navy.

Schuurman had a keen interest in medicine so he decided to stray from his original Navy course and join the Marine Corps as a corpsman, or medic. When he was running for cover on that first day "in country," Schuurman was kicking himself for allowing this to happen. Oh well, he thought, just make the best of the situation.

The siege of Khe Sanh lasted five months, 18 days from Jan. 21, 1968 thru July 9, 1968. It was the prelude to the Tet Offensive, the massive invasion of South Vietnam by North Vietnamese troops and Viet Cong guerillas that began January 30, 1968. Schuurman found himself in April of 1968 as a

corpsman with a Marine artillery battery. Schuurman also found out quickly that fire bases where artillery units are based are magnets for enemy ordinance.

"It is kinda funny how when you get there and for the next five or six months you are running around jumping at every sound," Schuurman said. "After awhile you get numb to what is going on around you. But when you get "short," that is when your tour is nearing completion and you can go home, you get jumpy again."

On his recent trip, Schuurman wasn't jumpy. In fact, he found revisiting the locations where he once served enthralling. While standing on paved roads with modern automobiles zooming by, Schuurman could see the wasteland of a fire base with pock-marked holes where enemy shells had tilled the ground with the smell of cordite in the air. He remembered how he felt the stout hand of fear grip his soul each time he heard the whine of an incoming shell or the whoosh of a rocket before it impacted, throwing deadly shrapnel through the air at twice the speed of sound. Now, nothing but the smell of car exhaust and the honking of a horn.

"I don't suffer from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) like so many other veterans," Schuurman said. "I don't know why. I guess it was the way I viewed everything back then. But I understand why many vets do suffer from that. I just basically accepted that whatever happened to me, happened. There wasn't anything I could really do about it."

But some of it may have been fate or destiny.

On one occasion, Schuurman was supposed to join a convoy from the fire base to travel down a road to retrieve more medical supplies. He told the driver to stop by his hooch, or tent, to get something he forgot. The truck continued on without him and hit a mine that exploded right where Schuurman would have been sitting in the truck.

Schuurman didn't leave Vietnam unscathed, however. At another fire base, at a place Marines called the Rockpile, he earned his Purple Heart. The Rockpile was really a mountain jutting out of the surrounding green triple canopy jungle. At the top a forward artillery observer could call in supporting fire for many miles around. Naturally, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong didn't like Americans being there.

"There was a fire base at the bottom of the mountain and on the fire base was a very good bunker where the fire control center was," Schuurman said. "This bunker was the safest place to be when we got shelled so naturally I always ran into it whenever it started raining explosives."

It was during one of these rain storms of rockets and shells that Schuurman and a young lieutenant decided to make some Kool-Aid. What else were they going to do, Schuurman said. A rocket hit the bunker dead center and Schuurman got shrapnel in his head. And the Kool-Aid spilled all over the floor of the bunker. Despite his injury, Schuurman said he went out after the shelling and tended to the wounded. When asked if this selfless act should have included another medal besides the Purple Heart, Schuurman said, "There were guys all over the place who did what was needed to be done. I was no different. I did what my country had trained me to do."

Even though he was a corpsman, his country taught Schuurman how to kill as well. During the trip in March he came face to face with scores of Vietnamese war veterans who had fought against the Americans and their allies. It was hard for Schuurman to think that decades ago these people were trying to kill him and his friends while Schuurman's friends were intent on doing the same to them.

"There was no animosity among us," Schuurman said. "We laughed, told stories, and drank together. We could be friends now and I think I made some friends while I was there. It is the leaders of countries who make the wars. If it were left up to us, the men on the ground, we'd just try to get along without all the fighting. I didn't then, and I certainly don't now, have a hatred for the Vietnamese people."

After his tour of duty, Schuurman, who was born in Iowa but grew up in Denver, Colo., was living in Wisconsin when he met his wife, Rosie. After graduating college, the couple moved around for a few years before settling down in Meridian 20 years ago.



In many ways the trip to Vietnam was the closing of one chapter and opening of another in Schuurman's life. He said he feels he is a much better person for going over to a place that, not necessarily haunted him, but preoccupied a part of him for so many years. He now feels the trip was well worth the effort and expense and he is pleased to have taken it with his son and daughter.

"I am glad I went," Schuurman said. "It really wasn't a priority for me to go but the closer we got to starting the trip the more I was looking forward to it. I really enjoyed it."

It is during this holiday season, Thanksgiving, that Schuurman said his experience there has actually given him reasons to be thankful in the here and now.

OBIT

KENNETH L. REINESCH USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
BRAVO CO 1/26 3RD PLT

Kenneth Lawrence Reinesch was born on January 22, 1947 to Albert and Margaret (Kindred)Reinesch in Plankinton, SD. He farmed with his family on the family farm in White Lake until 1966, when he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Ken served two combat tours in Vietnam and was wounded in action on June 6, 1967. Ken was honorably discharged from the United States Marine Corps in 1971. He married Constance Moeller on October 2, 1971 in White Lake. From this marriage, his two children, Jodi (Ruden) and Joel were born in 1973 and 1976, respectively. He worked for the Chamberlain Police Department starting in 1971 until he was hired as a patrol officer with the Mitchell Police Department in Mitchell, SD. Ken was a Detective with the Mitchell Police Department for many years and was named the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year in 1979. Ken worked for the Mitchell Police Department from 1972 until 1988. Also in 1988, he married Sue Murley. He ran his own private investigation business and was a certified polygrapher. He then worked for Davison County from 1989 until his retirement in 2002. Never one to sit around the house, Ken then managed the Mitchell American Legion Post 18 shortly after his retirement and then went to work for Lifequest in 2005 and remained there until the time of his death. On December 31, 1999, Ken was married to Sherri Hildebrand.

Ken was a life-time member of Post 18 and the Mitchell chapters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans and the Military Order of the Purple Heart. He held nearly every executive position with Post 18, including Commander. He was honored with numerous Veteran of the Year awards and was named the District 6 Legionnaire of the Year in 2007. He was a past Chef De Gare of the Post 18 40/8. Ken also was a member of the Knights of Columbus and the Corn Palace Detachment of the Marine Corps League.

Ken was fiercely proud of his service in Vietnam, the title of Marine and his unwavering patriotism. He devoted thousands of hours in service to his fellow veterans and also to the community of Mitchell. Ken was instrumental is raising the funds for the first DAV van in Mitchell to be used for the transport of disabled veterans to and from their doctor's appointments. He also was very active for many of years in the Mitchell Exchange Club where he gained a number of lifelong friends through that association. He held, until his final breath, the most special kind of love for his fellow Marines whom he served with in Vietnam, especially all of the men of 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, many of which he reunited with recently in Mitchell. Semper Fi, brothers.

Ken loved his work in the woodshop at Lifequest and tremendously enjoyed working alongside the clients there. In his final years, he relished most his title of grandfather and loved his four grandchildren immensely.

Ken is survived by his wife, Sherri and his two children, daughter, Jodi (Corey Elward) and son, Joel (Liza) Reinesch, all of Mitchell and his four grandchildren, Shawn Ruden, Blake Ruden, Coy Reinesch and Emma Reinesch. The youngest of the family, he is survived by his three loving sisters, Betty (Dick) Vant Hul of Sioux Falls, Mary (Leroy) Persson of Mitchell and Leanne (Don) Bradwisch of Loomis. Ken also is survived by his mother-in-law, Doris Hildebrand, Mitchell, brother-in-law, Craig (Amy) Hildebrand of Mitchell, sister-in-law, Deb (Tim) Havrevold of Minneapolis, MN, and sister-in-law, Gladys Reinesch, Mitchell and 20 nieces and nephews. Ken also leaves behind his loyal companion, Peanut, with whom he spent countless hours side-by-side. Ken is preceded in death by his parents, grandparents, Christ and Susan Reinesch and Napoleon and Elsie Kindred, one brother, James, and father-in-law, Duane Hildebrand.





CUSTOM DESIGNED COFFIN VIETNAM SCENES

DOC TOPMILLER CEREMONY

By Steven Orr

"Doc" Robert J. Topmiller Memorial Dedication Ceremony
Veterans Day 2013
Eastern Kentucky University
Richmond, Kentucky

November 11th, Veterans Day, is a special day every year, a day for Americans to express their appreciation for and to recognize the service and sacrifice of all military veterans. It is a time when veterans remember and reflect upon their military experiences. I had the honor and privilege to share Veterans Day 2013 with three old friends, three Khe Sanh veterans, as we witnessed and participated in a dedication ceremony for "Doc" Bob Topmiller at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU)

Navy Corpsman and Khe Sanh veteran "Doc" Topmiller achieved his doctorate degree at the University of Kentucky and subsequently became a distinguished, respected, and well-liked History professor at EKU. "Doc" cared for so many in both his military and his civilian life, all the time himself suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). "Doc" took his life in 2008 as the demons of war snatched him away from us

Veterans Day 2013 brought together members of" Doc's" family, along with friends, colleagues, former students and teachers, as well as various campus and area dignitaries to EKU's Powell Plaza to witness the dedication of the Robert J. Topmiller Memorial.

The early afternoon ceremony occurred under a sunny, blue sky of a mild Kentucky Fall day. Students and faculty bustled about the EKU campus with many stopping to observe and listen to the EKU Veterans Day ceremony conducted on the deck above Powell Plaza. The Topmiller Memorial Dedication ceremony followed immediately in Powell Plaza.

Doc's wife, Terri, daughter Jamie, grand-children Ross and Aiden were seated as harpist Dr. Carolyn Dupont and violist Jeremy Mulholland provided a musical prelude. Khe Sanh veterans, Mike Archer, Michael Reath, Allen Ferg, and I, assumed our seats

as Dr. Todd Hartch opened the ceremony.

Dr. Hartch spoke fondly of his personal and professional relationship with "Doc". Dr. Hartch informed the audience that the ceremony was to, not only recognize Dr. Topmiller and to dedicate the memorial that bears his name, but also to remember EKU student and Iraqi war veteran, Robert Hundley-Doria, who took his life in 2010 as a result of PTSD.

The program continued with three speakers, friends and colleagues of "Doc" Topmiller, Dr. Peter Alegi, Kirby Neil, and Mike Archer, each eloquently and poignantly shared stories and memories of "Doc" Topmiller's dedication, honor, courage, compassion, and sense of humor.

Dr. Ezra England of the Humanities Department shared his memories of Robert Hundley-Doria. As his advisor and mentor, Dr. England spoke of a fine young man with such great potential, but who struggled with the horrors and memories of war.

Members of the Topmiller and Hundley-Doria families unveiled the gray granite memorial plaque revealing the following inscription:

"Wars never end for those who participate in them"

Red Clay on My Boots: Encounters with Khe Sanh 1968 – 2005 Robert J. Topmiller/ (1968 – 2008) Professor 2000 – 2008)

Positioned in front of the memorial plaque are two long benches, the seats made of the same gray granite stone with bold, white lettering. On the front edge of the left bench is inscribed: Robert Hundley-Doria 1984-2010 and the front edge of the right bench reads: "for those who remain nameless".

The ceremony closed with the playing of "Amazing Grace" and "Taps". EKU hosted a reception immediately following the memorial ceremony.

The ceremony and the entire experience at EKU was such a rewarding and enlightening experience for me and, I think, for the other Khe Sanh veterans in attendance. "Doc" Topmiller was so very special to so many people in so many different ways and it is ever apparent that he is missed by all who knew him.

The vision to erect a memorial to Bob Topmiller and to other EKU veterans who ended their lives as a result of PTSD was brought forward by Lt. Col. Brett Morris (USA Ret.), EKU Director of Admissions and former Director of EKU Veterans Programs. Dr. Christiane Taylor, History Department Chair, embraced the project and joined Lt/Col. Morris in design development, selection of site, and dedication ceremony format. Faculty members supported the project and assisted in a variety of ways. Dr. Taylor expressed to me that Administrative Assistant Diane Tyer "...is a God-send when you have to organize events". Diane was involved in nearly every aspect of the project.

The memorial site is not yet complete. There are plans being designed and funds sought to erect a bronze missing man statue (boots, bayoneted rifle, and helmet) on the ledge just above the memorial plaque.

THANK YOU to everyone at Eastern Kentucky University who was involved in the Robert J. Topmiller Memorial and for bringing public awareness to the debilitating and often life-ending effect post traumatic stress disorder has upon our military veterans.

If you wish to contribute to the "Doc" Robert J. Topmiller Veterans' Memorial Fund donations may be sent in care of: Dr. Chris Taylor, Department of History, 323 Keith, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky, 40475. Engraved commemorative brick pavers are also being sold to raise funds and order forms are available



REMEMBERING LLOYD SCUDDER BRAVO CO 1/26

By Craig Tourte

What and honor and privilege it was to have read several past articles I had written referenced in the latest edition (Issue 83) of Red Clay Magazine acknowledging the loss of Lloyd W. Scudder. Lloyd's courage, sacrifice and perseverance were certainly an inspiration in my life and I'll continue to tell his story of bravery and survival and to reference his character and his example of being extraordinary - I'll miss him terribly.

I drove up to Mt. Shasta/Weed California to attend the November 11th, 2013 Veterans Day Memorial Service at the "Living Memorial Sculpture Garden" of which "Khe Sanh Veterans Inc." is a sponsor with that name inscribed into the Granite Sponsor Wall - much appreciation to our President Tom Eichler. There is a memorial service each Memorial and Veterans Day attended by several hundred throughout the community. I last attended the Memorial Day Service on Monday, May 27th, 2013. Khe Sanh Veteran Paul J. Turnbull had recently passed and we attended to honor his name being placed on the Memorial Wall. Dennis Smith, Lloyd Scudder, Kenneth "Buzz" Sawyer, David Tonick, Tom Horchler, Steve Wiese and myself all stood next to Paul's inscribed name to honor his memory.



As I sat amongst those attending this Veterans Day Service my thoughts went back to what seemed like just a few months prior when Lloyd was sitting just a few feet from me and together we honored those who had too soon departed us. And now Lloyd was gone. I hadn't realized it at the time but after this



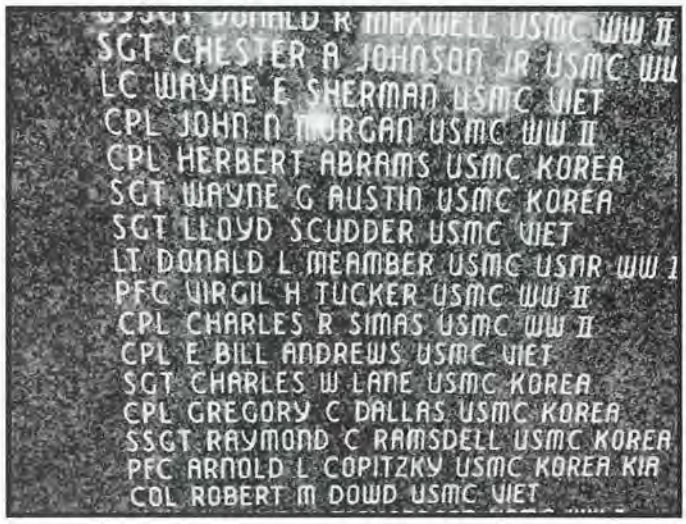

service Dennis pointed out that Lloyd's name had been inscribed into the granite wall some years before and he directed me to that location. It was just and fitting that his name had been placed on the wall and that he had been able to view it inscribed in this most hallowed location. I'll add here that any living and/or deceased Honorable Discharged veterans name can be inscribed. I had my name along with my now deceased - veterans of WWII - father, uncle and father-in-law's name inscribed into the granite wall.

Those who attended our Khe Sanh Reunion in Nashville this year will remember the photograph of Lloyd placed on the table for all to sign. Lloyds wife Pam also attended the Veterans Day Memorial Service at the Sculpture Garden and proudly showed us that signed, framed photograph of Lloyd which she had received from the Khe Sanh Veterans. Pam was visible moved holding the photograph and I know she was very appreciative of all who signed in his memory.





AN AMERICAN HERO

Before he was a Pirate, a Brave and a Red Sox, Chuck Goggin was a Raider

By Steve Wulf ESPN.com

The first-time visitor to Cooperstown enjoyed walking through the Hall of Fame gallery last Memorial Day weekend with his two adult sons.

There were more than a few guys he played with: Don Sutton, Bill Mazeroski, Willie Stargell, Hank Aaron, Carl Yastrzemski, Carlton Fisk, Jim Rice, Juan Marichal. There was the plaque for Roberto Clemente, who got his 3,000th and last hit for the same team and on the same day that the visitor had gotten his first major league hit. There was Phil Niekro, whose no-hitter he saved with a diving stop at second in the eighth inning. There was Dave Winfield, who hit that ball. There were two of his managers (Eddie Mathews and Tommy Lasorda) and a player he managed, Rickey Henderson. There was even a player he was once traded for: Jim Bunning.



Vietnam Veteran Chuck Goggin Shared a Special Day with Roberto Clemente in 1972

"I made those guys," says Chuck Goggin with a laugh. "Seriously, it was wonderful seeing my teammates immortalized. You know, I also had hits off Bob Gibson, Tom Seaver and Steve Carlton."

Goggin certainly got a lot out of his 72 games in the three years he played in the majors. But the real reason he was in Cooperstown can be found on the back of his 1974 Topps baseball card (#457), the only one he ever had.

On the front is Goggin in his Atlanta Braves uniform. Turn it over, look at his lifetime batting record, and you will see "IN MILITARY SERVICE" for the years 1966 and 1967. And under his vital statistics, there's one of those little cartoons Topps put on the cards back then. Goggin's is of a player with two medals on his chest, along with this legend: "CHUCK WAS AWARDED THE PURPLE HEART & BRONZE STAR IN VIET NAM."

Charles Francis Goggin, born on July 7, 1945, is the most decorated Vietnam veteran in major league history, and the Hall of Fame had invited him to its Classic Old-Timers Game because The Wall That Heals, a replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, was being brought to Cooperstown as part of the Memorial Day festivities. "We lost 38 men in my outfit," he says. "Men who did not make it to the age of 21, all killed in my 13 months in Vietnam." That outfit was Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd

Marine Regiment — a legendary band that was known as Ripley's Raiders, after company commander Capt. (later Col.) John Ripley. Before Goggin was a Pirate, a Brave and a Red Sox, he was a Raider, and therein lies a story of resilience and determination and luck — not all of it good. His tale is as rich as any in Cooperstown, or Hollywood, for that matter. Think "Forrest Gump" meets "The Rookie."



Goggin in a rare moment in Vietnam with Legendary Captain John Ripley

Goggin grew up in Pompano Beach, Fla., using sports as an escape from an unhappy home life. "Baseball was my compass," he says. The Dodgers signed him as an infielder in 1964, right out of high school, and he split the year between Salisbury of the Western Carolina League and St. Petersburg in the Florida State League.

For someone born on 7/7, Goggin certainly had his share of misfortune. He hurt his knee that first season and had offseason surgery before reporting to Santa Barbara in the California League in '65. While there, he and some teammates, including Don Sutton, decided to join the Army Reserve, but Goggin was classified as 4F because of the knee surgery and told not to worry about being drafted. That November, after a season in which he hit 10 homers with 65 RBIs, he got his draft notice and discovered his 4F had been crossed out and replaced by a 1A.

As the Vietnam War intensified, the Marine Corps found that they had too few good men, so Goggin was drafted into the Marines and reported to Parris Island for boot camp in February 1966. At Camp Lejeune, he was trained to be an infantry rifleman, and by July, he was in Vietnam as a private first class in L Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Regiment. "The fact that I was a baseball player impressed nobody," says Goggin. "They hadn't heard of me."

In December '66, Ripley made Goggin, by then a corporal, a platoon radio operator. The position carried a lot of weight figuratively (he had to be his commander's shadow) and literally (the radio weighed 30 pounds).



Goggin, Right on Shoulder Played Key Role In Phil Niekro's No Hitter on August 5, 1973

In a yet-to-be-released documentary about the war, based on the book "Ride the Thunder" by Richard Botkin, Goggin describes an encounter near the DMZ on March 1, 1967, in which Ripley instructed Goggin's platoon to "Fix bayonets." Says Goggin, "I don't think troops have done this since the Civil War … Captain Ripley gives us the order to charge, and I've never been so proud of 45 guys in my life. One or two guys start yelling, like a rebel yell, and pretty soon all 45 of us are yelling. We walked right over that hill — didn't run — firing with our rifles at our hips. It would have been an awesome sight if you were making a movie out of this."

But that charge was only the precursor to a March 2 battle that Goggin described as "Frazier and Ali." L Company had happened upon an entire North Vietnamese regiment, and the firefight that ensued is

described in harrowing detail in the Botkin book. Goggin, who had to assume command of his platoon that day, sums it up this way: "At 10 a.m., there were 250 of us and thousands of them. By 5 p.m. we were down to 15 men who weren't dead or wounded. And we won."

A few days later, the Marines read a newspaper account of the battle under a headline that referred to "Ripley's Raiders," and the name stuck. Goggin received a Cross of Gallanty from the South Vietnamese Army for his role in that battle and was promoted to sergeant. He was awarded a Bronze Star from the Marines for a later engagement.

But bad luck hit him again on April 13, 1967. On that day, he stepped on a land mine in the jungle along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. As he told the Louisville Courier Journal a few years later, "I heard this thing explode and could feel the shock hit me. It lifted me up in the air 8 to 10 feet. The first thing I could remember thinking was, 'Damn, I've stepped on a mine' ... Then I thought, 'What if I should come down on another one?'"

He didn't, but he did take 14 significant shrapnel wounds in his legs and back and left shoulder. He still had to walk three hours out of the jungle to Highway 9, where he was picked up and transported to receive medical treatment. Goggin spent several weeks aboard the hospital ship USS Repose, but that gave him time to steel his determination to get back to baseball. Once he recovered, though, he resumed command of his platoon.

At one point, Ripley offered Goggin a commission, but that would have meant putting baseball off for another year. His tour of duty was completed on Aug. 20, and upon his discharge on Feb. 10, 1968, he almost immediately traded in his Marine Corps uniform for one with "Dodgers" on the front. "The Dodgers did me a humongous service," says Goggin. "They allowed me to report with the pitchers and catchers on Feb. 19, which gave me extra time to get in shape."

Playing for Roger Craig in Double-A Albuquerque that year, Goggin hit .247 with 14 stolen bases, which was pretty good for a guy who would have to pull a long-lost shard of shrapnel out of his body every once in a while. Ray Lamb, who would go on to pitch in the majors for the Dodgers and Indians, was Goggin's roommate in the minors. "Some of us knew he had been in Vietnam," says Lamb, who still keeps in touch. "But if it ever came up, he never bragged, never came off as the hero he was. His back was sore because of the heavy radio he had to carry over there, but it was never an excuse."

Even in a baseball uniform, Goggin was a Marine through and through. In order to make himself more valuable, Goggin tried switch-hitting in the Instructional League for his manager, Tommy Lasorda, and indeed, he was hitting .336 and leading the league in stolen bases when bad luck intervened again. He broke his ankle sliding into second on a steal. "The doctor told me I would never play again," says Goggin.

"I remember driving him to the airport after the injury," says Lamb. "He had a cast up to his chest, it was so bad. Other guys might have thought about quitting, but not Chuck."

When he did return to the field, for Triple-A Spokane in the middle of the 1969 season, he hit .318 and made himself marketable enough to be traded, straight up, for Pirates pitcher and future Sen. Jim Bunning. But Goggin didn't have a good year for Triple-A Columbus in 1970, so, fearing that his value was slipping as a utility player, he went to Pirates farm director Harding Peterson with a proposal: Send me down to Waterbury to learn to become a catcher. "The only thing I asked for in return," says Goggin, "was two catcher's mitts. I couldn't afford them at $150 apiece."

He made the Eastern League All-Star team as a catcher in 1971 and was promoted to Triple-A Charleston, where he batted .316. The next season, 1972, he hit .297 for Charleston and finished second in the International League MVP voting to a guy named Dwight Evans. On Sept. 8, the Pirates called him up to fulfill the dream he harbored while on board the hospital ship.

But while the per diem sure beat field rations, manager Bill Virdon didn't use him much because the Pirates were still in a pennant race. On Sept. 30, with the division title clinched and Clemente stuck at hit No. 2,999, Virdon batted Goggin leadoff, playing second in place of Bill Mazeroski.

Goggin led off with a single to right off left-hander Jon Matlack, and second-base umpire Doug Harvey — another Hall of Famer — called time to give Goggin the ball from his first major league hit. He got another hit off Matlack but was erased on a force with Clemente in the on-deck circle. It was in the next inning that Clemente doubled off Matlack for No. 3,000.

After the game Clemente congratulated Goggin, who says, "I told him, 'At this rate, it's going to take me 1,500 years to catch you.'" A reporter suggested that a photographer take a picture of the two of them together, with their respective milestone baseballs. (The photo looks remarkably like one taken of Goggin and Ripley on a quiet day in Vietnam.)

Goggin played winter ball in Puerto Rico that offseason, so he saw and felt firsthand the despair on the island after Clemente's plane went down on New Year's Eve. His death impacted Goggin on the field, as well. Because the Pirates decided to move catcher Manny Sanguillen to right field for the '73 season, they bolstered their catching corps and reduced Goggin to an afterthought. Sent down to Charleston, he asked GM Joe Brown to trade him or release him, and Brown complied by selling him to the Atlanta Braves on May 24.

Goggin hit .289 in 64 games for manager Eddie Mathews that year, earning him that Topps card and inclusion in — ironically enough — the band of bench players known in Atlanta as "F Troop," after the TV sitcom about a comical cavalry unit. More significantly, Goggin got to participate in a little history: Phil Niekro's no-hitter against the Padres on Aug. 5.

"I was playing second as a defensive replacement for Davey Johnson," says Goggin. "Winfield hit a shot to my right to lead off the eighth, and I caught it on one hop and threw to first to get him. Davey was a much better player than I was, but I had better range at that time. Phil's always been nice enough to give me credit for saving that no-hitter for him."

Goggin also saw Hank Aaron hit his 713th home run, leaving him one shy of Babe Ruth, and Goggin was looking forward to witnessing a little more history with the Braves in '74. But wouldn't you know it? After surviving enemy fire, a land mine, a horrendous ankle injury and the caprice of baseball, he was done in by a situp. While warming up in the outfield during spring training, he ruptured a disc in his back. Traded to the Red Sox for catcher Vic Correll, Goggin struggled at Triple-A Pawtucket and got into only two games after he was called up to the Red Sox with Jim Rice and Fred Lynn that September.

That was the last time Goggin played in the majors. He hit .296 in his 72 games, while playing five different positions. He coached and managed in the minors, first for the Braves, then for the Reds — Yankees pitching coach Larry Rothschild was one of his players in Triple-A Nashville. In the winter of 1978-79, he won Mexico's Pacific League championship with the Navojoa Mayos, who had a young outfielder named Rickey Henderson.

Goggin says that "not too many" of his teammates or players knew about his Marine exploits. "You have to remember," he says, "I was playing at a time when America was trying to forget about Vietnam."

After moving into the private sector, he got into local politics in Nashville, and that led to his appointment by President Ronald Reagan as a U.S. marshal for the Middle District of Tennessee, a post he held from 1983 until 1995. He married a woman who had a son from a previous marriage, and he watched with pride as his wife, Wendy Goggin, became chief counsel to the Drug Enforcement Administration. They've been married 30 years, and their two sons have blessed them with four grandchildren.

In recent years, Goggin has devoted time and energy to building a memorial for Ripley's Raiders at the Marine Corps Museum in Triangle, Va. "We actually purchased four boulders from the area in Quang Tri Province between the Razorbacks and the Rockpile, and had them shipped over here," says Goggin. "We dedicated the memorial on March 7, 2012."

On the monument are the names of the Marines of Lima Company who were lost between 2/19/67 and 11/01/67: William Branock, Peter Liberati, Johnnie Mason, John Barker, Richard Blinder, Forrest Goodwin, Richard Graham, John Hanscom, Jackie Harris, Terry Heekin, Robert Martin, John O'Don-

nell, Richard Strahl, Robert Freed, Robert Hice, Jay Hensley, Jacque Ayd, Theodore Nelson, Richard Brown, George Mangrum, Paul Golembski, Francis Ludwig, Benjamin Romero de Jesus, Jimmie Dutcher, George Roland, Lee Jarvis, Albert Lawson, Kevin Ferguson, Barton Haynes, Morrell Crary, Michael Horner.

"They may not be as famous as the men in Cooperstown," says Goggin, "but they're heroes nonetheless. I wish they could have walked through the Hall of Fame with me."

As for Goggin, he doesn't claim hero status for himself, or bemoan his fate.

"Not many men can claim to be a Marine and a major leaguer," he says. "If I do have one regret, it's this: I never got to show people the ballplayer I might've become. I was just too banged up, from the war, from the injuries and all, to answer the question of how good I could have been.

"But right now, I'm sitting in a chair on the North Carolina coast, looking at a beautiful sloop going down the Intracoastal Waterway, enjoying the day. And I'm talking to you about a life not many people have had. I am a very lucky man."

OBIT

HAROLD W. JURY USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN A/1/13

Harold operated a 155 at Khe Sanh. He spent 13 years in the Corp. My wife and I were friends of Harold and his wife when we retired and moved to Panama. We were next door neighbors when they rented the home next to ours up in the mountains of Panama. I was USAF in Panama in 1968 and Harold had been stationed at Marine Barracks Rodman, CZ but we didn't meet till 2008 in Panama. Thanks you. Chester Oakes

Harold Wesley Jury, was born Oct. 2, 1946 in Oklahoma City. He was the 8th child of Joe and Linnie January Jury of Moore. He is preceded in death by his parents, two stillborn siblings, brothers Albert, LeRoy, and Clarence. Harold graduated from



Moore High School in 1964 and later joined the US Marine Corps. He served in Vietnam and retired as a Sergeant after 11 years of service. He began working at Dayton Tire and Rubber Co. in Oklahoma City in 1975 and retired from Firestone as a supervisor in 2007. Harold married the love of his life, Dolores Sanchez in Panama in February 1970. They were currently residing in Panama on their acreage in Moore, on the family home place. Harold loved to share his cooking skills with his large extended family, his brother's and sister's families, and many cousins and friends. We will miss the family celebrations he loved to host.

He is survived by his wife, Dolores, daughter, Lynnelle Murray and husband Randall of Edmond, and his son Michael serving in the US Coast Guard in Connecticut. Other survivors include his two sisters, Oleta Tolen and Zelma Young of Moore, brother, Kenneth Jury and wife Claudia of Houston, TX., and sister-in-law Genivia Jury of Oklahoma City. Lynnelle and husband and their four children, Colten, Gavin, Madeleine, and Michael and daughter, Avery were able to go to Panama for his funeral service on January 17.



BOOK REVUE

Restoring Valor: One Couple's Mission to Expose Fraudulent War Heroes and Protect America's Military Awards System Hardcover

by Doug Sterner (Author) , Pam Sterner (Author)

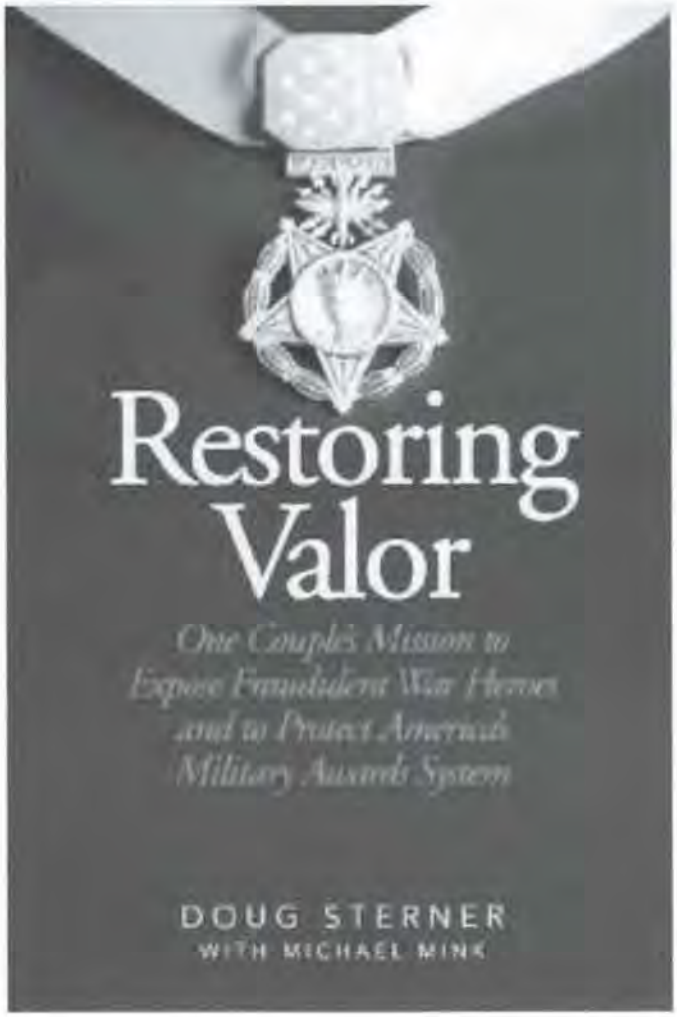

Stolen valor occurs when a person lies about receiving military decorations that he or she has in fact never earned. It has become a major societal problem that has been discussed numerous times in the news and, most recently, by the US Supreme Court. According to *The New York Times*, the Department of Veterans Affairs paid disability benefits to more than six hundred people falsely claiming to have been POWs in the Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars. The number of stolen valor cases reported to the FBI has tripled in the last decade. In fact, more imposters lie about earning high military declarations for battlefield bravery than the actual number of real -life hero recipients. These imposters trade on tales and the trappings of military valor to secure privileges such as career advancements and even unearned veterans' benefits.

Because officially recognized valor is a calling card of trust and courage, many of these imposters "steal" it to invade the lives of people and institutions, for personal gain and often with criminal results. In *Restoring Valor*, Doug Sterner provides riveting case studies of the stolen valor imposters he's investigated and exposed, and the serious crimes — including murder — they've committed. He chronicles the evolution of stolen valor from the inception of the republic to today. Sterner demonstrates why the federal law he and his wife Pam helped to enact, called the Stolen Valor Act, is necessary.

I GET PICTURES



SUB UNIT 5 KHE SANH 67 DON WATKINS



L-R BILL LEFEVRE, DAVID PARKER, PETE OTTMAN

OBIT



THOMAS E. FRALEY, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
A CO 1/26 3RD PLATOON

Thomas E. Fraley, 68, Buchanan Hollow, passed away, Tuesday, January 7, 2014, at the Bradford Regional Medical Center, surrounded by his loving family.

Born September 6, 1945, in Bradford, he was the son of the late Jack Fraley and Kathleen (Cottillion) Levis. He married Connie (Cocherell) Fraley who survives.

Mr. Fraley was a 1962 graduate of Bradford High School. On October 1, 1965 he enlisted in the United States Marines. He served during the Vietnam War and at the battle of Khe Sanh. He was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Letter of Commendation, Vietnam Service Medal with 2 Stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal with device, and the Combat Action Ribbon, He was honorably discharged on September 30, 1969 as a Corporal.

He had been employed at W R Case and Sons for over 30 years. He was a member of the Disabled American Veterans, American Legion and the VFW. He enjoyed hunting and fishing and his two bull dogs were the love of his life.

In addition to his wife, he survived by one daughter, Brenda Wooten, of Tulsa, OK, four sons Mark (Sonia) Havers, of Eldred, Shane Fraley, of Bradford, Jeremy Gault, of Ft Leonardwood, MS, Joshua Gault, of Shreveport, LA, 10 grandchildren, and 8 great grandchildren.





REUNIONS

3RD BATTALION 26TH MARINES & CORPSMAN
DATE: JUNE 11-14
LOCATION: ENNIS MONTANA

For Information On Scheduling ETC Google "3/26 Marines Reunion:

I GET MAIL:

Mrs. Holly Witt
95 North Road
Harmony, Maine
04942

Dear Mr. Eichler,

With every magazine that arrives at our home Bill and I would sit down together and read the pages from cover to cover, and then he would share stories of his time in Khe Sanh. There were tears shed by both us and of course the "Why me?" I never had an answer for him but I held him close and together we cried and I consoled him to the best of my ability.

Today the magazine arrived and there was no Bill to share it with, however, I wanted to keep the tradition going and read each story, when I came upon pages 75 and 76, and saw the story of his death and obituary! Needless to say the tears began, and even though I had written his obit, it was as if it were for the first time.

Thank you for remembering him, he was a fine man whom I cherished in our 8 short years together. He was the love of my life.

God Bless you each and every one of you for your service to our country.

WEB BRIEFS

By Craig W. Tourte

I have read quite a lot about Khe Sanh, there is much information on the subject, the battles for, in and around the hills and of course the long and arduous Siege. Numerous books, essays and articles and well as web sites and now the documentary film "Bravo, Common, Uncommon Valor" is available for purchase to those who wish to educate themselves about that most difficult and significant battle, one even noted in President Osama's first inaugural address. Many who survived those trying times have been asked "what was it like" with the response being almost a wordless and personal emotional explanation not clearly understood by those asking. How can one explain the unexplainable to those who have never had that personal experience except from movies, books or the sometimes weird and mindless ramblings of pseudo heroes and questionable participants

I'll reference Mike Fishbaugh's POST of November 9th regarding the "Idaho Interview" in which a local commentator interviewed Ken & Betty Rodgers and Steve Wiese about the documentary and Ken & Steve's Khe Sanh experience. I have my own copy of the documentary but have not viewed it. I have seen the documentary twice and each time it takes a little something out of me. When I think I'll take another look at it, I find I just cannot. Steve asked me to view the Idaho television interview. I reluctantly did so because he asked me, but I certainly was not emotionally prepared to once again visit those emotional and descriptive interviews

The interviews contained statements, comments and observation that I have heard before, but out of respect for Steve I continued to watch because I knew it was important to him. Then the inevitable was asked of Steve in reference to his escaping the Ghost Patrol ambush and "what it was like" making his way back to the Khe Sanh Base. Steve's response was profound and direct and could not have been stated better by anyone else. He said, "Like crawling through the dark shadow of night." I sat there in a daze with tears in my eyes; it was an outstanding, not previously pondered and perfect answer to the question that has been asked of many of us. I don't know if Steve's response was meant literally or figuratively, I suspect it may have been a

little of both. Never-the-less it was a perfect answer for many of us who have difficulty answering that painfully unanswerable question.

Response by John M. Kaheny

I left Khe Sanh on February 15, 1968 on my extension leave. My tour date had already past. I spent 30days at home watching the TV coverage and reading the news reports. I don't recall anyone asking me what it was like. I did observe that what was being told on the nightly news and the New York Times did not reflect the reality I had experienced. There were NO reports of valor, comradeship, determination, and Marine Corps esprit de corps. The closest thing to interest was the question "why are you going back". I simply said "that's where my friends are". The public really had no idea. That was the fault of the media. Ernie Pyle, Dickey Chappell, God bless them, had left the stage too early. Juarte Kazickas was never recognized for her valor and reporting. Sad but true. The public never knew. Good night Chet! Walter was a joke

OBIT

DENNIS E. BARNETT
USMC HOTEL CO 2/26
KHE SANH VETERAN

Born on July 14,1947 to the late Oman Barnett and Frances Hornsby Barnett in Graham, Texas. He has two brothers, Terry and Kelly Don Barnett. Attended Crestview Elementary School, Graham Junior High and Graham High School in Graham, Texas. Received training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, CA. His first duty station was at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, where he was assigned as a Marine Guard at Makalapa Gate. He became the Squad Leader, supervising the honor guards assigned to the USS Arizona. They wore their dress blues, 24/7, directing VIP visitors while at the USS Arizona. **On August 15, 1967 he arrived in Vietnam where he was assigned to Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion 26th Marines. He fought during the Tet Offensive at the Khe Sanh Siege. He was medivac to Danang on May 9, 1968 and later sent to Camp Pendleton, CA.** In 1969, he then received his orders for his next duty station to Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, CA.

In November 1968, he met Florie at her apartment on Florida & Sonoma when he was searching for an apartment rental. It was love



at first sight for him. On February 21, 1969 they were married in Jacksboro, TX. Soon after they were stationed at Sangley Point Naval Air Station, Cavite City, Philippines from August 1969 until the base closure in November 1970.

He was sent back to Camp Pendleton until his honorable discharge. In 1971, Denny and Florie moved to Vallejo and started their career with the Department of Veterans Affairs until they retired. It took ten years to produce the love of his life ... their one and only son, Daniel Barnett. He enjoyed the annual camping with a bunch of longtime friends and relatives at Dillon Beach and fishing with his son Daniel and John Tyquiengco. The highlights of his life were receiving a yearly invitation to attend the December 7 Pearl Harbor Commemoration and the Vietnam Veteran Hotel Company Marine Corps Reunion.

Denny was an avid reader of Philippine history and novels relating to law enforcement. He enjoyed watching Filipino movies especially his hero, Dolphy. He became very active in civic as well as political activities in Vallejo. He loved to mingle with and assisted fellow veterans in applying for their benefits. Denny's life became complete when Daniel found and married his soulmate Rizalene (Zalee) at North Shore, HI last August 16, 2012. On top of it all, he was a fast food junkie and loved to hang out at the casino.

Denny joined the Lord Almighty peacefully on June 21 at 2:55 am, three hours after Florie's birthday, under his own terms.



God took the strength of a mountain,
The majesty of a tree.
The warmth of a summer sun,
The calm of a quiet sea.
The generous soul of nature,
The comforting arm of night.
The wisdom of the ages,
The power of the eagle's flight.
Then God combined these qualities,
There was nothing more to add.
His masterpiece was now complete,
He lovingly called it, Dad.

OBIT

WILLIAM JAMES MILES (RET. COL. USAF) AKA WILDMAN WILLIE, THE COLONEL 1923 – 2013



William James Miles' progressive outlook on life exhibited such curiosity, wit, and intelligence that chaplains admired him and waitresses swooned. He died peacefully on Wednesday, April 24 of natural causes. He was 89. Born and raised in Seattle, Bill graduated from St. John's grade school and Lincoln High School in 1941. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in Business from the University of Washington and a Masters in Business Administration from Georgetown University.

As a boy he covered his walls with photos of Ginger Rogers, read comic books about WWI pilots, played with the neighborhood kids at Ross Playfield and called his mother by her first name. Following his dream of being a pilot, he graduated from Army Air Forces Pilot School in March of 1944. This was the beginning of his long and proud military career. During WWII he was stationed in Italy and flew P-38 missions over Eastern Europe. In 1948, he and his gregarious wife Madelyn met at the Cozy Corner Tavern on Whidbey Island and were married

within two years. Bill was recalled to active duty during the Korean War and stationed in Japan with his wife and children. His military career also took him to Tacoma, Oklahoma, Alabama, and the Philippines/Viet Nam where he was Commander of the 29th tactical airlift squadron based at Clark Air Base, Philippines. **The squadron operated from Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Viet Nam where he spent most of his time flying missions that involved personnel transport, equipment and supply airlift and airdrop, aeromedical evacuation and bombing missions. He was proud that none of his men perished**.

"Those of us who served with and under him always felt that he enjoyed what he was doing and he enjoyed being associated with the rest of us.....especially those of us who were subordinate to him. He trusted us to do our job as best we could and he didn't impose his personal policies or procedures on us – all he asked was to get the job done. Needless to say, we wanted to get the job done for him."

– H. Delbert "Tasty" Frieze

Bill was also stationed in Ohio, and did two tours of The Pentagon where he was Deputy Director of Personnel Programs, regularly presenting at Senate/ House Defense sub-committee hearings. In 1975 he retired and moved the family back to the Northwest. He spent most of his days at the library reading political news, Rolling Stone Magazine, and checking out Tom Robbins' books and foreign films. His kids and their friends thought he was pretty cool and he was a great admirer of his grandchildren's antics and achievements. He was a very much loved husband, dad and (great) grandfather! Politically independent with Kennedy liberal leanings, he believed foremost in the common sense of compassion and human rights. His generous spirit is legendary among family and friends as is his practical thinking and quiet stoicism. In short, he was always there for you.

When Madelyn was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, he lovingly took care of her every need until he reluctantly accepted the fact that she needed to be in assisted living. Even then he was there with her at every meal, every day until her death. William was preceded in death by his parents Harry and Grace Van Well Miles, his wife of 57 years, Madelyn Baldwin, and his sisters and brother and their spouses Bette and Robert Murray, Mary and Guy Graham, and Harry and Florine Miles. His four children survive him: daughters Barbara Miles of Bothell, Sheila Breysse (Matt) of Bothell; Pattie Van Beuzekom (Erik) of Chimacum and son Jay Miles (Theresa) of Bristow, VA. Also surviving are four grandchildren: Chris Miles (Susan), Matt Miles (Dana,) Sarah and Elizabeth Breysse and six great-grandchildren: Hope, Garrett, Cade, Josiah, Makhi, and Malik. He also leaves behind his brother-in-law and his wife, Bill and Bobbie Baldwin, and a rich assortment of nieces and nephews.

A REMBERANCE

By Rich Delotto

SERGEANT WILLIAM "BILL" MALCOLM USA 101ST AIRMOBILE DIVISION VIETNAM KIA 05 MAY 1970

The story of Sergeant Malcolm starts with his birth in 1942. His parents were living in Clifton, NJ. Bill's father served in WWII and Korea as a combat engineer. Bill was an average student, graduating in 1960. He enlisted in the army right after high school. After four months of basic and advanced training he applied for and was accepted into the 3rd Infantry Regiment which guards the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers at Fort Myers Va.

After less than 3 years of service he rose to SFC and was considered one of the more outstanding Non Commissioned Officers in his unit. Immediately after the assassination of president Kennedy, the 3rd Infantry was put on standby for the burial ceremonies.

On November 23, 1963 Bill was a member of the 24 hour honor guard at the presidents casket. He was relieved for 24 hours on Sunday, but spent the day organizing the 21 gun salute. On Monday November 25, Bill marched his unit into position and ordered the firing sequence at the culmination of the funeral. At the time when most of bill's high school classmates were either working or entering senior year of college ,bill was on national TV serving his country.

In early 1964 Bill re-enlisted and spent 3 years with the 2nd armored division under NATO in West

Germany. In 1967 he returned to the states and served as a drill sergeant at Ft Campbell, Ky. In mid 1969 bill volunteered for Vietnam and the 101st Airmobile Division.

He arrived in Vietnam in September. During his combat tour, Bill was awarded both the Bronze & Silver Star Medals, and Combat Infantry Badge. 1ST SGT William Malcolm was killed in action on may 5, 1970 outside Fire Base Veghel, the action for which he was posthumously awarded the Silver Star. For the people who will always remember Bill Malcolm, he was a patriot in peacetime and a hero in wartime.

OBIT

MAJOR JOSEPH TYLER BURLEY USAF. FIGHTER PILOT AND KHE SANH VETERAN

Niceville, FL - Joseph Tyler Burley Major USAF Fighter Pilot (Ret), age 74, died October 12 at Fort Walton Rehabilitation Center.

Joseph is survived by his sister Joan (Burley) Hoffmann of New Fairfield, CT, five nieces and four nephews, and his longtime companion Judy Lynch of Valparaiso.

Joseph is a veteran of the Vietnam War where he flew the F4 Phantom in 350 combat missions in two tours during the Vietnam. He fought in the infamous "Triple Nickel"; During the Vietnam Tet Offensive, and during Linebacker II which fought the Vietnamese until peacetime. **Major "Birdlegs" Burley was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for action at the Battle at Khe Sanh;** the Bronze Star Medal; the Air Medal w/ 12 Oak Leaf Clusters; The Distinguished Presidential Unit Citation; Air Force Outstanding Unit Award; National Defense Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal w/4 Oak Leaf Clusters. Major Burley was highly respected as a superb pilot and instructor. He made a career of 21 years in the US Air Force. Joseph held a BS in Geology from Tufts University in Boston. He also loved football and baseball. Full military honors were presented at Doolittle Park, Valparaiso, Friday Nov. 15th at 2:00p.m. .

WEB CHATTER

By Craig Tourte

I was riding in the car with 3 of my male neighbors the other day. All of them are affluent, formally educated and in their late 40's. They are also aware that I am a Vietnam Veteran and a generation older. We are not good friends nor do I hang out with them or make frequent visits to their homes and I am seldom invited to participate in their ping pong, dice and pool games, which is fine with me. I am not particular gregarious and understand completely the lack of an invitation, but they were kind enough to ask me to play golf with them which I foolishly accepted and embarrassed and humiliated myself with my poor skill level against their outstanding play, an error in which I paid a rather high monetary price. Understandably there was not a follow-up invitation to join them in the future.

During the ride home the neighbor sitting next to me asks, "So did you kill anyone in Vietnam?" Now I realize they all had been consuming adult beverage at the golf club and I guess he was under the impression that he was familiar and comfortable enough with me to ask such a question, but frankly I was a bit stunned and just a little insulted, to me such things are not taken or discussed lightly with outsiders. I think it must have taken me a few seconds but I responded "war is a terrible thing." I could have said more, but given the circumstances, I thought that was enough. Feeling friendlier than we actually are, he gave it another attempt by asking the same question, my response was about the same but I added, "...I didn't do anything heroic, I mostly cowered in the trench line," with that, the subject was dropped.

I just hate boastful war stories and don't like to speak about my experiences to outsiders. War is a terrible experience and to be honest, it makes one just a little crazy for a very long time. Not crazy in the commonly understood civilian context of being crazy, but different than those who have not had that experience. I have heard and read the reflection of so many purported Vietnam Veterans that I often cringe after hearing or reading about their very colorful and boastful descriptions of bravely battling and preserving over the enemy. Few acknowledge fear or remembering those who did not survive, many in fact describe being a lone or one of the few

survivors.

I thought about the question my neighbor asked and understood that most of the information he has ever received about war was via television. I walked over to his house and lent him a copy of "Bravo, Common Men, Uncommon Valor." I was very clear that I was not a participant in that patrol and that any experience I might have had was not reflected in the documentary, but I wanted him to hear the voices and personal reflections of legitimate brave men, to hear the horror of war in their voices and see the painful anguished remembrance on their faces. A few days later he came over and returned the documentary and didn't say a word, he didn't have too.

EDITOR NOTES:

Our KSV Researcher, Michael Fishbaugh located the back issues of the Sea Tiger Newspaper For the year 1967, in Vietnam. I for one, have never read one. I do not think many of the KSV ever had the opportunity read one either. I am going to republish some of the articles pertaining to KHE SANH. I will attempt to cover all of the units that served at Khe Sanh. In this issue most of the articles cover the Hill Fights, and supporting units.

BUSY SEABEES BUILD DEFENSES ON Hill 881 S

KHE SANH - Third Division Marines took Hill 881 South from the NVA. Now, it is up to a detachment of Seabees from Mobile Construction Battalion-4 to insure the Marines have defensive positions and a supply zone.

Under the guidance of Lt. Brent Mandry, USN (Ferguson, Mo.), the Seabees built a helicopter landing zone on Hill 881and 861."That was the first thing we did after the hill was taken,"Mandry said. "We also helped build defensive bunkers and artillery positions on the hill. "Their work is not yet completed.

They are building ammo pits and clearing trails on the hills for better mobility for the Marine units.
At the present time they are working on revetments for helicopters and planes that stay at the Khe Sanh airstrip overnight. "We've building them so that if the area ever comes under a mortar attack, they will be protected as much as possible."

NEW LIEUTENANT PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN THE BATTLE FOR HILL 861

By Sgt. Roger Ynostroza

KHE SANH--2ndLt. James D. Carter, Jr., arrived in South Vietnam, April 21 and assumed duties as platoon commander with a company of the Ninth Marine Regiment April 23, 1967

In the next four days, Lt. Carter was to play a major role in the battle for Hill 861, fast becoming the heaviest enemy contact to date in this far northwestern corner of South Vietnam.

Carter received his baptism of fire April 24,1967 his first full day with his 57-man unit. "We were part of a two platoon sweep of a North Vietnamese Army Cave complex about 1,500 yards from Hill 861," said the lieutenant. "Enroute there, we spotted about five NVA in Khakis. We opened fire and they ran from us, so we called in 81mm mortars and hit them with our own 60mm tubes. "

"My squad leader took a fire team around to try to block the NVA escape, but he was hit with a white phosphorous grenade and killed, and the smoke covered the enemy escape," said Lt. Carter. "We rigged up a stretcher and started for Hill 700, where our command group was 'located." Enroute, the unit was hit by fierce enemy fire and was pinned down. "My men reacted quickly an M-79 man killed several with his accurate shots, and another man handheld a 60mm mortar tube and put rounds on the enemy," said Lt. Carter.

An OE-1 spotter plane circling overhead marked the enemy positions for fixed-wing air strikes. High explosives battered the NVA positions while the Marines found better defensive positions. "They must have really been dug-in because the air strikes passed and they began firing at us again," said Lt. Carter. The platoon moved to a landing zone and were able to evacuate our wounded before the helicopters were driven off by heavy enemy fire.

The unit moved to a new LZ and another chopper evacuated more wounded before it, too, was driven off. "We had no entrenching tools with us so we

dug in as best we could for the night, using canteen cups and whatever to dig holes," said Lt. Carter'. "Surprisingly we weren't assaulted that night. Air strikes and artillery pounded the areas around us and on 861 for most of the night."

Shortly after midnight, the platoon observed an NVA mortar tube and rocket flashes. Effective artillery fire was called in from "F" Btry.. Twelfth Marines, based here.

We set out the next morning on NVA trails toward 861 again and made sound contact with the other company," said Lt Carter. "But when we moved toward their position, we received heavy barrages of enemy 60mm mortar and automatic weapons fire from the top of 861.

That's when I was hit by shrapnel in the left arm." He said, "Thirteen of us were separated from the rest of the unit. We tried to get four more wounded out of the impact area but we could not reach them. They were later recovered safely by the rest of the unit. Meanwhile we finally linked up with the rest of the platoon.

While gunships pounded 861, we called for med evac choppers. A CH-46 chopper came in but was riven off by ground fire before it could take on wounded. One wounded Marine gained evacuation by hanging onto a strut of the chopper as it hovered Over the LZ.

Then NVA Mortar fire began raking the LZ. The Marines left the LZ, Crossing fields of Tall Elephant grass which afforded little cover from automatic weapons fire.

INFANTRYMEN PRAISE JET SUPPORT ON HILL 861

By LCpl. Woody Price

"When you're pinned down by heavy enemy fire, with wounded Marines who need medical help, there's nothing in this world that looks as good as a couple of Marine jets screaming out of the sun to tear up the enemy," says Cpl Arnett Lewis, Jr. The 23-year-old from Lexington, Miss., was on Hill 861 near the demilitarized zone when F-4B Phantom jets arrived to provide close air' support for the besieged Marines. "We were sent up the hill to reinforce a unit that had suffered casualties and were pinned down by enemy fire," said Lewis, a fire team leader with the 3rd Bn., Ninth Marine Regiment.

"We got part of the wounded out during the night, but when daylight came we still had a long way to go and the enemy was making it hot for us. We had wounded Marines who really needed help. but we couldn't get down the hill.

"Then we heard a helluva roar and looked up to see jets swooping down toward the hill top," said Lewis. "Once they started on that hill they didn't stop until it was just a mass of rubble.

"We got out okay, and for nearly two days Marine jets just kept coming in to pound that hill. When they were finished it looked entirely different than when we first went up. "When we went back up the hill, the top was practically bare and the enemy was gone. I guess we owe our lives to those jets," Lewis said. "Since I've been in Vietnam I've heard a lot of guys say the same thing," said Lewis. "When you're pinned down those jets are a beautiful Sight, andwhen you're wounded a helicopter looks like an angel

SEVEN MAN RECON PATROL FIGHTS OFF NVA COMPANY

KHE SANH-A seven· man Marine reconnaissance patrol aided by an armada of gunships, fixed-wing fighter bombers, and heavy artillery fought off an estimated North Vietnamese Army reinforced company for 12 hours in the heavy jungle west of here.

The NVA, operating from well-concealed bunkers, at times within two feet of the marines, were constantly driven back by the ring of fire. After three unsuccessful attempts the beleaguered patrol was lifted out by a Huey helicopter.

Four members of the patrol were killed, and three seriously wounded. A CH·46 pilot tried to extract the team and was also killed. Several crew members of other helicopters were wounded.

Although wounded four times, first time at the be-

ginning of the fire fight, 18 year-old PFC. Steve P. Lopez, of Silver Springs, Md., maintained unbroken radio contact with his parent unit of the 3rd Force Reconnaissance Bn., and also directed air and artillery strikes.

"This kid was fantastic," said the company commander, Capt. A.B. Crosby of Annapolis, Md. "He was the coolest individual I have ever seen. He kept calling in artillery closer and closer to his position. Back here they were actually scared to drop them closer. But he kept repeating, 'drop it closer, drop it closer.'

"Throughout the fire fight Lopez never once mentioned that he had been hit. He kept saying, 'I'm alright.' "The first thing he said when he arrived back here was, 'check my camera I took some good flicks out there, and want to get them developed.' It was amazing."

Lt. C.A. Mumford, Francesville, Ind., pilot of the Huey gunship who patrolled the skies over the besieged Marines constantly for 12 hours, except for refueling, said, "Lopez was unbelievable. For 12 hours he was cool, calm, and never got excited. He told us where to shoot and passed on valuable information. The whole mission would have been impossible without him. He was the only one who could fight down there for several hours.

"He kept telling us he was alright and wouldn't admit he'd been hit in the head. He coordinated the whole mission." The patrol was inserted about 4: 50 p.m. on May 9,1967 eight miles from Khe Sanh, to check out trails in the area.

The Marines found several NVC bunkers, then returned to a nearby hill to look for the enemy. The patrol came under heavy small arms fire for the first time around midnight. At first they estimated the enemy strength at 30 to 50, but later increased their estimate to a reinforced company. Lopez, on his fifth patrol, said he was hit in the head as soon as the action began.

"I then received wounds in the chest, leg and head again," he said. "The enemy was about two feet from us at times. There was at least a company out there. They walked right up to us. " "I shot the first NVA and the last one. One of the ones I shot looked very young. like in his teens. He walked right up to me. I looked at him and knew if I didn't shoot him he would shoot me.

"I was laying down on the ground and he didn't see me until he was right on top of me. "They were all over the place. I saw at least 15 dead NVA in front of our position. A lot of credit goes to my M-16, it worked fine and never jammed once," he said. Crosby said at one time Lopez thought all his buddies were dead. but checked and found four of them still breathing.

For several hours Lopez was the only member of the patrol able to fire his rifle. At about 2:30 a.m. the patrol ran out of ammunition. Gunships had to drop bandoliers of ammo to the fighting Marines. The first gunship to arrive over the area was piloted by Mumford who pounded the hill with machinegun and rocket fire.

At 2:45 a.m.. a CH·46 made an unsuccessful attempt to recover the trapped Marines. "But the ship took a tremendous battering," according to Mumford. "Several crew members received shrapnel wounds.

Every time we stopped firing, the enemy would start moving up on the Marines." "When we opened up again they would retreat back to their bunkers. They were underground all over that hill. All they had to do was retreat into those bunkers. We couldn't kill anyone there." Several hours after the first rescue attempt, a second CH-46 tried to pick up the Marines.

It was waved off, but still took numerous rounds flying away, and the pilot was killed. The two crew members were wounded, but the co-pilot managed to bring the crippled chopper back to Khe Sanh.

When daylight came, fixed wing fighters were called in and they plastered the hill with ordnance. At midday, as several Huey gunships continued to hit the hill with rockets and machinegun fire, another Huey landed beside the Marines and extracted them.

ASSAULT AGAINST KHE SANH TOPS APRIL MARINE ACTION

By GySgt. Ron Harwood

Until the last six days of the month, April had few significant ground contacts between Marines in I Corps and enemy forces. From the 24th on, however, the action was furious as elements of the Third and Ninth Marine Regiments foiled the North Vietnamese Army's planned assault and take over of the Khe Sanh area.

In the action at Khe Sanh, the artillerymen and jet pilots were a prime factor in dislodging the North Vietnamese from their bunkers on Hills 861, 881 N. and 881S. The guns hurled more than 11,000 rounds at the enemy positions while Marine air was dropping more than 1,000 tons of ordnance in five days.

Other enemy attempts In the northern-most province of South Vietnam to silence Marine and Army artillery came almost nightly as they poured mortar shells and rockets into Gla Unh and other points south of the demilitarized zone. Their efforts failed, however, and the big guns continued their accurate support of ground units throughout the month. Enemy mortars and rockets also struck at Chu Lai, Dong Ha, Phu Bai and Khe Sanh during the month. Little damage was caused by any of the attacks.

In all, the Marine air-ground team killed 1,649 enemy soldiers during April. Also, 248 individual and 11 crew-served weapons were captured by Leathernecks. To the south, Task Force Oregon, a multi Brigade U. S. Army force commanded by MaJGen. William B. Rosson, started operating in Quang Ngal and Quang Tin province.

Four days later, Chu Lai based Task Force X-Ray, 1st Marine Division, was dissolved, and its operating elements moved northward to bolster other Marine units in the northern three provinces of South Vietnam. In significant small unit action, a company of the 1st Marine Regiment made contact with a large enemy force 20 miles south of Da Nang on April 22. Two other companies of the First Marines were lifted in to help as were elements of the Fifth Marine Regiment. With the arrival of reinforcements, the enemy broke contact. In the air, Marine jet pilots flew 369 missions north of the DMZ and 6,860 sorties in South Vietnam. There were 38,348 helicopter sorties flown by Marine Aircraft. Leatherneck C-130'S transported 27,448 Passengers and hauled 3,823 Tons of Cargo.

ENEMY FOUGHT REAL HARD

KHE SANH-" The enemy fought real hard, was well coordinated, well armed and a pro," LtCol. W. J. Masterpool (Solvay, N.Y.), operations officer for Marine operations west of here, said as he summed up the capabilities of North Vietnamese troops in the area. He compared the enemy's fighting qualities with those of the NVA that Marines opposed on Operation Hastings.

In 10 days of action Marines killed a total of 551 North Vietnamese near here. "The enemy used every weapon available," said LtCol. E. R. DeLong, commander of the 2nd Bn., Third Marine Regiment, following the assault against 881 North.

Capt. R. W. Swigart, company commander of 3rd Bn., Ninth Marines, who took part in the assault on 881 South, described the enemy as hard, hard core." "They had staying power that was unbelievable. They were good." Major W. E. Fogo, operations officer at Khe Sanh, said aerial observers had spotted well· fortified bunkers on almost every ridgeline in the area.

KHE SANH MARINES SUPPLIED; SUPPORT GROUP DOUBLES EFFORT

Intense enemy action began against Marine forces in the Khe Sanh area April 24, a Logistic Support Unit has been supporting the "in action"

Leathernecks with over 60,000 pounds of supplies daily. The Khe Sanh LSU, an extension of Force Logistic Support Group "Alpha" at Phu Bai, has been doubling their supply efforts to effectively support the battalions in addition to artillery batteries. Originally established in December, 1966, and designed to support one battalion, the LSU specialists, some 60 Marines, are meeting the needs of the Marines engaging the enemy forces in the northwest section of I Corps.

"The Marines were never out of anything," said Major John Weeks of Willard, Ohio, and officer in charge of the LSU, "and they were probably better

supplied than any other previous operation." he added.

The initial supply and resupply operations to some 3,000 Marines in the field, was completely airlifted by Marine helicopter units operating from the Khe Sanh airstrip.

In addition to supplying the troops in the field. the LSU provides enough class "A" food to feed over a thousand people housed at the Khe Sanh compound. Most of the supplies received at the airstrip staging area were flown into Khe Sanh on a "round the clock" schedule by Marine and Air Force transport. The major portion of cargo came from the Air Force Logistic Command units at DaNang.

"This single mode of resupply by helicopter was the first time an operation was not provided additional means of resupply transportation," stated Major-Week's, "since the action was some 5,000 meters from our supply staging area, no vehicle convoys or surface ships could gain access to the troops in the field." he added.

"We could fully load a helicopter with old rations, water, individual equipment and ammunition and get it out to the action sites within 15 to 25 minutes," said Lt. Robert E. Johnson of Northfield, Minn., assistant officer in charge of the LSU.

"When the operation began, we had some problems trying to make stable LZ's (landing zones) for cargo deliveries," Johnson said. "The troops were moving at such a rapid pace the LZ's were changing constantly, stretching the supply route and requiring immediate supply needs as they moved ahead."

"We frequently had to pace our resupply runs in between artillery firing missions and helicopter medav ac flights," stated Johnson, "but we managed to meet all the demands from the field."

Capt. James Ross of Seattle, Wash .. an artillery battery commander for the Twelfth Marines, is a firm believer in the supply efforts made by the LSU Marines. "My artillery battery has been firing an average of 1,500 rounds a day and there seems to be an endless stockpile of ammo," he said. "It's a damn good feeling." Although the primary mission of the LSU was resupplying the troops in the field, another task equally important was the repair and maintenance of battle damaged equipment.

Increased combat activity dictated the increased need for rapid repair of weapons, communication equipment and disposing of captured enemy ordnance. Contact teams, consisting of explosive ordnance disposal specialists were brought into the area from Phu Bai and Dong Ha.

Other teams trained in the repair of artillery tubes burned out from constant use, arrived to "beef-up" the LSU's increasing commitments. After the equipment was repaired, it was immediately airlifted to the action sites.

"Nobody working with the LSU, counts the hours or even the days," said SSgt. Louis Hernandez of Bronx, N.Y. "We keep the gear moving as long as our guys on the hills need the stuff. If we can't get it done in 24 hours. we'll do it in 25."

BATTLE PRESSURES FELT BY FLIGHT LINE CREWS

The action was miles north, but ordnance and flight line crews of Marine All Weather Fighter Squadrons-232 and 235 felt the pressure along with the infantrymen battling North Vietnamese near Khe Sanh, just south of the demilitarized zone.

As the infantry units called for more and more close air support by F-8E Crusader jets of the two 1st Marine Aircraft Wing squadrons, the demand on ground crews who arm, refuel, and check each plane before it can return to action increased.

Sorties flown by VMF(AW)-232 on May 1, rose from an average of 24 per day to 38, while tonnage of bombs dropped on the enemy almost doubled. The battle "up north" gave the aviation Marines the "busiest day we have had since we got to Vietnam," according to GySgt. J. H. Howard. Middleburg. Fla.. and VMF(AW)-232 ordnance chief.

It was the kind of day when LCpl. Kenneth L. Heist. of Deland, Fla., "only had time to smoke a quarter of a cigarette at a time," between readying the jets for their next mission. The effort paid off. Throughout the period of the battle for Hill 861 and the twin peaks of 881, aviation and artillery units were cred-

ited with 75% of the enemy confirmed killed from April 24 to May 5.1967.

In all Marine jets from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Squadrons flew more than 790 sorties and expended more than 1,150 tons of ordnance in the 12 days.

AGGRESSIVE MARINE REACTION PREVENTS; NVA TAKE OVER

By GySgt. Ron Harwood

The aggressive reaction of Marine Corps units in the Khe Sanh area to the presence of a then unknown sized enemy force "undoubtedly foiled" a North Vietnamese Army attack and take-over of the Khe Sanh combat base, according to Marine Corps officials here.

Marine intelligence sources estimate that Leathernecks in the area have engaged a North Vietnamese Army regiment since the action started April 24. They further believe that an attack on Khe Sanh was to coincide with the mortar attacks of April 26 on Phu Bai, Dong Ha, and Gio Linh.

However, the enemy plans were thwarted when a reconnaissance element of the Ninth Marine Regiment made contact with the NVA units at 11 a.m., April 24, on Hill 861. Since that time almost constant contact has been maintained with the enemy forces. During the action Marines have killed 253 enemy soldiers while 96 Leathernecks have been-killed and 276 wounded. Marines have been supported by more than 11.000 rounds of 105mm, 107mm. and 155mm artillery and more than 1,000 tons of air ordnance, including bombs up to 2,000 lbs.

Chronological highlights of the action are:

APRIL 24-At 11 a.m. a forward observer team from the Ninth Marine Regiment made contact with an unknown number of enemy troops. A relief force was sent in and air and artillery missions called in to support them. Contact continued until 8 a.m. that evening. After the initial contact a Third Marine Regiment company and command group were alerted to move to Khe Sanh while another rifle company was placed on a four-hour alert. Weather did not permit the move to Khe Sanh that day.

APRIL 25-At 9:45 a.m.
The Third Marine Regiment units commenced to move by helicopter to Khe Sanh. At the same time, Ninth Marine Regiment units in the area consolidated and began a sweep toward the enemy. At 5:10 p.m a company from the Third Marine Regiment, enroute to join a Ninth Marines company, made contact with an estimated reinforced company of NVA. The two Marine units linked up and occupied defensive positions for the night. At the same time, another company of Ninth Marines arrived at Khe Sanh and took up positions there.

APRIL 26-At 7:00 a.m.
the two companies in the field began moving against Hill 861. the focal point of the battle. Both companies received heavy mortar and small arms fire during their attack. Shortly after noon, three more companies of the Third Marines arrived at Khe Sanh and started moving toward Hill 861 at about 3 p.m. They linked up with the other Marines at the hill at 7:30 p.m. There was no contact reported during the night.

APRIL 27-At 8:30 a.m. Ninth Marines units linked up with Third Marine Regiment units. At 11: 30 a.m., one battalion of the Third Marines returned to Khe Sanh while another battalion remained in the field.

There was no significant contact reported by ground units during the day, but Marine aircraft were used extensively against enemy bunkers and trench lines. The enemy was using many heavy automatic weapons, mortars and recoilless rifles as they put-up a stubborn defense.

APRIL 28--The "plan of the day" called for a battalion of the Third Marines to move out on two axis of advance from the south and southwest of Hill 861 and capture the hill. The battalion moved out on-schedule at 2:30 p.m. as air support and artillery fire pounded the objective. Enemy forces pulled back without making contact and the hill was secured at 4:30 p.m. by the Leatherneck battalion.

During the day, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing pilots were credited with killing 44 enemy soldiers on and around Hill 861.

APRIL 29--While one battalion made a thorough

search of Hill 861, another battalion of the Third Marines moved out toward an objective northwest of the hill. Sporadic contact was reported throughout most of the day with the heaviest action taking place at noon when a company of the Ninth Marine Regiment came under heavy automatic weapons fire. They called in air strikes and returned fire with 60mm mortars and their organic weapons, silencing the enemy positions. In the action, which took place 7.5 kilometers northwest of Khe Sanh, two Marines were killed and 10 wounded. The night was quiet and no significant contact reported.

APRIL 30 - Plans for the day call for a battalion of the Third Marines to conduct a search and destroy mission of company size in the vicinity of Hill 861. Their remaining companies were to seize Hill 881 N. At the same time, the other battalions of Third Marines were to attack in the direction of Hill 881S., and be prepared to attack along the ridgeline southwest of the hill.

Action started quickly and by noon elements of both battalions were engaged with forces. Units from one battalion had reached their objective but were meeting stiff resistance from enemy forces fighting from bunkers with automatic weapons, mortars and small arms. A company from the Ninth Marines joined them to aid in the battle.

Meanwhile, on 881N, the other battalion also reached its objective and encountered heavy resistance from well dug in enemy forces. Both objectives were honey- combed with a network of bunkers and fighting holes, including bomb shelters.

By the end of the day, the positions remained about the same, both objectives had been reached, but not secured. Once again there was no significant contact during the night.

MAY 1 Both Marine units continued the fight to secure the hills from a stubborn, well- disciplined enemy force. Heavy air strikes were called in and by 3 p.m. a battalion reported that enemy troops could be seen running off Hill 881S.The battalion worked them over with their mortars and machine guns as the air strikes continued.

However, by the end of the day the relative positions of the Marine and NVA forces remained unchanged. Marines dug in for the night and the following morning (May 2) continued the assault on the enemy positions.

STORY FROM LEATHERNECK MAGAZINE CONCERNING KHE SANH & OPERATION PEGAGUS. JULY 1968

When the 26th Marines were surrounded by thousands of North Vietnamese at Khe Sanh, the only way supplies could reach them was by air. But the enemy was zeroed in on our aircraft. The problem was solved by a nearly incredible feat of engineering.



The Marines who manned the isolated base at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, needed help. The members of the 26th Marine Regiment and its supporting units were surrounded by estimated

tens of thousands of North Vietnamese regulars. For 77 days, commencing with the first heavy enemy bombardment on January 21, 1968, the Marines had been under the constant threat of an all out enemy attack. The only supply route was by air and, in landing and taking off, several fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters had been destroyed by enemy artillery.

But no one was sitting idly by during the crisis. In addition to the Khe Sanh Marines' own reply from the artillery pieces of the 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, U. S. aircraft strafed, bombed and blasted enemy strongholds in the surrounding hills. On April 1, Operation Pegasus was initiated with the mission of clearing the land supply route to Khe Sanh and easing the pressure on the Marines who were holding it.

Route#9 stretches from Dong Ha in the east, through Ca Lu and Khe Sanh, and eventually to the Laotian border.

From Dong Ha to Ca Lu the road was clear for convoys. But from Ca Lu to Khe Sanh it ran along the twisting and picturesque Quang Tri River and then over the mountainous hills to Khe Sanh. And ever since the enemy had planted an ambush on the road, January 13, 1968, the area had been considered hostile territory and the lifeline to Khe Sanh had been cut off from U. S. traffic. Removing the enemy forces from that area was the first objective of Pegasus.

After B-52 strikes and Marine artillery had saturated the hills adjacent to the road, the U. S. Army's First Air Cavalry Division began to sweep the terrain above the Route #9, moving toward Khe Sanh.

The Marine phases of the penetration began with the First Marine Regiment, composed of its own 1st and 3d Battalions and the 2d Battalion from the Third Marines. They moved directly through the valley, clearing out enemy positions which had escaped the onslaught of the air and artillery strikes.

Almost directly in the wake of the First Marines, the 11th Engineer Battalion began their work on the road. The Marine engineers had been given until April 12 to fulfill their mission: To improve and widen the road to accommodate traffic to Khe Sanh and, where necessary, to erect bridges capable of supporting the heavy vehicles which would soon be moving up and down the road.

Although the road bore the designation of Route #9, the 11th Engineers quickly posted their trademark signs as fast as they moved up the road. The signs, unofficially, renamed the 18 miles of winding highway "USMC 11."

The 3d Platoon from the 3d Bridge Company kicked off the engineering operation when they began putting up the first bridge, April 1. They were succeeded by Alpha Company, Bravo Company and Delta Company of the engineers, all of whom played a curious game of leapfrog in opening the road and building the bridges.

According to 1stLt Duncan Hoffman, executive officer, Alpha Company, as soon as the road was cleared far enough ahead one company of engineers would begin work on a bridge. Then, as quickly as another site was open, a second company would leapfrog the construction at the first site to begin work farther down the line. The pace quickened from there.

The11th Engineers provided bridges at 18 crossing, including several supplementary bridges called "by-passes," to complete the project by April 11, one day ahead of their deadline. Commencing with Bridge 9/17 (the 17th bridge on Route#9 and the first bridge past Ca Lu), they worked their way up to the Rao Quan Valley which precedes the hill route to Khe Sanh and planted Bridge 9/34 at the bottom of that valley.

The going was nearly always rough, the dust gathering on the Marines' sweat-soaked bodies like insects on flypaper. But one thing which added speed to the engineers efforts was the fact that the French had worked along the same route years before during the French Indochina War. Although the NVA. had blown up all the remaining French bridges during their activities of the past year, the sound masonry abutments still remained in most Cases and these provided a tailor-made foundation upon which the Marines could improve.

Even this, however, was not always possible. In several cases, at Bridge 9/34 for example, the French supports were too far apart to allow the engineers to construct a practical Bridge in limited time. In these cases, by-passes were constructed and the French abutments were turned into guard posts or used as parking spots for tanks.

The engineers constructed the by passes by first positioning several large cylindrical steel culverts lengthwise in the river bed, allowing the water to flow through them.

The culverts were then packed into place with numerous sandbags and covered with tons of dirt from dump trucks. Bulldozers carved out a supplementary road leading to the by-pass and smoothed over the dirt on top of the by-pass to form a driving surface.

In addition to the by-passes which were constructed at all sites where conventional "bulk" bridge was impractical, by-passes were also set up alongside the places where there were bulk bridges. Further, at a site where only a by-pass could be built, two by-passes were made.

This served a two fold purpose. First, the by-passes allowed an easier means of crossing for heavier equipment, such as tanks. Second, they imposed a double challenge to any enemy sneaking in to attempt to blow up one of the bridges.

More security came with the Marines of Fox Company, 2d Battalion, Third Marines. Men like PFC Richard Miller and PVT Richard Farnsworth were strategically detailed along the road at every bridge site to set up bunkers as guard posts and to defend the bridges if an attack materialized.

Another observation post against enemy activity was "The Rock Pile." This imposing rocky crag sits along "USMC 11" and the Marines who man it have an excellent view of several of the bridges near Ca Lu.

The guard duty was made easier, in places. Many of the bridges were built as little as 75 to 100 meters apart. Miles wound out between others.

Problems, of course, were bound to occur as the road work progressed. At two different areas, the steep cliffs into which the road was cut were severely cratered. Here, explosives had to be used to dislodge more dirt and the excess was then pushed around by the bulldozers to fatten up the road.

One factor which aided the 'dozers in their quick improvements on the road was the old surfacing laid by the French. In only a few places could the hard surface still be seen through the layer of brown dust which now covers the road and clouds up behind each passing vehicle. And, elsewhere, although parts of it had been broken up by artillery and other spots had crumbled from long use, the hard chunks still provided an excellent foundation upon which the 11th Engineers could build.

With the old abutments still standing and the road surface still evident, further earmarks of another era were found in abandoned French bunkers alongside the road. It was obvious that Route #9 had played a significant part in the history of the struggles of South Vietnam. One of the most vivid and tragic sites of French activity is present in the vicinity of Bridge 9/34, spanning the Rao Quan River deep in the valley of the same name.

The Rao Quan River is a tributary to the Quang Tri River, None of the 18 bridges, in fact, crossed the Quang Tri itself, but spanned the streams which lead into it. Evidence of French attempts to bridge the Rao Quang Tri within 150 meters of the present 9/34. At one point, the river is still somewhat bridged by the twisted wreckage of a now rusted steel suspension frame work which was blasted from its high supports, 50 feet above the river bed, by the enemy many years ago. Close by, a cement bridge with steel reinforcing cables protruding from its broken body, also lies in bits and chunks in the river where it met the same fate as its metal counterpart.

A third French bridge was never completed. Its supports jut out from both sides of the enclosing

hills but the signs are apparent that the work was suddenly abandoned before completion. Why, no one seems to know.

The Marine version of 9/34 is a floating bridge. Which consists of a wooden platform resting across four rubber pontoon-type floats. The floats were helilifted in by the Army's CH-54 "Sky Crane."

Cooperation between the Marines and the Army had been outstanding all through Pegasus, and the 11th Engineers received a special commendation from the commanding general of the First Air Cavalry Division for their work on the road.

Army helicopters were used on other bridges too. Bridge 9/28, according to Maj Joseph C. Thorp,11th Engineers S-2 and S-3 officer, was fitted with a 30-foot platform atop the old French abutments. Bridges 9/31 and 9/33 both received 38-foot, four-inch spans. In each case, the bridges were lowered by the helicopter while Marine engineers on the ground guided the heavy platform into position with Guy lines.

But the action wasn't all on the bridges. PFC Kevin Rooney, of Fox Company, was guarding Bridge 9/32 and commented, "There hasn't been much action this close to Ca Lu but they get more further on up the road."

Rooney was right. Delta Company, 11th Engineers, was patrolling the section of road nearest to Khe Sanh and they were kept busy. A portion of the company, led by 1stLt Floyd Campbell, captured two NVA soldiers almost at Khe Sanh's doorstep and discovered several more enemy bunkers in the area which they cleaned out with Willy Peter grenades. PFC Larry E. Ramsey, a combat engineer with Delta, was usually the grenade heaver and PFC Larry E. Sherbert and PFC J. R. Albert were always close by with more handfuls of the hot stuff to back him up.

With the road finished by April 11 and officially opened April 12, the first vehicle rolled into Khe Sanh. It was a Jeep and its chief passenger was LtCol V. A. Perry, commander of the 11th Engineers. But a Jeep is a versatile vehicle and, with the road making treacherous curves in places, and plagued by bumps and dips, LtCol Perry knew that one final test had to be made before the road could be considered in satisfactory condition. He ordered his men to take the "low-bed" to Khe Sanh. "If that low-bed can make it," said SSgt Donald Thompson, NCOIC of the engineers' motor transport section, "anything can make it."

The low-bed was a large, cumbersome, 5-ton truck and, for a trailer, pulled a long flat-bed designed for hauling heavy equipment. At 9 :30 a.m. on Easter Sunday the low-bed rolled out of Ca Lu and, with SSgt Thompson and 1stLt Bud Westmoreland, motor transport officer, bouncing ahead in a Jeep, it began its slow, plodding journey up "USMC 11."

At 11 a.m. the low-bed rolled over the pontoon bridge at 9/34 and then up the steep hills toward Khe Sanh. The supply route to the Marine base was open and ready for business.

With convoys now going back and forth along the road, things began to slack off. Enemy shelling of Khe Sanh had picked up again but none of the enemy showed up along the road and it was assumed that the NVA. had vacated the area for the time being. No chances were taken, however. Marine artillery was called in on several of the hills near the bridges every night.

The Marines stood their guard posts with alert eyes. But now, with a little time off, members of Fox Company, like Cpl Terry A. Kelley and PFC David J. Gardner, took advantage of a job well done by going swimming in the ice cold waters of the Rao Quan River.

Cpl Frank Geramita found that the swift-flowing water beneath Bridge 9/32 enabled him to get a decent shave without cutting himself in a million places. And LCpl Tolbert McGlohorn could now brush his teeth in the clear stream with no pasty after taste to rinse out with the precious supply from his canteen.

The Marines found other sport in bicycles, apparently left behind by the enemy in their hasty

departure. A good share of the engineers were still hard at work, though. Many of the supplementary by- passes were still under construction next to the bulk bridges. They had to be completed as soon as possible so that the convoys could use them while the professional type bridges were being moved elsewhere in Vietnam.

But the big goal had been achieved, that of opening the supply route to Khe Sanh. And, with Marines in Khe Sanh already branching out into the surrounding hills to chase down the enemy, it looked like the recent activities of Pegasus had served their purpose.

And, in addition to the road, the engineers could count several things at Ca Lu itself among their recent achievements. Upon arriving there they had built almost all of the bunkers, cleared fields of fire, set up ammunition and oil supply points, and had constructed the berms (fortified parking places) where the helicopters could land.

On the road itself, they had put in an estimated 40,000 man-hours in meeting their deadline and had used more than 5,000 equipment hours. And one piece of that equipment, now sitting back at Ca Lu, sums up the whole theme of the engineers' accomplishments on "USMC 11." On one side of the truck is painted the words: "If you can't swim it; bridge it." The other side reads: "Khe Sanh or bust."





Engineers often provided their own security while working on the road



GySgt Wade Hampton, the 26TH Marines Motor Transport Chief, took time out to mail a letter at the Khe Sanh post office.

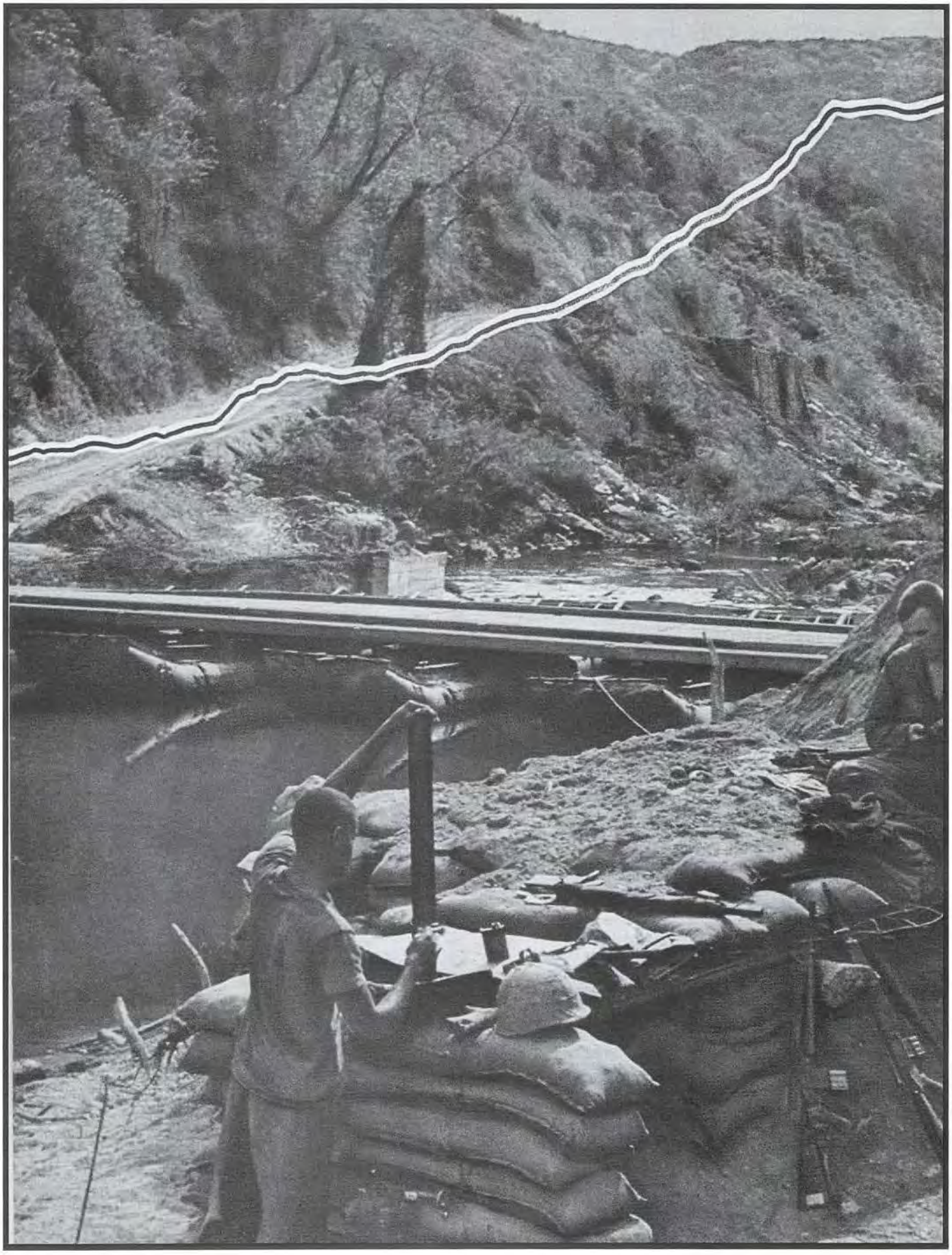



(ABOVE) A Marine tank, flying a Confederate flag, pulled off the highway to provide security for the engineers. Engineers often provided their own security while working on the road.

(BELOW) Sand bags were used in the construction of culverts beneath the improved roadway.

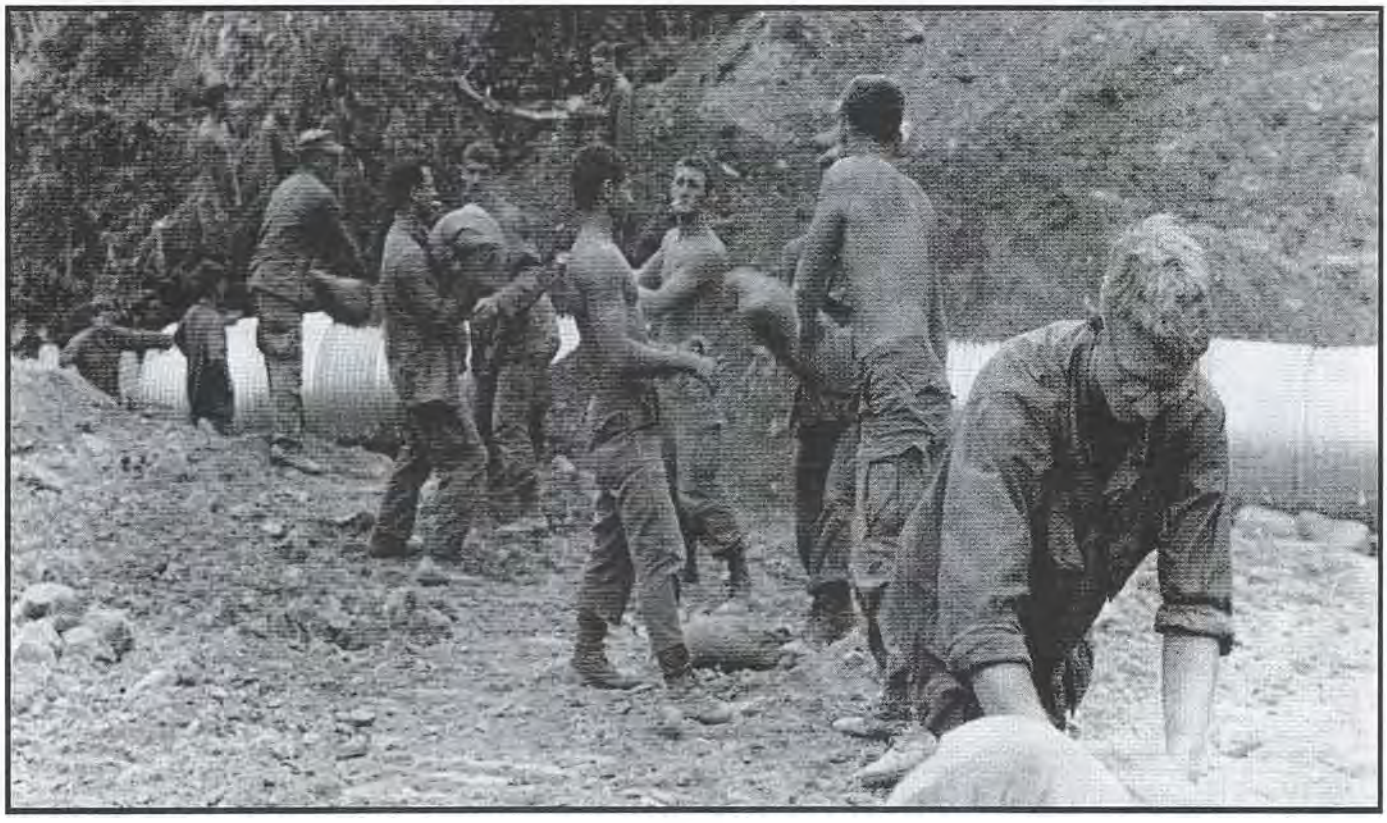

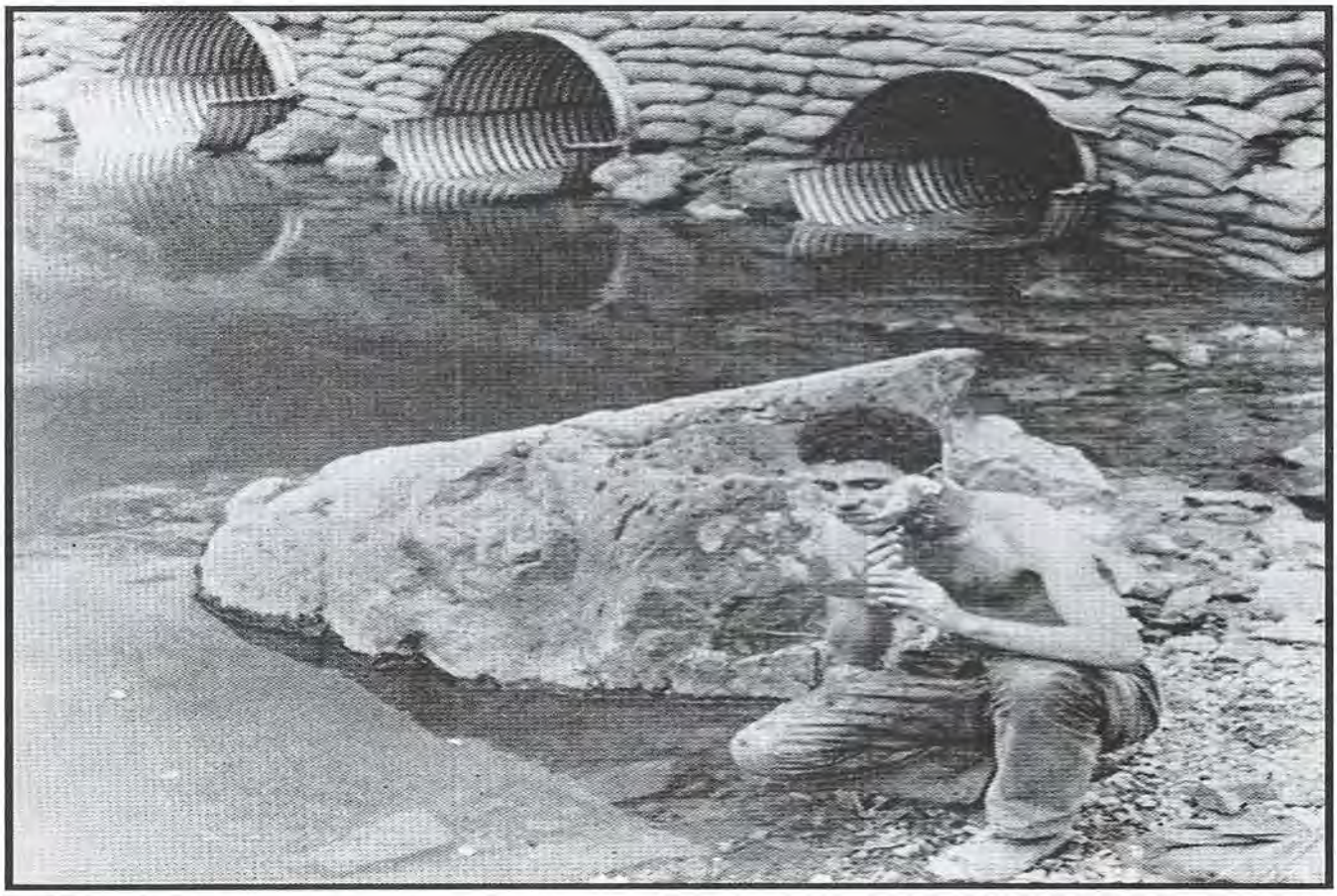

PFC Kevin Rooney found time to hack off several days' growth of beard during a break in the construction work.



Working from floats on a pontoon bridge, engineers gauged the depth of a river over which "USMC 11" would pass.

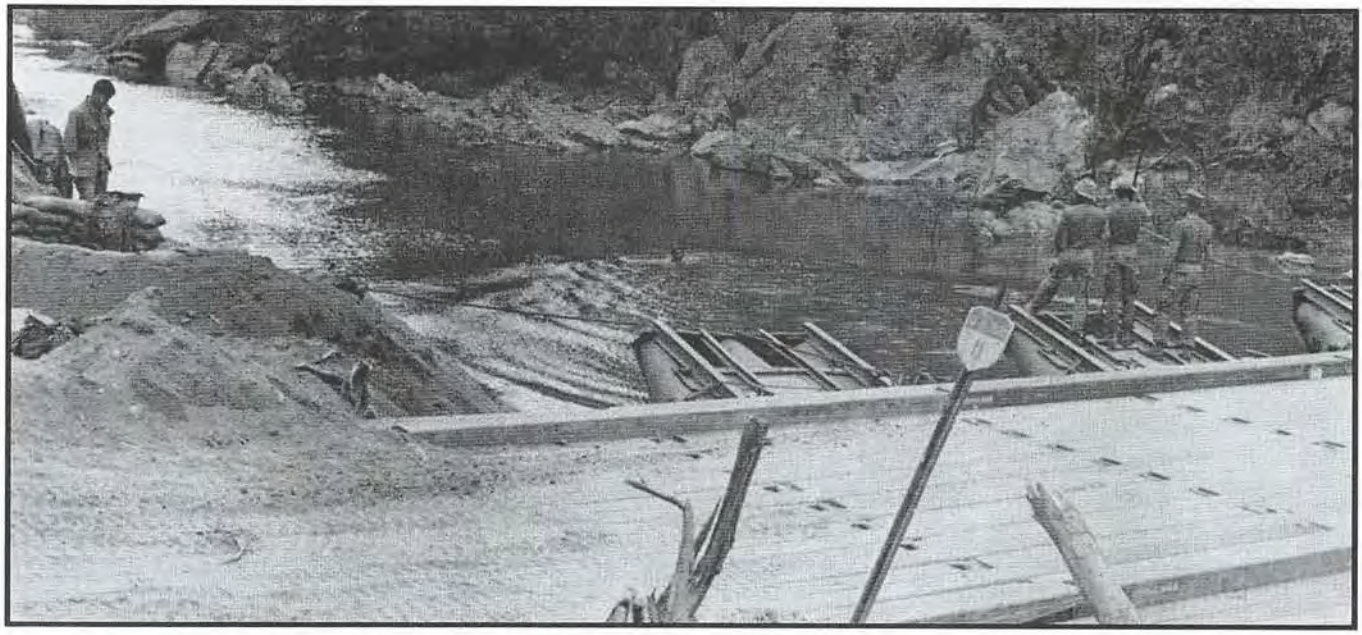

With a bridge completed and ready for heavy vehicular traffic, the engineers paused to survey their handiwork.



A bulldozer graded rough portions of the dirt highway that had been briefly controlled by Communist forces.

KHE SANH VETERANS 2014 REUNION SAN DIEGO CA, NOV 09 TO 15, 2014
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Electronic door locks with automatic deadbolt
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Turndown available upon request
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AM/FM alarm clock radio
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Dancing in the Lounge Friday and Saturday evenings

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Steakhouse Cuisine
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Terrace Cafe

Casual Cuisine
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Serving Breakfast and Lunch Daily

Terrace Deli

Featuring: Deli Sandwiches, Snack and Desserts
Open Daily for Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

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Old Town
Beautiful Beaches and Bays
Gaslamp District
Lego land
Qua l comm Stadium (SDSU Aztecs, Chargers)
PETCO Park (Padres)
Balboa Park
Miramar Marine Corps Air Station
Fashion Valley Shopping Mall











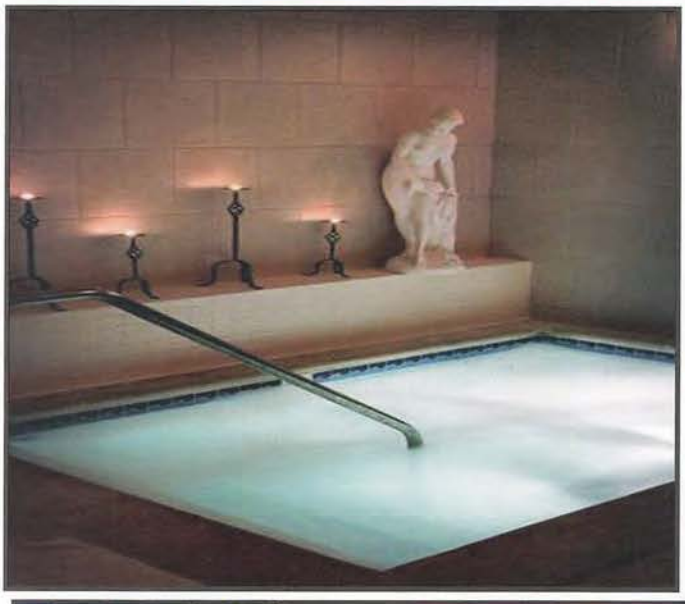





GHOST BATTALION
VIETNAM VETERANS OF
2nd Bn 1st MARINES
THE PROFESSIONALS

ROAD TO THE MONUMENT

by Phil Leslie, Bruce Oliver and Dale Williams



After more than 30 months from an idea to completion, it was both humbling and exciting for the Monument Committee, Officers and Trustees to finally see our monument dedicated on 8 November 2013 at the Memorial Park, National Museum of the Marine Corps, Quantico, VA. The Committee consisted Myself, Bruce Oliver and Dale Williams and three members, Jack Klimp, Bill White and Clyde Woods. We reported to the Board of Trustees who had the final say on every facet of the project. I was amazed that we sorted thru the myriad of concepts and designs to arrive at the most significant monument [My unbiased opinion] concept and design at the NMMC Memorial Park. Although I was "The Chairman", I had little to do because of the professionalism, dedication and perseverance of the team – all of them. These Gentlemen, are without a doubt, "The Professionals".

Initially, The Team met with Mark Joyce [MSgt USMC Ret], VP Museum Operations who oversees the Semper Fidelis Memorial Park adjacent to the museum where all of the monuments are located.

Mark informed us of the parameters for the monument, and that the design as well as each inscription would have to be reviewed by a committee which included a representative from the Marine Corps Historical Branch before we could obtain any approval to proceed. We then walked the entire park and viewed, photographed, and discussed each monument.

A few weeks after the initial meeting, Mark informed Clyde Woods there were only four unclaimed spots for a monument available at the park. Clyde paid the required $1000 down payment on the spot and secured the monument space. That was the first donation to the monument fund. Our members donated sufficient funds to complete the monument.

The team met several times over the next few months at the NMMC / Memorial Park and visited

two monument businesses in the Manassas, VA area. Again, we took more photographs and found more attributes we did not want in our monument. However, at that time we had no idea of what we wanted except it had to be different from all the rest and had to represent men and valor of 2dBn, 1st Marines. "The Team" did none of these things in a vacuum. Each meeting at Quantico or each issue was also discussed with the whole Board of Officers / Trustees who had the final say on how to proceed. The initial design concept we all agreed on was that the First Marine Division Diamond had to be a part of the monument. Not just inscribed on granite, but somehow incorporated into the monument design.

The membership was asked to submit ideas, but only three were submitted. Trustee Dale Williams then made two almost full size cardboard mockups which we erected at the monument site pieced together with Duct Tape. One of Dale's designs became the form that morphed into the final approved design. Much debate and discussion then went into each word inscribed on the monument and it's placement including the dedication statement, 'To All Who Served Or Supported'.

Initially, we requested bids from four monument companies. Of those, one did not reply, another considered the work, but declined because of other work. Of the two remaining vendors, we selected Kline Memorials of Manassas, VA. Rick Burroughs was the project manager. All materials and workmanship are 100% USA. The monument is granite is "American Black" and was quarried in Pennsylvania, cut and polished in Elberton, Ga., and engraved in Manassas, VA.

A hearty Semper Fi to the significant contributors to the monument design, placement and dedication Program:

- Master Sergeant Mark Joyce, USMC (RET) – VP, Museum Operations;
- John Morgan: John Morgan Art, Charlotte, NC Created first designs of the monument
- Greg Jones, Greg Jones Design Portland, OR: Created first designs of the monument.
- Bill Guillot: OMNOVA Solutions, Inc., Monroe, NC: Large Scale prints of Monument concept.
- Tony Mills: L&M Granite, Elberton, GA. Cut and polished the monument stone
- Robert Firvida: Galicia Construction. Set monument and memorial bricks.
- Rebecca Joy Allen: Student Wingate Univ, NC Created Original Art of monument at no cost.
- Beth Crumley USMC Historical Branch, Quantico. Researched Unit Awards.
- Nancy Hoffman, Leatherneck Magazine. Proof Reader for inscriptions and dedication program
- LtCol Sean Smith, USMC. Dedication Program Bagpiper
- MGySgt John Rode USMC Ret. Dedication Program Bagpiper
- LCdr David M. Todd, CHC, USN. Dedication Program Chaplain

And, last but not the least are the members who contributed their money to make this dream a possibility

MONUMENT AND DEDICATION COMMITTEE

Phil Leslie led a review of the committee, the members, how it was formed and a host of other details that had been mentioned in previous updates and newsletters. The monument and the dedication ceremony was the culmination of the years of hard work put in by all those involved. He noted that ours was the most well attended dedication event held at the NNMC to date. It surpassed the numbers for the Chesty Puller statue. We had in excess of 400 at the ceremony. Phil reminded those who have purchased bricks that we have the second most purchases behind the Marine Corps League, which is a national organization, with a much larger membership than us. Not to be missed is the outstanding speech given by General Klimp. It was an awe inspiring message given by a Warrior, to Warriors. We love that humble guy, as he works very hard behind the scenes to help us in any way he can, and never wants any credit. He is the hallmark of many, many men who do the same for 2/1 every day. Many thanks to all of you

2/1 MONUMENT INSCRIPTIONS

Top Diamond: Bronze Diamond with Vietnam in the numeral 1.
Left & Right EGA - Corpsman Caduceus:

Front Left-Dedication

VIETNAM

Front Right-Battle Streamers

Dedicated to all who served with or supported
Second Battalion, First Marines, FMF

1965 - 1971
"GHOST BATTALION"
UNIT HONORS
Presidential Unit Citation Streamer with 3 Bronze Stars
Navy Unit Commendation Streamer
Meritorious Unit Commendation Streamer with 2 Bronze Stars
National Defense Service Streamer

Vietnam Service Streamer with 2 Silver and 3 Bronze Stars
Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Streamer
Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation Civil Actions Streamer

Rear Right - Origin of Ghost Battalion
Initially, units of the battalion conducted heliborne raids into enemy held areas. Because these assault units would suddenly appear, then disappear only to reappear in a different location, the enemy radio operators referred to the battalion as "Ghosts".

During May 1968 while operating in the Khe Sanh area, the battalion out maneuvered elements of the North Vietnamese Army. When the NVA Commander informed his HQ Command that he lost contact with the battalion. he was relieved of his command. The intercepted NVA message traffic referred to 2d Battalion, 1st Marines as a "Ghost Battalion".

Rear Left - R. Reagan quote
"They learned not to rely on us; they learned to rely on each other. And they were special in another way: They chose to be faithful. They chose to reject the fashionable skepticism of their time. They chose to believe and answer the call of duty. They had the wild, wild courage of youth. They seized certainty from the heart of an ambivalent age; they stood for something. And we owe them something, those boys. We owe them first a promise: That just as they did not forget their missing comrades, neither, ever, will we." R. Reagan 1986









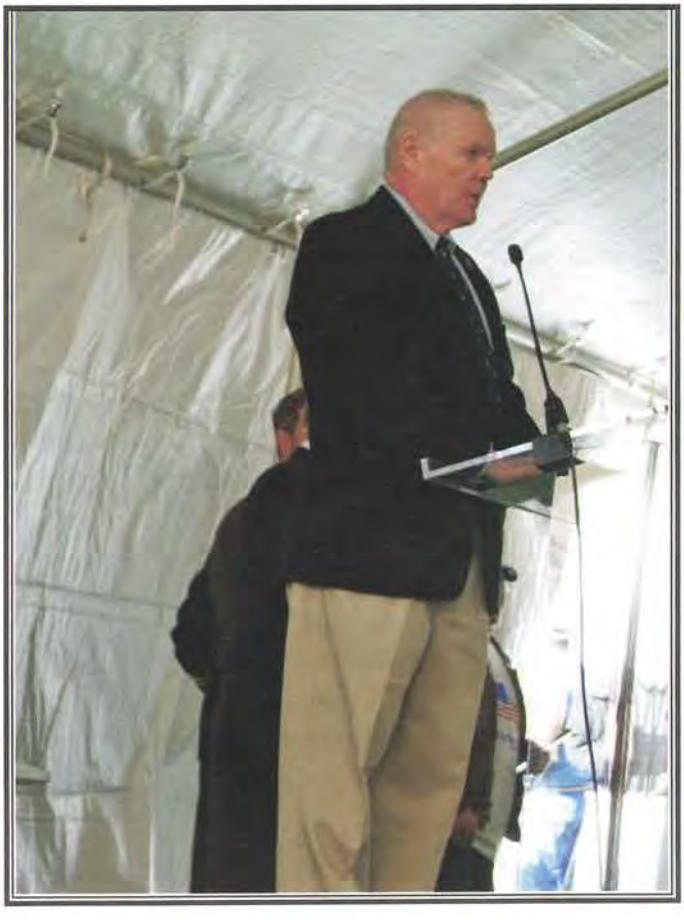






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THE ORIGIN OF 'THE GHOST BATTALION'

In September 1965, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines [2/1] was the Special Landing Force [SLF] for the 7th Fleet with the mission of conducting amphibious raids against North Vietnamese Army [NVA] and Viet Cong [VC] infiltration and marshaling points in widely dispersed areas along the coast of South Vietnam. These raids were code named "Dagger Thrust".

The first of the five raids occurred on 25 and 27 September without any contact with NVA/VC forces. The third raid occurred on October 1 where some light resistance was encountered. Afterward, The 7th Fleet with 2/1 aboard sailed for Indonesian waters and did not return until late November when the last of the Dagger Thrust occurred. Here, the battalion was moderately successful in an encounter with VC forces. In December, the battalion participated in Operation Harvest Moon, a joint operation with the ARVN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam] forces. In early 1966, The Battalion operated in the area around Phu Bai as well as assisting an ARVN Battalion in the Phu Thu Peninsula. In June the Battalion was again on the move with the 4th Marines and ARVN units in Operation Jay. In July the battalion participated in Operation Hastings against NVA forces less than 2 miles south of the DMZ.

Afterward, it was reported that Hanoi Hanna, the English speaking voice of the NVA propaganda radio, referred to the battalion as "ghosts" because the battalion had been 'wiped out' during Operation Hastings but had reappeared elsewhere. Thus, in a period of less than a year, the battalion had been in action in widely scattered areas along the coast as well as inland areas of Vietnam, appearing and then disappearing only to reappear again at a distant location.

During December 1967, the battalion took control of the Con Thien Combat Base along the DMZ and conducted operations in that area until late March 1968. Afterward, the battalion became the "point of the spear" for ground attack in Operation Pegasus attacking along Route 9 to the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Operation Pegasus ended on 15 April 1968. The battalion assumed the role of the ground unit for the combat base.At that time, the NVA strength operating in the Khe Sanh area was estimated to be three regiments and 1 battalion.

In early May, the whole battalion was conducting a search and destroy operation 'outside the wire' in the areas around Hill 881 North when they came under intense NVA mortar and artillery fire. During this barrage, the Bn CO, LtCol. Billy R. Duncan [Texas Pete 6] was med-evac'd to a hospital ship. However, after it was determined that his injury was mainly concussion, he convinced the CO Marine Air Group 16 to fly him back to the battalion where we re-assumed command. During the next 18 hours, the battalion out-maneuvered the vastly superior NVA forces and returned to the Combat Base. It was also reported that the senior NVA Commander in the Khe Sanh area was relieved when he reported that the Marines were 'ghosts' and had evaded him. The CO, Mag 16 also reported that intercepted NVA communications referred to 2/1 as ghosts.

Thus the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines of the Vietnam era is "The Ghost Battalion".





SECOND BATTALION 1ST MARINES REUNION PICTURES

ARLINGTON, VA NOV 07 TO 11, 2013



2ND BATTALION 1ST MARINES REUNION CELEBRATION ARLINGTON, VA NOV 7-11, 2013





JANUARY 21ST LUNCHEON IN CHICO, CALIFORNIA

By Craig W. Tourte

It is not a federal nor state holiday, it is not a time when the general public would normally honor those who have served and sacrificed, but each year January 21st is a time when those who fought in and around the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh remember those who preserved, did not return and those who supported that gallant effort of survival. Khe Sanh Veterans Steve Wiese, David Lind, Tom Horchler, Marco Soto, David Tonick, Craig Tourte, Kenneth Sawyer, Charles Teasley, Ned Borlaug and Louis Raddigan gathered once again with members of the Northern California community to honor those who not only served at Khe Sanh but also to honor all who have served and are currently serving in our Armed Forces. It is a special day for many, just regular folks doing something extra-ordinary and so appreciated by the many veterans in attendance at the Eagles Hall in Chico California.

I am reminded of a recent Khe Sanh Board post made by Neil Kenny where he quotes an article written by Sgt Maj Dougherty. The last paragraph reads It is that sense of belonging to something that will outlive our own mortality which gives people a light to live by and a flame to mark their passing.

Veterans and community supporters gathered in Chico for a small simple luncheon because of that sense of belonging to a very small family. A family of veterans and friends who continue to care about each other and who gather to recognize the sacrifice of too many who were unable to return home with us. If they are now forgotten by their friends or family, they have not been forgotten by us. If their graves stones are overgrown and their names are no longer mentioned, we acknowledge their lives and deeds. Each January 21st we who gather are the flame to mark their passing.





NORTHERN CALIFORNIA KSV IN ATTENDANCE

L-R STEVE WIESE - LINCOLN, DAVID LIND SACRAMENTO, TOM HORCHLER,-CHEROKEE, MARCO SOTO -SACRAMENTO, DAVID TONICK BERRY CREEK, CRAIG TOURTE- ROCKLIN NOT PICTURED: KEN SAWYER WESTWOOD, CHARLES TEASLEY NEVADA CITY, NED BORLAUG REDDING







THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
William A. Hayes E CO 2/26 KIA 06 Jun 68	James Kaylor E CO 2/26
ALL SPECIAL FORCES AT DET A-101 LANG VEI	Lawrence T. Cooper CO C- 5TH FG
GySgt C.H. "Chuck" Perkins K Co 3/26 Hill 861 DOW 17 May 68	Barbara Eddowes Fiance
Lawrence A. Berneski USAF KIA 15 Oct 67 C-130 Crash	Louis W. Caton II USAF 50TH TASS
LCpl Ron Vivona G CO 2/26 DOW Received 06 Aprl 68 Hill 700	Ronald Main VMGR-152 SU # 1
LCpl Jerry Ferren USMC VMGR-152 KIA 01 Mar 68	Ronald Main VMGR-152 SU # 1
L Cpl Dave Devik USMC VMGR-152 KIA 10 Feb 68	Ronald Main VMGR-152 SU# 1
Capt Daniel Coonon USMC VMFA-115 1ST MAW KIA 08 Oct 68	Charles Fetter H&MS-11 MAG-11
LCpl Jay Books USMC CAP Hotel-2 , 3RD SR BN KIA 16 Nov 68	Charles Fetter H&MS-11 MAG-11
1st Lt Thomas Reich USMC VMFA-115 1ST MAW KIA 17 Nov 68	Charles Fetter H&MS-11 MAG-11
Cpl Dennis Herb USMC 3RD Recon Passed Away	Charles Fetter H&MS-11 MAG-11
Sgt Donald R. Chamblin Jr. USMC HQ Btry 1/13 KIA 08 Mar 68	Bruce Kates HQ BTRY 1/13
PFC Gale Gotti USMC A/1/13 KIA 07 Jun 67	Thomas K. Soerensen A/ 1/13 F/O
Lt John Bobo USMC I CO 3/9 KIA 30 Mar 67	Thomas K. Soerensen A/ 1/13 F/O
LCpl Philip Van Dusen USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 07 Jun 67	Thomas K. Soerensen A/ 1/13 F/O
PFC Jon Woodard USMC D CO 1/1 KIA 05 Jul 68 Hill 689	Glenn Griffin Delta CO 1/1
CPL Vic Pizarro USMC A/1/13 KIA 06 Mar 68	Dennis Wimbish A/1/13
HN Alfredo Lucero USN A/1/13 07 July 1997 (Suicide)	Dennis Wimbish A/1/13
SGT James L. Cook USMC A/1/13 27 Nov 1983 (Murder Victim)	Dennis Wimbish A/1/13
PFC Peter Cook USMC G CO 2/5 WIA 10 Apr 67 DOW 22 Apr 67	Arthur Caldwell 7TH ENGRS
SSGT Jerry Elliott MIA 21 Jan 68 Khe Sanh 282 AHC Black Cats	Donna Elliott (Sister)
1Lt. John Carson USMC D CO 1/4 KIA 05 Jun 68	Tim Dewolf E Co 2/9
LtCol John Carson (Father of John) USAAF WWII POW	Tim Dewolf E Co 2/9
PFC Randall M. Davis USMC K/3/4 KIA 04 Jun 68 Hill 881S	Larry J. Davis (Brother)
SSGT Karl G. Taylor USMC I CO 3/26 MOH KIA 08 Dec 68	Will Griggs I CO 3/26 HILL 881S
PFC Robert H. Kruger USMC E/2/3 KIA 03 Mar 67	Frederick G. Monahan E CO 2/3
EOCS Donald Barnes USN Seabee NMCB-10 KIA 06 Jun 67	Hugh MCCauley MCB-4
BUL-3 Chuck Hubbard USN Seabee NMCB-4 KIA 06 Jun 67	Hugh McCauley MCB-4
CN Bruce Dashiel USN Seabee KSCB WIA 06 Jun 67	Hugh McCauley MCB-4

KHE SANH MENTIONED AT HAWAIIAN PUNCH BOWL CEMETERY

By Craig W. Tourte

I was reading through the February 2013 edition of VFW Magazine when I came across an article titled "Vietnam Maps at Punchbowl. " The article read, "Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii were made complete with the Vietnam Battle maps on Veterans Day. Designed by 90-year-old artist Mary Jacobs, who created the original WWII and Korea maps, the mosaic maps were installed in a pavilion at the monument's top. As VFW's Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief Bill Thien said, Vietnam veterans are getting up in age now - so it's a legacy for our children to be able to come here and see maps portraying their war."

"The maps constitute the first federal permanent tribute to the Vietnam War built exclusively with tax dollars. Inscribed on the Vietnam pavilion are the words of World War I - era poet Archibald MacLeish - We leave you our deaths, give them their meaning."

The memorial at the top of the cemetery contains a small chapel and tributes on mosaic maps to the various battles fought in the Pacific.

I had been to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punch Bowl) in the State of Hawaii on the Island of Oahu before. Each time I visited I was humbled just being on such hallowed ground where so many of American's war dead are interred, including many who served at Khe Sanh.

It was winter in California when the gentle warm breezes of the Islands called to me once again. I grabbed my golf clubs, a change of socks, a pair of shorts, an aloha shirt and took the red eye from Sacramento to Hawaii, landing on Oahu 5 hours later. After checking into the U.S. Army owned Hale Koa Hotel on the beach of Waikiki I rented a car and drove up the mountain to the "Punch Bowl."

Located in its own pavilion at the top of the Memorial are two battle maps of the Vietnam War. The mosaic map on the left or south side reads "The Vietnam War 1959-1973." The mosaic map on the right or north side reads "The American Ground War in South Vietnam 1965-1973." Each map has 5 paragraphs describing historic battles and events. The south map has them listed 1 through 5 and the north map 6 through 10. The north map paragraph 6 reads, "In South Vietnam's I Corps Tactical Zone (I Corps) the North Vietnamese attached across the demilitarized zone or with short hooks through Laos into Khe Sanh and the A Shau Valley. U.S. Marines beat back recurrent ground assaults and fought prolonged artillery duels with an entrenched enemy. Front-line combat complicated security efforts elsewhere. United States Army units reinforced the Marines, providing additional artillery and helicopters to assist with counterinsurgency."

Since the cemetery was dedicated on September 2, 1949, approximately 25,000 World War I, World War II, the Korean, and Vietnam Veterans who lost their lives were interred there.

The National Cemetery is truly an American treasure and I appreciated once again the opportunity to visit and pay tribute and honor those who served and sacrificed. The words Khe Sanh inscribed in that mosaic panel will forever confirm that the Battle of Khe Sanh was truly an important historic even and one in which the millions who visit the cemetery each year will read and remember.



OBIT





LAWRENCE R. LEON USMC
BRAVO CO 1/9 KHE SANH VETERAN

Lawrence Robert Leon was born on August 1, 1940 on the Tejon Ranch in Tehachapi, California to Marceline-Cordero Leon and George Lawrence Leon. Lawrence was a member of the Piute tribe of American Indians. After Lawrence Graduated from Bakersfield High and was quite proud to be member of the varsity football team.

After Lawrence graduated from high school, he immediately joined the United States Marine Corps where he proudly served until 1970.

While stationed at Camp Pendleton, he served as a drill sergeant and his love for football carried over here as well. Lawrence continued to play football on Marine Corps teams. While stationed in San Diego he joined the Camp Pendleton Rodeo Team and rode "rough stock".

During his 12 years of service with the USMC, Lawrence was in active combat in Viet Nam for a period of three and a half years. He was assigned to Recon and the famous 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, also known as the "Walking Dead". He was with 1/9 during the Siege of Khe Sanh. He also survived the Siege of Con Thien. In addition to being engaged in active combat, Lawrence also served as an Embassy Guard for the United States Embassy in Saigon.

Lawrence was not only a dedicated Marine, but he was recognized and decorated as well. He received a battle field commission as a 2ndLieutenant served several months as an Infantry Unit Leader. In addition, he was a respected small arms instructor known for his expertise with small tactics. Lawrence was awarded a Bronze Star with Valor for his brav-

ery in combat along with a Purple Heart with 2-stars acknowledging his combat wounds.

After the Marines, Lawrence was able to return to the cowboy spirit at the Rankin Ranch in Walker Basin. There he met his wife Linda Leon. While married to Linda, Lawrence decided to become a professional big- rig driver and ultimately retired from Apex Bulk Commodities to live in Walker Basin, where he and Linda enjoyed the quiet life with their dogs and kitties.

Lawrence was a man of few words. In



short he was a good Marine, good cowboy, and good man. His nature was reminiscent of still waters however, we all know that still waters run deep.

Lawrence joined his parents, George Lawrence Leon and Marceline Cordero Leon, brothers, George Leon and John Leon, and two sisters, Frances Leon Price and Carol Leon Garza on October 5, 2013. Lawrence leaves behind his wife of 26 years Linda Leon, two stepsons Sean and Ryan Tejaratchi, sisters Marcelina Thelma Leon and Christine Leon Martinez, brother, Henry Leon along with a host of family and friends.

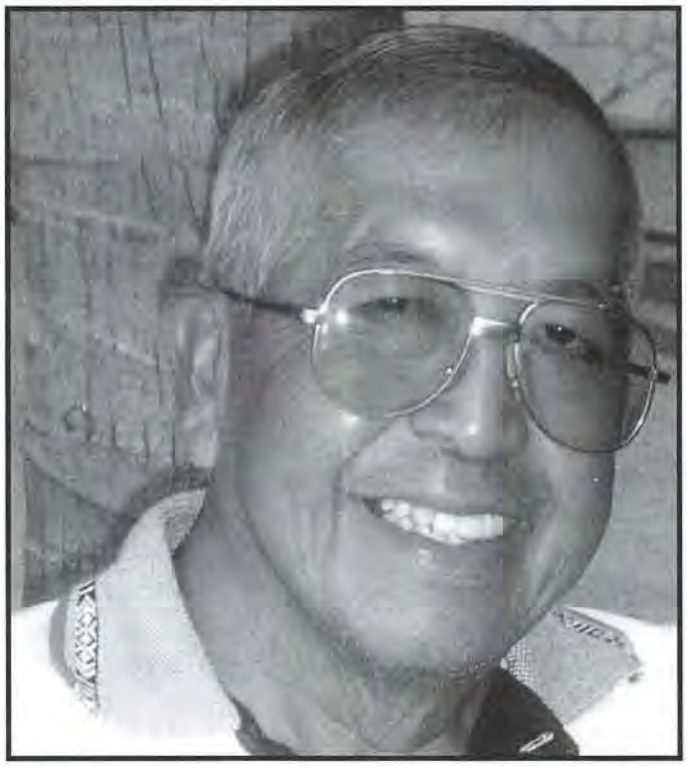





ARTICLE ON KHE SANH IN LEATHERNECK MAGAZINE JULY 1968. SEVERAL KSV ARE MENTIONED

Story and photos by Sgt John Martin

Although the few newspapers which had filtered in shortly before the Easter weekend declared that the threat to Khe sanh was over, the marines who were manning the base were taking no chances

True, they could now eat their own C-ration meals above ground and engage in outdoor activities without the fear of incoming rounds. But they still made it a point to keep their helmets on and their flak jackets tight about their bodies whenever they ventured far from the safety of their bunkers.

But there was a definite release of tension in the air. With the withdrawal of several battalions from the Khe Sanh base to go into the surrounding hills to seek out the enemy, and the knowledge that the road from Ca Lu was being secured by the infantry and made accessible by the engineers, the atmosphere was one of a big, inaudible "Whew!"

For 77 days, commencing January 21, 1968, the Marines had lived a life of constant harassment. It had been approximately two and one-half months of constant enemy shelling, day and night. For 11 weeks they had lived with filth, grime, red dust and rats. There had been uncountable hours, minutes, and seconds of fear, prayer, hope and death around the battle-scarred bunkers of Khe Sanh.

But in spite of it all, morale ran high. And Col David E. Lownds, the commander of the 26th Marine Regiment and its supporting units during the continual peppering of Khe Sanh, "never had a doubt" that, in the event the enemy had elected to attack, Khe Sanh could have been defended.

"I had the finest enlisted men in the world," Col Lownds stated. "And they had the best morale, under the conditions, that any commander could ask for. Since January 21," he recalled, "there was no hot chow, no beer, and no showers available. But every Marine I saw had a smile on his face. To them goes all the credit."

LtGen Robert E. Cushman, Jr., commanding general of the III Marine Amphibious Force in Vietnam, expressed his opinion as to why the North Vietnamese had never ventured to attack Khe Sanh. "Because they'd have been slaughtered," he said, "and they knew it!"

Gen Cushman attributed the let-up on Khe Sanh to three things. First, he pointed out, there was the fortitude and combativeness of the Marines there. Second, there was the tremendous air effort which blasted the enemy from their positions in their hills. And, third, there was the accurate barrage of artillery fire directed at the enemy by the 1st Battalion, 13th Marine Regiment.

"The trouble is," said Gen Cushman, "that everybody counts the incoming rounds. No one ever counts the outgoing. We replied a hundred fold to every enemy shell. We beat them down. The area was becoming untenable for the enemy."

The opinions of Gen Cushman and Col Lownds are shared by all the Marines who can say, "I served at Khe Sanh." Cpl Don H. Wiggins was "kind of disappointed" that the enemy had never attacked. And LCpl Timothy Wright, who had been flown into Khe Sanh as a replacement in early March, during the heat of the onslaught, told us that he didn't mind it a bit. "I knew what it was like when I found out I was coming here," he said.

With the bigger part of the threat to Khe Sanh diminished, it was evident that a smaller force could handle the base itself and that many of the Marines would move into the hills surrounding Khe Sanh to provide a greater area of defense. Some were glad about leaving their bunkers; others were not.

"I was scared out of my wits when I got here in February," said LCpl Joe Haggard, "but, now, look here's the place. We dug the bunkers and got the incoming, and now I might have to leave. There may be hot chow in other places but this this is home."

Sgt Johnny Baker shared Haggard's opinion. "I was shaky when I got here," he admitted. "But Khe Sanh is like any other duty station. If I'm going to get 'blown away,' I'll get 'blown away' no matter where I'm at."

All the Marines seemed to think of the incoming rounds in a philosophical manner. "If I get hit," said PFC Robert Reyna, a member of Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, "there must be a reason; because something is guiding my every step and movement. I'm proud to be here and glad to be doing my part."

And Lt Charles T. Kelly, USN, one of the chaplains at Khe Sanh, had words to that effect in his Holy Saturday services, held in a dingy bunker at Khe Sanh. "Men," he said, "we must consider ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God."

The men sang. "Rock of Ages" and "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name," and Chaplain Kelly gave the epistle to Cpl Jim Hill to read aloud and Cpl Dennis Finley read the gospel.

Faith, hope and sheer determination helped sustain the Marines' at Khe Sanh during those hammering days. They had faith in their own capabilities; hope that the supplies would come in; and the pilots had sheer determination in flaunting en emy fire to deliver their necessary cargoes.

Reminiscent of the Berlin Airlift in scope was the supply stream which flowed into Khe Sanh. In spite of heavy enemy artillery and hornets' nests of small arms fire, directed specifically at many of the incoming planes, the pilots got through to Khe Sanh. They either unloaded their cargoes in precious seconds on the runway before taking off again or dropped them from the air by parachute.

And the fact that not all the supply planes flew out again was dramatized in the wreckage of several helicopters and transport planes, lying in twisted metal graveyards along the airstrip.

But the planes rolled in despite the enemy, because. the Marines at Khe Sanh needed the supplies to keep them going. "They did a good job," remarked Maj W. T. Cook, assistant S-4 officer for the 26th Marines. "We received outstanding support from the Air Force planes, the Third Marine Division, and the Force Logistic Command."

Cpl Ernie Ross, a member of the open air post office section at Khe Sanh, also had praise for the mail drops. "Most of the time," he said, "the mail came in whenever they could get it to us. Once, more than a week went by with no mail. Then, they dropped in 40,000 pounds of it."

Looking at an aerial view of Khe Sanh is like looking at one-third of the base. The rest is underground. In small, one and two man hootches, to larger Lv shaped "office" bunkers, all the way up to the underground complex which houses the Combat Operations Center, the Marines lived and worked beneath the red dust carpet of Khe Sanh, their way lit only by candles and, in some places, electric lights that didn't always work.

One of the most vital and active points was "Charlie Med," the casualty treatment center operated by Charlie Company of the 3d Medical Battalion. Although Charlie Med treated upwards of 2,000 casualties during the siege of Khe Sanh, according to Lt Edward Feldman, one of the Navy doctors there, his own biggest challange came on the first day of the bombardment when PFC Robert Mussari was hit by an 82-mm. mortar fuze which lodged in his stomach without detonating.

"They brought him in with a large battle dressing on his abdomen," recalled Lt Feldman, "and we took him down inside Charlie Med and padded him with sandbags.

"We didn't know how much time we would have before the fuze detonated so SSgt Ronald Sniegowski from the 3d Engineer Battalion stood by to help if it looked like it would go off."

While HM3 Roger Tillotson, a Navy corpsman, stood by with four flashlights shining into the exposed area, SSgt Sniegowski handed the instruments to Lt Feldman who removed the tissue around the fuze and extracted it in a ten-minute operation.

The fuze, which was slightly smaller than a hot

sauce bottle, was then buried outside until an EOD team could arrive to blow it up. "We had no anesthetic available for the operation," Lt Feldman said, "but he never flinched or cried once.

He said he wanted to comeback to Khe Sanh again."(Mussari is now receiving additional treatment in Pennsylvania.) "This is typical of all the Marines," Feldman went on. "They never cry out in pain. In all of our experiences, most of the casualties are more worried about their buddies than themselves. None of them wanted to leave Khe Sanh."

Pfc James C. Heard, who had arrived at Khe Sanh shortly before the hostilities began, was one such Marine. Heard was hit in the arm with shrapnel from an exploding mortar. His wound wasn't serious enough to warrant evacuation. However, he was the type who would have wanted to come back, if the injury had required him to be medevaced.

Heard shared the unanimous sigh of relief, however, after the threat to Khe Sanh had died down. "You feel real good after everything is over," he said.

The Army's First Air Cavalry Division, having finished its sweep up Route #9, had moved into Khe Sanh. But they were already in the process of mounting helicopters out again, to head for other parts of the war.

The Marine force, too, had been largely diminished, with field units swarming the hills around Khe Sanh to take enemy positions and provide a more mobile defense of the area. And, while the 11th Engineers put the finishing touches on Route #9, the supply route they had nicknamed "USMC 11," the enemy struck again at Khe Sanh.

All day on Easter Sunday, artillery rounds fell on the base. This time, the fire was thought to come from inside Laos, since Marines had captured most of the enemy gun points in the hills.

But incoming was nothing knew to Marines in Vietnam, especially those at Khe Sanh, and the possibility of the problems involved in an enemy ground attack had been eliminated.

Perhaps one of the biggest threats to Khe Sanh during the deluge was the fear of the unknown. Newspapers had suggested that the defenders of Khe Sanh might meet the same fate as the French had in the historic battle of Dien Bien Phu. On March 14, the 54th day of the Khe Sanh saga, the word went around that North Vietnamese General Giap, who was reportedly masterminding the attack on Khe Sanh, had finished Dien Bien Phu on Day 54!

But Khe Sanh is still there and the Marines are now certain that history will not repeat itself ....



COLONEL DAVID E. LOWNDS COMMANDED THE MARINE GARRISON AT KHE SANH DURING THE 77 DAY ENEMY SIEGE.



A forklift driver overturned on a small embankment, and another forklift was needed to right the vehicle



PFC C. E. Jordan pointed out recently vacated NVA positions to LCpl Robert W. Plyer



A STEADY STREAM OF MATERIALS REACHED THE KHE SANH COMBAT BASE DESPITE ENEMY EFFORTS TO BLOCK SUPPLY ROUTES.



" CHARLIE" GOT A " MIGHTY MITE," BUT THE EMPTY SHELL CASINGS INDICATE THE MARINES GOT THEIR LICKS IN TOO.

MARINES AT KHE SANH WITH SUB UNIT 5 - 1967



LARRY LARSEN



LOUIS RADDIGAN



REVIS WILSON



JJ JOHNSON



L-R RICHARD BARKELY, BUTHCH EVEANS, ED BAUSMAN



DENNIS PLUSH

REMEMBERANCES

by Mac - Milton McNeely

January 20, 1968 Khe Sanh

Today is January 20, 2014, and looking back to 1968 there is actually one thing that I remember about this day all those years ago. This was the day that I submitted a request for extension of my tour in Vietnam. We could request any duty station in RVN and get a free 30 day leave anywhere in the free world, if we would agree to extend our tour in Nam for an additional six months. I thought long and hard about my choice of possible duty stations and of destinations for that leave.

The crazy thing is that of all the exotic locations where I could have gone, the only place I really considered was home. Nope, it wasn't girlfriends. After ten months in Nam, I had already received Dear Johns from the three girls that I had kinda been dating and about a half-dozen others that I didn't even know that I was having a relationship with. Oh yeah, there was even a "don't ever write me again" letter from one of those high school let's be pen pals to a serviceman in Vietnam girls. Seems she graduated from high school and went on to the University of Wisconsin in Madison and was told by her classmates that she shouldn't be associating with us warmonger-baby killer types. Any way, home is where I wanted to go and that's what I put in the request.

A few of the guys knew I was extending . Crazy-nuts-etc., they said. They thought it even more foolish and senseless when I said I was going home on leave instead of maybe Denmark, home of beautiful, blonde-haired, blue-eyed vixens or maybe South America for some of those darker, hotter-blooded Latino ladies. Well, you know what the guys were thinking. But the kicker was that my choice of duty stations would be to remain with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines. Proof enough of absolute insanity for just about everyone. In a few hours even I would doubt my sanity for extending but of course most of us knew we had to be a little crazy for enlisting in the Marine Corps during wartime in the first place. Enlisting in the Marines in 1966 might have been a little crazy but that's how I chose to avoid the draft. Just call me a creative draft dodger.

Sitting idle and contemplating the reasons why I extended my tour for more than a hour now and while I think of a number of reasons that I sold myself on and even a few shared with others back then, I really feel that deep down there was more and I can't seem to get it out. If I write maybe it will come, so let's see, there's the extra 80 or 90 dollars a month in combat pay. No, don't think so. After I got back to the states I had a number of moonlighting jobs and it was easy enough to make more than that. There is the 30 days free leave, but wait, 30 days or a permanent, until end of enlistment, back in the states duty station. Just doesn't work, does it?

How about a little guilt that I really hadn't done my part yet so a little overtime was in order and of course the whole survivor's guilt thing from friends lost especially those on June 7, 1967. Yep, there is that.

Then there is the fact that I was serving with men that I considered the best of the best. Men that I had great respect for and admired. I'll not start dropping names here as many of you reading this know those names and several reading are likely those that I speak of. The men I was serving with and that we were truly doing something worthwhile, is the one I haven't given enough consideration to in the past. This was a chapter of my life that I wasn't ready to end and ultimately the greatest of the real reasons that I chose to return to Vietnam when I didn't have to.

The Siege would begin in a few hours and those 77 days would be a chapter, no a book, in and of itself and really has nothing to do with my extending my tour except that a few days, maybe a week, into the Siege Lt. Ferral, 1/26 Battalion Adjutant, gave me the opportunity to withdraw my extension request. I was surprised by his offer and I think we were both a little surprised by my answer to let it stand. I mentioned this to my wife a few minutes ago and she said that it would not have been like me to withdraw or renege. I hadn't thought of it in that light but like to think that she is correct.

By now at least some reading this rambling have figured out that I really didn't intend to write about extending. My intention was to write about the events and my part and view of those events of January 21, 1968. Guess I'm stalling and rabbit chasing

and that's normal for me for this time of the year. Yes, I have written about the 21st a little before and more often than not my attempts to do so have either failed completely or just kind of fizzled out. I'll even attempt to start with something I have never been able to write about or get past. It's not at the beginning but for me somewhere around the halfway mark of January 21, 1968. At least the halfway mark of leaving the Ponderosa and heading to the perimeter and Lt. Dillon's bunker.

January 21, 1968

The screams began as we once again raised to attempt running a few yards. We hesitated and listened and partially felt the unbearable pain and terror broadcasted by a single voice but with a volume that almost matched the rocket explosion that caused it. Screams amplified by the silence of a few seconds respite from incoming. There were two of us, Lance Corporal Lonnie Gipson and my-self. We hesitated and in that hesitation we communicated the unspoken question, "Continue on our quest to the perimeter or divert to the wounded man?" There never should have been doubt or question but the screams were so terrible as to cause hesitation and fear. Even as we turned to the screams, they abruptly stopped. So abruptly that we decided it was pointless to continue in that direction. We never spoke of it later except in inquiry, an attempt to learn who he was and verify our suspicions of his fate. The best I can account he did die within a few very long seconds after being hit. The rocket came straight into the open doorway of a very small above ground sandbag bunker. Our understanding was that he probably should have died instantly. Still and even though our assessment that it was pointless to try to give aid was probably justified, I am haunted by the screams and by not going just to make sure.

Note: It's taken 46 years to write this paragraph.

RON WASSON

January 21, 1968

On this day in 1968 I arrive in Hawaii for R&R to meet my wife, Linda, who I had not seen for 8 months. This was also the day the siege of Khe Sanh began. I had orders to Khe Sanh upon my return Vietnam, and was not too excited about my new duty station considering all the TV news. In less than a week I was back in-country trying to find my unit and my gear. The TET Offensive was in full swing, even though TET was not until January 30. After quite an adventure, I arrive at Khe Sanh on February 5 by running down the ramp of a moving C130 as it threw out supplies. When it came to the end of the runway, it turned around and took off. Welcome to Khe Sanh -- what a great place to spend my next 70 days.

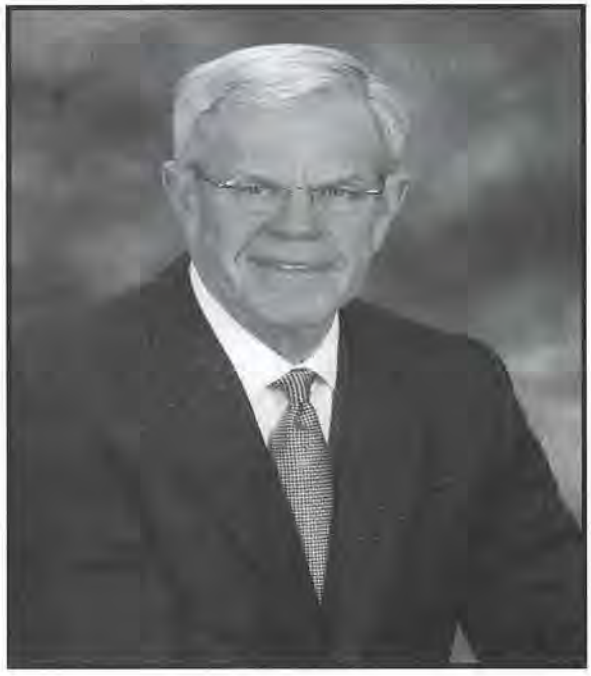



OBIT

KERRY BIGNALL USN KHE SANH VETERAN VO-67 JANUARY 21, 2014



Bignall served in the Navy's VO-67 Squadron as a flight engineer on a converted P2V-5 Neptune. Flying out of Thailand, their mission was to fly at at low level in mountainous terrain to drop motion, infra red and other sensors over Laos and North Vietnams Ho Chi Minh Trail. This enabled the Air force to hit the troops & supplies coming down from the North. The unit and its 12 aircraft, normally used for A.S.W. operations, took 25% casualties before it stood down from operations. It did force the NVA to adopt some unusual counter measures that included playing tapes of truck noises to fool the air controllers directing the air strikes. VO-67 never stopped the flow of supplies, but they did help make the NVA pay a heavy price and with their high risk 500 ft altitude missions, helped defend the Marine base at Khe Sanh in 1968. In 2003 the US Government corrected a long overdue omission and awarded Kerry the DFC for his missions.

In 1999 Kerry was the first Navy GOLD WING Combat Air crewman from the Vietnam era to be inducted into the ENLISTED COMBAT AIR CREW ROLL OF HONOR upon the USS Yorktown CV-10 at Patriots Point, SC.





From left to right are as follows: Sadie and Alex McCormick (USAF Ret) his wife's parents, Capt Ray Schultz (USNR Ret) and Kerry & Maxine Bignall



This is a picture of Combat Air Crew 6 taken in late April 1968 at NKP Standing from left to right: ATR2 Vine, LT Browne, LTJG Harsanyi, LTJG Paulsen, LTCDR Shultz, AO1 Squire, AE2 Moorman, Kneeling from left to right: AE2 Clark, ATR3 Bissell, ADJ2 Bignall, ADR1 Witt, AMCS Underwood, AX3 Cleveland, Note that he was wearing a Marine-issue flak jacket, everyone else is in Navy -issue. He wanted to make sure that he had every chance of getting back. The AAA at 250-500 ft was pretty bad.



Kerry was born Dec 16, 1944 in Trona, California (up above Ridgecrest in the high desert). He has a brother (William James) and a sister (Ginger Mary). Kerry: "His father (Kenneth Otis) was a Navy Chief sonarman in WWII. After the Navy, he went to work for Philco Ford Corp, Palo Alto, California. His mother (Mary Eileen) was a photographer and housewife.

CHAPLAINS CORNER

Chaplain Ron Rayner

TAKE CARE OF YOUR MIND, BODYAND SOUL

As Chaplain for the Waterford, Michigan Fire Department, I entered one of the fire stations and observed eight off-duty firefighters running flights of stairs with self-contained breathing-apparatus strapped to their back. They were working out to maintain a high level of physical fitness to do their job and prepare for a charity stair climbing event. Though at age 65, I am not ready to climb 72 flights of stairs for charity, I realized I needed to drop a few pounds. As Chaplain for the Khe Sanh Veterans, I am passing on some of the inspirational materials that I have discovered to help me on the path to better physical, mental and spiritual health.



"A prudent person foresees the danger ahead and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences." Proverbs 27:12

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought you at a price. Therefore honor God with your body". "I Corinthians 6:1-20 (NIV)

I am not my own? I cannot change the past abuse of my mind and body or negligence of my spiritual side, but I can take better care of them from this point forward. Months before dying of cancer NCAA Champion Basketball Coach Jim Valvano stated the following; "I urge all of you to enjoy your life. Every precious moment you have on this earth. Spend each day with some laughter. Don't be afraid to feel … to get your emotions going. Be enthusiastic, because nothing great can be accomplished without enthusiasm. Live your dreams."

Now is the time to enjoy life. I know in my younger years I did not like grumpy old people. I have to do a daily evaluation make sure I am not one. I can't do anything about being old, but I don't have to be grumpy.

A group of dedicated firefighters inspired me to work on my mind, body and soul and it is my prayer that all of us Khe Sanh Veterans are looking out for each other. Phone calls, visits, gatherings, emails and snail mail can help inspire someone to a more fulfilling life. Use your Khe Sanh Veterans Directory. I have found that my worst symptom of PTSD is isolating from everyone. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 27:17 "As iron sharpens iron, a friend sharpens a friend."

We took care of each other in Vietnam and some of you have been doing it ever since. Others like me have been in and out of the loop. The message board at khesanh.com has been a great help to me as chaplain.

On a recent trip out west, I was out walking to help tone my body when I saw Mars come shining up over the horizon. A Cheshire cat smile moon soon followed. I thought, only God can create something that beautiful. That peaceful morning walk, the scenery and a prayer of thanksgiving gave nourishment to my mind, body and soul.

I now daily keep working at taking care of myself, my family and my friends.
" This is the day that the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."
Psalm 118:24

May all the Khe Sanh brothers and their families have a blessed 2014. Amen.

BOOK REVIEW

LAST STAND AT KHE SANH
By Gregg Jones

Seventy-seven days in 1968, amid fears that America faced its own disastrous Dien Bien Phu, 6,000 US Marines held off 30,000 North Vietnamese Army regulars at the remote mountain stronghold called Khe Sanh. It was the biggest battle of the Vietnam War, with sharp ground engagements, devastating artillery duels, and massive US air strikes. After several weeks of heroic defense, the besieged Americans struck back in a series of bold assaults, and the North Vietnamese withdrew with heavy losses.

Last Stand at Khe Sanh is the vivid, fast-paced account of the dramatic confrontation as experienced by the men who were there: Marine riflemen and grenadiers, artillery and air observers, platoon leaders and company commanders, Navy corpsmen and helicopter pilots, and a plucky band of US Army Special Forces. Based on extensive archival research and more than 100 interviews with participants, *Last Stand at Khe Sanh* captures the courage and camaraderie of the defenders and delivers the fullest account yet of this epic battle.

AUTHORS NOTE:

Dear Khe Sanh veterans,

As I write this letter, the book I have been working on for the past three years, *Last Stand at Khe Sanh*, is about to go to press. As many of you know, it is a narrative history of the three months of siege at Khe Sanh in early 1968. I hope you will be pleased with the final product. Even more, I hope that you will read it and be able to tell your friends and families: This is what it was like.

As I said many times during this journey—in long conversations with many of you, in brief encounters at Khe Sanh reunions, phone conversations or email exchanges with others—I had two objectives when I began this project: to write a book of exceptional historical integrity, and to honor your service at Khe Sanh. I have devoted myself to these ends for the past three years, and now, the deadline demands of my publisher have brought me to the end of the road.



For several months now, I've been on a succession of deadlines. I've completed and fact-checked and proofed a 400-page manuscript. I've gathered photographs and winnowed about 300 images down to a final lineup of 38 for a 16-page photo insert. I've designed and commissioned the creation of 8 pages of maps, There has not been time to reflect on everything I've experienced in this journey the past three years, so I have a jumble of thoughts and emotions as I try to get this letter to Tom Eichler before the *Red Clay* deadline.

I can tell you that having the opportunity to share your story with other Americans has been the highest honor of my thirty-plus years in journalism and book-writing. I began this project knowing only vaguely what you experienced at Khe Sanh. I stand in awe after learning in detail what you endured and accomplished. I had hoped to speak to hundreds of you about those experiences; ultimately, I interviewed about 90 Khe Sanh veterans and a few family members and friends before deadline demands forced me to begin shaping what I had learned into a narrative that would do literary justice to your real-life feats of courage and camaraderie. Among the

many regrets I will always have is that I was not able to speak with more of you. It certainly is no reflection on the respect I have for you and your service. This comment applies as well to the men who served at Khe Sanh in the Hill Fights of 1967, and in the years before and after. To those of you who made time to speak with me: I can't thank you enough for your generosity and trust. I hope this book meets and exceeds your expectations.

Writing this book has been one of the greatest challenges of my career. When I stepped away from the interviewing process, I had hundreds of hours of interview tapes and transcripts to go along with thousands of pages of archival documents, as well as all the books that have been published on Khe Sanh since 1968. The discrepancies and inconsistencies I encountered in all this material numbered in the hundreds. I lost more than a little sleep as I tried to work through these discrepancies, build an accurate timeline, and arrive at the best version of the truth as revealed by the preponderance of the evidence.

The challenges of sorting through a muddled historical record pale in comparison to the anguish that mounted over three years as I tried to shape several hundred thousand words of information and interview transcripts into a compelling narrative that told the story of Khe Sanh between January and July 1968. The demands of artful storytelling required building a narrative around a relatively small number of characters and scenes. Everyone I interviewed is mentioned at least twice in the book—in the acknowledgments section at the front, and in the bibliography section at the back. But I had to make some very difficult choices in selecting the personal accounts and scenes that would convey the larger story of what transpired at Khe Sanh.

I wrote a first draft that was upwards of 150,000 words, more than 50 percent above what my very patient editor at Da Capo Press thought was a reasonable ceiling. I cut that manuscript to 125,000 words, and then proceeded to add a few thousand words here and there during the editing process as I conducted more interviews and tried to restore some of the material I had earlier cut. Still, hundreds of pages of accounts and scenes ended up on the cutting-room floor. Some of you will be disappointed (and perhaps angry) to find your accounts missing from the book. I can only tell you that I did not take any of these decisions lightly, and I apologize for not being able to include everyone's account at length. I also want to assure you that the information you imparted to me contributed greatly to my knowledge and to my ability to tell this story with authority. I've agonized over this, and even now, I continue to contemplate ways to share some of these experiences with a wider audience outside the book.

In the coming months, I'm happy to answer any questions you might have about the book. I hope I will get to see many, if not most of you, at upcoming Khe Sanh reunions or other stops along the way. I look forward to adding even more friends than I already have in the magnificent community of Khe Sanh veterans. Thank you all for this unforgettable experience, and for your service to our nation.

Sincerely, Gregg Jones



In a journalism career that spanned 30 years and five continents, Missouri native **Gregg Jones** wrote in-depth stories on such varied topics as revolutionary upheaval in Asia, steroid abuse among U.S. high school athletes and oil development in the Amazon rainforest. His many honors include four Texas Headliner Awards and a Sigma Delta Chi Public Service Award for online journalism, and he has been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the Gerald Loeb Awards for Distinguished Business and Financial Journalism. He is the author of two nonfiction books: *Honor in the Dust: Theodore Roosevelt, War in the Philippines and the Rise and Fall of America's Imperial Dream* (NAL/Penguin, 2012) and *Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement* (Westview Press, 1989). He is currently writing his third book, *Last Stand at Khe Sanh*, about the epic Vietnam War battle in 1968. He lives in Addison, Texas with his wife, Ali, their son, Chris, and two cats.

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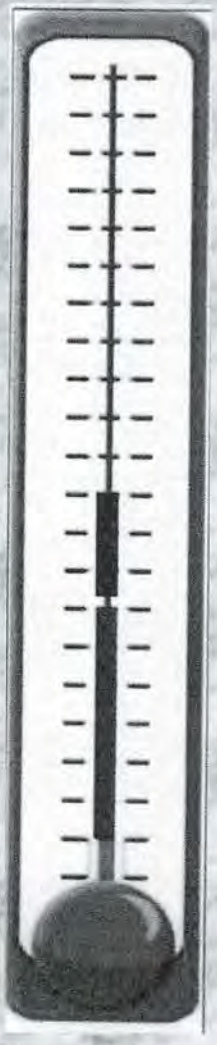

2014 GOAL
$ 40,000

$18,000

$15,000

$10,000

$5,000



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GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable Organization

3. **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2014 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;**

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6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms.
Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the ***" RED CLAY"*** Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David E. Lownds Award - for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award - for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award - for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 Awards)

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY* 1 of the school year applied for. *** (This is an important, NEW change to previous years)*****

6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System !Maximum of 100 regular points or 115 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points max. (please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

A GPA of 4.0'x 10 = 40 points or a GPA of3.0 x 10 = 30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 30 points total

Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Student government = 10 points max.
Community related services = 10 points max.
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 10 points max.

c. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min.) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max.
Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments.

By using one of the six suggested adjectives below, select one that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

TENACIOUS RELIABLE UNDAUNTED STEADFAST RESOLUTE INNOVATIVE

d. Bonus Points = 10 bonus points for being a military veteran
= 5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application: _____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: Last_____ First_____ MI _____
Address: Street_____ _____ City_____ST___ZIP_____
Home PH: _____E-mail address: _____

Applicant Birthdate: _____

2 KSV Sponsor Information (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member):

Name: Last_____First_____

Relationship to applicant;_____

Branch of service: _____

Unit served at Khe Sanh _____Dates Served There_____

3 School Information: (School to be attending)
School Name_____
School Address: _____Street , City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____
School Phone number: _____
Curriculum/intended course of study_____
School year to be funded_____

4 Applicant Personal History (Be specific!)

a School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, communications, offices held,
b Academic honors and prizes, student government participation, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b Community Activities participated in; (military service, volunteer service to community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Mailing Packet (Due *MAY 1)*

* **ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS,**
* **A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,**
* **A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,**
* **A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min.) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.**

!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!

I, SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

Signature of Applicant **Actual Signature of Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent**

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY 1ST* OF THE SCHOOL YEAR APPLIED

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Committee

Tom Eichler, President Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

THE BEAUTIFUL TOWN & COUNTRY HOTEL LOCATED NEXT TO WORLD CLASS GOLF COURSE & ONE OF THE LARGEST SHOPPING MALLS.
















DEATH CHEATERS


FMF
2nd BATTALION


UNIT HONORS

SUMMER 2014

RED CLAY

ISSUE 85

ON APRIL 25TH, 2014 CLASS 6-67 DEDICATED A MONUMENT TO THE 498 OFFICERS OF BASIC CLASS 6-67, AND THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS, WHOSE LIVES WERE CHANGED FOREVER BY THE WAR IN VIETNAM, AT THE MARINE CORPS BASE, QUANTICO, VIRGINIA

THE INSCRIPTION ON THE MEMORIAL READS "FORTY THREE MEN FROM OUR CLASS WERE KILLED IN VIETNAM, ONE MAN WAS KILLED IN LEBANON, AND SIX LOST THEIR LIVES IN TRAINING. OVER 200 MEMBERS OF OUR CLASS WERE WOUNDED IN COMBAT."

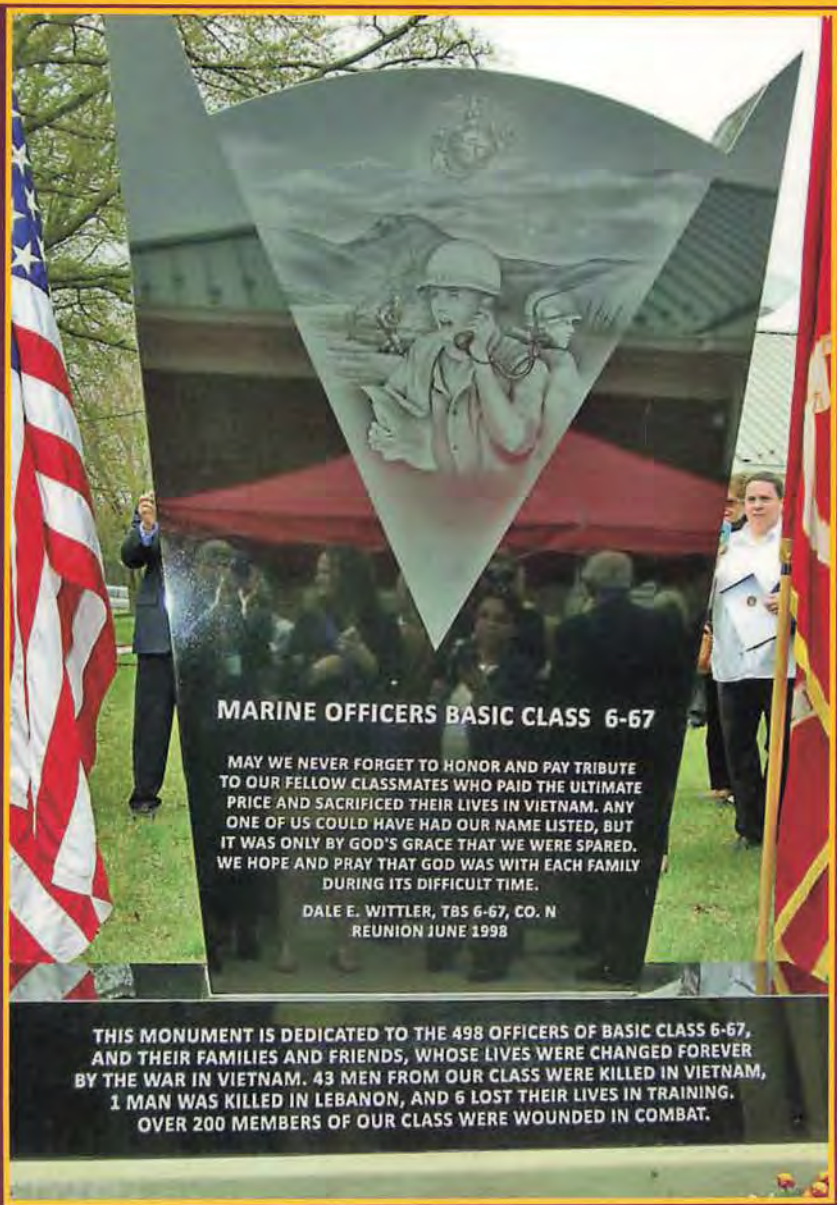

FELLOW 1/1 MARINES;

We have secured the last available place on the Chesty Puller walk at the USMC Heritage Museum for the construction of an appropriate memorial to the 520 Marines and Corpsmen who perished at their posts serving with 1/1 Marines in Vietnam.

THE MEMORIAL DESIGN IS SHOWN BELOW:

SEE HISTORY & STORY ON PAGE 63

We truly believe that our design is elegant, moving, appropriate, and most of all respectful. We will utilize the engraved paver bricks design which is used throughout the Museum grounds to honor our Marines. The name and rank of each of our fallen brothers will be engraved on the brick, with three names per brick. The center diamond, crafted in reverse laser etched black granite, echoes the original 1st Marine Division patch from the Guadalcanal campaign.

At the threshold will be a matching granite slab announcing that it is we who are remembering our fallen brothers. The Memorial will contain a bench integrated into our memorial to match those throughout the Museum grounds. This will provide a place for quiet, personal contemplation of the sacrifices made by our brothers, and reflection. It is hoped that families and friends of our fallen will be comforted by the knowledge that we, their brothers, remember and honor their service. Semper Fidelis reveals its true meaning by all of us supporting this memorial. By creating this lasting Memorial, it is we, those that have survived, who honor them that have fallen.



Plassmeyer honored with others in his Marine Corps class nearly 44 years after he was shot down



After almost 44 years, lst Lt. Bernard H. Plassmeyer, along with the other U.S. Marine Corps officers from his class killed in Vietnam, were honored with a monument April 25 at The Basic School (TBS) at Quantico, Va.

"This monument is dedicated to the 498 officers of Basic Class 6-67, and their families and friends, whose lives were changed forever by the war in Vietnam," reads an inscription on the memorial. "Forty three men from our class were killed in Vietnam, one man was killed in Lebanon, and six lost their lives in training. Over 200 members of our class were wounded in combat."

Class 6-67 was the sixth class to graduate from TBS in 1967, and the memorial is adjacent to Lopez Hall at TBS. The veiling was witnessed by Plassmeyer's brother, Norb, who has for years wondered exactly-what happened to him.

"It means a whole lot to me," said Plassmeyer of the monument and the two-day gathering he attended. "My brother was declared dead in 1976, but it didn't really resolve anything about what happened to him." Bernie Plassmeyer's wife at that time, Carol (Knaus) Plassmeyer, now Eckert, did not attend the dedication, but said Saturday of last week that she is grateful for the effort that went into putting it together. "I think it's wonderful," she said. "It's gratifying to know people look back and remember all these people. We appreciate all the support we've continued to receive, especially from people who weren't really involved back then." Eckert is now the director of the nursing education, nurse assistant and ward clerk programs at Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville, III., near St. Louis.

Bernard H. Plassmeyer was born May 5, 1945, the fourth son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Plassmeyer of Westphalia. He attended Belleville, III., near St. Louis. Grade School, Fatima High School ,and graduated from Parks College of Aeronautical Technology of St. Louis University in 1966 with a B. S. in Aeronautical Engineering. It was at St. Louis University that Bernie met Carol, and after she graduated with her Bachelors of Science in Nursing, the two were married in the summer of 1968. In early 1967, Plassmeyer joined the Marine Corps, receiving his commission as a Marine officer in June 1967, graduating at the top of his TBS class.

After the two were married, they spent time at various military bases before Plassmeyer went to Vietnam in 1969. The last was in Yuma, Ariz., when Plassmeyer went missing 16 days before the birth of his only son, Bernard William, who was born Sept. 27, 1970.

"My mom came out to help, and that was a godsend," said Eckert. "I don't know how I would have handled it if I was alone, with the baby and all.

According to the Marine Corps, 1st Lt. Plassmeyer departed Chu Lai Airbase in an A4E Skyhawk on a night combat mission against enemy targets in the infamous A Shau Valley. At 3:40 a.m., as he made an attack run on a communist target in the extreme southern edge of the valley, his Skyhawk was truck by anti -aircraft artillery (AAA) fire and crashed approximately three miles east of the South Vietnamese border, six miles west of Tu Bat and 60

miles west-northwest of DaNang, Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam.

Search and rescue (SAR) efforts were immediately initiated, but no trace of 1st Lt. Plassmeyer or his aircraft was located in the dense jungle covered valley or the mountain foothills just to the south of the target area. Because of the intense communist presence in the area, no ground search was possible. At the time SAR operations were terminated, Plassmeyer was listed as Missing in Action (MIA).

There was no evidence of a parachute, and no beeper signal was heard, according to the Marine Corps.

A later search located the wreckage and from its condition determined that Plassmeyer's aircraft had disintegrated prior to impact. That same day, a forward air controller saw a parachute and torso harness in some nearby trees. There appeared to be blood on the harness.

Norb Plassmeyer said he spoke with the commanding officer and another pilot who flew the mission with his brother. "They were confident he did not survive the crash in the first place," said Plassmeyer. "But there's still no real evidence. It's all circumstantial."

A Marine Corps investigation revealed that returning U.S. prisoners of war (POWs) had no information on Plassmeyer's precise fate, and he was later declared dead (body not recovered) based on a presumptive finding of death.

Eckert recalls that there was little information from the Marine Corps immediately after the crash with regard to her husband's fate, but the location was well known. "No body thought that even if he survived the crash that he would be found right away," said Eckert.

A casualty officer was assigned to Eckert to provide information, and help with any immediate needs. "It was really a waiting game," said Eckert of news on Plassmeyer. "Having a casualty officer really was nice. I didn't feel cut off from the military."

Eckert decided to rent out the house in which she lived in Yuma, and move back to Illinois to be with her family. That was in December of 1970, and between then and the time the Marine Corps declared Plassmeyer dead in 1976, Eckert spent a lot of time trying to raise awareness.

"I got involved about a year after he was shot down," said Eckert of a national association of families of MIAs and POWs. "We'd go to various countries we thought would be useful, and make presentations and explain our situation. "Based in Washington, D.C., one trip was to Geneva, Switzerland, to . speak to the Red Cross.

Letters, posters and petitions were circulated asking for information, and letting the public know that there were still missing military men. "I think people were interested," said Eckert. "We even sent letters to people in power in Vietnam asking for an accounting of those who were missing."

Eckert added that those people who knew the area and saw the crash site didn't think it "looked good" that Plassmeyer would have survived.

"I can't imagine that he survived, but there was no way to get in there for a more thorough investigation," said Eckert. "But the Marine Corps was not prepared to declare Plassmeyer dead without evidence. I don't think they would have made that declaration without people pushing them to do it."

Eckert said she went from one thought to the next regarding his fate. "In the back of my mind, there was always a sliver of hope," said Eckert. "I didn't absolutely accept the fact that he died in the crash, but there's no way to know that for sure. In the front of my mind, logically, I don't think I or anybody else was surprised when they declared him dead."

After six years, the Marine Corps asked Eckert if she wanted a review of the case, and she agreed. "I told them to review it and make whatever decision they thought best," she said. After the declaration, Eckert remarried and moved on with her life.

In March 1991, U.S. investigators in Vietnam located the crash site associated with this incident. They were unable to locate any witnesses to the shoot down and could not locate any remains. However, they did locate fragments of the aircraft's ejection seat and a face piece which indicated the pilot did not eject from the aircraft prior to impact.

The Douglas A4 Skyhawk was a single seat light attack jet flown by both land-based and carrier squadrons, and was the U.S. Navy's standard light attack aircraft at the outset of the war. It was the only carrier based aircraft that did not have folding wings, as well as the only one which required a ladder for the pilot to enter/exit the cockpit The Skyhawk was used to fly a wide range of missions throughout Southeast Asia, including close air support to American troops on the ground in South Vietnam. Flying from a carrier was dangerous as many aircraft were lost in operational incidents as in combat, according to the Marine Corps



This photo shows First Lt. Bernie Plassmeyer in the A4E Skyhawk, which he flew on more than 100 missions during his time in Vietnam before being shot down by anti-aircraft artillery in September of 1970.

Eighteen months ago, a search team returned to the crash site. Norb Plassmeyer said excavation of the site was considered "They don't think there's enough evidence that they'll find anything, so it probably won't happen," said Plassmeyer, adding he was very happy with the memorial presentation, and the interaction with others there, "It was more than a dedication. They provided bus transport to the Vietnam Memorial Wall, and we spent time there. My brother name is on that wall as well".

A banquet was held April 26. "It was a great opportunity to get acquainted with those people who knew my brother. They thought highly of him," said Plassmeyer. "It was an excellent experience."



Norb Plassmeyer, brother of Bernie Plassmeyer, who was killed during Vietnam in 1970, attended the unveiling of fhe special monument at Quantico, Va., and also went to Washington, D.C., to see the Vietnam Memorial Wall, on which his brother's name is etched as well.



Bernie Plassmeyer, a native of Westphalia, was one of 43 men killed during Vietnam from the Class of 1967, for whom this monument was erected April 25

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, VIRGINIA

Dabbing tears trickling from her eyes, Nell Hannah, the mother of one of the 50 names etched in front of her, looked up with gratitude at the memorial which contained her son's name.



Hannah was just one of the scores of people who participated in the dedication of The Basic School Class 6-67 monument at TBS on April 25, 2014. Class 6-67 was the sixth class to graduate from TBS in 1967.

"This monument is dedicated to the 498 officers of Basic Class 6-67, and their families and friends, whose lives were changed forever by the war in Vietnam," reads an inscription on the memorial. "Forty-three men from our class were killed in Vietnam, one man was killed in Lebanon, and six lost their lives in training. Over 200 members of our class were wounded in combat."

Donnie Shearer, retired gunnery sergeant and photographer of the image that was used on the memorial, fought in Vietnam while capturing photos of the conflict. He shared his perspective on the lieutenants of the 6-67.

"So many were killed within three to four months," said Shearer. "It was open season on lieutenants and platoon commanders. It was horrible. These are the Marines of the past."



To honor the class, specifically those who paid the ultimate price, two years' worth of work and more than 100 financial contributors produced a final product that sits along the TBS sidewalk for today's lieutenants to see.

"And so this memorial, we dedicate here, honors our brothers who gave their lives for our country and our Corps," said Father John Cregan, dedication speaker. "And they have become forever a part of the legacy of the United States Marine Corps, a legacy that simply reflects to this country and beyond all the best that is America."

The memorial is adjacent to Lopez Hall at TBS.

THE TIP OF THE SPEAR

Lt. Col. Jack Wells, USMCR(Ret)
Reprinted from the November issue of The Marine Corps Gazette, with permission

Marine Officers Sixth Basic Class of 1967 (BC 6 67) convened on 7 June and graduated 498 second lieutenants on 1 November. BC 6-67 sent more lieutenants off to battle and suffered more officers killed or wounded than any Basic School class since the Korean War. The huge size of BC 6-67 was the result of the Joint Chiefs' request to the White House early in 1967 for an additional 200,000 men for the escalating war in Vietnam, plus the activation of the 5th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton in June 1966. In July 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson reluctantly agreed to an increase of 50,000 men for the war effort. The Marine Corps had long been under pressure trying to deal with the acute shortage of officers caused by the number of Marine forces that had been committed to Vietnam. The

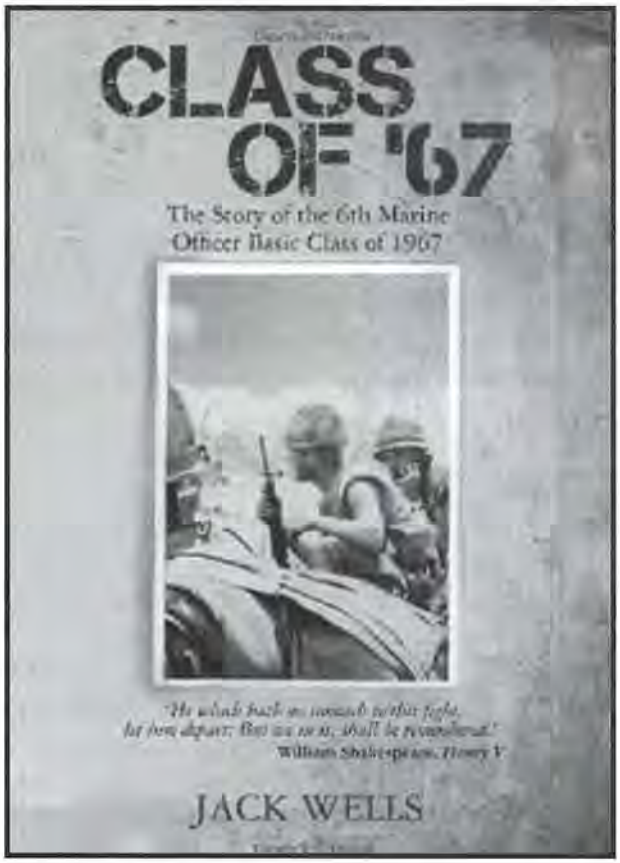

number of Marines serving in Vietnam had increased a staggering 45 percent from July 1966 to July 1967.

The Marine Corps Commandant at that time, General Leonard Chapman, Jr., aptly described the manpower headaches that the Marine Corps was experiencing when he stated, "There are just three kinds of Marines: those in Vietnam, those who have just returned from Vietnam, and those who are getting ready to go to Vietnam!"

Most of the officers in BC 6-67 came from the huge 44th Officer Candidates Course (44th OCC) that started in March 1967 with 715 officer candidates, and graduated 585 new second lieutenants on 2 June 1967. In the 44th OCC class were 187 officer candidates from the newly expanded enlisted commissioning program that was used to fill the critical shortage of officers. Joining BC 6-67 were 67 officers that came from the Platoon Leaders Class, about a dozen "fallen angels" (lieutenants who had not completed flight school in Pensacola), and 20 other officers from various Naval Reserve Officers Training Program.

The Basic School in 1967 was commanded by Col. E.H. Haffey, and the class was made up of Companies N and O with 250 officers each. Major Russell Kramer commanded Company N, and Major Carter Swenson commanded Company O.

The Basic School in 1967 had been condensed to 21 weeks of instruction which meant that the workweek included half days on Saturdays with just a few exceptions. The course syllabus had been modified to double the number of hours allocated to land navigation based on feedback coming from the Western Pacific (Westpac) that new lieutenants needed greater proficiency in map reading.

The demand for infantry officers in Vietnam had mandated that fully 70 percent of the class had to be designated as basic infantry officers (0301). Retired Col. Swenson recalls not feeling comfortable in having to assign some of the officers to infantry military occupational specialty and more than several in the class did not want to be platoon leaders but had no choice. Unbeknownst to U.S. military leaders at the time, Communist leaders in Hanoi had made a decision early in July 1967 that would directly impact BC 6-67 and change the course of the war. This decision was to launch an all-out offensive in South Vietnam in January or February 1968.

Preoccupied with the long hours of classroom and field instruction, plus late nights on night patrols and compass marches, not many of us realized what we would face in 1968. We were confident of the fire power and technology that was on our side but could not imagine the stealth, deception, and surprise tactics that we would see in doing battle with the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). The NVA were particularly adept at constructing mutually supporting firing positions that were almost undetectable until too late.

After graduation from The Basic School on a crisp fall day on November 1967, approximately 300 new second lieutenants had West Pac orders, either after a short leave or after completion of a formal school such as field artillery or the combat engineers course. Ninety-four officers in the class went on to flight training, including 15 ordered to U.S. Air Force flight schools because of the backlog of officers waiting to start flight training at Pensacola. BC 6 -67 officers setting foot in Vietnam in December 1967 and January 1968 were soon to enter a hellish

maelstrom of fighting that was inconceivable during our final weeks at Quantico. In 1968 there were more Marines killed or wounded in Vietnam than during any other year of the war.

By mid-December some of, the single or more eager lieutenants were arriving in Da Nang en route to either the 1st or 3d Marine Divisions. A short time later, names of our classmates started showing up on the Casualty reports being sent out. On 18, December 1967, 2ndLt. Michael Ruane from Brooklyn, NY was the first t~3 be killed after just 9 days as a platoon commander with Company M, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines (M/3/7) in Quang Nam Province. Thirty days later, two more officers were killed in action, 2ndLt. Randell Yeary's reconnaissance patrol was ambushed on Hill 881 North and 2dLt. Thomas Hoare would posthumously be awarded the Silver Star medal for heroic action leading his L/3/4 platoon against an NVA company west of Gio Linh near the demilitarized zone.

A number of BC 6-67 officers found themselves in the 77-day siege at Khe Sanh and the deadly hill fights on Hills 861,881 North, and 881 South. Marines at Khe Sanh Combat Base would be subjected to days during the siege when over 1,000 enemy artillery rounds would land inside the perimeter. Several of our classmates would also experience the terrifying nightmare of having their platoons or artillery batteries overrun by North Vietnamese sappers. In The Basic School an often heard refrain from the instructor staff was, "What do you do now, lieutenant?" On 16 February 1968, 2ndLt. Terrence Graves was brutally confronted with that phrase when he was seconds away from safety as he and his 3d Force Reconnaissance team boarded the UH-34 helicopter that was going to extract them away from over 200 pursuing NVA soldiers. When 2ndLt. Graves realized that one man was unaccounted for, he immediately jumped off the helicopter. Graves was joined by Cpl. Danny Slocum and PFC James Honeycutt who did not want to leave 2ndLt. Graves alone in the search for the missing team member, whom they found severely wounded. 2ndLt. Graves and his men were hopelessly outgunned in spite of calling in supporting arms from every source available. When a second rescue helicopter from VMO-6 came in to extract the four Marines, it was riddled with gunfire as it was lifting off the ground and crashed, killing all but Cpl. Slocum who managed to evade the NVA soldiers until he was rescued a day later.

In July of 2001 at The Basic School, Graves Hall, student officer housing, was rededicated in honor and memory of 2ndLt. Graves. Terry was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on that fateful February day. At The Basic School, we received instruction on combat in a "built-up area," and all of us knew well the few cinder block two-story structures that made up "combat town.

Instead of the make-believe combat town at The Basic School, 2ndLt. Leo Myers from Alva, OK found himself in the ancient city of Hue, the third largest city in Vietnam with a population of 140,000 people. More than 5,000 NVA troops comprising 16 battalions had taken over the city on the second day of Tet -- 31 January 1968. For 12 days, 2ndLt. Myers led his 1st Platoon, H/2/5 Marines in the bloody street-by-street fighting against an enemy that was so fanatical that some NVA soldiers were found chained to their heavy machine guns to ensure that they would not flee against the attacking Marines. 2dLt. Myers would be the second classmate to be awarded a Silver Star for his heroic actions on 11 February 1968.

BC 6-67 officers were now being killed at a rate of more than one per week through April 1968, and the second NVA offensive, labeled "Mini-Tet," was still to erupt in May. 2ndLt. Thomas Keppen was a platoon commander with B/1/3 that was operating with Battalion Landing Team 2/4 (BLT 2/4). The Marines of BLT 2/4 found themselves in one of the boodiest battles of the war where they went up against two NVA battalions that were spread out along the Bo Dieu River northeast of the Marine Combat Base in Dong Ha. During this heavy fighting in what would be known as the "Battle of Dai Do," the Marines would suffer 81 killed and 300 wounded in the 3-day battle during 30 April to 2 May 1968. On the first day in this battle, 2ndLt. Keppen's company came under withering machine gun and rocket-propelled grenade fire while crossing the Bo Dieu River in an amphibious assault on top of an LVTP-5. Before that day ended, all of the officers in B/1/3 had been killed or wounded an~l six months after The Basic School, 2ndLt Keppen turned over command of his platoon to SSgt John Gavel, who at the young age of 22 assumed com-

mand of Bravo Company. 2ndLt. Keppen would live through this battle only to die from wounds received in a mortar attack early in July 1968.

From January to November 1968, BC 6-67 lieutenants would be awarded 17 Silver Star Medals, 2 Navy Cross Medals, and 1 Medal of Honor. Another nine officers would be medically retired from wounds suffered in Vietnam in 1968. By late summer of 1969, BC 6-67 officers who had gone on to the Navy flight school in Pensacola or Air Force flight training in Texas began to be assigned to Vietnam. Four of these aviators would be killed during the next 12 months, including lstLt. Bernard Plassmeyer, flying with VMA-311 when his A-4E went down near the A Shau Valley southwest of Hue. lstLt. Plassmeyer had been the honor graduate for the entire BC 6-67 class.

The last classmate to be killed, LtCol. William Higgins, had returned safely from two tours in Vietnam and in 1988 was serving with the United Nation peacekeeping mission in Beirut, Lebanon, when he was captured on I February and executed by terrorists while in captivity. In April 1999, the USS Higgins (DD 76) was commissioned and named in his honor. Any one of the rest of us in BC 6-67 could have ended up with our names on the Vietnam Me morial Wall along with the 44 fellow officers and friends that we lost. The men in BC 6-67 were long ago stirred by President John E Kennedy's inaugural words: "We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship...to assure the survival and success of liberty." Let us never forget our classmates who did not return home.

He that outlives the day, and comes home safe... will yearly on the vigil, feast his friends... he'll remember, what feats they did that day." William Shakespeare, Henry V"

LtCol. Wells lives in Cupertino, CA In Vietnam then, 2ndLt. Wells was a forward observer with H/3/11 operating with A/1/7.

HOW I GOT TO VIETNAM
By JOE OLIVER

I was stationed at Camp Smith Hawaii in the G-2 section; Hawaii was a two year duty station. When I finished my time there I would not have had the time for a Vietnam tour.

The Intelligence field was new to me and I was busy learning my trade. My responsibilities were keeping the friendly and enemy order of battle and statistics on Marine Operations taking place in Vietnam. We tallied every item captured during an operation. All intelligence was then briefed to the General.

The General at Camp Smith was the CG of FMF PAC, he received daily briefings from our G-2 as well as the other G sections.

I was the bottom man on the totem pole and made E -5 once my MOS was changed to 0211. So all the shit details fell on me, but there was a nice E-6 Women Marine with me and she helped with all the important tasks assigned an E-5 Intelligence Sergeant. My biggest responsibility was making sure the coffee was made before the lifers (sorry about that) showed up in the morning and of course empting trash cans.

It was interesting learning how to keep the Order of Battle and I was enjoying my new trade.

Of course every other weekend we were in the field doing real Marine stuff. I was also in the Color Guard, at Camp Smith they had a drill team/band we did parades and ceremonies at the Punch Bowl and Pearl Harbor. Not bad and getting out of the office was always nice.

Remember now I was 18. When I received word of my childhood friend's death (LCpl Roger Michael Hurd) my first reaction was I wanted to go to Vietnam to avenge my friend's death. So I submitted a request and was turned down, the reason stated I was at a 2 year duty station and my 2 years were not up.

On my second request I added if I did my 2 years in Hawaii I wouldn't have the time for a 13 month tour in Vietnam. I got turned down again and again and again.

Then I got the idea to just do one request after another, I wouldn't wait for the rejection I would submit a new request twice a week. I figured I would kill them with paper work and they would let me go.

Months went by and I was worried I would be stuck in Hawaii for the whole two years. Funny now that I think about this, I was worried about being stuck in Hawaii. I know you must be thinking too bad youth is wasted on the young.

I worked directly under a Master Gunnery Sergeant and he was a great guy, a Korean Marine. He knew what I was doing and figured to let it run its course. One day we were having a heart to heart and I explained that my childhood friend and fellow Marine had been killed and I just had to get to Vietnam for my friend if for no other reason.

My Gunny told me to request Mast (going through the chain of command) and directed me not to talk to the Company Commander in fact he told me not to talk to anyone until he gave me the word.

I like the good Marine I was followed his orders. The Company XO put a lot of pressure on me trying to find out what the reason was for my requesting Mast. I kept silent and he passed me onto the CO, once again pressure but I wouldn't discuss my problem with him.

Up the chain of command I go, word spread of my requesting Mast and the Colonel in charge of my G-2 section called me into his office, he wanted to know what was up. I should have told him I was tired making coffee for all the lifers just to see what his reaction would have been! I told him I would not discuss the matter with him and he was sort of pissed. I then told him it had nothing to do with the G-2 section or my work within the section. This cooled him down and my journey up the Chain of Command continued.

I am working my way up and now I am going to see a full bird and my Gunny tells me after this guy I will be talking to the General. I was a little nervous about talking to a real General, but was relieved when Gunny told me I could discuss my problem with the Colonel and that he knew the Colonel and knew he would solve my problem.

I reported to the Colonel, the first time I am in a room alone with a Full Bird, he tells me Marine whatever your problem is I will solve it here and now. He told me there would be no reason to go any further up the chain. The Colonel looks me square in the eyes (I can still see him giving me that death look) and says Marine whatever it is let's get it solved right now.

I take a deep breath and say, "Sir I want to go to Vietnam'! He looks at me and bellows.....what!!!!!! I repeated myself and after he collected himself he says no problem you will begin checking out tomorrow. True to his word I started checking out the very next day.

I think he was relieved when I told him my problem, I am not sure what he was expecting but it wasn't my request to go to Vietnam. Remember this was 1967 and Vietnam wasn't that popular, although in Hawaii with all the military it wasn't bad there. I don't remember any protests or anything like that.

I arrived In Country (Vietnam) Nov 1967. It seems very childish now that I think back on my thoughts, but I was very sincere. I mean they killed my friend and there I was sitting on a tropical island. That just wasn't right.

After arriving in Vietnam to be honest with you more than once I wished I was back in Hawaii making coffee for those lifers!

Today if I met a Marine who was in during Vietnam and didn't serve in Vietnam I look at him differently.....know what I mean? I know he is still a fellow Marine, but he is not a combat Marine if you know what I mean?

Ok that's my story and I am sticking to it!

R&R IN BANGKOK

By Joe Oliver

Summer 1968 I had been in Vietnam for several months and was headed to paradise for a week of rest and relaxation. Words could not fully describe what I had been through in Vietnam, also the same would hold true for Bangkok. My week spent there was magical!

I had a "To Do List," which looking back years later, the items seem a little strange. My to do list in no particular order:
Flush a toilet.
Have real food.

Turn on a faucet and watch water run.
Flip a switch and turn on a light.
Sleep in a bed.
Take a hot shower.
Have a cold drink.
See a movie.
Go for a swim.
Have a cold beer.
Sleep without my boots on.
Spend as much time with a woman as possible.

My mind set, I had been through some intense combat in Vietnam. I survived TET 68, the major enemy offensive of the ten-year war. I had been shot down twice and wounded (where?) While flying as a gunner on Med Evac missions south of Da Nang in the area of Hill 55 South (Beth Hill 55 south is a famous combat area for Marine's a lot of action during 1968)

First time on a Med Evac mission for a South Vietnamese soldier. Pilot lost control due to damage from small arms fire, we landing in a field near a rice paddy. Our Huey Gunship came in and we passed off the wounded soldier, before heading for Delta Med they made a gun run in the direction of the LZ where we had picked up the WIA about a click away (1,000 meters). Our gunship escort was shooting up the area and shooting 2.5mm rockets. They then left the area heading for the hospital. All of a sudden it was completely quite sort of eerie.

I grab my M-60 machine to set up a defensive position. The co-pilot grab the extra ammo boxes I always flew with and acted as my ammo carrier. The pilot and crew chief started working on the damaged. I set up on a little mound and started looking around with the co-pilot who was on his first mission if you can believe that. I then tell him that the mound we were set up on was a Vietnamese Grave! Next thing I see is a Marine Fathom Jet coming in on a bomb run. He dropped Napalm we could feel the heat. Thinking back it was the coolest thing I ever saw my own personal seat to watch a Napalm show brought to us by the USMC. Pilot & crew chief manage to repair the damage and we flew out. The pilot was only able to fly at twenty feet above the ground at a slow speed. I felt like a duck in a shooting gallery, but made it to the coast and headed north back to our base at Marble Mountain.

Second time for a Marine Recon team, the team had eight Marine with serious wounds. They were located east of Hill 55 South, they told the pilot the enemy had withdrawn from the area. We approached the LZ flying along a tree line and the enemy had reinforced positions in that tree line. The whole tree line lite up. We were flying low and fast and all I could see were muzzle flashes the whole length of the tree line....it seemed like it lasted forever and I could hear the rounds hitting the helicopter making a pinging sound that continued for what seemed like a lifetime. I was firing my M60 machine out of the corner of my eye I catch the crew chief who was also firing, I look and all I see is red all over his face. I thought he had been hit in the head or face. It turned out to be hydraulic fluid flowing from the control lines after they were hit. Then we started to rock N roll as the pilots starting losing control. We always had a Huey Gunship as our chase (meaning they followed us on the mission and provided cover when we were on our approach to the LZ). The Huey was making rocket and gun runs on the tree line as we were taking hit after hit. We hit the ground hard, but the pilot had managed to avoid crashing into a tree line and we crashed into a small clearing. Crew Chief and I grab the machine guns he on one-side and me on the other to provide cover for the Pilots so they could get down and out of the Helicopter. Luckily there was no fire and both pilots were OK, the crew-chief and I were wounded.

I was the S-2 Sergeant of my helicopter squadron HMM-163, also flying as a door gunner. The majority of our missions were Med Evac and we had a saying, "Med Evac to Hell and Back! " The war was cooking during 1968, seventeen thousand American men and women were killed in action, the highest number of casualties of the war.

Arriving in Bangkok I started working on my to do list immediately. I met a couple of Marines and they also had a similar to do list. Imagine that! We shared a rented taxi driver for the week--he was our personal driver at our beck and call.

Our first trip was to a Steam House. It was there that I met Number Thirty-Two, who became my girlfriend for the week. Did you ever find out what her real name was or did you call her 32 the entire time? (I am sure she had a name but it was so long ago I have forgotten) No I called her thirty after we

got to know each other REAL good.....To put R&R in perspective I was nineteen and had not been in the company of a women for months and could have been killed when returning to Vietnam.

Between the taxi driver and my girlfriend I received a taste of their culture. We did everything from going to the movies and having sugar cane not popcorn for a snack to watching elephants move logs into the river.

I had to purchase clothes and wanted to send gifts home. The local shops had two prices one for the locals and one for US Servicemen. What we would do is I would pick out an item in one shop, then we would go to another shop and #32 or the Taxi driver would go in and buy the item at the local price.

I had taken five hundred dollars with me. In Vietnam the Marines (S-1 Admin Clerk.... where we were no paymaster would come.....paymaster?) pass the payroll around and you could request any dollar amount. There was no place to spend money and nothing to buy so I had most of my pay on the books. After I finished my R&R whatever money I had I gave to #32.

We arrived and converted our money MPC is what Americans used in Vietnam. Military Payment Certificates.....I think I have some place ...I HAVE A METAL TRUNK THAT I HAVEN'T OPENED IN OVER 40 YEARS I GUESS I HAVE TO OPEN IT????

We all got on buses that were going to certain hotels, you got on the bus and they made about four stops along the way. At each stop people got off and the hotel staff came out with big bottles of local beer and the bottles were passed around. The beer was very strong and was called "Tiger Piss" I think the alcohol rating was over 20%. I had not had any alcohol for several months like most of the bus. My hotel was stop number four or five and I was drunk when I arrived there.

We checked in and the first item was renting a cab and driver for the week, cost $25 a day and he was available 24 hours a day. The driver gave us a large bag of Pot and told us it was included with the $25. The deal was we had to give him back whatever was left at the end of the week.... There was a major drug problem in Vietnam and they were checking to make sure no drugs were brought back to Vietnam.....I split the cab with another Marine and the first stop was a steam house. They had a long one way mirror maybe 20 feet long and about two feet high. On the other side of the mirror was some benches and sitting on the benches were the most beautiful girls in the world. They were all dress in the same outfit, short hot pants and tight sweaters all white. They all had red buttons with white numbers on them. The Momma San was standing by and you could have a girl come out and talk to her or whatever. My request was to have number 32 (I just picked her...they were all so beautiful and remember where I had come from) stand up and turn around...that was it for me it was love at first turn around....

Next step was to go upstairs and have a bath, man it was GREAT...a big tub and 32 washed me all over with a huge sponge and this soapy water.....the water was hot and the tub was deep.....I had had maybe one or two showers in several months, mostly I washed myself from water in my helmet.....next came a message and it was really deep love at this point. After that she took me to this large room that was filled with dresses and shoes. I could pick out whatever outfit I wanted and that is what she would wear. All the girls were the same size maybe zero dress size I am not sure.....it was really cool picking out the dress I had never done that before.....little things one remembers....and the smell of perfume it was WONDERFUL!

The rest of the day was spent in the room..... then a bar..... then back to the room..... then a bar.... then back to the room ..... back to the room again.....
After leaving the room the first time I wanted a steak. We ate at the hotel and man the steak was WONDERFUL!!!!!

Each night we went to a night club and danced the night away, drank, smoked dope and so forth. (Don't put any dope stuff I am just telling you how it was) I had never smoked weed before. The first morning waking up I noticed my wallet lying on the table empty and my clothes were neatly hung up. Number 32 grabbed my money at the night club as I had no control over myself and held it for me for safe keeping.....if not I would have been broke and

probably waking up in an alley. The cab driver and 32 keep us safe and sound during the week.

Shopping we would go into a shop and look at when I wanted to send home to my family as gifts. The items had two prices the local price and the American price. So I would show 32 what I was thinking of and then we would go to another shop and 32 and the cab driver would go in and buy the item at the local price…..

We spent a day at a sort of amusement park only in the park they had local life exhibits. We watched elephants working moving logs to a river, saw a cock fight and was some kick boxing matches. Stuff like that, we watched how they made grass huts and how they farmed with water buffalos. Sort of how the people worked and lived. I thought it was pretty cool and you can asked Joanne what my favorite jungle animal is and she will tell you I love elephants. It was amazing watching them work.

They asked is we wanted to visit the Bridge on the river Quay, but it would of taken twelve hours or more. The roads weren't that good in 68 and we didn't want to spend all that time traveling….now of course years latter I wish I did make the trip, but I had my priorities rights and didn't want to waste all of that time.

One day we went to this place that had all hand dug little ponds. We all sat around the pond and ate local food and fished in the pond. Doesn't sound like much, but it was a great time. We were sitting on straw mats drinking and eating and fishing. Relaxing and taking little cat naps. I am not sure what I was eating, but I knew it was better than anything I had been eating in Vietnam.

One day we went to see a movie that had English subtitles. We bought small bags of cut up sugar cane for a snack. No buttered popcorn….The sugar cane was delicious… in the movie you could smoke and drink all of which I thought was pretty strange….It was a great day like all the days I spend on R&R.

When my week was up whatever money I had left I gave to 32 after I tipped the cab driver. It was the best week of my life!

Returning to Vietnam put me into a sad state for the first few days, but then I just got back into the daily grind.

PARRIS ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA
Joe Oliver

Training lasted three of the longest months of my life, PI was a life changing event. There is a Marine saying, "The Change is Forever" so true.

It was June 1965, I was seventeen years old and considered myself a tough city kid. That thinking lasted about one second after arriving at Parris Island and meeting my first Marine Corps Drill Instructor.

I love the traditions of the Marine Corps now, but my introduction was shocking. The bus arrives, the door opens, and a Wildman (DI) comes on the bus yelling and screaming and thumbing guys on the head. He wanted us off that bus now, we were told to put our feet into the yellow painted foot prints on the deck. None of us knew what a deck was, but we figured it out after seeing painted foot prints on the ground. I mean deck. Those Yellow footprints are one of the most lasting memories I have of my first few moments at PI and on the road to becoming a United States Marine.

Waiting for us at the Receiving Station once we exited the bus were a bunch of other screaming Wild Men. I had never experienced anything like it, it shocked me all I could think about was what kind of a place is this?

After some time in which they yelled and screamed and tried to have us stand at attention they brought us into a barracks, they called us all sorts of names like Maggot, Ladies and some that I can't repeat here.

We stayed at attention for hours staring at a spot on the wall. I wasn't sure why I was staring at the spot on the wall, but I knew that if I didn't one of those wild men would kick my ass.

All of a sudden I heard a bang, one of my fellow recruits passed out and hit what use to be call the floor, bang! I heard footsteps walking across the deck, I wanted to look but hey I had this spot on the

wall I had to watch. I kept staring at my spot, if I didn't I would receive a beating and have DI's yelling and screaming at me.

Next I heard the DI screaming at the passed out recruit for bleeding on his deck! He didn't care about this guy or his injuries all he cared about was the blood dripping on "His Deck". That was it for me I would do whatever the DI's told me to do without question. Or course I would also try not to bleed on his deck!

Next I heard a scraping/dragging noise, it's the DI dragging the injured man, and the guy was passed out cold and bleeding from the face. The DI dragged him in front of the line of us Ladies just to make sure we all got the message. It was a statement written in blood, DI's must be obeyed. For the first time in my life I would follow orders no questions asked!

They form our Platoon #235, 2nd Battalion there were approximately seventy of us and not everyone would make it to graduation day, we are now called a new name, "A Herd". Of course ladies, maggots, and some other choice words describing us sub humans are also used.

We spent one week going through processing, haircuts, injections, uniforms called Utilities which become our daily work attire. We are put through grueling mental and physical cruelty, it's a mind game and the DI's are master at breaking you down so you begin thinking hey maybe I am a maggot after all. Then we head for twelve weeks of training.

We meet our Drill Instructors that will lead us around by the nose for twelve weeks. They will control our every minute for twelve weeks. They control when we eat, shower, sleep, smoke and how we walk and talk. They take complete control over our minds and bodies.

They will teach us everything from the proper way to brush our teeth and cut our nails to how to fire an M-14 Rifle. Their biggest tasks is to make us follow orders without thinking, move when they say move. Jump when they say jump.

Sir better be the first and last word out of your mouth when addressing a DI, if not a thumping will come quickly. The DI's seem to be made of steel, they were the real deal. They could have chewed me up and spit me out at the drop of a hat.

Remembering some of the beatings I had received as a kid from my Mother and The Sisters of Saint Joseph helped me survive the Parris Island beatings. The DI's never really hurt me physically, but what they dealt out hurt my feelings more than anything. I wanted to do good for them for myself and of course for the Marine Corps. They instilled a spirit of confidence that I never knew existed, it helped me at PI and throughout my life. Surviving Vietnam would of never been possible without the foundation my DI's installed in me.

Our Senior Drill Instructor SSgt Francis X Muldowney tells us, "There are two ways to leave this Island, in three months as a United States Marine or in a pine box, he meant it! The choice for me was simple I would give all my effort to leave as a Marine. I didn't like the pine box option, but I believed him when he told us.

Parris Island taught me many things, basic marksmanship, discipline, how to clear toe jams, wash my uniforms, close order drill. Most importantly it taught me Duty, Honor, Courage, love of Country and Corps. Most importantly how lucky I was to be part of The United States Marine Corps!

My time at PI is coming to an end, we are finishing up at the Rifle Range. We receive a special treat we go to see a movie. Not any movie, but a Marine Corps movie called, The Sands of Iwo Jima staring John Wayne. The movie was the biggest treat we had received in almost three months. I sat there mesmerized watching John Wayne and the Marines on Iwo Jima.

The battle of Iwo happened before I was born, but to me the flag raising on Mount Suribachi is the Marine Corps. As I watch the movie it dawns on me hey I am almost a Marine just like the Marines in the movie. This thought overwhelms me! I am reminded of the proud history of the Marines and wonder will I be able to cut it? I want to make my DI's and the Corps proud.

Vietnam was heating up in 1965 and our DI's had us convince we were all going straight from PI to

Vietnam. One day a plane is flying overhead the DI tells us this could be the plane coming to take us to Vietnam. That along with whatever else they told us was believed. After that every time I hear a plane overhead I hope it will land and take me to Vietnam.

Graduation day is two days away, man I am thinking two more days and I have made it. I survived at the time what was the biggest challenge of my life, not only that but in two days just two days I will be a United States Marine!

My family drives down from Boston for the graduation, during my High School years I was what some might consider a hoodlum heading down the wrong path. Now however thanks to my DI's I have proved them all wrong.

My parents, sister along with my high school sweetheart and a friend make the trip. Day before graduation is family day, I joined with my friend Mike Lopez and his family is unable to make the trip. So my parents ask for Mike to join us, this is the first day I am without my drill instructors in three months. I feel like a fish out of water.

In the reception center I am standing at attention waiting for my parents. I see my family standing there looking at all the recruits. There were a bunch of us waiting and my parents are looking right at me, but I see no recognition in their eyes. They don't recognize their only son, the change is forever alright. I break the line and walk over to them, they still don't recognize me it was unbelievable. Finally when I talked to them they looked and wonder if I was their son. I guess I had changed during my time at PI.

Mike and I spend a great day touring PI with my family. Of course I am ram rod straight answering yes sir no sir out of habit. I know my parents are wondering what happened to their son? My mother must be thinking why she didn't send me to PI earlier.

Graduation day was like being born again! This was the day I would no longer be called any names, I would receive the title of United States Marine! Looking back today to that day which was over fifty years ago I can still remember part of the Generals speech, "Three months ago you sent us a boy and today we give you back a United States Marine"! I can still hear those words!

I GET MAIL

CORPSMAN & MARINES

We Corpsmen have a special relationship with our Marine Brothers. When people ask me what branch of the service I was in, I tell them I was in the Green Navy. That usually confuses most of the non-Marines and Corpsmen but we know what the Green Navy is and any Corpsman or Chaplain who has worn the FMF Badge is darn proud of it.

We could not do ours! Do we get a lot more credit than we deserve...probably but the question should really be, do the Marines get a lot less credit than they deserve? The answer is and always has been, YES!

As I have heard said many times before, I ain't no hero but I served alongside many a one and most of them were United States Marines.

ORRRAAAHHH!
Hope you all had a marvelous 4th of July...I sure did. They just keep getting better and better. Semper Fi...and I mean it,

Doc J (John Wurth)
Lima 3/9 RVN 1967-68





CORRECTIONAL TRAINING FACILITY SOLEDAD VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE SERVICE CENTER

Highway **101** North P.O. Box 689
Soledad, CA 93960-0689

March 19,2014
Thomas Eichler,
Dear Tom,

I received the latest *Red Clay* last PM. and I wanted to take a minute to thank you for the consideration. I am very impressed by the growth of the publication and the professional presentation. I read it from end to end each time. It is enjoyable to read about a period of time so distant, but so lasting in our memories.

It is rather sad that such a small period of time can have such a lasting effect on the rest of my life. In this fine facility that I reside in it just exacerbates the latent PTSD, or as my office partner call it, PMS-TD.

Starting this office and assisting other veterans is, as our slogan states," helping ourselves by helping others". It is far more than just a slogan, it is our therapy.

We also started a Incarcerated Vietnam Veterans of America group that is functioning as a "self-help" group in here. I have facilitated a couple seminars on PTSD, as well as other classes on employment, housing etc. for our parolee's, and had the privilege of having Ken and Betty Rodgers here so we could screen their new video *"Bravo", common men, uncommon valor.* It was very hard to set through, but well worth it. We also obtained a copy of the video to show on our close-circuit TV system so that the rest of the inmates could enjoy it and possibly have a little empathy for what we went through. I hope that you have had the opportunity to see this fine film; they did a good job on a painful subject.

Two years ago through a three year process, we were fortunate to have the mobile Vietnam Memorial Wall presented at our facility. As far as we have been told, we are the only prison that it has ever been seen at. We had over one hundred veterans and a population of over five thousand inmates able to pay their respects to their fallen comrades. It was on our exercise yard for two days, and two days in the parking lot outside for the general public to see. It was also the first time that it had been viewed in Monterey County. That rather surprised me as they have several military bases in the close proximity.

We are working feverishly on our annual celebration scheduled for the 26th of May. We will be fortunate to have a Federal Associate Justice Eileen Moore here from Southern California to speak during our celebration. She has been a strong supporter of incarcerated veterans (1170.9) as well as being a veteran herself and a member of Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.

In 1967 she and my partner crossed paths when she was working as an Evac nurse in Chu Chi, and they have been communicating on occasion since. It will be very interesting to hear what she has to say. She will be escorted by the California Highway Patrol when she comes in, and it is a well known fact that California Department of Corrections and the Highway Patrol do not see eye to eye. It will be fun to watch anyway. I just wish we could get more press coverage. We will be having Terry Hubert from the Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. attending as he has for a few years now, as well as several members of the California VVA. I did not run for reelection this year as the commander of our group so I hopefully will have more time for other projects, as there never seems to be a shortage of projects. (Isn't that what retirement is for?)

We have also been very instrumental in initiating several State Assembly bills and legislation in support and function of incarcerated veterans. Presently my office partner Ed Munis and myself are the only certified incarcerated veterans service representatives in California, certified by Monterey County Military and Veterans Affairs. We have had our application in Washington, DC with William Gunn for a few years now awaiting certification. Quite frankly, we could use any political help we could find to enable us to get Federally certified. If you have any suggestions, they would be well accepted and appreciated.

Through our legislation, the assembly bill directs California Department of Corrections to establish a

veterans service office in every one of their thirty three prisons; with our office as the processing hub. We currently have over seventeen hundred veterans that we are actively assisting and at present we have been directly responsible for over twelve million dollars in earned compensation for our veterans and their families; we are serving twenty-two other states as well as federal prisons. We even have a veteran in Puerto Rico that we are assisting.

In our spare time, we had a "Four Chaplain" ceremony last month for the first time. It was well received and we will probably be doing it annually. I am given to understand that our own Rev. William Stubbe has been presented with an honor from four chaplains also. I would like to learn more about it. Rev. Stubbe has been very supportive through the years. Quite a guy for his age, and still boxing frequently.

I had better close this for now as it sounds like all I am doing is bragging; I need to humble myself and get back to work. Again, thank you for the consideration and the great publication. Keep up the good work.

Semper Fi

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HELPING OUTSELVES
BY
HELPING OTHERS

INSIDE CDCR NEWS

CTF chaplains, inmate veterans honor 4 heroic WWII chaplains

Posted on Monday, March 10, 2014
By Lt. Roland Ramon, PIO/AA
Correctional Training Facility

The chaplains and inmate military veterans at the Correctional Training Facility (CTF) conducted a ceremony last month to honor four heroic chaplains who gave their lives to save others during World War II.

Inmates provided the color guard and CTF chaplains gave the invocation and benediction at the ceremony. During a bell-ringing ceremony, four CTF chaplains read a biography of the WW II chaplains. The WW **II** chaplains gave up their life jackets to others alter the troop ship they were traveling on was torpedoed on Feb. 3, 1944, by a German submarine in the Atlantic Ocean.

The chaplains were Methodist Minister George L. Fox, Reformed Church in America Minister Clark V. Poling, Catholic Priest John P. Washington and Rabbi Alexander B. Goode.

Some CTF inmates said they were struck by the varying backgrounds of the four men. Rev. Washington was the leader of a New Jersey street gang before he became a priest. Rev. Fox worked alongside the infantry as a medic in World War I before becoming a minister.



After the ceremony, inmates and staff expressed a desire to continue the service as an annual event.

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND

Snakes Cousin waits over forty years for Vendetta on Khe Sanh Vietnam Veteran Steve Wiese

Steven Wiese is lucky to be alive after being bitten by a rattlesnake during his golf game. He had no warning sounds, just a swift snake bite that landed him in the hospital.

Wiese was golfing when he sent the ball in the wrong direction. He went off into some taller grass just off the fairway and just a few moments after he decided to give up on finding it, a snake bit into him.



Photo of Steve Wiese After Brutal Murder of Vietnam Rattle Snake

He felt the bite and discretely told the person he was with. The golf club addressed the situation by flushing the snake out of the pipe it was hiding it and eventually trapping it in a trash can. They plan on releasing it into nature, far from the golf course.

"You can't blame the snake, basically he was telling me to get away from him," said Wiese. "I suppose it would give me a little more incentive to learn to hit the ball on the fairway. Haha."

A golfer was playing at the Catta Verdera Country



WE ARE EVEN TOUGH GUY

Club in Lincoln when a rattle snake bit him. Steven Wiese said the snake didn't even make that infamous "rattling" sound when it happened. "No sounds, no warnings, it was just 'bam' and the minute he hit me, I knew I had been hit," Wiese told FOX40.

A bad shot off the 11th tee almost cost Wiese his life, as the ball bounced off a tree and into some tall grass behind it.

Wiese got into trouble when he decided to go looking for it.



"Kind of walked around for a couple of minutes and went, 'O.K., let's forget it.' Started to walk back to the cart and bam," Wiese said.

But being a Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran, Wiese knew not to panic. "I had the ability to stop and go, 'O.K., what do I need to do here?' So I just started calmly walking back to the cart path and told the

gentleman I was with that I had just been bit by a rattlesnake," Wiese said.

Once Wiese was off to the hospital, course manager Jeff Wilson and his staff quickly tracked the culprit to a nearby drainage pipe.

"We used the hose and flushed him out of the drain. We put him in a container and will relocate it to a non-populated area," Wilson said.

But David Rosen with Splash Sacramento, a non-profit nature education organization, told FOX40 as it gets warmer outside, more rattlesnakes will come out, and humans need to be aware.

"Look on the other side of the log before you set your feet down, or before you reach over it. If you're climbing on rocks watch where you place your hands," Rosen said.

Meanwhile Weise says he's taken the experience as a lesson to work on his golf game.

"I suppose it would give me a little more incentive to learn to hit the ball on the fairway... You can't blame the snake, basically he was telling me to get away from him," Weise said.

OBIT

MICHAEL BROPHY USMC KHE SANH VETERAN HQ CO 2/26 HILL 558



From: Mark Brophy
Brother of: Michael Brophy

It is with great sadness I report the passing of my brother, Michael Brophy, after a twenty year battle with Parkinson's and other Agent Orange related diseases. Mike was assigned to HQ Co 2/26. I was by his side when he passed , in his sleep, on May 5, 2014 in Redlands , CA

Mike told me when he arrived at Khe Sahn, about New Year's Day of 1968, his NCOIC advised him " You are gonna love it here, nothing every happens"! Mike's service will be at 09:30 on May 15th at Emerson-Bartlett Chapel 703 Brookside ,Redlands, CA 92373.

Burial was at 11:30 Riverside National Cemetery , LeMay Blvd, March AFB, CA 92518. Mike will had a Marine Honor Guard. Mike was a wonderful brother and was loved by many great friends and relatives. He had to go into assisted living two years ago and charmed the ladies until the end.

Mike put up a brave fight until the end, I would expect nothing He struggled for 45 years, as have most of you, with the problems brought home from that terrible war. He had many happy times, especially attending KSV reunions of which I was able to attend several. Mike put up a brave fight, I would expect nothing less, he was a Marine to the end.

I would expect nothing less, even though Mike served 4 years in the CA Air National Guard as a C-130 Loadmaster, he was a stubborn Marine until the very end...is there any other kind If you need more info, contact me @ 509-879-4323 or mwbrophy aol.com

His Warm And Friendly Smile Will Be Missed. Rest In Peace Brother.



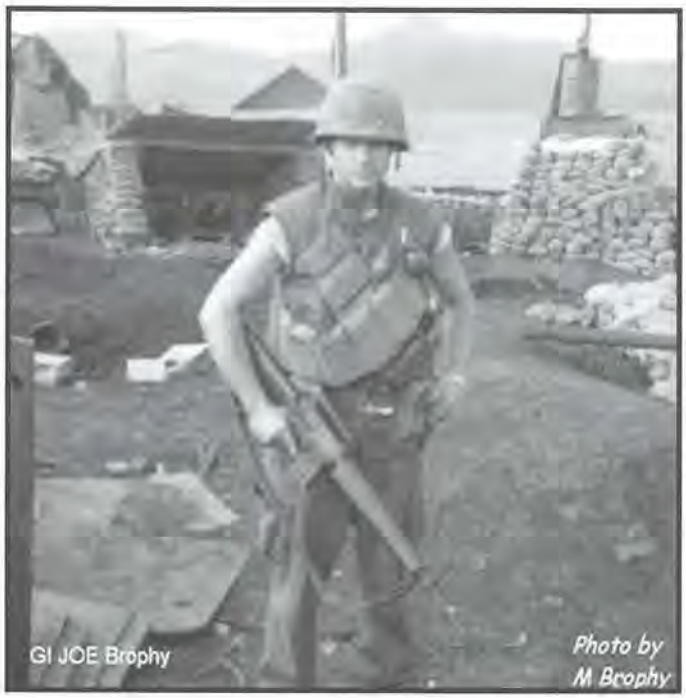

MICHAEL "TURTLE" BROPHY RIP

US VETS BUILD KINDERGARTENS IN FORMER VIETNAM BATTLEFIELD

Two veterans of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) fulfilled their wish to build two kindergartens for Vietnamese children, last month, in a mountainous village in Quang Tri Province where they served during the Vietnam War, Tuoi Tre reported.

George Barczay and Judd Kinne, both in their 70s, contributed VND700 million (US$33,230) to build the Ta Rui and Ta Ria 2 kindergartens in two villages of the same names in Huong Hoa District. The remaining VND300 million for the two projects came from the provincial budget.

With the new kindergartens, children from the Pa Co and Van Kieu ethnic communities in Ta Rui and Ta Ria 2 villages will no longer have to study in makeshift schools made from bamboo leaves and tree branches. Barczay and Kinne spent days climbing mountains in Huong Hoa to find the locations for the kindergartens, which they said is the least they can do for Khe Sanh, the district capital of Huong Hoa, their former battlefield.

In 1967, Barczay's corps was assigned to take a number of high points around Khe Sanh there to prevent attacks from Vietnamese soldiers streaming down from the north.

In 1968, he was stationed at Hill 881 South. He recalled thousands of tons of bombs being dropped into the region, ravaging peaceful villages and killing innocent people en masse. He was stuck in a



bunker at Hill 881 South for more than one month, suffering from hunger, thirst and fear. After the war ended, he remained obsessed by the scenes of bombing and killing. He dared not watch the films about the Vietnam War on the internet.

He told his wife that Khe Sanh used to be a peaceful land until the US brought bombs to it. He wanted to do something to heal the wounds of war there. He and Kinne first met after they were discharged from military service, while signing up for a college.

The two vets became close. They realized they had the same wish: to go back and do something for Khe Sanh. For the last 20 years, Barczay and Kinne have saved money for a fund they established to "heal the wounds of war for Khe Sanh."

When they encountered any former soldiers from the USMC, they told the vets about their fund and asked for their support. Late last year, Barczay's health took a turn for the worse and he began to walk with the help of a cane. At that point, the pair decided to return to Khe Sanh to do something before it was too late. When they started raising funds, they had no idea what exactly they would do with them. Then one day, they happened to watch a video clip about children in Huong Hoa District studying in makeshift schools.

During the flood season, the schools were abandoned, forcing the children to quit classes. Teachers and villagers had to go into the forest and cut down bamboo to rebuild the schools.

Barczay decided to use the funds to build two strong, solid schoolhouses for the children.

After Barczay and Kinne cut the ribbons during an inaugural ceremony at the two kindergartens, they returned to Hill 881 South. With the help of Kinne and two canes, Barczay reached the site of his former battlefield after three hours of walking and climbing the mountain.

OBIT

MAJOR WALTER "BUZZ" GUNN USA
KHE SANH VETERAN
37TH ARVN RANGERS

Walter Anderson "Buzz" Gunn, Jr., 76, of of Crossville, TN passed away on November 4, 2013 at Life Care Center of Sparta. Family received friends Thursday, November 7, 2013 from 12;00 to 2:00 pm at the Church of the Nazarene. Funeral Service followed at 2 with Rev. Gregory L. Keller and John Anderson Cayton officiating.

Buzz was born on March 12, 1937 to Walter Anderson Gunn, Sr. and Ernestine Dorris. He retired from the United States Army. In his younger years, Buzz built small scale model houses with intricate details, but his passion was church ministry, where he worked in all phases. He will be truly missed.

Buzz is survived by his wife: Phyllis Adams Gunn; daughters: Amy O'Neal (Richard), and Mary Strope (Ron); grandchildren: Danielle, Brandon, Kayla, Trevor, Kyanna, Savannah, and Austin; four great grandsons; sister: Bettye Cayton. He was preceded in death by his parents; son: Walter Anderson Gunn III; daughter: Cynthia Blackburn.



Belleau Wood WWI
Joe Oliver HMM-163

The Battle of Belleau Wood (1–26 June 1918) occurred during the German 1918 Spring Offensive in World War I, near the Marne River in France.

The battle was fought between the U.S. Second (under the command of Major General Omar Bundy) and Third Divisions and an assortment of German units including elements from the 237th, 10th, 197th, 87th, and 28th Divisions.[2] The battle has become a deep part of the lore of the United States Marine Corps.

Several years ago while on a cruise my wife and I met a wonderful couple from England Angelia and David. We became friends and have stayed in touch throughout the years.

Recently David and one of his friends Steve toured WWI Battle Fields, knowing my deep Marine Corps roots he sent the following.

Hi Joe

I was in France for 6 days over last weekend visiting some WW1 battle sites with my pal Steve. We headed for Ypres in Belgium first and did a tour round half the sites because that was all we could manage.

Visited the largest commonwealth war grave site which was very thought provoking. In addition to the 13,000 headstones there were inscribed on the walls thousands of names of soldiers who had no known grave and had died in the vicinity.

In addition we visited the Menin gate in Ypres. This has the names of 80,000 (eighty) men who died in the 3 major battles around Ypres and who have no known grave.

From there we travelled to the Somme, again this was very thought provoking with war grave cemeteries literally around every bend in the road. Sometimes as you looked around you could see 4, 5 or 6 cemeteries all in view at the same time, in fields, besides roads, up hills. Some had a few dozen headstones others up to 10.000.

All the cemeteries were immaculately kept with uniform white headstones and all had the same entry arch and large white cross and stone alter. We visited two sites that have been left as they were in 1916.

One was the battle site of the Newfoundland regiment from Canada. This was a preserved site and was treated as a burial site as bodies were still believed buried there. There were trenches, fox holes and mortar holes all over the place - you could only imagine the horror of living in those trenches for 2 years with all that ordinance going off.

Nearby was the main British memorial at Thiepval - this memorial has engraved on the walls the names of 85,000 British Soldiers who died in the Somme offensive from 1916 - 1917 who have NO known grave. It's hard to think of numbers like that, a whole generations wiped out.

In the area there are also similar memorial to the Canadian, Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans and Indians. All with thousands of names inscribed of soldiers with no known graves!!!

From here we were going to travel to the Marne and Aisne Battle fields near Meaux just a few miles East of Paris. My first wife Joan's Grandfather was killed at the first battle of the Marne which was in August / September 1914 it was the last line of defense to stop the Germans entering Paris. He was killed September 9th 1914 shortly after war broke out. We were able to find his grave.

On the way to the Marne as we were just a few miles from Belleau Wood we called in there, and I have attached over the next 3 emails some photos from there.

Belleau Wood has also been preserved as a sort of park in honor of the battle. The woods are full of foxholes and bomb craters and there are the remnants of many defensive German trenches.

Belleau Woods basically sits atop a hill with steep slopes to 3 sides and a gradual slope on the remaining side. This is the side the US Infantry and Marines launched their attack approaching across a wheat field. You can see all the trench's and fox holes were the Germans were dug in. I have enclosed about 20 photos and have attached some text to most of the photos.

We also paid a visit to the visitor center which is near the memorial, The Superintendent was a nice guy from Pennsylvania who was ex-military and I think was in the infantry, because he kept pushing the role of the infantry in the battle. However he did say the site was the Mecca for the Marines and he was expecting thousands of visitors from the USA in 1917/1918 the centenary of the battle.

Before leaving I wrote in the visitors book, I had done the same in all the visitors books in all the cemeteries we had visited. I just simply left a noted 'NOT FORGOTTEN' and signed my name.

I hope you don't mind but in the Belleau visitors book I wrote ' David Edwards - Chester, UK representing Joe Oliver, Boston and Florida -Not Forgotten- Semper Fi' (Note you can see why I am friends with this guy, very thoughtful)

Pic 1 the Memorial at Belleau Wood. The wood lies on the hill behind the memorial and was built on the Germans last line of defense.

BEAR CREEK VET VOWS TO FIND REMAINS OF FELLOW MARINES LEFT IN VIETNAM

Local man hopes to help find remains of 2 Fellow Marines in Vietnam

May 24. 2014 10:55PM
By Joe Sylvester jsylvester@civitasmedia.com

BEAR CREEK TWP. — It took nearly 40 years, but when Edward Zimmerman realized two of his fellow U.S. Marines were still missing, he had to do something about it.

He could not rest until he knew someone would bring back the two Marines who died in the 1968 siege on Khe Sanh, Vietnam, in early 1968.

Three days after Memorial Day, he will fly to Oahu, Hawaii, to meet up with a team from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, or JPAC, which

searches for, recovers and identifies the remains of missing Americans from past wars for the U.S. Department of Defense.

Zimmerman then will accompany the team to Vietnam to search for those Marines' remains, who are among the 1,642 U.S. soldiers still unaccounted for in Southeast Asia decades after public sentiment stateside forced a pullout.

The mission is happening because of Zimmerman.

After he learned in recent years one of the men still was missing, he contacted the Scranton Vet Center, which got word to the Pentagon.

Zimmerman, 65, an Edwardsville native who now lives in Bear Creek Township with his wife, Cathy, said the two bodies were at the bottom of a ridge at Khe Sanh but never recovered.

He knows. He saw them there after the battle, but due to circumstances afterward, he didn't report what he had seen.

Bloody siege

Zimmerman always assumed the recovery teams that swept the area afterward had recovered the bodies of all of the Marines who died in the 77-day siege, one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War, where Zimmerman earned a Bronze Star for saving a fellow Marine and a Purple Heart for a wound he suffered.

"I was told all of the guys were accounted for," he said.

It wasn't until 2007 that Zimmerman, while looking at a Khe Sanh veterans website, saw a photo of a memorial for PFC Anthony John Pepper of Richmond, Virginia. It said he still was missing.

The other Marine was Cpl. James Mitchell Trimble of Eureka, California. Both of the missing were from the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines, 3rd Marine Division — the same as Zimmerman — but they were with G, or Golf, Company. Zimmerman was with F, or Fox, Company.

He swung into action.

He contacted Tom Ford from Long Island, New York, the Marine he pulled to safety after Ford was shot in the legs, to get coordinates of the area when Ford traveled to Vietnam as a tourist.

Zimmerman told the Vet Center, where team leader Dave Ulkoski, whom Zimmerman credits with helping many veterans, passed on the information.

Then, in March, he received a call from two guys from JPAC who were at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle. They asked questions. They later came to visit. They asked a lot more questions.

"They talked with guys from Golf Company," Zimmerman recalled. "They put them right where I was" when he saw the bodies.

He said he had earlier seen Pepper and Trimble sitting on a boulder just days before seeing their bodies.

Search team

So after answering a lot of questions and convincing JPAC his information was legitimate, Zimmerman was approved for the trip. He said the Vietnamese government cooperates with JPAC searches for the missing.

"My job is to get them there," he said. "I'm what they call a 'living survivor.'"

He said he recalled seeing the bodies after the battle, when he was sent to search for any North Vietnamese soldiers who still might be in the area.

"I went down the side of the ridge where they (the missing Marines) were," he said.

Then he saw their decomposing bodies, which had been lying in 90 to 100-degree heat for about three days.

That was too much for Zimmerman, who went on to take part in 22 major battles in his 13 months in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968.
"I kind of lost it," Zimmerman recalled.

"When I came back up, I got into it with my sergeant," he said. "He started ordering me to pick up

more bodies. I told him I couldn't do it anymore."

He explained what led to that: "It was bad there. There were body parts. ... You didn't know who belonged to what."

The fighting in Khe Sanh in northwest South Vietnam, started on Jan. 21, 1968, when soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army, referred to as NVA, began a massive artillery bombardment of the U.S. Marine garrison, according to historical accounts.

The siege lasted for 77 days. Accounts put American deaths at 205 and NVA deaths anywhere from 10,000 to 15,000.

The 6,000 Marines, joined by South Vietnamese soldiers, fought against the 35,000 to 40,000 NVA fighters who surrounded them, Zimmerman said.

"That's why the B-52s came in," Zimmerman said.

Napalm dropped

They repeatedly bombed the NVA, and American Phantom jets dropped napalm, sometimes a little too close to the U.S. forces, Zimmerman said.

"When they dropped the napalm too close, you could feel it take the air out of your lungs," he said.

And then there were the rats.

"There were thousands of rats, because of the dead bodies," Zimmerman said. "They were like dogs." He said some ran through the wooden pallets on the floor of the bunker.

Still, at the time, the Marines didn't realize just how bad it was.

"You look at it now and find out it was a lot worse than you realized," he said of the siege.

That's not to downplay the initial terror of coming under the fire of artillery and sniper fire.

"At first, it's like an 'Oh, Jesus!' moment," Zimmerman said of his thoughts during battle. "You lose control of your insides. But after the initial shock wears off, your training kicks in."

On April 7, 1968, when he was dragging Ford to safety — Zimmerman, 5 feet, 10 inches and 133 pounds at the time, had strapped a belt to his own legs for the 6-foot, 3-inch Ford to pull himself along — a bullet struck one of the ammunition magazines Zimmerman had strapped to his chest.

He still has the magazine with the bullet entrance and exit holes in it. At the time, he didn't even realize the bullet had hit and caused a minor wound to his chest and right arm.

"There was so much blood, you don't know if it's yours or somebody else's," he said.

Zimmerman was awarded the Bronze Star for his heroics in saving Ford.

He never sought recognition for getting wounded, but in 2001, Ford began seeking the Purple Heart for the man who saved him. Zimmerman received the medal two years later at the Vet Center.

War still with him

Zimmerman doesn't talk about his heroics so much, but his time in Vietnam, especially in Khe Sanh, is with him every day.

When he returned from the war, he began dating Cathy, and two years later they were married.

But when he first returned, he had a hard time finding a job. He landed a job operating heavy equipment, taught diesel repair. At times, he was working two or three jobs to support his wife and three daughters.

It wasn't until 30 or 35 years after returning home that the war caught up with him. There were the thoughts, the nightmares. He had trouble trusting people, and the war took away his ability to feel, he said.

"I was ready to hurt somebody," he recalled.

He sought help, and through the Vet Center, he was referred to a treatment center in Coatesville

after he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

"They brought out things I knew were there," he said.

PTSD, a psychiatric disorder, can occur after someone experiences or witnesses a life-threatening event, such as military combat, natural disasters, accidents, or physical or sexual assault, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

People who suffer from PTSD often relive the experience through nightmares and flashbacks, have difficulty sleeping and feel detached or estranged.

About 30 percent of the men and women who have spent time in war zones experience PTSD, and more than half of all male Vietnam veterans and almost half of all female Vietnam veterans have experienced "clinically serious stress reaction symptoms." PTSD among Vietnam veterans is one of the main conditions treated by the VA.

Zimmerman, who also had suffered ear damage from the explosions and shoulder problems, retired at age 54 from his job as a mechanic for UPS due to his PTSD.

Sometimes Zimmerman, who also has nine grandchildren, is back in Khe Sanh, and he has to go outside of his house and only allow the memory a certain amount of time.

He gives much credit to Ulkoski at the Vet Center for his help and for providing a welcoming home away from home at the center.
"Without Dave and without church, I couldn't handle it," Zimmerman said. "It doesn't go away."

Healing and peace

But maybe, returning to the scene of the battle to help bring home two fellow Marines will bring him some healing — and some peace.

He said he'll be in Vietnam anywhere from two weeks to a month.

"It all depends on how good the Vietnamese government clears the ridge," he said, noting the Vietnamese are supposed to clear some of elephant grass there that grows 8 feet to 10 feet high.

His own mission is clear.

Although he has no regrets about joining the Marines and fighting in Vietnam, Zimmerman said he never had a need to return to the site of those battles. Until he learned he could help bring a couple of comrades home.

"I have no use to go back there except for this," he said.







Zimmerman (On Left) with fellow Marines in Vietnam



Marines on patrol In Vietnam



Photo Of Area Ed Zimmerman and a team from Joint Pow Mia Accounting Command will search for the two Marines

UPDATE

VET FROM BEAR CREEK TOWNSHIP FINDS LOCATION OF REMAINS OF MISSING MARINES, FAMILY SAYS

PITTSTON TWP. — The Vietnam vet from Bear Creek Township who traveled back to the Southeast Asian country two weeks ago to locate the remains of two fellow Marines found the location at Khe Sanh where he believed they were, his wife and daughters said Thursday.



Edward Zimmerman poses in Khe Sanh, Vietnam, the site of one of the bloodiest battle of the Vietnam War. He was there for two weeks with a search team from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, or JPAC, which searches for, recovers and identifies the remains of missing Americans from past wars for the U.S. Department of Defense. He found the location of the remains of two of his fel-

Edward Zimmerman, who was helping a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, or JPAC, search team, was due to land at the Wilkes-Barre/

Scranton International Airport at 5:30 Thursday evening, as his family waited with signs, balloons and American flags. But he faced a delay with a connecting flight in Chicago.

His wife, Cathy, and daughters Lori Kosierowski and Leah O'Boyle had been in touch with Zimmerman by iPhone while he was in Vietnam and learned he located the site based on his memories of the battle.

"They found the spot," Cathy Zimmerman said. "There was nothing there to see."



Ed and me with our backs to the crater on ridge line facing where Ed saw the two bodies

Nearly 50 years since the 77-day siege, one of the longest and bloodiest of the Vietnam War — and where Zimmerman earned a Bronze Star for saving a fellow Marine and a Purple Heart for a wound he suffered — the remains would be in the ground. But Mrs. Zimmerman said the JPAC team would have to secure funding to excavate for the remains, and that likely would not happen until next year.

She said the JPAC team is conducting other searches while over there, but they did this search first because her husband is considered an eyewitness.

Kosierowski, of Avoca, said her father brought the search team within two feet of the site.

"He even mentioned a stream that was in the area and they told him that there was no stream on their maps," she said in an email earlier this week. "But dad said to them that when they came around to that spot (during or before it got bad during the battle – don't really know) that they had been out of water and were glad to have that stream. So, after dad told them that they went to where he told them where the stream to be, some guys with him went and looked for it and found it. It totally validated everything dad said. He buried the marker and can now go forward with the mission."

As she and O'Boyle, of Duryea, waited at the airport with their mother and other family and friends, they recounted how proud they were of their father and relieved that he was coming home

Zimmerman, 65, flew to Oahu, Hawaii, three days after Memorial Day, to meet up with the JPAC team — which searches for, recovers and identifies the remains of missing Americans from past wars for the U.S. Department of Defense — to accompany them to Vietnam.

He was looking for the location of the remains of Pfc. Anthony John Pepper of Richmond, Virginia, and Cpl. James Mitchell Trimble of Eureka, California. Both of the missing were from the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines, 3rd Marine Division — the same as Zimmerman — but they were with G, or Golf, Company. Zimmerman was with F, or Fox, Company.

O'Boyle said her father told her he learned Pepper was a radioman and Trimble had the unit's map, and the North Vietnamese killed them, hid their bodies and took the radio and map.

Zimmerman had always assumed the recovery teams that swept the area afterward had recovered the bodies of all of the Marines who died in the siege. But in 2007, while Zimmerman was looking at a Khe Sanh veterans website, he saw a photo of a memorial for Pepper.

So he made some contacts, and JPAC representatives contacted and visited him. After verifying the locations of where Zimmerman said the units were at the time, he was approved for the trip.

Cathy Zimmerman said her husband plans to return to Vietnam next year when JPAC excavates for the remains.



Cathy Zimmerman organizes welcome home signs at the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport meant to greet her husband, Edward Zimmerman, on Thursday evening after his long trip back to NEPA from Vietnam. But he faced a delay in Chicago.

GOLD STAR LAPEL BUTTON AND NEXT OF KIN DECEASED LAPEL BUTTON

By Betsy Beard
Editor "Taps" Magazine

Much confusion surrounds the significance of the lapel pins given to surviving family members shortly after the interment of their loved one who died while serving honorably in the Armed Forces. Although there may be differences in presentation between the branches of service, there is only one law that governs the procurement, awarding, and wearing of the pins. Each of the two lapel pins have been authorized by Act of Congress. The legal and military distinctions between the two are based on the place, time, and circumstances of the death, as well as the survivor's relationship to the deceased. For either pin, eligible family members include: widow, widower, mother, father, stepparent, parent through adoption, foster parent in loco parentis, son, daughter, stepchild , child by adoption, brother, sister, half brother, and half sister. No other family members are legally eligible to receive the pin.

GOLD STAR LAPEL BUTTON



The Gold Star Lapel Button was designed and created in 1947 for family members of those who died in combat. It is a gold star on a field of purple surrounded by laurel leaves. Gold Star Lapel Buttons are awarded to surviving family members of service members who have been killed in the specific conflicts listed in the "Information" section on the back of DD Form 3. The award authority is retroactive to World War I, and includes most subsequent conflicts. The law stipulates that only one button is furnished to each recipient, but a request for replacement of the Gold Star Lapel Button (lost, destroyed, or unserviceable) can be submitted on DD Form 3 (Application for Gold Star Lapel Button) to NPRC, 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, MO 63138. If your loved one was killed during the *time period* of one of these conflicts, but not in the *official area of the conflict* you would receive the Next of Kin Deceased Personnel Lapel Button.

NEXT OF KIN DECEASED PERSONNEL LAPEL BUTTON



The Next of Kin Deceased Personnel Lapel Button was approved in 1973 for the primary next of kin of armed services members who lose their lives while serving on active duty or while assigned in an Army Reserve or Army National Guard unit in a drill status. It is a gold star on a gold background surrounded by four oak sprigs. The pin is authorized for issue retroactive to March 29, 1973. If you are a rela-

tive listed above and your loved one died while on active duty, but under circumstances that do not qualify you for the Gold Star Lapel Pin, you are entitled to the Next of Kin Deceased Personnel Lapel Button. The next of kin may request issue of the button by writing to the NPRC, 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, MO 63138. Furnish the name, grade, SSN, and date of death of the deceased soldier. The names and relationships of the next of kin must also be provided.



About the Author: Betsy Beard has served as the editor of TAPS Magazine since 2008. She is also a peer mentor, care group facilitator, and workshop presenter for the national seminar. She lives in North Carolina with her husband, Randy. Their lives were forever changed by the death of their only son, Army Specialist Bradley Beard, who was killed in action in Ar Ramadi, Iraq in 2004. In the years since Brad's death, the family has found help, hope, and healing within the TAPS family

T★A★P★S

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors



BATTLE-SCARRED CORPSMAN BECOMES MARINE OFFICER

"He feels proud to return to the fight"

It's not often you see a midshipman hustling down Stribling Walk to get to class with a Combat Action Ribbon and a Purple Heart pinned to his dress uniform, but that was the last four years for Marine 2nd Lt. Jefferson Talicuran.

The 25-year-old former Navy corpsman, who was nearly discharged for a combat wound only years before, strode across the stage May 23 to accept his Naval Academy diploma and commission as a Marine Corps ground combat officer, more than seven years after he originally joined the Navy straight out of high school in San Diego.



Talicuran had known since boot camp that he wanted to attend the academy. He'd read about officer programs on the back of a professional development textbook, looked through the academy's requirements, and decided, hey, I can do this.

"That's how my quote-unquote 'American dream' started," he said in a May 20 phone interview.

But he had no idea he'd have to survive an Afghanistan deployment and the blast of an improvised explosive device to get there, making him one of a cadre of former sailors and Marines who are bringing their war experiences into the halls of the Navy's most prestigious institution.

'Out of your control'

Talicuran had joined the Navy at the urging of his uncle, a retired chief hospital corpsman, whom he lived with after emigrating from the Philippines in 2005. His uncle told him stories of caring for sailors underway and in clinics ashore. He decided to complete his professional training and get one deployment under his belt before applying to the academy, to make himself more competitive.

After "A" school, Talicuran got orders to Twentynine Palms, California, with a Marine Corps light infantry battalion. "I never thought that I was actually going to be attached to a Marine unit," he said. "That part of the story [my uncle] left off, because he was never with the Marines. I had no clue what I was getting myself into."

Talicuran deployed with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, in April 2008 to Sangin, a town in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province that became an epicenter of the fighting. Two months in, his squad walked past a bicycle on a foot patrol, and that was the end of his deployment.

"I was probably the fourth person to pass the bicycle and by the time I passed it, when I was about six feet away from it, it exploded," Talicuran said. "We never thought that a bicycle could be used as an IED."

Talicuran was badly injured, but he was conscious and able to walk away. He told his battle buddies how to patch him up so he wouldn't bleed out through the axillary artery under his arm. Talicuran now sports a massive scar on his left arm, but luckily no brain injury, he said.

After a short stint at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, the Navy sent him to Balboa Navy Medical Center in San Diego to be closer to his family. He was on his way to a medical discharge, he said, but the academy dream was still there.

"Every single day, I would go do occupational therapy, do my exercises. I did that for a year," he said. Toward the end of his medical board, he recalled, he passed his fitness and medical tests, restoring him to full-duty medical status, the last milestone he needed before he put in his application to the academy.
"I guess you just have to realize that there are things that are out of your control, there are things that are in your control," he said. "Things that are in my control are to move on."

'The best thing'



TALICURAN IN AFGHANISTAN

He began his plebe year in the fall of 2010, at age 22 — four years older than most of his classmates. He said that boot camp was physically more difficult, mostly because he'd been much younger at the time, but that he wasn't prepared for the academy's academic rigors.
"I wished I went through preparatory school, because that would've helped me in academics," he said. "I graduated [high school] in 2006 and then I came here in 2010, so that's a while to be out of school."

Plus, Talicuran said, he'd never considered going to college before he decided to become an officer. On top of his age, his ribbon rack immediately set him apart from his fresh-out-of-high school shipmates.

"If I'm asked about my service, I would share my experience with my classmates or my company, but not necessarily put it in their faces," he said.

When it came time to pick a career track, he decided to stick with what he knew.

"I think it just happened because I joined the Navy, but I was really not familiar with the Navy side," he said. 'Of all my enlisted years, I've been with the Marines, and working with them was actually the best thing that happened to me."

He said he thinks his experience with junior enlisted Marines will make him a better officer, and that the guys from his own unit have told him they're proud that he's making the switch — and signing up to return to the fight.

"I think that coming back as a Marine officer is another way of serving them, again," Talicuran said.

TO MY FELLOW VIETNAM VETERANS "WELCOME HOME".
Michael O'Hara

On Monday, May 26, 2014 the Brown County Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6195 hosted a Memorial Service on the Brown County Courthouse lawn to honor our fallen heroes. Below is the speech that guest speaker, Michael O'Hara gave to an audience of over 350 people.

I am duty bound to dedicate my remarks here today to the 120 Marines from my Bravo Company 1st Bn, 26th Marine Regiment, 57 of whom sacrificed everything during the eleven week period known as "The Siege of Khe Sanh". Like the Spartans at Thermopylae in 480 B.C. they fought for the greater good, yet, in the end, they died, like the Spartans, for each other. They would earn 3 Navy Crosses, 10 Silver Star Medals, 14 Bronze Star Medals and over 200 Purple Heart Medals for their valor. They contributed greatly to the Regiment being awarded the coveted Presidential Unit Citation. Their Heroism would have inspired Tennyson.



Like Marines before them and like those Marines who would follow, they were and are Semper Fidelis.

This morning we acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. Let us be clear! This war was not started on the battlefield or on the high seas, but rather in a Joint Session of Congress, on 7 August 1964 with the passage of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. It should be noted only two Senators voted against it.

Effectively, the war ended for the American people, in Congress as well, with the passage of The Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 in the 93rd Congress. With our ground troops gone by then and our POWs home, the defunding of the Vietnamese government was the death nail in their coffin. With the passing of that act, the North then knew, the end was near. What they thought would take 24 months barely took 16 weeks before the tanks rolled into Saigon. The Socialist Republic of Vietnam was born.

Vietnam Veterans are somewhat different than most folks. Sometimes our families don't understand us. Maxine still complains because all those trip flares in the yard scare her cat and why does she still have to put up with all those sand bags piled around her doors and windows when the war has been over for 40 years.

Long before the Vietnam War was begun most of us who fought in that war were just young boys. Our heroes, our mentors were our fathers, our uncles, our teachers and our neighbors. They were the WWII generation. They taught us about the evils of Imperialism, Nazism and Communism. We learned

from them about Mao Se Tung and the 1949 takeover of China and how the folks who helped our pilots in WWII were forced to flee to Taiwan. As young boys we learned of the Berlin Airlift and that awful wall which stood for nearly three decades imprisoning its citizens. By 1950 we would be at war with the Communists on the frozen tundra of the Korean Peninsula where we would give up over 35,000 of our finest young men holding back the Communists hordes.



L-R Annie Hunsinger, Commandant Marine Corps League, State of Indiana, Mrs. Rae McQueary, widow of fallen Marine Sgt Jeremy McQueary, Afghanistan 2010, Hadley McQueary Son & Michael O'Hara, B CO 1/26.

We watched the fall of Cuba into Communist hands with led eventually to the famous Cuban Missile crisis three years later. We saw how evil communism can be. We watched our young President, a decorated WWII veteran himself, back the Soviets down with the threat of force. We understood what they feared was not our missiles but our strength as a nation when we were united.

When our President called, we answered. We understood what our duty was when we came of age. Like our fathers our duty was to serve. We understood communism was evil. It was evil in 1917, it was evil in 1947 and it was evil in 1967 and is just as evil to this day.

Nothing in all these years has changed my mind on this issue. Nothing ever really changes.

In 1968, as I was fighting the North Vietnamese Army regulars at the remote combat base at Khe Sanh other NVA units rolled into the Imperial Capital city of Hue. In short order they rounded up all government officials, professors and teachers, 6,000 in all.



DON BIRDEN COMMANDER OF VFW POST 6195 PUTS FLAGS AROUND MEMORIAL ON COURTHOUSE LAWN

They were marched outside of the city limits and into pre-dug pits and summarily executed, buried in mass earthen unmarked graves.

Last November, as we were all enjoying our freedoms at the Larry C. Banks Memorial Gymnasium, while we were all breaking bread afterward, an event unfolded half way around the world. In communist North Korea, Kim Jong Un, ordered, and carried out, the execution of over 80 of his fellow citizens who had been deemed dissidents. It was reported he had the local citizens ordered into a stadium to witness this horrible event. Their crime you ask? They were said to have been caught with a copy of the Holy Bible in their homes. Things never change. Communism is evil. Communism does not allow human rights.

That's what it was about for most of us who went to

Vietnam. It was a cause greater than ourselves and we felt then as we do today it was a righteous cause. Most if not all of us would do it again without hesitation.

Few people are even aware that the Vietnam War was the costliest war for Marines in the history of the Corps. It would have been far worse had it not been for the boys in blue. Did you know that in 1968, at the combat base at Khe Sanh, the USAF, in less than eleven weeks, dropped, in a five mile circle, more tonnage of high explosives than was dropped throughout the Pacific during the whole of WWII? Did you know it was the USAF that brought the North to its knees in December of 72 which brought about the signing of the Paris Peace Accords which provided for the release of our POW's and the withdrawal of our forces. That's right. North Vietnam capitulated, contrary to popular belief. The North only fully resumed their efforts after the signing of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 nearly two years later.



MICHAEL O'HARA AND CONGRESSMAN TODD YOUNG

The Vietnam War will be debated long after we all leave this earth. That is really not why we are here today. We come here on this Memorial Day to honor the sacrifices of those who fought for a cause greater than themselves and to always hold their memory near and dear to our hearts. They were as their forefathers were, great American heroes.

A noted journalist wrote a now famous book about a generation of great American heroes. Some would say he got it just right. May be! I would have chosen a different title. I would have called it The Greatest of a Generation. Great they were each and every one. But so too were those brave young Militiamen who stood at the Concord Bridge in 1775 who fired the shot heard round the world. Those who fought at Mexico, Gettysburg, Cuba and Belleau Wood, our young sons who lie buried yet in Belgium beneath the poppies of Flanders Field, each one a brave American Hero, each of their own generation.

Today it is my privilege and high Honor to introduce to you a "Few Good Men", men who offered their lives in defense of freedom of others, men who fought for a cause greater than themselves, men from my generation. They too are great American heroes.

Every generation has its "Captains of Industry". James V. Kimsey, West Point graduate served two tours in Vietnam as an Army Ranger. Inducted into the Army Ranger hall of fame he was the cofounder of AOL. Bob Parsons, served with the 26th Marines in 1969 and is the founder of GoDaddy.com.

Fred Smith is a highly decorated Marine Officer. SSM, BSM, 2 PHM. He graduated Yale in 1962. He also wrote a college paper on package delivery in the computer age. His professor gave him a C and laughed at him. He built one of the world's largest corporations. Last year they did $40 billion in sales and employed over 300,000 employees which is larger than our entire U.S. Navy. With his leader-



ship skills developed in Vietnam leading Marines in battle Fred Smith built Federal Express.

Rick Rescorla watched, as a young boy, our Army

paratroopers train for the Normandy invasion. He knew what he wanted to be. He was highly decorated at the battle of the Ia Drang Valley (We Were Soldiers Once). Mr. Rescorla went to work for Morgan Stanley in the late 80's in private security at the twin towers in New York city. With over 2,000 employees they consumed 44 floors of Tower Two. He warned the Port Authorities of the 93 bombing which occurred in the basement. No one would listen. He then warned that the terrorists would use civilian aircraft to attack the next time. Again, no one would listen. But Rick Rescorla was undaunted and he would not be denied. He was responsible for the employees at Morgan Stanley and he drilled them monthly on evacuation routes in the event of any emergency. He is credited with saving the lives of over 2,000 employees on 11 Sept 2001. He safely evacuated them in the stairwells by singing to them through his Bullhorn to keep them calm, an old Welsh fighting song "The Men of Harlech". Only one employee died that day.

Rick Rescorla had re-entered the building to ensure no one was left behind. He had just reached the tenth floor while on the phone with his wife. He had just told her that if he died that day he would die a happy man because of the love she had bestowed upon him throughout the course of their marriage. The phone went dead and the tower collapsed around him. His remains have never been recovered.

Keep in mind as well that it was the Vietnam Veterans and their families who brought about what is known today as the POW/MIA movement in this nation. That big black flag that you see hanging on the flagpole came about due to the dedication of many of those folks. Their work must not be understated. They are responsible for the honorable return of the remains of our Veterans from more than just Vietnam. I learned last Labor Day as I attended my reunion in Nashville Tennessee that one of the men I served with, Glenn Prentice, was actually one of the volunteers who excavated the grave of Marine Pfc Manley Winkley who we buried the week before at our state cemetery in Madison. I think we all remember that event.

Vietnam Veterans, collectively, have vowed to never ever let one of our heroes become lost or disrespected, no matter when or where they may have served. When our heroes were coming home from the wars in Asia and the Middle East they noticed a disturbing trend and rose to the occasion. Under the leadership of Vietnam Veteran Terry Houck of American Legion Post 136 in Mulvane Kansas, along with Veterans from other eras the Patriot Guard was formed.

We saw them in action last August here in Nashville when we buried the Winkley Marines. All two hundred of those magnificent men and women on their beautiful machines guarding the trail as a fellow Warrior came home to his final rest.

They are Semper Fidelis, Always Faithful.

For those of you who attended that event you may remember I pointed out to you a name on the plaque as you enter the offices at the cemetery in Madison. It is the name of Mr. William Jayne. He was the official with the VA in D.C. who over saw the grant money and construction of that cemetery in 2003. Bill is a good friend. We served together in the same rifle company in Vietnam. What you don't know is this. Bill was part of the initial group of young men, along with Jan Scruggs who had a vision for a great memorial to our fallen brethren. They worked tirelessly until it was done. The results of their efforts became the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. better known as "The Wall".

Here in the state of Indiana one of our former Governors, Joe Kernan, was a graduate of Notre Dame and went on to serve as a Navy pilot. He was shot down over North Vietnam and spent eleven months in captivity. Joe came home to a successful career in politics. Joe presided over the dedication of our cemetery in Madison in 2003 as our Lt. Governor.

Ron Ridgeway was a POW released at the same time as Joe Kernan. He had been imprisoned for 5 years. He was captured in 1968 when his platoon was caught in an ambush by an overwhelming force. 26 died immediately while Ridgeway was severely wounded and knocked unconscious. The Company sent reinforcements but they too were repulsed. They were ordered to withdraw until morning.

When morning came orders from Washington had

arrived. No recovery would be mounted. Marines loathed the thought of leaving their comrades in the field but Marines follow orders. Ridgeway was officially buried with the remains of 8 other Marines from that day in November 1968 at the Jefferson Barracks Cemetery in St Louis. His mother told the General her son was not dead and the Lord had assured her he would someday come home. Ron Ridgeway was from my Bravo Company. One of the Marines who was ordered to stand down stands before you this morning . It was 25/26 February 1968 at Khe Sanh RVN.



Marines helping their own, Michael O'Hara with Hadley McQueary, Photo by Charlene Folz.

Another lesser known Hoosier was one of the bravest of the brave. After graduating from college Norman Jensen began a 24 year career in the USAF in 1956. By the time he began to affect my life it was in the winter of 1968. He piloted, on many occasions, his lumbering C 130 cargo plane back and forth from Da Nang to Khe Sanh bringing much needed men and material to the Marines during the Siege.

I watched many times as he brought his plane down through the low cloud cover, guided only by a WWII era radar signal.

Sometimes the ceiling was less than 100 ft. He did this time and time again and each time he landed his plane he would run the gauntlet facing murderous machinegun and anti-aircraft fire as he passed by the remains of the other C-130s that didn't make it, a reminder of friends who would never return.

The mortars and rockets would literally chase him up the runway as he slowed only long enough to offload supplies and personnel as he turned his aircraft around. As he squared up his aircraft for takeoff and applied the brakes, while revving up his engines, he gave us just precious moments to load our dead and wounded Marines who were homeward bound.

Each time he would make his run back down the runway, with his bullet ridden fuselage and those four big turboprops roaring, laden with its precious cargo, as the nose of that big Hercules began to lift and turn to the south away from the guns, 5,000 Marines would kneel in prayer. Colonel Jensen was awarded the DFC.

There exists to this day an iconic photo of Colonel Jensen's aircraft as he is lifting off the eastern end of the runway. In the foreground is a two story bunker with two Marines on top laying down suppressive fire with their .50 caliber machine gun. Flying overhead on a background of Navy Blue was the golden Torch of Freedom, the flag of the great state of Indiana. GO HOOSIERS!

After the war, Colonel Jensen started an 18 year career at Valparaiso University here in Indiana where he taught mechanical engineering. He started the first Co-Op program in Indiana which helped young Hoosiers advance their careers in engineering. Sadly he flew his final mission last May.

I'm sure all in attendance today remember too, our

good friend Robert "Buck" Stogsdill, US Navy, former two term County Sheriff. Buck worked tirelessly for many years in our community of Veterans. In the early days of the BCVV Buck, along with others would gather every year on the afternoon of Christmas Eve (8-10 yrs) at a bakery near Gnawbone, Indiana. They would peel potatoes, snap green beans and make preparations for their Christmas gift to the community. After spending the evening at home with their families, Buck and his friends would rise early on Christmas morn and arrive back at the bakery around 5 a.m. to prepare multiple turkeys. By 9:00 A.M. they would be off in their vehicles to the four corners of the county delivering to those less fortunate.

Sometimes they would deliver to a Veteran who was a shut in but more often than not it was some young unfortunate couple who had nothing for their holiday meal. Sometimes they even managed to round up a present or two for the small ones who had nothing under their trees.

Our Vietnam Veterans continue to silently go about the business of taking care of each other and their fellow warriors from other wars. GySgt Dave Turner, former Marine and Vietnam Vet, now deceased, had a vision to create what became the Brown County Honor Guard.

Hardly a week goes by that they don't provide that last measure of respect for a fallen Veteran. These days they are mostly the heroes we looked up to so many years ago, our WWII Veterans. There are of course Veterans from other eras who participate as well and God Bless you each and every one and Thank You for your service as well. One Marine I especially respect is from the northern part of the county. He was wounded severely in Vietnam early on in his tour and spent months in the hospital only to be returned to his original unit to finish out his tour with the 2nd Bn, 4th Marine Regiment, otherwise known as, "The Magnificent Bastards" (ones) for their tenacity and their willingness to engage the enemy on the ground. Coupled with the residual effects from his war wounds his COPD is so bad sometimes others have to carry his weapon back to the van after their funeral details because he gets so winded. But he continues to show up. Bill Parsons is one of our heroes, representative of the many as opposed to the few.

But there are always those who fall through the cracks and when we know about them it is our solemn duty to tend to their honor. While we were all sleeping safe in our beds a long time ago on a lonely ridge top somewhere in the jungles of South America along the Columbian border a young career soldier gave up his life. He was on a still classified covert operation. His family was never given a Purple Heart or any other acknowledgement of his bravery or his sacrifice. They were only given a folded flag with the three complimentary shell casings tucked inside. Staff Sergeant John E. Waugh USA, one of our unsung American Heroes gave his life for his country. His honor is clean, his sacrifice great and we should never forget.

SSgt Waugh died in the arms of his commanding officer, now retired Army Colonel Rick White, Commander of our Honor Guard.

Two years ago we stood on this hallowed ground and gave tribute to three brave young Warriors with ties to our county who paid the ultimate price for their service during the war on terror.

Pfc Stephen Paul Downing, CWO Brian Hazelgrove and Marine Sgt Jeremy McQueary, were all great American Heroes, of the next generation.

Last year we paid tribute to Brown County's only known Missing in Action since the Korean War, Clyde Goe. It is a good thing that their families know that others care and appreciate their sacrifices. It too is a good thing we, not just as Veterans, but we as a community, have continued to come to this hallowed place to honor our heroes, for it is the Honorable thing to do. But let no one here today fail to understand, not man, woman, or child, this place is Hallowed ground.

When I began my remarks I jokingly stated how our families don't really understand us. For the families I leave you with a line from the famous poet W. B.Yeats: (Stolen Child). "For the World's More Full of Weeping than You Can Understand " God Bless you all here today and pray ye, each and every one, that He continues to Bless and watch over us as a nation.

Godspeed and Semper Fidelis.

KHE SANH MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

LTCOL KEN PIPES INTERVIEW PRIOR TO SHOWING OF THE DOCUMEMTARY,

"BRAVO, COMMON MEN , UNCOMMON VALOR."

THIS ARTICLE IS FROM MARCH 2014

They were days of survival, just south of the Demilitarized Zone in Vietnam during the winter of 1968.

Ken Pipes was there; he was in charge of Bravo Company, a unit so badly battered in the war that most of its Marines had been injured and replaced with fresh riflemen in the weeks before the start of a prolonged siege on Khe Sanh Combat Base that January.

Pipes, who lives in Fallbrook, told me this week that his memories of the battle are still vivid and loud, recalling the constant bombardment from both sides, and the devastating ambush that no survivor can forget.

"One of the reasons we join the Marine Corps is to be prepared for those kinds of situations," Pipes said, and yet, "It was almost overpowering, the responsibility. What made it, I suppose, worthwhile was working with those Marines who were in the company. It still amazes me how well they did, how professionally they conducted themselves, and what tough warriors they were."

The occasion for Pipes' recollections is a feature-length documentary about the battle at Khe Sanh that will be screened twice in North County on March 22 — once in Vista and again in Fallbrook.

The film focuses on a six-week period during the siege that began when a platoon was ambushed outside the base. Twenty-six of Pipes' Marines were killed that day, while a number of others were severely injured and evacuated.

But it was the daily sight of the fallen that would haunt those who remained on the base: "We were told there would be no more operations outside the wire, so we couldn't go out and get them, but we could see them out there for six weeks," Pipes recalled.

On March 30, the Marines counter-attacked and recovered the 26 bodies, seven of which were returned to the U.S. unidentified and buried in a common grave at Jefferson Barracks in Missouri.

Pipes still remembers the day in 1973 when he watched one of the men who had been assumed killed among those seven step off a plane full of prisoners of war after their release.

"He was alive, and he'd been a prisoner for five years at the Hanoi Hilton," Pipes said. As the man's company commander, he had written the letter himself: "Presumed killed. Body not recovered."

"No one knew he had been captured," he said.

Pipes also remembers crawling through the trenches to check on his men, carrying a bottle of whiskey from his stepfather's liquor store in Central California.

"Mom would send me some green-labeled Jack Daniels and I'd save it so that when I went down checking lines and talking to Marines, I'd give them a sip of whiskey," he said. "So they knew we cared about them, and worried about them."

Meanwhile, the North Vietnamese troops surrounding the base sustained much higher casualties — perhaps totaling 10,000, Pipes estimated — as U.S. forces dropped more than 100,000 tons of bombs on the hills around Khe Sanh.

"We respected them very highly," he said of those unseen enemies. "They were as good of troops as the Marines have faced in the modern era."

The two and a half months spent on the front lines of the Tet Offensive defined many a survivor's life, Pipes explained.

"It was a real honor to be with them, to be one of them throughout that battle," he told me. "Even today, I'm in touch with a good many of them, and

we've become friends over all these years."

During a reunion in 2008, a writer named Ken Rodgers started interviewing survivors. Rodgers was a survivor himself, and one of the Bravo Company Marines under Pipes' command.

"By that time, it was one friend interviewing another friend, and all of the people he interviewed had that common experience," Pipes said. "The hard part of that interviewing process was bringing back all of these feelings."

The interviews would form the basis for the documentary titled "Bravo! Common Men, Uncommon Valor," produced by Rodgers and his wife, Betty.

"I have nothing invested in this except a lot of emotion," Pipes said. "It doesn't praise war, it's just these guys' experiences. Some of them are very stark, there's a little humor on occasion, but it's an action-packed two hours."

POET EXPLORES WAR EXPERIENCE

FRED ROSENBLUM WRITES SEARINGLY ABOUT VIETNAM

By John Wilkens12:30 p.m.May 24, 2014

Fred Rosenblum went to fight the Vietnam War in 1968 when he was 19, full of Hollywood images about the glory of combat. He came back changed by what he saw and did. Eventually he started putting his impressions down on paper in the form of poetry.

"Hollow Tin Jingles," a collection of 50 war poems, opens with one called "The Final Episode of Leave It to Beaver" and ends with one called "Fort Rosecrans." In between is a journey of searing reflection on his military service, much of it laced with ironic pop culture references that ground the work in its time and place and make it achingly real. After the war, Rosenblum moved to Alaska and worked on a fishing boat, went to Hawaii and got married, moved back to Alaska and chopped firewood. He farmed for a while in Washington state. Now retired, he and his wife of 40 years live in San Diego.



Rosenblum dedicated his book "to those, living and dead, who shared the experience."

Q: How did you wind up in the Marines?

A: I lived out in El Cajon and I watched a lot of television back in those days and I was just pretty much brainwashed. I loved the Marine Corps, too, even after I went in.

Q: Did you have any family history in the military?
A: My dad was in the Coast Guard in World War II. My uncle was in Korea in the Army.

Q: How long were you in Vietnam?

A: 13 months.

Q: What did you do over there?

A: I started out in Phu Bai, right on the water, about eight miles from Hue City. I was a 60 (mm) mortar man. Then we moved about, moved up to Khe Sanh and the hills around there. Hill 881. I spent like three months up on 881.

Q: Were you writing poetry then?

A: (Laughter) No.

Q: How did you start writing poems?

A: Actually, I did write poems in high school but I had a long dry spell after I got out of the Marine Corps. I was cutting firewood and supporting a young family and I just, I don't know, I just had to vent that energy that was nagging at me. I went back to writing and I guess I sort of found my voice again.



Q: Over what period of time did you write this collection?

A: Some of these were written as far back as the early '80s. Some of the recent ones, about a year ago, before I even went into the final edition.

Q: Tell me what the title means.

A: It's pretty esoteric. I can give it a shot for you, although I usually like to leave it to people to figure out for themselves.

Q: Well, I have some ideas about it but I wanted to hear it from you.

A: On one hand, it's composed of 50 songs sung in homage to the dead and so-called survivors of the Vietnam War. On the flip side, it represents the contrasting symbols of identification some of us wore in subtle defiance to the dog tags. Is that what you thought it was about?

Q: I thought from the words "hollow" and "tin" it had something to do with dog tags.

A: Yes. There's a poem in the book ("So Ugly Too Early") that talks about love beads and dog tags. (After this interview, Rosenblum said in an email he went looking through items in storage and found both his love beads and his dog tags. And a belt he took off a dead North Vietnamese Army soldier during Operation Ford in 1968.)

Q: Tell me some more about why you wrote these poems. You talked earlier about venting energy.
A: Most of the poems are like snapshots of real incidents. I wanted to balance the actual incidents with some aesthetics, but at the same time I tried to keep the focus on accuracy. Some of the sketches reflect typical day-to-day experiences. Others are not as personal.

Q: What did you get out of writing them?

A: I'm not really a student of the healing-through-art school of thought. It really hasn't worked for me. There are workshops all around the country where people go to write and they find it therapeutic. It's just not that way for me.

Q: You must find something worthwhile in it, though, or why do it?

A: What I get out of it is I'm able to give a voice to people who can't spill their guts. It also gives me a chance to talk about something that I know and to play with words at the same time.

Q: What do you hope the poems say about your war experience?

A: I didn't keep a diary. A few photos maybe. I'm just trying to give the historians a unique perspective. It talks at length about what it was like for us as a culture. It's a period piece, really.

Q: Have you read it to other Vietnam vets?

A: I did go to St. Louis last year, to Springfield, and I read there. It was for an anthology I was in. I read extensively to a lot of vets and families of vets. All the reaction I got was positive.

Q: One of the reviews of your poems said it "sets the bar high for quality in Vietnam War literature." That kind of thing must feel good.

A: It does. I'm 65. I've sent a lot of these poems off to be published and I've had a lot of rejection and finally just all of a sudden I fell into a groove. I'm elated.

I GET MAIL
SOUND OFF

March 20, 2014

Dear Tom,

I enjoyed reading the Red Clay about Lloyd "Short round' Scudder. I managed to give him some Raven tee shirts I had. Ravens were FACs that flew over Laos kind of 'civilianized' AF guys from Vietnam.

This is about the time of Khe Sanh from back then when the 553rd Reconnaissance Wing maintained 'Blue Orbit' over KSAB.

I had been writing a book about it all this time when I had a artery problem in 2011. I have been okay since then but I don't stray out too far since I take voice muscle stimulation trying to get my swallowing to improve. Radiation in the throat is not a fun thing.

I read about Dennis Barnett's death though I never met him. Everyone from Young County Texas that served in the military is engraved on a memorial in Graham, Texas, his home town. I was born and raised in Olney, about 24 miles north of there and now live on my grandfather's old ranch at Post Oak, 20 miles north of Jacksboro, Texas where he married his wife, Florie. Small world isn't it?

I read some interest about how badly we Vietnam vets were treated back then and wanted to give a comment to those of our guys that never knew the real story. Russian KGB agents were planted around America to advise a number of organizations to oppose that war. Those of us in the Intelligence Community that had a chance to read those top secret code word reports could not tell how we got all that special information; it would have compromised our means of getting it. You may remember SDS, the 'Students for a Democratic Society', Jane Fonda's husbands organization like the American Communism Party as well as the NAACP, CORE and minority groups to oppose the war.
Demonstrating in college about what a country does was an old European activity; people wanting a change in money and prestige to suit their own needs by blaming attention to foreign war efforts. They claimed we 'murdered babies', 'killed innocent people' and 'fought in another countries right' when what they really wanted was a free education instead going to fight anywhere. The KGB efforts were extremely effective and so many Americans began to believe it and that joined those anti-war activities are now in elevated positions trying to hide their earlier positions.

Now we give our military a better status as if to hide how we Korean and Vietnam vets were treated back then. We all fought against communism's effort to encompass those Asian countries while our later wars are actually a fight against oil and the Muslim use to take over the world. Japan does not allow Muslims to settle there and I wish we didn't either.

Well, enough said for now and I appreciate getting the magazine. I have missed corning to the reunions and hope to try and come in the future. I need to send you a check for remembering me.
Regards

Bill Person
USAF
553RD RCW

COMMUNUCATIONS AT KHE SANH
From Historical Branch G-3 Division Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps
The Battle For Khe Sanh

Although the berms were prime targets, the ASRT, MATCD, FDC, 26th Marines communications center, and other units which depended on sophisticated and delicate equipment suffered from the heavy shelling. Consequently, they all had one common problem--maintenance. The normal difficulties associated with keeping the various radars, radios, antennae, generators, and cooling components in an "up" status were complicated by the constant incoming, the. dust, and the limited supply of replacement items. The vans and bunkers were heavily sandbagged but antennae and some communication lines .were exposed and frequently knocked out by enemy rounds.

The speed with which the vital installations were returned to operation served as a tribute to the technicians who maintained the equipment under the most adverse conditions imaginable. In one instance, a l22mm rocket exploded a scant seven me-

ters from the ASRT-B van and sheared off most of the radio antennae. Thanks to several trouble shooters who braved the intense barrage and repaired the damage, the station was back on the air within 20 minutes. Such performances were routine. The ASRT normally operated 23 hours a day and shut down one hour for maintenance. The ATCU; which was essential for ground-controlled approaches and paradrops, was kept operable 95 percent of the time.

Major John A. Shepherd, Communications Officer of the 26th Marines, was responsible for the vast network which enabled the ground commanders to keep abreast of the situation, and in touch with their units. The major praised the accomplishments of his men, stating that they "provided support in winning every' battle, firing every round of artillery, controlling every air strike, and providing the means to receive every-bean and bullet."

There were six radio relay teams which kept open 52 channels between Khe Sanh and the outside World. In addition, there were five external teletype nets in operation 24-hours a day. Radio relay provided voice and teletype, inks to agencies at Dong Ha and Da Nang.

For classified information, there were two secure voice circuits operating full time. One net linked the Combat Operations Center of the 26th Marines to that of the 3d Marine Division at Dong Ha, The other, the Regimental Tactical Net, enabled Colonel Lownds to disseminate hot information to his battalion commanders.

To protect it against the artillery, mortar, and rocket attacks, all communication equipment was either underground or heavily sandbagged. Major Shepherd moved his communications center into a shelter which was made from, 4 conex boxes, 16 feet underground. This nerve center housed the teletype equipment and switchboards which provided service for 65 on-base subscribers and 40 external radio relay voice circuits.

In spite of the protective measures, the antenna and internal wire system sustained damage on a daily basis. Following every barrage, wiremen tracked down cuts and spliced them and repaired damaged antennae so that the various nets were back in operation within minutes. The maintenance and repair of the electronic devices used for perimeter security placed an additional burden on the communicators

Information Supplied By

Corporal Donald G. Thorpe USMC
AN/TRC-97 Radio Relay team Chief
KSCB 12 August 1967-18 April 1968
7th Communications Battalion
Attached to 26th Marines

Corporal Thorpe was cited for his actions while serving with this unit

Provided 14 telephone channels and 17 teletype channels to net linked to the Combat Operations Center of the 26th Marines to that of 3rd Marine Division at Dong Ha. Providing air and logistics support and resupply, maintenance support, and tactical and administrative reports for five infantry battalions an~ supporting units for Khe Sanh Combat Base. In support of operations Ardmore, Scotland, Pegasus and during entire TET offensive and the subsequent siege of Khe Sanh.





OBIT

WILLIAM T. MITCHELL III USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN GOLF CO 2/26
3RD PLATOON M/G TEAM LEADER
H&S S-2 SCOUT

William "Billy" Thomas Mitchell, III, 70 of Florence, passed away on Monday April 21, 2014 at his residence after an illness. Billy was born in Florence, a son of the late Emma Belle Berry and William T. Mitchell, Jr.



He attended the University of SC and graduated from Florence-Darlington Technical College with degree in Civil Engineering Technology. Billy served in the USMC from 1966-1972 and having served during Vietnam 1967-68 in the Infantry as a machine gun team leader and Battalion S-2 Scout. Billy was a veteran of the Siege of Khe Sanh, 3rd platoon G Co,2nd Bn,26th Marines. He was also a major contributor to the Vietnam book "Into the DMZ" written by a friend with whom he served with in Vietnam.

Billy also contributed to the following books on Vietnam: "Marine", "Battalion of Kings", "Valley of Decision-The Siege of Khe Sanh", and "The Final Formation". He retired from the S.C. State Guard as a Colonel on June 1, 2013, having served 28 years and 8 months. He was also very active in the Marine Corps League Detachment 410 and a charter member of College Park Baptist Church.

Some of his hobbies included: Family history research, USMC military history (especially Vietnam), and University of South Carolina Gamecock football, where he was a 42 year Gamecock Club member.

Billy was survived by a brother, David Allen Mitchell, who passed away just three days after him. Surviving are numerous cousins and extended family members.



Graveside services were held at 11:00 AM on Saturday, May 3, 2014 at Florence Memorial Gardens Cemetery directed by Cain Funeral Home. Memorials may be made to College Park Baptist Church, 1501 Third Loop Rd., Florence SC 29505 or to the Marine Corps League Detachment 410, PO Box 13345, Florence, SC 29504 or to Pee Dee Area Veteran's Honor Guard, PO Box 21117, Florence, SC 29501



OBIT

JOHN "JACK" CORBETT USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, H&S CO 1/26 81MM



John (Jack) Corbett, a former Nyack resident, died June 22, 2014, in Key Largo, Florida, where he resided for many years.

Born in 1947 to Dr. John and Dorothy Falt Corbett, he graduated from St. Ann's School, and St. John's Seminary in Horseshead, NY. Jack was a Marine who fought in Vietnam and throughout his life he was dedicated to the Marines and the memory of Khe Sanh. He was an avid fisherman and loved the time he spent near the ocean as well as traveling extensively throughout the country. In later years, he authored a book about his experiences called **West Dickens Avenue** which was selected as a Veterans Book of the Month. His friends in Nyack always knew when he returned in his KHE SANH decorated van. Jack is survived by his wife, Beth; son, Mark (Kane) and grandson, Kaiden in Florida, several brothers and sisters, Dorothy Corbett McClafferty of Nyack, Katherine (Larry) Rudden of Washingtonville, NY, Joseph Corbett of Nyack, Mary Corbett of Nyack, Gerard Corbett (Debbie) of Valley Cottage, NY, Noreen Fioriti (Jerry) of Rock Tavern, NY, as well as many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his brother, James.

Jack will be remembered for his kindness and love of life. A memorial service will be held at a later date.



JACK WITH DELTA CO MARINES, JARHEAD'S BAR CHICAGO ILLINOIS



A GROUND LEVEL VIEW OF THE SECOND BATTLE OF KHE SANH

Reviewed by Kenneth W. Pipes, LtCol USMC, (RET.)

"WEST DICKENS AVENUE" by John Corbett, Presidio Press, The Ballantine Publishing Group, 2003, ISBN0-89141-785-0, 205 pages. $24.95.

Military historians frequently ask, when writing about the Marine Corps, "Where do they find such men?" In Mr. Corbett's case, as with the rest of us Marines, they are found, one at a time, by that most stalwart of men, the Marine Corps Recruiter. Interestingly, Corbett, prior to making contact with his recruiter in Nyack, New York, had given more than a fleeting thought to heading for Canada. He had enrolled in college, then, in a moment of defiance, tore up his draft notice. Later, at one of the neighborhood watering holes, he met and had a few beers

with an old high school chum who had enlisted in the Marines a year earlier and had just returned home as badly wounded, recovering, disabled combat veteran. The next day, on a dare from his long time friend, Corbett enlisted for two years in the United States Marine Corps. This then is his story as You will be with him on this hard ride and live Corbett's tour with and along side him. It is a recent Military Book of the Month selection—for excellent reasons. This book has become one of the few outstanding personal stories that add immeasurably to the history of Marine involvement in the Vietnam War.

As seen through the eyes of and experienced by an infantry mortar man of some the most vicious and costly fighting of the Vietnam War; TET 1968!

He tracks the usual experience of a newly caught East Coast Marine; Paris Island for Boot Camp, Camp Pendleton for advanced infantry training and the trip to the exotic and dangerous country of Vietnam, via Okinawa, Japan! Finally, Danang and assignment to Khe Sanh as a member of the Mortar Platoon, First Battalion, Twenty Sixth Marines—arriving there just in time to become an active participant in the Second Battle of Khe Sanh; The 77 day Siege of the Combat Base!

For the next 13 months the First Battalion would be his home away from home. Remember, unlike the other branches of our in-country forces, barring being killed or seriously wounded, a Marine's tour was one month longer! A lot could and did happen to a Marine infantryman during that last month of field combat duty; all of it life threatening, to include being added to the growing list of Marines Killed in Action! Surviving one thirteen month tour as an enlist Marine in an infantry battalion easily equated to the multiple three, four and six month tours experience by other members of our military forces. When you finish Corbett's book you will understand why this is an absolute truth!

Corbett's book fills a void that exists in Marine Corps history of that time and place; Northern I Corps, 1968. His is a very personal prospective of a grunt, a mortar man and a Mud Marine who saw, experienced and was a participant in the month after month vicious, close in, life giving and life taking War of Professionals; the North Vietnamese Army and our Corp's Band of Brave and Heroic Marine Riflemen! He like his brethren, asked little, gave much and, to this day, has received little or no recognition of their superhuman efforts and sacrifices. As an aside, Corbett's now officially documented experiences does not easily correspond to our past history. If parallels can be made, his story more closely equates to that told of Morrell's Marauders and the Chindits of World War Two fame, or perhaps, our Caribbean excursions between the Big Wars! For Corbett and his mates, there were few breaks from continuous combat; there was only a small, beckoning Saviors light at the end of a 395 day tunnel! Corbett made it!

He survived the Siege at Khe Sanh, operations in Leatherneck Square, the A Shau Valley, Elephant Valley, the Go Noi Islands, the An Hoa Basin, Liberty Bridge and Dodge City to name just a few of the more interesting and dangerous locations that appeared on his 395 day travel itinerary of that exotic country! If you have read or researched the Battle of Khe Sanh and other major fights in Northern I Corps, during and after the 1968 TET Offensive, this is a book that you will want to add to your collection. It is not a view of strategy or of tactics; he does not address the greater questions of the reasons why we were there or why we should not have been involved. His is the rarest of all Marine stories and history.



OBIT

ROGER L. SULLIVAN USA/SF
KHE SANH VETERAN FOB-3 5TH SF



Roger L. Sullivan, 68, of Richmond, died at home on May 4. Roger is survived by his loving wife of 42 years, Brenda, their devoted twins of whom Roger was so proud, Suzanne and Jonathan, his brother George Curtis (Elsie) of Spotsylvania, brothers-in-law Joddie Williams Jr. and Kenny Williams (Sue) of Emporia, three nephews, two nieces, and a growing family of great and great-great nieces and nephews, as well as his five kitty cats, the loves of his life.

A native Virginian, Roger was the son of the late John L. Sullivan and Janie Emma Curtis. He graduated from Spotsylvania High School in 1964, attended Richmond Professional Institute for one year, and then joined the U.S. Army in January 1966.

Roger served proudly with the 5th Special Forces Group MACV-SOG, Command & Control North, in Vietnam, the most decorated unit during the Vietnam War. While operating with Recon Team Krait out of Khe Sanh, Vietnam, he was critically wounded on February 19, 1968 and medevaced to Japan. For his courageous service, he was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star for Valor, Presidential Unit Citation, Purple Heart, Air Medal, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Vietnam Civil Actions Honor Medal, First Class, Combat Infantryman Badge, and Vietnam Service Medal with Two Bronze Stars. After recovery, Roger was returned to 6th Special Forces Group, Ft. Bragg, where he was discharged in December 1968.

Roger returned to college at VCU, earning his degree in Business Management (Real Estate). He was successful in the real estate and insurance business until redirecting his focus and interests and certifying as a National Service Officer for a Veterans Service Organization. He became a passionate champion for Veterans' rights and developed an all-consuming devotion to advocating on their behalf at every level. He retired as NSO six years ago, but he continued to help Veterans daily until his illness this year.

A service to honor Roger was held Monday, May 12, at 2:00 at Woody Funeral Home, 1771 N. Parham Road. There was visitation with the family before the service at 1:00. Interment with military honors will be at Arlington National Cemetery, August 19, 2014 at 3:00pm. The family asks that memorial donations be considered in lieu of flowers to C.A.R.E. Cat Adoption and Rescue Efforts, Inc. P.O.Box 2934 Richmond, VA 23228 http://carecats.org/.





OBIT

THE LAST OF THE ORIGINAL NAVAJO CODE TALKERS PASSES AWAY



Chester Nez, the last of the original Navajo code talkers credited with creating an unbreakable code used during World War II, died June 5 at his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Navajo Nation President said. He was 93.

(CNN) -- For more than two decades, Chester Nez kept silent about his role as one of the original Navajo code talkers responsible for developing an unbreakable code during World War II.

His death Wednesday at his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at age 93 was lamented by the Marine Corps as the end of an era -- for both the country



and its armed forces.

"We mourn his passing but honor and celebrate the indomitable spirit and dedication of those Marines who became known as the Navajo code talkers," the Marines said in a statement.

Nez was the last remaining of the original 29 Navajos recruited by the Marine Corps to develop the legendary code that was used for vital communications during battle.

He was a teenager when he was recruited in 1942 and assigned with the other code talkers to the Marine Corps' 382nd Platoon at Camp Pendleton. Together, they created a code, including developing a dictionary.

Military authorities chose Navajo as a code language because its syntax and tonal qualities were almost impossible for a non-Navajo to learn, and it had no written form. The ranks of the Navajo code talkers swelled to more than 300 by the end of the war in 1945.

The code talkers were forbidden from telling anyone about it -- not their fellow Marines, not their families -- until their work was declassified in 1968. The original 29 were presented with the Congressional Gold Medal in 2001 by President George W. Bush.

"In developing our code, we were careful to use everyday Navajo words, so that we could memorize and retain the words easily," Nez told CNN in 2011 while promoting his book "Code Talker."

"I think that made our job easier, and I think it helped us to be successful in the heat of battle." Still, Nez said he worried every day that an error might cost the life of an American military service member.

Nez was among the code talkers who were shipped out to Guadalcanal in 1942, where the code talkers worked in teams of two, with one relaying and receiving messages while the other cranked the portable radio and listened for errors in transmission. "That was my first combat experience, and there was a lot of suffering and a lot of the condition was real bad out there," he told CNN's Larry King in 2002.

Nez also fought in Guam and Peleliu.

"When bombs dropped, generally we code talkers couldn't just curl up in a shelter," Nez wrote in his book. "We were almost always needed to transmit information, to ask for supplies and ammunition, and to communicate strategies. And after each

transmission, to avoid Japanese fire, we had to move."

The code talkers faced initial resistance from fellow Marines who did not understand who they were and what they were doing.

That changed once they understood the importance of the code, Nez said.

The Navajo code baffled the Japanese, who had successfully deciphered codes used by the U.S. Army. After the war, the Japanese chief of intelligence, Lt. General Seizo Arisue, admitted they were never able to crack the Navajo code used by the Marines and Navy, according to the Navy.

Nez was discharged in 1945, but later volunteered to fight in the Korean War.

After the code talkers' exploits were declassified by the military, the group gained legendary status with books and, ultimately, a movie that was inspired by their stories.

"The recognition of the code talkers came late, but it has been good for my Navajo people. I hope that this type of recognition continues across cultures," Nez said.

The 2002 film "Wind talkers," starring Adam Beach and Nicolas Cage, followed the fictional account of two Marines assigned to protect two code talkers during the battle of Saipan.

"I could understand when they sent the message and received on the other end," Nez said. "I could understand, and I could sit there and write it down myself. I still remember it."

It was a far cry from his childhood, when he was forced to attend a boarding school and punished by the teachers for speaking Navajo, according to his book.

It's a language, though, that appears lost even to many members of his own family.

"My own children do not speak Navajo, although my daughter-in-law ... speaks it well," he said.

Nez said he decided to tell his story because he wanted to share the contributions and sacrifices of the Navajo during World War II.

"Our Navajo code was one of the most important military secrets of World War II. The fact that the Marines did not tell us Navajo men how to develop that code indicated their trust in us and in our abilities," he said.

"The feeling that I could make it in both the white world and the Navajo world began there, and it has stayed with me all of my life. For that I am grateful." The Navajo Nation's flags have been ordered lowered in Nez's honor, President Ben Shelly said

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

KHE SANH VETERAN SERGEANT CHARLES LYNN BANEY HONORED POSTHUMOUSLY AT FORT LEE

In a moving dinner ceremony, the 245th Quartermaster General, Major General James M. Wright, presented Lucy Baney a commendation and a plaque honoring her son for his service in Vietnam as a parachute rigger in the U.S Army's 109th Quartermaster Air Delivery Company.

Baney was killed on October 15, 1967, in the crash of an Air Force C-130 on its final approach of an airdrop mission to the beleagured Marine Garrison at Khe Sanh.

The presentation was accompanied by a standing ovation of some 400 attendees including the top leadership of the Quartermaster Corps. Accompanying Mrs. Baney in accepting the award were Baney's sister, Sandra Johnson of Warsaw, and Baney's commanding officer, retired Colonel Albert B. Lanier of Raleigh, NC

The Distinguished Member of the Regiment award recognizes military and civilians (active and Retired) for their outstanding performance and distinguished contribution to the Quartermaster Corps. A plaque with names of all Distinguished Members of the Regiment is permanently displayed in Mifflin Hall at Fort Lee, the home of the Quartermaster Corps.

Baney, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Marion Baney and a graduate of Warsaw Community High School entered the U.S. Army in 1965. He was stationed at



Fort Leonard Wood Missouri, Fort Benning Georgia, and Campbell Kentucky, prior to being assigned to Vietnam in July 1967.

He completed the Army Infantry Basic Course: Army Airborne School: and Parachute Packing Maintenance and Air Delivery School. He was awarded the Parachute Badge, Parachute Riggers Badge, National Defense Service Medal and the Vietnam Service Medal.

As an elite "Red Cap" parachute rigger assigned to the 109th Quartermaster Company, he was assigned in the preparation and parachute delivery of supplies and equipment to units that had been cut off from normal methods of re-supply. It was in that role, flying as an on-board parachute rigger, that Baney was killed in action at Khe Sanh, during the height of the Vietnam War.

"Baney was an outstanding young soldier that demonstrated the highest traditions of the Parachute Riggers, the Quartermaster corps and the United States Army," Lanier said! "He provided an outstanding role model that was worthy of emulation by his peers.

"I was extremely proud to have him as a member of the 109th which established the U.S. Army's still standing airdrop record during 1967-68. Sgt. Baney was an integral part of the U.S. Army's flexible response unit that had been centrally stationed at Cam Ranh Bay by General William C. Westmoreland in 1968 to provide emergency logistical supply throughout the country."

Baney is also survived by sister Amy Sills and brother Donald Lockridge, as well as many relatives from the Warsaw area. He is interred at Legion Circle in Oakwood Cemetery, Warsaw.

In the image section, Col. Al Lanier (ret.) is accepting the " Quartermaster Corps Distinguished Unit of the Regiment" award in 1997 from Quartermaster General Wright.

Also pictured is Col. William "Rigger" Mortis (Ret) who was a 1st Lt. in the 109th in January of 1968. Also at the awards, Lucy Baney, mother of Charles



Lynn Baney who was killed in a C-30 crash at Khe Sanh. Charles' mother accepted the award of "Quartermaster Corps Distinguished Member of the Regiment", presented by Quartermaster General Wright. Charles was serving in the 109th when killed on the Khe Sanh low altitude Air Delivery flight.

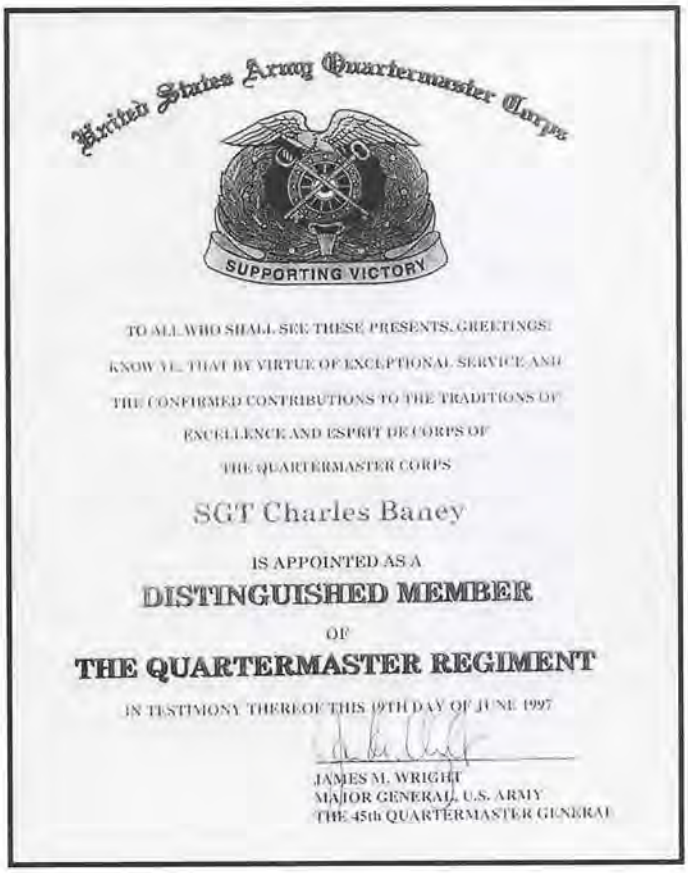

United States Army Quartermaster Corps

SUPPORTING VICTORY

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETINGS:

KNOW YE, THAT BY VIRTUE OF EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AND THE CONFIRMED CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TRADITIONS OF EXCELLENCE AND ESPRIT DE CORPS OF THE QUARTERMASTER CORPS

SGT Charles Baney

IS APPOINTED AS A

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER

OF

THE QUARTERMASTER REGIMENT

IN TESTIMONY THEREOF THIS 19TH DAY OF JUNE 1997

JAMES M. WRIGHT
MAJOR GENERAL, U.S. ARMY
THE 45th QUARTERMASTER GENERAL

Those Who were on the C-130 along with Charles Baney: Air Division 315th, 776 TAS

1. Joseph L Hannah, Captain, Pilot	WIA
2. Erle L. Bjorke, Captain, Co-Pilot	KIA
3. James R. Hottenroth, 1st Lt., Navigator	KIA
4. Edward Mosley, Pit Mechanic	KIA
5. John Snyder, A2C, Loadmaster	KIA
6. Lawrence Bemeski, A1C Loadmaster	KIA

A LITTLE HISTORY OF THE 109TH QUARTERMASTER COMPANY

The 109th Quartermaster Company (Air Delivery) arrived in Vietnam in August, 1966. The company was situated at the northernmost end of Cam Ranh Bay, overlooking the 6th Convalescent Center. The 109th remained active until 31 January, 1972, at which time it was inactivated.

The Air Delivery Unit of the 109th QM Co. designation never returned to the US from Vietnam. In 1983 the 109th designation was reactivated as a Quartermaster Petroleum Company.

The 109th was the only stand alone Air Delivery Company in Vietnam, and the only Air Delivery Company listed in the "Order Of The Battle Vietnam". Other air delivery units that made contributions are included in this history. Care has been taken to document the history included in these pages.

The 109th played an important role in many major events in of the Vietnam War, including resupply of the 173rd Airborne Brigade ("The Herd") combat jump in Operation Junction City in 1967; repair of the Khe Sanh Combat Base runway in September, 1967; critical emergency supply missions at Khe Sanh during the 77-day siege of 1968; emergency Tet 1968 air drops; A Shau Valley, April May, 1968; supplying 5th Special Forces, 1967 and 1968, as rebuilding Lang Vei after it was over run; rigging "Daisy Cutters" (large bombs to clear jungle areas for landing zones) which were dropped from C-130 transport aircraft; and the 1971 invasion of Laos by ARVN troops.

The 109th, 383rd, and 623rd all played a major role in the airdrops delivering over 8,000 tons of supplies by parachute and extraction systems that set a record of most tonnage ever drop into *actual combat* for a 30 day period during Khe Sanh and TET68. A record that still holds to this day.

On November 2, 1999 documents were received which clearly documents the 109th, not only rigged "necessary supplies, equipment, and mail" for inside Cambodia during the Cambodian Invasion, but also extracted captured enemy supplies out of Cambodia.

The documentation also refers to "members of our unit (109th) in Cambodia" in May and June 1970. In addition to the official documentation, Dale Larsen wrote a personal note: "We were spread out among the 1st Calvary. Our job was to sling out captured supplies and move heavier equipment around using slings, Chinooks and Sky Cranes." "We also had a couple of our guys with the Special Forces unit outside of Ban Me Thuot.

In June, 1997, the US Army Quartermaster Corps recognized the efforts of the 109th when it received the "Distinguished Unit of the Regiment" award. This is the highest award a unit can receive from the Quartermaster Corps.

OBIT

KHE SANH VETERAN LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS A. RICHARDS , THEN CORPORAL HOTEL CO 2/9 USMC

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas A. Richards (USMC, RET, Beloved husband, dedicated friend, avid veterans' advocate, American patriot and highly decorated Marine passed away on Wednesday, June 18, 2014. Thomas A. Richards was born to (and preceded in death by) Howard Thomas and Vera Nelson Richards in Madison, WI on April 4, 1947. His bear hugs, ear to ear smiles, bellowing laughter, incredibly warm disposition and zeal for life will be dearly missed.



Tom was raised on the west side of Madison, WI and attended Randall Elementary School and West Middle and High School. As a high school sophomore, he discovered his aptitude for long distance running and became a star runner on both the cross country and track teams. His love of running continued throughout his life, including competing in several marathons. Following his graduation from high school, he worked as a machinist.

In 1967, Tom joined the Marine Corps and found his life's passion. After completing recruit training he was selected to attend scout sniper school and Vietnamese Language School at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey. He was then assigned to Company H, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines in the Republic of Vietnam where he earned a meritorious combat promotion to the rank of sergeant, the Navy Cross Medal for valor in combat, and the Purple Heart Medal for his wounds. Upon completing his assignment with the 9th Marines, Tom served as a drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. While serving as a drill instructor he was selected for the Marine Associate Degree Completion Program, received his associate's degree, and was selected to attend Officer Candidate School through the Marine Corps' Enlisted Commissioning Program. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant.

Tom served four tours in infantry units and in various staff positions from battalion to division level. In addition to the Navy Cross and Purple Heart, Tom was awarded numerous other personal decorations and service medals, including the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (two awards), the Army Achievement Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon and the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, of which he was most proud. He retired in 1995 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Both during and after the Corps, Tom's civic service and pursuit of academic excellence was legendary. He actively participated in the Legion of Valor and served as its National Commander, 2008. He was widely known for his nine years serving with Spirit of the Fourth, Inc. in the Rancho Bernardo community of San Diego, CA. He was active in the Rotary Club and established the Miramar Semper Fidelis Rotary Club on the Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar; only the second service club on an active military base anywhere in the world. He was an active member of the San Diego County United Veterans Council (UVC) and served as the UVC chairmanship for 2010.

He co-founded the Soldiers of the Sea, Band of

Brothers Inc., an organization dedicated to bridging the gap between the Marine Corps and business communities. Tom served as a mentor to the San Diego State University Student Veterans Organization (SVO) and was presented with its "Mentor for Life" Award, its highest honor. He was appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to the California Veterans Board. He spearheaded nationwide efforts to discover incidents of Stolen Valor and prepared a "Friend of the Court" brief for submission to the Supreme Court in support of a finding that the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 was constitutional. In recognition of his community service, Tom was selected in 2005 for membership in the Rancho Bernardo Hall of Fame, one of only ninety-selectees since 1974. In June, 2009, he was named the California 75th State Assembly District Veteran of the Year. He also received the "Lifetime Support of Veterans Award" from the San Diego Veteran of the Year committee in 2009. He relocated from Southern California to Virginia Beach in 2012 and was appointed by Governor McDonnell in 2013 to the Virginia Joint Leadership Council of Veterans.

An avid student, Tom earned both is baccalaureate and master's degrees in history, and his masters of business administration, all from San Diego State University. While in Virginia Beach, Tom followed his passion for teaching history as an adjunct professor at Tidewater Community College. Tom maintained a rigorous physical fitness regimen throughout his life, permitting him to engage in numerous outdoor activities including diving, kayaking, camping, and hiking. During the past eleven years he climbed California's 14,497 ft. Mt. Whitney ten times.

Tom never quit anything that he set his mind on. He was a consummate advocate for veterans' issues, was a devoted and dedicated husband, and was the best and sincerest friend a man could have. He was the epitome of a renaissance man who loved opera, fine art, classical and Celtic music, and world travel. He is survived by his loving wife, Diane Hall Richards of Charlottesville, VA; cousins Linda Halverson and Laurie Lerhdahl and their extended families; aunt Theda and the late William Curwen and their extended family, his brother Marines; his friends and an extended honorary family - too numerous to name - all of whom dearly loved, and were loved by, and will dearly miss their "uncle" Tom.



The family wishes to thank the compassionate caring staff at the VA Palliative Care and Hospice Center, Hampton, Virginia, who provided great comfort, superb care and love to Tom and his family. A memorial service to honor Tom was be held at H. D. Oliver Funeral Apartments, Inc., 2002 Laskin Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23454 on Saturday, July 12, 2014, at 1:00 PM. Arrangements are in process for a memorial service and internment following at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA, as well as a service in San Diego, CA. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in Tom's honor to be sent to Legion of Valor, 4704 Calle Reina, Santa Barbara, CA 93110. Semper Fidelis!





NAVY CROSS CITATION



LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS A. RICHARDS, (then Corporal), United States Marine Corps. For extraordinary heroism on 5 and 6 June 1969 as a Fire Team Leader with Company H, Second Battalion, Ninth Marines. Third Marine Division during operations against an armed enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. When his platoon initiated contact with a company-sized hostile force occupying well-camouflaged positions on a cliff overlooking a trail, and were subjected to a heavy volume of fire, Corporal Richards, during the initial attack, skillfully regrouped his platoon and led his men in a counterattack, enabling them to establish a defensive perimeter. Throughout the night, he assisted in countering enemy attacks and in moving casualties to areas of relative safety. Although wounded by fragments of an enemy grenade, he steadfastly refused to be evacuated in order to remain with his men and continue the fight. Observing that a machine gun in his area was dangerously short of ammunition, he made several trips across the fire-swept zone to obtain and replenish ammunition for the weapon. When the machine gunner and assistant gunner sustained wounds, Corporal Richards unhesitatingly dashed to the gun position and, although exposed to the brunt of the enemy attack, concentrated a heavy volume of fire on the hostile troops, causing the attack to falter long enough for the Marines to repulse it. His gallant actions resulted in the death of eight enemy soldiers and prevented the Marine perimeter from being penetrated. Through his superb leadership, courage, initiative, and inspiring dedication, he contributed significantly to the defeat of the enemy and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

Local Vietnam veteran awarded Purple Heart after almost 45 years

Vietnam veteran who earned a Purple Heart but had never received it got his due Thursday in a ceremony at Rochester VFW Post 128. Bob DeSousa pins a Purple Heart on the suit jacket of Vietnam War veteran Harry L. Hage of New Brighton. Hage was wounded in 1969 while serving with the U.S. Army's 5th Mechanized Infantry Division.







Operation Utah Mesa[60] 12 Jun – 9 Jul 69 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines, 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division and ARVN 1st Division clear and search operation in the vicinity of Khe Sanh, Quảng Trị Province

I GET MAIL

CORRECTIONAL TRAINING FACILITY

SOLEDAD VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE SERVICE CENTER

Highway 101 North P.O. Box 689
Soledad, CA 93960-0689

June 6, 2014
Thomas Eichler,

First of all I would like to express my thanks for the consideration of the Red Clay magazine. I have read it from page to page with great interest; in fact that is primarily the main reason I am bothering you now.

In reading articles in the past publications I noticed a few about the Northern California group in Chico, CA. and a veteran by the name of Craig W. Tourte from Rocklin. Unfortunately it does not give his or the groups address so that I may contact them, and I do not have a KS directory. I am not at all sure what they might think of communicating with an inmate in state prison, but I would like to let them know what we are all about here, it I would not be out of line to do so? Also if there is anyone from their group, or others, that would be willing to come here to speak with our Incarcerated Vietnam Veterans Group.

Secondly, I would like to know where I might be able to receive a catalog for the Khe Sanh Survivors so I can purchase the "Home is where you dig it" pin, (we have a sign or reproduction of the sign in our office), and what the cost may be and an application if that is possible for membership?

Thank you for your consideration of my many questions; I am anxiously awaiting your communication .

M. "Doc" Piper
Veterans Service representative
J-49677 CTF DW-227L
PO BOX 689
Soledad , CA

RESPONSE FROM CRAIG TOURTE

"Doc" Piper

I received a copy of your correspondence from our Khe Sanh Veterans Association President Tom Eichler. Let me state you - being a veteran, a member of the Khe Sanh Association and having served our country is the common ground here.

Regarding the Khe Sanh luncheon held each year in Chico California, our little group consists of approximately twelve unorganized, disorganized and mostly undisciplined Khe Sanh Veterans - all suffering various effects of PTSD - who meet and socialize occasionally and who once a year invites the community to attend a luncheon to honor, not only Khe Sanh Veterans, but all Veterans who have served and those who are currently serving. Most who attend are friends of, or have associates who know Tom Horchler who lives near Chico. As the many who remember with great emotion and reverence those who fought at Pearl Harbor - December 7, 1941, Battle of Inchon - September 15, 1950, Battle of Hue City - January 31, 1968, Hamburger Hill (937) - May 10, 1969, both of the significant battles for Fallulah - April 23, 2003/February 12, 2004, and many other battles don't have an issue with your incarceration or communicating with where lives were lost and sacrifices made, we Khe Sanh Siege Veterans remember, acknowledge and honor those who served during any military conflict. The date January 21st - as you are aware - is significant to us as it was the start of the 77 day Siege which began on January 21, 1968.

As to speaking to your Veterans group I don't know what any of us would have to offer that you are not already aware of relating to that battle and the subsequent issues of PTSD. None in our little group has participated in social outreach but I'm sure speaking in a setting of incarceration would not be an issue. As you are aware our experience is difficult and in most cases painful to speak of to outsiders. I suppose though, it would be a small distraction from what I assume is a mundane routine. I'll be happy to ask some others, appreciating though that Soledad is a four and a half hour drive from Sacramento and add a couple of more hours from Chico, but I'll inquire. If I find myself down that way it would be a privilege to visit with you.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.
S/F
Craig Tourte
3710 Stone Ct
Rocklin, Ca

Incarcerated
Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 1065
Correctional Training Facility

Monday, 26 May 2014
Central Gymnasium
M. E. Spearman, Warden

Sponsors
E.A. DaRosa, Correctional Lieutenant
M. Leisner, Principal Sponsor
Ms. C. Martinez, Sponsor

Executive Body Members
Michael "Spike" Williams, Commander
Richard Moore Vice Commander
John C. Conway, Treasurer
Edwin V. Munis, Adjutant (A)
Michael Chandler, Associate AIVVA Adjutant

Posting of National Ensign,
Marcus Threats

Opening Prayer Chaplain,

Memorial Day Introduction

John Peck, Information Officer

Program

Welcome to the third annual Incarcerated Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1065 Correctional Training Facility "Memorial Day Celebration" as we,

"Honor the Dead by Helping the Living"

A Short History of the IVVA

The Incarcerated Vietnam Veterans of America CTF Chapter 1065, (IVVA) shall be affiliated with the congressionally chartered Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. The purpose of the IVVA is to serve as a multi-purpose self-help leisure time activity group for veteran inmates at the Correctional Training Facility - Central (CTF-C). The IVVA's primary purpose is to aid veterans / ex-military personnel and active duty service personnel by providing support in dealing with service related problems including, but not limited to, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), alcohol and drug abuse, family relations, life skills and other concerns believed to be related to duty in the U.S. Military and its allies.

The goals and objectives of the IVVA are to bring together people and resources to assist veterans incarcerated at CTF. It shall provide a self-help support group based on common military experience which helps to address service related problems and concerns.

The IVVA seeks to establish and maintain contact with other veterans groups and outside organizations to further its goals and objectives. Outside contact will solicit guest speakers, promote the exchange of information, and seek to enhance IVVA's therapeutic value and resources.

The IVVA seeks to provide aid and support to group members preparing for parole and aid reentry to the community. Such assistance may include, but is not limited to, helping members find employment, housing, clothing, tools, transportation, and other transition resources and support.

The IVVA will invite approved outside guests to participate in the groups meetings, workshops, seminars, and other events designed to further its goals and objectives. Participation in group activities shall be voluntary, though the group may contract with professionals to provide services with the approval of its sponsor(s) and CTF Administrators.

The IVVA shall adopt only those policies and practices that are in accord with the laws of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and he institutional policies of CTF.

The charter shall govern the organizational structure (as shown in Appendix A), and functioning of the IVVA at CTF Central Facility. AIIIVVA members shall adhere to this charter and maintain the integrity of the group and its activities.

The IVVA shall not advocate or support any ideas or political positions other than those directed towards its goals and objectives.

Catering by, Chopper Stop Deli King City California. Andy Nuno, Owner

Guest of Honor
California Court of Appeal
Honorable Associate Justice Fourth District, Division Three
Eileen C. Moore
Associate Justice
Life Member, Vietnam Veterans of America

Guests / Speakers *

M.E. Spearman, Warden, CTF '
V. Raso, Chief Deputy Warden'
Lieutenant DaRosa, IVVA Sponsor'
Mike Leisner, IVVA Sponsor
Ms. Connie Martinez, IVVA Sponsor
J. Alberto Fregoso, Community Resources Coordinator, CTF
R. Ramon, Public Information Officer, CTF
Wm. "Bill" Wilson, Associate Warden, Housing, Central'
E. Berta, Correctional Captain, Operations Central
Steve Mackey, CSC President Vietnam Veterans of America'
Mrs. Mackey, CSC President Associates Vietnam Veterans of America'
Terry Hubert, NSC President VVA, VVA Chairman IVC
Mr. & Mrs. Richard F. Garza, Fort Ord State Cemetery Gift Recipient *
Leslie Sunny, Monterey County Food Bank Gift Recipient'
Kurt Brux, Monterey County Veterans Transitional Housing **Gift** Recipient *
Annalisa Mitchell, Monterey County Stand Down **Gift** Recipient *
Michael Fields, Esq.
George Kennedy, Health Care Services VAMC Palo Alto
Jenny Lanterman, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Dept. of Criminal Justice U.N., Reno
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Konstenius, Ph.D. Advisor, Criminal Justice Committee, VVA

Awards Presentation

Closing Ceremony Flag Folding Ceremony IVVA Honor Guard **Taps**

Closing Prayer, Chaplain,

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

"Where's the New Guy?"

By Chaplain Ron Rayner

Stories of Faith and Courage from the Vietnam War by Khe Sanh Vet Larkin Spivey has provided me with much inspiration since it came out in 2011. I am giving a copy to the son of one of my fellow firefighters who will be going into the Marine Corps very shortly. I decided to read the whole of this daily devotional once again just prior to presenting it to the Marine recruit to remind myself of some of the details that have affected my life since its publication.

The July 5 devotional is entitled, "Where's the New Guy?" A soldier on his first night, not really knowing anyone, finds himself in a dark bunker as the base is being shelled. The soldier describes what happened next:

"Out of the silence and darkness, somebody said,
'Where's the new guy?'

'I'm here,' I said.

That was that, but there was something about that little exchange in the dark that I will never forget as long as I live...That somebody even bothered to think about me...I was amazed."

To those who have never attended a Khe Sanh Veteran's reunion, you will be amazed at the reception you will receive. Any new guys or people who have not attended lately will be well taken care of. Khe Sanh Veterans still take care of and welcome their new guys and the Khe Sanh Veterans' Wives take care of and welcome the ladies. For many it is a time of healing

The July 27 devotional in *Stories of Faith and Courage from the Vietnam War* talks about a soldier attending his first reunion with 11th Cavalry and he was contacted by a Chaplain that had help load him on a medevac chopper. He was able to say "Thank you." This made me think of the people I had helped on June 7, and August 18, 1968 that I never heard of again. One called Oakie, a truck driver from Oklahoma was severely injured and we only heard he had lived.

I have met others that I didn't know in Vietnam that have informed about what happened during those two battles on different parts of the battlefield.

The reunions have certainly educated me on many parts of the Siege that I was clueless about. I mostly only knew for sure what went on at the north side of the east end of the airstrip with a reaction force from Alpha 1/26. I have talked face to face with men that were on Hill 861 Alpha when it was overrun. Members of Bravo 1/26 have given me their personal accounts of their travails at different times during the siege. The reunion is a time to share a historic time in American history with one another.

Finally, it is a time to remember those who gave all. On November 15, 9am to 10am there will be a Memorial service. In the past family members of our fallen comrades have attended the reunions asking if anyone knew their father, grandfather or uncle. It has been my experience that our members have been very gracious in trying to help these people.

Lieutenant Colonel Fred McEwan, Commanding Officer of First Battalion 26th Marines at a memorial service for the KIA of 1/26 stated: "In this service, we have honored not only those who have died at Khe Sanh, but all those who were there... You will live with it the rest of your lives and in doing so, you will always remember those who gave their lives.

To each of you who were there, I have this to say. For three months, the eyes of the world looked at you and the enemy, who was unable to claim success..."

This quote comes from Chaplain Ray Stubbe's book, *Battalion of Kings*. As stated in this book 2097 Americans lost their lives in the Khe Sanh area from 1964 to 1972.

Please join us in San Diego, California in November to learn, remember and memorialize.
"May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace. Amen."
Numbers 6:24-25 (New Living Translation)

OBIT

1/LT GEORGE ERIC ROSENTAL USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN VMO-6
November 21, 1941 - May 9, 2013

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO - George Rosental passed away May 9, 2013 following a fall at his home in Colorado Springs, Colorado. A celebration of his life was held 1:30pm Sunday, June 30 at the Black Forest Community Center in Colorado Springs where George had been very active.

Retired Major General Edward Bracken officiated the memorial service along with Chaplain James Woodruff. George was born November 21, 1941 in Latvia to the late Margarita and Arvid Rozentals. In 1944 while Russia invaded Latvia, his family escaped to Germany. Their last place of residence before immigrating to Greensboro, North Carolina in 1949 was the displaced persons camp Valka in Nürnberg.

George graduated from UNC at Chapel Hill with a Bachelor's degree in English. He served as Class President his sophomore year. He served in the United States Marine Corps from 1964 to 1988. He was designated Naval Aviator in 1966 after U. S. Naval flight training.

During a rescue flight in February 1968 in Lang Vei, Vietnam, he was severely injured by enemy gunfire. He was not expected to survive evacuation but friends say because of his North Carolina cussedness - he did. George was a true "Marine Hero", having received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, Air Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze stars, and Vietnam Campaign Medal with 1960 device.

After a very long rehab, George fought to return to active duty transitioning from helicopters to fixed wing aircraft. He retired as Major in 1988. After retiring, he began a home handyman business, served as a financial advisor and later as a consultant on government bids as a technical writer. He also attended law school. Survivors include his wife Teresa of Colorado Springs CO; sister, Linda Gathings and her husband David of Fayetteville NC; brother, John Rosental and wife Lynn of Statesville NC; Teresa's sons, Ed Suever and Mark Suever ; nephews, David Dufresne, David S. Gathings, Chad Gathings and JR Rosental and nieces Karen Dufresne, Heather Gathings Navarro, Carrie and Claire Rosental. He was predeceased by a sister, Marita Dufresne. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Wounded Warrior Project. https://support.woundedwarriorproject.org







AN EXCERPT FROM MIKE ARCHER"S NEWEST BOOK:

The Long Goodbye: In Search of a Friend Lost at Khe Sanh,

Hardly a day goes by when I do not shake my head in amazement at the number of lives Tommy Mahoney touched during his brief existence. He and I were friends in high school and together joined the Marine Corps in 1967. In July of the following year, Tommy was mortally wounded on the day American forces abandoned Khe Sanh Combat Base in the face of overwhelming pressure from North Vietnamese Army forces.

His fellow Marines refused to abandon the body of their much-admired friend, fighting for hours at close quarters against an enemy that stubbornly refused to relinquish it. Only after a menacing directive from a future Commandant of the Marine Corps, did the men reluctantly cease their efforts -- forever tasting the bitterness of that decision.

Thirty-seven years later, I included an account of this in my memoir, ***A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered,*** generating an unanticipated outpouring of concern from readers moved by Mahoney's tragic end and the unresolved issue of his remains. A series of astonishing connections resulted, drawing me back to Vietnam and the hill where he had fallen. Scores of people, from around the world, became involved in this effort to see Tommy returned home. Among them, former adversaries from the Khe Sanh battlefield, including one who participated in the ambush that killed him.

My next book, ***The Long Goodbye: In Search of a Friend Lost at Khe Sanh***, scheduled for release in early 2015, is not just the story of Tommy Mahoney, those who knew him and those who fought against him. It is also the story of why American forces chose to fight at Khe Sanh, a place with the ruggedest terrain; worst weather; and largest, best equipped, enemy force anywhere in South Vietnam. Without understanding that, it is impossible to fully comprehend the appalling scale of suffering and death borne by both sides, or fathom the enduring sorrow carried by those who knew a fine young man who never came back from there.

Michael Archer

EXCERPT CHAPTER 21:

JULY 6, 1968

"There are few die well that die in a battle."

Shakespeare, Henry V

On July 1, 1968, Captain Black [CO, Bravo Company, 1/1 on Hill 881 South] finally received word that the base and hill outposts, with the exception of the radio relay site on Hill 950, were to be closed immediately. He called his platoon leaders to a meeting at the CP and told them that nothing of value to the was to be left enemy. [First Platoon leader] Lieutenant Frank Ahearn hiked back over to the western sector and told his squad leaders to have their men "cave in all of the trenches, collapse the bunkers, and destroy everything that you could not carry out on your back." Black began to ponder which LZ was the safest for final troop evacuation. Over the next three days, the men of Bravo destroyed the fortifications around them. By the night of July 3, 1st Platoon was, as Frank put it, was "sleeping out under the stars."

They were still there on the evening of July 4th. Bravo celebrated by joining the other hills in sending up red and white pop flares, rifle tracers and whatever other colorful ordnance they could spare. The following day was strangely quiet. There were no more explosions reverberating up the ravines and valleys from the base. The destruction was complete. Captain Black grew more concerned because the combat base could no longer provide the hills with artillery support -- and the NVA knew it. Bravo would now have to rely on helicopter gunships and close air support rockets or bombing if the enemy attacked.

Later that day Black told Ahearn that Bravo must remain on the hill for at least another day because Delta Company had gotten into a scrap with the NVA and all helicopters in the area were needed in support of that. The "scrap" he was referring to had begun on Hill 689 as the Marines prepared to abandon that position. Because the terrain there allowed the NVA to approach close to the defensive wire from defilade, the Marines were forced to patrol continuously just outside their perimeter to avoid surprise attacks.

On July 5, one of the patrols was caught in an ambush below the northwest perimeter. As was too of-

ten the case at Khe Sanh, the enemy had prepared a series of well-concealed bunkers and spider holes around a "killing zone," designed not only to inflict heavy initial casualties, but to lay in wait for those they knew would soon come to retrieve the dead and wounded. The officers of Delta Company spent the night devising a plan to recover the eight bodies that were now just outside their wire. On the morning of July 6, as soon as air support arrived over them, a platoon set out down the hillside.

The NVA were waiting, zeroing in on both the mountaintop position and the ambush site with 82mm mortars fired from a mile away. They had also emplaced a heavy machine gun into the hillside across a ravine, aimed directly at the killing zone, and tunneled in so deeply it could not be spotted. Any Marine or corpsman who tried to enter the zone to retrieve a fallen comrade came into its sights. By nightfall, several more Marine bodies, and possibly some wounded, were left in that zone.

By the time Lieutenant Ahearn learned of this dilemma, he was already simmering over the decision to abandon Khe Sanh: "When they started blowing up the ammo at Khe Sanh base I became upset and despondent. Why were we giving up the most important site in the whole war? Then we had several "hurry-up-and-wait" days after we caved in the bunkers got ready to depart the hill forever."

To make matters worse, Ahearn's radio operator, monitoring helicopter conversations for any indication of when they might get off the hill, believed he heard one of the pilots talking about making a special trip to deliver a refrigerated, chocolate cake to Marine Captain Chuck Robb from his wife, Linda, the daughter of President Johnson.

The sense of utter isolation on the hills around Khe Sanh was most keenly felt in the lack of information about what was going on elsewhere. Even mail from home took weeks to arrive. Anxious for a connection to the outside, the men often relied on rumor to supplant what they did not have. If a story was believable, it was believed. If believed, and with nothing to refute it, rumor became indistinguishable from fact and, in such fretful combat conditions, carried the same emotional impact.

Ahearn later recalled:

> I was mad when I heard that. Here we were sitting on top of a hill waiting to get evaced but could not get any helos, and the President's son-in-law was getting frozen fudge for his birthday. That, coupled with the fact that it was obvious to the NVA we were abandoning Khe Sanh after the valiant defense of the Marines there during the Tet Offensive, all combined made me totally demoralized and I was convinced that we [Bravo] had been betrayed somehow.[i]

Lieutenant Ahearn was not alone in his despondency over news of the abandonment and the base's destruction at the hands of fellow Marines. That sense of dejection was shared by the many thousands of American troops who had fought at, or around, the base, upon first hearing the news. It had been a well-kept secret and so landed hard and without warning for a majority of us.

We were disturbed by other events earlier in the year, such as the increasingly vocal antiwar sentiment back in the United States. President Johnson's decision not to run for reelection -- announced on the day before the Khe Sanh siege was lifted -- was, to us, tantamount to a coach quitting his team in mid-game.

All this, combined with the media's view that the Tet Offensive was a military victory for the communists, despite our successful efforts to the contrary; made us feel that our hard work and sacrifices were pointless, and worse, that the deaths of so many of our comrades, victims of political choreography and indecisiveness on the part of our leaders, was morally unforgivable.

Yet, nothing compared to the sick, personal sensation of betrayal we all felt at the news that we were handing Khe Sanh over to the NVA. I can still recall where I was standing near my hootch at Phu Bai when I read the short article about it, buried on the back page of the *Stars & Stripes* -- and the stinging sense of treachery like a slap to the face.

However, Ahearn and the others had more immediate problems than this anger at those who they be-

lieved had betrayed them and now had made their situation even more dangerous. Still sleeping in the open, they waited anxiously for the arrival of evacuation helicopters. Operating at half-strength and expecting to leave at any moment, Bravo had stopped patrolling around the hilltop for signs of the enemy. Each day they watched Marine helicopters making visits to other hills around Khe Sanh, but each evening they were still there, growing more apprehensive.

The History of the 304th Division records that the NVA knew the Marines desperate predicament and intended to capitalize on it:

"Seeing evidence that the enemy was fleeing out of Khe Sanh, the campaign headquarters immediately ordered units to keep aware of the situation and attack the enemy when they began to withdraw and throughout the period of their flight. The 246th Regiment tightly encircled Hills 832 [Hill 861], 845 [Hill 881 South] and 689, bringing pressure on the enemy who was withdrawing forces by helicopter."[ii]

As the sun rose on July 6, 1968, a light morning fog obscured the hilltops of the Hill 881 South complex from the surrounding countryside. Captain Black hoped the helicopters would arrive before the fog lifted. Although the NVA had all four LZ's targeted with mortars, the fog tended to confuse them as to the sound direction of arriving and departing helicopters and so provided a bit more safety from those both shells and their antiaircraft fire.

Still, Black worried that the sheer number of choppers arriving to remove his company might tip off the enemy that hill was being abandoned and with the defensive positions now demolished might trigger an attack. When the fog burned off later that morning and the choppers had still not arrived, Black "had a bad feeling about that day."

The captain's concern about NVA mortar fire caused him to order a switch from the eastern LZ, to one within the perimeter of the western sector, which had not been mortared during Bravo's time there. Black's experience told him that because of the way NVA mortars were so deeply dug into hillsides as a precaution against American counter battery fire, they could not readily shift them to another target. In addition, the slopes along that western sector were much steeper, making a last minute enemy assault there more difficult.

In making this decision, Captain Black weighed the fact that just a few days before, while one of the last patrols was reentering the western gate, they were surprised by what appeared to be an NVA officer and a subordinate studying the 1st Platoon position. Before patrol members could kill or capture them, the two men dropped off the northern lip of the ridgeline and could not be found. Yet, all things considered, the westernmost LZ seemed the safest.

As a result of this decision, Black ordered Lieutenant Gerry Rohlich's 2nd Platoon over to Ahearn's sector, where they took up temporary residence in the southern trenchline and a large bomb crater that Ahearn was using as his platoon command post to await the evacuation helicopters

Like the others, Lance Corporal Tommy Mahoney awoke that morning expecting this was his last day on the hill. To earn his $65.00 a month hazardous duty pay,[iii] he had survived some of the bitterest fighting o the war and in the worst places like, Con Thien, Hue and now Khe Sanh. Yet, barring a turn in his luck, he had only five months left to go in Vietnam.

However, Tommy seemed to have other things on his mind that morning and had been unusually quiet for the last few days. Many in his squad were becoming increasingly concerned after learning he had received a "Dear John" letter from his former girlfriend. Linda wanted to break all ties with him because of his involvement in the war and was not doing it nicely.

Lieutenant Ahearn later recalled how that morning seemed to drag on: "The 6th came and that was supposed to be the day. We woke up, surveyed the area (we weren't doing any patrolling), ate, and got ready. No helos. Noon came, still no helos. Then it happened."

At 2 P.M., Ahearn was sitting in his makeshift, bomb crater CP, along with Lieutenant Rohlich and most of his 2nd Platoon, when Corporal Ken "Snake" Fernandes, Tom Mahoney's squad leader, appeared at the edge of the crater. Snake told

Ahearn that Mahoney had left the barbed wire perimeter to relieve himself. A guard near the gate had subsequently heard him exclaim, "Oh my god," followed by a burst of AK-47 rifle fire, then nothing.

Ahearn immediately jumped up and headed toward the western gate area. Seconds later, an enemy 82mm mortar shell exploded in the bomb crater, badly wounding at least a dozen men, including Rohlich and the corpsman. Ahearn, who was moving away quickly by then and uninjured, spun around and returned to assist the wounded. He simultaneously ordered Fernandes to conduct a search of the hilltop to be sure Mahoney had actually left the perimeter. Snake returned within minutes saying he could not locate Tom on the hill.

While helping with the wounded, Ahearn noticed that the enemy mortar shell had struck the exact sandbag on which he had been sitting. He had avoided certain death by seconds. "Mahoney saved my life," Frank would later say. The lieutenant then radioed Captain Black about Mahoney and the terrible toll the mortar round had just taken on 2nd Platoon. Black ordered him to swend all the wounded back to the main position. Those in 2nd Platoon who were still ambulatory, began carrying the wounded back the five hundred meters to the eastern sector[...]

After mulling the situation, Black told the lieutenant to make a serious attempt at recovering Tom, but not to overinvest troops in the effort. He suggested they use a CS "tear gas" projectile launcher to cover the effort.

Ahearn asked for volunteers. Privates First Class Bruce Bird, Richard Delucie and Wayne Sherwin stepped up and the team set out through the zigzag gate path to the outer opening in the barbed wire about twenty meters to the west.

There they set off the gas canister, which eventually covered a football-field area to the west blowing back toward the area where tom's body lay and dissipating. Simultaneously, machineguns from the Marine trench line blasted the area where they suspected the NVA were located, while others tossed M-26 grenades over the wire. The gas-masked rescue team ran down the path under this covering fire.

Just outside the west gate was a well-worn area of flattened grass and earth that extended in a semicircle out to about ten meters. This was created by patrols leaving the hill over the last few months as they hurried away in all directions from the gate due to predictable NVA mortar fire following their movements. In this area of flattened grass, they found a pool of bubbly blood and evidence that Tom had relieved himself. A few seconds later they saw his prone body about thirty feet down the hill, the head facing downward and hidden in the grass, his trousers bunched around his ankles as if he was hurriedly dragged there and dropped.

Delucie was the first man to crawl toward the body, followed by Bird, Ahearn, then the radio operator, Sherwin. As Delucie got within ten feet of Mahoney, automatic weapons fire opened up from concealed NVA positions just past the body. A bullet hit Delucie in the foot. The others pulled him back up the hill and then made another attempt, this time with Bruce Bird leading.

Bird, though wounded in the arm minutes before by the mortar shell explosion on the hilltop, nonetheless volunteered to help retrieve Mahoney. As he walked in a crouched position to within ten feet of Tom's body, a bullet struck him in the neck. Frank and his men moved forward and dragged him back up.

The CS gas weapon, acquired by Bravo while improvising tactics during house-to-house fighting in Hue four months earlier, was not as effective in the open air and the enemy gunfire continued unchecked. As Lieutenant Ahearn was bringing Bird and Delucie back into the defensive perimeter for medical attention, Captain Black asked the men if they could see the body. Ahearn replied that they did and also saw a pool of blood on the path. When Black asked them what color it was, Frank replied that it was a bright red and bubbly. The captain then deduced it was a wound to the lung or lower abdomen shot, in which case Mahoney was probably already dead[...]

Just as Lieutenant Ahearn was underway with his third attempt, Captain Black received a radio call from the 1st Battalion's operations officer, Capt Ed McHenry, telling him that because more helicopters were on the way, he should prepare the last of his

troops to move off the hill. Black asked for "any possible delay" to allow Ahearn and his men more time to recover Tom's body.

McHenry replied that he would check with the battalion commander, but did not expect the request would be approved. However, before that response had come came back, Black recalled "a regimental commander flying around somewhere in a chopper, came up on my company net and laid into me for not being ready to lift out."

The voice on the radio belonged to Colonel Robert Barrow, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines (later Commandant of the Marine Corps) who, as a result of the almost daily succession of such changes going on at the time around Khe Sanh, had just been given temporary command of all forces in the area.

The Colonel now angrily ordered the captain to immediately terminate all efforts to recover the body and evacuate the hill at once. Black recalled that Barrow "punctuated his transmission liberally with expletives and said to break contact, just get on the choppers and forget about everything else. Since he chose to do this on the company net, virtually every Marine knew what he had done and in a manner that made him look the fool." [vi]

Black was not so much offended at being chewed out in this manner by a regimental commander as he was fuming at the affront to his sense of justice by his superior officers who for the entire afternoon had refused his urgent requests for "the gunship we needed to get Mahoney out."

Despite Barrow's order, Captain Black went ahead and told Frank to try to reach Tom, "but get it done as quickly as he could." Joining Ahearn in this attempt were Sherwin and Williams from the previous try, and a new volunteer, Private First Class Patton. Even though they would not use gas this time, neither side could see exactly where the others were in the tall grass, and the effort quickly turned into a hand grenade duel at close range.

Allen Williams:

Once leaving the trail, the elephant grass was short and so rather than working our way down in a kind of switchback motion, we slid straight down the grass on our backs. I was calling Tommy's name out through the grass in hopes that the sound of my voice might help him regain consciousness. Soon I could see Tom laying about 10 meters down the hill.

The gooks were down the hill past him and even though the elephant grass was only two feet high, the angle at which they had to look up to see us gave us pretty good cover. They stopped shooting at us and started throwing grenades. We started doing the same thing since we couldn't see exactly where they were. I was hit by a grenade fragment on my right arm, and though it was not a big wound, my arm went numb. I then tried to fire my M-16 with my good arm but couldn't. The frustration nearly drove me crazy. I tried pulling the pins out of grenades and throwing them with one hand, but it didn't work and so I pulled pins for the other guys to throw. There were many grenades thrown.[vii]

The five NVA soldiers who opposed them in this grenade fight were not in that particular location by accident. They had carefully chosen the site because it put them at the gate the Marines would most likely choose to begin a march overland to help the rest of their battalion on Hill 689. Alternatively, if the Marines were to be helilifted out, it put the NVA team directly beneath the path helicopters traditionally used when approaching and departing the westernmost of the four landing zones on the hill.

Leading them was 23-year old Nguyen Van Luong. Luong, who was born in Phu Tho Province, had dropped out of high school at seventeen to join the army and, after six years, had risen to the rank of warrant officer. When his unit, the 9th Company, 1st Battalion, 246th Independent Regiment, arrived at Khe Sanh in March, he was a deputy platoon leader.[viii] However, unremitting attrition in the ranks soon relegated him to 3rd Platoon squad leader. When Luong took over the squad, it had consisted of sixteen men, but due to death, wounds, sickness and desertions (the latter increased as they began to experience B-52 bombings), there remained only five.

On the night of July 5, Luong and his men quietly

worked their way up the slope through several barbed wire barriers to within thirty meters of the Marines, then spent the hours before dawn digging and camouflaging their fighting holes. While going about this business they could "clearly hear the voices of the Americans and smell cigarette smoke from the bunkers." At sunrise, they moved into these concealed positions and tried to get some sleep.

The *History of the 246th Regiment* describes what happened next:

At 1400 on the following day [July 6, 1968], we saw one American walking outside the entrance to the outpost. His face was red and his eyes were blue like a mean animal. He was looking toward Mr. Luong's team. The sounds of AK weapons roared immediately, and the American fell. Mr. Luong and Mr. [Tran Ngoc] Long jumped out of their positions and dragged the American's body down. They placed the body in front of them to create an ambush for the other Americans coming out of their bunkers. Ten aircraft of all types circled and bombed the area about five minutes later... however, the team was safe because they were very close to the enemy's location and could calmly observe their movements.[x]

Meanwhile, Captain Black, who had placed 1st Platoon at the end of the queue for the lift out, in hopes that Ahearn's team could finally retrieve tom's body, finally had to order him to "stand down" and move up to the LZ to leave the hill.

Ahearn:

I pleaded with Captain Black to let me stay with a couple of Marines from 1st Platoon and get the body. I thought we could get it. The captain said we were ordered from higher up to move out and so we gathered up all of the gear we could find so it wouldn't fall into enemy hands, even some bloody flak jackets. We crossed the saddle over to the main position as darkness fell.

By dusk, a few Marines were still left on the hill
To board the last CH-46 chopper out: Black; his helicopter support team radio operator; Ahearn and his three volunteers, including the wounded Allen Williams. Ahearn: "As the chopper lifted off I remember looking out of the window trying to see where Tom had been killed but I couldn't see him. It was getting dark. I was demolished exhausted"[...]

Many in Bravo Company, including Lieutenant Ahearn and Captain Black, later expressed the belief that Mahoney's inexplicable behavior in leaving the protection of the hilltop, which inadvertently tipped them off to the presence of NVA troops waiting nearby, saved the platoon from being shot down while lifting off during the scheduled evacuation. The *History of the 304th Division* records that the encirclement of Hill 881 South that afternoon was indeed to "bring pressure on the enemy who was withdrawing forces by helicopter."

Tommy Mahoney has the sad distinction of being the last U.S. Marine to die on that infamous mountain outpost. The place was wrested fourteen months earlier from an entrenched North Vietnamese Army regiment in a bloody four-day battle that resulted in hundreds of Marine casualties, and was held, at great additional cost of life, as the linchpin to Khe Sanh's survival. As the rhythmic popping of the helicopter blades receded into that July night, the agony of Hill 881 South, the Marine Corps' Gethsemane, finally came to an end.

CHAPTER NOTES:

i. Captain Charles Robb's birthday was ten days earlier, on June 26. On July 6, 1968, Robb was commander of a rifle company with the 7th Marine Regiment, south of Danang, a hundred miles south of Khe Sanh. Captain Robert Black would later remark: "Frank's comment about hearing net traffic regarding Robb's chocolate cake was undoubtedly correct, but Robb was never anywhere near Khe Sanh. Atmospherics at night, as well as being at a high elevation on the hill, permitted some really wild 'surfing' on PRC-25 frequencies and radio operators typically entertained themselves if it wasn't a tactical control net in use at the moment." The radio operator that day on Hill 881S either heard pilots who were now working the Khe Sanh lift recounting the story from ten days before, or he was receiving the atmospheric 'bounce" described by Black.

ii. Stubbe, B5-T8,p.48

iii. That, added to his base pay of $137.70, totaled monthly earnings of $202.70

iv. Bird, Williams and Vaughn said they dis tinctly heard him shout "Oh My God!"

v. Robert Black would write in May 2007 "As some later observed, an entire platoon, or more, would have been lost. Tom's irration al action in reality saved Bravo Company from being severely hurt on our lift out from Hill 881S to Hill 689. Many of us knew that, even if we didn't realize it at the mo ment."

vi. Robert Black email to author, November 2, 2008

vii. Allen Williams interview, July 30, 2010

viii. The 246th Independent Regiment unit histo ry later recorded that in mid-June 1968 they was ordered to replace the 304th Division. The 246th was an independent regiment not attached to a division, but to the 'Northern Vietnam Military Region. After the 304th left, NVA forces at Khe Sanh then consisted of a single regiment west of the base and another regiment to the south.

ix. Author interview with Nguyen Tien Thanh on July 8, 2012, with translator Mike Najim

x. U.S. Library of Congress, DOD/DPMO Re search and Investigation Team Research Re port 03-016; Vietnam Historical Reference to Battles at Hill 845 in Quang Tri Province, Case 1224-0-01 (hereafter referred to as "JPAC Research and Investigation Team Research Report")



Here's a photo of LCPL Tom Mahoney in early March 1968 near Phu Bai in newly issued utilities after just coming back from fighting his way through Hue city for the last three weeks. He arrived at Khe Sanh the following month and was KIA/ BNR on Hill 881S six weeks after that.



1ST BATTALION 1ST MARINES DEDICATION OF THEIR MEMORIAL HONORING ALL THOSE WHO PERISHED IN VIETNAM





It is hoped that families and friends of our fallen will be comforted by the knowledge that we, their brothers, remember and honor their service. Semper Fidelis reveals its true meaning by all of us supporting this memorial. By creating this lasting Memorial, it is we, those that have survived, who honor them that have fallen - Semper Fi, Brother.

The cost of constructing this Memorial will be in the $65-$70,000 range. We want to have it completed and appropriately dedicated next Summer in conjunction with our 2015 reunion in Washington, DC, which is scheduled to for August 2015.August 2015 is the 50th year of the deployment of our Battalion to Vietnam, and the beginning of our story.

We are hoping that each of you will join us by contributing what ever you can. As a guideline only, a $300 donation will honor the place of one our fallen in this Memorial. Donations of $300 or more will receive a mini brick, a jacket or both.

Please go to our 1/1 Marines '65-'71 web site at http://www.1stBn1stMarines.com to join us in making this Memorial possible.

I have one other item that may be of interest to the Khe Sanh veterans organization. Bob Koury D1/1 is able to directly purchase 20 Kilos of Khe Sanh Coffee. The coffee is packaged in 6 or 8 oz bags and could be included as sale or auction items at the reunion. If you or the reunion committee is interested in pursuing this matter let me know and we can have it shipped to the appropriate person. Thanks again and we look forward to seeing you in San Diego.

Bill Ring
D1/1 67-68

First OF THE First
1 GUADALCANAL
READY TO FIGHT
Vietnam 1965 - 1971



The above photo shows the overall Texas Vietnam Heroes exhibit as it sits in the Houston Health Museum. The exhibit is a tribute to those Texans who died while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam War. The Heroes exhibit is comprised of 3,417 replicated military ID tags (Hero Tags), each representing a Texas soldier who died in Vietnam during the war. In the foreground, you can see a scale model of the Texas Capitol Vietnam Veterans Monument (TCVVM), which was dedicated on March 29, 2014, on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol in Austin. Photos of actual memorial are on Back Cover Page & Inside of back Cover page.



OBIT

Gen. Carl E. Mundy, Jr., 78, 30th Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from July 1, 1991 until his retirement on June 30, 1995, died April 2, 2014.



From 1996 to 2000 he served as President and CEO of the USO. Gen. Mundy is the Chairman of the Marine Corps University Foundation. He also served on a number of corporate boards.

Gene Overstreet served Gen. Mundy as the 12th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps during his term as Commandant. Sergeant major Overstreet said "he was one of the finest men I ever knew."

Gen. Mundy was born on July 16, 1935 in Atlanta, Georgia. He graduated from Sidney Lanier High School in Montgomery, Alabama. At age 18, he enlisted in the US Marine Corps Reserve and enrolled in the PLC program in December 1953 while attending college serving in the 38th Special Infantry Company, Montgomery, Alabama and rising to the grade of Sergeant. He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in June 1957, following graduation from Auburn University. His later military education included the Command and General Staff College and the Naval War College.

General Mundy's decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with Valor device, Purple Heart, Navy Commendation Medal with a star & Valor device, Combat Action Ribbon, and many others.

General Mundy's two sons followed him into the Marine Corps. His oldest son, Brig. Gen. Carl E. Mundy lll currently serves as commanding general of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade in California, while Col. Timothy S. Mundy serves as chief of staff for Combat Development and Integration at Marine Corps Combat Development Command in Quantico, VA. He is also survived by his daughter, Elizabeth Gunter. Private Memorial services will be held at the Iwo Jima Memorial. He will be buried with his wife Linda Sloan Mundy in the family plot in Waynesville, NC.



WELCOME ABOARD SKIPPER

KHE SANH VETERAN IN THE NEWS

TOM ESSLINGER USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
INDIA & MIKE CO 3/26 HILL 881S

Marine veteran John T. "Tom" Esslinger, Marine Corps Association and Foundation (MCA&F) chief operating officer (COO) since 2008 will be departing the MCA&F at the end of June and was replaced by Colonel Daniel P. O'Brien, USMC (Ret). Tom oversaw significant advancements during his time as COO and in the two years he was a board member prior to becoming COO. His acumen and expertise were critical during the formation of the Marine Corps Association Foundation and in developing affinity partnership programs for the MCA&F.



OUTGOING COO MCA&F, TOM ESSLINGER

Following his graduation from Yale University, Tom was commissioned in December 1966 and upon graduation from The Basic School as an infantry officer he was ordered to the Republic of Vietnam. In Vietnam, Tom, with 3d Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, was in combat in northern I Corps and on Hill 881S during the Battle of Khe Sanh in 1968. Tom left Vietnam in October 1968, having been awarded two Bronze Star medals with Combat "V" and a Purple Heart, for duty at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C.

In August 1970, he left active duty to enroll in Georgetown University Law Center, graduating with distinction in 1973 and beginning a law career that carried him from an associate to a managing partner in a District of Columbia law firm he helped establish. He joined the MCA board in 2006, moving to the COO position in 2008.

Tom Esslinger's long service to Corps and country has been marked by superb commitment, and he will be missed. But, MCA&F will continue to move forward with a continuity of effort as another current board member, retired Col Dan O'Brien, assumes the duties as the COO. Dan comes in from his position as the Vice President, Marine Corps and Defense Accounts, Battelle Memorial Institute, Washington, D.C.



NEW COO MCA& F COLONEL DANIEL P. O'BRIEN

Prior to retiring from active duty in November 2004, he held a wide variety of command and staff positions, including Commanding Officer, Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C.; Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, MCB Quantico, Va.; Military Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Pentagon. He also had command tours in infantry units in the 1st, 2d and 3d Marine divisions.

Dan holds a bachelor's degree in management from the University of Massachusetts and a master's degree in International Relations from the U. S. Naval War College program with Salve Regina College.
Tom, on behalf of our MCA&F membership, sponsors, affinity partners and certainly our staff, thank you, and we wish you "fair winds and following seas."

Dan, welcome aboard, we look forward to working more closely with you.
MajGen Edward G. Usher III, USMC (Ret)
President and CEO
Marine Corps Association & Foundation

"I KNOW YOU "

By Craig W. Tourte

I usually wear a necklace and bracelet in the colors of the Vietnam Service Ribbon. You have seen the colors arraigned in many necklaces, bracelets, key chains and things that are similar. They are consistently yellow, red, white and green; many are handed out or can be purchased from the Khe Sanh PX during the reunions. At times I am surprised when I meet others who claim to be Vietnam Veterans when they fail to recognize or mention my adornment. I would have certainly noticed if another was wearing the same design and I'd mentioned it to them, inquiring if they served in Vietnam.

I played golf today and paired up with another man around my age. After a few minutes he asked me if I had served in Vietnam. I responded that he quite obliviously noticed my necklace and I confirmed that I had served in Vietnam in the Marine Corps. He said that he had also been a Marine and served two tours in Vietnam. He then asked me where I was in 1969 and 1970. I told him that I had served in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968 and that most of my time was at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Our conversation went back and forth during the game and I learned he had a most storied and interesting experience during his two tours. He purchased an adult beverage from the cart girl and asked if I remembered the green beer from Vietnam and in particular that served in Da Nang. I smiled a bit and told him that I never got to Da Nang.

Sometimes I don't think others really understand our situation at Khe Sanh. To many it was just another place and another battle. Most understand the long period of incoming but few really understand the deprivation relating to the Siege. I told him that my experience in Vietnam was perhaps unique to that experienced by others who served in Vietnam. I'm afraid I went into my usual rambling informative spiel about never having taken a bath or shower from a forced water pipe, never walked on cement or asphalt, never slept on a bunk, never saw a television or heard a civilian radio program, never sat on a chair, never used a flush toilet, never walked on a rug - etcetera, all during my tour in Vietnam. The list was getting way too long for our short conversation but I think he was getting the idea. I told him that I was very impressed that he served two tours because I was quite sure I would not have survived another and in fact a Marine I had served with all through the Siege extended for another tour and was subsequently killed in action.

He was a very pleasant fellow who told me that he reached the rank of Gunnery Sergeant and had served for over 13 years (or something like that I don't exactly recall the exact years he served) in the Marine Corps but during the Corps downsizing he was forced to leave.

We exchanged (business) introductory cards after our game. I gave him the Khe Sanh Association card Leland Upshaw had sent to me and he in turn gave me a card which identified him as being a Commander of a local American Legion Post. I also presented him with a Khe Sanh Challenge Coin - they are very impressive and those who receive one are always very appreciative.

After our golf game was over and I was placing my clubs in my truck he drove up next to me in his golf cart and handed me a small rolled up paper with a

red ribbon attached. He said he thought I would enjoy reading it when I had a few alone moments. When I arrived home I opened up his gift and read the following poem titled **"I Know You."**

"You may not know me, but I saw you

Your arms reached out.

Your mouth gasping for one last breath.

You carried wounds not seen with scars.

You carried memories that burn deep and burn like fire."

"The blood dripping from your hands does not wash off

and the screams within never leave.

You choke up when a flag passes by."

"You fall to your knees not from faith, but from

weakness when you hear "TAPS."

The faded army clothes, worn badges, but proud medals

that you wear say so much."

"You many not know me, but I know you.

You are a veteran from a war no one liked.

You gave when no one cared.

You saluted a flag that you felt turned its back on you."

"You are a Vietnam Veteran.

I breathe Freedom, because you cared.

My children know Freedom, because you

fought for it.

You may not know me, but I know you and I just want to say," **"THANK YOU"**

The author was not identified.

I thought it was a very important gift that I had received, obliviously the little poem by the unidentified author touched his heart and was an inspiration and even comfort to him. He told me that his post goes to the burials of homeless veterans and visits Veterans hospital. His concern was that returning Veterans are not forgotten nor treated like Vietnam Veterans were treated when they come home for war.

"I Know You" was a great title....because we do know, don't we.

HILL 861 AND KHE SANH COME TO THE BASIC SCHOOL AT QUANTICO, VA! PAST MEETS THE PRESENT

By Dennis Mannion

I picked up on the third ring, and the voice on the other end spoke just a few words, but they made my heart race and my breathing stop. "This is Captain Macon, United States Marine Corps, at TBS in Quantico, Virginia, and I am looking to speak with a Mr. Dennis Mannion." Before I could answer, my mind flashed through worst-case scenarios because our youngest son Devin was just about halfway through the 26 week Basic School course. I took a deep breath, wondered how I'd be able to break the news -- whatever it was that had happened at TBS -- to my wife, and said, "Yes...yes, sir. This is Dennis Mannion."

I was in for just under three years, and while I held down an officer's job in Nam as the arty FO for K 3/26, I was enlisted. From boot camp, to ITR, then to Naval Gunfire school in Coronado, CA, my sense and my understanding about USMC officers was that I needed to avoid them as much as possible! Sure, I knew that all officer candidates went to Quantico. I knew that there was no dividing line east or west of the Mississippi River for OCS, and that was about it. Hell, I don't think I even heard the acronym "TBS" until 5 or 6 years ago. I've met and hung around with some fine former Marine Corps officers at the reunions, but to be truthful, I never knew anything about the process that turned them into Officers of Marines. I wasn't "one of them" in the first place, and how they got to be who they were back then was always insignificant to me. It was at the San Antonio reunion when I first heard about TBS. Nick Romanetz told me that his July 67

TBS class was dedicating a monument in October on the grounds of the Marine Corps Museum. They were doing so to honor those in their class who had lost their lives in Vietnam.

As it turned out, I was very close to one of those officers -- to use the word "loved" would not be too much of a stretch -- and so I attended that dedication because of Lt. Fordham -- KIA 15April68 in the unforgiving terrain between Hills 881s & 881n. At the museum I was privileged to meet and spend some time with Lt. Fordham's TBS roommate Barry Kowalski who told me what those TBS weeks were like back in early 1967. With so many officers needed for Nam, it was only a 21 week course then. Last fall I became even more knowledgeable about TBS because Devin completed his ten weeks of OCS, graduated a 2nd Lt just before Thanksgiving, and started The Basic School a week later. We saw him at Christmas and New Years, but since then our contact was limited to weekend phone calls and video chats. Mostly what we heard was, "Lot's to learn; not a whole lot of sleep; made some great friends; the weapons at our disposal are awesome."

Now, standing in my kitchen in Cheshire, CT, I braced myself for whatever bad news Captain Macon had to say. His next words took me by total surprise. "Mr. Mannion, I just learned from some of the 2nd Lt's in your son's platoon that you were an artillery forward observer at Khe Sanh... on Hill 861 ... during the siege! Is that true?" My mind could not initially process what I had been asked, so I stammered, "Yes, I was an FO there, but what's wrong with Devin?" He laughed, said that Devin was doing well enough, and that he was calling not about our son but to inquire if I might be interested in helping him develop an artillery field-study case for Bravo Company's classroom work on Supporting Arms. He went on to explain that he was the head instructor for the artillery portion of their training, and that their final class on the topic consisted of a close examination of a real event in military history.

He stated that for almost two decades TBS had been using a field-study based on British Marines against Argentinean forces in a place called Goose Green in the Falkland Islands. He thought it was time for a change and was hoping that Hill 861 could become the new case-study about close artillery support at TBS! It did not take me long to say I'd be pleased to help.

For the next month, Captain Macon and I began weekly email and phone exchanges. He asked dozens of questions. I took my Khe Sanh map to Staples and sent him two copies by mail. I emailed him dozens of my photos from the siege, and I also used a photo-edit process to mark some of the photos with text about targets, terrain features, actual arty missions, known NVA locations, etc.

In mid-April he said that he was very pleased with the progress that he was making on this new case-study. However, completing it in time for Bravo Company's use was going to be a close call as their last day in the classroom before going into the field for a week of live arty fire was 10 days away -- Monday, April 28th to be exact. Not only did he have to get his immediate boss to approve the unit, it also had to be shown to the higher-ups at TBS before he got the green light. Then he casually said, "If I can get this approved and implemented for Bravo, do you think that you would be willing to come down to Quantico and participate in the study?! We'd love to have you here!" It did not take me long to say that I knew how to get there.

And so it was that I departed Connecticut on Sunday 27 April for the 6+ hour drive to Quantico with my original map and my C 1/13 issued Bausch & Lomb binoculars safely stored in my travel bag. I met Captain Macon on Monday at 0845, and we spent the rest of the morning going over his powerpoint presentation about the use of artillery at Khe Sanh. There was a particular emphasis on how arty was used against the NVA in their assault of 861 during the early morning hours of 21 Jan 68.

Stacked on the captain's desk were hundreds of copies of my map which he planned to distribute to the "students" when they came into the classroom in the afternoon. The classroom is a large lecture hall -- capacity over 300 -- with multiple, tiered rows of tables and chairs, two very large projection screens, and a superb audio system. Captain Macon and I went over the format for the field-study right before lunch, and he told me that the last 10 minutes of the class "would be mine."

As the 2nd Lt's arrived at the lecture hall, each fire team was instructed to send someone down to the front table to pick up a map. Once the maps were

handed out, the lights were dimmed and Captain Macon began his power point presentation and his explanation of what the tactical situation was like at Khe Sanh in early January '68. There were overhead views of the base, the hills, friendly locations were highlighted as well as specific NVA units by known names and numbers. As his running commentary progressed towards the 20th of January 1968, Hill 861 became the focus of his talk along with specific photos on the big screens.

He explained what the days prior to 20 Jan were like on that hill: no more active patrolling off the hill; passageways in the barbed wire sealed up with even more wire; digging deeper fighting positions; ammo distribution; and the registration of potential artillery targets around the hill by the FO. The lights came up and the fire teams were given 15 minutes to examine their maps and plot two locations around 861 where artillery should be registered. They were also instructed to also plot one target in close as an FPF --Final Protective Fire call. They set to work with a large, overhead image of 861 on the big screens to help. After the allotted time, three fire teams were randomly called up to the front to indicate with a laser pointer where they chose particular target locations and why they selected them. Instructors and other new lieutenants in the audience asked questions, and the fire teams had to respond with their reasoning behind their choices.

At the end of a pretty lively discussion, Captain Macon showed a photo of 861 with my actual target registrations on it, and he asked them to look at their choices and compare to what they were seeing on the screen. He provided a balance and an explanation of some of their choices contrasted with mine. His next photo was of me on 861 during the siege, and he told Bravo that the "the Marine on the screen and the gentleman in civilian clothes standing in the back of the auditorium is Dennis Mannion -- the corporal who had registered those targets 46 years ago.

The place burst into applause, and I was allowed 15 minutes to cover three topics: The day and the night of the 20th including the NVA officer surrendering at the combat base; the early morning hours of the 21st when the NVA got through our wire and on to the hill; and what life as the FO was like for me over the next three months....the daily and nightly routines. There was time to take a few questions, and I had Captain Macon go back into his power point presentation so that I could pinpoint certain terrain features as well as places where the NVA gave us the most trouble from.

When it was over, my son's platoon was given permission to stay a few extra minutes to interact with me, but the other 5 platoons headed for their barracks. They had just under an hour to fall out in full gear and equipment for a late p.m. and early evening hike out to the artillery range. Live fire would commence the next morning. I got to speak briefly with my son and a few of his buddies, but they really had to hustle out too as they were under the same time constraints as the other platoons. I shook hands with Captain Macon and departed for my hotel room and an early morning drive home on Tuesday morning.

Captain Macon called later that week to thank me and to ask for an additional favor when we were there for Devin's graduation on 25 June. He asked if I'd be willing to sit in the AV room of the library and talk on camera for about 15 minutes covering the same topics as I had done in person. The way he put it was this: Goose Green is OUT at TBS and Hill 861is IN, and he knew that I would not be able to come down to Quantico every time a new company came through TBS. I was able to do that taping and it's now part of the unit.

I am pleased and proud to have been a part of this (and the fact that it will continue to get used), but mostly I am pleased and proud for the Marines in my arty unit C 1/13, the Marines at the combat base who provided security for all of them and the other artillery units, as well as the helicopter and plane crews who kept them supplied, and the Hill guys who took a lot of pressure off the base just by their collective presence out there in no-man's land.

Life can be circular at times and 861, being part of TBS is proof of that, and we all know the value of being in the right place at the right time Outgoing rounds fired all those years ago at Khe Sanh are now being observed and discussed at Quantico, and will be for the foreseeable future.


The black X's lmark where
the NVA came thru after midnight
on 21Jan68
N
XXXXX
Became 861a
on 23Jan68
V
Combat Base >
3000 meters away
Flattest and longest approach
to 861...but totally exposed to 105
arty at the base.
Photo taken by Ray Stubbe
July 1967

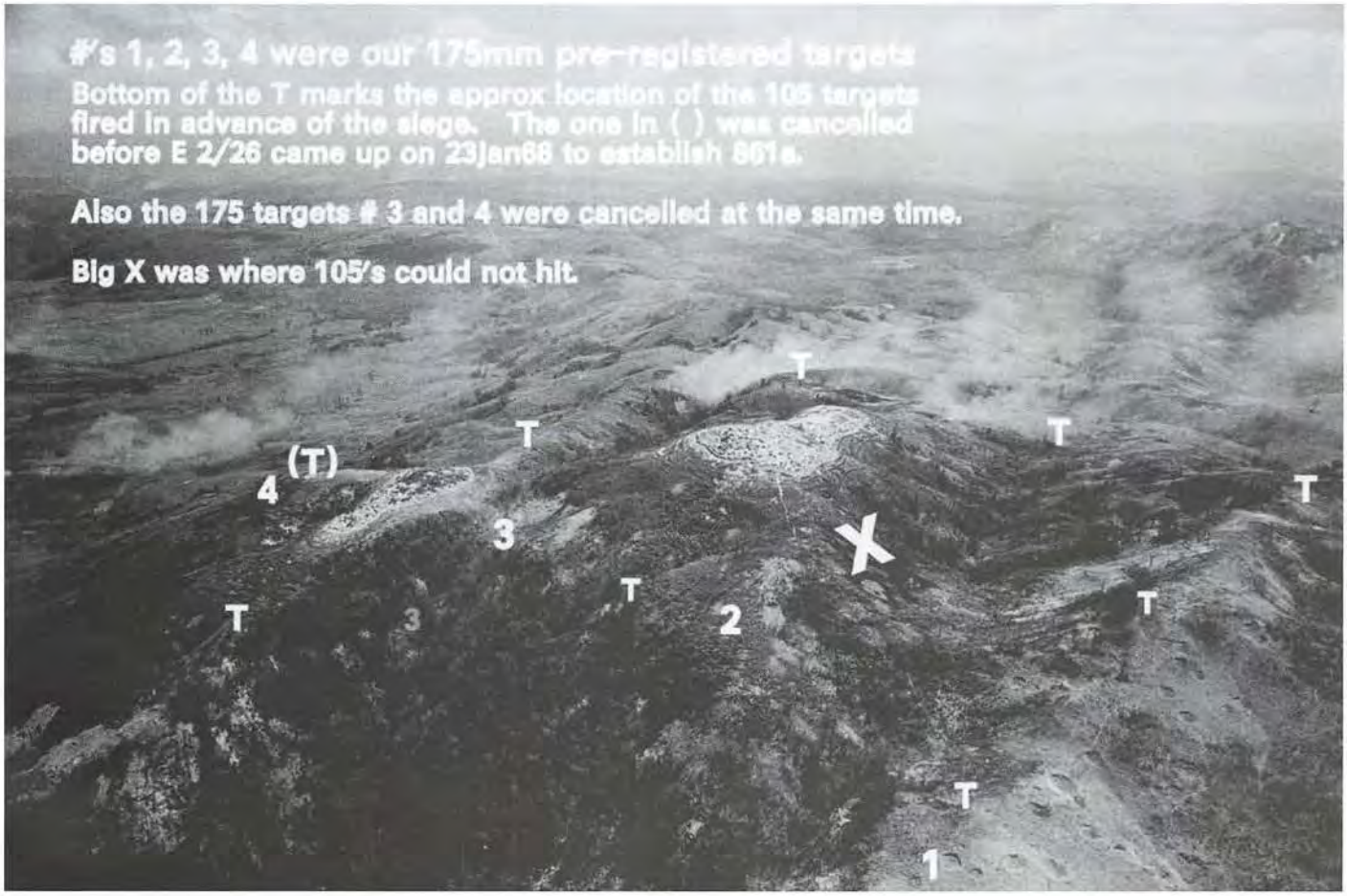
#'s 1, 2, 3, 4 were our 175mm pre-registered targets
Bottom of the T marks the approx location of the 105 targets
fired in advance of the siege. The one in ( ) was cancelled
before E 2/26 came up on 23Jan68 to establish 861a.
Also the 175 targets # 3 and 4 were cancelled at the same time.
Big X was where 105's could not hit.
T
T
T
T
4
(T)
3
X
T
T
3
2
T
T
1

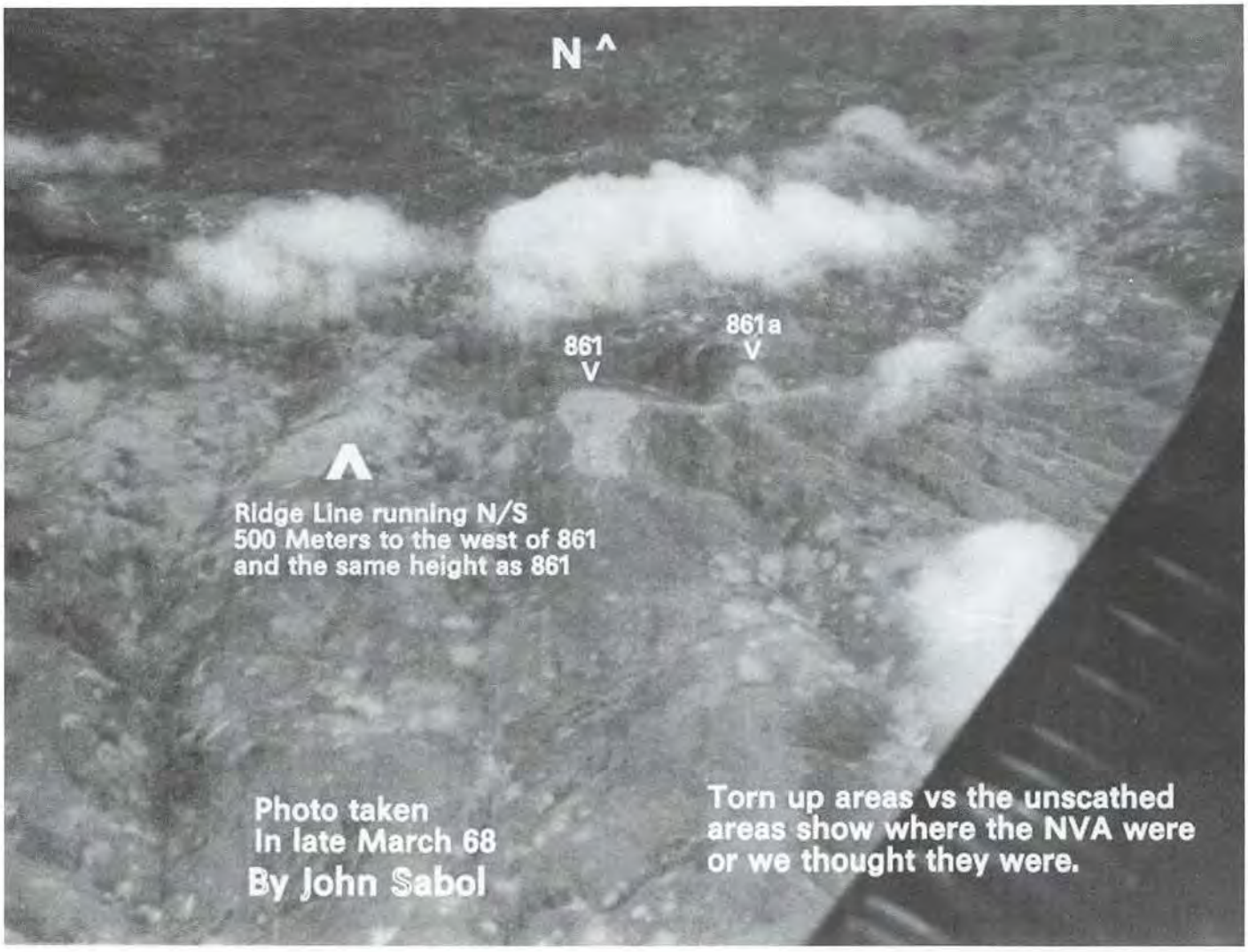
N ^
861
V
861a
V
Ridge Line running N/S
500 Meters to the west of 861
and the same height as 861
Photo taken
In late March 68
By John Sabol
Torn up areas vs the unscathed
areas show where the NVA were
or we thought they were.

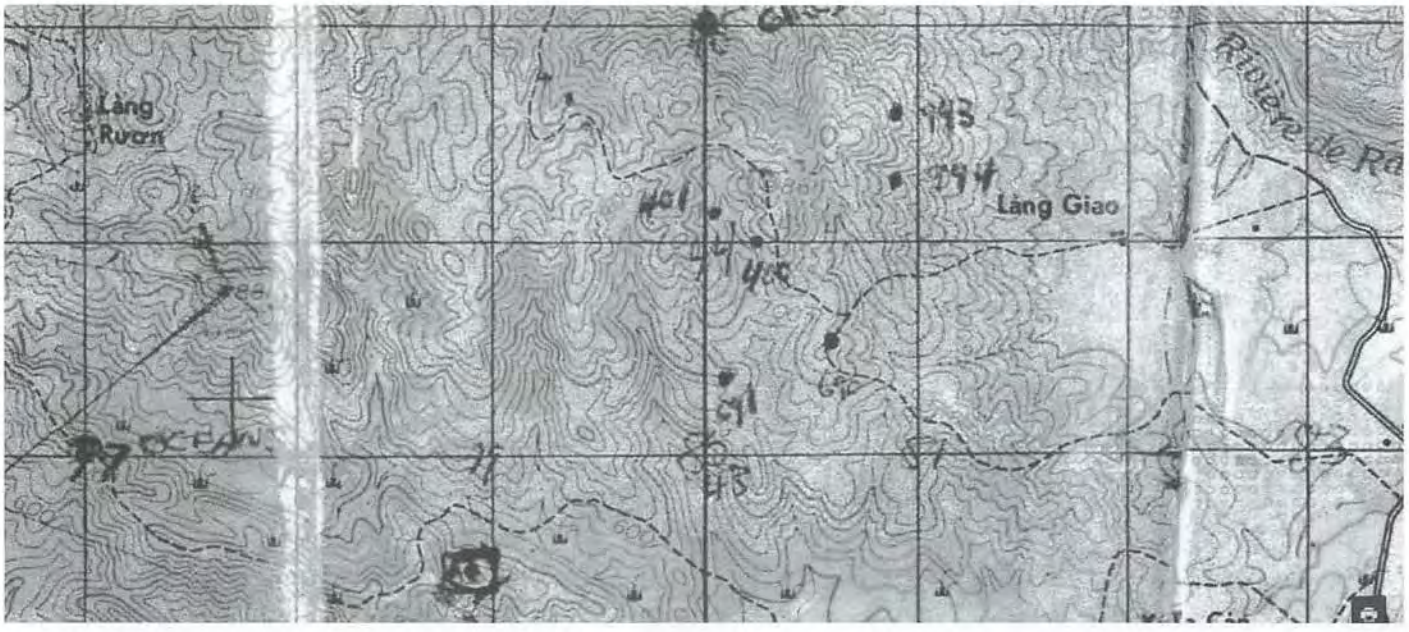
Làng
Ruon
Làng Giao

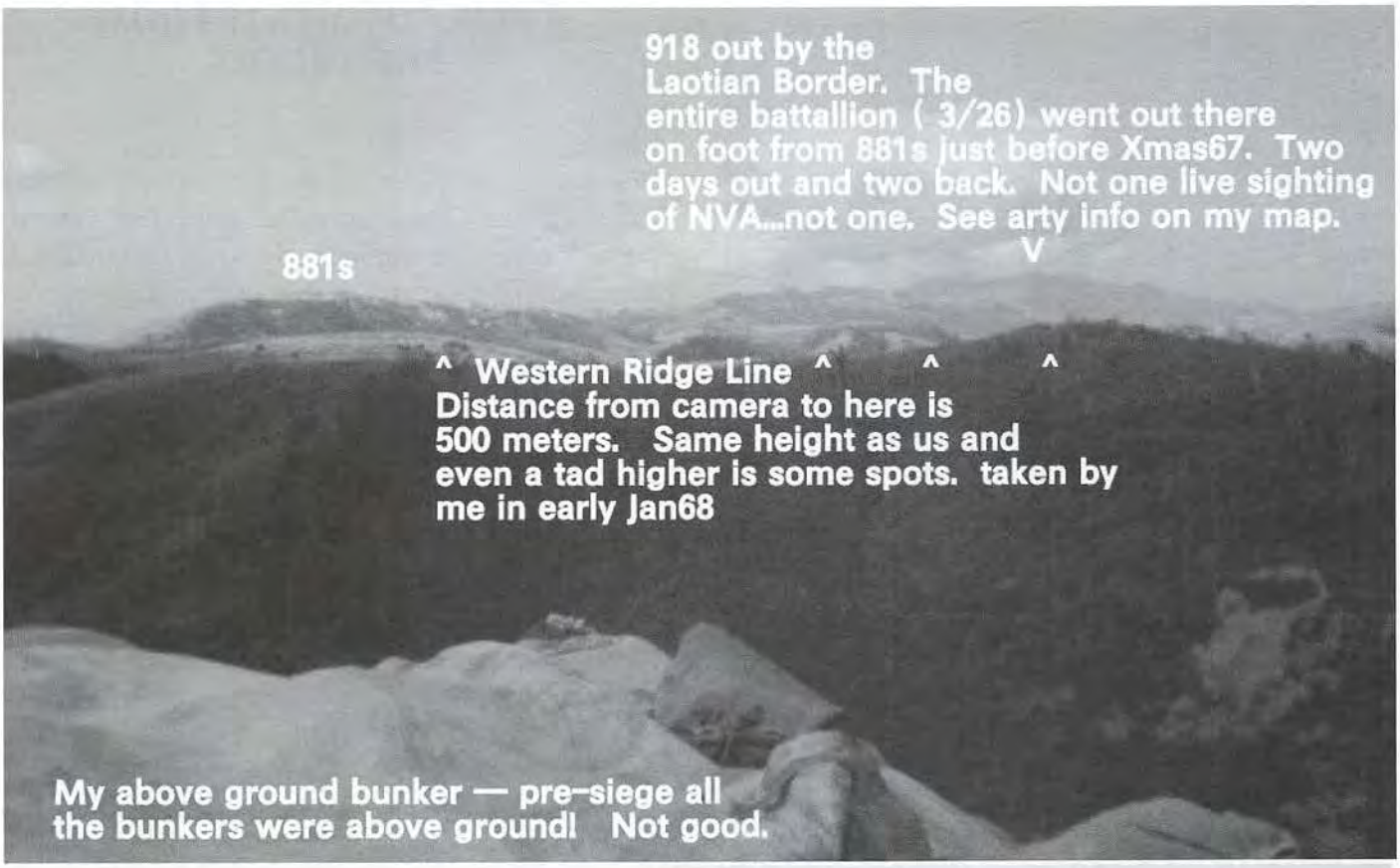
918 out by the
Laotian Border. The
entire battallion (3/26) went out there
on foot from 881s just before Xmas67. Two
days out and two back. Not one live sighting
of NVA...not one. See arty info on my map.
V
881s
^ Western Ridge Line ^ ^ ^
Distance from camera to here is
500 meters. Same height as us and
even a tad higher is some spots. taken by
me in early Jan68
My above ground bunker — pre-siege all
the bunkers were above ground! Not good.

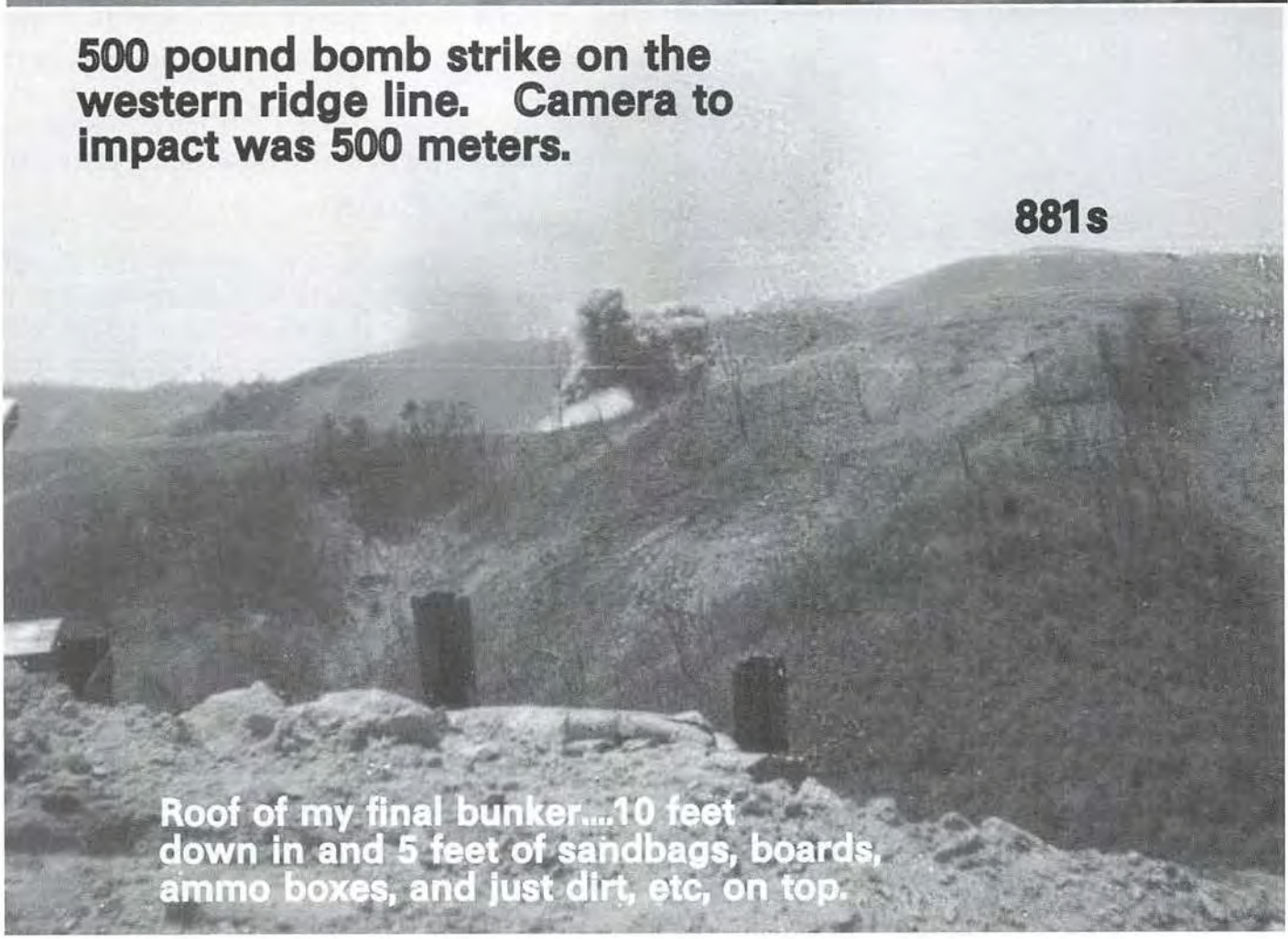
500 pound bomb strike on the
western ridge line. Camera to
impact was 500 meters.
881s
Roof of my final bunker....10 feet
down in and 5 feet of sandbags, boards,
ammo boxes, and just dirt, etc, on top.







PAST & PRESENT

CONGRATULATIONS

2ND LT DEVIN MANNION WITH HIS BROTHER JAKE AT HIS GRADUATION FROM MARINE CORPS BASIC SCHOOL

SORRY DENNIS HE WENT INFANTRY

A FEW COMMENTS FROM THE TROOPS

Dennis,
Congratulations! This is a perfect example of what has made our Corps successful since Tun Tavern, the willingness to continuously adapt and innovate by recognizing the genius from within. It invests us all in the mission, regardless of rank. How pleased you must be knowing the methods you employed 46 years ago to save lives at Khe Sanh, will now be helping bring even more boys safely home. Fantastic!
Mike Archer

Dennis, I think that most important thing about your post is that you were recognized by CURRENT Marine Officers who knew you did a remarkable job those many years ago at Khe Sanh. You accomplished your mission and with precision targeting saved many of our Brother Marines. I know that Devin was bursting with pride at his Dad's presentation. The old teacher in you never stops and I for one have learned much from you over the years at reunions. Congratulations and Semper Fi; Dennis. "T-Bone" PS: Get ready for some new photos of mine I just found stashed in my junk and "YES I am "T-Bone" Jones and won't you look at my photos!!!!"

Dennis, Great story! There probably isn't a guy more qualified than you to help put this together. It was a long time ago, but when I was at TBS, I don't recall spending in-depth time on supporting arms that the Lts go through now. We may have spent a day or two in the field, calling in a few live fire missions in small groups. Lots of class work though. I do recall personally calling in an 81 mission.

Once again, you have completed an immense undertaking that will keep Khe Sanh on the front burner at Quantico and in the Corps. You are among a few KSV that are the "go to" guys for factual information. An enlisted guy doing an officer's job? What would have happened with you and the Corps if you didn't leave Notre Dame early (you know what I mean)? Proud to have you as a brother and friend. I know you are immensly proud of Devin and his accomplishment.

Nick Romanetz



THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
Gilbert "Chief" Wall USMC B CO 1/26 FO Passed Away	Peter Mudrinich B Co 1/26
Maj Walter A. Gunn "BUZZ" USA 37Th Army Rangers Passed Away	Phyllis Gunn Wife
Cpl Paul Fredrickson USMC H&S CO 1/26 AO KIA 09 May 68	Patrick Hopkins H&S CO 1/26 81MM
Mark Cool USMC H&S CO 1/26 81MM	Patrick Hopkins H&S CO 1/26 81MM
Jack Corbett USMC H&S CO 1/26 81MM Passed Away 09 June 2014	Patrick Hopkins H&S CO 1/26 81MM
HM-2 William Mercer USN I CO 3/4 KIA 15 June 68 SS Medal	John "Doc" Nunn K CO 3/4 Alpha Med
LCpl Jeffrey M. Walsh USMC A CO 1/9 KIA 08 Feb 68	John "Doc" Nunn K CO 3/4 Alpha Med
In Memory of His 59 USMC Brothers of B CO 1/9 KIA 02 July 1967	Patrick McKenna B CO 1/9
Capt John Ellis USMC MABS-36 KIA 28 Feb 68 with 22 Others Crash of CH-46	Richard Takacs MATCU-62, MABS-36

GOD BLESS THEM ALL



RAYS WORLD

Letter From Our Founder
Reverend Ray W. Stubbe

Hi Tom,

I'm still active In local veterans events. Gave the prayer for the Milwaukee Flag Day event and also an event for the dedication of a monument to war dogs that was built m a local town (Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin). There were dog handlers from all over the country and also several dozen different dogs. It was a very pleasant day. Rain had been predicted, but didn't come.

I Some incidents about dogs at Khe Sanh were in my mind. I recalled that on one of my visits to Hill 881S, my clerk and I were sleeping on a large pile of C-ration cases m the supply tent. In the middle of the night, my clerk left his blanketed nest and went out to piss. When he returned, the dog was sleeping on his blanket. He told me the next morning what had happened and added, "I wasn't about to move the dog!"

Then, I remember that the dogs were pulled from accompanying infantry patrols off 881S and 861 because it was too hard on them! (Not hard on the Marines, but on the dogs). Then, Kevin Macaulay once told me that when the siege began, a scout dog dashed up the rear ramp of a CH-46 helicopter and bounded to a position between the two pilots.

When his handler came on the chopper to coax him out, he just growled. Kevin said, "He wasn't about to leave the helicopter! That dog was smarter than any of us!" Lastly, I remembered a statement by a MP at Camp Pendleton about dogs sniffing out drugs in the barracks. He said that the breed of dog best suited was the poodle, but added, "How would it look for a Marine with a poodle?" So, the more "Marine" appearing dogs-English bulldogs, German shepherds, and so on were used!

I still go to the boxing gym Monday through Thursday evenings and to a regular gym for weights and machines. So physically I'm doing very well, although issues with the spine and bones in general is the same as It is for all of us who have become older-NO! not "older," but "more mature!" Emotionally, however, I'm finding that I'm increasingly becoming more isolated, "bunkered," and just don't venture out of my immediate area. I won't even go into downtown Milwaukee-too much shooting, like going back to a battlefield! When there are events in the city (like the Flag Day ceremony), a good local Vietnam vet friend takes me there. The odd thing is that even though I know what's going on, I don't have the power to combat it!

Several Khe Sanh vets occasionally call or write me usually people I never personally knew at the time, but who have read things I've written about some buddy of theirs that was killed. A few Khe Sanh vets also write or call, but I suppose most, these days, communicate through the internet, and I'm still not on that. It's always very good to hear from these people, however. Sometimes, I'm able to send them copies of official reports or other documents that clarify situations.

HERE IS THE ARTICLE FOR THE WAR DOG MEMORIAL RAY TOOK PART IN

MENOMONEE FALLS MEMORIAL IS A BIG SALUTE TO THE DOGS OF WAR

By Meg Jones of the Journal Sentinel

Menomonee Falls - The 6-foot-tall gray granite monument was for Skip, Hobo, Fl0 and Prince. For Dobermans, German shepherds, bulldogs and huskies. For four-legged veterans who saved countless lives in combat zones as long ago as World War I and are still working in harm's way in Afghanistan.



They're veterans who have gotten little recognition aside from a chew toy and a loving embrace from their handlers. But a Menomonee Falls-based

group called War Dogs thought they should be honored and raised $5,400 for a monument unveiled at an emotional ceremony Sunday afternoon in Village Park.

"I can't say enough for what military working dogs do," said Kim Michalowski, who served as an Air Force dog handler in Vietnam in 1971 and '72 with German shepherds Hobo and Prince. "I wouldn't be here without my dogs. This monument means so much - it just touches my heart."

A couple hundred people turned out for the dedication, including many veterans and War Dogs group members plus several dozen dogs and a few law enforcement K-9 units. Among the veterans were Vietnam military dog handlers who came from Colorado, Minnesota and Illinois when they heard about the effort. As the national anthem was sung, everyone stood silently and saluted or held their hands over their hearts while a few canines barked as their owners shushed them.

Jerry Witt, a member of War Dogs who was instrumental in raising funds for the monument, told the crowd about his dogs Skip and Satan, who served with him in Vietnam. Skip was killed when he triggered a trip wire on a patrol, but not before he signaled to Witt the danger. As Skip tried to back away from the booby trap, the pup's body harness exploded the trip wire. Skip survived the initial explosion but died a week later from an infection.

"We're here today to honor those four-legged veterans because they saved countless lives, including my own," Witt said.

In a touching moment, Vietnam veteran Joe Campbell recited a list of Wisconsin military dog handlers killed in Vietnam as veterans walked up to a table with one ceremonial place setting in memory of fallen and missing military members, touched a Bible and saluted as each man's name and the name of his dog were read out loud.

The mortality rate for dogs and their handlers was high in Vietnam since the enemy quickly realized they were so effective as trackers.
"I can assure you the dogs I knew in Vietnam were always out front. I don't think I'd be here today except for the dogs and the men who trained them," Campbell said. "May God bless you all and rest in peace our brothers."

The aim of War Dogs is to honor a little-known part of American military history by marching in parades - the group's next event is July 3 in Menomonee Falls - appearing at shows and giving presentations on the history of war dogs. Members own dogs of the 16 or so breeds used by the U.S. military, including collie, Labrador retriever, boxer, beagle, Newfoundland and Jack Russell terrier.

Wearing T-shirts with the logo "Hell on Paws - America's Unsung Heroes of All Wars," members paraded with their dogs by breed as David Pohle explained how they were used by the military. Among them was Dave Gohr, a military historian and collector, clad in the World War II combat uniform of the 10th Mountain Division and leading two huskies. Gohr explained huskies were used by the 10th Mountain Division to carry supplies over rugged terrain in Italy, and they were also used to rescue downed pilots.



Military dogs were also used to sniff for explosives, find improvised explosive devices, capture enemy soldiers, patrol bases and comfort wounded service members.

Dan Crangle of Germantown spoke while holding his son's black lab Flo, who sat on her haunches and surveyed the crowd, panting in the heat.

Crangle's son Cody spent a year training with Flo in the Marines before they deployed together to Afghanistan, where they were involved in numerous patrols and operations in Helmand province a

few years ago. When Flo and Cody Crangle returned home to Camp Pendleton, the military decided 7-year-old Flo could no longer deploy because of PTSD symptoms and put her up for adoption. Cody Crangle jumped at the chance to adopt his partner, and now his parents are looking after Flo until Cody finishes his hitch in the Marines later this summer.

Crangle talked about how the pup quickly became a member of the family. "She's just an amazing dog. We're very proud of her and our son." Milwaukee County Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. came to the monument unveiling with his 7-year-old Rottweiler Zookes. "This group (War Dogs) is usually in the same parades I'm in. I understand the role dogs play in law enforcement and the role that they play in the military," Clarke said.

Don Gutknecht, 82, who served in the 39th Scout Dog Platoon in Korea and Japan, worked with German shepherds that acted as scouts. Some dogs ferried messages because "we didn't have any cellphones," said a smiling Gutknecht. "We had a North Korean dog come up to us one time. He'd been an ammunition carrier, he still had the straps on. We made him one of our own, and he served with us for a while. Good dog."

Gutknecht grew close to his German shepherd Marta, who moved to Japan with him for two years after Korea until Gutknecht returned home, leaving his dog behind. None of the dogs that served in Vietnam returned to America when the war ended; their handlers sometimes signed up for additional tours of duty because they didn't want to leave their dogs behind. Because they were classified as "excess equipment," half of the American military dogs were euthanized at war's end and the others were left to fend for themselves or given to the South Vietnamese army.



Military dog handlers lobbied Congress to change the rules, and two decades ago legislation was signed that ensures war dogs are treated like other veterans.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION
An update from the review Committee

What began as a simple idea suggested during the Board of Directors meeting at the 2008 Khe Sanh Reunion in Lake Tahoe has become an overwhelming success. This idea was to provide scholarship assistance to legal children and grandchildren of members of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. thereby supporting their goals of a full 4 year, post-secondary education. A five man Scholarship Committee volunteered to take on the task to setting the program up and establishing criteria for acceptance and review. Among those volunteers were Bruce "T-Bone" Jones, Bill Jayne, Larry McCartney, Dennis Mannion and Dan Fisher. Donations began to flow in from KSV members and from the proceeds of the reunion silent auctions.

By the beginning of school year 2009-10 the application forms were good to go and published in "RED CLAY", on the KSVinc.org website and announced at the KSV Denver, CO reunion.

2009-10 had 6 applicants, 2010-11 grew to 7 applicants, 2011-12 had 10 applicants, 2012-13 grew again to 12 applicants, 2013-14 stayed at 12 applicants and school year 2014-15 has a whopping 20 applicants! That is 67 applicants/awardees in the 6 years of the Scholarship program!

In fact, the quality of the applications has also risen considerably and now requires careful review and scoring separation by the review committee members. The competition is fierce and top scores are recognized by the Colonel David Lownds, Sergeant Major James Gaynor and the Colonel William Dabney levels of achievement. An outstanding $29,000 in a scholarship support has been awarded and that doesn't count the 20 awards to be given for 2014-15.

Many of these young scholars have completed their college degree programs are starting successful careers or continuing their educational goals knowing that they were supported not just by their families but by their family of Khe Sanh Veterans. The "Thank You" cards of appreciation they send in express their gratitude for the support.

So, a warm "thanks" is extended to all the members who contributed to make the KSV Scholarship Foundation the resounding success that it is.
The Committee

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION 2014-2015 SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNERS

COLONEL DAVID E. LOWNDS AWARD FOR TOP ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Shannon A. Friel - $1,000.00 – Daughter of Thomas Friel, G 2/26. Junior at College of St. Rose

SGT. MAJOR JAMES T. GAYNOR AWARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

1. **Thomas T. Hyde - $750.00** – Son of Tristan Hyde, 2/26. Freshman at UVA/William & Mary
2. **Justyce B. Rodgers - $750.00** –Granddaughter of Ken Rodgers, B 1/26. Freshman at Central Arizona College
3. **Bailey A. Kowalski - $750.00** – Granddaughter of Thomas Peters, 3/26 81s. Freshman at Michigan State

COLONEL WILLIAM H. DABNEY AWARD FOR HIGH ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Alyssa N. Waler - $500.00 – Granddaughter of Dennis Waler, CMBU301. Sophomore at Sinclair College

Monica L. Patton - $500.00 – Granddaughter of Marshall Wells, C 1/26. Freshman at UC Berkeley

McKinzie M. McElroy - $500.00 – Granddaughter of George Myrick D 1/26. Freshman at Oklahoma State University.

Dillon J. Murphy - $500.00 – Grandson of Richard Donaghy HQ 26th Marines. Junior at UCLA

Kerian T. Pope - $500.00 – Grandson of Henry Pope, D 1/26. Sophomore at California State University

Kalia J. Montez - $500.00 – Granddaughter of Jesse Montez 1/26 81s. Freshman, University. of Minnesota, Duluth

Samuel E. Haines - $500.00 – Grandson of James Sluss, HQ 26th Marines. Sophomore at Kansas State, University.

John F. Rowe - $500.00 – Grandson of John Rowe, 5th Comm Radio Relay, freshman at University. of California, Irvine

Stephen J. Campbell - $500.00– Son of Donald Campbell, HQ 26th Marines. Freshman at Catholic University of America.

Samuel K. Geers - $500.00 – Grandson of Russell Turner, A 1/26. Sophomore at Missouri Science and Tech University.

Annarose Kosierowski - $500.00 – Granddaughter of Edward Zimmerman, F 2/26. Sophomore at Misericordia University.

Laura D. Haines - $500.00 – Granddaughter of James Sluss, HQ 26th Marines. Senior at Kansas State University..

Hunter F. Lane - $500.00 – Son of John Lane, H&S 1/26. Freshman at Stetson University, FL

Troy Moose - $500.00 – Grandson of John Wolfe Sniper 3/26. Senior at Missouri Southern State, University.

Whitney L. Allen - $500.00 – Granddaughter of Bryson Allen, 26th Marine Comm. Freshman at OK Baptist University.

Madison H. Montague - $500.00 – Granddaughter of Richard Donaghy, HQ 26th Marines. Freshman at Villanova

WHY I GO TO REUNIONS

By Craig W. Tourte

I didn't know what to expect when I attended my first Khe Sanh reunion ten or twelve years ago. I felt a little out of place because it seemed most knew each other and I was an outsider. I was hesitant to meet others knowing they would not really understand my emotions of unexplainable guilt and certainly would not understand the pain I endured recalling those long ago experiences. I'll admit it was emotionally difficult the first few reunions I attended and it took me a period of time and several more reunions to realize that I was not actually an outsider looking in but that all who were attending were just like me, insiders who understood each other and who were in fact looking out at those who would never understand us.

I began to realize that we all had experienced the same fears, same tears, same emotional recalls - I was determined to stick with it and continue to attended each year. I don't know when it was, perhaps my third reunion when I realized that the others attending were - big surprise - just like me. With each new meeting of another Khe Sanh Veteran, with each new conversation I slowly realized how special we were to each other. That we were not strangers who were meeting for the first time but rather - even though it was our first time meeting - we had in fact known each other (it seemed) for many years.

I pulled out my old album the other day and went through the photographs I had taken at various Khe Sanh reunions. How young we looked - compared to now - even though we were rapidly reaching our golden years. I had placed a little name tag under each photograph so in the future I would not forget their names.

As a small example there were photographs with little names tags of; Robert Galianao, John Pessoni, Floyd McCulley Dave Drake, Jim Griffin, Neil Kenny, Nick Romanetz, Don Watkins, Robert Bates, Jon Cavaiani, Cliff Treese, Donald Ballard, Eric Clark, Ernie Spencer, Ray Stubbe, Bruce Geiger, John Rowland, Lawrence McCartney, Dale Pack, Franklin Brown, Scott Berry, Chuck Chamberlin, Steve Wiese, Mike Powers, David Tonick, Tom Horchler, Tom Eichler, Mike Fishbaugh, Cal Bright, Don Watkins, Ken Pipes, Bill Poland and the list goes on and on with to many photographs with names to continue - sorry if I did not mention your name but I have not forgotten our meetings and conversation, all are important memories.

I paused at one photograph in particular and my heart sank, for I had known both men, one more than the other but each an important part of my reunion experience and both in one way or the other had influenced my life. This was the photograph of Charlie Fox, Lloyd Scudder and myself. A moment in time that will never be duplicated. What great and respected men they were, we all have stories and fond memories of each. I did not know either when I started on this Khe Sanh reunion venture and now I can't forget them.

The Khe Sanh reunions are like that, fleeting moments of too brief meetings, enjoying the short time we have together, remembering and honoring those who did not return from Khe Sanh with us and taking the time to remember and appreciate those who we will never have the opportunity to share our memories with again.



L-R CHARLIE FOX, LLOYD SCUDDER AND CRAIG TOURTE



KHE SANH VETERANS 2014 REUNION SAN DIEGO CA, NOV 09 TO 15, 2014
TOWN & COUNTRY RESORT HOTEL 500 CIRCLE NORTH, SAN DIEGO, CA 92108
RESERVATIONS CALL 1-800-772-8527 USE KSV AS CODE KEY FOR RATE
99.00 A NIGHT PRICE GOOD 3 DAYS BEFORE & AFTER. PET FRIENDLY-FREE PARKING
FREE COMPLETE BREAKFAST EVERY MORNING, MANY MORE AMENTITIES





TOWN & COUNTRY AMENITIES

Location

The Town and Country Resort is located in the heart of an Diego Mission Valley, only seven miles from San Diego International Airport, downtown shopping, dining and entertainment. The resort is also **10** minutes from SeaWorld, the San Diego Zoo, sparkling beaches, bays and the most convenient location to all city sites and famous attractions.

Arrival Information

Check-In Time: **3:00** p.m. Check-Out Time: **11:00** a.m.
Express Check-In and Check-Out
Video Account Review and Video Check-Out
On Site parking (FREE)

Guest Room Amenities

Remote control TV with cable movie channels, in-room pay movies Telephone w / voice mail and message light, computer hookup
Wireless Internet Access (fee)
Individual climate control
Electronic door locks with automatic deadbolt
Full bath amenities
Turndown available upon request
Iron and ironing board
AM/FM alarm clock radio
Hair dryers
Free weekday newspaper
Room Service **(6:00** a.m. - midnight)
In-room Coffee
Concierge Desk
Business Center
Boarding Pass Printing Service
Bella Tosca Day Spa, Salon and Fitness Center
Gift Shops
Avis Rental Car
Valet Laundry Service
Multilingual Staff
Ice Machines
Safe Deposit Boxes at Front Desk
San Diego Trolley located behind hotel
Adjacent to Fashion Valley Shopping Mall
Assistive devices for persons with disabilities

Restaurants & Lounges

Trellises Garden Grille
Garden Fresh Cuisine
Featuring: Fresh Seafood, Pasta and Steaks
Serving Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner Daily
(closed for lunch and dinner on Sundays)
Dancing in the Lounge Friday and Saturday evenings
Kelly's Steak house
Steakhouse Cuisine
Featuring: Prime Rib, Steaks and Chicken
Serving Dinner and Cocktails Daily
Lively Piano Bar
Terrace Cafe
Casual Cuisine
Featuring: Sandwiches, Salads and Sundaes
Serving Breakfast and Lunch Daily
Terrace Deli
Featuring: Deli Sandwiches, Snack and Desserts
Open Daily for Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner
Charlie's Food, Fun and Spirits
All-American Cuisine
Featuring: Appetizer, Burgers, Salads and Pizza
Serving Lunch and Dinner Daily
7 TV Monitors and a Giant 65" HDTV Big Screen
Video Games and Pool

Recreational Facilities

Bella Tosca Day Spa, Salon and Fitness Center
Three swimming pools and whirlpool
Adjacent 27 -hole championship golf course
Tennis and racquetball nearby
Minute from beaches and bays

Points of Interest

World Famous San Diego Zoo
SeaWorld
Safari Park
Old Town
Beautiful Beaches and Bays
Gas lamp District
Lego land
Qua l comm Stadium (SDSU Aztecs, Chargers)
PETCO Park (Padres)
Balboa Park
Miramar Marine Corps Air Station
Fashion Valley Shopping Mall

REUNION INFORMATION NOTES:

The Khe Sanh Veterans 2014 Annual Reunion will be held in San Diego, California from 09 November to 16 November 2014. The location is the Town & Country Hotel, located in San Diego, California.

The Hotel Rates are 99.00 + Tax. These prices are good for at least 3 Days Before & After the Reunion Dates. The Hotel seems to be willing to allow more of these extra days at the 99.99 Price.

We have own building located next to the pool and close to the many Hotel amenities the Hotel Offers. The majority of the rooms have a balcony where you may smoke. The Rooms are small and not decorated like a 5 Star Hotel. The Grounds are large but there are little Electric Cars to take you to your Rooms and all the outdoor facilities Pool, Restaurants, recreation areas, smoking is allowed. The Hotel is also Pet Friendly

The Hotel offers a COMPLETE FREE BREAKFAST every morning 7:00am to 9:00am. On Monday & Tuesday our guest will be given a pass for breakfast in one of the Hotels restaurants. Wed to Sat breakfast will be served on the 9th Floor of our own building, our buildings rooms are from Floor 1 to 8.

Our hospitality rooms are located on the 9th Floor. We will have our usual Assortment of Goodies, starting on Tuesday the 11th.

We also have an attached room next to the main hospitality room where small groups of members, may hang banners, photos, maps etc. The room is also provided with Video equipment (Projector) to show tapes.

The Hotel shuttle will take members to the Major Golf Course & Shopping Mall located next to the Hotel. The shuttle will also transport members to nearby tourist locations (Old Town, Other Locations within a 5 Mile Radius) The Khe Sanh veterans will also have (3) fifteen passenger vehicles for trips of small groups.

Sunday 09 November Early Bird arrivals Free Day enjoy San Diego
Monday 10 November Free Day Enjoy San Diego

Tuesday 11 November 10:00 am Hospitality & PX Opens
Wednesday 12 November 10:00 am Hospitality Room Opens PX Opens and the Hotel Offers a welcoming Lunch (Time to Be Announced)

Thursday 13 November 10:00 am Hospitality Room Opens PX Opens.

Friday 14 November Trip to MCRD: Note: we have to be ready to board the buses by 8:30 am and arrive at MCRD by 9:00am There is an opening for 60 People to go to MCRD for

Morning Colors. You have to be ready by 5:00 am, the first 60 people to register for this will be accepted.

After Graduation we will have Lunch in the Base Café (Buffet) Note: Recent changes made do not allow civilians to eat in the Base Mess Hall. After Lunch Members will be allowed to shop in the base PX, Visit the Base Museum tour the facility. We will be departing at 4:30 PM

Saturday 15 November 9:00am Memorial service begins. 10:00am General Membership Meeting. Women will have their free Women's Luncheon while the Membership meeting takes place. 12:00 Hospitality Room Opens , PX Opens at 1200 Hours.

6:00 pm Cocktails will be served prior to the annual KSV Banquet at 7:00 pm. At 6:30pm we will have a Marine Corps Birthday Celebration, prior to the start of the annual Banquet . Banquet Starts at 7:00pm.

Sunday 16 November 14 Reunion Ends

COST:	**Registration**	**$ 50.00 a Person**
	MCRD Visit	**$ 25.00 a Person if Eating Lunch on Base**
		$15.00 a Person If Not Eating Lunch on Base
	Banquet	**$ 50.00 a Person**

Please Fill out the Registration Form ASAP You Can always cancel and receive a refund. The Registration Form will be in the Next RED CLAY issue 85. Also Please Register with the Hotel as soon as you can. Again you can always Cancel and receive a refund.







REGISTRATION FORM FOR 2014 SAN DIEGO KSV REUNION 09 NOV to 16 NOV 2014
TOWN & COUNTRY HOTEL 500 HOTEL CIRCLE NORTH SAN DIEGO CA, 92108
CALL 1-800-772-8527 MENTION CODE WORD (KSV) ROOM COST $ 99.00 a NIGHT
3 DAYS BEFORE AND AFTER REUNION DATES

REUNION REGISTRATION & EVENTS	Price Per Person	Number Attending	Total
ADMINISTRATION FEES:	$ 50.00		
SUNDAY 09 NOV: FREE DAY ENJOY SD	NOTE: PLEASE COMPLETE INFORMATION ON BACK PAGE FOR NAME TAGS & EMERGENCY INFORMATION		
MONDAY 10 NOV: FREE DAY ENJOY SD			
TUESDAY 11 NOV: 10:00am To 5:00 pm Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Opens.			
WEDNESDAY: 12 NOV 10:00am To 5:00 pm Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Opens. 12:00 Hotel Serves Welcoming Free Lunch			
THURSDAY 13 NOV 10:00am To 5:00 pm Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Opens.			
FRIDAY 14 NOV TRIP TO MCRD: Members will begin Loading at 8:00 am. The Members who signed up for Morning Colors will Board Their Bus at 6:00 am. After Ceremony Lunch On Base, Shop at Base PX, Visit Base Museum	$ 25.00 Per Person For Those W/Lunch $ 15.00 Per Person No/Lunch		
SATURDAY 15 NOV 9:00 to 10:00am Memorial Service 10:00am to 12:00 Membership Meeting 10:00am to 12:00 Free Ladies Luncheon ANNUAL KSV BANQUET: 6:00 pm Cocktails 6:30 Marine Corps Birthday Celebration 7:00 pm Dinner	$50.00		
SUNDAY 16 NOV HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME			

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: KSV ASSOCIATION

OFFICE USE ONLY Check#_____Date Received_____ Name Tag Completed_____	Send Check, Money Order or Credit Card Information To: The Khe Sanh Veterans/ Russell Turner 3168 Meadowfield Dr Arnold, MO 63010

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

NAME ON CARD:	VISA	MASTER CARD	DISCOVER
CARD NUMBER:	OTHER	Note: Our Bank Does Not Accept AM/XPress	
EXPIRATION DATE:			
3 DIGIT CODE ON BACK OF CARD		Note: Address Must Be The One Card Issued To	
ADDRESS FOR CREDIT CARD:			
CITY:	STATE	ZIP	

NAME TAG INFORMATION PLEASE PRINT		
NAME:		
UNIT SERVED WITH:		
SPOUSE OR COMPANIONS NAME:		
OTHER GUEST (1)		
OTHER GUEST (2)		
OTHER GUEST (3)		
OTHER GUEST (4)		
OTHER GUEST (5)		
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	ST:	ZIP:
PHONE:	CELL PHONE:	
EMERGENCY CONTACT:		
EMAIL:		
SPECIAL NEEDS:		
EMAIL:		
ARRIVAL DATE:	DEPARTURE DATE:	
ARE YOU STAYING AT HOTEL:	YES — NO CIRCLE ONE	
COMMENTS:		

ROBERT CRABB SCHOLARSHIP
KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable Organization

3. **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2014 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;**

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms.
Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the *" RED CLAY"* Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David E. Lownds Award - for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award - for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award - for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 Awards)

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY* 1 of the school year applied for. *** (This is an important, NEW change to previous years)*****

6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System !Maximum of 100 regular points or 115 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points max. (please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

A GPA of 4.0'x 10 = 40 points or a GPA of3.0 x 10 = 30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 30 points total

Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Student government = 10 points max.
Community related services = 10 points max.
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 10 points max.

c. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min.) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max.
Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments.

By using one of the six suggested adjectives below, select one that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

TENACIOUS RELIABLE UNDAUNTED STEADFAST RESOLUTE INNOVATIVE

d. Bonus Points = 10 bonus points for being a military veteran
= 5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Date of Application: _____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: Last_____ First_____ MI ____

Address: Street_____ _____ City_____ST___ZIP_____
Home PH: _____E-mail address: _____

Applicant Birthdate: _____

2 KSV Sponsor Information (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member):

Name: Last_____First_____

Relationship to applicant;_____

Branch of service: _____

Unit served at Khe Sanh _____Dates Served There_____

3 School Information: (School to be attending)
School Name_____
School Address: _____Street , City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____
School Phone number: _____
Curriculum/intended course of study_____
School year to be funded_____

4 Applicant Personal History (Be specific!)

a School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, communications, offices held,
b Academic honors and prizes, student government participation, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b Community Activities participated in; (military service, volunteer service to community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Mailing Packet (Due *MAY 1)*

* ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS,
* A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,
* A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,
* A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min.) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.

!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!

I, SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

Signature of Applicant

Actual Signature of Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY 1ST* OF THE SCHOOL YEAR APPLIED

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Committee

Tom Eichler, President Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

TRIBUTE TO A FINE MARINE

By Andy Weddington

Last week I, with my Marine (and Sailor) brother, waded a river in New Mexico fly fishing for trout. And I painted. It was a long overdue trip to relax and the first trip back to river since the death of Dad (who loved fishing that river). Emotional enough, sad news came at the end of the first day.

A Marine friend, whom I've written about a few times, died. Battle injuries suffered long ago, and complications therefrom, had the final say. I spoke to him on the phone a few weeks ago - we were coordinating a visit when I returned from fishing. His voice I remember.

Now I know not what to say. So in honor of Colonel Marcel "Big Mac" J. Dube, U. S. Marine Corps - a warrior in every sense of the word - I decided to republish commentary from a little less than four years ago.

We've lost a great Marine. Our country has lost a great American. Your rest earned, Big Mac! Semper Fidelis.

HEROISM'S ALWAYS REWARDED--SOMETIMES DECORATED

By Andy Weddington

"Within the soul of each Vietnam veteran there is probably something that says " Bad war, good soldier."Only now are Americans beginning to separate the war from the warrior." Max Cleland

Today's Commentary...true story about a couple of captains--a courageous U. S. Marine Corps infantryman and an equally courageous U. S. Air Force pilot--and their battlefield hasty rendezvous and subsequent hair-raising dash--through heavy enemy gunfire--to friendly lines.

But first, a little history to set the stage... The year--**1967**. Lyndon Baines Johnson was president of these United States. The current resident at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue was 3 1/2 years-old, and living in Jakarta. For the geography challenged, Jakarta is not in the United States. General Wallace M. Green, Jr. was Commandant of the Marine Corps. General John P. McConnell was Air Force Chief of Staff.

The NFL played its first "Super Bowl" (AFL-NFL Championship Game)--the Green Bay Packers beat the Kansas City Chiefs. Quarterbacks Bart Starr and Len Dawson "captain'ed" their respective teams. I remember the game but not the score. It doesn't matter. And, by the way, it'd be another two and a half years before Brett Favre, once of Packer fame, would be born. And decades before we'd know from season-to-season whether or not he was retired. In colors or not--cheesehead?

Astronauts Chaffee, Grissom, and White were killed in a fire during a pre-launch test for Apollo 1. Thurgood Marshall was sworn in as the first black justice to sit on the Supreme Court. 'Bonnie and Clyde,' 'Cool Hand Luke,' 'Guess Who's Coming to Dinner,' 'In the Heat of the Night,' and 'The Graduate' hit the silver screen. Old school Frank Sinatra won a Grammy for 'Strangers in the Night'--Record of the Year. He also earned a Grammy for Album of the Year. New school Beatles released 'Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.'

A team of South African surgeons, led by Dr. Christiaan Barnard, performed the first successful human heart transplant. The patient lived--for 18 days. John Coltrane, Woody Guthrie, and Spencer Tracey died.

America was amidst significant cultural change and turmoil--long hair, afros, bell bottoms, lava lamps, black lights, hippies, free love, drugs, tie-dyed T-shirts, love beads, racial tension, peace signs, draft dodgers, incense and draft card burners, riots, and war protests. In other words, it was pretty damn nutty. Sometimes it was downright scary.

THE DAY--MONDAY, MARCH 20th...

The 79th day of the calendar year and less than two weeks after my mother's annual "29th" birthday. Just another day. People were born. People died--some of natural causes, some in accidents, and some in combat. Yet the day was as unique as each day before it and each day after it. So goes life.

The Supremes--fronted by Diana Ross--released their hit song "The Happening." In Garland, Texas, a baby boy was welcomed to the world who grew

up to be a phenomenal basketball player; a star in college Division I and the NBA. That boy? Mookie Blaylock.

The popular war-themed series, "The Rat Patrol"--a small, elite force running amok in heavily armed jeeps--in its first season aired episode 27,"Take Me to Your Leader Raid."

A U. S. Marine Corps captain reported to the Commanding Officer of VMD-6--a helicopter squadron deployed to Vietnam. From his reporting date through 22 September--little more than six months--he earned the Medal of Honor, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, and 32 Air Medals. His name? Stephen Pless. Surviving hundreds and hundreds of combat missions, he was just 30 years-old when killed in a motorcycle accident in Pensacola, Florida, in 1969. A hero indeed but not the star of today's Commentary.

General A. J. F. Moody became the first U. S. Army flag officer to die in Vietnam.

And, the monthly issue of Playboy magazine was on the street--for the 20th day; officially. Playmate of the Month: Fran Gerard--a nineteen year-old 5' 2" 110 lb looker and the first to wear eyeglasses in her centerfold pose. Fran was popular with the Marines in Vietnam. And Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen, too. So much for the old adage about guys not making passes at girls who wear glasses. Then again, maybe they didn't notice her glasses--or Frame.

For everyone knows young men--especially warriors, and some old ones, enjoy Playboy not so much for the half-ass (sometime full) photojournalism but for the exceptional articles. Well, maybe just a peek at the photos. Though it is peculiar how the color pages of the rabbit-eared magazine get dog-eared; another mystery of our universe.

I wore a uniform in those days, but knew nothing of such a magazine. A fourth-grader attending a K-8,one classroom each grade, non-air-conditioned parochial school--with convent on the second deck--in mill country North Carolina had little time for the fairer gender. School began with a semi-circle formation, by grade, near the flagpole. After classmates raised colors, we recited the Pledge of Allegiance or sang our National Anthem. I was aware of the Vietnam War but only as much as any 10 year-old in the day could understand. And, yes, we prayed in school--for everything and everyone; including soldiers.

Other than going to school, I've no memories from that day--probably homework, out to play until dinner, television, and to bed (to sleep peaceably because rough men were doing violence on my behalf--to paraphrase George Orwell). For sure I could not have imagined what a hectic, remarkable, and dangerous day--doing their duty and hoping to survive--a couple of rough Americans waging war on the other side of the planet had. And little did the Marine know that when the heat of battle was over it'd be well into the fifth decade after his heroism that official recognition--a decoration--would catch up to him.

And for one last tidbit of context...visiting with some retired Marines, far my senior, before the award ceremony I learned they were colonels and sergeants major when the general, who was going to pin the award on "Big Mac's" jacket lapel, was a second lieutenant. And that general was no more than six or seven, if that, on that fateful day in Vietnam. He, too, clueless as to what was happening on the other side of the world, slept peaceably. Time marches on. Marines are Marines are Marines.

" Courage is the art of being the only one who knows you're scared to death!"
Earl Wilson

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the

SILVER STAR MEDAL TO
CAPTAIN MARCEL J. DUBE
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

That is how the award recipient--Big Mac Dube, the rescued pilot--Phil Jones, hundreds of others including family, close friends, distinguished civic leaders, Marines and Sailors, reporters, and me heard the citation at the award presentation on Friday morning, 20 August 2010, aboard the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California--ironically, Colonel Dube's last duty station before retiring 24 years ago. He was the Chief of Staff.

for service as set forth in the following

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy as Senior Advisor to the Third Battalion, Vietnamese Marine Corps engaged against enemy forces in the Republic of Vietnam on 20 March 1967. During a heavy battle Captain Dube led a small team of Vietnamese Marines through enemy lines to rescue a U.S Air Force Forward Air Controller whose L-19 aircraft had been shot down by enemy fires 200 meters in front of friendly lines. In route to the aircraft he personally killed 11 enemy soldiers with his weapon as they fought through enemy lines. Reaching the aircraft Captain Dube extricated the pilot and then fought his way back to friendly lines, eventually evacuating the pilot by helicopter, all done under heavy enemy fire. Returning later in the day to the L-19 he righted the overturned aircraft, disarmed its onboard ordnance, and then coordinated the arrival, hook-up, and departure of a cargo helicopter to recover the L-19, again under enemy fire. Captain Dube's heroic action prevented the capture and saved the life of the Forward Air Controller, enabled the recovery of the L-19, and destroyed 11 enemy soldiers by his own hand. By his bold initiative, undaunted courage, and complete dedication to duty, Captain Dube reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service

For the President,
(signed) Ray Mabus

Secretary of the Navy

I have six riveting pages titled "The Story Behind the Story" Big Mac penned recalling his actions on March 20th, 1967 and gave to me a month or so ago. As I received his detailed account before acquiring a copy of the citation, I thought for sure I'd make use of it for this Commentary. But once reading the citation it was clear nothing more really need be said. As with all heroism the succinctness and power of the citation needs no edification.

Though Big Mac's Silver Star was a long-time coming his heroism was never forgotten by a handful of Marines (some now dead and some unable to attend the ceremony) who had first-hand awareness of his bravery, and especially not forgotten by Phil Jones. For readers unfamiliar, the Silver Star is our nation's third-highest award for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States.

At a reception following the ceremony I had the pleasure and honor of meeting Phil Jones and his wife--they'd come from considerable distance to be with Big Mac. Phil's time was in demand but I managed a few minutes to hear his account of that day. Fascinating. It looked to me like there was a bead or two of sweat as he recollected. In short, he was flying low (100 to 300 feet typically) and slow (80 mph or so) looking for bad guys when--as he said, "...my propeller stopped..."--shot down behind enemy lines crash-landing his airplane upside down. It's important to note the L-19 was not outfitted with ejection seat nor was the pilot equipped with parachute. Infantryman respect, if not admire, this sort of aviator--likewise a rough man and not sure whether to think them brave or foolish, but thankful for them regardless. Though injured and disoriented, he managed to free himself from restraints and exit the aircraft about the time his guardian angel, Captain Dube, appeared. Then came their harrowing hundreds of yards dash through heavy enemy fire to friendly lines and his evacuation for medical care. Oddly enough, there were enemy POWs on the helo.

Phil Jones flew more than 300 combat missions (sometimes two a day). His interesting day on March 20th was not nearly his last flight. After recovering from injuries he returned to flying status for another six months. He mentioned a bird strike on one of his early flights that was a little unnerving but the frightening experience of being shot down did not otherwise interrupt his subsequent flying, low and slow, doing what he was trained and expected to do--support gunfighters on the ground. Though there was no mention and I did not ask, I know Mr. Jones was awarded at least one Distinguished Flying Cross, certainly some Air Medals, and sundry combat decorations. In his own right he's a larger-than-life hero of our country. As he spoke, he struck me as humble and not one to talk about his service unless directly asked and maybe even not then--it would depend upon who was ask-

ing; such is a common trait of warriors who have nothing to prove. Here was a man thankful to be alive, and enjoying the moment reunited with the man who saved his life.

Shortly after the reception, while another small gathering of old Marines was about to recognize Big Mac and Phil, I heard someone mention "...43 years ago..." and Phil casually remarked, "I was a kid." He was. An then it occurred to me--thankfully, our country still produces kids like Phil Jones and Mac Dube. Those "kids"--some witnessed the ceremony and some are now on duty; some in Afghanistan. And one or two unknowingly destined to not be recognized for their extraordinary heroism for decades. So goes the business of war. Every generation has true heroes.

Anyway, that "small gathering of old Marines"--representing the Desert Cities Chapter of the 1st Marine Division Association named in honor of Medal of Honor recipient Marine Colonel Mitchell Paige--presented Big Mac, one of their own, with an engraved K-Bar (combat knife) and welcomed Phil Jones as a lifetime Honorary Member. Presented an attesting letter and Chapter polo shirt Phil, clearly moved, struggled to find his words; find them he did.

Though corresponding through the years the reunion was the first personal visit between the two rough men in more than 43 years. No hostile gunfire and mad dash toward safety this time. Just memories and genuinely heart-warming camaraderie--in the Officers' Club pub of walls adorned with Marine units plaques. How fitting.

But the story is not quite over.

A few weeks ago I received an email from a stranger--a Marine so not really a stranger--who had found my Commentary site and read, "MARINES, BRASS RECYCLED, AND MYSTERY--SOLVED" posted for Friday, 28 May 2010. That Commentary another interesting tale involving Colonel Big Mac Dube. Strangely enough, the reader had, a few days earlier, himself received an email from a stranger--another Marine--asking if he could possibly assist with connecting him to a "Captain Dubee" a "Mustang" (term used to describe an officer who has served as an enlisted man) who he served alongside in 11th Engineers in Vietnam. The note to me wanted to know if it could be the same Dube? As Marines speak to each other, I sent a note to the Marine querying me, "Stand by." I then sent an email to Colonel Dube. Following is his reply--which he probably did not expect to see in this forum but would not object whatsoever:

"There is no doubt about this one, my brother, First Lieutenant Serge R. Dube (Former Master Sergeant) was with them at that time and we had several occasions where he had the time to visit with me when he found out that my Vietnamese Marine Battalion was around his area of operations. In fact, I had the opportunity to visit his compound once and met his CO and some of his friends during a lull in battle. I was in the Saigon area and had just been bandaged up after sustaining some wounds around the Cambodian Border.

Serge died last year from cancer which he no doubt inherited from his extended months trodding around that Vietnamese countryside getting sprayed with agent ORANGE!

Feel free to give them my phone number or e-mail, my friend! VERY GRATEFULLY!!!!!!!!
Yours Aye/Semper Fi
Big Mac"



THE AUTHOR

Colonel, U.S. Marines (Retired) - 0302. BA--Psych. MA--Bus Admin/Mgmt. Artist--paint, teach "seeing" and painting, write, and fly fish for trout. "On 'SEEING' & Painting--An Interdisciplinary Perspective" & "MAKING MARINES" published in 2007

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RADIO MAN



SNIPER



THE "DOC"



THE GRUNT



WOUNDED MAN

PICTURES & ARTICLE FOR TEXAS VIETNAM HEROES EXHIBIT APPEAR ON PAGE 64

ONCE, AMERICA SENT THEM TO WAR
NOW TEXAS WELCOMES THEM HOME



TEXAS CAPITOL VIETNAM VETERANS MONUMENT

The Texas Capitol Vietnam Veterans Monument is designed in accordance with House 79TH Texas Legislation Concurrent Resolution 36 to honor Texans who served in the Armed Forces in the U.S War In Vietnam.

The monument was dedicated on Welcome Home Texas Vietnam Veterans Day Saturday, 2014 at 10 A.M. in a ceremony opened to the public. The monument will be located on the Northeast corner of the state Capitol grounds in Austin near the Peace Officers Memorial

The monument design includes an infantry patrol on top surrounded by bas-relief depicting important symbols of the war.

The five combat patrol figures symbolize the key roles of infantry patrol represent the ethnic diversity of Texans who served in the U.S. military-

Standing Grunt - Anglo
Radioman - Native American
Sniper - Hispanic
Medic - Black American
Wounded soldier - Asian-American

They do not represent any specific military service or unit

WINTER
2015

RED CLAY

ISSUE
86







GUNNY CLAUS











Oohrah and Ho Ho Ho!







Delivering Freedom & Christmas
Wherever We Go!


The American Veterans
Disabled for Life Memorial









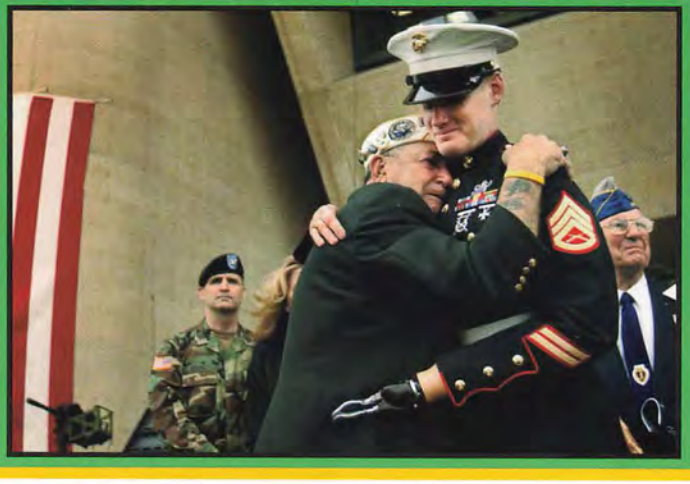

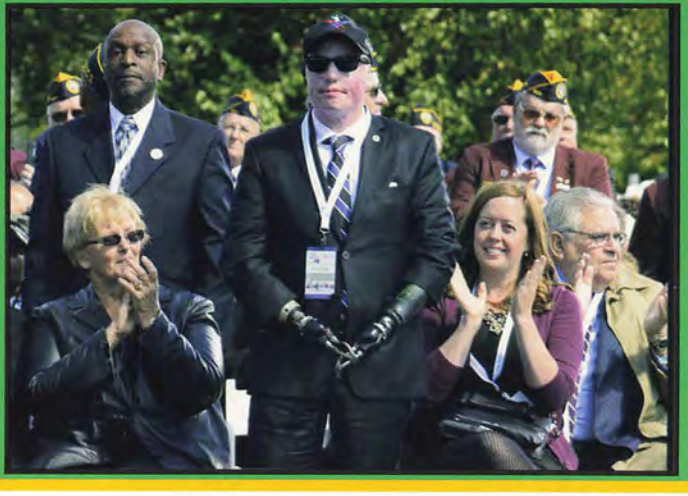

THE LAST PATROL HILL: 861-A TO LZ MARGO PART 1

By Larry McCartney
ECHO CO 2/26
HILL 861A

The sun broke early and bright on Wednesday, May 28, 2014 as Bill Griffith and I arrived at Philadelphia International Airport for the first leg of our trip to Hà Nội, Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Taking off from Philadelphia at 10:55 AM, just ten minutes after our scheduled departure time and flying east, we had an enjoyable, relaxing, though long flight which I quickly decided would be my last long distance flight in economy class—for any future air travel I will spend the extra money to stretch out in business class, maybe even first class if the cost isn't unreasonable. Hey, its only money and I don't have any children to leave it to anyway, so there's no reason to be as cramped as I was for such a long period of time.

Crossing the International Dateline we 'leapt ahead' during the flight to Doha, Qatar, where we had a long layover in its newly constructed international air terminal, then to Bangkok, Thailand for a brief stopover before flying into Hà Nội, where we landed on time at 3:30 PM on Friday, May 30, 2014—4:30 AM Eastern Daylight Time—after traveling for forty two hours. I can't praise Qatar Airways enough; it was professional and punctual. Unfortunately, upon deplaning we found it was hot and humid, just as we remembered and expected.

For the next three and a half days we did the normal tourist activities in and around Hà Nội, visiting museums, memorials, temples, pagodas, an inland waterway through caves which afforded protection from U. S. bombing during 'The American War,' shopping locales, and sites of ancient as well as historical significance—what's left of the Hà Nội Hilton, etc.—as we acclimated ourselves. Of all we saw, I was most impressed with the growth and modernization of the city—now a blossoming metropolis which, while still impoverished, when compared with my 1995 observations offers an improved quality of life for more residents. My greatest surprise was the many modern retail stores, which are replacing the street vendors and roadside stands.

On Tuesday, June 3rd we flew from Hà Nội to Hue, landing at the exact same Phu Bai airport where I landed in December of 1967 as an eighteen year old Private First Class. We were met by a driver and rode from Phu Bai to Dong Ha, a little over an hour, then checked into a decent hotel which was thankfully larger than the hotel in Hà Nội.

On the afternoon of June 3rd we spoke with a gentleman who is the director for Project Renew, a Quang Tri Province based non-governmental organization (NGO) which deals with unexploded ordnance (UXO) left over from the war—we learned that the Peace Tree Project, which is also responsible for the newly authorized memorial park at Khe Sanh, deals with the UXO issue in and around Khe Sanh, so we got contact information for those people and found out that there is great coordination, thus little duplication of effort, between those and related NGOs.

On June 4th we drove to Khe Sanh, stopping at what was Camp Carroll, as well as the bridge across Route 9 that the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines guarded after leaving Khe Sanh. The current bridge, next to the bridge 2/26 guarded, holds many memories; it was here I last 'fished'—a sport I loved as a boy but haven't done since—using M-26 grenades for 'bait.' It was also from this bridge that Echo Company ran the patrols where Joe 'Cisco' Reyes encountered a large, 'unfriendly' snake and Bill Griffith saw a spider the size of an adult beagle.

After checking into our hotel we visited; 1) the site of the U. S. Army Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei, 2) the Old French Fort, where there's a People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) memorial and cemetery and 3) the mall near Laos from which we could see Co Roc, which evidently is now inside Vietnam. We did not visit Co Roc since it's so close to Laos that we feared an unintentional border crossing and our visas only allowed a single entry, which we used when landing in Hà Nội. Besides, the hotel held our passports, so we had no official identification and could have been stranded at the border.

The schedule for June 5th was a main reason for our trip. We returned to Hill 861 Alpha since we were seeking answers to long nagging questions. We started early, meeting our guides for breakfast; Bill was pleased since they were the same men he used

in 2008. He said they were good and he was right, they really knew their business. They took us by motorcycle up a rutted path from just outside the Khe Sanh Combat Base to the tower on the south side of Hill 861. As we passed Hill 700 ridgeline we saw Americans—Ed Zimmerman, Pete Post and the Joint Pacific Accounting Command (JPAC) site location team looking to find where Corporal Trimble and PFC Pepper were last seen. After exchanging pleasantries and a brief conversation, we continued our journey to Hill 861-Alpha as they found their objective on Hill 700.

Once leaving the rutted road at the tower we went uphill approximately two hundred meters, through tall, thick, elephant grass and 'wait-a-minute' vines, to the east side of Hill 861, where we easily found the trail through the saddle leading to Hill 861-Alpha. The walk over to Hill 861-Alpha was also difficult since the jungle has reclaimed the earth. We found the old Echo Company perimeter, but were very careful since we recalled leaving UXO in the area.

Our visit to Hill 861-Alpha was due the fact we wanted to learn if the PAVN had tried to tunnel up to us in 1968. Bill and I, as well as other Echo Company Marines, had heard and reported sounds of digging, but a senior Marine had told us we were overreacting, so we should just shut-up before we caused other Marines to panic. However, history shows the PAVN had dug their way up to the French lines at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and had tried to do the same at the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

In addition, Reverend Stubbe has mentioned that there were reports of PAVN digging on Hill 861, of which Hill 861-Alpha is a part, so we wanted to learn if Echo Company had avoided something similar. One reason for our search for tunnels was since, when patrolling forward off the wire, Bill distinctly recalls seeing and reporting air vents—perfectly symmetrical holes, evenly spaced horizontally and vertically—coming up the northwest finger toward the Echo Company perimeter. Unfortunately, dense vegetation and suspected UXO prevented a thorough search of Hill 861-Alpha and the guides did not know of any tunnels or caves there, but did know of, and reported being in five such tunnels extending from the vicinity of Hill 558 near the Rho Quan River to the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

As we left the hill we held a brief memorial service for all the men of Echo Company who served there and are no longer with us.

On June 6th we visited the site of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, paying attention to visit where both airstrips were located—Bill explained that the first airstrip was destroyed after we left in 1968 and the second was built to support subsequent operations, such as Lam Son 719 in 1971. We also toured the new museum and coordinated with the director of the Peace Tree Project for possible participation in the memorial that is being constructed.

After leaving Khe Sanh we stopped at a Montagnard village to leave presents—pencils, paper, mirrors, combs, toothbrushes, toys, clothing, etc.—for the children as Bill had done at villages and orphanages in 2004 and 2008. The pencils and paper are necessary since the Montagnards are learning to read and write; something they couldn't previously do and didn't need because their language had no formal structure and they generally lived a nomadic life. We then drove through Camp Carroll to the Mai Loc area, observing the growth—there are no more ramshackle 'hootches' as we knew them, just permanent buildings with electricity, running water and satellite dishes.

We ended the day at Con Thien, the Hill of Angels, where 2/26 served from late May to late July of 1968. June 6th was the forty sixth anniversary of when Echo Company lost much of the 2nd Platoon—fourteen killed and at least fifteen wounded. In 1968 the area was a barren wasteland, but is now a thriving semi-rural community. Needless to say, all remnants of the positions at Con Thien, Yankee Station, C-2, the C-2 bridge/washout, etc. are gone. Much of what was the Con Thien Combat Base is now a plantation, growing coffee and tapioca. Upon leaving, it's now more than lightly populated and we didn't want to draw undue attention to our presence, we held a low-key memorial service for the Echo Company Marines lost in 1968.

On June 7th we prepared for the main focus of our trip, a visit to LZ Margo; referred to as Fire Support Base Margo in some official U. S. Marine Corps references—U. S. Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year - 1968; page 400. Like our visits elsewhere, our tour guide cleared our visit with the

Ministry of Defense (MOD), the PAVN—we found that while you don't have to have a guide, they can be extremely helpful and this was one such time. So going to LZ Margo was not an issue, despite what we were told by some association members. The only issues were positively identifying the location and finding the easiest, most direct route there.

We visited LZ Margo because of how the September, 1968 events affected us. Bill and I were wounded there, Bill on the 15th when 3rd Platoon, Echo Company engaged the PAVN on the hill northeast of the LZ and I on the LZ on the 16th, during the first barrage when our casualties were heaviest—official reports list twenty one Marines killed and one hundred thirty five wounded. I've long believed that in terms of casualties taken and the lack of known casualties inflicted, that phase of Operation Lancaster II – Trousdale North is one of the worst defeats of the U. S. Marine Corps in Vietnam. Why? Because a reinforced infantry battalion was crammed onto a barren, solid rock, hill; a site barely large enough for an infantry company—an area which prevented us from digging-in.

Reportedly we moved there so B-52 bombers could provide close air support. Yet, a review of official records questions that claim. So why did we move to where we were had to bunch up? We landed three days earlier with various levels of food and water—the 2nd platoon of Echo Company had little more than one day of rations, other platoons had more. Was it for resupply? After all, there is a stream at the base of LZ Margo that we could not use other than to cool off since we were told it had not been tested, but there was a water hole atop the hill. In my opinion 'leadership' at all levels underestimated the enemy, as the French underestimated their enemy during the Indo-China War, so we operated with flawed strategy, tactics and Rules of Engagement (ROE). We visited LZ Margo because, despite 'writer's block' and a lack of objectivity, I've long wanted to write about it. So I had hoped to film the site for a documentary; I can only hope to do half as good as Ken and Betty Rogers so brilliantly did in Bravo Company: Common Men—Uncommon Valor.

Finding LZ Margo was easy enough, we just had find LZ Winchester, then go approximately two thousand meters north. We had done a good map recon, so we took Route 9 to the service road from which that fire support base was resupplied, then remembering the climb up LZ Margo in 1968 we declined to climb that hill, we took the trail skirting it to the east.

Our trip to LZ Margo was an intense experience. So many Marines—our U. S. Navy Corpsmen are Marines—were killed or badly maimed there. The friends I lost, men with whom I shared hopes and dreams for the future, as well as the heroism I saw, too often not recognized, is forever etched in my brain. For whatever reason, their story is untold. It must be told. It will be told.

When concluding our visit to LZ Margo we held yet another memorial service, this to remember all the men from 2/26 killed or wounded there in 1968, as well as those like Eric Smith who have died since. Our particular concern was to pay tribute to Mrs. Anna M. 'Mickey Mom' Roble, formerly of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, a truly grand, very brave, lady who passed away in December of 2011, after she had traveled to Vietnam in August of 2004 to visit the site where her son, Lance Corporal Joseph E. Roble, an Echo Company Marine and a Khe Sanh veteran, died. Unlike the other mothers on that trip with Mrs. Roble, who was over eighty years old at the time, she was denied seeing the location of her son's death, as well as a proper, respectful, memorial service. This time we not only went there, but we also conducted a suitable service

Upon returning to our vehicle parked near Route 9 we were confronted by a rather unfriendly Montagnard village chief, surprisingly a young man in his early to middle thirties, as we were passing back through his village. The chief was extremely irate, so we sat silently as our guide spoke with him. We learned his anger was since we had passed through his village and territory without coordinating with him. That we coordinated with the MOD meant absolutely nothing to him; he was 'the law' in his village and he demanded the 'Rich Americans' compensate him for the insult; he wanted a pig and seven chickens. Our guide managed to negotiate and he settled for 'just' two million dong, approximately one hundred U. S. dollars.

The next day we drove to Hue, where we relaxed for four days after the intensity of the trip to LZ

Margo and to see the sights of the ancient Imperial City and surrounding area. Our tour of Hue included visiting what is left of the Citadel, a sampan ride on the Perfume River and a motorbike tour of the suburbs. While in Hue I first noticed a startling phenomenon; more than a few women were wearing small gold crucifixes around their necks. When I asked them about the crucifixes nearly all said, "I am a Catholic" and those who didn't said, "I am a Christian." I realized the religion was a result of the French influence, but I was surprised it survived so strongly and is now so openly expressed, even tolerated, in a communist country.

Upon leaving Hue we drove to Da Nang through the new vehicle tunnel under the Hai Van Pass—Bill recalled it opened in August or September of 2008. We spent two days there, visiting Marble Mountain and China Beach, still popular tourist attractions and resorts, Marble Mountain and the local markets. We also went to where LZ Baldy and the An Hoa Combat Base had been since I served there in 1970 and 1971. Our trip to the An Hoa Combat Base was an eye opener, it was still an active PAVN base in 1995, but is now demolished and due to become a modern 'supermarket.'

We left Da Nang on June 15th, flying to Ho Chi Minh City/Sài Gòn—it's only called Ho Chi Minh City in official matters, otherwise people still call the city by its prior name, Sài Gòn. We spent the night there and then drove to Mai Tho in the Mekong Delta, where we saw the sights, shopped in the local markets and toured the Mekong.

The half-day visit to the Mekong was interesting. Our guide, a pleasant young lady who spoke excellent English and I have no doubt was, like the other local guides who were either MOD officials or reported on our activities to the MOD—we were followed and our rooms/luggage were checked while we were out—showed us a fish 'farm' in the river. We also visited several villages with tourist-based industries, as well as the inland waterways. In one village locals entertained us with traditional music, than we had lunch in an outdoor restaurant where we were at a table next to a honeymooning Russian couple. Following lunch we visited another local mall, where Bill made friends with a large female boa constrictor. The snake had to be female since she immediately wrapped herself around Bill. I declined the 'invitation' to 'meet' her.

Upon returning to Sài Gòn on Tuesday afternoon we again took in the sights, visiting the new, upgraded, War Museum and seeing the old Presidential Palace, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the Central Post Office, and many famous landmarks like the Rex Hotel. Interestingly, when we visited the War Museum we were delayed since it closes for an hour-and-a-half for lunch, so we eschewed McDonalds and Burger King and ate at Pizza Hut. The highlight of our Sài Gòn visit was seeing the old U. S. Embassy—now reopened as the U. S. Consulate General—where the Deputy Counsel General give us a personal tour. Of course we spoke with the Marine on duty, a Corporal from New Jersey who, since he is a neighbor, we told to look up 'Big John.'

While we shopped during much of our time in Sài Gòn, I also spent time with friends I had made during my 1995 trip as well as here in the United States. It was good to see them again and get their first-hand reports. Most are doing well and are pleased with the progress in the country since the end of the American War, though they also recognize that much still needs to improve. One observation I made is that despite changing demographics—in 1995 approximately seventy five percent of the population was born after the United States left twenty years earlier and now that number is roughly ninety five percent of the population—the plight of our former allies, the South Vietnamese in general and members of the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam (ARVN) in particular, is unchanged. Sadly, anyone still alive from those days are, if they fought for or served the South and/or its allies, at best second class citizens.

Something I first noted near China Beach, but saw elsewhere in what had been the southern half of Viet Nam during my tours there, was the presence of the U. S. flag. While not 'everywhere' south of what had been the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), I often saw the U. S. flag flying alongside the national colors of Viet Nam. Tactfully speaking with locals, I learned there is little acrimony towards Americans in general or the U. S. military in particular, though some of the educated and articulate admitted an intense dislike for the U. S. anti-war protestors—they called them communists dupes—who subverted their freedom with the support they gave the North.

I also learned that due to ongoing political issues with the People's Republic of China (PRC), Viet Nam seeks stronger ties with the United States. Several told me they hoped the U. S. would send military aide should the PRC attack. On that point I surprisingly kept my big mouth shut.

A particular treat for me was to renew my friendship with 'Nguyen,' a former ARVN Special Forces soldier who I met during a two week liaison assignment in 1995 and have maintained contact with; though a Buddhist, 'Nguyen' gratefully and graciously accepts my small gift every Christmas. 'Nguyen' served a short—less than a year—stint in a reeducation camp in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Republic of Viet Nam in 1975, but could not emigrate since he was a young enlisted soldier and not a commissioned officer. I will not further identify 'Nguyen' for fear of potential repercussions, but will note that he survived and raised his family despite not being able to obtain employment—he works as an unofficial tour guide and is a 'hustler' but refuses to engage in criminal activities. While with him, 'Nguyen' took me anywhere I asked to go, as well as a few places I never thought of, such as the bars he and his friends are welcome to visit. It was fascinating and gratifying to be fully accepted by these men, all of who fought for the Republic of Vietnam and still pay a steep price for their service—of the six children 'Nguyen' and his wife had, five have already died from Agent Orange related issues. The remaining child is crippled and only has a few years left. Sadly, none ever got any government assistance, or significant medical care, since their father fought on the wrong side.

With an international exchange rate of approximately twenty one thousand Viet Nam dollars (VND)—dong—to the U. S. dollar, the trip, once 'in-country,' was fairly inexpensive. In addition, many of the products, merchandise and services are likewise inexpensive. However, Viet Nam is a 'negotiating country' and the price a merchant will accept is below the listed price. There is what I can only call as a multi-tier price scale—prices depend on the nationality of the purchaser, so an American will nearly always expect to pay 'top dollar' for everything. Since we knew this from our previous experiences, as well as our contacts, we resolved to use our guide to make purchases; an idea that worked remarkably well.

Despite the significant modernization that I saw—infrastructure, homes, shops, commercial buildings, communications, etc.—I couldn't help but notice that computer modernization in Vietnam lags behind the rest of the world. Because of U. S. Transportation Security Agency (TSA) policies and procedures, I had intentionally left my laptop @ home knowing I could communicate as needed because of reports from others who have recently traveled to Vietnam. I found that all the hotels we stayed @ had computers with Internet connectivity and nearby Internet Cafes were not only plentiful but inexpensive. However, the equipment and software was seriously outdated. More than a few facilities had ten year old computers and in some cases were still running Windows XP or even Windows 98. So while Internet access was available, it was not as reliable as I am accustomed and it was slow. I mentioned this to a friend, a naturalized U. S. citizen born in Vietnam who left in late April of 1975 but has since returned and he remarked that my observations were not isolated; he reported that despite the significant modernization, Vietnam is still a very poor country so some 'hard choices' have to be made. However, he sees improvement in the coming Years.

During my many conversations with the 'man in the street,' one theme I often heard was how 'the youth of today' were unmotivated; they "did not appreciate what they had." While in shops negotiating with the vendors, I heard a parent call for help and several times the parent would get frustrated, then apologize to me saying; "The kids today don't want to work, they just want to play on the computer." J Again much to my surprise, I kept my big mouth shut.

While I saw many differences, most of which is improvement, in the quality of life from when I served in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968, then again in 1970 and 1971, as well as when I was last there in 1995, I was still stricken by the contrast between the different classes of people; Vietnam is a heterogeneous country with over fifty ethnic minorities, so we saw well-dressed people, expensive hotels, restaurants and luxurious cars such as Mercedes Benzes, Land Rovers, Fiats, Toyotas, etc. However, we also saw a much larger number of people who are lucky to have a small motorcycle, scooter, or bicycle as they struggle to survive, all too often on less than a $1.00

per day outside the urban areas. My experience at this point in my life made me appreciate the many blessings we have here in the United States all the more, as well as wonder how much we really did help the people. According to my friends change is coming, albeit all too slowly.

Just prior to 7:00 PM on Sunday, June 22nd we left Sài Gòn out of Tan Son Nhut International Airport and after a seven hour flight we arrived in Doha at approximately 10:00 PM. After a three hour layover, we boarded our flight to Philadelphia International Airport and arrived in the United States at 7:30 AM on Monday, June 23rd; accounting for zone changes, we were airborne for over twenty one hours during a twenty four hour period. Brutal!!!

All in all it was a GREAT trip, well worth the effort despite all that was involved. We met all our objectives, we; 1) visited Hill 861-Alpha, 2) located and visited LZ Margo, 3) met NGOs to learn what to do to participate in the Peace Park at Khe Sanh—that information has been passed to Colonels Nick Romanetz and John Kaheny, and 4) learned how to get involved with the UXO problem. Our only significant problem involved the failure of the video equipment we took to LZ Margo; a HUGE disappointment, though 'in retrospect'—no pun intended—not unexpected since we intentionally traveled light. Frankly I don't know how I'll handle that issue. Will I make another trip, this time with better equipment and a skilled operator? Will I forgo a video of the site as it now is and just try to make a documentary based on interviews and old photos? Will I even pursue the documentary idea? Only time will tell. Anyone with any ideas is encouraged to contact me.

WEB BRIEFS

STICKS OF GOLD

By Dave Anderson

I saw him coming down the trench with his can of ham and Mothers in hand and a slight grin started forming on my face. Stop grin'n ass**** and give me those smokes now! Growing up, my Father was a two pack a day smoker. I pilfered one of his cigarettes one day and it made me sicker than hell so I never got into smoking. I was a country kid who grew up eating ham and Lima beans and actually liked the buggers. Melt some cheese into a can of ham and Mothers, break up some crackers and stir them in and if you were in possession at the time, a couple shots of Red Rooster and man I was in hog heaven.

I couldn't have been happier if I had gone to a fancy restaurant at the time. Most of my boys were smokers and they also hated that particular C-Rat meal so I was in a strong position when it came to trading my smokes for food. Those smokes were worth more than gold at the time I swear. Under the stressful conditions we were existing under, cigarettes were in demand and almost priceless to some of the guys. Word in the Mike 2 trench-line was, if you need smokes go see Anderson, he's always got some and he likes to trade for Ham and Mothers whenever possible. Like Sticks of Gold I tell ya. Like sticks of gold!

OBJECTIVE # 2 JANUARY 20, 1968

By Robert "Skip" W. Unangst Jr.
India Co 3/26 1st Platoon

After reading the accounts of Corporal Bryan's reconnaissance engagement on January 20, 1968 in "Red Clay", issue 83, memories of the day were stirred as they have been countless times since. At the time I was a twenty two year old corporal and squad leader of Second Squad, Third Platoon, India Company, 3/26. I was also the oldest member of the squad, and had been with India Company since arriving in country in July of 1967. No engagement is an isolated event. That day was no exception. For several weeks prior to January20th, India Company's base of operations was out of the network of trenches and bunkers atop Hill 881 South. After January 20th, these trenches and bunkers and those

of Khe Sanh and other supporting hills would have a commonality with places like Verdun and the Somme.

Hill 881S was an isolated and distant outpost of the Khe Sanh combat base. From atop the hill one could see a vast panorama extending for scores of miles in every direction. To the South, one could see well beyond the combat base. To the West, one could see beyond the immense cliff that is Co Rok Mountain and well into Laos.

To the North, one could see beyond Hill 881 North's ridge line, across the sweeping DMZ valley, and to the distant massive edifice that is Tiger Mountain. To the East, and across another great valley, rose the stretching mountainous ridge line that contained Hills 950 and 1050. These great vistas contained nothing but raw wilderness, except for the tens of thousands of North Vietnamese soldiers occupying them.

This environment was enough to make a lone reinforced rifle company of a little over two hundred Marines on Hill 881 South uneasy. This rifle company was many miles from its closest support base. It is also important, by way of background information, to understand that four months earlier, India Company and the rest of Third Battalion Twenty Sixth Marines, greatly outnumbered, engaged a division of the North Vietnamese Army in a ninety six hour battle between the DMZ and the Con Thien fire base that saw over seventy per cent of the Marines killed or wounded.

On an afternoon, many days before the 20th, a squad on patrol from India Company engaged elements from the North Vietnamese Army approximately a click to the north of Hill 881S. Shortly after, the distant bursts of small arms fire could be heard and the command went out, "Third Platoon saddle up!" Within minutes we were that "spread out", three to five meters apart, serpentine column moving at double time towards the fire. In approximately twenty minutes we were at the site of the fire fight helping wounded Marines. The NVA had broken off the engagement and there was no sign of them. In particular, I remember carrying a Marine, with what appeared to be a severe eye wound, a short distance to an improvised LZ. I remember saying words of encouragement to him as I carried him. However, the moment was of such intensity that I did not realize until I lay him down that the back of his head was gone. We quickly secured the area and headed back to 881S.

On January 19th, in the afternoon while "milling around" on 881S, the spontaneity of small arms fire again erupted, but this time the sound was more distant. This time the sound came from the vicinity of Hill 881 North. Again, the clarion sounded, "Third platoon, saddle up!" Again, our serpentine column of three squads double timed down 881S, and up and down the intervening topography, along the narrow meandering trail, through shoulder high elephant grass, and always wondering, always anticipating, what was around the next bend. It was no secret that the NVA's strategy was to strike when they greatly outnumbered their prey. Political restraints from the "Demilitarized Zone" to "International Borders" created a macabre vastness that was known as our Area of Operation. These restraints created a Happy Hunting Ground for the NVA; we were the bait.

As we crested Hill 881 North, the just ambushed bodies of Marines from a reconnaissance squad laid in the hot sun. Some Marines from that squad were lucky to have been extracted by rescue helicopter. Not these. To this day, I have vivid memories of that scene. One Marine had deep blue eyes, as deep as the sky above. He had a bright gold wedding band that radiated in the sun light, and his body, split in half all the way to his upper chest, was framed in bright red; this, perhaps, the result of a Soviet RPG.

The next memory I have was of a tree line less than one hundred meters away. Only elephant grass separated us. A maelstrom from Hell could have erupted from that tree line at any second. We "secured" the area, and all of us, the dead and the living, were helicoptered back to 881S or the Khe Sanh combat base. The NVA, again, chose not to engage us.

On the evening of January 19th, 1968, I and the other squad leaders of third platoon were called to Third Platoon's command bunker by our Platoon Commander, Lieutenant Thomas Brindly. Lieutenant Brindly had returned from the Company

Command bunker where our Company Commander, Captain William Dabney, had informed his platoon commanders of what Lieutenant Brindly was about to inform us.

India Company, shortly after day break, would depart Hill 881S on a company size patrol to Hill 881 North. There were several sequential objectives to be met along the way. The company would be split into two groups. First and Second Platoons would take one route, and third platoon would take a different route. This must have appeared as a two pronged advance toward Hill 881 North from Hill 881S. A reconnaissance squad would be attached to Third Platoon. This was Corporal Bryan's squad. Corporal Bryan's squad would peel off of our column and become "inserted" to commence its own reconnaissance mission. Lieutenant Brindley also informed us that a primary mission of the patrol would be the recovery of the radio the reconnaissance squad lost when they were ambushed the day before.

As it became light, Third Platoon "saddled up" and began to depart the perimeter of Hill 881S. My squad was second in the order of the march. First squad, led by Sergeant Knowles, was before us. Directly behind us were Lieutenant Brindley and the platoon command group, which included his radio man. Sergeant Johnson's third squad followed, and behind them was Corporal Bryan's reconnaissance squad so placed for insertion. I remember talking to Lance Corporal Collins of first squad just before we departed. He would be walking point for the platoon, and this would be his last patrol before completing his second tour in country. I believe he was from the Midwest.

I remember him talking about husking corn and corn country. He was a solid, alert, squared away Marine; the kind of guy you wanted walking point for you. He was also told he did not have to walk point or even be on this patrol because he was a day away from heading home. However, he felt strongly that he was more qualified than anyone else, and he therefore insisted on walking point. I remember telling him to be careful. As we left our perimeter and headed toward Objective #1, we moved down into the early morning mountain fog that blanketed the hills. The sky above the fog was so blue that we knew this would become a hot sunny day. Our forty something man column descended many hundreds of feet to the base of Hill 881S and up again to the crest of the adjacent hill, Objective #1. We continued to move north to Objective#2, Hill 800, which was a foot hill of Hill 881N.

As the point crested Objective #2 around midmorning, the silence was consumed by the explosion of small arms fire a few meters before me. I dropped to the ground, and a short time later, I remember looking up to see members of the first squad crawling back down. Several grenades were being thrown after them. In the middle of the group was their squad leader, Sergeant Knowles, with his lower jaw hanging below his throat, and in a strained voice with his tongue pressed against his pallet he was saying, "Help me, help me."

The first thought in my mind was, "Drop back and call in air support," but then another Marine, crawling back down the path said, "Collins is still up there." I then remember instinctively saying, "Second Squad Up." Up there" was probably no more than thirty five to sixty feet away. Just then, grenade floated through the air and landed five or six feet from me; I reflexively curled up and turned away from it. I thought, "This is it," and waited for a second for hot shrapnel to sear through me. Boom- unbelievable- nothing, nothing at all! I was untouched!

My first fire team, led by Lance Corporal Rudy "Dunker" Gomez, was before me, and I had them form a 'wedge." I called out, "Machine gun up." Two machine gunners, John Maceous, and Critchfield, instantly appeared. I said, "Give me a base of fire." Critchfield said, "where do you want it." I said, A few degrees to the left and right of where I throw this grenade." I pulled the pin, held it for a second, and lobbed it up to where one had been-lobbed down to us. I watched it, descend into the green elephant grass, and explode. In almost continuous rhythm, I saw what appeared to be an arm attached to quadrant of shoulder rise barely above the elephant grass.

The machine gunners put down a base of fire. I then had my second fire team, lead by Lance Corporal Roy Comstock, form a wedge to the left; and my third fire team, lead by Lance Corporal Tobin, form a wedge to my right. This movement

created a squad wedge and took a very brief time to form. The squad then moved five to eight meters forward when I heard Gomez's point, PFC Barrett, aka All Cap, say "We got him."

The fire team brought Lance Corporal Collins fifty or so meters down to the base of Hill 800 where third platoon was regrouping. I spoke with Lieutenant Brindley and members of my squad. I remember concluding that probably Collins and others had inadvertently walked inside a NVA perimeter on Hill 800. I doubt either side saw the other one coming.

Seeing a NVA soldier, Collins fired and another NVA soldier behind him shot Collins in the back with the bullet exiting his abdomen. A brief but intense fire fight then ensued. As I walked past Collins at the base of Objective #2, I observed the Corpsman attending to him with serum albumin. I asked my first fire team what he said when they got to him. They told me he said, "Leave me alone, I am dying." A few minutes later he died.

We were told at about this time that First and Second Platoons, on their way to 881N, had engaged the NVA at almost the same time we did.

My understanding of things at this time is that Lieutenant Brindley Informed Captain Dabney of our engagement. The word that went around at this time is that Captain Dabney informed Lieutenant Brindley, "I want that hill." I have always assumed that the hill was Hill 800 as Hill 881N was still a good distance away.

In about an hour, we regrouped and redistributed ammunition at the base of Hill 800 while helicopters removed the dead and the wounded. There was also a brief meeting with Lieutenant Brindley in which he informed the remaining squad leaders that the platoon would get "on line," " fix bayonets," and "take, seize, and secure" Objective #2. As I recall, my squad (second squad), made up the left flank of the line because first squad had had been decimated. Its remaining members were integrated into second and third squads. Third squad, which was led by Sargent Johnson was to our right, and the reconnaissance squad, led by Corporal Bryan, was on the far right of the line. While we were regrouping a 106mm recoilless rifle on Hill 881S blasted away at the top of Hill 800. I believe this gun crew was led by Lieutenant Richard Dworsky, and its mission was obviously to "soften" the target before our assault.

On command, the platoon moved out on line through the open elephant grass. This may have been one of the last on line fixed bayonet assaults in United States military history. It is important to note that the distance from where we began the assault to the top of Hill 800 was no more than 200 feet, and the increase in elevation was probably less than fifty feet. It is also important to note that on the other side of Hill 800 the land descended again, but then rose up to the topographic fingers of Hill 881 North; fingers that were higher in elevation than Hill 800. At this time I believe we were about to have much in common with other assaults in history. These include: Marye's Heights in December of 1862 at Fredericksburg, Pickett at the High Water Mark in July of 1863, the Normandy Beach in June of 1944, and the Iwo Jima beaches in February of 1945. As we moved out on line, we slowly fired our M16s on semiautomatic. This was considered suppressive fire.

In 1965, a friend of mine, Tom Costello, a student from Villanova, off for the summer, and working his summer job, got press pass tickets from Bob Murphy to a New York Mets game. We got to sit right behind home plate. From that vantage point I was in awe of the speed and energy in Willie Mays' swing.

More than half way up that hill I felt as if Willie Mays' swing had connected with my neck. My strapped on helmet and eye glasses went flying. The thundering noise of a fire fight turned into silence. A white mist surrounded me, and I felt myself levitating and looking down on the verdant hills and mountains of Viet Nam. The world had gone Kafkaesque. I thought that what had to happen had happened. I was no longer of this earth. Many of us who had been in country for the past seven months came to believe that getting out alive was unrealistic. Although it took me some time to piece it together, I had been shot through the neck.

This dream gave way to a cruel epiphany. I began to register the crackling of gun fire. I came to realize that I was staggering around in the middle of a fire fight. I was not dead! Fool, get down.

As I hugged the ground, I realized I was lying next to my M79 man, Joe Ramierez. I remember telling Joe to have the others face outboard. What I did not know was that Lieutenant Brindley was dead, shot through the heart. His last words were (I was told), "Sergeant Johnson, it's your boat."

After learning Lieutenant Brindley was shot, Second Lieutenant Thomas came up the short distance from the base of Hill 800. Apparently, he and other members from Second Platoon were sent over to reinforce us. I was told that as he moved up to the crest of Hill 800 he said, "Lets show them what second platoon's got." At this time he was probably no more than thirty feet from me. Other marines later told me that as he got to the top of Hill 800 he rose to a kneeling position to make observations, and just as he did, a bullet entered one hip and exited the other hip, and then exited his canteen. As his head hit the ground, a bullet went through it.

Lieutenant Folly, who was India Companies Executive Officer, next appeared on top of Hill 800. As I lay alongside of Joe Ramierez, I asked him how I was. He said, "Not bad Skip." Folly, who was not far from him, also asked him how I was. He said, "Pretty bad sir." Then I remember my head being about twelve inches from Joe's utility pants pocket as we clung to that hill. A puff of cloth caught the pocket. Joe immediately grabbed and patted his leg. After a pause, He said "I'm OK." I still maintain that bullets have a unique sound when they pass within inches of your head; perhaps a sonic boom. Earlier in the march, Joe found a corpsman's scissors on the trail and put them in his utility pant's pocket. Five or so weeks, later when Joe and I were back at Khe Sanh, he showed me the scissors and the severe bend the bullet had made in them.

At this time, those of us on top of Hill 800 were hanging on. The North Vietnamese army was positioned on the fingers of Hill 881 North above us. From there they could rake our position from several angles. We were receiving protective fire from our company positions back on Hill 881 South. They were able to support us with that 106 mm recoilless rifle. It was not enough. This time the NVA would not break off the fight. This time they would not melt back into the vast wilderness. This time they sensed their prey was greatly weakened and greatly outnumbered. This time they began an assault to finish us off. Those of us remaining, and in the more forward part of our small perimeter atop Hill 800, heard them moving towards us. This situation could not have been greatly different from that experienced by George Armstrong Custer at the Battle of Little Big Horn and his troops ninety two years earlier.

But then two A-4 Skyhawks at near supersonic speed descended out of the blue and pounced on that which had taken the bait. As I looked up, two memories would remain with me. The first was that of releasing napalm canisters. Canisters falling so close that I felt I might have been able to touch them. Canisters that broiled all that which was advancing before us into holocaust. The second memory is of my head and chest exploding with one thought, life, life, life; I am not going to die today.

Corporal Bryan and his reconnaissance squad, who were on our right flank, took casualties that were as severe as ours. I was informed that after he was shot multiple times, and before he died, he held his squad together and contributed to the coordination of air strikes that saved the survivors lives.

The Skyhawks secured our position, and for the second time that day we evacuated the dead and the wounded. The wounded were flown to Charlie Med at Khe Sanh. From there, I was flown to NSA Da Nang where a doctor examined the entrance and the exit wounds on my neck. He then informed me in his Texas accent, "Another quarter of inch more boy and that would have snapped your neck just where we hanged a man." The next day, I was flown to the USS Sanctuary where I would convalesce for the next nineteen or twenty days. At that time I would make my way back to Dong Ha, the siege at Khe Sanh, and finally Hill 881S. This return took several days as landing zones along the way were relentlessly being hammered by Soviet artillery, rockets, and mortars.

After returning to 881S, I would daily look North from third platoon's trench line to Hill 881N and Hill 800. This was real estate we had paid a dear price for only to give it back. A couple of months later, Marines would take it again only to give it back again. This was not a World War II type of war fought to be won. This was a war with a "Demilitarized Zone," allowing massive numbers of ground troops to move south, but forbidding other ground troops to move north. This was a war with "Rules of Engagement" and international boundaries. This was a war designed, directed, and executed by the theory of "Containment." This war also devolved into one that many Americans and most of the media desperately did not want won.

By June my tour had ended and I was going back to "the world." What we as survivors did not know was that the "siege" would continue for decades. I was made aware of this many times. Not the least of which was in the early 1980's. While applying for a social studies teaching position at the Fifth Avenue School in Northport, New York, the interview committee asked me, "Are you going to use napalm and machine guns on children?" Needless to say I would not be hired there or in any surrounding districts where a system of winks and nodes and a code of "omerta" blacklisted Vietnam survivors. As has been said before and in the words of a Beatles song, "Boy, you're going to carry that weight a long time."

In a country now, filled with "sun shine patriots," wearing shiny red, white ,and blue lapel pins, I occasionally reflect back to Parris Island in 1966 and the prescient words of my and Platoon 201S's Senior Drill Instructor, Staff Sergeant J.J. Hegerty. At the end of one those hot July days that drill instructors love and recruits fear and in the middle of our misery he admonished, "Don't tell me how bad you think you have it now, because a day will come privates when you will be holding a hill with other marines and everybody else in the world will be coming at you trying to kill you."

Semper Fi,
India 3 Bravo Actual

DISCIPLINE

By Craig Tourte
HQ Btry 1/13

Discipline
"Training to Ensure Proper Behavior"

Nine weeks of Boot Camp at the San Diego Marine Corps Recruit Depot was a difficult introduction into military life. I was thankful my cycle was not the usual twelve weeks, but the war was heating up and more Marines (Men) were needed, so the training was on a war time accelerated schedule. Upon graduation we were informed that we were now Marines. I certainly looked like a Marine in my new uniform and I was even told that I could even call myself a Marine. I had taken all of the instruction that was provided by the tough Drill Instructors and survived the rigorous physical and mental training.

I knew that additional training was forthcoming in the Infantry Training Regiment (ITR) at Camp Pendleton but I found solace knowing that the worst was over and now that we were recognized as legitimate Marines we would be treated as such with only physical training difficulties ahead, but I was wrong. Our Training Regiment consisted of the usual testy and slightly crazed and salty of which I was one. Our ITR Sergeant was now called a Troop Handler. A short little guy with a slight lisp, it was difficult to take him seriously when he yelled at us in his rather high pitched voice, we were all a bit taken back when he continued to treat us as recruits. At formation he made the announcement that he wanted the biggest looser to step forward (my words, not his) and he pointed out one individual - I observed that the Troop Handler had made the correct choice. His next instruction was "When he says something, I want you to act as if his orders to you came directly from me." Not suffering fools or idiots lightly, I of course had a slight problem with him which resulted in a minor physical altercation. Out of a hundred or so men in the company why did I have to stick my nose into this other than the fact I may have been an idiot myself or perhaps just a little hardheaded and not yet sufficiently disciplined.

After this minor issue of disobedience on my part, the Troop Handler called me into his office where he ordered me to stand at attention. He then stood directly in front of me and hit me in the chest which his fist knocking me to floor. He then took a posi-

tion over the top of me and pointing his finger at me stated in his now commanding voice, "I told you that when he told you to do something you were to consider it coming directly from me, do you understand?" This incident and lesson in discipline is something I have never forgotten - It was truly "Training to Ensure Proper Behavior" a process I continued to understand explicitly.

MARK OWEN 60 MINUTES INTERVIEW
By Craig Tourte

If you happened to have watched the television show "60 Minutes" on Sunday (November 2, 2014) you'll recall the segment interview of former Navy Seal Mark Owen. The interview focused on the book he had written regarding "The Mission That Killed Osama Bin Laden" titled "No Easy Day" and it's authorization by the government. I met Mark in 2013 - see story below - and will be donating to the auction the book he personally signed to Khe Sanh Veterans.

"No Easy Day" - Signed by author to "Khe Sanh Veterans" September 12, 2013
By Craig W. Tourte

It was an honor and privilege, a few weeks ago, to have had the opportunity to have dinner with Mark Owen - author of "No Easy Day...the firsthand account of the mission that killed Osama Bin Laden." Mark was the team leader and second in line of the squad of Navy Seal Team 6 members who entered the house and climbed the stairs, confronted Bin Laden in the doorway of his bedroom and dispatched him to his reward of 77 virgins. Mark was the guest speaker at the dinner and provided a wonderful PowerPoint presentation of his extensive training - mentioning that he actually had to live in a tent and eat MRE's for a month (an inside joke for Khe Sanh Veterans) - the rescue of Captain Richard Phillips - an about to be released movie staring Tom Hanks in "Captain Phillips" - and a first hand account of his participating in the actual search, training for and dispatch of Bin Laden. His presentation was compelling, inspiring and even at times humorous. I was able to spend a few private minutes with Mark and presented him with a Khe Sanh Challenge Coin and the Fall Winter 2012, Issue 81 of Red Clay Magazine. On the inside cover I wrote - "On behalf of all Khe Sanh Veterans, thank you for your service and sacrifice - Craig W. Tourte."

Mark inscribed a couple of his books for me with a personal note and he was also kind enough to write in one of the books the following: "Khe Sanh Veterans - Thank you for YOUR sacrifice to this country! I'm honored to follow in your footsteps and serve as will!" "One Team, One Fight" "Mark Owen." I'll donate this book, addressed to Khe Sanh Veterans, at the silent auction next year at our reunion in San Diego. "No Easy Day" was a compelling read of which I thoroughly enjoyed and of course once again, it was an honor and privilege to have met Mr. Owen.

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS
Steven Orr
HQ CO RLT 26 COMM

Steven Orr was a young Marine stationed on a plateau in Vietnam surrounded by enemy troops who marched shells, rockets and mortars across his company's position every day like clockwork.

In the years since the spring of 1968 when the 19-year-old left Khe Sanh Combat Base, which the U.S. abandoned after suffering more than 9,000 casualties. Orr has reflected on the men and women who for part of their lives wore a uniform to show devotion and service to their country.

"Veterans Day is a day for everyone to display their patriotism and their love of our flag and our country," Orr said. It's a day to express "appreciation to veterans and to those currently serving in the military for their service and for their sacrifices."

Orr, Lewiston's police chief, is the grand marshal of this year's Veterans Day parade, scheduled for 11:11 a.m. Saturday in downtown Lewiston. The parade's aim this year is to honor Vietnam-era veterans. The parade, which was revived in 2011 after a long absence, has routinely had between 85 and 100 entries.

"The parade is an opportunity for everyone to recognize and to celebrate our veteran-rich region," Orr said. An estimated 6,000 veterans reside in the area, Orr said.

"Our veterans serve stateside and abroad, they serve in times of war and in times of peace, in combat and support roles," said Ron Gray, commander of the Valley Veterans Council, an event organizer.

Saturday's parade took place Tuesday prior to a ceremony at the Idaho State Veterans Home, 821 21st Ave., Lewiston. John Brown of Clarkston, a retired U.S. Navy chief petty officer and Vietnam veteran, will give the address at that event.

The ceremony includes placing of the ceremonial wreath by veterans of the 148th

"We'll be honoring all veterans and all branches," said retired Command Sgt. Maj. Major Boyd L. Pedersen.

Retired U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Kay Kalbfleisch and former Army Staff Sgt. Howard Osterberg, a Korean War veteran, will receive the U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo Spirit of Freedom Award during the event, Gray said.

The ceremony will include representatives from local Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion posts, the Marine Corps League, the Disabled American Veterans and Fleet Reserve and Idaho Army National Guard color detail.

TRIBUTE TO OUR CORPSMAN
Larry McCartney E CO 2/26



Got this AGAIN today and it AGAIN brought tears to my eyes as I think of all the GREAT Corpsmen I had the honor and privilege to serve with through the years; in particular I though of those who were KIA--'Doc' Chuck 'Super Squid' Langenfeld, 'Doc' Jim Delaplane and 'Doc' Joe Lopez--but I also thought of some tremendous FRIENDS now gone, men like Commander John 'Doc' Lancaster and Bob 'Double Doc' Topmiller, as well as Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Don 'Doc' Ballard.
For those of us who heard and used the term 'Corpsman Up' it is a term that remains everlasting in both our hearts and our minds. The truth is that we ask and expect far too much from these young men and women who are called Corpsmen and who like most young Marines were first exposed to the horrors of war in ways most will never forget. Those assigned to the Fleet Marine Forces (FMF) lived the way we did and that of the units to which assigned; they endured and participated in every hardship and disappointment, as well as the praise and glory awarded their units.

The truth is many in Vietnam were eighteen (18) years old and upwards and were just as fearful of being hurt or killed as the rest were and like the rest failed to receive mail for extended periods of time. Like every other Marine in the ground combat units, Corpsmen dug their foxholes with other Marines, ate the same C-rations as the rest, felt the stings of ants, leeches, bees, and scorpions and they also dug their own toilets like the rest of us and they also buried their cans, papers, etc., after cooking and eating their meals. They were just as tired as the rest and at times just as afraid of the unknown as was anyone else. However, Corpsmen still had to check on the sanitation of our locations, as well as tending to the minor and major injuries and ailments suffered sooner or later by all—those aliments and injuries ran the gamut from diarrhea to coughs and colds, from Elephant grass cuts which usually festered into very large and ugly sores, to the usual heat related issues such as heatstroke and on to more serious mental and physical issues to include VD and other issues of that nature.

Our Navy Corpsmen did all that while still carrying the gear needed to care for a platoon or company sized unit as well as carrying their own gear and weapons. Often times they were told to help out the locals with their illnesses, injuries, or wounds and that in turn meant using up precious bandages and medications, which the Corpsman had carried in his pack and medical bags for his fellow Marines. That then caused the Corpsman to pray or ask help from somewhere that he would not run short of needed medications and supplies and just in case and when the next firefight, or mine explosion, or enemy mortars or artillery might happen upon his unit.

To ask the above of a young eighteen (18) to twenty two (22) year old FMF Corpsman is asking much more than many in the field ever realized until much

later and after the fact. After all, that Corpsman is thought by many to be an 'expert' on wounds, or how to handle other major injuries, in addition to which medication might be needed and requested to be used for everything from fleas or hair lice to trench foot or crotch rot or pink eye. While every Corpsman that our units had in Vietnam might not have been quite as astute, courageous, gifted, and the logically-minded individuals as we make them all out to be, I would love to have just one (1) more time to shake their hands and hug them all and to thank them all for they did for so many over the years and especially for those units I was honored to be a part of.

THANKS 'DOC' FOR YOUR SERVICE, BRAVERY AND CARING—A TRIBUTE TO THE FMF CORPSMAN.

BLURB FROM THE WEB
SERVICE CONNECTION FOR BRAIN CANCER
By Mack

All:
Just heard yesterday that a friend who I helped gather evidence for a disability claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been rated one hundred (100) percent service connected disabled for Glioblastoma Multiform—brain cancer—that is the result of Agent Orange exposure.

When gathering the evidence I was frequently told Glioblastoma Multiform, or any other brain cancer for that matter, can not be service connected for Agent Orange exposure since it is not on 'the list of diseases' connected to Agent Orange exposure. I disagreed, telling them that the illnesses on that list are only those that are currently presumed to be due to Agent Orange exposure, so if the claimant served in Viet Nam and has one (1) of those disease then he/she doesn't have to prove it occurred as a result of military service. However, a veteran can still be service connected for a disease if the claimant proves the nexus—connection—to military service.

The key here was in the diagnosis and testimony of the civilian doctors. In this case we found a Court of Veterans Appeal case—Citation Number 1201988, Decision Date January 19, 2012, Archive Date January 30, 2012, Docket Number 08-31 874, appeal from the VA Regional Office (RO) in Boise, Idaho—which set the precedent for service connection for Glioblastoma Multiform—brain cancer. In addition, we found a professional medical journal article written by doctors in Australia that substantiated the connection between Glioblastoma Multiform and Agent Orange exposure. The doctors examined the prior court decision, the medical evidence, including the medical evidence from Australia, as well as the current case, and wrote that the illness was "most likely" the result of exposure to Agent Orange.

After learning of the decision I learned that Glioblastoma Multiform, as well as several other forms of brain cancer, are on the VA 'watch list' that MAY be added to the presumptive list @ some point in the future

The important point here is that if you have a disease, any disease, make sure your doctors know you are a Viet Nam veteran and ask them if they think the disease is connected to Agent Orange exposure. If you need to provide them with medical evidence then do so. If they believe there is a connection then file a claim, which would include the strongest possible diagnosis the doctors can legitimately make, and force the VA to make a decision. Who knows, that decision just MAY go your way without any problems because of the accumulation of evidence from other claims, or your case just MAY be a part of that accumulation of evidence

Good luck, God Bless and Semper Fidelis!!!



VIETNAM STRIKES GOLD: THERE'S NO LOOKING BACK, AS THE VIETNAMESE CHARGE INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.

October 5, 2014

By Jeff Browne



I got in a little hometown jam, so they put a rifle in my hands, sent me off to Vietnam, to go and kill the yellow man.

American singer Bruce Springsteen

You think yellow, I say gold; it's the color of my real skin.

Vietnamese singer Pham Quyen Anh

When President Barack Obama took a moment in his first inaugural address to honor our war veterans, he cited four battles: Concord, Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sanh.

Khe Sanh? That's a village in central Vietnam where U.S. Marines repelled a furious assault early in 1968. The victory cost thousands of lives and obliterated the countryside. You might say we Americans won the battle there but lost the war. Or did we? If our purpose was to stop communism, you have to wonder.

In Khe Sanh, coffee plants have risen from the ashes. And today, amazingly, Vietnam is the world's second-largest exporter of coffee, thanks to hundreds of thousands of determined farmers.

Thirty years ago, Vietnam was starving. Today, it is feeding the world as a leading exporter of cashews, whitefish, tapioca, pepper, fruit and rice.

Vietnam makes shoes for Nike, chips for Intel, cameras for Canon, motorcycles for Honda and smartphones for Samsung. Vietnamese are customers of Briggs & Stratton motors, Harley-Davidson motorcycles, Manpower staffing services, General Electric medical devices and Kohler sinks.

Vietnamese consumers shop at the Gap, Banana Republic and Coach. They drink Pepsi, Coke, Miller beer and Starbucks coffee — and within a month after McDonald's opened there this spring, the Vietnamese had ordered 61,980 Big Macs.

McDonald's is an emblem of the triumph of capitalism over communism. The franchise owner is a Vietnamese-American named Henry Nguyen of Chicago. He is married to the CEO of an investment bank and the daughter of Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, who oversees the Communist Party's determined, and sometimes crude, efforts to stay in control. Vietnam's pre-eminent corporate power couple and its communist government are family.

In some ways, Vietnam's youthful, ingenious entrepreneurs overshadow corporate royalty. Consider Flappy Bird. A few months ago, this maddening game was the most downloaded smartphone game worldwide, the creation of a software engineer named Dong Nguyen who lives with his parents in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam.

Mr. Nguyen was bringing in $50,000 a day in ad revenue, but withdrew Flappy Bird from the market because he had grown weary of the notoriety. He wanted to get his life back.

Vietnam is full of Dong Nguyens — hundreds of thousands of modest, brainy entrepreneurs transforming their country.

That's what Google software engineer Neil Fraser discovered on a recent visit. He found that Vietnamese 11th-graders could pass Google's notoriously difficult interview test, and third-graders knew how to use Microsoft Word — in English. Over the next generation, these kids will showcase their potential. A recent report noted Vietnam's transition from col-

lectivism to capitalism produced 170 people worth more than $30 million. What's interesting is who reported it: the official newspaper of the Communist Party, which apparently deems capitalism as important as ideology in a country with bold global aspirations.

Vietnam is an entrepreneurial frontier. It's the 13th most-populous nation — larger than every country in Europe except Russia. Theoretically, Vietnam has the potential to be the Japan of the 21st century, which eventually could make an investment in Vietnam grow 10,000 percent. So far this year, Vietnam's stock market is up about 20 percent.

Even so, while global investors see gold, many American still see yellow — the color of peril, caution and cowardice. In Vietnamese culture, yellow and gold are the same — the color of power, prosperity and success.

Vietnam is a golden opportunity. The promise arises from a confident, forward-looking and optimistic culture — a curious blend of Buddhist, Confucian, Christian and communist values. That cultural complexity is embodied in a young man named Huan.

I encountered Huan one afternoon in Hanoi. As I was sitting on a park bench, he approached me to practice his English. I invited him to sit down, and we talked.

His story was familiar. Huan grew up on a rice farm in the rural north of Vietnam, and he studied hard to earn admission to a university in Hanoi. Sometimes he walked to the old quarter to get an odd job at a shop or a restaurant to earn money for food and incidentals.

As we were talking, a frail, elderly woman limped up to us and held out her hand. I barely noticed her, but Huan gave her his complete attention. He asked her a question and then pulled out his wallet and gave the woman its contents, a single note of Vietnamese currency worth about a dollar.

As she moved on, I asked him why he gave her his only money, and he said, "Because she needs it more than I do."

He realized I was puzzled and added, "In Vietnam, we have great respect for old people, poor people, the less fortunate."

A few minutes later, as we parted ways, I handed Huan about $3 for dinner.

He seemed confused and said, "I cannot accept that."

I said, "Why not? You need it more than I do."
He replied, "My father taught me never to accept money that I did not earn."

Then Huan walked into the streets of Hanoi with attributes many Vietnamese possess in abundance: pride, confidence and an empty wallet.

Culturally, Vietnamese also seem to have a short memory. Not long ago, I joined an educator from Ho Chi Minh City on a tour of Wisconsin's Capitol building in Madison. After visiting the legislative chambers, we walked outside on the deck at the top of the rotunda.

There, we faced three flags blowing in the wind: American, Wisconsin and POW/MIA. He had never seen the black flag, so I explained it was a reminder that some Americans who fought in Vietnam are still missing.

"In Vietnam," he said, "we do not dwell on the past."

And he added, wryly, "I just learned the Wisconsin motto."

Forward.

Jeff Browne is president of Vietnomics LLC, an investment consultancy, and co-founder of templehillsonline.com, a social enterprise helping Vietnamese farmers develop specialty coffee. He's based in Elm Grove, Wisconsin.

ANOTHER SMALL WORLD STORY

By Craig Tourte

"As attractive and charismatic as he was, there was a side of my husband that surfaced night after night in his sleep. He was plagued with the terrible nightmares about his time in the Marines…Many nights I was up changing the sheets wet with sweat, which poured from memories he forced himself to turn off while awake. Like many damaged war heroes…he had received the Purple Heart…he clung to the pride of having been a Marine. Then he drank to forget what the war had done to him."

Who amongst us here hasn't experienced at least some of the above described symptoms. Difficult to explain to others and certainly not discussed with outsiders, after all it has been so along ago you'd think "we'd just get over it" as the too often repeated and insulting phrase is directed towards us during casual conversations by the ignorant. I was impressed that the young wife making this statement understood and recognized the demons her newly married husband was experiencing and that she attempted to understand and was able to offer support for a condition, which at that time was not recognized nor discussed but rather ignored and most often misunderstood. Perhaps understandable, since the quote was made by the caring wife who describes her World War II Veteran husband and his condition in 1951.

I was reminded a few POST down that Lee Marvin had been a Marine, this little quote above was written by Lee's first wife Betty Ebeling in her book "Tales of a Hollywood Housewife" and notes the many struggles Lee had with PTSD, although there was not a name for this condition until many years later. Lee Marvin served in the Marine Corps from 1942-1945 with the 24th Marine Corps Regiment and was wounded during the battle of Saipan. Her statement about Lee's condition, those many years ago, is synonymous with the condition presently experience by so many veterans, regardless of when or where the served.

ARRIVING AT KHE SANH

By Doc Jim Thomas

So 47 years ago, I arrived at Khe Sanh! I remember looking around at the GREEN mountains, waving elephant grass, and a few tents here and there. I remember seeing a helium filled Santa tied to the razor wire floating high without a care. I wondered why the enemy didn't snipe at it, just to irritate us! I remember seeing hundreds of fruit cakes from home being thrown over the wire to the enemy, but they probably didn't eat them either!

I remember the word of the day as more info came to us, attack probable, attack expected, start building bunkers! Fill sandbags. I've got a Doctorate in filling Sandbags! A Corpsman named Nick, & I drove all over the base on our mule, looking for bunker material! I remember walking around with jars of malaria pills, handing them out. Marines, thinking they could out fox the Doc would act like they took them, but I would force the issue, and an old Gunny watching me, said Good job Doc! That still makes me smile! I remember watching the fog roll in, like trying to see through a wad of cotton. A spotter plane missed the approach, circled around and approached again, setting down, and then the fog covering him just that fast!

I was so green, and scared that I wouldn't survive! I hung on every word of the Corpsman who had been in country for seven, eight months. Their war stories both intrigued, and frightened me. A warning from a Corpsman to stay away from Rockets, & Machine gunners would in fact create a friendship that last to this day! The hardships of Khe Sanh brought more than heartache! It brought friendships with Tommy, Big John, Russ, David, Kutz, Dennis, Mike, John, and many other men who are honorable warriors that I have such love and respect for! So on this date in December of 2014, I wish you a very Merry Christmas!

Doc Jim Thomas





THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
CPL Carlos Marcono USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 19 Apr 68 KSCB	Daniel F. King K CO 3/4
LCPL Louis Lowe USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 14 May 65 Hill 689	Daniel F. King K CO 3/4
LCPL Randall Davis USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 04 Jun 68 Hill 861	Daniel F. King K CO 3/4
Robert Crabb USMC Golf Co 2/26 Passed Away	Dermott Barry Golf CO 2/26
All Those Special Forces Who Served At Lang Vei	Lawrence Cooper C CO 5Th S/F
PFC Phillip A, Van Deusen USMC A Btry 1/13 KIA 07 Jun 67	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
PFC Gale E. Gotti USMC A Btry 1/13 KIA 07 Jun 67	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
2 Lt John P. Bobo USMC I CO 3/9 KIA 30 Mar 67	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
Ron Wilson USMC Whiskey Btry 1/13 Passed Away 19 Nov 14	Willie Roe Yates Whiskey Btry 1/13
Billy Ray Moffett USMC Whiskey Btry 1/13 Hill 861 Passed Away	Willie Roe Yates Whiskey Btry 1/13
LCPL David E. Hornby USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 03 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
SGT Molimau A. Tela USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 13 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
LCPL Jose Pacheco USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 13 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
LCPL Alexander McGlothlin USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 13 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
SGT Robert Vaden USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 14 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
CPL Daniel B. Duffy Jr. USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 24 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
PFC Victor Morales USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 01 Aug 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
LCPL Bobby L. Eaton USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 07 Aug 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
PFC Charles L. Roberts USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 09 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
PFC Ronnie Bintliff USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 09 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
PVT William Devore USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 28 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
PVT Richard Brandt USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 07 Dec 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
LCPL Michael Baronowski USMC Kilo CO 3/3 KIA 29 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug Kilo CO 3/3
LCPL Tom MacMillan USMC Kilo CO 3/26 KIA 06 Mar 68	Charles Lemke Kilo CO 3/26
LCPL Ken Stanciu USMC Kilo CO 3/26 KIA 06 Mar 68	Charles Lemke Kilo CO 3/26
Capt.Walter J. Egger USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
GySgt John J. Grohman USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
1Lt Paul W. Bush USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
LCPL Stephen C. Shannon USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
Sgt Arnold J. Ferrari USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 31 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44 Arty Quads-Fifties
Capt Robert Lee Sevell USMC HMM-262 KIA 28 Feb 68	Col William Barba HMM-262 , VMO-6



GOD BLESS THEM ALL



OBIT

KHE SANH VETERAN
REV. WILLIAM R. HAMPTON STS
CAPTAIN,UNITED STATES
NAVAL RESERVE
CHAPLAIN 3/26
8 OCTOBER 1935 - 12 NOVEMBER 2014

SERVICE OF MORNING PRAYER WAS HELD SATURDAY 6 DECEMBER 2014 AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH 2108 N. EUCLIDAVE. UPLAND, CA 91784.

William Ray Hampton, known to many as 'Pastor Hampton', 'PrH', or 'Bill', was many things to many people-son, brother, Principal, Chaplain, Pastor, swim-instructor, YMCA Director, organist, mission fundraiser, mentor, and friend - all of it done in the service of the Lord.

Born October 8, 1935 to Hazel and Merle Hampton he grew up in Inglewood, CA. He was introduced to the Lutheran Church when h is mother enrolled him at Chapel of Peace Lutheran School because the local public schools did not teach phonics at the time. From there he attended Inglewood High School ('53) where he learned to play the organ. After high school he attended USC, graduating with a BS in Education ('57). While at USC he earned his keep by playing the organ at the Culver City Roller Rink, playing the catchy skate-tunes of the era while simultaneously studying for his classes.

This life long Trojan then went on to Pacific Lutheran Seminary at Berkeley ('61). While at seminary he attended Naval Officer-Candidate School and was commissioned an Ensign in the Chaplain Corps, USNR in 1959. He was ordained a Lutheran Pastor in 1961 (ALC), taking his first call as the assistant-pastor/principal at First Lutheran School, Pomona (1961-67).

He was then called to active duty to serve as a Chaplain, first assigned to the 3rd Bn 26Th Marines, with duty in Vietnam (siege of Khe Sanh, and in Quang Tri province), and then as the Chaplain for the Officer Candidate School, Newport, RI (1967-70). At the completion of his active duty he returned to Southern California as a graduate student at Cal Poly, Pomona (1970-72).In 1970 he became the Interim Pastor at Hope Lutheran Church, Mojave. In the 1980's he added two more preaching stations to his Sunday schedule with stops in Boron and Lake Los Angeles driving his ubiquitous Lincoln Continental or the "other" black car every Sunday morning, making the 225 mile round-trip for over forty years. Leading services in the liturgical tradition, PrH rarely missed a Sunday in those 44 years of serving his flock in the desert, conducting his last service on 19 October, 2014.

Pastor Hampton became the founding Principal of Lutheran High School in La Verne in 1972. He personally recruited the freshman and sophomore classes that began with the school in the fall of 1973. Pastor Hampton was instrumental in developing the curriculum that included the Naval Junior Officer Reserve Training Corp program in an addition to establishing the swimming and lifesaving class as a requirement for all students. Under his direction, in the fall of 1976, the new campus was constructed and the school moved to its permanent home in La Verne. In 1984 he oversaw the building of the new gymnasium.

Throughout his years at Lutheran High School he provided strong and caring direction to the many graduates and teachers.

In 1985 he became the General Director of the Pomona Valley YMCA. Through his steady leadership the YMCA grew and once again became an integral part of youth development in the valley through the programs of the Pomona YMCA. While serving as the General Director he also developed the Boy's and Girl's Gym Swim Club and the Young Men's Fitness Club. Through his community fund raising efforts he was able to provide sponsored membershi ps to many of the local youth that enabled them to participate in the aquatics and youth programs of the YMCA. Pastor Hampton retired from the YM CA in 1998 but was far from being retired.

In "retirement," Pastor continued to make his trips to the desert for church services each Sunday. He also began to travel extensively for mission trips and church conferences. He continued in his role as teacher, mentor, tutor, pastor and friend. He volu nteered his time to teach Greek and Latin (and the organ) to students at a local Lutheran School and to those who made the Sunday trip with him to the de-

sert. His passion for music and playing the organ continued through his invitations to friends to join him at his home for organ concerts followed by dessert. He played and recorded the hymns for his weekly church services on his Johannus organ. He also volunteered as chaplain for the local Civil Air Patrol.

Affectionately known as the "desert father," Pr. Hampton was a tireless evangelist for the Society of the Holy Trinity. Hardly a California chapter retreat took place without his bringing one or more guests-sometimes a Lutheran pastor he sensed might be blessed by the Society, often an ecumenical visitor. His dry sense of humor and his wisdom were a blessing to the California chapter.

Pastor organized financial support for a number of Lutheran ministries in Indonesia that provided life-saving medical care, scholarships, and pastoral care to needy Indonesian children and their families, an effort that culminated in the establishment of an official presence of the St. Louis-based Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod in Indonesia.

In another part of the world, Pastor Hampton led the effort to provide the headquarters/cathedral of the Lutheran Church in Kenya with a first class organ, hymnals for the congregation, and vestments for the pastors, so that they might be a beacon of liturgical worship in Africa.

He served 30 years of commissioned service in the USNR, retiring in 1989 with the rank of Navy Captain. His reserve duty was usually completed on Wednesday afternoons, putting on his Khakis and driving to El Toro MCAS or Camp Pendleton to visit "his" Marines while also taking along one of his protege's - a few of who ended up joining the U.S. Marine Corps or Navy. Pastor Hampton's personal decorations include a Bronze Star (w/ Valor) and a Purple Heart.



OBIT

KENNETH D. WILSON
USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13 4.2 MORTARS

Kenneth Du-Wayne Wilson, age 66 years old passed away November 19, 2014 at home in San Antonio, Texas surrounded by his family. He was born at Jacksonville, Illinois, August 04, 1948, second oldest son to Ellis and Lucille Wilson of Macomb, ILL. He was married to Jeni Comstock December 19, 1970. He is survived by his wife Jeni, children Maggie (husband John) Shaffer of Wasilla, AK, Mandy Walpole of San Antonio, and Steve (wife Jennifer) Wilson of San Antonio. And by his six grandchildren, Elizabeth, Ian, Kaeden, Benjamin, Garren and Clara. Then by his Sister Bev Lawyer of Industry and Brother Ray Wilson of Quincy. Also surviving are his nieces and nephews Carol, Abbey, Samantha, Jeremy, Tyler, and Colin. He was preceded in death by his parents Ellis and Lucille Wilson and brother, Eugene. He proudly served in the United States Marine Corps. Prior to moving to Texas was a salesman for Frito Lay in the Macomb area.

A memorial service was held Sunday November 23, 2014 at 3 p.m. at Mission Park North Funeral Homewith Chaplain John Edwards officiating.



OBIT

PATRICK J. HOPKINS "HOPPIE" USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN H&S CO 1/26 81MM

Hopkins, Patrick J. 68, Creve Coeur, MO, November 16, 2014. Beloved son of June Hopkins nee O'Dowd and the late James W. Hopkins. Dear brother of James D. (Chris) Hopkins and Sharon (Patrick) Holden. A proud war Veteran, Patrick served in Vietnam as a radio operator with Alpha







Company, 1st Battalion, 26 Marine Regiment. He was a participant in the largest battle of the war, the 77 Day Siege of Khe Sanh, serving with the 81mm mortar section. Military honors include the Combat Infantry Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnamese Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal and a Rifle Marksman Badge. He was a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association where he was a generous contributor to the Khe Sanh Veterans Scholarship Fund. Services: Graveside service on Monday, November 24, 2014, 1:30 p.m. at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to KSV Scholarship Fund c/o Tom Eichler, President Khe Sanh Vets, 3221 N. Opal Ave. Chicago, IL 60634

PATRICK "HOPPIE" HOPKINS, GENEROUS TO THE END

By Dennis Mannion

TRIBUTES

Ten days before the reunion I received a phone call from Pat who was a patient at the VA hospital at Jefferson Barracks His speech was slow, deliberate, and emotional. He and I had never met in person, but we connected because of this Message Board and Red Clay. He was calling to ask if I was going to San Diego (I was), and he asked if I'd do him a favor. He had planned to attend this reunion -- a first for him -- but had been diagnosed with lung cancer some months back. Despite extensive medical treatments the cancer had spread to other parts of his body, and he was pretty sure that he might not ever be able to attend any future reunions. He wanted me to take his bank/credit card information with me in order to facilitate a contribution of $500.00 to the KS Vets Scholarship fund.

He said it was his way of giving a little of himself back to the organization which had given him so much pride and comradeship. I brought all his Master Card information and was able to make a transfer of funds right at the Registration Desk. One second the $500.00 was in Pat's bank in St. Louis and the next second it was in our account. I called Pat's mobile from SD to tell him the news but it went to voice mail. I did the same upon my return home with the same results.

Joan and I got back to CT Sunday night and Monday eve his sister called me to say that Pat had passed away over the weekend. Details about the funeral are pending -- I helped her with the wording

about his USMC info for the obit -- but he will be buried in Jefferson Barracks Cemetery in the coming days. No wake, no service, just the Military Burial. Pat was never married and had no children.

He was part of the 81mm mortar section with the late Jack Corbett. A few years back Pat sent me a CD that had a 10 minute video on it. During the siege, someone sent him an 8mm movie camera and he had all that film transferred to a digital format. Amazing images of his section of the base: living conditions, the trash & debris, wreckage of aircraft, incredible air strikes (following the bombs down) as well as napalm drops, etc. In one short sequence he pans past Jack's Dickens Ave sign propped up on sandbags.

Pat, to his regret, never made to a reunion, but he has moved on to the greatest reunion of them all. I hope he rests in the peace and happiness he so justly earned. S/F. Dennis

RECENT NEWS ARTICLE PATRICK HOPKINS

VA chaplains part of 'remarkable work' being done for patients

By Joseph Kenny , St Louis Review

Forty-six years ago Patrick J. Hopkins served in Vietnam as a U.S. Marine hunkered down during the siege of the Khe Sanh base. His recall of the horror he experienced there led in recent years to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Hopkins was being treated for cancer and for the symptoms of PTSD at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care System's Jefferson Barracks Division in south St. Louis County. A big help for him was visits from Father Stuart King. As the nation celebrates Veterans Day on Tuesday, Nov. 11, Father King and other Catholic chaplains at the VA hospitals in St. Louis make a difference in the lives of veterans such as Hopkins brutal battle

BRUTAL BATTLE

On Jan. 21, 1968, the North Vietnamese Army launched an attack, and the siege of Khe Sanh began. Fighting continued nonstop for the next 77 days in one of the most brutal battles of the war, marked by a massive artillery bombardment. Steady



Father King Prays With Patrick Hopkins

shellfire every day brought new casualties and tension as about 20,000 enemy soldiers surrounded the base.

Hopkins' regiment of U.S. Marines held its position, and the U.S. "won that battle," he said, noting that "very bad things happened there." He showed emotion discussing a patrol of 38 men that went out and only a handful returned. Five weeks went by before the bodies could be recovered.

He recalled the thousands of airstrikes, artillery mortars fired and more. A radio operator, he served in the Marines from 1966 to 1969, returning home from Vietnam in November of 1968. "I was lucky," he said. "I was never wounded, shot or anything. Shelled a lot."

He had tinnitus, the perception of sound in the ears or head where no external source is present, commonly referred to as "ringing in the ears" and caused by exposure to excessively loud sound. He traced his cancer to exposure to Agent Orange. The PTSD happened later in his life, perhaps triggered by documentaries he saw on the war, his cancer or the health concerns and deaths of those with whom he served in the war. "I didn't lose an arm or a leg. Sometimes I feel guilty for that." Later, he noted: "I'm just a guy who did his job."

DOCTOR OF THE GOLDEN GATE

Father King prayed for Hopkins. They said the "Our Father," and the priest asked that Hopkins find peace, healing and a sense of God's presence. Father King also expressed thanks for the feelings Hopkins shared.

The patient nicknamed Father King, "the Doctor of the Golden Gate." Father King and other chaplains have "buoyed my spirits quite a bit," he said. "How wonderful it's been to have priests come to see me here and at (the other VA hospital) John Cochran. And laypeople from parishes have come out and given me Communion."

Hopkins also mentioned Father James Gray, a hospital chaplain who visited him while he was at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, where he had surgery. Hopkins was a member of St. Monica Parish in Creve Coeur,. where, as a child, he was an altar server. He ran a restaurant in Creve Coeur from 1975-91. He then was a car salesman before retiring in 2009. He had been caring for his 97-year-old mother, a devout Catholic, since then.

He had surgery for a brain tumor about seven weeks ago, but the cancer returned. He was at John Cochran before coming to Jefferson Barracks and said that the staff of the VA have "done amazing things and give so much of themselves. You'd think they're related to me." His approach was to "put his faith in the Lord and try to come back from this," he said.

SUPPORT

As Father King entered the building to see Hopkins, a World War II veteran was getting a ride home after being discharged from the hospital. The man turned to the chaplain, thanked him for his visits and said, "I'll never forget you."

Earlier, a Vietnam veteran, Larry Rice, praised the priest and another Catholic chaplain. "Father has been there supporting me, praying for me," said Rice, a U.S. Army vet from Wichita, Kan. "When you need help, they're there for you."

Rice had surgery on his spine. He said he is recovering well and said the VA has done "remarkable work." After Father King prayed with him and gave him a blessing, Rice smiled and said, "That's my daily jump-start."

Father King, a lieutenant colonel and wing chaplain in the Air Force Reserve with the 932 Airlift Wing at Scott Air Force Base, is the only full-time Catholic chaplain at the Jefferson Barracks and Chochran hospitals. Four priests of the Archdiocese of St. Louis serve part-time: Father George Brennan at John Cochran, Father John Schneider at Jefferson Barracks and Msgr. Kevin Callahan and Father Richard Rath at both hospitals. They serve with the endorsement of Archbishop Timothy Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services.

"Being a priest at our VA hospitals is demanding, but extremely rewarding, particularly as we offer the sacraments of penance, anointing and the Eucharist to veterans at the end of their lives," Father King said. "We also sit with them and provide comfort and reassurance, as they prepare to die, and as they recover from various illnesses and other medical conditions. We celebrate Masses for veterans, their families and staff members six days each week in one of the two hospitals."

Fourteen Catholic volunteers, including several from St. Francis Xavier (College Church) Parish, assist as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Another volunteer transports patients who use wheelchairs to Mass at Jefferson Barracks. The volunteers have extensive training and get credentials with the VA every year.

Father King, who grew up in Michigan, was ordained in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, La., in May 2012. He is married and a convert, having first served in the Army and Air Force as a Protestant chaplain, beginning in 1994. He was the first married man to be co-sponsored by the military archdiocese as part of their co-sponsorship program for seminarians. (There have been married Roman Catholic priests since 1980, when the Church said that Protestant clergymen who became Catholic priests could stay married to their wives.) He lives in Queen of All Saints Parish in Oakville with his wife, Bettina, and three children, ages 10, 4 and 9 months.

SPIRITUALITY IMPORTANT

Rev. Robert Collingwood, chief of chaplain services for the VA St. Louis Health Care System, said that in the past 10 years a shift has been made to a holistic approach to patient care.

"Particularly with veterans, it's important that you look at their whole life," said Rev. Collingwood, a

United Methodist clergyman. "The VA has taken the approach that one's spirituality is a part of that whole person. So they look at the physical, mental, psychological and spiritual as well. We are not here to convert anyone but to help them to tap into and use the spiritual resources they have."

Some veterans have what's called a "moral injury" when they are required in combat to do something that goes against their moral upbringing, or witness such acts. Chaplains are particularly helpful in dealing with those situations and helping the veteran heal.

Some veterans have attended chapel services and it brings a memory of a safe place, close to God. "We have people who return to church after coming to the chapel for the first time in years," he said. "We're a bridge for them, getting them connected with spiritual or religious resources in the community."

OBIT

BILLY R. MOFFETT
USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13
4.2 MORTARS HILL 861

Billy Ray Moffett, 70 year old, Checotah resident, passed away on Sunday, December 7, 2014 in Eufaula. He was born on Saturday, August 12, 1944 in Henryetta, Oklahoma to William Eugene and Venie J. (Parker) Moffett. Billy was raised in Henryetta where he graduated from High School. He entered the United States Marines on Friday, January 3, 1966. While in the Marines, Billy Ray earned the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Vietnam Service Medal Rifle Expert Badge and the presidential Unit Citation.

He was honorably discharged on Friday, January 3, 1969. After being discharged, Billy worked in Tulsa at Harding Glass, delivered Tulsa newspapers and was a certified security guard thru Pinkerton and worked as security guard at Wabash Metals in Checotah. There was a book written about him and his fellow warriors titled, "Last Stand At The Khe Sanh." He loved fishing, drinking coffee with his



buddies at Our Place Café, scenic drives, time at home and loved the Florida beaches, but the biggest smile on Billy's face was when he entered the city of New Orleans on our vacations. Billy was preceded in death by his parents, brothers, Tommy and Jimmy Moffett, 2 infant children and his wife Connie who passed away on Wednesday, December 12, 2009. He is lovingly survived by his fiance' Brenda Rafael of the home; daughters, Carrie Jean Moffett and Kateryna Moffett Kunytska and her husband Alexander of Ukrain; grandchildren, Brittany Wright of Tulsa and Nash Wright of Claremore and Nicholas Kunytska of Ukrain . He is also survived by his sister, Carol Thompson of Henryetta; brother -in-law, Dennis Elledge and his wife Elizabeth of Warner and sister-in-law, Pat Lee of Tulsa.



OBIT

LAWRENCE E. BOSWORTH CWO-4 USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN C/O CAC-OSCAR –3

Larry (aka "Boz" & "Gunner") was assigned early in 1967 to Oscar Company at Khe Sanh as part of the "Plank Crew." He proceeded to help establish Oscar Co., and was the squad leader of two of its CAPs, serving as NCOIC of O-3 until Oct. 1967.

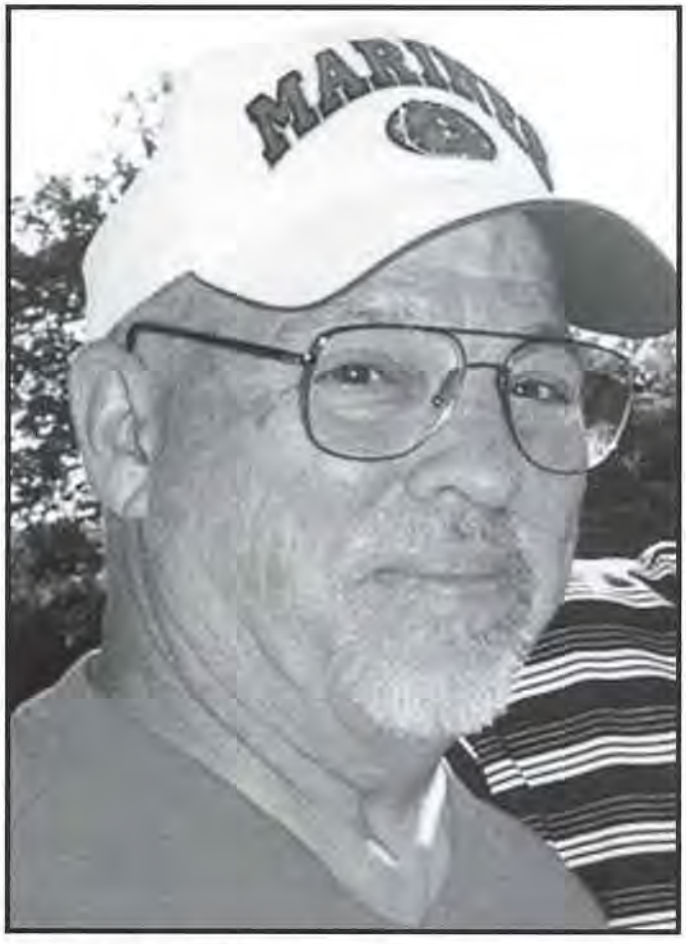

27 June, 1967, Oscar Company was ordered by the Marine command at Khe Sanh to send a patrol to investigate suspected rocket and mortar launch sites spotted earlier by an aerial observer that were believed to be the origin of an NVA rocket and mortar attack on the Khe Sanh base which had occurred just after midnight of the night before. This patrol resulted in the ambush of our patrol on Hill 689 and the deaths of most of the patrol. (See CAC Oscar History)

Larry was a good NCO who cared a great deal for his men's welfare. He told me in various Es and phone conversations that he greatly regretted sending that patrol out, as he knew it was a mistake at the time, as they all knew the area was "hot" and that the CAP unit was not big enough or well enough supported to make a combat patrol of that type, which was better suited to an infantry company. However, while LT Sermeus agreed, he was also under orders.

OBIT

STEVE GREEN USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, CAP -OSCAR 2



Steve A. Green joined the Marines in 1965, and was assigned to SU #5 in February 1967, thus becoming one of the "plank crew" of Combined Action Company Oscar. He was assigned to O-2 at Khe Sanh, and served under SGT Spellman, leaving in August 1967, prior to the Tet assault and Siege

Steve finished his tour in the Marines in 1970

Unfortunately, due to the years and his illness, Steve didn't remember a lot about his tour, though he recalled the Bru fondly, as most of us do.

He did remember some incidents, such as setting fire to the plantation by accident during a fire-fight in May 1967, when a fellow CAP Marine named Peter (he was unsure of the last name but it may have been "Pate") popped a flare that started a blaze. He also recalled a party thrown by a Bru chief to celebrate the curing of his malaria-stricken daughter by our medics.

Steve contracted cancer and took a full course of treatment for it, stemming the first assault, but was unfortunately struck again in 2014 by a much more aggressive and broader attack. Given the slender options, and with little to no chance for successful treatment, Steve decided to forego the debilitating treatment, and instead got his affairs in order. I spoke to Steve by phone on several occasions as his illness progressed (including a few days before his death) and he remained stoical, brave, and composed right up to the end. Despite his advancing illness and its severity, Steve survived for one more Marine Corps Birthday. He will be missed, but remembered, at the next Birthday, and I hope all of you will join me in raising a glass to his memory.

Steve enjoyed working on bikes and trikes, and could often be found in his garage tinkering with one of his "projects" like the one below
He is survived by his wife Carolyn.

A REUNION STORY
By Craig Tourte

I don't know how it started but some of us had heard those attending the graduation ceremony at MCRD would be offered VIP seating in the stands next to the Officer/VIP reviewing stand located in the very center of the grandstand area. Only the most important and those being recognized would be invited to sit in this area as it was the most advantageous location to view all the pageantry. Many loaded up in the busses at the hotel that would transport them to MCRD for this very auspicious occasion. Tom Horchler, who has some issues with mobility and was not sure if he wanted to sit and stay for an expected length of time thought it best that he just drive his own vehicle and asked if I would like to accompany him.

With our Khe Sanh shirts and reunion identification tag handing around our neck we found our way to the rear gate of the recruit depot and were waive through as we showed our identification and told the guard we were simply going to the museum. I told Tom that I thought it was a good place to park as it had several disabled parking places. The hundreds of vehicles heading to the parking area on the grinder for the graduation parade were waived to the long line of vehicles being inspected to a lane on the right while we simple followed behind a delivery truck in our own lane on the left.

We parked next to the museum and walked across the grinder to the middle of the grandstand area through a small opening monitored by what appeared to be drill instructors and sat in the grandstand to the left (north) of the VIP area where we assumed the K/S membership had been assigned seating, especially since not one person asked us who we were or directed us to sit at any other location. Looking around there were a few other Khe Sanh Veterans in their shirts sitting in the area but certainly not as many as those attending the reunion. After a few minutes several stood and apparently by invitation moved over to sit in the VIP area with the colonels, generals and other people of significant importance. Tom and I thought it was nice of whomever to invite us to join them so we walked in and sat down.

As I was walking up the stairs to the bench I was to sit on I spotted a rather attractive lady in a military uniform which displayed one gold star. I went up to her and thanked her for inviting us and told her it was an honor to be recognized for our service. She stood up, smiled and shook my hand. I was quite impressed with myself but sorry at that moment I didn't have a challenge coin to present to her.

The location of our seating was a perfect location to hear and observe the ceremony and the band stood right in front of us while they performed. We felt the Khe Sanh Veterans were really getting well deserved respect and recognition

After all the introductions, pontification, music, marching around and verbal recognition by the Lt. Colonel Master Of Ceremonies the graduation concluded and Tom and I walked towards the area where we observed the busses parked. As we reached the busses we learned that the Khe Sanh Veterans had in fact been seated at the very end of the grandstand and their view was less than ideal.

I want you to know that Tom Horchler and I duly represented all of you while we sat with the other VIP's, the general, colonels and the many others of importance and completely enjoyed

A CORPSMAN AT KHE SANH

By LCDR David C. Kleinberg
Former HM-3 K CO 3/9
Marine Corps Gazette Oct 2004

An intense firefight against the North Vietnamese at Khe Sanh as seen through the eyes of a corpsman.

On 24 June 1969, I was just doing my job as a grunt hospital corpsman 3d class (HM3) assigned to Company K, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, 3d Marine Division in the hills near Khe Sanh. I provided medical care to the Marines in my company. This particular day was somewhat different. Another day of humping the bush had finally ended. The rumor going around the hill was that we had been here before, and from the looks of the hill, it was probably true. Fighting holes were located near the top of this hill, but if you looked a bit closer, there was higher ground to be had within 200 meters to the north.



Photo of Author HM-3 David C. Kleinberg (Wearing Helmet)

This was one of very few company-sized movements that I can remember. 1st Platoon was on the west side, 3d Platoon stretched from the north to the east, and 2d platoon was on the east side of the hill. The foothills could be seen on the east side of our position.

We arrived on target around 2 hours before dark, which didn't leave much time for social life, such as it was in the bush. The Marines were working furiously re-digging fighting positions about 100 meters down the hill from the original holes because the company commander, 1stLt J.R. Wasson, wanted to take no chances being locked into an inescapable situation. 1stLt Wasson was an experienced combat leader. Lucky for us that he was because just after nightfall some of the Marines became aware of movement on the east and north sides of the hill.

We had gotten two new corpsmen that day-HM3 Fred Kurtze, who went to 1st Platoon, and another guy, who was sent to 3d Platoon. I had recently moved from 1st Platoon to 2d Platoon after the previous corpsman had been wounded and medevaced. Our platoon leader, 2dLt Arthur Johnson, was no stranger to the bush and neither were the men of 2d Platoon. 2dLt Johnson carefully checked all of the holes before returning to the top of the hill where the radioman and I were located-in one of the old fighting holes. The radioman told 2dLt Johnson and 2dLt Walter Smith (1st Platoon) that the company commander wanted to see them, so they went over to the command post. 2dLt Thomas Tighe (3d Platoon) was on the other side of the hill.

The moon was brilliant and full that night. With adequate night vision you could see almost as well as in the daylight, so a shadow was no surprise even in the dark of the mountains. Not long after the moon was at its zenith, "Buzz," one of our M60 gunners, came over to me and said, "You may want to keep your head down for a bit, doc. We're gonna make the gun talk a little." Buzz wasn't kidding. During the next 20 minutes or so you could hear a rhythmic clicking of sticks being tapped together by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). It was their method of coordinating their assault movement in the dark. The Marines knew they were coming, and so we waited. Shortly thereafter, the guns started to talk. Only a few M16s could be heard, but within several minutes things got wild and crazy.

I was suddenly aware of someone lying on the hill, out in plain sight, and he seemed to be making noise. Not wanting to attract attention to myself amid the green tracers going over my head, I low-crawled to his location. He kept making this indistinct noise, and I kept trying to tell him to be quiet but to no avail. As I got closer, I realized that he was still completely wrapped up in his snoopy blanket. It made no sense for someone to be sleeping in the middle of the hill, particularly in the middle of a rather intense battle, but there he was with the

snoopy blanket covering his face. By the time I got to him, I realized that he was not listening to my pleas for silence, so I proceeded to try to put my hand over his mouth. Finding nothing where his mouth used to be, I recoiled in some shock. This was the first dead Marine I had encountered.

I decided to venture back up the hill toward the area where Buzz had told me to stay low and in so doing encountered another Marine. This time, it was obvious. Cpl Rod Janetta was quite dead. He had a bullet wound in the thigh, and there wasn't much left of his head. My first thought was to start writing a tag. All of a sudden I heard "KACHUUUMP" to my left accompanied by lots of sparks and the appearance of three bodies being hurled out into the air just like you see on television. The cries for help followed from the same direction, so I left this patient and low-crawled again to the next location. When I reached the hole, I found "Little Joe" Loeffelman, Gator, and one other Marine in rough shape. Unfortunately for me, I also realized there was another NVA soldier approaching me, and I had no weapon with which to fight. A quick scan of the hole revealed one frag grenade at the bottom of the hole, so I threw that and ducked, hoping it wouldn't blow me up instead. The NVA guy was gone, but another showed up in his place. This guy had his helmet hanging over his AK-47. You could see him ready to shoot.

In no time, LCpl Dave Bartosek fired his weapon and neutralized the threat so I could work. Little Joe was in bad shape-shrapnel everywhere. Gator was OK, but he had the perfect Marine Corps wound-his butt was littered with shrapnel. The other guy (whose name escapes me after all these years) was hurt, but not too badly. None of them were in any shape to walk or even crawl so I pushed the first two up the hill and dragged the third with my leg. Once we got to the area of the old fighting holes, I did what I could to stabilize all three. The noise had diminished somewhat, so I got careless and stood up in front of Pancho, the radioman. In the flash of an instant there were a million firefly-like sparks coming out of the ground in what looked like an inverted funnel in front of me, but I don't recall any sound. Then I heard Pancho start to scream that he was hit. But he was behind me! That thing went off in front of me! I quickly got back on the ground and attended to Pancho, who had the classic sucking chest wound that I had heard so much about in my training at Camp Pendleton. I had the presence of mind to stuff the plastic wrapper of the battle dressing into the wound and tie the dressing around his chest and place him with the wound side down. He was as stable as I could get him in the dark.

A few minutes later it seemed that things had become quieter. It stayed quiet for about 15 minutes, and then we heard screaming. One of the Marines in 1st Platoon, PFC Jesus Perez, had been captured by the NVA while he was on an ambush. The corpsman (HM3 Mike Wild) had been separated from the group as well, but made it back to the lines safely. We heard another gunshot and heard Perez scream again, followed by more NVA voices telling us to surrender, I guess. This went on for what seemed an interminable amount of time-shot, scream-shot, scream. Finally, it stopped, and we surmised that Perez was dead. I guess we hoped he was so that he wouldn't feel any more pain. It was a long night for everyone after that.

The sun finally came up on yet another sweltering, humid day in the foothills of the mountains of Northern I Corps. We were now faced with the job of assessing the damages. There were three Marines killed in action, many wounded, and a lot of NVA bodies to count. I really don't remember how many NVA there were, but I had to go with the detail that was sent to detonate the explosive in the bomb crater where the bodies had been collected. There were a lot of young bodies in that crater.

I remember being numb from the entire firefight and wondering why no one came to take us out of there. A little later that morning, a general came to the hill by helicopter with a reporter on board. The general brought us several large boxes of ice cream. The flavor of the day was chocolate. While I was helping carry the body of Cpl Janetta to the landing zone, the reporter jumped out in front of me and yelled, "Smile, Doc!" I was in no mood to smile when he snapped the picture of me that was later published in the New York Daily News.

I never heard much about that whole event afterward, and it would be 34 years before I discussed it with anyone except the battalion executive officer (XO). One day after the 9th Marines was redeployed to Okinawa, I was summoned to the office

of the battalion XO. During the short interview for which I was ordered to stand at attention, the XO opened the discussion by saying, "So you think you deserve the Bronze Star?" I replied by asking him, "What is a Bronze Star?" He said it was a medal. Since I had never been given a medal, I told him that I didn't know anything about it. His reply was, "What happened [as if I knew what he was talking about] was just 'doing your job,' and we don't give medals to corpsmen just for doing their job-now get out of here." So, my part in the long night was appreciated by at least one of my leaders, but I never found out which one. Needless to say, no one ever gave me a medal. I was, however, glad to know someone knew what happened that night, even if I was only just doing my job.

THROWBACK THURSDAY: CORPSMAN MONUMENT GETS A NEW LOOK AT BASE NAVAL HOSPITAL

It was just three days into Raul Avina's first combat experience, the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II, when shrapnel blasted through his back, arms and legs.

As he lay there, several corpsmen ran up the hill to help him and another fallen Marine. Without their help, Avina later told his family, he wouldn't have survived. In the 36-day battle that ended with Marines raising the American flag at the top of Mt. Suribachi 4,000 Marines were killed and 15,000 were injured.

Nearly 40 years later on June 17, 1983, Avina, then 73, unveiled a sculpture he crafted from rebar, concrete and heavy mesh at what was then Naval Regional Medical Center Camp Pendleton. Top Marine and Navy officials attended the ceremony for the Hospital Corpsman Combat Memorial.

Avina, known for his artworks, designed and built the sculpture depicting three Navy hospital corpsmen running to a Marine on the side of a mountain in his Oceanside garage. It took him two years.

For 31 years, Avina's monument stood in front of the hospital. A year ago this week, a new four-story, 500,000-square-foot replacement hospital opened at Camp Pendleton and Navy officials planned to relocate Avina's 17-foot-monument. During the move, the sculpture broke apart.



Hospital Corpsman Memorial built by Raul Avina Sr. It was dedicated at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton on June 17. 1983. The monument was built by retired Marine Raul Avina, who was rescued by corpsmen after being wounded in the Battle for Iwo Jima.



On June 17, 1983, veteran Raul Avina unveiled his Hospital Corpsman Combat Memorial in front of Camp Pendleton's hospital, which was then called Naval Regional Medical Center Camp Pendleton. Avina, then 73, created the piece as a way to acknowledge corpsmen past, present and future



Raul Avina stands in front of his sculpture during the dedication ceremony on June 17, 1983, at Camp Pendleton



Raul Avina with his wife, Quirina, embrace before he deployed to Iwo Jima. Avina was 31 when he became a Marine. He and Quirina were married 67 years. They are buried together at the Veteran's National Cemetery in Cave Creek, Arizona.

Part of Avina's original pieces were salvaged. Contractors used photographs, renderings and its old footprint to re-create a new one.

On Friday, Navy and Camp Pendleton officials including at least 20 of Avina's family will dedicate the new monument. Improvements include new texture of Mt. Suribachi on the island of Iwo Jima. Avina's original cement figures were re-cast in bronze with patina applied to protect against the weather and sun.

For Dan Avina, one of Avina's sons, the unveiling will continue a legacy his father had hoped to create when he began building the first monument in his garage in Oceanside.

"He built it in sections and suspended them from joists in the garage and almost pulled the whole garage down." Dan Avina said. "When he finished it, he transported it in pieces out to the lawn at Camp Pendleton. I don't know how he assembled it. It was truly garage art."

That garage art later would become the inspiration for the hospital's logo. Its image is incorporated into the hospital's logo and is seen at the hospital's entry and is printed in hospital linens and scrubs.

Raul Avina died in 2003, at the age of 93.

"At the ceremony, I will look up into the heavens and give him a good 'thumbs-up,' and say 'Pops, you did something that will last,'" Dan Avina said.

CORPSMAN MONUMENT REDEDICATED

Raul Avina's Hospital Corpsman Combat Monument was re-dedicated Friday during a ceremony at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton.

The 17-foot-high sculpture was originally built by Raul Avina, a Marine injured in the Battle of Iwo Jima. Avina, forever grateful to the corpsmen who saved his life, created the monument at the age of 73. It took him two years to complete the cement, rebar and mesh sculpture in his Oceanside garage. It was first dedicated at Camp Pendleton at the old Naval Hospital in 1983.



Raul Avina created a corpsmen monument in 1983. The monument was in front of the Naval Regional Medical Center Camp Pendleton for 31 years. Last year a new Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton opened on the base. Attempts to move Avina's sculpture didn't go well and a new monument was created from Avina's original. An unveiling was held Friday at the base. Many of Avina's family members were on hand for the event. Corpsman are the Marines "docs" in combat and have saved countless lives over the decades.

Efforts to move the monument last year when the base's new Naval Hospital was opened were unsuccessful. The monument began breaking apart. So Clark Construction/McCarthy, builders of the new hospital, used photographs, renderings and pieces from the original structure to rebuild the monument and relocate it at the new Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, completed in 2013.

Avina's original cement figures were re-cast in bronze with patina applied to protect against the weather and sun. The monument stands at the end of the hospital's Medal of Honor Mall.

Navy Capt. Mark Kobelja, commanding officer, Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton hosted the rededication. Speakers included Maj. Gen. Lawrence D. Nicholson, commanding general, 1st Marine Division; Rear Adm. C. Forrest Faison, deputy surgeon general of the Navy; and Richard Heim, president and CEO, Western Region, Clark Construction Group.

The very fact that a United States Marine, wounded in combat and under the care of hospital corpsmen during one of the Marine Corps most storied battles



The Marines had planned to cover Raul Avina's 31-year-old corpsmen monument with a parachute until the grand unveiling on Friday, but, instead, Mother Nature came into play and coated the sculpture with a blanket of rain. Guest speaker Lieutenant General David Berger, commanding general of the first Marine expeditionary force, delivered stirring accounts of corpsman bravery and, on queue, the rain let up as he concluded, which afforded the masses to emerge from their tented event shelter and see the finished work outside Navy Hospital Camp Pendleton on Friday.

would personally design and construct with his own hands a representation of that image is profound, said Navy Command Master Chief Christopher Thorne.



Raul Avina's great nephew, Tom Ehmann, left, son, Dan Avina, grandson, Kyle Avina and his wife, Cheryl, admire the resurrection of the corpsman monument Avina created 31-years ago. Last year a new Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton opened on the base. Attempts to move Avina's sculpture didn't go well and a new monument was created from Avina's original. An unveiling was held Friday at the base. Many of Avina's family members were on hand for the event. Corpsman are the Marines "docs" in combat and have saved countless lives over the decades.

There is a bond between Marines and hospital corpsmen. A Marine will press forward in combat through mortal peril buttressed by the knowledge that if they should fall, a hospital corpsman will be only steps behind to aid them, while the fight continues around them. A corpsman will run onto the field of battle through fire with the sole purpose of reaching and aiding a fallen Marine, even if it means sacrificing his own life to do so. They will do this because each and every one of them know that their Marines will protect them with their very lives as well, he added.



Raul Avina's nephew, Ray Ramirez, left, chats with Richard Heim of Clark Construction about the significance of his uncle's sculpture to his family during an unveiling ceremony outside Navy Hospital Camp Pendleton on Friday.



Guests admire the new installation of Raul Avina's corpsman monument outside Navy Hospital Camp Pendleton on Friday.



Van and Kathleen Avina, right, Raul Avina's son and daughter, thank artisan Richard Winget for his work on the new, permanent rock structure that their father built. It is now affixed outside the Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton.

"For Raul Avina to shape this memorial with his own hands and share that bond between Marine and hospital corpsman gives more meaning than any words of thanks or gratitude," he said. "It represents heartfelt love."

The Hospital Corps is the only enlisted corps and the largest corps in the U.S. Navy with 26,980 currently serving around the world on the sea, under the sea, on land and in the air. Twenty-two Hospital Corpsmen have received the Medal of Honor, 178 have received Navy Crosses including the recent award of Chief Petty Officer Justin Wilson on Nov. 25. Thirty have received the Distinguished Service Medal and 956 have received the Silver Star Medal. Seventeen U.S. Navy ships have been named in honor of Hospital Corpsmen.

NEW MEMORIAL HONORING DISABLED VETERANS UNVEILED IN DC

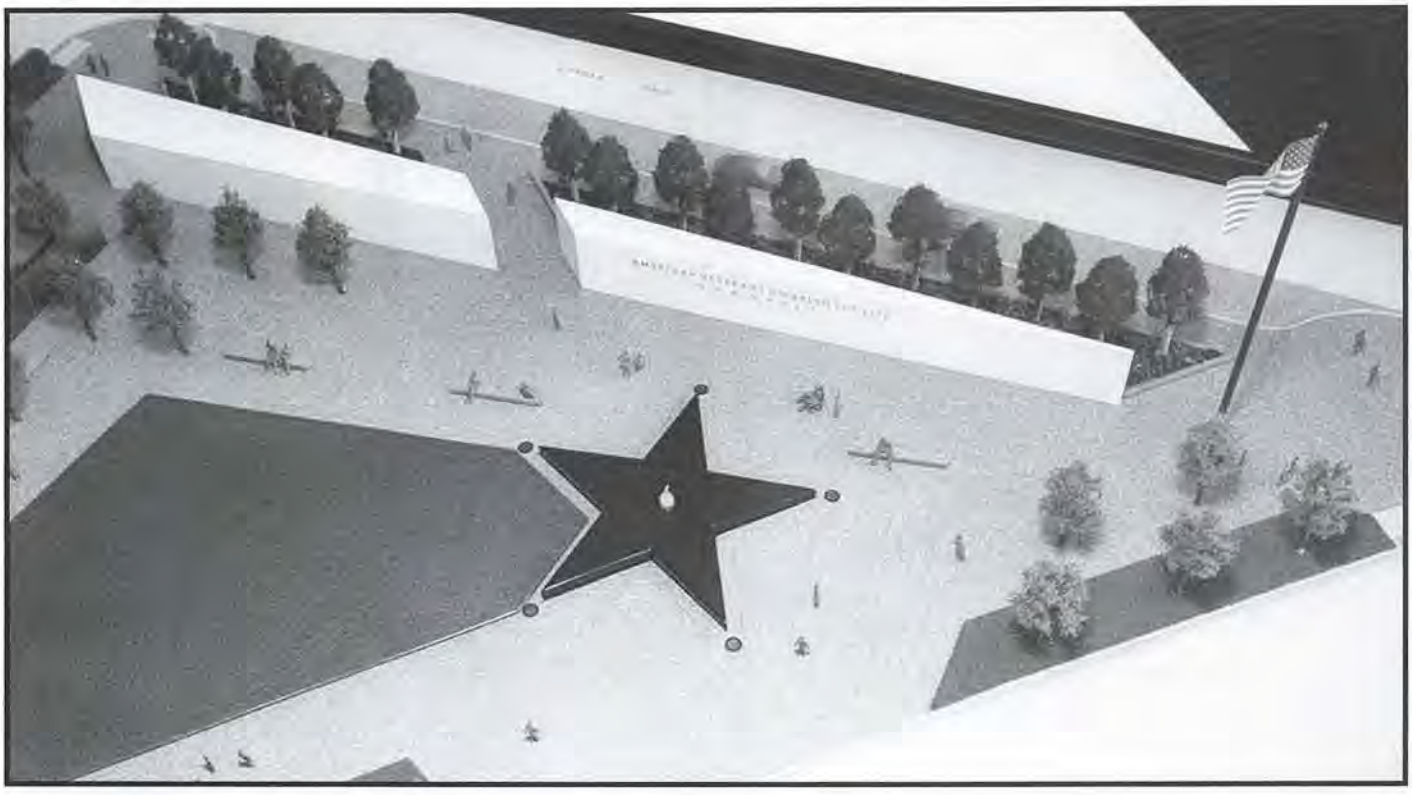

A new memorial honoring disabled veterans was unveiled in Washington on Sunday. "It was awesome. I cried the whole time," Bill McKinley, a Vietnam veteran told WUSA9 about the unveiling.

The new memorial is called 'The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial' and is the first of its kind to recognize all Veterans with both physical injuries and the "invisible" ones such as PTSD.

McKinley said that the memorial means "everything," to the Veterans who were their for its unveiling on Sunday: "It's finally an honor of our duty and service."

he project was a long-time coming. It started in 1998 when philanthropist Lois Pope, former U.S. Secretary of Veteran Affairs Jim Brown and the National Adjutant of Disabled American Veteran Art Wilson recognized a need for this type of memorial. Over the years they then followed suit with approval from Congress and 14 years of fundraising.

"This is something that's long overdue and I'm glad it's finally here," said Vietnam veteran Chester Wisnesky.

The structure itself symbolizes the people it represents. Architects used granite and glass to convey strength and vulnerability. A reflection pool shows a star with a single flame in the middle and a grove of trees stands to show the persistence in hope.

Some veterans say if there's no visible scar, many think there's no injury.

"They don't really see what's going on or what we've been though and so they just automatically assume that we should be fine," said Judy Brown, an Iraq War veteran. Brown says she's thankful every visitor will get a chance to see and understand what our service men and women really go though. "This helps us heal those wounds and stuff and know that we're not forgotten," said Martin Lathrop, another Veteran of Iraq.

The memorial officially opens to the public on Monday. For more on the memorial and the non-profit behind it, visit: http://www.avdlm.org/.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS ON INSIDE BACK COVER OF MAGAZINE











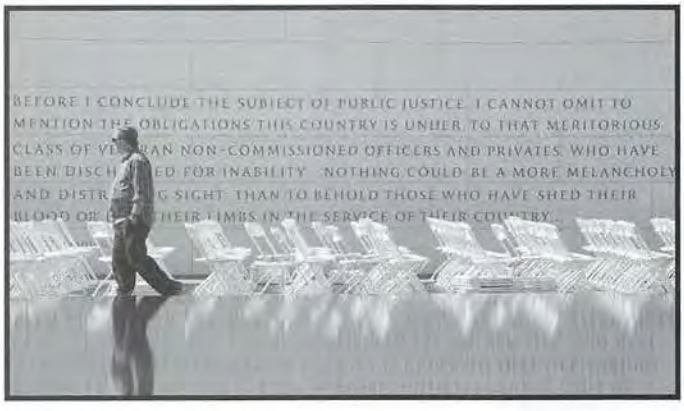



DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

WITH FAITH AND DEVOTION

By Herb Richardson
Originally Published April 1997

It was late in the afternoon on Monday, Sept. 4, 1967, when two platoons of Company M, 3d Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment, First Marine Division got into a vicious firefight with a strong enemy force.

Lieutenant Vincent R. Capodanno, a Navy chaplain and Roman Catholic priest, died in the firefight on that day on a hillside south of Da Nang, at a place where he didn't *have* to be.

The story of how he got there and what he did on the day of his death is incredible to most of us, but



understandable to many of the more than 700 chaplains who served with Marines in Vietnam over nine years, beginning April 12, 1962.

This was an old job in a new place.

Chaplains were first assigned to Marines full time in 1914, when a chaplain was stationed with the Marine Expeditionary Force of the Atlantic Fleet.

Chaplains were sent to the Fifth and Sixth Marine Regiments in 1917 and served with those units overseas during World War I.

Six chaplains went ashore with the troops at Guadalcanal. They were the first to see combat with the Marines on the offensive in World War II, but not the last.

Chaplains were with the Marines when they hit the Solomon Islands, the Gilberts, the Marshalls and the Marianas. When the leathernecks went ashore at Okinawa, the last island operation of the war, they had their chaplains with them.

Capodanno probably knew very little of these things. When he signed on for duty, he thought he was joining the Marines.

He was born in Richmond County, N.Y., in 1929, ordained in 1957 and served as a missionary in Taiwan and Hong Kong from 1958 until 1965.

It was in 1965, after the Vietnam conflict grew to a full-bore war, that the priest volunteered to serve in-country with the Marines.

Another Roman Catholic chaplain, Lt Conon J. Meehan, wrote that when Capodanno applied for military service as a chaplain he went to the Marine recruiting office in Hong Kong because he wanted to serve with the Marines.

It wasn't until he got back to the States for training that Capodanno learned that he had actually joined the Navy.

It didn't make any difference.

The chaplain joined the Marines anyway-the 5th Marines in Vietnam. He served a year, extended for six months and was killed in action four months into that extension.

On the day following his death, a letter was deliv-

ered to the 5th Marines commanding officer. It said in part, "I am due to go home in late November or early December. I humbly request that I stay over Christmas and New Year's with my men. I am willing to relinquish my 30 days leave."

Chaplain David J. Casazza said in his memorial remarks at the dedication of the Capodanno Memorial Chapel at the Naval Chaplains School in Newport, R.I., that Capodanno was pushed by a need to spend as much time as he could with his Marines.

"He was a hungry man. Hungry to be with his troops. Hungry for more time to seek out the lonely Marine, more time to sit with the scared boy, more time to explain things to the confused platoon leader."

Capodanno, like other Vietnam-era chaplains, adopted to the quick-mobility, small-services demands of this conflict. The chaplains assigned with the grunts in Vietnam had to find comfort in their Bibles and in their work.

They found little worldly comfort with their Marines who moved out fast, moved again and lived mostly in the dirt.

Services tended to be small, personal and frequent.

Ray Stubbe is a reverend in Wauwatosa, Wis., today. He was chaplain for members of the 1st Bn, 26th Marine Regiment during early 1968.

That's when the unit was being hammered day and night by NVA rockets and artillery at Khe Sanh Combat Base, near the Demilitarized Zone.

Stubbe understood the need for small, frequent services.

In a letter to former *Leatherneck* magazine managing editor, the late Tom Bartlett, Stubbe wrote, "The remarkable thing was not only the number of worship services but the fact of the 'one minute sermon!' In many ways I felt that just being with the men in their bunker or in their trench communicated far more than words ever would! I had been told not to gather more than three or four at a time since NVA forward observers on the ridge overlooking the base might very well regard that as a lucrative target and decide to provide background percussive music to our worship!"

Stubbe said sometimes there were too many Marines at one time, but the service would be over so fast that enemy observers would have problems calling in ordnance.

Stubbe's services lasted from five to seven minutes. There would be a prayer of invocation, often stressing that, "Wherever two or three are gathered" and "Lo, I am with you always."

A reading of scripture would follow. A one-minute sermon came after that, followed by words of institution, distribution with wafers and wine in a common cup and Aaronic Benediction.

From a reporting period of Jan. 28 through Feb. 10, 1968, Stubbe covered that besieged airstrip in Northern I Corps, where death, destruction and misery rained down in torrents. He ministered in the bunkers and foxholes, tuned in and ready to react to calls of "incoming" as he walked in the shadows of that valley of death.

He conducted 53 total worship services along the way. Attendance was 435. Stubbe also conducted eight counseling cases while he was resting.

Rest was a hard thing to find at times.

Stubbe wrote, "One night my bunker was so full of casualties that couldn't be evacuated, that I slept atop a 3 foot x 3 foot field desk, the doctor slept on the deck inside with his feet outside the 'door' and five Marines fell asleep sitting up on my rack."

Like the other chaplains assigned to the Marines, he was following his duty "to bring men to God and God to men."

Less than two weeks after that report 2d Bn, 26th Marines lost a chaplain-Lt Robert R. Brett (Roman Catholic), who was killed instantly Feb. 22, 1968, when a round landed in the trench in which the chaplain was waiting for a helicopter.

Brett was trying to return to battalion headquarters after one of his frequent trips to outposts.

Khe Sanh was deadly for chaplain's assistants, too.

Lance Corporal Alexander Chin, Brett's assistant, died in the same blast that killed the chaplain.

Lt William Hampton, assigned to 3/26, lost his clerk.

Stubbe had Private First Class Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer transferred to help him out because Spicer was a mild-mannered, caring, papers-filed conscientious objector.

Spicer also worked as a stretcher bearer with a habit of throwing his body over the wounded when there was incoming.

He was killed by incoming ordnance while evacuating casualties. Notch up a Navy Cross for the conscientious objector.

Rockets and artillery were as much a part of the war in Northern I Corps as were booby traps, mines and ambushes farther south. All-out attacks could come any time, any place.

Capodanno probably saw more of the Southern I Corps style of conflict in his part of Vietnam, especially on the day he earned the Medal of Honor.

It started out as a relatively small encounter when a platoon of M/3/5 drew some sniper fire. A second platoon set up a blocking position, then moved forward to help clear out the snipers.

As the two platoons advanced up a hill all hell broke loose.

Hell was a hail of mortar rounds, with machine guns, small arms and heavy weapons fire strong enough to halt the advance. The chaplain had been at the relatively safe command post until he heard a radio report that two platoons of Marines were in pitched battle and in danger of being overrun and wiped out.

While the order was being given for the Marines to fall back and form a defensive perimeter, Capodanno was on his way to the fighting, to take care of his Marines.

He took care of a Marine radio operator, who was forced into the dirt by a burst of automatic weapons fire. The chaplain grabbed a strap on the radio and helped the lance corporal up the hill. They had to eat dirt twice along the way as automatic weapons fire churned up the ground ahead of them.

The radio operator said he would never have made it up that hillside alive without Capodanno's help.

At one point the chaplain gave up his gas mask when the beleaguered troops popped tear gas to try to stifle the enemy fire. He continued through the gas ministering to the wounded and dying.

As he was moving ahead on the battleground, shrapnel from a mortar round that impacted about 20 yards from Capodanno, according to the Medal of Honor citation, "severed a portion of his right hand and inflicted painful, multiple wounds to his arms and legs." He carried his arm stiffly, but did not break stride until he reached a fallen sergeant. Capodanno prayed with the sergeant just before the Marine died.
He refused medical aid and continued to move about the area, encouraging and inspiring his Marines.

Capodanno reached a sergeant who had been hit five times and was lying near interlocking bands of fire from automatic weapons. The chaplain got him and delivered him to his comrades. The sergeant recovered fully from his wounds.

Outside of the defensive perimeter a lance corporal was trying to block the flow of blood from the thigh artery of a stricken corpsman in danger of bleeding to death.

The Marine saw the NVA charge their position, and he saw an enemy machine-gunner set up his weapon about 15 meters away. The Marine's rifle jammed as he tried to open fire, and he ran for cover.

Then he saw Capodanno, who heard the weapon, and could probably see its position, leave the perimeter to gather the corpsman into his arms and position his body between the corpsman and the enemy machine-gunner.

The chaplain died as he was trying to stem the flow

of the wounded man's blood. One account says he was hit 27 times.

Then-Lieutenant Commander Eli Takesian knew Capodanno. Takesian said, "He [Capodanno] just wanted to be with the 'grunts.' He was more Marine than anything else."

Lt Bryant R. Nobles Jr., a Southern Baptist, had only been in the field a couple of weeks when he found himself in a foxhole near the Rockpile, a well-known landmark and battleground in Northern I Corps, with the 3d Bn, 3d Marines.

He recalled that his faith was challenged about midnight, Sept. 17, 1969, when he was suddenly awakened by the sound of rifle fire. That's when he jumped into the foxhole he had dug earlier.

A couple of other people-the commanding officer and the radio operator-jumped in shortly thereafter. The ensuing fight lasted for five hours, with Nobles moving among the men giving encouragement, first aid and, he wrote, "doing whatever I could while praying without ceasing."

The enemy were gone by sunrise, leaving 48 of their dead behind. American losses were 25 Marines killed, 47 wounded. Nobles was decorated for his actions. He wrote of a higher reward:

"Just before turning in for the night the Commanding Officer requested that I pray with him. 'Chaplain, I can't even remember your name, but I thank God you were with us last night.' This reward far exceeded the medal I later received. The rewards are many for the chaplain who will give of himself for the spiritual needs of the men."

Through the Vietnam era the chaplain business was often a grim one-last rites, memorial services, comforting the physically and spiritually injured Marines-many of whom had seen and felt rigors that no young man should endure.

But there were joys, too. The Marines accepted and appreciated the chaplains. The Marines gathered in the fields and in the bunkers for services, and they built chapels, elaborate and makeshift, as the situations dictated. The chapel at Camp J. J. Carroll was named in honor of the fallen Chaplain Brett.

The Marines often admired and praised these men of God.

A regimental executive officer wrote about his chaplain, "His conduct under fire was notably courageous and that of a very brave man. On numerous occasions this officer was observed running across exposed paddies and areas to be at the side of a Marine. With no apparent regard for his personal safety, thinking only of the wounded or dead Marine, he carried his inspiration and prayer to those who needed his help. He had the confidence and deep respect of the men and healed the scars which the loss of a friend frequently caused in those who survived."

The feelings were mutual. Chaplain John Lepote, 3d Bn, 5th Marines, once reported, "The 'grunt' as he stands in dirty, muddy majesty, is as fine a fighting man as the United States has ever produced. He is young, tough, intelligent. He understands why he is here and he believes in the purpose that put him here. And, that is something, because if you take a 'grunt' out of his water filled bunker; remove his helmet, his flak jacket, and his field uniform, and take away his rifle, clean him up and dress him in a sport shirt, slacks and loafers, you've got the kid who was playing on last year's high school football team. He is a national asset to be cherished."

So, in Vietnam, as in other wars, there was mutual respect and admiration. There was a sharing of hardships of a sort unique to Vietnam.

Because of lessons learned and advances in technology there may never be another conflict like that in Vietnam.

But you may be sure that no matter what the type of conflict, if Marines take the field, they will be blessed by U.S. Navy chaplains.

Author's Note: I cheerfully confess that I used quotes freely and with great joy from the book of my friend, Commander Herbert L. Bergsma, CHC, U.S. Navy. That labor of love is titled "Chaplains With Marines in Vietnam 1962-1971." It's 240 pages, with pictures, of detailed and cross-checked history, presented with love, heart and understanding, published in 1985 by the History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.







MEDAL OF HONOR

CAPODANNO, VINCENT R. Lt, USN, Chaplain Corps, 3d Btln, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF. Action: Quang Tin Province, Republic of Vietnam, 4 Sep 1967. Inducted: Staten Island, N.Y. DOB 13 Feb 1929, Staten Island, N.Y

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Chaplain of the 3d Battalion, in connection with operations against enemy forces. In response to reports that the 2d Platoon of M Company was in danger of being overrun by a massed enemy assaulting force, Lt. Capodanno left the relative safety of the company command post and ran through an open area raked with fire, directly to the beleaguered platoon. Disregarding the intense enemy small-arms, automatic-weapons, and mortar fire, he moved about the battlefield administering last rites to the dying and giving medical aid to the wounded. When an exploding mortar round inflicted painful multiple wounds to his arms and legs, and severed a portion of his right hand, he steadfastly refused all medical aid. Instead, he directed the corpsmen to help their wounded comrades and, with calm vigor, continued to move about the battlefield as he provided encouragement by voice and example to the valiant marines. Upon encountering a wounded corpsman in the direct line of fire of an enemy machine gunner positioned approximately 15 yards away, Lt. Capodanno rushed a daring attempt to aid and assist the mortally wounded corpsman. At that instant, only inches from his goal, he was struck down by a burst of machine gun fire. By his heroic conduct on the battlefield, and his inspiring example, Lt. Capodanno upheld the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the cause of freedom.





Capt. Strichker, Lt. Dunnigan, and Father Capadonno
(picture courtesy of JD Murray)

THE LAST STAND OF RECON TEAM KANSAS

Outnumbered worse than the Alamo defenders, here's the story of a SOG team's desperate last stand.

By Maj. John L. Plaster, USAR (Ret.)

The once bustling Khe Sanh Marine Base in South Vietnam's extreme northwest had been a ghost town more than three years by the summer of 1971. Though used briefly that February to support the South Vietnamese Army's invasion of Laos, after that bloody debacle the South Vietnamese abandoned not just Khe Sanh but the entire region, yielding immense areas to the NVA, who almost overnight began extending their Ho Chi Minh Trail highways into South Vietnam.



"Recon Team Leader Loren Hagen shortly before his final mission."
(Photo by Tony Andersen)

In late July 1971, U.S. intelligence began tracking a large enemy force shifting across the DMZ a dozen miles east of Khe Sanh, threatening the coastal cities of Hue, Danang and Phu Bai where the last sizeable American ground units were based.

It was essential to learn what was happening near Khe Sanh, a mission assigned to a shadowy organization called "SOG." Created to conduct covert missions deep behind enemy lines in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam, the top secret Studies and Observations Group had shifted most of its operations in-country by 1971 to cover the continuing U.S. withdrawal. From among its clandestine assembly of Army Green Berets, Navy SEALs and USAF Air Commandos, the Khe Sanh mission eventually became a prisoner snatch assigned to Recon Team Kansas, an 11-man, Special Forces-led element, which included eight Montagnard tribesmen.

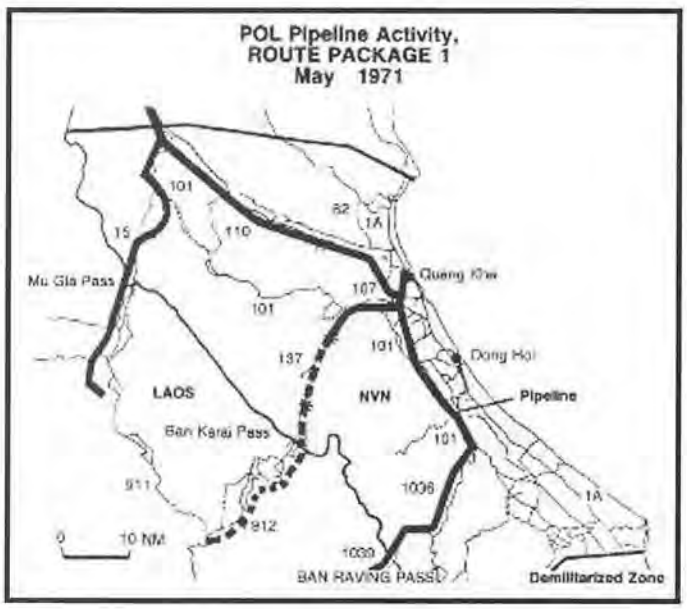

But how do you grab a prisoner in the midst of 10,000 or more NVA? Headed by an easygoing, lanky Midwesterner, First Lieutenant Loren Hagen, along with Sergeants Tony Andersen and Bruce Berg, the RT Kansas men had brainstormed through several scenarios until settling upon the best option: They would land conspicuously on an abandoned firebase -- which obviously would draw some sort of NVA reaction -- put up a short fight, then extract by helicopter. Except half of Hagen's men would stay hidden on the hill. When the NVA sent a squad up to see if the Americans had left behind sensors or bombing beacons -- as SOG teams often did -- the hidden men would ambush the NVA, seize a prison-

er and come out.

In case a serious fight developed, Lt. Hagen reinforced his team with three more Green Beret volunteers, Staff Sergeant Oran Bingham and Sergeants Bill Queen and William Rimondi, for eight Montagnard tribesmen and six U.S. Special Forces, a total of 14 men.

Landing at last light on 6 August 1971, Lt. Hagen surveyed the scrub brush and bomb craters below them and split his defense into three elements to cover the hilltop's three slopes. Immediately they went to work restoring the old firebase's two dilapidated bunkers and shallow trenches. The enemy must have seen them land, and Hagen reckoned to be ready.

A FOREBODING NIGHT

It was well after dark when the SOG men noticed campfires on two facing ridgelines, unusual because the NVA normally masked itself. By midnight enemy probers were at the base of the hill, firing provocatively from the north, south, east and west.



"Lt. Loren Hagen (right, rear) and Bruce Berg pose with five indigenous teammates. Both Hagen and Berg would die on the small hilltop, along with six of their Montagnard soldiers." (Photo by Tony Andersen)

At 1 a.m. a USAF AC-130 Spectre gunship arrived, walking 40mm and 20mm fire around the hill nearly all night. Never once did the team fire their weapons, staying blanketed in darkness. Then at 3 a.m. the SOG men heard trucks and tailgates dropping. This was odd, very odd.

Beneath the hill, dismounting NVA soldiers formed up into platoons and companies, which their leaders marched through the darkness to their assigned attack positions, to wait for dawn. Just before sunrise it became forebodingly quiet. Then Lt. Hagen heard more trucks arriving.



"The NVA were laying a Soviet-made tactical fuel pipeline, like this one, near RT Kansas' hilltop, the first ever extended into South Vietnam. It would be of strategic value a few months later during the Easter 1972 Offensive." (Def. Intell. Agency)

Fifty miles away at a coastal airbase, a USAF Forward Air Controller (FAC) and a flight of helicopters was lifting away for the false extraction; they would be above RT Kansas in 30 minutes.

As darkness gave way to light, Lt. Hagen detected glimpses of NVA on one slope; then on another slope pithe helmets appeared, bobbing in the fog. When his men reported NVA on the third slope, too, Hagen realized the hill was completely encircled by NVA -- but that would require a whole regiment, at least a thousand men!

The NVA regimental commander understood he had to dispatch the Americans quickly. They'd inadvertently landed almost within sight of the Hanoi High Command's most critical new venture, the first six-inch fuel pipeline laid across the DMZ, absolutely essential in a few months when entire tank

battalions rolled through here for the war's largest offensive. Already the 304th NVA Division was massing here, plus a regiment of the 308th Division, preparing for the 1972 Easter Offensive.

A fourth battalion moved into place; then, concealed in the ground fog, a fifth battalion arrived. Later, SOG's commander, Colonel John Sadler, would learn an entire regiment had stormed the hill, supported by a second regiment, a mass assault by approximately 2000 enemy infantry.

A HUMAN WAVE

As the clearing ground fog disclosed that terrible truth, Lt. Hagen had no time for inspiring words, just serious soldier work; in those final moments he repositioned weapons while his men readied grenades and stacked magazines. The Catholic Montagnards made the Sign of the Cross. Then they came.

A well-aimed RPG rocket smashed into Bruce Berg's bunker, collapsing it and signaling the attack -- fire went from nothing to ten thousand rounds per second! Andersen could see dozens of NVA rushing in lines up his slope, meeting them with his M-60 machinegun. Hagen hollered that he was going to check Berg, and ran directly into a ferocious maelstrom, with bullets ricocheting and slamming the earth in front of, behind, and beneath his dashing feet. He made it a dozen yards when fire from the other slope cut him down, killing him.

Then Klaus Bingham left a bunker to reposition a claymore and a bullet struck him in the head, apparently killing him. One Montagnard in a trench below Tony Andersen fired several bursts then jumped up to pull back and fell into Andersen's lap, dead.

Four men had died in less than four minutes. It was up to Andersen now, the senior man

THE LAST STAND

Small arms fire rattled closer on all sides and grenades lobbed up from below the hillcrest where waves of NVA were scurrying behind small rises and rolling from bomb crater to bomb crater. Andersen dashed over the hill to look for Hagen but couldn't see him anywhere -- just 100 khaki-clad NVA almost at the top! He fired one M-60 belt at NVA advancing up his own slope, then sped to the other approach and ran belt after belt on the 100 assaulting enemy. By then grenades started coming from behind him as NVA closed in from his rear. Just a dozen yards away, beyond the curvature of the hill, enemy heads popped up, cracked a few shots, then dropped back down.

Still a dozen minutes away, the approaching Cobra gunships went to full throttle, leaving the slower Hueys behind.

Meanwhile RT Kansas had just run out of hand grenades when a North Vietnamese grenade exploded beside Andersen's M-60, rendering it useless; he spun his CAR-15 off his back and kept shooting, then he tossed back another grenade but it went off in front of him, nearly blinding him, yet he kept shooting. More shrapnel tore into him, then an AK round slammed through his webgear and lodged in his elbow, knocking him down. He stumbled back to his knees and kept firing.

The perimeter was pinched almost in half when Andersen grabbed his last two living Montagnards, circled below the nearest NVA and somehow managed to reach the survivors on the opposite side. He found Bingham, started to lift him, and saw he, too, was dead from a head wound. All around him he heard, "zzzsss, zzssss, zzssss," as bullets flashed past his ears.

He dragged Bingham back to where Bill Queen lay, wounded. Only Rimondi wasn't yet hit and still fired furiously. Andersen put them in a back-to-back circle just off the hilltop where they would make their last stand. AK bullets had destroyed their team radio, another slug had shot Andersen's little survival radio out of his hand so Rimondi tossed him another survival radio, their last.

Now the NVA were streaming, rolling over the crest like a tidal wave, their rattling AKs blending together into one never-ending burst. Andersen's men were firing not at NVA but at hands wielding AKs over parapets and around bunkers. There was no place left to fall back. Andersen was shooting NVA little further than the length of his CAR-15 muzzle, and the time it took to speed-change a magazine meant life or death.

From the air it looked like an ant mound, with moving figures everywhere. Cobra lead rolled in and sparkled 20mm cannon shells around the surviving SOG men, and at last fighters arrived, adding napalm and Vulcan cannons to the melee. Then at last the assault ebbed, turned, and the NVA fled for cover, just as the Hueys arrived.

Though wounded repeatedly, Andersen crawled out to fire his CAR-15 to cover the landing Hueys. With Rimondi's help, Andersen dragged as many teammates's bodies as he could to the first Huey, then helped the wounded Queen and others aboard the second.

"3 months before RT Kansas fought the most one-sided fight in American history, the USAF already had plotted three enemy pipelines running out of North Vietnam but these extended into Laos. The most critical pipeline was secretly being laid across the DMZ into South Vietnam." (USAF)

A TERRIBLE TOLL

In one hellacious half-hour, nine of Recon Team Kansas fourteen men had been lost.

Lt. Hagen had died, along with Bingham, Berg was presumed dead, six Montagnards had died, Rimondi and Queen both suffered multiple frag wounds, Andersen had been struck by both small arms fire and shrapnel, and their other two Montagnards, too, all had been wounded

"It's amazing that any of us came through it with the amount of incoming that we were getting," Tony Andersen says today, 25 years later. He attributes their survival to his deceased team leader, Lt. Loren Hagen. "He epitomized what a Special Forces officer should be -- attentive to detail, a lot of rehearsals, followed through on things," he explains. "We were ready. I think that was probably the only thing that kept us from being totally overrun. Everybody was alert and knew what was happening and was waiting."

As for Hagen's bravery, dashing into a wall of AK fire to try to save Bruce Berg, that didn't surprise Andersen, either. "Lt. Hagen was that kind of officer. He was a good man."

Against the lost of most of his teammates, Andersen learned, the USAF counted 185 NVA dead on that hill little RT Kansas had killed half a battalion and probably wounded twice that many NVA. But that gives Andersen sparse satisfaction compared to the loss of most of his team.

Perhaps Andersen's most difficult duty was carrying the bodies of his six Montagnard teammates -- his "family" he called them -- to their home village. "As soon as they saw us driving up in the truck, they knew. Wailing and moaning started, and all the grieving." The villagers gathered in a circle around the headman's stilted longhouse. "Through one of the interpreters I tried to explain how proud we were of them, what good fighters they were, that they had died for a good cause."

That would be borne out a few months later when the intelligence generated by RT Kansas' spirited defense helped U.S. analysts read enemy intentions, enabling American airpower to counter the NVA's Easter Offensive.

And though details of this incredible fight would remain classified for decades, enough was disclosed that First Lieutenant Loren Hagen's family was presented the U.S. Army's final Vietnam War Medal of Honor; Tony Andersen, who held together what remained of RT Kansas through those final mass assaults, received the Distinguished Service Cross, while Queen, Rimondi, Berg and Bingham were awarded Silver Stars.

And now, today, with full disclosure, we can appreciate the significance of their fight:

At the Alamo, 188 Americans had stood against 3000 Mexicans, a ratio of 16-to-1; at Custer's Last Stand, 211 cavalrymen succumbed to 3,500 Sioux warriors, or 16.5-to-1; at the 1877 Battle of Rorke's Drift, the most heralded action in British military history resulting in -- 11 Victoria Crosses -- 140 British troops withstood assaults by 4000 Zulus, or 28-to-1. Lt. Hagen's 14 men had held on despite being outnumbered 107-to-one, four times as disadvantagous as Rorke's Drift and seven times worse than the Alamo, one of the most remarkable feats of arms in American history.

This article is derived from Maj. Plaster's book, SOG: The Secret Wars of America's Commandos in Vietnam, published by Simon & Schuster.







HAGEN, LOREN D.

Rank and organization: First Lieutenant, U.S. Army, Infantry, U.S. Army Training Advisory Group. Place and date: Republic of Vietnam, 7 August 1971. Entered service at: Fargo, North Dakota. Born: 25 February 1946, Fargo, North Dakota.

Citation:

1st Lt. Hagen distinguished himself in action while serving as the team leader of a small reconnaissance team operating deep within enemy-held territory. At approximately 0630 hours on the morning of 7 August 1971 the small team came under a fierce assault by a superior-sized enemy force using heavy small arms, automatic weapons, mortar, and rocket fire. 1st Lt. Hagen immediately began returning small-arms fire upon the attackers and successfully led this team in repelling the first enemy onslaught. He then quickly deployed his men into more strategic defense locations before the enemy struck again in an attempt to overrun and annihilate the beleaguered team's members. 1st Lt. Hagen repeatedly exposed himself to- the enemy fire directed at him as he constantly moved about the team's perimeter, directing fire, rallying the members, and resupplying the team with ammunition, while courageously returning small arms and hand grenade fire in a valorous attempt to repel the advancing enemy force. The courageous actions and expert leadership abilities of 1st Lt. Hagen were a great source of inspiration and instilled confidence in the team members. After observing an enemy rocket make a direct hit on and destroy one of the team's bunkers, 1st Lt. Hagen moved toward the wrecked bunker in search for team members despite the fact that the enemy force now controlled the bunker area. With total disregard for his own personal safety, he crawled through the enemy fire while returning small-arms fire upon the enemy force. Undaunted by the enemy rockets and grenades impacting all around him, 1st Lt. Hagen desperately advanced upon the destroyed bunker until he was fatally wounded by enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire. With complete disregard for his personal safety, 1st Lt. Hagen's courageous gallantry, extraordinary heroism, and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty, at the cost of his own life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon him and the U.S. Army.

KHE SANH VETERANS REMEMBER FELLOW MARINES AT VIETNAM WAR'S BLOODIEST BATTLE

Posted: Nov 10, 2014 9:43 PM CST
Updated: Dec 10, 2014 9:43 PM CST

CHARLOTTE, NC (Joe DePriest/The Charlotte Observer) -

They met on a hill in a far corner of Vietnam.

Especially on Veterans Day, David "Randy" Norton of Charlotte and Larry McCartney of Black Mountain remember that time in early 1968 at Khe Sanh, the Vietnam War's longest and bloodiest battle.



Faces of other Marines who survived the horrors of Hill 861 Alpha stand out in their minds, along with faces of those who, like Norton's best friend, didn't make it off the hill alive.

At a 2007 reunion of Khe Sanh veterans, Norton and McCartney crossed paths again and became friends.

Both are mentioned in a new book that examines the battle from the viewpoint of those who did the actual fighting. The author, former foreign correspondent and Pulitzer Prize finalist Gregg Jones, interviewed nearly 90 Khe Sanh veterans, including Norton and McCartney.

A cloud of controversy still hangs over a battle where both sides claimed victory. But many Khe Sanh survivors, like veterans of other wars, look beyond military and political arguments. They look out for each other.

"Over the years, we've become a close group," said Norton, 66. "Veterans Day really is a personal day. I guess, for me, it's a time to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. It's almost like there's an obligation to respect their memory."

Jones' book, "Last Stand at Khe Sanh," revisits a story that once gripped the world's attention. For 77 days, a North Vietnamese Army force of 20,000 besieged an outnumbered U.S. combat base in the northernmost province of South Vietnam near near the Laotian border.

Shells rained down daily on the base and surrounding hills held by the Marines. It turned into a deadly zone not only for those stuck there, but for aircraft bringing in food, water and ammunition. Flying out with the wounded was just as dangerous.

For his book, Jones focused on the four months from January through April 1968, when the siege was broken. He devotes a full chapter to the Feb. 5 assault on Hill 861 Alpha, where Norton lost his best friend, Joe Molettiere of South Philadelphia.

"You would have been hard-pressed to find two guys with more different backgrounds and temperaments, but Dave loved Joe to his core, and his sense of loss over Joe's death moved me deeply," Jones said. "Dave helped bring Joe alive for me as I wrote the story of the Feb. 5, 1968, assault on 861 Alpha." In the Khe Sanh book, Jones said he wanted to "capture the experience for audiences today. It's a universal experience of bravery, fear and camaraderie. I wanted people to understand the human experience of war."

YOUNG SOLDIERS

Norton and McCartney went to war as teenagers.
The full story of what happened to him on the hill in Vietnam is one Norton hasn't told his two children. He's given them copies of Jones' book to read, if they want to.

In his senior year at South Mecklenburg High School, Norton joined the Marine Corps with two friends.

"It was something we felt we needed to do," he said. "And we did."

On June 3, 1966, he graduated in a ceremony held at Ovens Auditorium. A year later, he arrived in Vietnam, a rifleman with First Platoon, Echo Company, 26th Marines, based out of a place called Phu Bai.

His war experience had begun. Norton got to know his fellow Marines, including Martin Rimson from Detroit who liked to sing Motown soul music. But Norton became especially close to the 18-year-old Molettiere, who talked a lot about the baby his wife was expecting.

In January 1968, Norton returned to Phu Bai after a week of R&R in Bangkok to find that his company had been transferred. He caught up with Molettiere and his other friends in the field outside Khe Sanh Combat Base.

Echo Company had the usual duty at first – going on patrols and ambushes. But an order came down to fortify one of several hills surrounding the combat base.

HILL 861A

Jungle and razor-sharp elephant grass covered Hill 861 Alpha, elevation 2,800 feet. The Marines climbed at night.

"It was absolutely brutal," Norton said. "We were hacking our way up, and I've never been so tired in all my life."

The hilltop became their world – a swirl of hot days, cool nights and mornings wrapped in heavy fog and mist.

All day, the Marines dug trenches in the red clay and filled sandbags. At night, they pulled guard duty or tried to sleep.

Often, supplies of C-rations and water ran low.
For two weeks, the North Vietnamese left the Americans alone. Then, in the predawn of Feb. 5, they hit – and hit hard. The hill erupted in explosions and gunfire.

Norton could see rifle flashes split the darkness as North Vietnamese soldiers blasted away. At one point, he and Molettiere recognized the voice of Rimson calling for help. They ran to him and saw that a mortar had almost blown off one of his legs.

As they helped the young Marine, a mortar round exploded nearby. Molettiere was killed and Norton knocked unconscious. When he came to, he couldn't feel his right arm. His M-16 rifle was shattered, so he held onto a knife with his good hand for protection and crawled into the grass.

By sunup, the fight had ended. Norton was loaded aboard a helicopter along with the other wounded, including Rimson. But the Marine from Detroit died before the chopper touched down at Khe Sanh Combat Base.

A WATERSHED MOMENT

Even then, Norton knew Khe Sanh was a watershed moment in his life. He spent 1 1/2 years in hospitals and had many reconstructive surgeries, and his arm eventually was OK. He returned to Charlotte and attended Central Piedmont Community College for two years. People knew he was an ex-Marine, and he sensed resentment from some instructors. But that didn't matter. He had support from family and friends.

Norton married in 1970. He and his wife have a son, daughter and four grandchildren.

About two years ago, while exploring the Internet, he learned about a veterans group combing cemeteries for unmarked graves of people who'd served in the military. One grave they found using a list of war casualties belonged to Norton's Detroit friend, Rimson, who was killed at Khe Sanh. The cemetery rock identified him as No. 27.

Norton was angry and contacted the veterans group, offering to pay for a marker. But he learned the group was already in touch with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs about getting a free marker for the grave.

Meanwhile, Norton met up with McCartney again at a reunion of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association in Washington, D.C.

McCartney, 65, spent 30 years in the Marine Corps, including two tours in Vietnam and tours in the Persian Gulf, Haiti and Bosnia. He saw some bad things but said "there was nothing like Khe Sanh. Absolutely nothing."

Yet he feels the experience helped him. On Hill 861 Alpha, fellow Marines "covered my back and taught me what I needed to do to grow up," McCartney said. "They taught me to survive – and in a very short period. I matured on the hill."

HELPING VETERANS

McCartney is concerned about veterans, helping them navigate bureaucracy at the VA when they're seeking mental health counseling, regular health services or other benefits.

He said the Khe Sanh association is providing scholarships and financial support for veterans' children and grandchildren.

Recently, McCartney replaced a damaged headstone of a Khe Sanh veteran buried in a Philadelphia cemetery. He'd survived Hill 861 Alpha only to die in another battle.

In June, McCartney made the trip of a lifetime. He returned to Khe Sanh, where war tourism now pumps cash into the local economy. Instead of a hole in the ground, he spent the night in an air-conditioned hotel.

Then he went to the hill and walked to the top.

"It was a step back in time," McCartney said. "A flood of memories came back, mostly about the people who helped me stay alive. And memories of the people we lost."



OBIT
NAVY CROSS RECIPIENT WHO BATTLED MILITARY FAKERS LAID TO REST

By Jeff Schogol, Staff writer
Military Times

A Navy Cross recipient who dedicated his life to protecting the integrity of valor awards has been interred at Arlington National Cemetery with his fellow heroes.

Retired Marine Lt. Col. Thomas Richards was given full military honors at a Tuesday ceremony that was attended by Medal of Honor recipient Barney Barnum and Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. John M. Paxton Jr.



In June 1969, Richards fended off enemy attacks in Vietnam so that wounded Marines could be evacuated. He killed eight enemy troops and prevented the Marine perimeter from collapsing. After retiring, Richards helped Marine Corps Times uncover at least 40 instances in which Marine Corps Associ-

ation members lied about receiving valor awards, including the Medal of Honor. He died of cancer in June.

On Tuesday, seven white horses pulled a flag-draped caisson in front of the funeral procession which marched to a drumbeat cadence to keep them in rhythm. Half of the Marine escort team marched in front of the colors and the other half behind. When the procession came to a stop, one Marine brought the urn with Richards' remains near the gravesite.

Diane Richards did not expect so many Marines to be there for her husband's interment.

"I was shocked by the entire tribute," she told Marine Corps Times after the ceremony. "I had no idea that they would be there. I was told there may be a few Marines from 8th and I, and had expected one or two representing the Marine Corps. When I walked out and saw this sea of Marines, I was overwhelmed."

After a bugler blew Taps and Richards was presented with a folded flag, Paxton knelt in front of her and embraced her.

"He and Tom were close," she said. "He continually offered his love and support, respect for Tom, what Tom stood for, the work that Tom did for the Marine Corps and for the country; and that the Marine Corps family will forever be mine."

It's fitting that her husband is now at rest in Arlington, she said.

"Tom was humble," she said. "I think to him, certainly he is among comrades. He is among comrades who shared his values and he's also among history, which was his love. His being at Arlington is also an opportunity for his legacy to be continued, something he would hold dear to his heart."



PATRIOTS POINT

Immerse Yourself into the Vietnam Experience Exhibit, a hero's welcome home.

Using state-of-the-art technology the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum is bringing the history of the Vietnam War to life in a new two and one-half acre Vietnam Experience Exhibit. It features more than a dozen components that simulate life during wartime in a "Brown Water Navy" support base and a U.S. Marine Corps artillery fire base during the Tet Offensive and the Battle of Khe Sanh in 1968. The primary mission of the "Brown Water Navy" was to block the movement of insurgents and their supplies into South Vietnam.

This immersive exhibit incorporates various facilities such as a fire control bunker and mess hall with various Vietnam-era artifacts including a rare MK1 River Patrol Boat (PBR) dedicated to Medal of Honor recipient James Elliot Williams (see Medal of Honor Museum). It also includes a 105 Howitzer gun, Wilys M725 ambulance, and three different Vietnam-era helicopters: CH-46 Sea Knight, UH-1M Huey and UH-34 Sea Horse. In addition to the artifacts, guests can climb onto an observation tower and hear the sounds of jet aircraft and helicopters flying over their heads. Holograms bring Marine officers to life in an exciting 3-D production.

The Vietnam Experience Exhibit also serves as a place for the two million Vietnam veterans in the United States to reflect and reconnect with their experiences during their years of service..

The Vietnam Experience is a permanent two and one-half acre exhibit and is included in the normal museum admission price. Construction of the exhibit was made possible by contributions from Charleston County Council, Bennett Hospitality and the Charleston Harbor Benefactors Society.

Accommodations for handicapped and special needs guests.

To assist visitors with physical challenges, an elevator is available to reach the USS YORKTOWN hangar deck level. The ship itself has an elevator for handicapped and special needs guests. special needs at the Information Desk.

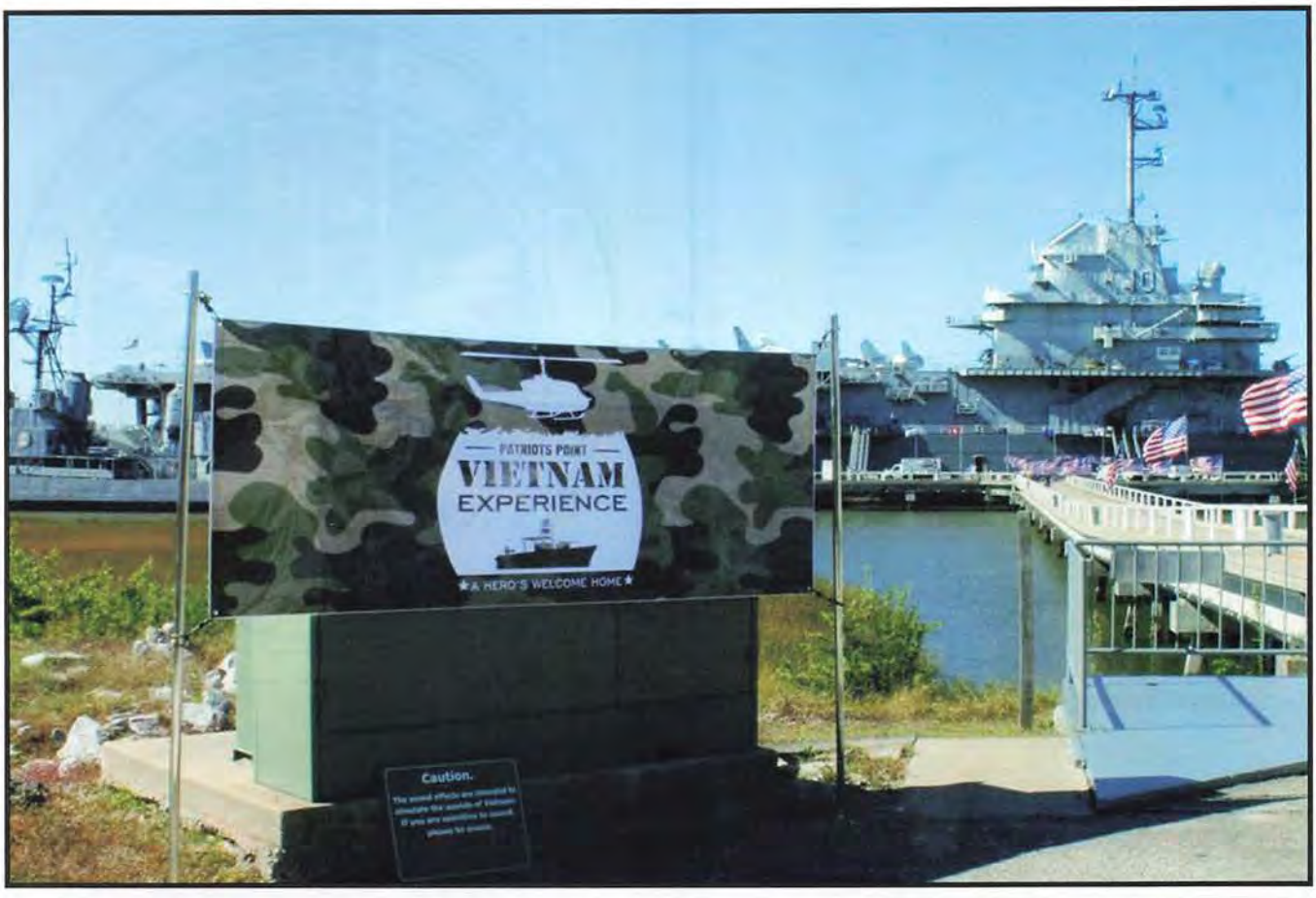

The Vietnam Experience at Patriots Point offers a fresh look at history.









RIVER PATROL FORCE
TF-116















This photo of Williams was taken during one of his numerous patrols on board the "Elaine." He is holding an M-60 machine gun.







WILLIAMS, JAMES E.

Rank and organization: Boatswain's Mate First Class (PO1c.), United States Navy, River Section 531, My Tho, RVN, Place and date: Mekong River, Republic of Vietnam, October 31, 1966.
Entered service at: Columbia, S.C. Born: June 13, 1930, Rock Hill, S.C.

Citation:
For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. BM1 Williams was serving as Boat Captain and Patrol Officer aboard River Patrol Boat (PBR) 105 accompanied by another patrol boat when the patrol was suddenly taken under fire by 2 enemy sampans. BM1 Williams immediately ordered the fire returned, killing the crew of 1 enemy boat and causing the other sampan to take refuge in a nearby river inlet. Pursuing the fleeing sampan, the U.S. patrol encountered a heavy volume of small-arms fire from enemy forces, at close range, occupying well-concealed positions along the river bank. Maneuvering through this fire, the patrol confronted a numerically superior enemy force aboard 2 enemy junks and 8 sampans augmented by heavy automatic weapons fire from ashore. In the savage battle that ensued, BM1 Williams, with utter disregard for his safety exposed himself to the withering hail of enemy fire to direct counter-fire and inspire the actions of his patrol. Recognizing the overwhelming strength of the enemy force, BM1 Williams deployed his patrol to await the arrival of armed helicopters. In the course of his movement he discovered an even larger concentration of enemy boats. Not waiting for the arrival of the armed helicopters, he displayed great initiative and boldly led the patrol through the intense enemy fire and damaged or destroyed 50 enemy sampans and 7 junks. This phase of the action completed, and with the arrival of the armed helicopters, BM1 Williams directed the attack on the remaining enemy force. Now virtually dark, and although BM1 Williams was aware that his boats would become even better targets, he ordered the patrol boats' search lights turned on to better illuminate the area and moved the patrol perilously close to shore to press the attack. Despite a waning supply of ammunition the patrol successfully engaged the enemy ashore and completed the rout of the enemy force. Under the leadership of BM1 Williams, who demonstrated unusual professional skill and indomitable courage throughout the 3 hour battle, the patrol accounted for the destruction or loss of 65 enemy boats and inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy personnel. His extraordinary heroism and exemplary fighting spirit in the face of grave risks inspired the efforts of his men to defeat a larger enemy force, and are in keeping with the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.

WHO IN THEWORLD IS 'GUNNY CLAUS?'

December 22, 2014, in Featured, Military Life by Raleigh Duttweiler

Macy's has the Real Santa. 1st Civ. Div. has a mall stand-in. But here in the Marine Corps, we have Gunny Claus.

That's right, Gunny Claus. 1st Reindeer Division, Marine Corps Base North Pole.
I'm not even kidding.

Who is Gunny Claus? Now, if you're a Marine Corps family, or a Navy family lucky enough to be stationed with some fabulous devil dogs, Gunny Claus is nothing new to you. You'd know him a mile away. His eyes – how they twinkle! His demeanor – so merry! His face is so jolly and his uniform's cherry! The beard on his chin is all salty and



white and to ring in the season is his USMC right.

He's a part of all things holiday in the Corps, and rumor has it, it's been that way for awhile. According to legend, Gunny Claus first made his appearance in the forests of Argonne, France during World War I, but Marine kids today know you can find him at bases far and wide during the holiday season. A battalion holiday party is incomplete without him, and you really can't call it Christmas until you've had your picture taken with the big man himself. Since 2002, he's visited over 46,650 devil pups and adds to that list every year with a new generation of Marine Corps kids lucky enough to make his acquaintance.

But the thing about Gunny Claus is he's not just a big, jolly old elf Marine. Much like Saint Nick stands for all the lessons we try to teach about Christmas, Gunny Claus embodies all that's magical



about Christmas in the Marine Corps.
And the Corps is really something at the holidays. Gunny Claus says it best:

Marines gather toys across the Nation each year only to give them back to less fortunate children. We help families of deployed Marines, Veterans, handicap children, and homeless Veterans at Christmas. We do this without the need of reward or recognition; this is Honor.

While others celebrate this festive time of the year, we serve on the battlefield far away from our loved ones surrounded by adversities unknown to most. We call this Courage since valor is simply one of our assets.

Marines at Christmas are deployed at hundreds of locations around the world, protecting the interest of this great Nation at Embassies, on board ships, in the air, and on distant battlefields. Standing our post at Christmas is not duty, we define it as Commitment.

This is the Marine Christmas.

In this house, Marine Christmas is marked by the usual holiday lights, tinsel, and in our case an added menorah. We gather toys from our family, friends, and big box stores for the children in our community who could use a little extra love.

We tell our own children about the miracles, about the baby in the manger, and about Santa, the most easily understandable version of all of those big concepts for small children. Santa is someone who cares about you, remembers you, looks out for you, acknowledges you, and rewards your goodness – and someone in whom you have to believe for the whole thing to work. Those are some great basic lessons of faith right there. We love Santa.

With Santa, there's that leap of faith. With Gunny, you just have to listen. He's not just a symbol of faith and goodness and love, he's the real deal embodiment of all of those things, proof that hard work, selflessness, kindness, and Semper Fidelis mean something. He's all the toys collected for children in need, the face of hope and determination that keeps us going through hard winters away from our loved ones, the promise that none of us will be left behind or forgotten. And like our spouses themselves, he's a warrior for what's good and honorable.
Again, Gunny:

There are many gifts you can give at Christmas. If you are not deployed, protect the families and kids of those serving abroad as they are your family. If you see a Vet, thank him and wish **him a Merry Christmas; take** ***particular care of Kids, they are our future. We have Marines in medical facilities across the Nation; let us never forget any of them. If you have a moment or a free day, stop by and say Merry Christmas to any one of them; this in itself is a reward.***

The gift you need to give to your fellow Marines and their families is simply to wish them a Merry Christmas. This gift requires no wrapping and is the greatest gift of all. Never question if you or your family make a difference, as the answer is clear.

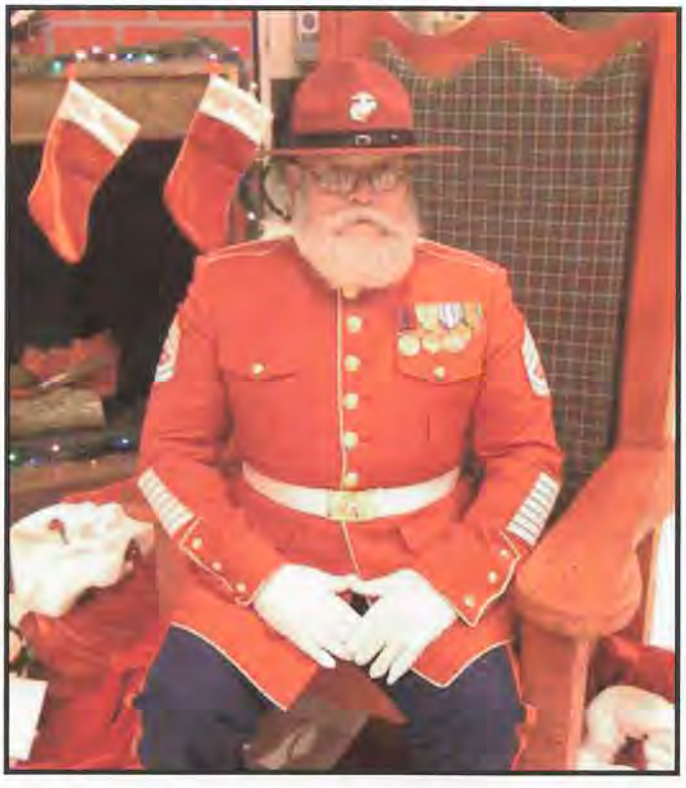



A FEW KHE SANH VETERANS MARCHED IN THE VETERANS DAY PARADE IN DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO, WHILE AT THE REUNION

















ON FRIDAY, 14 NOVEMBER, 2014 THE KHE SANH VETERANS ATTENDED THE GRADUATION AT THE MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT, SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA. WE WERE HONORED GUEST OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL WHO ATTENDED OUR LUNCHEON AT THE BASE RESTAURANT, AND GAVE A VERY WARMING WELCOME SPEECH TO THE MEMBERSHIP







DRILL INSTRUCTOR SCHOOL
MCRD SAN DIEGO

USMC

MCRD San Diego
2D BN
1ST BN
3D BN
SUPT BN
Recruit Training Regiment

KHE SANH VETERAN MARINES REMEMBERING THEIR GRADUATION DAY





BGENERAL JAMES W. BIERMAN JR.
COMMANDING GENERAL
MCRD, WELOMES KSV AT LUNCHEON





OUR LOVELY KHE SANH LADIES ENJOYING THEIR REUNION LUNCHEON

































GYSGT BILLY MARTIN HQ BTRY 1/13 READING COMMANDANTS BIRTHDAY MESSAGE. MGYSGT ED TUSO, B/1/1, 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN, OKINAWA 1958, READ GEN LEJEUNE BIRTHDAY LETTER



YOUNGEST & OLDEST MARINES LAUREN REYES & GYSGT ERNIE HAMNER

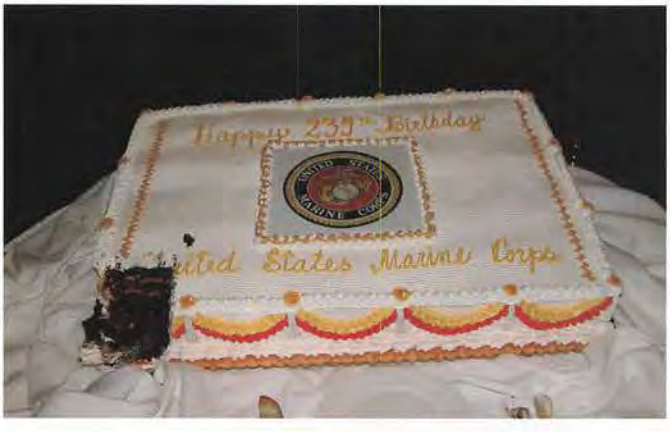



LAUREN REYES & DAUGHTER PRESLEY SHARE BIRTHDAY CAKE



SENIOR NCO, GYSGT BILLY MARTIN, PREPARES TO CUT CAKE FOR OUR HONORED GUEST, COLONEL THOMAS JOHNSON, USAF & YOUNGEST & OLDEST MARINES LAUREN REYES & GYSGT ERNIE HAMNER



GREGORY GIBBONS, H&S CO 1/26, LIGHTS MIA CANDLE



















JOHN & JUDY LEWIS
B/1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN 1958
OKINAWA

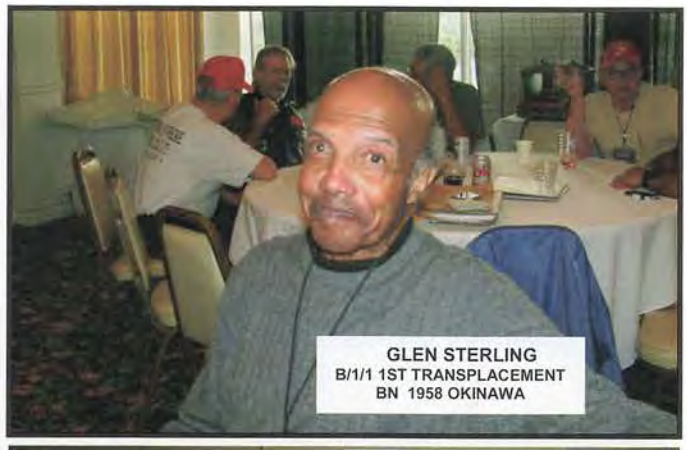

GLEN STERLING
B/1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BN 1958 OKINAWA



EDWARD & MARIAN TUSO
B/1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN 1958
OKINAWA



DENNIS MANNION K CO 3/26 F/O (TOP)
DICK & SALLEY DWORSKY
INDIA CO 3/26

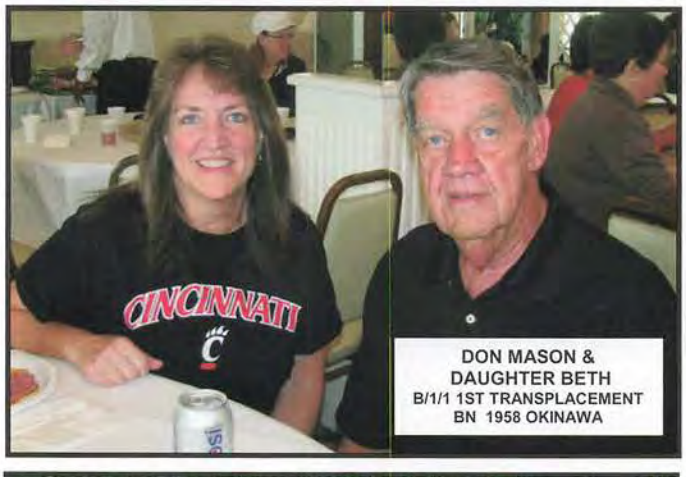

DON MASON &
DAUGHTER BETH
B/1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BN 1958 OKINAWA

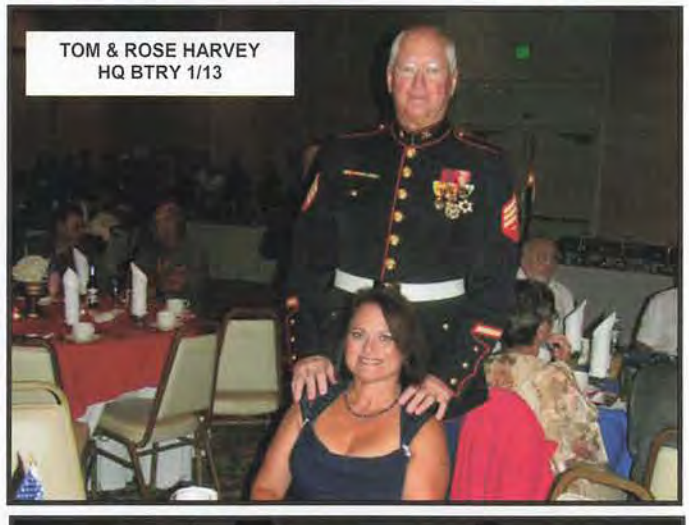

TOM & ROSE HARVEY
HQ BTRY 1/13



ERNIE & JO HAMNER
B/1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BN 1958 OKINAWA



BILL & JOANNE EICHLER
BROTHER & SISTER-IN-LAW OF
TOM EICHLER













REYES FAMILY: JOSE & SANDI
DAUGHTER LAUREN &
GRANDDAUGHTER PRESLEY



OUR HONORED GUEST & FAMILY MEMBERS



L-R: JUDY JOHNSON, JOAN KROLAK, COLONEL THOMAS JOHNSON, JOE MUSSO.SECOND ROW: CARRIE JOHNSON, THOMAS JOHNSON JR., ANNA JONES, BRUCE JONES













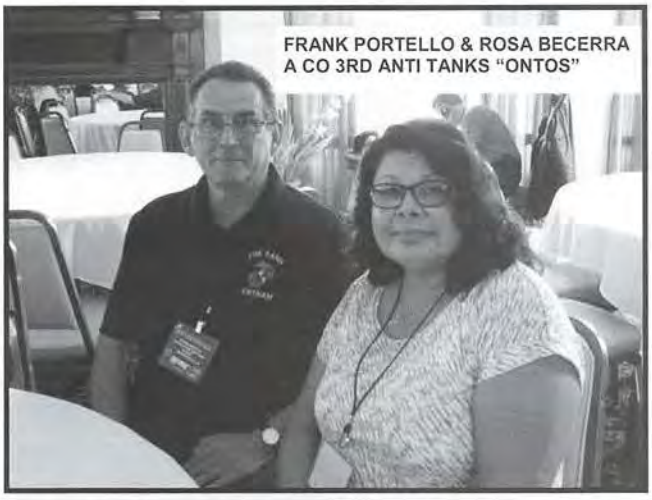
FRANK PORTELLO & ROSA BECERRA
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS "ONTOS"


KENNETH & BETTY RODGERS
BRAVO CO 1/26


HANS & GALINA GRANQVIST
HQ BTRY 1/13


DAVID & SUSAN LORD
CHARLIE CO 1/26



JIM & LINDA BEALL
"DOC"
BRAVO CO 1/26 & 1/26 BAS


MERLE & RITA MORITZ
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A


STEVE & DEBARAH WIESE
BRAVO CO 1/26


CURTIS & MARY FRYAR
HQ BTRY 1/13



RONALD & CATHY RAYNER
ALPHA CO 1/26
KSV CHAPLAIN



IRVIN & KATHY NOWACKI
BRAVO BTRY 1/13



PETE & TERRY TORRES
GOLF CO 2/26

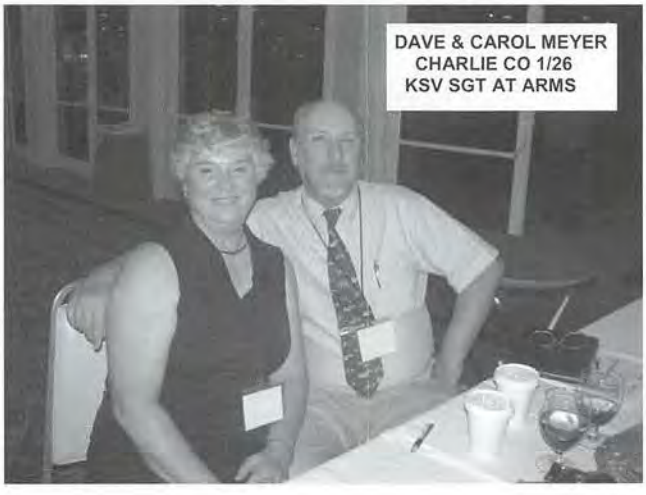

DAVE & CAROL MEYER
CHARLIE CO 1/26
KSV SGT AT ARMS



MODESTO & AMELIA DE LOS SANTOS &
DAUGHTER CYNTHIA
BRAVO BTRY 1/13



ROBERT & LINDA LONGCRANE
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A

MARIE PONTON



KEN & SHARON PIPES
C/O BRAVO CO 1/26



JIM & TERRI THOMAS
"DOC"
KILO CO 3/26



JOHN & EUGENIA MOORE
CBMU 301 SEABEES



CHARLES DEL CASTILLO
26TH MARINE REGIMENTAL
SNIPER



CRAIG TOURTE
HQ BTRY 1/13
KSV SECRETARY



SID PATRICIO
"FISH"
DELTA CO 1/26

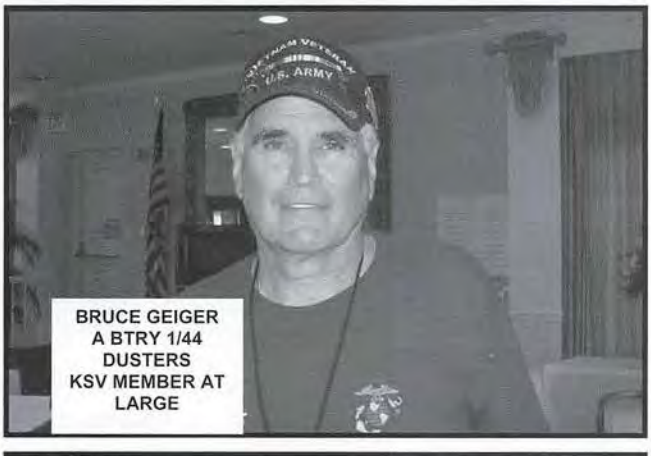

BRUCE GEIGER
A BTRY 1/44
DUSTERS
KSV MEMBER AT
LARGE



WAYNE & JOYCE DEVERNEY
HQ CO 2/26
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE



RON & DARLENE PARSONS
USAF 15 AERIAL PORT SQD



FLOYD & JANICE GRAHAM
HQ CO 26TH MARINES COMM


HUBERT & RUTH SMITH
HQ BTRY 1/13


ROBERT & MARYANN
D'ELIA
HQ BTRY 1/13


KEN & LINDA MARTIN
BRAVO CO 3RD RECON
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE


ALEX & BARBARA
SADOWSKI
H&S CO 2/26

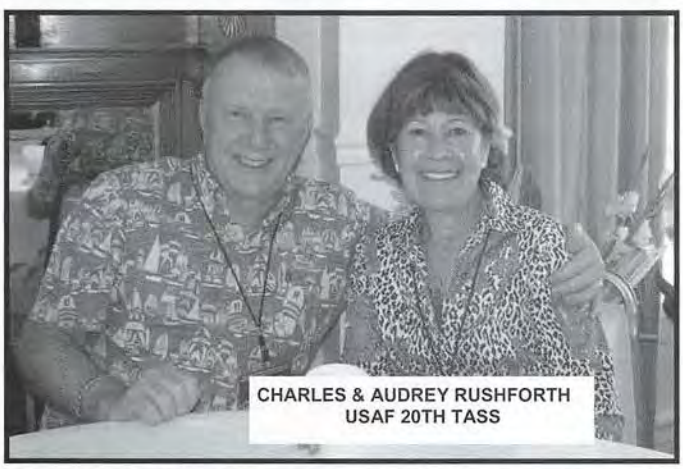
CHARLES & AUDREY RUSHFORTH
USAF 20TH TASS


RICK & JANET EERNISSE
ECHO CO 2/26


TOM & EVELYN FORD
FOXTROT CO 2/26
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE

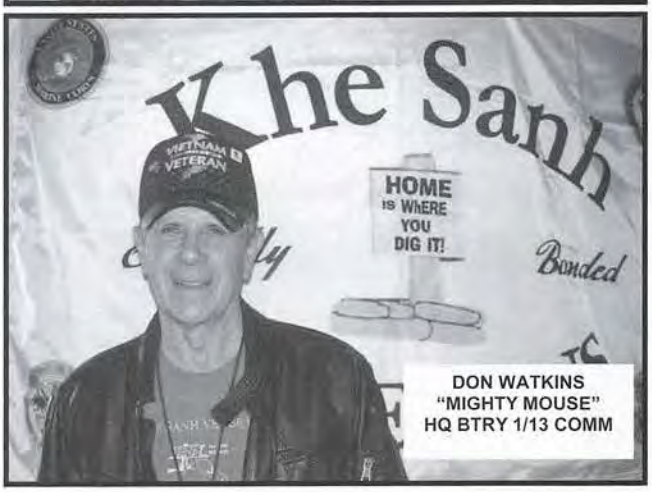

DON WATKINS
"MIGHTY MOUSE"
HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM


THOMAS JOHNSON
USAF B-52 PILOT
456TH BOMB WING


JAMES & PAMELLA
CONNOLLY
KILO CO 3/26


JOHN PESSONI
A CO 3RD ENGRS
KSV VICE PRESIDENT


KEN & LINDA MARTIN
BRAVO CO 3RD RECON
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE


TOM EICHLER
E CO 2/26 HILL 861A
KSV PRESIDENT &
TREASURER


MARCO & MONICA
SOTO
ALPHA CO 1/26


KEN & LINDA
SAWYER
HQ CO 1/13 M/T



GERALD & MARTY
WILCOXEN
FOXTROT CO 2/26

KHE SANH VETERANS ENJOYING THEMSELVES & MEETING NEW FRIENDS


PATRICK SULLIVAN
A CO 1ST PLT 3RD ENGRS
GRANDSONS JOHN & CHARLES


JOHN & GUINN WOLFE
3/26 SCOUT/SNIPER
9TH MAB


RICHARD & JERRYNE SOTO
FOXTROT CO 2/26


MICHAEL & ROSEMARY REATH
HQ CO 26TH MARINES COMM


BENJAMIN & JACQALINE
LEITH
GOLF CO 2/26


THOMAS & CARRIE
JOHNSON JR.


ROBERT & JENNIE
SCHULLER
KILO CO 3/26


BILL & JAN CORRCIA
LIMA CO 3/26



NEIL & ALICE KENNY
LIMA CO 3/26
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE

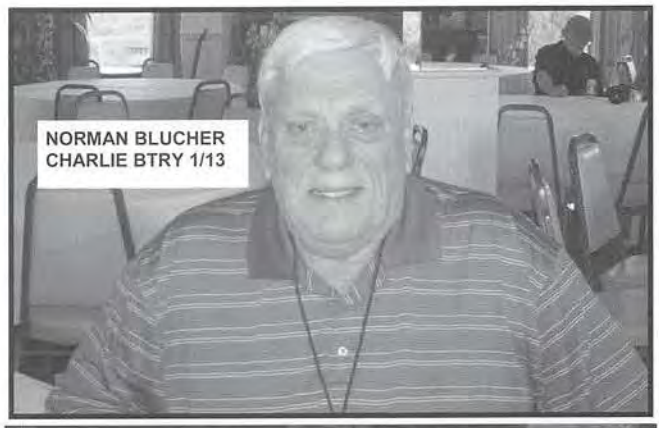

NORMAN BLUCHER
CHARLIE BTRY 1/13



RUSS & KATHY TURNER
ALPHA CO 1/26
KSV PAST PRESIDENT
REUNION CHAIRMAN

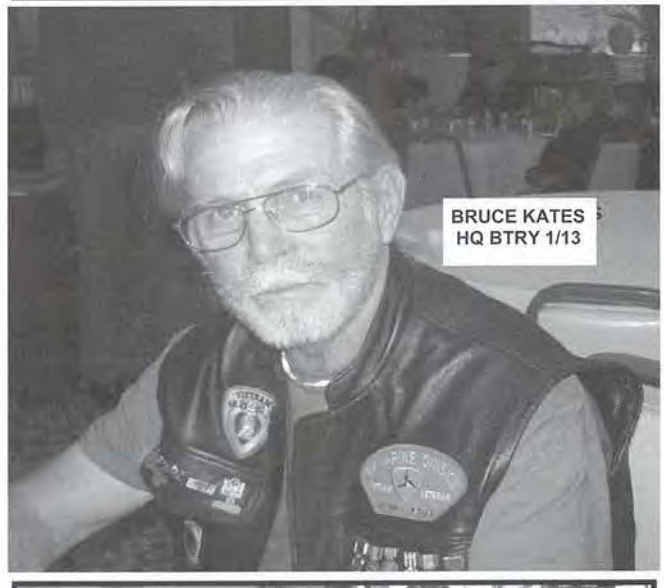

BRUCE KATES
HQ BTRY 1/13



RICHARD & ANN BOTTARI
BRAVO BTRY 1/13



RALPH & JEAN BECK
1ST MAW MAG-36

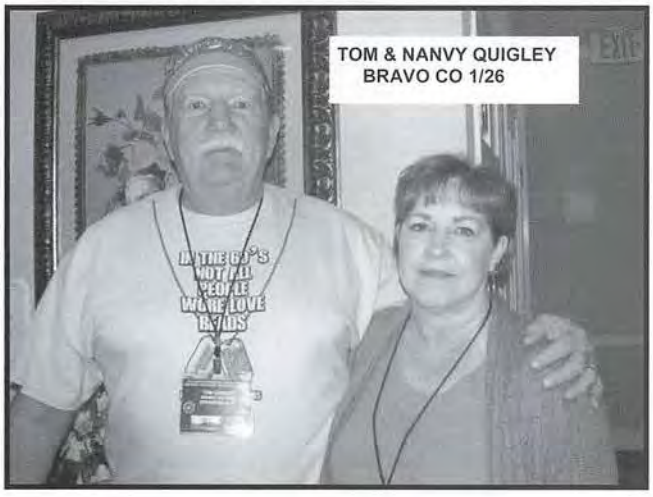

TOM & NANVY QUIGLEY
BRAVO CO 1/26



WILLIAM & WILMA RING
DELTA CO 1/1

014 REUNION SUMMARY

From the feedback received, the reunion in San Diego was an unqualified success, and the committee as a whole is grateful to all who spoke or wrote to us about their time in San Diego. With this location and all it had to offer, we only scheduled one off-site activity and that was a visit to MCRD for the Marine Corps graduation ceremony. Most of us travelled by bus from the hotel, but a few used their own transportation. We were enthusiastically received by the Marines at MCRD and the civilian guests of the graduating platoons. In addition, we were recognized for our Khe Sanh service, which was met with an outstanding ovation from those in attendance on that Friday. Joining us for lunch on the base afterward, Commanding General, MCRD, BGen James W. Bierman Jr., delivered a heartfelt, emotional welcome to the membership.

Many of those in attendance at the reunion who ventured out from the hotel to see and experience all that San Diego had to offer utilized the passenger vans we rented for small groups. We particularly have to give a big thank you to Roland Kutzbach who spent the entire reunion chauffeuring the vans. Our Vice President John Pessoni as usual, did an outstanding job with the KSV PX. Carol & Dave Meyer assisted John as well as doing a superb job with the Silent Auction. Tom Ford also assisted in the PX, giving Big John some much deserved breaks, although there are some who maintain that Big John gets too many breaks as it is. LOL. The KSV PX, the Silent Auction, and the continuous generosity of the membership, contributed much needed funds for the Scholarship Fund. Rita & Merle Moritz and our main "get everything done," Michael Fishbaugh, tirelessly operated the hospitality room providing goodies for the multitudes.

While the membership gathered in the Hospitality Room on Saturday for the general membership meeting, the distaff side of the Khe Sanh Vets enjoyed their ladies luncheon. The membership voted to hold the 2016 Khe Sanh reunion in San Antonio Texas. The dates have not been set, but we can assure you it will not be in July or August! We know full well the meaning of "those repeating history..." The membership informed the reunion committee they wanted us to arrange a visit to Parris Island while in attendance in Savannah Georgia in August 2015. We will make those arrangements as soon as possible.

An election was held for positions on the KSV BOD. John Pessoni was re-elected Vice President. Bruce Geiger and Ken Martin retained their seats as Members at Large. Craig Tourte was elected Secretary, replacing Jack Haigwood and Wayne Deverney & Jose Reyes were elected to the BOD. Big thank you's to Jack & Leland who did an outstanding job during their tenure with the BOD.

Prior to the annual banquet we held a small 239th-Marine Birthday party. The youngest Marine was Lauren Reyes, the daughter of Jose Reyes E Co 2/26. The oldest Marine was Ret. GySgt Ernie Hamner, an honored guest from B/1/1, 1st Transplacement Battalion, Okinawa 1958.We also honored Retired Colonel Thomas Johnson USAF, who flew B-52 Missions at Khe Sanh.

Craig Tourte ran a couple of golf tournaments at nearby golf courses. We want to congratulate him for protecting Steven Wiese from any California snake cousins who might have sought additional retribution for the murder of one of their cousins in Vietnam.

Last but not least, a real vote of thanks must go to the lovely Kathy Turner who is the glue in putting these reunions together. Her tireless efforts and her extraordinary patience and trouble-solving skills are the reason these reunions work at all. Every individual attending our reunions owes a great deal to her. Kathy: there was a certain amount of luck in getting out of Khe Sanh alive. That same luck includes having you and your talents to make these reunions the success that they are.



MARRIOTT, SAVANNAH RIVERFRONT HOTEL, 100 GENERAL MCINTOSH BLVD. SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401. PHONE # 912-233-7722. 2015 KSV REUNION, SAVANNAH GA. AUG 16-23. RATES 105.00 A DAY FREE PARKING RATES GOOD FOR 3 DAYS BEFORE AND 3 DAYS AFTER REUNION DATES. PET FRIENDLY, HANDICAPPED ACCESABLE ROOMS















CHAPLAIN'S CORNER
WINTER 2015
COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS
By Khe Sanh Veterans Chaplain Ron Rayner

Count your blessings was the message delivered at the memorial service on Saturday at the 2014 San Diego Khe Sanh Veteran's reunion. We, who survived the Vietnam War and our lives for the last forty some years, should ponder the positive aspects of those years when negative thinking starts to dominate our life.

I have been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder. If I allow it, negative thinking will fill my thoughts. I was introduced to a process called "thought stopping" during group sessions at the *Vet Center in Detroit, MI.* Simply put, I have to recognize that I am looking at life the wrong way and think about the positive things I have experienced and am experiencing. Some mistake I made years ago should not bother me today. I just have count my many blessings to get my mind headed in the right direction. Count your blessings if negative feelings control you. This is not very original but I know I need to be reminded quite often.

The Reverend Ray Stubbe provided a parable for the service. I had called him in Wisconsin to update him on the reunion and he told me the story about the minister who visited a parishioner that had not been to church in a long time. The minister simply went over to the fireplace and drew a hot coal away from the main portion of the fire. The coal cooled off and turned black. The minister then moved the coal close to the flames and it glowed again. The parishioner then stated he would be in church on Sunday. It is the same way with the reunions. The people at this year's reunion glowed with the fellowship of seeing old friends and making new ones.

I personally had the privilege of spending some time with two members of my Vietnam platoon, Vince Begay and George Miramontez. Vince, I have been seeing occasionally the last three years or so. It had been 46 years since I had seen George and we were able help each other clarify events that were foggy to both of us. Long buried feeling and events were relived. Second platoon Alpha First Battalion Twenty-sixth Marines meeting face to face once again was a fulfilling experience.

Connie Gibbons, wife of KSV Gregg Gibbon, spoke during the Memorial Service about her children's book, ***Mom Told Me You Were A Hero.*** This book will encourage discussion bridging generations about trauma induced anger, rage, lost memory, unexpected mood change (PTSD), and injury that can happen within families of veterans. It does not matter if the warrior recently returned or if their war is decades behind them. The book will be published in Spring 2015. Please contact Connie at **cogconnexion@gmail.com** if you are interested.

I personally believe that PTSD can be contagious and believe a book such as Connie's is long overdue.

Khe Sanh Veteran Larkin Spivey has published a new book, ***A Skeptic's Guide To God.*** Larkin, who did not become a Christian until age fifty-three after a prior life of religious skepticism, has done an excellent job of presenting an easily read, humorous, insightful, and skeptical look at God. One of the first quotes in the book explains the title.

"Large skepticism leads to large understanding. Small skepticism leads to small understanding. No skepticism leads to no understanding." Xi Zhi

I personally am a religious skeptic who has gained much understanding from this book. It was entertaining as well as educational. I highly recommend it for all, skeptical or not. It is available at amazon.com.

The Khe Sanh Veterans and their families are in my prayers.

"Live in such a way that God's love can bless you as you wait for the eternal life that our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy is going to give you."
Jude 21 (NLT)



KHE SANH VETERAN IN THE NEWS

HON LEE KHE SANH VETERAN DELTA CO 1/26 & 1/13 FO 5TH 155

HON LEE: SCHOLAR, WARRIOR, SPY, TEACHER AND HEALER

An Interview by Bill Reddy, LAc, Dipl. Ac.



Bill: Please share with me a little about your childhood in New York.

Hon: It was fun. Growing up in New York's Chinatown was like living in a Chinese village that had been transplanted to a five square block area in southern Manhattan.

The thing I liked most about the city, and still do, is it's rich cultural diversity. The neighborhood was a culinary paradise, with Chinese noodle shops and Italian pizzerias within a five-minute walk, and great Kosher Delies a bit further north. I went to school on the lower East Side, a tough neighborhood and I took up martial arts to defend myself after getting beat up.

Bill: What's your martial arts background?

Hon: When I was a kid, my uncle claimed he knew kung fu. He showed me how to punch and kick and made me stand in a low crouch called a horse stance until my thighs burned and my whole body ached. But, I didn't take him or my lessons seriously because he didn't look like my cinema kung fu heroes. It wasn't until I got into high school that I took formal lessons, but in Japanese karate, not Chinese kung fu. The classes in karate seemed better organized than what I found in Chinatown. I continued training in the Marine Corps, but it wasn't until I moved to Washington D.C. that I returned to my Chinese roots to study kung fu. This was before anyone had heard of Bruce Lee and people thought kung fu was something you ate at a Chinese restaurant.

Bill: What were some of the highlights of your Vietnam service as a Marine?

Hon: Combat was a transformative experience. The man I replaced and the man who replaced me were both killed in action. So many of the men I had served with came home broken, physically or emotionally. I'm glad that today's veterans are returning to a warmer welcome than the hostile reception Vietnam vets received. But I feel we have to go beyond just saying, "thank you for your service." A 2008 RAND Corporation study concluded that 31% of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan suffered from PTSD, depression or traumatic brain injury. That's why I appreciate the work so many in our acupuncture community are doing to help veterans, and I applaud the Acupuncture Without Borders "Military Stress Recovery Project," and similar initiatives.

Bill: What drew you into working with the CIA?

Hon: Military service whetted my appetite for travel and adventure. After the exhilaration of combat, I wasn't ready to settle down to a routine 9-to-5 job. And who could resist playing James Bond? Having witnessed the futility of war and the strategic myopia that got our country entangled in the so-called Vietnam quagmire, I had hoped that by joining the CIA I could help provide U.S. policy makers with the intelligence they'd need to avoid the future

squandering of our national blood and treasure. Unfortunately, good intelligence doesn't always translate into good policy.

Bill: Can you tell me of any "close calls" you've had during your tenure with the company?

Hon: What you see on screen is a distorted picture of the CIA. I was a case officer. Unlike Tom Cruise, unless it's a war zone or hostile environment, CIA officers don't go around shooting bad guys. The agents I handled, who put their lives or careers on the line, were the ones at risk. I was never in mortal danger while on the job. The only close call was during a burglary, when I had a knife pressed against my throat. But that could have happened anywhere.

Bill: What were the circumstances surrounding your pursuit of Chinese Medicine?

Hon: When I was a kid, I got so sick my mother took me to the Chinese herbalist down the street and made me gulp down bowls of foul tasting decoctions that restored my health. It was like magic, something I knew i had to learn. Also, the founders of my martial arts systems were Chinese medicine physicians. I'd inherited a manual of "secret" formulas, so I felt obligated to learn enough so I could use them responsibly. Moreover, according to Chinese martial arts ethics, if you know how hurt someone, you should also know how to heal them.

Bill: Have you had any qigong exposure? If so, what style(s)?

Hon: I'd practiced qigong as part of kung fu training to develop internal power and as a form of self-cultivation. It wasn't until I took a required qigong class in acupuncture school that I discovered that it's a pillar of classical Chinese medicine and can be used to heal people. Since then, I've learned several styles and completed a three-year program in Medical Qigong Therapy. I personally practice and teach Spring Forest Qigong, created by Chunyi Lin, whose vision is: "A healer in every family and a world without pain." I recommend it to all my patients as a way to heal physically, emotionally and spiritually. What I like most about this particular style is that it's profoundly powerful yet very simple to learn. If it's not simple, my patients won't do it consistently (if they do it at all).

Bill: What skills in your previous careers have come in handy as a Licensed Acupuncturist?

Hon: I think good people skills, i.e., our ability to communicate and build rapport with others, are essential in being successful in any profession. It's a set of skills I tried to develop to be a more effective military commander, CIA manager and martial arts instructor and that I continue to hone as an acupuncturist. In treating patients, especially those with chronic illnesses, I'm more effective if I can change mental, emotional or spiritual patterns that may be at the heart of their problems. And to effect change requires gaining their trust and confidence.

Bill: What do you like most about being an acupuncturist?

Hon: I just published my memoir describing the seemingly divergent paths I travelled that finally lead to fulfilling my boyhood dream of practicing Chinese medicine. Along the way, I discovered that my true purpose in life is to serve others. Being an acupuncturist provides me the tools to do just that, to help people lead stronger, happier and healthier lives.

Bill: Any parting thoughts for our readers?

Hon: Albert Schweitzer said, "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve." I know my fellow acupuncturists feel the same way. That's why it's such privilege to work with and learn from a community of like-minded people who are passionate about helping others.



OBIT

LAST OF NAVAJO "CODE TALKERS" DIES IN NEW MEXICO

CHESTER NEZ, USMC

Reuters) - The last of 29 Navajo Americans who developed an unbreakable code that helped Allied forces win the second World War died in New Mexico on Wednesday of kidney failure at the age of 93. Chester Nez was the last remaining survivor of an original group of 29 Navajos recruited by the U.S. Marine Corps to create a code based on their language that the Japanese could not crack.

His son, Michael Nez, said his father died peacefully in his sleep at their home in Albuquerque.

"He had been battling kidney disease and it seems like the disease won," Michael Nez told Reuters. "He's the last of a great era, a great part of history."

About 400 code talkers would go on to use their unique battlefield cipher to encrypt messages sent from field telephones and radios throughout the Pacific theater during the war.



It was regarded as secure from Japanese military code breakers because the language was spoken only in the U.S. Southwest, was known by fewer than 30 non-Navajo people, and had no written form.

The Navajos' skill, speed and accuracy under fire in ferocious battles from the Marshall Islands to Iwo Jima is credited with saving thousands of U.S. servicemen's lives and helping shorten the war. Their work was celebrated in the 2002 movie Windtalkers."



The president of the Navajo Nation, Ben Shelly, said he had ordered flags to be flown at half staff in memory of Nez. "It saddens me to hear the last of the original code talkers has died," Shelly said. "We are proud of these young men in defending the country they loved using their Navajo language." Last November, the American Veterans Center honored Nez for bravery and valor above and beyond the call of duty, awarding him the Audie Murphy Award for distinguished service.

"I was very proud to say that the Japanese did everything in their power to break that code but they never did," Nez said in an interview with the Stars and Stripes newspaper the day before receiving the award.

Nez and his young fellow recruits were called communications specialists by the Marines and were taught Morse code, semaphore and "blinker," a system using lights to send the code they developed substituted Navajo words for military terms. CHAY-DA-GAHI, which translates to "turtle," came to mean a tank while a GINI, "chicken hawk" in English, became a dive bomber. America was NE-HE-MAH, "our mother."

The code talkers served in all six Marine divisions and 13 were killed in World War Two.

Nez also volunteered to serve two more years during the Korean War. He retired in 1974 after a 25-

year career as a painter at the Veterans Administration hospital in Albuquerque.

Shelly said the Navajo Nation was drafting a proclamation in honor of Nez that it plans to present, along with the Navajo Nation flag, to the code talker's relatives. Nez is expected to be buried at the Santa Fe National Cemetery next week.

(Additional reporting and writing by Daniel Wallis in Denver; Editing by Cynthia Johnston, Bill Trott and Sandra Maler)

RELATED ARTICLES

WASHINGTON -- The 29 U.S. Marines dodged bullets at the front -- first in the Pacific and then in Germany -- passing top-secret messages to each other in a code that the enemy couldn't crack.

The warriors, Navajo Code Talkers, relied on their their native language to develop the code, which helped to turn the course of World War II in the favor of the Allies. Of the original group, only one was still alive: Chester Nez.

On Nov. 9, the American Veterans Center honored Nez and six other veterans for bravery and valor above and beyond the call of duty during combat. Nez received the Audie Murphy Award for distinguished service in the military during World War II. "I was very proud to say that the Japanese did everything in their power to break that code but they never did," Nez said in an interview with Stars and Stripes the day before the award ceremony.

If the Code Talkers had been caught, he said, they would be tortured and their tongues cut out. They risked everything for the United States, even though they were raised in military boarding schools that prohibited them from speaking their native language.

Nez was raised at a time when the government required every Native American to have a census number and be accounted for. His grandson, Latham, described it as a "bad time" for Native Americans. Part of the effort involved taking children off reservations and putting them into boarding schools. Once there, children were forbidden to speak Navajo and were beaten or had their mouths washed out with soap if they were caught.

That didn't stop them from whispering Navajo to each other in secret, said Latham Nez, who travels with his grandfather helping him tell his story. Their language, however, would serve the United States well later, in 1942, when Americans were dying in rising numbers overseas, especially in the Pacific. The Japanese seemed to know what the U.S. military was planning well before it took place.

That's where the Code Talkers came in, recruited from boarding schools to join the Marines and use their unique skills to develop an unbreakable code to pass messages.

"Even some of our town tribe wouldn't understand what we were talking about," Nez said in the interview.

World War I veteran Philip Johnston, who came up with the idea to develop the Navajo Code in 1941, came to Nez' boarding school to recruit. The volunteers went directly into basic training without any goodbyes. Nez left behind his sister Dora, his father and his beloved grandmother, who wouldn't know he was fighting until two years after he left.

When the Code Talkers got out of the service, "they told us not to talk about what we did," Nez said.

The Navajo men received no fanfare, and many struggled, said Judith Avila, who co-wrote Nez's memoir "Code Talker: The First and Only Memoir By One of the Original Talkers of WWII" and helped Nez during the Nov. 8 interview.

Instead of people thanking them for their service, they faced discrimination and insults, she said. When Nez wore his Marine Corps uniform to register for his Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood -- required for all Native Americans -- the clerk told Nez he wasn't a real citizen.

"I wish I had my .45 with me," Nez recalled saying at the time, according to Avila, "because if I did, I would shoot you in the face."

Without support, suffering from what most now know to be post-traumatic stress, many Code Talk-



ers turned to alcohol and lived on the streets. There were about 420 Code Talkers that followed the original 29 into service. Of that group, about 30 are still alive.

Nez said he was one of the lucky ones. When he returned, he was embraced by his family. He got a job at the VA, which he kept until the 1970s.

Nez still has good memories of his time with the Marines, whom he said treated the Code Talkers very well. Latham Nez, who accompanied his grandfather to the awards, said the Marines saw the Navajo men as "damn good Marines" who were already warriors when they left for basic training.

A modest man, Nez doesn't talk a lot. His grandson said that he was raised not to discuss his life, which made the book very special. It's also what makes the Audie Murphy award so fantastic.

"His normal response was a big smile, and saying, 'Good, good.' I know deep down it's the story that's important (to him)," Latham Nez said.

AT SANTA FE NM. CEMETERY, A MONUMENT TO NAVAJO CODE TALKERS

Published: March 22, 2013

By T.S. Last

Albuquerque Journal, N.M

SANTA FE, N.M. — Wind is thought of as a spiritual force in Navajo folklore and tradition. It also represents a means of communication. So it was appropriate that the spring wind was blowing hard Thursday during the dedication ceremony for a monument honoring Navajo Code Talkers at Santa Fe National Cemetery.

Cliff Shields, the cemetery's director, also said the Santa Fe cemetery is a fitting site for the new memorial.

When he was approached by the New Mexico State Organization Daughters of the American Revolution, "I thought how appropriate it would be to have the monument in New Mexico," he said, which encompasses a significant portion of the Navajo Nation.



From Left, BGen Andrew Salas, Navajo Code Talker Bill Toledo, Santa Fe National Cemetery Director Cliff Shields and Daughters Of The American Revolution state regent Zadeea Jean Graham Harris unveil a new monument to Navajo Code Talkers on 21 March , 2013 at the National Cemetery

The Navajo Code Talkers served as secret weapons for American forces in the Pacific Theatre during World War II. Using variations of the Diné language, they communicated messages through use of a code in the Pacific war theatre. The code was never broken and the code talkers' contributions are said to have helped bring an end to the war and saved thousands of lives.

A plaque mounted on a stone foundation simply reads: "In honor of the Navajo Code Talkers for their sacrifice and courage to help ensure the United States' victory during World War II."

"It will pass on the legacy for what we were honored to do to our children, grandchildren and everyone down the line," said Roy Hawthorne, of Lupton, Ariz.

Hawthorne was one of three code talkers present for the ceremony. Another was 91-year-old Chester Nez, who grew up near Gallup and now makes his home in Albuquerque, the last of the 29 original code talkers recruited by the U.S. Marines to carry out the task.

Brigadier General Andrew Salas of the New Mexico National Guard gave the keynote address, saying "their contributions will not be forgotten and are treasured in our hearts now and always."

Zadeea Jean Graham Harris, the state regent for the Daughters of the American Revolution, said she always loved and respected the code talkers. Through her research, she found that there were no monuments for the Navajo Code Talkers in New Mexico and decided to do something about it. "When people heard who it was for, I had no problem raising money," she said.

There are other code talker memorials elsewhere, including in the Navajo national capital of Window Rock, Ariz.

Shields said the Santa Fe monument will serve as the centerpiece for a new memorial wall and walkway to be located at the cemetery. He said there's space for 20 other monuments at the site, some of which will recognize military service branches.

A STATEWIDE PROGRAM TO HONOR DISTINGUISHED VETERANS WAS SPARKED BY A SCHUYLER COUNTY MAN.

Vietnam veteran **Philip J. Swaney** of Cayuta braved explosions and gunshots to save seven critically injured soldiers during a heated battle on Oct. 14, 1967, in Vietnam. His bravery, Philip earned a Silver Star.

Fast-forward a few decades to his latest battle with the New York State Legislature where Philip and his late wife **Marilyn** advocated for a bill to allow Silver and Gold Star recipients to receive a distinguished emblem on state license plates.

The bill remained stagnant in the Legislature for years over a moratorium on distinctive plates. Only recipients of the military's highest award, the Medal of Honor, and the Purple Heart, awarded to the wounded, are allowed the distinctive plates, according to a news release from the state Assembly.

"We were surprised and disappointed that these brave men and women who fought for our nation were being deprived of this simple recognition for their exceptional deeds because of some legal dispute in Albany," Assemblyman **Marc Butler**, R-Newport, stated.

During a press conference held in November at American Legion Robert Lee Walsh Post 337 in Broadalbin, Marc announced a new state-wide program to honor distinguished veterans — window stickers.

The "Honor Our Heroes" program administered through the Broadalbin American Legion Post, will provide free of any charge to veterans distinctive, full-color window stickers designating the medal awards for Silver Star, Bronze Star, Navy Cross, Coast Guard Cross, Distinguished Service Cross and Distinguished Flying Cross. The stickers are available to any New York state veteran who is a verified recipient of the medal.

"Mr. Swaney played a key role in developing this award program," Butler stated. "He really pressed our office to make it a reality and his perseverance in moving this forward is remarkable."

Philip was the first to be honored in the new program. During a small ceremony at the news conference, Philip thanked three people. His father, who fought during World War II's Battle of the Bulge, his mother who instilled in him a sense of patriotism, and his wife who stood by his side until her death.

Details of the program will made available to all New York Legislators. To learn more, contact Marc's district offices at (518) 762-6486, (315) 866-1632 or (518) 455-5393.

2d BATTALION, 9th MARINES IN 1967 "HELL IN A HELMET"

By Beth Crumley
August 2011

Early last week, I received an email from an acquaintance of mine, an active duty Marine officer, who commented on my HMM-262 blog. He said he was pleased to see me writing on Vietnam, since the Vietnam veterans had been ignored, or held in disdain, for so long. He added that his father had been with Echo Company, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines in 1967. I was surprised to hear that, and a bit taken



aback. I knew that was a hell of a year for 2/9… Operation Hickory, Operation Kingfisher, heavy fighting in the hills around Khe Sanh Combat Base, and at Con Thien. My curiosity got the best of me, and I started to look more closely at battalion operations for the 1967 period…and it is an understatement to say it was a hell of a year for the unit that called themselves "Hell in a Helmet."

In the early spring of 1967, 2/9 was operating south of Hue. The commanding officer of Echo Company, Captain William B. Terrill, received word that his company was flying back to Phu Bai. Once there, he was briefed on the growing enemy presence around Khe Sanh Combat Base. Elements of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines were reporting frequent contacts in the area, and it was believed that two NVA regiments were operating in the area. Echo Company was heading to Khe Sanh to reinforce the Marines already there.



Marines Of Echo Company, 2nd Battalion Ninth Marines on a sweep south of Hue, February. 1967.

Neither Captain Terrill, nor his seasoned commander of 1st platoon, Staff Sergeant Spencer Olsen believed the reports of heavy NVA activity in the area. Said Olsen, "It seemed every time we were briefed about a new operation, there were two NVA regiments waiting for us. All of these briefings seemed canned."

On March 7, much to the relief of the Marines of 1/9, Echo Company, 2/9 arrived at Khe Sanh. It was not long before they realized the reports of enemy activity in the area were not exaggerated.

Eight days later, on 15 March, SSgt Olsen received orders to conduct his second patrol. The first has taken Olsen and his Marines south of Hill 881S. This time, he was to scout the north side of the hill. The plan was to follow a trail west of the base, and



Marines of 2/9 move along a North Vietnamese trench, March 1967

in the course of a week, to cross Hill 861, and patrol the area north of 881S and west of 861.

Olsen's patrol, comprised of about 40 Marines, departed the relative safety of Khe Sanh Combat Base near dusk. Moving in a staggered column, Olsen halted the patrol about a quarter of the way up Hill 861, and took the radio handset to report in. He later said, "Vietnamese voices filled every frequency....There was just so much NVA radio traffic in the area that it was bleeding over onto all my frequencies." It was a portent of things to come, and it was, for the Marines, an uneasy, sleepless night.

On the morning of 16 March, the patrol continued its advance up 861. Cautiously moving through thick vegetation, the Marines could hear Vietnamese voices. SSgt Olsen halted the patrol and called for artillery support. Within minutes 105mm rounds impacted the far side of the hill. As the patrol continued, the trail leveled off below the crescent of hill before it descended down the west side of 861. The lead squad, led by Sergeant Donald Lord, disappeared from Olsen's sight. As they approached a fork in the trail, the point man, Private First Class George D. Johnson, asked "Which way?" Corporal Julian McKee pointed to the left. Thirty meters down the trail, they came to a second fork. As Johnson turned to ask which trail to take, he saw several hundred NVA. A blast of small arms fire killed Cpl McKee instantly. PFC Johnson was mortally wounded. As Private First Class Ivory Puckett watched his best friend dying, he opened fire. A momentary silence followed, then the hill erupted, spewing enemy fire on the Marines. Concussion grenades fell among them.

SSgt Olsen called for artillery support. Lance Corporal James Chase "started the rounds on the eastern slope of Hill 861 and walked them over the top." As the rounds exploded, Olsen made contact with Marine air assets operating in the area, and handed the handset to LCpl Chase. Chase, who had never directed an airstrike before, brought the jets in but twice called for them to abort. The jets came in for a third time and released canisters of napalm. To Chase, it seemed the canister were far too close. In a second, the landscaped changed from lush, green jungle to one of flames.

SSgt Olsen now began to concentrate on assisting his wounded Marines. One of his corpsmen was seriously wounded. The other, despite shrapnel wounded to his arms and legs, continued to treat the patrol's casualties. As medevacs were called in, Captain Michael Sayers, commanding Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, diverted a patrol and ordered them to Echo Company's position.

Olsen had succeeded in gathering most of his casualties around a suitable landing zone. As a CH-46, escorted by Huey gunships, landed, a mortar round exploded. SSgt Olsen was catapulted through the air. He said, "Wide streams of blood were running down both my arms. There was so much blood..." Wounded by shrapnel in both arms and the backs of his legs, he was told that seven wounded Marines had gotten out aboard the helicopter. Incoming enemy mortar fire had, however, wounded several more. He called for another medevac.

As the second helicopter landed, mortar rounds once again pounded the Marines. Said LCpl Chase, "I looked around. The chopper was gone...Several newly wounded guys staggered around the LZ, blood pouring from their wounds. It was horrible." SSgt Olsen was faced with a decision. Both times he had called in medevacs, the enemy had hit them hard, causing more casualties. However, there were simply not enough able-bodied men left to carry the wounded. He radioed Captain Terrill and told him they needed help.

By 1500, a column of Marines, a platoon from Bravo, 1/9 came into view. As they did, the unmistakable sound of incoming mortars was heard. The enemy fire had a devastating effect on the approaching Marines. As the smoke lifted, dead and wounded were strewn about the hill.

As the Marines worked to gather the dead and wounded into a perimeter, a third helicopter approached carrying additional troops from Bravo Company. One of them, Private First Class David Hendry, felt the helicopter shudder and saw holes appear in the fuselage. The CH-46 tumbled from the sky. It hit the ground nose-first, flipped and finally came to rest some 700 meters down the side of Hill 861.

Captain Terrill and his command group flew into the battlefield from Khe Sanh. Corporal Robert



This photo of Hill 861 was taken in July, 1967 but clearly shows the terrain in which 2/9 was operating



A wounded Marine is carried to a MedEvac during operation Hickory

Slattery stated, "Dead and wounded Marines were everywhere. SSgt Olsen had that thousand yard stare of a man who's seen too much death and destruction."

It took the rest of the evening and into the night to evacuate the wounded. In the morning, helicopters arrived to take the dead. Subsequent patrols combed the area between Hills 881S and 881N. There was no sign of the enemy. They had simply vanished. Marine casualties totaled 19 dead, and 59 wounded, all of whom had belonged to Echo Company. Depleted by fighting, the company returned to Dong Ha on 26 March to rebuild.

In early May, Con Thien, south of the Demilitarized Zone, came under heavy attack. Enemy activity in the "Leatherneck Square" area intensified and while clearing Route 561 between Cam Lo and Con Thien, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines Made contact with a large NVA force. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) authorized the III Marine Amphibious Force to conduct ground operations in the south half of the Demilitarized Zone. The planned attacks called for combined USMC-ARVN attacks along parallel routes. Code names for the operation were Hickory for Marine forces, and Lam Son 54 for ARVN forces.

By mid-May of 1967, a large force of US and South Vietnamese troops were poised south of the Demilitarized Zone. In total, some eight Marine infantry battalions, including two afloat, and five South Vietnamese battalions (three airborne and two infantry) were ready to go on the offensive. Among those was the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, which had arrived from Phu Bai on 16 May.

Operation Hickory launched on the morning of 18 May, 1967. 2d Battalion, 26th Marines, and 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, under the command of LtCol John Peeler, were supported by tanks from Alpha and Bravo Companies, 3d Tank Battalion. As they moved northward from Con Thien, 2/26 made contact with a large NVA force, estimated to be two battalions, positioned in well-defended bunkers and trenches. The right flank came under blistering automatic weapons and mortar fire. Casualties were heavy and the Marines of 2/9 moved up to reinforce the flank, immediately engaging the enemy. As night fell, the Marines broke contact and pulled back to evacuate the dead and wounded.

That night airstrikes hit enemy positions and as the day dawned on 19 May, artillery fire fell on enemy defenses. Both battalions jumped of in the attack at 0700. Within minutes, the advance of 2/26 was halted from withering fire to the front and right. 2/9 moved forward against light resistance and was able to relieve the pressure on 2/26's right flank. By 1030, the Marines had overrun the enemy bunker complex and continued the advance.

Three hours later, Company H, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, on the easternmost flank of the advance came under heavy attack near the intersection of Route 606 and 561. Heavy automatic weapons and mortar fire emanated from the east. Shortly thereafter, they began taking heavy fire from a tree line 60 meters to the front. Several Marines in the point squad had been shot and were lying in the open. Corporal Robert Gillingham ran through savage enemy fire to rescue one of the wounded Marines. Hit three times in the effort, he dragged the man to safety, but later succumbed to his wounds. He was posthumously awarded a Navy Cross for his actions.

Tanks from Alpha Company, 3d Tank Battalion, were brought in to support the attack. Almost immediately the first tank, "Earth Moving Mama," was hit. The gunner was killed instantly, and the tank commander was mortally wounded. A second tank moved into the fray and was immediately hit by RPG fire, knocking it out of the battle. Captain Robert J. Thompson, commanding Company H, moved the entire company forward to retrieve the dead and the wounded. As the company pulled back, he called in supporting arms. The action left 7 Marines dead, and another 10 wounded.

The next day, 2/9 faced Gia Binh, an abandoned village some 2500 meters northeast of Con Thien, where the NVA has established an extensive bunker complex off Route 561. Accompanied by tanks, 2/9 started the attack at 0930. One flame tank torched the bunker while another fired canister rounds and machine guns. Surprising, enemy resistance was very light. The NVA had pulled back from their fortified positions around Con Thien.

The command chronology for the month of May states, "During Operation Hickory, well-equipped and well-trained NVA troops fighting from fortified bunkers and positions were encountered. These positions had interlocking fields of machine gun fire and defensive concentrations of mortar fire. Camouflaged and placed at strategic locations, they formed formidable obstacles to friendly offensive movement. "Casualties for the operation totaled 22 killed in action, and another 116 wounded.

By 28 July 1967, 2/9 found itself involved in Operation Kingfisher, yet another operation along the DMZ, designed to block NVA entry into Quang Tri

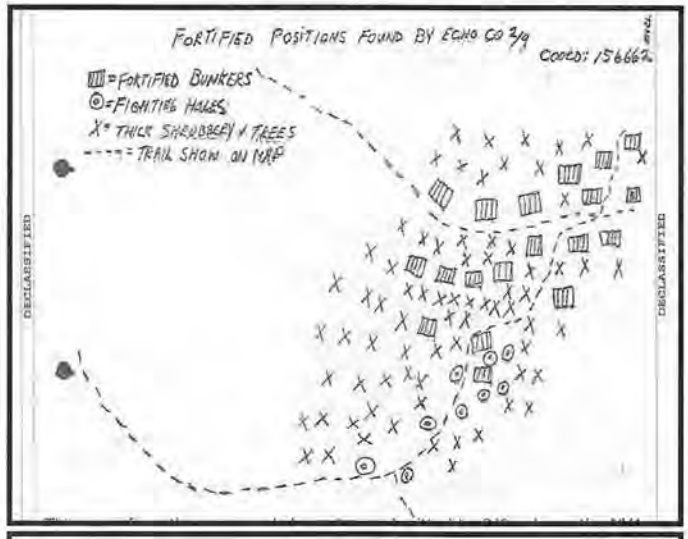

This map, from the command chronology submitted by 2/9, shows the NVA fighting positions during operation Hickory

Province. Reinforced by a platoon of tanks, three Ontos, LVTEs and engineers, the Marines moved north along Route 606. Companies E and G provided security on the flanks.

Moving through a narrow stretch of land bordered by the Ben Hai River on the west and north and a stream to the east, terrain dictated that the tanks remain on the road. Thick vegetation made movement on the flanks very difficult. Unbeknownst to the Marines, who would be forced to return by the same route, the NVA were already moving units into positions covering Route 606.



Marine of 2/9 during operation Kingfisher, north of Con Thien

On the morning of 29 July, 2/9 reached its objec-

tive. By late morning the battalion began moving south out of the Demilitarized Zone, led by Echo Company. At 1115, the enemy detonated a 250-pound bomb buried in the road, wounding 5 Marines. The engineers soon found a second bomb and destroyed it.

As the second bomb detonated, the NVA opened fire with small arms, machine guns and mortars, beginning a running battle that lasted until darkness fell. The NVA had established several strongpoints along the road. Some Marines dove off the road, only to land on NVA booby traps that had been placed there overnight.

Given the situation, and the terrain, the tracked vehicles became a liability rather than an asset. Company F was ordered to establish a helicopter landing zone to evacuate the dead and wounded. When the tanks entered the area, the enemy rained down a tor-



During Operation Kingfisher, Marines were supported by Tanks of the 3RD Tank Battalion.

rent of fire. Machine guns, RPGs and mortar fire swept the entire landing zone. Corporal Miguel Rivera Sotomayor, wounded by shrapnel knocked out an enemy machine gun position. He braved the enemy fire to man an M-60 when the gunner was badly wounded. When he ran out of ammunition, he picked up a rifle and continud to fire before being badly wounded. (Corporal Sotomayor survived and was later awarded a Navy Cross for his actions.) In addition to the casualties they had already taken, another 7 Marines were killed, and another 31 were wounded.

By late afternoon, Echo Company and Command Group A managed to break through the enemy gauntlet. Two squads of Echo Company could not move due to intense enemy fire that had killed 2 Marines and wounded 9 others. Other companies of 2/9 were unable to move, pinned down by enemy fire and with too many casualties.



The enemy pummeled Con Thien with rockets, artillery & mortar fire

Hotel Company, commanded by Captain Frank Southard, pulled back to join with Company F. The two squads from Echo joined them, as did two squads from Golf Company. The remainder of Golf Company, bringing up the rear had successfully fought off the NVA during the day, but found themselves separated from the main body by 1000 meters.

Mike Company, 3d Battalion, 4th Marines moved back up the road to defensive perimeter. In the morning, meeting no resistance, they were able to link up with the remainder of 2/9. Once again, the NVA had disappeared into the jungle.

Helicopters began evacuating the wounded and the dead. The After Action Report submitted by 2/9 clearly states, "It is believed the mission of the enemy force was to isolate the battalion, separate the column and then destroy-as an initial phase in the long sought after victory over the forward Marine



Marines of 2/9 during Operation Kentucky, along the DMZ

outpost at Con Thien. His concept of operation was to conduct ambushes at several strong points, utilizing terrain features to his advantage, At these the enemy had pre-registered mortar concentrations. In all cases the strongpoints were covered by intense automatic weapons fire."

Ina three day period, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines had suffered the loss of 23 killed in action and 191 wounded. Those Marines who survived returned to the "Leatherneck Square" area harboring feelings of bitterness and betrayal.

Throughout August, the battalion operated in "Leatherneck Square," a free-fire zone bordered by Con Thien and Gio Linh to the north and Dong Ha and Cam Lo to the south. It was a relatively quiet time for the battalion. However, by September, enemy activity began to intensify around Con Thien. Said UPI photojournalist David Powell, "When I think of Con Thien, I get a knot in my stomach and I feel echoes of the fear I felt. God, it could be terrifying."

On the morning of 12 September, 2/9 was awakened by a barrage of 82mm mortar fire. Several Marines were wounded. As the helicopters arrived to medevac the wounded, the battalion was subjected to second barrage. Both the commanding officer, LtCol William D. Kent and his executive officer were wounded.

By 15 September, the battalion moved to some 2000 meters south of Con Thien, closer to the main supply route. Pounded by enemy fire, the Marines also endured heavy rains. Said Lance Corporal Jack Hartzel, "I don't remember a day in which we didn't get hit with incoming rounds of some sort. We also suffered something that was almost unheard of elsewhere inSouth Vietnam. It was called "shell shock" and it was not unusual. The constant pounding every day could make you do nuts. You would sit there on edge, wondering if the next round that came in would have your name on it. We were in holes in the mud. Our holes would fill with water; we'd have to bail them out four or five times a day. We also had immersion foot and your feet would bleed and hurt like hell. Then there was the damned mud! You walked in it, you sat in it, you slept in it



PFC R.L. Crumrine learned of his best friend's death during Operation Hickory

and you even ate it. There was just no escaping it." Enemy fire was so heavy, so constant, that the Marines of 2/9 was not regularly resupplied. Over the course of nine days, Con Thien was hit with more than thousand rounds of artillery fire, rockets and mortars. At one point they were forced to scrounge in their own trash pits for something to eat.

Throughout September, the enemy kept up the pressure and Marine casualties mounted. Con Thien averaged 50 wounded and 2 Marines killed by incoming every day. 2/9, now operating outside the wire, was taking almost as many casualties.

On the morning of 25 September, at 0715, Con

Thien was pummeled by hundreds of rockets, mortars, artillery rounds and recoilless rifle fire. 122mm rockets landed in the midst of 2/9. Said LCpl Hartzel, "The thing I remember about September 25 that really sticks in my mind is a picture of a Marine sitting in a puddle of blood and battle dressings on a poncho with his legs blown off from the waist down. He was numb from morphine and in shock from loss of blood. He was smoking a cigarette very calmly as if nothing has even happened. He was waiting for a medevac. He probably died on the shopper ride back...Our platoon arrived at Con Thien with 45 men. When we left we only had twelve. Now you wonder why we called it "The Meatgrinder!"

The following day, 2/9 was pulled out of Con Thien after two months in the field as part of Operation Kingfisher.

Late fall would find the battalion embroiled in Operation Kentucky, and once again, caught in a fierce daylong battle near Gia Binh, were they had faced the enemy in May.

It had, indeed, been a hell of a year for the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines. The coming year would prove just as difficult, if not more. The battalion would see action in Operation Scotland, the defense of Khe Sanh Combat Base. They would also see action near The Rockpile and Vandegrift Combat Base.

There is no doubt that those Marines who served in 2d Battalion, 9th Marines were extraordinary. Those who survived lived together, fought together, and all-too-often bled together. I find myself reminded of the Saint Crispin's Day speech in Henry V:"From this day to the ending of the world, But we in it shall be remembered; We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he to-day that sheds his blood with me Shall be my brother;"

Let us remember those who served with 2/9. Let us remember their hardships and their sacrifices. And rest assured, they will not be forgotten.



NEW YEAR'S EVE 1967

By Dennis Mannion

So, Kilo has been on 861 for almost a week since our arrival on 26Dec67, and there has been a long-range patrol (over 3000 meters, reinforced platoon) and a short-range patrol (smaller sized and less than 800 meters) every day starting on the 27th. As the FO team, my RTO Dave Kron and I go on all the long-range ones, and New Years Eve day was no exception. Instead of west or north, we go south this time over to the 689 ridge line and back.



31Dec67 starts out sunny, partially cloudy, and surprisingly cool, and as we slog south through the elephant grass, Dave and I occasionally smile to each other. Man, do we have a New Years Eve feast planned for that night. Back in our above-ground bunker, we've set aside the last of our home-packaged Christmas goodies as well as "select" C-ration items. As soon as this F'in patrol is over, we can bring 1967 to a festive conclusion and ring in 1968.

By mid-morn we are across Hill 700 heading downhill towards 689 (photo), but by noon the sunlight & heat is intense and the humidity rising up from the wet leaves and grass is taking its toll on everyone. We're almost to our objective -- a small hill just in front of 689 -- when the column, now in almost triple-canopy jungle, just seems to stop. "FO up" is passed down the line, and Dave and I push past exhausted, sweat-stained, filthy Marines as we struggle to keep our footing in the soft ooze of the

the of the jungle floor. We reach the CP group and the Lt. in charge ask me if I know exactly where we were. (Kilo had some flat out, terrific LT's but this individual seemed to be the weakest and the least unsure).

I told him that I had a good idea, but that without getting onto some high ground and better visibility, I could not be sure. The only other solution was to conduct a fire mission using illumination rounds and adjust the parachute flare to pop overhead. Then have C/1/13 tell us where the target grid coordinates were plotted. I was told to give that a try as the patrol was NOT going any further. It took a bit of adjusting, but Charlie Battery gave us a good reading on our location. As we progressed back to the north and northwest -- you do not want to retrace your steps at all -- it became clear to me that we were not making significant progress and that we were using up a lot of precious sunlight. Two or three times we stopped for many minutes at a time, and at one point in late afternoon I was again ordered to the front of the column. A Staff Sergeant now seemed to be in charge, and he asked me to speak on the radio with Kilo's CO back on 861. I was told in no uncertain terms to help the E-6 get us back "home." It was a long, drawn out afternoon as we pushed our way back towards 861. The shadows got longer and we were still 1200 meters out. Going faster -- uphill all the way -- was simply not going to work. Back on 861, Captain Jasper had to make a decision: Leave us out all night in a defensive 360 or fire illumination to light our way back. He opted for illum.

By 8:30 p.m. -- I know that's 2030hrs -- we were on the approach in near darkness to the ridge line 500 meters to the west of 861....still an hour away from relative safety. Despite the real danger of highlighting us for the NVA, the 60mm & 81mm mortar guys began to fire round after round of illumination. We scrambled, clawed, and staggered across the western ridge, but it was never a full-out sprint as there was the constant danger of leaving Marines behind in the dark. Illum is tricky in that it lights your way, but the flares swinging beneath their parachutes make the ground seem to sway and pitch like being on a ship. Very disorienting to say the least.

It was less than 2 hours before 1968 when Dave and I got thru the gate in our protective wire, and it was closer to midnight before we concluded our debrief at the CP bunker. We only had 15 minutes to celebrate the end of 1967, and there was no time, energy, or desire for food or festivities. We shed our 782 gear, and exhausted beyond all measure, wrapped ourselves in poncho liners, clicked our canteens together and wished each other Happy New Year. It was still 1967 when I was fast asleep.



At the point in the jungle near 689 when we turned back for 861.**HAPPY NEW YEAR** to all.

REPLIES:

NEW YEARS EVE 1967

I always thought you guys up front were lost when we left the gate. 3rd platoon weapons was always bringing up the a rear. We called those leading a lot of names that day and they wasn't nice.

HAPPY NEW YEAR. Posted on December 31, 2014 at 11:41:24 PM by **Edgar J. Mickelson**

NEW YEARS EVE 1967

Posted on December 31, 2014 at 08:17:35 PM by Doc Jim Thomas

Still the early days for me! Bunker building, listening to every story from OLD SALT Corpsman! Thoughts of what the year held for me! No way of knowing the treasures of experiences I would go through, nor knowing what GREAT Friendships would happen because of Khe Sanh! But here we are, just a few hours away from a New Year, and I'm able to look back and honestly be thankful that I met you guys! So **HAPPY NEW YEAR** to the most wonderful Guys on Earth!

Doc T.

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KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student **OR** who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2015 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, -1MN 55128317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms.
Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the ***"Red Clay"*** Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David E. Lownds Award – for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award – for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award – for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

2. The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY 1* of the school year applied for. *** (This is an important, NEW change to previous years)*****

6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 regular points or 115 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points max. (Please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

A GPA of 4.0 x 10 = 40 points or a GPA of 3.0 x 10 = 30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 30 points total

Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Student government = 10 points max.
Community related services = 10 points max.
Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 10 points max.

c. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min. to 400 words max) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max.

Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments. Please review the six suggested adjectives below, select one or more that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

TENACIOUS FAITHFUL UNDAUNTED STEADFAST RESOLUTE INNOVATIVE

d. Bonus Points = 10 bonus points for being a military veteran
= 5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application:_____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: last_____, **first**_____ **MI**_____

Address: street_____, **city**_____ **state**_____**zip**_____
Home phone:_____ **E-mail address:**_____
Applicant Birthdate:_____

2. KSV Sponsor Information (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member):
Name: last_____ **first name**_____
Relationship to applicant;_____
Branch of service_____
Unit served at Khe Sanh_____**dates served there**_____

3. School Information: (School to be attending)
School name: _____
School Address: street_____, **city**_____
State_____ **zip code**_____
School Phone number:_____
Curriculum/intended course of study_____
School year to be funded_____

4. Applicant Personal History (Be specific!)
a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, communications, offices held, academic honors and prizes, student government participation, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. Community Activities participated in; (military service, volunteer service to community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Mailing Packet (Due *MAY 1*)!!

c. Mailing Packet (Due *MAY 1*)!!

*ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS,
*A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,
*A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,
*A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min. to 400 WORDS max.) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.

!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!

I, SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant Actual Signature of
Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY 1ST* OF THE SCHOOL YEAR APPLIED

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

_____
Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Committee

_____
Tom Eichler, President Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

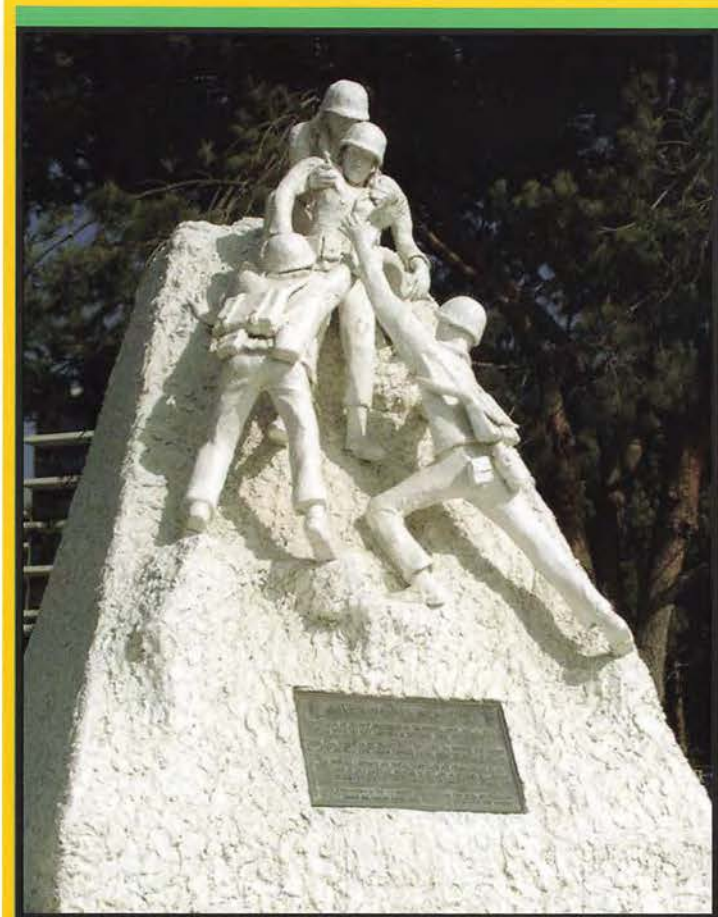



Raul Avina created a corpsmen monument in 1983. (Photo On Left) The monument was in front of the Naval Regional Medical Center Camp Pendleton for 31 years. Last year a new Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton opened on the base. Attempts to move Avina's sculpture didn't go well and a new monument was created from Avina's original. (Photo On Right) An unveiling was held Friday at the base. Many of Avina's family members were on hand for the event. Corpsman are the Marines "docs" in combat and have saved countless lives over the decades.

STORIES AND ADDITIONAL PHOTOS PAGE 29-32

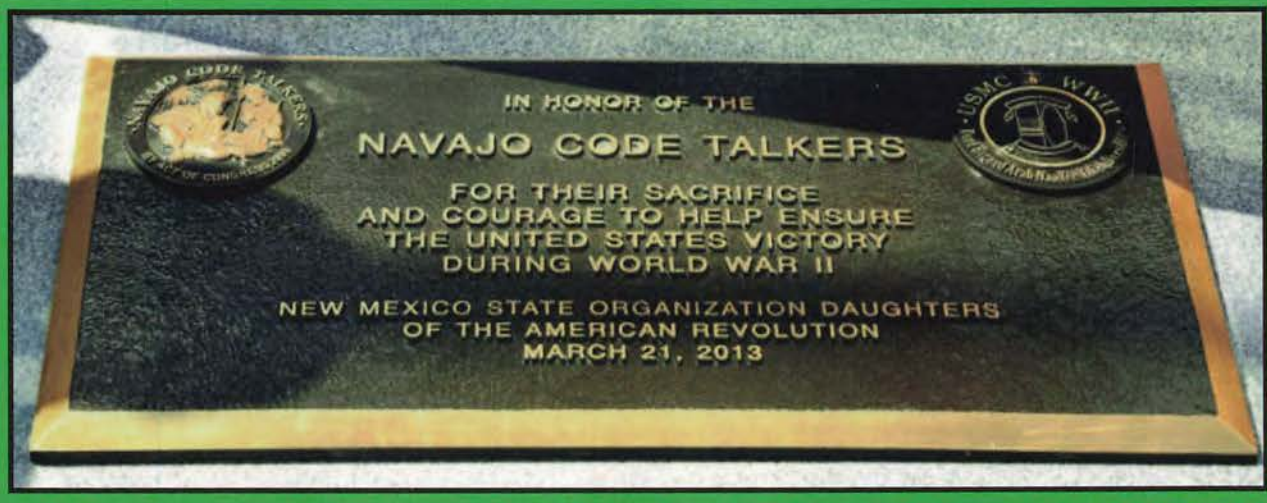

NAVAJO CODE TALKERS MONUMENT DEDICATED 21 MARCH 2013, AT THE NATIONAL CEMETERY, SANTA FE NEW MEXICO

STORY & PICTUREs ON PAGES 77-80



NAVAJO NATION FLAG

SEAL OF NAVAJO NATION

SPRING 2015

RED CLAY

ISSUE 87



KHE SANH



COMBAT BASE

SPECIAL UNITS FINALLY RECEIVE THE HONORS AND RECOGNITION DENIED THEM FOR SO MANY YEARS.

READ STORIES ON PAGES 1-5, 9-12.



WHY MEN WHO HAVE BEEN TO WAR YEARN TO REUNITE

I NOW KNOW WHY MEN WHO HAVE BEEN TO WAR YEARN TO REUNITE. NOT TO TELL STORIES OR LOOK AT OLD PICTURES. NOT TO WEEP OR LAUGH.

COMRADES GATHER BECAUSE THEY LONG TO BE WITH THE PEOPLE WHO ONCE ACTED THEIR BEST; WHO ONCE SUFFERED AND SACRIFICED, WHO WERE STRIPPED OF THEIR HUMANITY.

I DID NOT PICK THESE MEN, THEY WERE DELIVERED BY FATE AND THE MILITARY. BUT I KNOW THEM IN A WAY I KNOW NO OTHER MEN. I HAVE NEVER GIVEN ANYONE SUCH TRUST.

THEY WERE WILLING TO GUARD SOMETHING MORE PRECIOUS THAN MY LIFE. THEY WOULD HAVE CARRIED MY REPUTATION... THE MEMORY OF ME.

IT WAS PART OF THE BARGAIN WE ALL MADE, THE REASON WE WERE ALL WILLING TO DIE FOR ONE ANOTHER. AS LONG AS I HAVE MEMORY, I WILL THINK OF THEM ALL, EVERY DAY.

I AM SURE THAT WHEN I LEAVE THIS WORLD, MY LAST THOUGHTS WILL BE OF MY FAMILY, AND MY COMRADES.

SUCH GOOD MEN!

GROUP OF VIETNAM VETERANS RECEIVE LONG OVERDUE RECOGNITION

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Thanks in-part to a loyal colleague and US Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL), a group of veterans will receive long-overdue recognition Thursday night for their actions during the Vietnam War.

Fifteen veterans will be honored with a total of 33 awards, including Silver Stars, Distinguished Flying Crosses, Bronze Stars, Army Commendation Medals and more. Three of the veterans are from Florida.

Many in the group were on-hand at the Special Operations Association's Reunion Banquet in Las Vegas to receive the awards in-person.

The veterans served in the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observations Group (MACV-SOG), which was a highly classified, multi-service special forces unit which conducted covert operations in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Members of the group conducted reconnaissance missions, captured enemy prisoners, rescued downed pilots and conducted rescue operations to retrieve allied prisoners during the war.

MACV-SOG was not a publicly recognized unit until 2000, when the entire unit received the Presidential Unit Citation - the highest award a military unit can receive.

The group took part in some of the most noteworthy campaigns of Vietnam, including the Tet Offensive, the Cambodian Campaign and Operation Tiger Head. An eyewitness account from SPC Roger Lockshier describes one harrowing incident during the war when some of the veterans were sent to save a reconnaissance team that had come under heavy fire from North Vietnamese Army troops.

He recalls, "I turned to see if Scott was OK and he pointed to the side of my flight helmet. I reached up to find a large gash in the helmet where a bullet had torn across. I then also noticed how our helicopter had been hit with so many bullets ... both Scott and I had small spattering of blood on our arms and legs where small pieces of shrapnel had apparently hit."

"That day these soldiers risked their lives to save their fellow troops," Nelson said. "They fought, sacrificed and put their lives on the line to protect all the rest of us."

Securing the medals has been a long process for these soldiers and for their colleague, SGT Richard Crawford of Lakeland, a former member of MACV -SOG. The original awards packets were lost multiple times, and Crawford decided to contact Nelson's office almost four years ago about starting the awards process again. Crawford reassembled information for each veteran and worked with staff members in Nelson's Orlando office to help secure the medals.

Each veteran's name, along with the awards and a short description of their service, is listed below.



SPCS John Smith of Hawthorne, Florida is receiving the Silver Star for gallantry for his actions from November 16-21, 1968. And, he is also receiving a Soldier's Medal for heroism for his actions on June 3, 1968. According to the Army citation for that Soldier's Medal, SPCS Smith "was at Forward Operating Base when a supply convoy arrived. One of the drivers accidentally drove into a friendly unmarked minefield, hitting an M-1S anti-tank mine. The vehicle was almost completely destroyed and the drive was gravely wounded, requiring immediate medical attention. Specialist Five Smith quickly responded to the accident, and with no regard for his own personal safety began clearing undetonated mines in order to make a path to the wounded driver." He is also receiving another Soldier's medal for heroism for his actions on October 30, 1968, a Bronze Star and an Army Commendation Medal.



SFC Preston Mills of Colorado is receiving a Silver Star for gallantry for his actions on March 5, 1969. According to the Army citation, SFC Mills pushed back "multiple enemy attacks on (his element's) defensive position,

which was protecting an extraction landing zone for friendly helicopters. Sergeant First Class Mills repeatedly exposed himself to intense enemy fire in order to assist with the evacuation of his fellow Soldiers. Despite being injured multiple times, he refused medical treatment and continued to help direct incoming aircraft to the landing zone and load other Soldiers onto the helicopters." He is also receiving a Bronze Star.



SPC4 Robert Donoghue of Massachusetts is receiving a Silver Star for gallantry for is actions on October 3-4, 1968. According to the Army citation, SPC4 Donoghue, as part of a medical evacuation of wounded soldiers, "rappelled down from (his) helicopter to the wounded Soldiers. He tied a wounded Soldier to himself, and ignoring the heavy enemy fire, climbed the same rope he rappelled with, back to the aircraft. He then rappelled back into the firefight in order to lead the unit to a landing zone from which the wounded could be evacuated." He is also receiving a Bronze Star.



CW02 James Wittman (deceased) is receiving the Silver Star for gallantry for his actions on September 28, 1968. His son Matthew Wittman of Minnesota will be receiving the award on his father's behalf. According to the Army citation, CW02 Wittman "was assisting in the extraction of a reconnaissance team that was in danger of being overwhelmed by a large enemy force. He repeatedly placed his aircraft in a position to protect the extraction helicopter from the heavy automatic weapons fire, allowing other Soldiers to be successfully extracted." He is also receiving a Bronze Star.



SPC J.S. "Scott" De Arman of Arizona is receiving a Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism for his actions on September 28, 1968. According to the Army citation, SPC De Arman "placed the gunship as a physical barrier between the landing zone and devastating enemy fire. Without regard for his own personal safety, Specialist De Arman exposed himself to provide the covering fire. He continued to provide accurate covering fire, slowing the enemy advance. His suppressing fire allowed for the successful extraction of the special operations recon team." He is also receiving a Bronze Star.

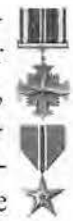

SPC Roger Lockshier of Connecticut is receiving a Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism for his actions on September 28, 1968. According to the Army citation, Specialist Lockshier was supporting the extraction of a reconnaissance team when he "exposed himself to provide covering fire. He continued to provide accurate covering fire, even after taking a hit to his flight helmet. His suppressing fire allowed for the successful extraction oft he special operations recon team. He kept firing upon the enemy, even after the helicopter was hit with an anti-aircraft round and began to crash. After the crash, Specialist Lockshier ignored his wounds and began destroying all sensitive material before establishing a perimeter and defending against the advancing enemy. His fire slowed the enemy, allowing crew members time to utilize extraction rings and escape." He is also receiving a Bronze Star.



(SGT Louis DeSeta KSV) of Delaware is receiving a Bronze Star for valor for his actions on June 6-7, 1968. Sergeant DeSeta was serving as the Assistant Leader of a Long Range Reconnaissance Team and displayed exemplary leadership by effectively directing his team during an intense firefight. He exposed himself to the enemy fire and successfully counter-attacked the enemy force. Sergeant DeSeta continued to engage the enemy, keeping them from reaching the team's extraction zone. His actions prevented a dire situation from deteriorating further." He is also receiving a Bronze Star with Oak Leaf cluster and an Army Commendation Medal.

The following soldiers are receiving Bronze Stars for their service as part of MACV-SOG. According to the Army citations, each soldier is receiving the Bronze Star for ensuring "that a multitude of critical special operations missions over the time period were executed effectively and efficiently."



WO Richard Chapman of Ft. Pierce, Florida
LT Vernon Ward of Mary Esther, Florida

SGT Raymond Frovarp of North Carolina *
SGT George Sternberg of Tennessee *
SFC Joseph Conlon of New Hampshire *
PFC Tony Herrell of Michigan
SGT Larry Payne of Missouri *
SFC Patrick Watkins of Utah *
(* Members of The Khe Sanh Veterans)



The following soldiers are receiving Army Commendation Medals for their service as part of MACV-SOG. According to the Army citations, each solider is receiving the Army Commendation Medal for "tactical and technical expertise (that) greatly contributed to the unit's mission success."

1LT Vernon Ward of Mary Esther, Florida
SGT Raymond Frovarp of North Carolina *
SGT George Sternberg of Tennessee *
SFC Joseph Conlon of New Hampshire *
PFC Tony Herrell of Michigan
SGT Larry Payne of Missouri *
SFC Patrick Watkins of Utah *
(* DENOTES MEMBER OF KHE SANH VETERANS)



On 22 May 2014, retired Special Forces Master Sergeant, and former Marine, Patrick N. Watkins, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, 46 years after his valorous actions. Put in for this prestigious award, second only to the Medal of Honor, for his extremely valorous actions while serving with MACVSOG, and during a massive NVA assault overrunning FOB-4, Da Nang in 1968, the paperwork for this award was lost. So viscous was the attack the night and early morning of 22-23 August, 1968, that 18 Special Forces warriors were killed in the attack and over 30 wounded, including Watkins.

The paperwork and time limit waiver legislation for his DSC was assembled by a group of fellow Veterans and with the assistance of Senator Nelson's office of Florida, the DSC was finally put through and presented to MSG Watkins.

In a spectacular ceremony carried out by the 7th SFG(A) at their compound at Eglin AFB Florida, near where MSG Watkins family resides, his actions were formally recognized and the DSC presented. The 7th SFG(A) graciously hosted MSG Watkins, Veterans of the action and MACVSOG, and friends and family, at the 7th Group Chapel. The 7th Group also conducted a tour for the Veterans and a pre-ceremony reception was hosted by their Family Readiness Group. After the ceremony, a post reception gathering was held with family, friends, and veterans at the Magnolia Grill in Fort Walton Beach.

MSG Watkins has spent a lifetime in service to his Nation. Born in Michigan in 1938, his mother and his aunt at an early age instilled a dedicated sense of duty in him which would carry through for the rest of his life and show in his deeds and actions. In High School, Pat played football, basketball, and ran. MSG Watkins found his excellence in running, but rather than accept a track scholarship in 1957, he chose to do his duty to his country and enlisted in the United States Marine Corp.

In the Marines, Pat Watkins was deployed to Lebanon with operation "Blue Bat", and then at Guantanamo Bay during the Cuban Missile Crisis, It was also in the Marines that MSG Watkins would meet his wife Carol, also a Marine. After Seven years in the Marine Corp, trying to figure out how to proceed with the rest of his life and working for his newlywed wife Carol's father, with a newborn daughter, Pat chose to do something he had always longed to do. He enlisted with the United States Army Special Forces, to don the Green Beret.

Initially though in the Army, Pat served with the 82nd Airborne with Operation "Power Pack" in the Dominican Republic, then later was accepted into Special Forces. By 1967, Pat Watkins had volunteered for the clandestine unit, MACV SOG, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, Studies and Observations Group. MACVSOG conducted ultra-classified cross-border operations into Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and North Vietnam, in addition to operations in South Vietnam. Casualties in this unit were extremely high, often exceeding 100% where every member was wounded at least once and still fighting. Never has a unit taken such massive casualties

as MACVSOG on a regular basis, and kept fighting, since the American Civil War. Of the 16 men Pat went to Vietnam with, only seven survived. Publicly MACVSOG operations were completely denied, and would remain secret until the mid-1990s. Unfortunately this led to many missing cases of proper recognition for the courage and bravery of the men of MACVSOG.

MSG Watkins courageously served three tours, 27 months, in Southeast Asia. He was awarded three Bronze Stars for Valor, two Bronze Stars for Merit, Two Purple Hearts, two Army Commendation Medals, and four Air Medals. Each of the Air Medals requiring 50 combat flights. Pat Watkins is very well noted for his exceptional skills as a "covey rider" and coordinating air to ground assets to keep his fellow warriors alive on the ground, as well as running and leading many cross-border ground operations himself.

Then Staff Sergeant Pat Watkins, on the night and early morning hours of 22-23 August, 1968, while at FOB-4, Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam, attending a NCO board, valiantly and courageously held off a surprise attack of highly trained North Vietnamese Sappers that had overrun the compound. He fought them courageously and sought out the wounded and those unable to defend themselves. At one point SSG Watkins, shielded a fellow wounded soldier from a grenade blast and with no regard to his own safety courageously engaged the attacking enemy with nothing more than his pistol. SFC Watkins rallied the men in the defense of FOB-4 to beat back and defeat their attackers. 18 Special Forces warriors were killed that night, but if not for the actions of SSG Watkins, the toll would have been severely greater.

MSG Watkins retired from the military in 1981. He spent his final years in the military teaching survival and land navigation skills to ROTC cadets at the University of Utah. From retirement he worked as equipment manager for the university Athletics, a technical writer for Hercules Company, and as a safety Manager for the Department of Veterans Affairs. MSG Watkins after many years of war and service to his Nation now peacefully resides in Utah.

CITATION

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Staff Sergeant Patrick N. Watkins, Jr., United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed enemy in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Command and Control North, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces. Staff Sergeant Watkins distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions in the early morning hours of 23August 1968, while at Headquarters, Command and Control North when the compound was attacked by a North Vietnamese Army sapper force in a well-coordinated assault. Despite being wounded in the initial assault, Staff Sergeant Watkins quickly organized a small reaction force to repel the attack and rescue wounded Americans while leading them to a defensive position through a gauntlet of machine gun fire and grenades. Staff Sergeant Watkins disregarded his own safety to direct the recovery of the many wounded men and repeatedly engaged and killed enemy sappers. Despite receiving several more wounds from grenade shrapnel, Staff Sergeant Watkins repeatedly repelled numerous sappers as he continued the search for the wounded. He refused medical aid and on one occasion fiercely charged an onrushing North Vietnamese Army sniper, killing him and preventing the sniper's continuing infliction of numerous friendly casualties. His actions inspired his men to greater heights to defeat the enemy and successfully defend the compound. Staff Sergeant Watkins' extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.















OBIT

JOSEPH P. AMODEO SR. USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, HOTEL CO 2/26



Joseph P. Amodeo Sr., age 66, passed away on Jan 25th at home in Newport, Oregon. Joe was predeceased by his parents, Adala and Ralph Sr. He was born Jan 13th, 1949, in Des Moines, graduating from St Anthony and Dowling High Schools. After high school, he enlisted in the US Marines and served two tours in Vietnam, most notably at the heroic and famous 1968 defense of our base at Khe Sanh. After military service, he resided in the Chicago, Il metro area, where he had a successful career in packaging industry marketing. Joe's legacy includes three fine sons, Joe Jr., Lou and Cody, all of Chicago. Also, he is survived by three brothers, Jim of Gainesville, VA, John, Ralph, Jr., and sister, Elaine Ragan, and spouses, all of Des Moines, plus many nieces, nephews and cousins. Joe leaves behind a nationwide contingent of friends and associates, notably many fellow Vietnam Marines.

WEB BRIEFS
March 30, 1968
By Ron Shouse
B Btry 1/13

It was close to sunup and there was still a little foggy. My crew was at the gun pit right near what was left of the ammo dump. I looked up and observed a group of grunts route stepping by us. They headed straight through the position toward what was left of the four holer and zig zagged out of the wire. They could not have been out of the wire more than 10 minutes and all HELL broke loose.

By this time the sun was up and we could observe what was going on. I could see our guys shooting like they were shooting at a rabbit. We inside the wire could tell they were in trouble. We had our rifles ready but were told not to fire because our guys were so close. Either the Gunny or an officer yelled at me and asked how low I could get my tube to help these guys out.

I ran back to my pit and could get an elevation of 60. They gave us a mission of HE, charge 1 or 2 at an elevation of 60, just enough to get it over the squad's head to try to get the gooks on the run. Then they increased the elevation so that we could keep them on the run. Do not remember how long we fired but in the middle of all of this, either the Gunny or the Lt came and told me to get my ####, my time was up and I was out of there. Everything is fuzzy until I got on the Chopper but I will never forget seeing these guys on the ground in one Hell of a fight just so I could get out of that place.

Every year on the 30th of March I always drink several shots of Jack Daniels and thank these guys for what they did for me. I still hold the Silver Star that was awarded to Wayne Morrison that day, he told me that he did not remember performing the actions they said he did. For that reason he did not want to keep it. I have attempted to leave it at the WALL several times. But the men who know him best, asked me to hang on to it. In case his family should want it at a later date. Semper Fi Bravo 1/26 and may God Bless .Ron Shouse

Semper Fi

I have read Ron's very moving recall account of March 30th. Now 47 years passed, one would think memories and emotions for all who experienced this horrific battle would fade, however as Ron's post clearly shows, as time passes those events have become vivid and painful recollections. In understandable circumstances faces and names have faded, but their gallantry and sacrifice will forever be remembered
Craig Tourte

Semper Fi to my Brother MARINES at Khe Sanh A Great post for sure. I will always remember and I will always care.
Tom Olson

Go get 'em, Bravo. Kick their asses!
Earl

I raise a glass with you for all the men in Bravo.
Terry Taylor

To all my Bravo friends...thinking of you today. God bless you all.
Dianne Jackson

OBIT

HN RUSSELL H. JACOBSON " DOC JAKE"
USN, KHE SANH VETERAN
1ST PLT ECHO CO 2/9



Russell Harold Jacobson, Jr., age 68, died on January 9, 2015 at home surrounded with his family. He was the devoted husband of Margaret Mary "Peg" (Johnson) Jacobson. Born in New London, CT on Nov. 7, 1946, he was a son of the late Russell H. and Marion A. (Odell) Jacobson. He was educated in CT and was a graduate of Norwich Free Academy, University of CT, Quinnipiac and Yale University. For most of his life Russell worked as a Pathologist, working at the University of Connecticut and later at Cape Cod Hospital in MA. He moved to Plymouth 10 years ago after residing in Avon CT for many years and more recently Harwich, MA. Russell enjoyed woodworking, archeology, boating and fishing. He was "Always in search of the big fish". He was an avid reader and was a history buff. He will always be remembered for his great sense of humor and quick wit. Besides leaving his wife "Peg" of 46 years, he was the loving father of Andrew and his wife Jackie of Simsbury, CT, Matthew and his wife Meri of New South Wales, Australia, and David and his wife Kristin of Plymouth. He was the beloved brother of Berlin, CT, Robert of Florence, SC, and Beth Champlain of Oakdale, CT. He was the cherished grandfather of Wyatt, Brody, Sam, Tilly, Elke, and Eli. A celebration of life took place on Sunday, Jan. 18th at the Plymouth Yacht Club.

ANNUAL CHICO CA MINI REUNION REMEMBERING START OF KHE SANH SIEGE 21 JAN 1968
By Craig Tourte

Another wonderful January 21, 2015 turnout to honor not only those who served at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh but also a special time to honor all who have and are currently serving and especially to remember those we lost. There were few speeches, no pseudo dignitaries of any significance, no special guests or self-congratulatory politicos. All were honored and we appreciated those in the local communities who took the time to come in and just say hello. Once again a special thanks to Tom Horchler, David Tonick, Steve Wiese, Marco Soto, Ken "Buzz" Sawyer, Daniel Ferguson, Bob Singleton and the many other on base Khe Sanh Veterans who paid their respects, sorry but I just can't list you all.

I know many others would have liked to have been able to join us but sometimes unforeseen circumstances and events do not allow attendance. We are grateful for the telephone call we received from Chuck Chamberlin and our condolences go out to him for the recent loss of his mother. I mentioned Tom Horchler already but he is the inspiration and driving force behind this event each year. I wanted to give a special thanks to Dianne Jackson who joined us after a difficult two hour drive by herself in the dense fog only to have to drive back home to start her 12 hour shift as a hospital nurse. Dianne delivered some home baked goods which we all enjoyed and so much appreciated. Dianne continues to be a devoted member of our Khe Sanh family and there are just insufficient words to descript our appreciation of her support.







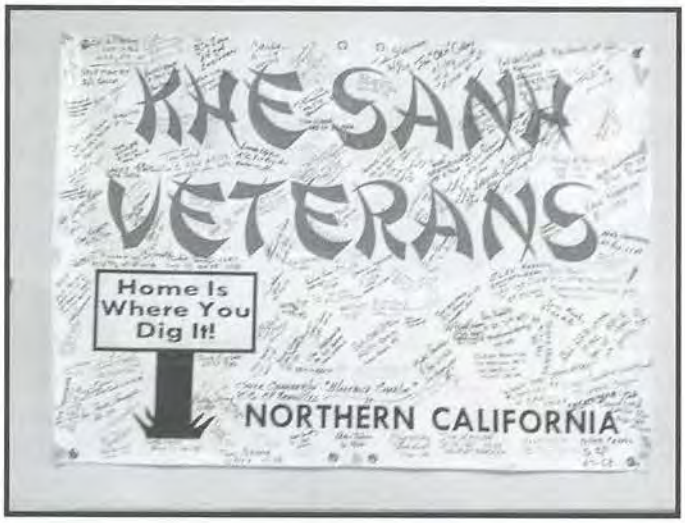





OK STEVIE BOY WE DID NOT FORGET OUR COUSINS BRING YOUR CLUBS TO SAVANNAH

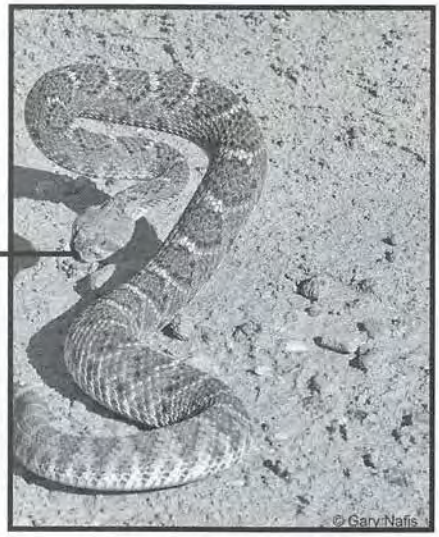

LONG OVERDUE RECOGNITION FOR GREEN BERET

Mission Hill Gazette
December 14,2012
By Maurice "Mossy" Martin

On Aug. 23, 1968, Mission Hill's Joe Conlon, a Green Beret assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group, was stationed at headquarters at Marble Mountain in the Republic of Vietnam. Shortly after midnight, Conlon heard several explosions and realized the enemy was inside the compound. A first lieutenant lay on the floor, injured by a grenade. Conlon jumped on the lieutenant to protect him and moved him to safety. Conlon and SFG member Patrick Watkins secured the entrance, but they were wounded by another grenade.

Conlon, although bleeding and with debris from a collapsed ceiling on him, fearlessly carried a badly wounded soldier through enemy snipers. Conlon eventually found a Navy corpsman who was driving a jeep and transporting the wounded to the dispensary. Conlon returned to headquarters several times, moving more injured soldiers to medical treatment. He did this while exchanging gunfire with the enemy.

Seventeen American soldiers lost their lives on that dark day, and many more were wounded. Because of Conlon's gallant actions, countless more American casualties were prevented.

For his devotion and bravery, Staff Sgt. Joe Conlon was awarded the Silver Star Medal at a ceremony on Oct. 25, 2012 at the Orleans Hotel in Las Vegas. The 5th Special Forces Group was highly secretive, and after the Vietnam War, paperwork was lost, hence the long delay in the award. The 5th Special Forces Group did receive a Presidential Unit Citation in 2003.

Conlon graduated from Mission High School in May of 1960. Four days later, he was in Parris Island, having joined the Marines. Joe served for 24 years in military service. After retiring from the military, Joe worked for General Electric in Lynn. He has a lovely daughter, Christine Shoemaker, who I enjoyed conversing with a Joe's celebration party Nov. 10 at McGarvey's Tavern in Manchester, N.H., where Joe resides.

Joe, incidentally, was a fierce defensive end on Mission High's football team who played in the epic 22-18 upset win against Matignon High at Matignon in 1959. Matignon had two future NFL players, including quarterback Jack Concannon. The game ended with a Matignon ball carrier attempting to cross the goal line, only to be tackled by Richie O'Neill and Dougie Blades at the 1-yard line.

Mission's quarterback in that memorable game was Mike Mangiacotti, a brilliant signal-caller. The coach of that team was Tom "Bubba" Clarke, a 1953 Mission High graduate who later was an All-American running back at Northeastern University.

AWARDEE HONORS OTHERS WITH PARTY

By Shawne K. Wickham
New Hampshire Sunday News 11 Nov 2012

A pint of beer and a shot of whiskey sat untouched at McGarvey's Saloon. Nearby stood a photo of a tall, handsome American surrounded by South Vietnamese soldiers, and a Silver Star rested in a velvet case.

Joseph Conlon, a Vietnam War veteran of the Army's 5th Special Forces Group, threw himself a party Saturday. And for a few hours, there was no better place to be on this Veterans Day weekend.

An Irish balladeer was singing, and American flags and red, white and blue balloons adorned the tables. A stream of friends poured in to congratulate Conlon on receiving the Silver Star, long overdue. As Conlon's daughter, Chris Shoemaker of Shirley, Mass., hugged her father, he told her, "I wish your mom was here, and your grandma." "They are, in spirit," she replied.

The citation accompanying Conlon's Silver Star describes his "gallantry in action" at a forward operating base in Danang on Aug. 23 and 24, 1968.

The base came under attack that first night, and one of his comrades was injured in the initial assault. "Staff Sgt. Conlon immediately adminis-

tered first aid and shielded him with his own body as an explosion and fireball blasted out from a nearby building," it reads.

After stabilizing his badly injured comrade, Conlon prevented the attacking forces from getting inside, then "exposed himself to direct enemy fire as he fought his way outside to rescue soldiers while delivering highly accurate fire on the enemy." The fight continued into the next morning. The citation notes that Conlon's actions "saved countless lives."

The injured soldier that night was a medic named Jim Scurry, Conlon said in an interview, "He was defenseless. I wasn't," he said, tears coming to his eyes. "I wasn't going to let them hurt him anymore, so I jumped on his body."

For a very long time, Conlon said, Special Forces veterans didn't receive medals or other recognition; it was the nature of the work they did. "We had to sign security documents," he explained. "I didn't exist." Back then, he reminded, "there were no Americans in Laos or Cambodia."

His unit was called a "studies and observation group," he said with a wry grin. "We were 'studying and observing' in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam. That's what we did." In 2000, 25 years after the war ended, Conlon's unit received a Presidential Unit Citation from the Army. The individual medals have followed, slowly.

Conlon took the microphone from singer Marty Quirk to thank his friends for coming to celebrate with him. His hair is white now, and he's gained a few pounds compared with that young soldier in the photo, but the 70-year-old's spine was straight as he donned his dark-blue dress uniform jacket, glittering with medals.

Conlon told his friends the medals soldiers receive are not their own. "We just keep track of them. I have mine framed, I hang them up on my walls, and I remember who was with me that night." "We lost 17 United States Army Special Forces soldiers that night," he said, struggling to maintain his composure.
He motioned to the untouched glasses of spirits on the counter. "That's why that's there," he said. "That's their drink."

Some of Conlon's closest friends were on hand for the occasion, including Bill Blankenburg of Townsend, Mass., another Special Operations veteran, and Donna and Paul Silver of Raymond, both Vietnam vets. John O'Keefe, who owns the bar with Bob Scribner, said when Conlon asked him about having the party there, he told him, "I'll throw a bash for you like you've never seen."

Every year, Conlon attends a reunion of the Special Operations Association. That's where he catches up with former members of his unit, including Jim Scurry, the medic who survived that long-ago night assault. At this year's event, held last month in Las Vegas, he was presented his Silver Star.

But it's a long-standing tradition to celebrate afterward at a bar, Conlon noted. And he wanted his celebration to be here in Manchester.

"These are all my friends," he said, looking around fondly. "These are the people that care about me."



Former Green Beret Joe Conlon (Right) celebrates his Silver Star Medal Honor with Mission Hill native Army Lt Col George Rollins at his Manchester, NH party.

DAYS ON MARBLE MOUNTAIN AN ACCOUNT OF SPECIAL FORCES HEROISM 21-26 AUGUST, 1968, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

By Neil R. Thorne, MACVSOG
Historical Researcher

On August 21st, 1968, Military Assistance Command Vietnam-Studies and Observations Group (MACVSOG), Spike Team Rattler, was assigned to occupy a listening and observation post on the side of the steep and rocky Marble Mountain overlooking the Special Forces and Marine compounds around Forward Operating Base 4 (FOB-4), Republic of Vietnam. Spike Team (ST) Rattler consisted of two American Special Forces Sergeants, a "One-zero" team leader and "One-one" squad leader Staff Sergeant (SSG) Larry Trimble, with seven Chinese ethnic Nung mercenaries.

ST Rattler stealth fully made its' way up the surreal environment that was Marble mountain, amongst the Buddhist shrines, vast cave networks, and areas known to be infested with enemy snipers. Ascending the steep and rocky mountain the first day, no enemy forces were detected. Ropes were required to make the ascent to the observation post located among the rocks and cliffs overlooking FOB-4 and the South China Sea.

Reaching their assigned post, ST Rattler set up a perimeter and began the mission of enemy detection. From the mountain, ST Rattler overlooked the entire area covering two US Marine outposts below, their own Special Forces compound, and a Marine Amphibious Unit stationed near the South China Sea. The first night and following day were eerily quiet of enemy activity, with none detecting or suspecting the gathering forces of elite North Vietnamese Army Sappers and Vietcong deep inside the Marble Mountain caves below.

The NVA had not overlooked ST Rattler. Enemy forces were soon attempting to ascend the ropes to their observation post. Hearing gunfire from the Nungs guarding the perimeter, SSG Trimble relinquished the radio to his fellow American "one-zero" and rushed to organize the repulse of the assaulting enemy force. While dropping grenades and delivering accurate fire to repel the enemy, a Nung mercenary alerted SSG Trimble to a nearby enemy mortar position firing on the Special Forces FOB-4 Compound. SSG Trimble with precise accuracy used a grenade launcher to silence the enemy mortar that was killing his friends in the Special Forces compound below. Flares were requested and launched over the mountain the remainder of the night to observe for additional enemy positions and personnel.

In the morning light, ST Rattler could see the devastation wrought on the FOB-4 compound below. 18 American Special Forces warriors and over 80 allied indigenous mercenaries were killed that night, with scores more wounded. Though the battle at the compound had ended along with the single deadliest attack on US Special Forces in history, it was far from over for ST Rattler on Marble Mountain, surrounded by an enemy licking its' wounds and regrouping for a second attack. Special Forces Staff Sergeant Patrick N. Watkins, Distinguished Service Cross recipient of the combat at FOB-4, said of SSG Trimble's actions, "Larry was an outstanding Special Forces Soldier and Recon Warrior.

The catastrophic loss of Special Forces personnel that night would have been far worse if not for Staff Sergeant Trimble eliminating the enemy mortar on Marble Mountain." Special Forces Staff Sergeant Joe Conlon, Silver Star recipient of that night's actions at the FOB-4 Compound stated, "Larry kept those mortars from putting effective fire on our camps position. Knocking out those mortars impeded the enemy's intent of destroying our camp and the neighboring US Marine positions."

ST Rattler continued to engage the enemy from inside their own staging area of Marble Mountain. Descending from their post, SSG Trimble and several of the Nung spotted an enemy patrol and gave chase. SSG Trimble led an aggressive assault to take out a second enemy 82mm mortar and capture enemy equipment and documents, as his fellow American "one-zero" gave cover fire from the observation post above.

Ascending back to the post and immediately notifying FOB-4 of their actions and captures, a helicopter was sent to retrieve the enemy equipment and documents. The American "one-zero" team leader boarded the chopper with the enemy property as it hovered and took heavy fire. This left SSG Trimble the only American on the ground and now the acting team leader of ST Rattler in the field. It was determined at FOB-4 that the documents SSG Trimble had captured contained detailed plans of a second attack on the Marine Amphibious Unit, which were thereby thwarted.

Still surrounded on the mountain, the Nung mercenaries decided to leave. Their interpreter informed SSG Trimble of their intent to sneak through the enemy and back to the compound. SSG Trimble refused to abandon his post and the Nung left him alone on the mountain. Soon after the Nung descent, a firefight erupted and they came running back, SSG Trimble gladly accepted their return and new-found agreement to defend the observation post.

ST Rattler was surrounded with no hope of ground escape and the enemy fire was too intense for helicopter extraction. SSG Trimble led the successful repulse of two more NVA attempts to overrun ST Rattler's position that night. One of the Nungs was severely wounded in the enemy assaults and SSG Trimble saved his life by stopping his severe bleeding. Gunships were called to assist in the enemy repulse and fire was brought down danger-close to ST Rattler's position. So close was the fire, the team was peppered by shrapnel, flying rocks, and debris.

By the morning of 24 August, as the team was reorganizing, a relief helicopter was sent to drop supplies to the small beleaguered force. A fellow American Special Forces warrior accompanied the helicopter and attempting to leap onto the ground to assist, was injured beyond ability to walk by the rocky terrain. A Special Forces Hatchet Platoon was dispatched to attempt a breakout of the surrounded ST Rattler but had to retreat after taking casualties from the determined enemy force still holding the mountain. That night a quiet returned.

The next morning, a helicopter was sent for the wounded American and Nungs, it received no fire, and no enemy were spotted. The NVA and Vietcong had dissipated back into the mountains and vegetation as fast as they had come. SSG Trimble and the remnants of RT Rattler held on for another day to ensure the enemy force was gone. On 26 August 1968 SSG Trimble and ST Rattler were uneventfully extracted by helicopter, leaving as quietly as they had arrived.

For six days SSG Trimble and ST Rattler held in the repulse of a vastly superior and completely surrounding enemy force. He was personally responsible for silencing deadly enemy mortars, thereby saving countless lives in the battle below his observation post. When all gave up, SSG Trimble continued to hold his post and engage the enemy.

SSG Trimble in his expert medical training, saved the life of one of his severely wounded men. He expertly guided close air support onto the surrounding foe, further leading to the enemy defeat. SSG Trimble's aggressive and fearless assault of the enemy was responsible for the capture of documents that saved lives by preventing the overrun of the US Marine Amphibious Unit stationed by the South China Sea. For these actions Army SSG Trimble would be awarded the Army Commendation Medal with Valor and treated to a celebration for him and ST Rattler by the United States Marine Corp, an uncommon cross-branch honor. SSG Trimble in his courage, actions, and dedication to duty is a true credit to his Nation, the United States Army, and Special Forces. SSG Trimble would continue to serve his Nation and Military, retiring after 21 years of service.



KSV MEMBER SEEKS HELP IN BUILDING A MEMORIAL TO A KSV MARINE & MEMBERS OF 1/9 WHO WERE KIA ON HILL 64 AT KHE SANH 1968

Tom, My name is Bob Williams My uncle Jerry C. Burkhead was a Marine attached to Alpha Company,1st Battalion Ninth Marines. Junius Jones and Velma Clyde Burkhead's youngest of 12 children was Jerry Clark Burkhead. Jerry was born and raised in Lee Mont, Virginia and graduated from Parksley High School in 1966 on the Eastern Shore.

Rhett Burkhead is only one year younger than his Uncle Jerry Burkhead because Rhett's dad is Jerry's oldest brother, Junius Edwin Burkhead. Rhett and Jerry grew up together, graduated at Parksley High School together, and Rhett remembers his Uncle Jerry well; "He was awesome. Everybody loved him." Soon after graduation Jerry volunteered to join the United States Marine Corps to fight for his country in the Vietnam War.

Cpl Jerry Burkhead was an M-60 machine-gun team leader in Alpha Company 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment in I Corps, the Republic of Vietnam .The men of 1/9, the Walking Dead", were rapidly moved from Camp Evans and flown in by helicopter to the Khe Sanh Combat Base, on 22 January, 68. Their mission was to protect the southern perimeter of the 26th Marines at the KSCB.

The 1st Platoon of A CO 1/9 (reinforced) was assigned a forward defensive position called the Alpha-l outpost. Alpha-l outpost was a small hill nicknamed Hill 64, not due to its elevation rather because of the sixty-two Marines, including Jerry, and two (2) Navy Corpsmen, dug-in at Hill 64 in a defensive position.

Alpha-l outpost elevation. Hill 64 dimensions were 60 meters long by 40 meters wide by 20 meters in height. In other words, Hill 64 was shaped like a football with a perimeter of concertina wire and mines connected by integrated and concentric trenches with bunkers throughout all dug deep and lined with sand bags.

Hill 64 was manned by 64 brave warriors from the youth of America, quite a distance from any friendly forces, and located 600 meters west of the perimeter of 1/9 and a mile from the KSCB.

The North Vietnamese Army was moving past Hill 64 for the attack at the KSCB. They had several Divisions in the immediate area, or staged nearby. The NVA had been ferociously attacking other nearby bases, camps, and hills almost every day for a week prior to the attack on Hill 64, to completely isolate the KSCB.

At 4:15 a.m. on the foggy morning of 08 Feb 68, the battle for Hill 64 began with a barrage of mortars, recoilless rifles, satchel charges, RPG's, automatic weapons, and a determined multi-pronged assault by a reinforced battalion from the lOlD Regiment, 325C NVA Division against the "Walking Dead" platoon on Hill 64. The enemy simultaneously fired hundreds of mortar shells against the perimeter of Alpha Company 1/9 in an attempt to further isolate Hill 64.

The overwhelming attack on the waiting 1st Platoon of A Company 1/9 reinforced Marines on Hill 64 was an example of some of the most brutal combat of the Vietnam War. These tenacious foes were locked in savage trench warfare, often hand-to-hand combat.

The 1st Platoon of Marines from A CO 1/9 (reinforced) held against a numerically superior force on Hill 64. Captain "MAC" Radcliffe bravely led twenty volunteers from the 2nd Platoon A CO 1/9 to relieve his brave Marines on Hill 64, and systematically cleared the Hill.

Cpl Jerry Clark Burkhead was 21 years old as he and his Brother Marines fought for each other, Hill 64, A CO 1/9, the "Walking Dead", the KSCB, I Corps, the RVN, and America with nearly 100% casualties. Sadly, 28 brave Americans were killed in action that foggy morning on 08 Feb 68, during the Battle for Hill 64.

The Battle for Hill 64 was the last all-out attack by the NVA on the KSCB American and Allied Forces during the 77 day siege of the KSCB. All KSCB

veterans from 20 January to April 1 1968 received the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action against the numerically superior NVA forces. Devotion to duty by A CO 1/9 Marines was exemplified during the Battle of Hill 64 08 Feb 68.

ALLEN, PFC Kenneth Jeffrey	A 1/13
ANTRIM, SGT Tommy Edward	A 1/13
AYERS, LCPL Leslie Steven	A 1/13
BARRETT, HN Michael Barry	H&S 1/9
BURKHEAD, CPL Jerry Clark	A l/I9
CLEMSON, PFC Gerald Richard	A l//9
COLEGATE, PFC William Karl	A l//9
CRAIG, PFC Thomas R Jr.	A l//9
CUNNINGHAM, PFC Bruce Edward	C/1/26
DALTON, PFC Bill Norman	A l/13
DICKIE, PVT Guy Douglas	A l/9
DUNLAP, PVT Darrell Edward	I/3/26
FEATHERSTONE, PFC Richard H.	A/3d SP Bn
FORDHAM, PFC Kenneth Charles	A l/9
GLASPER, LCPL William Lawrence	A l/9
HANDLEY, CPL Anthony William	H&S1/9
JACKSON, PFC Leonard Jr.	A l/9
LAPHAM, MAJ Robert Granthan	14 ACW
LEWER, CPL Thomas Charles	A l/9
McDANIEL, CPL Roy Dean	A l/9
McKINLEY, PVT Allen	A l/9
McKINNEY, SSGT Bernard B Jr.	A l/9
MORDEN, PFC Robert Nelson	A l//9
MURPHY, PFC Patrick Michael	A l/9
PEMBLETON, PFC Ronald Lee	A l/9
PONDOFF, PFC John Christopher	A l/9
RIZZO, LCPL James Patrick	A l/9
ROACH, 2Lt Terence Raymond	A l/9
ROUNTREE, LCPL Ronald Corbin	A l/9
SCOTT, LCPL James Frank	A l/9
SKUZA, LCPL Arvid Burdeen	A l/9
SMITH, PFC John Archer	I/3/26
STEWART, PFC Tommy Lane	A l/9
TORRES, CPL Manuel Prieto	A l/9
WALSH, LCPL Jeffrey Michael	A l/9
YORK, CPL Henry	A l/9





LEATHERNECK MAGAZINE 1967



MSgt F. King and MGen J.O. Butcher greeted Julius Foster at Camp Lejeune after he walked 404 miles to re-enlist.

MARINE "WHO WALKED FOR WAR" DIES IN BATTLE
February 28, 1968

Raleigh, NC (AP) A young Marine who walked 404 miles in 30 days to attract support for the United States Marines effort in Vietnam, has been killed in the fighting there.

The Marine, Lance Corporal Julius C. (Corky) Foster, 28, walked from his home at Welch, West Virginia, to Camp Lejeune last summer with a 40 pound pack on his back.

A Marine reservist, Foster was going to Lejeune to re-enlist for active duty in hope of being re-assigned to Vietnam.

He said he decided to take the hike to "emphasize the effort being made by other Americans. I hope to register the intent of the American people to win the war-not to talk about it or buy it-but to win it."

Word of Foster's death came from Captain Richard Titus, the Marine officer who swore in Foster at Raleigh after he completed his walk to Lejeune.

VIETNAM: MY EXPERIENCE STARS & STRIPES FEB 15, 2015

MGYSGT EDWARD EVANS USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, HQ BN 2/26, G-3

I arrived at the Khe Sanh combat base on Feb. 3, 1968, on a CH-46, the guest of Maj. Gen. Rathvon McClure Tompkins of the 3rd Marine Division, headquartered at Dong Ha in I Corps. I was the Team Chief of a III MAF G-3 group doing classified historical documentary work under orders. Tompkins' trip to Khe Sanh was my first opportunity to get in there, as every aircraft that landed there brought a rain of mortar and artillery fire to the already embattled base and its inhabitants of the 26th Marine Regiment.

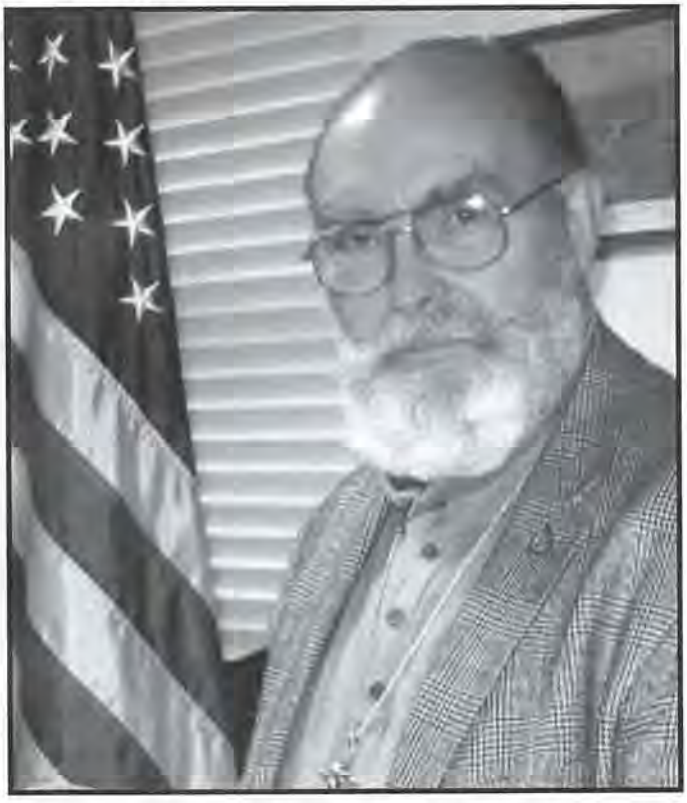

MGYSGT EDWARD M. EVANS "FAST EDDIE"

When the '46 landed, the general was the first off and there to greet him on the Marston matting was David Douglas Duncan. Even in the crashing "krump" of incoming mortars, they stood there talking and shaking hands. I nearly ran them down as I exited the aircraft looking for a hole. I was not alone!

Duncan was accompanied by base commander Col. David E. Lownds. When we came out of our holes, Tompkins, Lownds and Duncan had moved on to the Command Operations Center and I never saw Duncan again.

Years later, I learned Duncan remembered that moment. I had contacted him about a copy of his book, "I Protest," which I couldn't find anywhere. I'd given my copy away and I was on my way to a Khe Sanh Veterans Association Reunion in Chicago, and I had promised to find a copy for a buddy there. Duncan wrote me that he remembered that encounter at Khe Sanh, and sent me five boxes of "I Protest," gratis, to be shared at the reunion.

The book was precious to me because it contained photos of the fiery destruction of the only C-130 the Marine Corps lost in Vietnam. And aboard that aircraft on Feb. 2, 1968, was a Marine who meant a great deal to my wife and me, Staff Sgt. George Wilcox Walbridge. George had been in country only a few days or he would have known better than to get on an aircraft carrying six bladders of aviation gas into besieged Khe Sanh Combat Base. The C-130 was also carrying two pallets of emergency resupply.

When the ill-fated C-130 came in for a landing it was hit by enemy ground fire, bullets going through the bladders of aviation gas and splashing onto electrical equipment that set the C-130 ablaze. Pilot CWO-4 Henry Wildfang, a legend in Marine Corps aviation, managed to bring the flaming plane into a landing, which allowed five of the 10 aboard to survive. George wasn't among them.

Anyone who has seen Duncan's book of photos, "I Protest" has to be impressed with the documented efforts of the Marines in the crash crew, still under fire, attempting to knock down the fire and get Marines out of those flames.

Later, friends told me George was intent on reaching Khe Sanh because he had heard that I and another buddy, Gunnery Sgt. Chuck McCormick, were

attempting to get in there. Chuck was there and saw the crash. I got there a day later, and he told me of George's death in the charred skeleton of the aircraft. Killed with him that day were Lance Cpl. Daniel Ralf Devik, Staff Sgt. William Leo Brown, Staff Sgt. Glen Henry Calvin, Master Sgt. John D'Adama Jr. and Col. Carl Elving Peterson.

While George was only three months senior to me in age, he had a "16" serial number and one year more in the Corps than my nine years. But George was also one of those guys the Company Gunny loves, a slick talker, knows everyone and can find a way to "get" anything.

He was far more than any of that to me and my wife, however. While attending the Navy's Journalism School at Great Lakes Naval Training Center in 1964, George had introduced me to the most gorgeous brunette WAVE in the class. The younger sailors in the class had "locked up" all the other WAVES with dates far beyond the class graduation date. I was having enough trouble keeping up with the rules of journalism and operation of the old black box — the Speed Graphic camera — and figured she wouldn't be interested in this hardcore Marine, anyway. I didn't count on George inviting me to a drive-in movie with him and his WAVE girl friend.

I declined his invitation, not wanting to be a "third wheel" on their date, but he reminded me I owed him for a favor, so I accepted. When his car pulled up in front of the Marine Barracks, with him and his girlfriend in front, there was my future wife sitting in the back. The rest is history. Forty-eight years, five grown children, 11 grandchildren and two great -grandchildren later, she's still gorgeous.

To this day I've never been able to find out where George is buried. In 1967 I had dinner with his Marine wife and him at Camp Pendleton before I shipped out to Vietnam duty. It was a pleasant dinner in their home with a great reprise of memories George and I shared. But when George left the room for a moment, she fixed me with a stare like a bayonet, came closer and quietly informed me that several of George's friends had come through the Combat Correspondent School there at Camp Pend-



As described by Edward M. Evans: "A photo of the crew of Marine photojournalists and combat correspondents at our bunker alongside the runway at Khe Sanh Combat Base. Left to right, back row, are Jim Brown and Chuck McCormick; left to right, front row, are Phil Hartranft, Ed Evans, and John Wachter."



At a landing pad at Freedom Hill, Danang, South Vietnam, June 1970: Stony Merriman, Ed Evans, and John Wold. Stony and John were attached to the First Marine Division Public Affairs Office, Freedom Hill, and I am there on assignment for Leatherneck Magazine. We are about to fly up to the Khe Sanh Combat Base where the Army is involved in clean-up operations. I am just out of Charlie Med with a boot full of blood after having been wounded in the left leg."

leton run by Master Sgt. Walt Stewart, but even though George kept requesting to go to Vietnam, the Marine Corps wouldn't let him. "Don't you make him feel bad about that," she ordered.

Feeling as I did about George, and under that wifely glare, the only sensible answer, as I heard George coming back, was "Yes, Ma'am!"

Much later after George's death, I could find no one who knew what happened to her, or where she had gone. I have to admit it was a while before I could begin looking for his grave site, or her. Upon returning I was a bit messed up, especially after the second tour in Vietnam and a minor wound.

Since Duncan could not have known how much his book, and his kindness, meant to me, I felt compelled to write him a personal thank-you note, and tell him the story of Staff Sgt. George Wilcox Walbridge.

NEWS FROM THE WEB

By Larry McCartney

After the article posted to the Khe Sanh Veterans Message Board that appeared in the Winter 2015 edition of Red Clay, I received telephone calls and E-Mails asking for clarification on the criteria for a valid claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Since several were interested I thought more of you would want to know. So here is some information that you may find helpful.

There are three (3) criteria that must be met to substantiate a claim with the VA for service connection for; 1) injuries, 2) illnesses/diseases and 3) conditions, which were incurred while serving in the United States Armed Forces:

1.Evidence an 1) injury, 2) illness/disease, and/or 3) condition occurred while serving in the United States Armed Forces, or, if a preexisting condition, that the condition was fully disclosed upon entry into the United States Armed Forces and the injury/illness/disease/condition was exacerbated (VA terminology, means made worse) by military service;

2. Evidence the veteran has a current condition, supported by a medical diagnosis. Due to the Veterans Claims Assistance Act of 2000 (VCAA) most veterans who file an original claim for disability compensation do not need to obtain a medical diagnosis on their own. The VA is generally obligated to provide veterans with a medical examination to diagnose the current medical condition and there are only a few legitimate reasons for which the VA may refuse to schedule a VA medical examination;

3. A medical nexus connecting the military service incurred; 1) injury, 2) illness/disease, and/or 3) condition with the current diagnosed condition;

Examples:

1) Injury:

a) Loss of limb;
b) Gunshot/Shrapnel wound;
c) Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)—Previously called: i) Closed head injury; ii) Concussion;

2) Illness/Disease:

a) Cancer;
i) Agent Orange presumptive;
ii) Any others;
b) Malaria;
c) Hepatitis C;
d) Hypertension;

3) Condition:

a) Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD);
b) Tinnitus—Ringing in the Ears;

The questions arise because some are confused about having an illness service-connected for Agent Orange exposure when that illness is not on the list of illnesses that are presumed to be due to Agent Orange exposure.

Please understand, the list of presumptive diseases the VA connects to Agent Orange exposure are those diseases where the nexus to military service has already been sufficiently proven by medical professionals, so the VA automatically accepts the condition is the result of military service. You do not have to prove the nexus. This is different from diseases where the VA does not automatically accept the nexus, in which case you are responsible for proving the disease is the result of military ser-

vice. If you can prove it, using acceptable medical evidence, then the disease can be service connected.

As for the diseases that the VA recognizes are due to Agent Orange exposure, the following information was taken directly from the VA Web Site at: **http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/index.asp;**

The VA assumes certain diseases can be related to a Veteran's qualifying military service. We call these 'presumptive diseases.' The VA has recognized certain cancers and other health problems as presumptive diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during military service. Veterans and their survivors may be eligible for benefits for these diseases.

1. AL Amyloidosis: A rare disease caused when an abnormal protein, amyloid, enters tissues or organs;

2. Chronic B-Cell Leukemias: A type of cancer which affects white blood cells;

3. Chloracne (or similar Acneform Disease): A skin condition that occurs soon after exposure to chemicals and looks like common forms of acne seen in teenagers. Under VA's rating regulations, it must be at least ten (10) percent disabling within one (1) year of exposure to herbicides;

4. Diabetes Mellitus Type 2: A disease characterized by high blood sugar levels resulting from the body's inability to respond properly to the hormone insulin;

5. Hodgkin's Disease: A malignant lymphoma (cancer) characterized by progressive enlargement of the lymph nodes, liver and spleen and by progressive anemia;

6. Ischemic Heart Disease: A disease characterized by a reduced supply of blood to the heart that leads to chest pain;

7. Multiple Myeloma: A cancer of plasma cells, a type of white blood cell in bone marrow;

8. Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma: A group of cancers that affect the lymph glands and other lymphatic tissue;

9. Parkinson's Disease: A progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects muscle movement;

10. Peripheral Neuropathy—Early-Onset: A nervous system condition that causes numbness, tingling, and motor weakness. Under the VA's rating regulations, it must be at least ten (10) percent disabling within one (1) year of herbicide exposure;

11. Porphyria Cutanea Tarda: A disorder characterized by liver dysfunction and by thinning and blistering of the skin in sun-exposed areas. Under the VA's rating regulations, it must be at least ten (10) percent disabling within one (1) year of exposure to herbicides;

12. Prostate Cancer: One (1) of the most common cancers among men;

13. Respiratory Cancers: Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus;

14. Soft Tissue Sarcomas (other than Osteosarcoma, Chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's Sarcoma, or Mesothelioma): A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues—See more At: http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/index.asp#sthash.RQYMbFql.dpuf;

Children with Birth Defects:

The VA presumes certain birth defects in children of Vietnam and Korea Veterans are associated with Veterans' qualifying military service:

See more At:

http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/idnex.asp#sthash.1rJBd6Xt.dpuf;

http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/birth-defects/index.asp#sthash.UiVdmDop.dpuf;

• **Spina bifida** (except Spina Bifida Occulta): A defect in the developing fetus that results in incomplete closing of the spine, is associated with Veterans' exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides during qualifying service in Vietnam or Korea.

Birth defects in children of women Veterans is associated with their military service in Vietnam, but are not related to herbicide exposure. The affected child must have been conceived after the Veteran entered Vietnam or the Korean demilitarized zone during the qualifying service period.

See more At:

http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/birth-defects/index.asp#sthash.UiVdmDop.dpuf;

IN TRIBUTE

by Craig W. Tourte

This is a very difficult time of year for most Khe Sanh Veterans. The start of the Siege, the loss suffered by Bravo Company, the Revenge Patrol, the attacks and defenses on the hills, the gallant fight by the 9th Marines at the rock quarry, the historic struggle for Lang Vei and the countless battles, skirmishes and horrific losses and wounded that now defines the meaning of Khe Sanh. We all take a moment at this time of year to remember those we fought alongside and those we lost in battle. It doesn't take much to set me off on a melancholy tearful journey back in time and a painful remembrance of loss. Sometimes it is just a song, or theme from a movie that causes tears to flow. "Adagio for Strings" from the movie "Platoon" for some reason has always caused me pensive sadness and reflection

I attended a dinner accompanied by entertainment a couple of weeks ago which was set up on a long table with chairs on each side. I didn't know the two ladies sitting across from me but since it was a military sponsored event I was quite certain they had some connection to the Armed Forces. The Master of Ceremonies was dressed in white shoes, pants and jacket, he told the crowd he was not a Veteran however his father had served. He had perfect hair and sung all the songs in a high sweet voice. He reminded me of a ship cruise director.

As expected he had those who had served in various wars and military services stand to be recognized as he sang each service song. He then asked those who wanted to remember someone in the service to stand. One of the ladies across from me stood at what I would call attention. I noted she appeared to be in her early 70's, she had short grey hair and a dark sweater but what I notice most is that she stood ramrod straight for about 10 minutes, never wavering . There was just something about her that stood out to me and I could not take my eyes off of her. Her female companion then told me that her husband had been a Navy pilot who had flown from an aircraft carrier and had been lost during the Vietnam War in October 1968. It was clear the woman was remembering the continued love she still carried for her husband and her standing demonstrated her respect for his sacrifice and loss.

I did so want to say a few words to her, to say something to let her know how much I appreciated her sacrifice and how her husband's efforts were so important to Khe Sanh Veterans and that Vietnam Veterans continue to morn the loss of those who did not come home. I had planned to say these things but I was not able to say them. You see the last song of the evening was "I'm proud to be an American" by Lee Greenwood. I approached her after the crowd sang this last song but with tears now streaming down my face I was only able to smile and shake her hand and mumble something I don't now remember. Even so, it was a moving moment for me and I'll forever remember this elderly lady standing so tall, proud and respectful in tribute to a loved one she lost so long ago.

FROM THE WEB
By Dave Doehrman
B CO 3RD RECON

I was looking for a restoration project and ran across this Kaiser Jeep M715 that was built in November 0f 1967 and sent to the USMC in Viet Nam. I have paperwork on the vehicle appraisal that says it was in Viet Nam, but I want to do some research and verify that The truck is a 5/4 ton ammo/cargo hauler. It originally came with a 6 cylinder overhead cam engine that was not too reliable. The previous owner has his own auto repair business and he purchased and built up a 355 cubic inch 4 bolt

Chevy engine. He installed headers, performance ignition, Edlebrock carb and air intake, an aluminum full flow radiator with electric fan and installed a custom dual exhaust system.

The truck has Dana 60 front axles and Dana 70 rear axle with 5.87 gear ratio. It has a 4 speed transmission with a two speed transfer case. The truck has an 8" suspension lift. The body, cab and canvas top are all original. The original 24 volt electrical system has been converted to 12 volts.

The truck operates and drives like new. There is some rust on the rocker panels and the bottom of one door. The camo paint job isn't too great so I want to repair the body and repaint the whole truck

I have 8 foot doors in my workshop and this beast clears the door opening with less than an inch of clearance. I took it out and plowed my way through some 2-3 foot snow drifts and it barely slipped the wheels. Once I get the restoration done I want to drive it in the local parades and maybe take it down to the Kokomo Vietnam Veterans reunion in September. Just thought I'd share this at the start of the project. I'll keep a complete photo record of the whole process and I might post them if anyone is interested.



Dave...that looks like a good project. It seems in much better shape than most of the surplus we would get our hands on for fire department use. Have fun with it.

Larry Larsen

FROM THE WEB: STREET TO BE NAMED AFTER KHE SANH VETERAN KIA

By Craig Tourte
HQ BTRY 1/13

I was contacted by Anthony Buccino; an author who lives in Belleville N.J. Mr. Buccino is one of the driving forces of the Belleville "Sons of Honor Roll" which lists those Killed In Action from Belleville and includes the name of Donald Baron Saunders. Mr. Buccino told me.... "Recently the township committed to adding Donald's name to the street where he lived. I'm not sure of the logistics but was told that it would be done in warmer weather and they are going to try to honor all of Belleville's sons who perished in the service." Mr. Buccino provided the following from the local Belleville council bulletin:

February 19, 2015
From the North Jersey. Com breaking news..."The council additionally approved a resolution to dedicate High Street in honor of former Belleville resident Donald Baron Saunders, who died on March 4, 1968 while serving the United States in the Vietnam War.

According to www.bellevillesons.com, Saunders enlisted with the United States Marine Corps and volunteered to go to Vietnam. A graduate of Belleville High School, and member of its Big Ten champion cross-country team, he died while defending the Marine Corps combat base of Khe Sanh during a siege that lasted over two months. He was 20 years old."

A Place of Honor and Remembrance In the Home of the Brave
Belleville, New Jersey
These young men of Belleville, New Jersey, paid with their lives to prove "freedom is not free."
Our intent is to honor their sacrifice and preserve the memory of those Belleville sons who died in service to our country.

VIETNAM WAR

December 31, 1960 - May 7, 1975

Lt. Col. Alfred Barnes, 41, killed in Vietnam on May 12, 1969.

Captain William Branch, 28, killed in Vietnam on June 6, 1970.

Corp. Frank A. Cancelliere, 20, killed in Vietnam on March 15, 1969

Roger Crowell, 20, killed in action in Vietnam on Jan. 31, 1968.

Helder DaSilva, 24, killed in action in Vietnam on Feb. 7, 1966

Raymond DeLuca, 20, killed in action in Vietnam on June 27, 1968.

Lance Cpl. Jerry Richard Donatiello, 22, killed in action in Vietnam on Nov. 20, 1967.

John Hoar, 20, killed in action in Vietnam on Feb. 13, 1966.

Carl L. Mickens, 26, killed in action in Vietnam on July 4, 1970.

Cpl. Paul Nelson, 20, killed in action in Vietnam on May 31, 1969.

Donald Saunders, 20, killed in action in Vietnam on March 4, 1968.



"INCOMING"

By Robert "Skip" W. Unangst Jr.
India Co 3/26 3rd platoon

Here are some reflections and memories of that world that became a part of our day to day lives in that network of trenches and bunkers with surrounding hills and known collectively as Khe Sanh. For months this was our home; and as we all knew, it was where we could "dig it."

After returning to Khe Sanh from a twenty day convalescence gunshot wounds, I made my way from India Company's rear area to the eastern part of the trench around the air strip. I waited all day for a helicopter to take me back to India Company's forward area on 881S. No helicopter was able to make it the first day. I waited as these were very "hot" landing zones. At the end of that day, I went back to the Company rear. The next day, I returned to the trench to again wait for a helicopter to attempt to make it in and take us out to Hill 881S. During these periods of waiting, the base was frequently receiving incoming Soviet rockets, mortars, and artillery. We learned to live with this background noise and what it could suddenly mean.

I have two special memories of "incoming" during my two day wait in the Khe Sanh trench. The first was rockets heading for the base and Marines in the trench converging on this small bunker just off the trench. I don't know how many of us squeezed into that small volume of space, but for those who know what phone booths are, it was analogous to getting ten people in a phone booth.

The rocket exploded and after several seconds of silence loud thuds could be heard. One Marine said, "Don't worry, that's just others jumping into the trench." No it wasn't. It was masses of earth returning to earth. We all scurried from the bunker to see a steaming crater less than three meters from our bunker. My old M-79 man, Joe Ramierez, took out his camera and said, "Skip , take a picture of this." He gave me his camera and then he entered this four foot deep, six foot diameter steaming crater, and laid down with his feet crossed and his arms behind his head as if he were on a beach. He put on a big smile and I took the picture. Joe, I

hope you still have that picture.

The second memory from the trench around the air strip is of that fateful C-130 that took an incoming hit just as it was landing. I remember watching the plane approach and touch down. I thought it was coming in a little tilted with respect to the axis of the runway. I think it was receiving fire as it made its approach. I believe it was an incoming mortar that made a direct hit on the top of the fuselage. It simply turned it into an inferno.

This reminded me of an earlier time back at Khe Sanh. It August of 1967 and we were back at the base after completing a company size patrol that took most of a week. India company's perimeter made up part of the northern section of the base perimeter. We were at the northern end of the air strip. Perhaps a hundred meters beyond the air strip was a stand of large trees. It was dusk and a small reconnaissance/spotter plane was taking off.

You could hear it more than see it. As several of us, which included Lance Corporals Gary Travatello, Richard Harvel, and others were standing around talking, I said, "He better get up." Just then the plane hit the tops of the trees, and you could hear the strange sounds of the motor going quiet and the plane tumbling down through the branches. At about the time it hit the ground it burst into flames and illuminated the trees in the area. A good number of us rushed to the area. The ones who got there first said they could hear screaming, but like those trying to rescue the crew of the C-130, there was nothing you could do.

On the second day of waiting at the Khe Sanh airstrip, a UH 34 helicopter was able to approach and hover long enough for a few of us to jump on and be on our way before the mortars hit. We were on our way to Hill 881S. I was returning after twenty something days. On revisiting The Hill, I was amazed at how much deeper and wider the trenches had been dug. The width was increased to allow a stretcher to pass, and every sixty or so feet were sandbag baffles so placed that a direct hit in the trench would not take all those in that section of the trench.

The crest of Hill 881S was more like a small ridge line with two high points. The slightly higher point was the apex of India Company's perimeter. The slightly lower point was the apex for a reinforced platoon from Mike Company. India Company, which was also reinforced, had the larger perimeter. The two perimeters were separated by a distance of perhaps sixty feet. This area was a geographic saddle between the two high points. The population of Marines on this hill would fluctuate around 200. This was a function of the dead and the wounded that would be evacuated from time to time and those who would subsequently arrive. All of this was a function of incoming.

As I remember it, we could count on two H&I incoming mortars every hour when it was light. Of course an approaching helicopter was a whole other story. At least one Helicopter carcass on our perimeter was a testament to this. The routine mortars almost always came in a pair. From the time they made that soft distant soda can pop top pop as they left the tube, we had twenty seven seconds until boom. Twenty seven seconds to do little more than prey that they would not find time. Twenty seven seconds to pass the word, Incoming."

60mm mortars have 15 meter killing radiuses and much greater casualty radiuses. 81mm and 82mm mortars have 25 meter killing radiuses and, I believe, 50 meter casualty radiuses. India Company's perimeter had an average radius of no more than 50 meters, and Mike Company's reinforced platoon's radius was smaller than ours. This is why we lived in bunkers and trenches. These twenty seven seconds would produce what some religions might consider to be a "come to Jesus moment." For several months this setting would daily produce many such moments.

The land in front of the perimeter sloped downward and was barren dirt for about 25 meters. There, concertina wire and claymore mines took over. This distant outpost of the Khe Sanh combat base was surrounded by similar hills. A few, like Hill 861 and others, were also manned by Marine infantry. However, all of us were surrounded by tens of thousands of North Vietnamese soldiers. Perhaps two weeks after returning to the hill, in the

middle of the day, we heard two NVA mortars leave the tube. Peeking above the trench with my elbows on the trench, I looked through a pair of binoculars hoping to catch a trace of where they might have been fired from. This was something we all did if we happened to have the binoculars. After all, we had twenty six seconds to look.

The round hit directly behind me on third platoons command bunker. I think the force of the explosion, although not enough to breech the bunker roof, was enough to set off a smoke or a CS grenade, or something similar, because white smoke came billowing out of the bunker and into the short trench that connected the bunker to the perimeter trench. Shortly after the smoke began billowing out, a big husky Marine from Hawaii named Montoya (I hope I am spelling it right) came staggering out of the bunker and into the now quiet mist surrounding him. With a distant stare at other hilltops he said," I am in heaven, I am in heaven." I remember grabbing him and saying, " No, you are still on Hill 881." I think a tear then came to his eye.

The other memory from that incoming was of finding a piece of shrapnel in the back bottom part of my helmet liner. The steel pot had a bb sized whole in the same area. I was treated by Doc Steinberg for minor cuts but two years later the VA would show me an X-Ray with two pieces of shrapnel in my left elbow.

There is one memory of "incoming" that stands out among the rest. It was of a sunny day in late February or in early March. I was standing in third platoon's trench in a place where one could look down and over to Mike Company's trench. A steep ravine separated the lines at this point. Looking at the other perimeter, I saw three Marines talking and laughing. They were in the access trench that connected their bunker with their perimeter trench. I thought how wonderful was this scene of joy. In the middle of this apocalyptic landscape, these three were able to stare death in the face and find it in themselves laugh. Seeing and hearing it just made you feel good in a land where feeling good was hard to find.

The flash was in the center of the dust cloud that instantaneously consumed them. In the center of all of that there was a short moan. A trench, a meter and a half wide, met an incoming mortar with a 15 or a 25 meter killing radius, I'm not sure what was left to send home. Years later, at an art show in the Central Park Bird House, I saw a painting by Austin Deuel. He was a Marine Corps artist and attached to the Marines that first took Hill 881S in May of 1967. The painting shows the combat ravaged crest of the hill and evidence of dismembered Marines. He presciently entitled the painting, "Even God Is Against Us."

In a fashion this experience would continue upon "corning home" where many Viet Nam veterans were treated as pariahs on college campuses unless they claimed involvement in atrocities that never happened. This was another commonality we had with our POWs and the conditions their communist captors placed on them. Although it could have been heard on countless other campuses and although ROTC may have returned by now, I clearly remember the student ranting at Hofstra University in 1982, "At least we got rid of that ROT- C."

IMPORTANCE OF RED CLAY

Craig W. Tourte

The Importance of 'Red Clay"

While flying to the Khe Sanh Reunion in Nashville (2013) I engaged in conversation with the lady sitting next to me. I was wearing a Khe Sanh shirt so there was an opening for conversation. I learned that Ms. Kolodi was a school teacher and Councilwomen in Delran, N.J. who taught a class on the Vietnam War, which of course we discussed in length. Before we departed the airplane I presented Ms. Kolodi with a Khe Sanh Challenge Coin and a recent edition of Red Clay magazine.

When I returned home from the reunion I had the Documentary, "Bravo, Common Men, Uncommon Valor" sent to Ms. Klodi for use in her Vietnam War class and purchased a Red Clay subscription so that she would have additional historical and relevant class material. A few days ago (2/3/15) I received a letter from Ms. Kolodi again thanking me for the documentary and the Red Clay magazines.

Her letter reads in part, "....thank you for the Fall Issue 83 edition of Red Clay....I appreciate you sending me these books (magazines). This one is especially interesting because of the story of Robert Lee Sevell (pg 16). He grew up in Clark, N.J, and today my sister and her family live in Clark. The world is truly small, we went to the same grammar school. Since we met on the airplane over two years ago a few things have changed. I retired teaching after 36 year....but because I still love teaching I have started an adult night school class at Delron High School and am teaching the Vietnam course to adults. Believe it or not out of all the classes offered - from computer to cooking - Vietnam was the most popular. So we still remember all of your efforts so many years ago and my adult class, like my high school students, have a homework assignment for life - when they meet a Vietnam Veteran say thank you and welcome home...." Attached is the article regarding our meeting on the airplane flight to Nashville

August 25, 2013 While flying from California to Nashville, David Tonick and I were joined in our row of seats by retired school teacher and current town Councilwoman Patty Kolodi of Delran, New Jersey. Observing our Khe Sanh shirts naturally the subject of Vietnam came up in the conversation. We learned that Ms. Kolodi created a course in the 1980's covering the Vietnam War and that the course is sill being taught throughout South Jersey, where teachers from neighborhood districts ask for copies of the curriculum and veterans are invited to the classes to address the students. We also learned that Ms. Kolodi still teaches the class to adult students. It was interesting to hear that Ms. Kolodi had been a volunteer with Operation Smile which took her on 5 missions to Vietnam as an International Health Care Volunteer. Ms. Kolodi seemed interested to learn about Khe Sanh and our Association. I provided Ms. Kolodi with the copy of the Fall Winter "Red Clay" magazine, issue 81, for her edification and enjoyment.

I obtained Ms. Kolodi address just before we departed the airplane. When I returned home after the reunion I sent Ms. Kolodi a Khe Sanh Challenge Coin, a printed history of the "Battle of Khe Sanh" and a copy of the documentary film "Bravo! Common Men, Uncommon Valor" of which I had purchased 3 from the reunion PX.

A few days later I received a nice letter from Ms. Kolodi thanking me. The letter stated the following: "Thank you for sending me the information on Khe Sanh. I received it yesterday and a few days later I received a nice letter from Ms. Kolodi thanking me. The letter stated the following: "Thank you for sending me the information on Khe Sanh. I received it yesterday and am looking forward to watching the video "Bravo." Thank you also for the Khe Sanh coin - I am honored. I promise you this information will be used by the high school students to give them a better understanding of the Vietnam War. I hope you had a wonderful time at your reunion. Please give Dave my best. It was a pleasure and a real learning experience meeting both of you on the plane. Thank you again for all the information on Khe Sanh. But thank you most of all for serving our country in difficult times. Welcome Home, Sincerely Patty Kolodi."

When I travel I always try to take a few extra copies of our "Red Clay" magazines and coins along with me, for just such an encounter. It is through the education of others that the heroics, lives and remembrances of so many others will live on and hopefully their sacrifice will not be forgotten.

OBIT

FRANK E. WALTERS
USA, KHE SANH VETERAN, 588TH SIGNAL COMPANY, 83rd SIGNAL BATTALION, 1st SIGNAL BRIGADE

Frank E. Walters, 71, of Phillipsburg, N.J. passed away surrounded by his loving family on December 31, 2014 at the Brakeley Park Center in Lopatcong Twp., N.J. Born March 29, 1943 in Raubsville, PA, he was the son of the late Harry Walters Sr. and June Allen Wyant. Mr. Walters was a graduate of Easton High School, class of 1963. He was a 4-year varsity letterman in baseball, and was a member of the 1962 District XI championship team. Mr. Walters also served in the US Army during the Vietnam War from 1968 to 1969 with the 588 Signal Company, 1st Signal Brigade in Quang Tri Province as a



combat engineer. He served in four campaigns, which included participation at the Battle of Khe Sanh during the Tet Offensive. When Frank left the Army in 1975 he had attained the rank of E-7. His combat decorations included an Army Accommodation Medal with V device, the Bronze Star, and Soldiers Medal.

He was an employee of the Phillipsburg School District and worked at the Freeman School. Frank was a member of St. Philip & St. James Catholic Church, the Knights of Columbus, was a life member of the Vietnam Veterans Association, life member of the VFW, member of the Bernadine-May American Legion Post and a member of the Khe Sahn Veterans. Survivors are his wife, Mary Procita Walters, and children; Jeffrey E. Walters and wife Amy, of Pohatcong Twp., Gina Fey and husband Bernie Jr., of Phillipsburg and Jennifer Walters, also of Phillipsburg. Grandchildren are Emily Schreiner, Justin Mitman, Jillian Mitman, Abigail and Allyson Fey and Madison Walters. Mr. Walters is survived by a brother, Harry Walters Jr., a stepbrother Bob Piparata and he was predeceased by a brother, Roger Allen. Funeral services will be held on Monday at 9:15 AM at the Finegan Funeral Home, 302 Heckman Street in Phillipsburg followed by a Funeral Mass at 10:00 AM at St. Philip & St. James Catholic Church, 430 S. Main Street, Phillipsburg. Calling hours will be held at the funeral home on Sunday from 5-7 PM. The interment will be in Palmer Township. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Miracle League of Northampton County, 4100 Green Pond Road, Easton, PA 18045

OBIT

THOMAS E. FRALEY, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, ALPHA COMPANY 1ST BATTALION, 26TH MARINE REGIMENT

Thomas E. Fraley, 68, of 42 Buchanan Hollow, passed away Tuesday (Jan. 7, 2014) at Bradford Regional Medical Center, surrounded by his loving family. Born Sept. 6, 1945, in Bradford, he was the

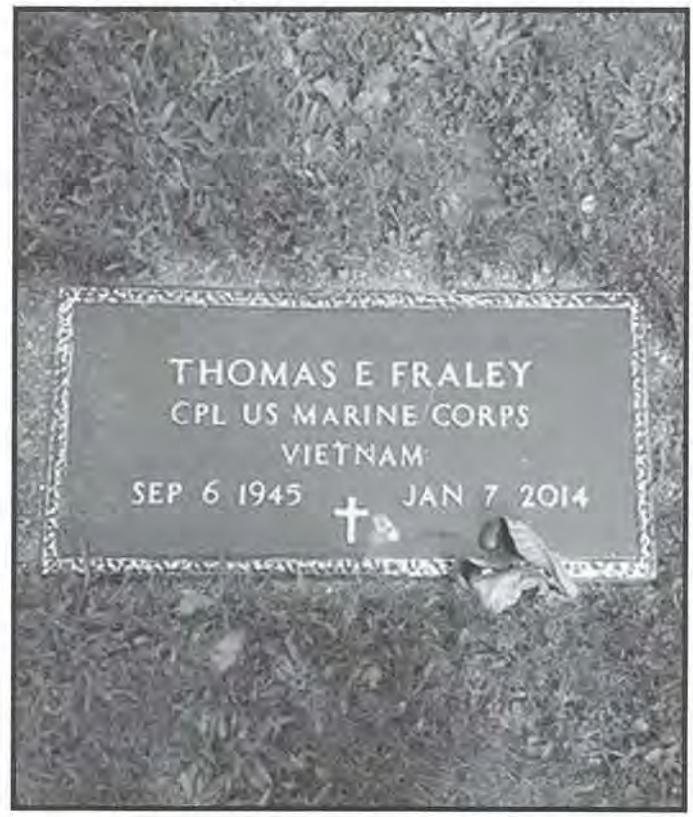

son of the late Jack Fraley and Kathleen Cottillion Levis. He married Connie Cocherell Fraley, who survives. Mr. Fraley was a 1962 graduate of Bradford High School. On Oct. 1, 1965, he enlisted in the U.S. Marines. He served during the Vietnam War and at the battle of Khe Sanh. He was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Letter of Commendation, Vietnam Service Medal with 2 Stars, Vietnam Campaign Medal with device, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

He was honorably discharged on Sept. 30, 1969 as a corporal. He had been employed at W.R. Case and Sons Cutlery Co. for more than 30 years. He was a member of the Disabled American Veterans, American Legion and VFW. He enjoyed hunting and fishing and his two bulldogs were the love of his life.In addition to his wife, he survived by one daughter, Brenda Wooten of Tulsa, Okla.; four sons, Mark (Sonia) Havers of Eldred, Shane Fraley of Bradford, Jeremy Gault of Fort Leonard Wood, Miss., and Joshua Gault of Shreveport, La.; 10 grandchildren; and eight great-grand children. Family will be receiving friends from 1 to 2 p.m. Friday in the Hollenbeck-Cahill Funeral Homes Inc., 33 South Ave., at which time funeral services will be held with the Rev. Raymond Gramata, pastor of St. Bernard Church, officiating. Military honors and committal services will follow in Willow Dale Cemetery. Memorials, if desired, may be made to the McKean County SPCA, P.O. Box 113, Bradford, PA 16701.

WELCOME HOME
A 47-YEAR WAIT IS OVER FOR A SOUTH WEST ARKANSAS FAMILY

The remains of a local soldier who disappeared during the Vietnam War have now been identified. Sergeant James William Holt was listed as "missing in action" (MIA) for nearly five decades but that will soon change after the discovery of his remains in Vietnam. "I have worn this bracelet ever since he came up missing" says Sgt. Holt's brother George Holt.

It has long been a tradition to proudly wear the bracelet of soldiers listed as MIA but for George Holt of Guernsey, Arkansas, he is glad to remove his bracelet. "His daughter will receive this bracelet in Washington, D.C." says George Holt.

Sgt. James Holt was listed as MIA on February 7, 1968 in Vietnam. Sgt. Holt was a medic assigned to Company C, 5th Special Forces Group. Last month, his family was notified the remains were recovered and positively identified as Sgt. Holt. "It is a relief yes sir when we finally put the remains in the casket and in the ground" says George Holt. Family members of the soldier say only 12 people survived that attack when the enemy used tanks in battle for the first time.

Sgt. Holt is one of eight soldiers listed as MIA on the Korea Vietnam memorial in Texarkana. The Texarkana chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America Plan to further honor Sgt. Holt at a special memorial service on February 7, exactly 47 years from the date of his death. "So his family can get some closure and us too because he is kind of a brother to us although I have never met him. We care about him and his family" says Gregory Beck, President of the Texarkana Chapter of Vietnam Veterans.

Shortly after midnight on February 7, 1968, a combined NVA infantry-tank assault drove into Lang Vei. Two PT-76 tanks threatened the outer perimeter of the camp as infantry rushed behind them. SFC James W. Holt destroyed both tanks with shots from his 106mm recoilless rifle. More tanks came around the burning hulks of the first two tanks and began to roll over the 104th CIDG Company's defensive positions. SSgt. Peter Tiroch, the assistant intelligence sergeant, ran over to Holt's position and helped load the weapon. Holt quickly lined up a third tank in his sights and destroyed it with a direct hit. After a second shot at the tank, Holt and Tiroch left the weapons pit just before it was demolished by return cannon fire. Tiroch watched Holt run over to the ammunition bunker to look for some hand-held Light Anti-tank Weapons (LAWs). It was the last time Holt was ever seen.



FEBRUARY 5th, 2015
WELCOME HOME SERGEANT HOLT



The volleys of a rifle salute and the forlorn strains of Taps concluded a memorial service conducted here Saturday to welcome home Master Sergeant James Holt, of Hope, after 47 years Missing in Action in Vietnam.

By Ken McLemore, Hope Star Editor

The volleys of a rifle salute and the forlorn strains of Taps concluded a memorial service conducted here Saturday to welcome home Master Sergeant James Holt, of Hope, after 47 years Missing in Action in Vietnam.

More than 200 people gathered in the WPA Gymnasium at the state park for the service conducted by the Vietnam Veterans of America, No. 278, of Texarkana, to honor the memory of one of the heroes of the Battle of Lang Vei and to give the Holt family the recognition of a grateful nation.

"Only two individuals have ever died for you," Chaplain Charles Jones told the assembly, "Jesus Christ, who died for your soul; and the American Soldier, who died for your freedom."

Jones' remarks invoking the tenor of the service were vividly illustrated in the reading of the names of the military personnel from Arkansas who remain MIA from the Vietnam War and the remembrance of all other Arkansans who gave the last full measure for their country.

M/Sgt. Holt's story was the Battle of Lang Vei on Feb. 6-8, 1968, as recounted by Vietnam veteran Don Ruggles, of Hope.

As officially documented, Holt served in the medical unit of Company C, Fifth Special Forces Group, at Lang Vei, which was housed on the west end of the U.S. compound adjacent to the dispensary. On the evening of Feb. 6, 1968, three armored columns supporting a North Vietnamese infantry assault attacked the Special Forces Camp.

Holt dodged enemy fire to cross the compound and treat fallen American soldiers, then took up a position with a recoilless rifle and returned fire upon the advancing NVA and Russian tanks, drawing both tank cannon and machine gun fire concentration on his position and away from other American soldiers.

According to the accounts of the investigation into his action against the assault, Holt delivered return fire against the attackers, disabling two tanks before he ran out of ammunition. He was last seen charging a third tank with a light anti-tank weapon, destroying the tank before others lost sight of him.

George Holt, of Hope, older brother of M/Sgt. Holt, representing the Holt family, was presented with an American flag which draped a table in the front of the assembly, representing the missing casket typically covered in such fashion. Holt also received the collection of MIA bracelets worn by individuals from across the country for the past 47 years in recognition of his brother's sacrifice and MIA status.

M/Sgt. Holt's sister, Mary Spigner, of Nashville, and her husband, Bill, were also recognized. She and George Holt are the last surviving of seven siblings, of which M/Sgt. Holt was the youngest.

"I'm so happy," Mrs. Spigner said after the service. "I couldn't believe how much trouble our veterans went to for this. My brother would be beside him



George Holt, of Hope, older brother of Master Sgt. James W. Holt, is presented an American flag in memory of his brother's service and sacrifice at the Battle of Lang Vei, Vietnam, 47 years to the day after MSgt. Holt became "missing in action." The Vietnam Veterans of America, No. 278, of Texarkana, also presented the Holt family with metal MIA bracelets which Americans from across the country have worn for the past 47 years in honor of MSgt. Holt. -- Ken McLemore/Hope Star .

self. And, my mother, every morning she would get up and she would say, 'If I only knew what happened to Jim. ' She would be so thrilled."

The POW/MIA Table ceremony was read by Billy Walker, a World War II veteran and former POW, commemorating the empty place of honor for those who have yet to be returned home.

Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Herbert Jack Lloyd, recounted how he was entirely coincidentally involved in the Battle of Lang Vei.

"Today is the same day, the same day, that Sergeant Holt gave his life; and, here we are," Gen. Lloyd noted. "By chance, by chance, I was a young sergeant with the 68th Paratroopers who was part of the rescue element that went to Lang Vei. We landed in a zone that was about eight miles east of the base at Lang Vei; at a dirt strip and walked to the Marine base at Khe Sanh. We got there late in the afternoon; spent the night there, and the next morning, we moved out in a half-moon to Lang Vei to come down from the north."

Lloyd recalled that the battle was over and it was evident the American position had been overrun.

"There were bodies all over, even though the North Vietnamese went to great lengths to try to remove all of the dead, because they didn't want the Americans to determine how many had been killed," he said.

Lloyd said that Holt, whom he had never known, was representative of the fighting spirit of the American soldier, who understands that his post is at the gates of freedom.

"When it comes down to living and dying, you're American; and, you want somebody American behind you," Lloyd said. "The call sign in Vietnam was 'Americans on the ground; everybody come.' It didn't matter who you were: Army, Marines, Air Force, Navy, everybody came."

Lloyd took a moment to assure the Holt family that, although M/Sgt. Holt was posthumously advanced in rank to master sergeant and awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart, efforts are being made to upgrade M/Sgt. Holt's award to the Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest military honor awarded U. S. soldiers.

"We're going to make it happen," Lloyd said.

M/Sgt. (Ret.) William Amelung, of Truman, among the numerous Vietnam War veterans in attendance, said after the service that Msgt. Holt's remains were discovered at the spot where the command center of the American Special Forces camp was located during the excavations of the Lang Vei area by the government of Vietnam for highway construction. Amelung said once remains were discovered in the area, the construction was stopped for further investigation.

M/Sgt. Holt will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington with military honors later this spring.



OBIT

CAREY W. MCGIFFIN, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, H&S CO 1/9, ATT TO DELTA CO 1/9 AS A SCOUT

On July 20, 2014, a generous soul left us after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Carey Wayne McGiffin, died peacefully in his home in St. Petersburg. Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he made St Petersburg his home in 1987. Carey's warm heart and generous nature touched many people during his time here with us.,

Carey's life was marked by service to his country. He was a United States Marine Corps veteran of Vietnam, where he earned a Bronze Star, Navy Achievement Medal, Combat Action Award, Purple Heart, and a Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. He later served in the United States Army Military Intelligence and Criminal Investigation before becoming a Federal agent with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. This service continued with his memberships and volunteer work in the Marine Corps League, American Legion Post 124 in Gulfport, FL, VFW Post 39, and the Vietnam Veterans and Khe Sanh Veteran's Associations.



After retiring from government service, he became a teacher and coach in the Pinellas County School System and later an adjunct instructor at St. Petersburg College.

Music was a vital part of Carey's life. An excellent singer, he participated in musical theater productions and choir at Slippery Rock State College, and continued to share his talent in community theatre and church choir throughout his life.

As a sports enthusiast, he valued his membership in the Gulfport Boomerangs Softball Team since 1987. He was very proud of his volunteer work at the Armed Forces History Museum in Largo, FL and can be found on the TV screen there being interviewed in the Vietnam War section. Always strong in his faith, he served as a leader in his church, First United Methodist Church in Gulfport, and was a valued member of the choir there.

Carey is survived by his beloved wife Barbara, daughter Shannon, Barbara's children, Jennifer, Jonathan, and Joseph, and six grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Friday, August 8th at 10:30 AM at the First United Methodist Church, 2728 53rd St. S., Gulfport.

OBIT

CORPORAL BILLY DREXEL, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, HILLS 861& 861A, ECHO COMPANY 2/26, MORTAR SECTION LEADER

Billy E. Drexel Jr., 67, beloved son, brother, uncle and friend, was welcomed into his heavenly home Thursday, Feb. 19, 2015. Billy was born May 9, 1947, in Fort Worth to Bill and Alice Drexel. After graduating from Lake Worth High School, he joined the Marine Corps and was deployed to Vietnam where he was injured at Khe Sanh in 1968. Billy

was a highly decorated Marine and an award-winning landscape designer. Billy will always be remembered for his kindness, generous nature, love of family and heart of gold. He was preceded in death by his father. Survivors: Mother, Alice M. Drexel; sisters, Cynthia Myers, Sherree' DeGroat.



Billy Drexel passed away on Feb 20, 2015. Billy was a Corporal assigned to E Co 2/26, as the 60mm Mortar Section Leader on Hill861A, Khe Sanh Vietnam. On 05 Feb 1968 two companies of the North Vietnamese Army launched an early morning attack on Echo Company Positions. One of Billy Drexel's Mortar position received a direct hit by an enemy mortar round.

Billy immediately brought up another Mortar , and began firing his mortar directly at the advancing enemy, without the use of a base plate. He fired hundreds of rounds directly at the enemy, killing several NVA. He also killed several more who attacked his mortar position. For his Heroic Actions Billy was awarded the Bronze Star with V for Valor.

A short time later, Echo Company moved up to Hill 861. During an enemy mortar barrage Billy again left a safe position to set up a mortar to return fire on the enemy position. He was than seriously injured by an incoming enemy mortar, losing both his legs.



This Photo appeared in David D. Duncan's book "I protest" Billy is standing with the soft cover to the right of myself as we examine the dead NVA, in front of our position. Mike Worth, another unsung hero, is standing just behind me.

A SMALL WORLD STORY

Craig W. Tourte

"Life's reality is that we cannot bounce back. We cannot bounce back because we cannot go back in time to the people we used to be...The nineteen - year-old Marine who sails for war is gone forever, even if he returns...what's done cannot be undone...and some of what life does to us is harsh." From the book "Resilience" by Eric Greitens.

I was having a conversation with my sister-in-law the other day. We don't normally discuss the Vietnam War, even to this day it brings up painful memories of her boyfriend "William (Buddy) Denman KIA 11/5/66." But we know many of the same people and she had gone to grade school with my cousin "Richard," - a pseudonym - me and Buddy. Buddy and I both volunteered for military service and Vietnam. I spoke to Buddy just before I went off to Marine Corps Boot Camp and he deployed to Vietnam serving in the Army. My cousin faked asthma and didn't enter the military. I realize not everyone is cut out to serve, during the draft years which ended in 1973, many were to frightened to serve, had legitimate health issues, were conscien-

tious objectors or just did not want to carry a rifle with the possibility of have to fire that weapon at another....I appreciate and understand those issues...then there were others like my cousin. Richard didn't go into the military because his priority was driving his new Corvette around town and partying with the girls. Now there is nothing wrong with that except someone took Richards place in the draft line. This is not an original opinion on my part, but rather was offered to me by a friend who was drafted and as a result of wounds has suffered terrible. Having volunteered I have no excuse for any issues I might have as the result of my service, but I can see how one who was drafted would have a particular dislike for those who avoided their responsibility to the point where someone else had to take their place in line, particularly if that other person was physically capable. To this day, my friend believes he took a draft dodgers place

The irony of it all is that my cousin the draft dodger, was killed in a single vehicle automobile accident just a few weeks before my tour was up in Vietnam while drunk and returning home from a party he crashed his new pickup truck into the side of a tree. Who knows, if he had gone into the military and had even served in Vietnam, he in all likelihood might have survived. But that is all water under the bridge a long time ago now...does it matter...I think to some it does....it certainly still matters to my friend who was drafted, can't sleep, is in great pain and has had nightmares for these forty odd years...he would have liked to have been able to stay behind, had a girlfriend, drove a new car, visited his parents...but he is not the same now...and he never will be. He knows like most of us....although we returned....we can never go back to the person we used to be.



VINDICATION AFTER A BATTLEFIELD ERROR AND PURPLE HEARTS LONG DENIED

MARCH 14, 2015 By C. J. CHIVERS



CHANDLER, Ariz. — Long after Dan Jones's last flight over Vietnam ended in wreckage and blood, his combat tour was never quite complete.

In 1968, Mr. Jones, a Marine first lieutenant, was co-piloting a helicopter carrying supplies to troops in battle when an American howitzer accidentally shot the aircraft down.

Three Marines were killed. Lieutenant Jones, the only survivor, was notified while convalescing that the deceased crew members, victims of an embarrassing mishap, would not be awarded Purple Heart medals, which recognize troops wounded or killed in action. He was instructed, he said, not to inquire further.

Forty-seven years on, Mr. Jones's determined journey — from silenced victim of a fratricidal mistake to a veteran vindicated by his insistence that his dead crew be honored — is reaching its end.

Last year, the Marine Corps reversed previous decisions and approved Purple Hearts for all the Marines who had been aboard the aircraft. A spokes-

man said the family of the one Marine who had not yet been formally recognized, a door gunner who was ejected from the crippled helicopter and fell to his death, would receive the medal as soon as his surviving family members set a date.

"The Purple Heart is absolutely an appropriate recognition of their courageous service and sacrifice to our nation," the spokesman, Maj. Rob Dolan, said of the crew members. "This is closing a tragic story from the Vietnam era."

The corps's about-face points to the continuing evolution in how the Pentagon determines who qualifies for one of the military's most emotionally resonant awards. Eligibility questions are often contentious, and rules have repeatedly changed.

During the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, for example, eligibility was expanded to include victims of a trauma that often does not leave visible wounds: brain injuries caused by explosive blasts.

And in an interview last month, Brad Carson, the under secretary for the Army, said the services were considering Purple Hearts for troops wounded while clearing improvised bombs made from old chemical weapons. This could result in honors for veterans of the Iraq war who were previously denied them.

That change, however, will cover a small number of veterans compared with the thousands presumably struck by American gunfire or ordnance in Southeast Asia, said Fred L. Borch, a retired Army colonel who is a historian of American medals and decorations and the author of "For Military Merit: Recipients of the Purple Heart."

For troops wounded by their colleagues in Vietnam, recognition has been difficult to obtain.

Mr. Jones, now 70 and living in Arizona, twice asked the Marine Corps to issue the medals, including in 1981 with the help of Senator Barry Goldwater. He was told that victims of so-called friendly fire were excluded from the honor.

The policy effectively prevented ceremonies that would have acknowledged grave battlefield errors. It also compelled Mr. Jones to abandon his efforts. "I dropped it," he said, "thinking there was pretty much no hope." For years he was plagued by sadness and guilt.



Dan Jones during a ceremony in which the Purple Heart was awarded to First Lt. Glenn J. Zamorski, his fellow crew member and one of three Marines killed in a helicopter crash in Vietnam. Credit

A change to the law in 1993 granted eligibility to those who had been wounded by American ordnance intended to cause an enemy harm. The law was amended, Mr. Borch said, after Congress became concerned that some victims of friendly fire in the 1991 Persian Gulf war had been awarded Purple Hearts but others had not. There had also been disagreement over the denial of the medal to an Army officer wounded in Panama in 1989.

"The genesis of the law was, 'We want uniformity,' " Mr. Borch said.

Few Vietnam-era cases have been opened, veterans said, in part because the change was not widely publicized but also because the Pentagon has not actively searched for all of the victims. The complicated work of marshaling evidence has largely been left to veterans and their families or friends — many of whom, including Mr. Jones, were not aware the rules had changed.

He learned of his crew's eligibility only after he and other veterans began pooling records and recollections in 2013. The chronicle they assembled was

one that many combat veterans would recognize; it told of a routine leg of a mission that instantly turned bad.

Early on June 11, 1968, the squadron of CH-46 helicopters in which Lieutenant Jones served had flown a ground force to a landing zone northwest of Danang. That afternoon, those Marines were in heavy fighting. Lieutenant Jones's aircraft was returning to provide supplies and take out the wounded and dead.



1ST LT DAN JONES

The aircraft had just picked up a cargo net loaded with what looked like water cans, he said, and was gaining altitude.

First Lt. Glenn J. Zamorski, Lieutenant Jones's friend since flight school, was in command. Sgt. Raymond W. Templeton was the crew chief. Cpl. Conrad Lerman tended a .50-caliber machine gun at the left-side door. He had just re-enlisted, and was due home in July to see his wife and infant son, his widow, Faye Kelley, said by telephone.



CPL CONRAD LERMAN

With Lieutenant Zamorski on the controls, Lieutenant Jones sat quietly in the left seat, enjoying a lull before reaching a dangerous landing zone.

"I relaxed and was sitting much as you would in an easy chair at home, with my arms resting on the edges of my armored seat and my feet flat on the cockpit floor," he wrote in a statement submitted to the Marine Corps.

As the helicopter climbed through 1,200 feet, he said, he heard an explosion. The aircraft nosed over, out of control. "The tail lifted up and to the right, continuing way past the 90-degree point," he wrote. "I would describe it as having



SGT. RAYMOND W. TEMPLETON

the motion of a football tumbling end over end."

The helicopter was falling. Lieutenant Jones jumped on the controls, but the rapid descent could not be checked. He heard no human sound as they plummeted, he said, save a scream behind him roughly halfway down. This, Mr. Jones said, was probably Corporal Lerman, who he later learned left the aircraft at about 500 feet, most likely after being ejected.

In the 10- or 12-second descent, Mr. Jones said, he first assumed the aircraft had suffered a mechanical failure, then accepted that he was about to die.



1ST LT GLENN J. ZAMORSKI

As the ground seemed to rush to meet him, he said, he had a vision of two Marine officers in dress uniforms walking up his sidewalk to notify his wife that he was gone. "The only emotion I felt," he wrote, "was anger."

The last sight he recalled was an emerald tuft of grass on white sand as the aircraft slammed to earth. His seat, with him attached, was thrown clear at impact. He ended up face down and unconscious near the wreckage. A Navy corpsman at a nearby firebase sprinted to the site, flipped him over, cleared his airway and saved his life. (The corpsman, Lloyd E. Colvin, had crossed a minefield; the Navy later awarded him the Bronze Star.)



The wreckage of the helicopter after an American howitzer accidentally shot down the aircraft on June 11, 1968.

Mr. Jones recalls briefly waking up. "The investigating officer told me that I tried to pull my pistol and shoot the Marines that were trying to rescue me," he said. Tallies of his wounds read like a dispatch from a morgue. He had fractures of the right collarbone, nine ribs and two vertebrae. His sternum was "split down the middle." His jaw, right wrist, right hip and right ankle were dislocated. His right knee was hyperextended. His left foot faced backward. Both of his thumbs were broken, as were two toes on his left foot. His face and body, he said, were a patchwork of cuts. "They used a whole lot of Band-Aids," he said, softly.

Grimmer news soon followed.

Capt. James T. Butler, another pilot from the squadron, investigated the crash and determined that a los-millimeter round had struck the helicopter's rear rotors. It had come from the firebase they crashed beside, where a howitzer battery had been "firing continuous rounds in support of heavily engaged Marines," according to an affidavit Mr. Butler wrote last year.

In a telephone interview, he said the projectile's impact with the rotors had instantly made the aircraft impossible to fly. Before submitting his official report in 1968, Mr. Butler said, he visited Lieutenant Jones on a hospital ship and shared the unvarnished news: His helicopter had been shot down by other Marines, and the rest of the crew was dead.

The information, Mr. Jones said, "just staggered me." Mr. Butler said he had then written his report honestly, attributing the crash to American fire, which became a basis for denying medals he believed his friends deserved.

"I could have written it a little different," he said. "But I had to write it as I found it." He added: "I always felt a little guilty that they did not receive their awards."

The turn of fortune came last year after George Ross, another fellow pilot from the squadron, submitted a bundle of documents to the Marine Corps.



John Zamorski, left, accepted the Purple Heart for his brother, a victim of so-called friendly fire who had long been excluded.

Mr. Jones had not been optimistic as the records were assembled. "I'm afraid they'll never get the award," he wrote in an email from the time. "I've been hauling around these letters and such for forty-some years. Perhaps I'll leave them to my grandson."

Several months later, Mr. Ross called him to

say the Purple Hearts were approved for the entire crew. As Mr. Jones described the conversation, his eyes welled with tears.

"My reaction to that call was pretty much the same as it is now," he said. "I cried. I was at a loss for words." "They were my buddies," he added. "I felt their deaths needed to be honored, and as the surviving crew member it was my responsibility to make sure that occurred."

Since that call, three of the four medals, including one for Mr. Jones, have been awarded. Only Corporal Lerman's medal remains.

Major Dolan said the Marine Corps hoped to honor the Lerman family's wishes and present the award at a family reunion this summer. The medal will be given, he said, to Gary Lerman, who as an infant in 1968 lost a father due home within weeks.

OBIT

JOHN "TOBY" HOFFLER SR.
USMC KHE SANH VETERAN
1ST MAW, H&MS-11 & VMCJ-1

John Toby Hoffler, Sr., 69, of Folkston, GA, passed away at his home July 8, 2014. He was born in Brooklyn, New York to the late Johnson Hoffler and Beatrice Johnson Hoffler. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge #34 in Portsmith, VA. He proudly served his county in the United States Marine Corps and the United States Navy. He was a member of the American Legion, the3 Vietnam Veterans Association and the Khegan Association. Along with his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother: David Hoffler. He is survived by his son: John Toby Hoffler, Jr.; 3-siblings: Micheal Hoffler, Zenola Hoffler and Patricia Hoffler-N'Gom.

OBIT

SGT MAJOR FRANKLIN D. JONES
USMC KHE SANH VETERAN
SNIPER 26TH MARINES

Sgt. Maj. Franklin D. Jones (ret), age 70, lost his courageous battle with cancer and the effects of Agent Orange at 2:15 AM on February 15, 2015. Although he lost his battle with cancer, he was victorious in life.

Frank was a dedicated family man and is survived by his beautiful wife Peggy, his daughters Pam, Tracy and Becki, sons Dave and Jacob, and nine grandchildren.



SGT MAJOR FRANKLIN D. JONES USMC

He served with honor and valor in The United States Marine Corps for 28 years. His distinguished military career includes fighting in one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the Vietnam war, the Battle of Khe Sanh where he was a Sniper with the 26th Marines. His military service and courage were commemorated with two Purple Hearts, The Cross of Gallantry with a Silver Star, and two Presidential Citations just to name a few. When he retired from The Marine Corps he was proud to protect and serve as a member of the Inglewood Police Department for a number of years.

Frank got sober January 7, 1981 and remained sober

for the rest of his life. He was a sponsor, mentor and friend to countless men and women who's lives will be forever changed by his steadfast influence and example.

He will be remembered for his quick wit, his love and commitment to friends and family, his love for our Country and his unique ability to inspire others to greatness. His leadership, loyalty and dedication to duty will live on in the lives of his family and friends forever. The life of Franklin Dennis Jones, husband, father, grandfather and friend was celebrated with a Memorial service March 1, 2015

WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY DESIGNATED BY SENATE FOR MARCH 30

In 1969, after a year of service to the U.S. Navy in Vietnam, Doug Vollmer returned home to a country that failed to differentiate between the war and the troops who served. "We just weren't welcomed home," said Vollmer, Paralyzed Veterans of America's Retired Associate Executive Director for Government Relations.

But in 2011 the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution to provide these veterans with the chance at a proper welcome. Recognizing the final withdrawal date of all combat and combat-support troops from Vietnam, March 30 honors these veterans by its designation as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day."

Senator Richard Burr, ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, introduced the resolution, calling it "a day to give our Vietnam veterans a warm, long-overdue welcome home." Indeed, many homecoming veterans were scorned, insulted and even spat on by vociferous anti-war activists.

"You don't see that kind of rhetoric about veterans returning from today's wars," Paralyzed Veterans' Retired Associate Director of Health Policy Fred Cowell said.

After two tours stationed in Vietnam and the Philippines as a naval petty-officer, Cowell had trouble adjusting to civilian life after nearly three years abroad. Attending college on the GI Bill, Cowell experienced the anti-war movement first-hand.

"There was a time when we were trying to sort out the value of the war and the position of many college students at the time," Cowell said, speaking of a group of veterans who congregated on campus. For many veterans, the construction and unveiling of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the National Mall was the most significant milestone in recognizing their service.

Cowell spoke of the anger and frustration that veterans experienced during the tumultuous period as they returned home faced with a lack of appreciation for their service. "I am so thankful that today's military veterans aren't returning with that anguish," Cowell said. He called the resolution to welcome home Vietnam veterans an "extended hand."

"As a Vietnam veteran, it's nice to finally feel appreciated," he said.

Today, while opposition to the conflicts and continued American troop presence in Afghanistan and Iraq is fierce, support and respect for returning soldiers is widespread. While today soldiers often travel in uniform—a uniform that, today, elicits high esteem from the public—Vietnam veterans often trekked in plain clothes to avoid name calling and the like.

Vollmer credits Vietnam vets as a driving force behind the respect afforded to today's veterans. "Our generation wasn't going to allow what happened to us happen to them," Vollmer said.

Paralyzed Veterans of America urges all citizens and communities to honor Vietnam veterans on this date, and to remember and honor the service of all veterans throughout the year.

Paralyzed Veterans of America

COURT DISMISSES VETS' CLAIM AGENT ORANGE POISONED THEM IN VIETNAM

A federal judge dismissed Navy veterans' claims to compensation for illness incurred by exposure to poisonous chemicals the U.S. Military sprayed during the Vietnam War, Courthouse News Service reports.

U.S. planes showered almost 20 million gallons of the herbicide Agent Orange over about 10,000 square miles of Vietnam in the late' 60s and early '70s. The chemical is extremely toxic, and hundreds of thousands of American veterans who served on land in Vietnam have been compensated for their poor health by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. But sailors who served at sea are ineligible for benefits, and their move for medical funding was denied in a district court.

RELATED: Vietnam vet walks to raise awareness of Agent Orange

According to Courthouse News, U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan wrote "Congress chose to shield VA benefits decisions from review or channel them into specific courts, and the court therefore has no jurisdiction to hear these claims."

Organizations of Navy veterans first sued the VA in 2013. The sailors argue that, even though they were not on land, they were exposed to Agent Orange that washed into the ocean and was sucked into their ships' drinking water purification systems.

Agent Orange is linked to at least 14 cancers and diseases, as well as birth defects. Hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese suffer from Agent Orange poisoning, and children are still born with severe deformations.

RELATED: Agent Orange still a threat at old U.S. base in Vietnam

Neil Carman, a chemist with the Texas Sierra Club, called Agent Orange "one of the most toxic chlorine containing chemicals ever known to science," and noted that it can poison a man's sperm. It's main use if deforestation; it was used to wipe out rainforests where North Vietnamese armies hid and to kill the crop fields that fed the communists. "It was an environmental disaster in Vietnam," Carman said.

According to the New York Times, the Pentagon and developers of Agent Orange initially claimed the chemical was not harmful to humans. However, according to the VA, it is a recognized cause of illnesses including leukemia, diabetes, Hodgkin's Disease, lymphoma, Parkinson's Disease, prostate cancer and respiratory cancers. In Vietnam, where many communities were sprayed with the chemical, Agent Orange has caused severe mental disabilities and physical disfiguration, including people born without eyes.

RELATED: Communist, U.S. will fight effects of Agent Orange in Vietnam

In 2010, U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki expanded the list of Agent Orange claims eligible for benefits, adding new diseases to the list. Shinseki said he expected 150,000 new claims from the Vietnam era and would re-review 90,000 claims previously dismissed.

The VA commissioned a 2011 study to determine to what extent ocean Navy veterans were exposed to Agent Orange. But Judge Chutkan noted that the results are "vigorously disputed." She said she dismissed the case because her court did not have jurisdiction to evaluate the parameters set by the VA for what qualifies a veteran for benefits.



VIETNAM: POST-WAR PROBLEMS THAT STILL NEED FIXING; AN INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE BLACK

Cecil Caulkins

On March 8, 1965, the first combat troops landed in Vietnam. The war ended 35 years ago, but not before about one million people died. Parts of the country still bear traces of Agent Orange, the chemical used to burn away parts of the jungle. Agent Orange still poisons the environment in Vietnam. In addition to that problem, the people of Vietnam have had to cope with unexploded ordinance, which has killed about 40,000 people and maimed 65,000 since the end of the war. Reporter George Black discusses the problems in this commentary and his 9,000 word report in The Nation magazine, "The Lethal Legacy of the Vietnam War."

Black explains that Chuck Searcy, a Vietnam War veteran, guided him through the country as he was researching his report. Searcy was one of a few veterans, initially, who went back to Vietnam after the war. He wants, as Black puts it, to make us worthy of the extraordinary forgiveness offered by the Vietnamese.



GEORGE BLACK

Black says that the Agent Orange has lingered in Vietnam, and several generations of children have been born with birth defects. No one, however, has spent the money to do an epidemiological study to discover conclusively whether the birth defects were in fact the result of Agent Orange. Searcy approaches both sides of the war with sympathy, both for the Americans—close to three million of them—who served in Vietnam and for the millions of Vietnamese people who suffered through the war, including many who died.

Black found that the people of Vietnam have largely forgiven Americans for their part in the war, which happened a long time ago, especially for young people. Chuck Searcy believes that the U.S. government should make an effort to bring Vietnam veterans back to that country, as such visits could have "an extraordinary healing effect." Meeting the people can be a good way to deal with PTSD. Black wonders whether, in the long run, the people of Iraq will be as gracious and forgiving towards Americans as are the people of Vietnam.

During the war, the U.S. sprayed nearly 20 million gallons of Agent Orange on parts of Vietnam. The U.S. has spent money on clean-up, but probably not enough. The Da Nang airport was the central point of spraying operations, and $84 million has already been spent cleaning up dioxin contamination at that one base. Black says there are dozens of these "hot spots" where Agent Orange was loaded onto planes and where some of it spilled, and other hot spots where the civilian population lives. There were 4.8 million civilians who were in the path of the spraying, and there has been no restitution to them.

Unexploded ordinance is still a very big problem in a small area, particularly the Quang Tri province. The estimate is that 10% of the ordinance that dropped is unexploded and that 84% of the area is still contaminated by the munitions. It is a daily problem. Searcy's Project Renew operation has a hotline that citizens can call when they encounter munitions that need to be removed.

George Black, a writer in New York, is editor-at-large for the Food & Environment Reporting Network (FERN), an independent nonprofit news or-

ganization. In his 30 years in journalism, including stints as foreign editor of The Nation and a columnist for the Los Angeles Times, George Black has written about everything from the civil wars in Central America and the democracy movement in China to climate change in South Asia and energy conflicts in the American West. He is working on a book about the history and culture of the Ganges. The Legal Broadcast Network is a featured network of the Sequence Media Group.





"THE COLOR ORANGE"

We only had their moments
and the were hard to bear
the husbands, sons and brothers
whose dreams were lost somewhere.
They took what they were given,
and gave all that they could
in a bid to further Freedom
in a place where warriors stood.
They taught them to be soldiers
and dressed them up in green
but color are not always,
the color that they seem.
The color orange was so supreme
they sprayed their days, of grace
hoping it would end their strife
that danced before their face
years beyond, the toll began
as the color faded past
and the husbands, sons and brothers,
would find the die was cast.
They found no pleasure, in the pain,
and no patience, for the plan,
as they sailed through days of sorrow,
with no thanks from Uncle Sam.
With no known retribution
they advanced through livings' fears
and the pleas that fell between the tracks,
would fall on deafened ears.
Intent now on delivering
to a hostile industry,
they stand, now undivided,
in their search for sanity,
They will not go unnoticed,
if all stand, with voice strong
and take the reins back from the men,
to make a right, from wrong.

Jim Johst



ONE VETERAN SHARES WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE SURROUNDED BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE FOR 77 DREADFUL DAYS
BY DAN DOYLE

Recon teams from Bravo Company, 3rd Recon Battalion at Khe Sanh had been reporting large enemy movements long before the siege started. Many had experienced contact with elements of the NVA for some time, but the higher-ups seemed to be in denial about the size and intent of the enemy. By the end of December, Khe Sanh was observing blackout orders at night.

On January 21, 1968 at 5:00 a.m. the base was hit with its first heavy bombardment from NVA artillery and mortar batteries. 50,000 well-trained, well-equipped NVA had surrounded the base and had begun a siege that would go on for the next 77 days.

HITTING THE GROUND RUNNING

I arrived at Khe Sanh as a 20-year-old, fresh-in-country Corpsman assigned to Bravo, 3rd Recon. When myself and another new Corpsman were flown into Khe Sanh on a Caribou cargo plane, we were told that the plane was not going to stop to unload, that it would taxi in to the loading area and we were to run off the back ramp as it kept rolling and into bunkers beside the airstrip. That's what we did and then watched while it continued back out to the runway to take off as fast as it could to avoid being hit by incoming mortars.

That was my introduction to the war. Little did I know what lay ahead. The NVA would begin firing their mortars as planes landed. They would hit a big C-130 during the siege, and one large 53 Seaking medivac helicopter, killing several Marines and wounding many more.

From the 21st of January to the 9th of April, the Marines at Khe Sanh would endure daily artillery and mortar barrages. The NVA would also probe for weaknesses along our perimeters and would even try to tunnel under the base. Corpsmen from Bravo Company would often be called upon to take their stethoscopes and listen to metal stakes pounded into the ground to see if we could hear any sounds that would imply tunneling beneath the base. There were about 5,000 Marines and Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops on the base when the siege began.

"One of the men, thinking that others may not yet have assembled, suggested that we wait for the others. We were told that we were it."

Bravo, 3rd Recon had 110 men on January 21st. On April 9th when the siege had been lifted, our Company Commander gathered us together for a photo for historical purposes. We were issued new, clean fatigues to put on. We had not showered or bathed fully in 77 days. We had lived underground in bunkers of our own making in the red earth of that part of Vietnam. Everything we wore was covered with that red dust. The letters I wrote home during the siege still have that red dirt smudged into them.

We put those newly issued fatigues on over our dirty bodies and began to gather together for that photo. Our CO began to read off all of the names of those who were present. There were 42 gathered together there. One of the men, thinking that others may not yet have assembled, suggested that we wait for the others. We were told that we were it.

At the end of the siege only 42 of the original 110 were able to walk onto the one helicopter that would take us away from that place where we had struggled, fought, and survived together for so long. Nineteen of our men had been KIA as a result of the constant and accurate artillery and mortar fire. 49 had been wounded and evacuated either to the rear or to hospitals in Japan, the Philippines, or the U.S.

NO REST FOR THE WEARY

We were supposed to be taken back to Quang Tri to be reunited with the full battalion, but for some reason, we were flown to Phu Bai. We would not be able to get further transportation to Quang Tri until the next day. It was late in the day, we were exhausted, dirty, and benumbed. But we were not alone. Our 1st Recon brothers at Phu Bai gave us soap and towels and opened their facilities to us so

that we could take our first showers in months. They fired up the ovens in the mess tent and cooked us our first real meal since January 21st. We had been living on C-rations and Kool-Aid alone during the siege.

That part of the war was over for us. We were told when we got to Quang Tri that we would be given a month to get back into condition, and re-equip ourselves before we would be going back out on the recon patrol missions that we had been trained to do, to become once again the "eyes and ears" of the 3rd Marine Division. That would not be the case, of course. We were back at it within a week.

At 20 years of age these kinds of experiences have a way of tattooing themselves into the memory. You are no longer 20 years old, you are 40. You face your own mortality in ways that are not normal, that are intense, immediate, and certain. Your dependence on your brothers for mere survival is complete. When you endure something like that you form a brotherhood like no other. Being with the men that I went through these things with again this past week has been one of the most moving experiences I have had in a long time.

GOOD MARINES

We are old men now in our 60s and 70s. Some of us are struggling with the health issues that come with age. Many have died and our numbers are growing smaller every year. We are all slower, grayer, heavier than we were back then, but when we get together we are young men again, enjoying our shared memories, laughing about the crazy things we did, and mourning those who died, and who we remember as they were back then.

I am, of course, thankful that I came home, that I was able to marry a woman who has loved me for over 40 years now, to have been given the gift of two beautiful daughters and three wonderful grandchildren. I was able to enjoy a meaningful and purposeful career and to build a good life. I am thankful for those men who gathered in Sparks, Nevada this past week to spend time together again, to enjoy the camaraderie of that singular brotherhood again. I am glad, too, that we were able to remember those who died. The experiences of war never leave us. We endured our struggles with PTSD to recover from our wounds and our memories. We overcame to varying degrees, and we got on with our lives. But we never forget.

Thank you to all my brothers in Bravo Company and to all our brothers from who fought with 3rd Recon Battalion, 3rd Marine Division in that war long ago. Thanks to all who have served in all of our wars. We did our duty, and we did it with honor. Our honor and respect goes out to all those who died and to their families. Semper Fi!
You were all good Marines.

BRAVO CO 3RD RECON BATTALION KIA AT KHE SANH COMBAT BASE

L/CPL GARRY G. TALLENT	USMC
PFC GARY S. STICKEL	USMC
L/CPL THOMAS J. TINGLEY	USMC
2ND LT RANDALL D. YEARLY	USMC
PFC PAUL M BEDDOE	USMC
L/CPL GREGORY F. POPOWITZ	USMC
L/CPL GARY D. SCRIDNER	USMC
PFC WALLACE L. REATHER	USMC
L/CPL JAMES K. MCCANN	USMC
HN RICHARD J. SMITH	USN
L/CPL THOMAS W. HOLLIS	USMC
L/CPL TIMOTHY M. BARMMER	USMC
PFC CARL LYONS	USMC
L/CPL MARION L. MEGGS	USMC
PFC TERRY A. JONES	USMC
CPL RICHARD J. HEALY	USMC
CPL CHARLES W. BRYAN	USMC
HN CHARLES W. MILLER	USN
PFC JUAN A. ROSA	USMC

AWARDS FOR BRAVERY IN COMBAT* BRAVO COMPANY, 3RD RECON BN.

LCpl. Robert C. Barne	Navy Cross	17 Dec66
Sgt. Jose G. Lopez	Navy Cross	2 Sep 67
*Cpl. Charles W. Bryan	Navy Cross	20 Jan 68
Sgt. Albert W. Bach	Silver Star	18 Jan67
LCpl. Robert C. Barnes	Silver Star	3 Oct 67
Pvt. Roy T. Bums	Silver Star	2 Sep 67
1st Lt. John T. Cassidy	Silver Star	15 Mar 66

Capt. James B. Compton	Silver Star	13 Mar 66
PFC Wayne T. Corbett	Silver Star	17 Dec 66
PFC Gary R. Gruerman	Silver Star	17 Dec 66
1st Lt. Albert R. Pfeltz	Silver Star	24 Aug 67
Cpl. Sandy R. Reid	Silver Star	11 Dec 68
Sgt. Robert Skinner	Silver Star	17 Jul 68
1st Lt. Gordon R. Wilson	Silver Star	15 Mar 66

* Killed In Action

Bronze Stars Not Listed At this Time





45 YEARS LATER, VIETNAM VET RECALLS LAST TIME HE SAW

'JUNIOR' PRICE

By Diane Turbyfill

Retired Army Lt. Col. Dan Maslowski piloted a helicopter shot down in Cambodia on May 2, 1970 during the Vietnam War. He never met young Staff Sgt. Bunyan Durant Price Jr., of Belmont, who went by the name "Junior," but he may have shared Price's last minutes. Price was listed as missing in action for decades. His remains were recently discovered in a shallow grave near where Maslowski landed the burning helicopter almost 45 years ago. The Belmont man's remains will return to the U.S. next month.



BUNYAN "JUNIOR" PRICE

Maslowski, who now lives in Charleston, S.C., was captured after landing the burning helicopter, but not everyone survived the attack by enemy fire, he

said. "That was the last time I saw most of the guys," he said.

FIERY LANDING:

Maslowski, another pilot and six men loaded into the helicopter that day. Their mission was to fly supplies into Cambodia. They were derailed when the enemy shot at the helicopter and it caught fire. "That thing looked like it was firing red basketballs at us. I had been fired on many times, but nothing like this," he said. The men in the back gasped for air as the chopper burned. Maslowski and the other pilot landed the helicopter in a rice paddy, and everyone scattered, several of them jumping out before the helicopter was on the ground. All of the men made it out alive, but they split up from there. Maslowski said he never saw Price again.

TRUSTY .38:

Maslowski saw one man dive into a ditch to hide. He and another soldier landed face down in the rice paddy as the enemy approached. Their heads about a foot from each other, the men braced themselves. "I cocked my trusty old .38. I looked at this guy, and I said, 'Hey buddy, we're going to die,'" Maslowski said. Armed men approached with an interpreter. Twelve to 15 seconds felt like a day as they drew nearer, he said. Then the interpreter spoke."He said, 'Surrender or die.' So, I dropped my trusty .38," Maslowski said. Maslowski spent more than two years in captivity. In that time, he crossed paths with two men from the helicopter, one of whom eventually died from an injury.

SCHEDULED RELEASE:

Maslowski and two others from the helicopter were bound with their own bootlaces and taken to POW camps. Life wasn't good by any stretch of the imagination, but they weren't what Maslowski would call abused or tortured. When their captors said it was time to move, they walked miles at night. Captured service members were kept in wooden cages, and malaria became a vicious enemy. Some men came down with the disease every couple of months. Many died as a result. Maslowski and 26 other soldiers were part of a scheduled release on Feb. 12, 1973, just shy of three years after he was taken prisoner. The American Red Cross was on hand to provide medical care, and The Associated Press was on scene to capture it on film. Maslowski still has the photos.

PROVIDING COMFORT:

Maslowski went on during his career in the Army to speak to families of service members missing in action. He didn't know Price or the other passengers who jumped from the helicopter the day he became a POW. Because Price's remains were found less than a mile from the crash site, Maslowski imagines he was shot and killed that day. He could have been buried by his killers or by local farmers, Maslowski said.

Maslowski can't speak with certainty about how Price met his end, but he can talk about the day he last saw him. He has offered to talk with Price's family if it would bring them comfort.

FINAL BURIAL:

Price would have turned 65 last month. Instead, his family got confirmation from the military that his remains had been identified. The family has since worked with the Army to make funeral arrangements. Price, called Junior by friends and family, will be buried near his parents in Belmont on April 11. A portion of his remains will also be interred in Arlington National Cemetery.

SEARCH FOR SOLDIER SPANS NEARLY 50 YEARS

Joseph Paul, jpaul@jconline.com

For nearly 50 years, all Jack DuVall knew was that his brother Dean left an Air Force base in South Vietnam in 1966 and never returned.

"We did not hear anything from that point on to speak of. Each year, we would get an annual update. It would be almost word for word from what it was the previous year," he said. "It never changed. It was almost the same. I called it a rubber stamp."
DuVall was a college student when he learned his

younger brother was missing in action at the age of 20. Dean was onboard an AC-47 gun ship on a mission to Laos, which borders Vietnam to the west.

It took nearly four decades for U.S. government officials to locate the plane's crash site and nearly 15 more years to excavate it. It's still unclear what caused the plane to crash into the side of a mountain near a small village in Laos' southernmost Xekong province.



The White County resident recently received a 150-page report, documenting the 2,400-square-meter excavation completed in 2014 and its findings — dog tags, watch bands, belt buckles, buttons and even a human tooth. None of it, however, definitively linked to Dean.

"I think we're going to have to accept that this is his final resting place," DuVall said Sunday during an update on the search at Sitka Baptist Church in Monticello, where he's been a member since 1972.
The half-century struggle to locate his brother's remains led DuVall and his family across the country, as they regularly attended status updates held about 10 times a year in various cities. They've learned to grapple with the U.S. and Laos governments, the latter setting strict regulations on when and how long crews could excavate the site.

In Pittsburg in 2010, the family learned that human remains had been located. But in Minneapolis in 2014, their hopes came crashing down: Of the testable remains found, none was Dean's. The family has yet to hold a memorial service.
"He's never given up the search," said James Elliott, the pastor at Sitka, where DuVall has hosted several similar updates over the years. "He knows his brother is deceased, but having closure with the remains, it's been consuming."

Even more consuming could be DuVall's battle with leukemia and prostate cancer, which requires daily trips to Logansport for chemotherapy. Yet the farmer is out every morning to take care of his animals and the first to volunteer at the church, which recently needed roof repairs.

"He's worked hard all the days of his life, seven days a week. Always has a smile, very generous and kind," Elliott said. "He's the head deacon at our church. He'll do anything. He's the first guy on the roof at 71 years of age."

In person, DuVall is proof that time can't heal all wounds. Wearing a POW/MIA tie and button attached to the lapel of his blazer, he expertly explained the intricate details of the case as a packed church sanctuary intently listened.

The maxillary molar found during the excavation typically comes in from ages 8 to 10, he said, and the grating that eventually uncovered it was a quarter-inch wide. Anything wider, he noted, and the tooth would have fallen through; anything less and the dirt and sand wouldn't properly sift.

The attention to detail is just one way DuVall keeps his brother's memory alive. Dean's absence left him with an empty feeling — a void that over the years he's attempted to fill, starting when he joined the Air Force a month after his brother went missing.
"He wants to do everything he can to find out," said DuVall's wife, Ruth.

But he isn't the only who's struggled to come to terms with the loss. Kay DuVall-Martinez, the youngest of DuVall's five siblings, was 11 when a school official came into her class to tell her Dean was missing. Since then, she's clung to hope.

"I don't know if I've come to the grips of losing him," she said with tears in her eyes.



THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
LCPL David E. Hornby USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 03 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
SGT Molimau A. Tela USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 13 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
LCPL Jose Pacheco USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 13 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
LCPL Alexander McGlothlin USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 13 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
SGT Robert Vaden USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 14 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
CPL Daniel B. Duffy Jr. USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 24 Apr 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
PFC Victor Morales USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 01 Aug 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
LCPL Bobby L. Eaton USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 07 Aug 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
PFC Charles L. Roberts USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 09 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
PFC Ronnie Bintliff USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 09 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
PVT William Devore USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 28 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
PVT Richard Brandt USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 07 Dec 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
LCPL Michael Baronowski USMC India CO 3/3 KIA 29 Nov 66	Ned Borlaug India CO 3/3
Lt Hank Norman USMC A Btry 1/13 F/O B Co 1/26 KIA 30 Mar 68	Dennis T. Wimbish A Btry 1/13
Sgt. Tommy Antrim USMC A Btry 1/13 Gun 6 Chief KIA 08 Feb 68	Dennis T. Wimbish A Btry 1/13
CPL Vic M. Pizarro USMC A Btry 1/13 M/T KIA 06 Mar 68	Dennis T. Wimbish A Btry 1/13
CPL Bill Travis USMC A Btry 1/13 GUNS KIA 27 June 67	Dennis T. Wimbish A Btry 1/13
CPL James "Jimmy Lee' Cook USMC A Btry 1/13 Homicide Nov 1983	Dennis T. Wimbish A Btry 1/13
SGT Harold Jury USMC A Btry 1/13 Passed Away 2014	Dennis T. Wimbish A Btry 1/13
HMN "DOC" Alfredo Lucero USN A Btry 1/13 Passed Away 1997	Dennis T. Wimbish A Btry 1/13
PFC Kevin Cassell USMC Hotel CO 2/3 KIA 21 Apr 68 Hill 689	David F. Brombaugh Sr. Hotel CO 2/3
PFC Ron Kearsly USMC Hotel CO 2/3 KIA 21 Apr 68 Hill 689	David F. Brombaugh Sr. Hotel CO 2/3
PFC Robert H. Kruger Jr. USMC Echo CO 2/3 KIA 03 May 67	Frederick Monahan Echo CO 2/3
1st Sgt James L. Mallini Jr. USMC Passed Away 31 Aug 2014	Donna Mallini (Wife)
For All The Fallen Brothers From Echo Co 2/26	Dan "Cpl Jack" Jackimiak E CO 2/26
PFC Randall M. Davis USMC Kilo CO 3/4 KIA 04 June 68 Hill 881S	Larry Davis (Brother) 3rd Pioneer Bn

GOD BLESS THEM ALL







Form # 06-2014 **Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. PX Price List** **www.khesanh.org**

BOOKS

Item #	ITEMS DESCRIPTION	AVAILABLE COLORS AND SIZES	PRICE
# PUC	PUC CERTIFICATE SPECIAL ITEM Made to Order	W/Name, Rank, Unit	$ 10.00
# B03	BOOK, BATTALIONS of KINGS Casualties at Khe Sanh	By Ray Stubbe	$ 30.00
# B04	BOOK, WEST DICKENS AVENUE	By John "Jack" Corbett	$ 15.00
# B05	BOOK, SEMPER COOL	By Barry Fixler	$ 20.00
# B06	BOOK, A PATCH OF GROUND	By Michael Archer	$ 20.00
# B09	BOOK, IN THE COMPANY OF MARINES	By James Finnegan MD	$ 20.00
# B10	BOOK, Stories of Faith and Courage From The Vietnam War	By Larkin Spivey	$ 15.00
# B11	BOOK, PEBBLES IN MY BOOTS	By Ray Stubbe	$ 10.00
# B14	BOOK, PEBBLES IN MY BOOT, Vol. 2	By Ray Stubbe	$ 10.00
# B15	BOOK, KEEPING the PROMISE	By Donna E. Elliott	$ 15.00
	HATS		
# H02	HAT, VETERAN	White/Red Letters	$ 15.00
# H06	HAT, KHE SANH USMC	Tan/Black letters	$ 15.00
# H08	HAT, COMBAT VETERAN	White/Red Letters	$ 15.00
# H09	HAT, "THE SIEGE"	White/Red Letters	$ 15.00
# H10	HAT, "THE SIEGE"	White/Black Letters	$ 15.00
# H11	HAT, "THE SIEGE"	Black/Gold Letters	$ 15.00
# H12	HAT, USMC	Red/Gold Letters	$ 15.00
# H13	HAT, USMC	Black/Gold Letters	$ 15.00
# H14	HAT, MARINES	Black/Gold Letters	$ 15.00
# H15	HAT, HILL FIGHTS	Hunter Green/Gold Letters	$ 15.00
# H18	HAT, KHE SANH USMC VET W/ Nam Ribbon	Black/Gold Letters	$ 15.00
# H19	HAT, KHE SANH USMC VET W/ Nam Ribbon	Red/Gold Letters	$ 15.00
# H25	HAT, "USMC"	Tan/Black W/Black Letters	$ 15.00
# H29	HAT, 26th MARINES	Red/Gold Letters	$ 15.00
# H30	HAT, 9th MARINES	Red/Gold Letters	$ 15.00
# H34	HAT, VIETNAM VETERAN W/ RIBBONS	Olive Drab Gold Letters	$ 16.00
# H35	HAT, VIETNAM VETERAN W/ RIBBONS	Black With Gold Letters	$ 16.00
# H36	HAT, KHE SANH MARINES	Red With Black Letters	$ 15.00
# H37	HAT, KHE SANH 26th MARINES VIETNAM	Black With Gold Letters	$ 15.00
# H38	HAT, 26th MARINES VIETNAM	Red With Patch	$ 15.00
# H39	HAT, 26th MARINES PATCH	Black With 26th Marines Patch	$ 15.00
# H40	HAT, 26th MARINES VIETNAM	Black With 26th Marines Patch	$ 15.00
	SHOULDER, JACKET PATCHES		
# PA01	PATCH, KHE SANH SURVIVOR	Shoulder Patch 2X3in	$ 5.00
# PA02	PATCH, 26th MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in	$ 5.00
# PA03	PATCH, 1/26 MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in	$ 5.00
# PA04	PATCH, 2/26 MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in	$ 5.00
# PA05	PATCH, 3/26 MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in	$ 5.00
# PA06	PATCH, KHE SANH VETERAN 4 SERVICE BRANCHES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in	$ 5.00
# PA07	PATCH, KHE SANH VIETNAM RIBBON	Shoulder Patch 2.75X1in	$ 3.00
# PA08	PATCH, USMC COMBAT VET RIBBON	Jacket Patch 5"x2"	$ 7.00
# PA09	PATCH, 13TH MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4X4in	$ 5.00
# PA12	PATCH, SORRY CHARLIE Black NEW	Shoulder Patch 4x3in	$ 7.00
# PA13	PATCH, 3rd ENGINEERS BATTALION	Shoulder Patch 4x3in	$ 5.00
# PA14	PATCH, 3rd RECON BATTALION	Shoulder Patch 4x3in	$ 5.00
# PA15	PATCH, 1st BATTALION 9th MARINES	Shoulder Patch 4x3in	$ 5.00
# PA16	PATCH, PURPLE HEART VIETNAM 59-75	Shoulder Patch 4x3in	$ 5.00
# PA17	PATCH, POW MIA Black	Shoulder Patch 4x3in	$ 5.00
# PA18	PATCH, BULL DOG With COVER	Shoulder Patch 4x3in	$ 5.00
# PA20	PATCH, 3rd MARINE DIVISION	Shoulder Patch 4x3in	$ 5.00
# PA21	PATCH, LIFE MEMBERSHIP	Shoulder Patch 4x4in	$ 7.00
# PA22	PATCH KHE SANH VIET VET (Kick ass)	Shoulder Patch Round 3.5" X 3.5"	$ 5.00
# PA23	PATCH, 26th MARINES VIETNAM	Shoulder Patch 3x3in	$ 5.00
# PA24	PATCH, 3rd ANTI TANK ONTOS	Shoulder Patch 3x3in	$ 5.00
# PA25	PATCH, 3rd TANK BATTALION	Shoulder Patch Round 3.5x3.5in	$ 5.00
# PA26	PATCH, SHIT BURNER	Shoulder Patch Round 3.5x3.5in	$ 5.00
# PA27	PATCH KHE SANH SIEGE	Shoulder Patch 3x4in	$ 5.00
	HAT LAPEL PINS		
# PIN01	PIN, KHE SANH SURVIVOR	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN02	PIN, HOME IS WHERE YOU DIG IT	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 6.00
# PIN03	PIN, KHE SANH 1967-1968	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN04	PIN, KHE SANH VETS W/EAGLE GLOBE ANCHOR	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN06	PIN, 26th MARINES "The Professionals"	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN08	PIN, US FLAG MARINE CORPS	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN10	PIN, SORRY CHARLIE	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 6.00

# PIN11	PIN, VIETNAM SERVICE RIBBON 1967 or 1968	Hat/Lapel Pin 1967 or 1968	$ 5.00
# PIN12	PIN, EAGLE GLOBE and ANCHOR	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN13	PIN, POW MIA	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN14	PIN, 9th MARINES	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN15	PIN, 13th MARINES	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN16	PIN 1/26th MARINES	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN17	PIN, 2/26th MARINES	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN18	PIN, 1ST BATTALION 9TH MARINES	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN19	PIN, ARMY	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN20	PIN, AIR FORCE	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN21	PIN, NAVY	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN22	PIN, LIFE MEMBERSHIP	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 7.00
# PIN23	PIN, K-BAR MINIATURE REPLICA Khe Sanh, USMC, US ARMY	Pin Hat/Lapel Circle One	$ 7.00
# PIN24	PIN, 26th MARINES VIETNAM	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN25	PIN, SHIT BURNER	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN26	PIN, VIETNAM 59-75 PURPLE HEART	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN27	PIN, THREE SERVICEMEN STATUE	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN28	PIN, CLAYMORE	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN29	PIN, POW/MIA FLAG	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00
# PIN30	PIN, VIETNAM W/BLACK RIBBON	Hat/Lapel Pin	$ 5.00

SHIRTS and JACKETS

# S06	TEE SHIRT, KHE SANH HOME IS WHERE YOU DIG IT Gray	Sizes L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 18.00
# S11	T-SHIRT, (SORRY CHARLIE) Light Blue, Silk screened logo	Sizes XXL	$ 10.00
# S12	T-SHIRT, (SORRY CHARLIE) Dark Blue, Embroidered	Sizes L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 10.00
# S16	T-SHIRT 26th MARINES OLIVE DRAB/LIGHT GREEN	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 16.00
# S20	T-SHIRT KHE SANH VIETNAM DIG IT EMBROIDERED Red	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 16.00
# S22	T-SHIRT 1st Bn 9th MARINES Red, Silk Screened Large Logo	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 10.00
# S23	T-SHIRT 1st Bn 9th MARINES Red, Silk Screened Small Logo	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 10.00
# S24	T-SHIRT 2nd Bn 9th MARINES Red, Silk Screened Small Logo	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 10.00
# S25	T-SHIRT 3rd Bn 9th MARINES Red, Silk Screened Small Logo	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 10.00
# S27	GOLF SHIRT KHE SANH VIETNAM Black Embroidered	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 25.00
# S28	GOLF SHIRT KHE SANH VIETNAM Green Embroidered	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 25.00
# S29	T-SHIRT KHE SANH W/EGA Red Home Where Dig It In Back	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 16.00
# S30	T-SHIRT KHE SANH VIET VET MAP Gray Silk Screened	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 15.00
# S31	T-SHIRT REUNION NASHVILLE TN TEAL Silk Screened	Sizes M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL	$ 10.00
# SH01	ZIPPERED HOODED SWEAT SHIRT KHE SANH VETERAN Black	Sizes XL, XXL XXXL	$ 30.00 $ 35.00

Miscellaneous Items

Coins, Window Decals, Bumper Stickers, License Plate Covers, Beer Stein

# BO01	BOTTLE OPENER MUSICAL	Plays Marine Hymn	$ 10.00
# BO02	BOTTLE OPENER 50 CAL BULLET	Real 50 Cal Bullet	$ 10.00
# BO03	BOTTLE OPENER USMC "CHESTY" BULDOG	USMC CHESTY" BULDOG	$ 10.OO
# MB01	BUMPER STICKER, KHE SANH GET SOME USMC	Bumper Sticker	$ 3.00
# MB02	BUMPER STICKER, KHE SANH VETERANS (YELLOW)	Bumper Sticker	$ 3.00
# MCO4	COIN, SORRY CHARLIE GOLD	4 Branches Reverse Side	$ 7.00
# MCO5	COIN, SORRY CHARLIE IN ACRYLIC DISPLAY	4 Branches Reverse Side	$ 15.00
# MD01	DECAL MAGNET, VIETNAM VET	Car Magnet Decal 8 X 3-1/2 in.	$ 3.00
# MD02	DECAL MAGNET, USMC YELLOW RIBBON	Car Magnet Decal	$ 3.00
# MD03	DECAL MAGNET, VIETNAN VETERAN W RIBBON OVAL	Car Magnet Decal	$ 6.00
# MW01	DECAL WINDOW, KHE SANH	Four Branches	$ 3.00
# MW02	DECAL WINDOW, KHE SANH VETERAN	Home Is Where You Dig It	$ 4.00
# MW03	DECAL WINDOW, VIETNAM RIBBON	Oval 3X2 in.	$ 4.00
# MW04	DECAL WINDOW, POW MIA	Round 3x3 in.	$ 5.00
# MW05	DECAL WINDOW, 1/9th MARINES	Round 3x3 in.	$ 5.00
# MW06	DECAL WINDOW, Grunt USMC	Oval 4.5x3 in.	$ 5.00
# MW07	DECAL WINDOW, Sniper USMC	Oval 4.5x3 in.	$ 5.00
# MW08	DECAL WINDOW, Artillery USMC	Oval 4.5x3 in.	$ 5.00
# MW09	DECAL WINDOW, Tanker USMC	Oval 4.5x3 in.	$ 5.00
# MW10	DECAL WINDOW, Combat Engineer USMC	Oval 4.5x3 in.	$ 5.00
# MW11	VIETNAM VETERAN, US Marine Corps	Round 3x3 in.	$ 5.00
# MW12	CAL TRAP, 3rd Mar. Div.	Decal 3.5x4.25 in.	$ 5.00
# MW13	VIETNAM VETERAN, Map with Nam Ribbon	Decal 4x4 in.	$ 5.00
# PLATE	LICENCE PLATE COVER	Vietnam Khe Sanh	$ 16.00
# DVD	VIDEO, BRAVO 1/26 DOCUMENTARY	Bravo 1/26 Documentary	$ 20.00
# ADL01	PLAQUE LIGHTED 26Th MARINES KHE SANH	Lighted Acrylic Display Plaque	$ 30.00
# ADL02	PLAQUE LIGHTED MARINES KHE SANH	Lighted Acrylic Display Plaque	$30.00
# CAL68	CALENDAR DAILY CASUALTY LISTING FOR 1968	Calendar Daily Casualty Listing	$20.00
# CAL67	CALENDAR DAILY CASUALTY LISTING FOR 1967	Calendar Daily Casualty Listing	$20.00

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. PX
Order Form
Please Fill Form Below

Item #	ITEM DESCRIPTION	SIZE	COLOR	PRICE EACH	QUANTITY	TOTAL

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Call "Big John" @ 732.948.9803
If You Need Help

KHE SANH VETERANS Inc.
PX

Check Our PX Web Site For New Items
www.khesanh.org/px.html

BOOKS Plus

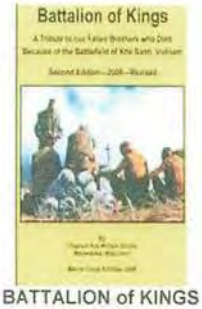

BATTALION of KINGS
By Ray W. Stubbe
B03 $ 30.00

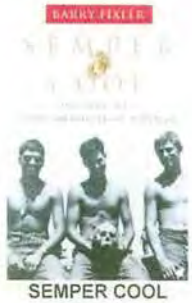

SEMPER COOL
By Barry Fixler
B05 $ 20.00



A Patch of Ground
By Michael Archer
B06 $ 20.00

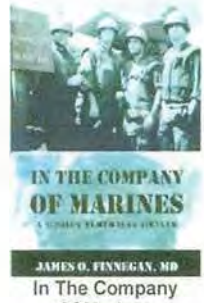

In The Company
Of Marines
By Dr. James Finnegan
B09 $ 20.00



BRAVO 1/26
DOCUMENTARY
As told by the Men who served with Bravo 1/26 Marines
By Ken and Betty Rodgers
DVD $20.00



LAST STAND AT KHE SANH
By Gregg Jones
B16 $ 20.00



PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION CERTIFICATE
Personalized
W/Rank, Name and Unit
PUC $ 10.00

ALL HATS: $15.00



H02



H08



H09



H10



H11



H06



H25



H12



H13



H14



H36



H37



H39



H38



H40



H18



H19



H29



H30



H15



H41



H35

APPAREL
Tee Shirts, Golf Shirts, Sweat Shirts



#S22 $10.00



#S23 $10.00



#S20 $16.00



#S06 $18.00



#S16 $16.00



#S29 $16.00



#S27 $25.00



#S28 $25.00



#S30 $15.00



#S31 $10.00



S32 $ 15.00



#SH01 $30.00 xxxL $35.00



WB-02 $35.00 xxxl $40.00

Shoulder Patches



#PA01 $5.00



#PA21 $7.00



#PA12 $7.00



#PA06 $5.00



#PA02 $5.00



#PA23 $5.00



#PA03 $5.00


#PA04 $5.00



#PA05 $5.00



#PA20 $5.00



#PA09 $5.00



#PA24 $5.00


#PA25 $5.00



#PA13 $5.00



#PA14 $5.00



#PA15 $5.00



#PA07 $3.00



#PA08 $7.00



#PA22 $5.00



#PA17 $5.00



#PA16 $5.00



#PA27 $6.00



#PA26 $5.00


#PA18 $5.00



#PA28 $5.00



#PA29 $5.00



#PA30 $5.00



#PA31 $5.00



#PA32 $5.00

Hat/Lapel Pins



#PIN01 $5.00



#PIN02 $6.00



#PIN03 $5.00



#PIN04 $5.00


#PIN06 $5.00


#PIN24 $5.00


#PIN08 $5.00


#PIN10 $6.00



#PIN11 $5.00



#PIN13 $5.00


#PIN14 $5.00



#PIN15 $5.00


#PIN16 $5.00


#PIN17 $5.00


#PIN18 $5.00



#PIN22 $7.00


#PIN 23 $7.00

K-BAR "KHE SANH" $7.00

K-BAR USMC $7.00

K-BAR ARMY $7.00


PIN12 $5.00


PIN26 $5.00


PIN27 $5.00


PIN28 $5.00


PIN29 $5.00


PIN30 $5.00



#PIN31 $5.00



PIN25 $5.00

Miscellaneous Items

Coins, Window Decals, Bumper Stickers, License Plate Covers, Acrylic Displays, Bottle Openers



#ADL01 $30.00



#ADL02 $30.00


#CAL67 $20.00


#CAL68 $20.00


BO01 $ 10.00


BO02 $ 10.00



BO03 $ 10.00


PLATE $ 16.00



MBO2 $ 3.00



MB01 $3.00



MD01 $3.00



MD02 $3.00



MD03 $6.00



MW01 $3.00



MW13 $ 5.00



MW02 $ 4.00


MW03 $ 4.00



MW04 $ 5.00



MW05 $ 5.00



MW11 $ 5.00



NEW Click for large view
Wind Breaker Lined
Silk Screened

Sizes: XL, XXL, XXXL
Price: **$ 35.00**
XXXL**: $ 40.00**
Item: # **WB-02**

Shoulder Patches, Hat/Lapel Pins



KHE SANH SURVIVOR
Shoulder Patch 2x3in

Price: **$5.00** ea.
Item # **PA01**



KHE SANH VETERAN
LIFE MEMBER
Shoulder Patch

Price:: **$ 7.00** ea.
Item # **PA21**



SORRY CHARLIE
Khe Sanh Veterans
Shoulder Patch, 4x4in

Price: **$ 7.00** ea.
Item # **PA12**



KHE SANH VETERANS
Shoulder Patch, 3x3in Iron-on

Price: **$5.00** ea.
Item # **PA06**



26th MARINES
Shoulder Patch 4x4in

Price: **$5.00** ea.
Item # **PA02**



NEW ITEM
26th MARINES
Shoulder Patch 3x3in

Price: **$5.00** ea.
Item # **PA23**



MW12 $ 5.00



MW10 $ 5.00



MW06 $ 5.00



MW07 $ 5.00



MW08 $ 5.00



MW09 $ 5.00



#MW14 $5.00



#MW15 $5.00

THE BELOW T SHIRTS WILL ALL BE AVAILABLE AT THE REUNION



Women's Reunion T Shirt



Men's T Shirt



Men's T Shirt



Men's T Shirt



Reunion T



Reunion T Shirt

TWO MEN WHO KEEP HISTORY ALIVE

By Terry Garlock



Cliff Stern (L) and Wayne King (R) in front of Huey 624, a helicopter Wayne flew in combat in Vietnam. .

How do you know when you are rubbing shoulders with someone who has left footprints in history? Well, sometimes you don't. I'll tell you about two men here in Peachtree City who left footprints serving their country when it was not easy, and how you can help keep their history alive.

Cliff Stern and his wife Paula live in the Interlochen development. A retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel, Cliff is now president of the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF), a unique non-profit volunteer outfit of veterans and civilians with a hangar at Tara Field near the racetrack in Hampton. AAHF keeps a number of Vietnam War aircraft maintained in tip-top flying condition. You might instinctively worry about helicopters over 40 years old, but the intensity of AAHF maintenance puts these birds in far better condition today than they ever were when we flew them into combat in Vietnam.

The AAHF flies in airshows and provides static displays and rides all over the country. Last week they flew to Nashville to display at the Army Aviation Association of America convention. They have done numerous flybys at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., and at other venues on Memorial Day and other events.

Two weeks ago Cliff's group flew a Huey and a Cobra into the soccer field at Newnan High School, where a number of us who flew in the Vietnam War gathered around the aircraft to talk to hundreds of students interested in the helicopters and our experience.

Why is Cliff so passionate about connecting veterans and civilians by capturing attention with helicopters that flew in the war? Well, he was a Huey helicopter pilot in that war, flying combat assault lift missions as a platoon leader with the 174th Assault Helicopter Company, flying loads of ground troops into and out of landing zones.

Cliff's son, John, owner of John's Golf Carts here in Peachtree City, so admires what his father did decades ago that he built a beautiful golf cart for him with silk-screened images from the war.

On his first day with his unit in Vietnam, Cliff had his customary check ride in the morning, and that very afternoon, because they were one pilot short, this new guy flew an emergency extraction mission for a Special Forces team under attack by enemy forces. He hoped things wouldn't get worse than that initial excitement, but they did.

Near the end of the war in February of 1971, the massive Lam Son 719 operation had been planned for five to seven divisions to cross the border into Laos to cut the enemy's Ho Chi Minh Trail where they had operated unchallenged for years. In execution, only three divisions were committed against an enemy dug in very deep.

The staging area was Khe Sanh where they launched on Feb. 8. The huge lift flight of about 100 Hueys were loaded with South Vietnamese grunts because most American ground troops had been withdrawn from Vietnam and by order of the 1970 Cooper-Church Amendment in Congress, no American troops were permitted to put boots on the ground in Laos. Americans provided support in logistics, artillery, air transport and air cover.

When Cliff flew into LZ Hotel that first day, he was in front only because the two aircraft that had been in front of him had already been shot down. He had Bob Gentry as his wingman since they had worked

together every day and knew each other's moves and signals.

When Cliff took off after dropping his ground troops, he spotted an enemy anti-aircraft team setting up and just seconds later they shot Bob dead, though his chicken plate (chest protector). He had celebrated his 22nd birthday two days prior. Bob's co-pilot, Steve Burch, quickly took the controls to recover the aircraft. Steve died in a fiery crash a few weeks later. On that same day, Cliff flew fresh loads of troops back into that same LZ five more times, and at the end of the day he picked up eight wounded South Vietnamese soldiers and delivered them to a hospital. Cliff received the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism that first day of Lam Son 719.

Joe Galloway, the most respected correspondent of the war, covered the operation and says a pro-Hanoi spy in Saigon leaked the plan to our enemy a month in advance, and 60,000 battle-hardened NVA troops were waiting to fight. The bad guys had 19 anti-aircraft battalions in the area including the feared .51 caliber plus larger 23mm, 37mm and 57mm guns guided by radar. Cliff saw more than a half-dozen helicopters shot out of the air by big guns, including Cobras hit broadside and broken apart mid-air.

The operation proceeded for more than two weeks, but with our Vietnamese allies losing the ground fight against a much tougher enemy and weather hampering air support, a withdrawal was initiated which Cliff summarizes as just awful. When he flew in to pick up South Vietnamese grunts, they panicked and rushed to overload the helicopter with too many so the crew chief and gunner had to throw troops off. Even then some held onto the skids in desperation to get out until they fell to their injury or death from altitude. Cliff said they had to do something to get the grunts out without overloading and causing a fatal crash, so they greased the skids. When the operation was over, out of the 33 Hueys Cliff's unit flew into Laos, only five remained. These are memories that do not fade.

U.S. Army Major (Ret.) Wayne King also left footprints in history flying Hueys in the Vietnam War. Wayne lives just down the road from Cliff in the Highlands development with his wife, Cookie.

Like Cliff, he flew lift missions in the Vietnam War but with the 61st Assault Helicopter Company based at LZ English. Since 6+1 is a key roll of the dice in the game of craps, the 61st takeoff pad was known as the Crap Table and the Huey lift platoons were called Lucky stars.

As a helicopter gunship pilot myself, I often watched lift pilots taking troops into a hot LZ, clustered in a tight formation to fit into a small clearing with gunfire zipping through the thin-skinned aircraft, and I asked Wayne to explain for students the pucker factor of taking fire in that setting. He told me they should think about it this way.

With a load of armed grunts in the back, the ride was usually at the treetops to evade enemy fire, dipping and rolling with the terrain and the grunts with their feet hanging over the side sometimes yelled their delight at the ride.

When the LZ was not far away, the pilots climbed to tighten up in formation with just one rotor blade of separation since they needed to touch down and take off as one to minimize exposure to enemy fire, and room in the LZ was often tight.

They stepped up toward the back, keeping the next rotor to the front lower and level with the horizon, jockeying to stay in position, trying to prevent the dangerous stretch and compression of a slinky, and keeping the right rear skid strut visually lined up with the left front strut on the aircraft to the front left to stay in position, even in a slow turn, listening intently to radio traffic announcing the marker rounds from artillery indicating their prep fire was complete, then gunships like mine were alongside firing rockets, trying to nail the enemy or at least keep their heads down while our grunts got on the ground, sometimes scaring the hell out of the lift pilot if it was close, listening for other pilots announcing, "Taking fire from three o'clock!" and being ready for the sudden change of "Go around! Go around!" if enemy fire was still too heavy, scanning the gauges every few seconds as always while the crew chief and gunner on either side just behind you tried to bust your eardrums as they opened up

with their M-60s to shoot back at the tree line, staying lined up tight with the other birds as the ground approached and watching intently for an enemy to pop up from the deep grass to punch your lights out, and ready before the skids touch the ground for the grunts in the back to jump out and scramble away from the helicopter because it is such an inviting target, and without touching down, rock it forward to take off, still keeping formation separation while gaining altitude until you had enough room to drift apart since scattering might lead to a midair collision.

Who had time to worry about rounds whacking through the aircraft, Wayne asked? He said they just looked for bullet holes when they got back to base and fixed what needed fixing so they could go do it again.

On his off time, Wayne and his buddy, gunship pilot Richard Benicewicz, used their construction skills to build things, like a barracks, or to fancy up their own room. They scrounged and horse-traded for material, and covertly "borrowed" from the Air Force what they needed in quick excursions they thought of as the virtuous practice of "reallocating Uncle Sam's resources to a higher and better use."

Horse-trading and making things with hammers, saws and his hands with Richard at his side was one of two things that kept Wayne's sanity amidst all the killing and dying. The other was his wife, Cookie, writing him a letter every day, telling him about life with their young boys back home. On one of the worst days of his life, Wayne was flying a combat assault lift mission, escorted by Richard's and another gunship on the way to another LZ when Richard's aircraft had a freak catastrophic rotor failure. His Huey gunship dove into the ground like an anvil and the entire crew was killed. Wayne was never the same. He switched to flying guns, said it was time to shoot back.

After Vietnam, Wayne flew helicopters and fixed wing aircraft in a number of U.S. Army capacities, including covert missions in Central America that he still cannot talk about to you or me. Both of these men have deep in their bones a permanent love of the aircraft they flew in battle, and the crews who will always be their brothers. The hangar at Tara Field is where they come together and labor with meticulous and intense care to maintain these Hueys and Cobras to exacting standards, even better than they did in Vietnam long ago. Wayne has a special connection to one of the AAHF aircraft, a Huey with tail number 624. Wayne flew this very aircraft in combat with the 61st AHC during the Tet Offensive of 1968. He says he could have been flying 624 the day Richard was killed, but he doesn't know.

Huey 624 is a prime example of why the crews who flew them still love them so much. They were tough, resilient, reliable and absorbed much abuse. Huey 624 flew over 2,200 combat hours in Vietnam. Several of her crew received Purple Hearts for wounds and several others died. She was shot down multiple times, including from enemy mortar fire while preparing to take off from the Crap Table.

At the end of the Vietnam War, Huey 624 was returned to service in Germany, Korea and finally with the Alabama National Guard in Birmingham until acquired by AAHF. After passing the rigorous maintenance standards and tests at AAHF, 624 was put into service in air shows, displays and rides. Wayne is not only proud to be a life member of AAHF, he has his own combat chariot in 624 that is also now a life member. He and his entire family, including five grandkids, have taken a recent ride in 624, a Huey that has served America long and well.

Two weeks ago 624 was the Huey the AAHF flew in to Newnan High School, and Wayne was on hand to talk to the kids about flying that same bird in the war over 40 years ago. How cool is that? As time moves on, AAHF will be looking for opportunities to acquire more recent aircraft that our soldiers flew in Iraq and Afghanistan, a more recent history equally vital to keep alive, especially as we Vietnam vets are not getting any younger.

The Army Aviation Heritage Foundation also wants to involve more civilians in its mission, and they have an invitation for you, whether you are a veteran or not.

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Grab-n-Go breakfast, fee: 12.00 USD
Hot breakfast, fee: 15.00 USD
Housekeeping service daily
Laundry on-site
Laundry on-site, coin operated
Mobility accessible rooms
Newspaper delivered to room, on request
Newspaper in lobby
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Safe deposit boxes, front desk
Valet dry-cleaning
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Bonaventure Cemetery
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Tybee Island Lighthouse
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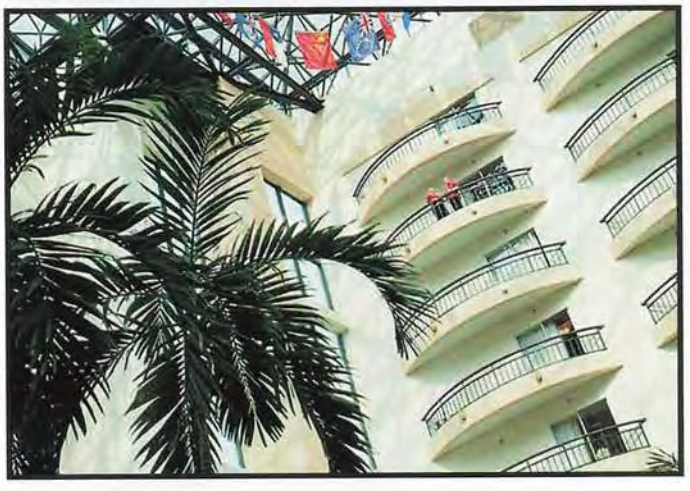




Magnolia
SPA















KHE SANH VETERAN BILL MAVES FATHER'S WWII SERVICE HONORED WITH SOLOMON ISLANDS VISIT

By Rachel Wittrock
Reporter staff

While the Edgerton Lions were busy serving up heaping stacks of pancakes, sausages and scrambled eggs on Sunday, Edgerton resident William Maves was packing his bags for a three-week journey to the Solomon Islands. The journey is not just a vacation to warmer temperatures, but a chance to reconnect with his father, Elroy Maves, who passed away 10 years ago.

William's father was the first Edgerton resident to serve overseas during World War II. The war came to the United States with the bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7,1941. Exactly eight months later, on Aug.7,1942,Elroy was with the Marine Corps unit that landed at Guadalcanal.

From the battle at Guadalcanal, where he was wounded the first time, to the battle at Midway and Okinawa, William's father was a part of the war's major offensives. During his deployment to Okinawa, Elroy was wounded and sent back to the states to a hospital in North Carolina, where he met a young Army nurse and his e wife.

William's life very closely mirrored his father's. He also joined the U.S. Marine Corps and was the first member of his high school class to be sent to Vietnam. William was also called up to serve in Oper-



WILLIAM MAVES

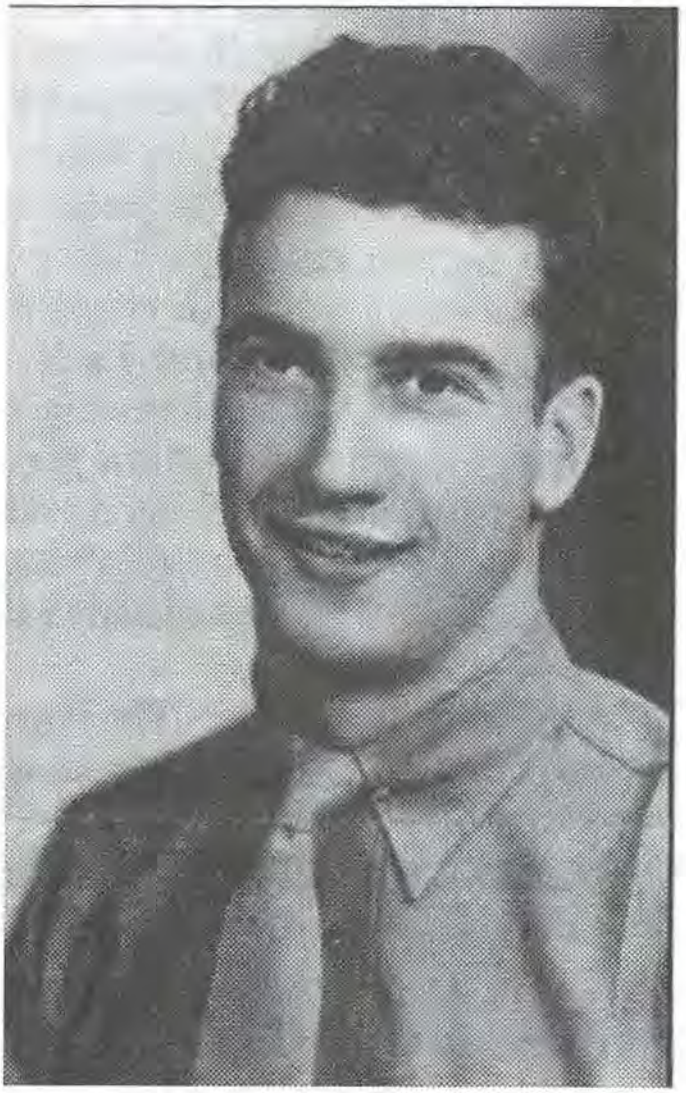

ELROY "PAL" MAVES

ation Iraqi Freedom in 2005, making him the last member of his high school class to serve.

It was during William's 2005 deployment to Iraq that his father passed away.

During the next three weeks, William and his wife Peggy, will be visiting Australia and the Solomon Islands, which are located off the northeast part of Australia. William is planning to visit Wellington, which is where his dad was sent when he was wounded in Guadalcanal. He also wants to find Red Beach and explore the jungles. William is planning to bring some of his father's ashes with him to spread either on the beach or the jungle.

FOLLOWUP STORY
KHE SANH VET IN THE NEWS
BILL MAVES VISITS GUADALCANAL TO HONOR HIS FATHER

By Rachel Wittrock
Reporter staff

Last month, Edgerton resident Bill Maves left on a three-week trip that took him to Australia and Guadalcanal, the island where American troops beat the Japanese in a bloody jungle battle that turned the tide in the Pacific Theater during World War II. Maves' mission: re-connect with his father, World War II veteran Elroy Maves, who died in 2005.

Maves' first stop was Sydney, Australia, where he spent six days. "We went in the Outback and into the Blue Mountains. We got to see the kangaroos and the koala bears and the things that are native to Australia that tourists like to see," Maves said. trip also included several stops not listed in tourist handbooks. Unlike Sydney and New Zealand, Guadalcanal is not a tourist destination. Planes land at the small airport only twice a week.

Soon after stepping off the plane, Maves met a local man who gave a him a tour of the island. Maves said history has been well preserved on Guadalcanal.

"There are war relics there, they are just where you left them," Maves said. During a walk in the jungle, Maves came upon an intact World War II plane and an artillery piece still in place. "On the shore there are still a couple troop transports that were destroyed," Maves said.

Guadalcanal doesn't see many tourists. The Toulagi Dive Club is an exception. The club attracts divers who want to explore Iron Battle Sound, where the sea bottom is littered with Japanese and Allied shipwrecks.

While on the island, Maves visited the memorial gardens near Henderson Field. Maves made his way down the "M" aisle until he found a secluded tree standing next to the airfield. Using a fork, Maves dug a hole next to the tree and buried his father's ashes. Maves said his father had no interest in traveling back to Guadalcanal in 1992 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal, a fierce fight that dragged on for six months and killed 24,000 Japanese soldiers and 1,400 GIs.



Alistair Morris Pae Honiara holds a dog tag he found on Guadalcanal when he was a boy. The dog tag belonged to David William Chalkley, a GI who fought in the battle of Guadalcanal in 1942.

The turning point in the battle came when U.S. Marines landed and took possession of the airfield. Although they were only able to un-load half their supplies before warships of the Imperial Navy steamed over the horizon and forced them to retreat, the Marines were able to grab a large cache of

Japanese supplies, including most of the rice.

In addition to burying his father's ashes, Maves undertook a second mission during his trip: discover the fate of another World War II veteran, David William Chalkley. During his time on Guadalcanal, Maves met a local man who found a GI's dog tag while he was a child. The dog tag belonged to Chalkley.

The discovery prompted Maves to investigate Chalkley's history. Did he lose the dog tag? Was he killed on Guadalcanal? If so, was his body ever found or was he listed MIA? Since returning to Edgerton on Tuesday, Feb. 24, Maves has uncovered some answers, which The Reporter will report on in a future issue.

NO CAR, NO RESPECT: THE PUSH TO END THE RIBBON RACK DIVIDE

By Hope Hodge Seck, Staff writer

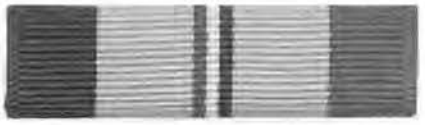

ED NOTE: I Believe that some Khe Sanh Members had the same experience with the issuing of the CAR Maybe this article and new standards may answer some age old questions.

Master Sgt. Orlando Reyes was taken aback when he was ridiculed on social media for not having a Combat Action Ribbon after being named the 2014 Military Times' Marine of the Year.

While Reyes, a logistician, had three deployments to Iraq under his belt, his duties had never put him in a position to participate in a combat engagement. "I didn't expect it to go so far," Reyes said of the criticism he experienced. "In today's era of social media and anonymity of computer posts, people are going to say what they want and there's no repercussions. They think, because of the rack of someone's chest, they have insight into that individual."

The growing discord surrounding Combat Action Ribbons — the award issued by the sea services for active participation in ground or surface combat — is troubling some leaders.

The online criticism illustrates an increasingly vocal perspective among Marines, especially those in the ground combat community. This perspective holds that a Marines' worth and authenticity is closely connected to combat experience, and that those who lack this experience are less deserving of respect.

In some ways, this viewpoint is a natural outgrowth of 14 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. But Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford is making it clear that he has no patience for it.

"The coin of the realm is the eagle, globe and anchor," Dunford told Marine Corps Times in a February interview. "It doesn't matter what [military occupational specialty] you have, it doesn't matter what deployments you've been on, it doesn't matter what ribbons are on your chest — it's about being a Marine."

"STACKING EACH OTHER UP'

When Dunford named Sgt. Maj. Ronald Green as his senior enlisted adviser in January, most Marines expressed interest in his background and the reputation he'd built as a thoughtful and involved leader. But a loud minority couldn't get past the stack of ribbons on his chest.

Green, a career artilleryman, did not have a Combat Action Ribbon.

"No CAR ... not the right guy for the job," one reader groused on Marine Corps Times' Facebook page following Green's selection. Others complained that the newly chosen sergeant major of the Marine Corps didn't measure up to other senior leaders who had earned combat valor awards.

Green took the comments in stride.

"We don't go around counting one another's ribbons, and, you know, kind of stacking each other up," he told Marine Corps Times. "We're actually too busy to do that."

When a Marine is tested in combat, Dunford said, how he or she performs is important. But, he added, the same can be said for every task and field to which Marines are assigned.

"Most Marines don't pick their MOS," he said. "Most of us do things that the Marine Corps tells us to do. And it really is about the quality of your performance in the task that you've been assigned that's most important, once you wear the eagle, globe and anchor. And that's how I'm going to approach this issue."

These comments from Dunford, a decorated infantry officer, represents a rebuke to the grunt-centric culture that glorifies combat experience above all else. What remains to be seen, though, is whether the commandant's message is enough to change the culture — or if only time can do that.

Green isn't the only Marine leader to face criticism for lack of a Combat Action Ribbon. Now-retired Gen. James Amos, the 35th commandant and the first from the aviation community, received so much heat online for his lack of a CAR that an aide once jumped into the fray to defend him.

"[Amos] has been in many a fight ... probably killed more enemy with his F-18 than any single company of grunts," the staffer wrote in a Facebook posting before thinking better of it and deleting the comment.

The division is a relatively new challenge for the Corps. The Combat Action Ribbon did not even exist until February 1969, when the Navy and Marine Corps adopted it in the midst of the Vietnam War. It was retroactively applied to combat engagements stretching back to 1961, and later extended to cover combat dating from the December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor attack that marked the U.S. entrance into World War II. The Coast Guard would adopt the Combat Action Ribbon much later, in 2008.

And prior to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Combat Action Ribbons were a rare sight rather than an expected one.

Andrew Northam, a Marine infantry veteran who served from 1990 to 1994, recalled the reverence that surrounded the CAR during that largely peacetime period.

"[CAR recipients] were more revered when I was in," Northam said. "A guy had three Combat Action Ribbons in my unit and he was like a god to us." Because there were so few opportunities to earn a CAR, he said, they weren't treated like a badge of authenticity. And combat experience wasn't seen as a rite of passage among Marines, as it sometimes is today.

Northam, who deployed to Somalia in late 1993 to support Operation Support Hope, earned a Combat Action Ribbon there, but did not receive it until years later when it was retroactively authorized after he had left the service.

Receiving the award, even late, made Northam realize its significance as a recognition of what he experienced. "When we looked back on our experience in Somalia, we always thought we should have gotten it; we felt a little robbed by that," he said. "We were taking mortar fire, in an offensive posture. It was a little bit of vindication having that."

Still, Northam believes the hype surrounding the ribbon has gone too far. When news of Green's selection as the Corps' top enlisted leader broke, Northam fired back at Green's critics on the blog USMC Life, calling the belief that senior leaders needed to sport a CAR "fanatical."

"Marines do not get to choose their duty stations; you go where you are assigned," Northam wrote. "As we wind down our nation's longest period at war, the Corps is facing many challenges; two of the biggest are dealing with the overall military drawdown and more importantly, dealing with returning vets and [post-traumatic stress]. Can [Green] conceivably do this without that precious ribbon? I believe so."

AN IMPERFECT AWARD

Even today, following a decade and a half of war in two theaters, Combat Action Ribbons are less common than some perceive them to be. According to

Marine Corps Manpower and Reserve Affairs, only 20,855 of the 184,567 Marines currently on active duty boast at least one CAR.

With combat arms fields — including infantry, artillery and mechanized units — making up roughly 22 percent of the active-duty force, that means less than half of active Marines in combat arms rate the award. That figure is likely to keep dwindling as wartime deployments are replaced with training, humanitarian and crisis response missions.

Logan Stark's Marine Corps experience was in many ways different from Northam's. He enlisted in 2007, as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were in full swing. An infantry assault man, Stark was surrounded by Marines who had already deployed and earned their Combat Action Ribbon. There was definite pressure, he said, to join their ranks.

"When I was a boot, there was the whole concept of, 'you aint sh-- until you got your Combat Action Ribbon," Stark said. "When you're coming up in the fleet, especially the time that I was in, you felt like that was a requirement of being an infantryman in the Marine Corps. It became something that you strived for, that you needed to be that complete Marine."

But there was a dark side to the CAR obsession, Stark soon realized. While deployed to Afghanistan's Sangin valley in 2010 and 2011, Stark said he encountered Marines who would insert themselves into patrols they didn't belong on, just so they could earn their Combat Action Ribbon. The experience altered the way he viewed the award.

"Is it a badge of honor and do I wear it with pride? Yes," said Stark, now a filmmaker and writer for the website Funker350. "But it only holds so much weight. I don't think we should judge people based on whether or not they have it. For some reason, we want to use these really easily identified symbols ... When did we get away from getting to know a person and getting to know their background before judging them?"

"I want to hear about a person's experiences; I want to learn from their combat," he said. "It shouldn't be a pedestal thing; it should be a way to learn from each other."

Reyes, the master sergeant, said he also observed Marines going out of their way to get a CAR during his deployments to Iraq. The trend wasn't limited to junior Marines, he said; he saw troops that were senior to him finagle their way onto convoys and other missions outside the wire to earn the coveted award. When they did, Reyes said it wasn't only unnecessary, but dangerous.

Now assigned to School of Infantry-East out of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Reyes said he encourages junior Marines to value their comrades' character and leadership qualities more than their ribbon stacks.

"We get so bent out of shape with these ribbons and awards that we sacrifice the most important thing to us as Marines: our integrity," he said.

SHORT VERSION OF THE NEW GUIDELINES FOR ISSUANCE OF THE CAR.
FOR COMPLETE DETAILS SEE PAGES

What's out: "Personnel in riverine and coastal operations, assaults, patrols, sweeps, ambushes, convoys, amphibious landings and similar activities who have participated in firefights are eligible."

It's the swatch of silk most Marines point to when you ask them what's the most important award on their chest. Sporting the gold, red and blue of the Combat Action Ribbon is a subtle way of telling fellow leathernecks you've done your job when the bullets were flying. But after two years of work and growing controversy over whether too many - or too few - CARs were being awarded, the Navy and Marine Corps have revised the criteria that govern who can earn one, modernizing the Vietnam-era rules in "recognition of situations encountered in today's combat environment."

Those "situations" can be summed up in one term that anybody who's been to Iraq knows all too well: improvised explosive devices. The revised rules,

which are detailed in the June 26 Corps-wide message ALMar 025/06, change the language of the official instructions for awarding the CAR to include those who've actively participated in a "ground or surface engagement" instead of a "bona fide ground or surface combat firefight or action during which he or she was under enemy fire." The change broadens the criteria for awarding the CAR to include situations where Marines and sailors may not be under small-arms fire, such as in an IED ambush.

"This is all tied to the IED piece," said Lt. Col. Jim Taylor, acting awards branch chief with Manpower and Reserve Affairs at Quantico, Va. "If I am the recipient of an IED explosion, I have not returned fire, in some cases.

"We didn't want the phraseology to eliminate that warrior from being entitled to the Combat Action Ribbon."

Gone, too, are stipulations that include the defense of a ship under enemy attack, riverine and coastal operations and Marines and sailors participating in peacekeeping operations. If they've actively participated in the ground or surface engagement, they're eligible.

Marine officials say that no previously issued CAR will be revoked under the revised rules. However, the new rules do mean that more Marines are eligible for the prestigious award than before. And Marines can get them retroactively if the new rules fit their situation on the battlefield.

So far, 85 Marines who had been denied the CAR based on earlier rules have been retroactively approved for the award, Taylor said.

The modernized CAR rules come after years of debate over the equity of the award and the situations under which Marines and sailors should earn it.

In 2002, there was grumbling in the Corps over the awarding of CARs for nearly the entire 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit's battalion landing team after operations in Afghanistan. The CAR is supposed to be bestowed upon a Marine for his individual action - it is not a unit award, officials explained.

The increasing toll of improvised explosive device ambushes in Iraq and the belief among most commanders that the rules did not allow them to award CARs for Marines hit by roadside bombs prompted further discussion in late 2005, including a letter from I Marine Expeditionary Force commander Lt. Gen. John Sattler to Marine Commandant Gen. Mike Hagee asking for a review of the rules.

After intensive discussions between Navy and Marine awards officials, the language was clarified earlier this year to include IED attacks.

The clarification also said the new IED rule would apply to Marines and sailors as far back as Oct. 7, 2001. And in March, the Corps drew up guidelines to help determine who might have been denied a CAR and now deserved one, and how to submit the names of those Marines and sailors who might not have been considered under the old guidelines.

The latest revision takes the eligibility to receive the CAR a step further, deleting or changing language from the original Navy Department rules written in 1969 and giving commanders greater authority to award the CAR in combat situations that can go from humanitarian operations to pitched combat in seconds.

"The Marine Corps has the most diligent application of awards in comparison to the other services," Taylor said. "From this point forward, I think we've got it right."

The rule changes also attempt to end the controversy over whether a Marine or sailor has to be fired on and fire back to rate a ribbon. By saying the individual has to "render satisfactory performance under enemy fire," the rules say a Marine or sailor doesn't have to fire his weapon when he's fired on to earn the CAR - but he's got to be doing his job to the utmost.

"It's meant to eliminate that potential situation where a Marine demonstrates cowardice under fire or disobeys a direct order," Taylor said.

The rules further emphasize the CAR may be awarded to Marines and sailors engaged in clandestine operations that preclude them from engaging the enemy. Navy awards officials wanted to ensure the new CAR rules did not leave out SEALs, whose duties often keep them from firing on the enemy.

The modified commando language applies to Marine special operations troops and reconnaissance men as well. "What we intended to do was to define the box a little better to say that the intent is to describe those people who by the nature of their mission are restricted in their ability to return fire - not by virtue of the specific assignment that they're on," Taylor said.

The rule revisions are also expected to dampen controversies sparked by some recent CAR awards. In late 2001 and 2002, hundreds of Marines from the Camp Lejeune, N.C.-based 26th MEU were awarded CARs for a firefight near their compound and for a mortar attack at Kandahar airfield. Few 15th MEU Marines - who were among the first to take ground in Afghanistan - were awarded the CAR.

Marines from the 26th MEU held their noses in August 2005 when the entire Navy crews of the amphibious assault ship Kearsarge and dock landing ship Ashland were awarded CARs after a single rocket fired by terrorists flew over their ships docked at the port of Aqaba, Jordan.

The MEU's leaders refused to submit their Marines for the award, believing the brief incident did not constitute an "engagement," officials said. "There was some degree of consternation about that situation," Taylor said The rule revisions are also expected to dampen controversies sparked by some recent CAR awards.

In late 2001 and 2002, hundreds of Marines from the Camp Lejeune, N.C.-based 26th MEU were awarded CARs for a firefight near their compound and for a mortar attack at Kandahar airfield. Few The CAR revisions coincide with an ongoing Navy Department overhaul of all its awards for Marines and sailors, Navy and Marine officials said. A draft of the newly edited awards manual has been forwarded to the Navy's top manpower official; the final version is expected to be released by the end of the summer.

Award eligibility: A June 26 Marine Corps message laid out major changes in eligibility for the Combat Action Ribbon. The highlights:

DEFINING COMBAT:

What's in: "...the individual must have rendered satisfactory performance under enemy fire while actively participating in a ground or surface engagement."

What's out: "...the individual must have participated in a bona fide ground or surface combat firefight or action during which he or she was under enemy fire ... ."

What's in: "Direct exposure to the detonation of an improvised explosive device used by an enemy, with or without the immediate presence of enemy forces, constitutes active participation in a ground or surface engagement."

What's out: "Personnel in riverine and coastal operations, assaults, patrols, sweeps, ambushes, convoys, amphibious landings and similar activities who have participated in firefights are eligible."

"Personnel assigned to areas subjected to sustained mortar, missile and artillery attacks who actively participate in retaliatory or offensive actions are eligible."

"Personnel aboard a ship are eligible when the safety of the ship and the crew were endangered by enemy attack, such as a ship hit by a mine or a ship engaged by shore, surface, air or sub-surface elements."

All three circumstances are now covered under the "ground or surface engagement" clause, and were deleted and rendered "unnecessary." Personnel aboard a ship are eligible when the safety of the ship and the crew were endangered by enemy attack, such as a ship hit by a mine or a ship engaged by shore, surface, air or sub-surface elements."

BOOK & MOVIE REVIEW

VIETNAM HEROES: 'I'VE BEEN WAITING 40 YEARS FOR THIS!' BOX-OFFICE HIT HAS WARRIORS IN TEARS, FINALLY GIVES THEM CELEBRATION THEY DESERVE



By Richard Botkin

In his book, "Ride the Thunder," author Richard Botkin tells the amazing true story of the remarkable collaboration between U.S. Marine Capt. John Ripley and South Vietnamese Marine Maj. Le Ba Binh. In the process, he vigorously dispels the notion that the military situation in Vietnam was lost, even as American war correspondents and policy makers were surrendering to the winds of political and economic pressure.

"For men like Ripley and Binh, who fought long and hard only to have victory pulled from their grasps, 'Ride the Thunder' celebrates their heroism, their humanity, their story," says Botkin. Using his keen Marine insight and years of in-depth research, Botkin takes the reader back in time, deep into the heart of the jungle and into the midst of the American-Vietnamese struggle for liberty.

In the prime of their youth, the two noted warriors were inspired by their fathers to fight for their country's freedom – one American, Capt. John Ripley, and the other South Vietnamese, Maj. Le Ba Binh. Their destinies would collide in Vietnam.

REVIEWS

"Richard Botkin has written a brilliant account of the bravery and skill of a small group of American Marine advisers and the courageous, Vietnamese Marines who fought to the end. For those of us who served as advisers to these Marines, it is a moving, personal story magnificently told. It is a must-read for all who want to understand the true nature of the Vietnam War." – Gen. Anthony C. Zinni, USMC (retired

Name: Lynn Chelewski
Ride The Thunder

This is a fantastic book for any American patriot, regardless of branch of service. It is especially a must read for former Marines or Viet Nam era veterans. Botkin ties in some crucial tangents between key historical figures both of South Vietnamese and American forces. The heroics of many; particularly Captain Ripley are inspiring and unforgettable. I've made it a gift to others as well as for myself. Semper Fidelis!

"I 'VE BEEN WAITING 40 YEARS FOR THIS"

That was a common refrain among the Vietnam War veterans and the South Vietnamese Americans – most with tears streaming down their faces – who gathered there on March 27 and 28 to witness their powerful story finally making it onto the big screen at the wildly popular premiere of "Ride the Thunder: A Vietnam War Story of Victory and Betrayal," a film that exploded at the box office and ranked as the top movie in the nation in per screen revenue this weekend.



VICTORY NEAR THE DONG HA BRIDGE

Some South Vietnamese attendees recalled their own heart-wrenching memories of more than a decade of starvation and torture in prison camps after they fought to keep their country free of communism. Separated from their wives and children, they saw friends and loved ones brutally murdered by North Vietnamese guards during their communist "re-education."

And 40 years after the fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War, U.S. Marine and Army veterans remembered harrowing fire fights alongside their South Vietnamese brothers in arms – and their return to a nation that turned its back on its own freedom fighters. But this momentous event wasn't about re-opening old wounds.

Instead, it was a heartfelt celebration of brotherhood, a long overdue welcome home and a chance to finally tell the incredible story of unparalleled sacrifice that most Americans have never heard.

"The film record of the Vietnam War is what will determine history 10, 20, 50 years from now when all the Vietnam veterans are gone," Richard Botkin, executive producer of "Ride the Thunder," told WND at the red-carpet event.

"Ride the Thunder" Executive Director Richard Botkin at the premiere of the film:

Many popular films dealing with Vietnam – such as "Apocalypse Now," "The Deer Hunter," "Platoon," "Good Morning, Vietnam," "Rambo" and "Full Metal Jacket" – serve as great entertainment, Botkin said, but they often grossly distort the reality of the warriors who fought courageously to stop the spread of communism.

"Those films portray our troops as victims, as dupes," he said. "It marginalizes them, shows them very unfavorably and the leadership unfavorably. It shows our Vietnamese allies as even worse. Our film is an effort to begin to turn the tide against that so that, in the future, people will realize that America was right to fight in Vietnam, to stop communism, and that our South Vietnamese allies were worthy of our sacrifice and that they fought well also."



"Ride the Thunder" Executive producer Richard Botkin(Left) introduces Vietnamese Marine LtCol Le Bah Binh & LtCol Gerry Turley at film premiere

The main character of the film is South Vietnamese Marine commander Le Ba Binh, who was a prime example of enduring courage in a battle of David and Goliath proportions as his battalion of only 700 men held 20,000 communist invaders in Dong Ha.

Binh, a man with few equals in the war-fighting profession, served 13 years in heavy combat (1962-1975) and another 11 years in communist prison camps. Despite numerous battle wounds and lost comrades, he showed unwavering courage in the face of extreme hardship.

"Americans, when they went to Vietnam, if they were a Marine, they went 13 months for one tour. If they were in the Army, 12 months. Some men went two or three times, but very few," Botkin explained.

"The Vietnamese generally had one tour that ended with death or dismemberment, so they fought forever. My main character, Binh, fought forever – 13 years, wounded nine times. At the end of the war, the communists put him in prison – they called it euphemistically 're-education camp' – for 11 years. He comes to the U.S. because he'll never get ahead in Vietnam. He comes to the U.S. with nothing and prospers. That's the Vietnamese story in America – suffering, hardship, come to America, work hard and succeed. It's a great story."



South Vietnamese Marine veterans surround commander Le Bah Binh (Center) at the "Ride the Thunder" premiere.

Botkin traveled to Vietnam seven times to do research for the film and the WND book that inspired it, "Ride the Thunder": A Vietnam War Story of Honor and Triumph." He and Binh visited Saigon and toured battlefields where the South Vietnamese Marines and their American advisers had fought so valiantly.

The film cast includes many Vietnamese "boat people," refugees who came to America's shores on overcrowded boats. They endured violent storms and even vicious attacks by pirates. An estimated 250,000 refugees would die at sea in their unwavering pursuit of freedom.

"No one dies breaking in to communist countries," Botkin said. "They all die breaking out. These people broke out. They were the risk takers. Those are the people who came to the United States. We got the best of the best. The risk takers came here, and that's why they've done so well."

Botkin's name was on the lips of most veterans and Vietnamese-Americans attending the premiere, all of whom said they were profoundly grateful that he and Producer Fred Koster endeavored for so many



"Ride the Thunder" Executive producer & author Richard Botkin



Skipper John Ripley and "Ripley Raider Sgt Chuck Goggin, " Ca Lu, 1967

years to finally bring the untold story to the big screen.

One Vietnamese couple, Kim Ly and Thomas Ly, was filled with emotion after seeing the film.

With tears welling in her eyes, Kim told WND, "There were a lot of memories. We cried so much when we were watching that movie."

Thomas said his brother, an Army of the Republic of Vietnam general who was famous for his leadership at the Battle of An Loc in 1972, is his "first hero."

"But Richard Botkin, he's my second hero," Thomas said. "When I watch this film, I am so proud."

WND also interviewed Col. Gerry Turley, member of an all-star American team of advisers who found the moral courage to persevere when he was forced into one of the highest positions of leadership in the midst of a brutal and bloody confrontation.



Col. Gerry Turley

Turley, whose real-life story is told in the book, admired Binh's determination and sacrifice.

"I think that Col. Binh was illustrative of all of those other Vietnamese officers who served their country," he said. "He really laid his life on the line so many times. Then he became a prisoner. All he had to do was say, 'I accept communism.'"

Another leading character in the book and film is the late U.S. Marine Capt. John Ripley, who showed exceptional physical strength and courage when he took on the superhuman task of detonating a steel bridge at Dong Ha on Easter Sunday, 1972 – before the enemy could cross with its tanks and 20,000 invaders.

Ripley had not slept or eaten a solid meal in four days when he shimmied up and down the I-beams of the bridge for nearly four hours, rigging them for detonation. His legs dangled like moving targets, inviting enemy fire from snipers and North Vietnamese tanks. While most people might never have dared attempt the monstrous feat, Ripley never backed down, purchasing critical time for allied forces.

"It was a tremendous honor to play this great man. There's a responsibility when you play such a great person, a historical figure," he told WND. "There's an abundance of great material about him, his life, his family, what he did in the war. It makes the job easier as an actor when you have a book with such rich details about this person's life. Usually you're using your imagination and also your life experiences, but … it was great to have that book to go to and get all those details. I hope I did him justice."

Capt. Ed McCourt, who served in Vietnam in the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, knew Ripley personally. McCourt, who grew emotional when recalling his time in Vietnam, told WND the film accurately depicted Ripley, the war heroes and the reality of the battles they fought.



Vietnam Veteran Capt Ed McCourt and his wife Dr. Susan McCourt at the premiere of "Ride the Thunder"

"John Ripley was a real Christian type of individual," he said. "Fidelity was number 1 on his list. He was a super individual, inside and out. … His troops would follow him to hell and back just because he asked them to go. That's the kind of leader he was. When his company would go out, he was like a [North Vietnamese Army] magnet. Every time they'd go out, they'd get in a fire fight."

McCourt said his Marines liked to go with Ripley on patrol because "we knew we'd get into something and not just walk around for six or seven days."

McCourt lamented that the U.S. military is still enforcing the same rules of engagement he says handicapped the warriors in Vietnam.

"We've got the same thing happening right now," he said. "We send Marines, soldiers, airmen, Navy SEALs and whatever to combat, but we've got rules of engagement that will not let them win. This is ridiculous. We didn't learn anything in Vietnam when it comes to that."

Asked how he felt about the film as a whole, McCourt said, "I'll tell you, it brought me closure. … I thought it was fantastic. … I think the president should see this movie."

Nationally syndicated talk-radio host Hugh Hewitt said he "loved" the documentary film. He attended the premiere and saw the movie twice – once with a primarily Vietnamese-American crowd and a second time with a crowd of American veterans.

"The Vietnamese audience reaction was significantly different from the American veterans," Hewitt told WND. "The American veterans were moved and touched by the story of their compatriots. The Vietnamese were, in part, angry and very chatty about what they were seeing because many of them had survived the re-education camps before they got to the United States."

Hewitt predicted that the film will "play very well across the United States" and the word will get out "Dinesh D'Souza style."

"It accomplished its ends. It was very sober. It's not propagandistic. It's just a telling of a story that needs to be told," Hewitt said. "They allow the film to tell the story about the people who were against the war and the propaganda they created for the enemy and the fact that they need to apologize. It really creates a moral obligation on the part of people like Jane Fonda and John Kerry and Donald Sutherland to step up and say, 'I'm sorry. I was wrong.'"

WND asked Hewitt: What was the most significant lesson you learned from this film?

"Don't give up the fight for history," he said. "It's never over."

Some U.S. history teachers are ready to bring the lessons of "Ride the Thunder" into their classrooms. Todd Anton, an eighth-grade history teacher at Heritage School near Victorville, California, told WND, "It was an outstanding movie. … This is what we need to get in our classrooms throughout the country – the honest portrayal of the heroic men and women, both sides, who fought in Vietnam – because it's not taught in our schools anymore."

Anton said most school kids don't know much about the war, but, in his experience, Vietnam veterans are more than willing to have honest and thoughtful conversations with younger generations about their experiences.

"It's really opening up a lot of dialogue and a lot of healing for our veterans, which is so important," he said.

Anton said the "Ride the Thunder" film presents such a significant lesson of history that he's working on a related curriculum to teach in America's classrooms.

"This isn't some propaganda," he said. "There are two sides to every story. It's about time for people to hear both sides and let the individual make up their mind. That's what history is all about. It's not a predetermined outcome. It's using the facts, and this movie really brings that together."

Two jovial and brawny Marine officers who served two tours in Vietnam together, Maj. Wayne Legenfelder and Maj. Dell Williams, told WND they delighted in seeing the film.



"Ride the Thunder Executive producer Richard Botkin (Left) Vietnamese-American actress and producer Kieu Chinh and retired Marine Capt. Ed McCourt

Williams, a retired U.S. history teacher for Mira-Costa College in North San Diego County, said, "It was an excellent, excellent film. It tells a story of Vietnam that I think very few people in this country have heard about – and that's something that happened after the Tet [Offensive]. Things were going so well in Vietnam, and we just don't hear that story. It ends with Tet, and 'Oh, we lost the war.' I don't think that's the case at all. It shows it well."

Williams said, in his experience, American students "have no idea" about the Vietnam War: "They don't understand the politics, the foreign policy, the agreements this country made."

And for those critics who say America had no busi-

ness getting involved in the war, Chow Huang, whose father was a South Vietnamese Marine, had a special message:

"If you have never been to our country, you don't know," he said. "We were fighting for our freedom, and we appreciate all the help from the U.S."

Following the premiere, on March 28, a special ceremony was held in the parking lot of the Westminster theater that drew several hundred veterans and members of the community. The event, called "Bridging the Gap," promoted the brotherhood of the South Vietnamese and American veterans.

The emotional 40-year reunion of the brothers in arms featured veterans from both countries who individually saluted and embraced one another. And for Richard Botkin, seeing the warm ceremony and the culmination of his 12-year labor of love was pure delight.



"Bridging the GAP" Ceremony, March 28, 2015

"I've met so many wonderful American Marines and their families," he said. "And the Vietnamese community has embraced us magnificently. It was a long time, but it was a complete joy for me."

Botkin shared the most significant lesson he learned in his dozen years of research:

"America is made and kept free by a small percentage of men and women who are willing to risk it all," he said. "We should celebrate those people. Unfortunately, we don't. We celebrate the wrong people all the time. But these are people who need to be celebrated. 'Joy' is the word that describes being around warriors. These are committed people. I love these people."

PHOTOS FROM BRIDGING THE GAP CEREMONY 28 MARCH 2015





ANOTHER EXCERPT FROM MIKE ARCHERS NEWEST BOOK:

***The Long Goodbye: In Search of a Friend Lost at Khe Sanh*,**

This Chapter immediately follows the chapter "July 6, 1968" in Red Clay Issue 85 Page 61

Hardly a day goes by when I do not shake my head in amazement at the number of lives Tommy Mahoney touched during his brief existence. He and I were friends in high school and together joined the Marine Corps in 1967. In July of the following year, Tommy was mortally wounded on the day American forces abandoned Khe Sanh Combat Base in the face of overwhelming pressure from North Vietnamese Army forces.

His fellow Marines refused to abandon the body of their much-admired friend, fighting for hours at close quarters against an enemy that stubbornly refused to relinquish it. Only after a menacing directive from a future Commandant of the Marine Corps, did the men reluctantly cease their efforts -- forever tasting the bitterness of that decision.

Thirty-seven years later, I included an account of this in my memoir, ***A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered,*** generating an unanticipated outpouring of concern from readers moved by Mahoney's tragic end and the unresolved issue of his remains. A series of astonishing connections resulted, drawing me back to Vietnam and the hill where he had fallen. Scores of people, from around the world, became involved in this effort to see Tommy returned home. Among them, former adversaries from the Khe Sanh battlefield, including one who participated in the ambush that killed him.

My next book, ***The Long Goodbye: In Search of a Friend Lost at Khe Sanh***, scheduled for release in early 2015, is not just the story of Tommy Mahoney, those who knew him and those who fought against him. It is also the story of why American forces chose to fight at Khe Sanh, a place with the ruggedness terrain; worst weather; and largest, best equipped, enemy force anywhere in South Vietnam. Without understanding that, it is impossible to fully comprehend the appalling scale of suffering and death borne by both sides, or fathom the enduring sorrow carried by those who knew a fine young man who never came back from there.

LAST STAND AT HILL 689

Later that night before brief, merciful, sleep engulfed the men who had tried so hard to reach Tom's body, each struggled with the same questions: Why had he left the safety of the hill top that afternoon? If it was merely for some privacy to relieve himself, why did he not use one of the many trenches or partially collapsed bunkers within the defensive perimeter?

Everyone on Hill 881 South had been aware of what was happening over on Hill 689 that day, how the NVA had ambushed Marines just outside the perimeter, placing the bodies in prepared kill zones awaiting other Marines to retrieve them. In addition, Tom had likely been part of the 1st Platoon patrol just days before that had chased off two NVA reconnaissance soldiers standing near where he was later killed. Just as puzzling, why would a seasoned combat veteran like Tom venture out into enemy territory without a weapon?

Years later, Ken Campbell vividly recalled that "the day Mahoney took that walk, his friend told me that he had been depressed because of a recent 'Dear John' letter and he suspected that Tommy was 'inviting suicide.'" Ken felt there may have been some truth in that "because to go outside the wire without your rifle just did not make sense." Allen Williams concurred, later saying, "Tommy never let me see the 'Dear John' letter, but we all knew about it and he was very distraught for days. After he got that letter, he was in bad shape. Very bad shape. He was just not thinking clearly. He didn't give a f#ck any more. He was hurt, really hurt." It was entirely out of character for him, Williams added:

"Tommy was a decent human be-

[1]Northrop was wounded on Hill 689 the day after Tom was killed, suffering a hand injury and concussion from an enemy mortar round. He returned to duty with Bravo Company and left Vietnam in September, later saying "When I try to think back and remember certain things that happened during my tour, very little comes back. But, July 6th will always be on my mind"

> ing who always wanted to do the right thing and always seemed to succeed. He always stayed awake on watch. He always knew the right thing to say and do. I never heard him say a bad word about anyone, and he got along with everyone. Tommy had that way with everything he did."

His fellow Marines, including Lieutenant Ahearn, agreed. By all accounts, Tommy Mahoney was probably the least careless member of the platoon, and although Ahearn knew him to be fearless and often "rambunctious and experimental" in combat situations, Tommy was not negligent and the last person one would expect to take such an unnecessary risk.

Frank would later say, "I don't think Mahoney was trying to commit suicide. We had not patrolled for days while waiting to evacuate the hill. We were just sitting ducks." Lieutenant Ahearn was of the opinion that while Mahoney could stoically endure "the pain of war," he was also a sentimental-type, and perhaps that was his Achilles heel. Savvy and battle-hardened, he may have been undone by "a broken heart."

While Frank's take on this might sound overly romanticized, it sprang from terrible anguish he'd endured as a boy, watching his mother die a slow, painful death as his father struggled mightily to pay her medical bills and encourage her not to give up. A responsible, intelligent man, who adored his children, the elder Ahearn could no longer find the will to go on without her and would die in his sleep ten months later, orphaning Frank and his six siblings. "He loved her very much," Frank later said of his father. "The cause of death was attributed to a heart attack, but I knew it was actually a broken heart." [iii]

Three weeks later, I received a letter from Tommy dated July 4—two days before he was killed. I was in Phu Bai when it finally arrived and had not yet learned of his fate. No longer the upbeat and optimistic guy he had been in his last few letters to me, Tommy's tone was now gloomy, almost despondent. He had been watching the destruction of Khe Sanh Combat Base for the last few weeks and glumly commiserated with me about the waste it had been by so many who sacrificed so much to defend the place.

He was also frustrated by his battalion- and regimental-level superior officers for allowing his company to exist so dangerously exposed on the hill for days after destroying their own shelters. The men of Bravo were growing angry at the lack of proper planning that had left them in such a precarious situation and with still no reliable word on when they would be lifted out. There was no more talk from Tom about a career in the military. More ominously, there was no mention of our planned New Year's Eve bash back home in Oakland. Though he did not tell me of it, I later learned he had just received a hurtful letter from Linda, for whom he still carried a torch. Given his despondency about the abandonment of Khe Sanh to the North Vietnamese, her timing could not have been worse.

Lieutenant Ahearn was inconsolable as he examined the events of the day on the five-minute flight from Hill 881 South to Hill 689:

> "I didn't bring back Mahoney's body and was allowed 'no excuses' like my father had taught me. The Marine Corps has high standards for this and I didn't meet them. I believed I had let everyone down who ever trusted me. Words cannot describe my feeling of hopelessness and loss that day and for many years thereafter."

Others had a higher opinion of Ahearn than he did

2 Homemade explosive device, usually a canvass or burlap sack filled with dynamite.

3 Smith would retire a Major General in 1999

of himself. Ken Campbell later wrote to Frank saying, "Tom Mahoney was a good guy. I know you tried hard that bad day to get him back. You should take comfort that you did your best ... and the rest of us knew and appreciated it." Tom Northrop, who had been Mahoney's squad leader for a time, empathically seconded Campbell's sentiment, recalling Tom Mahoney "as probably the most well-liked brother in our platoon" and Ahearn as "the best damn line officer a Marine could have." [1] Many decades later, Marine General James "Mad Dog" Mattes observed that, "some platoons are worth as much as a company because of the social energy of their leaders." He must have been thinking of men like Lieutenant Frank Ahearn.

Some in Bravo could not endure another minute of the strain and danger. One confided to me years later that while helping medevac wounded men, he had stayed onboard a chopper bound directly for a hospital in a safe area to the east. Though not injured himself, he was covered with so much blood from those he'd carried that no one would question him until he was too far away from Khe Sanh for it to matter. He made this decision to avoid going to Hill 689, where it was obvious the battalion was preparing to make a last stand and he would likely not survive.

His platoon had been badly mauled a few weeks before on Memorial Day near the Old French Fort and the subsequent anxiety of trying to defend Hill 881 South with so few people added to his emotional damage. The peculiar circumstances of Mahoney's death, coupled with the simultaneous mortar attack wounding over a dozen Marines and a corpsman, was the final straw. His story reminded Me that each of us had a breaking point. He reached that point on the afternoon of July 6, 1968—we will never know if Tommy Mahoney did so that day as well.

Ahearn was so exhausted when he arrived on Hill 689 that he slid into the nearest hole he could find, an old bomb crater, to get some sleep. As his eyes adjusted to the dark interior he noticed an unexploded NVA satchel charge [2] but was too tired to go any further and so curled up beside it and went to sleep.

Members of Bravo who had arrived earlier were busily digging defensive positions on the southeast side of the hill. Captain Black landed after dark and immediately ordered a radar-guided bombing strike on his old command post to keep the enemy from using what was left of it. He vividly recalled the bombs were right on target and how "that mountaintop lit up."

Earlier that day, the new commander of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, Lieutenant Colonel Archie Van Winkle, finished moving all his men, including his headquarters unit, to Hill 689 in order to deal with the dire situation. Van Winkle, who had received the Medal of Honor as a staff sergeant platoon leader in Korea, set up his new command post in a deep, cave-like hole hastily dug below the northeast rim of the hill. Due to unrelenting attrition over the last month, his command was now a "battalion" in name only, closer to just two companies, or about 500 men, rather than the approximately 1,200 of customary battalion troop strength.

The NVA knew that the senior Marine officer had moved his command post there from Hill 558 and were anxious to achieve maximum propaganda value by annihilating this last American battalion at Khe Sanh. Major General Raymond Davis, commanding the 3rd Marine Division, added some media bluster by announcing, "We are going to move off the hill, but not until we have defeated the North Vietnamese," failing to mention there was now no other option left for the isolated and outnumbered Marines but to hold.

Charlie Company set up within the existing perimeter wire, reinforcing badly depleted Delta. Alpha Company covertly moved into positions just outside the northwest defensive perimeter to protect the flank and rear of the hill. This put them just above the killing zone where the Marine bodies lay from earlier NVA ambushes, the stench of death nauseating them throughout the night. Alpha was led by

4 The presence of this flag suggests the NVA planned to raise it in victory on the hill.

Lieutenant Ray L. Smith. He and Ahearn had been classmates at Officers Candidate School and Frank had been immediately impressed by the natural leadership abilities of this young Oklahoma native. Originally an enlisted Marine, Smith had so impressed his superiors in boot camp that he was immediately tabbed as officer material and sent to Quantico.[3]

The following night, July 7, hundreds of NVA soldiers moved from across the ravine to the southwest. Lead members called out to the Marines in English phrases, like "friendly corpsman" and "friendlies coming in," to deceive the defenders into thinking wounded comrades were finally returning. The ruse allowed them to approach within a few meters before bursting through the perimeter barbed wire and flowing to the right and left down the Marine trench lines. The attackers quickly overwhelmed Marine fighting positions and bunkers, but their effort to take the crest of the mountaintop and the battalion command post was stalled by Charlie Company defending the interior of the narrow fortification. [iv]

Some of the attackers, attempting to get onto the northwest ridgeline, were surprised and driven back by the waiting Alpha Company. Lieutenant Smith then led a platoon counterattacking back into the main position, killing dozens of surprised invaders and retaking captured bunkers and trenches.

Lieutenant Colonel Van Winkle then ordered Bravo Company to provide a platoon at once to assist in the counterattack, granting Lieutenant Frank Ahearn his wish from the day before when, in the throes of despair after losing Mahoney, he bitterly hoped to "maybe kill some NVA." Those who witnessed Ahearn's audacious charge down the trench line ahead of his troops, firing point blank into the stunned enemy, never forgot.

Ernie Vaughn, then a 20-year-old Lance Corporal from Keokuk, Iowa, was right behind Frank and later recalled: "The NVA were everywhere and Lieutenant Ahearn traded his .45 pistol with me for my M-16 to increase his fire power." They soon came upon a Marine bunker now occupied by the enemy. "Lieutenant Ahearn fired a LAW [Light Anti-Tank Weapon] into it and when we went over to check, there were several dead NVA [the later official count was six] laying there. I wanted their flag, but the Lieutenant told me to leave it because it could be booby trapped."[v4] Throughout the night, the Americans waited for the NVA's heavy artillery to pulverize their positions on the hill, as they done a few weeks earlier at places like LZ Bang Hill. Later, many Americans would be incredulous that they passed up on the opportunity to easily destroy the Marine battalion with unrelenting artillery fire, rather than a costly and unsuccessful ground assault.[vi]

At sunrise, it took Bravo's commander, Captain Black twenty minutes to get to the battalion command post, a walk of usually less than five, because of the damage and carnage all around him. "All along the way," Black recalled, "I saw Marines in tears for the hell they'd undergone and the buddies they lost." [vii]

The NVA took most of their dead when they finally retreated before daybreak, leaving only fifteen bodies behind, nearly half of whom were personally dispatched by Frank Ahearn. He and Ray Smith, classmates at OCS the year before, had just led synchronized charges into the teeth of a resolute enemy assault force, driving them from captured American trench lines and bunkers. Their courage and determination saved this last, isolated battalion at Khe Sanh from being overwhelmed, denying Hanoi a considerable propaganda coup which undoubtedly would have a significant impact on negotiations then underway in Paris to end the war.

The final major battle by Marines at Khe Sanh was not decided by sophisticated weaponry in America's vaunted arsenal, as envisioned by General Westmoreland when the siege had begun six months before, but by the audacity and heroism of the officers and men of rifle platoons meeting the enemy in the dark, face-to-face.

Before the battalion could leave Hill 689, they had to devise a scheme to recover the dead Marines outside the wire. After two days of preparation, the final plan unfolded on the night of July 9. A "box of steel" would be created around the bodies with co-

BOOT CAMP GRADUATION DAY AUGUST 67, MCRD SAN DIEGO, CA



TOM MAHONEY (L) MICHAEL ARCHER (R) WITH MICHAEL ARCHERS LITTLE BROTHERS

ordinated machine gun, mortar, and close air support, while two-person "body snatcher" teams, well-camouflaged and faces smeared with black paint, would under cover of darkness move into the box to recover a designated body. The mission was over in thirty minutes, when all but two of the dead were located and recovered. This time, no one was killed in the effort. The Americans finally left Hill 689 on the afternoon of July 12, 1968.

I learned of Tommy's fate 17 days later, while reading U.S. casualty reports in the *Stars & Stripes*. His name was listed under the heading "Missing in Action." Earlier that month I suspected something might be wrong because of a puzzling interruption in mail from friends and family, especially my mom who wrote almost daily. My unit was then located near the Hué-Phu Bai airfield, about 70 miles southeast of Khe Sanh, and, after reading that Tom was missing, I hitchhiked over to the hospital to see if any men from Bravo Company, 1st Marines might be there.

I found Bruce Bird still recovering from the neck wound he received in his attempt to reach Tom a few weeks before. Bruce said he had heard that Tommy was acting "differently" because of a "Dear John" letter he'd received a few days before walking off the hill and getting killed. Until that moment I thought Tommy was missing-in-action and so was shocked to learn he was dead. Bird told me the rest of the story in a detached, matter-of-fact monotone of one who had seen many men die. Still stunned, I turned to leave. Bruce, sensing my pain, called out to me: "Hey, for what it's worth, if Mahoney hadn't done what he did, the whole platoon would have been lost, shot down with the chopper on the way out."

I suddenly recalled the unusually vivid dream I had back in May 1967, as described earlier, of Tommy being killed on Hill 881 South. At the time I dreamt this, Marines had just fought a well-publicized battle there, which I followed with great interest in the newspapers and on television. I did not mention it to Tom and now wondered if I should have. If I had, and he remembered, would it have made any difference? Like most dreams, I didn't think it would come true, but had since learned firsthand that at pitiless Khe Sanh, the unimaginable was a common occurrence—a lesson once again being painfully reinforced at that moment.

After leaving the hospital, I went back to my hut and intentionally picked a fight with the burliest enlisted man in my platoon, with whom I rarely spoke, and who was more than happy to accommodate, drilling me on the chin with a big right fist, knocking me back through the air onto the plywood floor dazed.

This incident was immediately understood by everyone present. In an environment where to weep was considered a sign of weakness by peers, a cause for doubt about one's toughness and trustworthiness under pressure, I had to do something quickly to extirpate the devastating sorrow I was experiencing. Physically punishing myself for having outlived my friend seemed like an acceptable course of action. Getting one's ass kicked was more dignified than crying.

That evening I wrote a letter to my parents:

Dear Mom & Dad,
I haven't been getting much mail lately. I guess I know why. I read about Tom, we get weekly casualty reports. I'm really going to miss him. He was about the best friend I ever had. I hope his mom will be able to take it.

As for me, I just don't know. I'm sick of it all, this lousy country and this war. A few more months and I'll be leaving and somebody else will take my place. One big waste. That's all it is. Well I'd better go. Take care. I'm O.K. And I'll write again soon. Love, Mike.

i Ken Campbell email to author, October 13, 2006
ii Allen Williams interview, July 30, 2010
iii Ahearn email to author May14, 2014
iv First Marine regiment Command Chronology July 1998
v Ernie Vaughn email to Frank Ahearn, October 11, 2005
vi Robert Black, "Closing the "end of the Line," *Shipmate Magazine*, November 2999, pp 13-14
vii Black, *Closing*, p.4.

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MIKE'S LETTER ON THE CONTINUING SEARCH FOR TOM MAHONEY

Tom, JPAC was up on Hill 881 South digging for Mahoney this last summer, but were relying on information from two guys, one Marine and one former NVA, who weren't actually there the day Tommy was killed—and so the excavation unsurprisingly to me) came up empty. Several members of Bravo 1/1 and myself have been trying to tell JPAC every chance we got for the last four years that they were looking on the wrong hill, but for some reason they are adverse to entertaining first-hand information.

To give you an idea how far off they were, visualize walking off the back of that CH-46 in the Hill 881 South exhibit at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. The distant hilltop you see on the mural straight ahead (then called 881 Alpha by the Marines) was guarded by Tommy Mahoney's First Platoon and his body was left behind on the far side of that knoll (out of view) as you look. Yet, the JPAC dug last summer at two sites close together on the 881 South main position almost equivalent to *where the exhibit helicopter is located!* Anyway, the good people at DPMO (now a new agency) are picking up the ball and have asked me (again) for all the information. They will pass it along to JPAC with a strong recommendation that they at least consider it (since that's where he is!) during their two trips back there this coming summer… so keep your fingers crossed.





TOMMY, YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

BRAVO! Skipper Ken Pipes remembers the actions of 30 March 1968 in the following piece that was published, among other places, in October 2014 for the Military Order of the World Wars.

ED NOTE: THE STORY HAS BEEN TOLD BEFORE, BUT I AM PROUD TO BE WRITING & READING IT OVER AND OVER.

One of the most sobering experiences in life is the responsibility of leading young Marines into the teeth of the enemy knowing that some of them will not come out of it alive. It takes courage, faith, an indomitable spirit, and an unfailing trust in the capabilities of the men entrusted to your care.

Fighting at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam in 1967 –1968, was an ongoing, brutal fight to the death between Marines and soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army. Subsequently, this battle has become the title of a two-hour documentary film, "Bravo! Common Men, Uncommon Valor," produced and directed by Ken and Betty Rodgers. Ken was a member of Bravo Company, First Battalion, 26th Marines, before and during the Siege of Khe Sanh.

On 30 March 1968, Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines (B/1/26) proceeded from the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base to their predesignated line of departure located near forward units of the North Vietnamese Army's (NVA's) 8th Battalion, 66th Regiment, 304th (Hanoi) Iron Division. Poised against each other in the coming attack were lineal descendants of one of the most famous divisions involved in the siege against the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and elements of the 26th Marines—one of three Marine regiments of the 5th Marine Division that led the assault against Japan's island fortress of Iwo Jima in February/March 1945.

The attack was scheduled for first light, but it was delayed by heavy ground fog that obscured the entire objective area. As the blinding fog began to lift, our Marines, with bayonets fixed, crossed the line of departure outside the wire of the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

Immediately upon commencing the assault, the two lead platoons came under extremely heavy mortar, rocket-propelled grenade, automatic weapons, and small arms fire from the 8th NVA Battalion who occupied extensive, well-constructed, mutually supporting bunkers and trench systems.

Under the umbrella of withering fire from nine batteries of Marine and Army artillery that pummeled the flanks of the objective area and created a rolling barrage 50 to 70 meters in front of the two attack platoons, the Marines began breaching the NVA positions. The fight for fire superiority hung in the balance until the attached flame section and combat engineer detachment entered the fray. As their predecessors did on Iwo Jima, these units, covered and assisted by Marine riflemen, began to blind, blast, and burn their way into the NVA fortifications.

For the next four hours, the Marines of Company B, some of whom had undergone 70-plus days and nights of continuing, killing bombardment by NVA heavy artillery, rocket, mortar, and concentrated sniper fire, gained some measure of retribution as they routed the NVA soldiers from their fiercely defended positions. Within the breached positions, our Marine riflemen were literally walking over the dead and dying NVA defenders.

From the moment of close contact until some four hours later when we received the order to withdraw back into the combat base, the fight was hand to hand, bayonet to bayonet, knife to knife, grenade against grenade, and rifleman against rifleman, with the trump card being, as always, Marines using flamethrowers and combat engineers employing demolitions!

It may seem to some readers that this was just another example of a typical seasoned Marine combat unit doing its job. It was not. The Marine rifle company that attacked the NVA that Saturday morning was not the same company that had moved from Hill 881 South three months earlier to participate in a battalion sweep toward the Laotian border, and

then moved into the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The continuous enemy bombardment while we were in the combat base had hurt B/1/26 more than any other similarly-sized defending unit, exacerbated by the tragic loss of most of an entire platoon on 25 February resulting from an ambush by a reinforced company from the 8th NVA Battalion.

Most of the Marines in Company B on 30 March had joined during the siege as replacements after the siege had begun. These young men had traveled a hard road including boot camp, skills training at the Infantry Training Regiment, Staging Battalion at Camp Pendleton, a flight to Vietnam, reporting in to the 26th Marines, exiting the aircraft at the Khe Sanh Combat Base under fire, reporting for assignment to 1st Battalion, and finally, still under fire, joining Company B. To a rifleman, they had no combat experience at the fire team, squad, platoon, or company level.

As it has always been in combat, if it had not been for the leveling skills of a handful of short-timer leaders, privates first class and corporals, led by an experienced company executive officer, company gunnery sergeant, and outstanding platoon commanders, the execution of this company-sized raid on 30 March 1968 would never have moved beyond our frontline trenches.

As noted by the commanding officer of 1/26 and the S–3 (operations officer) who planned the company raid, "The members of Company B performed individually and collectively in a manner normally expected only of seasoned and combat-experienced Marines."

I believe that their brilliant feat can only be attributed to their deep and overriding desire to avenge the prior loss of Marines of their company, most of whom they never knew or met! To them and them alone goes the credit for executing, arguably, the first successful company-sized offensive assault outside the wire since the ambush of their mates on 25 February, and for making it such a success!

These Marines totally decimated the 8th NVA Battalion, including the enemy battalion commander and his staff. In so doing, intercepted enemy radio traffic revealed the Marines of Company B killed at least 115 NVA officers and soldiers and wounded an untold number of their survivors.

Still later, Marines from B/1/26 (none above the rank of corporal) who had participated in the raid, were awarded two Navy Crosses, nine Silver Stars, eight Bronze Stars, and two Navy Commendation Medals with Combat "V" for valor for individual acts of courage, gallantry, and heroism! Additionally, Marines received over 100 Purple Hearts, with several of these Marines earning their awards for receiving a second and third wound.

Subsequent to the fighting on 30 March 1968, the company was the recipient of the following from the commanding general of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam:

Officers and men of B/1/26 USMC deserve highest praise for aggressive patrol action north of Khe Sanh on 30 March. Heavy casualties inflicted on bunkers and entrenched enemy forces indicate typical Marine esprit de corps and professionalism. Well done!

Gen William Westmoreland

Just as is the case with their predecessors from Iwo Jima, to a man, the Khe Sanh Marines of Company B remain intensely proud of their 26th Marines heritage! We will always feel we were privileged to serve with Bravo's young, inexperienced, Marine infantrymen that fateful Saturday morning. We were truly in the company of men who were, are, and will always be, "The Immortals!"

Lieutenant Colonel Pipes was the Officer Commanding Bravo Company, First Battalion, 26th Marines, during the Siege of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, TET, 1968, RVN. Ken and his wife, Sharon, have lived in Fallbrook, California since their retirement from the Marine Corps in 1982. They have been married for 52 years. Ken, Sharon and their sons, Dan and Tim, are all members of MOWW's MajGen Pendleton Chapter, CA.



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KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student **OR** who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.
2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization.
3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2015 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, -1MN 55128317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.
Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms.
Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.
A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the ***"Red Clay"*** Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David E. Lownds Award – for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award – for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award – for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

2. The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY 1* of the school year applied for. *** (This is an important, NEW change to previous years)*****

6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 regular points or 115 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points max. (Please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

A GPA of 4.0 x 10 = 40 points or a GPA of 3.0 x 10 = 30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 30 points total

Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Student government = 10 points max.

Community related services = 10 points max.

Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 10 points max.

c. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min. to 400 words max) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max.

Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments. Please review the six suggested adjectives below, select one or more that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

TENACIOUS FAITHFUL UNDAUNTED STEADFAST RESOLUTE INNOVATIVE

d. Bonus Points = 10 bonus points for being a military veteran

= 5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application:_____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: last_____, first_____ MI_____

Address: street_____, city_____ state_____zip_____

Home phone:_____ E-mail address:_____

Applicant Birthdate:_____

2. KSV Sponsor Information (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member):

Name: last_____ first name_____

Relationship to applicant;_____

Branch of service_____

Unit served at Khe Sanh_____dates served there_____

3. School Information: (School to be attending)

School name: _____

School Address: street_____, city_____

State_____ zip code_____

School Phone number:_____

Curriculum/intended course of study_____

School year to be funded_____

4. Applicant Personal History (Be specific!)

a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, communications, offices held, academic honors and prizes, student government participation, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b. Community Activities participated in; (military service, volunteer service to community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

c. Mailing Packet (Due *MAY 1*)!!

***ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS,**

***A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,**

***A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,**

***A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min. to 400 WORDS max.) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.**

!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!

I, SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant **Actual Signature of Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent**

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY 1ST* OF THE SCHOOL YEAR APPLIED

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Committee

_____

Tom Eichler, President Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

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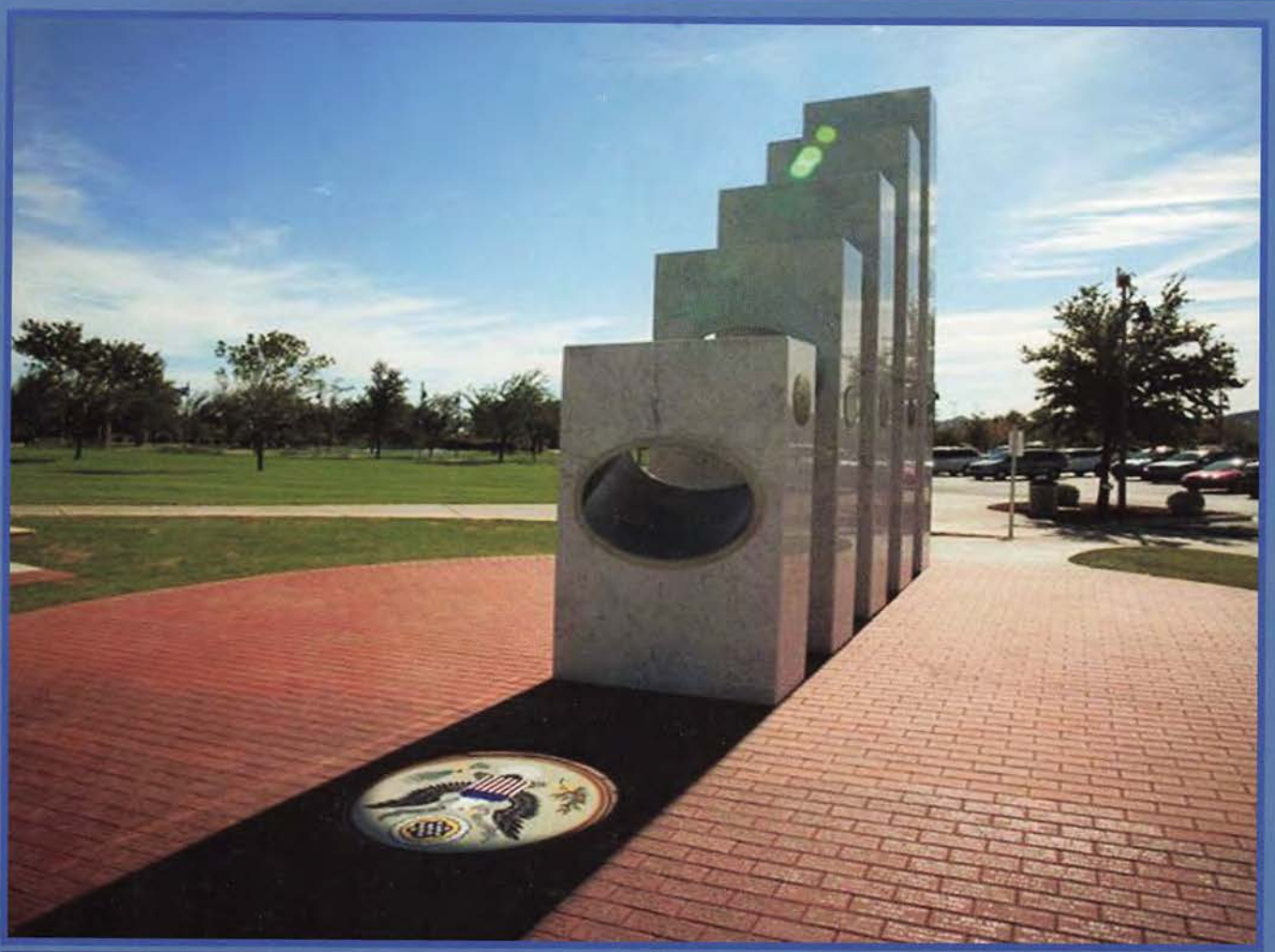

The Anthem Veterans Memorial, located in Anthem, Arizona, is a monument dedicated to honoring the service and sacrifice of the United States armed forces. The pillar provides a place of honor and reflection for veterans, their family and friends, and those who want to show their respects to those service men and women who have and continue to courageously serve the United States.

Once a Year at 11:11 am the Sun Shines Perfectly on this Memorial At precisely 11:11 a.m. each Veterans Day (Nov. 11), the sun's rays pass through the ellipses of the five Armed Services pillars to form a perfect solar spotlight over a mosaic of The Great Seal of the United States.

The memorial was designed by Anthem resident Renee Palmer-Jones. The five marble pillars represent the five branches of the United States military. They are staggered in size (from 17 ft to 6 ft) and ordered in accordance with the Department of Defense prescribed precedence, ranging from the United States Army, the United States Marine Corps, the United States Navy, the United States Air Force and the United States Coast Guard

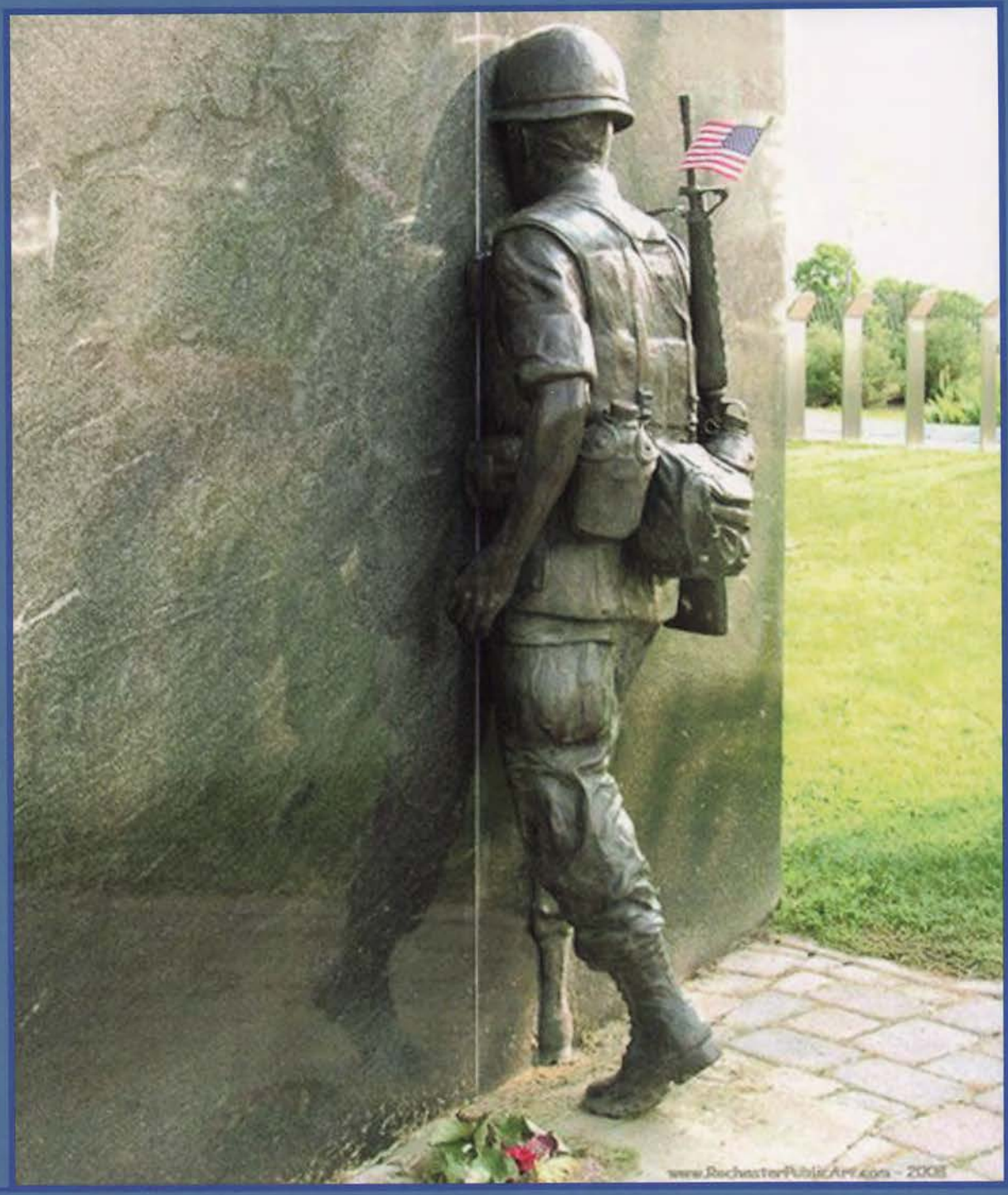

Vietnam veterans with Agent Orange diseases continue to march into the Vietnam Wall to join their fallen brothers. These men and women will not be remembered as fatalities of the Vietnam War. Their names will not be engraved onto the wall…yet they are still victims of the Vietnam War! These veterans have died slow deaths BECAUSE of their country and won't be remembered as dying FOR their country. This is truly a gripping photograph of the Vietnam Memorial in Rochester, New York. HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE REALLY DIED FROM THE VIETNAM WAR?

FALL
2015

RED CLAY

ISSUE
88

WELCOME HOME MARINES "A PROMISE FULFILLED"

AFTER 70 YEARS 36 MARINES WHO LOST THEIR LIVES DURING THE BATTLE OF TARAWA ARE FINALLY COMING HOME, STORY AND PICTURES ON PAGES 11-13











KHE SANH VETERAN MARINES FROM ECHO CO 2ND BATTALION TWENTY SIXTH MARINES, ATTEND DEDICATION OF MEMORIAL BRIDGE NAMED IN HONOR OF JULIUS "CORKY" FOSTER, A FORMER MEMBER OF ECHO CO WHO WAS KILLED IN ACTION AT KHE SANH, DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. CORKY IS REMEMBERED FOR WALKING 400 MILES TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR THE WAR IN VIETNAM PRIOR TO HIS ENLISTING.









"ALL IS CALM, ALL IS BRIGHT" FOR THE LAST TIME AT KHE SANH

By LTCOL JAMES B. WILKINSON, USMC (RET)

REPRINTED FROM LEATHER NECK MAGAZINE DECEMBER 2004 WITH PERMISSION

In the spring of 1965, units of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade arrived in South Vietnam. As they stormed ashore, ready for battle, lovely young ladies welcomed them with floral bouquets. The Marines were given the mission of protecting the airfield at Da Nang and were soon patrolling the surrounding villages and paddies. Their enemy, clad primarily in black pajama-like garments, supported the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and were called Viet Congo Armed with single-shot rifles, punji stakes and other rudimentary weapons, they were a formidable foe, blending in with farmers and villagers when not setting up ambushes or planning other actions against the Marines.

Identifying Viet Cong was a major challenge. It was reminiscent of a vintage Western with John Wayne as the grizzled, old Indian fighter. When a cavalry officer reports, "We just saw a patrol of Apaches!" Wayne replies, "Sir, if you saw them, they weren't Apache."

By 1967 American forces in South Vietnam numbered approximately 500,000 troops. Marines included the First and Third Marine divisions plus supporting forces, including a variety of Marine aviation units. The Marines were assigned to I Corps, in the northern portion of South Vietnam. The enemy also had grown from a poorly equipped but effective group of Viet Cong into a far more capable force. Large numbers of well-trained and equipped units of the North Vietnamese Army had moved into South Vietnam. Their arsenal included the old reliable AK47 rifle, rocket-propelled grenades, rockets, field artillery and an up-to-date communications and command structure.

Like the Viet Cong, the North Vietnamese units proved hard to locate. But in the spring of 1967, friendly patrols detected enemy forces in the extreme northwestern corner of I Corps. The enemy was present in well-placed fighting positions and bunkers in the vicinity of Hills 881 South, 881 North and 861. Several Marine infantry battalions were tasked with destroying the enemy units. The ensuing conflicts became known as "hill battles" with both sides suffering heavy casualties.

When the fighting ended, the Marines occupied Hills 881 South, 861, 950 and Khe Sanh Combat Base. Hill 881 North was not occupied. The enemy withdrew, probably across the border into Laos where they could regroup and take on replacements that moved south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

American leaders at very high levels decided to maintain a force at Khe Sanh Combat Base. Their strategy was to lure the North Vietnamese into a set -piece battle, where air and artillery coupled with the courage of the individual American fighting man would prevail. The enemy viewed a future battle for Khe Sanh as another Dien Bien Phu the French outpost the North Vietnamese had battered day and night with artillery and ground attacks. The French surrendered Dien Bien Phu in 1954 after suffering extremely heavy casualties. This decisive battle led to the defeat of French forces in Vietnam. Like Khe Sanh, Dien Bien Phu was located close to Laos.

In August 1967, Colonel David E. Lownds assumed command of the 26th Marine Regiment. During most of 1967 he had only one battalion under his command. The 26th Marines were part of the 5th-MarDiv. However, when additional forces were needed in Vietnam, the regiment was moved from Camp Pendleton,Calif., and became part of the 3dMarDiv.

For the last half of 1967, up until Christmas, life at Khe Sanh Combat Base was uneventful. The defense of the base, Hills 861, 881 South and 950 remained with 1st Bn, 26th Marines. That battalion also was responsible for security of the bridge over the Rao Quan River. A rifle company was given the mission. Every six or seven weeks, companies would be reshuffled to and from the hills, to the base or to the bridge.

Life on the hills was far more Spartan than life at the base, with C-rations delivered by two ancient UH-34 Seahorse helicopters. The helicopters were

so old their Marine passengers joked that the old "birds" suffered from mental fatigue.

When the squad-size patrols left the hills, the triple-canopied jungle, which began a few hundred yards from each hill position, enveloped them. Patrols oftentimes stayed out for several days, even during heavy monsoons or "cratchins," (The French used *le crachin* to describe light rain, coupled with fog.)

By comparison, life at the base in the days leading up to Christmas was a picnic. Even a few jury rigged showers were available. When operational, a laundry unit would attempt to scrub out the red hue from each article of clothing it received. M16 rounds, occasionally left in pockets of utility clothing, sometimes exploded, creating more than a little stress in the laundry unit. A cold beer would be available every now and then to troops at the base. A bunker-type structure, probably dating back to when the French occupied the base, served as a "club" for officers and staff noncommissioned officers. Mess halls included one operated for regimental headquarters personnel and another operated by 1st Bn.

Monsoon rains turned the Rao Quan River into a dangerous torrent, dictating the removal of the bridge by Marine engineers. After the bridge was removed from Route 9, food was in short supply at Khe Sanh, as Route 9 had been the sole overland supply route from Da Nang across the northern part of South Vietnam. From then on, everything arrived by air.

Thanksgiving provided a rare treat at the base: turkey with some but not all of the trimmings. Shortly after Thanksgiving, a food shortage meant that only two meals were served daily. Breakfast almost always included blueberry hotcakes. The second meal was a thin soup and a sandwich, usually bologna. Anyone desiring more substance could always find a can of ham and limas or other choice morsels from a box of C-rations.

In other parts of Vietnam, occasional USA shows would provide entertainment and a break from the monotony of day-to-day life. Unfortunately, these entertainment units could not visit Khe Sanh. Individual celebrities would sometimes fly in, spend an hour or so and then head out to other such outposts. These were dubbed "handshake" visits.

One such celebrity who appeared just before Christmas was Robert Stack, the star of "The Untouchables." He posed for photographs with the troops. The last entertainment before Christmas was provided by a small detachment from the 3dMarDiv Band. They sloshed through the mud, playing a mixture of martial music and Christmas tunes as they visited troops manning the trench lines and bunkers protecting Khe Sanh.

As Christmas approached, the cratchins continued to overwhelm the area. When the sun broke through, the two UH-34 helicopters usually stationed at Khe Sanh proceeded with the daily logistical flights from the combat base to Hills 861 and 881 South.

Getting onto the outpost on Hill 950 was especially challenging. While Hills 881 South and 861 could be visible from the airstrip at Khe Sanh, fog frequently surrounded Hill 950. Reaching 950 on foot was a difficult, if not impossible, task as the approaches to the hill were extremely steep. Crossing the flooded Rao Quan, which ran between Khe Sanh Combat Base and Hill 950, was dangerous for Marine infantrymen. Earlier in the year, prior to the monsoon rains, the NVA had attacked Hill 950 and came close to over-running the outpost. Defending Marines called in artillery on their own small position and avoided defeat.

Improving positions was a never-completed task at Khe Sanh. Units from a Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (Seabee) were assigned to Khe Sanh to improve the airstrip, a monumental task during the monsoon just before Christmas. Begging, bribing or even using the chain of command resulted in a remarkable event involving the Seabees. A few of the Seabees briefly left their round-the- clock mission of upgrading the airstrip. Using a backhoe and other implements, an additional trench line was dug outside a portion of the regular trench line. With the battalion stretched thin, lst Bn lacked the resources to man the new trench line. They did, however, put in a formidable addition to the defenses by installing double apron and concertina barbed wire outside the new trench line. These efforts paid big dividends later when an Army of the Republic of South Vietnam Ranger battalion reported to Khe

Sanh. They were moved into the new trenches that had been installed along a major avenue of approach leading toward the base.

Obtaining wood to help improve and provide support for sandbags as overhead protection proved difficult. Most sturdy trees were well away from Khe Sanh and were so filled with shrapnel from the previous hill battles that saws and axes were useless in felling them. Trenches were continually damaged by the heavy monsoon rains.

As Christmas neared, intelligence sources revealed that North Vietnamese forces were beginning to amass around Khe Sanh. "Many hoof prints coming in, no hoof prints going out." "Bravo" Co from the division reconnaissance battalion was based at Khe Sanh and reported increased signs of the enemy. Khe Sanh was also home for a U.S. Army Special Forces forward operations base, FOB-3, which housed a Special Observations Group (SOG). Dozens of black Huey helicopters appeared periodically at FOB-3, loaded troops, then headed westward. One of their missions was to obtain information along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. They also made frequent attempts to interdict the trail and capture prisoners. Scuttlebutt had it that SOG received orders directly from Saigon.

A small U.S. Air Force Tiger Hound unit operating from Khe Sanh provided additional intelligence. Pilots and aerial observers, flying Piper Cub-size aircraft dubbed 0-1 Bird Dogs, confirmed heavy enemy movement toward Khe Sanh. This galvanized everyone at Khe Sanh. The North Vietnamese Army was up to something, and it would happen soon.

The movement of the rifle company from the bridge site across the Rao Quan River back to Khe Sanh provided additional manpower just before Christmas. A few more surprises were added to Khe Sanh's defenses. One of these involved installing lethal *fougasse-a* mixture of gasoline, oil and various explosives in 55-gallon drums, just outside the barbed wire and along other avenues of approach.

The drums proved doubly useful when filled with gasoline and diesel fuel. They were placed around the perimeter to mark friendly lines. During a major attack, they would have been lighted to outline the perimeter. Specially outfitted Air Force aircraft, dubbed "Puff, the Magic Dragon" and armed with modern-day high-powered Gatling guns, could use the burning oil drums as markers to avoid casualties from friendly fire.

In mid-December, 3d Bn, 26th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Harry L. Alderman, returned to Khe Sanh. Use of the airstrip had become a challenge during the preceding two months. A Navy construction battalion detachment worked around-the-clock to repair rain damage. The regimental commander, Col Lownds, spent hours alongside the Seabees, providing encouragement and advice. Because of the need for illumination for the work force on the airstrip, "light discipline" at the base basically was nonexistent.

Signs of increased enemy activity were reported almost daily by the patrols from Bravo Co, 3d Reconnaissance Bn. The patrols by the companies on the hills revealed recently abandoned field kitchens and directional markers along trails that resulted in an edgy, tense feeling that the enemy was preparing for battle. Villages of Bru Montagnards were nearby along Route 9. The tribes had endured poor treatment from other Vietnamese for generations. Maps were dotted with the names of Bru villages, now marked "Village destroyed."

Weather permitting, the hills into Laos were visible each day, where the Ho Chi Minh Trail operated like Interstate 95 carrying the enemy south. Battlefield intelligence revealed that large numbers of the enemy in division strength were stopping around Khe Sanh. Higher-level intelligence, such as delicate sensors, radio interceptions and prisoner interrogation, revealed that the enemy was close by and in considerable numbers.

As Christmas neared, several well armed, hard-core NVA divisions were nearby. Where could such a large number of enemy fighters find shelter? Michael Herr, author of "Dispatches," a highly acclaimed book about the war in Vietnam, spent time in and around Khe Sanh and in his book describes the area as follows: "The Highlands of Vietnam are spooky, unbearably spooky, spooky beyond belief. They are a run of erratic mountain ranges, gnarled valleys, jungled ravines." The media latched onto the story and began comparing the past tragic battle

for Dien Bien Phu to a future battle for Khe Sanh Combat Base. The feelings of the Marines ranged from uneasy to "let them come; we're ready."

In spite of the increasing tension, life went on as usual at the base. Troops continued to go on rest and relaxation trips as scheduled. Married Marines usually chose Hawaii, where they met their wives. Single Marines chose more exotic locations, such as Bangkok. Mail from home increased as family and friends remembered the troops with Christmas packages of candy, cookies and photos from home.

Dick Camp Jr., commander of Lima Co, 3d Bn, 26th Marines, has vivid memories of Christmas Eve 1967. His battalion had just returned to Khe Sanh Combat Base after spending several days sweeping the adjacent jungles. His company gunnery sergeant approached him and asked where he should put the packages. Busy getting his company settled in, Capt Camp impatiently told the "gunny" to put them anywhere. Several minutes later Camp saw Marines stacking box after box of Christmas packages that became a gigantic pile near his CP foxhole. Girl Scouts from his hometown had collected hundreds of boxes of cookies. Some members of the company also had received a few small baby bottles containing various alcoholic beverages. The battalion provided half-frozen eggnog, nonalcoholic of course, and each Marine and corpsman received a box of cookies plus other goodies, as available.

The sounds of battle from Hill 950 came from Second Lieutenant Marshall "Skip" Wells' 3d Platoon, Charlie Co, 1st Bn, 26th Marines, as they repelled an enemy attempt to overrun the hill position. The days around Christmas had been designated a ceasefire period by both sides. Following their usual procedure, the NVA, trying to catch the enemy off guard, launched an attack on 950.

On Christmas Day Col Lownds hopped on board a UH-34. He had the crew tie a green smoke grenade on one side and a red smoke grenade on the other. The pilot circled each hill outpost, then circled the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei. While green and red smoke streamed from the helicopter, Col-Lownds stood at the door waving a Christmas greeting to all the valiant troops who, in less than 30 days, would fight in one of the most epic battles of the war.

Despite Three Wounds, He Remained With His Marines

Although wounded in action during the Christmas Eve action, Marshall "Skip" Wells remained with his platoon for several months. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his heroic leadership during the battle for Hill 950. Later in his tour, he received two additional Purple Hearts. His comrades claim that Skip received several other wounds that were not reported during the remainder of his tour. After his third Purple Heart, he received orders out of country.

Skip Wells returned to Vietnam in 1971-72, serving as an advisor to the Vietnamese Marine Corps. He earned the Silver Star during that assignment. In 1989 he retired from the Marine Corps and now lives in Colorado, working as a counselor to county prisoners. When recently questioned about his gallantry in repelling the enemy assault on Hill 950 Christmas Eve, Skip, a soft-spoken Marine, modestly explained, "I had a lot of help."

LtCol James B. Wilkinson, USMC (Ret)



LTCMDR Ray W. Stubbe, a 1/26 chaplain, arrived at Khe Sanh in the summer of 1967 and remained with the Marines, making daily diary entries, until the battle for Khe Sanh was over.

Sunlight streamed down on Khe Sanh Combat Base in the distance as clouds shaded the Marine outpost atop Hill 950 in the foreground. The NVA marked the Christmas 1967 cease fire with a ground attack on Hill 950.

OBIT

KENNETH MARTIN, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
BRAVO CO 3RD RECON

Ken was born on January 31, 1948, to Tanner and Evelyn Martin in Cottage Grove, Oregon. Ken was the first of three sons. On Tuesday, May 26, 2015, Ken lost his brief battle with lung cancer, a strand caused by exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. Ken was 67 years of age.

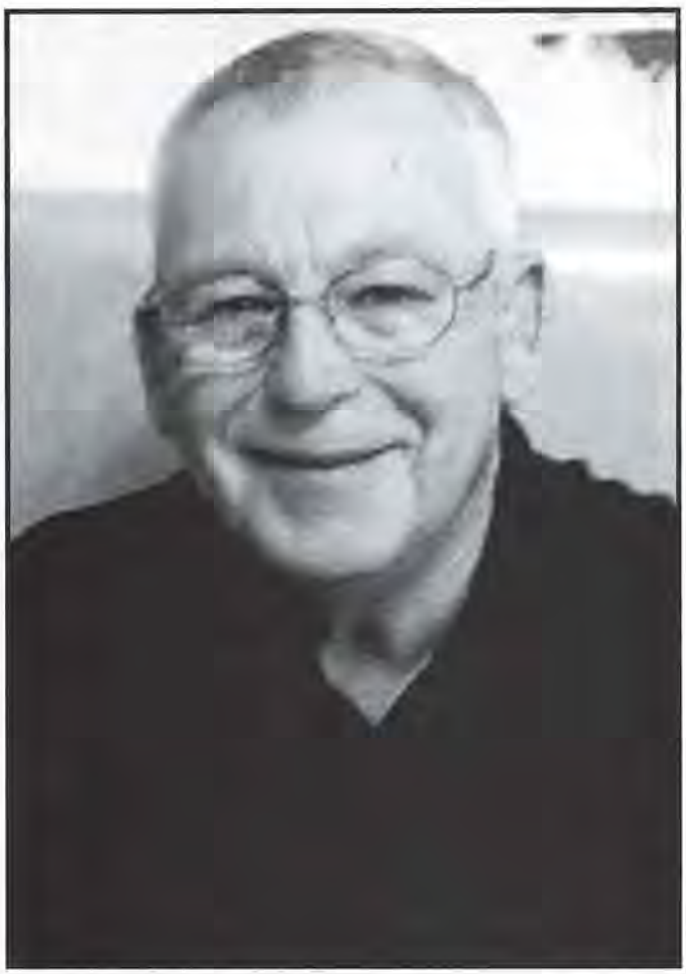

Ken attended Days Creek High School for his freshman and sophomore years and was sophomore Class President; Myrtle Creek High School as a junior and South Umpqua High School for his senior year. Ken was in the first graduating class from SUHS in 1966. Voted "best all around" by his classmates, Ken surely was. He was a man you knew you could count on. An avid athlete, Ken participated in football, basketball, wresting and track throughout high school.

After graduation, Ken enlisted with the United States Marine Corps. He received his Basic Training in San Diego, additional training at Camp Pendleton, and was soon among the many young men sent to Vietnam. Ken served with Bravo Company, 3rd Recon.

Ken would come home from Vietnam bearing three Purple Heart Medals; the National Defense Service Medal; the Vietnamese Service Medal; the Vietnamese Campaign Medal; the Presidential Unit Citation; the Combat Action Ribbon and Rifle Sharpshooters Badge. Ken saved countless lives while fighting during the siege at Khe Sanh.

Ken met his wife Linda in Roseburg and they would have two daughters. Linda was one of the best things to happen to Ken. The family enjoyed many camping trips over the years with friends and family. Ken never made a secret of how much he loved his family. Ken was employed with James A Graf Trucking for 36 years as a log truck driver.

After retiring from trucking, Ken was a volunteer at the Roseburg VA as a patient escort. To date, Ken had volunteered over 2,500 hours. He was well loved by his co-workers and fellow veterans. Ken was a member of the Khe Sanh Veteran Association and enjoyed attending annual reunions. The bond between his Khe Sanh brothers is eternal.

Ken is survived by his wife of 33 years, Linda Martin; their daughters Melissa (Andrew) Georgesen and Kendra (Jason) Schroeder; his granddaughter Ella Rose Georgesen; and brothers Gary (Carole) Martin and Mike (Juanita) Martin. Ken was blessed to be an uncle to special niece Nancy Martin. Ken is survived by many family members, including nieces and nephews Kristy, Michael, and Brian Martin. Ken will be missed by numerous close friends who were like family to him.

Ken was laid to rest on Friday, June 5, 2015, at 11 a.m. at the VA National Cemetery in Roseburg. There was a Celebration of Life to honor Ken also on Friday, June 5, 2015



OBIT

WILLIAM H. WOOLMAN, II USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, BRAVO CO 1/26

William H. Woolman, II, 66, of Manteo died Jan. 19 at his home. Born in Trenton, NJ, he was the son of the late James Henry Woolman and Mildred M. Bauer.

He served his country honorably in the U.S. Marine Corps, having fought in the Vietnam War, including the Battle of Khe Sanh. He later retired as a chemical operator in the pharmaceutical industry.

He is survived by his wife, Darlene L. Woolman; a son, William Woolman, III of Manteo; a daughter, Denise Grybowski and husband, Mark of Newark, DE; two grandchildren; and a brother, James Woolman and wife Diane of Elsmere, DE.

A memorial service was held in Delaware at a later date. Burial was private. Twiford Funeral Home, Manteo is assisting the family with arrangements.

OBIT

HM-2 JAMES D. CANTER, USN KHE SANH VETERAN, DELTA CO 1/3

James David Canter "DOC", age 69, lost his battle with the effects of agent orange at 5:55am March 11, 2015 in Madison, WI. Although he lost this battle, he was victorious in his entire life.

James was born February 11, 1946 to Donald and Vesta Canter. He graduated Madison East High School in 1964 and joined the Navy. He served in the U.S.Navy from 1964-1970 with a final rank of Hospitalman Corpsman Second class , Fleet Marine Force. James completed 2 tours of Vietnam from 1966-1968 attached with the Fleet Marine Force. He was known as "DOC" to all his comrades and friends. Upon return to the US he worked at the Madison VA as a Radiology Tech. He served the Federal Government for a total of 37 1/2 years. James received many certificates of Commendation Meritorious Achievement. The one he was most proud was the D-Company, 3D medical Battalion 3rdMarine Division (Rein) FMF in the Republic of Vietnam Dec 14, 1966 to April 1, 1967.



James was very proud of his 3 children Sheila, Kate and Mark and Grandson William David Craig Canter. James loved to spend time with his family, and reconnect with past family, friends and comrades from his service time. James is a lifetime member of the VFW, DAV, American Legion post 0501 and is an eternally bonded member of the KHE SANH VETERANS. James received the following medals: Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnamese campaign medical with device, Vietnam service medal with Bronze Star, National Defense service, Good Conduct medal and The Purple Heart. James Canter's life was celebrated on March 22, 2015 in Monona, WI with Full Military Honors.

James will be remembered for his quick wit, his love and commitment to friends and family, his love for his country and his Cherokee Heritage. He had a unique ability to inspire others to achieve their

goals and always to do better in their lives. James always found the good in others and made sure everyone knew they were special. His famous words that he lived by were "Be Kind to Each Other".

OBIT

DAVID SPRY, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A

David was born March 16,1948 in Forest Lake, MN. His father ran a funeral home and sold used cars on the side. His mother was a homemaker. David had a brother, Tom, who was eleven years older. Tom was a cadet at the Naval Academy. One snowy, evening, while home on leave, Tom went to a nearby town to pick up a car part for his Dad. He was hit by a drunk driver and lived for a few hours in the hospital but ultimately died. Tom's death destroyed the family. His mother grieved deeply and never really recovered. I say this next piece not to disparage anyone but to share the pathos that permeated David's life, and all our lives for that matter...On many occasions David's mother would cry and tell David, "I wish it would have been you who died."



David described himself as a prankster growing up. He was either in roller skates or ice skates and was told he should have been born with wheels on. He also played baseball and football and loved the sciences. He played in "a crappy band and was a mediocre singer and a mediocre bass player." He stole cars, went joy riding and was generally in search of a good time. David was popular with the ladies in high school as he was a jock AND had a car and in the sixties you only needed one of those two things for social standing.

One of David's favorite stories from childhood involved fishing. He and a friend had gone out to the lake for a day of fishing. After many hours and no fish they were about to give up. At that moment, their black lab jumped into the water and came back with a 5 pound grouper. The fish did not have a mark on it. The boys were going to pass the fish off as their catch but they thought they better make it look real. So David picked up the spear and aimed at the fish. He missed the fish but did manage to put a hole in his father's boat. They had no choice but to tell the truth at that point!

David joined the Marines straight out of high school as he had become aware of the plight of the Vietnamese people , wanted to help, and thought the Marines offered the best chance of survival and he didn't want to be drafted to the Army. He went to Vietnam in late 1967 with E/2/26. David joined the Marines on the buddy plan with a friend, Gary, from his hometown of Lincoln, NE. His buddy did not make it home. When David did return home himself, right before Christmas in 1968, his mother insisted he spend Christmas with the family of his deceased buddy, which David did. He continued to visit the family on holidays for the next ten years. David, of course, felt guilty about talking Gary in to joining and tried to offer some comfort as sort of a surrogate son.

As mentioned, David was an athlete, strong and healthy. Boot camp was not difficult for him. Others were not so lucky. David became friends with a guy who was a little on the scrawny side and had difficulty with the maneuvers and exercises. David would help him out however he could by doing things such as carry some of his gear when no one was looking. The DI rode this guy hard and he began to show signs of mental distress. David did his best to encourage the guy. One evening some one yelled for David from the back of their barracks. The guy had shot himself in the head.

David's MOS was the ubiquitous **0311.** David had a girlfriend named Janet, when he shipped out to Vietnam. David wrote her name on his helmet and they corresponded intermittently throughout his enlistment. When David returned from Vietnam in 1968, he found that Janet was engaged to someone else. David was grateful that he never got that "Dear John" letter in Vietnam, as, false as it was, Janet gave him something to look forward to…

David had not been in country all that long before he got shot in the arm in a friendly fire incident. He was sent to Da Nang, initially, and after some stabilization, was moved to a smaller hospital. While there, the hospital took some incoming and the building collapsed on David. He sustained serious head and facial injuries resulting in numerous reconstructive surgeries and a lengthy recovery. Even years later, David regularly had to have some sort of facial surgery for problems that would crop up from this initially injury. In another incident, David dove into a pipe at the Khe Sanh Combat Base during an incoming round. The round basically landed on top



of the pipe and caused David to loose his hearing.

When finally ready to be discharged from the hospital the CO there said "You need to rejoin your company because they're getting the hell beat out of them up there at Khe Sanh. They're completely surrounded and things don't look good". The problem was finding someone to fly him in. Originally troops were being flown in on C-130's but those got shot down, then C-123s, and those got shot down. Then choppers on a limited basis. The enemy had the runway dialed in and were attacking from the nearby hills of Laos so even supplies had to eventually be dropped in by parachute as the landing strip was so dangerous.

After a couple of days, David finally found a chopper going in and there was a total of six guys headed to Khe Sanh. One thing David had figured out by then was that the last one loaded on was the first one loaded off so he made sure he was that guy. On approach to Khe Sanh David noticed there were bursts of light coming in a straight line from the fuselage. He realized these were bullet holes. About 20 feet off the runway, the pilot got hit by incoming and the helicopter jerked to the right and David literally fell out the back, got tossed in an arch upward and fell landing on his helmet and his pack. He got the wind knocked out of him. By the time he stood up he saw that the helicopter had crashed and the pilot had been badly injured and several other guys were injured to a lesser degree and were scrambling out.

By this time, David's company was already out on Hill 861 Alpha. David's CO, Captain Earle Breeding said, "Listen...you already have two purple hearts and you are just getting over dysentery. I'm assigning you to mail call duty. So, along with mail call came an additional duty. While delivering the mail, David would meet guys face to face and get to know where they were from as he checked addresses before delivering. So David was familiar with many more people than the average guy. The worst thing about all this was that David was asked to identify dead bodies. They were housed in a storage bin all double bagged, piled one on top of the other. Each one was wrapped in a translucent sheet that you could see through and then in a zippered black bag, double tagged inside, top and bottom. At one point, David was asked to identify a friend, Joe Roble. In the process, he identified a kid who had only been there one day. The kid only knew David and one other guy. When David finally found Joe he found Joe had a blast injury to the right side of his neck and his head was hanging on by a few neck veins on the left and some cervical vertebrae. David knew it was Joe as he recognized a little scar he had above his right eyebrow. At one time Joe was wounded while burning trash. A live grenade was in the trash pit and cooked off, wounding Joe in the forehead.

When Joe was sent home, David heard that his mother insisted on seeing his body, even though the military did not advise that. She had been told he was decapitated. The heavy closure stitches that were used to sew his neck together from left posterior to right posterior gave the appearance that his head had been in fact decapitated and then sewn back on. Several years later at a reunion, David was able to speak with Joe's mother telling her that he, David, was the last person who saw him and his neck had been blasted but he was not decapitated. When Mrs. Roble heard David's description she heaved a sigh of relief. David said no mother wants to picture her son decapitated and that their meeting was a healing of sorts.

Some time after Khe Sanh the military insisted David take some time off. He hadn't wanted to go on R and R as he was saving money for a new corvette, which he did end up buying. The military compromised be allowing David and a couple of other guys to act in a courier capacity in lieu of R and R but they had to leave Vietnam. So, they assigned David to a project escorting six dead Royal Thai Military in their silver, aluminum coffins, back to Thailand. The coffins were stored in a shipping container. The temperature outside was 120 degrees. The aluminum held in the heat and inside the containers it was probably 180 degrees. They loaded the coffins on the back of a C-130. When they reached altitude the cabin was pressurized. Shortly thereafter, creaking and popping sounds could be heard coming from the coffins. The handles securing them started breaking off due to the heat and the changes in pressure. They began popping open. The stench of the hot, bloated, dead bodies was unbearable. David and the others started heaving their guts out. Everyone in the cargo area of the plane was sick. The crew ended up dropping the back lift gate and depressurizing the cabin to allow some air flow. The lift gate was tilted up instead of down and they were all hanging over the back end, heaving continuously. When they finally reached their destination, David tidied up the coffins and delivered them to their destination. Once delivered David was asked if there were any problems in transit, to which he replied, "No, none what-so-ever."

After Vietnam, David met his wife of twenty years, Penny. They lived in the same apartment building when they met. They had two children, Jason and Robin. David went to college on the GI bill and majored in Biology. David also liked geology and philosophy and was probably the only person who ever actually enjoyed organic chemistry. Originally, David wanted to go to medical school and became a doctor. It became impossible once David realized you can't use a stethoscope with hearing aids. Instead, he tried a few different things and ended up in sales.

David did, in addition to his sales career, become a paramedic and in 1995, took a trip back to Vietnam and participated in medical screening and treatment in the villages. He always carried an emergency treatment kit in his car.

Throughout David's adult life he devoted hundreds of hours helping other veterans. David was well known to the Nebraska legislature as he was regularly challenging erratic VA policies and lobbying for better care and benefits for veterans. In order to assist people in filing VA claims, he would sometimes write briefs . One of those a couple of years ago, was 160 pages long. There are many people who benefited form David's efforts. He did all of this without compensation of any kind.

David was also a mentor and a benefactor to Vietnamese immigrants and spoke fluent Vietnamese. He would help them negotiate the Small Business Administration policies and help them get started in business. To this day, some of David's most loyal friends have been South Vietnamese immigrants.

David liked to dance, enjoyed good food, could talk to anyone about anything, and honestly earned the nickname Mr. Fix It. David would help any body with any thing any time. He was highly intelligent and just a little quirky. David was devoted to the Khe Sanh Veteran's organization. Of all the things for which he was proud, being a Khe Sanh Veteran was number one on his list.

One very fond memory I have of David was his ability to tell a good joke. No one, but David, knew as many jokes where the main character was a frog, often in a bar, each time with a fresh twist that you couldn't help laughing at.

I once asked David if there were any period in time he could live in what would it be. Without missing a

beat David answered, Vietnam. "It was exciting, it was dangerous, it was invigorating...it was the most alive I have ever felt. Sure, I have the nightmares, the flashbacks, the PTSD, the hearing loss-but I wouldn't trade it for anything."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY "DOC'S, WE LOVE YOU GUYS



We extend my sincerest thanks and appreciation to the Navy Hospital Corps commemorating 117 years of faithful and committed service.

President William McKinley signed an act of Congress in 1898 establishing the Hospital Corps. Since the first 25 apothecaries were appointed by the secretary of the Navy, the Hospital Corps has grown immeasurably in size and scope.

Today, we honor their bravery, brilliance and sacrifice while serving in harm's way to protect the lives of our Sailors and Marines. From the Revolutionary War to current overseas operations, corpsmen have served heroically and gallantly.

They stand ready to heed the call, "corpsman up," tending to the sick and injured on the sea, under the sea, in the air and on the battlefield.

No Marine has ever taken a hill without a corpsman, and when they do, they take comfort knowing that "doc" is by their side.

In 1902, corpsmen learned their profession at the Navy's first corps school at Naval Hospital Portsmouth.

Today, they receive extensive training at Navy Medicine Education and Training Command in Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and the quality of their training has not changed. It's evident that corpsmen are selflessly dedicated to caring for patients worldwide. Because of their exceptional and comprehensive training, we are experiencing the lowest battle mortality and non-battle injury rates in the history of war.

The Navy Hospital Corps is the largest and most decorated rate in the Navy. Twenty-two corpsmen have received Medals of Honor, among many other awards. Additionally, 20 naval ships have been named in honor of corpsmen worldwide. Since the end of World War I, 178 corpsmen have been awarded the Navy Cross. During the Vietnam War alone, corpsmen were awarded four medals of honor, 31 navy crosses, 179 silver stars, and 292 bronze stars for heroism while under fire. This recognition is a humbling testament to the quality of character



and integrity of the men and women proudly wearing the caduceus and answer to "doc."

Today we pay our admiration to their courage in battle; the empathy they provide to those in need during humanitarian assistance and disaster response efforts; their desire to do the right thing; and their outstanding commitment to mission readiness at our military treatment facilities across the globe. These heroic individuals ensure our nation has a medically-ready, fighting force, while providing compassionate patient and family-centered health care.

To the more than 30,000 active duty and reserve corpsmen globally, thank you for your steadfast and fearless service at home and overseas. Happy birthday Hospital Corps!

KHE SANH VETERAN AIDES RECOVERY OF MARINE REMAINS LOST ON TARAWA FOR 70 YEARS GLENN PRENTICE– INDIA CO 3/26 & CHARLIE BTRY 1/13

Glenn has been volunteering with History Flight a non-profit NGO that works in Europe and the South Pacific recovering WWII MIA--For the last four year he has been the South Pacific Team Leader in Tarawa (Betio) Two year ago, he was appointed Vice Chairman of the Board--two month ago they uncovered lost cemetery # 27--They found 36 intact Marine remains this was the biggest recovery of MIAs to date. Glenn says he is very thankful he was able to be apart of this find.

RELATED ARTICLES:

The grandson of one of the Corps' most ferocious officers killed in the World War II Battle of Tarawa will finally bring his grandfather's remains home, along with those of dozens of other fallen Marines. More than 70 years ago, Marine 1st Lt. Alexander "Sandy" Bonnyman, Jr. was determined to blast a hole through the deeply entrenched enemy on the tiny island of Betio in the Republic of Kiribati.

With fellow Marines pinned down on the beach during the November 1943 amphibious invasion of the Tarawa Atoll, the 33-year-old led a small engineering team into unfriendly territory to repeatedly assault enemy fortifications. He succeeded, but was mortally wounded while fending off an enemy counterattack.



Bonnyman's "dauntless fighting spirit, unrelenting aggressiveness and forceful leadership" led to his posthumous award of the Medal of Honor, according to his citation.

Yet the remains of Bonnyman and approximately 40 other Marines killed in action during the battle disappeared as their impromptu burial trench, known as Cemetery 27, was lost.

An American Graves Registration Service team exhumed and repatriated about 500 Marines from the small island in the Central Pacific in 1946, but



1ST LT ALEXANDER "SANDY" BONNYMAN MOH

simply could not find Cemetery 27. Its occupants were officially declared "unrecoverable" by the Quartermaster General's Office in 1949.

"They must have been buried in all the confusion," Clay Bonnyman Evans, Bonnyman's grandson, told Marine Corps Times. "In all probability the grave markers were run over when the Seabees came

ashore."

For 70 years the lost graves of Tarawa remained a mystery, but now the fallen Marines — including Bonnyman — are coming home.



"**History Flight** is extremely pleased to announce the discovery and recovery of historic Cemetery 27 on Betio Island as part of its 10-year, multi-million-dollar effort to recover hundreds of Marines lost to history, their nation and their families in 1943," said founder and director Mark Noah in a press release Sunday.

The non-profit, dedicated to finding and recovering the remains of 84,000 missing American service members, located the burial trench in 2011 and began excavation in March. They have since recovered the remains of at least three dozen fallen Marines.

Working with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, History Flight recovered the remains of at least 120 troops from Betio previously believed to be unrecoverable. They will conduct a forensic review of the remains from Cemetery 27 this month.

Although we have dental matches to known missing Tarawa Marines for more than half of the recovered individuals, we are seeking DNA reference samples from families of the Tarawa missing," History Flight board secretary Ed Huffine said in a news release.

"We plan to have all of these recovered heroes identified by the end of the summer," Huffine said.

Clay Bonnyman Evans never got to meet his grandfather, but grew up in admiration of his legacy.

When History Flight began calling families to obtain DNA samples of the Marines unaccounted for at Tarawa, Evans jumped at the opportunity to volunteer with the group and flew to Betio to assist in excavations.

"They're a small non-profit, but these guys have done what no one else could do," Evans said. "This



is a group that knows how to get things done."Evans assisted the History Flight archaeological team in excavating Cemetery 27, which was located under a parking lot on Betio.Evans knew that his grandfather had distinctive dental work, including gold teeth. He said he was breathless when Kristin Baker, the History Flight Recovery Team leader, called him over to examine the teeth on an exposed cranium."It's gold," Baker told him.

Evans said it's very likely that the remains are those of the Medal of Honor recipient, but legal verification is still required.

The remains of the three dozen Marines are being transported to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's laboratory at Hickman Air Force Base in Hawaii, where a team of specially trained dentists and other experts will work to authenticate their identities.

"We are very grateful for the efforts of Mark Noah and History Flight for the recovery of these Marines lost during the Battle of Tarawa," DPAA director

Lt. Gen. Michael Linnington said in a press release. "This is a tremendous example of how private-public partnerships can contribute to our accounting efforts both now and in the future."

After more than seven decades, Bonnyman's remains will finally travel the almost 7,000 miles to his birthplace in Knoxville, Tennessee, where he will be buried next to his parents and three siblings. Bonnyman's family intends to conduct a public burial ceremony in late September to celebrate his return home.

"This has been simply incredible," Evans said. "Our family is so, so grateful."

MARINES ARE FINALLY COMING HOME
36 MARINES MISSING SINCE THE BATTLE
FOR TARAWA WWII
PICTURES ON FRONT COVER

Thirty-six caskets holding the remains of U.S. Marines killed in the 1943 Battle of Tarawa were returned from battlefield interment last weekend.

The men, killed in the epic 76-hour Battle of Tarawa on the heavily defended island of Betio were recovered recently through the efforts of non-profits and the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

The Marines, each in a flag shrouded casket, were transferred to a contingent from the 3rd Marine Regiment during a repatriation ceremony in Tarawa, Kiribati on Saturday. Reverently loaded onto a Marine KC-130J Hercules, they were flown to their home country for the first time in more than 70 years.

Upon arrival at aboard Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, they were further honored as they were unloaded for identification and final burial. Among the remains is believed to be 1st Lt. Alexander Bonnyman, a posthumous Medal of Honor recipient from the battle.

"Today provides for us the opportunity to bring home some Marines who were lost here during the Battle of Tarawa over 70 years ago," said Maj. Gen. Richard P. Simcock, 3rd Marine Division commanding general. "Those Marines that gave their lives and ensured our way of life continued here in the Pacific were fully expected to come home, but it didn't work out that way. Today we've filled that obligation for those Marines."

"THANKYOU FOR YOUR SERVICE"
CRAIG TOURTE

I was fortunate last week to have been able to spend time in Monterey California, a very pleasant 65 degrees while it was 103 in Sacramento. I stayed with a friend who has a second home there and who had invited me to stay for a few day. During the war in Vietnam he had been a Lieutenant in the Army Reserves but did not serve in Vietnam, also being more scholastic than I he attended the Department of Defense Language Institute (DLI) at the Presidio of Monterey which is run by the Army but serves as a joint service institute. While students from the other military services and foreign counties are just starting out the Marines attending have already gone through Marine Combat Training and are considered careerists and have privileges from the day they arrive. My friend has fond memories of attendance and enjoyed his time studying and living in Monterey, unfortunately he suffers from extreme guilt for not having served in Vietnam.

Because I have a Military Identification Card I was able to drive onto the base and took him to the Mess Hall – sign says cafeteria – where we enjoyed a variety of military cuisine as we sat at a table surrounded by curious young men and women wondering who these old farts were. While my friend was reminiscing, a young Marine walked up to us, held out his hand and thanked me for my service – could have been he noticed my Khe Sanh shirt. I am now accustomed to such gestures and thanked him. The Marine then extended his hand to my friend and thanked him for his service which he likewise acknowledged. After the Marine walked away my friend told me that no one had ever done that before. He could not stop talking about it the rest of the afternoon. That evening he told my wife about it and I noticed tears were running down his cheeks and observed that it had been quite an emotion experience for him. It was just a little thing really, having someone acknowledge our service, common occur-

rence now for many, but a reminder that countless did their part quietly, served in different ways in a variety of MOS's and in different locations around the globe, but all who serve deserve recognition for that service no matter their situation or contribution. I am reminded of that now too often used phrase "All gave some, some gave all." I am certain my friend will never forget his experience at DLI that afternoon and in the future realize his military service and contribution was important and is appreciated.

Another reunion next month. But is it just another reunion or it is like all of the others I have attended, once again, something special. I know this reunion will be something I'll think about the rest of the year and I'll wonder why the years has gone by so fast. I wonder how many I have left. Like so many others there is something about each one that stands out. I thought I'd let you read the little story about our reunion in Reno...a very special reunion and one I think you'll enjoy reading.

A REUNION STORY

BY: CRAIG W. TOURTE

I had a great time at the reunion this year. It's doesn't matter where the reunion is held, the extravagance of the accommodations or lack there of, it's the comradeship that is important to me. On Thursday Steve Wiese (B/1/26), Mike Fishbaugh (FLSU-1 & FLSG-B), David "Tony" Tonick (A/1/26) and myself, drove over to Genoa Nevada, a little town about forty miles south of Reno, tucked up against the high Sierra Nevada Mountains. David served eight months in Vietnam before he was shot in the back, the projectile exiting through the front right side of his neck. A jagged scar remains and is a reminder to all of his service, bravery and sacrifice. Genoa was named after the birth place of Christopher Columbus in Genoa Italy. We stopped off for a cold one at the Genoa Bar, said to be the oldest and first established bar located West of the Mississippi (or something like that). I bought Mike a T-Shirt, him being from Kentucky and all; I wanted Mike to have a little souvenir from his Nevada Travels. I can almost guarantee that no one in Kentucky has ever heard nor been in the small little dusty and hard to find town of Genoa. Like the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh, if you're in Genoa, you're no where. For many years Steve Wiese owned and operated a successful construction company and did a great deal of traveling, I was surprised to hear that he had never heard of, nor been to Genoa before that day because he certainly has been everywhere else. We continued our travels, driving up the steep 11.2 mile Kingsbury grade, climbing to over 7000 feet above the desert floor to South Lake Tahoe where we stopped in at the Beacon Restaurant and gazed out over the world famous deep blue lake while we had lunch. We continued our trip with a slow drive around the east rim of one of the most beautiful lakes in the world, onto highway 50, descending down to the desert floor then on to Carson City, the state capitol of Nevada and back to Reno. It was a great afternoon.

On Friday evening Steve Wiese, Tom Horchler (H.Q. 1/13) and myself, were the invited guests of Khe Sanh Veteran and Association member Michael Archer (Author of "A Patch Of Ground") who lives in Reno. Mike's guests included the two sons and the grandson of the late Lieutenant Colonel John A. Hennelly, Commanding Officer of the First Battalion Thirteenth Marine Corps Regiment at Khe Sanh. Both men are former Marines and the grandson is entering Marine Corps boot camp in late August. There was an array of various dignitaries, scholars, writers and academics amongst the professionals present. As the twenty five or so of us gathered in the back yard, Mike stood and introduced each guest, announcing their name and giving a brief personal history of each and their individual achievements. It was one of the most amazingly articulate and even humorous oral presentations of introduction and recalled personal information I have ever heard, and I was privileged to have been present and to have been invited to his home. Mike introduced me as a Khe Sanh Veteran and writer, perhaps a bit gratuitous, but I appreciated the introduction.

It was the first reunion for many, often a difficult and lonely time for some. Marco Soto, Chuck Teasley, Andres "Pete" Torres and Phil Nuchereno were just a few who attended the reunion for the first time. Marco and Pete are from Sacramento and I know they attended the reunion because I asked them to come. I appreciated them taking the time to drive over from California. Both attended the reading of the names at the California Vietnam Veterans

Memorial along with myself, Steve Wiese, Ernie Spencer, Carrie Peppers and others.

Steve Wiese asked my wife and I to join his table for dinner. I was honored to have sat with Ken Pipes, Ben Long, Ken Korkow (all with B/1/26)), Chuck Teasley (C/1/26) and their wives. I tried to keep an eye on Pete Torres and Marco Soto because I knew they had arrived late to the reunion and I didn't want them to feel left out because they didn't know anyone. I observed that Pete had connected with the others at his table and was pretty engaged. Marco and his wife sat a couple of tables away from ours. I introduced myself to Marco's wife and thanked them both for coming. Marco told me that when he signed his name on the reunion sign up board he noted the name of David Tonick, and asked if I knew who he was, as both David and he had served in the same company in Vietnam and he had not seen David for over forty years. Marco took out his wallet and showed me an old color photograph of David taken during the war. At that point my heart skipped a few beats and I had to take a couple of breaths. I'm just assuming here, but I had to believe that Marco and David had been rather close in Vietnam. My understanding is that the last time Marco saw David was when he and David were severely wounded and Marco was told to grab any other wounded and get on the chopper. David was removed from the field of battle with a rather large wound in his back and neck. In June of 1968 Alpha and Charlie Companies were attached to Delta Company, all with the Twenty Sixth Marine Regiment, when they assaulted up a small hill containing spider holes, towards an enemy held trench line. Marco sustained a wound to the back of his neck and had his M-16 jam during the assault. Many who survived the Siege at Khe Sanh were killed and wounded.

I took four steps to my left, less than ten feet. As I stood in front of the next table. I told David that there was someone at the next table who he should meet. David stood up and followed me the few feet to where Marco was sitting. I noticed that David had a photograph of himself taken in Vietnam attached to his reunion name tag. The exact same photograph that Marco had showed me just seconds before. It was a private moment and I left them alone to get reacquainted.

I sat down at my friend Tom "Louie" Horchlers table. Tom had talked me into attending our first Khe Sanh reunion some five years ago. I asked Tom what he thought of this reunion and Tom said it was the best one so far. I considered that for a minute, recalling how difficult those first reunions were for me and how each proceeding reunion was a little easier and more enjoyable. I told Tom he was right, it was a great reunion, perhaps because we were just emotionally prepared for it, Tom just smiled knowing it has been a long road traveled. I glanced over at David and Marco knowing it was their first reunion, and was sure they would feel the same way.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER FALL 2015
YOUR LITTLE LIGHT SHINE

By Khe Sanh Veterans Chaplain Ron Rayner

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 5:16 (KJV)

It is time to brag to your local newspaper's veteran's editor about attending the Khe Sanh Veteran's reunions. Once again we had in excess of ten Khe Sanh Vets attend this year's reunion that had never heard of The Khe Sanh Veterans before. Getting an article in your local newspaper will spread the word about our organization and we will hopefully have many more new attendees next year at San Antonio. I take advantage of any opportunity to tell people how great our reunion is run and the many new and interesting people I meet. I am also amazed at the new information I get about a battle I was in over 47 years ago.

Something else to brag about, Connie Gibbons (Khe Sanh veteran Gregg Gibbons wife) book *Mom Told Me You Are A Hero.* This excellent children's book is a wonderful, easy to understand vehicle to provide understanding and healing between veterans and their families as well as the general public. I believe the general public sees veterans on Veteran's Day and Memorial Day but really have little concept on how to relate to a war veteran. I pray this book will help my wife, children, nieces, nephews, and grandchildren to understand why I am a little strange sometimes. This book provides many definitions and thoughts on relating to veterans. I have ordered one hundred copies of the col-

oring book to spread around to relatives, newspapers, veteran organizations, churches, and schools. The simple message it delivers is what I can relate to.

Ken Korkow spoke at this year's memorial service on helping US veterans and active duty personnel deal with symptoms of Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder. Ken mentioned one of the ways he gives his life purpose is by distributing a New Testament with Psalms and Proverbs that is entitled; *The Greatest Warrior.* Included in this Testament are stories by US military combat personnel that have been afflicted with Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder. These personal testimonies tell about how Jesus changed their lives and guides them through the tough times. *The Greatest Warrior* is available at BiblicaDirectService@Biblica.com.

Giving purpose to your life is one of the most effective tools you can use to fight Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder. Donating blood, being a chaplain and prison visitation are a few of the activities have provided me with a sense of worth to fight my PTSD.

I also want to brag about collecting yarn for the Vietnam Veterans at Jackson Prison in Jackson, Michigan. I get yarn, take it to the prison, they crochet it into hats, mittens and scarfs and these items are distributed to the needy. The people who donate the yarn feel good about themselves; the prisoners keep busy doing something worthwhile and feel good, the groups that distribute the items enjoy their part in all this, the needy get good quality items to keep them warm and finally PTSD Ron can justify his existence when he is attacked by bad thoughts.

A quote from Ray Stubbe's book *Battalion of Kings,* which is the motto of the War Memorial in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, suggests appropriate remembering;

"To honor the dead by serving the living."

"The generous prosper and are satisfied; those who refresh others are themselves refreshed."
Proverbs 11:25

"A final word: Be strong with the Lord's mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the devil… Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere."
Ephesians 6:10-18 Selected verses

OBIT

MAJOR EARLE BREEDING JR. USMC (RET)
KHE SANH VETERAN. C/O ECHO
COMPANY 2/26, HILL 861A
KHE SANH VIETNAM

Major Earle Breeding, Jr., United States Marine Corps, retired, died Friday morning, Aug. 7 in Al-



buquerque at the age of 82 in the Veteran's Administration Hospital. Major Breeding, and wife of 62 years, Patricia, have been Ruidoso residents for more than 17 years.

Born Dec. 17, 1932 in Washington, D.C. to Dr. and Mrs. Earle Breeding, Sr, Earle attended Fishburne

Military School in Waynesboro, Virginia and joined the Marine Corps at 19 years of age.

His military years in the '50's and 60's sent him across the world and far away from those he loved.



After serving two tours in Japan and Okinawa, Major (then Captain) Breeding was given the Vietnam command of 200 troops in Company E, Second Battalion, 26th Marines, Third Marine Division. He remembered his first moments in-country before heading to Khe Sanh. After getting squared away, he was taken to Colonel David Lownds who Major Earle Breeding, Jr., United States Marine Corps, retired, died Friday morning, Aug. 7 in Albuquerque at the age of 82 in the Veteran's Administration Hospital. Major Breeding, and wife of 62 years, Patricia, have been Ruidoso residents for more than 17 years.

Born Dec. 17, 1932 in Washington, D.C. to Dr. and Mrs. Earle Breeding, Sr, Earle attended Fishburne Military School in Waynesboro, Virginia and joined the Marine Corps at 19 years of age.

His military years in the '50's and 60's sent him across the world and far away from those he loved. After serving two tours in Japan and Okinawa, Major (then Captain) Breeding was given the Vietnam command of 200 troops in Company E, Second Battalion, 26th Marines, Third Marine Division. He remembered his first moments in-country before heading to Khe Sanh. After getting squared away, he was taken to Colonel David Lownds who was finishing a briefing of what was expected in the days to come. Lownds stated to Breeding, "We will hold Khe Sanh at all costs, won't we, Captain Breeding?" Breeding replied, "As long as Echo Company is here, Khe Sanh will hold." And for seventy days in the early months of 1968 hold they did, against horrific conditions and all odds.

David Douglas Duncan, WWII Marine veteran and a photojournalist at the time, has preserved these moments in several published books. "War Without Heroes" contains a section devoted to Hill 861 A and Breeding's fighting men.

Breeding's service earned him two Purple Hearts, a Navy Commendation medal with V for Valor, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry and a Silver Star which states, in part, "By his courage, extraordinary initia-



tive, and unflagging devotion to duty at great personal risk, Major Breeding contributed significantly to the accomplishment of his unit's mission and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service."

After Breeding arrived home, he spent time in a military hospital to treat the effects his service in Vietnam had left. Eventually he retired from the military and was recruited personally by J. Edgar Hoover to give the Federal Bureau of Investigation a try, serving for 20 years as a Special Agent. During and subsequent to his time with the Bureau, he also worked with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Breeding and wife, Pat, 15 year Ruidoso residents, recently hosted a reunion of several of the men who served under his command. Breeding was honored by the Lincoln County Commission with Resolution 2011-36 recognizing his valiant leadership and the ultimate sacrifice given by many in the battalion. Personal friend Commissioner Tom Battin was on hand to deliver the resolution and to offer the county's thanks to the men who were there. The Ruidoso Free Press was privileged to attend and speak with the visiting men of the second battalion and their families.



A REUNION EXPERIENCE PARRIS ISLAND MUSEUM

BY CRAIG W. TOURTE

Visiting the Parris Island USMC Recruit Depot Museum was certainly an interesting experience, it offered an excellent representation of Marine Corps History. I did a slow walk around trying to view each segment. I felt great pride at having served as a Marine and having been a part of its exceptional history. Of particular interest to those attending was the section devoted to Khe Sanh. As I made the circle carefully viewing each segment, I noticed a large gathering in one particular area, I knew it was the area devoted to Khe Sanh so I stood back a bit and waited for the crowd to clear before I walked over. As I made my way towards that section Dennis Mannion passed by me and in kind of a hushed voice said, "They said only 205 Marines were killed" I sensed the presumable incorrect numerical accounting of loss was a very personal and emotional issue for Dennis

The inscribed panel on the wall read the following: "Khe Sanh – Early in 1968, the North-Vietnamese Army targeted the Marine defensive base at Khe Sanh, just south of the Demilitarized Zone. The NVA looked at Khe Sanh, guarded by a chain of mountain outposts, as the key to controlling the Quang Tri Province."

The Base's defense consisted of the reinforced 26th Marines and South Vietnamese Rangers. On January 20, 20,000 NVA regulars and Viet Cong began a 77-day campaign against Khe Sanh's 6,000 -man garrison. Effectively using air supply and coordinated artillery and air strikes, the besieged Marines crushed all attempts to capture the base. Despite withstanding intense artillery shelling day and night for over two months, at one time receiving 1,109 incoming shells in a single day, U.S. casualties were comparatively light. Only 205 Marines were killed compared to more than 10,000 of the enemy. The NVA withdrew without victory and were sorely depleted of troops, equipment and ammunition."

Besides the stated number as 205 Marines killed during the Siege, I thought the use of the word "Only" was an inadvertent attempt to marginalize the number of those killed, I suspect many felt the same way. I think this causality issue is best addressed in the book "Valley of Decision" (1991) by John Prados and Ray W. Stubbe, (pages 515-516). I'll try and hit the most pertinent parts here as the explanation is rather lengthy. It reads in part...."Official (Marine Corps) casualty figures are 205 killed in action, 816 wounded and evacuated, 852 wounded but not evacuated and one missing... they include only Marine causalities and only for the combat base and hilltops...the Marines own casualty figures in the heat of confusion of battle may be incomplete and inadequate." "...Charlie Med logs record 903 casualties treated just between January 21 and February 24, a figure that does not include Marines treated by regimental or battalion aid stations..." "...memorial service bulletins and 3rd

Marine Division casualty records identifies by name 353 Marines killed between January 20 and March 31, (sixty nine) 69 (killed)between then and the end of PEGASUS, April 15, plus 64 killed on April 16 and 17..." "Valley of Decision" also notes additional losses which occurred in Khe Sanh Village, PEGASUS losses, losses at Lang Vei and plane crashes. In "Battalion of Kings"(2005) another book researched and authored by Ray Stubbe he notes, from January 20 to April 16, 1968, those Marines Killed totaled 495

In a separate article also written by John Prados published in "The American Legion Maine" (September 1, 2013), he states, "Careful compilation of Marine Corps and other causalities for the campaign (Khe Sanh Siege) indicate overall allied losses of 730 dead and 2,642 wounded." In addition Prados states that it (causalities) are also "... among the most difficult to assess."

I want to close this little article by once again referring to Ray Stubbe's very fine book "Battalion of Kings" in which he notes the following, "This book tells the story of the major battle of the Vietnam War in human terms (rather than strategy, tactics, political implications, etc.) Not only individual deaths, but how that death affected others, and continues to do so, makes the implications of President Kennedy's statement about bearing any burden and paying any price to ensure freedom profound beyond mere words. In our fallen brothers we know the meaning of "Greater love has no man than this, to lay down his life for his friends." That is why words and numbers are so important to Khe Sanh Veterans, each loss was personal to us, there is no "ONLY" there are just friends, comrades and fellow Marines.

OBIT

CHARLIE WITTWER, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, INDIA CO 3/26 HILL 881N

Charlie Wittwer, a decorated veteran and wheelchair athlete who once appeared on a Cheerios Box, died Friday after an illness.

The 66-year old Island Lake resident was remembered for his positive outlook, his tenacity and his leadership.

"He wanted to be a hero, and he was. He thought you could raise the bar and everybody could do better",said his wife, Jan Wittwer.

Wittwer served as a US Marine machine gunner during the Vietnam War, earning a Purple Heart, among other military honors.

He fought during the Battle of Khe Sanh in 1968, suffering shrapnel wounds from a mortar round. In 1979, 10 years after he returned from the war, Wittwer lost the use of his legs after an accident with a semitrailer, leaving him a paraplegic. Seventeen years after that, one of his legs was amputated after an infection.

"You can't not be inspired by that guy," said Duluthian Shawn Corbin, who played wheelchair basketball and softball with him for 27 years. "He went through so many bad things in his life. ... If there was anyone who had the right to be jaded or pessimistic, it was him. But he was the opposite."

Wittwer started the Minnesota Flame Throwers wheelchair softball team after playing for the Minnesota Rolling Twins. A pitcher and the coach, he took the Flame Throwers to national competitions, coming in fourth last year.

He volunteered for the Minnesota Paralyzed Veterans group both as a sports director and as president, traveling to Washington, D.C., to lobby for better laws for people with disabilities. He was honored with dozens of medals from the wheelchair games held with the state paralyzed veterans group, in a variety of fields. That's how he landed on a Cheerios box in 2008, Jan Wittwer said. A gold-medal finalist in the 2007 National Veterans Wheelchair games, he was pictured with other athletes on a special box after being chosen by the Veterans Canteen Service.

"It was pretty amazing," Jan Wittwer said. "He saw himself, really, as an athlete first. The chair was secondary."

Wittwer played for 17 years with the Twin Ports Flyers basketball team, and he learned to parachute,

golf, scuba dive, water-ski and downhill ski from a wheelchair.

"He's done so many things from a wheelchair to inspire other people and himself," Jan Wittwer said. "He wouldn't say 'no.' He would try anything."

He was most proud of his family, she said, where a "symbiotic" relationship existed.

"You need to rely on other people, but we relied on him just as well," she said.

Wittwer was a champion in northern Minnesota for wheelchair sports, teaching others about the benefits of competition for people with physical disabilities, said Eric Larson, program manager for Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute-Northland, previously known as Courage Duluth.

"He always had a glass-half-full approach," Larson said, noting Wittwer looked at life with humor, never taking himself too seriously. "He tried to make others recognize it isn't all bad. You can have fun and contribute to something larger than yourself."

Wittwer told the News Tribune in 2010 that he was "hurt at the right time," because those paralyzed years ago were "cast aside."

"Now we're in an age where the wheelchairs are better and people are more accepting of wheelchair athletics," Wittwer said. "We're every bit as competitive because most of us were athletes before."

Educated as a teacher, Wittwer spent 15 years as a social worker at St. Mary's Medical Center and five with Courage Duluth as a sports director. He also coached several youth sports.

Corbin, who plays with the Flame Throwers, said Wittwer was "the heart and soul" of the team. While he wasn't recently able to play, he still traveled to the Twin Cities for practices.

Despite his difficulties, "he never had a bad day," Jan Wittwer said. "He had these cute little quips: 'Walking is overrated.' "

Wittwer is also survived by five children and 11 grandchildren.

RIP Brother! Charlie and I were together on Jan 20, 1968 during the battle on 881N. I was the M 60 Gunner when James Collins, our point man was hit! I was four or five behind Collins and immediately setup the 60 and started firing into the NVA lines! Charlie was the gunner who took over after we recovered Collins!!! My team leader had me pushing out rounds non stop during the initial contact which heated up the barrel resulting in a cook off round! Thus, putting my gun out of commission!!! Reece Critchfield was my assistant gunner and we did not have any spare barrels, we both effectively became 0311's!!! There were plenty of M16's laying around so we were able to rejoin the fight! Some how I found myself with the recon team we were planning on inserting! Late in the day we returned to Hill 881S to man the lines! We lost Critchfield the following day on Hill 881S! He and I were loading WIA's on the medivac when we heard the incoming! We both jumped into a nearby trench. I suffered slight wounds, however Critchfield took the brunt of the schrapnel and died immediately! RIP My Brothers! S/F!

TED RIZO

I GET MAIL

Caroline Frank Nation
3 Roppel Rd
Wellsville, MO 63384

Thomas Eichler
Khe San Veterans
3221 N Opal
Chicago, IL 60634

I was married to Ernest A. Frank, Jr. who was a Marine in Vietnam and a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans. He died September 2, 1997, just a couple months after attending a reunion in St. Louis. I have been getting the Red Clay issues since then. I wanted you to know that I have finally received a positive ruling from the VA.

I continued a claim he started for PTSD with the VA, and finally after 15 years, was granted my claim that his sudden heart attack was attributed to his service. We had 4 young children when he died. By the time I was awarded the claim, they

had all graduated from college. It has taken over 2 more years to finally have each of them receive benefits for college, but that has finally been completed. Unfortunately, our oldest son died in a car accident the week before his checks came, but he had the benefit of looking forward to paying some of his debts with those funds. In fact, today would be his 32nd birthday. I've worked through probate court, and finally have that settled so his little girl will get those benefits when she turns 18.

Our younger son has Crohn's disease and I have filed a claim for him so that if that is ever connected to his dad's exposure to Agent Orange, the claim is in place.

I remarried four years after Ernie died, so I am not receiving benefits as a widow, but I know that if something happens to my husband, they should be available.

I did not meet Ernie until right after he got home from Vietnam, but I did read the graphic, descriptive letters he wrote home to his mom. Our children also treasure having that piece of their dad's history. Your publication Red Clay, is also a source of information for them, and I will save them for our grandchildren to read some day.

I just wanted to contact you and thank you for your service and let you know that like Ernie said of Marines, we never gave up. Even if it took all these years, and countless pages of forms and letters, we finally were successful. I could not find an email address for you, but if you do use email, please let me know, and I can send any updates on our situation if you would like.
Love and prayers,
Caroline Frank Nation
cana66@gmail.com



I GET MAIL FROM OUR FOUNDER REVEREND RAY

Mr. Tom Eichler
3221 N. Opal
Chicago IL 60634

Hi Tom:
Both the regular mailing (to all Khe Sanh vets) and the special envelope with the extra copies of the latest *Red Clay* just arrived and, as usually, you have produced a truly great issue that far exceeds those of ANY of the other veterans groups that I receive! I am especially pleased with all the various colored photos inside the magazine as well as the cover.

Of interest was the reprint of Gunny Richardson's article that first appeared in *Leatherneck* concerning chaplains that appears on pp. 35-38. The part dealing with me starts rather abruptly on p. 36, and reading it, brought back any memories. You might be interested in a note from my diary entry of November, 1989-8 book review Tom Bartlett of *Leatherneck* wrote of the book I co-authored: *Inside Force Recon:*

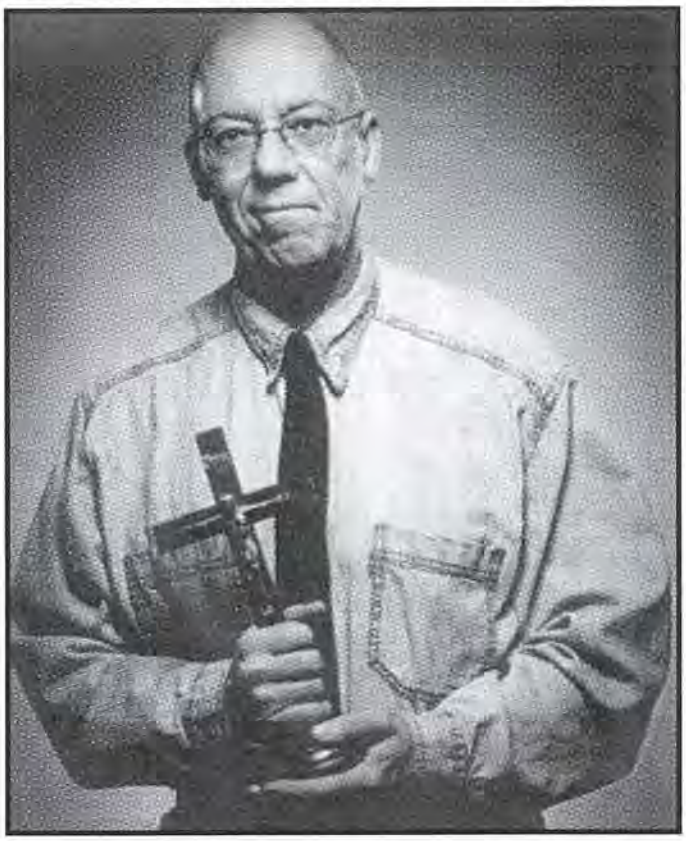

REVEREND RAY STUBBE

Book review by Tom Bartlett in *Leatherneck* 72: 11 (Nov89) p. 98: *"Ray Stubbe is neither stranger nor friend. We've met, and I remain in awe of his accomplishments. He has been places I've only read about and accomplished deeds beyond my comprehension. We first met in DaNang*

in early 1968. *He was dirty, needing a shave, shower and sedative. He was very nervous. He smelled. He wore no rank, but appeared too old to be a private. He wore no weapons. He had a story he wanted told. He offered a rough draft on a cruddy sheet of paper. The story was, indeed, rough. But it contained all the facts, so we edited and printed it in the* Sea Tiger, *newspaper of the III MAF. By the time I realized who the smelly grunt was, he was gone. Back to Khe Sanh where he served as chaplain to the Marines. He was a naval officer. That's Ray Stubbe, a Lutheran minister. Though he has long since hung up his cammies, he still writes of 'his' Marines. .. .. "*

All is well, despite a few aches and pains that come Sanh vet so well put it, "Every day since Khe Sanh is a plus, a day I couldn't have counted on." I'm sure you agree--as do all of us. We know how precious each day truly is because we got to the point over there, almost 50 years ago, when we didn't know if we could count on another day. I've told many hundreds of people in my many presentations and conversations that the Marines I knew at Khe Sanh during the siege were those who gave their last drops of water of bits of C-ration to a buddy, who dashed out during incoming to pull in a wounded Marine who couldn't move, and move him to safety, that in the dozens of bunkers I visited, the Marines remained without fear, frequently cracking jokes-like how poor a marksman they were shooting their rockets and unable to hit their bunker (not considering the rockets were fired from over 7 miles away!), or who hugged each other while present because of the affirmation of life in the presence of death, the sharing of food and water "with the least of these," caring and sharing and daring!

Many years ago, I started telling people: "Life is short, precious, and fragile." All of us Khe Sanh vets know that at the core of our being! And maybe that's the reason I've always felt that Khe Sanh vets, as a whole, are the best group of people I have ever known-and I've been with some mighty good groups of people! Like most boxers who generally have a rather mild manner in normal life because they have confronted very brutal situations, those who have emerged from combat are like the gold that has been refined. I knew a fellow chaplain who also served in Vietnam who once told me: "Everything of value that I have has come out of the crucible." All that really doesn't matter, all the stuff that's just for show, all that has been stripped, leaving the truth of what a person is.

The Greek word for "truth" literally means "unconcealed" or "revealed," "disclosed." My worship services had no choirs, robes, stained glass, pews, organ music, or people dressed up in their finest, but all was so genuine, so "true," so real. I remember Gunny Bailey, NCOIC of the Radio Company (those Marines from III MAF who intercepted NVA radio transmissions and determined by late November, 1967, that Khe Sanh was going to be the target of a major NVA battle) once told me that he saw one of our worship services or about three men kneeling and praying. In a typical Marine Corps fashion appropriate to a Gunny, he stormed over to give us some of his "Gunny talk" (you know the Marine vocabulary he was going to use!), because he said it was crazy. He said, "The audacity!" He said he came, and listened, and then joined in himself and knelt, and felt a peace in the midst of all the bombardment that amazed him. It was like being in the eye of the destructive hurricane, all peaceful, but not as the absence of turmoil, but as strength in the center of the turmoil.

When something difficult makes life miserable, other Khe Sanh vets might tell me: "Hey, we've been through much worse!" And we have! We know! We appreciate each other! We live!

OBIT

MICHAEL J. GUESS, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, C CO 1/9 2ND PLT

Mike received 3 Purple Heart while serving with Charlie Co. He fought a battle with his Cancer since 1989. He finally lost the battle 13 September 2015.He is survived by his wife Debbie, Sons Brian & Adam, and his lovely daughter, Nicole & two Granddaughters



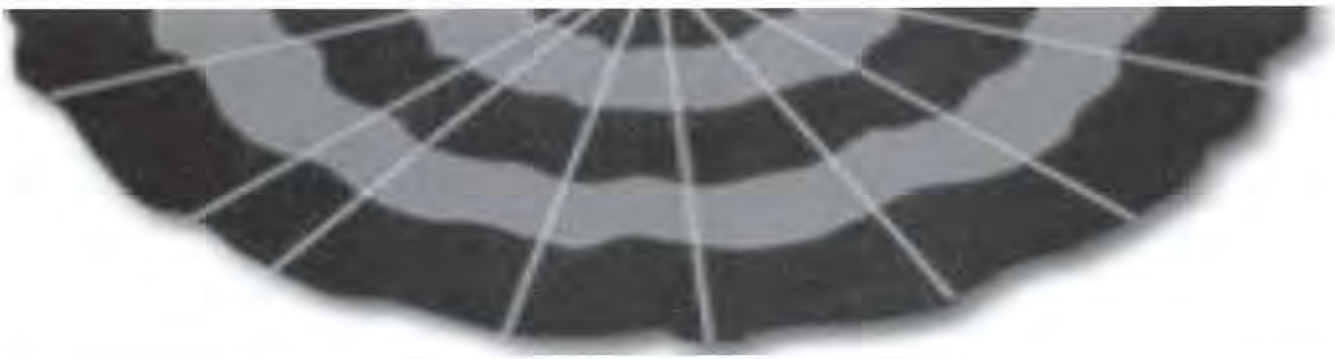

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
Phillip Wright USMC Passed Away	Daniel Laliberte FLU-SUB-2
CAPT Walter J. Egger USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty
GYSGT John J. Grohman USMC Charlie Co 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty
1LT Paul W. Bush USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty
LCPL Stephen C. Shannon USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty
William H. Woolman II USMC B CO 1/26 Passed Away 19 Jan 15	Darlene Woolman Wife & Children
1LT John Ellis USMC KIA Feb 68	Richard Takacs Crash Crew MATCU 62
SW-2 Edward "Cody" Adams USN CBMU-301 DET B KIA 16 Mar 68	Larry Kubley CBMU-301 Det-B

GOD BLESS THEM ALL







THE MARINE WHO VANISHED IN VIETNAM WITHOUT A TRACE

By Ron Martz
September 13, 2015

Late on the afternoon of Sept. 21, 1969, Marine Lance Cpl. James W. Jackson Jr. of Atlanta walked into a U.S. Navy medical facility in what was then South Vietnam and vanished without a trace.

At least that is what the Marine Corps told his family after a rather cursory investigation, a story to which the Corps has steadfastly held for the past 46 years despite the fact that, short of an alien abduction, people just do not simply disappear; there are always explanations.



Jackson is among the more than 83,000 American service members and civilian contract workers unaccounted for since World War II. These soldiers of the unreturning army fell on foreign soil and remain there, their last resting places unmarked, their sacrifices for their country often remembered only by those who loved them or served with them.

This Friday, Sept. 18, is National POW/MIA Recognition Day. It is a day that will go largely unnoticed by many. But it is a day which is uniquely painful to those family members who have never had the closure that comes with giving their loved ones a final accounting and a final resting place.

For many of the 83,000, there will never be a final accounting. Their planes or ships went down at sea, their remains unrecoverable. Others died in battle in which their demise was of such a violent nature that little was left of their physical self.

According to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, more than 73,500 are unaccounted for from World War II, 7,800 from Korea, 1,600 from Southeast Asia, 126 from the Cold War and six from Iraq and other conflicts.

Yet much of the focus of DPAA remains on the war in Southeast Asia, often incorrectly referred to as the Vietnam War. The reasons are complex and difficult to explain to those who were not touched by the war or the political and social upheaval that rent the United States in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The Jackson case is somewhat of an allegory for the war; there was no reason he should have been lost, just as there was no reason the war should have ended as it did. And the official explanation for Jackson's disappearance defies all logic, just as the explanation for the war's strategy defies logic.

"This case is an institutional embarrassment for us," one Marine officer told me shortly after I began investigating the case in 1983. Other Marines have told me that efforts to reopen the case in the years since Jackson's disappearance have met with strong pushback because of the negative publicity it would engender.

Over the years, I have interviewed hundreds of people, traveled thousands of miles and amassed more than 20,000 pages of documents and notes in an effort to find the true story of why Jackson has never been accounted for.

The answer, I finally discovered, was actually rather simple once I began questioning conclusions the Marine Corps accepted as fact thanks to the help of Al Duda of Kenner, La., a former Marine who knew some of the circumstances of events that led to Jackson's disappearance and helped me see through the flaws in the government's case

On the day Jackson disappeared, he was serving as a rifleman on a remote hilltop fire support base named Russell just south of the Demilitarized Zone in northern South Vietnam. His unit was preparing to abandon the base in preparation for redeployment to Okinawa as the Marines' role in the war wound down.

A fire and accidental explosion in a pit where discarded ammunition had been placed sent Marines scurrying off the hill — many without their weapons — because all the bunkers and trenches had been rigged with explosives and there was fear that the whole hill would blow.

Two Marines were killed and about a dozen wounded that day. Helicopters were brought in and the entire unit was flown off the hill, with the dead and wounded first out. Or so they thought.

Two days later, another unit returned to Russell to investigate the damage. A Marine major saw the smoldering remains of two small men in a shallow depression and concluded the bodies were those of two Vietnamese scouts who had been with the unit but were unaccounted for. Those remains were not recovered.

At this point no one knew Jackson was missing. His buddies assumed he had been among the wounded taken to a medical facility. It was not until six weeks later, when Jackson's worried mother began inquiring why she had not heard from her son, that anyone went looking for him.

Frantic inquiries were made throughout Vietnam and all military facilities in the Far East. There was no record of Jackson anywhere. When members of his unit were told of his absence, several began trying to piece together what had happened the day of the explosion. One thought Jackson had suffered a minor back wound. Several others thought they remembered placing him on a helicopter bound for the medical facility.

Once the official investigation began in November 1969, that became the story that has endured to this day; Jackson, slightly wounded, was flow to a hospital, walked in and disappeared.

It was not that the Marines who served with Jackson and testified at the hearing were being deceitful or in any way criminally negligent in his disappearance. What had occurred among them was what is known as "false memory syndrome," a psychological phenomenon in which the human brain, when under severe stress, can be made to believe that something happened when it did not actually happen.

In her book "Witness for the Defense: The Accused, the Eyewitness, and the Expert Who Puts Memory on Trial," Dr. Elizabeth Loftus writes that "When people are afraid, their memories slip and slide, neglecting details, rearranging facts ... The finished product, the memory that seems so clear and focused in our minds, is actually part fact, part fiction, a warped and twisted reconstruction of reality."

So what happened to Jackson? In all likelihood, he was left behind in the rush to get off the hill, his body one of those seen two days after the explosion.

Despite urgent requests from some Marines investigating the case early on, no one went back to the hill to recover the unidentified remains to see if they just might belong to Jackson, despite Marine Corps assurances to the family that it was doing everything in its power to find Jackson.

The official investigation simply concluded that Jackson had disappeared, vanished into thin air, a mere puff of smoke in a strong breeze. To this day, the government remains convinced there was no chance the eyewitnesses were mistaken in what they believe had happened. Any suggestion that he had been left behind was dismissed out of hand.

The possibility that he might have been in shock and simply deserted was discounted because of his strong family ties and somewhat hypochondriacal nature that would have prompted him to seek immediate medical care if injured.

Jackson was listed as missing in action for nearly 11 years, promoted and paid as if he were still serving. Finally, on Aug. 7, 1980, Jackson was declared dead with the stroke of a pen, an administrative procedure undertaken by the government after his parents could not prove he was alive.

A headstone bearing the name "GYSGT James W.

Jackson, Jr." was placed in a special section of the Marietta National Cemetery and a ceremony held to commemorate his passing, even though he had likely died 11 years earlier and there was no body underneath that marker.

When I first talked to Jackson's mother, Rudeen, about the case many years ago, she told me that she was glad her son had joined the Marine Corps because Marines had a reputation for taking care of their own and never leaving a man behind.

"When Jimmy went to Vietnam, I thought one of four things would happen," she said. "He would come home safe, he would be taken prisoner, or he would be killed or wounded and come home that way. I never thought they would just lose him."

Rudeen Jackson died in 2008, never knowing what happened to her son. Jackson's father died in 1986. An older brother and a younger sister also have died. The only surviving immediate family member is an older sister, Dawn Bodiford of Jackson.

So why spend so much time, money and effort to find the remains of one Marine?

As Michael Sledge writes in his book "Soldier Dead: How We Recover, Identify, Bury and Honor Our Military Fallen," there is a social contract between military personnel, their families and the government that when a service member dies overseas, extraordinary efforts will be made to recover their returns.

"For the families of those killed," Sledge writes, "the war is not over until all the missing have been accounted for and buried, either overseas or at home."

And as all Marines know, we never leave one of our own behind.

Ron Martz is Marine Corps veteran (1965-68), journalist and former educator who is writing a book about the Jackson case. He lives in Northeast Georgia.

THE DEAD WENT LAST
LZ MARGO

By Major General Jarvis D. Lynch, U.S. Marine Corps(Retired)

"They were typical grunts and Corpsmen- normally unwashed, usually underfed, always overloaded and more often than not, tired " A battalion operations officer reflects on. One day in a very long war.

The 2d Battalion, 26th Marines rarely appears in the Marine Corps illustrious combat history. The battalion saw only brief service during World War II ... long enough to land in the assault wave at Iwo Jima. Later, during the Vietnam War, it reappeared for a few years before its colors once again were returned to the museum curators.

It's daily Vietnam experience was usually far less stressful than the Iwo Jima operation but Vietnam had it's days and when it did, the late 1960s Marine of 2/26 experienced the horrors of war at the same levels of intensity faced by the generation that fought its way up the black ash terraces beneath Mount Suribachi. This is the story of one of those days: 16 September 1968.

Late 1968 found the 3d Marine Division serving in the extreme north of I Corps, the northern most corps area in what was then the Republic of Vietnam, controlling ten infantry battalions: those of its organic 3d, 4th, and 9th Marine Regiments, plus 2/26. The division's operational concept — an effective one — was as easy to understand as it was difficult to execute. Relying on few fixed defensive positions and even fewer infantry units to defend them, the defense was offense. Battalions stayed in the bush for weeks on end covering North Vietnamese Army (NVA) infiltration routes and, in general, looking for trouble. They moved constantly, on foot or by helicopter, and when they encountered an NVA unit, all hell broke lose until it was destroyed.

Our battalion – I was the operations officer – celebrated the Fourth of July in an area near the coast called Leatherneck Square, where it was responsible for defending the square's northern and western sides. In late July, the battalion was reinforced to

conduct amphibious assault operations and designated Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 2/26.

After training with the reinforcements, BLT 2/26 embarked in the ships of Amphibious Ready Group Alfa, including the famous World War II Essex – class carrier Princeton (LPH-5), now an amphibious assault ship. Initially, there was talk of landings just south of the Ben Hai river inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), but the pattern of NVA operations had shifted westward and the amphibious talk died out. An early September landing, well inland, marked a temporary end to our amphibious experience, and the beginning of service as one of the division's maneuver battalions.

Despite the change in mission, the battalion kept its reinforcements – among them, a tank platoon, a 105mm artillery battery, and a 4.2 inch mortar battery. Operational control shifted to the 3d Marines, head quartered at Camp Carroll, but several days of aggressive patrolling yielded no enemy contacts. About 7 September, the BLT's field elements were trucked to Camp Carroll and staged for two contingencies: a helicopter assault into Landing Zone (LZ) Margo, a barren hilltop just south of the DMZ, roughly 17 kilometers west-northwest of Camp Carroll — or a shift of operational control to the 4th Marines and a return to Khe Sanh, where the battalion had served throughout the early 1968 siege. To the relief of those who had served at Khe Sanh, the Margo operation prevailed – an assault into the LZ followed by movement north to the high ground on the southern border of the DMZ, where the battalion was to turn east, and sweep the high ground. The orders emphasized the need to take prisoners.

A typhoon brushed the coast and although the tree covered mountains inland showed no outward sign of the rains, movement became impossible. The war ground to a halt. Finally the weather began clearing and, on 12 September the commanding officer of the supporting helicopter squadron flew in for the Zippo brief — a planning and co-ordination meeting attended by the battalion and squadron commanders plus their staffs. Zippos were business like affairs. Lives were at a stake and the assaulting battalion and supporting squadron had to reach complete agreement and understanding. On the plus side, Margo was easy to find because of its location on the north side of the Cam Lo River inside a distinctive kilometer-wide, and more than a kilometer deep – U-shaped bend.

Unfortunately this plus was offset by several minuses — most of which stemmed from the tiresome but necessary subject of terrain.

Margo, which resembled a broken bowl, was smaller than the maps indicated. Using north as 12 o'clock, the rim from about 5 to 10 o'clock was the dominant piece of ground within the LZ. The southern side of the rim dropped sharply to the Cam Lo River, actually more stream than river at this point. While the interior slope provided good observation over the landing zone and north toward the DMZ. A spring near the center of the zone fed a stream that had cut a deep draw, which meandered eastward and exited Margo between 2 and 4 o'clock. Margo's northern rim, from 10 to 2 o'clock, varied in height but was lower than the southern rim. Its exterior sloped sharply downward for a kilometer or so before reaching the steep approaches to the terrain fingers that led to the high ground in the DMZ. At its highest point, Margo was about 150 meters above sea level. The hills to the north were three to four times that height while the intervening terrain dropped to low points of about 50 meters.

It was rugged, forbidding country, made all the more so because — although Margo was clear — the heights and intervening valleys were covered with double — or triple canopy forest. The terrain inside the LZ made Margo a "one-bird zone," — helicopters had to land and unload one at a time. This was hardly unusual, but it slowed the rate of assault dramatically. Margo also was too small to accommodate the entire BLT. Since the intent was to retain only G Company, the BLT command group, and the 81mm mortar, Engineer, and Reconnaissance platoons in the zone for any length of time (a few days), the size of the LZ did not seem to be a major factor. Its rock hard soil, however, was another problem. Digging-in, took time.

Finally, there was Margo's history. For a brief period some months before, it had been used as an artillery fire support base and the North Vietnamese were known to keep such positions under observation. The terrain and history summed to the point that BLT 2/26 was landing, one aircraft at a time, into a zone that was:

1 Too small to hold the entire BLT
2 Dominated by high ground to the north
3 Probably the subject of continuing NVA attention, at least to the point of registering mortar fires
Not good … but not unusual.

Friday the 13th of September 1968, a date not lost on many of the Marines, marked the beginning of several days of cloudless skies and comfortable temperatures. By 0700, a thousand or so Marines and Corpsman were waiting quietly in the Camp Carroll pick-up zone smoking, talking, thinking, and maybe, especially in Golf Company – which was landing first – praying. They were grunts, a term coined in Vietnam. While it may have been a derisive term originally, the sting was long gone. With certain pride, it is what they called themselves.

Believing that the chances of infection dramatically increased with the amount of clothing worn when wounded, they were deliberately underdressed. Boots. socks, and trousers were the standard; no underwear and, quite often. no shirt during the day. Their faded helmet covers sported an elastic band around the outside intended to hold camouflage material when the wearer sought invisibility in the bush. More often, it held either a main battle dressing for use if the wearer's luck turned bad or. in the case of optimists, a bottle of mosquito. repellent. The graffiti on most of the covers addressed a variety of subjects but many tended toward the religious. David Douglas Duncan's striking photographs of 26th Regiment Marines at Khe Sanh captured the phenomenon.

They all wore flak jackets, never zipped because she -or grenade fragments taken in the wrong place could jam the zipper, making it difficult for the Corpsmen to remove the jacket and treat a wounded man in the field. The flak jackets, if anything, were dirtier than the helmet covers. Sweat-stained from long wear by a series c owners, they had the same faded color as the camouflage covers but their graffiti, for whatever reason, tended to more basic thoughts than those found on the helmets.

They carried a haversack holding a box of the venerable C-rations, a poncho, poncho liner, and most important of all, an extra two or three pairs of socks. They carried extra radio batteries; mortar ammunition, even though them were not mortar men; rocket launchers, -grenades; at least four filled canteens; and as much extra rifle or Machine gun ammunition as possible.

They were typical grunts and Corpsmen, -normally unwashed, -usually underfed, always overloaded and, more often than not, tired. The lucky ones, those who avoided disease, wounds. or death, did not enjoy a hot meal or a cold shower for weeks on end.

Shortly before 0800, the CH-46s began landing in the pick-up zone with their distinctive whomping blade sound-unforgettable for those who rode them into combat. As the first wave launched, the sounds of the artillery preparatory fires in the distance and the roar of the fast movers orbiting overhead helped ease the tension.

The actual landing was anti-climactic. There was no opposition. but it still took a long, time. Echo, Foxtrot, and Hotel companies quickly assembled and began moving north. Echo struck out for a finger on the right that led to the high ground while Foxtrot and Hotel headed up another finger on the left. Golf Company, the command post, the 81-mm. mortar platoon. and others established defensive positions in the LZ and began digging in. Friday the 13th passed quietly.

On Saturday, 14 September, the companies continued moving north at first light. While there were well-worn trails in the area and occasional sounds of movement ahead. there were no contacts. Even so, the companies called artillery and mortar fires on possible target to keep the fire-support system active. About mid-day, Hotel Company's point, leading the movement up the left finger, saw movement ahead and signaled the company to move off the trail and wait. Their patience was rewarded as they watched a North Vietnamese soldier, weapon at sling arms, striding down the trail toward them.

The entire point was in an excellent ambush position and easily could have killed him. That they didn't was a testimony to discipline and the emphasis on taking prisoners. Waiting until the NVA soldier had passed. the point man re-entered the trail and, in Vietnamese. ordered him to halt — which he did promptly. The capture was reported to the company commander, relayed to battalion. and within a mat-

ter of minutes the 3d Marines had learned of the potential guest speaker. Within the hour. the prisoner had been flown to Camp Carroll for interrogation.

Throughout the war, most higher headquarters consistently failed to pass timely intelligence information down to the battalion level where it could be acted upon. The 3rd Marines did not make that mistake. Just before sundown. 2/26 learned that the prisoner had intended to surrender because he had been at Khe Sanh when the Marines first arrived. Stating that he "had a love of life." he added that he wanted no more of anything remotely resembling that battle, a confrontation that clearly had a psychological hold on both sides. Of greater interest was his disclosure that the lead company on the northwest finger – Hotel Company – would be attacked at about 2000 that evening. All three companies were alerted.

Echo, Foxtrot, and Hotel halted for the night and began registering artillery defensive fires. Hotel Company's artillery forward observer (FO), controlling a supporting 155-mm. howitzer battery, had just started registering fires to cover a listening post located on the western side of the finger when the Marines manning the post reported hearing movement through the draw to their direct front. Since the registration rounds were on the way, they could only wait. Seconds later, as the roar of the explosions died away. the listening post reported screams and other sounds of panic. The FO immediately called "Fire for effect" and swept the draw with 155 -mm. rounds. Other than moans and the sound of some movement in the draw the remainder of the nigh; was quiet.

15 September dawned clear and cloudless. Visibility was so good that Marines could watch outgoing 81mm mortar rounds until they reached their apogee. Again keeping the mortar and artillery fire-support systems active. E F, and H companies resumed their slow and careful climb toward the high ground. Signs of enemy presence were plentiful but there was no contact. The trouble started at noon, when a radio message from the 3d Marines ordered the BLT to pull its companies back to the LZ and prepare to shift to the operational control of the 9th Marines. The message was cryptic — it had to be because none of the radio transmissions with any of the battalions in the 3d Marine Division's area were secure. The encryption equipment of the day was too heavy to be carried in the field and, in any case, seldom worked in the heat and humidity of the bush. Problems with getting shackle sheets (code) down to company level precluded the use of even that decades old means of encryption. Everyone assumed that the North Vietnamese heard most of the radio traffic.

Communications security problems notwithstanding. the order was received with incredulity. There was little doubt that the NVA would follow the companies back to the landing zone and less doubt that mortar and perhaps infantry attacks would follow. The three rifle companies were told to halt and then to begin moving south to Margo; meanwhile the order was strenuously argued.

The regimental commander made it clear that the order stood but it was clear that he Agreed with the battalion's tactical assessment of what lay in store. Obedience would have a price. that much was obvious. What was not obvious was how much. After a few hours. the three companies were told to halt, reorient. and return to the original northward advance. We had to know if the trailing-enemy theory was correct. The order did not specify how long to follow the reverse course. but did tell the company commanders something they already knew — to expect contact. It came quickly on both ridges as small NVA units were surprised to find the Marines heading north again.

Breaking contact, the companies once more turned south toward Margo. So far as 2/26 was concerned, the point had been proven. We reported this to the 3d Marines and forcefully recommended cancellation of the withdrawal order. The reply was more enlightening than helpful. The battalion was told that its arguing and temporary resumption of the offensive had caused some difficulties (it wasn't phrased quite that way) and that there would be a 24 hour postponement. Further, however, the entire battalion was to concentrate in LZ Margo south of the 61 grid line — an east-west map line that split the LZ — by a specified time early the next afternoon. 16 September. In the interim, the BLT was authorized to do whatever it thought best to prepare for the return to the LZ. The maneuver companies were turned north again: within minutes. they bumped into NVA troops following them down the

ridge lines.

The enlightening section of the order was the part about moving south of the 61 grid line. It made no sense because the area remaining in the LZ south of the grid line was too small to accommodate the BLT in anything resembling tactical positions. Even worse, it did not permit a tactical defense of the LZ, especially against infantry attacks coming from the most logical direction — north. It was apparent that the order had emanated from a headquarters other than regiment or division, neither of which would have displayed that level of tactical ignorance. This. and the urgency associated with the 61 grid line provision, led to the conclusion that an Arc Light-a high altitude B-52 area bombing mission — was imminent. To those steeped in the traditions of obedience to orders it might seem strange, but the BLT now confronted a dilemma. If its tactical assessment was correct, the order returning the maneuver units to the LZ would result in some form of NVA attack; if,. on the other hand, the Arc Light guess was right, there were other problems. The timing and target area were unknowns and, for security, would remain unknowns at the battalion, level. Further, the tactically inane directive to move south of the 61 grid line indicated that the Arc Light was going in north of Margo but close.

The dilemma was. simple and stark: Comply with the: order and risk NVA action — or move the companies toward Margo, retaining some semblance of tactical deployment north of the LZ, and risk the Arc Light.

To those who have seen a proper Arc Light, the choice was easy. The companies were directed to hold in place and begin moving south to the LZ early the next morning. But as a concession to common sense, that portion of the order regarding the 61 grid line was interpreted rather loosely. WE WOULD DEFEND MARGO.

The weather on 16 September matched the brilliance of the days gone by. Today, the Vietnamese Bureau of Tourism would be touting the weather, on that day in 1968, however, it turned into a scene from hell

Occasionally stopping to engage the NVA units following them, the three rifle companies, slowly made their way back to Margo. Echo Company came in last. Commanded by Captain John Cregan, now a Roman Catholic priest, the company began the climb up Margo's northern slope about and by 1430 or so was beginning to take up its assigned defensive positions on the northern perimeter. Even after ignoring the order to stay, south of the 61 grid line, there were too many troops in too small an area — and they had to contend with Margo's hard ground. Digging in took more time.

Early in the afternoon, there were ominous sightings of North Vietnamese Soldiers with mortars fording the Cam Lo River west of Margo. Artillery fire was called, probably without effect. At the same time, there was a minor flurry of activity as the BLT shifted to the operational control of the 9th Marines and radio frequencies were changed and tested. That done, the chatter of the troops and clanging of their entrenching tools were the only sounds disturbing the quiet.

At 1500, Captain Ken Dewey, an F-4 pilot serving as the battalion's air liaison officer, was looking north toward the left of the two hills that had been the original objectives when suddenly a mirror started flashing — followed immediately by the soft "thunking" sound of mortars firing in the distance. Within seconds, Margo was blanketed with exploding 82-mm rounds from several points on the compass, especially the northern arc. The battalion began – its "time on the cross" as the French put it in an earlier Indochina War.

The noise was deafening. Each explosion filled the surrounding air with black, stinking, greasy tasting smoke. The mortar men poured it on until 200 to 300 rounds had pummeled the Marines and Corpsmen, a good percentage of whom had no protection beyond that of shallow fighting holes.

As, the fire eased, the LZ sprang to life and First Lieutenant Al Green's 81mm. mortar platoon began counter battery fires, an action that won them concentrated NVA attention. Battalion machine gunners on Margo's southern rim saw some enemy mortar men and began to engage at long range attracting in turn their share of incoming. The exchange continued for a few more minutes until the mirror on the high ground flashed again. The incoming barrage slowed, then stopped— but the

noise in the, zone grew to deafening proportions as hundreds of rifles went into action.

At first, it seemed as if the frustrated Marine riflemen were wasting ammunition on the out-of-range NVA mortar men, but a radio query to First Lieutenant Bob Riordan, the Golf Company commander, revealed that from his position, on the -southern rim, North Vietnamese soldiers could be seen moving uphill to assault the LZ's northern side.

Then the rifle fire stopped abruptly and, within seconds, the southern rim and center of the LZ were alive with Marines running to the northern side. Their fires had been masked by those manning the northern slope defenses and they were leaving their own positions to get into the fight. The enemy never had a chance, The NVA commander who ordered the assault, probably had fewer' troops than he thought as a result of the previous contacts. In any case, the reaction of the defenders was too violent. No more than 20 minutes had elapsed. The cost to BLT 2/26 was more than 150 dead and wounded. The cost to the enemy was unknown. At 1700, the mirror flashed again and the mortars went, to work. Once more, rounds rained down on Margo fewer this time and without – an infantry attack – but the BLT's casualty list grow longer.

For the first time since the attacks began, medical evacuation of the wounded now seemed possible. It was likely that the NVA had expended most or all of their mortar ammunition and would not interfere with the helicopter evacuation.

The casualties had been separated by category . . . emergency, priority, routine ... and the "permanent routine," a euphemism for the dead that had crept into the radio operator's lexicon. We hoped to Medivac at least the emergency and priority wounded before nightfall. Several CH-46As and gun ships arrived about 1830 and the laborious process of loading the casualties, one at a time, began as soon as the lead bird touched down.

As always, the strength and example can be found in the casualties. I saw Staff Sergeant Doner from the reconnaissance platoon, covered with ' with blood, as he was being escorted to the Medivac staging area. He was refusing to leave, insisting that he was okay. I told him that he would leave.

Late the afternoon of 16 September, I watched as an uninjured Marine rapidly searched the rows of wounded, clearly looking for a friend. Suddenly, a large arm reached out and waved. "There you are," said the first as he took the wounded man's hand and squatted down to talk. They held hands quietly until the Medivac helicopters arrived.

The wounded Marine had been hit badly, I do not know if he survived. Nor do I know if his friend survived our subsequent encounters with the NVA. What I do know is that the wounded Marine was black and his buddy white. I remember thinking at the time how much better a people we would be if we were all like those two. Recently, we have been told that the best and brightest did not go to Vietnam. When I heard that, I thought of those two Marines so long ago, the hardships they endured, and their obvious respect for each other. Maybe they were not the brightest. They were the best.

Realizing that there would be no other Medivacs from Margo that night, the last pilot insisted on overloading his aircraft with wounded. Over his objections, the loading stopped and the pilot was told to launch. He must have been good. If not good, he was lucky. The overloaded 46 resembled a giant praying mantis as it struggled into the air, tail down, nose swinging back and forth in a wide arc, as though searching for escape from a trap. Finally, he nursed it a few feet higher, leveled, and began slipping sideways, just above the trees, down the slope that formed Margo's northern rim. Again, the LZ filled with Marines running north: convinced that the -46 was about to crash, they were moving to assist survivors. The helicopter disappeared from view behind the trees and, an eternity later, came back into view, this time in full flight, nose high on a southerly course, jettisoning fuel to lighten the load and clear the ridge to Margo's east. All movement stopped as everyone in the LZ watched the miracle claw its way over the ridge line, taking the wounded to safety.

Quiet settled over Margo. As the troops returned to their positions, the silence was broken by a single "thunk" off to the north. This time there was only one round, but it landed precisely where the Medivac birds had loaded. It was "Charlie," saying that he knew what had been done and could have stopped it anytime. He also was saying that he was a

"pro" We knew that already.

The XXIV Corps Commanding General visited Margo the following morning. His worries about morale evaporated as he watched Marines improving their defensive positions. He then looked toward large group of wounded waiting to be evacuated. In response to a question, he was told that they were the routine Medivacs. Behind them were rows of poncho – covered objects. He looked at them, saying nothing, knowing what they were. Finally, a Marine broke the spell. **"The dead go last. Sir."**

Epilogue

The Arc Light went in five or six kilometers north of Margo on the afternoon of 16 September. Maybe too much had happened or maybe there was an unusually high number of duds. Regardless, it was unimpressive. Paradoxically, it hurt 2/26 more than it hurt the enemy.

'Early on 17 September, Golf, Foxtrot, and, Hotel Companies returned to the familiar trails, attacking north. Echo Company, having lost nearly 70 Marines in the mortar and infantry attacks, remained behind. The LZ was mortared twice that day but there were few casualties. Margo's final toll probably will never be known exactly. We evacuated more than 200 dead and wounded, some of whom doubtless died later. Before we left, we filled 18 helicopter external nets with packs, weapons, and other equipment, no longer needed.

Eventually, after another long period of torrential rains, the attacking companies reached the high ground, where Golf found a graveyard — 18 graves with markers aligned in rows — near where the mirror had flashed before the mortar attack. They excavated a few to confirm that it was a graveyard. They also traced the extensive writings on the markers and sent them to the rear for translation. The writings turned out to be a history of each of the casualties. We learned that we had gotten the NVA battalion commanding officer and much of his staff. The CO had been a soldier since joining the Viet Minh in the late 1940s, he was a professional. I think that whoever ordered all of the writing put on the markers did so, at least in part, so that we would not dig up their dead.

We stood by to attack to the west. It never happened. Near the end of September, the BLT moved by helicopter into another one-bird zone, his one in the DMZ just south of the Ben Hai River, nearly 15 kilometers north and east of Margo. In a series of assaults, BLT 2/26 routed an enemy force defending a headquarters complex and artillery positions. During the last assault, Marines of Echo and Hotel Companies were treated to the rare sight of North Vietnamese troops fleeing in panic.

The Marines and Corpsmen of 2/26 formed a typical grunt battalion. They fought a dirty, unpopular war and they did it well. They never said that they were the best. All they said was that, if they met somebody better, they hoped he was on their side.

Major General Lynch, an infantry officer, was the operations officer (S-3) for BLT 2/26 during the action at Landing Zone Margo. He commanded the Marine Corps Recruit Depot and Eastern Recruiting Region, Parris Island, South Carolina, prior to his retirement in 1991. He is the Southwest Florida Area Co-ordinator for the State Comptroller.

LZ Margo Casualties (Sept 13-17)

H&S Company
LCPL Lawrence G. Bryan
HN D. L. Eisenbraun
LCPL William J. Moore
CPL William T. Parker
PFC P.E. Peden
HN D.L. Songne
LCPL L. Brownbey
LCPL W. Oskilenick
LCPL Dominic Pollastro
PFC Frank A. Skocich

Echo Company

PFC Edward Cunningham
PFC John M. Donohue
PFC Delon Hunter
LCPL Harry Rivers
SSGT Juan O. Sanchez
SGT Billie Strickland
LCPL Gary R. Daffin

PFC James C. Durham
CPL Stanley R. Pettit
LCPL Joseph E. Roble
LCPL Clifton Spiller

Fox Company
CPL Rodney Bradford
LCPL David B. Freed

Golf Company
PFC G.L. Kunchier
CPL Thomas M. Phillips

Hotel Company

PFC Dwight L. Adams
PFC Michael H. Deschenes
PFC Leon E. Kizzle
PFC D. Lance McDonald
CPL William T. Parker
PFC Steven J. Reichardt
LCPL George A. Bond
PFC Douglas C. Impson
PFC Jerry L. Marcum
PFC Ronald J. Pointer
CPL William E. Wykosdic

[from the Memorial Service program October 21, 1968; U.S.S. Princeton]

2015 ANNUAL KHE SANH REUNION AUGUST 17 - 22

The reunion was held in beautiful Savannah, Georgia at the Marriott Savannah Riverfront Hotel. Another reunion full of interesting events and excursions was offered for all to enjoy. Golf was offered on Wednesday at the beautiful Savannah Harbor Golf Course. Thursday we boarded comfortable busses for a trip to Parris Island where many were able to relive their induction of many years ago. Friday was the board of directors meeting and later the attendees enjoyed an outstanding two (2) hour river boat dinner cruise which included entertainment and dancing. Saturday morning was the ladies luncheon, Memorial Service and General Membership Meeting. The evening concluded with the Annual Cocktail Party, formal flag ceremony, introduction of elected officers, acknowledgment of appreciation for the outgoing officers and concluded with the annual Dinner Banquet.

Besides these wonderful social events, actual work does get accomplished for the good of the membership and the Association. Meeting are held, opinions are offered and discussed, budgets presented, financial reports are made available for all to review, elections are conducted for various board positions and the membership selects the year after next reunion location.

The Officers and Board of Directors (Members at Large) are elected for a two year cycle. The terms are staggered so there is always a carry-over of current members. The board members for 2015-2016 are as follows. (Officers) Tom Eichler – President/ Treasurer, John Pessoni – Vice President, Craig W. Tourte – Secretary. (Board of Directors) Russ Turner, Thomas Ford, Bruce Geiger, Wayne (Butch) Deverney, Jose (Cisco) Reyes, Dennis Mannion, Sid Patricio, Mike Fishbaugh and John Wolf. David Meyers – Sergeant at Arms and Ronald Rayner – Chaplin.

Previously selected San Antonino will be the site of the 2016 Annual reunion. (Details pages 35 & 36) The membership decided this year that the 2017 Annual Reunion will be held in (downtown) Cleveland Ohio. (No Date Has Been Set)

Special appreciation was noted to those who donated so generously to the Khe Sanh Association which supports the needs of the Association and the Khe Sanh Scholarship Fund. A Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to Robert C. Koury Jr. Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines for his tireless efforts and overwhelming support and generosity to the Khe Sanh Veterans.

Starting November 1, 2015 the annual dues has been raised to $ 40.00. The dues notifications will go out the same date. John Pessoni related that members are still sending orders for the PX to his old address. His new address is listed in the change sheet in the current issue of Red Clay. For those who do not have a current directory in their possession it is:

JOHN PESSONI
1700 RT 37W
BLDG 124 APT 8
TOMS RIVER, NJ 08757

Big John wanted to thank the membership for their generosity in purchasing items from the KSV PX. Dave Meyer KSV Sgt At Arms, and his lovely wife Carol, who work so hard putting together the silent auction, also wanted to give a shout out to the membership for their generosity. Khe Sanh Veterans also kicked in almost $1,400 for the 50-50 drawing. Thanks to all who worked hard selling tickets. All these funds support our magazine and the scholarship fund.

We would be so remiss if we did not give a huge thank you to our lovely hard working committee chairwoman, Kathy Turner. She is really the glue that holds the reunions together We love you Kathy.

Please get your registrations in ASAP, after you receive them in the mail. It makes our job a little easier You can always cancel with the KSV and the Hotel. We refunded eight members and the Hotel was kind enough to give refunds even after the 24 hour limit.



SCHOLARSHIP FUND

ANDERSON, David M.	250.00 SF	Check# 3416
AVERY, Terry E.	25.00 SF	Check# 5898
BAKER, David & Mindy	150.00 SF	Check# 220
DONAGHY, Richard E	200.00 SF	Check 2016
EVANS, Faye S.	100.00 SF	Check# 1938
FOLEY, Richard M. Jr	100.00 SF	Check# 1481
FORD, Thomas	500.00 SF	Check# 2533
GEIGER, Bruce	500.00 SF	Credit Card
GIBBONS, Constance	142.00 SF	Check# 5002
HANNA, Robert III	100.00 SF	CASH
HARVEY, Tom	20.00 SF	Check# 2691
KENNY, Neil	65.00 SF	Check# 4460
KENNY, Neil	236.00 SF	Check# 4458
KRAMER, Mark	55.00 SF	Check# 335
MEYER, David	150.00 SF	Check# 1160
MEYER, Carol	150.00 SF	Check# 1159
NELSON, George J.	300.00 SF	Check# 5313
ORGAN, Michael	50.00 SF	Check# 1019
PRENDERGAST, Edward	100.00 SF	CASH
SIEJUTT, Thomas	20.00 SF	Check# 4363
STACK, Geoffrey Nancy	1,000.00 SF	Check # 1195
TOBIN, William J III	50.00 SF	Check# 332
WAGNER, Russell	40.00 SF	Check# 4015
WOOLMAN, Darlene	500.00 SF	Check# 1052

GENERAL FUND

BAKER, James	100.00 GF	Check# 400
DESETA, Louis	123.00 GF	Check# 5472
DIGAETANO, John	30.00 GF	Check# 376
DUNLAP,	25.00 GF	Check# 2395
FISHBAUGH, Michael	50.00 GF	Check# 3932
KING, James	30.00 GF	Check# 541
KUBLEY, Lawrence W.	400.00 GF	Check# 11554
LEMIEUX, Lorne A.	20.00 GF	Check# 688
MAIN, Ronald	40.00 GF	Check# 2232
MORGAN, Robert I	100.00 GF	Check# 2575
MUSSARI, Derek	10.00 GF	Cash
TOURTE, Craig	500.00 GF	Check# 875
WHITTENBURGER, Allen R.	30.00 GF	Check# 4630
WILLIAMS, Robert E.	270.00 GF	Check # 1278

THE 2016 KHE SANH REUNION WILL BE HELD AT THE EL TROPICANO RIVERWALK HOTEL IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS FROM 09 OCTOBER TO 16 OCTOBER 2016. THE COST WILL BE 105.00 A DAY, SAME PRICE THREE DAYS PRIOR & THREE DAYS AFTER THE REUNION DATES. PARKING IS FREE, BUFFET BREAKFAST AT A REDUCED COST, PET FRIENDLY WITH PERMISSION. LOCATION: 110 LEXINGTON AVE, SAN ANTONIO, TX 78205 PH :









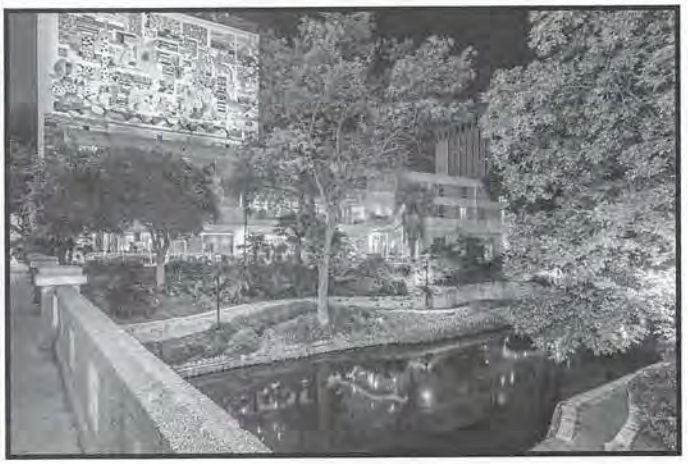



Hotel Amenities

- Outdoor pool
- Free newspapers in lobby
- Use of nearby fitness center (discount)
- Fitness facilities
- Restaurant
- Breakfast available (surcharge)
- Bar/lounge
- Conference space
- 24-hour front desk
- Porter/bellhop
- Express check-out

Safe-deposit box at front desk



Family Friendly Amenities

- Family Hotel
- Outdoor pool
- Free Wi-Fi
- Rollaway/extra beds available
- Laundry facilities
- Refrigerator
- Internet Available in all rooms Free W-FI




GLENN & SANDRA
GRIFFIN
DELTA CO 1/1


CHARLES & EMMA LOU
LYNCH
A CO 3RD ANTI TANK
"ONTOS"


ALLEN & LYSA
WHITTENBURG
HQ 26TH MARINES


TOM EICHLER
KSV PRESIDENT &
TREASURER
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A


HERRICK & CHER LORD
MIKE CO 3/26


BILL PERSON
USAF
553RD RECON WING

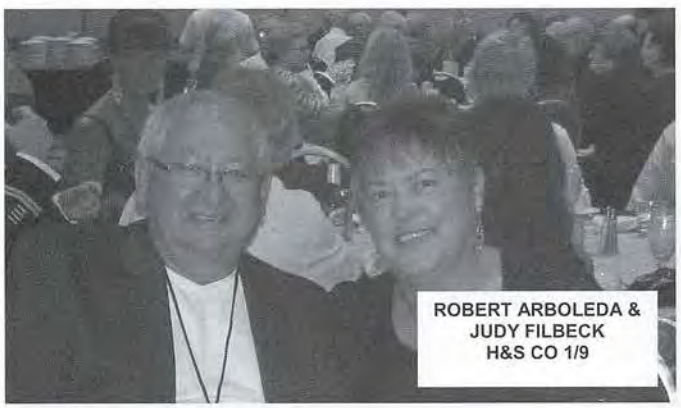
ROBERT ARBOLEDA &
JUDY FILBECK
H&S CO 1/9


BILL & BARBARA
FOSTER
WITH GRANDSON
AUSTIN LEWIS


TOM & ROSE HARVEY
HQ BTRY 1/13


LELAND UPSHAW
& SON MAJOR
KYLE UPSHAW
USA


BILLY & JUDY MARTIN
HQ BTRY 1/13


CAPT JOSEPH CONLON
& MICHELE MALAGUIUS
FOB-2 CCN 5TH SF
AIRBORNE


GLENN PRENTICE
INDIA CO 3/26 & CHARLIE
BTRY 1/13


RON & DARLENE PARSONS
15TH AERIAL SQUADRON
USAF


KEN & LIZ KORKOW
BRAVO CO 1/26


PETER
&STEPHANIE
KURKUBA &
DAUGHTER
CAROLYN
DELTA CO 1/26


JOEL & SHIRLEY NELSON
1ST CAV DIVISION USA


KYL THOMAS SON
OF "DOC" THOMAS
KILO CO 3/26


LOUIS A. RANN
HQ CO 26TH MARINES

FRED MCEWAN
HQ CO 26TH MARINES S-4

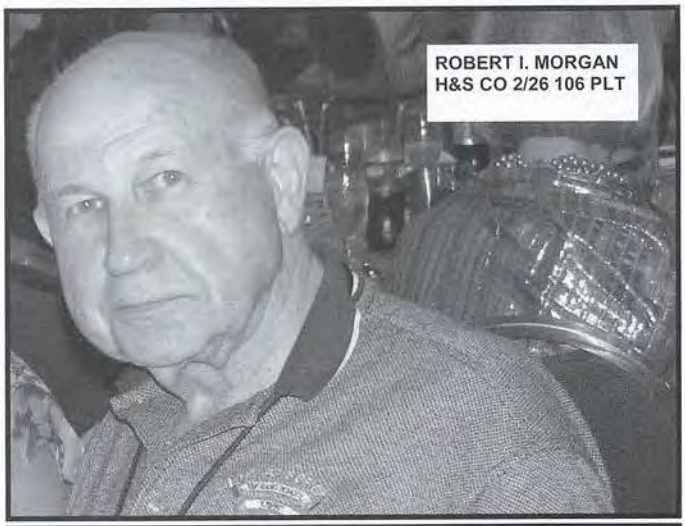
ROBERT I. MORGAN
H&S CO 2/26 106 PLT


RICH & CAROL
FOLEY
INDIA CO 3/26


FRED McEWAN
& WIFE FAYE TILLETT
HQ CO 26Th MARINES S-4

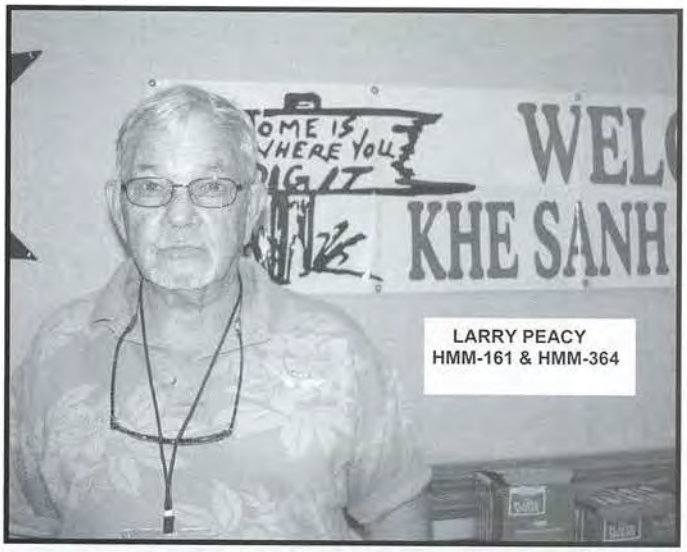

LARRY PEACY
HMM-161 & HMM-364



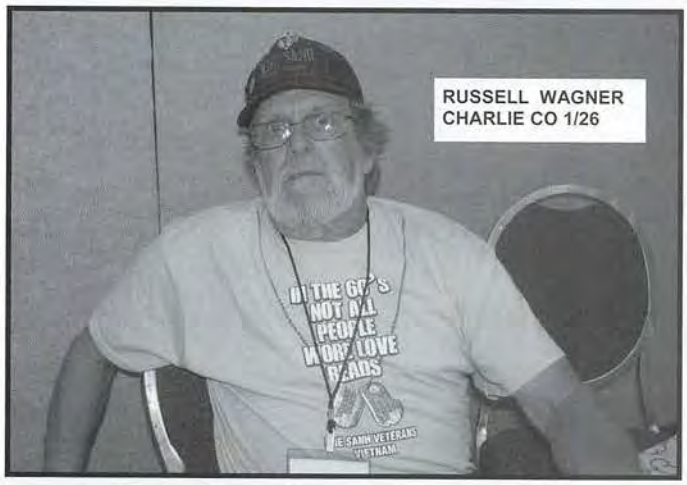

RUSSELL WAGNER
CHARLIE CO 1/26



WILLIAM POLAND
BRAVO BTRY 1/13



ROBERT & LYNN BATES
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13

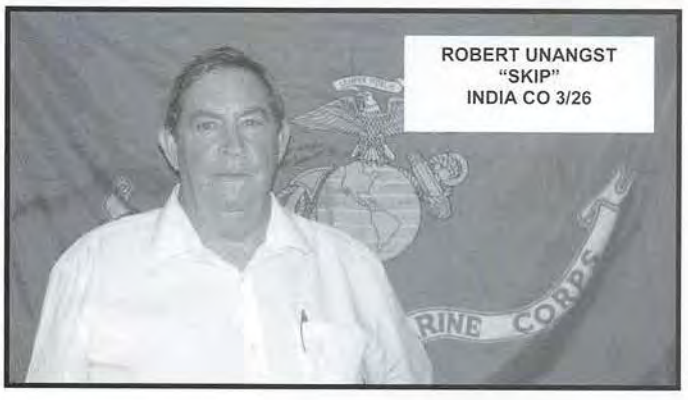

ROBERT UNANGST
"SKIP"
INDIA CO 3/26

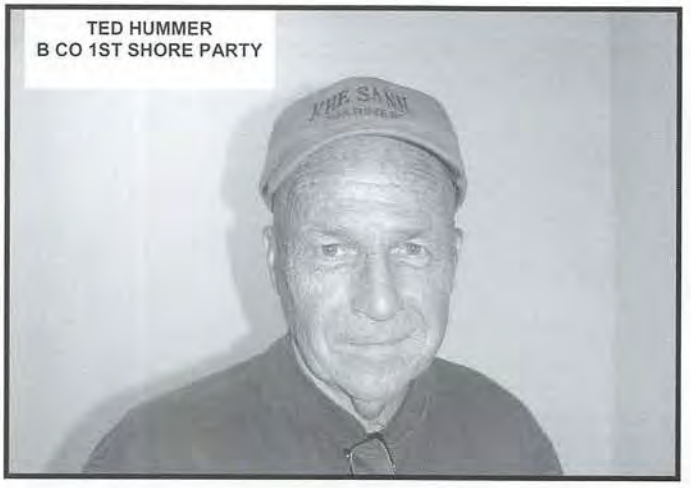

TED HUMMER
B CO 1ST SHORE PARTY


DAVID & MARGARETE
THOMPSON
PLATOON 2085
CARRIER

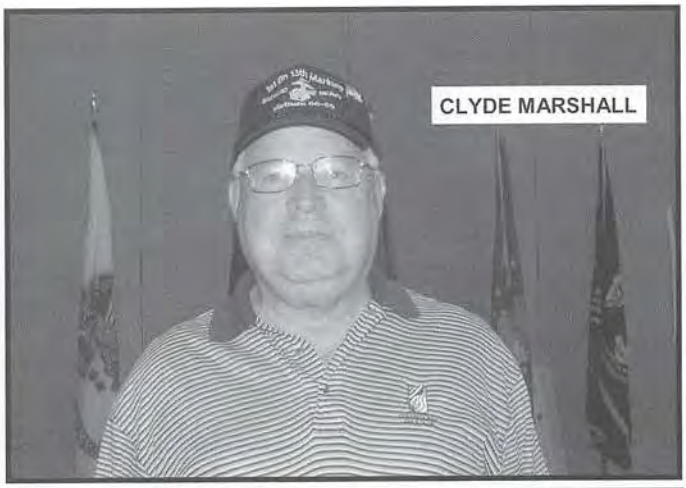
CLYDE MARSHALL


CHARLES O'DONNELL
FOXTROT BTRY 1/12

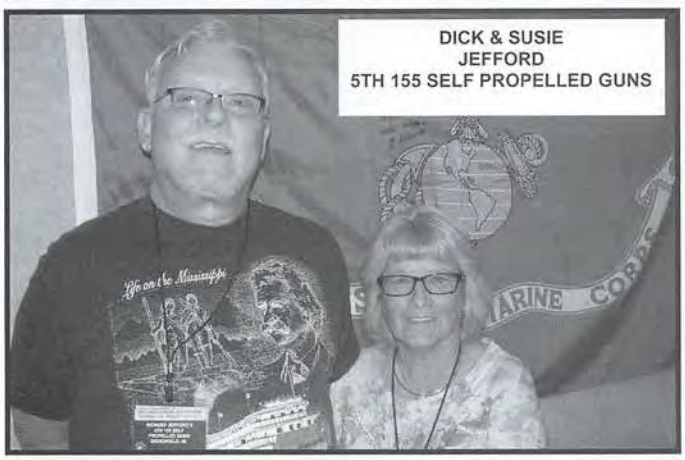
DICK & SUSIE
JEFFORD
5TH 155 SELF PROPELLED GUNS


LELAND UPSHAW
BRAVO CO 3RD
RECON


JERRY & SHERRY
WILLIAMS
BRAVO BTRY 1/13
Khe Sanh
VETERANS
THIS IS MY GUN PERMIT
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NAME: SECOND AMENDMENT
ISSUE DATE: 12-15-1791
EXPIRATION DATE - NEVER


MICHAEL HART
BRAVO BTRY 1/13



DAN & JOYCE
FERGUSON
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13



ROBERT & JUDY
ALEXANDER
H&S CO 2/26

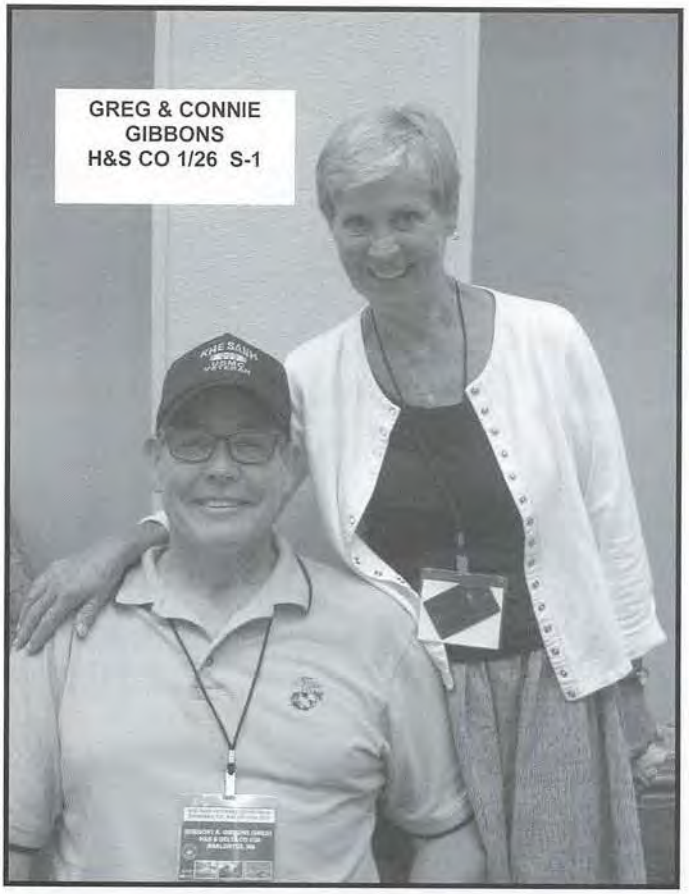

GREG & CONNIE
GIBBONS
H&S CO 1/26 S-1



RICHARD &
BRENDA
VAUGHN
H&S CO 1/26
COMM

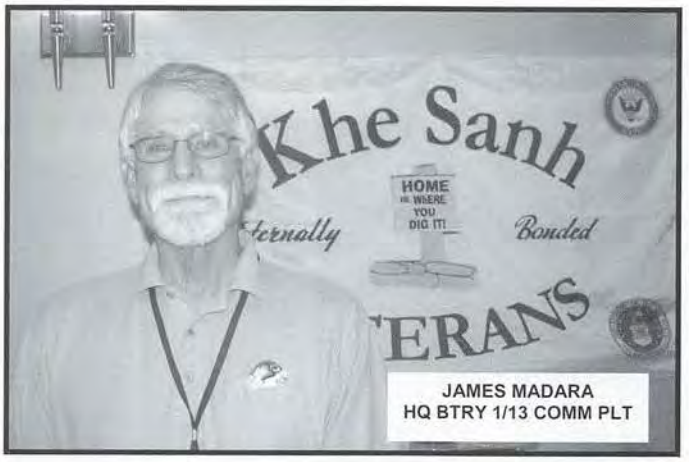

JAMES MADARA
HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM PLT



MICHAEL CORCORAN
3/9 3RD MT BN

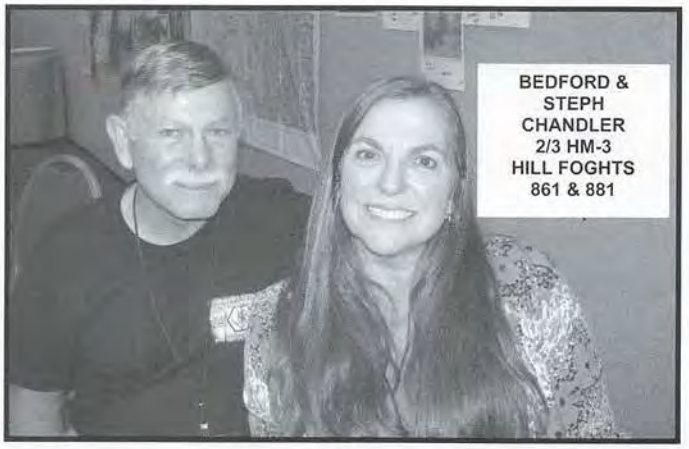

BEDFORD &
STEPH
CHANDLER
2/3 HM-3
HILL FOGHTS
861 & 881


JAMES & DONNA KING MIKE CO 3/26

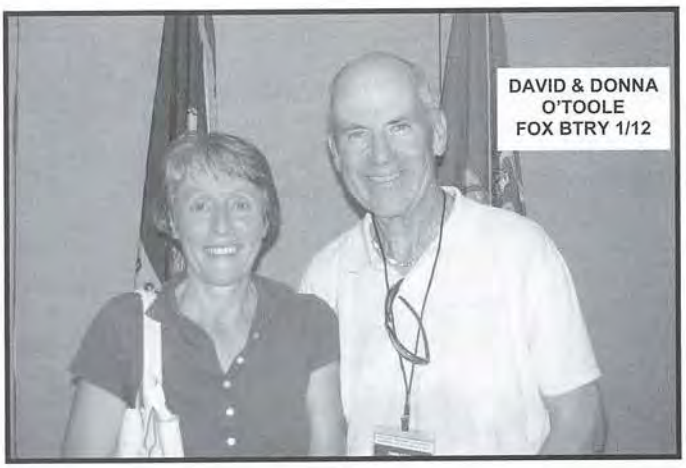
DAVID & DONNA O'TOOLE FOX BTRY 1/12


JOE & TERRY BUENROSTRO BRAVO BTRY 1/13


STEVE & DONNA DUNKLE A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS "ONTOS"


CURTIS & MARY FRYAR HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM

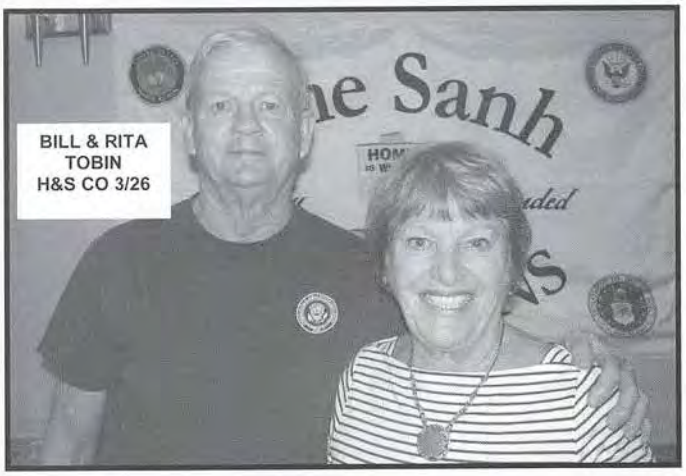
BILL & RITA TOBIN H&S CO 3/26


FORD KILGALLON 3RD TANKS 1ST AMTRACK


LOU & BEV NAJFUS C CO 3RD ANTI TANK "ONTOS"


ELCOME HOME BROTHERS
MICHAEL & LINDA
ORGAN
5TH COMM BN


DAVID & SANDRA
MARTINEZ
HMM-163


WELCOME
KHE SANH VETERANS
VINCENT BEGAY
ALPHA CO 1/26

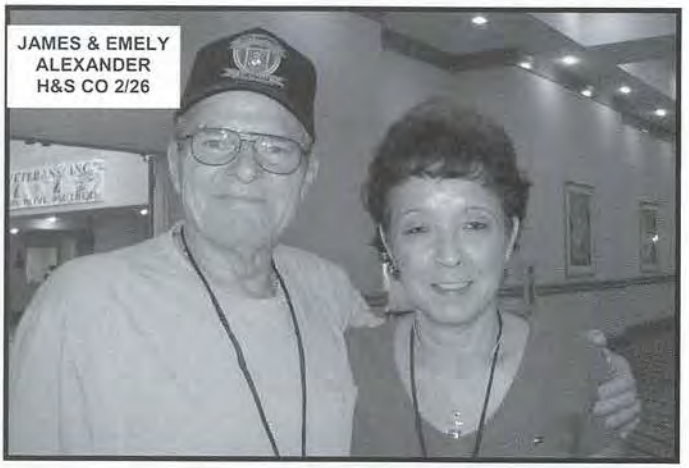
JAMES & EMELY
ALEXANDER
H&S CO 2/26


TED & LYNN RIZO
INDIA CO 3/26


DON & SANDI
FRIEDSAM
DELTA CO 1/26


PETE & TERRY
TORRES
GOLF CO 2/26


JOE & PAULINE
BISPO
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13



TERRY & CAROLYN
AVERY
H&S CO 2/26



ALLEN & JEANIE
FLEMING
"CHIPS"
MACV-SOG



LARRY SHERER
HMM-163

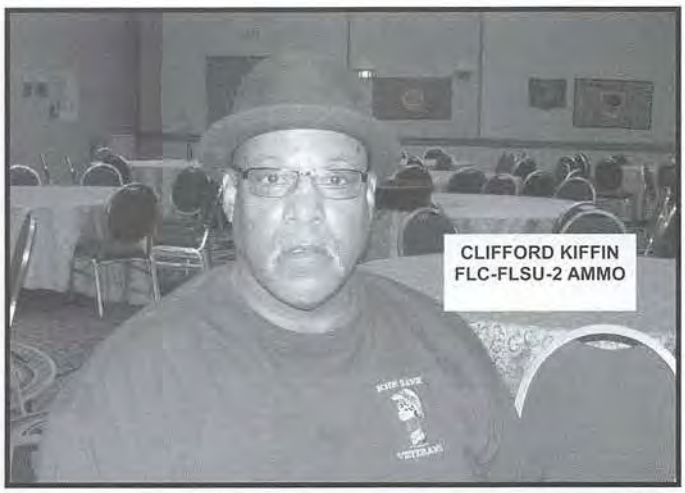

CLIFFORD KIFFIN
FLC-FLSU-2 AMMO

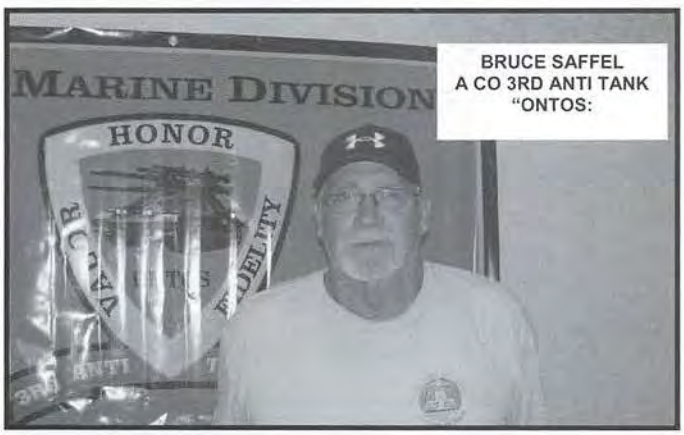

BRUCE SAFFEL
A CO 3RD ANTI TANK
"ONTOS:



RAY & ANGELA
UPDIKE
A CO 3RD ANTI TANK
"ONTOS:

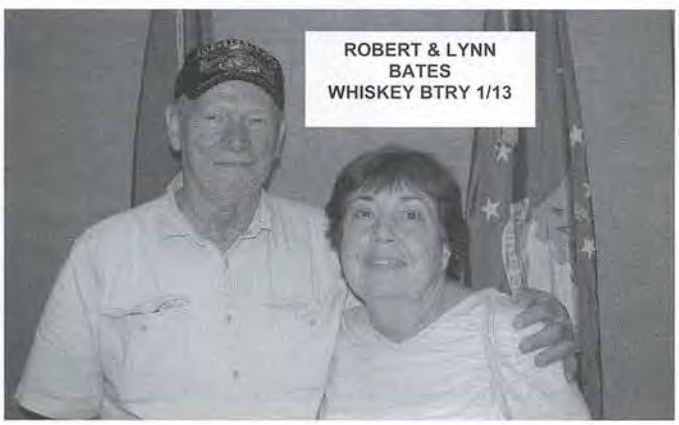

ROBERT & LYNN
BATES
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13



RONNIE & MARCIA
THOMPSON
3/4


BOB & MARY ANN D'ELIA
HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM


LOUIS DESETA
FOB-3 USSF
5TH SF


DICK & SUSAN
MURTHA
LIMA CO 3/26

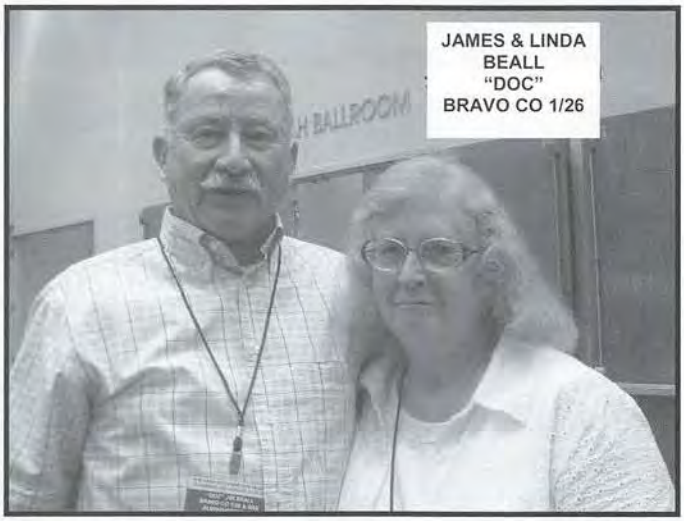
JAMES & LINDA
BEALL
"DOC"
BRAVO CO 1/26


TY DONELDSON
JENNIFER SHUMAKER
FILM MAKER


WALLY & PAT
HOFFMAN
A CO 3RD
COMBAT ENGRS

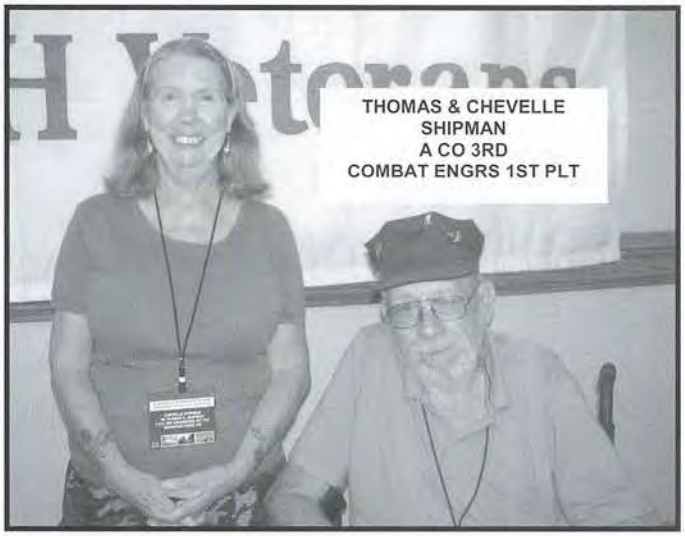
THOMAS & CHEVELLE
SHIPMAN
A CO 3RD
COMBAT ENGRS 1ST PLT


WILLIAM BOAN
"SHERRILL"
& JANET
PARKER GRIGGS
GOLF CO 2/26


PETER & RYL GIACCHETTA
ALPHA CO 1/9


MICHAEL & JANICE BEAUREGARD
DELTA CO 1/26


LEE & ALICE RIMKUS
CHARLIE CO 1/26


RICHARD HOFFMAN
JOE & CANDY
1/26 SCOUT/SNIPER

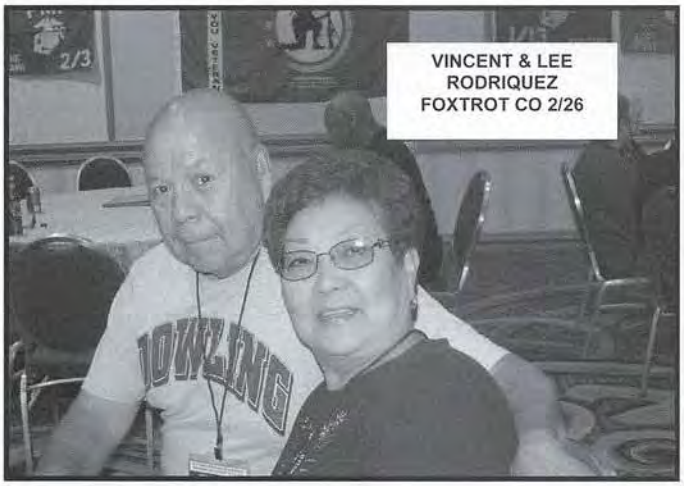
VINCENT & LEE
RODRIQUEZ
FOXTROT CO 2/26


JOHN & ALLISON FISH
KILO CO 3/26

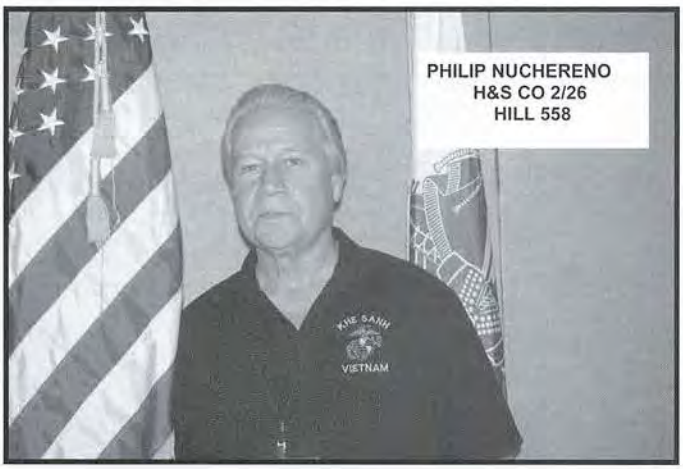
PHILIP NUCHERENO
H&S CO 2/26
HILL 558

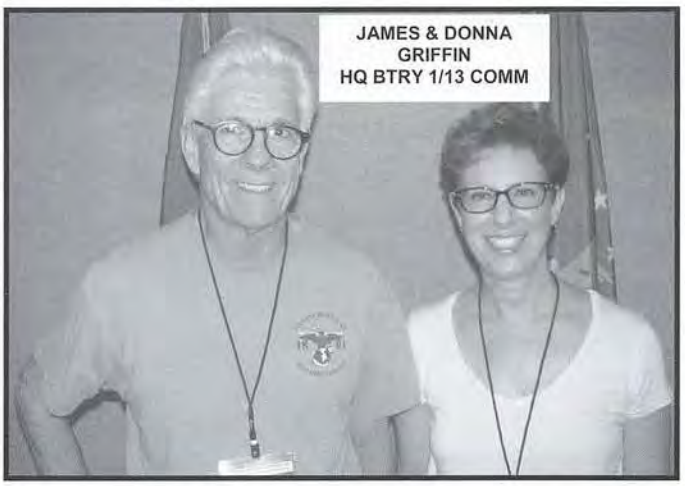
JAMES & DONNA
GRIFFIN
HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM


WILLIAM & SUSAN WEBER
MCB4– SEABEES
DAUGHTER
TRACY
JENNE
WILLIAM


PETER & JEANNINE
BRUSH
MORTAR BTRY 1/13


BUTCH & SHERRY
STRASNER
FOXTROT CO 2/26


VIRGIL & EYDIE
CAUGHRON
HQ BTRY 1/13


LAWRENCE & LOU
LECLAIRE
KILO CO 3/26


TERRY & NANCY
SEESE
5TH MARINE BLT
2/26


BILL & BARBARA
FOSTER
HQ CO COMM


TERRY & LORETTA
FOURNIER
BRAVO BTRY 1/13

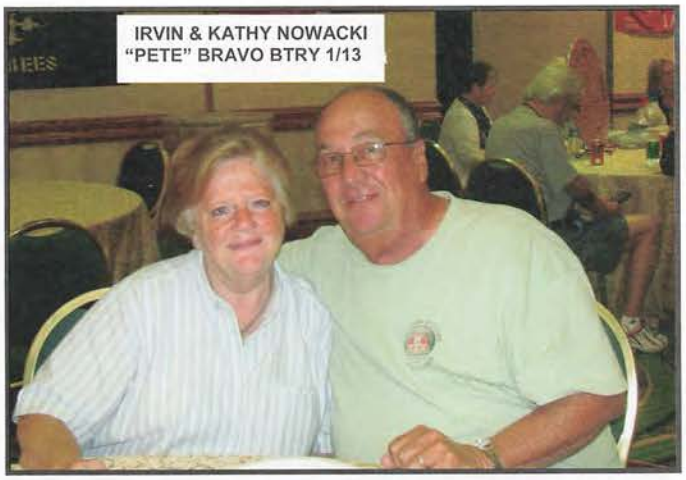
IRVIN & KATHY NOWACKI
"PETE" BRAVO BTRY 1/13

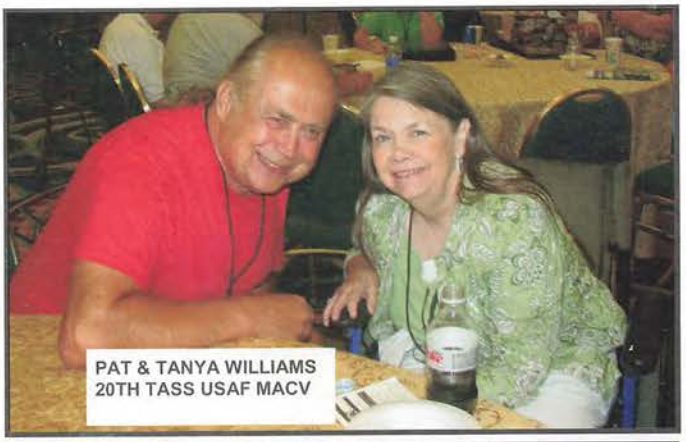
PAT & TANYA WILLIAMS
20TH TASS USAF MACV

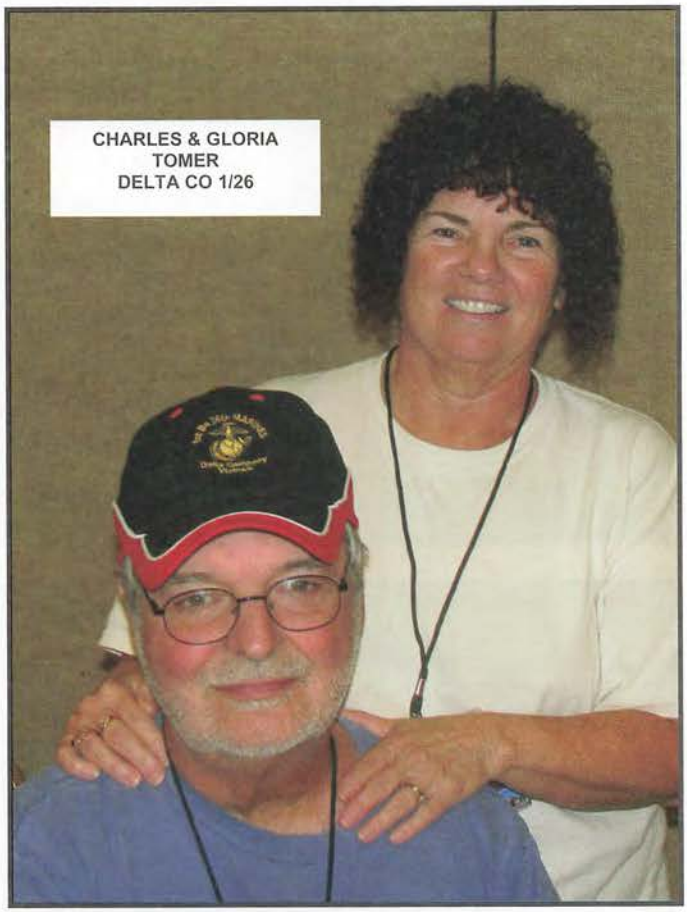
CHARLES & GLORIA
TOMER
DELTA CO 1/26


ROLAND
KUTZBACH
SEABEES
SUSAN FLORES
& MALAYSIA


EDWARD & LINDA
KAZIMIR
FOXTROT CO 2/26



FRANK PORTELLO
& ROSA BECCERRA
A CO 3RD AT's
"ONTOS"


JOHN & GUINN WOLFE
KSV BOARD OF DIRECTORS
3/26 9TH MAB SCOUT/SNIPER


WILLIAM & CONNIE MOORE
A CO 3RD ANTI TANK
"ONTOS"


JOHN & KAY HARGESHEIMER
A CO 3RD ANTI TANK
"ONTOS"


OUR HONORED GUEST
MRS VIRGINIA DABNEY,
WIDOW OF COLONEL WILLIAM
DABNEY HILL 881S


BILL & JOANNE EICHLER
RETIRED CPO USN
BROTHER TOM E CO 2/26


ALEXANDER & BARBARA
SADOWSKI
H&S CO 1/26 81MM

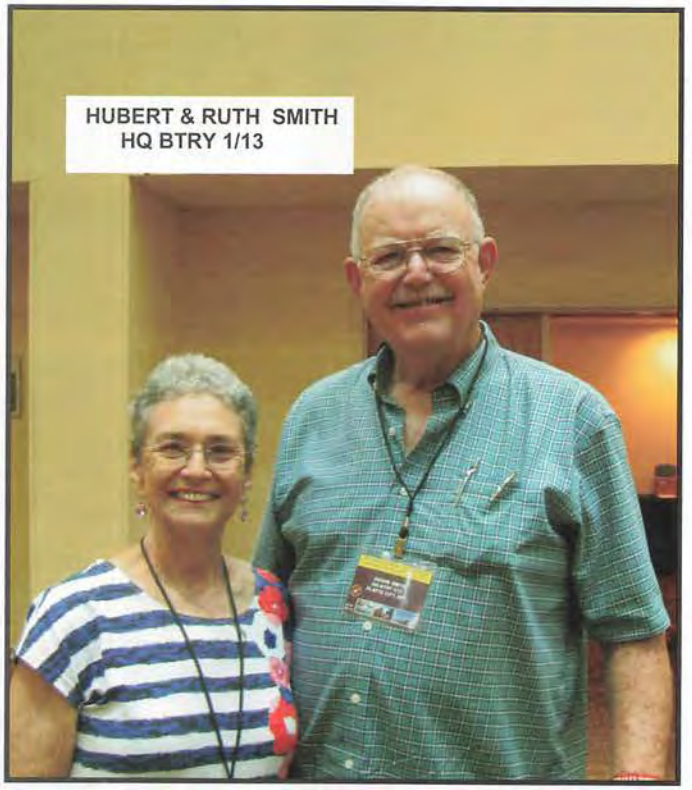
HUBERT & RUTH SMITH
HQ BTRY 1/13

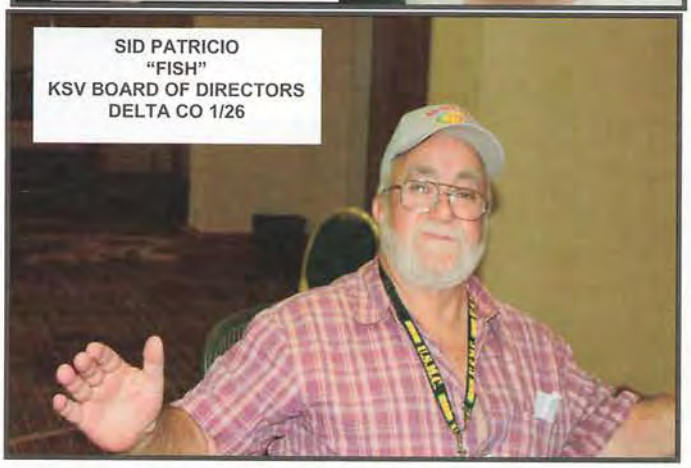
SID PATRICIO
"FISH"
KSV BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DELTA CO 1/26



TOM EICHLER
KSV PRESIDENT
ECHO CO 2/26
HILL 861A



CRAIG TOURTE
KSV SECRETARY
HQ BTRY 1/13

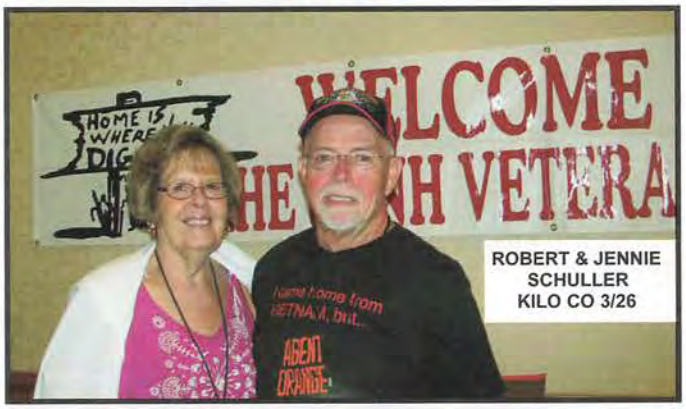

ROBERT & JENNIE
SCHULLER
KILO CO 3/26



RALPH & ORISE
SARGENT
HQ BTRY 1/13



MARK & ELAINE KRAMER
CHARLIE CO 1/26

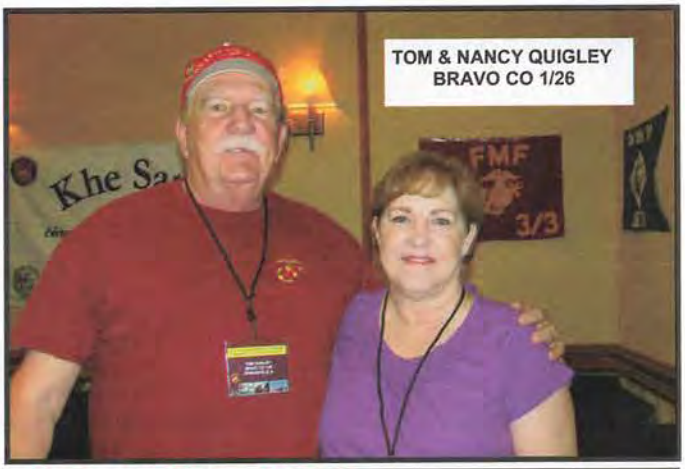

TOM & NANCY QUIGLEY
BRAVO CO 1/26



GERALD & MARTY WILCOXEN
FOXTROT CO 2/26

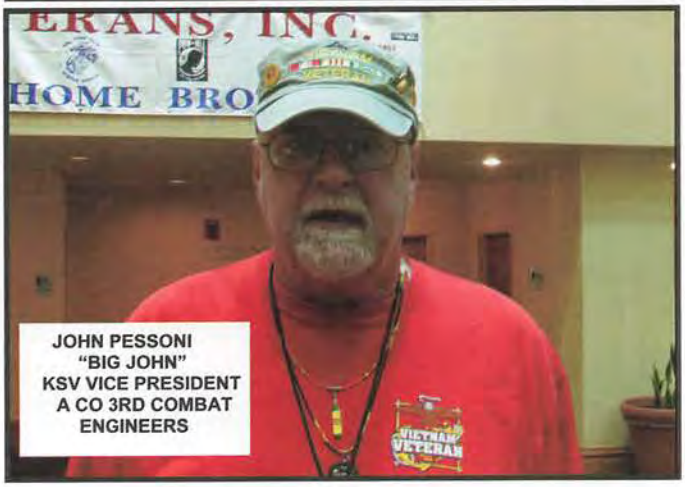

JOHN PESSONI
"BIG JOHN"
KSV VICE PRESIDENT
A CO 3RD COMBAT
ENGINEERS

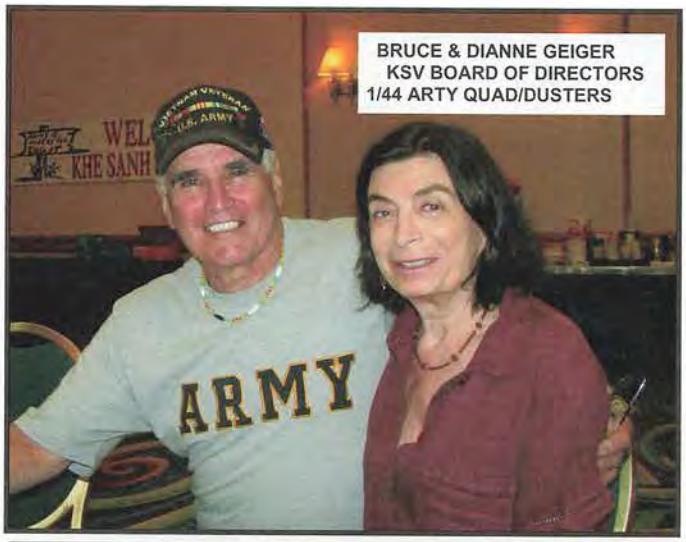
BRUCE & DIANNE GEIGER
KSV BOARD OF DIRECTORS
1/44 ARTY QUAD/DUSTERS
ARMY


HAROLD & LINDA EASTER
ALPHA CO 1/26

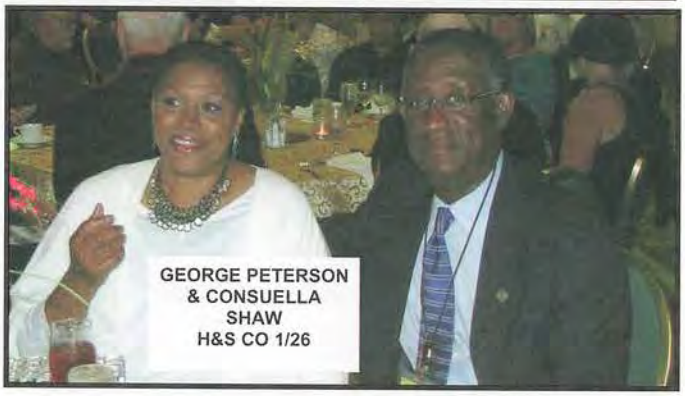
GEORGE PETERSON
& CONSUELLA
SHAW
H&S CO 1/26


NEIL & ALICE KENNY
LIMA CO 3/26
USMC


RUSS & FAYE
EVANS
H&S CO 1/26

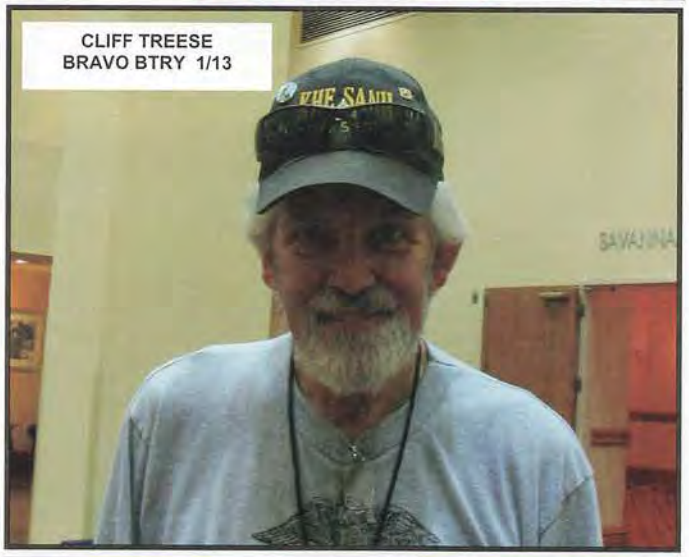
CLIFF TREESE
BRAVO BTRY 1/13
KHE SANH


TOM & JANE
VOSNICK
GOLF CO 2/26


RONALD & LYNN
SHOUSE
BRAVO BTRY 1/13


THOMAS & MARY KEATON
BRAVO BTRY 1/13

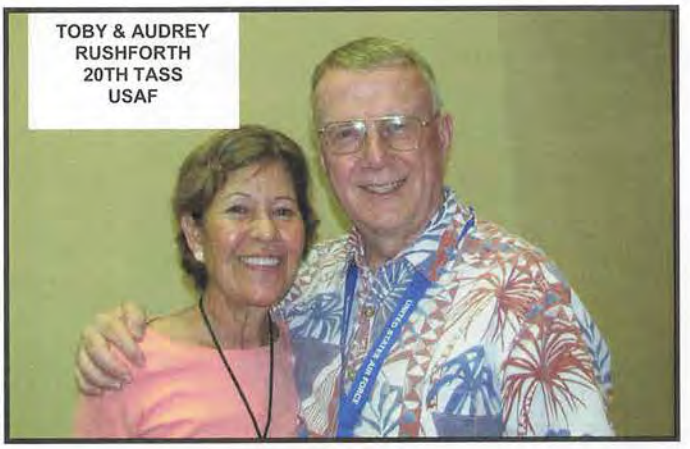
TOBY & AUDREY
RUSHFORTH
20TH TASS
USAF



WILLIAM & WILMA RING
DELTA CO 1/1



MICHAEL FISHBAUGH
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FLC-FLSU


RUSSELL & KATHY
TURNER
REUNION CHAIRMAN &
PAST KSV PRESIDENT
ALPHA CO 1/26



"DOC" JIM THOMAS
& TERRY THOMAS
KILO CO 3/26


DENNIS & ANITA WALER
CBMU-301 DET BRAVO
SEABEES



ALBERT &
JUARENNE
OWEN
A CO 3RD ANTI
TANKS
"ONTOS"

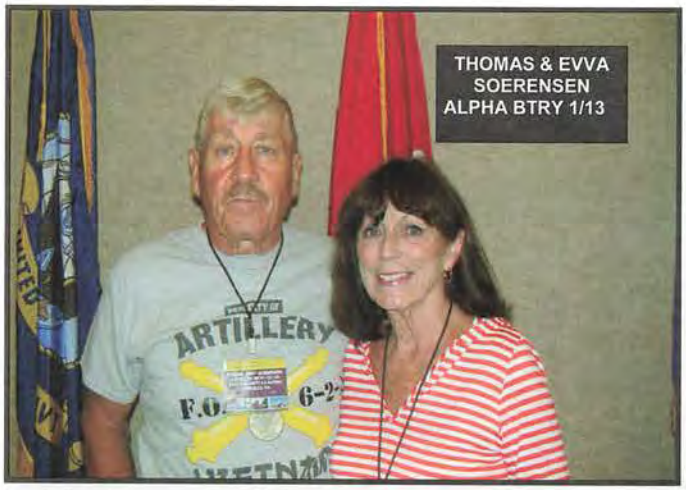
THOMAS & EVVA
SOERENSEN
ALPHA BTRY 1/13


DAVE & CAROL MEYER
KSV SGT AT ARMS
CHARLIE CO 1/26


THOMAS & SONG
ESSLINGER
INDIA & MIKE CO 3/26


FLOYD'S BARBER SHOP
2 CHAIRS NO WAITING
MAIN STREET
MAYBERRY, N.C.
CHARLES HUGHES
RICHARD HUGHES
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A
WITH HIS BROTHER
CHARLES


TOM & EVELYN FORD
KSV BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WITH DAUGHTER TARA
FOXTROT CO 2/26


RONALD & CONNIE
BELLANTONE
DELTA CO 1/26

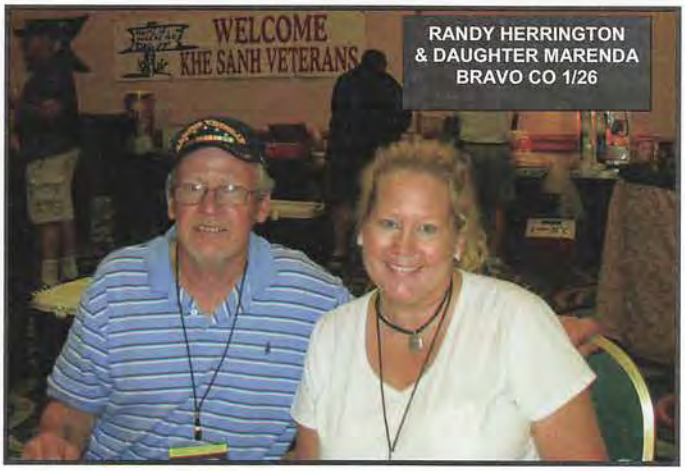
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KHE SANH VETERANS
RANDY HERRINGTON
& DAUGHTER MARENDA
BRAVO CO 1/26

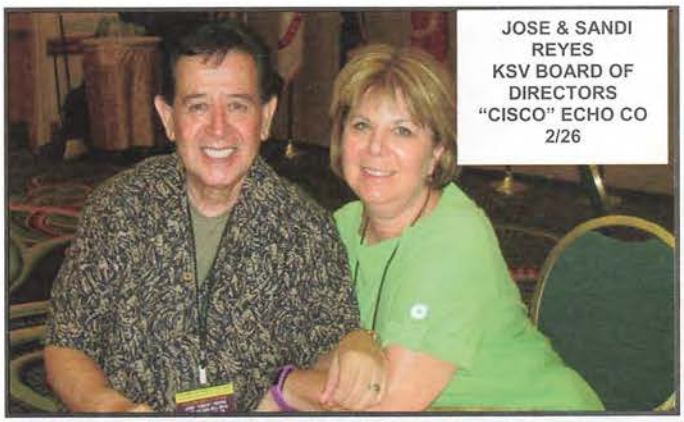

JOSE & SANDI REYES
KSV BOARD OF DIRECTORS
"CISCO" ECHO CO 2/26

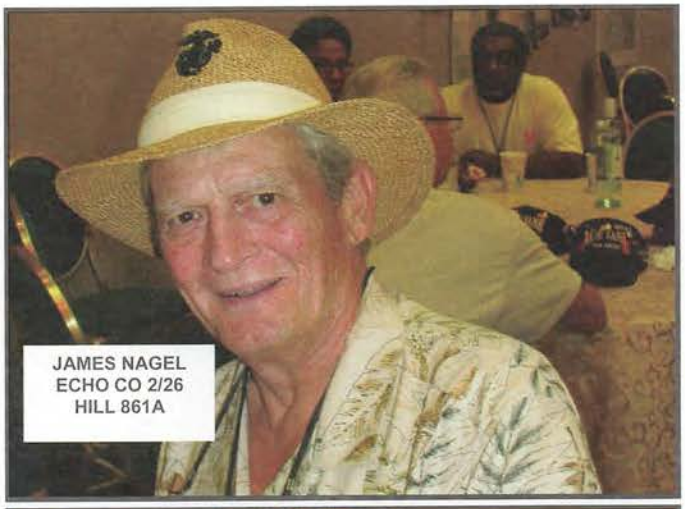

JAMES NAGEL
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HILL 861A

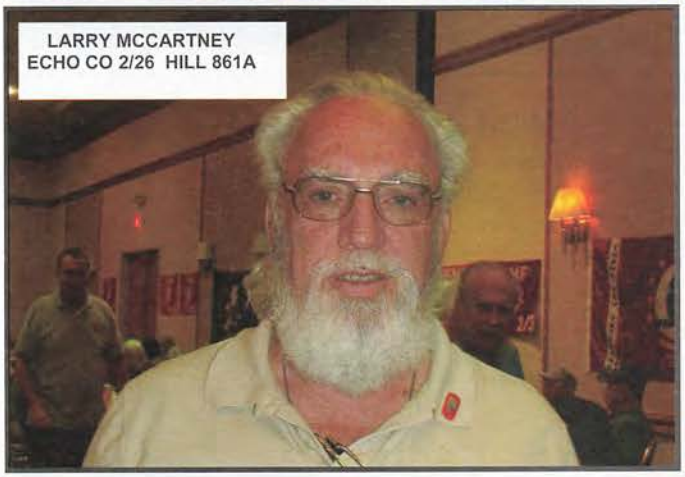

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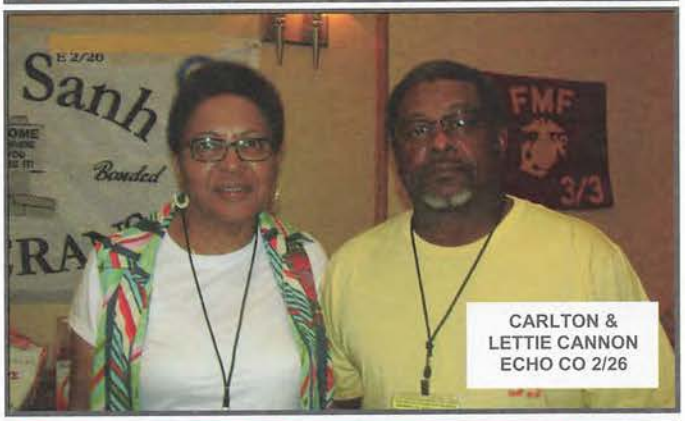

CARLTON & LETTIE CANNON
ECHO CO 2/26



MERLE & RITA MORITZ
KSV HOSPITALITY ROOM HOTESSES
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A

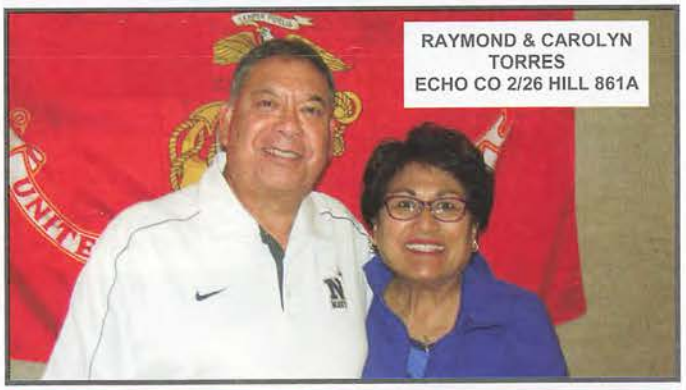

RAYMOND & CAROLYN TORRES
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A

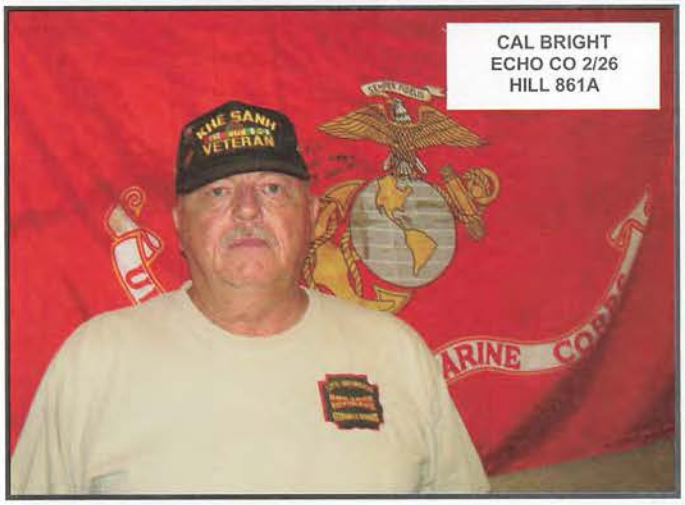

CAL BRIGHT
ECHO CO 2/26
HILL 861A



BILL GRIFFITH & MARIE
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A


BILL & PEGGY MAVES
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A
H&S CO 2/26
MILO


ROBERT
LONGCRANE
"CHIEF"
ECHO CO 2/26
HILL 861A
KHE SANH
VIETNAM


JAMES & CHRISTINE
WRIGHT
H&S CO 2/26

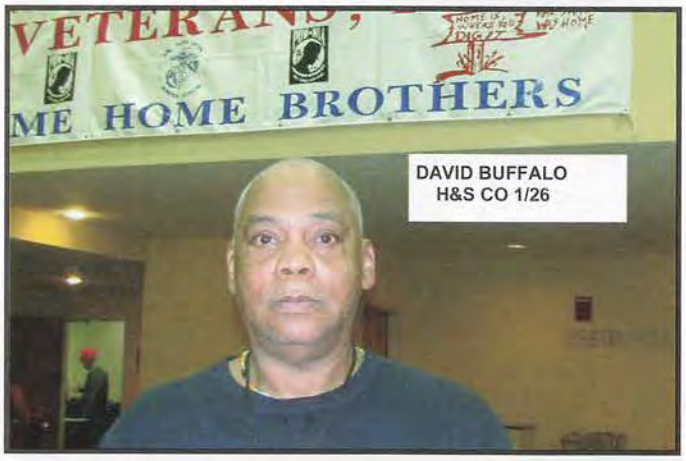
ME HOME BROTHERS
DAVID BUFFALO
H&S CO 1/26

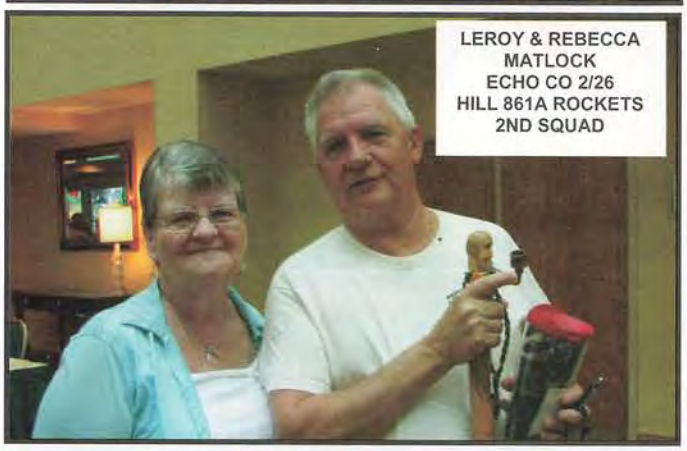
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MATLOCK
ECHO CO 2/26
HILL 861A ROCKETS
2ND SQUAD

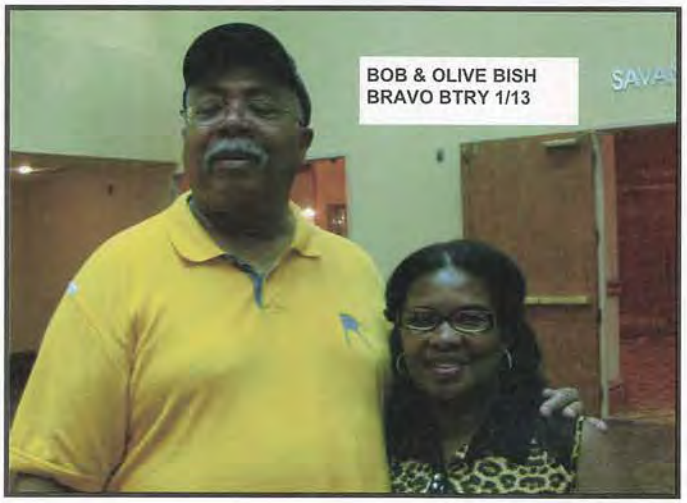
BOB & OLIVE BISH
BRAVO BTRY 1/13

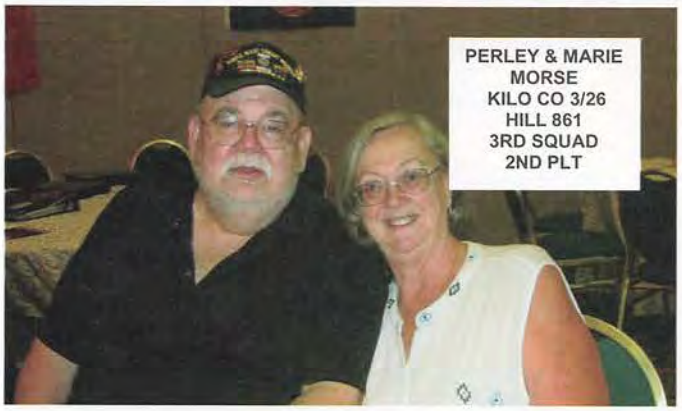
PERLEY & MARIE
MORSE
KILO CO 3/26
HILL 861
3RD SQUAD
2ND PLT

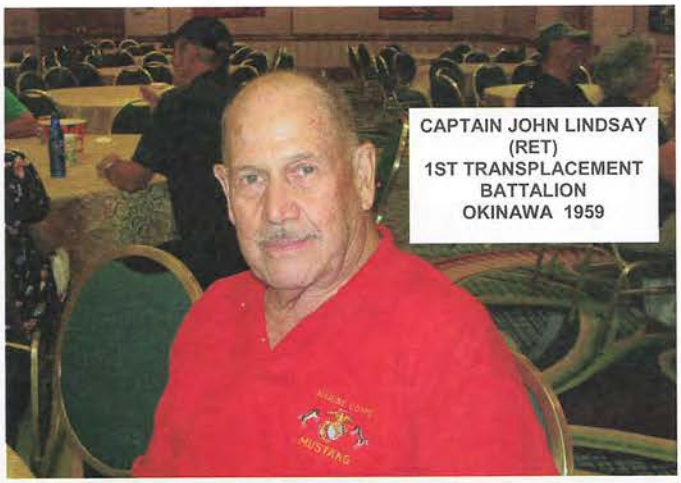
CAPTAIN JOHN LINDSAY
(RET)
1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BATTALION
OKINAWA 1959

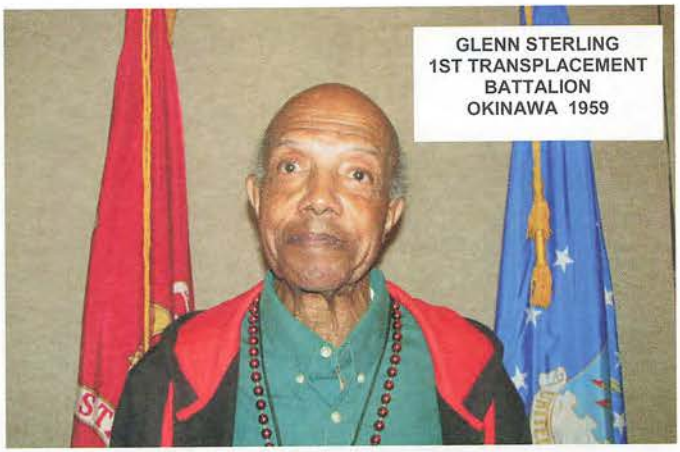
GLENN STERLING
1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BATTALION
OKINAWA 1959

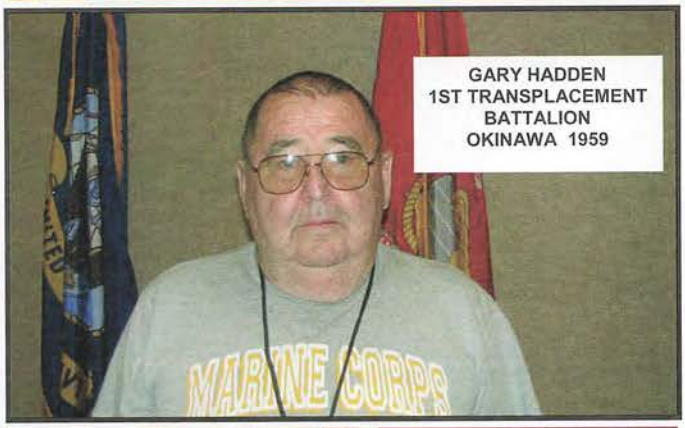
GARY HADDEN
1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BATTALION
OKINAWA 1959


ED & MARIAN TUSO
1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BATTALION
OKINAWA 1959


JAMES & DONNA
SANBORN
1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BATTALION
OKINAWA 1959


DON & JAN MASON
1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BATTALION
OKINAWA 1959


EDWARD & SANDY
STERN
1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BATTALION
OKINAWA 1959


JOE & MARY ANN
REBHOLZ
1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
BATTALION
OKINAWA 1959

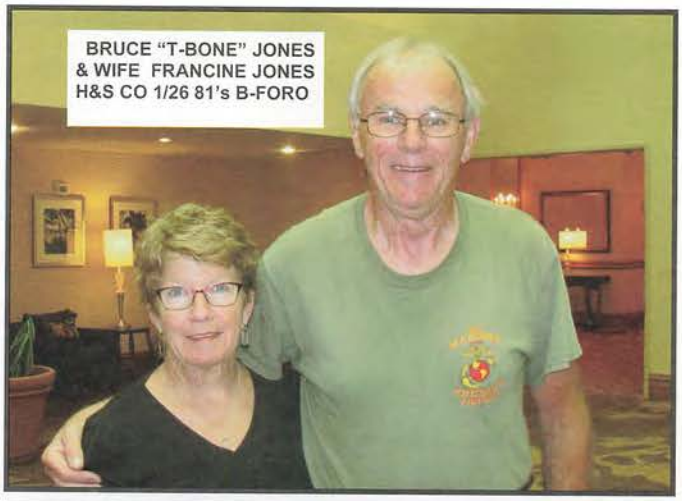

BRUCE "T-BONE" JONES
& WIFE FRANCINE JONES
H&S CO 1/26 81's B-FORO



DENNIS & JEAN MANNION
KILO CO 3/26
KSV BOARD OF DIRECTORS



RON & CATHY
RAYNER
KSV CHAPLAIN
ALPHA CO 1/26

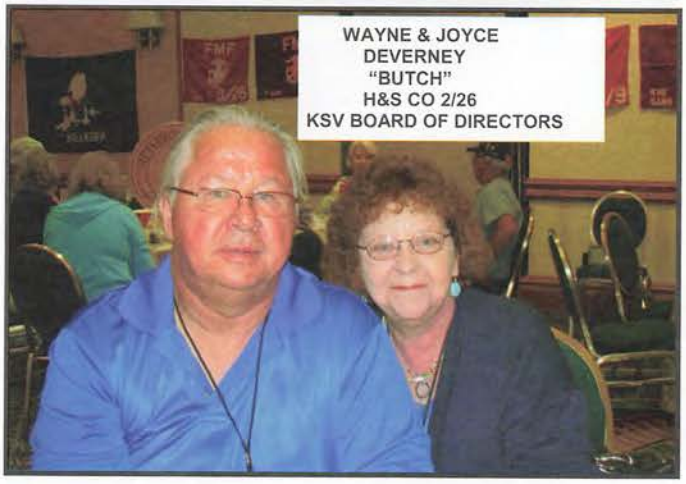

WAYNE & JOYCE
DEVERNEY
"BUTCH"
H&S CO 2/26
KSV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

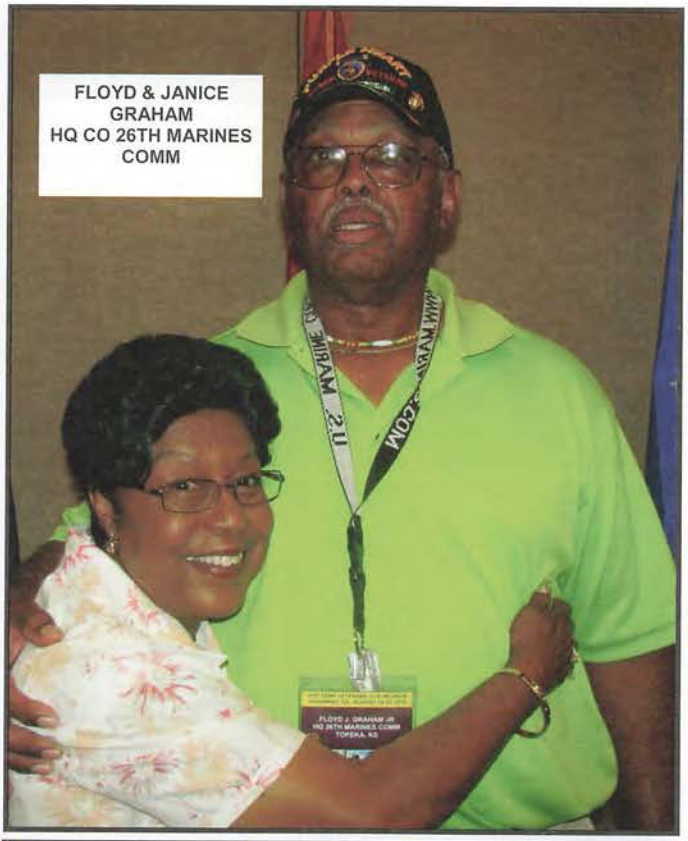

FLOYD & JANICE
GRAHAM
HQ CO 26TH MARINES
COMM

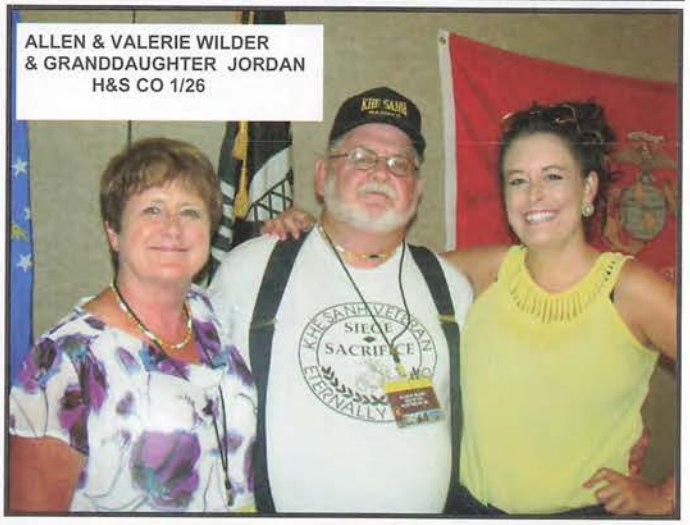

ALLEN & VALERIE WILDER
& GRANDDAUGHTER JORDAN
H&S CO 1/26



BENJAMIN & JACKIE
LEITH
GOLF CO 2/26

OUR VIST TO PARRIS ISLAND . BROUGHT BACK OLD MEMORIES, SOME GOOD,SOME BAD? THOSE DI's ARE STILL SCARY





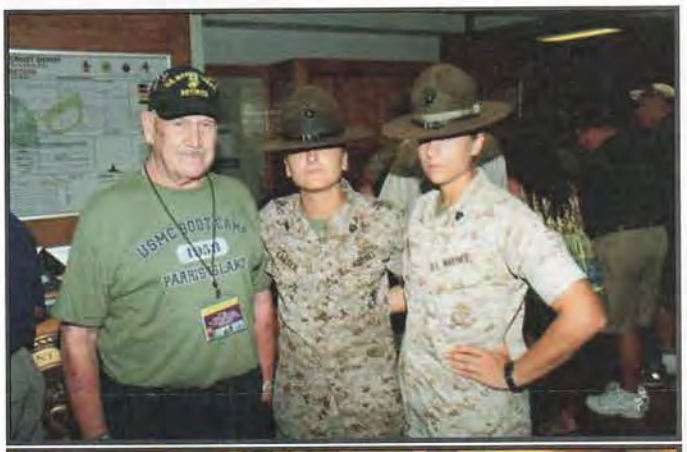























A LITTLE LUNCH BREAK IN THE MESS HALL

MEMORIAL BANQUET, HONOR GUARD, PARADE OF UNIT COLORS LIGHTING OF POW-MIA CANDLE









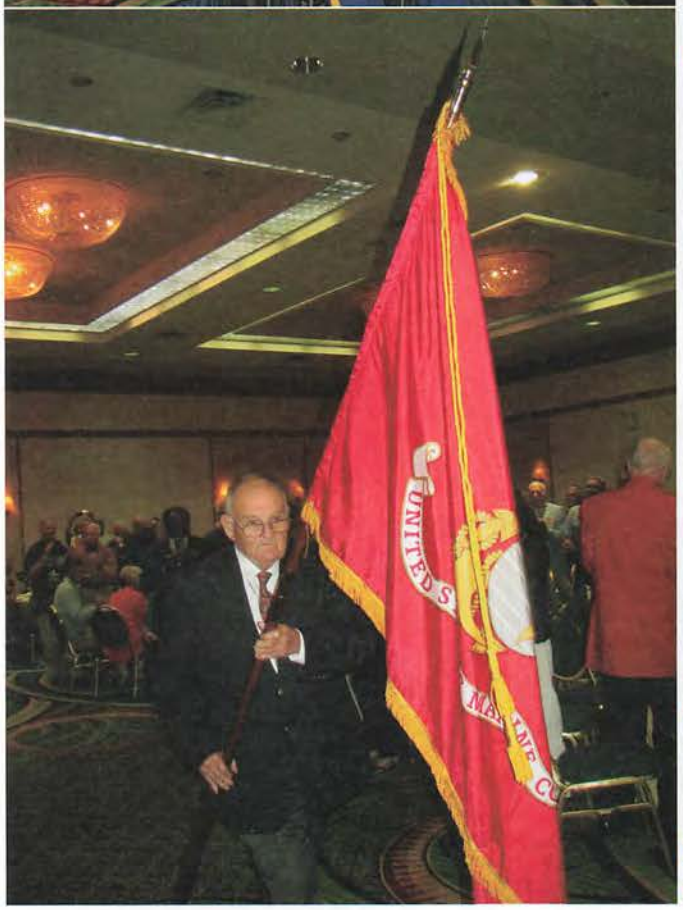



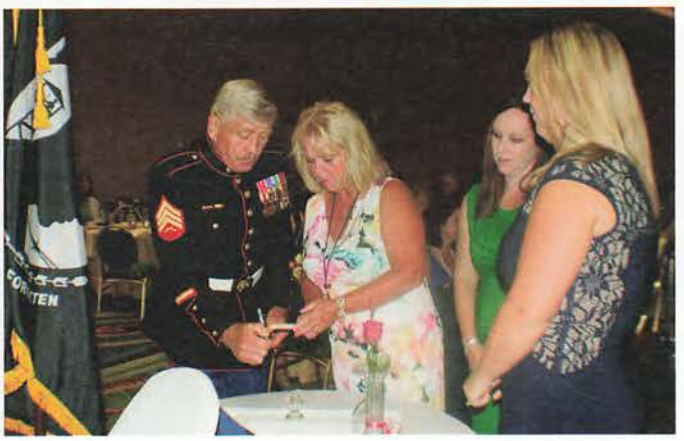










DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE, DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE, AHOY MATES, LITTLE DINNER CRUISE


































































AGENT ORANGE
HEALTH CLUB

















THE JOURNEY

DEDICATION OF MEMORIAL FOR THE 567 MARINES & CORPSMEN OF 1ST BATTALION 1ST MARINES WHO FELL DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS, QUANTICO, VA, 29 AUGUST 2015

WELCOMING REMARKS BY ROBERT C. KOURY JR. DELTA CO 1/1, USMC

It is wonderful to see so many adolescent faces- and I am not just talking about the grandchildren. It is indeed a grand and glorious day to be alive and in the Corps where every meal is a banquet, every formation is a parade, and every day is a holiday. Am I missing anything?? May the Heavens bless the United States Marine Corps and all who serve in her ranks.

My goodness, what a spectacular ceremony! Thanks to Rick Bazaco and Sgt Major Lon Martin for making this possible Can I get an Oroughah. Ever since Rick asked me to speak at this event, I have been agonizing about what I could possibly say to a group of Marine combat veterans. Something they didn't already know about Vietnam. Something about the profound subjects of life, death and sacrifice in combat.

I ask you to forgive me if I repeat facts that you may already know. And please forgive me for carrying around the notes on this talk in front of me. I have not been able to memorize anything since the hundreds of rock 'n roll songs that I know by heart from the 60s took up all the available space in my brain. You know- Buddy Holly, Gene Vincent and the Big Bopper

Two score and ten years ago, Marines from the 1st Battalion of the 1st Marine Regiment were deployed to the Republic of Vietnam. We were just one part of America's commitment to bolster the democratic government in the south of that country. And to halt the expansionist aggression of the communist government in the north.

We were inserted into a very long, in fact ancient, history of conflict and war in Vietnam. It is fair to say most Americans, and certainly most of our political leaders, were woefully negligent on the depth and breadth of what had unfolded in Vietnam for well over a thousand years before our arrival. These guys had been at war forever, and learned to be real good at it. It is also fair to say that most of us, definitely not me, had very little appreciation of our place Vietnam's history, at least not at that point in our lives.

But, let me see if I have this right...
- Communists are invading a democratic free nation...
- More domino nations in the area will fall to Communism if we do not intervene...

- Hmmmm..... for us, Nuff Said.
-

Let's kick a little Commie butt and be back home in time for Christmas!!

We are Marines. We march toward the sound of gunfire, and faithfully obey the orders from our chain of command. No matter what our county asked, we Marines were eager to do. And tuning up the Communist north's attitude was right up our alley.

So march off to war boys. With bangles and spangles and bright golden buttons. Our role in the conflict started with guarding an airfield, and expanded to seeking and destroying the enemy across most of I Corps and its borders with North Vietnam and Laos. We fought guerilla and conventional battles, and we engaged in urban combat. The conflict for us expanded from an intervention to become a real war.

America fought this war with one hand tied behind its back militarily, using only a fraction of its might and resources. This, primarily due to the concern that we could awaken the giant Communist nations of China or Russia into full scale land war in Asia. Absolutely, not a good idea. However, this larger strategic picture was of little consequence for those of us at the pointy end of the spear. For us, the Vietnam war was serious, intense and damn deadly.

During the six year period of its deployment in Vietnam, 1st Battalion 1st Marines lost 567 Marines

and corpsmen killed in action. Staggering. That is almost 3 whole companies killed out of a battalion. 567!! To this day, it is difficult to fully comprehend and reckon with the tragedy of these losses. For every death there were at least four times, or five times or maybe six times that many of us wounded. There is no way to know exactly how many.

And these wounds included horrible losses of limbs and bodily functions- not the kind you see in the old time western movies. These were wounds that forever changed your life, and inflicted long term suffering and misery.

So, that adds up to 567 of us killed and likely well over 2,500 wounded during 1/1's deployment. That is roughly 3,000 lives which were either terminated or forever changed. Your odds of being killed or wounded were 1 in 3, or maybe even 50/50 if you were serving with 1/1 in Vietnam. Based on your experiences, does that sound about right?? How many of you wear the Purple Heart ? Thank you.

Those brutal odds were a consequence of 1/1 being at the absolute pointy tip of the military spear in Vietnam. We were bloodied, but no way broken. And then on top of these frightful KIA and WIA odds are the additional lingering consequences of being in our war. Horrible Agent Orange illnesses, TBI (traumatic brain injury), PTSD, alcohol and drug addictions, and the ever enduring deep emotional scars. We all came back from our journey to war as very, very different individuals from who we were when we left.

On a slightly brighter note, our on-going sacrifices are just beginning to be recognized by our country. Rather late in our lives, but I guess, better late than never. We at the pointy end, have paid a heavy price for serving. And we have paid that price many times over.

Let's reflect for a moment on what happened to us on our journeys both to war and coming back from war.

We signed up for the Green Machine, or the Blue Machine, from our home towns throughout this great nation. Our motives for doing so varied. No matter. With the skilled guidance of our recruiters, we overcame the apprehensions and opposition of our parents and loved ones. And then, off we go on our journey to become Marines or Corpsmen. Soon, the realization sets in... we are alone on this voyage. Friends and family are small specs in the rear view mirror, and they are continuing with their lives without us. We are introduced into a new world of discipline, martial skills and hardening. Our instructors absolutely know what is ahead for us. And we absolutely, absolutely do not have a clue. There is very little time to make friends we are on this journey alone.

Whether a recruit at Parris Island or San Diego, or squid at Great Lakes, or a potential (make that possible) officer candidate at Quantico PLC or OCS, the basic military conversion is to you, and to you alone. You are beginning your journey to war. You get to know a few guys, but they are 30 day friends. Not like your long time high school friendships from home.

Then there is the next dislocation on your journey to war: Advanced Infantry, Advanced MOS or Corpsman training, or to officers' Basic School. Again, you enter this leg of the journey to war without family or friends to be your support group. You are injected into a whole new group of strangers- alone again. Then, you deploy to Vietnam. This leg of your journey to war is taken with new strangers who are on the same well worn path with you. Remember the surreal voyages or flights into country? And on arrival, the heat, the noises, and the smells (yes, I do mean the burning the crappers) are staggering to your senses.

You are lost and alone in this new world- warrior not yet at war. At last, your assignment and arrival to somewhere within 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. Again, you are with new strangers and in a very strange place. Your mind is reeling as you try to fit in. Then comes.....the ultimate separation and loneliness which is:??? Anyone please?? You are the New Guy- locally known as an FNG!!

We were all a FNG at one point, and we all, if we were fortunate enough to not get hit, later knew guys who we called FNG's. As a FNG, you were an outcast. You were embedded in a unit, but no one wanted to get friendly or emotionally close. They all knew your chances of outlasting the FNG label were pretty darned small.

Talk about lonely... your first FNG nights on watch, in a hole or bunker in the pitch black night, with every shrub an enemy coming to cut your throat. No one but other strangers to talk to- and not much of that. Alone and pondering the fact that that your sweetheart, Nancy Rottencrotch was doing it with Jody Sweetgums back home, while you were on the opposite side of the planet.

Strangely, you were somehow able to look down, with mental x-ray vision, through the bottom of your hole, all the way through the planet, to see their feet on the other side where you left them. That is, unless Nancy and Jody were horizontal, whereupon the view was very different, but easy to visualize. So, here you are, an FNG surviving among strangers, and worse, now within the reach of those who really do want to kill you.

If you stayed healthy for a while, you made a few new 30 day friendships with some of your fellow Marines. These were somehow much deeper and different friendships than you had ever experienced. Probably because your lives depended on each other. A lot different from your football buddies back home. But with your new Marine buddies, you always held something back. You had to be willing to let them go in a heartbeat- always one bullet or incoming round away from their leaving your life.

Or if they rotated home before you, they were pretty much flat gone from your life. Strangely, the longer you survive in country, the fewer friends you are willing to make. It is just not worth the emotional loss when they go. And your mind begins to be packed with new, vivid memories of your time at war. Memories that will be with you for the rest of your days. Some good. Most horrific. These are the very best times and the very worst times of your life.

Do I have that right???

Your journey to war has now reached its destination. You are a Marine warrior at war. And you are serving with the legendary 1st of the 1st- 1st Battalion1st Marines. It just doesn't seem so at the time, but you are now a living part of that storied 1/1 legacy: Guadalcanal, New Britain, Peleliu, Okinawa, Inchon and the Chosin Reservoir. You are now the last link in the unbroken chain of Marines at war stretching back over 200 years. A chain of Marines joined in mind, body and soul that has remained unbroken to this day.

Your moments of combat, with the lives of brother Marines in your hands, will likely be both the very best and the very worst times of your life. The peak and the valley. The top and the absolute bottom. All in one. Most of the rest of your life will be relatively, and thankfully, dull by comparison.

You are filthy, covered with oozing sores. You have been cut by elephant grass, sucked on by killer mosquitos, bitten by the ginormous centipedes, threatened by rats big enough to carry sidearms, and that doesn't account for the damned leaches- ugh. You have been shot at by little guys who are very serious about killing you, mortared, rocketed and booby trapped You have become weary to the bone exhausted from little sleep, pissed off and pissed on, haunted, edgy, moody, and hostile, damned hostile.

You have become exactly what is needed to survive and succeed at this war thing- the perfect killing machine: An Infantry Marine at War. Welcome to the new you. So this is what those Marine heroes from earlier wars endured?- wow. Whodda thought?

And then your thirteen months are up. Or you are wounded and evacuated. You have survived your journey to war, and are ready to begin your journey from war.

Here you are, too short for a long conversation. Too short to see over your jungle boot laces. Too short for a wait-a-minute vine to slow you. Infused with guilt at leaving your buddies, and those poor, poor bastard FNG's behind, you head back to the World. You are a survivor. However, it is a very different you who is leaving. You are absolutely not the same person who started your journey to war months earlier. You left the World with bright eyes, bangles, spangles and bright golden buttons.

You have returned from war with aching scars from your sores and wounds, haunted, edgy, angry, moody, pissed off, and still hostile- damned hostile. You are haunted with the horrible war memories, to be re-lived- many, many times over. This is the new you.

This new you is a stranger to even you. What the heck happened? And even worse, all those folks you left back in the World are now strangers to you. And you to them. You are back in the World, but you are alone on your journey from war. It is a very strange place.

None of us signed up to get a thank you from a grateful nation on returning from our journey to war. We signed up to be warriors. And we warriors are in it for reasons the rest of the World simply does not comprehend. Definitely not in it for getting parades and a rousing welcome home. That is something we can live without and blow off. Screw it- march on. Simply add one more item to our enormous list of things to be pissed off and hostile about But, to top it all off, back in the World, we were welcomed and rewarded with the utter disdain of friends and strangers alike for our heroic part in our nation's war in Vietnam. This distain and sneers for our service was, and still is, a bit tough to stomach. How many of you get a rousing welcome home and thank you from a grateful nation??

The way the Corps worked in our war: you joined alone, became a Marine or Corpsman alone, trained with strangers, traveled to war with strangers, fought with strangers and came home with strangers, only to reunite with strangers who used to be family and friends. Alone again. "Surrounded by strangers you thought were your friends, you find yourself further and further from home." (Bob Seger). You are now back in the World, but without a real home, even in your home town. You are there, but your soul isn't. And oh, the survivor's guilt.

Strangely, you miss and want to be back with your Marine unit, even if it means going back to the hell hole that is the Nam. Self healing is the next, and the very longest part of your war journey.

And, self healing turns out to be very a long term proposition.

So, that is our story- the story of those of us who survived our war journey. Now, let's take a moment to ponder the journey of those less fortunate than we. Those who served with 1/1 in Vietnam who did not survive their journey to war. Those who walked among us, and who walked with us, who were killed there. Those who we today honor. Depending on when or how they got hit, they likely died with Marine comrades and Corpsmen around them. But they essentially died alone. Without the comfort of the mother they sometimes cried out for. And without any support system to ease this part of their journey. They were alone- and then they were gone. Absolutely gone from us.

Still at war ourselves, we had to turn our backs on their death and get immediately on with the very urgent business of surviving. No time or emotion available to think deeply about their onward journey. They were irrevocably and immediately gone. And they were achingly alone on their journey from war.

If there was a quiet moment later, and if their death was even discussed, it was said that:??? "They were scattered". Not sure we understood or fully appreciated the greater implications of this description. But in fact, they were scattered from us- alone on their personal journey from war. First, on a hurried chopper out of the field which was, understandably, primarily interested in getting the heck out of a hot LZ. Then, through the morgue at Division. Then in a dark baggage hold on a flight to a receiving center somewhere in Guam or Hawaii.

Next, to a couple of more unknown transit locations, before finally arriving at one of the thousands of local mortuaries across the land. They were a stranger to all they passed at each stop of their final journey.

When they arrived at their final destination, those who came to mourn them were only able to know and remember who they once were- who they had been before they left to war. Their mourners simply did not have a clue who they had become during their journey to war- the new him. They were mourning a stranger. Only we, their almost-brothers, knew who and what they had become. And sadly, we, the only ones who now truly knew them, could not be at their final destination to be with them, comfort them, and mourn their passing.

There simply has been no way for us to come together with our fallen Marine brothers for these many years. They have been scattered and alone, without a home. As have we. But today, damn it, we

are going to begin a new chapter in the war journey for both us and our fallen. And this new chapter is named "Welcome Home, Brother".

The Marine Corps Heritage Museum is located at Quantico, the crossroads of the Marine Corps. Sooner or later almost everyone who serves in the green machine passes through Quantico. The designers of the Heritage Museum grounds wisely provided for a beautiful and fitting, naturally wooded memorial area to honor Marines from many generations. This is really a wonderful thing, and our enduring thanks should be rendered to them.

Quantico is also at the crossroads of our American Civil War. After over 45 years of living in this area, I finally came to understand why there were so many battles fought here: this area is basically midway between the Confederate capital in Richmond and the Union capital in Washington. Civil War soldiers on both sides crossed this ground many times in that horrible war, and too many perished right here. This is indeed hallowed ground.

From now on when I use the word "here" in this discussion, I will be referring to where our new 1/1 Vietnam Memorial is situated. At the Museum, maybe a couple of miles from this Chapel. How many of you have already seen our Memorial?? The rest of you have a day coming that will be remembered for the rest of your lives. It is just that cool.

Here (there), in this hallowed ground, we have built a fitting Memorial to the fallen 567 who walked with us, with 1/1 in Vietnam, and perished at their posts. Our Memorial contains 193 beautifully engraved bricks displaying each of their 567 names. Our fallen have now, at long last, come together at this Memorial place. Reunited. No longer alone. No longer scattered. They are at home.

In designing our memorial, we decided that it was fitting to display the names of our fallen in a way that those who came to visit with them could:- Easily locate and read their name- Speak it out loud in this wooded area - And sit for quiet moments to contemplate this reunion

Most important, when we speak their names out loud, we are keeping that person alive within us. By saying their names, we remember and rekindle their lives within us. It is like a flash bulb going off in the brains of we the living. You can see them, visit with them and remember. When I say:

- Smiley Vasquez
- Nick Buffin
- Mike Casey

David Langley

Or any of our 567, their personal flash will go off in the brains of we who knew them. Did that just happen for some of you with these names I just said?- it did for me

Next in this ceremony, we will share that rekindling of their lives, by reading out loud the names of each and every one of our fallen brothers. And by so doing, they will become a mental flash, remembered, and alive again within us.

I had the occasion to tour the Museum with a group of my basic school class- 47 years later (I know, we don't look it). Sgt. Major Lon Martin was our host. During his orientation, he shared a story that has had a profound impact on me, and I hope it will on you as well. He told us that quite frequently, families will bring older Marines to the Museum. And that many times, these Marines are in wheelchairs and don't have the ability to say much. The Sgt. Major has often responded to their family's questions which ask why this old Marine has such a huge grin on his face while wheeling through the Museum. The Sgt. Major advises the family that this is because this old Marine now feels that he is home.

Home with a part of his life that was of huge importance to him. Comfortable in these Marine surroundings and happy with the people about him. And you know, when I walk through the Museum, I feel at home. And I have that same grin on my face. And I'll bet you will too.

So, our new Memorial has created a home for our fallen in this hallowed ground. Home from the 567 locations where they were scattered, their spirits have come here to this hallowed ground, to these crossroads, where we remember them and honor them. The creation of this memorial is a homecoming for our 567.They are no longer scattered. They are home.

And we, the surviving, are today also welcomed home. This is a new home for us as well. At home with our fallen brothers. At the crossroads of the Civil War. At the crossroads of our Marine Corps. And at the crossroads of our personal journeys to and from war. This is a place to remember our war journey, and a place to give thanks and homage to those who walked with us. It gives me great pleasure to say to you assembled here today: Welcome Home Marines. This is the welcome home you never got and have long deserved. Thank you for your many, many sacrifices. I am so damned proud to be standing here among genuine American heroes. Can I get an oooraugh.

To paraphrase President Lincoln: We are met here, on a great battlefield of our American Civil War. We have come here today to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who walked with us and perished in what was, ironically, a civil war in Vietnam. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it should never forget what our honored did. It is rather for us to be now dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead, we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of their devotion: the success of our Marine Corps and the preservation of our great nation.

We hereby highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain. That their memory and their sacrifice shall not perish from the earth. Can I get an oooraugh.
Semper Fi, Brothers.





Lon Martin, a retired sergeant major, helps dedicate the memorial to the fallen Marines and Corpsmen who served in 1st Battalion, 1st Marines in Vietnam from 1965-1971. The new memorial is located at the National Museum of the Marine Corps and was dedicated Aug. 29 in a ceremony held aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico.



MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — Dolia Gonzalez, mother of Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. Alfredo Gonzalez, reads names of fallen Marines in her son's unit 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. The roll call was part of a ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico Aug. 29, to dedicate a new memorial to the 567 Marine who died in that unit from 1967-1971. The new memorial is located at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.



MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — Brad Mamalis, a former Marine who was a soprano bugler for The Commandant's Own Drum and Bugle Corps rings a bell after the name of each of the 567 Marines and Corpsman who were killed in action with 1st Battalion, 1st Marines in Vietnam from 1965-1971. As the roll call was part of ceremony dedicating a new memorial was held aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico Aug. 29. The new memorial displays each of the 567 names and is located at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

SEPTEMBER MORN
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We've traveled halfway 'round the world
To find ourselves again
And look how far we've come
So far from where we used to be
But not so far that we've forgotten
How it was before (
Lyrics by Neil Diamond: September Mourn)

By Richard D. Camp, Jr.
Colonel USMC (Ret)

Packed with troops, the long column of trucks maneuvered over the rutted, hard-packed dirt road. Many of the vehicles mounted .50-caliber machine guns, their threatening snouts jutting menacingly from cab-mounted support rings. Their gunners peered intently into the ground-clinging fog that limited visibility to the edges of the cleared brush. Rain pelted the poncho-draped Marines sitting in the open, overcrowded truck beds, adding to the misery of sore butts and cramped muscles. The wretched passengers faced outboard, rifles at hand, but half asleep, numbed by boredom and fatigue. The distorted silhouette of an LVT (landing vehicle, tracked) materialized out of the fog, just off the road. There was a sudden stir among the passengers…heads snapped up, hands tightened on weapons, something was terribly wrong. The steel hulk was blasted and burned, barely recognizable. Multiple rocket-propelled grenade strikes had turned the vehicle into a shattered wreck. The sight of the destroyed armored vehicle—seemingly invincible to a grunt—inspired a new awareness. Lieutenant Chan Crangle, platoon commander, Mike Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines (M 3/26), summed it up. "I told my platoon sergeant that we were about to get into a very different war from the farmer-and-pitchfork stuff down south. I knew Con Thien was a dangerous place…"

Deadly Encounter

In early September 1967, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines (3/26) fought two major engagements against elements of the North Vietnamese 324B Division, suffering almost 350 Marine casualties, four out of ten

killed or wounded. The actions took place just south of the Demilitarized Zone in Northern I Corps. The area became known as the "Leatherneck Square," a quadrangle just below the Ben Hai River, which marked the boundary between North and South Vietnam. The "Square," bounded in the south by Cam Lo and Dong Ha and in the north by Gio Linh and Con Thien, was one of the most hotly contested areas in South Vietnam.

The first deadly encounter began on the afternoon of 7 September, when volleys of rockets, mortars and artillery slammed into the hastily dug Marine positions. Waves of NVA infantry closely followed, threatening to overrun the embattled Leathernecks. Three under strength companies, India, Kilo, and Mike, battled elements of the North Vietnamese 812th Regiment throughout the long night. Finally, toward morning, the fighting tapered off and the NVA withdrew to lick their wounds. The haggard Marine survivors emerged from their foxholes to find the battlefield littered with over a 100 NVA bodies. The struggle had not been without cost; twenty Marines had been killed in action, while another 70 had suffered wounds.

Sounds in the Night

The Battalion, minus Lima Company, ended up at a location just north of Charlie-2 (C-2), an artillery firebase, where the men dismounted and waited for guides to take them to their position. It was one of those pre-monsoon days when the sometimes heavy rain turned the reddish loam into mud; sticking to their jungle boots and making them feel like they weighed a ton. Visibility was less than 100 meters. "The guides from 1st Battalion, 9th Marines (1/9) (later nicknamed "The Walking Dead") were wearing ponchos," recalled Crangle, "and as they moved out ahead of us, is seemed surreal, with those green ghosts walking toward the treelines. Noiseless. No chatter. No clatter of equipment. The silence was striking."

They moved into position and 1/9 shoved off, anxious to get back to the rear for hot showers and food that didn't come in little green cans. "The unofficial word, grunt to grunt during the relief," India Company's Staff Sergeant Russ Armstrong remembered, "was that there was nothing around there—no VC or NVA, no action." There was a problem with the relief however, 3/26 had three companies, while the departing battalion had just two. The foxhole lined perimeter was too small…and it was almost dark, a bad time to dig new holes. Captain Tom Early, the communications officer recalled, "Unfortunately, it's sometimes easy to take the lazy way out and put yourself into a hole that's already been dug." The three companies shifted about, trying to find the best ground. Andy DeBona, the profane snuff-dipping skipper of Mike Company didn't like the ground one bit. "I was spread out over hell's half-acre and back," he groused. A thoroughly annoyed 81mm mortar platoon under Chief Warrant Officer Dick Holycross, a reservist from Columbus, Ohio, had to pick up and move to a new position before digging in—again!

The battalion settled in for the night, on the ground that was the highest around but was, in effect, a slight grade, more of a mound than commanding terrain. Sergeant Armstrong recalled, "It was bordered on two or three sides by dense growth we did not control and in which I was afraid enemy soldiers could conceal themselves." A half-destroyed church stood in the middle of the perimeter, its ruined tower jutting into the air, "like it was right off a movie set," according to Lieutenant Ron Zappardino, the forward air controller. "It was right out of a John Wayne movie." The only thing the ground lacked was a graveyard—but that would soon change.

DeBona's forward observer called in night defensive fires—planned artillery concentrations in case of attack. "Either he was off or the guns were," Crangle remembered. "The first round impacted close enough to get everyone in their holes. I convinced our 'cannon cocker' to add a few meters to his plot." When the excitement passed, the defenders settled down to the usual 50 percent alert—one man awake in every two man foxhole—but there was uneasiness. India Company rifleman Lance Corporal Chuck Bennett summed it up. "We heard some movement during the night, but not much. They were testing us, I think. They were out there; in front of our perimeter…I could hear movement."

Hell in a Small Place

September 7 downed bright and clear, the previous days rain just a memory. The men completed their morning ritual—pee, C-ration breakfast, weapons'

maintenance—and saddled up. Battalion wanted to check out the area—India, minus one platoon to the northwest, while Mike Company scouted generally south—each company on its own patrol route. Debona wasn't too happy with the assignment. "I wanted to get out and back into position as quick as I could," he said. He had been told this was "bad-guy country and...we should go out only as a battalion with a lot of supporting arms planned." His company reconned by fire—artillery and mortars onto suspicious terrain—and returned to the perimeter by late morning. They didn't spot anything but old NVA fighting pits.

Two platoons of India—about 80 men and three officers—trudged through the badly overgrown cultivated area. "That terrain was tough to move in," India Company's Lieutenant Bob Stimson recalled. "It was very confining, very scary. I had a bad feeling about being in such dense growth." It took the slow moving formation about three to four hours to move a little over one klick—1,000 meters. Armstrong discovered "four very distinct beaten-down trails in the grass where a military unit had marched through four abreast." Bennett saw some smoke and came across a "big black kettle with rice cooking in it." The company crossed a large, open rice-paddy and dropped down into a dry drainage ditch—8 feet deep and 10 feet across. Even though part of the company was able to use it, progress remained slow because fire teams and squads had to advance through the brush on either side to provide security for the rest of the men. Suddenly, small arms fire broke out on the left. "Lance Corporal Gary Lindsay was the next guy to my left, about 20 feet away," Bennett said. "I saw him go down. I knew he was hit. I crawled over, firing a few bursts as I went. Lindsey was hit in the head and was already dead. He never knew what hit him."

The company set up a hasty defense, pushing troops out of the ditch to form a perimeter. Sporadic small -arms fire wounded three men, who were dragged back to the ditch, along with Lindsey's body. Another Marine was killed, tumbling into an old bomb crater. The NVA seemed to be moving around, probing to determine what they were up against, searching for any weakness in the Marine defense. The company contacted an Aerial Observer (AO) who brought in several flights of fighter-bombers to hit the NVA positions. The enemy fire died away and an H-34 medevac helicopter was able to get in and take out the wounded—but had to leave the two dead Marines.

Battalion assembled a rescue force consisting of Kilo Company and a platoon of tanks. The tank commander, Lieutenant Paul Drnec said, "The entire tank platoon—all three gun tanks and the one flame tank— reinforced Kilo Company." The force reached the open rice paddy but couldn't cross it because there was too much water under the crust. It wouldn't support the weight of the tanks. India withdrew from its position in the ditch and linked up with the rescue force. "We retraced our route," Stimson recalled. "I knew there were NVA out there. I could just sense that we were in the wrong place." Armstrong saw a man in a Marine helmet and flak jacket motioning for him to come to him. Something just didn't seem right; there were no Marines over there. India's commander, Captain Wayne Colter, climbed a tank and ordered it to fire into their old position. Drnec warned him, "Hey look sir, let's get the hell outta here and then we can start playing games." Overruled, he started firing—and was immediately blanketed by intense fire from the entire NVA arsenal—artillery, 60mm and 81mm mortar fire, RPGs, 140mm rockets, .51-caliber machine gun and small arms fire. Colter toppled off the tank with a severe head wound.

Stimson heard the rockets lift off, and then impact around the tanks and the rear elements of the company. Armstrong took a hit. "An explosion went off just to my right rear and shrapnel penetrated underneath my right arm and struck me in the right side of the face. Another piece went all the way through my left leg. The hole in my leg was huge." The incoming killed and wounded many (author's note, number undetermined) and disrupted the formation. "The company was in as vulnerable a position as anyone could have feared," Stimson said, "strung out, burdened with casualties, in incredibly bad terrain, part in the open, and with no one in charge!" At this critical moment, the NVA launched a ground assault. "I saw a dozen to about 20 people in green uniforms trotting—double timing—across the paddies," Armstrong recalled. "I thought 'Jesus Christ,' this is the end of the line."

About a dozen Marines made it to the thin cover of trees off to the side of the paddies. "There were hu-

man waves of NVA coming at us," Bennett said. "It looked like they had us completely surrounded." Two Marines with him were blinded by white phosphorous, but there wasn't much he could do for them. The tanks had just pulled back into the tree line when the flame tank commander shouted to Drnec, "For Christ's sake, they're all around me!" Drnec barked back, "Are you sure they're not Marines?" "No sir," the tanker responded, "they are definitely goners, can I zap them with the flame?"

Drnec knew there were Marines still out there—what a dilemma—"No, spray them with your .50"—it was a tough call. He glanced through the vision slits in the cupola and his heart stopped. An enemy RPG team stood up, less than 25 meters away and took aim. Drnec hit the trigger of the 90mm main gun and blew the NVA away.

India gradually formed a perimeter—more or less—as many Marines were still in the brush fighting for their lives. "We didn't really form a perimeter per se," Stimson said. "Our position had an amorphous shape...my main concern at the time was not its shape, but its strength." Wounded men who could hold a rifle were put in the line—and others who kept drifting in filled still more gaps. Somehow a badly wounded Russ Armstrong made his way back to the perimeter and took over a radio to call in artillery support. The company forward observer had been killed earlier when an ammunition can exploded.

Stimson saw a Navy Corpsman get shot in the throat—then wrap a battle dressing around the wound and carry on. "It was one of the most incredible things I have ever seen," he said. Drnec tank was hit and disabled by an RPG round that took out the transmission. The situation was desperate; the Marines were running out of ammunition, weapons were jamming and the NVA were in the next rice paddy—some as close as 10 to 15 meters away. Stimson could see the enemy's faces. He ordered his men to fix bayonets!

Heavy .51-caliber machine gun fire now raked the Marine lines, pinning them down. The thumb-sized slugs tore up the ground and anything else they hit. Bennett saw the results at first hand. He recalled, "Lance Corporal Robert Pugh hollered, 'Ben, Ben, I'm hit.' I crawled over and saw that he was hit in the back, down low, near the spine, a big hole just below his flak jacket." Stimson radioed the AO and begged him to hit the machine gun position. "The first F-4 made its run along an east-west axis and dropped all its bombs on an NVA company." The second F-4 worked on the .51s, knocking out at least one and causing the remainder to stop firing.

Drnec and his crew abandoned the gun tank, after disabling its main gun and machine gun. They stuffed themselves into one of the other gun tanks and made their way into India's position, adding valuable firepower to the defenders. According to Stimson, "We were no longer vulnerable; we had good tactical integrity, we had the tanks, the air, and the indirect artillery fire. And we had taken a heavy toll on the NVA. The time for them to turn it on full bore had been at the beginning. That was when they could have gotten us...but they missed the opportunity."

While India Company fought for its life, 500 meters away the battalion's two other companies faced a similar fate.

Fight for Life

A slight breeze carried the faint crackle of small arms fire and the heavy booms of exploding artillery to the Marines manning the battalion perimeter. Word soon filtered down through the ranks that India Company was in deep trouble. The "word" was soon reinforced when a tired and spooked Kilo Company returned from its failed mission to bring back India's survivors. Even the most skeptical defender was soon scooping an extra shovel full of dirt from his foxhole. The atmosphere was tense, this was truly bad-guy country—a free-fire zone where anyone not wearing Marine green was shot—no questions, no warning.

Staff Sergeant Charles Owens, Kilo Company gunnery sergeant, stood near his foxhole winding down from the harrowing rescue mission. "I had one arm in my flak jacket and I had my helmet in my left hand...when I saw the flash of a rocket as it went off. The last thought going through my mind was, 'Oh no, not in the stomach!" He woke up minutes later with his flak jacket on and his helmet buckled. He couldn't figure out how it happened. India Company platoon commander, Lieutenant Bill

Cowan thought it was out-going from Con Thien until, "All of a sudden I heard *shwew*—the sound of incoming—and a tremendous explosion behind me, about 50 meters." Men dove or simply fell into any depression that offered protection. Most just curled up, hands clutching the sides of their helmet trying to pull it down to their ankles! Within 30 minutes an estimated 60 140mm rockets and 70 82mm mortar round hit the perimeter, killing three Marines and wounding 25. While this heavy enemy bombardment pounded the perimeter, NVA infantry crept to within 10 meters of the font line foxholes.

Staff Sergeant Dave Nugent was in the 81mm mortar position when, "The NVA started opening up on us," he said. "Gunner Holycross yelled, 'I think they're up in the trees." A sergeant charged the NVA with his .45 caliber pistol. A slug from an AK -47 cut him down. An ammunition carrier was hit in the leg and. Nugent was attempting to stop the bleeding. "Before I was done, I saw this Chicom grenade coming. It blew up just before I could get my hand on it. The grenade destroyed my left hand and tore up the upper left side of my head. The NVA got inside the perimeter and shot several mortarmen in their holes. Enraged, Holycross charged the assailants—shooting them in the head at point blank range. Debona rushed over. "There were quite a few wounded Marines there," he recalled, "inside a little bomb crater. I also saw a lot of bullets coming from a tree line approximately 60 meters away." Debona scraped together a reaction force and sent them after the NVA. Ten minutes late the posse proudly reported, "We got them all, sir."

The battalion command post was under direct attack. Tom Early recounted, "Everybody in the CP who didn't have to have a [radio] handset in his hand and a radio stuck in his ear was given a weapon and put on the line around the CP area. Once the enemy attacked and penetrated into the trees, we had a tremendous problem of identification and trying to get any type of clear field of fire." It was worth a man's life to leave his foxhole. The enemy fire didn't stop the indomitable DeBona. "Mike Six," roamed the perimeter, "kicking ass and taking names," in Marine jargon for aggressive leadership. He led a charmed life until, "On the way to the battalion CP," DeBona recalled, "my invincibility was shattered. The bad guys threw one round...and I felt some warm stuff on my leg!" More bad news followed. "I received a report that Mike-3 Actual—Lieutenant John Manzi—was KIA." It was a personal loss for DeBona. "He [Manzi] was about to make first lieutenant, and it was my intention to transfer him over to the battalion S-3 section."

Lieutenant Zappardino tried to get air support but, "We couldn't get air because of the weather. The sky was overcast and it was getting dark." Early worked the artillery nets, "...but there was a lot going on throughout the area that night. Con Thien and Gio Linh were being shelled." Zappardino pitched in, relaying firing data over the radio nets. "We had support from every gun at every fire base that could reach us." Marine artillery from Dong Ha, C-2 and Camp Carroll opened up, putting a ring of steel around the two perimeters. Even the U.S. Army pitched in with its 175mm guns, adding to the weight of metal from 105mm howitzers and 8-inch self-propelled guns.

Lieutenant Cowan's best squad leader was killed while cleaning a jammed M-16—a common occurrence that cost more than one Marine his life. It was the young officer's first time under heavy fire. "Until Sergeant Krage was shot, I had been too busy or maybe too inexperienced to be scared. After that, I was more aware of the danger." Lieutenant Crangle had a similar experience. "...A young Marine came up to me to ask for a cleaning rod. He sounded a little groggy, and I asked him if he was all right. 'Yes,' he answered, but then I looked at his helmet and saw a bullet entry hole just about where the top of his head should have been. I held my breath while I took off his helmet, fully expecting his brains to fall out! The kid had a permanent part where the bullet had just creased his skull, one more inch and good night." Crangle ordered the man to the landing zone, which had turned into an aid station.

Casualties were jammed into an area between the battalion CP and the 81mm mortar position. The site was a frenzy of activity as Navy corpsmen desperately struggled to treat the wounded in the darkness. Many of the wounded were classified as "emergency medevacs—one of three categories and the most serious, "in danger of losing life or limb." The Corpsmen rigged ponchos so they could use flashlights—an exposed light could mean instant

death. Battalion put the call out for an emergency medevac—men would die without hospital care. A gutsy Marine helicopter crew responded. Zappardino talked them down through the heavy fire. The most seriously wounded were quickly loaded aboard. The pilot got a "thumbs up" and the bird leaped into the darkness, escaping without a scratch.

The wounded were flown to Dong Ha, a 15-minute flight, for initial treatment and stabilization at "Delta-Med," a Navy Medical Collection and Clearing Company. Stretcher bearers rushed the wounded into triage, where they were quickly evaluated for priority of treatment and scheduled for emergency surgery. Within minutes many of them were under the knife. As soon as they were stabilized—hours or days—they continued along the evacuation chain. Sergeant Nugent was flown to the USS Repose (Ah-16), a Navy hospital ship off the coast. "My facial wounds were minor," Nugent recalled, "and quickly healed, but I lost the use of my left hand." Others were flown directly to the United States for hospitalization close to their homes.

The irrepressible aviator, Zappardino, established contact with "Puff the Magic Dragon," a C-130 aircraft armed with a gatling gun that fired 6,000 .50 caliber rounds a minute. When it fired, the red stream of tracers looked like a water hose, and the battlefield quickly settled down. Lance Corporal Ron Burke remembered, "Every once in a while someone would think he saw something out there. We'd lay down a little fire and wouldn't have any problems for a while. I never slept a wink that night. I just wasn't about to go asleep. I could sleep some other time." Tom Early heard noises. "The NVA dragged away their dead with meat hooks that had ropes attached. We could hear the noise of the hook going into the body and the body hitting other objects as it was being dragged."

At first light, the men witnessed the grim results of the fighting. Zappardino saw, "dead people all over the ground. Everyone was stunned." Lance Corporal Bennett was given the grisly task of retrieving the dead. "I didn't want to do it," he said. "We were tired and it was very hot. Some of the guys were already decomposing. They smelled terrible and some were blown all to hell." Andy DeBona had his men sweep through the tree line that had caused so much trouble. "...Mike 2 found a total of seven bad guys and a live one who was shot through the ankle. The POW was a young kid who just scared to death. He was crying and sniveling and, I guess, begging for mercy." The prisoner was treated and evacuated—the only one taken during the battle.

India Company also survived the night and in the morning Kilo Company helped bring them back to the battalion perimeter. Sergeant Owens described the scene. "The India dead and wounded were all spread out—a little patch of people here and a little patch of people there, killed and wounded."

The Battalion Commander called a meeting of his surviving commanders and staff. He started to give them new orders when a tank engine interrupted him. The group turned and watch pensively as the battle-scared armored vehicle ground slowly past. Its rear deck was piled high with dead Marines. As the noise faded, the commander finished the brief—"continue the mission." Two days later the battalion, now reinforced with Lima Company, fought another pitched battle.



Dick Camp is a retired Marine Corps colonel and the author of Lima-6, his memoir as a Marine infantry company commander at Khe Sanh. He has written several combat histories of the US Marines, including The Devil Dogs at Belleau Wood, Battleship Arizona's Marines at War, Iwo Jima Recon, and Last Man Standing: The 1st Marine Regiment on Peleliu. He is also the author of Leatherneck Legends: Conversations with the Marine Corps' Old Breed and has published over sixty articles in various military-oriented magazines, including Vietnam, World War II, Marine Corps Gazette, and Leatherneck.

In February 2015, Belleville Township Council approved a resolution to dedicate High Street in honor of former Belleville resident Donald Baron Saunders, who was killed in action on March 4, 1968, while serving with the U.S. Marines in the Vietnam War. Council members Kevin Kennedy and Vincent Cozzarelli are here today. Thank you for undertaking this effort to honor all 159 Belleville sons



We need to remember the sacrifice Donald Saunders' family made. It surfaces in the Belleville Times article on March 14, 1968, at the report of his death.

Pfc. Saunders leaves besides his parents William and Maisie, a brother Kenneth, 16 at the time, and a sister, Kathleen, both at home, 27-29 High Street. [In summary]

"Since he had to leave this world, I'm glad he left it the way he did, with courage and fighting for his country." There was little else for William D. Saunders of 20 High Street, Belleville, to say.

The young Saunders, only 20, died of wounds on his head and body from an enemy mortar fire in Quang Tri. Saunders was killed while defending the Marine Corps combat base of Khe Sanh.

Saunders enlisted in the Marines two years earlier on his father's birthday.

A member of the First Battalion of the 13th Marines, Pfc. Saunders attended Belleville High School.

He was also a member of Little Zion U AME Church in Belleville. Donald completed his basic training at Parris Island, S.C., and advanced infantry training at Camp Lejeune, N.C. He volunteered for duty in Vietnam.

His mother, Mrs. Maisie Saunders, said, "Donald was never too talkative. He made his own decisions. I think he felt the boys were doing a good job and he should back them up."

"It was just a job that had to be done, for him," added Saunders, and he never complained. In all his letters there was never a word of complaint. He tried to reassure us, in fact."

Mrs. Saunders said Donald did mention in one letter that he did not know whether it was the last letter or not and that they were surrounded by the enemy.

She told the Times that the difficulties of the people of Vietnam particularly affected him. He wrote home about the villagers who had to scramble for food and were so starved that they were eating garbage.

About two weeks before he was killed, Donald managed to telephone home -- at 3 a.m. -- to talk to his parents. Mrs. Saunders said: "We were surprised and so happy to hear his voice. The first thing he said was 'don't talk about anything military, Mom.' There was so much confusion because of the relay through Hawaii that we could not say very much. I said something and then had to wait for it to be relayed. He did say though, 'What's happening, Mom' which was his favorite expression. It was so good to hear that. I only wish we could have talked much longer, it was over so quickly, so very quickly."

Mrs. Saunders told the Times her son never said much about military conditions in South Vietnam. Mrs. Saunders said, "He sometimes wrote that he gave candy and food to the Vietnamese children. The only thing he really asked for was undershirts. It seems that you could not purchase them over there because of the climate."

His dad told the Times, "When he enlisted, we hoped for the best, we did not want anything to happen. But we knew he was on a machine gun and the first thought of any enemy is to knock out machine gun out. At least he wasn't like those doves or slobs, who try to find any excuse to get out of going. That's the one thing I remember, he never, even after he was in combat, said he was sorry or complained."

Thanks to Mike Lamberti in The Belleville Times, who wrote on the 45th anniversary of Saunders's death. The mini biography under Donald Saunders' photo in his Belleville High School yearbook read:

Donald plans to become president. Watching television occupies much of his time. He admires Peter Snell, Olympic gold medal winner.

Lamberti wrote: A short but concise description of a Belleville original who was a fantastic athlete. A 1967 graduate of Belleville High, Donald would go on to join the Marine Corps after graduation. Less than a year later, he lost his life in Vietnam, on March 4, 1968. He had turned 20 years old a little over two weeks earlier....

Saunders was remembered by friends on the 45th anniversary as a humble young man who had a smile as wide as his athletic talents. He also held one of the most prestigious athletic records at Belleville High.



Donald broke the school record in the half mile in '67 with a time of 2:00.08. His record stood for 11 years. In addition to being a tremendous track runner, Saunders was also on the 1965 Belleville cross country team, which won the Big 10 championship

Donald Saunders is not forgotten by the men he served with.

Craig W. Tourte, a veteran of Khe Sanh Veterans writes:

Anthony - I hope all is well...I just wanted you to know that March 4th is the date Donald B. Saunders was Killed In Action while defending the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh in what was then the country of South Vietnam.

I thought it important that you know I continue to mourn his loss and remember what a fine brave Marine his was.

We who survived that horrific siege are all some of



them have left who remember their sacrifice.
Tourte continues in another letter:

The mention of Quang Tri as the site of his death is like naming a county or state, as Quang Tri is both a city and providence.

More important is that Donald was killed during the horrific and deadly 77 day Siege of the United State Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh -- while he was assisting other Marines in fortifying their bunkers from an incoming attack of artillery, rockets and mortar fire.

I just wanted to make that fact clear as it personalizes his death a little more. I knew Donald at Khe Sanh and talked to him just before he was killed.
One little additional point I wanted to make, and that was that Donald did this while unselfishly exposing himself to the intense incoming fire of the enemy - a fact one does not always hear from the government.

Craig Tourte wanted to be here today but he lives in California. He would also like to correspond with Saunders' family members.



OBIT

RICHARD CUEVA, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN WHISKEY BTRY 1/11, 155's

Our Khe Sanh brother Richard Cueva passed away a few weeks ago after a gallant battle with prostate cancer. His wife is having a celebration of life for Rich on Sunday October 4th from 1 to 4PM at Kelly Ridge (the old golf course) located in Oroville Calif at 5131 Royal Oaks Drive, 95966. Rich served with W Battery 1/11 and 155s

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student **OR** who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.
2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization.
3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2016 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, -1MN 55128317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.
Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms.
Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.
A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the "***Red Clay***" Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David E. Lownds Award – for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award – for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award – for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

2.. The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.
2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.
3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.
4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.
5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY 1* of the school year applied for. *** (This is an important, NEW change to previous years)*****
6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 regular points or 115 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points max. (Please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

A GPA of 4.0 x 10 = 40 points or a GPA of 3.0 x 10 = 30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 30 points total

Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Student government = 10 points max.

Community related services = 10 points max.

Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 10 points max.

c. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min. to 400 words max) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max.

Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments. Please review the six suggested adjectives below, select one or more that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

TENACIOUS FAITHFUL UNDAUNTED STEADFAST RESOLUTE INNOVATIVE

d. Bonus Points = 10 bonus points for being a military veteran

= 5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application:_____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: last_____, first_____ MI_____

Address: street_____, city_____ state_____zip_____

Home phone:_____ E-mail address:_____

Applicant Birthdate:_____

2. KSV Sponsor Information (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member):

Name: last_____ first name_____

Relationship to applicant;_____

Branch of service_____

Unit served at Khe Sanh_____dates served there_____

3. School Information: (School to be attending)

School name: _____

School Address: street_____, city_____

State_____ zip code_____

School Phone number:_____

Curriculum/intended course of study_____

School year to be funded_____

4. Applicant Personal History (Be specific!)

a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, communications, offices held, academic honors and prizes, student government participation, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. Community Activities participated in; (military service, volunteer service to community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Mailing Packet (Due *MAY 1*)!!

***ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS,**
***A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,**
***A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,**
***A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min. to 400 WORDS max.) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.**
!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!
I, SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant **Actual Signature of Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent**

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY 1ST* OF THE SCHOOL YEAR APPLIED

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Committee

_____

Tom Eichler, President Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

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FORMER MEMBERS OF 1ST BATTALION 1ST MARINES WHO SERVED IN VIETNAM, ATTENDED THE DEDICATION OF THEIR MEMORIAL AT THE MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS ON 29 AUGUST 2015, HONORING THE 567 MARINES & CORPSMEN KIA WHILE SERVING WITH 1/1. ADDITIONAL PHOTOS & STORY ON PAGES 70-75.





MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — Dolia Gonzalez, mother of Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. Alfredo Gonzalez, reads names of fallen Marines in her son's unit 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. The roll call was part of a ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico Aug. 29, to dedicate a new memorial to the 567 Marines & Corpsmen who died in that unit from 1967-1971. The new memorial is located at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Story & Pictures on inside cover, pages 70-75

ISSUE 89

RED CLAY

WINTER SPRING 2016

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE, THE POILANE FAMILY, WHO OWNED AND OPERATED THE COFFEE PLANTATION NEAR THE KSCB. THEY WERE HELD IN HIGH REGARD BY KSV THEN & NOW. SEE ADDITIONAL PHOTOS & STORY PAGES 34-52



THE POILANE FAMILY 1967, BOTTOM LEFT, DAUGHTER FRANCOISE, JEAN-MARIE IN MOTHER MADELEINE ARMS, & FATHER FELIX



JEAN-MARIE POILANE WITH HIS WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN



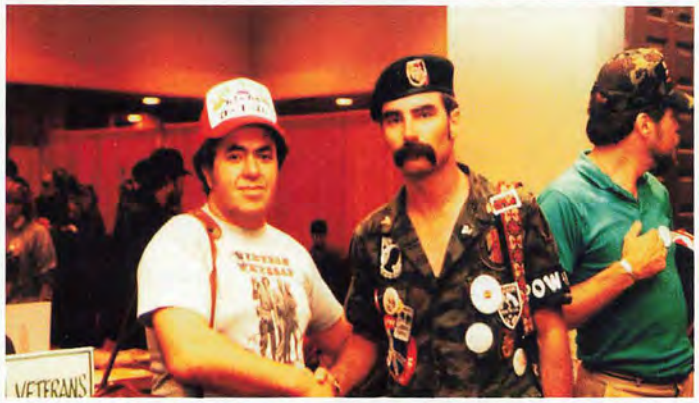









FISH WITH THE 1ST MARINE MOH RECEIPIENT IN VIETNAM ROBERT E. O'MALLEY





TWO WEEKS OF 'CALM' AT KHE SANH

LTCOL C.G. GERARD USMC, RET

There is an old axiom in Marine aviation: Never go on leave or miss a meeting because in your absence you can be sure you will become heir to a task solely because you were not there to protect yourself. I judge that is what occurred during my two weeks TAD away to_Texas in December 1967.VMO-6 C/O Lieutenant Colonel White listened to my after-action report until it was his turn to speak. He let me know that VMO-6 was taking over a commitment for a detachment of two UH-1Es and flight crews for two week stints at the Khe Sanh combat base. VMO-3 previously carried that commitment, but now that we established at Quang Tri nearer the DMZ, it became our inherent responsibility. I was to take the first two-week detachment, to begin January 1, 1968.

The Khe Sanh combat base was the scene of a major battle in 1966, which fought on rather conventional terms until the NVA withdrew. Since then the base was relatively quiet, although it certainly stuck out to the northwest constantly inviting action from the North Vietnamese. I had the one previous visit in September 1967 when Ed Kufeldt led me on a flight of two planes up there from Ky Ha to support local re-supply transport helicopters for a day. I had only a vague idea of the layout of the base, the outlying facilities or the threat. I certainly recall the vast beauty of the area. The first two weeks of 1968 gave ample time to learn the workings of Khe Sanh.

On the afternoon of New Years Eve, 1967, our cadre flew to the northwest comer of I Corps to take over the helicopter support for Khe Sanh. Old friend Joe Sales had the previous VMO-3 detachment, and took us on a quick orientation of the ground facilities before making a hasty retreat back to Hue Phu Bai.

Colonel David E. Lownds was the commander of the 26th Marine Regiment and its supporting activities. As the senior Marine, he was also the base commander. His headquarters was in the "Old French Fort," a structure built by the French in a pentagon configuration of thick brick walls buried two-thirds below the surrounding ground level. The single entrance gave an initial impression of crossing a moat before lowering your head to transit the low overhang. Inside all was dim except for an occasional light bulb dangling on a single wire from the cantilevered brick ceiling. The Colonel operated from an aluminum frame lawn chair in front of a hardwood kitchen table. A yellow note pad, communication radios and a wall of combat maps were the only obvious adornments. I was introduced briefly to the Colonel before working through his intelligence officer, Major Jerry Hudson, or an air liaison officer, one of several Lieutenant Aviators who rotated through the daily watch routine. VMO-6's own Lieutenant Rich Donaghy became the 26th Marine ALO in mid-January.

The base was bare bones functional. A 3000-foot east-west Marston-mat runway had a distinct uphill grade toward hills to the west, and a precipitous drop off the eastern end. With few exceptions, fixed-wing aircraft landed to the west and took off to the east. A turnaround taxiway at the southwest end provided room for on- and off-loading transports. *Charlie Med* hospital was within fifty feet of the turnaround, located to provide quick medical loading to aircraft. To the northwest, opposite the runway and turnaround were six corrugated steel revetments designed to protect parked helicopters from fragmentation and debris during any attack. We contentiously parked our two UH-1Es in the revetments at night, during our two quiet weeks at Khe Sanh, and the provision worked fine. Two CH-46 helicopters normally also used two revetments.

Every conceivable military function was available at Khe Sanh, from infantry, to airfield support, to logistics, to artillery, to housekeeping was in place. In addition, the base was encircled with triple-roll concertina wire with trench lines and strategic gun emplacements within that. Khe Sanh was red clay underfoot and everything soon carried its crimson imprint. Initially we were there in the dry season, but soon it was the wet season and all turned to gumbo.

A wood frame building housed the mess hall, post office and basic PX. All was calm enough that movies were shown there immediately after the evening meal hour. Our conventional wood frame and plywood Southeast Asia hooch was more than adequate with metal frame racks and mattresses. Our eight-man detachment of four pilots and four crew-

members fit comfortably. Nights were cool, so we slept under poncho liners. A sandbagged bunker for protection behind the building was a constant reminder that hostile fire was ever possible, even probable.

The base was reliant, unquestionably, on air support. The main Highway-9, from the east through a mountain grade, was cut long ago, and the support roads to outlying defensive positions in the hills around were suitable for foot traffic only -- no vehicles. Highway-9, as it passed the base and headed for Laos, twenty-miles west, was kept open only with dedicated effort. Two to four CH-46s made daily supply runs to the outlying defender positions. Much of our UH-IE flying was escorting the 46s as gun support. For the most part those flights went unmolested during the quiet days of early January.

The immediate countryside was beautiful in its native state. All was green and a substantial river ran from northwest to southeast cutting the northeast comer of the defensive perimeter. That ravine housed a pump station as the only potable water-point supplying the base. It remained intact during the full duration of the three-month siege of the base. In that deep canyon, it seemed to beg someone to fly fish. The beauty was deceptive for the apparent low green was mostly six-to-eight foot high saw grass that would cut-to-ribbons anyone who attempted to pass through. Several months earlier, a VMO-6 UH-IE was down at night about one mile north of the base. The immediate search for the helicopter and crew was not productive. At first light, they were located and successfully lifted out only after standing on top of the aircraft. The UH-IE was almost out of sight, buried in the tall grass.

For two weeks, we flew the deceptively "friendly skies" around Khe Sanh. In addition to the gunship escort for the CH-46, helicopters providing daily supply to the surrounding hill outposts we delved into reconnaissance. Daily we flew intelligence gathering flights into varying quadrants, with vague guidance as to what we should be seeking, although questioned in detail during after-flight debriefings as to what we actually noted. We were in fact, but a small input to the greater intelligence gathering effort, for what was developing around Khe Sanh. The enemy was out there and only the number and intent were undetermined. Our wanderings did in fact uncover extraordinary sightings, but we were never allowed to act upon them -- just report.

Initially to the west, along the single-track dirt road, misleadingly labeled a "Highway" was the lush green coffee plantation of Madame Poilane. Next was the village of Lang Vei, just prior to the Army Special Forces compound of the same name. Just beyond the boarder with Laos stood imposing vertical face of Cu Rock Mountain. Pocketed within its face we saw numerous caves -- some camouflaged, but enough exposed that we could see barrels of artillery pieces unquestionably pointed at Khe Sanh proper, twenty miles to the east. We could see the weapons, but no personnel -- they apparently stayed alert and remained out of sight.

On another day, south of Lang Vei beyond a long low-running ridge we stumbled on a large grass meadow, which revealed tire tracks from vehicles activity. More surprising, browsing under broad limbed trees were four dusty elephants painted with identifying colored numerals on their sides. We knew this was a significant find and immediately reported to the Khe Sanh command post. I requested clearance to take some offensive action on the elephants, but that was denied. Again, we sighted no personnel.

VMO-6 was the custodian to an equipment item, dubbed "people sniffer," which mounted a wand under a UH-IE for gathering air samples and a sensing unit in the cabin for processing. When flown at low altitude and slow airspeed over the landscape it had the capability of "sniffing" and chemically testing the air for human urine. Supposedly, it classified monkey urine the same as human urine, but no other species could confound the equipment. The sniffer was highly classified and only a couple of the squadron pilots were trained on the operation to obtain maximum reliable readings. One afternoon Lieutenant Colonel White came to Khe Sanh to spend a full afternoon to sniff the valleys and hills around the base that our searching had identified as possibly "hot." I flew about a thousand feet above his low-level flight path with a map on which we placed an X over every point he called off as giving a significant reading. We gave our data to Major Hudson to incorporate into the intelligence picture his agents were developing. The sniffer report revealed that there was a huge human urine trace throughout the area --either people or there were an equally significant number of monkeys. The bottom line support-

ed the fact that a probable hostile build-up was growing around Khe Sanh.

My flight crews became intimately familiar with all the outposts surrounding the base: the "hills," to the west were 881S, 881N, 558 and 861, while east was 950 -- each referenced the elevation in meters on a contour map of the area. Each soon became historically significant when the true battle of Khe Sanh developed.

By January 14, our group completed the two-week obligation and we left the base as relatively quiet as we had inherited it the first of the year. Major Dave Workman and company relieved us and it was back to Quang Tri to pick up the more conventional missions the squadron flew.

One week later, on the night of January 22, Workman's group awakened, along with everyone else, to the initial attack on the base -- the siege of Khe Sanh began. Over the next three months, I was to return to Khe Sanh repeatedly -- as an out-and-in, overnight or escorting other evolutions.

THREE MONTHS OF 'NO CALM' AT KHE SANH

Reflecting back on the siege of Khe Sanh and participation in it, just like most of the Vietnam experience, it is better to judge from afar. Daily activity moved so quickly that there was, during the moment, little opportunity to keep things in perspective. From almost fifty years for consideration, the action and the impact is much easier to evaluate. Read elsewhere for the story of, and history of, the "Battle of Khe Sanh." Here is solely my participation.

The dawn of January 22, 1968, at Khe Sanh, found what the North intended to be the destruction of the combat base and a drive to remove the Marines from the outpost. The ordnance storage facility was hit the first night and exploded with a force that leveled many of the above ground structures and rained debris throughout the base. That day was bedlam for the defenders. For the defenders on the hill positions, artillery fire and frontal attack was almost successful. The 1st MAW put much of its assets in the air, and artillery that could reach the area was also put into action.

By late morning, I went from Quang Tri along with a brand new copilot, First Lieutenant J. B. Turner, who was literally receiving his "baptism of fire" on the trip. We landed near the revetments where I had the crew stay with the aircraft while I would hustle down to the command post in the old fort to talk to Rich Donaghy for a briefing on what we could do to support. When I was within about 50 yards of Charlie Med, an artillery round impacted probably 10-yards from me. The concussion knocked me off my feet and I went tumbling into a ditch. I was dully shaken and dirty, but trudged the remaining quarter-mile to the CP. Rich had more than he could keep up with in the bedlam of the moment, but gave me a frequency and an area to support to the southwest of the base, near the Lang Vei Special Forces camp and he would feed fixed wing flights to me to control. That is what we did for six hours that afternoon, control jets on targets of opportunity, landing only to refuel and rearm. We stayed in contact with the voice on a radio in Lang Vei Special Forces compound, who contributed with recommended targets.

Within a few days, the battle settled into sparing and responding. That is much the pattern for us that followed for weeks, and into the three months of the siege. Some days we flew out of Quang Tri, some nights we slept at Khe Sanh in the concrete underground bunker the Air Force was in the process of building when action began. The Air Force never got around to using it, but we found it gratifyingly secure. Nights there were fairly serene, listening only for the course of battle and the Khe Sanh rats that shared the space with us -- they nibble, but never bit.

Eventually we ceased leaving helicopters in the revetments overnight, because it appeared they were a magnet for NVA artillery. The message seemed to be, "Destroy the helicopters." The revetments were soon damaged to the point of being useless and several aircraft hulks littered the area, so few adequate parking spots remained. However, during the night helicopter support was much on-call and the response had to come from Quang Tri, meaning a demanding night flight. The air traffic control unit's never ceased operation -- the tower controllers went from above to

below ground. The GCA radars went underground too with an open scan pointed east, so helos could be guided in during minimal weather, day and night. In addition, weather was a huge factor during the winter season -- fog sometimes persisted throughout the day. Some daring CH-46 pilots on occasion approached the high ground and gradually crept up the slopes to some of the outlying hill outposts for the worst of the emergency evacuations.

Otherwise, it was a ground battle -- the NVA used bad weather and night to attempt to infiltrate the vulnerable defensive lines. One night an NVA sapper team did penetrate until eventually chased down individually before doing any real damage. From that group an officer was killed and initially suspected, because of his circumcision -- a rarity among Vietnamese males -- not to be Vietnamese. Eventually, it was confirmed he was a Chinese captain. The indication of Chinese participation was significant.

Daily, weather permitting, Marine fixed-wing dropped heavy ordnance around the base, sometimes within several hundred feet of the fence line. There were several incidents when an aircraft was damaged enough to merit pilot ejection. One F-4 pilot landed literally in the defensive wire, and another, farther away, was quickly snatched up by helicopter. The air force began B-52 bomb saturations, referred to as "arc-light" drops, throughout the area. Those came day or night and their rumble left an extremely satisfying impression on the friendlies, wherever they were. The B-52 drops took the better part of a minute for their 750-pound drops to reach the ground. I suspect that too, they were terrifying and destructively effective to the NVA army. Soon the green, green hills around Khe Sanh were a "moonscape." The Marine A-6s, carrying a lesser load also dropped what we learned to recognize as the "minnie arc-lights." They produced the same satisfaction to those on the ground that their "big-brothers" generated.

Supply of Khe Sanh was primarily Air Force C-130s, but their needed offload time began to also draw heavy artillery and mortar fire. One Marine C-130, carrying bladders of aviation fuel, piloted by Chief Warrant Officer Henry Wildfang, was hit by enemy fire while on rollout and was destroyed by fire -- several were killed in the incident although the two pilots survived. (Wildfang is one of the last Naval Aviation Pilot -- not a commissioned aviation officer -- and his actions during the loss merited his fifth DFC.) Air Force delivery began to use parachute-borne cargo containers released over the rear ramp from about 500 feet altitude. A single pass could deliver several thousand pounds of supplies. A few loads inadvertently ended up far to the west where they may have actually supplied the NV A. Another low-altitude parachute extraction system delivered loads from a very low altitude where once out of the aircraft they slid to a halt -- those tended to carom arbitrarily, or worse, do major damage to the runway surface.

That was, after three months, the territory the North finally chose to withdraw from.

My flying was there almost daily. After the battle MAG-39 identified, from the four helicopter squadrons supporting the siege the individual pilots with the most hours at Khe Sanh. I was the VMO-6 "top dog."

SEVERAL INDIVIDUAL KHE SANH INCIDENTS MERIT MENTIONING:

An indigenous troupe living in the hills of the Vietnam-Laos boarder were disrupted and displaced as a direct result of the fighting. Referred to as a Montagnard tribe of "Bru) and significantly slight of build -- generally less than five feet. The developing conflict drove them in mass to the east to avoid the fighting. They came down Highway-9 to the gate of the combat base. There they came to the realization the Marines were not going to take them within the combat base where feeding, protection and providing shelter were beyond possible.

A small number of the thousand we escorted to Air Force C-130s for transportation out. The majority were to fend for themselves, although some foodstuff was made available from the Marines' limited supply. They took up camping as close to the Marine wire as practicable. Many dug underground holes to subsist in, popping up like chipmunks when the heat from battle allowed. In some cases, they were so close to the perimeter that they could converse with defenders across the defensive line.

There they existed until the battle termination and they either exited further to the east or returned to their home location.

One foggy morning when we could not fly, I found three young Marines positioned as snipers on top of the bunker where we slept. One manned the sniper rifle with scope, one worked binoculars to give recommendations and results to the shooter and one kept a small notebook recording their every action. Their vision was south across a level plane, which eventually rose to higher ground concealed by the low clouds. Highway-9 crossed a quarter-mile away and the Brew "chipmunk holes" that abutted the base. The snipers had an NVA patrol pinned down beyond, and were picking them off one-by-one. During the forty-five minutes I observed they took credit for three kills. Quite an insightful experience for me. Next, noted photographer David Douglas Duncan came on the scene and quietly began some candid snaps. He was at Khe Sanh for several days and I had seen him in other shoots as he toured. Years later, I found his book *War Without Heroes,* which documents in photos far more than I can convey here in words. It covers Khe Sanh and other Marine outposts throughout our area of operation in early 1968.

February 8 proved to be a dramatic day-long ordeal. The night before the base was alerted to something big in the making. We were advised to check our gas masks and to carry them. The base took hundreds of artillery and mortar rounds throughout the night. My crew was sleeping at Khe Sanh that night. The command center wanted our UH-1Es in the air at first light for reconnaissance, but it was one of the "locked-in-tight" fog hardened mornings. We finally were in the air by about ten hundred hours and directed to the Lang Vei Special Forces camp, which was under heavy pressure. When I checked-in with their radio the report was, "We hear tanks coming down Highway-9 from the Laotian boarder."

Flying west in lousy visibility I confirmed the tank movement. We fired some rockets, but did nothing to slow the steady advance. Before our time-on-station was down to where we had to return to Khe Sanh for refuel-rearm, at least one tank was "in the wire" at Lang Vei and their situation was critical. Meanwhile other participants were into the air war and we became simply contributors with our on-board weapons and trying to get some fixed-wing on target. The weather continued to be terrible. Eventually all seven tanks were stopped, but Lang Vei was overrun. Survivors were evacuated by various means and in the afternoon the battle pretty much wound-down. Late in the afternoon Captain Ed Kufeldt's flight of two picked up a call that there was still one American in the Lang Vei perimeter, and no other aircraft were in position to attempt assistance. Therefore, Ed and his crew, including co-pilot First Lieutenant George Rosenthal made a run-for-it, to help. They encountered immediate NVA close-in fire and were badly damaged. George was wounded three times and Ed barely nursed the DH-1E back to Khe Sanh. It had been a well or castrated trap set in motion by some well-spoken English speaking instigator. Seven tanks, and one probable, of nine confirmed were eventually destroyed. Fourteen of twenty-four Special Forces troops survived, with only one not wounded. Three were captured, but later repatriated. The indigenous Special Forces support troops losses were also substantial. Lang Vei fell, while Khe Sanh continued to fight on for another six weeks. The tanks were Soviet-built PT-76s.

I mention one heroic deeded simply because it almost went unnoticed. Corporal Ernesto Gomez was the crew chief on a HMM-262 CH-46 during an emergency medical evacuation on Hill 881, January 25. From the after action citation (recommended for Medal of Honor, gut awarded the Navy Cross) reads, "Two Marines on the ground began to lead a casualty to the helo. The wounded service member's head and eyes were both covered with bandages. At the moment the zone came under intense enemy fire the two Marines dropped to the ground. Meanwhile the blindfolded casualty continued, unassisted, toward the helicopter. Gomez unhesitatingly left the helicopter and rushed across 25 meters of fire-swept terrain to the side of the injured man. Quickly pulling the Marine to the ground, he selflessly used his own body to shield his comrade from the hostile fire impacting around them." Another Marine joined them and together carried the injured Marine to the helicopter. That event almost went unnoted, except a photojournalist recorded it and soon it was published by national press. Copies were sent via personal mail to several members of the HMM-262 squadron and eventually action was taken within the

squadron to get the award recommendation forwarded.

Ernesto Gomez went on to serve three tours in CH-46s in Vietnam. Twenty-six years later he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder PTSD, and entered eight months of therapy. He died unexpectedly October 10,2007. In comparison, only one aircrew member, PFC Raymond Clausen of HMM-263 , received the Medal of Honor in Vietnam. His action on January 31, 1970, involved entering a known minefield to make repeated trips carrying injured Marines to his CH-46 rescue helicopter.

USO shows circulate freely throughout I Corps, although th~ her from Da Nang, the less apt one is to attend one. Several good venues did make it to Quang Tri, but always an afternoon performance, gone by sunset. With one exception -- a country and western group was stuck with us for the night when their transportation cancelled due to weather. Members dispersed across the camp to where a free bunk was available. The one female singer got the Colonel's Quonset, the only quarters with indoor plumbing. My group housed the male singer - guitar player and the comedian, Elmer Fud Pucker -- "Have to be careful how you say that son," he'd quip We did have an entertaining evening. The crowning event was generated by the Lutheran chaplain who shared our hooch -- for he was a darned good hypnotist. The Chaplain put his spell on Elmer, who was counseled while "under" that when awaken he would not immediately be able to bend his elbows, and he would have to urinate. Sure enough, when snapped alert he announced he needed the urinal and trotted of to the outside vertically buried rocket tube, which served that purpose. We could hear .his swearing when confronted with stiff arms and the need to relieve himself. He returned wet, as predictable.

That chaplain was a very non-conventional practitioner. During his Sunday services, he gave his eulogy while walking the . isles of the small hooch converted to a chapel very disconcerting to many who did 't cater to the idea of someone they could not see preaching from somewhere behind them. He also was very effective with disgruntled enlisted people sent by various commanders for counseling, "go see the chaplain" about perceived issues. He would place the Marine in a comfortable overstuffed leather chair he had acquired and so ,through fatherly talk, have the individual hypnotized and revealing facts from his psyche he would not have considered revealing during conventional questioning. Often more than one session was necessary to get to any real revelations, and usually, the issue was relatively minor -- a change of work supervisor, or a short three-day R& to Da Nang's in country China Beach recreation center. One particularly hard-n case led to unprecedented revelations when the individual began to speak about a murder he had perpetrated at some point in his past.

When the siege of Khe Sanh was well underway and conditions reasonably stable, I got an unusual assignment to join up at Dong Ha Combat Base with an Army CH-54 *Flying Crane.* I spoke briefly with the Army Warrant Officer about his assignment and what I might do to facilitate it. The mission turned out to be uneventful except for the unusual inventory he had to deliver -- an aviation fire truck, a backhoe and an ambulance, all of which was to be individually carried with external lifts. I led him to Khe Sanh, handled all the voice transmissions and kept him out of trouble. More than anything else, the latter was what he wanted -- no trouble. His parting words before leaving Dong Ha were"You let anyone shoot at me and I'm dropping what I have on the hook and leaving the area." Three round trips, and all went well before he was thankfully able to depart to his more familiar area of operation. That was the only crane operation I experienced during the year in Vietnam. The fire fighting equipment and the ambulance were self-explanatory, but the backhoe was unique. It was for use just outside the perimeter defensive wire to dig a lengthy trench in an effort to uncover any of the tunnels the NVA were suspected digging at night to infiltrate the base. Several tunnels were uncovered and the effort thwarted.

When I checked in to VMO-6 I was the junior major and inherited the junior major job -- S4 logistics, supply), and that never changed. The only decision I ran into, which I was not able to handle on my own occurred while Hue-Phu Bai. Co-located there was a highly classified organization, the 8th Radio Research Field Station. Their compound had eight

air-transportable vans, many antennas, and a small cadre of six OV -1 D *Mohawk* aircraft, heavy security and access on a "need-to-know" basis only. It remained a curiosity to us because none had the "need-to-know." That was true until their executive officer came to see me one day as the VMO- supply officer. We exchanged pleasantries pending his speaking frankly about the visit. The Army did not have the state-of-the-art fire-retardant *Nomex* flight suits, which the Marines seem to have in unlimited supply. He would like to outfit his flight crews with *Nomex* and was offering to trade an army jeep for 40 *Nomex* flight suits, varying sizes. My mind raced through the options facing me, until I had to admit, I would have t propose that to my CO and let him make the decision. In turn, we were given an invitation to dinner at their club that evening where we could discuss the proposal further.

Lieutenant Colonel White, two others and I went to dinner. We not only got access to the compound, but also encountered a small well-appointed club with all amenities -- bar, pool table, dim lights, linen table cloths, solid stainless utensils and a steak and seafood menu -- unheard of in northern I Corps. We not only discussed the Nomex proposal, but also learned about their mission. They were a "listening" organization picking up on any NVA radio and signal communications available. At least one OV-lD aircraft was always on station near the Laotian, Cambodian or North Vietnam borders, listening and relaying to the vans, where interpreters and intelligence personnel called the input. As for the jeep trade, Colonel White asked to defer a decision until the following morning.

After sleeping overnight on the deliberation, he made the right decision, he could not accept. I delivered the message at noon, with one 44-Long *Nomex* flight suit as a gift for the XO. The bright side of that exchange was a standing invitation for our field grade officers to use their club anytime, with a twelve-hour prior clearance request. (In 1972 when I was the Air Operations Officer on the USS *Tripoli,* the NVA incursion across the DMZ was well underway and the end in sight, we had the mission to use Marine CH-53 helicopters to external the 8th Radio's high priority vans from Hue- Phu Bai to the ship. We later offloaded them at Subic Bay in the Philippines.)

Early in the evening, on a return to Hue-Phu Bai I was by happenstance caught up in a small bit of intrigue, which lasted for weeks. I sent the rest of the crews off to get a meal before the dinning facility closed, while I would complete the maintenance reports and do a quick intelligence debrief. Then I was off to the club and a bite to make up for the missed meal. I was completely alone in the late light, while crossing our flight line, when I took note of a single A-4 *Skyhawk* profile transiting ac rossss the sky at about 2,000 feet. I gave it little thought until -- Kaboomb -- a blast in our parking area. I was thrown forward, prostrate on my front side, while small debris mixed with bigger chunks of cement and steel reined around me. I stood, surve yed the fact I was uninjured, then the five or six damaged aircraft, and a 20 x 20 foot hole in the matting filling with water. Soon it was remarkably apparent no one else d seen or taken note of the incident. I went to the nearest hooch of the MAG XO to tell him what had happened, to which he was nothing short of uninterested. I went there alerting others to take charge of assessing the damage and taking steps toward cleanup. I then completed my intended trip to the club.

Next day the local investigation established, among other things, I was remarkably the only witness! I provided a formal statement, referencing the fact the 250-pound bomb probably came from the A-4 I had seen. That investigation was bumped up to the Wing, from which the issue was delved into further -- Whose aircraft was it? I was interrogated aggressively, trying to get a revision to my statement that it was an A-4, because it was established their were no Marine A-4s in the air at the time and place. I stuck with my statement," with 800 hours in the A-4, I know one when I see one." Only after three weeks was it fin ally determined the A-4 was from a Navy carrier, and the pilot knew he had a "hung bomb" as he was heading out to sea from a mission in Laos. I was vindicated. Interestingly, Hue-Phu Bai was always short of water, as no amount of drilling had established a reliable water source. That bomb crater in turn had an unending amount of water bubbling from it -- the engineers took weeks pouring concrete into the crater before it was finally reduced to an acceptable dribble.

My closest incident for total wipeout came not from combat, but from a pure hazard of aviation. Some-

time during the siege from Khe Sanh, while returning to Quang Tri at last light after a full day of flying, I chose a comfortable 4,000 cruising altitude above a solid low-level cloud cover. That was a good safe, relaxing way to shake the tensions of the day. That is what we were doing when a Marine RF -4 from the photoreconnaissance squadron shot straight up from the cloud, vertically in front of us. I was looking right into the radar-intercept officer's (RIO) back seat, and could note every detail and color of the aircraft inside and out -- close enough to see that neither pilot nor back-seater was looking our way, knew we were there or what had just missed killing them -- and us. Immediately we passed through their afterburner turbulence, which further threatened to tear the UR-1E apart. After that, all was calm again as we tried to put in perspective what had happened. Apparently, the RF-4 had been on a low-level flight of some type before deciding to abandon it and pull straight up through the clouds in after-burner for higher altitude. There was nothing we could do except be thankful we had not been a few seconds further along on our homeward flight.

The 26th Marine's chaplain Ray Stubbe became a "behind the scene" dynamo of inspiration throughout the combat area. In addition to the traditional religious functions, he became the unofficial (later official) historian of the siege. He not only wrote the definitive history of the battle, *Valley of Decision, the Siege of Khe Sanh,* (copy write1991) with co-author John Prados, but established the Khe Sanh Veterans Association (of which I'm a life member), and its quarterly publication *Red Clay.* He, thus, is the force behind preserving Khe Sanh heritage for all of us who participated. Annual reunions continue to be held each year.

The *LBJ Library & Museum* archives in Austin, Texas, retain a Khe Sanh battlefield model-- sand table -- that the Commander-in-Chief kept in the White House Situation Room in 1968. The President and aides apparently agonized over it daily, week after week, before and during the siege to better understand what was doing on the battlefield.

SUPER GAGGLE

Supply of the defensive hill locations west of the base by the CH-46 helicopters became untenable due to the weapons the NVA were able to direct on the landing area whenever they approached. The enemy knew those hills relied for survival on the helicopters and directed everything possible when they were most vulnerable, while on the ground evacuating wounded and delivering food and ammunition. The escorting UH-IE helicopter gunships could suppress some gun locations, but were unable to cover all.

Typical of the hill outposts plight was 881 South, 8-kilometers west of Khe Sanh, where Captain Bill Dabney commanded two companies of Marines in a 77-day standoff with almost overwhelming numbers of surrounding NVA.

Back at Quang Tri Air Base, home to the supporting helicopter squadrons, the three squadron commanders most involved in the resupply came up with a "better idea" -- a maximum effort. Lieutenant Colonel's Bill White of VMO-6, Melvin J. Steinway of HMM-262 *Flying Tigers* and Louis A. Gulling of-HMM-364 *Purple Foxes* formalized the plan. Lieutenant Colonel White then carried it to the 1st MA W to brief Major General Norman J. Anderson, who in turn approved it.

The first outing in mid-February had many more players that necessary for everyone beyond just the helicopters wanted to participate. Understandably, of course there was much coordination required and the unavoidable apprehension, which goes with any new endeavor. The concept had flights of as many a twelve CH -46s at a time load with externally carried supplies at Quang Tri and Dong Ha, to proceed directly to the Khe Sanh hill sites, where, in a "daisy-chain" they approached the landing zones and one-by-one place and release their loads and rapidly depart.

Those deliveries flooded the zones with as much as 24 tons of supplies in about three minutes, which later could be sorted and dispersed as conditions allowed. Just prior to the CH-46 arrival jets bombed the surrounding enemy concentrations. Two A-4s made low-level smoke dispensing runs on both sides of the helicopter approach lane to reduce the enemy's observation of the operation. Four UH-IEs parallel the transports providing close -in gun support. Each CH-46s also has two door

cabin mounted 50caliber machine guns very effective for close-in suppressing fire. One two-seat TA-4 aircraft functioned as the overall Tactical Air Controller, Airborne (TACA), which represented the fixed-wing community wanting to get a piece of the helicopter operation. VMO-6 pilot, Major Bob Neff, who was familiar with the terrain, rode along in the back seat to advice on the helicopter participation.

The effort was soon dubbed *Super Gaggle*, for its possible resemblance to a gaggle of geese. It was not without shortcomings. The NVA adjusted, brought long-range fire into action when the helicopters were anticipated. Weather -- often dominated with low cloud cover, or even all-encompassing fog was always a factor. Retrieving the external carrying nets and slings, evacuating dead and wounded still required prolonged periods of a helicopter holding in the landing zone.

However, in the end it was a huge success, for the transport helicopter squadrons could concentrate on supper gaggle a couple of days a week and be free to apply their flying to other needs. They were still committed to having CH-46s on-call for immediate and emergency needs from the hills, but the one or two helicopters for daily resupply were eliminated. Supper gaggle continued for weeks during the siege of Khe Sanh, while adjustments made it more sophisticated and effective with each effort. The fixed wing jet support was soon abandoned as providing more forewarning and coordination effort than actual effectiveness. It became a helicopter effort exclusively, and much better than before.

I was a UH-IE participant repeatedly during the CH -46 resupply of the hills, both prior to and during supper gaggle. My second DFC recommendation was a result of providing cover for a downed CH-46. A CH-46 was damaged either in the hill landing zone or just after departing, and he was forced to put down in a valley half-a-mile east of Hill 881S. The steep incline on either side of the "controlled crash" site allowed NVA to fire down on the aircraft. My crew and I made repeated firing passes on obvious gun locations until our ammunition was expended. The crew was in the process of destroying everything that might be useful to the enemy when the aircraft was abandoned. I got another CH-46, Major John A. (AI) Chancy from HMM-364 directed to the scene for rescue pickup. We continued to make unarmed passes directed to diverting the enemy gunners away from the downed CH-46, while Al and the rest of the crew got their aircraft positioned to pickup. All were rescued and the downed 46 was smoldering as we all departed east to Khe Sanh.

I note in the obituary of Major General Norman J. Anderson, who passed September 6, 2010, that he is given substantial credit as, "Innovator Super Gaggle concept for Khe Sanh." He was the Commanding General of the 1st MAW during most of my tour in Vietnam and deserves much credit for his strong leadership, particularly standing his ground against General Westmoreland on how Marine aviation was to be used in direct support of the Marine on the ground. However, he may have approved the concept and possibly provided some of the "bells whistles" added to the original super gaggle plan, but I stand behind the position that it was not his idea! That has to remain a credit to the three squadron commanders at Quang Tri. (Close to home it is added that in retirement Major General Anderson was involved with the MacArthur Memorial Foundation in Norfolk ,Virginia, for 28 years -- for the first 10 years as Executive Director, and then as member of the board, helping to turn a forgotten museum into a civic center, as well a world-class memorial for one of America's great warriors. He remained director Emeritus until his death.)

PROVISIONAL MAG-39

Somewhere during that early 1968 period of the Khe Sanh siege, the TET offensive and all the other activity in northern I Corps, organization rework was going on behind the scene. Parent command, Marine Aircraft Group 36 (MAG-36) was now located at Hue Phu Bai airport. Co-located there were *Huey* squadron VMO-3 and several other CH-46 and UH-34 squadrons. VMO-6, two CH-46 and one UH-34 squadron were at Quang Tri, twenty-five miles north. That distance prevented MAG 36 providing the needed attention to oversee the Quang Tri Squadrons permission from the MAG-36 Commander, Colonel Wilson to go to the Wing and brief the supper gaggle proposal, he also highlighted the command structure shortcomings that existed in our detached relationship with MAG-36. Appropriately,

MAG-36 should have presented the proposal, but it allowed Colonel White to do the job for them. That reflection alone highlighted a lack of initiative and responsibility on the part of MAG-36, and the obvious fact they did not know much about the Khe Sanh support issues.

First indications that movement was afoot by the MAW came with low-key visits to Quang Tri by one of the two assistant wing commanders, a ground officer Brigadier General H.W Hise. As a ground officer, not necessarily "aviation savvy," he proved to be very perceptive in observing that there was a weak link in providing Quang Tri. The result was; create a new administration and operational command-Provisional MAG-39, to be headquartered at Quang Tri.

The term Provisional represents the fact the organization wa s made up of "wing assets" alone, with no formal endorsement or support from the Marine Corps. A table of equipment and personnel for Prov MAG-39 was drafted and then all other Wing organizations were tasked to contribute assets to it's creation. About 139 individuals from various occupational specialties, ranks and rates were drawn from other air groups and squadrons throughout the 1st Wing. Every unit gave something or someone, and was not very happy about the losses.

Since the Quang Tri facility opened in December 1967, the senior Marine, Colonel O. V. Gallentine, had oversight and assets to run the Quang Tri base. The tenant aircraft squadrons received their maintenance support, and operational guidance from MAG -36 at Phu Bai, far to the south. The arrangement of two Colonels overlapping responsibilities was not good.

Organization change, all solidified April 15, 1968, when Provisional Marine Air Group-39 was commissioned. Colonel John E. Hansen was the new commander of both MAG-39 and the Quang Tri base. Lieutenant Colonel Bill White relinquished command ofVMO-6 and moved to Hue Phu Bai the week prior (March 24) to become the MAG-36 Operations Officer, while Major Bertram A. Mass assumed command of the squadron. On his first night at Hue Phu Bai Bill White was injured during a mortar attack that hit the hooch where he was sleeping. Several other occupants were killed or wounded that night, and he took shrapnel in one eye. He was medically evacuated back to the states, where he recovered from his injuries except for the loss of the eye. He remained on active duty and eventually rose to Lieutenant General, where he served three years as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Aviation -- as high as any aviator general had reached in the Marine Corps at the time. He, thereafter was affectionately referred to as "the one eyed General."

Almost lost in the multitude of other events occurring that date, I took command of newly formed Headquarters & Maintenance Squadron - 39, created to provide the administrative functions of the new MAG. I have absolutely no factual insight to how I was selected for the job -- I suspect I was nominated to fulfill VMO-6's piece of the overall personnel contribution for creating Provisional MAG-39. I had an administrative occupational specialty having been a personnel officer previously. I was well past midway in my tour and very well could have been forfeited to almost any other job in the Wing when it became available. Therefore, I got the best of all options -- a command and remain at Quang Tri where I could still fly and contribute with VMO-6.

On July 5, Colonel Walter Sienko replaced Colonel Hansen as Provisional MAG-commander, and I continued to work with him until my departure August 10, 1968. Fortunately I had excellent rapport with both men, thus could not have been happier with my position. Apparently, I did an excellent Job for both.

The creation of Provisional MAG-39 did not go well in all respects. The individuals forfeited by other units obviously gave opportunity to provide less than their stellar individuals. We did get some losers. However, most Marines came with an attitude of "second chance" and opportunity to prove themselves in a new command. Unquestionably, I inherited a superb Sergeant Major in the form of Duncan F. Davis. He managed the Staff NCOs and enlisted personnel to the point that I do not recall having a single disciplinary case come to my desk. or some never-to-be determined cause, we did have a suicide by hanging. The Navy criminal Investigative Service report was never made available to me other than to establish it was not a murder.

Some real hanky-panky was exposed via some of the equipment we inherited. Example: Evidence of trying to short-change us came with the ten boxes of supposedly "new" typewriters, which obviously had passed through some point in the supply chain where free-interchange took place. We received ten derelict machines. Brigadier General Hise interceded in that case by going to the 1st Wing headquarters and visiting office-by- office to recover our new equipment while returning the usurped -- or "stolen" -- typewriters. At the same time, he took the initiative to send the Wing Commissary officer personally to Quang tri and get us on the list for better food distribution and even a once a week supply of ice cream. The H&MS-39 office spaces never did advance from under teenage during my time on the job.

Good friend Major Guy Larkin, from HMM-262 also joined provisional MAG-39 to be the S-4 Logistics officer. For whatever reason his association with the two COs was not good, to the point he probably damaged his career in the process.

Somewhere in that spring Colonel Sienko and I, along with three or four other commanding officers from Quang Tri were invited dinner at the Commanding General Anderson's mess in Da Nang. Quite a formal a formal affair with amenities to the ridiculous for a combat environment we thought.

However, I guess general officers have to be prepared to provide a civilized front for visitors of all stripes. Tuesday nights he set aside to rotate through his many commands officers to come and kibitz, his way to "keep in touch" with his commanders. Many of his direct staff were also there, as they apparently were every night, as members of the mess.

When Colonel Sienko was afforded an opportunity to speak during after-dinner coffee he gave a spectacularly clever pitch, which subtly spoke to the neglect of which the northern reaches of the 1st MAW had been subjected. "It is nice", he said, "to finally be drawn in to the Ice Cream Belt." Colonel Sienko obviously knew his way around and through the wing headquarters, which allowed him to place his jabs where he new they were merited. He referenced the "stolen" typewriters, and called out Brigadier General Hise for all he had done to benefit Quang Tri. Good trip and a long CH-46 ride home in the late hours.

It is coincidental that the siege of Khe Sanh also ended simultaneously on that 15 April date. The Army formally moved in to the area and relieved the 26th Marines of control of that area, Highway-9 was opened again to vehicle traffic, and the whole complexion of the contested area changed. The NVA had withdrawn. The 26th Marines reformed in the Quang Tri - Dong Ha area and thereafter directed their efforts directly north into the disputed territory along the DMZ. Good friend, Major Bud Guenther showed up on my door step during that time. He was the 26th Marine's Air Officer, and was struggling in the shuffle to find his home in the organization. He stayed with us several nights until he found the spot where he fit in with the reorganizing regiment.

Not to be overlooked is the battle for Hue City, which began with the TET offensive of January and February 1968. Support of that prolonged conflict relied primarily on the aviation assets of MAG -36 out of Hue Phu Bai.

Not to be ignored is the fact that VMO-6 and sister transport squadrons supported daily the contested war north of Dong Ha at hot spots like Gio Linh, Cam Lo and Con Thien in *Leatherneck Square,* and the Chua Viet river passage. I missed most of that support flying since my time was at Khe Sanh. Nevertheless, it as an expensive time from January through April when VMO-6 lost more aircraft, pilots and personnel than any other time. Captain Bobby F. (Gabby) Galbreath copilot First Lieutenant Paul Jensen and crew were all lost February 16, 1968, while trying to xtract a ground unit under attack. Gallbreath received the Navy Cross and Jensen the Silver Star posthumously for their heroics. We lost several personnel during mortar and rocket attacks on the Quang Tri base.

Captain Bruce McMillan and his crew were lost in a mid-air collision with a UH-34. Still another, Captain Jim Cawley, First Lieutenant Bob Kimmel and crew disappeared unaccountably at last light east of Quang Tri. Investigations best bet is they were hit by a friendly artillery round -- almost unbelievable. There were 35 VMO-6 combat losses in Vietnam.

Sister squadrons at Quang Tri of course had their stellar performers. One of which was Major Dave Althoff, the XO of HMM-26 ,who gained a reputation for flying the most demanding emergency missions. He took his quiet and unassuming nature on the ground to the air and performed repeated acts of heroism. His three Silver Stars spoke unquestionably of his mettle. HMM-2 lost 22 crewmembers over the first three months of 1968.

CH -46 helicopters went through another spell of structural fixes during that period, pulling planes out of operation ,leaving many of the junior pilots without much opportunity to fly. Lieutenant Colonel White offered up an arrangement where blocks of six or eight Lieutenants a time could join VMO-6 as co-pilots for the duration. We picked up some great young aviators that way. Most, after experiencing the UH-IE were reluctant to return to transports.

*

In an after war interview General Vo Nguyen Giap, the brilliant, highly respected leader of the North Vietnam military, gave the following quote in his memoirs currently found in the Vietnam War memorial in Hanoi.

"What we still don't understand is why you Americans stopped the bombing of Hanoi. You had us on the ropes. If you had pressed us a little harder, just for another day or two, we were ready to surrender! It was the same at the battle of TET. You defeated us! We knew it, and we thought you knew it. But we were elated to notice your media was helping us. They were causing more disruption in America than we could in the battlefields. We were ready to surrender. You had won!"

However, the U. S. public voted Richard Nixon into office, based heavily on his promise to begin withdrawing U. S. troops and turn the war over to the South Vietnamese. The move was initiated and underway soon after his taking office. Thus, we forfeited all that fifteen years of conflict had gained.

More in question was, where was I going next? Typically, that question was to remain until the final days. A couple months earlier, I received a preliminary alert from my assignment officer indicating Marine Aviation Detachment, Naval Missile Center Point Mugu, California, to fly the F-4. I recognize that was a little bizarre, noting my background void of any weapons expertise and certainly no F-4 flying, but it did sound "neat." In preparation I obtained an -4 Flight Manual from hooch-mate Major Dave Vest and began some late night reading.

Eventually reality came as a modification of orders for MAG-26, MCAS New River, North Carolina. I did not care for that -- having been there and done it before. I tried to protest with a quick message, from which the terse reply was, "Needs of the service. Your rank and occupational specialty are desperately needed at that location." Truth is; when I arrived at New River there were six UH-1E majors vying for two jobs. Fortunately, I got the best position, but it does highlight the, all too often, assignment shortfalls.

(Incidentally, a few words on David G. Vest. He went to high school with my wife Jane, who judged him a bit "kooky" at Normandy High in St. Louis. The Vests also lived two doors from us in b se housing at EI Toro in 1961. He did not fly much combat in Vietnam, and ran the passenger transportation center at Quang Tri while we lived together for about four months . However, overall he performed quite well in the Marine Corps, evidenced by being selected *Marine Corps Aviator of the Year* for 1971, for his work developing the Aviation Air Combat Facility at Yuma, Arizona. He was a good organization man .)

The commandant of the Marine Corps, General Leonard F. Chapman, visited Quang Tri, for which the troops of H&MS-39 provided a portion of the backdrop of inspection. The Commandant's comments included favorable reflections on the base, the unit performances and the overall contributions in northern I Corps supporting the bases there.

A formal change of command ceremony was on the Quang Tri flight line as I "passed the H&MS-39 flag" to a CH-46 pilot, Major Herman Bolen, I provided a short recognition which gave to recipients of awards for individual actions over the four months I had the unit -- including three Silver Star medals. Those decorations were earned by members of Air Traffic Control Unit-64 detachment, which operated the Khe Sanh airstrip throughout the siege. The unit became part of Provisional MAG-39 upon

its creation.

CH-46 squadrons, earning Air Medals. Several Bronze. Stars were also awarded. It was quite a creditable presentation for a headquarters organization forcefully emphasized. There were a couple of departure gathering with the enlisted personnel, the Staff NCOs -- which I most enjoyed -- and the several officers of the H&MS and VMO-6 organizations. The Air Force C-130 I hopped to Da Nang was rigged with rope lines strung low across the fuselage every so many feet for the occupants to hold during the flight. We were directed to face the rear and sit on the floor and grasp the nearest line. That was the last vestige of the combat zone for me.

Once in Da Nang I visited the 1st MAW "O' Club for two nights and parked in Jake Moore's recently vacated room in the BOQ, he left a week ahead of me. Then on departing Vietnam it was a contract flight to Travis AFB, California for processing and a commercial TW A flight to St. Louis.

From arrival in San Francisco until St. Louis, I had sobering exposure to unbridled Anti- Vietnam mentality. Long hair, loud weird casual clothing leaning to bellbottoms and peacenik T-shirts, along with bra-less women was prominent. I was traveling in uniform, which prompted stares, finger pointing and a few hisses. The one and only barbershop shave I have ever paid for, in preparation for arrival home in a few hours, left me in the hands of an outspoken straight razor wielding anti-war advocate -- not comforting. Once safely out of the chair I gave him justifiable right to protest something -- no tip. On the TWA flight I found the stewardess (flight attendant today) failed to waken me for the in-flight meal. When I inquired if there was yet a chance to get a bite, she let me know directly, "You missed your chance soldier boy." No attempt made to accommodate the Marine who had been fighting a war important to someone other than her.

Back with family was reward enough. Seven -year-old Steven had been in an arm cast when I left a year before, and he was still in cast upon my return -- different arm. Several days prior to my return my Uncle Ned Gerard, from Alton, Illinois gifted the boys a Brittany spaniel puppy, soon dubbed *Freckles*. He lived with us for thirteen years. All was well as we immediately began to plan ahead with the priority of getting the sons to Jacksonville, North Carolina, and established for the fall school year.

CHAPTER FROM NEW NOVEL "DUELING WITH GIFFORD" BY GARY FOSTER

The jungles of western Quang Tri Province turned tranquil just before dawn – very tranquil – but not completely quiet.

The only sounds heard were those of small birds overhead, the occasional rustle of the palm fronds and the constant ripple of the Quang Tri River as its waters sluiced through the cataracts and the meandering channels below the canyon walls.

The NVA ground attack against the Khe Sanh Combat Base surely was going to occur. No one knew when. Some refugees, arriving at the base seeking protection, reported movements of NVA. Enemy activity in I Corps was increasing. The area around the base remained combat active every day.

Patrols outside the wire were risky yet they were essential to the survival of the combat base. Special Marine patrols began to seek out the enemy to ascertain where they were and to substantiate theories as to what General Vo Nguyen Giap's next move would be.

Captain Jason Allen led his two heavily-armed platoons – a total of thirty-four Marines – on a daring patrol far from the base to reconnoiter Highway Nine. The Marines had moved all night through the dense vegetation. They now found themselves several kilometers somewhere east of the Khe Sanh Combat Base in a slight but eerie fog-shrouded landscape.

The patrol halted. The men stood perfectly still. Some Marines crouched low, their guns at the ready. Allen looked at his map. He and his men were on the north bank of the Quang Tri River just north and downstream of the confluence of the Da Krong and the Rao Quan Rivers. Allen mused to himself. This must be the headwaters of the Quang Tri River. This is where the Da Krong River turns

into the Quang Tri River. Interesting. The geographic layout was very complicated. He confirmed his location by spotting two islands in the river that barely showed up on his map.

Captain Allen's men were superb fighters. They had been tested on earlier patrols and in many firefights. Allen relied heavily on Lieutenant Gerry Gifford who he had placed at the lead of the platoons. The Lieutenant was about one hundred meters in front of the mass of men, about fifty meters more than he should have been.

Captain Allen could not see Lieutenant Gifford and waited for the Lieutenant to return. Neither he nor any of his men spoke. The Marines made no sound. Instead, they listened.

Lieutenant Gerry Gifford gasped for air from the crouched run back from the river, from the two islands. He had slung his M79 grenade launcher and his M16 assault rifle over his shoulder – Gifford carried both weapons when he was on point, in fact, always. He reached Captain Allen's position just below the cliff. Gifford was out of breath.

"Captain," he urgently whispered. "There's something going on over there, beyond those two islands."

Captain Allen had heard an unfamiliar noise on the other side of the Quang Tri River, south of the patrolling Marines. The sound was not a naturally occurring one. It was menacing, even unnerving. The commotion of military personnel handling equipment – rifles, mortar tubes, base plates, machine guns and tripods – was muffled but unmistakable. The sounds grew until they became completely distinguishable. Vietnamese voices and words could be distinctly heard.

Allen wanted to see. He returned with Gifford to investigate. Both Marines, bending forward, walked at a steady pace through the fleeting fog to the south edge of the two islands. Once there, they lay down on the sand and gravel deposits behind thick brush and some large rocks. They observed a bustle of activity in the thick trees on the other side of the river. Had to be the NVA. Who else would be out here?

A minute passed as Allen and Gifford scanned the tropical landscape through the early morning greyness. The two Marines weren't looking for figures, only for movement, for patterns. Soon, as their eyes focused and discerned shapes, they saw clearly what they feared. Like so many ants rustling in the brush, green figures, somewhat camouflaged, were toiling in the jungle's thickness. The NVA must have been on the move maybe for two or three days.

"Shit," Allen said in a whisper. "What the hell are they doing?" "Not sure, Sir." Gifford looked across the river again. "It must be a probe, Sir."

Captain Allen strained his eyes. "Can't be, Giff. Too many men. Why are they setting up mortars and machine guns, and why so near the river bank? There's nothing here and we're too far from the base. God, I hope they haven't seen us. What are they up to, Lieutenant?"

Captain Allen looked about him, up the river, up to the steep hills and toward the flat plateau where the combat base loomed. He turned and looked through the wafting fog down river to where the cataracts ended and the water flow smoothed out. The Captain, looking back over his shoulder, surveyed his men's position from the vantage of the river.

"Gifford, we need to move to a safer place. We're too vulnerable. No cover. No protection. We gotta get the men outta here. The gooks have too much firepower. We can't match it with what we have with us. We need mortars to match theirs and some fifty cals but we ain't got 'em."

Both men continued to look at the developments of the enemy on the other side of the fast- flowing stream. The Captain continued in a whisper.

"The NVA's in force. What do you think their strength is, Giff?" "Can't be a regiment," Gifford responded in a low voice. "Surely not. Maybe a couple of companies, maybe a battalion. Can't be positive about that, though, Skipper. Sure as hell seems to be a lot of 'em over there, Sir."

Captain Allen looked intently. The NVA were busy establishing some sort of a position. But why?

"Gifford, sixty-one millimeter mortars? See any?"

Gifford looked hard across the river. "Maybe they have some of the smaller calibers – I don't see any – but there!"

Gifford quickly pointed. "Over there, Skipper, see 'em, Captain?" Gifford's eyesight was as keen as it was when he had played baseball in high school and college. "I can see they're setting up eighty-twos."

"Eighty-twos! Shit me alive, Gifford. Goddamn, we'd be crazy to start a firefight here on our own with that kind of enemy firepower. There is no intelligence as to which NVA units are operating here, if any at all, and how many NVA there are in the area. We don't know what they got hidden in the jungle."

"Sir, Highway Nine is behind us. I'll bet they're setting up for some kind of ambush on the road from the other side of the river."

"Shit, Gifford, what do they know that we don't know? We can't start a firefight on our own and we are too far from the combat base for such heavy action without hope of reinforcements. We need artillery and air support, Lieutenant, and . . ."

The Captain paused and then stole another quick glance at the enemy through the grass. He pushed backward, prone on his stomach, from the opening in the bush. He slid his helmet back on his head. Sweat rolled down the Captain's dirty face. How he would love to have a cigarette.

"Gifford, I'm sure they have patrols everywhere up and down this damned river but I don't think they know we're here. We could exploit this opportunity and surprise the hell out of them. But we need to call in artillery, give the arty guys some coordinates and let them take the gooks out. Let's get back to the platoons. You run ahead of me – stay low, Giff – and get me Lieutenant Schuster, the Forward Observer, and the radio man. Get Agostino and his radio quick. I want to call in a pre-assigned fire mission. I need the FO and the radio. Go now, Gifford!"

"Got it, Skipper."

The Captain reached out and grabbed Gifford by his arm. "Also, find out what airpower is in the area. We could use some napalm and CBU's. Tell the men to hold their fire and stay low. I don't think the gooks have seen us. If there is no air power in the area, we'll surprise the bastards and take them out with our 105s and 155s."

Captain Allen and Lieutenant Gifford moved stealthily back from the river. Gifford started to run ahead for the Forward Observer and the radioman. But it was too late. The Captain's presumption of their not being seen was dashed. The distinctive metallic sound of mortar rounds being dropped down the hollow, lengthy NVA mortar tubes, and the excited voices of the NVA crews signaled what was about to happen next.

The propellant of each round exploded in the tube with a truncated sound, sending the projectile into the air. Within seconds the NVA mortar rounds landed but way short of the two Marine platoons. The valley resonated with loud explosions. The shells tore up the ground and shredded the landscape. They splintered trees and showered the area with limbs, dirt, flying wood, fragments of rock and sharp, jagged shrapnel. The pungent smell of explosives pervaded the area. At the same time, the NVA sprayed the nearby brush with heavy machine gun fire. The small bullets, their sound unmistakable as they hit their random targets, peppered the trees and ground. The recognizable short, staccato sounds of NVA AK47 assault rifles broke out. Allen could hear the bullets as they zinged overhead and clipped limbs and leaves, ripped into tree trunks and ripped the ground apart in instantaneous spurts of dirt and mud. It all happened fast.

"Gifford, run like hell ahead of me! Get Agostino! Get on the radio and call in artillery!" The Captain took another look back across the river. He spoke to himself. "Shit, the bastards know we're here. How in the hell did they spot us so quickly? Damn sonzabitches! They're gonna march their mortar rounds right up our ass and cut us to ribbons. We've got to get out of here and pull the men back."

The Captain began to run toward the valley cliff. He caught up with Gifford. Both men continued to run toward the platoons, toward the waiting Marines who were taking cover in the jungle foliage, concealing themselves where they could. The enemy mortar rounds arced through the sky. They fell to

earth and exploded violently.

Gifford was blown off his feet by a nearby explosion as he ran. He was bleeding from cuts on his face and neck but not seriously harmed. Now behind the Captain, Gifford picked up his M16 and helmet and ran again. His M79 bounced on his back.

The mortar shells were coming closer to the platoons but the Marines held their fire lest they kill the Captain and the Lieutenant.

Finally, the Captain made it back to his platoons with Gifford right behind.

"Return fire! Return fire!"

The Marines opened up with their M16s and two M60 machine guns. The sound of the Marines' gunfire filled the entire valley and seemed to smother the sound of the enemy's guns. The firefight, just what the Captain was trying to avoid, had started in earnest. The now-isolated Marines were in a serious fight for their lives.

Both sides exchanged long torrents of machine gun and rifle fire.

The Marines launched volleys of grenades at the NVA from their M79s. The hand-held weapon shot grenades a little bigger than golf balls. But the effective range was not much more than four hundred meters and at that distance accuracy suffered. The Marines fired grenade after grenade across the river. They exploded in puffs of white, then black smoke. The resulting explosions from the grenades just on the other side of the river made a distinctive sound. The Marines continued to rake the area across the river with their M60 machine guns and smaller caliber M16 assault rifles. In all, they laid down a formidable wall of fire.

The NVA answered the Marines with much larger and much more potent rocket propelled grenades from shoulder-held B40 and B41 launchers. The Russian and Chinese-made projectiles made horrendous shrieks and left behind long telltale smoke trails. The flight of the warheads terminated in deafening explosions. Mortar rounds kept falling indiscriminately, too.

The enemy continued their vicious fire. Their bullets severed tree branches and spit everywhere through the dirt. They brought more men and arms to the fray.

The Marines' weapons were no match for the strength of the NVA. The NVA had overwhelming firepower. The battle on the banks of the Quang Tri River, unbalanced as it was, turned into a bloody slugfest.

Captain Allen made it back to his radioman, cursing that he had ever left him in the first place. He yelled out.

"Agostino, Jesus Christ, we're facing more than a company of NVA. There're probably four or five hundred gooks out there. Gotta call Stanford for a fire mission now. We got to get in touch with those guys."

Little could be heard above the noise of the explosions. Allen cupped his hands and yelled at Lieutenant Schuster, his forward observer.

"Schuster, do we have pre-assigned fire missions for this area?"

The Captain, impatient with the danger around him, quickly assumed the duty of the forward artillery observer who was part of the artillery unit on the base but who was accompanying the patrol. He looked at his watch quickly: ten minutes past seven.

"Give me that phone, Lieutenant."

"Captain, we don't have pre-planned fire missions here. Nothing here, Sir. We need to be farther downstream in the area where the coordinates are lined up and ready to go. We have Toto one-one, Toto one-five, Juliet six, and Hotel ten —"

"Lieutenant, I don't have time for an explanation. We'll call in a new fire mission. Give me the grid and azimuth.

Schuster looked at his map and determined the grid coordinates and he ascertained the azimuth from his position to the target.

The Captain talked into the radio's hand-held re-

ceiver while the FO determined the fire mission.

"Stanford Thirty-four, this is Oscar Six. Stanford Thirty-four, this is Oscar Six."

The Captain continued.

"This is Oscar Six. Do you read me?" No reply.
"Shit, what's wrong with those arty guys? Are they on vacation, playing cards, havin' a damned picnic? What the hell is going on up there?"

The Captain looked up.

"Must be too steep in this damned valley. We're in a hole. They can't read me." The Captain tried again. "Stanford Thirty-four, Stanford Thirty-four. This is Oscar Six. We need fire support. Do you copy?"

The Captain waited for a reply. "Come on you cannon cockers, pick up the phone, for Christ's sake." He pressed the button. "Stanford Thirty-four, Stanford Thirty-four. Do you read?" Still no reply.
"Damn." Gifford shouted above the noise of the firefight. "Captain, we gotta do something now. We gotta take out the mortars."

The NVA had marched their eighty-two millimeter mortar rounds across the river toward the platoons. The rounds were now landing less than seventy yards away and coming closer. Machine gun bullets were zinging through the air and thudding into the dirt and trees. The bullets ricocheted off the boulders. The air was full of flying lead.

Several mortar rounds landed behind the Captain and Gifford. A cry came from their left rear.

"Corpsman! Corpsman! I'm hit! Oh, shit, I'm hit bad." Captain Allen turned to Gifford. "Damnit! The gooks'll have us bracketed within seconds. My God, Gifford. We gotta get our men outta here. Damnit to hell."

Gifford looked around. He and his Marines were in a serious predicament. The steep cliff rising from the river valley floor up to Highway Nine above him cut off any easy retreat. The North Vietnamese were walking their mortar rounds in on them closer and closer and forcing them to the cliff face. Once there, a barrage would destroy the platoons. Climbing the wall would be no escape. Every Marine would be easily picked off. The only escape was moving up or down river or attacking the enemy directly. Either way would be suicide. No cover and no area in which to maneuver.

"Shit!" Goddamnit! We need arty support." Captain Allen spoke into the radio receiver. "Stanford Thirty-four, this is Oscar Six. We need arty now! Repeat, immediate! Do you read me?" No reply.
"Schuster, what's wrong with those Goddamn jokers?"

Gifford, not far away from the Captain and Lieutenant Schuster, had moved nearer to his platoon mates. They were digging in and covering their bodies with anything they could find.

"Who are those guys? How did the gooks know we're here?"

Whoomp! Whoomp! The mortar rounds were shaking Gifford to his core. They exploded now only yards away. The explosions were ear shattering. They sent deep, shuddering concussion waves through the terrain and through each Marine's body.

The NVA fired more rocket propelled grenades toward the Marines. The rocket-grenades, making their screaming, whooshing sound and, with thick smoke in trail – straight-as-an-arrow – zipped across the river directly at the Marines. The rockets exploded immediately on the cliff face, sending shrapnel and earth debris everywhere.

A shout rang out above the others. "Corpsman hit. He's down."

In one quick movement, Gifford emptied his pack. He rounded up eight hand grenades, three that he had and five from his comrades, some of whom had sustained severe wounds to the point they could no longer fight. He put the grenades inside the empty green satchel. With his M16 across his back, several magazines of 5.56mm rounds and six, fat shotgun-like cartridges for his grenade launcher in his vest pockets, Gifford grabbed the satchel of hand grenades in one hand and the M79 in the other. He crawled, then ran back across the islands to the river's edge.

"Grenades first, Goddamnit, then rifles." He recalled the words of a fellow Marine during the Hill Fights who admonished another Marine when he returned fire at night with his rifle."Shithead! Now they know where you are and we're gonna get plastered, you idiot."

Gifford had never forgotten that night or those words. Now, as he ran toward the river bank to within throwing range of the enemy positions, he repeated them to himself: "Grenades first!"

Gifford ran fast, sometimes tripping on rocks and debris and falling to his face only to jump up and run again. He crossed the two islands. He heard bullets flying crazily overhead. The Marines' fire in back of him was matched by the NVA staccato fire in front of him. The air was alive with the whipping sound of bullets as they snapped and zipped overhead in opposite directions. The Marines fought valiantly. Their survival depended on it.

The North Vietnamese continued to rain down their mortar shells and fire their rockets at the Marines. Gifford could hear the deadly ordnance whistle and shriek overhead. Twice an NVA RPG rocket sizzled just above his head on its way to some target. It left behind a horrible stench of burned propellant. He imagined the flight to the end point of the rocket's trajectory. He heard the explosions now behind him. He dropped and crawled the remaining distance to the river's edge on the south island. Gifford hid behind a large thick bush and some shoulder-high boulders. He peered through the leaves and stalks and saw what he expected to see.

Three enemy mortar crews were working the tubes. Two machine guns were spitting red flames out of their muzzles. NVA crews continued to load and fire their shoulder-aimed B40 RPGs. NVA infantry, interspersed among them, were crouching and furiously firing their AK assault weapons.

Gifford had learned from a briefing that NVA infantry had been taught to conserve ammunition through the use of the *Diem Xa* – firing only two cartridges at a time in rapid succession. But it seemed the infantry disregarded this technique and embraced the *Lia* – full automatic fire.

Gifford could see the NVA were bringing up more soldiers. Gifford heard the screams of wounded Marines behind him. He knew their position had been hit hard; his comrades were dying. But he had not been spotted. At least, he didn't believe he had been spotted.

"They have us cornered but they haven't attacked us yet," he murmured to himself.

Gifford thought he might use his grenade launcher but decided not to; not at first. "Shit, if I fire this grenade blooper, they'll see me like that idiot dumbass months before. Gotta use hand grenades."

Gifford laid the M79 down. He eyed the two mortar crews to his left and another mortar crew far to the right, all on the other side of the river. For no particular reason, Gifford decided to strike the two outside mortars first. He pulled out two hand grenades from his pack. He mentally measured the distance to the right target. Throwing a grenade is not like throwing a baseball. There's a big difference between lobbing and throwing. Gifford knew the distance was at the limits of his throwing capability. Still . . . damnit, Gifford was going to do it anyway. He was going to go for the strike zone

Gifford clamped the safety spoon to the round grenade casing with his left hand and pulled the arming pin with his other hand. He waited till the NVA dropped a round down the mortar tube.

"Ground ball to short center with a runner on third. A straight throw to home plate from behind second base." Whoosh, the NVA mortar round fired.

At that precise moment, Gifford rose up to his full height and with the speed of lightning and the strength of a Roman catapult, launched his grenade in a slight arc, straight at the right mortar crew. The hand-thrown projectile flew on a true trajectory across the river and within a second, exploded among the NVA mortar crewmen, killing them all.

"Strike one for the southpaw. You gook dumb-shits don't know who you're messin' with."

A more difficult throw would be to Gifford's left since he was left handed but in the blink of an eye, Gifford repeated the movement. He clamped the spoon down and pulled the pin on his second gre-

nade, stood upright, spread his feet apart and steadied himself on his left foot. Gifford took aim and let fly. The grenade sailed, this time in a higher arc, across the river. Again, it met its target and exploded, disabling the second mortar and killing its crew. "Strike two, you filthy sonzabitches."

Gifford had caught the Vietnamese completely off guard. He didn't think they had seen him but, surely knowing the distance a grenade can be thrown – but not knowing the distance Gifford could throw a grenade – Gifford knew they would rake the brush with their machine guns.

Gifford clutched his pack, his M16 and the M79 and pulled back and down into a small, narrow ravine. Bullets ripped through the thicket and gouged the trees. They clipped the grass and churned up the earth and zinged off the rocks. A line of earth fountains suddenly jumped up to his left as the succession of machine gun bullets ripped up the ground, marching right past him. He protected himself as best he could. He rolled to the right and slid into a deeper gulley.

The two outside mortars were silent but the NVA were screaming and shouting. Machine gun fire swept over and past him to his right and up into the trees cutting down limbs and decapitating palm trees. It was time to take out the NVA machine gun.

The Marines continued to return fire.

Gifford pulled the pin on his third grenade, rose up and let it fly across the river. It landed right in front of the machine gun and exploded. But the machine gun was not knocked out and continued to fire.

"Damnit to hell," Gifford said to himself. "Ball one. A one-two count."

He pulled the pin on the fourth grenade, stood a little to his left for a better vantage and threw the grenade with all his strength. The grenade made a beeline, straight as a taut rope, into the machine gun nest, hitting the gun. It exploded, killing everyone and blowing the machine gun several feet away.

Gifford smiled. "Now we're talking."

The North Vietnamese soldiers began to scream and point. They turned their guns toward where they thought Gifford was hiding. The NVA would soon cross the river.

Gifford stood and, partially hidden, stretched his long, lanky, sinewy left arm all the way back. Like a tightly coiled spring, his arm snapped forward in a shortened arc over and to the left of his head. The fifth grenade left his hand and headed for the third mortar. It struck quickly with lethal accuracy and exploded. The grenade killed everyone in the crew.

A surprise explosion occurred behind him. It came from a Chicom grenade. Although the shockwave startled him, Gifford was not struck by any shrapnel. But where did the grenade come from? He saw directly in front of him a grenade flying through the air toward him.

"Oh, shit."

Gifford dove for a small ravine. The grenade exploded harmlessly.

"I got to get those bastards, they've outflanked me."

At the same time Gifford rose up, he saw two NVA soldiers standing not far away. They were in easy range. Quickly, Gifford dispatched a grenade in their direction before either one of them could throw theirs or unshoulder their rifles. Gifford's grenade landed at their feet. The explosion killed them both.

"Man, that was close."

Gifford decided it was time to leave but not before he launched his last grenades. He threw two more in rapid succession across the river right at the attackers with deadly results.

The whole episode lasted less than seven minutes.

Not wasting any time, Gifford sprang to his feet. He ran into the brush with bullets zinging after him, tearing at the leaves and waist-high grass. Gifford turned, aimed his M79, and pulled the trigger. The shell shot over the river and exploded on an embankment killing two NVA soldiers. He opened the breach of the single-shot weapon, loaded and fired again. More NVA fell to the ground. The Marines

behind him provided suppression fire just above his head.

Gifford moved to a new position and repeated. He fired the M79 again. Finally, Gifford ran back to the two platoons.

But shelling continued from other hidden enemy mortars. NVA machine gun fire seemed to be on the increase. The North Vietnamese were now charging across the river.

The Marines continued to lay down an intense wall of fire.

"Captain, I can't suppress them anymore," Gifford yelled out. He was out of breath and panting for air. Captain Allen, Agostino and Lieutenant Schuster tried to raise the artillery battery on the Combat Base.

"Stanford Thirty-four, this is Oscar Six. Fire mission! Can you copy?" "Go ahead, Oscar Six. This is Stanford Thirty-four. Ready to copy." "Shit, Almighty! They woke up. They finally Goddamn heard me. For Christ's sake."

Allen depressed the button on the phone.

"Stanford Thirty-four. Oscar Six. Urgent. Active movement, NVA attacking my position. Over." "Roger, Oscar Six."

Schuster had already determined the grid coordinates on his map. The grid could be pinpointed to within ten meters if he had had time to precisely make the measurements. But no such time was available. The grid to the nearest one hundred meters would have to do. The fire could be adjusted. No time for shackle codes. The grid coordinates would be sent in the clear. Schuster took the phone from the Captain and spoke.

"Stanford Thirty-four. Grid, X-ray Delta, niner two niner, four one niner. Compass azimuth, one four seven degrees. Enemy attacking. Request two rounds Hotel Echo. Adjust fire. Over." "Stand by one, Oscar Six, working the data for fire mission. Battery engaged in support of firefight near Kilo Sierra. Stand by three zero seconds. Repeat, stand by three zero seconds."

Out of patience, Captain Allen yelled out.

"Schuster, give me that damned radio,"
Allen grabbed the receiver out of Schuster's hand and stuck it to his ear.

"Stanford thirty-four, this is Oscar Six Actual. Negative, negative. Cannot wait. NVA in the open attacking our position. I repeat, NVA in the open. Copy?"

"Oscar Six, understand. Repeat. Working the data. We've got you covered. Stand by your fire mission. Kilo Sierra will advise Romeo Papa – The Rockpile – and Charlie Charlie – Camp Carroll – to provide reinforcing fire."

The NVA kept attacking but the Marines maintained a withering fire which slowed their advance. Still the NVA mortar rounds fell among the Marines. Fire from the NVA machine guns ripped through the area like a scythe. RPGs punctuated the cacophony with their rocket sounds and terminal explosions that shook everything.

Captain Allen covered his ears. He became desperate. "Stanford thirty-four, I say again, this is Oscar Six Actual. Repeat. Actual. Fire Mission! Repeat coordinates, X-ray Delta, niner two niner, four one niner. Compass azimuth, one four seven. Danger close, repeat, danger close. Will adjust. Affirmative on reinforcing fire from Romeo Papa and Charlie Charlie. Repeat, affirmative. Have Romeo Papa and Charlie Charlie fire spotting rounds for reinforcing fire. Will adjust. All rounds need fuse quick and Victor Tango in effect. Do you copy?"

While Captain Allen was talking, Schuster unfolded the adjacent map west and found that when adjoined with the one he was using, the NVA position was directly east of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The Marine patrol was about three hundred meters north of the NVA salient. He added up the grids. The target was just about eight kilometers east of the base, well within range of the 105s. He could have used grid coordinates and a gun-target line but, under the circumstances, plotting an accurate gun-target line on two separate, unattached sheets would be more difficult than plotting the azimuth on the same sheet from his position to the enemy's. For him to say east of the base would not be accurate enough for

the Fire Direction Center and the artillery battery. Over a distance of eight kilometers, a one degree error would result in an alignment variance of one hundred forty meters.

The Fire Direction Center at Khe Sanh plotted the grids and azimuth, determined range and deflection, size of charge and quadrant elevation. The gun crews attached fuses to shells, loaded their howitzers and waited for directions from the FDC.

The FDC quickly gave the order. "Fire!" Two howitzers fired one round each. The FDC spoke immediately to Captain Allen.

"Oscar Six. Shot."

There was a slight pause. Then the FDC gave Schuster and Captain Allen a heads-up so they could look for the impact. The FDC called into the microphone to Allen and Schuster.

"Splash."

Two forty-pound shells from the Combat Base screamed overhead and within seconds smashed into the river bed far to the east of the tip of the south island and short of the advancing NVA. A huge geyser of mud and water flew into the sky.

Captain Allen stated corrections. "Stanford Thirty-four, Oscar Six. Adjust fire. Right two hundred, add one hundred."

The FDC on the Khe Sanh Combat Base repeated the corrections and gave the new firing data to the guns. After not too many seconds, the guns reported ready.

The command was immediately given.
Fire!"

Like before, the FDC spoke to Allen and Schuster.

"Shot." Then, "Splash."

The two 105mm rounds fell in the middle of the enemy near the edge of the river and exploded.

"Stanford Thirty-four, good shooting. Request Battery One, three volleys. Fire for effect. Good rounds. Danger close. Oscar Six."

Captain Allen turned to his men. "Marines! Heads down! Incoming!" Within seconds, six shells, then another six, then another six - eighteen shells in all – crashed in on the NVA. The valley filled with a continuous roar of explosions from the landing artillery shells. The ground beneath the charging North Vietnamese soldiers suddenly churned into brown and black and geysers of dark water. Smoke and dust and flying debris from the effects of the Marine's artillery enveloped the area. "Stanford Thirty-four, continue fire for effect. Repeat, danger close. "The rounds kept coming.

With the coordinates now known with precision, the Fire Support Coordination Center on the Combat Base called in reinforcing fire from The Rockpile and Camp Carroll. The giant US Army 175mm long range guns, two from each firebase, fired. The projectiles landed with such a sudden impact that they made the explosions of the 105mm shells look insignificant. But they both landed short of the target.

Captain Allen, remembering a lecture about crater analysis and the size of crater a 175mm shell makes, screamed out. "Marines, get down low. Incoming 175s!"Schuster spoke into the receiver to the Fire Support Coordination Center. "Tell Romeo Papa and Charlie Charlie, add two hundred meters, fire for effect."

All of the 175s at The Rockpile and Camp Carroll opened up with their large, one hundred fifty pound rounds. The shells, their shriek faint at first, screamed loudly through the air and smashed into the area amidst the advancing NVA. The noise of the explosions was sudden, overwhelming and all consuming. The US Army's King of Battle had arrived.

Dirt, small boulders and tree trunks flew in all directions. The rounds exploded with devastating effect. Huge plumes of smoke and dirt and large geysers of water shot skyward. Hot shrapnel, spraying over a wide area, slammed against the edge of the cliff. The shock waves spread up and down the valley. The 175mm rounds arrived with an intensity that quickly overwhelmed the advancing NVA. There was no let-up. Twenty-four 175mm rounds total, in two volleys, all from the US Army firebases

at The Rockpile and Camp Carroll, smashed into the area within a short time on both sides of the river where the NVA had been spotted.

The charging NVA horde was suddenly stopped. They did not press the attack. They retreated south across the Quang Tri River and disappeared into the tall elephant grass and the hills, leaving their dead and wounded behind.

Rounds from the Khe Sanh Combat Base continued to slam into the area. "Stanford Thirty-four, check fire. End of mission. I repeat. End of mission. Good shooting you guys, good shooting! Drinks on me. Thanks to Romeo Papa and Charlie Charlie. I have at least eight maybe ten dozen enemy KIA and many WIA. Oscar Six out."

Literally out of the blue, a new voice came on the radio. "Oscar Six, this is White Star Fifteen on scene overhead north of your position. See NVA retreating in open. Can coordinate direct fire from Romeo Papa and Charlie Charlie. Attack aircraft in area in one five minutes." Schuster looked to the skies but he saw nothing. Captain Allen took the receiver. He pressed the button on the microphone. "White Star Fifteen, Oscar Six. Be my guest. Hammer the bastards if you can see them. We can't see sierra."

The FAC – Forward Air Controller – banked his two-seater, single engine aircraft so he could get a good glimpse of the retreating NVA while staying clear of the gun-target line. He leveled out as he spoke into his mic to the Fire Direction Centers at The Rockpile and Camp Carroll.

"Romeo Papa Twenty-one and Charlie Charlie Niner, White Star Fifteen. NVA in retreat from Oscar Six position, in the open. One hundred left from last grid. Fire one shot, can adjust from altitude."

Two 175 mm shells, one each from The Rockpile and Camp Carroll, slammed into the south bank of the Quang Tri River. The FAC saw the impacts perfectly. White Star Fifteen added some power and banked his high-winged plane again to get a clear view. He reacted with adjusting fire instructions.

"Got it! Romeo Papa Twenty-one, left two hundred; Battery One, fire for effect. Charlie Charlie, adjust same. We got 'em on the run, boys. Oh, man, we really got the bastards. Crush 'em, guys. Aw, man, beautiful shooting. Shit hot." large 175mm shells fired from the long gun tubes many kilometers away flew through the air and, like meteorites, smashed into earth farther south of Captain Allen. The waves of explosions and resulting devastation tore up the countryside and shredded the NVA forces. Captain Allen smiled and then, out of nervous relief, laughed loudly.

The Forward Air Controller circled his Cessna observation plane around the besieged Marines. The pilot looked at the terrain around the two Marine Platoons. Craters were everywhere. "Oscar Six, This is White Star circling above. No sign of enemy. State status." "White Star, I have four KIAs and twenty WIAs, some very serious." "Roger that, Oscar Six, Can arrange chopper extraction. Two Sandy's and two A4s in area in one zero minutes for support. Repeat, can arrange extraction. Will remain on station. Stand by one. Changing channels."

Captain Allen's response was easy: acknowledgement and call sign. "Understand, Oscar Six." Two minutes passed. "Oscar Six, White Star Fifteen. Five 46s enroute your position for extraction to Kilo Sierra and Danang. On ground your position in zero two zero minutes. Will take KIAs and WIAs to Danang direct. Attack aircraft circling. Have called for more Alpha Charlie. Copy?" "White Star Fifteen, thanks for gettin' us outta here. We owe you a case of beer, my friend, courtesy the Marines." The pilot chuckled back. His voice was somewhat garbled by the sound of the plane's engine. One thing came out clear. "Make that vodka."

The two Marine platoons who had faced imminent destruction were now safe and soon to be extracted. The area, destroyed of all vegetation, cleared of smoke and dust. The enemy was vanquished. NVA bodies littered the area.

Captain Allen, a slight smile crossing his muddy face, laid his M16 across his left shoulder. He turned to look at his Forward Observer whose face and squinted eyes showed the anxiousness of the moment. Allen spoke rapidly. "Lieutenant Schuster, this was some bad shit today but we got through it. If you were scared, don't worry about it. I was scared shitless. We all were. But I'll tell you what.

The NVA learned a big lesson today." Schuster's face brightened up. Allen continued. "Lieutenant, I know you ain't been here long but you can be my FO anytime. I really appreciate that you were with us . . . and what you did today . . . for all of us. I'm gonna write a good report about today and your actions."

Captain Allen, Agostino, Lieutenant Schuster and Lieutenant Gerry Gifford and the others of the two platoons who had survived the attack by the North Vietnamese soldiers left the area by chopper. After hours of desperate fighting, almost hand-to-hand, the living but exhausted and bloodied Marines arrived at the Khe Sanh Combat Base and stepped from the helicopters onto the red soil.

Not long afterward, Gifford, with a few stitches on his face and a bandage covering the wound, held a can of hot Black Label beer that had been stolen from somewhere. A message on the back of the can read 'Do not consume after May 1967.'

Gifford stretched back against the sandbag wall of a crumpled lean-to. The sandbags that had been slashed open by shrapnel, their contents spilling onto the red clay. He laid his M16 and his M79 to the side and unlaced his boots and removed them. He pulled his wet, stinking socks from his swollen feet. He allowed his bruised and bleeding toes to feel the air and to dry in the hot sun. Gifford was exhausted, dirty and sweaty. He was not able to form cognitive thoughts.

He opened the can of Black Label with his fighting knife. Foam immediately erupted from the top of the can and sprayed him in the face. He laid his head back and poured the beer into his mouth. The hot, frothy taste, never appealed to him. At this moment, however, it was a welcome and pleasurable relief. Gifford savored it. Beer dribbled down his chin and neck and onto his shirt but he didn't care. He wiped his lips with his dirt and sweat-covered, salt-stained forearm before gulping the beer again. This time the beer frothed less. He could actually swallow some liquid. The inside of his mouth tingled from the hot but refreshing effervescence of the carbonated liquid.

"The Captain needs you, Giff, pronto." Gifford looked up. He shielded his eyes from the low sun with his forearm. It had been one hell of a long day. He saw Agostino looking at him. "Come on, Giff. Shit, man. Get your ass in gear. The Captain wants you now."
Gifford took in a deep breath and put on his socks and boots. He grabbed his M16 and M79 and stood. He followed Agostino, who said very little, as they walked to the Captain's hootch. Gifford didn't knock. He just went inside.

Captain Allen didn't bother to look up from a report he was reading. "You knocked out three mortars, right, Gifford? Eighty two millimeters, right? How many mortars total do you think, Lieutenant?" "Correct, Sir. I saw three – yes, all eighty-twos. I took them out. But there may have been five or six or more because it looked like they were still setting up. And after I took out the three I saw, mortar rounds were still coming in. So, there had to be several more mortars hidden somewhere, Sir." "What else did you see, Gifford?" "Two heavy machine guns, fourteen point fives, I think – I knocked one out – and some infantry in the bush." "How many NVA soldiers total do you think were out there?" "Not sure, Skipper, but when they opened up, it sounded like more than fifty, maybe sixty, or maybe even a hundred men." "Gifford, I think perhaps even more. Did you see any of them?" "Only some, Sir, but not close up. Not really, Sir. Sorry." "Lieutenant, I am thinking there may have been as many as five or six hundred NVA out there. The question is, why on the river and why so exposed?" "Not sure, Sir. Maybe they followed us and wanted to engage us openly and measure our strength."

"Shit, Gifford. If they had followed us, they would have known our strength. They weren't following us. They had another mission." Captain Allen lit a cigarette and inhaled. He drummed his fingers on the sheet of plywood that served as a makeshift table. "What's wrong, Sir?" Gifford asked. "Gifford, Giap hasn't attacked Khe Sanh like we think he will. Something is going on but we don't know what. Papers found on two of the bodies after today's engagement suggested they were from the PAVN 320th division." "Yes, Sir." "Gifford, we know the 320th is controlling the eastern sector of Highway Nine. We don't know where their headquarters are." Gifford looked at Allen quizzically. "Sir?" "Gifford, if Giap chose not to attack Khe Sanh and if he placed the 320th in the eastern sector

far from Khe Sanh; first question. Why? Second question. Why did they send heavily armed soldiers back in the opposite direction in which they were originally sent? And third, why are they near Khe Sanh now?" "I wouldn't know, Sir."

Captain Allen inhaled on his cigarette and chuckled. "Gifford, we had one hell of a duel today. Man, we poured some bad-ass artillery fire into the middle of those shithead gooks, didn't we?" "Yes, Sir, once we finally made contact with Stanford. Chewed them up pretty good." "Lieutenant, if there were five hundred soldiers out there, or more, doesn't it strike you as odd that the NVA did not call in their own artillery on us first rather than risk their men?" "I never thought of it, Sir. I was too damned busy. I'm just happy to still be in one piece."

"That's all, Gifford. File a detailed report with intelligence. They want it ASAP. They need your account as soon as possible to corroborate with other reports." "Got it, Sir. Will do." "Get some rest, Giff. I'm sure as hell we will go out on patrol again within one or two days. My supposition is within one day. Take care of that wound. I'll need you on the next patrol."

Captain Allen paused as he looked at Gerry Gifford, then spoke again. "You done good today, Marine. I may as well tell you. You'll probably be gettin' some kind of medal. " "Thank you, Sir." "Oh, and Lieutenant, damn good arm. Where did you learn to throw like that?" Gifford grinned. "Phoenix, Arizona, Sir."

Gifford saluted, although he knew he didn't need to. He turned for the exit. "Gifford, something tells me we're going to be in the thick of things here in I Corps. This shit is just gonna to get worse. I think we're at Khe Sanh for the long haul."



REUNION REFLECTIONS

BY RON SHOUSE
BRAVO BTRY 1/13

This year's reunion sadly had to come to an end. I can only hope that the men, their wives, kids and guests had as much of a good time as my group did. I always try to speak to as many of the guys as possible as most of you know.

The night before our main group was going to Parris Island, Tom Keaton, Jerry Williams and Cliff Treese B 1/13 and Leroy Matlock E 2/26 decided they would leave early enough to attend Morning Colors. I do not know if it was anticipation or the excitement of what was about to happen, but none of them slept that night. We left the Marriot at 0600 and arrived at Base HQ Parris Island at 0745. It should have taken us only an hour but you have to forgive us we were in artillery and sometimes our sense of direction is off a little and we got lost.

Colors ceremony begin at 0800. Once the ceremony was completed (Fig # 1 back Page) we took pictures with personnel responsible for the color detail. (Fig # 2 Back Page) Afterwards we went to the Khe Sanh Memorial at the Rifle Range to take a few pictures. We had a picture of our group from the reunion held at Charleston several years ago before we lost Phil Mineer and Glenn Rappold and wanted to do an update. (Pictures On Back Covers)

We had a little ceremony and drank a toast to them and to men we lost so long ago. While standing there I saw a Drill Instructor close by and asked him if it would be all right for me to take my guys down to the Khe Sanh combat range for a few pictures. The range Gunnery Sergeant and after seeing who we were, told me to go, hang out but that the range would be going "HOT" in about an hour or so. We drove down to range office and all the instructors came out. We laughed and joked with Marines that are probably younger than our kids but what was really neat about it was these guys acted just like us. I mean, they were just like us. As we stood there a golf cart drove up. (Fig 4 Back Page)

A colonel got out and a Sergeant Major came up and joined in on the B/S formation. Several other officers came over when they found out we were

Khe Sanh Veterans. The Colonel turned out to be the Commanding Officer of the Weapons Battalion and the Sergeant Major was the Weapons Battalion Sergeant Major. He said "would you guys like to stay on the firing line and watch the recruits go through a simulated casualty extraction drill?" Unreal… The recruits would come across a clearing of about 200 or so yards, then fall down behind cover, simulate firing, jump up move forward to another position and repeat this probably 8 to 10 times, before running to the firing line to actually live fire at "pop up" targets. After firing, the Squad leader would then run them to the "casualty" where they would get him out of field of fire for medical attention. This is part of the "Crucible". (See Pictures On Back Covers)

I know this sounds easy but these kids had packs and other gear on, running full bore and all of my guys were dripping wet with sweat so these kids must have really been hot and it was probably taking a lot out of them. The instructor stopped one group and told them who we were and that the training they were receiving was because of us. That made us all kind of choke up. The Commanding Officer and Sergeant Major gave us a Challenge coin from Weapons Battalion and we returned the favor by giving 1 or 2 of ours. I will return to the Island and make sure that all personnel who gave us this experience, receive one from the organization. Before we left the range, the instructors had us "Police up some Brass" for souvenirs. I could not believe our good fortune that day.

On a different note, Cliff Treese met a gentleman in Melbourne, Florida that made plaques of various subjects and had him make one of our Battery Sign for the guys in Bravo Battery. When we were walking around Savannah, we stopped at a little bar to have lunch and met Captain Jason Henesie, an Army Chaplain stationed at Fort Bragg, and his fiancé. They joined our little group for lunch and we invited them to come over to the Marriott to meet some of the Men from the Khe Sanh Reunion. The Captain and his Lady forgive me, I have forgotten her name just hung out for a while and remarked how great it was that there was still so much fellowship between the men after all these years. We told them that we shared a bond that is hard to explain to non-members. Cliff had an extra plaque of our Unit and he presented it to the Captain who now displays it in his office at Fort Bragg. Oh to be a fly on the wall to hear some of the good natured ribbing he must be taking from the Army personnel.

Semper Fi Ron

Ron Continues:

Every year at this time, Tom Keaton, Jerry Williams and I get together at our property in Mt Airy NC for a little fellowship. We usually end up taking a trip to Camp Lejeune to shop at the PX or commissary or visit some friends at the 10th Marines. Our primary purpose this year was to present a Statue of St Barbara to the Regiment. Liberty call had been sounded for the long 4th of July weekend around 1300 that afternoon and there was only the OD, his driver and clerk on duty. (See Pictures Back Covers)

We informed the Warrant Officer who we were and wanted to leave the statue on the Master Gunnery Sergeant's desk for a little surprise for him, when he came back on Monday. He was gracious and allowed us to do it. (Fig 6) Just outside of HQ of the 10th Marines is the Gun Park. There is some of the weaponry we used in the Nam. There is a 4 deuce Mortar, 155 SP, 155 towed, an 8 inch gun, several pieces from Korea, a howitzer, and a 75 pack howitzer and of course several 105's. Brought back some memories for all of us. We spent the night at the BOQ Hospital Point now called the on base motel before heading back to Winston Salem the next morning.

The primary purpose of our little yearly get together is to remember the guys that we lost in the Nam and the ones that have reported to the Supreme Commandant since our return. Promptly at 1400 on July 4th we assemble at Mineer Park on the "Last Firebase". The program is short, usually about 20 to 25 minutes, and consists of a drink of Rum poured in a Marine Corps Shot Glass and the names of our departed spoken, starting with the ones we lost in Nam, not necessarily just at Khe Sanh, and then poured for them on the Memorial. After all names of men to be remembered, those of us in attendance will toast them either by the rum or the drink of their choice. Most will use the rum as that was the drink of choice of Philip Mineer for which this park is named. Before we dismiss the ceremony, we ask if someone in attendance has anything to say and then close with a prayer. Afterwards there is usually a few tears, but they are good tears of remem-

brance.

By about 1530, everyone has migrated to my place to sit in the cool, eat, drink and talk of the time when we were all a bunch of invincible heroes. The crowd starts to disperse around 1800, I think we get tired of each other, but it is getting close to "lights out" and all us old guys need to hit the rack because 0530 comes early.

Every year our numbers are getting smaller and it seems the younger generation is starting to become more interested in what we did and the places we were. My grandchildren asked if I would take them to Washington DC and the Marine Corps Museum. They wanted to visit the WALL, go to the Evening Parade at Marine Barracks and see the IWO JIMA statue. If you look in a history book that our kids study in the schools, there will be little, if anything, of what our generation did. There will be very little mention of the Korean War and WW11. I feel if we do not tell them of the horrors of war that they will never understand just how bad it can be, so whenever a young person asks me about the Nam I talk to them. Of course there are questions I do not wish to answer and will tell them so but anything I think they might learn something from, I talk about. Gentlemen, when a young person asks you a question, take time to talk to them and when they say to you "Thank you for serving" it will all seem worth the trouble.

Semper Fi

Ron

CONTINUING MEMORIES

Gentlemen, when we all visited that fabulous vacation land back in our younger days, I always thought that there must have been a Guardian Angel looking over me. It turns out that there was. Her name is Saint Barbara. She is the Patron Saint of all the Artillery.

On a recent trip to Camp LeJeune, aka Camp Swampy, or Swamp Lagoon as you may remember, I had the privilege of meeting Master Gunnery Sergeant John Locke, Master Gunnery Sergeant of the 10th Marine Regiment. He invited my wife Lynn and me to attend the annual "St Barbara Celebration" of the 10th Marines. At the time I had no idea what an honor it would turn out to be.

It was a formal affair, with all the Staff NCO's and Officers in Dress Blues and the wives in gowns. These men asked questions about Nam and we talked about details of the Khe Sanh experience. I had never really thought about it but these guys informed me that we were actually in a firefight with the NVA artillery. Wow, did not see that coming and I guess that is the first time since I got back that I truly felt we were appreciated.

We arrived at the Hilton Double Tree on Atlantic Beach, North Carolina around 1700 and were promptly escorted to the VIP Bar. This was bad. Free Beer for me and wine for the wife. We chatted with the upper crust of Division and I must say these men really made me feel welcome. When Tom Keaton and Jerry Williams came to the annual Bravo Battery get together at our property, located just outside of Mt. Airy, N. C. called "The Last Firebase" last summer, I took them down to meet these men. They were invited to attend the celebration, but were unable to do so because of prior obligations. After a few Beers we went in for dinner and had some entertaining skits about the history of Artillery, a speech by the former 10th Marines Commanding Officer, Colonel Gobar with the evening culminated with "mixing of Marine Corps Grog" and appropriate toasts being made. Several of the Staff NCO's were awarded the "Order of Saint Barbara" Medallion. There is also an award given to the ladies of our Artillery Family called the "Order of Molly Pitcher".

Of course there was music for dancing after the program but I spent the rest of the evening talking with the various dignitaries. I was asked if terminology that is used today in the Artillery Vocabulary was anything like what we used back then. Absolutely. Their missions may not have as many rounds fired as we did and their "GUNS" are a little different from what we used but it is still the same. It was really refreshing to speak with someone who actually knew what I was talking about when I spoke of Powder Charges, Deflections, Quadrants, Direct Fire and Shifting Zone Missions and the like. So gentlemen, I guess what I am trying to tell you is if you have access to a Military Installation, regardless of the branch, take a trip/tour and talk to the younger generation that are serving now. They are probably better educated than we were but they will still ask your thoughts and opinions of current events

and ask for a little history of the places we were and things we did. Was a really gratifying experience. Cannot wait to do it again. One final side note, I did make a donation for a beer blast for the men of the 10th Marines. Semper Fi

On Sunday morning Lynn and I headed south to Myrtle Beach to spend the night at our beach house before heading to Parris Island on Tuesday. After checking in at the Osprey Inn, I walked up to the Parade Deck to watch the new Marines practice for graduation and I must say they really looked sharp. It is hard to believe that we looked that squared away almost 50 years ago. Where has the time gone? After some shopping at the PX and a lot of reminiscing, it was back on the road again heading to Melbourne, Florida and the annual Viet Nam Vets Reunion at Wickham Park.

Lynn and I arrived at the home of Cliff and Linda Treese, another "Bravo Brother" on Wednesday afternoon. After chatting a while and going out to dinner, Cliff and I decided to ride up to the Reunion. There are plenty of exhibits of the things we carried and used when we were in the Nam. The "TRAVELLING WALL" was there, along with the "WALL" for the Men lost in Iraq and Afghanistan from the state of Florida and also the "DOG WALL" remembering the War Dogs that were lost in the big sandbox. There was live music by a local DJ, "Doc Holiday" that was actually a crewman on a B 52, a lot of camaraderie, a few tears, souvenirs and of course a Beer Garden. There was also a landing of a Chopper. When the guys heard that "Whop Whop Whop" of those blades, cheers went up and there was a mass migration to where it would land. It came in and you could see those circles of dust on both sides of the bird. The guys could not wait to touch it and have a picture made beside it. Was a sight to see and still brings a tear to the eye.

On Saturday afternoon all the Marines gather in front of the stage, for the annual "Charge up the Hill" and sing the "Marine Corps Hymn". The hill is a grueling trek of almost 25 yards at about a 10 degree grade and most of us were exhausted but still managed to sing the Hymn. Probably should have been recorded for sales later as it was really a good rendition. After about the 3rd time, it really started to sound That was probably the highlight of the event because all the guys were cheering and laughing and it really brought back some memories of our younger years. Some good and alas some bad.

If anyone should be interested in attending the event you can go online under Florida Viet Nam Vets and get some info about next years' program. This program is free to the public. It is kid friendly and is encouraged. I saw some dogs but because of amount of people attending that may be frowned upon. There is no cost for anything, other than souvenirs, food and drink. I am sure that donations can be made to defray costs of the Moving Wall but are made directly to the Brevard County Viet Nam Veterans Association. Take care gentlemen, Fortes Fortuna Juate Fortune follows the Brave
Semper Fi
Ron

LEGEND OF SAINT BARBARA
BY RON SHOUSE
B/1/13

According to legend, our patron saint was the beautiful daughter of Dioscorus, a nobleman of the Roman Empire, believed to have lived in Nicomedia in Asia Minor in the third or fourth century, A.D. Because of her beauty and fearful that she would be demanded in marriage and taken from him, to limit Barbara's exposure to Christianity and encourage her development as a zealous pagan, her father kept her shut up in a tower. But even such incarceration could not keep the young woman from becoming a Christian. From her window, she looked out upon the surrounding countryside and marveled at the living things. She concluded they all must be part of a master plan and the idols of wood and stone her parents worshipped had to be condemned as false. She received instruction in Christianity and was baptized.

Shortly before embarking on a journey, Dioscorus commissioned a sumptuous bathhouse to be built for her, approving the design before he left. The bathhouse was to be lighted by only two windows. However in token of her faith while her father was away, she had another window pierced in the tower making three, symbolizing the Holy Trinity. Upon his return, Dioscorus asked why she had made this change, and Barbara acknowledged her conversion. Despite his threats, she refused to renounce Christianity. Dioscorus flew into a rage and dragged her

before the local prefect who ordered her death. The evil Dioscourus tortured his daughter, then took her to a high mountain where she was beheaded. Afterward, as he descended the mountain, he was caught in a sudden violent storm, struck down and consumed by the lightening. Only his scorched sword remained as a reminder of God's vengeance.

As a logical consequence, Barbara came to be regarded as the sainted Patroness of those in danger from thunderstorms, fire, explosions, that is to say, sudden death. Given the questionable reliability of early cannon misfires, muzzle bursts and exploding weapons were not uncommon, it is easy to see why our predecessors sought the protection of Saint Barbara. She has protected us well ever since.

Saint Barbara is usually represented standing by a tower with three windows, carrying a palm of a martyr in her hand. She is often viewed standing by a cannon or holding a chalice and sacramental wafer.

ARTILLERY ORDER OF MOLLY PITCHER

The Artillery Order of Molly Pitcher is a military society that occupies a central position in the traditions of the United Sates Field Artillery. Its membership is limited to those women whose service to the Field Artillery Community exemplifies the spirit of sacrifice and devotion of Molly Pitcher. The award recognizes these women for voluntary contributions that perpetuate the essence and significance of Molly Pitcher.

The story of Milly Pitcher is about an artillery wife, Mary Ludwig Hays (better known as Molly Pitcher) who shared the rigors of Valley Forge with her husband, John Hays. It was at the Battle of Monmouth (28 June 1778) that she gained fame. That day was as hot as the valley had been cold that legendary winter. With water to cool the hot guns and quench the thirst of the men essential, Mary Ludwig Hays earned her nickname by bringing pitcher after pitcher of refreshing water to the parched troops. While carrying out these duties, she saw a wounded Continental soldier and carried him on her back to the rear, out of reach of hard charging British. Back at the cannon, she saw her husband fall wounded. Without hesitation, she stepped forward and took the rammer staff from his hands, resolutely staying at her post while facing heavy enemy fire and ably acting as a gunner. For her heroic role, General Washington himself issued her a warrant as a non-commissioned officer. Thereafter she was widely hailed as "Sergeant Molly". A flagstaff and cannon stand at her gravesite at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. A sculpture on the battle monument commemorates her courageous deed.

VIETNAM MARINE FROM BENSALEM HONORED DURING BRIDGE RE-DEDICATION

by Cpl. Matt Myers

BENSALEM, Pa. — On June 22, 1968, American service members in Vietnam were engaged in the Tet Offensive. Marines from 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, were providing covering fire from the top of Hill 512 near Khe Sanh as Marines below them were fighting their way into the enemy perimeter. During that time, the Marines on Hill 512 attracted a large enemy artillery assault. That artillery barrage left some Marines wounded and others killed in action. One of those Marines killed was 18 -year-old Private First Class Neil William Weintraub. To honor the Bensalem, Pennsylvania, native,



Neil Weintraub rests on the side of The PFC Neil William Weintraub Memorial Bridge where it is mounted. The bridge was re-dedicated to Weintraub on Nov. 14, in Bensalem,The bronze plaque honoring Private First Class Pa. The ceremony was held to remember PFC Neil William Weintraub, a Marine who was killed in action during the Vietnam War on top of Hill 512 near Khe Sanh. (U.S. Marine Corps Courtesy Photo/Released)

in 1969 a bridge in his hometown was named, 'The PFC Neil William Weintraub Memorial Bridge.' Recently, when the bridge was closed down to be worked on, some concerned citizens took action to ensure it was re-dedicated upon its opening

"When we heard the bridge was closed, Neil's friend George Delia, who is a Vietnam combat veteran, contacted Lee Cannon, who is also a Vietnam combat veteran, and me," said Brenda Hecklin, one of the event organizers. "He wanted to have a re-dedication ceremony for him so he could honor his service and sacrifice. It was important to us because it was the only bridge that crossed over the Pennsylvania Turnpike named for a veteran, so by extension it also honors all veterans."

On Nov. 14, more than 250 family, friends and community members gathered for the ceremony. Fire engines from the Union and Nottingham Fire Departments flanked the bridge with their ladders raised while Newport Fire Department members rendered their salutes. Bagpipes played, followed by an official Marine Corps Color Guard presentation of the Colors and the playing of the National Anthem.

Speeches were given by family members and state officials, after which there was a fly over of an U.S. Coast Guard HH-65 Dolphin helicopter and a 21 gun salute

He will never be forgotten," said Hecklin, a Montgomery County, Pennsylvania native. "This bridge keeps his memory alive, and stands as a symbol of remembrance to all who see it."



MEMORIES FROM KSV WEBSITE

BURNS YOU UP YOU SAY T-BONE"

Dennis and Dan'l: I thought I flew in to Khe Sanh on May 11th - my Brother's BD. But I obviously was wrong all these years (shut up Dennis!) because I went in two days before 1/26 got there so maybe May 9th. I was pulled off Bravo Co. outside of Phu Bai on security for some road construction after leaving Hill 55. Some Sgt. from Naranga Florida an 81's FO came over and said you are leaving with me. He said there were no 81's FO's left alive at Khe Sanh after the Hill Fights and we were going TAD to Khe Sanh. Flew in and sat in a bunker for two days along the airstrip waiting for orders to do what???? Nobody ever told that Sgt. what to do so we just sat there picking our noses. Cannot remember the Sgt's name and it is still a mystery to me what we were doing there. The one thing I do remember was seeing some of the Marines come in off of 881 and that scared the snot out of me! Now Dennis I was not as smart as you (that's a compliment you smart ass...) so when I hit Hill 55 they issued me a 45 because I was a radioman and I didn't need a rifle. After I got out of the hospital after getting blown away on Route 9 (7-21-67) I went to the armorer at KSCB and said I WANT a rifle... NO 45! After showing him the scar from the gunshot in my neck and the shrapnel holes in my pelt; he did give me a M-16. Oh what a piece of crap that was. Until the grunts in Bravo showed me how to figure it out. That rifle was as first issued a piece of junk and many men lost their lives from jamming even after the hill fights!! Semper Fi Boys and it still burns me up to this day.
"T-Bone"



ROGER ERICKSON: HELL AND BACK

By Matt Warshaw

KSV IN THE NEWS

New Year's Resolution, 2016: Stop making lists. Like this one. Or this. And especially this! Silly little look-at-me clickbait trifles. But to give up listing will take grit and discipline and resolve. I know this because, for the past week, since making the the Roger Erickson clip you see above, I've felt compelled — nay, obligated — to draw up a "10 Coolest Surfers" list so I can put Roger in the top spot and feel the righteousness of having this laudable but obscure man out in front of Lopez, Curren, Edwards and every other platinum-level-cool petitioner (Including, yes, Barry Kanaiaupuni, a man I once cited with total conviction as the "coolest surfer ever." Do I contradict myself? Very well, then. I contradict myself).

For the moment, I will resist the urge to list by reprinting, in abridged form, **"Roger's Got Wild Eyes,"** Derek Hynd's masterful 1988 SURFER profile on a man known to big-wave heavies at the time as the King of Waimea. Read and be amazed.

Tom Carroll returned home two seasons ago from Hawaii with a ginger-colored beard. "Just like Roger Erickson's," as Tom put it. It smacked of hero worship. The beard came off after a week of sloppy surf, but the intrigue remained.

Last winter, walking into the Sunset Store on Oahu, I saw that Roger Erickson had signed a one-man protest next to his name on the list of Eddie Aikau Invitational invitees, pledging $15,000 to charity if he won. I'd already heard stories, opinions and predictions about him—some good, some strange. No one really knows how he operated so powerfully on his own. Then, a big moment.

Roger was running on the soft sand between Rocky Point and Pipeline, when he angled up to the Pupukea deck that held Flippy Hoffman, Fred Van Dyke and myself. Thundery things filled me, in the face of a man who looked so nice, yet so deadly. He was 41, with a gladiator's build, but his eyes had it all: life, death, and wisdom. Here was power, in mind and body. A defined human being. We met. Suddenly, I wanted a beard.

Playa del Rey, Los Angeles. Summer of '65. "It was the best year of my life. Everything was coming together: a year out of high school, double-dating at the drive-in, racing at Lyon's Drag Strip, surfing and hanging out on the beach—all that stuff. In '66, it all fell apart." Roger pauses. "I joined the Marines to avoid being conscripted. I didn't want bad training if I was going to Vietnam."

Fresh out of boot camp, Roger married his high school love, and honeymooned in Hawaii. "Just me and my girl, living at Rocky Point. I surfed big Sunset and Waimea, and she was there when I got out." Two weeks after that, Roger sailed out of San Diego in early morning darkness. "I remember looking over the railing of the boat, smoking my bowl of pot, thinking, 'Man, what am I doing?' I'd just left my whole life behind. I actually thought about jumping off."

On February 6, 1967, he entered another world. Da Nang fist, then southwest to Hill 55. On the way, a sniper nearly picked Roger off. It got him excited. He volunteered to go on point. Nobody did that. On quiet nights, Roger thought about the beauty in everything he saw, and thought about his recent past. "I knew better, but at times it was all so serene out there. And with emotions running through you, you're trying to relate to your life back home, and for me it was . . . 'What's she doing now? What is she doing now?' That was my overriding emotion all through Vietnam."

Roger's squad was under fire and in retreat, up by Hill 55. "A bullet came so close to my head that I felt it pass, and at that point I got so focused returning fire that I lost track of time. When I finally turned around, everyone was gone. It was just me. I saw movement, and retreated through the field, started running, and a mortar landed between my legs. It didn't go off."

Another time, Roger saved the life of a friend who'd tripped a mine. Roger was injured as well, but not as badly. He dove on his burning friend, smothered the fire, then collapsed. Earned himself a Bronze Star.

The war just kept coming. Out of the infirmary, Roger was airlifted straight to Khe Sanh. It was quiet when he arrived, but was soon to become one of

the heaviest battlefields in military history, with Roger in the middle. Everything was chance, from taking a shit, to sleeping, to going on point. It rained two days out of five. Jungle rot was everywhere, and plagues of mosquitoes descended and devoured. He was truly in hell now, and interest began to fade. His own description: "I was a walking zombie."

Late in '67, Roger got his R&R pass, along with malaria. By the time he arrived back at Da Nang for the trip to Hawaii, he was nothing but shakes, sweats, and chills. "Somehow I hid my condition, because I didn't want to get put in the hospital again. As soon as we got to Honolulu, I jumped the first plane home."

Back in Playa del Rey, everything had changed. Incredibly, just 10 months had passed since he'd left. Roger was 21. He spent five days in town, three of them in bed. People avoided him. The word went something like, "Roger's back from Vietnam, and he's twisted." He smelled like the bush, and looked out of his mind. His wife had split, hippied out in paisley and granny glasses. "It didn't matter by that point. The way I figured it, I was going back in at Khe Sanh, and wouldn't be coming out. You can't imagine how sick I was at that point—in every way."

After returning to Da Nang, Roger spent a month in the hospital, and then sure enough was ordered to Khe Sanh—where the hell he'd experienced before soon expanded tenfold. After walking in the jungle for two days on patrol, Roger was on his way back to camp when the North Vietnamese launched the Tet Offensive. The world had never seen a battle like it. Hill 881 was no more, and Khe Sanh became the most crater-ridden location in history. Survival itself was a ridiculous longshot. Survival followed by a return to normalcy was a complete impossibility.

Playa del Rey. Summer of '68. "I was the decorated Vietnam Marine, back in town, and I was meant to set a good example. I surfed, but basically I was racing bikes. My forte was going as fast as I could. I remember flying down Imperial, near LAX. The police were on me, and that got me all jazzed. I had a couple of outstanding tickets, and no license, so I went for it. Here come the sirens, and all I could think of was, 'Wow, unreal! If I get through the tunnel up there, I can escape.' But they ran me down on the curve past the tunnel. I took the corner so fast—had my back wheel on the edge of the gutter, riding out the curve. They threw me in jail for two weeks."

By 1969, Roger had a dark reputation around town. The full impact of Vietnam had still not been felt in America, and any veteran who opened his mouth against what was happening was a Commie-lover. Few civilians saw the vets' point of view, or knew of their problems.

Roger went deeper into his Easy Rider mode. At a Venice Beach concert that year, he saw an old biker getting billy-clubbed by several policeman. "I saw a friend in trouble, and starting running over. Hands down, totally passive, just wanted to try and settle things down. One of the cops saw me coming, and next thing the club was coming down on my head, then I'm fighting five or six of them." Roger went to court, refused to plea-bargain, argued self-defense, and got a 10-month prison term for his troubles. Out in late 1970, he got into it with five bikers at a party in the middle of L.A.. One of them had a baseball bat. A busted arm and a fractured skull for Roger, and thereafter his involvement with bikers was terminated.

I learned all of this during a chess game with Roger, not long after we met. He wasn't proud of his past. As Roger saw it, he'd had a destiny until Vietnam ripped it away. Not until the mid-'70s was he able to think about the future, and a challenge relative to Vietnam—a fresh test of mind and body, but this time by his own choice, on his own terms.

Roger knows the limits of human endurance in more ways than any other surfer. As he laid my king over on the chessboard, he slowly said that the flashpoint of his memory was no longer Khe Sanh. Now it was that afternoon in 1976, when he was a link in the human chain that saved big-wave surfer Kimo Hollinger from drowning during a huge swell at Waimea. As outstretched hands met, the point of contact burned into Roger's soul: the difference between life and death.

Roger Erickson had a new destiny. He bought Kimo's board.

FROM JIM CROW TO KHE SANH: AN AIRMAN'S HISTORIC JOURNEY

By J.B. SMITH

For nearly half a century, retired Lt. Col. Allen Smith kept his place in history locked inside a briefcase, alongside medals and photos.

His story as a pioneer in the integration of the U.S. Air Force and his life as an officer in the Korean and Vietnam wars has emerged only this year, after a look inside that briefcase led his son to piece it together.

At 86, Smith finally is sharing his stories of fighting for his comrades and for their respect.

As a young black man, Smith enlisted in the Air Force shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, one year after the Air Force announced that it would be the first branch of the military to end racial segregation.

The all-black Tuskegee Airmen had recently won fame for their prowess in World War II, dispelling doubts military leaders had long expressed about the valor and fitness of blacks.

"I joke with my dad about the Tuskegee Airmen," said Michael Smith, Allen Smith's son, who now cares for him in their home in Elm Mott. "I said, Dad, which is harder, to graduate from an all-black flight school or be the only black in an all-white flight school?" "Being in an all-white school," his father answered with a chuckle

DISTINGUISHED CAREER

In his career training among white cadets and later leading mostly white airmen, Smith did more than survive. He served as an intelligence officer with high-security clearances in Korea, then led the transport of bombs and planes across the U.S. Ultimately, he would play a prominent role in extricating Marines from the siege at Khe Sanh during the Vietnam War.

Through it all, he kept the words of his father in his mind.

"My dad told me, 'You can do anything you put your mind to,' " Allen Smith said.

He believed that sentiment, as unrealistic as it might have appeared for a black child growing up in cotton fields of Mississippi in the 1940s.

Smith's father was an unschooled sharecropper with 13 children, and he lived in a time and place where racial inequality was rigorously enforced.

But he saw promise in the boy and put him in charge of driving cotton to market and checking the price to make sure it was favorable. Smith graduated as valedictorian from an all-black high school in Edwards, Mississippi, and came to Texas when he was recruited by a coach at Prairie View A&M University.

"My mom put my clothes in an old trunk, and she said, 'You know we don't have any money, so when you get to Prairie View, you put your trunk in the employment line,' " Smith recalls. "Before I even enrolled, I got a job busing dishes."

When Smith graduated in 1950, he married a classmate, Lorraine, in her hometown of Waco, and she got a job as a nurse. But by then, the Korean War had begun, and Smith went to enlist so he wouldn't be drafted. He went to basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.

President Harry S. Truman had signed an executive order on July 29, 1948, calling for racial equality in the Armed Forces, but it was greeted with resistance and foot-dragging. The following day, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Omar N. Bradley stated desegregation would come to the Army only when it became a fact in the rest of American society.

Air Force historian Rudy Purificato, curator of Lackland's Airman Heritage Museum, said the Tuskegee example had helped the way for the Air Force's integration. Still, he said, "it wasn't a quick process," and racial biases still persisted.

Purificato said Smith would have been among a "handful" of blacks who trained at Lackland in the early 1950s.

After basic training, Smith taught white cadets in Wyoming to read, then was accepted for officer's candidate school back at Lackland.

Smith said his treatment by cadets and officers at



Allen Smith began his 30-year Air Force career in 1950 at the beginning of the integration of the Armed Forces. He retired as a lieutenant colonel with experience in the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

Lackland was "excellent," and he served as class leader. But he often had to stay at the barracks when others took their leisure time in the segregated city.
"There were times I couldn't go with my classmates," he said. "I knew it, and they knew it. But I never had any confrontation with the authorities."

But he had a close call with those authorities. Once



Rod Aydelotte Allen Smith's son and daughter-in-law made this display this spring after discovering photos, medals and documents from his distinguished career in the Air Force.

he drove back from Waco with a white classmate and was 10 minutes late getting to his class. A guard noted it and wouldn't let it slide.
"It was an offense that could have washed me out completely," Smith recalls. He said his punishment was to walk the track with a weapon for 24 hours.

After Smith's service as an intelligence officer in Korea, he shipped to flight school at a small airport in Bartow, Florida. At one point, when he was in danger of flunking, a white officer named Maj. Ralph Bradley took an interest in him. The two went up in a small plane, and Bradley had Smith cut the engine, then restart. After some maneuvers, the officer told Smith to head back to the airport.

"He said, 'Smith, there's nothing wrong with your flying, and you're going to graduate with your class,' " Smith recalls.

Smith learned to fly big cargo planes at a Texas Air Force base and was promoted to captain. Then he was transferred to Travis Air Force Base in California, where he found a racial tolerance he had never known.
"Even though I was the only black captain, it was different altogether," he said. "I was considered just another person doing a job, which made me feel real good."

MISSILE MISSION

In 1959, Smith was commander of a mission to ship a Titan missile from California to Florida. He recalls that the white crew on the tarmac in Florida was stunned when he walked out in his captain's stripes.

An officer at the rural Florida base offered to drive him to a segregated motel, separate from the rest of his crew. Smith said he made his position clear.

"I said, 'Sir, we fly together, we eat together, we sleep together and sir, we die together,' " Smith said. " 'If I don't stay with my crew tonight, this missile will go back to Southern California.' "
And so the men stayed together that night.

Smith got his master's degree in business in 1965, and in 1967 he was deployed to the rapidly escalating Vietnam War. He said bullets were flying when he stepped off the plane.

As chief of tactical operations for the 315th Air Commando at Phan Rang Air Force Base, he was in

charge of 25 C-123 planes. In early 1968, he was ordered to send his planes to help extricate some of the 5,000 Marines stranded at Khe Sanh, which was under siege by thousands of Viet Cong who were encamped in the surrounding hills.

He said two of his planes loaded with Marines were shot down as they attempted to take off from Khe Sanh. He told his other pilots to circle in a holding pattern until he gave further commands.

Smith said a general got on the radio and confronted him about why he was not following the orders to evacuate.

"I said, 'I've already lost two. I'm not going to lose any more,' " Smith recalls. He said planes landed after the Viet Cong forces were beaten back.

Smith left Vietnam in November 1968, his brain still burning with images he saw there. He remembers seeing bodies of supposedly dead American soldiers piled like cordwood against a wall but hearing moaning from one of the men saying, "Help me! Help me!"

He said those experiences were too difficult to talk about, so he snapped his briefcase shut and put it all behind him.

"I had never seen anything like that before," Smith said.

He resumed his military career in data development in the U.S. and later worked as a Veterans Affairs adjudicator in Waco, retiring in 1985.

OLD MEMORIES (Good or Bad)ARE NOT EASILY FORGOTTEN

The Poilane family was and still is an integral part of the history of Khe Sanh. The Poilanes and Khe Sanh vets share a common connection -- the land. They were digging into the red soil at Khe Sanh long before the first American forces ever set foot in that place, and their dependence on that soil was their livelihood as they farmed acres and acres of coffee tress. Unlike the Poilane family, our dependence on the soil wasn't our livelihood; it was our life! For us, it was simply a matter of survival as we dug down into it. Through the use of the internet and a friend of a friend, Dennis Mannion in October of 2014 was able to locate the two Poilane children -- now adults in their 50's -- living outside of Paris with children of their own. Through emails he has remained in contact with Francoise and Jean-Marie, and in January of this year he posted a long message on the board (including photos) that generated a lot of commentary and remembrances. Recently, at the urging of the Dennis and the president of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Jean Marie went on line and posted a message of his own to all of us. In a magical and heartwarming way, he and his sister are family and one of us. So, many of you now have an additional brother & sister in your lives.

For those members who are unaware of the Poilane's history at Khe Sanh, I am posting the recent emails and history of the Poilane family which originally appeared in the Red Clay Magazine, which were
Written by Madeleine Poilane.

FROM OUR WEBSITE:

Many of you -- and some of you more than me -- have a memory or had a personal contact with the Poilane family during your KS days -- pre-siege. Felix and his wife Madeleine were owners of the largest coffee plantation at Khe Sanh. They had two children: Francoise and her younger brother Jean-Marie. The entire family was forced to leave everything when the siege began, and the Marines flew them to Saigon. Felix died in the crash of a C-130 on the KS runway on his return to KS 13April68. Madeleine took her two children to France and raised them there. To my knowledge she never returned to Vietnam. She is now deceased...some years back...cancer I was told.

Nick Romanetz (C/1/26) took the left photo above while on patrol just before or after Xmas 67. I too had seen Françoise on similar patrol by her house just before that Xmas. I waved to her as I walked past, and she smiled and waved back. I've never forgotten that -- a kid's smile just before all the madness ensued.

At the Nashville reunion a few years ago, I was telling that story (about Nick and my patrols) and I had Nick's photo on my laptop. A gentleman near my

table overheard, and he came over and said that he was not a member of the KS vets but he lived in the Nashville area and had heard about the reunion. Turns out, he was a Green Beret in the early 60's, and he was at KS in 1964 when there were only 8 Americans there -- his team. He said that they were in and out of the Polaine home all the time. He supplied me with the photo (upper right) taken in either '64 or '65.

In the last few years, I was able to track down the Polaine "kids" both now living near Paris. Jean-Marie and I are in email contact from time to time and for the first time ever, Françoise herself wrote back to me even though she had been copied on all my emails to her brother.

We all have our memories (and our pain) from those years....so do the Poilane kids, but life continues to move forward and we all forward-on, like it or not. I hope this makes you smile.

The little boy grew up. S/F Dennis

Latest emails: Jean-Marie on 5 Jan:
Hi Dennis, Thanks for this kind message and the photos, you have a beautiful family.

Yes in France we are still under the shock of the terrorist attack in November. It was horrible and now situation is tense in the country. Thanks also for speaking of your time in Vietnam and of us to students. My family and I are healthy and happy - I send you a photo taken on Christmas day. Warmest regards.
Jean-Marie

Françoise on 10 January:
Hello thank you for the mail and happy new year also for you and all of your family, i hope all is ok for you. All is ok for us, we are living near Paris but were not in Paris in November, it was terrible. kind regards
Francoise

Jean-Marie
Françoise is 55, married and also have 2 children. My sister and I would like to post a message on this site. First to thank you all, and especially Dennis Mannion who could contact me in the end of 2014 after long searches to find Françoise and me. I think most of you know his story and how he saw Françoise in December 1967. To summarize it briefly, Dennis was in a patrol and returned back when he saw our house - an European building - and my sister (she was 8) sitting in front of the house. He was surprised to see this in the heart of VN. He waved my sister with his hand and she waved back. He took a picture but after he thought he had dreamt all this. But it was not a dream and Dennis has this moment since living deeply in his memory. He could retrieve who we were and learned a part of our story. Dennis sent us the 2 photos (our house and the one with Françoise) taken by Nick Romanetz and also another one taken in 1964/65 by a US Army Green Beret with all the 4 of us (my parents, my sister and me). So thanks a lot to Nick Romanetz and to the Green Beret - unfortunately I do not know his name, maybe someone knows ?These 3 photos are a treasure for Françoise and me. Moreover they are in colors - in the 60s in France we had only black and white and color photos were very rare. I asked to a photograph to work on it in order to enhance if possible and develop these photos. Now in my living room I have the one with the 4 or us and sent the one with Françoise to er. Recently my wife made me a surprise. She asked a friend, who has some talent in painting, to paint a drawing from the photo of our house. When it was done my wife gave it to me as a present. When I left VN after the tragic death of my father in April 68, I was only 5 and did not have any remembering of our house. My sister was 8 and she remembered the house. So it is very precious for us.

I would like to thank also Reverend Ray W Stubbe who was chaplain of the Marines in Khe Sanh and who met and knew my parents. Ray stayed in contact by postal mail with my mother and she sent him her writing on her memories about her life in VN. Ray could make it translate in English and share through veterans' associations. Ray could find me also, after the death of my mother in 2007 and kindly sent me his last writing « Pebbles in my boots volume 3.

Our story in VN began with my grandfather Eugène Poilane. Eugène was born in 1888 in a small village (near Angers a city in the center of France). He came in VN around 1908 as a soldier, he signed to serve in French army and Vietnam was belonging to France as a colony. Eugène was a self made man

and showed some capacity in botanic. He was remarked by a botanist who learned him the basis. Eugène was passioned by this and was a great searcher in plants - in his life he discovered the flora of the whole Indo-China and picked up and sent more than 40 000 plant's specimen to the French Museum of botanic (the average for a « normal » searcher is 7000/8000). At the end of his life he had a « laboratory garden » very famous, the president of South VN visited it.

He came back to France to find a wife a got married in 1921. They returned to Vietnam just after and had 3 children (my father Felix was the youngest, born in 1931). Eugène divorced after and had a second wife - Vietnamese. He had 7 children, so Felix had half brothers and sisters who were Metis. Felix met my mother in 1956 in Vouvray near Tours (a town in the center of France) as he came to get cured of a grave accident (he signed to serve in the French army in VN and got his spine broken). Felix was accountant (army was finished for him after his accident) in France but he missed his life in VN so he proposed to go back to VN to manage the coffee plantation (the half part belonging to his mother after the divorce with Eugène). My mother accepted and they returned in VN in 1957. Eugène was killed in 1964 in an ambush on the road done by VC (they were expecting a Vietnamese general, so he was killed by mistake).

Jean-Marie-Poilane

Francoise on 15 Jan :

Hi Dennis
Thank you for your message in-French, remember many time about Viet Nam when I was young also, I love Viet Nam, and in 2001 2003 and 2011 we were in Hue (where I was born) with my husband and my second daughter. The last time I was at Khe Sanh to try to remember to find the house of my parents or something else but all is change the only thing I found it was a museum of the war nothing else I was sad bye and at the next mail from you

The following is the memoirs of Madame Poilane, wife of coffee planter Felix Poilane who ran the coffee plantation at Khe Sanh.

Memories of Vietnam, 1951-1968

The Sanh village came about as a result of the arrival of the planters. Before, there were only the Montagnards of the "Bru" tribe who were dispersed in the villages that were accessible only by the back roads. There was a French woman living, I believe, with a Vietnamese man. Since the development of the plantations, the Vietnamese population came about slowly and one could be able to figure between 1,500 and 2,000 inhabitants in 1968.

The planters were five in number Monsieur Eugene Poilane, remarried to a Vietnamese woman who managed the plantation from 1964 until the death of her husband. She also possessed a plantation bought for Monsieur Poilane's sister (former Lecas plantation). Madame Lecas died of cholera, and she is buried on the plantation at Khe Sanh Monsieur Felix Poilane, my husband and manager of his mother's (Madame Bourdeauducq) plantation since December 21, 1957, the date on which I arrived with him to Vietnam. We stayed there until January 22, 1968 -- the evacuation before the Viet Cong offensive.


Jean-Marie-Poilane

Monsieur Simard (former Laval plantation) owned a plantation starting from Khe Sanh and continuing on the road to Lao Bao. Another part was found at another section. Monsieur Simard was married to a Eurasian. Monsieur Rome (deceased) rented the plantation to Monsieur Llinares, married to a Viet-

namese woman.

And finally, the plantation of the Benedictine Fathers whose monastery was at Hue. When my mother-in-law, Madame Bourdeauducq, had to leave Khe Sanh and Vietnam, she gave them our plantation. But the Fathers, in addition, had asked for more land. She gave them 9 Hectares (equivalent to 22,239 acres.) of land planted with productive coffee trees and the possibility of expanding, which they did.



FRANCOISE POILANE

Upon our return in 1957, the Fathers, having been notified, constructed a building for themselves and gave us back the plantation as agreed. One French Father (Father Corentin who since died in France) and some Vietnamese brothers stayed to help with the plantation work. When I arrived on December 21, 1957 in the middle of the monsoon season, I was a little afraid to see the state in which the plantation was -- especially the big 16-room mansion which was uninhabitable. The Fathers had to cultivate and harvest the plantation, and that's all -- no reparations, since we did not know what would become of Vietnam. Father Roman, another French Benedictine who accompanied us, did me the honor of showing me the plantation. He told me, "You will be a queen here." I held back my tears, for all I was seeing there were holes in the ceilings and in the floors.

There were no more doors or windows. The wind could easily come in. In the first floor room, which was our bedroom, the ceiling was held up with branches from the coffee trees. As there was no bed, my father-in-law gave us two iron beds, and we set up mats on them. The main part of our luggage had not arrived yet from Saigon, and we only had a few things with us.

Our first meal consisted of bread with salted "bridel" butter and bananas. There were only two bowls and very few plates and dishes, some canned food that was barely edible, especially the peas. In view of this lack of supplies, we went to have our first meal at my father-in-law's at Khe Sanh. The chauffeur came to pick us up with an old winded T23 Citroen automobile. Encountering the little comfort that existed at my father-in-law's home, we had our meals at our own home with the arrival of our thi ba named Ninh. Father Corentin had hired her for us. She was clean and honest which was good for us.

Our first Christmas was very simple and rather sad for us who just made the trip from France to Vietnam on the boat Le Laos and then stayed at the Hotel Majestic in Saigon. This was too much of a change for us. Thus, we found again the poverty of those who were around us.

It was necessary to go down to the Province of Quang-Tri, 77 kilometers (almost 48 miles) from Khe Sanh to shop and to buy the minimum to live in a more decent manner. My husband did not dare to venture out too much; he managed the plantation alone for the first time. It was necessary to work for a year to see how it would turn out. We were to show Vietnamese identification papers in order to go about. From Dong Ha to Khe Sanh there were no less than 14 barriers to cross, showing these papers. Most of the time, soldiers would look very seriously at the reverse side of these papers. They did not want to show that they did not know how to read. We said nothing and tried only to stay calm. Later on, the name Poilane served as our passport.

Before going any farther I would like to say that Khe Sanh is connected to town -- that is to say Dong Ha -- by Route 9 which was constructed by the French Military Corps of Engineers. The road went as far as Lao Bao, but before the events of the Viet Cong and the Japanese, it went as far as Laos. When it was impossible to come down toward Dong

Ha, the coffee was sold at Savannacket in Laos. When my father-in-law arrived for the first time, he was able to come as far as 41 kilometers (about 25 miles) by the river, then on foot along the path that existed then, having been cut out by the Montagnards who went to visit each other from village to village.



PHOTO OF FRANCOISE POILANE, WHEN SHE WOULD SIT IN FRONT OF HOUSE AND WAVE TO PASSING MARINES ON PATROL FROM THE KSCB.

I am going to continue to enumerate the important people who were with us: the Vietnamese Protestant minister who was there before 1955 without having any followers. He came back in 1958 and wound up having a beautiful house for prayers and meetings with the Montagnards. No Vietnamese joined him again. Then the American Protestant linguists arrived around 1960 or 1961. They did a tremendous job and began to transcribe the "Bru" language that was never written down. With the Bru, they began to make little elementary books for teaching the Montagnards to read and write their language. Then they started translating the books. Our relationship excelled with this young American couple (the Millers) who lived in a straw hut constructed in a village. They had much courage since this was just about complete destitution for them. The Fathers of Foreign Missions of Paris arrived March 3, 1964. First was Father Poncet who was named parish priest (he was later killed February 13, 1968 at Hue during the Tet Offensive in the middle of a road by the Viet Cong.) Next was Father Mauvais who came to replace him, and in May of 1967 the nuns of Saint Paul of Chartres moved in near the priests. They, too, came to take care of the Montagnards.



FELIX POILANE DRIVING HIS TRACTOR

For us, rather for me, I was beginning a completely new life. My husband, Felix, who was born in Khe Sanh and had always lived there, was happy to meet his father again and also to see his plantation and country once more. The Montagnards had been informed of the return of the "boss" and for those who knew him, it was a great joy because with his return, there Was also the promise of steady jobs. Visits were numerous. One often came to see the wife of the cau, a Vietnamese word meaning "young man of good family." Numerous gifts, in the form of new rice, were offered to us. I remember a nice gesture: upon my arrival at the plantation house (named Petite Fleur), I found a pretty bouquet of flowers. The young boy in charge of watching the house knew that the wife of the master was arriving. In my distress, this gesture moved me very much.

I had a lot of trouble getting used to this new life in the middle of the underbrush. Above all, it was the lack of even the slightest comforts that left me unable to adapt. In this large house full of holes, one could not consider anything to do in such conditions. And furthermore, there was the food to which I had trouble adapting. We had a very clean cook who did her best, but I simply could not stand eating rice at every meal. She tried to prepare rice for me in the form of bread, but nonetheless, it was still always rice! Each night I would cry and ask my husband to leave again; I said that I would not become accustomed to this life. Felix used to say to me then that it was necessary to make a harvest, and

then we'd see about it. The trip would be expensive; it would be necessary to make the harvest and then sell it. We would see then if we would return. He knew very well what he was doing. He knew well what the country did to each person. In such a paradise, because that is what this land was, he knew that I would let myself be taken by the enchantment and would stay. It was true.

The first harvest of coffee was a little Arabica and weighed 800 kilos (about 363 lbs) then came several tons of the Robusta. And around April 15, good weather had arrived and the harvest of the Chari was going to begin. Before explaining how the harvest of the coffee went, I would like to describe it. The Arabica is a real little shrub, not more than two meters in height. It is very fragile and was destroyed by a disease called leaf blight. This disease showed itself by the appearance of tiny mushrooms under the leaves. When this was discovered, the damage was done since we did not have the products to take care of this disease. The plantation produced, before the onset of the disease, 25 tons a year. This coffee was harvested during the monsoon and thus did not have the sun to dry it. It was prepared by the "wet" method. It was placed in large cement basins full of water and left to swell with water and to ferment. Then, it was shelled and the beans could dry in a room known as the "hot room." The heat did the rest in thoroughly drying it. The coffee could then be put in bags before preparing it to be sold, removing the outer skin and sorting it so that there were only perfect beans being sold.

The Robusta was just as the name indicates, a more robust coffee. It was bigger, as it was already a small tree and the harvest took place at the beginning of the month of January. It was not prepared, however, by the wet method. Instead, we dry it by leaving it first to ferment, then putting it in the hot room to dry it. Once dry, it is placed sideways until the time comes to prepare it to be sold. We produced 2-3 tons of this a year. The hot room is a large room with trays on which the coffee is placed for drying with long dug-out galleries which are covered with sheet-irons to conduct the heat. A large furnace in which wood is burned produces this heat. The furnace runs day and night. The coffee is turned at least twice a day so when the upper layer dries, we can continue to dry the rest.

ext is the Chari. It was my father-in-law who brought back nine beans of this coffee from Tonkin, and with those nine beans, started this plantation. As its name indicates, this coffee originates in Africa in Oubangui Chari. It is a tree with a rather fat trunk and long branches with large leaves of a beautiful dark green. It can reach three to four meters in height. It is a very robust coffee and it adapts well to the red earth of Khe Sanh. Generally, the coffee tree grows in red earth.

The harvest of Chari is done from the 15th of April to the end of September. It is our largest output as we produce about 20 tons a year. The harvest is done on the spot by the Montagnards -- those here leave in the morning and return in the afternoon. Starting at about 3:30 in the afternoon, I begin to measure the harvest of each coffee. A starting price is set: $10 a touque (a Vietnamese measurement). A touque of petroleum is 20 liters. The coffee bean has the form of a red cherry, which is picked bean by bean as to try not to scratch any little pieces of wood from the coffee tree, because the tree would then suffer. It is an art to pick the ripe coffee. It takes a lot of time to gather each bean but the Bru are very gifted for this type of Work. I watch only to make sure they don't pick any green beans. They must mature, and then they will be gathered later. In the middle of the harvest, we have 120 to 150 workers and this gives an enormous amount of work, not just in measuring, but in the payment and sale of rice and other products: salt, dried fish, and a shrimp paste called jourc which smells rather bad. It is necessary to get used to the smell in order to eat this product, but it is otherwise very good. However, it exists in different levels of quality.

After the payment for the daily harvest, I begin to nurse Montagnards who have numerous sores on their legs. Much conjunctivitis occurs at the time of the sale in Laos, the io nam. The dust is responsible in most cases, and it is easily cured with eyewash. There is also a lot of dysentery for which sulfamides and other medications are given, depending on the severity of the case. I am anticipating a little; I want to speak again about the coffee, which is our principal activity, not counting all the fruit of the country that we were introduced to by Monsieur Eugene Poilane.

The coffee, once picked, is left on a cement surface.

It remains in a heap for the fermentation of the beans, which resemble a fat cherry in which the pulp is very thick. When the mildew forms very lightly, it is time to put the coffee on the surface and, several times a day, our Vietnamese workers rake through the coffee, using rakes and their bare feet, to aerate the coffee, which will begin to dry, becoming black. Each night, it will be put back into piles based on its degree of dryness and covered with corrugated iron to protect it in case of a sudden storm. When it is dry, it will then be grayish in color. The coffee will be placed in bags in a room, waiting for the time to be prepared to be sold.

One cannot imagine the work that is required to prepare the coffee before it is poured in a cup to enjoy! The harvesting of Chari is the highpoint of the year on the plantation, because it is then that we have the most workers. These Vietnamese workers coming from the plains, generally from Dong Ha and the area surrounding the plantation and who live on the premises with us, did all of the work drying the coffee and taking care of the plantation. Actually, the coffee trees require having their highest and dead branches removed, as well as little branches called "gourmands" which exhaust the tree. Each day the workers would be on the plantation with Felix to see what had to be done on such and such a section planted with coffee trees. The plantation was divided into planted hectares, separated one from the other by wide alleys for easier access by car and foot.

They would look to see if there were any trees that were too old or unproductive that had to be replaced. For that, we would have a nursery for young plants and each year in May the young plants would be put into prepared holes at least one month in advance to allow the soil to be aerated. The planting of young coffee trees required a lot of work and care, and it was necessary to survey their progress. In general, everything grew well in the rich soil of our plantation, but it was just as possible that a more robust tree would replace a vegetating plant.

Two times a year, the Montagnards would weed the whole plantation. This work would be done bit by bit, and then the price would be discussed according to the number of trees to be cleaned and the height of the plants. It is necessary for me to say that in periods of monsoons one saw vegetation grow right before one's eyes and I experimented with banana trees. We had many fruit trees: orange and mandrian trees of many species and banana trees with many different types of bananas. There were avocado trees, mango trees, persimmon trees of many species; one of which, a royal persimmon tree, had a little stem of green leaves. The jacquiers could be eaten as vegetables. There were jacquiers with wet fruit and jacquiers with dry fruit. I liked this fruit enormously and the Montagnards, knowing this, asked me if they could pick these fruits.

They would come and together we would enjoy this delicious fruit. There were papaya trees, lychee trees of very different kinds; also juicy limes and durians, fruits well liked by the Chinese. This fruit smells very bad, and it is necessary to hold one's nose before eating it. I never succeeded in being able to endure that odor and because of this, I deprived myself of a very delicious fruit. If you have a durian or ducian (the two words are interchangeable) in the house, it is impossible to sleep because the smell takes your breath away. The Chinese buy these fruits at the price of gold. There were longanes, kola nuts very prized by the Sengalese, and areca-nuts, which are used to prepare betel with the coca leaves we also had. We had superb mango trees, but alas, they did not bear any fruit. elix succeeded in growing a pepper plant. This little plant is a type of parasite since it needs support for life and bearing of its fruit.

The pepper is gathered in red grains and comes in two forms, white pepper and black pepper, the better of the two being white. The majority of tea plants served our own purposes; we sold very little of it. My father-in-law had succeeded in acclimating prune trees. The fruits were sold green because the Vietnamese would like to eat them in this fashion with salt and nuoc-mam (briny fish). We used to sell mandrian and oranges by the piece and there were an enormous amount, but one of every two years of harvest was even more abundant. While descending towards the streams where we used to get our water, there were superb mandrian trees. Our children, accompanied by the Montagnard children, would amuse themselves the moment harvest came by picking the green fruits to include oranges. Seven per cent of these fruits were truly delicious and gave a lot of juice. We also had large fruit trees called "abrasins" which bore nuts that were sold to

make oil. We did not sell these nuts often because the people were not interested in these fruits. This was very unfortunate for us.

In thinking about this tour of the fruit trees, I forget undoubtedly about how the red soil was so rich that everything could grow. The French and Japanese species of plants and trees, introduced into the country by my father-in-law, were observed in his experimental garden at Land Tram. The President of the Republic, Ngo Dinh Diem, came to visit this garden in July 1959. That day, I had in my hand a notebook containing all the species and the observations made by my father-in-law. This manuscript was sent to the Museum of Natural History of Paris.

Our copy was lost at Khe Sanh at the time of the offensive in 1968. I regret this because in it were numerous species of trees listed along with useful observations. The museum did not want to entrust me with a copy with which I could make another copy. It's a shame that the manual could not have been printed or published!
During my pregnancy, I saw a gynecologist twice since I spent nearly all of my time at the plantation. I gave myself urine analysis, and everything went as well as could be. I continued to work on the crop harvest without further problems. The plantation and the harvest continued at its rhythm; the maintenance was taken care of as usual. I had begun to look after the Montagnards and to manage things well. In addition to that, I had also begun to learn from their children, using hand signs, how to speak their language. I wrote, as I understood them.

But in July, I was expecting once again a second child, which was very comforting. That year, on September 16, 1962 we had a very violent typhoon. This date is carved in my memory because I had never before seen such a destructive typhoon. Our house survived the storm, but all the roads to the plantation were cut off as the trees lay across them. We had to disentangle them, all which was an enormous job. In Khe Sanh, my father-in-law's house no longer had a roof and the rain and wind came in everywhere. But in these tropical regions, one is used to such violence in nature and quickly restores whatever is damaged or destroyed. That is what happened and life went on.

However, it was decided for my safety that I should wait to give birth in my stepfather's house at Hue. The workers came to arrange things. The gynecologist gave me shots to take every day during the first five months. Then it was blood tests every month because Felix and I had different RH factors. We had discovered an abnormality only thirteen days before the birth of Francoise. One took blood samples from me just for precaution.

This worried us a little because doctors in Vietnam were not properly equipped. Since we were so concerned, they gave me four tests instead of three to reassure us at the blood bank in Hue. Felix then started to come each weekend, generally from Saturday afternoon at noon to Monday morning. Thus, in this way, he spent the weekend with us. I had with me the wife of our cook and my little sister-in-law, Pierrette, to keep me company. Without any abnormality, we were overjoyed to have a very big boy weighing 5 kilos (11 lbs), Jean-Marie. I quickly returned from the clinic to stay a few days at Hue and to prepare for our return to the plantation. I nursed my two children for only a few weeks as I did have milk, but it was not substantial, so they had to have their bottles.
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It was at this time that the attack (supposedly by the Vietnamese) against the Buddhists took place following false rumiors that they shot into a crowd gathered to celebrate the feast of Buddha. This caused a big commotion in Hue and in other cities. In Saigon, there were a few Buddhist monks who burned themselves in the public squares to show that the Catholics (represented by the President of the Republic and by his brothers) persecuted them. One of the brothers of President Diem was Archbishop of Hue. Someone spread a rumor that he had buried Buddhists alive in his garden. People were actually gullible enough to believe these tales and went there to see if it was true. This, for a very long time, made life in Vietnam very disturbing and annoying.

Dad returned quickly to the plantation to flee from these fanatics who became dangerous. Public opinion quickly becomes crazy with such storytellers. Once at our land at Cu-Bach (such was the name of the plantation), we were very peaceful and far from this turmoil. The harvest of the Chari had begun, and there was plenty of work to be done. Pierrette came to the house to help me, since I was still tired

after giving birth to a big baby.

We took in a young girl who helped us as well to replace our cook's wife who felt too old. Life returned to normal at the plantation. Many friends came to visit and experience a little coolness, especially during school vacation. We also had friends who came up to hunt deer, tigers, and also the wild boar, which had caused a lot of havoc when it had gone into a section of coffee trees. It was worse than a tractor. There was also hunting for wild rooster and pheasant usually toward the end of the day. I would drive and my husband would be next to me, ready to shoot if he saw a rooster or a pheasant. In order to hunt at night, it was necessary to trace the animal's tracks before setting out on an expedition. A person would hold a light out at front and others would follow quietly behind the one who held the rifle. I went hunting at night once when Felix killed a civet cat. It made me so sick to my stomach to see it in its last throes of life.

But for us, however, hunting deer was a necessity if we wanted to have fresh meat. Furthermore, the deer spoiled the coffee trees. When scratched between the deer's two horns, the tree could decay and it was necessary to remedy this. It also gave Felix pleasure, as he loved hunting although he never abused it. If he killed one animal, he returned, as that was sufficient. The workers who went with him were happy, since for them there was also meat to garnish their meal consisting of rice, herbs, local vegetables, pimento, shrimp paste, and nuoc-mam, if they could get it. One must not forget while they were alone on the plantation that they had a family to feed in the plain.

I felt that I was rewarded, since if I liked these native people they would welcome me. This contributed a lot to my adapting. There was so much to do for these Montagnards who were so poor and lived in such backwards conditions, they didn't even realize it.
I spoke a lot with the women when it was possible for me to maintain a conversation. They were very natural with me and I with them. They spoke to me freely about their problems. I knew about their life and that became even truer gradually through the time I lived on the plantation. The principal problem of the women was to not have too many children and also how to take care of them. This was easy for me to explain to them after the birth of my daughter, Francolse. From the time of her birth, the women made a habit of saying "before Francoise or after Francoise." I wound up knowing the ages of the children from Ta-Con, the oldest and closest village to our plantation.

I continued my learning of the language. I also had a Montagnard named "Counta" who spoke French. He once jumped on a mine at Lao Bao during the time the French were there and had his leg cut off. My mother-in-law always took care of him at the hospital, and he was always grateful to us. He walked on crutches that we had made for him at Hue. He came in each day to help me write and speak "Bur," which was very helpful to me and in this way I progressed faster. I must admit that I was very attracted to these primitive people who were so very close to us. This influenced my desire to stay at the plantation. I felt that we could help them so much in every way.

In 1961, we returned to France. Francoise wasn't two years old yet. The plantation was once again put in the hands of Father Corentin and also of our overseer Anh Thu, who was very informed. With the help of Father, we were able to take two months vacation in France near the family. We planned on staying until Christmas, but we were called because Father had to go to the monastery at Hue to meet with Father Superior of the Benedictines. When we left, saying good-bye was painful for all of us.

Upon our return, we had found everything in perfect condition. It is true that we had as well a Vietnamese cook who spoke French and knew how to do French cooking. We also took in his wife as a thi ba for Francoise. With the work on the plantation, harvesting and the counting, etc., I found myself pretty busy and it was necessary to have someone to look after Francoise when the two of us were occupied.

At the beginning of 1962, I had a miscarriage, and not knowing what had caused it, I became very depressed. I returned to the plantation somewhat distressed and had trouble recovering. End of 1961. I omitted telling of one of Felix's successful hunting expeditions. The Montagnards of TaCon had had a young buffalo that a tiger had gotten. They came to ask Felix to help them to attract the tiger towards the spot where he was going to set the trap. It was

an accessible place (and tigers like clean places) where he set up the infamous trap.

All this was an art. It was necessary to dig a hole and cover it with bush as nothing was there, since the tiger is a mistrustful animal. Near the trap, meat was half hidden. The night went by and then very early in the morning the workers told us that they had heard a roaring, the tiger must have gotten caught. Felix, accompanied by the workers, left with his rifle and indeed, the beast was there, her paw caught in the trap. She was struggling to try to free herself as it hurt her so. That is when one must have courage and know how to shoot at the right moment. There's no question of misfiring and that would be rather unfortunate. But Felix was a fine marksman, and he killed the tiger. Then, he sent the workers to find me so that I could bring the camera and take pictures right there on the spot in the middle of the bush. Then, it was the triumphant return with a very beautiful animal. He left the trap there, however, well camouflaged. Once again, two days later, a second animal was caught. That occurred between December 19th and December 21st, 1961. Felix was very happy with this ending as two beautiful animals were captured. We were going to eat them, of course! It's not bad at all when it's well prepared.

ow I'm going to speak a little about the events on the outside of the plantation -- actually, the war that was there. At the former French fort, there were at first seven American advisors who settled in there, without any well-defined mission except to observe what was happening in the region, which had been so calm. They put the fort back in shape after it had been abandoned for so long, so they would be able to live a little better rather than in tents. It was in February 1964 that an event occurred on Route 9. A French pharmacist from Dong Ha, a Mr. Wolff, was coming to visit Mr. Llinares who had been ill. Going down with his car, he was killed. One had taken him for an American, we thought. There also had previously been the discovery of a network of Viet Cong in the village situated near Mr. Llinares's fields (at the edge of the river Rao-Quan in a sort of deep ravine). Following this discovery, the Vietnamese authorities decided to regroup Montagnard villages that were inaccessible to the road into places where the jeeps could have access. At that time, a lot of Bru went over to the VC, several thousand, no doubt.

However, we weren't worried despite the death of our friend Mr. Wolff. A little while later, I went down with Father Poncet to have our car repaired. Everything went well, and we came back on Friday. Felix had to go down as far as Quang-Tri and returned without being worried. But on Monday, April 20, 1964, while we were going to the market as we did each day, we stopped at my father-in-law's at noon. His wife told us that he had left for QuangTri that very morning. She was worried following the death of the pharmacist. Felix reassured her by telling her that we just came down and went back up, first him and then me. He hadn't even finished his sentence when a Vietnamese soldier we knew well, rushed in and told us screaming. In Vietnamese, "Mr. Poilane is dead. He had been killed by the VC in his car." We were stunned and very strained by this news.

My husband brought me back to the plantation and asked Father Poncet to accompany him. He also asked for the presence of the Americans who were at the fort. They accepted and thus left under safe escort. I had said to Father Poncet, "Come to get me if my father-in-law is disfigured." We didn't know what we were going to find, alas.

While waiting, I took the hundred steps on the trail, and the Montagnards, seeing my sorrowful demeanor, asked me what was wrong. I explained, then, without having a lot of details. I waited more than two hours before Father Poncet came back to get me. Then, he told me, "You can come. He had been killed in his car by three deadly bullets close to his heart." The Viet Cong had thrown a grenade in the motor of the car. The body had thus been brought under good escort, one never knew. The car stayed in place, one serviced the hauling later.

It was then a Monday, the day of departure to the province of Quang-Tri's chief administrative office of Khe Sanh, and it's the first car that had been pulled, the soldiers in ambush didn't know who was going to come (ED. I believe that Madame Poilane is trying to say that the VC were waiting to ambush Quang-Tri's administrative chief but her father-inlaw rode into the ambush site and was killed instead.)

I was going then to my father-in-law's house there in Khe Sanh accompanied by Father Poncet. I was helping my husband to groom his father. We put him in the kitchen and began. The coffin was ordered, a big one made of good, exotic wood not at all eaten by termites. We then decided to bury him close to his sister on the plantation and close to the house. The children at Hue were expectedly angry and were arriving just at the moment of burial. He was buried with Buddhist rights. We hadn't kept the body two days and already there were little lines in the wounds from the gunshots -- it was completely hot already! We got together with the Fathers at our plantation -- Father Lefas, Father Petijean, Father Neyroud and Father Vincent, not to forget Father Corentin and Father Poncet.

Papa was 76 years old and he had to go get himself killed on the road just as he had regained his health, and his coronary thrombosis was cured. This experience we did not understand. Why would he be killed when he was known and liked by all? This ambush wasn't for him, but it is he who had been a victim unfortunately. The Fathers left for Hue, and life renewed at our home. The harvest didn't leave us any leisure, which was good.

After this discovery of the network of Viet Cong, the Americans did not stay at the fort. They asked us if they could occupy a small piece of land used by the French for aviation. This land was found at the end of the track at the boundary of our plantation and Papa's. We accepted, of course, and an air base was built starting there. Then, this land was expanded to about 30 hectares. The situation began deteriorating. The bridges on Route 9 began to get destroyed, and we could not travel this way anymore. It was a hard blow to the planters. How to sell the coffee and supply ourselves with rice and other products necessary to life in the bush. The Americans were equipped during this time and began to construct a lot on this base, which was a strategic point for them not far from the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This was hardly reassuring to us; we were thinking that with this installation we would have an inevitable less calm life at Khe Sanh and at the plantation.

One time Felix descended to Hue, and during this time I felt cold and I realized I had a strong ear infection. Impossible to find a Vietnamese nurse, Father Poncet was staying at the house doing everything possible to find who could take care of me. It was about 4pm when he succeeded at finding the American nurse. The latter spoke French and that made it easier. He gave me an injection of a sedative so that I would not suffer and gave me medicine for the ear infection. At the same time, Jean Marie was also sick with diarrhea. Felix returned in the evening and immediately left to ask if a helicopter could take us to Hue. The captain accepted, and at 8pm that evening we landed in Hue. I liked the helicopter as our means of transportation; it was very nice and practical.

In Hue, I saw the doctor and found out that the eardrum of my left ear had ruptured and that I would remain deaf for many months. As for Jean Marie, we tried many X-rays and types of examinations, but we didn't find out what he had. I still felt his burning forehead against mine. It all finally ended when we found out he had tonsillitis and his health improved. He was 16-months-old, and he started to walk. That set him back a bit.

We stayed in Hue to recover ourselves and then returned to the plantation. The weather was very bad since a typhoon had come from the Philippines. A little eight-Seat plane took us in its care. There was an American on board who took us back to the base along with our little dog Thai Dong. I had never been so afraid in my life. The plane dropped in air pockets. It was frightening and all of us were vomiting tripe. Felix and Jean Marie were stoic. The pilot shocked us when he told us he had plugged up the plane with rags; we were hysterical! But the most upsetting thing was that the plane could not cross the mountain despite several tries, and it turned back. We found ourselves again in Hue in a very sorry state. The Vietnamese soldiers seeing us like this took a jeep and brought us back to the Joan of Arc School. There, with a cup of boiling tea, my spirits lifted and I fell asleep.

It became important, however, to think of returning. The next day, Father Neyroud accompanied by Father Suval, took us by car. The weather didn't permit us to think once again of a plane. The route for going to Quang Tri and Dong Ha didn't present any difficulties. It was on Route 9 that a bridge had collapsed. We knew that it was not possible to pass and on the other side there waited a 1,400 kilo Renault that would take us to Khe Sanh. Having arrived at

the spot of a blown up bridge we were terrified. It was necessary to descend into the deep ravine (there was water) and remount on the other side. 0h, with the children and baggage it was expected that we would make a lot of trips and in what conditions! With the help of the two priests, we crossed all the same and found a truck awaiting us. It was already quite full, but we got inside and fit rather well. My knees were folded because there were bags of rice on the floor.

We started moving, and I noticed a lady who remained on the stepladder. It was, in my opinion, a sign of gratitude for the V.C. for they were at least letting civilians pass with supplies. One had to make concessions. At KM 51, everyone got in the trailer as the danger zone had passed. It is necessary to explain that on Route 9 the places were distinguished by the number of KM, thus the plantation was at KM 51.

These are little details, but they had their importance in the mountains where it was easy to be attacked at will.

The return was not a burden -- a bit tiring, but we were lucky and happy to be back at the plantation, and all was quickly forgotten. Father Petitjean was waiting for us, and this was a great surprise. He had come before the typhoon and, with luck, had made it. He had gone to spend a few weeks in the cool weather, and it was always a pleasure to find our friends again in the bush. If one does not know, he can imagine how lonely it is to live alone in the wilderness. The Marines who had known the base and also our plantation were happy to see a house of blond haired children. It reminded them of their home far away in the USA. How many visitors we would have from the Marines, from soldiers to the Captains and Colonels.

One day, we had a visit from a four star general, who I believe came directly from the U.S. He stopped at our house simply to get the news. We had, at that time, problems with the leaves falling from the trees, caused by the wind sent from Laos. None of our durian trees that were more than twenty -five years old produced any longer, having lost all their leaves and their fruit. That made so much damage on the plantation that the trees looked funny. Upon leaving, he said goodbye to us and tapping on Felix's shoulder, said to his men, "Attention, when you go to Laos, be careful of the wind when you throw defoliation products." That is a true story!

Following this defoliation, we filed a damage claim at Quang Tri Province. We never received anything in return. We found out that the Americans had given aid, but the Vietnamese had to keep these subsidies for their side. These products had to be pretty toxic to have been able to kill trees like the durians, which are very strong. We surveyed the rest of the plantation because there were some coffee trees coming up. They were able to resist, or else we'd have replaced them, so the native population remained untouched by the consequences of this defoliation. Often, we used to see the planes go by that were going toward Laos. They were, of course, to defoliate the places that were too dense and also to always survey the territory of this cursed war.

For us, life continued to be pretty calm, but we were at present cut off from everything. The bridges on Route 9 had tumbled. That was, for us, a big handicap because it was necessary to live on the plantation. The Marine Base expanded itself, and the planes were landing on the runway that was lengthened for the circumstances. Felix spoke English well and continued to perfect it. It was necessary for our subsequent relationship with the Marines. They occupied our land and were kind enough to assure us of their help for all that we would need. And we were going to need their assistance to sell the coffee that formerly would have been sold on the premises and bought by merchants, who would come up with their trucks. The Marines then put themselves at our disposal when it was an absolute necessity for us to have planes to carry several tons of coffee to Dong Ha, Hue, or even Danang. In return, we were able to bring up rice and as many provisions as they needed. With our planter friends, we grouped ourselves together to avoid too many requests of our neighbors. A plane just for us, that was already too kind. In order to go down to Hue, it was the same thing -- planes or helicopters took us in their charge. From that time, I didn't have to go down to Hue more than once a year. It was a little hard for us all. However, our friends were able to come up to see us and to say thanks to the kindness of the Americans and their planes. They never refused to be of service to us which was vital for us all at Khe Sanh.

The time passed despite the impossibility of going by our own means to Hue or elsewhere. The harvest was done as in the past and the coffee sold well. It was necessary only to leave with the plane to accompany the coffee and sell it oneself on the spot. The same for the supplies -- there was an airplane for us alone and for our planter friends. It was necessary to ask, but we did not suffer too much. Everyone had to leave their coffee in the same way and bring back the provisions for everyone. Even Father Poncet acted in the same manner and brought back provisions as well for everybody. In the meantime, Father Mauvais had come to join him to help him in the apostleship. The coming of the nuns in the beginning of the year 1967 was not delayed for that, as one didn't know how long one could last and each got accustomed to it. The Vietnamese saw there a free means of bringing up the merchandise to Khe Sanh, and this side of things would please them well enough.

Our friends continued to come to spend their vacations and to visit us. I omitted to speak of the visit of a French friend who came to spend two months with us on the plantation. This was a friend from the region of Tours where I am from. She was a nurse who brought back from each trip a very profound and lasting memory. We write each other still to this day when I'm writing these lines.

I resume then with the nuns of St. Paul of Chartres moving in. There were four. The mother superior was a French woman whom we liked a lot, and Sister Paul Xavier had already been in Vietnam for a very long time. She lived very close to the house that the Fathers had constructed facing the village of CuBach. We had given them some land on the plantation, one hectare or more. The house was strong, that is to say concrete blocks and a roof of corrugated iron. There were two bedrooms, a little shower - very rudimentary -- fed through a big pond, and a little kitchen.

For the nuns, it was a house on piles that was constructed with wooden walls and an iron roof. Four big rooms, one for cooking and another that would serve as the chapel and the oratory. The Fathers said the mass every week in the little oratory and on Sunday in Khe Sanh for the Catholic population. The work of the Fathers and the nuns was to take care of the Montagnards. It was necessary to explain to the latter why the nuns were dressed with their habit and the veil, and finally their kind way of life. The Montagnards were dumbfounded while listening to us.

The nuns after having settled in already began to take care of them. There was much to do on this side. When they went into the village, I used to go up with them, as there was the language to learn. During this time, our two fathers did not remain inactive. They laid out the land of the plantation -the old abandoned pastures, a big school with a residence for the girls and boys of surrounding villages, a big kitchen and other necessary buildings, if one seriously wanted to take care of these people and to try to do a good, apostolic job.

Before the nuns arrived, Felix had built a large hut in front of our house so that I could have class with the children, and also with the Montagnard children who wanted to attend. I taught them "Bru" and also French. We had with us for about a year a little "Bru" girl named Tiou who lived totally with us. We treated her like our two children. She was five or six years old. A boy, named Plengue, was also with us. He was around twelve. He didn't want to have his meals with us but instead, he ate with the staff in the kitchen. He helped me by watching the children while I measured the coffee. I taught him how to clean house well, how to clean the bricks, how to wipe the furniture, and I might say that he turned out to be very skillful. Several times we took him to Hue. His eyes opened wide, he who left the bushes of his village!

To lay out my school, the Marines brought ammunition boxes to us that our workers had quickly transformed into benches and tables to furnish the school. We also found a dark green blackboard and a large desk for me made out of the same materials. To complete the furnishings there were notebooks, pencils, and chalk. Thus equipped, I was able to have class every morning. I had a correspondence course from Paris for Francoise. She would study seriously, and the other students profited from this teaching in addition to their "Bru." This gave me a chance to learn new words with the correct pronunciation. I taught them the rudiments of catechism in order to prepare them for the nuns and priests who would soon take over.

The Marines who arrived knew our school very well. And when passing by, they would stop and give treats to the children. They also brought food for the Montagnard children so they could have a balanced diet for their noon meal. They were content when the Marines left. We had a little "Bambi." We bought him from the Montagnards for 500 Piastres. He was found in the brush, his mother most likely had been killed. The commanding colonel at the Marine base was our friend. He often brought us powered milk. Bambi ate at least four times a day. There were a lot of photographs taken of the Marines on their many visits passing through the plantation.

The arrival of the nuns was a very good thing for me. I found myself less alone, especially with the Mother Superior who was French. I knew her very well. My health was not good after the death of my father-in-law. Being cut off from the town was difficult. We liked to get together with our friends from time to time, after experiencing the austere life that we had on the plantation. There were only Frenchmen at Khe Sanh, with the priest and our planter friends. We would gather every Sunday at the house to have our noon meal and evening with the priest and M. Llinares. After dinner, we would play tarot card games until midnight.

It was really our only distraction, since the work did not allow much during the coffee harvest. During the monsoon, there was no question of working. The rain never stopped. You must know tropical rains to really understand a monsoon. Then, there was the humidity, the drizzle and constant fog in February and March before ever seeing the sun in April.

It was then that an attack of the Viet Cong occurred on three hills, North 881,861 & 881, which were all visible from our house. The culminating point was the Tooth of the Tiger, at about 1700 meters, on a mountain located very close to us facing the Marine base. I think these three hills could be the natural boundary between the North and South, since we were said to be twenty kilometers from the border. That was difficult enough to evaluate. This attack lasted for three weeks. If my memory is good, it happened suddenly, with no one expecting it. Everything was calm, too calm. The Marines started bombing these three hills, trying to force the VC out. It was all in vain as the Viet Cong were at the bottom, well into the shelter of the mountain dugouts. They were able to prepare their food without anyone seeing the smoke. They had plenty of water and were content with what little they had to live on. They were, therefore, very strong while hearing the planes coming to bomb them.

From our house we could see the bombs leaving the planes. The bombing went on day and night. Other times, the Marines flew in reinforcements. When the Marines evacuated their wounded, the VC responded with machine guns, which they had camouflaged in the forest. We did not take it seriously and continued to harvest the coffee. The Marine visits became rare; we understood why. The Montagnards did not seem affected by what was going on around them. As for us, we became disturbed by the incessant rotations of the C-123 and C-130 airplanes. The noise stopped us from sleeping most nights. Our friend, the Colonel, took the time to give us any news. I think if there was any immediate danger, he would have been the first to tell us to leave the plantation.

s soon as there was a lull, the Marines came to our house to reassure us and to exchange a few ideas. The Colonel gave us his laundry (at our request.) That certainly freed him from an unpleasant job. His wife sent him packages from the United States, and he never failed to bring treats for the children and us.

The attack finally ended and everyone breathed a little easier. Each Monday morning the Colonel brought us his laundry. When he came to pick it up in the afternoon, he was all wet. The rescue of the three hills had cost a lot in human lives. He had however, saved Khe Sanh from an attack. One cannot forget that the Ho Chi Minh Trail was there, very near, and we all knew it.

One can ask how a surprise attack was possible. One must not forget that numerous Montagnards worked at the base and were able to observe the movements of planes, the locations of trenches, and where the machine guns were located. It is very possible that there were VC among the Montagnards. I am now able to say that the chief of the VC among the Montagnards was a woman, a young girl whom had taught me to speak "Bru." I earned

her confidence, and she had confided in me. She came to the market at Khe Sanh, dressed as a simple Montagnard gathering information. It was difficult for me to betray the confidence she had entrusted in me.

The increase of men and materials at the base left us less calm than as we had been prior to the attacks on the three hills. The VC retreated but were regrouping and preparing for another offensive. Although we feared they would attack again, we remained at the plantation. The harvest was not finished; it was May or June of 1967. It was necessary to earn a living and eat. At that time of the year, the rains began, and the Montagnards' provisions were diminishing. They survived eating sweet potatoes, manioc, bamboo shoots, and whatever vegetables they could find in the brush.

During the next six months, it was calm. Nothing abnormal happened as the year came to an end. The Christmas celebrations continued as usual. I attended Fran~oise's eighth birthday party in October 1967. We made a nice cake, and the Marines brought an even bigger one. It took several Marines to carry it. I forgot to point out that Felix had killed a spotted panther the same day. The panther had killed a pig in a nearby village. He placed the trap the night before and his lure worked perfectly. Once it had been trapped, he shot it. The news quickly spread and everyone wanted to take a picture with the dead panther. Each person posed with it in a different manner. We had the skin sent home and tanned. I still have it along with two other skins from tigers which Felix also killed. They are all still in excellent condition.

January 1968 arrived, and the feast of Tet began early in February. Our workers left the plantation to celebrate. That was the only vacation time they were allowed during the year. When we were short of help, I took a Montagnard woman to do the cooking. She was very clean and cooked very well. Her name was M'Pi Ania. She had previously worked at the plantation during the time my mother-in-law ran operations.

The attack on Khe Sanh began at night on January 19th and 20th, 1968. We were surprised to hear the noise from the B-52s, which flew very high. The VC were in the village and had attacked the guard post, offices and the residence of the Chief of the District. We wanted to go to Mass but decided against it to keep the children out of danger. Father Mauvais had tried and was pushed back to the bridge of Khe Sanh, which crosses the Ta-Con River. The battle was becoming ferocious. No one left the Montagnard villages. The silence was unusual. Helicopters began bombing and firing at everything that moved. Disregarding the danger, late in the afternoon, we went to the home of Father Mauvais. Father Poncet was still in Hue City. Stray bullets from the helicopters struck the entrance to the home of the nuns, so we quickly returned to the plantation.

Felix called all of our workers to protect our house. They gathered things from the basement and slept on cots. The B-52s continued bombing and the noise was unbearable. Helicopters dropped off wounded South Vietnamese soldiers at the Old French Fort. Two of them managed to get to our house. I left the veranda and met another wounded soldier who told me his friend was seriously wounded and was hiding where we stored coffee. I called my husband Felix, who scolded me for leaving the house. Felix located the wounded soldier who was suffering from a broken shoulder. His bleeding had stopped and Felix decided not to change the soiled dressing, to prevent the bleeding from starting again. He gave him a shot of Penicillin and water, which seemed to revive him. Felix told both soldiers to remain where they were until the B-52s ceased bombing.

I omitted telling you that on Saturday, Mr. Miller, the American linguist, had came by the house to warn us that things were getting worse. My husband was not home at the time and when I later told him of the visit of Mr. Miller, he could see the fright on my face.

On Monday, there was still fighting in the village of Khe Sanh. It was rumored that the American forces were no longer giving ammunition to the Vietnamese Army. The nuns continued coming by the house as there was no question of their leaving. The Montagnards did not leave either. Towards the end of the afternoon, Mr. Llinares was able to join us. His son Emmanuel, remained at their house with the rest of the coolie workers.

On Tuesday, the Vietnamese from the villages of Khe Sanh and Cu Bach filed past the plantation carrying backpacks, heading towards the Marine base. Prior to the attack on the three hills, everything had been very peaceful. The sudden attack on the village of Khe Sanh had led to widespread panic. My husband Felix used his car to take the wounded Vietnamese soldiers to the Marine base. He was asked to drive the old and sick villagers to the Marine base. He made many trips in our old 2CV but had to stop, so the vehicle would be ready when it was our turn to leave. Some villagers offered Felix 500 Piastas for a ride, but he could not help them -we really needed the car. Felix instructed us to pack some necessary things and be ready to leave the plantation at any moment. The children were very scared and screamed every time the B-52s conducted a bombing raid. We just took with us the money we had received from the coffee crop we had sold, and a few trinkets and toiletries.

e were the last to leave the plantation. We released our dogs and little "Bambi," then locked the door and left for the Marine base in our old 2CV. When we arrived at the base there was total confusion. The planes that were to arrive to evacuate the villagers never arrived. The Marines did not know what to do. Father Mauvais, who did not want to leave, finally changed his mind and worked his way to the base. Felix spoke to the colonel in charge of Lang Vei, a village on the Lao Bao route. We told him we did not want to leave the area, and he suggested we go with him to Lang Vei. At that time, the North Vietnamese began firing rockets at the base and the children and I took refuge behind some metal barrels that contained pine tar, which got all over me. The children and I were an awful sight and scared to death. At that moment a civilian journalist began basking questions of us. What we were doing there, where we had come from, etc. I am sure she wasn't concerned that we were suffering and had left everything we loved behind; her concern was more of a journalistic nature. She took a picture of us that later appeared in the newspaper in France. Although the photo's appearance assured our families that we were okay, it just was not the proper time to take it.

Finally, the first C-123 arrived at the base. There was a great rush to get on the first plane. We waited, not wanting to be crushed or separated. We were ordered to join the crowd and get aboard. Felix refused, telling the Marines that they had to organize the villagers into groups to allow an orderly withdrawal. The Marines complied and when other planes arrived, it was done in an orderly manner. The planes were either going to Dong-Ha or Da Nang -- we would have preferred Hue.

We left with a heavy heart, leaving everything we loved behind. When we arrived at Da Nang, we met the Miller family, which was a very pleasant surprise. Somehow they had been made aware that we would be arriving. We asked to be taken to the house where the nuns lived. It was January 22, 1968 and nothing else had happened at Da Nang. I cleaned some of the sticky tar, which was very difficult to remove, off of my legs and skirt. Two days later we left for Hue City and the School of Joan of Arc. We had many attachments there and Tet was quickly approaching. This meant everyone would be leaving to join his or her families to celebrate together. We did not know if we would ever be able to return to Khe Sanh. We settled in, having only the bare essentials we had taken with us when we left the plantation. We would have to buy whatever things we would need.

On the night of 31 January 1968, the Tet offensive began all over South Vietnam. We were awakened by gunfire and immediately covered the windows with an armoire. We put our mattresses under the beds to stretch out on. When night came, we left, taking what little we had with us. We worked our way through the streets to the main central building of the school. We saw the first Viet Cong enter the city from the big main gate. We put mattresses over the windows and sealed the building the best we could. Sister Henri was very scared and hid under the covers most of the time.

The central building was located across the street from Saint Francois-Xavier Church, and the VC had taken up a position in the steeple. When shots were exchanged between them and the American forces, bullets would strike the bell in the steeple, it sounded like the song of a bird. Finally, the bell fell to the ground as if it finally gave up its spirit.

We took our meals when the situation allowed it. Mostly, we stayed under the mattresses. The Rossignols, instructors who lived next door to the church, joined us. Soon after, about fifty other peo-

ple -- nuns and others preparing to be nuns -moved into our building. Fierce fighting broke out and at one point, the American soldiers almost attacked our building. We managed to warn them that we were all civilians, and it became necessary to evacuate the building. When we tried to make our way to the chapel there was street fighting everywhere! Civilians as well as the VC and American soldiers were running everywhere. We saw my Vietnamese mother-in-law with Jean-Vincent, Cosette and Nanou. They joined us and the American soldiers helped us get behind the chapel. We thought our last moments had arrived.

The Rossignols attempted to take refuge at the Faculty of Sciences building where everyone was being directed and which was now empty. We encountered a guard who refused to let anyone in. After a discussion, he allowed us entry but we were only given access to a room which was approximately 4 meters square. There wasn't food for anyone but at least we were not homeless. We stood back to back to use the least amount of space as possible. Little Jean-Marie, who was only four years old, cried that he wanted to go back to Joan of Arc. I did the best I could to calm him, although the sounds of the all night battle kept us awake all night.

The next morning the rest of the refugees arrived, those who knew the nuns cooked some rice. We each had a small bowl. It wasn't much but a comfort to our empty stomachs. Felix and two of the nuns went back to Joan of Arc and retrieved some blankets and small survival kits. Sister Paul Xavier brought back her black habit and some consecrated host. She gave communion to all the Christians at the shelter, which was a particularly moving moment. Jean-Marie watched very closely, his eyes speaking for him. For the first time, we knew he understood the significance of communion.

As more and more refugees arrived, the guards opened bigger rooms, which was a great improvement. We were finally able to stretch out. We did not know how long we would be at the shelter, so the extra room really helped. Felix began to organize the refugees, so we could all have at least two meals a day. The Americans gave Felix some raisins, cokes, and sugar. We had to guard them very closely, so that Franqoise and Jean-Marie could eat a little better.

The only place to do laundry was in the Perfume River. It was not safe to go there by yourself, so the Americans took us by bus. A group of journalists arrived and informed us through their intermediary that they had requested our evacuation through the American Consulate. On Feb. 11, 1968, all the nuns, the Rossignols, my mother-in-law and her children, and the Philippino family, and the doctor married to a French woman were able to get on a boat. The priests, including Fathers Poncet, Petit-Jean and Neyroud, stayed at the Providence School. The Viet Cong put Father Lefas and another Frenchman up against a wall. The VC thought they had a grenade in their pocket. They were saved when they discovered it was just a battery. We had to stay on the boat at Hue until February 12, because it was not safe to move. A helicopter arrived and escorted us to Da Nang.

When we arrived at the Da Nang American Consulate, Mary Ange and the Mother Superior of the Sacred Heart School greeted us. I had become sick on the boat and arrived wrapped in a blanket. We arrived at the school where we ate a good meal of meat and rice soup -- what a luxury! It was the first hot meal we had had in 12 days. For the first time, we enjoyed a little tranquility. It felt good to sleep in a warm bed. One could not describe the difference in accommodations, it was wonderful.

The city of Hue was still under attack and suffered enormous damage. The Joan of Arc School was destroyed, and the coffee we had stored there was stolen and sold by the VC. The VC looted many buildings, and some personally profited from their attack by selling our coffee crop for a good price. The main bridge, which spanned the Perfume River, was cut in half by the VC and the ferry remained the only way to get to Hue.

We were now refugees in Da Nang. Two days after our arrival, we learned that the VC somewhere near the Hue Canal had beaten Father Poncet and Father Cressonnier. Felix was devastated by the news and could not bring himself to tell me. Sister Xavier was the one who finally broke that news to me. When two of the Fathers learned that a nun had been seriously wounded in Hue at a location still under control of the VC, they returned to help her. Mr. Llinaires accompanied the Fathers. The VC executed

both of the Fathers. No one ever learned why. Mr. Llinaires was wounded in the wrist and barely escaped by hiding in a trench.

After 14 days, Father Cressonier's Thi-Ba, the woman who was responsible for the priest home, was finally able to enter the liberated zone. Unbelievably, the bodies of the two Fathers were still where they had fallen. Her and another women placed the bodies in sacks and brought them back to the home of the priest where they were temporarily buried in the back yard. In time, they would be interred at the Priest Cemetery in the District of the Citadel. The cruelty of the VC was incredible -- how many other priests died, attempting to save a child, or say Mass is unknown.

The VC committed many atrocities. There was a group of German doctors who served at the Mission of the Order of Malte. They worked at the hospital at Hue, serving the entire population. One was a pediatrician and the others were general practitioners. One of their wives was pregnant and expecting her third baby. The VC kidnapped them and for a time, it was rumored that they had been taken to treat the wounded VC. Unfortunately, that proved to be untrue when they were found executed. One female German doctor who escaped execution, later returned to Germany with her three children.

Most of the massacres took place outside of Hue City on the plain going towards the Benedictine Monastery of Thien-An. Two French Fathers were among those massacred. Father Urbain and Father Guy had made a wrong turn and were captured by the VC. They, like the others, were made to dig their own graves. When the city was finally liberated, many corpses were found, some only half buried. It was hard to believe human beings could be responsible for such an abomination.

After the city of Hue was completely liberated, Felix and a group of nuns went to see the devastation. Felix took notes and recorded the widespread devastation. The Joan of Arc School suffered extensive damage. Felix, Fathers Lefas, Duval, Neyroud, along with Monsignor Urrutia, Jean-Vincent Poilane, and a Frenchmen who lived with the Fathers began salvage work at the school. I stayed in Hue with the children while they rotated back and forth from Da Nang to Hue as limited space on airplanes allowed.

We continued living at Sacred Heart, and had a very large room on the first floor. Most of our friends were leaving Viet Nam and returning to France. The Americans provided abundant food for the orphans who lived at the school. We ate at the sisters' guest table and were able to pay for our meals with the money we had received from the six tons. of coffee we had sold from the plantation at Khe Sanh. We made our own clothes from the American surplus, some of the dresses looked very nice. My mother-in-law and friends would also send us clothes -- clothes for Felix and the children that could not be found at the school. Time passed slowly, Khe Sanh was still under siege. Hopes of ever returning were starting to fade. The Montagnards were allowed to evacuate their villages. Most of them traveled by foot to Cam-Lo. They could not stay in their villages as they were completely out of food.

On April 9, 1968, Khe Sanh was finally liberated. Felix was ecstatic and immediately began contacting American authorities through a Philippine friend who spoke perfect English. Felix wanted to return to the plantation to see how much, if anything, remained. The Americans were reluctant, they said it was still very dangerous, the VC were still very close. Finally, they informed Felix he could return on April 12. Upon hearing the news, I hid his passport, as I did not want him to go back to Khe Sanh. He told me he was going, with or without a passport. Although I still did not want him to go, I returned it. On April 13, 1968, he departed by plane to Khe Sanh.

I did not hear from him on Easter Sunday, 14 April 1968, and immediately sensed something was wrong. A journalist informed Mother Angel of the tragic news. She kept it from me until Monday morning, fearing I would not sleep the night before. She sent for me on Monday, the pale look on her face told me something was indeed wrong. She informed me that something had happened at Khe Sanh, and that she was going to the American Consulate to learn the details. When I tried to go with her she refused, making me wait for her return. She returned and informed me that Felix's plane had been shot down over Khe Sanh. Felix was the only civilian on board. He died in the crash, with five of the fourteen military passengers being injured. One

later died. The same nun that went to the consulate located the hospital where Felix's body had been brought. She and the other nuns took care of everything for me. They made the notifications to his mother, took care of the administrative papers, and ordered a coffin. I informed her of my wish to have his body returned to France. The nuns tried to dissuade me. The priests wanted to bury him next to Father Poncet. If he could have spoken to me, maybe that would have been his desire. I did not know, he loved this country so much.

The Americans embalmed his body and returned it to us on April 17, 1968. He was laid out in a little room that served as an office for the chapel. He was dressed in his dark, navy blue suit. A little drop of water and blood came falling from his right ear from time to time. He appeared to have just gone to sleep and was at peace. A tri-colored ribbon and simple bouquet of flowers adorned his coffin. Francoise and Jean-Marie had grim faces. Jean-Marie was especially affected. He came, looked at his Father, left and went back again. At five years old, he could not understand what was happening. Father Petit-Jean remained close to me to get me through the ordeal. I hugged Felix for a long time, his face against mine.

On 18 April 1968, funeral services were held at the Cathedral of Da Nang. Nine priests co-celebrated the mass, which was said by the Vietnamese parish priest. They were all his friends. Father Lefas eulogized Felix in a very solemn way. He had felt particular pain, as Felix was his student at the College of Providence at Hue. Among the many mourners was the lieutenant who had authorized Felix's plane trip; he felt responsible.

After the ceremony, the Americans took the body to Saigon to await transportation to France. I returned to Hue City with the nuns to clear up affairs with the bank. I found the city destroyed. It was still a dangerous time to be in Hue and several times during the night we had to hide on the first floor. Due to the still continuing dangerous situation in Vietnam, there was a delay in our leaving. During this time I could not take the pressure and had to get treatment to allow me to sleep. On 22 June 1968, the children and I left for France after making sure Felix's body would be returned. My stepsisters, Cosette and Nanou, and two nuns came with us. Goodbye Vietnam, where I left so many memories. A part of my life and heart remain in that country where I knew both joy and suffering at the plantation. Life goes on and I still have the children. But Vietnam remains forever engraved in me. It is still hard to describe all these events, it was so brutal.

Felix was 37 years old when he died. He was born on April 30, 1930 at Khe Sanh, and had gone back to die at Khe Sanh.

"BATCATS" SENSOR GO TO WAR

Bill Person USAF
553rd Recon Wing



ED NOTE: *Bill Person, Captain, USAF. AFROTC, North Texas State, Pilot Training Class 60-F. Served at a radar station in New Mexico until selected in October 1962 to serve as liaison between Strike Command and USAF Security Service intercept site at Key West during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Granted a high level clearance for access to codeword material and then after an intensive Communications/ Signals Intelligence School, officer was assigned to the 6986th Radio Security Group at Wakkanai Air Station, Japan from August 1963 to May 1965. This secret radio listening post on the northern tip of Hokkaido was a hotbed location for peering behind the iron curtain to spy on the Russians. Soviet space activities, ICBM tests that pose a thermonuclear threat to the heartland of America, hostile MiGs and SAMs reacting to unarmed ferret flights, intrigue, even romance that made the futons in a cold place warmer in the midst of a cold war; it's all here.*

Bill was an intelligence officer in Vietnam, assigned to the 553Rd Recon Wing. During the war, President Johnson became alarmed with the infiltration of South Vietnam, by the North Vietnam Army.
Bill was responsible for the planning, development, training And implementation of the sensor program, especially de-

signed to aid the defenders of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, charged with blocking the infiltration routes of South Vietnam.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The events described in this book took place in 1967 to 1968 when I was involved in a Priority One military project involving sensors.



The war in Southeast Asia was not going well and it was losing favor with the public. The White House, Lyndon B. Johnson and Robert S. McNamara seemed to be telling those fighting the war to make it an "enemy friendly" effort. It was resisting a war instead of assisting the Saigon government froma takeover from Hanoi. That was like a doctor telling his patient "let's hold off on the treatment and give the cancer a chance."

Seeing the way Washington was fighting the war in Vietnam left me depressed and angry. The communications intercept work at Wakkanai was extremely fascinating but again there were those who found delight in personal empire-building.

Now, Stewart Air Force Base in New York offered more problems to contend with on two more directions.

Major General Gordon **H.** Austin assumed command in what would be his final assignment before retiring. He had spent most of his career in fighters so he had little interest in the forming of the 553rd Reconnaissance Wing at Otis. Additionally, this Eastern NORAD/CONAD commander also took command of 1st Air Force and 26th Air Division hosted at the same base. The previous commander had never used the Special Security Office and Major Darrell Dubrow had never met either commander.

An additional problem came when I discovered that Army Lieutenant Colonel Neal Dawson insisted on changing the way an SSO shop should be changed to be like his Directorate of Intelligence section.

I had the job of changing these major problems and getting General Austin to finally learn about Special Intelligence information but also to truly support the new Recon Wing.
When I did this, I decided I also wanted to join

this new Batcat Wing.

The military War College produces detailed contingency plans for numerous possible emergency situations that may arise in the future. This prompted The reasoning that once that particular activity happens; there would be too little time to start planning

Secretary McNamara had charged the Jason Group with a problem to solve what would stop the support from Hanoi for waging the war in South Vietnam. The 27 member think tank that comprised "our brightest minds" came up with a plausible idea. The JCS, Joint-Chiefs-of-Staff did not care for it, but McNamara liked it and called for COLLEGE NINE, nine college professors to develop the project. The plan was to adapt the Navy Anti-Submarine Warfare system to a land application. Sonobuoy listeners were converted to ground type sensors that could detect activity in the jungles and be identified on radio receivers in an airborne platform. A sufficient number of Navy EC-121s were mothballed at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, and the appropriate ARR-52 radios were an on-shelf available items.

McNamara approved the final proposed plan and renamed it PRACTICE NINE.

On January 13, 1967, the National Security Action Memorandum number 358 was signed at the White House by W.W Rostow or Walt W. Rostow, Deputy Director to National Security Council. It assigned the highest National Priority for the Mk84, Mod 1, a 2000 pound bomb and to Project PRACTICE NINE. This was the implementation of the sensor program which was later called IGLOO WHITE. This was the second time this highest, or Priority One was used. The first time was the Manhattan Project to develop the atom bomb.

The people in charge had determined America no longer needed conventional bombs because we had atomic and thermonuclear weapons. ICBMs, sub-launched Polaris missiles and Strategic Air Command's big B-52s would keep America safe. Wars needing conventional weapons were now passe. All of the vast inventory had been sold to a foreign company who wanted to use the chemicals in industrial applications. This included acres and acres of the 250, 500 and 750 pound bombs. However, before even a small amount of the bombs could be moved, Vietnam happened. The repurchase price was many times higher than the sold price although they had never left the open storage bomb farm facility. The government spokesperson commented that this was done because it was too costly to maintain such a huge number of previously believed unneeded and deteriorating ordnance. Truth was that once the government cashed the purchasing check, ownership rested with the new owner regardless of their disposition. The German company was allowed to be compensated for anticipated profits to be derived from the sale of reprocessed otherwise explosive chemicals int6 a new useful civilian product.

A massive restoration of these aging bombs sped on for the war effort in Vietnam, but the secretive wars in Laos and the Congo raged on to use up a lot of the smaller ordnance units. This was because the smaller North American Corporation built T-28D trainer was the predominate plane in use in both far off places. Thousands of the T-28s were mothballed' because the Navy and Air Force ordered newer planes.

Getting trained men with proper equipment and supplies to a distant hot spot was a huge problem. From the time a situation needing action is identified and an appropriate response can be accomplished can take a while. This happened to members of the new 553rd Reconnaissance Wing and also in a related type secretive project. While the 553rd Batcat mission to locate targets passively in Laos on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the secret combat units trained at Hurlburt were to put those bombs on them. The EC-121R Super Constellation could operate from a base in Thailand and fly at high altitudes for long periods of time. However the short ranged T-28 Trojan needed to be closer to the action, and too, we were not suppose to be in Laos; the Congo either. Both were "by invitation only" wars.

PRACTICE NINE was to be developed at the same time the personnel were training in the use of the refurbished camouflaged EC-121R Connies and its sensor equipment. The paths of these two separate projects were mere miles apart on the Florida coast at Eglin and Hurlburt Air Force Bases. The 553rd Reconnaissance Wing was dubbed Batcats because

of their pending role in the war.

Volunteer Cuban mercenaries were trained and sent to the Congo while the CIA recruited and trained "borrowed" U.S military Caucasian personnel as well as some civilians for Laos. The reasoning was that the slightly darker faces needed to be sent to the darker Congo while the paler faces belonged in Laos. Hurlburt AFB, Florida was horne to most of this specialty super secret combat training and the Cubans intermixed with Americans there. The local Florida coastal residents, civilian and military were subjected to the frequent buzzing of T-28 Trojans like so many annoying bees.

My first contact with these special "civilians" was in Bangkok, Thailand in April 1965. Because of the exposure of such close contact with the Cuban volunteers who were exiled from their island home, some influence naturally rubbed off on the others. A special comical greeting arose from this association with the Spanish/Cuban culture and was carried over with real enthusiasm into Thailand and Laos. Being from Texas, I laughed heartily when I first heard it.

"Hey-ey-ey **PEEDro!"**

Of course it was an inside special greeting joke, but I recognized it for what it was the first time I ever heard it. The Air America Choctaw H-34 helicopter pilots began using Pedro as a call sign. Someone created a bigger than life sized plywood cutout image of a skinny Pedro with a huge ***charro sombrero*** that covered his face. It was displayed next to the one the resctie people had of the now famous: "Jolly HO HO HO, Green Giant!"

IGLOON WHITE PROJECT

President Johnson was concerned with the war in South Vietnam and the lack of favor of the American public. He did not want to increase the war against North Vietnam but somehow wished to restrict the supply of arms into South Vietnam.

Professors Jerome Wiesner of MIT and George Kistiakowsky of Harvard recruited the Jason Study Group to meet at Wellesley. Their proposal was a more passive, less destructive approach to an all out bombing of North Vietnam and blockading their ports.

Robert S. McNamara directed the Jason Group, a 47 member "think tank' to provide a means to deny men and supplies to the war.

"Infringe on the flow of men and materials to South Vietnam," was the wording.

This group decided to use the Navy Anti-Submarine Warfare system to be used on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This system used sonic sensing probes dropped from P2V Neptunes up to the plane's ARR-52, Aircraft Radio Receivers. These items were already in use and so were Navy and Air Force C-121 Constellations in mothballs at Davis- Monthan AFB, Arizona.

McNamara and Johnson were desperate for a low cost method for the poor showing of the badly run war. However, the project he wanted cost over a billion dollars for not buying the planes or radios to be used. He approved a closer look at a completed study which was the brainchild of two college professors and seven others joined them in this planning group.

It was codenamed COLLEGE NINE, for 'a stitch in time saves lives,' as directed by the White House to fulfill Johnson's requirement.
National Security Action Memorandum No. 358 was signed on January 13, 1967, with a rating "Assignment of the Highest National Priority to the Mk 84, Mod 1 2000 Ib Bomb and to Project PRACTICE NINE. This was first used for the MANHATTAN PROJECT, the development of the atom bomb.

Army Lt.Gen. Alfred Starbird was named as head of the Defense Communications Planning Group overriding the Department of Defense for the project. DCPG was located in the old Navy building in Washington.

The system modified the existing Navy system for an anti- filtration project by using sensors and monitoring radios. It was changed to ILLINOIS CITY on June 14, 1967. Then again to DYE MARKER on July 14, 1967. MUSCLE SHOALS was the new codename on September 13, 1967. Then once in place in SEA in December 1967, as a part of Task Force Alpha, a mostly civilian outfit at Nakhon Phanom. Later it renamed IGLOO WHITE in June

1968. The IBM 360 processing section was known as Infiltration Surveillance Center.

Electronics Systems Development part of MIT's Research Electronics, ESDMITRE developed the modified ground sensors. It was determined that an anti-probing means needed to be installed that had an explosion bomb inside to avoid detection or examination from the enemy. The sound affects of the sensor let the sensor monitors know when that sensor was captured and when it exploded by enemy inspection.

The C-121s were flown from Davis-Monthan to Ontario, California for modification. This meant removing the radars and domes to install racks of ARR-52 radio receivers with antennas and painting the planes a camouflaged color. Lockheed was the plane manufacturer and they joined with Martin-Marietta in Baltimore to complete the changeover.

Defense Communications Planning Group was then the final authority for this sensor project and they hired VITRO for testing at Eglin AFB, Florida.

There were other names for this project like DUNE MOON and POT LID and the Navy VO-67 was named DUEL BLADE and MUD RIVER.
I was part of the testing at Eglin but only for the flying part. I saw DCPG's mock-up sensors but did not see the final sensor package. New large buildings with four derrick mounted antennas were built at Nakhon Phanom (Naked Phanny) for Task Force Alpha which became IGLOO WHITE.

Small Air Force electronic technicians and some Navy techs too, handled the sensors. This was done at NKP and Ubon where these sensors were placed in Laos and Vietnam.

The Navy also had another group at NKP that flew P2V Neptunes over the Ho Chi Minh Trail to emplace sensors and monitor their signals. The Combat Intelligence Monitors were primarily intended as back-up since TFA's ISC was supposed to handle all the intercepts from active sensors while the Connies were merely a relay part. DCPG back in D.C. determined that we did not need to have too many Air Force guys up in the air over there. They came up with a single engine plane, a Beechcraft F-33 Debonair with a remote controlled system. This plane could not climb high enough to transmit signals to reach TFA's antennas. Khe Sanh and other orbits south of the DMZ restricted the signal to reach NKP.

A pilot had to fly the plane to override the remote control system and it was limited on the number of sensor inputs from the ground.

I met a pilot who had to bailout of this troubled QU -22 'Mini- bat' .

Nothing worked properly so the Batcats managed to make the sensor program work, especially at Khe Sanh and other Army camps near the DMZ. ISC's IBM 360 was not programmed to handle enemy activities around Khe Sanh and other bases in South Vietnam.

My story is about how we used the sensor inputs to work despite what McNamara and DCPG planned. This was a first hand observation approach to fight the ground war.

I briefed President Johnson in September 1968 to see that he proposed using the sensor program the way DCPG intended and knew that the Batcats, as I knew them, would end.
I worked with CIM training at Otis to train newer crews of what I knew were working back at Korat. Shortly afterwards I was sent down to Eglin AFB on IGNITION SWITCH to test improved sensors yet to be sent to Thailand. I then went TOY to California to test a new sensor program designed by Hughes Aircraft, Electronics Department. We flew to Navy Air Base Los Alamitos to fly our test flights out over the Pacific.

We stayed at Buena Park next to Knots Berry Farm, the Wax Museum and Disneyland.

Hughes' test failed and we were sent back again as DCPG wanted that equipment approved. I used my technicians to help change a few things to pass their test.

Hughes got a lot of money for this project on equipment we never used.

I did fly one of our EC-121Rs down to Davis-Monthan AFB to mothball it. We were told that the

plane had to be made ready to fly again so all its problems were fixed in case it was needed again.

While I watched this process, several men in coveralls came in to start removing all the ARR-52s, the AN/ARC 89 S band ADR relay device and all our communications radios. I asked but was told to ignore seeing the sensor backend equipment being recovered by the Navy.

After I was the sent to McClellan AFB, I was told to go back to Arizona to recover the mothballed plane to take it to Tel Aviv Israel. We were selling one of our planes to Israeli's Air Force and I was to go over to teach them how to use the equipment.

I told my boss that this could be done because I had seen all the sensor equipment removed. They believed me and the program was cancelled.

It would have been an interesting trip for me since I knew was getting out on July 31, 1971.

I knew that everything was changing with our sensor program over in SEA and that there was no future for this program.

The Navy's Observation Squadron Sixty-Seven (VO -67) existed for just a little over a year, a total of 500 days, from February 1967 to July 1968. The "Observation" in the name is meaningless. It hid, at the time, what was a highly classified mission. The "67" stood for the year it came into being. VO-67 was a vital part of project Muscle Shoals. The mission of the project was to detect, classify, hinder and penalize the North Vietnamese Army infiltration into the South. Steel Tiger was the code name for the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos. IGLOO WHITE was the code-name for the technologies associated with the project located at NKP and operated by USAF Task Force Alpha.

After intense personnel training and extensive modifications to twelve P2V-S Neptune aircraft, now OP-2E's, the squadron deployed to Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, nine miles from the Laotian boarder. Since being officially declassified in 1998 the story of this unique aircraft squadron can now be told. Do to its then very sensitive and secret operations, few records were made or exist. Because its flight crews were constantly in jeopardy of being shot down and captured few details of individual combat missions, performance, and accomplishments were shared. Each squadron member had his part of the story and little else. The many acts of heroism and sacrifice the flight crews endured will forever remain undocumented.

The concept of the VO-67 mission was not totally unique. As Navy ASW crews search for and track submarines in our world's oceans, VO-67 would search the sea of green jungle in Laos and Vietnam for truck and troop movements south along the famous "Ho Chi Minh Trail". The dangerous air space above the trail, "The Hard Air", that place where death lingered will remain etched in the minds of all who served there. The trail was regarded as one of the most heavily defended areas in the Vietnam War. Many 37 and S7mm radar controlled AAA guns 'Firecan' and small arms awaited the slow lumbering OP-2E Neptune's as they made there long straight line run in to implant the coded sensors. The squadron would eventually implant several thousand "Acoubuoys" (electronic listening devices) along the trail. At times approaching the target area at 50 feet above the terrain then popping up to 500 feet just before the target, implant sensors, and then a max-power jinking clime out. VO-67 was also the only aircraft squadron, of any service, to use the famous Norden Bombsight during the Vietnam War. The sight was used to implant the "Adsid" sensor, Air Delivered Seismic Detection Sensor, at altitudes of 2000 to 3000 feet.

The squadron has also been cited for its intense aerial support of the Marine base at **Khe Sanh,** South Vietnam, during the 1968 Tet Offensive. VO-67 implanted sensor fields around the base that was under siege by over 20,000 NVA troops supported tanks and anti-aircraft weapons. Marines at the base believe their casualties would have been double had the sensors not been used. In 2005 the enlisted combat flight crews of VO-67 were awarded the silver "Combat Aircrew Wings "by the Marine Corps, a high honor indeed.

Estimates of 75% loss of VO-67 Aircraft and combat crews by planners fortunately did not oc-

cur. Thanks to the Air Force FAC Pilots training and intelligence reports only 3 aircraft and 20 crewmembers were lost. The FAC Pilots taught the VO-67 pilots how to survive the heavily defended air space over the trail.

The men of VO-67 were dedicated to the mission they assigned. After each aircraft shot down with the loss of their close friends and fellow airmen, their resolve became more determined to stop the flow of war supplies down the Ho Chi Minh trail.

The VO-67 ground support teams were also extremely instrumental in the success of this special mission. VO-67 never lost an engine and operational aircraft were always ready for the next mission without fail.

When the squadron was abruptly disestablished in June of 1968,its members were scattered to the winds. Squadron members were sworn to secrecy and ordered never to talk about the mission they had participated in.

The VO-67 Squadron, an amazing and dedicated group of men that made up this very unique squadron assigned a mission never before performed. Throughout the history of our great nation, men like these came from all walks of life in times of need and performed unbelievable feats and many made the ultimate sacrifice for love of country, democracy and their fellow man.

VO-67 History

HUNTING FOR SUBMARINES IN THE MEKONG RIVER?

SEE: Additional History - VPNAVY - VO-67

At the height of the Vietnam War, a secret Navy 12 plane squadron arrived at the Nakhon Phanom Air Commando base in Thailand. The squadron aircraft were old P2V-SF anti-submarine patrol planes that had been considerably modified into armed, jungle green gun ships. Of course, every would-be comic that saw them at Nakhon Phanom asked, What's the Navy going to do, hunt for subs in the Mekong?

North Vietnam was moving massive amounts of munitions by truck and troops down the Ho Chi Minh Trail undetected in mid-1966. Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara was opposed to attacking North Vietnam military targets and infrastructure and to stopping the movement of war materials into North Vietnam by mining their harbors as advocated by the military. In the fall of 1966, he ordered the military to submit a proposed plan for an anti-infiltration system designed to stop or greatly reduce the flow of men and war material from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. The quickest solution available was to modify and employ the Navy's sonobuoy (a listening device used to detect submarines underwater) to implant in the jungle canopy to detect the movement of NVA trucks and troops.

The converted sonobouys, dubbed 'Acoubuoys', were camouflaged jungle green and parachuted into the jungle, snagged in the top jungle canopy, and hung unseen high off the ground.

Sensitive microphones that replaced the hydrophones could pick up the sound of truck and troop movement below.
The Navy had a number of anti-submarine aircraft in its inventory with sonobuoy racks installed and capable of delivering the modified listening devices.
The Navy determined that available P2V-SFs would be the quickest and the best delivery platform to modify for implanting the modified sonobuoys along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

By this stage of the war, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) had heavily fortified the trail with highly mobile ZPU-23mm, 37mm, and some radar controlled S7mm guns. Survivability of the slow, lumbering P2V-SF in this environment was questionable. But the need was urgent; our troops in South Vietnam were taking heavy casualties. The Defense Department decided to deploy the P2V-SFs to provide an interim capability until Air Force F-4 jets could be modified to take over the task.

The initial overhaul was done in three phases at the Martin Aircraft Company in Baltimore, MD. This overhaul and replacement of electronics included installing new self-sealing bladder fuel tanks (capable of holding 2800 gallons of fuel and sustaining small arms and shrapnel hits),

and painting the aircraft a flat, jungle green. After this modification, the aircraft were redesignated as the OP-2E.

Modifications to the aircraft continued well into the deployment and operational phase of the squadron. Much of the modification work was done by the VO-67 squadron maintenance organization. The APS-20E submarine search radar, with its large radar dome, and the MAD gear and boom (used to magnetically detect submerged submarines) were removed. Wingtip tanks were removed and extensive armor plating was added, primarily in the bombardier's nose station, cockpit, flight deck, and the aft gunner's stations to protect the crews. Two under wing SUU-ll six-barreled mini guns were installed

A 'Chaff' dispenser was added aft where the MAD boom had protruded. LORAN C, a new version of the Long Range Aide to Navigation, replaced the old LORAN system used by the Navy at that time and was used to drop sensors during the monsoon season Internal mounts for the M-60 machine guns were installed at both hatches in the after station of the OP-2E aircraft. These hand-held 7.62mm guns fired 550 rounds per minute and were manned by two crewmembers.

To facilitate egress for the crew forward of the wing beam to bailout, the deck hatch to the nose gear tunnel was enlarged. Threat-detection electronics and a terrain-clearance radar were added. Bomb bay racks were fabricated to carry additional Acoubuoys. A Norden bombsight as installed in the plexiglass nose of the OP-2E.

This was the result of the added mission of implanting the Air-delivered Seismic Detection Sensor (ADSID) that presented a problem that the old P2V aircraft was not equipped to handle. The addition of the J-34s to the P2V-5Fs had reduced the under-wing launch stubs from 16 to 8 stations.VO-67 overcame this shortage of stations by using MER weapon racks that could hold three ADSIDS on each of these eight stations. However, the real problem was the lack of an accurate delivery system for the ADSIDS. Navy patrol plane pilots dropped sonobuoys and torpedoes at low altitude by sight or timing. An accurate means of dropping the ADSID from 2500 feet or higher was needed.

The Norden bombsight had been used extensively in WW-II and had been installed in the Navy's PB4Y-2 aircraft. VO-67 requested Norden bombsights and after demonstrating their accuracy at Eglin AFB, Pentagon officials agreed that the Norden bombsight was what was needed and had the Rock Island Arsenal overhaul twelve bombsights (for this they had to locate and recall retired WW-II Norden bombsight technicians).

An Air Force Norden bombsight instructor, Lt Col Conrad Brown, was found and sent to NAS Alameda, California to help train the bombardiers. Lt Col Brown located a battered copy of a WW-II training film on the Norden bombsight in the Smithsonian Institute. He had it shipped PRIORITY ONE to VO-67 and used it to train the Squadron bombardiers. Lt Col Brown deployed with the squadron to continue training the VO-67 third pilots who developed into qualified bombardiers.

The first flight of three OP-2Es departed NAS Alameda, California on 6 November 1967 for Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base (NKP) in Thailand led by CAPT Wallace 'Wally' Sharp. The last flight of three OP-2Es arrived at Nakhon Phanom on 15 November 1967. Much credit for the smooth deployment must be given to the Air Force Military Air Transport service for the professional job they did in moving the rest of the squadron. Eighteen C-141s arrived at NAS Alameda, California right on schedule. Because of the runway landing Weight limitations at Nakhon Phanom, each C-141 was limited to 45,000 pounds of cargo. One after another they were efficiently loaded and departed with loads ranging from large electronic vans to administrative files. In all, they airlifted 629,021 pounds of VO-67 personnel and cargo to NKP.

The personnel compliment of VO-67 when they arrived at NKP was 1 Captain, 8 Commanders, 3 Commander Selectees,5 Lieutenant Commanders, 40 junior officers, 23 Chief Petty Of-

ficers, 220 rated enlisted personnel, and 14 Airmen. They also had 5 civilian representatives attached to the squadron; 1 from Lockheed, 1 from Hazeltine, 1 from Martin Marietta, and 2 from Sandia Lab.

On arrival at Nakhon Phanom, the VO-67 pilots immediately began flying combat missions with the Air Force FACs (Forward Air Controllers) in the small Cessna 0-2A (Nail) aircraft to familiarize themselves with the Ho Chi Minh Trail and enemy gun emplacements. The Air Force FAC pilots helped the newly arrived Navy pilots tremendously. The FAC pilots became a valuable intelligence asset to the VO-67. CAPT Sharp initiated a close working relationship shortly after VO-67's arrival at NKP by inviting the FAC pilots to a party with the VO-67 pilots at the NKP Officer's club. The FACs flew every day and night and kept track, for their own survival and that of the strike aircraft they marked the targets for, of where the North Vietnamese moved their antiaircraft guns. The FACs that had flown the night before provided the latest NVA triple-A firing positions for the following day's VO-67 combat missions.

Close friendships developed among the Air Force FAC and Navy pilots; two of them were highly instrumental in the later rescue of seven VO-67 crew members after their plane was hit by AAA fire and they bailed out over hostile territory. The Air Force 0-2A FAC, A-1E, and Navy VO-67 pilots at Nakhon Phanom quickly bonded into a mutual respect support group.

Each VO-67 crew was responsible for planning their own assigned missions. They studied the NVA triple-A gun positions and terrain to determine the safest light path and altitude profile in and out of the target area. Some missions were as simple as diving from 12,000 feet on the sensor implant heading, leveling off at drop altitude, slowing to drop airspeed, laying the sensor string, and climbing back to 12,000 feet and heading home. Drop altitude for the Acoubuoys was always 500 feet.

The ADSIDS were dropped from 2,500 feet and later 5,000 feet. Missions in heavy areas of enemy AAA concentrations required the crews to use terrain masking wherever possible. The high karst outcroppings in some target areas were ideal for this tactic. Some called for jinking dives to sensor implant altitude and numerous heading changes to the target to avoid the anti-aircraft gun emplacements. Acoubuoy drops in heavily defended areas were made by running into the area at tree top level, popping up to 500 feet, laying the sensors, dropping back to the deck and flying safest route out.

On 11 January 1968, the VO-67 Executive Officer (XO), CDR Dell Olson, was on an Acoubuoy drop mission over the Ho Chi Minh Trail; at 9:57 AM radio contact with his aircraft was lost (the FAC working the mission had also lost visual contact with the OP-2E). Two other OP-2Es were working the trail that morning. They tried to reestablish radio contact with Crew 2. One OP-2E went under the overcast and spent three hours searching the area. There were some karst outcropping in the area but it was mostly dense jungle. The base of the overcast was above the highest terrain in the area so they were able to search the whole area. The jungle was so dense in most places that a plane crashing into it would not leave a discernible entry point and the crash could not be seen from the air. No trace of the Crew 2 aircraft was found by the searching VO-67 aircraft.

On 23 January an Air Force A-1 located a suspected crash site. On 25 January an 0-2 from Nakon Phanom photographed the site. Photo interpretation determined that the wreckage was that of BUNO 131436, Crew 2's aircraft. It was located on the north side of a cliff, 150 feet below the 4,583-foot ridgeline. Due to the hostile environment in the crash site area, it was decided not to insert an Investigation and Recovery team.

On February 17, 1968, CDR Glenn Hayden and his Crew 5 were dropping Acoubuoys over the trail in Laos. He had two F-4 escorts out of DaNang and an 0-2A FAC spotter. After coming off his first target run, CDR Hayden reported that they had been hit by small arms fire in the starboard wing but were continuing on with their second assigned target run. During the second run, the fighter escort radioed to the OP-2E

that its starboard engine was on fire, CDR Hayden acknowledged and reported that he was aborting the mission and returning to base.

The F-4s climbed through the overcast with the intention of joining the OP-2E on top and escorting him back to base. The last radio transmission they heard from the OP-2E was, 'We're beat up pretty bad .... .'. The F-4s dropped back down below the overcast and found the burning wreckage of the OP-2E; no parachutes were seen or emergency beepers were heard.

Ten days later, VO-67 suffered its third combat loss on 27 February. CDR Paul Milius's OP-2E was shot down while implanting sensors in Laos. The aircraft was flying at 5,000 feet above the jungle tops. There weren't any 57mm radar controlled guns reported to be in the area of his drop, but if it wasn't that, had to be the best 37mm gun crew in the world. No flack was spotted before the aircraft was hit, so it almost had to be a direct hit on the first salvo. The aircraft was hit in the radar well area where the old APS -20E radar had been removed. One crewman, P02 John F. Hartzheim, was killed instantly. The hydraulic and electrical systems were severely damaged and the aircraft immediately filled with acrid smoke and fumes. CDR Milius ordered his crew to bail out. He remained at the controls of the stricken aircraft until the remaining seven crewmen had successfully bailed out.

One 02 FAC pilot, Major Sam Weaver, flew alongside MR-7 as the crew bailed out and kept a plot where each crewman had landed. Another FAC pilot, Major Phil Maywald also came to assist in the rescue. The 'Sandys', A-1H aircraft, that provided fire protection for downed airmen, and the rescue helicopters, better known as the 'Jolly Greens' and 'Buffs', were soon on the scene. Sandys were from the 602nd Fighter Commando Squadron and helicopters from the 37th Air Rescue Squadron at Nakhon Phanom participated in the rescue along with other Air Rescue Recovery Squadrons from DaNang and Udorn. The FACs vectored the helos to each of the downed crewmen. Since they were in a very hostile area, the helos wasted no time in picking up the crew and getting out of there.

CDR Milius was seen to bailout, but never located and listed as MIA. He was promoted to the Rank of Captain on 1 July 1972. On 26 April 1978, he was officially pronounced 'presumed killed in action' and posthumously awarded the Navy Cross.

On 23 November 1996, the Aegis Guided Missile Destroyer Milius (DDG 69) was commissioned in his honor at the Ingalls Shipbuilding, Pascagoula, Mississippi.

On 29 February 1968, two days after MR-7 was shot down, the last one of the 12 fully modified OP-2Es arrived at NKP. With the three losses, VO-67 was now a nine-plane squadron. MR-ll was repainted to MR-7 and the rescued members of Crew 7 continued to fly as a crew.

The North Vietnamese Tet offensive of 1968 was an all-out effort to take the U.S. Marine Base at Khe Sanh. On 22 January 1968 VO-67 commenced implanting extensive Acoubuoy sensor fields around the combat base and it's approaches to assist in lifting the siege of the Marine stronghold.

The special bomb bay racks to hold additional Acoubuoys in the OP-2E were used for the first time in the close-in support of Khe Sanh. These Acoubuoy flights were classic mission profiles of Squadron developed tactics and what they had trained for in California and Florida. The OP-2Es came into the area skimming above the jungle tree tops or rivers, popped up to 500 feet, laid their string of sensors, dropped back down on the deck, and got the hell out of there as fast as the old, lumbering patrol planes would take them!

Estimates of the number of North Vietnamese that took part in the siege of Khe Sanh vary, but most agree there were upwards of 20,000 NVA troops supported by tanks and anti-aircraft weapons. The latter accounted for eight U.S. aircraft during January and February. VO-67 flight crews that participated in implanting Acquobuoys in defense of Khe Sanh were awarded the Navy Commendation Metal with Combat 'V' for missions that were, of the very highest priority' and for achieving their goals, '-- despite poor

weather, rugged terrain and enemy defenses which included surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft guns'.

On May 25 1968, the Chief of Naval Operations set the date for the disestablishment of VO-67 as of 1 July 1968. At that time the mission was to be taken over by the Air Force's 25th Tactical Fighter Squadron. In June of 1968, the squadron received a message from the Navy disestablishing VO-67.As of 1 July 1968, the squadron no longer existed; personnel were ordered to return to the States for further assignment.

The last squadron combat mission implanting sensors was on 25 June 1968. VO-67 lost 25% of its aircraft in combat and 20 crewmen, less than half of what the planners had expected and predicted. This was due to the outstanding airmanship of one of the finest multi-engine squadrons ever assembled.

However, a large part of the credit must be given to the Air Force FAC pilots at NKP and the training and intelligence they provided the VO-67 pilots. They taught the VO-67 pilots the Ho Chi Minh Trail and how to survive in the air spaces over it. The FAC pilots returning from night missions would mark the maps in NKP Intelligence with the location of the AAA guns they saw firing. This knowledge was an invaluable contribution to the survival of the OP -2E missions the next day.

Capt Sharp became fast friends with Lt Col Palaster, the Commanding Officer of the 0-2 FAC Squadron, as did many of the VO-67 pilots. He was so respected that when he was promoted to full Colonel while at Nakhon Phanom, the officers of VO-67 threw him a traditional Navy 'wetting down' party and made him an Honorary Naval Aviator.

The FAC pilots flying the little 02 aircraft came from Air Force fighter, attack, and even SAC commands and their daring and courage was respected by all the Air Force, Navy, and Marine pilots in the Vietnam War. The Navy and VO-67 owe a deep debt of gratitude to these brave pilots and good friends.

Air Force reported that truck kills tripled, for a like period, after the sensors were implanted and used How many American and South Vietnamese lives were saved by the courage and sacrifices of VO-67 in successfully planting sensors along the Ho Chi Min Trail and around Khe Sanh will never be known. The to detect and pinpoint targets. Senior Marine officers estimated at casualties at the siege of Khe Sanh would have been double that experienced if it had notbeen for the sensors implanted by the VO-67 Navy crews.

Written by Larrv W. Girp

MEMORIES
New York City Vietnam Veterans "Welcome Home" Parade On May 7, 1985
By Jim Velcheck

Delta Co. 1st Bn, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division - 10/67 – 08/68

Marching in the New York City Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Parade was a memorable experience for me, one that I will never forget. What made it so memorable was the enthusiasm of the parade watchers and the camaraderie of what for many of us was the first attempt to reconnect with our fellow Vietnam Veterans; this was certainly true for me. When we first came home from Vietnam – for me that was August 1968 – we resumed our lives from where we had left off before we left for the service. Some of us had a more difficult time with that return to civilian life than others and for most of us it took some amount of time before we were ready to examine our Vietnam experiences and attempt to reconnect with those with whom we had served. This parade was held seventeen years after my return from Vietnam and pretty much corresponded with my readiness to reconnect with my Vietnam experience and comrades.

Some Vietnam Veterans I had spoken with before the parade were not interested in participating in it. They said things like "Too little, too late!". They were still bitter at the way the war was conducted and the treatment they received when they returned home from the government, veterans organizations

and from some elements of American society. They would have marched in a parade right after they came home, but because society blamed the Vietnam Veteran for a lot of the negativity associated with the war, and because of the way the war ended gradually and without a victory, the mood of the country, civilian and veteran, was not conducive to parades at the time we came home. Over time, however, society changed and realized that the veteran did not lose the war.

Welcome Home Parades were held in many cities around the country. When I heard that the NYC parade was going to be held I knew I wanted to participate. It was a wonderful experience! This change in societal attitude has evolved into support for today's war veterans and is why we now hear "Thank you for your service" from so many people. I know that some Vietnam Vets are uncomfortable hearing that , but I do appreciate hearing it and typically respond "Thank you for your Thank You; I appreciate it, we did not hear that in the past when we first came home".

I grew up in South Bound Brook, New Jersey, a small town about 30 miles outside New York City. I graduated from Bound Brook High School in 1965 and went to work at first one then another local factory. I don't remember having any early interest in joining any branch of the military. I do remember my US History teacher in high school, Mr. Weidner, telling us boys that some of us would likely serve in the military in the conflict in Vietnam that was just then heating up. I didn't think it was likely that I would. A while after graduation one of my best friends decided he was going to join the Marine Corps. I said to him "Good luck, buddy, more power to ya". I still had no interest in the military. Then he issued a dare. That got to me. I went right off to the Marine recruiting office and joined up!

Anyway, when I got out in 1968 I worked for a year and then went to college for a year. I got married to my lovely wife, Sara (45 years in February, 2016), and had three kids within 2 ½ years (first a girl then twin boys). I was too busy to think about Vietnam or the people I served with there. I was doing rotating shift work in a factory and working on the weekends as a bartender at the Riverside Pub, a local neighborhood bar in South Bound Brook co-owned by a friend of mine. So seventeen years was just about the right amount of time for me to have developed the interest in getting back in touch with my experiences and the people I served with. I'm sure that the dedication of The Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC just a few years previous to the parade was also a factor in making me ready.

During construction of The Wall I was not too interested in it. The controversy over the design and the fact that I was just so busy with life contributed to my lack of interest. But then over the months after it was dedicated I developed a strong interest in seeing it. When I finally got up the nerve to mention that to my wife the Spring after the dedication she said "You should go to DC by yourself next weekend and see The Wall." My mother had saved all the letters I sent home and she gave them all to me. I went to The Wall, got a room at the Alexandria WMCA (all I could afford) and read all the letters and cried when all the memories came flooding back. I was then ready to reconnect.



SID "FISH" PATRICIO D CO 1/26 & JIM VELCHECK D CO 1/1

The day of the parade I was working midnight shift. I took a bus into New York City to Cadman Plaza, just on the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Bridge where the parade was forming. There were thousands of Vietnam Veterans milling about. They made an announcement "All Marines to the front!" Everyone was asking "What unit were you with?" and "When were you there?" trying to reconnect with people we served with. Some people actually wrote their units and dates on the back of their shirts to let people know in their attempt to reconnect. After the officials and dignitaries stepped off to start



JIM VELCHECK's FAMILY AT VIETNAM-MEMORIAL WALL





JIM VELCHECK VIETNAM

the parade they fed in a group of 50 or so Marines. Between each group of veterans they would insert a band or some other organization. I was in that first group. I had pretty well checked out everybody in that group and didn't reconnect with anybody I had served with. They apparently didn't have a band ready so after the first group of Marines they just left a gap and then another group of 50 or so Marines.

We were in the middle of the Brooklyn Bridge when I decided I would stand to the side and wait for the next group to catch up so I could join them and check out that group. I joined the first ranks of that second group and as we came down into Manhattan we could see the crowds of people and the tickertape coming down on the first group. There was at least one fireboat in the river spraying red, white and blue water up into the air. A flight of Huey gunships flew over the bridge. It was a wonderful experience! We were coming down Broadway as pretty much just a mob when a vet in a Park Service uniform, who said he had been a DI, got out in front of us and started calling cadence. We straightened up, formed ranks and started marching like Marines!

At some point I noticed the man marching next to me on my left in that front rank was looking at me as though he recognized me. He was not someone I recognized at all. Eventually we started talking as we marched. We asked each other the usual questions, "Who were you with?" and "When were you there?" Nothing matched. He was with the 26th Marines and was in Khe Sanh for the siege. I was with 1/1 and didn't get in to the Khe Sanh area until I participated in Operation Pegasus that broke the siege and was on hills 558, 881S and 689 up until



SID "FISH" PATRICIO D CO 1/26

the Khe Sanh area was abandoned in July 1968 (Check out the photos of me on Hill 689!). He didn't look at all familiar to me. Finally, I said to him

"I don't think we know each other." He wouldn't let it go. He kept looking at me and I could see he was still trying to make the connection. Finally, he got a big smile on his face, snapped his fingers and exclaimed "I got it, you're one of the bartenders at the Riverside Pub!"

You know him as Sid Patricio, otherwise known as "Fish". I can't imagine how he got that nickname. Sid had a car repair garage in New Brunswick just a few miles away from my home and a friend of his was one of the owners of the Riverside Pub, the bar in South Bound Brook, where I was part-time bartender. He had been in a few times and recognized me from there. Small world! Sid paid my first dues for the Khe Sanh Vet organization. **I still owe you $20, Sid!**

I had my camera with me at the parade and took the accompanying pictures. I also have a DVD of the parade that was produced by an educational video company. It shows Sid and me marching in the front rank. If any of you were in that parade and would like a copy of the DVD get in touch JimVelcheck@msn.com). Included are also pictures of my wife and a couple of our kids at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Lower Manhattan that was dedicated at the same time as the parade. The only Khe Sanh Vet reunion I have made it to was the one in DC in 1993 when the Memorial Plaque and tree (See photos) were dedicated in the pouring rain! I do hope to make it to another reunion before too much longer.

Welcome Home everyone and thank you for your service!
Jim Velcheck

LOUIS F. ARMBRUSTER, CAPTAIN USAF, 20TH TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT SQUADRON AT KHE SANH

I was a FAC (Forward Air Controller), flying the O1E (Bird Dog), a little puddle jumping, high wing Cessna, 213 hp single engine, tractor propeller driven airplane with a tailwheel. It was an excellent observation platform because both side windows could be opened for a clear unobstructed view or magnified with 7X50 binoculars. Our typical ordinance was four 2.75 inch rockets, two under each wing for marking targets. I also carried rifle grenades in the pouches behind my cockpit seat with the smoke bombs. This was very low tech like Snoopy in the Peanuts cartoon flying his Sopwith Camel during WWI. I would stick a rifle grenade out the right window, pull the pin, fly a track over the intended target, estimate a reverse lead, and let go. The grenade was stabilized with a circular fin and would detonate on ground contact. It wasn't a Norton bomb sight, but with a little guesstimating practice, surprising accuracy was possible. This would be too dangerous for close air support, but a technique used with some success for harassing the enemy. We also carried an AR15 (the M16 precursor) in the airplane, because we weren't issued parachutes, and if we were forced down, any rifle would be better protection than our 6 shot .38 Special Smith & Wesson revolver. We were specifically instructed not to trade shots out the window with any enemy, especially those protected behind a tree or in a foxhole, because it wouldn't be prudent from a vulnerable position without cover.

Khe Sanh FACs flew four different types of missions while I was there. One of our missions was artillery support. Around June, 1967 I flew a Marine, 1st Lt. "Lucky" Luciano, in my back seat, while he directed a 105 mm artillery strike north of base and south of hill 1015. All I had to do was keep us out of the shells trajectory to observe impact. Another mission was going north of the DMZ into the SAM (surface to air missile) environment of North Vietnam, looking for targets of opportunity. I heard of a SAM blowing a USAF O1E out of the sky, because he was directing air strikes on a high value target. Normally, the NVA wouldn't waste a SAM on us. I was only assigned into North Vietnam two times. Still another mission was working with Army Ranger SOG patrol teams doing insertions and extractions via helicopter.

Our primary mission and about 90% of my activity involved daytime patrol of the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos. We were tasked with interdicting war supplies moving on the Ho Chi Minh trail from North Vietnam through Laos into South Vietnam. This trail was actually a dirt road capable of handling heavy trucks and tanks. In July of 1967 my first mission of each day would reveal new trails con-

structed by bulldozers overnight just west of Khe Sanh in Laos. This was part of the NVA buildup for the 68 Siege.

Shortly after daybreak on July 21, 1967 I was in Laos just west of where a branch of the trail dropped into the north end of the Ahe Shau valley. I was trying to locate a 37mm anti-aircraft gun on a ridge line I saw previously until the NVA camouflaged it, and I lost visual contact in a turn. Due to the early horizontal sunlight I spotted 3 long hootches with grass thatched roofs, under a triple jungle canopy near the main trail road. I had flown this same area multiple times previously, but always under typical daytime vertical lighting so the hootches never stood out. After making a mental note of the location, I continued flying down the road, like I hadn't seen anything. The airborne C-130 Command Post call sign, "Hillsboro," handed me a flight of 2 USAF A1E Skyraiders. After they came on station, I went back to the hootch complex and dove in marking the target with a 2.75 inch rocket having a 10 pound white phosphorous warhead. It exploded producing dense white smoke, and I advised Skyraider lead to "hit my smoke". They had unusually large bombs that day, 5,000 pounders to the best of my recollection, mounted centerline under the fuselage. When the flight leader's bomb exploded a visible fog concussion wave moved outward through the humid air till the blast buffeted my aircraft.

I adjusted Skyraider #2 to hit 12 o'clock from lead's impact on their attack heading. After the dust and leaves settled, I went over the target for a closer look. Now I could see a zigzag trenchline in the perimeter around what remained of the hootches. The NVA knew they were spotted and cut loose with everything they had. A golden bullet came through the lower door on the right side, penetrated my map case and shattered my right femur leg bone. My knee and lower leg was displaced about 4 inches higher than my upper thigh due to the seatbelt securing my hips. I was alone in my airplane, so I made a radio call to the fighters and another O1E pilot who was observing the mission from high cover, that I was hit. The other Bird Dog pilot was a newbie on his first flight out of Khe Sanh and I recall some initial confusion over whether my airplane was hit or if I was physically hit. As that was being clarified, I took a direct course for Khe Sanh, since that was the closest friendly runway in enemy territory.

The two Skyraiders broke off their attack to escort me home, but couldn't render any direct assistance. I was on my own! I knew there was a tourniquet somewhere in my survival vest, but I couldn't find it, so I improvised with a gill net for survival fishing instead. I wanted to keep from bleeding out by tying the net with a knot on my upper leg above the wound. After that was as tight as I could get it, I became aware of shock setting in, because I was having unusual difficulty operating the radio. I finally got contact with Rich Coppess, who was our Air Force Intel guy at Khe Sanh. (He later told me he thought I blacked out 3 or 4 times, but I don't recall loosing consciousness, and probably wouldn't remember if I did.) Then he gave me the winds, which were the next bad news. They were out of the south and a direct crosswind to the runway at 30 knots. It didn't matter wind wise which way I landed. The runway had a substantial slope downhill to the east and uphill to the west.

Landing a taildragger airplane in a strong crosswind is an adventure even with two good legs for rudder and brake directional control. I opted to land uphill and let gravity help slow me down. I knew the wind would weathervane me left to the south, so I landed on the extreme right side of the runway in a crab. The wind immediately caught my vertical stabilizer causing the O1E to veer sharply left, raising the right wheel off the ground till the left wing contacted the metal plank runway. Now I was going south across the runway and wound up in the first string of concertina wire, which wrapped around the idling prop, stopping it. That ignited a trip flare attached to the concertina wire burning under my engine while the plane was leaking 100 octane gasoline. I looked up to see several Marines on top of a defensive bunker beyond the wires, giving me a look that said, What is this crazy fly boy trying to do?" Luckily again, the same winds that sent me off the runway blew the fumes away from the flare, till a big Marine with about a size 13 boot stomped it out.

While I was landing west, Rich was driving east down the runway in a jeep. He had witnessed other FAC pilots burn to death in crashes, and it isn't a pretty sight or any bodies first choice of ways to

go. Rich got to me quickly, within seconds of my stopping. As they tried to pull me out of the cockpit, my right leg didn't want to follow. I quickly and loudly hollered to advise them of the problem. After I was extricated from the wrecked O1E, they placed me in the back of the jeep and took me to the field hospital tent. The Navy surgeon on duty chuckled and said the sharply deformed jacket of the bullet had brushed my femoral artery and I was lucky to have a flexible and rubbery artery due to being only 25 years old. He also said I was even more lucky to be going home, and gave me the bullet for a souvenir, which I have to this day.

Ultimately I was air evacuated via Danang AB, Yakota AFB, Elmendorf AFB, and Andrews AFB, to Wright-Patterson AFB hospital, from where I walked away on a cane 13 months later. I watched the siege of Khel Sanh on the TV evening news from my hospital bed. That experience was paradoxical, because on one hand I was glad to be safely home, but on the other I felt guilty for not being able to help my brothers, who were completely surrounded.

Now that I am retired in the autumn of my years, I have more time to reminisce and reprocess what happened at Khe Sanh. I was surprised by some of the details I remembered, and have second guessed my decision to land west. There wasn't a procedure for this scenario in my check list, so I just wanted to get down to terra firma and land as soon as possible, while still conscious.

Today, from the comfort of my easy chair, and not in shock from trauma and blood loss, I have thought of other options like landing east downhill, or even south across the runway into the wind. No one can predict those outcomes with certainty, so now we will never know anyway. I remember an AF Officer asking me while I was drugged up in the Da Nang hospital why I didn't use my AR15 to push on the right rudder for directional control. I don't remember what I said, but I know exactly what I was thinking.

"You no good REMF can dream up all sorts of solutions from the safety of your desk. Let's see what can you can think of when you're wounded and in shock!"

The bottom line is I survived the landing without additional injury, even if the O1E was totaled. Today, I wish I had written this experience immediately after learning about the Khe Sanh Vets organization, and becoming a lifetime member. If I had done that, brothers who are now gone or currently in the fog of dementia, could have shared their memories

I would like to solicit information from anyone who saw or remembers my crash landing on the south side of Khe Sanh runway the morning of July 21, 1967. I would also appreciate any pictures of my damaged O1E airplane in the wire, and apologize to the Marines who had to repair the wire. My e-mail is la97113@yahoo.com and/or cell 971-734-4234. Thanks for reading this far to the conclusion.

RICH COPPESS COVEY 5A
KHE SANH VETERAN
RICH COPPESS MEMORY OF
INCIDENT IN LOU ARMBRUSTER ARTICLE

In 1967 I was the "S2" in Marine jargon for a Special Forces SOG unit at Khe Sanh. My call sign was 5 Alpha and I flew dozens of missions into Laos and occasionally, "North". Also I briefed our pilots before missions and debriefed them afterward, forwarding on to DaNang the results along with photos taken by myself or our pilots. In addition I directed air and artillery strikes.

In early June LtCol. Jack Roberts introduced me to a young replacement pilot, Lou Armbruster, instructing me to share our mission and brief him on operations. I informed the Capt. that I would prepare a set of maps for him. An hour or so later he returned for his maps. I had not yet had time to work on them as I had more important things to do. Lou left somewhat agitated. He returned about a half hour later and informed me that Col. Jack had explained to him the facts of life at Khe Sanh. He then said "what can I do to help you? In the 14 months I spent at Khe Sanh Lou was the only Pilot that ever helped me prepare his maps. They included a set of 5 topographical maps with all target designations printed on them and covered with a heavy clear plastic. Lou still has them today. We became instant best friends.
On 21 July I had returned from an early flight and overheard Lou's emergency call. I grabbed the radio

mike and asked his condition as well as the planes. I sent the radio operator out of the bunker to watch for Lou's plane. Lou kept passing out or at times not able to answer. I just kept yelling at him. When he was in sight I jumped in a jeep, drove to the aid tent, picked up a stretcher and a medic and headed east down the flight line. Lou was about to touch down. Because we had such a strong cross wind I knew the plane would careen off to the south side of the runway as Lou could not control the rudder as his right femur was shattered. The plane crashed into a sandbag guard post and concertina wire with several trip flares ignited by the crash. I was horrified at the thought of Lou being burned to death as I had witnessed 3 other pilots suffer that fate. I was the second one to reach the plane as a gunny in the guard post was first, exclaiming "I can't get the____ door open. I pushed him aside yelling I can get the door ____open and did so. I was so afraid the plane would go up in flames I was determined Lou would not! We are still best of friends to this day.

VIETNAM VETERAN SURVIVED INJURIES, EARNED SILVER STAR

Though a "million dollar wound" gave his time in Vietnam an early end, Capt. Ronald Hoover stands as one of the most accomplished Marines to have been involved in the war.

Hoover, 79, of Carlisle, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1954. He said his decision to enlist was inspired by several of his friends who had enlisted before him.

"I had some friends from high school that went in (to the Marines) during the Korean time," Hoover said. "They came back and we were talking, and I said that the Marines was the place I wanted to go. I thought the Marine Corps was the best outfit. I made a lot of good friends there and decided I would stay and make 20 years out of it."

During his career, Hoover served two tours at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina as a drill instructor and he also served on the Inspector Instructor staff of the 78th Rifle Company in Williamsport. He achieved the title of Master of Fitness, which had only been accomplished by 22 Marines ever at the time of his retirement.

Hoover served in two tours during Vietnam. His first tour was spent with Alpha Company, Third Reconnaissance Battalion from 1966 to 1967.

"One of the big problems we had was when we



would get in a situation out there, we would sometimes run up against 30 to 40 guys and we would need some kind of support," Hoover said. "We were responsible for each other and (for) making sure that all the people we had were coming home safe and sound; that was the primary thing in my mind." After coming back to the United States for three months, Hoover returned to Vietnam for a second tour from 1968 to 1969 – this time as Company Commander of India Company, Third Battalion, 26th Marines.

"The situation I was in as a commander was similar to that movie 'We Were Soldiers,'" Hoover said. "We walked into three machine guns one night and we lost 157 marines in about two hours. We stayed there the whole night and we actually had hand-to-hand combat for about two hours. My company sergeant, from PA, got the medal of honor posthumously."

It was during this tour that Hoover suffered injuries significant enough to end his involvement in the war.

"A mortar round came in and blew me away and left me off the ground," Hoover said. "I had wounds in my back, arms and legs. I got my 'million dollar wound,' as they say; I did not go back into (Vietnam) again."

Hoover spent nine months at a hospital in Guam before he was finally transported back to the United States.

"I stayed (in Guam) for nine months and got put back together," Hoover said. "From there, I went to Okinawa and got back on my feet and came home."

Hoover was awarded the Silver Star – just one of a list of accumulated personal awards that includes a Bronze Star with combat valor, a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat valor, a Purple Heart, a Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, a Vietnam Service Medal, a Vietnam Cross of Gallantry Star and a Vietnam Campaign Ribbon.

After officially retiring from the Marine Corps in 1974, Hoover remained involved with public service as a law enforcement official.

"I was a people person," Hoover said, "so I ended up going into law enforcement."

Hoover served as a deputy sheriff for 10 years with the Reno Nevada Sheriff's Department and served another 12 years with the California Department of Corrections before retiring again in 1994.

Hoover currently resides in Carlisle.
"I'm 79 years old and there is not too much I can do," Hoover said. "I'm kind of slowed down a bit, but I do what I can."

Hoover said that Vietnam, as a whole, should stand as a lesson to modern America.

The government needs to adhere to the lessons we learned in Vietnam," Hoover said. "We won the battles over there, but we did not win the wars."

TANKS INSIDE THE WIRE

Pete Meca

Sgt. Nickolas Fragos couldn't believe his eyes. North Vietnamese PT-76 tanks were moving on the Lang Troai Road, heading straight for the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei. Fragos dashed to the TOC (Tactical Operations Center) to report his observation. The 24 Americans at Lang Vei knew the odds were stacked against them. Seven would die, along with 309 Montagnard mercenaries and Vietnamese CIDG soldiers.

A young lieutenant, Paul Longgrear, was there to tackle the onslaught. This is his story.
He candidly admitted, "I was a pretty rotten kid. After being kicked out of high school, I was sent to live with an uncle in Oregon. He managed to straighten me out, a little, but after attending two different colleges that 'encouraged' me to join the military, I moved to California. Uncle Sam sent his 'greetings' in 1965."

On basic training at Fort Polk, La.: "I fell in love with the Army. I needed someone to point me in the right direction plus provide structure in my life. The Army fit the bill." Longgrear was an honor graduate.

He completed advanced infantry training at Fort Ord, Calif., then refused an offer to stay on as a drill instructor. "I wanted to go to Vietnam to kill the bad guys, then come home a hero," he said. "To my surprise, I wasn't as stupid as I thought. They sent me to OCS (Officer Candidate School)." In May of 1966, Longgrear pinned on the butter bars of a 2nd lieutenant at Fort Benning.



US Army 1ST LT Paul R. Longgrear is assisted by a US Marine during thr evacuation from Lang Vei, on 7 Feb 1968. Longgrear was wounded in the head, wrist, ankle.

Worried the war would be over before he could see action, Longgrear called the Pentagon for three straight weeks before a major asked him, "Are you sure about this?" Longgrear responded, "Major, I've called for three weeks. What else do I need to do?" Asked his choice of units, he told the major, "The

Screaming Eagles, sir, the 101st Airborne." The major suggested Special Forces training. Longgrear asked, "You mean I'd get to wear a Green Beret?" The major concurred. Longgrear said, "Major, would you like a kiss?"

Married with his wife expecting, Longgrear reported to Fort Bragg, N.C. Awarded a Green Beret in June of 1967, Longgrear was finally en route to Nam in October, a week after the birth of their first child.

Assigned to a mobile strike force at Lang Vei Special Forces Camp near the South Vietnamese border with Laos, Longgrear recalled, "I was put in charge of a company of Montagnard mercenaries, mountain people, very ferocious and aggressive fighters. From October through January we patrolled near the Laotian border, but something just wasn't right. The enemy would not engage, they ran from a fight."
Unbeknownst to the men at Lang Vei, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) was under orders to avoid combat to build up and position their forces for the upcoming infamous 1968 Tet Offensive. "We started receiving incoming every day near the end of January," Longgrear said. "The NVA positioned artillery inside the caves of Co Roc Mountain, across the Xe Pone River. Their artillery zeroed in on Lang Vie without using spotters because they could spot their own artillery from the mountain."

Lang Vei soon received a warning from the NSA to stop patrolling trails. The NSA had overheard NVA orders to set up ambushes and reposition men and equipment. The "beast" was stirring.

"The NVA overran the village of Khe Sanh near the Marine base in late January," Longgrear recalled. "Apparently they thought the Marines would bail out the village, but our mobile strike force hit the NVA from their rear. We killed a bunch of bad guys, but it caused the NVA to change tactics. Instead of using tanks against the Khe Sanh Marine base, they used two tank battalions against Lang Vei, that's 16 PT-76 tanks."
Feb. 6, 2330 hours: Sgt. Nickolas Fragos reports, "tanks inside the wire."

"That's when all your training kicks in," Longgrear said. "We left the TOC to man 81mm mortars. It was pitch dark outside, so we lit up the night with illumination rounds so the Montagnards could see the NVA infantry. A tank without infantry support is a rolling coffin."

The Lang Vei defenders used M-72 LAWs (Light Anti-armor Weapons) plus 106mm recoilless rifle fire to knock out 11 of the 16 tanks.

Early morning, Feb. 7: "Our defensive line had been decimated by then," Longgrear said. "We were out of LAWs, the NVA knocked out our 106mm, and their three or four remaining tanks commanded the ground. We surrounded the TOC to defend it as long as possible because they were calling in airstrikes and artillery support. At that time I engaged and killed a four-man sapper team."

An enemy tank pulled up and prepared to fire. Longgrear said, "We ran into the bunker, knowing reinforcements would be sent from Khe Sanh. Then we heard an NVA soldier yell, 'G.I., you surrender.' Somebody in the bunker shouted back something about his momma. 'G.I., you no surrender, we blow up bunker.' Someone else insinuated the soldier had had sex with this mother. Well, they blew the bunker by shoving an explosive charge down the side of an air vent. The blast knocked us out. When I awoke, I noticed a big hole in the wall. We fought for our lives."

The NVA attacked the bunker with grenades and flame throwers, but the survivors fought on. "We suddenly heard explosions and screams outside," Longgrear said. "Our A1E Skyraiders had arrived to bomb and strafe the enemy, but the battle continued, from dawn until 1630 that afternoon."

The TOC received disappointing news; the Marines from Khe Sanh were not coming to the rescue. With only seven Americans left in the bunker, the Marines claimed they would lose more than seven Leathernecks in a rescue attempt. "I was angry," Longgrear said. "I told the guys if they wanted to stay in the TOC and die like worms, that's up to them, but I'm going outside to at least die like a man."

Longgrear had 19 bullets left, one man had five rounds in a .45 automatic: they knew death awaited them topside. "The Skyraiders reported the NVA had occupied our former fighting positions for pro-

tection from the bombing and strafing," Longgrear said. "The flyboys kept the enemies' attention as we sprinted out. I told the men, 'if hit, stay on the ground.' A machine gun starting firing at me, but I knocked it out. Then my gun jammed. I'd been wounded in the head, my wrist, and ankle. Trying to run, my ankle popped and I went head over heels. I'd injured my arm, plus everybody had left me. At first I got mad, but then realized that's what I'd told them to do if hit."

As Longgrear awaited his fate, he thought of his spouse, a very religious lady. "I gave my life to the Lord," he said. "I got saved, then got up and got off that hill. We rendezvoused with a chopper out of Khe Sanh, and well, that's why we're able to have this conversation today."

Longgrear received extended medical care in the Philippines, then Japan before returning stateside. He spent over 26 years in the service of his country. Colonel Longgrear became an ordained minister and pastored four churches before his retirement. He still teaches the Word. He was inducted into the Army Ranger Hall of Fame and is the founding father of the Georgia Military Veterans Hall of Fame. "Yes, I grew up the hard way, at a place called Lang Vei," he said, smiling. "That's my story and I'm sticking to it."

OBIT

Posted on January 7, 2016 at 08:57:01 PM by LLLarsen

JOSEPH JJ JOHNSON
USMC SUB UNIT 5

Joseph JJ Johnson was a radioman at Khe Sanh with Sub Unit 5 3rd Marine Division. He spent most of 1967 there. He was a good friend of mine and well liked by the platoon. When I first started looking for Marines I had served with about 12-14 years ago, I only remembered two names JJ and Sgt Drum. I managed to find both of them. Sgt Drum stayed in and retired as a Master Sgt. He died of Agent Orange related cancer and other diseases a few years ago.

JJ had found the good life in the woods of northern Maine. I would lose contact with him for months at a time. I would think he had packed and left the country. But then I would get a letter or a call. He was still in Houlton, Maine at the same address. Just before Christmas I got a call from his ex wife saying he had died on December 11th, 2015. I sure do miss him. SF JJ RIP

OBIT

CHARLIE MADDOCKS
USMC VMO-2

The warrior life of Charlie Maddocks ended on 12 Feb 2016 during surgery for brain cancer. Information from his brother, Mike, indicated that he would be laid to rest in ARLINGTON at a date to be determined by Arlington National Cemetery. Charlie had served three tours as a crew chief with VMO-2 in 1966-68. Charlie served many years writing articles for POPASMOKE (magazine) and the CHERRY DEUCE publication in the 1990's. We at POPASMOKE owe much to Charlie for making the USMC Combat Helicopter Association what it is today





THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
Harold Jury A/1/13 Passed Away 2014	Dennis Wimbish A/1/13
James Jim Hurt A/1/13 Passed Away 2014	Dennis Wimbish A/1/13
Bill Stepp A/1/13 Passed Away 2015	Dennis Wimbish A/1/13
All Those who served with Kilo 3/26	Charles Lemke Kilo 3/26
PFC Randall M. Davis Kilo 3/4 KIA 4 June 68	Larry Davis 3rd Pioneer Bn 3RD MAR DIV
Bill Lawson LCpl in 1/26 C CO Passed away Sept 2015	Daniel Erwin A Co 1/26
Robert V. Wilson Passed Away Oct 6 2015	Cynthia Wilson Wife
CPT Daniel J Coonon USMC VMFA 115 KIA 8 Oct 68	Charles Fetter MAG-11 H&MS-11 VMF 314 AW
PFC Ron Kearsey USMC H/2/3 Hill 689 KIA 4-21-68	Dave Brombaugh H/2/3
PFC Kevin Cassell USMC H/2/3 Hill 689 KIA 4-21-68	Dave Brombaugh H/2/3
CPL William K Downing USMC E/2/3 KIA 03 May 67	Frederick Monahan E CO 2/3 Hill Fights
Jerry W. Elliott USA MIA 21 Jan 68 282nd AHC	Donna Elliott Sister
ALL who served at Lang Vei A-102 FOB-3	Lawrence Cooper CO C 5th Special Forces
1LT Thomas A. Reich USMC VFMA-115, MAG 13 KIA 17 Nov 68	Charles Fetter MAG-11 H&MS-11 VMF 314 AW
2LT Heinz Ahlmeyer USMC Lima CO 3/26 KIA 10 May 67	**Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt**
2LT Dale Allen USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 27 June 67	**Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt**
1LT Paul Bush USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	**Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt**
2LT Ferdinando Distefano USMC E/2/26 KIA 24 Feb 68	**Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt**
1LT Henry Norman USMC A/1/13 KIA 30 Mar 68	**Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt**
1LT Kim Johnson USMC H&S 2/26 KIA 23 Feb 68	**Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt**
1LT Stephen Joyner USMC Lima CO 3/26 KIA 15 June 68	**Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt**
ALL FROM TBS-3-67	

GOD BLESS THEM ALL





SCHOLARSHIP FUND

ANDERSON, David M.	250.00 SF	Check# 3416
AVERY, Terry E.	25.00 SF	Check# 5898
BAKER, David & Mindy	150.00 SF	Check# 220
BARBER, Michael	100.00 SF	Check# 1709
GOTTMANN, James H.	100.00 SF	Check# 3330
DONAGHY, Richard E	200.00 SF	Check 2016
EVANS, Faye S.	100.00 SF	Check# 1938
FOLEY, Richard M. Jr	100.00 SF	Check# 1481
FORD, Thomas	500.00 SF	Check# 2533
FORD, Thomas	250.00 SF	Check# 2528
FORD, Thomas	250.00 SF	Check# 4968
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 SF	heck#418672
GEIGER, Bruce	500.00 SF	Credit Card
GIBBONS, Constance	142.00 SF	Check# 5002
HANNA, Robert III	100.00 SF	CASH
HARVEY, Tom	20.00 SF	Check# 2691
KENNY, Neil	65.00 SF	Check# 4460
KENNY, Neil	236.00 SF	Check# 4458
KRAMER, Mark	55.00 SF	Check# 335
KUBILUS, Robert	30.00 SF	Check# 2352
MEYER, David	150.00 SF	Check# 1160
MEYER, Carol	150.00 SF	Check# 1159
NELSON, George J.	300.00 SF	Check# 5313
ORGAN, Michael	50.00 SF	Check# 1019
PRENDERGAST, Ed	100.00 SF	CASH
RAIT, Donald M.	500.00 SF	Check# 1029
SIEJUTT, Thomas	20.00 SF	Check# 4363
STACK, Geoffrey Nancy	1,000.00 SF	Check # 1195
TOBIN, William J III	50.00 SF	Check# 332
TROUP, Ed & Diana	100.00 SF	Check# 5298
WAGNER, Russell	40.00 SF	Check# 4015
WOOLMAN, Darlene	500.00 SF	Check# 1052
YOUMAN, Elwood W.	1,000.00 SF	Check # 1389

GENERAL FUND

BAKER, James	100.00 GF	Check# 400
BARBER, Michael	500.00 GF	Checks # 1044
BROMBAUGH, Dave	25.00 GF	Check# 1253
COOK, Michael H.	50.00 GF	Check# 12320
DESETA, Louis	123.00 GF	Check# 5472
DIGAETANO, John	30.00 GF	Check# 376
DUNLAP,	25.00 GF	Check# 2395
FISHBAUGH, Michael	50.00 GF	Check# 3932
FORD, Thomas	250.00 GF	Check# 2528
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 GF	Check# 418673
KATES, Bruce E.	250.00 GF	Check# 1218
KING, James	30.00 GF	Check# 541
KUBILUS, Robert	25.00 GF	Check# 2381
KUBLEY, Lawrence W.	400.00 GF	Check# 11554
LEMIEUX, Lorne A.	20.00 GF	Check# 688
LEMKE, Charles T.	35.00 GF	Check# 1124
MAIN, Ronald	40.00 GF	Check# 2232
MILLOCK, Carl	10.00 GF	Check# 4471
MORGAN, Robert I	100.00 GF	Check# 2575
MULLIGAN, Michael	300.00 GF	Check# 4044
MUSSARI, Derek	10.00 GF	Cash
NDQS ASSOC	412.50 GF	Check# 1398
OWENS, Mike	100.00 GF	Check# 9516
PETERSON, Roger	200.00 GF	Check# 2066
STERLING, Glenn	30.00 GF	Check# 3768
TOURTE, Craig	500.00 GF	Check# 875
TROUP, ED & Diana	100.00 GF	Check# 5297
WHITTENBURGER, Allen R.	30.00 GF	Check# 4630
WILLIAMS, Robert E.	270.00 GF	Check # 1278
WIMBISH, Dennis T.	30.00 GF	Check# 1275
ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	250.00 GF	Check# 4596

EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS





OBIT

Daniel R. BEHR Age 69 of Shoreview, MN Formerly of St. Paul Passed away unexpectedly on January 20, 2016. Preceded in death by parents, Burt and Marie Behr. Survived by wife of 42 years, Karen; sons, Dan Jr. & Chris; siblings, Judy Olsen, Pat (Ralph) Gamnis, Tom (Amy) & Bob; other relatives & friends. Dan was a US Marine Vietnam Veteran and retired after 40 years with Century Link. He will be dearly missed by all who knew him. Memorial Service was held at 12 Noon Wednesday, January 27th, at Roberts Funeral Home, 8108 Barbara Ave., Inver Grove Heights

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER WINTER 2016
Chicken Soup for the Combat Veteran

By Khe Sanh Veterans Chaplain Ron Rayner

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put into practice. And the ***GOD*** of ***PEACE*** will be with you." Philippians 4:8-9

Peace of mind is something is elusive to those that suffer from **P**ost-**T**raumatic-**S**tress-**D**isorder. There are many symptoms of **PTSD** and emotional numbness has been the one that has bothered me the most in recent years. It has come in handy when as a chaplain I perform funeral services where I very seldom choke up. It is devastating when I try to talk to the people I love. While suicide is the most talked about sad result of **PTSD**, isolation, divorce and estrangements from relatives and friends are the most prevalent result.

Communication is of the utmost importance in relationships. I recently read ***Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul.*** Many of the stories brought tears to my eyes and made me realize I have a need to clarify my feelings with those who mean the most to me. It also made me realize that being by myself or running away from home is the last thing I want or need to do.

What ***Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul*** has done for me, as one who has many **PTSD** issues, is give me a vehicle to reach out to the people I love. One of the stories was about the reconciliation of a strict father with a son he had driven away with harsh discipline. I asked my son to read the story and then we talked about our relationship. There were similar stories for friends and relatives.

If you want to open communications with someone important to you, I recommend reading ***Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul*** and find a story that may apply to your situation. One of the endorsements in the front of the book compared these short stories to the parables Jesus used to get his messages across. The stories I have read in the ***Chicken Soup*** series of books have been quite inspiring and there many helpful messages for many different situations.

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. **If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him**. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind...Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him." James 1:2-12 (NIV)

THE 2016 KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION WILL BE HELD AT THE EL TROPICANO HOTEL IN SAN ANTONIO TEXAS, 110 LEXINGTON AVE, SAN ANTONIO TX, 844-239-0346. FROM 09 TO 16 OCTOBER 2016. ROOM RATES ARE 105.00 A DAY 3 DAYS BEFORE AND 3 DAYS AFTER SAME RATE.THE HOTEL IS LOCATED JUST A FEW YARDS FROM THE RIVER WALK, AND HAS A BOAT LANDING APPROXIMATELY 10 YARDS FROM THE HOTEL. PARKING IS FREE WITH IN AND OUT PRIVILEGES. THE HOTEL IS ALSO PET FRIENDLY. WALKING DISTANCE FROM DOWNTOWN.



- **Hotel Amentities:**
- Breakfast available (surcharge)
- Coffee shop or café
- Computer station
- Concierge services
- Conference space
- Conference space size (feet) - 37000
- Conference space size (meters) - 3437
- Dry cleaning/laundry service
- Elevator/lift
- Express check-out
- Fitness facilities
- **Free WiFi**
- Free newspapers in lobby
- Gift shops or newsstand
- Health club
- In-room accessibility
- Laundry facilities
- Luggage storage
- Meeting rooms13
- Multilingual staff
- Number of floors - 9
- Number of meeting rooms - 19
- Outdoor pool
- **Pets allowed**
- Poolside bar
- Porter/bellhop
- Restaurant
- Roll-in shower
- Rooftop terrace
- Safe-deposit box at front desk
- **Self parking Free Khe San Vets**
- Smoke-free property
- Spa treatment room (s)
- Television in common areas
- Total number of rooms - 306

HOTEL AT A GLANCE

Since 1962, the El Tropicano Riverwalk Hotel has been amazing tourists at every turn. Nestled on the River Walk and just minutes from San Antonio College, the hotel offers a long list of amenities to make you feel right at home. Knowledgeable staff and Southern hospitality come out in every aspect of your stay. Located at 110 Lexington Avenue, the El Tropicano offers delicious choices for your appetites. Whether you're dining on the breakfast buffet at Mangos or enjoying a smoothie from the Espresso Bar, there's always something to enjoy. As you're traveling around the college and nearby areas, you'll also discover amazing local restaurants and national chains to enjoy. Relax with several recreational items on-site to help you let your cares slip away. Take the family down to the outdoor pool to cool off on those blazing Texas summer days. Enjoy a swim or just relax on the lounge chairs with your favorite book. Sit around the fire pit in the evening and enjoy a drink or just great conversations. There's a full-service fitness studio on-site that offers membership options

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

The amazing El Tropicano Riverwalk Hotel offers a great location as one of the first hotels that was ever put in the River Walk area. From shopping to the college campus tours, this area is vibrant with life and exciting adventures to take. The River Walk area itself is full of shopping, dining, and entertainment options. Take a boat ride down the river or enjoy the boutiques along the banks. Great shopping is also available at the Rivercenter Mall and the North Star Mall. Theme parks abound with several to choose from including Six Flags Fiesta, SeaWorld, and SplashTown. Ride on thrilling coasters and see amazing shows at each of these parks. Visit historical attractions like the Spanish Governor's Palace and the Alamo. There's also other family friendly attractions like the San Antonio Zoo & Aquarium or San Antonio Children's Museum. You're sure to have a great visit in this amazing city when staying at the ever popular El Tropicano Hotel.

GUEST ROOMS

Recently redecorated, the guest rooms are spacious and offer a long list of comforts to keep you relaxed and rejuvenated. Whether you're traveling for business or for fun, these rooms offer all that you need to feel right at home. Large screen televisions offer expanded cable channels to keep you busy and entertained throughout your day. If you're needing to finish up some work before heading out to pay, the ergonomic chair and work desk make it easy. Set up your laptop and work with the wired and wireless Internet options in your room. Comfortable plush bedding and mattresses make for a great night's sleep every night. Feel like you left the spa after your shower in the private bathroom with pulsating shower heads. Choose from either full, queen, or king beds for your comfort











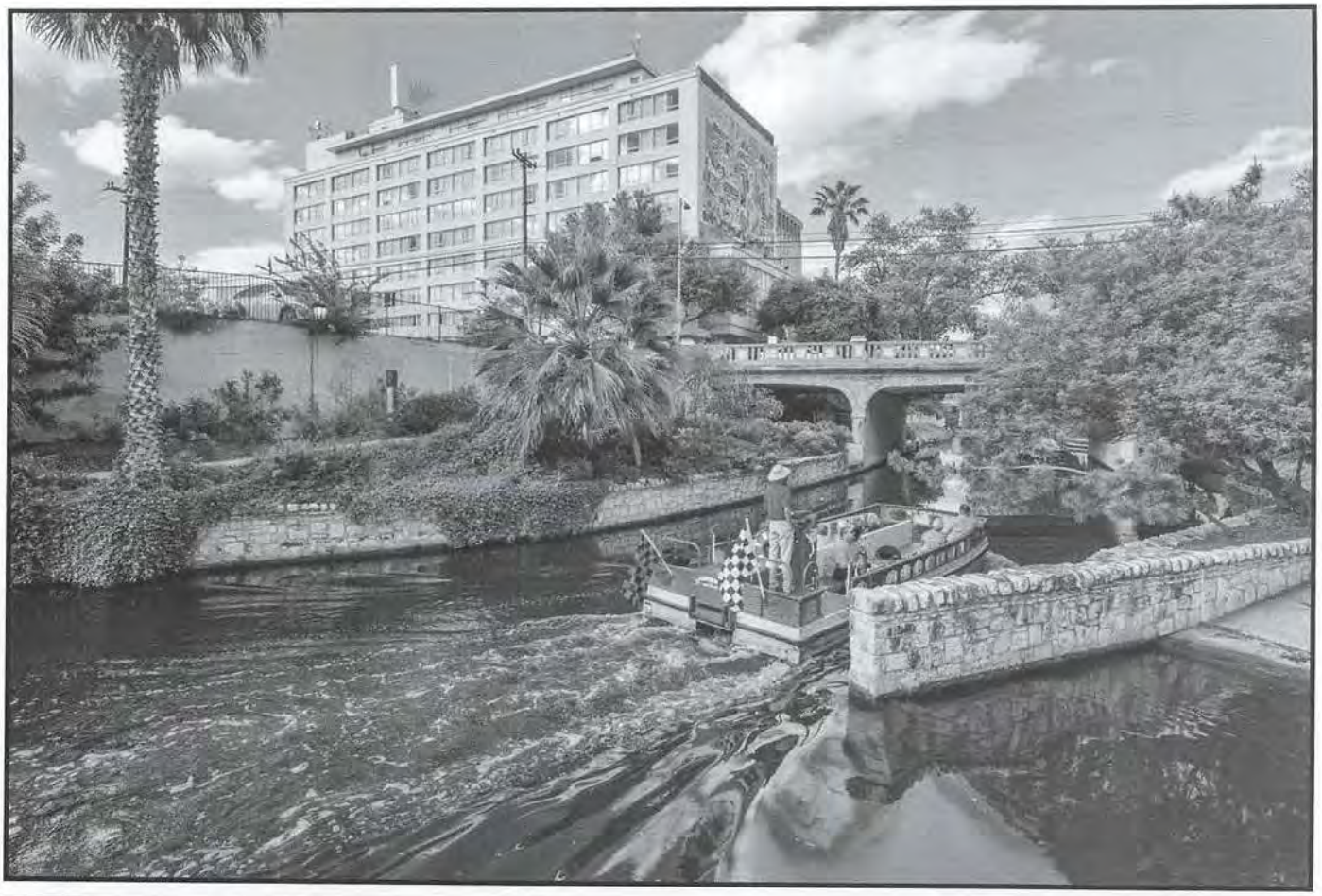


CAUTION





OBIT

RAYFORD W. ADDINGTON, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
INDIA CO 3/26, HILL 881S

Rayford "Ray" William Addington, Jr., age 69, passed away at his home in Boerne surrounded by his family on Sunday, December 27th, 2015.

Mr. Addington is survived by his wife, Martha, and two daughters, Moshelle Carlson of Ladera Ranch, CA and Meredith Wiskur of Murphy, TX. He also leaves behind five grandchildren, Nathan, Sophie, Anna, Avery and Lilly; sons-in-law, Todd Carlson and Matt Wiskur; his sister, Shelley Addington of Dallas, TX; and brother, Mike Addington of Lynchburg, VA.

Ray grew up in Dallas, the eldest son of Rayford Addington, Sr. and Martha Addington. He served two years with distinction as a Marine in the Vietnam War. Marine Sargent Ray "Big D" Addington fought in the Battle of Khe Sahn, Hill 881 South in a desperate 77 day fight where the only way out was to be "Flown Off or Blown Off." The discipline, patriotism, and servanthood he learned in the Marines never left him, as friends and family will attest. He will be remembered fondly by many as "Uncle Ray", the "go-to" guy at Reinhardt Bible Church and Christ is Life Ministries, always willing to teach the children's Sunday school class, drive the church bus to camp, and to lift, carry, or fetch anything needed. He had fond memories of singing with the Firewheel Bible Fellowship Choir (he loved to sing, dance, perform and make people laugh). In later years, he spent his time teaching Bible study to prisoners as a chaplain at the Kendall County Jail and collecting food for Hill Country Daily Bread.

We find comfort that his was a life well lived and now he is reaping his eternal reward in heaven with his Lord and Savior.

Visitation will on Friday, January 1st from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Ebensberger-Fisher Funeral Home. A graveside service and burial with military honors was held Saturday, January 2nd at 9:00 a.m. at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, 1520 Harry Wurzbach Rd.,San Antonio. A Memorial Service was held Saturday, January 2nd at 10:30 a.m. at Faith Bible Church, 1 Bergman Rd., Boerne, TX.
In lieu of or in addition to flowers, please send donations to Cal Farley's Boys Ranch and Girls Town online www.calfarley.org. To leave condolences for the family and to view a video of Ray's life, please visit www.ebensberger-fisher.com and select the Obituaries tab.



RAY FORMERLY SERVED ON THE KHE SANH VETERANS BOARD OF DIRECTORS



10 FEB. 1968, AT NOON A SILVERY KC130-F OF VMGR-152, #14981, CALL SIGN BASKETBALL-813

REMBERANCES
LEST WE FORGET

10 FEB 68







KIA

SSGT WILLIAM LEO BROWN, H&HS-Passenger
MSGT JOHN D'ADAMO, JR VMGR-152 (DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS) (Crew)
LCPL DANIEL RALF DEVIK VMGR-152 (DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS) (Crew)
LCPL JERRY WAYNE FERREN, VMGR-152 (Crew-DOW 3-1-68)
SSGT GEORGE WILCOX WALBRIDGE H&HS-1 (Passenger)
COL CARL ELVING PETERSON 1MAW (Passenger)



PHOTOS & STORY BY MIKE FISHBAUGH FROM HIS WEBSITE

New Citation sent to me by Doug Sterner: The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Flying Cross (Posthumously) to Lance Corporal David Ralf Devik (MCSN: 2196100), United States Marine Corps, for heroism and extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight while serving with Marine Aerial Refueler/Transport Squadron

ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-TWO, FIRST Marine Aircraft Wing, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On 10 February 1968, Lance Corporal Devik was the Radio Operator aboard a KC-130 transport aircraft which was delivering a combat logistics load of JP-4 fuel bladders to the besieged Marine base at Khe Sanh. During the final landing approach to the runway, his aircraft was hit by intense North Vietnamese machine gun fire which ignited the fuel containers, immediately engulfing the cargo compartment in flames. Despite the intense heat, Lance Corporal Devik remained in the smoke-filled rear compartment, advising the aircraft commander of the situation until he was killed when another explosion caused the entire aircraft to burst into flames. Lance Corporal Devik's courage, superior professionalism and unwavering devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the service of his country.



L/COL JERRY W FERREN

VMGR-152 DOW

ANOTHER SMALL WORLD STORY BY CRAIG TOURTE HQ BTRY 1/13

Memorial Day in my corner of New Hampshire is always the same. A clutch of veterans from the Second World War to the Gulf march around the common, followed by the town band, and the scouts, and the fifth-graders. The band plays "Anchors Aweigh," "My Country, Tis of Thee," "God bless America," and in an alarming nod to modernity, Ray Steven's "Everything is Beautiful (In Its Own Way)"....One of the town's selectmen gives a short speech, so do a couple of representatives from the state organizations, and then the fifth-graders recite the Gettysburg Address and the Great War's great poetry. There's a brief prayer and a three-gun salute, exciting the dogs and babies. Wreaths are laid. And then the crowd wends slowly up the hill to the Legion hut for ice cream, and a few veterans wonder, as they always do, if anybody understands what they did, and why they did it." – quote from the book "The Undocumented Mark Steyn."

There was a time when wearing a Khe Sanh hat or shirt I'd often receive a "Thank you for your service." but not so much anymore. The truth is, few now remember or care about battles long fought, lives changed or the broken bodies of veterans. Time has moved on and there are other and immediate concerns for those younger. Jobs, the economy, terrorism, education, housing, taxes and for some, even climate change is an immediate pressing pending catastrophe to worry about. I have attended a number of parades in my now long years of life, many just like the one described by Mr. Steyn, and I have even been asked to participate in a few, but have not, preferring the focus to be on others much more deserving But as to Mr. Steyn's question, I too have wondered if "anyone understands what they did, and why they did it." Later on in this most interesting book Mr. Steyn answers that question when he quotes a poem penned by his then 10-year old daughter, "The stars and stripes, red white, and blue. Wave above our heroes true. It makes cry, it makes us weep, but in our hearts we will keep. The sacrifice our soldiers gave, they shall not die in vain. For they have given us the freedom they have fought to gain." Imagine that, the answer coming from a 10-year old. I was quite moved when I read this little story and wanted to share it with you.



of

48TH ANNIVERSARY THE SIEGE BEGAN

January 21, 2016 Craig W. Tourte

We had an outstanding showing of Khe Sanh Veterans and supporting community members on January 21st at the Table Mountain Golf Course located in Oroville California, commemorating the 48th year of the start of the Siege at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh. With little public notice of our annual even, I was astonished when over 30 folks showed up. Tom Horchler (HQ/1/13) is the driving force behind this honorable event. It is because of Toms commitment to Veterans and his love of community that his many friends and acquaintances attend. The setting could not have been more conducive with an abundance of food and beverages and beautiful view of the golf course. We had a couple of display tables filled with photographs and memorabilia. Ken Soerensen (B/1/13) proudly wore his Dress Blues and provided the Marine Corps place mats and napkins along with displaying the Marine Corps and MIA flags on the walls.

Steve Wiese (B/1/26) attended along with David Tonick (A/1/26), Ken (Buzz) Sawyer (HQ /1/13), Ned (I/3/3) and his brother Nels Borlaug (E/5/11), Marco Soto (A/1/26), Andres (Pete) Torres (G/2/26), Dan Ferguson (W/1/13), Bob Singleton (A/3rd/SP) Chuck Teasley (C/1/26) and Bruce Kates (HQ/1/13). Neil Kenny (L/3/26) and his wife Alice all the way from New Jersey won the longest travel award. Dianne Jackson, an ardent supporter Khe Sanh Veterans joined us again, her presents is always appreciated. I apologize for not mentioning everyone, I'm quite sure I have left many off this list but please forgive me and know that you are important to us, that we appreciate you and are grateful that you attended. We meet informally but with a reverent purpose. I mumbled a few incomprehensible words but my theme was we gather to remember those who fought at Khe Sanh, those who did not come home with us, those who have passed and those who continue to serve.



Posted on January 21, 2016 at 09:06:45 PM by Marco Soto

Tom, thanks for putting together such a nice gathering. The food, people, weather and the words could not have been better. I always look forward to gathering with all the great guys. It makes this time of year a little easier to deal with.
Semper Fidelis
Marco

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student **OR** who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.
2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization.
3. **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2016 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;**

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, -1MN 55128317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms.

Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the "***Red Clay***" Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David E. Lownds Award – for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award – for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award – for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

2.. The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.
2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.
3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.
4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.
5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY 1* of the school year applied for.** *** **(This is an important, NEW change to previous years)*****
6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System /Maximum of 100 regular points or 115 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points max. (Please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

A GPA of 4.0 x 10 = 40 points or a GPA of 3.0 x 10 = 30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 30 points total

Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Student government = 10 points max.

Community related services = 10 points max.

Other (i.e. work experience, sports) = 10 points max.

c. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min. to 400 words max) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max.

Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments. Please review the six suggested adjectives below, select one or more that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

TENACIOUS FAITHFUL UNDAUNTED STEADFAST RESOLUTE INNOVATIVE

d. Bonus Points = 10 bonus points for being a military veteran

= 5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application:_____

1. **Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)**

Name: last_____, **first**_____ **MI**_____

Address: street_____, **city**_____ **state**_____**zip**_____

Home phone:_____ **E-mail address:**_____

Applicant Birthdate:_____

2. **KSV Sponsor Information (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member):**

Name: last_____ **first name**_____

Relationship to applicant;_____

Branch of service_____

Unit served at Khe Sanh_____**dates served there**_____

3. **School Information: (School to be attending)**

School name: _____

School Address: street_____, **city**_____

State_____ **zip code**_____

School Phone number:_____

Curriculum/intended course of study_____

School year to be funded_____

4. **Applicant Personal History (Be specific!)**

a. School Activities participated in: (athletics, publishing, music, art, communications, offices held, academic honors and prizes, student government participation, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. Community Activities participated in; (military service, volunteer service to community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Mailing Packet (Due *MAY 1*)!!

*ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS,
*A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,
*A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,
*A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min. to 400 WORDS max.) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.
!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!
I, SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant Actual Signature of
Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY 1ST* OF THE SCHOOL YEAR APPLIED

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Committee

_____

Tom Eichler, President Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

2015-16 KSV SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

Whitney Allen- 2nd Year. Granddaughter of Bryson Allen, HQ 26th Marines Comm. Whitney attends Oklahoma Baptist Univ. and continues her curriculum in nursing.

Dillon Murphy – 4th Year. Grandson of Richard Donaghy, HQ 26th Marines. Dillon will complete his degree at the

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in Geology, engineering and Geospatial Info systems.

Mackenzie Murphy – 1st Year. Granddaughter of Richard Donaghy, HQ 26th Marines. Mackenzie is a freshman at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Univ. and plans to begins study in Global Securities and Intelligence.

Jeffery Menard – 1st Year. Grandson of Dermott Barry, G 2/26. Jeffery is a freshman at Southern Oregon Univ. and plans to begin study in Pre-Biology fields.

Bailey Kowalski – 2nd Year. Granddaughter of Thomas Peters, H&S 81s 3/26. Bailey attends Michigan State Univ. and has been studying in the MSU School of Journalism now as a sophomore.

Kiersteh Powers – 1st Year. Granddaughter of Mike Powers, D 1/26. Kiersteh will be a freshman at Univ. of North Texas and plans to study communication design.

Shannon Friel – 4th Year. Daughter of Thomas Friel, G 2/26. Shannon has had outstanding success in her pursuit of a Music B.A. at the College of St. Rose and is a past recipient of the Col. David Lownds Scholarship Award.

Madison Montague – 2nd Year. Granddaughter of Richard Donaghy, HQ 26th Marines. Madison is a 2nd Year student at Villanova University and continues her studies for a nursing degree.

Wesley Haines – 1st Year. Grandson of James Sluss, HQ Co. 26th Marines. Wesley will be attending Wichita State Univ. as a freshman and begins studies in Business or Musical Theater.

Allyson Perry -1st Year. Granddaughter of Marshall Parker, 3rd AT Bn. Allyson will be a freshman at Marshall Univ. and study athletic training with a specialty in physical therapy.

Annarose Kosierowski – 4th Year. Granddaughter of Edward Zimmerman, F 2/26. Annaorose has been enrolled at Misericordia Univ. and is a preparing to get her degree in speech-language pathology.



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PICTURES FROM ARTICLES PAGES 24-28 AND BACK PAGE













ISSUE 90

RED CLAY

SUMMER 2016



KEN & BETTY RODGERS RECEIVING THE MAJOR NORMAN HATCH AWARD AT THE MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS, FOR THE BEST FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTRY FILM. READ STORY ON PAGES 16-18. ADDITIONAL PHOTOS BACK PAGE OF FRONT COVER



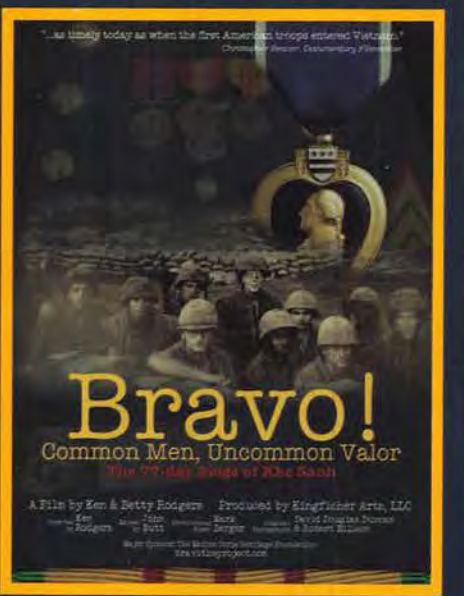





KEN RODGERS & MICHAEL OHARA WITH THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS GENERAL ROBERT B. NELLER AT THE MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS



KEN RODGERS & MICHAEL OHARA WITH THE SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS, SGT MAJOR RONALD L. GREEN AT THE MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

BOOK REVIEW

"THE LONG GOODBYE"
By MICHAEL ARCHER

MICHAEL ARCHER grew up in northern California and served in Vietnam as a U.S. Marine in 1967-68. His books include *A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered,* which VIETNAM magazine called "the best first-hand account of the battle of Khe Sanh;" *A Man of His Word: The Life and Times of Nevada's Senator William J. Raggio;* and, his most recent book, *The Long Goodbye: Khe Sanh Revisited*, chronicling his search for answers to a friend's mysterious death at Khe Sanh.



His articles and essays have appeared in The Nevada Review, The Political History of Nevada; Reno-Tahoe magazine, Red Clay magazine as well as a variety of newspapers.

Michael's research is frequently cited in works by writers of historical non-fiction. He was invited to Hollywood as a technical adviser on the 2013 short film *Guarding Charlie* and was a cast member in the 2015 documentary film *The Siege of Khe Sanh.*

Michael has participated in book events and spoken on a variety of topics at venues across the country, including: Eastern Kentucky University, University of Delaware, Bentley University in Massachusetts, Casper College in Wyoming and the University of Nevada, Reno.



In addition to his writing, Michael is currently a staff member with the Senate Committee on Finance of the Nevada State Legislature and lives in Reno.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

"**Michael Archer** established himself as a worthy spokesman for Vietnam War veterans in 2004 with publication of his poignant combat memoir, *A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered.* Now,

Archer has delivered a powerful sequel in *The Long Goodbye*, a brutally honest and impassioned work of nonfiction that takes us even deeper inside America's faltering war in Vietnam in early 1968. The focal point of *The Long Goodbye* is Archer's best friend from high school, Lance Corporal Thomas Patrick Mahoney III, who survives his combat debut at Hue City, only to disappear under mysterious circumstances at Khe Sanh. *The Long Goodbye* builds to a climax in contemporary Vietnam, with Archer playing the role of relentless cold-case detective, driven by loyalty and devotion to unravel the mystery of Tommy Mahoney's disappearance, and to bring home his beloved friend. Many Americans would rather not remember the anguish of our lost crusade in Vietnam. In *The Long Goodbye*, Michael Archer reminds us why we should never forget."

GREGG JONES has been a foreign correspondent, investigative journalist and Pulitzer Prize finalist author. His critically acclaimed works of nonfiction include *Last Stand at Khe Sanh* and *Honor in the Dust*.

"Marines don't leave their dead behind, goes the adage, and in The Long Goodbye Mike Archer demonstrates the truth of that statement and the double-edges of its meaning... Archer gifts us with the vivid, utterly compelling story of his stubborn devotion to a friend and of the grim reality of war and its long echoes into the lives of veterans. This is a book that will leave its grip on your heart. It deserves to stand with the classics not only of the Vietnam War but of all wars." —WAYNE KARLIN is an award-winning author and editor. His numerous works of fiction and nonfiction include *Wandering Souls: Journeys With the Dead and the Living in Viet Nam*. A Marine veteran of combat in Vietnam, Wayne teaches languages and literature at the College of Southern Maryland.

"Mike Archer's gripping description of the decade-long search for his friend's remains speaks volumes about the motto of the Corps, *Semper Fidelis* --Always Faithful."-- DICK CAMP is a retired Marine Corps colonel, former company commander at Khe Sanh, and formerly Deputy Director of the Marine Corps' History Division. He has authored numerous books, both fiction and nonfiction, including Boots on the Ground and Battleship Arizona's Marines at War.

"Skillfully blending history and biography, Michael Archer tells a compelling story of the Vietnam conflict and its aftermath. His timely revisiting of the epic battle of Khe Sanh reminds us that for those who experience combat a war may never end."-- GEORGE HERRING, Alumni Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Kentucky, is a leading authority on U.S. foreign relations. His books include *America's Longest War* and *From Colony to Superpower*.

Michael Archer writes the simply gripping and astounding story of the death of his childhood friend and fellow Marine in The Long Goodbye, one that goes to great lengths to place that terrible event into its proper personal, historical, and geopolitical context. —CALEB CAGE is a West Point graduate, decorated for his leadership and courage in combat during Operation Iraqi Freedom II and coauthor of the book T*he Gods of Diyala.*

"Exhaustively researched... will bring tears to the eyes of the most hardened reader and fresh knowledge to the most well-read historian. It is a terrific book that deserves a wide readership." KENNETH J. CAMPBELL, Associate Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science & International Relations, University of Delaware.

"Part battlefield account and part detective story...*The Long Goodbye* is riveting ands brilliantly told." DAN BARNETT, Book Columnist, Chico Enterprise-Record

The Long Goodbye: Khe Sanh Revisited by Michael Archer This is not a review of Mr. Archers latest book. I could contribute very little to what has already been expressed by so many. All experts in their various fields, professional historians, career military officers, acclaimed authors and those with great knowledge and influence. By now you should know the book is about the loss of Mr. Archer's childhood friend and fellow Marine who was killed in action and body not recovered on Hill 881S and his search for his remains, but that is just the vehicle that drives you to the ending, still leaving many questions yet unanswered

What made this book intriguing - at least for me -

was the well written and painstaking research Mr. Archer compiled about the preparations of the North Vietnamese as they closed in on the Khe Sanh Combat Base anticipating a swift and fatal defeat of the defenders. "It was one of the largest and best supported attack forces ever fielded by the Vietnamese, and, as it tightened the noose around the scattered and out-numbered American at Khe Sanh, seemed invincible." (Kindle 21%) I read this book late into the night, stopping ever few chapters to digest the words and remember back to those trying times as a young Marine, not really aware of much other than what was immediately around me and yes, during the read PTSD raised its head just a little.

As emotional as this book was for me to read, drawing suppressed recalled recollections, I envisioned Mr. Archer struggling with his own emotions recalling so many memoires and experiences, also alone in the dark of night and

Craig Tourte
HQ CO 1/13

UPDATE (June 21, 2016)

In the closing hours of the American occupation of Khe Sanh Combat Base in July 1968, after the longest and bloodiest battle of the Vietnam War, Tom Mahoney inexplicably walked away from his platoon, unarmed, and was shot to death by enemy soldiers hiding nearby. His body was never recovered.

After decades of exhaustive research, I have been able to describe in *The Long Goodbye* why Tom, my high school buddy and fellow Marine, took that mysterious walk into oblivion. However, several attempts over the years by American and Vietnamese search teams to locate his remains (and even the use of a psychic) have been disappointing. As such, **I'm delighted to report** that another effort by a joint U.S.-Vietnamese search team last week, this time taking with them for the first time actual eyewitnesses to the events of that tragic afternoon, returned with news that this long, painful quest may soon be coming closer to fruition.
Frank Ahearn and Tom Northrop, two members of Tom Mahoney's platoon the day he was killed, and involved in repeated attempts to recover the body from under an intense enemy ambush, led the searchers to the correct area of the hill (about 500 meters from where the teams had been previously looking).

According to Tom Northrop's email to me yesterday, they were able to locate a convergence of two trench lines at the location of the gate through which Mahoney had walked to his death. The team then searched the area with metal detectors, clearing away a good deal of underbrush, and soon located several pieces of barbed wire, and what appeared to be some grenade fragments, pins, and detonators. Also nearby in an old bomb crater they found a decaying old, plastic poncho, a belt of fifty -caliber machine gun ammunition, several spent bullet casings and a metal ammo box—all issued to American forces in that period. Not far away they located a sizable fragment of the tube from a Marine light anti-tank weapon (LAW), shoulder-fired rocket launcher

Those familiar with the details of Tom's death from reading *The Long Goodbye* will be excited by how promising these initial findings are because Tom was lost not far from the barbed wire defenses around the gate area. The hand grenade pieces are even more encouraging because the fighting that day by six Marine volunteers to retrieve his body (three of whom were wounded) was hampered by the inability of everyone involved (including the enemy soldiers using Tom's body as bait) to identify targets amid the thick vegetation—forcing all into a lengthy hand grenade duel.



Parts of old hand grenades recently located near the surface on Hill 881 South at the site identified by Ahearn and Northrop as where Tom Mahoney was last seen.

It is now up to the U.S. Defense POW-MIA Accountability Agency to now decide when to begin excavating for Tom. I'll keep you posted as more information arrives.
Michael Archer

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

RONALD RAYNER USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
KSV CHAPLAIN ALPHA CO 1/26

In this 50th year Anniversary of the Vietnam War, Vietnam veteran and Chaplain Ronald Rayner reflects on his journey from his service as a machine gunner in Vietnam to his current service, as a chaplain for the Waterford Regional Fire Department. Rayner was 19 years old, when he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1967 and now at 67, 49 years later, he is still serving his country, veterans and community.

Rayner enlisted in August of 1967 and after training was sent to Vietnam in 1968, where his Military Occupational Specialty was 0331/M-60 Machine Gunner. He said that after being there two weeks, they handed him a machine gun and made him a Squad Leader. He arrived in Vietnam as the Tet Offensive was beginning and served through it and the Siege of Khe Sanh. Both were major battles.



Rayner, a resident of Davisburg, is from Pontiac and graduated from Pontiac Northern in 1966. He attended Central Michigan University for a year, before enlisting. After leg injuries, he was sent home to heal. He was awarded a Bronze Star and Purple Heart for his service.

As he looks back at the Vietnam War, he says that regardless of how history evaluates it: "When my country calls, I go. You do what they ask you to do. So many guys do it. You take your turn. You don't get to choose your war. "Back home, he married his wife Cathy and started a family. He now has four children and six grandchildren.

He earned a Bachelor's degree from Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin with a major in history and a minor in Physical Education. He taught U.S. History at Waterford Kettering for two years before becoming a Pontiac Firefighter. He served there for 22 years from 1972 until his retirement in 1994. He then became a chaplain for the Pontiac Fire Department in 2003 and served there until 2012, when it became the Waterford Regional Fire Department and he is still serving.

Rayner said that it is an honor and a privilege to serve as the department's chaplain and that he is proud of the people he serves, who willingly risk their lives daily to save someone else's. "I pray for



the right words to help and bring comfort to people and I know that if I have faith, the Lord will provide the right words and then the biggest thing is to make myself available. That's all," Rayner said. Rayner said it was important to make it clear that he's no angel or saint, but the chaplain who trained him said, "All they had was sinners to choose from." "So many veterans who served so many years ago still serve today in various service organizations to serve other veterans and their communities," Rayner said. As a volunteer, Rayner conducts funeral services regularly at Great Lakes National Cemetery, is a chaplain for Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 133 in Pontiac and Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc

OBITS

EDWARD GEORGE LAWIDA . USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, HQ BTRY 1/13

Edward George Lawida succumbed to Parkinson's disease at his home in Brattleboro Vermont on May 7, 2016, four days after his 68th birthday. A fighter for his country and community, Ed approached his last years with an unmatched effervescence. If Parkinson's threw him a punch, his response was a joke. If he lost his ability to step, he danced the shuffle instead.

His drive to serve his country led him to sign up for the Marines in 1966. At just shy of 18 years old, Ed fought in the battle of Khe Sanh where the horrors of war inspired his lifelong commitment to peace. His military service took him from the jungles of Vietnam to the streets of Moscow, where he served as an Marine Guard at the U.S. Embassy during the height of the Cold War, and later as a field agent for the CIA. While in Moscow, he uncovered that the Russians were secretly microwaving the Marines, something that the U.S. government knew but denied. Ed spent countless years advocating for declassification of U.S. intelligence in an effort to reveal the truth and protect the health of current and future servicemen.

Ed was forever curious about the world around him. From the distant shores of Vietnam and Moscow, he traveled the world visiting Europe, the South Pacific, India, South America, and Africa. He traversed Denali and the Amazon, leaving a trail of new friends in his wake. His good humor and optimism served as a beacon for anyone who crossed his path, providing a sense of openness and accessibility to even the least known stranger.

Ever optimistic and good humored Ed never once complained about his pain and declining health. quick to serve those in his closest communities. He was a gracious host and he maintained a wit in conversation that kept even the darkest of Vermont winters just a little brighter.

His desire to be of help to those around him continued even as he lost his ability to do so. Instead of chopping fire wood, Ed became the expert fire builder – arranging his fire place just so – so that at the flick of a Bic, he would be able to provide warmth for his guests. Even after he could no longer stand on his own, his eagerness to help lent itself to his sense of humor.

Ed was the first to say that he never intended to be a family man. He was content to live his post-military life enjoying outdoor pursuits including skiing, scuba diving, bungie-jumping, fishing, and gardening. He worked for the U.S. Postal Service where he served the membership as a tireless and highly effective Union Representative. His life of serving those around him was punctuated when he moved to Vermont and met Mary. He was a devoted man, who strove for nothing more than to make Mary, the love of his life, smile, which she did all the time. They traveled the world together as partners in exploration; to Spain, France, Croatia, Montenegro, and Cuba. He introduced Mary to the sport of fishing and they surfcast from the Jersey shore to the rocky coast of Maine. Ed believed fishing taught important life lessons such as patience and optimism (if the fish aren't biting today, they surely will tomorrow). Clearly Mary came too late to the sport to develop those virtues!

He joined Mary's family and became a father to Caitlin and Sarah as both girls were attending and about to enter high school. To say Ed's greatest virtue as a father was patience, would have belied the word.

But he was a quick learner with the Holt girls, applying support and love from the start. He loved

them through all the ups and downs that come with raising teenage girls. He instilled in them his sense of marvel and curiosity with the outside world, and tried his best to engage them in politics and world affairs. He taught Sarah how to drive a stickshift and managed never to say a word as the gears grinded. Through it all he was a shoulder to cry on and a voice of support in concert with his loving wife. He was truly happy as a father, one who loved his daughters and who was ever grateful for the unexpected gift of Caitlin and Sarah in his life.

In the end, Ed left the world with a legacy of love, family and service. Parkinson's took his ability to walk and his vast intelligence, but it failed to take



his spirit and character. A week before he died he sat in the living room of their home waiting for Mary to finish preparing a meal.

"Mary, can I help with anything?" He offered with a chuckle and a glimmer in his eye.

"Well, yes my love I have lots for you to do," she replied from the kitchen. Both of them aware of the absurdity of the moment, and still humored by the sweetness of the offer. Even after he couldn't physically serve those around him, Ed's offer of support was always there.

A private celebration of Ed's life will be held in June. Memorial gifts in Ed's memory may be made to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

IT STARTS WITH AN APOLOGY

By Craig Tourte
HQ BTRY 1/13

It starts with an apology, something like this "Oh, I was just a ....." those who feel as if they did not do enough, were not heroic, didn't fix their bayonet and charge up the hill, and are in many incidences even embarrassed talking about their military contributions. The 2015/88 edition of Red Clay has a great article about Donald Saunders who was KIA at Khe Sanh on March 4, 1968. Donald didn't fix his bayonet nor charge the enemy trench line. Donald spent most of his time at Khe Sanh digging the trench line, filling sand bags, building bunkers and fighting positions, walking out of the base at night to the isolated listening posts, humping ammunition for the artillery pieces along with other necessary and dangerous jobs too numerous to mention. I have often thought that just identifying one's MOS does not necessarily described what they experienced.

Captain Dabney once told me that he had a variety of MOS's on hill 881S, including cooks, truck drivers and clerks as replacements for those who had been killed or wounded and to get off of this "only a cook stuff." That said, I thought I'd repost a little something I wrote a number of years ago for those, who to this day, still feel that little twinge of guilt because they were "just a ..."

MOS AND CASUALITIES

Marines are pretty much Marines, regardless of any particular Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). I never fixed my bayonet like Marines Mike Powers and John Rowland who served with Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment and I never charged an entrenched enemy bunker or ridge line like Marine Steve Wiese who Served with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, did during his 18 month Vietnam combat tour. I never sat month after cold isolated month on the top of a lonely hill in an isolated corner of Vietnam, like Marine Phil Nuchereno, watching his friends being picked off one at a time, wondering when and how his time would come. I never commanded men on an isolated entrenched hilltop, like Lieutenant Ernie Spencer,

Commanding Officer of Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, and to say that I was particularly brave or extraordinary would be a stretch. After all, I was just a private and did the job the Marine Corps assigned to me; I was just a regular Joe. I knew a lot of just regular Joes at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh in 1967 and during the terrible 77-day Siege of that base in 1968. Marines like Bill Poland and Beryl Bushaw who went about their very dangerous job with little sleep and little food. Men who fought their own battles for survival every day and somehow, perhaps through just plain luck, persevered.

Some are surprised to learn that there were, "other than infantry (grunts) at Khe Sanh." Marines like Donald Saunders, Ken Williams and Wilbur Stovall, the Company Clerk of Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marine Regiment. All Killed in Action at Khe Sanh during that long and bloody Siege. None assigned to infantry units, but all three were Marines.

Although my personal knowledge of the Marine Corps Combat Base at Khe Sanh is somewhat limited to the period of time I was there, roughly July/August 1967 to sometime in April/May 1968, as I look back it seems like I was there forever. To this day, certain experiences remain vivid in my memory and dreams. I have read extensively about the events of the Siege and have spoken to numerous individuals who were there with me. Each recalls a somewhat different yet similar experience.

Certainly the Military Occupational Specialty of the men in the various services were dissimilar, however I am quite sure infantry and supporting arms made up the majority of those on the base and surrounding hills. As such, it would make sense that most causalities were to those that held the MOS of an infantryman or related combat specialty. It is generally assumed, there were anywhere from 5,000 to 6,000 men at the Khe Sanh Combat Base in late 1967, a fair amount of military personnel, at least by Marine Corps standards. But regardless of the exact number of U.S. and allied personal at Khe Sanh, it is accepted that the number of North Vietnamese Army troops in the area was somewhere in the neighborhood of 40,000 men with supporting arms including tanks (Attack of the Lang Vi Special Forces Base by NVA tanks.)

I don't know the ratio of infantry to other Military Occupational Specialties on the base, but there were certainly many different and varied military specialties present among the Marine, Army, Navy and Air Force personnel. Cook's, truck drivers, office clerks, engineers, Navy Seabees, medical personnel, electricians, mechanics, wiremen, artillery, forward observers, graves registration, supply, radar, fork lift drivers, heavy equipment operators, air traffic control, tanks, supporting arms (50's and twin 40's) to name just a few. To look at those who were present, you could not tell one from the other, they all looked the same. Each carrying their individual weapon wherever they went. Red clay stained ratty green uniform, tired, scared, skinny, undernourished and exhausted, grunt, clerk and cook. Each MOS took casualties and all faced the same dangers together. All had their time in the V ring, not one safer nor job easier than the other.

Marine Tom Horchler was a truck driver with Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marine Regiment, who risked his life daily, taking rounds while he drove his truck to the dump, hauled water, C rations, sandbags, artillery shells from the landing strip to the guns and picking up the dead, gently transporting their lifeless bodies to Grave Registration. A moving exposed high value target, no trench, armor, sandbags or overhead to protect him, unable to hear the rounds leaving the guns of the enemy, unable to run, hide or even hope, all he had was just luck and a prayer. Continuing his very dangerous duty all day and then standing guard half the night in the trench line waiting for the expected ground attack.

Tom Horchler knew he had a dangerous job; no one had to tell him it was dangerous and no one had to thank him for his effort at supporting "them." It was the job the Marine Corps assigned to him, and at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh, it was just as valuable, just as necessary and just as dangerous as any other. There were many at Khe Sanh during the 77-day Siege of 1968 just like Tom Horchler, not an infantryman, but a Marine, doing a job which was just as dangerous, just as dirty and just as necessary as the rest of the jobs that had to be done.

At Khe Sanh we were all the same and it did not

matter what MOS the military had given us. There was no safe place, no place to rest, to hide or sleep, no place safer than another. We were all the same at Khe Sanh no matter the MOS, officer, enlisted or civilian contractor. We all shared in the danger equally and our casualties reflected our presence.

OBIT

EDWARD J. KAZIMIR USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, FOXTROT CO 2/26

Edward J. Kazimir, 67, husband of Linda (Kleiva) Kazimir, died peacefully on Wednesday, June 1, 2016 at the Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, NY

Ed was born on June 3, 1948 in Waterbury, CT the son of the late Paul and Dora (Urbinati) Kazimir and had been a lifelong Naugatuck resident. Ed graduated from Naugatuck High School, Class of



1966 and attended Post College. Ed was a disabled United States Marine Corps Veteran, having proudly served in the Vietnam War, FoxTrot Company second battalion, 26th Marines 3rd Marine Division. Ed was a member of the V.F.W. Crusader Post 1946, where he served as the permitee for many years and took pride in organizing yearly veteran trips to Washington D.C for Veteran's Day, the American Legion Post 17 and the Veterans Who Care Committee.

Throughout his career, Ed worked at Scovill Manufacturing, the chemical division of Uniroyal, Inc., Siemon Company, Naugatuck High School and with his wife Linda owned and operated Kazzy's in Bethany. Ed loved life and connecting with people. He took great pride in his country and family. His eight grandchildren were the light of his life. Ed was a parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi Church.

In addition to Linda, his loving wife of 46 years, Ed is survived by his daughters, Terri Kelley and her husband Christopher Kelley of New Hampshire; Wendy Dumonski and her husband Mark Dumonski of North Carolina; Kate Riva and her husband Brian Riva of Connecticut; his sister, Elaine Fredericks of Connecticut; his grandchildren, Caitlyn, Ashley, Madison, Alexa, Brianna, Zachary, Holley and Hayden and his niece, Chrissy Okoski and her husband Brian Okoski and daughter Lilah. In addition to his parents, Ed was predeceased by his brother in law, Bill Fredericks. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Monday, June 6, 2016 at 11:00am at St. Francis of Assisi Church, 318 Church Street, Naugatuck. Burial with military honors followed in St. James Cemetery, Naugatuck. Calling hours were Sunday, June 5, 2016 from 2:00 to 6:00pm at the Buckmiller Thurston Mengacci Funeral Home, 82 Fairview Avenue, Naugatuck. Members of the Naugatuck Veterans Council assembled at the funeral home, Sunday at 5:45pm. To honor Ed's memory, contributions may be made to the Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 11, 33 Oak Street, Watertown, CT 06795.

FROM THE KSV WEB

Part One of Two posts.. For All Khe Sanh Vets No Matter the MOS, and Especially the Grunts in K/3/26

By Dennis Mannion

Background Info:

On 861 in April '68...two days before being lifted to 881s. Trey Meade (Rocky) and I joined Kilo

the same day in late Sept '67 at Camp Evans. He was a machine gunner He was with us when Kilo (and many other companies) were sent to Khe Sanh as part of the buildup in mid-Dec.

Just before Christmas, the malaria that he had contracted caught up with him and he was sent from KS to DaNang for medical treatment. He hated leaving us. He was on his way back to Kilo when the NVA partially overran 861 that first night 21/22Jan.



They kept him down at the base for a few days to help ID our initial KIA's He felt so guilty about not being there at the start that when his 13 months were up he signed on for another 6 months....as a machine gunner!

Shot through both hips on his second tour, he received blood transfusions that had been unknowingly contaminated with Hepatitis B.

Plagued with liver problems all his life, he never married...no kids....no brothers or sisters and his parents were both only children too. He died of liver cancer 5 years ago.

There is a sentence in what you will read in Part Two that references the fact that in 30 years of teaching in a public high school, I maybe ate in the teacher's cafeteria 5 times. Just always felt out of place there.

Part Two of Two posts.. For All Khe Sanh Vets No Matter the MOS, and Especially the Grunts in K/3/26

Canape may be a little like Lt Black. There are some guys that returned completely wrecked from the experience. They want nothing to remind them of that time.

It was different for me. I came back wild and angry, but as I mentioned before, it took me awhile to diagnose that my rage and alienation were the result of what I came back to, not what happened over there. I hated this country or what it did to those of us who had seen the cauldron, who had been asked to give absolutely everything we had to give in a conflict this nation wasn't to follow through with. At the same time though, I wish I had handled a couple of isolated incidents differently (though the results would have been identical) I did nothing I am ashamed of. War is hell. It has always be hell, and always will be. I'm proud of my service in Nam and will f---- up anyone, anywhere who in any way attempts to demean that service.

I've often conjured an image of you sitting in your office at school, involved in a solitary lunch. You were always alone in a world of people (often well intentioned, though alien nonetheless) having no conception of your history. How do you communicate with individuals who have never lived that far beyond the norm?, have never gathered the body parts of their friends, never cringed as sheets of automatic weapons fire scythed the foliage around them or curled into human knots as incoming artillery projectiles rocked the earth on its axis?, never believed they would see another sunrise. For years I hated every noncombatant Mother--------- alive. Now I reserve my contempt for criminals and terrorist and dictators, and those in our society who apologize for their behavior.

I guess it all comes down to how a veteran perceives his behavior in the time he spent on the battlefield. I have nothing to be ashamed of and neither do you. I know you saved our asses on many occasions. On a smaller scale I would like to believe I did as well. I learned a great deal about life and death, in the Nam. I was also fortunate enough to have walked through the most beautiful and

mysterious terrain on this planet,and was privileged to have met some of the most stand up bastards it has been my good luck to have known. All of us who spent extended periods of time on those grass less hills and in those hallucinatory jungles have brought back memories which will forever estrange us from the overwhelming majority of our fellow creatures.
I say F—— ing "A" I wouldn't trade it for the world
Semper FI
Rocky the Dread
Terry Mead in an email to me 10 years ago

Semper Fi Dennis

REPLIES

Dennis,

My earlier message that did not come through was simply the word "WOW!" I was momentarily at a loss for words after reading Mr. Meade's observations.

Pure honesty about oneself very often unlocks an inherent eloquence that is difficult to replicate. Warriors-turned-writers like Remarque, O'Brien, Marlantes, and others had it in fiction. And for me, Graves (Goodbye to All That) and Manchester (Goodbye, Darkness!) had it nonfiction—most likely influencing the title of my most recent effort. In his too-short-of life, your friend, Trey, did too.

There is a kind Holy Grail out there for war writers that is often described as the "awful beauty;" originally from a piece written in a periodical at the time of the Civil War: "War is a sublime and awful beauty---a fearful and terrible loveliness--that atones in deeds of high enterprise and acts of heroic valor for the carnage, desolation and slaughter." I think Trey tapped into that notion powerfully and honorably as only a survivor of intense combat can.

Thanks for sharing it.
Mike Archer

Dennis,

This is an extraordinary post; one (1) of the best ever. I had tears in my eyes as I was reading it. This is exactly how I've felt for the past forty seven and a half (47.5) years; ever since I returned to the United States following my first tour—what Trey W. 'Rocky' Meade said here is a significant part of why I served a second tour. Trey just said it so much more eloquently than I've ever been able to express myself. Of particular I found the following most profound; "I came back [from Viet Nam] wild and angry, but, as I mentioned before, it took me awhile to diagnose that my rage and alienation were the result of what I came back to, not what happened over there. I hated this country for what it did to those of us who had been in the cauldron, who had been asked to give absolutely everything we had to give in a conflict this nation wasn't willing to follow through with. At the same time, though I wish I had handled a couple isolated incidents differently—though the results would have been identical—I did absolutely nothing I am ashamed of. War is hell. It always has been and always will be. I'm proud of my service in Nam." My God is that so true for so many of us.

After reading this post I just had to do an Internet search on 'Rocky' to learn more about the man. I was disheartened—to say the least—with what I found. His entire obituary, @ < http://www.tributes.com/obituary/show/Trey-Witter-Meade-91123146 > reads; "Trey was born on November 9, 1948 and passed away on Friday, March 18, 2011. Trey was a resident of Burnet, Texas."

The obituary Web Site asks: "Do you know something about Trey's life? You can enhance Trey Witter Meade's memory by upgrading Trey's public record with words and pictures, signing Trey's memory book, recording an audio memory or lighting a candle. The information in this obituary is based on data from the US Government's Social Security Death Index. No further information is available. More details on this data source are provided in our Frequently Asked Questions section."

There are no entries in the memory book. I'll leave it to those of you who served with and knew him to leave a lasting memory of the man.

May he rest in eternal peace. God Bless and Semper Fidelis!!!

Dennis-

Once again, thanks for sharing. I feel the same. I'm proud of my service with Mike 2, 3/26 and I'm proud of all the young Men, regardless of MOS that served around me, some driving themselves all the way to "going crazy" in the process. I joined them at Camp Evans as an 0311 replacement on or around Sept. 11 or 12, 67 with two other replacements. I learned a lot about my fellow human beings over there. Mike Co. was in the process of rebuilding after being hit hard in a battle up north "Operation Kingfisher" I think, where 3/26 was hit by the 324th NVA Regiment near Con Thien.

My second night with Mike 2, I and another new replacement were sent out on an LP to the west of the perimeter at Camp Evans with one of Mike's survivors from the battle up north. You could see in his eye's and hear in his speech that he was terrified of sometime in a very serious way. Around midnight or one o'clock, I and the other new kid were finding it all to exciting and were talking amongst ourselves. The "old salt" whispered for both of us to shut the blank up dam it.

Well, a short while later we were whispering amongst ourselves again and the more experienced kid just came unglued and basically began screaming at the top of his lungs that if we didn't shut the blank up right now he was going to kill us himself. You could see in his eyes and hear in his voice that he was terrified of something that we had no clue about yet but would come to understand as the months ahead exposed us to experiences that defy description with mere words. As you guys all know, you have to experience some things in person to actually understand the barbaric nature of War and what it can do to the heart.
Semper Fi
Dave Anderson
Mike 2, 3/26

Dennis

It was a great read. Thank you, Dennis.
Joe Bizz

Dennis

After the first night there were NVA and marine bodies all outside the perimeter. We loaded the Marines on a tank and when reinforcements came out in trucks they hit us with rockets. I was hit in the leg and had trouble walking the next day Mike took the brunt of the attack NVA were wearing Marine flack jackets they took from our dead/I have lived with the guilt of getting on the medevac since Walter Hammond wrote a song about the battle and I have it on a CD

Brian Mahoney

Dennis

For some reason this song always gets to me --- Sam

These mist covered mountains
Are a home now for me
But my home is the lowlands
And always will be
Someday you'll return to
Your valleys and your farms
And you'll no longer burn
To be brothers in arms

Through these fields of destruction
Baptisms of fire
I've witnessed your suffering
As the battle raged higher
And though they did hurt me so bad
In the fear and alarm
You did not desert me
My brothers in arms

There's so many different worlds
So many different suns
And we have just one world
But we live in different ones
Now the sun's gone to hell and
The moon's riding high
Let me bid you farewell
Every man has to die
But it's written in the starlight
And every line in your palm
We are fools to make war
On our brothers in arms

Songwriters:
KNOPFLER, MARK

OBIT

JIM KAYLOR USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, ECHO CO 2/26, HILL 861A

Jim served in the United States Marine Corps during the Vietnam war where he fought at the battle of Khe Sanh. Jim was awarded the Silver Star, our nations 3rd highest medal for valor and a purple heart at ConThien.

Jim was a Sergeant and worked for the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department for 38 years in various departments.

A full synopsis of Jim's Silver Star

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Private First Class James N. KaylorCSN: 2349911), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving with Company E, Second Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, THIRD Marine Division, in the Republic of Vietnam, on 7 June 1968. While serving with the Second Platoon and on security patrol near Con Thien, Private First Class Kaylor and the patrol were ambushed by approximately two companies of enemy forces. Surrounded and pinned down for four hours without communications, an order was given to charge the enemy. Although Private First Class Kaylor's grenade launcher became inoperable as the attack went forth, he drew his side arm and commenced firing on the enemy. Within a short time, all of his fellow Marines on the front lines were killed by enemy automatic weapons fire. Alone and with only three rounds of ammunition left, he called to the rear and located the only two remaining Marines. Moving into a crater which was near enough for them to supply him with grenades, he then singlehandedly attacked the enemy until there was no return fire. As he and two of his comrades prepared to assault the enemy bunkers again, the remnants of the Second Platoon came on to relieve them. Private First Class Kaylor's courage, bold initiative, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of great personal danger were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. Action Date: 7-Jun-68

JIM KAYLOR MEMORIAL

Jim Kaylor's Memorial was a sad, but fitting tribute to an outstanding Marine, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy, Khe Sanh Veteran and Silver Star recipient. An overflow crowd of more than 300 filled the little chapel at the 5th Marine area of Camp Pendleton. It was clear that Jim Kaylor was well respected, loved, admired and will be sorely missed by his family, countless friends and colleagues. Khe Sanh Veterans wanted to insure that those present recognized Jim was one of us, that we were present and paying our respects, as many were plainly visible in Khe Sanh shirts amongst the various in Marine Corps, Los Angeles County Sheriff and other allied law enforcement and public safety uniforms. I introduced ourselves to his wife Terry who thanked us for coming. Retired Lieutenant Colonel Ken Pipes - one of the most revered and respected Marines in the San Diego Camp Pendleton area - provided a wonderful, magnificent and fitting Eulogy. Steve Wiese and Jim were friends and as such, Steve shared a few memoires of his association with Jim. Steve's moving and inspirational parting words from the podium were, "Be sad that Jim is gone, but happy that he was here."

A Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Bag Piper accompanied by two drummers marched into the Chapel playing the Marine Corps Hymn and out again as is tradition, followed by the Sheriff's Honor Guard which presented an American Flag to Terry. Outside a Marine Corps Honor Guard in Dress Blues provide a rifle volley salute. The time honored bugle call of taps played at all military funerals was a fitting tribute to a fine warrior. As the memorial was coming to a close, two Marine Corps H23 Helicopters made two low passes overhead, one trailing an American Flag.

Jim's Memorial announcement has a closing line which reads in part, "Jim was a gigantic presence...fiercely loved his family but the Marine Corps was his heart and soul."

Pictures On Back Page of Cover

OBIT

LIEUTENANT COLONEL FREDERICK J. MCEWAN, JR., USMC KHE SANH VETERAN HQ CO S-4

Lieutenant Colonel Frederick J. McEwan, Jr. Lieutenant Colonel Frederick J. McEwan, Jr., born in Windsor, Ontario, Canada on September 27, 1928, passed away on Hilton Head Island on Wednesday, June 29, 2016. The Colonel, the son of parents who were U. S. and Canadian citizens, chose U. S. citizenship and volunteered to serve in the United States Marine Corps during the Korean War. The Colonel chose to continue to serve the United States for over twenty-five years, serving in myriad posts around the globe, to include service with the storied 26th Marine Regiment @ Khe Sanh, Quang Tri Province, Republic of Viet Nam during the 1968 Tet Offensive.

He received his Bachelor of Science degree at Assumption College in Windsor. He attended the University of Detroit Law School for two years, before joining the Marines. He is survived by his wife Faye Tillett, his three children Wilhelmina McEwan, Frederick McEwan III, Mary McEwan, & their mother Mary Ellen McEwan of Rembert, S.C., his stepson Todd Payne of Hilton Head, S.C., granddaughters, Victoria McEwan of Lexington, KY, Laura Grace Payne of Hilton Head, S.C., his sister Barbara Prew & brother-in-law Clifford Prew of Bloomfield Hills, MI, his brother Richard McEwan of Windsor, Ontario, niece Andrea Odette (Andrew) Federer, niece Ann Odette (Kevin) Kaye, nephew Edward (Lisa) Odette, and nephew Curtis (Karen) Odette all of Toronto, Canada, nephews Clifford, Douglas, Bobby, & John Prew of Birmingham, MI, and nephews Jeffery & Kenneth McEwan of Windsor, Ontario. He is predeceased by his sister & brother-in-law Gloria & Ed Odette of Toronto, Canada. The world lost a giant of a man when Lieutenant Colonel Frederick J. McEwan, Jr., age eighty-seven went to his eternal reward. The Colonel now rests in the all-knowing, all-loving, all-forgiving, all-merciful, all-powerful arms of our Lord and Savior. The Irishman that he is, the Colonel did not 'go quietly into the night' as he fought a long battle with several illnesses, which our government has attributed to the Agent Orange herbicide he was exposed to while serving in Viet Nam. Among his many proud accomplishments, Lieutenant Colonel McEwan was the S-4 Logistics Officer for the 26th Marine Regiment during the intense seventy-seven day fight @ Khe Sanh, the seminal battle of the Viet Nam War. Lieutenant Colonel McEwan was responsible for keeping the combat base and surrounding hilltop outposts properly supplied and he did an absolutely extraordinary job; without his leadership and efforts the Marines could not have sustained their defense and that battle would have been lost.

Following that assignment, for which he was highly recognized, Lieutenant Colonel McEwan was the Commanding Officer for the 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment during the spring and summer of 1968, again doing an exemplary job while earning the respect of his seniors for accomplishing an extremely difficult mission, but more importantly to him, earning the admiration and respect of the Marines who served under his command, many of whom volunteered without reservation to follow him into the most dangerous of assignments.

Rest in Peace Colonel. Mission Accomplished!!! He will be sorely missed. Family and friends are invited to a Mass of Christian Burial, Friday, July 8, 10:00 AM at Holy Family Catholic Church, 24 Pope Ave. Hilton Head, Interment will follow at Six Oaks Cemetery in Sea Pines, Hilton Head. A visitation will be held Thursday evening, 6-8 PM at Keith Funeral Home, 63 Arrow Road, Hilton Head. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in the memory of Fred can be made to Khe Sahn, Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation. C/O Thomas J. Eichler, 3221 N. Opal St. Chicago, IL 60634. . -



FRED McEWAN
& WIFE FAYE TILLETT
HQ CO 26Th MARINES S-4

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

KEN RODGERS, BRAVO CO 1/26 AND HIS WIFE, BETTY, DIRECTORS & CO PRODUCERS OF THE FEATURE LENGTH FILM, "BRAVO" COMMON MEN UNCOMMON VALOR, RECEIVED SEVERAL HONORS, FOR THEIR VIDEO

THE MAJOR NORMAN HATCH AWARD GIVEN FOR THE BEST FEATURE LENGTH DOCUMENTARY FILM. GIVEN AT THE MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS & THE DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION ELLEN HARDIN WALWORTH FOUNDERS MEDAL FOR PATRIOTISM, GIVEN IN BOISE IDAHO

Story By Ken & Betty

It was a heady experience being at the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's 2016 Awards Ceremony at the National Museum of the Marine Corps outside the gates of Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia.

BRAVO! was recognized and honored with the Major Norman Hatch Award for best feature length documentary film.

Betty and I arrived a few days before the big event and journeyed to Lexington, Virginia, to visit good friends. While there we checked out Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's home. Stonewall was an instructor at Virginia Military Institute (located in Lexington) before the Civil War.

The following day, BRAVO! Marine Michael E. O'Hara and his son-in-law Daniel Folz went with us to tour the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Betty and I have visited the museum three times before this journey and we are always amazed at the constant change in the individual exhibits as well as the continued expansion of the museum, which speaks to the level of commitment and passion by all the donors and personnel involved.

Later that afternoon, we were invited to The Basic School for new Marine Corps officers to talk about the history of Bravo Company, 1/26, at the Siege of Khe Sanh, and observe how The Basic School is using Bravo Company's patrol outside the wire on February 25, 1968, as a case study in their Patrolling and Scouting class.

Upon arrival we were greeted by the commanding officer of The Basic School, Colonel Christian Wortman, and three instructors: Captain Joe Albano, Captain Josh White and Captain Jason Duehring.

We will post a blog later about the specifics of our visit to The Basic School but I must say that we are gratified that the experiences of the Marines at Khe Sanh are being used to prepare the Marine officers of the future for combat.

Later that evening we dined at The Globe and Laurel restaurant owned by Retired Major Rick Spooner who also received an award from the Foundation for one of his works of fiction, THE DRAGON OF DESTINY AND THE SAGA OF SHANGHAI POOLEY. The Globe and Laurel is a museum of Marine Corps history in its own right, and we enjoyed looking around at the posters, photos and other memorabilia of days gone by in the lives of Marines. If you are ever in the area and want to see a fabulous array of Marine Corps history, consider dining there.

On Saturday, friend and supporter of BRAVO!, Betty Plevney came up from Richmond, Virginia, to join us for the Awards Ceremony. Betty has been a great resource for the producers of the film. Her expertise and opinions have helped guide us along the path to where we are now.

Before the main event, we were joined in the museum's Scuttlebutt Theater by many of the other honorees and their friends and families. The medals were presented by the Heritage Foundation's

Vice-President for Administration, Mrs. Susan Hodges, Retired Lieutenant General Robert Blackman (President and Chief Executive Office of the Foundation), Commandant of the Marine Corps General Robert Neller, Retired General John Kelly (the Foundation's Chairman of the Board), Retired General Walter Boomer (past Chairman of the Board), and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Ronald Green.

Betty and I were very proud to have General Neller shake our hands and in my case get my medal ribbon untangled from my red bowtie

After the awards ceremony we went into the main atrium of the museum to join over four-hundred-forty guests for a great meal and an informative—and at times inspiring—program that included the Commandant, General Kelley, General Boomer, Lt. General Blackman, noted actor and Marine Wilfred Brimley, and former Virginia Senator and Secretary of the Navy John Warner.

One of the most satisfying moments for Betty and me happened immediately after they screened the official trailer for BRAVO! on large screens strategically positioned around the atrium so that all the guests could watch. Earlier in the trip, we had asked if Michael O'Hara could join us on stage when the Commandant presented us with our medals. We were informed that the space was too small—and it was—but they would recognize him after they played the trailer.

When the that moment came, Lt. General Blackman announced that Michael was my guest and that he had served with B/1/26 at the Siege and had received three purple hearts during that seventy-seven day battle. One of the cameras that was filming and projecting the night's events focused in on Michael and he appeared on all the big screens in the building. He stood to a great chorus of ooorahs, cheers and much applause.

All through our time with Michael and Daniel, Daniel photographed the events so we could enjoy them later. Thank you, Daniel. The two men departed early the next morning, and Betty Plevney joined us for a leisurely breakfast before she headed back home. Betty Rodgers and I returned to the Museum of the Marine Corps and spent quite a bit of time wandering through the extensive outdoor gardens and memorials adjacent to the museum The weather was sublime and the dogwoods were blooming in all their spring glory. As we strolled past memorials to a whole host of different Marine Corps organizations and events, I pondered what had occurred for us during our time in Quantico.

When I was in the Corps, I made it a matter of personal policy to hightail it as far as possible any time a general, a colonel, a sergeant major came around. I was an enlisted man and I didn't want any encounters with officers above the rank of captain or any non-commissioned officers above the rank of gunnery sergeant. For me, those people almost came from another species, so on this visit, when I got to talk to the commandant, as well as a number of other generals, colonels and lieutenant-colonels, I came to the conclusion that they are folks just like me. Much more committed to the Marine Corps than I ever was, but folks none the less.

Thinking that made me remember what my drill instructors in boot camp used to say when we were about to be inspected by officers: "Just remember, they put their trousers on just like you do, one leg at a time."

Betty and I send along a hearty thanks to the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation—which, by the way, gave us some seed money to begin the process of making BRAVO!—and all the folks who honored BRAVO! and made our stay in Virginia a great success.

If you or your organization would like to host a screening of BRAVO! in your town this coming summer, fall, winter or next spring please contact us immediately.

PHOTOS ON FRONT COVER & INSIDE FRONT COVER

NSDAR CEREMONY

A Marine veteran who turned his company's harrowing tale from the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh during the Vietnam War into a documentary film will be honored with the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution's highest award.

Ken Rodgers, of Eagle, Idaho, will receive the Ellen Hardin Walworth Founders Medal for Patriotism on May 12 in Boise, the society announced in a statement. The medal honors an adult who has displayed "outstanding patriotism in the promotion of NDSAR's ideals of God, home and country through faithful and meritorious service to our community, state and nation."

Rodgers, along with his wife, Betty, directed and co-produced the award-winning film, "Bravo! Common Men, Uncommon Valor." The film won the best documentary feature prize in 2015 at the GI Film Festival San Diego's Local Film Showcase.

"Ken is an amazing person, veteran and Idahoan," Barbara Grant of the NSDAR Eagle chapter said in an email to Stars and Stripes. Ken and the others "fought so valiantly to preserve and uphold the freedoms we as Americans hold so dear."

"Bravo! Common Men, Uncommon Valor" details the bloody Khe Sanh battle from the perspective of Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, complete with interviews from more than a dozen survivors, never-before-heard audio, after-action reports and photos. Participants in the battle said the process allowed many of them to heal old wounds.



Ken and Betty Rodgers, the evening's awardees (center), along with the Eagle Chapter of the DAR. Photo courtesy of Don Johnson.



Betty and Ken Rodgers. Photo courtesy of Don Johnson

The battle for Khe Sanh came to symbolize the American involvement and resolve in Vietnam as well as the war's complexities. During the 11-week siege in early 1968, a single surrounded and supporting forces stood in defiance of three North Vietnamese Army divisions — about 20,000 troops. They were victorious, but only after 66 deaths, including 27, with 19 wounded and one taken prisoner on a single patrol. The base was later abandoned to the enemy.

NSDAR is a service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and supporting better education for American children. It was founded in 1890 and boasts 165,000 members in approximately 3,000 chapters worldwide.

For more information on the film and screenings, see https://bravotheproject.com/

The Worst Day Of My Life June 7th, 1967, 50 years ago...

by Thomas Hanks
Bravo Co 1/26

I was on mess duty at headquarters in Khe Sanh, Vietnam. I had been listening to a long battle off in the distance, It seemed to go on forever. Eleven months in country and I never heard anything like it. A Marine coming through the mess line who knew me, said "Hanks, that's your company out there".

The company was Bravo Company, 1st Battalion 26th Marines, surrounded and being attacked by a larger North Vietnamese Army force. I was so upset that I couldn't stop shaking to serve mess.

The Mess Sergeant said "Go see if you can help". I ran down to the airfield, there were body bags scattered around. I saw another friend walking toward me and that is when I heard about the deaths of my friends. Among the dead was one of my best friends, Ron Crooks from Hickory, NC, 22, wife and kids back home. Ron and I had been friends 15 months, since the formation of Bravo Company at Camp Pendleton in March 1966. He and I only had two months till we were due to come home from our tour in Vietnam.The Silver Star Awarded, posthumously, for actions, during the Vietnam War: Corporal, Crooks was participating, with his platoon, in a search and clear operation, west, of Khe Sanh. The entire, sweeping unit was taken under, heavy and accurate, mortar fire by North Vietnamese, regular forces. While mortar rounds, continued, falling upon the patrol's position, the patrol, was assaulted, by a North Vietnamese platoon, from well-concealed positions. Corporal, Crooks immediately put, his machine gun into action, in the most, advantageous positions and returned, accurate fire upon the enemy, with telling effect. An enemy, grenade explosion, knocked him, from his gun and seriously, wounded him. He refused, medical treatment and returned, to his gun and continued, to deliver accurate, fire, until a second grenade mortally, wounded him. By his courageous, actions and devotion, to duty, Corporal, Crooks contributed, substantially and directly to the success, of the patrol, in containing and repelling, the enemy. His selfless efforts in behalf, of others served to inspire, all, who observed, him and were, in keeping with the highest, traditions, of the Marine Corps and the United States, Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life, for his country. Action Date: 7-Jun-67, Service: Marine Corps, Rank: Corporal, Company: Company B, Battalion: 1st, Battalion, Regiment: 26th, Marines Division, 3d, Marine Division, (Rein.) FMF.

Also among the dead was Kenneth M Johnson, from San Diego, the young Marine who took my place that day as an "0351 Anti-tank Assault Man".

At the moment I heard the awful news, I crumpled to the ground, I couldn't move and I couldn't stop sobbing.

A few minutes later, when I finally regained my composure, I was in the middle of a dirt road, I looked up and there was a huge truckload of Marines, on their way to board helicopters to reinforce Bravo Company. They were waiting for me to get up. No honking, no yelling, they were totally silent, just looking at me and waiting.

Two weeks later I volunteered to go back out into the field, my request was granted and I was back out with Bravo company. I was assigned to be the gunner on the 106 recoilless rifle on top of Hill 881, a few miles outside of Khe Sanh.

I wanted revenge, it never came. I returned home two months later. June 7th 1967. A sad day for all Americans

Semper Fi,
Thomas Hanks
Bravo Company - 1st Battalion - 26th Marine Infantry Regiment



Addendum:

The 1st Battalion 26th Marines Command Chronology contains the following entry: On the afternoon of June 7th, 1967, 2 platoons of Bravo Co were attacked while on patrol at XD 760445, vicinity of Hill 821, came under a heavy small arms and mortar attack from XD 756439. Bravo Co received approximately 20-30 rounds of 82mm mortar rounds.

Bravo Company was then assaulted from the west by 30-40 NVA. The enemy troops attacked under cover of their mortar fire, which enabled them to get within grenade range of Bravo Co. The attack was repulsed at close range by small arms fire and hand grenades. The enemy's mortar positions were destroyed by artillery and air strikes. The enemy withdrew to the west.

When the medi-vac helicopter landed, small arms fire was received from the north. Two platoons and the CP group from Alpha Company were helilifted to Hill 881s to support Bravo Co. The 3rd platoon from Bravo Co and the Alpha Co Command Group moved from Hill 881s to Hill 821 to provide security for the movement of Bravo Co. Under cover of Air, the Alpha Company Command Group returned with Bravo Co to Hill 881s.

It is estimated that the enemy unit was 1 NVA Company with another NVA Company located to the north of Hill 821. The enemy suffered 23 KIA (C) and 17 KIA (P) as a result of the action.

The Operations Log includes the notation that two of the 18 men killed on June 7th were with an artillery Forward Observer team from A Battery, 1/13 Marines. In addition, two of the four seriously wounded men died from their injuries.

20 Americans - 19 Marines and 1 Navy Corpsman - died as a result of the fight at Hill 821 on June 7, 1967•



Casualties:

A Battery, 1st Bn, 13th Marines

Pfc Gale E. Gotti, Westminster, CA
Pfc Phillip A. Van Deusen, Tully, NY •

Bravo Co, 1st Bn, 26th Marines

- Cpl Ronald L. Crooks, Hickory, NC (Silver Star)
- Cpl Edward F. Furlong, New York, NY
- Cpl Edward A. Vercouteren, East Meadow, NY
- Cpl Walter L. Ward, Harvey, IL
- LCpl James L. Blaz, Dededo, GU
- LCpl John J. Chase, Laurel, MD
- LCpl Robert F. Enderby, Danville, IL
- LCpl Kenneth R. Keefer, Streetsboro, OH 0351
- Pfc Lawrence A. Brooks, Fountain Valley, CA 0341
- Pfc Thomas M. Healy, Hutchinson, MN
- Pfc Jesse L. Johnson, Morris, IL
- Pfc Kenneth M. Johnson, San Diego, CA
- Pfc Steven L. Millett, Massapequa, NY
- Pfc Larry L. Morris, Gas City, IN
- Pfc Wayne M. Pitts, Pensacola, FL
- Pfc Frank J. Shovlin, Wilkes-Barre, PA
- Pfc Larry E. Worthen, Union Point, GA
- HN Gregory P. Vercruysse, Spokane, WA (Corpsman, H&S w/ B/1/26)

The Bravo Company "Hill 821" battle on June 7, 1967 received very little state-side press. "The 6 Day War" that took place June 5 -10th 1967 was dominating the press at that time.

REPLIES:

Thomas – Thank you for your post. These things are difficult to recall, painful to write but necessary to share these remembrances. especially with your brothers here on this board, because we understand and share the same experiences and emotions and continue to mourn for those who did not return with us. If you read this board frequently, you'll find that many feel a terrible guilt, a sense of loss and that they did not do enough or contribute enough. Glad you made it home, hang in there....

Craig Tourtes
HQ Btry 1/13

Tom, As you know I was out there that day, no matter what you do , it's never enough when you lose your brothers. We do what we are told and assigned the rest is up to powers beyond our control.
Semper FI
Gene Weresow

THE WEB 30 March 2016

REMEMBERING MARCH 30

By Craig Tourte
HQ Btry 1/13

March 30, 1968 – Battalion of Kings pg 267 "The specter, terror, and horror of what happened on 25 February became an 'idee fixe' (obsession) continually gnawing at the souls of those still alive at Khe Sanh, especially within the command and staff of 1/26. Almost immediately, the battalion staff initiated plans for a return to the ambush site to retrieved the MIAs...In what would be the first offensive action out of the Combat Base, approximately 75 - 80% of the NCOs and enlisted men from the company had been there only a short time and although there was no way to rehearse the plan of attack nor train for it, several days prior to the attack, briefings were given repeatedly to the troops in the trenches. The mission was to attack a known fortified position with an alternate mission of attempting to establish and if possible, recover our comrades who had been ambushed on 25th of February 1968..."

So with bayonets fixed the brave reconstituted Bravo company of the 1st Battalion 26th Marine Corps Regiment once again crossed the wire to attack the same enemy fortified positon they had previously tangled with a month prior with the loss of 24 Marines. The February 25th battle was known as the "Ghost Patrol" by those who survived that most horrific battle. This March 30th attack would forever be referred to as the "Revenge Patrol." The CO of the Company Capt Ken Pipes stated, "I believe all of the young Marines that we had in the company had been waiting several weeks for this opportunity. ....once the kids started, there was nothing, it seemed, that could stop them...." A later body count confirmed approximately 115 North Vietnamese Army soldiers were actually killed by kids using small arms fire, grenades, bayonets and M79s, all weapons organic to an infantry company...." The loss of 19 brave Marines, many having survived the battle of February 25th and volunteering to go back out once again to face the enemy is a testament to the bravery and spirt of those brave young Marines On this day, the survivors of both battles, those who served at Khe Sanh and the family and friends of those lost, remember the 43 brave Marines who lost their lives on February 25th and March 30th. A day that continues to haunt the survivors and a day for all of us to take a few minutes to remember those, oh so brave young men, who without hesitation, charged into the claws of the beast of war.

Posted on Facebook by Michael O'Hara The morning fog is lifting. It is about to begin 48 yrs ago today. Those of us who survived this ordeal have crossed this trench every morning for 48 yrs.

30 March 1968 Khe Sanh Vietnam

30 March 1968. The most vicious battle of the Vietnam War is coming to a close. My Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment will depart the Khe Sanh Combat Base pre-dawn this day. A large percentage of our 120 man company are new replacements as we had been mauled badly on 25 February by the communist North Vietnamese Army. Nearly thirty Marines had been killed during an unescapable ambush and we were ordered to leave them lie some 800 meters to our front. Today the score would be settled tenfold on what has become known as "the Payback Patrol", but at the cost of over a dozen more brave young Marine Warriors.

It began with overhead artillery and what is known as a "Rolling Box Barrage" with the use of multiple Batteries of heavy artillery. After the initial prep fires the end of the box opened up as Bravo moved in to close with what turned out to be a battalion of communist troops. Once in, the box would close behind us trapping Marines and NVA alike inside. It became a fight of unprecedented fury. To see those young Marines, some of whom only six weeks before had been home with their families, charging machine gun bunkers with their flamethrowers, satchel charges and fixed bayonets. It was a sight to behold. The Communist gunners

quickly learned what the Germans had learned at Belleau Wood some 50 years before when the German High Command asked: "Wer sind diese Teufelshunde ? Who are these Devil Dogs?" When it seemed to be coming to a close, hours later, we began to pull back, collecting our dead and wounded, we realized what a price we had just paid. We had fought a very determined, well-disciplined enemy who, still to this day commands our respect as fellow Warriors. When our enemies tried to reinforce, it was at that point, as they were bearing down on us, that we came to appreciate those Marines who were part of our "Air Wing", as the F4 Phantoms screamed in at treetop level with their Napalm bombs, dropping so close you could feel the heat of the inferno adjacent to our positions. As the pilot rolled his jet around to the left we could see him give us all a "Thumbs Up". Our Commander Captain Ken Pipes, who had been seriously wounded and had lost most of his Command Group, had maintained contact with the air and artillery and had masterfully coordinated their firepower to our benefit.

In the end Bravo would suffer more casualties (58 KIA's) than any other company of the Regiment (REIN). For their valor they would earn three Navy Crosses, our nation's second highest award. Only one would live to collect it. After attacking numerous bunkers within the enemy complex Donald Rash, one of our newest members, laid down on the edge of a bomb crater to cover our withdrawal, knowing full well he would never get up again. His mother would be handed a folded flag along with his Navy Cross. That kind of heroism and dedication to your fellow Marines brings a whole new meaning to the verse in John 15:13, "Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends". Ten Silver Star Medals and fourteen Bronze Star Medals with V for valor were awarded as well. Over two hundred Purple Heart Medals as many were wounded on multiple occasions. Numerous Navy Commendations were earned and they contributed greatly to the Regiment earning the prestigious Presidential Unit Citation (PUC).

April brought new leadership to the company as many of our Officers had been wounded or killed. New men arrived and the wounded were evacuated. Our fallen Marine's remains were recovered within days. It would be five long years before we were told one of our members, Sgt Ronald Ridgeway, had been captured and held prisoner and had survived the war. It has now been nearly fifty years and those men, those brave young Marines will live in my memory forever. I hope the world will always remember as well.

Where do we get such men? What a privilege and an Honor it was to have served with and to have known them.

Semper Fidelis and may God always hold them in His arms
Michael E. O'Hara USMC Bravo 1/26 Marines USMC 1967-1970

I GET MAIL

I am the Green Beret who took the old color photo of the Poilane Family on the cover of the most recent "Red Clay" Magazine. I read the story and was overwhelmed by the memories it brought back to me. In 1964, I remember driving past their European style house quite frequently as we drove between the old French Fort and the airfield. We had dinner with the Poilane Family on at least a couple of occasions, and sometimes discussed the VC situation with Felix. I had no knowledge of what happened to them until I returned to Khe Sanh in 2013. Then I met Dennis Mannion at the KSV Reunion in Nashville in 2013 where we exchanged photos and information on the whereabouts of the Poilane Family

What a courageous family they were, and are today. I'm looking forward to making contact with Jean-Marie and Francoise and sharing some old memories with them.

Ted Showwater

TED

Thanks for this post. I was wondering if someone could retrieve you in my message on this board. Finally "Red Clay" magazine allowed this ! Thanks again for the photo of my parents, my sister and me and thanks for this message. Actually Dennis Mannion sent me an email reporting me

your post. Of course I will give you my email to correspond with you and I hope that my sister Françoise will do the same.

Warmest regards.

JEAN-MARIE POILANE

PERSONAL MEMORIES FROM THE WEB

I returned from Vietnam with all my body parts intact and no holes in them except those that were intended to be there. For that I am grateful, and I still have that body today. The only part of my body I ever lost (other than a few of my teeth), was the tip of the middle finger on my right hand. It was cut off in a jointer in shop class when I was in the 9th grade. The vivax and falciparum malaria I contracted in Vietnam has never recurred. I didn't want to bring those parasites home with me anyway.

When I came through Okinawa on my way home, I bought a hand carved serving tray. The ox cart and ox that were carved three dimensionally in the tray were intended to be covered by a sheet of glass, inset on the rim that was left for that purpose, in order to make a level surface. I gave it to my mother but she never used it as a serving tray. Instead she hung it on the wall in her dining room, and it remained there as a conversation piece until she died at age 87.

On the wall of my mother's living room, right next to the front door where everyone would see it, she hung the large, framed, head and shoulders picture of me in my uniform that was taken at some photo studio in San Diego after I graduated from boot camp. I was one of five siblings, and I think over the years my brother and sisters came to hate that picture because it was so prominently displayed.

My mother and I were not particularly close (I didn't particularly enjoy being whipped by her and my father), but I think she wanted to be closer to me. I left home when I was 16 and lived on my own, working two jobs and staying out of trouble until I turned 18. I joined the Marine Corps less than two weeks after my birthday. When I returned home before leaving for Vietnam, I had enough money to pay off all of my mother's debts (she lived a very frugal life, and my father was disabled with MS and couldn't work), so I did that as a non-verbal way of thanking her for putting up with me.

After I returned from Vietnam my mother saved all the letters she received about my military career and accomplishments from the Commandant of the Marine Corps on down. She also received and saved all the grade reports and newspaper articles about me from my college and law school days. My sister and I found them after she died, in the place where she kept her prized possessions. She and my father had 6th grade educations, and I was the only one of her children who served in the military and attended college, so she saved all those memories.

Now my wife has that tray, but she also just wants to display it. At this point some of the glue that held it together has dried and doesn't hold the tray together as well, but she loves the look and feel of the tray so it is on display in our home now. One reason she loves it is because I am an ox under the Chinese zodiac, and she even calls me Niu Bao, which means ox baby. For her, the ox carving is like a depiction of me.

My wife also has that framed picture of me, hanging in our home, to remind me (according to her) that I wasted the best years of my life before she and I met and married each other.

When I arrived at Camp Lejeune after Vietnam, I went to the PX and proudly bought things with the Marine Corps Emblem on them, but none of them survived the years. Coffee cups tend to get broken, and when you move a lot, other things tend to disappear.

Then after I finished OCS and The Basic School, I bought a black, leather-covered box that officers tend to buy at the PX, much like a man's jewelry box, to hold things like my ribbons and medals and warrant officer bars. But I put something else in that box because it meant something to me. Over the years, many more things disappeared from my Marine Corps days. Even my Marine Corps officer's sword with my name on the blade disappeared along with its black scabbard and belt, and I don't have a single item of my uniform or covers or emblems left. Even my dog tags disappeared

somewhere along the way.

But that one little item survived in that black box and remains there today. My kids have marveled at it and tried to use it. My grandkids are curious about it, but have trouble believing that it could be used for its intended purpose.

Have you guessed what it is? Yes, it is the last C-Ration opener that I used in Vietnam. It looks old, and it is, but it served its purpose well, helped keep me alive, and still works after all these years. It earned its place of honor in that little black box.

Other than that, all I have left are the memories; that is, all the memories that still remain.

Now there is no particular reason that you should care about this story, and you may wonder why I wrote it, but to be honest I didn't write it just to post it on this message board. I have calculated, right or wrong, that one thing I can leave for my family and my descendants are stories about their ancestors that might survive, and may even increase in value to them over time, so when I write a story like this, I save it with all the other stories I have written. I wish some of my ancestors had done the same, but it would have been more difficult to do without computers and electricity.

I also wrote a book that was published in 2009, and republished in 2010. It is based on true stories about my life, but fictionalized enough to make it more interesting, and it actually got great reviews on Amazon. I wanted to capture those memories for my descendants while they still existed.

For whatever it is worth, I shared this story with you, because you are my fellow Khe Sanh Veterans, and you may also see some value in that old C-Ration opener because you saved yours as well.

MORE MEMORIES

48 YEARS AGO TODAY

April 17, 2016 at 04:54:14 AM
by Nick Romanetz

Last night, C/1/26 spent the night at 1/9's old position at the rock quarry. The morning of the 17th, we moved to the LZ in the vicinity of the drop zone, formed into heliteams and prepared to leave Khe Sanh. We watched 46s bring in new troops, one bird touching down with the tail ramp in a mine fields. As troops left the bird, several mines were tripped and Marines wounded. Welcome to Khe Sanh. We headed to Wonder Beach and as we lifted off I had a knot in my stomach until the base faded from view. We had cleared the AO and were out of there, completely. As I get older, my memory retains less about time on the ground and the siege, but leaving Khe Sanh is remembered like it happened yesterday. Unlike Dennis, within a few hours we had hot showers, clean utilities and a hot meal.

Sadly, the months ahead would bring some intense combat near the DMZ and guys that survived Khe Sanh went home in body bags. War sucks.

MEMORIES CONTINUES

WARNING TURNS INTO FRIENDSHIP

Just a quick quote, and the story! I'm on my way to Hill 861as the new Doc! A fellow Doc calls me aside, and tells me to stay away from Rockets, and Machine gunners. When I reach the 3rd Plt. trench line, a Marine starts screaming for me to get down, and in comes a mortar round. That Marines name was John Snowder, and he was in fact a Rocket Man. A few minutes later, I meet another Marine named Mike Bradbury, who also was a Rocket man. My home ending up between Rockets & Machine Guns. We would become life long friends, and later a grunt named Randy Mapel, also a Rocket man would join this club! These three MARINES just spent the week with me, encouraging me, never letting me spend a penny on anything. Much adapt overcome persever for me. It's the most I've eaten in 6 months□. They took from their own lives and gave much to me! It is a true picture of the United States Marine Corps helping their own! To everyone of you out there, thank you so much, and Semper fi!
Much love, Doc Jim Thomas

Reply

Doc,

Doc, I am sure other Marines have already told you this, but we depended so much on our Corpsmen and every time we lost one of them, we took it personally.

Did you know Doc Toner? He was returning from R&R not long after I arrived at Khe Sanh. His plane was shot down and everyone on board died. He was the first of what seemed like an endless stream of Corpsmen I knew who were injured or killed in Vietnam.

Much of what happened in Vietnam has been lost or shut out of my mind over the years. Even the name of the Corpsman who died a hero not 5 minutes after he left my side to go to the aid of a seriously injured Marine remains in my memory, but I have never forgotten how he sacrificed his live to help that Marine.

At that time I was carrying the company radio and Doc was at the command post, such as it was, with the company commander and me. I heard the cry for Corpsman Up on the radio and Doc heard it as well and was already grabbing his bag. We were under heavy fire but Doc ignored it and ran to help the downed Marine. But as soon as he arrived and started to treat the Marine, who had a sucking chest wound, I heard the frantic call on the radio. They got Doc too, same kind of wound to the chest, and Doc lost his life that day.

It was two more days and many more dead and wounded before we fought our way out of that mess. I may not remember his name, but I can still see Doc's face and will never forget his bravery and his sacrifice.

Semper Fi
Lee Soloman

MISSION TO VIETNAM A ATASCOCITA VETERANON MISSION TO EXUME KIA MARINES

By Melanie Feuk

KSV IN THE NEWS

Peter Post of Atascocita and his fellow Marines made their way up Hill 700 at Khe Sanh in Vietnam, they came under small arms fire April 6, 1968.

"We were at Khe Sanh for the 77-day siege," Post said. "At the end, we (were) assigned to patrol Hill 700, right in the middle of Hills 881, 861 and 558 which are the more famous Hills. There was still some North Vietnamese Army (NVA) there."
On the other side of the hill, there were two large bomb craters where many of the troops were taking cover. Squad leader James Trimble and radioman PFC Anthony Pepper were in the right-hand bunker when a mortar round landed in the crater; taking both of their lives.

The battle lasted for two days; those who could, continued pushing on. Those wounded were recovered and brought back for medical attention. However, many of those who lost their lives in battle had to be left for retrieval at a later, safer time.
"It was a tough two days," Post said. "As we got to the very ridge of the hill, the fire got really intense. We had a couple of Marines that were out over the edge and we were trying to get back. The battalion pulled us back off the hill and brought in artillery. We thought we'd go right back up. We had the wounded off the hill, but we knew we didn't have all of those Killed in Action (KIA.)

"They held us down there all night. We went back the next day joined by the Fox Company on the right, and we took the hill. But, when we went back up, we couldn't find any traces of Trimble and Pepper. We took the hill on April 7(1968,) cleaned everything up and got everybody identified except for those two. So, that's been an ongoing case."

In 2014, Post was approached by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) regarding an investigative mission into the case of the unrecovered Marines.

"JPAC in Honolulu has teams that go back to recover MIAs or unaccounted-for servicemen," Post said. "They asked if I would help them with this investigation. So, we went to Vietnam in June 2014 with a 16-person team."

Post navigated the team to the bomb craters. After they examined the craters and properly catalogued the information, Post showed them the exact site where Pepper and Trimble were killed, although the location of their bodies remained unknown.
Determined in their attempt to bring some closure to this case, Post and JPAC began working their way through another approval process which would permit them to conduct a dig on Hill 700. In the end, they were successful and return to Vietnam Wednesday, Aug. 10 in the hopes of exhuming any remains of the fallen heroes, Trimble and Pepper.

"It took two years to get everything in place," Post said. "We'll be doing a sort of anthropological dig. There could still be remains at the edge of the crater. They will sift the dirt and dig it out very carefully. Our hopes are that we recover something, which will most likely be bone fragments or something like that. The lab in Honolulu has DNA for the both of them, so they can test anything we find."

The excavation process will take time and may not yield the desired results, but Post remains optimistic.

"It takes approximately 30 days for them to do this dig," Post said. "There's enough probability of finding something for this to have been approved. If there was no chance of finding something, we would not have been given the funding."
According to Post, exhumed remains of Pepper and Trimble would likely be buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



A REFLECTION ON FATHER'S DAY

By Gene Weresow

Yesterday was fathers day and today I was reflecting on how fortunate I am to have survived this long. After Khe Sanh my children and grandchildren bought me a little something. But beyond the gift was a note from my grandchildren. It read " We have a Hero we call him Grandpa" now I'm not normally a sentimental guy but this touched me beyond words.

So today I was relaxing and reflecting back on my Dad (that's what us old guys do these days) in a way he was a hero to me too, and I regret never telling him so, he's gone many years now and I miss him

So I decided to listen to some of the music he had written over the years. As many of you may know, he wrote Symphony No 6 Khe Sanh in 1968. As I listened to it again I came to realize how truly remarkable it is and what a labor of love it must have been for him. Thanks dad for leaving me this wonderful work which I can enjoy when ever I miss you.

Now you gotta realize he penned this this thing, each instrument each note and my daughter God bless her spent countless hours converting it all to a computerized symphony I received on fathers day about 8 years ago.

How truly blessed I am to have such great children , grandchildren, a wonderful wife and a father who cared to pen this music for me.

AN UNHEARD SYMPHONY, AND A RUTGERS COMPUTER WHIZ'S WORK TO BRING IT ALL TO LIFE

"Catherine Weresow labored late into the night to convert her grandfather's score into sound"

By Mary Jo Patterson

Most families have heirlooms of some sort, providing a precious link between generations. A pocket watch. A chair. An old teddy bear.

This is a tale about a symphony – four movements,

handwritten on sheet music – that passed from one generation to the next. A family heirloom, to be sure, but one that was not heard for 42 years until Catherine Weresow, an application developer at Rutgers brought it to life.

The work was composed during the Vietnam War in New Jersey by Dymitry Weresow, a father of six, including a Marine defending a remote Vietnam outpost known as Khe Sanh. In January of 1968, one of the war's most brutal battles began at Khe Sanh. As Weresow watched news reports of the 77-day-long siege, he was so inspired by the courage of his son, Gene, and other Marines that he wrote a symphony and dedicated it to them.

Gene survived the battle and came home. He wanted desperately to hear the symphony, especially after Dymitry's death in 1985. But that did not happen until December 2010, when his 36-year-old daughter, Catherine, who works in Rutgers' Office of Instructional Research and Technology, began experimenting with software used for music composition.

After work for three months, Catherine labored late into the night to convert her grandfather's orchestrated score into sound. She decided to make the result a surprise Christmas present for her father.

One evening in December, while visiting her parents, she set up her laptop with speakers and clicked on the link she'd created, http://zdh.com/khesahn. Here, she announced, come the first two movements of Dimitry Weresow's Symphony No. 6, "Khe Sahn". Her father listened. He was elated.

"I was overwhelmed," he said. "I'd been wanting to hear this thing for years. Not being as gifted as my dad, I couldn't hear the music just by reading the notes."

Catherine hadn't been able to imagine her grandfather's symphony, either. She had taken violin lessons as a child, but wasn't a fan of classical music. Making music as an adult meant playing the drums or Rock Band on her Xbox. She knew, from childhood visits to her grandparents' home, that Dymitry had a room in back filled with records. She remembered him playing the piano, and knew he was choirmaster at church. But she did not understand that her grandfather, who made a living as a laborer, was a composer. When he died, he left behind seven symphonies, several operas, and a number of shorter works.

Dymitry Weresow had no formal music education, according to his son, but he had a great-uncle who was a well-known Russian composer, Alexander Scriaben. He taught himself to play the piano and joined a performing arts troupe as a young man. During World War II he was captured by the Germans, and later he became one of the thousands of exiles from eastern Europe who resettled in the United States.

During the last days of his life, Weresow told Gene he hoped his music would find recognition some day. After he died, his son sent the Khe Sanh symphony score around to orchestras around the country, hoping to kindle their interest.

"I got back some very nice responses, but basically nothing happened," he said. After graduating from Rutgers in 1997 his daughter, now skilled in computers, used technology to tackle the project. It was a formidable task; software was costly, her grandfather's writing was hard to read, and the score was filled with obscure notations and unfamiliar Italian phrases. She gave up.

In October 2010, Catherine tried again. Newer, less expensive software allowed her to slowly convert the pages into sound, note by note. When she was stumped, she studied musical composition, or consulted a handful of experts she had met online.



Catherine Weresow, Gene's Daughter

good. It sounded interesting."

It was hard work, but exciting. She was learning, using technology, and writing family history. At night, she went to bed hearing the music in her head. At work, she found herself humming.

She completed the job on the night of Jan. 12, 2011. After some post-production tweaking, to adjust the volume of certain instruments, she sent her father an e-mail, "I'm finished!"

Now Weresow plans to produce her grandfather's other works. But she hopes that will not be the end of the story.

"We would still like to hear it performed live. Who knows? It's possible, we could find someone who takes an interest," she said. "I figure, the more I do, the better. Maybe one of them will catch someone's ear. "

Decades after a man wrote a symphony honoring his son and other Marines in Vietnam, his granddaughter has converted the orchestrated score into sound

Eugene -What a wonderful tribute to your father. On Friday June 17, a number of us met in Oceanside California for dinner prior to attending the Memorial Service for Jim Kaylor on Saturday at Camp Pendleton. I don't recall what caused the subject to come up, but Larry McCartney asked me, "Of all of the people who have lived on this planet who would you most like to have a conversation with." I'll admit I was stuck for an answer, although I may have considered having a conversation with some of intelligence and influence I am quite sure the conversation would have been one sided. I think I mumbled something of a none answer that I can't now remember. I guess I have never been too fascinated with celebrities, stature or power, perhaps I am too narcissistic to be overly impressed by others. About 0200 Saturday I was awake and the answer to Larry's most interesting question came to me, I'll blame an overabundance of adult beverage for not thinking of it when asked, because it is certainly something I have thought about most of my life. My father passed away in 1950 at the age of 35, I was only 3 years old. My parents had separated and my mother had moved on with another man who pretty much resented having to raise another man's child. By now you'll have correctly reasoned that the person I would most like to have talked to was my natural father. Although I never knew him, many have told me what a wonderful man he was. He certainly wasn't wealthy, scholarly nor cultured, just a farm laborer who did his best both before and after serving in WWII. On the few days when I pass through the small dusty farm community where he is buried, I often stop and remove the weeds from his little white military granite head stone and have a few private words with him. I look at the only photographs of him from his high school year book that sits on my desk, there is not a day goes by that I don't think about him, I think he knows that.

Craig Tourte

OBIT:

ED DIAZ, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN
FOXTROT COMPANY 2/26

TRIBUTE"

My Rocket Man
By Captain Terrence Arndt
Memories of Ed Diaz

I served with Cpl. Ed Diaz in the Republic of Vietnam during the period of November 1968 to April 1969. I was his platoon commander. I am saddenedby the loss of Ed. He was liked and respected by all. My prayers go out to his wife Jenny and family & friends. I would be with you if it were not for the health of my wife and the requirement for 24/7 care.



Ed was a Marine through and through. With 2nd Platoon, Fox, 2/26, Ed participated in the defense of the Khe Sanh Combat Base in which the 26th Marine Regiment was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for one of the 77-day siege of the combat base. It was one of the largest battles of the Vietnam War.

He participated in operations LZ Margo, Valiant Hunt, Eager Pursuit, Meade River, and Bold Mariner. During Operation Bold Mariner, February 1969 our platoon, with Ed playing a key role, was successful in capturing over 100 enemy personnel including a complete Sapper Company (56), the largest intact enemy unit captured during the war to that date.

My fondest memory of Ed was on Operation Meade River, November 1968. This was a 10 battalion operation that killed over 1100 NVA. A tough, close, at the tip of the spear fighting. Ed was section leader in 3.5 rockets assigned to our platoon. The 3.5 Rocked Launcher was an old weapon from WWII. It was large but effective if the gunner could shoot. The platoon was returning from a dangerous patrol in front of friendly lines trying to find and close enemy escape routes. It was a quiet patrol until we were returning to our lines. We were pinned down by enemy sniper and machine gun fire. The platoon organized a defense while under fire. We were all trying to crawl into our helmets. I called Rockets up and Ed came forward with his Assistant Gunner. Now we were all scared. Ed was scared, but he was courageous. I explained to Ed that we had to use his rocket launcher to knock out a small house/bunker complex the North Vietnamese were using to fire at us. Ed, kneeling and exposing himself to enemy fire, aimed his rocket launcher at the complex.

He took careful aim while always knowing that the snipers want to kill him before he can launch the rocket. They did not. He was successful with a direct hit, destroying the complex and suppressing enemy fire. Not only did he hit the complex but he put the round through the window. Some shot! This allowed the platoon to safely return to friendly lines and was then that Ed, forever, became, My Rocket Man.

After the war we all came home, put it away, and got on with our lives. In 1985 there was a parade in NYC and the dedication of the New York City Veterans Memorial Plaza. I was working at the American Express Company and the building formed part of the plaza. Late in the afternoon I decided to go down and see what was happening. The was a notice that the 26th Marines were gathering at a hotel and all who served were invited. The Khe Sanh group put on a slide show of the battle in a hot dark, crowed room. When it was over, I looked across and I thought recognized three Marines. I went over and introduced myself and they all said Lt. Arndt, good to see you. They were Ed Diaz, Ed Brown, and Rich (G?). We proceed to tell too many sea stories, late into the night. It began a lifelong friendship with Ed, Ed Brown until he passed away and Carlos Morales. Ed Brown is buried here and Ed wanted to be buried with his Vietnam Brother, Ed Brown.

We stayed on contact, and even attended a couple of Khe Sanh Veterans reunions.

I shall miss him, his humility, smile, friendship. Semper Fi my good brother and I will see you with Sky Six soon.

OBIT:

JAMES HEBRON, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN BRAVO CO 1/26

JULY 15 2016 JIM HEBRON DIED IN THE PHILIPINES. JIM WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ESTABLISHING THE KHE SANH VETERANS ORGANIZATION AND WAS THE KEY PLAYER IN SETTING UP THE 1985 NY TICKER TAPE PARADE.

Another sad loss. Spent many reunions with JIM. The life of the party when he was around, but humble at the same time. I had to hear from others that he was partly responsible for the NYC Welcome Home Parade (which was my introduction to the KSV) and the Khe Sanh Veterans. He will be missed.

TOM FORD
Foxtrot Co 2/26

I am sad to hear about Jim's passing. Jim was second squad leader B/3 at Khe Sanh. he rotated out 4 days before the "Ghost Patrol" arriving home on Feb 25. We were good friends for many years. He contacted all of the families of those KIA on the patrol to offer his condolences and share memoirs of their loved ones lost that day. He was also instrumental in the in organizing and running the 1985 Welcome Home Parade for Vietnam Veterans in the city of New York . Until he moved to the Philippines to retire , he attended all of our Khe Sanh reunions. He was a good friend, a good man. and a Great Marine! RIP our brother! Semper Fi.

Tuesday, just after midnight at The Wall on 9Nov82....three days before the dedication:

I had driven down from CT earlier on that Monday to "be a part of the dedication" even though I was not a member of any veterans groups and I did not know a single veteran there.

Checked into a motel in Alexandria at 2200 hrs. Called home and spoke with Joan. Then drove to the Wall and stayed within 400 meters of it for the next 36 hours straight. There was only a temporary paved walkway then, and there was a least 8 feet of grass between it and the wall itself.

It was raining and had been so for hours, so with all the foot traffic, the grass had been churned into serious mud. In addition, there were no small flood lights at the bottoms of the panels, so it was an occasional flashlight, lighter, or matches. I had none of these. I overheard someone in the dark explaining how the wall "worked" with names in alphabetical order by day and, it took me some time to zero in on April 1968. I was looking for Lt. Steve Fordham -- KIA on 15April in the saddle of terrain between 881s and 881n. Somehow, I needed to find him first. It must have been around 4 in the morning, and suddenly there he was. His panel is on the Washington Monument side at a point where the wall is only three feet high.

I was stunned, shaken, overtaken with grief and seemed to be weighted down. I sank to my knees in the mud, leaned against the glistening marble panel, touched his name and wept. It seemed that the Wall was shedding tears right along with me. Not sure how long I was there -- motionless and wracked with sobbing -- maybe half an hour or more. Suddenly, a hand on my shoulder and a quiet voice, "You OK, buddy? Is this your first visit? Let me help you up."

He and the woman he was with helped me to my feet and we shook hands. He told me his name -- Jim Hebron -- and he introduced me to the woman he was with. I have forgotten her first name but I have never forgotten who she was. A sister of Lt. Don Jacques. I saw them on and off together for the next two days, and I remember sitting on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial (in the daytime) as we compared our USMC time. He was clearly haunted and guilt ridden by the fact that he had rotated out of KS a few days before the ambush of the ghost patrol. I think Jim said he was in Okinawa when he heard the news reports about it.

We stayed in touch for a few years...I saw him at the NYC Parade in '85 and at one of the D.C. reunions. Last I had heard (till now) was that he had moved out of the country. So sad.

Semper Fi, Jim, and God Bless.
Dennis Mannion

OBIT:

JOHN COLLINS, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN FOXTROT CO 2/26
By Tom Ford
Foxtrot Co 2/26

John R. Collins, 67, of Manheim, died peacefully on Wednesday, May 18, 2016 at the Lebanon Veterans Administration Medical Center. Born in Lancaster, he was the son of the late Paul and Jean Royer Collins. He was the loving husband of Jo Anne Nauman Collins and they celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary in March. John served in the U. S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War and participated in the Battle of Khe Sanh. He was a Purple Heart recipient and a member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

For over 30 year he was employed by Fenner Drives in Manheim. A father figure for many, he was active with the Big Brothers Program and a

coach for the Manheim Youth Baseball League. John was a member of the Manheim Athletic Association and for many years was a baseball official and wrestling referee. For many years John played in numerous "Country Music Bands" throughout Lancaster County.

An avid hunter and fisherman, he was a member of the Dela-Ches Fishing Association. John enjoyed



spending time with his friends, family and grandkids, going to the family cabin in Perry County and riding his motorcycle. He was a member of the American Legion, VFW, Retreads Motorcycle Club, Red Rose Riders, and the Hogs and Heroes PA Chapter 2. John had a lifelong passion for his family and his many friends and was a true role model of a humble generous man that gave from his heart each and every day.

Surviving in addition to his wife, Jo Anne, is a son, Jonathan married to Shannon Collins, Manheim; a daughter, Angela, married to Shane Barber, Lancaster, five grandchildren: Damon married to Shannon Collins, Chance Barber, Kadance, John, and Alexandria Collins, one great grandson, Jaren Collins; four brothers: Barry, married to Jane Collins, Bloomington, IN, Gary married to Cindy Collins, Elizabethtown, James, married to Kathy Collins, Elizabethtown, and Jeff married to Diane Collins, Ephrata, and a sister, Nyla Collins married to Tina Cunrad. He is preceded in death by a grandson, Austin Barber.

Chaplain's Corner Summer 2016

Conversation in San Antonio

by

Khe Sanh Veterans Chaplain Ron Rayner

This election year has polarized our country as no other since 1968. I see no middle ground. It is my suggestion that politics are left at home while the Khe Sanh Vets are in San Antonio. The Bible offers much advice on what should be said

"Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear." Ephesians 4:29

"A perverse person stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends." Proverbs 16:28 (NIV)

"Words satisfy the soul as food satisfies the stomach; the right words on a person's lips bring satisfaction. Those who love to talk will experience the consequences, **for the tongue can kill or nourish life."**

Proverbs 18:20-21 (NLT)

Three simple criteria for speaking: Is it true? Is it kind? Is it going to help the situation?

I am going to try and get a notice in my local newspaper about our San Antonio reunion in September. It is always nice to see new faces as well as familiar faces at the reunions. I believe we all have a duty to promote the Khe Sanh Veterans and the annual reunion.

"Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Proverbs 12:18 (NIV)

Our Father, please speak to us through the words of the Bible and help us to see how to apply their truth daily. Amen.

MORE WEB GEMS

It was late into the night and as usual I was awake and laying on the couch channel surfing while my wife was tucked safe and snug in bed 3 hours into her restful sleep pattern. I happened to come across Oliver North's War Stories series about the Siege of the Khe Sanh Combat Base, my recall is that it was produced or first shown in 1991. There were a number participant of that battle who were interviewed and all of them did an excellent job articulating their first hand narratives. I guess because I know them personally, I was particular interested in the dialogs of Ray Stubbe, Bruce Geiger and Dennis Mannion, each eloquently described their individual experiences and perceptions of that battle.

They were of course younger men then and although sixteen years has now passed since that interview, relative speaking, to this day they still look fit and distinguished. Calm, composed, articulate yet coupled with great heart felt emotion, they were able to paint a clear and concise biography of events. I was thinking, the producer of the series could not have chosen a better assemblage of Khe Sanh Veterans to have told the story of that now legendary battle. I was proud of them and proud that I am able to call myself a Khe Sanh Veteran. Their words spoke for all of us, an accurate and historical account of our endurance, deprivation, struggles, bravery, individual triumphs and great loss, now forever etched into the soul of American history.

OBIT

JERRY WAYNE WILLIAMS
USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN
BRAVO BTRY 1/13

(October 21, 1947 - July 18, 2016)

Jerry Wayne Williams, 68, of Harpers Ferry, WV passed away at Reston Hospital Center in Reston, Virginia.

Born October 21, 1947 in Madisonville, Kentucky, he was the son of the late Marvin C. Williams and Marguerite Hoskins Williams of Harpers Ferry, WV.

He was a veteran of the US Marine Corps from 1966 to 1970, serving three tours in Vietnam, and was involved in 23 major operations. Jerry received 14 ribbons which included the CAR (Combat Action Ribbon) and three Presidential Unit Citations. Jerry was a direct down to earth man. He absolutely loved and enjoyed every minute he spent with his granddaughters, Rachael and Emily, and his wife, Sherry, his pride and joy for over 43 years.

Jerry was a member of St. James Catholic Church in Charles Town, WV and a 1966 graduate of Madisonville High School.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by his wife of 43 years, Sherry Lathe Williams, at home; son, Timothy David Williams of Harpers Ferry, WV; and two



granddaughters, Rachael and Emily Williams of Harpers Ferry. He was preceded in death by his father, one sister, Linda Jones and one brother, Curtis Williams.

A funeral liturgy was held at 11:00 am on Friday, July 22, 2016 at Eackles-Spencer & Norton Funeral Home, 256 Halltown Road, Harpers Ferry, WV. Interment in Pleasant View memory Gardens in Martinsburg, WV with military honors.





TRIBUTE TO A BROTHER

I am sure that everyone knows about the little ceremony that Tom Keaton and I have every year at our property just outside of Mount Airy, NC to remember the brothers lost so long ago and all the ones since. Jerry called Tom to tell him that he would be unable to attend this year because his camper had a problem. This excuse sounded sort of lame but as time grew nearer, Jerry said he and Sherry would just come down and stay in the Best Western, but brought his camper anyway.

He had asked Tom and me to plan a trip to Camp Lejeune after our ceremony and before he had to return home, to see the MEN of the 10th Marines. He really liked being down there around men that he trusted. We could see that he would need some help with mobility so I borrowed an electric wheelchair from my American Legion Post. It worked well until I got it to the base, then Murphy's Law took over. Batteries would not charge. I was in panic mode so I went to our friends of 2nd Division for some help and was steered to the Wounded Warrior Battalion.

We had been invited to attend the retirement ceremony of a Master Sergeant on Friday the 8th, and Jerry would need something that he could maneuver around at the ceremony. The NCOIC at Wounded Warrior Battalion East was very accommodating and let us use the "rascal" in the lobby. Mission Accomplished and the only casualty was my nerves. Once back at the BOQ, we parked the vehicles under a tree to unwind from a hectic day and our group had a B/S Formation on the tailgate of my pickup, complete with music, lawn chairs and a couple of adult beverages. Great time for all and Jerry loved it.

The next morning we headed to the Wounded Warrior Battalion East Complex for the retirement ceremony. After the program and a few pictures, our group headed to the PX. While our wives and daughters shopped, and Jerry rode the scooter, Tom, Bob and I reported to the SNCO Club to talk to the MEN of the 10th Marines. But alas, all good things must end. It was time to return to the "Last Firebase" in Mt Airy. Jerry and Sherry had to leave for Charles Town, West Virginia early Saturday Morning for a Doctor's appointment on Tuesday. Tom had to get Jerry's camper ready to travel before he could return to Pittsburgh on Sunday, so Lynn and I said our good byes on Friday Night, Tom and Mary said theirs on Saturday Morning, we dismissed the formation and were looking forward to next year.



This little story of the last days Tom and I spent with Jerry did not do justice for him. All of us had experiences such as this almost 50 years ago where we had friends one minute and they may be gone the next. We walked together and watched each other's back. We still do and will continue to do so until future events dictate otherwise. We may not always get along and will get on each other's nerves, so make the most of our times together because it might be the last time we will do so.

Semper Fidelis, Staff Sergeant Williams and God Speed
Ron



Pictures On Inside of Back Cover



HAPPY 117TH BIRTHDAY DOC'S,WE HOPE YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH YOU GUYS MEAN TO US. YOU ARE ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS FOR THE WONDERFUL, CORAUGEAGEOUS SERVICE YOU HAVE ALWAYS PROVIDED, GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU.



HOW MANY LIVES WERE SAVED AT THIS LITTLE METAL BOX IN THE GROUND AT THE KSCB



NEW INFORMATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS THAT EFFECT OUR KHE SANH NATIVE AMERICAN BROTHERS

38 CFR Part 14
RIN 2900 –AP51

Recognition of Tribal Organizations for Representation to VA Claimants

AGENCY Department of Veterans Affairs
ACTION: Proposed Rule

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is proposing to amend its regulations concerning recognition of certain national, State, and regional or local organizations for purposes of VA claims representation. Specifically, this rulemaking would allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recognize tribal organizations in a similar manner as the Secretary recognizes State organizations.

The proposed rule would allow a tribal organization that is established and funded by one or more tribal governments to be recognized for the purpose of providing assistance on VA benefit claims. In addition, the proposed rule would allow an employee of a tribal government to become accredited through a recognized State organization in a similar manner as a County Veterans' Service Officer (CVSO) may become accredited through a recognized State organization. The intended effect of this proposed rule is to improve access of Native American veterans to VA-recognized organizations and VA-accredited individuals who may assist them on their benefit claims.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before September 19, 2016.

ADDRESSES: Written comments may be submitted through *http:// www.regulations.gov;* by mail or hand delivery to the Director, Regulation Policy and Management (OOREG), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Room 1068, Washington, DC 20420; or by fax to (202) 273-9026. Comments should indicate that they are submitted in response to "RIN 2900-AP51, Recognition of Tribal Organizations for Representation of VA Claimants."

Copies of comments received will be available for public inspection in the Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Room 1068, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays). Please call (202) 461-4902 for an appointment. (This is not a toll-free number.) In addition, during the comment period, comments may be viewed online through the Federal Docket Management System at *http://www.regulations.gov/.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Dana Raffaelli, Staff Attorney, Benefits Law Group, Office of he General Counsel, (022D), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420, (202) 461- 7699. (This is not a toll free number.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
This proposed rule would amend part 14 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, to provide for the recognition of tribal organizations that are established and funded by tribal governments so that representatives of the organizations may assist Native American veterans and their families in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of their VA benefit claims.

The purpose of this proposed rule is to address the needs of Native American populations who are geographically isolated from existing recognized Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) or who may not be utilizing other recognized VSOs due to cultural barriers or lack of familiarity with those organizations.

Native American veterans face challenges accessing representation in VA claims because many live in remote areas that are far from the nearest accredited representative. In addition, some Native American veterans may prefer to seek assistance from organizations that are associated with their tribal government, rather

than using other organizations that are not as familiar to them.

This proposed rule would help facilitate the V A recognition of tribal organizations that are established and funded by one or more tribal governments and whose primary purpose is to serve Native American veterans.

Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 5902, VA recognizes organizations and accredits their representatives for the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims under laws administered by VA. VA's regulation regarding the recognition of such organizations is 38 CFR 14.628, which currently does not expressly allow for the recognition of tribal organizations. Under the current regulations, however, any organization, including an organization created by one or more tribal governments, may apply for recognition by V A as either: (1) A national organization, or (2) a regional or local organization. To be recognized as a national organization, the organization must meet the requirements of § 14.628(a) and (d). Tobe recognized as a regional or local organization, the organization must meet the requirements of § 14.628(c) and (d). VA also accredits State organizations. To be recognized as a State organization, the organization must meet the requirements of § 14.628(b) and (d). Under the current regulations,

VA has received only a few inquiries from tribal governments expressing interest in pursuing any type of VA recognition other than the type of recognition granted to State organizations. Pursuant to 38 CFR 14.627 and 14.629, VA recognition of a State organization is limited to organizations established and funded by a State, possession, territory, or Commonwealth of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

This proposed rule would allow tribal governments to establish and fund tribal organizations in a similar manner as the State governments have established and funded State organizations. Allowing organizations that are created and funded by tribal governments to be recognized as "tribal organizations" rather than as national, regional or local organizations would afford VA the opportunity to acknowledge and affirm the long-standing recognition by the Federal government of tribes' inherent sovereignty and right to self-government.

This proposed rule would amend 38 CFR 14.627 by adding a paragraph ® that would provide that tribal government means the Federally recognized governing body of any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or Regional or Village Corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians. This is consistent with the definition of Indian tribe in 38 CFR 39.2.

This proposed rule would amend current § 14.628(b) by re-designating it as paragraph (b)(l), "State organization," and adding paragraph (b)(2), "Tribal organization." V A would clarify that *Tribal organization,* for the purposes of 38 CFR 14.626 through 14.637, is a legally established organization that is primarily funded and controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by one or more tribal governments and that has a primary purpose of serving the needs of Native American veterans; that only one tribal organization may be recognized for each tribal government; and, that, if a tribal organization is created and funded by more than one tribal government, the approval of each tribal government must be obtained prior to applying for VA recognition and that, if one of the supporting tribal governments withdraws from the tribal organization, the tribal organization must notify VA of the withdrawal and certify that the tribal organization can continue to meet the recognition requirements in § 14.628(d) without the participation of that tribal government.

This change is intended to allow tribal organizations to be recognized in a similar manner as State organizations, while still taking into account the unique circumstances of tribal governments being sovereign nations and of varying sizes.

In order to ensure that all claimants for VA benefits receive responsible, qualified representation in the preparation, presentation, and criteria that apply to all organizations requesting VA recognition as a national, State, regional, or local organization under § 14.628(a) through (c). Therefore, tribal organizations would also need to meet these same general requirements in order to be recognized. Pursuant to § 14.628 (d), an organization requesting recognition must: (1) Have as a primary purpose serving veterans, (2) demonstrate a substantial service commitment to veterans either by showing a sizable organizational membership or by showing performance of veterans' services to a sizable number of veterans, (3) commit a significant portion of its assets to veterans' services and have adequate funding to properly perform those services, (4) maintain a policy and capability of providing complete claims service to each claimant requesting representation or give written notice of any limitation in its claims service with advice concerning the availability of alternative sources of claims service, and (5) take affirmative action, including training and monitoring of accredited representatives, to ensure proper handling of claims.

We recognize the varying sizes of tribal governments. We further recognize that, due to the size of certain smaller Indian tribes, a single tribal government may be unable to establish an organization that could demonstrate a substantial service commitment to veterans either by showing a sizable organizational membership or by showing performance of veterans' services to a sizable number of veterans.

A single tribal government may also be unable to establish an organization that would be able to adequately fund the necessary services of a tribal organization that provides assistance with VA benefit claims. Therefore, VA would consider applications from a tribal organization that is established and funded by one or more tribal governments to be recognized for the purpose of providing assistance on VA benefit claims. The approval of each tribal government would be necessary for VA to process the request for VA recognition.

While VA is sensitive to the fact that some tribal governments may have difficulty meeting the substantial service commitment and funding requirements, VA must ensure that VA accredited organizations can provide long-term, competent representation. Therefore, VA would require that, if one of the supporting tribal governments withdraws from the tribal organization, the tribal organization must notify VA of the withdrawal and certify that the tribal organization continues to meet the recognition requirements in § 14.628(d) without the participation of that tribal government. We note that 25 U.S.C.450b(l) recognizes the existence of tribal coalitions in the definition of tribal organization for the purpose of entering into contracts or grants for certain educational benefits. Additionally, in 38CFR 39.2, VA has recognized the existence of a parallel concept for the purpose of applying for cemetery grants.

Based on our experience in applying § 14.628, we believe the proposed addition to the regulation would facilitate the recognition of Tribal organizations and would improve Native American veterans' access to accredited representatives.

Once a tribal organization has been recognized by VA, the certifying official of the organization would be able to file for VA accreditation for the individuals that the organization wishes to become accredited as its representatives. *See 38* CFR 14.629.

VA further recognizes that not all tribal governments may want to establish their own Tribal veterans organization and some may have already established working relationships with their respective State organizations to help ad dress the needs of their Native American veteran population. We, therefore, propose to amend 38 CFR 14.629(a)(2) to allow for an employee of a tribal government that is not associated with a tribal organization, to become accredited as a representative of a State organization in a similar manner as a county employee, *i.e.*, a CVSO. In 1990, in order to further ensure the availability of competent representation for VA claimants, VA extended the opportunity for

accreditation through State organizations to county veterans' service officers. See 54 FR 50772; 55 FR 38056. In extending this opportunity, VA cited the close association between States and county veterans' service officers, likening the association to that of a State employee under 54 FR 50772.

In a previous rulemaking. VA recognized the fact that State governments do not have direct supervision of, or accountability or, CVSO, and therefore, to ensure adequate training and fitness to serve as a VA accredited representative, VA prescribed criteria that such officers must meet in order to become accredited. The criteria for a CVSO to become accredited through a State organization are outlined in § 14.629(a)(2)(i) through (Hi). In order for a CVSO to be recommended for VA accreditation by a VA-recognized State organization, the officer must be a paid employee of the county working for it not less than 1,000 hours annually; have successfully completed a course of training and an examination which have been approved by a Regional Counsel with jurisdiction for the State; and receive either regular supervision and monitoring or annual training to assure continued qualification as a representative in the claims process.

We note that the VA Office of the General Counsel (OGC) has recently undergone realignment and under the new structure Regional Counsels are now referred to as Chief Counsels. To avoid unnecessary confusion and because we intend to issue a direct final rule addressing the realignment of OGC and the changing of titles of certain OGC positions in the accreditation regulations in a single rulemaking, we are continuing to use the outdated title of Regional Counsel for this rulemaking.

Although tribal governments are not politically subordinate to State governments like county governments are, tribal governments often do have close, productive relationships with State governments through gaming compacts, cross-deputization, and other cooperative agreements. Therefore, we believe that the collaborative nature of the relationship between tribes and States supports the proposed concept of recognizing tribal veterans' service officers in a manner similar to county veterans' service officers.

As stated above, we believe this additional path to become an accredited representative would further facilitate veterans obtaining representation across county State, and tribal borders.

For consistency, the proposed rule would also amend 38 CFR 14.635 to extend office space opportunities already granted to certain employees of State organizations to employees of tribal organizations. The proposed rule would allow the Secretary to furnish office space and facilities, when available, to both State and tribal organization employees who are also accredited to national organizations for the purpose of assisting claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for benefits.

We are also requesting from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval for the provisions of § 14.628(d) that constitute a collection of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3521). Therefore, we would remove the current OMB control number parenthetical at the end of § 14.628 and add, in its place, a placeholder parenthetical.

Finally, we would make a technical amendment to § 14.629(a)(2) to correct "county veteran's service officer" to read as "county veterans' service officer". In a prior rulemaking, we misplaced the location of the apostrophe associated with the previously mentioned phrase. *See* 54 FR 50772 (Dec. 11,1989); 55 FR 38056 (Sept. 17, 1990). Therefore, we would correct that error in this rulemaking. Paperwork Reduction Act

This proposed rule includes provisions constituting collections of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C.3501- 3521) that require approval by OMB.

Accordingly, under 44 U.S.C. 3507(d),VA has submitted a copy of this rulemaking action to OMB for review.

OMB assigns control numbers to collections of information it approves.VA may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Proposed § 14.628 contains a collection of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. If OMB does not approve the collection of information as requested, VA will immediately remove the provisions containing a collection of information or take such other action as is directed by OMB.

Comments on the collection of information contained in this proposed rule should be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget, Attention: Desk Officer for the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Washington, DC 20503, with copies sent by mail or hand delivery to the Director, Regulation Policy and Management (OOREG), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Room 1068, Washington, DC 20420; fax to (202) 273-9026; email to www.Regulations.gov. Comments should indicate that they are submitted in response to "RIN 2900-AP51."

OMB is required to make a decision concerning the collections of information contained in this proposed rule between 30 and 60 days after publication of this document in the Federal Register. Therefore, a comment to OMB is best assured of having its full effect if OMB receives it within 30 days of publication. This does not affect the deadline for the public to comment on the proposed rule.

The Department considers comments by the public on proposed collections of information in- • Evaluating whether the proposed collections of information are necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility;

• Evaluating the accuracy of the Department's estimate of the burden of the proposed collections of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

• Enhancing the quality, usefulness, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

• Minimizing the burden of the collections of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, *e.g.*, permitting electronic submission of responses.

The collection of information contained in 38 CFR 14.628 is described immediately following this paragraph, under its respective title.

Title: Requirements for Recognition as a VA Accredited Organization.

- *Summary of collection of information:* The collection of information in 38 CFR 14.628 would require organizations seeking VA accreditation under § 14.628 to submit certain documentation to certify that the organization meets the requirements for VA accreditation. Pursuant to § 14.628(d), an organization requesting recognition must have as a primary purpose serving veterans. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit a statement establishing the purpose of the organization and that veterans would benefit by recognition of the organization.

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The organization must also demonstrate a substantial service commitment to veterans either by showing a sizable organizational membership or by showing performance of veterans' services to a sizable number of veterans. In establishing that it meets his requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit: The number of members and number of posts, chapters, or offices and their addresses; a copy of the articles of incorporation, constitution, charter, and bylaws of the organization, as appropriate; a description of the services performed or to be performed in connection with programs administered by VA, with an approximation of the number of veterans, survivors, and dependents served or to be served by the organization in each type of service designated; and a description of the type of services, if any, performed in connection with other Federal and State programs which are designed to assist former Armed Forces personnel and their

dependents, with an approximation of the number of veterans, survivors, and dependents served by the organization under each program designated.

An organization requesting recognition must commit a significant portion of its assets to veterans' services and have adequate funding to properly perform those services. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit: A copy of the last financial statement of the organization indicating the amount of funds allocated for conducting particular veterans' services (VA may, in cases where it deems necessary, require an audited financial statement); and a statement indicating that use of the organization's funding is not subject to limitations imposed under any Federal grant or law which would prevent it from representing claimants before VA.

An organization requesting recognition must maintain a policy and capability of providing complete claims service to each claimant requesting representation or give written notice of any limitation in its claims service with advice concerning the availability of alternative sources of claims service. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit evidence of its capability to represent claimants before VA regional offices and before the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

If an organization does not intend to represent claimants before the Board of Veterans' Appeals, the organization shall submit evidence of an association or agreement with a recognized service organization for the purpose of representation before the Board of Veterans' Appeals, or the proposed method of informing claimants of the limitations in service that can be provided, with advice concerning the availability of alternative sources of claims service. If an organization does not intend to represent each claimant requesting assistance, the organization shall submit a statement of its policy concerning the selection of claimants and the proposed method of informing claimants of this policy, with advice concerning the availability of alternative sources of claims service.

An organization requesting recognition must take affirmative action, including training and monitoring of accredited representatives, to ensure proper handling of claims. In establishing that it meets this requirement, an organization requesting recognition shall submit: A statement of the skills, training, and other qualifications of current paid or volunteer staff personnel for handling veterans' claims; and a plan for recruiting and training qualified claim representatives, including the number of hours of formal classroom instruction, the subjects to be taught, the period of on-the-job training, a schedule or timetable for training, the projected number of trainees for the first year, and the name (s) and qualifications of the individual (s) primarily responsible for the training.

In addition, the organization requesting recognition shall supply: A statement that neither the organization nor its accredited representatives will charge or accept a fee or gratuity for service to a claimant and that the organization will not represent to the public that VA recognition of the organization is for any purpose other than claimant representation; and the names, titles, and addresses of officers and the official (s) authorized to certify representatives.

• *Description of need for information and proposed use of information:* The information is used by VA in reviewing accreditation applications to determine whether organizations meet the requirements for V A accreditation under § 14.628.

• *Description of likely respondents:*

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Organizations seeking VA accreditation under § 14.628.

• *Estimated number of respondents:* 5 applicants per year.

• *Estimated frequency of responses:*

This is a one-time collection.

• *Estimated average burden per response:* 5 hours.

• *Estimated total annual reporting and recordkeeping burden:* 25 hours per year.

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Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Secretary hereby certifies that this pro-

posed rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as they are defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act, 5 V.S.C. 601-612. It does not require any action on the part of any entity but merely provides a new opportunity for tribal organizations to become recognized by VA for the purpose of assisting VA claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits. Therefore, pursuant to 5 V.S.C. 605(b), this rulemaking is exempt from the initial and final regulatory flexibility analysis requirements of sections 603 and 604.
Executive Order 13175

Executive Order 13175 provides that Federal agencies may not issue a regulation that has tribal implications, that imposes substantial direct compliance costs on tribal governments, and that is not required by statute, unless the Federal government provides the funds necessary to pay the direct compliance costs incurred by the tribal governments or the Federal agency consults with tribal officials early in the process of developing the proposed regulation, develops and publishes in the Federal Register a tribal summary impact statement, and provides to the Director of OMB any written communications submitted to the agency by the tribal officials.

On March 3 and 10, 2016, respectively, VA issued letters to tribal leaders as well as a Federal Register notice, 81 FR 12626, seeking comment on VA's consideration of issuing a proposed rule that would amend part 14 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, to expressly provide for the recognition of tribal organizations so that representatives of the organizations may assist Native American claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of their VA benefit claims. Those interested in providing comment were given 30-days to respond. Based on requests from commenters, VA expanded the comment period an additional 15 days to April 26, 2016. VA received comments from 36 commenters. A few commenters submitted more than one comment. Overall, the comments were supportive of issuing such a proposed rule.

One commenter wrote that, currently, their tribal representatives are being accredited through their State as well as other national organizations and was curious as to the "road blocks" other tribal organizations were facing. This commenter did not provide any suggestions, and therefore, no change to this rulemaking is warranted.

Several commenters noted that currently Native American veterans face many roadblocks to obtaining representation. One commenter noted that geography, economic, and culture barriers prevent Native American veterans from utilizing currently available representation. These comments were offered in support of the proposed rule, and therefore, no change to this rulemaking is warranted.

A few commenters misinterpreted the language provided in the consultation and notice as meaning that VA intended to propose that VA's recognition of a tribal organization would be tied to VA's recognition of the corresponding State organization. One commenter stated that V A should recognize a tribal organization as "equal to" a State organization. VA is not tying VA recognition of a tribal organization to a State and is choosing not to make value judgements as to the importance of the recognition granted to State organizations and Tribal organizations. Recognition of a tribal organization would stand on its own. VA has chosen to use the term *similar* rather than the term *equal* in this proposed rule because we are proposing some differences in the requirements for VA recognition of a tribal organization and therequirements for State organizations Specifically, the proposed rule would allow a single tribal government, or multiple tribal governments to join together to establish and fund a tribal organization, but such allowance is not permitted for State governments.

A few commenters misinterpreted the language provided in the consultation and notice as limiting recognition of a tribal veterans' service officer through a State. One commenter asked for clarification on what type of employees would be eligible to become accredited by VA. The commenter stated that employees of a tribal na-

tion as well as a tribal organization should be eligible. We agree, and the proposed rule would allow for both avenues to attain VA accreditation depending on the tribal government's size, relationships with other tribal governments, relationships with States, and the needs of Native American veterans in their area.

After tribal organization becomes recognized by VA, that organization would be able to request to have its own representatives accredited under 38 CFR 14.629. In addition to proposing to recognize tribal organizations and accredit their representatives, VA would provide an additional means by which VA may recognize an employee of a tribal government as a tribal veterans' service officer through a State organization. This accreditation would be akin to acreditation given to county veterans' service officers through State organizations and is only meant to provide an additional path to VA accreditation. We propose that the requirements for a tribal veterans' service officer to become accredited as a representative through a State organization be the same as the requirements for a county veterans service officer. Therefore, VA makes no changes based on these comments.

One commenter asked what happens to the accreditation of a tribal organization if the Director is relinquished. It seems this comment stems from the misinterpretation previously discussed regarding the accreditation of a tribal organization and the corresponding State organization.

The commenter also asked what happens if the State refuses to sponsor the replacement officer. As discussed above, once a tribal organization becomes recognized by VA, that organization would be able to request to have its own representatives accredited under § 14.629. The tribal organization can file with VA to have a replacement officer accredited. Therefore, VA makes no changes based on this comment.

Several commenters also expressed concern over the requirements for recognition in § 14.628(d). Specifically, the commenters expressed concern that many tribal organizations may not be able to satisfy the primary purpose, size, funding, and training requirements, to include providing the required, supporting documentation.

One commenter suggested that VA provide the funding for tribes "to engage in this work." Another commenter suggested including Indian Health Services for funding assistance. A few commenters expressed concern about the requirement that the organization must maintain a policy of either providing complete claims representation or provide "written notice of any limitation in its claims service with advice concerning the availability of alternative sources of claims service." 38 CFR 14.628(d)(1)(iv). One commenter seemed to believe V A was questioning the level of competence of tribal representatives. VA must ensure that VA accredited organizations can provide long-term, competent representation and has found that the § 14.628 (d) requirements are protective of that mission. These requirements apply to all organizations seeking VA recognition. Exempting tribal organizations from meeting the § 14.628(d) requirements would not be consistent with the purpose of VA recognition to ensure that veterans are receiving qualified, competent representation on their VA benefit claims. As previously discussed, VA has provided additional means to achieve VA recognition or accreditation for those tribal governments that may have difficulty establishing a tribal organization capable of meeting the § 14.628(d) requirements, to include the ability for one or more tribal governments to establish and fund a tribal organization and the ability of an employee of a tribal government to become accredited as a tribal veterans' service officer through a recognized State organization. Therefore, VA makes no changes based on these comments.

One commenter suggested that VA grant accreditation to tribes through a Memorandum of Understanding and included their tribe's Memorandum of Understanding with their State. The commenter also questioned the role of VA in the accreditation and monitoring process. The laws governing VA accreditation are set out at 38 U.S.C.5902 and 5904 and 38 CFR

14.626- 14.637. These laws apply to all organizations, agents, and attorneys seeking VA accreditation. Pursuant to § 14.628, the organization requesting VA accreditation must certify to VA that the organization meets the § 14.628 (d) requirements for recognition. Therefore, a Memorandum of Understanding between VA and a tribe is not sufficient for applying for V A accreditation. Furthermore, VA does monitor its accredited organizations, agents, and attorneys and handles disciplinary matters as they arise. Therefore, VA makes no changes based on this comment.

One commenter suggested that VA engage in additional consultation with Tribes that would be "interested in becoming recognized veterans ['1 service organizations, but are unable to meet the requirements." In the proposed rule, VA offers alternative avenues for VA recognition and accreditation for tribal governments that may not be capable of establishing an organization that can meet the VA recognition requirements in the proposed rule on their own. VA further welcomes additional comments as to the suitability of those alternative avenues through comments on this proposed rule. VA declines to make any changes based on this comment.

One commenter also recommended that "VA enter into Memorandums of Understanding with [Federally-recognized tribes and tribal organizations for [veterans' [service officer training and service reimbursement, on individual bases."

Another commenter objected to the fact that there was "no mention of funding to train and maintain such a position." Section 5902, of title 38, United State Code, which is the law that authorizes VA to recognize organizations for the purpose of providing assistance on VA benefit claims, does not provide for the funding of such organizations to train and maintain representatives. Pursuant to § 14.628 (d)(iii)(B), organizations are not precluded from seeking and receiving other sources of State and Federal grant funding so long as the organization's funding is not subject to limitations imposed under any Federal grant or law which would prevent it from representing claimants before VA. Therefore, VA declines to make any changes based on these comments.

One commenter wrote that VA ". . should include [Federally-recognized tribes, not just tribal organizations funded by tribal governments, as an entity from which applications will be considered to be recognized for. . ." VA accreditation. Another commenter suggested adding "[Federally recognized tribes" or "[Federally recognized tribal governments" as part of the definition for tribal organizations. Another commenter suggested adding tribal communities. For the purposes of the regulations pertaining to the representation of VA claimants, VA proposes to define a tribal government to mean "the Federally recognized governing body of any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community ... ". VA finds this definition to be inclusive of the comments, and therefore, no change is warranted.

One commenter suggested a legislative amendment to the definition of State in 38 U.S.C. 101 (20) to include "[Federally recognized tribal governments." Amending the statutory language is something that only Congress can accomplish. Since VA is defining the term "tribal government in regulation and providing an avenue for VA recognition of a tribal organization separate from a State organization, VA does not find such a legislative amendment necessary. Therefore, no change is warranted based on this comment.

Several commenters wrote that "[special attention must be paid to what specifically is meant by a '[tribal organization' " and that VA should offer a clear definition of the term. The commenters did not offer any suggestions for such definition. As previously discussed, VA is defining this term for the purposes of this rulemaking. Therefore, VA does not make any changes based on this comment.

Several commenters asked VA to clarify whether tribal governments, including veterans departments within these governments, would be eligible for VA recognition. A Department of Veterans Affairs or a Veterans Affairs office

that is established and funded by a tribal government would be included in the definition of tribal organization. Therefore, no change to this rulemaking is warranted based on these comments.

One commenter asked that VA provide recognition for urban Indian organizations. The comment is unclear on whether such an organization would be able to apply for VA recognition as a tribal organization. VA declines to add an additional organization category at this time. In addition to the proposed amendments discussed in this rulemaking, an organization may still utilize other avenues to apply for VA recognition such as requesting VA recognition as a regional or local organization. To be recognized as a regional or local organization, an organization must meet the requirements of § 14.628(c) and (d).

Further, there are several ways that individuals, including tribal members, tribal government employees, and others who work within and serve tribal or Native American communities, may be accredited by VA to represent claimants. An individual may apply for accreditation as a representative through an existing VA-recognized organization under standards set forth in § 14.629(a).Alternatively, an individual may also seek accreditation in an individual capacity as either an agent or an attorney under the standards set forth in § 14.629(b). Therefore, VA declines to make any changes based on this comment.

A couple of commenters submitted statements certifying that their organization would meet the requirements for accreditation for a tribal organization. Applications for accreditation are outside the scope of this rulemaking. Therefore, no change is warranted based on these comments.

One commenter asked whether accredited tribal representatives would be granted access to software programs containing a veteran's claims file information and whether that access would be on tribal grounds. This issue is outside the scope of this rulemaking. Therefore, no change is warranted based on this comment.

One commenter expressed support for VA recognizing tribal organizations in an equal manner as VA recognizes State organizations but suggested that VA authorize a field office close to tribal administration locations and fund one or two veterans service officer positions. The tribal consultation and this proposed rulemaking are limited in scope to recognition for purposes of VA claims representation. The commenter's suggestion of adding a field office is beyond the scope, and therefore, VA declines to make any changes based on this comment. VA also declines to make any changes to the commenter's suggestion of funding job positions for veterans service officers. Part of the § 14.628(d) requirements is that an organization seeking accreditation must commit a significant portion of its assets to veterans' services and have adequate funding to properly perform those services. 38 CFR 14.628(d)(1)(iii).

A few commenters expressed concern that the proposed rulemaking is limiting VA recognition for the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits. One commenter seemed to think VA is depriving veterans from other title 38 benefits. The commenters did not specify what other accreditation they are seeking. As previously discussed, 38 CFR part 14 is limited in jurisdiction to recognizing organizations and accrediting individuals to assist in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of VA benefit claims. Pursuant to section 5902, VA accreditation may not be granted for any other purpose. This rulemaking in no way deprives any veteran of any title 38 benefits. Therefore, no change is warranted based on these comments.

One commenter suggested that office space opportunities should be available to tribal governments and organizations in the same manner as they are available to State organizations. As previously discussed, this proposed rule would, under § 14.635, allow the Secretary to furnish office space and facilities, when available, to both State and tribal organization employees who are also accredited to national organizations for the purpose of assisting claimants in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for benefits. VA would be furnishing

office space to tribal organizations in the same manner as it furnishes such space to State organizations. Therefore, no change is warranted based on this comment.

One commenter noted that VA should allow a tribal government employee to become accredited through an accredited body of their choice. VA in no way is limiting how a particular individual may apply to become an accredited VA representative. As previously discussed, VA is merely providing additional paths to VA accreditation than currently exist. Therefore, VA declines to make any changes to this rulemaking based on this comment.

Several commenters suggested further outreach and collaboration. One commenter suggested that VA form a tribal workgroup to allow representatives from tribal organizations to collaborate on implementing the new program. One commenter provided VA with their tribal consultation policy.

Other commenters suggested that VA engage in additional consultation with experts in Indian law and hold an all- tribes call to gather additional input for this rulemaking. VA appreciates this information. As previously noted, VA extended the comment period for an additional 15 days to ensure that all interested parties had an appropriate time to provide input. Therefore, VA finds that it has complied with the requirements of Executive Order 13175. VA notes that an additional 60-day comment period is provided for this proposed rule and invites any additional comment to this rulemaking to be provided during that time.

One commenter asked for the projected implementation date of this rulemaking. VA will publish a final rule to this proposed rule which will contain the effective date of the rulemaking. Executive Orders 12866 and 13563 Executive Orders 12866 and 13563 direct agencies to assess the costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, when regulation is necessary, to select regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety effects, and other advantages; distributive impacts; and equity) Executive Order 13563 (Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review) emphasizes the importance of quantifying both costs and benefits, reducing costs, harmonizing rules, and promoting flexibility. Executive Order 12866 (Regulatory Planning and Review) defines a "significant regulatory action" requiring review by OMB, unless OMB waives such review, as "any regulatory action that is likely to result in a rule that may: (1) Have an annual effect on the economy of $100 million or more or adversely affect in a material way the economy, a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local, or tribal governments or communities; (2) Create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency; (3) Materially alter the budgetary impact of entitlements, grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations or recipients thereof; or (4) Raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President's priorities, or the principles set forth in this Executive Order."

The economic, interagency, budgetary, legal, and policy implications of this regulatory action have been examined, and it has been determined not to be a significant regulatory action under Executive Order 12866. VA's impact analysis can be found as a supporting document at *http://www.regulations.gov,* usually within 48 hours after the rule making document is published. Additionally, a copy of this rulemaking and its impact analysis are available on VA's Web site at *http://www.va.gov/orpm/.by* following the link for "VA Regulations Published From FY 2004 Through Fiscal Year to Date."

THE 2016 KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION WILL BE HELD AT THE EL TROPICANO HOTEL IN SAN ANTONIO TEXAS, 110 LEXINGTON AVE, SAN ANTONIO TX, 210-277-4004. FROM 09 TO 16 OCTOBER 2016. ROOM RATES ARE 105.00 A DAY 3 DAYS BEFORE AND 3 DAYS AFTER SAME RATE.THE HOTEL IS LOCATED JUST A FEW YARDS FROM THE RIVER WALK, AND HAS A BOAT LANDING APPROXIMATELY 10 YARDS FROM THE HOTEL. PARKING IS FREE WITH IN AND OUT PRIVILEGES. THE HOTEL IS ALSO PET FRIENDLY. WALKING DISTANCE FROM DOWNTOWN.



- **Hotel Amentities:**
- Breakfast available (surcharge)
- Coffee shop or café
- Computer station
- Concierge services
- Conference space
- Conference space size (feet) - 37000
- Conference space size (meters) - 3437
- Dry cleaning/laundry service
- Elevator/lift
- Express check-out
- Fitness facilities
- **Free WiFi**
- Free newspapers in lobby
- Gift shops or newsstand
- Health club
- In-room accessibility
- Laundry facilities
- Luggage storage
- Meeting rooms13
- Multilingual staff
- Number of floors - 9
- Number of meeting rooms - 19
- Outdoor pool
- **Pets allowed**
- Poolside bar
- Porter/bellhop
- Restaurant
- Roll-in shower
- Rooftop terrace
- Safe-deposit box at front desk
- **Self parking Free Khe Sanh Vets**
- Smoke-free property
- Spa treatment room (s)
- Television in common areas
- Total number of rooms - 306





















SCHOLARSHIP FUND

ANDERSON, David M.	250.00 SF	Check# 3416
ARCHER, Michael	25.00 SF	Check# 101
AVERY, Terry E	25.00 SF	Check# 5898
BAKER, David & Mindy	150.00 SF	Check# 220
BARBER, Michael	100.00 SF	Check# 1709
BECK, Ralph	60.00 SF	Check# 4138
CAMPO, Carl C.	60.00 SF	Check# 3553
CARDWELL, Arthur	40.00 SF	Credit Card
CASEY, Maurice	10.00 SF	Check# 2556
GILLESPIE, Donald J.	60.00 SF	Check# 3738
GOTTMANN, James H.	100.00 SF	Check# 3330
DONAGHY, Richard E	200.00 SF	Check 2016
EDDOWES, Barbra	40.00 SF	Check# 499
EVANS, Faye S.	100.00 SF	Check# 1938
FOLEY, Richard M. Jr	100.00 SF	Check# 1481
FORD, Thomas	500.00 SF	Check# 2533
FORD, Thomas	250.00 SF	Check# 2528
FORD, Thomas	250.00 SF	Check# 4968
FORD, Thomas	150.00 SF	Check# 5038
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 SF	Check# 020103
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 SF	Check#418672
GEIGER, Bruce	500.00 SF	Credit Card
GIBBONS, Constance	142.00 SF	Check# 5002
GRANQVIST, Hans	20.00 SF	Credit Card
HANNA, Robert III	100.00 SF	CASH
HARGESHEIMER, John	100.00 SF	Check #3198
HARVEY, Tom	20.00 SF	Check# 2691
JACHIMIAK, Daniel L.	250.00 SF	Check# 4552
KENNY, Neil	65.00 SF	Check# 4460
KENNY, Neil	236.00 SF	Check# 4458
KRAMER, Mark	55.00 SF	Check# 335
KUBILUS, Robert	30.00 SF	Check# 2352
MEYER, David	150.00 SF	Check# 1160
MEYER, Carol	150.00 SF	Check# 1159
MULTIPLE LISTING SRV	100.00 SF	Check # 976609
NELSON, George J.	300.00 SF	Check# 5313
NUNN, John B	60.00 SF	Checks 1067,68
ORGAN, Michael	50.00 SF	Check# 1019
PEARSON, Scott	50.00 SF	Check# 5851
PRENDERGAST, Edward	100.00 SF	CASH
RAIT, Donald M.	500.00 SF	Check# 1029
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SOLEDAD VETERANS	200.00 SF	Check# 65627
STACK, Geoffrey Nancy	1,000.00SF	Check # 1195
STUBBE, Ray	500.00 SF	Check# 12860
SWERS, Fred	40.00 SF	Credit Card
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TROUP, Ed & Diana	100.00 SF	Check# 5298
WAGNER, Russell	40.00 SF	Check# 4015
WISE. Tom, Anne & Susan	125.00 SF	Check# 5634
WOOLMAN, Darlene	500.00 SF	Check# 1052
YOUMAN, Elwood W.	1,000.00 SF	Check # 1389

Thomas Eichler Check# 1269 $ 8,000 on 28 Apr 16

GENERAL FUND

BAKER, James	100.00 GF	Check# 400
BARBER, Michael	500.00 GF	Check # 1044
BATES, Robert G.	10.00 GF	Check# 2600
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MULLIGAN, Michael	300.00 GF	Check# 4044
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PETERSON, Roger	200.00 GF	Check# 2066
PROVENCIO, Ramon Jr.	100.00 GF	Check# 201
RIVEZZO, Michael F.	50.00 GF	Check# 1768
SEMKOW, Raymond	10.00 GF	Check# 1207
STERLING, Glenn	30.00 GF	Check# 3768
TALLENT, Wayne R.	50.00 GF	Check#9446
TOURTE, Craig	500.00 GF	Check# 875
TOURTE, Craig	500.00 GF	Check# 887
TROUP, ED & Diana	100.00 GF	Check# 5297
WHITTENBURGER, Allen R.	30.00 GF	Check# 4630
WILLIAMS, Robert E.	270.00 GF	Check # 1278
WIMBISH, Dennis T.	30.00 GF	Check# 1275
WONDERS, William K.	250.00 GF	Check# 4896
ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	250.00 GF	Check# 4596

FIRST EVER MEMORIAL FOR VETERANS LOST TO PTSD COMING TO CHANNAHON

By MIKE MALLORY - mmallory@shawmedia.com

CHANNAHON – Channahon State Park, Channahon, Illinois will be home to a one-of-a-kind memorial for military veterans who have lost their battles with post-traumatic stress disorder.



The Forgotten Warrior Memorial Wall will be a tribute to all veterans who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and have been afflicted with PTSD and sacrificed their lives beyond the limits of active duty. The memorial, expected to open in November, was funded through private donations to Chicago-based nonprofit K9s For Veteran Warriors.



K9s For Veteran Warriors CEO Michael Tellerino said it's proper to have memorials for veterans who lost their lives in battle; however, currently no memorials exist for the countless veterans who have taken their own lives while fighting another war at home – PTSD.

"How can we honor them for paying the ultimate price?" Tellerino said. "They come home with wounds you can't see. People don't understand how serious this is."

One statistic Tellerino cited suggests about 22 veterans commit suicide each day, but that's just based on veterans who have registered for benefits. He said the real number is between 28 and 32 a day.

"That's not acceptable," he said. "We wanted to acknowledge that sons, daughters, brothers and sisters have not died in vain. We hope this will give some healing to their families and raise public awareness."

The memorial, which will cost more than $80,000, will be constructed in an existing circular turnaround area of the park and be comprised largely of granite. Tellerino initially wanted to etch the names of each veteran lost to PTSD into the memorial, but said it would be an exhaustive process to get every name from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Instead, families will have individual bricks etched with their loved ones' names on a volunteer basis. He said that since announcing the memorial last week, he received a call from a woman in tears.
"She was so excited about doing this," he said. "It's so long overdue for these guys."

The organization chose Channahon because it has easy access from the Chicago metropolitan area and the specific spot in the park is perfect for what the architects of the project have designed.

The nonprofit also wanted the memorial to be relatively close to Marseilles, which is home to the Middle East Conflicts Wall Memorial along the Illinois River.

Illinois State Parks and Recreation and state legislators have already signed off on the project, he said.

"This one-of-a-kind memorial will provide a place for family members, other veterans, and the public

to honor those service men and women whose injuries, while perhaps not physically apparent, were no less devastating," Channahon Mayor Missey Moorman Schumacher said in a news release.

K9s For Veteran Warriors provides service dogs to veterans with PTSD, along with medical care and food for the life of the dog.

Tellerino said that although it is not a cure-all, the initiative plays a major role in improving the spirits of veterans.

VETERANS STILL NEED FAR BETTER TREATMENT

by Pat Barone | *Updated* 27 Jul 2016 at 11:25 AM

Ed Note: Interesting Article

Those who need help must get it promptly, fairly, and accurately

Not all veterans in this country suffer from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). But virtually all veterans need our help in the form of freedom from dangerous stereotyping.

They also need far better services and treatment than they've been receiving — which is partly why Donald Trump pledged on Tuesday to "take care of our veterans like they have never been taken care of before.

Psychologists fear that labels such as PTSD — so routinely and often unfairly applied to any veteran who has a brush with the law — will discourage those in real need from reaching out for help. That, in turn, could deepen the stigma surrounding PTSD and other psychological disorders.

"The prognosis for recovery [from PTSD] is high when people are able to engage in treatment," said one expert.

There is an assumption that the term 'PTSD' is equivalent to 'crazy combat vet,' as well as a misconception that *all* veterans suffer from PTSD," mental health counselor Duane K. L. France told LifeZette. France is a retired Army veteran with combat experience, and director of veterans services at Family Care Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Ben Rutt, Ph.D., of Silver Springs, Maryland, a psychologist who works with veterans with PTSD, agrees there's a misunderstanding.

"The majority of people with PTSD do not commit acts of violence," he said. "I am not aware of any research showing that people with PTSD are more likely to commit acts of violence, such as what Gavin Long did in Baton Rouge. Additional psychiatric diagnoses are more related to violent behavior than whether someone is diagnosed with PTSD."

The National Center for PTSD of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs says various studies indicate that 4 to 17 percent of veterans have PTSD. The numbers are higher if a traumatic brain injury (TBI) is involved. Over 260,000 veterans have been diagnosed with TBI.

Comparatively, 7 to 8 percent of the entire population will suffer from PTSD at some point in time. The condition commonly occurs after assault, accidents, and sexual trauma, as well as among those continually exposed to trauma itself, such as police officers, firefighters, and first responders.

Fifty percent of veterans with PTSD do not seek treatment and, more concerning, only half of that 50 percent of people get "minimally adequate" treatment, according to an independent RAND Corporation study.

"Those who are diagnosed with PTSD are often viewed as dangerous and unstable," said Jennifer Wolkin, PhD, a New York City neuropsychologist. She told LifeZette that the media slant toward "dangerous and unstable" is damaging.

"While the incident in Baton Rouge clearly does not help curtail the stigma," she said, "it sheds light on a deeper and more insidious problem our society faces. Post-trauma treatment is often unavailable, denied, or administered poorly."

While veterans may seek treatment, their wait can be long and arduous. Also, they have less choice than private payers about whom to see for treat-

ment, and they may have a hard time finding a therapist or counselor with whom they're comfortable revealing personal experiences.

As part of Trump's new plan for reforming the VA, he is calling for private medical options for vets. Our veterans would be able to receive care from any doctor or medical facility that accepts Medicare. It's a move that would help reduce wait times for those seeking care. The plan would also expand technology and mental health services.

Four types of symptoms must be present to warrant a diagnosis of PTSD: recurrent, unwanted, and distressing memories, dreams, or flashbacks of trauma; negative changes in thoughts and feelings due to the traumatic event; avoidance of the event and anything that reminds someone of the triggering event; and hyperarousal or being on guard when there is no threat of danger, irritability and anger, and difficultly sleeping.

Many people suffer with symptoms just below this threshold of diagnosis. Avoiding feelings about the event and any person or place that might trigger memories is the most common way of coping, but it cannot work long-term if there's going to be true healing.

Psychologist Rutt emphasized that healing occurs when one faces the resulting emotions with professional help. "The prognosis for recovery is high when people are able to engage in treatment. However, this involves no longer avoiding dealing with the trauma, which many people find difficult to do."

People with PTSD have experienced an injury due to a traumatic event — an injury that can be healed in time with treatment,'said Ben Rutt, Ph.D.

Other helpful treatments are Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, as well as Mindfulness-based Mind Fitness Training. The film "Free the Mind" shows the unique results from meditation, yoga, and mindfulness, which was discovered during research at the Center for Health Minds at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

A veteran's personal network of friends and family is most important in treatment and recovery, said France.

"Family members, community members, peers, and colleagues who recognize a negative change in a veteran's behavior can help [him or her] seek treatment, but also continue encouragement throughout the course of the treatment," France noted.

With so much misunderstanding about PTSD, it's important to clearly define the condition and demystify it, so that anyone suffering from it can receive help.

It's important we change attitudes toward mental illness in general and PTSD in particular in our society," Rutt said. "People with PTSD are not crazy. They've experienced an injury due to a traumatic event, an injury that can be healed in time with treatment. We don't look down on people with cancer who have chemotherapy appointments. We shouldn't look down on people with PTSD for seeking treatment."

Pat Barone, MCC is a professional credentialed coach and author of the Own Every Bite! Body centric re-education program for mindful and intuitive eating, who helps clients heal food addictions.

SYMPTOMS OF PTSD

- **Intrusive memories**
- **Flashbacks**
- **Recurring nightmares**
- **Intense distress, irritability**
- **Physical reactions when reminded of trauma**
- **Avoidance**
- **Emotional detachment**
- **Moodiness or anger**
- **Prone to addiction**
- **Suicidal thoughts**

Source: http://www.military.com

Ed Note: Another Interesting Article

VETERANS SHELL-SHOCKED AT PTSD TREATMENT DENIAL

Unique tool is called a lifesaver, but many of our bravest can't get access to it

by Kathleen Krueger | 20 Jan 2016 at 5:04 AM

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been a disabling condition for many of our military personnel — and this was true even before it was given a name or label. The condition generally has meant years of cognitive therapy to help those affected learn to process their thoughts and feelings differently, along with medications for coping on a daily basis.

Ricardo Romeras, a Minnesota resident and a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, returned home a changed person in 2006. While war changes everyone and some more than others, anxiety and other symptoms of his PTSD were disrupting his life. In his self-proclaimed stubbornness, he began to "self -medicate."

Seeing how tormented he was, his wife started searching for help. She came across an innovative therapy called Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). This tool, she was told, was being used to treat PTSD with amazing success.

As far back as 1998, a study published in The Journal of Traumatic Stress showed that 77 percent of combat veterans were free of PTSD symptoms after 12 sessions. Not only that, they remained symptom-free at their nine-month follow-up appointments.

But when Romeras and his wife requested access to EMDR through their local Veterans Health Administration, they were told it was not an approved treatment, nor was it even available through their VA. That was in 2008.

They continued to seek care, and it wasn't long before they found an EMDR-certified therapist in private practice in St. Paul, Minnesota. Romeras began treatment.

Jane McCampbell, the licensed marriage and family therapist whom they turned to, had been using EMDR in her practice since she began training with it in 2008. In her eyes, EMDR is so successful she has been using it with 70 percent of her clients, not all of them veterans, she told LifeZette.

"My first use of EMDR therapy with a veteran was an incredibly moving experience," said McCampbell. One statement from her patient made an emotional impact: "I slept through the night for the first time in eight years."

The website Trauma Recovery says EMDR is a noninvasive, eight-phase treatment that identifies and addresses experiences that have overwhelmed the brain's natural resilience or coping capacity.

"Patients are able to reprocess traumatic information until it is no longer psychologically disruptive," according to the site. Sufferers learn to process the memory in a way that leads to a peaceful resolution.

Romeras credits EMDR therapy with giving him tools to manage his PTSD symptoms and move forward with his life. He now uses the rhythmic tools of EMDR therapy to control his symptoms.

"When I start feeling the way I used to feel in the past, I tap on my hand, my heart or my collar bone and it brings me back," he said.

Dr. Harold Kudler, chief mental health consultant for the Veterans Health Administration, has had training in EMDR therapy himself. He said the therapy has been well-documented as an effective evidence-based treatment for PTSD, along with other cognitive processing therapies.

Why it remains widely unavailable as a valuable treatment option for our veterans nearly 18 years after it was first found to be successful is a mystery.

EMDR therapy was added to the VA's Guidelines for Care as an evidence-based option for PTSD treatment in 2010. However, the VA has not yet developed a nationwide training program for this

treatment option, as they have their other two evidence-based PTSD treatment options, Cognitive Processing Therapy (launched in 2006) and Prolonged Exposure Therapy (launched in 2007).

Romeras's therapy with McCampbell over a period of three years used a combination of cognitive trauma therapy plus EMDR.

"My wife and I went into debt to pay for my therapy," said Romeras. "At the time, I felt the only other option was killing myself, and I wasn't going to go that route."

Elaine Wynne, a clinical psychologist in Minneapolis who specializes in trauma recovery, has been encouraging the use of EMDR therapy for veterans since she received training in 1995. As a result, her veteran patients, she said, have had improved sleep and a lessening of the startle response associated with PTSD.

"It assists your brain in putting the memory into a stable place," she told LifeZette.

Still, a big challenge this psychologist faces is getting the message out to veterans that the therapy is an effective treatment option for PTSD. The therapy has not been made available through the Twin City VA facilities, so she's been working with several veterans who have benefited from EMDR to inform others about it.

Out of this advocacy has come The Resilience Project, with the mission of educating veterans about the benefits of EMDR and raising funds to pay for treatment through private providers in Minnesota. The funding aims to help veterans avoid the frustration of trying to gain access to the treatment through the VA benefit system.

Under the Veterans Choice Act of 2014, veterans everywhere should be able to seek help from health providers outside of the VA and have those services covered.

"If the VA clinician agrees with the veteran that EMDR therapy would be in the best interest of the veteran, the clinician can make the recommendation for the VA to purchase these services through a community provider," Kudler said.

Yet what sounds like a simple solution is complicated by bureaucratic red tape. Providers still need to be on an approved vendors list to receive reimbursement for services. This, along with a list of other stipulations included in the Veterans Choice program, add hurdles that limit the services available.

So, while the mental health community as a whole debates the effectiveness of EMDR in treating PTSD versus other evidence-based therapies -- veterans such as Ricardo Romeras say it has already been a life changer.

TO KILL AND BE KILLED
THE STORY OF KILO CO 3/9

The following rough draft pages reflect the most passionate and rewarding time of my life my time as Company Commander of Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines from September 1966 through mid-July 1967. I would like to say that these writings are made from careful notes made during that time. That is not the case. I only have a few pieces such as Gunnery Sergeant Hatfield's field notebook to provide some specific times and events. My letters home to my family gave only give vague references to battles and dates as I was trying not to add to their apprehension.

Most of this is written from/through a forty year old memory, looking over faded pictures, reading a few letters from Marines within Kilo at that time and from conversations at Kilo reunions that began in 2000. What I know is that my recall of events, particularly timing, is at best a best guess. I have a clear picture in my mind of the events that I have written about but know that what I 'recall' and what actually happened may not be even close to the same. The mind 'fills-in-the-blanks' with logical scenes and feelings to complete a whole understandable event *out* of what may have been experienced as a total jumble of emotions, fears, sights, sounds and smells.

In talking with Marines who were near my side in different battles, I was always stunned to discover that their 'story' - the times, locations, trees, NVA, the sounds and the battle itself looked very little like what I was 'seeing' in my mind. I guess that's

TO Kill and Be Killed



THE "KIDS" OF KILO COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, 9TH MARINES,VIETNAM, 1966-1967

By Jerry Giles

why in the law enforcement arena, 'eye witness' accounts are always taken with a grain of salt. I invited all the Marines from Kilo that I could contact to provide their stories for me prior to writing this story. Most said they really couldn't remember, several just didn't want to remember and others, written in my story, did write. I did have several provide some input **via** the phone and all comments are most valued. I hope that as I have attempted to weave our stories together I

have valued each and everyone comments, thoughts and feelings.

These writings arc made to honor all the Marines of Kilo I've made no attempt to include other Marine unit's actions other than those in direct support of Kilo during battles. I am not a historian and can/will only write to those events to which I was directly involved.

Ed Murphy's book, 'The Hill Battles" is a well written and documented historical study of the first battle of' Khe Sanh. I used some of his dates and locations as reference points and gathered some key names from his writings. I did not include his specific stories about Kilo Marines from his book. He did those interviews and it's not my place to copy his writing. Joe O'Dell and Art Gennaro both provided me– with stories similar to what they provided to Ed Murphy. I hope to add more personal accounts from anyone that sends one this way. Enjoy the reading and for 'the Kids of-Kilo' - you were and are my heroes.

Semper Fidelis,
Jerry Giles

PROLOGUE

It's April 25, 1967. The call comes over the landline from the battalion operations officer to Kilo Company's command post at Camp Carroll. Giles, get your ass down here, we've got a hot mission for you and your company". Wow, a 'hot mission'. Something new and perhaps exciting. Kilo was the Bald Eagle Company, the rifle company designated as a quick reaction force for the 3rd Marine Division and I knew we were ready.

I'd been Kilo's company commander for seven months since September 1966 and we had spent most of that time running squad sized patrols (13 -18 Marines) or platoon patrols with a platoon of 45 Marine riflemen plus some machine gunners and 3.5 rocket Marines attached. Occasionally we would go out as a full rifle company with an average of four officers and 185 enlisted Marines. Up until this moment in time, company sized operations were more of a training exercise that a tactical necessity as we had been hunting down the elusive Viet Cong who prided themselves on not making a major contact with sizeable Marine forces. It had been classic guerilla warfare with an occasional sniper, a few rounds fired from afar, the ever present booby traps and the small threat from sharpened bamboo stakes.

We had been lucky up till now with few casualties. Back in on November 9, 1966 we suffered our first killed in action (KIA) during my tenure as Company Commander, Private First Class Bill Derksema tripped a booby trap and was killed instantly while acting as point man for his squad while on a platoon sized patrol. PFC Derksema had only been 'in-country' for about a two weeks.

From September through December of 1966 we, as part of the battalion, had operated north, south and east of Danang in the rice paddies and villages called 'injun' country. In January the entire battalion had deployed to Okinawa for re-training. While on Okinawa we trained, added new personnel, filled out the company to full. combat strength of six officers and 205 enlisted Marines. At the same time we were issued the new and highly vaunted M-16 rifle. The M-16 was lighter, had larger ammunition magazines, a more deadly bullet. that tumbled after striking flesh thus creating horrific wounds and, unfortunately, had not been field tested in the dust, mud and rain of Vietnam On the pristine rifle ranges of Okinawa few problems with this new 'miracle' weapon were observed. Sadly, that all was to change upon our redeployment to Vietnam on Valentines Day, 1967.

Back in Vietnam, Kilo was farmed out to another battalion to assist in securing a huge valley complex called Ba Long Valley. Once again it was platoon and occasional company sized patrols. The weather was miserable, rainy, windy and cold. When two platoons went out on patrol I would send my Executive Officer, 1st Lt Geoffrey Gaugish, out with them to give him some command time at a higher level that his previous time as a Platoon Commander. His best friend, 1st Lt. John Woodall, was the platoon commander of the 3rd Platoon and had about four months left on his Vietnam tour. 2nd Lieutenant Jerry Barlow commanded the First Platoon, 2nd Lieutenant Stephen Hepner the 2nd Platoon and 2nd Lieutenant Steven Cobb the Weapons Platoon Commander. Gaugish and Barlow were short tiers and would soon leave Kilo. Hepner and Cobb were both former enlisted

Marines who had been selected for and had completed Officers Candidate school. They were the F ----- New Guys (FNG) of the Kilo's officer corps.

After some six weeks down in Ba Long Valley we rejoined our battalion, 3rd Battalion, 9 Marines, up closer to the DMZ at a 'lovely' place called Camp Carroll. Camp Carroll sat in a low valley some 15 kilometers south of the Demilitarized Zone. Almost directly north, some 13 kilometers away, you could see the vague outline of a small hill overlooking the Ben Hai River and North Vietnam, This dot on the landscape was Con Tien - a place that would turn into nothing more than an aiming stake for NVA artillery and rockets in the months and years to come. The heroics of the Marines in that hell-hole are written in pictures and words in Marine Corps history.

At Camp Carroll, large tents lined the well marked 'streets'. Showers were rigged from 55 gal drums suspended on finely engineered 2" X 4"s. Chow was a mixture of C-rations and incredible mess hall styled meals cooked by our Company Gunnery Sergeant, Gunny Hatfield in what was known as "Hatfield's Deli". Life-was good! Contact with the 'enemy' was limited. Being a Marine in a combat zone doesn't get any better than this. That was soon to change.

Gunny Hatfield was the most feared and respected Marine in Kilo Company. He had replaced my original company gunny, Gunny Gross, in December prior to our one month deployment to Okinawa for retraining and issue of the M-16 rifle. When Hatfield reported in to Kilo I was stunned. Gunny Gross was a quiet, well mannered and totally respectful Staff Non-commissioned Officer. Hatfield was the absolute anti-thesis of Gunny Gross.

Hatfield arrived at my command bunker looking like he had been on a month long drinking spree and as if he had just been run over by a M-48 tank and spit out on the road. Weighing all of 150 pounds stuffed into a well wrinkled set of utilities, he looked more like a well worn bag of rags than a Marine Drill Instructor.

The first words out of his mouth were, "The name is Hatfield, John C. Hatfield, Gunnery Sergeant, United States Marine Corps. My friends call me JC, you can call me Gunny". I thought in my mind, *'Now isn't that sweet, this Gunnery Sergeant is giving me permission to call him Gunny'*. I nodded politely suppressing a smile as I tried to figure out where the Marine Corps had found this sad excuse for a Company Gunny. Hatfield then continued, "The sorry ass Marine Corps has sent me to this sorry ass country to fight this sorry ass war in your sorry ass company". ***Wow!!! I have really got my work cut out for me. First will be figuring out how to get this sorry ass Marine reassigned somewhere, anywhere but Kilo.***

I decided to go through the motions of a 'Welcome Aboard" so that I could at least tell battalion that I tried. I invited Hatfield into my old French fort command bunker and sat down. He looked around and said: "Whore's the coffee?' ***Damn, now I get to play nurse maid to a hung - over derelict of a Marine***. I broke out my small Coleman stove, heated some water and passed him a cup of coffee. He looked at the coffee, reached over and added another scoop of coffee grounds to his cup, swirled it around and made some comment about officers drinking pussy coffee.

He then asked, "Your not going to take that sorry ass stove to the field are you?" "Of course not", I replied. "I'll use the small heat tabs that come in the o-ration boxes to heat the water". "Too f***ing slow" he replied as he reached in to his upper utility jacket pocket and pulled out a small square of what looked like a piece of soap. I asked, "What's that? " He smiled, "C-4, the best damn coffee heating material ever invented". (C-4 is the explosive used to-blow bunkers and unexploded ordnance.) With that he pinched off a dime sized piece, set it between us and lighted it with a match.

Whoompps! !! A bright and very intense flame burned for a few moments and went out. Hatfield just looked at me and laughed and said, "Captain, that's the way sorry ass Marines heat water for a sorry ass cup of coffee.

This 'visit' was rapidly going down hill He then broke out his Marlboros and began asking rapid

fire and very germane questions about Kilo's personnel, the officers, the Staff NCOs, the training and the enlisted Marines. Hmmmm, I was impressed. I noted that every other phrase was 'sorry ass' and every other word an appropriate and very descriptive, profane adjective. He seemed totally unimpressed with anything or anyone (including officers) that didn't have to do with taking care of the enlisted Marines. This I liked. His expectation of the enlisted Marines was simply that they be Marines 24 hours a day and there would be hell to pay for those that didn't live up to his expectations

His attitude toward the lieutenants was a 'wait and see'. Respect from Hatfield was to be earned, not given just because of some rank insignia on their uniforms. I knew from his intensity that the same 'rule' applied to me.

The 'Welcome Aboard' continued for well over an hour. I discovered that he had been in the Marine Corps for 17 years, had served with the 1st Marine Division in Korea and had fought in the misery, cold and hell of the Chosin Reservoir. Here was a Marine that had lived through and understood the meanings of life and death in combat. I had no idea at that time how incredibly valuable his advise, his mentoring, his friendship, his ass kicking, his strength, his leadership would be for me and the Marines of Kilo

Gunnery Sergeant J.C. "Horrible" Hatfield would soon become a legend within the battalion for his commitment to Kilo Company and his absolute disrespect for the 'system'. Hatfield operated under his own very special set of rules. He would lie, cheat, steal, fight for the Marines of Kilo. Kilo had the best chow back in base camps, better utilities, more combat gear, more sandbags to fill and he even 'borrowed' an Army jeep for Kilo's use because he felt it was unfair that Kilo Marines did not to have decent transportation. I 'defended' Hatfield to those officers that felt offended with a simple comment: "Hatfield operates for the Marines of Kilo".

OFF TO KHE SANH

So now it's April 25, 1967 and Kilo has the Bald Eagle mission of being airlifted to Khe Sanh and help out a couple of Marine rifle companies that seemed to be in trouble in the hill surrounding Khe Sanh. Lieutenants Gaugish and Barlow had rotated home so I'm down to three officers and have Staff Sergeant Taylor as the Platoon Commander of the First Platoon. I decided to keep Lieutenant Cobb as Weapons Platoon Commander as I needed someone to provide good direction for our 60mm mortars and I had absolute trust in SSgt Taylor's ability to handle a platoon.

I proceed over to the battalion's command tent for the battalion Operations Officer's briefing which was short and limited on information. He only knew that the 3'" Marine Division has directed that Kilo go to Khe Sanh to reinforce the Marines at Khe Sanh. Due to the urgency of the orders, the operation officer 'guesses' that Kilo could become involved in some heavy combat so it is imperative that we mount out with a full load of ammunition, rations and water. His final words: "Check-in with the Khe Sanh Base Commander upon arrival for further instructions, he know what is going on down there". The helicopters were inbound to pick us up for the short flight to Khe Sanh so it's time to get moving.

The adrenalin is rushing as I trot back to the Kilo area. Finally, real combat. I quickly gather the platoon leaders and Gunny Hatfield and briefed him on our 'mission'. Their eyes light up, a real mission, a real war (perhaps). Kilo is ready!

Hatfield is operating in hyper-mode, ass kicking, no bullshit, just a great SNCO doing his job. The platoon leaders have done a good job of being prepared and Kilo forms up quickly for the short march to the helicopter landing zone. PFC Larry Stevanus wrote: "I had heard 'saddle up' many times in training. Hearing it for the first time in Vietnam made my heart pound so hard I thought it was going to rip a hole right through my fatigues. Grabbing our gear and moving out to the staging area was hectic and soon we were headed out on choppers to help another unit that was being clobbered in a place called Khe Sanh." I pass the simple instructions, "Load your sorry asses up in the helos and we will reform when we get to Khe Sanh. The helicopter, CH-46's, came thundering into the LZ, red dust rises, voices go unheard, heads down as we dash up the tail ramps into the shaking beasts. The ramps begin to close as we lift

off in a swirl of dust.

As we rise above the red clay of Camp Carroll I begin to wonder about the days ahead. All my training for the past eight years has led to this moment. ***Are you really ready? How will I react if we get involved in heavy combat? Will my leadership be worth a damn? What will all this lead to? Damn, I hope I do a good job***. My thoughts run amok as I look around the packed helicopter. Young kids, old Staff NCOs, young lieutenants, good NCOs'. I believe we are ready, but LCpl Joe Odell, the old man of his platoon and a squad leader at age 25, recalled: "As the ramp on the Ch-46 Chinook helicopter dropped to take us on board, I had no idea what the next 5 days would hold for us, the Marines of Kilo *3/9*. I'm sure the rest of the company felt the same way as we departed Camp Carroll in a cloud of red dust on our way to an unknown destination. I looked out the porthole widow of the noisy, shaky Chinook and watched the green expanse of Vietnam stream by. "How many NVA were concealed in the hills and jungles below, he wondered". ***(The five days would turn into four weeks and Joe O 'Dell would be on the hospital ship Repose within a few days.)***

HELLO TO KHE SANH

Landing in an LZ from a helicopter is a lesson in disorientation. No matter how you plan it, it's guaranteed that you will have no idea where you are, what direction you are facing or what unit, troops, Marine land next to you in the swirling dust and incredible noise. Luckily the LZ at Khe Sanh is a cold LZ. No incoming rockets or mortars, no rifle or machine guns are sweeping the landing zone and the helicopters. The moment the rear ramps begins to open Marines are lined up ready to dash out of the hulking beast.

We grunts appreciate the ride but have the greatest fear that our friendly helicopter will fall from the sky. Not a pretty picture so haste is the action once our ride to Khe Sanh is over.

The first lift of Kilo is now on the ground at Khe Sanh. I've got my company headquarters group of radio operators, Gunny Hatfield, my Arty Forward Observer Team, Forward Air Control team, supply NCO and senior Corpsman. The 3rd Platoon with Lt Woodall, the 1st Platoon with Staff Sergeant Taylor is reforming. The 2nd Platoon with Lieutenant Hepner and the Weapons Platoon with Lieutenant Cobb will soon arrive on the second flight of 46's. A young lieutenant from the Khe Sanh base meets us and point to an area east of the runway and tells us that is where Kilo will dig in for the night. I tell Gunny Hatfield to get the gaggle organized and set up in a night defensive position. (Due to the shortage of officers, Hatfield by this time is my Company Gunny and acting Company Executive Officer. ***(Nice to have a Korean War vet around to keep things moving.)***

The Khe Sanh base seems rather extensive, neat and tidy, personnel tents with five layers of sandbags around the edges for protection from incoming fire, nice airstrip, ammunition bunkers, arty positions, lots of barbed wire, fighting positions and all totally exposed to the surrounding hills. Hmmm, this could become interesting. In the late afternoon sun it seems to be a clearly marked red clay aiming stake for NVA rockets and mortars .. I recall thinking and wondering if this place now called Khe Sanh was once called Dien Bien Phu by the French. Oh well, not to worry. After all, we had all the arty, air and naval gunfire at our disposal so the North Vietnamese certainly wouldn't put up to fierce of a battle. Probably just hit and run, again and again.

The Khe Sanh Base Commander, LtCol. Reeder had passed the word for me to come to his command bunker for a welcome to Khe Sanh briefing. LCpl Bob (Stew) Stewart, my 19 year old arty FO, and I walk the 300 meters over to his bunker. We were greeted outside by LtCol Reeder who invited me inside. Stew shrugged his shoulders at the lack of an invite and said he would go over to Fox. Battery, 2nd Battalion, 12th' Marines (Fox, 2/2) under the command of Captain Glen Golden) and scrounged some new utilities and get the latest scoop from his parent artillery group. LtCol Reeder seemed rather calm about the whole affair of the reinforcements for Khe Sanh. He mentioned some increase in North Vietnamese activity, pointed out on a map where he believed elements of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion 9th Marines were located with substantial casualties.

He also mentioned that Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion 3rd Marines had sustained rather heavy casualties in their attempt to gain control of Hill 861 to rescue a recon team and had suffered too many casualties to evacuate their wounded. LtCol Redder wasn't too sure of what role we of Kilo would play in the days ahead He was emphatic that his role was base commander, not the tactical commander.

We were assigned by the 3rd Marine Division to operate with the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines commanded by LtCol Wilder. LtCol Reeder, as base commander, had no command or control over our movements and employments. He said we were to spend the night at the base and that tomorrow a guide from the 3rd Battalion would guide us up to LtCol Wilder's position near Hill 861. He then added that he was a bit surprised at the North Vietnamese's tenacity and attacks as he knew that the NVA were poorly trained, poorly equipped, poorly fed, poorly led and suffered from low morale. With a smile, he ended the 'briefing' and said. "Besides, one Marine is worth 10 NVA any day of the week and the NVA will probably all be gone by the time you get there, all on their way back to the safety of North Vietnam".

I walked back to Kilo's position with a mixture of thoughts. Two Marine rifle companies plus a recon team had suffered extensive casualties from a supposedly poorly trained, poorly equipped, and poorly led and fed NVA force that is suffering from low morale? A military force that never sticks around to fight? Yet they did. Then again, the base commander of Khe Sanh should know what was going on in his area of operations.

(The failure: The historical writings by Ed Murphy in "The Hill Fights" and Chaplain Ray Stubbe's numerous and detailed books/articles clearly show that LtCol Reeder had been briefed/ advised by both ground and aerial reconnaissance units that large NVA forces had moved into the hills surrounding Khe Sanh. Small recon teams had encountered well trained and well equipped NVA units on numerous occasions. Recon units reported the NV A had built bunkers on Hills 861 and 881S. His response to such briefings was "Bullshit". His briefing to LtCol Wilder, CO of the 3rd Battalion 3rd Marines discounted the presence of large NVA units LtCol Wilder, being a former commander of a reconnaissance battalion likely placed more credence in the recon reports than those of LtCol Reeder.)

When I returned to the near darkness of the Kilo position I found that the platoon leaders and Gunny Hatfield had done all they could do to establish a defendable and relatively safe night defensive position near the west end of the runway. Based on the information from LtCol Reeder, I did not expect a ground attack and felt that with such a large combat base to shoot at as a target, it was unlikely that Kilo would be in any danger.

I called the lieutenants and the Gunny into a mall dimly lighted circle and briefed them on what I knew-which was not too much. LtCol Reeder had given me several sets of Khe Sanh areas maps which I passed out to the lieutenants, arty and forward air control Marines. We discussed our planned movements for early tomorrow and reinforced the requirement for plenty of water as we expected a hot and long day. The obvious question came up. "Are we going to see combat tomorrow?" My response was simply, "I have no idea. Right now all I know is that we are headed to Hill 861 and may be assisting in the medical evacuations of two rifle companies. Prepare your Marines for the possibility of seeing and helping with casualties. That's all I really know at this moment".

The lieutenants disappeared in the darkness. Gunny Hatfield pulled out a piece of C-4 and said, "Give me your sorry ass cup and I will make you a sorry ass cup of coffee". A small burst of flame later, boiling water made instant coffee and with lighted Marlboros we settle in for the night. "Horrible" Hatfield and I sat quietly with but a few words about what tomorrow might bring. He rarely talked about Korea and I didn't push him to do so. I had a strong feeling that there were deep and dark memories that drove him to push the Kilo Marines so hard. Yet, without saying so, it seemed that he cared. Cared that they lived, cared that they had the best he could scrounge and he demanded that should they die, they die like Marines. He didn't believe in heroics. Just being a Marine. Soon after Hatfield had arrived in Kilo he 'suggested' that all officers and SNCOs carry M-

16 rifles rather than the issued 45 caliber pistol strapped to their waist. As he said: "No reason to look special in the eyes of a NVA sniper and if the shit hits the fan, everyone is a rifleman."

All is quiet now. Hopefully the listening posts are alert. The stars are bright. I've got three young officers with me, 161 enlisted Marines and eight Navy Corpsmen. A grand total of 173 Marines of Kilo will arise tomorrow to perhaps face their greatest test. Hmmm, I wonder how we will do. It's 2315 hours and suddenly I hear the hissing whistling sound of the first round just a moment before it impact far to our left. A bright burst of light, a curumping explosion followed by another whistling sound. Many are yelling "Incoming!!!!" More rounds are landing, all to our far left. Hatfield yells, "Recoilless rifles!!!" I think, "How in the hell does he know? Oh yes, his Korea experience". A new sound, more faint in their arrival and landing in a walking pattern as NV A mortars pace back and forth across the runway.

I hear Hatfield counting the explosions. He's up to 29 and going strong. The rounds still search the other end of the runway as Hatfield reached 40. As suddenly as it started, it stops. Glenn Golden and his artillery battery are already returning fire. After about 40 friendly rounds out the tubes, all is silent again. Well, well, Kilo was just welcomed to Khe Sanh. No casualties, so far, so good.

Around 0700 in the morning the young Marine who will be our guide to LtCol Wilde!' s position shows up. He looks haggard and very tired, perhaps even a bit of fear in his eyes. I ask him what is going on up around Hill 861 and he just shakes his head and replies with an "I don't really know, Sir. I just know Colonel Wilder was really pissed about all the confusion of yesterday and win be glad to have you up on the hill".

"Well Marine, that is interesting. Do you know what we will be doing", I asked. Same head shaking, same look, same response. "I don't know, Sir." It was almost as if he does know more but is unwilling or had been told to say nothing. Hmmm, this is not starting out as a wonderful hike in the woods to help out a couple of Marine rifle companies. Seems a bit more serious.

Hill 861

At 0730 we move out towards Hill 861. The day was to be very hot and humid. Lieutenant Woodall and the Third Platoon, with guide in tow are leading the way. 1, with the Kilo command group are following with the SSgt Taylor and the First Platoon, then elements of Lieutenant Cobb's Weapons Platoon who have not been attached to the platoons (mortars and rockets) followed by Lieutenant Hepner and the Second platoon It's a long snake like procession out through the concertina wire of the combat base, across the deep red dust of the cleared fields of fire and then the slow rise into the hill surrounding Khe Sanh. The road becomes not much more than a trail after a thousand meters or so. The sun climbs, damn, it is getting very hot. Low lying ridge lines flank each side of our trail, green markers with the normal and occasional bomb or artillery crater. Just a slight reminder of what could be. After some 3000 meters we pass through an area of rice paddies, long ago abandoned but still with a fairly good trail leading the way to the mountains surrounding Khe Sanh. Obviously many patrols have gone up and down these trails. Both the good guys and the bad guys?

We stop every 45 minutes or so for a break. Damn, it is hot!!! No reason to create heat casualties. The heavy loads of ammo, the helmets and the ever present flapping and rustling flak jackets add to the heat. As we begin to climb the ridges toward Hill 861 we can hear the arty round passing through the few low hanging clouds, headed to Hill 861. Low rumbles in the distant, an occasional pair of jets swoop in low and disappear over the next ridgeline followed by a deep rumble and you could almost feel the air move as the sound past by your ears. LCpl Stevanus remembers, "There was much stopping and starting on the trail. Stopping a column of grunts is a study in disorganization to say the very least. Still we were quick to kneel down and face in opposite directions, be alert and be ready to move out when the column moved again".

As we moved closer I felt, this is more like it, real combat sounds. This is why I took the Marine Corps option to become 'an Officer of Marines" in college. The adrenalin is flowing and

Kilo is moving. More hours pass as we move from the flatlands at 375 meters in height near Khe Sanh towards the saddle in the ridgeline some 800 meters short oft he crest of Hill 861. About 1300 and after a steep climb, the lead elements of Kilo link up with LtCol Wilder and his command group. The artillery is raining down on the backside of Hill 861. Marine jets are sweeping by. Wow, this is just like a John Wayne movie. As I walk to the crest of the ridgeline that leads to the top of Hill 861, I see a rather stocky Marine on the radio surrounded by other radio operator. Must be LtCol Wilder. The hill shakes from the concussion of the bombs. The jets leave and the arty start again. What wonderful coordination of fire support. I'm impressed. In my mind the Marine Corps Hymn is playing, I 'see' flags-a -waving. This is great!!!

As Gunny Hatfield and I are standing there, I notice two Marines running down the trail from the crest of Hill 861, dragging what looks like a bag of potatoes behind them. I'm curious, why would they be dragging a bag down the hill? They continue towards the Gunny and me and we step out of their way as they stop right in front of us. As they stop I see their faces-one is gaunt, hollow eyes, no expression other than gasping for breath. The other Marine is bending over, hands on his knees, dry heaving his guts out.

He looks up at the sky, says something I don't hear and he goes back to dry heaving again and again. I look down at the 'bag' the two Marines had pulled down the trail and so neatly deposited at my feet. The 'bag' was not a bag, it was a dead Marine. I am stunned. look into the dead Marines face; see his snow white skin, bright red freckles and his curly red hair neatly cut Marine Corps style. He looks as if he is asleep. A bit of blood stains his utility jacket. Suddenly I realize that the music is no longer playing in my mind, I'm not seeing pictures of flags waving and people cheering, all is silent and my only focus is on the young, dead Marine at my feet.

This is my first face-to-face look into the face of death. So this is what combat is all about. My mind spins, the joy is gone. I think, ***'Here is this kid A moment ago, an hour ago, he was alive, being the best Marine he knew how to be. Now he's gone. Bullshit, gone is 'nice', face it - he is f***ing dead. Somewhere back in the States a Mom, a Dad, a brother or sister may be thinking about him right now. They think he is alive, they will pray for him tonight and then tomorrow, the next day or so, they will know what I know - he is dead*** I look up at the two Marines that dragged this Marine down the hill. The dry heaving has stopped. Two faceless Marines holding on to each other. Slowly they turn, face the trail back up the hill and with a huge sigh disappear through the tall elephant grass slowly back to the top of Hill 861.

They're gone as I again turn my attention to the dead Marine. How long I stood there staring down at this Marine I don't know. What I do know is that suddenly someone popped me hard on the shoulder, bringing me back to reality. I turned to my right and there is Gunny Hatfield standing rather close, eye slightly squinting with a look of intensity I had rarely seen. Very slowly and calmly he said "Captain, that Marine is dead. Our job is to take care of the living". I nodded my head in agreement, not saying a word. With that Hatfield turned and walked toward LtCol Wilders command group.

(This was the first of many Hatfield lessons for survival.in combat He became our combat tutor. Hatfield a gem, a gift to Kilo and me. I thought about thanking him but knew he would only respond with a typical Hatfield rebuff such as, "1 didn't say that tom save your sorry ass, I said it to save the Kilo Marine's sorry asses."I ever again 'saw' another dead Marine's face. To this day I recall only that young Marine's face despite the many casualties Kilo would endure over the next four months. Many years later I discovered that Hatfield's suggestion was the only way to maintain sanity in an incredible vulgar combat environment.)

I joined Hatfield at LtCol Wilder's hillside command post. He briefly explained the 'problem'. Bravo Company, 1st Battalion 9th Marines had

been on extended combat patrols around Hill 861 when they became engaged with a large North Vietnamese Force. Bravo had sustained relatively heavy casualties and needed our assistance in evacuating their wounded and dead. Bravo, led by Captain Michael Sayers, was no longer in direct contact with the NVA so our mission was expected to be primarily one of assisting Bravo in their move to a safe medevac site.

Bravo was located in two separated areas so I sent one platoon to link up with Bravo's lonely platoon and I went with the other two platoons to link up with the main element of Bravo Company. The sun was hot and penetrating but huge rain clouds forewarned of a very wet afternoon. We move slowly but with a great sense that our mission would save some jives. No one talked, silence, each Marine in his own thoughts. I wondered how my Marines would respond, react, standup to the sights of many Marine dead and wounded. This was going to be a new experience for Kilo-for all of us: officers, SNCOs, NCOs and the enlisted Marines.

LCpl Stevanus realized this would be our first encounter with dead and wounded Marines. He saw almost a look of panic and fear all rolled into one. He could tell by the silence and the look on the Marine's faces in his squad. I wondered how a company commander would motivate Marines after they have seen that combat in an ugly, unforgiving and a final affair. No where in my officer's training had that subject been taught. My only thought was to lead by example, get focused on the job at hand, don't allow myself to be emotionally involved, demand excellence, be a Marine. Much easier said than done.

By early afternoon we began to see the aftermath of Bravo's struggles. A helmet here, a discarded pack there, bandages strewn across the trails and empty M-16 cartridges indicating contact with the NVA. I had the feeling that NVA eyes were watching, waiting for the right moment to add Kilo to their victory belt. But, all remained silent.

About 1400 the lead elements of Lt. Woodall's platoon linked up with the main element of Bravo 1/9. Lt. Woodall passed the word back to me that "This is not a pretty sight, Captain. Lots of dead, lots of wounded, they really need our help". As my command group moved forward we noticed the first of many dead Marines along the trail - some in grotesque positions, frozen in time by rigor mortis, others near peaceful-like, arms folded across their chests - evidently attended by a corpsman or Marine buddy in their last moments on this earth. Perhaps they were attempting to create some dignity for this Marine on a hill just called 861 in Vietnam. *Damn, it's brutal and quick!*

Joe O'Dell recalled, "As we arrived at their position I will never, so long as I live, forget the sight and smell of those dead Marines. I recall some of them had cleaning rod rammed down the muzzles of their M-16s in an effort to free the jammed round in the chamber". So much for the vaunted M-16.

The silence was deafening. I expected the wounded Marines would be crying out in pain, asking for mom and dad as I had seen in the movies. None of that was happening, just a few moans or a short outcries as we moved the wounded onto ponchos for their trip to safety. Morphine works. Being a Marine works even better. Our Kilo corpsmen joined in the care of the wounded, adding a bandage, offering some hope, providing another shot of morphine.

I looked around for some hint of NVA casualties. None! Not a pack, no weapons, not a body, no trace of what had caused the carnage among the Bravo Marines. How in the hell had they done so much damage? "Poorly led, poorly trained"? Not from what I was seeing.

My senior corpsman, Doc Hill, whose nickname was 'Spanky', caught Gunny Hatfield's eye. Spanky was leaning over, studying three small purple dots on a dead Marines chest. He was in awe that the purple dots were the only indication of where the NVA's bullets had entered the dead Marines body. As he rolled the Marine over to study the exit wounds Hatfield barked out, "God damn it Spanky, that Marine has done his job, it's time for you to get your sorry ass back to work and do your job - take care of the living". Without a moments hesitation Doc Spanky hustled off to care for the wounded of Bravo 1/9. No one, absolutely no one questioned Hatfield's 'advice'.

Captain Sayers and his NCOs bad done a good job of preparing for the trek down the hill to LtCol Wilder's position. He was absolutely insistent that we carefully search the area before we moved out to insure that all the living and dead were 'going home'. The Marines of Bravo 1/9 were without expression. Not defeated, just stoic with eyes that did not see, eyes that did not cry, eyes that had seen too much. There was a sense of 'we've been through hell, don't ask any questions, we don't want your sympathy, we just want off this hill'. We scrounged around the area and policed up all the weapons - no need to leave an M-16 for the NVA. However, they likely would have thrown the M-16 away as their AK-47 was much more reliable than our easily jammed 'Mattel Toy' rifles.

The rains began, first a few heavy drops and then the downpour. Each non- walking wounded and dead Marine was carried by four Marines, one each corner of a poncho or carrying a makeshift stretcher. The trail down, which had been a struggle for our Kilo Marines in a single column climbing up in dry weather, now became a nightmare of stumbles, near silent curses, slips in the mud, razor sharp elephant grass cutting into bare arms all compounded by the absolute fatigue of the Bravo Marines would slip and fall; the wounded would bounce to the ground, crying out in pain. The dead would slip off a poncho and slid forward like a log with limbs extended knocking other Marines to the ground. Other bodies slipped away into the gullies only to be retrieve and the procession would continue. It was move, stop, recover, wait, care, dry heave from exhaustion, pray for a drink of water and move on.

Now I understood the look on the faces of the first two Marines I had seen hours earlier. You could tell which Marine was from Bravo 1/9 and Kilo 3/9 by noticing the eyes. Bravo Marine's eyes told the story of seeing too much, seeing the unbelievable, seeing their buddies die before their eyes, some times in their arms. The faces were near expressionless, mouths partially open as they went about the sad task of moving down the hill. In some ways they were more resolute than the Kilo 3/9 Marines - no side glances, no acknowledgement of other Marines, just whatever was necessary to get off that damn hill.

About 1730 our lead elements made contact with Wilder's CP The long trek was over, fresh water flowed, more corpsmen tended the wounded and the helicopters were inbound. The evacuation was a success. But the price Bravo had paid for their three day engagement with a 'poorly trained, poorly equipped, poorly led and fed NVA force suffering from low morale' had been heavy - 19 killed, 4 missing and 42 wounded to be evacuated. It was time for Bravo 1/9 to move back to Khe Sanh and then to Dong Ha to refit, gather new personnel to fill their ranks and be prepared for new battles with the NVA.

Hatfield broke out his C-4 and created two much needed sorry ass cups of coffee. It had been a long ass day and yet the Marines of Kilo seemed to have held up well. one had broken down emotionally, no heat casualties, no casualties from enemy fire and even the C-Rations seemed palatable. Several times as he sipped on his coffee and took long drags on his Marlboro, Hatfield quietly said, 'They did good Captain, damn good".

I was briefing the platoon leaders on our possible security role for LtCol Wilder's CP group when the word came down to report to LtCol Wilder. Damn, I was just getting comfortable. I could tell by the look on Wilder's face that his briefing for me was not going to be filled with pleasantries. With hardly any acknowledgement of our afternoon role with Bravo 1/9, Wilder launched into his concerns for Kilo 3/3. Kilo had attempted on several occasion over the past three days to secures the crest of Hill 861 in hopes of securing the hill and rescuing a recon team that had been trapped there for days. Wilder had expected that after Kilo's initial contact and with the heavy air and artillery bombardments, the NVA would have long ago disengaged from the fight for Hill 861. They hadn't. With each attempt to send in helicopters for re-supply and medical evacuations, the NVA pounded the hill with mortars and small arms fire. Even now, in the late afternoon light, Marine jets screamed overhead, and "Puff the Magic Dragon" spewed its' Gatling Gun stream of machine gun rounds into NVA positions. Once the air power stopped, the arty began once again. Silence for a moment of time, helicopters move in, NVA mortars start again - and so it goes. Gutsy little bastards those NVA!

Wilder's mission for Kilo was simple, under the cover of darkness Kilo will move to Kilo 3/3s position on or near the crest of 861 and assist in recovering the dead and wounded and return to Wilder's CP prior to daylight. One platoon with major element of the weapons platoon would remain with Wilder's CP group as security. All other Kilo Marines were to prepare for a long, long night.

Joe O'Dell, a Fire Team Leader seemed to be aware of many details that that I totally missed. Perhaps it was his several years in the construction trade as a stone mason that tuned him into the details of hills, construction, things out of the ordinary. As we moved out to link up with Bravo 1/9 in the late afternoon's light he had noted that 'someone' had altered the 6 foot high elephant grass. He would later write: "One thing that I saw on the face of Hill 861 has still, to this day, caused me to wonder what it was

Earlier in the afternoon, I was on the left end of the line of assault and a few feet to my right was this cleared path, maybe 12 feet wide. The elephant grass was all lying down and the tops of it were all pointing to the top of the hill. This, and I'll call it a path, went all the way to the crest of the hill. The only way I can explain how this path and elephant grass looked was as if someone had taken a 12 foot log and attached a chain/rope to each end and pulled it to the top of the hill. The elephant grass lay perfectly side by side neatly pointing up the hill. Was it the NVA's attempt to create fields of fire?" No one else seemed to notice and for Kilo it was fortunate that the NVA didn't have the opportunity to use it in defense of Hill 861. Perhaps Kilo 3/3s efforts had precluded long range, sweeping automatic weapons fire down that slope.

I designated Lt Hepner's 2nd Platoon as Wilder's CP security. Steve Hepner was a bit round and rotund and we had nicknamed him "Porky". His weight and size never seemed to slow him down and unknown to me he had vowed to 'win some medals' during as a platoon leader. He loved to laugh at himself and seemed destined to become a good officer.

I then directed Hatfield to organize the relief column with every able bodied Marine loaded with extra water and ammunition. We hoped for no contact with the NVA. The planned movement would start about 1830 with a plan of making contact at nightfall to provide the cover we needed to reach Kilo 3/3. Absolute silence was the 'word', no smoking, secure anything that would clank and move slowly.

As had become my mode, I directed that lst Lt. Woodall's 3rd Platoon lead the wav to the Kilo 3/3. John was my most experienced platoon leader and, while quiet and .unassuming, was well respected by his Marines. His nine months as a platoon leader had given him the experience to handle most any challenge. Along with the headquarters group of radio operators, senior corpsman, arty FO team and elements of the weapons platoon led by Steve Cobb, we followed in their track. Lt. Cobb was the quiet one of my three lieutenants. So far he had performed very well. Reliable SSgt. Taylor and the 1st platoon would bring up the rear

At dusk we moved out in a long silent column. Clouds formed and it looked like a wet night was in store for the Marines on Hill 861. The plan was a two hour trip to Kilo 3/3s position. Kilo 3/3 would send out a squad sized team after dark down the hill to link up with our lead elements. All seemed well planned. The trail to the top was fairly well defined and Woodall kept the pace that all could follow. As darkness settled in, the rains began. First a light mist, then a downpour. The firm footing of the first hour became a slippery quagmire of mud mixed with the tall elephant grass. Marines slipped, silently cursed and moved on. The hill became steeper. Still Kilo moved onward and upward towards Kilo 3/3.

About 2200 hours Lt. Woodall quietly radioed that he had linked up with Lt. Carter's squad sized element from Kilo. Success - at least so far. In the near pitch black night we moved into Kilo 3/3s perimeter. It was very difficult to see who were the-wounded, the dead and the ~e bodied. Captain Spivey had done all he could to prepare for the trip down the hill. The wounded and dead were laid out on poncho, more ponchos added by Kilo Marines. Kilo's corpsman moved among the casualties checking for life, providing morphine, sometimes just an encouraging word. The stench of death permeated the entire hill. Some of Kilo 3/3s Marines had died days earlier and in the heat of

the days, bodies were bloated and frozen in the obscene position of their moment of death. I knew it was going to be a long, long journey back down the hill.

Suddenly out of the darkness came this hulking Marine - probably a SNCO from Kilo 3/3. He walked up to me and with his face but inches from mine and almost quietly said, "You dumb son-of-a bitch! Are you trying to get us all killed?" Without a pause he continued, "Look at your dumb f***ing watch, ass hole. It's glowing like a f***ing aiming stake for the NVA". I looked down and sure enough, my precious SCUBA diving watch glowed brightly in the darkness of Hill 861. Without a word I reached down and rotated the face of the watch 180 degrees to face inward, looked back at the Marine and said, "Thank you". With that he disappeared in the darkness, never knowing that I was the Company Commander of Kilo. Obviously Gunny Hatfield's advice that all Marines of Kilo carry M-16s, wear no rank insignias and look like every PFC in the company was working. To that Marine I was nothing special, just a dumb shit trying to get his Marines killed. Good lesson for me. Thanks Gunny.

Captain Spivey and I set the plan in motion for the evacuation. The more details we looked at, the more impossible the task seemed to become. The rain was now heavy, the darkness total. We called Wilder and suggested an early morning evacuation. That conversation ended quickly with a Bullshit, get everyone off that hill, NOW!"

The plan was for Lt, Woodall to lead the column. Lt. Cobb would 'work' the middle and Captain Sayers float from front to rear holding things together. I would bring up the rear with SSgt Taylor, All radios were on the same frequency. Control and silence were the keys. Bodies and the wounded were slowly laid out in a line so that as the column began the downward trek, 3 - 4 Marines could pick up their precious loads.

LCpl Art Gennaro, an 18 year old rifleman of Kilo 3/9 wrote home just 12 days after the battles on 861 and 881S. He writes about our night rescue mission: "When we reached them (K/3/3) they were in bad shape. There were about 10 dead and 15 wounded. They were up there for three days and had little food or water. We made stretcher and got the wounded and dead on them and started down the mountain. It was so dark we had to almost touch each other to keep together. The fog rolled in and it started to rain, luckily. I say luckily because just as we left, some 10 minutes later, the NVA mortared the hilltop. Movement was slow. The guys in front of me had to make trail. The NVA didn't know where we were but mortared all around us. We finally stopped walking at 0500. We had moved all night, no sleep, wet and cold.

And just where were the NVA? What were their plans? They seemed to be in control throughout the day but never made that final assault to eliminate Kilo 3/3. They knew Bravo's position, mortared it each time a helo arrived, occasionally sprayed the area with small arms fire, yet no final assault. Perhaps they were planning a quick, intense early morning assault before air and arty support was activated. As with Bravo 1/9, Kilo's small perimeter only showed the damage suffered by the Marines. No NVA dead, gear, no weapons. Damn!!!

About 45 minutes after the lead platoon started their move down the hill the final body was hoisted by four Marines and they disappeared down the narrow trail. Following them was a lonely Marine and I asked him what he was doing alone and he replied, "I'm tail-end Charlie, Sir. My job is rear security". I smiled inwardly and said, "Well Marine your not alone, for whatever it's worth, you've got me and my two radio operators."

As if on cue the skies opened up with a downpour and then in moved the fog. 'Sight' was more like touch, feel and listen for the grunts of the Marine next to you. I again marveled at the silence of the wounded. How did they do 'it'? Incredible. The column moved ever so slowly, stopping often as bodies were lost down a gulley, only to be slowly retrieved. Marines slipped, fell, were cut by the razor sharp elephant grass - but they oved on. The hour turned into excruciating long hours and yet the column moved on. Near daylight Lt Woodall radioed that he had finally linked up with Wilder's CP group. A margin of relief, we had made it. There was no elated welcome, only a

somber reprieve from the night from Hell.

The dead were laid out in rows. Corpsman checked each one to insure no living Marines were misplaced. The badly wounded were staged so that the most seriously wounded could be the first out on the incoming medevac helos. The walking wounded and the dead would be the last. Corpsman moved among the wounded, adjusting bandages, offering encouragement, sometimes simply holding an out-stretched hand.

The helos arrived at first light, touching down for a moment in time. Able bodied Marines hustled the wounded aboard. Ramps up and off they flew to Khe Sanh for initial medical evaluation and then (many of them) on to the hospital ship USS Repose. The walking wounded were next and the dead were the last to be added to the cargos of pain.

As quickly as it had begun, silence now enveloped the small knoll as the last helicopter disappeared into the overcast morning. Few Marines spoke, all likely buried in their thoughts of the past three days or the journey down the ridgeline. I wondered how the last 24 hours was affecting the Marines of Kilo. Tills had been an incredibly vulgar introduction to the reality of war. Few shots fired, only an occasional enemy seen in the distance and yet over 100 dead and wounded Marines. Would they be next?

Now a pair of voices broke the stillness. Gunny Hatfield was on his feet, challenging the Kilo Marines to be Marines in his own special way. "You sorry ass Marines, get your sorry ass moving. Get those weapons cleaned, square your ass away, you've got to do and that is being a sorry ass Marine." A SNCO from Kilo 3/3 was doing the same. No slack, be a Marine. Their attitudes began to shift and I could feel a sense of pride in what they had accomplished beginning to take hold. I marveled at the Gunny's skills

LtCol Wilder passed the word that we would be moving back to Khe Sanh to regroup, add some supplies and get some much needed rest. Captain Spivey, though offered the opportunity to be trucked to the combat based, refused and proudly led the remaining Marines of Kilo *3/3* down the narrow trail to Khe Sanh and a C-130 flight back to Dong Ha. Some of the Kilo 3/3 Marines were less than impressed.

ON TO HILL 881S

On 27 April two replacement rifle companies joined LtCol Wilder's depleted battalion. The first was Mike 3/9 commanded by Captain Bob Swigart. Bob, being from my same parent battalion, was well known to me, He was supremely self -confident in words but indecisive in action. Likable among the officer of the 3rd Battalion, rumors floated freely that the Marines of Mike Company were less than impressed. His 'leadership' style was to bark out orders, dismiss junior officer and SNCO's suggestions and information and demean the enlisted Marines. This was compounded by his inability to correctly read a map while on company sized patrol thus moving to the wrong objective or becoming hopelessly lost. Added to this he was in poor physical shape and the first to call for a halt as he could not keep up with his better conditioned Marines. On occasions he even ask members of his command group to carry his pack - supposedly to provide himself with more freedom to maneuver. I doubted that LtCol Wilder was aware of Swigart's shortfall and likely trusted that he would perform, as a competent officer of Marines.

The second rifle company was the return of Mike 3/3 to Wilder's control. Mike 3/3 was a combat hardened and experienced rifle company. Unfortunately their company commander, Captain Raymond Bennett, was not. Fifteen days earlier Captain Bennett was in command of a Marine Corps detachment aboard an aircraft carrier off the North Vietnamese coast and had volunteered to get some combat time with any rifle company in need of a 'hard charging' Marine captain. With Wilder's approval he was assigned to Mike 3/3 to temporarily replace their company commander who was going on a short, well earned R & R vacation from Vietnam. Some Mike Marines were unimpressed with Bennett's overly eager attitude to engage the NVA in close and intense combat. They knew what combat was like, Bennett could only imagine.

On the 29th the battalion moved out towards their objective for the 30th - Hill 881S. Reconnaissance

reports had placed a large number of NVA troops on the hill and reports from both aerial observers and ground recon team had stated that the NVA were building defensive bunkers on the crest of the hill. Wilder was aware of the reports and briefed us that he expected resistance but the hill would be !saturated with artillery and air strikes prior to our assault. ***(Our 8" and 175 Howitzers located at Dong Ha could reach 881 S but due to the angle of fire, close-in support would be risky to friendly troops. The 175 howitzer had a potential range error of 400 meters thus negating their use as close-in arty support)*** LtCol wilder directed that Mike 3/9 lead the battalion with Mike 3/3 and Wilder's command group following in their trace. Kilo 3/9 would follow as battalion reserve. I didn't argue with Wilder's decision for Kilo to be the reserve Company. Perhaps he felt we had already 'paid the price' of Khe Sanh in our recovery of Kilo 3/3 and Bravo . 1/9. The plan was that the battalion would skirt the base 861 and advance to a position some 700-800 meters north, northwest of Hill 881S. The assault up the slopes of Hill 881S by Mike 3/9 would commence the early morning of 30 April.

So much for a plan. About three hours into the movement I heard a firefight break out to the front/right of our route of march. The firing was intense and I was surprised contact with the NV A had been made so early. By my map, the battalion still should have been some 2000 meters short of our nighttime objective. The column held up and the firefight waned and burst again and again into an explosion of grenades and small arms fire. I listened in on the battalion command net for clues as to what was going on. I could tell that LtCol Wilder was pissed. Captain Swigart was calling for support, Wilder calling for him to withdraw from the contact - NOW! Then it became clear to me, Swigart, for unknown reasons, had veered off the route of march and was moving up the wrong hill, a southerly finger of Hill 861. Damn, I thought, another example of Bob's inability to read a map.

From Wilder's small ridge top position overlooking the fire fight, both the Marines of Mike 3/9 and the NVA could be clearly seen. LCpl Don Hossack, the radio man for the2nd Platoon of Mike 3/3, recalled Wilder's anger and frustration and Wilder's refusal to provide any support for the wayward Mike 3/9 Marines. Hossack felt that plunging small arm and machine gun fire would save lives and assist Mike Company in disengaging from the small battle. Wilder would have none of that and he repeatedly ordered Swigart to disengage. Swigart reluctantly agreed, withdrew with his two dead and some 10 wounded Marines. The NVA at the base of 861 were left to fight another day.

LtCol Wilder ordered Mike 3/3 to take the lead and continue towards the night objective near the base of881S. We of Kilo followed in their trace. Mike 3/9 now became 'tail-end-Charlie', the battalion reserve. Though the Mike 3/9 Marines were infuriated by Wilder's seemingly self-centered and rather heartless approach to their dilemma and casualties, it would turn out that Swigart's blunder was a disguised blessing for the Marines of Mike 3/9.

As we moved through the thick elephant grass near the stream beds at the base of 881 S a Marine to my front pointed out a grisly sight about 20 meters off the trail. There, stuck on cut bamboo stakes were two skulls, their hollow eye sockets staring at the passing Marines. I walked over to inspect, to see what was going on. There at the base of the bamboo stakes were two freshly dug-up graves. I could see from the remnants of the uniforms that still clothed parts of their bodies that they were not Marines. I was relieved but questioned why good Marines would dig up graves and put on a Halloween show. I then decided that it must be something that the South Vietnamese Rangers must done to 'warn' the NVA that this was their territory. Any way I looked at 'it', desecration of the dead was only something I had read about and never expected to see. My learning process about the vulgarity of war was escalating.

As dusk settled in, Mike 3/3 and the remainder of the battalion arrived and dug in for the night near the base of Hill 881S. Mike 3/3 was the closest to Hill 881S, near its' base with the remainder of the battalion some 800 meters away on the crest of a small hill. The steepness of 881S and the stark face of tile two major ridgelines leading to the top seemed an open invitation to disaster. I wondered just what tomorrow would bring.

As darkness settled in, Mike 3/3 reported some NVA activity on the crest of 881S. A few errant NVA 82 nun Mortar rounds were launched at Mike's position and our 105 battery at Khe Sanh responded with accurate suppressive fire. Mike Company reported that the NVA were taunting the Marine with "You die, Marine" comments that spread eerily throughout the night. We of Kilo heard very little from our position some 600 meters away.

After all units had settled in for the night, LtCol Wilder called the company commanders together for his plan of attack the next morning. Mike 3/3 would lead the assault with Kilo 3/9 moving to and remaining at Mike's night defensive position to await orders from Wilder to reinforce Mike Company should they need it. Mike 3/9 and the battalion command group would remain in their night defensive position some 800 meters away from the crest of 881S. Lt Col Wilder decided on a one company assault based on the limited routes up 881 S and possibly his belief that the NVA had likely evacuated the hill after the severe prep fire of the previous days. That had been the NVA' s mode of operation, make a contact and then disappear to fight on another day of their choosing. After all, they were "Poorly trained, poorly equipped, poorly fed and poorly led". Right?

Wrong! The first clue might have been their ferocious defense and skills in fighting Bravo 1/9 and Kilo 3/3 on 861 and that both rifle companies had noted well built NVA bunkers and fighting positions. A second clue was the 82mrn mortar team that sent a few round down the hill earlier in the evening. It was well known that 82mm mortar teams were associated with NVA battalion, not small teams of NVA scouts. The third clue, ignored all the way back to Saigon, was that the NVA were led by a highly skilled cadre of officers and enlisted soldiers who had defeated the French years earlier. Such arrogance or ignorance would play into the NVA plans for the Marines on Hill 881S., sadly, became a part of the misguided leadership.

At first light we of Kilo mounted up for our move to Mike 3/3 ' s night defensive position. As LCpl Joe O'Dell recalled: "The day was hot and clear. A day more suited for a family picnic, not a day to do combat. We had long ago gotten used to the heat, even with our flak jackets. We moved out from our base camp and began our way to the base of Hill 881S. I noticed the bleached, faded camouflage covers on our helmets contrasted sharply with the ever present green elephant grass. It was a strange sight to see the faded, camouflaged covers protruding and bobbing above the top of the grass as we moved along. Joe O'Dell thought, what a great aiming point for an NVA Sniper." didn't notice.

As we arrived at Mike's position around 0800,they had already moved out and I could see two columns of Marines moving towards the crest up the only two available ridgelines leading to the top of 881 S.

Mike Company had discarded their flak jacket as they left the Khe Sanh perimeter-either on orders from Captain Bennett or LtCol Wilder. Wilder, being a recon Marine, evidently believed the flak jackets were of marginal value, would create unnecessary heat casualties and would slow the Marine's advance up the steep hill surrounding Khe Sanh. As mentioned earlier, Mike Company was commanded by Captain Raymond Bennett. His unproven leadership style would soon be tested by the battled hardened NVA.

From our position at the base of 881S we could not see the top of the hill some 300 meters steeply above us. The left ridgeline leading to the crest of the hill was rather narrow and rose steeply just before cresting the hill. The right ridgeline was broader and, though steep, would provide some maneuver room prior to moving over the military crest. Looking at my map I could see that once you crested the hill, the top was rather flat rising from right to a highpoint on the left. LtCol Wilder had not provided a 'guesstimate' as to NVA strength on the hill and I 'guessed' that since he was sending only one rifle company up the hill that he expected nothing more than light harassing fire and contact.

I don't recall watching Mike 3/3 struggle up the steep slope of 881S. I suspect I was more concerned about how we of Kilo would get up the hill if events dictated that we reinforce Mike 3/3. I decided on sending the 3rd Platoon with

JohnWoodall up the left ridgeline, if needed. The 2nd Platoon with Lt. Hepner would move up the right ridgeline some 100 to the right of the 3rd Platoon. I planned to send the Weapons Platoon with Lt. Cobb and their 60mm mortars and rockets to a small knoll near the base of 881S and yet with a good view of the crest of the hill. Each platoon had a machine gun section of two guns attached for the possible assault. The first Platoon with SSgt. Taylor would be Kilo's reserve and my command group would travel in trace of the 2nd Platoon as that ridgeline provided more maneuver room. I pointed out to the platoon leaders that great care must be taken to insure that our friendly fire didn't create friendly casualties among M 3/3 Marines or between our platoons as they would be coming into the crest of the hill from different directions. All seemed confident and we waited for 'the word' from LtCol Wilder.

The morning seemed to drag on. The crest of 881 S very quiet. Mike 3/3 Marines now were nowhere in sight. I thought they must have crested the hill without contact and that was good. Around] 100 hours 881 S erupted in an explosion of small arms and automatic weapons fire. The air was punctuated with small explosions and then louder one that seemed like mortars. We could see nothing other than some smoke and dirt rising in the air. We waited. My battalion radio operator reported that Mike 3/3 was calling in to battalion with reports of heavy enemy contact and casualties. We waited. The noise on the hill seemed to rise and fall almost like a planned 4th of July celebration - but we knew no one was celebrating on the crest of 881S. We waited.

About 1200 hours, Wilder passed the word that Mike 3/3 was in serious trouble on the crest of the hill and that Kilo was to link up and reinforce their positions By 1215 hours Kilo was 'online' and moving toward the crest of 881S. Lt Cobb was already in place with his Weapons Platoon. All was going well. My plan now was simple. The 3rd and 2nd Platoon would move to and secure the military crest of the hill. If possible they would link up in the saddle that separated the two knolls of HiII 881S. Based on Woodall's and Hepner's information at that time, I planned to commit the 1st platoon to reinforce the 2nd Platoon and we would move from our right to left, rolling up the NVA defenses and link up with elements . of W/3/3 It was a simple plan based on my belief that there might be 50- 100 NVA on the hill who had been pounded with artillery and air strikes the previous days. A simple plan based on my briefing at the Khe Sanh airstrip that the NY A forces in the Khe Sanh area were " ... poorly trained, poorly equipped, poorly led and fed and would likely not stick around to face a full fledged attack by Marine forces". As elements of the 2nd Platoon came into view of LCpl Donald Hossack of Mike 3/3, he suddenly began to believe that he was going to live rather than die on a no-named mountain called 881S. Hossack had been badly wounded in the initial burst of small arms fire and subsequently suffered a sucking chest wound from a mortar round that Marine buddy in his lap for a half hour, looking to the sky, praying some miracle that would deliver them from the hell going on around them.

When his buddy died, Don knew that he was next. Now, as he looked down the slope he could see Marines coming his way. Perhaps, just perhaps he might live to see another day. He did.

As the 3rd Platoon neared the crest of the hill it became a hand-over-hand pull up the steep slope through the shattered trees and brush from our artillery and air strikes. Deploying into a 'platoon on-line' was impossible and Lt Woodall, traveling with his lead squad, evidently decided they would deploy and disperse after reaching the more open and flatter crest of the hill. The 2nd Platoon was having it a bit easier with two squads nearly 'on-line' and a squad in reserve.

We had seen several Mike 3/3 Marines, obviously wounded and helping each other, scrambling down the face of 881S. The quiet simple assault was now turning into a raging battle of killing and being killed. As my command group moved slowly toward the crest some 100 meters to the rear of the 2nd Platoon, I noted a pair of Marines sitting in a small bomb crater some 150 meters down from the crest of the hill. It was now about 1230 hours and the battle had raged on the hill for over an hour and a half. Gunny Hatfield and I walked over to see what the two Marines were doing and to find out why they were not with their unit. To my great, great surprise, there sat Captain Bennett, the

hard charging Company Commander of Mike 3/3, rocking back and forth, his face pale and expressionless. I said, "What the hen are you doing down here?" Bennett replied, "I don't know what to do. They're all dying up there and I don't know what to do". I then asked, "What's going on up there?" Again, Bennett replied, "I don't know, they're all dying up there". I looked at the other Marine and recognized Bennett's Artillery Officer, Lt. Rogers, who was sitting there, shaking his head in disbelief, obviously stunned by Bennett's loss of command and control.

I looked back at Bennett and again attempted to gain some information as to Mike Company's whereabouts on the hill and what was happening. No response-just the. same rocking and "I don't knows". Gunny Hatfield slowly moved up next to me, leaned over and at a slight whisper said, "Let me shoot the sorry-ass son-of-a-bitch and put him out of his misery". I, with nearly a smile in my voice said, "No Gunny, we're not shooting Captains today". He quietly shrugged his shoulders and we move on. Based on what I was seeing and hearing, the situation on the crest of the hill was much worse than I had originally believed

I called my Arty Forward observer team over, pointed out a small rise on the ridgeline leading to the crest of the hill and told LCpl Bob Stewart to move forward to the large remnants of a tree and see if he could figure out where we could run some artillery fire. I likely suggested either some white phosphorous round for smoke cover or perhaps some high explosives round on the back side of the hill where the NVA mortars might be hiding. Without hesitation Stewart and his radio operator, LCpl John Krohn moved out from the command group and made their way up the hill to the tree.

John Woodall, now at the military crest of the Hill, called in to report that he had just seen two NVA soldiers standing on top of the hill, holding hands and waving at his platoon. John asked for instructions and I said. "Go get'em, tiger". I then called Lt. Hepner and he related that he also was near the crest and ready to move out. I repeated my 'order', "Go get'em, tiger". There radios became silent as the crescendo of fire on the hill rose again to an unbelievable level.

Within a few minutes I received a call from LCpl Krohn that my arty FO Bob Stewart, had been shot in the butt and was seriously wounded. John would help his down the hill and then return to my command group. Damn, a NVA sniper had picked out someone who looked important, had a map and field glasses and BAM, I'm currently out of artillery support. Moments later I receive another call, this time from my weapons platoon radio operator that Lt. Cobb has been wounded and needed evacuation.

Obviously, Lt. Cobb, following the action with binoculars in hand, also looked important. Damn, within two minutes some NVA sniper has picked out two very important Marines of Kilo and with two long ranged shot, both are out of action. It happened that the tree that I had sent LCpl Stewart to and the small knoll where the Weapons Platoon was emplaced were both in view down the long slope of the right broad faced slope of 881S. Stewart was likely 150 meters from the sniper's position and Cobb some 150 meters further down the hill. Obviously some 'good shooting' by the **"poorly trained and led** NVA". My simple plan no longer looked simple. Things were not looking good.

I call Lt Woodall for and update. Silence. I call Lt Hepner to see how things are going. Silence. The battle on the crest of the hill raged on. We of the command group were now about 100 meters short of the military crest of the hill with the 1st Platoon directly below me. Bullets are zinging by, about six - eight feet over head. At least we are not in the kill zone - yet.

My company radio operator looks stunned, shaking his head and quietly reports, "Lt. Woodall is a KIA". *What the fuck'* screams in my mind. Now I'm down to one lieutenant.

Eighteen year old Pfc Art Gennaro, moving with the 1st Squad of the 3rd Platoon, wrote home to his parents the horrific story about what happened to the 3rd Platoon when they crested the hill into the NVA killing fields. He wrote upon his return to Khe Sanh on May 12th: ..... I remember going up the hill in a column. At first it seemed like an easy climb. Then it felt like it was almost straight up. The trees and roots gave us something to hold

onto, or push up with your feet. We were on stomach, not for just the obvious reason but because the last few yards were so steep.

I, luckily on this day, was the thirteenth man in line of our squad. The lead Marine was Flowers, next Pitts, then Aponte, Nevarez, Lt. Woodall, his radio operator, my squad leader, three machine gunners, Knight, Appleton and them me. The other two squads were behind me.

I was about on top when I heard a sniper shoot at the lead Marine. Someone yelled for a corpsman. As he ran up, I saw a guy in front of me kneeling down. Another shot was fired and I saw his helmet fall off his head and he fell over, shot in the head. Then all hell broke loose. The NVA fired M-79 rounds at us landing 10 yards from me. ***(Perhaps the M-79 weapons were recovered from Mike 3/3 casualties)*** The tree line to my left opened up on me. We hit the deck. The NVA ran from the tree line throwing grenades. The guy in front of me (Appleton who came over here with me) caught it in the face and chest and he was dead. We fired back and tossed grenades. The NVA kept coming. Some looked doped up, showing their teeth and wide eyes. We fired back and threw grenades. I said to myself: 'This is it Art you're going to die but you will go down fighting'. Some of our weapons jammed and wouldn't fire. Two guys behind me caught parts of a grenade and one was shot in the arm. Word was passed to pull back. We let the wounded go first then I left."

Lt Woodall was one of the first Marines killed. When the initial battle erupted, he realized his platoon was in a killing zone and he passed the word for everyone to pull back. He then, without consideration for his own safety, knelt down and took the NVA positions under fire to provide some cover for his Marines. After a few burst from his M-16, he was hit by a fusillade of automatic weapons fire from a NVA bunker some 30 meters to his front. He died instantly. ***(Lt. Woodall was awarded a Silver Star -posthumously for his courageous action.)***

About the same time that the 3rd Platoon was fighting for their lives and attempting to evacuate their wounded, I noticed a Marine trotting stumbling down the hill from the 3rd Platoons position. As he came nearer I could see in was SSgt Manson, Platoon Sergeant for the 3rd Platoon. Gunny Hatfield yelled at Manson to get his sorry ass over to our position. A few moments later and there stood SSgt. Manson, breathing heavily but not making eye contact with the Gunny or me. He just looked at the ground. I said, "Manson, what the hell are you doing down here?" *(Hoping he was on some special mission for his platoon)* He looked up, shook his head and slowly spoke. "Captain, I can't go back up there, I've got a family at home, I've got young kids that I want to see again". I exploded. "You son of a bitch, you've got a whole platoon of young kids up on that hill. That is where you need to be. Do you understand?" Manson just stood there, shaking his head and finally said, "I just can't go back up that hill". I was totally pissed and frustrated. More heated warnings and orders and Manson just stood there. I then realized that the last thing the real Marines on top of the hill needed was a totally ineffective Platoon Sergeant. He would just get in their way, get someone killed. I decided to not spend anymore time with Manson, no warnings about a court martial, no further words other than "You're relieved, get your sorry ass to the bottom of the hill and help with casualties. I just didn't have time for his bullshit. Manson would just have to live the rest of his life knowing that he abandoned his platoon. The Gunny and I continued our movement across the face of 881.

Moments later my radio operator reports again, "Lt. Hepner is likely a KIA. He hasn't moved since he shouted out. "We can't kill these son-of-bitches hiding behind a log" With that he had jumped up with his M-16 blazing away and attacked an NVA bunker single-handedly. He made it but a few steps across an open patch of ground before being cut down by automatic weapons fire from at least two bunkers. He lays still. No one can get to him. His body totally exposed to NVA fire. No sign of-life. ***So much for earning a medal.***

LCpl Joe O'Dell was with one of the two squads that Lt. Hepner used to crest the right hand ridge of 881S. He writes: "The din of the battle could e heard further up the hill. There was indeed lots of stuff going on up there. I have read articles about how steep Hill 881S was but where I went, I had no such problem. I had moved past the predomi-

nant tree line to my right when I discovered that the members of my fire team were not with me. I knelt down on one knee and waited a short time thinking that they would show up. They didn't.

Small arms were whizzing and puffs of dust kicking up around me. I thought I had better get away from the open ground and seek come cover - which seemed very scarce. In front of me on the other side of a cleared area was an NVA bunker. I decided it was better to be inside the bunker than to be in the open and exposed to enemy snipers of which there were many.

I ran across the clearing with my rifle at the ready and entered the bunker and found it to be vacant. I was amazed at how neat and carefully it had been constructed. The top was two layers of 8" - 10" logs crisscrossed inside. The dirt walls were perfectly plumb and straight. There were two entry points and one exit point out the back. The exit point went out six feet and angled to the left towards the tall elephant grass facing my position in the bunker.

I had not been there very long when out of the elephant grass came a chicom grenade. I knew the NV A soldier was close because the chicom came at me as if it had been thrown underhanded. Before the grenades exploded I would duck down in the bunker to get clear of any shrapnel. After it exploded I would rise up and empty a magazine clip into the elephant grass from where the grenade had come. I carried plenty of ammo and fired my M-16 on full automatic. This exchange took place 3-4 times until the grenades stopped coming my way. I might add, the times I fired my M-16 in Vietnam it performed flawlessly.

After this exchange, I raised a little out of the bunker and shortly a sniper round clipped a twig off a bush near me and I could feel the round whiz by inches from my right ear Luckily his aim was off. Leaning out of the bunker opening I heard some incoming mortar rounds. I didn't duck back into the bunker fast enough. I recall a very loud noise as the round landed and sucked all the air out of my lungs. I fell back into the bunker but felt no pain. I don't recall a corpsman tending to my wounds. I simply lay there, stunned, until I got my bearings. At some point I somehow exited the bunker and, with my flak jacket torn apart, crawled, walked, stumbled down the hill to the medevac site. Thanks God for the flak jacket, it saved me from serious back and chest wounds. Later that evening I was choppered to the USS Repose where I was treated for multiple fragmentation wounds to my legs and lower back."

The NVA, with their troops in bunkers or fighting holes were free to mortar the crest of the hill. They 'walked' mortars back and forth among the exposed Marines all afternoon creating extensive casualties. Brilliant plan. In the meantime we couldn't use our artillery or air power for fear of creating friendly casualties.

It's now 1400 hours and I've lost all my officers and artillery forward observer. I had little or no contact with the surviving elements of Mike 3/3. I knew the general disposition of the 3rd and 2nd platoons but no idea where the surviving members of Mike 3/3 were located.

I should have had some clue as to the nature of the NVA units on Hill 881S. The previous night they had taunted Mike 3/3 with voice and bugle calls. They had randomly fired their 82 mm mortars on or near Mike 3/3 position early in the night. Now I understood; piss off some Marines and they will attack you head-on. After all, they were just 'gooks' and we were Marines. No one mentioned that 82 mm mortar teams travel with NVA battalions of 350 - 550 soldiers. It didn't register with me either. The two NVA that Lt. Woodall saw at the crest of the hill, holding hand and waving at his platoon was just another example of the NVA understanding our culture and sucking another platoon into a deadly kill zone. My response to the hand waving had been: Go get 'em tiger."I was clueless as to the tactics and tenacity of the NVA. In World War II the 'rule' was that the should outnumber the defenders by at least four to one. On Tarawa it was six to one and Iwo Jima, five to one. On Hill 881S it likely was much less than one to one.

As Gunny Hatfield and . I traversed the face of 881S towards the broader slope near the 2nd Platoon's position, I attempted to make contact with platoon radio operators that might have some idea of what was going on top of the hill The reports

were not pretty. Some radio operators reported that they were the only living Marine in the area Others reported small groups fighting furiously, while others were in bomb craters praying for reinforcements. There seemed to no one in command or control of the platoons, just small groups here and there, separated by intense NVA fire.

The Gunny and I began to do a knee/elbow and belly crawl as we approached the crest. The 1st platoon was some 25 meters behind us. We were now about 60 meters short of the military crest and could feel the automatic rounds zing through the air just above our heads. Several Marines, evidently wounded, came stumbling down the hill through our position. They were motioned to the bottom of the hill by Gunny Hatfield.

Earlier, around 1400 hours, Corporal Orville Fulkerson, the squad leader of the reserve squad for the 2nd platoon, moved to link up with the surviving elements of his platoon. As he began his move towards the military crest he noted his platoon Gunnery Sergeant standing near motionless on the face of the slope. When Fulkerson's squad approached, the gunny pointed to a trail to his left and the lead Marine moved toward the crest. Fulkerson passed by the Gunny and, for a moment, wondered why he wasn't with the platoon. Fulkerson, nicknamed "Mad Dog", didn't hesitate long for he had a job to do, link up With his platoon take Hill 881S. Fulkerson didn't go directly up the ridgeline as he could see that the ridgeline was covered with casualties. He actually crossed the ridgeline some 60 meter short of the first knoll and was able to maneuver safely around and further up the hill than he might have had he followed in the fatal footsteps of his platoon.

Cpl Fulkerson remembers his first sights on the hill... another squad leader had just repulsed a strong NVA counter-attack and was in no shape to continue the battle. LCpl 'Little Joe" Bob Purro had shot an NV A soldier three times as the NVA rushed his position. The man fell on top of Little Joe and bled all over him. Soon after. a NVA mortar round landed behind Little Joe and wounded him in the neck, just above his flak jacket. LCpl Bill Van Devander rushed to his aid thinking Little Joe was seriously wounded in the chest due to all the blood. Little Joe kept telling his buddy that it was NVA blood, not his. Finally, Bill realized that Little Joe was not seriously wounded and both continued the fight.

Fulkerson continued: ... We could hear lots of firing to our left as we worked up the trail to the true crest of the hill. Everything around us looked undisturbed. The canopy was of low brush and undergrowth and yet there was a lot of noise .... We crawled forward, looking into the clearing beyond the hill's undergrowth.. Out there, there were at least 30 dead Marines and NVA. Not a good feeling, No one alive.

He continues: ... We crawled up to the edge of the clearing and could see at least three squads of Marines, along with their machine guns and radios in the 'beaten zone'. We pulled back and then saw an NVA mortar team setting up a mortar on the crest of the main hill of 881S, above us some 150 meters away. I called Captain Giles and asked for mortar fire. I was refused. ***(Due to the unknown location of M3/3 and elements of K/3/9, all requests for arty, mortar and air support were denied by battalion to limit friendly casualties from friendly fire.)***

Corporal Fulkerson's story continues: ... We *(his squad)* then work our way back down the hill where we could still hear some firing. . .. We came upon a low ridge running up the mountain and my first fire team moved forward and were fired upon. They took cover in a small hole just beyond where they had been hit. LCpl Stoudt who was in front of me when the NVA opened up was shot and killed. LCpl Ed Bohannon and LCpl Terzi were now trapped in the small hole forward of my position. Unknowingly, we had pushed up on the NVA's main defensive positions. Due to heavy enemy fire the remaining members of my squad we repulsed and, for a moment in time, had to leave my two Marines in no man's land between us and the NVA. LCpl Svoboda, lying next to me got shot in the helmet, clipped his hair - about as close to death as you can get. We moved back just before the ground where we had been erupted in little geysers of dried leaves and dust. Life is always a game of inches. We then regrouped and tried another way to get to the top. It was becoming very complicated and chaotic.

We came across another clearing with yet another firefight in progress. We then jumped into a bomb crater and discovered a badly wounded Marine who had been laying there for several hours in the hot sun. He died about the same time we told him we had come to take him home.

We then made our way to the wooded top of the hill. The NVA were now below us so we could crawl under their automatic weapons fire. We crawled forward to a 'firing line' made up mostly of dead Marines who formed a wall of protection from the NVA weapons fire. From this position I could see where Bohannon and Terzi were pinned down in the small fighting hole between us and the NV A .

.. .I hollered out to them to stay down and so we could put out some suppressive fire to cover their movement to our position. The line of dead Marines and NVA took the impact of the NVA rounds coming our way. I recall so vividly the bodies jumping like jelly as the stream of automatic :fire was directed our way. I moved to the top of the piles of dead and hollered, "Bo, can you hear me?" "Yes, I can hear you" came the voice floating back across the bodies. "Sit tight, Bo. We need to get more firepower up here to pry you loose". Bo replied, "We can only hold out for so long" . ... I kept calling Captain Giles for reinforcements and getting nothing. The answer was always, 'we on the way' but no one shows up. I decided to use the Marines that I had and got them into position to lay down suppressive fire. On my command, we opened up, leaving a zone in the center for my two Marines to safely scramble through. Up they came, over the tops of the bodies and back to the 'safety' of my squad. 'Safety 'meant alive for this moment.

. .. After two more mortar attacks, Captain Giles passed the word to pull back. I was the senior Marine and NCO left on the ridgeline. My Platoon Leader, Lt. Hepner, had been killed early in the battle. My Platoon Sergeant had quit. Good NCOs had either been killed, wounded or had retired from the hill with their wounded. I was pissed!!! We had paid the price to own this place, a very high price and now were being ordered to pull back. We were not annihilated, we were still there. I gave the order to pull back with all our wounded. No wounded would be left on that damn hill. Angrily I led my Marines to the base of the hill, passing by groups of Marines, possibly sent as reinforcements, safely huddled in bomb craters on the hill sides. My battle on Hill 881S was over. The memories will last a lifetime.

By 1500, the situation on Hill 881S had become an individual battle between small valiant groups of Marines of M/3/3 and Kilo/3/9. At the very best, my command and control over Kilo was limited. I had one remaining platoon that r could commit to the fight in the area of the 2nd Platoon. The word that I was getting was that the NVA were still operating from bunkers and fighting holes while our Marines were exposed and fighting for their lives.

As my command group held up near crest of the hill, I knew that some hard decisions would need to be made. About that time, Captain Bob Swigart, CO of Mike 3/9 came crawling up to my position. He asked what was going on and r explained the situation very briefly with some words likely that, "We are in a world of shit!" He then asked what he could do and I said, "Stick with me and get your ass killed. After all, this seems like a great place to die". With that Bob swirls around on his belly and disappears down the hill like a large lizard, all belly, knees and elbows. I had no idea that LtCol Wilder had decided to commit M/3/9 to the battle and Bob, for whatever reasons, did not mention it.

I believed that I could commit the 1st Platoon to reinforce the small holdings gained by elements of the 2nd Platoon. Squad leaders from both the 3rd Platoon and 2nd Platoon had been requesting reinforcements from nearly the start of the battle. The 2nd Platoon area looked liked the best shot at success. The area where Cpl Fulkerson was fighting was on or near the small knoll which included the lower 1/4th of the ridgeline. To reinforce there might give us ownership of the lower of the two knolls on the 881S ridgeline. The NVA would still 'own' the actual crest of the hill along with their bunkers and fighting holes with clear lines of fire down the ridgeline into the 2nd Platoon's position. I believed we could gain the small knoll but felt it was unlikely were could 'own' and control the entire crest of the hill prior to dark.

My thoughts then went back to three days earlier when we were briefed on the problems Kilo 3/3 was having on 861. Kilo gained the crest of Hill 861 but didn't own the hill. The NVA had created sufficient casualties among Kilo 3/3 so that Kilo was stuck in place. Able to fight, yes. Able to move and maneuver, no. They didn't have enough able bodied Marines left to move their wounded let alone recover their dead. They fought bravely for three days, with limited water and ammunition in the hot sun. The NVA, seemingly at their leisure, pounded the hill with mortars and burst of automatic weapons fire. Our great artillery fire support from Khe Sanh and airstrikes seemed only to quiet the NVA weapons for moments at a time. Finally, under the cover of darkness, we had been able to extract Kilo 3/3. I didn't want the same scenario for the Marines of Mike 3/3 and Kilo 3/9.

Was the price we were paying for 881S too much? Just what the f**k was this hill worth? The NVA showed no intention of withdrawing from their bunkered defensive positions as long as they could continue to inflict casualties on the Mike and Kilo Marines. **"Poorly trained, poorly led, poorly equipped and fed"?** Bullshit!!! As the afternoon progressed I had watched as streams of wounded and totally disoriented Marines stumbled and struggled down the face of 881S to a totally disorganized medevac site. No one was prepared for the chaos on that hill= least of all the young Marines led or ordered over the military crest into a perfectly prepared ambush on a grand scale.

I called LtCol Wilder on the radio. "Sir, I believe that if I commit my reserve platoon we can gain the crest of the rights side of the ridgeline. However, there is no guarantee that we will be able to own the entire hill. I believe that sending more troops into the battle will create huge numbers of additional casualties and we may end up like Kilo 3/3, stuck in the middle of a hill we don't own with night approaching. Sir, I recommend we use all available Marines to get the living Marines off the hill, and do that now!" There was but a slight pause and Wilder responded, "Pass the word to withdraw".

I had my radio operator pass the word to the widely separated squads of the 2nd and 3rd platoons to withdraw and to make certain that all the wounded were brought down the hill. Some had already begun the movement back over the military crest to the safety of the bomb craters on the side of the hill. This was not a smooth, by the book withdrawal. For some it was orderly, for other a dash through a hail of automatic weapons fire. With no radio contact with the survivors of Mike 3/3, I could only pray that they were also getting the word to withdraw from Wilder's headquarters.

LCpl Gennaro recalls the 'evacuation'. "When we reached the bottom of the hill we realized that the eleven Marines in front of me were still up there. We believed all were dead. About the same time we started down, I could see the 2nd Platoon carry their wounded down from the hill." Gennaro was thankful to be alive. Only he and one other Marine from his squad had made it off the hill that day.

By now, Gunny Hatfield was 'working' the entire face of Hill 881S, directing wounded to the initial medevac site and writing names in his small green notebook. Confusion reigned. He kept asking, "Are you absolutely certain that you got all the wounded off the hill. One answer was unacceptable to the battle hardened Hatfield. Someone from the 3rd Platoon said, "I think so". "Thinking so" was bullshit to Hatfield's ears and he ordered a composite squad from the 2nd and 3nl platoons to get their 'sorry asses' back up the hill and check for any additional survivors.

LCpl Gennaro was one of those 'chosen' to return to the top of the hill. He wrote: "Boy, I felt like hiding someplace but I knew I couldn't live with myself if I didn't go back up with my platoon. So up I went again. We reached the top and turned left to find the Marines we had left behind. We crawled all the way. The NVA snipers were good shots and bodies lay all over the place like leaves off a tree in the fall. It was hot as hell.

As we passed a crater I looked in it and there Pfc Flowers (a guy from my squad) lying there with blood all over his right side, from top to bottom. Somehow he had survived, one out of the initial eleven that had crested the hill. He said that when his platoon had initially pulled back, the NVA came out of the tree line, threw grenades and shot

all the bodies on the hill. Flowers had rolled under some brush and the NVA shot at his head three times, missed and left him for dead."

Hatfield was ruthless about the possibility that wounded Marines might have been left on the hill. As Gennaro and his squad of Marines moved through the NVA sniper fire, they were met by a two squad of Marines from Mike 3/3 also ordered back to the crest of 881S to look for possible wounded Marines. Gennaro writes further: "Then the NVA mortared us again while we were on top. Again I said 'Art, this is it, I'm going to die on this damn hill'. Thankfully, Mike 3/9 sent a platoon up after us. They also got pinned down. Every five minutes someone got shot or hit by grenade or mortar fragments. It was now about 1830 and darkness would settle in an hour. The fog was rolling in."

Gennaro and five other Marines made a stretcher out of a poncho to carry Flowers down the hill. He recalled, "When we lifted Flowers up to carry him down the hill, a sniper opened up with automatic weapons fire. We hit the deck. We tried again and the NV A mortared us again. We finally agreed to get up and just keep moving."

The Mike 3/9 platoon set up on the military crest of the hill and began to provide effective suppressive fire with their machine guns. Cpl Gordon Herbert recalls the intense NVA fire directed at them. "The logs were jumping up and down as the NVA fire swept near their position. We returned their fire and it seemed to slow them down a bit. We watched as the five Marines slowly gathered their courage once again to make the dash down the hill with their wounded buddy in tow". With snipers firing and mortars falling Gennaro and his five Marines rose quickly and kept going down the hill. His summation, "It was crazy!"

Darkness was beginning to settle in over the slopes of Hill 881S. Hatfield and I believed that all the living were off the hill. A bit earlier, the 'check fire' for artillery was lifted and white phosphorous (WP) rounds covered the hill to provide some cover for the withdrawing Marines. That fire mission was granted by the battalion as 'they' felt the value of the smoke would outweigh the possibility of further casualties. It seemed to work. However several Marines were wounded by burns and one seriously wounded as the WP round landed next to him. As I walked back and forth between the medevac site and the base of the hill I marveled at the guts shown by both the wounded and non wounded Marines. No one cared about unit loyalty, just the loyalty between Marines Theirs was an attitude of getting the job done, get the wounded out and regroup. Just at dusk, a Marine off to my right flank called out that he detected some movement coming down the face of the hill. Marines went on alert. Then we saw him, a Marine staggering down the hill with a body cradled in his arms. Slowly the Marine approached my position and I could see it was a black Marine carrying Corporal Mieczkowski. Mieczkowski, a slender and slightly built Marine, was obviously dead. His head, arms and legs bobbed limply with each step of the black Marine. I said. "What the hell are you trying to do Marine, get yourself killed?" He stopped for a moment, looked at me and I could see that he had been crying. With absolutely no apology, the young black Marine looked at me and said, "Sir, this is my squad leader. I just couldn't leave him on the hill tonight". I knew Mieczkowski as a damn good NCO, no frills, no bullshit, just a good NCO. Up until that moment I had no idea how good he really must have been. Damn!! The black Marine then slowly moved to the medevac site, laid his precious cargo on the ground paused for a moment and disappeared into the night. That level of respect- and loyalty is earned by too few of us in leadership positions.

Night settled in on the base of Hill 881S. Mike 3/3 off to the left, Kilo 3/9 near the center where we had started some 10 hours earlier and Mike 3/9 off to our right. Everyone dug in for the expected mortar barrages. Silence. Gunny Hatfield went from platoon to platoon and then to the medevac sight and back to the platoons counting casualties, listing names, looking for the missing. By midnight he had accounted for all the Kilo Marines even though about 14 bodies remained on the hill. Those that we weren't absolutely certain that they were dead were listed as 'Probable Killed in Action'.

That was Lt Hepner, Corporal Ives, LCpl Nevarez and Cpl Stoudt. After being hit, they had not moved but no one physically got to their position

to confirm their deaths. The other 13 Kilo Marines that had died on that hill were confirmed by someone in their squad or platoon. Thirty-two Kilo Marines were wounded seriously enough for medevac while eleven others were wounded and returned to duty to their platoons. Another eighteen Kilo Marines were listed as non-battle casualties with such ailments as twisted ankle and knees, stomach cramps, beat exhaustion, foot injuries, and two with acute depression. How many, if any, of these non-battle casualties were evacuated I have no record. What I do know is that Kilo started the day with four officers, eight corpsman and 161 enlisted Marines. By days end, were had one officer, five corpsman and about 110 enlisted Marines. Nearly 30% casualties. A tough day for Kilo and a grim introduction to combat with the **"poorly trained, poorly led poorly fed and equipped North Vietnamese".**

BACK TO THE CREST

The night remained relatively quiet and at first light we expected to resume the assault on 881 S after heavy artillery barrages and air strikes. Wilder was having none of that. He directed artillery and air strikes all day long, stripping the hill of all trees and most vegetation. The Marines of Kilo enjoyed the show, cleaned their weapons and regrouped as a cohesive fighting unit. Mike 3/3, having suffered heavier casualties than Kilo, was declared combat ineffective and moved back down to Khe Sanh and then on to Dong Ha for additions of personnel, equipment and redeployment to other battle area on another day.

As night fell we were informed that the 'final assault' would commence the next morning. I wondered throughout the night how the Marines of Kilo would react, going back up the hill when so many of their buddies had died and had lain for two days in the hot sun. I learned at first light what the key to motivating battle weary Marines was Hatfield. Hatfield was walking through our position his voice raised on high so all could hear. "You sorry ass Marines, you get your sorry ass shit together, clean your weapons again and you had better shave. Kilo Marines live and die like Marines and if I find one of your sorry asses dead on the hill today and you are not squared away and haven't shaved, I'll leave your sorry ass body out there to bloat and rot for a few days. Now get off your miserable sorry asses and get moving. Your buddies have already paid their price for owning that hill and now it's your turn!" No sympathy, no 'woe is me, ain't it awful' ,just boot camp toughness, take them back to where they will follow commands without questions and be Marines. Brilliant and typical of Hatfield.

Around 1100 Kilo and Mike 3/9 moved up the bleak and barren face of 881S. We expected some resistance. What we got was silence, dead silence. As we crested the military crest where so many Marines had died two days earlier, we were met only by a gentle breeze and the stench of death. The artillery and airstrikes had denuded the entire hill. Only stumps of tree remained standing. Then came the sight of the remains of bodies. Horrific, a leg here, an arm there. A possible torso half buried in the red clay. All were Marines. Not a single NVA casualty was found, no wounded, no dead. The NVA had stripped the hill of all signs of their presence except for several of their sturdy bunkers that remained standing despite the bombings. No NVA weapons were found and it seemed as if they had even picked up the expended brass. 881S, clean as a park except for the Marine dead that permeated the air and ground.

As we walked the. crest of the hill where two larger NVA bunkers remained intact, Gunny Hatfield suddenly said, 'Holy shit, look what those bastards have done." I walked over and there, very neatly lay two dead Marines spread eagled on the roof of the bunkers their bloated faces and bodies facing the sun. I then saw what Hatfield was talking about. Both Marines had evidently been laid out on top of the bunkers, their trousers opened and their penis's exposed. What a gross insult to these heroic Marines. I just walked away. Hatfield was cursing out loud.

Kilo was given the security mission of the left (highest) point of the hill with Mike 3/9 to our right. The Gunny found us an unoccupied NVA bunker and claimed it for our 881S CP. Our radio operators and arty FO team found fighting holes and trenches for their security. The search for bodies and spare parts of Marines continued for two days.

Many Kilo Marines just stopped eating due to the stench of death. Late on the afternoon of the first day, a young Marines came up to me and said. "Sir, we've got Lt. Woodall's and Lt. Hepner's bodies laid out for evacuation. Do you want to see them and 'say goodbye' before we load them up?' I thought for a moment, thanked the Marine for his courtesy and said. "No, want to remember them as they were, young, excited and good Marine officers and men." I hoped the Marine understood, -

We sent out patrols for the next five days. Some small squad sized and others platoons reinforced. No enemy contact was made. The NVA seemed to have disappeared just as easily as they had appeared, built bunkers, laid an ambush, extracted a heavy toll of Marine casualties and once again disappeared. I too often went back to my initial briefing at Khe Sanh, "Don't worry about the NVA, they are poorly trained poorly led, poorly fed and equipped. One Marine is worth ten NVA any day of the week.

AFTERTHOUGHT COMMENTS

Sadly, that was not the case and as I was to learn in later battles that we were facing a well disciplined, well trained and well equipped enemy that was willing to pay the 10 to 1 price, if necessary, to extract their toll on Marines.

This was my first, but not last, exposure to a classic NVA tactic loosely translated as "Close to the belt". It was a simple tactic with a deadly outcome for American units in Vietnam. The NVA would create a well camouflaged defensive position with cleared fields of fire. When the well armed and well supported Americans would approached, the NVA, showing great fire discipline, would wait until the lead elements were either within their positions or just a few meters away. They would then open fire with their automatic weapons, mortars and grenades. The Americans were exposed, the NVA, mostly in bunkers or fighting holes. Since friendly forces were intermingled with or very close to the NVA positions it was impossible to use our overwhelming artillery and air power. The battle would rage on, rifleman against rifleman, machine gun versus machine guns and grenades galore on both side of the battle. With the NVA holding the prepared defensive positions, American casualties were high. When the American units were finally able to withdraw with their wounded, the NVA knew that arty and air support was 'on-the-way. In most cases the NVA had just enough time to police up their casualties and disappear to fight another day.

The total number of Marines killed on Hill 881S is listed as 42 by various estimates. In talking with my Marines they related that they had killed up to 50 NVA during the heated battles. Double that number due to NVA killed by Marines who lost their lives and due to the heavy bombardments we get an estimated NVA casualty number of 100 or so. No confirmed numbers are available. However, I was not surprised when years later I read in official Marine Corps historical documents that over 500 NVA were confirmed killed on 881S with another 150 probably killed. That would track nicely with my initial briefing that one Marine is worth ten NVA any day of the week. It also would make the casualties as reported back to the 'States' more palatable.

The M-16 rifle caused many Marines to die needlessly. Particularly, Marines in Mike 3/3 reported or were found dead with rifle cleaning rods jammed in the barrel of their rifles in their last futile attempt to clear the spent cartridge from the chamber of their rifles. Within Kilo, about 10 percent of the Marines reported problems with their weapons jamming as did Marines in Bravo 1/9 and Kilo 3/3. Due to the proximity of Mike 3/3 casualties, Kilo Marines often picked up a serviceable weapon or a M-60 machine gun and continued the advance. Sadly, the Marine chain of command blamed the M-16's failure on the Marines not cleaning their weapons properly. Even General Walt, the "Marine's Marine", laid the blame on the individual Marines rather than on the weapon itself. Historically, the Marines were vindicated. The chambers of the M-16 were retooled and the problem solved. No one in an official capacity ever admitted it was the weapons problem, not gutsy Marines. Some two weeks after our initial assault up Hill 881S, it was time for Kilo to return to our parent battalion at Camp Carroll. Kilo walked off the hill wiser, perhaps closer knit as a company as a result of the hell under fire of April 30, 1967. There was no

celebration, just quiet resolute Marines leaving a hill where so many of their buddies had died. We all knew that this battle would not be our last. Hopefully we all would be wiser next time.

***(The most insulting surprises that came to me regarding the battle for* 881S *showed up in my mail in late 2006. Here was this old newspaper clipping with a great head and shoulders shot of Captain Bennett. The write-up was a summation of the Bronze Star Medal, with Combat V"device awarded to Captain Bennett for his heroic leadership on 881S. In essence it stated that Captain Bennett, showing courageous leadership skills, had led his rifle company in the initial assault on* 881S *and after personally directing artillery and air strikes had courageously led his company in securing Hill* 881S *from a tenacious NVA force. Total bullshit! Captain Bennett never made it to the crest of Hill 881S and was back in Dong Ha or Camp Carroll with elements of Mike* 3/3 *when Hill* 881S *was secured by Marines of Mike and Kilo* 3/9.**

How such a travesty of justice occurred we will never know. Any and all Marines who made it over the Military crest should have received at least a Bronze Star. They were the heroes despite the leadership (including mine) that sent them to hell and back

My plan is to continue the story of Kilo through July 10,1967. Kilo was subsequently involved in two major battles with NVA forces after Hill 881S. On May 20, thanks to an incredibly stupid battalion commander, Kilo was cut off and surrounded for 16 hours. On July 2 - 4, 1967 Kilo was the bald eagle company, again, for the beginning of Operation Buffalo. In both battles, the Marines of Kilo exceeded, in my mind, the words Semper Fidelis - always faithful.

ANOTHER KHE SANH VETERAN?

By Craig Tourte

Sometimes I think there just couldn't be too many more idiots out there and then I meet one more. I would think making the claim of being a Khe Sanh Veteran and getting called on it with sideway and doubting looks after so many years would be sufficient to dissuade those from making questionable claims. Now when someone makes the claim "I served at Khe Sanh" it usually means they served on the base or hills during the Siege, otherwise it was just another tour stop, another hump, another battle, important and certainly a great contribution but they were not part of the Siege which was news worthy and captured the attention of the world. I'm not saying here that simply being at Khe Sanh during the Siege was any more or less of a contribution, just that that service represents a noteworthy historic event, an event that represents sacrifice, deprivation and courage of which many would like to be identified as having participated in.

Now to my story...so I'm in the little lounge I occasionally frequent after golf when I am called over to another table by some fellows I know. One of them says he wanted me to meet his good friend who was also a Marine and served at Khe Sanh. "Really" I respond, finding that unusual because I know most of the regulars and they know my and Steve Wiese's history of serving at Khe Sanh which we remind them every year during the Marine Corps Birthday. Anyway the guy has his head down and is checking his phone when I walk up and he kind of nods in agreement with the statement made the by person who was making the introduction. I stick out my hand and he looks up at me. I ask him when and where and who he served with at Khe Sanh. There as a slight pause and now all eyes are on him.

He clearly appears uncomfortable and now here it comes and I can see it on his face, "Will, I never really was on the base I was just South of it." I say where was that, the Rockpile, Camp Carrol, where were you, I could see he clearly didn't know where or what any of those places were?" He says he was in the jungle south of Khe Sanh where there was a big mountain. He said he served with 1/5 in 1966. I just smiled and said welcome home and walked away leaving him with his friends who by this time were all looking at him with doubting expressions. I didn't hang around to hear his explanation to them. But the message was clear and another pseudo Khe Sanh Veteran bites the dust.

AND WHEN HE GOES TO HEAVEN ST PETER HE WILL TELL

TO THE PROTESTERS

**HE FIGHTS IN A LAND THAT IS FOREIGN AND FAR,
WHILE YOU PROTEST AND PLAY YOUR GUITAR!**

**HIS KIND IS KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE PAST, NEVER
TO RUN ALWAYS STAND FAST!**

**HE WADES THROUGH THE MUCK,MRE AND FILTH, WHILE
AT HOME YOU LAUGH AT HIS BLOOD BEING SPILT!**

**GO AHEAD BURN YOUR DRAFT CARDS, HAVE YOUR
PARTIES AND FUN,WHILE OVER THERE YOU HAVE
COUNTRYMEN DYING UNDER A HOT BURNING SUN!**

**HE LOVES HIS COUNTRY AND WHAT IT STANDS FOR,
HE'D RATHER FIGHT THERE THAN AT YOUR FRONT DOOR!**

**HE WALKS STRAIGHT AND PROUD, HE HOLDS HIS HEAD
HIGH, HE'S SEEN FRIENDS KILLED, HE'S SEEN
GROWN MEN CRY!**

**HE'S BEEN SHOT AT AND WOUNDED, BUT COMES BACK FOR MORE,
ON SPIRIT LIKE THIS HAS BEEN BUILT THE CORPS!
FOR NOTHING CAN STOP THESE GREEN MACHINES,
BETTER KNOWN AS: UNITED STATES MARINES!!**

**AUTHOR
JOHN A. LAIBINIS
1967**

ANOTHER MARINE REPORTING SIR I'VE SERVED MY TIME IN HELL!



USMC SEMPER FI!



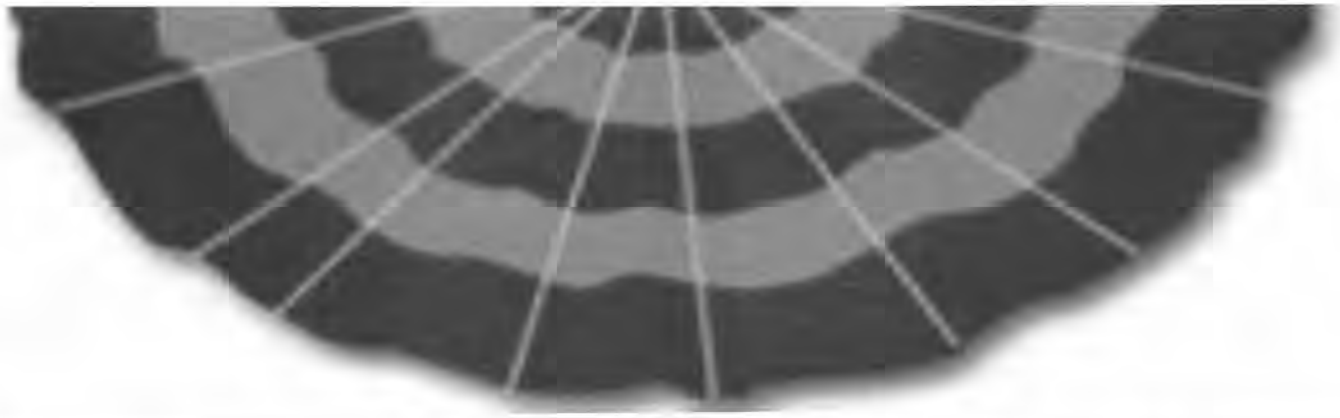

THOSE REMEMBERED

Harold Jury A/1/13 Passed Away 2014
James Jim Hurt A/1/13 Passed Away 2014
Bill Stepp A/1/13 Passed Away 2015
All Those who served with Kilo 3/26
PFC Randall M. Davis Kilo 3/4 KIA 4 June 68
Bill Lawson LCpl in 1/26 C CO Passed away Sept 2015
Robert V. Wilson Passed Away Oct 6 2015
CPT Daniel J Coonon USMC VMFA 115 KIA 8 Oct 68
PFC Ron Kearsey USMC H/2/3 Hill 689 KIA 4-21-68
PFC Kevin Cassell USMC H/2/3 Hill 689 KIA 4-21-68
CPL William K Downing USMC E/2/3 KIA 03 May 67
Jerry W. Elliott USA MIA 21 Jan 68 282nd AHC
ALL who served at Lang Vei A-102 FOB-3
1LT Thomas A. Reich USMC VFMA-115, MAG 13 KIA 17 Nov 68CPL Jsck Jachimak
2LT Heinz Ahlmeyer USMC Lima CO 3/26 KIA 10 May 67
2LT Dale Allen USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 27 June 67
1LT Paul Bush USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68
2LT Ferdinando Distefano USMC E/2/26 KIA 24 Feb 68
1LT Henry Norman USMC A/1/13 KIA 30 Mar 68
1LT Kim Johnson USMC H&S 2/26 KIA 23 Feb 68
1LT Stephen Joyner USMC Lima CO 3/26 KIA 15 June 68
ALL FROM TBS-3-67
For all who served in Bastard Bravo
LCpl Jeremy E. Santiago I CO 3/2
1LT John Ellis USMC Crash Crew OIC Killed outside wire at Khe Sanh KIA in CH-46 CH-46 Shot down outside wire at Khe Sanh 67-68
MAJ EARLE BREEDING E CO C/O HILL 861A
McNamara, William J. L/CPL USMC, M CO 3/4 KIA 27 May 68
Sgt Larry Berneski USAF KIA 15 Oct 1967 C-130 Crash KSCB
HM-3 Cecil Fincher USN KIA 24 Jan 67
L/Cpl Jeremy E. Santiago USMC I CO 3/2 KIA 9/7/93
Philip Wright USMC Passed Away Khe Sanh Veteran
Sgt James Neil Tycz USMC Recon KIA10 May 67

REMEMBERED BY

Dennis Wimbish A/1/13
Dennis Wimbish A/1/13
Dennis Wimbish A/1/13
Charles Lemke Kilo 3/26
Larry Davis 3rd Pioneer Bn 3RD MAR DIV
Daniel Erwin A Co 1/26
Cynthia Wilson Wife
Charles Fetter MAG-11 H&MS-11 VMF 314 AW
Dave Brombaugh H/2/3
Dave Brombaugh H/2/3
Frederick Monahan E CO 2/3 Hill Fights
Donna Elliott Sister
Lawrence Cooper CO C 5th Special Forces
Charles Fetter MAG-11 H&MS-11 VMF 314 AW
Major Earle Breeding C/O ECo 2/26 Hill 861A
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt

William E. Carpenter B Btry 1/13
William E. Carpenter B Btry 1/13
William E. Carpenter B Btry 1/13
William E. Carpenter B Btry 1/13

DAN :CPL JACK JACHIMIAK E CO 2/26 Hill 861A
HUGH LIVERMAN L/CPL USMC Mike CO 3/26
LOUIS CATON 50TH TASS "RED DEVILS" TASK FORCE ALPHA
LORNE LE MIEUX M CO 3/26 3Rd PLT 3RD SQD
Daniel Depagnier Gold Star Father HMM-363 Mag-36
Daniel Laliberte FLU Sub Unit 2
Sharon Pelon

THE 2016 KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION WILL BE HELD AT THE EL TROPICANO HOTEL IN SAN ANTONIO TEXAS, 110 LEXINGTON AVE, SAN ANTONIO TX, 844-239-0346. FROM 09 TO 16 OCT 2016. ROOM RATES ARE 105.00 A DAY 3 DAYS BEFORE AND 3 DAYS AFTER SAME RATE.THE HOTEL IS LOCATED JUST A FEW YARDS FROM THE RIVER WALK, AND HAS A BOAT LANDING APPROXIMATELY 10 YARDS FROM THE HOTEL. PARKING IS FREE WITH IN AND OUT PRIVILEGES. THE HOTEL IS ALSO PET FRIENDLY. WALKING DISTANCE FROM DOWNTOWN. MENTION KSV WHEN REGISTERING

REUNION REGISTRATION & EVENTS	Price Per Person	Number Attending	Total
ADMINISTRATION FEES:	$ 50.00		
SUN: 09 OCT FREE DAY, ENJOY SAN ANTONIO	NOTE: PLEASE COMPLETE INFORMATION ON BACK PAGE FOR NAME TAGS & EMERGENCY INFORMATION		
MON:10 OCT FREE DAY ENJOY SAN ANTONIO			
TUES: 11 OCT: 10:00am To 5:00 pm Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Opens.			
WED: 12 OCT 10:00am To 5:00 pm Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Opens. 3:00 PM To 6:00 PM WELCOMING BBQ AT HOSPITALITY ROOM (OUTDOORS)	NO CHARGE		
THUR: 13 OCT Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Opens.10: 00am -5:00 PM 6:00PM 5:00 TILL ?? OUTDOOR BBQ AT VFW POST,MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT	10.00		
FRI: 14 OCT: 10:00am To 5:00pm Registration Opens Hospitality Opens			
SATURDAY 15 OCT 9:00 to 10:00am Memorial Service 10:00am to 12:00 Membership Meeting 10:00am to 12:00 Free Ladies Luncheon ANNUAL KSV BANQUET: 6:00 pm Cocktails 7:00 pm Dinner	$50.00		
SUNDAY 16 AUG HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME			

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: KSV ASSOCIATION

OFFICE USE ONLY
Check#_____Date Received_____

Name Tag Completed_____

Send Check, Money Order or Credit Card Information To:
The Khe Sanh Veterans/ Russell Turner
3168 Meadowfield Dr
Arnold, MO 63010

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

NAME ON CARD:	VISA	MASTER CARD	DISCOVER
CARD NUMBER:	OTHER	Note: Our Bank Does Not Accept AM/XPress	
EXPIRATION DATE:			
3 DIGIT CODE ON BACK OF CARD		Note: Address Must Be The One Card Issued To	
ADDRESS FOR CREDIT CARD:			
CITY:	STATE	ZIP	

NAME TAG INFORMATION PLEASE PRINT		
NAME:		
UNIT SERVED WITH:		
SPOUSE OR COMPANIONS NAME:		
OTHER GUEST (1)		
OTHER GUEST (2)		
OTHER GUEST (3)		
OTHER GUEST (4)		
OTHER GUEST (5)		
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	ST:	ZIP:
PHONE:	CELL PHONE:	
EMERGENCY CONTACT:		
EMAIL:		
SPECIAL NEEDS:		
EMAIL:		
ARRIVAL DATE:	DEPARTURE DATE:	
ARE YOU STAYING AT HOTEL: YES — NO CIRCLE ONE		
COMMENTS:		

2016-17 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER



GOOD LUCK

Catherine S. Akley
Sierra L. Bates
Noah B. Bissonnette
Nathan T. Carlson
Braden D. Cooper
Alexandria C. Frick
Samuel K. Geers
Emily A. Gess
Elizabeth L. Hennes
Jona S. Galindo-Juarez
Alexander M. Koppel
Hunter Freedom Lane
Shelley A. Lownds
Jeffrey C. Menard
Kyle M. Morrow
Madison H. Montague
McKinzie M. McElroy
McKinzie G. Murphy
Austin D. Neal
Melia B. Ortiz
Marshall E. Parker IV
Chris P. Rowland
Paige E. Schuller
Alias J. Starkovich
Amanda M. Velcheck



JUST ONE LETTER THAT DAN FISHER RECEIVES FROM OUR AWARDEES

I am so incredibly honored to have received this award and cannot thanks the KSV Scholarship Foundation enough for their selection. This award means so much to me, as Col. Dabney was my Grandfathers Colonel, and a man he very much admired and respected. More importantly, receiving this award meant everything to my Grandmother. You may never fully understand just how special it was for her to see the video of me opening the letter to find the scholarship inside. With my grandfather's recent passing, it felt like he had been taken away just before he would get to see any of his grandchildren graduate high school, and unfortunately I will never be able to watch the Texas Longhorns play a Thanksgiving Day game with him as an actual Longhorn. But because of this award, my grandfather is able to leave behind support that he cannot be here to physically pass on, and it means the world to my grandmother that they were able to help assist me in college through this scholarship opportunity. Thank you so much to Khe Sanh Veterans organization for this award and their service, God bless the United States Marines.

Nathan Carlson
University of Texas C/O 2020

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/Governing Year AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman 52ND
6050 52ND St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms. Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the Red Clay" Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David E. Lownds Award - for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award - for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award - for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited Institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY* 1 of the school year applied for.** *** **(This is an important, NEW change to previous** years)***

6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System !Maximum of 110 regular points or 125 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max =40 points max. (Please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

A GPA of 4.0 x 10 =40 points or a GPA of 3.0 x 10 =30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max =30 points total

Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Extra Curricular =10 points max.
Volunteer services =10 points max.
Leadership positions =10 points max.
Employment = 10 points max

c. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min. to 400 words max) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max.

Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments. Please review the six suggested adjectives below, select one or more that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

TENACIOUS- FAITHFUL -UNDAUNTED- STEADFAST- RESOLUTE- INNOVATIVE

.d. Bonus Points

10 bonus points for being a military veteran

5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application _____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name:Last _____ **First** _____ **MI** _____

Address: Street _____ **City** _____ **State** ___ **Zip** _____

Home phone: _____ **E-mail address:** _____

Applicant Birthdate: _____

.2 KSV Sponsor Information : (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran Inc. Regular or Life Member)

Name: Last, _____ **First** _____

Relationship to Applicant; _____

Branch of Service _____

Unit served at Khe Sanh _____ **Dates served there** _____

3. School Information: (School to be attending)

School Name: _____

School Address: Street _____ **City** _____

State _____ **Zip Code** _____

School Phone number: _____

Curriculum/intended course of study _____

School Year To be Funded _____

4. Applicant Personal History (Be Specific)

A. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Athletics, Publishing, Music, Art, Scouting, Communications, Academic Honors & Prizes, etc)

B. VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: (community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.) -

C. LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HELD IN A&B (Capacity, Class Officer, Committee Chairperson, etc)

D. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY– FULL & PART TIME Include Military Service If Applicable)

e. MAILING PACKET: (Due May 1ST)
Enclose THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS

***A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,**
***A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,**
***A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min. to 400 WORDS max.) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.**

!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!

I, SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

_____ _____

Signature Of Applicant **Actual Signature of Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent**

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY* 1ST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR APPLIED

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc Scholarship Committee

_____

Tom Eichler, President, Khe San Veterans

CHANGES KSV DIRECTORY

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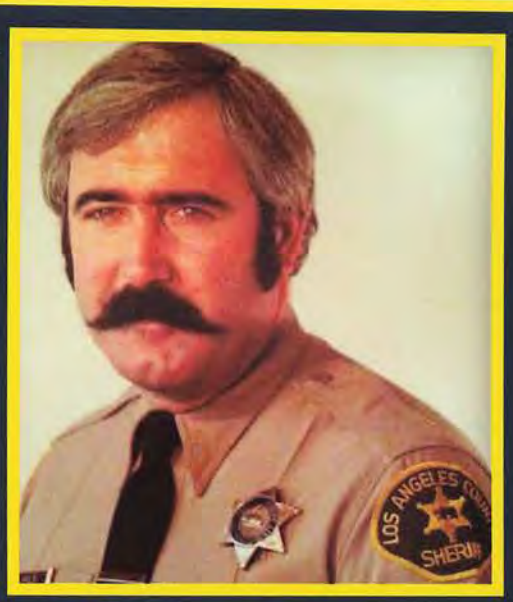



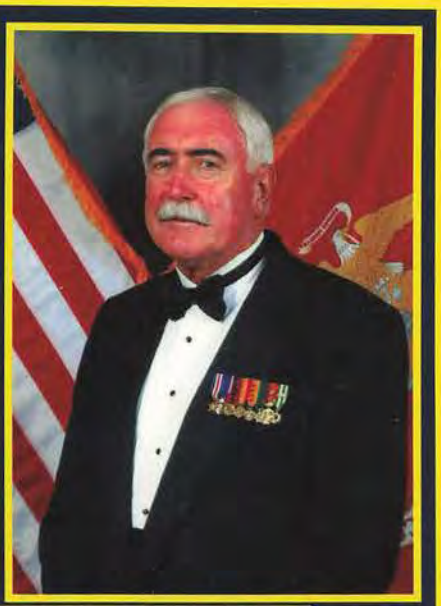



Several Khe Sanh Members at dinner the night before attending Jim Kaylor's Memorial Service at Camp Pendleton, including Col Ken Pipes and his wife Sharon.
Both Ken, and Steve Weiss spoke at Jim's Service.





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MERRY CHRISTMAS



HAPPY NEW YEAR



A BLAST FROM THE PAST 1942 MARINE JEEP FROM VIETNAM

HAPPY HOLIDAYS KHE SANH VETERANS

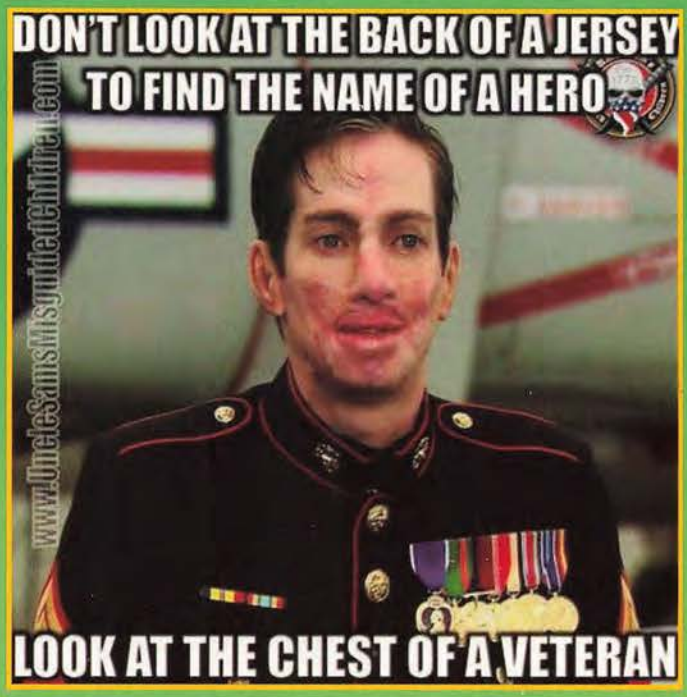

PERFECT VETERAN'S DAY PHOTO



BRUCE GEIGER, A BTRY 1/44th ARTY, "DUSTERS" AS HE DOES EVERY YEAR, REPRESENTED THE KHE SANH VETERANS WITH OUR WREATH LAYING CEREMONY AT THE VIETNAM MEMORIAL ON VETERANS DAY, WASHINGTON, DC.





BRUCE GEIGER & TOM FORD





KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

MERLYN MCFEE: A SURVIVOR OF KHE SANH

MERLYN L. MCFEE, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN H&S CO 1/26
Jim Offner the Courier

WATERLOO Not even a full year out of Independence High School, Merlyn McFee found himself in the middle of the Vietnam War, with the U.S. Marines.

During my senior year, I signed up; that summer, I was heading for the Marine Corps," McFee said.

That's when the lessons began. And, once McFee was in Vietnam, in January 1968, he found the enemy to be a pretty nasty teacher.



Those lessons got under way soon after McFee arrived, first at the Phu Bai Combat Base and, about a week later at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. It was during this time the North Vietnamese Army conducted a five-month siege of the base and surrounding outposts. NVA ground, artillery, mortar and rocket attacks pelted McFee's unit for 77 straight days, and it started at almost the exact time McFee arrived for his first day, where his job was cook but "technically" was infantryman.

First day on the job -- this is the interesting part," he said. "Get up early, go to the mess hall with your M -16. Wasn't an hour later, all hell broke loose. They said, 'incoming.' We head for the trenches and they just bombarded us with everything they could. "The area was engulfed in haze the whole day, he said.

"I'm in the Foxhole and their asking me, "where's your M-16" McFee said. His weapon was in the tent. I'm scared; I had no weapon.". "Everything slowed down at the end of the day and everybody got everything together. I got my M-16. It was not a pleasant day.

"McFee said he did not understand Khe Sanh's importance to the North Vietnamese; yet, they came at the base day after day. In three days, they had their own trenches. I don't know how many of them were out there," but it was spooky. "I was told their were 6,000 of us up there

A long siege can wear on a unit, McFee said, and he and his comrades could expect anything. You see a lot of weird stuff," he said. "You get sniped at. It's an eerie feeling. You know something happened, but you don't know what. Of course, you see others getting shot at. If there was a nightmare scenario to imagine in that war, McFee said he probably saw some version of it – friends getting hit in trenches, helicopters going down, regular bombardments"

"We're setting on a flat area and, on this side, there's mountains," he said. "There was a ravine on this side, which I didn't see until we flew out of there. When I first got there, it was all green. When we left, it was all orange, because of their ground, which was kind of that color

McFee's first mission in the field was Operation Scotland. Where we were I couldn't tell you, but it was hot," he said. "When we landed by the DMZ, for us, it got kind of hot. There was real tall grass and there was more rounds coming in. Shrapnel got the last guy in my squad. Then, we kind of marched

back and it started raining

McFee said patrols could be unnerving.

"Some areas are real thick," he said. "In fact, one time I almost came to shooting somebody. Our patrol came across something. We kind of sat there. through the thicket, I saw these two ARVNs . I'm scared to death. Then, I see an American with them. We were going through odd stuff. You can't see who is who.

"Sometimes, patrols had to navigate grass as tall as the soldiers, McFee said. Then, you run into thicket," he said. "Then you have open fields with grass and mounds and stuff like that. I didn't see anything on that operation."

The threat of death never seemed to abate, McFee said There are certain days you thought you were gonna die," he said" There was one night the Air Force saved us." There's no way to prepare for what might happen, McFee said. Jets would spray the ground; B-52s just rumbled, and you felt the vibrations," he said. "You slept in the trenches sometimes with your flak jacket. You just say whatever happens is gonna happen whatever you do; it's not a good feeling

When McFee and his unit weren't being bombarded, they were digging, he said. The normal thing was you knew it was coming, you did what you had to do," he said. "It almost was a safe environment because you knew what your mind was going through. Nothing was going on, but, of course, "you knew they were out there."

Other memories from Khe Sanh stand out, McFee said. "Taking showers in the rain, naked, and stuff like that," he said. "I got a Dear John letter over there and that didn't make me feel good. That was devastating at that point because you felt connected with this person



Boynton Beach Veteran Wants Dying Brother To Get On Honor Flight

By Eliot Kleinberg -
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

When the next Honor Flight departs, Andy Mayer hopes to make it a family affair.

He has plans to escort not just his father Robert, a World War II veteran, but brother Daniel, who was in Vietnam. It's a sad reason for this longtime military family: Daniel is dying of cancer.



Andy (from left), Robert and Daniel Mayer will travel from Palm Beach International Airport to Washington, D.C., on the next available Honor Flight. Photo courtesy Mayer family / Southeast Honor Flight

Since 2009, the nonprofit Stuart-based Southeast Florida Honor Flight, one of 133 such operations nationwide, has taken more than 2,100 veterans, free of charge, from Palm Beach International Airport to Washington and back.

Honor Flight operates solely on corporate and individual donations. Its four flights a year comprise a daylong trip to see the World War II Memorial, the Iwo Jima Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery.

The Mayers were scheduled to go out on Saturday, but the flight was canceled because of Hurricane Matthew. The flight was to have 56 Korean War veterans, along with 25 from World War II. The oldest vet who planned to go on the flight was 99. The youngest would have been Daniel, 68. Priorities are World War II veterans and anyone with a terminal disease.

Andy, who lives in suburban Boynton Beach, had

seen news coverage of past flights, and worked to arrange for his dad, who lives in northern Broward County, and Daniel, who's still working at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, to go.

But he was told flights were booked up; the earliest opening was April 2017. Andy explained to organizers his concerns about his dad, 89, and his brother, fighting cancer.

"Time is of the essence, I guess you could say," he told The Palm Beach Post last week. Before Hurricane Matthew struck, space had been found.

Honor Flight Chair Todd Tucker "came back and he's, 'Hey. We made some adjustments. You're good to go for October,'" Andy said. As of press time, it was uncertain when the next flight will be scheduled.



Robert Mayer and sons Daniel (left) and Andy. Photo courtesy Mayer family / Southeast Honor Flight

Tucker said in a release before the cancellation that "when this special situation came to my attention, and especially in light of Daniel's exemplary military career, I knew we had to make it happen."

Daniel Mayer was a Marine from 1966 to 1968, and was in the Battle of Khe Sanh. He says he had helicopters shot down from under him a few times and was shot twice. He received two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star. He later went back in with Army Special Forces — the Green Berets, he said last week from Tampa.



Daniel Mayer was a Marine from 1966 to 1968 Photo courtesy Mayer family / Southeast Honor Flight

Daniel would work in Special Forces until he retired in 2003; he then stayed on as a civilian at MacDill. Now 68, he's married with two grown children.

In April 2015, he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. He had surgery as recently as August, and continues to undergo treatment.

Andy, now 60, served in the Air Force from 1976 to 1980, working search-and-rescue helicopters in sites that included Turkey, Guyana and Nicaragua. Now a civilian consultant, he's also married with two grown children.

During World War II, Robert Allen Mayer's father didn't want him to join and wouldn't grant permission. So Robert waited until he turned 17, then enlisted in the Navy. He served aboard the USS Mary-

land from 1945 to 1947.

His ship spent the immediate postwar period ferrying men from Pearl Harbor back to the U.S. west coast.

"They called it 'the magic carpet ride,'" Robert said last week from his Deerfield Beach home. He said he might have missed action, but he heard plenty of hair-raising stories from men whose ships had been hit by Japanese torpedoes and even Kamikaze suicide planes.



World War II-era photo of Robert Mayer. Mayer Photo courtesy Mayer family / Southeast Honor Flight

After the war, Robert worked for decades on the presses at the Columbus Dispatch newspaper in the Ohio capital. He retired to South Florida in 1978.
He says he did not push his sons into the military, and in fact tried to dissuade Daniel from joining the Marines.

"I said, 'You gotta be nuts.' I couldn't talk him out of it," Robert recalled. Whenever the flight is rescheduled, Robert hopes his day of honor with his two sons to be "very special." Daniel's and Andy's mom died at 55 around 1982, their sister at 49 around 2002. Both from cancer. Andy said he doesn't suspect heredity. If anything, he said, there's a chance Agent Orange contributed to Daniel's cancer. But, he said, "my brother won't go there. He says 'it is what it is.'"

MORE KSV IN THE NEWS
Dialogues Show War Through Veterans' Eyes

Rebecca Burylo , Montgomery Advertiser

WETUMPKA — Marine veteran Jerry Duncan spent 77 days in a foxhole in Vietnam. Outnumbered and surrounded he was bombarded by enemy mortar shells and artillery and lived to tell about it.



JERRY DUNCAN

He talked freely about the horror he lived through to a group gathered in an Elmore County museum.

About 20 people sat in a circle Tuesday night, blending with the rich history around them as they shared personal stories of war and death. They, like the items around them, revealed well-worn snapshots of history, moments of past wars that they lived first-hand.

This past week was the second in a series called Dialogues on the Experience of War inviting people with former or active military backgrounds, spouses and relatives of veterans gathered to discover and discuss stories of service from World War I and the Vietnam War and how it correlates to their own stories of service.

Duncan arrived in Vietnam to serve in the war in 1967. He remembers the stench at Khe Sanh was



"unbearable."

The stress and fear of war was even more so for some of his fellow Marines. One man stood up and yelled, "Kill me, kill me!" A bullet struck him dead. Duncan hunkered even lower in the foxhole hoping that was not his fate. To say he wasn't scared is a lie.

"War changes you. You think it's going to be glorious and fantastic and you'll go home with a chest full of medals," Duncan said. "It's not what you think. You're priorities in life change. Being warm and having three meals a day doesn't matter. You were there to survive."

Duncan left Vietnam after two tours in 1969. He was wounded and flown out after taking machine gun rounds to the back of his shoulder. He spent a year in a hospital to recover.

Dialogues on the Experience of War is a series of meetings that will go until March and will discuss a total of four books and two films. The group went over several short historic nonfiction that showed a particular aspect of war. Duncan related his story to that of "Rosa," a story of a French soldier who was overcome by the stress and fear of war and shot himself as a way to escape.

It was previously reported that 22 veterans commit suicide each day and is one of the leading causes of death among those in the military. However, new data provided by the U.S. Veteran Affairs for 2014 show 20 veterans kill themselves daily.

Maria Church is a military spouse. Her husband is currently stationed at Maxwell Air Force Base and has been deployed 10 times. She understands there is a strong connection between the military and mental health.

"War can sometimes be the trigger for those thoughts of suicide," Church said. "That's why the military has so much mental health training and suicide prevention courses."

Those thoughts are the same no matter what war a person has fought in Duncan said. "War is war."
"I have the same feelings I had 45 years ago and they have the same today whether it's Saudi Arabia or Iran," Duncan said.

OBIT

JAIME VAZQUEZ, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, DELTA CO 1/1

Jaime Vazquez, the former Jersey City councilman and longtime voice for the city's Latino and veterans



The 19th annual Memorial Day Commemoration to honor the young men from Jersey City who died as a result of the Vietnam War and those who died from war related causes after they returned home took place at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Pershing Field in Jersey City on Monday, May 25, 2015. Pictured: Vietnam Veteran Jaime Vazquez, 65, of Jersey City. Michael Dempsey | The Jersey Journal

communities, died of a massive heart attack late last night. He was 67.

Vazquez is being remembered as a fighter for his constituents, a war hero and an unabashed social

liberal. He was elected to represent Downtown on the City Council in 1985 and remained in the seat for 12 years.

"He was the Puerto Rican/Latino leader of the '60s, '70s and '80s, when Downtown was burning," said Councilman-at-large Daniel Rivera. "The guy was a true advocate."

Vazquez's death came the night before he was set to be honored along with four other Latino ex-council members at tonight's City Council meeting.

A U.S. Marine who fought in the Vietnam War as part of Delta Company, First Battalion, First Marine Regiment, Vazquez received a Purple Heart for injuries he suffered when a grenade exploded near him in Khe Sanh, according to his brother Carlos. He still walked around with pieces of shrapnel embedded in his leg.

Vazquez, who lived on Pacific Avenue with his mother, was the oldest of seven children. Carlos told The Jersey Journal that Vazquez was a "leader" even as a child.

"He was a rebel," Carlos said.

Vazquez's rebel streak never abated.

He quit as a deputy mayor under Bret Schundler in 1999 after firing off a letter to Schundler calling him "an extremist and a nut." At the time Schundler said he was surprised by the letter and called it "hysterical" in tone.

In 2006, he and controversial radio host Hal Turner scuffled after Vazquez protested outside Turner's home holding a sign calling the radio host a racist, bigot and coward. Vazquez said he broke his wrist after Turner pushed him into the street. The two men filed dueling assault claims that a municipal judge later dismissed.

Vazquez suffered a heart attack and died just before midnight on his way to Jersey City Medical Center, Carlos said. He is survived by his mother, five siblings — Carlos, Jose, Linda, Raymond, Zaida and Ricardo — and three children, Cynthia, Jaime and Anthony.

Freeholder Bill O'Dea served with Vazquez on the council from 1985 to 1993. O'Dea remembers Vazquez arguing passionately from the dais about issues that were never under the city's control, like nuclear disarmament or gun control (his title in the Schundler administration was deputy mayor of international affairs and economic development).

In the late '80s, O'Dea said, Vazquez collected several hundred dollars' worth of toy guns and had them crushed by a steamroller behind City Hall as his young son watched. Vazquez's son was not happy to watch the toys be destroyed, but his father wanted to make a point, O'Dea said.

"That was how Jaime was able to convey a message of how those toy guns ultimately created a mentality that could lead to more violent behavior as someone got older," he said. "He'll be missed."

City Clerk Robert Byrne, who has worked with dozens of council members during his time as clerk, said Vazquez "set the bar pretty high." Being a councilman, Byrne said, "was his only gig."

"That's what he did," he said. "When anyone walked in, he never asked what their address was or what ward they lived in."

In 2001, Vazquez became the head of the newly created city department of veterans affairs. He held the position for more than a decade, and he was a regular at city events honoring veterans, wearing his military cap and medals pinned to his jacket.

"The best way to describe Jaime was our Marine Corps mantra of Semper Fidelis, which means always faithful," Mayor Steve Fulop, a former Downtown councilman himself, said in a statement. "Jaime was a special kind of leader and fighter. He always put his whole heart into every issue, never backing down when he saw an injustice or a cause he believed in. He will be missed greatly by everyone who knew him."

The pride Vazquez felt in his military service is evident in a 1999 letter he wrote to The Jersey Journal and addressed to a fellow U.S. Marine killed in action in Vietnam in 1968.

"Keep an eye on us from your lofty porch,"

Vazquez wrote to the man. "We could always use the help of a good Guardian Angel. We will get to meet again, when we meet at Jesus's feet. Until then Semper Fi."

OBIT

JOHN J. KELLY, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN AND ACTIVIST

By Bryan Marquard Globe Staff
September 24, 2016

John J. Kelly's lifelong determination to help others



Mr. Kelly paused at the grave of Charles Greenwood in Hyde Park's Fairview Cemetery at the end of a ceremony.

was apparent the first time he was injured in Vietnam and in the decades that followed when he advocated for fellow veterans in Massachusetts.

"The first time I was wounded, all I can remember is that my buddy George and I were in a foxhole behind two radio guys. Suddenly, it was like someone set off a giant firecracker in my face," he told the Globe in 1990. The radio operators died, his buddy was injured, and "I got a piece of shrapnel imbedded above my left eye," he added.

Some might have tried to turn that experience into their last battle. Not Marine Lance Corporal Kelly: "I spent the night in a hospital and returned to Khe Sanh."

He was 18 when a bullet paralyzed him in 1968 during the Vietnam War, and he spent the rest of his life offering a personal example of how to live without regrets. "He never complained about his injuries in the war," his brother-in-law George Rohlfing of Quincy said. "He always said that if he could walk again, he would enlist in the Marines again and go right back in."

Mr. Kelly, a longtime mainstay of veterans programs in Greater Boston, died Sept. 11 in the VA Medical Center in West Roxbury as his body failed after the lifelong wear from injuries he suffered. He was 67 and lived in Hyde Park.

"I remember him because he was a quiet hero as far as I was concerned," said Raymond L. Flynn, who was Boston's mayor when he shared a stage with Mr. Kelly in 1984 to announce the conversion of a vacant Roslindale school into a multiservice center for Vietnam veterans.

"Jack was a real hero. He didn't talk about what he did. He talked about the sacrifices that so many young people made there," Flynn said. "For all that he went through, and the sacrifice he made for our country, he was so quiet and unassuming. He never bragged about it; he never complained."

Mr. Kelly and a veteran friend had came up with the idea of turning the school into a place for Vietnam veterans. The center, he recalled at the 1984 ceremony, "is going to be all the things Vietnam veterans have needed, but never had. Things like vocational training and job placement and counseling. But most of all, it's going to mean recognition for the service Vietnam vets rendered the country."

"We never got it before because almost everyone who hated the war thought he had to hate the warriors," Mr. Kelly added, "but no more."

John J. Kelly Jr. wanted to be a warrior when he was growing up in Boston, the second of 13 children. His mother was the former Mary MacNeil. His father, John Sr., was in the painters' union.

"The thing with Johnny is he was pretty athletic as a kid," said his brother Jim, a retired Army sergeant major who lives in Stoughton and teaches at the Community Academy of Science and Health in Dorchester.

"He quit Hyde Park High School and joined the Marine Corps because he thought it was the right thing to do," Jim said. "People in 1966 were trying to get out of the war. He was trying to get in."

Only 17 when he enlisted, Mr. Kelly had turned 18 by the time he served in South Vietnam with the 26th Marine Regiment during the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh, which began in January 1968.

"After John survived Khe Sanh, he had an unbelievable respect for life," his brother said.

The bullet that paralyzed Mr. Kelly was fired while his company was awaiting transport for some much needed R&R, he recalled in the 1990 interview.

"It's impossible for me to relate exactly what happened," said Mr. Kelly, who didn't regain consciousness until many days after he was shot. "I only remember that there was a firefight that night, May 5th. One of our guys went berserk and was waving around a revolver. I remember reaching for him. A lot of us were reaching out to try to control him. Then, boom, his gun went off and I was hit."

Along with the Purple Heart for his earlier head wound, Mr. Kelly's many decorations include the Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, and Vietnam Service Medal, his family said. When Mr. Kelly returned to the United States, he initially was a quadriplegic until the swelling from the injuries subsided and feeling returned to part of his body, leaving him a paraplegic. "He was not sad, he was not depressed, he was just ecstatic to be alive, and he made a vow to himself that he was going to live life to the fullest," Jim said.

Mr. Kelly was a Boston police dispatcher until complications from his injuries curtailed his working life. He also ran unsuccessfully for state representative and coached sports. "He was a very giving person," his brother-in-law George said. "He always tried to help the community. He would be pushing people out of the way to help someone in need."

Using his sharp humor, Mr. Kelly liked to put at ease those unaccustomed to spending time with someone in a wheelchair. With football players, "He'd always say, 'Put the ball down; I'll show you how to kick it,' " his brother said. "He'd grab his leg and wave his foot around as if he was going to kick it, then he'd say, 'Oh, I can't do it. The pension guy is here.' "

At other times, Jim said, "Kids would ask him, 'Can you walk?' And he'd say, 'Yes, but I'm too rich to walk.' "

Mr. Kelly was at a party in 1972 when Jacqueline Rohlfing, who is known as Candy, walked past with one of his sisters.

"I thought she was pretty. I asked her if she wanted a Coke. She said yeah and we began to talk," Mr. Kelly said in 1990, adding: "I knew I was in love with her from the start." They married in 1976.

"He was an awesome husband," said Candy's brother George. "They were inseparable."

A service has been held for Mr. Kelly, who in addition to his wife and brother leaves three other brothers, Michael of West Roxbury, Stanley of Avon, and Daniel of Norwood; and three sisters, Peggy Mitchell of Las Cruces, N.M., and Julia Kuhn and Gail Faria, both of Stoughton.

Though Mr. Kelly was known for his courage, "Candy is the hero behind that guy," his brother Jim said. "I remember having these conversations with him and saying, 'You're truly a lucky guy.' He was lucky on a number of counts. To survive the war and to have someone like her? He was truly blessed."

And Mr. Kelly was never bitter. "Listen, I enlisted. I did the best I could," he said in 1990. "Had I been drafted, it might be a different story. But I enlisted. I'm a survivor. I'm a Marine. And I have Candy here."

OBIT

ROGER A. BULLEIGH – SERGEANT, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
MASS-3, MACG-18, 1st MAW, FMF Pac

Roger Bulleigh, age 69, passed away in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on Sunday, March 13th, 2016, surrounded by his large family. Roger was born on November 4th 1946, in Greeley, Colorado, and grew up there with his parents, Donald and Betty Bulleigh, his older sister Sharon, his twin sister Rita, and his little sister Janice. In his early teens they moved to Midland, Texas, where he graduated from high school in 1964. He joined the Marines on June 1st, 1964, and served until May 27th, 1968, spending two tours in Vietnam using his training in electronics, communications, radar and aviation fire control. He was present at the entire siege at Khe Sanh, from the beginning until the siege was lifted, he and his buddies maintaining the radar and calling in close air support.



Following his discharge, he lived in California for a brief time. He moved to Tulsa in 1969, where he met and married Juli Braunlich. He was the beloved father of nine children: Connie Caple, Aaron (Jacqueline) Bulleigh, Phyllis (Sean) McComb, Marla (Bradley) Hart, Joel (Kimberly) Bulleigh, Stephen (Alicia) Bulleigh, Adam (Jeannine) Bulleigh, Nathan (Jessica) Bulleigh, and Natalie (Soren) Michaelsen.

Roger was preceded in death by his parents and his father-in-law, Frank Braunlich, Jr. He is survived

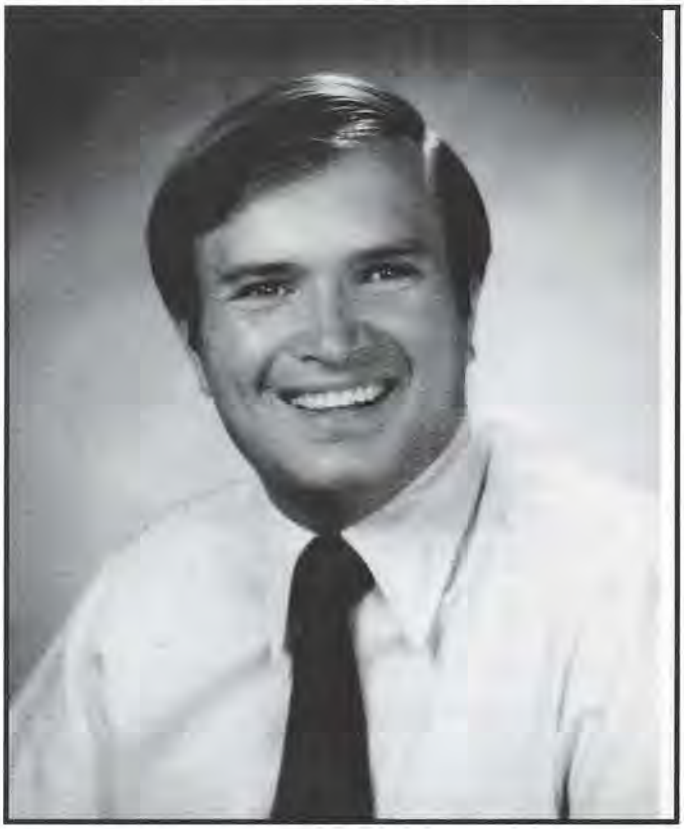

by his wife and children, his mother-in-law Phyllis Braunlich, sisters Sharon Herries, Rita Worley and Janice (Thomas) Gilbert, sisters-in-law Beverly Braunlich and Anita Long, and brother-in-law Thomas Braunlich, as well as his grandchildren: Blake (Michelle) Maggia; Lacy James; Joshua (Megan) Caple; Hadley, Brigette and Brandon Bulleigh; Evan, Julianna and Brigham McComb; Sophie and Chloe Hart; Raegan, Tyler, Claire and No lan Bulleigh; Thomas, Jillian, Elizabeth and Kathryn Bulleigh; Allen, Dahlia, Luke and Oliver Bulleigh; Pierce, Lauren and Lincoln Bulleigh; and Owen, Carter and Elise Michaelsen; and his great-grandchildren: Adriana and Brantley Maggia; Logan and Skylynn James; Triston Jacomine, and Madison Caple.

Roger was retired after 30 years of employment as an industrial electrician at the Ford Motor Company Tulsa Glass Plant and was an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was also a lifetime member of Disabled American Veterans.

A memorial service was held at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, on March 25th, 2016, followed by graveside service and burial with military honors later that same day at Fort Gibson National Cemetery in Fort Gibson, Oklahoma. There is an obituary page with a family video of old movies available at KennedyCares.com. Although his family will miss him immeasurably, we are relieved that his suffering has ended and we look forward to the day we can be reunited with him in love.

MORE KSV IN THE NEWS

JOHN BLAIR INDUCTED INTO THE GEORGIA MILITARY VETERANS' HALL OF FAME

JOHN BLAIR, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN INDIA CO 3/4

October 18, 2016 by Valerie Villarreal

Longtime APRO member, rent-to-own veteran and RTO-industry vendor John Blair will be inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame in November. He was one of only 17—out of 106 nominees—to be selected for the honor this year. Prior to this year's inductees, there were only 49 other veterans in this prestigious group.

Blair, vice president of sales for PTS Direct Benefits & Tax Service, received the Hall of Fame honor for his service in the U.S. Marine Corp during what many consider one of the most harrowing periods of the Vietnam War. He served in the battle of Khe Sanh, for which he earned the prestigious Silver Star.

According to the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame board of directors, the evaluation and selection process for the Hall of Honor "was done in total secrecy and absolutely void of any outside influence. [Blair's] sterling active duty record and post



military life served [him] well and gained for [him] this rare and noble honor." Recipients are awarded based on one of three categories: valor, achievement and service. Blair was honored for his valor during the Hall of Fame induction ceremony on November 5 in Columbus, Georgia.

In 1968, Blair was a member of the Third Battalion, Fourth Marines, India Co. stationed in Vietnam. APRO Executive Director Bill Keese was honored to be a spectator at a reunion of that company in 2006. One of Blair's Marine buddies told Keese, "I would follow John through hell—and I did. He got us out of that mess alive!" Others at the reunion agreed that Blair is a true hero. In an unpopular war, one in which many sought to avoid service, Blair reported for duty.

During the war's dramatic Tet Offensive, Blair's platoon came under heavy fire from a large North Vietnamese force. Blair, serving as squad leader, and his men were pinned down, but he didn't hesitate to maneuver his squad forward and launch an assault on the enemy. He was awarded the Silver Star for his leadership and for disregarding his own safety that day. After being promoted to sergeant later that year, Blair was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal.





OBIT

MICHAEL HOWARD HASSICK, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN

ONEONTA – Michael Howard Hassick, 68, of Oneonta, a Marine and decorated Vietnam War veteran, passed away Sunday, Oct. 16, 2016, at Bassett Hospital.

He was born on May 17, 1948 in Hancock, the son



MICHAEL H. HASSICK

of Arvilla (Hassick) Jordan and Robert W Jordan. He graduated from Oneonta High School in 1966.

Michael served with the Marine Corps from 1967 to 1970. He was on Hill 881S during the siege of Khe Sanh in 1968, where he earned two Purple Hearts.

He was a life time member of the DVA, Military Order of the Purple Heart. Also a member of the VFW and American Legion.

He married his wife, Rose, on Aug. 20, 1971, in Milford Center. She predeceased him in 2015. Michael was employed by Osterhoudt Commercial Refrigeration for 35 years.

He is survived by his sons, Robert (Janine) Hassick of Canajoharie and Brian (Kristina) Hassick of Milford; four grandchildren, Kyle, Marina, Logan and Josh; sister Christina (Daniel) Hromada, David (Gina) Hassick, Robin (Peter) Conte; in addition to his wife, he was predeceased by both his parents and his oldest sister, Patricia Kelsey.

The funeral was held at 11 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 20, also at Grummons. Burial with full military honors took take place in Glenwood Cemetery, Oneonta.
In lieu of flowers please feel free to donate to the American Diabetes Association or Oneonta American Legion.:

KSV STILL MAKING NEWS

WELCOME HOME: Town's former DPW director put engineering skills to good use in Vietnam

LEIGHTON F. "LEE" PECK USN KHE SANH VETERAN "SEABEES" CBMU-301

Former Plymouth DPW Director Lee Peck served with the U.S. Navy's Fighting Seabees in Vietnam from April 1968 to April 1969.

By Rich Harbert
rharbert@wickedlocal.com

PLYMOUTH – Leighton "Lee" Peck ran Plymouth's public works department for nearly two decades, but most people probably never knew he got his nickname in Vietnam.

Many probably never even knew he served in the war. It's a memory Peck rarely allows himself to visit.

Named Leighton for his father, a former Falmouth fire chief, Peck was known as "Junior" or "Chief" growing up on the Cape. His nickname changed forever to Lee while Peck served with the Navy in Vietnam in 1968 and 1969.

A heavy equipment operator for the Fighting Seabees, Peck would spend Sundays volunteering, us-

ing his civil engineering skills to help villagers with public works projects.

"It seemed like every kid over there was named Ly, so that's what they called me. They couldn't pronounce my name. The name 'Lee' came from Nam," Peck said.

A 1964 graduate of Lawrence High School in Falmouth, Peck earned an associate's degree in civil



Lee Peck, Plymouths Former Public Works Director displays the Dog Tags he wore while serving in Vietnam from April 1968 to April 1969

engineering at Wentworth Institute in 1966. He enlisted in the Navy later that same year, with the understanding that he would be able to put his skills to good use in the Seabees.

Peck spent his first year building a golf course on Midway Island. Work took a more serious turn when he landed in Da Nang in April 1968.

Assigned to the maintenance unit of a construction battalion, Peck found himself in demand because of his ability to operate heavy equipment.

Licensed to run cranes, bulldozers and earth movers, Peck spent months working on public works projects that years later, in peacetime, would become his life's work.



Lee Peck's abilities as a heavy equipment operator were in high demand in Vietnam. Lee spent most of the war at the controls of a heavy duty crane, like this one he mans at

"It was kind of a natural with my engineering degree. We did drainage and road projects. Not everyone understood about grades," Peck said.

Based out of Dong Ha, about eight miles south of the demilitarized zone, Peck spent four or five months alone assigned to a giant crane.



Lee Peck at a USO show at Dong Ha

"Once you're assigned to something like that, you are the only one who runs it," he said. "So if they need to go 24 hours a day, you do that. If the machine was needed somewhere, you go with it."
Peck primarily used the machine to offload supplies



Lee Peck, Plymouth's Public Works Director, Served with Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit CBMU-301 in Vietnam

for the troops, but as the enemy shelling of Dong Ha intensified, commanders decided to move operations farther from the border and used Peck's crane to lift huts onto trucks for the move south.
Peck's ability to operate heavy equipment landed



Lee, 3rd From Right looking at camera, unites with his Seabee unit in 2006

him in Khe Sanh after the 11-week siege of the outpost ended in March 1968.

Peck's outfit was called in to help clean up the mess and dismantle the base.

The Seabees pulled up the aluminum airstrip and



Lee Peck remembers fellow Falmouth native Eddie Mello, during a visit to the Vietnam Veterans memorial. Six men from Falmouth were KIA in action during the Vietnam War.

bulldozed bunkers in advance of the evacuation, all under harassing fire. "I buried a C-130 (airplane) there so the enemy couldn't get it, because we couldn't get it out of there. They blew the wings off it and we buried it. We did take a couple of engines but the idea was to destroy everything. All the bunkers, everything was blown up and filled in before we left," Peck said. "It was heart breaking to think we were there defending the place and then we blow it up."

By day, most Marines at the garrison stayed underground in bunkers while the Seabees did their work. At night, the Seabees would join Marines in protecting the base from attack.

"Up at Khe Sanh, every night we were on red alert, everyone was in the trenches," Peck said. "Outside the wire you could see where the enemy was digging trenches to try to get to you. There were rats out there as big as cats, supposedly because they were eating the dead NVA."

Thinking about it nearly 50 years later stills takes a toll on a man who went into the service with a goal

of being constructive.

"Taking someone's life is not normal. I'm a kind soul. I like people. It's not me," Peck said. "But sometimes you're in a situation where you don't have much choice. It's either you or him."

Peck returned home in April 1969 and built on his public works experience. He earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering on the G.I. Bill, started a family and went to work.

He served as superintendent of public works in Carver and Middleborough before taking over as director in Plymouth in 1986. He retired in 2003, but continues to work as a consultant.

Peck said he hasn't talked about the war, even to his children, since his return from Vietnam. He kept his dog tags and the attached P-38 can opener, but threw away most of his gear and photos.

A publication chronicling his Seabee unit's work in Vietnam offers the only glimpse of his service. Photos show Peck at the controls of his crane, not on guard in a trench.

"I went over there to do a job and did it the best I could," Peck said. "It makes you think about life and how precious it is. I always think how fortunate I was to come back physically and mentally undamaged."

MONOGRAPH BY "JOHNNY JAMES"

All names shown in quotation marks are fictitious. All pictures in this monograph are the property of the author and are used with his permission.

I graduated from a school where the graduates are expected not just attend college, but to excel in college. A Jesuit school, it limits enrollment to have smaller classes and attracts many of the brightest students in the area. (In my class, there was a descendent of one of the "robber barons" of the 1900s.) Of the graduates in the class of 1966, I believe I am the only one who did not go directly to college. About a week after graduation, on June 23, 1966, I was standing on the yellow footprints at Parris Island Recruit Depot I would be honorably discharged from the Marine Corps a little over six years later, on July 14,1972 - Bastille Day.

Upon completion of boot camp and training at Camp Lejeune, I was selected to attend avionics school at the Naval Air Station in Memphis, Tennessee. My hope was that I would get enough training in the Marine Corps that I could pursue a good-paying job upon discharge. During the course of avionics training, I" Sammy Sosa" (a friend and fellow Marine) and I decided that all we would learn from this training would be how to pull black boxes from airplanes. We were both looking at getting more advanced skills- skills that we could market after our time in the Marine Corps. We both decided to apply for training as ground control approach radar technicians - MOS 5951.

Classes for this MOS were held every six weeks and only a very limited number of people were accepted. One enticement to become a GCA tech was that, with this MOS, you would be entitled to what the Marine Corps called "shortage specialty pay", or what we called "proficiency pay". This was extra money paid monthly to retain people who had specialized skills that were in high demand in the Marine Corps. There were three levels of proficiency pay and MOS 5951 - GCA radar technician - was at the highest. But there was also a price to pay for attending this school- you had to extend your original four-year enlistment by two years. "Sammy" and I decided to go for it together. (While we were taking the oath to extend our enlistment by two years, I kept hearing a song by Johnny Rivers in my brain- "I Cast My Fate to the Winds".)

The school was in Glynco, Georgia, and if I remember correctly, there were six Marines and a few sailors that completed the training and were certified as GCA technicians in October 1966. Upon graduation, I was assigned to Marine Corps Air Station Quantico, Virginia. I was promptly assigned to guard duty and, in a gesture that the late Senator Specter would appreciate, I was given a single bullet and a rifle and told to protect the few planes and helicopters that were stationed at Quantico. Fortunately, my stay at Quantico was brief and I was given orders for Vietnam in mid-November.

I arrived at Da Nang on December 23, 1966. I was in Phu Bai the next day and had the worst Christmas in my life-I was kind of nonperson, isolated and alone in the Transient Barracks. During processing at Phu Bai, I was issued a rifle that had been fired so many times that it was blue. (The armorer had to pull the trigger three times to get it to fire.) The armorer told me that it was better than nothing and that I would need it where I was going. I hopped on an H-34, "a shuddering shit-house", and arrived at Dong Ha on December 28. I have two memories of that flight. The first was a fear that my seabag would fly out the open door when the pilot banked the chopper. My second memory is of the crew chief/door gunner pulling a wrench from his pocket and tightening up several connections while we



H-34 (Shuttering Shithouse) from HMM-163 "Flyng Eyes" at Khe Sanh. Note loading of stretcher cases: also note debris front left and sea bags on right.

were in the air. The flight left me quite a distance away from MATCU-62 and I walked past a lot of tents in which six-foot- long trenches had been dug next to the sleeping cots. This would allow a person to roll directly from the cot into the trench. When I finally got to MATCU-62, the first person I ran into was a radar technician bundled up in a field jacket with a large loaf of either French or Italian bread sticking from his pocket. The sergeant pointed me to where the living quarters were and I started my trek from the airfield to the MATCU 62 area. (The sergeant, I believe, was sent back to the states in the next few days with combat exhaustion.) During my walk to the living area, I came across some ghostly reminders of what had happened at Dong Ha, on September 3, 1967. The Marines had moved a helicopter squadron up to Dong Ha to improve support to the troops along the DMZ. The choppers- -CH 46s--were parked in revetments just north of the MATCU 62 living area.

On September 3, 1967, an artillery attack hit the Dong Ha ammunition dump. The helicopter squadron was decimated. Now, as I walked past, all that was left were the burned-in outlines of where those choppers were destroyed. My next stop was the MATCU 62 living area. MATCU 62, which-except for short stays at other locations-would be my home until August 1969. More precisely, MATCU 62 Dong Ha would be my home-Khe Sanh was too deadly a place to ever be called "home". I was a 19-year-old lance corporal (probably the lowest ranking person in the Marine Corps with my MOS) with little field experience, a peasant boy from the big city stationed in an area which would soon become the focus of the Vietnam War.

Before I go into detail about my experiences in Vietnam, it is important that you know about "the lights". I've often thought of life as rows of brightly colored lights planted in our bodies. Red lights, green lights, yellow lights, white lights, orange lights, blue lights every color of light that you could imagine. When we are born, all of these lights are as bright as can be. As we go through life, some of the lights dim, some of them burn out. Certain experiences, such as having a child, would make the lights shine brightly. Other experiences - and you can name them for yourselves - would dim the lights and sometimes burn them out entirely. In Vietnam, as in all wars, to survive, I believe, you had to control which of these lights are on and how bright they would be. To do this, you had to, in essence, numb yourself, closing off certain experiences from fully registering in your brain. Psychic numbing is what I believe the professionals call it. If the lights were too bright all or most of the time, you would go mad. After all, how could you continually ingest the madness that is war-the organized mass killing of strangers by strangers- without going mad? There was also danger if the lights were too dim - the danger of becoming a stone cold killer, impervious to the feelings of both yourself and others. To survive, you had to keep the lights functioning at a level that made you recognize the danger, yet not paralyze you with fear. If you could achieve that equilibrium, you would be able to perform your duties, while

maintaining your humanity as the madness continually tried to engulf you. The key to survival as a human being was to keep some lights on brightly and to keep other lights dimmed.

I got lucky that first day at Dong Ha. The hooch I was assigned to was the northernmost one, the one closest to the area where the Marine helicopter squadron was destroyed on September 3. Because of the devastation caused by that attack, an underground bunker with bunk beds and a wooden floor was built next to the hooch. It was the only one of its kind in the compound. It was the safest place in all of MATCU 62's living area. It was a place where Marines who lived in other hooches would crowd into during barrages. But I was lucky because, in addition to having an underground bunker, the hooch was also home to a number of memorable people. There was a lively, full-of- life radio tech who made everyone feel at home. There was a veteran controller who everybody respected. And there was me and Sgt. Mac, who, like me, was a "Nicky New Guy".

Dong Ha received its share of shelling during January and February 1968. The barrages were regular enough that you either slept in your flak jacket or in a location or position where you were half of a body roll away from putting your flak jacket on. I



This bunker was constructed next to my hooch. Bunks were built in the bunker so everyone in my hooch could sleep in the bunker.

remember my first artillery barrage, both Sergeant Mac and I were slow in getting from the hooch to the bunker. We were told about it in no uncertain terms by others in the hooch who had lived through September 3.

I was comfortable and confident in my work at Dong Ha, as the equipment I worked on (TPN-8) was the same that I had trained on. Although we had heard that the NVA were planning to attack Dong Ha (The Battle of Dai Do) and, although we were taking incoming on a fairly regular basis, the attention of the whole unit was focused on Khe Sanh.

We heard about the NVA using tanks and there were even rumors of North Vietnamese jets in the area. But it was the casualties that told us what was happening at Khe Sanh. Captain Flahive was killed and Sgt. Mac was seriously wounded when a piece of shrapnel went through his jaw. Soon enough, there were enough casualties that it was evident that another 5951 would have to go to Khe Sanh. The only 5951s left in our outfit were a senior enlisted man - a master sergeant I think - and me. I went into the master sergeant's office and told him, "It's my turn to go." Obviously, the people in charge were hesitant about sending me to Khe Sanh, where keeping the GCA radar operating was Priority 00. After all, I was a 19-year-old lance corporal with little field experience and GCA operations were vital in the resupply effort at Khe Sanh. Shortly after my visit with the master sergeant, it was decided that I would go to Khe Sanh, but another, more experienced, 5951 from Chu Lai would also be assigned as my backup.

Everyone knew how dangerous it was getting into and out of Khe Sanh. Helicopters were called "mortar magnets" because of the incoming fire they attracted. For that reason, the 5951 from Chu Lai and I would go to Khe Sanh on separate helicopters. I was the only passenger on the CH 46 that brought me to Khe Sanh. The crew chief explained that the chopper was also carrying an external load, an artillery piece, and that, so as to not attract incoming, the chopper would drop off the artillery piece, and then gain altitude. Hopefully, by gaining altitude, the NVA gunners would be fooled into thinking that there were no passengers on board for them to fire at. The crew chief explained that then the chopper

would descend rapidly with just the back wheels touching the ground. He would then partially lower the ramp and give me the sign to disembark. That's how I entered Khe Sanh - stumbling off the ramp, burdened down with not just my equipment but with replacement cable. Oh yeah, the deception worked-there was no incoming.

When I reached the MATCU 62 area, one of my most important duties was to deliver eyeglasses to the OIC, Captain "John Paul Jones" (Some officers you just called Captain Jones or Captain Smith, but this officer was always "Captain "John Paul Jones" to me.)

My first impression of Khe Sanh was that it was like a city garbage dump. There was debris everywhere. It would remain that way for a long time. Stories about the and the bombardments at Khe



Well known picture, Note in this version several windows are missing and sandbags are on the roof.

Sanh have often been told-there is no need for me to repeat them. My most vivid memories of Khe Sanh are the short vignettes that follow. Most reflect incidents during which "the lights changed".

***I remember the first time I was shot at. Not the first artillery fire, not the first mortar fire, not the first rocket fire, but the first time I was fired at by aimed rifle fire. I had had to climb above the sandbags protecting the equipment to do a repair. Immediately, I heard zing, zing, zing, and poc, poc, poco Having pulled targets on the rifle range, I knew these were bullets flying past me. I jumped down and said as much to myself as to anyone, "They're shooting at me! They're trying to kill me, me!" Artillery fire was fired at "to whom it may concern". This was different-this was enemy fire intended-in no uncertain terms-for *Johnny J. James*." This made the lights burn brighter and suddenly I wasn't as numb as I was before this happened. I could get killed here.

***Whenever I went out to work on the equipment, I always stuffed some food in my pockets. That way, I could stay behind the sandbags rather than risk running for the underground bunker. I believed

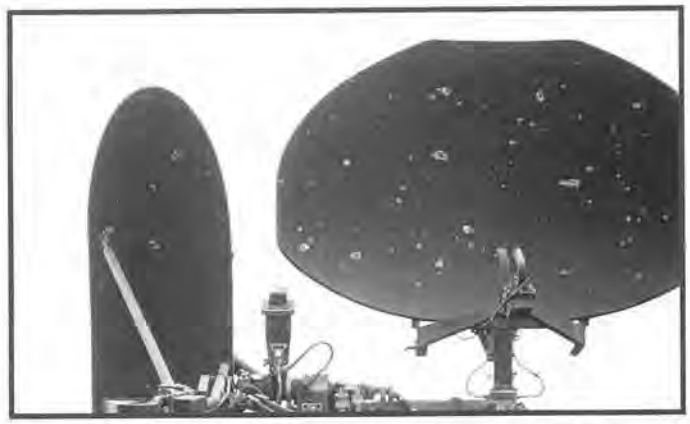

SHRAPNEL DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT

that, if the first barrage didn't get you, you are better off lying behind cover rather than running for a trench or bunker. I figured that if I stayed behind the sandbags that surrounded the equipment, they would have to score direct hit (or near direct hit) for me to be injured. My chances of survival would be better than if I gave them a moving target, a moving target in the open. The first time the sergeant from Chu Lai saw me sit out a barrage by opening a can of peaches and some crackers, he thought I was crazy. But the next day, I believe, he had stuffed some food in his pants also. The sergeant stayed at Khe Sanh for a week. He told the decision-makers that his presence at Khe Sanh was unnecessary and that I could handle the job.

***The closest I ever came to getting killed was on Easter Sunday, April 14. Shorty, plus a sergeant who was a diesel mechanic, and I were hanging around what passed for a control tower. (It was actually a ground-level, small metal "enclosure" surrounded by sandbags.) Shorty was using a portable radio to control air traffic. We were out in the

open when the first rounds came in, virtually on top of us. We scurried to the closest protected area, a sandbagged entryway to so-called "control tower". It was about 25 feet away, and we got there just as the second barrage of incoming hit. Shorty, the sergeant, and I crouched behind a row of sandbags. The sergeant had been hit in the finger and he didn't stay long. He ran for the underground bunker. Shorty and I stayed behind the sandbags as he worked the aircraft. After about 15 minutes, the barrage appeared to be over. Shorty and I ran to the underground bunker, each of us holding one end of the radio. We were told later, that no more than 30 feet in front of us, some Army guys were killed.

***" Jimmy Jones" and I were escorting one of our casualties, a walking wounded case, to the medevac chopper. We were asked to help load the bodies of dead Marines on the CH 46. They were in body bags and on stretchers. After we had loaded about five or six, the floor of the helicopter was filled. As we started to climb the ramp and load the next body, I was on the back end of the stretcher and pulled the stretcher back. "Jimmy" turned around and looked at me-he knew what I was thinking. He said matter-of-factly, "We stack them." I hesitated but then started stacking the stretchers of dead Marines until all the stretchers were loaded. For me, this was another one of those "changing lights" times. Intellectually, I realized the need to get as many bodies on board the chopper so that they would make as few trips as possible and minimize their exposure to enemy fire. Emotionally, it just didn't seem right. After all, just a short while ago, all of these bodies were living, breathing, human beings. Now, we were treating them like pieces of wood, to be stacked and transported like any other piece of cargo. Maybe too many lights were still burning bright in me and I wasn't as numb as I should be. It was a rough time for me emotionally that night.

***The scuttlebutt was that we were abandoning Khe Sanh either Easter weekend or the following week. In preparation for this move, I started to pull up the cables that were buried underground. It was during this work that I experienced another incident in which "the lights" and the psychic numbing were not in balance. A sergeant who was supposed to help me tear out the cables refused to go beyond the opening of the underground bunker. He had been lightly wounded before, but now he would not venture even one step beyond the threshold of the underground bunker. I lost a lot of respect for that person that day.

***As it was, the scuttlebutt was false. We were not pulling out of Khe Sanh in the near future. It was during this time, that a young lieutenant came up from Dong Ha to take care some of the administrative duties - my memory says the matter concerned payroll. Anyway, when I reported to him, he stopped and said, "I just want to shake your hand." I don't know if that lieutenant remembers that incident today, but he should know that it was greatly appreciated by me at the time, and has become more treasured by me with every passing day.

***In May, I was relieved by Sgt. "Baker" for about a month. I guess I just had too much of continuously



This "after" picture shows the destruction done by the shelling

living underground. I returned to Khe Sanh in early June, just in time for the closing of Khe Sanh on June 23, 1968. That date-June 23, 1968-was exactly 2 years to the day that I first put my feet on the yellow footprints at Parris Island. It had been some journey.

***Back at Dong Ha, the next months seemed almost tranquil. We got our share of incoming but it was not as intense or as frequent as at Khe Sanh. The work seemed more normal but, because I was still a lance corporal and the other techs (even the new guys) outranked me, I still pulled guard duty for a month and had to burn the shitters, etc. The one reprieve was that I was assigned 30 days of



Here are the last matcu-62 Marines from Khe Sanh. The picture is at Air Freight in Dong Ha just after we got off the helicopter

temporary duty at Monkey Mountain (Hill 647) where some of the United States most sophisticated and sensitive radar equipment was located. (The Vietnamese, whose access to the top of the mountain was restricted, thought that we had "our gods" located on that hill.) In December 1968, I extended my tour by six months so that I could go home for Christmas. I didn't want to spend another lousy Christmas in Vietnam.

***When I returned from leave, not much it changed. Rather than working in the job I was trained to do, I was assigned to mess duty for 30 days. Because I was still collecting proficiency pay, I was probably the highest paid enlisted man on mess duty. My time in Vietnam ended late August 1969 when I was given two days' notice that I would be part of the first wave of Marines to be pulled out of Vietnam. I was glad that I was not part of MATCU 62's move south.

***My next four years in the Marine Corps were pretty routine, except for the fact, that exactly one year to the day that I was in Travis Air Force Base coming home from Vietnam, I was again in Travis Air Force Base headed to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan. Supposedly, there was an "urgent need" for 5951 sat Iwakuni. The "urgent need" resulted in my being assigned as the night-time Duty NCO-checking in Marines before midnight to ensure they hadn't violated Cinderella liberty.

***The other notable occurrence in my last four years in the Marine Corps was when, in protest of the continuing Vietnam War, I mailed back my decorations to President Nixon. My protest was not unlike that of the previous year by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (WAW). Mail call was quite an occasion on the day I received a return package from the White House. Everyone in the unit, senior staff and the OIC included, waited around in the hanger until I came in from the field. Everyone wanted to see what was in the small packet that had "The White House" emblazoned on it. Inside were my decorations and a brief note signed by a White House staffer, Michael B. Smith. The note was short, polite, and a bit dismissive. The note was 35 words long, of which 17 were three letters long or less. The following two short paragraphs summarize my reflections on my time in Vietnam.

***I am glad the Vietnam Wall was built and I have supported it financially over the years. It serves the vital purpose of reminding everyone that war is not statistics, war is not sophisticated equipment, and that war is certainly not a scorecard of battles won and lost. The Wall reminds us all that war is the killing of individuals-men and women with names, with families. But, as much as I think the Wall is proper, fitting, and necessary, I will not go and see the Wall. I need no reminders of the sorrow and suffering of Vietnam. I need no reminders of the effects of the Vietnam War. Too many of my lights are still dimmed by the Vietnam War.

***As for my military service in Vietnam, my feelings are best captured by lyrics of an old 1970s tune by Melanie, some of which are:

Look what they've done to my brain.
Look what they've done to my soul, Ma.
Look what they've done to my soul
Yeah they tied it up in a plastic bag
and they shook me upside down, Ma.
Look what they've done to my soul, Ma.
Look what they've done to my soul.

Look what they've done to my song, Ma.
Look what they've done to my song.
Well, it's the only thing I can do half right
and it's come out all wrong, Ma.
Look what they've done to my song.

Look what they've done to my brain, Ma.
Look what they've done to my brain.
Yeah they picked it like a chicken bone
and I think I'm half insane, Ma.
Lyrics by Melanie Safka ©



"Still Life, Khe Sanh", Note the thermite grenade in the middle, it was to be used to destroy equipment should we be overrun.



This is a long shot looking North from Khe Sanh. Hill 950 and Hill 1015 are clearly visable as the terrain feature known as the "Witch's Tit".



"Still Life at Dong Ha"

OBIT

Col. John E. Davis, U.S. Air Force (retired) passed away on Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2016 in Fairhope, Alabama.

Col. Davis was born on July 4, 1929 at a coal-mining camp in Farmington, West Virginia, and graduated from East Fairmont High School in 1947. In 1948, he began a 29-year career in the U.S.A.F. He completed pilot training and was commissioned in 1951. He retired as a full colonel in 1977.



He earned a master's of science degree in personnel management from Troy State University in 1978. Following his military retirement, he became a corporate pilot until retiring again in 1991.

He is survived by his wife, Sarah F. Davis; his children, Carol Jo Davis and Jennifer (Kevin) O'Neil in Atlanta, Georgia, Christine Davis in Zionsville, Indiana; and his former wife, Josephine Davis. Also surviving are grandchildren, Nancy Hudson and Sarah (Brian) Horne; and five great-grandchildren.

Col. Davis was an "American hero" and "patriot." He had service during the Korean and

Vietnam conflicts. His decorations include the Legion of Merit, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Bronze Star and 10 Air Medals. He was twice awarded the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, with two silver stars. His service ribbons display 10 battle stars.

During more than 40 years as a pilot he amassed more than 15,500 hours flying, including more than 1,300 flown in actual combat. He has more combat hours than any other pilot serving in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.

His noteworthy assignments include commander, 314th Tactical Airlift and wing commander at Little Rock Air Force Base, the largest combat wing in the world with 95 C-130 aircraft. He also served as commander, 16th Special Operations Squadron in Ubon, Thailand, equipped with 16 heavily armed AC-130 gunships.

Other noteworthy accomplishments include flying the first-ever typhoon penetrations in a C-130 aircraft and flying the first C-130 gunship. Col. Davis delivered emergency helicopter fuel to Khe Sanh regional combat base while under siege and heavy fire by the Viet Cong.

He spent five consecutive years, from 1968 to 1972, in direct support of the Vietnam conflict. Through his missions, he saved countless allied and American lives.

SEMPER FIDELIS

BY JOHN "DOC" NUNN
USN, KHE SANH VETERAN KILO CO 3/4

This Latin phrase can mean ***always faithful*** or *always loyal*, but it it meant to us Marines back in Vietnam nearly 50 years ago was a lot more practical a helluva lot more personal. For one of my beloved brother Marines, Michael "Red" Reagan, the notion of being always faithful, or always loyal, did not cease being a mission once he escaped the hell of war and returned home to the U.S.A. Indeed, Mike continued to remain forever loyal and faithful all these years later thanks to his amazing labor of love, the Fallen Heroes ,www.fallenheroesproject.org
On National Medal of Honor Day here in the U.S., March 25 2015, Mike was awarded the prestigious Congressional Medal of Honor for Service, known as the *Citizen Service Before Self Honors Medal*, with the historic landmark, Arlington National Cemetery, serving as amazing backdrop. I am proud to say that I had the privilege to personally witness this incredible honor for my brother Marine, Michael Reagan. In fact, this was one of the proudest days of my life because a brother Marine, a Vietnam veteran, was being lauded for continuing to fulfill the solemn promise that we all made to each other as kids in a foreign land 50 years ago: he remains eternally faithful and loyal to his brothers in Arms. Frankly, I felt that we all were having that amazing medal placed und our collective necks when the medal was placed upon Mike!

In Vietnam, we did not necessarily know who the enemy was, and often times, we did not see the enemy, but we sure as hell knew who our allies were: more often than not, the only ally that we could count on was the brother Marine that stood side by side with us in the jungle, or on the hill, or in the foxhole, as we tried to help each other survive one more second in hell. As a Corpsman, I knew that my brothers counted on me to have their back, and they knew that I would never let a brother Marine down. I ran into more mortar attacks and firefights than I care to remember, but I always did it without hesitation because I knew that my brothers needed me. Whether a brother Marine was injured, or near death, I was there as a Corpsman to do all that I could to dress a wound, to administer morphine to dull excruciating pain, or to prepare a body to be removed from the battle field. I did it because I knew that my brothers would never hesitate to be there for me, if I ever needed their help. We were, indeed, always faithful, and always loyal to each other, and Mike was no different back than, and he remains no different today.

Michael Reagan, a corporal in Vietnam that we called "Red" due to his striking red hair, did not leave the notion of *Semper Fidelis* behind in Vietnam when he was lucky enough to come home in 1968. Indeed, Red has remained loyal to the cause of the USMC all these years later. In 2004, Mike founded the Fallen Heroes Project as his way of showing respect and love for all U.S. Military personnel, men and women, that made the ultimate sacrifice by laying down their lives in the name of our country's continued freedom. Red does this

through his amazing artistic ability: Mike gave up a great job with the University of Washington to begin the humble task of hand-drawing custom portraits of our nation's Fallen Heroes in the basement studio of his home in Edmonds WA.

For the last eleven years and counting, Mike has completed nearly 4,600 of these breathless works of art with hundreds of thousands of sketching pencils in that magical right hand. Once a portrait is completed, Red, through the Fallen Heroes Project and the Michael G. Reagan Portrait Foundation, mails it to the Fallen Hero's surviving Gold Star family, absolutely free of charge, as a solemn gesture of sending the hero back home. Mike's gifts of art become so much more than beautiful portraits of deceased loved ones when they arrive at their intended destination; indeed, they become gifts of absolute love that bring the grieving Gold Star families a renewed sense of dignity, love, respect, closure, peace, and hope. And after all these years, while drawing in the solitude of the basement studio of his Edmonds, WA home, Red still is going strong: he always is hard at work, sketching the next Fallen Hero that he shall never forget, long after the last stroke of his pencil meets the canvas upon which the hero is forever immortalized.

The impetus for Mike's loyalty to Brothers in Arms that he never knew was one moment in time from 47 years ago, it was a morning in Vietnam that neither Red nor I shall ever forget as long as we both shall live. Back on March 28, 1968, nearly forty-seven years to the day before Mike received his well-earned *Citizen Service Before Self Honors* medal, Red and the rest of the platoon from Kilo Co., 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, were guarding the District Headquarters in Carn Lo, Vietnam, near the DMZ.

The morning began like nearly every other morning during our time in that particular region of 'Nam: our company driver, LCPL Vincent B. Santaniello, a 19 year old kid from Jamaica, Queens (New York) that we affectionately called "Saint," greeted us on yet another run from Dong Ha headquarters. Saint brought the Marines many things on his runs, but most importantly, he brought some sanity into an absolutely insane freaking world because he brought us our most prized possessions in Vietnam: mail from our loved ones back home! Saint was a great kid and he was loved by all of his brother Marines: he was funny as hell and a wise guy in a fun way. Most importantly, like all of us, he was loyal: Saint didn't let mine-laden roads, or mortar attacks, keep him from performing his duties.

On March 28, 1968, Vinny's jeep arrived at our location. As he exited his jeep, carrying our loved ones' mail, the unexpected happened: we suddenly were under attack from the north. There was sort of an unwritten rule in Vietnam: attacks typically were done under the cover of darkness, or at least dusk. However, this day was different, as the NVA surprised us with a mortar strike, with rockets and artillery raining down on our position. Our platoon, including Red, instinctively jumped into the relative safety of the foxholes as the shells of hell whistled through the air towards us. Unfortunately, Saint was caught too far from a foxhole and too far from his jeep as the mortars rapidly approached him with unforgivingly deadly accuracy.

Soon after the ground stopped shaking and the explosions ceased, I heard the exclamation that I came to both fear and expect during my tour in Vietnam: *CORPSMAN UP!* The man calling for my assistance? Red. Why? Well, to my eternal sadness and chagrin, he was holding our beloved Saint in his arms, and Vinnie clearly was mortally wounded. However, that didn't stop Tony "Doc" Milazzo and me trying to save Saint's life. Saint was badly wounded, obviously, but he still was alive, so Doc Milazzo and I were doing what we could to stop the tremendous bleeding while administering pain-killing morphine. All of this took place while Red held Saint in his arms. Vinnie looked up at Mike and uttered his [mal words while Doc Milazzo and I tried in vain to save his life: "Mike, I just want to go home." With that, our beloved brother was gone.

Mike explained to me many years later that this moment, frozen in time, inspired him to give up his job at the University of Washington three and a half decades later to begin the Fallen Heroes Project. Vinnie wanted to go home that fateful morning of March 28, 1968, but the war ensured that he would not. Miraculously, Mike got to send Vinnie home 47 years later, on Easter Sunday of 2014, of all days, but not without an amazing exchange between him and me.

An ABC affiliate in the Seattle, WA area had done a special internet story on Mike, in early 2014. The reporter asked Michael about his inspiration for the Fallen Heroes Project, but the decades had caused Mike to forget the name of his muse! Mike could see Saint's face, as it was etched in his memory, and he clearly recalled that the young Marine that died in his arms was the Kilo Co. driver, but he could not remember his name. Mike called me and asked if I recalled the name of our company driver. Without hesitation, I exclaimed, "Saint ... Vinnie Santaniello!" Mike asked how I recalled the name without hesitation and I advised him that it was easy: I had been wearing a KIA bracelet to honor Saint for decades!

Armed with the name of his brother Marine, Mike turned to the ABC reporter and advised him of Saint's full name and the belief that Saint hailed from New York. Soon thereafter, the intrepid ABC News reporter found Saint's remaining family in New York all those years later, and Vinny's nephew, Ralph Vincent Morales (his middle name serves to honor the uncle that died 18 months before he was born in July 1969) joined Mike in WA for the 10th Anniversary of the Fallen Heroes Project. Thankfully, I was there, too, and I was fortunate enough to witness Mike send Vinnie home as Ralph accepted Mike's amazing portrait of his late uncle.

Vinnie's death had not been in vain; rather, it served as an inspiration. Vinnie's death inspired Mike decades later to send other Fallen Heroes home to their loved ones. Saint's death continues to serve as a beacon of hope to this day through Mike's Fallen Heroes Project, as countless thousands of Gold Star families gain a sense of love, dignity, respect, peace, and closure - despite their profound sadness and loss - in the form of a unique hand-drawn portrait from the desk of one Michael Reagan. Incredibly, Saint's dying words continue to serve as a beacon to Mike today, as he sends heroes like Vinnie "Saint" Santaniello home every day of the week.

Fittingly, Saint's portrait received first class treatment on its trek home from Seattle to New York. The portrait and frame were much too large to store in an overhead bin, or under the airplane seat. Ralph explained his predicament to the crew at the gate and they told him that they'd see what they could do to accommodate the special cargo. Minutes later, the captain of the plane emerged from the gate, gestured for Ralph to approach, and told him, "It would be my honor to have your uncle's portrait stay with us in the cockpit for his ride home." And with that, Saint received firsts class, hero accommodations in the cockpit for the red eye flight from Seattle to New York!

On March 25,2015, virtually 47 years after holding his fallen brother, and hearing his final words, Michael G. Reagan - *Red* - received an incredible honor from the country that he served so valiantly a generation ago. I'm not ashamed to say that tears welled up in my eyes when the *Citizen Service Before Self Honors* medal nestled against Mike's





chest that day because a brother Marine was getting his due. It was as if I was up there getting that medal, and Saint, and Doc Milazzo, and nearly 60,000 other brave souls that were not able to make it home from Vietnam. Michael Reagan is an angel walking amongst us and his unflinching devotion to bringing such peace and dignity to Gold Star families around our nation is a gift of untold riches. You see, Mike's art, his life's calling, brings Fallen Heroes home. Mike did not just pay lip service to the USMC credo of Semper Fi decades ago while in the Marine Corp.

You have to understand: Michael "Red" Reagan *lives* Semper Fi each and every day in continued service to his country by virtue of the amazingly spiritual impact his artwork has on Gold Star families and beyond. And he's got a *Citizen Service Before Self Honors* medal around his neck to prove it!

OBIT

GEORGE "MICKEY" HEARN USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, DELTA CO 1/26

George "Mickey" Hearn, age 68, of Gulfport, passed away on October 20, 2016.

The funeral service was held October 26th, 2 PM at Riemann Funeral Home Gulfport, MS, If you wish you may offer condolences to his son Ryan phone number 228 297 2414, or the funeral home web site. attached is the obituary.

He was preceded in death by his father, Robert Harold Hearn, a brother, Robert Stanley Hearn, and a sister, Sherry Cupit Darnell.

Survivors include his wife, Gail Morgan Hearn, 4 children, Ryan (Dawn) Hearn, Morgan Hearn, Amber Hearn (Eric) Spurgeon, and Lauren Hearn (Barret) Biandis, 7 grandchildren, Tyler, Haley, Brennon, Jaren, Sinclaire, Brianna, and Sutton, his mother, Dorothy Wood Lindsay, a sister, Lynn Wood Moore, a brother, Ray Wood, and other relatives and friends.

Mickey was born 1948 in Laurel, MS., and a graduate of R.H. Watkins High School. Mickey and his wife, Gail Morgan, and their four children, lived in Laurel until 1987. They then relocated to Nashville and in 1990 moved to Gulfport.

Mickey, a veteran of the Vietnam War, served in the U.S. Marine Corp., Delta Co,1st Battalion 26th Marine Division, where he received two Purple Hearts, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, and other medals of commendations during the Siege of Khe Sanh.
After his military service, he spent 30 years in the transportation and moving industry. He later became a Regional Sales Representative for Electric Mobility selling durable medical equipment to the VA hospitals across the south until his retirement.

Friends and family called him Mickey, and all 7 grandkids called him Papaw. Regardless of what you called him, Mickey was a wonderful and loving husband to his wife of 49 years Gail, and the best father anyone could ask for to his 4 children Ryan, Morgan, Amber, and Lauren. There was never a shortage of hugs and kisses for each one of his grandchildren and they all made sure to come give Papaw some love anytime they were around him. Mickey was warm, loving, and he always made everyone feel welcome. The only thing bigger than his heart and personality is the void that is left within all of us now that he is gone. Everyone that knew and loved Mickey will carry with them the memory of his bright smile, big heart and boisterous laugh, and for this we can all be thankful. We can only hope that small part will be enough to lessen the void that has been left in his passing.

Memorials may be sent to The Wounded Warrior Project or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital .

CITIZENS TO HOLD LONG OVERDUE "WELCOME HOME" PARADE FOR VIETNAM VETERANS

WELCOME HOME: Wayne Moore was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for his gallantry at Khe Sanh

By Rich Harbert
rharbert@wickedlocal.com

This is part of an ongoing series profiling local veterans of the Vietnam War. The town will recognize Vietnam veterans this November with a long overdue "Welcome Home" celebration on Veterans Day.

Wayne Moore liked playing army growing up in Plymouth late 1950s and early 1960s.

As a young man, he became the ultimate warrior, a fearless Marine whose heroics in Vietnam earned him one of the nation's highest military honors. Moore received the Silver Star for spearheading a decisive assault on entrenched enemy machine gunners in the battle of Khe Sanh. But it came at the ultimate price, posthumously.

Moore was one of four young men from Plymouth who died in the line of duty in Vietnam. Thanks to his squad leader in Vietnam and, more recently, fellow veterans in Plymouth, his courage will never be forgotten.

Born in California, Moore moved to his mother's hometown of Plymouth when he was 11. He joined the Marine Corps after graduating from high school here in 1965.



He enlisted in the Marine Corps the following spring. In December 1966, he was sent to Vietnam, a lance corporal with the first platoon of B Company of the First Battalion's 26th Marine Regiment. He was 21 when he died on March 30, 1968.

The newspaper, at the time, reported he had been killed in action by hostile fire in the vicinity of Quang Tri. He was thought to be the second local casualty of the war. He was buried that April in Vine Hills Cemetery and, for decades, little was known of his heroic service.

Though he married a local woman before shipping overseas, Moore was something of an enigma, even to fellow schoolmates and servicemen.

Ken Medeiros, who graduated a year after Moore and served with the Army's 101st st Airborne Division in Vietnam, remembers Moore as big and strong but quiet.

"He always dressed in black. Black boots, black shirt, black leather jacket. He looked like a tough guy, but I think inside he was just a regular kid," Medeiros said. "He liked to play army games when he was younger. He played a lot of war games."

Medeiros was one of several local veterans who helped create a permanent memorial to the town's four fallen Vietnam heroes in Memorial Hall several years ago.

They built a shadow box with Moore's known medals, but the exhibit will be getting an addition soon. Despite issuing a public plea for information about Moore several years ago, local veterans were able to find scant information about the Marine's service until just this week, when an Internet search revealed Moore had received the Silver Star, the nation's third-highest military decoration for valor, for his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action. A copy of the citation explains that Moore's heroics occurred while B Company engaged a North Vietnamese Army battalion entrenched in a fortified bunker complex near Khe Sanh.

"When his squad became pinned down by intense automatic weapons and mortar fire in the initial moments of the fire fight, Lance Corporal Moore unhesitatingly moved across 25 meters of open terrain and aggressively assaulted an enemy bunker, destroying two hostile positions and killing two North Vietnamese soldiers," the citation reads.

"As the Marine launched an attack, he repeatedly disregarded his own safety to assist the wounded and provide suppressive fire for the advancing men. While he was maneuvering across the open terrain fearlessly attempting to draw the hostile fire way from his squad, Lance Corporal Moore was mortally wounded. By his courage, aggressive fighting spirit and selfless devotion to duty, Lance Corporal

Moore inspired all who observed him and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the service of his country."

Steve Wiese was Moore's squad leader that day. Reached this week at his home in Lincoln, California, Wiese said he thinks of Moore and the many other friends and comrades he lost in Vietnam all the time.

"I think of him probably daily," Wiese said. "My time in Vietnam is not something I think of occasionally. I think of it daily, and nightly of course. I had the honor of serving with some amazing men."

Wiese said he was scheduled to leave Khe Sanh the day Moore was killed, but decided to stay on to lead his men into what became known as the payback patrol.

A month earlier, on Feb. 25, 1968, the Marines had lost dozens of men when they stumbled into the enemy ambush just outside the base perimeter. Marines are known from always carrying their casualties from the battlefield, but several of the men were left behind that day.

"They became known as the ghost patrol, because we feel like these guys are still out there patrolling," Wiese said.

On March 30, 1968, the Marines launched an attack to retrieve their dead, but almost immediately came under heavy fire.

Wiese recalls how Moore spearheaded the attack.
"He literally jumped out of the trench line and charged the enemy trench line single handedly," Wiese said. "He charged an enemy machine gun bunker head on and he kept on charging and shooting even though he was hit three or four times that I saw."

Moore's heroics prompted another member of the squad to charge as well.
Author (pronounced Arthur) Smith followed Moore and made it into the enemy bunker. The last Wiese saw of him, Smith was engaged in hand-to-hand combat with an enemy soldier. Like Moore, Smith died in the attack. Like Moore, he received the Silver Star posthumously.

Wiese, a corporal at the time, said he put both men up for the Medal of Honor, noting how their gallantry led the rest of the platoon to attack and defeat the enemy, and reclaim their fellow Marines' remains.

"I had major respect for that guy. He was a great Marine and seemed like a good guy in general. He was in my bunker with me so we spent a lot of time in close proximity. We spent many a day and night getting rocketed and mortared, so there weren't many secrets," Wiese said. "Wayne was amazingly courageous. He had no fear."

Big and strong as an ox, Moore rarely spoke of his life back home and planned to make a career of his service in the Marines, Wiese said.

"I can remember him also saying he was a warrior at heart and believed that he belonged in combat," Wiese said. "He said he wasn't going to leave Vietnam. This war wasn't going to end for him. He truly believed he was a combat soldier."

Wayne Moore will be among the nearly 180 men and women honored Nov. 11 as the town recognizes its Vietnam veterans with a long overdue welcome home.

VIETNAM POW: 'I'LL ALWAYS BE THERE'

It's been nearly 50 years since Dennis Thompson was captured by North Vietnamese forces as a prisoner of war. But he still sees the black enclosed room with no light where they kept him. For five years - he counted 1,864 days - the Vietnamese imprisoned him, 850 days of which were in continuous solitary confinement.

"I'll always be there," the 74-year-old veteran said.

Thompson, who now lives in Olympia, was one of more than 15 veterans who attended an event to honor paws at a home on Bunker Hill west of Longview on Saturday. Jeanette Brusco, whose deceased husband was Thompson's uncle, organized the event to mark national POW Recognition Day on Friday.

For Thompson, being a POW was no romantic notion. It was permanent damage. "It ain't like in the movies," he said. 'When somebody really stomps your a-, you don't run off with a heroine to the sunset."

February 1968 was when the North Vietnamese captured Thompson, along with a handful of other American soldiers, at the Lang Vei Special Forces camp in South Vietnam near the border of Laos.

Thompson, then a staff sergeant on the Mobile



Strike Force, was 5-foot-6, 165 pounds before his imprisonment. Five years later, he was 90 pounds. It began with interrogations and torture. His captors beat him, broke three of the fingers on his right hand, cut his bicep with wire, tied his elbows together and wound them tighter until his collarbone broke out of his chest.

Thompson said he never stopped trying to escape. Any brief slip from the guards - a sneeze, a glance in the other direction - and he would bolt.

And then the war ended. In February 1973, the International Control Commission gathered the remaining paws onto its aircraft. Thompson flew out of Vietnam and into the Clark Air Base in the Philippines, where he requested a Coke chilled to 33 degrees. The cooks used a C02 fire extinguisher to do it. "I slammed that thing down, and it was heaven," he said.



He spent half that day in the shower. He ate steak and eggs for breakfast. He had filet mignon, eggs and toast, then threw up outside.

And then they took him to San Francisco. There was his country, his wife, his two children who didn't know him. "They might as well have beamed me to a new planet. I didn't recognize a damn thing," he said. "Nobody knew I was alive until two weeks before I got home. You think it'd be, 'Oh thank God he's alive: It was more like, 'Oh s--.'"

About a year later he was divorced and a few years later remarried. Eventually he transferred to Fort Lewis in Tacoma as a first sergeant- the "high point of my existence" - near his hometown of Portland, Ore. But Thompson will never fully move on, he said. He wears a silver bracelet on which "Daniel Phillips" is engraved, the name of the last POW missing in action in Thompson's 5th Special Forces Group and never found.

And Thompson still has nightmares about his time imprisoned. "They seem to come in bursts, four or five nights in a row," he said. During his time in

solitary confinement, Thompson found solace in his memories of a book he read as a child. The story was about a mountain climber who found himself in a whiteout and couldn't see the world

around him. Instead the man put his entire focus on the one item there, a chair - what it felt like, what tools were used to make it, the pieces of the wood. Thompson said he focused on himself and his boundaries - how high he could jump, how fast he could run, what kind of education he received. It's how he kept his sanity.

"50 these dates are going by and I said, 'Looks like I'm going to be here indefinitely. I gotta bring things in perspective here, I gotta find reality."

The veteran, who enlisted at the age of 17, retired as a sergeant major after 23 years of service. He said he's content with his decisions, both as a POW and in his career, but he's no hero.

"I'm OK with myself, how I handled it," he said, "my whole career in the Army."

FOR 48 YEARS, HE DIDN'T WANT SEE HIS OLD BUDDIES FROM VIETNAM. THIS YEAR HE MADE AN EXCEPTION
RUDY GOMEZ KHE SANH VETERAN
I CO 3/26 3RD PLT

Rudy Gomez says that when he was a Marine deployed in Vietnam, he was warned not to get too close to the guys in his unit: "I always heard, 'Don't make very good close friendships because you might not be here in the next minute.'" So, he told 10 News, he didn't. In fact, he'd avoided getting together with his buddies for all of the subsequent 48 years.

Gomez enlisted in the Marines because as he put it:"I'd seen too many John Wayne movies and I always wanted to be a Marine. They were instilled in my brain, watching those war movies." Gomez was part of the storied 3/26 Marines, men who fought in World War II in the Battle of Iwo Jima before the 5th Marine Division was deactivated.

The 3/26 was reactivated in 1966 when Rudy and his buddies saw action in Vietnam. They fought in the bloody Battle of Khe Sanh, a battle in which, for 77 days, 6,000 Marines — including Rudy Gomez and his buddies — protected a crucial air strip by holding off a 20,000 man communist force.
History.com describes the scene:

"U.S. Marines and their South Vietnamese allies fought off an intense siege of the garrison, in one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War. Meanwhile, with U.S. and South Vietnamese attention focused on Khe Sanh, North Vietnamese



and Viet Cong forces launched the Tet Offensive, a series of coordinated surprise attacks on cities and towns throughout South Vietnam."

Sergeant Gomez served under Marine legend Chesty Puller's son-in-law and was assigned to protect "Hill 881 South" in Khe Sanh."We lost a lot of people. One of the snipers that they had missed me four times from about five inches away, kicking up the dirt as I'm face down, laying on the dirt. I moved to the right. He shot again about a foot a way. Backed up. Missed again. grenades were thrown overhead." He was in the middle of hell. He kept his head down amid the sniper fire:

They were surrounded. He said he warned his Lieutenant to keep his head down, but he didn't — something that "pisses off" Gomez to this day.
Gomez told 10News it was horrible:

They were surrounded. He said he warned his Lieutenant to keep his head down, but he didn't — something that "pisses off" Gomez to this day. "A lot of fellow Marines falling down to the left and to the right of me. All of the sudden I see this explosion." The next morning, the Tet Offensive started and his hill was one of the targets.

He was wounded — blinded in his left eye. While in the hospital thumbing through magazines trying to find information about the war, he saw a photo of himself in Newsweek Magazine:

Despite all those movies he'd watched as a kid where John Wayne was best buddies with his guys and all, he couldn't remember the names of the men he'd served in combat.

He avoided his unit's reunions. Though he'd worked for 33 years at the Post Office, his PTSD made going outside and engaging in unfamiliar activities awkward. Hard. He still didn't want to get too close. He just wanted to forget.

In Gomez's oral history recorded by YouTube user, "Visual Journalist" (see below) he said maybe someday he would change his mind about seeing guys in his unit. Maybe someday, he reasoned, he'd want to see these guys, whose names he couldn't even remember, again:

"I'm hoping to go to one of these reunions very soon."
This week after 48 years, Gomez decided to reunite with his old unit at a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the reactivation of the 3/26 Marines, which was held at San Diego's Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial.

The memorial sits atop a peaceful hill overlooking the turquoise blue Pacific Ocean. It has been the subject of legal battles over the cross that marks the site.

But it was here that Gomez found peace:
Gomez's unit sealed the reunion with a plaque honoring the unit and its sacrifice:

Rudy Gomez's unit in Vietnam lost 391 men from 1966-1970.Looking back on his service, Gomez said the only public display of thanks after he came back from Vietnam was a bartender at a bowling alley who bought him a drink and escorted him home.

HAMPTON BAYS STUDENTS HONOR VIETNAM WAR VETERAN

Children in the Hampton Bays School District honor the nation's heroes by flying flags to salute their bravery.

HAMPTON BAYS, NY — The flag will be flying high in Hampton Bays for a Vietnam veteran.

The Hampton Bays School District will continue its goal of bringing history to life for students by paying tribute to Vietnam War veteran Paul Dargan; the American flag will fly in his honor in September.

"The district is proud to honor Mr. Dargan for his bravery and service to the United States," said Superintendent of Schools Lars Clemensen.

Dargan was honored at a ceremony held Sept. 9 at Hampton Bays Elementary School, during which the heroes of Sept. 11 were recognized as well, a release said.

Fourth-graders described Dargan's life, recited patriotic poems that wrote themselves, and sang "Peace Starts Within," an original song written by Southampton Supervisor Jay Schneiderman.

The ceremony culminated with the raising of the flag on the district's flagpole.



Here is a history of United States Marine Corps

Sgt. Paul Dargan, as provided by the Hampton Bays School District:

U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Paul Dargan was born in Brooklyn on Aug. 27, 1946," the release said.
"After his father passed away, his family moved to Hampton Bays in 1957, where he went on to graduate from Hampton Bays High School, Class of 1966.
On June 29, 1966, Mr. Dargan enlisted in the Marine Corps and underwent basic infantry training at Parris Island, South Carolina. After graduation, he was transferred to Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina, and assigned to a recon unit for specialized training, which at the time was in desert warfare, in anticipation of assisting Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

Since U.S. assistance wasn't needed in the Middle East, Mr. Dargan's unit was reassigned to Western Pacific Command. They were then trained at Camp Lejeune in mountain warfare. When training was complete, Mr. Dargan was granted leave to Hampton Bays for a short visit. Upon his return to Camp Lejeune, his unit flew to Vietnam via Okinawa, Japan. They arrived at Da Nang, Republic of South Vietnam, in late June.

Mr. Dargan's unit was Bravo Company, 3rd Recon Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment. They were flown to Khe Sanh (KAY SAHN), an old volcano that had been a French outpost in the mid-1950s. Khe Sanh could only be reached by air because the enemy had cut off roads and bridges. It was close to both the demilitarized zone and the border of Laos.

The job of recon units, and Mr. Dargan's eight-member squad, was to locate the enemy in enemy territory. They searched for soldiers, equipment and types of transportation like jeeps, trucks and even elephants. Unknown to Mr. Dargan and his fellow Marines, the enemy had two infantry divisions, two artillery (big cannons) regiments and an armored tank regiment in the area — approximately 20,000 enemy soldiers against roughly 6,000 Marines.

The infamous Battle of Khe Sanh began on Jan. 20, 1968. The outpost was bombarded by the enemy, who aimed for the ammunition supply. Since command knew an attack was imminent, the Marines were told to sleep with "their boots on." The Marines reinforced their bunkers with pieces of portable runway and covered them with sandbags. During this time, Mr. Dargan was on patrol when his squad came upon a new trail not on the map. They waited and set up a land mine. As Mr. Dargan was backing off, he heard a twig snap and saw the silhouette of an enemy soldier. He quickly warned his patrol.

During the siege, Mr. Dargan was wounded in the chest and leg by shrapnel. He refused the Purple Heart medal and continued duty as a Marine. At the end of the siege, the Marines went to the Quang Tri (KWANG TREE) province for rest and recuperation. It was at that time that the unit chaplain held a memorial ceremony for the 19 Marines from Bravo Company who were killed in action. Rifles were placed bayonet first into the ground with helmets placed on top. Mr. Dargan took several photos to honor his friends.

Following the war, Mr. Dargan's photos were put on display at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison, Wisconsin. More than 40 years later, he met Steve Alpert, an artist from Quogue, and shared his photos, telling Alpert, "I have your next military painting."

The result was the painting "Journey of Souls," which now hangs in the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia.

Mr. Dargan was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps in October 1969 and returned to Hampton Bays. There, he met Diana "Dee" Penny when they played tennis together. It was love at first sight. They built their own home and raised two daughters, Kalen and Lindsay, and a son, Ryan. They have four grandchildren: Kaya, Carissa, Vasili and Niko. Mrs. Dargan taught in Hampton Bays and even taught Superintendent of Schools Lars Clemensen."

Photo courtesy of the Hampton Bays School District

Medal of Honor Recipient Khe Sanh Veteran Michael J. Fitzmaurice to speak at Wolsey-Wessington program Nov. 8

Posted: Thursday, Nov 3rd, 2016

avour native and Vietnam Army veteran Michael J. Fitzmaurice, who was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, will be the guest speaker at a Veteran's Day program Tuesday, Nov. 8, at 2:30 p.m., at the Wolsey-Wessington School. The public is invited to attend this program. Walking the hallways of the VA Medical Center in Sioux Falls, you may have crossed paths with Fitzmaurice, who served other veterans as a VA plumber from 1987-2011.

A humble man, he is never one to bring attention to his military service or the fact that he earned America's highest award for valor, the Congressional Medal of Honor, for his heroic actions at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam in 1971. March 23, 1971, at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam: Specialist Fitzmaurice and three fellow soldiers were occupying a bunker when a company of North Vietnamese sappers infiltrated the area. At the onset of the attack Specialist Fitzmaurice observed three explosive charges which had been thrown into the bunker by the enemy. Mike hurled two of the charges out of the bunker; then threw his flak vest and himself over the remaining charge. By this courageous act, he absorbed the blast and shielded his fellow soldiers. Although suffering from serious multiple wounds and partial loss of sight, he charged out of the bunker and engaged the enemy until his rifle was damaged by the blast of an enemy hand grenade. While in search of another weapon, Specialist Fitzmaurice encountered and overcame an enemy sapper in hand-to-hand combat. Having obtained another weapon, he returned to his original fighting position and inflicted additional casualties on the attacking enemy. Although seriously wounded, Specialist Fitzmaurice refused to be medically evacuated, preferring to remain at his post. He was evacuated and treated in Japan and then transferred back to the states where he was hospitalized for 14 months and was discharged from military service in 1972.

He went about life in South Dakota, married Patty, his wife of now nearly 43 years, and became father to two sons (and a grandfather to four). Fitzmaurice signed up with the South Dakota Army National Guard in April 1973, and was working in a meat packing plant when he was summoned to Washington, D.C., in November 1973. There, President Richard Nixon awarded him the Congressional Medal of Honor for his extraordinary heroism at



MICHAEL J. FITZMAURICE

Khe Sanh. "Specialist Fitzmaurice's conspicuous gallantry, extraordinary heroism, and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life contributed significantly to the successful defense of the position and resulted in saving the lives of a number of his fellow-soldiers," reads the Congressional Medal of Honor citation. "These acts of heroism go above and beyond the call of duty, are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect great credit on Specialist Four Fitzmaurice and the United States Army." In addition, Fitzmaurice received other honors for his bravery and sacrifices including the Vietnam Service Medal with Bronze Star, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and a Purple Heart.

He continued with the Army National Guard until discharge in April 1990. In May 1990, he joined the South Dakota Air National Guard and then retired from military service in May 1992 with 23 years of devoted military service. He was key to the VA Summer of Service event held at the Sioux Falls VA in June 2015, when the Medal of Honor Stamp honoring Vietnam Congressional Medal of Honor recipients was unveiled. He graciously autographed pages upon pages of stamps for other Veterans, their families, VA staff, volunteers and others – just

another example of how he continues to serve Veterans, his former employer and his country. In recognition for his service to country, South Dakota re-named the State Veterans Home in his honor in 1998.

On March 30, 2016, he cut the ribbon on the newly constructed state Veterans Home. The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System is proud and honored to have had Fitzmaurice and his wife as members of the VA team.

OBIT

ALBERT W. POTTS, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, FOXTROT CO 2/3

Albert "Al" William Potts, Master Sergeant, went to his heavenly home on August 13,2016, after a courageous battle with cancer from Agent Orange, surrounded by his loved ones.

Al was born on April 20, 1946 to the late Betty Greve and Wilbert Potts in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. He was a 1964 graduate of Central High School and worked at General Electric before enlisting in the USMC. He served with USMC FOX 2/3/3 during the Vietnam War and was mentioned in "The First Hill Fights Battle of Khe Sanh" book. He was a member of the VFW and the American Legion Post 157.

The saying, "Once a Marine, always a Marine," was true to Al's life. He proudly served for 27 years and retired as a Master Sergeant in 1993. He stayed very close to the brave men that he called brothers.

Al retired from Riverside High School due to his illness.

He enjoyed reading and watching history films, John Wayne films, game shows, and old movie classics. Al loved animals; he rescued dogs and cats, and fed wild birds. He spent days fishing at the lake cottage in Orland, Indiana, while visiting his family. He was so proud of the Family Bowling league and always asked for the scores. His grandchildren grew up with fun times with "Grandpa Al" at camp in Holiday Camplands. Missing him dearly, his wife, Edyie Lefevre Potts. He was a wonderful father figure to Steve & Beth Bash, Douglas Hassler and Connie Hassler. His pride, joy and reason to live were his five grandchildren, Braeden, Camden & Lauren Bash, and Benjamen & Jonathan Hassler. He is survived by his mother-in-law, Verna Vargo, and his faithful companion, Cricket.

"Smiley" as his family nicknamed him, he was a dear brother to Susan & Doug Bedra, Donald (Lum) & Debra Edwards, Elaine & James Mowan, and Joan Potts, all of Indiana, and Wilbert Jr. & Kathy



Potts of VA; his sisters-in-law, Judith & Joe Yekyll, and Cathy Jo & Dave Kardish of Ellwood City. He is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews and their children.

Preceding him in death, the man he called his dad, Donald Edwards; his baby sister, Tammy Edwards; his brothers, Merle and Walter Potts; his first wife of 33 years, Sara Kay McClearn, and her parents, Sara & Kenneth McClearn. The family wishes to thank the Hillman Cancer Center and the teams of Dr. Ohr and Dr. Bartlett. They'd also like to thank Amedisys Hospice Angels, Kathy, Amy, Peggy &

Michelle, Pastor Dave, and their neighbors and friends for food and care of Cricket.

I MARRIED THE WAR': KUNA COUPLE SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON VETERANS' WIVES



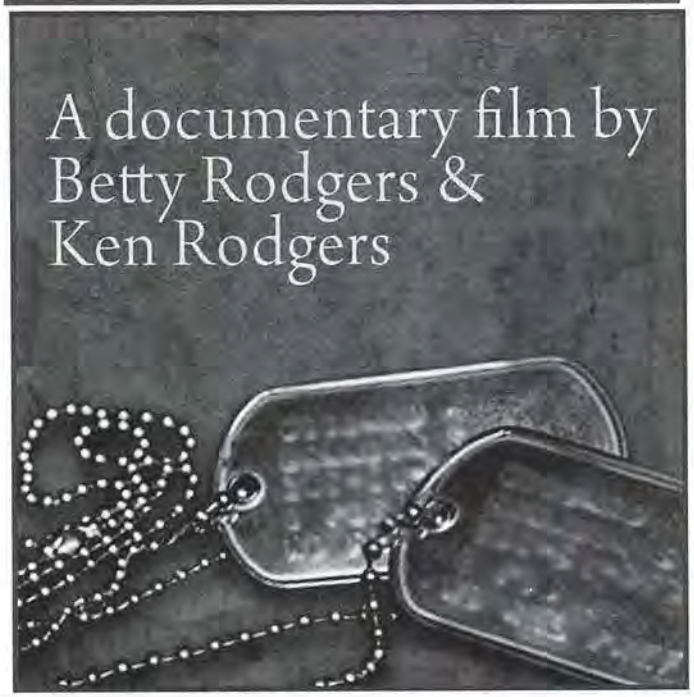

BOISE - Two years after releasing a documentary about one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War, a Kuna couple is back with a new film, called "I Married the War."

The documentary shines a spotlight on the wives of war veterans. It is told from the spouses' perspective, giving them a voice and showing the true impact of war at home.

"There are wives from World War II who are still alive, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Middle East wars and everything in between," said Betty Rodgers. "This is a group of people who have been silent."

Ken and Betty Rodgers brought the Vietnam War to the forefront in their 2014 documentary, "Bravo! Common Men, Uncommon Valor." It told the story of the siege at Khe Sanh from the perspective of the men who lived through it.

"During our journey with 'Bravo,' it became very clear that there was another story out there," said Betty. "Think about how around the nation and around the world, how many wives are living with PTSD, traumatic brain injury, physical injury."

Betty knows how that feels. Her husband, Ken, is a Vietnam War vet.

"You come home from war, and I'm speaking as a man, a combat veteran, and you have all this pent-up emotion that you are not supposed to show because you are tough and this is what it took to get through combat," Ken said. "It all gets passed on to your family



KEN & BETTY RODGERS



That was the inspiration for the Rodgers' latest documentary, "I Married the War," which tells the stories of the wives of war vets - women who have fought to keep their marriages and families together.

"We are reaching out to women from around the country," said Betty.

They started in Idaho. Terri Topmiller is a mother and grandmother who lives in Star. She was married to a Vietnam War vet for 39 years before he passed. Her husband, Bob, lived for years with severe PTSD.

"My husband had nightmares from the day I met him," Terri said. "Every single night, he had the same nightmare over and over and over.

"The first 10 years we were married, he did not talk about the war, because back then nobody talked about the war," she added.

Years later, Terri joined a support group of military wives and realized she wasn't alone.

"It was about then that I really truly understood the ramifications of Vietnam," she said.

Laura Nickel is also featured in "I Married the War." Her husband, George, was the only survivor of a 2007 roadside bombing in Iraq. The blast left him injured both physically and emotionally.

"He struggled with undiagnosed PTSD and untreated traumatic brain injury for two years after he came back from Walter Reed," Laura said. "He started to have some severe problems re-adapting to civilian life."

In 2009, George Nickel was involved in an armed standoff with Boise police. Over a dozen rounds were fired, but incredibly, no one was injured. George went to jail, got treatment and went back to school, where he earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and his master's degree in social work.

He's now one of the Boise Police Department's allies, helping to make training videos for when police encounter veterans in crisis.

The Nickels are also the proud parents of a baby boy.

"It's been a long haul, but he's really turned things around and inspired other vets to get off their couches and make a positive difference and re-adapt," Laura said.

She had her own reasons for being a part of the documentary.

REUNION SECRETARIES REPORT (2016) BY CRAIG TOURTE KSV SECRETARY

Another wonderful reunion this year in San Antonio at the El Tropicana Riverwalk Hotel where Khe Sanh Veterans last visited in July 2010. The El Tropicana is the location where many of the interviews were recorded and filmed for the much-acclaimed and award winning documentary by Ken & Betty Rodgers, "Bravo, Common Men, Uncommon Valor." A couple of golf games were once again on the unofficial agenda. Thanks to Khe Sanh Veteran and PGA Professional Fred Bender for stepping up and making the T-Times at the Quarry and Riverside Golf Clubs. Besides myself and Fred those who enjoyed the games were Tom Horchler, Robert Longcrane, Tom Ford, Cisco Reyes and Ted Hummer. Thanks to Fred, we received a deep discount for both courses. All of those who played expressed their enjoyment and their desire to be included in the golf games next year at the reunion in Cleveland. These games are structured in such a manner that all who wish to play are welcome regardless of skill, handicap, gender or age. What is required is that you have a good time with friends.

Tom Eichler and Russ Turner, did their usually tireless job manning the registration desk and fielding complaints and suggestions along with welcoming those who returned for another reunion and those attending the reunion for the first time. Besides negotiating with the hotel, signing contracts, making sure there were sufficient rooms, meal banquet selections and negotiating parking fees months prior to the reunion they had to deal all the other unanticipated issues that arise. I don't know how they manage the time or find the energy for those twelve (12)

hour days. Tom towed the Khe Sanh USMC Jeep all the way from Chicago, it was a big hit and must have been an impressive display seeing a military jeep being driven around the streets of San Antonio sporting an M60 on a tall stand with the words USMC and Khe Sanh painted in bright gold letters.

The Reunion PX is always popular, no one works harder at making it a success than Vice-President John Pessoni and Board Member-at-Large Tom Ford. Sgt-at-Arms Dave Meyer once again tirelessly manned the silent auction table. The funds from the silent auction and purchases from the PX which included the newly designed reunion shirts by Tom Eichler, along with the pins, button, hats, jackets, etc. helps support the various Khe Sanh non-profit Association functions including the Scholarship Fund. If you didn't make the reunion and would be interested in having some of these items which identifies you as a Khe Sanh Veteran, you may go to the Khe Sanh web site at Khesanh.org, click on PX and order the new (and previous) reunion shirts, jackets, hats and other items that were offered.

I understand the ladies meeting and luncheon was a huge success as was the benefit raffle, we thank them once again for their generosity. 4th Recon Marines from San Antonio had a static weapon display. Many veterans were surprised at the weight of the weapons and found it hard to accept they humped equivalent or even heavier weapons up, down and around the hills of Khe Sanh. On Thursday VFW Post 76 on the Riverwalk provided a BBQ for us. Jose "Cisco" Reyes provided the music and sound system while we all enjoyed a great meal and adult beverages.

ON Friday VFW Post 1533 also provided a BBQ for us. The post provided an excellent DJ and adult beverages. The membership enjoyed another evening of dancing and merriment.

As in each reunion, elections are held via written paper ballot for open board positons. There was however an exception this year as there was no opposition for the open positions so those who submitted their notice to run were selected and no ballot nor voting was necessary. Those interested were asked to contact Dave Meyer and/or myself in writing at least 30 days prior to the reunion so that ballots can be printed. The only requirement to run for office is the member be in good standing (current on dues) and having attended at least two (2) reunions within the past five (5) years. Those elected for the term 2017-2018 are: Vice-President – John Pessoni, Secretary – Craig W. Tourte. Board of Directors Member at Large – Wayne "Butch" Deverney, Bruce Geiger, Jose Reyes and Russ Wagner.

So many contributed their skill, time and effort to the success of this reunion I'd be remiss to name just a few without naming them all. But we all know who you are and appreciate your generous and selfless contribution. The By-Laws, Board of Directors and Membership Minutes are available for anyone who is interested in reading them. I place a folder on the registration table at the reunion for anyone who would like to look at them.

The reunion closed with the annual Khe Sanh Veterans Association Banquet. As anticipated, the turnout was huge and President Tom Eichler did his usual outstanding job as Master of Ceremonies, keeping everyone and everything running efficiently.

SAN ANTONIO VETERANS MEMORIAL
BY CRAIG W. TOURTE

I truly enjoyed another Khe Sanh Reunion in San Antonio. While walking around this historic city, my memories carried me back to the 2010 reunion. I fondly remembered Tom Horchler brought his beautiful companion dog Lucy and I was fortunate at that time to have taken a photograph of the both standing in front of the Alamo. Sadly, Lucy passed away and did not join us during this year's reunion. Once again I wandered around this most hospitable city and enjoyed the thrilling historical sites. During that 2010 reunion Marco Soto told me he had come across a Vietnam Memorial and thought I would be interested in seeing it. Dave Tonick, Marco and I walked over to the Memorial which is called "Veterans Memorial Plaza" located next to the San Antonio Municipal Auditorium. It was a stunning site with two bronze figures in utilities poised in combat, one appeared to be wounded and the other looking up into the sky.

There were several plaques attached to the base, one

of which read "Hill 881 South. On April 30, 1967 one of the bloodiest hill battles of the Vietnam War took place at Hill 881 South. Over 50 United States Marines and over 300 North Vietnamese Regulars lost their lives. This scene was taken from that battle, an incident vividly recalled by Austin Deuel the Artist. On January 3, 1986 John D. Baines, commissioned Austin Deuel to sculpture Hill 881 South as a lasting tribute to all Vietnam Combat Veterans dedicated Sunday afternoon November 9, 1986."

On May 10, 2014 an article authored by Lt. Col Ray Madonna (Ret), read in part: "...when Hill 881 South was positioned on its base...it was no coincidence that the radio operator was looking upward at the American flag. In the actual battle scene, the young Marine was looking skyward for a medical evacuation helicopter. The height of the flag pole and the position of the radio operator's head were designed and constructed to have him looking at the Stars and Stripes for inspiration."

As I walked around the base I observed another plaque with a poem authored by then 1st Lieutenant David G. Rogers. The background for this poem is found on Mr. Rogers USMC Class 38th Alumni Profiles which reads the following. "On April 30, USMC Marines assaulted Hill 881 South. At the end of the day of bitter fighting 44 Marines lay dead and over 100 wounded. As the sun began to set, emergency MedEvacs were still being made to save the dying lives of young Marines. Perimeter defenses were set up for any possible counter-attack from the enemy forces still occupying Hill 881 South and surrounding areas. An air of uncertainty preoccupied the thoughts of those still living as a first quarter moon began to rise over a bloody battlefield. This poem is dedicated to those who fought and fell on that wretched hill in a far-off country where a battle for freedom was fought and won."

The poem on the plaque reads: "Death at My Door" "Day is over as danger hastens, young Marines at their battle stations, instruments of war outline the sky, means of death are standing by. Can it be on this high hill; forces will clash only to kill? Silence fills the near moonless night, restless thoughts of a bloody fight. Endless memories for those awake, meaningful discussion experience would make, thought silent world in which we live, permits only God's comfort to give. Somewhere through the darkness creeping, a date with death is in the keeping, alone I sit and question why, life itself, to be born to merely die? David G. Rogers, 1st Lt. USMC, April 30, 1967, Hill 881 South Republic of Vietnam."

As I continued around the base of the Memorial I



came across another plaque which read: "Vietnam Veterans Memorial" In honor of those men and women who served our country during of its most trying times."

I enjoyed visiting this Memorial Park once again, walking over from the hotel by myself and taking a few minutes to consider the moment and reflect on what the dedication must have been like, now empty of others, quiet and even lonely. I wondered how many others had passed by this Memorial and stopped and considered the sacrifice of so many. My curiosity led me to located the dedication information. "San Antonio's Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Veterans Memorial Plaza was dedicated on Sunday, November 9th, 1986. The ceremony began with an Air Force F-16 flyover in the Missing Man formation, followed by a squadron of eight Army Huey Gunships stilling the emotions of a crowd estimated near 10,000...Retired Army General William Westmoreland was the keynote speaker..."
I don't know if I'll ever return to San Antonio or visit this wonderful Memorial Plaza again, but I'll never forget it. If I should ever find myself this way away I'll pay my respects and remember those who fought that horrific battle.



AFTER 5 DECADES MARINE OFFICERS REUNITE, REMINISCE ABOUT THE BASIC SCHOOL

BY DIANNA CAHN
STARS & STRIPES
NOVEMBER 11 2016

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — Most of them took the military road before they knew it was headed to Vietnam. They were high school graduates in 1962 – intelligent but not necessarily wealthy, and for many, ROTC scholarships meant a free ride to a college degree.

By the time they chose to become Marine Corps officers, there was no doubt where they'd be going. The war that would define them was burning on the horizon. It was their calling, and these boys on the verge of manhood were eager to take up the mantle. For five months in 1966, 184 young men from across the country came together for a brief, defining time here at The Basic School, where newly commissioned Marine Corps officers are trained. They started in June, in the deadly heat of summer and spent the coming months exhausted and covered in dirt and mosquito and tick bites. By November, they were camping and running in the cold rain, covered in mud.

"I learned to laugh at adversity with these guys," said Mike Wholley, who stayed in the Marine Corps for 30 years, retiring as a brigadier general. "These 200 guys from The Basic School – I love them. We all went through the same things. We laughed, we cried, we ate crappy chow, but we laughed through it all and we persevered." And then – almost to a man – they went to war.

THE BASIC SCHOOL

This year marks a half century since TBS class of fiscal year 1967 came through this campus. The buildings have all changed, and the technology is new.

The men of B Company, now in their 70s, laughed in amazement at the large size of the modern classrooms, the perks for new officers and the elaborate choices in the chow hall.

But some things never change.

When Marines on the chow line heard who the visitors were, they shook their hands. And the Marine spiel – with its pride and ethos -- brought the veterans back to their own young boots.

"This is where we introduce young men and women to what it truly means to be a Marine Officer," Maj. Dan Eagan, protocol officer at The Basic School, told the veterans during a briefing. "To lead, to take charge to make decisions when you are under stress, when the world is crashing down around your ears, and maybe the only thing that can be your saving grace is keeping your head on your shoulders, picking up a radio and getting the right support where you need it."

"You all know it because you lived it," he told the silent room.

The veterans had gathered on this autumn weekend to mark then and now, a 50th reunion for men who had been together fleetingly -- some before they could grow a full beard. **(SEE PHOTO BACK PAGE OF COVER)** But it was a seminal time, when they learned to take responsibility and were thrust into battle. Their mettle would be tested, and their ability to laugh, when fate would rightly have them shaking in fear, connected them in irrevocable ways.

For many Marines, service is a calling that bonds them like no other. But as these young lieutenants trained to be officers, they shouldered the added knowledge that they were preparing to take men into battle. For five months, day and night, they ran, jumped and crawled, cursed, fell, got up and did it again. They laughed when it got too hard, or some-

thing didn't go right.

"What are they going to do, send me to Vietnam? Oh wait, they are already doing that,'" they joked. They were hurting and dirty and knew that soon, they'd be at war, and not all of them would come home.

Some kept in contact, becoming lifelong friends. Others put the war behind them – or buried it. Ord Elliott put his manuscript in a drawer for nearly four decades before he published it. Wholley lived in Washington for years before he could bring himself to visit the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial.

"I had this irrational fear I would walk down and see my name. It was not rational. But there were a lot of names of good friends," he said. Now once a year, at 6 a.m., he heads to the Wall and spends an hour and a half there.

In 1996, 30 years after they graduated, classmate Bob Schmitt reached out to 12 classmates whose contacts he had and organized the first small reunion in California. Time passed, and every five years or so, they had an expanded gathering.

Now, about 50 of them were back where started so long ago.

They looked around at the young Marines training for new wars in a newfangled world, struck by how much had changed, but also, how much was familiar. Eagan's words to them struck home.

"As much as we evolve technology-wise, as much as we advance, incorporate new things, these young lieutenants when they graduate have more in common with you gentlemen than they do with their peers out in the civilian world," Eagan said. "Because the underlying fundamentals of what makes a Marine Corps leader are timeless. That they are going to be men and women of character. That they are going to make the right decision.
"That's the institution you passed on to us."

READY, SET, COMBAT

The class graduated at the end of November 1966. Some went on to flight school, dividing further into fixed wing or helicopters. Others landed ground jobs – riflemen or artillerymen -- and were on the front lines by early 1967.

They entered a war in full throttle. The number of American forces in Vietnam had surpassed 350,000, but troops were stretched thin. As American losses multiplied, public support waned.

By the time the first graduates of their class landed in the I Corps tactical zone – the northernmost quadrant of South Vietnam just south of the Demilitarized Zone – they were seeing signs at home of the anti-war sentiment that would punctuate their service and return from war.

Whether they served on the ground or in the air, they came home with the shared experience of combat that cemented their bonds.

"These are the guys that fought with you," said Ord Elliott, who commanded a rifle platoon through battle along the DMZ. "We can understand even though we had different experiences – the wing and the grunts like me – we can understand what that experience was.

"So when we share stories, it's warming," he said. "It's wonderful. It brings back the camaraderie we had as Marines."

"It's about spending time with Marines," said Bob Lund, a CH-46 helicopter pilot in Vietnam. "My whole life, I've been tremendously proud to be a Marine, and I have tremendous respect for other Marines because I know what happened to them. I know what they did."

A LEGACY OF SUCCESS

In the years that followed the war, the men of B Company had remarkable and successful lives. Hon Lee survived the ground war on Hill 881 South near Khe Sanh to be recruited by the CIA – first in their technical unit, and later, as a clandestine operative around the world.

Classmate Andy Vaart also worked for the CIA, as an analyst. He was born in Estonia before his mother escaped to the United States during World War II.

Mike Wholley, who joined the Marines so he could go to law school and become a politician, stayed 30 years, becoming a brigadier general and the top lawyer in the Marine Corps.

Hays Parks, a fellow lawyer who commanded a base security unit at 1st Marine Division headquarters near Da Nang, became the pre-eminent scholar on the laws of war, negotiating weapons agreements on behalf of the United States.

Others went into business or computer technology, or became doctors or surgeons. David Martin served as a U.S. Congressman and John Astle went from flying helicopters to serving two decades as a Maryland state senator.

"The underlying fundamentals of what makes a Marine Corps leader are timeless. That they are going to be men and women of character. That they are going to make the right decision."

- Maj. Dan Eagan, protocol officer



Hon Lee was attached to Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment as leader of a four-man Forward Observer team in 1967, hiking the dense terrain around Khe Sanh ahead of the siege in early 1968. His predecessor and successor were both killed. Courtesy of Hon Lee

In 2014, Astle introduced legislation in Maryland that passed unanimously, making March 30 the official Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day in his state.

He said he had been spit on when he returned home and a friend he'd grown up with turned his back on him because of the war. The legislation, for him, was a way to reconcile the pride these Marines felt coming home with the shame many Americans felt about the war they fought.

"I tell people that of all the things I've done with my life, the thing about which I am most proud is my service as a Marine," Astle said.

A REUNION OF FAMILY

Last month, as they walked the campus of The Basic School, Vaart came across a dedication plaque with several names, including one that stopped him in his tracks: Lt. Col. Victor Ohanesian.

A Marine Corps major working with the Navy ROTC at the University of Rochester in 1964, Ohanesian recruited Vaart and Bob Rivers to join the Marines, not the Navy, at the end of their college scholarships.



Roger Hunt on his first day in Vietnam. Photo taken by TBS classmate Bob Schmitt

He was Vaart's mentor, a Marine he wanted to emulate. It made him proud that Ohanesian had selected him.

Three years later, Vaart was a young lieutenant in Vietnam when he got word that Ohanesian was killed in combat in the DMZ.

Vaart reached out and ran his fingers over the name on the plaque. "He was the first person to see something worthy in me," he said.

The weekend took them to the Marine Corps Museum, where many of them relived their Vietnam battles. Lee stood on his Hill 881 South, John Sullivan and Lund under a Huey from their squadron – one they'd both flown dozens of times. Roger Hart and Astle walked down a CH-46 ramp, remembering how the Marines helped injured buddies onto a bird.

They rescued a lot of troops. But Astle hasn't forgotten one kid who died on the back of his helicopter.

Astle's helicopter had been called in for a rescue in an area where troops had come under heavy fire. But the security gunships were taking too long. He had to choose between risking the lives of himself and his crew to go it alone, or wait. He waited. The copter didn't end up getting shot at, he said. Maybe it was because they came in with the big guns. Or maybe the bad guys had already fled. Maybe the kid would have survived had he gone in sooner. The memory brings him to tears.

"I wrestled with that for a long time before I came to terms with it," he said.

For Bob Rivers, the camaraderie comes back the minute he gets into a room with these men.

"We shared something special," he said, emotion bubbling up as he spoke.

"This is coming home. These are my friends. This is who I am," he said.

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INTERESTING ARTICLE

LEFT BEHIND: THE STORIES BEHIND THE ITEMS LEFT AT THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL WALL

By Jay Korff and Kevin Drennen/ABC7
Thursday, November 10th 2016

WASHINGTON (ABC7) — ***ABC 7 News has been working on a documentary for most of 2016 about items left behind at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington. We felt Veterans Day would be an appropriate time to release this powerful story. These very personal and intimate objects, like a rotor blade from a downed helicopter, speak not only to sacrifice but ultimately to our deepest desire to heal from a complicated and painful past. If you would like to share your story or provide feedback, we welcome it. Please email jkorff@sbgtv.com with your thoughts.***

The Warehouse

When you step inside an unassuming warehouse in Hyattsville, Maryland you're reminded that extraordinary items are sometimes found in unremarkable places.

"We're always finding new and interesting things," says National Park Service museum technician Janet Donlin.

The National Park Service National Capital Region Museum Resource Center houses millions of treasured artifacts from America's past.

Writings, records and artwork from National Park Service sites in the D.C. region, like Ford's Theater and the Frederick Douglas estate, are carefully preserved and stored here when not on display.

National Park Service Park Curator Laura Anderson says, "These objects all tell a story and it's a very powerful experience to work with these objects."

But the bulk of this cavernous depository of history was actually amassed by you as a thank you.

Donlin says, "So everything in these boxes has been left at The Wall."

This place is not open to the public.

"We call it the floor. Its artifact storage and the blue boxes that you see in front of you are where we store the Vietnam collection," says Donlin.

Rows and rows of towering stacks soar nearly to the ceiling here. And for more than 30 years curators and technicians like Janet Donlin have been meticulously cataloging the hundreds of thousands of items left behind by those visiting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in nearby Washington.



There are tributes, reminders and keepsakes that catapult you back to that tumultuous time. One veteran left his daily countdown calendar.

Another donated the POW flag he received upon returning stateside.

Donlin says, "He made the cross out of his toothpaste tube and he tied it together with his uniform while he was a prisoner of war."

There are hellos to heroes and unintended goodbyes to sons.

Donlin says "A generic happy birthday card but she received it back in the mail verified deceased return to sender."

Only a day after Air Force Major Leonard Niski's mother sent her son this birthday card in 1967 Niski was killed in action. She kept that card for more than 25 years before it was placed at The Wall.

Park Rangers have been picking up and keeping items placed at The Wall since 1984.

Their routine is like clockwork. At nightfall they pick up the pictures and packages left behind. From D.C. these items are taken to the warehouse where they are placed in a box to one day be catalogued.
To give you a sense of the size and scope of this collection curators and technicians have catalogued around 500 boxes. They still have another 1,000 boxes to look through.

Donlin says, "A lot of what's in the collection is what we call documentary artifacts."

Like poems, pictures and letters.

This massive stockpile of offerings varies from the routine to the remarkable.

"It's one of a kind," says Donlin as she lifts a white covering off of an old motorcycle with a timeless story.

Donlin says, "We call it the hero bike. It's the largest, the heaviest and most significant piece that we have in our collection."

The hero bike honors the 37 men from Wisconsin listed as either prisoners of war or missing in action.

"This motorcycle was left at The Wall in 1995 by this group of veterans. They were part of Rolling Thunder," says Donlin.

That year those veterans rolled 900 miles from Wisconsin to The Wall pulling a trailer loaded with that handcrafted chopper. They left that bike at The Wall to be consumed by history as a symbol of devotion to men left behind.

A cluster of dog tags are attached to the front of the hog. Each man is represented by one of those dog tags.

And inscription of the seat reads 'Bring 'em home or send us back.' This motorcycle has never been ridden. It can't until all 37 men come home.



The Wall

There are few places on the American landscape as revered as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The Wall, simple in its power, is not political. It doesn't need to be.

"It symbolizes sacrifice," says Janet Sileo. Her uncle Jerry Elliott was killed during the Vietnam War. Hiding behind a sloping hillside this black granite monument, gleaming like a mirror, pays tribute to the more than 58,000 lives lost in a conflict that still haunts a nation. Every year millions gaze upon the cherished, chiseled names of the fallen.

The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Fund (VVMF) is the nonprofit organization that built the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

"It brings you closer to your lost loved ones," says Rick Prine. His brother Rob Prine perished during the war.

Here we reflect on a sorrowful past and for some, what is a still painful present.
It's become a tradition for Ed Holterman to return to a certain spot at The Wall every Memorial Day Weekend. But for nearly 50 years Holterman could not bear to be here, to walk the cobblestone path, to face an old friend he believes he disappointed so long ago.

Holterman says, "I knew these guys. The one guy saved my life and he's here."

Holterman says during the war he had too much to drink one night and couldn't work the next morning. The man who replaced him on that mission was killed.

"I wanted to say I was sorry. For all these years I've had a lot of guilt, a lot of anger and general disgust



with myself and everything that happened," says Holterman.

Holterman recently left his original Vietnam Veterans ball cap at The Wall for that comrade to dull a pain that will never fully recede.

Other more unique items find their way here and then to The Warehouse so parents can share with the world a part of their soldier's story far removed from the blood soaked battlefields of Vietnam.

As technician Janet Donlin walks over a heavy carrying case to a display table she tells us, "So I cataloged this recently after discovering it in a box. I thought it was odd because of how heavy the box was so of course I had to look into it and see what was inside of it."

Roller skates. And not just any pair from anybody. Donlin reveals, "Terry Lee Moore Vietnam Veteran killed in action May 6, 1968."

Moore won nearly 100 trophies and metals in competitive skating before leaving the carefree world of the rink for the jungles of Southeast Asia.

Donlin says, "You can look on The Wall and see a name but you don't really know about the person



until you see his story. It's kind of like piecing together a puzzle."

This wondrous gathering of memory also sits beside profound sadness. These shelves hold so many reminders of soldiers who can no longer speak for themselves.

But we found one small item, hidden from the public for a generation, which tells a young pilot's story in his own words.

Donlin says, "So this is a ¼ inch magnetic reel. It actually contains vocal recordings from a person who served in Vietnam. This was made by Robert Prine."

"Well hello. How is every little thing on the home front. I am in Bravo troop 1st of the 9th cavalry," says Prine in the recording.

The Tapes

"Well hello. How is every little thing on the home front? And I'm presently An Khe, Vietnam," says Prine in the recording.

Rob Prine grew up in Daytona Beach, Florida.

His younger brother Rick says life with Rob, the oldest brother, was never dull.

"It was a crazy household. There were six siblings. My mother was on her own as she had been divorced," says Rick Prine.
Rick says Rob willingly took on the role of surrogate father and when war called, Rob volunteered. Before shipping off to Southeast Asia Rick Prine made a promise to his sweetheart Sandy Yager. They decided to get married when Rob returned home.



Rick says, "Well I heard from my brother Rob that 'hey, when I get back Sandy and I are going to get married and we're going to have kids, lots of kids'." Rob Prine's connection to family ran deep. He corresponded with loved ones every chance he could while heading into harm's way. In fact Rick showed us a number of original post cards that Rob had sent him from abroad while heading to Vietnam.

But what Rob shipped stateside next is now a part of our nation's history.

National Park Service museum technician Janet Donlin holds up a small, flat, square container and says, "And he sent it to a Ms. Sandra Yager in Atlanta, Georgia. We actually had this recently digitized so I was probably the first person to listen to this recording since it was left at The Wall in 1989." Prine made reel-to-reel tape recordings.

"Well hello you all. I figured I would send you some words here," says Rob Prine on the recording.

It's late January 1968. Prine is based out of Ah Khe, the largest helicopter base in the world at the time. Ah Khe also served as a critical transportation and tactical hub for U.S. military operations.

Rob says in a recording, "I'll go forward Monday I believe. Either Monday or Tuesday and that's to our

area of operation and that's where I guess we start the war." In the background of this particular recording you can clearly hearing helicopters landing or taking off.

But this recording would be the last time his family and his fiancé would hear Rob's voice. On only his 20th day in Vietnam, this 21-year-old crashed the helicopter he was piloting in foul weather.

Rob's brother Rick says, "In the process of trying to turn around he hit the mountain and that was it. I went ballistic. I could not control myself because he meant so much to me and the rest of the family and



he was gone."

For years, Rick dreamed of a scenario never to be: that his resourceful brother had somehow survived. Rick says, "Of course that didn't happen but you always want to hope to see your brother again because he was special."

The tapes arrived stateside soon after Rob's death. Rick, while fighting back tears, says, "It was devastating to have to listen to him alive when we knew he was dead."

He adds that Rob's loss was especially difficult on the woman he wanted to marry.

"They loved each other tremendously. I was devastated but Sandy was doubly devastated by his loss because they loved each other so much," says Rick. In one of Rob Prine's final recordings he says to Sandy, "Take care of yourself. And I really can't think of all that much to tell you except I'm doing fine. Pretty good life here I guess. Pretty good start anyway."

The Prine family made sure Rob would live on in others. Rick named his son after his brother. His sister Mary did the same. When Sandy Yager married she also had a son. That young man, during an 8th grade field trip to Washington, D.C. in 1989, placed those recordings at The Wall so Rob Prine's story of devotion to family and to county could live on forever.

"Be good Sandy. I miss you. Bye-bye," says Rob.

The Rotor Blade

Three days before Rob Prine arrived in Vietnam, the infamous Battle of Khe Sanh erupted to the north. This engagement would prove to be among the longest and bloodiest of the war.

In the first hours of this ferocious siege, 19-year-old Private Jerry Elliott with the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company volunteered for a dangerous rescue mission.

According to first-hand accounts, helicopters headed to a barren mountaintop in search of wounded. Upon arrival enemy fire hit the lead chopper which erupted in flames and crashed. Survivors say Elliott hit the ground to aid crash survivors but was soon surrounded. That's the last time Jerry Elliott of Greenville, Mississippi was seen alive.

"The helicopters who had landed to help with the rescue mission pulled away and left men on the ground, one being my uncle," says Janet Sileo, Elliott's niece.

Sileo says when helicopters circled back several minutes later her uncle had vanished.

"And everyone was gone. There was no one. The casualties were on the ground. Everyone disappeared. No one knew where they were. Where did they go?" says Sileo.

Sileo, who lives in nearby Reston, comes to The Wall often to pay homage to a man who meant so

much to her family.

Sileo says, "This is an uncle I have never met but I absolutely love and adore. His sacrifice for me, the freedoms I'm able to experience because his name is on The Wall. It's not just a name. It's a person. Someone who people love and the fact that this is all we have of him. This is it."

Jerry Elliott's remains were never found. But something else, something remarkable, did eventually come home thanks to a sister who refuses give up on her brother.

If there's an item at the warehouse that symbolizes the unfailing commitment to MIAs it may be this one.

Technician Janet Donlin carefully opens up an old, small pine box and says, "This is a part of a helicopter blade."

And not just any rotor blade.

"This is a piece of history directly from the site, from the era. This can't be replaced," says Donlin.
The spellbinding story behind this blade is one for the ages.

Thirty-one years after Jerry Elliott disappeared on that hilltop near Khe Sanh his sister Donna arrived



in country with a team of experts in search of anything connected to her lost hero.
While interviewing people in the village task force members discovered that a farmer, years ago, had salvaged parts from the very helicopter that crashed moments before Jerry Elliott disappeared.

Donlin says, "They found some local Vietnamese who knew of what happened at the time. They told the crew about this guy who was using a helicopter blade that he found as a fence post in his cow pen."
Task force members bartered for that rotor blade and brought it home. On Memorial Day 2000 Donna Elliott and surviving members of that fateful rescue mission came to Washington. They placed the rotor blade in a pine box that was draped in an American flag. And they left it at The Wall so that the only link to a life lost was assured a place in history.

Jerry's sister Donna tells ABC7 News that in the summer of 2016 the crash site at Khe Sanh was excavated. She says additional helicopter debris was discovered. Jerry Elliott's remains were not found. Donna Elliott tells us she vows to never give up the search for her brother.

The Huey

There is a reality of war that most combat veterans cannot escape. The repercussions of battle often result in invisible scars that embed in the bones of soldiers.
For Aircraft Commander Walter McNees and Door Gunner Ralph Tutrani their recent and historic

trip to The Wall reminds us that with a bit of luck and a lot of faith you can begin to heal wounds deep and wide by honoring your fallen brothers in arms.
"This project has helped me so much with maybe just coming to grips with it," says Carol Hewitt. Her brother Gary Dubach was killed in Vietnam.

This project, so improbable, began nearly 50 years ago with a call for help during the war near the town of Tay Ninh 100 kilometers northwest of old Saigon.

A Huey and its crew came under heavy fire while trying to save fellow soldiers.
"It has a serial number 174 and it was shot down on Valentine's Day in 1969. It was a medivac unit and it was going in for a rescue. There were five on board. There was a pilot, a co-pilot, crew chief, door gunner. It was leaking hydraulic fluid, low on fuel

so it had to make crash landing in a hot zone."

After the helicopter landed at an angle crew chief Gary Dubach and Stephen Schumacher jumped out to set up a perimeter only to be hit and killed by the rotor blade.

"A lot of families were destroyed when these guys were killed," says McNees.

Those families and those survivors have struggled in the decades to follow.

McNees admits, "I have PTSD very bad and this mission was probably at the top of the list for causing that."

Out of that darkness emerged an unlikely light. A man connected in no way to that mission recently made an astounding discovery in a remote helicopter boneyard.

"So we found this in Show Low, Arizona which is in the White Mountains of Northeast Arizona," says



Dave Barron.

Retired Army Sgt. Dave Barron runs a non-profit that supports combat veterans grappling with PTSD. Light Horse Legacy is a benevolent educational organization designed to promote treatment and healing of Post Traumatic Stress suffered by all U.S. combat veterans.

A couple of years ago, Barron searched randomly for a battle-tested helicopter to restore. His idea was to rebuild a Vietnam-era Huey in a way that helps combat veterans talk about the silent fight burning inside them.

Barron determined after months of research that the old helicopter he found in that remote Arizona helicopter boneyard was the very Huey that crashed in Tay Ninh back in '69. And not only that, he found the relatives of crash victims Gary Dubach and Stephen Schumacher.

"I never would have thought I would have seen it again or seen it at all because it got shot down. I figured it would be in Vietnam," says Dubach's sister Carol Hewitt.

And then Barron, with the help of veteran's organizations, tracked down crew members like Ralph Tutrani.

"I got off the phone and I turned to my wife and I said you're not going to believe this. You're not going to believe what I just got off the phone and listened to," says Tutrani.

hen renowned artist Steve Maloney went to work, transforming that air ambulance into a spectacular 47-foot-long sculpture designed to inspire dialogue and healing. The piece, called "Take Me Home Huey", now tours the country and will be featured in the New York City Veterans Day event November 11. The sculpture then heads to exhibits on the west coast.

Take Me Home Huey is a partnership between Steve Maloney and Light Horse Legacy.

During Memorial Day weekend, victims' relatives and surviving crew members gathered at The National Museum of the Marine Corps in Virginia where the sculpture was on display.

There would be one last mission on this day to close a significant circle.

Tutrani says, "Maybe this project will say, you're home now. You can let go."
An original section of the Huey's door panel was removed so it could be left at The Wall. McNees and Tutrani, along with relatives of the victims of that crash, walked to the spot where the names of Gary Dubach and Stephen Schumacher are in-

scribed on The Wall.

During a short ceremony McNees and Tutrani presented a part of that Huey to the sisters of the fallen. Walter McNees says, "This is the panel of the aircraft that has been restored and we would like to give it to you ladies in honor and remembrance of Gary and Stephen and we'd like to go ahead and give this to you now."

And as Laura Anderson with the National Park Service walked away with that special section of that old Huey in her hands, to place in the country's archive, we are reminded of this memorial's timeless



power.

Maybe in a way, The Wall is a reflection of ourselves: all we've seen, all we've learned in one nation's collective effort to better honor and to better treat the men and women who serve, fight and die for our freedom.

The Collection: An Unprecedented Phenomenon

Due to the sheer volume of items the National Park Service cannot keep every item left behind at The Wall. For that and other reasons the agency in early November 2016 updated its Scope of Collection Statement. It spells out in detail how items will be collected and cared for.
his statement says many things about the historical importance of this collection and the unprecedented nature of visitors leaving behind so many items that speak to the healing power of The Wall.

Moving forward the Vietnam Veterans Memorial cultural collection will generally keep "Items with a discernible connection to service in the Vietnam War…" The statement adds items not added to the collection will include offerings left by school groups, perishable items, mass-produced items and objects tied to wars or movements not associated the Vietnam War.













NOVEMBER 10, 2016

Each year on or around 10 November, Marines gather in groups large and small to celebrate our history, honor the memory of those who have gone before us, and rekindle the bond that unites all generations of Marines. This year, we mark the 241st anniversary of our Corps—241 years of uncommon valor, innovation, and combat excellence.

Marines, we are part of something bigger than any of us could imagine. Whether you fought in the battles of World War I, in the Pacific during World War II, in Korea or Vietnam, in Desert Shield or Desert Storm, or in the streets of Iraq and Afghanistan—or you are just starting out on your Marine Corps journey—we are all part of an elite family of warriors. For the rest of your life, the first term people use to describe you will be "Marine."

When the Continental Congress stood up two battalions of Marines in 1775, a culture of discipline, vigilance, professionalism, and military excellence was born that has characterized our Corps for nearly two and a half centuries. As Marines, we have a profound respect for our traditions and heritage, and for taking care of each other. We know we're strongest when we're together as a team. Wherever you are celebrating our Corps' birthday this year, look around at the Marines beside you and remember the bonds forged in training, in garrison, and in combat. Take this time to reconnect.

We are Marines for life. It's our responsibility, our duty, to maintain and build upon the legacy of those who have gone before us. What we do today, guided by what we've learned from past generations, will determine the future of our Corps. So as we celebrate this 241st anniversary of our Corps, we also look ahead and prepare for our next success. Take pride in carrying our legacy forward.

Happy Birthday, Marines!
Semper Fidelis,
Robert B. Neller
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

GOD BLESS AMERICA & HAPPY BIRTHDAY
TOM EICHLER
PRESIDENT KHE SANH VETERANS

The 2017 Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion will be held at the Cleveland Marriott East, 26300 Harvard Rd, Warrensville Heights, Oh- 44122-6146 Ph: 216-378-9191, From August 27th 2017 to 03 September 2017. Rates are 109.00 a day, rates same 3 Days before & 3 Days after. Hotel is located in a giant mall with numerous restaurants and shops only a 5 minute walking distance. No Fee for parking. No Pets



HOTEL AMENTITIES

- All public areas non-smoking
- Beauty shop, nearby (referral at front desk)
- Buffet breakfast, fee from : 14.95 USD
- Cash machine/ATM
- Coffee in lobby
- Coffee/tea in-room
- Concierge Lounge Hours
- Concierge desk
- Continental breakfast, fee from : 11.95 USD
- Foreign exchange, nearby
- Full American breakfast, fee from: 14.95 USD
- Gift/newsstand
- Hot breakfast, fee from : 14.95 USD
- Housekeeping service daily
- Laundry on-site
- Laundry on-site, coin operated
- Mobility accessible rooms

HOTEL AMENTITIES

- Newspaper delivered to room, on request
- Newspaper in lobby
- Phone calls: toll-free
- Room service, 6:00 AM-11:00 PM
- Safe deposit boxes, front desk
- Valet dry-cleaning
- Vending machines

Virtual Concierge Available

There is a large mall located within a five minute walk, from Hotel which contains many Fine restaurant s and Stores.























Tom Ford F/2/26 With his two Daughters, Lovely wife & Adopted Son "Big John" Pessoni





L-R- Bill & Joanne Eichler Merle & Rita Moritz





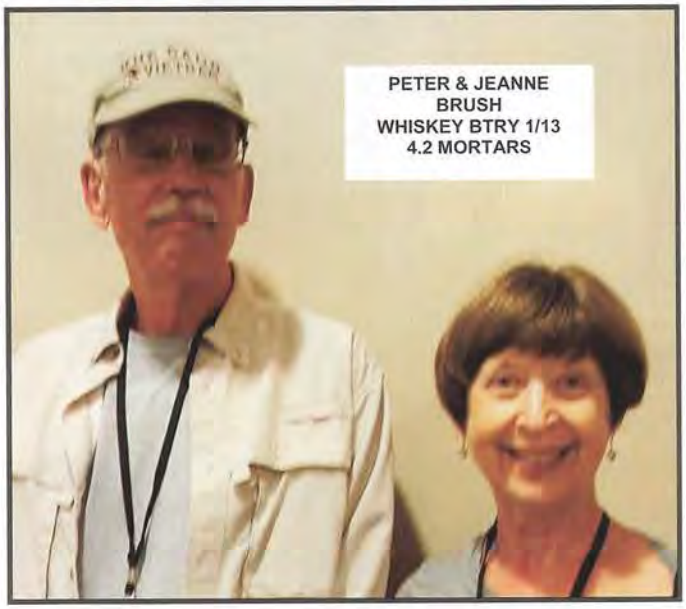





MARSHALL & LINDA PARKER A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS "ONTOS"



FRANK & ROSA PORTELLO A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS "ONTOS"

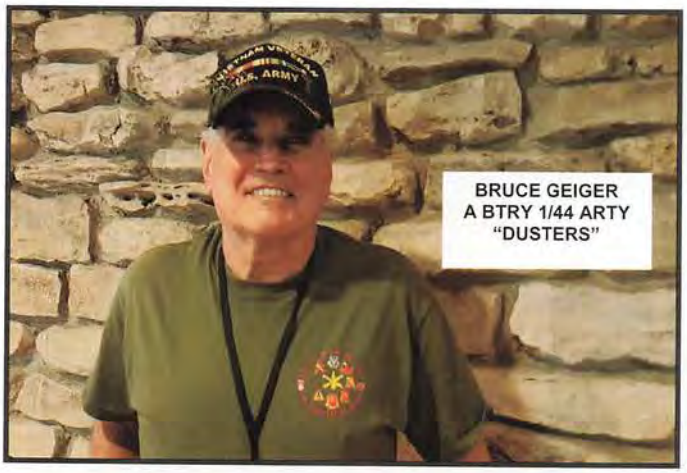
BRUCE GEIGER A BTRY 1/44 ARTY "DUSTERS"

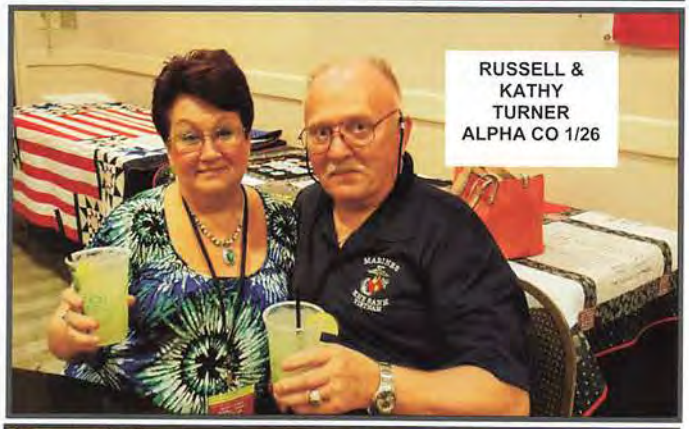
RUSSELL & KATHY TURNER ALPHA CO 1/26

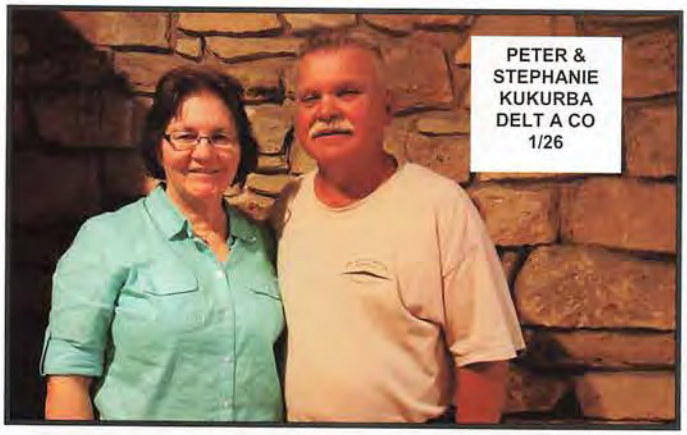
PETER & STEPHANIE KUKURBA DELT A CO 1/26

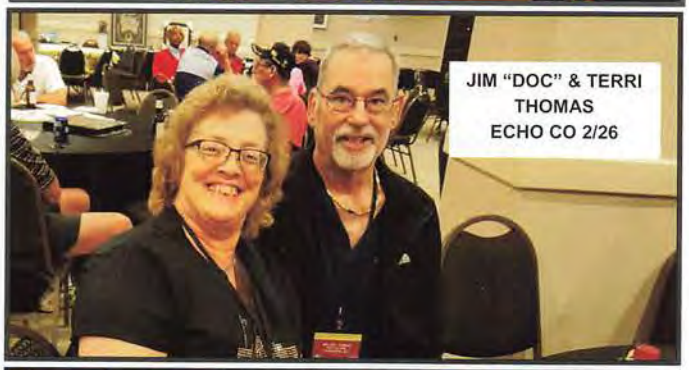
JIM "DOC" & TERRI THOMAS ECHO CO 2/26



RUSS & FAYE EVANS H&S CO 1/26


1ST SGT BENJAMIN & JACKIE LEITH GOLF CO 2/26 SENIOR DRILL INSTRUCTOR FOR PLATOON 2085

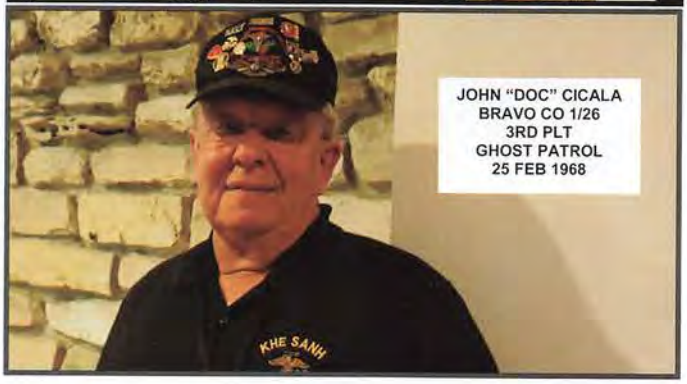

JOHN "DOC" CICALA BRAVO CO 1/26 3RD PLT GHOST PATROL 25 FEB 1968

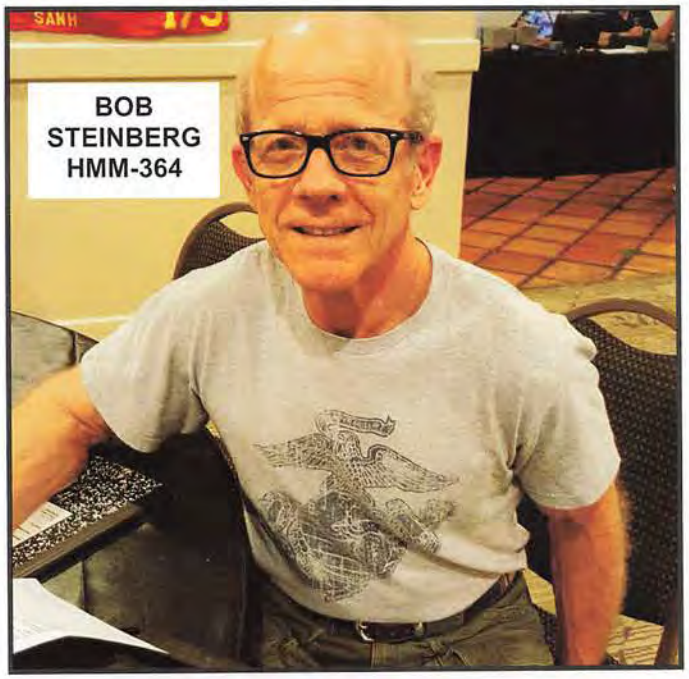
BOB STEINBERG HMM-364

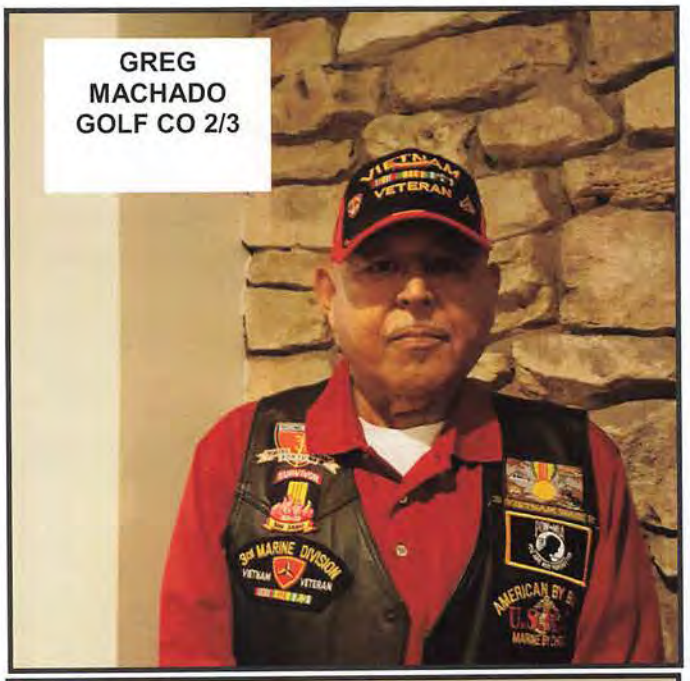

GREG MACHADO GOLF CO 2/3



HANS & GALINA GRANQVIST 1ST BN 1/13 SWEDEN

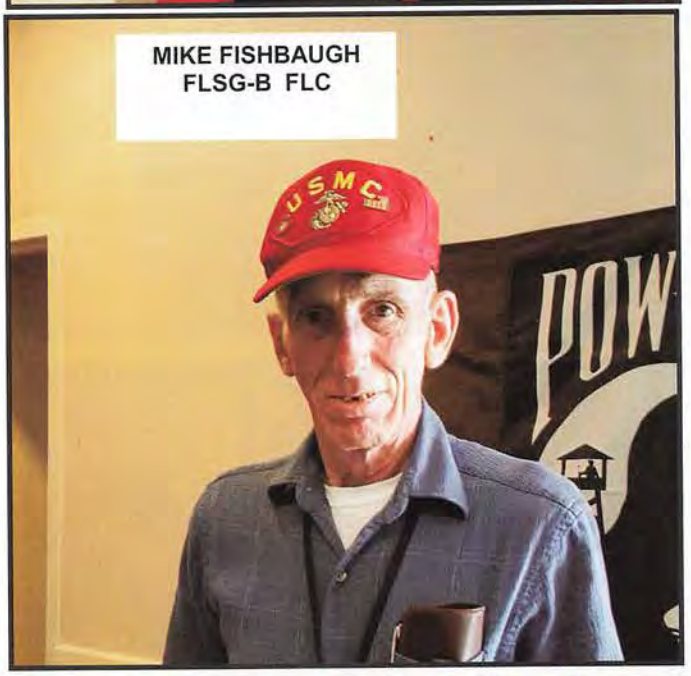

MIKE FISHBAUGH FLSG-B FLC


RAYMOND "CLYDE" PHILLIPS A CO 3RD COMBAT ENGINEERS

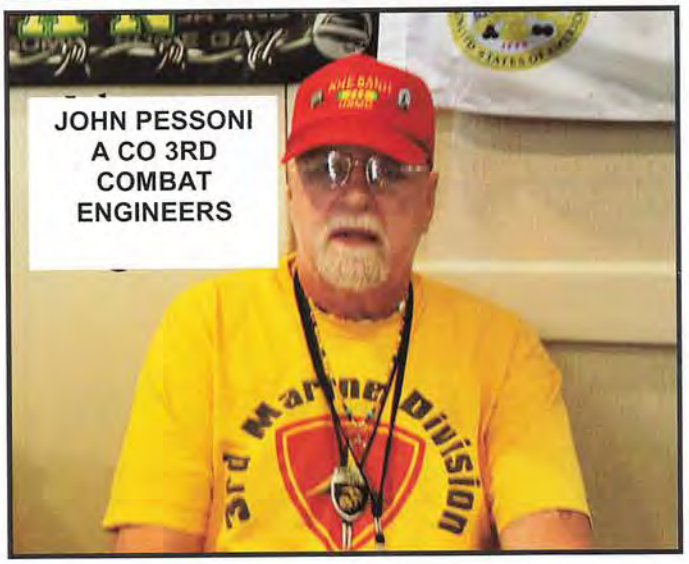

JOHN PESSONI A CO 3RD COMBAT ENGINEERS



JOHN & JAN VOSNICK GOLF CO 2/26


DON MASON
BRAVO CO 1/1
IST TRANSPLACEMENT
BN OKINAWA 1959
FMF
USMC

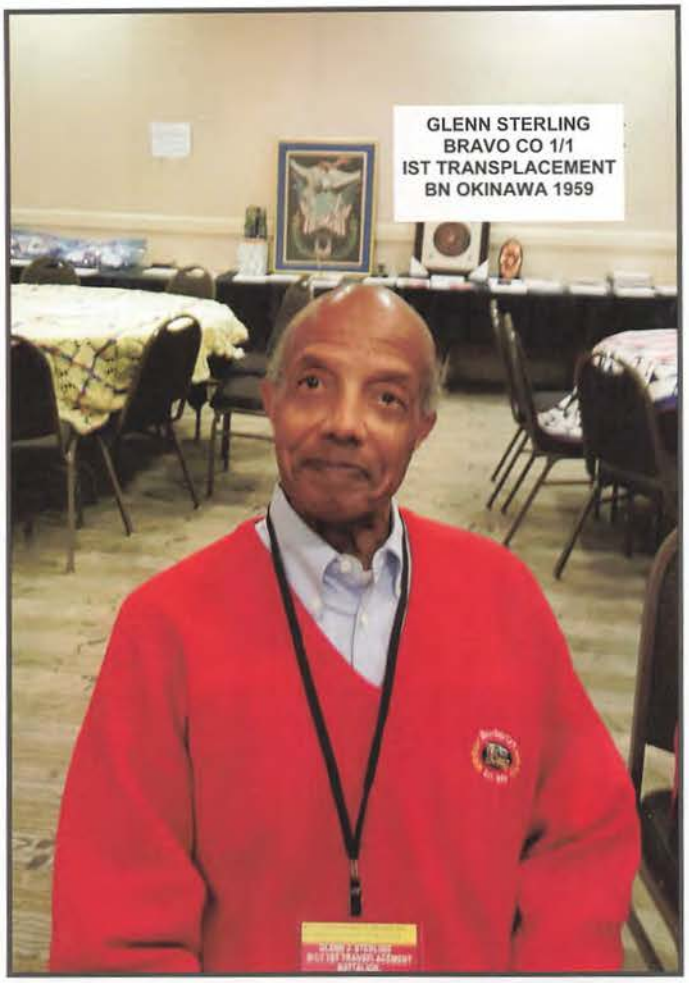
GLENN STERLING
BRAVO CO 1/1
IST TRANSPLACEMENT
BN OKINAWA 1959


Joe & Mary
JOE & MARY
REBOLTZ
BRAVO CO 1/1
IST TRANS-
PLACEMENT BN
OKINAWA 1959


JOHN & JUDY LEWIS
BRAVO CO 1/1
IST TRANSPLACEMENT
BN OKINAWA 1959


JERRY & JANET
LEWIEN
GOLF CO 2/26
Khe Sanh
Bonded


WAYNE & JOYCE
DEVERNEY
H&S CO 2/26


DAN "DOC" DOYLE BRAVO CO 3RD RECON

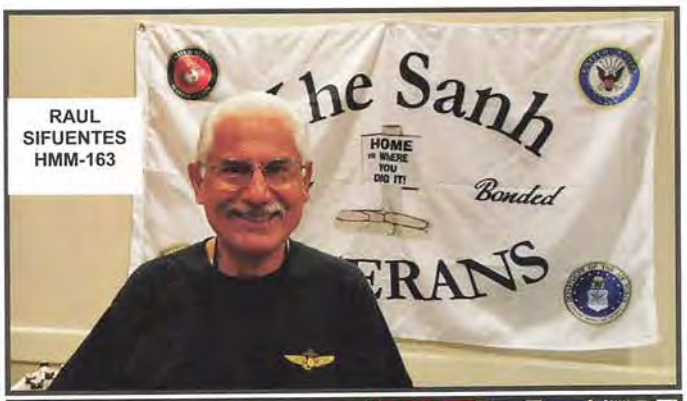
RAUL SIFUENTES HMM-163


LARRY "DOC" & LOU LECLAIRE KILO CO 3/26


RON & SHERRIE TAYLOR HQ BTRY 1/11


VIRGIL "STEVE" CAUGHRON & EYDIE HQ BTRY 1/11


JOHN & GWINN WOLFE KILO CO 3/26


LINDA KAZIMIR WITH DAUGHTER TERRI WIDOW & DAUGHTER OF ED KAZIMIR FOXTROT CO 2/26


PETER FREDERIKSEN USMC PLATOON 2085



MEMBERS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS ATTEND AN OUTDOOR BBQ SPONSORED BY THE MEMBERS OF VFW POST 76 & THE KSV
























UNITED STATES
MARINES
Semper Fidelis
KHE SANH


ALUMNI



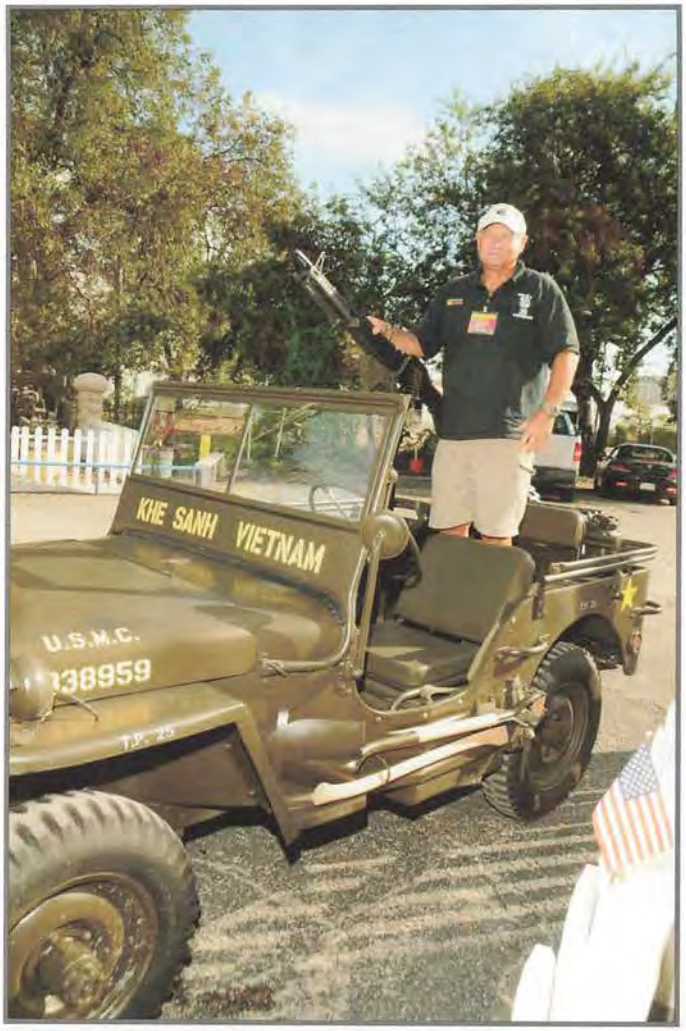
KHE SANH VIETNAM
U.S.M.C.






KHE SANH VIETNAM
U.S.M.C.





OUR BEAUTIFUL LADIES DURING THEIR LADIES LUNCHEON, HELD THEIR OWN AUCTION WHICH RAISED OVER $ 800.00 DOLLARS FOR THE KHE SANH VETERANS SCHOLARSHIP FUND


















VFW POST 1533 ALSO HONORED THE KHE SANH VETERANS WITH A BBQ










VFW 1533






Coors
LIGHT











KHE SANH VETERANS ANNUAL BANQUET



HONOR GUARD PROVIDED BY VFW POST 76



LIGHTING OF POW CANDLE BY LINDA KAZIMIR & DAUGHTER TERRI ESCORTED BY BILLY MARTIN



LINDA EASTER WIFE OF HAROLD EASTER SANG A BEAUTIFUL NATIONAL ANTHEM



KHE SANH VETERANS BOARD OF DIRECTORS































KHE SANH VETERANS WHO WERE ALL PRIOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS















RON & KATHY RAYNER & SISTER KAREN THERIOT A CO 1/26 KSV CHAPLAIN



GEORGE, PAULETTE & ALEXIS MIRAMONTEZ A CO 1/26 ATT TO 3/26 HILL 861



JESUS & MARY JONES 1ST BN 26TH MARINES H&HS CO



HAROLD & LINDA EASTER A CO 1/26



ROLAND KUTZBACH SEABEE WITH SUSIE & MELAYSIA



ROBERT & LINDA LONGCRANE E CO 2/26



ART & LINDA LOMAS

RAY "DOC" TORRES E CO 2/26



JOHN & KAY HARGESHEIMER A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS "ONTOS"

HOW A MARINE UNIT BECAME "THE WALKING DEAD"

One Marine Corps unit exemplifies traditions through its actions and its enduring nickname: the Dead. Through nearly four years of combat in Vietnam, the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines earned its place in Marine Corps history. Amazing Combat Stories



In the annals of Marine Corps history there are many famous units and numerous famous men. There are tales of valor and loss.

But one unit truly exemplifies these traditions through its actions and its enduring nickname: the Walking Dead.

Through nearly four years of combat in Vietnam, the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines earned its place in Marine Corps history.



Lance Cpl. Spencer Cohen, rifleman with 1st platoon, Alpha Company, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, traverses a path for his team through rocky terrain during a mechanized assault as part of a live fire range in Djibouti, Africa, March 29. (Photo by Sgt. Alex C. Sauceda)

The 1st Battalion first arrived in Vietnam in June 1965 as part of the troop increase and escalation that year as U.S. forces took over most combat operations from the South Vietnamese. By August they were involved in offensive combat operations as part of Operation Blastout — a search and clear mission.

More missions continued throughout 1965 and into 1966. In their first year in Vietnam the Marines of 1/9 would conduct hundreds of company-sized or larger missions. The Marines of the 1st battalion, as part of a greater effort by the 9th Marine Regiment, also developed the SPARROW HAWK concept. This was essentially a heliborne quick reaction force that could be called in to help win a fight in which Marines on patrol had found themselves. The 1st Battalion, 9th Marines then rotated out of Vietnam for a few brief months beginning in October 1966.

When the unit returned in December 1966 the operations tempo greatly increased. The 1st battalion Marines started 1967 with the anti-climactic Operation Deckhouse V. From there operations picked up in the 9th Marines tactical area of responsibility. This area just south of the Demilitarized Zone became known as "Leatherneck Square" for the high number of Marine casualties. The Marines there swore the wind, rather than blowing, made a sucking sound. It was in this area that the 1st Battalion 9th Marines became the legendary Walking Dead.

The battalion participated in three phases of Operation Prairie within Leatherneck Square. Casualties were heavy as the Marines conducted search-and-destroy missions. In less than a month through mid-1967, Marine casualties during Prairie IV were 167 killed, and over 1,200 wounded.

In July, 1/9 participated in Operation Buffalo, a clearing mission up Highway 561. On the first day of the operation, July 2, the Marines of A and B

companies encountered strong NVA resistance. The fighting was bitter. The NVA used flamethrowers to burn the vegetation and force the Marines into the open. An NVA artillery round wiped out the entire company headquarters for B company.

Soon the commander of 1/9 sent in C and D companies to relieve the battered Marines. With significant support they were finally able to force the NVA to break contact. The battalion suffered 84 Marines killed and 190 wounded. The next day only 27 Marines from B company and 90 from A company were fit for duty.

A combination of the remnants of Companies A and C several days later was able to get some payback on the NVA, inflicting 154 enemy killed. By the middle of July Operation Buffalo came to an end. Almost immediately the men of the 9th Marines were back in action as part of Operation Kingfisher in the Western portion of Leatherneck Square. This operation drug on until the end of October 1967. The sporadic but intense combat saw another 340 Marines killed and over 1,400 wounded in Leatherneck Square.

January 1968 found the battalion reinforcing the infamous Khe Sanh Combat Base just south of the Demilitarized Zone and west of Leatherneck Square. The Marines at Khe Sanh not only held the base but also fought in the hills surrounding it. Just over a week before the Tet Offensive began on January 30, 1968, the North Vietnamese began laying siege to Khe Sanh. Some 6,000 Marines, including 1/9, would endure daily shelling and close-combat for 77 days before being relieved. In all, 205 Americans were killed and over 1,600 wounded defending Khe Sanh. A further 200 Marines died in the bloody fighting in the hills surrounding Khe Sanh.

The lifting of the siege was hardly the end for the Walking Dead though. Immediately upon relief of duty from the defense of Khe Sanh they began Operation Scotland II to clear the area nearby. Following the conclusion of Scotland II, the Marines of 1/9 returned to the Con Thien area and took part in Operation Kentucky. This action would last until near the end of 1968.

In early 1969, the 1st battalion, as part of the larger 9th Marine Regiment, launched Operation Dewey Canyon, the last major Marine Corps operation in Vietnam. During this time the Marines swept through the NVA controlled A Shau valley and other areas near the DMZ. In a heroic action on February 22, 1968, then-Lt. Wesley Fox earned the Medal of Honor. The Marines suffered over 1,000 casualties during the operation. The entire regiment was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for their extraordinary heroism during Operation Dewey Canyon.

The Walking Dead — along with the rest of the 9th Marines — redeployed from Vietnam in the summer of 1969 to Okinawa.

The name "the Walking Dead" was originally used by Ho Chi Minh talking about the Marines in the A Shau valley. Later, after the 1stBattalion suffered extraordinarily high casualty rates, they used the term to describe themselves. Of a standard battalion strength of 800 Marines, the battalion had 747 killed in action with many times that number wounded. They also were in sustained combat operations for just short of four years. Both of these are Marine Corps records.

The unit was disbanded in mid-2000, reactivated for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, then was disbanded again in 2015.

HONORS AWARDED
1ST BATTALION 9TH MARINES

Presidential Unit Citation w/2 Bronze Stars

WAR WORLD II
Iwo Jima – 1945

VIETNAM
1965 – 1967
1968

Presidential Unit Citation (Army) Streamer

VIETNAM
1969
Navy Unit Commendation Streamer w/1 Bronze Star

VIETNAM
1968

GULF WAR
1990 – 1991

Meritorious Unit Commendation Streamer w/2 Bronze Stars

VIETNAM
1967
PERSIAN GULF
1987
PERSIAN GULF
1994

Asiatic – Pacific Campaign Streamer with/4 Bronze Stars
World War II Victory Streamer
National Defense Service Streamer with/2 Bronze Stars
Korean Service Streamer
Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamer with/2 Bronze Stars
Vietnam Service Streamer with/2 Silver Stars
Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Streamer


Charlie Company


Delta Company


Alpha Company


Headquarters & Supply


Bravo Company


Corpsmen

REFLECTIONS

By Glenn Griffin
Delta Co 1/1

Its been a month since returning from San Antonio Reunion. Since returning I have undergone major surgery for cancer and will shortly start a series of radiation and chemo treatments. This is second go around did this seven years ago. Agent orange seems to be relentless as the NVA at TET.

Times like these tend to motivate me to reflect on life experiences. A year ago I sent a note to me kids and grandkids with a copy of Red Clay Magazine. That particular issue contained article on my Battalions' 1/1/ memorial dedication at Quantico.

Thanks to Tom Eichler and all Khe Sanh Vets for providing an outlet for us old beaten up guys can rally around. I can't express how fortunate I feel to be a member of this great group and will be no matter how long I hang around.

I am attaching a copy of note I sent to my family and once again want to express the gratitude to Tom for publishing our event in the Red Clay. The magazine itself is one of the best historical references and chronicle of what we experienced and until a few years ago we were scorned by our own countrymen.

December 24th, 2015

Dear kids and grandkids;

I want to wish all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New year. As a different and special gift I want you all to have a copy of a magazine called Red Clay. It is a publication from Khe Sanh Veterans Organization to which I am a member. This is one of the groups that mom and I enjoy a reunion every year. It is composed of Marines , Army, Air Force , and Navy veterans who served in the Khe Sanh Area during the Vietnam War. It was also where one of the largest and longest battle of the war was fought. I was lucky to survive this duty but lost some of my best buddies during the three months we fought there.

The reason I want all of you to have this copy of Red Clay is because it includes an article and pictures of a dedication of a special monument to my Battalion and the 567 men we lost during the war. This is a project that was initiated by myself and a buddy by the name of Bill Ring. It started as an idea in North Myrtle Beach a couple of years ago and grew into a major accomplishment and monument that will last as long as our country survives. It is located at the marine Corps Museum in Quantico Virginia. I hope all of you will get to see it in person someday. It will be there long after all of the men who served in 1/1 during 1965-71 including me will have passed on ot guard heavens streets.

The Article itself is titled the Journey and starts on Page 70 of the Magazine. A speech given by a good friend of mine Rob Koury gives a great snapshot of what life was like for a combat marine during those times. In addition there are some great pictures located towards the back of this issue of the monument itself and parts of the ceremonies. Even better than this are some videos you can view on our website or u tube of the ceremonies.

Please keep this magazine to share with the kids and maybe someday their kids. There are also some photos of your mom in this issue. She enjoys these times so much and of course all the folks just love your mom. The closest friends a person ever has are those who served together in life and death situations. The war continues to haunt us as Agent Orange is killing off veterans with cancers that are caused from chemicals used in the war. I was lucky mine was caught early enough to treat it.

The things I am most proud of in my life are my wife, kids and grandkids that would not have ever happened if I wasn't blessed by God to make it home. The next most important and proudest thing is my time in the USMC and the great guys I served with. I hope that none of you will ever have to experience war but I know you would do your part to preserve the freedoms and great life this country has created since 1776.
Semper Fidelis and love

Once a Marine Always a Marine
Dad / Grandpa
Glenn T. Griffin
Delta 1/1 67-68

HILL 64 KHE SANH

By John "Jack" Wells
A CO 1/7 & H Btry 3/11

In January 2016 I was contacted by US Army Captain, Dustin Colegate. He had read the chapter in Class of 67 about 2ndLt Terry Roach who was killed along with 23 of his 1st Platoon men in the attack on Hill 64 on 8 February 1968. Capt. Colegate's grandfather was one of the Marines who died that day.

Captain Colegate was attending Expeditionary Warfare School, an advance Infantry school at Quantico, VA, and he was the only officer in the class that had a relative that died during the siege at Khe Sanh. Because of that, he was assigned to make a presentation to the class about the battle at Khe Sanh.

Capt. Colegate asked if we could meet in Vietnam and if I could arrange to go to the hill where his grandfather, PFC William Colegate, 1st Platoon, Alpha Co. 1/9 was killed.

He was able to get DOD approval for a trip to Vietnam and arrived at Da Nang on 3 April. A few days later I arranged for a vehicle and driver to take us to Khe Sanh and also arranged for a guide. During my time in Vietnam with 7th and 11th Marines, I did not get farther north than Phu Bai, so all I had were the grid coordinates for the Alpha 1, Hill 64 position.

I was referred to Pham Cam Thach, a DMZ tour guide, who said she could take us to Hill 64. We met her at a restaurant in Dong Ha and then the hour trip to Khe Sanh. Thach had secured permission to enter the coffee plantation that was now part of Hill 64 and knew of an old jeep path that led towards the hill.

It had been raining part of that afternoon and when the jeep trail ended, we left the vehicle and proceeded on foot. Seeing how it was now late in the afternoon and muddy from the rain, we did not stay long. It would have been great to have someone who was on Hill 64 to point out where the different defensive positions were located.

Before we left, Dustin and I embedded a USMC emblem on one of the coffee trees in memory of his grandfather and the other brave men of 1st Platoon. By fate, I happened to spot, barely visible, in the wet red clay of Hill 64, a plate from a flak jacket. After Capt. Radcliffe's relief force repelled the remaining NVA attackers after first light on 8 February, the survivors of 1st Platoon were evacuated and the position abandoned and destroyed by air strikes that afternoon. Gear and some flak jackets that were abandoned were forever scattered by the air strikes. I told Dustin that it was possible that the plate from the flak jacket belonged to his grandfather, and gave the plate to Capt. Colegate.
Semper Fi.

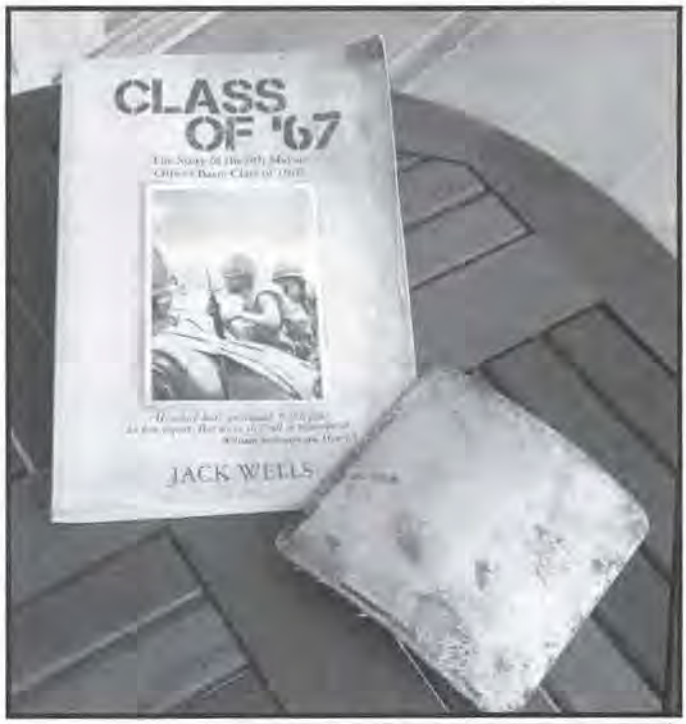

JACK WELLS BOOK



JACK WELLS (L) & CAPTAIN DUSTIN COLGATE



JACK & CAPTAIN COLGATE WITH THEIR GUIDE







DESTROYING HILL 64 POSITIONS ON AFTER THE ATTACK



FOLLOWING GUIDE



CHAPLAINS CORNER

Our Chaplain had a bad fall, and is a little under the weather. In addition, his son had a stroke and is now in rehab. While he and his son are recovering I thought The membership might enjoy this Christmas poem

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MY FRIEND

By Lance Corporal James M. Schmidt

Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone,
In a one bedroom house made of plaster & stone.
I had come down the chimney, with presents to give, And to see just who in this home did live.

As I looked all about, a strange sight I did see,
No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree. No stocking by the fire, just boots filled with sand, On the wall hung pictures of a far distant land.

With medals and badges, awards of all kind,
A sobering thought soon came to my mind.
For this house was different, unlike any I'd seen,
This was the home of a U.S. Marine.

I'd heard stories about them, I had to see more,
So I walked down the hall and pushed open the door. And there he lay sleeping, silent, alone,
Curled up on the floor in his one-bedroom home.

He seemed so gentle, his face so serene, Not how I pictured a U.S. Marine. Was this the hero, of whom I'd just read, Curled up in his poncho, a floor for his bed?

His head was clean-shaven, his weathered face tan,
I soon understood, this was more than a man. For I realized the families that I saw that night, Owed their lives to these men, who were willing to fight.

Soon around the Nation, the children would play,
And grown-ups would celebrate on a bright Christmas day. They all enjoyed freedom, each month and all year, Because of Marines like this one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone,
On a cold Christmas Eve, in a land far from home.
Just the very thought brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees and I started to cry.

He must have awoken, for I heard a rough voice,
"Santa, don't cry, this life is my choice. I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more, My life is my God, my country, my Corps."

With that he rolled over, drifted off into sleep,
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep. I watched him for hours, so silent and still, I noticed he shivered from the cold night's chill.

So I took off my jacket, the one made of red,
And covered this Marine from his toes to his head.
Then I put on his T-shirt of scarlet and gold,
With eagle, globe and anchor emblazoned so bold.

Although it barely fit me, I began to swell with pride, And for one shining moment, I was Marine Corps deep inside. I didn't want to leave him so quiet in the night, This guardian of honor so willing to fight.

But half asleep he rolled over, and in a voice clean and pure, Said "Carry on, Santa, it's Christmas Day, all's secure." One look at my watch and I knew he was right. Merry Christmas, my friend, Semper Fi and good night.

James M. Schmidt wrote this poem back in 1986 while a Lance Corporal stationed in Washington, D.C., serving as Battalion Counter Sniper at the Marine Barracks 8th & I under Commandant P.X. Kelly and Battalion Commander D.J. Myers [in 1986].

Schmidt hung this poem on the door of the Gym in the BEQ. When Colonel Myers came upon it, he read it and immediately had copies sent to each department at the Barracks and promptly dismissed the entire Battalion early for Christmas leave. The poem was placed that day in the Marine Corps Gazette, distributed worldwide, and later submitted to Leatherneck Magazine.

Schmidt's original version, entitled "Merry Christmas, My Friend," was published in Leatherneck (Magazine of the Marines) in December 1991, "Gyrene Gyngles," Page 79. As Leatherneck wrote of the poem's author in 2003:



THOSE REMEMBERED

Jerry W. Elliott USA MIA 21 Jan 68 282nd AHC
ALL who served at Lang Vei A-102 FOB-3
1LT Thomas A. Reich USMC VFMA-115, MAG 13 KIA
2LT Heinz Ahlmeyer USMC Lima CO 3/26 KIA 10 May 67
2LT Dale Allen USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 27 June 67
1LT Paul Bush USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68
2LT Ferdinando Distefano USMC E/2/26 KIA 24 Feb 68
1LT Henry Norman USMC A/1/13 KIA 30 Mar 68
1LT Kim Johnson USMC H&S 2/26 KIA 23 Feb 68
1LT Stephen Joyner USMC Lima CO 3/26 KIA 15 June 68
ALL FROM TBS-3-67

Capt Walter Egger	USMC C CO 1/26	KIA 3 22 68
GSGT John J Grohman	USMC C CO 1/26	KIA 3 22 68
1t Paul W. Bush	USMC C CO 1/26	KIA 3 22 68
LCpl Stephen C Shannon	USMC C CO 1/26	KIA 3 22 68
PFC Bennie J. Sisson	USMC C CO 1/26	KIA 3 22 68

All Khe Sanh Veterans KIA
Sgt Larry Berneski USAF KIA 15 Oct 1967 C-130 Crash
Sgt James Neil Tycz USMC Recon KIA10 May 67
All 1/26 KIA KSCB

LCpl Vincent Santaniello	USMC K 3/4	KIA 28 Mar 68
PFC Peder Armstrong	USMC K 3/4	KIA 28 Mar 68
L/Cpl Louis Lowe	USMC K 3/4	KIA 14 May 68
HM2 William Mercer	USN M 3/4	KIA 15 Jun 68 NC

GY SGT Charles Perkins K CO 3/26 Hill 861, wounded in action 28 Mar 68, Died 17 May 1968 on USS Repose
CAPT Daniel Coonon USMC VMF(AW)115 KIA 10/8 68
DET A-101 Team Members Lang Vei
PFC Randy Davis USMC Kilo 3/4 KIA Hill 861 04 Jun 68
LCpl Louis Lowe USMC Kilo CO 3/4 KIA Hill 689 14 May 68

REMEMBERED BY

Donna Elliott Sister
Lawrence Cooper CO C 5th Special Forces
Charles Fetter MAG-11 H&MS-11 VMF 314 AW
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt

Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Louis Deseta Subscriber
LOUIS CATON 50TH TASS "RED DEVILS" TASK FORCE ALPHA
Sharon Pelon
SgtMaj James Morris H&S CO 1/26 81MM Platoon
John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
Barbara Eddowes Love & Miss You so Much after all these years
Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11, MAG-11, 1ST MAW
Lawrence Cooper CO C 5TH Special Forces Group
Daniel King Kilo CO 3/4
Daniel King Kilo CO 3/4

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

ANDERSON, David M.	250.00 SF	Check# 3416
ARCHER, Michael	25.00 SF	Check# 101
AVERY, Terry E.	25.00 SF	Check# 5898
BAKER, David & Mindy	150.00 SF	Check# 220
BARBER, Michael	100.00 SF	Check# 1709
BECK, Ralph	60.00 SF	Check# 4138
BECK, Ralph	60.00 SF	Check# 4282
CAMPO, Carl C.	60.00 SF	Check# 3553
CARDWELL, Arthur	40.00 SF	Credit Card
CASEY, Maurice	10.00 SF	Check# 2556
GILLESPIE, Donald J.	60.00 SF	Check# 3738
GOTTMANN, James H.	100.00 SF	Check# 3330
DESETA, Louis J.	100.00 SF	Check# 5645
DONAGHY, Richard E	200.00 SF	Check 2016
EDDOWES, Barbra	50.00 SF	Check# 499
EDDOWES, Barba J.	50.00 SF	Check# 635
EVANS, Faye S.	100.00 SF	Check# 1938
FOLEY, Richard M. Jr	100.00 SF	Check# 1481
FOLEY, Richard M. Jr	100.00 SF	Credit Card
FORD, Thomas	500.00 SF	Check# 2533
FORD, Thomas	250.00 SF	Check# 2528
FORD, Thomas	250.00 SF	Check# 4968
FORD, Thomas	150.00 SF	Check# 5038
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 SF	Check#418672
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 SF	Check# 020103
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 SF	Credit Card
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 SF	Credit Card
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 SF	Credit Card
GIBBONS, Constance	142.00 SF	Check# 5002
GILLESPIE, Donald J.	60.00 SG	Check# 3849
GRANQVIST, Hans	20.00 SF	Credit Card
HANNA, Robert III	100.00 SF	CASH
HARGESHEIMER, John	100.00 SF	Check# 3198
HARVEY, Tom	20.00 SF	Check# 2691
JACHIMIAK, Daniel L.	250.00 SF	Check# 4552
KENNY, Neil	65.00 SF	Check# 4460
KENNY, Neil	236.00 SF	Check# 4458
KILROY, Joseph M.	250.00 SF	Check# 9127
KING, Daniel F.	10.00 SF	Check# 3014
KRAMER, Mark	55.00 SF	Check# 335
KUBILUS, Robert	30.00 SF	Check# 2352
MCCANN, Timothy	50.00 SF	Check# 1841
MERCADO, Saturno	10.00 SF	Check# 7805
MEYER, David	150.00 SF	Check# 1160
MEYER, David & Carol	500.00 SF	Checks 1248-50
MEYER, Carol	150.00 SF	Check# 1159
MORGAN, Robert	150,00 SF	Credit Card
MULTIPLE LISTING SRV	100.00 SF	Check # 976609
NELSON, George J.	300.00 SF	Check# 5313
NUNN, John B	60.00 SF	Checks 1067-68
OHARA, Michael	120.00 SF	Check# 2232
ORGAN, Michael	50.00 SF	Check# 1019
PEARSON, Scott	50.00 SF	Check# 5851
PRENDERGAST, Edward	100.00 SF	CASH
RAIT, Donald M.	500.00 SF	Check# 1029
REES, Ronald	40.00 SF	Credit Card
ROWE, John & Martha	1,000.00 SF	Check# 15252
RUECKERT, John G.	40.00 SF	Check# 13808
SARGENT, Ralph F.	60.00 SF	Check# 3710
SIEJUTT, Thomas	20.00 SF	Check# 4363
SMITH, Hubert	100.00 SF	Credit Card
SOLEDAD Prisoner Vets	200.00 SF	Check# 65627
SPIVEY, B. Larkin	60.00 SF	check3 1633
STACK, Geoffrey Nancy	1,000.00 SF	Check # 1195
STERLING, Glenn	60.00 SF	Check# 3867
SWETS, Fred	40.00 SF	Credit Card

GENERAL FUND

TOBIN, William J III	50.00 SF	Check# 332
TROUP, Ed & Diana	100.00 SF	Check# 5298
WAGNER, Russell	40.00 SF	Check# 4015
WILKINSON, James B.	250.00 SF	Check# 6744
WISE. Tom, Anne & Susan	125.00 SF	Check# 5634
WOOLMAN, Darlene	500.00 SF	Check# 1052
YOUMAN, Elwood W.	1,000.00 SF	Check # 1389
YOUMAN, Elwood W.	1,000.00 SF	Check# 1439
BAKER, James	100.00 GF	Check# 400
BARBER, Michael	500.00 GF	Checks # 1044
BATES, Robert G.	10.00 GF	Check# 2600
BECK, Ralph	60.00 GF	Check# 4282
BIOLSI, William P.	10.00 GF	Check# 2317
BROMBAUGH, Dave	25.00 GF	Check# 1253
CARPENTER, William E.	250.00 GF	Check# 10729
CATON, Louis	35.00 GF	Check# 2362
COOK, Michael H.	50.00 GF	Check# 12320
CRAWFORD, Daniel C.	10.00 GF	Check# 1607
DESETA, Louis	123.00 GF	Check# 5472
DIGAETANO, John	30.00 GF	Check# 376
DUNLAP,	25.00 GF	Check# 2395
ESTES, Leo	10.00 GF	Check# 3001
FETTER, Charles H	10.00 GF	Check# 449
FISHBAUGH, Michael	50.00 GF	Check# 3932
GAROUTTE, Michael A.	20.00 GF	Check# 9519
FORD, Thomas	250.00 GF	Check# 2528
FARRELL, Brian	10.00 GF	Check# 1226
FETTER, Charles H.	10.00 GF	Check# 532
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 GF	Check# 020104
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 GF	Check# 418673
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 GF	Credit Card
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 GF	Credit Card
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 GF	Credit Card
GRIGGS, Will E.	10.00 GF	Check# 3174
KATES, Bruce E.	250.00 GF	Check# 1218
KING, James	30.00 GF	Check# 541
KUBILUS, Robert	25.00 GF	Check# 2381
KUBLEY, Lawrence W.	400.00 GF	Check# 11554
LAIBINIS, John A. SR.	50.00 GF	Check# 6839
LALIBERTE, Daniel J.	20.00 GF	Check# 808
LEMIEUX, Lorne A.	20.00 GF	Check# 688
LEMKE, Charles T.	35.00 GF	Check# 1124
MAIN, Ronald	40.00 GF	Check# 2232
MANNING, Gerald E II	10.00 GF	Check# 3851
MERCADO, Saturno	10.00 GF	Check# 7550
MILLOCK, Carl	10.00 GF	Check# 4471
MORGAN, Robert I	100.00 GF	Check# 2575
MULLIGAN, Michael	300.00 GF	Check# 4044
MUSSARI, Derek	10.00 GF	Cash
NDQS ASSOC	412.50 GF	Check# 1398
OWENS, Mike	100.00 GF	Check# 9516
PETERSON, Roger	200.00 GF	Check# 2066
PROVENCIO, Ramon Jr.	100.00 GF	Check# 201
RIVEZZO, Michael F.	50.00 GF	Check# 1768
SEMKOW, Raymond	10.00 GF	Check# 1207
STERLING, Glenn	30.00 GF	Check# 3768
TALLENT, Wayne R.	50.00 GF	Check#9446
TOURTE, Craig	500.00 GF	Check# 875
TOURTE, Craig	500.00 GF	Check# 887
TOURTE, Craig	300.00 GF	Check# 902
TROUP, ED & Diana	100.00 GF	Check# 5297
WHITTENBURGER, Allen R.	30.00 GF	Check# 4630
WILLIAMS, Robert E.	270.00 GF	Check # 1278
WIMBISH, Dennis T.	30.00 GF	Check# 1275
WONDERS, William K.	250.00 GF	Check# 4896
ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	250.00 GF	Check# 4596

By-Laws
Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.;
Wisconsin Corporation

I. Name: The name of the corporation shall be **Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.**

II. Purpose: The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc shall be a fraternal association of veterans of the Vietnam War as set forth below and other purposes approved by the Board of Directors or voting members, authorized by chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes and in accord with Section **501(c)(19)** of the Internal Revenue Code.

A) General Purpose:

1) To promote renewed fellowship of all who lived and served in the area of, or in direct support of, Khe Sanh, Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam, during the period of 1954 through and including 1975;

2) To locate and account for all who so served;

3) To promote preservation of an accurate historical account of such service;

4) To promote research, understanding and healing with a regard to those who so served; and, to promote artistic expression of the Khe Sanh experience.

B) Non Profit: None of the aforementioned objectives shall be construed to authorize the association to conduct activities for monetary profit or financial gain, to attempt to influence legislation, or to engage in any activity not consistent with the organization status as any exempt organization
under **501(c)(19)** of the Internal Revenue Code.

III. Members:

A) **Criteria:** Persons who satisfy the following criteria shall be eligible for voting membership in and affiliation with the association:

1) Any and all persons who were members of the Armed Forces of the United States of America, allied military forces and civilians assigned to support U. S. and allied military forces who lived at or served in the area of, or in direct support of, Khe Sanh, Quang Tri Province, Republic of Vietnam, during the period of 1954 through and including 1975.

2) All such persons who pay dues shall be considered a voting member in good standing.

3) Dues shall be established in the amount of $40.00 per year, or such other amount as the Board of Directors may establish from time to time. The annual dues payment may be satisfied by a single (life membership payment) lump sum payment of $250.00. The lifetime membership fee may be adjusted from time to time by the Board of Directors.

B) Friends/Associates Unit: The association shall provide for a Friends/Associates unit of non-voting members. A Friend/Associate non-voting membership may be granted to any spouse or relative within two (2) degrees of consanguinity of a member, or any other interested person who supports the purposes of the organization. However, at least seventy five (75) percent of all Friends/Associate members must be war veterans, or related to a war veteran within two (2) degrees of consanguinity (ie. grandparent, brother, sister and grandchild represent the most distant allowable relationship). All Friends! Associates members shall pay dues as set forth in paragraph III) A) 3) and these funds shall be paid directly to the association.

C) Voting Members: Voting members in good standing shall have all privileges of membership and shall be entitled to one vote (1) on any matter requiring a vote.

D) Non-Voting Members: Non-voting members shall be members of the Friends/Associates Unit whose applications for membership have been approved by the Board of Directors and who have paid the prescribed membership fee. Non-voting members shall be entitled to receive publications, attend meetings and have any other association privileges, but they shall not be entitled to vote.

E) Removal of Members: Upon a recommendation by a vote of seventy five (75) percent of the Board of Directors and for just cause, members may be removed from the organiza tion.

F) Meetings of Members:

i) Annual Meeting: In each calendar year, an annual meeting of members shall be held at a time and place as determined by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall give at least thirty (30) days written notice of an annual meeting to each member (voting or non-voting) at the address of the member shown in the records of the association. It shall be the responsibility of each member to inform the association of any change in address.

ii) Special Meetings: Special meetings of members may be called by the President, by a majority of the Board of Directors, or by a written request signed by five (5) percent of the voting members. Special meetings shall be on five (5) days written notice, which shall describe generally the specific business to be transacted at the meeting.

iii) Place of Meetings: All meetings of members shall be held within the United States of America.

iv) Voting: Voting shall be by voting members present at a meeting. Proxy voting shall not be allowed.

v) Procedure: Meetings shall be conducted pursuant to *Robert's Rules of Order* unless some other procedure is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present and voting.

vi) Adjournment: Meetings may be adjourned by the Board of Directors from time to time without further notice.

IV. Directors:

IV) Directors:

A) Number: The management of the association shall be vested in a Board of Directors consisting of no more than (13) voting members.

B) Powers of Directors: The Board of Directors shall have the authority to manage the business of the association to the extent provided by Wisconsin law. However, the Board of Directors shall not disperse association funds for any charitable purpose unless such dis bursement has been approved by a majority of the voting members present and voting at an authorized meeting.

C) Eligibility:

i) Only voting members of the association who honorably served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America may hold any position on the Board of Directors of the association.

ii) Within forty five (45) days of election or appointment to any position on the Board of Direc tors of the association, that voting member must provide the Board of Directors acceptable proof of honorable service in the Armed Forces of the of the United States of America; only official documents which verify an Honorable Discharge or a General Discharge Under Hon orable Conditions are acceptable qualifying proof of honorable service.

D) Term: The term of each member of the Board of Director shall be two (2) years. Terms shall be staggered with six (6) of the positions commencing in even numbered years and six 6) of the positions commencing in odd numbered years. In the odd number years, the election of the four (4) Members-at-Large shall take place after the election of the President and Treasurer. In even number years, the election of the four (4) Members-at-Large shall take place after the election of the Vice President and the Secretary.

E) Election: Election of the Board of Directors shall take place at the annual meeting of voting members. Each voting member may cast one (1) vote for each position open for election at such meeting. Election shall be awarded to the candidates receiving the largest number of votes.

F) Vacancies:

i) In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the President shall appoint a qualified voting member to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term for that position.

ii) Should a voting member hold two (2) positions as authorized in paragraph V) D), the President shall appoint an additional Member-at-Large for the remainder of the term for the open position.

G) Meeting of Directors:

i) Annual Meeting: There shall be an annual meeting of Board of Directors held immediately prior to the annual meeting of members. The Board of Directors shall give at least thirty (30) days written notice of the annual Board of Directors meeting at the same time notice is given of the annual membership meeting.

telephone conference call or other satisfactory electronic means.

iv) Place of Meetings: All meetings of Board of Directors shall be held within the United States of America.

v) Voting: Voting shall be by members of the Board of Directors present at the meeting, or actively participating if by telephone conference call or other electronic means. Proxy voting shall not be allowed.

vi) Procedure: Meetings shall be conducted pursuant to *Robert's Rules of Order* unless some other procedure is approved by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of members of the Board of Directors present and voting.

vii) Alternate Voting Procedures: Acting by unanimous consent or conducting meet ings telephonically or through other electronic means shall be permitted to the extent and under the conditions permitted by law.

H) Quorum: A majority of members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting a meeting. Directors may be present in person, by telephone or by other satisfactory electronic means to be fully informed on the issues discussed.

I) Compensation: Members of the Board of Directors shall receive no compensation but shall be entitled to reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses as approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. There shall be no reimbursement for transportation, lodging or per diem expenses incurred unless prior approval is obtained by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

J) Indemnification: Members of the Board of Directors shall be entitled to indemnification for actions taken while conducting the business of the association to the extent permitted by Wisconsin law.

K) Committees: The President may establish any standing or special committee as he deems appropriate, provided that such committees may not exercise the powers of the Board of Directors and all decisions and determinations are subject to formal approval by the Board of Directors.

V. Officers of the Association:

A) In General: The officers of the association shall consist of a President, a Vice Presi dent, a Secretary, a Treasurer, the Immediate Past President and eight (8) Members-at-Large. The Immediate Past President shall be entitled to vote on all issues and shall be in cluded in the number of members of the Board of Directors.

B) Election and Terms: The officers shall be elected by the voting members as outlined in paragraph IV), C) of these By-Laws. A member of the Board of Directors may be removed at any time for just cause by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board of Directors.

C) Duties: The duties of each office shall include, but not be limited to, duties pre scribed bylaw and those additional duties set forth below. The President may assign addition al duties to any member of the Board of Directors as he deems appropriate.

i) President: The President shall generally manage the day-to-day operations of the association subject to the direction of the Board of Directors. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors and voting members. A person seeking the office of President and Vice President is required to have served a minimum of four (4) years on the Board of Directors of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc

ii) Vice President: The Vice President shall exercise the duties of the President in the absence or incapacity of the President. If the President should die, resign, or be removed from office, the Vice President shall succeed to the office of the President.

iii) Secretary: The Secretary shall maintain all records of the association and shall prepare minutes of all meetings of the Board of Directors and members.

iv) Treasurer: The Treasurer shall have custody of the funds of the association and shall maintain all financial records of the association. The Treasurer shall report to the Board of Directors and the voting members on the financial status of the association.

v) Members-at-Large: The Members-at-Large are directors of the association who shall take part in all meetings of the association; they shall participate in conducting the business of the association and shall perform such necessary duties as assigned by the President.

vi) Sergeant-at-Arms: The Sergeant-at-Arms is a non-voting position on the Board of Directors. The President will appoint an appropriately qualified voting member to serve as the Sergeant-at-Arms at each venue where the Board of Directors and voting members conduct meetings. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall be responsible for maintaining order during all meetings. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall ensure that only qualified voting members vote at general and special meetings of the association; he shall collect and count any and all written ballots when secret elections or other secret votes are conducted.

vii) Chaplain: The President will appoint an appropriately qualified individual to serve as Chaplain, which is a non-voting position on the Board of Directors. The Chaplain shall be responsible for providing the pastoral services to the association.

viii) Parliamentarian: The President shall appoint an appropriately qualified voting member as a Parliamentarian; said Parliamentarian will be responsible for maintaining proper decorum during all meetings of the association.

D) One (1) voting member may hold no more than two (2) of the elected offices, except that the offices of President and Vice President and President and Secretary may not be combined.

VI. Amendment: These By-Laws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members of the association present and voting at a meeting duly called for such purpose. Written notice of the meeting must be given to each voting member at least sixty (60) days prior to the date of the meeting. Prior to any vote to amend these By-Laws, the members must have had the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed changes.

VII. Dissolution:

A) This association may only be dissolved at any meeting of the voting members upon a two thirds (2/3) vote of all voting members present and in good standing, provided that an an-

B) In the event the association is dissolved, the assets of the association shall first be equally distributed between the National Military Medical Museum and Youth Education Center and the Fisher Foundation, provided said organization (s) qualify as an exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code of the United States, as amended, or any successor statute thereto.

If said organization is not qualified, or is no longer in existence, the assets shall be distributed to such other similar qualifying entity as determined by a two thirds (2/3rds) vote of the voting members attending the meeting; provided that any organization receiving the assets of the association agrees to maintain all memorial plaques created by the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

Approved this 01 day of September, 2012.

THOMAS J. EICHLER .PRESIDENT

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/Governing Year AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman 52ND
6050 52ND St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms. Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the Red Clay" Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David E. Lownds Award - for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award - for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award - for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited Institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY* 1 of the school year applied for.** *** **(This is an important, NEW change to previous** years)***

6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System !Maximum of 110 regular points or 125 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max =40 points max. (Please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

A GPA of 4.0 x 10 =40 points or a GPA of 3.0 x 10 =30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max =30 points total

Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Extra Curricular =10 points max.
Volunteer services =10 points max.
Leadership positions = 10 points max.
Employment = 10 points max

c. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min. to 400 words max) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max.

Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments. Please review the six suggested adjectives below, select one or more that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

TENACIOUS- FAITHFUL -UNDAUNTED- STEADFAST- RESOLUTE- INNOVATIVE

.d. Bonus Points

10 bonus points for being a military veteran

5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application _____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name:Last _____ **First** _____ **MI** _____

Address: Street _____ **City** _____ **State** ___ **Zip** _____

Home phone: _____ **E-mail address:** _____

Applicant Birthdate: _____

.2 KSV Sponsor Information : (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran Inc. Regular or Life Member)

Name: Last, _____ **First** _____

Relationship to Applicant; _____

Branch of Service _____

Unit served at Khe Sanh _____ **Dates served there** _____

3. School Information: (School to be attending)

School Name: _____

School Address: Street, _____ **City** _____

State _____ **Zip Code** _____

School Phone number: _____

Curriculum/intended course of study _____

School Year To be Funded _____

4. Applicant Personal History (Be Specific)

A. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Athletics, Publishing, Music, Art, Scouting, Communications, Academic Honors & Prizes, etc)

B. VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES:: (community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.) -

C. LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HELD IN A&B (Capacity, Class Officer, Committee Chairperson, etc)

D. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY– FULL & PART TIME Include Military Service If Applicable)

e. MAILING PACKET: (Due May 1ST)

Enclose THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS

***A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,**
***A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,**
***A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min. to 400 WORDS max.) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.**

!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!

I, SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

_____ _____

Signature Of Applicant **Actual Signature of Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent**

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY* 1ST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR APPLIED

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc Scholarship Committee

_____

Tom Eichler, President, Khe Sanh Veterans

CHANGES IN DIRECTORY

ALSTON, ARTHUR L
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC L CO 3/26 3RD PLT
Address 2629 PAWNEE MEADOWS RD
FREMONT NE 68025
Phone 402-727-0957
Cell 402-720-5080 Fax
Email ALSTONLLC1@GMAIL.COM

ANDERSON, DAVID M.
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC M CO 3/26 2ND PLT
Address 2245 BLUEBIRD DR
MISSOULA MT 59808
Phone 406-728-0949
Cell SAME
Email DA2335123@BRESNAN.NET

ANDRES, GREGORY R
Nickname ANDY
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 1/26, 81MM & S-1
Address 27215 SE 12TH PL
SAMMAMISH WA 98075-5964
Phone 402-278-0558
Cell Fax
Email GSANDRES@HUNTEL.NET

ANTOINE, GARY V
Nickname DOC
Branch/Unit USN B CO 1/26 2ND PLT HN
Address 40922 ACACIA LN
POLSON MT 59860 -7515
Phone 310-386-1336
Cell Fax
Email GARY551@EARTHLINK.NET

ARBOLEDA, ROBERT J
Nickname
Branch/Unit USMC H&S CO 1/9
Address PO BOX 184
PINE RIVER MI 56474-0184
Phone
Cell 313-727-1822 Fax
Email ROBERT. ARBOLEDA@ATT.NET

ARCHER, MICHAEL J
Nickname
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Veterans Day, November 11, 2016 at the Living Memorial Sculpture Garden, Weed, CA.

By Craig W. Tourte

Though the day was forecast with cold and rain, a small gathering of Khe Sanh and Vietnam Veterans once again came to these hallowed grounds where the sculptures inspired and created by Dennis Smith replicate the painful experience and very personal sacrifice, bravery and horrors of those who have engaged in armed conflicts. There is a poem in the Living Memorial Sculpture Garden pamphlet that begins with the words, "A place to remember where we have been. A place to remember what we've been through. A place to remember those faces so well of friends and loved ones..." Dennis Smith is a former Marine and survivor of the historic and horrific Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh in what was then the country of South Vietnam. Dennis is quoted as saying, "Each sculpture has personal meaning for me in terms of life experiences and personal incidents."

So, we gather together to pay homage to those who have gone before us. As others are enjoying a "day off on this holiday" many make the often long and difficult journey past the diminutive mountain towns of Mount Shasta and Weed into the Northern shadows of majestic Mount Shasta, 14,179 feet high, observed from 150 miles away. A journey made specifically to honor and pay tribute to our fallen warriors. A place that is reverently significant for those of us who served at Khe Sanh.
It was once again an honor and privilege to be in the presence of Khe Sanh and Vietnam Veterans who made the journey.





PHOTO L to R
Steve Gabal (1/155)
Dennis Smith (Bravo CO 1/26)
Tom Horchler (HQ Btry1/13)
Ned Borlaug (India CO 3/3)
Ken "Buzz" Sawyer (HQ Btry 1/13)
Nels Borlaug (1/155)
Craig W. Tourte (HQ Btry1/13)
Ralph Shelly (Charlie Med)
David Tonick (Alpha CO 1/26)
Robert Singleton (A/3rd SP) Not In Picture





Nearly 50 of the some 184 classmates from the 1966 year at Marine Corps officer training at The Basic School reunited at the school on Oct. 21, 2016. The 50th reunion was the largest the classmates had had since their five-month training at the school ahead of Vi etnam. Article & additional pictures on pages 37 to 40



Larry Friese and Anthony Zinni, alumni of the Basic School Class 1-66, which gathered aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico Oct. 3 and 4 for its first-ever reunion 51 years after graduating, pose together in the Leatherneck Gallery at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Friese spent 5 years and one month as a prisoner of war in the Hanoi Hilton in Vietnam and later became an oceanographer for the Navy. Zinni is a retired Marine Corps general who served as commander in chief of United States Central Command from 1996 to 2000.

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RED CLAY

SPRING 2017

TWO OF THE BRAVEST WOMEN PHOTOJOURANALIST WHO SERVED IN COMBAT IN VIETNAM & WWII



CATHERINE LEROY AT KHE SANH
ARTICLE ON PAGE 40



DICKEY CHAPELLE KIA WITH MARINES VIETNAM 1965
ARTICLE PAGES 65-67



ONE OF LEROY'S MOST FAMOUS,A US MARINE LOOKING FOR HELP WITH A WOUNDED COMRADE



DICKEY BEING GIVEN LAST RIGHTS KIA WITH MARINES 1965

LEST WE FORGET, ARTICLE & ADDITIONAL PHOTOS BY LARRY BURROWS ON PAGES 62-64











WERE YOU IN COMBAT?
SMALL WORLD JOURNAL 27 MAR 2015
Keith Nightingale

For some, the time of combat is just the length of the tour. For others, they are always at war. For some, facets of a personal war are shrouded in the labyrinth of the mind-only to occasionally emerge to be seen by others. For all who experienced it, combat is a constant-sometimes controlled, sometimes not as are all life events. The person you see across the room or sitting in the subway may be in a place you cannot travel and he or she is dealing with issues you cannot see but they are very real. If the mind contains the distilled residue of the person's experience, some live constantly in a very dark and ferocious place while others may be blessed with sunshine. It's all very personal.

The smoke of battle may clear the field, but its residue resides in the minds of those who first saw its shades, tremors and drifts erupt at time since passed. A spark of suggestion may bring it back from the darkest recesses to which the individual relegated it to the brightest light of recognition and reaction. The war is always with you.

To some, it is shallow and always present-obscuring and modifying the present with highlights from the past. To others, it sits in quiet solitude amongst the denser neurons and erupts after only the strongest of impulses and the passage of time It is the shadow world of the mind and resides within anyone who has seen the tiger who always awaits a moment to spring forth and alter the present peace with the residue of the personal past.

Each participant in our wars returns with a personal kit of both controls and the uncontrolled and un programmable impulse of memories- One to counterbalance the other. Each person works to deal with a world they left in their own way-succeeding or failing as personal nature and makeup dictates while the constant combat between impulses and controls ebbs and flows within.

A child looks at his father, returned from his last of several deployments and asks the question-"Were you in combat?" For those that experienced the great difference between just deploying and serving and those that were seriously mortally engaged, the answer would have to be Yes…..But…..it's not that simple and much less opaque to the participant.

Combat changes people. It is not a simple matter of leaving it all behind when one boards the plane to return home. Everyone has some secret file cabinets of the mind that store the emotionally searing moments and darker residue of their lives. For the combat veteran, this vault can be quite extensive and subject to un programmed withdrawals and viewings. The human coping mechanism provides a variety of resolutions that each person draws upon to keep the vault closed and unknown to his or her domestic companions and relationships.

On the surface, there appears normally. Underneath, the suppressive mechanisms are hard at work keeping the darkness away. In many cases, the bearer is unaware of the activities until in some specific moment, gesture or scene, the past becomes present and a new part of the person is noted. Domestic relationships become adjusted as new aspects of a personality emerge. New obsessions, behavioral patterns, long moments of silence, inability to communicate as in the past or just a distant eye on a quiet day indicating the vault is opening. "Yes. I was in combat today-and always will be."

Walking through a farm field, aspects of the terrain take on new significance. Fields of fire are mentally plotted. The best defensive terrain is selected. Likely avenues of approach are scanned and noted. The new corn and soybean fields are seen as visual distractors as the mental military calculus unfolds-not to be noted by the walking companion who sees only the progress of the green. The fields he walked as a boy with his father are no longer friendly.

Crossing the street, a judgment is made as to sniper placement, the best building access point, the location of covering forces and the best position for over watch. Starbucks is just across the walkway but there is an imaginary platoon securing its perimeter.

The most important game of the year is on the tube a bright Sunday morning. A phone rings and a conversation unfolds. The game is ignored for considerable time. The conversationalists agree to meet at a specific time and place. The life partner mentions

the conflict with an important family event. Unfortunate but this is more important and has to be done. This person on the other end was with me one dark day.

The helicopter ambulance passes overhead. A quick glance from sound to sight opens the vault full wide. Out pours a scene of some time ago with dust, smoke, streaking tracers, sudden explosions and enshrouding dark silence accompanied by great pain. No one else sees that but the one that opened the vault. Despite his location, he is in combat.

In a quiet moment, he can hear past conversations that are unheard by other people in the room. They are of hard cynical jokes with a morbid dark sense of humor. He hears the talk and in his mind's eye the faces of his fellow soldier's with shoulders against the mud dike of an unnamed village just discernible in the silver grey light of a dawn. We survived the night. Now we have to work on the day. "One more day God. One more day." There is a pause in the room while everyone looks at him as he returns from his world to theirs.

The kitchen has always been the repository of the best of family feelings. The aroma of a roast, a soup or a favorite pastry unlocks the most pleasant of memories. Sometimes, for whatever reason of stimulus-the aroma changes. It is harsh with cordite, hot JP 4 and the ugly deep breath of a newly opened abdomen. Blood has a unique odor that lingers far longer than it takes to wash off the hand. The reason for the sudden grimace amongst all the goodness is lost on the room. To clear his head, he walks out the door. The rich earth of his home yard as he rakes the rose bed suddenly becomes that pungent odor of the village last cleared. He is back from the war but he is still in combat.

Purple Hearts are awarded for wounds received in combat. The regulations require that they be the result of hostile action and require medical treatment. For those that receive the award, the wound is and was obvious. There is no provision for mental wounds and the weight carried by each combat participant as he or she struggles to keep that dark vault closed. Observers are privy to moments but never see the whole catalogue enclosed in the labyrinth of the mind. There is no Purple Heart authorization for wounds not seen and not treated-but they are wounds nonetheless. The child's innocent question-"Were you in combat?"-requires an affirmative answer. "Yes.I was in combat and I am now." There are many more wounds than awards.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

by former L/Cpl
Frederick Monahan Echo CO
2/3 Khe Sanh Vietnam-

Amphibious Ready Group #79.5 carrying 1,900 Marines and Sailors of Special Landing Force Bravo was headed east toward Subic Bay to secure overdue liberty for its crew, resupply fresh water and fuel and take on waiting crew replacements. Second Battalion, Third Marine Regiment and HMM-164 were aboard the USS Tripoli and USS Ogden and along for the ride and didn't complain that liberty was forty-eight hours away as long as inspections were passed.

The sun was setting on the South China Sea looking astern. With my newly issued M-16, I went to the fantail before early morning chow and saw the sun was rising in the ship's wake the same place as it was setting the night before. Just then the ship's captain announced we had gotten orders overnight to reverse course and return to I Corps Combat Tactical Zone waters and that liberty for crew was postponed.

This was on or about April 24, 1967. Only something serious would cause this change of course but no one knew anything except to follow orders. Orders called for 2/3 to disembark by landing craft and H-46s on the beach of a barrier island. To the hundreds of new Marines just picked up in Okinawa, this was what they joined for. After three days of pounding our boots into the sand dunes and checking out deserted fishing villages we were ordered to cease our mission and immediately proceed to the west side of the island. There we were picked up by one of the assortment of helicopters, some Republic of South Vietnam Air Force, Marine and U. S. Army and U.S. Navy and shuttled minutes away to the tarmac at Phu Bai.

We were desperately needed somewhere else. We waited an hour as the choppers returned with more 2/3 Marines. We boarded a C-130 and took off to

the unknown, landing at Khe Sanh. A mysterious combat base in the north west corner of South Viet Nam surrounded by mountains. From the west end of the base we could see our fighter jets bombing and strafing and buzzing the highest hills to the northwest. I thought, 'Whatever the problem is, those jets will eliminate it and we won't have to go out there.'

Within an hour we columned up and stepped over the single strand of concertina wire and headed toward Hill 861 about two miles away. The trail led around smaller hills, across small streams and up and down gullies taking almost two hours to reach the base of Hill 861. Before us was a long gradual slope to the summit. We stopped only a few seconds to view three elephants, two adults and baby, about four hundred yards to our left. About half way up three raggedy assed Marines, gaunt and unshaven, wearing cut off shorts asked us for cigarettes as they approached us. We paused and asked them their outfit and couldn't help observing the contrast between our fresh starched and pressed pre camo utilities with shined brass and boots just and their battle worn condition.

They identified themselves as a remnant of a Bravo Company 1/9 platoon; all three of them. We then gave them more cigarettes. They said they were guarding Hill 861 for days with no food. Now late in afternoon of 28 April 1967, Echo Company bunched up having reached our objective. I always believed Golf and Hotel Companies had reached Hill 861 that morning and went beyond it toward Hill 881N. The Marines who had time in country first heard the rounds out of the North Vietnamese 82mm mortar squads one each almost a thousand yards to the northeast, the north and the west

The time in country Marines ran for the NVA fox holes on the rim of Hill 861 for cover. The new replacements just stood bewildered on the hilltop until the first mortar hit then followed the veterans to remaining cover. I ran toward the first explosion knowing subsequent rounds would not hit exactly in its crater. The east side of 861 had a drop off made most likely the result of the last few days air strikes. It appeared a bomb had blown out the top side of the hill which I jumped off onto the heads of Echo Co. Marines hugging the wall of the bombed out hill and lighting cigarettes.

With the amount of Marines bunched up on top of 861 and the amount of NVA mortar rounds, there were little to no casualties that I remember but Marines with minor wounds may have been instructed to walk back to Khe Sanh. I walked around the perimeter and counted the well camouflaged NVA bunkers fighting holes now occupied by 2/3 Marines, and reported the totals to Echo Co. First Sergeant, a Veteran of WWII and Korea. He pointed to an NVA fighting hole on the west side of Hill 861 to occupy for the night along with the company messenger who spoke little English.

Not suspecting the NVA to attack and face the air strikes again and like very one else having not slept much for three nights we opened "C" rations and nibbled to stay awake. An hour into daylight on 29 April a patrol returned from the northwest with what we believed were three Bravo 1/9 Marine KIAs. The back end of the patrol had armloads of the WWII Marine web gear that was standard issue that we used and called "782 gear." They said it was found in a fox hole a few hundred yards away. Either stashed there by NVA or Marines to deny use by the NVA. I used my poncho and one borrowed to cover the bodies.

On the west slope of Hill 861 Echo Co. formed into a column to move out toward our objective Hill 881N. In the hills on our left flank was Kilo and Mike 3/3 together with Kilo and Mike Companies 3/9 whose objective was Hill 881S. Across the ridges on our right flank was Golf and Hotel Company 2/3 whose objective was like that of Echo Company, Hill 881N but with an approach from the northeast. Echo would attack Hill 881N from the southwest. Almost two-thousand Marines went after Ho-Chi-Minh's finest that morning. At least what was left of them after the pounding by artillery and air strikes. No one believed anyone was left on those hills to put up a resistance. One Marine joked, "The hills should be renamed 880 North and South to account for one meter of dirt blown off the tops."

Word was passed back for an Echo Co. scout to accompany the Third Division photographer with us off into the right flank to allow him to take pictures of some NVA hootch's in dense foliage on the reverse slope from Khe Sanh Combat Base. I passed the word toward the rear of the column, "Two Ma-

rines checking out the right flank." "Keep eyes open for them." He took the pictures and I turned back and after a few yards cupped my hands on each side of my mouth and half hollered in perfect English, "Photographer coming back into column."

The column proceeded along a stream bed to a fresh bomb crater next to the stream. I searched the two dead NVA soldiers for papers, etc. after slicing their pockets open with my K-Bar. One was lying in the stream water that we had filled our canteens with a short while before we discovered them. Further upstream we climbed over the debris from a bomb crater that hit the creek bank creating a dam at the bottom of a ravine about 20 yards high. As the column proceeded through the pooled water each Marine had to point out a trip wire leading to an M-26 hand grenade taped in full view to a sapling on the bank of the creek. It was obvious this was set by Marines during the fighting the last few days and I needn't send in a report with a diagram to the S-2 chief. Spent 5.56 rifle rounds from Hotel Company were snapping above us into the trees at the top of the swampy ravine. Some of the bullets would make whistling noises a TV western sound effects crew would be proud of.

Hotel company was about a quarter mile to our right flank going in an opposite direction and made contact with the NVA and called air support which dropped napalm in a draw below them. Gunnery Sergeant Ed Crawford relates that a platoon of NVA ran from their burning hiding positions on fire and screaming. Ed was 39 years old and had fought in WWII and Korea. A Marine next to him raised his rifle to sight in on running NVA and Ed scolded, "Don't fire at them." "Save ammo and let them burn." He told his men to stay in place and went down the draw alone and tripped on an NVA rifle barrel sticking out of a bush. The NVA soldier Behind it opened up and emptied a magazine between his, shredding his jungle trousers below the knee severely wounding him. He avenged his wounds before he fell. Hotel Company Marines went down with a Corpsman to carry him back to the ridge line.

Because the draw was still unsecured, Hotel Marines wouldn't let petite photographer Catherine Leroy go with them. She then walked past the stalled column and caught up to Golf Company where she stayed with Cpl. Mellon as her body guard. From the amount of spent rounds zinging over our heads while in the flooded ravine it sounded like Hotel Company was having a good time. Like at an amusement park shooting gallery.

Echo Company had to get out of that steep ravine to higher ground but couldn't. Our Engineer section from 3rd Engineers had a coil of line and sent their smallest most wiry Marine to claw to the top with one end of the rope tied to him. After he secured it to a tree the 200 + men of Echo one-by-one climbed up out of the potential ambush trap we were in. The bullets zinging over our heads stopped. When the last Marine reached the top the word passed back to bring the rope forward. where it was secured to another tree and dropped back down into the ravine. First Sergeant Patrinos (47) declared, "If anyone breaks an ankle we're going to carry you to all the way to Hanoi."

As each Echo Marine repelled down the rope Army Ranger style into a new creek and began the climb up the far bank using saplings, rocks and bulging tree roots as hand holds, a big city wise guy Marine, like myself, said, "Top, do we get Ranger pay for this?" The First Shirt replied, "No, you don't even rate Navy Sailor pay let alone Marine pay." Now we were supposed to be quiet but the NVA on Hill 881S could clearly see us but their mortar teams were out of sorts from all the bombing that turned the summit into a barren moonscape

We were carrying all kinds of weapons and gear made easier by leaving our flack jackets as ordered aboard ship. The NVA were no doubt also watching the approaching Kilo Company 3/9 over the next hill or three from us on our left flank. Scores of snipers in trees always waited until a valuable target carrying a radio or close to one entered their sights. The report from the sniper rifle would alert his dug in buddies and on our side, a Marine of lower rank would have to make a decision to take out the sniper or go around him.

We climbed a small hill or knoll covered in high grass and dug in and defended the holes with a rarely used three Marines each not knowing that right next to us were the NVA on Hill 881S, its base less than 200 yards.

First thing the next morning a squad was sent down

to the creek we crossed the day before. Each Marine carried all the canteens he could manage. I picked up six myself and we took off to catch up with the detail. Being last I sat at the top of the steep creek bank. The canteens were filled at the bottom of a ten foot high waterfall we only quickly got to glance at the day before. After the last Marine struggled up the bank by reaching and clinging to roots and rocks with ten canteens stuffed in their utility jackets, I climbed down to the water fall to quickly fill the my canteens. When filled I tied them together and pulled myself uphill and saw no one was guarding for me. Back up on our position I returned the filled canteens to their owners and was asked, "Where were you, we have to move out." As company scout I would not be appointed point man for the day.

It was 30 April, 1967. Third platoon of Echo Company had already moved out. I joined up with 2nd Lt. Jim Cannon and his 2nd platoon. First platoon squad stayed on the hill to secure it if we had to pull back to higher ground. Second platoon's column departed the hill and headed north through shoulder high grass toward Hill 881N. We heard a horrendous commotion about 100 yards to our left flank about half way up Hill 881S. The rear of our column paused to watch a squad with a 3.5 rocket launcher moving parallel to us up on 881S approach a draw that instantly lit up light a Christmas Tree

Taking on a high volume of automatic rifle fire from a wooded area of the draw which had escaped the bombs of the air strikes. Green tracers poured out of the draw from the top of Hill 881S forming a "V" meeting at the squad's position. Four or five Marines dropped immediately and the 3.5 rocket team ran past them to get a shot higher up into the draw with a WP round. It quieted the NVA long enough for a Corpsman to roll two wounded Marines down the steep side of Hill 881S.

The squad followed the rolling WIAs by sitting on the hillside and sliding down feet first on their seat pants kicking up dust as they slid to reach some cover. We fired a few magazines up into the draw to provide covering fire. Cannon observed a covered path running straight up 881S that the NVA made. Some of its cover had been blown off and he observed an NVA appear carrying ammo for their machine-gunners firing on the main body of Marines at the rear of the 3.5 rocket squad. He used a quickly borrowed M-16 and a Marine's shoulder to rest the rifle to get a good shot at the NVA replacements descending the covered tunnel when the NVA reached the exposed portion.

As this same time, Golf Company 2/3 was assaulting hills between Hills 861 and 881N. They had the luxury of having all the foliage denuded. It was here that while attacking NVA diehards who survived the air strikes that the world famous Life Magazine photos were taken by Catherine Leroy of Navy Corpsman Vernon Wike attending in vain to Philadelphia Lance Corporal Bill Junior "Rock" Roldan, KIA, a Boot Camp buddy from a year earlier.

The oldest 2nd Lt. in the Marine Corps and Korea veteran, 37 year old Andy McFarlane, led his platoon beyond the neutralized NVA positions into a wooded area and lost some Marines WIA and KIA He had to wait to retrieve them next day and more Golf Company Marines were lost.

On top of the hill we just spent the last night, our Echo Company CO, Captain Al Lyon radioed to Cannon's 2nd platoon, asking for a situation report? Ans: Alpha Sierra (All Secure) We aborted our assistance on the Hill 881S attack and got on with our mission. Stopping after running at a trot less than 75 yards, in back of Lt. Cannon who wore a red bandana, a single rifle shot rang out from across a narrow gully to our right rear.

An NVA sniper round aimed behind Cannon's right ear was deflected when it hit the muzzle end of an M-79 grenade launcher he had slung on his shoulder. He unslung the weapon, looked at the dented barrel and said, "This won't be of use anymore," as he tossed it into the elephant grass and rubbed his shoulder and upper arm looking for blood. God knows where the ricochet went.

After some more trotting, Lt. Cannon turned to me and said, "Return to the hill we stayed last night and bring the rest of the command group to this spot." As I neared the area from where the sniper round came, I was about to pass a tree trunk, my right foot snagged ground vines. The instant I freed it and leaned forward to run again, a sniper round creased the tree trunk inches in front of my face. I hid behind the tree for one second, then dashed out the

same way I came in to the bullet bashed bark side of the tree and emptied a magazine at the tree limb I thought he was lying behind.

I went behind the same tree and tossed a grenade over to the far side of the gully, and took off running before it exploded. The XO's Command group was already off the hill and on the trail as I ran toward them. They picked up their pace and about fifty of us passed the snipers nest without incident.

As we entered the rendezvous point, Lt. Cannon's 2nd platoon was gone. I had been looking back every thirty yards or so to see if the group was keeping up with my pace and saw the point Marine holding his palm up signaling me to stop. The NVA were expecting us to assault Hill 881S but we turned our backs on 881S and started up this unnamed hill. The high grass was too dense to advance on line. Echo company XO, Lt. Adinolfi pointed up hill and I started up a narrow path with grass leaning over for concealment. The grass had to be parted to see ahead. Suddenly there was what appeared to be an NVA listening post position. 'Any second now.' I thought, nothing." Ahead a vacant NVA fighting hole. 'Again any second 'expecting a burst from just yards away.

Machine gun fire erupted from the east side of the hill and I expected it to spread to us. I heard voices ahead from up on the hill. I pulled my helmet off to hear better. Echo had walked up on this hill with four columns. The voices were from two point Marines meeting each other surprised there was no NVA opposition. In a few minutes we were a mob on top of this hill. Weapons platoon was in a fight down below the east side and lost their commander Lt. Cantor while leading a machine gun charge with a .45 in his hand he was shot three times and fell to his knees.

The medevac chopper accompanied by a COBRA for protection stayed on hovering thirty feet above us on the top of this hill and firing for all it was worth at the NVA positions down hill. The chopper was directly over me and I froze at what I thought were rounds hitting all around me when something hit my helmet. I relaxed when I realized it was expended linkage dropping. As soon as the COBRA left, 106mm recoilless from Hill 861 began blasting the trees lower down on the hill.

Platoons had formed up around the perimeter all thought we had walked up on a recently abandoned NVA command headquarters neatly dug and camouflaged bunkers and fighting holes. Each bunker had black Lima-Lima (land line) wire running from it and down the heavily wooded east side of the hill which was actually a cliff. A count of the holes and bunkers was radioed to battalion and S-2.

Echo company was mortared the next morning 1 May67. We were warned it was a big Commie Holiday and they would celebrate. Twenty incoming 82mm rounds, two KIA and six WIA. A Marine dove into an empty bunker and was immediately joined by me and another Marine behind me. The three of us hug the split bamboo walls to make room for all then see the third Marine remove his hand from below his nose to see all blood. I gave him my battle dressing and told him to bite on it. All his teeth had been blown out. Another Marine, a Chicagoan, on the hill had his lower jaw removed from the same mortar attack. They shared a medevac ride along with our air officer who lost an ear and part of his neck.

Air strikes continue on Hill 881N.The composite battalion of Kilo and Mike 3/3 and Kilo and Mike 3/9 has Hill 881S secure and are searching for their MIAs.

A kilometer to Echo's right flank, Hotel Company 2/3 chased the NVA off their positions. 3rd Engineers, 1st platoon, A Company is given the word to blow up the freshly constructed NVA bunkers. Setting the C-4 charges, a Marine from the Engineer section finds maps, flags and a Samurai sword in its scabbard. A mystery to this day. Did the sword belong to the son of a Vietnamese woman and a Japanese soldier from the occupation in 1945? Or did a 40 something WWII Japanese soldier still sore from losing 22 years earlier sign on to fight U. S. Marines for North Vietnam? And whoever they were, did they take it to South Viet Nam for good luck against the Marines? Or did they plan to behead captured U. S. Marines when they captured Khe Sanh Combat Base? A bigger mystery is who has them now? The Pennsylvania Marine demo man who found them was told, "We'll send them to the USS Ogden and you'll get the sword back aboard ship," of which he didn't believe a word.

On 2 May 67 Echo column begins assault on Hill 881N but has to turn back in strong wind and thunderstorm. After a late start from waiting for the go-ahead to assault Hill 881N, the whole of Echo Co. was strung out in a column up 881N with its tail end in a ravine when a spotter plane above asks Echo if we have completely left our last position. After checking an affirmative is given to the spotter pilot. The pilot responds, "Well there are NVA running around on your last position." The spotter then had to leave to avoid the severe storm just forming. XO Lt. Adinolfi looked at me and said, "Get back up there and fire a couple rounds in each bunker." It took ten minutes after passing the tail end of the column to reach the top where I took another deep breath and ran from bunker to bunker yelling at each one in proper Philadelphase, "YO," while ready to blast any NVA who showed his face. It was an area about the size of a baseball infield to cover and I was surprised no NVA were on base. As I reached the tail end, now point, of Echo's column, who had already started back up from this aborted mission. I sat in the pouring rain at the side of the trail and looked every passing Echo Marine in the eyes again just as I had when going up to the hill top. For some, it would be the last time.

Word was passed to reoccupy the same positions from last two nights. Our Engineers were to blow the bunkers and join the end of the column to 881N but wanted to save C-4 for later and only demolished one. Now thunder, lightning and drenching rain in receding daylight. I sat on the edge of my fighting hole which doubled as the entrance to my NVA bunker and waited for my night watch mate of the last four nights to share watch with me. He never showed. No poncho and the flack jackets were all ordered left on the USS Tripoli and Ogden to make us light infantry. No C-rats. No cigarettes or water. My old Echo 3rd platoon squad had developed a method to collect rain water by raising the right arm palm down and canteen in left hand held under the right elbow where rain water dropped in a steady fast drip in heavy rain. I wished I was with my old squad somewhere on this former NVA hill. If missing something, a buddy usually had a spare. The whole company was manning the perimeter drenched to the bone except for the tops of our heads under our helmets. I had a dry bunker but did not want to go in.

It was well after mid-night and now 3 May 67 and couldn't imagine the NVA attacking. I crept into the bunker. I lay on the woven grass mat and awoke a short time later to explosions outside. Thinking a jumpy Echo Marine had thrown a grenade, until I heard a NVA soldier shouting commands. I was lying on my stomach in two inches of rain water and pulled my knees up to kneel on my hands and knees. My M-16 in my right hand was quivering. My whole body was shaking in an uncontrollable shiver I could not shake. (years later the word hypothermia was added to my vocabulary)

On my knees in the small bunker my body shook like it was strapped to a vibrating machine in a hole in the ground. Here it was, after all the training and being sent 10,000 miles around the world and under attack by 500 NVA, it was SHOWTIME and I'm in a bunker doing push-ups. Hoping to get my muscles warm enough to stop the violent shivering and return fire with the rest of the Echo Marines. I try deep breathing taking long breaths to get oxygen. Segments from my twenty and one half years of life flashed through my mind.

Then I hear voices above. Who is that? It's in English. It's Lt. Eller (35) my former platoon commander and L/Cpl Hall with Pfc. Maio. I was glad to hear them but couldn't talk. After another deep breath I called out, "Hall, is that you?" The CO, Capt. Lyon radioed Lt. Eller to get a squad up here to assault downhill into the NVA. Hall and Maio pulled me up out of the bunker and if it were not so dark but daylight they could see the big smile on my face. There are no other Marines I would prefer to die with.

From the two days on this hill, (30Apr. and 1May) we knew there was a zig-zag trench just five yards from my hole and Hall and Maio eased down into it. just then a volley of three chi-com grenades splashed just five feet in front of us. Boiling hot mud hit the tops of our helmets and plastered my forehead and eyeglasses which protected my eyes. The explosions were immediately followed by blasts from three AK-47's. Hall yelled in a muffled voice, "Monahan, are you OK?" "Yeah. How about you?" At that point Maio opened up, then Hall, then me. Firing downhill into the dark at the darker wet forms struggling uphill in the mud. Beyond the forms was a fog from the rain and dampness. Next

we hear a scream from our left front. "HELP, THEY'RE TAKING ME AWAY." Hall says, "That's Kruger." Seconds later a grenade explodes in the fog just downhill from the scream. Then silence. A squad of second platoon was KIA and Pfc. Kruger and another Marine of his third platoon fire team took over the unmanned positions. Hall and Maio took over the seemingly unmanned sector that was mine. After a few more NVA fire team uphill rushes at us, Hall and Maio were moved to another sector around the hill. In the dark, Doc Burke ran up to my bunker and asked if there was room. I stood up and exited my hole and he and another Marine with a hand blown off entered the bunker about the size of the back seat area of a VolksWagen. The wounded Marine held in his good hand his rifle which he donated to me. Bipods and all to keep it out of the mud.

Now recovered from waking up in a rain puddle, I had a field of fire covering the main trail leading up past my hole on the north end of the hill. On the back side of my three foot high dirt and log covered bunker there was no approach due to a fifteen foot drop-off in back of it.

My hole with attached bunker was right at the military crest on the north end of the nameless hill. From my hole, the top of Hill 881N could be seen and the trail the 225 strong company pounded to mud in the effort to reach Hill 881N came right up to my hole.

I removed my helmet and placed it an arms length to my left to act as a decoy to draw fire. Now this created a problem. My eyeglasses tied to my head became useless with rain smeared on them. When eyesight was needed I used a finger as a windshield wiper.

At my feet in the fighting hole was my WWII issue haversack holding six grenades, one WP grenade and a metal ammo box of 5.56mm holding hundreds of rounds. I passed the ammo box to Doc Burke and asked him to fill my magazines, all three of them.

I GET MAIL

49 years ago this past week I returned to Viet Nam after spending a month in the hospital after being wounded in Hue City on 28 February. This picture was taken at LZ Stud just outside Khe Sanh as Operation Pegasus was starting. Alpha 1/1 would be helicoptered onto Hill 861A and relieve a Company of Marines, Echo 2/26 who had been there for the 77 day seize. I would meet one Marine who was in that company that day, Barry Fixler at a MCL Golf outing a few years ago. We have become good, GREAT friends since that day. In this picture I am eating my favorite C-Rat meal, Beans and Meatballs. YES, I remember what I was eating that day. I was NEVER the same after returning to Viet Nam after being wounded. And even 49 years later I am still pissed that I wasn't.
Semper FI, Neas Out



EDDIE NEAS A CO 1/1 1ST PLATOON

JANUARY 21 , NOT JUST ANOTHER DATE

BY CRAIG TOURTE
HQ BTRY 1/13

We gathered once again this year at the Table Mountain Golf Course in Oroville California. As usual this luncheon, held to honor so many, would not have occurred if it were not for the unselfish devotion to Veterans like Tom Horchler.



January 21st is not just another date in time, for those who served at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh, that date represents not only a historical battle in the annals of American history but forever a life changing event for all who served in that area of operation during the Vietnam War. On January 21st where ever a Khe Sanh Veteran finds himself, he knows he is not alone, he knows others he served with are remembering what he is remembering and feeling the painful memories and loss of the many who did not return with him. That is why on that date we gather together to commemorate that battle and to remember those who served on the base, on the hills and area of operation. To remember those who did not come home with us and to honor those who have and continue to serve.

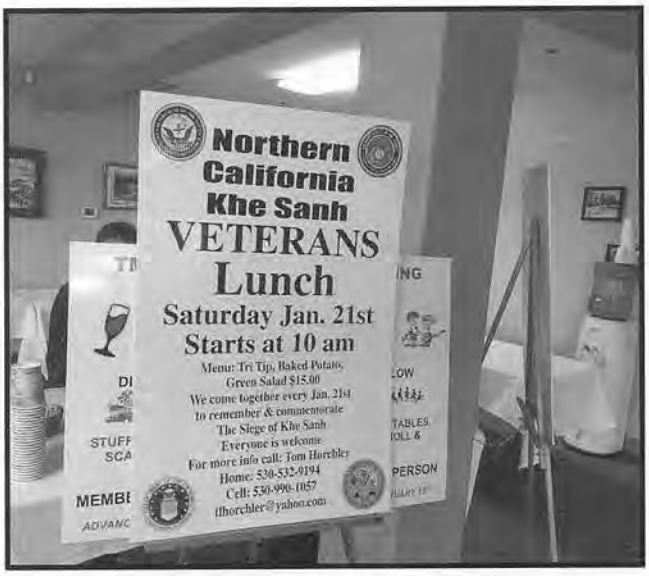


Khe Sanh
VETERANS


EXIT


Style
It's like I've come home








VIETNAM
Shooting Gallery
Newsweek
The Agony Of Khe Sanh


Khe Sanh
VETERANS

I GET MAIL

THOMAS KEN SOERENSEN
A BTRY 1/13 ALPHA 6 FO
I CO 3/26 HILL 881S, B CO 1/26 F/O

I Tommy,

I am sending you a copy of a letter which I composed and forwarded to Congressman Doug LaMalfo 1st District, Northern California Region. I corresponded with Chaplain Ray Stubbe a few days ago and sent some pictures of our reunion, and dinner. Also told him what a great reunion it was.

This reunion was very special for me. I finally got to greet a fellow Artillery F/O/RO from A/1/13. Cpl Sam "Red" Roach attached to Echo Co. This was his first ever Khe Sanh Reunion and ours after 48 years, Tears & words flowed freely while visiting the Hill 881S memorial, A place where I spent much time when not on patrol, at Khe Sanh.

I think my letter to the Congressman may be an inspiration, to other Khe Sanh Veterans who are struggling with government bureaucracies regarding their service in Khe Sanh.

THE LETTER

Thomas Ken Soerensen
USMC, Khe Sanh Veteran
20 November 2016

Honorable
Congressman
Doug LaMalfo
1st District, Northern
California Region

Dear Congressman LaMalfo,

Nearly 50 years Ago on a dark night, I disembarked a Continental Airliner, at the Marine Base located in El Toro California. I was in the company of many other Marines returning from Vietnam. Myself after a nineteen month tour. Needless to say there were no brass bands or cheering people to greet us.

The next coming months would expose me to many hateful acts by the public protesting the Vietnam war. Maybe this was just a new form of a welcome home ceremony for the battle weary survivors. It seemed like the returning dead suffering was over and the survivors ordeal began. Today, once again, we face those hateful masses, who deny freedom of choice, and freedom of speech to the American people.

For more than forty years, I have lived in an alien world, where I had few friends, meaningless jobs, and could not even find true love. Consuming alcohol became my way of feeling secure in this insecure world.

At the end of my first year of being back in the world (Home), I came to realize that the only time anything felt normal, was after I consumed large quantities of Alcohol. I sought answers and help from the VA beginning in the fall of 1968, while starting my first semester of College.

The VA informed me that I had no proof that I was suffering nightmares, deprived of sleep, fits of anger, rage and despair along with a continuous ringing in my ears.

Ten years after my discharge in 1968, I was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with a combat "V." Representatives from the Marine Corps travelled to my home in Eugene Oregon to present the award. The recommendation for the award was for actions while serving at the Khe Sanh Combat Base, Vietnam in 1967,with B CO 1/26 as a artillery F.O.

This award, along with my Purple Heart did not mean much except bring memories of all my radio operators, who had been killed in action by NVA soldiers whom daily tried to kill as many Marines as they could.

I managed to exist somehow in spite of the alcohol abuse, a failed marriage, and very few true friends. I could not settle in one place constant moving, sometimes becoming homeless.

In 2012 I was informed by a VA clinic employee from Chico, California, that I should submit for an exam for PTSD Syndrome. Again, after forty years, the VA gave me a hard time in regards to supplying proof prior to scheduling my psychiatric exam. I was then diagnosed with PTSD and awarded a minimum of 50 per cent for hearing loss, with a total 70 per sent disability rating.

During this process I became aware of the existence of documentation when I first filed for help from

the VA in 1968. The letter from the VA in 1998 informing me of an examination date In LA California for P.T.S.D. was also on file. I could not make the 1998 exam since I was at that time homeless, with no transportation, and no Drivers License from a DUI conviction.

I wrote the VA a letter asking for a postponement/ rescheduling for that exam. That was the last time I ever heard from the VA regarding my P.T.S.D.

Later in 2012, I sought further help from the Butte County Veterans Services Hannah Williamson. At that time I was able to view the letters for help which I had written requesting medical help in 1968 and the letter requesting a rescheduling my exam for PTSD. All this documentation was available at the VA Regional Office in Oakland California.

When I attempted to file for Vocational Rehab or un -employability, at the Vocational Rehab office in Chico, I was informed by Mr. Larry Bonnington that I had a better chance of achieving this, if I were to become medically incapacitated. The word cancer somehow came up in our conversation. I was told that Vocational Rehab was out of the question due to my age.

I have been a healthy, physically fit person all my personal and military life, with Marine Corps Values.

During a recent ultra-sound exam of my gallstone area performed at Mather VA hospital, and a follow up Cat-Scan/MRI, some abnormalities were observed on my lug and neck.

After a follow up MRI & PET Scan, and needle biopsy, I was diagnosed with MDS cancer. It is located in my bone marrow, after a sample was taken from my right hip bone.

I am scheduled to start treatment soon, after obtaining a second opinion from Dr. Robert Greenburg at Stanford Cancer Research Medical Center on November, 2016.

Hannah Williamson has been attempting to have the Veterans Department acknowledge my existing PTSD back to the original contact date of 1998. I have personally written letters to the Assistant Director of the VA, all for naught.

I requested all of my medical records from them, After waiting for a year, I received a CD containing all my correspondence, and medical records. It included the 1998 letter from the VA informing me of my scheduled 1998 exam, and my request for another date, that never materialized.

NOTE: I have watched a presentation of a VA whistle blower who revealed that this was a common practice of the VA in the "90's. They would contact a veteran once, if there was no response there would be no further communication with the Veteran, regarding His/her PTSD.

I finally had to terminate my employment this year after my employer / agents refused to accommodate my VA Sanctioned 20 Hour maximum work week because of PTSD brought on by stress.

Now I am also experiencing a few of the Symptoms related to the type of cancer I have been diagnosed with. My existing PTSD deprives me of normal sleep for nearly fifty years. It is presently 0145 hours, I have been trying to sleep since 8:00 P.m.'s Now I also have nausea, headaches, and a constant fever.

My time is running out, I do not have the energy to go on trying to get the VA to right a wrong! I attend a weekly group therapy session and also one counseling session. (And have been for 3 years)

Congressman, I have spoken with you on several occasions, recently at the Oroville Air Show. I am aquatinted with Bill Connelly and a loyal supporter of you as my congressional Representative of the US Congress. If you can manage to allocate time to this matter before yoyo, I would be sincerely appreciative.

Gratefully Yours,
Thomas Ken Soerensen



BOOK REVIEW

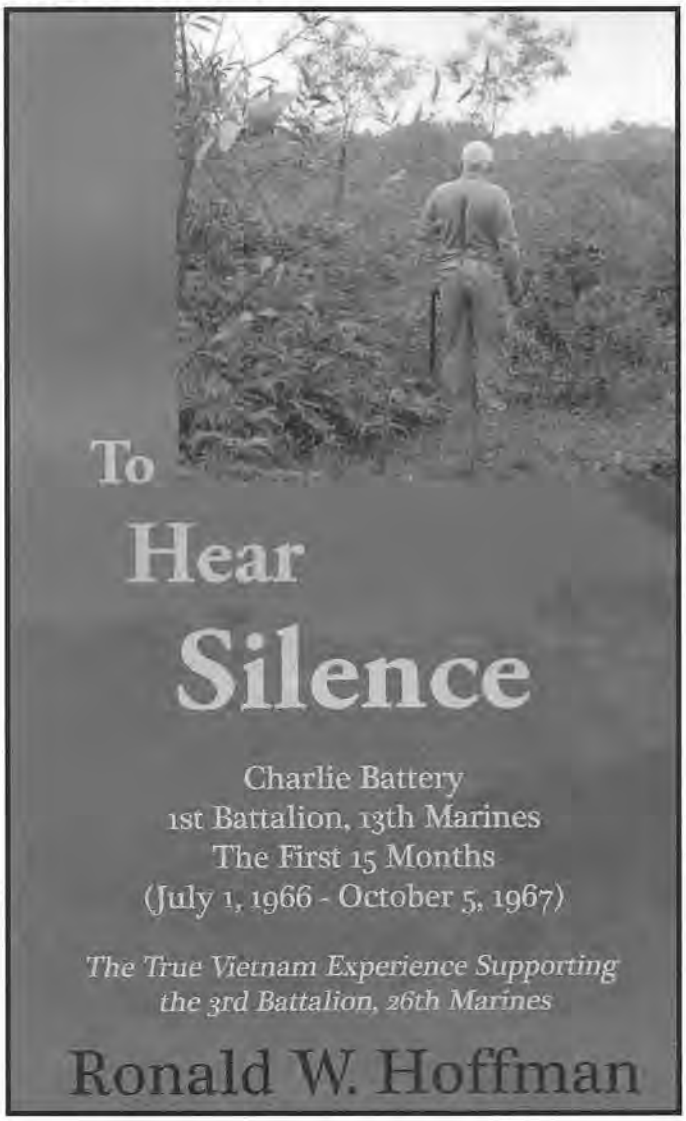

To Hear Silence is the history of Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, from the time of its formation at Camp Horno, California, in July 1966, until the original members left Vietnam in early October 1967. Although partly written in narrative format, this book paints an accurate portrayal of the experiences of what really happened in 1966 and 1967 through its day-to-day, and often minute-to-minute, accounts of the members' time in Vietnam. This book is based on a diary kept by the author while in Vietnam, the actual declassified documents kept by the Marine Corps, and the memories of those who lived through it.

Ronald Hoffman knows the entire population of northeast Wisconsin does not even come close to the number of people who died during the Vietnam War. Anywhere from 1.5 million to 5 million people were killed during the war, he said.

It was a war Hoffman, a retired U.S. Marine living in Green Bay, knows all too well. It is also the main focus of his new book, "To Hear Silence."



Ron points out his fighting position during the Vietnam War, during a presentation about his book

Hoffman said he heard that most presentations should start with a joke.

"I could not think of a single joke about war and about people being killed," Hoffman said. "We're just going to have to skip that."

By the end of 1965, more than 200,000 American troops were deployed in Vietnam. On Jan. 27, 1966, Hoffman was drafted, which he found ironic because he had been rejected because of bad eyesight when he tried to join the military two years earlier. That changed when Congress approved the Gulf of Tonkin resolution in 1964, authorizing President Lyndon B. Johnson to use military force in Vietnam.

"It was the year we started questioning everything," Hoffman said. "Some were good things. Some were bad. After '64, everything changed. Before then, nobody even knew where Vietnam was."

Hoffman remembers all too well the night when he and his fellow Marines were attacked when he was a part of Operation Chinook, which started on Dec. 10, 1967.

Reading an excerpt from his book Wednesday, Hoffman recounted seeing fellow soldiers killed and maimed, and he questioned whether he would make it out alive.

"I slipped into my fighting hole, and it is only then I discovered the rain has washed away my poncho," Hoffman read. "Now the rain and the mud have started to join me in my hole. It is at this same time that all hell breaks loose. The North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong both start pounding us with mortars and rockets.

"As I lay there with the ground shaking as each mortar hits, I start to think about people I hadn't seen in years, and I start to wonder, is this the way it is before you die? I start to think, will the next round hit on top of me? God, don't make me suffer."

Military strategy and people's reactions differentiated Vietnam from World War II, Hoffman said.

In World War II, soldiers were in the war for the duration, he said, while soldiers in Vietnam were rotated every 12 to 13 months.

"By the time you got the lay of the land and how to do things over there, your time was up, and you got new people in there," Hoffman said.

Anti-war protests at home also hurt the soldiers, according to Hoffman.

"It was great fodder for the enemy. 'Look, even your own people back home hate you,'" he said.
Hoffman urged people to remember that a lot of young Americans give up a lot to protect the freedom that the United States enjoy.

"Wars are not fought by old men; they're remembered by old men like me," Hoffman said.



BOOK REVIEW

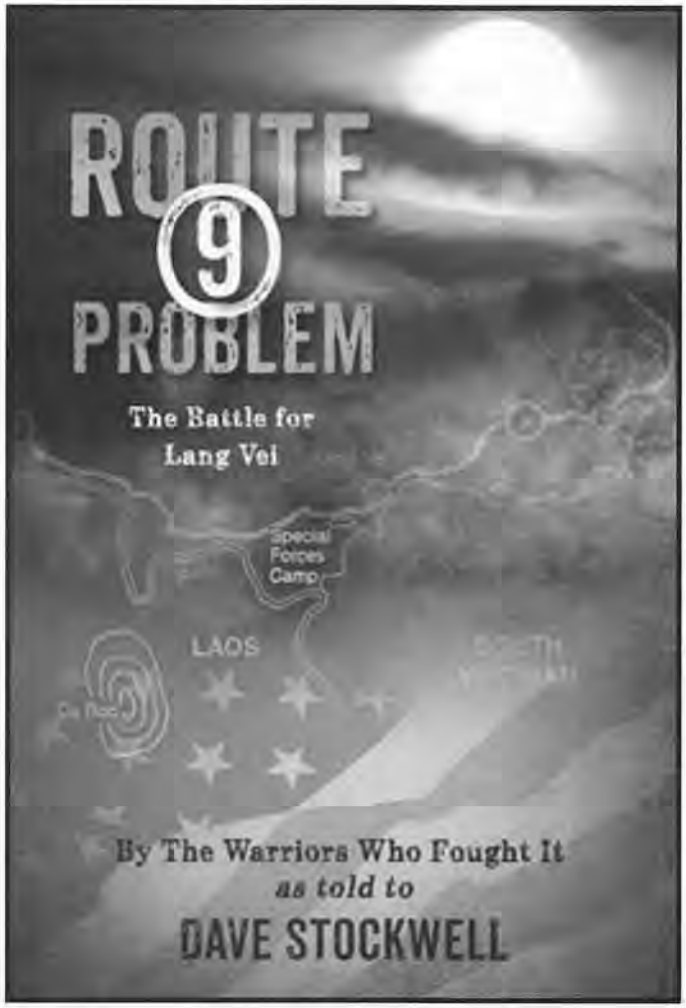

AGAINST ALL ODDS BROTHERHOOD, TENACITY, AND COURAGE AT LANG VEI

When the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) planned to send forty thousand troops to attack the six thousand US Marines at Khe Sanh in 1968, it expected a decisive victory. Certainly the small US Special Forces camp in the way at Lang Vei would be quickly overrun.

The Tough tenacious defenders at Lang Vei had other ideas. The two dozen US Army Green Berets and their four hundred tribesmen at Lang Vei gave the NVA such a monumental headache that they became known as the "Route 9 problem" all the way to the highest levels of the North Vietnamese government. Even the NVA's tanks-their first use in The war– couldn't completely defeat the stubborn US fighters.

More than an intense, moment-by-moment description of the battle, *Route 9 Problem: The Battle/or Lang Vei* details the personal side-who these men were, how they got there, who was waiting for them back home

Dave Stockwell has done an excellent job putting together so many different points of view and making them blend into the true story that will live as long as the US Army has soldiers that proudly wear the Green Beret.

William R. Phillips, Author of "Night of the Silver Stars": The Battle of Lang Vei

A masterpiece! The hair-raising account of the renowned fight will leave you feeling you were there. When enemy tanks breach the perimeter wire at the start of the battle, you'll break out in a sweat Route 9 Problem-The Battle for Lang Vei is a must-read lor every Viet Nam veteran and for anyone else who needs a good dose 01 patriotism.

- Gary linderer, US Army Ranger Hall of Fame Author of The Eyes of the Eagle and Others on Vietnam

One of the most outstanding books we have read, Route 9 Problem delivers an honest rendering of that conflict in the words of those who fought. By showcasing each branch of the service's unique capabilities, Stockwell provides a fresh and thoughtful look at Lang Vei's enduring truths of leading, planning, and showing courage in combat.

- Victor Holman, US Army Lieutenant Colonel Retired and Somalia Veteran, and Emmanuel Holman, US Army Captain and Iraq and Afghanistan Veteran.

DAVID B. STOCKWELL is a Retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel and author of "Tanks in the Wire"!: The first use of Enemy Armor in Vietnam. He and wife Sheryl, make their home in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.



KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

MICHAEL ARCHER KICKS OFF CSM SPRING CONNECTIONS SERIES, FEB. 17, 2017

Every day at the College of Southern Maryland, professors work to broaden the minds and widen the perspective of students in the classroom. The annual Connections Literary Series is a chance for these lessons to be offered to a much wider audience – including both students and the Southern Maryland community through the experiences and perspectives of authors, poets and writers. On Feb. 17, CSM will kick off the Spring 2017 Connections Literary Series as Michael Archer reads from his works and speaks about his experiences at 7:30 p.m. on the Leonardtown Campus, Building A, Auditorium.

Two of Archer's books are about his own experiences in the Vietnam War as a U.S. Marine and the war's aftermath. Archer served in Vietnam in 1967 and 1968, when his closest friend was killed during the battle of Khe Sanh. As he researched his third book "The Long Goodbye: Khe Sanh Revisited," Archer returned to the scene of the battle to search for his friend's remains, which had never been found, and later he encountered one of the men who had killed his friend and dragged his friend's body away.

"Forty years later I met these guys we had fought against and I had a real epiphany," Archer said in a telephone interview. "I found out they were just guys like me." The man he met described being able to hear the American soldiers in their bunkers. "He said he could smell our cigarette smoke. ... He was never the demon that our government and our military tried to make him out to be," Archer said.

For Neal Dwyer, professor of Languages and Literature at CSM, who arranges the Connections series each year, epiphanies like Archer's are the exact reason the speaker series is important. Dwyer hopes to see the audience think of things in a new way, or gain a new perspective, and learn from the experiences of others. Archer's speech, Dwyer said, is likely to show that the aftermath of war goes far beyond the

veterans who have left the battlefield and come home.

Dwyer said Archer's talk will resonate with the large veteran population in Southern Maryland, many of whom attend classes at CSM. "When students and the community come together for these events, I have seen people become very moved by the stories that are taught and shared by real people," Dwyer said. "We cannot replicate that kind of direct learning in the classroom."

Archer said he is looking forward to the reading and to share a presentation of photos from his trip to Vietnam, along with the history of the Vietnam War and the government actions that led to America's involvement. He will read an excerpt from his book, but what's important to Archer is that he will get a chance to connect with the audience in a way that could make a difference.

"I want to convey that there's a lot of survivors' guilt for the veterans of all wars," he said. "I want all veterans to know that they're not alone. You can get past it, but you have to learn to accept things that you might not want to acknowledge at first."

One of the biggest tragedies of the Vietnam War, Archer said, was that the war continued on in the minds of so many veterans, even after they were home. "Some researchers believe that twice as many American combatants later died by their own hand than were killed by the enemy in war," he said. By writing his books and speaking at events like Connections, Archer said he wants to show people that the reality of war is different than what is portrayed in the media. "Regardless of the necessity of it, war is never glorious. The people who fight are never the same again," Archer said.

For the veterans who become writers, they are serving the country in a whole new way. Dwyer said authors like Archer give their readers a chance to see the horrors of war without being on the front lines themselves. The idea is to make sure people understand what is really happening, and hopefully learn from the lessons of the people who lived these experiences.

"We can inform and engage the public, but it's not just an outreach; it's a forum for sharing ideas and learning through literature as a springboard," Dwyer said. "We're doing what we can in our little corner of Southern Maryland, and I know it works. I've seen the effect that programs like this have. … I believe in this."

Since it began in 1990, the program has featured writers such as National Book Award winners, Tim O'Brien and Robert Stone, Pulitzer Prize winning poets, Yusef Komunyakaa and Henry Taylor, and Maryland Poet Laureates Lucille Clifton and Michael Glaser. Connections readings offer the Southern Maryland community a chance to hear from and meet established and emerging local writers up-close-and-personal.

OBIT

CAPTAIN GEOEGE MICHAEL GRATZER, USA-KHE SANH VETERAN, COMMANDING OFFICER B CO 2ND BN, 2ND INF, 1ST INF DIV

George Michael Gratzer (Ret), "Sonny", 76, died early Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2016, as the direct result of long-term medical issues derived from wounds suffered in combat in Vietnam.

Sonny was born in Eveleth, Minnesota, to George and Dolly (Heelstone) Gratzer on May 5, 1940. His family moved to Butte shortly thereafter, where he attended grade schools and graduated from Butte Public High School. He played football and participated in track and field. He also boxed for the Racetrack Boxing Club and won a state boxing title. He played guitar and sang, often performing in high school and later in college. He worked summers as a hardrock miner, and was prevented from playing college football due to an accidental injury in the Emma Mine.

He was a proud member of the Butte Miners Union Local No. 1. He sold papers on the Rialto corner from age 9 through 11, and often skipped school on Mondays to earn a buck an hour pushing stock through the pens during sales at the stockyards. He graduated with a B.A. in history in 1963 from what was then Montana State University in Missoula



CAPTAIN GEORGE W. GRATZER

(Steve Miller) Gratzer, Karen (John) Doran; and brothers Steve and Karl Gratzer.

Although CPT Gratzer was authorized to be laid to rest at Arlington Cemetery in Virginia, his wishes were to remain in his home state.

A visitation was held on Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2016 from 4 to 7 p.m. at Garden City Funeral Home. A memorial service was held on Thursday, Dec. 15, at 1:30 p.m. at Garden City Funeral Home with a graveside at the Western Montana State Veterans Cemetery at 3:30 p.m. A catered reception followed at 6:00 p.m. at the Elks Club 112 N. Pattee, Missoula. Sonny requested that in lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to Association for the Bladder Exstrophy Community, 204 37th Avenue North, Suite 157, Saint Petersburg, FL 33704; or Scoliosis Research Society, 555 East Wells St. Suite 1100, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

A HERO MEMORIALIZED
WHISENHUNT DIED AT KHE SANH SAVING HIS PLATOON

By Jessica Cejnar, The Del Norte Triplicate
Published Feb 16, 2017 at 06:11AM

Michelle Barber remembers saying goodbye to her father. She was a little girl then, but the ER nurse, a Del Norte native, said she was clutching four angels from off her birthday cake when James Whisenhunt, a lance corporal in the U.S. Marines, left for Vietnam on Sept. 6, 1966.

Whisenhunt was killed in the First Battle of Khe Sanh, also known as the Hill Fights, on April 30, 1967. His platoon was trying to secure Hill 881S and were fired on from both sides by the Viet Cong, Barber said. He was 23 years old; she was 5.

"They were slaughtered," Barber said. "Guys were going down left and right. Dad could see the main bunker that was hitting the guys... Dad went up with his best friend, they had to take the bunker out. Dad knew it had to come out and he went across with no cover, no nothing, taking the bunker out. He got shot across the abdomen and he died instantly."

In addition to saving his platoon, Barber said her father brought two of his platoon mates, Donald Hossack and Tommy Wheeler, down from off the hill. He received two Purple Hearts and a Silver Star.

With the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Hill 881S approaching, Whisenhunt and the 46 other Marines who lost their lives have been commemorated on a plaque at the Vietnam War Memorial in San Antonio, Texas. The surviving members of Whisenhunt's platoon will hold a ceremony in observance of the anniversary on April 30 at the Veterans Memorial Park in San Antonio.

Whisenhunt was the youngest son of Noah and Iva Whisenhunt. Before he joined the Marines, Whisenhunt was a Crescent City Police Officer, joining the force at 20 years old and serving under Chief of Police Danny Nations.

where he became a Sigma Chi and was commissioned through the ROTC program as an Infantry officer. He married Janet Lee of Cut Bank in 1962 and the couple had four children

In 1963, Sonny trained at Fort Benning, Georgia, where, following Infantry Officers Basic, he earned Airborne Wings and a Ranger Tab, then served in Bamburg, Germany, working as a Mechanized Infantry Rifle Platoon Leader and a Rifle Company Executive Officer. He was then promoted to Captain and commanded Company B, 2d Battalion, 54th, Infantry, 4th Armored Division, and became executive officer of the same battalion. In Germany, CPT Gratzer earned the Expert Infantryman's Badge and was awarded the Army Commendation Medal. He completed the 120-credit-hour Special Forces Correspondence Course through the JFK Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

CPT Gratzer earned a Jungle Expert Patch in Panama enroute to his first tour in Viet Nam, where he commanded Company B, 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry, 1st Infantry Division (The Big Red One) headquartered in Lai Khe, where he was wounded twice. CPT Gratzer was awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Silver Star (w/ OLC), the Soldier's Medal, the Bronze Star w/"V" device (w/ OLC), the Purple Heart (w/ two OLC), the Army Commendation Medal (w/ two OLC), the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnamese Campaign Medal (w/ two Stars), two Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry (w/Gold Star and Silver Star), and the Vietnamese Service Ribbon. In addition, his unit earned the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry (w/ Palm) and the Vietnamese Civil Action Medal.

During his second tour to Vietnam while in combat, CPT Gratzer underwent direct enemy fire while attempting to save the life of one of his soldiers, and in turn, was shot by an AK round through the spine and internal organs on Feb. 9, 1968. CPT Gratzer spent seven months in military hospitals and the VA Spinal Cord Center in Long Beach, California, where he underwent extensive physical rehabilitation. He was informed he would never walk again, but as stubborn as he was, he learned to walk on his own without further professional rehabilitation. Due to his heroic actions, he was finally awarded his second Silver Star (OLC) 32 years later in December 2000, before the presentation of the Colors, on the 50 yard line at a University of Montana Grizzly game.

Sonny returned to graduate school, was inducted into the National History Honorary Society, and earned his MFA in Creative Writing, later publishing three books of poetry and his first novel, "Ninety Days." He was working on a second novel at the time of his death.

Sonny enjoyed summers at Flathead Lake, first at his Wildhorse Island land, and later at his Finley Point cabin. He was a member of the old Grizzly Century Club, the Grizzly Athletic Association, and then the Grizzly Scholarship Association. An avid fan, Sonny rarely missed a home game. He especially enjoyed watching his kids and grandkids participate in sporting events, and was one of the founders of the Sentinel Booster Club and its first president. He very much enjoyed corresponding with his many military brothers across the nation

He was a lifetime member of the following organizations: Sigma Chi Fraternity, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Retired Officers Association, the Reserve Officers Association, the Disabled American Veterans, the National Rifle Association, the U.S. Army Ranger Association, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, the American Legion, the Montana Army National Guard Service Club, and the University of Montana Alumni Association. He was also a member of the Hell Gate Elks Lodge No. 383, the Butte High Golden B's, the Montana Shooting Sports Association, AF&M Sentinel Lodge No. 155, and was a Scottish Rite 32nd Degree Mason.

He was deeply loved, and his smile, laugh, compassion, my-way-or-the-highway demeanor, playing the guitar and singing, and sincere interest in family and friends and the world around him will be truly missed by all. His parents, son Steven Kurt Gratzer, and granddaughter Rachel Lynn Millhouse preceded him in death. Survivors include daughter Dana Gratzer Millhouse (Glenn); son Michael Gratzer (fiancée Maria Snow); daughter Rachel Gratzer Ross; grandchildren Sean (Whitney), Kyle, K.C., Mariah, and Ryan Millhouse; Gage Palmer; Treyvon Spirlin, and JD Strange; sisters Ruthe Fesperman, Vi (René) Marquez, Margie Scheley, Jill

According to Barber, her father was already a local hero before he joined the military.

"A guy had stolen a car out of the police department parking lot, and the cops left my dad there because he was the rookie," she said. "Dad took off running and caught the car. He's running alongside the car, holding the door handle with his gun out telling them to pull over. I have the newspaper clipping that tells you exactly that."

Barber said her dad felt the need to join the military after his brothers, Adreath, Everett and Alfred, joined the Army.

"Dad was the youngest out of the four boys so he didn't have to go, but he felt the need to go," Barber said. "He felt he was there for a reason and it was to give these people the same freedom we have."

Even though Whisenhunt wouldn't see his little girl grow up, Barber said her grandparents made sure she would know who her father was.

Iva Whisenhunt saved the oath her son took when he became a police officer. There's a telegram from Gen. Wallace M. Greene notifying her of her son's death; letters of condolences from U.S. Marine Corps Capt. W.R. Griggs and Congressman Don Clausen and a special letter to Barber from Gen. W.C. Westmoreland who commanded U.S. forces in Vietnam.

Barber also has clippings from the Crescent City American and the Del Norte Triplicate about her father as well as the transcript of a broadcast on KPOD and a proclamation from the Crescent City Council, which named May 15, 1967 Jim Whisenhunt Day.

Thirty-three years later, Barber would take the Oath of Allegiance using her father's badge and administered by her father's former boss. She was a Crescent City Police officer for 11 years before transitioning to the Del Norte County Sheriff's Office and later pursuing a nursing degree ultimately winding up in the emergency room at McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center in Eugene.

Barber said her grandparents put down good roots for her and her own daughter, Katie Kelly, who went into the U.S. Air Force. But it was her father's legacy that prompted her to follow in his footsteps and then strike out on her own path as a nurse.
"Dad was a very caring soul from what everybody has told me," Barber said. "Anybody that knew him, and there's a lot of people in this town that still know my father well, (would say) rather than take them to jail, he would take them home."

OBIT

FLOYD D. DRAKE SR, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, HQ BTRY 1/13

Drake loved the United States Marine Corps and served his country proudly and honorably, but what served as an even greater sense of pride for him was his family. He was a supportive father, a loving husband, and a loyal friend, and he left an impression on every single person he met. Mr. Drake is preceded in death by his sisters, Patricia and Micky as well as his daughter, Denise.

He is survived by his wife, Sompolsri; his children, Debbie, David and Tim; and his grandchildren, Melissa, Emory, Tylan, Ann, and Ashely as well as Jessie and Janna Menix; his great-grandchildren, Jessa, Mickey Jay, and Henry.Memorial services will were held on Tuesday, November 29, 2016 at 1pm at Kimbrell-Stern funeral home located at 1503 Dawson Road, Albany, GA 31707.

I GET MAIL

TO: Rev. Ray W. Stubbe

Tuesday, 11 October 2013
8766 Park View Ct.
Wauwatosa WI 53226-2729

FROM: Daniel Hobart C CO 1/26

Dear Ray,
I have put together information about Hill 950 on Christmas Eve 1967. Understanding how different accounts can be told, this is the event that happened on that day and night. Also is a copy of the after action report.

Also is a poem I wrote and as you can see, it was put in The Library Of Congress. I hope if any of this helps tell our story about the time we spent in a place a lot call hell, helps in the history of Khe Sanh.

Perhaps you might find it worthy of being added to our magazine? It is always helpful talking to you and I want you to know, there is A special place in my heart for you. God has given us all these years, And I live every day with Brothers still here, and all the brothers we lost.

Thank you for all you have done and God Bless, Dan Hobart

It was December 24, 1967, on the radio relay station, called Hill 950. I was in guns with my team facing the Base at Khe Sanh. About 11:00 a.m. We were told our squad was going down the hill To set up an L.Z. We were to be picked up by choppers and a new platoon would relieve us.

At about 12:00 P.M. 3rd pit. Started to move Half the men cleared the area and the rest stood watch. About 3:00 PM A call came over the radio, saying the fog was moving in and the choppers would not be able to pick us up and drop off the new PLT. Word was climb back up the hill. The men were pissed off, about the climb back to the top. It was mud, wet, and we were drained from the work we just completed. Someone said light up. Meaning, smokes, joints, and we could care less if they heard us. Move out barked the squad leader. Up we started, but this time it was different.

We said to hell with the gooks and everybody talked, broke brush, trees, anything to hold on. It took us about two hours to get back to our bunkers. I got on top of my machine gun bunker and started yelling every dirty word I could Think of and then some.

I had just got into my live in bunker, it was getting dark. Minutes later Bullets started flying. Shoving my boots on, me and Burrows ran out and jumped on the M-60. Just as I opened up with a quick burst, it seemed like something hit the ammo can behind the M-60. The can of ammo was on the ground, between me and Burows. A grenade was thrown into our bunker and the blast put us and the machine gun out of order. Some of the other men pulled me and Burrows out of the bunker.

We were both hit, him worse then me. I can still hear the LT. yelling get another gun over here. The men put me (Hobart), and Burrows in our live in bunker, on our bunks, made out of steel stakes and ammo boxes.

More grenades followed and someone threw A willy peter grenade. From what I heard the wind changed and blew it back on some of our men. Three I think. It burned right threw you if you didn't get mud on The burn. Next day was Christmas and you could hear a chopper flying around The hill in the fog. It was the second day before the pilot found a Hole and dropped like a coin from a building, to get us out.

We were taken to the Bn. Aid Station for treatment and two beers. Burrows was sent to Japan because of his wounds. I know he lived, but never heard from him again. I was laid up in one of the Company Tents. It was a quick recovery. I heal quick and wanted to get back in The action.

That is the main part of Christmas Eve Dec.24, 1967. I want it to be the correct account. Some of the stories I have read seem to be different from what I saw where I was.

By the way the picture of us at the services was in the blue sector, where you went out to the water hole. South across from the ammo dump. That we all know was quite an experience. Also the airstrip ran from North to South.

A SECRET

I HAVE A SECRET BENEATH THE EARTH
ONLY ONE MAN CAN GIVE TO REBIRTH.

NO LONGER CAN I HOLD IT WITHIN
FOR HE WHO IS GONE SHOULD KNOW WE DID WIN.

OUR YOUNG THAT WOULD NOW BE GROWING
OLD DIED IN VAIN, SO WE ARE TOLD.

I BUT ONE MUST FIGHT TO MY DEATH
FOR IN MY MIND I KNOW IT WAS MY TEST.

AS I RISE TO FOLLOW THE SUN

I LOOK THROUGH THOSE TIMES AND THINK OF MY SON.

FOR HE IS THE ONE I FOUGHT FOR IN VAIN IN HOPES ALL CHILDERN NEVER FEEL THAT PAIN.

TIS, THE BLOOD THAT WAS SPILLED ON THAT FOREIGN SOIL
THAT BROUGHT HIM HOME IN SO MUCH TURMOIL.

THE LIFE THAT WAS LEFT, SOME MEN COULD BLAME
BUT TO HIM IT WAS THE GHOST THAT THEY COULD NOT SHAME.

OH LORD FORGIVE ME FOR CAUSING SO MUCH PAIN
FOR I HAVE A SECT BENEATH THIS EARTH THAT ONLY YOU CAN GIVE TO REBIRTH.

@ Daniel L. Hobart

AGENT ORANGE A TOXIC LEGACY

by Daniel L. Hobart
C CO 1/26

On the eve of a possible revolution in Veteran's benefits relating to the acknowledgment of service-related birth defects, it's prudent that we reflect upon the history of dioxin-related problems.

When the Agent Orange manufacturers were selling their lethal product to the United states government for use in Vietnam, they knew much more about dioxn's deadly potential than they told the government. Correspondence between these manufacturers has been obtained and shows the horrifying FACTS:

1. A letter dated March 17, 1965, to Dr. R. Emmett Kelly, the medical director for Monsanto, states that "enclosed is a sample of dioxin. This was received from Dow Chemical Company, and according to them, it is the most toxic compound they have ever experienced. According to Dow, it is 100 times as toxic as parathion. It is, likewise, capable of causing incapacitating birth defects and infertility in both males and females."

2. A letter dated June 24, 1965, to Dow Chemical Company of Canada from Dow Chemical in Midland, Michigan, marked as "Dow Confidential" states:

Page 2

"As you well know, we had a serious situation in our operating plants because of contamination of 2,4, 5-Tetrachloro-dibenzodioxin this material is exceptionally toxic; it has a tremendous potential for producing chloracne and systemic injury. If it is present in 2,4,5-Trichlorophenol, it will be carried through into the T acid and into the esters and hence into formulations which are to be sold to the public."

After reviewing the tragedy surrounding dioxin and Agent Orange, we should recognize a few factors. First, the history of these chemicals has been inundated with lies and deceit because admitting dioxin's deadly potential will cost the chemical, pulp, and paper, incineration industries billions of dollars in liability. Perhaps this is why dioxin stories in the media about infertility and birth defects are almost nonexistent.

More than likely, the chemical companies will say that this only affects women. Yet there are now studies that show the existence of dioxin in the seminal fluid of male Vietnam Veterans, and there is little doubt that this same dioxin can reach the egg of a female. A new study from Minnesota on exposure to 2,4,0 shows a strong connection to infertility and/or birth defects.



THE GREAT GHOST CHASE VISITS THE CIRCUS OF KHE SANH

By Dale A. Dye Captain, USMC (Ret), Commanding Officer of Warriors, Inc. and Warriors Publishing Group

THE HUFINGTON POST
FEB 27, 2017

Dale Dye is a Marine officer who rose through the ranks to retire as a Captain after 21 years of service in war and peace. He is a distinguished graduate of Missouri Military Academy who enlisted in the United States Marine Corps shortly after graduation. Sent to war in Southeast Asia, he served in Vietnam in 1965 and 1967 through 1970 surviving 31 major



DALE DYE OUTSIDE BUNKER AT KHE SANH

combat operations. Appointed a Warrant Officer in 1976, he later converted his commission and was a Captain when he deployed to Beirut, Lebanon with the Multinational Force in 1982-83. He served in a variety of assignments around the world and along the way attained a degree in English Literature from the University of Maryland. Following retirement from active duty in 1984, he spent time in Central America, reporting and training troops for guerrilla warfare in El Salvador, Honduras and Costa Rica. Upset with Hollywood's treatment of the American military, he went to Hollywood and established Warriors Inc., the preeminent military training and advisory service to the entertainment industry. He has worked on more than 50 movies and TV shows including several Academy Award and Emmy winning productions. He is a novelist, actor, director and show

This whole business of being a capitalist lackey and running dog imperialist war monger is a tough gig. I mean, it's a hard dollar when you make it by suppressing freedom loving peasants and supporting a puppet army. And if they'd told me I was going to spend most of my time at war cowering in fear of my own shadow? Why, hell no I wouldn't go. But I did—several times. I even came back nearly 50 years later on The Great Ghost Chase, which is now in Day 6, during which we discover just how evil us bastards were way back then.

Indeed. And if you fought here during the Vietnam War and really don't believe you are all or any of those things, if you believe at this remove that your heart was in the right place even if your body wasn't? Well, then. You just need to take a little jaunt along Vietnamese Route 9 toward what was once the Khe Sanh Combat Base and that'll do for your education—or re-education as the case may be. Up there, nearly in Laos and surrounded by mist-blanketed hills where Marines suffered under intense daily artillery barrages and held off legions of enemy soldiers trying to create Dien Bien Phu déjà vu, you'll learn a thing or two.

Right there in the little museum you'll learn that the peace-loving soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army didn't really want to attack the cowardly Yankee imperialists, but they just felt compelled by basic decency to trot on down the Ho Chi Minh trail and jerk a high-explosive knot in the American tail. And while they were at it, they killed 11,900 of the foreign invaders (real number of American KIA is 274), destroyed at least 400 aircraft piloted by Yankee Air Pirates (real numbers include one KC-130, two C-123s, and a half-dozen helicopters). The Khe Sanh museum also claims that tenacious fighters of the NVA sank 80 ships during the 77-day siege. But look who's counting. And there's no reason to consider that Khe Sanh is completely landlocked when you're amping up those numbers.

The whole show at what little is left of Khe Sanh Combat Base reeks of commie hokum. It's P.T. Barnum in NVA greasepaint, and it raises primitive hackles among a few of us Marine Combat Correspondents who served there at one point or another during the war. The joint is strewn with what purports to be captured U.S. equipment. There's even a partridge running along the overgrown airstrip. No sign of a pear tree. So let's ignore the cheap-jack

concrete sandbags and misspelled American graffiti designed to paint us as poor uneducated peons forced to brutalize brave freedom fighters. Yes. And let's just give all that the old wink and nod while we ponder a few observations made on the trip to Khe Sanh from Hue.

There's the elaborate suspension bridge over the Cam Lo River right at one of the old Ho Chi Minh trail access points paid for and built by Cubans. You've got to figure the forebears of some of Castro's construction crews were here once before—up north where they served as anti-air advisors or POW interrogators. But no mention of that either.

Up here in the highlands, traveling a newly constructed highway that will lead to Thailand if you've got the time and inclination to make the trip by vehicle, there's always a spooky mist hanging on hilltops like The Rockpile and Hills 861 and Hills 881 North and South. In the days American Marines fought to hold those rocky tors, it was an evil mist that made every nightfall a nightmare. As convection forced the fog up the forested slopes, NVA infantry often accompanied it, jumping out at startled defenders like heavily armed Halloween ghouls. And at Ca Lu, a spot on the map-sheets that later became Vandegrift Combat Base, where Operation Pegasus kicked off in April 1968 to break the Khe Sanh encirclement, there's an elaborate graveyard and monuments to NVA soldiers killed in what became known to Marines as The Hill Fights. The numbers are a little more accurate here including a count of some 5,000 KIA. Mr. Vinh translates a sign indicating that they are all brave southern fighters of the National Liberation Front. He's got a great wink and nod

What's cool and a little disconcerting in this blowtorch barrage of propaganda are the Montagnards we see up here puttering around their stilt-supported straw huts as they've done for centuries. The ones we see are mostly Bru, one of the 13 recognized Montagnard tribes populating the mountainous areas of Vietnam and Laos. While most of Vietnam has morphed into a semi-modern nation, the Yards still live a fairly primitive existence. They don't want or need much from the government—which is fortunate because they are still a disadvantaged and depressed minority.

We see a lot of national flags everywhere. No upright or vertical stanchion is without that gold star on a red field. Could be there's a swivet of genuine patriots up here. Americans have no monopoly on flag-waving. Or it could be that the folks living a back-breaking stoop-and-bend lifestyle in the extremely rural areas just below the 17th parallel are anxious to let Big Brother know they came down on the right side of the fight that boiled through their backyards for so long.

And that's it for now. There's just one reliable treatment for massive sensory overload. It involves mass quantities of intoxicants and my keyboard will only suffer so much abuse. Stay tuned for a wrap-up which will be filed from the land of the free because of the brave

REMAINS OF MARINE SHOT DOWN DURING VIETNAM WAR HEADING HOME AFTER 48 YEARS. WELCOME HOME



1ST LT WILLIAM (BILLY) RYAN USMC

The remains of Marine Corps Reserve 1st Lt. William (Billy) Ryan, of Bogota, N.J., were identified through DNA tests conducted by the Defense Pow/MIA Accounting Agency at the Pentagon, the paper reported Friday.

Ryan's plane crashed on a combat mission in southern Laos near the Vietnam border on May 11, 1969, the day before his son's first birthday.

"I always knew my dad died in the crash, and that's what my mom told me," Michael Ryan, 48 told the paper. "What she didn't tell me is that part of her held out hope that maybe she'd see his face again." His aircraft was pulling out of a bombing run when it was hit by enemy fire. The pilot bailed out and was rescued.

Ryan was also shot down in 1968 over the Gulf of Tonkin but he survived that crash.

According to the Record, military investigators went to the Laos crash site in 1990 and found his plane seat. Investigators visited the site on six other occasions from May 2012 to January 2016 to look for remains. A lab identified the remains as Ryan's and notified Michael last month.

The next day Ryan's widow Judith was diagnosed with stage-4 stomach cancer.

"I don't know, it's strange to me," Michael told the paper. "We've waited 48 years for this. And now I'm looking up at God and saying, 'Can you give this woman a week to celebrate?'"

Billy Ryan will be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery on May 10, the eve of the crash anniversary.

THE STORY BEGAN LAST MONTH

Last month, sad comfort finally arrived. It came in a phone call on Jan. 3 from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, informing the family that the remains of Marine 1st Lt. William C. Ryan Jr. had been positively identified using DNA recovered from the crash site in Laos.

One day after she received the news, Judy was told she had an advanced form of cancer. Again the timing seemed important and strange, like maybe God and Judy had waited together all those 47 years.

"It's uncanny to me that this love story — and that's exactly what it is, a love story — ended the night before" the diagnosis, Michael said. "She got that feeling of hope and closure right before she starts the fight of her life."

TWICE A HERO

Billy Ryan was born in Hoboken in 1944 and grew up in Bogota, where his friends called him Rhino. Even at 5 feet 9 inches tall and a wiry 160 pounds, the nickname suited him.

Ryan was tough. He played quarterback and running back on the football team at St. Cecilia High School in Englewood, pitcher and shortstop on the baseball team, and point guard in basketball.

"Everything we did, he was just better. Faster, stronger, more coordinated," said Ed Ryan, 71, Billy's younger brother. "Absolutely, I looked up to Billy."

Billy attended St. Francis College in Pennsylvania, where he studied French and nursed a crush on a beautiful woman named Judith Ann Woolsey.

She ignored him for years. Then, one night, she didn't.

"My mom's super outgoing, and she thought he was too quiet and shy," Michael said. "Then they just went out to a local coffee shop, and she thought he was the nicest man she ever met."



8 FEB TUE 2017
TRAGIC VALOR OF MARINES
AT CON THIEN
(JULY, 1967)by Don North

It was known to local missionaries as "the Hill of Angels," but to the occupying Marines, Con Thien was a little piece of hell. Just two miles south of the Demilitarized Zone (the DMZ dividing line between North and South Vietnam), it was a barren, bulldozed plateau of red dirt 160 meters high and ringed with barbed wire, studded with artillery revetments and crisscrossed with trenches and sand bag-covered bunkers. To the east stretched the "McNamara Line," the 600-meter-wide "barrier" ordered by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara which the Marines had cleared and sowed with seismic and acoustic sensors and minefields.



At Con Thien in 1967, American commanders in Vietnam failed to recognize that loyalty should flow downward as well as upward. The commanders' loyalty should have been to their Marines facing the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) as much as to their superiors in Washington. U.S. Marines died in droves at Con Thien; they deserved better of their commanders.

I was there. My ABC News team – consisting of cameraman Nguyen Van Quy, soundman Nguyen Xuan De, and myself – was next on the list for an assignment out of Saigon. We drew Con Thien, the most dangerous place in Vietnam that week. Nearly a half century later, as Memorial Day 2016 approached, I thought back on that assignment.

In that part of Quang Tri Province, the McNamara Line was anchored in the east by Firebase Gio Linh and in the west by Con Thien. Secretary McNamara, ever on the lookout for clever, logical and arms-length solutions for defeating the enemy, floated the idea of the barrier in March 1966, at a meeting of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. High-ranking U.S. military professionals pretended to take his myopic vision seriously and construction began in April 1967. But anchored by those two fire bases, the McNamara Line could be flanked on either side of the combat bases. And the North Vietnamese side of the DMZ was off-limits from U.S. ground attack. NVA divisions, operating within range of their 135mm artillery, were free to target firebases and roving Marine patrols with deadly accuracy

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A FLAWED STRATEGY

So, why was there a base at Con Thien in the first place? Simply because the 160-meter hill, if taken by the NVA, could have facilitated hits on the key U.S. staging area at Dong Ha. Aside from denying the hill to the enemy, there was little reason to protect Con Thien. But its vulnerabilities also made it an inviting target

The commander of NVA forces, the renowned General Vo Nguyen Giap, victor of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, was trying to replicate that victory along the DMZ. But the battle doctrines he followed were based on a rigid command structure and similarly rigid thinking, reflecting someone "unschooled in the art of war," according to Marine historian Eric Hammel. Nevertheless, Hammel concluded that "all of Giap's flaws as a planner and leader were more than compensated by the self-defeating policies and attitudes in the camp of his enemies. At least Giap took responsibility for his setbacks."

My news team found the First Battalion, Ninth Marines at Con Thien suffering from blazing heat and choking dust as they were targeted by snipers and under constant threat of ground attacks.

What made duty at the outpost a special misery was the hail of artillery from NVA batteries tucked away in the northern hills of the DMZ. The 135mm guns were well camouflaged and sheltered in caves; the NVA quickly rolled out the artillery to fire, then just as quickly rolled them back again to shelter. Although Americans retaliated with artillery and air strikes of their own, they were not able to stop the hundreds of shells that each day took a toll of Con Thien's defenders.

HEAVY CASUALTIES

On July 2, 1967, the Marines' Alpha and Bravo Companies launched Operation Buffalo, a sweep in the area north of the base. But faulty reconnaissance and inadequate observation allowed an undetected NVA force to ambush the Marines. Eighty-six Marines of Bravo Company were killed and 176 wounded; only 27 members of the Company walked out of the battle unaided. An estimated 1,290 NVA were killed, even so, by anyone's definition, including that of the Marines, it was the enemy's victory. Although American casualties in Vietnam were rarely specified, the Marines acknowledged that it "was the worst single disaster to befall a Marine Corps rifle company during the Vietnam War."

The NVA were well aware of the U.S. Marines tradition of not leaving their dead behind, and they prepared for the Marines' return. On July 3, air strikes and Marine artillery were directed to the battle area in preparation for retrieval of the bodies. Marine reinforcements lifted off from the carrier USS Okinawa, and early the morning of July 4, they attacked on a six-company front to reach the dead. Marine Skyhawk attack aircraft lay down suppressing fire as our ABC crew recorded the recovery operation.

As we slowly advanced with two battalions, it soon became obvious that the NVA had pulled out during the night but left numerous booby traps behind to further bleed the Marines. Many bodies had been rigged with grenades and almost all had been mutilated or desecrated in some way. The bodies were spread over a wide area of low bushes. Two days lying in the blistering sun had bloated the bodies and burned them black. One dead Marine had his genitals cut off and sewn to his face, with a photo of his girlfriend stabbed to his chest.

Many of the recovery teams wore gas masks as some protection from the ghastly stench, other Marines retched and vomited. They placed the corpses in green rubber body bags and carried them to a clearing where the remains were loaded on Marine tanks. Personal effects were collected and placed in upturned helmets.

Many in the work party made it forcefully known they were not pleased that a TV news crew was accompanying them on a mission to reclaim their dead. We shot sparingly and from a distance so as not to upset them. In any event, those grisly scenes would never be used in a U.S. news program.

THE AFTERMATH

The next morning, our ABC News crew entered the base at Con Thien. It felt like being at the heart of the war. We could look north across the Ben Hai river which marked the Seventeenth Parallel and see the North Vietnamese flag waving from a tall pole. We could look beyond the flag to see puffs of white smoke and hear the rumble of shells being fired in our direction, giving us about 20 seconds to find the nearest bunker. Late in the afternoon, one of the Marine artillery pieces took a direct hit; its crew had not been able to retreat to a bunker in time. As rockets and shells continued to drop in, an Army Special Forces medic jumped out of a bunker and joined a half dozen Marines trying to save the life of a badly wounded comrade. They took turns pumping his chest to strengthen a weak pulse and giving him direct mouth-to-mouth resuscitation while shouting encouragement. "C'mon Sidell, you can make it buddy! Don't give up!" Lance Corporal Jimmy Sidell from Atlanta, Georgia didn't respond with either a gasp or a pulse as his Marine buddies worked on him for almost an hour. Another NVA shell hit with a deafening impact just a few yards away. Our film camera was blown off the cameraman's shoulder; Sidell's buddies recoiled from the concussion but never missed a beat pumping his heart. Finally with the body growing stiff, it was clear Sidell wasn't coming back. Through sobs and curses, the Marines tied an identification label to his boot laces and carried him to a tank waiting outside the wire that would serve as his hearse

I cried too, even as I tried a "standupper" to conclude my report. In New York, ABC News located Sidell's parents in Atlanta and warned them the report of their son's death would be on national TV the following evening. It was clear that what motivated these Marines to endure the daily hell of Con Thien was not victory or satisfying the chain of command but their strong devotion to each other.

HIGH-LEVEL COMPLAINTS

The MACV Commander General William West-

moreland was not satisfied with the effort the Marines were putting into making the barrier work. In October 1967, he complained, "the barrier has not been accorded a priority consistent with operational importance." Engineer companies showed enormous courage working in daylight hours, in the open with heavy equipment and suffered a higher percentage of casualties than the rifle companies at Con Thien.

Another part of the problem was that Marines are traditionally an offensive organization. Building in-depth defenses is not their forte, especially questionable ones like the "McNamara Line." Marine Corps generals complained that the barrier plan was a constant irritant. Holding static defensive positions prevented the Marines from conducting "pacification programs" and from attacking the enemy's infiltration routes. Major General Rathon Tompkins, commander of the Third Marine Division, referred to the McNamara Line as "absurd." Lt. General Robert Cushman, the Marine commander in Vietnam, later admitted, "We just weren't going out getting everyone killed building that stupid fence."

After the Tet offensive which began on Jan. 30, 1968, and demonstrated the resilience and determination of the NVA and the Vietcong, Secretary McNamara agreed to step down. At the end of February 1968, a broken and distraught McNamara attended a farewell luncheon at the State Department and spoke tearfully of "the futility, the crushing futility of the air war." Perceiving him as growing soft on the war, President Lyndon Johnson quietly arranged for McNamara to take over the presidency of the World Bank.

General William Westmoreland was replaced on June 11, 1968, as commander of MACV. On Oct. 22, his successor GENERAL CREIGHTON ABRAMS ordered all construction associated with the McNamara Line halted. The fate of the barrier was finally sealed on Nov. 1, 1968, when President Johnson announced a bombing halt in the DMZ and North Vietnam. Marine units were under orders not to set foot or even fire into the DMZ.

TALLYING UP A FOLLY

During the period of the McNamara Line construction from September 1966 to October 1967, 3rd Marine Division casualties were 1,400 killed in action and 9,000 wounded. Forty-six years later, I am reviewing my scripts, video and notes from Con Thien. I see now that the anger I felt at the misguided strategy and the compassion we felt for the Marines' suffering was not fully expressed. It should have been much clearer that the U.S. strategy was not only flawed but resulted in an unnecessary waste of lives.

I am reminded of an observation by Chris Hedges, a former war correspondent for the New York Times: "Reporters who witness the worst of human suffering and return to newsrooms angry see their compassion washed out by layers of editors who stand between the reporter and reader. The creed of objectivity and balance ... disarms and cripples the press and transforms reporters into neutral observers or voyeurs."

As Marine historian Eric Hammel concluded, "Americans were bound by the moral poverty of their political leaders, and the North Vietnamese were bound by the intellectual inflexibility of their Communist Doctrines. The soldiers of each side suffered mightily in the stalemate that ensued."

We need to pay tribute to those who served at Con Thien and learn from their sacrifice. It can be fairly said that anyone who seeks glory in battle would not find it in the mud and heat of Con Thien, but anyone who seeks tales of extraordinary valor need look no further.



FILLING A HISTORICAL GAP – VETERAN CHRONICLES THE SERVICE OF AC-119 "SHADOW" GUNSHIPS IN VIETNAM

In the years following his service in the Vietnam War, local veteran Larry Fletcher fervently searched for books about the Air Force's special operations squadrons and the pilots and crews who operated the AC-119G "Shadow" gunships.



Larry Fletcher flew 177 combat missions aboard an AC-119G "Shadow" gunship during the Vietnam War, earning two Distinguished Flying Crosses. After the war, he went on to earn his doctorate in education, retired from the public school system and became a published author. Courtesy of Larry Fletcher

When he discovered this was a historical niche largely overlooked, the Air Force veteran chose to fill the gap with a narrative based upon his personal experiences.

"There just didn't seem to be anything about (the special operations squadrons), so I decided to take it upon myself and write about it," said the Lake Ozark veteran.

A 1961 graduate of California (Mo.) High School, Fletcher pursued an education by attending Southwest Missouri State College (now Missouri State University), graduating with a bachelor's in education in 1965. The following year, he graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a master's degree in education.

My father fought the Japanese in the Pacific during World War II and then worked as a mechanic at the Ford garage (in California) much of his life," said Fletcher. "I remember him telling me I wasn't going to be a mechanic like him and that I was going to attend college," he added.

Initially, Fletcher's professional outlook did not gravitate toward a military career despite the war raging in Vietnam. Instead, he fulfilled his desire to become an educator by teaching at a high school in Illinois his first year out of college. In 1967, he transferred to St. Charles (Mo.) High School and began teaching several classes while also coaching sports.

"I remember the superintendents had to write letters to the Moniteau County draft board requesting a teacher deferment," said Fletcher. "But one day, during a current events class I was teaching, a student asked me how I kept from getting drafted."

Fletcher continued, "When I told him I had a teacher's deferment, you should have seen the look on his face … like I was a big chicken or something of the sort."

During a "snow day" at the school, Fletcher decided to visit a local recruiting office and was soon signing the enlistment papers to become an Air Force pilot although he had never before set foot on an airplane.

In June 1968, the young recruit arrived at Lackland AFB, Texas, undergoing a 90-day course designed to train officer candidates in the fundamentals of serving in the Air Force. Upon his graduation later that summer, the newly commissioned lieutenant moved to nearby Randolph AFB to begin 53 weeks of flight training.

Pilot training consisted of three stages—the first was 30 hours of flying a T-41, which was basically a Cessna 172 used for initial pilot training. After that," he explained, "we moved on to 60 hours in a T-37, which was a twin-engine subsonic jet. The final phase was 90 flying hours in a T-38 Talon." For a number of years, the T-38 held the world

record for climb rate."

Completing his initial flight training in October 1969, Fletcher received his Air Force "silver wings." Shortly thereafter, he learned that he would be assigned to fly the AC-119—a prop twin-engine, side-firing gunship.

Survival and POW training in the states of Wash-



ington and Idaho were completed before the crew trained on AC-119 gunships in Ohio. In April 1970, Fletcher received orders for Vietnam, reporting to Tan Son Nut Air Base (near Saigon) as a member of the 17th Special Operations Squadron.

"We flew the AC-119Gs," he said, "which was the 'Shadow' model. It was a twin-engine gunship with four 7.62 mm mini-guns—one gun would fire 6,000 rounds per minute." He continued, "Our mission was direct close air support of American and Allied ground forces. We could talk directly to the troops on the ground from the airplane and direct our fire as necessary."

As the former pilot explained, the plane was equipped with a night observation scope (NOS) that would assist in the detection of enemy troops, mortar positions and anti-aircraft guns. Information from the NOS was processed through an onboard computer and relayed to the aircraft commander pilot's gun sight.

With a crew complement of four officers and four enlisted personnel, Fletcher affirms that their "Shadow "successfully operated on teamwork, completing 177 combat missions that carried them throughout Vietnam and Cambodia.

"It was like the Wild West with everything going on over there," he said, "but we were able to save a lot of friendly troops, villages, garrisons and convoys with our air support."

After leaving Vietnam in May 1971, the combat veteran remained in the Air Force until resigning his regular commission at the rank of captain on August 15, 1973 to return to his career in teaching. In later years, he earned his doctorate in education at the University of Missouri and served in several educational capacities to include superintendent of California R-1 School

Though retired since 1997, Fletcher has remained active in preserving the history of those who served in the special operations squadrons, dedicated to sharing stories from the Vietnam War that he believes have remained largely undocumented. He has written several novels based upon his experience in the Air Force including "Shadows of Saigon," "The Shadow Spirit" and "Charlie Chasers."

"It was the war of our generation … and it was a bad war," Fletcher said. "When I came back from Vietnam, I had two more years to serve on my five-year obligation. When I separated from the Air Force, I hung up my uniforms and went back to teaching. For years, hardly anybody even knew that I had served in the military. But, I went on thinking that someday a scholar would write about the special operations gunships, but nobody ever did."

With a brief moment of reflection, he concluded, "These books, everything I have written, is stuff that I carried in my head for 28 years. Much of what we did, especially the missions over Cambodia, were top secret and no one—not even those on the

air base (Tan Son Nut)—knew what missions we had completed."

Jeremy P. Ämick writes on behalf of the Silver Star Families of America

THE ONLY MARINE TO EARN A MEDAL OF HONOR FOR ACTIONS AS A POW, DONALD COOK WAS TRULY UNBREAKABLE IN THE FACE OF THE ENEMY

To be clear, there have been multiple Marines who displayed inexplicable gallantry in combat warranting a Medal of Honor before they were subsequently captured. However, if you are searching the halls of history for the one Marine Medal of Honor recipient whose actions *as* a POW earned him the medal, you will only find Donald Cook.



CAPT. DONALD COOK, USMC MOH

In fact, Captain Cook was only in Vietnam for 18 days before he was captured. He would spend the next three years enduring harsh captivity at the hands of the North Vietnamese. Despite deteriorating health, he would often give his food and medicine to his fellow prisoners in greater need. When questioned by the North Vietnamese, he never gave them more than his name, rank, service number, and date of birth. His captors didn't even know he was a Marine and just assumed he was an Army Officer.

Refusing to cooperate on multiple occasions, he found himself more than once being threatened at gunpoint. On one such occasion, Cook simply said, "You can't kill me, only God can decide when I die." For his actions during his captivity, Captain Cook was awarded the Medal of Honor.

A GIFTED LINGUIST

Donald Cook was born in Brooklyn New York in 1934. After high school, he chose to attend St. Michael's College as he was a man deeply guided by his faith. While in college, he would prove quite



the gifted linguist and was fluent in Latin, German, and French by the time he graduated. In 1957, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps and was assigned as a communications officer due to his natural gift with language.

He would serve as the officer-in-charge of an inter-

rogation and translation team, before being assigned as an intelligence officer with the Fleet Marine Force Pacific.

As the war in Vietnam began to ramp up, Captain Cook took a personal interest and began to study the Vietnamese language. By 1964, he was eager to volunteer for service in Vietnam to put his skills to use. Unfortunately for Donald Cook, his time as a free Marine in Vietnam would be remarkably short. After only 18 days in country, Captain Cook and his fellow Marines became engaged in a firefight with the North Vietnamese and after being shot in the leg, Cook passed out from the loss of blood.



The "Little Vegas" area of Hỏa Lò Prison, built for American POWs in 1967. Shown in a final inspection in 1973 shortly before the Americans' release.

When he awoke, he found himself the first Marine officer taken prisoner in the Vietnam War. By all accounts, the action in which he was captured displayed none of the characteristics one might associate with a Medal of Honor recipient. Rather, Cook's place among the gallant men in the history of war would come as a POW.

OTHERS BEFORE HIMSELF

Shortly after capture, Cook had established himself as the senior officer among 10 other POWs and thus the legal spokesman for the group. Responsibility for leading the men through this ordeal would fall to him as well as official interactions with their captors.

The setting would be various jungle POW camps throughout Vietnam. They were given meager rations of rice and fish, quickly leading to malnourishment, sickness, and disease. As the senior officer, Cook would demand additional food and medicine, with some success but often at a high price to himself.

When food was scarce and medicine hard to come by, Cook would often ignore his own deteriorating physical health to feed and treat his fellow prisoners.

On more than one occasion when en route to a new POW camp, Cook would bear the burden of his fellow weaker prisoners packs to ensure they made it alive. Through his encouragement, leadership, and support his fellow prisoners would always make it. For Cook, it almost seemed unthinkable to give his captors the pleasure of their deaths *or* their cooperation.



Statue of Col. Cook on the campus of St. Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont.

One fellow POW would describe his relentless resistance by saying, "If Captain Cook thought the Viet Cong were using his feces for fertilizer, he

would have stopped crapping."

On top of caring for his fellow prisoners, he would lead them in their defiance towards their enemy. Under extreme duress, it is common for POW's to submit to behavior outside of the code of conduct. However, Cook never relented.
Despite harsher treatment for doing so, it was his policy to give them "the big four and nothing more." "Name, rank, service number, and date of birth" is all the Vietnamese would ever learn about Donald Cook. However, the gifted linguist would work hard to stay one step ahead of his foe. He continued to learn and master the Vietnamese language while in captivity although he never once spoke it to his captors.



USS DONALD COOK AT SEA

Fellow prisoners report that he often seemed to be in the minds of the guards due to his ability to listen in on conversations unbeknownst to them.

FIGHTING UNTIL THE END

He helped lead a failed escape attempt on at least one occasion, but due to the weak physical condition of the prisoners they were unable to make it. He was severely beaten as the senior officer for doing so and it was on this occasion that a pistol was placed to his head and he gave his famous line "You can't kill me, only God can decide when I die".
As fate would have it, Captain Cook would prove that statement true.

wasn't the beatings, the starvation, or a bullet that took Captain Cook's life. Rather, was the bite of one mosquito. Captain Cook died of malaria in December 1967, just shy of three years in captivity.
The accounts of his fellow POWs brought his story back to the world and in 1980, Captain Cook was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Jimmy Carter.

It was presented to his widow, with his children looking on, and it reminded a nation to be thankful for a strong character like Captain Cook. His story is one of faith, commitment to his fellow prisoners, and a burning determination to fight until the very end.

PARA RESCUE JUMPER DUANE HACKNEY, THE MOST DECORATED ENLISTED MAN IN US AIR FORCE HISTORY

An Air Force Cross, the Silver Star, 4 Distinguished Flying Crosses with a Combat V, 2 Purple Hearts, 18 Air Medals, and ok, we have an article to write so we have to move on for time's sake. To list this man's 70 plus individual achievements would be overwhelming as Duane Hackney is by far the most decorated enlisted man in US Air Force history.

What is remarkable about Chief Master Sgt. Duane



Hackney is that he earned his accolades through the acts of saving others rather than gifting violence to the enemy. As a Pararescueman, it was his job to descend into the jungles of Vietnam and recover downed pilots before the enemy. He could rarely rely on the comfort of operating in mass numbers with fellow airmen, but this man took solace in the fact that he fulfilled the promise that if a pilot should go down, America would come looking for him. More often than not the materialization of that promise was none other than Duane Hackney.

BORN TO RESCUE

Duane Hackney is a native of Flint Michigan who joined the Air Force in 1965 to become a Pararescueman. As the Vietnam War was picking up steam, the United States began to use air superiority in an ever-increasing fashion to hold back a relentless enemy. And while the United States enjoyed technological superiority in the air, North Vietnamese ground fire and surface to air missiles were regularly enough to take its toll on the American planes. When one of these pilots would go down over the jungles of Vietnam, this typically meant death or capture that led to a less than courteous stay at the infamous Hanoi Hilton.



DUANE PREPARING TO JUMP IN A RESCUE

But America had made a promise to his pilots, that whenever possible and in cases when it seemed completely improbable that they would come looking for them thanks to men like Duane Hackney. This man would fly over 200 combat missions over 3 ½ years of volunteer duty in Vietnam. Just days after reporting for his first assignment, he took a .30 caliber slug to the leg and had it removed himself to avoid medical evacuation.

In the months ahead, he would see the helicopter on which he served shot down up to five times as they braved the most hostile of enemy territory in search for downed pilots.

By his own account, he couldn't recall the number of times he descended into the thick canopy of the Vietnamese jungle to search for downed pilots or exactly how many he was able to extract. But as the missions accumulated and the enemy fire came raining down, it became clear that each mission brought with it a necessity to display unprecedented valor and an opportunity for near certain death.

After a year plus of demonstrating such valor, one particular mission in February 1967 would set him apart and earn him the Air Force's second-highest military honor.

JOLLY GREEN 05

On February 3, 1967, Hackney was riding in one of two HH-3E jolly green giant long-range search and rescue helicopters over Vietnam. On his second rescue mission of the day near Mu Gia Pass North Vietnam, Hackney descended into the jungle as he had many times to search for the downed pilot.

Despite the presence of heavy enemy forces, he was able to locate the pilot and assist him in being hoisted up into the helicopter. Once the crew departed, they became subject to heavy 37 mm flak that tore into the craft creating an intense fire on board.





Air Force Pararescuemen running to their HH-3 Jolly Green Giant in southeast Asia via historynet.com

During the chaos, Hackney was able to take off his own parachute and place it upon the downed airmen with little regard for his own life. Just as Hackney made his way to the smoke-filled cabin and slipped another parachute around his own arms, a second burst of 37 mm flak tore into the craft sending it into an uncontrollable spin.

Unsecured Hackney was flung from the helicopter out the open door. Despite being dazed and confused, he was able to employee the parachute that was still unbuckled and made a successful landing over enemy territory. The rest on board this particu-



lar HH-3E, died in the crash, and Duane Hackney found himself on the opposite side of a rescue that he himself had conducted time and time again.

Eventually, another jolly green giant was able to locate Hackney and bring him to safety. It was for his actions on this particular mission that Duane Hackney was awarded the Air Force Cross. One might think such a close call would be plenty of cause to call it quits as surely one could only cheat death so many times, but Duane Hackney took his calling seriously and was earning distinguished flying crosses as late as 1970.

A GALLANT LIFE CUT SHORT

Before his career was over, Hackney would receive more than 70 individual awards making him the most decorated enlisted man in Air Force history. After 26 years of unprecedented service where he served at great risk to his own life in order to save others, Chief Master Sgt. Duane Hackney retired from the Air Force in 1991.

Tragically the man, the entire North Vietnamese Army couldn't seem to kill, died of a heart attack in 1993 at age 46. And while Hackney would claim he was just doing his job, his record of unprecedented gallantry is without rival in the Air Force.

I GET MAIL

Tommy, letter I sent to Reverend Stubbe after the last reunion in San Diego, CA in November 2016

Dear Pastor Stubbe,

Reading your passages of your 3 volumes of "Pebbles in my Boots" I became aware of your ultimate mission to all of us., whom you served with at Khe Sanh.

And before you took on the task of being our comm wire to God, you had to become a apostle, mingling, training, communicating, suffering hardships as we did. Identifying our joys, our pain, our bonding because of pain.

Wrapping yourself in a Chaplains robe, or setting up a temporary altar on the red clay of Khe Sanh, did not automatically establish you as our spokes person to God!

You had to suffer and endure, as we did. Jesus Christ and many of his apostles.

You walked the trails in our footsteps, slept in the red mud next to us. Jumped out of planes, to the same bullets and shell fragments as they travelled through space, seeking its ultimate destination of flesh and bone.

You had to starve, go thirsty and bleed as did we, before you became our warrior brother. Only than could your words to us and God, give us meaning, healing and acceptance of us all being one, with God in life and death.

That connection was made not only during your many in prompt set up services, but especially when you were with us on the trails or ambush site, giving comfort to the wounded, or last rites to a Marine in the throes of death.

This bond was also formed while out on a listening post, monitoring a radio in the darkness of night, drenched by monsoon rains, while fear and horror froze our facial expressions, as we listened for the sounds of death.

Your presence brought us memories of home, our parents, our siblings and our loved ones. We could relate and bring back visions of us being in church together, so long ago, back in the world.

Your connection with us and God calmed our anger, organized our despair, and minimized our physical suffering

Your presence gave us light when in the darkness of having witnessed death of a brother Marine.

Ray I have some other input if you do not mind listening to a philosophical Marine's ramblings.

Hope you had a nice Thanksgiving

Semper Fidelis

Go With God.

Sgt. Thomas 'Ken" Soerensen
Arty 6-2 Alpha A/1/13 USMC

REVEREND STUBBE'S REPLY LETTER

Friday, 09 December 2016

Mr. Thomas Soerensen
3295 Hildale Ave.
Orville, CA 95966-6306
Dear Tom:

Thank you for one of the most important letters I've ever received! As a chaplain and pastor, it's always a matter of faithfulness to our calling since we usually don't receive any feedback on how we communicate our Lord's live and love, concern and healing, Presence and peace. Your letter expressed what I have always felt: that the presence and message of Christ is best communicated by life, not just words, by presence and deeds.

Your mention of Greek philosophers and mythology and your reading and interest in them also greatly impressed me. The ancients have much to give us. It's amazing that many of them lived at the same time of the Old Testament prophets, several centuries before Christ. I once looked through some volumes of Euclid's geometry and was absolutely stounded by the complexity of thought he expressed some three centuries before Christ-far exceeding what our high school kids are able to reason! Who would have thought-back 196B-that a muddied Marine Grunt would delve into Greek philosophy!!?

There's another volume (the fourth) in the ***Pebbles in* My *Boots*** series-this one covering the Jacques patrol of 25 February and also a biography of Colonel Lownds as well as some recent presentations and prayers. I don't plan to have any more printed, but if I did come out with another volume, I could like to quote your letter since it might be beneficial to chaplains who are now serving-the value of getting close to their troops and sharing life- communicating Christ through our actions and presence and not just words! If that would be OK, please let me know.

Speaking of communicating through life and actions, this is what Christmas communicates: that God is present with us in a most intimate manner and lives and suffers with us!
May our gracious Lord bless you richly at this special time of the year!

Rev. Ray W. Stubbe
8766 Park View Ct.
Wauwatosa WI 53226-2729

MORE MAIL

Mr. Tom Eichler:

I really do not know how to start this note. I am not really that educated, but here goes. My name is John M Moon. In Vietnam I was assigned to Charlie CO, 1/26 3RD PLT, 3RD SQD.

On 24 March 1968, I received an assignment to aid in the recovery of the bodies of 5 Marines who had been killed on 22 March 1968, during a rocket & mortar attack at Khe Sanh Combat Base.

Due to sustained Sniper and heavy shelling from the NVA we had to wait several days when it was safe so the bodies could be dug out of the remains of the bunker destroyed on 22 March 68

I was only 18 years old and barely out of high school. During retrieval, I came face to face with the horror that would stay with me through my entire time in Vietnam, and the rest of my life.

I was the first Marine to come into contact with the 5 Marines KIA. The sight was indescribable. To this day I have never told anyone what I observed that horrible day,I will take it to the grave with me.

My three ex wives and my entire family, did not know that any strange actions on my part were probably just reaching out. With little or no help I sit here trying to find some sanity that I lost.

I believe that Lt Bush was just 6 days from going home to get married.
Semper FI my Marine Brother

JOHN M. MOON
475 FRIENDSHIP RD
KILMICHAEL, MS 39747

BOOK REVIEW

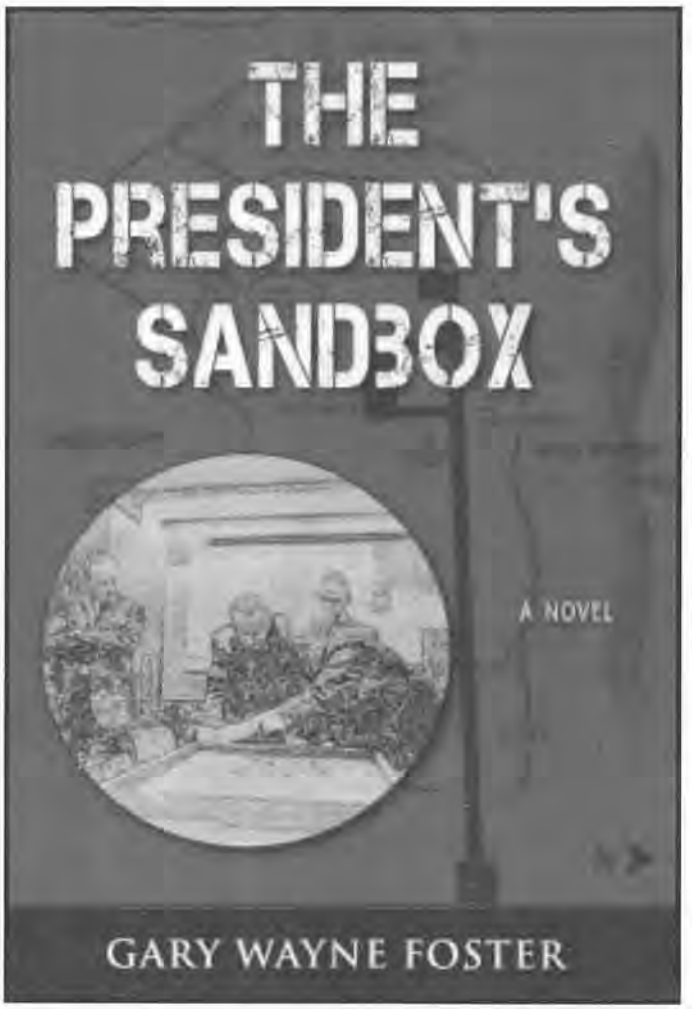

The year 1968 proved to be the defining year for the U.S. Marines fighting in Vietnam. One month after the New Year, the Tet Offensive shook the world. Just prior to that, the Marines were besieged at Khe Sanh, and would be so for 80 days.

Khe Sanh was one of the most dramatic and complicated conflicts of the entire war.

This novel relates the intricacies of the White House, Hanoi, Saigon, the main characters on both sides and the times.

Set in both Vietnam and Stateside, ***The President's Sandbox*** vividly recalls the dire events of early December 1967 through May 1968 while recreating the intense conversations and negotiations taking place on both sides of the conflict.

BOOK REVIEW

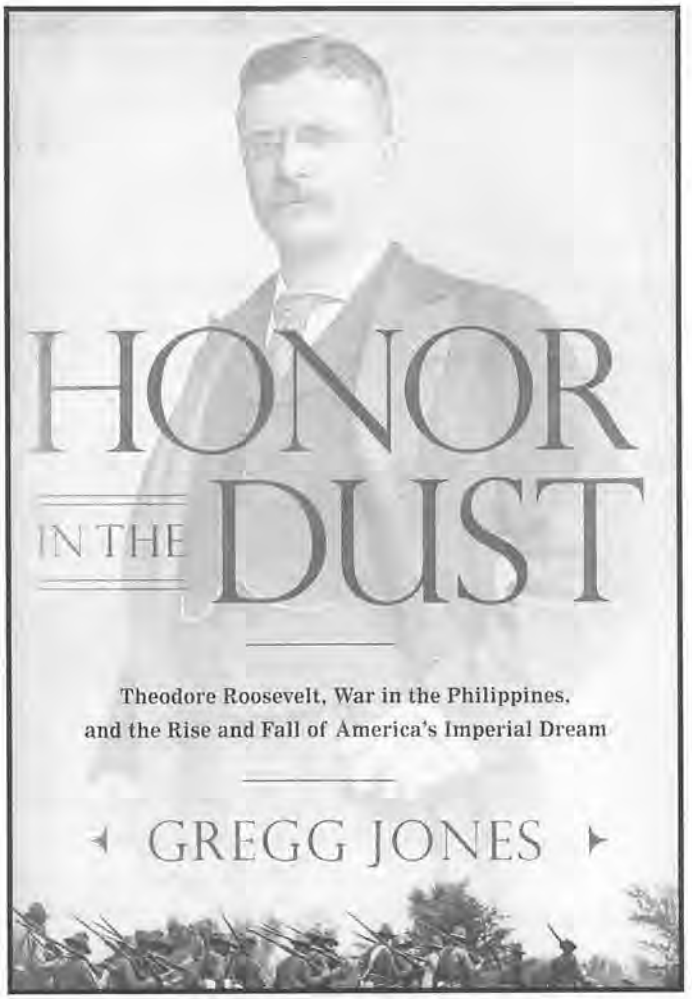

The first book I read by American journalist Gregg Jones was "Last Stand at Khe Sanh." I was absolutely enthralled with that effort and was unable to put it down. It was one of the most riveting and compelling works about that most horrific battle conveyed by the brave men who participated. Well written and informative, it is the most accurate depiction of personal events and descriptive moments of war that I have read about that battle, placing the reader in the trench line, sharing the fears, doubts, horrors and bravery of the men involve.

That book led me to Mr. Jones magnificently written "Honor in the Dust," A detailed account of a then imperialist America involved in defeating and exiling Spain from Cuba and the Philippians and then occupying the Philippians as essentially a colony. This book too follows the bloody trail of battle, politics behind imperialistic decisions, hardships of the soldiers, denial of atrocities by superiors and substantial suffering by the local populace. 464 Pages which makes it a rather long vacation read but a compelling read non-the less, about the war in the Philippines 1899-1902. Another scholarly masterpiece by Mr. Jones.

Posted by Craig W. Tourte on Feb-18

Honor in the Dust is a dramatic page -turner, told with marvelous reporting crackling writing, and original insights. Gregg Jones presents a fascinating cast of characters and gripping battle scenes in a story that moves with the speed and power of a battle ship. utterly absorbing."

JONATHON EIG. New York Times Bestselling Author Get Capone, Luckiest Man, and, Opening Day.

America's brutal war of conquest in the Philippines amazing little-known,1argely, ignored in our schoolbook and history museums. Yet its imperial hubris and it torture scandal eerily for shadow events of the last decade.

In his much-needed, highly readable book on this forgotten war, Gregg Jones has written both a compelling page-turner and a work of careful scholarship."

ADAM HOCHSCHILD. Author of *King Leopold 's Ghost* and *To End All Wars*

'Gregg Jones has produced a masterful and fa st-paced book. ***Honor in the Dust*** may be classified as a work of history but it read like a thriller. Foreshadowed are the war in Vietnam, Iraq, Afghani tan-and on. This book is the vital prequel to understanding the state of American empire today.

DALE MAHARIDE, Pulitzer Prize – winning Author of *And Their Children After Them*

'The Philippine occupation was the first of the United States quagmires. yet its lessons have been willfully ignored by later generations. ***Honor in the Dust*** recovers this essential history, from the bombast of a Washington's jingoism to the terror of the lost patrol in Samar. Gregg Jones does an admirable job of bringing this extraordinary period and it remarkable character to life."

ANNE NELSON, Author of *Savages*

"Honor in the Dust" is an absolutely riveting page -turner, a terrific read. Gregg Jones resurrects a long-forgotten but very important slice of American history in which the country's imperialistic dreams clashed with its sense of honor and justice, severely testing Theodore Roosevelt's young presidency and forcing Americans to confront the horrors of war. Any one interested in how America uses and abuses its power during times s of war should read this book.'

ERIC JAY DOLIN. Author of *Fur, Fortune, and Empire* and *Leviathan*

OBITS

USN Chaplain (Ret.) Edwin Douglas Stanfield, 70, of Piedmont, passed away on Thursday, February 16, 2017.

Born in St. Petersburg, Florida on September 30,



1946, he was the son of the late Rev. Claude Stanfield and the late Wilma Clayton Stanfield. Capt. Stanfield was a graduate of the University of South Florida, Duke University Divinity School, and Princeton Theological Seminary. **He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1966 as a seaman recruit and served with the Third Marine Division as the Leading Petty officer assigned to the Khe Sanh Combat Base during the 1968 Tet Offensive.** Honorably discharged in January 1970, Stanfield became a member of the NC Methodist Conference and served churches in Rougemont and Pink Hill, NC before returning to military duty as a Chaplain Corps officer in 1978. Duty stations included the U.S. Naval Training Center in San Diego; the Destroyer Squadron Five; the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis; the U.S. Naval Station in Guam; the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in Parris Island; the Office of the Navy Chief of Chaplains in Washington D.C.; the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay; the U.S. Coast Guard in Alameda; the Marine Corps Air Bases Western Region at Miramar; and the Naval Medical Center in San Diego.

Capt. Stanfield's awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal, a Combat Action Ribbon, a Vietnam Service Medal, a Humanitarian Service Medal, and others. In 1983, Stanfield was named Armed Forces Chaplain of the Year.

He settled with his family in San Diego after retiring from active duty in 2005, and relocated to Piedmont last May Surviving are his wife, Vera Jaudon Stanfield, and son, Samuel Douglas Stanfield, of Piedmont, SC; two sisters, Linda Lewis and husband, Harmon, of Ocala, FL, and Amy Nottingham of Jacksonville, FL; and ten nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held Thursday, March 2nd, at 11:00 AM at Bethesda United Methodist Church, 516 Piedmont Road, Easley, SC, with Rev. Dan Batson officiating. A naval honors memorial service and burial will be held in Arlington Cemetery at a later date Arrangements are being handled by Robinson Funeral Home. Flowers may be sent to the church. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be sent to The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy, Attn: Supporting the Cause, 485 Half Day Rd., Suite 350, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089.

OBIT

MICHAEL D. PRUITT, USMC, SGTMAJ, KHE SANH VETERAN LIMA CO 3/4

Jacksonville | Michael Dexter Pruitt, USMC SgtMaj Retired, 67, passed away Sunday, March 5, 2017, at Vidant Health Care in Greenville A private memorial service will be held at a later date. Michael



proudly served his country in the United States Marine Corps from which he retired at the rank of SgtMaj. He served in Vietnam and 3/4 the very first MEU that went to the Middle East. To all those with whom he served throughout his career, most especially 3/4 Semper Fi Ooh Rah. After he retired he began working at Coastal Carolina Community College in the security department. He is survived by wife, Marla Jean Pruitt of the home; daughter, Kellie Kiely (Joseph) of Asheville; and twin granddaughters, Piper and Kaitlyn Kiely. He was preceded in death by his father, William Lafayette Pruitt.

THIEVES TARGET MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT

GRAIN VALLEY, Mo. -- Thieves targeted the only living Congressional Medal of Honor recipient in Missouri over the weekend -- stealing cash, gold coins, and weapons worth more than $100,000.

The burglary happened at Swan Lake Memorial Park in eastern Jackson County.

Col. Don "Doc" Ballard runs this cemetery for veterans and their families. All of the cash taken was used for his Forgotten Veterans program, which pays funeral expenses for veterans who don't qualify for benefits.

The crooks broke into a maintenance building at the cemetery during the weekend. Ballard and his wife were in Washington, D.C., presenting a civilian medal of honor award to an extraordinary citizen, while a different type of citizen was busy ransacking his back office.

Among the collectibles stolen were a Medal of Honor ring, gold coins, and honors given to Ballard by presidents and other dignitaries over the years.
"A lot of stuff I will never be able to recover because the type of person who stole this is probably going to melt it down rather than see the core value of it," Ballard said. "Rings, a Medal of Honor ring. Luckily I was wearing the Medal of Honor itself or it would have been gone."



The Ballards are in the process of moving and had been using the maintenance building to temporarily store some of their most prized possessions. The thieves got away with thousands of dollars in cash, the result of several months worth of fundraising, but Ballard said he won't let it stop his efforts to help veterans in need.

Jackson County Sheriff's deputies are investigating the break-in. If you can help detectives with information about this case, call the TIPS hotline at (816) 474-8477.

ONE OF THE GREATEST FEMALE PHOTOGRAPHERS YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF: CATHERINE LEROY

One of the few female combat photographers in the war was also the most daring

By Elizabeth Herman

Vietnam 67 Mar 28 2017

Very few women went to Vietnam as journalists, and even fewer as dedicated war photojournalists. In fact, for most of the 1960s, there were only two: Dickie Chapelle, who was killed by a grenade in 1965, and Catherine Leroy.

Leroy was widely considered the most daring photographer in Vietnam. She almost certainly spent the most time in combat — in part because she had no money, having traveled from her native France to Vietnam as a freelancer in 1966 with no contracts and a short list of published work. Living with soldiers meant that she could eat rations and sleep in the countryside.



CATHERINE PREPARING TO JUMP DURING OPERATION JUNCTION CITY.

Leroy faced no shortage of sexism. After she parachuted into combat during Operation Junction City, in early 1967, rumors circulated that she had slept with a colonel in exchange for permission. In fact, she had earned her parachutist license as a teenager, and had already jumped 84 times. Still, she developed a reputation as a photographer quickly, selling photos to The Associated Press and U.P.I.

At one point during the Tet offensive, in early 1968, she was captured by the North Vietnamese Army while with the French journalist Francois Mazure. There was a young lieutenant that they could converse with in French. They explained that they were journalists and would do no harm, so the soldiers decided to let them go. But first she persuaded them to let her take photos, saying that it was important because only one side of the story was being seen. The photos ran as a cover story in Life magazine, which she wrote herself.

Leroy never promoted herself or her work, which is one reason she remains largely unknown among the war photographers of the day (though not forgotten: In 2015 the writer and filmmaker Jacques Menasche completed a documentary about her career, "Cathy at War"; a clip from the film is available). But she was one of the Vietnam War's most lauded photojournalists, winning Picture of the Year from the George Polk Awards and, for her later work in Lebanon, the Robert Capa Gold Medal.

Later in life, Leroy ran a vintage clothing website. She died in Santa Monica, Calif., in 2006.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS ON BACK PAGE COVER

Leroy's photo series of Vernon Wike became some of her most famous pictures, and in 2004 Paris Match magazine commissioned her to visit him at his home in Prescott, Ariz. Mr. Wike, 58, stood in his living room, his arms heavy with tattoos, including the names of fellow soldiers killed in Vietnam.



VERNON WIKE

VIETNAM VET SHARES STORIES OF KHE SANH BATTLES

James D. Watts Jr.
Tulsa World
918-581-8478
james.watts@tulsaworld.com

He has stories from his days in law enforcement — 20 years with the Tulsa Police Department, most of those with the bomb squad, and 10 years as a U.S. Marshal.

Then there are the years he spent working in film and television as an actor and stuntman, a second career that began when he was chosen to play the police officer who kills Matt Dillon's character in



Marine Corps veteran Robert Maras stands outside his Tulsa home Monday holding the book he co-authored, "Blood in the Hills: The Story of Khe Sanh, the Most Savage Fight of the Vietnam War". JESSIE WARDARSKI/Tulsa

the movie version of "The Outsiders."

Maras can talk about the exploits of his cousin, the late Roger Maris, who broke Babe Ruth's record for home runs in a single season, hitting 61 in

Maras even has more than a few fishing stories, the result of a passion for fly fishing — a pastime that even his German shepherd, Gunny, enjoys thoroughly. But another significant story of Maras' life is one he hasn't been able to tell until now. "I never talked about it," he said, "because when I do, I see it all over again. And not much of it was pretty." In April and May 1967, as a 19-year-old member of the U.S. Marine Corps, Maras participated in one of the bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War: the Hill Fights at Khe Sanh.

He and his fellow Marines endured almost continuous firefights for more than two weeks as they fought to secure three strategic hills. "It was shooting and killing for breakfast, shooting and killing for lunch, shooting and killing for dinner," Maras said. "We got there on April 26, and on May 12 we left. And in all that time, I don't remember sleeping. I know I had to have slept some, but you were in such a constant state of alert that you couldn't relax."

Maras credits two people with getting him to tell his story about his time in Vietnam: Tom Hoffmann, a psychologist, and Charles W. Sasser, an Oklahoma writer whose published works include dozens of



Vietnam veteran Robert Maras holds his combat helmet from his days in the U.S. Marine Corps.

novels and non fiction books. Friends in New Mexico loaned Maras the use of their weekend home, and he spent three weeks writing out his memories of those weeks of battle, the horrors he witnessed, the friends he lost.

"I wept just about every day, reliving all those things," he said. Maras turned his manuscript over to Sasser, and the two worked it into "Blood in the Hills: The Story of Khe Sanh, the Most Savage Fight of the Vietnam War" (Lyons Press, $26.95).

The book sets Maras' personal experiences against the broader backdrop of the Vietnam War. It pays tribute to his companions who survived and those who did not. "We went in with 1,300 men, and there was only about 700 of us who came out," Maras

said. "And I think a lot more Marines would have come out of those battles if it wasn't for the M16A1s we were given." That was one reason I decided to go ahead with this book — nobody wants to really tell the story of Khe Sanh because they would have to tell the story of M16A1."

Maras was a machine gunner, tasked with operating the large M-60 machine gun, which soldiers nicknamed "the Pig." Most Marines, however, had the M16A1, which quickly became notorious for its unreliability in combat. The gun frequently jammed because of poor design and manufacturing shortcuts.

"We would go to bring in the KIA, and we'd find Marines with all kinds of things jammed into their rifles, trying to unjam a round," Maras said. "There are things in this book that are probably going to make a lot of politicians angry, but not as angry as I am at them." In spite of the horrors of the situation in which Maras and his colleagues were immersed, he said there were lighter moments, such as when the Marines first landed and were greeted by tables of bottled Coca-Cola and plain bologna sandwiches.

"It was about 100 degrees, so the Cokes were hot as blazes," Maras recalled, chuckling. "You had to blow the red dirt off the sandwiches to take a bite. We're standing there eating these gritty sandwiches and my buddy Tony Leyba, who had the best sense of humor, said, 'Boy, when the Marines feed you this good, you know things are going to be bad.' "Maras also recalled an almost surreal moment of beauty during one of the worst skirmishes.

"It was during the battle for Hill 881 South," he said. "We were getting hit with mortars, small-arms fire, people were getting blown apart, there were body parts in the trees — everything bad that could be bad was happening.

All this is going on, and all of a sudden this parrot comes flying into the battle area. It was this huge bird, with these beautiful iridescent green feathers, this bright yellow head. And it just flew through all this gunfire It was such a beautiful sight, I literally stopped shooting just to watch this parrot fly by." "It was such a beautiful sight, I literally stopped shooting just to watch this parrot fly by." Maras paused for a moment, staring off into space. Then he said, "You know, I think that parrot came through there just for me, to give me that moment."



Marine Corps veteran Robert Maras talks about the book he co-authored, "Blood in the Hills: The Story of Khe Sanh, the Most Savage Fight of the Vietnam War," while sitting in the living room of his Tulsa home Monday. JESSIE WARDARSKI/Tulsa World

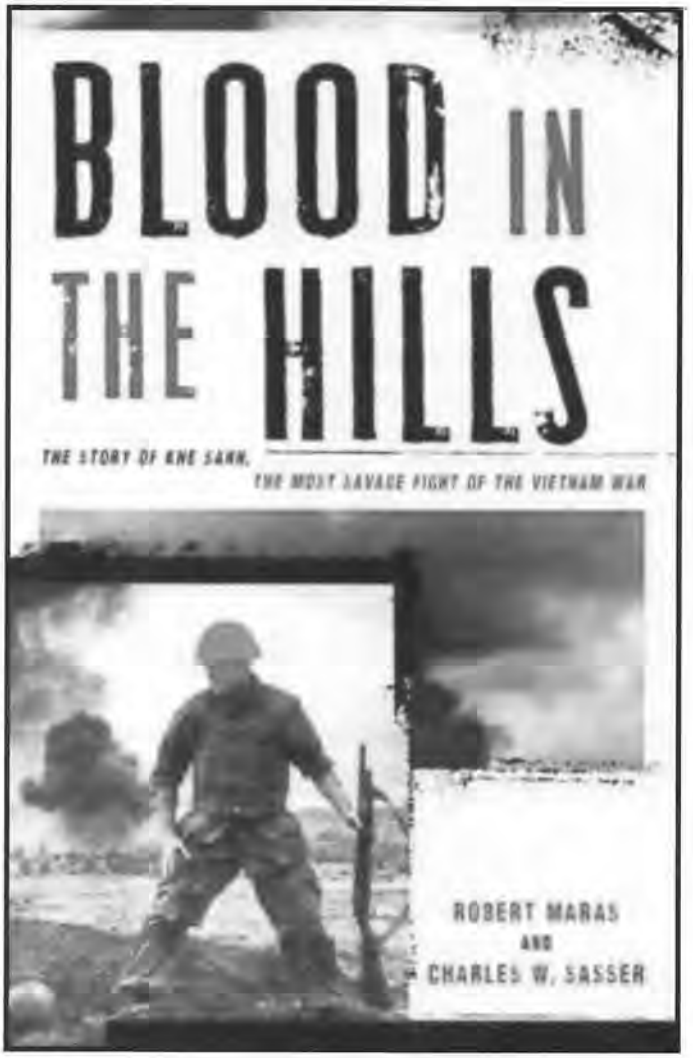

FROM THE WEBSITE

VA MAKES WAIT TIMES FOR PATIENTS TRANSPARENT FOR VETERANS

NEW ONLINE TOOL FIRST OF ITS KIND

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is taking unprecedented steps to increase transparency. Today, VA launched a new Access and Quality Tool that provides Veterans with an easy-to-use, easy-to-understand way of accessing patient wait time and quality of care data. This tool not only provides Veterans with more information about VA services, it increases accountability and ensures VA is held to a higher standard. "Veterans must have access to information that is clear and understandable to make informed decisions about their health care," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David J. Shulkin. "No other health -care system in the country releases this type of information on wait times.

This allows Veterans to see how VA is performing." The tool allows Veterans to access the average times patients are waiting to be seen in their local area; how Veterans describe their experiences scheduling primary- and specialty-care appointments at specific VA facilities; timeliness of appointments for care needed right away; and the quality of health care delivered at VA medical centers compared with local private-sector hospitals. The Access and Quality Tool is the most transparent and easy to understand wait time and quality data website in the health-care industry. "This tool is another example of VA leading the way," said Acting Under Secretary for Health Dr. Poonam Alaigh. "No one in the private sector publishes data this way. This tool will instill a spirit of competition and encourage our medical facilities to proactively address access and quality issues while empowering Veterans to make choices according to what works best for them and their families." VA will continue to make improvements to this tool based on the feedback it receives from Veterans.

The Access and Quality Tool can be found at www.accesstocare.va.gov. Watch this video to learn how the tool can be used.

Posted by Mike Fishbaugh

FROM THE WEBSITE

To all my friends who have been following my latest battle with cancer. Just heard from my beautiful doctor-------drum roll---pet scan results are in-----good news we are in remission. Still experiencing some side effects but it appears we won round 2. Hope to never have a round 3. I guess I'm just to ugly and ornery to give in yet. Now we can live again with even more appreciation for how precious is.

Thanks to all for prayers and genuine concern cannot explain how grateful I am. Special thanks to my guardian angels who got me to radiation everyday when I was too weak to drive. These guys Pat Dolan , Rob Bates, Joe Ostuni, and Eddy Stevens (almost everyday last 2 weeks) were always there regardless of weather.

Finally to my beautiful wife Sandy who was by my side every second of everyday. A true example of our wedding vow in sickness or in health. She never waivered in attitude or activity. Fed me through a tube so I could maintain some strength when I couldn't eat at all. She is a true saint and angel. I will never be able to express my true gratitude to that lady.

Ok now watch out Vegas next month and two Marine Corps reunions this summer and of course our families traditional lobster fest. Guess I will get to use that huge handicap I've built up in golf.

GLENN GRIFFIN D/CO 1/1



BOOK REVIEW

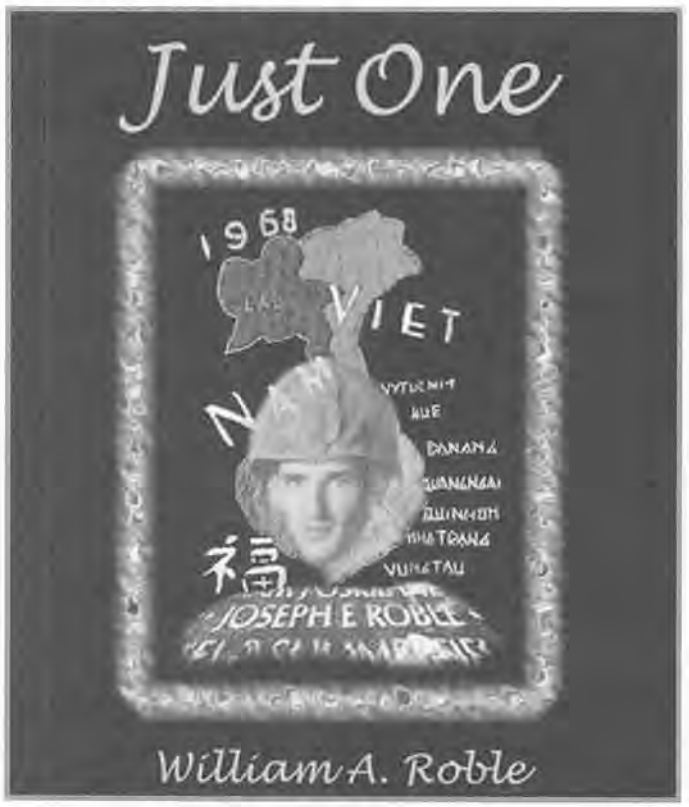

Just One covers the life of Bill Roble as he tries to learn why one name on the Vietnam Memorial Wall, that of his brother, Joseph Edward Roble, meant so much to so many. Throughout his younger years and into adulthood, Bill was influenced by correspondence his late brother sent while a Marine in Vietnam, as well as comments from his brother's friends and relatives.

This influence led to an enlistment in the U.S. Marine Corps, and later a meeting with many of his brother's comrades in arms all of which culminated in an attempt to retrace his brother's footsteps to Vietnam. Bill attempts to show how the loss of just one man in one war can impact many lives. *Just One* attempts to give the reader a new perspective on the ideals of the men and women that fought in Vietnam, as well as show how their lives impact some of us even today.

HERE ARE A FEW CHAPTERS

MY STORY

What could a four year old understand about the death and loss of a brother? I grew up hearing words that were not typical of an American boy's

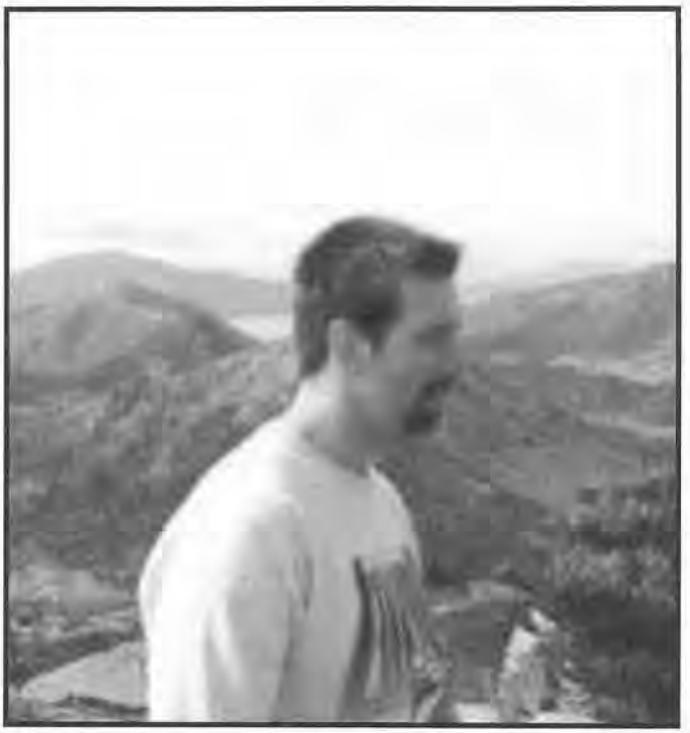

WILLIAM A.ROBLE

childhood. DMZ, Dong Ha, Con Tien, Khe Sanh, were places I learned of when I should have heard of Disneyland or the Smithsonian. My Childhood was not a bad one, but where did these locations fit in?

In May of 1968, my family decided to move to the east end of our hometown of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, into a house on Ohio Street. It was a big empty house when we moved in and I loved exploring it. I eventually made some friends and was content in my new surroundings, though my memories of those early days were few. I was oblivious to what my brother and many young men were doing a half a world away. He would never get a glimpse of this new house, as I would never have a memory of him. Though I don't remember it, the last time I would see Joe alive was at the Pittsburgh Airport approximately six months earlier, when he departed for Vietnam. Four months after we moved to Ohio Street, Joe would be gone and I would be left with wonder.

For years my memories of Joe were limited to letters sent from Vietnam and a jacket he sent me for my fourth birthday. I still have the jacket, which I wore with pride even after it no longer fit, and I also still have the letters. I still reflect on these items from time to time. I also remember when Joe's friend from Vietnam, Frenchy visited us after the

war, but only his being at our house and nothing more. Other that that I received little information from the rest of my family and I knew no one else that new Joe. The words that touched me most were the letters that were written after his death. They made me wonder why one man meant so much to so many.

IN MEMORIAM

Joe was gone, but friends and family would never forget the man that brought humor in times of sadness, that greeted people with an actual concern for how they were feeling and would stop whatever he was doing to help another. After his death, the letters began to pour in from friends and relatives, many of which recalled memories.

Ken Seybold, wo joined the Navy and went to Vietnam, wrote to the local newspaper and talked about his and Joe's past days working on cars and getting their first jobs. He also talked about the days at the Highway Restaurant and their joining the service. He said " we joined to do our best, not to grow long hair, not to demonstrate, not to take drugs, but to help to do a job that had to be done." Ken mentioned that he learned from the Stars and Stripes , a magazine for military personnel, that Joe, "had completed his obligations to God and Country." Joe's friend, George Hill sister, Audrey, wrote in memoriam:

There is someone who missed you sadly
And finds the time long since you went
There is someone who thinks of you always
And tries to be brave and content
Gone is the face we loved so dear
Silent the voice we loved to hear
Tis sad, but true, we wonder why
The best are always the first to die

POEM BY AUDREY HILL & FAMILY

It was a simple, but beautiful poem that captured my perception of how most people thought about Joe. My cousin Rick's letter to the editor of the Latrobe Bulletin also offered insight to my brother's character. He gave a brief outline of Joe's short life and told of how everyone loved him. He would stop whatever he was doing to help a neighbor carry packages, fix a flat or just chat with people. "Rick called for the support of American troops in Vietnam and said that Joe's, "death enables millions of Vietnamese to live a life of freedom and democracy."

Many letters from Joe's friends in Vietnam also began to pour in, which further described Joe's character. Some of the letters came late as many of the men Joe fought with were wounded at LZ Margo around the same time as him. One even came from a man who never knew Joe, but heard of him. All expressed their deepest sympathy and regret, while also sharing their memories.

Jim (Frenchy) LeBlond would later come to visit our family, but just after Joe's death he wrote and informed us that he was the one who discovered Joe's body that day at LZ Margo. He said that , "Joe was the first one to help me understand my job over there and in all that time I grew to love him like a brother. "Joe was liked by everyone

And he would sit there and make me write a letter, and I would thank him for it now cause I realize how much my mother was worrying over me." Frenchy Added some humor by saying that he didn't like having to wake Joe for watch and complained that he would sometimes have to, stand half his watch for him." Frenchy would get even with him though when it was his turn for watch, pretending to be asleep.

Joe's squad leader, Sergeant James J. McDulty was also wounded at LZ Margo and was still recovering when he wrote to our family. His letter was full of emotion and clearly demonstrated the deepest respect he had for Joe. He addressed my father saying, "Sir, you have a lot to be proud of." "Your son joe was the best Marine in my squad." In fact as far as I know he was the number one Marine in the platoon. Everyone really liked him." Practically everything that I have learned about Vietnam, your son taught it to me." "I will never forget the name of your late son, Joseph Roble." "everyone in Echo Company, 3RD Platoon feels the same as I do."

Mike Worth had this to say about Joe. "He was always lifting everybody's spirits in the platoon. Everybody really ;loved him. Under the most terrible conditions he always stayed in such high spirits. Joe was the type of guy who would give you his last

drink of water out of his canteen in 112 degree heat. Every time he would receive a package, he would divide everything up equally and pass it out among the squad. If a guy was wounded or hurt, Joe would always be the first one to volunteer to carry him to an area where he could be medevaced. He had plenty of guts as we call it. I really respected him. Everybody in Third Platoon and everybody who knew Joe over here, had nothing but the highest praise for him.

FIRST MEETING

I Went to Saint Louis to attend the KSV Reunion. I had no idea what to expect and did my best to think of what to say when I would meet Joe's friend's. I arrived at the hotel and was told that I had a message when I checked in. Larry McCartney said that he and some other men from Echo Company would be in the lounge when I arrived and that I should join them.

I went to my room and dropped my bags, then returned to the front desk to inquire about getting an iron. While standing at the desk, a men approached me and said" Billy Roble' I turned and found Larry approaching me he was the first of many of Joe's friends I would meet that day and in the future. We shook hands and I asked how he knew it was me. He said he just knew. We walked to the lounge and there I met Mike Worth, Bob Reed, Earle Breeding, David Spry and Bill Griffith. Vince Griffith arrived later, and they all told many comic stories about Joe. I was then made an honorary of Echo Company.

THE HERO

On October 14th, 1977, I had a message on my answering machine from Bill Griffith who said I should call him immediately as he has some good news. I called him he informed me that Joe was going to receive the Bronze star for actions on September 15th 1968. He told me that a copy of the certificate and citation, would be delivered.

I was extremely excited, as was my mother. Later that day I received a call from Lucille Biscaglio who put me on a 3 way conversation with Larry McCartney. It was only then that I learned how Joe and Eddie Ginn and braved machine gun fire and grenades to save Bill Griffith's life as well as attempt to save Stan Pettit. I then knew why Bill could not iterate enough what a great guy my brother was. I wondered how many more there were on the wall or even living whose self sacrifice went unnoticed

OBIT FOR BILLY ROBLE

William Arthur "Bumper" Roble, 44, of Huntington Beach, California formerly of Latrobe, PA passed away on Tuesday, December 9, 2008 while exploring in Peru. The son of Anna L. (Michel) Roble of Latrobe, PA and the late William Matthew Roble, he was born April 28, 1964 in Latrobe, PA. He was a graduate of Greater Latrobe High School in 1982, proudly served in the United States Marine Corps for four years being discharged as a corporal. He attended the University of California, Irvine, earning a BA in Anthropology and was employed by Western Digital in Los Angeles as a certified computer technician. He was a parachutist, scuba diver, film editor, writer of screen plays, books and poetry. His love of music led him to be the guitar player and vocalist in the LA band "Take Cover" as well as writing some original songs. His other love was to travel which took him to Korea where he was an English instructor for three years, China, Japan, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Mexico, India and his next to last destination

of Peru. He was fluent in the languages of Spanish and Korean. Bill is survived by his mother; siblings, two brothers, Matthew (Kathy) of West Chester and Steven of Torrance, CA; four sisters, Ann Roble of Latrobe; Toni (Stanley) Apryasz of Blairsville; Rita Roble of Scottdale and Beth (Surya) Sundaram of Colorado Springs, CO; six nephews and four nieces who will miss his laughter, Charles and Joseph Roble, Holly Apryasz Best, Raymond and Joshua Apryasz, Eric and Daniel Roble and Dhamanika, Chandra and Dhene Sundaram and one great niece, Cecilia Apryasz Best. He was preceded in death by his father; and his brother and hero, Joseph Roble, USMC. He had written a book which was Writer's Club Press titled "Just One" in Joe's memory.



OBIT

JIMMY R. LeBLOND, (FRENCHY) USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN ECHO CO 2/26

Jimmy R. LeBlond, 66, of Terryville, husband of Carol (Casey) LeBlond died Monday Dec. 14, 2015 at Bristol Hospital.

Jimmy was born November 24, 1949 in Ft. Kent, Maine, son of the late Alphie LeBlond and Reginia



(Pelletier) LeBlond. Jimmy was a U.S. Marine veteran of the Vietnam War. Prior to his retirement he was employed by Sugar Mountain Enterprises.

Besides his wife he is survived by his daughter, Aleathia Drehmer of NY; stepsons, James Edwards of Bristol, Kevin Edwards of FL; his stepdaughter, Victoria Wirth of FL; his brothers, Michael LeBlond of Terryville, Gary LeBlond of RI; his sister, Patricia LeBlond of Michigan and his granddaughter, Chole Drehmer.

A military service was held Friday, Dec. 18th at 12:30PM at State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown.

OBIT

ALAN INABINET, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, C CO 1/26

Alan was born on January 9, 1947 and passed away on Friday, February 3, 2017. Alan was a resident of Cordova, South Carolina at the time of his passing.

Alan served four years in the United States Marine Corps. He earned a meritorious promotion to sergeant while in Khe Sanh Vietnam a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star with a Ribbon of Valor for bravery and leadership in battle. He was married to Bonnie.

OBIT

CLAYTON LARABELL, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN

He was born January 23, 1949 in Mount Clemens to Nellie M. "Darlie" and the late Clarence J. "Nat" Larabell. He married Yvonne L. "Bonnie" Anderson on February 14, 1970 at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Marine City.

Clate served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War and earned a Bronze Star and Purple Heart during the Battle of Khe Sanh. He was employed by Detroit Edison for 47 years until his retirement in 2016. Clate was a jokester and enjoyed spending time outdoors, working in his yard, and gardening. More than anything, he loved spending time with his grandchildren and being "Papa".

He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Bonnie; two children, Paul Larabell and Diana Vargas; four grandchildren, Ashley Larabell, Jeffrey and Katelyn Barks, and Julianna Vargas; his mother, Nellie "Darlie" Larabell; brother, Nathan "Nate" (Nan) Larabell; sister, Nellie (Glenn) Hernandez; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins.



OBIT

WILLIAM "BILL" EARL SHAFFER
USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, B CO 1/26

FREMONT: William "Bill" Earl Shaffer, 67, of Fremont, OH passed away unexpectedly on Thursday, March 23, 2017 at the VA Hospital in Ann Arbor, MI. He was born on December 22, 1949 in Port Clinton, OH, the son of Ivan Shaffer and Florence "Sandy" (Constantine) Heschel. He was a 1968 graduate of Fremont Ross High School



Bill served in the U.S. Marine Corps from February 9, 1967 to April 28, 1969 and was awarded the National Defense Service Medal; Vietnamese Service Medal with one Bronze Star; Vietnamese Campaign Medal w/Devise (60); Combat Action Medal; Good Conduct Medal and was a Purple Heart recipient.

Bill married Wanda Spittler in 2003 and she survives. Bill worked at Davis Bessie Nuclear Plant as a Superintendent for twenty-seven years. He was also a Brick Layer with the BAC Local 46 for twenty-five years, retiring in 2017.

Bill was a Life member of VFW Post 2947 in Fremont where he served as Past Post Commander; Past District 9 Commander, served on the Building Committee; was a member of the VFW Color Guard for several years; volunteered for Post func-



tions and the Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner for many years. Bill was also a member of the American Legion and the Marine Corps League. He enjoyed working, gardening, golfing and spending time with his grandchildren.

Bill is survived by his wife of fourteen years, Wanda Shaffer; children, Kelly Shaffer, Kenneth Blohm, Ronald Shaffer, Brian (Cathy) Shaffer; mother, Florence "Sandy" Heschel; stepchildren, Tanya (Michael) Burkett and Shane (Stacy) Bilger, all of Fremont, OH; siblings, Ivan Shaffer and Linda (Robert) Dorsey both of Fremont, OH; grandchildren, Dylan Blohm, Miranda and Beau Shaffer, Dalton Blohm, Chase and Reagan Shaffer; step grandchildren, Tawnie (Levi) Bishop, Shelby, Hanna and Whitney Bilger and Tyler Binder. He was preceded in death by his father, Ivan Shaffer; sisters, Carol "Susie" Musgrave and Helen Wang.

FROM WEBSITE

In keeping with Neil K's recent posts about getting in and out of the conflict, here is a link to a retrospective of the Vietnam War using Magazine Covers from Life, Time, Newsweek, and a few others.

They are in chronological order and they provide a unique glimpse at our getting in and getting out of the war ....and our society too. It's just the covers, but if you scroll slowly and process what you are seeing, you can get a real sense of when the overall mood of the country began to shift. At least I did. If I was a high school history teacher and doing a unit on the 60's and the War, I'd have my kids all over this. Some covers will produce "I remember that one," moments while many will not I won't say "enjoy" but it is fascinating.
S/F Dennis Mannion

MAGAZINE COVERS DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

Date: March 20, 2017Author: pdoggbiker

I spent some time researching the Big – 3 magazines: Life, Time and Newsweek, to see what their covers looked like during the years of the Vietnam War. I managed to collect over a hundred, which include Vietnam War photos or faces of those important people who were tied to the war effort at that time; all are posted below in chronological order. It's interesting to note the volume of coverage during the early part of the war and then again during the final months – and also seeing how the photos and headlines had changed over the years. I also found it odd that very little was published about the 1968 Tet Offensive and found only two covers.

The 60's were a decade of war, demonstrations, and other cultural changes – a time when censorship was challenged, and everybody pushed the envelope to see what they could get away with. The Vietnam War was the biggest event of my generation and the press exploited it. News reports brought the war right into our living rooms every evening during the dinner hour, while weekly magazines, some with vivid photos of the war – a constant reminder as they collected on our coffee tables. Photographers, both male and female, traveled with the troops in the jungles and rice paddies, taking pictures at every opportunity; all showed the mud, blood, horror and brutality of war, rushing the rolls of film to the states in hopes of making the next issue.

Many journalists and photographers lost their lives in Vietnam while in the bush covering the war, those on the top of my head are Larry Burrows, Dickey Chapelle, Bernard Fall and Errol Flynn's son, Sean among others. Unfortunately, most of the stories were depressing and eventually helped sway the public opinion against the war and its warriors. I did not see any covers showing the "uplifting" and "humane" things we accomplished during that war, i.e. orphanages, MedCap, irrigation, village wells, improved roads, medicine, etc., and I didn't see any pictures of me either. I'll just have to be content with my photo slide show and personal albums.

While viewing these covers, see if you can tell when the "social shift" begins and leave a comment at the end of this article with your observations about this collection. Enjoy!



27 Oct 1961



2 Apr 1962



11 May 1962



25 Jan 1963



11 Oct 1963



15 NOV 63



20 MAR 64



12 JUN 1964



7 AUG 1964



14 AUG 1964



21 AUG 1964



27 NOV 1964



19 FEB 1965

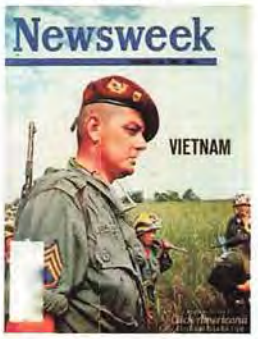

22 FEB 1965



16 APR 1965



14 MAY 1965



22 JUN 1965



5 JUL 1965



15 JUL 1965



6 AUG 1965



29 AUG 1965



12 FEB 1965



22 OCT 1965



22 OCT 1965



26 NOV 1965



7 JAN 1966



14 JAN 1966



11 FEB 1966



16 FEB 1966



18 FEB 1966



25 FEB 1966



3 JUN 1966



28 OCT 1966



4 NOV 1966



27 JAN 1967



10 MAR 1967



7 APR 1967



5 MAY 1967



7 APR 1967



5 MAY 1967



26 MAY 1967



25 AUG 1967



25 AUG 1967



6 OCT 1967



20 OCT 1967



27 OCT 1967



27 OCT 1967



12 FEB 1968



16 FEB 1968



15 MAR 1968



18 MAR 1968



22 MAR 1968



12 APR 1968



19 APR 1968



7 AUG 1968



7 SEP 1968



8 NOV1968



16 DEC1968



1968



15 FEB1969



11 APR1969



20 JUN 1969



27 JUN 1969



6 SEP 1969



12 SEP 1969



17 OCT 1969

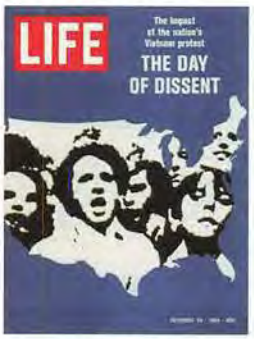

24 OCT 1969



24 OCT 1969



15 MAY 1970



17 MAY 1970



18 MAY1970



18 MAY1970



22 MAY 1970



7 DEC 1970



29 JAN 1971



12 MAR 1971



21 JAN 1972



12 APR1971



28 JUN1971



17 APR1972



28 JUN 1971

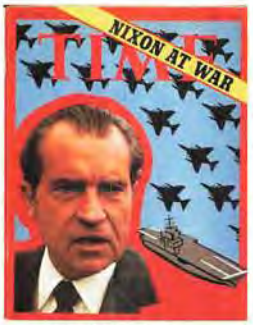

1 MAY 1972



12 MAY 1972



15 MAY 1972



22 MAY1972



9 OCT 1972



30 OCT 1972



6 NOV 1972



10 NOV 1972



5 JAN 1973



5 JAN 1973



8 FEB 1973



19 FEB 1973



25 FEB 1973



31 MAR 1975



19 APR 1975



25 APR 1975



5 MAY 1975



12 MAY 1975

All of the above photos were obtained from the archive files of Life Magazine, Time Magazine, Newsweek and Google search.

The 2017 Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion will be held at the Cleveland Marriott East, 26300 Harvard Rd, Warrensville Heights, Oh- 44122-6146 Ph: 216-378-9191, From August 27th 2017 to 03 September 2017. Rates are 109.00 a day, rates same 3 Days before & 3 Days after. Hotel is next to a giant mall with numerous restaurants and shops only a 5 minute walking distance. No Fee for parking. No Pets



HOTEL AMENTITIES

- All public areas non-smoking
- Beauty shop, nearby (referral at front desk)
- Buffet breakfast, fee from : 14.95 USD
- Cash machine/ATM
- Coffee in lobby
- Coffee/tea in-room
- Concierge Lounge Hours
- Concierge desk
- Continental breakfast, fee from : 11.95 USD
- Foreign exchange, nearby
- Full American breakfast, fee from: 14.95 USD

HOTEL AMENTITIES

- Newspaper delivered to room, on request
- Newspaper in lobby
- Phone calls: toll-free
- Room service, 6:00 AM-11:00 PM
- Safe deposit boxes, front desk
- Valet dry-cleaning
- Vending machines

Virtual Concierge Available

There is a large mall located within a five minute walk, from Hotel which contains many Fine restaurant s and Stores.

















KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

AFTER 50 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE, A WAR HERO RETIRES

BY TERI FIGUEROA WRITER

For more than 50 years, Ken Pipes wore a uniform — first as a long-time Marine officer who earned a Silver Star in Vietnam, then later as a reserve sheriff's deputy in North County, a role he held for 26 years.
That second job, he did for free. He didn't want the pay. He just wanted to contribute.

After five decades of public service, the Fallbrook man has finally called it quits, retiring in January as a reserve captain with administrative responsibility for all reserve deputies in North County.

With his 80th birthday approaching, said Pipes, it was time to "hang up my spurs."



"I think we all reach a point where you hate to leave something you enjoy and the relationships you have made, but there is a little clock inside all of us that says 'it's time to go,'" said the retired Marine Corps lieutenant colonel.

Service is important in his family — Sharon Pipes, his college sweetheart and wife of 56 years, has volunteered with the sheriff's department's senior patrol unit for the last 20 years. She has also volunteered with the Friends of the Fallbrook Library for many years.

Between the two of them, Ken Pipes figures, they may have done as much 30,000 hours of unpaid work.

Aside from his "honest desire to help protect our community," the reserves job fulfilled another need. "It gave me an opportunity to continue to serve alongside Marines," he said, noting that many former Marines move into law enforcement.

Growing up in Central California, Pipes wasn't thinking of going into public service. He wanted to play football. He credits the influence of his college coaches in Fresno for his decision to enlist in 1957. They were former Marines, and he wanted to be like them.

Pipes would spend 25 years in the service — the first three as a reservist, the next 22 on active duty and as a part of history.

In 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Pipes was a young officer aboard a ship headed toward the island nation.

Five years later, then-Capt. Pipes found himself in Vietnam, with two sons still in diapers back home. From late August 1967 until April 1968, he commanded two companies operating out of the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

That nine-month stretch included the Tet Offensive in 1968 and the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh. At the





time, Pipes commanded Bravo company, which he said was responsible for defending a sector of the main base perimeter during the protracted and bloody battle. More than 60 men in his company died.

During the days and nights of fighting, he was near-

ly shot in the head. His helmet stopped the bullet. Sometimes at night, he'd walk the trenches, slipping a shot of whiskey to weary men.

His memories of Khe Sanh are included the feature-length documentary "Bravo! Common Men, Uncommon Valor."

His many awards and decorations from his time at Khe Sanh include the Silver Star — the nation's third highest honor for gallantry in combat — the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart.

According to his Silver Star citation, on March 30, 1968, Pipes' company launched an attack but came under heavy fire from automatic weapons, mortars and rockets.

According to the citation, Pipes "fearlessly maneuvered across the fire-swept terrain, deploying his men and adjusting supporting arms fire on the enemy." Although he suffered a serious wound, he ignored the painful injury and continued to lead his men. He "repeatedly exposed himself to the intense fire as as he supervised the destruction of numerous bunkers and ensured that all wounded were treated and evacuated."

And when ordered to leave, he "unhesitatingly remained with the rear element of his command and directed an orderly withdrawal from the hazardous area."

1982, when Pipes retired as a lieutenant colonel, he stayed in San Diego County and began working in the security office at San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station.

He was still doing that job a few years later when he started reading headlines about a San Diego police officer who had been fatally shot. He groused to his wife about it.

"Sharon finally said quit complaining and do something about it," Pipes said. "That's when I enrolled in the police officers reserves academy."

He was 52 when he enrolled. While taking the six months of classes, he remained working full time at the nuclear power plant, driving to Carlsbad after work for five hours of law enforcement training every Tuesday and Thursday evening, as well as all day on Saturdays.

He left the power plant job about five years later, in 1995, and focused on his work in the sheriff's reserves.

Sheriff's Capt. Chuck Cinnamo, who runs the Vista sheriff's station, has known Pipes for about seven years and calls him "truly a lifelong public servant." "He is definitely dedicated to the cause of doing the right thing," Cinnamo said Friday. "That is what he is all about."

Over the years, Pipes also volunteered with a program called Veterans Moving Forward, where he counseled veterans in jail in hopes of getting them help and cutting recidivism rates.

Pipes, a Marine to his core, said that what he found most rewarding during his time in the reserves was the people that he worked alongside, particularly former Marines. He wants to see more of them step forward for the reserves job.

"When you are protecting and serving the public," Pipes said, "that is a noble calling."



ALL BLUE LIVES MATTER

OUR WORLD TRAVELERS

TOM FORD, HANK MELANSON, ED SANCHEZ AND JOHN TOMECK, SIGNED UP FOR ANOTHER TOUR IN VIETNAM. HERE ARE A FEW PHOTOS OF THEIR CROSS COUNTRY TRIP IN VIETNAM.

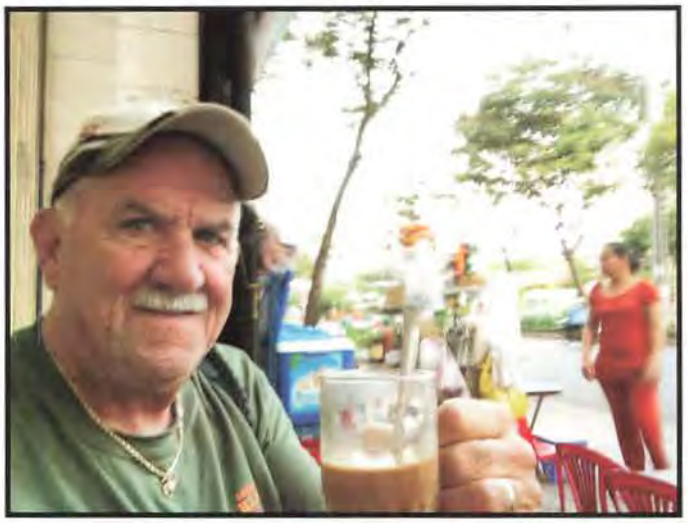

















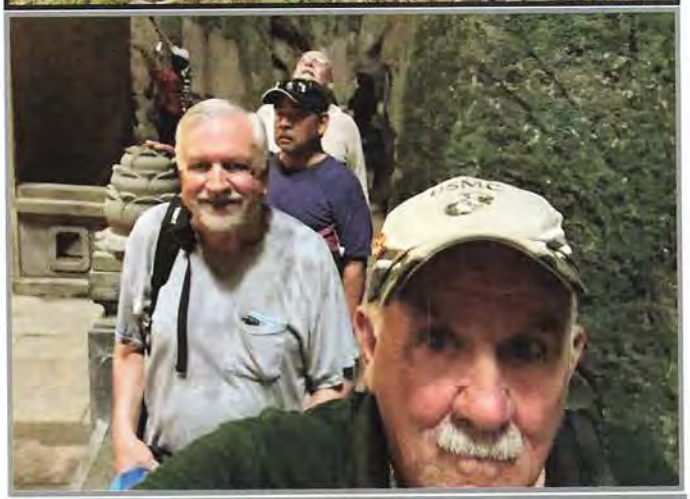

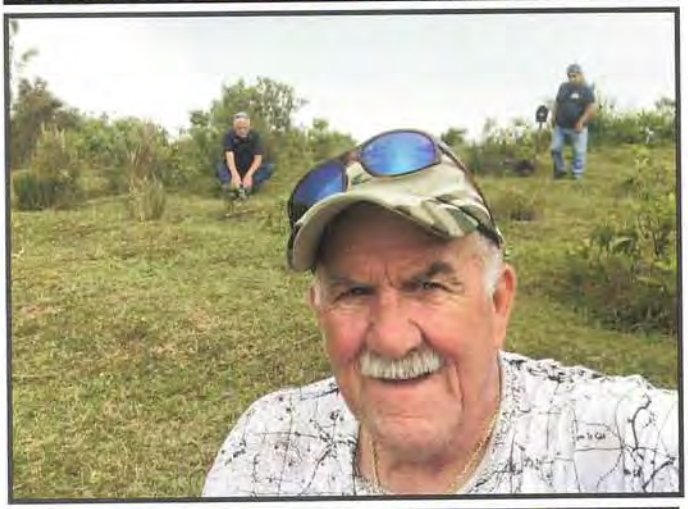









MEMORIES
FROM CALIFORNIA TO HILL 861
BY DENNIS MANNION
KILO CO 3/26 FO

I'll get to the photo in a few minutes, but first a bit of a "behind the scenes" glimpse of how I got from EI Toro Air Station to Khe Sanh and ultimately *that particular hill.*

14Sept67 and it was EI Toro to Okinawa on a Continental Airline jet...with a refueling on Wake Island. How I wished they'd have let us off the plane even for a few minutes just so I could have walked on that historic sand and coral. Kadena to Da Nang three days later on another Continental craft and the stewardesses standing the doorway saying, "Good Luck, Marine, see you in 13 months!" It was mid-afternoon and uncomfortable waiting around at the terminal -- brutal humidity, scorching sun -- awkward glances at the other FNG's, jealous looks at anyone in jungle boots and wondering how soon I could get out of stateside utilities and where I'd end up

.

A group of names called out -- mine was one of about 25 -- and on into another stifling room. We stood in a half-circle and all they said was "You're going up north in about two hours. Stick around." As it turned out, "north" meant a ride on a C-123 to Dong Ha and the two hour wait became almost four. When we got off the plane with our oversize, yellow travel envelopes as our only weapons, no one told us where to go next. It was already starting to get dark. There were a few large USMC trucks parked near the runway, and I climbed into the empty cab of one and "made myself as comfortable as possible." Relaxing was next to impossible what with planes and helicopters taking off, flares being shot up into the dark, and an occasional artillery piece booming away. Plus, I was a long way from home, hungry and sleep-deprived. I have no idea where I wandered to in the morning or how I even got there, but eventually I was told that I was going by truck to a place called Camp Carroll. Just that quickly I was in the back of an open, deuce and half truck with a dozen other Marines dressed the same as me. The driver and his buddy riding shotgun -- sporting a real shotgun -- were in ragged jungle boots and dirty, stained jungle utilities. More jealousy on my part. Out some sort of gate, a quick left and our single, vehicle convoy was barreling down a total dirt road heading west (I knew because of the position of the sun) with choking dust swirling up behind us. Not sure how long were on the move but I felt vulnerable as all get out. No weapons to be seen except for the driver's .45 and the shotgun. The land got steeper and we were beside river from time to time. Just like that, jutting up in the distance an unusual rock formation to our right front. Shotgun yelled to the driver, "You missed the turn to Carroll, you dumb SOB, this is the Rockpile! We're out here by our lone somes. We gotta turn the truck around!" We retraced the route for a period of time .... eventually took a right and a climb of a few 100 feet to the gate and the protective wire.

Two days at Camp Carroll -- and finally a helmet, flak jacket, jungle pants and jackets and jungle boots. I got what I had been wishing for, but everything was so shiny and new, I knew I still stood out as one of the FNG's. On day three and in light rain and mist, I flew by CH-34 to Khe Sanh. I reported in at C 1/13's headquarters and was told not to get too comfortable as I'd be detached out "fairly soon to an infantry company as part of its arty FO team." Not only was I brand new, I wasn't going to be around for very long so it did not seem like anyone was interested in talking to me much less getting to know me. I kept to myself, hung around my tent, and tried to get the shine off my jungle boots by walking in the mud and puddles every time I made the trek to the mess hall. We did have compartmentalized trays, but the only meal I remember having was a breakfast consisting of a single fried egg and a soft apple. The only word I got about the base in general was that there had been heavy fighting back in the spring, but that they had not taken so much as a sniper round since July. The weather was pouring rain .... light rain .... mist...low clouds for a week straight. I was also told that a Marine had died the week before my arrival when a bunker collapsed on him due to the wet and mud, and the week I was there, the same thing happened with another Marine losing his life. Finally, the weather broke and the sun came out. The only other place on earth I had seen with layered shades of green on the surrounding hills was Ireland. It was hard to believe I was in Vietnam. The natural beauty beyond the perimeter was breathtaking. Mesmerized, I was standing by

the tent waiting to head to the mess hall when someone stepped out, yawned and stretched. He pointed and said, "Can you see that dirt covered hill in the distance? I said yes and he casually replied, "That's Hill 861." WTF!

I could not have been more shocked if he had said, "See that building over there? That's the Alamo." Or, "See that river down there? That's the Little Bighorn." Or, "See that distant beach? That's Omaha Beach." It was startling and stunning to be standing so close to an historic spot from recent, USMC lore. I judged it to be a few thousand meters away, and I was almost giddy with excitement at being so close to such a landmark. It meant so much to me that I turned, raced into the tent, dug out my Kodak Instamatic 126 and snapped a picture ..... just like a goofy tourist in Disneyland or NYC. I guess if it had been today, I'd have turned my back to the hill, stretched out my arm and taken a photo of myself with 861 in the background. But this was the last week of September in 1967.

When I tripped the shutter that morning, I had no way of knowing that I'd be on 861 three months later -- 26Dec to be exact. No way of knowing about the misery up there for over 77 days in 1968 -- sleeping on cardboard from C-Ration cases; one canteen of water and one meal per day; jungle pants rotted off at the knees and running around in "shorts" for weeks; never washing; being partially overrun; dead NVA hung up in our protective barbed wire and rotting to bare bones in a week's time; close-in air strikes, napalm, and artillery less than 75 meters from our trench lines; instant death as well as lingering death; terrible injuries; fear; anger; longing for home; the constant odor of gunpowder and burning flesh; living in the dirt; dying in the dirt; etc, etc, etc.

In the fall of 1967 I took a photo of history that had been made. In the spring of 1968 I was part of history. Almost fifty years later, and that hill is still locked up inside my head and the images and the memories -- good and bad -- have never diminished.

Semper Fi.
Dennis Mannion
Kilo 3/26



PICTURE DENNIS TOOK OF HILL 861 WITH HIS LITTLE INSTAMATIC

MUD, BLOOD AND TERROR: THE BRUTALITY OF THE VIETNAM WAR CAPTURED IN HARROWING IMAGES BY LESLIE LARSON

LIFE magazine war photographer, Larry Burrows, covered the fighting on the front lines during the Vietnam War and is now being remembered for his extraordinary work as the 41 year anniversary of his Death approaches.

Mr Burrows captured the compelling images of Operation Prairie, the U.S. offensive against the North Vietnamese near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ),



War correspondent: Terry Fincher of the Express (left) and Larry Burrows (right) covering the war in Vietnam in April 1968

that lasted from August 3 to October 27, 1966.
His photographs of the bloody aftermath of the attack, juxtaposed against the lush and picturesque scenery of the Southeast Asian nation, are being revisited on LIFE.com as the London-born photojournalist is remembered.

An estimated 1,329 Americans were killed during the operation. More than 58,000 Americans lost their lives in the conflict in Indochina that ended in 1975.

One of the most famous images in the collection by Burrows is the shot 'Reaching Out,' the moment when wounded Gunnery Sgt. Jeremiah Purdie, photographed with a blood-stained bandage tied around his head, is drawn to his fellow soldier, who lays wounded on the ground.

Burrows himself suffered a tragic end as he worked on the front lines, he was killed on February 10, 1971 over Laos when his helicopter was shot down. He was 44-years-old.





In memory: The remains of Larry Burrows and the three other war photographers killed in the helicopter crash over Laos in 1971 were finally discovered some 37 years later. They now reside at a memorial (right) to fallen journalists at the Mewseum in Washington, D.C.

Fellow photographers Henri Huet, 43, of the Associated Press, Kent Potter, 23, of United Press International and Keisaburo Shimamoto, 34, of-Newsweek were also killed in the crash.

Ralph Graves, then LIFE magazine's managing editor, remembered the Englishman as 'the single bravest and most dedicated war photographer I know of,' in a moving tribute he wrote following Burrows' death.

'He spent nine years covering the Vietnam War un-

der conditions of incredible danger, not just at odd times but over and over again.'

'The war was his story, and he would see it through. His dream was to stay until he could photograph a Vietnam at peace,' Mr Graves added in the 1971 issue dedicated to the fallen correspondent.

Though the lost photographers were mourned, their remains were not discovered until 37 years later thanks to the tireless effort spearheaded by AP writer Richard Pyle.

The remains of Mr Burrows, Mr Buet, Mr Potter and Mr Shimamoto now sit in a stainless-steel box beneath the floor of the Newseum in Washington, D.C., part of a memorial gallery honoring journalists killed in the line of duty.

A total of 2,156 individuals, dating back as far as 1837, are included in the museum's memorial.



Wounded: U.S. Marines carry the injured during a firefight near the southern edge of the DMZ, Vietnam, October 1966



Reaching Out: Wounded Marine Gunnery Sgt. Jeremiah Purdie (center, with bandaged head) reaches toward a stricken comrade after a fierce firefight



Bloody: Marines carry an injured soldier back to the medics for treatment following an assault on Hill 484, Vietnam, October 1966



Comrade: American Marines tending to a wounded soldier during a firefight south of the DMZ

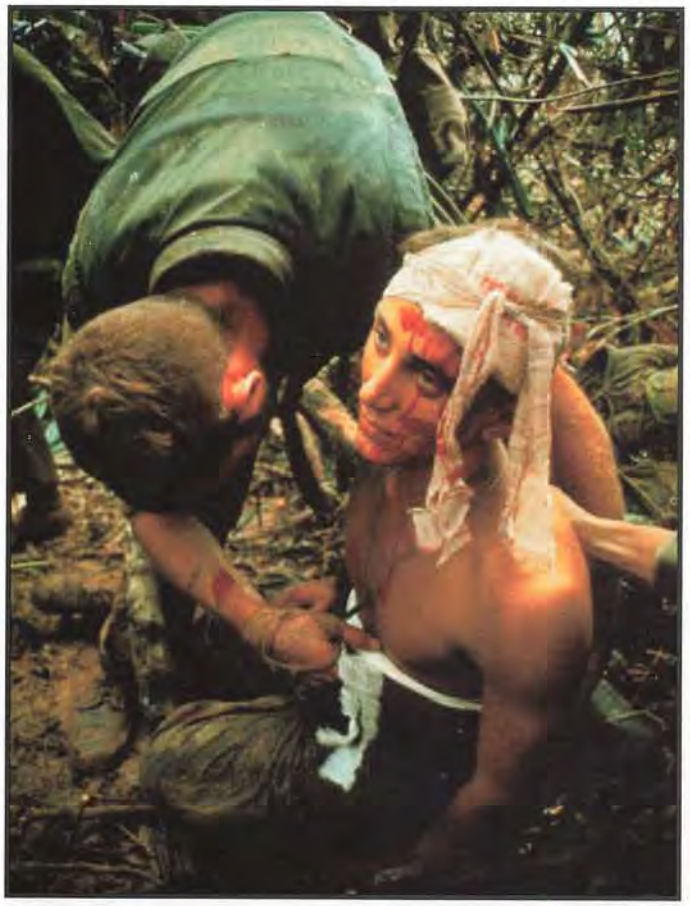

Battle: A dazed, wounded American Marine gets bandaged during Operation Prairie



Forging ahead: U.S. Marine Phillip Wilson as he fords a waist-deep river with a rocket launcher over his shoulder during fighting near the DMZ. Five days after this photograph was taken, he was killed in combat



Fallen: Four Marines recover the body of Marine fire team leader Leland Hammond as their company comes under fire near Hill 484. (At right is the French-born photojournalist Catherine Leroy)



An American soldier (right) with a bandaged head wound looking dazed after participating in Operation Prairie just south of the DMZ

LEGENDARY WAR PHOTOGRAPHER DICKEY CHAPELLE BACK IN FOCUS

By Meg Jones of the Journal Sentinel

After talking her way onto Iwo Jima during one of the famous battles of World War II, Dickey Chapelle recalled hearing the buzzing of wasps as she stood on a rocky outcrop snapping photos of Marines.



The Marines later told her there were no wasps on Iwo Jima. But there were Japanese snipers. The sounds she heard were enemy bullets whizzing by her head.

On assignment for a women's magazine, the Shorewood native was supposed to be covering the efforts of Navy nurses saving lives on a hospital ship anchored off the South Pacific island.

She wanted to get to the front lines, and persuaded the military to take her ashore.

Her fearlessness led to an impressive career covering the world's hot spots for two decades. One morning in November 1965 as Chapelle photographed a U.S. mission in Vietnam, a Marine walking in front of her tripped a booby trap. The explosion blew shrapnel into Chapelle's neck. She died within minutes.

A famous photo snapped by Associated Press photojournalist Henri Huet, who would die in Vietnam a few years later, shows a Navy chaplain performing the last rites for Chapelle. She was 47 — and the first American woman correspondent killed in action.

In anticipation of the 50th anniversary next year of Chapelle's death, the Milwaukee Press Club is inducting her into its hall of fame on Oct. 24. A book of her photos will be published next spring by the Wisconsin Historical Society Press. A playwright in California is writing a play about her. The Milwaukee Press Club is working with University of Wisconsin graduate students on a project to track down military members and journalists who interacted with Chapelle.

Chapelle put herself into harm's way over and over, covering the battles of Iwoima and Okinawa during World War II, and traveling to Algeria, Panama, Lebanon, Hungary, Cuba and Vietnam on assignment for National Geographic, Cosmopolitan, National Observer and other publications. She was captured by Russians while covering the uprising in Hungary in 1956 and held for 52 days, writing an article for Reader's Digest about spending Christmas in a Hungarian prison.

Born in Milwaukee, Georgette Meyer began calling herself Dickey because she admired polar explorer Admiral Richard Byrd, whose nickname was Dickey.

After graduating from Shorewood High School in 1935, she studied aeronautical design at MIT but flunked out when she didn't attend classes, instead hanging out at the airport to watch planes take off and land. When she returned home to Milwaukee, she worked at an airfield and wanted to earn her pilot's license.

Her parents sent her to Florida to live with her grandparents, and she found a job as a publicist at an air show. She was sent to Cuba to cover an air show and filed stories at the Havana bureaus of The New York Times and AP. She later moved to New York, met her husband Tony Chapelle, a pilot and photography instructor, and began working as a photographer for an airline.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Chapelle traveled to Panama for Look magazine to cover a U.S. Army unit. Eventually she made her way to the Pacific, where she covered the battles and took unflinching photos of severely wounded and dying Marines.

"She wanted an exciting life; she didn't want to be a kid from an ordinary suburb of Milwaukee. I think that motivation propelled her to do this for a long time," said John Garofolo, who is publishing a book next year of 150 to 180 of her photos.

With a grant from the Brico Fund funneled through the Milwaukee Press Club Endowment, Garofolo is also writing a play about Chapelle.

"She was raised in a family of pacifists who believed war was wrong. I think thiswas her way to reconcile that. She was showing how horrible war was, that she was willing to go to show people the terrible price wars exact," Garofolo said.

She traveled to Vietnam several times in the early '60s, when U.S. forces numbered only a few hundred advisers. In 1962 she met a young AP reporter who would later win a Pulitzer for his coverage of the Vietnam War. Peter Arnett, who became a household name during his coverage of the first Gulf War for CNN, met her at the Caravelle Hotel in Saigon, recalling that she was "petite and charming, not the brittle, aggressive personality I had envisaged from her legend."

As one of the first, if not the first, female journalists covering the Vietnam War, Chapelle had to cope with attempts by military leaders to ban her from missions. In 1962 an officer tried to deny her access to covering a field operation, arguing that there were no toilets for women in the jungle.

"According to my AP colleague Fred Waters, Dickey, in her olive drab field gear, and her feet firmly planted on the ground, snarled at him, 'Listen soldier don't worry about me, and when I have to I can piss standing up straight just like you do!' Of course, Dickey went on the patrol," Arnett recalled in an email interview.

Chapelle returned to Vietnam in October and November 1965 on assignment for the National Observer and RKO broadcasting company for a story about a Marine company, following the unit from training and into battle.

Huet's photo of Chapelle getting the last rites from a chaplain, along with a picture of Chapelle holding a camera and wearing Marine fatigues, were sent out by AP and widely printed shortly after her death.

"What was different about Vietnam is that photographers had incredible access to the war thanks to the U.S. military and particularly helicopters," said Hal Buell, who supervised AP photo operations during the Vietnam War.

"If you were accredited, and she was, if you heard there was a battle, all you had to do was hop aboard a chopper and off you went, you were in the middle of the battle. That's different compared to World War II and Korea and subsequent wars.

She really took advantage of that and saw a lot of action," said Buell, 83, who later became AP's executive news photo editor.

Jack Paxton was the Marine press officer who met Chapelle and other journalists the night before she was killed. Stationed with the 4th Marine Regiment in Chu Lai, Paxton briefed reporters about the next morning's mission to engage the Viet Cong. He had met Chapelle a decade earlier when she was covering an air show in Philadelphia and they laughed and reminisced that evening over dinner.

Chapelle loved the Marines, her fondness stemming from her first visit to the front lines on Iwo Jima. She called them "her Marines" and they responded in kind to the slender woman who didn't mind digging her own foxhole and ate the same chow as they did. Marine representatives will attend the Milwaukee Press Club hall of fame induction ceremony for Chapelle next week.

Perhaps it's fitting that she was with her beloved Marines when she was killed.

"She had seen more action than most of our Marines had at that time. Anyone going into any action is scared. I'm sure she was nervous, but she didn't show it," said Paxton, 84, president of the Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association.

Greg Lake took part in the same battle but in a different Marine company than Chapelle. When she was killed just a few hours into the mission, word quickly spread among Marines despite the remote area.

"It passed like wildfire — 'Did you hear Dickey got killed?' The word-of-mouth was almost immediate throughout the company. What a shame," said Lake, who spent nine months in Vietnam and now lives in northern California.



LAST RIGHTS BEING GIVEN TO DICKEY BY CHAPLAIN

A Marine honor guard escorted her body home from Vietnam. On the first anniversary of her death, a monument was erected near where she was killed. The Marines who dedicated the memorial marker included these words on the plaque:

She was one of us and we will miss her.



GENERAL WALT AT THE DEDICATION OF THE MEMORIAL BUILT BY MARINES WHERE SHE FELL IN VIETNAM



SIMPLE STONE MARKS HER GRAVE

MORE PHOTOS APPEAR ON INSIDE BACK COVER



OBIT

AMERICA JUST LOST ONE OF THE MOST DECORATED SOLDIERS IN HISTORY

Lt. Gen. Thomas H. Tackaberry joined an Army at war, enlisting amid World War II.

He later served in Korea and Vietnam, becoming a hero of both conflicts. He'd go on to command the 82nd Airborne Division and, later, the 18th Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg.

But Lt. Gen. Tackaberry, who died Monday at the



age of 93, wasn't defined by the three stars he wore on his uniform at the end of his 38-year military career.

Nor did the numerous medals that made him one of the most decorated officers in Army history — three Distinguished Service Crosses, five Silver Stars, a Distinguished Flying Cross and a Soldier's Medal, among many others — provide the full measure of a man long devoted to his country and his family.

"He never talked about his awards," said retired Brig. Gen. Burt Tackaberry, one of his oldest sons. "He was very humble. He knew what he achieved, but was very quiet about it."

After his Army career, the general lived quietly at the family home in Gates Four and later, in a Fayetteville nursing home, his son said. But he was fiercely proud of his service, especially within the 82nd Airborne Division and at Fort Bragg.

Instead of medals and war-time heroics, Brig. Gen. Tackaberry said his father's stories focused on soldiers, whom he treated much the same way he treated his own family.

"He loved soldiers, and he loved his children," Brig. Gen. Tackaberry said. "He gave both a lot of latitude and a lot of responsibility, and he expected you to get the job done."

"He was a soldier's soldier," his son added.

A September 1979 copy of The Fayetteville Times called Lt. Gen. Tackaberry a "grunt's angel."

"That's what they call a leader who goes out of his way to see his troops have enough beans and bullets to carry them through the long trek and the fight to follow," the author of the profile wrote.

Another article, dated June of the same year, described Lt. Gen. Tackaberry as a rugged, yet compassionate man "with John Wayne-like qualities." Brig. Gen. Tackaberry said his father taught him that leaders should be firm, but fair.

At a time when many commanders were known for bluster and an expletive-filled vocabulary, Lt. Gen. Tackaberry believed that motivating soldiers required more than scare tactics.

"He never harassed. There were no threats," his son said. "He taught me that you didn't have to scream. You didn't have to use four-letter words."

After his Army career, Lt. Gen. Tackaberry briefly served as a manager of a local real estate office be-

fore joining a private firm, BDC Corp., as the head of a six-person team that advised the military of the Republic of China.

As an Army leader and a father, Brig. Gen. Tackaberry said his dad led by example, often setting a high bar for fitness.

As the commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, then-Maj. Gen. Tackaberry would often lead paratroopers on lengthy runs from the division headquarters across Fort Bragg to Smith Lake and back. The general would have a picnic spread waiting for the soldiers' return, but few reported much of an appetite after the test of endurance.

Months before his passing, a member of the family jokingly challenged the retired general to push-ups. Brig. Gen. Tackaberry said his wheelchair-bound father didn't hesitate. He slipped out of his chair and promptly completed a set of 10 push-ups.
"It was unbelievable," he said.

Lt. Gen. Tackaberry's example instilled a devotion of duty to country not only in his soldiers, but in his family. His twin sons, Brig. Gen. Burt Tackaberry and retired Col. Kief Tackaberry, both served lengthy Army careers, including stints in the 82nd Airborne Division. And multiple grandchildren are serving.

Despite a busy Army career, Lt. Gen. Tackaberry always made time for his family.

"He was a family man," Brig. Gen. Tackaberry said. "He came to almost all of our games."

At Arlington National Cemetery later this year, the general will be buried next to two of his children who preceded him in death, Richard Tackaberry and Elizabeth Tackaberry.

He is survived by his wife, Lilian Tackaberry, and two other sons, Thomas H. Tackaberry and Steven S. Tackaberry.

On Fort Bragg, officials responded to news of Lt. Gen. Tackaberry's death by praising what he did for the post and the Army as a whole.

"We remember and honor the service, sacrifice, leadership and tremendous example of Lt. Gen. Thomas Tackaberry," said Maj. Gen. Paul J. LaCamera, deputy commanding general of the 18th Airborne Corps and acting senior commander of Fort Bragg. "We'll keep his family in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. Though he is no longer with us, his legacy is forever enshrined in the history of the 82nd Airborne Division, 18th Airborne Corps and our great Army."

A spokesman for the 82nd Airborne Division said the All Americans — who are celebrating the historic unit's 100th anniversary this year — were saddened by the loss of their former commander.

The spokesman, Lt. Col. Joseph Buccino, said the general "has a permanent place in the legacy of America's Guard of Honor."

Commanding the 82nd Airborne and the 18th Airborne Corps were "dreams come true" for Lt. Gen. Tackaberry, according to his son.

He led the division between 1974 and 1976, nearly three decades after he first served in the unit, as a private and machine gunner in the division's 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment. And he led the corps and Fort Bragg from 1979 to 1981.

Lt. Gen. Tackaberry came from humble beginnings, as the son of a barber and a tax collector in Los Angeles. But even from a young age, he seemed destined for greatness.

A high school sports star and valedictorian, Lt. Gen. Tackaberry was starring for the Occidental College track team when, as a 19-year-old, he enlisted in the Army Reserve while the nation was still at war.

After serving in various infantry and paratrooper infantry units, Lt. Gen. Tackaberry was commissioned as a second lieutenant and served from late 1945 to June 1948 in Germany as part of the Army of Occupation.

He performed several heroic acts while serving in Korea and Vietnam, thrice earning the nation's second-highest military award for valor, the Distinguished Service Cross, and earning the third-highest award for valor, the Silver Star, five times.

In Korea, he organized a volunteer patrol to go into enemy-held territory in search of wounded U.S. troops, leading the patrol under intense small arms fire, heavy mortar and artillery bombardment and through a known minefield to rescue the wounded and prevent others from being captured by the enemy, according to an award citation.

In another incident, he left the relative safety of his command post to cross a minefield under intense enemy artillery fire to aid a United Nations patrol that was under attack. While exposed to enemy fire, he organized efforts to care for the patrol's wounded and then covered the unit's escape with his weapon.
In Vietnam, then-Lt. Col. Tackaberry flew to the rescue of a besieged firebase under fire from three companies of North Vietnamese Regulars. At the firebase, he leaped from his helicopter, braving relentless enemy fire to move from position to position while leading the defense of the base, according to officials. He then left the base to direct an assault against the enemy.

In another incident, he led a search and destroy operation in which a 15-man platoon was pinned down and its leader killed. The general ordered his unarmed command helicopter to land near the firefight and ran through intense enemy fire to reach the platoon and assume command.

When reinforcements arrived, he led an assault on enemy bunkers, forcing the larger North Vietnamese force to retreat.

At the end of his career, Lt. Gen. Tackaberry said he had no regrets about his service.

"If I were given one wish, I'd ask to start all over again and jump on that street car in Los Angeles and tell the sergeant at that station that I wanted to join like I did on Oct. 23, 1942," he said.

His final assignment was as the commander of the 18th Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, during which he helped foster what he called the "second golden age of the airborne."

Lt. Gen. Tackaberry led the corps as it assumed the role as the nation's "Strategic Army Corps," responsible to serve as a quick-strike force for immediate deployment to world hot spots.

He also played a hand in petitioning the Army to officially approve the maroon beret that is synonymous with paratroopers. The beret, which was long described as a "non-standard" uniform item by the Army, was briefly banned in the late 1970s.

Before that, Fort Bragg soldiers wore the berets on an unofficial basis, often carrying a signed card from their commander that they would show when challenged by officials from other units.

After the Army outright banned the beret, Lt. Gen. Tackaberry was among the leaders to ask for its return.

"I think the beret is good," he said while at the helm of Fort Bragg. "I didn't realize how important it really is to the young trooper, and veteran soldiers, for that matter, until I arrived."

Brig. Gen. Tackaberry said his father was always on the side of soldiers.

"His philosophy was 'Take care of soldiers and they would get the job done,'" he said. "He loved his soldiers. And he absolutely loved the Army."
Military editor Drew Brooks can be reached at brooksd@fayobserver.com or 486-3567.

OBIT

EDWIN DOUGLAS USN (RET)
KHE SANH VETERAN

On Thursday, February 16, 2017
Born in St. Petersburg, Florida on September 30, 1946, he was the son of the late Rev. Claude Stanfield and the late Wilma Clayton Stanfield. Capt. Stanfield was a graduate of the University of South Florida, Duke University Divinity School, and Princeton Theological Seminary. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1966 as a seaman recruit and served with the Third Marine Division as the Leading Petty officer assigned to the Khe Sanh Combat Base during the 1968 Tet Offensive. Honorably discharged in January 1970, Stanfield became a member of the NC Methodist Conference and served churches in Rougemont and Pink Hill, NC before returning to military duty as a Chaplain Corps officer in 1978. Duty stations included the U.S. Naval

Training Center in San Diego; the Destroyer Squadron Five; the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis; the U.S. Naval Station in Guam; the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in Parris Island; the Office of the Navy Chief of Chaplains in Washington D.C.; the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay; the U.S. Coast Guard in Alameda; the Marine Corps Air Bases Western Region at Miramar; and the Naval Medical Center in San Diego.

Capt. Stanfield's awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal, a Combat Action Ribbon, a Vietnam Service Medal, a Humanitarian Service Medal, and others. In 1983, Stanfield was named Armed Forces Chaplain of the Year.

He settled with his family in San Diego after retiring from active duty in 2005, and relocated to Piedmont last May.

Surviving are his wife, Vera Jaudon Stanfield, and son, Samuel Douglas Stanfield, of Piedmont, SC; two sisters, Linda Lewis and husband, Harmon, of Ocala, FL, and Amy Nottingham of Jacksonville, FL; and ten nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Thursday, March 2nd, at 11:00 AM at Bethesda United Methodist Church, 516 Piedmont Road, Easley, SC, with Rev. Dan Batson officiating. A naval honors memorial service and burial will be held in Arlington Cemetery at a later date.

I GET MAIL

Sharing a e-mail I was included in.....My brain is old and tired. I checked my "Red Clay" last night and the reunion information is there. I overlooked it. Sorry to have bothered you. Please pass on to all the KSV people who put the "Red Clay" together that from this old reconners perspective, the "Red Clay" it is by far the best, most superbly crafted and written publication of all the various veterans' groups I have read thru the years. Well done. It is still after all these decades strange for me to remember as our very small 3rd FRC Detachment Forward, maybe 15-20 Force Recon Marines and two Corpsman, relieved the SF and their Nung Strikers at Khe Sanh. They left to settled into their new Lang Vei compound in Nov/Dec '66'. The strange part is that we used to call the walk out to Hills 950 and 1015 "the Witches Tit"a 'milk' run to set up radio relay for our teams working the borders. And by Jan '68', the battle was on though the NVA platoons moving in and around Khe Sanh certainly kept the heat on us from Nov '66' thru Mar '67'. Lost count how many times our teams got shot out. Anyway, must get back to work. Again, Tom, I cannot thank you and the other good KSV guys and gals for keeping the memory of what we did and endured alive for our children and grandchildren.

MORE MAIL

WALTER J. 'SKI' DOROSKI
3RD FORCE RECON

"Then last night was the 'kicker'. I opened up the Spring 2015 Red Clay, by the Khe Sanh Veterans founded by Rev Ray W. Stubbe, Chaplain 1/26. On page 13/14 is a story of Cpl Jerry Clark Burkhead, age 21, M-60 machine-gun team leader in Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment ("the Walking Dead"), who died with 27 other Marines in his platoon on forward outpost Hill 64 under attack by a reinforced battalion of the 325A NVA Division. The same NVA Division we tracked and chased in '66-67' along with the 324B NVA Division. The Battle for Hill 64 was the last all-out attack by the NVA during the 77 day siege of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Jerry was a graduate of a very rural Parksley High School, Class of 1965. Jerry, was my classmate and teammate on the Eagle's football team. In a graduating class of roughly 40 Seniors, 20 gals, 20 guys, six of us served. I am the only one left of those six men. Again, another night and no sleep."

I would never have known what happened to my old classmate if it were not for your superb "Red Clay". Thank you all.
I remain, Semper Fidelis
Walter J. 'Ski' Doroski
Transportation Specialist
USPS Air Transportation Operations



OBIT

DONALD W. MURPHY, USMC
FLSG-BRAVO

On March 5th, 2017 a great man's heart stopped beating and broke the hearts of the family members he left behind. Donald William Murphy, Jr. was 69 years old and was just a few days away from celebrating his 42nd wedding anniversary to Sue Murphy.



OBIT

TIMOTHY WHELAN USMC,
KHE SANH VETERAN ALPHA CO 1/26

It is with deep sorrow that I announce that the passing of my oldest brother Timothy, on February 6th 2017. He was a Marine grenedier and was stationed at khe sanh during the Tet offensive in 1968 on hill 861. He received two Purple Hearts and taught war college at Quantico Virginia. Arrangements are being made to have his remains laid to rest at Arlington cemetery.





TIM WITH HIS FAMILY

LT COLONEL KYLE UPSHAW IS THE SON OF LELAND UPSHAW KHE SANH VETERAN B CO 3RD RECON



Please join us in congratulating 10th Mountain Division's new G9 (Civil Affairs Officer), Lt. Col. Kyle Upshaw on his recent promotion. Following his promotion to Lt. Col. he received the Oath of Office from Brig. Gen. Andrew M. Rohling, Deputy Commanding General, 10th MTN. DIV. (Support). The two previously served together as Sky Soldiers in the 173rd Airborne Brigade They are now making their mark here as they #ClimbToGlory

INTERESTING INFORMATION FROM RAY MILLIGAN, KHE SANH VETERAN B CO 3RD RECON

UNDERSTANDING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE RATED 100% DISABLED

Unfortunately, many veterans are too often confused about Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 100 percent disability ratings and whether or not they are allowed to secure gainful employment if rated at 100 percent. While complex, and sometimes confusing to the most experienced VSO, let's take a look at the four types of 100 percent disability ratings in plain, understandable English.

1.Combined. When a veteran's service-connected disabilities are combined to reach 100 percent, he/she is allowed to work full time or part time. For example, if a veteran is rated 70% for PTSD, and 30% for IBS, the two disabilities equal 100% (sometimes – see rating table), and the veteran is allowed to hold a full time or part time job.

2. TDIU or IU. Total Disability/Individual Unemployability. This is a specific type of claim made by a veteran, requesting that he/she be paid at the 100 percent rate even though his/her disabilities do not combine to reach 100%. The request is often made because the veteran is unable to maintain "gainful employment" because his/her service-connected disabilities prevent him/her from doing so. The basic eligibility to file for Individual Unemployability (IU) is that the veteran has one disability rated at 60 percent or one at 40 percent and enough other disabilities that result in a combined rating of 70 percent or more. The one disability at 40 percent criteria can be a combined rating of related disabilities. Meeting the basic criteria is not a guarantee that the veteran will be awarded 100 percent under IU criteria. The medical evidence must show that the veteran is unable to work in both a physical and sedentary job setting. A veteran not meeting the percentage criteria may still be awarded IU if the disabilities present a unique barrier to gainful employment. If a veteran is granted 100 percent under IU he is prohibited from working full-time, because in filing the claim for IU the veteran is stating he/she is unable to work because of his/her service-connected disabilities. However, receiving IU does not necessarily prevent a veteran from all employment circumstances. The veteran can work in a part-time "marginal" employment position and earn up to a certain amount annually, but not allowed to surpass a certain amount.

3. Temporary 100 percent rating. If a veteran is hospitalized 21 days or longer or had surgery for a service-connected disability that requires at least a 30-day convalescence period, the VA will pay at the 100 percent rate for the duration of the hospital stay or the convalescence period. For example, if a veteran has a total hip replacement for a service-connected hip disability, the VA will pay 100 percent compensation for up to 13 months, the standard recovery period for a replacement of a major joint. The duration of 100 percent temporary disability for any other type of surgery will depend on what the doctor reports as the recovery period.

4. Permanent and total. A 100 percent "permanent and total" rating is when the VA acknowledges that the service-connected conditions have no likelihood of improvement and the veteran will remain at 100 percent permanently with no future examinations. The P&T rating provides additional benefits, such as Chapter 35 education benefits for dependents, among others. Veterans sometimes make the mistake of requesting a P&T rating simply because they want education benefits for their dependents. The one caveat that veterans need to keep in mind is that when P&T is requested, all of their service-connected disabilities will be re-evaluated. If improvement is noted during the subsequent examinations, a reduction from 100 percent can possibly be proposed. Because many veterans are service-connected for conditions that VA says have a "likelihood of improvement," most ratings are not considered permanent and are subject to future review. The only time veterans can't work a full-time position, that is considered a gainfully-employed job is if they were awarded 100 percent disability through a claim for IU. Additionally, a 100 percent rating under either IU or combined ratings may or may not be rated as permanent and total. A temporary 100 percent rating is just that: temporary due to being hospitalized or recovering from surgery on a service-connected condition.

Keep in mind, it is always best for a veteran to work with an accredited Veteran Service Officer (VSO) who can explain the complex workings of the VA benefit system.

NICE HONORING OF KHE SANH VETERAN

GAMBOA, GUEST COLUMNIST: MARINE CPL. ROGER LEE STROUD, WACO NATIVE, DISPLAYED VALOR RIGHT TO THE END IN VIETNAM WAR COMBAT

ROBERT GAMBOA Guest columnist
May 14, 2014

Roger Lee Stroud, a Waco native who called it home even after his family relocated to Corpus Christi, is an example of the instinctive heroism that colored the history of the Vietnam War. He not only demonstrated a regard for the fallen but also the safety of his men — something he took seriously to his final breath. He is one of nine veterans with local ties being added to the Waco Vietnam Veterans Memorial this morning.



ROGER STROUD CHARLIE CO 1ST BATTALION, 1ST MARINES

Stroud arrived in Vietnam on March 27, 1968, two weeks after his 18th birthday. He soon was assigned as a machine gunner with C Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division. The 1st Marine Regiment then was involved in Operation Pegasus, guarding an airstrip at Ca Lu. In mid-April, the 1st Division was ordered back to the Khe Sanh area in Quang Tri Province. Khe Sanh was home to the city of Hue, where the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) had begun their Tet Offensive months earlier. Hue was finally recaptured after the enemy suffered nearly 1,900 killed, but now the NVA had begun to reappear. It was time to clean them out.

There's no denying the danger. Elephant grass 4 to 6 feet high provided excellent cover for the enemy, not to mention the untold number of Viet Cong sympathizers. The area was also home to several battalions of the NVA.

May and June 1968 found Marine Cpl. Roger Stroud, by now a seasoned combat veteran, assigned as a platoon leader. C Company, 1st Battalion, was assigned to search-and-destroy missions. The NVA, well-entrenched in bunkers, were well-armed, professional fighting units. Monsoon rains from afternoon into night only added to the threat of ambushes.

On the night of July 6, the 1st Battalion was ordered up Hill 689. C Company was to follow D Company on the western slope. The NVA aggressively countered with mortars, tree snipers, rocket-propelled grenades, automatic fire and small-arms fire. D Company suffered extensive casualties and pulled back.

Meanwhile, C Company experienced NVA assaults along the defensive wire. During the night NVA soldiers yelled, and in perfect English, phrases such as, "Friendly Corpsman," "Get Down" and "I'm a Friendly," finally slipping into the 1st Battalion secure zone. Heavy fighting occurred on both sides of the wire.

The morning of July 7 found many D Company casualties, some left on the battlefield. C Company was ordered up on the southwestern slope of Hill 689 to recover the dead. Stroud's platoon took the lead and immediately moved against the main force of the 304th NVA Division. Tree snipers appeared everywhere.

Observing that several Marines from an adjacent platoon were wounded and exposed to continuous enemy fire, Stroud led several of his men across 50

meters of fire-swept terrain to the side of the casualties. There they administered medical aid to four men and directed evacuation of the wounded to safety.

During the three-hour battle, the NVA suffered 45 dead and countless wounded. C Company suffered seven dead and 30 wounded. Marine Cpl. Roger Lee Stroud lost his life on July 7, 1968, having served three months and 12 days with C Company. He was Vietnam War Casualty No. 30,449. He was awarded the Purple Heart and Silver Star Medal posthumously.

OBIT

FROM MICHAEL ARCHER

A PIECE I JUST SUBMITTED TO MY LOCAL NEWSPAPER, THE RENO-GAZETTE JOURNAL:

Retired Marine Corps Lieutenant General Martin L. Brandtner died in Reno on January 3, 2017. He and I initially met about a decade ago after my first book, A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered, was published. He insisted on being called "Marty" which, as a former Marine enlisted man, required a bit of practice on my part in order to unlearn the proper military etiquette I'd been taught years ago. Marty was immediately supportive of my work, helping, along with Major General Mike Myatt and Reno banker David A. Funk, to have the book placed in the splendid library of the Marines' Memorial Club in San Francisco. This proved to be, not only an honor, but a timely source of encouragement in my fledgling writing career. I thought of Marty again with gratitude just last year upon the release of my third book The Long Goodbye: Khe Sanh Revisited.

Marty Brandtner was a modest man, with little to be modest about. Long before retiring in 1981 as Director of Operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, one of the most significant positions in the U.S. military, he had, as a captain, commanded a combat rifle company in Vietnam. There, he would earn the distinction of being one of only two people from that war to twice receive the Navy Cross, the second highest award for valor, only behind the Medal of Honor. Even more extraordinary, Brandtner would earn those two medals in September 1968 during combat actions just eight days apart!



LTGEN MARTIN BRANDTNER, USMC

Among the several acts of bravery described in those citations was one telling how, during fighting against an overwhelming North Vietnamese Army force attempting to overrun his company position, Captain Brandtner saw an enemy hand grenade land near some of his men, and "concerned only for the welfare of his fellow Marines, he knocked two of the men to the ground and quickly placed himself on top of them, thereby absorbing the fragments from the exploding grenade in his protective armor and preventing possible death or serious injury to his companions."

Just over a week later, when the enemy returned in a series of human wave attacks against his company, Brandtner "calmly moved among his men reorganizing, encouraging and rallying his outnumbered and dazed company into an inspired fighting unit." (The entire text of his commendations can be read at http://valor.militarytimes.com/cipient.php…)

WHY IT'S SO MEANINGFUL TO RETIRE A BATTALION FLAG

By Dan Doyle

Recently I had the honor to participate in a very special event at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, VA, outside of the sprawling Quantico Marine Base. About 150 people attended the event to honor the veterans of 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, who had served with that unit during the Vietnam War.

The reason for the gathering was to retire and transfer our Vietnam era flag to the museum where it will become part of the collection. We were also there to unveil a plaque honoring the Battalion to be permanently displayed along the peaceful, leafy path called the "Legacy Walk" that meanders through the woods and hills on the beautiful museum's grounds.



THE CEREMONY OPENS WITH RESPECT

The small crowd that gathered for the event included wives and some of the adult children of the gathered veterans as well as Marine Corps and Museum officials. The Battalion Chaplain, Gil Gibson, opened the ceremony with a prayer remembering those who had fallen and those present. There were tears as his voice quavered slightly with his own emotion. Those emotions seem to come more easily and readily to us now in our older years.

Major General Donald R. Gardner, USMC —who had been a Co. Commander for Charlie Co, 3rd Recon Bn, in Vietnam and would go on to end his career as Commanding General of the 3rd Marine Division— was the guest speaker. His remarks were charged with the history of the battalion and his own memories of his time with it. The Charlie Co. guidon flag from Vietnam was also retired to the museum at this ceremony.

BATTALION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

3rd Recon Battalion's accomplishments in Vietnam were many. 2,800 Marines and Corpsmen served under the battalion's colors that were retired to the museum at this ceremony. As the "eyes and ears" of the Marine Amphibious Force and the 3rd Marine Division, the men of this battalion paid a dear price in service to the nation. 1,333 Marines and Corpsmen were killed, wounded or missing during the battalion's service in country. The battalion suffered a 40% casualty rate, which was equivalent to that of many of the regiments who fought at Gettysburg, the bloodiest battle of the Civil War. But the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese troops knew and feared the small, lightly armed patrols of the 3rd Recon Battalion. During the battalion's time in Vietnam 4 Medals of Honor, 13 Navy Crosses, 72 Silver Stars, and 56 Bronze Star were awarded to its Marines and Corpsmen.



FROM L-R "DOC" WINTERS, SGT LELAND UPSHAW AND "DOC" DAN DOYLE

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG MEN...

We 3rd Recon Battalion veterans were very young men when we patrolled and fought together in the steamy jungles, the rolling, elephant grass covered hills, and coastal plains of Quang Tri Province, in the I Corps area of South Vietnam. Bravo Co. endured the long siege at Khe Sanh during the Tet offensive of 1968. Five decades have passed behind us since then.

At this event we came together as a gathering of old men. We had reunited, once again, to remember that time in our lives when we faced the challenges and

fears of lonely patrols and fierce combat together against a determined enemy. We were full of good cheer in each other's presence. We also bore with us the long held sorrows of loss for those heroes who had fought so hard with us there, but who did not come home. Those who have experienced the horrors of combat know the peculiar bond that exists between men who have survived and lived on with those memories.

...NOW THAT WE'VE GROWN

50 years ago we were thrown together as strangers and, after surviving the terrible crucible of combat together, we came away a band of brothers like no other. You may have heard the phrase more than once: **"Once a Marine, always a Marine."** It is not just a phrase to Marines; it is a felt truth, a reality. That identity lasts a lifetime. That was clearly evident amongst the attendees.

Those of us who attended the event felt great pride for our history together. The respect and the honor given to the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion meant a lot to all of us. We have accepted the fact that this momentous time in our lives, and the battalion's role in Vietnam, is now 50 years in the past. We have lived long and productive lives, raised families, and are now, for the most part, experiencing the joys retirement and grandchildren. We know that we are the lucky ones. We have never forgotten those that we knew so well, who "gave the last full measure of their devotion." Those who did not come home with us remain forever brave and youthful in our memories. And when we think of them, we can not hold back the tears of loss and sorrow. They were, and remain, our real heroes.

THE DEDICATION OF THE PLAQUE

When the speeches were finished they were followed by a brief ceremony involving a Marine Corps Color Guard, the playing of the National Anthem and the Marine Corps Anthem. All of it was carried out with the usual Marine Corps precision, formality, and dignity. After the formal passing of the colors to the museum was complete, the plaque dedicated to us was unveiled by a Corpsman and a Marine. When the event was completed, my company, Bravo Co., which had the largest contingent of veterans at the event, gathered for a Company picture. While the cameras clicked one of the men started singing the Marine Corps Hymn and the rest of us spontaneously joined in with enthusiastic, if less than melodic voices. After words, we all went



back into the museum to lift a few libations in the museum's Tun Tavern.

Dan Doyle is a husband, father, grandfather, Vietnam veteran, and retired professor of Humanities at Seattle University. He taught 13 years at the high school level and 22 years at the university level. He spends his time now babysitting his granddaughter. He is a poet and a blogger as well. Dan holds an AA degree in English Literature, a BA in Comparative Literature, and an MA in Theology.

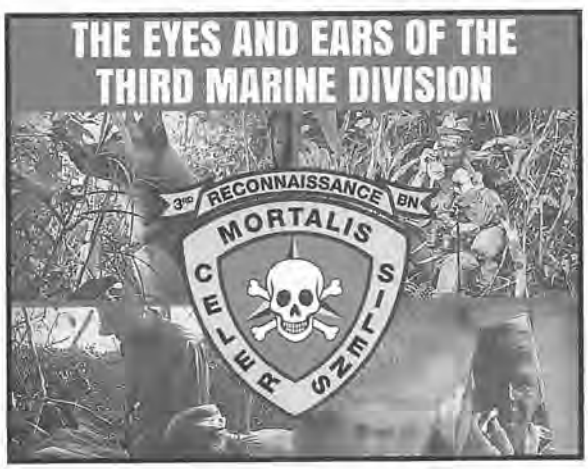

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER SPRING 2017

CHAPLAIN RON RAYNER

Amazing Grace and Finishing Strong

"Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come; 'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home."
John Newton

I would say that any Khe Sanh Vet for sure has been through many dangers, toils, and snares. Actually, everyone goes through many dangers, toils, and snares if only driving on an expressway. Grace, the undeserved favor of God, I believe is what has brought me safe thus far. Pushing seventy years old now I am making an effort to help the Lord by taking better care of myself. Falling and fracturing my skull last November as well as helping to take care of new grandchildren made me realize my obligations if I want to share in their lives.

At the Denver reunion in 2009, my first as KSV Chaplain, I spoke about finishing strong. Scripture as well as secular quotes reinforce how a person needs to take care of their mind, body, and soul to truly enjoy life.

"Do not have your concert first and tune your instruments afterward. Begin the day with God."
Hudson Taylor

Daily devotionals and prayer have brought me closer to God. A Silver Sneakers Card from Blue Cross gave me a free gym membership to work my body. Lumosity, an online daily quiz is helping my mind.

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord, "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me."
Jeremiah 29:11-13

My brother Tom is a fire department chaplain also. He has mentioned to me many times that I need to listen to and follow my own advice. Since my accident, I have realized just how right he was. My fractured skull left me a bit goofier than I was before and if I want to finish strong I have to daily pay attention to my mind, body and soul.

"...Because the hand of my God was on me, I took courage..."
Ezra 7:28

"Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid of them! The Lord your God will go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor forsake you."
Deuteronomy 31:6

"I command you—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."
Joshua 1:9 (NLT)

"A pessimist is one who makes difficulties of his opportunities and an optimist is one who makes opportunities of his difficulties."

Harry Truman

"Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out."

John Wooden

"...Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, 'May the Lord, who is good, pardon everyone who sets his heart on seeking God—the Lord, the God of his Fathers—even if he is not clean according to the rules of the sanctuary.' And the Lord heard Hezekiah and healed the people."
II Chronicles 30:18-20

There are many passages in the Bible that state "seek God" and one of my favorites is Psalm 9:9-10 "The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, **for you, "O Lord, you have never abandoned anyone who searches for you**."
It is my hope to see many of you in Cleveland at the reunion.

Holy Spirit, Advocate, Comforter, help us to find strength and courage in your presence for all the challenges of our lives. "May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace." Numbers 6:24-26 Amen.

LATE OBIT

JAMES B. THOMAS USN, KHE SANH VETERAN, KILO CO 3/26



James Byron Thomas died April 15, 2017 in Chickasha, Oklahoma. He was born March 2, 1947 in Lawton, Oklahoma to James Clarence Thomas and Ruth (Chapman) Thomas. After graduating from Lawton High, he enlisted in the Navy in 1966 and became a corpsman in Vietnam. He was shot down in a helicopter on May 29, 1968 and received a purple heart for his injuries.

James was married to Emma and that union resulted in two children, Scott and Michelle

James later moved to Lawton in 1979 where he met and married Terri Ganse in October 14, 1982. They were married 34.5 years. That marriage resulted in two sons, Kevin and Kyle

After getting out of the Navy, he went to Sparks in Ft. Smith, Arkansas and became a Radiologic Technologist. James worked in numerous hospitals in Lawton, Chickasha, and Oklahoma City. He retired from Mercy and The Heart Hospital in 2010.
James joined the Navy reserves for a while then transferred to the Air National Guard. He had a total of 36 years of service when he retired from the military and he achieved the rank of Master Sergeant.
Jim Thomas was preceded in death by his mother and father.

He is survived by his sister, Carolyn Pingry of Lawton; his wife, Terri; his son, Scott and wife, Nora and daughter, Michelle Elsey and husband, Bryan all of Sanger, TX; his son, Kevin of Norman, OK and son, Kyle of Chickasha, OK; grandchildren, Tanner and Madison Thomas, Brennan Bloom, Cody and Emma Elsey

KHE SANH VETERANS DONATIONS

ANONYMOUS	250.00 SF	Check# 4694
ANDERSON, David M.	250.00 SF	Check#3416
ARCHER, Michael	25.00 SF	Check# 101.
AVERY, Terry E.	25.00 SF	Check# 5898
BAKER, David & Mindy	150.00 SF	Check# 220
BARBER, Michael	100.00 SF	Check# 1709
BECK, Ralph	60.00 SF	Check# 4138
BECK, Ralph	60.00 SF	Check# 4282
CAMPO, Carl C	60.00 SF	Check# 3553
CARDWELL, Arthur	40.00 SF	Credit Card
CASEY, Maurice	10.00 SF	Check# 2556
GILLESPIE, Donald J.	60.00 SF	Check# 3738
GOTTMANN, James H.	100.00 SF	Check# 3330
DESETA, Louis J.	100.00 SF	Check# 5645
DONAGHY, Richard E	200.00 SF	Check# 2016
DONAGHY, Richard E	250.00 SF	Check# 1143
EDDOWES, Barbara	40.00 SF	Check# 499
EDDOWES, Barbara	40.00 SF	Check# 635
EVANS, Faye S.	100.00 SF	Check# 1938
FELDMAN, Edward	500.00 SF	Check# 727
FOLEY, Richard M. Jr	100.00 SF	Check# 1481
FOLEY, Richard M. Jr	100.00 SF	Credit Card
FORD, Thomas	500.00 SF	Check# 2533
FORD, Thomas	250.00 SF	Check# 2528
FORD, Thomas	250.00 SF	Check# 4968
FORD, Thomas	150.00 SF	Check# 5038
FORD, Thomas	300.00 SF	Check #2549
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 SF	Check#418672
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 SF	Check# 020103
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 SF	Credit Card
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 SF	Credit Card
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 SF	Credit Card
GIBBONS, Constance	142.00 SF	Check# 5002
GILLESPIE, Donald J.	60.00 SF	Check# 3849
GRANQVIST, Hans	20.00 SF	Credit Card
HANNA, Robert III	100.00 SF	CASH
HARGESHEIMER, John	100.00 SF	Check# 3198
HARVEY, Tom	20.00 SF	Check# 2691
JACHIMIAK, Daniel L.	250.00 SF	Check# 4552
KENNY, Neil	65.00 SF	Check# 4460
KENNY, Neil	236.00 SF	Check#4458
KILROY, Joseph M	250.00 SF	Check# 9127
KING, Daniel F.	10.00 SF	Check# 3014
KRAMER, Mark	55.00 SF	Check# 335
KUBILUS, Robert	30.00 SF	Check# 2352
MCCANN, Timothy	50.00 SF	Check# 1841
MERCADO, Saturno	10.00 SF	Check# 7805
MEYER, David	150.00 SF	Check# 1160
MEYER, David & Carol	500.00 SF	Checks 1248-50
MEYER, Carol	150.00 SF	Check# 1159
MORGAN, Robert	150.00 SF	Credit Card
MULLIGAN, Michael	300.00 SF	Check# 4272
MULTIPLE LISTING SRV	100.00 SF	Check # 976609
NELSON, George J.	300.00 SF	Check# 5313
NUNN, John B	60.00 SF	Checks 1067-68
OHARA, Michael	120.00 SF	Check# 2232
ORGAN, Michael	50.00 SF	Check# 1019
PEARSON, Scott	100.00 SF	Check# 5851
PRENDERGAST, Ed	100.00 SF	CASH
RAIT, Donald M.	500.00 SF	Check# 1029
REES, Ronald	40.00 SF	Credit Card
ROWE, John & Martha	1,000.00 SF	Check# 15252
RUECKERT, John G.	40.00 SF	Check# 13808
SARGENT, Ralph F.	60.00 SF	Check# 3710
SIEJUTT, Thomas	20.00 SF	Check# 4363
SMITH, Hubert	100.00 SF	Credit Card
SOLEDAD Prisoner Vets	200.00 SF	Check# 65627
SPIVEY, B. Larkin	60.00 SF	check#1633
STACK, Geoffrey	1,000,00 SF	Check # 1195
STERLING, Glenn	60.00 SF	Check# 3867
SWETS, Fred	40.00 SF	Credit Card
TOBIN, William J III	50.00 SF	Check# 332
TROUP, Ed & Diana	100.00 SF	Check# 5298
TROUP Ed & Diana	100.00 SF	Check# 5535
WAGNER, Russell	40.00 SF	Check# 4015
WAGNER, Russell	750.00 SF	Check# 4135
WILKINSON, James B.	250.00SF	Check# 6744
WISE. Tom, Anne	125.00 SF	Check# 5634
WOOLMAN, Darlene	500.00 SF	Check# 1052
YOUMAN, Elwood W.	1,000.00 SF	Check# 1389
YOUMAN, Elwood W.	1,000.00 SF	Check# 1439
BAKER, James	100.00 GF	Check# 400
BARBER, Michael	500.00 GF	Check# 1044
BATES, Robert G.	10.00 GF	Check# 2600
BECK, Ralph	60.00 GF	Check# 4282
BIOLSI, William P.	10.00 GF	Check# 2317
BROMBAUGH, Dave	25.00 GF	Check# 1253
CARPENTER, William E.	250.00 GF	Check#10729
CATON, Louis	35.00 GF	Check# 2362
COOK, Michael H.	50.00 GF	Check# 12320
CRAWFORD, Daniel C.	10.00 GF	Check# 1607
DESETA, Louis	123.00 GF	Check# 5472
DIGAETANO, John	30.00 GF	Check# 376
DUNLAP	25.00 GF	Check# 2395
ESTES, Leo	10.00 GF	Check# 3001
FETTER, Charles H	10.00 GF	Check# 449
FISHBAUGH, Michael	50.00 GF	Check# 3932
GAROUTTE, Michael A.	20.00 GF	Check# 9519
FORD, Thomas	250.00 GF	Check# 2528
FARRELL, Brian	10.00 GF	Check# 1226
FETTER, Charles H.	10.00 GF	Check# 532
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 GF	Check# 020104
FOSTER, Gary	200.00 GF	Check# 418673
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 GF	Credit Card
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 GF	Credit Card
GEIGER, Bruce	250.00 GF	Credit Card
GRIGGS, Will E.	10.00 GF	Check# 3174
KATES, Bruce	250.00 GF	Check# 1218
KING, James	30.00 GF	Check# 541
KUBILUS, Robert	25.00 GF	Check# 2381
KUBLEY, Lawrence W.	400.00 GF	Check# 11554
LAIBINIS, John A. SR.	50.00 GF	Check# 6839
LALIBERTE, Daniel J.	20.00 GF	Check# 808
LEMIEUX, Lorne A.	20.00 GF	Check# 688
LEMKE, Charles T.	35.00 GF	Check# 1124
MAIN, Ronald	40.00 GF	Check# 2232
MANNING, Gerald E II	10.00 GF	Check# 3851
MERCADO, Saturno	10.00 GF	Check# 7550
MILLOCK, Carl	10.00 GF	Check# 4471
MORGAN, Robert I	100.00 GF	Check# 2575
MULLIGAN, Michael	300.00 GF	Check# 4044
MUSSARI, Derek	10.00 GF	Cash
OWENS, Mike	100.00 GF	Check# 9516
PETERSON, Roger	200.00 GF	Check# 2066
PETERSON, Roger	100.00 GF	Check# 1795
PROVENCIO, Ramon Jr.	100.00 GF	Check# 201
RIVEZZO, Michael F.	50.00 GF	Check# 1768
SADNESS, Gary W.	250.00 GF	Check# 5147
SEMKOW, Raymond	10.00 GF	Check# 1207
STERLING, Glenn	30.00 GF	Check# 3768
TALLENT, Wayne R.	50.00 GF	Check# 9446
TOURTE, Craig	500.00 GF	Check# 875
TOURTE, Craig	500.00 GF	Check# 887
TOURTE, Craig	300.00 GF	Check# 902'
TROUP, ED & Diana	100.00 GF	Check# 5297
TROUP, Ed & Diana	100.00 GF	Check# 5535
WHITTENBURGER, Allen R.	30.00 GF	Check# 4630
WILLIAMS, Robert E.	270.00 GF	Check # 1278
WIMBISH, Dennis T.	30.00 GF	Check# 1275
WONDERS, William K.	250.00 GF	Check# 4896
ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	250.00 GF	Check# 4596

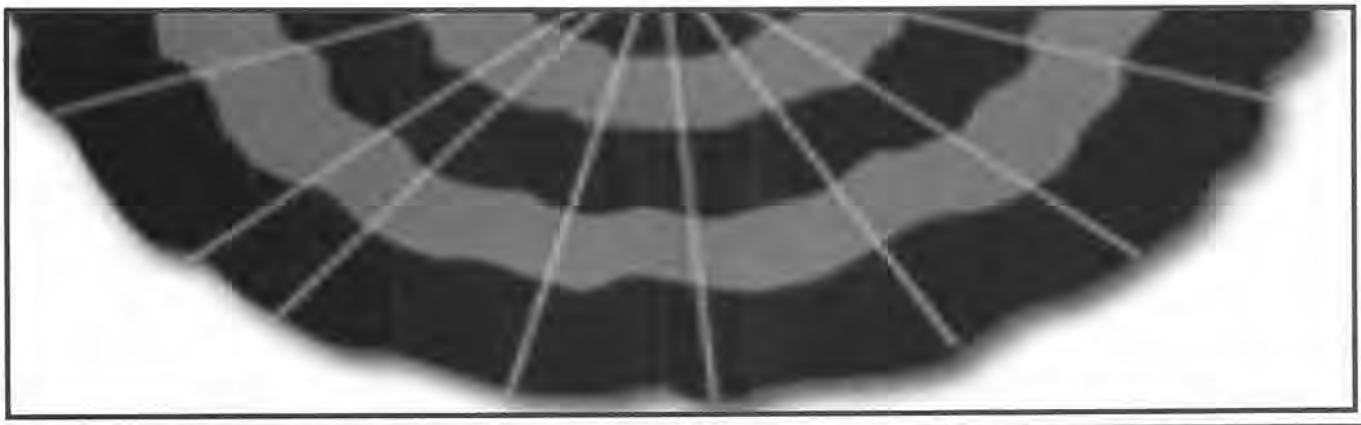

THOSE REMEMBERED

ALL who served at Lang Vei A-102 FOB-3
1LT Thomas A. Reich USMC VFMA-115, MAG 13 KIA
Capt Walter Egger USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
GSGT John J Grohman USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
1t Paul W. Bush USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
LCpl Stephen C Shannon USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
All Khe Sanh Veterans KIA
Sgt Larry Berneski USAF KIA 15 Oct 1967 C-130 Crash
Sgt James Neil Tycz USMC Recon KIA10 May 67
All 1/26 KIA KSCB
LCpl Vincent Santaniello USMC K 3/4 KIA 28 Mar 68
PFC Peder Armstrong USMC K 3/4 KIA 28 Mar 68
L/Cpl Louis Lowe USMC K 3/4 KIA 14 May 68
HM2 William Mercer USN M 3/4 KIA 15 Jun 68 NC
GY SGT Charles Perkins K CO 3/26 Hill 861, wounded in action 28 Mar 68, Died 17 May 1968 on USS Repose
CAPT Daniel Coonon USMC VMF(AW)115 KIA 10/8 68
PFC Randy Davis USMC Kilo 3/4 KIA Hill 861 04 Jun 68
LCpl Louis Lowe USMC Kilo CO 3/4 KIA Hill 689 14 May 68
All combat Engineers from 1st Platoon A CO & 1st Platoon C CO From The Hill Fights Thru The Siege
Reggie Schloerb USMC B CO 3RD Recon Passed Away
GYSGT Alexander Koppel USMC B CO 1/9, WPNS PLT Passed Away 13 Dec 2005
Jerry Elliott MIA 21 Jan 68 282ND AHC Black Cats
Hans Runge USMC my good German Friend D CO 1/26
Gilbert Wall "Chief" USMC B CO 1/26 F/O
PFC John Richard Meuse USMC E CO 2/3 KIA 03 May 67
Francis Foiles USMC M CO 3/4 3RD PLT KIA 27 May68
Lee Edward Himebaugh USMC M CO 3/4 3RD PLT KIA 27 May 68
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC A HQ/13 KIA 09 MAR 68
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68
Remembering All "Bastard Bravo" Marines and their families

REMEMBERED BY

Lawrence Cooper CO C 5th Special Forces
Charles Fetter MAG-11 H&MS-11 VMF 314 AW
Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Louis Deseta Subscriber
LOUIS CATON 50TH TASS "RED DEVILS" TASK FORCE ALPHA
Sharon Pelon
SgtMaj James Morris H&S CO 1/26 81MM Platoon
John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
Barbara Eddowes Love & Miss You so Much after all these years
Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11, MAG-11, 1ST MAW
Daniel King Kilo CO 3/4
Daniel King Kilo CO 3/4

Michael F. Barber C CO 3RD ENGINEERS

Albert Roberts Jr "TOBY" B Co 3rd Recon
Michael Koppel Son

Donna Elliott Sister
Peter Mudrinch B CO 1/26 81MM
Peter Mudrinch B CO 1/26 81MM
Frederick Monahan E CO 2/3
Hugh Liverman Mike Co 3/4 3RD PLT
Hugh Liverman Mike Co 3/4 3RD PLT

Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
William E. Carpenter Bravo Btry 1/13

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/Governing Year AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman 52ND
6050 52ND St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms. Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the Red Clay" Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied.

Achievement Award Levels are:

The CoI. David E. Lownds Award - for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award - for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The CoI. William H. Dabney Award - for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited Institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY* 1 of the school year applied for.** *** **(This is an important, NEW change to previous** years)***

6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System !Maximum of 110 regular points or 125 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max =40 points max. (Please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

A GPA of 4.0 x 10 =40 points or a GPA of 3.0 x 10 =30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max =30 points total

Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Extra Curricular =10 points max.
Volunteer services =10 points max.
Leadership positions = 10 points max.
Employment = 10 points max

. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min. to 400 words max) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max.

Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments. Please review the six suggested adjectives below, select one or more that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

TENACIOUS- FAITHFUL -UNDAUNTED- STEADFAST- RESOLUTE- INNOVATIVE

.d. Bonus Points

10 bonus points for being a military veteran

5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application _____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name:Last _____ **First** _____ **MI** _____

Address: Street _____ **City** _____ **State** ___ **Zip** _____

Home phone: _____ **E-mail address:** _____

Applicant Birthdate: _____

.2 KSV Sponsor Information : (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran Inc. Regular or Life Member)

Name: Last, _____ **First** _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Branch of Service _____

Unit served at Khe Sanh _____ **Dates served there** _____

3. School Information: (School to be attending)

School Name: _____

School Address: Street, _____ **City** _____

State _____ **Zip Code** _____

School Phone number: _____

Curriculum/intended course of study _____

School Year To be Funded _____

. Applicant Personal History (Be Specific)

A. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Athletics, Publishing, Music, Art, Scouting, Communications, Academic Honors & Prizes, etc)

B. VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES:: (community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.) -

C. LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HELD IN A&B (Capacity, Class Officer, Committee Chairperson, etc)

D. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY– FULL & PART TIME Include Military Service If Applicable)

. MAILING PACKET: (Due May 1ST)

Enclose THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS

***A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,**
***A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,**
***A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min. to 400 WORDS max.) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.**

!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!

I, SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

_____ _____

Signature Of Applicant **Actual Signature of Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent**

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY* 1ST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR APPLIED

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc Scholarship Committee

_____

Tom Eichler, President, Khe Sanh Veterans

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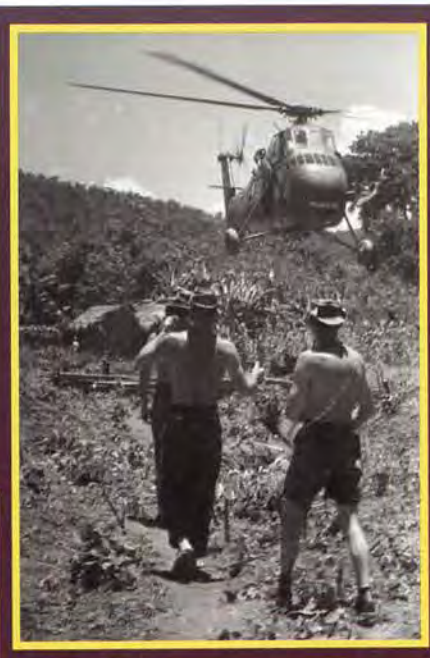

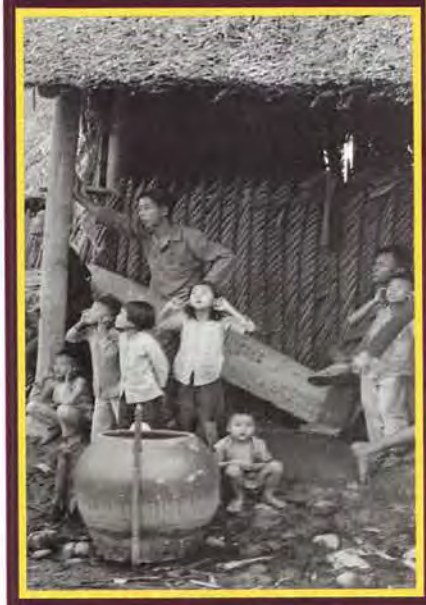









A FEW OF CATHERINE LEROY'S PHOTOGRAPHS DURING THE WAR IN VIETNAM













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FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE, THE B.O.C. CLASS 5-67 50TH ANNIVERSARY

KHE SANH VETERANS ANNUAL REUNION CLEVELAND, OHIO 2017

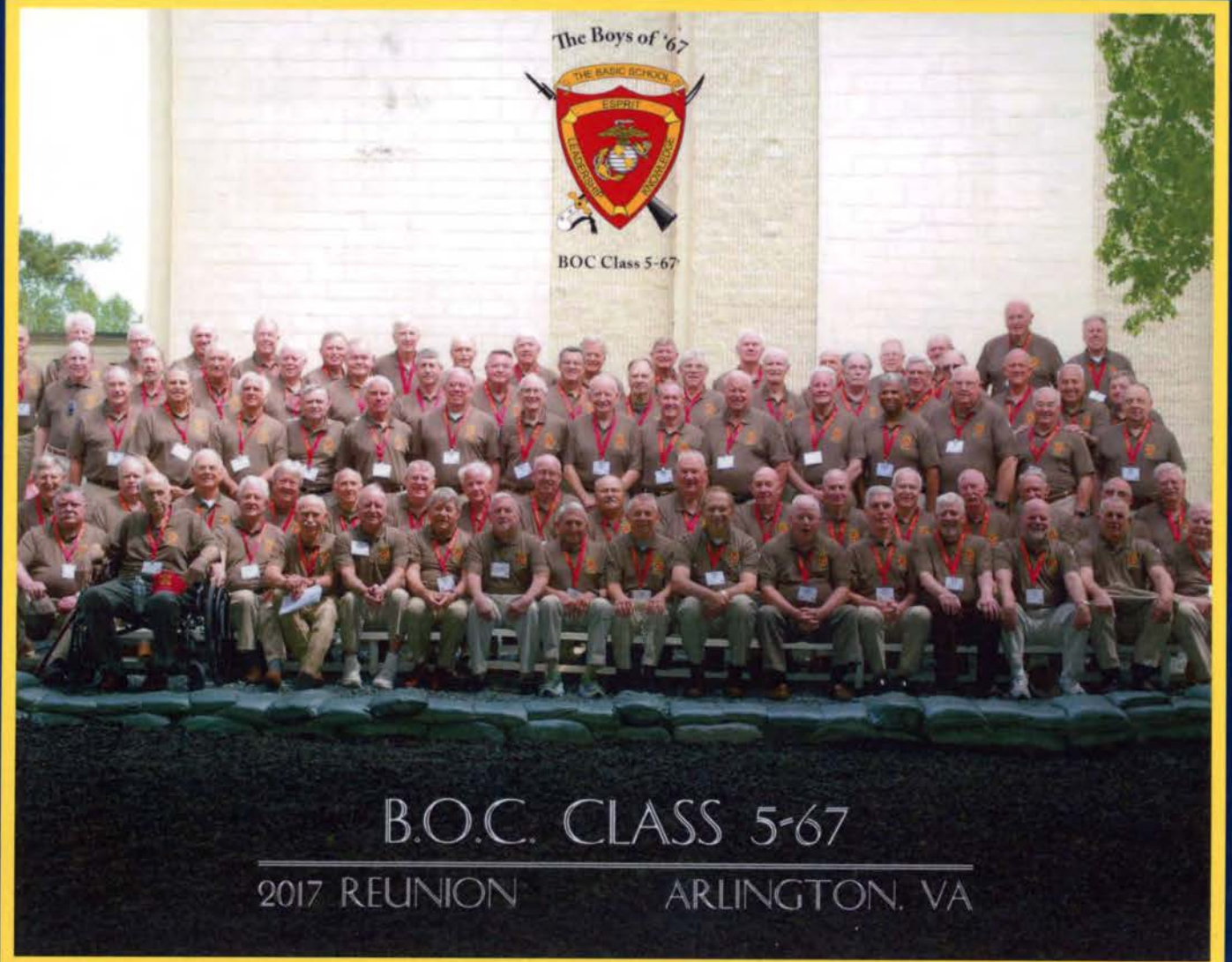

KHE SANH VETERAN OFFICERS FROM BASIC OFFICERS COURSE CLASS 5-67 (BOC 5-67) ATTENDED THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION IN WASHINGTON , DC ON MAY 3RD– 6TH 2017. STORY ON PAGES 41-42



MIKE SOMMERS PRESENTING COIN TO GEN MATTIS



HONORED DINNER GUEST "CHESTY"



GROUP PICTURE MGEN RAY SMITH (SITTING CENTER) CO A 1/1 DURING BREAKOUT & MGEN LES PALM (STANDING 2ND FROM LEFT)



MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR CLASS BOC 5-67



8TH & I SUNSET PARADE



GROUP PICTURE WITH GEN MATTIS

THE "LUCKY ONES"
Fifty years after Vietnam's bloodiest Battles, veterans gather for what could be a final reunion
Story by Michael E. Ruane
Published 29 April 2017
The Washington Post

Kathryn Barents got home from work that fall night in 1967 to find somber family members gathered in the living room, and her shaken father, Henry, waiting to speak with her. She feared this was about her husband, Paul, a Marine Corps lieutenant in Vietnam.

They had been married only a few months, and his class had just completed the Basic Officer Course in Quantico, Va., in August. Ten from the class had already been killed, and she figured that Paul, 23, had now been added to the list. Her father brought her into the kitchen, and they sat down. Paul had been grievously wounded in a friendly-fire incident. His legs had been shattered, and would later be amputated. But she was lucky. He was alive.

This week, Paul Barents, now 72, and Kathryn Barents, 71, of Easton, Md., will join scores of Marine Corps veterans and their spouses outside Washington for a 50-year reunion of Paul's graduating class from the Marines' Basic School for officers.

There were 516 of them in class 5-67, most college graduates, like Paul, in their early 20s who trained as infantry platoon leaders and were sent almost directly to the war, which was reaching its height. Dozens of Americans were being killed every day, and the toll was especially great for officers.

The men of 5-67 were the sons and grandsons of immigrants, and the sons of Marines who had fought in World War II. There was a college wrestling star, and a baseball player with a shot at the major leagues. Most of them were single. But a few were married, and some had children. One, 2nd Lt. Morrell J. Crary, was killed in action five days after his daughter was born back home in Salem, Ore.

Some lasted only a few days in Vietnam — two were killed Oct. 14, 1967, the day after they arrived, according to a classmate who knew them.

Others made it a few months before they were killed or wounded. One man was spared death when a buddy persuaded him to skip a flight on a transport plane that was shot down, killing everyone on board.

Thirty-nine from the class perished, in battles around well-known places like Khe Sanh, and Con Thien, and at forgotten locales like Thon Tham Ke, "Bastards Bridge" and "Antenna Valley."

Twelve would receive posthumous medals for courage — four got Navy Crosses, three Silver Stars, four Bronze Stars and one a Distinguished Flying Cross.

One classmate would be missing in action for 36 years, until his body was located in 2004. The remains of two others have never been found.

But many, like Barents, have moved beyond the lifelong physical scars from the war to enjoy successful and productive lives.

They are in their 70s now, with white hair and grandchildren. A few still have mementos of the war — faded telegrams sent to their families, a memorial card from a friend's funeral, snapshots of themselves in Vietnam.

[Stories of grief, love and penance live among what's left at the Vietnam Wall]

This year and next year, when most of the men served, mark the 50th anniversaries of some of the bloodiest months of the Vietnam War. The year 1967 saw the deaths of 11,400 Americans, and 1968 claimed 16,900, the worst yearly toll of the war, according to the National Archives.

The two years account for almost half the 58,000 names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, which honors those killed by the war. Since the war, the men of class 5-67 haven't met often. This is only their fifth get-together. They went separate ways after the conflict and reunited for the first time in 2008.

Now 50 years have passed. Many survivors from the class have died. Some are too sick to attend the reunion. And while their four days together will be a

time of comradeship and remembrance, one of them said, "we might not do this again."



Paul Barents, 72, was a second lieutenant serving in Vietnam when he was injured in a friendly-fire incident. His legs had been shattered, and would later be amputated. (Bill O'Leary/The Washington Post)

Second Lt. Paul Barents was setting up a night ambush south of the Vietnamese town Phu Bai when he got a radio call from his captain to be alert for an attack from across a river behind him. He passed the warning to his front-line Marines, and in a crouch began making his way through the underbrush to warn men he had posted in the rear. It was Dec. 7, 1967. Barents had been in Vietnam about 10 weeks and had yet to see much action. He and Kathryn, then 22, had been a married only a short time.

They were both from Massachusetts, she via northern New Jersey. They had met while they were college students, working in the kitchen of a dining hall at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. They had hit it off, and were married June 17 at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in South Orange, N.J. He wore his dress white uniform. She was in a white wedding gown.

He had joined the Marine Corps right out of college. He believed it was an outfit with purpose, and he went to Vietnam "thinking we were doing a noble thing," he said. "I really did." Doubt emerged mainly in hindsight, he said.



Paul and Kathryn Barents, in a copy of a photo taken on their wedding day, will be attending a reunion with the men of class 5-67. (Bill O'Leary/The Washington Post)

He had been hesitant about marriage because he knew he would be going to the war. But Kathryn told him: "I'd rather be your wife for three months than not all."

"Starting in 1965, '66, we became more aware of the losses over there," she said. "So by the time the class of '67 went, we knew the fatalities were going to be pretty high."

"I was prepared for that," she said.

(Both of Paul's roommates at the basic school and a fellow who lived across the hall were killed in action.) The couple had lived in Woodbridge, Va., while he was at Quantico, and three months after their wedding they were saying goodbye at an airport in New York. She drove their 1963 Pontiac back to her parents' home in Andover, Mass., to await his return.

In Vietnam, he wrote Kathryn regularly and discussed, among other things, whether she should get her hair cut before they met in Hawaii when he had R&R."I wouldn't mind if you cut your hair for Hawaii," he wrote her nine days before he was wounded. "The only thing that has to be there is

you." In another letter, he told her he had cut back on his smoking, and closed with, "Well, beautiful, I guess I better go."

Now, as he crept back to his men in the darkness, a new Marine in the platoon mistook him for an enemy soldier and opened fire with an M-16 rifle. Barents had always trained his men to aim low at night, so as not to miss high, and the bullets ripped into his legs. The slugs broke his right thigh bone, both bones in his lower left leg and lacerated critical arteries in both legs.

[Sculpture left by widow at Vietnam Wall shows the tragic effects of war]

Barents collapsed, and hollered "Cease fire!" He asked his men to take off his boots, and someone gave him some shots of morphine. Medevac was called. He was placed on a poncho and hoisted into the helicopter. Before it left, one of his men said, "You were a damn good skipper, sir, a damn good skipper."

Barents was flown to Phu Bai, where he told a superior not to blame the man who shot him. "It was my fault," he said. "I should have had some kind of better communications."

On Dec. 18, his right leg was amputated above the knee, and on Dec. 29, his left leg was amputated below the knee. The left leg failed to heal and was later amputated above the knee. Barents's part of the war was over.

He regretted being unable to complete his tour and his service. Plus, he thought: "How the hell am I going to make a living?"

And he wondered how Kathryn would react. "I'm not the guy [she] married," he said.

Back home, the commandant of the Marines had sent her a telegram reporting that Paul's condition was "serious with his prognosis fair." "Okay," she said she thought. "We knew this going in. . . . Just bring him home. We'll be fine." But her young husband of a few months now had amputated legs.

"It was a game changer," she said in a recent interview in their Maryland home. "It changed all our hopes and futures and plans and everything that we dreamed of."

She wondered whether she would still be attracted to him. He was crippled. There would be no more dancing, no more walks on the beach, she said.
Some people said to her: Wouldn't it be better if he had just been killed?

"No," she replied. "I'm one of the lucky ones. He's coming home."



Jack Callanan, sits in his Boston home in April. Callanan was reporting over the radio that he and his men had just seized part of the enemy hamlet of Lam Xuan when he was injured. (Katye Martens Brier for The Washington Post)

Paul was eventually moved to the Philadelphia Naval Hospital, where he would stay for 14 months. They were reunited there in early January 1968.He was in bed when she walked in. She remembers that he weighed about 75 pounds. He remembers that she looked terrific.

At dusk on Jan. 28, 1968, Jack Callanan, call sign "Gold Lemon 1," was studying a map and reporting over the radio that he and his men had just seized part of the enemy hamlet of Lam Xuan. He had collected documents from dead enemy soldiers and crammed them into his pockets for intelligence purposes. Suddenly his radioman yelled, "Grenade!"

Callanan never saw the North Vietnamese soldier who had popped out of a spider hole, and never saw the crude grenade he threw.

But he heard the "kerplunk" when it hit the ground between him and the radioman. It exploded with a bang, flipped him on his back and drove hot shrapnel into his abdomen, pelvis and left side.



Jack Callanan's photo is shown next to medals earned during his time in the Marines, including a Purple Heart, left. (Katye Martens Brier for The Washington Post)

Callanan, 23, was a second lieutenant from the Throgs Neck section of the Bronx in New York City, and one of the five children of parents who had been born in Ireland.

He was a math whiz, with an electrical engineering degree from Manhattan College. After leaving the Marines' Basic School he had gone to the Army's Fort Sill, Okla., for 12 weeks of artillery training.

Technically he was a forward observer, a spotter who would call in artillery fire when it was needed. But the fighting in Vietnam often came in such close quarters that it was too dangerous to ask for an artillery attack, lest Americans be hit.

He was stationed with other Marines aboard the USS Valley Forge, an amphibious assault ship just off northern South Vietnam, and had been involved in previous operations, most notably in late December 1967, near a village called Thon Tham Khe. It was part of Operation Badger Tooth, and aimed to find a large contingent of enemy soldiers reported to be in the area.

The Marines had stumbled on a superbly camouflaged North Vietnamese bunker fortress. We took it real bad," Callanan said in a recent interview in his home in Boston. Forty-eight Marines were killed. They included his Quantico classmate, 2nd Lt. George M. Broz, who had been in Vietnam a month.

Now, a month later, during the fight for Lam Xuan just south of the demilitarized zone dividing South and North Vietnam, he was leading a squad of Marines after another lieutenant had been killed by mortar fire.

"It was another one of these fortified villages," he recalled. "We had to cross some rice paddies, and they had these dikes. We were kind of pinned down on this dike . . . not quite 50 meters from the periphery of the hamlet."

"Anybody that stuck their head up over that dike got a bullet between the eyes," he said.

He maneuvered his men, took some foxholes in the village, and then seized the enemy command and control bunker. He was reporting in when the radioman yelled. Callanan didn't think he was that badly injured, although he was bleeding internally and a wing of his pelvis had been blown off.

"I was very much at ease," he remembered. He was wearing a religious medal his mother had given him. "Strangely enough, you're at peace," he said. "A calm comes over you. You basically say, you know, 'Here it is.' "

[Army unit's Vietnam heroism finally recognized]

Medevac was called in under fire, and Callanan was placed on the helicopter beside the body of the officer he had replaced, 1st Lt. Kenneth W. Smith.

Smith, whom Callanan knew only as "Smitty," was one of eight Marines reportedly killed there that day.

Callanan underwent surgery — the first of many

over the years — to have shrapnel removed and internal damage repaired, and shipped back to St. Albans Naval Hospital in New York City, where he would be for almost six months.

When a Marine officer came to his parents' house on Milton Place with the news of his wounds, his mother, Delia, fainted.

Later, she would keep pieces of shrapnel removed from her son's body in a teacup in a china cabinet at home.

Fighting at Khe Sanh, the Vietnam war's most famous siege

These are excerpts from a 1968 documentary film from Department of Defense outlining the timeline in the Battle of Khe Sanh.

A few weeks after he was wounded, while he was still in the Naval Hospital, he got word that his buddy and Quantico classmate, 2nd Lt. Ferdinando DiStefano Jr., 25, had been killed in a mortar attack near Khe Sanh.

DiStefano was the only child of Italian immigrants. He spoke several languages and wanted to go to language school. But he wound up in the infantry. The two men would travel together on visits home from Quantico, and Callanan had gone to DiStefano's to meet his parents.

DiStefano's mother, Antonietta, spoke little English. His father ran a grocery store on Central Avenue in Brooklyn's Bushwick neighborhood, according to a news account.

When Callanan was informed of DiStefano's death, he agreed to be an honorary pallbearer at the funeral. He got a hospital pass and attended the viewing. He introduced himself to DiStefano's parents, and his mother remembered him. He recalled her grief. "It was something that was searing," he said.

The funeral Mass was packed, he recalled. Callanan and other Marines walked behind the casket in dress blue uniforms. He also attended the burial. "It was a gray, cold, damp day," he said. "We had a bugler. . . When the casket was lowered into the ground, his mother [was] screaming."



George Chaconas, 72, poses for a portrait with boots he wore in Vietnam. Chaconas was spared death when a friend persuaded him to skip a flight on a transport plane that was shot down. (Matt McClain/The Washington

Fifty years later, he still has the laminated memorial card from the funeral. It bears a picture of DiStefano in his Marine Corps uniform.

"O Gentlest heart of Jesus," the prayer on the card says. "Send thy angels to conduct thy departed servant to a place of refreshment, light and peace. Amen."

Second Lt. George Chaconas had to get back to the Khe Sanh Combat Base. His week-long break from the grinding siege there was over. His R&R in Bangkok, away from the mud and the trenches and the pounding of enemy artillery, had been wonderful. But now it was time to return. He had made it as far as Da Nang, and had signed up for a flight that would make the dicey hop from Da Nang to Phu Bai to Khe Sanh, in what was then northwestern South Vietnam.

The C-123 cargo plane was scheduled to leave March 6, according to historian Gregg Jones. It would eventually carry, along with its crew, 43 Marines. Also onboard would be a young freelance photographer working for Newsweek magazine, Robert J. Ellison.

Ellison, 23, had been at Khe Sanh 10 days earlier and had taken a stunning series of photographs that

Newsweek would run March 18 in a spread called "The Agony of Khe Sanh."

One picture showed Marines dragging from the bush the body of 2nd Lt. Donald Jacques, 20, one of Chaconas's 5-67 classmates, who had just been killed. Now Ellison was heading back to the base.



George Chaconas's dog tags from his service in the Marines. (Matt McClain/The Washington Post)

Chaconas, 23, the grandson of Greek immigrants, had grown up in Northwest Washington and graduated from the University of Maryland. He had been at Khe Sanh before the siege began in January and would be peppered there by shrapnel from a North Vietnamese artillery or mortar round. Aside from brief leave, he would be present for the entire 77-day siege.

It was a subterranean experience lived in trenches and dugouts often filled with muddy water and populated with huge rats, he recalled in recent interviews in his Washington, D.C., home and via email. The canned rations were tasteless, and the possibility of death always present. Thousands of artillery shells and mortar rounds fell on the combat base from enemy positions in the surrounding highlands. Inside the base, where about 6,000 Marines were besieged by 20,000 to 40,000 enemy soldiers, a fellow officer gave Chaconas a copy of Bernard Fall's book, "Hell in a Very Small Place."

The historical account, which he still has, tells of the siege and fall of the French bastion of Dien Bien Phu to Vietnamese communists in 1954. "You gotta read this," Chaconas remembered his friend saying. Chaconas did, underlining parts in pink marker. " 'Whoa, this is exactly what's going on right now here at Khe Sanh,' " he thought at the time.

Nearly 50 years later, he said, "I'm sitting there in my hole, reading this thing . . . thinking, 'Holy cow!' "

Could Khe Sanh be another Dien Bien Phu?

No matter, Chaconas had to get back. In Da Nang he had met up with his Washington boyhood friend Dick Wooster. Chaconas and Wooster had gone to elementary and middle school together. Both had joined the Marines, and both were, for the moment, in Da Nang. They hung out, drank beer, and Wooster urged Chaconas to stay the night and skip his flight to Khe Sanh. He could catch one later. Chaconas agreed.

The next day, when he signed up for the trip to Khe Sanh, a flight coordinator did a double take: Lieutenant Chaconas? Weren't you on the airplane yesterday?" The C-123 had been shot down. Everyone onboard was killed. Officials were notifying families of those whose names had been on the doomed flight's passenger list.

"My name was on that list," Chaconas said. "They were filling out the paperwork to tell my parents that I had been killed in Vietnam."

The reunion of class 5-67 began May 3 and ran through May 6.

Jack Callanan, who uses a walker and wheelchair because of complications from his wounds, plans to fly in from Boston. Paul and Kathryn Barents plan to pick him up at the airport and give him a lift to the headquarters hotel in Arlington, Va.

George Chaconas, who is scheduled to lead a reunion tour of Washington, is putting up a couple of the visitors at his home. Others are expected from Ne-

vada, Vermont, New York, North Carolina, California, Texas and elsewhere. They won't gather to tell war stories, said Tony Latorre, 76, who as a young Marine captain helped train class 5-67 a half-century ago and is also attending.

They assemble because "they all shared probably, with the exception of a marriage or the birth of a kid, the most unique experience . . . [of] their entire lives," he said. "They just revel in being . . . [in] standing there," he said, in knowing "that you survived it."

Magda Jean-Louis contributed to this report.

Killed in action

A list of 39 men from the Marine Corps' Quantico, Va., Basic Officer Course class of August 1967 who were killed during the Vietnam War.



2Lt. Eric Craig Egge, 22, of Hopkins, Minn., killed Oct. 14, 1967, at a place that became known as "Bastards Bridge," near Con Thien, in a bitter nighttime battle. He was one of 21 Marines killed there that day.



1Lt. Charles Yaghoobian Jr. , 23, of Pawtucket, R.I., killed Oct. 14, 1967, at the battle of "Bastards Bridge," near Con Thien.



2nd Lt. Larry Dean Bleeker, 24, of Ames, Iowa, killed by a sniper on Oct. 26, 1967, near Gio Son. He had sent tape recordings home to his family. A Christian, he had told his parents before he left for Vietnam: "Mom, Dad, I want you to know . . . I'm ready to live or] die . . . for the glory of Jesus Christ," a local newspaper reported.



2Lt. Leo Richard Schoff, 23, of West Homestead, Pa., killed Nov. 1, 1967, near Thon Bai An a month after his arrival in Vietnam. He was engaged to be married upon his return.



2Lt. Morrell Joseph Crary, 24, of Salem, Ore., killed Nov. 1, 1967, at Thon Bai An, a month after visiting home on leave. His wife, Jeanne, had given birth to their daughter, Shannon, five days before his death, and he had talked to her on the phone about the baby. Crary was posthumously given the Bronze Star medal for gallantry



2Lt. Robert Warren Miller Jr., 24, of San Antonio, killed Nov. 6, 1967, at Ap Bon in "Antenna Valley" during a failed attack in which he and his men were caught by enemy machine gun and mortar fire. He was one of 16 Marines killed



2Lt. Dale Russell Loudin, 22, of Atwater, Ohio, killed Nov. 7, 1967, in "Antenna Valley" in Quang Nam. His men carried his body all night to a place where it could be evacuated. "That night we took great care of a great man we cared about," a buddy remembered.



2Lt. Lloyd Chisolm Runnels Jr., 24, of San Diego, killed Nov. 23, 1967, south of Quang Tri airfield, when a land mine exploded, claiming him and two other Marines.



2Lt. Sam Dixon Warlick, 22, of Raeford, N.C., killed Nov. 30, 1967 at Gia Binh. He was one of 16 Marines killed there that day.



2Lt. Richard William Vaughn, 23, of San Luis Obispo, Calif., killed Dec. 6, 1967, in Thua Thien province by mortar fire "fragmentation wounds to the head and body," the telegram to his family said. He was survived by his parents and six sisters.



2Lt. George Michael Broz, 23, of Stanwood, Wash., killed Dec. 27, 1967, at the fierce but little known battle of Thon Tham Khe. More than 40 Marines were killed, 26 of them from Broz's Lima Company. Broz had been in Vietnam just over a month. He had been married one year and 18 day



2Lt. Thomas Drew Brindley, 24, of St. Paul, Minn., killed Jan. 20, 1968, during a firefight on a hill near Khe Sanh. He was given the Navy Cross posthumously "for his inspiring leadership and unyielding devotion to duty in the face of overwhelming odds."



2Lt. Michael Howard Thomas, 25, of Pawnee, Okla., killed Jan. 20, 1968, in the same battle near Khe Sanh as 2nd Lt. Thomas Brindley. Thomas was also given the Navy Cross posthumously for carrying wounded Marines to safety under fire.



2Lt. John Robert Burns Jr., 24, of St. Louis, killed Jan. 27, 1968, at the battle of "Mike's Hill," near Cam Lo, where 21 men died. He was posthumously given the Silver Star for courage displayed in a battle nine days earlier.



2Lt. Robert Edward Wright , 22, of Sacramento, killed Feb. 9, 1968, in Thua Thien in a mortar and small-arms attack.



2Lt. William Robert "Bill" Reese, 24, of Abeline, Tex., killed Feb. 14, 1968, near Ca Lu in fighting at "Valentine's Ridge." He was among six killed by a direct hit from an enemy mortar. Reese had just graduated from Abilene Christian University, where he had been a band drum major.



2Lt. Ferdinando DiStefano Jr., 25, of Brooklyn, killed Feb. 24, 1968, near Khe Sanh in a mortar attack. He spoke four languages and was the only child of Sicilian immigrants. His father ran a grocery store, and died several months later. His mother, Antonietta, returned to Sicily, but regularly ordered flowers for her son's grave. In 1980, DiStefano's death was remembered by newspaper columnist Jimmy Breslin.



2LT Donald Jacques, 20, of Rochester, N.Y., killed Feb. 25, 1968, in an ambush near Khe Sanh. A news photographer snapped a picture of his men dragging his body out of the underbrush. Jacques was among 26 killed that day. The night before, he wrote home: "We're just sitting here waiting for all hell to break loose." hotographer, Robert Ellison, 23, whose dramatic photo would run in Newsweek, was killed a week later when a plane he was in was shot down at Khe Sanh.



2Lt. Michael James Casey,, 23, of Dalton, Mass., killed March 18, 1968 in Thua Thien. He was posthumously given the Navy Cross for leading his men and carrying wounded to safety.



2Lt. Lawrence Ryland Koman, 23, of Aliquippa, Pa., killed March 30, 1968 at Khe Sanh in a mortar attack. He had attended the University of Cincinnati on a football scholarship and had written his parents that he was about to be promoted.



2Lt. Donald John Matocha, 23, of Smithville, Tex., killed April 5, 1968, on a reconnaissance patrol near Dong Ma Mountain. In the wake of the firefight, his body was not recovered. It remained lost for 36 years, until 2004, when a former North Vietnamese soldier who had buried him was located.



1Lt. Maxie Raymond Williams Jr., 22, of Waverly, Tenn., killed April 10, 1968, in Quang Tri province. His father, a Marine colonel, had served in Vietnam before him, and had been given the Navy Cross for gallantry at the World War II Battle of Tarawa.



1Lt. Benjamin Stephen Fordham, 24, of Monterrey, Mexico, killed April 15, 1968, in a mortar barrage on Hill 800 near Khe Sanh. He wrote to friends about the pain of losing his men and urged buddies back home to avoid going to Vietnam.



1Lt. Michael Pym Hayden, 24, of Detroit, killed April 16, 1968, at Hill 689 near Khe Sanh. Forty-one Marines were killed in the fierce battle, including 12 from Hayden's Alpha company.



1Lt. Daniel Joseph Jaskiewicz, 25, of Grand Rapids, Mich., killed April 16, 1968, in Quang Tri. He was survived by his wife, Kathleen.



1Lt. Michael Jay Warren , 24, of Moline, Ill., killed April 25, 1968, north of Quang Tri in a helicopter crash. The helicopter's tail rotor struck a forklift or crane while landing on a night medevac mission. The aircraft crashed and burned. Warren and another Marine were killed. Three others escaped.



1Lt. Allen Wesley Courtney Jr., 22, of Houston, killed May 17, 1968, by a mine near Khe Sanh. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star for heroism in a battle five months earlier



1Lt. Victor David Westphall III , 28, of Albuquerque, killed May 22, 1968, at An Dinh in a battle that claimed 25 Marines, 12 from his company. After his death his parents and brother built a memorial to him in rural Angel Fire, N.M., among the earliest such tributes to the fallen veterans of Vietnam.



1Lt James Warren Cockrell Jr., 23, of Macon, Miss., killed May 26, 1968, by an "explosive device" while on a reconnaissance mission in Quang Tri province.



1Lt. John Harvey Carson, 21, of San Antonio, died June 5, 1968, near Cam Lo when his jeep struck a mine, killing him and his driver. He was posthumously given the Bronze Star for heroic action two months earlier at Hill 190, in Quang Tri, on a mission to recover the body of a Marine killed.



1 Lt. Joseph Timothy Campbell, 24, of Stoneham, Mass., killed June 15, 1968, near An Hoa by a mortar. He was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for helping evacuate wounded comrades from battle that day, even as he was dying from wounds he had received



1Lt. Robert Gerald Dodson, 25, from Bloomfield, N.J., killed in battle on July 7, 1968, at Hill 689 near Khe Sanh. He was posthumously given the Silver Star for gallantry in an assault he directed and continued, despite being wounded.



1Lt. Dennis Dee Andrews, 24, of Pittsburgh, reportedly killed by a mine on July 14, 1968, west of An Hoa. He was posthumously given the Bronze Star for actions two months earlier when he helped rescue those on board a helicopter that had been shot down. Before joining the Marines, he had been a champion wrestler at Allegheny College.



1Lt. Richard Eli Latimer Jr., 24, of Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., killed Dec. 2, 1968, when the tiny "Bird Dog" observation plane he was in was shot down near Quang Tri.



1Lt. Brian Lee Webber, 24, of Albuquerque, killed in battle Dec. 8, 1968, near Da Nang. He was wounded shortly after arriving in Vietnam, but recovered and returned to duty. He was posthumously given the Silver Star for heroism in fighting on Dec. 4 and 8.



1Lt. Jan Houston Nelson, 25, of Clearwater, Fla., killed April 11, 1970, when the A-4E attack jet he was flying was shot down in Quang Tri province. His body has never been recovered.



1Lt. Kurt Michael Wilbrecht, 26, of St. Paul, Minn., killed June 7, 1970, when his F-4 jet was shot down in Quang Nam province. His radio intercept officer ejected both of them as the aircraft went down. The radio intercept officer survived, but Wilbrecht's body was never recovered.



Capt. Benjamin Lee Tebault, 29, of Portland, Ore., killed June 4, 1972, when his F-4 jet was shot down near Phu Cat, in Binh Dinh province. He was on his second tour of Vietnam. In 1970, he had been given the Distinguished Flying Cross for attacking enemy positions during a rescue mission, despite heavy antiaircraft fire.



1Lt. John David Lawson, 26, of Topsfield, Mass., killed Sept. 1, 1970, when his A-4 attack jet was shot down on a bombing run near Ba Log. The jet, carrying napalm, was hit by antiaircraft fire and blew up.

OBIT

LT COL WALLACE E. FOGO , USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, X/O 3/26



Wallace "Wally" Edward Fogo, 89, died Saturday, April 15, 2017, at his home at Kendal at Lexington. With family at his side, he died due to complications of dementia and cancer.

Born in East Liverpool, Ohio, on Aug. 16, 1927, the family was living in Wellsville, Ohio, where Wally spent much of his childhood. The family then moved to the Shaker Heights area of Cleveland where Wally graduated from Shaw High school. He graduated from the University of Maryland with a bachelor of arts and also from the Armed Forces Staff College.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years Dorothy "Dot" Fogo; his children, Paul B. Fogo (wife Elizabeth); grandson Matthew Wallace Fogo; and son Matthew H. Fogo (husband Kevin M. Manning). He is also survived by many nieces and nephews, a brother-in-law and sister-in-law, and many friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, a younger sister and a younger brother.

At the age of 17 he asked his mother to sign papers allowing him to join the Marine Corps. She signed and off he went, beginning what would be a 32-year career in the Marines Corps. Wally's life took him to many interesting places including China, Brazil, Japan, Hawaii, Korea, Vietnam, and many of the duty stations known well by all Marines.

Wally entered the Marine Corps at the age of 17 in February of 1945. His first duty station was in China. In China, he fought back the Japanese in an effort to keep them from destroying bridges and railroads. His assignment was to guard the railroads. Post China, the Marine Corps took him to Brazil where he was attached to the US Embassy. During his time in Brazil, Wally acted in plays and adopted a Doberman named Fritz. Fritz was flown home stateside courtesy of a ride in the cockpit of a military transport plane and lived with Wally's parents for the remainder of his life. Post Brazil, Wally attended additional military training and schooling, between Marine Corps Headquarters and Camp LeJeune, N.C. He was then deployed to Korea, his second war, alongside his first cousin. In the Korean War, Wally received a battlefield commission.

Wally met the love of his life, Dot, in 1955 at a good friend's wedding. Wally was the best man for his fellow Marine and Dot, a registered nurse at the time, was maid-of-honor to her good friend and nursing school classmate. This was Wally and Dot's first meeting, but fate was sealed. Wally courted Dot for five years and they married on Dec. 5, 1959. At the time, Wally was stationed on an aircraft carrier, the USS WASP, in Boston harbor. He was the Commanding Office of the Marine Corps detachment on the ship.

After serving on the WASP, Wally and Dot relocated to Washington, D.C., where Wally was stationed at Marine Corp Headquarters. During this time, the couple's son's Paul and Matt were born. After time in DC, the family moved to Camp LeJeune, N.C., then to Quantico, and then to Camp Pendleton, Calif. At that time, Wally was sent to battle again, this time in Vietnam. He served with the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines, 5th Division as the Operations Officer to Vietnam fighting in Denang, Phu Bai, and Khe Sanh. Marines say that the most intense fighting of the Vietnam War occurred at Khe Sanh. He loved serving his country and was well decorated.

His decorations included the Bronze Star with Valor (saving fellow soldiers by pulling them from a overturned jeep under enemy fire), Joint Services Commendation Medal, Purple Heart Medal (for wounds suffered in Vietnam), Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unity Commendation, China Service Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, Victory Medal World War 11, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, Korean Presidential Unit Citation, Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation Gallantry Cross Color with Palm, Republic of Vietnam Campaign with Device, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Gold Star, Combat Action Ribbon, Letter of Appreciation – Second Award. Most of his time at war, he was on the front lines and he never asked the men he commanded to do anything he would not do himself. Needless to say,

Wally served his country proudly. But, he never once bragged about his esteemed service. In fact, his family had to actually research some of this history as Wally rarely spoke of his time spent fighting for his country. His career took him into three conflicts, serving in WW11, Korea, and Vietnam. He loved the Marines. In 1977, after 32 years, he retired as a Lt. Colonel.

Life after the military opened up another interesting and rewarding chapter for Wally. After his retirement, he and his family moved to Lexington. He loved Lexington. In fact, when his family wanted to go on vacation, he'd say "but I live on vacation He found his next passion in real estate, eventually owning and operating a Century 21 franchise on Main Street. Many people tell stories of his honest, transparent, and forth-right way of running his business. Stories included helping people with real-estate needs and not charging a fee. Wally owned and managed his office for over 20 years. As the effects of dementia became more apparent, he retired for the second time in his life

Wally loved Lexington and everything about this community, and he enjoyed volunteering and serving many of the civic organizations of Lexington. Wally was a member of the R.E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church for 37 years, serving on the vestry, the property committee, and as an usher. He was also past President of the Lexington Rotary Club, past Lt. Governor of the Rotary Club, a Paul Harris Fellow recipient (Rotary), was instrumental in securing the building for the Association of Retarded Citizens and was past Vice President of the Association of Retarded Citizens, past President of the Effinger Ruitan Club, past President of the Lexington SPCA, past President of the Board of Realtors, recognized as Realtor of the Year in 2002, and was the flag bearer and led the Lexington Hospice Hustle for 14 consecutive years, and delivered meals weekly to those in need for nearly 20 years. He loved giving back, but he kept quiet most of his volunteer efforts.

For anyone who knew Wally, they knew him as a gentle, kind, and humble man. He accepted everyone and welcomed everyone with a warm smile. He loved his God, his Marine Corps, his Church and community, and his family. Wally liked people and being with people. He never forgot his humble beginnings, thus giving him a sense of community, a sense of duty, and a need to help anyone in need. To be clear, Wally would be embarrassed about listing his accomplishments and activities, as he never talked about himself. But, his family is proud of him and wanted to honor him with this information. Wally loved many things, but his love for his wife Dot was nothing short of inspiring. He'd often say how lucky he was to have her as his wife, partner, and best friend. Wally was a good man, a man that did many good things that even his family will never know about, and will be sadly missed by his family, friends, and the community. Semper Fi, Wally!

The Fogo family would like to thank the care giv-

ers, particularly the staff at Kendal, Dianne, and Lexington Hospice for ensuring Wally was comfortable. The family requests donations be made, in memory of Wallace E. Fogo, to either the National Alzheimer's Association, Lexington Area Hospice, or the Fellowship Fund at Kendal of Lexington.

MONUMENT HONORING VIETNAM HELICOPTER CREWS APPROVED FOR ARLINGTON CEMETERY

By: Charley Panzino, April 30, 2017 (Photo Credit: Sgt. 1st Class James K.F. Dung/Army)

It Has been three years in the making, but helicopter crews who flew during the Vietnam War will have their own monument at Arlington National Cemetery.

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and Congress came together for the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Monument Act, directing the secretary of the Army to place a 2 1/2-foot by 2 1/2-foot monument



at the cemetery in Virginia. It will be placed in Section 35 along Memorial Drive, not far from the Tomb of the Unknowns. Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Bob Hesselbein, who flew AH-1 Cobra gunships in Vietnam, helped spearhead the campaign for the memorial.

In April 2014, Hesselbein, legacy committee chairman of the pilots association, and other members went to Arlington Cemetery to discuss donating a tree. Instead, one of the historians suggested donating a monument. We discovered that the greatest concentration of combat casualties who operated helicopters in the Vietnam War are in Arlington," he told Military Times on Thursday.

The tiebreaker went to then-Army Secretary John McHugh, who decided to not move forward with the monument.

The prime directive for the cemetery is to do everything it can not to initiate an action that would displace an otherwise-eligible veteran," McHugh told Time magazine in 2016. "On a very tough decision, that philosophy and unwritten rule was the determining factor."

McHugh said the association could donate the tree, as originally intended, but Hesselbein said just having the tree marker didn't give justice to those who lost their lives.

The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association members sought action from Congress, and through publicity and nationwide support from the community, the Vietnam Helicopter Crew Monument Act was passed in March. Sens. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., and Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, introduced the bipartisan legislation. Companion legislation was introduced on the House side by Rep. Mark Amodei, R-Nev.

Baldwin told Army Times that she was moved by Hesselbein's stories of his own experiences during Vietnam, including "stories of his friends and comrades that he still knows and those that he lost," she



The Vietnam War was known as the helicopter war" because the United States relied heavily on the aircraft to transport troops and provide close-air support. Photo Credit: The Associated Press

A PATROL CALLED KING KONG

Michael B. Taft VIETNAM '67 MAY 12, 2017

In early October 1966, the men of "A Co.," my rifle company, part of the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, boarded C-130 cargo planes for the short flight to a hilltop Special Forces base in the far northwest corner of South Vietnam called Khe Sanh. Within days, the entire battalion arrived, along with a battery of 105-millimiter howitzers.



THE AUTHOR, MICHAEL B. TAFT

My battalion, known as 1/3, had been deployed around Danang, along the Vietnamese coast, helping to "pacify" civilians — assisting with farming, improving security, anything to keep the Communists from extending their influence among the population. Now we had a new and much different mission. Decision makers in Saigon and Washington had charged the Marines with fortifying the northern border and defeating the influx of Communist forces.

At Khe Sanh, 1/3 was assigned base security, providing reaction forces for reconnaissance units and interdicting North Vietnamese activity in the area. It was a grueling job — but it also provided an up-close view of the crescendo of enemy activity that would culminate, months later, in the dramatic siege of Khe Sanh and the Tet offensive.

Astride the old French colonial Route 9 and just six miles east of Laos, the Khe Sanh Special Forces base sat on a plateau in a valley, deep within the Annamite Mountains. Immediately north of the plateau and hundreds of feet below, the spectacular, fast -moving Quang Tri River had cut a deep gorge on its way to the South China Sea at Dong Ha. To the west sat a mass of 3,000-foot hills, both an extraordinary spectacular beauty and a forbidding terrain of dense, triple-canopy forest growing in laterite soil. It would also soon be the scene of some of the bloodiest fighting of the war.

We patrolled in small fire teams, larger reinforced squads and platoon-size groups of 30 to 40 men. These patrols could last up to two weeks. We often climbed well into the 100-foot broad-leafed trees, observing the vast, impenetrable jungle and trying to find terrain features that corresponded to our maps. The maps were drawn from old French military maps and air photos interpreted by American sources, and they were usually highly inaccurate. For example, we might suddenly come across a ravine, hidden below the canopied forest, with sides so steep it could barely be climbed, hundreds of feet deep with a narrow stream at the bottom. We had no idea it was there — the mapmakers had simply missed it.

The abundance and diversity of wildlife was stunning. Bamboo vipers, six-foot cobras, foot-long centipedes, scorpions, small deer, multicolored Asian jungle birds and large monitor lizards. Occasionally, somewhere nearby, we would hear a tiger attacking wild hogs. The thunderous roar of a full-grown tiger was as frightening as any experience in Vietnam. But a bigger concern was much smaller: While on patrols, whenever we stopped to rest we would use lit cigarettes to shed our lower bodies of dozens of leeches.

Though we were in a tropical jungle, the weather was mostly a bone-chilling 45 degrees, under monsoon rains, fog and drizzle. We wore long underwear under our jungle utilities, and dried our socks by tying them around our waists. More-level parts of the region contained intermittent bamboo thickets and tall, sharp-edged elephant grass that cut, then infected, uncovered skin and tore apart our clothing. In late January 1967, we went out on one of the multitude of long and short range patrols in and around Khe Sanh. Codenamed King Kong, it was an A Co. operation.

I was the radio man for a reinforced rifle squad, which in those times consisted of about 20 Marines — 12 riflemen, a machine gun team, a corpsman (or

medic), an artillery forward observer, his radioman and a patrol leader. The patrol was to last several days, and we would be resupplied with rations by helicopter.

Starting from our company's position on the Khe Sanh perimeter, we climbed down to the Quang Tri River. After fording the fast-moving, chest-high water, we built fires, dried our clothing and were on our way. Several large tiger tracks dotted the wet sand at the river's edge.

The terrain was extremely difficult, and we were lost more often than not. Since we'd been in these hills for months, the situation was in fact the normal course of events. What was not normal occurred during the last days of King Kong.

I was breaking brush for the patrol. Machete in hand, I led the way up a jungled hillside from the gorge bottom below. We were looking for someplace, any place, where we could make radio contact and could be resupplied. Suddenly, at the top of the hill, I broke into a large, hilltop open space that had been a position used by South Vietnamese Army units. It was well above a portion of Route 9, at a sharp bend in the Quang Tri River. Below, we could see several old colonial buildings, a bridge and the surrounding forest. Thankful for our good fortune, the Marines of King Kong set up defensive positions at the opening's edges, made radio contact and arranged for resupply and possible extraction.

Just then, someone noticed a large number of uniformed men below, bursting from what seemed to be everywhere, moving swiftly, headed east and away from us on Route 9. We thought they were North Vietnamese, and there were lots of them. Marine UH-1 helicopters arrived, dropped some rations and flew down to check the troops below. They confirmed our suspicions. King Kong had come across a small part of the huge enemy buildup that would explode into the bloody "hill fights" of 1967, which in turn culminated in the siege of Khe Sanh that fall.

We were in a tight spot. If the North Vietnamese decided to assault our position, the approaches they would probably take would be beyond the reach of our supporting artillery.

However, the reach of the artillery could bracket the North Vietnamese as they moved away, and the forward observer got right to work calling in 105-milimeter artillery fire from Khe Sanh. Several dozen 105 rounds crashed into the areas where the rapidly disappearing North Vietnamese had been.

The patrol leader discussed several options over the radio with our company commander, back in Khe Sanh. Night was quickly approaching. There were no helicopters available for extraction. One option would be to backtrack back down the hill we'd climbed earlier, but then we'd be out of radio contact and floundering in the darkness.

If we marched down to Route 9 and headed west, we would be headed to Khe Sanh, several miles away, but would be subject to ambush if any North Vietnamese were along the highway. Our existing position was acceptable for defense, and the decision was made to spend the night. We improved the existing fighting holes, set a listening post and positioned the machine gun to command the likely path of assault. It was a long, uneventful night for the exhausted members of King Kong. Morning came, and word arrived from Khe Sanh for the patrol to take Route 9 west and meet up with several trucks that would be sent east as far as possible from the base. Single file and extremely alert, we went down the hill to Route 9 — nothing yet. Once down, we spread out in single file along each side of the road, the Quang Tri River below on our left, the jungle on the right.

Moving briskly, we crossed several partially destroyed bridges during the several-hour march west. Suddenly we saw trucks with a rifle squad from our company hidden around them. We quickly climbed in and were on our way. Back at Khe Sanh, we were taken to a large, heated tent, where we would spend a free night, no guard duty. As a reward for our efforts, each of us had the choice of a can of soda or beer. I took the beer.

Michael B. Taft, an ironworker and dairy farmer, was an infantryman in A Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines from 1966 to 1967.

THE FATEFUL LAST MISSION OF JACK RITTICHIER, COAST GUARD RESCUE PILOT IN VIETNAM

Dec 12, 2016 Gabe Christy

The United States Coast Guard is world renowned for its excellence in helicopter rescue operations. Few people realize how effectively this was used during the Vietnam War. In particular, Lieutenant Jack Rittichier stood out from the rest of these skilled airmen and was highly decorated for his efforts.



AN HH-3E HOVERING DANANG AIR BASE 1968

Rittichier was born in Akron, Ohio, in 1933. After attending Kent State University, he enrolled in the United States Air Force and achieved the rank of Captain.

In 1962 he joined the United States Coast Guard Reserve, as a Lieutenant Junior Grade. Following a short career in the Reserves, he rejoined active-duty military life as a Lieutenant (equivalent to Air Force Captain) in the Coast Guard.



Jack Rittichier as an exchange officer with the US Air Force, standing next to Lonnie Mixon, another USCG to USAF exchange officer.

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Rittichier then volunteered for an exchange program with the Air Force. This placed him in Vietnam, with the 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS). His skills as a helicopter pilot, especially during high wind and rough weather rescue operations, made him a natural fit for this unit.

Their task, on paper at least, was simple: land their helicopters near downed airmen, or stranded troops, and extract them to safety.

This does not take into account the fact these airmen were being shot down deep in enemy territory; they and the helicopters were favorite targets for the North Vietnamese Army.

As a member of ARRS, Rittichier distinguished himself time and again. His first commendation came on April 21, 1968.

He was sitting in his barracks when a call came in for a volunteer crew. He immediately jumped at the task and was put on as copilot. They flew west, to an area known as the "Happy Valley." Later, in an interview, Rittichier remarked on what a misnomer that was. He saw the rescue operation was already in progress, and his helicopter was third in line.

They were aiming for a small landing zone, surrounded by the enemy. Eight US Army soldiers had been trapped there overnight when their helicopters had been shot down.

SPADs (attack aircraft) were circling overhead, and the first helicopter was already headed back to base. The second took ground fire while attempting the rescue, but was still able to pull out four men. Then Rittichier and his pilot went in. They were under intense, but inaccurate, ground fire and had to hover steadily while their PJ (pararescue operator) performed the rescue.



A US NAVY A-1 Sky Raider referred to as a SPAD. These incredibly accurate and powerful attack craft provided cover and support for the 37th ARRS operations in Vietnam.

Rittichier coordinated with the SPADs overhead, calling out enemy positions for them to attack with strafing runs. He described one enemy soldier being killed, only meters away from an American soldier, by machine gun fire from a 6-ton aircraft.

Thanks to Rittichier's communication skills, and the professionalism of the crew, their mission was a success, and they rescued all the remaining soldiers. He was awarded his first Distinguished Flying Cross.

Over the next few months, Rittichier participated in numerous operations. From investigating suspected crash sites, and dodging American artillery shells on the way, to extracting crews from his own squadron who had been shot down in enemy territory. Then, on June 9, 1968, he set out on his final heroic mission.

At 1026 that morning, the call came in that an A-4E Skyhawk, flown by First Lieutenant Walter Schmidt (callsign: Hellborne 215) had gone down in the A Shau Valley. The young Marine was part of a bombing mission, focused on slowing the flow of troops and supplies coming to Vietnam from Laos, along the Ho Chi Minh trail.

His plane had crashed within 2 miles of the Laotian border, next to the trail itself. He was surrounded by enemy troops and was a very high-value target Shortly after the first call came in, 2 HH-3Es, Jolly Green 22 (JG22), and Jolly Green 23, (JG23, flown by Rittichier) took off from Danang. Schmidt had reported his leg was wounded, and he could not walk.



Da Nang Air Base, during the Vietnam War

The rescuers would need to locate him, hover above and then drop their pararescue operators (PJs). The helicopters would be large, stationary objects, floating just above the treetops; in other words, easy targets.

To make matters worse, the helicopter crews did not know whether the calls were genuine or not. Schmidt could have been captured, and have been used as a lure to draw more forces into an easy trap. As the two rescue helicopters approached the crash site, they met up with the rest of their team. While the HH-3Es were well armored and equipped with a machine gun, they were not to attack aircraft by any means. To supplement them, SPADs, Huey Gunships, and forward air controllers (FAC), joined the flight. This was a delicate operation and needed a coordinated effort.



A flight from the 37th ARRS flying towards a rescue site. Within flight refueling, the HH-3Es could travel incredibly long distances.

As they approached, FAC Trail-35 reported there was ground fire, bunkers, and trunks near the crash site. These would need to be avoided or destroyed before a rescue could continue.

Despite the dangers Rittichier and his crew circled the crash site. The gunships sprayed rockets and machine gun fire into the surrounding forest, hoping to suppress the enemy. As the wood burned, JG22 dropped down to rescue Schmidt. As they drew near, the valley floor and hillsides nearby erupted in muzzle flashes, and bullets filled the air around the aircraft.

JG22 made another attempt but had to pull up quickly. They moved away, low on fuel and needing to refit. Attack aircraft made a series of sweeping passes around the crash site. Rittichier had to make the next rescue attempt, knowing all too well what was awaiting him when he did. Again, thinking more of the downed airman than his own safety, he brought JG23 to a hover over the crash. As his PJ prepared to leave the aircraft, gunfire came from every direction.

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The Vietcong had surrounded the crash site, and now in position, opened fire at the hovering helicopter. This time their fire was more accurate, and Rittichier felt rounds pounding into his airframe. Bullets poured into the craft just behind his head, into the base of the rotor mast. As Rittichier pulled away, a fire erupted behind him, and he knew he had to set down somewhere to deal with it. His crew's life was in grave danger, and he had to save them first. As he flew towards an opening in the forest, he tried to set down on a small berm, but it was too late.

The gunfire had damaged his rotor assembly. By the time they reached the clearing, the helicopter was in free fall. When the aircraft hit the ground, it exploded in fire. Tragically, all four men on board were killed.



The remains of Lieutenant Jack Rittichier return to the United States. Carried off of a USCG C-130 at Andrews Air Force Base.

Sadly, even rescue operators are not immune from enemy fire. These three brave Airmen and a Coastguardsman gave their lives for their fellow aviators. They exemplified two of the greatest virtues: dedication to others, and sacrifice of self. For their sacrifice on that day, Lieutenant Jack Rittichier, Captain Richard Yeend (his copilot) and Sergeant James Locke (his PJ) were all posthumously awarded the Silver Star. Their remains were not recovered until 2003; they are all now interred in the United States.

THEIR FATHERS WERE ENEMIES, BUT THE CHILDREN OF VIETNAM'S DEAD SHARE A BOND

By Michael E. Ruane May 25 at 7:20 PM



Vu Ngoc Xiem visits the Vietnam Memorial with as part of the 2 Sides project, a documentary featuring men and women who lost parents on both sides of the Vietnam War. (Evelyn Hockstein/For The Washington Post)

Susan Mitchell-Mattera leaned her small American flag and the framed picture of her family against the black stone of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Thursday and raised her father's old harmonica to her lips.

As she played the opening notes of taps, Vu Ngoc Xiem, a veteran of the North Vietnamese army whose father was killed in an American bombing attack during the war, reached out and steadied her hand.

Up on the wall, at Panel 14W, Row 14, was the name of Mitchell-Mattera's father, James C. Mitchell Jr., a sailor who was killed when his helicopter was shot down in 1970, days before he was to come home. He was 24.

Mitchell-Mattera played only a few notes, but they hung in the humid air on an overcast day when the Wall was just starting to dry from the overnight rain, revealing the names of the 58,000 American dead in the Vietnam War.

It was one part of an emotional morning as Vietnamese and American children of parents killed on opposite sides in the war gathered to honor lost fathers and mothers and to embrace each other as brothers and sisters.

There were many tears and hugs on both sides, and the laying of hands on the dark stone.

At the start of the Memorial Day weekend, the group was visiting Washington for the debut of a documentary about children who lost parents to the Vietnam War.

The film, which was shown Thursday at the GI Film Festival at the Navy Memorial in Northwest Washington, is part of the 2 Sides Project, an enterprise launched two years ago by Margot Carlson Delogne, 52, as she sought to fill the void left by the absence of her father, who was killed in the war.

The nonprofit aims to connect sons and daughters who lost parents on both sides of the Vietnam War. In 2015, Carlson Delogne took a film crew and a small group of Americans who had lost fathers in the war to Vietnam. They visited sites where their fathers were believed to have been killed and met with Vietnamese who had lost fathers and mothers in the fighting.

Several of the Vietnamese encountered on the trip, including Vu, 65, a veteran and retiree from Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon, were invited to Washington for the opening of the film and the weekend's commemorations.

The Vietnamese had never been to the United States before.

They included Nguyen Thi Hong Diem, 49, also of Ho Chi Minh City, whose father and mother were killed fighting for the insurgent Viet Cong, and Dang Thi Le Phi, 53, of Da Nang, whose father died in the war when she was 2.

They were joined by several Americans who had made the trip in 2015. Among them were Ronald R. Reyes, 49, of Moorpark, Calif., whose 19-year-old father, Ronald, was killed serving with the Marines at Khe Sanh in 1968, and Mitchell-Mattera, 52, a nurse from Carson, Calif., whose father was shot down over the Mekong River Delta, in what was then South Vietnam.



Both of Nguyen Thi Hong Diem's parents were killed fighting for the Viet Cong. (N/A/Family photo)

The group arrived at the -memorial at 10 a.m., with Vu bearing a bouquet of flowers to leave there.

After a translator helped -explain how the names are -arranged on the Wall, and Reyes described it as "like a scar in the ground," the group descended the path into the memorial, which was thronged with visitors.

They paused at the center. Vu placed his flowers and spoke on behalf of the Vietnamese.

In an interview earlier in the week, he explained that his father was killed manning an anti-aircraft battery at the Ham Rong Bridge near Thanh Hoa against a fierce bombing campaign the Americans called Operation Rolling Thunder.

His father, Vu Ngoc Sam, then in his 40s, had been fighting in the army since the Vietnamese enemy had been the French.

He was rarely home, his son said, and the family saw him mainly when he passed their rice farm in Nam Dinh Province, south of Hanoi, on the march.

After the attack on the bridge, in 1965, there was nothing left of his father, no body to bury. So the family erected a small tomb near their home and left it empty.

More tragedy struck two years later, when Vu was in high school. He was 16 and a class leader. He had been outside checking the school's adjacent bomb shelters when U.S. jets attacked.

To illustrate, Vu lined up a candy bar, a package of cookies and a small recorder case on a hotel lobby countertop to show how the three buildings of his high school were arranged.

One bomb landed beside the first school building, he indicated with his finger. Another bomb landed near the third building. But the middle building suffered a direct hit.

The shock waves blew him off his feet and into a pond, he said. He recovered, ran to the -destroyed building and began trying to dig out his classmates. Dozens of them, and a teacher, were killed, he said. The incidents filled him with hostility, he said, and he went on to become a war correspondent during the closing chapters of the conflict.

Thursday, as he stood before the Wall in a coat and tie, hands clasped before him, he spoke of peace and healing.

"We are the sons and daughters of the Vietnamese war martyrs," he said through an interpreter. "We want to heal the wounds of the war . . . the pain and sacrifice and losses on both sides. Today I'm very moved standing here. I am the son of a war martyr, and also a veteran."

But "we travel on the same road," he said. The Vietnamese and Americans embraced and wept.
Then the group went to see the names of the American fathers.

When they reached the carving of Ronald Reyes's father's name, the son used his necktie to wipe moisture from the stone.

His father was a skinny teenager from La Puente, Calif., who joined the Marines and was killed in the fighting around Khe Sanh on March 30, 1968, weeks after his 19th birthday.

Reyes said his father's spirit has followed him his whole life.



Ronald Reyes, a Marine, was killed March 30, 1968, at Khe Sanh. His son Ron Reyes is participating in a meeting of adult children who lost parents in the Vietnam War. (N/A/Family photo)

As he held his hand over his father's name Thursday, Vu pressed his hand over Reyes's in a sign of affection.

When the group got to the name of Carlson Delogne's father, Air Force Capt. John W. Carlson, on Panel 13E, she said: "My father's name is not touchable. It's too high up."

But she explained how to count down from the top to Row 18, where he was listed.

Carlson Delogne, a resident of Walpole, Mass., was 2 when her father was shot down in an Air Force jet Dec. 7, 1966. His body has never been found, and although he has a tombstone in Arlington National Cemetery, there is no grave.

She said she remembers nothing of him.

"I have searched long and hard in my memory, and I have just nothing," she said in an interview this week. "I've asked over the years people who knew him, 'What was he like?' Always searching for what in me is from him.

"I've never had a satisfying answer," she said. Carlson Delogne also studied his letters and papers and listened to some of the cassette tapes he sent home to his family.

At the same time, she detested Vietnam for taking her father. "I had a hatred toward it," she said.

But her attitude started to change when she met other children of Americans killed in Vietnam. And she realized that bombs dropped by her father may have killed the fathers of Vietnamese women.

"I began to wonder . . . [if] there was . . . a daughter on the other side who was like me," she said. "I started to wonder how she felt and how she had grown up."

The 2 Sides Project seeks to answer such questions. As she stood at the Wall on Thursday, Carlson Delogne pointed up to Row 18.

"You see his name?" she asked.

Her Vietnamese friends said they did.

VIETNAM VET GETS BELATED MEDAL FOR HEROISM

The Courier-Post Published 10:30 a.m. ET May 25, 2017

HILL - Adrenaline was pumping through the body of a Marine rifleman from Pine Hill on a battlefield halfway around the world.

So at great personal risk, far outnumbered by the enemy and realizing he was facing death on Dec. 15, 1967, U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. John Hunsinger advanced alone after his squad leader was wounded, rallied fellow Marines in his company to follow and saved them and himself from certain death.

His heroism inadvertently went unreported and unrewarded — until earlier this month when Hunsinger, now of Franklin Township, received the Bronze Star with Valor. Fifty years overdue, the hero's welcome included an escort in a motorcycle and first responder procession to American Legion Post 372 in Cherry Hill.



Retired Lt. Col. Robert Black of Tenafly, the last of Hunsinger's three company commanders in Vietnam, and retired Lt. Col. Al Bancroft of the Camden County Department of Veterans Affairs presented him the medal with the additional letter "V" for valor to a chorus of the Marine's signature "hoorah."

More than 100 veterans, first responders, legionnaires and members of the 'Nam Knights and Warriors' Watch Riders motorcycle clubs attended the ceremony and luncheon the legion hosted.

"It's very humbling... really I'm so very humbled," said Hunsinger.

Earlier he explained what happened on that December day when he suddenly was ordered by the platoon sergeant to assume command of the second squad from its wounded leader. They were part of B Company (Bravo) of the 1st Marine Battalion, 1st Marine Division.

We were pinned down and somebody had to make the move (to advance) and nobody was. I was given a job to take over and I just went out and did it," said the 69-year-old who left in his junior year at Overbook High School to join the Marines because he wanted to follow others and go to Vietnam.

"At the time, you were an 18-year-old who had so much adrenaline running through you in battle and I always felt like the hands of God were around me," he said.

All of the men in the squad deserved a medal, Hunsinger said, because they followed him that day during fierce fighting between approximately 110 men in his company ambushed by more than 500 North Vietnamese Army soldiers.

Hunsinger became the unexpected leader of the second squad of the first platoon in the defense of the American fortress at Nuie Con Thien. It was near the southern border of the Demilitarized Zone beyond which U.S. troops were not permitted to enter. Black read the medal citation, which outlined how Hunsinger maneuvered his squad into a better vantage point while under heavy automatic, mortar and artillery fire.

"Selflessly exposing himself, he personally charged, firing his rifle head-on another 25 meters through the killing zone under a murderous stream of small arms fire. His squad followed him and joined the third squad to stop the advance of the enemy.

"During the day-long fighting, Cpl. Hunsinger valiantly exposed himself time after time to enemy fire, shouting encouragement to his Marines, directing and controlling their fire, distributing ammunition and all the while moving and checking on his Marines with complete disregard for his own safety. The enemy attacked in waves, the citation continues, but each wave was thwarted in part by the corporal's "valiant leadership."

Hunsinger said he was told in Vietnam he was being recommended for the medal, but his company commanding officer Captain Clarence L. Baker was transferred suddenly and the new commander was killed shortly afterward in battle. Black then took over the company as a captain in early 1968.

Now a retired colonel, Baker wrote to the Marine headquarters in 2013 to start the process for Hunsinger's medal after Gaudencio Viloria Jr., a staff sergeant who commanded the first platoon and later was promoted to major, found out at a Marine reunion six years ago that Hunsinger had never received his Bronze Star. Baker and Viloria, who both live in California, were unable to attend.

In Vietnam, Hunsinger also took part in battles at Quang Tri, Hue City, Hill 881 in the Battle for Khe Sanh and the Tet Offensive in 1968. He was wound-

ed by shrapnel in November 1967 and contracted double malaria after the Tet Offensive but always returned to his unit and the fight.

Hunsinger had an unexpected reunion with two other Overbrook High School buddies from Pine Hill



Big "O" VIETNAM REUNION. Three "buddies" at Overbrook Regional High school, held a reunion in Vietnam where all three were now stationed. At left is Cpl Eddie Kramer, who arrived in March of 1968;Cpl john Hunsinger, in Vietnam since August, 1967,in center J. P. McKelvey, who landed in Vietnam in July of that year.

who ended up in his company in Vietnam with him — Eddie Kramer and J.P. McKelvey.

Black praised Hunsinger as an exceptional Marine. "He was a Marine who ran toward the sound of gunfire and took responsibility for his action. These people are hard to find even in the Marines," the 75-year-old Black said after the ceremony.

"I had three rifle companies in Vietnam and he was the only enlisted man I consistently gave the top 5.0 rating to in his performance reviews."

Hunsinger received a joint state Senate and Assembly resolution from Sen. James Beach, D-Camden, and a congressional recognition certificate presented by a congressional staffer on behalf of Rep. Frank Lobiondo, R-N.J. Marine Corps League Detachment 775 veterans served as the honor guard.

Legion commander Tim Kraft, Bancroft and others said it was an honor to be at the medal ceremony and thanked others for their outpouring of patriotism. Warriors' Watch Riders, Delaware Valley chapter spokesman Brit Henderson of Audubon and Cherry Hill Councilwoman Carolyn Jacobs lamented the poor reception most Vietnam veterans like Hunsinger received when they came home.

"He is a true American hero and well-deserving (of the medal). As we know many were overlooked when they returned home, so the support we give is our payback to them," Henderson said.

COLLIERS BRIDGE TO BE DEDICATED TO VETERAN

Summer Wallace-Minger
Community editor
swallace@weirtondailytimes.com

THE WEIRTON DAILY TIMES
26 MAY 17



CPL MARK COOL

COLLIERS — Marine Cpl. Mark Cool was 19 when he was injured in the Battle of Khe Sanh in Vietnam on Feb. 27, 1968, and died three days later in Okinawa, Japan.

Now, almost 40 years later, the Colliers Way Bridge, near where Cool grew up and lived most of his life before entering the Marines, will be renamed the Cpl. Mark D. Cool Bridge in his honor.

The re-dedication ceremony will be held at 6 p.m. Friday at the Brooke-Hancock Veterans Memorial Park in South Weirton, adjacent to the state Route 2 -U.S. Route 22 interchange. In the event of inclem-

ent weather, the event will be held at the Weirton Veterans of Foreign Wars located at 3534 Main St. What his surviving family, including his brother, Scott, and his 91-year-old mother, Arlene, want most of all is for those who knew Mark to attend the re-dedication. The family has relocated to New Manchester since Mark's death, and said they expect to see many friends at the ceremony, but hope that more will hear about the event and come to honor Mark's life and death.

"He sacrificed his life for the rest of the world and for those who didn't have a lot," Arlene Cool said. "I'm proud and surprised (about the renaming)."

Mark Cool was a 1966 Follansbee High School graduate and went straight into the Marines, something he had always wanted to do.

"I could have gone and gotten his diploma from Brooke High School after he died, but ... ," Arlene Cool said.

One of those who will be attending the ceremony will be state Del. Pat McGeehan, R-Hancock, who was the primary sponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 96, which renamed the bridge. McGeehan said an interested party — not the family — sent him information about Mark Cool in 2015, and he had been working to see the bridge renamed since.

"He was in the Battle of Khe Sanh, which was one of the most brutal battles (of Vietnam)," McGeehan said. "When I was in the Air Force Academy, I did a research paper my senior year on Khe Sanh. I received information on Cpl. Cool, and I started researching his life."

McGeehan said the re-dedication coming the Friday before Memorial Day was happy serendipity — it was simply a case of the right things coming together at the right time.

"I didn't want to tell (the family) before the bill was passed, because I didn't want to get anyone's hopes up," McGeehan said.

McGeehan will drive directly up to Weirton Friday evening from Charleston — it is important to him to see a Vietnam veteran properly remembered.

"The guys from Vietnam and Korea get overlooked, and the guys who went to Vietnam weren't treated very well in their day," McGeehan said. "I want to make sure that we remember and honor our Vietnam and Korean veterans."

"We are very honored, proud and grateful," Scott Cool said.

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

By Chris Brady, The Standard-Journal 27 May

STEVE HECKNAUER C CO 1/26

Editors Note: Today's feature is the first of two featuring Marine veteran Steve Hecknauer. Next week, Hecknauer takes readers through life at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, during the siege of 1968.

Exploring the horrors of combat, and dealing with its effect afterword, is difficult for any veteran soldier. Hearing it from a Marine who survived the Siege of Khe Sanh 50 years ago is chilling.



"You deal with it," said Steve Hecknauer, who sur-

vived 77 day's at Khe Sanh, including the infamous siege in January 1968. "You see what is around you... it's a dam shame, but it's not me. It's tough, and you gotta deal with it every day."

Fighting the well trained North Vietnamese was something every Marine in I Corps section of South Vietnam had grown accustomed to.

"They hit and hit and hit," said Hecknauer. They were very disciplined and very good at camouflage. You might be right on top of their bunkers and never see them."

Hecknauer arrived in Vietnam in October 1967 and was assigned to Charlie Company 1st Battalion 26th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division. Three months prior to arriving in Vietnam he was in the Mediterranean Sea training for landing assaults.

Stepping off the plane in Vietnam still carries with it, vivid memories for Hecknauer."I came off the plane and the first thing you are hit with is the heat and the smell, " he said. "The humidity was terrible. I thought, "What the heck." It was like someone took a hot blanket and threw it on you, it was so humid."

Weather conditions were tough, as was the terrain for Marines in and around Khe Sanh.

"I went from Danang to Phu Bai, where I spent two days, then they choppered me into Khe Sanh,"said Hecknauer. "The mountains were beautiful, lush green, until you got out there in the triple canopy, and elephant grass. That stuff will cut you to shreds."

Marines "humped" or hiked, everywhere, covering several kilometers a day at times while navigating elevations that soared thousands of feet—all while wearing rucksacks full of supplies, ammunitions and more.

Just 19 & 20 while he was in Vietnam, Hecknauer arrived feeling confident, as most Marines did.

"We had a lot of guerilla training with the French Foreign Legion, "he said. "That's kind of how felt-bulletproof, I didn't have fear of going to Vietnam."

In the days following his arrival in the Khe Sanh area, Hecknauer noted action was down from weeks prior. The spring of 1967, many Marines were killed in the hills surrounding Khe Sanh, he noted.

By Christmas action, was heating up again. "Hill 950 had been overrun in the spring and our platoon was to go up and relieve another platoon" said Hecknauer. "Every month, we'd rotate. This hill was steep and very muddy, and slippery. There were leeches everywhere. We had to hold on to trees just to climb it. We definitely were not sneaking up, on anybody.

Atop the hill, the men dug in, and on Christmas Eve the NVA began probing with a series of frags and small arms fire.

"it was foggy and you could barely see to the wire,"he remembered. "it was windy, so some ofour trip flares went off and scared us, made us think they were coming through the wire. It made our hearts beat a little quicker."

Hecknauer remembered being in a fighting position where he was close enough to hear Christmas music coming from a radio in a bunker.

His unit continued probing the area taking assignments closer toward the DMZ and west toward Laos. While contact was sporadic, signs of enemy action in the area was everywhere.

"you could see their bunkers, their positions, but no one was there," he said. They would wound a few Marines just to let us know they were still there. We never new how many were there and no one ever told us. Turns out there were several regiments out there– 20,000 to 30,000 and we're out there as a company."

QUIPS FROM THE WEB

SAD ANNIVERSARY
By Glenn T. Griffin D CO 1/1

It was 49 years ago today that Delta Company 1/1 took a walk in the sun from Hill 558 to hill 861 , it turned out to be a very difficult day. After spending a few relatively quiet days on 558 our job was to

relieve Alpha Co. 1/1 on 861. We had recently moved off of 881 South which we manned for 30 plus days.

I was the Company radioman during this entire time period. Captain Harrison Haley from San Jose California was our Company Commander since around March in the Hue Phu Bai area during Tet . The night before our patrol to 861 I was offered a position as Chaplains assistant for the Battalion. I guess because I always attended mass whenever possible, at that time I had 11 months in the bush and some exciting experiences such as Operation Swift, Con Thien, operation Medina , etc. behind me and many close calls. In spite of opportunity to get out of the field I decided to remain with Company because of many close ties developed over previous 11 months in addition to my loyalty to Captain Haley.

The patrol from 558 was fairly uneventful for the most part. I think the only issue was we recovered the remains of a Marine who had been lost in a previous battle. The day was extremely warm and the sun shine was something new after rain and fog during previous month. We arrived just outside the wire on 861 when tragedy struck. We were getting organized and preparing to move through wire , at that time I asked the Gunny (Staff Sgt. Herb Kahrer) if we could proceed to locate CP bunker. He and the Captain agreed so I switched radios from Company net to Battalion with a corporal Hutchinson.

What then transpired was our 60 mortars team moved up on right flank and unbeknown to us into a minefield. Cpl. Arthur Crowell who had just returned from emergency leave due to a death in family stepped on and detonated a bouncing betty landmine,. he was KIA as was Captain Haley, many others were wounded severely including Hutch who was hit around head and shoulders. he survived but spent many months in hospital and was scarred for life. Hutch was a little taller than I so if I hadn't switched radios it probably would have tore my head off.

I'm not sure why God decided to spare me once again 49 years ago but I am thankful to survive, I think of Captain Haley and all of the other great Marines I served with and look forward to our next formation on Heavens streets someday. The Gunny came to me later that day and mentioned the Chaplain was coming in on a chopper to conduct a memorial for the skipper and asked if I wanted to reconsider the assistant position. Reluctantly I agreed with a few special requests regards who would fill my position as Company radioman. That is a story for another time. RIP Captain Haley and gunny Crowell.

OBIT

SSGT ALFRED J. CUPPS JR, KHE SANH VETERAN, MIKE COMPANY 3/26 WPNS PLT SGT HILL 881S

SSGT Albert J. Cupps Jr. Hill 881S M 3/26 Weapons Platoon Sgt. 67-68 Suffered with Diabetes





while on The Hill without knowing it. Life long Insulin dependent till his last day of 76 years. If not a Marine's Marine he would have given up, I'm sure. He never gave in to it! R.I.P. Al

PARKSLEY HONORS FALLEN MARINE, OTHERS AT WAR MEMORIAL DEDICATION

Clara Vaughn, Delmarva Now Correspondent

Hundreds gathered at the Parksley Town Square this Memorial Day to honor a fallen Vietnam War hero from a nearby town and all Accomack County veterans who have died in war.

Mayor James Eichelberger welcomed the crowd, which included dozens of veterans, state and local officials, residents, members of local veterans groups, and the friends, family and former comrades of Cpl. Jerry C. Burkhead.



The Cpl. Jerry C. Burkhead/Town of Parksley War Memorial was officially unveiled during a ceremony on Monday at the Parksley Town Square. Burkhead's sister Shirley Johnson spearheaded the effort to raise a monument memorializing her brother and all fallen soldiers from Accomack County. (Photo: Clara Vaughn photo)

"It's something that your never, ever get over— the loss of a child or a brother," said Shirley Johnson, who spearheaded the effort to raise a monument memorializing her brother and other fallen service members.

Burkhead was killed in action during the battle for Khe Sanh in Quang Tri Provence, Vietnam on Feb. 8, 1968. He was 21 years old.

He was born the youngest of 12 children to Junius and Velma Burkhead of Justiceville, near Parksley, in 1946.

Burkhead joined the United States Marine Corps after graduating from high school in 1966 and was deployed to Vietnam the next year.

He was one of 64 Marines defending an outpost known as Hill 64 during the battle that claimed his life and more than 20 others'.

His comrade Willi Lauterbach, who was wounded in the fight, attended Monday's ceremony honoring his fellow Marine.

"That day (Jerry was killed)… started on Hill 64 as rockets and the like and ended in hand-to-hand combat," Lauterbach said. "That morning was arduous; it was an endless barrage of putting in those hours of hand-to-hand combat, but I stand here today because Jerry and my other Marines lived up to the bond of warriors."

Johnson's original plan to raise $150 for a small plaque memorializing her brother blossomed into almost $50,000 in donations for the memorial in the town square.

The Town of Parksley donated the land for the monument, and gifts from Accomack County government officials including Sen. Lynwood Lewis and Delegate Robert Bloxom, local organizations and friends and family of veterans paid for the polished black monument adorned with flags honoring various military groups, benches and an empty POW seat in memory of those who went missing in war.

Nearly 40 years after her brother's death, Johnson simply wanted to memorialize him, she said.

"People like Shirley Johnson remind us of what we can achieve when we all pull together as one," Rear Adm. Craig Quigley said during his keynote address at the Memorial Day ceremony.

Family and friends can still purchase personalized bricks honoring war veterans to be displayed at the

Cpl. Jerry C. Burkhead/Town of Parksley War Memorial.

BUNNELL'S PFC JONATHAN NAT SPICER, A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR, TO BE HONORED ON MEMORIAL DAY.

It isn't often that a conscientious objector who refused to carry a rifle in the thick of battle is the decorated hero to be recognized at a Memorial Day ceremony.

So it will be Monday when Private First Class Jonathan "Nat" Spicer, U.S. Marine Corps and former Flagler County resident and Bunnell High School student, is recognized for the Navy Cross for Courage Under Fire, awarded Spicer posthumously: he was killed in 1968 at the Battle of Khe Sanh, the fiercest of the Vietnam War. He had been a medic.
Several Memorial Day ceremonies are scheduled for Monday across the region. The events have been staggered, making it possible to attend each one–at 8 a.m. in Palm Coast, 10 a.m. at the county seat, and 1 p.m. in Flagler Beach.



Memorial Day has come to mark the beginning of summer, with barbecues, major retail sales and car races. That was not the intention. It is a Civil War-era holiday started by a Union soldier in remembrance of war dead. It had been preceded by Decoration Day, when the graves of civilians and soldiers alike were decorated with flags and flowers. It was only in 1971 that Memorial Day became a federal holiday. At the time, Congress set the date to remember the nearly 600,000 Americans who had died in what, until then, had been nine major wars and innumerable minor ones.

American soldiers have since been involved in wars in Grenada, Lebanon, Panama, Kuwait and Iraq in 1991, Iraq again starting in 2003, Somalia, the Balkans, Afghanistan, Libya, and now Syria.
Flagler County will mark Memorial Day starting at 10 a.m. in front of the Government Services Building in Bunnell, with Spicer's memory at center stage.

Marines sustained a 75-day siege at Khe Sanh in 1968, lost some 205 men, but inflicted casualties on the North Vietnamese forces at a ratio of between 50 to 1 to 75 to 1. The battle ultimately had little strategic value for either side, and the so-called "riddle of Khe Sanh" was never answered.
Gregg Jones wrote a detailed account of Spicer's last days in "Last Stand at Khe Sahn," a vivid account of the siege, which had begun in January.

"By early March, one of the most valued members of Finnegan's Charlie Med team was a slight, nineteen-year-old preacher's son from Florida. Private First Class Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer served as a stretcher bearer, carrying wounded Marines from arriving helicopters or ambulances to the Charlie Med triage area and then shuttling stabilized casualties to the helicopter pad for evacuation–all under enemy fire. Spicer had earned a reputation for bravery and selflessness, shielding the wounded with his own body as enemy shells rained down.

"After all that Spicer had done to prove himself, it was easy to forget the controversy that had accompanied his arrival at Charlie Med a month earlier. The trouble had started when he arrived at Khe Sanh and refused to carry a rifle in his assignment with the supply unit of Bravo 1/26. Spicer explained that he was a conscientious objector and

couldn't kill anyone. He had loved animals growing up in Florida and had hoped to be assigned to a canine unit when he joined the Marines. But Spicer was designated a rifleman, and at every stop in the Marines, he was told to take up his claim of conscientious objector status at his next duty station.

"Spicer heard that line all the way to Vietnam, and the next thing he knew, he was in Bravo Company, enduring torment from his comrades for his pacifism, his Bible reading, and his rejection of the rough language that was a rite of passage in the Marine Corps. Spicer sought out Protestant chaplain Ray Stubbe at Kha Sanh in late January, and Stubbe came away from their conversation convinced that the Florida teenager was for real. He arranged for Spicer to be attached to Charlie Med as a stretcher bearer.

"Spicer was only about five foot seven and 140 pounds, but he impressed everyone at Charlie Med with his courage and hard work. He was pleasant and soft-spoken, fond about talking about the home and family he missed. He had written the name of
He felt bad about his time at Bravo Company and wanted to prove he wasn;t a coward. But he wasn;t going to fight, even if the [North Vietnamese Army] overran the base. 'I don't have any problem with dying,' he would say to ambulance driver Danny Sullivan. 'But I will not kill anyone.'

"On the afternoon of Friday, March 8, medevac flights arrived at the Kha Sanh helicopter pad during an intense North Vietnamese bombardment. Spicer and other stretcher bearers headed into the fire with litters loaded with wounded Marines and carried them aboard the waiting aircraft. Spicer had gotten his wounded aboard and had dashed back to get the final casualties out of the shell fire and onto a chopper. A mortar round burst among the knot of stretcher bearers and casualties, and shrapnel sliced into Spicer's chest, face, and legs. He had left his flack jacket unzipped, and a small metal fragment found the opening and pierced his heart. "Spicer held on for six days before he died.

On Monday, family and friends of Spicer will place a memorial wreath at the Veterans Monument in front of the Government Services Building. Golden Sands chapter of the Girl Scouts of America will place a Daisy Wreath at the monument. Flagler Palm Coast High School students will sing the national anthem. Randy Morris, a boyhood friend of Spicer's, will read the commendation, which notes: "Completely disregarding his own safety, he continued to expedite the loading of the wounded aboard the aircraft, despite the increasing intensity of the attack, and was the last man to seek shelter in a bunker at the edge of the air strip."

The Memorial Day ceremony will also feature U.S. Navy veteran Dr. Tracy Hejmanowski of Jacksonville Naval Hospital as the guest speaker. In her nine years as the Program Manager of the Naval Hospital Jacksonville Deployment Center, Dr. Hejmanowski has provided individual, group, and couples therapy for chronic operator fatigue and post-traumatic stress related conditions and has provided innovative alternative treatment modalities to military members from all service branches and components.

Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer: The Full Citation for His Navy Cross:

For extraordinary heroism while serving with Company C, Third Medical Battalion, Third Marine Division in the Republic of Vietnam on 8 March 1968. During an intense enemy rocket, mortar and artillery attack against the Khe Sanh Combat Base, Private Spicer unhesitatingly volunteered to serve as a stretcher bearer and assisted in embarking the numerous casualties aboard transport helicopters for evacuation. Completely disregarding his own safety, he continued to expedite the loading of the wounded aboard the aircraft, despite the increasing intensity of the attack, and was the last man to seek shelter in a bunker at the edge of the air strip. Observing a mortar round exploding near an evacuation helicopter loaded with casualties, he unhesitatingly left his position of relative safety to assist the wounded who were unable to move from their exposed position. Moments later, another round exploded within a few feet of Private Spicer, seriously wounding him, as he shielded a Marine from the blast with his own body. Unable to walk, he warned his comrades to remain in their protective positions while he attempted to crawl from the hazardous area to safety by himself. His selfless actions undoubtedly prevented serious injury or possible death to his fellow Marines and were an inspiration to all who observed him. By his dauntless courage, unfaltering determination and selfless devotion to duty at great risk,

Private Spicer upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

BLOOMER FAMILY OF FALLEN MARINE HONORED BY CHI-HI STUDENTS

ROD STETZER rod.stetzer@lee.net

Herbert Bungartz was coming up the steps from the basement of his home when he saw the visitors, who were two Marines. "He looked at them and said, 'Oh, no," said one of Herbert Bungartz' sons, David. The Marines were there to announce Herbert Bungartz' 19-year-old son, Marine PFC Fredrick Willa Bungartz, was missing in action in the Battle of Khe Sanh in Vietnam on Valentine's Day 1968 Three to four weeks later, his body was found and identified. Fritz" Bungartz's death for years haunted one of his brothers, Dan Bungartz. It still deeply affects him to this day. "I just got over this in the last 10 years," Dan Bungartz said. "I can talk about it now, where I couldn't before."

Dan and brother David Bungartz, both of Bloomer, were on hand Monday at Chippewa Falls Senior High School as Frederick Bungartz was honored. Another brother, Michael Bungartz, a former police chief in Bloomer, was unable to attend.
Bielecki will be making a trip to Hawaii.Jake said he has gone on a previous trip to memorials in Washington, D.C. His grandfather, Henry Hurtgen of Glenwood City, is a veteran of the Vietnam War.Each of the frames given to the Bungartz brothers had a rubbing of Frederick Bungartz' name from an etching on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The Flags 4 the Fallen program is starting a fund-raising effort today, Flag Day, to help pay for a trip to go to Pearl Harbor in Hawaii to honor local veterans buried there. The fund-raising effort at the school is going on through Saturday, and proceeds will be used to defray the cost of 30 students making the trip. John Kinville, an American government teacher at Chi-Hi and who directs the Flags 4 the Fallen program, said the students found in their research that Frederic Bungartz was friendly and courageous.



Chippewa Falls Senior High School teacher, John Kinville, chats with Dave and Dan Bungartz. Students honored Don and Dan Bungartz Brother Frederick, who was killed in the Vietnam War.



BIELECKI

"He left the a lot of unfilled dreamworld with us," Kinville said.



JAKE

CHI-HI CONNECTION

Frederick Bungartz graduated in 1967 from Chippewa Falls Senior High School and then joined the Marines.He was apparently ambushed while on patrol during the battle of Khe Sanh, which lasted from Jan. 21-July 9, 1968. During that battle, a reported 20,000 North Vietnamese Army regulars surrounded the 5,000 Marines at the Khe Sanh base. During the battle, 205 Marines were killed and 1,000 wounded, according to the Stars and Stripes website.

Dan Bungartz said he was 17 months younger than Frederick Bungartz. "We fought like any other brothers would fight. He was soft-spoken and good-hearted," he said.

David Bungartz was much younger, only seven years old when his older brother was killed. "I remember him (Frederick) really looking out for Mike and I," David Bungartz said.

Having the students remember their brother meant a lot to Dan and David Bungartz."I think it's very educational for them," Dave Bungartz said of the Flags 4 the Fallen program. "They are putting a face with a name, learning what Fritz was all about."

Dan Bungartz thanked the students for what they are doing and for honoring his brothersomethilt's ng that someone is being recognized from the Vietnam era," he said.
PFC Frederick Willa Bungartz is buried at St. Catherine Cemetery in Bloomer, off of Highway 64. His name is etched on Panel 39E and in row 29 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington.

OBIT

1ST LT ROBERT I. MORGAN USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, H&S CO 2/26-106 PLATOON.

March 13,1943 - June 2, 2017

TRIBUTE; By Rich Foley

I met Bob Morgan in March 1966. We had both enlisted in the Corps. I was in my senior year at LaSalle College and Bob had "left" VMI in his fourth year. We were assigned to the Third Battalion ("Disneyland"). Bob was in the third platoon, two floors above me. After the first week, twelve recruits were selected to be screened for Officer candidate School.

Escape from the DI's for any time at all was a treat. Bob could call cadence like a drillmaster and our merry group marched from mess hall to mess hall, delaying our return to our platoons as long as possible.

At ITR, Bob and I sealed our friendship. Eventually our orders to OCS arrived. I was assigned to a class ahead of Bob, but our friendship continued at the Basic School. We both requested and received des-

ignations as Infantry Officers. Our next meeting was in Quang Tri. Bob was a platoon commander in 2/26 and I was the Executive Officer of India, 3/26.
In December of 67 the entire regiment was sent to Khe Sanh. We would be there for the "Siege", seventy seven days under fire. me on Hill 881S and Bob, the 106 Platoon Commander on Hill 465.

We did not see each other again until 1970. We had both left: the Marine Corps. Bob was working for New York Life in D.C. His journeys after D.C were interesting. He attended the University of Mississippi, left to work in the Gulf and eventually found his way to Franklin Pierce Law School. He practiced law in New Hampshire until last: year, when his cancer was diagnosed with a very dire prognosis.

He started treatment at the VA Hospital in White Water Junction. When he learned of his condition my wife, Carol, insisted that he transfer his treatment to the VA hospital in Philadelphia and stay with us. Bob was a lifelong bachelor and with us he would have a solid support group. Little did we know how solid that support group would become..

Shortly after his arrival,, we introduced him to our friend, Eleanor, and they started playing bridge together. Determined not to meet his maker as a bachelor, Bob proposed to Eleanor in April. They were married in Claremont, New Hampshire on April 22, at the home of Jack and Nancy Yasinski. Jack was the former law partner of Bob and was now a judge. I was the best man, a role I never dreamed of having and carol was matron of honor.

Bob and Eleanor intended to leave for Roslyn. Virginia on May 2 to attend the 50th Reunion of Bob's Basic Class 5-67. "The Boys of Summer.- By May his condition had deteriorated significantly and Eleanor took him to the VA emergency room. He was admitted that day but on May 3 he insisted on leaving the hospital and heading for Roslyn. He was definitely attending his reunion.

Coincidentally, Carol and I were going to the D.C. area on May 1. With the assistance of Tom Esslinger, another KHE SANH vet, we put together a wonderful dinner at a Roslyn restaurant. Attending were Bob and Eleanor, Tom and Sung Esslinger, Dick and Sally Dworsky and several other of Bob's friends. Despite his pain, this trip invigorated him. He returned to the hospital on May 8 and was transferred to the nursing home on May 23 where he died on June 2.

Bob was the recipient of the Bronze Star Medal, two Purple Hearts and all the other Vietnam service medals. He served nineteen months in Vietnam.

He was my very best friend for fifty-one years and I always knew there wasn't anything he would not do for Carol and I that was within his power. He was stubborn beyond description, but the most principled person I ever knew. Those who knew him in New Hampshire found this "died In wool" Southerner an aggressive advocate for "you damn Yankees.· He never worried about his fee and if you had a legal problem, you had a lawyer.

Bob is survived by his brothers, Elliot, Ronald and Mitchell, his favorite cousin Claudia Simpson and several other cousins, nieces and nephews.

I frequently think about vanishing flags. These are the flags that appear in the newspaper obituaries of WWII and Korean War Veterans. Soon they all will have passed and our flags will replace them. I will miss Bob terribly, even the arguments we frequently had.

Semper Fidelis

Rich Foley





ALUMNI
VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE/WINTER 1965
REVIEW

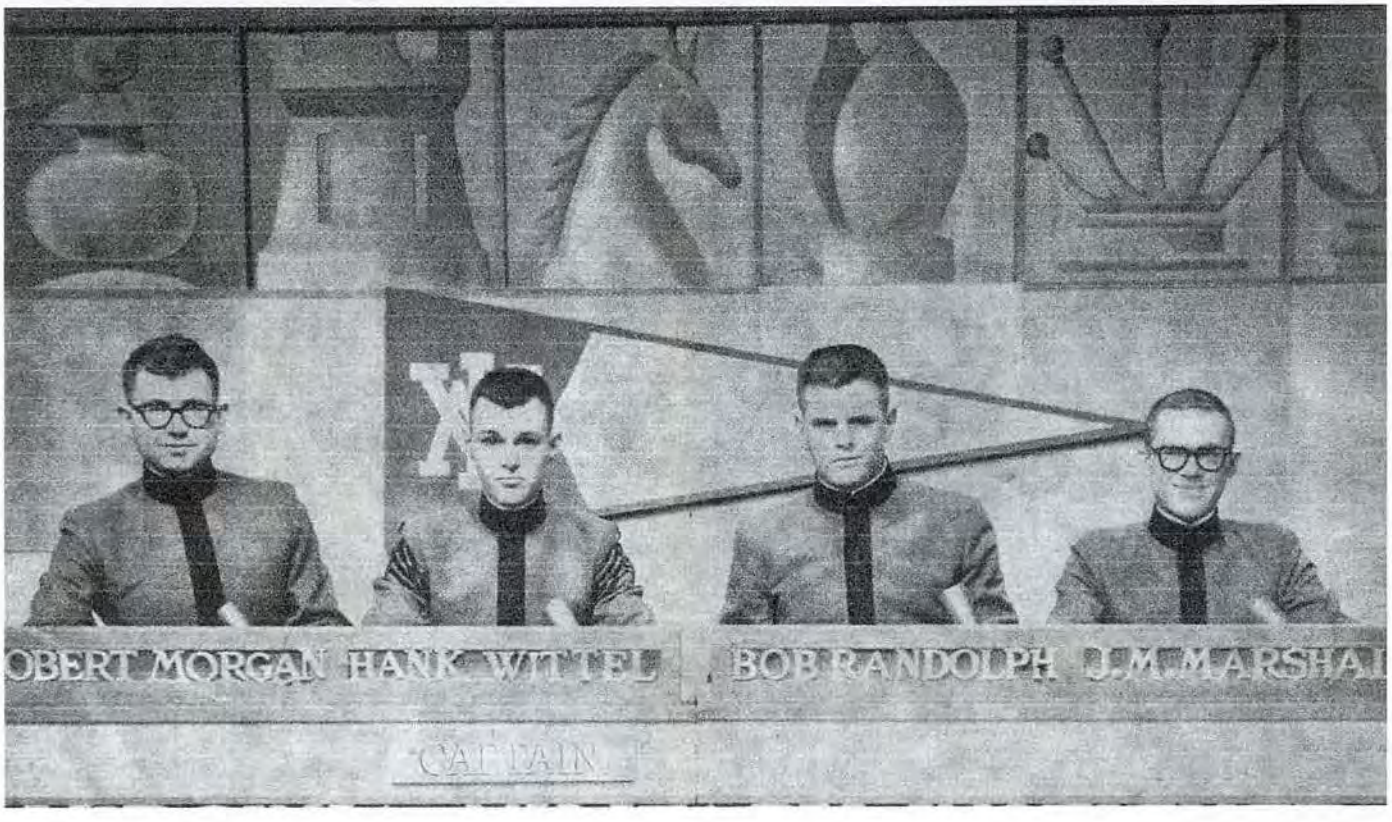

THE VMI COLLEGE BOWL TEAM

FROM THE WEB:
BY MIKE FISHBAUGH

ST. PAUL POLICE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO FALLEN VIETNAM WAR MARINE AND EAST SIDE LEGEND

By S. M. Chavey | schavey@pioneerpress.com | Pioneer Press

Thomas Brindley was already somewhat of a legend on St. Paul's East Side even before he went off to war.

When East Siders gathers to memorialize Brindley on Thursday, they will recall the Marine as a hero whose actions on the battlefield 49 years ago cost him his life. They will also remember Brindley as a hockey star, jingle writer and entrepreneur.



Brindley was a lieutenant in the Vietnam War when he was killed in 1968. His battlefield actions were awarded the Navy Cross, the second-highest gallantry award from the U.S. military.

St. Paul police officers and Brindley family members will pay tribute to him at a 4 p.m. ceremony Thursday at the St. Paul Police Eastern District.

Brindley was only 24 when his platoon came under intense fire at Khe Sanh, near the northwestern province of Quang Tri. The lieutenant shifted his squad to temporary safety while recovering the casualties. He then directed an aggressive attack

"Tom Brindley, the third platoon commander, drew his .45 pistol from his holster and, like something out of the movies, began to move his people on line and move up the hill. It was nothing short of magnificent," a fellow U.S. Marine wrote in a letter to his parents a couple of weeks later. "They just kept moving — men falling as they went, but everyone else just walking, shooting from the hip and tossing grenades until they came over the top of the hill."

At the crest of the hill, however, the squad came under intense fire once again. Brindley was fatally struck. His Navy Cross is one of only 116 given to Minnesotans and only 29 to residents of St. Paul, according to Doug Thompson, curator at the Minnesota Military Museum.

Before enlisting in the Marine Corps, Brindley was heavily involved in St. Paul's East Side community.

He had a knack for business: As a young boy, he and a friend wrote a hot dog jingle to the tune of Yankee Doodle and sold it to a St. Paul hot dog company for $50. A few years later, he started printing business cards with a friend. He also helped his oldest brother Terry Brindley with a paper route.
Thomas was "very outgoing and open to other people. He was always happy to help his friends with whatever they were doing," Brindley's second oldest brother Greg Brindley said.

During high school, Brindley worked for the family gas station, Brindley's Oil Co.. at the corner of Payne and Cook avenues.

Brindley captained his high school's hockey team and was a key player in winning the consolation championship one year. His athletic success merited him a scholarship at Colorado College, where he studied economics.

While home from college in the summers, he

worked at Hamm's Brewery, in the same building where many St. Paul police officers now work



St. Paul police Officer Lou Ferraro learned of Brindley's history from a former officer and helped organize the event. He said he wants East Side St. Paul residents and officers to understand the rich histories that are often lost.



"These community members have this huge family history," Ferraro said. "A lot of time it's really entrenched in the past and there's no way to know about it. It's important for me to bring these histories to the forefront."

Two of Brindley's brothers and other family members will attend the tribute at the 722 Payne Ave. police station. Brindley would have celebrated his 74th birthday on June 28



In addition to the Navy Cross, Brindley was also awarded the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Navy Presidential Unit Citation, the national Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation, the Vietnam Civil Actions Unit Citation, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

In 2015, Ferraro led a tribute in honor of Robert Pruden, another highly decorated soldier from the Vietnam War.

REPLIES

Thanks, Mike for the magic you work on this website and relaying the news of the honors for Lt. Thomas Brindley. Approximately 100 people, members of his family, 20 or so St. Paul Police Officers and many veterans attended the ceremony in the precinct house. A police sergeant gave a slide show of Tom Brindley's life and service with "India" 3/26 on 881S and included reading the Navy Cross Award citation. Not a lot of dry eyes in the group. Even met another Khe Sanh Vet (2/1) who attended.
DAN FISHER D CO 1/26

Thanks for the information about one of our classmates from Basic Officer Class 5-67.It's nice that some still recall our fallen. A saying is on our class "coins": WHEN YOU GO HOME TELL THEM OF US, AND SAY FOR YOUR FREEDOM

Our class lost 39 from the 516 graduates. Also, some died of wounds after returning states side and those aren't listed. Tom was part of L-1, 5-67. Tom assisted me during that training and I always recall the nice person that he was. sf/tc

TERRY CHARBONNEAU

THE WALL THAT HEALS

BELLEVUE — Donn Rospert was 25 years old when he joined the United States Marine Corp.

He had been in college for two years, watching the war rage. He made the decision to leave the safety of school to serve his country.
He had just arrived home from boot camp when he received a call from the local funeral home.



"I was asked to go with a funeral director to pick up and escort a body back. That jarred me. I realized this war was really going on and I might end up there," Rospert said.



Rospert served in Vietnam from October 1967 and October 1968, including from Da Nang to the demilitarized zone to Khe Sanh and to the Laotian border. He was given command of a unit.

Rospert knew about 20 people whose names are now on the Vietnam War Memorial, Rospert said. Two names are deeply personal to him.

"They were Lee Rush from Sacramento, Calif., and Robert Gonzalez, from New York City," Rospert said. "Those were my men."

Rush was 20 and Gonzalez was 19 when they died April 3, 1968. in the fight for Quang Tri City.

Rospert has been to the Vietnam Veteran Memorial in Washington, D.C.. He also saw the traveling memorial when it came to Sandusky a few years ago and then again when it was brought to the Ohio Veterans Home.



"The names strike you. You touch the wall and run your figures over the names. You see your reflection. That wall speaks to you," Rospert said. "Time, prayer and therapy takes the sting away from the pain, but the memories remain."

Rospert is one of the organizers who helped bring The Wall That Heals to Bellevue.

Hundreds of people lined the streets Wednesday to honor the names on the Wall That Heals.

"I am totally overwhelmed. It was a good escort," said Don Rospert, one of the event organizers and a Vietnam veteran.

The escort for the Wall That Heals, otherwise known as the traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall, was more than 500 motorcycles, as well as police and fire vehicles from every jurisdiction the route traveled through. It went through Sandusky, Milan and Norwalk before arriving at its final destination at Central Park in Bellevue.

The wall, which is 250 feet long, is a replica of the Vietnam Wall memorial in Washington, D.C. It contains all of the approximate 58,000 names that are on the permanent memorial.

About 110 of the young men who died during the Vietnam War were from Erie, Seneca, Sandusky and Huron counties, he said.

Organizers spent two years planning the event, including hosting community fundraisers. Rospert said it was amazing to see people lining the route to pay their respect.on Smith, president of Bellevue City Council, was along Bellevue's Main Street to watch the arrival. He is scheduled to speak at the opening ceremony on Thursday.

Smith, who was in the Army, was a teenager when he served in Vietnam from February 1967 to February 1968.He recalled being shelled at night and running to the bunkers for protection The first time we were attacked I remember thinking 'Is this real?"' Smith said. "It affected me when I saw shrapnel holes by where I had been sleeping."

The wall brings back memories for everyone, some funny and some painful, he said.

Smith remembers when he heard Bellevue resident Tommy Norman had been shot and returned home. And he remembers Roy Beasley.

"He went to Vietnam before me. I talked to him before he shipped over. We were at my home on Roger Avenue," Smith said.

Beasley was killed Jan. 25, 1970 in the Quang Tin province. "It made me so angry, I wanted to go out and start shooting," Smith said. Both Smith and Rospert hope that for some who served, the wall, whether the traveling wall or the permanent wall in Washington D.C., brings closure.

Another Army veteran along Main Street was Bob Hahl who served in Vietnam from June 1966 to 1967.Hahl was a wheel vehicle mechanic in the 5th and 27th Artillery. He remembers William "Billy" Weidinger, who died March 20, 1968 in the Hua Nghia province.

"I am glad Vietnam veterans are getting recognized," he said. The wall opens to the public at noon Thursday.

A bell will be rung and all 110 names will be read in the official opening ceremony.

OBIT

DAVID A. MARTINEZ, USN
KHE SANH VETERAN,
HMM-163 & HMM-262 (HM1)

Martinez, David Milan, Michigan Age 81, passed away Oct. 3 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He was born in ST Paul, Minnesota to parents Clayton and Agustina Martinez and raised in Milan. He joined the Navy in 1955 and served for eleven years as a Corpsman with the Marines. He served his country with valor in Vietnam between 1967-68 as a Corpsman with the HMM-163 (Ridge Runners).

He was in country at Quang Tri, Chu Lai, and served during the Tet offensive and the siege at Khe Sanh. As Corpsman who flew Medevac in Vietnam with the Marine Corps he was involved in two helicopter crashes. After one such assault, he woke with an injured back yet he managed to crawl from a mine field and gave aid to the injured crew. He flew 268 missions and was awarded 13 air medals and two Purple Hearts. During another assault, he leapt from the copter ignoring concern for his own safety to rescue an injured Marine.

He was once shot in the chest while giving aid to a fallen Marine but was spared by his bullet proof vest. During each battle or saving a soldier's life as a Corpsman, he always said a prayer when he thought it was necessary. He retired as a Senior Chief



Hospital Corpsman in 1976 after 22 years of service. He then attended Eastern Michigan University where he received Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (1983). He was active in the community sponsoring and competing in Softball and the Saline Bowling League and a die-hard Michigan football fan. He was honored to serve three terms as the President of the Vietnam Veterans Chapter 310. Proceeded in death by his parents Clayton and Agustina Martinez and infant broth!

Augustin. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Sandra Martinez, three sons, Jim, Richard and Deborah (Rogers) and David Martinez. Three sisters, Helen Opp, Rose Caswell, Mary and Harry Randolph, nephew Carl Opp, eight grandchildren and three great grand children Visitation tok place October 21, 3-8 pm at Ochalek-Stark Funeral Home, (734) 439-1100 in Milan.

A memorial for "Doc" was held at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial at the Ypsilanti Township Civic Center (7200 S. Huron River Drive) on Saturday at 11 am October 22. A luncheon took place afterwards at the Immaculate Conception Hall on 420 North St. in Milan at 1 pm

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to: Vietnam Veterans of America, Washtenaw County Chapter 310, P.O. Box 3221, Ann Arbor, M148106. Fir: Marine Aircraft Wing Association- Vietnam Service, 5282 Ousterhout Dr., Sterling, MI 48659. Khe Sanh Veterans, C/O Thomas Eichler, 3221 N. Opal, Chicago, IL 60634.

OBIT

COLONEL MCALEER, USAF, KHE SANH VETERAN

Dr. McAleer passed away on Friday, December 23, 2016.

Dr. McAleer was a resident of Fairfax, Virginia at the time of passing. George attended Holy Cross College for a year before transferring to the U.S. Naval Academy in 1954.George was commissioned in the U.S. Air Force and went to pilot training. He flew B-47s in the Strategic Air Command and C-130s in Southeast Asia. He flew over 100 combat missions in Vietnam and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for extracting Marines - and orphans - from Khe Sanh. He left active duty in 1969 and continued to serve in the Air Force Reserves where he later retired at the rank of Colonel. Visitation was held on Thursday Dec. 29 from 1-3PM and 6-8PM at Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home 9902 Braddock Road Fairfax VA. A Mass of Christian Burial was held on Friday Dec. 30 at 10:30AM at Holy Spirit Catholic Church 5121 Woodland Way Annandale VA. Burial with full military honors were held at Quantico National Cemetery 18424 Joplin Rd Triangle VA on Tuesday Jan 3 11AM.

46 YEARS AFTER THE TERRIBLE SIEGE AT KHE SANH, A VIETNAM VETERAN REUNITES WITH HIS FELLOW MARINES

By Dan Doyle

The year was 1968, it was January, and the Tet Offensive had begun. My unit, Bravo Co., was at a forward air base called Khe Sanh — now surrounded by a force of about 20,000 North Vietnamese

Army (NVA) troops — and, for seventy-seven days, the Marines at Khe Sanh would endure daily artillery, rocket, and mortar barrages.

Within days we had dug deep into the ground to make bunkers and eight-foot-deep trenches, connecting them in an effort to find some level of protection against the endless barrages. All too often, the size of the artillery and mortar rounds made all that effort an exercise in wishful thinking.

REUNION AND REFLECTION

That was 46 years ago. Today, I am in Sparks, Nevada, attending a reunion with my Marines from Bravo, 3rd Recon for the first time. It is proving to be a powerful experience. We are old men now. We were in our late teens and early twenties then. We were thinner, had all of our hair, and had the muscle and the energy of youth then. As life and luck would have it, we are old men, now in our late sixties and early seventies in varying stages of health.

But when we look at each other's ID tags and remember those names, we embrace. That brotherhood born in the crucible of that far away war reignites, and we settle quickly into recounting our old memories. While some of the shared memories are full of the pathos of those days, there is much laughter in our conversations, too. Somehow we have always been able to use humor to deal with the weird reality we found ourselves in. Many of our conversations are born out of that mutual experience and a sense of wonder that we survived all of that and even went on to have families and careers. We made lives for ourselves. But we never forget those whose lives ended back there. They are still missed and mourned for as if it were yesterday.
Many of these men have been coming to these reunions for years. This is my first time to be back with my brothers from Bravo Co., 3rd Recon. It has surprised me how quickly I felt at home with them all. There are men from the whole Battalion here, so there are many that I did not know then and am meeting for the first time here. But that doesn't make a difference — we are all Marines (even we Corpsmen).



TEDIUM AND TERROR

At the time the siege began Bravo, 3rd Recon about 110 men. At the end of it we had lost 19 of our brothers and many more had been wounded. We were a small unit on the base and our typical task of reconnaissance, being the "eyes and ears" of the 3rd Marine Division, had been rendered moot by the siege. We did not have to go sneaking around in the jungle looking for the enemy; the enemy had surrounded us and was at our perimeter. You could see them and their trenches creeping closer, testing our defenses every day. As a result we were often called upon to do other things.

For example, we were called upon regularly to collect the garbage on the base and then take it outside of the wires to the dump site. This was not as easy as it may sound, as the artillery and mortar barrages could come at any time. Getting caught out in the open, above ground, standing on a pile of garbage in the open bed of a truck, nowhere near a bunker was not good.

It seemed crazy, but it was an absolute necessity. We were already overrun with rats. They didn't need any more encouragement. When we went outside the wire to the dump site, we went with weapons locked and loaded. We pushed that trash off of the back end of that truck like madmen and retreated back behind the wires as fast as we could. Corpsmen were assigned the duty of burning the waste in the outhouses every day. That meant being exposed to sniper fire, or being away from the bunkers and trenches while you were engaged in this nasty job. But we did it, every day.

We would be called on occasion to help out at Graves Registration too. This was the difficult job of identifying and body-bagging our fellow Marines. Most of us were 18-22 year old kids, but we already knew the reality of death intimately. We

lived with the threat of it on a daily basis. We smelled it. We touched it. And it touched us.

BROTHERS, AGAIN AND ALWAYS

My Bravo Co. and some of the men from Delta Co. were the only elements of the Battalion at Khe Sanh, but we all went on Recon patrols in our small squads and share the unique realities of that experience. We all know what it means to have each other's back. These men cared for one another, protected one another, helped one another with an affection unlike any other. This brotherhood is a phenomenon of war that much has been written about, but to be a part of it is one of the most cherished things in our lives. We are never strangers to one another. Even though we see each other rarely, when we do get together, we are brothers again.

Being here with my Recon Marines again has been a very moving experience for me. I am enjoying the old camaraderie and am taking it all in, for we will part again and go back to our homes to carry on with our lives as usual. But for these few days we can step out of the usual and remember that unusual reality that we shared and survived together so many years ago.

It is good to be with my Marines again. They are good men, one and all. I love them. They are my brothers.

BETTER A LITTLE LATE THAN EVER

More than 600 veterans, families and citizens of all ages gathered under sunny Monday morning skies to remember and honor those who have served in our armed forces. This year's ceremonies focused on veterans from the Vietnam era, with much sharing of personal recollections, remembrances and thoughts from that pivotal conflict more than half a century ago.

"Today we pause as a nation to honor our military veterans, particularly those who have made the ultimate sacrifice," said master of ceremonies and Edmonds Cemetery Board Chair Jerry Janacek. "Memorial Day was first proclaimed in May 1868 to honor those who gave their lives in the Civil War. Our ceremonies today pay particular attention to our veterans of the Vietnam era, and accordingly the flag we raise today honors a fallen soldier from our own community.

"Ronald Paschell graduated from Meadowdale High School in 1969," Janacek continued. "Shot down while on helicopter patrol near Quang Tri, South Vietnam, in 1972, he was listed as missing in action. Twenty years later his remains were found, and now rests with two of his fellow servicemen in Arlington National Cemetery."

After the presentation of colors by scout groups and honor guard, singing "America the Beautiful," reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and a performance of "The Star Spangled Banner" by the Kinetic Singers, Janacek introduced Edmonds-Woodway sophomore Jenna Brock. Brock recited her original poem "Welcome Home," expressing recognition and deep gratitude for those veterans of Vietnam, often unsung and under-recognized, who physically survived that conflict, but bear inner scars for the remainder of their lives.

Mayor Dave Earling then took the podium to express his personal connection with the Vietnam conflict.

"While the previous two wars, World War II and Korea, happened when I was very young, Vietnam hits raw emotions and memories for me," he said. "I lived through those years in ways which have affected me for the balance of my life. It was a major force shaping my attitudes, outlook and values."

As a college teacher, Earling recalled, "I was confronted by the protests and political unrest engendered by that war, the assassinations of Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., and the ultimate resignation of President Richard Nixon. I watched demonstrations from my college office. I saw the names of acquaintances and friends on the daily casualty reports. I had a student commit suicide for fear of being drafted.

But the single biggest sadness for me which continues today was the anger and disrespect shown to our troops as they returned from Vietnam. The men and women who fought in that conflict are as noble and honorable as those who fought in any of our preceding calls to action. I salute our veterans from Vietnam."

Olivia Olson, three-time winner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars essay contest, next read her winning essay, "My Responsibility to America," in which she stressed the vital importance of caring for our country and those who have sacrificed in its name.

"We love our country and the freedoms and joys we share as Americans, but we must never forget that these have come with a price paid by the generations that preceded us," she said. "Being an American carries with it the responsibility to live these values; if we don't, we ignore the sacrifices others have made. Among these is respecting contrasting views, and working respectfully together for the common good regardless of politics, opinions or ideology. This is how we care for our country as it has cared for us. This is how we honor the sacrifices of our veterans. We owe it to ourselves and to future generations to nurture and inspire active citizenship from all."

Olson's address was followed by the White Table Ceremony led by Vietnam-era veteran Dan Doyle in honor of those who never came back — the prisoners of war and missing in action. "We must never forget the agonies of those who have endured, and may still be enduring, deprivation and imprisonment," he said. "This tribute bears witness to their continued absence, a testament that we will never forget them."

After an instrumental rendition of "America the Beautiful" by the Edmonds-Woodway High School Brass Quintet, Doyle returned to the stand to deliver an emotional and moving account of his experiences as a 20-year-old corpsman in Vietnam, focusing on enduring more than 77 days of constant bombardment in Khe Sanh.

"All hell had just broken loose," he recalled. "Within days our hooches had been destroyed, and we had to go underground, digging deep into the red clay of Khe Sanh. We could hear the thump of the rounds leaving the tubes from about four miles away in Laos. This would be followed by a brief silence, and then the intensifying sound like that of a freight train coming right at us. Then the terrifying explosions would shake the ground and fill our bunker with dust. It was impossible to build an underground bunker that could survive a direct hit by their artillery. One day a bunker took a direct hit, and only one of our brothers survived. We lived on C-rations and Kool Aid, unable to shower or bathe. That was our daily life. "

As he related his assignment to graves registration, where he had to tag and bag bodies of the fallen between artillery barrages, Doyle had to fight back the tears.

"Out of the original 110 brothers in our company, only 42 left together from that hell on earth. When those things happen to you at the age of 20, you're changed forever. You have faced your own mortality in ways that are immediate and certain. Your dependence on your brothers is total, and you form a bond like no other in this life.

"We went as young men, and left as old men, covered with the external and internal wounds of war. We will never forget our brothers who fell there in the red clay and dust of Khe Sanh. They are the ones who gave their last full measure that we may enjoy our freedoms today. We must never forget their sacrifice," he said.

Story and photos by Larry Vogel

ON MAY 3RD – 6TH, BASIC OFFICERS COURSE CLASS 5-67 (BOC 5-67) HELD THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION IN WASHINGTON, DC.

BY MIKE SOMMERS
PHOTOS INSIDE FRONT COVER

BOC 5-67 graduated from The Basic School on August 30, 1967 and by the first week of October individual members were arriving in Vietnam. Over 30 officers were assigned to the 26th Marines while an-



other eight were assigned to the 1st Battalion 9th Marines. In addition, several more officers were assigned to supporting artillery, engineering and motor transport units. Most of the officers would be involved in the 77 day Khe Sanh siege in 1968. In fact, the first officer casualties on January 18, 1968 were 2nd Lieutenants Mike Thomas and Tom Brindley both of India Company who were killed in the assault on Hill 881 North. Both officers were awarded Navy Crosses for their heroism that day. Over the next 120 days a total of 10 officers from 5-67 would pay the ultimate price while fighting in the Khe Sanh area of operations. These officers were: Ferndinando Distefano, Don Jacques, Larry Koman, Maxie Williams, Steve Fordham, Michael Hayden, Al Courtney and Robert Dodson.

The following officers, who fought at Khe Sanh, attended the Reunion: George Chaconas, Bill Connelly, David Combs, Dick Dworsky, John Engval, Mike Fielding, Bob Morgan, Les Palm, Charles Richardson, Ray Smith, Craig Swanson.

The Reunion kicked off Wednesday evening with a dinner at the Fort Myers Officers Club. Congressman Seth Moulton of Massachusetts was the guest speaker. Congressman Moulton is a Marine Captain who completed four tours in Iraq. On Thursday, the Class went south on I-95 to Quantico to visit The Basic School (TBS), the scene of their education 50 years ago. All remnants of the past are gone and in their place, are new billeting, mess and classroom facilities. A briefing by the command staff, a demonstration of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program and lunch in the new dinning facility were the highlights of the visit. It was then on to Semper Fidelis Trail at the National Museum of the Marine Corps for a memorial ceremony at the class monument to its 39 Vietnam KIAs. In addition to the Memorial Ceremony a brief presentation was made by The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration Program personnel and our three attending General Officers: LtGen Marty Steele, MajGen Les Palm and MajGen Ray Smith. Upon returning to the hotel, the group enjoyed a relaxing reception where the guest of honor was the Marine Corps Mascot, "Chesty".

Friday was a free day with an optional tour to Gettysburg. The two busloads met professional guides at the park's entrance and were treated to an informative and worthwhile two-hour tour of the battleground. That evening it was off to Marine Barracks Washington, (8th & I), to observe the first Evening Parade of the season. The skies had threatened all day, but the rain held off for most of the ceremony. With 15 minutes to go the skies opened and a Vietnam style deluge was dumped on us all, which served as empathy training for the spouses and guests.

Saturday started off with two guided bus tours of Washington DC, which were thoroughly enjoyed by all participants. The Reunion ended with a formal dinner at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. As the Class disembarked the buses and entered the Museum they were greeted by Secretary of Defense General James Mattis, USMC (Retired). General Mattis' time was limited, but he hosted a reception line so that each member and guest had an opportunity to greet him and exchange in brief conversation.

During the entire reunion, those of our classmates who were killed in action were constantly in our thoughts, and their families in our prayers. We were blessed to have several members of our KIA's families with us, which added significance and context to our gathering.
We will not forget!

REMEMBERING LLOYD W. (SHORTROUND) SCUDDER

11/7/1949 – 08/19/2013

From an old post – still remembered by those who loved him

"Ponderings from A Bus Bench"

By Craig W. Tourte

I sold my house in the suburbs and moved back to the city and into the little house I have owned for the past 30 years. As could be expected, the neighborhood has gone through a few changes, but the same old lady still lives next door. I thought she was old thirty years ago, in reality she was much younger than I am now. The 60-year-old homes in the neighborhood are filled with mostly middle-aged blue-collar workers, retired people and a few young

families.

The grocery store across the street is closed and boarded up with a tall chain link fence around the parking lot, as is the Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant next door. There is a vacant lot where the old Chevron gas station once was. New fast food restaurants have sprung up along the busy main street and a 24-hour AM/PM opened on the corner a few years ago. Just down the street a few blocks sits the little neighborhood bar called Ernie's Interlude. Of course, Ernie has been deceased for many years now, and the place is currently owned by his nephew, who lives out of town and takes little interest in the place. Ernie's sits in a little 4-business strip mall that has seen better days. A nail solon run by Vietnamese ladies, a smoke shop and late-night liquor store with massive iron bars on the windows run by an East Indian are all neighbors of Ernie's. A broken-down car wash is in the back, where Ernie's regular customers park in the evening out of sight of the street and neighbors, their vehicles hidden from spouses, old lovers and the late night cruising of police cars.

A few nights ago, I found myself sitting at the bar in Ernie's. A U-shaped affair with 20 or so stools around the bar and a few tables off to the side. There are the perennial photographs in cheap dusty frames hanging on the walls. Old photographs of the now long deceased Ernie and his many customers. Mostly people now forgotten, who played golf and tennis in various tournaments and events sponsored by Ernie's establishment. Small, cozy and quiet, with libations that are reasonable priced and most often the 3 working television sets are tuned to the latest sporting event. Occasionally a customer will put a few dollars into the new satellite system music center (jukebox) and play a slow country song or oldies from the sixties or seventies. The bartenders and even a few of the regulars are starting to recognize me, but I still feel obscure and comfortable. Ernie's Interlude is my kind of place.

It was well into the evening and dark outside. I had walked into Ernie's around 9:30 PM; it was now around midnight and time for me to leave. Walking to Ernie's from my house is not much of a problem, but walking home can sometimes be a challenge for one who has spent any amount of time consuming adult beverages. The drink I ordered at Ernie's cost $4.00; the same drink cost me $11.00 (a single shot) at the Riverview Plaza Hotel in Mobile Alabama during the reunion this year (2006).

I must be very careful when walking home from Ernie's because I have to cross two, 2-lane city streets before walking into my neighborhood just a few blocks away. At times, the walk home can be a dangerous adventure. About half way home, there is this old bus bench that sits all alone near the roadway and next to the chain link fence that surrounds the now boarded up grocery store. There are several battered, rusted and long forgotten newspaper racks nearby and of course the area is littered with various amounts of trash and castoffs. It was cool and dark that evening, with few vehicles traveling along the normally busy street in front of me. I was not in a hurry to go home, I walked out of Ernie's because I knew that I still could make it home in my current condition. About half way home, I took a seat on the old bus bench. Here I was, an inebriated lonely, middle age Vietnam veteran sitting on a bus bench in the dark, late at night, next to some junky abandoned and rusting newspaper racks, surrounded by trash, pondering my failures and difficulties in life.

A police car drove slowly by and the two young policemen inside gave me the once over but did not stop and continued on down the street. The area has quite a number of low rent and government subsidized apartments, so it is not unusual to see interesting characters walking along the street at various times of the day and night, although I happened to be the only character out on that particular evening.

My thoughts went back many years ago, when I too drove a big shiny police car around the same beat and along the same street. I was a young man, former Marine and Vietnam veteran and a survivor of the Siege at Khe Sanh just a few years before, feeling fortunate to have a job and knowing that I had already faced danger much worse than anything a policeman could possibly face. On the lookout for various thieves, robbers, drunks, drug dealers and unscrupulous characters who might be sitting on vacant old bus benches in front of boarded up grocery stores late at night waiting for the opportunity to attack the innocent, rob late night business establishments or take what did not belong to them. I was deeply pensive and found myself lonely, depressed and feeling worthless.

My thoughts went to my friend Tom Horchler who I had served with at Khe Sanh in 1967 and 1968. In 2003 Tom suggested that we attend the Khe Sanh Veterans Association Reunion to be held in Charleston, South Carolina. I would not know anyone at the reunion but wanted to spend as much time with Tom as I could. In 2003, he was the first Khe Sanh veteran I had spoken to in 35 years and I felt a real comradeship with him.

It was a truly rewarding experience to be able to meet and talk to so many Khe Sanh veterans in Charleston. I don't think I had been around so many really interesting people before in my life. It was clear that many had been attending these reunions for years. The respect and affection they had for one another was overwhelming. I am not a particularly garrulous person, but I tried to meet as many as I could. Neil Kenny, John Pessoni, Bruce Geiger, Dave Drake, Dennis Mannon, Erick Clark, John Rowland, Jim Wodecki, Tom Eichler, Milton McNeely, Nick Romanetz, Lloyd W. Scudder, Cliff Treese and Ron Shouse are just a few of the many I met at the reunion, each a hero to me and each with their own individual experience and prospective of that time in history, they were a completely fascinating group of individuals.

I found it interesting to observe how each interacted with the other. Some were with their families and others came with other veterans or by themselves. I noticed that Lloyd W. Scudder drew an unusual amount of attention from the other veterans. Many walked over to meet him and have a picture taken with him. There was seldom a time when he was not engaged in conversation with someone. I noticed the great love, respect and admiration so many had for this man. He of course obliged them all and was more than accommodating with their requests.

I also noticed that Mr. Scudder was missing his hand at the end of each arm. I made my way to Mr. Scudder and introduced myself, he was happy to extend his arm to me and acknowledge me. I told him this was my first reunion and that I was pleased to meet him. We exchanged some small talk, but shortly others had gathered around and it was time for me to move along and allow them to have some time and conversation with him.

Over the next several days, I think Mr. Scudder came to recognize me. Towards the end of the reunion, I had the occasion to sit down and talk to Mr. Scudder and he told me a fascinating story about his injuries.

Mr. Scudder was with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion of the 26th Marine Regiment, at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh in South Vietnam and was at Khe Sanh during the 77-day Siege that started on January 21, 1968. On February 25, 1968, 2/Lt Donald Jacques took Bravo Company across the wire located at the East end of Khe Sanh and into a horrific battle where numerous Marines were killed and few escaped the ambush. This event was later known as the Ghost Patrol. It just so happened that Mr. Scudder was visiting his brother at another base in Vietnam during the time that Bravo went across the wire and he returned to Khe Sanh with the gut wrenching feelings of loss and guilt that many such survivors carry in their hearts the rest of their lives.

When Mr. Scudder returned home from Vietnam he was assigned as a weapons instructor at the Marine Corps Camp Pendleton in California. One of his assignments was to instruct new Marines on the proper handling and throwing of the hand grenade. Mr. Scudder would accompany the new Marine into the grenade pit, no more than a hole in the ground, and instruct the Marine on how to hold the grenade, pull the pin enabling the safety spoon to be released when thrown, then to toss the grenade safely.

The Instructors where having problems with this particular batch of grenades and all of the instructors were apprehensive of their use. But in the Marine Corps, one does what he is ordered and the Marine Instructors carried on with their duties of instructing the new Marines, who would most certainly soon be on their way Vietnam.

Mr. Scudder was in the grenade pit with a young Marine and was giving him instructions on how to hold the grenade with the safety spoon against the palm, how to remove the pin and how to toss the grenade. He was standing directly in front of the Marine, instructing the Marine on how to place the grenade in one hand and how to remove the pin with the other hand, pull his arm back and toss the grenade. The young Marine managed to remove the safety pin on the grenade but then froze in place.

Mr. Scudder placed both of his hands around the hand of the young Marine so the Marine would not drop the grenade or release the spoon. As Mr. Scudder turned his head to the right to call another instructor over to place the safety pin back into the grenade it suddenly and without cause exploded in his hands, killing the young Marine and severely injuring Mr. Scudder. As a result of the tremendous blast Mr. Scudder lost both hands, the use of his left eye, damaged several ribs and suffered severe internal injury.

Gravely injured, Mr. Scudder was then transported to Oaknoll Naval Hospital in Oakland California where he lay for over three months recovering from injuries that many men would have succumbed to. On more than one occasion an officer came into his hospital room and interrogated him, questions where asked why he mishandled or dropped the grenade. Mr. Scudder wondered if the Marine Corps was blaming him for the accident, and holding him accountable for the deadly explosion. Mr. Scudder was discharged from the Marine Corps upon his release from Oaknoll Hospital, his pay was placed into the front pocket of his trousers and he was transported by pickup truck to the bus terminal in downtown Oakland California.

The Marine Corps pickup that transported Mr. Scudder into Oakland, parked across the street from the bus terminal and the driver opened the door for Mr. Scudder and pointed to the terminal. Unable to see clearly, he stumbled as best he could across the street and purchased a bus ticket home to Oregon. It was necessary for Mr. Scudder to ask the ticket agent behind the counter to remove money from the pocket of his trousers in order to pay for the bus ticket, Mr. Scudder told the ticket agent, "I don't have any hands."

Many years have passed since the accident, an accident which can be directly attributed to the Vietnam War. Training cycles were accelerated and shortened as young men were rushed to Vietnam. Munitions, weapons and equipment necessary for war were manufactured at a record pace. On occasion, newly manufactured munitions would unexplainable explode, fail to explode or somehow malfunction. Poorly made weapons like the newly issued M-16 rifle were placed into the hands of Soldiers and Marines with the prior knowledge that the rifle had serious deficiencies. Weapons would most often fail to fire during critical periods of combat. Weapons failure was blamed on poor cleaning and maintenance by the very men who were issued this poorly manufactured rifle. Thousands of young men were killed and injured as the result of these failures. It was later revealed that the Department Of Defense had prior knowledge of the weapons potential for failure.

Through these many years, Mr. Scudder has tried many alternatives and ill-fitting prosthetics provided by the Veterans Administration. After so many failures Mr. Scudder kind of gave up on the Veterans Administration and to a certain extent, I think the Veterans Administrating may have forgotten about Mr. Scudder. He has continued to persevere and endure these many years despite his injuries and the seemly lack of concern by the Veterans Administration. Mr. Scudder told me at this years Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion (2006) that the Veterans Administration was going to give him another try with something newly developed and he was looking forward to it's success.

It has been over 4 years since I first met Mr. Scudder, and I think about him every time I hear someone gripe or voice a complaint about an irrelevant event in their life. I think about a very brave man who faces real challenges each day, challenges most of us could never imagine. Mr. Scudder is popular at the Khe Sanh reunions, not because of his loss of limbs, but because of his bravery, inspiration and his perseverance.

Sitting on that old bus bench all alone in the dark after my departure from Ernie's Interlude, it was time for me to end my melancholy and leave. It was time for me to stop feeling lonely and sorry for myself, to stop feeling depressed and worthless. I opened up the door to my house, went in and went to bed where I knew I belonged. I was thankful for another day and so appreciative of the man who helped me to appreciate what I have. A man who was severely injured while trying his best to instill a little knowledge of combat and survival to someone else, a man who gave all that he could give, Lloyd W. Scudder, the bravest and toughest Marine I know.

KILLED' IN VIETNAM AND BURIED WITH COMRADES, ONE MARINE FROM THE DEAD

By Michael E. Ruane July 8 at 8:59 PM

Ronald L. Ridgeway was "killed" in Vietnam on Feb. 25, 1968.

The 18-year-old Marine Corps private first class fell with a bullet to the shoulder during a savage fire-fight with the enemy outside Khe Sanh.

Dozens of Marines, from what came to be called "the ghost patrol," perished there.

At first, Ridgeway was listed as missing in action. Back home in Texas, his old school, Sam Houston High, made an announcement over the intercom.

But his mother, Mildred, had a letter from his commanding officer saying there was little hope. And that August, she received a "deeply regret" telegram from the Marines saying he was dead.

On Sept. 10, he was buried in a national cemetery in St. Louis. A tombstone bearing his name and the names of eight others missing from the battle was erected over the grave. His mother went home with a folded American flag.

But as his comrades and family mourned, Ron Ridgeway sat in harsh North Vietnamese prisons for five years, often in solitary confinement, mentally at war with his captors and fighting for a life that was technically over.

Last month, almost 50 years after his supposed demise, Ridgeway, 68, a retired supervisor with Veterans Affairs, sat in his home here and recounted for the first time in detail one of the most remarkable stories of the Vietnam War.

As the United States marks a half-century since the height of the war in 1967 and '68, his "back-from-the-dead" saga is that of a young man's perseverance through combat, imprisonment and abuse.''

He was 17 when he signed up with the Marines in 1967. He was 18 when he was captured, 19 when his funeral was held and 23 when he was released from prison in 1973.



"You have to be willing to take it a day at a time," he said. "You have to set in your mind that you're going to survive. You have to believe that they are not going to defeat you, that you're going to win."

EVERYBODY'S DEAD'

About 9:30 on the morning of Feb. 25, Pfc. Ridgeway's four-man fire team charged an enemy trench line.

The curving trench seemed empty when they got there. But as Ridgeway and the others made their way along it, suddenly an enemy grenade dropped in.
"We back around the curve," he recalled. "It blows up."

"We throw a couple grenades," he said. "We backed off. . . . Then we realized the firing [from Marines] behind us had almost died down to nothing."

When they stood up to look around, they saw North

Vietnamese soldiers walking through the underbrush toward them. "I guess they thought we were all dead," he said.

"We cut loose on them," he recalled. "They were easy targets."

Ridgeway had been part of a platoon of about 45 men sent out from the besieged Khe Sanh combat base, in what was then northern South Vietnam, to find enemy positions, and perhaps capture a prisoner.

The enemy's noose around the Marine base had been tightening, with heavy mortar and artillery fire, and the patrol was hazardous. Six thousand Americans were surrounded by 20,000 to 40,000 North Vietnamese soldiers.

On that foggy morning, the patrol's leader, 2nd Lt. Donald Jacques, 20, strayed off course and was drawn into a deadly ambush, said Jacques's company commander, Capt. Kenneth W. Pipes.

More than two dozen Marines, including Jacques, were killed. One of the Marines in the trench with Ridgeway, James R. Bruder, 18, of Allentown, Pa., was cut down as the enemy returned fire, according to author Ray Stubbe's book about Khe Sanh, "Battalion of Kings."

"Stitched him across the chest and killed him," Ridgeway remembered.

The fire team leader, Charles G. Geller, 20, of East St. Louis, Ill., took a peek, and a bullet creased his forehead, knocking him down.

"Everybody's dead," Geller said, according to Stubbe's book. "Everybody behind us is dead. . . . What are we going to do?"

They had to retreat. Geller left first, running back across the field where they had charged, followed by Ridgeway.

The son of a Southern Pacific railroad worker, Ridgeway came from a working-class neighborhood of Houston. He had a younger brother.

His parents were divorced. He had left high school and joined the Marines because "I wanted to get away," he recalled.



(Maine Military Museum – and Learning Center) Ronald Ridgeway is photographed in 1973 shortly after his release from POW camps in Vietnam. (Family photo)

As he and Geller ran to the rear, they came upon Willie J. Ruff, 20, of Columbia, S.C., who was lying on his back with a broken arm.

"We were in a hurry," Ridgeway said. "But we stopped. He was wounded."

As Geller knelt beside Ruff, a bullet hit Geller in the face, leaving a terrible wound. Then Ridgeway was struck by a round that went through his shoulder. All three men were now down.

"All we could do was lay there and play dead," he said. "We were in the wide open."

Ridgeway said he drifted in and out of consciousness. When Geller, who was delirious, got to his knees, the enemy threw a grenade, killing him.

Ridgeway said the North Vietnamese then began shooting at Marines who had fallen in front of their trenches. "They're popping the bodies to make sure they're dead," he said.
One bullet hit the dirt near him. A second glanced off his helmet and struck him in the buttock, he

said.
"When that hit, it jarred the body," he said. "They figured they got me. Left me for dead and kept working their way down past me."

Ridgeway passed out again. When he woke up, it was dark and American artillery was pounding the area.

Ruff said he had been hit again and begged Ridgeway not to leave him. Ridgeway said he wouldn't. At some point that night, Ruff died.

Ridgeway was awakened the following morning by someone pulling on his arm. He thought at first it was fellow Marines.

But when he looked up, he realized it was a young North Vietnamese soldier trying to pull off his wristwatch.

AGONY AND IDENTIFICATION

After the firefight, the shattered survivors of the patrol made it back to the combat base, and the dead were left on the battlefield.

A rescue mission was deemed unwise by higher-ups, who feared losing even more men and depleting the base's defenses, according to Pipes, who is now retired and lives in California.

In a telephone interview, he said that with binoculars, he could see Marines' bodies strewn on the battlefield. "It was worse than agony," he said. No further patrols outside the combat base were immediately permitted.

"We couldn't go get them," he said. "They laid out there for six weeks."

On March 17, he wrote to Ridgeway's mother: "I am sorry that I can offer no tangible basis for hope concerning Ronald's welfare."
Finally, on April 6, the Marines were able to return to the battlefield, Pipes said.

What was left of the dead was brought back to Khe Sanh's temporary morgue, where Pipes and others went about the grisly task of identifying the dead.
"There wasn't much there but bones and shoes and boots . . . [and] dog tags," he said.

In the end, of the 26 missing and presumed killed in action on Feb. 25, remains of all but nine were positively identified, according to Pipes and Stubbe.

The unassociated body parts were sent home and placed in two caskets that would be buried beneath a large tombstone bearing the nine names of those unaccounted for, Stubbe said.

The day of the funeral at the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery was sunny and cool. Ridgeway's mother attended, and there were flags and solemn honors. A newspaper photographer took pictures.
Far away, in North Vietnam, the rainy season was on, and Ridgeway was in his seventh month as a POW.

THE WORK OF SURVIVING

As he sat alone in his windowless cell beside a wooden bed and the bucket he used for waste, Ridgeway went about creating a "make-believe" life.
There was no one to talk to, and he was allowed out only once a day to empty the bucket.

So he imagined that he was somewhere else, that he owned a pickup truck, that he had a wife and children, that he would go fishing.
It was a mental exercise, he said, and he found that spending three days in his make-believe world would take up a whole day in solitary.

Ridgeway said that by then, his captors considered him a "die-hard reactionary" and all Marines "animals."

He hadn't cooperated with his guards. He had lied to interrogators, pretended he was a green kid who had neverfired his rifle and gave them bogus military information.

The startled North Vietnamese soldier had locked and loaded his rifle when he realized Ridgeway was alive that morning.

Ridgeway expected to be killed. "You didn't hear about prisoners being taken," he said. But he was bandaged, fed and marched away, through Laos and

into North Vietnam.

He spent time in several jungle camps, held in wooden leg stocks, and he eventually wound up in enemy prisons.

He got lice, malaria and dysentery and lost 50 pounds. He wore pink-and-gray-striped POW pajamas and rubber sandals, all of which he brought home with him when he was freed.

He was beaten with bamboo canes and tied up during interrogations.

One interrogator the Americans named "Cheese" — because he seemed to be the big cheese — was especially cruel.

He spoke English and sat up on a high chair as he questioned POWs tied on the floor. When he nodded his head, a guard would strike the prisoner with the bamboo cane.

He had a face like a rat, Ridgeway recalled, and was a "mean . . . sadistical son of a b----."

Ridgeway said he didn't dwell on the notion that people back home might think he was dead. They would be fine. His job was to survive.

In January 1973, he was in North Vietnam's notorious Hanoi Hilton prison when his captors abruptly announced that the POWs were to be freed as part of a peace agreement before the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam.

When the list of POWs being released became public, Ridgeway's name was on it.

Back in Houston, his mother banged on a neighbor's door and said, "Ronnie's alive!"

MEMORY ETCHED IN STONE

Ridgeway was released on March 16, 1973. He came home, got married and went to college.

"I came back in basically one piece," he said. "I came back able to live my life.... We went over with a job to do. We did it to the best of our ability. We were lucky enough to come back."

Several months after his return, he and his wife, Marie, went to Jefferson Barracks to see his tombstone, which was later replaced.

"It brought back memories," he said. "The loss of life of those that I knew. It was a solemn experience."
Carved in the surface were the words "Ambushed Patrol Died in Vietnam Feb. 25, 1968."

Eight names from the top: Ronald L. Ridgeway.

Magda Jean-Louis contributed to this report.



After his disappearance, Ridgeway's name was etched onto a tombstone in a St. Louis cemetery, along with those of eight fellow Marines who went missing in the 1968 ambush. (Fred Waters/





Retired Marine Ronald L. Ridgeway, photographed at his Texas home, was 18 years old in 1968 when his patrol was attacked in Vietnam. He was captured and held prisoner for five years before being released, a time during which he was believed dead. (Matthew Busch for The Washington Post)



1971, Mrs.Mary Hoff, an MIA wife and member of the National League of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs. Prompted by an article in the Jacksonville, Florida TIMES-UNION, Mrs. Hoff contacted Norman Rivkees, Vice-President of Annin & Company which had made a banner for the newest member of the United Nations, the People's Republic of China, as a part of their policy to provide flags to all UN member nations. Mrs. Hoff found Mr. Rivkees very sympathetic to the POW/MIA issue, and he, along with Annin's advertising agency, designed a flag to represent our missing men. Following League approval, the flags were

"MEMORIES"

THE 2017 KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION, CLEVELAND OHIO BY CRAIG TOURTE KHE SANH VETERAN SCRETARY HQ BTRY 1/13

I just don't know how President Tom Eichler and Board Member Russell Turner along with Russell's wonderful wife Kathy do it. The literally hundreds of hours of negotiations, travel, contracts, assurances, promises, complaints, reservations, miscellaneous shipping, transportation, excursions, name tags, meal costs, negotiating parking and additional business room fees, meal counts, attendees registration collected and tracked, supplies for the PX and hospitality room, artistic design of new shirts and paraphernalia along with long hours at the registration desk are just some of the many tasks they freely perform, and they undertake this job for us, each year, without complaint or compensation. All of which made this another outstanding reunion enjoyed by so many. The Cleveland Marriott East was one of the finest hotels we have visited. The rooms could not have been more comfortable and the staff more accommodating

There was much to offer this year in the way of excursions and entertainment. Tuesday and Wednesday some of us played golf at two (2) great courses. Stone Water Golf Club and Little Mountain Country Club. As he did last year, Khe Sanh Veteran and PGA Profession Golf Instructor Fred Bender (Pasa Hills Golf, Wesley Chapel, Florida (813) 857-5430) was kind enough to make the arraignments and T-Times for both courses at less than half the regular price. Besides my high handicap self and Fred Bender, those who participated were Tom Horchler, John Wolfe, Ted Hummer, Robert Longcrane, Tom Ford, Louie Reyes and Ted Rizo. As would be expected, Fred is a great golfer and I was humbled to have been able to play golf with him. Except for Fred, we all seemed to play to our handicaps. Fred was very kind, he just smiled, offered no advice or opinions and let us play our game. What a pleasure he was to watch, I tried to learn at least something, after all, it was free. On that note, there is no golf planned for the Washington D.C. reunion next year. I'll try to put something together in 2019 in

Tacoma Washington if there is enough interest.

Who doesn't enjoy a romantic dinner cruise. On Thursday, we all boarded the "Nautica Queen" river boat for an enjoyable little cruise up the Cuyahoga River – famous for having been so polluted it caught fire in 1969 which spurred the environmental movement in the United State – now pristine, we had great views of the city lights and sites. At the dinner table, I sat next to Tom Horchler who had a remarkable17 year career in the food and beverage industry. I can personally attest to his experience and attributes as it pertains to food preparation and hospitality. I deferred to his expertise regarding the meal, his opinion was it was difficult to feed so many in such limited space but given the circumstances the food was pretty good and certainly plentiful. Many must have agreed; a quick glance around revealed many empty plates and looks of satisfaction.

While visiting with those around me Board Member Louie Reyes stopped by, accompanied by his 7-year -old granddaughter Presley (Torres). She introduced herself and informed me she was not named after the singer Elvis Presley but rather after USMC Lt. Presley O'Bannon (1776-1850). Presley told me she could sing the "Marine Corps Hymn" and asked if I wanted to hear it. Of course, I said yes and was absolutely stunned at her rendition and singing talent Rock and Roll Hall of Fame" just the name is intriguing. We traveled there on Friday and I don't think any were disappointed. The building was huge and as the name implies, loaded with thousands of memorabilia from notable bands and performers. Of interest was the Dick Clark - from American Bandstand – theater which played a continues film of then, not so famous performers. Phil Nuchereno and Board Member Bruce Geiger both thought this was one of the most interesting presentations of the hundreds of exhibits displayed.

The reunion concluded with the Saturday evening banquet. Another notable evening of pageantry, formality, introduction of officers, good humor, excellent food and sad goodbyes. The posting of colors representing all the military branches is always a proud and emotional moment for me. 7-year-old Presley stood before this large mature crowd and while holding the microphone, humbly sang the Marine Corps Hymn. I don't think there was a dry eye in the place

There are always the dependable at the Khe Sanh Reunions who volunteer their time and energy so that others may enjoy themselves. Without their devotion to the Association and love for their comrades the reunion would not continue to be the success it has become. Vice-President John Pessoni donates hundreds of hours to the Association by managing the PX both at the reunions and his home. Sergeant at Arms David Meyer and Board Member Tom Ford assist John in the PX, often forgoing their own enjoyment and entertainment so they may be available to assist others. Merle Moritz and his wife Rita assisted by Board Member Mike Fishbaugh ensure the hospitality room is stocked with the finest available, a never-ending task and huge responsibility so very much appreciated by the attendees

Board Member Mike Fishbaugh deserves individual recognition for his tireless efforts. He always seems available to any member who contacts him with a request for assistance. His skill at the computer does not go unnoticed and is so greatly appreciated by so many who have asked for guidance in researching important and often complex personal issues

Board Member Louie Reyes skills in electronics with the microphone and speakers is so appreciated. As experience has shown, his talent and expertise has saved the Association in funds often charged by the various host hotels. I have it on good authority Louie has a wonderful signing voice, now we know where his granddaughter got her talent

There are those who always ascend to the task and volunteer to assist in any way they can to contribute in making the reunion a success. Rolland Kutzbach is just such an individual. A professional commercial driver he freely volunteers his time, transportation knowledge and skills along with any other odd job that needs doing

Sid Patricio is often seen in the background with several cameras hanging around his neck. For those who do not know Sid or have failed to introduce yourself, Sid is one of the original founding members of the Khe Sanh Association and to my knowledge, has never missed a reunion since its inception. Sid is a fine man and outstanding Marine who served with Delta Company in Weapons Pla-

toon. If you have ever had questions regarding the Association, past members or the history of its founding, please don't hesitate to ask him, he warrants our praise and respect.

Our Wonderful, lovely, Khe Sanh Ladies enjoyed a Luncheon while their men folk discussed Khe Sanh Veterans affairs at the General Membership meeting. They held their own little auction of gifts they personally donated and raised over 1,000 for the Scholarship Fund.

An Election for Board members was held for the position of President, Treasurer, and four Mmbers at Large positions.Tom Eichler, our current Presidentb & Treasurer ran unopposed and was reelected. Bruce Geiger, Tom Ford, Russell Turner, were all elected for another term. Ted Rizo replaced John Wolfe .We want to thank John for his dedicated service to the Khe Sanh Veterans organization.

Were you one of the fortunate who made the 2017 Reunion in Cleveland Ohio? I think I may have missed one in the past 14 years and told myself if I was capable, I'd never miss another. I can think of several members just off the top of my head, who were unable to make this reunion but certainly would have, had they been able. I am confident they would have had a wonderful time seeing and visiting with their many old friends and making new ones, swapping stories and recalling encounters, remembrances and so looking forward to next year's reunion. I can see their happy faces and caring smiles and I remember the many conversations I had with each. Doc (Corpsman) Jim Thomas missed this year's reunion as did Board Member Kenneth Martin.

The always inspirational Lloyd (Shortround) Scudder didn't make the reunion this year, neither did former Marine Corps Drill Instructor Bruce Kates who joined us for golf at the San Diego reunion and who I spoke with at Khe Sanh shortly before he was seriously wounded. No, none of those mentioned made the reunion in Cleveland Ohio this year. Sadly, they have passed on, but they were missed and not forgotten, as were so many more we have lost over the years. If you haven't attended a Khe Sanh Reunion in a while or have never attended, please consider attending the reunion next year in Washington D.C. This reunion commemorates 50 years since the start of the Siege at the combat base however, this reunion is for everyone who served in that area of operation during the Vietnam War, dependents, associates, guests and anyone else who would like to honor and support Khe Sanh Veterans, anyone and all are welcomed and invited to attend.

TWO DAYS AT THIS KHE SANH VETERANS' REUNION HAS BEEN BETTER THAN TWENTY YEARS OF THERAPY

BY

KHE SANH VETERANS CHAPLAIN RON RAYNER

Programs for the Khe Sanh memorial service were available at the check in table at this year's reunion in Cleveland. Inside the program was a section to write people's names that are connected to Khe Sanh that have passed on. I had a program open and I had written the names of some people who I knew because of my Khe Sanh experience. Others had already written more names on the program.

One of the first ladies that checked in after I had sat down at the check in table looked at the program and saw the name **"Short Round"** and proceeded to tell a "Short Round" story that validated the whole purpose of having a place in the Memorial Service program to write remembrances.

First of all, it had to be established which "Short Round" we were talking about as there is more than one guy called "Short Round". The lady said, "Lloyd and Patricia Scudder." Her story follows:

She and her husband met Lloyd and Patricia Scudder at the Khe Sanh Reunion in 1997. A few days into the reunion she had been walking through the hotel and happened to see Patricia sitting somewhere and crying. The lady asked if there was something she could do. Patricia responded, "Oh no, everything is just fine. Two days here at this Khe Sanh Veteran's reunion had helped Lloyd more than twenty years of therapy."
Jesus said, "... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10 (KJV)

The Cleveland reunion went great. The people that attended smiled a lot and enjoyed the camaraderie. Enjoying life is something God wants us to do. Enjoying life is what I believe we owe to the more than the 1.1 million men and women who have lost their lives serving this country.

If you have not been to a reunion in a while or not at all, I highly recommend going to Washington D.C. next year and meeting some very friendly happy people. Remember it is not what happens to you in life, but how you handle what happens to you in life.

Gracious God, thank you for bringing into our lives friends who brighten our dark moments. Please guide us to transform our own struggles into compassion for others. Amen.





OUR KSV PX GURU'S TOM FORD & JOHN PESSONI

REUNION START, CHECKING IN:



RUSS, KATHY, TOM

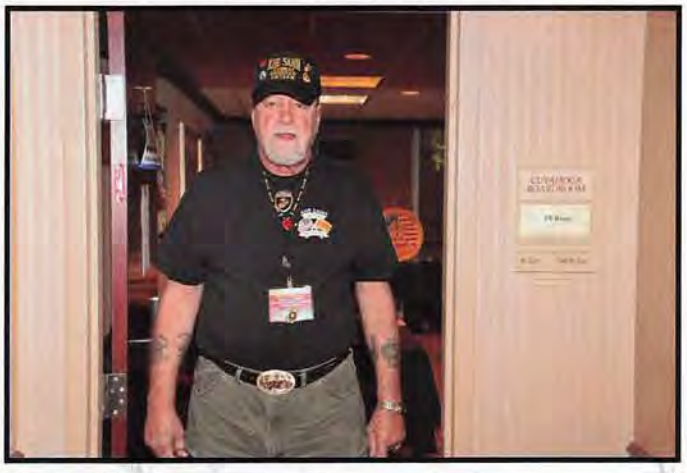

BIG JOHN PESSONI OPENS KSV PX



BIG JOHN CHECKING INVENTORY



OPENING SILENT AUCTION





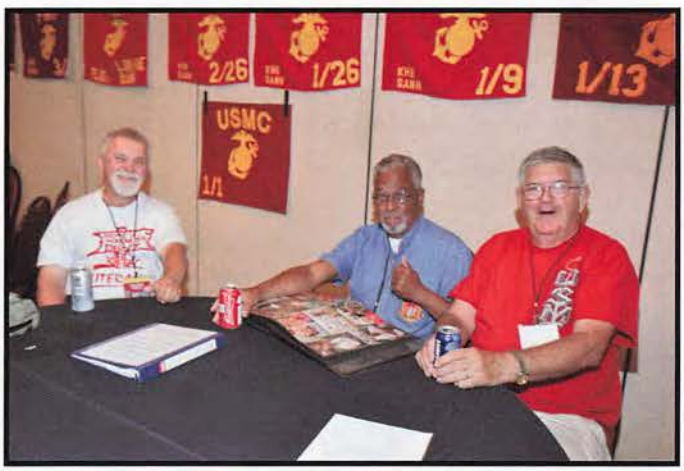

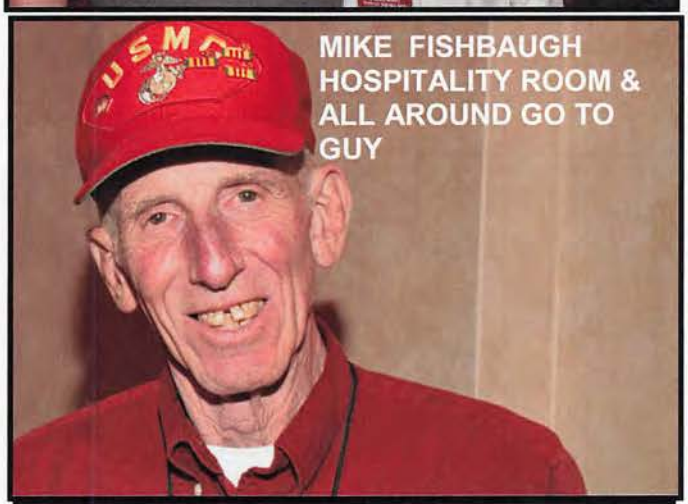

HOSPITALITY ROOM OPENS












I'M GETTIN FRIED ON
DECK






Marriott





CRUISE & DINNER TRIP WITH LIVE ENTERTAINMENT




















RECON
MARINE






USMC




United States Marines



A TRIP TO THE ROCK& ROLL HALL OF FAME


















ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME


ROCK & ROLL HALL O
WELCOME - ENTER HERE


ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FA


ROCK & ROLL HALL OF
WELCOME - ENTER HERE


ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME


ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME


ROCK & ROLL HA
WELCOME - ENTER HERE


ROCK

CHAPLAIN RON RAYNER LEADING MEMORIAL SERVICE









OUR BEAUTIFUL KHE SANH LADIES HELD THEIR ANNUAL LUNCHEON. THEIR OWN FUND RAISER EARNED ALMOST $1,000 FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND.

























KHE SANH LADIES RAISING MONEY FOR THE KHE SANH SCHOLARSHIP FUND

REUNION BANQUET KSV REUNION CLEVELAND OHIO 2017



















































HAROLD & LINDA EASTER
ALPHA CO 1/26



BRUCE GEIGER
A CO 1/44 TH ARTY USA
DUSTERS/QUADS
KSV BOD



JOHN & JAN VOSNICK
GOLF CO 2/26



JOHN & BEV BERSANO
DELTA CO 1/26



JOHN PESSONI
"BIG JOHN"
VP KSV
A CO 3RD
COMBAT ENGRS
REUNION
COMMITTEE



RUSS & FAYE EVANS
H&S CO 3/26



AL & JUARENNE OWEN
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
"ONTOS"



RUSS &
KATHY
TURNER
A CO 1/26
PAST
PRESIDENT
KSV
REUNION
CHAIRMAN


MIKE FISGBAUGH
FLSG-B FLC
KSV REUNION
COMMITTEE


RITA & MERLE MORITZ
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A
KSV REUNION
COMMITTEE


VIRGIL & EYDIE CAUGHRON
HQ BTRY 1/11
USMC


DENNIS MANNION
KILO CO 3/26 F/O
KSV REUNION
COMMITTEE
KSV BOD


FRANK PORTELLO
& ROSA BECERRA
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
"ONTOS"


USMC
RICK & CHER LORD
MIKE CO 3/26

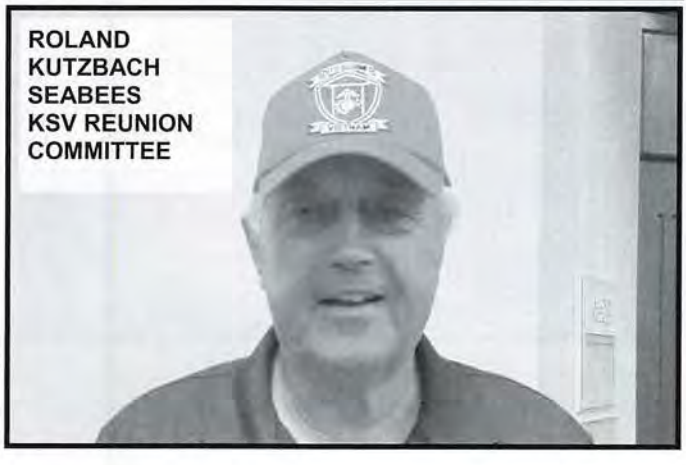
ROLAND
KUTZBACH
SEABEES
KSV REUNION
COMMITTEE


Marines
JOHN & GUINN WOLFE
3/26 9TH MAB
SCOUT/SNIPER



ED & SANDY STERN
BRAVO CO 1/1 1ST
TRANSPLACEMENT
BN OKINAWA 1959

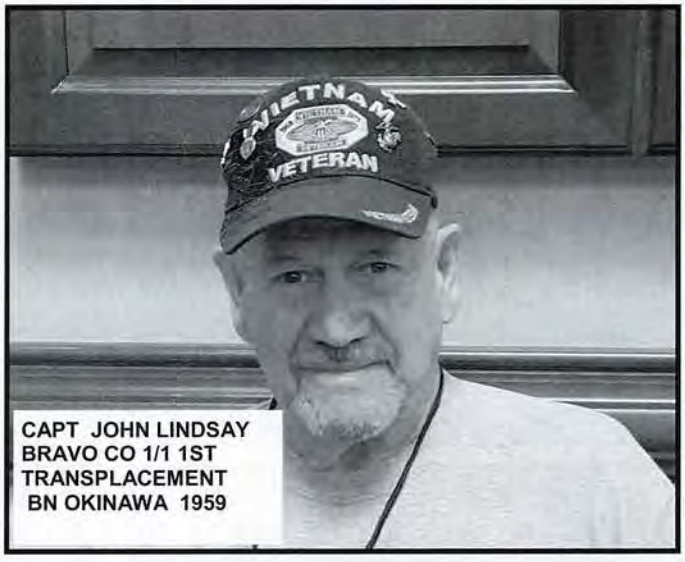

CAPT JOHN LINDSAY
BRAVO CO 1/1 1ST
TRANSPLACEMENT
BN OKINAWA 1959



GLENN STERLING
BRAVO CO 1/1 1ST
TRANSPLACEMENT
BN OKINAWA 1959

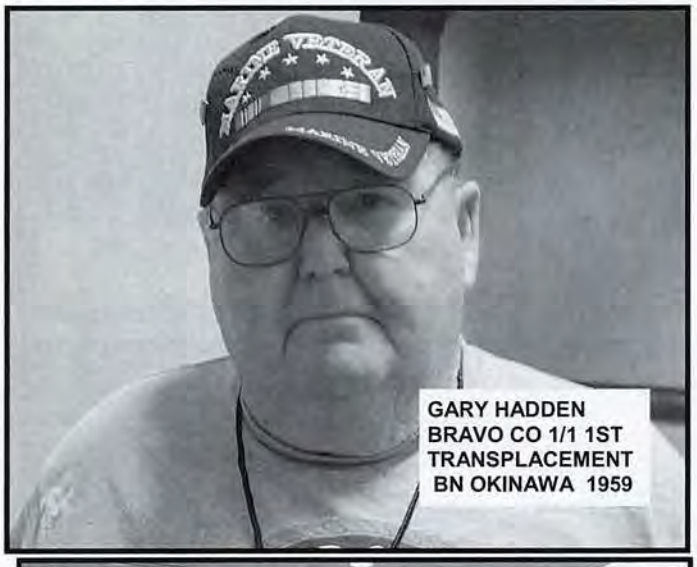

GARY HADDEN
BRAVO CO 1/1 1ST
TRANSPLACEMENT
BN OKINAWA 1959



DON & JAN MASON
BRAVO CO 1/1 1ST
TRANSPLACEMENT



JOE & MARY ANN REBOLTZ
BRAVO CO 1/1 1ST
TRANSPLACEMENT
BN OKINAWA 1959



ED & MARIAN TUSO
BRAVO CO 1/1 1ST
TRANSPLACEMENT
BN OKINAWA 1959

MEMBERS OF BRAVO CO 1/1 CAMP SUKIRAN OKINAWA 1959



BILL & WILMA RING
DELTA CO 1/1


RICHARD HOFFMAN
1/26 SCOUTS


RON & CONNIE BELLANTONE
DELTA CO 1/26


GLENN & PANUMAS
PRENTICE
C BTRY 1/13 &
INDIA CO 3/26


1ST SGT BENJAMIN
& JACKIE LEITH
GOLF CO 2/26



PATRICK & CHRIS GORMAN
MIKE CO 3/26


LARRY "DOC" LECLAIRE & LOU
KILO CO 3/26



GARY COX USA
75TH SUPPORT CO
1ST BDE 5TH DIV



GLENN & SANDRA GRIFFIN
DELTA CO 1/1


LAWRENCE ST ANTOINE
MCB4-SEABEES



JOE & TERRI BUENROSTRO
BRAVO BTRY 1/13


CLIFF & LINDA TREESE
BRAVO BTRY 1/13


RICHARD & CAROL FOLEY
INDIA CO 3/26



TOM & MARY KEATON
BRAVO BTRY 1/13


JOSEPH & MAUREEN VITURALE
CHARLIE CO 1/26

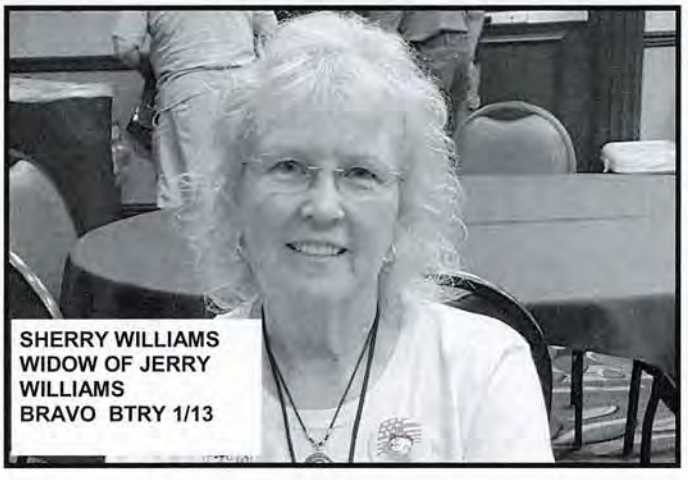
SHERRY WILLIAMS
WIDOW OF JERRY WILLIAMS
BRAVO BTRY 1/13



JOSE LUIS REYES "CISCO"
& SANDI
ECHO CO 2/26
HILL 861A
REUNION COMMITTEE



LAUREN & PRESLEY REYES



SAM ROACH
A BTRY 1/13
BRAVO CO 1/26



DAVID & CAROL MEYER
CHARLIE CO 1/26
REUNION COMMITTEE
KSV SGT AT ARMS



GERALD "JERRY"
WILCOXEN &
MARTY
FOX CO 2/26

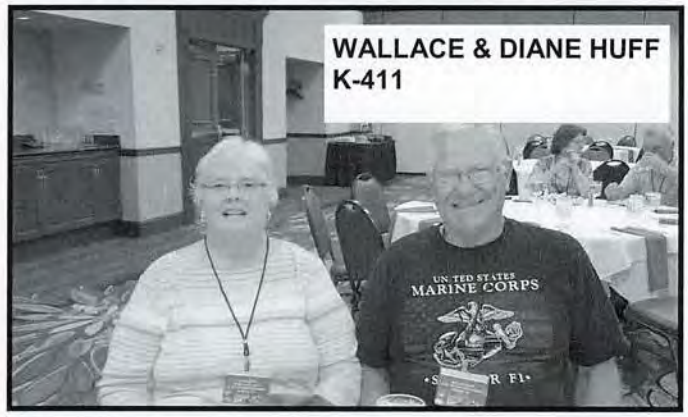

WALLACE & DIANE HUFF
K-411



BILL & SUE WEBER
MCB-4 SEABEES



RUSS & CATHY WAGNER
CHARLIE CO 1/26


JAMES & LINDA
BEALL
HN BRAVO CO
1/26 BAS


WILLIAM & JUDY
CRAWFORD
FOX CO 2/26


JOHN & KAY HARGESHEIMER
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS "ONTOS"


CLINTON &
JULIA
LEWIS
H&S CO 1/26


BILL & JUDY
MARTIN
HQ BTRY1/13


WILLIAM & JANET
BOAN
GOLF & H&S CO 2/26


DICK & SARA
DWORSKY
INDIA CO 3/26


THOMAS & MARIE
KELLY
1ST RADIO BATTALION



RAY "DOC" & CAROLINE TORRES
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A



VINCENT BEGAY
ALPHA CO 1/26



MICHAEL ORGAN
5TH COMM BN



ROBERT LONGCRANE
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A



KEN & LIZ KORKOW
BRAVO CO 1/26

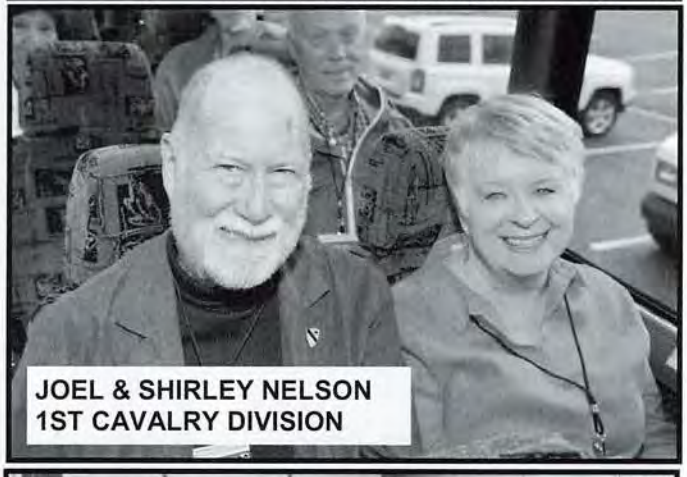

JOEL & SHIRLEY NELSON
1ST CAVALRY DIVISION



MARTIN & ETHEL BROSTON
LIMA CO 3/26



BRUCE SAFFEL
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS "ONTOS"

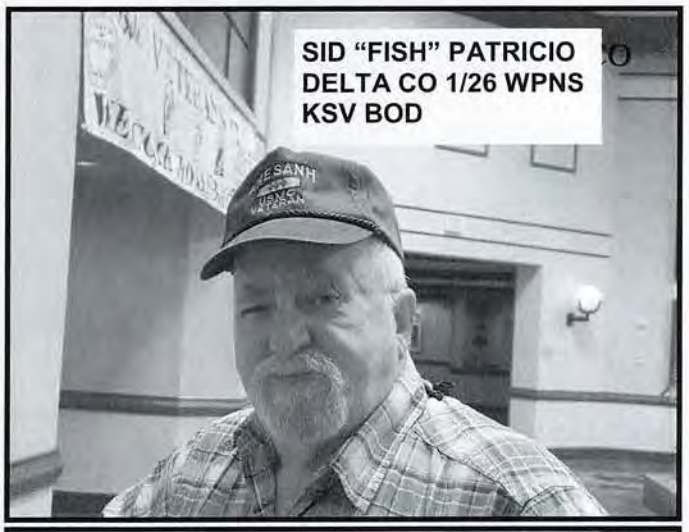
SID "FISH" PATRICIO
DELTA CO 1/26 WPNS
KSV BOD


RON RAYNER
CHARLIE CO 1/26
KSV CHAPLAIN

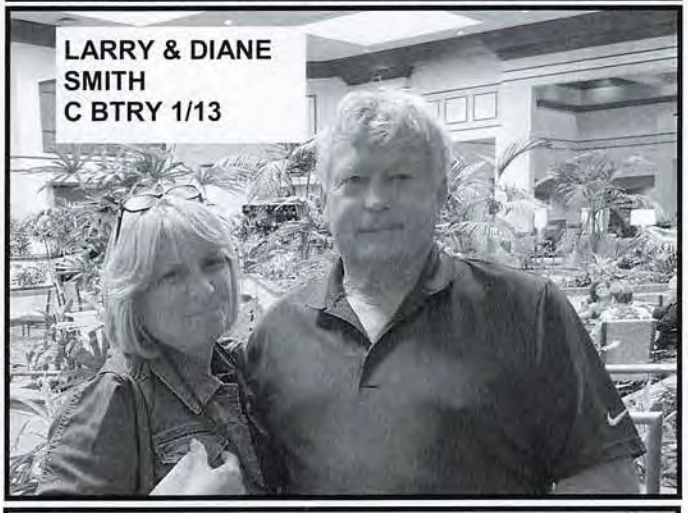
LARRY & DIANE
SMITH
C BTRY 1/13



RAY & ANGELA UPDIKE
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
"ONTOS"



TOM & EVELYN FORD
FOX CO 2/26
KSV BOD
REUNION COMMITTEE


TOBY RUSHFORTH
20TH TASS USAF

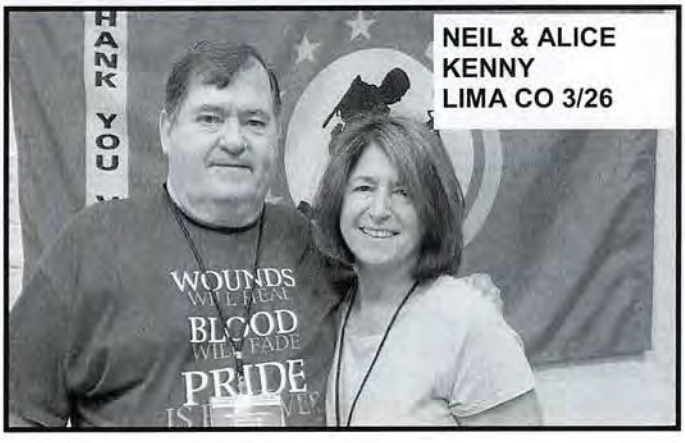

NEIL & ALICE
KENNY
LIMA CO 3/26


ROBERT & CONNIE
KUBILUS
CHARLIE CO 1/26



RALPH &
JEAN BECK
MAG-36 1ST
MAW



LINDA KAZIMIR
WIDOW OF ED KAZIMIR
FOX CO 2/26 & DAUGHTER
WENDY



JIM & KAREN POPTIC
H&S CO 1/26 81MM



RON & LYNN
SHOUSE
BRAVO BTRY 1/13



BOB & LYNN
BATES
WHISKEY
BTRY 1/13

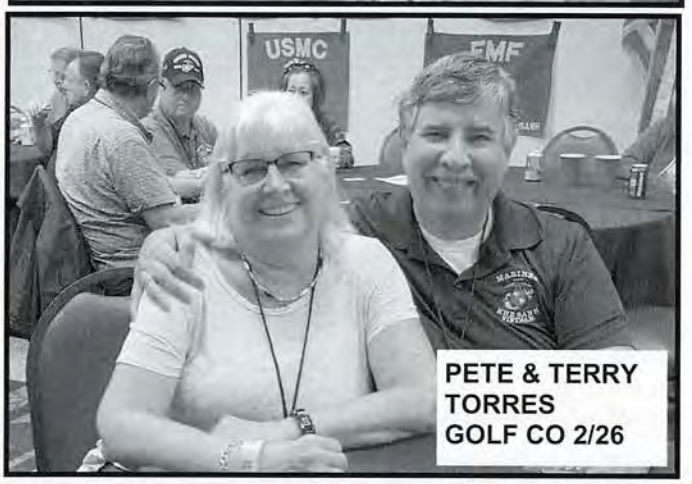

PETE & TERRY
TORRES
GOLF CO 2/26



MILTON & BARBARA
JONES
HQ CO SUB UNIT 1



ALEX & BARBARA
SADOWSKI
H&S 1/26 81MM



ROBERT, CHERYL & JESSIE PENN 3RD MED BN 3/26



BEN & JOYCE LONG BRAVO CO 1/26



RON & DARLENE PARSONS 15TH AERIAL PORT SQUADRON



ALLEN & LYSA WHITTENBURGER HQ 26TH MARINES FOREWORD



JOHN & COREEN TOMEK FOX CO 2/26



VINCENT & LEE RODRIQUEZ FOX CO 2/26

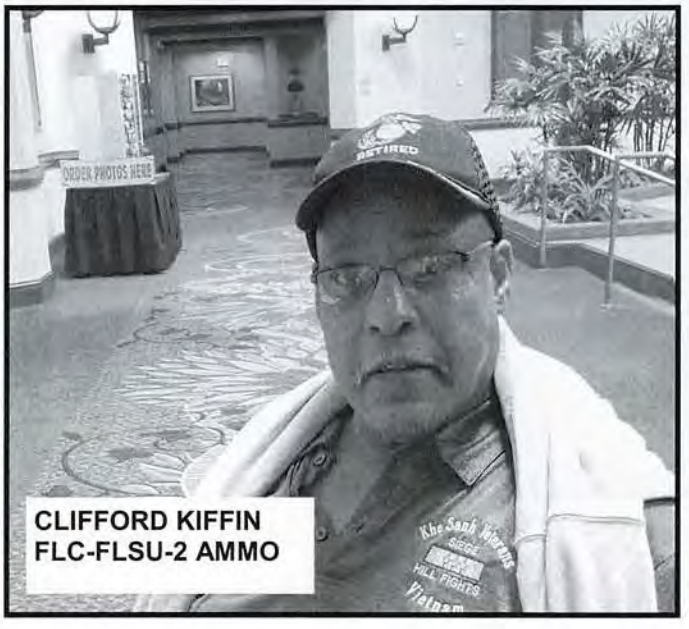

CLIFFORD KIFFIN FLC-FLSU-2 AMMO


BOB &
RUTH ZINK
C BTRY 1/13
D BTRY 2/12
BRAVO CO
1/9


TERRY & CAROLYN
AVERY
H&S CO 2/26


BILL & CONNIE
MOORE
A CO 3RD ANTI
TANKS "ONTOS"


PETER & STEPHANIE
KUKURBA
DELTA CO 1/26


FLOYD & JANICE
GRAHAM
HQ 26TH MARINES


JIM
VELCHECK
DELTA CO 1/1

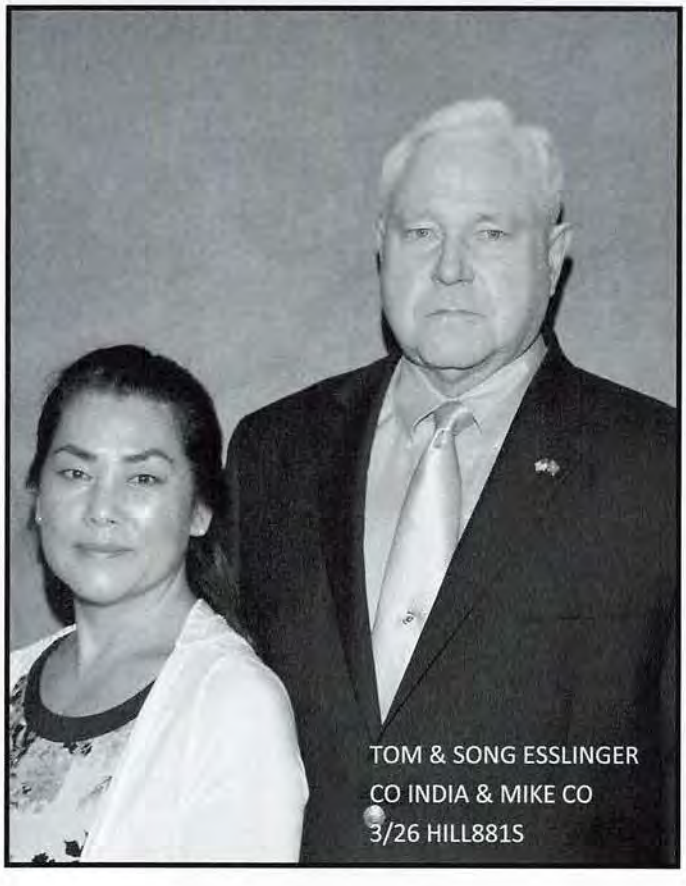
TOM & SONG ESSLINGER
CO INDIA & MIKE CO
3/26 HILL881S

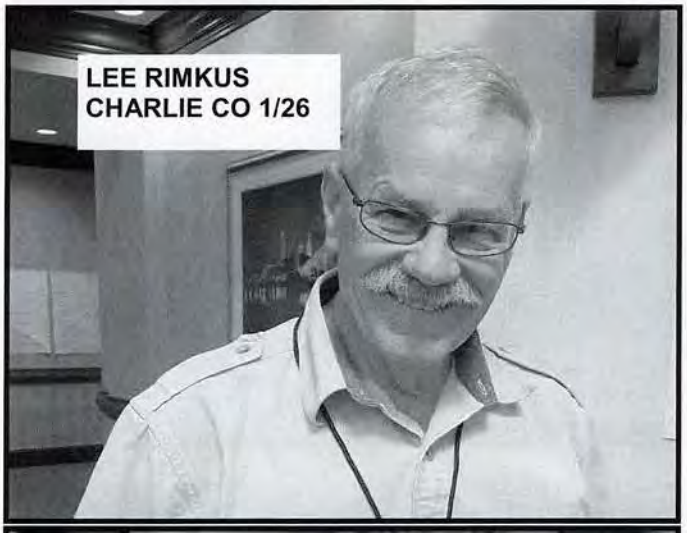

LEE RIMKUS
CHARLIE CO 1/26



VEE JAY & BARBARA
BEADLING B BTRY
1/13 F/O 3/26

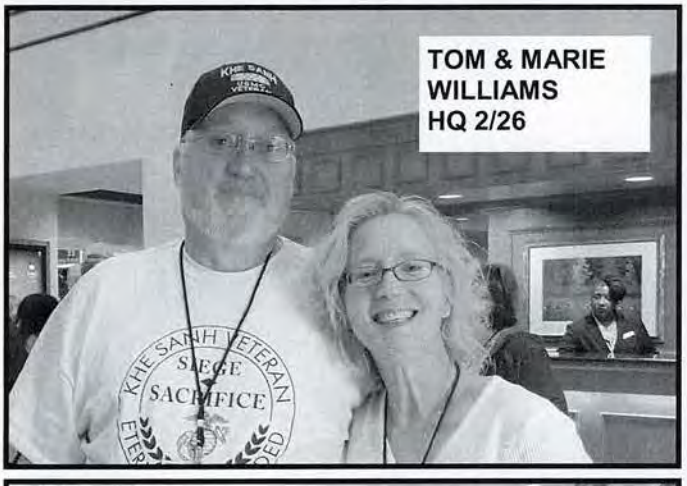

TOM & MARIE
WILLIAMS
HQ 2/26

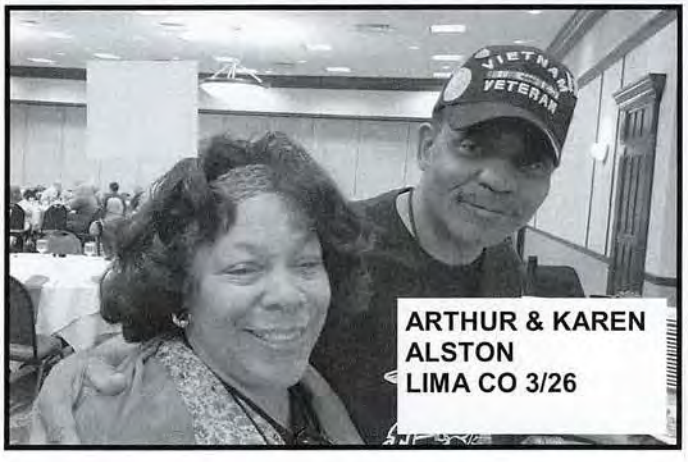

ARTHUR & KAREN
ALSTON
LIMA CO 3/26



CHARLES CHOC
ALPHA CO 1/26

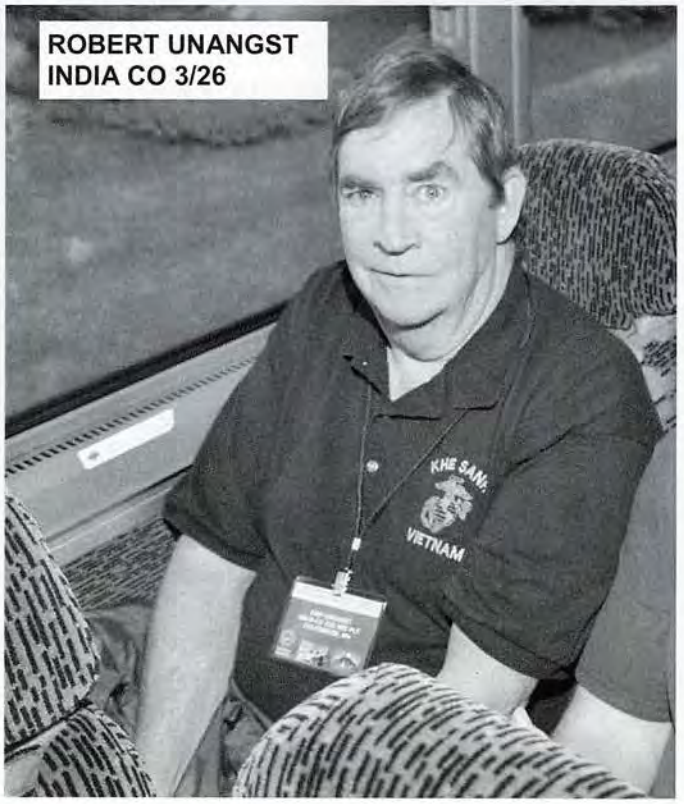

ROBERT UNANGST
INDIA CO 3/26

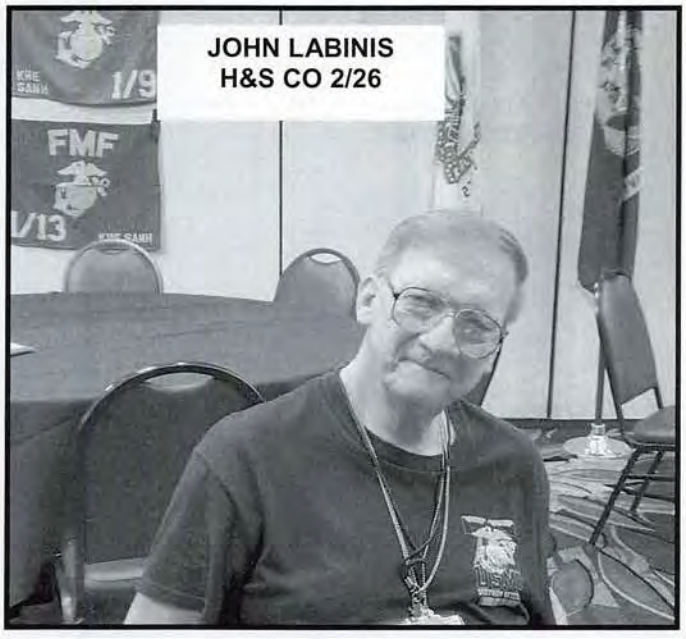
JOHN LABINIS
H&S CO 2/26


PETE & MARIE MORSE
KILO CO 3/26

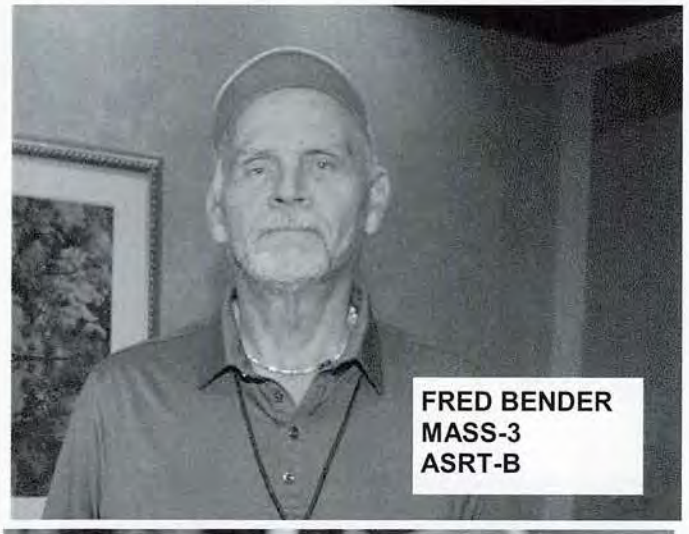
FRED BENDER
MASS-3
ASRT-B

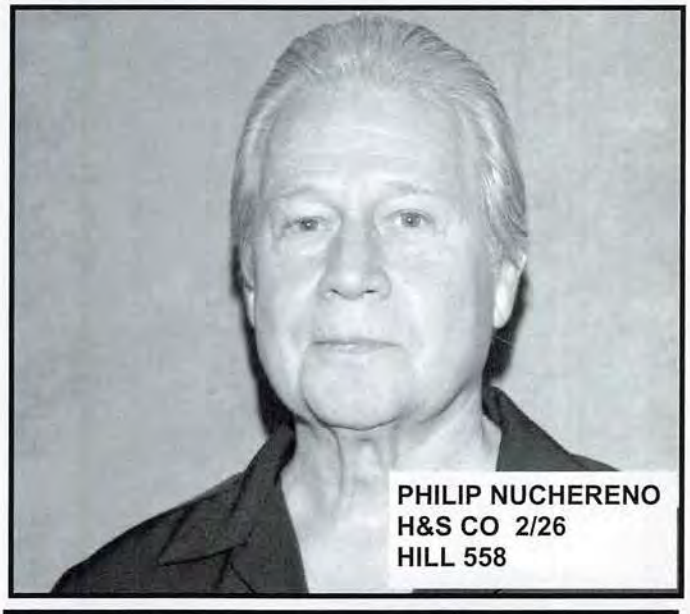
PHILIP NUCHERENO
H&S CO 2/26
HILL 558

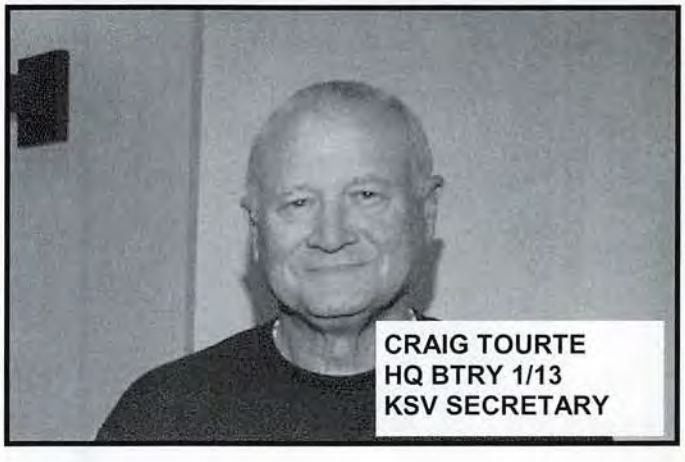
CRAIG TOURTE
HQ BTRY 1/13
KSV SECRETARY

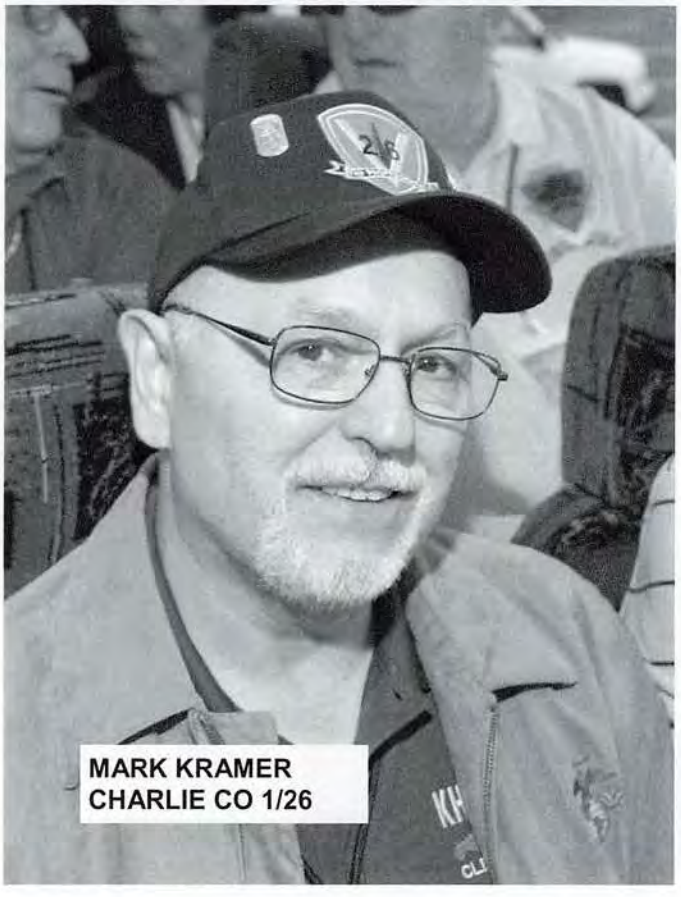
MARK KRAMER
CHARLIE CO 1/26



WAYNE "BUTCH" DEVERNEY
H&S CO 2/26
KSV BOD

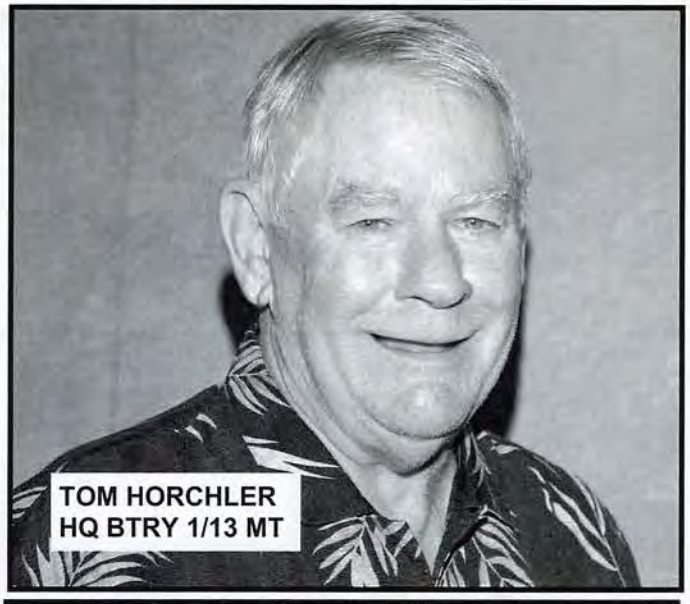

TOM HORCHLER
HQ BTRY 1/13 MT



TED & LYNN
RIZO
INDIA CO 3/26
KSV BOD



TOM & ROSE HARVEY
HQ BTRY 1/13



HENRY KARKOSZKA
CBMU-301 DET-B
SEABEES



RICHARD CARMER
A CO 3RD TANKS

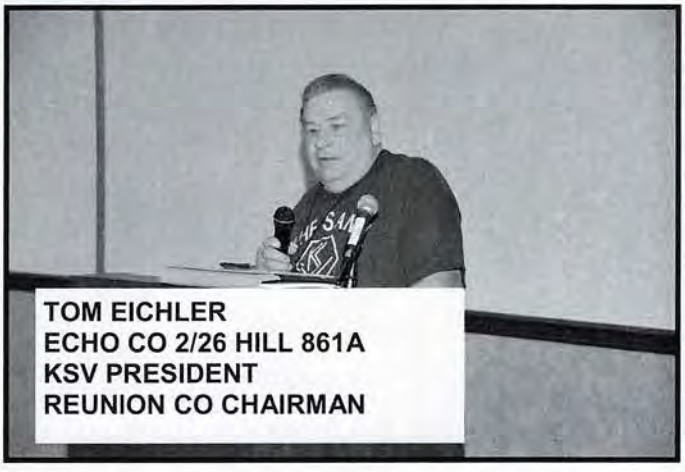

TOM EICHLER
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A
KSV PRESIDENT
REUNION CO CHAIRMAN

THE 2018 KHE SANH VETERANS 2018 REUNION WILL BE HELD AT THE HYATT REGENCY CRYSTAL CITY AT REAGAN NATIONAL. 2799 JEFFERSON DAVIS HWY, ARLINGTON, VA 22202 DATES 12 AUGUST TO 19 AUGUST 2018. RATES 105.00 A NIGHT GOOD FOR 3 DAYS BEFORE & 3 DAYS AFTER
FREE PARKING
PET FRIENDLY (SMALL CHARGE)
REDUCED BREAKFAST & DINNER MEALS.
FREE SHUTTLE TO & FROM AIRPORT



Find an outdoor pool, pillow top beds and multiple on-site dining options at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, one of Arlington's most popular hotels among our guests. With its stone and glass facade, the 18-story Hyatt Regency is one of Crystal City's most handsome buildings. The 686 rooms make you feel pampered with pillow top mattresses. Non-smoking rooms are available. The decor is inviting, mostly in neutral shades, with a few pops of color. Modern touches include flat-panel TVs, with on-demand movies and video games, sound systems with docks for your mp3 players and Wi-Fi and wired high-speed internet access in all rooms. If you need to get down to business, there are spacious desks with ergonomic chairs in your room and a business center on-site. On the third floor, you'll find a seasonal outdoor pool and hot tub on a sunny deck. Video monitors give the fitness room a high-tech flair. There are several restaurants on the premises, and room service is available. Valet parking is offered for a fee. The Hyatt Regency is a mile from Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. Arlington National Cemetery, the Iwo Jima Memorial and the Lee Mansion National Memorial are all within three miles. George Washington Memorial Parkway is close to the hotel, and it helps speed you into downtown D.C. You can drive to the Washington Monument and other popular attractions in 10 minutes. our guests say the "fresh and modern" Hyatt Regency Crystal City has "beautifully appointed" rooms, and the "excellent shuttle service" is one of the amenities that everyone seems to enjoy.

Amenities

- Room Service
- 24 hour front desk
- Jacuzzi or Spa
- Hair Dryer
- Alarm Clock
- ATM Machine
- Currency Exchange
- Airport Transportation

Business Center

















OBITS

CAPTAIN ANDREW BRUCE "MAC" MCFARLANE, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, F, G & H&S CO 2/3, HILLS 881N&S



Andrew Bruce "Mac" McFarlane, 87, of Saddle Brook, NJ passed away on Tuesday, August 8, 2017 at home surrounded by his loving family.

Born January 26, 1930 in Teaneck, NJ to Andrew and Mary (Docherty), he was raised in Rutherford, NJ and was a 1947 graduate of Rutherford High School lettering in three varsity sports - soccer, basketball and baseball.

In November of 1948, he enlisted in the US Marine Corps were he remained on continuous active service for 22 years until retiring in 1971 with the rank of Captain. During his service, he saw direct combat with the First Marine Division in Korea from September 1950 to August 1951 and serving twice in Vietnam, September 1966 to October 1967 as an Infantry Officer with the Third Marine Division and from April 1970 to January 1971 as an Infantry Captain. His courageous and valiant service earned him three Bronze Star Medals with combat "V" for heroic action during direct combat. The first was awarded in 1951 for his service in Korea as a Private First Class and two were awarded for his service in Vietnam in 1966 and 1967. In 1970, he was the recipient of the Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat "V" for meritorious service and a Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star. Additional service awards earned for his devoted service include the Combat Action Ribbon twice for direct combat in Korea and Vietnam, four Presidential Unit citations for Korea and Vietnam with the First and Third Marine Division, six battle stars on the Korean Service Medal and three battle stars on the Vietnam Service Medal.

Upon retirement from the Marine Corps in 1971, he became employed with the Bergen County Prosecutors Office in Hackensack as a County Investigator where he remained until his retirement in 1991 with the rank of Lieutenant of County Investigators. He was a retired member of the NJ Police Benevolent Associations - Local #221 Prosecutors Office and Local #600 NJ Retired.

From 1991 to 2002, he was a professional baseball scout with the Cleveland Indians, NY Yankees and the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

Mac held life memberships with V.F.W. Post 3484 of Saddle Brook, American Legion Post 415 of Saddle Brook, First, Second and Third Marine Division Associations, Military Officers Association of America and Korean War Veterans and Vietnam War Veterans of America. Other memberships included the Marine Corp League, The Chosin Few - First Marine Division during winter of 1950 North Korea, Marine Corps Officers Mustang Association, Khe Sanh Veterans of Vietnam, NJ Vietnam Veterans Memorial & Education Center, founder and charter member of the Rutherford High School Athletic Hall of Fame and committee member of the Greater Bergen County YMCA of Hackensack annual Sports Awards Banquet where he served from 1993-2005 and in 2001 received the Richard Poor Service to the Community Award.

His tireless and dedicated service to the community included serving as a youth baseball coach with the Saddle Brook recreational programs and American Legion Baseball League, field Manager of the Saddle Brook Colonial Baseball Team of the Metropolitan Baseball League as well as league Commissioner, President of the NJ College Baseball Association, CYO Boys Basketball coach at St. Philip the Apostle Church and founder and Commissioner of the Saddle Brook Boys/Girls Recreation Soccer Programs.

His exceptional athletic ability earned him induction into the following - Rutherford High School Athletic Hall of Fame Association, Metropolitan Baseball League Hall of Fame, Bergen County Semi-Pro Baseball Hall of Fame and the Saddle Brook Colonials Baseball Team of the Metropolitan Baseball League Hall of Fame.

Beloved husband of the late Joan (Cartier) McFarlane. Loving and devoted father of Andrew Bruce McFarlane and Douglas McFarlane and wife Annmarie. Cherished grandfather of Kelsey and Ryan McFarlane. Dear brother of the late May. He is also survived by many loving nieces, nephews and cousins.

OBITS

COLONEL BRUCE F. MEYERS, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, CO 26TH MARINES

Colonel Bruce F. Meyers, USMC passed away peacefully on August 7, 2017. He was born August 10, 1925, in Bellevue, WA, to Major Herbert and Bess France Meyers. Bruce grew Up in the Pacific Northwest with his brother George and step-brother Douglas. The Meyers boys loved their active outdoor boyhood - swimming, diving, skiing and mountaineering. Bruce had climbed the six major peaks in Washington by the age of 16, and became a pilot at 19. At Franklin High School in Seattle, to which he commuted by ferry across Lake Washington and bike or streetcar up to school, he was active in student government, played football and ran track. His .academic and sports careers continued at the University of Washington where he played football and rowed crew as a Husky.



Graduating early from high school, Bruce enlisted in the UW Naval ROTC program in 1942 and was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. in the Marine Corps. After WWII, still in the Marine Reserves and still attending classes at UW, Bruce became a forest ranger in a fire lookout on Mt. Rainier. Bruce married Jo-Anne Hopf in March, 1948, the same year he graduated from the university with a BS in geology. Two years later he received a BA Law degree from UW, then a JD (with honors) from George Washington University in 1963 (Order of the Coif, Law Review). Postgraduate study included a year at Brown University, and completion of his LLM at Yale University, 1980.

2nd Lt Meyers rose to the rank of Marine Colonel, a career spanning 28 years of military service. He commanded a rifle company in Korea (1951); had a pivotal role in forming Force Recon, becoming the Commanding Officer of First Force Recon (1957); became Battalion Commander of the Sixth Fleet Landing Force (1966) and Commander, Special Landing Force Alpha aboard the (LPH) Iwo Jima. In Viet Nam, Colonel Meyers commanded the 26th Marines at Khe Sanh, during the Tet offensive in 1968.

OBIT

DAVID A. DOEHRMAN, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, B CO 3RD RECON



DAVID ALLEN DOEHRMAN, 69, of Fort Wayne, passed away on Saturday, August 19, 2017 surrounded by his family. He was the son of Alfred and Opal Doehrman. He proudly served his country in the United States Marine Corps from 1967 to 1969 as a SCUBA Qualified Reconnaissance Marine. He was a Viet Nam veteran, stationed at Khe Sanh Combat Base during Tet Offensive. He received numerous commendations, including the Navy Commendation medal with Combat "V"; the National Defense Service medal; the Viet Nam Service medal; the Republic of Viet Nam Campaign medal; and two Presidential Unit Citations. After being discharged from the military he spent 30 years working in the trucking industry and retired from Centennial Wireless as Director of Reporting/Database Management. He is survived by his wife, Thomacine "Tommie" Doehrman; five children, Michael (Gail) Doehrman, James Doehrman, Michelle (Steve) Bade, RaeLynn Doehrman, and Mark Thayer; 13 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Preceded in death by his mother, father, sister, Susan Parks and one grandson. At his request, there will be no visitation or funeral services. Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

OBIT

JAMES "DOC" THOMAS, USN KHE SANH VETERAN, KILO CO 3/26 HN 3RD PLT



James Byron Thomas died April 15, 2017 in Chickasha Oklahoma. He was born March 2, 1947 in Lawton, Oklahoma to James Clarence Thomas and Ruth (Chapman) Thomas. After graduating from Lawton High he enlisted in the Navy in 1966 and became a corpsman in Vietnam. He was shot down in a helicopter on May 29, 1968 and received a purple heart for his injuries.

James was married to Emma and that union resulted in two children, Scott and Michelle.

Lames later moved to Lawton in 1979 where he married Terri Ganse in October 14 1982. They were married for 34 and a half years. That marriage resulted in two sons, Kevin and Kyle.

After getting out of the Navy, he went to Sparks in Ft. Smith Arkansas and became a Radiologic Technologist. James worked in numerous hospitals in Lawton, Chickasha, and Oklahoma City. He retired from Mercy and the Heart Hospital in 2010.

James joined the Navy reserves for a while then transferred to the Air National Guard. He had a total o 36 Years of service when he retired from the military and he achieved the rank of Master Sergeant.

Jim Thomas was preceded in death by his mother and father.

He is survived by his sister, Carolyn Pingry of Lawton; his wife. Terri his son, Scott and wife, Nora and daughter, Michelle Elsey and husband, Byron all of Sanger, TX, his son Kevin of Norman, OK and son, Kyle of Chickasha, OK: grandchildren, Tanner and Madison Thomas, Brennan Bloom, Cody and Emma Elsley all of Sanger, TX, and Kaleb and Tyler Forshee of Chickasha, OK

KHE SANH VETERAN IN THE NEWS

VIETNAM VETERAN FROM EAST HAMPTON HONORED FOR 2 TOURS AT WAR

PARKSLEY HONORS FALLEN MARINE, OTHERS AT WAR MEMORIAL DEDICATION

Hundreds gathered at the Parksley Town Square this Memorial Day to honor a fallen Vietnam War hero from a nearby town and all Accomack County veterans who have died in war.

Mayor James Eichelberger welcomed the crowd, which included dozens of veterans, state and local officials, residents, members of local veterans groups, and the friends, family and former comrades of Cpl. Jerry C. Burkhead.

"It's something that your never, ever get over— the loss of a child or a brother," said Shirley Johnson,



The Cpl. Jerry C. Burkhead/Town of Parksley War Memorial was officially unveiled during a ceremony on Monday at the Parksley Town Square. Burkhead's sister Shirley Johnson spearheaded the effort to raise a monument memorializing her brother and all fallen soldiers from Accomack County. (Photo: Clara Vaughn photo)

who spearheaded the effort to raise a monument memorializing her brother and other fallen service members.

Burkhead was killed in action during the battle for Khe Sanh in Quang Tri Provence, Vietnam on Feb. 8, 1968. He was 21 years old.

He was born the youngest of 12 children to Junius and Velma Burkhead of Justiceville, near Parksley, in 1946.

Burkhead joined the United States Marine Corps after graduating from high school in 1966 and was deployed to Vietnam the next year.

He was one of 64 Marines defending an outpost known as Hill 64 during the battle that claimed his life and more than 20 others'.

His comrade Willi Lauterbach, who was wounded in the fight, attended Monday's ceremony honoring his fellow Marine.

"That day (Jerry was killed)… started on Hill 64 as rockets and the like and ended in hand-to-hand combat," Lauterbach said. "That morning was arduous; it was an endless barrage of putting in those hours of hand-to-hand combat, but I stand here to-

day because Jerry and my other Marines lived up to the bond of warriors."

Johnson's original plan to raise $150 for a small plaque memorializing her brother blossomed into almost $50,000 in donations for the memorial in the town square

The Town of Parksley donated the land for the monument, and gifts from Accomack County government officials including Sen. Lynwood Lewis and Delegate Robert Bloxom, local organizations and friends and family of veterans paid for the polished black monument adorned with flags honoring various military groups, benches and an empty POW seat in memory of those who went missing in war.

Nearly 40 years after her brother's death, Johnson simply wanted to memorialize him, she said.

"People like Shirley Johnson remind us of what we can achieve when we all pull together as one," Rear Adm. Craig Quigley said during his keynote address at the Memorial Day ceremony.

Family and friends can still purchase personalized bricks honoring war veterans to be displayed at the Cpl. Jerry C. Burkhead/Town of Parksley War Memorial.

MORE KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

VIETNAM VETERAN FROM EAST HAMPTON HONORED FOR 2 TOURS AT WAR 'REAL HERO RIGHT IN OUR MIDST,' VIETNAM VET FINALLY ISSUED HIS DUE FOR 2 TOURS AT WAR

PUBLISHED 1:54 PM, FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 2017

EAST HAMPTON >> Bolstered by friends and family in the library's community meeting room, Robert Olivieri confronted a harrowing part of his past Thursday morning.

As he stood quietly in khaki chinos and a blue polo shirt embossed with the bold letters USMC, Olivieri was cast back nearly half a century — and half a world away — to Vietnam.

As an aide read a citation for the Navy/Marine Commendation Medal, friends who have known Oliveri for years and even his own grandchildren learned about a whole other dimension of the man U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Connecticut, called "a real hero right here in our midst."

Oliveri had earned the medal in 1969 but never received it. It was only this past November that he contacted the congressman's office about tracking down the medal, Courtney's district director Ayanti E. Grant said.

"He said it was not so much for himself but for his family, his lineage, his grandchildren," Grant said.
Ironically, Olivieri was being recognized for actions he took during his second tour in Vietnam, the one he promised his anxious mother would not be so hectic — or as dangerous — as his first tour.

While a Hartford native fresh out of high school, Olivieri joined the Marine Corps at 17. He arrived in Vietnam in 1967 and was assigned to I Corps, the farthest, most northern part of South Vietnam.
Olivieri ticked off a litany of places where he served, places now largely forgotten by all except



U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney presented Robert Olivieri of East Hampton with medals earned during his service in the U.S. Marine Corps from July 1965 to July 1969 Thursday at the East Hampton Public Library.

the men who served there and the families of men who died there: Khe Sanh, Con Thien, Hill 881.

Olivieri was "a grunt," an infantryman, with Bravo Co. 1/9 Marines (First Battalion/9th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division). The 1/9's nickname in Vietnam was "The Walking Dead." Bravo Co.'s nickname was the "Battling Bastards," Olivieri said.

In 1967, the 1/9 was engaged in "hill fights" with tough, battle-hardened North Vietnamese Army regulars — thousands of them, Oliveri explained.

"The enemy was devastating. We got our [rears]



kicked so bad" so the 1/9 rotated back to Okinawa three times during his tour to regroup, refit and fill its ranks with fresh new Marines, Oliveri said.

Oliveri has forgotten — or suppressed — many of his memories of those harrowing hill fights fought in deep jungles routinely swept by torrential rains, he said.

After 13 months, he came home to an America at war with itself over the war. He quickly realized he was estranged from "my supposed friends" whose knowledge of the true facts of the war were naive and simplistic.

"I told them, 'You don't have a freaking clue,'" Olivieri said.

Shortly thereafter, he volunteered to return to Vietnam for a second tour because "all my friends were there and I can't be here with all these idiots." His mother did not take the decision well, Olivieri acknowledged. So he made her a promise: "I wasn't going to be a grunt again."

Instead, he wound up as a military policeman at the sprawling base in DaNang.

And it was there on April 27, 1969, that the incident occurred which earned Olivieri the commendation medal.

Olivieri was flanked by Courtney and his Veterans Service Representative Manuel F. "Manny" Menes-



es as Meneses, a retired Navy master chief, read the citation.

A fire began in the ammunition storage supply point at the Amphibious Force Transient Facility in DaNang, he said. The fire, raging out of control, ignited stored munitions.

"With complete disregard for his own safety, Sgt. Olivieri voluntarily joined a detail which was directed to proceed to the highly explosive service area and ensure the safety of the Armory, which held 382 M-16 rifles and the Money Conversion Unit, which contained $450,000," Meneses read.

"After fearlessly maintaining his position until he was ordered to evacuate the area [Olivieri] volunteered to return as a member of the security force, despite the danger of falling debris."

Olivieri then "remained on the perimeter ... until the explosive ordnance disposal team had successfully cleared the area.

"By his courage, bold initiative and unwavering devotion to duty, Sgt. Olivieri was instrumental in safeguarding valuable government property," he continued. In doing so, "he upheld the finest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service," the citation concluded.

The nearly two dozen people in the room rose as one as they applauded Olivieri, who moved to East Hampton in 2011.

Courtney's staff had prepared a further tribute, organizing all 10 of the medals Olivieri earned in the Marine Corps in a shadow box. As he presented them to Oliveri "on behalf of a grateful nation," Courtney looked at the medals and the man who earned them and said, "What an incredible array."

"I appreciate everyone who came (to the ceremony)", Olivieri began. "I didn't think it would be that big a deal" for anyone but his immediate family: his wife Bonnie, his son Eric and his wife and two children, Paige and Heath.

Olivieri also has another son, Craig, who lives in Wyoming with his two other granddaughters, Amaya and Indi.

He became emotional as he said his thoughts were of the 58,212 men — and eight women — who gave up their lives in Vietnam.

"It's not easy for me to think about the people who died in a ridiculous war, as I see it now," Olivieri said.

Still, following the ceremony, Olivieri said he remains "proud to have been a Marine and proud to have served my country."

Olivieri invited the assembled group to join him for "pizza for breakfast," but was persuaded to settle for more traditional fare. Even though it invoked painful memories of Vietnam, the simple ceremony honoring a man Courtney said was "a real patriot" was a perfect tonic to what has been a sour week.

Courtney acknowledged as much as he said one of the benefits of his job is "I get a chance to learn more about people on a deeper level. It's pretty moving when you get a chance for more than just a glimpse of some of the amazing people like Bob that I have gotten to meet," the congressman continued.

The medal ceremony was particularly moving, Courtney said, "because it lets us get back to the basics: service to the country, unity and coming together."

IN VIETNAM, THESE HELICOPTER SCOUTS SAW COMBAT UP CLOSE COBRAS AND LOACHES, TWO VASTLY DIFFERENT AIRCRAFT, RELIED ON EACH OTHER TO FIGHT THE ENEMY.
BY DONALD PORTER
AIR & SPACE MUESUM

You were right in the enemy's face with a helicopter and had to know what you were doing," recalls warrant officer Clyde Romero of his 1,100 hours flying scout missions over South Vietnam in 1971.



Pilot Clyde Romero, 19, rests between flights at Khe Sanh in February 1971. His unit was flying in support of South Vietnamese troops fighting in Laos. (Clyde Romero)



A crew chief at a base in Can Tho works on a Cobra's tail rotor gear box. Note the red stabilizer, also common on OH□6s, which helped the aircraft above track them. (US Army via NARA)

"It's like a street cop going into a bad neighborhood. You can have all the guns, vests, and radios you want, but you need street smarts or you're going to be dead within an hour."

Although most combat aircraft in Vietnam aimed for altitudes and speeds that helped them avoid anti-aircraft weapons, U.S. Army crews flying Hughes OH -6A Cayuse helicopters flew low and drew fire—to set up the shots for the Bell AH-1G Cobras circling above. These hunter-killer missions, among the most hazardous of the Vietnam War, tested the resolve of the OH-6 pilots and the aerial observers sitting beside them. Although many were still teenagers, their survival depended on well-honed instincts and razor-sharp reflexes, along with plenty of luck.

In 1965, the concept of helicopter-borne fighting forces was still new and largely untested, and units in Vietnam invented tactics on the spot. The U.S. Army began to use Bell OH-13 Sioux and Hiller OH-23 Raven helicopters, once artillery spotters, to scout ahead of UH-1D Huey formations in the moments before air assaults to gather information about landing zones and enemy locations. Vietnam's mountainous terrain stressed the underpowered, obsolete helicopters to



Hunter-killer tactics evolved from the sorties flown by scouts and their escorts to assess landing zones in the minutes before "slick UH-1s (seen hear in 1969 near Lai Khe) filled with troops arrived. (USAAVA/LT Mike Loehrer.

their limits: They could neither fly fast enough to escape enemy fire nor carry enough armament to pose a meaningful threat. Units in Vietnam began sending UH-1Bs outfitted with rocket pods and machine guns to circle over the scouts at around 600 feet and attack anything that might interfere with the imminent troop landing. But the Hueys proved too slow to do the job properly, and the need to replace both scouts and protectors was immediately evident.

Within that same year, help was on the way. An inventive Bell Helicopter engineer was already at work on the world's first attack helicopter, and Bell's decision to keep the project hidden until complete let the model slip into service as a Huey derivative (see "The Birth of the Cobra," Aug. 2017). In August 1967, the AH-1G Cobra arrived in Vietnam.

The Cobra was fast and deadly. From the rear cockpit, the pilot fired rockets from launchers fixed to the stub wings on either side; the copilot in the front operated a chin turret that held a minigun and grenade launcher. Unlike its troop-carrying ancestors, "a Cobra was like a World War II fighter," says Jim Kane, who arrived

in Vietnam fresh out of Purdue University. "It was a joy to fly." Kane, who today sells securities in Richmond, Virginia, flew AH-1s in Vietnam from 1968 to 1971.

Following a contentious selection process that included allegations of industrial espionage and political favoritism, the first Hughes OH-6A observation helicopters arrived in Vietnam in December 1967. Army troops called the OH-6As Loaches, a contraction of "light observation helicopters." The ship was unusually light and had plenty of power, perfect for



Pilot John Shafer prepares to fly his Loach from a base outside Pleiku in March 1971. The photo was taken days after he was shot down .John Shafer)

flying nap-of-the-earth missions, and its 26-foot-diameter main rotor made getting into tight landing zones a snap. It had no hydraulic system and its electrical setup was used primarily to start up the engine—simple even by 1960s standards, which for practical purposes meant it was easier to maintain and harder to shoot down than other helicopters. But the light aluminum skin could be easily pierced by rifle bullets, and it also crumpled and absorbed energy in a crash, and a strong structural truss protected critical systems—like the people inside. Loach crews regularly walked away from crashes that would doom others.

As the H-13s were phased out, Loaches were paired with Cobra gunships. Loaches, usually with a pilot and observer and sometimes a door gunner aboard, flew as little as 10 feet above the treetops at between about 45 and 60 mph, scouting for signs of the enemy. Cobras, nicknamed Snakes, flew circles 1,500 feet above the scouts, waiting to pounce on whatever the Loach found. But the Vietnam War was unlike any previous American conflict; there were few real definable frontlines, and combatants needed to know what was happening all around them, all the time. "We operated from fixed bases that were islands, if you will, of allied control," says Hugh Mills, who flew both Loaches and Cobras in Vietnam from 1968 to 1972, and went on to fly helicopters for the Kansas City Police Department. He recalls: "360 degrees around you was enemy territory, and the ability to work with American and [South Vietnamese] units on the ground really required aviation to be able to look eye to eye to tell the good guys from the bad guys." Loach-Cobra pairings were sent out more and more frequently, until their main role was to gather general intelligence rather than prepare landing zones.

Missions began every day at dawn, when crews were briefed on where to fly and what to look for. To hunt for encampments, bunkers, or other signs of the enemy, commanders would deploy a flight of one scouting Loach and one supporting Cobra, called Pink Teams. (Scouts were known as White Teams and Cobras as Red; the two colors combine to become pink. In some areas, Purple Teams—one Loach and two Cobras—were also common, as were other variations.) "We were so close to the elephant grass that we'd blow the grass apart to see if anyone was hiding in there," observer Bob Moses says. Moses, a 19-year-old draftee, arrived in Vietnam in July 1970 for the first of two year-long tours, and later worked for the Department of Veterans Affairs as a therapist and administrator. Even trampled grass was a clue; it meant that enemy troops had passed through the area within eight hours, the time it took for grass to dry upright. Since units were all but permanently assigned to particular areas, they came to know the local geography intimately and could spot anything out of the ordinary. "We were combat trackers," says Mills. "I followed footsteps. I could see a cigarette butt still burning. I could tell how old a footprint was by how it looked.

"Most of our engagements [we] were 25 to 50 feet [away] when we opened up on [the Viet Cong]," Mills continues. "I've seen them, whites of the eyes, and they've seen me, whites of the eyes.... I have come home with blood on my windshield. A little



Cobras were the muscle for many missions. In April 1971,theseSnakes escorted CH-47 Chinooks as they flew commandos into Laos, (AP Neal Ulevich)

gory but that's how close we were." As the Loach flew among the trees, the rear-seat pilot in the Snake circling above kept a close eye on the little scout and the front-seat gunner jotted down whatever the Loach observers radioed. Upon encountering enemy fire, Loaches were to leave immediately, dropping smoke grenades to mark the target so that within seconds, the Cobra could roll in. Loach crews were equipped with small arms and returned fire as they fled. They could also use grenades and on occasion even homebuilt explosives; more aggressive units mounted forward-firing miniguns. Cobras generally attacked with rockets, preferred for long-range accuracy, switching to the less-accurate chin-mounted machine gun and grenade launcher only if they were far enough away from friendly troops or if the rockets—AH-1s could carry as many as 76 rockets—ran out. Four troop-carrying Hueys (called a Blue Team) often sat idle somewhere nearby, ready to insert troops if the Pink Team discovered an interesting target—or were shot down and needed rescuing.

Loach and Cobra were in constant radio communication, and because of the intensity of hunter-killer missions, it wasn't long before pairs in each type knew each other well enough to anticipate the other's moves. "It had to do with the timbre of your voice-—how you talked to other guys on the radio," says Romero, who arrived in Vietnam in 1970, initially as a Huey co-pilot. (He later transferred to the Air Force and flew F-4 Phantoms, and eventually became an airline captain.) Loach and Cobra crews lived together, and schedulers generally paired the teams with the partners they requested, though given the high turnover rate, that wasn't always possible. "To this day I am closer to those guys I flew with in Vietnam than my own brothers," says Mills. "I spent more time with them."

For most of the war, there was no formal Army training to prepare scout pilots and observers. Army headquarters developed doctrine by building on what worked in the field, rather than the other way around, and each unit in-country did things slightly differently. Though Cobra pilots were trained Stateside, most Loach pilots didn't take control of OH-6s until arriving in Vietnam. "You had a couple of flights in the Huey, then you rode front seat in a Cobra," scout pilot Allan Krausz recounts. Krausz was ordered to Vietnam in April 1971, and today teaches Army students how to fly the Eurocopter UH-72 Lakota, a twin-engine trainer. After around 10 hours at the controls of a Loach, the pilots were deemed worthy of flying in combat.

Warrant officer John Shafer was 21 when he arrived on October 16, 1970, to fly Loaches. "I was just out of flight school when I went to Vietnam." He flew Loaches for the next 11 months, and today is an accountant in Seattle.

The observers and gunners had even less experience. "There was one day of initial training," says Bob Moses, who was first trained as a tank crewman and then as infantry before a sudden transition to helicopter door gunner. "I went up in a Loach with an M60 machine gun to get used to firing the weapon. That was about it."
Another such gunner was 19-year-old Joel Boucher, drafted and sent to Vietnam from 1967 to 1969.

Boucher quickly discovered that life as a qualified crewman was extremely dangerous. "We flew down along the Ho Chi Minh Trail," he says of the supply route that wound through Vietnam and neighboring Laos and Cambodia. "The NVA [North Vietnamese army] was everywhere. Each time we went out, we got shot at. One time we ran into hundreds of enemy troops. We thought they were ARVNs [Army of the Republic of Vietnam] until they started running. It was pretty hairy, and we got the hell out of there." But Boucher got a rush from the missions, and stayed six months beyond what was required of a draftee. Upon returning to the United States, he established a career in the construction industry and settled in rural Sierra City, California.

Other Army pilots, most of whom flew Cobras or Hueys, thought of Loach pilots as a little offbeat. "Scout pilots were a different breed of cat," says Cobra pilot Jim Kane, who likens his former colleagues to the airborne equivalent of the Tunnel Rats, soldiers who crawled head-first into Viet Cong-built tunnels without any idea what awaited them there. "I was wounded three times and shot down nine times," Romero reports. "The shelf life of a scout pilot was probably six months. You were killed, shot down, or got scared and quit. I liked it because in the Bronx, I was a ghetto kid. I was used to getting up close and personal with the enemy." Mills, who served two tours in Loaches and one in Cobras, was shot down 16 times—all but once in OH-6s. The Army dictated that after 300 hours of flight time, each Loach go through a thorough inspection, but in practice such inspections were rare: Few Loaches survived to reach that mark.

"I had a wingman shot down," pilot John Shafer says. "They went down in the jungle, and both [members of the crew] survived. I had another lead that went through 150 feet of trees, and they survived."

Shafer himself had brushes with disaster, and his luck nearly ran out on a mission west of Dak To, near the border with Laos. "I got shot down on my 22nd birthday," March 27, 1971. "I was flying wing and just dropped into the AO [Area of Operations]. Following the lead, we got peppered with rounds." The Loach had a bad vibration, but he made it about half a mile before he had to land. "Just as I set it down,the tail rotor spun off. The enemy was moving toward us when a [command and control] ship picked us up. Cobras rolled in and blew the downed aircraft up—taking with it about 15 bad guys standing around it."

Jim Kane's Vietnam tour abruptly ended one day in February 1971. NVA troops shot down a Cobra, killing the crew. Kane was dispatched to the crash site in another Cobra with copilot Jim Casher. While they were circling the wreckage, enemy rounds hit their ship. Kane recalls, "The vibrations were so harsh I had to return to base camp at Khe Sanh," seven miles from the Laotian border. Upon landing, an inspection revealed a damaged pitch link, a rotor head component so critical that had it failed, they too would have crashed.

"We got into another aircraft and went back out. We were about ready to call in tactical air support to blow up the wrecked ship when another Cobra took a lot of fire. So I engaged the enemy, but didn't make it out of that one.

"We got hit by incendiary .51-caliber rounds, and the phosphorus ignited the Cobra's hydraulic fluid. The flames covered my boots and lower legs. It was the same for Jim. I still have scars on my legs—it was terrifying. I tried to move the stuck controls and prayed for a place to set down." It took all of Kane's strength to pull out of a steep dive, and they crash-landed with a horrific thud. "Jim was unconscious when I helped pull him out of the burning aircraft."

Kane's commanding officer flew his command-and-control Huey to the ravine where Kane and Casher huddled. The Huey descended gingerly into a clearing smaller than its main rotor diameter, the aircraft's rotor blades chopping tree limbs as it descended. Kane and Casher were pulled aboard and returned to Khe Sanh, but the Huey barely made it back; slicing trees had left -its blades shredded, and the tail section had almost separated. It never flew again.

The hunter-killer tactic worked well for a few years, but by the time the United States left Vietnam, it was obsolete, says Mills. In 1972, as U.S. troops slowly withdrew, the NVA began a major push that became known as the Easter Offensive. The campaign included the first major use in the war of So-

viet-built, shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missiles. SA-7 Grail heat-seeking missiles could down a Loach before its crew even realized they were under fire. The Cobras high above had a few seconds of warning—they could spot the missile's exhaust plume—but were all the more tempting because at their higher altitudes they were more easily seen than the smaller Loaches. The North Vietnamese deployed hundreds of the missiles, and from then on, both hunter and killer tried to stay well hidden.

By the end of the war, the Loach's replacement was imminent. Despite a strong outcry from crews in Vietnam, the Bell OH-58A Kiowa, powered by the same Allison T-63 engine as the OH-6, was being distributed to Army units. Scout crews argued that the Kiowa was nowhere near as nimble as the Cayuse, but scouting flights were changing. The high-low hunter-killer combination gave way to uniform-altitude missions, with all helicopters flying nap of the earth. Kiowas, largely relegated to low-threat cargo and liaison missions in Vietnam, were after the war tasked to spot targets from afar and guide Cobras (and later, Boeing AH-64 Apaches) to good firing spots.

A sobering statistic: Out of 1,419 Loaches built, 842 were destroyed in Vietnam, most shot down and many others succumbing to crashes resulting from low-level flying. In contrast, of the nearly 1,100 Cobras delivered to the Army, 300 were lost.

Both Loach and Cobra have been in production, on and off, in one form or another ever since.

The Loach-derived MD-500 and other civilian variants still roll off the assembly lines at MD Helicopters, Inc., while Boeing produces an upgraded variant, the AH-6 Little Bird, for military forces (including an autonomous drone version). The Little Bird's weaponry is a far cry from the M60 machine gun carried aboard a Loach in Vietnam: AH-6s can carry miniguns, rocket pods, grenade launchers, Hellfire missiles, and air-to-air Stinger missiles. The AH-6 and its troop-carrying sibling, the MH-6, are still heavily used by U.S. special-operations forces, as everything from airborne sniper platforms to transports inserting small teams to expeditionary light attack helicopters.

The U.S. Marine Corps still flies AH-1 SuperCobras as its main attack helicopter, with the latest version—the AH-1Z Viper— so upgraded and modernized that a Vietnam-era pilot might be hard-pressed to recognize it. Its cockpit teems with electronics and sensors, and its stub wings are heavy with heat-seeking Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, laser-guided Hellfires, rockets (like those used in Vietnam), and even fuel-filled drop tanks. The guidance systems on newer attack helicopters—often working with or even controlling the cameras of reconnaissance drones—have relegated to history the hunter role in the hunter-killer missions. The killer role persists.



A "Purple Team", consisting of one OH-6 (Center) and two Cobras, looks for trouble near Phouc Vinh in 1969. USAPA/SP5 David Walker



While the AH-1G Cobra front seat Gunners wrote down what their partners in scout helicopters observed, rear seat plots never took their eyes off their charges, always ready to dive in firing rockets the instant scout crews took fire (US ARMY)



THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
All Those who served with Kilo 3/26	Charles Lemke Kilo 3/26
PFC Randall M. Davis Kilo 3/4 KIA 4 June 68	Larry Davis 3rd Pioneer Bn 3RD MAR DIV
Bill Lawson LCpl in 1/26 C CO Passed away Sept 2015	Daniel Erwin A Co 1/26
Robert V. Wilson Passed Away Oct 6 2015	Cynthia Wilson Wife
CPT Daniel J Coonon USMC VMFA 115 KIA 8 Oct 68	Charles Fetter MAG-11 H&MS-11 VMF 314 AW
PFC Ron Kearsey USMC H/2/3 Hill 689 KIA 4-21-68	Dave Brombaugh H/2/3
PFC Kevin Cassell USMC H/2/3 Hill 689 KIA 4-21-68	Dave Brombaugh H/2/3
CPL William K Downing USMC E/2/3 KIA 03 May 67	Frederick Monahan E CO 2/3 Hill Fights
Jerry W. Elliott USA MIA 21 Jan 68 282nd AHC	Donna Elliott Sister
ALL who served at Lang Vei A-102 FOB-3	Lawrence Cooper CO C 5th Special Forces
1LT Thomas A. Reich USMC VFMA-115, MAG 13 KIA	Charles Fetter MAG-11 H&MS-11 VMF 314 AW
17 Nov 68CPL Jack Jachimak	Major Earle Breeding C/O ECo 2/26 Hill 861A
2LT Heinz Ahlmeyer USMC Lima CO 3/26 KIA 10 May 67	Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
2LT Dale Allen USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 27 June 67	Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
1LT Paul Bush USMC Charlie CO 1/26 KIA 22 Mar 68	Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
2LT Ferdinando Distefano USMC E/2/26 KIA 24 Feb 68	Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
1LT Henry Norman USMC A/1/13 KIA 30 Mar 68	Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
1LT Kim Johnson USMC H&S 2/26 KIA 23 Feb 68	Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
1LT Stephen Joyner USMC Lima CO 3/26 KIA 15 June 68	Michael Barber C CO 3RD Engineers 1st Plt
ALL FROM TBS-3-67	
CAPT Andrew McFarlane USMC F,G & H&S Co 2/3	KHE SANH VETERANS
COL Bruce Meyers USMC CO 26TH Marines	KHE SANH VETERANS
HN James Thomas USN Kilo Co 3/26	KHE SAHN VETERANS
DR Edward Feldman USN Charlie Med	KHE SANH VETERANS
Dave Doehrman USMC B Co 3Rd Recon	KHE SANH VETERANS
SGT Manuel F. Martinez USA -A 1/44 Arty KIA 6/09 68	Bruce Geiger A 1/44Arty Dusters Quads
Capt Walter Egger USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger A 1/44Arty Dusters Quads
GSGT John J Grohman USMC C Co 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger A 1/44Arty Dusters Quads
1t Paul W. Bush USMC C Co 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger A 1/44Arty Dusters Quads
Lcpl Stephen C Shannon USMC C Co 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger A 1/44Arty Dusters Quads
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC C Co 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger A 1/44Arty Dusters Quads
McNamara, William J. L/CPL USMC, M CO 3/4 KIA 27 May 68	HUGH LIVERMAN L/CPL USMC Mike CO 3/26
Sgt Larry Berneski USAF KIA 15 Oct 1967 C-130 Crash KSCB	LOUIS CATON 50TH TASS "RED DEVILS" TASK FORCE ALPHA
HM-3 Cecil Fincher USN KIA 24 Jan 67	LORNE LE MIEUX M CO 3/26 3Rd PLT 3RD SQD
L/Cpl Jeremy E. Santiago USMC I CO 3/2 KIA 9/7/93	Daniel Depagnier Gold Star Father HMM-363 Mag-36
Philip Wright USMC Passed Away Khe Sanh Veteran	Daniel Laliberte FLU Sub Unit 2
Sgt James Neil Tycz USMC Recon KIA10 May 67	Sharon Pelon
GY SGT Charles Perkins K CO 3/26 Hill 861, wounded in action 28 Mar 68, Died 17 May 1968 on USS Repose	SgtMaj James Morris H&S CO 1/26 81MM Platoon
	Barbara Eddowes Love & Miss You so Much after all these years

OBIT

DR EDWARD FELDMAN USN, DOCTOR, "CHARLIE MED", KHE SANH VETERAN

It is with great sadness that the family of Edward Michael Feldman announces his passing on October 3, 2017. He was surrounded by his loving family and will be forever remembered by his beautiful wife Patricia and his children Stuart (Carol), David (Erin), Jessica Grunvald (Dan). He was loved and adored by his seven grandchildren Carly, Ally, Sophia, Dahlia, Luca, Jordan and Preston. Edward is predeceased by his parents Sid and Ann and his brother John.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, October 17th 2017 at 12:30 PM Miramar National Cemetery, San Diego, CA





The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Lieutenant (MC) Edward M. Feldman (NSN: 0-724224), United States Navy, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving as Surgeon of the First Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, THIRD Marine Division, in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam, on 21 January 1968. When the Khe Sanh Combat Base came under heavy mortar and rocket attack on 21 January 1968, a wounded Marine was taken to the Battalion Aid



Station where preliminary examinations revealed a metal object protruding from a wound in his abdominal region. Further examination disclosed the possibility of the object being a live enemy mortar round. Quickly assessing the situation, Lieutenant Feldman directed the erection of a sandbag barricade around the patient over which he would attempt to operate and summoned an ordnance expert to identify the object and assist in removing the suspected explosive device from the injured man. Disregarding his own safety, Lieutenant Feldman removed his helmet and armored vest and exposed himself to the danger of a possible explosion as he began to operate. Displaying exceptional professional ability while performing the delicate surgery under flashlights, he succeeded in removing the live round from the Marine and directed an assistant to carry it outside for disposal. By his courage, exceptional professionalism and selfless devotion to duty at great personal risk, Lieutenant Feldman undoubtedly saved the life of a Marine and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

GENERAL FUND

FOR KSV TAX YEAR 01 Aug 2016 TO 31 Jul 2017

EVANS, Faye	200.00	Check# 2186
LACY, Donald B.	100.00	Check# 5425
NELSON, George	500.00	Check# 6127
GEIGER, Bruce	500.00	Credit Card
LEITH, Ben	200.00	Cash
WISEMAN, William	100.00	Check# 4081
FORD, Tom	250.00	Check# 5142
STERLING, Glenn	100.00	Check# 3952
Meyer, Carl & David	500.00	Check31299
DIFOOT Alicia	50.00	Check# 1601

THANKS A BUNCH



EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS



GROWING UP IN THE KHE SANH FAMILY



IN ISSUE 83 OF RED CLAY, THE COVER DISPLAYED THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THREE GRAND-DAUGHTERS OF KHE SANH VETERANS (SEE BACK PAGE) ALL THREE ARE STILL AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS ORGANIZATION. AT THIS YEARS 2017 REUNION IN CLEVELAND OHIO, TWO OF THOSE PICTURED IN THAT ISSUE, APPEARED TOGETHER AT THE ANNUAL BANQUET. PRESLEY REYES (CENTER) GRAND-DAUGHTER OF LUIS REYES, SANG THE MARINE CORPS HYMN ESCORTED BY RILEE LONDON (FAR LEFT) GRAD-DAUGHTER OF ROBERT LONDON AND KYLIE STACKHOUSE GRAND-DAUGHTER OF TOM HARVEY.

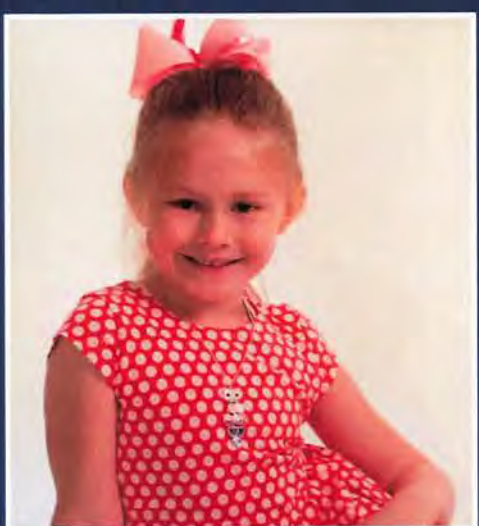

JULIA PARSONS



PRESLEY REYES



KYLIE STACKHOUSE

HERE ARE THE THREE FROM ISSUE 83 ALL GROWN UP

FALL
WINTER
2013

RED CLAY

ISSUE
83

JUST A FEW OF THE BEAUTIFUL GRANDCHILDREN BORN TO THE CHILDREN OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS



PRESLEY-JEANE CORNELL GRAND DAUGHTER OF JOSE " CISCO" REYES & WIFE SANDI

A TRUE REWARD FROM GOD FOR ALLOWING YOU TO LIVE THROUGH THE KHE SANH EXPERIENCE



NEW RECRUIT KYLIE STACKHOUSE, GRANDDAUGHTER OF TOM & ROSE HARVEY



JULIA PARSONS GRANDDAUGHTER OF TOM & NANCY QUIGLEY

ISSUE 94

RED CLAY

SUMMER 2018

THE KHE SANH VETERANS WILL MEET IN WASHINGTON DC, COMMENCING 12 AUGUST 2018 TO 19 AUGUST 2018, FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE START OF THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH, WHICH BEGIN 21 JANUARY 1968. THIS ISSUE OF RED CLAY WILL BE DEVOTED TO ARTICLES & STORIES RELATING TO THE SIEGE & BATTLE OF KHE SANH



ON 22 FEBRAURY 1968, DURING THE SIEGE OF THE KHE SANH COMBAT BASE, WHICH BEGIN 21 JANUARY 1968, A BERM IN THE KHE SANH AMMUNITION SUPPLY POINT THREE EXPLODED WHEN HIT BY AN ENEMY 122 MM ROCKET. THE PHOTO TAKEN BY COMBAT PHOTOGRAPHER ROBERT ELLISON APPEARED ON FRONT COVER OF NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE ON 18 MARCH 1968. ROBERT WAS KILLED ON 6 MARCH 1968 WITH 56 OTHERS WHEN A C-123 WAS SHOT DOWN ATTEMPTING TO LAND AT KHE SANH.













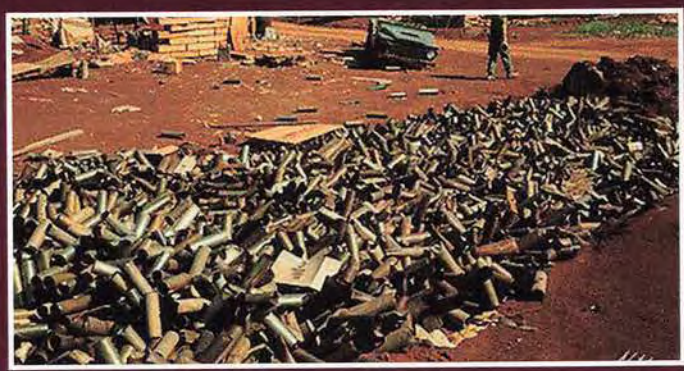



A COUPLE OF INTERESTING ARTICLES REPRINTED FROM VIETNAM 67

THREE JOURNEYS TO KHE SANH

Ray Wilkinson VIETNAM '67 JAN. 11, 2018



Ammunition airlift during the relief of Khe Sanh in 1968. Credit Larry Burrows/The LIFE Picture Collection, via Getty Images

DONG HA, Vietnam — "This is surely one of the most beautiful spots on earth," my Marine companion rhapsodized early in 1967 as we walked in South Vietnam's mysterious, brooding Annamite Mountains, swathed in carpets of deep green and black, tumbling precipitously from rebellious skies into deep valleys. Emperors once hunted for tigers in the untamed landscape. French "colons" later established coffee plantations here.

The Marine and a few buddies lived among the hill tribes in their wood houses on stilts as part of an innovative American program to win Vietnamese "hearts and minds." It was an almost indolent lifestyle, and war seemed far away at that moment.

I had recently arrived in-country, a somewhat bewildered recent British immigrant to the United States who had been plucked by the vagaries of the military draft from a bucolic Midwest life reporting on Iowa's hog markets for the U.P.I. news agency. I was now assigned to be a combat correspondent with the Third Marine Division, headquartered along the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Vietnam. Little did we suspect during my visit that the Marines were witnessing the last days of natural splendor in a place that would play a central role in the war: Khe Sanh.

Shortly afterward, that isolated northwest corner of South Vietnam was transformed into the sort of landscape that the author and journalist Bernard Fall called "hell in a very small place." That was the title of his book describing the siege of Dien Bien Phu, 13 years earlier, when the Viet Minh army decisively defeated the French, ending their reign in Vietnam. The siege of Khe Sanh would become so eerily reminiscent of that earlier battle that a spooked President Lyndon Johnson publicly demanded a pledge from his military commanders that it would not end in a similar debacle.

The struggle at Khe Sanh crept up on the world almost stealthily. It began with the little remembered "hill fights" of 1967, small-unit actions between the Marines and North Vietnamese to seize and hold vital high points in northern South Vietnam — Hill 861, Hill 881 South, Hill 881 North — that loomed over a small Marine air strip at Khe Sanh, a tiny plateau far below.

The North Vietnamese were slowly closing in, but we didn't realize it. As the fighting moved up and down the peaks, lush jungle landscape was ripped apart by airstrikes and artillery fire and reduced to craters and shattered tree stumps, with body parts protruding from the pulverized earth.

Marine patrols battled an often elusive enemy and the equally challenging jungle. Grunts wore condoms to protect themselves from leeches that could burrow inside genitals. Once, when I was sprawled on the jungle floor during one halt, a huge snake slithered across my hand, and to this day I am convinced I levitated several feet in shock.

We'd be submerged for days by monsoon rains, wading through rice paddies and shivering at night in sodden jungle fatigues until our feet began to rot and we felt as cold as being naked on winter's day in Chicago. The cold wetness was often followed, within hours, by tropical heat so stifling that Marines fell like ninepins from dehydration despite gulping handfuls of salt tablets.

We lived in terror of a night ambush — every sound

and movement was undoubtedly an enemy soldier. It took hours to "come down" from that experience even when there was no contact. Marines doused themselves with mosquito repellent so evil-smelling that experts said the North Vietnamese and Vietcong soldiers could identify us over long distances and avoid contact. Eventually a less toxic mosquito formula was introduced.

As the North Vietnamese stranglehold tightened around the Khe Sanh combat base itself, Marines burrowed into often shallow trenches, reminiscent of those of World War I, that offered only modest protection against incoming fire. Streams of visiting civilian journalists refused shelter in the public information trench and bribed Navy Seabees with liquor to share their impressively constructed bunker.

My commander was bitten by rats. Despite his violent protests, he was medevaced "to the rear" for rabies treatment, which meant taking two helicopter or fixed-wing trips on the "death run" from the Khe Sanh airfield as North Vietnamese gunners bracketed aircraft and the airstrip with nonstop shelling.
What became known as the siege of Khe Sanh — probably the most reported fight of the entire war — began in late January 1968 and stretched into a protracted artillery slugfest, a grim daily struggle for survival dominated by a virtual curtain of death rained down by high-flying bombers we rarely saw but constantly blessed in our prayers.

As the encirclement was finally lifted in April, I returned to Khe Sanh as a civilian correspondent for U.P.I., having recently finished my military service. In an awesome fleet of gunships (yes, war can look beautiful at times) and clean jungle fatigues, the Army's First Air Cavalry Division hopscotched from hilltop to hilltop into Khe Sanh base and planted a sign declaring, "Under New Management."

I accompanied a sullen unit of Marines who had not changed their fatigues, taken a proper shower or eaten a good meal for weeks or months, as they left by battered trucks or on foot, some muttering their admiration for the North Vietnamese Army rather than any gratitude to the Air Cav.

I had first become aware of this Army-Marine animosity during a stopover in Japan on route to war, when frustrated Marines confined aboard a troop ship had tossed overboard dozens of inebriated soldiers returning from shore leave. And now it had resurfaced in Khe Sanh, and I feared an all-American shootout.

The base was abandoned shortly after the siege itself was lifted, but controversy swirls around Khe Sanh even today. Why were the Marines there in the first place, and why were so many lives sacrificed, seemingly in vain?

Were the North Vietnamese determined to seize Khe Sanh, or was the siege a feint to camouflage the forthcoming nationwide Communist 1968 Tet offensive? Common sense suggests that it was a combination of both. Had the North Vietnamese overrun the base it would have been their biggest victory of the war, affecting the outcome even more decisively than the Tet offensive.

And though the North Vietnamese were not successful in that aim, the battle did distract Gen. William Westmoreland and the Americans from developments in other parts of South Vietnam. Under pressure from Saigon, the Marines had also abandoned their promising hearts and minds campaign in the northern operational area, known as I Corps.
I arrived at Khe Sanh and the surrounding Quang Tri Province as a Marine with a rifle, but returned a half-century later with a piece of chalk as a full-time volunteer English teacher in a Vietnamese high school.

Today, the region, which was subject to possibly the heaviest aerial bombing and defoliation campaign in history, is still dotted with unexploded ordnance despite years of mine clearance and more than 7,000 postwar casualties. Farmers, children and mine clearers themselves continue to be victims. Families suffer the lingering effects of Agent Orange and babies continue to be born deformed.

Some 100,000 tons of ordnance were dropped around Khe Sanh itself, turning the region into a wild moonscape of pulverized red soil. But the mountains are again cloaked in green. Bomb craters have been transformed into duck ponds. The ghostly armies of camouflaged North Vietnamese soldiers slipping down the nearby Ho Chi Minh Trail have been replaced by commercial traders traveling

to and from neighboring Laos and Cambodia.

Coffee plantations and split-level homes steadily encroach on the former Marine base, A Vietnamese victory museum there bizarrely claims "80 ships were destroyed" during the climactic battle, even though the base is 70 miles from the sea or other navigable waterways.

The Vietnamese are remarkably generous in their forgiveness of a war that devastated their country and killed one million to three million people (estimates depend on the source), or as high as 10 percent of the population. American deaths were slightly more than 58,000. Despite this carnage, locals have overcome the trauma of the war more quickly than Americans, and I am warmly welcomed into homes and classrooms everywhere, including Khe Sanh.

One skinny kid who begged candy from passing Marines in 1967 is now a friend and a successful businessman. A farmer friend was a South Vietnamese soldier. His wife was a Vietcong antiaircraft gunner. Their daughter, Nhung, attempts to teach me Vietnamese, a language most Marines did not need because we were not allowed to fraternize with locals, only shoot at them.

I recently met Lan, who had been at Khe Sanh as a NVA nurse at the same time I was. She survived by snuggling close to the Marine wire in a strip of land around the base that American bombers avoided to prevent friendly casualties. Thousands of her fellow soldiers were "simply blown apart — we could do nothing for them," she recalled.

Until our meeting, Lan said she had never talked about Khe Sanh except with her husband, though a picture of a beautiful young woman in uniform sits proudly on the wall of her home. After forging that deepest bond, possible only amid the horror and memories of war, sometimes even with former enemies, we agreed to revisit Khe Sanh — this time together as friends.

Ray Wilkinson is a retired reporter and aid worker who now works as a volunteer English teacher in Vietnam.

WAS AMERICA DUPED AT KHE SANH?

John Mason Glen VIETNAM '67 JAN. 1, 2018

At the time, he seemed like the perfect fit: a tall, articulate, handsome paladin. His posture was always ramrod straight, his uniform constantly and precisely starched. He had punched all the right tickets: Eagle Scout, first captain of the West Point class of 1936, commander of both the elite 504th Parachute Infantry of the 82nd Airborne Division and later the 101st Airborne Division, superintendent of West Point and honorary member of the Society of Cincinnati. So when Lyndon Johnson went looking for someone to command the overall anti-Communist crusade in Vietnam in 1964, Gen. William Westmoreland's name was at the top of a shortlist.

Johnson had taken over the presidency, and the challenges in Southeast Asia, from John Kennedy in November 1963. Kennedy's plan to contain Communism in that part of the world had been to supply aid — both monetary and in the form of American military advisers — to the anti-Communist regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam. By the time of Kennedy's death, the United States had more than 16,000 soldiers advising the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, and it wasn't working. At the Battle of Ap Bac, in January 1963, a force of 1,500 South Vietnamese, despite superior firepower, was decimated by a few hundred Vietcong. Johnson's top aides offered two solutions to the American president: get in or get out. Clad in the panoply of American exceptionalism, Johnson opted for the former and turned to Westmoreland to lead the charge at the head of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam — MACV for short.

In the first major engagement under Westmoreland's leadership, the Battle of the Ia Drang Valley in November 1965, American forces killed 10 enemy soldiers for every one of their own lost. The hard-fought victory persuaded Westmoreland to adopt a strategy of attrition — if American troops killed enough North Vietnamese and Viet Cong, the enemy would have to sue for peace. Westmoreland explained his plan to an old friend, Senator Fritz Hollings of South Carolina. "Westy," Hollings explained, "the American people don't care about the

10, they care about the one."

Westmoreland's opposite number in North Vietnam, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, had also punched the right tickets. A former history teacher and a self-taught military strategist, he had led the Viet Minh resistance against the Japanese during World War II and later commanded the Viet Minh troops who defeated the French forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Considered one of the greatest military strategists of the 20th century, Giap had as his goal not a classic military victory, but rather, as he wrote later, "to break the will of the American government" — just as he had done against the French.

In late 1967, Giap concentrated some 40,000 soldiers in the hills of northwest South Vietnam and orchestrated a series of assaults on a string of American combat bases in the highlands, not far from a Marine base called Khe Sanh, which the North besieged in January 1968. Giap later called these attacks a "diversion" to trick the Americans into moving forces from the populated areas to defensive positions in the hinterland. Most American leaders fell for it; one of the few who didn't, Adm. U. S. Grant Sharp, Westmoreland's nominal superior, presciently argued that "the Communist strategy continued to reflect an effort to draw Allied forces into remote areas," therefore "leaving the populated areas unprotected."

To Westmoreland, the North Vietnamese gambit looked more like the beginning of the end for the North. Called home that fall to convince America that the war was close to being won, he famously claimed, "I begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel" — coincidentally, nearly the same language used by his French predecessor, Gen. Henry Navarre, not long before Dien Bien Phu. For "the light" to glow full orbed, it was essential that the Marine position at Khe Sanh be held.

Both Westmoreland and Johnson quickly became obsessed with Khe Sanh; the president even had a scale model of the outpost built in the Situation Room of the White House so that he could track the course of the battle daily. He also demanded a signed affirmation from the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the base could and would be successfully defended. For both men, the landmark French defeat — likewise a siege against a hilly outpost far to the north — hung over them heavily. "I don't want any damn Dien Bien Phu," Johnson told his staff in 1967, while Westmoreland requested a thorough analysis of the 1954 battle "to ascertain that we are taking all countering actions possible in relationship to the analogous Khe Sanh situation," according to a MACV memo. Khe Sanh likewise took hold of the American public, which bought into the notion of a pivotal battle that would leave one side sprawling and the other limping to final defeat.

Westmoreland threw everything he could at Khe Sanh. During the 77-day siege, American jets flew more than 24,000 sorties, dropping 110,000 tons of bombs on the enemy positions. At one point, Westmoreland even considered the use of tactical nuclear weapons to defend the Marine garrison.

But Khe Sanh was only a prelude to an even bigger campaign: an all-out and unexpected assault on the more densely populated areas in the South, which, Hanoi hoped, would trigger a general uprising against the South Vietnamese government and the Americans. The attack, during the cease-fire for the lunar new year, known as Tet, involved close to 80,000 North Vietnamese and Vietcong fighters who had sneaked into nearly 100 hamlets, villages, cities and towns across South Vietnam.

Though caught off guard, the Americans and their allies reacted quickly and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy force, an estimated 37,000 in the first few weeks of fighting (separate phases of the offensive, which ran into the summer, brought their losses above 100,000). But it came at great cost: The South Vietnamese lost 21,000 men; the Americans and other allies lost nearly 24,000; and tens of thousands of civilians were killed or wounded. A suicide squad of 19 Vietcong sappers breached the American Embassy grounds in Saigon — allegedly one of the most secure locations in South Vietnam. Many of the buildings in the ancient capital of Hue were totally razed during a month long battle, resulting in thousands of deaths and tens of thousands of refugees.

American forces broke the siege of Khe Sanh in April 1968 but withdrew a few months later. Afterward, North Vietnamese forces moved into the area, unopposed, and held it until 1971.

Was Westmoreland duped? Was the attack on the Marines at Khe Sanh simply a ruse to beguile the sclerotic Americans, and especially their obdurate leadership, into believing that Giap was attempting a repeat of the Dien Bien Phu victory? Or were they two separate campaigns? After all, Giap was skeptical of the Tet offensive and paid meticulous attention to Khe Sanh (and, conveniently, was sent to Hungary for medical treatment in the fall of 1967, as the planners behind Tet put the final touches on their offensive).

Duped or not, Westmoreland was replaced soon after the Tet offensive ended. The well-respected CBS newsman Walter Cronkite — a former supporter of the war — now thought the best that the United States could hope for was a "draw." Johnson chose not to run for a second term as president, and Richard Nixon was elected that fall primarily because of his promise to end the fighting. Whether Khe Sanh and Tet were part of the same campaign, they contributed equally to the emotional collapse of American support for the war, and for their leaders.

John Mason Glen is a retired college history professor who flew medical evacuation helicopters in Vietnam from 1971 to 1972.

OBIT

CAPTAIN BILL PERSON 553RD RECON WING,USAF KHE SANH VETERAN

Captain Billy Joe "Bill" Person went on his last mission November 27th after a long courageous battle with cancer and COPD. Born and raised in Olney, he went on his chosen path of Boy scouts, Civil Air Patrol, graduated ROTC from North Texas into the Air Force and the Intelligence Security Services with 2 tours of Vietnam. Survived being shot down and was involved in some amazing Intelligence programs. **His passion was always Flying aircraft, he loved being in the sky.** An avid military historian and author of 7 books; Avatar Dawn, Critic Makers, Ravenworks Sanction, Queen Bee Delta Project and his latest Batcats as well as a lovely book "Stories Remembered from the Past" about a history of the North Texas area as well as a children's book of illustrated poems all available from Amazon. He was a successful motivational speaker and trainer at Brown and Root after his military service. Later as a rancher in Jack county with his brothers Richard and Claude as well as an Oil and Gas man. Active in VFW - Bowie, American Legion - Bowie, Khe Sanh Veterans, Forward Air Controllers, Batcats, he enjoyed attending those reunions and a brotherhood of military history writers. A very sweet loving giving man, always positive and generous to everyone



His eyes smiled and his wit always sparkled. He enjoyed being a celebrity of late with his many caregivers, Doctors, nurses and home health in the New Braunfels area who doted on the man.

The world lost a sweet good man and I lost my brother, best friend, debate partner and father. On that last Sunday evening, we watched some football, he did one of his Sudoku puzzles, had a conversation with a Vietnam marine Harrier pilot next to him and we were able to hold each other and say I love you.

He will be honored to be next to his father Claude Oliver Person WW1 and his brave uncle Aaron WW2 in our Person family home at the Hastings Oklahoma cemetery in January 2018.

A STUDY SHOWS PARASITE FROM VIETNAM MAY BE KILLING VETS

Veterans returned to the U.S. after fighting in the jungles of Vietnam a half century ago, but hundreds of them may be dying from a silent bullet — a slow-killing parasite living in the men decades after the war, a new study revealed.

Liver flukes, parasites that infect a human when raw or undercooked fish is eaten, are being investigated

as the cause of a rare bile duct cancer among veterans who served in the Vietnam War. It could take years for symptoms to show up, but when they do, the host is left with tremendous pain and given just a few months to live.

The Department of Veterans Affairs this spring commissioned a small pilot study to look into the link between liver flukes and the cancer. More than 20 percent of the 50 blood samples submitted to the study came back positive or bordering positive for liver fluke antibodies, said Sung-Tae Hong, the tropical medicine specialist who carried out the tests at Seoul National University in South Korea.

Gerry Wiggins, who served in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969, agreed to take part in the study even though he didn't have any symptoms. The 69-year-old said he has already lost friends to the disease. To his surprise, liver fluke antibodies were detected in him.
"I was in a state of shock," he said. "I didn't think it would be me."

SALMONELLA POISONING SYMPTOMS AND WARNING SIGNS

Further tests showed two cysts on his bile duct what could develop into cancer known as cholangiocarcinoma. They were removed and Wiggins is doing well.

Everyone who tested positive for the antibodies was notified, Northport VA Medical Center spokesman Christopher Goodman told the Associated Press. Goodman would not comment on the findings. The parasites infect about 25 million people worldwide, mostly in Asia. It's very uncommon among Americans.

The parasites can be killed in infected humans through drugs during the early stages. But they can also live in humans without treatment for decades because no symptoms show up — much like veterans who fought in the jungles of Vietnam during the war. Over time, swelling and inflammation of the bile duct can lead to cancer. Jaundice, itchy skin, weight loss and other symptoms appear only when the disease is in its final stages.

Mike Baughman, 65, who has bile duct cancer that his doctor said was "more likely than not" caused by liver flukes, was granted a claim for service-related benefits early this year after being denied three times. Baughman was probably infected when his unit ate uncooked fish in the Vietnam jungle after they ran out of rations. He gets about $3,100 a month and said he's relieved to know his wife will continue to receive benefits after he dies. But he remains angry that other veterans' last days are consumed by fighting the same government they went to war for as young men.

"In the best of all worlds, if you came down with cholangiocarcinoma, just like Agent Orange, you automatically were in," he said, referring to benefits granted to veterans exposed to the toxic defoliant sprayed in Vietnam. "You didn't have to go fighting."

"Personally, I got what I needed, but if you look at the bigger picture with all these other veterans, they don't know what necessarily to do," he said. "None of them have even heard of it before. A lot of them give me that blank stare like, 'You've got what?'"

MOM JAILED OVER SON'S 'SENSELESS' STREP THROAT DEATH

The VA study, along with a call by Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer of New York for broader research into liver flukes and cancer-stricken veterans, began after The Associated Press raised the issue in a story last year. The reporting found that about 700 veterans with cholangiocarcinoma have been seen by the VA in the past 15 years. Less than half of them submitted claims for service-related benefits, mostly because they were not aware of a possible connection to Vietnam. The VA rejected 80 percent of the requests, but decisions often appeared to be haphazard or contradictory, depending on what desks they landed on, the AP found.

The number of claims submitted reached 60 in 2017, up from 41 last year. Nearly three out of four of those cases were also denied, even though the government posted a warning on its website this year saying veterans who ate raw or undercooked freshwater fish while in Vietnam might be at risk. It stopped short of urging them to get ultrasounds or other tests, saying there was currently no evidence the vets had higher infection rates than the general population.

We are taking this seriously,'said Curt Cashour, a spokesman with the Department of Veterans Affairs. But until further research, a recommendation cannot be made either way."

REPLIES FROM THE KSV WEBSITE

"Untreated" water was also noted as a possible cause. I assume that didn't include mountain streams and rivers in the Khe Sanh area.
Nick Romanetz

On occasion, many of the different rifle companies would be assigned to protect villages, especially around DaNang. The villagers would often trade local food for C-rations. They would cook fish, piglets and chicken but not everyone would partake. Happy Thanksgiving!

John Kaheny

When we left Khe Sahn, C/1/26 was positioned at Red Beach for a few weeks to get cleaned up and refitted for future missions. A village chief lived on the base because the VC had a bounty on his head for being friendly to the Americans. His village was on the beach facing the ocean. My platoon was tasked with taking him to the village one day for a village gathering of the elders/leaders. The good ole boys shared a luncheon of local food and discussed politics. My platoon sergeant, a second tour SSgt, was grinning as we left the base. Upon getting to the village, he said I was the "guest of honor', being the platoon commander, and would dine with the village elders. He bid me a farewell salute and said to "enjoy your meal." He knew what I was in for but I didn't.

The meal basically consisted of lumpy, dirty looking rice, mostly raw fish from the ocean catch that morning, some slightly cooked, an appetizer of raw fish eyes, nuc mong (sp) and home brewed tea and perhaps a shot of their "moonshine." The mamma sans did all of the serving of food, mostly in cracked, dirty ceramic bowls and plates and throughout the meal their second most important job was to keep shooing the flies away. Fortunately. my platoon sergeant said not to finish everything on my plate as that would mean they did not feed me enough. Thank God that was a one time deal. I did not finish much of my food, came down with dysentery 24 hrs later and was just miserable until the bug ran its course with scant medial assistance from our medical personnel. So far, no apparent symptoms of the disease mentioned in these posts. "C" rats really aren't that bad in the grand scheme of things.
Nick Romanetz

DOC TOPMILLER MEMORIAL CEREMONY BY MICHAEL ARCHER

On November 11, Eastern Kentucky University hosted a wonderfully meaningful ceremony to dedicate a memorial to veterans who have given that last full measure of devotion, both during the war and after, including my friend Robert "Doc" Topmiller. The memorial sculpture was created by artist, and former Khe Sanh siege survivor, Allen Ferg. I was honored to be asked to give the keynote address (that text can be found at www.michaelarcher.net). Among other participants and guests who came to pay their respects were several other Khe Sanh



siege veterans who are shown in the photo above next to the newly unveiled memorial: (left to right) me, Richard Vaughn Steve Orr, Larry McCartney and Michael Reath

I was honored to be asked to be keynote speaker

at the November 11, 2017 Veterans Day ceremony at Eastern Kentucky University to dedicate a monument in memory of my friend Robert "Doc" Topmiller and other fallen veterans. For those of you who were unable to attend, here is the text of that speech :

President Benson, Doctor Morris, distinguished guests. What an honor it is for me to be preceded at this podium by Dr. George Herring. Dr. Herring, a Navy veteran, is one of the country's leading, and most sought after, experts on U.S. foreign policy and diplomacy. But more importantly to the theme of today's ceremony, beginning in the late 1970's, when our country was still very much politically divided over the recently ended war in Vietnam, domestic unrest, Nixonian abuses of power, and the decline of American prestige abroad, Dr. Herring's balanced examination of that era in his books and treatises, helped us to understand how we had gotten to that place and were instrumental in moving this nation past that "long national nightmare."

I would also like to thank Dr. Chris Taylor and Dr. Brett Morris for inviting me here today; for their generous hospitality and for the extraordinary work they did over the last few years in advancing this meaningful project, not merely to remember those who gave that last full measure of devotion in the service of our country, but as guardians of something even more precious—their reputations. This is my fourth trip to Eastern Kentucky University and each time I return I'm pleasantly reminded of the real sense of community and spirit of purpose displayed by students and faculty. There is certainly no timelier example of that spirit than in our presence here this morning.

In 2004, I reunited with EKU history professor Robert "Doc" Topmiller, my close friend from the Vietnam War. Despite it being 34 years since we last spoke, it seemed like almost no time had passed, picking up on threads of conversations we had started back then and soon relapsing into the grim, satiric humor that we'd developed in combat—a coping mechanism I later recognized—to deal with issues that might otherwise have overwhelmed us emotionally. Doc invited me to speak to his students, and, on my first day here on campus, he took the opportunity to tease me by fabricating a darkly humorous hypothesis. In January 1968 I had been with a platoon then guarding the District Headquarters compound in Khe Sanh town when we were suddenly attacked by several hundred enemy assault troops. Though badly outnumbered, we fought for two days and then managed to escape just as we were running out of ammunition, allowing those communist forces a substantial propaganda coup from having captured, up to that point in the war, the first seat of government within South Vietnam.

Doc amusingly spun that event for his students, saying that this boost in enemy morale "created by PFC Archer's surrender," had transformed the northern forces into a juggernaut and thus was directly responsible for the fall of Saigon seven years later. Accordingly, he introduced me to each class as: "The person who single-handedly lost the Vietnam War." While most of his students knew it was a joke and laughed, there were always a few faces that remained contorted in revulsion throughout my lecture. I, of course, loved every moment of it, basking in the joy of our renewed special bond and pleased that nothing seemed to have changed over the years. But I was wrong.

By 2006, I'd come to realize my friend was now spiraling into PTSD-fueled despair, but I was encouraged that several PTSD researchers at the time were of the opinion that some of this disorder stemmed from a combat vet's sense of alienation after returning home. This was not necessarily due to being shunned, as had been experienced by most Vietnam War vets; but rather because they longed for the loyalty, trust, cooperation and self-sacrifice that typified good soldiering in battle that was not easily found in modern civilian society. As such, I naively believed that our grim but comical wartime patois at the absurdity of the human condition, was just the medicine Doc needed to overcome this; the same way it had appeared to work in combat years before. However, it proved to be far more complicated than that.

As a nineteen-year-old combat corpsman-medic during the brutal 77-day siege of Khe Sanh, Doc Topmiller had been thrust into the unimaginable position of each day having to save many, of what turned out to be, nearly 400 killed and 2,500 wounded young Americans; treating injuries ranging from relatively clean bullet holes to gaping artillery shrapnel wounds and horribly burned bodies,

all within a filthy underground environment with few sophisticated medical tools at his disposal, some literally dying in his arms.

It was not until two years later, when he ended his life, that I was forced accept the reality that each wound Doc had touched at Khe Sanh, physical or not, had become his own and was painfully reminded of a doleful verse by A.E. Housman a century before: "The saviors come not home tonight. Themselves they could not save."

There is no good data on how many Vietnam veterans took their own lives because they could not cope, but no doubt many did. Psychiatrist/author Jonathan Shay suggested that fully twice as many of those veterans died by their own hand than by the enemy's. And while many PTSD researchers concede that high levels of intrusive memories among combat vets can predict the relative risk of suicide, other predictors are unclear. All we do know is that many American veterans of all wars are struggling with this life and death issue each day and more awareness of the seriousness and complexity of their plight is needed. To further that end, this academic institution dedicated a memorial bench a few years ago.

Sadly, in addition to today's unveiling of the monument commemorating those lost in war; we are also here to witness a new name being added to that bench, honoring a veteran who later succumbed to such invisible, unhealed wounds suffered in his service to our nation.

The most profound lesson I learned in my search to understand post-war trauma, is that wars do not end once the shooting stops. War ends within families. For those who we have come to honor today, the war is over. But, for those who have suffered the immeasurable sorrow of having lost a son or daughter, father or mother, brother or sister, the war never ends. And so, it is only fitting that today, and on every occasion when we stop to pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, we never forget those they left behind with a piece missing from their lives and a perpetual anguish at "what might have been."

In battle, soldiers often bond into ties similar to a family that has been compared, since at least the time of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, to a "band of brothers." Among them, grief for a fallen friend can be equally intense. About eight years ago I came to know a former Marine, Allen V. Williams, who had fought at Khe Sanh, though in a different unit than mine, and had been wounded in an unsuccessful attempt retrieve the body of his close friend, Tom Mahoney. Mahoney, one of the last Americans to die at Khe Sanh, and on the very day that infamous combat base was finally abandoned, had been my high school buddy and we had joined the Marines together. My later search for Tom, and for answers to the unusual circumstances surrounding his death, became the subject of my book *The Long Goodbye*. It was during that research that I found Allen, who, as it turned out spent months in a New York Naval Hospital recovering from his wounds, and then had a long, accomplished career as an actor in television and Hollywood films. Despite this uncommon level of fame and success throughout his life, Allen told me: "A day never goes by that I don't think of Tommy. For a long time, I thought of trying to talk to someone about it, but for the most part, I just buried it in some deep part of my heart." Needless to say, we immediately bonded in the commonality of our grief. On Veterans Day 2010, both Allen and I received the same eloquent and heartfelt message from his daughter Carrie.

In closing, I would like to share her words with you and dedicate her sentiment to my fellow veterans here today:

"I wish you had never had to endure the tragedy and turmoil of war, or had to grow up too fast, or lose your best friends in combat. I could never understand where you have been. I can only be grateful for the impact you both have made on my life. Thank you for your service to our country, for your love of each other, and the example you set for the next generation."
Thank you.

DEDICATION OF THE FALLEN SOLDIER CROSS

RICHMOND, Ky. (WTVQ) – Tommy Fagan found his purpose in life, his sense of belonging through his service in the military.

The Richmond native returned from the battlefield,



even went on to earn two degrees from Eastern Kentucky University, but like so many of his fellow soldiers, found that the scars of war never really heal. At age 34, he passed away last year from a massive seizure.

Now, however, thanks to a recent addition to the Veterans Memorial at EKU, his life of service will never be forgotten. In Veterans Day ceremonies on Saturday, Nov. 11, the University unveiled a Fallen Soldier Cross in memory of all those who lost their lives because of their service, but not while in active service.

The sculpture was fashioned by Allen Ferg, a platoon mate of fellow Vietnam veteran and former EKU history professor Dr. Robert Topmiller, another of the day's honorees. It features a bronze casting of the traditional upside-down rifle, boots and helmet, surrounded by a stainless steel sphere that "symbolizes that PTSD is not unique to America, and represents the global nature of the problems facing all warriors after they leave service," said Dr. Brett Morris, former professor of military science with the University's ROTC program, who has been involved with the Veterans Memorial project since its inception. Family members of Fagan, Topmiller and others were invited to attach replica "dog tags" to the sphere to create a wind chime effect.

Dr. Aaron Thompson, an EKU faculty member now serving as vice president of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, was a friend and mentor to Fagan, and among the speakers at the Veterans Day ceremony.

After two years in the Army, including combat in the Middle East, Fagan came home at age 21, but "he never really left Iraq and Afghanistan. He came home suffering from so much. He had flashbacks and nightmares, difficulty sleeping and trouble concentrating."

Just as he had been assisted by staff at the EKU Military and Veterans Affairs Office and others, Fagan went on to help his fellow veterans in any way he could and was a certified active volunteer at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center. In fact, he was planning to help some fellow veterans move on the day he passed away.

Fagan's name was added to a bench adjacent to the new sculpture.

The speakers also included George Herring, a professor of history at the University of Kentucky and a prominent scholar of the Vietnam War, and keynote speaker Michael Archer, whose book "The Long Goodbye: Khe Sanh Revisited" won Foreword magazine's 2016 INDIES Book of the Year award for war and military nonfiction.

"Like no other event in our history, Vietnam caused us to confront a set of beliefs as a people," Herring said, recalling the words of novelist Robert Stone, who once likened the unpopular war to a piece of shrapnel "embedded in our definition of who we are."

"Bob Topmiller (a medic at Khe Sanh) served nobly in Vietnam and was dedicated to understanding the war he had fought in," Herring said. "His tragically short life reminds us that wars don't end on the day the shooting stops."

Archer, who called himself an "old friend" of Topmiller, said, "We do know that veterans of all wars deal with life and death situations every day. For those we honor today, the war is over."

For Topmiller, the war "ended" with his passing in 2008. In a letter to the editor of The Eastern Progress, Peter Szok recalled his former teaching colleague's "open and generous spirit" and his focus on "contributing to his community and broadening his own understanding of humanity. I was particularly impressed with Bob's volunteer work, his willingness to share his knowledge with innumerable groups and his deep concern for his fellow veterans

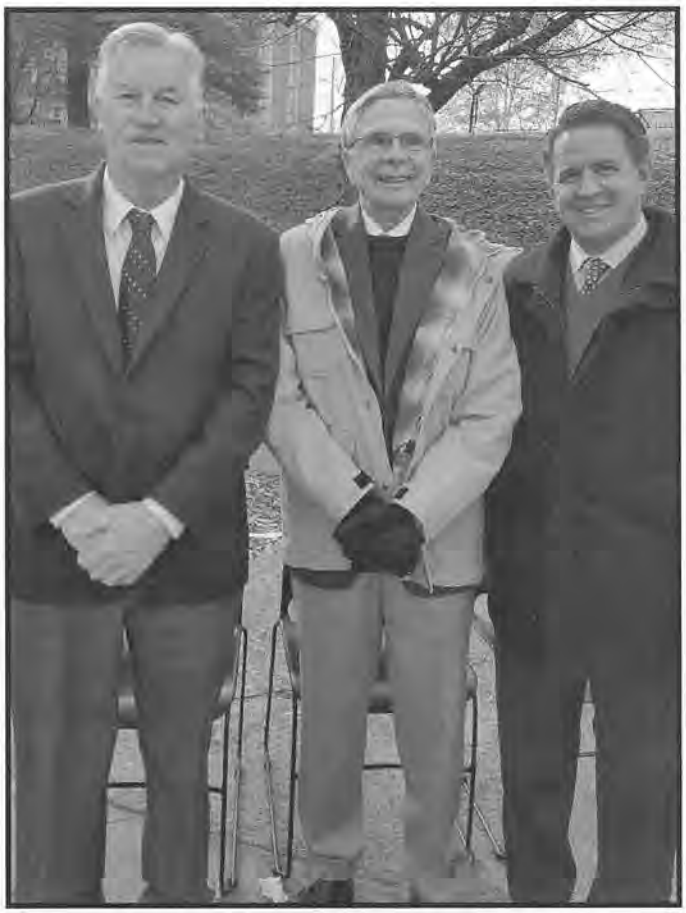

L– R **Me, Dr. George Herring and EKU President Michael Benson**



and for the people of Vietnam. It is difficult to see Bob's death as anything but a tragedy. Over the last days, I've felt a great sense of sorrow, but also an enormous feeling of privilege for having spent time with this extraordinary person."

Approximately $15,000 was raised to fund the Fallen Soldier Cross sculpture. Donations to the Veterans Memorial Fund at Eastern can still be made through the University's Development Office, online at and designating the gift to the Veterans Memorial Fund, or by mail to University Development, Coates CPO 19, Eastern Kentucky University, 521 Lancaster Ave., Richmond, Kentucky, 40475. Gifts of $100 or more are remembered by brick pavers that name the donors or someone they wish to recognize.

The Veterans Day ceremony was preceded by a special roll-call tribute to Vietnam veterans with the reading of names of the 1,100 Kentuckians killed in action in the Vietnam War. A day earlier, the campus community participated in the National Roll Call, a reading of approximately 7,000 names as part of a grassroots effort to honor service members lost in recent military conflicts.

MICHAEL ARCHER :

Grew up in northern California and served in Vietnam as a U.S. Marine in 1967-68. His books include *A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered*, which VIETNAM magazine called "the best first-hand account of the battle of Khe Sanh;" *A Man of His Word: The Life and Times of Nevada's Senator William J. Raggio*; and, his most recent book, *The Long Goodbye: Khe Sanh Revisited*, chronicling his search for answers to a friend's mysterious death at Khe Sanh. *The Long Goodbye* was named the 2016 INDIES Book of the Year in the category of War & Military nonfiction by a panel of librarians and booksellers from among hundreds of submissions by independent publishers and university presses from across the nation.

Michael's articles and essays have appeared in *The Nevada Review, Political History of Nevada 2016; Reno-Tahoe* and *Red Clay* magazines. His research

is frequently cited in works by writers of historical non-fiction. He was a technical adviser in preparing the screenplay for the 2013 short film about Khe Sanh, *Guarding Charlie* and was a cast member in the 2015 documentary film *The Siege of Khe Sanh.*

Michael has spoken at numerous universities, colleges and other venues across the country. In addition to his writing, Michael is currently a staff member with the Senate Committee on Finance of the Nevada State Legislature and lives in Reno.

And now I'll now get back to work on the final editing of my new book "The Gunpowder Prince: How Marine Captain Mirza Munir Baig Saved Khe Sanh" which is scheduled for release in early 2018. Cheers!

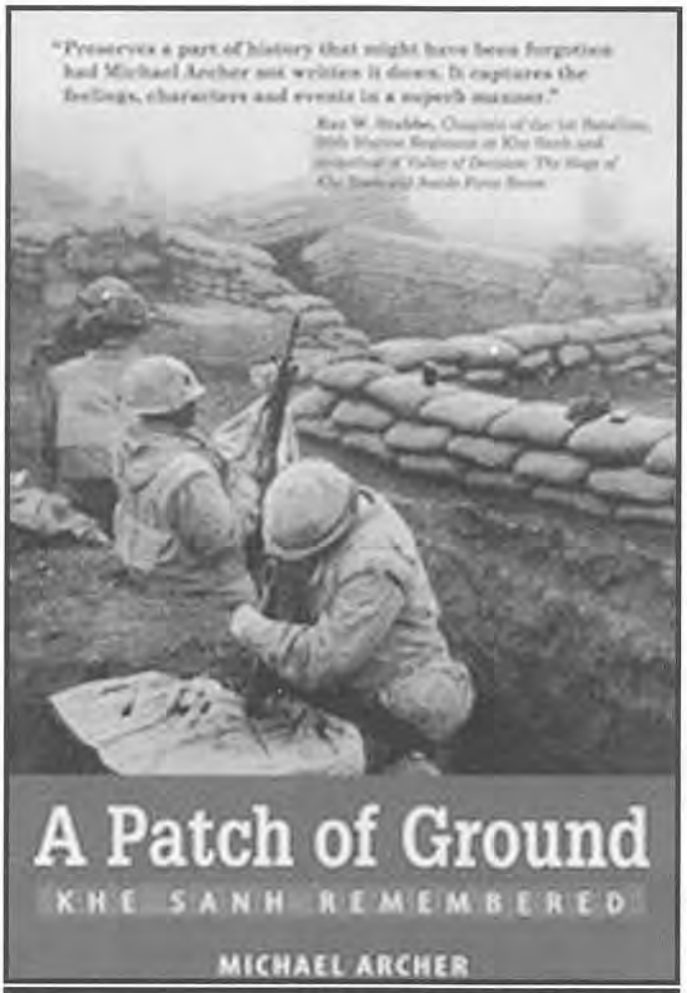

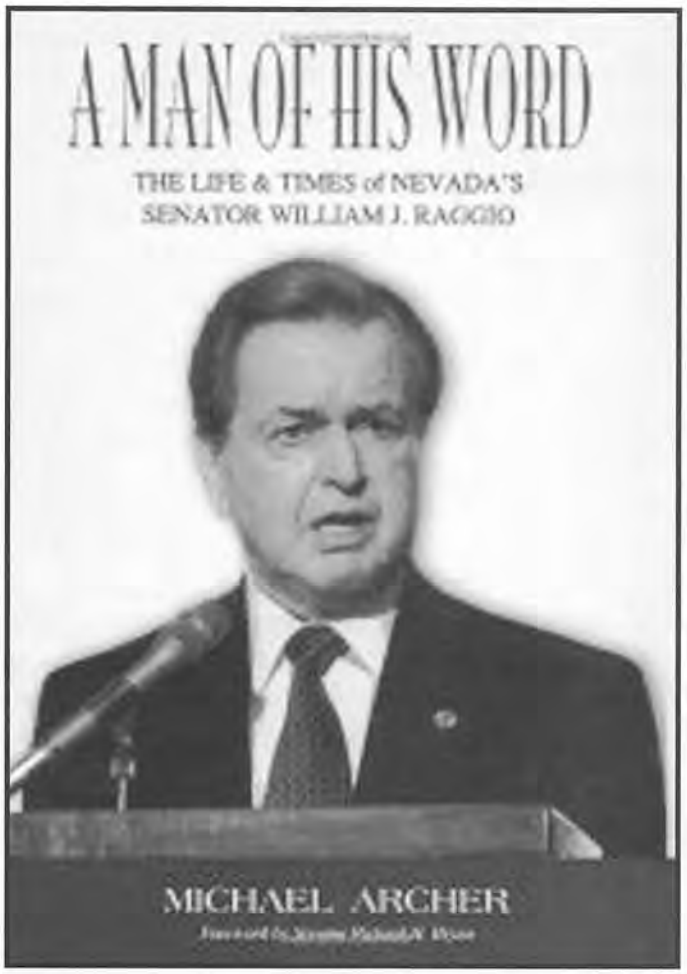

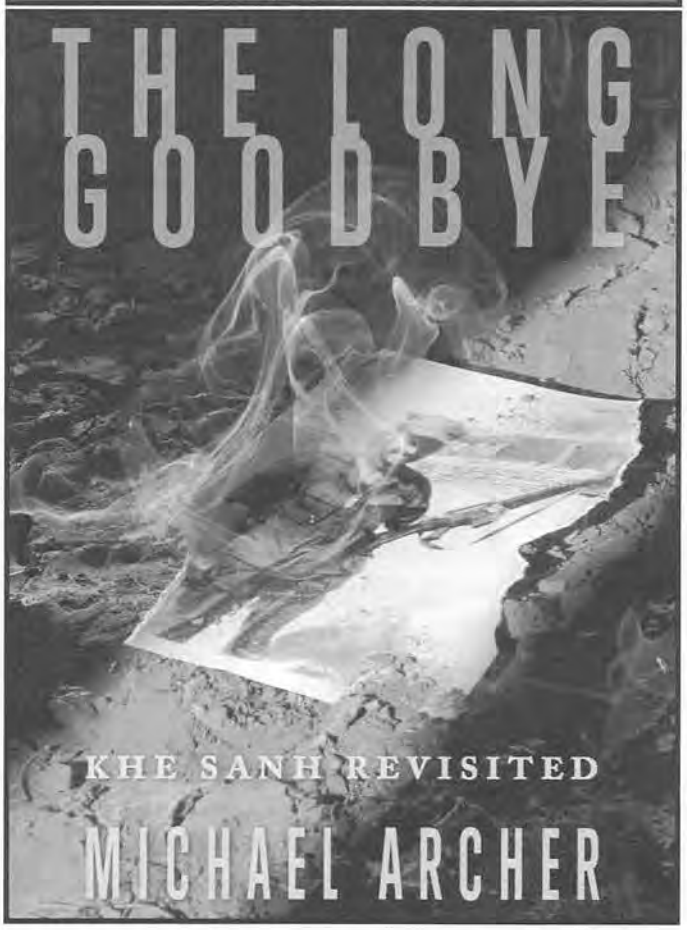

OBIT

MICHAEL BRADBURY, USMC KILO CO 3/26 3RD PLT, KHE SANH VETERAN

Michael D. Bradbury "Mike", 69, passed away on Thursday, Nov. 9, 2017, at his home, following an illness.

A memorial service, with military honors, was held at 11:00 a.m., on Thursday, Nov. 16, 2017, at Rost Funeral Home, McMurtrey Chapel.

Mike was born on March 22, 1948, to Benjamin Elmer Bradbury and Arva Edria Pichler in San



Francisco. He graduated January 1966 from William C Overfelt in San Jose.

He joined the US Marine Corps on Feb. 14, 1966 and served in Vietnam from October 1967 to November 1968, including Khe Sanh during Tet Offensive and the Battle of Khe Sanh. He earned a Purple Heart and a Presidential Citation.

He returned to the states and in July 1969 and reenlisted into the US Air Force in September 1971. Mike retired from the Air Force, as an F-111 Crew Chief, in August of 1988.

He worked for BLM after retirement until 1997, then Marsh Aviation in Mesa, Arizona until a 2002 cancer diagnosis. He returned afterward to the place he loved, Mountain Home.

In 1972, he married Judith Annis and their son Dennis Michael Bradbury was born. In 1976 he married Susan Cutrer, and Daniel Joseph and Donna Marie were born. In 2005, he married Donna Helmandollar.

In 2006 Mike began treatment for Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma. He remained in remission until February of 2017. Mike enjoyed shooting and hunting, classic cars, old movies, playing the guitar, boxing and model cars and trains. Mike is survived by his friend and wife Donna Bradbury, son Dan Bradbury, daughter Donna Ryan, step daughters Pam Edington, and Kristina Aubert, brother Daven Bradbury, sister Robin Cassidy, and eight grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, and his son Dennis.

Donations in Mike's memory can be made to the American Cancer Society, 2676 So. Vista, Boise, ID 83705.

SADOWSKI WILL FINALLY HEAR SOUNDS OF THE GAME HE LOVES

M.F. Piraino Contributing writer

Alexander Sadowski is surrounded by loud noises when he bowls in the Sackett Tract League on Thursdays at Pastimes Athletic Club.

The thud of bowling balls hitting the lanes. The sharp crash of pins scattering for strikes. The noisy chatter of bowlers waiting to bowl. But for the last 48 years, Sadowski hasn't been able to hear a pin drop.

The 67-year-old Sadowski, a Marine veteran, has been deaf since 1969, a personal price he paid while serving his country in Vietnam. He's never heard his grand children laugh . He can't talk on the phone. Family conversations at the dinner table took place without his voice.

"I've missed out on a lot," said Sadowski, who earned the Purple Heart after he was discharged. But Sadowski's silent world is changing. Earlier this



Alexander Sadowski has bowled in the Sackett Tract League for over 30 years. Sadowski, a Marine veteran who has been deaf since 1969, recently received cochlear implants.

year, Sadowski was approved to receive cochlear implants in both ears through the Veteran's Administration Hospital. The medical devices were surgically implanted during a five-hour procedure Nov. 7

"I wasn't able to hear after the surgery for a few weeks while 1 was healing," Sadowski said. "But three weeks later when they were turned on I started hearing a noise. It sounded like a bird chirping."

The cochlear implants create sound for people with severe or profound hearing losses like Sadowski, who suffered permanent damage to his ear drums from constant gun blasts and mortar fire during Vietnam.

The implants bypass the damaged structures in the inner ear and directly stimulate the auditory nerve in the ear by slowing increasing sound levels. "At this stage 1 can hear some but the sound of people's voices sound like Mickey Mouse," Sadowski said. "Every day sounds get clearer. I'm on programs with different hearing levels, starting at level one. I should be able to move up to level five. By that point, I should be able to hear. It takes six months to a year before I'll hear completely."

While he adapted to his hearing loss by reading lips, Sadowski's social isolation impacted his quality of life as a father, husband and employee. Sadowski worked at R.E. Dietz for 19 years then at Carrier for 19 years but he had a hard time interpreting co-worker's words.

Sadowski's wife, Barbara, shouldered the responsibility of helping him communicate. It was a struggle for both, especially when the couple's 18-year-old son, Marc Edward, died in a car accident in 1996.

"He relied on my mom to communicate things to him," Sadowski's daughter, Jennifer Artz, said. "It definitely was difficult. She had to do all the communicating for him because he didn't understand what was being said to him."

"I missed out on a lot that my wife and children had to say throughout the years," Sadowski said. "I missed out on hearing funeral services for my parents, brothers, aunts, uncles and especially my late son.

When I was working, I had a hard time hearing my boss and co-workers."

In the near future, Sadowski will hear the voices of his bowling pals in the Sackett Tract League, a league he's bowled with for over 30 years. League members honored Sadowski for Veteran's Day and to welcome him back after surgery Nov.17

Sadowski, who is known as Harv, a nickname he received because of his affinity for Harvey Wallbanger cocktails, was taken by surprise when league members all wore matching grey T-shirts with his picture on it. Sadowski's teammate Eric Gancarz ordered and handed out to league bowlers the T-shirts with the Marine motto, Semper Fi, a Purple Heart and 'Congratulations Harv' on the front and a photo of Sadowski as a young Marine on the back. Artz and other family members were on hand for the surprise.

"Even though it's been hard to communicate with him, he's got a great personality" and we wanted to do something special for him," said Gancarz, who bowls on Sadowski's team; Harv's Hangers. Barbara Sadowski said it's rewarding to see her husband's face light up when he hears and understands people talking to him.

"This is pretty exciting," said Sadowski's wife of 45 years. "In a quiet room with no outside noise he's starting to hear my voice. He's had a hard life not being able to hear. I've had to advocate for him all the years we've been married."

After years of living in silence, Sadowski's ready to rejoin a world with filled with sound. "I'm looking forward to being able to hear everyone's voice, including my own," he said.

OBIT

DONNA ELLIOTT, SERGEANT, USA, SISTER OF JERRY ELLIOTT, MIA VIETNAM

A plaque hung near the entrance of the door which read, "Only she who attempts the absurd can achieve the impossible." This was how Donna Elaine Elliott, born on April 26, 1951, in Greenville, Mississippi, experienced life until October 22, 2017.

Along with a career in community organizing which resulted in the free school breakfast program being congressionally mandated in all Mississippi schools with below poverty level students, Donna achieved the rank of Sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserves, earned the Army Commendation and Achievement awards, a U.S. Army Forces Command Fourth Estate Award, and three Fifth U.S. Army Minaret awards for excellence in military photo journalism; authored the book. "Keeping the Promise: the story of MIA Jerry Elliott"; and dedicated innumerable hours and trips to Southeast Asia in an effort to account for all U.S. POW/MIA's.

She loved animals and nature, was a talented photographer, liked the feel of warm garden dirt between her fingers, the thrill of reeling in a big fish, canoeing and camping, and was always up for a road trip adventure, but her greatest joy was family and friends. Donna was always just a phone call away if someone had a problem. Her son often told her she should hang out a shingle that read: "1-800-I-Listen."



Daughter of the late William Stafford and Mary Richardson Elliott, she was preceded in death by an older brother, Vietnam MIA SSGT Jerry William Elliott; and a little sister, Cindy Ann Elliott. A resident of Pleasant Grove, Arkansas since 1984, she is survived by her steadfast companion of 24 years, Storm Sterling Minick; a son and best friend, William Jerry Randolph Berry, Pleasant Grove, Arkansas; three beloved grandsons, Thomas Roy Fuller, Taiwan; William Samuel Wayne Berry and William Maxwell Elliott Berry both of Mountain View, Arkansas; several exceptional brothers and sisters by choice and her dog pal, Wilson.

A memorial service celebrating Donna's life was held Saturday, October 28, 2017, 2:00PM at Roller

Coffman Chapel in Mountain View, Arkansas with Brother Danny Robbins officiating.

Military honors were provided by the Stone County Honor Guard.

OBIT

LT COL JAMES BASCOM WILKINSON, USMC, C/O 1/26 KHE SANH VETERAN

Lt Col. James Bascom Wilkinson, (USMC, ret) 87, passed away peacefully at home in Dallas, Texas of complications from Congestive Heart Failure on December 1, 2017.

Born in Vicksburg, Mississippi on July 28, 1930 to



Fay and John Wilkinson, he joined the Marine Corps at 18, later graduating from the University of Alabama while in the service. Serving in the Vietnam War as an Infantry Battalion Commander during 1967-68, he survived the deadly Khe Sanh siege and was later featured in the oral history book, "Khe Sanh: Siege in the Clouds", and in David Douglas Duncan's book, "War Without Heroes." He was honored with the Legion of Merit with Combat V for his distinguished services while in combat with the enemy in Khe Sanh.

After retiring at 39 as a Lt. Colonel and moving to Hilton Head Island, he became a Financial Consultant in the Savannah offices of Merrill Lynch. He subsequently held Merrill Lynch management positions in Dallas, Charleston and Memphis where he served on the Memphis Symphony Board, the Theater Board, as President of the Arts Appreciation Council and Junior Warden of the Calvary Episcopal Church. After retiring in 1995, he and his wife Nancy lived first on Hilton Head Island, where he served as a board member and driver for Meals on Wheels, before settling for many years in Cashiers, North Carolina, where he served a term of President of the Sheep Laurel Homeowners Association and was a member of the vestry for the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Preceded in death by his son in-law Chip Thompson. He is survived by his wife Nancy, his daughters Sabra Thompson and Shannon Wilkinson , Catherine McCarthy and husband Chuck, son , Dwight Emanuelson, Jr and wife Claire and 6 grandchildren; James Marion, Ashley Shannon and Sabra Elizabeth Thompson, Hillis Emanuelson and wife Lindsey, James Emanuelson , and Charles K McCarthy

Hillis Emanuelson and his wife Lindsey , James Emanuelson, Charles K NcCarthy , Jr , He was an avid reader and writer for The Marine Corp Gazette and The Leatherneck He had a special appreciation for the Marine Corps and remained in close touch with his many Vietnam troops long after the war ended. "My decision to join the Marine Corps was a very wise move by a young Mississippi lad," he once commented, recalling that after going through new recruit training in 1948 his monthly income was approximately $96.00.



OBIT

GARY MARKWARDT, USMC
KILO CO 3/26
KHE SANH VETERAN

Gary Markwardt was born September 10, 1945, in Cando, North Dakota to William and Clara Markwardt.



He grew up on a farm near Bisbee, North Dakota and graduated from Bisbee High in 1963. Gary was drafted into the U.S. Marine Corps in 1966 where he served 13 months in Vietnam and the battle of Khe Sanh.

Gary was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps as a corporal in 1968. Gary moved to Oxnard, CA where he met Patty Tourtellotte and married in 1969. Gary received his degree in criminal justice from Oxnard College while working full time and helping raise his three children Michael, Lisa and William.

Gary became a Ventura County Sheriff's Deputy in 1974 until 1977 when Gary and Patty moved to Spokane, WA. Gary became a Pend Oreille County Deputy in 1979 until 1985 when he took a position as a resident deputy at Priest Lake, ID for Bonner County. In 1987 Gary accepted a job as a Newport City Police officer and later became the Chief of Police. Gary retired from law enforcement in 1998.

Upon retirement, Gary worked as a custodian for the Newport School District until 2001 when he went to work for the Northern Quest Casino as a security officer until 2010 when he and Patty fully retired together.

Gary enjoyed his family more than anything but especially his grandchildren. Gary and Patty enjoyed the summers in Newport, WA and the winters in Yuma, AZ where they had close friends and family.

Gary passed unexpectedly at his home in Newport, WA on October 3, 2017.

Gary was preceded in death by his father William, mother Clara, sister Ruth and brothers Duane and Gene. He is survived by wife Patty; sons Michael and William; daughter Lisa; sisters Janet, Linda, Carol, Nita and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Services for Gary were held on Tuesday October 10, 2017 at Sherman-Campbell Funeral Home in Newport, WA at 2:00pm with a celebration of life to follow at Kelly's. Military Honors burial were held on Wednesday, October 11, 2017 at Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake, WA at 2:15.

2 PERCENT FEDERAL RETIREMENT COLA SET FOR JANUARY

By Eric Yoder
October 13, 2017 at 9:47 AM
Submitted By Larry McCartney

Most federal retirees will see their annuity benefits increase by 2 percent in January, the largest inflation-based increase since 2012 and an amount about in line with what current federal employees stand to receive as a pay raise.

The cost of living adjustment, or COLA, reflects the increase in a consumer price index measure from the third calendar quarter of one year to the next. The calculation was finalized Friday after taking into account inflation in September.

The impact on benefits will differ between the two main federal retirement systems. While more than nine-tenths of current federal employees are under the Federal Employees Retirement System — which generally covers those first hired after 1983 — two-thirds of the 2.1 million federal retirees draw benefits from the older Civil Service Retirement System.

The CSRS program provides for a full COLA adjustment to all retirees regardless of age. The average monthly annuity under that program is about $3,600, meaning that the increase will be worth about $72 monthly on average.

Those retired under CSRS do not receive Social Security benefits due to their federal service, although they may be eligible for Social Security benefits from other employment. However, in most cases, an offset would reduce the Social Security payments.

Under FERS, an inflation adjustment isn't paid until age 62, except for those who retired due to disability or from certain occupations that require earlier retirement. The average monthly civil service benefit under FERS is about $1,400, yielding an average increase, for those eligible, of $28.

Those retired under FERS are eligible for Social Security benefits under standard rules and those receiving that benefit — which generally cannot begin earlier than age 62 — will see that payment boosted by 2 percent as well.

Both of the federal retirement programs increase benefits to survivors regardless of their age; there are about 530,000 of them, with average benefits of about $1,600 a month under CSRS and about $600 a month under FERS.

Federal employee and retiree organizations commonly bench mark the COLA figure against the average increase in premiums for the following year in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, which for 2018 will rise by 6.1 percent on average. In the Blue Cross-Blue Shield standard option that is the most popular among retirees, for example, the increases per month will be $15.54 for self-only coverage, $36.92 for self plus one, and $38.39 for family coverage. However, premium rates and annual changes vary substantially among plans, and in an open season starting Nov. 13, retirees and other enrollees may change plans for 2018.

Related: *[Federal employee health insurance premiums to rise by 6.1 percent]*

The COLA is also commonly compared with the pay raise for current employees, although the two are determined in different ways. While the COLA adjustment for retirees is set automatically by the inflation count, raises for current employees are decided in the annual federal budget process.

So far this year, Congress has been silent regarding a raise, following its practice of recent years of allowing a raise to be paid each January by default, as federal pay law provides if no number is enacted. President Trump has set the default raise at 1.9 percent.

Related: *[Q&A for federal workers: 1.9 percent pay raise looking likely]*

Part of that raise would be set aside and parceled out in amounts that would vary by locality, resulting in raises that would vary from slightly below 1.9 percent to slightly above. Precise numbers would be set later in the year. However, if any other figure is enacted to law before the end of the year, that figure would prevail.

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

MASSENA MAN RECALLS 1968 BATTLE OF KHE SANH
JAMES BAKER HQ CO 1/13

By BOB BECKSTEAD
BBECKSTEAD@OGD.COM
WATERTOWN DAILY NEWS

MASSENA — For members of the 26th Marines (Reinforced), 3rd Marine Division (Reinforced), the 1968 battle at Khe Sanh in Vietnam was an intense 77 days of fighting.

But, for Massena veteran James Baker, the years can't erase the memories.
"It was the longest siege in American history, 77 days," he said.

The battle was costly. As they faced an army of 35,000 North Vietnam Regulars, the casualties be-

gan to mount.

"We have a list of 2,097 dead," Mr. Baker said, as well as 2,600 wounded.

A directory published by a Khe Sanh veteran's organization keeps updates on the number of men who died. The directory indicates who died, when they died and what unit they were with in Khe Sanh. He said the North Vietnamese Regulars suffered the same fate.

"They lost in excess of 15,000," he said.

The 26th Marines (Reinforced) had been assigned to hold the Khe Sanh Combat Base and positions on Hills 881, 861A, 558 and 950, which dominated strategic enemy approach routed into Northern I Corps. But they found themselves surrounded by a force of 35,000 North Vietnamese Regulars who were determined to destroy the Khe Sanh Combat Base in conjunction with large-scale offensive operations in the two northern provinces of the Republic of Vietnam.

"We lived underground for 77 days. We weren't aware at the time how many there were," Mr. Baker said.

They faced a daily barrage of hundreds of rounds of intensive artillery, mortar and rocket fire, in addition to fierce ground attacks in an area that Mr. Baker said was a mile long and a half-mile wide. They were so close, he said, that they could hear the enemy talking at night and when it was foggy.
But they couldn't shoot them because they couldn't see them, he said.

To support the Marine base, a massive aerial bombardment campaign called Operation Niagara was launched by the United States Air Force. More than 100,000 tons of bombs were dropped by U.S. aircraft and over 158,000 artillery rounds were fired in defense of the base.

"There were holes so big you could set a 10-story building inside some of them," Mr. Baker said.

They may have been outmanned, but the Marines stood their ground and contributed substantially to the failure of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army winter/spring offensive.

In March 1968, an overland relief expedition called Operation Pegasus was launched by a combined Marine–Army/South Vietnamese task force that eventually broke through to the Marines at Khe Sanh. But American commanders ultimately decided to dismantle the base rather than risk similar battles in the future.

In the aftermath, the North Vietnamese proclaimed a victory at Khe Sanh, while U.S. forces claimed that they had withdrawn as the base was no longer required.

"We abandoned the base. That's why they claimed it," said David Jackman, commander of Amvets Post 4.

"We never lost a major battle," said Fred Cockayne, commander of Disabled American Veterans Chapter 171.

By the time the Vietnam War came to a close, more than 58,000 Americans had died. But, Mr. Baker said, they had left their mark.

"I think we really did stop the spread of communism," he said.

NEWS FROM THE WEB-SITE

Fifty years ago on Christmas Day 1967 the officers of Lima Company Third Battalion Fourth Marines gathered in front of the Lima Company Command Post bunker with battalion commander Lee Bendell near a strong point called The Washout. The Washout connected nearby Con Thien, within sight of the Demilitarized Zone, to combat bases C-2 and C-3 to the south and the east-west Route 9 in Quang Tri Province. The following month, Lima Company engaged main force NVA regulars twice just east of Con Thien and again on Route 9, near Camp Carroll. In savage battles, on 18 January Lt. Hoare was KIA and Capt. Carr wounded and medevaced. Lt. Christy was wounded and medevaced a week later at the battle of Mike's Hill near Camp Carroll. Lt. Joyner was KIA south of Khe Sanh in June 1968.

Lima Company's experience was typical of Marine infantry units near the DMZ in 1967-68, which

struggled to fill officer and enlisted leadership billets due to high casualty rates.



Photo from left, Company Commander Capt. John Carr, Lt. Col. Bendell, platoon commander Lt. Steve Joyner, Executive Officer Lt. Jim Day, platoon commander Lt. Michael Hoare, and platoon commander Lt. Ken Christy, kneeling.

Photo courtesy of Ken Christy, Photographer unknown.

OBIT

LT COL MARK F. TIERNEY USMC, M CO 3/7 & HQ 3/7, KHE SANH VETERAN Submitted By Larry McCartney Echo Co 2/26

With the heaviest of hearts I must report that at 11:40 A.M. on February 6, 2005—Super Bowl Sunday—a true American hero, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Freeman Tierney, USMCR (Retired) died in his Lake Ridge, Virginia home as a result of several Agent Orange related cancers. Lieutenant Colonel Tierney, recipient of the Silver Star Medal and the Purple Heart Medal with one (1) Gold Star as well as a host of other combat and service decorations, is one of the finest Marines with whom I ever served during my thirty (30) year Active Duty and Reserve career.

Lieutenant Colonel Tierney joined the Marine Corps Reserve in 1964 and after graduation from Boot Camp as his platoon's Honor Man he was trained as a Communicator, then he reported for duty with a Reserve artillery unit near his home in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area.

Upon completing college in 1968 Lieutenant Colonel Tierney, though eligible for promotion to Staff Sergeant, accepted a commission and volunteered to serve in the Republic of Vietnam. After he was trained as an Infantry Officer and Vietnamese linguist, he reported for duty as a Platoon Commander with Mike Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. Subsequently Lieutenant Colonel Tierney served as a Civil Affairs Officer for Headquarters, 1st Marine Division and made many trips into Khe Sanh to help the people there.



While I did not have the good fortune to meet Lieutenant Colonel Tierney until 1991 when we were both mobilized for the Gulf War—he was the II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) Staff Counter Intelligence Officer and I was the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (2nd MEB) Intelligence Chief—I was fortunate to serve under him near continuously from that point until he retired from the Marine Corps in 1995 after more than thirty one (31) years of officer and enlisted service. While he was my senior in the Corps, in life I was extraordinarily fortunate to have him for a mentor and a friend; he is the first person I could ever talk to about the events occurring at and after LZ Margo in September of 1968 and the grief those incidents caused me.

I have long believed that the measure of the man is in how he treats those who can't do anything for him in return and that description epitomizes Lieutenant Colonel Tierney; when I was sick last December he is the one who made sure I got to the hospital and then home when I was released, he was the one who took me to have my stitches put in and later removed, then he went into the hospital. While in the hospital he asked me for some addresses and envelopes since he wanted to make advance tax payments so his wife wouldn't have to and at the same time he made sure he made a donation to our association knowing full well it would be his last one. He died just five (5) weeks later.

I will cherish the mentorship and friendship Lieutenant Colonel Tierney gave me until my dying day. In an era when people have a warped idea of leadership, he was the finest leader I ever worked for; his philosophy was simple, give your Marines a job, make sure they have what they need to do the job, then get the hell out of their way and let them accomplish their mission; he **was never surprised at how his Marines always produced.**

On February 17, 2005, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Freeman Tierney, USMC (Retired)—October 19, 1942 to February 6, 2005—was buried with full military honors in plot 2733, Section 69 at Arlington National Cemetery.

God Bless and keep you Colonel Tierney. The streets of heaven are well-guarded now that you've reported for duty Sir. SEMPER FIDELIS!!!

THE KIND OF NEWSMAN WE NEED THE HOMEWOOD FLOSSMOOR CHRONICLE

WATCHING HISTORY UNFOLD WHEN TV NEWS WAS ESSENTIAL VIEWING

By Tom Houlihan on December 8, 2017 - 8:21pm

HE'S STILL A NEWSMAN.

When I interviewed Russ Bensley at the start of November, he detailed his years as a senior producer for CBS News during what is generally considered the golden age of broadcast journalism. Bensley, who lives in Flossmoor, was the producer of the "CBS Evening News" when Walter Cronkite was "the most trusted man in America."

He did on-the-street TV interviews in Chicago after President John F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963. When Richard Nixon resigned during the Watergate scandal, Bensley produced the story. He was on the scene during at least one early NASA launch from Cape Canaveral. **And he was severely wounded while covering a story during the Vietnam War.**

Toward the end of our discussion, though, he had a question for me.

"Why are there so many traffic arrests for revoked licenses in Homewood?" he asked. "I think that would be a good story for the Chronicle."

LIKE I SAID STILL A NEWSMAN

Bensley said he has seen the Homewood police blotter in another newspaper and has never understood why there are so many citations for revoked licenses.

I had to admit that I had no answer to his question and agreed that it sounded like a good story. I meant what I said, too. When you are talking to someone who has had a legendary journalism career, it's best to tell the truth

Google "Russ Bensley CBS News" and you find scores of internet items about his career. The first one I found was his video analysis of a news story about lethal nails used in a helicopter weapons system during the Vietnam conflict. It was originally used at the Columbia University School of Journalism and shows Bensley describing all the elements that go into a TV news story

The clip, about 20 minutes long, provides a thorough analysis of what would have been state-of-the-art broadcast journalism in the early 1970s. More than 40 years later, it is still a valuable primer on how to tell an effective, meaningful story.

Bensley began his career at CBS in Chicago as a radio news writer. It was 1951 and he was a journalism student at Northwestern University. He'd grown up in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood and want-

ed to work for a newspaper.

"I'd been the editor of both my grade school and high school newspaper," he said.

WBBM came to Northwestern looking for a news writer and Bensley was picked for the job. He worked three hours a day at the WBBM studio at the Wrigley Building. After graduation, he took a full-time job and later entered the brave new world of television news when WBBM-TV was launched in 1953. At the young TV station, he worked with people who would become famous in Chicago journalism — Fahey Flynn, Lee Phillip and Irv Kupcinet. He was mostly a writer but occasionally appeared on air, most notably on a late night news show.

In 1960, Bensley was hired by CBS News and moved to New York. Historic events were rapidly unfolding as television turned to technology that made it possible to show them as they happened — the Cold War, the Space Race, the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam-era protests.

I asked Bensley what he was proudest of during his years at CBS News.

"I was always proud when we got the story done on time," he said.

Then he told me about one of his personal attributes that added to his success.

"You know my major talent was that I could type real fast," he said. "We'd get raw film of someone talking and I'd sit there at a big Royal typewriter, type up a rough transcript of the interview. If I saw something that was important, I'd circle it in the transcript so that the film editor would get it into the story."

Bensley was recently interviewed by Decades, a cable television channel, for a documentary, "Eye on the World: The Rise of Walter Cronkite and the Evening News."

He told me that he generally got along with Cronkite, the longtime anchorman on the "CBS Evening News" who had a reputation as an "800 pound gorilla."

He could be tough," Bensley said of Cronkite. "If he wanted something, he'd insist on it."

Every day, Bensley said, producers and writers of Cronkite's news program would work to come up with an acceptable "magic number" of how long the iconic anchorman would be on camera during each broadcast.

During the 1968 Tet Offensive, which is often regarded as a turning point in the Vietnam War, Bensley traveled to Khe Sanh, a Marine outpost under siege by North Vietnamese Army units. Before his trip, he'd been in Tokyo reviewing raw film from Vietnam before it was sent to the U.S.

On the day after his arrival in Khe Sanh, Bensley was with a group of Marines when a mortar shell exploded in their midst. He was not badly hurt but was taken to the base hospital. The next day, the hospital was hit by a round from a 122-mm howitzer and Bensley was badly hurt. His spleen was removed at a military hospital and he was evacuated to Toyko for recuperation.

"I asked the doctor about losing the spleen and he said I'd probably be OK as long as I stayed away from countries where malaria was a problem," he said.



Russ Bensley shows the Emmy Award he received for his work as a news producer. (Photo by Mary Compton/H-F Chronicle)

Bensley was with CBS Evening News between 1963 and 1972, serving as senior and executive pro-

ducer. After that, he worked as a special projects producer until his retirement from CBS in 1985. After that, he and his wife and family moved to Niles, Mich., where they ran a horse farm. His wife, Pat Bannon — she had also worked for CBS — grew up in Homewood, and they moved back to the village in 2003. Bensley moved to Flossmoor three years ago and now lives with his daughter, Vicki Burke Stevenson, and her family.

I was honored to meet him. He made me want to be better at this journalism business, and I just may start by looking for an answer about those traffic arrests.

A NICE PLACE FOR A VISIT

OUTSIDE CHARLESTON, THREE ACRES OF VIETNAM LIVE IN SOUTH CAROLINA'S LOW COUNTRY

BY JOHN BORDSEN

In the light Low country rain and high heat of late-summer South Carolina, bamboo was growing just outside the fenced perimeter of a three-acre addition



Large relics from the Vietnam War, including various helicopters, are on view throughout Vietnam Experience near Charleston, S.C. (John Bordsen/For The Washington Post)

to Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum near Charleston.

Above a mix of military equipment and drab-painted plywood buildings surrounding the compound, mounted speakers punched out the screeches of jungle birds and the droning chirps of crickets — along with the muffled booms of far-off artillery shells and the whoomp-whoomp-whoomp of helicopter blades.

None of it was foreign to Ray Tanner, a wiry 74-year-old who had recently moved back home to Cades, a hamlet about an hour north in the Palmetto State. To him, the clamor of incoming Hueys was the best sound he had ever heard.

"I looked for it," he said, his shirt bearing the crest of the Army's 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment. "It meant they were getting us out of here."

"Here" was wartime Vietnam. And a half-century later, he was walking through a re-creation of it, a permanent exhibit called Vietnam Experience.

[From canopy walk to gator-filled waters, Florida park offers wildlife aplenty]

Tanner was a radio operator who did 11 months in Vietnam. He was a forward observer whose battalion spent 2½ days in the Ia Drang Valley in late 1965. Ia Drang, in the Central Highlands, was one of the first battles in Vietnam that featured large American units. It was the subject of "We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young," a 1992 bestseller and a 2002 movie.

"There were 64 killed," Tanner said of his battalion, "but nobody was left behind."

A FOCUS ON PEOPLE

Patriots Point is a major Charleston attraction operated through a state agency of the same name. Its centerpiece is the USS Yorktown, the famed World War II aircraft carrier decommissioned in 1970 and relocated to Mount Pleasant five years later.

Linked to Charleston by the stunning Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge and directly across the Cooper River from tourist-choked downtown landmarks, shops and restaurants, the complex is a draw for veterans, their families and school groups. A submarine and a destroyer are also permanently moored at Patriots Point.

Vietnam Experience, which opened in 2014 on formerly undeveloped land behind the warships, is included in Patriots Point's admission price. Many cities and states have Vietnam memorials; the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington has spawned permanent and touring Wall replicas. But the walk-through Vietnam Experience — portraying a Mekong Delta naval support base and a Marine artillery base set in Khe Sanh — is a tourism outlier. Still, Dick West, 72, who runs the volunteer program at Patriots Point, says that 2017 attendance at Patriots Point is expected to top 300,000. Like Charleston, it attracts visitors from across North America, Europe and Asia.

At the exhibit's entrance, a wall holds military chains identifying the 896 South Carolinians who died in Vietnam. (John Bordsen/For The Washington Post)

A mock-up of the Mekong Delta naval support base features a shallow-bottom "brown water" patrol boat. (John Bordsen/For The Washington Post)

Overseas conflicts great and small are hard to physically project beyond museum dioramas. Factor in the enduring home-front division over the Vietnam War, and Vietnam Experience could seem a marketing land mine.

But the exhibit steers clear of controversy: The timelines avoid politics and strategic second-guessing, and instead focus on what American grunts went through.

You don't hear brass-band patriotic tunes emanating from the replica barracks. It's "Born to Be Wild," "Green Tambourine" and other hits that were audio touchstones to home from a distant and dangerous jungle.

Large relics include a shallow-bottom "brown water" patrol boat, choppers (including two Cobra gunships), field artillery and a Viet Cong dugout. A Quonset hut displays M-1s and other rifles, maps and other paraphernalia. The Quonset and a building toward the back hold small theaters that loop footage about Americans in Vietnam. Roughly 2.7 million of them served there; about 58,000 were killed in action.

Veterans and their families are core visitors to Vi-



Source: Google Earth THE WASHINGTON POST

etnam Experience. There is a strong sense on the grounds — via signage wording and spectator comments — that this is a belated welcome home for those who returned from the fog of war to find no parade. "Thank you for your service" is a frequent call-out to seniors whose caps or clothes mark them as vets.

So, the best way to see Vietnam Experience is with someone who was on the ground in Southeast Asia.

TWO SOLDIERS

Tanner strolled the grounds with the soft-spoken West. Their hitches in Vietnam were quite different. A country boy who could hunt, Tanner was prime enlistment bait. West was in Army ROTC while studying engineering at the University of Florida. Tanner was in trenches, facing incoming fire. West served in 1969 as a first lieutenant in an engineering group, the U.S. Army Engineer Construction Agency, often heading to military construction sites in a low-flying, twin-engine Beechcraft — an easy target.

Tanner slept in pup tents, then larger tents; West's crews built plywood-and-sheet-metal barracks that came after the war's escalation brought more manpower and money.

Tanner climbed the wooden observation tower in the exhibit's Delta area and handled the .50-caliber Browning mounted there. If you pull the trigger, you'll hear a recording of machine-gun fire. From the tower platform, the top of the nearby USS York-

town can't be seen; only the peak of the distant bridge rises above the dense tree line.

West and Tanner found common ground on their walk. The choppers and equipment were familiar, as



Dick West, left, runs the volunteer program at Patriots Point. Ray Tanner, right, was a radio operator who did 11 months in Vietnam. (John Bordsen/For The Washington Post)

was the back acreage set up as a Marine fire base at Khe Sanh, the remote outpost that was a scene of fierce fighting in early 1968, just before and during the Tet Offensive.

[In a limited engagement, fireflies blink in sync in Great Smoky Mountains]

Aside from a tipped-over tank, the fire base mock-up is set before that event. The vets discussed the different ways that barbed-wire perimeters were built; they smiled at the counter in the primitive PX and its limited supply of 1960s chewing gum, soft drinks and Playboy magazines. They appreciated the outpost's raised plank walkways, which were easy to build and kept you above the ever-present mud. They agreed that the latrine was an accurate reproduction, and that the worst duty you could pull was having to top a filled metal barrel with diesel fuel, light it and wait until the contents were reduced to ash.

One plywood building holds a small cinema where the hologram of a Marine sergeant warns of increased enemy activity around Khe Sanh. The image fades and a screen erupts with a montage of close-up archival battle footage and big-volume sound. It is terrifying.

Tanner and West waited outside; they had seen it before. This show is not for everybody: Signs warn that even veterans may not be able to handle it. Patriots Point, sensitive to the hazards of post-traumatic stress disorder, has similar advisory signs posted throughout Vietnam Experience.

In the interest of healing, Patriots Point provides the Ralph A. Johnson Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Charleston with no-cost tickets, and the exhibit is used by the hospital for repeat-exposure therapy. Patients arrive and leave as they wish, melting into the crowd.

"When we incorporate Patriots Point into therapy, it is often a challenging and potentially very healing experience for those with combat PTSD," psychologist Ashley Hatton said.

After his service, Tanner returned to his native South Carolina and worked for 28 years in Charleston as a transportation manager for a utility. His first visit to Vietnam Experience was shortly after it opened, when he was organizing a reunion for vets. "I had no apprehension at all," Tanner said. "When I'm there with vets, I'm there with some of our



West, left, and Tanner head toward the Vietnam Experience exit. Tanner has helped organize reunions at the exhibit. "Most people don't want to relive it," he said. "It's more like a family reunion." (John Bordsen/For The Washington Post)

own. We talk about that — now. [Before,] nobody ever asked me about Ia Drang, and most of us put it behind us. Now, I'm at an age when I don't mind talking about it. I look at it differently now."

Tanner has been involved in organizing veterans reunions for 25 years. "We don't sit around and tell war stories; we're like family," he said. "The people I knew over there were cohesive. We always liked one another."

A walk-through always triggers one emotion, Tanner said: "I feel pride in the recognition that we were really good soldiers. That's something 'We Were Soldiers Once' helped start to make clear."

West and Tanner were still comparing notes as they headed back to the Patriots Point gate. They agreed that uniforms were always wet in semitropical Vietnam, and one of the easiest ways to dry them was to hold them up to the exhaust pipe of a chopper.

"The uniforms were unique to the jungle," West said. "They were built to last a year. When yours began to fall apart, you knew your time there was almost through."

Bordsen is a travel writer based in Charlotte. His website is bordsentravel.com.

HELL ON A HILL AT KHE SANH HILL 861A, BY BARRY FIXLER, ECHO CO 2/26

For nearly 80 days, Marines on the hills surrounding Khe Sanh endured one of the war's fiercest fights.

The top of what became known as Hill 861-A was just virgin land covered with elephant grass and bamboo when I first saw it. My company, Echo 2/26, had to claw through the dense vegetation and up the steep slopes of what would soon be transformed into a bomb-scarred hilltop with trenches reminiscent of World War I.

All we knew in mid-January 1968 was that we were leaving Phu Bai for a place called Khe Sanh and were loaded down with war gear, all that we could carry. I only knew of it as a company operation, and how it affected me, Lance Cpl. Barry Fixler. I was unaware that we were part of a huge, regiment-size operation. None of us had a clue.

As our company piled onto C-130 transport planes, it seemed that this operation might be a little bigger than most. We were going to an area closer to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) than Phu Bai, so it probably would be worse, but I was a seasoned Marine with six months of combat, so I was unworried, confident.

The DMZ was anything but demilitarized. It was intended to exist as a zone free from any military presence by either North or South for a limited period until national unification elections took place. But history didn't follow the diplomats' script. The zone and the areas around it saw some of the greatest destruction and carnage of the war.

After landing at the Khe Sanh combat base and getting ourselves organized, we humped outside the lines and into the fields. We dug in on a small hill the first couple of nights. There was no outpost. We were the only Marines there, and we still did not know our objective or what was actually happening. There was an eerie feeling about the place. Whatever we were doing, it wasn't routine. We knew that we were in a bad spot; we just didn't know how bad. We finally ended up at the base of a steep hill, a mountain almost, about 2,500 feet high. There was only one overgrown trail, so the 150 or so of us started up it in a single column. It took hours to climb in the oppressive heat.

I carried a rocket launcher that looked like a huge bazooka, my M-16 rifle and ammunition, all my grenades, my gas mask and a minimum of two rockets. The heavy load required both of my hands, so I couldn't use them to help myself up the trail, and we still had to be alert for an ambush. We were spread too thin and were very vulnerable. The North Vietnamese troops must have been able to see us. I still think we were lucky to reach the top without being slaughtered.

We were the first Marines on Hill 861-A. Not a soul was there, just wild grass, bamboo and other vegetation all over the place. We had obscured lines of sight, which would make it difficult to find targets if someone started shooting at us. The enemy could

have sneaked up to within 10 feet of us and we would not have been able to see him. So the first thing we did was to start digging in.

Darkness was falling on us fast, and we were totally out of water. The only moisture we found was on bamboo shoots that were covered with mites. Desperate, we snapped the bamboo rods and put our tongues to them to catch the drops of water as they trickled out.

For the next two or three days, we continued to entrench ourselves and clear lines of fire. Someone erected an American flag. We didn't get the barbed wire and concertina razor wire emplaced around our position for about a week. Fortunately, the North Vietnamese didn't zero in on us quickly.

Nearby Hill 861 was already getting pounded and had been overrun once, and within three days we were catching mortars and rockets on 861-A. As each day grew more intense, we got the feeling that we might be there for awhile; we had no idea that it would turn into 77 days of hell.

The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) became increasingly better at aiming their weapons at us. They would rain mortars up and down the lines. Ba-boom! Ba-boom! Ba-boom! We were even hit by our own artillery a few times. Things like that just happened, and we felt helpless against it.

The first week of February, the North Vietnamese really turned it on. Rockets and mortars were almost constant. On February 4, a helicopter came in to evacuate the wounded and bring in some replacements and supplies. As the new guys ran off the chopper, I ran onboard to offload supplies.

Heavy rockets and mortars showered the landing zone, and as the chopper lifted off, I leaped into a trench and ended up next to one of the new guys. He had been in Vietnam for a day or two, and on the hill for all of one minute. He was clearly shaken by the intensity of the situation.

"How long you been in-country?" he asked.
"Six months," I told him.

"How could you live that long? How's that possible?" he wanted to know.

I remember the conversation because the new Marine's name reminded me of the actor Humphrey Bogart. I also remember he was killed the next day, when we were totally overrun.

Too many Marines were killed on Hill 861-A that day, February 5, 1968. The North Vietnamese swarmed in from all directions and were all over the hill. Three or four Marines were right there when the first NVA popped up, and they just got overrun. The shooting was intense, and waves of enemy soldiers just kept coming, coming, coming.

Everything went down at once: artillery, rockets, mortars, small arms, bayonets, even tear gas. It took us the entire night to kill all the North Vietnamese who had gotten into our lines.

I heard more of the fighting than I saw that night. The enemy was swarming over and through our trenches, and there was a serious risk of shooting one of our own guys. Another Marine and I instinctively ended up with our backs to each other, holding our position in the trench line. It was total chaos, pitch black, and the constant explosions from rockets, artillery and grenades created a strobe light effect.

We used gas grenades on the NVA. Tear gas is heavier than air, and it blew back on us and filled our trenches, forcing us to wear our gas masks. This limited our vision even more. But even looking through the mask eyepieces, one of the first things you could see was that a lot of the guys were dead or seriously wounded. Our ears rang from the constant explosions, and each flash of light from the blasts briefly illuminated a portrait of death.

It felt like I had been blindfolded and spun around 50 times. Then they take off the blindfold, flip the lights on and off, and blast your ears with noise loud enough to make your nose bleed. And, at the same time you have to try to identify and shoot the enemy—all night long. We lost a lot of Marines that day. They can't simulate that experience in boot camp.

You don't have time in a situation like that to note individual acts of heroism, but I found out later that my mentor, Corporal Tom Eichler, was a hero that night. Hill 861-A could well have fallen if he hadn't

done what he did. His actions were emblematic of what made Khe Sanh a part of Marine Corps lore: perseverance against overwhelming odds.

When three of our men manning a machine gun were wounded as they were overrun during the initial assault, Eichler dodged enemy fire three times to carry each of the Marines to safety.

Corporal Eichler killed three North Vietnamese soldiers in hand-to-hand combat, stopping them from firing a rocket into a trench that was filled with Marines. When the enemy managed to establish a machine gun position inside our perimeter, Eichler wiped it out with grenades and sprayed cover fire that allowed our own machine gunners to move into a position to defend us.

He stood above the trenches to throw grenades down on the advancing North Vietnamese troops, and the entire time he made sure that the Marines were kept supplied with ammunition. Although Eichler was seriously wounded early on in the assault, his injuries never slowed him down. He was later awarded a Silver Star for his actions that night.
When dawn came, we counted 109 North Vietnamese bodies sliced and diced all over the hill, spread over maybe two acres. We had seven Marines killed, and at least 30 seriously wounded—guys missing limbs, or so damaged that they probably died within a few days. At best, they lived but never fought again.

We waded through the trenches and gathered the wounded and dead. After a corpsman would get a wounded Marine stabilized, we'd wrap him in a poncho and carry him to a staging area near the landing zone to be evacuated to a field hospital. We just kept lining them up, and the helicopters kept coming to take them away.

One of the guys I helped had suffered multiple severe injuries, and I kept talking to him to try to keep him from going into shock. He asked me to find his hand.

"I need my hand," he said. "Can you look for my hand?"
I asked where his fighting hole was and told him I'd look for it. I meant it, too. But when I got to his area and started looking around, reality set in. Debris and body parts were everywhere.

"It's hopeless," I thought. "Even if I find a whole hand, there's no way to know if it's his."

We needed immediate reinforcements, and when they came from other units, they all had looks in their eyes that said: "Oh my God, I'm fucked! I am fucked!"

We didn't put their minds at ease.

"They're definitely gonna attack us again tonight," I told the green Marines. "Be ready because they're coming back. Those mothers are coming back tonight!"

All the new guys were wide-eyed and solemn, and you could tell that they were thinking, "Ah shit, I'm gonna die tonight!"

Those of us who had been on the hill since the beginning didn't think that way anymore. I looked at myself and couldn't see the green Marine who had landed in the country only six months earlier. And, in no way could I show fear to the new guys. I had to raise my confidence to a new level. Those guys picked up on that real fast, and pretty soon, the ones who survived, they talked the same shit. They needed to see the example to have that confidence, and then they fed off of it.

Getting overrun rattled us but it didn't scare us. I was just hell bent to kill the enemy. It was more like, "C'mon, you gave us your best shot yesterday, and now give us your best shot today!"

And they did. The NVA continued to bring it. They never overran our position again, but they laid siege to us for another two months, throwing everything they could at us: artillery, rockets, mortars and grenades.

Long after the siege, when my ears had quit ringing, I still thought sometimes that I could smell the gas. Anyone who has ever been gassed will tell you that things can't get much more fucked up. Unless you've experienced it and found the discipline within yourself to apply your training and overcome it, you can't control yourself. You can have the best rifle in the world, but it's worthless against gas.

The night the NVA overran us, I was moving from off watch to on when the skies lit up. We scrambled to organize and fight back, and then I smelled the gas. The odor is distinct and unforgettable.

I didn't know that we were using the gas. I assumed it was the NVA gassing us, or that a Marine had been blown up and his gas grenades had exploded with him.

I was seasoned then and thought I was cool, and I'd let my hair grow nice and long. I didn't panic, but as I held my breath and put on my gas mask, the band of it got tangled in my hair, and the only thing that I could do was start yanking my hair out by the roots. It was like pulling clumps of grass out of an overgrown lawn.

During boot camp, the last time I had donned my gas mask, my head had been shaved, but doing it with long hair while under enemy fire was a whole different matter. I cleared the tangled spot, fit the mask on and blew to clear the gas from inside and was ready to fight. But I was pissed at myself for not getting a haircut.

I was promoted to a squad leader early on at Khe Sanh, and it wasn't long before I began asking myself how long I could last. Second lieutenants and squad leaders passed through a revolving door of death at Khe Sanh.

Second lieutenants had to be where the bad stuff was happening at every moment, and so they were vulnerable. The position of squad leader among the enlisted men was based on who had been in the squad longest when rotations came, and on who still was alive and able to fight.

Becoming a squad leader meant the world to me, but I suddenly had responsibility for anywhere from seven to 12 guys. Every morning, squad leaders from my platoon had to report to the command post (CP). The order would get passed down the trench line, "Squad leaders up!"

That meant that I had to run as low as possible through trenches to get to the CP, where Captain Earle Breeding waited. I usually was ducking from mortars and rockets. The command post was a short little sandbag hut—a taller structure would have been a big target— in which six to 10 guys could fit, sitting down.

Captain Breeding barked out orders, telling us our jobs for the day, what our plan was: "OK, 1st Platoon, you're doing good. Mortars. Where's mortars? Where's machine guns?"

Maybe Captain Breeding would want an extra listening post. That was the worst of the worst. They sent two men out at night past the edge of our perimeter, the other side of the razor wire, to listen for the enemy and notify us if they heard anything. It was like throwing them to the dogs. They were cannon fodder.

Or Captain Breeding could order a squad to go out and clean up C ration cans that were carelessly thrown out past the perimeter: "1st Platoon? Send a squad out to police the area south of your line. We have animals out there scavenging your C rats and we're gonna get complacent. Next time the enemy probes the line, we'll think it's rats!"

Or sometimes the captain would order a working party to repair the concertina wire: "Third Platoon, send a working party out there and throw more wire."

There was always something to do. We never sat around. We survived by staying busy, and if we weren't assigned to a working party, we had to dig deeper, and pile sandbags higher.

Captain Breeding gave us these orders every morning, and as I got used to being a squad leader, I began to notice: "Whoa, another new face! Oh my God, another new face!" I saw the same faces for a few days, and then one would be gone and replaced by someone new. Sometimes guys just got rotated back to the States, but most of the time they were wounded or killed. I'd wonder, "Who's going to replace me when I get it?"

Years later I saw the movie *Spartacus* with Kirk Douglas, and for some reason one of the scenes reminded me of our morning meetings with Captain Breeding. Before they called Spartacus and his opponent into the ring in which one of them would die, the two warriors sat in a little room and stared at each other, knowing that one of them was

doomed. That's the feeling I had when I sat in the squad leaders' meeting. It was just like the two gladiators in *Spartacus*. I would look at the faces and think: "Who's the next one to die? Am I next?" It's strange, but a person can get used to being bombed every day. It's survival of the fittest. It got to a point when we were being mortared that we didn't ask, "Did anybody get hit?" but rather, "Who got hit?" We took casualties at all hours and from all directions. Sometimes the helicopters would drop in reinforcements, but they were never enough. One day in mid-February, during a rare break in the incoming, Mike Lucas called to me from two foxholes over. Lucas was one of my best friends.

"Hey Fix! Fix! Fix!" he said. "I got something cool!" "What the hell could he have that's cool?" I thought. Nothing had changed for weeks. "I have cupcakes!" he said. "How the hell could you have cupcakes?" I asked. We were under siege, living in trenches, men dying. How could he have damn cupcakes?

We would get these tins of compressed pound cake, and every so often our C rations would also include miniature Hershey candy bars. So Lucas got creative.

We always had C4, an explosive that's a little like Play-Dough. During the day, but never at night, we could use little pinches of it to heat our food. Without a detonator, it wouldn't explode, but it would burn. We would light the C4, place an empty can upside down over it, then put the can with our food in it on top of that. It was like a little burner, and it made the food a little easier to get down.

Lucas must have formed the pound cake into three little cupcakes, and then melted his Hershey bars and dripped the chocolate over the pound cake. He presented it to me and another Marine, Lance Cpl. James Anthony Wood, really nicely on a piece of cardboard, like he was a chef or something.

Like a jerk, I didn't catch on right away. "Where did you get those cupcakes?" I asked. It didn't dawn on me that he had just made the cupcakes.
"Some helicopter guy just flew them in for us," he said.

It really didn't matter. Lucas, Wood and I probably spent 10 minutes just admiring those little cupcakes, and then we only ate them in nibbles, nice and slow. There we were, three tough Marines giggling like school kids and eating cute Khe Sanh cupcakes.
That was James Wood's last treat.

By February 25, 1968, the NVA had zeroed in on one area on the hill so well that it seemed like it was almost certain death to be there. Around sunset that day, one of the corporals came up to me. "Fixler," he told me, "we lost three Marines; no one has their hole. Give up one of the men from your squad. Someone has to be in that hole."

The position was totally vacant. We had lost so many Marines in that foxhole that I just knew whoever I put in that hole was a dead man.

Mike Lucas and I met back in July 1967 in Phu Bai. We were both from NewYork, and we hit it off right away. With similar personalities, we were buddies from then on and stayed on the same operations and in the same platoon.

Then James Wood was attached to our squad, and he and Lucas became extremely close. They shared the same foxhole and always were hanging out and laughing. I was 19 years old, and I got a little jealous. "Jesus Christ!" I thought, "I'm losing my best friend."

So when the corporal told me I had to give up a man to replace the ones who had been blown out of that doomed foxhole, I had to make a decision real quick. It was almost a certain death sentence.

I made a call—Wood. Lucas immediately volunteered to go with him. "We're going in together," he said.

Wood was killed within hours of my decision—his foxhole took a direct hit from a mortar after dark.
"Minutes before, we were talking about home, watching through binoculars," Lucas told me years later, "and the mortars started coming in and he was completely disintegrated, no head at all."

Somehow Lucas survived it, and when daylight came, he looked down at his flak jacket and saw part of James Wood's face. There were pieces of flesh, and the stubble from Wood's beard was im-

paled in the protective jacket, little hairs just standing erect.

It was a heavy blow to Lucas, and I could tell it shook him up. Lucas was a tough Marine, a great Marine. And so was James Anthony Wood.

But as hard as it hit him, Lucas had to shake it off, like we all had to. We were fighting a war, in a pitched battle, and we were taking losses daily. There was no time to reflect on our situation.

We simply endured what had to be endured.

Adapted from* Semper Cool: One Marine's Fond Memories of Vietnam *by Barry Fixler. Copyright © 2010 by Barry Fixler Published by Exalt Press New York, LLC. The author is donating 100 percent of his royalties from* Semper Cool *to veterans wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. For more information visit www.sempercool.com.* Semper Cool *is available at HistoryNetShop.com.

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50 YEARS LATER, STRESS OF VIETNAM STILL PRESENT FOR NEMO MAN

By Forrest Gossett
Salt River Journal Editor

WAYNE DAFFRON, USMC C BTRY 1/13 KHE SANH VETERAN

By January of 1968, Wayne Daffron said there had been a sense that something was changing in the routine at Khe Sanh. The easy duty days were giving way to around-the-clock fire missions.

Wayne Daffron recalls being amazed at the natural beauty of the surrounding terrain when he arrived for an assignment at the United States Marine Corps outpost at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, in August 1967.

"It was a really nice place. It was the prettiest little place you have ever seen... and it was fairly easy duty," he said of the base, where he staffed a 105mm Howitzer as an artillery specialist.



But what happened at Khe Sanh in the early morning hours of Jan. 21, 1968, would change Daffron and his fellow Marines and South Vietnamese troops for the rest of their lives as a 77-day battle ensued with the People's Army of North Vietnam for control of the highlands near the demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam and the border with Laos. The battle is a story of perseverance and courage in one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the War in Vietnam.

And it is a story of coping nearly 50 years later for both Daffron and his wife, Gayln, and for thousands of other war veterans, from World War II to Vietnam and the Global War on Terror, who deal daily with the memories and trauma of war in the form of Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. But more on that later.

Khe Sanh is a distant memory for many Americans of a certain age — while a total unknown for younger people, as is the Vietnam War. The battle created headlines in the states, but was soon forgot-

ten — except for the Marines and handful of soldiers who defended the outpost for 77 long days.

By January of 1968, Daffron said there had been a sense that something was changing in the routine at Khe Sanh. The easy duty days were giving way to around-the-clock fire missions.

"We had couple of patrols that were sent out but didn't return," he said of the days leading up to the siege.

Then, on the night of Jan. 20, 1968, officers told their men of intelligence reports that suggested the North Vietnamese Army may be hitting the base in the next 24 hours. As most intelligence reports in a war zone during Vietnam, Daffron took the news nonchalantly. In the days before the attack, one of his friends wrote a letter to his wife and asked that it be mailed it he died in combat. Daffron agreed, never expecting to mail the letter.

"They told us we would get hit the next day," Daffron said. "I learned most of what I know about Khe Sanh after I left Vietnam. Now what I learned later was that a North Vietnamese officer had surrendered at the wire and he had all the plans for the battle. He told us exactly what they were going to do."

At around 5 a.m. on Jan. 21, 1968, the Marines of Khe Sanh learned that intelligence was correct this time. A barrage of Vietnamese artillery signaled an all-out attack on the base..

"A guy said that they were hitting the other side of the base," Daffron said. "Then, rounds started landing near us and I said, 'Other side of the base, hell.'"

During the first long day, the battle was intense with both sides conducting intense artillery and mortar attacks on each other, and riflemen and machine gunners repelling attacking troops.

After the first day of battle, Daffron made his way to the headquarters bunker where he learned his friend had been killed.

In Vietnam, most battles lasted a few hours or even a few days. Not Khe Sanh. A determined North Vietnamese Army wanted control of the highlands around the base, and the Marines were just as determined, said Daffron.

Khe Sanh had been a strategic breakpoint for the U.S military since it was first staked out in 1962. That's when Army Special Forces built a small camp near the village, located some 14 miles south of the demilitarized zone, and about six miles from Laos. Marines built a garrison adjacent to the Army camp in 1966. In the fall of 1967, the People's Army of North Vietnam began to build up its strength in the region, and U.S. officials began to suspect that Khe Sanh would be the target of an attack.

As the battle progressed — hours turning into days, days in weeks and weeks into months — Daffron said a routine set in with the expectations of shelling during the day and attempts by the North Vietnamese to penetrate the wire at night.

The Marines were cut off from the south, dependent on daily supply runs by C-130 Hercules aircraft to bringing in ammunition, water and food — mainly in the form of C-rations. Then, the North Vietnamese destroyed the air strip. Daily supplies had to be air dropped in dangerous missions that placed both air crews and Marines on the ground in danger. The Marines were aided by B-52 bombers, which dropped close to 100,000 explosives on the hills surrounding Khe Sanh over the course of the battle. During the battle, life was austere – and intense.

"We lived underground. Literally underground," Daffron. "We lived in a bunker – two of us. I would go in the bunker and my head would be about ground level...but there were times when it was a nice place to be located."

Finally, after 77 days, the battle waned, and Army units arrived to relieve the Marines.

"They said they were there to save us, but the battle was over," Daffron said.

That was the end of Khe Sanh, chapter one for Daffron. The next chapter came when he was reassigned in Vietnam. To this day, he has no memory of his last six months in country.

"I can't remember a thing," he said.

He came back to the states in August 1968, and was assigned to Camp Lejeune, N.C., and while on leave visiting in St. Louis, he met the woman who would become the love of his life, Gayln. They met on a blind date, and she was not impressed.

"He not good looking.... skinny and droopy...but I went out with him," she said.

After a long-distance courtship, he proposed, and they were married in April 1969.

They settled into life. Gayln was a hairdresser and Wayne became a bricklayer, eventually rising to a construction superintendent, supervising more than 100 people. They raised three daughters.

His struggles with Vietnam surfaced in small ways — snapping here, ignoring there. Then one day when they were living in O'Fallon, Daffron suffered a blackout that he cannot explain to this day.

Gayln, who operated a beauty salon out of their home, sent Wayne to the bank with a deposit. He did not return home for hours.

"I only knew that it was raining, and this Vietnamese guy was hitchhiking. I picked him up and gave him a ride. I do not remember dropping him off, I do not remember anything," Daffron said with his voice trailing off.

Gayln picks up the story: "Somehow, he made it home. His mother at the time was a live-in nanny and she had weekends off. She spent Saturdays with us, because I had work. When he got home, he went straight the table, sat down and I noticed that he had a cigarette with a huge line of ashes...I got an ashtray and put it on the floor. The I asked if he wanted a drink of water. He said, "No, we can't drink water expect when we really need it. We do not have much water.'"

He was experiencing a flashback to Vietnam. He did not know his wife, his children it his surroundings.
"A few minutes later, his mom had given the children something to do, and the moment Wayne heard her voice, he snapped out of it," she said. "He did not know me before Vietnam, but he knew her."
An ambulance crew was called their house, but found him in good physical shape and told Gayln there had no idea what caused the behavior.

A few years later, Daffron had another blackout.
Meanwhile, over the years, he rose in his career, but he was always dealing with the stress, often stopping off for a few drinks on his way home.

"He would never drink around the children, saving that for the bar," Gayln said. "I do not think he was an alcoholic, but he had a problem."

They moved to Troy in 1998, and started going to church. Daffron quit drinking, but the stress caused by Vietnam was ever-present.

The current chapter started in 2007, when Wayne retired, and they moved to Monroe County, about eight miles from Paris, near Mark Twain Lake. They purchased a doublewide, placed it over a foundation that Wayne built himself and moved to celebrate retirement. Wayne finished the basement with a nice entertainment area, and even built a hair salon for Gayln. But still, Vietnam was on his mind. He would to the basement for hours and sit alone.

"When we first finished the basement, he would go down there for hours listening to his oldies with all the lights off," she said.

Meanwhile, Wayne was a patient at the Veterans Administration clinic in Mexico. One day, as he was preparing for an appointment, Gayln said that in addition to checking on his physical health to please talk to someone about mental health.
It was a day that changed their lives.

He had an appointment with a counselor who asked a series of questions.

"He then said to me, 'You have PTSD,'" Wayne said.

Since the diagnosis, he receives therapy and takes medication to deal with the chemical imbalance caused by stress.
to this day, Wayne deals with the effects of combat. The day he was being interviewed, there was a sonic boom, likely from a B-2 bomber flying from Whiteman Air Force base near Kansas City. He briefly flinched and stopped talking while swallow-

ing hard.

"We get those several times a week... this one was not that bad," Gayln said.

And the stress over years has impacted Galyn. "It was worse when the kids were younger," she said. "I would get mad and take a walk."

But through all the tough times of dealing with PTSD, Gayln said she never once considered leaving the marriage.

"I made a covenant and it said for better or worse," she said as she tapped her index finger on a table. Said Wayne: "She's the best thing that ever happened to me, and I'll tell anyone that. She put up with more than anyone should."

They both credit faith in helping them deal with Wayne's PTSD. They attend the First Baptist Church of Paris, where Wayne sings in the choir and serves as a deacon.

Dealing with PTSD is a daily struggle but now that he has reached out for help from the VA, he has better control although he still experiences moments of despair.

"I don't how to explain it, but a lot of times you have triggers and a lot of times you don't have triggers," he said. "I will be sitting here watching TV and I have to get up. Got to get up. Do something. Stay at home and not see anyone. Then, I have to get out, have to see someone. Your body just gets tight."

Nearly 50 years after the first artillery rounds that signaled the siege of Khe Sanh, Wayne Daffron and his family are living the effects of that intense 77 days. But they are coping and making progress.

Wayne urges fellow veterans to seek help.

"If my story helps one person, then it is worth it," he said.And Galyn says to loved ones of troubled veterans, do not give up.

"If I had not made it through rough times, then I would not appreciate what I have now," she said.

I GET PICTURES



Curled up in his trench protected by sand bags a young Marine tries his best to get some reading done at the Khe Sanh Combat Base in North Vietnam. The well read book is passed from Marine to Marine, as they wait for the next artillery barrage from the NVA troops entrenched in the surrounding hills.

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN TO FEATURE LOCAL VIETNAM WAR VET IN ANNUAL VETERANS DAY PROGRAM CHAPLAIN RAY W. STUBBE SELECTED FOR LECTURE

WAUWATOSA - Wisconsin Lutheran High School is featuring a local Vietnam War veteran as part of its annual Veterans Day program that will honor nearly 400 veterans from all branches of the military who served in World War II through the most recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Chaplain Ray W. Stubbe gave a speech Thursday, Nov. 9, about his experiences as a Navy chaplain during the Vietnam War, including his survival of the Siege at Khe Sanh. To protect his fellow soldiers, he went into the trenches himself, leading over 20 or 30 prayer services each day. Stubbe also discussed the challenges he and other Vietnam War veterans faced when they returned home from war, according to a news release.

FROM DONALD J. RASH

I wanted to let you know on behalf of the State of Virginia The Tazewell County Board of Supervisors and the Town of Pocahontas the Bridge on Center Street just up the street from the former Cricket will be named the Donald R Rash Memorial Bridge on Friday September 15 2017 at 2:00 pm. State and local folks as well as friends and family will be in attendance for the ceremony I trust you can attend and help spread the word....Thanks





Don Rash, B/1/26, KIA 3/30/1968 Khe Sanh. Navy Cross, 2 purple Hearts

I GET PICTURES



CPL Bruce Brown, LCpl Frank Batchman, and Sgt John J. Balanco, members of Combined Action Company Oscar who served with the Bru Montgnards in the Khe Sanh Village complex are seen at the secretive Forward Operating Base (FOB -3) next to the Khe Sanh base, where they set up new positions with their Bru Popular Force Troops.

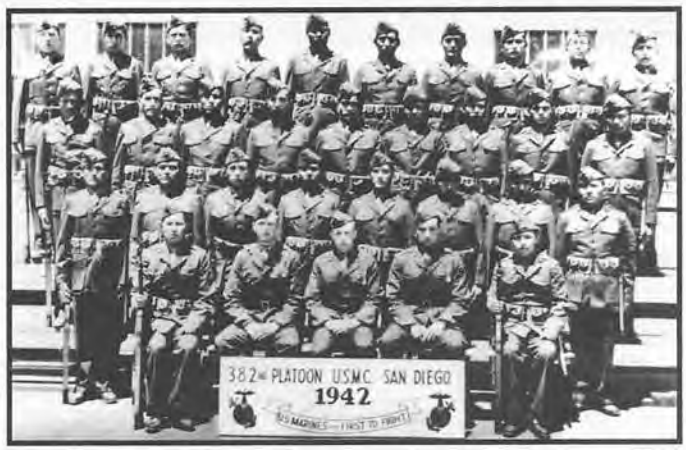

The 382nd platoon. Special unit of Navajo Code Talkers



FROM AN AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPER



To the North Vietnamese Army, the village of Khe Sanh was the gateway to the south.

The now infamous siege in 1968 was the largest battle in the 30-year-long war and what broke the will of the American government to continue fighting a war they no longer believed they could win.

Though Australian involvement in the 77-day siege was minimal, the battle has been forever immortalized in this country in the lyrics of Cold Chisels 1978 song.

It was 45 years after the battle at Khe Sanh that Robyn Milbus found a zippo lighter belonging to someone who had been there just a couple of years earlier.

Mrs. Milbus and her husband Darryl were travelling to Cooktown from their home at Coomera when they stopped at Calliope River to camp for the night.

"Darryl did a bit of fishing and I went for a walk and found the zippo lighter in the sand," she said.
"I thought it would be nice to reunite it with the owner, but of course in the ensuing years I forgot all about it."

Mr. Milbus passed away the following year it was when she was going through his belongings that she found the zippo lighter again.

Zippo lighters are distinctly American so it may have belonged to an American ex-serviceman travelling in Australia, or it may have been given to an Australian while in Vietnam.

It is marked with the words "Vietnam, Khe Sanh 65 -66".

For now, it's origin is a mystery. Last year, Mrs. Milbus was at the Gympie Muster and was reminded again of the lighter when she was talking to a member of the RSL.

"I told him I'd love to find the owner, but then I put it aside and forgot about it again," she said.
"I don't smoke, so it's no good to me."

If anyone has any ideas about who may own the lighter, call The Observer on 4970 3044.

OUR FOUNDER, RAY W. STUBBE's RESPONSE TO THE VFW ARTICLE *THE TURNING POINT*, WHICH WAS FULL OF INACCURACIES, AND GREATLY UNDERESTIMATED THE AMOUNT OF CASUALTIES SUFFERED AT THE KHE SANH COMBAT BASE..

Thursday, 04 January 2018

Editor, *VFW* Magazine
406 West 34th St. STE 523
Kansas City MO 64111

Dear Sir or Madam:

Concerning your excellent article, "'The Turning Point'," *(VFW* 105:4 (Jan 2018», a couple of minor errors should be noted lest they continue to

be perpetuated.

While an "official" 205 KIA had been continually repeated for the past five decades, based on the 26th Marine Regiment After Action Report and Congressional testimony (1971), the totals reported in the Command Chronologies and After Action Reports for the subordinate battalions (1/26, 2/26, 3/26, 1/9, 1/13) for the period 21 Jan - 31 Mar bring the total to 274. If one then adds KIA from the various support units at Khe Sanh (recon, shore party, engineers, helicopters, etc.) , another 70 KIA must be added. This is just for 20 Jan - 31 March. For those of us who were at Khe Sanh, an artificial "ending" with the conclusion of Operation SCOTLAND (31 March) does not reflect the end of the "siege!" For those of us who were there, the siege battle lasted as long as we fought at Khe Sanh.

Thus, for the period 20 Jan-31 Mar, there were 407 KIA, 01-15 Apr (Operation PEGASUS), 165 KIA, and for the one day when 1/9 fought on Hill 689, 43 KIA, and for 17 Apr - 11 Jul, 396 KIA (the day Americans abandoned Khe Sanh and also the date of the ending of Phase IV of the NVA battle plan). This gives a total of 1101 KIA for the Khe Sanh siege.

In addition, the article. erroneously indicates 852 WIA. COR Brown, the CO of 3rd Medical Battalion, who frequently was at Khe Sanh during the siege to supervise his doc- tors and corpsmen of 2nd Platoon, Co "C"-{"C Med"), reported in a professional journal that the records of C Med recorded 2,249 patients seen and treated, of which 2,037 were WIA and 490 NBC. 2,249 patients were evacuated of which 292 were returned to duty. ["Dateline Vietnam," *Pennsylvania Medicine*, August, 1968, pp. 45-53].

There has been a tendency to minimize what we, who were there, endured. Even the official NVA histories of the Ho Chi Minh Trail (classified Secret), indicate the amount of materiel supplied to B5 - T8 (their secret designation of the Khe Sanh battlefield) was more than twice that for the rest of I Corps (e.g., Hue) and 24.5 times that provided to southern

South Vietnam. The number of troops committed to H2 (their designation of the specific Khe Sanh battlefield, Hi being the eastern, i.e., Hue) was 28,000 in February and 29,000 in March 1968 .. [I can provide you with the exact references if you desire].

With such a concentration of men, the casualty figures are understandable when one notes that there were more tons of bombs dropped during the first half of the Khe Sanh siege (22 Jan - 29 Feb 68) than in all of the Pacific in WW II (WWII: 32,735 tons; Khe Sanh: 53,380 tons). In addition, the local Montagnard tribesmen, who had, for example, safely guided our Marine recon teams caught outside the base when the siege began and were always friendly to us, were forbidden to evacuate. Their census just prior to the siege was 21,000, and only 6,000 made it to the Cam Lo Refugee Center following the siege, making about 16,000 KIA. NVA losses were estimated using statistical models of MACV's MACEVAL to be an estimated 15,760 NVA KIA. Thus, Khe Sanh is certainly the bloodiest battle of Vietnam, not Hue (as has been recently asserted), and is the main battle of Tet, if not the entire Vietnam War.

The list of Navy Crosses should include PC Jonathan Nathaniel Spicer (DOW 14 March 1968). Spicer reported at Khe Sanh Monday, 22 Jan 1968, the day after the siege began. He claimed to be a Conscientious Objector, and a talk with the chaplain (me) disclosed that he had mentioned this to his recruiter (who said he could become a dog handler), in boot camp and various commands and was told to wait until his final command Well, here he was at Khe Sanh the day after the base was shelled, destroying all hardbacks and severely damaging all above-ground structures. It was chaos as 1200 civilians from Khe Sanh village were gathered to be evacuated on C-130s which had brought ammunition since our ammo dump had exploded destroying $3,298,862.97 worth of ammo (according to CG, III MAF 141216Z/Feb68, LOGSUM #2-68)-{>ver three million dollars!).

PFC Spicer mentioned he had never been in a fight, never participated in sports, his father was a minister, and he didn't care what happened to him; he just didn't want to hurt anyone else. Everyone knew we were surrounded by thousands of NVA and the adrenalin freely flowed! The paperwork on Spicer started. A few days later, Spicer's First Sergeant came to the chaplain (me) saying, "You have to do

something! The men are beating up Spicer." I replied that I deserved a chaplain's clerk and didn't have one. I said I really didn't need one due to the situation-no need for a driver, but that since I was in the medical area, he could be a stretcher bearer. For two months, Spicer carried litters to MEDEVAC choppers which naturally attracted much incoming. He always remained with the casualty, either lying beside him or even on top to protect him. One day he took shrapnel in his heart. The doctors of C Med, although not qualified for open heart surgery, did so, saved him, he was evacuated to Tokyo, and then died of an infection. Col. Lownds recommended him for a Navy Cross which was granted to this Conscientious Objector.

Hopefully, what we who were at Khe Sanh won't continue to be belittled!

RAY WILLIAM STUBBE

{I can provide you (or your historians and writers) with specific notations of archival sources for the details mentioned, if desired. I was the Protestant chaplain at Khe Sanh, Jul1967 - March 1968, and organized Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., about 3,000-strong and has annual reunions and publishes a first class magazine, *Red Clay*. I have appeared on about half a dozen nationally televised programs relating to the Vietnam War and Khe Sanh specifically].

ALSO FROM THE GOOD REVEREND RAY STUBBE

--Since the date of 9/11 is approaching, Chaplain Bill Will sent me a story that I'll reprint. Perhaps you've read it before. Even if you have, the story is a stark reminder of the mission, dangers, and dedication of our Marines and Sailors (and their families) in the service of our nation, and our important role in providing ministry to them, their loved ones, and ourselves.

Did you know this about 9-11? After Flight 77 hit the Pentagon, a chaplain who happened to be assigned to the Pentagon, told of an incident that happened right after the plane hit the building.

A daycare facility inside the Pentagon had many children, including infants who were in heavy cribs. The daycare supervisor, looking at all the children they needed to evacuate, was in a panic over what they could do.

There were many children, mostly toddlers, as well as the infants that would need to be taken out with the cribs. There was no time to try to bundle them into carriers and strollers.

Just then a young Marine came running into the center and asked what they needed. After hearing what the center director was trying to do, he ran back out into the hallway and disappeared. The director thought, "Well, here we are, on our own."

About 2 minutes later, that Marine returned with 40 other Marines in tow. Each of them grabbed a crib with a child and the rest started gathering up the toddlers. The director and her staff then helped them take all the children out of the center and down toward the park near the Potomac.

Once they got about 3/4 of a mile outside the building, the Marines stopped in the park, and then did a fabulous thing - they formed a circle with the cribs, which were quite sturdy and heavy, like the covered wagons in the Old West. Inside this circle of cribs, they put the toddlers to keep them from wandering off. Outside this circle were the 40 Marines, forming a perimeter around the children and waiting for instructions. There they remained until the parents could be notified and come get their children.

The chaplain then said, "I don't think any of us saw nor heard of this on any of the news stories of the day. It was an incredible story of our men there. There wasn't a dry eye in the room."

The thought of those Marines and what they did and how fast they reacted; could we expect any less from them? It was one of the most touching stories from the Pentagon.

As I read this story, I'm reminded again of how privileged we've been as Navy chaplains to have served the men and women of the Sea Services, and their loved ones.
Peace!
Fred Zobel

I GET MAIL

Tom, I wanted to take a moment to thank you and the Board of Directors for all you good work for the Khe Sanh Veterans organization. Due to your efforts over the years, the Battle for Khe Sanh will live forever in the legacy of our Corps. The heroic fighting by the Marines and supporting organizations will always be an example of courage and sacrifice.

The organization is one of the premier veterans organizations in the county and has earned the respect of veterans and the American citizen.

This does not come easy and requires hard work. I am sure that there are many hours spent to maintain the organization, the Red Clay and the annual reunions. I thank all the countless volunteers who donate their time to the success of the organza ion.

Semper Fi

Terrence D. Arndt
Captain, 0302
F & G 2/26 (post siege)

NICE STORY, SUBMITTED BY DOCTOR BARRY BOOTH, MEMBER KHE SANH VETERANS

Major Mordecai Arnold, who received his final promotion Monday night, made his last personal appearance in December at Family Wreath Day at the Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Spanish Fort. As many of you have responded with the impact he had on your lives as a college professor...he continued in his sunset years to do the same with our young people in our area...his kindness and soft words reached the hearts of hundreds of kids ...yes kids of all ages...his refusal of a wheel chair ...he walked when he couldn't walk...and his determination to stand was an example for all of us ...he is standing to left in the photograph below...during the pledge and national anthem he was given extra strength to stand and salute...his back was straighter and his aged eyes brighter...Thank you Mawk for your service....and the lasting impression on our hearts ...and the hearts of those who will serve in your place now...









Major Mordecai Arnold USMC(RET) was promoted tonight. He served our country with honor...WWII…

Korea...Vietnam...a true American Hero. This photo was taken Saturday...he and Dr.Barry Booth were making plans....always ready to serve. Special thoughts and prayers are extended to his family. Thank you for your service Mawk...you will be truly missed.

OBIT

COLONEL FRED V. CHERRY USAF, VIETNAM & KOREAN WAR

Fred V. Cherry, an Air Force fighter pilot, was downed by enemy fire over North Vietnam in 1965, and he spent more than seven years as a prisoner of war.

He had grown up in the Jim Crow South, and his captors made it clear that he could mitigate the harshness of his incarceration, including routine torture, and improve his living conditions by speaking out against the racial injustice and discrimination he had faced as an African American in the United States.





When beatings failed to bring him around, his jailers tried another tactic. They assigned a self-described "Southern white boy" as his cellmate, hoping that racial antipathy between the two men would weaken his resolve and produce a propaganda triumph for North Vietnam.
The plan failed.

Instead, the two men, Col. Cherry and a Navy fighter pilot, then-Ensign Porter Halyburton, became fast and lifelong friends. Each would credit the other with having saved his life.

Col. Cherry died Feb. 16 2018, at a hospital in Washington. He was 87. The cause was heart ailments, said his companion of 24 years, Deborah

Thompson. He was a major and had more than 100 combat missions in Korea and Vietnam behind him on the day — Oct. 22, 1965 — that his F-105 Thunderchief fighter-bomber was hit by enemy antiaircraft fire.

"The plane exploded and I ejected at about 400 feet at over 600 miles an hour," Col. Cherry wrote in a 1999 collection of war stories by POWs and Medal of Honor recipients. "In the process of ejection, I broke my left ankle, my left wrist, and crushed my left shoulder. I was captured immediately upon landing by Vietnamese militia and civilians."

"I spent 702 days in solitary confinement," he added, with the longest period lasting 53 weeks. "At one time I was either tortured or in punishment for 93 straight days."

Early in his captivity, Col. Cherry was matched with Halyburton, a North Carolinian who had been shot down Oct. 17, 1965. For eight months, they would live together. But whatever mutual animosity their captors may have hoped for never materialized.

"I guess they thought if they had a Southern white boy taking care of a black man, it would be the worst place for both of us," Halyburton said in a telephone conversation from North Carolina. "It turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to me."

For eight months, Halyburton changed the dressings on his cellmate's infected wounds, fed him, bathed him and watched over him. "He said I saved his life, and he saved my life. . . . Taking care of my friend gave my life some meaning that it had not had before."

The two men lived in a succession of fetid 10-by-10 -foot cells, sleeping on straw mats, benches or the floor.

"I was so inspired by Fred's toughness," Halyburton said. "He had grown up in the racial South [and] undergone a lot of discrimination and hardship. But he was such an ardent patriot. He loved this country. It inspired me, and it inspired a lot of others."

For 2,671 days, Col. Cherry was held in captivity before his release on Feb. 12, 1973, with the first group of U.S. prisoners of war to come home.

Fred Vann Cherry Sr. was born in Suffolk, Va., on March 24, 1928. His parents were farmers. He attended racially segregated public schools and graduated in 1951 from Virginia Union University, a historically black college in Richmond.

He then joined the Air Force and, during the Korean War, flew more than 50 combat missions over North Korea.

In the summer of 1966, after eight months of sharing a cell, Col. Cherry and Halyburton were separated. Halyburton remembers it as "one of the saddest days of my life." They did not see each other again until 1973, when they met at a military hospital at Clark Air Base in the Philippines after their release from captivity.

Col. Cherry, who later attended the National War College and the Defense Intelligence School in Washington, retired from the Air Force in 1981 as a joint staff officer assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency. He was a resident of Silver Spring, Md.

His medals included the Air Force Cross, awarded, according to the citation, for "extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a Prisoner of War ... extremely strong personal fortitude and maximum persistence in the face of severe enemy harassment and torture, suffering critical injuries and wounds."

But Col. Cherry's homecoming was painful. His wife, the former Shirley Brown, reportedly deserted him soon after he was declared missing, cleaned out his life savings and had a child with another man. The officer endured years of legal proceedings and negotiations with the military over issues involving back salary, child-support payments and allowances.

Survivors include his companion, of Silver Spring; four children from his marriage, Deborah Cherry-Jones and Donald Cherry, both of Norfolk, Va., Cynthia Cherry-Leon of Woodbridge, Va., and Fred V. Cherry Jr. of Springdale, Md.; a son from anoth-

er relationship, Frederick Stein of Los Angeles; 14 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.
Col. Cherry and Halyburton, who retired from the Navy at the rank of commander, gave joint talks at military institutions and colleges. In 2004, they toured to promote a book about their story, "Two Souls Indivisible: The Friendship That Saved Two POWs in Vietnam," by James S. Hirsch.

Col. Cherry also was featured in a public television documentary narrated by Tom Hanks, "Return With Honor," about Vietnam fighter pilots held as POWs. "I know that the faith in God, love and respect for my fellow man that my parents and family instilled in me during my youth carried me through some very difficult years as prisoner-of-war in Vietnam," Col. Cherry wrote in the 1999 collection of POW war stories.

"I was always taught to love and respect others and forgive those who mistreat, scorn or persecute me. . . . [This] allowed me overcome the damages of discrimination, Jim Crow, and the social and economic barriers associated with growing up a poor dirt farmer. . . . My standard for making decisions is based on doing what is right."

LOCAL CHAPLAIN TRIES TO LOCATE KHE SANH VETERANS IN OAKLAND COUNTY
RONALD RAYNER, USMC
A CO 1/26, KHE SANH VETERAN

Chaplain Ron Rayner, KSV, 71, a resident of Oakland County, says that he believes there are local Khe Sanh veterans who have never been to a reunion or know of the existence of the organization Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

He wants to let veterans know that, this year, the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Jan. 21, to April 7, 1968 siege of Khe Sanh during the Vietnam War by hosting a reunion in Washington D.C. during the week of Aug. 12. A memorial service will be given to remember the 2,097 Americans killed in the Khe Sanh area from 1964 to 1973, and the Khe Sanh veterans will wash the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall."

"I am humbled that we have been given the honor of being allowed to wash the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. It is my prayer this will attract many non-member Khe Sanh vets," said Rayner.



Vietnam veteran Ron Rayner with Vietnamese children from the village by Wonder beach in South Vietnam, circa 1968. Photos courtesy of Chaplain Ronald Rayner Khe Sanh Veteran

"There have been over one million men and women (VA estimate 2003) who have sacrificed their lives serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. ... What the rest of us owe these individuals is to live a happy, healthy and purposeful life so that they have not died in vain."

For more information, call Rayner at 248-875-7743, email chaplainron66@gmail.com or visit KheSanh.org.

50 YEARS AGO: VETERANS OF KHE SANH BATTLE TO MEET ON SUNDAY
21 JANUARY 2018

Oroville: In the early morning hours of Jan. 21, 1968 the first explosions of artillery fire rang out through the dense jungle of the Quang Tri Province,



In this photo taken by Tom Horchler in April 1968 at the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Base at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, seven young marines pose with war-weary stares when the 77-day siege ended. Craig Tourte is at right, with his arm on the truck. He recalled that the man sitting in front, Fred Louis Thomas Jr., died in another battle 10 months later.

South Vietnam, marking the beginning of what came to be known as the Battle of Khe Sanh.

Veterans of that 77-day siege, in which 6,000 primarily U.S. Marines defended the small combat base against 10-times that many People's Army of North Vietnam troops, will be marking the 50th anniversary together at the annual Northern California Khe Sanh Veterans' Luncheon on Sunday.

This year's event will begin at 10 a.m. at Table Mountain Golf Course, 2700 Oro Dam Blvd. The tri-tip luncheon is open to all U.S. veterans and their families who wish to honor those who fought at Khe Sanh. A $20 donation is requested.

"They say it was the Marines who fought there but just about every branch of the service was there. There are not many battles in history where guys from different branches fought shoulder to shoulder, but Khe Sanh was one of them," said Tom Horchler of Oroville, event organizer.

A lance corporal with the 1st Battalion 13th Marines Headquarters Battery Motor Transport Section, Horchler spent his entire tour of duty in Khe Sanh, driving a truck hauling "bodies, bullets, bandages and beans."

At 71, Horchler said he sometimes forgets things that happened yesterday but his memory is clear when it comes to what happened 12 miles south of the North Vietnamese border 50 years ago.

"You never forget. Never. You can't forget. Ever. I remember every wounded man I hauled. I remember every dead body I hauled. I remember every round fired. I remember every second of every day," said Horchler, a 1965 Chico High School graduate.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2018 REUNION WILL BE HELD AT THE HYATT REGENCY CRYSTAL CITY AT REAGAN NATIONAL. 2799 JEFFERSON DAVIS HWY, ARLINGTON, VA 22202 DATES 12 AUGUST TO 19 AUGUST 2018. RATES 105.00 A NIGHT GOOD FOR 3 DAYS BEFORE & 3 DAYS AFTER FREE PARKING PET FRIENDLY (SMALL CHARGE) FREE SHUTTLE FROM REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT, REDUCED BREAKFAST & DINNER MEALS. 703-418-1234

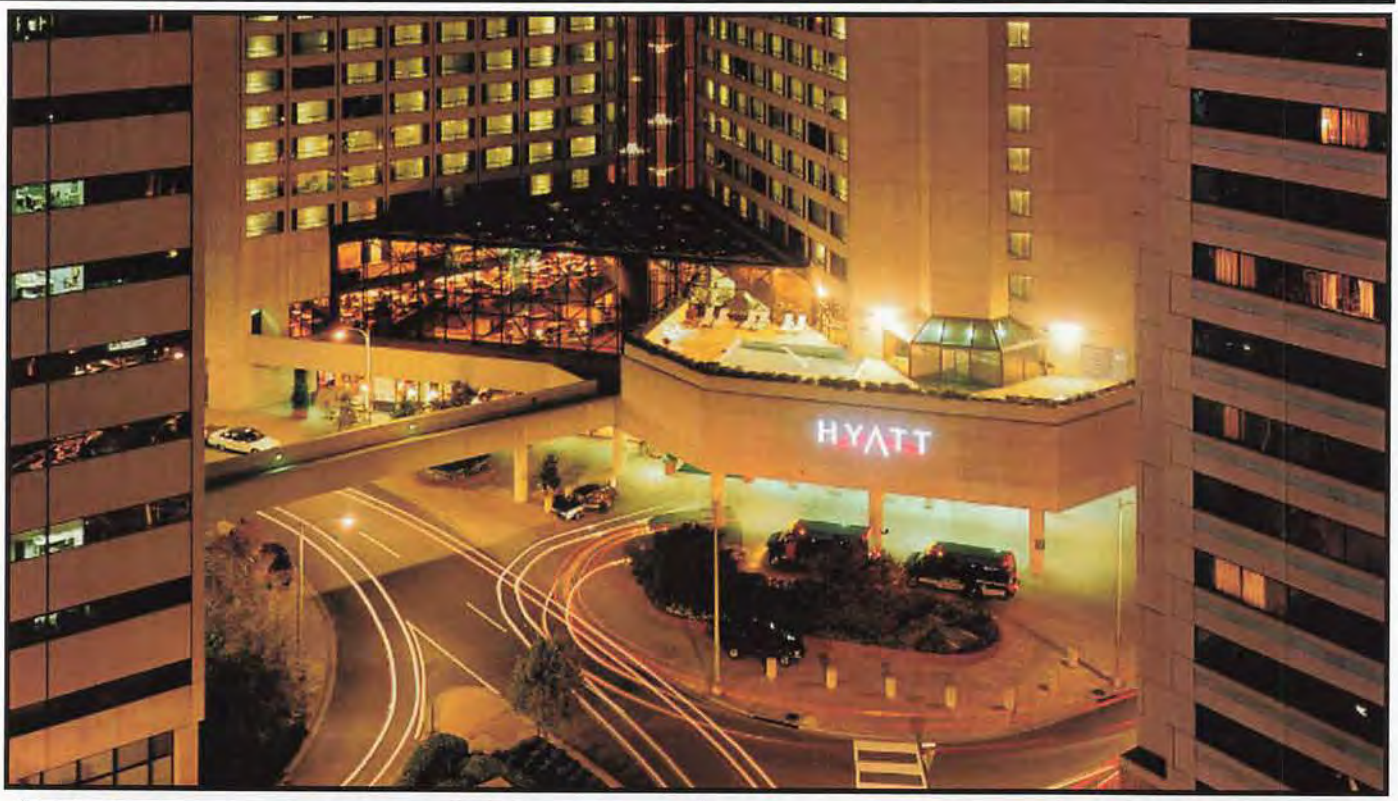














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- Exhibit hall - one of largest in DC area

Creative catering featuring Personal Preference Dining®

Horchler and fellow Khe Sanh veteran Craig Tourte of Rocklin organized the first Northern California Khe Sanh veterans' lunch. Ninety-eight veterans attended, many with their spouses, children and grandchildren.

As the years have passed Khe Sanh veterans from Oregon and Idaho have also begun attending, but overall, veteran attendance has dwindled to about 50.

"We're getting old now and we're dying, many of us from complications due to Agent Orange exposure and there's not one of us who has not lived and struggled with PTSD," said Horchler.

The troops fighting at Khe Sanh were young, many in their late teens. Horchler, who had "celebrated" his 21st birthday a month before the battle started, was one of the "older guys."

For 77 days and nights, these young men were under a constant bombardment of shells, rockets and mortars. At night, troops called the "Ghost Patrol" ventured into the surrounding foothills engaging in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy.

"These guys, they kept the North Vietnamese from getting on the hills around us. If they hadn't, we would have been right in the bullseye and none of us would have made it out. I get chills every time I've met one of them," said Horchler.

There remains some controversy about how many U.S. troops died in Khe Sanh. Initial government reports said slightly more than 200, but later that number was increased to less than 500. Many Khe Sanh veterans, including Horchler, believe it was closer to 2,000.

"Everything that happened in Vietnam was a lie from the beginning right through Nixon's 'peace with honor.' Everything was a lie including how many died at Khe Sanh. If you didn't die in that square box of land that was the combat base, if you died fighting in the hills around the base or in a plane shot down over the base or days after you were injured and evacuated to a medical base, you weren't officially counted as having died at Khe Sanh," said Horchler.

When the veterans of that Tet Offensive battle get together they do so to remember all of their "brothers" who didn't make it home. Sometimes they tell "war stories," but mostly they come together just to be with others who shared an experience that those who haven't fought battles will never understand.

"It's almost a spiritual thing. I know when I walk into a room full of vets just like me, it gives you a calming sense. You are surrounded by true brothers. Men who would, men who did step up and take a bullet for you. It's a special place to be when you're together. When you have fought, bled and seen the death we saw, it creates a bond that undeniable," said Horchler.







2018 KHE SANH LUNCHEON ADDRESS 21 JANUARY 1968

BY CRAIG W. TOURTE, USMC
HQ BTRY 1/13, KHE SANH VETERAN

We gather here today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Siege and battles that occurred at and around the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh beginning January 21st and ending around July 11, 1968, resulting in the death by several accounts of numbers exceeding 1011 American Marines, Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen. Of those, 274 were actually killed on the base between January 21st and March 31st. During this time, in addition to several infantry assaults, the Combat Base and the hilltop outposts were subject to constant artillery, mortar and rocket attacks. At times, those rounds fired at the base alone, exceeded 1,500 rounds a day. Over 100,000 tons of bombs were dropped by US aircraft and over 158,000 artillery rounds were fired in defense of the base.

Those of us here today set aside this date and this hour to remember and mourn those we lost. We survivors of that horrific battle will never forget the ones we stood shoulder-to shoulder with in the trench lines, those who faced incredible hardships on the surrounding hills, those who flew above in a desperate attempt to extract our wounded and dead and supply us with the critical material necessary for us to persevere. And we will not forget those who flew the thousands of sorties by attack aircraft and B-52's high above, suppressing the intentions of over 20,000 surrounding enemy soldiers who were preparing to assault the base and dislodge the defenders from their shallow hand dug defenses.

From a newspaper article a couple of years ago, I want to read a quote from my friend Tom Horchler. This interview was particular poignant with words clearly descriptive of the events of which those just reading the article could only imagine, no one could describe Toms experience better. "I remember the lush green beauty of the Khe Sanh jungle and mountains, and the clear blue sky when I first arrived. It was a landscape that despite the heat, humidity, bugs and rain, I appreciated. I remember too the horror of watching that landscape transform into a moonscape as the barrage of bombs, artillery and Agent Orange assaulted the area. It went from a living place to a place with nothing but death and the dying, dead plants, dead trees and dead and dying people. It was an unbelievable transformation. The killings, the dying, the mutilation of young bodies, the plane crashes, the rats, the wounded, the dysentery and exhaustion, along with the gore and fear. It was an impossible situation." But Tom went on to say, he found solace in these gatherings, the coming together of other Khe Sanh Veterans and our friends who often join us.

Brigadier General Lowell English complained that the defense of the isolated outpost of Khe Sanh was ludicrous. "When you're at Khe Sanh, you're not really anywhere. You could lose it and you really haven't lost a damn thing."

President Lyndon Johnson disagreed. As LBJ personally sent off Marine reinforcements to I Corps from El Toro Marine Air Station, California on February 17, 1968, he told them. "This is a decisive time in Vietnam. The eyes of the nation and the eyes of the entire world, the eyes of all of history itself, are on that little brave band of defenders who hold the base at Khe Sanh..."

The Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh was an historic event. The mention of Khe Sanh along with the great battles of Concord, Gettysburg and Normandy in President Obama's first inaugural address, forever confirms to our nation and the world that the Battle of Khe Sanh will forever hold a significant place in American History.

We will never forget the fallen, how they sacrificed for us and for our wonderful country. For the rest of our lives we will never forget where they served or who they are. The fallen heroes of Khe Sanh will continue to be a part of who we are. We also take this moment to honor those who to this day carry the wounds and memory of the Vietnam War, in their hearts, minds and bodies.

Today we remember not only those who fought at Khe Sanh but also those who fought other battles and continue to fight this day for the freedom of all Americans. On behalf of Khe Sanh Veterans, thank you all for coming and may God Bless America.

Dave Tonick (right), a Khe Sanh veteran, A CO 1/26 shares stories with other veterans on the 50th anniversary of the Siege of Khe Sanh at a gathering in Oroville on Sunday. Leila Rodriguez — Enterprise-Record



Oroville "I just turned 20 and then got shot right in the leg," said Dave Tonick, a Khe Sanh Vietnam veteran.

He proudly showed off a photo of his wounded young self, smiling and holding a bottle of champagne he received from his father as a gift in a care package. His battle scars were earned from a rocket blast that knocked him off his feet. Trapped under debris, Tonick's chest and head were unharmed from the blast, but his leg didn't make it unscathed. "I remember it clear as a bell," Tonick said.

His experience and sacrifice were one of many stories shared during the Khe Sanh luncheon held Sunday afternoon at Table Mountain Golf Course that commemorated the 50th anniversary of the 77-day siege that occurred at Khe Sanh, just 12 miles south of the Vietnamese border.

The luncheon was put on by Khe Sanh veterans Craig Tourte and Tom Horchler. Many of these gatherings have reunited other Vietnam and Khe Sanh veterans. It's a shared camaraderie that seems to root deeper each year.

"Even if you've never met a guy before, you start talking, and it's like you've known him forever," Tourte said.

A booming bagpipe rendition of the "Marine Corps Hymn" kicked off the casual festivities. Many were accompanied by family members and loved ones, and those flying solo to the event were happy to reconnect with old friends. While many in attendance were local, others traveled from Sacramento, Rocklin and the Bay Area to join their brothers.

Though Sunday's reflections brought up tough memories of loss and talk of handling post-traumatic stress disorder, not all tales were sad.

From table to table, one could easily catch snippets of war stories that mirrored something from a movie, mixed with the chatter of buddies catching up and inside jokes that would resonate only with a Marine were shared between each gentleman.

Will Caput of Chico, one of the younger Marines in the room, joined the annual Khe Sanh luncheon for the first time Sunday. Caput often meets with a Chico chapter of Marine veterans but said he wanted to reach out and pay his respects to this generation and take their stories into account.

"I think a lot of our generation doesn't understand sacrifice for people who go through war," Caput said. "I know some Iraq veterans, but veterans of Vietnam came onto a different perception compared to veterans today. Back then they weren't respected or honored for their sacrifices."

For 77 days and nights, the combat base and hilltop posts were subject to constant artillery. The soldiers, many in their late teens, spent tireless days evading bombs, mortars, rockets, and bullets — embedded images that still haunt them today.

Tourte said just living at Khe Sanh with the rats and the rain was like digging yourself a hole and calling it comfortable, but for them, it was their duty.

"You were 19 and bulletproof, you didn't think about getting killed," said Dan Ferguson, a fellow Vietnam veteran at the gathering.

Amongst the jokes and reality of what war can do to one's soul, it was clear from those in attendance that the men who fought at Khe Sanh 50 years ago Sunday will always be remembered.

"We will never forget the fallen," Tourte said, "how they sacrificed for us and our wonderful country. Today we remember not only those who fought at

Khe Sanh but also those who fought other battles and continue to fight this day for the freedom of all Americans







Craig Tourte, Hq Btry 1/13, one of the founders of the Khe Sanh Veterans of Northern California, gives key-note address at the 50TH Anniversary of the Siege of Khe Sanh Veterans gathering in Northern California.





THE ENDURING DEBATE OVER KHE SANH

BY

Gregg Jones VIETNAM '67 JAN. 19, 2018

In early 1968, the siege of the remote Marine combat base at Khe Sanh dominated American news coverage of the war in Vietnam. Gen. William Westmoreland, America's supreme commander in Saigon, billed the North Vietnamese Army's move against Khe Sanh as "the main event" of a Communist offensive.



News accounts ominously compared the siege to Dine Bien Phu, the remote French garrison surrounded and forced to surrender to Vietnamese Communist forces in 1954. On Feb. 18, even with the so-called Tet offensive raging across the country, The New York Times called the unfolding showdown at Khe Sanh "the major battle of the Vietnam War."

The drama played out over 77 days, with nerve-jangling highlights on nightly news broadcasts. Four weeks into the siege, Americans learned that President Lyndon Johnson and his commanders were contemplating the use of tactical nuclear weapons to save Khe Sanh.

The defenders endured artillery barrages, sniper fire, probes and ground assaults. Ultimately, though, Khe Sanh didn't live up to its early hype of an Alamo-style disaster in the making.

Over time, the events that unfolded at Khe Sanh in 1968 were eclipsed by the interpretation of what had occurred. A revisionist historical narrative hardened in the 1980s, and Khe Sanh became a metaphor for General Westmoreland's mismanagement of the war. More recently, the siege has been written off as a brilliant North Vietnamese ruse that concealed the impending Communist attacks on urban centers — the Tet offensive. This judgment infuses books of contemporary vintage and the recent Ken Burns-Lynn Novick documentary film on Vietnam. In reality, the evidence on North Vietnamese intentions at Khe Sanh is inconclusive, and the case is far from closed.

As 1968 began, the United States and North Vietnam aspired to victory in the year ahead. Khe Sanh figured prominently in the plans of both. The anchor of the American stronghold at Khe Sanh was a Marine combat base perched on a plateau between an old French road, Route 9, and the Rao Quan River, about seven miles east of the border with Laos and 15 miles south of the demilitarized zone dividing North Vietnam from South. A fan-shaped array of outposts, including an American Army Special Forces camp, guarded approaches to the base from the north and west.

In January 1968, two North Vietnamese Army divisions — some 20,000 men — converged on Khe Sanh from the west. Another division moved to a position northeast of Khe Sanh.

The first phase of the North Vietnamese plan, "General Offensive and General Uprising," called for Communist troops to provoke a series of interior battles to lure American forces from the populous coast. One of those battles was to occur at Khe Sanh.

But the ruling Politburo in Hanoi had split over the next phase. A faction led by the ascendant Le Duan, the general secretary of the Central Committee, called for urban attacks aimed at igniting a popular uprising. In opposition to that risky approach were North Vietnam's aging revolutionary leader, Ho Chi Minh, and his military chief, Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, architect of the victory over the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Ultimately, Le Duan outflanked his opponents and the urban offensive was incorporated into the plan. The attacks on southern cities were to

unfold as Vietnam celebrated the lunar new year — Tet — in late January 1968.

In Saigon, General Westmoreland welcomed the Communist move against Khe Sanh. He laid plans for an unprecedented artillery and air response to cripple his North Vietnamese adversaries in a rare conventional confrontation.

The drama at Khe Sanh got underway with a flurry of N.V.A. attacks in the early hours of Sunday, Jan. 21. An enemy ground assault penetrated a Marine outpost on Hill 861 before failing. Communist artillery bombarded Khe Sanh Combat Base, detonating the main ammunition dump. Other North Vietnamese troops attacked the district headquarters compound in nearby Khe Sanh village. Over the next two weeks, the base and its outposts endured daily barrages and sniper fire. At night, N.V.A. soldiers probed Khe Sanh's defenses.

Concerns of a massive ground assault on Khe Sanh increased after the Communist urban attacks began on Jan. 31. The following day, President Johnson's chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Gen. Earle Wheeler, asked General Westmoreland whether tactical nuclear weapons might be required to save Khe Sanh. Westmoreland hedged his bets. In a worst-case scenario, he said in a secret cable, "I visualize that either tactical nuclear weapons or chemical agents would be active candidates for employment."

On Feb. 5, as fighting continued in Saigon, Hue and other cities, the North Vietnamese attacked a key Khe Sanh outpost on Hill 861 Alpha. Communist forces pierced the Marine perimeter, but the attack was finally broken by a massive artillery barrage aided by electronic sensors and punctuated with a ground counterattack. The following night, the Army Special Forces camp southwest of the base was overrun in a ground assault supported by 11 Russian -made PT-76 light tanks. On Feb. 8, N.V.A. soldiers attacked a small Marine outpost barely a mile southwest of the base.

Communist forces set to work encircling the base with trenches and concealed gun positions, imperiling the stronghold's aerial supply lifeline. In Washington, retired Gen. Maxwell Taylor, a respected World War II veteran and former ambassador to South Vietnam, advised President Johnson to abandon Khe Sanh. Food and water were rationed in the outposts, and wounded men sometimes died awaiting helicopter evacuation flights. The sense of crisis deepened on Feb. 10 when a Marine C-130 transport was hit by enemy fire and forced to crash-land at Khe Sanh, killing eight Americans.

That same week, unknown to General Westmoreland and the Marines, Communist commanders shifted a third of their siege force from Khe Sanh to the battle for Hue, 50 miles to the southeast. Years after the war, Westmoreland's intelligence chief, Lt. Gen. Phillip B. Davidson Jr., remained baffled by the decision. The North Vietnamese "kept too many troops at Khe Sanh just to threaten it, and too few to overrun it." It is one of many unsolved mysteries that still shroud the battle for Khe Sanh.

The siege reached its climax in the last week of February 1968, although this, too, became evident only much later.

On Feb. 24, American forces launched Operation Sierra, colloquially known as the Super Gaggle, for the large number of aircraft involved. It involved inundating enemy gun positions around Khe Sanh with tear gas, smoke, high explosives and napalm, allowing big Sea Knight helicopters to swoop in to the hilltop outposts and drop external nets packed with supplies. The resupply crisis eased.

The following day, fear of an imminent assault on the base peaked after the decimation of a Marine patrol and discovery of new Communist trenches extending to within a few yards of the southeastern perimeter wire. On the night of Feb. 29, N.V.A. forces undertook three waves of attacks on the eastern perimeter of Khe Sanh Combat Base. The Americans activated an elaborate plan to trap and slaughter Communist forces with coordinated B-52 strikes and other air and artillery missions. A few N.V.A. soldiers reached the perimeter wire before the final attack failed.

North Vietnamese pressure on Khe Sanh eased in March as improved weather resulted in even heavier American air and artillery attacks. With the arrival of a joint Army-Marine relief force, American com manders declared an end to the siege on April 8.

Army forces departed and fresh Marine battalions arrived, encountering even bloodier combat than during the siege. But by then the reporters had moved on, and General Westmoreland was on his way out, replaced by Gen. Creighton Abrams. In early July, Khe Sanh Combat Base was dismantled, and, in a scene that foreshadowed the events of April 1975, the last Americans left hurriedly by helicopter. North Vietnamese radio proclaimed victory at Khe Sanh.

Nearly 1,000 Americans died in the 1968 fighting around Khe Sanh (far more than the discredited official toll). Estimates of Communist losses ranged from 2,500 to 15,000 killed.

The full intentions of the North Vietnamese at Khe Sanh remain unclear. For decades, the Hanoi party line has held that Khe Sanh was solely a ruse to mask the urban attacks — a self-serving claim by ideologues who view history as a tool of the revolution rather than a search for objective truth. That claim has been amplified by respected Vietnam War correspondents such as Neil Sheehan and the late Stanley Karnow. Largely ignored is a competing analysis that contends the North Vietnamese intended to cap their 1968 offensive with the coup de grâce inflicted on the Americans at Khe Sanh. Until the Vietnamese government opens its wartime archives, we won't know for sure what Khe Sanh was about.

Gregg Jones is the author of "Last Stand at Khe Sanh" and "Honor in the Dust: Roosevelt, War in the Philippines, and the Rise and Fall of America's Imperial Dream."



Delta 1/26 Marines. L-R Charles Lopez, Randy Dilbeck, John Rowland, George Myrick, David Devaughn, Albert Marzano and Doc Cahill.

FROM THE WEB

JANUARY 20

On today's date, fifty years ago and the day before the Siege of Khe Sanh erupted, I woke my fire team before first light to go on a work detail.



One of the men in my team slept hard and didn't like to wake up. This happened a lot. I finally told him if he didn't get out of the rack and eat some chow, I'd kick his ass.

That was a mistake. We didn't really think much of each other. He jumped up and wrapped me in a bear hug. A strong kid from Detroit, he squeezed and made mention about my heritage and my mother. I thought he'd crush my chest.

Somehow I struggled and freed my arms and with my left hand found a metal bucket on a shelf in the bunker. Using both my hands, I clutched it and drove it down on the top of his skull.

He dropped me as blood shot into his brown hair, down the sides of his head and over his forehead into his eyebrows.

My stomach churned at the sight of all that blood and I figured there would be hell to pay. I sent him to see the corpsman while we ate chow. Word came back that he went to the battalion aid station to get his head stitched up.

We went off and built a concertina wire barrier somewhere behind the main trench lines. All day I worried about the private, his split open head and the ramifications with which I would have to deal. While we pounded posts into the ground and strung concertina wire, a Huey flew over with a man hanging below. It looked like his hands were tied to a cable. The helicopter had no markings that would identify it as an American chopper.

We all watched as the Huey flew above a line of ragged trees that grew along the south side of the base and dragged the dangling man through the tree tops. I still imagine the sounds I imagined at the time—snapped bones, ripped flesh, the wash of guts and other organs impaled on the remains of broken branches.

For years, I didn't remember the incident of the chopper dragging that man but I did remember splitting the private's head open. Not until the mid 1990s did I recall the Huey and the dangling man and it wasn't until 2010 that I was sure I'd seen what I saw. I was worried that I had taken someone else's memory and made it mine. One of the men who we interviewed for BRAVO! asked me, while we were filming him, if I remembered seeing the Huey and the man hanging below.

Fifty years ago, when we arrived back at our fire team area the private with the busted head waited. He seemed quite pleased with a head full of stitches and that he didn't have to help string concertina.

As I stood there peering at the top of his head, someone down the line set off a claymore mine by accident. When I looked that direction I saw Marines charging into their fighting positions and for the first time, an inkling of what was to come at the Siege of Khe Sanh snuck into my consciousness.

Later that night, I took first watch. A heavy mist hung over the combat base. I walked up and down the trench, thinking, I suspect, about the bloody skull and the man who'd been hanging from the bottom of that Huey. I know I thought about that claymore mine and the echoes of its explosion that bounded along our lines.

I heard a soft, low moan and shivered. A waving line of red tracer fire sketched out of the sky and out to the front of our position. We called that moaning

weapon, an airplane, Puff the Magic Dragon but it was more commonly known in Vietnam as Spooky.

And spooky it was as the red tracers etched a curved crimson line into the misty night and the low, sad moan of its sound followed and made me think of lamentations from spirits of the dead.

As I got ready to go off watch, I stood at the back of my hooch and stared into the night.
It was spooky.

BRAVO! COMMON MEN, UNCOMMON VALOR @ https://bravotheproject.com/. #BRAVO! #USMC #Khe Sanh #Vietnam War



IGET MAIL

From Michael O'Hara

A new generation of Marines. L-R is my former Company Commander from Khe Sanh days ret LtCol Ken Pipes, his great nephew and recent grad Robert Caposella, along with the Commanding General MCRD San Diego. I there in June of 67. Photo taken last week.

FROM THE WEB
FIFTY YEARS AGO
20 JAN68 INTO 21 JAN68
BY DENNIS MANNION
KILO CO 3/26 F/O

have been reflecting upon this 24 hour period since I got up this morning in CT. While the 21st of January in any year always sets me on edge, I have been totally consumed with the fact that it's been exactly fifty years since the NVA came through the wire on the northwest corner of 861. In fact, as I type this on the evening of Jan 20th, it's already the morning of the 21st over there, and five decades ago right now, Kilo 3/26 and W 1/13 were picking up the pieces, counting the dead and wounded, and planning for the next 24 hours. Were we shell-shocked and dazed? For sure, and our greatest wonder & fear was thinking about the tenacious NVA and whether they'd be back in force when the sun went down on the 21st. Uneasy times.

While the old combat base is totally unrecognizable as it once was, the same cannot be said for the hilltops that the Marines held. As physical landmarks, the hills at Khe Sanh are same as they were fifty years ago. I always think of Gettysburg National Park when I think of Khe Sanh's hills.

I have been to Gettysburg three times. Standing at the high water mark of Pickett's Charge -- the Angle -- where the two stone walls meet (the high point of the Confederacy, it's called), it's easy to imagine what happened there in July 1863. However, no matter your thoughts as you conjure up what took

200 meters from the Angle. I mean, WTF?! Same today at the combat base: a museum, artifacts, fake bunkers and trenches, photo-ops, etc. Hell, these days, young Vietnamese couples travel to the old combat base to have their wedding photos taken using the scenic hills as backdrops. Totally changed.

Travel a few miles south from Pickett's Charge, and you can visit Little and Big Round Tops. Those hills exist today as they once did and the big boulders present 155 years ago are there today! That is true as well for the Khe Sanh hills: the geological imprints remain the same five decades later, and while the vegetation has grown back, the terrain up there is unchanged. (Photo Evidence included.)

This is not to minimize what people at the base endured (and had to take day after day), and my heart aches for all of you who were down there for those days, weeks, and months. 861 was never hit with any big arty or rockets the likes of which plagued the base, and I feel fortunate about that....and guilty too.

So, here is to all us all who were there, endured, suffered, wept and cursed. We were part of history then and we always will be. God bless and Peace. S/F Dennis

Photo 1: My photo taken mid-February from my bunker on 861 showing the N/W corner of the trench line where the NVA came through that first night. Look to the right side of the photo, just outside the trench line and in the barbed wire: Locate a large, grey boulder sticking up.

Photo 2: Tom Ford's photo taken in 2008 showing the same view forty years after my photo. Notice anything special in the lower right hand side of the photo?

Photo 3: Close up from Tom's photo. Like the Little Round Top, the boulders don't disappear

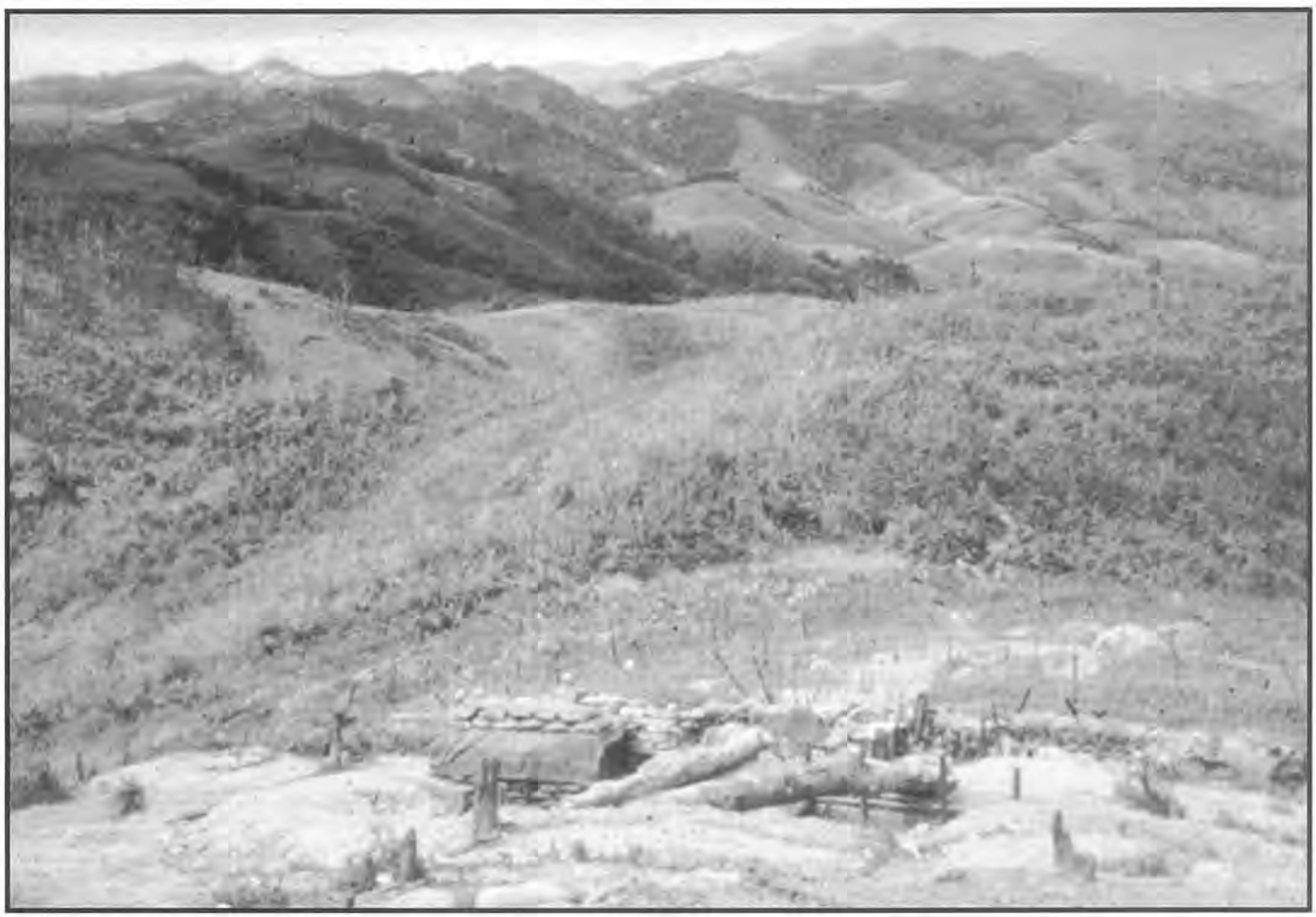

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PHOTO # 1



PHOTO # 2



PHOTO #3

I HAVE POSTED THIS BEFORE & NOW IT'S JANUARY 21, 2018 & MAYBE YOU NEED TO KNOW..NOT MY WORDS BUT I LIVE THEM.

POSTED BY SAM MESSER, USN, KHE SANH VETERAN
CBMU 301-DET B SEABEES

"DO YOU STILL THINK ABOUT VIETNAM?

This story came to me anonymously via e-mail, the author, a fellow Vietnam Veteran. After reading his story, I felt compelled to share this with you. If you didn't participate in the Vietnam War, this will give you some insight into how our minds work. He writes: A couple of years ago someone asked me if I still thought about Vietnam. I nearly laughed in their face. How do you stop thinking about it? Every day for the past forty (NOW 50) years, I wake up with it- I go to bed with it. This was my response:

"Yeah, I think about it. I can't stop thinking about it. I never will. But, I've also learned to live with it. I'm comfortable with the memories. I've learned to stop trying to forget and learned to embrace it. It just doesn't scare me anymore."

A lot of my "brothers" haven't been so lucky. For them the memories are too painful, their sense of loss too great. My sister told me of a friend she has whose husband was in the Nam. She asks this guy when he was there.

Here's what he said, "Just last night." It took my sister a while to figure out what he was talking about. Just Last Night. Yeah, I was in the Nam. When? Just last night, before I went to sleep, on my way to work this morning, and over my lunch hour. Yeah, I was there

My sister says I'm not the same brother who went to Vietnam. My wife says I won't let people get close to me, not even her. They are probably both right. Ask a vet about making friends in Nam. It was risky. Why? Because we were in the business of death, and death was with us all the time. It wasn't the death of, "If I die before I wake." This was the real thing. The kind boys scream for their mothers. The kind that lingers in your mind and becomes more real each time you cheat it. You don't want to make a lot of friends when the possibility of dying is that real, that close. When you do, friends become a liability.

A guy named Bob Flannigan was my friend. Bob Flannigan is dead. I put him in a body bag one sunny day, April 29, 1969. We'd been talking, only a few minutes before he was shot, about what we were going to do when we got back to the world. Now, this was a guy who had come in country the same time as me. A guy who was loveable and generous. He had blue eyes and sandy blond hair.

When he talked, it was with a soft drawl. I loved this guy like the brother I never had. But, I screwed up. I got too close to him. I broke one of the unwritten rules of war. DON"T GET CLOSE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING TO DIE. You hear vets use the term "buddy" when they refer to a guy they spent the war with. "Me and this buddy of mine."

Friend sounds too intimate, doesn't it? "Friend" calls up images of being close. If he's a friend, then you are going to be hurt if he dies, and war hurts enough without adding to the pain. Get close; get hurt. It's as simple as that. In war you learn to keep people at that distance my wife talks about. You become good at it, that forty years after the war, you still do it without thinking. You won't allow yourself to be vulnerable again.

My wife knows two people who can get into the soft spots inside me----my daughters. I know it bothers her that they can do this. It's not that I don't love my wife. I do. She's put up with a lot from me. She'll tell you that when she signed for better or worse, she had no idea there was going to be so much of the latter. But with my daughters it's different. My girls are mine. They'll always be my kids. Not marriage, not distance, not even death can change that. They are something on this earth that can never be taken away from me. I belong to them. Nothing can change that. I can have an ex-wife; but my girls can never have an ex-father. There's the difference. I can still see the faces, though they all seem to have the same eyes. When I think of us, I always see a line of "dirty grunts" sitting on a paddy dike. We're caught in the first gray silver between darkness and light. That first moment when we know we've survived another night, and the busi-

ness of staying alive for one more day is about to begin. There was so much hope in that brief space of time. It's what we used to pray for. "One more day, God. One more day."

And I can hear our conversations as if they'd only just been spoken I still hear the way we sounded. The hard cynical jokes, our morbid senses of humor. We were scared to death of dying, and tried our best not to show it.

I recall the smells, too. Like the way cordite hangs on the air after a fire-fight. Or the pungent odor of rice paddy mud. So different from the black dirt of Iowa. The mud of Nam smells ancient, somehow. Like it's always been there. And I'll never forget the way blood smells, sticky and drying on my hands. I spent a long night that way once. The memory isn't going anywhere.

I remember how the night jungle appears almost dreamlike as pilot of a Cessna buzzes overhead, dropping parachute flares until morning. That artificial sun would flicker and make shadows run through the jungle. It was worse than not being able to see what was out there sometimes. I remember once looking at the man next to me as a flare floated overhead. The shadows around his eyes were so deep that it looked like his eyes were gone. I reached over and touched him on the arm; without looking at me he touched my hand. "I know man. I know." That's what he said. It was a human moment. Two guys a long way from home and scared to death.

God, I loved those guys. I hurt every time one of them died. We all did. Despite our posturing. Despite our desire to stay disconnected, we couldn't help ourselves. I know why Tim O' Brien writes his stories. I know what gives Bruce Weigle the words to create poems so honest I cry at their horrible beauty. It's love. Love for those guys we shared the experience with.

We did our jobs like good soldiers, and we tried our best not to become as hard as our surroundings. You want to know what is frightening. It's a nineteen-year-old-boy who's had a sip of that power over life and death that war gives you. It's a boy who, despite all the things he's been taught, knows that he likes it. It's a nineteen-year-old who's just lost a friend, and is angry and scared and, determined that, "some*@#*s gonna pay". To this day, the thought of that boy can wake me from a sound sleep and leave me staring at the ceiling.

As I write this, I have a picture in front of me. It's of two young men. On their laps are tablets. One is smoking a cigarette. Both stare without expression at the camera. They're writing letters. Staying in touch with places they rather be. Places and people they hope to see again. The picture shares space in a frame with one of my wife.. She doesn't mind. She knows she's been included in special company. She knows I'll always love those guys who shared that part of my life, a part she never can. And she understands how I feel about the ones I know are out there yet. The ones who still answer the question, "When were you in Vietnam?"

"Hey, man. I was there just last night."

So was I. How about the rest of you vets....Hits home doesn't it! Share this article with others so they understand why many of today's veterans behave the way they do be it Vietnam or other conflicts, this is a common thread shared by all."

POETRY

DEATH DREAM

by Sam Messer

In a helicopter flying over rice paddies,
then over jungle to a spot brown and red,
tents and a lonely strip.

I run from the chopper looking for a hole.
No weapon, scared as hell.

This base is so small,
and the enemy,
they are every where I look.

I see bodies everywhere.
A rifle from one I take,
It's bad luck but I'm so scared.

Ammo, I've got none.
back to the bodies,
stealing from the dead.

I must survive,
they're gone, I must live.

Clips, clips, none to be found.
Back to the dead,
Stealing again, from the dead.

With shaking hands, I load the clips.
God I'm so scared, surrounded,
they're closing in,
I'm all alone and going to die.

Back in a helicopter,
The dream starts again.
Each time I know I'm going to die,
I'm going to Khe Sanh !!

L.S.M.II
9-6-93

FROM THE WEB

L/CPL STEVEN L. HELLWIG B CO 1/26
KIA 21 JAN 1968 KHE SANH

Please see Copied below from the Seattle Times, January 21, 2018. I served with C Co. 1/26 in 1969, one year after Steven was KIA at Khe Sanh. As an 0311, I ended up carrying the PRC 25 for the company - Steven carried it for Capt. Ken Pipes who I have been in contact with.
Honor and respect to all of you,
RAY HELLWIG

OBIT

STEVEN L. HELLWIG, USMC B CO 1/26
KHE SANH VETERAN
April 12, 1948 - January 21, 1968

In loving memory of L/Cpl Steven Louis Hellwig, USMC, our brave Marine, honorable and proud American, beloved son, cherished brother, and irreplaceable hero.

Steven was born on April 12, 1948, in Seattle, Washington, to Louis and Very Hellwig. He was the brother of Gary, Raymond, and Leonie Hellwig. Steven, a 1966 graduate of Shorecrest High School, had enlisted in the Marine Corps to serve his country. He was a radio operator with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, 3rd Marine Div. (Rein). He was killed in action at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, on January 21, 1968.Though taken from us 50 years ago today, we are all still here, Steve, loving you and missing you every day of our lives. Mom, Dad, Gary, Ray, and Lee.





I GET MAIL

A REPLY TO A RED CLAY ARTICLE BY TOM KEN SOERENSEN A BTRY 1/13

I Just finished your letter to the Congressman in the latest issue of Red Clay and thought I would write you.

In late '66 I came to Gun 2 in DaNang along with about 5 other FNG's. Didn't make much sense to put us all together on the same gun at the same time, but who can dispute Marine Corp logic. We later learned that most of the Battery had formed in the US and came over together as a unit. Rick Stewart, Randy Worthley, Leroy Swinehart and myself, Bob Sullivan. I don't remember the others except maybe Sgt Stemmel who became our section chief. You were also on the gun when you were not in the field as an FO. We were in awe of the Corporal who spent most of the time in the "bush" while the rest of us were in the relative safety within the wire.

In January of '68 my tour was up and some of us left as the siege began. However, as I'm sure you know, in June of '67, we were mortared and Gun 2 took the most causalities. Stewart and "Bill" Travis were killed and most of the rest of us were wounded. Several years ago I got in touch with Sgt. Stemmel who had moved to Florida after retiring as a Master Sgt. He was sent to Japan and later returned to different unit upon release from the hospital. I was sent to a Navy hospital in Guam for 10 weeks before coming back to A-I-13.

After Vietnam I tried to forget about the war of helplessly watching two guys die, of accidently shooting a fellow Marine, and of experiences while in the hospital. Like you I tried to drown my memories with alcohol. Drugs such as "speed" enabled me to drink even more and stay sober longer so I didn't smash as many cars as before. Finally my wife had enough and threatened to leave if I didn't stop drinking. She put up with a lot and I eventually went to a vet center in Lowell, Mass. in the late '90's. They sent me to the PTSD clinic in Boston for a dozen sessions in as many weeks. At the V AMC in Bedford I started in counseling and have been attending groups ever since. I initially received 50% for PTSD along with what I had from my shrapnel wounds. The labor union that had saved my job from being fired for so many times had made me decide to retire after which my appeal increased my disability to 70% and un employability raised it to 100%.

Almost 20 years ago I called Randy Worthley up in Maine and talked with him awhile. We were supposed to go to the reunion in DC in 1998 but he cancelled out at the last minute. I went myself and made some new friends but didn't meet anyone I knew. Most were from 26th Marines and you would have probably known some. It was a good time but I never went again. I'm sure you knew Bill Dubois who became a Sgt and took over his own gun. He lives about 5 miles from me but we never got together until several years ago. We went up to Maine for a memorial service for Randy Worthley who fell or jumped off of a bridge near Augusta. He was an officer with the VFW for many years and had his own disability claims with PTSD. Dubois was a Dracut cop. I heard about Tommy Antrim after I returned to Camp Lejeune along with Pizarro and others who were KIA.

I hope you are successful in pursuit of your claims with the VA and that the congressman will help you receive what is rightfully yours. Don't give up like many other veterans have done in the past. An old adage of the claim system of the VA is to "Delay, Deny, and hope that they Die. Don't let them win.

Good Luck
Robert Sullivan A Btry 1/13
6/7/17

I GET MAIL

FROM THE WEB
CLIFF TREESE, B BTRY 1/13

Pictures of me just before being wounded twice in one day and then in hospital in Danang Naval Hospital receiving my purple hearts from. Brig. Gen. Kern. After almost 4 weeks in Danang transferred to Clark Air Force Base hospital in the Philippines for 3 weeks and then on to Philadelphia Naval Hospital by way of Yokosuka, Japan, then Anchorage, Alaska, then to Andrews Air Force base in Virginia and then to Ft. Six Army Hospital (by mistake) and finally to Philadelphia Naval Hospital for 9 months. From there to Wilkes Barre VA hospital for 1 year then finally transferred to Philadelphia VA hospital for about a year and a half. Needless to say, I hate hospitals.



CLIIF AT KHE SANH





ANOTHER CEREMONY REMEMBERING THE SIEGE

50 YEARS LATER: HONORING VETS WHO FOUGHT IN ONE OF VIETNAM'S BIGGEST BATTLES

Fifty years ago was one of the Vietnam War's biggest battles commenced. In Massena Sunday, they honored those who stood firm at Khe Sanh.

Six wreaths were brought to Veterans Memorial Park to honor those who served. The Battle of Khe Sanh began on Jan. 21, 1968, and went on for 77 days. It was the longest siege ever withstood by the U.S. military.

Massena area veterans posts laid wreaths and rendered salutes. James Baker was there as a U.S. Marine. Despite the passage of time, there's a special bond when Khe Sanh vets meet.

"Oh you can't shut up. You finally got someone that was there and knows what you went through. And you can tell them things that you never told anybody before," Baker said.

Sunday's ceremonies at Amvets Post 4 featured readings of presidential and village proclamations. Similar events took place across the U.S. and in August a reunion of Khe Sanh vets is planned for Washington D.C.



A POEM BY SAM MESSER

NO TITLE 1/3/93

I fell asleep for a minute or two.
When out of the night came sounds,
Bombs dropping close somewhere

Wide awake,
still the sounds were there.
I feel a rush,
AGAIN! I am back there.

The sounds I hear are a band, next door.
But the rush of blood pumping,
and my heart thumping.
Take me back to "TET 68"
again I am there.

Oh I'm so high,
sleep is denied.
My senses are again alive!

Memories flood my mind.

Oh thank god I'm alive!

Holes in the bulldozer,
the truck caught a mortar,
The fork lift is no more, Dear,
The seat I sat in,
is shredded like paper.
Shrapnel in my Jacket,
no I'm not hurt Dear.

The chow hall now vacant.
A couple of rockets it has taken.
For K.P. I was five minutes late,
was it fate?

Back to my bunker,
five hours later!
Cry, crawl and pray,
I hugged that RED CLAY!
Rounds dropping around me,
from the dump that day.
Could I survive? - NO Way!

Safe in my bunker,
I let out feverous laughter.
I light up a cigarette,
my arm is on fire!

Phosphorus!
burning a hole in my arm.
With a k-bar,
he digs out the burning ember.

The roof by c-med we redo,
it was such a mess.
Damm I didn't know Vietnam had bees.
Little holes at our feet,
Damm guys, it's a sniper.

A hole in the strip,
as large as a dozer.
Please! send me somewhere safer.

Helicopters coming in,
take cover, in coming.

MORE POETRY SUBMITTED BY SAM MESSER

THIS POEM WAS WRITTEN BY ANOTHER COMBAT VETERAN NOT ME.

I was that which others
did not want to be.
I went where others feared to go,
and did what others failed to do.

I asked for nothing
from those who gave nothing,
and reluctantly accepted the
thought of eternal loneliness...
should fail.

I have seen the face of terror;
felt the stinging cold of fear;
and enjoyed the sweet taste
of a moments love.

I have cried, pained,
and hoped...but most of all,

I have Lived times
others would say
were best forgotten.

At least someday I
will be able to say that I was
PROUD
of what I was...
a Soldier
Sarge



THIS BRAVE EX-CHAPLAIN IS STILL HAUNTED BY THE VIETNAM WAR'S MOST DESPERATE SIEGE WASHINGTON POST

By MICHAEL RUANE

WAUWATOSA, Wis. — Retired Navy chaplain Ray W. Stubbe leaned over his diary and ran his finger to the entry for Feb. 23, 1968, the 34th day of



Retired Navy chaplain Ray Stubbe leads a prayer service during the siege of Khe Sanh in Vietnam 50 years ago. (John Reid/U.S. Marine Corps)

the Vietnam War's siege of Khe Sanh and the day the bunker was hit.

The small, sandbag fortress was on the perimeter. He had spent the night there three weeks before, as a half-dozen nervous young Marines sat under a single lightbulb, making coffee in a ration tin and playing a recording of "I Heard It Through the Grapevine" over and over.

Now the bunker had been smashed with some of those Marines inside, and Stubbe, then 29, a bespectacled Lutheran minister, rushed from a nearby medical shelter to help.

What he found would haunt him for years. The Marines inside were in pieces. One was headless. Stubbe carried what was left of another to a military ambulance. "A hand, an arm, a stringy piece of flesh intertwined with cloth and caked with mud," he recorded.

"I knew them all," he wrote. They were barely out of their teens. One had been an altar boy. Another had a death wish since he had accidentally killed several buddies in a friendly fire incident during an earlier tour of Vietnam.

"I took this very hard," Stubbe wrote.

Sunday marked the 50th anniversary of the start of the war's most famous siege, a 77-day struggle for a rain-swept plateau in central Vietnam that riveted the U.S. in 1968, and opened a year of often-bloody social upheaval that resonates today.

[A young photographer took this harrowing image of the Vietnam War. He didn't live to see it published.]

The siege was front-page news for almost three months. President Lyndon B. Johnson pored over a scale model of Khe Sanh in the White House. He vowed that the base would never become another



U.S. Marines take cover during a North Vietnamese mortar attack. (UPI Telephoto by Dana Stone)

Dien Bien Phu, where a besieged French garrison surrendered to the North Vietnamese communists in 1954.

In 1968, Khe Sanh heralded the start of the enemy's sweeping Tet offensive, in which Vietnamese forces launched a barrage of deadly attacks across South Vietnam, stunning American officials. Tet wound up souring much of the American public on the war and set the stage for the gradual withdrawal of the U.S. troops.

It also opened the bloodiest year of the war, and for many of the 6,000 Marines and others besieged there by 40,000 North Vietnamese, it left physical injuries and disturbing images that would last a lifetime.

Hundreds of Marines were killed and thousands were wounded at Khe Sanh, as the enemy rained as many as 1,300 shells, rockets and mortars on the base a day. The Americans burrowed into the reddish earth, and shared a muddy, subterranean world with the well-fed local rats.

[Traitors or patriots? Eight Vietnam POWs were charged with collaborating with the enemy.]

The prospect of death was ever present, and oblivion could come to anyone in a flash. (A Catholic chaplain, Father Robert R. Brett, was killed in a rocket attack the day before the bunker was hit.)
Stubbe developed a fast, 10-minute service focused on the Bible story of Jesus calming the stormy sea. He once conducted 13 services around the sprawling base in one day.

In his diary entry, probably penned that night, he listed the dead and their faiths.

"PFC CHISHOLM, James," 20, Baptist, of Savannah, Ga.
"LCPL MCKEEVER, Michael Edward," 20, Roman Catholic, of Duluth, Minn.
"CPL THORPE, Gary Wilford," 20, Mormon, of Bear River City, Utah.

He noted that amid the carnage the big recoilless rifle outside the bunker was unscathed, and the missing head was never found.

A 'foreshortened future'

Ray Stubbe sat down at the kitchen table in his brick home in this Milwaukee suburb one gray day earlier this month and began his story.

He wore blue jeans, a denim shirt and black sneakers. A vase of white flowers sat in the middle of the table. A Tiffany-style lamp hung from the ceiling.
He is 79 and lives alone. He never married, has no close family, doesn't use the Internet and doesn't like to travel out of the area — a legacy, he believes, of Khe Sanh. He said psychologists call this a "sense of foreshortened future."



Stubbe reflects on his days during the siege of Khe Sanh, and how it affected his life. (Gary Porter for The Washington Post)

"Part of it was the siege," he said. He and others developed the mentality that every day might be their last. "We could never count on another day."
He was affected by other things at Khe Sanh, and suffered so much from PTSD after the war that he had to be hospitalized twice.

He had nightmares and crying jags, and relived scenes like that in the bunker over and over, as if on a record with a skip in it, he said.

He was troubled by an incident where he was caught in the bottom of a shallow trench during a ferocious barrage. The ground shook, and when he tried to pray, all he could do was babble.

[Fifty years after Vietnam, veterans gather for what could be a final reunion]

And he was distraught when, on Feb. 25, a patrol of 45 Marines was ambushed outside the base and only half of them returned. Again, Stubbe knew many of those who were lost.

He said he often had a dream where he was in a bunker under attack and was the only one left.

For a time, Khe Sanh colored everything in his life, like dye in a clear liquid, he said. "It was all that there was."

Now it's "become increasingly set in its place," he said. "It doesn't overshadow. It doesn't preempt. It doesn't monopolize."

He gradually realized that his recovery from the trauma of Khe Sanh would be helped if he chronicled the details of the siege. As an historian of the



Stubbe looks over a list of names of some of the people he served with in Khe Sanh. (Gary Porter for The Washington Post

battle, he could step outside his experiences, he said.

He was already a beloved Khe Sanh figure: "A couple of the Marines swore they once saw him walk across a puddle of water and not get his feet wet," veteran Steven A. Johnson wrote in a memoir.

"He was the real deal," said retired Marine officer Kenneth W. Pipes, who was a company commander at Khe Sanh. "He did an awful lot of good for an awful lot of people. . . . Pretty much fearless. . . . [Stubbe] turned up at the key places at the right time for the right reasons."

In an oral history for the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, Stubbe recalled that he once recited Psalm 91 while holding the hand of a wounded Marine — ***Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day.*** Another time, he wrote, he fed cookies to a Marine with burned hands, as if the snacks were Communion wafers.

After he got home, he immediately transcribed his diary. "I just had to get this out of me," he said. He retired from the Navy in 1985 and established a ministry in a Milwaukee church visiting shut-ins.

All the while he researched Khe Sanh, exchanged letters with veterans and their families, and gathered memorabilia and artifacts.

He wrote books, essays, and sermons, and his work



Stubbe reads from a transcript of diary from his days in Khe Sanh. (Gary Porter for The Washington Post)

is often cited by historians. He founded the group, Khe Sanh Veterans Inc., in 1983.

When Stubbe donated much of his material to the Wisconsin veterans museum in 2005, he said it took two trucks to carry it all away. And still, an upstairs room is filled with mementos, photographs, maps, plaques, news clippings and boxes.

One famous photograph, which appeared in Life magazine, shows Stubbe conducting a service at Khe Sanh. He stands with head bowed, hands clasping a piece of paper, as a group of Marines sit around him in prayer. Rugged mountains and mist where the enemy lurked appear in the background.

Stubbe said he realized later that nobody was wearing a helmet, a potentially catastrophic mistake at Khe Sanh.

An unlikely warrior

Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty and maketh it waste. And turneth it upside down and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof . . .

The opening bombardment of the base began before dawn on a Sunday morning, Stubbe recalled in an autobiographical essay several years ago.

he darkness was illuminated by explosions. A supply depot nearby caught fire. And the air was filled with the odor of burning sandbags, and gasoline that had ignited in a petroleum dump.

As the barrage died down, he emerged to survey the damage, and thought of the prophet, Isaiah: ***the earth is crumbled in pieces . . . (and) reels . . . like a drunken man.***

Stubbe was perhaps the most unlikely participant at Khe Sanh. A Navy lieutenant, he had a degree in philosophy from St. Olaf College and had started a PhD program in ethics and society at the University of Chicago. He had translated scripture into Greek, and carried a Greek New Testament in his uniform pocket.

He said he only carried a rifle once. He was going out with a patrol and the Marines told him that if he didn't carry a rifle the enemy would think he was an officer and gun for him.



Stubbe at Khe Sanh. (Courtesy of Ray Stubbe)

Stubbe had grown up in Milwaukee, the only child of a draftsman and homemaker. He joined the Navy Reserve in high school. In college he decided to attend the seminary. While there, he said in his essay, he joined the Navy's Reserve Chaplain Company, became an ensign and attended the Navy Chaplains School.

He was ordained in 1965, started a church in a Milwaukee suburb, and began his PhD program in 1966.

But by 1967, the war had heated up, and, feeling a call, he volunteered for active duty. "I was deeply interested . . . in the interface of religion and war," he said in his oral history. "Can a Christian be a soldier — or a Marine?"

He reached Khe Sanh on July 17, 1967, and left Feb. 29, 1968, although he went back once a week or so through April.

Khe Sanh was relieved by American ground forces that April, and the base was destroyed and abandoned in July, according to historians.

Throughout his ordeal there, Stubbe said, he never had a crisis of faith.

"I always knew that God was with us," he said, as he sat in his kitchen. "I saw many of the good parts of people. . . . Especially there. It was very apparent to me how good people were to each other."

Marines shared food, water, letters from home, and gave their lives for each other.

"These are mainly 19-year-olds … happy, friendly, frolicking kind of people playing practical jokes," he said. "But also just had that genuine sense of caring for each other."

Those seeking to destroy them were largely distant and unseen, he said.

"I've really been enriched," he said. "I think we're enriched by the difficulties we pass through, as long as they don't crumble us."

Even a half-century later, Khe Sanh still is instructive.

"For those of us that were there, it isn't 50 years ago," he said. "It was, like, last night."

FROM THE WEB
MICHAEL ARCHER

It was 50 years ago today, January 22, 1968, that I made it out of the district headquarters compound in Khe Sanh village, unscathed after two days of fighting against a numerically superior force of North Vietnamese Army attackers. It took our overloaded helicopter, an old CH-34, two tries to make it out of the landing zone.

My relief was short-lived though; because after about a five-minute chopper ride I beheld Khe Sanh Combat Base under thick pall of smoke. It appeared to me that the east end of the base was completely destroyed, the victim, I would later learn, of a horrendous ammunition dump explosion caused by North Vietnamese rockets. When I had left 12 days before, the base was intact and most of my buddies were living above ground. Now, I would join them underground and, for the next 76 days, weathering near constant incoming artillery and their repeated attempts to capture the combat base.

Lieutenant Stamper and I crawled up on that corrugated metal roof later that night with a radio to direct Spooky, who was hosing down an area to the south. With NVA snipers all around the compound, every little creak and pop of that metal, as we slithered up and down it, was a real heart stopper. Good times.

I've attached are two photographs: one is of the little communications bunker in the district headquarters compound where I radio-operated during the fighting. The other is of Khe Sanh village along "Highway" 9 and a stream that meandered through

Some of you were wondering what you're looking at in that photo of the old comm bunker in Khe Sanh village (my previous post). Not exactly state-of-the-art technology! The sides were covered with discarded World War II Marston runway matting brought down from the Khe Sanh airfield. That trench to the left leads into the bunker. The opening you see is a rifle port. As I mentioned in A Patch of Ground, once I called in those artillery airbursts in the initial moments of the attack, I was busy jamming everything I could find into that hole to keep the shrapnel out.





I GET PICTURES

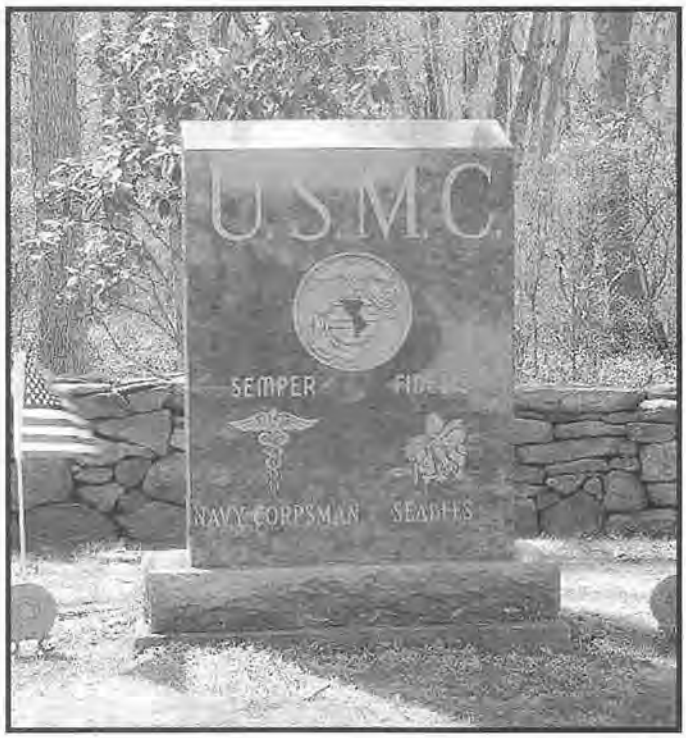

VIETNAM VETS HONORED AT LONG WHARF YALE DAILY NEWS DENNIS MANNION K CO 3/26 F/O

Veterans trekked in full military uniform along the Long Wharf Drive on Sunday in remembrance of those who died in the Vietnam War.

Roughly 40 veterans and community members commemorated the sacrifice of United States veterans on Sunday morning — the 50th anniversary of the start Battle of Khe Sanh, a months long battle that culminated in the start of the Tet Offensive during the Vietnam War. The event was organized by the New Haven Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 12150.
"It is important to support the events [of the Veterans of Foreign Wars] so people have awareness that we still have troops that are still out there fighting," said Stanley Borusiewicz Jr., a member of the New Haven Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 12150. "We have a lot of people who have served and they need to be recognized because we wouldn't have the freedoms we have today if it wasn't for those people."

After a six-mile hike on the New Haven Harbor, the march culminated in a brief ceremony at the V statue, which is engraved with the names of community members who died in the Vietnam War, at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park on Long Wharf Drive. Dennis Mannion, a veteran of the Khe Sanh battle and former sergeant of the Marine Corps, gave brief remarks about his experience in Vietnam and on the importance of holding events to honor veterans.

Mannion said that he was fortunate to have survived the Khe Sanh battle after being wounded twice on duty. Still, he recounted the difficulties he faced after returning from the war — including during his flight home on a civilian airplane from Vietnam in which a passenger requested to move to a seat away from Mannion after the passenger learned he was a Vietnam veteran.

Mannion touched on the isolation of veterans during and after the war, noting the lack of discussion about the topic from veterans during that period. At the event, he pointed out a name on the V statue of his former late classmate from Notre Dame High School in West Haven. He said he did not find out about his friend's death until several years after the war.

He said he is glad that popular perceptions toward veterans have changed, and that it is important to host events honoring men and women who serve.

"To see younger people out here, the uniforms you're wearing, I understand it and it's gratifying to see that," Mannion said, addressing the veterans at the service. "You serve our country, you do a great thing that most people don't do."

In 2000, Mannion said he visited Vietnam to give a proper goodbye to 28 of his friends who died during the war.

The New Haven Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 12150, an organization of mostly younger veterans, puts on several events each year. James Namnoun, the chaplain of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said the organization was started by post-9/11 veterans at Southern Connecticut State University. Namnoun said the organization makes an effort to be active in the community, noting that the Veterans of Foreign Wars participates in the annual New Haven St. Patrick's Day Parade.

"Veterans tend to isolate themselves when they get out of active service," Namnoun said. "You want to always have engaging things … it's about being active and letting [veterans] know they're not alone."
Many of the city's Veterans of Foreign Wars members are also part of the Marine Corps Detachment 40 of Glastonbury.
Isabel Bysiewicz | isabel.bysiewicz@yale.edu



I GET MAIL

Having served nineteen months as an artillery FO and slated for return to CONUS on December 17, 1967 from Khe Sanh, I approached my battery CO, Captain Pardee of A-I -13, with the request for one more field mission.

This mission entailed collecting funds from Marines at Khe Sanh, getting on a rare flight returning to Da Nang air base, where I would reacquaint myself with Air Force MSgt Kearsage, senior NCO, in charge of scheduling in-country flights for resupply missions throughout Vietnam. Planes for these flights consisted of C-130 (Hercules), C-123 Provider), and C-7 (Caribou) flown by Air America. MSgt Kearsage had helped me secure a flight back in March to Saigon in order to make my connecting flight to Australia. Upon my return to Nam, he got me space on a flight to Khe Sanh and we had become good friends during those previous meetings. He also had given me some specialty items which I shared with the officers of B-I-26 on Hill 881 South.

I landed at Da Nang the evening of November 7, 1967 and made my way to the Air Force Staff/Officers quarters and there located MSgt Kearsage. After greeting him and getting some chow, I told him of my plan to bring back some adult beverages to the Marines at Khe Sanh for the upcoming Marine Corps Birthday.

MSgt Kearsage made some calls that evening and then met with other Air Force personnel the following day, and helped me secure the purchase of a pallet (88 cases) of Carling Black Label beer. Some other officers and staff, at the procurement location, showed their respect and gratitude to the Khe Sanh Marines by presenting me with a case of Jim Beam Black Label, for the officers and staff NCOs at Khe Sanh, for the Marine Corps birthday celebration.

As this time of year was not ideal time for flying, the monsoon rains were in full force and flights heading north were few and far between. I was full of wonder and deep gratitude towards all the members of the Air Force who made it possible for me to sit with these supplies on the flight line while awaiting a flight back to Khe Sanh.

The eighth and ninth of November were spent mostly pulling guard duty on my precious cargo. After chow the rains let up somewhat and I set up a cot in the transit building. with my supplies, hoping for a flight to materialize soon and tried for some shut-eye.

I awoke later that evening with someone calling out my name in an anxious voice. It was MSgt Kearsage leaning over my face, telling me I needed to get up and to grab my side arms and cartridge belt, that he needed my help.

He informed me that Dong Ha had received heavy NVA artillery and rocket fire that evening and suffered quite a few casualties.. There were eighteen Marines awaiting transportation to Danang's 3rd Marine Division Graves Registration.

A Marine C-130 was sitting on the flight line awaiting a Marine escort to accompany the returning Marines and carry their SRBs (Service Record Book) back to Da Nang.

I boarded the plane introducing myself to the crew and we were airborne in just a few minutes. As we approached Dong Ha's airstrip, I could make out existing fires on the base and exploded debris littering the airstrip. We touched down quickly, taxied to an area where ground personnel signaled us to approach. The plane's ramp dropped, the Crew Chief and I deplaned and approached an area where we observed body bags next to some building from which more body bags were being carried.

An officer gave me eighteen SRBs from which we verified each Marine's name and service number with the I.D. tag on the body bags. I also assisted with the loading of our dead Marine brothers and shortly the plane's ramp was raised by the Crew Chief. We sat down amongst these silent Marines, as the roar of the four turbo-props increased in intensity and the plane rushed down the runway

with its precious cargo. Sitting there amid those body bags, holding those SRBs, silently communicating with each and every one of those Marines, and acknowledging the deep sense of loss which I felt. The red shadows of the planes combat lights allowed my tears to flow unabated and sobs to be unheard beneath the sound of the turbo-props. I vaguely remember rising up and approaching the pilots cabin and thanking both of the pilots for having performed this dangerous special flight.

Back in Danang, I bade farewell to the flight crew, monitored the unloading of those eighteen Marines, once again cross checking names from body bags and SRB's, then turned those SRBs over to 3rd Marine Division Graves Registration officials.

It was around 2300 hrs. as I made my way back to the transit building totally exhausted and in a somewhat state of shock of this great loss. I was experiencing the visions of a few months back, of my former Scout Sgt. Phillip Van Duesen and Radio Operator Gale Gotti, both of whom I had lost in a NVA ambush while on patrol southwest of Hill 881S, Khe Sanh.

I slept on the airstrip next to my supplies, at the transit building, not really in tune with all of which was going down then. I awoke before dawn feeling and hearing the rains coming down. Now I worried about not making it back to Khe Sanh with my supplies before the Marine Corps Birthday observation, and all those Marines covered in red mud from the clay which made up the Khe Sanh Valley.

It was around 0930 hrs., while I was enjoying a pecan nut roll, along with some A.F. coffee, when MSgt Kearsage approached me and stated we might have space on a Air America Caribou flight bound for Khe Sanh.1t was carrying some Special Forces personnel, some Bru tribe members, some supplies and a couple of caged pigs which were slated for Lang Vei, Quang Tri Province, the Special Forces camp just outside of Khe Sanh.

Half an hour later I was indeed boarding the strange, fragile looking plane, with its unusual cargo and passengers.

Coming into Khe Sanh airspace we encountered low clouds and poor visibility. Seat belts tight, the caged pigs shrieking and crapping, we made a sudden descent through the clouds ending up with a waterfall on the northwestern side of the plane's fuselage appearing outside my cabin window. It seemed like a straight drop down to the airstrip matting, before the pilot could stop the aft section of the plane gyrating in that turbulence. I sure had my doubts about survival, landing, and my continued existence or me getting back to the "world." The tiger claw hanging from my neck was being squeezed frantically by my fingers when we were rolled to reality by the back thrust of the planes twin engines.

All's well, which ends well!! Mission accomplished. First Sergeant Noll, Captain Pardee, and the representatives of the 26th Marine Regiment were given possession of these birthday supplies, minus one bottle of Jim Beam which I brought up to Hill 881S and presented to 1 st Lt Guy Pete, Commander, First Platoon, B-I-26. A great Marine.

Happy Birthday Marines
Sgt Thomas "Ken" Soerensen USMC '64-'68

THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH AND ITS RETELLINGS

What one Vietnam War battle, celebrated by the press and the military as a turning point towards an inevitable American victory, says about certainty and authoritativeness.
Conor Frieder THE ATLANTIC

The Battle of Khe Sanh began 50 years ago this week when roughly 20,000 North Vietnamese troops surrounded an isolated combat base held by roughly 5,500 Marines. The marines could not be reinforced or resupplied except by air, and the enemy had attacked during monsoon season, when the weather would limit flights. General William Westmoreland, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, ordered them to fight to hold the base rather than evacuate.

The North Vietnamese hoped to repeat the sort of victory won years earlier at Dien Bien Phu, when similarly besieged French forces were overrun and slaughtered.

President Johnson followed the 77-day ordeal with a scale model of the battlefield in the Oval Office. The public read about the besieged marines in newspapers as the fighting unfolded: the American servicemen bombarded by artillery and reliant on resupply from aircrafts that came under heavy fire on approach and departure.

The United States ultimately held the base at a cost of 2,500 Americans killed. 2,500 Americans were wounded. And thousands of Vietnamese fighters were killed.

Today, we know that the Americans ordered to risk their lives at Khe Sanh did so under a commander-in-chief who already believed that victory in Vietnam was unlikely. We know that the brave men who fought impressively to save the base would be ordered to abandon it utterly almost as soon as the enemy's forces had withdrawn. And we know that the United States later withdrew from Vietnam in defeat, abandoned its allies, and watched the country fall to communism (then suffer the repression, want, and starvation so often caused by that economic system).

What followed Khe Sanh doesn't diminish the courage or sacrifice displayed by U.S. forces there, but does remind us of our obligation as citizens to urge against dumb wars and to spare young Americans from being asked to die for a politician's mistake.

With that in mind, one artifact of Khe Sanh that I gravitated towards while marking this anniversary was an official U.S. military account of the battle printed and declassified in 1969. At the time, the war raged under Richard Nixon, a corrupt commander-in-chief who sabotaged peace talks while running for president and spoke privately as if getting reelected was a major factor in prolonging the war. The report was authored by Captain Moyers S. Shore II, with a prologue by Commandant of the Marine Corps L.F. Chapman Jr. and a Foreword by Westmoreland.

Put another way, it was produced by men and institutions who wanted to keep prosecuting the war in Vietnam, and who hoped anti-war protesters would not prevail.

"As a history, this work is not intended to prove any point, but rather to record objectively the series of events which came to be called the Battle of Khe Sanh," the report's preface stated, suggesting the ethos of a straightforward accounting of facts.

But that same preface declared that the battle "not only denied the North Vietnamese Army a much needed victory but reaffirmed to the world the intention of the United States to hold the line in Southeast Asia," adding, "in addition to having been a contest of men and machines, this was the test of a nation's will." Finally, it stated, the battle showed Hanoi "the futility of its war of aggression."

In fact, America lacked the will to stay in Vietnam, though it did have the will to hold Khe Sanh. And Hanoi did *not* conclude from the battle that its war making was futile.

The body of the report makes a better attempt at straightforwardness, but is nevertheless interesting in the ways that it departs from that ethos and leads readers astray.

It is too much to expect the Department of Defense to describe war in the manner of Paul Fussell. But anyone who has delved into accounts of what it is like to be under artillery shelling, or spoken to veterans recalling the experience years later, can grasp the disservice done to returning vets by romanticized passages like this one:

"Attention to Colors."
The order having been given, Captain Wiliam H. Dabney, a product of the Virginia Military Institute, snapped to attention, faced the jerry-rigged flagpole, and saluted, as did every other man in Company I, 3d Battalion, 26th Marines. The ceremony might well have been at any one of a hundred military installations around the world except for a few glaring irregularities.

The parade ground was a battle-scarred hilltop to the west of Khe Sanh and the men in formation stood half-submerged in trenches or foxholes. Instead of crisply starched utilities, razor sharp creases, and gleaming brass, these Marines sported scraggly beards, ragged trousers, and rotted helmet liner straps. The only man in the company who could play a bugle, Second Lieutenant Owen S. Mathews,

lifted the pock-marked instrument to his lips and spat out a choppy version of "To the Colors" while two enlisted men raced to the RC-292 radio antenna which served as the flag-pole and gingerly attached the Stars and Stripes. As the mast with its shredded banner came upright,the Marines could hear the ominous "thunk," "thunk," "thunk," to the southwest of their position which meant that North Vietnamese 120 mortar rounds had left their tubes. They also knew that in 21 seconds those "thunks" would be replaced by much louder, closer sounds, but no one budged until Old Glory waved high over the hill.

When Lieutenant Matthews sharply cut of the last note of his piece, Company I disappeared; men dropped into trenches, dived headlong into foxholes, or scrambled into bunkers. The area which moments before had been bristling with humanity was suddenly a ghost town. Seconds later explosions walked across the hilltop spewing black smoke, dirt, and debris into the air. Rocks, splinters, and spent shell fragments rained on the flattened Marines but, as usual, no one was hurt. As quickly as the attack came, it was over. While the smoke lazily drifted away, a much smaller banner rose from the Marines' positions. A pole adorned with a pair of red, silk panties—Maggie's Drawers—was waved back and forth above one trench line to inform the enemy that he had missed again. A few men stood up and jeered or cursed at the distant gunners; others simply saluted with an appropriate obscene gesture. The daily flag-raising ceremony on Hill 881 South was over.

The episode was just one obscure incident which coupled with hundreds of others made up the battle for Khe Sanh .

Little wonder too few Americans grasped the trauma of returning Vets when the Defense Department was at times portraying battles like Khe Sanh as hundreds of semi-jocular moments. Some survivors who served there are still haunted by the shelling.

The rest of the report includes much that is of value to historians trying to understand the battle, but also passages that frustrate in hindsight. Here is one of the latter:

The six men were dressed like Marines and, while no friendly patrols were reported in the area, he challenged the strangers in clear English to be sure. There was no reply. A second challenge was issued and, this time, the lieutenant saw one of the men make a motion as if going for a hand grenade. The Marines opened fire and quickly cut down five of the six intruders. One enemy soldier died with his finger inserted in the pin of a grenade. The awesome hitting power of the M-l6 rifle was quite evident since all five men were apparently dead by the time they hit the ground.

In fact, the glaring flaws of the M-16 rifle were scandalous, deadly to Americans, and already long since known to military brass in 1969. Still other passages proved prescient, as when the authors posited that the enemy gained through the Tet Offensive a tremendous psychological change in the mindset of the American public.

The final words in the report quote an editorial published in the *Washington Star* after the 77-day battle was over:

To be sure, Khe Sanh will be a subject of controversy for a long time, but this much about it is indisputable: It has won a large place in the history of the Vietnam war as an inspiring example of American and Allied valor. One day, in fact, the victory over the siege may be judged a decisive turning point that finally convinced he enemy he could not win.

Of course, the victory over the siege will *never* be so judged.

To highlight all the ways that editorialists and military officials of 1969 were wrong about Khe Sanh, or misleading in how they portrayed it, is not to denigrate them. Some believed every word they wrote; others misled with the best of intentions.

Yet returning to their flawed reports (and analogous historical artifacts) is useful in that it allows us to study the words of men who spoke and wrote with an air of authoritativeness—who struck many contemporaries as authoritative—yet were wrong in consequential ways. Poring over the flaws in their logic and the rhetorical techniques that led bygone

observers astray helps remind us to probe the biases of those who mean to inform or persuade; to be on guard against romanticized accounts of war; to bear in mind that its fog can blind even those military officials best positioned to see what is before their eyes; and to otherwise be more clear-eyed.

Indeed, that project honors the men who fought there by making it less likely that others won't be asked to do so needlessly. To give them the rest of their due 50 years later, I'll end by quoting the Presidential citation that honored them as a collective:

For extraordinary heroism in action against North Vietnamese Army forces during the battle for Khe Sanh in the Republic of Vietnam from 20 January to 1 April 1968...

The 26th Marines was opposed by numerically superior forces--two North Vietnamese Army divisions, strongly reinforced with artillery, tank, anti-aircraft artillery and rocket units. The enemy, deployed to take advantage of short lines of communications, rugged mountainous terrain, jungle, and adverse weather conditions, was determined to destroy the Khe Sanh Combat Base in conjunction with large scale offensive operations in the two northern provinces of the Republic of Vietnam.

The 26th Marines, occupying a small but critical area, was daily subjected to hundreds of rounds of intensive artillery, mortar and rocket fire. In addition, fierce ground attacks were conducted by the enemy in an effort to penetrate the friendly positions. Despite overwhelming odds, the 26th Marines remained resolute and determined, maintaining the integrity of its positions and inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. When monsoon weather greatly reduced air support and compounded the problems of aerial resupply, the men of the 26th Marines stood defiantly firm, sustained by their own professional esprit and high sense of duty. Through their indomitable will, staunch endurance, and resolute courage, the 26th Marines and supporting units held the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The actions of the 26th Marines contributed substantially to the failure of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army winter/spring offensive. The enemy forces were denied the military and psychological victory they so desperately sought.

By their gallant fighting spirit and their countless individual acts of heroism, the men of the 26th Marines (Reinforced) established a record of illustrious courage and determination in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH BEGINS

BETH CRUMLEY MCA&F

This Friday I took a few minutes out of my day to wish my friend Glenn Prentice a very happy birthday. Now I will be the very first to admit that I am TERRIBLE at remembering birthdays, but his always sticks in my mind....**On 20 January 1968, he was serving with the India Company, 3d Battalion, 26th Marines on Hill 881S.**

He celebrated his 19th birthday while on a reconnaissance-in-force up Hill 881N. Said Prentice, "44 years ago we went up Hill 881N engaged the NVA---what a day! The start of Tet---I turned 19--thought I would never see my 20th Birthday---it was that bad..."



Sgt Glenn Prentice, at Khe Sanh Combat Base. (Photo courtesy of Glenn Prentice)

I have spoken several times on the siege of Khe Sanh Combat Base and the hill outposts. One of the questions I am most frequently asked is, "How did it all begin?"

The village of Khe Sanh was composed of nine separate hamlets that sat astride Route 9 in the northwest corner of South Vietnam. This was the nexus

of movement from Laos into northern Quang Tri Province. Marines had initially carried out two battalion-sized operations near Khe Sanh in 1966.

By February 1967, elements of the 9th Marines moved into the area around Khe Sanh, to protect a detachment of Seabees whose mission was to extend and improve the airfield. Increased contact led to reinforcement of Khe Sanh with a second company. By April, the Marines had encounter strong North Vietnamese Army forces in fortified positions. Two battalions of the 3d Marines were committed to the area. In some of the bloodiest fighting of the war, which came to be known as "the Hill Fights," the Marines gained control of the commanding terrain overlooking the combat base.

By October, the North Vietnamese *325C Division* had once again moved into the area. Operation Scotland, the mission of defending Khe Sanh Combat Base, and using it as a base for offensive operations against NVA forces, became the responsibility of the 26th Marines. Said Col David E. Lownds, commanding the 26th Marines, "All indications are that we are going to get hit. How bad, I can't say."

In early December 1967, the 3d Battalion, 26th Marines moved to Khe Sanh and were briefed that the NVA was building up forces in the area. Ordered to sweep the area south and west of the base, the battalion moved from Lang Vei north and west to within 2 kilometers of the Laotian border. The Marines then swept northward, finally arriving back at Khe Sanh shortly before Christmas 1967. They made no contact with the NVA nor did they find any evidence of recent enemy presence in that area.
At this time, India Company, 3/26 was under the command of Captain Bill Dabney, a Canadian-born mustang who happened to be the son-in-law of Chesty Puller. Given the mission of occupying and defending 881S, Dabney's Marines made an overland march from Khe Sanh to the hill. From 27 December through 17 January, India Company patrolled the area aggressively, sometimes to the limit of the range of the attached 81mm mortars (about 4000 meters

n addition to these company-sized patrols in the area, recon teams were also patrolling. On 18 January, the Commanding officer of 3/26 informed India that recon team Dockleaf had been ambushed and had



PHOTO COURTESY DAVE POWELL

too many casualties to break contact and move to an LZ. India was ordered to send a force up 881N to locate Dockleaf and guide in the helos. India's 3d platoon, led by 2dLt Thomas Brindley, was patrolling in the area so the mission was his. It was already mid-afternoon and Dockleaf had to be located before nightfall. Brindley and his men left flaks jackets and packs behind and made a forced march, almost a run, in an effort to find team the embattled recon team. The platoon was successful. Dockleaf was evacuated and Brindley's platoon returned to 881S.

That night, however, India was informed that the recon team, while under very heavy enemy fire and subsequent evacuation, had lost a radio and some



India Company's position on Hill 881S, during the siege. To the right of center is Hill 881N, where NVA rocket, mortar and anti-aircraft sites were

encoding sheets during the ambush. India was ordered to send another force north to recover them.

At first light on the morning of 19 January, 1st Platoon, commanded by 2dLt Harry Fromme, left 881S, headed northward. About halfway to the crest of 881N, Fromme's platoon made contact with a large NVA force moving south. Two Marines were wounded and another, machine gunner PFC Leonard Newton, was killed in the ensuing firefight. 2dLt Chuck Schneider later wrote to his parents and described the events. In this letter, although written almost a month later, the details of the action are riveting.

"We made point-to-point contact with an NVA patrol. Our patrol was moving in column (the thick vegetation made it the best for travel), the elephant grass was head high and therefore, since they were on the higher ground, they were able to see us before we saw them There was a sudden burst of automatic fire and two of our men fell wounded. We returned fire as best we could, but the rear of the column could not fire because of our own men in front. For the minute the enemy had fire superiority and while they had us pinned down, they began to move people off to our left flank. One of our machine gunners ran to the front to try and cover a withdrawal. The grass was so tall you couldn't see to fire unless you stood up, so he got to his feet and began to fire his M60 from the shoulder. The enemy fire slackened and we began to pull back, dragging the wounded. Again the fire picked up and again he stood and fired from the shoulder. The fifth time he did this, a sniper shot him through the right eye. It was just about then that we started receiving heavy fire from our left flank. We were in a bad spot because they could see us from above, but the heavy grass prevented us from seeing them. The crossfire grew intense, but miraculously no one else was injured. Then my rounds arrived, 105mm artillery from Khe Sanh. I began to pound the enemy to our north. Grabbing another radio, I called an 81mm mortar mission to our left. We still couldn't move since the rounds were falling so close that fragments from our own artillery and mortars were zinging over our heads."

The platoon was not strong enough to continue the mission alone and was ordered to return to base. Throughout the night, artillery and mortars were fired, to prevent the enemy force from continuing south toward India's position



PFC Leonard Newton, left, with PFC Cecil Rogers. (Photo courtesy of Cecil Rogers)

Said, Captain Dabney, "I requested from battalion, permission to have a reconnaissance-in-force to 881N with India Company....I asked them to send up a platoon from Mike Company, 3/26, which was then at the Khe Sanh Combat base perimeter, to help man the 881S line while we were gone." As the mission was being planned India received word that the regiment wanted to insert recon Team Barkood onto 881N.



The Marines of recon Team Barkwood. (Photo courtesy of Lionel Guerra)

The plan was simple. The Marines were to move out north toward 881N in two mutually supporting columns. India Company's 1st and 2d platoons were positioned on the left, 3d platoon was on the right augmented by Team Barkwood. Captain Dabney thought contact with the enemy was likely....The plan was simple; the reality of combat is much more chaotic.

The Marines jumped off the following morning, 20 January 1968 at 0500. Corpsman Mike Ray said, "We moved silently down the hill. We slipped down through the waist high elephant grass... through the fog cover. As we went deeper, the bright sun turned into a faint glow. The fog must have been several hundred feet thick."

As the fog lifted, Brindley's 3d Platoon, operating



Thomas Brindley's 3d Platoon, photographed through the fog. (Photograph courtesy of Dick Dworsky)

to the right on the eastern ridge, was poised to take a small hill. As the Marines move forward they were hit by RPG and automatic weapons fire. Three Marines were seriously wounded. Captain Dabney ordered Brindley to break off the attack and evacuate the wounded. Brindley reported to India Company's XO, Lt Richard Foley that he was confident he could take the hill. He was ordered to do so after heavy preparatory fire from mortars and artillery. Cpl Charles Bryan realized that 3d Platoon was understrength and volunteered Team Barkwood as an additional assault element. My dear friend PJ Pagano, then a corporal, was a member of Team Barkwood. He later said,

"It was decided that we would get on line with the infantry and assault the immediate objective. We were on the right and the infantry was on the left. The lieutenant said 'fix bayonets!' and we all looked at him at the same time. Recon guys usually don't have bayonets...but the real reason we looked is because, at least for me, I thought this is it; the real thing! Recon guys usually don't do walking assaults!"



Corporal PJ Pagano (Photograph courtesy of Bill Messer)

Concurrently, Captain Dabney decided to advance with 1st and 2d Platoons on the western ridge. If they could seize their objective, a small hill, they could provide covering fire for 3d Platoon. Said one Marine, "We moved out on line and began to climb the hill. About 3/4 of the way up, the enemy waited. When we were 50 meters from them, they pulled out the stopper. We were hit by .50 caliber machine gun fire, AK-47s and RPGs. They were well dug in with two men to a hole. One would fire while the other reloaded and intermittently tossed grenades. We took 15 casualties in the first ten seconds. We kept on moving but then were hit from the right rear by 2 .50 caliber machine guns. We couldn't move any further and had to fall back. I watched one corpsman dash out 7 times under heavy fire to pull wounded to safety."

All but two men were wounded. Fromme consoli-

dated his position and directed mortar fire to the front but did not have sufficient strength to hold the position and evacuate the wounded. 2d Platoon, under 2dLt Mike Thomas, set up a landing zone. The NVA were everywhere. A CH-46 helicopter from HMM-262 attempted to land, was shot down, crashed to the west of the LZ, rolled and burst into flames. Marines from both platoons, led by Lt. Mike Thomas, rushed to the crash site and rescued the crew, all of them wounded, some severely.

(According to HMM-262's command chronology, "while resupplying Hill 881 near Khe Sanh, Capt Ropelewski took a 50 cal hit through the main fuel line. Capt Ropelewski crash landed the burning CH-46 in a nearby zone." I spoke with the squadron historian, Kreig Loftin, who stated, "Beth - I remember this incident. Curtis Larson was the crew chief. As the burning aircraft approached the crash zone, he and his gunner had to jump out while the aircraft was still 30-40 feet in the air. They both suffered broken ankles, legs and such. Larson showed me his flak jacket afterward. The back panel was completely melted.")

In the midst of the chaos on the western ridge, Captain Dabney ordered 3d Platoon to renew the attack on the right. The chaos grew. The Marines of 3d Platoon surged up the 30 degree slope behind Brindley. The NVA brought everything they had to bear on the advancing platoon. Wrote Lt Schneider,

"Tom Brindley, the 3d platoon commander, drew his .45 pistol from his holster and, like something out of the movies, began to move his people on the line and move up the hill. It was nothing short of magnificent. They just kept moving- men falling as they went, but everyone else just kept walking shooting from the hip and tossing grenades as they came over the top. By that time, a platoon sergeant and all three squad leaders were casualties. As they stepped over the crest of the hill a sniper shot Tom through the heart."

Brindley's last words were "Keep low, keep going, stay on line." Captain Dabney later said that Tom Brindley led his men over the crest of that hill by the sheer force of his example. He added, "the platoon found itself holding the piece of high ground with depleted ammunition stocks and...a lance corporal in command."



Lt Tomas Brindley, right, with Lt Michael Bonacci (Photograph courtesy of the Brindley family)

The recon team was in no better position than 3d Platoon. Pagano recalled, "Almost as soon as we started out a hole opened between us and the infantry on the left. I shouted to Cpl Bryan that I was moving forward to plug the hole. The terrain and elephant grass soon caused us to lose contact with the infantry and each other. We all continued up the hill. We stopped for a moment and an 81mm mortar landed right in front of us. I was hit a second later and (another recon Marine) Lionel Guerra was hit a second after that. We were taking fire from the Marines at the bottom of the hill as well as from the NVA whom we were amongst. I was hit by a Marine bullet. I got on the air without much ceremony and said "Check fire, Check fire. You're cutting us to pieces up here." A second later Cpl Bryan called to me to stop the mortar and rifle fire from the friendlies. I told him I had done so and that I was hit...He crawled over and while I was on the radio (now working choppers) he got up on his elbows to rip open a battle dressing for my wound. An NVA no further than six feet away cranked a round at us that passed my left ear, over my chest, and into Bryan's armpit. I stopped transmitting after a while because my hands and face fell asleep and I became very tired. I had tied a tourniquet but I'd lost a great deal of blood and was still losing some.



Corporal Charles Bryan

2d Platoon, which by now had succeeded in evacuating 1st Platoon's wounded on the western ridge was ordered to the right flank of 3d Platoon to reinforce and to repel counterattacks, to evacuate 3d Platoon's casualties and to locate the missing recon team. Said Pagano, "Some new choppers came on station and I heard them talking about Team Barkwood in the past tense. I realized that because I had been off the air for a while they thought I had died. Using the weight of my head to key the set I transmitted, "All stations this net be advised. This station is still up."

(In the confusion of battle Team Barkwood had lost physical contact with 3d Platoon and actually found themselves -8 Marines- assaulting an NVA company.) 2d Platoon's Lt Mike Thomas did not survive the afternoon. Thomas had located 5 of the missing Marines. One at a time he hoisted them onto his back and carried them to safety. He found a 6th missing Marines and while carrying him was wounded in the face. He refused medical attention. Aware of the fact that there are still two Marines missing he made an attempt to reach them and was fatally shot.



Lt Mike Thomas (Photograph courtesy of Dick Dworsky)

Brindley, Bryan and Thomas were all awarded Navy Crosses posthumously. Steve Thomas, brother of Mike later said,

"Mike was one of those few people who walked through this world and left large footprints. He touched so many people in his few years. He joined the Marine Corps on this own accord, because there was a job to be done. He told our father, that someone had to do it, so it might as well be him. MIKE HAD PURPOSE IN HIS LIFE!"

India Company now held both ridgelines but with very high casualties. There were 42 casualties including 7 killed in action. Captain Dabney asked for reinforcements but the request was denied. At the time, Captain Dabney was unaware of an extraordinary event that was occurred a world away from India Company. In the early afternoon of 20 January, a white flag appeared at the eastern edge of the airstrip at Khe Sanh Combat Base. La Thanh Tonc, a lieutenant in the North Vietnamese Army surrendered. Immediately interrogated, the disgruntled Tonc reported that all outlying positions around the base would be attacked that night. India was ordered to return to 881S.

Gunnery Sergeant Max Friedlander, who was part of the interrogation-translation team recorded the following:

"Hill 881N is presently surrounded. There is a

company of sappers deployed in the general area of 881N. This sapper company will be the company used against Hill 861. Once Hill 861 has fallen, the general attack against the Khe Sanh Combat Base will begin."

That night the enemy hit Khe Sanh and all the outlying outposts EXCEPT 881S. It's likely the reconnaissance in force mauled the NVA so badly they couldn't attack that night. Chuck Schneider wrote,

"It's my opinion, and that of most of the officers here, that our attack that day made them rush their plans for an attack on Hill 861 and Khe Sanh. That next morning at 0430 Khe Sanh took 300 rounds of incoming mortar, rockets and artillery. Hill 861 was assaulted by several hundred NVA. We fired 1400 rounds of 81mm mortar ammo and nearly a thousand rounds of 105mm artillery in their defense…. When the sun rose that morning the hillside was strewn with bodies….All day long I shot artillery at enemy rocket, mortar and anti-aircraft guns in our area. The order of business ever since the 21st has been to keep your head down to keep it from getting shot away."



Marines on 881S take cover from incoming enemy fire. (Photograph courtesy of David Powell)

Glenn Prentice was right. He was very lucky to see his 20th birthday.

The Marines at Khe Sanh and on the outlying hills were forced to dig in and endure a siege that lasted from 21 January until 17 April. Forty two Marines and corpsmen died on or near the hill, and another 200 were wounded. (Those numbers do not include aviation casualties.) Those who survived endured a 77-day siege that tested them to the limit of their endurance. Said Colonel William Dabney, "By enduring, they triumphed. They were magnificent!"



Marines raise the American flag over Hill 881S. (Photograph courtesy of David Powell)

PROPAGANDISTS MASQUERADING AS HISTORIANS

by Terry Garlock
Scheduled for publication Wed, Jan 31 in The Citizen, a local Fayette County, GA newspaper

I was only one of many Vietnam veterans who wrote opinion columns criticizing the Vietnam War film by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, opining their work seemed more like propaganda than history. In doing so I occasionally used "Burns" as shorthand for the pair, to which Ms. Novick emailed me her objection. She is correct, I should consistently include her name as co-producer because she is equally culpable in the hit piece they brazenly call a documentary.

So, Ms. Novick and Mr. Burns, this is for you. My back-handed compliment is that your wholly inaccurate film is a slick rationalization for aging Americans who, decades ago, loudly encouraged our enemy while we were killing each other in combat. For those harboring doubts about actively opposing us in their youth while we served our country in a war, your film may have supplied just the soothing salve they need.

You bent the truth in your film too far, too consist-

ently, too repetitively, and omitted too much to leave any room for me to believe those errors, omissions, distortions, half-truths and complete falsehoods were remotely accidental.

Like a house of distorted mirrors, you portrayed the murderous and avowed Stalinist Ho Chi Minh as a nationalist driven by reunification of North and South Vietnam rather than his real commitment to Communist conquest of free South Vietnam. Your film repeatedly depicted the war as unwinnable, the North Vietnamese cause as just, war crimes between the two sides as morally equivalent, American troops as victims, South Vietnamese as mere bit players, all that and much more of your content completely opposite of the truth. You selected for dominant interviews from the tiny percentage of American combat veterans with a grievance who joined the protestors when they returned home.

I cannot know the motivation in your hearts, but I have the stark impression that your plan from the very beginning was to delegitimize America's role in the war and justify the anti-war left by very selectively emphasizing negatives and minimizing positives to shape the film's message to your liking.

There is a tragic irony in protests by the anti-war left and your justification for them. The noble cause of the Vietnam War was trying to stop the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia, especially important given the hegemony of China in the region. Even so, while we answered our country's call and honorably performed our difficult duty, leadership in the White House and Pentagon created a patchwork of micromanagement and idiotic war-fighting limitations, obstacles that got thousands of us killed while preventing victory. Those egregious and very real failures alone would have been worthy of protest, but your buddies on the left either didn't notice or felt compelled to manufacture their own demons, like John Kerry's fantastic lie that we were raping, murdering and rampaging in Vietnam like Genghis Khan.

The outrage is our enemy's daily atrocities against their own people, juxtaposed against how we Americans defended and helped those civilians in a hundred ways, both ignored by the news media while American troops were maligned.

Ms. Novick, you were just eleven years old when America withdrew from Vietnam in 1973, so you might have missed personally knowing the effects of false stereotypes about Vietnam and its veterans.

Like so many others, I came away from that experience with my eyes opened, having learned bywatching young Americans the true meaning of honor, courage and trust. Those men and women were then and still are the finest people of character I have ever known.

I saw my fellow helicopter pilots fly into enemy fire routinely, taking mortal risks to protect civilians and their brothers, and I saw grunts do the same crazy things for each other. I flew gun cover for Dustoff crews braving enemy fire to pick up wounded, and I flew gun cover for LRPs sneaking in enemy turf, the bravest men I have ever seen; if you have an open mind, read Six Silent Men by Gary Linderer to understand how bold our Rangers were.

I saw doctors, nurses and orderlies drive themselves to physical and emotional exhaustion every day as they struggled to send us home alive, and still we found time to send medical help to poor villages where medicine had never been seen. There was much to admire, and when I finally wrote a book my title tells my sentiments: Strength and Honor: America's Best in Vietnam.

Anti-war voices were overwhelming, and America never knew what a fine job their youth had done in Vietnam, despite impediments imposed by our own government, despite collaboration with the enemy by our own fellow citizens.

When we came home, the country seemed to us to have turned principles upside down. Wearing the American uniform invited hostility while refusing to serve was somehow a virtue. These remarkable troops, young enough to be called boys but now battle-hardened men, never lost a single significant battle against a very tough enemy, but they didn't know how or want to engage in political argument. And so many like me kept their head down and went on with life. Nobody wanted to hear about our experience anyway, for two reasons.

First, everybody already knew all the answers about Vietnam, they had seen it on TV. Second, in those

days the Vietnam War was a shunned topic, something dirty not discussed in polite company.

Even some family members skirted the subject, wary of the rumors they heard about rampant war crimes, drug addiction and vets prone to snap into violence. During his first visit home, Tony Foster's mother asked him what kind of drugs he was on.

False stereotypes took root from repetition in a media leaning hard against the war. Movies reinforced the lies with absurd stories and unreal characters that indulged Hollywood's ridiculous fantasies of the war.

Period fiction followed suit, and TV dramas occasionally created a Vietnam vet when they needed an unbalanced, unpredictable and dangerous character.

Spreading these attitudes has consequences. Not everyone thought the worst of us, but enough did to change the national mood.

Even small slights left lasting impressions. Jay Standish escorted his date to their seats near the front of an off-Broadway theater, proudly wearing his Marine Corps dress blues, prompting boos from many in the audience. A Sgt. named Chip went to see a Priest for pre-marital counseling wearing his Army dress greens, and the Priest told him to come back when he was wearing decent clothing.

Vietnam vets learned to leave the war off their resume to avoid rejection in the first cull of job applicants. They soon knew to keep quiet in college classes since anti-war professors used their grading pen as a weapon.

ROTC membership plummeted and some professors wouldn't accept members as students. Military recruiters were ejected from campus. The uniform was not popular, as R.J. DelVecchio learned by hostility to his Marine Corps uniform at the University of Maryland and was advised not to wear it again on campus. Wearing a uniform made some feel invisible waiting to be served in a restaurant.

Drew Johnson, who ferried Navy aircraft to Vietnam over an extended period, returned through California airports at least two dozen times and saw the escalation of vitriol aimed at our returning troops by anti-war protestors who, by my measure, were unfit to shine a veteran's shoes. Officials and most in the public merely looked the other way while protestors yelled "babykiller" and worse at returning vets, threw nasty splatter packets at them and frequently used their own spit.

In 1971, my commanding officer told me to remind my men not to wear their uniform off-base, for their own personal safety.

Some anti-war tactics were despicable. An F-105 fighter pilot I will leave nameless bet his life every time he flew into North Vietnam through the toughest air defenses in the world. When he was shot down, even before his wife received official notification, anti-war activists called to say her husband was a baby-killing a**hole and deserved what he got.

There were many thousands of these uncouth episodes incited by fabrications from the anti-war left, and they were made worse that they were aimed at Americans who served honorably and sacrificed much. And yet every Vietnam vet I know is proud of their service, fiercely patriotic and doesn't want even a shred of sympathy.

They do want one thing. They want the truth told about them, their enemy, their war.

Now, after forty something years, Ms. Novick and Mr. Burns, along comes the misrepresentation you call a documentary, very pretty but with only fleeting intersections with the truth and reviving conflict long ago buried. It seems, to me at least, that you pre-planned your strategy to build up to your conclusion in support of your friends on the left, "The Vietnam War was a tragedy, immeasurable and irredeemable."

Even with 10 episodes over 18 hours, you left out vital pieces of the story. In 1974, in the aftermath of Watergate, Democrats were elected in a landslide and the new Congress violated America's promise by cutting off funding for South Vietnam's self-defense. Then when the Communists attacked South Vietnam in massive force, Congress refused to honor America's pledge to come to their aid. The left's view seems to be North Vietnam's conquest had the happy result of reunification. Senator J.

William Fulbright, who provided the forum for that spectacular liar John Kerry, said about the fall of Saigon that he was ". . . no more depressed than I would be about Arkansas losing a football game to Texas."

Trivializing the human cost of Communist victory, you didn't mention tens of thousands of executions, the million or so sent to brutal re-education camps, the panicked populace fleeing in rickety over packed boats and dying by the tens of thousands. You neglected North Vietnam's obscene practice of bulldozing South Vietnamese graves, and the influx of North Vietnamese to take over the best farms, businesses, homes and jobs in South Vietnam. And you swept under the rug America's shame, the betrayal of our ally, never mind the genocide by Communists as they murdered two million in Cambodia next door.

All in all, Ms. Novick and Mr. Burns, kudos on the slick appearance mixing photos, film clips, tilted narration and sad music to set the mood for your biased content. I think you have succeeded in making your semi-factual slop believable to a naïve public, and students in schools you send it to will likely lap it up because they don't know better.

That means we will need to redouble our efforts to tell the story true.

As I tell students when I speak to them about the Vietnam War, "Why does this ancient history matter to you? Because you need to know how a false history takes root, and you need to be smart enough to beware propaganda when you turn on TV news." Or watch a film labeled a "documentary."

Terry Garlock lives in Peachtree City, GA. He was a Cobra helicopter gunship pilot in the Vietnam War. He can be reached at tlg.opinion@gmail.com

BOOK REVIEW

"19 Minutes to Live" has nearly 400 pages and over 80 pictures that vividly describe the incredible courage and determination of helicopter pilots and crews supporting their heroes that carried a rucksack and a rifle in Vietnam. Over 12,000 helicopters were used in the Vietnam War and nearly half, 5,086, were lost. Helicopter pilots and crews accounted for nearly 10 percent of all the US casualties with nearly 5,000 killed and an untold number of wounded.

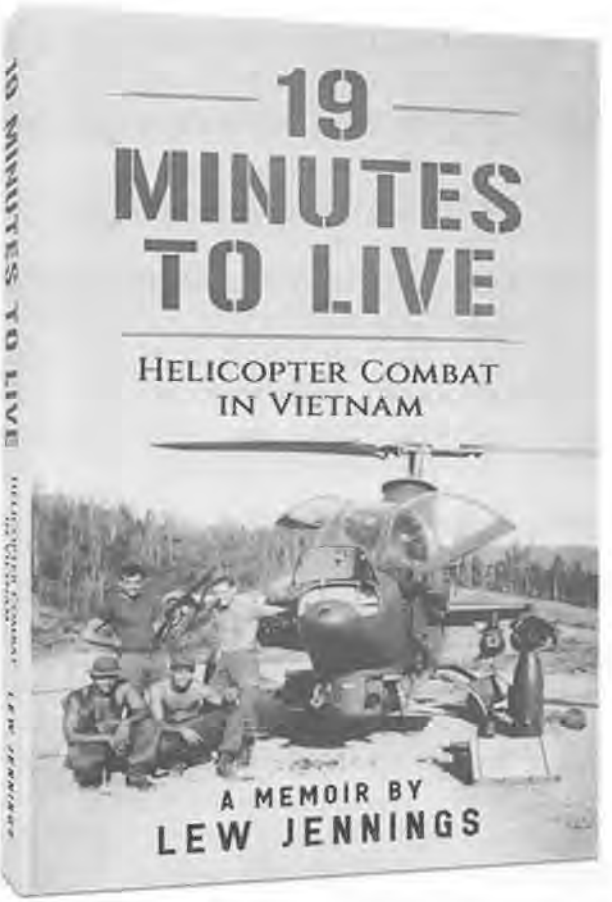



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

"Lew Jennings is a retired Army officer, former airline pilot and business executive who flew over 700 Air Cavalry Cobra Gunship Helicopter missions and received Three Distinguished Flying Crosses for Valor.

This Vietnam war memoir describes first-hand the harrowing experiences of pilots and crews in helicopter combat operations, from the far South to the DMZ, including the infamous A Shau Valley, Hamburger Hill, LZ Airborne and others.

LOCAL VIETNAM VETERANS RECALL CARNAGE OF TET OFFENSIVE, LAUNCHED THIS DAY 50 YEARS AGO

By Kip Hill kiph@spokesman.com

JOSEPH "HANK" MELANSON, USMC F& E CO 2/26 KHE SANH VETERAN

Hank Melanson remembers his friend's face on that January day a half century ago, outside Khe Sanh in what was then part of South Vietnam.

Three bullets had just ripped through the throat and heart of Ed Heifner, an 18-year-old Marine like Melanson, as the two young men pushed up a hill near the site of a 77-day siege by communist forces. "He had no expression on his face. Just blue-eyed, football player. Young guy. Just no expression on his face at all," Melanson, now 68, said from his home in north central Spokane last week.

The battle that day in the hills near the border with North Vietnam was just the second time Melanson, who had arrived in the southeast Asian country just a few weeks earlier, had been under enemy fire. Before the end of the attacks, which lasted nearly six months, hundreds of American servicemen lost their lives. The battle for Khe Sanh served as a precursor to what came to be known as the Tet Offensive. Named for the lunar new year observed in the country, the North Vietnamese attacked on all fronts in an attempt to demoralize American and South Vietnam forces.

The push became a crucial turning point in the war that helped topple an American presidency and divided public sentiment in the Inland Northwest and throughout the country.

For Melanson, an 18-year-old Marine Corps private from Massachusetts by way of Canada, the larger geopolitical implications of the attack were lost in the daily struggle to stay alive as mortar shells rained without pause. He was a member of the 2nd Battalion of the 26th Marines, which was moved to Khe Sanh in the middle of January. "It was day and night. The whole first three months I didn't sleep. You were just too damned afraid," he said.

Melanson has accumulated books, maps and photographs of the war in his home, and he recently signed a South Vietnamese flag owned by a fellow Marine, Larry Lutz, that has the autograph of servicemen who fought near Khe Sanh. Among Melanson's mementos is a black-and-white printout of Heifner, in his Parma, Ohio, high school football uniform.

An album full of color photographs, some taken during the rare moments of down time during the war's tumultuous turn in 1968, are also among Melanson's mementos. In one, a grinning, shirtless young Melanson smiles broadly into the camera, his sandaled-feet touching each other cross-legged on a beach. In another, he stares down the sights of an M79 grenade launcher.

Holding the combat base near the village of Khe Sanh became an obsession for the American military brass, even as thousands of North Vietnamese regular soldiers and the Viet Cong, armed Communist sympathizers from the south, sought to overrun major cities such as Saigon, Hue and Da Nang. Six thousand Marines, including Melanson, took up positions at Khe Sanh against enemy forces that outnumbered them nearly 7-to-1.

After nine days of fighting at Khe Sanh, the North Vietnamese launched the offensive on Jan. 30. They first attacked the coastal city of Nha Trang, a military headquarters for the U.S. forces. Battles in the cities of Saigon, Hue and dozens of district capitals quickly followed. Violent images of the Tet Offensive's aftermath in South Vietnam were broadcast into homes throughout the United States, slowly turning what had been perceived up until that time as a successful military campaign into growing dis-

cord, said Robert Dean, an associate history professor at Eastern Washington University.

"What happened after Tet, was a lot of the people who had been fairly committed supporters of the war in Vietnam simply decided that, under the conditions that existed, the war could not be won," said Dean, who has examined the causes of American escalation in the Vietnam War.

President Lyndon Johnson began an escalation of ground troops in Vietnam in 1965. A Gallup poll taken in September of that year showed 24 percent of Americans believed committing troops was a mistake. By the time of the Tet Offensive, that number had nearly doubled to 46 percent. By the end of 1969, it was near 60 percent.

The cultural upheaval seen across the United States also was felt in the Inland Northwest. In 1965, hundreds of Washington State University students rallied not against the war, but to collect blood donations for American service members overseas, according to an Oct. 19 issue of The Spokesman-Review.

David Rose, then a senior at the university, told the newspaper the drive was inspired by student protests around the country, which he said were "not representative of most college students."

But just three years later, in April 1968, hundreds of students again assembled, this time to call for peace. In October 1969, Gonzaga University canceled classes to observe a national day calling for a moratorium to the conflict.

Peace protesters in Spokane were twice pelted by eggs and tomatoes during demonstrations held in 1967. An April march prompted an unnamed woman to fling the items at marchers and accuse them of "giving aid and comfort to the enemy by their propaganda," according to an account in the April 15 edition of the Spokane Chronicle.

Then, in October, a 17-year-old Montana woman was arrested for heaving eggs and tomatoes at peace marchers outside of the downtown Spokane federal courthouse. Sheila D. McIntyre told police her act of disorderly conduct was fueled by her husband's service overseas. David Carlson was a 19-year-old Navy storekeeper when he returned to his hometown of Spokane in August 1967 during a 30-day leave from his post at Camp Tien Sha, an outpost just southwest of Da Nang. Carlson, now 70, recalled a coldness in the eyes of some people when they realized he was serving in the war.

"There were lots of people against it," Carlson said. "I didn't see any protests, because I was trying to get my 30 days in and get the most out of it."

Carlson returned to Da Nang after his brief visit home. That city, too, became a target of the Viet Cong in the offensive. For Carlson, a member of the Navy's combat engineers known as the Seabees, the ramp up of the war was seen only in the additional bustle at the city's airport and volume of classified mail that needed to be delivered.

"I think it was all building up, you know?" said Carlson, who was part of the first graduating class at Ferris High School.

Carlson's tour ended in March of 1968, just as the first push of the Tet Offensive was ending. But before leaving the country, his routine trip into town to pick up the mail included a brief and stark reminder of the escalating violence that had begun to shock the folks back home, including his mother.

A pile of the dead had been stacked near a bridge into town. A photograph of the grisly scene wound up in Time magazine, Carlson said, which his mother saw and asked him about when he returned. "You learn, pretty quickly and no matter what your age, if there's a lot of bad stuff going on and you see it, you don't want to tell anyone about it at home," he said.



SAM MESSER,
SEABEE KHE SANH 67-68
CBMU-301 DET –B

I submit this photo out of the deepest respect for my Brother Marines that endured Khe Sanh full time. Flying in and out with HMM-363 as a L/Cpl Crew chief I could not understand how they hung in for so long with so little. I often tell friends that Khe Sanh was my turning point. After observing the Marines at Khe Sanh and the surrounding hills, I knew I was a LIFER, I understood what the title MARINE was really all about. This is a photo of my friend Sam Messar ,Seabee, Sam was there from the early start in 67 until he was badly wounded in 68. Sam was not a Marine, but like our Navy Corpsman, to we few that were there he is OUR BROTHER. Sam is a Life Member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association , an organization I am proud to be a member of

George Curtis.





TET OFFENSIVE 50 YEARS AGO SHATTERED AMERICANS' CONFIDENCE IN VIETNAM WAR

By Carlo Muñoz - The Washington Times - Monday, January 29, 2018

WILLIAM RIDER, USMC, C CO 1/9
KHE SANH VETERAN

Bill Rider considered himself a grizzled veteran of the Vietnam War that late January night in 1968 when the first waves of North Vietnamese soldiers and their Viet Cong allies attacked U.S. and South Vietnamese lines in the besieged central city of Khe Sanh, where he was stationed.

After all, the 19-year-old native of New London, Ohio, had been in the theater for a whole three months and had seen intense action dating back to his second day in Vietnam in October.

But the scope of the battle, and the determination of the enemy forces he faced, quickly convinced him that this attack was different.

"We knew that if anyone screwed up, you could get killed," Mr. Rider said. "My advice to the new guys was, 'Do what I tell you, and you might survive this.' "

Mr. Rider, now 75, recalls many harrowing days and close calls during his 13-month tour, but no time was more nerve-wracking than that January exactly 50 years ago Tuesday. We knew that if anyone screwed up, you could get killed," Mr. Rider said. "My advice to the new guys was, 'Do what I tell you, and you might survive this.' "

Mr. Rider, now 75, recalls many harrowing days and close calls during his 13-month tour, but no time was more nerve-wracking than that January exactly 50 years ago Tuesday.

The wide-ranging assault was timed to the day marking the Vietnamese lunar year, a celebration known locally as Tet. here some fighting had begun more than a week before Tet, became a grueling 77-day conflict before the Marines were finally withdrawn.

The Johnson administration and the Pentagon had

been offering relatively rosy assessments of the fighting in the months prior to the attack, suggesting Hanoi's ability to carry the fight to the South was weakening.

But on that day, the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese army launched a series of calculated, coordinated attacks against every major American military position from the demilitarized zone in central Vietnam right into the heart of Saigon.

Waves of North Vietnamese fighters had been building up weapons and supplies in anticipation of the surprise attack via the Ho Chi Minh Trail — a complex network of jungle footpaths through seemingly impassible terrain that was the materiel lifeline for the Vietnamese communists.

Thousands of Viet Cong and whole regiments of North Vietnamese army troops stormed U.S. outposts and major firebases across the country during the offensive, catching the South Vietnamese government and the Pentagon by surprise.

In Saigon, Viet Cong fighters and Marines assigned to secure the U.S. Embassy engaged in bloody street warfare as the Americans fought off waves of attackers attempting to overrun the diplomatic outpost.

A half-century later, the attack and its aftermath can still spark bitter divisions while providing an object lesson in the power of perception in the prosecution of modern warfare.

Militarily, even the North Vietnamese would later concede, the Tet Offensive was a staggering defeat for the communists, who lost over 50,000 fighters during the offensive while gaining little valuable territory.

Against Hanoi's expectations, South Vietnamese soldiers did not abandon their posts, the South Vietnamese "puppet" government did not buckle and ordinary citizens did not welcome their "liberators" from the north.

Two weeks after the offensive started, the Defense Department estimated that the North and its allies had lost more than 33,000 soldiers, compared with 2,000 South Vietnamese soldiers and 1,000 Americans. A total of 12,000 were wounded.

The Viet Cong's "regular units were decimated and would never completely recover, and its political infrastructure suffered crippling losses," Vietnam War historian George Herring wrote of Tet's impact.

But the boldness and sophistication of the coordinated attacks was a massive blow to public confidence in the U.S. about the course of the war and the Pentagon's plan to win it. An enemy that some U.S. generals argued was on the ropes had managed a coordinated assault that struck 36 provincial capitals, the six largest cities in South Vietnam and even the U.S. Embassy in the heart of Saigon.

Convulsive political events on the home front marked 1968, which would become the bloodiest year for U.S. forces from the entire Vietnam operation, with 16,592 killed.

Less than a month after the first Tet assaults on Jan. 30, 1968, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara resigned. By June, a beleaguered President Johnson removed Gen. William Westmoreland from his command of the war as well.

CBS newsman Walter Cronkite famously proclaimed that, after Tet, an outright U.S. victory in the war was no longer feasible and a negotiated peace was the only way to avoid a military stalemate with the regime in Hanoi.

INTENSE FIGHTING

While much of the North Vietnamese were thrown back from much of the territory they seized in the first days of fighting, the Tet Offensive sparked more extended fighting in many places. The brutal battle for Hue, for example, lasted a month and destroyed much of the onetime imperial capital before the North Vietnamese and their allies were thrown back.

Nowhere was the fighting more intense than in Khe Sanh. While most of the fighting from the Tet Offensive subsided weeks after the initial thrust by enemy forces, the battle for Khe Sanh lasted for 77 days.

The battle for the city, less than several miles from the demilitarized zone separating North and South Vietnam, remains perhaps the signature conflict of the Tet Offensive and the scene for some of the most intense fighting of the war.

Mr. Rider and the other Marines from Charlie Company found themselves on the front lines at Khe Sanh during Tet. The Marines had been flown into the besieged city along with troops from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions from 26th Marines to hold the line against enemy forces, which had been laying siege to the city for more than a week.

Mr. Rider recalled that his Marine platoon was digging bunkers and fortifying its positions at Marine Corps base "Rock Quarry" on what was known as Hill 64 in Khe Sanh when the first wave of the North Vietnamese army and Viet Cong fighters hit the perimeter on the night of Jan. 30.

"Normally during Tet, there were always some attacks," he said. But after hearing reports about concurrent attacks on Saigon, Hue, Da Nang and elsewhere, platoon members knew they were facing an assault unlike any other to date in the war.

"What the information was that there were 40,000 hard-core NVA" waiting to pour into Khe Sanh," he said. "And at best we had 3,500 to 4,000 Marines. And we thought they are coming for us."

The first full day of Tet was harrowing for the Marines, who were hit with 1,400 heavy artillery, Mr. Rider recalled. "It was incredible. Mortars, artillery, rockets, everything ," he said. "There wasn't one day where there was not severely wounded [Marines]."

PICKING OFF SAPPERS

For days on end, the Marines battled back waves of North Vietnamese attackers, picking off specialized combat engineers known as sappers who were planting explosives and other devices to crack the U.S. fortifications in the city. There was little time to rest, much less sleep, during the onslaught.

"Alpha Company ended up getting overrun" during the early days of Tet, Mr. Rider recalled.
Sleep became an even dicier proposition as American B-52 bombers pounded North Vietnamese positions in and around Khe Sanh as part of Operation Arc Light. "We would be sitting in our bunkers and feel the vibrations from Arc Light" as the massive bombers decimated the countryside around the besieged city.

"We would sit there and think, 'My God, what are those guys going through?'" he said of the North Vietnamese units on the receiving end of the bombardment. "But they were committed. They just would not leave."

The fighting in Khe Sanh got so bad that Marine Corps helicopters would not fly in supplies to the Marines. Instead, they dropped massive pallets of food, water and ammunition to the forces below, Mr. Rider recalled. During one drop, one Marine was partially crushed by a falling pallet of supplies, he said.

In April, when the fighting from Tet subsided, the Marines at Khe Sanh went on the offensive. The Marines from the 26th Battalion began pushing the enemy out of the embattled city and moved into the highlands surrounding Khe Sanh to hunt down the remnants of the North Vietnamese units that were regrouping.

Mr. Rider and what was left of 1/9 Marines took out an entire North Vietnamese battalion. Days later, almost all of Mr. Rider's battalion was wiped out by communist forces on nearby Hill 64. In the end, 1/6 Marines and those from 26th Marines were pulled out of Khe Sanh and moved back to the rear in Bang Hao.

By the end of the war, Charlie Company and the rest of 1/9 Marines would compile the highest American combat casualty rate of all Marine Corps units in Vietnam, earning them the nickname "The Walking Dead."

In his 13 months in Vietnam with Charlie Company, Mr. Rider and the men of 1/9 Marines were pulled off the front line three times. Suffering from malnutrition, Mr. Rider was evacuated to Bethesda Naval Hospital in 1968. While he was recovering in Maryland, Marine Corps recruiters attempted to persuade the 20-year-old to sign up for another tour in Vietnam.

"They said they needed guys with combat experience," he recalled. "I was bulletproof there, but I did not know if I wanted to tempt fate. I decided to go to Ohio State instead."

Looking back, Mr. Rider said what got him though those difficult days in central Vietnam were the bonds he forged with his fellow Marines.

"The Marines who died [in Khe Sanh] gave their lives for their brothers," he said. "Nobody died for their country. They died for the ones who they fought next to."

FOLEY NAMED PURPLE HEART COMMUNITY

By Jessica Vaughn / jessica@gulfcoastmedia.com

FOLEY – During the Feb. 19 Foley council, Mayor John Koniar proclaimed the city to be a Purple Heart Community. "Many citizens of our community have earned the Purple Heart Medal as a result of being wounded while engaged in combat with an enemy force, construed as a singularly meritorious



Mayor John Koniar designated the City of Foley a Purple Heart Community and presented the proclamation to a group of local Purple Heart recipients who were honored by the city during the

act of essential service," said Koniar. "I hereby proclaim the City of Foley as a Purple Heart City honoring the services and sacrifice of our nation's men and women in uniform wounded or killed by enemy forces while serving to protect the freedoms enjoyed by all Americans."

The honor was brought forth to the city after local dentist and Vietnam veteran Barry Booth learned of Purple Heart Communities while visiting a friend.

"We both had served at Khe Sanh; he had been wounded," said Booth. "While out driving around his town, he pointed out the very distinctive Purple Heart signs located at the city hall complex and around his town. I thought what a great idea this would be for the communities of Baldwin County and South Alabama."

Booth reached out to Ed Evans of the local Military Order of the Purple Heart, telling him about the Purple Heart Communities and beginning the movement to declare Baldwin County municipalities as Purple Heart towns and cities.

"The Military Order of the Purple Heart is a congressionally chartered veterans' organization whose members have received the Purple Heart Medal, given in the name of the president of the United States, to any member of our armed forces who have been wounded or lost under combat conditions," said Booth. "While clearly this is an individual decoration, the Purple Heart differs from all other military awards. An individual is not recommended for a Purple Heart, they are entitled to it upon meeting certain criteria."

While Booth stated he was not a recipient, he supports the distinguished order that delivers programs that include: suicide prevention, assistance for veterans with brain injuries, counseling for post-traumatic stress, and assistance for women's health issues. These services are offered to aide all veterans and their families and continue to make many significant contributions to our communities.

To be designated as a Purple Heart City is to raise awareness and to honor those who are recipients of the Purple Heart, and Foley took the step during the council to do just that. "I hope that each of you at some time can take a moment to speak to a Purple Heart recipient," said Booth. "Their experience is nothing like you can imagine, or read, or see in movies. These men and women have put themselves in harm's way and have offered up their life in service to the rest of us and our nation. Our gratitude to each of them is inseparable."

The City of Foley has received Purple Heart signs to designate the city as a Purple Heart Community, which will be going up around the city soon.

SCHOLARSHIP & GENERAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS





CONTRIBUTIONS FROM 02 SEPT 2017 TO 22 FEB 2018

ADAMS, Harry	40.00	LACY, Donald B.	100.00
ARCHER, Michael	20.00	LEITH, Ben	200.00
BAKER, James	200.00	MAPEL, Randall	35.00
BARBER, Michael F.	600.00	MERCADO, Saturno	10.00
BEALL, James D.	280.00	MEYER, David & Carol	500.00
BECK, Ralph	60.00	MILLOCK, Carl	10.00
CAMPO, Carl C.	60.00	MULLIGAN, Michael	300.00
CHICOINE, Roger	500.00	NAZZARIO, Anthony J.	50.00
COLLINS, James M	250.00	NELSON, George	500.00
COOK, Michael H.	100.00	PEARSON, Scott G.	50.00
DESETA, Louis J.	100.00	PETERSON, George	250.00
DELOTTO, Richard J.	50.00	SADOWSKI, Alex	100.00
DIGAETANO, John	10.00	SARGEANT, Ralph F.	10.00
DIFOOT Alicia	110.00	SPIVEY, B Larkin	60.00
EDDOWES, Barbara	40.00	STERLING ,Glenn	100.00
ERLANDSON, Peter	40.00	STUBBE, Ray W.	1,000.00
EVANS, Faye	200.00	SWETS, Fred W.	40.00
FELDMAN, Patti	400.00	TOURTE, Craig	600.00
TOM FORD	250.00	TROUP, Ed	100.00
GAROUTTE, Michael A.	40.00	WIMBISH, Dennis	10.00
GEIGER, Bruce	500.00	WISEMAN, William J	100.00
GILLESPIE, Donald	60.00	YOUMAN, Elwood	1,000.00
HELTON, Michael	10.00	ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	250.00
HORCHLER, Thomas	40.00		



EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS



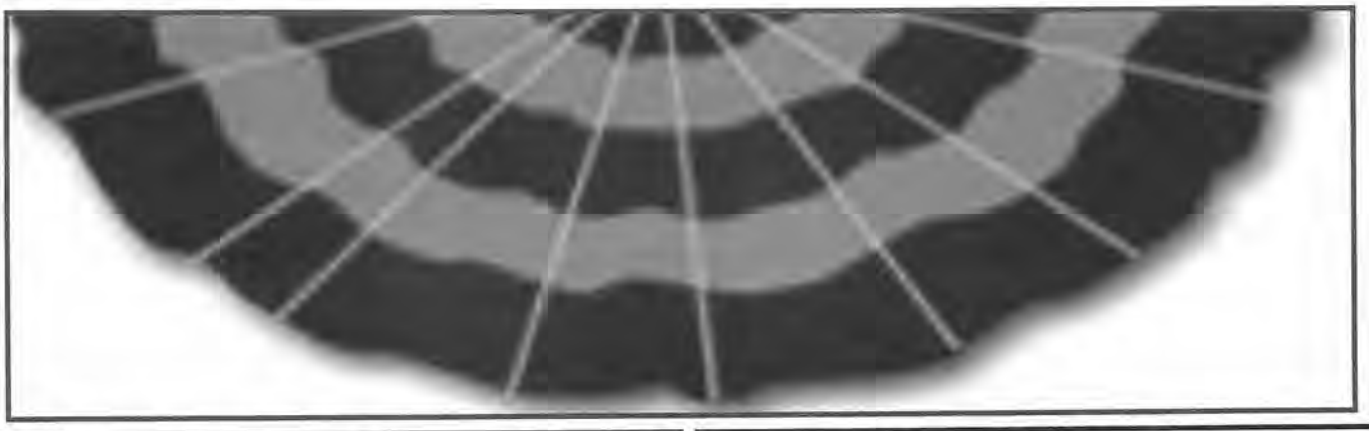

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
ALL who served at Lang Vei A-102 FOB-3	Lawrence Cooper CO C 5th Special Forces
1LT Thomas A. Reich USMC VFMA-115, MAG 13 KIA	Charles Fetter MAG-11 H&MS-11 VMF 314 AW
Capt Walter Egger USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
GSGT John J Grohman USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
1t Paul W. Bush USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
LCpl Stephen C Shannon USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
All Khe Sanh Veterans KIA	Louis Deseta Subscriber
Sgt Larry Berneski USAF KIA 15 Oct 1967 C-130 Crash	LOUIS CATON 50TH TASS "RED DEVILS" TASK FORCE ALPHA
Sgt James Neil Tycz USMC Recon KIA10 May 67	Sharon Pelon
All 1/26 KIA KSCB	SgtMaj James Morris H&S CO 1/26 81MM Platoon
LCpl Vincent Santaniello USMC K 3/4 KIA 28 Mar 68	John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
PFC Peder Armstrong USMC K 3/4 KIA 28 Mar 68	John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
L/Cpl Louis Lowe USMC K 3/4 KIA 14 May 68	John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
HM2 William Mercer USN M 3/4 KIA 15 Jun 68 NC	John B. Nunn K 3/4 "DOC"
GY SGT Charles Perkins K CO 3/26 Hill 861, wounded in action 28 Mar 68, Died 17 May 1968 on USS Repose	Barbara Eddowes Love & Miss You so Much after all these years
CAPT Daniel Coonon USMC VMF(AW)115 KIA 10/8 68	Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11, MAG-11, 1ST MAW
PFC Randy Davis USMC Kilo 3/4 KIA Hill 861 04 Jun 68	Daniel King Kilo CO 3/4
LCpl Louis Lowe USMC Kilo CO 3/4 KIA Hill 689 14 May 68	Daniel King Kilo CO 3/4
All combat Engineers from 1st Platoon A CO & 1st Platoon C CO From The Hill Fights Thru The Siege	Michael F. Barber C CO 3RD ENGINEERS
Reggie Schloerb USMC B CO 3RD Recon Passed Away	Albert Roberts Jr "TOBY" B Co 3rd Recon
GYSGT Alexander Koppel USMC B CO 1/9, WPNS PLT Passed Away 13 Dec 2005	Michael Koppel Son
Jerry Elliott MIA 21 Jan 68 282ND AHC Black Cats	Donna Elliott Sister
Hans Runge USMC my good German Friend D CO 1/26	Peter Mudrinch B CO 1/26 81MM
Gilbert Wall "Chief" USMC B CO 1/26 F/O	Peter Mudrinch B CO 1/26 81MM
PFC John Richard Meuse USMC E CO 2/3 KIA 03 May 67	Frederick Monahan E CO 2/3
Francis Foiles USMC M CO 3/4 3RD PLT KIA 27 May68	Hugh Liverman Mike Co 3/4 3RD PLT
Lee Edward Himebaugh USMC M CO 3/4 3RD PLT KIA 27 May 68	Hugh Liverman Mike Co 3/4 3RD PLT
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC A HQ/13 KIA 09 MAR 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Remembering All "Bastard Bravo" Marines and their families	William E. Carpenter Bravo Btry 1/13
Captain Bill Person USAF 553 3RD Recon Wing	Alex & Barbara Sadowski H&S CO 1/26
PFC Donald Saunders USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM KIA 04 March 1968	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
Sgt Donald Ray Chamblin USMC HQ BTRY COMM KIA 08 March 1968	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2018 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman 52ND
6050 52ND St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms. Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the Red Clay" Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David E. Lownds Award - for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award - for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award - for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited Institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY* 1 of the school year applied for. *** (This is an important, NEW change to previous** years)***

6. KSV. Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System !Maximum of 110 regular points or 125 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max = 40 points max. (Please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

A GPA of 4.0 x 10 = 40 points or a GPA of 3.0 x 10 = 30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max = 30 points total

Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Extra Curricular = 10 points max.
Volunteer services = 10 points max.
Leadership positions = 10 points max.
Employment = 10 points max

C. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min. to 400 words max) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max. Please type, single spaced lines on ONE sheet only

Essay suggestions;

Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments. Please review the six suggested adjectives below, select one or more that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

TENACIOUS- FAITHFUL—UNDAUNTED- STEADFAST- RESOLUTE- INNOVATIVE

b Bonus Points= 10 bonus points for being a military veteran
5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application _____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: Last _____ First _____ MI _____

Address: Street _____ City _____ State ___ Zip _____

Home phone: _____ E-mail address: _____

Applicant Birthdate: _____

2. KSV Sponsor Information : (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran Inc. Regular or Life Member)

Name: Last, _____ First _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Branch of Service _____

Unit served at Khe Sanh _____ Dates served there _____

____ Regular Paid KSV Member ____ Life KSV Member ____ Deceased KSV Life Member

____ KIA or MIA KSV Family Associate Member (Check One)

3. School Information: (School to be attending)

School Name: _____

School Address: Street _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

School Phone number: _____

Curriculum/intended course of study _____

School Year To be Funded __ Freshman ___ Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior (Check One)

4. Applicant Personal History (Be Specific!)

a EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Athletics, Publishing, Music, Art, Scouting, Communications, academic honors & prizes, student government participation,etc)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b. VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES: (community, church, government, environmental, health, etc.) -

c. LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HELD IN A&B (Capacity, Class Officer, Committee Chairperson, etc)

d. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY– FULL & PART TIME Include Military Service If Applicable)

e FINAL MAILING PACKET: (Due May 1ST)

Enclose THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS

***A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,**
***A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,**
***A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min. to 400 WORDS max. one page) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.**

!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!

I, SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

Signature Of Applicant

Actual Signature of Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY* 1ST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR TO BE APPLIED FOR

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc Scholarship Committee

Tom Eichler, President, Khe Sanh Veterans

















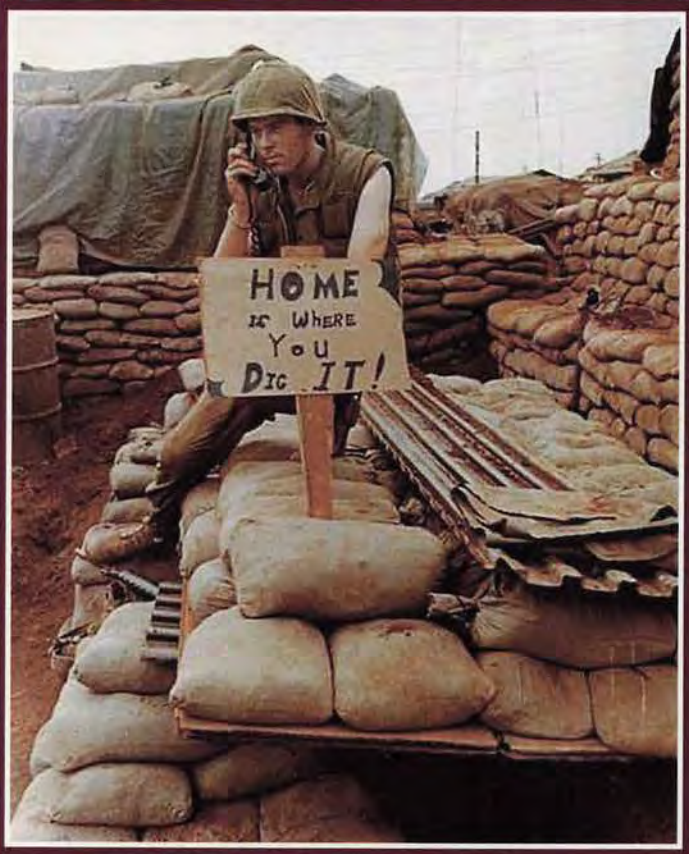
HOME
IS WHERE
YOU
DIG IT!









ISSUE 95

RED CLAY

SUMMER FALL 2018

MEMORIAL DAY 2018: 5TH MARINES VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL DEDICATION CEREMONY

STORY ON PAGES 20-22



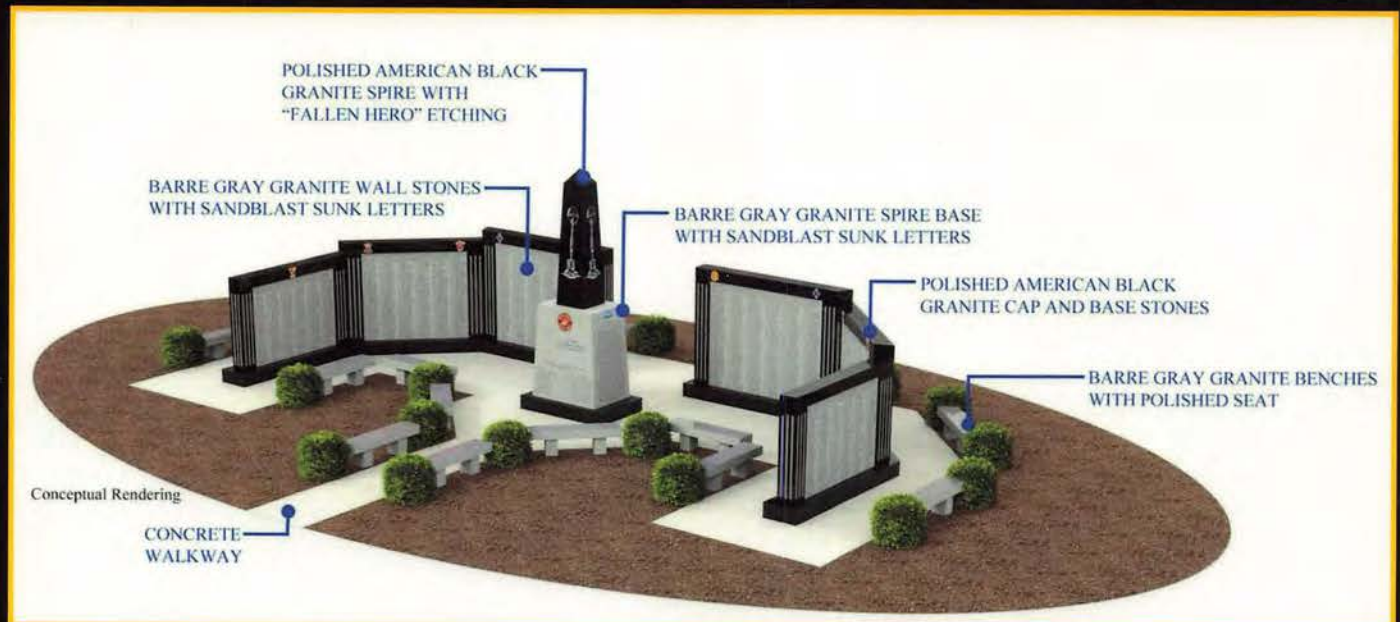

THE MEMORIAL RECOGNIZES AND COMMEMORATES ALL THOSE MARINES AND THEIR UNITS WHO FOUGHT IN THE FIGHTING FIFTH MARINES DURING THE VIETNAM WAR.






Dean Curry Photography



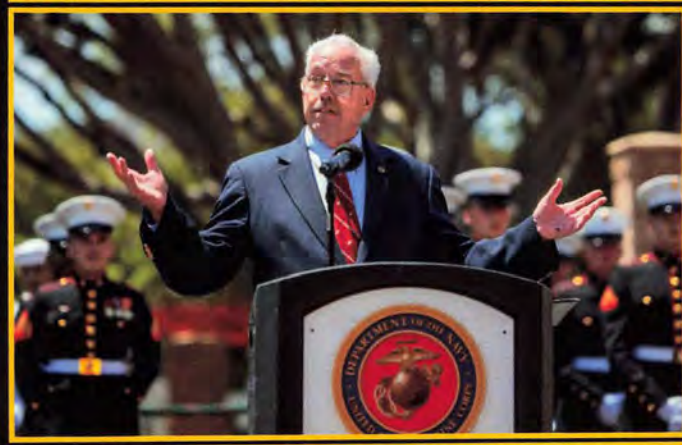


AMERICA
Proud Airbo
Dad


DEDICATED TO THE
COMBAT WOUNDED
AND
FALLEN WARRIORS OF THE
FIGHTING FIFTH
MARINE REGIMENT
ALL GAVE SOME
SOME GAVE ALL



OBIT

COLONEL THOMAS L. JOHNSON, USAF KHE SANH VETERAN, FLEW B-52 MISSIONS AT KHE SANH

Dr. Thomas "Tom" LeRoy Johnson, 85, of Elberta, Alabama, died Thursday, May 17, 2018 at his home with his wife Judy, children, grandchildren and great-granddaughter at his side.



Tom was born on March 26, 1933 in Seattle, Washington. He attended the University of Washington and graduated with a B.S. in business administration in 1956.

He served in the U.S. Air Force for 27 years, including four tours in Vietnam. Tom was a radar navigator on B-52 combat missions over Vietnam, including the battle of Khe Sanh. He was a special guest and keynote speaker at the November, 2014 Khe Sanh reunion. By the time of his retirement from the military, Tom achieved the rank of full colonel.

Tom received his doctor of arts in computer science from Nova University in 1988 and taught for 16 years as a college professor at the University of Maryland and University of Mobile.

He and his wife Judy enjoyed traveling to many exotic destinations throughout the world. Early this year Tom published his first book, "Skid Row Kid," an autobiography and in-depth look at the life of a young boy trying to survive on the streets of Seattle during the World War II era.

Tom is survived by his wife of 49 years, Judith A. Johnson; his sons, Thomas L. Johnson Jr. and Eric A. Johnson; his daughters, Karen L. Johnson and Laura Anna Jones; his grandchildren, Sarah Valdes, Jason T. Paine, Daniel T. Pate, Benjamin C. Johnson, Andrew C. Johnson and Emily A. Johnson; and his great-granddaughter, Senna L. Johnson.

Tom will be laid to rest in Arlington Cemetery.

KHE SANH VETERAN BILL BALZANO RECIEVES LONG OVERDUE BRONZE STAR W/V FOR ACTION ON HILL 950 06 JUNE 1967

SENATOR WHITEHOUSE BESTOWS BRONZE STAR ON VIETNAM HERO CHARLESTOWN RESIDENT RECEIVES LONG OVERDUE HONOR FOR REMARKABLE BRAVERY DURING MARINE CORPS SERVICE

Washington, DC, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse conferred a Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V" device upon William Balzano of Charlestown for his actions in Vietnam as a member of the United States Marine Corps. The ceremony took place in the Ballroom at the Providence G before dozens of Balzano's family, friends, and fellow service members.

"I am honored to bestow this long-overdue honor on Lance Corporal Balzano," said Whitehouse. "His actions in Vietnam are a study in bravery and selflessness, and for far too long those actions went unrecognized. Today, with his family by his side, we observe his exemplary service and solemn commitment to Corps and country."

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and courageous action against the enemy as a Machine Gunner with the Security Platoon, Sub-Unit One, Headquarters Company, Twenty-Sixth Marines (forward), Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. In the early morning hours of June 6 1967, Lance Corporal BALZANO, along with seventeen men, was defending a vital radio relay position on Hill 950 near Khe Sanh, which came under intense enemy small arms, automatic weapons, mortar and rocket fire fire, , followed by an assault of ninety North Vietnamese Regulars.

Almost immediately, six Marines were killed and four were seriously wounded. Unhesitatingly Lance Corporal BALZANO was forced to relocate his M-60 machine gun to the back of his foxhole, since the breach was from the opposite side of the perimeter. This causing him to be exposed himself to heavy enemy fire. Lance Corporal BALZANO began firing his M-60 which was now deployed in the open and facing the charging enemy. Lance Corporal BALZANO returned fire stopping the forward aggression of the enemy. He saw enemy soldiers on top of the communication bunker and fired on them killing them.

Lance Corporal Balzano continuously suppressed the enemy from his fighting position, all under a barrage of enemy fire and explosive projectiles directed at destroying the last M-60 machine gun protecting Hill 950. While repelling the enemy from overtaking a strategic communication tower, Lance Corporal BALZANO suffered a head wound from a round delivered by an enemy machine gunner and encountered numerous weapon malfunctions from the amount of shells he was forced to put through his gun.

BALZANO changed barrels which were glowing red and would use his M-16 to continue the suppression of the enemy. In the face of all this adversity, he maintained continuous fire with his machine gun, rifle, and grenades to protect the vital communication encampment.

BALZANO only hearing enemy fire thought his was the only position left on the hill. BALZANO knew that he would fight to the end, having enemy grenades thrown at his position and one lading in his foxhole. He knew if he left the foxhole he would certainly perish from the enemy machine gun firing at him.

Lance Corporal BALZANO realized that he was not the only Marine left alive on the hill. BALZANO attempted to kill the enemy machine gunner that had the few remaining Marines pinned by firing an M-79 at the tree behind the enemy gunner to no avail. When daylight came he and two other Marines decided to assault the enemy machine gunner by throwing the few hand grenades left and continual gun firing at him until the enemy gunner was seriously wounded. The enemy gunner was crawling away but immediately captured. Immediately after the battle, Lance Corporal BALZANO provided first aid and attendance to the wounded and assisted in capturing the last known fighting position of the invading enemy force. Undoubtedly, his exhaustive efforts and vigilance kept a key strategic fighting position in the hands of the United States Marine Corp and saved the lives of numerous Marines. Through his bold initiative, undaunted courage, and complete dedication to duty, Lance Corporal BALZANO reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.



BILL & LT. CAMPBELL & SENATOR SHELDON WHITEHOUSE



POSTER ANNOUNCING CEREMONY



L-R BARRY BUTTERWORTH, FORCE RECON, LT. CAMPBELL, WIFE BRENDA, BILL BALZANO, DAUGHTER STACIE , SEN WHITEHOUSE, KASSIM YARN, DIRECTOR VETERAN AFFAIRS, RHODE ISLAND



BRENDA, BILL & LT. CAMPBELL



BILL & LT. CAMPBELL LOOKING AT HIS NOTEBOOK FROM VIETNAM

LIEUTENANT CAMPBELL'S PRESENTATION

On behalf of the President of the United States, United States Marine Corps and Commandant of the Marine Corps, it is my honor to be able to present this Bronze Star Medal with a Combat V to Sgt. William Balzano for heroism while serving Hill 950, Quang Tri Provence, Khe Sanh, Vietnam, on June 6, 1967. Thank you Senator Whitehouse and especially Andrew, his aide.

Why is the Bronze Star being presented 51 years later? An explanation - Bill was in my platoon providing security to a radio relay station and observation post atop a peak on a mountain in N.W. Vietnam called Hill 950.

If you looked west, miles and miles, you overlooked the small Khe Sanh airbase runway and beyond at Laos. If you looked North, you looked right up the Ashua Valley into North Vietnam and East was the DMZ, border of North and South Vietnam and beyond the South China Sea.

Security was necessary because this relay station took radio messages from outposts operating in N. Vietnam, Laos and Khe Sanh and offshore ships. This was before emails, cell phones, satellite communications. When Bill and the 18 men of HQ platoon came under attack one night from the NVA

(100 it was later found out), immediately six Marines died and four were seriously wounded. I wasn't there but down at the Khe Sanh base, We all listened through the night to the radio transmissions that our men were over run, the NVA soldiers had gotten through our defenses and were attempting to knock out the critical communications. They managed to get a few feet from our men. Bill was a machine gunner who fired back at the NY A throughout the night. Our Marines did survive but not all. For Bill Balzano's actions and heroism that night we commemorate with this Bronze Star.

I wrote up the men for awards for what they did that night. Sgt. Baskin got the Navy Cross. But I was transferred a few weeks later before the paperwork and medals went up the line and were processed, to another unit 2/3. 48 years later, as the result of my name appearing in the Khe Sanh Veterans book, Bill Balzano called me one day and said, "is this Lieutenant Campbell?" - Now very few people on earth call me "Lieutenant". We got together and I learned for the first time that Bill didn't get the Silver Star he deserved. So the men on the Hill still surviving, Green and Costello, wrote to the Commandant. The Marine Corps said "we don't forget", and as you know, the request went up through the Commandant and he said Bill deserves the Bronze Star.

First, let me just say a few words about Bill and these young men, Marines 18 & 19 years old, not just who were in Country Vietnam, but were in actual combat with the NVA. We lost, in Vietnam, 58,220 men and women in Vietnam who left behind mothers, fathers, wives, children, loved ones, and over 500,000 wounded - (13,000 Marines were killed and 52,000 wounded). Not everyone in Bill's generation in 1967 went to Vietnam or went in the service, only a small percentage, as there were protests and marches against the Vietnam War. They were mostly lead by those who didn't want to get drafted into the military, no matter what and many did everything just to avoid the draft and get deferments.

But what made these Bill Balzano's, young boys volunteer to be Marines and not seek deferments. What did they volunteer for? Was it the title? - a Marine, the nice uniform those fantasies ended in boot camp. What was it? Did the Marines make these young boys or did they just already have it within their characters, as volunteers, and the Marines just brought the best that was already within them - Good Question.

I've said to people over the years - I could have spent each and every day doing nothing else but writing up citations for those young boys in Vietnam. What was it that was most heroic? - staying awake at night on watch, freezing, shivering - on 2nd watch, 3rd watch, hour after hour, keeping each other from falling asleep. Or seeing them carrying out their buddies, heads covered up or just wounded going out by chopper. When I was in Da Nang, on the bed across from me was a very young Marine, no legs, one arm and another Marine was speaking to him in Spanish, he laid across his stomach crying and the wounded Marine in the elevated bed patted his head saying in English, it's ok, it's ok.

These men, these Marines heroically put out, day after day, night after night. Going out on a listening post, walking point trying to avoid booby traps, food (living off c rations -no wonder we were so skinny), hot showers - no such thing; sleeping in a bed or rack -you've got to be kidding, not even tents on Hill 950. Never once did I ever hear anyone ever say, "I can't do this anymore". One example, a brand new young medic came up to me once and said, "Lt., all the men have colds and are sick from the constant rain; they can't go on". I just looked at him and mumbled something to the effect. "this is what we do".

So, it's our great honor to be with Bill today and even know Bill and other Veterans. I know myself and others may look like funny old men in our military caps, obviously not able to run forever like we once could. Just a few years ago, up here on Cape Cod, a young lady saw my hat and said to me in passing, "thank your service". I had never heard that before and actually I was speechless. I just couldn't process it mentally, emotionally. What? Did she really say "thank you"? But she did and now I hear people say it more often!

We Veterans who have heard the both sides, we should have stayed in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq or that we should have never gotten involved and wasted so many young men. It's hard for us Veterans to figure it all out and get your arms around it.

Bill and all Veterans like him don't have to figure it perfectly out. That is why we are here today, all of us - thank you for coming, to say to Bill and all Veterans, thank you - thank you for serving - thank you, Bill, for volunteering to give your life for someone else. No one has greater love than this, to offer his life for his brother or sister. It's the relationship of the Corps - of guys who would give their life for you, who got your back. Bill, thank God you made it.

And this awarding of this Bronze Star 51 years later is the country's and the Marine of saying, thank you for your service. For all of us, it is a very nice thing to say - thank you - thank you for your service - It does mean a lot to us Veterans, more than you will ever know.

Bill, everybody might not know, has been just recently diagnosed with aggressive prostate cancer, all 12 biopsies positive, probably from Agent Orange exposure.

Bill, us Marines say to each other, Semper Fi, always faithful To those of you who don't know, it doesn't refer to the fact Marines never forget, we sometimes do, or that we never leave our wounded behind, that we never do, but it does refer to Him who never forgets. Remember Bill, He will never forget you-and dinn't, not even after 51 years. So come up here and get your Bronze Star medal

MARINE AWARDED SILVER STAR FOR VIETNAM HEROICS A HALF CENTURY LATER

A Marine was awarded the Silver Star for his ac tions during the Vietnam War more than half a century after his heroic deeds.

Kelley refused to allow his position to be captured by the enemy, "and ignoring his own wounds, murderously engaged the enemy until they broke contact," the citation states.

The Silver Star award was approved in August 2017, but Kelley and fellow Marines waited until the anniversary of the firefight, museum officials told Marine Corps Times.
Kelley's Silver Star is the second this year to be awarded to a Marine who fought in the Vietnam War. First Lt. Philip H. Sauer was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for holding off an enemy attack with his .45-caliber pistol while on a recon patrol of Hill 861 in Vietnam.



Lance Cpl. Raymond Kelley (center) was awarded the Silver Star for his heroic actions during the Vietnam War 51 years after the incident. (National Museum of the Marine Corps)



A picture of Hill 861 south Landing Zone in Vietnam July 28, 1967. (Marine Corps)

FORMER MARINE TO BE HONORED IN DC FOR SERVICE TO FELLOW VETERANS

SAN DIEGO -- It's an understatement to say San Diegan William "Sarge" Rider is a survivor.

The Vietnam veteran lived through 13 months of one of the bloodiest battles in history. The Battle of Khe Sanh began on Jan. 21, 1968, when forces from the North Vietnamese Army bombed the U.S. Marine garrison located in South Vietnam.



Rider suffered three combat wounds in the ensuing battle -- he was part of the 1/9 Marine battalion that became known as the "Walking Dead," because for every 100 men who deployed with the 1/9, only a handful survived.

Rider is one of them.

His harrowing experiences -- and the pain of losing so many of his fellow Marines -- left him with depression and extreme survivor's guilt when he returned from the war.

"Heads exploding like a watermelon. Your best friends. How do you rectify that? How do you put that back together?" Rider reflected Wednesday. "And then as a human being, how can you accept the fact that you killed human beings, regardless of your situation?"

But today, Rider uses his experiences to help other war veterans deal with the mental anguish that often accompanies their return home.

Rider is a co-founder of American Combat Veterans of War, an organization that facilitates outreach and safe sharing groups for veterans, and the Director of Veteran Affairs for the City of San Diego.

Now, after more than a decade of providing services for fellow vets, he's being recognized nationally for his work. On Thursday, Rider will travel to Washington D.C., where he'll visit the Vietnam Memorial before being honored at the annual PBS National Memorial Day Concert this weekend.

OBIT

MARY HARPER UPTON
BELOVED WIFE OF LUTHER UPTON, KHE SANH VETERAN, A CO 3RD ENGINEERS

Mary (Molly) Harper Upton, age 68, of Evergreen, died Friday, December 29, 2017, in a Mobile hospital.



She will be remembered as a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. Burial was in the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Spanish Fort, Cope-Keahey Funeral Home directing. Her nephews served as pallbearers. Survivors include her loving husband of 20 years, Luther Upton, Evergreen; two sons, Brian (Adrian) Asire, Tallassee and Patrick Asire, Texas; two stepsons, John Berry (Julia) Upton, II, Auburn and Richard B. Upton, Anniston; one step-daughter, Leigh (Neils) Carmichael, Daphne; five grandchildren, Anna Cruit, Grayson Asire, Sara Grace Asire; Brook Asire, and Patrick Asire: one great- grandchild, Sadler Cruit; and two sisters, Betsy (Mark) Krantz, Fairhope and Pat (Robert) Booker, Monroeville.

FAMILIES PAY RESPECT TO LOVED ONES AT FORT SAM HOUSTON CEMETERY ON MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

By Sarah Acosta

SAN ANTONIO - The Fort Sam Houston Cemetery was filled with people Memorial Day weekend. Guests paid their respects to loved ones who once served or lost their lives in combat.

One couple, Arthur and Elvia Cavazos, visited five of their relatives buried at Fort Sam Houston.

One of Elvia Cavazos' brothers, Marine Pvt. 1st



Class Richard Stephen Hernandez, died at the age of 21 while fighting at Khe Sanh during the Vietnam War. The battle is considered one of the bloodiest battles fought by Marines.

Arthur Cavazos said it pains him to know how much his wife still hurts from her brother's death. Arthur Cavazos said that while he and his wife have to walk past several hundred graves to get to all of their family members, it's worth it. He said he enjoys seeing the various traditions people observe when paying respects to their loved ones.

"It's a day of remembrance for these people that paid the ultimate sacrifice to protect our way of life," Arthur Cavazos said. "It's a battle that continues today."



LIVING MEMORIAL SCULPTURE GARDEN IN WEED FROM CRAIG TOURTE

Yesterday at the Living Memorial Sculpture Garden in Weed Calif. . I write a story about this wonderful yearly event.

At the foot of the majestic and mystical Mount Shasta, the hallowed ground of the "Living Memorial Sculpture Garden" called once again to honor all veterans who have served our country. The informational pamphlet available to all visitors provides the Garden was "...founded in 1988 by a group of Siskiyou County veterans and is sponsored and maintained by the Weed/Lake Shastina Kiwanis Club. A Memorial Wall celebrates the honorable discharged veterans of our nation's conflicts from the Revolutionary War to the present."

Of the nine incredible haunting sculptures currently displayed, the original sculpture located in the center of the garden is titled "The Why Group." "This was the inaugural sculpture and remains the centerpiece of the Living Memorial Sculpture Garden array. On the ground a man rushes to help a falling comrade. High above on a pedestal the central figure arches his back, rears his head and stretches his arms to the sky."

The artist of these magnificent and inspiring sculptures is Dennis Smith. I asked Dennis his interpretation of the "The Why Group" sculpture. As he gazed up at the heavens, he responded that it posed the question often asked by each one of us who have experience conflict, "Why war, why me." The pamphlet reads in part, "Dennis Smith, a Vietnam War Marine Corps Sergeant and veteran of the Khe Sanh Siege, is the metal sculpture whose works grace the Sculpture Garden" The pamphlet quotes Dennis as saying, "Each sculpture has personal meaning for me in terms of life experiences and personal incidents. Through the arts we have the means to peacefully consider violence and to ask questions as well as to offer possible solutions." The pamphlet continues, "His work is specific yet symbolic, monumental yet intimate, patriotic yet cautionary." Dennis adds, "I don't think the purpose of art is to entertain, but to uplift, edify and educate."

Although the Living Memorial Sculpture Garden is somewhat remote in it's location, this Memorial Day, several hundred attended the wonderful and solemn ceremony honoring our Veterans. The Keynote Speaker was Major General Clyde L. Vermilyea (Retired). Khe Sanh Veteran Robert Singleton (A/3rd SP) and his Marine Corps League Siskiyou Detachment 936 formed the Color Guard & Gun Salute. In addition, Khe Sanh Veterans David Tonick (A/1/26), Thomas Horchler (H.Q. 1/13) as well as Dennis Smith (B/1/26) honored our Veterans. Sadly, there were more missing this year from our usual attending Khe Sanh Veterans group. Khe Sanh Board of Directors Member Kenneth Martin (B/3rd Recon) was not there, nor was former Khe Sanh Veterans Assoc. Sergeant at Arms Lloyd Scudder (B/1/26) present. Paul Turnbull and Bruce Kates (H.Q. 1/13) were also absent. Regrettable, those mentioned have passed away, but their spirits were with us this day and we honored their contribution and sacrifice for our country, we will remember them always and they will not be forgotten.

As I once again walked around the Memorial Garden, each sculpture telling a silent and personal story inspired by Dennis, I recalled a similar walk I took around these same grounds accompanied by Bruce Kates a few years before. I had met Bruce at Khe Sanh and had spoken to him shortly after he had arrived. Tragically he was terribly wounded a short time later and I never thought I would see him again. Bruce came to one of our Khe Sanh Northern California January 21st remembrances, although still suffering from the horrific wounds he had received at Khe Sanh, I immediately recognized him. Bruce attended the Khe Sanh Reunion in San Diego and several more of our January 21st events. During this walk Bruce turned to me and said, "It seems that you want to whisper when you're here." A couple of years later Bruce became seriously ill and sadly passed away. I thought of Bruce during this walk, and of Lloyd and Ken and Paul, and of so many others that are no longer with us, but I knew they were here in spirit this day, walking with me in this hallowed garden. The notation on the pamphlet for "The Peaceful Warrior" reads, "...there must be those who loving peace, will fight against aggression to preserve that peace. There is no contradiction in this. As long as such warriors are needed, The Peaceful Warrior honors those who step forward when asked to do so."



Left to right Khe Sanh Veterans – Dave Tonick A/1/26, Dennis Smith B/1/26, Craig Tourte & Tom Horchler H.Q. 1/13.



Attendance at the ceremony yesterday at the Living Memorial Sculpture Garden at the foot of Mt. Shasta near Weed Calif

Once you visit the Living Memorial Sculpture Garden it seems to become part of your soul, much like the Vietnam Memorial, there is a moving spirit about this place, you sense you are not alone and one longs for the time when you can once again return here to this hallowed ground to join the healing spirit of lost warriors at the foot of the magnificent and inspiring Mount Shasta.



OBIT

LIEUTENANT COLONEL
KENNETH W. PIPES USMC (RET)
KHE SANH VETERAN,
COMMANDING OFFICER BRAVO CO 1/26
RESERVE CAPTAIN, SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF (RET)
October 19, 1937-April 26 2018

Ken Pipes, Lt. Colonel, USMC Retired; The Skipper"The Skipper" was 29 when he arrived at Khe Sanh at the end of August 1967, and turned 30 on October 19, 1967. Born in Bakersfield, California and raised in Tulare and Clovis, California, he attended grammar and high school at Clovis, then Junior College in Fresno, and graduated from Fresno State majoring in US History.



At Khe Sanh, Ken Pipes commanded H & S Company from September through November, then Bravo Company from December 1967 through April 1968. He was the Assistant Operations Officer from May until "I got back to Sharon and the boys in late Sept.1968. Dan was 18 months when I left and Tim was just 6 weeks old."



Since retiring from the Marine Corps and Southern California Edison, Ken has spent 20-plus years as a Reserve Peace Officer Volunteer.

The Skipper was revered by the men who served with him. His courage, honor and respect for the men he led is the mark of a true leader.

Said the Skipper, "Last week I spoke to our Grandson, Connor's Second Grade Class. He introduced me as follows: My Grandpa joined the Marines, got married, had two sons and got old. I guess that sums up a man's life very succinctly. He hit it right on the money."



For more than 50 years, Ken Pipes wore a uniform — first as a long-time Marine officer who earned a Silver Star in Vietnam, then later as a reserve sheriff's deputy in North County, a role he held for 26 years.



That second job, he did for free. He didn't want the pay. He just wanted to contribute.

After five decades of public service, the Fallbrook man has finally called it quits, retiring in January as a reserve captain with administrative responsibility for all reserve deputies in North County.

With his 80th birthday approaching, said Pipes, it was time to "hang up my spurs."

"I think we all reach a point where you hate to leave something you enjoy and the relationships you have made, but there is a little clock inside all of us that says 'it's time to go,'" said the retired Marine Corps lieutenant colonel.

Service is important in his family — Sharon Pipes,



his college sweetheart and wife of 56 years, has volunteered with the sheriff's department's senior patrol unit for the last 20 years. She has also volunteered with the Friends of the Fallbrook Library for many years.



Between the two of them, Ken Pipes figures, they may have done as much 30,000 hours of unpaid work.

Aside from his "honest desire to help protect our community," the reserves job fulfilled another need. "It gave me an opportunity to continue to serve alongside Marines," he said, noting that many former Marines move into law enforcement.

Growing up in Central California, Pipes wasn't thinking of going into public service. He wanted to play football. He credits the influence of his college coaches in Fresno for his decision to enlist in 1957. They were former Marines, and he wanted to be like them.

Pipes would spend 25 years in the service — the first three as a reservist, the next 22 on active duty and as a part of history.

In 1962, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Pipes was a young officer aboard a ship headed toward the island nation.

Five years later, then-Capt. Pipes found himself in Vietnam, with two sons still in diapers back home. From late August 1967 until April 1968, he commanded two companies operating out of the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

That nine-month stretch included the Tet Offensive in 1968 and the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh. At the time, Pipes commanded Bravo company, which he said was responsible for defending a sector of the main base perimeter during the protracted and bloody battle. More than 60 men in his company died.

During the days and nights of fighting, he was nearly shot in the head. His helmet stopped the bullet. Sometimes at night, he'd walk the trenches, slipping a shot of whiskey to weary men.

His memories of Khe Sanh are included the feature-length documentary "Bravo! Common Men, Uncommon Valor."

His many awards and decorations from his time at Khe Sanh include the Silver Star — the nation's third highest honor for gallantry in combat — the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart.

According to his Silver Star citation, on March 30, 1968, Pipes' company launched an attack but came under heavy fire from automatic weapons, mortars and rockets.

According to the citation, Pipes "fearlessly maneuvered across the fire-swept terrain, deploying his men and adjusting supporting arms fire on the enemy." Although he suffered a serious wound, he ignored the painful injury and continued to lead his men. He "repeatedly exposed himself to the intense fire as he supervised the destruction of numerous bunkers and ensured that all wounded were treated and evacuated."

And when ordered to leave, he "unhesitatingly remained with the rear element of his command and directed an orderly withdrawal from the hazardous area."

In 1982, when Pipes retired as a lieutenant colonel, he stayed in San Diego County and began working in the security office at San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station.

He was still doing that job a few years later when he started reading headlines about a San Diego police officer who had been fatally shot. He groused to his wife about it.



"Sharon finally said quit complaining and do something about it," Pipes said. "That's when I enrolled in the police officers reserves academy."

He was 52 when he enrolled. While taking the six months of classes, he remained working full time at the nuclear power plant, driving to Carlsbad after work for five hours of law enforcement training every Tuesday and Thursday evening, as well as all day on Saturdays.

He left the power plant job about five years later, in 1995, and focused on his work in the sheriff's reserves.

Sheriff's Capt. Chuck Cinnamo, who runs the Vista sheriff's station, has known Pipes for about seven years and calls him "truly a lifelong public servant." "He is definitely dedicated to the cause of doing the right thing," Cinnamo said Friday. "That is what he is all about."

Over the years, Pipes also volunteered with a program called Veterans Moving Forward, where he counseled veterans in jail in hopes of getting them help and cutting recidivism rates.

Pipes, a Marine to his core, said that what he found most rewarding during his time in the reserves was the people that he worked alongside, particularly former Marines. He wants to see more of them step forward for the reserves job.

"When you are protecting and serving the public," Pipes said, "that is a noble calling."

POEM BY KEN

TEAR IN THE FABRIC
By Ken Pipes

Shadows flicker, fire reflecting
off the pines at the midnight hour-
another time-or place-or both-
another brief shadow-
just at the corner of the eye-
thinking-seen-imagined-
50 years is a long half-century away/ago-then
just perhaps a brief shadow-
that draws the string to a tight close
at the top of the bag that holds
all the secrets in a holder that holds it all:
the secrets-memories-
most good, some not so good?
Names, pictures, times, dates-
a minor tear in the fabric and the past-
even the future-could be revealed.
And the time-time moves
with a speed all its own-
the tune sometimes out of synch!
then the beat settles in
and the march begins again-
sometimes at the slow-
but increased step of the Kepi Blanc
of the Legion etrangere moving
out the gates of Forts
on the edge of some far flung and isolate outpost-
with flickering fire shadows
and movement out of the corner of the eye-
looked briefly like Don, Hank, Ken-Mac
no-
it is but the tricks of the midnight hour
or the light fading from the glow
that was once yesterday.

March 14, *2018*

POEM BY TIM PIPES KEN'S SON

The Siege What is it? What was it?
How, 0 Lord can I comprehend?

by **Timothy Pipes Bravo 1/26**

I wasn't there, but I was literally dying, six month old, at the beginning; desperate, cold and hungry just the same!
But, why 0 Lord can't I comprehend?
I have listened and I have read; I hove seen the "thousand yard stare!"
Why can't I comprehend?

I wish I knew, but I don't, in a way you Khe Sanh Veterans couldn't comprehend! Why? Because I wasn't there and neither were you all here; here in my shoes and my shoes are heavy!
Heavy with the burden of trying to understand!
Oh, why can't I comprehend?

I wish I could maybe it wasn't meant for my eyes and my heart But, why can't I comprehend; I wish I could!
Lord, I was lying near lifeless while you had my Dad at the land of Khe Sanh--
But, I don't understand why my Dad was in a lifeless land!
What you all went through I pray I never can comprehend

INTERESTING ARTICLE

AGENT ORANGE EFFECTS BEING SEEN IN GRANDCHILDREN OF VIETNAM WAR VETERANS

By: WFLA

HOLIDAY, Fla. (WFLA) - Birth defects and heart problems are showing up not only in the children, but the grandchildren of veterans who served in America's military during the Vietnam War.

The question is whether Agent Orange, a powerful poison sprayed by the military to wipe out vegetation, is a contributing factor.

Emma Ackerson, 9, of Holiday, looked like any other little girl playing her with dog.



But this list of Emma's medical problems keeps growing:

- Connective tissue disorder, which is EDS (Ehlers Danlos syndrome)
- Hypermobility

Vision problems

- Muscle weakness
- Sleep apnea
- Epilepsy (benign occipital epilepsy)
- Orthostatic hypotension
- Dysautonomia
- Long QT syndrome
- Joint pain
- GI problems
- Migraines

Acid reflux

- Arrhythmias
- Balance problems

Emma suffers headaches and stomach pain, as well as heart problems.

"All of a sudden she gets pale. She gets dark circles under her eyes and you either have to lay her down on the floor, you have top pick her up, because she'll pass out," explained Emma's mother, Keri Ackerson.

According to her mom, Emma's problems stem from a birth defect called Chiari malformation, a neural tube defect.

"It's a structural defect in the brain where part of the brain is going down in to the spinal column," said Keri.

Chiari malformation is also a condition associated with Agent Orange.

The military sprayed more than 20 million gallons of the powerful defoliant in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia to deny the enemy food sources and cover.

Tens of thousands of American military personnel handled, sprayed or were sprayed by this herbicide.

The chemicals in Agent Orange are known to cause a variety of illnesses including several types of cancers, among other diseases.

This list of illnesses tied to Agent Orange is posted on the Department of Veterans Affairs web site:

- AL Amyloidosis
- Chronic B-cell Leukemias
- Chloracne (or similar acneform disease)

Diabetes Mellitus Type 2

- Hodgkin's Disease
- Ischemic Heart Disease
- Multiple Myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- Parkinson's Disease
- Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset
- Porphyria Cutanea Tarda
  Prostate Cancer
- Respiratory Cancers (includes lung cancer)
- Cancers of the lung, larynx, trachea, and bronchus.
- Soft Tissue Sarcomas (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or mesothelioma)

- A group of different types of cancers in body tissues such as muscle, fat, blood and lymph vessels, and connective tissues.
-

It took decades for the Department of Veterans Affairs to admit that the powerful herbicide poisoned thousands of U.S. service members.

It took even longer for the government to acknowledge the children of those contaminated could also be affected.

Emma Ackerson's grandfather, Navy veteran Lonnie Kilpatrick, was exposed to the toxic herbicide while on Guam in the 70s.

The effects destroyed his heart.

After an eight-year struggle, 8 On Your Side assisted Lonnie in obtaining Agent Orange benefits from the VA.

Lonnie died weeks later from cancer that the VA missed.

Sheila Kilpatrick, Emma's grandmother, also lived on Guam, in an apartment complex near a jungle that was also sprayed.

"All my kids, they all have something, heart problems," explained Sheila. "We've pulled up all this information to link to Agent Orange."

Keri Ackerson, Sheila and Lonnie's daughter, was diagnosed with heart trouble at age 20.

"I black out probably 20 times a day, every time I stand up my vision goes black," stated Keri. "I wake up in the middle of the night feeling like I'm going to die."

Keri was also born with Chiari malformation.

Many of Emma's and Keri's medical issues show up on lists of illnesses associated with Agent Orange. The VA dismisses most as not Agent Orange connected.

Its current policy is that children born with Spina Bifida, who are the biological children of men who served in Vietnam and the Korean Demilitarized Zone, are eligible for VA benefits.

According to the VA, covered birth defects for children born to women who served in Vietnam and the Korean Demilitarized Zone include:

- Achondroplasia
- Cleft lip and cleft palate
- Congenital heart disease
- Congenital talipes equinovarus (clubfoot)
- Esophageal and intestinal atresia
- Hallerman-Streiff syndrome
- Hip dysplasia
- Hirschprung's disease (congenital megacolon)
- Hydrocephalus due to aqueductal stenosis
- Hypospadias
- Imperforate anus
- Neural tube defects
- Poland syndrome
- Pyloric stenosis
- Syndactyly (fused digits)
- Tracheoesophageal fistula
- Undescended testicle
  Williams syndrome

Leroy Foster of Lakeland claims he sprayed hundreds of thousands of gallons of Agent Orange while stationed on Guam.

Master Sgt. Foster suffers from 28 auto-immune diseases and terminal cancer.

His granddaughter was born with 24 fingers and toes.

"I carry terrible guilt. There's all these children I've hurt," explained Foster. "And all the unborn children that died and didn't have a chance to live."
Betty Medkeci, executive director of Birth Defect Research for Children Inc., is gathering data on children of veterans who served in Vietnam.

"I am absolutely convinced by the data that there's something significant going on in the children of Vietnam veterans," stated Medkeci."We have found impressive increases in learning, attention, immune, endocrine and skin disorders."

Medkeci points out Agent Orange isn't the cause of every birth defect to every child whose parent fought in Vietnam. In fact, some veterans were not

affected by Agent Orange at all.

Others, whose systems had a deficiency in the ability to break down toxins, were more likely to have a child with Spina Bifida.

"The higher level of dioxin in the veteran who had this deficiency, the more like they had a child with a neural tube defect," added Medkeci.

She claims studies to date are insufficient and she chides the VA for dragging its feet on research mandated by Congress.

"I know that industry doesn't want these connections made, but if it's happening. It's happening. It isn't going to go away because you don't like the answer," said Medkeci.

Medkeci believes not enough research exists to confirm Agent Orange exposure to veterans caused birth defects in their grandchildren.

"We need to solve questions about the effects on the first generation before we jump to grandchildren," she said.

At age 6, Emma Ackerson underwent corrective brain surgery. Her symptoms returned within weeks.

"She asks, you know, why is she being punished. And I try to explain 'you're not being punished.' You know, we just have to find a cure,'" said Keri.
At night, it's worse.

"When I get into bed, after a few minutes, I just start feeling hot and sweaty," explained Emma.
Emma wears a cooling vest and ice packs to help cool her body temperature.

Then there's the pain. "When you have to lay in bed every night and watch your child suffer and there's nothing you can do, I feel like I apologize to her all the time, but I can't help her," said Keri.
Agent

CROSSROADS BROTHERS REMEMBER HORRORS OF VIETNAM WAR

By Jon Wilcox | jwilcox@vicad.com

Despite the passing of almost five decades, some memories still burn brightly and painfully for three Crossroads brothers who served during the Vietnam War.

"They don't go away," said Leonard Sternadel, 68.
On a warm mid-May afternoon, Sternadel, of El Campo, with his two Ganado brothers, Frank, 77, and Kenneth Sternadel, 71, visited the Warrior's Weekend Field of Honor in Victoria, which hosts more than 2,500 American flags, each honoring a veteran.

Meandering through the rows of flags, the Sternadels enjoyed laughter and playful, brotherly teasing. They also shared difficult memories of the war as they visited each of their three flags.

The field of flags they visited was more than a beautiful patriotic display.

It also was an opportunity for healing and a sign that their community recognized and honored their sacrifices and service.

"When we came back, that was a tough time for our country," Leonard Sternadel said. "It's very satisfying that maybe after all these years and the things that we did and we went through, … people can at least acknowledge (our service)."

FRANK STERNADEL

When Frank Sternadel entered the Army in 1963, he was prepared to go to Vietnam. Instead, he was assigned to an "8-to-5" office job issuing security clearances at Fort Bragg in North Carolina.

Like his brothers, he grew up on his parents' farm in Ganado, taking his fair share of hard work in a large family that ultimately raised six other siblings.

"I'm the older, wiser of the three of us," he said, chuckling wryly.



Frank Sternadel poses soon after joining the U.S. Army in 1963.

He and his brothers recalled with laughter partaking in cow-patty and corn-cob fights. Although the brothers didn't always get along during their formative years, they have since grown close, they agreed. "My life was very boring in the service compared to these two," the eldest brother said.

KENNETH STERNADEL

Unlike his older brother, Kenneth Sternadel saw plenty of Vietnam.

"You didn't miss anything," Kenneth Sternadel said, reassuring his older brother with quiet emphasis.

Kenneth Sternadel joined the Marines at age 18 in 1965 after cotton ginning season ended in Ganado. After completing Marine boot camp at Camp Pendleton, he learned helicopter mechanics in Memphis, Tenn., before going on a four-month "Caribbean cruise" aboard a helicopter carrier.



Kenneth Sternadel after becoming a Marine in 1966.

When he got back in 1967, he had orders to go to Vietnam. At the time, he didn't consider the dangers.

During that year, 11,363 Americans were killed in Vietnam, according to the National Archives.

"I never thought about it really. It was just a place I had to be," he said.

Stationed near the demilitarized zone, the border adjoining North and South Vietnam, the middle Sternadel brother flew daily aboard a Sikorsky H-34 helicopter as a door gunner and mechanic.

The job allowed him to see much of Vietnam as the crew resupplied troops, chauffeured VIPs and removed wounded soldiers to safety.

"The worst," Sternadel said, was making night rescue trips into jungles filled with darkness and enemy soldiers.

"You couldn't see," he said, his voice cracking with emotion.

Sometimes, as they searched for the strobe lights used by American troops to guide helicopters to safe landings, several other lights would be sighted in the jungles.
Enemy Vietnamese soldiers hoped to confuse pilots with those lights and kill the helicopter crews who mistakenly landed near them.

"They were trying to kill us," he said. "And we were trying to kill them."

During his 14 months in Vietnam, Kenneth Sternadel experienced many terrifying times. He was there during the infamous Tet Offensive. He landed three times amid falling rocket artillery during the siege of Khe Sanh. But he said his absolute worst day was July 4, 1968, when his helicopter was attempting to rescue wounded near the demilitarized zone.

While making a second pass at a landing zone after overshooting it the first time, the pilot and corpsman on board were shot. Their helicopter crashed.

Sternadel said afterward at least 50 bullet holes were counted on the helicopter.

"You don't think about stuff like that. You put it out of your mind," he said.

LEONARD STERNADEL

Leonard Sternadel, who jokingly described himself as "mama's favorite" and "the best-looking one," joined the Army in 1969 because he assumed he would be drafted.
That year marked the most American deaths during the war with 16,899 killed, according to the National Archives.

Sooner than he expected, he found himself making reconnaissance patrols in the jungles to the north of South Vietnam's capital, Saigon.

For nine months, he hiked through jungles, setting booby traps and laying ambushes along trails.

Once, one of those booby traps exploded, killing a dear friend as it was being set. Another time, he and a small group of Americans became the target of an ambush themselves, causing them to run for their



Leonard Sternadel relaxes after returning from a mission to Fire Support Base Libby in Vietnam during 1970.

lives as the enemy pursued them. That same day, a helicopter was shot down while attempting to remove wounded Americans. The experience was terrifying, he said.

"Initially, you are bulletproof, but that doesn't last long," he said.

During those nine months, Leonard Sternadel said he rarely thought about the grim, deadly business in which he was involved.

"You really try to put it out of your mind," he said, adding, "You either kill them, or they kill you."
Lasting effects

Although Leonard Sternadel survived those trying months, they have left an indelible mark in his mind, he said. While remembering some of those times at the Field of Honor, Sternadel was gripped with emotion almost 50 years later.

Talking with a Veterans Affairs counselor helps, he said, and so does socializing with other veterans. Sternadel is president and co-founder of Chapter 1069 of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

But perhaps most of all, it's the support and recog-

nition of his community that has helped him live with those memories, he said.

"I feel like I am a patriot. I feel proud for my service to my country," he said.

AFTER THE WAR

Frank Sternadel and his wife of 53 years had two sons living in Victoria and Longview. They are both married. Sternadel's wife died last year. He worked for Alcoa in Port Lavaca for 36 years. He lives in Victoria.

Kenneth Sternadel has been married for 48 years and has two married children, who live in San Antonio and Seadrift, and four grandchildren. Sternadel worked for Key Energy for 41 years. He lives in Ganado.



Leonard Sternadel, right, poses for a photo Vietnam with friends Bill Smith, of Dallas, left, and Tim Spears, of California, middle.



A Sikorsky H-34 helicopter like one ridden by Kenneth Sternadel during his time in Vietnam.

Leonard Sternadel has been married for 44 years and has three married children living in Weimar, New Jersey and Denver. He has three grandchildren. After giving 26 years to the U.S. Army, Sternadel retired in 1995. He has also worked as community service director for the City of El Campo, where he lives, and served two terms on the city council there. He is the president and cofounder of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter No. 1069.



Kenneth Sternadal, right, stands with an unidentified friend in Vietnam.



From left, brothers Frank, Kenneth and Leonard Sternadel share a laugh at the Field of Honor by Parkway Church. Kenneth, 77, and Leonard, 68 served in the Vietnam War, and their brother, Frank was in the Army, but never deployed.



Leonard Sternadel guards the perimeter at an under-construction fire support base in Vietnam



Leonard Sternadel's sleeping place at Fire Support Base Libby in Vietnam during 1970. A belt of grenades and wooden box containing his personal items are present.



Kenneth Sternadel, a Vietnam Veteran, gets emotional at the Field of Honor while recalling a memory from when he served in 1967-1968.



THIS TABLEAU OF CHAPLAIN RAY STUBBE'S GEAR AND RELATED IMAGES WAS PART OF THE RECENT VIETNAM WAR EXHIBIT AT THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY. IT WAS ON LOAN FROM ITS PERMANENT HOME. PARDON MY REFLECTION; DIDN'T SEEM TO BE ANY WAY TO AVOID IT.

PLANNING , OBTAINING FUNDS AND TRANSPORTING MEMORIAL STONEWORK FOR VIETNAM MEMORIAL ARRIVES AT CAMP PENDLETON

Sitting 4 ½ years ago in the shadows of the 5th Marine Regiment's memorial garden, Steve Colwell dreamed that someday he'd return to see a granite monument rising from the dust to remember his long ago war in Vietnam.

On Thursday morning — National Vietnam War Veterans Day — three semitrailer flatbed trucks hauling 50 tons of black granite cut into six large slabs pulled into a parking lot inside Camp Pendleton. The stonework displays the names of 2,706 Marines and sailors killed in Vietnam while fighting for the three battalions that comprised the 5th Marine Regiment, plus the dead from 2nd Battalion, Fourth Marines.





And Colwell was there to greet it, along with hundreds of Marines who lined San Mateo Drive at a rigid position of attention in solemn honor of the memorial.

"Back then, I was one person sitting out here and now we have 2,706 Marines and sailors who died in



Steve Colwell has been a key supporter for acquiring the funds to erect the 5th Marines Vietnam War Memorial for Camp Pendleton. (Nelvin C. Cepeda / San Diego Union-Tribune)

Vietnam. It's been a long journey," said Colwell, a Carlsbad real estate developer who was seriously wounded near Hoi An while serving with D Company, 1st Battalion, Fifth Marines in 1967. "And no matter how much work it's been, I have to remind myself that it's an honor to be able to do this."

After a brief ceremony, workers began jostling the heavy granite hewn by Vermont's Rock of Ages quarry off the trucks. Escorted by chapters of The Patriot Guard Riders along the 3,000-mile route, the stonework started out from New England covered in snow but arrived on a sunny Thursday at Camp Pendleton.

Along with a spire rising from the center of the monument, it's slated to be fully installed by Me-



On Monday, May 28 the 1/5 Vietnam Veterans Association dedicated the 5th Marines Vietnam War Memorial with a ceremony from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Camp San Mateo 5th Marine Regiment Memorial Garden, located on Cristianitos Road in San Clemente, CA. The Memorial will honor the 2,706 Marines and Sailors who died in Vietnam while serving with the 5th Regiment.

The Memorial Monument was designed entirely with granite by monument builder Rock of Ages. The layout includes a total of six name panels arranged in a "U" shape around the center piece. Both sides of the name panels list the KIAs for a total of twelve name panels. The Battalions and porcelain emblems are listed at the top of the panels for each unit.

The panels list the rank, first name, middle initial and last name of the 2,706 KIAs in the 5th Marines during the Vietnam War. Twelve granite benches accommodate visitors to the Camp San Mateo Memorial Park with great close-up views of the Memorial Monument.

This project holds special meaning for both Rock of Ages and the veterans organizations involved. David Fournier, Large Projects Specialist at Rock of Ages, said, "Early on in the project, Steve Colwell of the 1/5 Vietnam Veterans Association payed us a visit and it was quite an experience listening to him talk about his Vietnam tour with D Company, 1st Battalion Fifth Marines. This Memorial means so much to him, and we are truly honored to be a part of it."

Those involved with raising funds for the project include the 1/5 Vietnam Veterans Association, the 1st Marine Division Association, the Dana Point 5th Marines Support Group, and the 5th Marine Regiment Command Group. Funds are still being raised for the Memorial. Donations are being accepted through the campaign

Stephen B. Colwell of the 1/5 Vietnam Veterans Association will be on site during the ceremony for interviews. He can be reached at 760-522-6091 and stephenbcolwell@aol.com.

ABOUT THE 1/5 VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION

The 1/5 Vietnam Veterans Unit Chapter of the 1st Marine Division Association is a 501 (C) (19) not-for-profit corporation chartered in the state of North Carolina. The organization's missions include supporting the 1st Marine Division Association and its Scholarship Programs; preserving incidents and memories of the Marines and Sailors who served with 1/5/1 during the Vietnam War; and fostering, encouraging, and perpetuating the memory and the spirit and comradeship in arms of the 1/5/1 Vietnam Veterans. For more information, visit 1-5vietnamveterans.org.

Vietnam veterans have been waiting for the memorial for 50 years. The class of '67 was one that fought with distinction but also suffered the devastation of some of the toughest fighting the war in Vietnam would ever see.

The cold granite walls represent 2,706 Marines and sailors and their once-2nd Lt. Steve Colwell oversaw the years long process of raising the money and designing the memorial.

"In the 60s, they raised their hand and they answered the call of duty when 16 million of their peers stepped sideways or backwards," Colwell said. "They put on a pack and went 10,000 miles away from home. They fought in rice paddies and jungles and monsoons and terrible conditions and they gave all they had and all they would ever have."

Jimmie Edwards III says the dates etched into the memorials are scarred into the minds of all the members of the 5th Marine Regiment.

"On August 19, 1969, all those names are the men I was with that were killed when I was wounded," Edwards said.

Members of the Fighting 5th say finally all the brothers that have been scattered in cemeteries across the nation are now brought together one last time.

morial Day. It will join a memorial garden already ringed by monuments to the regiment's fight to take Vietnam's Go Nai Island during Operation Allen Brook in 1968; the 14 Marines from I Company, 3rd Battalion, Fifth Marines lost in the crash of an MV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft in 2000; and the many Marines killed in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003.

"We've been building it out for 10 years now," said Terry Rifkin, the president of the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment Support Group, a charity that spearheaded much of the funding for the monuments. "It's a special place."
The nonprofit joined the 1/5 Vietnam Veterans Association and the 1st Marine Division Association to collect more than $350,000 to fund the Vietnam memorial, but they're seeking about $50,000 more from the public.

That should be enough to pay the cost of of the foundation, finish the landscaping and fly out several impoverished Gold Star families so that they can see the names of their loved ones on the memorial, too.

Anything left over will be donated to charities designed to aid service members, Colwell said.

Colwell predicted that the memorial and its tranquil garden will become a mecca for Vietnam veterans to visit, sitting quietly in the shade as he once did while they reflected on the war they fought a half-century ago.

Men like John Chang, 72, who made the trip from Surprise, Ariz. to welcome the memorial to Camp Pendleton.

"Every night, in my dreams I see the faces of the Marines and corpsmen who are on this monument. Brave, brave men. And now they're home, again, at the 5th Marine Regiment," said Chang, a corpsman with C Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines in Vietnam.

Lt. Col. John Gianopoulos, the executive officer of 5th Marine Regiment, will be glad to see them. Throughout the morning, he encouraged Marines lining the roadway for the monument's arrival to seek out Vietnam vets and shake their hands, welcoming them back home.

"It's about establishing a connection," said Gianopoulos, a former commander of Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, in Iraq. "Today, you get so much, 'Thank you for your service.' I believe in that. I love that connection the American military has today with civil society, but it's no secret that it hasn't always been that way.

"If you'd asked about that 40 years ago — did you get a lot of thanks for your service? — I'd venture to say that the answer would be 'no.'" he said.

He noted the "amazing" relationship America had with its veterans immediately after World War II.
"Part of what America is built upon is that relationship between civil society and our military, but we went to a low point in the 1970s and 1980s and these veterans standing out here today helped to overcome that," he said. "They stood with broad shoulders, endured that and built that so that today I can't walk down the street without somebody stopping me and thanking me for my service."





MARINE RECONNAISSANCE FOUNDATION

On 02 June 1969 Recon Team "Flight Time" from D Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, was inserted on Hill 471 about a kilometer south of Khe Sanh in the Quảng Trị Province, Vietnam, On the night of 03/04 June 1969 the team was attacked by an enemy force and requested both emergency extraction and immediate reinforcement. Communications with the team were lost at 0320. When the reactionary force arrived a little after 0400 they were too late ... the six members of "Flight Time" were dead. Five members of the team were in a small trench; the sixth, Cpl Buck, was approximately 10 meters further down the hillside. It was apparent from the state of the battle area that "Flight Time" had been overwhelmed in fierce Hand to hand combat.

RICHARD SOTO
F CO 2/26 REMEMBERANCES
IN MEMORY OF THE MARINES &
CORPSMEN FROM FOX COMPANY,
2ND BATTALION, 26TH MARINES LOST
FROM JANUARY 1968 TO OCTOBER 1968

PFC Clifton Moses	F/2/26 35E44
PFC Melvin L. Dolby	F/2/26 43E40
PVT John F. Quattlebaum	F/2/26 43E46
PFC James D. Richardson	F/2/26 48E47
CPL Donald R. Schroeder	F/2/26 48E47
LCPL James R. Wells	F/2/26 48E49
LCPL Gilbert Wiley	F/2/26 48E49
PFC Gilbert L. Zerbst	F/2/26 48E50
SGT Edwin D. Connell	F/2/26 43E52
CPL George A. Pruitt	H&S 2/26 43E54
PVT Billy M. Holllimon	H/2/26 43E6
LCPL Andrew Jackson	F/2/26 43E23
PFC Edward W. Heifner	F/2/26 35E32
CPL Rodney Bradford	F/2/26 43W6
L/CPL David Freed	F/2/26 43W35
L/CPL James Rinehard	F/2/26 43W36
PFC Richard Prostell	F/2/26 52W43



RICHARD SOTO BOTTOM & PFC JAMES RICHARDSON FIRE TEAM LEADER KIA 07 APR 68



JAN 68 KHE SANH, HILL 558 L-R
L/CPL HAROLD BAIRD &
LCPL ANDREW JACKSON KIA 06 MAR 68



DEC 67 PHU BAI AREA CPL G. PRUITT
KIA 08 APR 68 KHE SANH



JAN 68 KHE SANH HILL 558
TOP SGT JOHN FEIGLE WPNS PLT SGT BOTTOM
LEFT PFC GIL "COWBOY ZERBST KIA 07 APR 68



FALLEN MARINE CORPS MAJOR KILLED IN VIETNAM WAR, HONORED AS HERO, REMEMBERED AS DAD

By: Paul Wagner

WASHINGTON - Fifty years after a Marine Corp Major lost his life in Vietnam, his daughter is paying her respects at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.

Anastasia Kurilich was 7-years-old when her father was shot down Southeast of Khe Sanh Airfield. He lost his life with the helicopter pilot, Ralph Hunt, and Marine Captain Richard Corcoran.

Anastasia Kurilich learned what happened in a talk with her mom. That's a memory that never fades.

"And she just sat us down in our room and just said 'Remember when we had the talk that Daddy may not come back from the war?' And then it just hits." While Anastasia visited the wall for the third time on Saturday, she was overcome by emotion while in the company of other Vietnam vets. Something she had not done before.

"Saturday with the Vietnam Veterans, Run For The Wall and I just let it go. It was the right people to come with." Major Robert Kurilich may have looked at himself as one tough Marine, but Anastasia says he was one big softy.

"I have seven years of body contact that is warm, golden, honey-colored love just pouring through us. He was everybody's favorite because he was just this big teddy bear love. Even though he was a Marine -- he was a marshmallow heart Marine."

Anastasia's older sister has never been to the wall. But her mother and younger sister have. She describes it as hallowed ground.

She says of her Dad's sacrifice, "as a child you just want your Daddy and you know people say he is a hero because he served his country and did this and that. I say he is a hero because he was loving and kind and patient and funny and that is why he is my hero."

Marine Corps Major Robert Kurilich was 30-years-old years old and a 10-year veteran when he was killed. His memory will live on, with his name engraved on panel 59 west.

Thank you for your service Major Kurilich.





May 26, 2018, Three Marine's reflections looking at the bean in Chicago.
Dick Schie, Larry Deason, Jim Larson.
The same Marines at Khe Sanh, 1968 age 19...

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

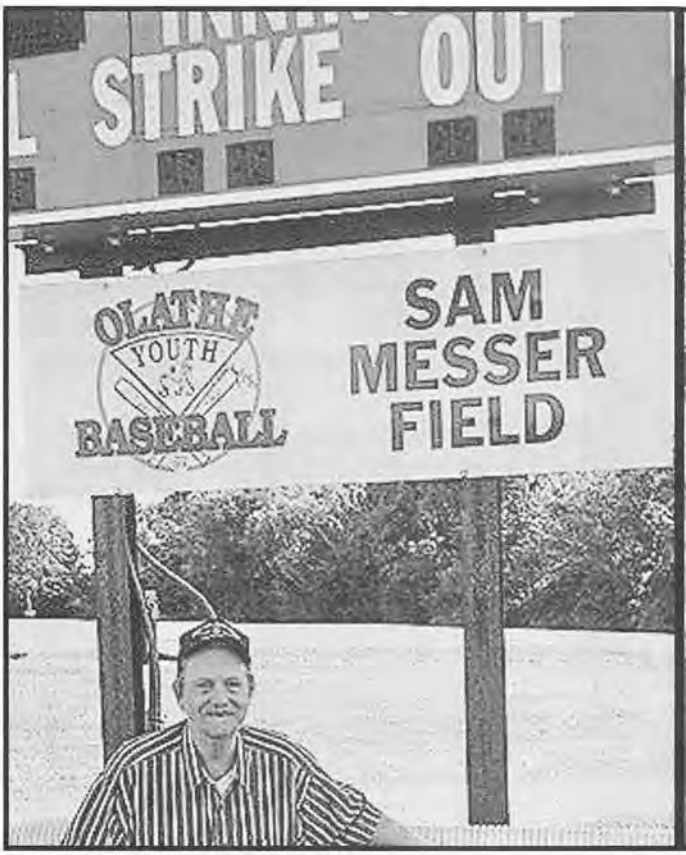



PRAIRIE CENTER PARK BASEBALL FIELD # 3 NAMED AFTER KHE SANH VETERAN SEABEE SAM MESSER,
FOR HIS DEDICATION TO OLATHE YOUTH BASEBALL

OBIT

SGTMAJ BERNARD G. GODDARD, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN,
KILO CO 3/26 HILL 861
1927-2018

Sgt. Maj. Bernard G. Goddard, USMC (Ret.) passed away May 29th, 2018. Bernard was born December 8th, 1927 in Dudley, MA., the second child to Joel and Rose Goddard. Bernard attended Cole Trade School of Southbridge, MA. 1943-1945, After which he began his 34-year career in the United States Marine Corps by enlisting in July 1945.

After recruit training at Parris Island, SC., he was deployed to Tientsin, China for occupation duty un-



til the end of WWII. Bernard served in Korea from 1953-1955, and later, when the Cuban Missile Crisis erupted, he was deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in October 1962. With the escalation of the war in Vietnam, he deployed as First Sergeant of Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines. During 1966-1967 he saw action in the I Corps area of South Vietnam along the DMZ where he received four Purple Hearts and was awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. Bernard's actions in Vietnam have also been cited in two publications: "LIMA-6" by Colonel R.D. Camp with Eric Hammel and "The Battle for Khe Sanh" by Captain Moyers S. Shore II.

After his retirement from the U.S. Marine Corps on September 1st, 1979, Bernard settled his family in Poway, Ca. where he began his second career helping anyone and everyone. He was always available to his friends, neighbors and strangers alike for whatever they needed. He was often seen driving the streets of Poway in "Old Betsey", his beloved military green pickup truck with Marine Corp. emblems waiving to fellow patriots who honked their horn thanking him for his service.

Bernard is survived by his wife Yasuko, daughter Linda and granddaughter Victoria.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation in Bernard's name to any Veterans assistance organization or to his granddaughter's college fund at the following website:

COMMENTS:

Breakfast with my marine brothers and wives; inspired at the love and dedication we share for Our Kilo Co First Sgt. As difficult it is to say goodbye we are all sharing different specific interactions we had in Vietnam. Thankful to having had the opportunity to have known this great Marine! Semper Fi!
Patrick Pond

Growing up in a Marine family, I have met Marine legends and heroes over the years. Ben ranks high among them. I learned more about leadership from him than anyone else in my life.
Semper Fidelis my friend.
Joe D. Beck

The greatest first Sgt in the Marine Corp we had some laughs after we met for the first time after Viet Nam He grabbed me in a headlock and said " You gave me all these grey hairs Mahoney " I loved and respected him more than any leader I ever served under Tough but fair with great bravery under fire He will always be remembered by "his boys"
Brian Mahoney

Absolutely! A term of endearment
Caryn Wallin

Karen Mais

CHICK-FIL-A HONORS FALLEN SOLDIERS WITH SPECIAL EMPTY TABLE

By Michelle Gant | Fox News

Chick-fil-A celebrated fallen soldiers on Memorial Day by setting an empty table in remembrance of them.

At several locations across the country, the chicken chain set a special place as a reminder of those who've lost their lives serving our country.

"It's a tradition in military services when you have a formal celebration to have a table for those who didn't make it back," retired Navy Commander Marinus Storm, who runs a Chick-fil-A in Jacksonville, Fla. said in a statement.



The Missing Man Tables, also referred to as Remembrance or Fallen Soldier Tables, were set with a white tablecloth "for the purity of the service members' motives in serving their nation" and an "empty chair that will never be filled."

On top sat a red rose, an American flag, a Bible and a framed message about the meaning of the display. "People have always been touched by it, especially veterans and the generation that has children in the armed forces now," Storm said. "There's no doubt this is an opportunity to teach people, specifically those who don't have any connection to the military, about the sacrifices our service members make and that hose losses last."

OBJECTS ON THE TABLE

The white tablecloth draped over the table represents the purity of their response to our country's call to arms.

The empty chair depicts an unknown face, representing no specific Soldier, Sailor, Airman, or Marine, but all who are not here with us.

The table itself is round to show that our concern for them is never ending.

The Bible represents faith in a higher power and the pledge to our country, founded as one nation under God.

The black napkin stands for the emptiness these warriors have left in the hearts of their families and friends. A Purple Heart medal can be pinned to the napkin.

The single red rose reminds us of their families and loved ones. The red ribbon represents the love of our country, which inspired them to answer the nation's call.

The yellow candle and its yellow ribbon symbolize the everlasting hope for a joyous reunion with those yet accounted for.

The slices of lemon on the bread plate remind us of their bitter fate.

The salt upon the bread plate represent the tears of

their families.

The wine glass, turned upside down, reminds us that our distinguished comrades cannot be with us to drink a toast or join in the festivities of the evening.

ARTICLE JUDGE DAVID CARTER KHE SANH VETERAN CHARLIE CO 1/9

FEDERAL JUDGE DELAYS MONGOLS TRIAL BUT WARNS THE GANG ABOUT MANNERS

R. Scott Moxley

Inside a stately Orange County federal courtroom on June 4, U.S. District Court Judge David O. Carter silently eyed a wild looking bunch of at least 25 Mongols Motorcycle Club members dominating the public seating section.

Several of the club's crew looked bar-room ready to rumble with anyone who held their probing gazes, but Carter, a heroic U.S. Marine survivor of a brutal 1968 military battle in the Vietnam War at Khe Sanh as well as one of the nation's most colorful judges, wanted the motley crew to know who is in charge and not to be challenged: him.

"What a great impression you make," the federal judge sarcastically said to the Mongols during the pre-trial hearing.

He told the group–which has a history of murder, robbery and extortion in Southern California–they are welcome to attend proceedings, but if he sees any of them "looking cross-eyed" at witnesses during an upcoming trial there will be hell to pay. "I had a whole row of about 50 cops do that," he said about an Anaheim police excessive force case.

To press his point, Carter asked the Mongols in attendance, folks who spent an inordinate amount of time mad-dogging an undercover federal law enforcement agent working the case, if they "got it." "Yes, sir," most of them quickly responded.

The Mongols are involuntarily in Carter's ninth-floor Santa Ana courtroom because the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is trying to use the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act to rob the club of two of its iconic trademark logos in a ground-breaking forfeiture claim.

It's not clear what the government would do if it



grabs the rights to the logos, but Carter dismissed DOJ's first attempt at the move as "legally deficient" in 2015.

Two years later, a three-judge panel at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit reversed his ruling without determining if prosecutors can legally take the trademarks.

In late May, DOJ officials filed an amended complaint against the Mongols, adding new murder, attempted murder and narcotics trafficking charges in their effort.

The expected six to eight-week trial at Orange County's Ronald Reagan Federal Courthouse was scheduled to begin June 26, but the parties asked Carter to delay the case until October 23.

An assistant United States attorney told the judge he will use the testimony of undercover agents who infiltrated the Mongols organization to establish it remains a lethal criminal enterprise subject to federal forfeiture laws.

Carter expressed renewed concerns about the government's theory given First Amendment protections, noting that self-identified Nazis freely rallied in Skokie, Illinois in the 1970s and "idiots" at the

Westboro Baptist Church in Kansas have openly prayed "for the death of marines" because the nation enacted gay rights.

Joseph A. Yanny, the raspy-voiced Los Angeles-based attorney for the Mongols, argued DOJ is "trying to hang the club on the [criminal] actions of rogue individuals," who have been booted from the organization which is now home to "law abiders."

"Well, that's your claim," responded Carter, who has experience presiding over cases involving dangerous criminal street gangs like the Aryan Brotherhood and Mexican Mafia. "I'll have to hear testimony."

Among DOJ's new counts against the Mongols is the alleged sale of a tiny amount of narcotics, a charge the judge said made him "scratch my head in amazement." He asked, "Does anyone really care about 34 grams of drugs?"

The Mongols chuckled.



But a federal prosecutor responded, "I do."

Ironic that of all days I was not only at Navy drill but that I had the honor of meeting a Vietnam Marine Corps veteran - Sgt. Lee Rimkus.

This man was attending a building rededication named for HM3 "Doc" James Raab. Doc was killed by a NVA sniper after he "went forward" over a cemetery wall to aid a Marine who had been shot. A second Marine also went over the wall to try a get Doc Raab and he too was shot. Doc Raab was awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with "Valor" insignia along with the Purple Heart.

Doc Raab's son was 2 months old. The Raab family were NJ natives. Mrs. Raab, also present today, never remarried, and raised her children in NJ. The son, he went on to graduate high school in Toms River and entered the United States Naval Academy. He continued his Navy career, retiring today after 32 years of service, including his Academy time.

Sergeant Lee Rimkus, was the Radio man that called in the medevac for Doc Raab. At the time of Doc Raab's demise, the platoon/battalion had been engaged in a 5-day, near continuous, battle with the NVA. This battle hardened Marine cried today for 'his' Corpsman, all these years later.

Panel 57W 003 is Raab's inscribed Vietnam Memorial location.

Sgt. Rimkus related that the previous 3 Corpsmen assigned to the battalion and 2 Radiomen were all killed in action. He was an infantry rifleman who was ordered to do radio operator duty.

He opined openly that he did not know why he survived … except perhaps to "be here today to honor a man who gave his all for his Marines". He spoke of the Marines' 3 field rules;



1."Don't mess with our chow, it was only C Rations, but they were our C-Rations."
2. "Don't mess with the mail, it was the only thing they looked forward to."
3. And … Don't ever mess with our/my Corpsman … just don't. He's ours!

This was a humble man, a man who had lived more than a lifetime by his 20th year of life. 13 months of Vietnam field duty. Marines came and went, some went home injured, some went home dead, some went home alive, most, if not all, were anonymous but he always knew and remembered his Corpsmen. "They were us, and we were them."

He reported his greatest fear was meeting Mrs. Raab, "I don't know why but …" as his voice trailed off. A man who had hip replacement surgery a month ago, "and I got 'better' so I could be here today." He limped with a cane. He came from Bozeman, Montana to "honor an American hero".

At the end of the ceremony, I approached him again, he asked me if he did okay … seemingly concerned that he didn't do justice to his Corpsman.

I reached for my shirt and removed my FMF Warfare pin, shook his hand with pin in mine, giving my pin to him. He opened his hand asking "what's this?". I told him it was my FMF pin, and it was now his. His tears flowed … trying to hand it back to me, and I told him "No, that's yours for taking care of our Corpsman". His hug was as ready as his tears, unreserved and honest as he said "thank you, thank you Doc, thank you brother!"

That's summed it all up "Doc" and "brother" in the same sentence.

Semper Fidelis Marine Sgt. Rimkus. Semper Fi.

Rest In Peace HM3 James Doc Raab. Semper Fi Doc.

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

REFLECTIONS OF VIETNAM

On Monday, May 21 at 2:00 pm the Senior Center of South Plainfield hosted a special photo presentation narrated by South Plainfield High School alumni, Joe Belardo and Paul Fusco. The two men, who were friends in high school, spent time together in Vietnam in 1967-68, and have created a program entitled "Reflections of Vietnam," which they have presented more than 200 times. "Reflections of Vietnam" covers Belardo and Fusco's combat experience and one-on-one exposure to the Vietnam



In the 35 years that Belardo and Fusco have been doing their presentation, audience reactions have been emotional. Person photographs depict scenes in Southern Vietnam, the Central Highlands, and the Demilitarized Zone. The 1968 TET Offensive and battles in the mountainous highlands are shown as well. The program's climax is the famous battle of Khe Sanh Combat Base.

"Reflections of Vietnam" covers the soldiers' conditions, life in the combat zone, the devastating loss of combat comrades, and the emotional journey home. The harsh realities of Vietnam, such as the impact of Agent Orange on soldiers and civilians, as well as the suffering of those with PTSD, are included to show the harsh realities of combat.

Also on display during the presentation are military memorabilia and artifacts from the Vietnam conflict.

Free of charge, members of the Senior Center as well as residents of South Plainfield, were invited to the program on May 21st. The Senior Center is located at 90 Maple Avenue. As Memorial Day approaches, this program is a fitting tribute to the men and women who have served in the US military. For further information call 908-754-1047.

HIS VALOR FORGOTTEN FOR HALF CENTURY, MARINE KIA TO RECEIVE BATTLEFIELD AWARD

The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to First Lieutenant Philip Howard Sauer (MCSN: 0-93419), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving with 1st Battalion, Ninth Ma-



1ST LT. PHIL SAUER HILL FIGHTS KIA 4-24-1967

rines, 3d Marine Division (Reinforced), FMF, in the Republic of Vietnam on 24 April 1967. While on a reconnaissance patrol of Hill 861, First Lieutenant Sauer's five-man squad was suddenly ambushed by murderous enemy fire from well-placed enemy bunkers and trenches, immediately killing the point man. Realizing his squad was engaged with a superior enemy force, First Lieutenant Sauer ordered his squad to withdraw while he provided covering fire with only his personal sidearm. He was last seen holding his position in the face of overwhelming enemy fire. First Lieutenant Sauer's bold action, courage under fire, and complete devotion to duty, reflected great credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.



FROM THE WEB

REMEMBERANCES JUNE 7, 1967

Remembering those Marines who lost their lives the early morning of 6/7/67 on Hill 950 and those who became casualties later

BARNES, EOCS Donald Joseph NMCB-10
BURKE, CPL John Roland H&S/1/26
HUBBARD, BUL-3 Charles Austin NMCB-4
LAWRENCE, LCPL Larry Eugene HQ-26 MAR
SHERRELL, CPL David Frank A/3rd Recon
SPEIR, CPL Dale Lloyd A/3rd Recon
STUPAR, LCPL Michael Nick H&S/1/26
WITHEY, CPL Howard Hugh A/3d Recon
BURKE, John - suicide in 1995, Philadelphia.

YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN AFTER 51 YEARS.

SEMPER FI
DAVID BUFFALO
H&S CO 1/26



HILL 950 1968



1/26 BROTHERS, 48 YEARS AGO
POSTED ON JUNE 7, 2016
MARCO SOTO
F CO 2/26

REMEMBERING MY 1/26 BROTHERS LOST 48 YEARS AGO
RIP JUNE 7, 1968

On 07 June 1968 the 1st Bn, 26th Marines were conducting a sweep along the Bon Song River. Alpha 1/26 was providing a screening force along the river while Delta 1/26 was moving through the hills along the river. Charlie 1/26 was in echelon behind Delta, with the Command Group and H&S Company bringing up the rear.

As Delta 1/26 crested a ridgeline they took fire from a trenchline. The company established a base of fire, flanked the trenchline, and forced the NVA to withdraw - but they didn't withdraw far; a second set of fortifications lay only 50 yards behind the first. Charlie 1/26 sent help and Delta buckled down to assaulting the second trench line - and once again forced the NVA from their lines.

This action, though costly, was only a prelude. The NVA troops engaged by Delta 1/26 were a covering force for the NVA main body, which withdrew into the Alpha 1/26 position - and were engaged by the Alpha 1/26 Marines in a bloody fight. By the time the NVA escaped through the gap between Alpha's flank and the oncoming Delta Marines, 20 Marines and 2 sailors were dead:

1ST BN, 26TH MARINES

A COMPANY:

2ndLt Paul M. McGrath, Rye, NY
SSgt Donald M. Cuff, Wilmington, DE
Sgt Thomas R. Cores, Del Rio, TX
Cpl George A. Essary, Chattanooga, TN
Cpl Jerome D. Kupperschmidt, Sandwich, IL
Cpl Gregory A. Shelley, Palisades Park, NJ
LCpl Edward L. Bradford, Westville, OK
LCpl Kevin M. Coyne, Silver Spring, MD
Pfc Michael P. Becker, Omaha, NE
Pfc Jerry N. Christman, Williams, AZ
Pfc Carl M. Middlebrooks, Baltimore, MD
Pfc Alton L. Staples, Cincinnati, OH
Pfc Ernest L. Wesley, Stockbridge, GA
LCpl Michael W. Travis, Sweetser, IN

C COMPANY:
Cpl David E. Dixon, Miami, FL

D COMPANY:
2ndLt Samuel J. Hannah, Reily, OH (Silver Star)
Cpl Normand C. Deschaine, Lewiston, ME
Cpl Johnnie B. Espy, Montclair, NJ
LCpl David O. Auen, Blairsville, PA
LCpl John A. Scarpinato, La Puente, CA

H&S COMPANY:
HM3 Ramon Leyba, Albuquerque, NM (H&S Co, W/ Alpha 1/26)
HN Ronald E. Rockefeller, Tivoli, NY

The 1/26 Marines meets an NVA battalion at My Loc (2), three miles northeast of An Hoa. Alpha Company was on the right, Delta Company on the left, and Charlie Company in the middle, about 200 yards back. The hot weather continued and was exhausting at 100 degrees and 90% humidity. During fighting on 7 June, both Alpha and Delta Companies are hit hard.

The Delta Company advance had the 2nd Platoon on the left flank, 3rd Platoon advancing up a small ridge line and 1st Platoon was sweeping a village on the right. The company command post was behind 3rd platoon.

About 10 AM that morning the NVA opened up on the 3rd Platoon's lead squad which had gotten inside the enemy's camouflaged positions. The enemy opened up with automatic weapons at close range from a trench line. Elements of 3rd Platoon counter attacked the enemy killing all five NVA in the trench. Delta Company sustained casualties including two Marines KIA.

The following Marines were killed during this fight:
2nd Lt. Samuel Hannah, 6/7/68 -- Killed by gunshot wound near My Loc 2
LCpl. David Auen, 6/7/68 -- Killed by gunshot wound near My Loc 2

The fighting became widespread. Alpha Company

was to the right and ahead of Delta and they took fire when they entered a tree line and became heavily engaged. All of Delta Company platoons came under fire. 2nd Platoon assaulted through the tree line and relieved the pressure on third platoon.

The Company regrouped while casualties were medevaced. Charlie Company had moved up to support Delta sent one platoons by helicopter over to help Alpha Company in its actions. Charlie Company was ordered to secure around the LZ.
About noon as Delta Company got ready to move out again, snipers opened up from the direction away from the tree line. The company held its position and a fire mission was called. Then, the NVA opened up on the company with heavy automatic weapons fire from positions in the tree line. Third Platoon was hit hard again and the attack resulted in many Marine casualties.

Delta Company with attached units engaged the NVA and the enemy was forced to pull back as sustained artillery and air strikes were called in. That evening the 1st Platoon was pulled up on the ridge with 2nd and 3rd Platoons.

The following Marines were killed during this fight:
Cpl. Normand Deschaine, 6/7/68 - Died of wounds suffered during fighting near My Loc
Cpl. Johnnie Espy, 6/7/68 - Killed by gunshot wound near My Loc
LCpl. John Scarpinato, 6/7/68 - Killed by gunshot wound near My Loc
HN Ronald Rockefeller, 6/7/68 - Killed by gunshot wound near My Loc

Elements of Alpha and Charlie Companies were attached to Delta Company during this fight. The following Marines were killed:

Pfc. Alton Staples III, 6/7/68 - A/1/26 Marine
Cpl. David Dixon, 6/7/58 - C/1/26 Marine
2nd Lt. Samuel Hannah was awarded the Silver Star (Posthumously) for his actions and valor on June 7, 1968.
Sgt. Clark Henson (KIA-6/16/68) was awarded the Silver Star (Posthumously) for his actions and valor on June 7, 1968.
The My Loc (2) fight was costly with many Delta and Alpha Company casualties reported. Delta Company casualties were 8 KIA and 22 WIA. Alpha Company had 14 KIA and 18 WIA.

Enemy casualties were heavy and his objective of gaining close approach to Da Nang was once again denied.

CRAIG TOURTE WRITES REUNION OF MARCO SOTO & DAVID TONICK

In 2008 the Khe Sanh Reunion was held in Reno, Nevada. As I read this post about that battle which occurred fifty years ago today when both Marco Soto and David Soto were wounded, I thought of that reunion and the first meeting since that battle of the meeting between Marco and David. I thought some would find it interesting and indicative of the often-surprising events that occur at our reunions, here is a portion of the story of that meeting.

".... Marco and his wife sat a couple of tables away from ours. I introduced myself to Marco's wife and



thanked them both for coming. Marco told me that when he signed his name on the reunion sign up board he noted the name of David Tonick, and asked if I knew who he was, as both David and he had served in the same company in Vietnam and he had not seen David for over forty years. Marco took out his wallet and showed me an old color photograph of David taken during the war. At that point my heart skipped a few beats and I had to take a couple of breaths. I'm just assuming here, but I had to believe that Marco and David had been rather close in Vietnam. My understanding is that the last time Marco saw David was when he and David were severely wounded, and Marco was told to grab

another other wounded and get on the chopper. David was removed from the field of battle with a rather large wound in his back and neck. In June of 1968 Alpha and Charlie Companies were attached to Delta Company, all with the Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment, when they assaulted up a small hill containing spider holes, towards an enemy-held trench line. Marco sustained a wound to the back of his neck and had his M-16 jam during the assault. Many who survived the Siege of Khe Sanh were killed and wounded.

I took four steps to my left, less than ten feet. As I stood in front of the next table. I told David that there was someone at the next table who he should meet. David stood up and followed me the few feet to where Marco was sitting. I noticed that David had a photograph of himself taken in Vietnam attached to his reunion name tag. The exact same photograph that Marco had shown me just seconds before. It was a private moment and I left them alone to get reacquainted."

REMEMBERING THOSE
WE LOST THAT DAY, JUNE 7 ,1967
BRAVE MEN OF BRAVO 1/26

BLAZ, Lcpl, James Lujon 21E65 (19)
BROOKS, PFC, Lawrence Arthur 21E66 (19)
CHASE, Lcpl, John Joseph 21E65 (20)
CROOKS, Cpl, Ronald Lee 21E66 (21)
ENDERBY, L/Cpl, Robert Francis 21E66 (21)
FURLONG, Cpl,Edward Francis Jr 21E67 (19)
GOTTI,PFC, Gale Edward 21E67 (21)
Healy, PFC, Thomas Micheal 21E68 (19)
JOHNSON, PFC,Kenneth Micheal 21E68 (19)
KEEFER, L/Cpl Kenneth Ray 21E68 (20)
MILLET, PFC, Steven Lawrence 21E69 (19)
MORRIS, PFC, Larry Lee 21E69 (20)
PITTS,PFC, Wayne Monroe 21E70 (19)
SHOVLIN,PFC, Frank Joseph 21E70 (18)
VAN DEUSEN,PFC, Phillip Andren 21E6 (18)
VERCOUTEREN, Lcpl, Edward Arnold 21E71 24)
VERCRUYSSE, HN, Gregory Paul 21E71 (20)
WARD, Cpl, Walter Leonard 21E71 (18)
WORTHEN, PFC, Larry Eugene 21E72 (21)

GENE WERESOW B CO 1/26

REMEMBERING KEN MARTIN
B CO 3RD RECON









DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN, 102, WHO PHOTOGRAPHED THE REALITY OF WAR, DIES

THE NEW YORK TIMES

June 7, 2018

By Robert D. McFadden

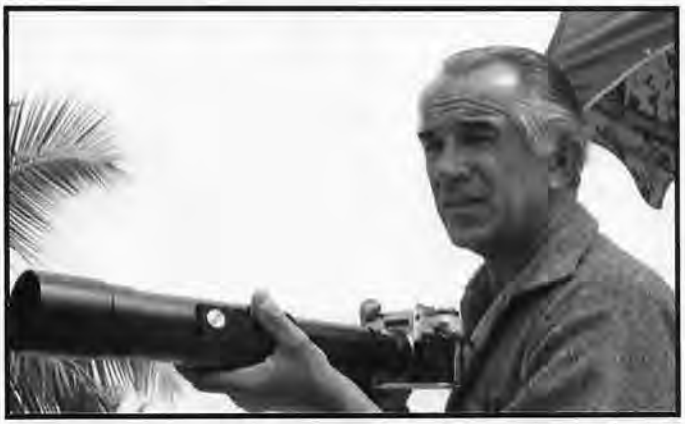

The photographer David Douglas Duncan in 1969. He was among the most influential photographers of the 20th century, a Life magazine peer of Alfred Eisenstaedt, Margaret Bourke-White and Carl Mydans. Credit Ray Fisher/The Life Images Collection, via Getty Images



Capt. Ike Fenton, commanding officer of Baker Company, 5th Regiment of the 1st Marine Brigade, during the battle to secure No-Name Ridge along the Naktong River, Korea. September 1950.CreditDavid Douglas Duncan, via Harry Ransom Center

Under the helmets, the faces are young and tormented, stubbled and dirty, taut with the strain of battle. They sob over dead friends. They stare exhausted into the fog and rain. They crouch in a muddy foxhole. This goddamn cigarette could be the last.

There are no heroes in David Douglas Duncan's images of war.

Dark and brooding, mostly black and white, they are the stills of a legendary combat photographer, an artist with a camera, who brought home to America the poignant lives of infantrymen and fleeing civilians caught up in World War II, the Korean conflict and the war in Vietnam.

"I felt no sense of mission as a combat photographer," Mr. Duncan, who was wounded several times, told The New York Times in 2003. "I just felt maybe the guys out there deserved being photographed just the way they are, whether they are running scared, or showing courage, or diving into a hole, or talking and laughing. And I think I did bring a sense of dignity to the battlefield."

Mr. Duncan, who had lived since 1962 in Castelleras, France, died on Thursday at a hospital in Grasse, in the South of France, his wife, Sheila Macauley,said. He was 102.

He was among the most influential photographers of the 20th century, a Life magazine peer of Alfred Eisenstaedt, Margaret Bourke-White and Carl Mydans. In addition to his war work, Mr. Duncan spent years with Pablo Picasso, creating a pictorial record of the artist's life, and roamed the world making photographic essays on the Kremlin, the city of Paris and the panorama of peoples in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

A globe-trotting adventurer sometimes likened to Hemingway, he climbed mountains, crossed jungles and was a deep-sea diver, a marine zoologist, a fisherman, an aerial and undersea photographer, an ar-

chaeologist in Mexico and Central America and a connoisseur of Japanese art and culture.

His work filled more than 25 books, including eight on Picasso. "This Is War!" (1951), about Korea, was his best-known combat work and brought worldwide acclaim. The renowned photographer Edward Steichen called it "the greatest book of war photographs ever published."



Marines engaged in combat against North Korean troops in September 1950, from Mr. Duncan's book "This Is War!" Credit David Douglas Duncan/Time Life Pictures

Mr. Duncan was a Marine officer and combat photographer in World War II, covering the American invasions of the Solomon Islands and Okinawa. He was aboard the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay in 1945 photographing the formal Japanese surrender under the stern gaze of Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

He joined Life after the war, and his assignments took him to conflicts in Palestine, Greece and Turkey and to India, Egypt, Morocco and Afghanistan. He was in Japan in 1950 when North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel, igniting a United Nations police action that would leave 36,500 Americans dead.

Mr. Duncan was soon on the front lines, exposed to the same dangers as the allied troops and civilian refugees. He also flew on bombing missions, taking pictures from jets swooping over targets. He wrote the text for "This Is War!," as he did for his other books, but critics said it was his pictures that captured the essence of war.

"My objective always is to stay as close as possible and shoot the pictures as if through the eyes of the infantryman, the Marine or the pilot," he told an interviewer in 1951. "I wanted to give the reader something of the visual perspective and feeling of the guy under fire, his apprehensions and sufferings, his tensions and releases, his behavior in the presence of threatening death."



A vigorous Pablo Picasso at 76 in 1957 at his home, the Villa La Californie, in a suburb of Cannes, France. Credit David Douglas Duncan, from "Photo Nomad" (W.W. Norton & Company)

In Vietnam, where he worked for Life and ABC News, Mr. Duncan again focused on the vulnerability of soldiers and civilians, often against backgrounds of lush jungles and burning villages. His most powerful images were made in the 1968 siege of Khe Sanh. But in contrast to the objectivity he showed in earlier wars, he was critical of the United States' role in Vietnam, which he denounced in his book "I Protest!" (1968).

Mr. Duncan's friendship with Picasso began in 1956, when, at the suggestion of a colleague, the war photographer Robert Capa, he went uninvited to Picasso's home, the Villa La Californie, in the South of France. Admitted by Picasso's wife at the time, Jacqueline Roque, he found his subject taking a bath. Mr. Duncan stayed for months, and they were simpatico for 17 years, until Picasso's death in 1973.

Exploring the artist's daily life and extraordinary creativity, Mr. Duncan's pictures were collected in "The Private World of Pablo Picasso" (1958), "Picasso's Picasso" (1961), "Goodbye Picasso" (1974), "The Silent Studio" (1976), "Viva Picasso" (1980) and other volumes.

"You cannot imagine how simple it was," Mr. Duncan told Le Monde in 2012. "I was there, like someone belonging to the family, and I took pictures."



Alone in his hotel room, the presidential nominee Richard M. Nixon wrote his acceptance speech during the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach in 1968.CreditDavid Douglas Duncan, via Harry Ransom Center

David Douglas Duncan was born to Kenneth and Florence (Watson) Duncan on Jan. 23, 1916, in Kansas City, Mo., where he and three brothers and a sister grew up. He was fascinated with photography from an early age.

He studied archaeology at the University of Arizona in 1934, but dropped out to join expeditions to Mexico and Central America. He then majored in zoology and Spanish at the University of Miami, graduating in 1938.

Resolved to freelance, he began deep-sea fishing, diving and photographing aquatic life. On a schooner from Key West, Fla., to the Cayman Islands, he took pictures of giant sea turtles. In Mexico, he photographed Indians, Gila monsters and jaguars, and shot Mayan ruins in the Yucatan. Off Peru and Chile, he caught and photographed swordfish and marlin. His pictures ran in National Geographic magazine and many newspapers.

After World War II, he went to Palestine for Life and covered fighting between Arabs and Jews in 1946, before the creation of the State of Israel.



Mr. Duncan titled this 1950 photograph simply "Korea. "Credit David Douglas Duncan, from "Photo Nomad" (W.W. Norton & Company)

His marriage to Leila Khanki, in 1947, ended in divorce. He married Ms. Macauley in 1962. She is his only immediate survivor.

Mr. Duncan covered the Republican and Democratic National Conventions for NBC News in 1968. He was just back from Vietnam, and what might have been a hiatus from combat turned violent in Chicago, where National Guardsmen with rifles and police officers with nightsticks and tear gas clashed with antiwar demonstrators outside the convention hall where Democrats were meeting. His photographs showed helmeted troops on Michigan Avenue, protesters with gashed and bleeding heads, and a sobbing girl who pleaded with him, "Please, tell it like it was." The grim scenes were published in his 1969 book, "Self-Portrait: U.S.A."

Mr. Duncan's archives — including thousands of combat photographs, works on Picasso and others for "The Kremlin" (1960), "Sunflowers for Van Gogh" (1986) and other books — were acquired in 1996 by the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas in Austin.

He went to war with only essential equipment: helmet, poncho, spoon, toothbrush, compass, soap and backpack containing two canteens, an exposure meter, film and two cameras. He used a Rolleiflex in World War II, but preferred a 35-millimeter. He took two Leica IIIc cameras into Korea, and said they stood up well in the rain and mud. He often used 50-millimeter f/2 and 135-millimeter f/3.5 Nikkor lenses.

A 1972 exhibit of his war photos at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York was hailed in The New York Times. "Again and again," the photography columnist Gene Thornton said of Mr. Duncan, "he approaches and crosses the line that divides the journalist's interest in the here and now from the artist's concern with the timeless and universal."

DDD
Triple D RIP

EDITOR NOTE:

MY MEMORY OF TRIPLE D
(That is how he signed his signature)

On 05 February 1968, I was the weapons Platoon sergeant for Echo Co 2/26, Stationed on Hill 861A at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. In the early morning hours a large NVA force attacked and over ran , the 1st Platoons positions.

After a long battle, we defeated their attack with the loss of 11 Marines and many wounded. Within hours David Duncan appeared and began photographing the aftermath of the battle.

I accompanied him around the Hill as he took many pictures which later appeared in his book "I PROTEST" and in Life Magazine.





Center Page of Book: Tom Eichler, Billy Drexel & Michael Worth

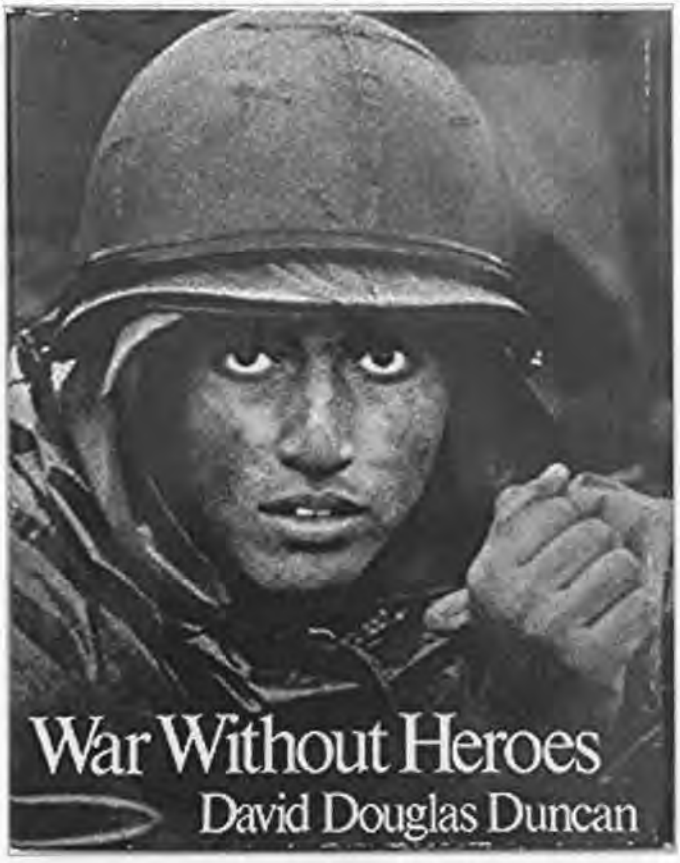





MICHAEL ARCHERS MEMORIES OF DAVID DUNCAN

I was saddened to learn that photojournalist David Douglas Duncan passed away yesterday, June 7, 2018, at the age of 102. He had lived life with such gusto, as only one who takes the risks he took can do, in the thick of combat covering wars for over thirty years, on almost every continent. No photo-journalist, before or since, has consistently captured the grimness and despair of battle like David did. Between these wars, he showed us the great joy and beauty in life. His opus, *Photo Nomad*, is a stunning photographic chronicle of the twentieth century.

In early June 2004, as I was preparing my first book, *A Patch of Ground,* for publication, I wanted permission to use a photograph that he had taken of Captain Baig, and the other "brain trust" officers, together in the Khe Sanh command bunker during the 1968 siege. I initially contacted a person at his publisher, HarperCollins-NYC, who advised me that Duncan still owned the rights to all his photos and provided me with his address in France. I wrote to him immediately, and eleven days later he called. When I picked up the phone, the first thing I heard

was David's ninety-year-old, curmudgeonly tone that sounded like a question, but was actually a statement of fact: "Mike, so you didn't get your ass shot off at Khe Sanh, huh." I have included in *The Gunpowder Prince* part of our conversation with regard to Captain Baig, and so will not replicate it here. David then asked me what Baig had done after Khe Sanh, and whether he was still alive. I filled him in on that tragic scenario and later that day mailed him a copy of Ray Stubbe's monograph on Baig, *The Mongol Prince* (I had no idea at the time that I would be writing Baig's story twelve years later).

David, a Marine officer in World War II, who had covered American troops fighting in that war, and the war in Korea, ended his thirty-year career as a combat photographer at Khe Sanh. That decision was not based entirely on his now being in his fifties and the grueling physical strain of battle that was beginning to take its toll on him. The fact was that, while David had seen countless dead and wounded American soldiers in his decades of reporting, his sobering, iconic February 1968 photo of body bags lined up beside the fog-shrouded Khe Sanh runway waiting for evacuation to some distant morgue, seemed to have been the last straw in reining in his anger and disappointment at what America was doing in Indochina. Soon after leaving Khe Sanh, David would produce two books, *War Without Heroes* and *I Protest!,* condemning the Johnson administration for, what David said was, their having changed the criteria for going war from the traditional, unfortunate, last-resort decision to preserve national security, to a lucrative business practice.
Fifteen years earlier in 1953, nine months before the French defeat at the hands of the Viet Minh Army at Dien Bien Phu, David produced a prophetic piece for Life magazine, titled "*Indochina All But Lost.*" As such, he was enormously frustrated to still be photographing war in that land, so many years later at Khe Sanh. Yet, he was unflinching in his admiration for the troops who served, as many a Khe Sanh vet who benefited from his kindness over the years can attest.

While David's reputation would have permitted him into the inner circles of world power, he preferred being out among common people, among common soldiers and artists like himself. What saddens me the most is not just that the world has lost such a rare talent, but a person who possessed the honesty and intellectual courage to state the truths he'd learned from his vast experience, irrespective of the bleating of more fearful, insulated and devious souls. Because of that, later in his life more doors closed for him, than opened.

David thanked me for requesting permission to use his photos, because, he said, many people used them without extending him that courtesy. I then heard his wife call him for dinner. He said they were "having a chicken and rice dish with a very good sauce on the chicken" (considering he lived another twelve years, to age 102, this recipe might be the *elixir of life*□).

Before we said our goodbyes, David said, "I suppose you would like something [about the permission] in writing?" I said I would appreciate that. I'm attaching below a link("Duncan Reply") to that wonderful message, handwritten boldly on the second page of my original request letter. As you can imagine, it has warmed my heart each time I've come across it in my files over the years (NOTE: To clarify two things in the text of my letter, the working title of my book at the time was "*Murmurs*," which was promptly rejected by my publisher a few weeks later as being too "artsy-fartsy" [a decision for which I am eternally indebted to him]. Also, I subsequently learned how to properly spell Lieutenant Colonel *Hennelly*'s last name).

One last item, actually a confession that I need to make; one I did not tell David about, though I'm sure he'd have found it amusing:

Earlier on a February 1968 evening, just before David shot the photograph I was requesting to use, he had been standing outside at the entrance to the command bunker chatting with Gunnery Sergeant Leon Risch, a salty Korean War veteran, about David's age. Coincidentally, I was just then reporting for my radio shift and before I left my own bunker I had too-hurriedly put on my web gear, including my utility belt, which held sundry items

like bayonet scabbard, ammo magazines, bandages, etc. The belt was buckled in the front by inserting a metal hook into an eyelet. In my haste, I had not secured the hook all the way in, and, as I arrived at the edge of the cement steps that descended into the

command bunker entrance, the belt suddenly unlatched and all the gear attached to it slid down to my ankles causing me to trip and tumble head-first down the stairs. I landed at the feet of Duncan and Gunny Risch, and, as gunnies are traditionally known to do, he immediately unleashed a torrent of profanity chastising me for my clumsiness. The commanding presence of the famous David Douglas Duncan loomed above me in silence; but his eyes eloquent in the unmistakable squint of "Old Corps" disdain I'm relieved to finally get that one off my chest.

BOOK REVIEW

Post-publication Reflections on *The Gunpowder Prince: How Marine Corps Captain Mirza Munir Baig Saved Khe Sanh.*

For all sad words of tongue and pen,
The saddest are these, 'It might have been'.
- John Greenleaf Whittier

I have gone over in my mind countless times the thought of what Captain Mirza Munir "Harry" Baig might have accomplished had he survived all his dangerous counterintelligence missions in Southeast Asia, and the tragic circumstances of his death in 1971 at age thirty-nine. Harry's short life and career included him honing his remarkable intellect while obtaining a law degree from Trinity College in Cambridge, England, and an MBA from McGill University in Montréal, Canada, before entering the U.S. Marine Corps in 1958—as a lowly private. Given the rapid and lofty trajectory of his accomplishments, there is a good chance Baig would have risen to positions of great responsibly within the U.S. intelligence community

His mother, Juliette Jamil, was a member of a well-connected Anatolian family and had studied at the American University in Beirut under special patronage of King Faud of Egypt. Her brother, Selim Jamil, had gained notoriety for his assistance to the American army during the First World War, and later conducted highly sensitive missions working with the U.S. State Department and Office of Strategic Services (forerunner of the CIA) during the Second World War. Harry's father, General Osman Baig, was the son of British colonial knight Sir Ab-

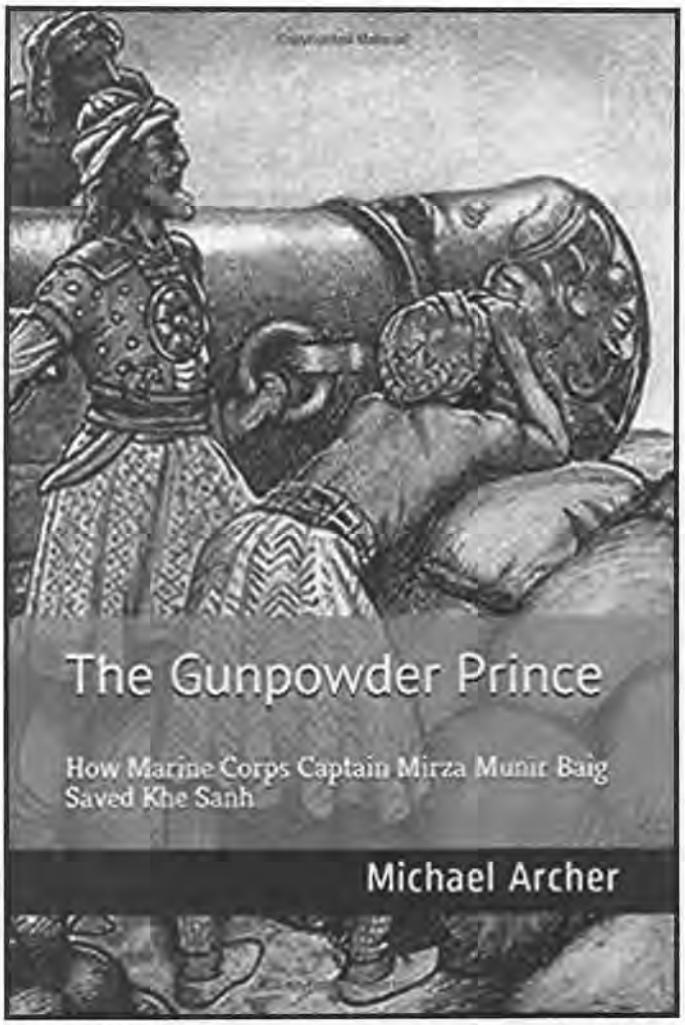

bas Ali Baig, who was a personal friend of King George V. Osman had commanded an Indian Colonial Army division guarding the strategic Khyber Pass during the Second World War, and later became a versatile and highly respected Pakistani diplomat. Osman's brother (Harry's uncle), Mirza Rashid Ali Baig, was an Indian soldier, scholar and diplomat, who had, among his many later duties, served as India's ambassador to The Philippines and Iran. Rashid authored several influential books under the name M. R. A. Baig, including *The Muslim Dilemma in India*, Viking House, 1974.

Harry's father-in-law, Count Nicholas de Rochefort, appears to have recruited him into the intelligence business. As a member of one of France's oldest families, with ancestor Guy de Rochefort earning fame during the First Crusade in 1095, Nicholas served as a captain in the French Army during the Second World War. He was captured by German forces and later escaped and rejoined Allied forces. After the war, de Rochefort, who spoke five languages, edited a periodical in Morocco before be-

ginning a lecture tour in the United States in 1949. Five years later, he renounced his French citizenship and title and became a U.S. citizen. Now, an expert on psychological warfare, Nicholas served on the faculty of the American University, and as a research analyst at the Library of Congress for the Agency for International Development (USAID) which maintained a close working relationship with the CIA. Harry's brother, Taimur, would graduate from Harvard and become an executive with the World Bank.

In addition to these several unique, widespread and highly placed connections, by the early 1970's, Harry had developed a stellar reputation within the world of counterintelligence, as well as a close connection to the then-Deputy Director of the CIA, General Robert Cushman. Combined, it is easy to conjecture how effective a player Harry might have been in helping detangle the religious, cultural and political mechanisms causing widespread volatility in the Middle East and South Asia during the latter half of the twentieth century.

More similar to John le Carré's fictional character, the eccentric George Smiley, than he was to Ian Fleming's macho James Bond; Mirza Munir Baig would have, as he had in South Vietnam, particularly at Khe Sanh in 1968, continued to employ his matchless genius, cunning and self-discipline in the world's most dangerous locales to protect his adopted country from harm until the day his luck ran out—which, as Fate would have it, was far too soon.



I GET PICTURES REMEMBERANCES



C 1-4 3RD MARINE DIVISION'S JOE MITKO. 1ST PIC CON THIEN 1968. 2ND PIC C-1-4 REUNION JUNE 9, 2016. MITKO PIC AND MY PIC



C-1-4 3RD MARINE DIVISION'S JOE MITKO. 1ST PIC CON THIEN 1968. 2ND PIC C-1-4 REUNION JUNE 9, 2016. MITKO PIC AND MY PIC



REMEMBERING CAPT HALEY CO D/1/1, ON 881S 2ND FROM RT. KIA ON 861 5/26/68. RICK SNOCKER

THE KHE SANH VETERANS 2018 REUNION WILL BE HELD AT THE HYATT REGENCY CRYSTAL CITY AT REAGAN NATIONAL. 2799 JEFFERSON DAVIS HWY, ARLINGTON, VA 22202 DATES 12 AUGUST TO 19 AUGUST 2018. RATES 105.00 A NIGHT GOOD FOR 3 DAYS BEFORE & 3 DAYS AFTER FREE PARKING PET FRIENDLY (SMALL CHARGE) FREE SHUTTLE FROM REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT, REDUCED BREAKFAST & DINNER MEALS. 703-418-1234

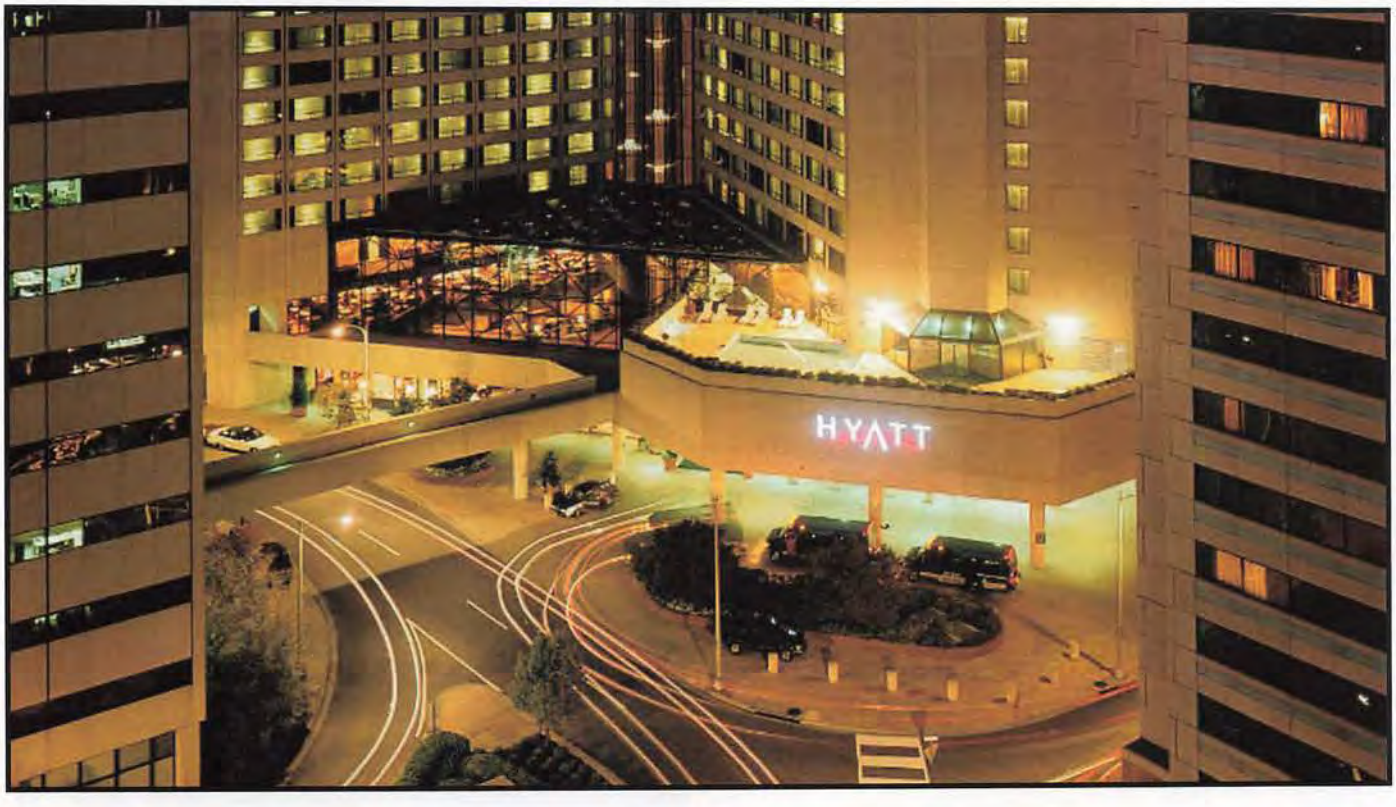












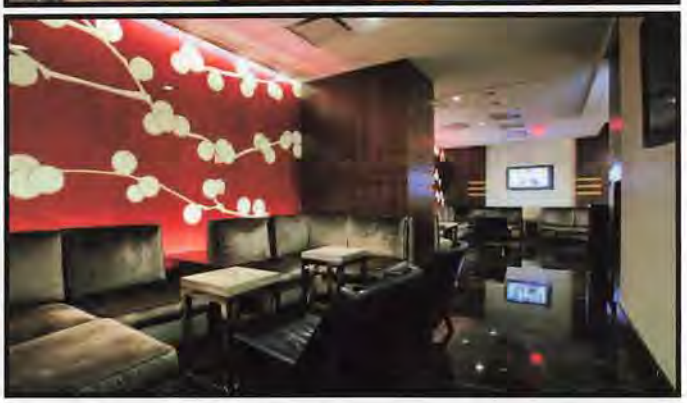

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CURTIS J. MOSS

THIRD GENERATION OF MARINES MY 3 BROTHERS

MY SON AND MY FATHER

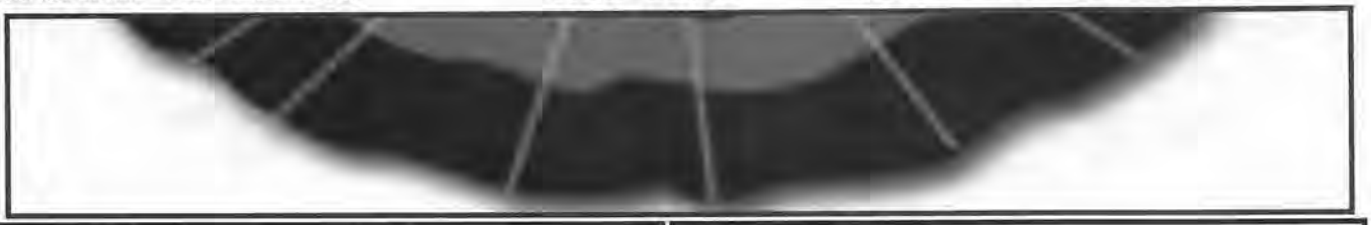

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
Capt Walter Egger USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
GSGT John J Grohman USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
1t Paul W. Bush USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
LCpl Stephen C Shannon USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
All combat Engineers from 1st Platoon A CO & 1st Platoon C CO From The Hill Fights Thru The Siege	Michael F. Barber C CO 3RD ENGINEERS
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC A HQ/13 KIA 09 MAR 68	
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Remembering All "Bastard Bravo" Marines and their families	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Captain Bill Person USAF 553 3RD Recon Wing	William E. Carpenter Bravo Btry 1/13
PFC Donald Saunders USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM KIA 04 March 1968	Alex & Barbara Sadowski H&S CO 1/26
	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
Sgt Donald Ray Chamblin USMC HQ BTRY COMM KIA 08 March 1968	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
William "Doc" Miller Sr USN Lima Co 3/26 Passed Away 11/6/17	S/Sgt Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C Btry 1/13
PFC Bruce Cunningham USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 8 Feb 68	Stephen Jenkins C Co 1/26
SSgt Karl E. Taylor USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 12/98/68	Will Griggs India Co 3/26
PFC Roland T. Marshall USMC M CO 3/4 KIA 5/17/68	Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
L/Cpl Philip Van Deusen USMC A/1/13 KIA 06/07/67	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
Lt Marion Norman USMC A 1/13 KIA 30 Mar 68	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
PFC Gale E Gotti USMC A/1/13 KIA 06/07 67	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
2Lt John Bobo USMC I Co 3/9 KIA 30 Mar 67	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
All Members of Detachment A-101 Lang Vei & All who served at FOB-3	Lawrence Cooper CO C 5TH Special Forces
Major Earle Breeding USMC C/O ECHO CO 2/26 Hill 861A	The Men Of ECHO CO 2/26
All the men of HQ Btry 1/13 Who Gave Their Lives So We can Enjoy The freedom we have today	James Baker HQ Btry 1/13 26Th Marines
LTCOL Ken Pipes USMC C/O B CO 2/26 Passed Away 26 April 2018	Lawrence Luther India Co 3/26
Cpl William E. Wyrosdic USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 10/08/68	John Laibinis SR. H CO 2/26 2ND PLT
Always remembering all those KIA HILL 689 27 June 1967	Clarence T. Anthony India CO 3/26
L/Cpl Adrian Brittle USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 9/21/68	Chester W. Nelson JR. India CO 3/26
2LT Donald Jacques USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Pietro Osimanti Bravo CO 1/26
CPL John Greene USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 04 July 1968	Johnny Moon Charlie CO 1/26 3RD SQD
SW-5 Edward Cody Adams USN CBMU-301 KIA 16 APR 68	Larry Kubley USN CBMU-301 (Seabee)
LCPL Frederick B. Link USMC C CO 1/9 KIA 3/1/68	Eric Bergland C CO 1/9
All Marines & Corpsman who served on Hill 861A in Jan/Feb & Mar of 1968	Lt Don Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A
All Marines KIA of Delta CO 1/26	John Finn Delta Co 1/26
All Marines 1/1 & 2/1 Hotel CO	Peter Hoban Hotel CO 2/1
DR John Magilligan, d. 29 Jan 3013,DR Ed Feldman d. 03 Oct 2017& DR James Finnegan d. 13 Sep 2013 From Charlie Med	Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN
All who served at Khe Sanh	Ron Shuff LSU MTM Co. Maintenance Bn.
HN William A. Beyer "Willie" USN H&S Co 3/26 KIA 2/1/67	Pat B. Buckley Charlie CO 1/26
L/Cpl Ronnie Harbert USMC 1st 155 How Btry KIA 6/29 68	Douglas Caldwell H&S CO 2/26 Comm
Capt Dan Coonan USMC VMF (AW) 115 KIA 08 Oct 68	Charles Fetter 1 MAW, MAG-11, H&MS-11
PFC Joseph C. Battle USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	George "Bill" Jayne Bravo CO 1/26
LT Thomas Ballard USMC C/O CAC-3 KIA 11/11/68	Walter Seneff A BTRY 1/13

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Brothers (& Sisters) Killed in Action in USMC Helicopters or while assigned to USMC Helicopter or Tiltrotor Squadrons in Vietnam

680228 HMM-262 Vietnam

Incident Date 680228 HMM-262 CH-46D 153360+ Hostile Fire, Crash

REMBERANCES

ON 28 FEB 1968, A CH-46 D (BUNO 153360) OF HMM-262 WAS STRUCK BY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE WHILE INBOUND TO KHE SANH ON A RECOVERY MISSION. THE AIRCRAFT WAS DOWNED AND EXPLODED ON IMPACT, KILLING ALL 23 MEN ABOARD

CREW:

MEIXNER EDWIN GEORGE : 078246 : USMC : MAJ : HMM-262 MAG-36 PILOT
SEVELL ROBERT LEE : 093427 : USMCR : CAPT : HMM-262 MAG-36 PILOT
BENIGNI ALFREDO : 2174301 : USMC : CPL : : HMM-262 CREW CHIEF
GARD DANNY D : 2158322 : USMC : CPL : HMM-262 MAG-36 CREW
MCCABE MARC WAYNE : 2181347 : USMC : SGT : HMM-262 MAG-36 CREW
THOTLAND JOHN ALFRED : 2162806 : USMC : LCPL : HMM-262 MAG-36 CREW
TOTH JOHN PAUL : 2122035 : USMC : SGT : HMM-262 MAG-36 CREW

PASSENGERS:

BALADES DAVID ZAVALA : 2127880 : USMC : PFC : H&S CO 3RD SHORE PARTY
BRADLEY KENNETH ROBERT : 2179251 : USMC : CPL : HMM 262 MAG-36
CALDWELL ROBERT EDWARD : 2302017 : USMC : CPL :H&S CO 3/26 :
CHRISTMAN RONALD S H : 2279648 : USMCR : LCPL : HMM-262 MAG-36
COLES KYLE J : 2275627 : USMC : LCPL : :H&MS 36- MAG-36
COOPER DONALD NATHANIEL : 2241658 : USMC : CPL HMM-262-MAG 36
DEMPSEY RONALD LEE : 2150817 : USMC : CPL : B BTRY 1/13
DWYER MATTHEW MURICE JR : 2104947 : USMC : LCPL : A CO 3RD ENG BN
ELLIS JOHN PATRICK : 087066 : USMC : CAPT : MABS-36 MAG-36
LABONTE, DONALD ARTHUR : USN : HN : H&S CO 2/26
MIKELS JAMES HERBERT JR : 2137733 : USMC : SGT : H&S CO 1/26
PARSONS CHARLES EDWARD : 2117797 : USMC : SGT : HQ CO 5TH COMM FORCE LOG COM
SPILLMAN CHARLES OTTO : 5533579 : USN : BU1 : : NMCB-301 31ST NCR
STANTON EMMETT CHARLES : 2241061 : USMC : PFC : A CO 3RD ENG BN
STULL ,JAY WEBSTER : 080518 : USMC : CAPT : HQ CO /HQBN 3RD MAR DIV
TURNER WILLIAM OLIVER : 2172336 : USMC : CPL : H&S CO 3RD SHORE PARTY BN

Fifteen minutes into the siege, an NVA large caliber round landed in the bases ammunition dump (ammo supply point No. 1) which held 1,100 tons of ammunition for the 155mm, 105mm 106mm 81mm, 60mm, and 4.2 inch mortars. This was the main dump for the base situated between Alpha Company's position and Bravo Company's position. The initial explosion caused not only secondary explosions but sent numerous 105mm and 106 recoilless rounds flying out everywhere. The discarded munitions were rendered incredibly unstable yet Marines Edward Pendergast and others ran out, stripped off their shirts, draped them over the glowing red hot rounds, picking them up on either end and tossed them out of the trench line where they landed. This went on for hours as secondary explosions from the ammo dump continued to arbitrarily detonate sending more rounds out. The concussion was so violent at times that structure still above ground were blown over. My own father who was at the opposite end of the base in Lima Company 3rd Bn 26th Marine's position that morning recalled the blast concussion from some of those secondary explosions hit us like a blast of wind and made your ears ring.

He recalled the 122mm rockets coming in and one slamming into the tent that was 3rd Battalion's make-shift mess hall tossing crates and stuff everywhere. Some of us even went out to salvage a few edible items that we figured we could use later. That morning an estimated 100 rounds of 82mm mortars and sixty 122mm rockets slammed into the combat base between 0500 and 0530, a small amount by later standards for example February 23, 1968 1,307 rounds hit the combat base during the day, the most intense barrage during the entire siege.

From that morning in January for the next 77 days, the combat base at Khe Sanh and the surrounding hill top positions, one of which would be virtually overrun Outpost Alpha 1 on Hill 64 where Alpha Company 1st Bn 9th Marines were located. On February 8, 1968 in the foggy pre-dawn hours an NVA regiment overran Alpha Company's position killing 24 Marines and wounding 27. **There was no actual Hill 64, the position was called that due to the fact there were 64 Marines & Corpsman at the position.**

The siege necessitating vital resupply, a task made much more difficult due to the fact that route 9, the only road to the base, was cut off. The siege made helo supply difficult and the airstrip was really the only hope. C-130's had to resort by late January to LAPES resupply (Low Altitude Parachute Extraction Supply). Getting the needed supplies of food, ammo, water and mail from home then fell to the Logistics Supply Unit attached to the 26th Marines. Sergeant Carl Ornelas was the chief ammo tech. During the siege as ammo came in by plane Sgt. Ornelas and his ammo techs would often have to operate a fork lift to get the ammo off the air strip ASAFP. Surely this attracted the attention of NVA guns who would not desire a better target than a large pallet of 105mm rounds. Reading through his journal and records that he kept during the siege, it evident that the final weeks of the young 19 year old sergeant's life were obviously full of terror but utterly exhausting trying to keep the guns around the base supplied with ammo.

He and his ASP personnel had no choice, at times when incoming was heavy and others had the opportunity to seek cover, but to get out to the open airstrip and get ammo out of the open and or deliver it where needed. What a true hero he was. On February 5, 1968 at some point during the afternoon, had been taking the open road between Logistics Support Unit, Charlie Med (3rd Medical Battalion) and Recon's position. His fellow Marines had cautioned him not to use that open road as there was really no immediate cover and it was the road running parallel to the airstrip, seemingly the main target of the NVA guns. He was advised to use the adjacent trench system which took longer to maneuver through. According to an interview with Philip Wright as it appears in "Battalion of Kings," by Ray Stubbe a navy chaplain at the combat base, Ornelas was determined to use the road

Ornelas was quoted as saying "lightening doesn't strike twice in the same spot," and didn't cotton to the idea of using a trench to move to the LSU. "He just stepped out of his hootch and was walking up to the main road," according to Wright. "The shell damn-near landed on his bootlaces and split him wide open and gutted him all at one time. There was a very surprised look on his face; his face didn't get hurt. His eyes were as big as saucers," recalled Wright in 1995. It was a 152mm artillery round that instantly killed the tireless 19-year old ammo tech

who time and time again risked his life to ensure that desperately needed ammunition reached his fellow Marines in order to hold that red-clayed patch of unforgiving ground.

According to his casualty file, "Died 5 Feb 68 Quang Tri Province (01) Republic of Vietnam 'result shrapnel wounds to the head and body from hostile rocket fire when the bulk fuel farm came under attack.

Sgt. Carl Ornelas remains were sent home to his family in Kansas City, Missouri and he was interred at Ft. Leavenworth National Cemetery. May he rest in peace and forever be remembered and honored for his tremendous sacrifice.
Semper Fi, Kevin

The second book where he scratched notes and instructions regarding handling of ammo and storing it. The eerie aspect to this second book is that you can tell he had it with him on his person at Khe Sanh. If you talk to anyone who was at Khe Sanh, the one indelible aspect that they will tell you they recall regarding the physical landscape is the near maroon red clay that permeated everything from skin to clothing. If you look at the pages especially the one below, you can see that distinct red clay on these pages. (NO COLOR PAGE)



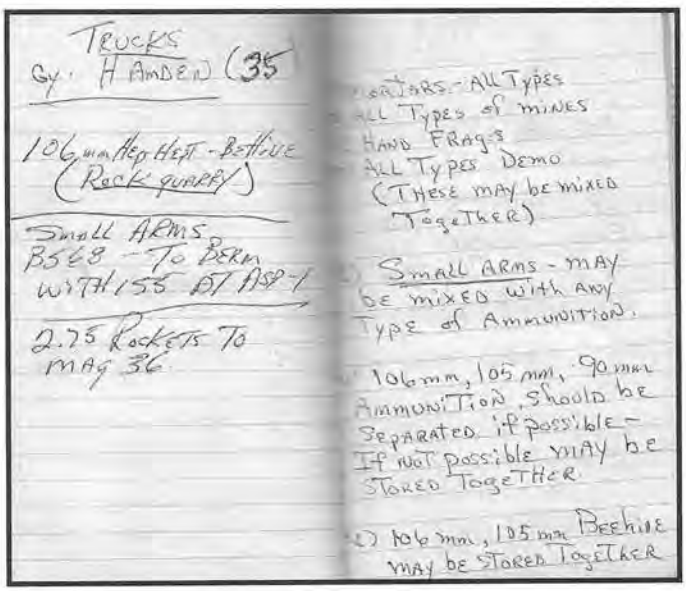

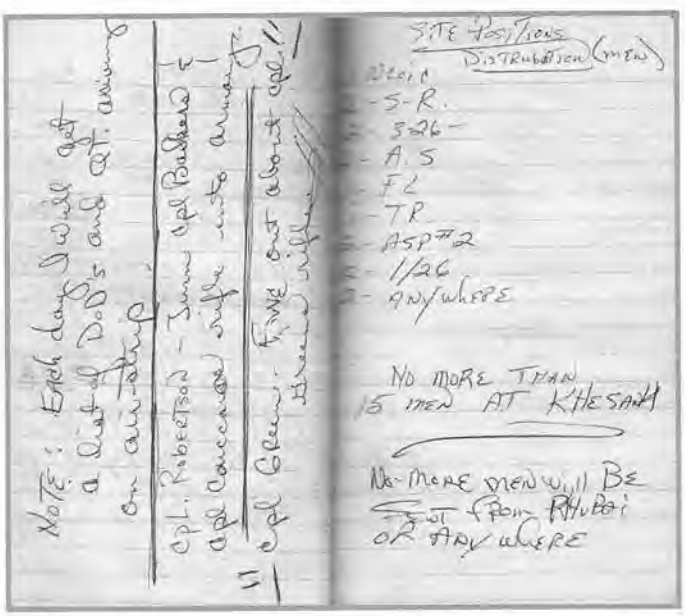

NAME	RANK	SER. NO.	ARRIVE IN K.S	MOS	
ORNELAS, C.S.	SGT	2456064	17 JAN 68	1341/2311	
MARTH - P.S.	CPL	2145678	Dec 26, 67	2311	
GREEN, J.W	CPL	2152865	DEC 23, 67	2311	
CHRISTIAN	CPL		1 AUG 67	2311/0811	3531
BOND, J	CPL	2181839	23 JAN 68	2311/3511	
WARD, J.E	CPL		17 JAN 68	2311	
DILTON	LCPL		25 NOV 67	2311	
BUNNELL	LCPL			2311	
CLYMIRE	LCPL		25 Jan 68	2311	
OGBOURN	CPL			2311	
ROBERTSON WM	CPL	2135388	JULY 25, 67	2311	
SCHENKER	LCPL			2311	
GARRETT, K.E	CPL	2128587	Aug 20, 67	2311/8551	
CUCCARO	CPL			2311	
BAKER	CPL			2311	







KHE SANH VETERANS CONTRIBUTIONS

ANDRES, Michael	200.00	Check# 360
ANTHONY, C.T.	50.00	Check# 12112
ARBOLEDA, Robert J.	250.00	Check# 838
ARCHER, Michael J.	60.00	Check# 2025
BAKER, James	200.00	Check# 658
BARNETT, Florentina	100.00	Check# 6675
BATES, Robert	10.00	Check# 5534
BECK, Ralph	100.00	Check# 4481
BERNAL, Daniel C.	50.00	Check# 1100
BIGLER, Don	100.00	Check# 2778
BIRTCIL, Robert F. R/A	250.00	Check# 6475
BISCHOFF, Edward	25.00	Cash
BOTAMER, Nicholas M.	100.00	Check# 1346
BUCKLEY, Patrick B.	100.00	Check# 1105
CAHILL Robert	100.00	Check# 8938
CALDWELL, Scott	100.00	Check# 193266
CAMPBELL, Donald	250.00	Check# 1137
CARPENTER, William	500.00	Check #10823
CHAMBERLIN, Charles	20.00	Cash
CHICOINE, Roger D.	500.00	Check# 3868
CHOCLIS, Paul	100.00	M/O
CIALONE, Joseph A.	300.00	Check# 9263
CROFT, Dennis	40.00	Cash
DAKIN, William E Jr	25.00	Check# 911
DEVOE, Bryan	15.00	Check# 3316
DONAGHY, Richard	100.00	Check# 1157
ESSLINGLER, Thomas	250.00	Check# 1893
FETTER, Charles H.	10.00	Check# 634
FINN, John	25.00	Check# 2334
FISHER, Daniel	100.00	Credit Card
FORD, Thomas C.	250.00	Check# 5219
FOSTER, Gary	400.00	Checks 2627-28
GAROUTTE, Michael A.	80.00	Check# 9616
GERRIOR, Charles	100.00	Check# 7781
HARRINGTON, David S	250.00	Check# 858
HOPWOOD, Harry E III	100.00	Check# 2318
HUFF, Wallace	100.00	Check# 5272
JACHIMIAK, DANIEL L.	250.00	Check# 4848
JACKSON, Dianne	100.00	Check# 2032
JAYNE, George "Bill"	100.00	Check# 226
JENKINS, Stephen	25.00	Check# 2593
JESPERSEN, Marshall	40.00	Check# 8102
KEATON, Thomas	50.00	Check# 4308
KENNEDY, Frank LJ.	50.00	Check# 5805
KUBLEY, Lawrence W.	300.00	Check# 12102
LEFEVRE, William R.	100.00	Check# 7606
LIVERMAN, Hugh C	40.00	Check # 935
LUCAS, Melvin	50.00	Check# 6138
LUTHER, Lawrence	100.00	Credit Card
MANNION, Dennis	300.00	Credit Card
MCCANN, Timothy N.	50.00	Check# 1900
MCELROY, John W	200.00	Check# 3195
MERCADO, Saturno	25.00	Check# 8166
MOON, Johnny M.	50.00	Check# 2903
NANGLE, James T	500.00	Check# 193
NUCHERENO, Philip L.	250.00	Check# 371
ORR, Steven W	150.00	Check# 1253
OSIMANTI, Pietro	100.00	Check# 1106
OWEN, Albert A.	500.00	Check# 3455
PETERSON, Roger M/Gen	500.00	Check# 1998
POLAND, William	30.00	Check# 2427
RIZO, Ted	250.00	Credit Card
ROBERTSON, Isidor	80.00	Check#
ROSSON, Harold E. Jr	100.00	Check# 7795
SHANLEY, Don	500.00	Check# 1243
SHERER, Larry	100.00	Check@ 8483
SENEFF, Walter E.	50.00	Check# 4644
SIEJUTT, Thomas	25.00	Check# 4856
SOERENSEN, Ken	60.00	Check# 1555
STACK, Geoffrey L.	500.00	Check# 6528
STUBBE, Ray	500.00	Check# 13104
TONICK, David	100.00	Check# 4997
VINEYARD, Thomas E	250.00	Check# 20026
WIEDRICH, Albert	60.00	Check# 2317
WILDER, Allen	100.00	Check# 2977
WILSON, Chester W. JR.	250.00	Check# 5875
WITT, Edward	40.00	Check# 942
WRIGHT, James E.	200.00	Check# 4841
YATES, William R.	100.00	Check# 7714
YOUMAN, Elwood	1,000.00	Check# 1523

MEMORIES

KILLED IN ACTION 44 YEARS AGO TODAY KHE SANH

Started by devildog 34 , Feb 04 2012 05:07 PM

As with my previous posting about a Khe Sanh Marine who gave his life, I know that this particular group has been the subject of a previous post. Thank you again to the same member who was willing to negotiate a deal with me, I have the honor to be the guardian of the items belonging to Sergeant Carl J. Ornelas. It is my honor to remember him on this the 44th anniversary of his sacrifice. Carl John Ornelas was born May 21 1948 in Concord, NH. At a young age he moved with his family to Witchita, KS. He enlisted in the Marine Corps May 24, 1965, 3 days after he turned 17. He went through boot camp at MCRD San Diego, CA.

After going through additional infantry school training at ITR (infantry Training Regiment) Camp Pendleton, he was assigned to H&S Company 3rd Bn 5th Marines as a rifleman on November 20, 1965. For reasons not explained he was sent transferred to Bulk Fuel Company Supply Battalion 1st FSR Camp Pendleton on January 5, 1966. From the end of January 1966 to May 1966 he was receiving OJT as a Bulk Fuel Specialist 1391. His MOS changed to 1391. In October he was shipped out to Okinawa and was assigned to 7th Separate Bulk Fuel Company 5th Division Reinforced.

In January 2, 1967 Ornelas joined FLSU (Force Logistics Support Unit) as a 2311 which is the MOS for an ammo tech, an MOS that according to his records he had never been trained for prior to this assignment. While in Vietnam, Ornelas was at Phu Bai, which was headquarters for the 3rd Marine Division to which he was assigned. On January 20, 1967 he suffered shrapnel wounds from mortar fire which penetrated the right side of his chest with hemopneumothorax which happens with blood enters the chest cavity that separates the muscle and the rib cage. When fluid enters into it, it acts very much like water separating two sheets of glass. He was treated at NSA DaNang and released.

Upon release from the hospital he was then assigned to Supply Company FLSG (Force Logistics Support Group) "A" 3rd Service Battalion FLC at Camp Hansen Okinawa where he completed training in April of '67 as an ammo tech, the same job he had in Vietnam. He was sent back to Vietnam for a second time on November 20, 1967 with FLSG Co. A 3rd Service Battalion FLC as an ammo tech. A Sergeant by this point, Ornelas was assigned to the Marine base at Khe Sanh January 17, 1968, only a few days before the fireworks began.

Khe Sanh remained under watchful eye, yet relatively quiet in the closing months of 1967 and well into early January 1968. In the pre-dawn hours of January 21, 1968 following a night-long assault on hill 861, a position held by Kilo Company 3rd Bn 26th Marines, the NVA guns dug in across the border or Laos in a mountain known as Co Roc and NVA positions around the combat base unleashed a hail of artillery and mortar fire on the combat base, initiating what would turn out to be a 77 day siege.

At approximately 0530, the distant report of rockets and mortar tubes echoed throughout the valley as a cluster of 82mm mortars crashed into the center of the combat base around eastern end of the base occupied by Bravo Company 1st Bn 26th Marines and element of Alpha Company 1st Battalion 26th Marines.

David Leverton, a corpsman with Alpha Company recalled, "I swear like in slow motion I must have raised three feet laying flat on my back and screamed 'Incoming' out of a sound sleep. Why, I don't know, but less than thirty seconds later the first rocket hit. Nobody in that tent was still sleeping." Captain Kenneth Pipes, commanding Bravo Company 1st Bn 26th Marines exclaimed, "That sounds like incoming!" The company gunny from Georgia would have none of it. He woke up from his sleep and shouted back, "Hell no captain, that ain't incoming!" Shortly after the Gunny's assessment, the first cluster of mortar rounds exploded outside the captain's bunker. A nearby tent holding some of Bravo Company's corpsman, supply specialists and radio operators emptied quickly as the men came pouring out in search of cover. One man, Lance Corporal Steven Hellwig, turned back to the tent as he forgot something. During his momentary pause, a large shell landed next to him and literally cut the 19-year old in half.

20 Jan, 1968
KHE SANH

Dear Christine,

I truly am sorry in my delay in writing to you. But ever since I returned off of leave, I have been rather busy.

As always I hope my letter finds you in the very best of health. Myself I feel just great. Couldn't feel any better.

I'm no longer in Phu Bai. At this time I'm up at Khe Sanh. It's only five miles from the DMZ, and only 3 miles from Laos. Yes, I'm pretty far north.

I've always wanted to see a little action over here. By the looks of things I just might get my chance up here at Khe Sanh. We early this morning that Khe Sanh is surrounded. Within the next 3 days, the NVA are going to try to take Khe Sanh - How true that is I have no idea - Earlier today an officer of the NVA (North Vietnam Army) gave himself up - And he did a lot of talking. We're on alert at this time just waiting - Myself I doubt that anything is going to happen. But I'll be ready for almost anything.

So what's new with you? I'm sorry I couldn't stop into see you - maybe the next time - When I stopped in San Francisco to report in I found out that my flight was leaving in little over 3 hours. So I really didn't have any time -

I'll close for now - And Please take care of yourself. Write Sooner than I did anyway. Bye -

Always,
Jack.

P.S. - HERE'S MY NEW ADDRESS!

SGT. C.J. ORNELAS - 2156064
SUB UNIT #1, HQ CO., (LSU)
26th MARINES, 3RD MAR DIV
FPO SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.
96602



Headquarters
Force Logistic Command, FMFPac
FPO San Francisco, Calif. 96602

10 January 1969

Mrs Anna A. Ornelas
4527 Washington St.,
Kansas City, Mo.

Dear Mrs. Ornelas,

On 23 December, 1968, we dedicated a Memorial Garden at Camp Books, Force Logistic Command, to honor those members of the command who have given their lives in service here in the Republic of Vietnam. As you can see from the enclosed photos it is a simple memorial, built by volunteers under the direction of our Force Chaplains, but it naturally has deep meaning for us. I thought you might like to have the enclosures as remembrances of the occasion of the dedication, and as assurance that we are keenly mindful here of the trust we inherit from those of our comrades who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Sincerely,

D. A. Feeley, Jr.
Brigadier General, U. S. Marine Corps

FORCE LOGISTIC COMMAND
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
23 DECEMBER 1968

* * *

* MEMORIAL GARDEN *

* * *

DEDICATION CEREMONY

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

INVOCATION — CHAPLAIN EMMETT R. GALLAND, COMMAND CHAPLAIN

REMARKS — BRIGADIER GENERAL JAMES A. FEELEY, COMMANDING GENERAL, FORCE LOGISTIC COMMAND

PRESENTATION OF MEMORIAL PLAQUES by SERGEANTS MAJOR-S — CHAPLAIN A.C. VOLZ

DEDICATION — REAR ADMIRAL JAMES W. KELLY, CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS, U.S. NAVY

BENEDICTION — CHAPLAIN JOHN CLAD

When struggling and courage in mortal combat, always there are those who must pay the dearest price of all - their life. The goal toward which such combat strives becomes more dear with each life lost.

We briefly pause today to honor to these friends - strong men brave and true.

And then press on to achieve that prize which they sought to win.

We care not so much that we be safe, as that we be loyal; not so much that we survive, as that freedom survives; not so much that we be remembered, as that these honored dead be not forgotten.





REMEMBERANCES

The Marine in the picture is a Mike 3/4 member. The words of Del Candelaria are chilling as he tells the loss of Jeff Thibault and Rich Murphy.

On this day lost, but never forgotten. Jeffrey Allen Thibault was born on July 15, 1949. His home of record is Pitman, NJ. Jeffrey attended Pitman High School. Thibault entered the U.S. Marine Corps where he attained the rank of Private First Class (PFC/E2).On June 15, 1968, Thibault was killed in action in Quang Tri Provence of South Vietnam. He was 21 years old.

Jeff
July 15, 1949 - June 15, 1968 PFC, Marines Pitman, NJ



Jeff Thibault left Pitman High School as a junior in 1967, and entered the Marine Corps in November under the "buddy system" with David Dresh, who still lives in Pitman, NJ. He had excelled at football and basketball, following a long family tradition in athletics. Both his father and uncle were local stars of the thirties and forties. He became the third of five Pitman young men to give their lives in the Vietnam War.

David and Jeff were good friends before they joined the Corps. The Marines had an enlistment option that allowed individuals to stay together through boot camp and advanced training. The two thought it was a good idea. Over the next several months, they became much closer.

"Together, we experienced the enlightenment of boot camp, the pride of the Corps, the shortness of leave and the reality of going to Vietnam," Dresh recalls.

Jim Pensabene, also of Pitman, and a Vietnam veteran, remembers Jeff as being popular with the girls and fond of cars. "We were friends from the seventh grade through high school," he says. "He was handsome and he loved cars, like most other high school kids. Although I don't remember him being particularly fond of school."

Dresh recalls the Pitman of the sixties. "It was a small town where everyone knew each other," he says. "Although we weren't joined at the hip, Jeff and I had the same circle of friends and shared many interests. We liked hanging out, nice clothes, sports, dance clubs, cruising, and of course, girls. I think we were typical teenagers and we had a few adventures, both good and bad."

"Jeff had a very understanding grandfather who appreciated Jeff's free-spiritedness," Dresh continues. "He would allow Jeff to borrow his 1965 Sport Fury, with the simple request that the car be returned clean and in one piece. Jeff was not seventeen yet, so one of the guys or myself would drive. We would all put in a dollar or two for gas, and at thirty-two cents a gallon, we could cruise all night."

"I think Jeff knew Vietnam was on the horizon," Pensabene adds. "Once I got there, I just wanted to come home. I am not so sure he could perceive the horror of it all. None of us could."

Especially Barry Weatherby, now living in Mount Ephraim, NJ. He knew Jeff as well as he knew the others from the Pitman and Mantua area who served

In Vietnam. "We all hung out together at Alcyon Lake," he says. "There were many a good time had in the woods around there. The whole group was a bunch of fun loving, All-American guys. Of course, not many of them ever wanted to come over to my house."

Barry's father, Russell, owned the Weatherby Funeral Home in Pitman for twenty-five years. Barry and his brothers helped with the business as they grew up. When Barry was drafted into the Army in August of 1967, he almost immediately found himself being trained as a "Memorial Activities Specialist".

"Also known as Graves Registration," he adds. "Once Uncle Sam saw that my father operated a funeral home, it was 'Wham, bam, thank you, Ma'am'."

After basic training at Fort Dix, and more mortuary training at Fort Lee, Virginia, Barry was sent to Vietnam in April of 1968, where he worked with civilian morticians at Da Nang Air Base. The experience in his father's business could not have prepared him for Vietnam.

"I can't know what the guys in the field went through," he says. "But I know there were many times I wished I wasn't where I was. You can't imagine how bad it was and what I had to get used to. Suffice it to say it was not a pleasant job."

Jeff Thibault's enthusiasm for the Marines and his eagerness to serve his country took him, with Dave Dresh, first to Parris Island, SC, and then to Camp Le Jejune, NC and Camp Pendleton, CA. And finally, in late April of 1968, they were sent to Vietnam.

"We went through everything together from boot camp until we were 'in-country'," Dresh says. "They split us up there. I went to the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines and Jeff went to 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines. Our units operated in about the same area, but I never saw him again after that first day in Vietnam."

Del Candelaria, of Phoenix, Arizona, was an "old timer" when Jeff Thibault joined Mike Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines. The unit had defended Khe Sanh during the Tet Offensive, and was now on its own offensive named "Operation Robin South". Candelaria was a squad leader with ten months experience.

"I had to look at the diary I kept," he says. "On May 1, 1968, I have an entry indicating a new squad member had joined us and I see that I couldn't spell his last name. It looks more like 'Thisbough' than anything else. I must confess, I do not recall what he looked like. I want to say he was pretty short and stocky, but I may be confusing him with one of the others. It's been thirty years."

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Jeff was assigned to a fire team of the first platoon of Mike Company. His team leader was Richard Murphy, from Norwood, Massachusetts, a six-month veteran who took Jeff under his wing.

Del Candelaria recalls from his memory, and diary, a very tragic time in June of 1968. "On June 11th, we left Khe Sanh for an operation on a hill where many North Vietnamese had been spotted. The area we landed on was filled with tall elephant grass that was above our heads. The next day, after spotting some NVA, we came under fire and Kilo Company took most of the casualties. While this was going on, our jets were napalming a hill miles away. The plan was to burn the grass and then land us there to stop a large NVA force that was heading towards Laos. Later in the day, we were choppered to that area. The next three days were fairly uneventful."

"On the 14th of June, we spent the day on patrol climbing hills...we came back quite exhausted. That night was worrisome as the NVA kept probing our

lines. I had been in Vietnam for 12 months and I remember telling the men in my team that I had a bad feeling... something was going to happen."

"At about 5:45 AM, our area was hit with rockets, mortars and machine gun fire. Our company was in the most vulnerable position as three companies of NVA regulars hit us. By the time our gunships, artillery and jets responded, we had sustained a lot of wounded and killed. Our platoon, with rifle fire and grenades, was able to re-take the lines that were overrun in the initial assault."

The fierce fighting lessened as the artillery and air support took its toll on the enemy. The attack had been repelled and the enemy was on the run. Yet, many wounded Marines laid out in the open at the bottom of the hill. The Marine Corps takes great pride in never leaving a wounded or dead comrade on the battlefield.

"Later that morning," Candelaria continues. "One of my team members and I crawled down an open slope to retrieve a wounded Marine. I yelled for a corpsman who crawled down to meet us. About fifty or so yards away, Murphy and Thibault were going down the same slope to see if another Marine was alive or dead. I could not see either of them because a large hedge separated our views. Except for the sporadic and distant small arms fire and the cries of the wounded, it was fairly quiet."

"I then heard a sniper's rifle fire about five hundred yards in front of us. I heard Thibault yell, 'Oh, God. Murphy's been hit!' Then a second shot and Thibault yelled something like 'My arm, my arm!' At this time, the corpsman who was helping us said he was going to leave to go help Thibault and Murphy. He had to go back up the hill to get around the hedge. A third shot rang out and Thibault was no longer crying. As our corpsman got to the top of the hill, a fourth shot killed him. And a fifth shot killed another corpsman who showed up at about the same time. The sixth shot killed our radioman. I carried the wounded Marine back up the hill just as twenty or more 105mm howitzer rounds were fired in the area of the sniper. After that, we did not receive any more sniper fire."

Candelaria continued to carry the wounded to an evacuation area until he was called to help interview some prisoners. A horrible day was about to get worse. He had already lost half of his ten-man squad. During a break in the interrogation, he learned that another very close friend died earlier in the day.

"When I heard he had been killed, I ran up the hill to see if it were true," he says. "While I was crying and hugging his body, I saw some Marines lay two more body bags at the end of a long row...one was Murphy and the other, Thibault. It was a very sad day for me. We lost twenty Marines that day and then twenty-three more two days later."

Barry Weatherby continues his story. "I used to have friends stop in and see me when they came in from the field," he says. "I got ready for work one day and Sergeant Sinotti, from New Jersey, comes up to me and says, 'You're from Pitman, right?' And I said 'Yes, why?' He said, 'Do you know a guy named Thibault?' I said, 'Sure!' He said, 'He's here.' So I went outside and looked high and low for him. I couldn't find him so I figured he had to get back to his unit. I went back to work."

Barry pauses, his eyes glaze over and he takes a deep breath. "Jeff's name was on the first body bag I looked at. I sort of lost it. I went straight to the NCO club and got totally wasted."

He also got into some trouble. "I guess I got out of hand," he says. "They were going to charge me with dereliction of duty and insubordination until orders came through for me to escort Jeff's body home. They didn't believe I knew him."

Jeff's body had already been shipped home by the time Barry was able to leave Vietnam. He spent seventeen hours waiting for a flight, and finally met the casket at Dover Air Base in Delaware. He rode in the hearse from Dover to Weatherby Funeral Home.

At the graveside service at Hillcrest Cemetery in Hurffville, NJ, the Marine Corps Guard handed the folded American flag first to Barry, who in turn, gave it to Jeff's parents.

"It was the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life," he recalls. "First, Steve Sickler was killed, then Bruce Sharp and Johnny Jervis. And now, I'm

delivering Jeff's body and handing the flag over to his folks."

Barry has not visited any of the local gravesites. He does his healing at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington. He spends time reflecting on each name he knows; each life he shared. But then he steps back and takes in an even more personal perspective.

"I wonder, 'How many of these guys did I work on?' And they all seem like they're right there. It's a tough thing to describe."

Jim Pensabene wants Jeff Thibault to be remembered not only as a young man who served his country. "We are all in his debt for that," he says. "But, also as a man who joined the Marines, knowing that this branch of service was renowned for being in the midst of the action."

It has taken some years and a good bit of faith to heal Del Candelaria. He would like to visit Vietnam some day and bring back some dirt to sprinkle on the ground at the Wall. He also feels a strong presence as he places his hand on the names. There is a spiritual bond to both the living and dead that all Vietnam veterans share and cherish. He also has a vision.

"I believe that Jeff and the others are in heaven," he says. "I believe that when I die, these guys will be waiting at the gate for me and that Jeff will tell me, 'I want to introduce someone to you.' And he will introduce me to the sniper who also died that day. And we will all say to each other, 'We're so sorry. It was such a terrible time for all of us.'"

David Dresh, Vietnam veteran, Marine Corp buddy and friend, has a heavenly vision of his own.

"Jeff will always be a part of my history," he says. "I celebrate his memory by remembering our friendship before and during our enlistment in the Marines."

"When I visit Jeff's grave site, I do so because he is my friend and a guy I liked spending time with. Should I say Jeff was a good kid and a nice guy? Yes, he was. Do I miss him? Absolutely." "I know Jeff is in heaven and when we next meet, I hope he has the keys to that Sport Fury so we can cruise to Mr. Abba's Diner. I'll let him drive. There, we will tell each other stories while we chow down on cheese steaks, fries, coconut custard pie, and cherry Cokes. Semper Fi, Jeffrey. Semper Fi."

I GET PICTURES

Colonel Gregory D. Gadson, USMA Class of "89," relinquished command of USAG Fort Belvoir and retired after 25 years of distinguished service. After losing both legs in combat, he went on to become the first double-amputee to command a U.S. Army Installation.



KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

Dr. Joseph Wolfe spoke about his experience in Vietnam at the First United Methodist Church. Wolfe was one of four Army medical doctors present at the siege of Khe Sanh during the war.



KHE SANH VETERANS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS FOR 2018





CATHERINE S. ACKLEY - 4
CAIN A. AUSTIN - 1
NOAH B. BISSONNETTE - 3
NATHAN C. BRANT - 1
CARLTON L. CANNON III - 1
MCKENNA I. COOLEY - 2
BRANDEN P. COOPER-3
ALEXANDRIA C. FRICK-3
OLIVIA K. FRICK-1
SAMUEL K. GEERS - 4
MACKENZIE L. GEERS - 2
TAYLOR R. GREEN - 1
JACK M. HILL-1
DYLAN S. HUMMER - 3
ASHLEY M. KELLEY - 1
CAITLYN E. KELLEY - 1
JEFFREY C. MENARD - 4
NICHOLAS E. MOCCIA - 2
JULIA F. MORRISSEY - 1
KYLE M. MORROW - 2
QUINN R. MORROW - 1
MACKENZIE G. MURPHY - 4
JACK S. MURTHA - 2
MELIA R. ORTIZ - 3
ALYSON N. PERRY - 4
COLTON T. RAMOS - 2
TAYLOR N. ROGERS - 1
GWENDOLYN R. SIEMAN - 2

JUST TWO OF THE MANY LETTERS THE COMMITTEE RECEIVES SCHOLARSHIP SUMMARY FOR 2018, POSTED ON PAGE 82

Dear Chairman Fisher,
I would like to take a moment to thank you and all those involved in the Khe Sanh Veterans Scholarship Foundation for taking the time to read through all of the received scholarship applications. It means a lot to us that you all would do this for us. Furthermore, thank you for selecting me as a recipient for the Sergeant Major James T. Gaynor Award. It's an honor that my family and I are very proud of. I look forward to utilizing this scholarship for the pursuit of the best education I can have. In other news, as soon as my 2017-18 transcript is available, I will promptly send it your way. Again, thank you for all your hard work.
Semper Fidelis,
Hunter Freedom Lane
(4) Year Award Winner

Khe Sanh Veterans Scholarship Foundation,

My name is Gwendolyn Sieman, and I was a recipient of the Sergeant Major James T. Gaynor Award. I wanted to thank you so much for the scholarship. With school around the corner, it is such a blessing to help with tuition. I truly appreciate the award. Even more so, thank you to the committee of veterans, who served our great country. Thank you for my freedom, and giving me the ability to be able to go to college in America, home of the free and land of the brave! Thank you again. My family and I deeply appreciate it!
I don't know where I would be today without my grandfather or the veteran foundation.
Thank you, again! God Bless! Best,
Gwendolyn Sieman, Ohio State 2020

FROM THE KSV WEBSITE

I haven't seen my Sergeant - Micheal Secli - since I left Khe Sanh but have had a number of email and telephone conversation with him this past year. He sent this story to me today, though gut wrenching it is well written and descriptive of what many have gone through. I don't know when it was written or came out, but shows the emotional turmoil many of us continue to deal with, even after all of these years.

BURIAL AT SEA BY LT/ COL. GEORGE GOODSON, USMC (RET)

In my 76th year, the events of my life appear to me, from time to time, as a series of vignettes. Some were significant; most were trivial.

War is the seminal event in the life of everyone that has endured it. Though I fought in Korea and the Dominican Republic and was wounded there, Vietnam was my war.

Now 42 years have passed and, thankfully, I rarely think of those days in Cambodia , Laos , and the panhandle of North Vietnam where small teams of Americans and Montangards fought much larger elements of the North Vietnamese Army. Instead I see vignettes: some exotic, some mundane:

- The smell of Nuc Mam.
- The heat, dust, and humidity.
- The blue exhaust of cycles clogging the streets.
- Elephants moving silently through the tall grass.
- Hard eyes behind the servile smiles of the villagers.
- Standing on a mountain in Laos and hearing a tiger roar.
- A young girl squeezing my hand as my medic delivered her baby.
- The flowing Ao Dais of the young women biking down Tran Hung Dao.
- My two years as Casualty Notification Officer in North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland .

It was late 1967. I had just returned after 18 months in Vietnam. Casualties were increasing. I moved my family from Indianapolis to Norfolk, rented a house, enrolled my children in their fifth or sixth new school, and bought a second car.

A week later, I put on my uniform and drove 10 miles to Little Creek, Virginia. I hesitated before entering my new office. Appearance is important to career Marines. I was no longer, if ever, a poster Marine. I had returned from my third tour in Vietnam only 30 days before. At 5'9", I now weighed 128 pounds - 37 pounds below my normal weight. My uniforms fit ludicrously, my skin was yellow from malaria medication, and I think I had a twitch or two.

I straightened my shoulders, walked into the office, looked at the nameplate on a Staff Sergeant's desk and said, "Sergeant Jolly, I'm Lieutenant Colonel Goodson. Here are my orders and my Qualification Jacket."

Sergeant Jolly stood, looked carefully at me, took my orders, stuck out his hand; we shook and he asked, "How long were you there, Colonel?" I replied "18 months this time." Jolly breathed, "You must be a slow learner, Colonel." I smiled.

Jolly said, "Colonel, I'll show you to your office and bring in the Sergeant Major. I said, "No, let's just go straight to his office." Jolly nodded, hesitated, and lowered his voice, "Colonel, the Sergeant Major. He's been in this job two years. He's packed pretty tight. I'm worried about him." I nodded.

Jolly escorted me into the Sergeant Major's office. "Sergeant Major, this is Colonel Goodson, the new Commanding Officer." The Sergeant Major stood, extended his hand and said, "Good to see you again, Colonel." I responded, "Hello Walt, how are you?" Jolly looked at me, raised an eyebrow, walked out, and closed the door.

I sat down with the Sergeant Major. We had the obligatory cup of coffee and talked about mutual acquaintances. Walt's stress was palpable. Finally, I said, "Walt, what the hell's wrong?" He turned his chair, looked out the window and said, "George, you're going to wish you were back in Nam before you leave here. I've been in the Marine Corps since 1939. I was in the Pacific 36 months, Korea for 14 months, and Vietnam for 12 months. Now I come here to bury these kids. I'm putting my letter in. I

can't take it anymore." I said, "OK Walt. If that's what you want, I'll endorse your request for retirement and do what I can to push it through Headquarters Marine Corps."

Sergeant Major Walt Xxxxx retired 12 weeks later. He had been a good Marine for 28 years, but he had seen too much death and too much suffering. He was used up.

Over the next 16 months, I made 28 death notifications, conducted 28 military funerals, and made 30 notifications to the families of Marines that were severely wounded or missing in action. Most of the details of those casualty notifications have now, thankfully, faded from memory. Four, however, remain.

MY FIRST NOTIFICATION My third or fourth day in Norfolk, I was notified of the death of a 19 year old Marine. This notification came by telephone from Headquarters Marine Corps. The information detailed:
*Name, rank, and serial number.
*Name, address, and phone number of next of kin.
*Date of and limited details about the Marine's death.
*Approximate date the body would arrive at the Norfolk Naval Air Station.
*A strong recommendation on whether the casket should be opened or closed.

The boy's family lived over the border in North Carolina, about 60 miles away. I drove there in a Marine Corps staff car. Crossing the state line into North Carolina, I stopped at a small country store/ service station/Post Office. I went in to ask directions. Three people were in the store. A man and woman approached the small Post Office window. The man held a package. The store owner walked up and addressed them by name, "Hello John. Good morning Mrs. Cooper."

I was stunned. My casualty's next-of-kin's name was John Cooper!

I hesitated, then stepped forward and said, "I beg your pardon. Are you Mr. and Mrs. John Cooper of (address)?

The father looked at me - I was in uniform - and then, shaking, bent at the waist, he vomited. His wife looked horrified at him and then at me. Understanding came into her eyes and she collapsed in slow motion. I think I caught her before she hit the floor.

The owner took a bottle of whiskey out of a drawer and handed it to Mr. Cooper who drank. I answered their questions for a few minutes. Then I drove them home in my staff car. The store owner locked the store and followed in their truck. We stayed an hour or so until the family began arriving.

I returned the store owner to his business. He thanked me and said, "Mister, I wouldn't have your job for a million dollars." I shook his hand and said; "Neither would I."

I vaguely remember the drive back to Norfolk. Violating about five Marine Corps regulations, I drove the staff car straight to my house. I sat with my family while they ate dinner, went into the den, closed the door, and sat there all night, alone.

My Marines steered clear of me for days. I had made my first death notification.

THE FUNERALS Weeks passed with more notifications and more funerals. I borrowed Marines from the local Marine Corps Reserve and taught them to conduct a military funeral: how to carry a casket, how to fire the volleys and how to fold the flag.

When I presented the flag to the mother, wife, or father, I always said, "All Marines share in your grief." I had been instructed to say, "On behalf of a grateful nation...." I didn't think the nation was grateful, so I didn't say that.

Sometimes, my emotions got the best of me and I couldn't speak. When that happened, I just handed them the flag and touched a shoulder. They would look at me and nod. Once a mother said to me, "I'm so sorry you have this terrible job." My eyes filled with tears and I leaned over and kissed her.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION Six weeks after my first notification, I had another. This was a young PFC. I drove to his mother's house. As always, I was in uniform and driving a Marine Corps staff

car. I parked in front of the house, took a deep breath, and walked towards the house. Suddenly the door flew open, a middle-aged woman rushed out. She looked at me and ran across the yard, screaming "NO! NO! NO! NO!"

I hesitated. Neighbors came out. I ran to her, grabbed her, and whispered stupid things to reassure her. She collapsed. I picked her up and carried her into the house

Eight or nine neighbors followed. Ten or fifteen minutes later, the father came in followed by ambulance personnel. I have no recollection of leaving.

The funeral took place about two weeks later. We went through the drill. The mother never looked at me. The father looked at me once and shook his head sadly.

ANOTHER NOTIFICATION One morning, as I walked in the office, the phone was ringing. Sergeant Jolly held the phone up and said, "You've got another one, Colonel." I nodded, walked into my office, picked up the phone, took notes, thanked the officer making the call, I have no idea why, and hung up. Jolly, who had listened, came in with a special Telephone Directory that translates telephone numbers into the person's address and place of employment.

The father of this casualty was a Longshoreman. He lived a mile from my office. I called the Longshoreman's Union Office and asked for the Business Manager. He answered the phone, I told him who I was, and asked for the father's schedule.

The Business Manager asked, "Is it his son?" I said nothing. After a moment, he said, in a low voice, "Tom is at home today." I said, "Don't call him. I'll take care of that." The Business Manager said, "Aye, Aye Sir," and then explained, "Tom and I were Marines in WWII."

I got in my staff car and drove to the house. I was in uniform. I knocked and a woman in her early forties answered the door. I saw instantly that she was clueless. I asked, "Is Mr. Smith home?" She smiled pleasantly and responded, "Yes, but he's eating breakfast now. Can you come back later?" I said, "I'm sorry. It's important. I need to see him now."

She nodded, stepped back into the beach house and said, "Tom, it's for you."

A moment later, a ruddy man in his late forties, appeared at the door. He looked at me, turned absolutely pale, steadied himself, and said, "Jesus Christ man, he's only been there three weeks!"

Months passed. More notifications and more funerals. Then one day while I was running, Sergeant Jolly stepped outside the building and gave a loud whistle, two fingers in his mouth..... I never could do that..... and held an imaginary phone to his ear.

Another call from Headquarters Marine Corps. I took notes, said, "Got it." and hung up. I had stopped saying "Thank You" long ago

Jolly, "Where?"

Me, "Eastern Shore of Maryland. The father is a retired Chief Petty Officer. His brother will accompany the body back from Vietnam ...."

Jolly shook his head slowly, straightened, and then said, "This time of day, it'll take three hours to get there and back. I'll call the Naval Air Station and borrow a helicopter. And I'll have Captain Tolliver get one of his men to meet you and drive you to the Chief's home."

He did, and 40 minutes later, I was knocking on the father's door. He opened the door, looked at me, then looked at the Marine standing at parade rest beside the car, and asked, "Which one of my boys was it, Colonel?"

I stayed a couple of hours, gave him all the information, my office and home phone number and told him to call me, anytime.

He called me that evening about 2300 ."I've gone through my boy's papers and found his will. He asked to be buried at sea. Can you make that happen?" I said, "Yes I can, Chief. I can and I will."

My wife who had been listening said, "Can you do that?" I told her, "I have no idea. But I'm going to break my ass trying."

I called Lieutenant General Alpha Bowser, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, at home about 2330, explained the situation, and asked, "General, can you get me a quick appointment with the Admiral at Atlantic Fleet Headquarters?" General Bowser said, "George, you be there tomorrow at 0900. He will see you."

I was and the Admiral did. He said coldly, "How can the Navy help the Marine Corps, Colonel." I told him the story. He turned to his Chief of Staff and said, "Which is the sharpest destroyer in port?" The Chief of Staff responded with a name.

The Admiral called the ship, "Captain, you're going to do a burial at sea. You'll report to a Marine Lieutenant Colonel Goodson until this mission is completed..."

He hung up, looked at me, and said, "The next time you need a ship, Colonel, call me. You don't have to sic Al Bowser on my ass." I responded, "Aye Aye, Sir" and got the hell out of his office.

I went to the ship and met with the Captain, Executive Officer, and the Senior Chief. Sergeant Jolly and I trained the ship's crew for four days. Then Jolly raised a question none of us had thought of. He said, "These government caskets are air tight. How do we keep it from floating?"

All the high priced help including me sat there looking dumb. Then the Senior Chief stood and said, "Come on Jolly. I know a bar where the retired guys from World War II hang out."

They returned a couple of hours later, slightly the worse for wear, and said, "It's simple; we cut four 12" holes in the outer shell of the casket on each side and insert 300 lbs of lead in the foot end of the casket. We can handle that, no sweat."

The day arrived. The ship and the sailors looked razor sharp. General Bowser, the Admiral, a US Senator, and a Navy Band were on board. The sealed casket was brought aboard and taken below for modification. The ship got underway to the 12-fathom depth.

The sun was hot. The ocean flat. The casket was brought aft and placed on a catafalque. The Chaplain spoke. The volleys were fired. The flag was removed, folded, and I gave it to the father. The band played "Eternal Father Strong to Save." The casket was raised slightly at the head and it slid into the sea.

The heavy casket plunged straight down about six feet. The incoming water collided with the air pockets in the outer shell. The casket stopped abruptly, rose straight out of the water about three feet, stopped, and slowly slipped back into the sea. The air bubbles rising from the sinking casket sparkled in the sunlight as the casket disappeared from sight forever....

The next morning I called a personal friend, Lieutenant General Oscar Peatross, at Headquarters Marine Corps and said, "General, get me out of here. I can't take this anymore." I was transferred two weeks later.

I was a good Marine but, after 17 years, I had seen too much death and too much suffering. I was used up.

Vacating the house, my family and I drove to the office in a two-car convoy. I said my goodbyes. Sergeant Jolly walked out with me. He waved at my family, looked at me with tears in his eyes, came to attention, saluted, and said, "Well Done, Colonel. Well Done."

I felt as if I had received the Medal of Honor!

'A veteran is someone who, at one point, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America ' for an amount of 'up to and including their life.'

Posted by Craig W Tourte

REPLIES"

As hard as it was for him to tell the next of kin. Think how hard it is on us, having watched our brothers –arm and friends die on the battlefield
Sam Smith

MEMORIES

IN REMEMBRANCE OF OUR FALLEN CORPSMEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS.
JAMES CHARLES DELAPLANE
(20 MAR 1948 - 17 APR 1968)

HOSPITALMAN, HN, E3, UNITED STATES NAVY. KHE SANH VETERAN H&S CO, 2ND BN, 26TH MARINES, 3RD MAR DIV, III MAF.

Delaplane's Home of record was Camden, Carroll county, Indiana. Born in Seattle Washington, son of Charles Kenneth and Margaret Ban Geystel Delaplane. Brother of Robert and Dennis Delaplane. He was a 1966 graduate of Carroll county High-school. He was never Married and had no children.

Quang Tri Provence, South Vietnam at 1645 hrs, in vicinity of hill 558 near Khe Sahn, durning operation Pegasus, HN Delaplane was killed by 122mm rocket fragments to his head and chest while engaging in action against hostile forces. His company received 7 incoming rocket rounds resulting in 2 friendly KIA & 15 WIA (14 Medevaced, 1 Minor). H&S Company, 2/26th Marines, lost three Navy Corpsmen as a result of this enemy action. Two Corpsman died that day and one the following day from wounds received during the attack.

HN Delaplane was 20 Years of age at the time of his death. James is buried at Rock Creek Cemetery, Logansport, Deer Creek, Carroll county, Indiana. He is remembered on the Vietnam veterans memorial wall, Panel 50E, Line 27. No other information could be found. Thank you for your service and commitment brother, RIP.

If you knew or served with this Individual or any others and have additional information or photos, please contact me directly. You can leave a message for me on messenger or on my Facebook page and I will get back to you as soon as possible.







MEMORIES

BY JAMES M. "OLLIE" COLLINS,USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
A CO 1/26

Just passed midnight @0035, Khe Sanh Combat Base received more than 50 rounds of 82 mm mortars killing 4 and wounding 76 and killing one Vietnamese ARVN Liaison Officer. The mortars were walked up and down the tent areas of A Battery, 1/13, killing 2 and wounding 30, including the Fire Direction Officer and CO of the battery, Capt., Brennan.

At 0525 hrs., the base was again hit with approximately 50 rounds of 122 mm rockets. Newly arrived Marines of 3/26, sleeping in tents, were hit, especially the 3/26 Battalion Aide Station. A USAF AO spotted mortar positions near Hill 689 just west of the Khe Sanh Air Strip at day break and a patrol from CAC "O" was dispatched to investigate. The patrol became pinned down in an ambush and took 3 friendlies killed in the initial burst. An artillery mission enabled the patrol to withdraw, causing one wounded Marine who shortly thereafter died. Two Marines returned to the hill. Searching for the wounded and friendly dead. Two Marines had been left on the hill, one returned the other was missing.

Cpt., Bynum, CO of I/3/26, was shot by an NVA sniper as he neared the top of Hill 689, wounds which eventually prove fatal. Soon there after Hill 689 was seized by the Marines and the CAC "O" KIA were recovered. 2/Lt., Larry Bolger was killed when Capt., Norm Centers, CO, put the Alpha Company 1/26 behind the artillery battery and laid them out in the grass without digging in, and those Marines got butchered by that mortar attack. I am a survivor of this attack! But only by the grace of God almighty,

I Sgt Jim "Ollie" Collins was spared from the bee's nest of rockets and shrapnel, but still haunted by the screams of those wounded and the smell of lingering sulfur from the many detonated mortar and rocket rounds that rained down on us! Just prior to the NVA rocket attack, Sgt Paul Kincaid and I were having conversation about what he might do when he returned to the states. He was a "short timer" and was ordered to stay beyond his rotation date. His tour of duty was complete and was about to leave the Company when we returned from the current combat mission. "IT WAS NOT TO BE." I will always remember and will never forget his heroism and sacrifice. Knowing many of these warriors on this day in history, they would agree that their story and fate should be told for the sacrifice they made for freedom, democracy and a better life for all. To this day, I am still currently in contact with Sgt., Paul Kincaid's family.

May they continue to "Rest In Peace"
Semper Fidelis

THOSE LOST
27 JUNE 1967

2 Lt., Dale Allen	I/3/26
2Lt., Lawrence Bolger	A/1/26
PFC Frederick Brenke	L/3/26
L/Cpl Victor Burns	A/1/26
Cpt., Franklin Bynum	L/3/26
L/Cpl Allan Damian	A/1/26
L/Cpl Jeffrey David	I/3/26
Cpl Anthony Dicesare	I/3/26
L/Cpl Alejandron Godinez	I/3/26
HM3 Curtis D. Jackson	L/3/26
L/Cpl Freddie L.Johnson	I/3/26
Sgt., Paul Kincaid	A/1/26
L/Col Charles A. Lynch	CAC-O
L/Cpl Francisco Mazariegos	CAC-O
L/Cpl Kenneth Millard	I/3/26
Cpl, Dennis O'Connor	CAC-O
PFC Paul Rodriguez	A/1/26
Cpl James Shepard	CAC-O
PFC Rick Stewart	A/1/13
Cpl Edward Travis	A/1/13
Cpl Richard L. Walker	I/3/26
Cpl Stephen Wassenich	I/3/26
L/Cpl Jonathan Whitticom	H&S/1/26
L/Cpl Ira W. Williams	A/1/26
PFC William J. Williams	L/3/26



"BOOTS"

BY ROBERT "SKIP" W. UNANGST
USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN,
I CO 3/26 3RD PLT

If there was something I looked forward about Vietnam, it was knowing that I would be issued a genuine pair of Jungle Boots. That was unquestionably the imprimatur of a combat veteran. No more of that all leather black boot camp type footwear that was apparently made for state side pogues and other noncombatants to endlessly polish for endless inspections.

No, these were the real deal, with green cloth sides designed to deal with life in the jungle; deep treaded soles to deal with mud; ventilation ports at the arches to deal with rain, swamps, and rice patties and a thin metal foot plate to minimize land mine blast.

After arriving in Da Nang, my group was sent north to Phu Bai for a few days and from there to Khe Sanh. At Khe Sanh, five of us or so were sent to India Company as replacements. From there we were assigned to our respective platoons. Along this route we were issued gear that included rifles, magazines, knap sacks, shelter haves, helmets, helmet liners, and you name it. Everything you would expect a TO infantry man to have, except Jungle Boots.

Now I knew jungle boots were cool, and I suspected that everybody along the supply chain wanted to own at least one pair; but we were the ones at the end of the supply chain, theoretically the ones the supply chain was built for. We were the "grunts" that would be humping the damp, slippery, and muddy hills and valleys along the DMZ.

It wasn't long after arriving at Khe Sanh that we began company size patrols that lasted from several days to a week or so. It didn't take long for those damp rocky slippery slopes to take a toll on our state side boots. Within two weeks one could tell the new guys from the "salts." The salts wore these cool, worn ,leather jungle boots; and the new guys wore boots held together with duct tape. I think the new guys would have fitted in better at that winter at Valley Forge.

After a lengthy patrol, the company returned to the Battalion rear at Khe Sanh . Here we got hot chow and a chance to relax in our shelter halves for a couple of days as we took up our perimeter positions until the next patrol.

In this down time, two friends (also from India Company) John Heinrick and Gary Travatello and I went to visit a mutual friend of John's. He was a battalion cook and we went to visit him in the cooks' tent. Their quarters were plush. First of all, they were in a tent; a real tent. Not two shelter halves tied together. And all of this was up on a wooden platform, not the ground. Each resident of the tent had an actual cot to sleep on. But there on the wooden floor beneath a cot I saw a sight I will never forget. All in a row were three pairs of Jungle Boots.

While on the last patrol I slipped on a wet rock while moving down a steep jungle trail. My right shin slammed into another sharp rock. At the next "take five" break I examined my leg to find a half inch horizontal cut at the midpoint of my shin. I didn't think much of it, and we then "saddled up" and kept going. At the next rest I again examined my shin only to find a four inch black leach on the cut.

Four or so days later (back at Khe Sanh) my lower right leg began to ache and to swell. Consequently, I went to the med station where I was given penicillin, a set of crutches, and a diagnosis of " cellulitis."

A day or so later, (around September 5, 1967} 3rd battalion, 26th Marines, were helicoptered east to Camp Carrol. A day or so later the battalion moved out to the north to begin a sweep between Con Thien and the DMZ. Here they would walk into "Ambush Valley" and two divisions of Communists. The battalion would takeover 80 per cent killed and wounded. I remained behind with my cellulitis. Camp Carrol was on a bit of a plateau and from there one could look to the north and see that something big was happening. I remember seeing smoke and F4 Phantoms bringing supporting air strikes. My other memories of Camp Carrol were that the times for chow had to be random because any regularity produced "incoming." I also remember seeing another Marine in a chow line that I hadn't seen since boot camp. He was shaking like a leaf

and couldn't stop stammering about incoming. He was done.

After seeing the fire fight from the distance of Camp Carrol, I got in a vehicle and went down to Charlie Med in Dong Ha. This is the aid station to which the casualties from the fire fight were being medevaced. I was there looking for medical clearance, but one look at my lower leg got me on the first helicopter to the hospital in the rear at Phu Bai. That part of my leg was now scarlet and swollen to look like a piece of meat hanging in a butcher store display.

While at Charlie Med I saw several doctors working intensely on a marine who had been shot several times. His name was O'Neill. He was in severe pain and they were direct in handling him with anything but "kid gloves." I remember them yelling his name and screaming at him to hold still. This was triage medicine.

Shortly after this, several of us were loaded on a UH-34. O'Neill, me, a NVA soldier with his foot blown off, and I think others.

A few minutes into the flight, the wind from the open door was pulling at the sheet O'Neill was rapped in. He began to moan. The crewman on the chopper went to O'Neill to secure the sheet. Just before he did, he gave me his 45 and, looking at the communist, said, "If he moves, blow his f- - -ing head off."

Almost on 0, the communist moaned, sat up, and looked straight at me. I chambered a round and put the gun six inches from his forehead. His eyes got big and he immediately laid back down and did not move or make a sound for the rest of the flight.

At Phu Bai, we were taken into the initial treatment area. There I saw something I will never forget. At this time casualties from the "Ambush Valley" fire fight were pouring in. O'Neil was a priority; I was not. A senior Navy doctor walked past the communist and said to a corpsman, I don't even want to look at him."

Several minutes later, the doctor returned to the communist and examined his wound. Knowing surgery would be required he asked the corpsman what his blood type was. The corpsman answered B-Negative and there was only one unit left. The tormented doctor answered, "Break it out." Perhaps he had seen too much of this before at other places like Iwo Jima or Inchon.

I have often wondered over the years how many Marines in that horrific fire fight had that blood type. I also wonder now how many of us had any idea of the hostile protest we would receive by the country that sent us to that war and by those cowards who protested us because we served where they were terrified to appear. I wonder how many of those sheltered, self serving phonies could have learned something real about, "Come on people now, smile on your brother, learn to love one another right now" if they had been in that treatment room that day. *

PTSD wasn't because of Vietnam. Vietnam was only the precursor; "Coming Home" was the injury. After four days in the hospital and after, as another Marine put it, "getting four times as much penicillin as a man with 'The Clap'."

I was released from the hospital and sent north to rejoin my decimated unit. But first I was sent to supply to be issued new gear, new jungle utilities, and yes, new boots- Jungle Boots. Supply was low on inventory so I had to take the size closest to my ten and a half feet. There they were a pair of brand new Jungle Boots, twelve triple EEE. I was now a bona fide Marine infantryman in The Nam.

Our new battalion rear would be about fifty miles south of the DMZ off of highway 1 at Camp Evans. From here we would run several operations over a two month period that would provide the time for replacements to arrive and bring the unit back to T/O strength and numbers. The balance of this article is about one such patrol.

We were running a platoon size patrol in a remote area to the west of Highway 1. The route of the patrol brought us to a river with an abandoned village on the other side. I believe the abandonment of the village was part of the strategy to relocate populations. The river was about 150 feet wide. It had a moderate current, and at the point of crossing was at *most* waste deep. A fairly steep and muddy bank rose from the other side. The path up

the bank was about twenty feet in length. The bank gave way to a flat twenty or so feet wide strip that ran up and down the river. At the side of the path opposite the river was a six foot high concrete wall that was the boarder of the village. As the village was abandoned, overgrowth covered much of the wall. I vaguely recall structures on the other side of the wall: The wall might have run for a couple of hundred feet. The day was wet and overcast.

As the lead elements of the patrol were crossing the river several shots from behind the wall erupted. Two Marines were hit, neither fatally. One Marine, Vinny Trentacosta from Brooklyn, New York, was shot in the upper leg. He with the other Marine, would be medevaced and return to the unit in three weeks or so. As I was also from New York, Vinnie and I were friends. He was rugged and I knew he would be all right. In fact Vinnie was the kid living on Wycoff Avenue whose mother could be heard yelling at him from an open window, "Vincent, put that car down!"

The first squad, well spread out, was able to continue across the river and secure the area immediately on the other side. Now the rest of us just had to move across to the other side, spread out and face outboard. The sniper (s) were no longer a threat but in this environment the danger of bobby traps was very real. We were still in the general area of what Bernard Fall had described as "The Street Without Joy."

The Marine behind me, in the order of march, was an engineer attached to the platoon. He was there because the probability of bobby traps was high. His expertise was in dealing with such things. He was just about my height and build, six feet and maybe 200 pounds with gear.

As we ascended the muddy river bank, we were told to place your foot where the person in front of you placed his. The assumption was that if he hadn't triggered a mine, you wouldn't either. By the time I got to the river bank, the foot positions in the mud had been well defined and well worn. Upon rising from the bank, I moved out about twenty meters, knelt down, and faced outboard.

The explosion was bone shaking! With the noise, I reflexively turned in its direction to see the engineer returning to earth. The sequence was one I had seen before. Silence, the cry "Corpsman", the insinuation of shock. As I was closest to him, I ran to him to see him laying on his back with his head to the wall. His left foot was virtually blown off and twisted at an angle so the sole of his boot was facing him. His right foot was also at an odd angle but not as severe. His legs formed aU, and his crotch appeared riddled with shrapnel. I can't remember what I said to him, if anything. The corpsman and others immediately appeared, and I went back to my position. He was quickly medevaced and I never saw him again.

As he was right behind me, I have often wondered why his foot and not mine on that well trodden piece of mud detonated that mine. All the previous footsteps had brought that mine to the threshold of detonation. There have been many quiet times over the years in which I have just stared at my feet and thought about what they almost looked like. If the engineer survived, I wonder if he does the same.

After returning to "The World" a time would come when I would teach high school physics for thirty years. A fundamental concept of physics is that Pressure=Force/Area. Pressure, like the Pressure that detonated that mine, is greater if the Force, the weight of gravity, is greater of if the Area is smaller. Pressure is less if the Force is less or the Area is greater. The engineer and I were almost identical in weight- Force. The Area of our footprints were not the same. I wore 12 EEE boots.

From here we continued the patrol. My squad leader was Rudell Lee. He was a replacement and he happened to be from Oklahoma. Rudell informed me that our squad would now be walking point. As I was the fire team leader for first fire team, he wanted my fire team to walk point. He also said I had more experience. I couldn't argue with him on this point for as I was one of the few to return after Ambush Valley". I had much more experience than any of these replacements.

I couldn't see letting a new Marine walk point for the fire team so I did. We headed up river and out of the village for maybe a mile or two. We walked slowly along a narrow path. I came across one or two pungi pits, but weather had eroded

enough of them so careful observation revealed them. Fortunately the rest of the day was uneventful.

*From the song entitled "Get Together" written by Chet Powers of the "young bloods."

WHEN IT REALLY MATTERED, PATRIOTISM HAS REIGNED IN THE UNITED STATES.

Lubbock's Barry McCool reflects on service in Vietnam, patriotism

By Ray Westbrook A-J Media

It's a given about how the founders and their Minutemen of 1776 conducted themselves in the original fight for freedom. But now, three living generations of the Barry McCool family have served the nation in the military with much the same mindset. McCool, who resides in Lubbock as a 22-year Marine and Navy veteran, had been living in Pennsylvania when he joined the Marine Corps in 1965 as an 18-year-old. He was in time for two full tours, plus a bit more, in Vietnam.



They trained him extensively to be a track vehicle repairman, but he preferred to be a rifleman.

"I was a terrible mechanic, so I volunteered for all of the ambushes and patrols that they needed to send out. I was really a grunt, a rifleman," he said. "Even though I was attached to an artillery unit as a repairman, I was always out in the field. I couldn't believe they wasted all that time sending me to repair school, when I was a really, really good rifle shot."

He has memories of Vietnam, some that he doesn't speak about in detail.

"We were often outnumbered. There were ambushes and firefights where we were outnumbered four or five to one," he said. "I lost a lot of friends. Like at Con Thien, that was way up north right by the DMZ, and basically a fire base that was easily cut off — there was only one road in. We took a lot of hits there, lost a lot of people."

McCool said, "We were out there on a limb, and the thought process was that technology — aircraft — would make up the difference in being out there basically on our own."

He also recalls Khe Sanh:

"Khe Sanh was a fixed-place battle where the only way out was to be medevaced out on a truck, or you were there basically for the length of the siege.

"The North Vietnamese had the whole combat base zeroed in, and they were firing really big guns and rockets from the DMZ into the combat base ... we lived mostly underground the whole time."

He remembers that chances of survival were not good: "We were outnumbered like 20 or 25 to one. But except for the weather, we had on call 24 hours a day fighter and bomber support."

When he survived Vietnam, he went to college for a degree, and the Navy recruited him as a flyer.

I flew as a naval flight officer for 16 years, and retired off of Gen. (Norman) Schwarzkopf's staff as his manpower branch chief," he said. "I did the prepositioning of forces, setting up replenishment, R&R courts and things like that in Mozambique, Nairobi, Bahrain, and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. I did the prepositioning of forces and contracts prior to the start of Desert Shield and Desert Storm."

McCool's service has provided a perspective on what proved to be the loss of Vietnam:

"There was no set, fixed plan that went into effect for victory. It was nothing like Korea, where we pushed the commies all the way back to the 38th parallel."

He remembers, "We would go out and capture the same hill five or six times, and after we captured the hill, a week later we would move off, and they would move back in."

He said the cost to America didn't stop communism in Vietnam.

"They understood what the war was all about better than the American politicians. They knew it would be a war of attrition from the start. They kept feeding — and wasting troops, basically — just to keep contact, because they knew that sooner or later the Americans would pull out because of the number of casualties. They were willing to lose people over the long term for their end goal," he said.

"Obviously, that worked."

Even the draft tended to work against the war, according to McCool.

"Up until 1968 there was an all-volunteer service for the Marines. In 1968, we saw a major change. With the draft, the quality of the Marines that were coming to Vietnam deteriorated very rapidly. We were receiving replacements that had been involved in things like the Black Panthers and the hippie movement and things like that," he said.

"They didn't want to be there, they hadn't volunteered, so we had a lot of incidents with disharmony among the crews, is the way I would put it."

The mainstream media gets a part of the blame, he believes: "The media really supported Khe Sanh. They looked at it as another victory preventing another Dien Bien Phu, which is what the North Vietnamese had wanted. They had wanted a pitched battle where they would win just like they did over the French. That didn't happen. We beat them back bloodily.

"But right after that, all of this black power movement and the hippie movement and the Kent State incidents — all that kind of stuff hit the media, and the media really, really puffed all that up."

McCool isn't more optimistic about North Korea.

"It's a country that shouldn't have nuclear weapons, No. 1; and No. 2, they shouldn't have ballistic missiles that could reach the USA," he siad.

Does he think North Korea will get rid of its nuclear weapons?

"Not a chance."

McCool's family has served the nation:

- Son Shawn McCool, is an Army captain. "He was a Black Hawk chopper pilot in Afghanistan and Iraq."
-
- The service to the nation of son Willie McCool is nationally known -- he was a NASA astronaut who piloted the Space Shuttle Columbia that exploded over the South Plains in 2003.

Grandson Hunter Chadwick, who graduated last year from West Point as a second lieutenant, serves in the Army at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

McCool said, "The average American — male and female — when the need arises, they stand up. They are the first to volunteer. When America is threatened, Americans traditionally rise to the occasion. It matters not what your color is, what your religion is, or anything else — we have a country of patriots. "I'm proud to be an American."

I GET PICTURES



Larry Deason G Btry 3/12, D CO 1/4
Looking North from KSCB with Hill 1015 in the background. Sometime in 1968. I'm on the left with the Army flack jacket I "found" in Dong

OBIT

EVERY MARINE KNOWS THE NAME CHESTY PULLER CHOSIN RESERVOIR KOREA - " WE'RE SURROUNDED THAT SIMPLIFIES OUR PROBLEM."

SEMPER FI VIRGINA !!!

DABNEY, VIRGINIA MCCANDLISH PULLER, OF LYNCHBURG, DIED JUNE 29, 2018, AT WESTMINSTER CANTERBURY, LYNCHBURG AT THE AGE OF 78.

Virginia was born in Shanghai, China, May 27, 1940, the daughter of the late Lieutenant General Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller and Virginia Evans Puller. Growing up the daughter of a career Marine, she lived in China, Hawaii, San Diego, New Orleans, and Camp LeJeune, but always came back to her beloved Virginia.



Virginia spent her last two years of high school living with her aunt in Richmond, attending The Collegiate School, graduating in 1957. To the great dismay of her mother, she went north to Smith College, which was not in keeping with her mother's plan for her to meet a good southern boy. Yet, as fate would have it, her mother was at a party and met Virginia's future husband, Bill Dabney, VMI '60 who was, in order of importance, a Marine, southern and tall.

Virginia and Bill were married in September 1961 and enjoyed 50 wonderful years of marriage. She held her family together and worked tirelessly as a mother, military wife, teacher and community volunteer. She was a voice of calm and reason through her father's extended illness, her infant daughter's death, her husband's two tours in Vietnam, the first with two small children and the second with three, her brother's grievous wounding in Vietnam and her eldest son's death, never wavering in her faith and the importance of service and family, nor uttering a word of woe or pity. Virginia loved raising her children and was proud, but not surprised, when both her sons became military officers and her daughter followed in her footsteps and became a teacher. She was incredibly supportive of her husband's career, enduring countless moves, pieces of broken furniture, last minute school registrations and the trials of establishing a new community and friendships.

After her husband's retirement from the Marine Corps, she and Bill enjoyed 22 years in Lexington, Va., living in their beloved Mackey's Tavern, welcoming family and friends at every opportunity. Among her many favorite causes were the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, the Stonewall Jackson House, the Garden Club of Virginia, Boys Home in Covington, Va. and every Episcopal church parish, of which she was a member throughout her life.

She always had a fondness for and offered a place at her dining room table to the many VMI Cadets and countless Marines who visited her home over the years. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Colonel William Howard Dabney, U.S.M.C. (retired); a son, William Howard Dabney Jr.; an infant daughter, Anne Christian Dabney; and a brother, Lewis Burwell Puller Jr. She is survived by her sister, Martha Puller Downs (Michael) of Alexandria; a daughter-in-law, Andrea Shilt Dabney of Greenwich, Conn.; a son, Lewis Puller Dabney (Kristin) of Lynchburg; daughter, Virginia Keane Dabney Kauders (Eric) of Richmond; and six grandchildren: Page Dabney, Caroline Dabney, Virginia Kauders, Ellie Dabney, Anna Kate Dabney and Andrew Kauders. A funeral service was held at St. John's Episcopal Church.

I GET PICTURES



Our group from Khe Sanh Went to the hospital today to see our favorite Colonel even though he was in the Army. Col. David Bulldog Smith who is in for some medical problems. He was in great spirits and shared many stories from Viet Nam and his time in the Army. Bulldog was a two term president of the Khe Sanh Veterans



Mike Co 3 Bn 26 Marines 50th Reunion in Pensacola. Feb. 21- 25, 2018. — with Rick Lord, Phillip Loersch, Charles "Marty" Martin, Joe Darrell, Ron Echols and Thom Altom.



Mike Fishbaugh Chillin with the family.



An awesome group of Khe Sanh veterans (some pictured here) gathered at the Warhawk Air Museum in Nampa, Idaho, on April 7 for the museum's well-attended event commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of the Siege of Khe Sanh. They referred to it as "Khe Sanh Veterans Day."



All the wives and family that put up with us. — with Jessie Appier-Penn, Lynn Shouse and Linda Treese

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

VFW UNVEIL STATUE HONORING TOM GREEN ON JULY 4, 2018



A Ceremony was held at the VFW Post 5146 in Athens for Tom Green, who served as a Marine and as the McMinn County Service Officer, prior to his death in 2017. Shown here is the bust of Green revealed during the ceremony.

The memory and contributions of a McMinn Countian who spent his life helping his fellow veterans will be honored on his birthday: The Fourth of July. VFW Post 5146 will host a brief service to dedicate a statue at the post in honor of the late Tom Green, who passed away on Oct. 28, 2017, after a long life dedicated to serving his country as a Marine and his fellow soldiers and sailors as McMinn County Veterans Service Officer for more than 20 years.

A decorated Marine Corps veteran, Green served his country during two tours of duty in Vietnam, including fighting in the Battle of Khe Sanh. He spent his life after the service serving veterans, both individually and as part of such veterans' service organizations as VFW Post 5146, AMVETS Post 106, American Legion Post 68, Disabled American Veterans No. 93, Vietnam Veterans of America, the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, the Third Marine Division Association, and Khe Sanh Veterans.

"That guy would do anything, he would meet you anywhere, any time, any day, and do whatever he could to help a veteran. I can't imagine how many thousands of veterans owe Tom," said VFW Post 5146 Commander Jim Haney during the 2017 Veterans Day Ceremony following Green's passing. "I would like to use Tom as an example we can all emulate. He took his job as Veterans Services Officer to the highest level and worked tirelessly to help everyone he could. I would compare his work not to a job, but to a calling."



A Ceremony was held at the VFW Post 5146 in Athens for Tom Green, who served as a Marine and as the McMinn County Service Officer. Shown here are Post Commander Jim Haney L) and former Post Commander Jack Ferrell presenting the bust to those in attendance.

MEMORIES

CLIFF TREESE REMEMBERS BRAVO BTRY 1/13





Our group got together in Mt. Airy, N.C. for our yearly gathering to honor the passing of all our friends who died in Nam and those that passed since. Also some pictures of before and after the gathering at the site of one of our fellow Marines from Bravo 1-13 , Phil Mineer.

JAMES SIGMAN REMEMBERS MIKE CO 3/26



On July 6, 1967 L/CPL Terrence J Kilbane made the supreme sacrifice for his country. A fellow Marine, friend and classmate, "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers, For he today who sheds his blood with me shall be my brother,"

WHERE BOMBS ONCE FELL, KHE SANH GROWS

Over 50 years after the war, the devastated battlefield of Khe Sanh has become an economic hub of the poor central province of Quang Tri, with average annual income per capita of US $1,400.
According to the People's Committee of Khe Sanh Town, the town's living standards have transformed completely since the post-war era.



A farmer harvests coffee at a plantation in Khe Sanh. Greenery has returned to the former battlefield thanks to the efforts of local veteran soldiers.

"The town is growing into a developed urban zone and we hope to reach annual income per capita of $1,900 in 2020, thanks to the focus on the development of trade and tourism," says Hoàng Văn Quynh, the committee's chairman.

A report by the committee said the local residents' education has increased year after year, while the health care system works effectively, with a doctor present in every commune in the town.

Greenery covers all land areas and vestiges of wartime bombing are rarely seen in the town. The return of the green trees, along with the mild weather and the plenty of red basalt soil in the town, have sparked hopes that it could become a tourism destination and clean agriculture.

Hoang Huu Cam, a local who runs a hotel business in the town, says a tourism boom seems in the cards, thanks to the town's location on the East West Economic Corridor, which runs through five Southeast Asian countries of Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Việt Nam.

"Khe Sanh is the ideal stop for visitors from the countries who go through the nearby Lao Bao and La Lay border checkpoints," Cam says. The border gates sit between the town and Savannakhet Province of Laos. They also facilitate trade to and from the town.

Ho Xuan Hieu, a businessman who owns a cassava starch brand, says the fertile soil in the town yields a pure flour. Cassava grown in the town produces 70 tons of starch each year, which is supplied to Japan and South Korea.

The return of greenery to the town cost the blood and tears of local soldiers who fought in the battle of Khe Sanh for five months from January 14 to July 9, 1968.

Ho Mo left his soldier's life to return the town in 1980, when the remnants of the war were everywhere and the town was in disarray. Mo started to clear a valley five kilo meters from the center to take soil for cultivation.

Thanks to his efforts, rice began to grow well in the soil within a month. By 2005, Mơ became one of the top farmers in the town. He had rice paddies, a plantation of rubber trees and a big herd of cows and water buffalos.

Since 2005, Mơ has earned around US$13,000 a year. Besides cultivating his seven hectares of farm land and his husbandry work feeding 50 cows and buffalos, the 80-year-old man has volunteered to protect 53 hectares of community forest from illegal hunters and loggers.

"At my 18, I joined the North Vietnam military volunteer and worked as a porter carrying necessities and weapons to assist the battles in Lang Vay and Ta Con airport," says Mo.

Ho Ta Che, another veteran, says joining the liberation force in the past and working for the greenery of the town today are all part of his responsibility to his hometown.

Younger than Mơ, Chê worked as a liaison boy for

the troops and later dug secret tunnels that led army tanks into Làng Vây battlefield.

Chê lost his right hand in 1967 after a bombardment by American Air Force. However, losing one hand did not mean losing all his power. After the war, Chê fertilized the soil for rice cultivation and became one of the biggest rice producers in the town.

The veterans have determined that once their hometown grows to be a tourism hub of the province, they will be the best tour guides for itineraries related to the famed Battle of Khe Sanh, where over 100,000 tons of bombs were dropped by US aircraft and over 158,000 artillery rounds were fired in defense of the base.

I GET PICTURES



In this July 3, 1968, file photo, Marines of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment ride on an Ontos near Khe Sanh. The Marine Corps deactivated the unit, nicknamed "the Walking Dead," on Friday, Aug. 29, 2014.

May I introduce myself: Dwight Hunter: I was company Radio Operator for "A" Co 3rd ATs Camp Carroll and Khe Sanh Nov 66 through June 67. With H&S 3rd AT outside of Danang from Jul 66 to Nov 66 and from June 67 through Aug 67 Rough Rider for H&S 3AT in Phu Bai and later with Task Force Xray Naval Survey Team.

MEMORIES

Fifty years ago today nineteen year old Sandy Lee Shull was killed by an incoming an 82 mm mortar round that landed three feet from him as he and other Marines were climbing out of a bunker at Khe Sanh Combat Base during the 1968 TET offensive.

It was Sandy's eleventh month in Vietnam with less than sixty days remaining of his tour. Sandy was a radio operator on an FO Team with H&S Company First Battalion, Ninth Marine Regiment, Third Marine Division, known as "The Walking Dead". He died of his wounds on the Medi-Vac Helicopter on the way to a Field Hospital leaving behind a young widow, Jackie and many friends. Sandy was a 1966 graduate of Maplewood High School, Nashville, Tennessee. He and two high school friends, George Johnson and myself enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, August 3rd, 1966.



Today, Eleven of us gathered by his grave at the National Cemetery in Nashville to remember our friend and have one more PBR to celebrate his short life. Not in the picture is Barry Carson (taking the photo). RIP Sandy Lee....Semper Fi Our Brother
with Wade, Jack, James, Larry Saunders, Larry Deason, Butch, Ron, Bobby, Ken and Jimmy.



BOOK REVIEW

BIRD WITHOUT A SONG
By JAMES KELLY

I served in Marine medevacs, HMM-163 (the Evil Eyes) in the early sixties and promised my friends who died I'd write about them someday. I've finally finished the novel after over fifty years, Bird without a Song. This is the most important part of the book.

During the seventh month of my first Vietnam tour, in the languid hours after a medevac, I began to see them. At first they were only shadows, movements in the dark corners of my tent, but as days dissolved



into weeks and body counts soared during the first battle for Hill 881, some of their faces became familiar.

Those few I knew, Corporal Terwilliger, Major Ayres, Corpsman Cooper, but there were others, too, wounded and dead faces I remembered when flares and tracers were tracking through the night. I loved them all without knowing their names because they were my brothers. They were small, like toys, and full of life.

One day, while sweeping blood from our chopper, I stopped and turned to the crew chief. "I wonder if this is what heaven is like. You see people you knew in life but they're tiny." Recognizing the stare of concern, I laughed and pretended to be joking. I didn't mention the little Marines again but they were real to me and, in time, they started talking. Major Ayres was the first to speak. "Tell my girlfriend I loved her, Sergeant Carmody.""Did they send my Air Medal to my mom?" Corporal Terwilliger asked next. He loved his mother and wrote to her every day. I couldn't tell him he hadn't flown enough missions to earn his Air Medal. He died in a burning chopper, calling out for his mom and did receive two Purple Hearts. But only fools wanted one of those. Corpsman Cooper stood beside Terwilliger with his arm around his shoulders. He was comforting even in death.

A Marine wearing dress blues, who I didn't remember, stepped close to me and saluted. "You don't know me, sergeant, but thanks for bringing my body out of the jungle. "suspecting he was one of the many we picked up in body bags, I slowly saluted him back then turned to the major again. "Why are they here, sir?" He looked at me with his normal kindness. "You gave them comfort in their last hours, sergeant."

For the remainder of my tour, they went with me everywhere, Dong Ha, Phu Bai, Marble Mountain, to the top of the Rock Pile and out to the hospital ship, Repose. During the eerie half-darkness of mortar attacks while we huddled against sandbags, they were with me.

When my time came to leave, I collected the few things I cared about and turned to say goodbye. "We're coming with you," they shouted in chorus. "I can't take you back to the States. Someone would notice."

"They won't see us," Major Ayres argued. "We will all fit nicely in your sea bag. We want to be there when you tell people about us, when you let our families know we're still here and we still love them. You must help keep us alive." "But you're dead, sir, you all are." "Not if you write about us," a nameless one said.

BOOK REVIEW

TO HEAR SILENCE: CHARLIE BATTERY 1ST BATTALION 13TH MARINES: THE FIRST 15 MONTHS
BY RONALD W. HOFFMAN (2014-05-03)

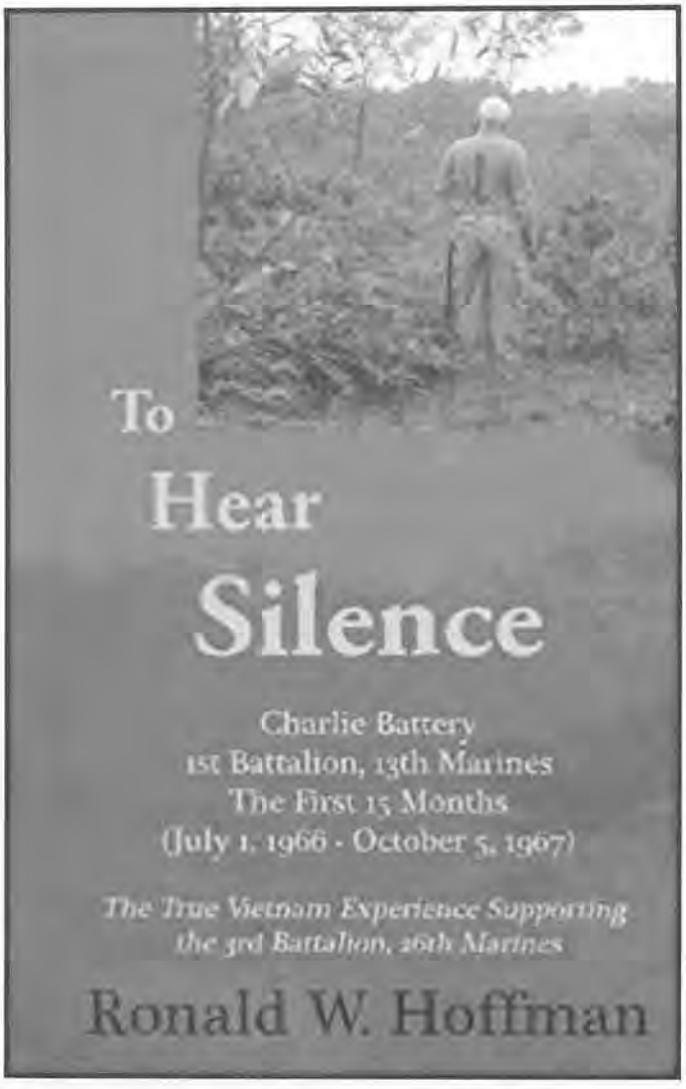

Ron Hoffman's book recounts the 10 months he spent on the front lines, and he hopes his book inspires other Vietnam veterans to share their stories.

Hoffman headed for Vietnam in 1966. He was 20 years old.

"I tried to join the Marines a couple years earlier, and they wouldn't take me. They said my eyes were bad. And then they had the Gulf of Tonkin incident, and suddenly they said, hey, if you're breathing, we could use you," Hoffman says with a laugh.

In the country for close to a year, Hoffman served as a radio operator.

"I guess they felt that with my eyesight I ought to be up front where I could see something," he says, again laughing, "so when the infantry would get hit then it was my job to radio back to the artillery battery and call in the coordinates and tell them where to drop the artillery rounds."

As a member of Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, Hoffman had a lot of close calls and lost a lot of good friends.

But after returning home, he never talked much about his experience -- until a return trip to Vietnam with his wife in 2010.

"While we were over there, I mentioned to our tour guide, I said, you know we had a little piece of history here, we accomplished something. The year before, they couldn't clean out this area, and we spent all these months on this operation cleaning this out and then we ended up at Khe Sanh, and so he said, 'Why don't you write a book about it?'"

Using a diary he kept during the war and a mountain of research he compiled, Hoffman wrote his book "To Hear Silence. "There's that silence just before an ambush breaks out," he explains, "and you can hear your heart pounding and swear that anybody close by is going to hear you breathing, and so it's dead, dead silence, then everything erupts."

Dedicated to the men he served with, Hoffman hopes his book inspires those still living to share their stories.

"For me it helped to get rid of some of the demons. Once you get it in black and white you can forget about it."

He says time is running out and the lasting effects of that war continuing taking a toll.

"Since we've been home unfortunately out of the 120 of us that were in the battery, it's getting very close to half that have died since then, thanks to good old Agent Orange and other things."

KHE SANH CORPSMAN TO PHYSICIAN WALTER F. SCHLECH III, M.D.

By: Craig W. Tourte

It was just a short notation on the "View Our Guest Book" section of the public web site, "Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page." Nothing special really, one of many posted every day by various visitors, including Veterans of the Vietnam conflict, those who had served at the combat base, students, family members of Veterans and little memorandums from the public who wanted to make a comment relating to Khe Sanh or the Vietnam War.

The writer identified himself as Wally Schlech, MD, Nova Scotia, Canada. Under comments was the notation: HQ Btry (1/13) Jan-Aug 1968. Since I had served with the same unit at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh from July 1967 to April 1968, I was naturally curious about Doctor Schlech and contacted him.

Wally Schlech told me he had served as a Hospital Corpsman at Khe Sanh. During the ensuing years he had contacted several he had served with including Corpsman (Doc) William Ballew, and was aware that Lieutenant Hal Lasker, the now deceased battalion surgeon, had become a psychiatrist in New York. I was familiar with Doc Ballew and Doctor Lasker as they treated me for a rather serious medical condition at Khe Sanh. I have since spoken to Doc Ballew and thanked him for taking such good care of me. Mr. Schlech continued that he has also spoken to Gunny Klidonas (Sergeant Major James Klidonas) whose shoulder he treated before taking the Gunny to the air field for medical evacuation.

Wally Schlech said he left a small New England college and joined the United States Navy where he served his military tour as a Navy Corpsman at Khe Sanh. When he returned home he monitored the events of the Vietnam War through the Navy Times. He noted that Lance Corporal William Robert Yaskanich was killed in action on February 23, 1969; a Marine Mr. Schlech had served with at Khe Sanh. Mr. Schlech said that Yaskanich had received a Navy Commendation with V for running communications lines at Khe Sanh during the Siege.

Wally Schlech returned home and went back to college in 1969. While attending a social event he inadvertently became engaged in conversation with Jim Munroe who had just returned from Vietnam. It was during that conversation Mr. Schlech learned that Jim Munroe had also served with Headquarters Battery of the First Battalion, Thirteenth Marine Regiment. Munroe told Wally Schlech that he had joined the Thirteenth Marines in Da Nang after the Siege and had in fact served with Corporal Yaskanich who had been killed in action. Jim Munroe discussed the events leading to the death of Lance Corporal William Yaskanich, describing how the unit had been overrun, how he and Yaskanich had jumped into a hole together when a Chicom grenade was thrown in and exploded killing Yaskanich. The injuries to Munroe ended his combat tour in Vietnam, which was why he was attending college and subsequently the event that evening. Mr. Schlech told me Jim Munroe is now the Very Reverend James Munroe, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Springfield, MA-a long way from a foxhole in Vietnam.

Wally Schlech told me that he lives in Halifax and describes it as a small community. He recalls the day he happened to meet Dick Murtha an attorney from New York who had moved to Halifax. During their conversation Dick Murtha revealed that he had been an infantryman with the Third Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment and had also served at Khe Sanh. Mr. Schlech believes he and Mr. Murtha may be the only Khe Sanh Veterans currently residing in Canada.

This issue has been discussed by many who served at Khe Sanh, I thought it was interesting that Doctor Schlech mentioned it to me and I certainly understand how that event would leave an impression on his memory. One of the things that bothered Wally Schlech was that since Headquarters Battery was the Regimental Headquarters, those going to various Thirteenth Marine Regimental units had to fly into Khe Sanh as transients, and then report to units elsewhere. He recalls a billeting tent near Headquarters which took a direct hit from a 152mm artillery shell. Corpsman Schleck was called to treat the wounded and tend to the dead and remembers how tragic it was, as so many had just arrived in country and were waiting orders to go elsewhere.
I noted that Donald Saunders was killed in action at

Khe Sanh, was a member of our small detachment and recalled that incident to Doctor Schlech. He remembered that Donald's body was brought to him on a small cart, that an 82mm round impacted near Saunders who took shrapnel up under this armpit where his flak jacket didn't cover. The Corpsmen tried to insert a chest tube but tragically Donald Saunders died quickly. I told Mr. Schlech that I had spoken to Saunders just minutes before he was killed and that I packed up Donald's few personal belonging in preparation for them being sent home to his family.

(Corpsman Wally Doc Schlech) Walter F. Schlech III. Medical Doctor is currently an internist and infectious disease specialist and a full-time faculty member at a medical college in Canada and now a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association. Welcome home and to your Khe Sanh Veterans Association Doc Schlech.

"POSTCRIPT"
This article was written some years ago, subsequently Corpsman William Ballew has passed away. I had corresponded and spoken with Bill on the telephone numerous times trading photos and recalling our experiences, he sent me a DVD of the sounds of incoming, I noted a voice yelling "Run baby run," sent chills down my back. Bill saved my life when I became ill and he is missed and not forgotten. Doctor Schlech mentioned the death of Marine William Yaskanich. I later learned that Marine Fred L. Thomas Jr. was also killed in the same battle and date (February 23, 1969). Fred was an outstanding Marine who I served with all through the Siege of Khe Sanh. Fred's close friend and bunker partner was Donald Saunders (KIA 3/4/1968). I was shocked to learn he had extended his tour after experiences that horrific battle. Dr. Schlech mentioned Dick Murtha, I met Mr. Murtha at one of our Khe Sanh Reunion, I haven't seen him since but I'm hoping he'll attend our reunion in Washington. As to Dr. Schlech his email address in outdated and I have been unable to contact him.

FIFTY YEARS AGO, AMERICAN TROOPS ABANDONED KHE SANH. HERE'S HOW THE U.S. GOT OVER 'VIETNAM SYNDROME.'

by Jonathan M. DiCicco and Benjamin O. Fordham
Washington Post



In this Feb. 7, 1968, photo, an unidentified Marine assists wounded Army Lt. Paul R. Longgrear, left, at the Khe Sanh Combat Base after Longgrear was evacuated from Lang Vei.

Fifty years ago today, the United States began to abandon a combat base at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, just months after the Marines successfully defended the base against a grueling 77-day siege by the North Vietnamese Army. More than 200 Americans had died, as had thousands of Vietnamese. Khe Sanh's abandonment left many Americans questioning whether that prolonged battle had a purpose — and fueled skepticism about the U.S. war in Vietnam.

For years after, many American policymakers were left with a general aversion to using U.S. military power overseas. The hawks who remained criticized this "Vietnam syndrome" for weakening U.S. power in the world — because afflicted decision-makers would hesitate to use force even when situations called for it.

So was there a "Vietnam syndrome"?

That's what we examined, a half-century after the U.S. war effort peaked. Our new research on the attitudes of U.S. foreign-policy elites — individuals

poised to become policymakers and opinion leaders in foreign affairs — reveals a kernel of truth in the idea of a Vietnam syndrome. Many such "elites" did turn against the war in Vietnam and remained skeptical about U.S. interventionism for years.

However, U.S. elites were not uniformly "dovish" after Vietnam. Predictable divisions grew out of the positions that individuals took during the war. When compared with those who supported the war until its end, those who had turned against the war remained considerably more skeptical of U.S. policies that would use or threaten military action abroad.

In other words, elite attitudes on foreign policy after the war mirrored the elite's attitudes toward the Vietnam War. But while the "syndrome" was chronic, it was not permanent — and it quickly subsided after the Cold War ended.

How we did our research

In a study published in International Studies Quarterly, we present a fresh analysis of survey data collected by scholars Ole Holsti and James Rosenau. Every four years, from 1976 through 1996, their Foreign Policy Leadership Project (FPLP) surveyed public officials, military officers, academics, and other potential decision-makers and opinion leaders. Among other things, Holsti and Rosenau asked these "elite" respondents whether they supported the Vietnam War early on, and if they changed their minds later. This is important because the overwhelming majority of elites surveyed, like the rest of the American public, initially supported the war. *[The U.S. isn't being very neighborly. Here's what that means for Canada's foreign policy.]*

We found that those who had turned against the Vietnam War — "converted critics" — remained significantly more dovish than consistent supporters of the war on possible military intervention or demonstrations of resolve against foreign adversaries. Converted critics were predictably dovish toward prospective interventions arguably reminiscent of Vietnam, such as Ronald Reagan's covert war in Nicaragua and his intervention in the civil war in El Salvador. But they were also dovish on very different issues, such as arms control with the Soviet Union and protecting oil tankers in the Persian Gulf during the war between Iran and Iraq that raged from 1980 to 1988.

We found a significant difference in attitudes between converted critics and consistent supporters from 1976 through 1988. Was it just that liberal Democratic converted critics were more dovish than conservative Republican consistent supporters? No. Even after controlling for party and ideology, elites' positions on the Vietnam War significantly influenced their subsequent foreign policy views — until the Iron Curtain fell.

Vietnam syndrome ended with the Cold War

Once the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union dissolved, so did this nearly uniform pattern — which was much weaker by 1992 and entirely gone by 1996. By then, "consistent supporters" and "converted critics" were all over the map. Elites still disagreed about U.S. foreign policy, but positions on the Vietnam War were no longer a good predictor of where they stood on such questions as whether to intervene in the ethnic conflict in Bosnia, in the civil war in Somalia or whether to expand NATO to include former Soviet client states.

Why did Vietnam syndrome disappear? Our results suggest that the world looked different to U.S. elites after the rivalry with the Soviet Union ended. Many who had become dovish after the Vietnam War were far less dovish after the Cold War. Others who took hawkish positions during and after the Vietnam War became less inclined to do so once the Soviet Union collapsed.

[There are signs North Korea is still working on its nuclear program. Here's why 'denuclearization' is so problematic.]

The lessons of "the lessons of Vietnam"

The "Vietnam syndrome" in elite opinion, it turns out, was not about avoiding military entanglements generally; rather, it was about the role of force in Cold War foreign policy. For nearly 15 years after Vietnam, the same divisions arose on issues as distinct as arms control treaties that would restrict the two rivals' nuclear weapons and whether to deploy intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe. But these divisions disappeared after the Cold War — suggesting that even dovish U.S. elites had not giv-

en up on U.S. military power entirely; they just disagreed with their hawkish counterparts about its usefulness in the U.S.-Soviet rivalry.

Unconstrained by that rivalry, some who had opposed interventionism during and after the Vietnam War changed their minds. Other events influenced their viewpoints, like the international community's failures to prevent genocide and ethnic cleansing in Rwanda in 1994 and Bosnia between 1992 and 1995. Some, such as former secretary of state Hillary Clinton, concluded that a more aggressive U.S. military posture could prevent such humanitarian disasters. Conversely, some — such as Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) — who had thought the United States needed to look tough during the Cold War were more skeptical about the use of force once this struggle was over.

In 1991, after driving Iraq's army back from its invasion of Kuwait, President George H.W. Bush jubilantly declared an end to Vietnam Syndrome. He was right, but for the wrong reason. The cure was not victory in the Gulf War; it was the dramatic change in strategic context that reshuffled elite attitudes.

As a result, "Vietnam syndrome" had disappeared by the time of the 9/11 attacks, opening the door for the George W. Bush administration's invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq — which ironically forced elites to relearn lessons about the limits of U.S. power that Vietnam might have taught us 50 years ago.

Correction: *An earlier version of this post incorrectly stated that U.S. troops were fighting the Viet Cong at Khe Sanh. It was the North Vietnamese Army. We regret the error.*

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Benjamin O. Fordham (@PSBenFordham) is a professor of political science at Binghamton University (SUNY) whose research focuses on the influence of domestic political and economic considerations on foreign policy choices.

OBIT

JAMES R. LARSON, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, DELTA CO 1/26

"Jim" passed away peacefully surrounded by his loved ones at the age of 70. Jim was born to Einar and Marge Larson (McMullen) on 23 April 1948. He graduated from Richfield High School in 1966. After Graduation, Jim served in Vietnam as a United States Marine where he earned multiple honors including a Purple Heart. Upon returning from Vietnam, he was employed by UPS for 25 Plus years & the NHL for 15 plus years. Jim took great pride in all his accomplishments within the game of Ice Hockey, his service to our country, and most importantly his children.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Einar and Marge Larson and his grandson, Tyler Senn. Jim is



survived by his children, Cory (Tanner) Porisch of Kasson, MN, Samantha (Joseph) Carnevale, of Oradell, NJ and Matthew Larson of Chicago, IL. Seven grandchildren, Spencer, Anthony, Lauren, Dylann, Camryn, Jaxon and Theodore. His true love Bonnie Beane: siblings Mary Paaverud Jack (Sherry) Larson Jeanne (William) Gauger, as well as many nieces, nephews, friends and loved ones.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC 2018-2019 SCHOLARSHIP SUMMARY

SUBJECT: KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. 2018-2019 SCHOLARSHIP SUMMARY
FROM: DANIEL FISHER (DJFISHER26@YAHOO.COM)
TO: DJFISHER26@YAHOO.COM; TEIC1448@AOL.COM;
DATE: TUESDAY, JULY 3,20188:18 PM

2018 is the 10th year that Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. has supported a scholarship program for the children and grandchildren of KHE SANH VETERANS. Since 2009 some 155 applicants have been awarded scholarships totaling $95,100! These funds were all raised due to the tremendous generosity of KHE SANH VETERANS, their families and admiring friends of KHE SANH VETERANS.

The reunion silent auction proceeds have also significantly contributed to the scholarship fund. 2018 was the largest pool of applications to date for the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Fund. Twenty-eight new and returning undergraduates applied and met the criteria to receive financial support. The applications reflect the high degree of academic skill achieved and a strong ambition to succeed in their chosen fields of study. Five of this year's applicants will have completed their four years of eligibility and will go on to promising careers or post graduate study.
2018-19 top awards went to:

***Noah Bissonnette - Colonel David E. Lownds Award (Bruce E. Jones)**
***Melia R. Ortiz - Sgt. Maj. James T. Gaynor Award (John Ortiz)**
***Gwendolyn R. Siemon - Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award (Morley Sweet IV)**

The Scholarship Committee wants to thank the KSV membership for their financial and moral support over these past ten years making this program a huge success!
Semper Fidelis

The Scholarship Committee

MIKE FISHBAUGH'S FAMILY VISITING LOST LOVED ONES













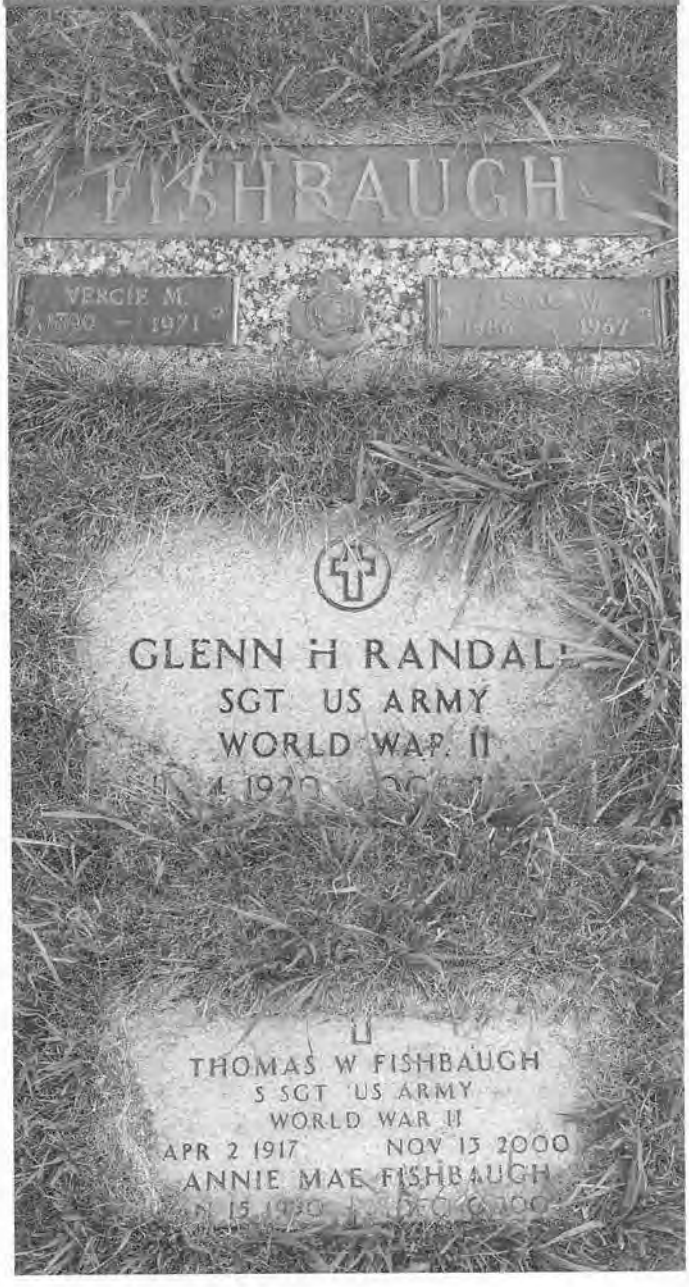

THE CORPS UNVEILED ITS NEW UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM BADGES AUTHORIZED FOR WEAR FOR BOTH ENLISTED AND OFFICERS WHO OPERATE THE CORPS' DRONE AIRCRAFT.



MARINE CORPS OFFICER BREAST INSIGNIA FOR UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM OPERATORS.



MARINE CORPS ENLISTED BREAST INSIGNIA FOR UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM OPERATORS.



MEMORIES

LOST A LOVED ONE
BETH VOSBERG

**JOHN "JACK" CORBETT H&S CO 1/26 KHE SANH VETERAN
KHE SANH MARINE CORP. VETERAN,ALSO AUTHOR OF WEST DICKENS AVE. IN THE LIBRARY BOOK OF CONGRESS, A NON-FICTION NOVEL OF THE KHE SANH SIEGE BATTLE.**











Linda Jenkins Gideon

3 years ago today, the traveling wall came to Rainier, Oregon. My sister & I paid our respects to our cousin, Cpl James Trimble and all the others who made the ultimate sacrifice. He's still on that hill. He and 10 other Marines died in Quang Tri Province on April 6, 1968; all but Jim and PFC Anthony Pepper were recovered. After an unsuccessful search for Jim and Tony, they were declared "Killed in Action/Body Not Recovered". A joint American/ Vietnamese team went out in 1993 to search the battle area, but determined "the remains of each individual are unrecoverable." When they made the banner for the Education Center, they used Jim's picture.
Semper Fi Jim & Tony.

FOR VIETNAM VETERANS, A 'THANK YOU' LONG OVERDUE -- MARCH 29TH, VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY
BY: ARMY MAJ. GEN. JIM JACKSON (RET.)

The Veterans Affairs Department estimates we are losing more than 500 veterans per day who served during the Vietnam War years. We must act now to do what should have been done 50 years ago.



Across the nation, Americans are uniting to thank and honor these veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice. Spearheading this effort is the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration office.

Of special significance, President Trump last year signed into law the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017, establishing National Vietnam War Veterans Day that will, henceforth, be celebrated every March 29. This March 29 will be the first anniversary of the new law.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington — "the Wall" — will play a significant role in our nation's honoring of our Vietnam veterans on that special day. The Wall is an arresting reminder to its more than 5 million annual visitors of the service and sacrifice of the more than 58,000 Americans whose names are on that black granite memorial. There is something haunting and yet cleansing about that special place.

Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey, a Vietnam combat vet, was honored with the commemorative pin on Thursday.

Senior members of the Defense Department and VA will participate in a wreath-laying ceremony on that day at that hallowed site.

The commemoration office is also coordinating with governors of all U.S. states, commonwealths and territories, and the mayor of the District of Columbia, to host similar events on or around this day; as of March 19, 47 states had committed to do so.

The commemoration was authorized by Congress, under DoD auspices, and launched at the Wall in 2012. Our goal is to thank and honor America's 6.6 million living veterans of the 9 million who served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces from Nov. 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975 — regardless of location — and the families of all who served.

Nearly 3 million served "in country" and another 6 million served elsewhere. All were called to serve. None could self-determine where they were stationed, and each deserves our thanks.

Those who served in country experienced unique hardships that only come with service in a combat zone, which every veteran understands and honors. While we recognize all, those who served in country deserve our special appreciation.

Inspired by thousands of local, state and national organizations that have partnered with the commemoration, Americans have already publicly and individually thanked and honored nearly 2 million of these veterans and their families in hometowns across the nation.

Those who have joined us in the hometown-centric Commemorative Partner Program (more than 11,000 organizations) have committed to conducting two events per year, in their local communities, that recognize and honor our veterans and their families. These partners have held more than 12,000 events to date.

There are no costs associated with becoming a commemorative partner, and we heartily invite organizations to join the mix of dedicated local and national businesses, corporations, veterans and military organizations, associations, educational institutions, community groups, towns, cities, states and many others that have committed to assist the nation in this noble effort.

The commemoration is providing Vietnam Veteran lapel pins to commemorative partners for dignified

public presentations, during commemorative events, to living U.S. veterans who served during the Vietnam War period. Each veteran who served during the dates above is eligible to receive one lapel pin.

Vietnam veterans can locate upcoming commemorative events here; zoom in to locate your state and city or town, and click a blue pin to reveal details of an upcoming event, including contact information.

If there are no blue pins in your area, check back frequently as new events are added every week. Veterans who need help finding a commemorative event can email the commission.

The certificates are available through the same Defense Department-backed group that offers lapel pins to Vietnam War-period veterans.

Now is the time for all Americans to fully embrace the brave men and women who returned home from Vietnam and other locations around the world, often to shame and disgrace — or served in uniform during that period and failed to get the respect due them — by publicly thanking them with honor and dignity, as well as recognizing the sacrifices of their families.

Please visit www.vietnamwar50th.com or email us at whs.pentagon.wso.mbx.vnwar50th-cpp@mail.mil for more information about the Commemoration and the Commemorative Partner Program, respectively. Join the nation ... thank a Vietnam veteran! Retired Army Maj. Gen. Jim Jackson is the director of the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration.





MESSAGE FROM A PROUD SON OF A MARINE POSTED ON FACEBOOK RUBEN GARCIA





Im here on behalf of my dad who was a 19 year old US Marine in Vietnam...I guess I'm just looking for info to see if maybe he can possibly reunite with some of his old pals...He was in the 3rd Marine Division326 Marine Kilo Company1967-March '69 He was in Khe Sanh thru '68 on Hill 861 His name is Salvador "Sal" Garcia Hoping some of you may have been there with him...Urrraaaahhhh !!!!

Michael Fishbaugh:
Found his name in my database...26-3-H&S
GARCIA, Salvador E1 0311 2410186 March 1968

Ruben Garcia:
Is that good ??
I've never done any searches for him before

Michael Fishbaugh:
A lot of Marines were listed as H&S but actually done their time with the other gun teams, flames, etc.

Kevin Seldon
Semper Fi, my dad was with Lima Co. 3/26 at the combat base. My dad's best buddy who he enlisted with was KIA on hill 861 on January 24, 1968. I wonder if your dad knew him? His name was Kenneth V. Goodman from Stewart, Minnesota.



Rueen Garcia
I'll ask him

Michael Fishbaugh
Sal" was only listed on the March 68 database, so I am guessing that's when he arrived or assigned to 3/26. I may be wrong.

Kelvin Seldon
Here's another photo of Goodman

Ruben Garcia
I'll have my mother Lidia Garcia show this to my dad



Kevin Seldon
Curious if may have also known PFC. Paul Bellamy who was KIA the night the NVA attacked on Jan. 21st. God bless your dad give him my best.



Thomas Buono
Sorry can't say I knew him but proud of another brother from Khe Sanh

James Shirley
3/26 Marines have a web site and we have reunions every two years.

Chuck Wellens
Didn't know your Dad personally , but I'm sure we crossed paths more than once. I was in weapons platoon Kilo Co on hill 861 same time as your Dad . It was one hell of a time . Proud to have served with him .
Sember Fi Sal

Rick Zunnio
I didn't know your Dad, but I was on Hill 861 only with A 1/26, 2nd platoon...I was a Corpsman, and I know another Corpsmen that was with Kilo 3/26 at the same time on 861....he might know your Dad. His name is Larry LeClaire....Doc LeClaire

Tony Flores
My God almighty. This post brought chills to my head and heart. When I saw the name of Salvador Garcia, I turned cold. You see, I was a Corpsman who was assigned right out of Field Med Service School to H&S Co HQ26 Marines in April 66 while the Rgt was reconstituting at Pendleton before our phased deployment in May, July and Oct 66 respectively. I deployed in July with HQ & 2/26 via ship convoy from San Diego, thru Pearl Harbor, Camp

Schwab Okinawa and then in country through Da Nang.

I was later chopped over to BLT 1/3/3 and met a fellow El Pasoan(TX), Marine, PFC Salvador Borrego Garcia...not the one in this string. We became best friends. We discussed and shared everything in our young lives in between operations since our folks homes were less than three miles apart.

Sal was an 0331 with B Co. I again served in country, this time with 1/3 from March - my end of tour, Aug 67. Sal and I got together virtually every time we were back on the USS Okinawa...our mother assault platform during those months. My time was up in late Aug. We said our goodbyes after he asked me to convey his love for his young wife Margie and his mom. I quipped that he'd be home before he knew it.

It never occurred. He was KIA 5 Mar 68 at Dai Do. Attending both his funeral and much later the funeral of a B Co 1/26 0311, PFC Arnold Rivera (KIA 25 Feb 68...his father and mine were old friends) still weighs heavily...esp since I was back in civ-ville and in college, foot loose, fancy free, but never quite leaving my units, my buddies and myself "back there."

You guys who've "been there, done that" know the rest of the story in putting it behind...it frankly never happens.

Though a squid, I was a Greenside Corpsman whose held our grunts in the highest esteem.
Semper Fi



FROM FACEBOOK

In 1969 Mike Company 3/4 folded up its guidon following a courageous and steadfast campaign in the Vietnam War. Yesterday, 12 July 2018, 50 years later, Mike Company 3/4 was reactivated under the command of Captain Jacob S. Castillo. We are proud to bring back a company which such a tremendous history and battle record. Congratulations to Captain Castillo, and Semper Fi.





MICHAEL FISHBAUGH: VALOR THAT I AM AWARE OF

66-10-05	HN	SMITH	Robert	L	Silver Star	M 3/4	Hill 484	OP Prairie
68-05-16	HM3	BALLARD	Donald	E	MOH	M 3/4		PH X3
68-05-16	HM3	BURNLEY	Earl	L 61-E6	Silver Star	M 3/4	Hill 689	
68-06-16	CPL	PAMPLIN	John	M 61E16	BS W/V	M 3/4	Hill 689	
68-05-16	1LT	RAIT	Donald	M	Silver Star	M 3/4	Hill 689	
68-05-27	CPL	KOONTZ	Leonard		Navy Cross	M 3/4	Hill 542	
68-06-15	HN	CRUSE	James	D 57W24	Navy Cross	M/3/4		
68-06-15	HM3	MERCER	William	I 57W129	Navy Cross	M 3/4		
68-06-15	CPL	PLANCHON	Randall	T 57W30	Silver Star	M 3/4	Hill 689	
68-03-14	CPL	PARLETT	Phillip	G	Silver Star	M 3/4		
68-03-14	CPL	THOMPSON	Clinton	W	Navy Cross	M 3/4		

MICHAEL FISHBAUGH: FALLEN HERO'S M/3/4 KHE SANH

M 3/4	ADDINGTON	Zach Taylor	LCPL	5/16/1968
M 3/4	ALLEN	Eddie Hugh	PFC	5/27/1968
M 3/4	BURNLEY	Earl Rosewood Jr.	HM3	5/16/1968
M 3/4	CLAYBOURNE	Milton Gay	LCPL	5/16/1968
M 3/4	CRUSE	James Dale	HN	6/15/1968
M 3/4	FOILES	Francis Ivan	PFC	5/27/1968
M 3/4	HIMEBAUGH	Lee Edward	CPL	5/27/1968
M 3/4	KNIGHT	Huber Charles	PFC	5/16/1968
M 3/4	LOPEZ	Robert Francisco	PFC	6/15/1968
M 3/4	MARSHALL	Roland Trent	PFC	5/17/1968
M 3/4	MARX	Robert Garry	CPL	5/27/1968
M 3/4	MCNAMARA	William James	LCPL	5/27/1968
M 3/4	MERCER	William Ivan	HM2	6/15/1968
M 3/4	MONCAYO	JOSE Roberto	SGT	6/18/1968
M 3/4	PAMPLIN	John Mac	CPL	5/16/1968
M 3/4	PLANCHON	Randall T. II	CPL	6/15/1968
M 3/4	SCHURRER	John Rodney	CPL	6/18/1968
M 3/4	SHELTON	Henry Earl	PFC	5/26/1968
M 3/4	THIBAULT	Jeffrey Allen	PFC	6/15/1968
M 3/4	WALLACE	Jackie Elmore	PFC	6/15/1968
M 3/4	YBARRA	Ricardo	PFC	5/27/1968
M 3/4	YOUNG	John Curtis	LCPL	5/27/1968

HE DIED SAVING FELLOW MARINES IN VIETNAM. 50 YEARS LATER, MEDAL GIVEN FOR HIS BRAVERY

By Carmen George
The Fresno Bee
cgeorge@fresnobee.com

The Marines were under heavy enemy fire on June 8, 1968 in Vietnam when Cpl. Stephen Austin broke away from his squad and charged toward a machine gunner concealed in a bunker.

The men had been ambushed. A lieutenant wanted to pull them back, but there was concern that many more would die if they retreated and waited for an airstrike.

So Austin, "disregarding his own safety," stepped into the open and "in full view and under full fire of the enemy in an attempt to get close enough to throw a grenade into the bunker," recalled a fellow Marine who was there that day, Al Joyner.
Before Joyner died later in life, he wrote about Austin's heroism.



Cpl. Stephen Austin, who grew up in Porterville, after his first tour in Vietnam. Photo courtesy of Allen Austin Special to The Bee

"He was wounded repeatedly by enemy fire but continued to advance on the bunker," Joyner said of Austin, who grew up in Porterville, "as he was falling to the ground, he was able to throw his grenade up to the bunker slit to silence the enemy and assure a safe withdrawal of his squad and his platoon. A combination of rifle fire and the explosion of his own grenade resulted in Stephen's death."

An account of what he did that day was included in an application requesting that Austin be posthumously awarded a Silver Star for his heroic actions. It was instead upgraded to a Navy Cross, just below the military's highest honor, the Medal of Honor.

It will be presented to Austin's daughter, Neily Esposito, on July 21 by Marine Corps Commandant General Robert Neller at a 50th anniversary reunion



Cpl. Stephen Austin in Vietnam, March 1968, three months before he was killed.

banquet for the 1/27 Marines in Alexandria, Virginia.

Joyner led a first effort to get Austin a military citation. After his application didn't result in a medal, another Vietnam War veteran who knew Austin, Grady Birdsong, took up the cause and tried again. To make it happen, it took several years of tracking down fellow Marines and assembling testimonies, including that of Lt. Col. Ronald Gruenberg and Sgt. Don Sell.
Birdsong called it cathartic.

He also wrote about Austin and other veterans in his battalion.

"All of us have survivor's guilt. … I got to live and I got to come home," Birdsong said. "It was my duty to tell their story, and I was honored to be able to do that. That was the least I was able to do for these men, especially the ones we lost like Stephen."

Austin died without knowing he had a daughter, who was born a few months before he was killed. Esposito's adopted father was also killed in combat during the Vietnam War. She was 2 years old.

Austin's last letter, dated June 7, 1968, was pulled from his pocket and mailed to his parents covered in blood stains. They received it two days after learning he had been killed.

"My mother literally fell to the floor," recalled Austin's youngest brother, Allen. "My dad, a World War II and Korean War veteran, held it in. We were forever changed. As we now know, freedom isn't free, and our family paid a high cost."

Austin wrote home about Operation Allen Brook south of Da Nang, which claimed his life. Part of that letter:

We took 28 wounded and six dead. So our company is hurting for some new men. On my birthday things didn't go too good. One of my best friends who I met in Hawaii was shot twice in the stomach and he died the following afternoon. His name was Art Sinksen. I am going to write his parents a letter as soon as I go in to Battalion area.

I am so sick of fighting I've seen and helped too many boys my age or younger that was wounded or dead. I thank the Lord each morning I get up. Well I should be going on R&R any time. That's about it over here. So say hi to everyone and take care of yourselves. Bye For Now
All My Love
Your Son Stephen
P.S. Write Soon



Cpl. Stephen Austin, center, with his family, from left, brothers Allen and Dean, and parents Lorene and Albert, in the mid-1960s at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in Southern California. Photo courtesy of Allen Austin Special to The Bee



Neily Esposito at the grave of her father, Cpl. Stephen Austin, in Lindsay, CA. Photo courtesy of Allen Austin Special to The Bee

Austin enlisted at age 17. The infantryman was killed seven days after his 21st birthday during his second tour in Vietnam. He returned to Vietnam in early 1968 after recovering from a combat injury in November 1965. He is buried in Lindsay.

Allen Austin said the Navy Cross citation verifies the kind of man his brother was. He made a website, stephenaustin.org, to remember and honor his brother and other veterans.

The website enabled Birdsong to reconnect with other veterans. It also led him to Austin's mother. He visited her several times before she died. Birdsong said she never recovered from the pain of losing her eldest son. His push to get Austin a citation was, in part, for her. He wishes she was still alive to see Austin receive the Navy Cross.

"I know she's looking down smiling," Birdsong said.

Birdsong understands how it took 50 years to get Austin a medal.

"Through no fault of anyone," he said, "you got to understand that because we were a maneuver battalion, record keeping was by paper and pencil, not pen. We were on the move all the time and to be real honest with you, we weren't concerned about awards. We were just concerned about staying alive and being able to come home. ... A lot of men deserved awards for valor that didn't receive them."

Austin is honored in Porterville, where his name is the first one listed on a memorial plaque for local Vietnam War veterans.

It's also inscribed alongside more than 58,000 names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., which Allen Austin and Esposito will visit for the first time next week.

Esposito is looking forward to learning more about her dad from his comrades.

She hopes to get a better understanding of who she is. She thinks her dad has something to do with it, even though he "wasn't physically here to teach me those qualities."

Said Birdsong of Austin: "I just want everyone to be proud of him. He's one of the true warriors ... He answered the call, God bless him. I'm humbled to have been with him. He was a true leader."

MORE FROM THE WEB

From Sam Rutledge II

My father Sam Rutledge passed away last year 3/4/2017. He was a Marine cannoner in Khe Sanh. Here's a post of his to Khe Sanh Vets:

"I been tryin to get in here for long time, I just have trouble sometimes. Does anybody have a roster of "W"Btry. 1st Bn 13th Mar. from 10/67 to 12/67? Also I was involved in the rescue of survivors of bombing at Lang Vei Village 3/2/67 I have amnesia about it sure would like to close that nightmare. I was a gun driver an cannoner with "India" Btry. 3rd Bn 12 th Marines at Khe Sanh then. I was transfered to "W" 1/13 in Sept. If anybody can help thanks so much,

Sam"
Does anyone here know him?



He was a brave Marine who served three tours in Vietnam. God Bless you all and thank you for your service.

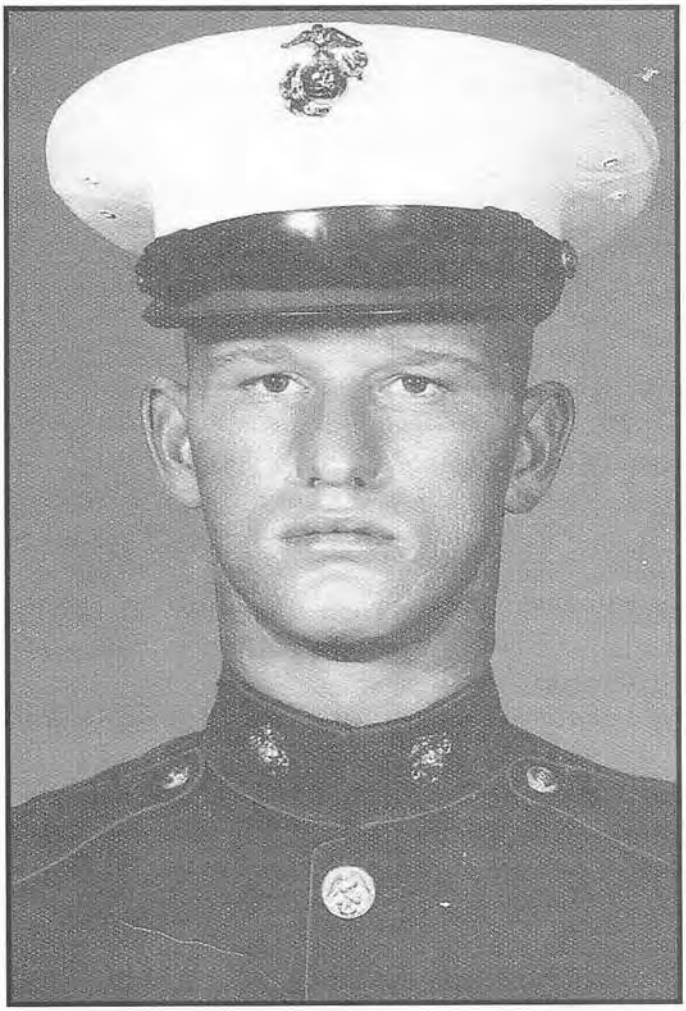









FROM THE WEB
MICHAEL OHARA

29 Feb/1Mar1968

Colonel Lownds " I called up division and said: I need a B52 strike NOW; any later than two hours from now forget it, he will have closed with me." Because of his intelligence Lownds had concluded that there was at least a Regiment approaching the combat base. The Arc Light (B52 strike) struck the approaching juggernaut and " this was the only time the kids on the line told me they could actually see bodies being thrown into the air. I sincerely believe those strikes caught at least 2 Battalions ."

The remnants of the main attack did close with the 37th ARVN Bn in front of Bravo Co area. Morning would find 71 dead NVA who failed to breach the wire.

The NVA record states "Our forces clung to the enemy's barb wire. The cadre and troops who were involved in the encirclement were determined to sacrifice themselves and to accept the ferociousness of the fighting."

31 additional personal lost their lives during this two day period bringing the total KIA to 172.



Another bunch of great Marines from Bravo Co. L-R Tom Steinhardt, Ron Exum (now deceased), Grant "Little John" Kniedler, and Steve Wiese.

BRAVO CO 1/26 MARINES TAKE CARE OF THEIR BROTHER

Ghost Patrol----Eddie Rayburn was WIA in that patrol. After several years of different hospital's ,etc., he passed away in 1976. After a lot of research by myself and others, we located his Resting Place in Michigan. He had no headstone. Marines working together got that corrected.


















51h MARINES VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL
WE APPRECIATE YOUR DONATION











1ST BATTALION 5TH MARINES

DANA POINT 5TH MARINE REGIMENT SUPPORT GROUP
DanaPoint5thMarines.com

VIETNAM 1



ISSUE 96

RED CLAY

WINTER 2018

50TH ANNIVERSARY SIEGE OF KHE SANH , STORIES & PHOTOS PAGES 49-87 & INSIDE FRONT & BACK COVERS







COMMANDANT OF MARINE CORPS , GENERAL ROBERT B. NELLER WAS HONORED GUEST & TOOK NUMEROUS PHOTOS WITH MEMBERS OF KHE SANH VETERANS

MERRY CHRISTMAS



HAPPY NEW YEAR

DENNIS MANNION & TED SHOWALTER WITH POILANE FAMILY AT THE KHE SANH VETERANS BANQUET





POILANE FAMILY-1964
FELIX & MADELINE
JEAN-MARIE & FRANCOISE

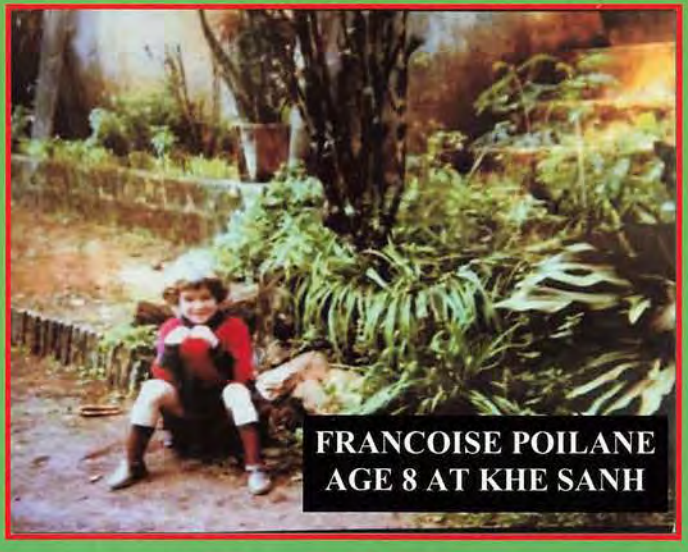

FRANCOISE POILANE
AGE 8 AT KHE SANH

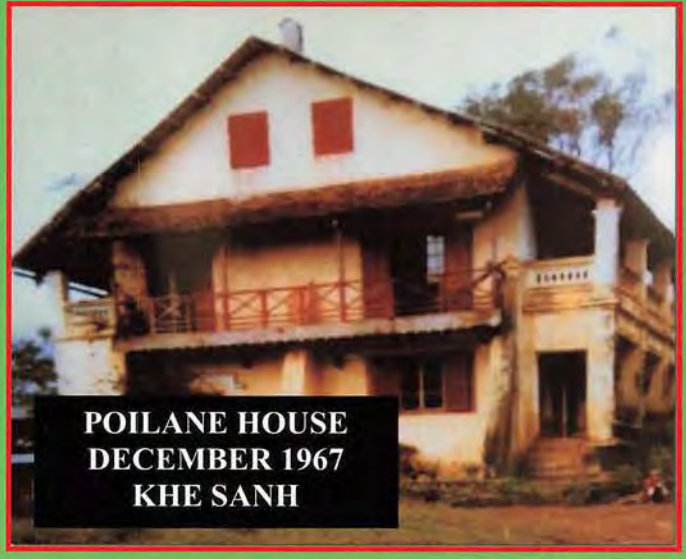

POILANE HOUSE
DECEMBER 1967
KHE SANH

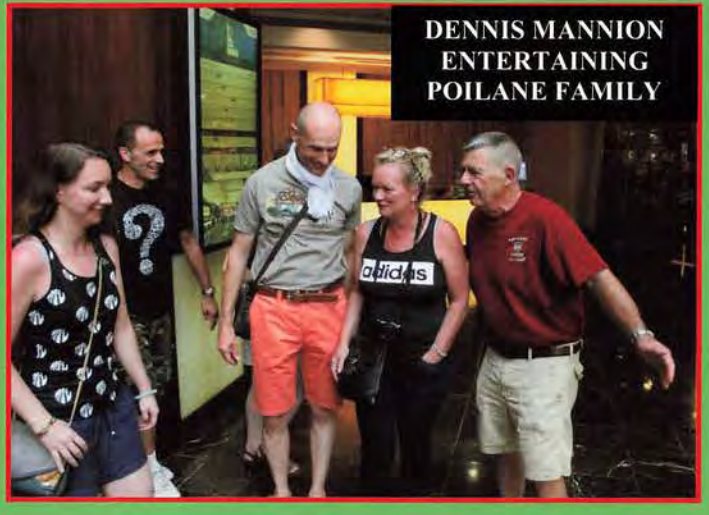

DENNIS MANNION
ENTERTAINING
POILANE FAMILY

THUA THIEN PROVINCE
By ROBERT W. UNANGST JR
INDIA CO 3/26 3RD PLT

In early September of 1967 Third Battalion 26th Marines left the Khe Sanh combat base for Camp Carroll. On September 7th the battalion left Camp Carroll to begin a sweep between the Con Thien fire base and the DMZ. This operation quickly transformed into a three day and night fire fight with two divisions of the North Vietnamese Army. The engagement is well documented and saw the battalion take killed and wounded casualties that reduced it's numbers from near 800 to a little over 130.

As the battalion was well below T/O strength, it was sent south to Camp Evans where it would regroup and rebuild. Once regrouped in December, it would be sent back north to Khe Sanh. While at Camp Evans, typical assignments might be sweeping Highway 1 and it's flanks for booby traps, occupying hill 51 and running patrols from it, setting night ambushes, and going on assorted two to four day patrols in the Co Bi Thanh Tan Valley between Highway 1 and the mountains rising west of the coastal plain. In particular, the area along highway 1 is what French correspondent Bernard Fall earlier referred to as "La Rue Sans Joie"(i.e., The Street Without Joy). This article is about one such patrol.

On or about the 27th of September 1967 my platoon, third platoon, of India Company 3/26, left Camp Evans on trucks and headed North on Highway 1 for several miles. We debarked from the trucks and moved out to the East across flat wet land until we came to a village near My Chanh still in Thua Thien province. The village was on the western bank of a river, probably the Song O Lau. The river was about two hundred feet across, slow moving, and apparently deep. The village was what one would expect in a simple rural setting. We were told our mission was to dig in along the river bank and act as a blocking force for the South Vietnamese Army that was sweeping towards us on the other side of the river. The sweep was apparently fairly large and would take some time as we were told that we would be in our positions for several days.

As we settled in, we began to casually dig our fox holes and other fighting positions on the river bank with our e-tools. We were in close proximity to the villagers and their dwellings. They went about their daily business, and in this bucolic setting we felt no sense of urgency or danger as we continued to dig the holes that would be our dwellings for several days and nights. This tranquility lasted well into the afternoon then the stillness was shattered by the sound of semiautomatic small arms fire from the other side of the river. We were sitting ducks. The casual digging of our fox holes became frantic. There was nothing between the shooter and us but an occasional bush or small tree. The small arms fire quickly stopped, but the digging accelerated. After completing my fox hole, looked at my right hand and saw that every knuckle on the palm side of my hand was abraded and bleeding.

The instinct to survive demanded that we return fire, but the Platoon Commander, Lt. Richard Foley, said we were forbidden to do this as there might be a village on the other side of the river. The only thing I or anyone else was able to see on the other side of the river was dense foliage that went down to and into the river. There were no paths, no huts, no open. Areas, not the slightest evidence of a village.

For the next hour or so It was quiet. Our fighting positions had been dug. It was going into evening, and most of us were starting to eat our C-rations. At this time the small arms fire from across the river again erupted, but this time a Marine had been hit. two positions down from mine, Lance Corporal Richard Harvel a twenty year old from Bedford, New Hampshire was sitting in or on his foxhole eating his chow when a bullet either straight on, or ricocheting off the ground in front of him, hit him in the back of his head.

The enemy fire lasted but a short while, maybe eight or ten semi-automatic rounds, and then quiet. Again we were forbidden o return fire. Now the quiet was broken by the high pitched almost siren-like sound of a head wound.

The platoon commander, Second Lieutenant Foley, called in the H-34 medivac chopper. It took a while to arrive and now it had become dark, very dark. I remember several of us carrying Harvel to the make shift LZ which may have been forty five meters

away from the river. I remember trying to keep the combat bandage on the back of his head. This was a bit of a balancing act as we were trying to stay low, but also trying to keep the back of his head out of the mud. In a Kafkaesque, way I recall stopping within inches of a farmer's wooden fence to take a breather. I looked to be sure Havel's head was still bandaged. Just as I did this, I saw and heard inches away on the other side of the fence the huge snorting head of a water buffalo. I was relieved that the fence was there. We got Richard to the arriving helicopter, and that was the last we saw of him.

The next day we manned our positions and did little else as we were the "Blocking Force." About 100 feet from my position I noticed a concrete slab going down and into the river. Back in "The World" one might have called this a boat ramp. On this concrete slab I noticed several Vietnamese women from the village washing clothes.

Before going to Vietnam, I and my fellow Marines had a full year of training most of which was in preparation for Vietnam. Somewhere along the line we were taught that the communists would not endanger the local population. From my experience that instruction could not have been more wrong. They didn't just endanger the local population,- they terrorized it.

Vietnam had already taught me how minor cuts and scrapes would rapidly bloom into infections i.e., "jungle rot". This was especially true for those of us who were living in dirt. Foolishly feeling safe among these village women, I squatted on the slab at the water's edge with a piece of soap to wash and clean the abrasions I sustained from the day before. Normally I would also have take advantage of such situations to wash my face. For whatever reason, I chose not to wash my face that morning.

I began walking back to my position when semi-automatic fire erupted. I dropped to the ground facing the fire and found myself behind nothing more than the lone sprig of a tree. The only analogy I can think of is walking naked into a dark room when a group of people turn on the lights and yell surprise. The difference- the Vietnam experience had an immediate lethal potential.

The women ran screaming. On the river bank behind the slab and behind the women, two Marines were sitting on a makeshift bunker. Apparently they received the same bad information about the communists not endangering civilians. The corpsman told us one Marine was hit in the elbow and the other was hit in the spine. To this day I wonder how the outcome would have been different If I had stayed to wash my face. I would have been an easy squatting target at that range. Was my squatting presence motivation for the shooter to get his gun? Again, we were forbidden to return fire.

Some time Later in that day we again received semi -automatic fire from the dense vegetation on the other side of the river, but this time the response would be different. This time, a young lance corporal whom we nicknamed "Gunny", took a few steps toward the river and opened up with his M16. I think everyone else thought what I was thinking. This situation is crazy; "Gunny" is right! We all opened up our weapons for about ten seconds. Survival is a powerful motivator. We were there for the rest of that day and well into the next day. In that time not so much as a single shot was fired at us. Of course that was too late for Harvel, another now paraplegic Marine, and another now armless Marine.

Sometimes I would wonder if this time at Thua Thien was primer for the 130mm Soviet artillery that would pound us at Khe Sanh from the enemy's sanctuaries in Laos' Co Roc mountain and the DMZ. Was this village a microcosm of the much larger strategy of "Containment." After all, we were not there to win but rather to contain.

I know some people say that we didn't remember these events. But rather that we "remember the telling" of these events. What these people have profoundly told me is that they were never there. I also strongly suspect that many of these people, at the time of these events, made every effort to be sure they were very far from Vietnam. Along this line I can say I don't remember much else from that operation. I do remember the Lieutenant had a radio man named Rinn. He was built like Tarzan but was shy. The village had an elder leader that we called "the Honcho." He told the Lieutenant that he wanted Rinn to mate with one of his daughters. When he got the drift of the conversation, Rinn turned red. It

did not happen.

Years later at a Khe Sanh reunion, Lt. Foley told me this was one of his first operations in the Nam. After arriving in country, he made a personal vow that as a platoon commander he would not lose a single man. I am sure he was far from the only Second Lieutenant to do this. Richard Harvel's death quickly put an end to that, not to mention the unimaginable carnage that returning o Khe Sanh would bring.

Nine months later I would return to "the world." I spoke with Richard Harvel's mother twice. His father had passed. Years later I sent her a copy of Dick Camp's "Lima -6" which gives his accounting of those days and nights from September 7-11, 1967. Those were days and nights of Hell between Con Thien and the DMZ. In that engagement, which I was not a part of because of a cellulitis infection in my leg, Richard was the M-79 man for our squad leader, Sergeant Bruce Krage. Sergeant Krage was part of the original 3rd Bn 26th Marines that landed in Viet am a year earlier. For my first seven weeks in Viet Nam I was glad that Sergeant Krage was my squad leader. He was everything you wanted in an infantry squad leader, smart, instinctive, thoughtful, well spoken, experienced, and squared away. He was the six foot one All-American kid from Minnesota. Unfortunately, Sergeant Krage was killed by a shot to the head during the heavy action on September 7, 1967, near the DMZ.

Richard Harvel described to me how the round that hit Craig was a tracer and how he saw it burn around inside his head. Ironically, it was a similar shot to the head of Richard Sometimes I reflect on the round that hit Richard. I think of the combat bandage I kept holding on the back of his head; I think of the mud I tried to keep his head out of; I think of the darkness; I think of the water buffalo. The corpsman told us that because Harvel's wound was in the back of his head he could still have higher functioning abilities. Later the next day our platoon sergeant, Sergeant Hoapili, in his Hawaiian accent told each of us, "Bruder, Harvel didn't make it." In our conversations I was never able to mention any of this to his mother. She told me she was a nurse in World War II. I mentioned that my father was the medical officer on a destroyer, USS Higbee, in the Pacific. The Higbee was the only ship in the Navy named after a woman, a WWI nurse. I still felt paralyzed when it came to mentioning any of the details of her son's death.

Right now I reflect on how it took only six disjointed hours to write this but how it took fifty years to exhale it. I also reflect on my first week home, being back in lithe world." I remember going to a young person's gathering place in Saint James, New York. It was called The Gold Coast." I well remember the owner with his hand gun in a holster and a bouncer goon at his side telling me that as a Viet Nam veteran I was not allowed inside. In retrospect, this should not have surprised me as the establishment was a meeting place for students from Stony Brook University and Suffolk Community College.

The Gold Coast is gone, but we remain, what they and the communists could not kill.

OBIT
ROBERT E. GREENWOOD USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, CO 1/9 WPNS PLT

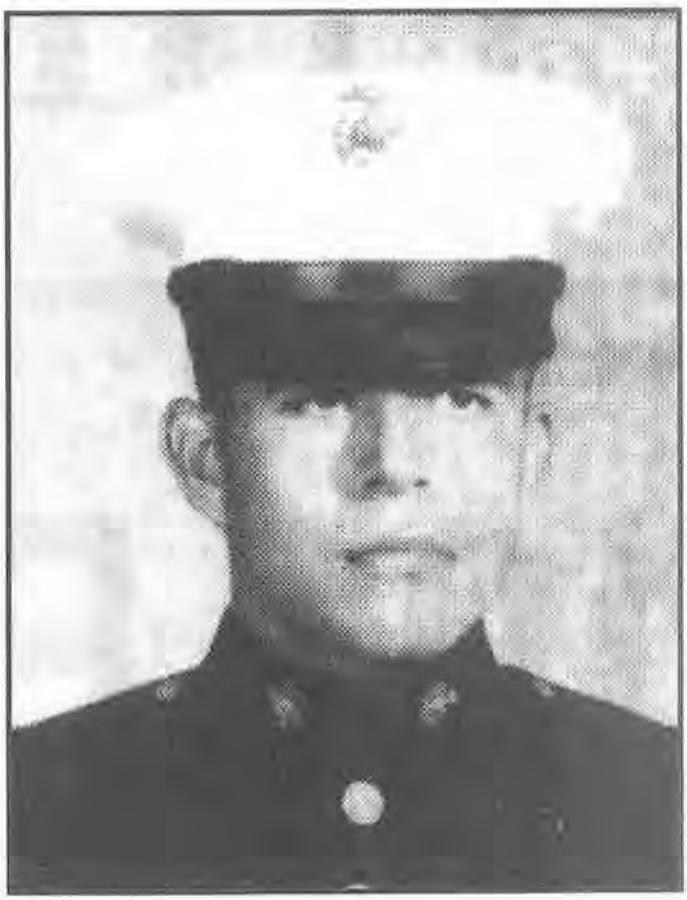

Robert E. Greenwood Fought the good fight in his short battle with liver cancer and on Saturday, June 9, 2018, he began his journey to his heavenly home. He leaves behind his wife, Joyce Buffalo Head Greenwood, of Oklahoma City; one son Brent Greenwood, of Edmond; two daughters, Shane and Shaula, of Oklahoma City; two granddaughters, Anevea, of Edmond and Mekai, of Oklahoma City and nine grandsons, Isaiah and Miwese, of Edmond and Josiah, David, Adrian, Julian, Andrew, Elijah and Jacobi, all of Oklahoma City; one sister, Jackie Sue Harrison, of Choctaw and many nieces, nephews, Chickasaw relatives and friends.

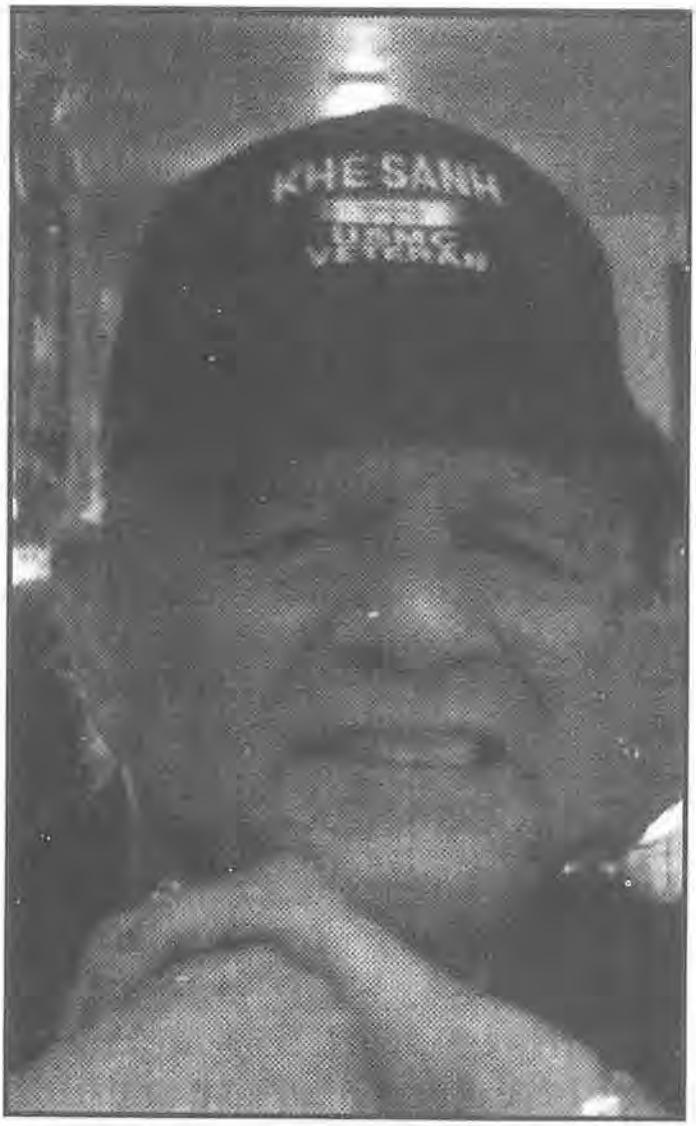

He is preceded in death by his parents, Cecil Greenwood and Louise Tyubby-Greenwood; a sister, Patricia Rough face-Greenwood; a nephew, Tommy Jr. Roughface; maternal grandparents, Lila Mclish-Hawkins and Richmond Tyub by and paternal grandparents, Susie Chummuttie Greenwood.

Robert was an enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation. He embraced his Chickasaw language and culture. He was honored to accept the invitation to have his portrait painted by Mike Larsen, a renowned Chickasaw artist. Robert is one of 18 Chickasaw elders whose paintings are displayed in the Chickasaw Cultural museum in Sulphur. Just recently, he was asked to participate with other Chickasaw elders in a documentary entitled, "Elders Speak".

Robert was born In Lawton, on March 13, 1949, to the proud parents Louise and Cecil Greenwood. The family resided in Oklahoma City and later moved to Midwest City where he attended school his elementary and high school years. Upon graduation in 1967 he, along with his best high school friend Shelby Nelson, enlisted with the Marines.

Robert was stationed at Camp Pendleton for his basic training and was later deployed to fight in the Vietnam War. He was assigned with the 1st battalion 9th Marines. It was during the Khe Sanh battle that Robert would receive two purple hearts, a National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon, two Meritorious Citations and a Good Conduct Medal for his bravery and heroic efforts in one of the deadliest battles in the Vietnam War. He was seriously injured during this time of battle and was transported by medevac to Corpus Christi Texas where he was hospitalized for his injuries and later assigned to Camp Pendleton for further training.

1969 he returned home to Midwest City. He was employed at Western Electric Company in 1970 and later was employed by the U.S. Postal Service where he retired in 2006. In June of 1970, he attended the Methodist annual conference at Hog Creek in Anadarko. It was there he met his wife, Joyce and they were married in January of 1971. They established their home in Oklahoma City, where many

memories were made with their three children and 11 grandchildren. He was a member of the Mary Lee Clark Church in Del City.

Robert was an avid fan of the Oklahoma State Cowboys. There were many happy days spent with his family in the Stillwater and Ponca City area during football and basketball seasons. He enjoyed camping at Chickasaw National Recreation Park in Sulphur with his family and grandchildren. Every year for the past 26 years, he looked forward to camping in August at the annual Ponca Celebration. He was very supportive of his wife's desires to carry on the Ponca ways and traditions for her family.

Robert was a loving husband, father, grandfather, uncle, friend and there are no words to express the void that will be left with his family and friends. He left a legacy of unconditional love, discipline and respect for his children and grandchildren to carry through their words and actions.
Burial was in Ponca Indian Cemetery.

OBIT

RAYMOND WORDEN, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
ALPHA CO 1/26

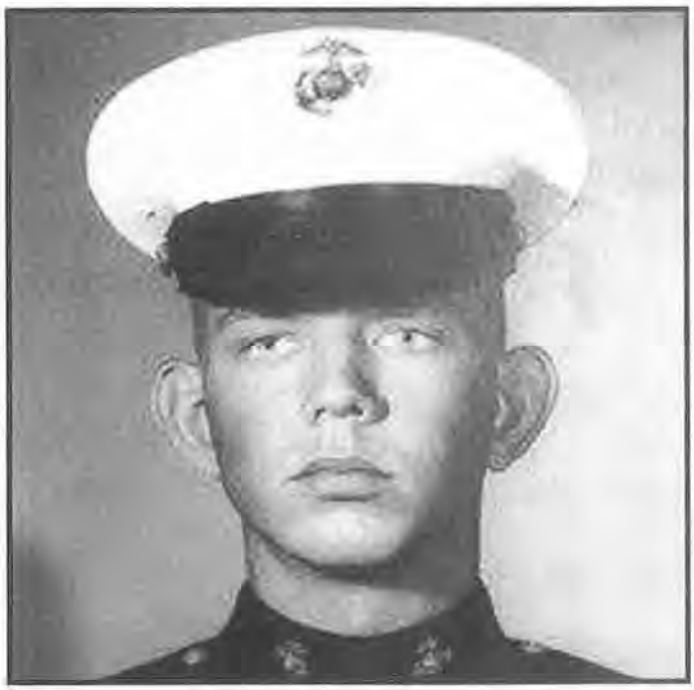

Raymond Marcus Worden, "Modoc", was born November 25, 1947 in Muncie, IN to the late Raymond and Wanda (Cooper) Worden. Mark 'Modoc' Worden ,70, passed away unexpectedly at his home in Hagerstown on the morning of September 7th. 'Modoc' was a 1966 graduate of Union High School in Modoc, IN.

He served his country with honor in Vietnam and abroad as an enlisted volunteer in the United States Marine Corp. He was a Khe Sanh veteran seeing action in the hills and mountains surrounding the base. In 2007 'Modoc' retired from General Motors Corp. after 30 years of service. After retirement 'Modoc' went on to work at Autocar before being diagnosed with a serious form of cancer for which he was successfully treated. At the time of his passing he was employed as a groundskeeper at Hartley



Hills Country Club.
Modoc' was an avid golfer and up until recently a devoted Harley Davidson rider. He enjoyed spending time with friends at the golf course, American Legion Post 333, and AmVets Post 38.

'Modoc' was a devoted husband, beloved father, grandfather, and brother. Survivors include his wife of 34 years Cynthia L. (Kerney) Worden, three children Amanda J. Worden (Brad Thomas) of Hagerstown, Bryan A. Worden of Muncie, and Justus T. (Kimberly) Kerney of Economy. His surviving brother and sisters include Teddy (Jim) Holwager of Mathews, NC, Cathy Flatter of Winchester, IN, Joy Woolf of Farmland, IN, Gilbert Worden (Toni Pardue) of Tulsa, OK, and Claudia (Rodney) Spurlock of New Castle, IN. His grandchildren include Cameron Worden, Kelsey Dodd, Shelby Dodd, Bryce

Worden along with a great granddaughter, Emma Worden and step-grandchildren and great grandson: Allyson (Gruell) (Brett) Crawford, Patrick Gruell, and Paxton Crawford. Numerous nieces and nephews and other close relatives will also miss 'Modoc' dearly.



Although very active he greatly loved his family and always made time to spend with them. He was very well known throughout the community having countless friends and acquaintances. 'Modoc' will be fondly remembered as a very kind, genuine man with a great sense of humor and authentic character. As his nickname can attest, he was fond of his personal slogan: "Bottle of pop, big banana, I'm from MODOC INDIANA!" We will miss you and are grateful we had you.

A memorial service was held on Thursday Sept. 13th at 2:00pm at Culberson Funeral Home in Hagerstown, IN. Visitation will begin at 1:00pm. In lieu of flowers the family requests donations be made to a veteran's organization of your choice.

Raymond Worden was my radio operator twice, first in the 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company, 1/26 and later in the reconstituted 2nd Platoon, during the Spring and Summer of 1967. As a Marine he was as good as they get, especially in close combat. The former members of the 3rd Platoon had been looking for him since 1988. We were so glad to see him at the reunion. He decided to come based on the encouragement of his friend Charles Pittman (Whiskey Battery, 1/13). He was as surprised as we were to meet up again. Thank you Charles. We will miss him.

John Kaheny

OBIT

LOUIS ARTHUR RANN, COL, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
XO 26TH MARINES

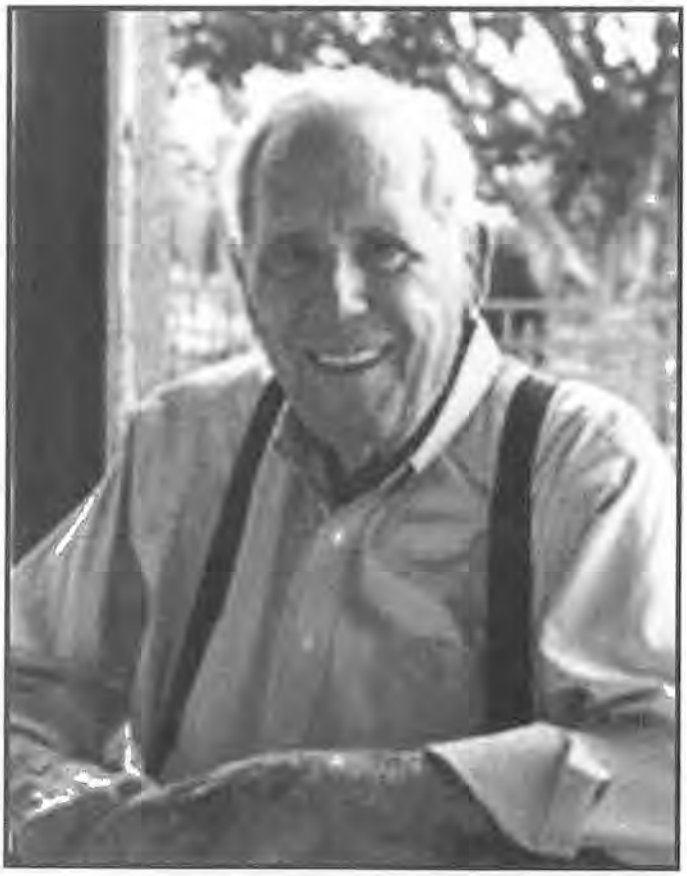

Retired, age 95 of Indian Harbour Beach passed away on Tuesday July 17, 2018. Louis was born June 23, 1923 in Cologne, New Jersey. Louis & Joanne moved to Brevard County in 1975 from Quantico MCB, Quantico, VA He served during WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War earning awards that included the Purple Heart, Legion of Merit with V, Bronze Star with V, Peruvian Navy Cross and the Meritorious Service Medal

Louis was a 32nd Degree Mason, a member of the

Satellite Beach United Methodist Church, 3rd Marine Division Association, Khe Sanh Marines, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines - The Magnificent Bastards-Association and Phi Epsilon Kappa Fraternity.

Louis is survived by his children, Stephen L. Rann, David P. Rann, R. Zoe Rann and his siblings, Patricia Stutzbach, Phyllis Messinger and Robert Rann, his grandchildren, Kimberly Brown, Sarah Aboukhater, Rachel Wysuph, Joshua Scheiner, Katherine Rauber, James Scheiner, Paul Rann and Allison Rann, his great-grandchildren, Maxwell Brown, Elias Aboukhater, Evan Aboukhater, Margaret Brown, Baylan Wysuph, Mira Aboukhater, Lilian Wysuph, Sela Scheiner and Ava Scheiner. He was preceded in death by his wife Joanne Rann.

A Funeral Service was held Satellite Beach United Methodist Church, 450 Lee Avenue, Saturday, August 11 at 11:00 AM,

KSV 2018 REUNION:

THE POILANE PAPERS BY COL NICHOLAS ROMANETZ USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN CHARLIE CO 1/26 2ND PLT

I arrived at Khe Sanh in early October 1967 as a new Second Lieutenant and was assigned to Charlie Company on Hill 861. In early November the company was rotated down to the combat base and assumed the responsibility for base security/ reaction force. We ran a variety of squad, platoon and company patrols from the combat base which lasted as long as one to five days. Sometime in early December, I believe, we were returning from a five-day company size patrol from the vicinity of the blown bridge on Route 9, east of the KSCB. We passed a Bru village of huts and soon arrived at the access road from Route 9 to KSCB. As we made the right turn towards the base, I noticed in the distance a yellow, two story house. I was not aware of what the structure was or who it belonged to as I can't recall ever seeing it before.

About 50 yards from the house, I noticed a young Caucasian girl sitting on the front steps. I took a picture of her with my high tech, expensive Instamatic and when I was about fifteen feet from the girl I took a second picture. A little over a month later, the siege began. I had kept those pictures in a scrapbook for many years (at least 30) and always wondered what happened to the girl. I had found out that she was the daughter of a French couple that owned the home and a coffee plantation very near the base.

I instinctively reached out to Ray Stubbe and he told me the Poi lane Family were the people that lived there and that the mother and two children were alive and well, living in France. Ray then provided me Madame Poilane's address in France. In my readings about Khe Sanh I learned that Felix, the husband of Madeleine, was killed in a plane crash at Khe Sanh in April 1968 when he was returning to check on his house and plantation (I knew that the house was destroyed early in the siege and this was recently confirmed in Mike Archer's recent publication, "The Gunpowder Prince". The house was being used by NVA artillery spotters positioned on the second floor who were seen by Marine spotters on the base. A flight of fixed wing aircraft quickly destroyed the building).

In early 2002 I was working in a public high school and I enlisted the services of a French teacher to translate my initial letter to Madame Poilane in French. I identified myself and included copies of the two color photos of her daughter I had taken some 30 years earlier. Within two weeks I heard from Madame Poilane. A letter, written in French, thanked me for contacting her and providing the photos. She basically said she had "lost everything" from her time in Viet Nam and the pictures were the first and only physical items she had that covered her life at Khe Sanh. For the next few months we exchanged letters with the French teacher doing all of the translation from French to English for my benefit and English to French for Madame's benefit. I soon received a 25+ page "manuscript" typed in French and titled "Memories of Vietnam 1957-1968" from Madame. I called the manuscript "The Poilane Papers." My French teacher friend was more than happy to have one of her Advanced Placement French classes assume the responsibility of translating the document to English. Within a few weeks I had a wonderful manuscript to read and found it fascinating.

About this time Ernie Spencer was responsible for publishing and distributing Red Clay. I sent him the pictures and manuscript and he published it in its entirety. Fast forward to a few years ago when Dennis Mannion took an interest in the Poilane children and their story and life in VN. I provided him a copy of the original manuscript, in both French and English, and he contacted the children, Francoise and Jean- Marie. Issue 89 of Red Clay (winter/ spring 2016) republished Madam Poilane's entire manuscript as well as stories which were the result of Dennis communicating with the Poi lane children and others.

For me, upon learning the Poilane children would attend our recent DC reunion, I felt it was a great opportunity to bring this episode full circle and close this chapter of my Khe Sanh experiences. I met the Poilane's for breakfast on Thursday of the reunion. I introduced myself as the guy who took the pictures of Franscoise and the guy that corresponded with their Mom allowing her "manuscript" to be published in Red Clay. That morning I returned to the children all of the correspondence I had with Madame (English and French copies) as well as the original manuscript typed in French. This manuscript and accompanying correspondence had been stored in a filing cabinet for over 30 years. Had I died, there is no doubt these documents would have ended up in the trash. I also provided each of the children with the two pictures in a frame (photo of presentation enclosed). I truly hope that them having the documents I provided add some value and meaning to their family history.

OBIT

LAWRENCE "LARRY" BALLARD USMC KHE SANH VETERAN H&S CO 2/26

Laurence A. "Larry" Ballard, 70, entered into eternal peace on Wednesday, August 22, 2018 at his home in Silver Spring, MD. Larry was born in Washington, DC on March 1, 1948 to Caleb H. and Alise J. Ballard.

Larry graduated from Spingarn High School, Washington, DC in 1966 and joined the U.S. Marine Corps, serving from 1966 to 1971. He served in the Vietnam War, including stints at Phu Bai, Con Thien, Camp Carroll, and Dong Ha. He also served in the war's most famous siege, the Battle of Khe Sanh, from January through April 1968



After returning from Vietnam, Larry served as a sergeant at one of the premier posts of the Corps, Marine Barracks at 8th and I Streets in Washington, DC, for two and a half years. He earned many awards during his military service including National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon, and Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

Larry attended the University of the District of Columbia, graduating in 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Bio-environmental Science and Engineering. He began his career in law enforcement, joining the Montgomery County Maryland Police Department in 1977. The career in law enforcement was a good fit for him as he always had a moral code consisting of a strong commitment to fairness and justice.

Larry was a humanitarian and community lead-

er. He was active in politics in Washington, DC as a young man, served as president of the Spring Oaks Community Association for many years, and sponsored several children through the Children International Organization over a period of more than 25 years. His sponsorship provided support to children in impoverished countries, ensuring they had access to medical care and educational opportunities.

Larry was a member of several organizations including the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Montgomery County Police Alumni Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a lifetime member of the NAACP. Larry will be lovingly remembered by his devoted wife of 38 years, Carolyn N. Edwards; sister, Mena Young-Harris (Joseph); two nephews, Michael A. Young Jr. and Johnathon L. Key; father and mother-in-law, Joe Wise and Christine Edwards; and special friends, Marsha Gilchrist, James Gilchrist, and Otis Pitts Jr., along with other beloved family and friends.

OBIT

LARRY P. SHREVE, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN H&S CO 3/26



He was born February 11, 1941 in Marshall County, WV; the son of the late Clark and Zelma Wells Shreve.

He was a veteran of the USMC, where he received a Purple Heart; a retired coal miner from McElroy Mine; a member of Moundsville VFW Post 437; Earl Francis Post 3, American Legion; DAV; Marine Corps League, Wheeling; and Paralyzed Veterans. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by an infant brother, Brent; an infant sister, Rose; a brother, Clark Shreve; and a sister, Loretta Ford.

Survivors include his wife, Karen Ann Shaffer Shreve; a son, Kevin (Christa) Shreve of South Riding, VA; two daughters, Tina (Michael) Nichols of Valley Grove, WV, Deanna Shreve of St. Clairsville, OH; two grandchildren, Tiffani Amber (Anthony) Baltimore, Ryan Shreve; ten siblings, Gary (Kathy) Shreve of Glen Dale, Joyce (Luther) Ritchea of Moundsville, Donna (Mickel) Evans of Moundsville, Randy (Kathy) Shreve of Fernandina Beach, FL; Jerry Shreve of Washington Lands, Debbie (Terry) Kittle of Smoke Hole, WV, Janice Shreve, Sheila (Dale) Rodgers, Melody Shreve all of Moundsville, Barbara Whitlatch of Cameron; two great-grandchildren, Ezra and Sarah Baltimore; several nieces and nephews.

Interment in Riverview Cemetery, Moundsville, where the Moundsville Honor Guard conducted Military Graveside services.

. THE GUNS AT KHE SANH, 1968

Dwight Jon Zimmerman
ARGUNNERS MAGAZINE



"The 66-day battle of Khe Sanh, which began in January 1968, became a classic defensive operation for U.S. forces. It tested American concepts of defense and demonstrated that good fire support

***could effectively neutralize a superior force.*" — Major General David Ewing Ott, USA (US Army Vietnam Studies: Field Artillery 1954-1973)**

The North Vietnamese 1968 Tet Offensive was designed to be the knockout blow that would defeat South Vietnamese military forces, inspire a popular uprising against the South Vietnamese government, and force the Allied troops under the command of U.S. Army General William Westmoreland, Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) to evacuate the country. A prelude to the communist campaign was the conquest of the remote base camp in the U.S. Marine I Corps Tactical Zone, Khe Sanh.

Khe Sanh was located in the northernmost South Vietnamese province of Quang Tri, about six miles east of the Laotian border and fourteen miles south of the Demilitarized Zone. Established in 1962 and initially occupied by Special Operations Forces, it was designed for surveillance, not interdiction, of enemy traffic down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. In 1966 General Westmoreland, over Marine objections, ordered it expanded to a battalion-sized base camp complete with airstrip. In 1967 it was expanded and reinforced to regimental strength.

In late 1967, Marine patrols observed stepped up North Vietnamese activity in the region, with evidence that large numbers of communist troops were remaining instead of typically transiting south. On 2 January 1968, about three weeks before the Vietnamese Tet holiday and truce were to begin, a Marine reconnaissance patrol attacked a six-man North Vietnamese Army patrol just outside the Khe Sanh defensive perimeter, killing five. Among the dead were an NVA regimental commander and his operations officer. The official Marine history concluded, "The fact that the North Vietnamese could commit such key men to a highly dangerous, personal reconnaissance indicated that Khe Sanh was at the top of the communists' priority list." Westmoreland interpreted the incident to mean that thousands of enemy troops were in the area and that Khe Sanh held the opportunity for finally bringing about the decisive engagement against communists that he had long desired. The entire 26th Marine Regiment under the command of Colonel David Lownds was tasked with the defense of Khe Sanh. It was the first time since Iwo Jima that all three battalions of the regiment were together for a combat operation. Westmoreland planned to use the Marines as "bait" to lure the NVA into battle where they would be destroyed by superior American firepower. Anticipating that the Marines would be cut off, Westmoreland planned to use superior American air power to resupply and augment the defenses of the base. In the days leading up to Tet, additional men, including the South Vietnamese 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion, and supplies were air lifted to Khe Sanh. Approximately 3,000 troops were located in the base camp with 3,000 more split among positions on the nearby hills 950, 881, 861, and 558, so named for their height. Each garrison was supported by artillery. For the siege, the NVA had assembled two regiments of the 325C Division, veterans of Dien Bien Phu, and two regiments of the 320th Division. They would be supported by the 304th Division, an armored regiment,



U.S. Marines of Company G, 2ND Battalion, 3RD Marines inch their way toward the summit of Hill 881N during the Hill Fights of the Battle for Khe Sanh. (Credits: USMC /A189161)

and two artillery regiments. All told, the NVA had committed from 20,000 to 30,000 troops for the operation.

The siege began on 20 January when a patrol between hills 881 North, held by the NVA, and 881 South, held by the Marines, led by Captain William Dabney made contact with elements of the NVA. The following day, the enemy launched an assault of hills 881S and 861. Enemy artillery damaged the airstrip and scored a major success when rocket and shellfire hit the main ammunition dump, leaving the Marines desperately short of shells. Despite incoming barrages and anti-aircraft fire, six C-130 cargo transports successfully landed later that day on the still-damaged air strip and discharged 24 tons



Marine Artillery Crew fires from Khe Sanh, 14 February 1968. (Credits: National Archives)

of cargo, mostly artillery shells. For his troops to successfully hold out, Colonel Lownds estimated that he would need 160 tons of supplies per day.

The vital role that air power and artillery performed in the successful Marine defense of Khe Sanh cannot be overstated. During the siege there were times when approximately half of all air assets in the theater were tasked with the support of the Marines at Khe Sanh. There is no question of the value and importance of the many air strikes on enemy positions. But even more important was the Air Force's ability to conduct aerial resupply operations. Westmoreland later wrote, "The resupply of Khe Sanh stands as the premier air logistical feat of the war. At no time during the siege did the defenders experience a serious supply shortage."

Regarding artillery fire during the battle, 158,981 rounds of various calibers were fired on enemy positions and attack points. A total of 46 artillery pieces were used including five batteries of Marine artillery composed of three batteries of 105 mm howitzers, one battery of 4.2 inch mortars, and one battery of 155 howitzers. The Marines were supported by four batteries of Army 175 mm guns, all from the 2d Battalion, 94th Field Artillery. One battery was at a base codenamed "Rockpile" located about nine miles north-northwest of Khe Sanh, and the other three were based at Camp Carroll about thirteen miles northeast. All supporting arms fire was coordinated from Khe Sanh itself by the fire support coordination center (FSCC) operated by the 1st Battalion, 13th Marines (Artillery) and the direct air support center (DASC).

The complexity of the FSCC operations during the siege is indicated by the description of an average night's pattern of preplanned fires by a target intelligence/information officer: "Combined TOTs (time on targets) from nine batteries totaled 4 -6; separate battalion TOTs, Army 4-6 and Marine 10-15; battery multiple volley individual missions, 40-50; battery H&Is (harassment and interdiction) 20-30. Normal one-gun, one-round H&Is were not used; this type of fire was of little value. Marine and Army artillery were employed in target areas and at ranges to reduce to a minimum check fires caused by the arrival of MPQ (radar guided) and reconnaissance aircraft. Later, as we learned finesse, air was given the targets south of the base and west of the maximum range of the 175 mm guns; 1/13 was given any targets whose range required a maximum ordinate of 14,000 feet (altitude of an MPQ controlled air strike), and the 175 mm guns were assigned to targets to the north, northwest, and east of the base."

FSCC's ability to provide timely and accurate fire on numerous targets simultaneously was made possible by the Field Artillery Digital Automatic Computer (FADAC). First Lieutenant Carlton B. Crenshaw of Company C, 1/13, would receive the Bronze Star with "V" device and his second Purple Heart while stationed on Hill 881S during the siege. A few days after the siege had begun, Crenshaw, on night watch duty in the Charlie Battery command bunker had an opportunity to see the FADAC in action. In a letter home he wrote, "At about 10:00 our battalion fire control center called and needed support for another Marine recon unit that was surrounded. We had a new computer called FADAC that was able to do many things simultaneously. It gave us four simultaneous missions to be supported by eight artillery guns from my battery. In essence they provided a box of artillery protection for our Marines. The fire mission went on for hours as the box moved to cover the movement of the Marines back to the combat base."

Easy clearance procedures for fire missions meant artillery could swiftly respond to changing tactical situations regardless of weather. Unless friendly aircraft were above the target area, artillery rounds could be striking enemy positions within forty seconds after the call for fire was made.

Support fire was organized into four responses, three-sided artillery box, mini Arc Light, micro Arc Light, and direct fire against targets of opportunity. North Vietnamese Army doctrine called for battalion attacks in column formation. Lt. Crenshaw described one use of the artillery box. In general the fire support coordination center used three batteries of the 1/13 to execute the three sides of the box around second echelon troops designed to support the enemy's lead battalion during the attack, hemming the reserves. The fourth, open, side faced friendly lines. A fourth battery from 1/13 closed this fourth side with a rolling barrage that moved up and down the box like a piston in a cylinder. Simultaneously, the center placed a secondary box around surrounding enemy backup units. Four Army 175 mm batteries were responsible for two sides, about 500 meters outside the primary box. If weather conditions permitted, air strike missions, sometimes including B-52 Arc Light missions, supported the barrages. The combination of back and forth piston and side to side accordion salvo action proved devastating. Lead assault units would come under organic 81 mm mortar and 106 mm recoilless rifle fire when they came within range. When NVA commanders of the lead assault units attempted to call in support or reinforcements for an



An Army 175mm M107 at Camp Carroll provides fire support for ground forces. (Credits: U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center)

effective *schwerpunkt*, they discovered that their reserves were already under heavy combined arms attack.

Mini Arc Light missions were used against area targets and were the responsibility of the assistant fire support coordinator. Similar to a regular B-52 Arc Light mission, the value of a mini Arc Light mission was that it could be organized and employed more rapidly, generally within forty-five minutes. Once a target, such as an enemy troop staging area, was identified, the assistant fire support coordinator plotted a 500 x 1,000 meter block in the suspected area or across the anticipated march route. Two Intruder tactical aircraft, each armed with twenty-eight 500-lb. bombs, were then called in for a radar-guided bomb run. As the same time, batteries at Khe Sanh, the Rockpile, and Camp Carroll were alerted. Thirty seconds before the Intruders were about to drop their bombs, Army 175 mm batteries fired a sixty-round salvo concentrated on half the block. As the Intruders dropped their bombs down the middle of the block, Marine batteries directed fire on the second half of the block. Flight and trajectory times of all ordnance were computed so that all would strike simultaneously, saturating the block.

More rapid still was the micro Arc Light, which could be put into effect within ten minutes. Conducted essentially the same way, the micro Arc Light used less ordnance and over a smaller, 500 x 500 meter, area.

The direct fire against targets of opportunity was used by Marine artillery on Khe Sanh. The effectiveness of this method was demonstrated by Marine howitzers located on Hill 881S northwest of Khe Sanh. At one point during the siege, an alert machine gunner on Hill 881S saw a twenty-man NVA column, with troops carrying mortar tubes, climbing the slope of Hill 758, south of the Marines' position. An initial salvo, from 1,200 meters, successfully hit a number of the enemy. When the survivors gathered around their fallen comrades, the Marines shoved aside their defensive parapets, depressed their gun tubes for a downhill shot, and fired off about a dozen rounds, killing all the enemy troops.

The B-52 Stratofortress was not generally regarded as a close air support asset. But, with a 27-ton payload of 500- and 750-pound bombs, they proved enormously effective in that role during the siege. Even a near miss by an Arc Light mission was devastating. In a study of the effectiveness of combined artillery and airpower at Khe Sanh, Cap-

tain John A. Hamilton, Jr., USA, wrote, "The concussion from a B-52 attack was so violent that fatal casualties were produced from concussion effects alone." Applying the rule of thumb of one meter distance per each pound of TNT in a bomb, a 500-pound bomb could be dropped as close as 500 meters from a friendly position. This capability prevented the NVA from massing large numbers of troops close to Marine lines, particularly at night. Often after an Arc Light mission, 1/13 batteries



Remaining bomb shells at KheSanh (Credits: L'Homme Veneux Via Wikimedia)

would wait a maximum of twenty minutes before saturating the bombed area with artillery fire, inflicting additional casualties on the dazed enemy troops.

NVA used a number of types of artillery including tube and rocket. Soviet-built 122 mm rockets were launched mostly from positions on Hill 881N. Tube artillery in the form of 130 mm and 152 mm batteries were located on Co Roc Mountain in Laos. Marine positions on Hill 881S were ranged by NVA 120 mm mortars. In a tactic used fourteen years earlier at Dien Bien Phu, it's believed that the NVA emplaced the 120 mm mortars at precise angles in tunnels in order to repeatedly hit one specific target. It is one explanation for why only Hill 881S received 120 mm mortar fire and why the communist mortars were never found and knocked out of action.

Communist shelling was often intense. One day alone, 1,370 shells landed on Khe Sanh. Lt. Crenshaw wrote that by the eight day of the siege, "Our hill reminds me of pictures that I have seen of trenches used by French, English, and German troops during World War I. Within a few days nothing will be left above the ground level." Marines continued to dig foxholes and bunkers. But even deep bunkers with reinforced roofs proved little protection against NVA 120 mm mortar fire. In a letter home, Crenshaw noted, "The bunker next to mine took a direct hit with a 120 mm mortar yesterday which went about three feet of overhead protection and wounded two Marines in there."

Enemy artillery fire was immediately answered by either counterbattery fire or air strikes or a combination of both. The Marine official history of the siege noted the extraordinary dedication of the Marine artillery officers in returning fire. In one example, the executive officer of the 1/13 "ignored the heavy barrage and raced from one shell hole to another analyzing the craters and collecting fragments so that he could determine the caliber of the enemy weapons as well as the direction from which they were being fired. Much of the counterbattery fire was a direct result of his efforts."

The NVA made its greatest attempt to capture Khe Sanh the night of 29 February-1 March. Intelligence determined that the enemy had massed a significant force, later believed to be a battalion from the 304th NVA Division, and it was moving toward the eastern side of the Marine perimeter which was defended by the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion. The FSCC quickly called in saturation fire missions on the projected enemy routes of march east and south of the perimeter. Within minutes tactical air, and mini and micro Arc Light missions added their destruction. Two and a half hours later, bomb payloads of the first full-scale Arc Light mission were dropped on the enemy troops. The NVA resolutely attempted three assaults on the ARVN line. The intensity of the combined ground, air and artillery fire was so great that at no time were the enemy troops able to reach, let alone breach, the outermost defensive line of barbed wire.

Montagnard tribesmen later reported that they discovered 200 to 500 enemy bodies stacked along the leading to Khe Sanh. Intelligence estimates concluded that an NVA regiment was virtually wiped out that night. The official Marine history of the siege concluded, "It was obvious that [the NVA troops]had been caught on the march and mangled by air raids and piston-like artillery concentrations.

While many of the defenders of Khe Sanh never fired a shot, what was believed to be the long-awaited enemy onslaught came and passed with a whimper instead of a roar." Though attacks against the base continued, the NVA never again staged a major attack on the base.



Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap (Credits: Public Doman)

Two weeks later, intelligence determined that the enemy was pulling units away from the area. On 31 March, the Army's 1st Cavalry Division arrived at Khe Sanh, relieved the Marine force, and commenced Operation Pegasus, the fifteen-day air assault operation that ended the battle of Khe Sanh. A final assessment by intelligence estimated that two crack NVA regular divisions were effectively destroyed and that their destruction was primarily caused by American combined artillery and air attacks.

During the siege, Bravo Battery, 1/13, an oversize battery composed of six 105 mm howitzers and three additional howitzers from Charlie Battery, had fired more than 1,250 rounds in support of the Marines at Khe Sanh. 1st Lieutenant Fred McGrath remembered that near the end of February,

"Colonel Lownds personally came to our position and thanked every Marine in the position for the superb fire support his regiment had received." Lownds would later receive the Navy Cross for his role in the defense of Khe Sanh and accept for the 26th Marines the Presidential Unit Citation.

North Vietnamese Defense Minister and commander in chief of the North Vietnamese Army General Vo Nguyen Giap had gambled that he could overwhelm the Marine and ARVN forces at Khe Sanh the same way he had the French at Dien Bien Phu. He failed. The resolution of the infantry defenders, coupled with the enormous power of American artillery and aircraft demonstrated that even an isolated and encircled position could hold out against a superior enemy force.

In comparing the two sides' operations, Captain Harry Baig, 26th Marines Target Information Officer at Khe Sanh, later said, "Colonel Lownds employed traditional Marine tactics and doctrine of the twentieth century against an enemy who chose to put his faith and fortune in usages of the eighteenth."

Dwight Jon Zimmerman is a Bestselling and award winning author, radio host, and president of the Military Writers Society of America,



A TRIBUTE TO THE VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR

By Sue Staton
Winchester Sun



Since I had written several times about War II veterans, I have decided to write two columns about some of the soldiers from the Vietnam War era.

Many of these men who served in the Vietnam war are now in their 70s and I feel the need to honor them.

While this war is very close to my heart since it claimed the lives of many young men who were my own age at the time of the war, I have felt compelled to honor these military men who served.

As I have mentioned previously, Willie Aldridge and Linn Planck graduated the same year I did and both lost their lives in the Vietnam War soon after graduating from high school. Clark County lost another young man, Bobby Gentry, to the war.

To these three and all others ho never made it home from the war, I want to dedicate this column to them.

For the many veterans who did make it home alive, no one truly knows what toll this war has taken on their lives. Most of them have never been able to speak of it until recently and for some not at all.

What they experienced happened, in some cases, more than 50 years ago, but that experience is as real today as it was back then for them.

I asked Kim Wedgworth last week if he would be willing to share a little about his Vietnam experience and learned he is just now willing to talk about being in the Marines during the war. He served in the Infantry with the 3rd Battalion 9th Marine. His marine career began when he was 19 on Dec. 28, 1966.

He drew a low lottery number which meant he would be drafted soon. This was during a time when every young man who turned 18 was sent a draft notice for military service. The higher the lottery number, the less likely you would be drafted. He knew he was going to be called up soon so he and a buddy went ahead and signed up for the Marine Corp.

His military journey began with a rigorous 13-week training at Parris Island, South Carolina. From there he was sent for 17 weeks for more rigorous training at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and then one week to Camp Pendleton in California before being sent to the middle of the war zone of Vietnam in a place called **Khe Sanh.**

He told me he was thankful for the rigorous training he received before he arrived because, "it was an absolute must for survival in the war:'

I mentioned to him I had read the temperatures would soar to 100 degrees and he said, "110." He told me they had to carry a backpack that weighed around 70 pound. I shuddered inside at the thought of it.

Luckily, for a lot of guys, their homes were not equipped with air conditioners while growing up. Even so, I am sure many a soldier collapsed from heat exhaustion.

These guys may have been boys when they left home but they became tough men in just a few weeks.

Kim said it takes eight people to support one guy in the field. One of the things they were told during

training before they left for Vietnam was one of them would get killed, two would be wounded and one would make it out with no visible signs of trauma.

From what I have learned all would share some type of inner turmoil from what they saw in combat and being in Vietnam. Seeing what they saw just on the internet gave me flashbacks for several days after viewing the pictures.

I asked Kim if he got to stay with the same group of people he did his training with and he said they were separated but he did see some of them when they got rotated.

He was put in the jungle of the De Militarized Zone in **Khe Sanh** where he endured a lot. He told me they would go on an operation where "recon" confirmed the enemy was there. The choppers would come in. It was during those times Kim realized he had to go into survival mode.

I asked Kim if he had buddies who got killed and he responded, "Yes, killed, mangled, blown up". Kim was also injured. He was shot and hit in the back side of his legs. He had shrapnel in five places. He was given a Purple Heart but when I called him a hero he made me very aware he did not want to be called a hero.

He emphatically told me, "Do not say I was a hero:' He told me the ones who didn't come back and gave their all were the true heroes of the war. He often has had survivor's remorse. He told me he often wonders why he lived and his buddies and others did not.

Kim said it was about five years before he felt any sort of normalcy after returning from the war. He still has nightmares from time to time. He also said he feels he must stay vigilant at all times since he returned from the war. He agreed it did leave its mark on him.

No matter what Kim thinks, I consider him a hero.
A guy who grew up at Kiddville and one I saw nearly every day of my life while s is the next story.

There were many guys who went to Vietnam who had never ventured very far from the community in which they lived. Such was the case of Billy Joe Trusty. His wife, Margaret, gave me permission to include him in this series.

Bill left for the Army in August 1966. He returned from Vietnam in January 1968. When he first went into the Army, he was stationed at Fort Knox, where he received his basic training. After basic training, he guarded the AWOL guys and guarded the transport of gold at Ft. Knox. He was sent from there to Ft. Polk, Louisiana. He told a story from his time there that was used for conversation many times at his home.

He and a guy had gone into town on the weekend leave and were ordering breakfast. When the waitress asked his friend how he liked his eggs, he replied, "Oh, I like them:' He was not aware she was asking him how he wanted the eggs cooked. Like I said, many young men had never left their confines of their communities.

Bill told Margaret one of his most lonely nights was laying in a top bunk overlooking the city lights in the state of Washington the night before he was flown out to Vietnam. Unlike what Kim spoke of with the Marines, he said you became friends quickly in the Army since they were the group you would be with as long as you were able to survive.
Bill also had nightmares of his time in the war.

The soldiers were told spraying Agent Orange was to kill the mosquitoes but they soon learned it was to kill the trees and vegetation there so the enemy would be in view. He told how they stayed in fox holes and the rice filled swamps where leeches would often attach to your body. He said they took their cigarettes and burned the leeches until they would drop off.

Once he got stung by a tarantula and had to be taken out of the field. He told her it was the worst headache he ever experienced He also broke his finger while loading a machine gun.

A few months before his death he told how he made money to buy his cigarettes. He purchased a hair trimmer She could hardly believe her ears when he told her this. She never ever saw him even trim a stray hair when he at one time had been so particular about himself for so many years. She got to

thinking about it and realized all the haircuts were mostly burrs anyway so she thought how smart he had been.

He had always been an industrious person and worked since he was around 12 years old to make extra money. He worked for Bush Turkey farm, William Columbia, Paul Hisle and Floyd Pace farms at Kiddville.

Another of his ideas in the Army was to purchase an automatic Polaroid camera and take pictures of his Army buddies so they could send pictures of their group back home to their families. He sold those pictures for $1 each.

She displayed those pictures at his funeral and several of the guys who had been in Vietnam mentioned to her they would like to see those pictures again. Some never got any pictures at all while they were there. Bill told her normally a soldier was taken out of the field two weeks prior to their departure. However, he never got to do that since there was such a large battle going on at the time. He said he did not think he would make it home since he only had a few days before he was to leave.

He did make it home safely. He returned to the workforce and retired from Rockwell International. He no longer had to work for others and he became the owner his own farm. Billy Joe Trusty was born June 1947 and left this earth in May 2018. His wife wanted me to include that there is never enough gratitude and respect shown for the men who spent time in Vietnam and as she was writing

down some notes for me, tears fell from her eyes.
The same holds true for me. Thank you guys for your service. It will not be forgotten. You are heroes in my heart. I want to end with this poem given to me by a friend. The author is unknown to me but it so sums up my personal feelings.

"What Is a Veteran? A Veteran, whether active duty, discharged, retired or reserve, is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The United States of America' for an amount of 'up to, and including his life:"
That is honor. And there are way too many people in this country today who no longer understand that.

Sue Staton is a Clark County native who grew up in the Kiddville area. She is a wife, mother and grandmother who is active in her church, First United Methodist Church, and her homemakers group, Towne and Country Homemakers.

I GET MAIL

Dan,

I am a former USMC Captain that was assigned by CG 3RD Mar Div, Major General Bruno Hochmuth, to go to Khe Sanh (April-November 1967). My Job was to infiltrate 6 different overt & covert intel operations, (4 other countries, 2 in the village to get current intel so Hochmuth could better defend that base. It was quite a challenge. The only one I could not trade info was an Army CIA/ SOG with Chinese Nungs out of Saigon.

North Vietnam was their TAOR. The other 5 Lang Vei SF camps with their own TAOR in Laos, did not get to operate with, but the Montagnard Army/ CIA SOG, and USAF Air Force/CIA. I did 43 night missions Laos North Vietnam TAOR with night missions written up for DFC by Lt Col Detachment Command... It was lowered to an Air Medal w/ Special Citation. The other two were with CIA American Couple, inverted in 1958 who wrote the Bru lanquage & teaching 20 Bru how to read and write their own language. Carol was a Bru Midwife, and John was a half Assed Padre who preached on Sunday when we could talk alone. The other 2 Army lent to CIA (counter parts) were in the Ville listening to chat from Bru people for NVA activity and Bru spies.

We actually acted on his intel as we intercepted Lang Vei's CO, Frank Willobys body guard .who ran out and opened the gate for non present NVA during a fake mortar attack. The way we got intel from the traitor was another interesting story. So I did all that for 7 months was sent home in early November, 1967, shortly before MajGen Hocmuth was KIA. Hocmuth was a Mustang and was one of the finest Marines I ever met. I reported directly to him directly in those 7 months, even bypassing G-2. Prior to that 7 months I was CO of Lima & India companies 3RD Battalion 26TH Marines. whom I formed up with at Pendelton after I went to SFOC at Fort

Bragg in NC.and jump school at Fort Benning GA. What Great tours I had in USMC previous 7 years.

The reason I am writing and sending a check for the KSV Scholarship Fund is (1) It's a great program as Chapter 757 did the same thing for our 3 high schools in Curry Colorado, for years.

(2) To ask you to provide me with Tom Eichler's address & phone number so I can write and or call him to congratulate him for a job well done for the organization, the Red Clay and Scholarship Program.

I do not have a computer by design, so I need phone numbers if you please. I am a Life Member of KSVA for many years but have yet to attend a reunion. My friend and fellow member of 757, Bulldog Smith tells me they are great. I have been a Board or Officer member of VVA, Chapter 757 "The Front" since 1998. I currently serve as president and into my 4th term. We are the largest combined VVA in the State of Oregon, with 260 members. National Chapter of the year 2000 Chapter 670, Regional Chapter of the year 2017 and we will run for National Chapter of the year in 2018. There is a 15 year wait to run again.

NICE ARTICLE: KHE SANH VETERAN THE WINCHESTER STAR

VALLEY PIKE: 'THE MOST HAPPY FELLA'

Sept 19, 2018

ALONG THE ROAD TO WASHINGTON, D.C. — Back in the 1950s, during the Golden Age of Broadway, there was a musical titled "The Most Happy Fella." I don't know much, if anything, about the play, except the title. Or how it may apply to a "fella" I just met, name of Bill Crawford

Bill was my seatmate on the bus two Saturdays ago when I accompanied 53 veterans on their trip to Washington, D.C., as special guests of Honor Flight Top of Virginia. And what makes him so happy? A congenital disposition to be so, I suspect, which at age 70 makes him marvel at his life.

Especially after surviving the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh (January to April 1968) during the Vietnam War's Tet Offensive. A lance corporal in the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, 5th Marine Division (Reinforced), Bill was the only machine gunner in his outfit — Don Schroder of Indianapolis and Jimmy Wells of Georgia were the others — to survive the siege. That's reason enough to feel fortunate, blessed, and, yes, happy. Another is that his two brothers — one a fellow Marine; the other, his twin, a Seabee — also came home.

A native of Cleveland, Bill now resides in Strasburg — which he calls a "nice little town" — with his wife of 34 years, Judith. A career Marine who served 24 years with the Corps, he later worked with the VFW as a veterans claims advocate and then with the Veterans Affairs Office-Tennessee in Nashville. Now contentedly retired, he sleeps in when he feels like it, plays golf at links throughout the Northern Valley (including the little executive course at Appleland), and smiles, laughs, and jokes ... a lot.

But all this is getting ahead of the story a bit. What about Khe Sanh?

Well, for starters, he and another Marine — Charlie Plummer of Washington, D.C. — lived in a hole, a five-foot-wide foxhole, during the siege. "Home was a hole," he says with a laugh, "and you were at home in it." Providing, of course, you didn't "open up" your machine gun except when necessary because that would allow the North Vietnamese, only 200 yards away, to zero in on you. Every day was a patrol for the men of the 2nd Battalion, ambushes were set up at night, and at all times they watched their hole and the territory, their assigned fire lanes, around it.

Luckily," says Bill, "they (the North Vietnamese) never came after us, but we lost a lot of men on Hill 881," which was about 1.000 meters away.
We got used to it . . . but what an experience for an 19-year-old," he adds.

That "experience" began a year-and-change earlier, coincidentally 52 years to the day — Sept. 8, 1966 — of the Honor Flight trip to Washington. He chose the Marines, he says, after seeing a photo in the Cleveland Plain-Dealer of a lance corporal bran-

dishing his weapon.

Plus, he deadpans, "I was used to taking orders. I was taught by nuns. But those DIs (Marine drill instructors) scared you to death."

Those memories and those feelings live on, as no one who served in the Corps is an ex-Marine. On this particular Honor Flight, one of Bill's goals was to visit The Wall and find the names of three comrades — his fellow machine-gunners and Chaplain Robert Brett. This he accomplished through the raindrops.

On the way home, Bill talked about his family — he and his wife each have daughters from earlier marriages — and how he and Judy had a grandchild back in March. And then Bill Crawford, "The Most Happy Fella," turned philosophical.

We all wanted in (back in the '60s), to follow patriotism," he says. "Pearl Harbor, if you remember, was only 25 years out. That's just what you did."

THE SHERIDAN PRESS

DESPITE HALF CENTURY SINCE VIETNAM WAR, VETERANS REMAIN CONNECTED

By Doug Sanders|Aug. 24, 2018

SHERIDAN — John Marschall yearned for a cigarette.

The young Vietnam War soldier from Texas had been fighting for several hours in the Battle of Khe Sanh and needed a quick break.



"I crawled over to a big tree, put my back up against it and lit the cigarette," Marschall said. "There was smoke rolling out behind the tree and two guys crawled over, 'Man, give me a drag!' I could hear the bullets hitting the tree, (but) I'm going to get this cigarette."

Small luxuries were hard to come by in Vietnam for Marschall and the rest of his platoon in the 1st Air Cavalry Division, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, which faced the constant possibility of death at all turns.

Most of the platoon members survived the brutal conflicts at Khe Sanh and the fighting during the Tet Offensive, and in honor of their 50th anniversary of returning home from the war, seven veterans gathered in Sheridan for a week. They came from all over the country — Texas, Florida, California, Iowa and Illinois — to talk, laugh, argue and cry.

Local resident Richard Legocki hosted the gathering, which also included five veterans receiving Quilts of Valor Tuesday evening. Legocki put on a similar reunion in 1988 that brought 10 platoon members together.

"It's been quite a ride," Legocki said. "You're probably closer to these guys than anything. It's a brotherhood."

Most of the veterans spent two years enlisted in the army after being drafted — all when they were between the ages of 18 and 21 — and one year fighting in Vietnam for different portions of 1967 and '68.

They were part of about 10 percent of Vietnam veterans who saw armed conflict at the front lines of battle.

"That's the difference, as far as I'm concerned, between soldiers," Legocki said. "I don't think they're all created equal ... To me, it was different."

Marschall said no preparation was adequate for the environment in Southeast Asia.

"All the training in the world could not prepare you for what you actually get into," Marschall said. "I

was prepared to do my job, but I was not prepared for the emotion that came with the job."
Buck Jones agreed.

"When I stepped off that airplane, it was like walking into a brick wall," Jones said. "Basically everything is dangerous. If it wasn't the other guys trying to shoot you, you had leeches, dangerous snakes and unfortunately sometimes South Vietnamese artillery."

Jones, who joined the platoon a few months after most of the other guys, was injured from shrapnel in his shoulder, leg and head but did not have any drastic physical wounds.

"I'm one of the lucky ones," Jones said. "I came home pretty much in one piece."

One piece, physically, at least. Upon returning, Jones didn't talk about his experience for 30 years. Like many veterans, he tried to forget the atrocities he had seen.

"Most guys that made the 12 months came home and hid somewhere and didn't talk about it," Jones said. "It was a bad time for the country."

Greg Molesworth also recounted the poor reception he and many other veterans received upon coming home.

"It was not the World War II homecoming I had imagined," Molesworth said.

Jones has gone to therapy for the last six years and said he's doing better, but it still isn't easy. He said Veteran's Day and Memorial Day are especially tough because he thinks about his comrades who didn't come back.

"We suffered a lot, faced a lot of casualties," Jones said. "As they say in war, good men will die. (But) good men will survive (too), and they're here.

Legocki said the intense stresses of war made him almost immune to death after a few months.

"You just filed it away forever, until you get somewhere and start thinking about it," Legocki said. "The longer you had been there, you didn't really want to know anything about the (new soldiers). You didn't want to get attached, I guess ... When they got killed, it was like, 'Eh, big deal.'"

Barry Plesser often walked in the front of the group as the point man on missions and wanted to keep everyone else safe.

"You weren't afraid for yourself," Plesser said. "You were afraid you'd miss something and get the guys hurt behind you."

The veterans said when they fought they weren't thinking of their country but were doing their best to keep each other alive.

"You weren't there for the United States of America," Plesser said. "We were there for each other ... When you're 21 years old and you got a bunch of guys looking at you who say, 'Sarge, we want to go home,' then we're going home. By the grace of God here we are today."
Legocki concurred.

"It wasn't like in the movies and, 'Oh gee, we're fighting for the flag and the United States,'" Legocki said. "It was, 'We're trying to keep everybody here alive and go home.'"

Marschall was injured in the hip and upper thigh areas by a mortar round. As his one year of service approached, Marschall wanted to go home but didn't want to leave the guys in his platoon.

"It would kind of leave a little hole in your heart, because of the friendship," Marschall said.

Spero Argyris was one of the platoon's medics.

"Whatever he says he did, times 10," Marschall said of Argyris.

Argyris was with the platoon for about six months before being wounded in August 1968, and said he was blessed to fight alongside an excellent group of men.

Steve Harris was a self-proclaimed tunnel rat, burrowing into holes and looking for weapons or opposing guerilla soldiers.

Along with Harris, Molesworth was one of two veterans who came to Sheridan this year and in 1988. Molesworth was the platoon lieutenant and called it the most rewarding job of his life to bring his men back alive.

"(Their) wives and children on more than one occasion have thanked me, and I can't be any more proud than that," Molesworth said.

Plesser hosted a reunion last year at The Villages, near Orlando, Florida, where Molesworth was married and 11 veterans served as best men.

"There was a lot of crying and a lot of beer," Plesser said. "You never really left the guys."

Marschall, though, hadn't seen some of his fellow veterans in 50 years but said they picked up conversations right away.

"You hold emotions in for so long and then, around these guys, you're not trying to hide anything," Marschall. "They all got the same s**t you got."

Future reunion plans aren't set in stone, but the veterans hope gather again soon to relish past memories and cherish the present camaraderie.

I GET MAIL

WHAT IS A WARRIOR

The final step in the long road home for the veteran is completing this initiation as a warrior. A veteran does not become a warrior merely for having gone to war. A veteran becomes a warrior when he learns to carry his war skills and his vision in mature ways. He becomes a warrior when he has been set right with life again. A warrior's first priority is to protect life rather than destroy it. He serves his nation in peace as well as war making and dissuades his people from suffering the scourges of war unless absolutely necessary. He uses the fearlessness he has developed to help keep sanity, generosity, and order alive in his culture.

A warrior disciplines the violence within himself. Internally and externally, he stares violence in the face and makes it back down. A warrior serves spiritual and moral principles, which he places higher than himself. The role of a warrior has a high, noble, and honorable status. From chapter 15, Initiation as a Warrior, of War and the Soul, by Edward
Tick, Ph.D.

COMBAT VETERANS MAY HAVE THE ANTIDOTE TO WHAT AILS US

Excerpt from Huffington Post article By Peter Yeomans

We "overlook the depth of character and clarity of values that can emerge from life altering experiences. Veterans of war have much to offer us. Psychologist Ed Tick writes, 'civilization needs the sensitivity and valuing of life that only one who knows its fragility can develop.' Soldiers and Marines return with insights that can guide us and deepen the meaning in our own lives. We must seek to understand what they know. If we can stop long enough to listen closely and without judgment to what they may only have the nerve to whisper, we might heal some of the wounds and dysfunction of our own society."

HANK (SKI) KARKOSZKA
CBMU-301SEABEES



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

GOD'S LOVE AND HOW HE SAVED US AT THE SIEGE BY KHE SANH VETERANS CHAPLAIN RON RAYNER

Jesus said in John 15:12-13 (NLT) "I command you to love to each other in the same way that I love you. And here is how to measure it---the greatest love is shown when people lay down their lives for their friends."

Many memorial services start with quotes from the 15th chapter of John. The Khe Sanh Veteran's founder, Reverend Ray W. Stubbe had advised me that showing God's love could be defined as, **"Serving others with no expectation of compensation."**

At this year's reunion memorial service, I used a quote found in KSV Larkin Spivey's book *Stories of Faith and Courage from the Vietnam War* on page 32.

St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)
"Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet but yours.
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good, Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world." I add this last line **"Yours is the smile that brightens the world around you."**

The people who come to the KSV reunions reflect the above quote. In my review of the Cleveland reunion last year I quoted Patricia Scudder, wife of Lloyd "Short Round" Scudder who had said in 1995, "Two days here at this Khe Sanh Veteran's reunion had helped Lloyd more than twenty years of VA therapy." The positive attitudes and smiles that had helped "Short Round" were in abundance at the 2018 reunion.

I also talked at this year's memorial service about PFC Johnathan Nathaniel Spicer whose story can be found on the Virtual Wall. Jonathan, a conscious objector who ended up at Khe Sanh, would not kill anyone or carry a rifle but risked his life carrying causalities to the medivac planes and helicopters. He lost his life helping others and earned a Navy Cross. I also mentioned Lt. Colonel Ken Pipes and his wife Sharon who together contributed more than 30,000 hours to community service beyond Ken's Marine service. Ken, who had been awarded a Silver Star for actions at Khe Sanh once said, "Its never been about the awards or the recognition. Its always been about wanting to serve."

I am thankful Rev. Ray Stubbe represented God at the "Siege" and the years since. The Khe Sanh Veteran's, Inc. which he founded, provides the Khe Sanh Vets with a wonderful yearly get together that is so positive that four widows of Khe Sanh Vets attended this year to be with friends from past reunions. A fifth widow sent a bottle of whiskey saying her husband was with us in "spirit".

I sum up the Washington DC reunion by saying the reunion committee did a tremendous job in providing a great time for those who attended.

The Khe Sanh Veterans have been blessed by having many excellent authors among our members. I spent most of the siege on the north side of the east end of the runway in a reaction force that had replaced ARVN Rangers. I rarely saw and mostly just heard the noise when something was happening. I have only learned about the big picture at Khe Sanh by reading books by Ray Stubbe, Michael Archer, Robert (Doc) Topmiller and Larkin Spivey.

One of our Khe Sanh authors, Michael Archer had his new book, *The Gunpowder Prince*, in the KSV PX. Captain Mirza Munir Baig, who the book is about, was crucial in defeating the NVA during the siege. I could not put the book down. I believe it was a miracle of God that such a talented Pakistani immigrant joined the Marine Corps as a private and helped to defeat the NVA as a Marine Captain analyzing NVA troop movements. I was immediately reminded of Larkin Spivey's two books, *God In The Trenches* and *Miracles Of The American Revolution,* in which Spivey writes of the miracles that won the American Revolution and other conflicts in United States history.

It is my advice to read all four of these authors and learn just how much we needed God's help in at the siege. Michael Archer gave Chaplain Ray Stubbe

credit for the tremendous amount of research he has provided in establishing a credible history of the battles around Khe Sanh.

The Reverend Ray recently sent me a letter reflecting his thoughts on turning eighty. This quote which was in the letter and is attributed to both Socrates and Abraham Lincoln, pretty much sums up my thoughts: "It's not the years in our life, but the life in our years." Enjoy each day that the Lord has given us.

Numbers 6:24-26 (NLT): "May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace."

KHE SANH MEMBER GUEST SPEAKER AT MARINE CORPS GRADUATION CEREMONY 18020

BY JAMES M. "OLLIE" COLLINS,USMC KHE SANH VETERAN A CO 1/26



"Remarks"

U.S. Naval Station, "Marine Corps Detachment" Newport, Rhode Island

ALTIS - Aviation Logistics Tactical Information Systems "Specialist Course", Graduation Ceremony for Class **18020**

Good Morning;

Colonel, Seigh, Commanding Officer
Major; Bueno; Executive Officer
1stSgt; Biato; Detachment First Sergeant
MSG; Shawn Lee: Academy, SNCOIC
GYSGT; Kean Jr; Academy Class 18020 NCOIC
Sgt; Rosario; Assistant Class NCOIC
Academy Instructors
Chaplin; Hodges, Naval Base Chaplin, Newport R.I.

Distinguished guests, and most importantly the family and friends who have also sacrificed and forfeited their own time to encourage, inspire and support the graduates during their time at the academy.



First, I would like to personally address the graduates!

It is my honor and privilege to congratulate each...

graduate on their completion of the 2018 ALTIS Specialist Course, Class 18020. I would like to remind the graduates that this is just another stage of your military educational requirements, and I might add, has been successfully achieved. Although! as you look to the future, as you evolve I urge you to continue pursuing your military opportunities... ultimately... this will produce... limitless dividends down the road. "YOU SHOULD BE VERY PROUD OF YOURSELVES."

"A JOB WELL DONE"! CONGRATULATIONS AGAIN, MARINES!!

I was invited here today and asked to share in some experiences "both personal and militarily," that date back over 5 decades.

I live it "literally" every single day! I'll try not to bore you! I'll attempt to take you on a very short journey... this fine morning, sharing awareness of things that were factual and contrary to certain beliefs about my Vietnam War experience and the War itself, in addition to several other significant events.



But before I do that ...I would offer some personal insight about myself. My adolescent years! I was extremely out of control... I was a very unhappy little tyke, with virtually no path to success. Family life was non, existent, lacking mentorship, guidance and much more. The path to delinquency was easier for me, rather than a successful and happier life to pursue. My yearning and desire for education while attending a Jr High school was nothing more than unpleasant and just consuming my time, while living a life of hopelessness and deprivation. "Trouble was my middle name."

Then came the incident at school.....I was involved "fist fighting" in the corridor of the school during classes.. again! My parents were notified. I was expelled from school. My mother by this time, certainly had enough of me. The very next day.... a Truant Officer, (Mr. Noone), a fair, respected, admired individual and well known in the neighborhood, was at our door, leaving a document, stating that a parent and I were to appear before a Juvenile Judge Magistrate to answer for my repeated disruptions during school hours. Either way, Mr. Noone, probably saved my life one way or the other. I remember Mr., Noone, and his stern warnings to me, from time to time "If I didn't shape up, trouble would eventually follow." I now, was certainly "front and center" of his caution with little or no options left."

To complement a twist to this story, in 1976, I would graduate from the Worcester Police Academy "Shoulder to Shoulder" alongside Mr., Noone's son, Paul Noone, as we received our Graduation Diploma and Official Police Badge together with forty nine other "Recruit Police Officers."

Who, possibly could have imagined that. Unbelievable scenario, to say the least!!!!

At the scheduled closed-door meeting with a probation officer I was given two alternatives;

1. Enlist in the military service or.....
2. If another incident like this is repeated, it could lead to a reform school placement decision.

I thought to myself, I was 16 years old, I cannot enlist in any branch of military service?
My mother and I walked out into a waiting room area and was approached by two Marine Recruiters.

To this day, I believe that they were there, intentionally or on purpose! Long story short after having conversation with the Marine recruiters, we were informed that, even though 16 years old, I could take advantage of a new enlistment program called 90-day delayed entry. In a "nut shell" If I passed the entrance exam requirements, then, 90 days before my seventeenth birthday I could sign a contract, to enlist in the United States Marine Corps, and leave for Paris Island, South Carolina on my 17th birthday. I said to myself, enlist for 4 years active duty and I would be discharged 3 months earlier....

What did I know...sounded good...and it sounded even better to my mother. My parents signed the enlistment contract. I took the test, passed and enlisted in the US Marine Corps on April 22, 1965. What a wakeup call!!Paris Island literally changed my life forever. I was a different person after graduation. I felt an overwhelming accomplishment and achievement even in the face of all that adversity, misfortune and years of hardship by way of my youth. I now had the ability to shape my life... and be who I desired to be!! And pursue my education with purpose, determination and excitement.

After graduating from Paris Island, Boot Camp and successfully completing the Advanced Infantry Training Regiment, ITR training program at Camp Geiger, a satellite facility of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, I received my official military assignment orders. I was to be transferred to the 1st Battalion 8th Marines. While a member of 1/8, I made a 6-month Mediterranean Cruise, traveling all over Europe and visiting many "ports-of-call." What an eye opener! There was truly a wonderful world out there.

In 1966, the Vietnam war was escalating. I received orders for Vietnam in September of 1966. I would be deployed and transferred to Alpha Company 1st Battalion 26th Marine Regiment, vicinity Hill 55, Danang to include Death Valley and Liberty bridge, the TAOR "Tactical area of Responsibility".

The 26th Marine Regiment had a three-fold mission, of occupying and defending key terrain, seeking out and destroying the enemy (the Viet Cong) while attempting to engage in an intensive pacification program.

Hill 55, Danang, in 1965 & 1966 was identified as a TAOR with the most densely mined Hill, in I Corps. No other hill or area that would be cleared for a combat base; came anywhere close, regarding encountering the number of emplaced mines, when clearing, as was the case at Hill 55. The enemy, over-mined Hill 55, trying to keep the Marines away for as long as possible from this most strategic elevation. The enemy fully understood that Hill 55 was most instrumental to the Marines in hindering a major communist attack against the vital Da Nang, Airstrip.

Well hidden, yet undetected, emplaced mines from 1965, would detonate, maim, kill and/or be found periodically at Hill 55. Already completing 6 months of my units occupation and many wounded and KIA's from booby traps and other explosive mines, then word came down from the chain of command to get ready to move out in a few hours. Prior to moving to another location, Viet Cong infiltrators were probing the perimeter of Hill 55 when a Marine tripped a booby trap and all hell broke loose. Two Marines from the platoon were wounded to include myself.

May, 1967;

(Our company) A/1/26 was extracted by helicopter and inserted in a place called "Phu Bai" on another operation. After defending Phu Bai's perimeter for several days, the unit suddenly received a message to saddle-up! Destination, a place called Khe Sanh, Demilitarized Zone, I Corps "Tactical Area of Responsibility" a place, none of us ever heard of. The following account is cited by my Platoon Commander, Lt., John M. Kaheny, 3rd Platoon Commander A/1/26. I was the "Platoon Guide" at the time.

Lt Kaheny: When we arrived on C-130's at the KSCB "Khe Sanh Combat Base" it was a very eerie experience and terrifying experience. As the ramp of the aircraft came down we looked out onto the airstrip winding down this long dirt road towards the mountains was all the walking wounded from the hill fights. There were probably five to six hundred Marines standing in line, all bandaged up one way or the other, covered with blood and mud.
I had to take my platoon off the airplane and march them down this long road to an assembly point,

Hardly anyone was saying a word. It was terrifying. We set out to defend 881 South against a possible counterattack and that's when we found all the Broken M16 rifles that hadn't worked, scores of helmets with the crown of the helmet shot out with AK -47 rounds, and literally scores of dead NVA bodies. It was a real graveyard.

We had been fighting
the Viet Cong along the coastline. And we hadn't seen anything like that at all. It was a gorgeous place, beautiful at a distance when we went on patrol from day to day we would just continue to find more and more dead NVA bodies. And of course, the stench was ungodly. It was also difficult for the young Marines because when we found those broken M16 rifles, it kind of gave us a hint that the new M16,s that we'd gotten weren't working all that well. And we found that to be true a couple of weeks later when my platoon and then all of bravo company got into it with the NVA west of 881 South. When my platoon got hit about 20% of our rifles jammed after the first shot. Some of them were cleared some of them were totally useless. We were very lucky.

When bravo company went out about two weeks later, they got caught in a churning movement and got badly chewed up. About 10 percent of their M16's went down. They replaced the M16's eventually with other models and that situation eventually resolved itself.

We then were assigned our defensive positions. Marines from A/1/26 began daily Long Range (rotating) combat patrols around the Hills and "Khe Sanh Combat Base" with periodic contact with North Vietnamese forces and NVA snipers.

21 May 1967:

Lt Kaheny, 3rd Plt Leader, led his 43-man patrol from A-3 into a Valley just west of Hill 881-South to examine a heavy trail reported by an AO "Air Observer." The patrol moved into grid coordinates XD 756 454 and was suddenly attacked by a large volume of fire from four different locations. Two young Marines, each 18 years old, PFC Thomas Hendershott and L/Cpl Roger Hurd, stood up stood fast, and fired into a charging NVA force, taking the full force and dying so the rest of the patrol could escape and live.

Epitaph; by Lt John Kaheny; "A Marine Remembers On Memorial Day" Suddenly, the Cat of death leaps from a tree line on the exposed flank of the platoon. Two young rifleman, each but 18 years old, shun available cover, stand up, stand fast and fire into the charging horde. Taking the full force of the enemy's assault, they purchase with their blood a precious gift of reaction time for their fellow Marines and Corpsman. Helmets fade slowly away into chest high grass and soon disappear from view.

Eventually forty-one make it back to safety, some bleeding, none broken, but the two go on home, to rest forever beneath marble crosses. Their names, Private First Class Thomas Edward Hendershott and Lance Corporal Roger Michael Hurd, are now etched in stone on that wall beneath Lincoln's watchful eye. The years have passed but every day I see their sacrifice reflected in the smiling faces on my children. For had not those two brave Marines, held their ground with everything they had, Coleen, Meghan and John Peter simply would not be, because one of those they saved that day was me!

Over a month later:

27 June 1967; Just past midnight, @ 0035, Khe Sanh Combat Base received more than 50 rounds of 82mm mortars, killing 4 and wounding 76, and killing one Vietnamese ARVN Liaison Officer. The mortars were walked up and down the tent areas of A Battery, 1/13, killing 2 and wounding 30, including the Fire Direction Officer and CO of the battery. Capt., Brennan.

At 0525, the base was again hit, with approximately 50 rounds of 122mm rockets. Newly-arrived Marines of 3/26, sleeping in tents, were hit, especially the 3/26 Battalion Aide Station. a USAF AO spotted mortar positions near hill 689 just west of the Khe Sanh air strip, at day break, and a patrol from CAC "O" was dispatched to investigate. The patrol became pinned down in an ambush and took 3 friendlies killed, in the initial burst. An artillery mission enabled the patrol to withdraw, causing one wounded Marine who shortly thereafter died. 2 Marines returned to the hill. Searching for the wounded and friendly dead. 2 Marines had been left on the hill,

one returned, the other was missing.

Cpt Bynum, CO of I/3/26, was shot by an NVA sniper as he neared the top of 689, wounds which eventually prove fatal. Soon there after hill 689 was seized by the Marines and the 2 CAC O KIA were recovered.

2/Lt., Larry Bolger was killed when Capt., Norm Centers, Company Commander, put the Alpha Company 1/26 behind the artillery battery and laid them out in the grass without digging in, and those Marines got butchered by that mortar attack.

I stand before you today as a survivor of these multiple catastrophic events. But only by the grace of God almighty, I Sgt "Collins" was spared from the bees' nest of rockets, shrapnel and bullets. But still haunted by the screams of those wounded and the smell of lingering sulfur from the many detonated mortar and rocket rounds that poured down on us.

Just prior to the NVA rocket attack both Sgt Paul Kincaid and I we're having conversation about what he might do when he returned to the states. He was a "short timer" and was ordered to stay beyond his rotation date. His tour was over and was about to leave the Company when we returned from our combat mission. It was not to be. I will always remember and will never forget his heroism and sacrifice. Knowing most of these warriors...they would agree that their story and fate should be told for the sacrifice they made for freedom, democracy and a better way of life for others. To this day, I am still in contact with Sgt Kincaid's immediate family.

I now will "Memorialize" those Marines who gave the ultimate sacrifice June 27, 1967! by citing their names, here, at U.S. Naval Base, Marine Corps Detachment, Newport, Rhode Island, 14 June, 2018.

2 Lt., Dale Charles Allen I/3/26
SSGt., William Ivor Tenney Bacon-06/29/67 H&S/3/26 Died USS Sanctuary, result of wounds 6/27/67

Lt., Lawrence Joseph Bolger	**A/1/26**
PFC Frederick Brenke	**L/3/26**
LCPL Victor Burns	**A/1/26**
Capt., Franklin Bynum	**L/3/26**
LCPL Allan Damian	**A/1/26**
LCPL Jeffrey David	**I/3/26**
Cpl Anthony DI Cesare Jr	**I/3/26**
HM3 Hospitalman 3rd Class, Carl Douglas Dudley Jr	**H&S/3/26**

L/Cpl Charles Manley Gattis Jr 07/05/1967 - 1/3/26 Died Navy Hospital, Danang, result of wounds 6/27/67

LCPL Alejandro Godinez	**I/3/26**
SSGt Donald Paul Hamilton	**I/3/26**
HM3 Curtis Darrell Jackson	**H&S/3/26**
L/Cpl Freddie Lee Johnson	**I/3/26**
Sgt Paul Kincaid	**A/1/26**
LCPL Charles Lynch	**SubUnit5**
LCPL Francisco Mazariegos	**SubUnit5**
LCPL Kenneth Millard	**I/3/26**
CPL Dennis O'Connor	**SubUnit5**
PFC Paul Rodriguez Jr	**A/1/26**
L/Cpl Glenn Edward Sanders	**A/1/26**

06/29/67 Died USS Sanctuary, result of wounds 06/27/67

CPL James Shepard	**SubUnit5**
PFC Rick Stewart	**A/1/13**
CPL Edward Travis	**A/1/13**
Cpl Richard Lee Walker	**I/3/26**
CPL Stephen Wassenich	**I/3/26**
LCPL Jonathan Whitticom	**H&S/1/26**
LCPL Ira Williams	**A/1/26**
PFC Jack Williams	**L/3/26**

May these " Warriors" continue to Rest In Peace!

November/1967;

After spending 6 months at Khe Sanh, I departed Khe Sanh Combat Base on a C-130. Looking down from the rear end of the Air Craft, was chilling. First, wondering if we were going to be targeted by the NVA and shot out of the sky. My emotions took over, my eyes swelled with tears, then I began feeling guilt-ridden, distressed by the thought of leaving our brother Marines behind and knowing that the worst was yet to come.....the Siege of "Khe Sanh."

We Landed in Danang, Air Base. After several days of out-Processing, we were in the air again, destination, Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa. Up-

on arrival we were told by S-1 Administration Officer, that there were no flights going to CONUS "Continental United States" at least for a week or so. This was bad and unfortunate news. A Marine 1Sgt addressed the group and provided some advice.

Recommendation; get to the Officers Club, ask anyone there, if they could get us on a flight to the states. It happened!! Two pilots approached us....and stated "we can take you to the states, but it has to be by C-130 and buckled to the interior of the air craft for the flight duration. The 14 Marines took the offer.

Next morning 0600hrs we were loaded and in the air, destination; Santiago International Air Port. We landed at the airport in the early evening. Still on the tarmac, suddenly, one of the pilots addressed us. Hear this! We cannot disembark, we have violent Anti-Vietnam demonstrations all over the airport. Not safe. What a disappointment.

In the air again!

Destination; Adak, Alaska, Naval Air Facility/ in the Aleutians Islands. We spent several days at the Naval Facility! Back in the air! Destination, Dover Air Force base, Dover, Delaware. finally, back in the states. We were supplied transportation to the Bus station. One of the Marines grabbed a newspaper and was somewhat visibly upset. Front page, "another serviceman struck by hit & run driver." We were in our tropical uniform! That was enough said, we grabbed our "duffle bags" headed for the bathroom at the bus station .

As we took turns changing from our tropical uniforms to our civilian clothes ... all the while thinking....we were going to be targeted, because we represented the military service. We threw the sea bags in the belly of the bus and we were on our way home. Although, staying vigilant and cautious. We felt that we were outcasts ..frightening was a light term!

Sadly, there were no "ticker tape or confetti" parades or welcome home acknowledgments for the returning "Vietnam Veterans." We were cast as baby killers, war mongers , spit upon, eggs and garbage thrown on them and simply rebuked. At the very least, returning servicemen if not vilified, were certainly not well received.

Most tried to slip quietly into a normal pattern and tried to hide the fact they served in Vietnam, to avoid the anger and disdain of many. I believe to this day that those who demonstrated against the Vietnam War....are still out there! I often wonder? have they ever changed there "intellectual mindset"??

In closing; undeniably, without question, influencing the entire Marine Corps concept, is a thing called "Values" We, perpetuate them.. we protect them and we promote them. I urge and encourage you.... to continue promoting your Marine Corps "Values" for "It matters not how a Marine Dies"!

But it does matter, how they Live" All the things we call values prepare us as Marines for the very choices that will ultimately define our character. What a Marine is, is more important then what a Marine has....and our bottom line...our true worth is what we are! Thank You for this honor... to have had the opportunity to share some of my most guarded personal chronicles and accounts of 51 years past... which I have never done in a venue such as this. God Bless America!!!!! & the United States Marine Corps!
"Semper Fidelis"

"The above remarks are cited by means of sincere and honest interpretations from my thoughts, experience, which are the best of my personal recollections."

LOCAL MAN TO BE INDUCTED INTO OKLAHOMA MILITARY HALL OF FAME

By Kenton Brooks /
kcbrooks@muskogeephoenix.com
Nov 2, 2018

Mark Downing knows exactly what he's going to be doing Saturday at the 19th annual Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame induction ceremony in Norman.
"I'll probably be crying," he said, trying to hold back tears. "I'm so happy for him. He died so I wouldn't have to go, because I'm the only surviving son. I tried to enlist, but they wouldn't let me. I want Kelly to get everything he deserves."



Mark Downing shows two of his brother's medals he received in the Marine Corps. The Purple Heart is on the left, and the Silver Star is on the right.

Downing's older brother William Kelly Downing will be one of the 10 inductees in the 2018 class to be recognized. Kelly, the older Downing by four years, was a corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps. He was killed in a battle on a hill near Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, on May 3, 1967.

Kelly Downing was one of two fighters to receive the Silver Star from that battle. He later received the Purple Heart. His brother Mark proudly displays those and other medals his brother received in a memorial in a room at his home.

Mark's wife Johnna tells the story about her brother -in-law because she knows how it affects her husband.

"They were about to be taken over, and a bunch of them were wounded," she said. "They brought in a helicopter and Kelly told them to take all of the wounded first. When they came back to get him, he was dead. He had six Vietnamese dead around him before they killed him."

Mark has never forgotten that day when he and his family got the word his brother had been killed.

"I was a junior in high school, and these two Marines drove up in a car," he said. "I didn't know what was going on. The Marines told my mom it was a bad deal. It was two weeks before they brought him home."
Mark also doesn't hesitate to say that his brother was his hero.

"I would shag fly balls for him at almost all of his games," he said. "He played baseball constantly. If it was raining, he would be out in the rain. Kelly was an awesome catcher, and I would go watch him



play and there would be scouts all around him. He would carry baseballs in his pocket."

There are 188 inductees in the Hall of Fame, located in Edmond. Downing isn't the only area soldier who is in the Hall of Fame. The others include Pfc. John N. Reese Jr. of Muskogee and Lt. Col. Orville Munson of Tahlequah of the US Army.

The Okay High School baseball field and a portion of Oklahoma 251A that goes through the town are named for Downing.

"I just want people to know that he was a very good guy," Mark said.

VALOR IN COMBAT
BY KELLY BLACK
BITTERSWEET

ROBERT MOXLEY, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN
DELTA CO 1/9

The Bronze Star, the Navy Commendation, two Purple Hearts: the medals are bittersweet to Bob Moxley. In six months of intensive fighting in the jungles of Vietnam, Moxley earned numerous medals for valor in combat. "I look at all those medals and all I see is death and pain," said Moxley. Christmas morning 1968 eighteen year old Moxley landed near the demilitarized zone in Vietnam. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion 9th Marines, nicknamed, "The Walking Dead."

A man leaving said to him, "You're a dead man. Nobody makes it out of there."

The Walking Dead had a 72 percent casualty rate. "I was just a kid," said Moxley.

A recent graduate of Tigard High School in Portland, Ore. Moxley had planned to enroll in Oregon State University's forestry program. Instead he was conscripted for boot camp in San Diego and after just eight weeks of training sent to Da Nang, Vietnam.

"They called us shake and bake, because they had to have warm bodies in Vietnam," said Moxley.

Moxley was sent up into the highlands to fight the North Vietnamese Army where the triple canopy was so thick the squad had to hack through it with machetes. In the heat and humidity Moxley treked mountainsides with over 100 pounds on his back: six canteens of water, a M-16 rifle, 20 magazines, 200 extra rounds of ammunition, 100 rounds of ammunition for the machine gun, one mortar round, C-4 explosives for the engineers, a Claymore mine, a LAWS rocket, six hand grenades, a five day supply of sea rations in cans, a flak jacket with fiberglass panels for body armor, a body bag that served as a poncho and a heavy helmet.

He was shot for the first time two days after his 19th birthday.

In February 1969, Operation Dewey Canyon in A Shau Valley on the Lao Ocean border saw thousands of NVA troops heavily fortified with tanks, mortar teams and artillery rockets. Helicopters were coming in with five guys hanging from a rope. The squad leader said to Moxley, "Those are dead bodies coming in from A Shau Valley and we're going there tomorrow."

On February 26, 1969 the fighting started at 9:00 a.m. A machine gun bunker part way up the hill had the whole platoon pinned down. Lieutenant Simms said to Moxley, "Take your team and take the hill." To avoid being easy targets for enemy machine guns, the men would stagger running. When the squad leader called a man's name; he would get up, run forward and drop down.

Lieutenant Simms and two others were killed right off. A rocket-propelled grenade came at Moxley who dove in a log deck. A bullet round blew out his eardrum and another caught him in the head and blew him backwards. Dazed Moxley tried to wipe the sweat from his eyes and got blood. His helmet had a gapping hole.

"I've been shot in the head," Moxley realized.

Moxley thought he was dying and decided to charge the NVA machine gun bunker with his M-16.

The NVA also thought Moxley was dead. He caught them by surprise, rushed the hill and before they could reposition the machine gun at him, threw a grenade into the bunker. The bunker was part way up Hill 1044.

Hill 1044 is known as one of the largest supply depots of weapons and ammunitions captured during the war.

"I was the first one on it," said Moxley. He got to the other side of the bunker and lay down, bleeding profusely.

Moxley was awarded a Bronze Star with combat V for taking out the NVA machine gun bunker and saving numerous American lives. His commander told him, "We counted 34 dead and you got most of them."

Later while Moxley was waiting for a medevac chopper, Captain Riley asked the group of wounded if anyone could fight one more night. Numbers were very low due to casualties. Moxley knew the NVA would try to take back the hill. Concerned that his comrades would be overrun, he volunteered to stay. Riley put his arm around Moxley and said, "Damn, you are one hell of a marine. I love you."

Moxley was good at making decisions during combat. He was quickly put in charge of first a team of three and then a squad of 15 men.

"I accepted I would never make it home," said Moxley. "I would take a bullet for any of them. They knew that."

Moxley remembers being out in the jungle with no food, no supplies and no bullets. They would dig roots from the ground to eat and squeeze water from banana tree bark. At night bugs veraciously attacked but they could not slap them for fear of alerting the nearby NVA.

In April, Moxley was sent back to Hill 1044 for Operation Apache Snow. On May 6, 1969 Moxley lost a very good friend and displayed valor in combat that earned him the Navy Commendation.

Under heavy fire, Moxley's good friend Bill Prose had thrown his helmet over a grenade lobbed into his foxhole. When the grenade detonated it blew Prose's face, shoulder and leg off. Another man, Private Turner, lost his foot. Their team leader froze.

Moxley heard his friend screaming for help, as did the enemy. Moxley tried to get to the foxhole. Flares lit up the night sky, Moxley saw three NVA soldiers staring down at him. He dove and rolled; one of their bullets took three of his fingernails off. At the foxhole Moxley started shooting enemy fighters up in the trees. He got tourniquets on the legs of Turner and Prose. He carried Prose to the medic only to be told, "You brought me a dead man."

Later Captain Riley told Moxley he would recommend him for a medal for his courage under fire and credit him with 17 confirmed kills. Moxley did not care. He was tired of war. The enemy was close by but he took off his helmet and flak jacket, and sat on a log where Prose died.

He told Lieutenant Gene Smith, "I'm tired of war. I don't want to kill anybody else. I don't want to see my buddy's die anymore."

Years later Moxley finally accepted the Navy Commendation with valor in combat for taking control of the foxhole and rescuing Prose and Turner.

In fact, Moxley refused the medals for many years before allowing his sons Robert and Jason, then 14 and 12 years old, to pin them on him at the Marine Corp base in Portland, Ore. in 1988. 200 marines stood at attention.

"There is no glory in war," said Moxley. "Nobody wins in a war. Everybody loses tremendously."

Moxley feels angry that as an eighteen year old his country would not allow him to drink a beer or vote but deemed him mature enough to fight a war and kill people. Most troubling to Moxley are his memories of the wounded NVA soldiers reaching out for help.

"They were just like us," said Moxley. "They just wanted to go home as bad as we did."

Moxley had to shoot them in the head. If they were left alive they might get a weapon and sneak up behind.

"I can still feel their hands grabbing hold of me to help them," said Moxley. It gives him nightmares. "I portray myself as a tough marine," said Moxley, "but I tell you I have a heart as big as the world and it hurts knowing what I did over there."

Moxley does not understand why smart, educated people choose war.

"There has got to be a better way to do it instead of bloodshed," said Moxley.

Moxley lost his whole squad on June 12, 1969 during Operation Utah Mesa at Khe Sanh, one year after the big siege. At 9:00 p.m. Moxley and seven of his men were out of ammunition and on patrol. Hundreds of the NVA were close by.

The enemy was setting booby traps—an artillery round in the fork of a tree detonated with a trip wire. When the squad tripped the wire two men, including his best friend David Palmeri, were killed instantly. It was an ambush. The enemy started shooting at them and throwing grenades. Moxley's left leg was badly hit and he was shot in the right arm and shoulder. He used one bootlace to tourniquet his arm and the other his leg. His men were either dead or severely wounded.

"I can still hear my men crying for help," said Moxley.

The enemy swarmed over them. Moxley was bayoneted and shot several times in the groin. He thought to himself, "Hell Mox, the war is over. They got me."

Finally the rest of the platoon pushed off the ambush. The first helicopter took out the wounded. The second, called the dead chopper, took the dead out in body bags.

Moxley remembers the corpsman looked at him and said, "He's dead."

Lieutenant Smith said, "Bag him and tag him." He was crying. In a body bag on the dead chopper, the gunner who protects the helicopter must have sat on Moxley who squealed. The gunner ripped the body bag open and screamed to the pilot, "We got a warm one."

Moxley spent over one year in the hospital system getting put back together. He had malaria and dysentery. He nearly lost both his arm and leg. He left leg is partially paralyzed and parts of his knee are artificial.

From six months of intensive action Moxley would earn numerous medals including the Bronze Star, the Navy Commendation and two purple hearts.Moxley returned to a political climate in America where veterans were stereotyped as warmongers and killers. He felt the scorn. He would tell people his leg injury was from a car accident.

In 1999 Moxley traveled to Vietnam for one month with Colonel Bulldog Smith and two other Special Forces veterans. They took 5,000 pounds of medical supplies to distribute to clinics in small villages where there had been battles during the war in the northern part of South Vietnam.

"I thought there would be so much animosity," said Moxley.

Instead Moxley met a beautiful and proud people who night after night insisted on buying him dinner and beer.

"I was dumbfounded," said Moxley.

Moxley had dinner at the home of a Colonel from the North Vietnamese army who fought in a battle against Moxley. The Colonel spoke pretty good English and asked Moxley, "Why? Why did we have to kill each other?"

"I have no answers," said Moxley.

He got down on his knees and kissed Moxley's hands.

"There is not an hour that goes by that I don't think about that war and the friends I lost," said Moxley. Moxley wants his gravestone to read: The war is finally over.

OBIT

JOSEPH "HANK" MELANSON, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN F& E CO 2/26



Sadly my brother Hank Passed away this past Saturday morning in Spokane Washington. A great Brother and Friend who I will miss very much. I will miss our long talks about life and the universe, I will miss being able to call him and tell him that I love him and hoped he could visit soon. I will miss exchanging jokes in emails and mostly I will miss being able to just call him anytime to just talk. He is a Marine and a Vietnam Vet, he worked hard his whole life and was always helping with things like Toys for Tots, going down to south America to help build schools in third world countries, he was a Mason and a Shriner and a dedicated Father and to his mate Kirsten for over 18 years. After he left the military, he worked for a local company named Raytheon for many years maintaining aircraft and then went on into the management aspects of aircraft maintenance operations. A guy from Fitchburg who would run ultra marathons (100) miles and make it, his goal was not to be in first place, but just to be able to finish it. So all I guess I can say now is until we meet again. Love you always Hank Melanson a great brother and a great friend...



OBIT

ROBERT H. ROGERS, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN HQ BTRY 1/13

Robert H. Rogers of East Marion died July 22 in New York. He was 71.

The son of Henry and Kathryn Kane Rogers, he was born Nov. 23, 1945, in New York.

He earned a master's degree and served in the U.S. Marine Corps, was a Vietnam Veteran and a member of the American Legion Post in Southold.

Family members said he loved boating and fishing,

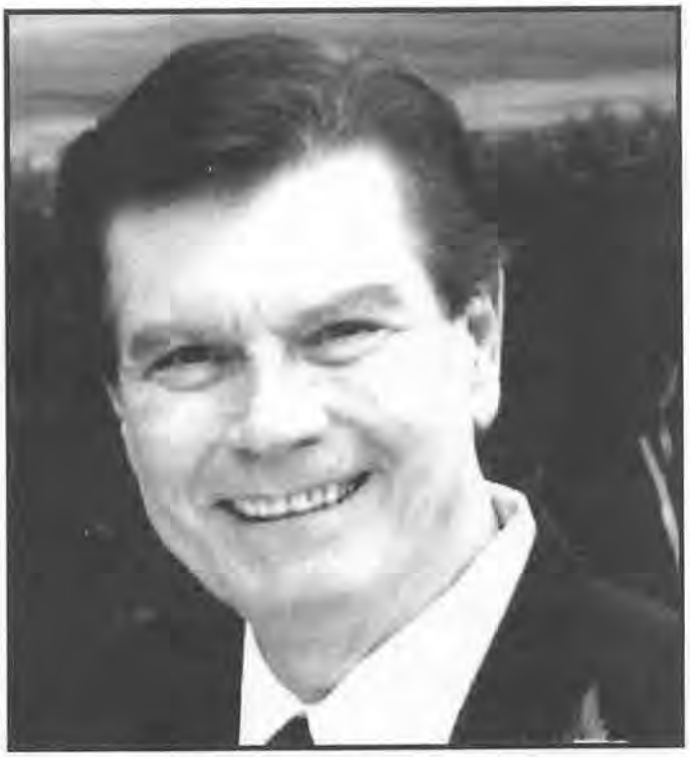

and achieved his dream of living near the water after moving with his wife, Maureen, to East Marion in 2014. He was also an avid gardener and horticulturist. In addition, he was a linguist, whose favorite phrase was "Illegitmi Non Carborundum," Latin for "Don't let the bastards grind you down."

Mr. Rogers is survived by his wife, Maureen, of East Marion; daughters Christine Rogers Saenz of Centereach and Allison Rogers Chimienti of Glen Cove; his son, Robert, of Miller Place and nine grandchildren. Interment at Calverton National Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Legion, 51655 Route 25, Southold, NY 11971.

OBIT

RICHARD F. DWORSKY, CAPTAIN, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN INDIA CO 3/26 HILL 881S

Dr. Dickie, Captain USMC from Steamboat and Anchorage, died November 5th returning from a pheasant-hunting trip taken with friends he'd known for over 55 years. Richard was born in Lebanon, Missouri, August 13, 1942 where his parents Leonard and Diana Dworsky were stationed at Ft. Leonard Wood during WWII. He attended Lincoln High School in Portland Oregon, graduated from the University of Michigan in 1965 (Forestry), playing football and developing unreserved affection for the Wolverines. He received his Master's degree in Natural Resources from Colorado State University in 1972, and his Ph.D. in Forestry from the University of Massachusetts 1986.



Over his career, Richard spent 37 years in Alaska, 15 with the Bureau of Land Management working to effectively manage and preserve the lands of the western US and Alaska. He met his wife Sally while living in Waitsfield, Vermont, directing projects for the New England River Basin Commission, and skiing at Mad River Glen. Before that, he was the Director of Forestry for the Department of Natural Resources San Juan, Puerto Rico, the Maryland Land Use Specialist for the Interstate Commission of the Potomac River, and Natural Resources Planner for the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Board in Rochester New York.

Richard was proud to have served as an officer in the United States Marine Corps, Basic School 5-67, serving in Vietnam from 1967-1970, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines as Rifle Platoon and Company Commander. He was a reserve officer from 1970 to 1977. A decorated combat hero with numerous personal citations, his actions with India Company on Hill 881S during the siege of Khe Sanh earned him the Bronze Star, the Navy Commendation Medal, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. Additional citations include the Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, the National Defense Medal, and 3 Purple Hearts. He maintained important friendships with his brothers-in-arms throughout his entire life, and recently wrote in a newspaper article, "I didn't pick the men I fought with but I have an attachment to them that cannot be described – and I have the same attachment to those who carry on today. Never have I given anyone the trust I gave these men."

Richard's entire professional and intellectual career reflected his deep respect for the natural world. Like his father and his brothers, he focused on the planning and management of water and land resources, balancing the needs of people and nature. He authored numerous professional papers, and was a member of the American Water Resources Association, as well as Rotary International in Anchorage East, the Michigan Alumni Association, Trout International and the Rocky Mountain Angling Club.

He was an excellent charismatic friend and raconteur; a skier, an avid hunter, an expert marksman,

an adventurous traveller, and an accomplished fly fisherman. Pursuing trout, bonefish and salmon worldwide with his fly rod was his passion. In Alaska, he volunteered at Alpenglow Ski Area skiing with veterans and individuals with special needs. He was a genuine scholar and a voracious reader of history of all kinds focusing on military, American, and natural history. Richard carried on his family's legacy: public service to his country, care for the world around him, steadfast affection for colleagues and friends, and an unwavering devotion to his family.

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

WILLIAM 'BILL' FULTINEER OF LEWIS COUNTY, WV, PUTS MILITARY SACRIFICES ABOVE HIS OWN

by Jonathan Weaver STAFF WRITER
Nov 13, 2018

JACKSON'S MILL — The details about his military service during the Vietnam War aren't important to William "Bill" Fultineer. He recognizes



William Fultineer shown here with his Wife Dixie and their Jack Russell Terrier

the service and sacrifice of all of his fellow Marines and soldiers.

A lance corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps, Fultineer specifically fought at the combat base in Khe Sanh.

"When the Tet Offensive happened, we were real busy," Fultineer said

The North Vietnamese People's Army and Viet Cong soldiers attacked dozens of South Vietnamese cities in January and February 1968, including Khe Sanh

"Out of my platoon, seven of us made it home," Fultineer said. He estimated the platoon was comprised of about 35 Marines, with most of the casualties coming during the Tet Offensive.

Fultineer received his first Purple Heart for wounds inflicted by hand grenades and gunfire while he was patrolling Hill 950 in July 1967. Hill 950 was located at Khe Sanh, near the North Vietnam border.



He received a second Purple Heart for rescuing a fellow Marine. Fultineer was shot by a North Vietnamese sniper during his rescue.

Fultineer's third Purple Heart was received for his actions during the Tet Offensive. During intense gunfire and mortar fire, he evacuated 30 children from Khe Sanh. He was wounded by shrapnel in the process

He received other medals and commendations but refused to specify.

"There are a lot of guys that are worse off than me. ... When our country needed us and called us, we went willingly," he said.

His medals are displayed in the Mountaineer Military Museum along Center Avenue in Weston. Fultineer knows several other veterans memorialized in the museum, and said it is no longer difficult to view their photographs.

People in that museum will never grow old. They'll always be young."

Fultineer doesn't talk about his service with his wife of 49 years, Dixie, 48-year-old son or his 43-year-old daughter.

"If they asked a question, I would answer it," Fultineer said. "I didn't decide to keep them away from it, but it was just something we didn't talk about. My fellow Purple Hearters and I will talk about it, but that's about it.

"I didn't sacrifice anything more than anybody else did there"

Dixie said she is proud of her husband's service.

"It makes me appreciate the fact that people were willing to endanger their lives to keep this country free," she said.

Fultineer, who turned 72, will occasionally talk with youth about his service, but doesn't talk in detail.

After graduating from Weston High School in 1964, Fultineer went to Glenville State College before enlisting in the Marine Corps in 1966. Along with being a football and baseball athlete, he finished his English and physical education degree in January 1971 after his service.

"The Marine Corps had a 13-month hitch that we had to serve in Vietnam. I came back home after that 13 months and I was back on duty for about two months before letting me out early to go back to college. I came home with nothing but the clothes on my back," Fultineer said. "Glenville State College had a lot of veterans there at that time. I knew them all."

Bill and Dixie met while both enrolled at Glenville State. She graduated in 1969, and they were married that July.

He taught language arts for five years, three years at Weston Junior High (which was formerly located in the spot of the current CVS Pharmacy on High Street) and two at Harrisville High School in Ritchie County before becoming a self-employed insurance agent in Martinsville.

Fultineer retired in 1997 after 20 years. He became a member of VFW Post 1976 a dozen years ago.

MUSICK HAULED AMMO DURING SERVICE IN VIETNAM

ABINGDON, Va. — Roger Musick was in a convoy hauling ammunition down the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Vietnam toward a gun position near Khe Sanh.

Although it hadn't rained for days, Musick spotted a mud puddle in the middle of the road. He realized the puddle concealed a landmine, and he jumped out of the truck before being hit.

We buried ourselves on each side of the road while the shrapnel went over the top of us," he said. "We didn't get a scratch. There was mud on each side of the road, and we came out really muddy."

Musick, 73, began his service in the Army by volunteering in September 1965 when he was 20 years old. He served for two years and achieved the rank of private. He left for Vietnam in September 1966. He served in that war with the First Battalion 40th Field Artillery on the Vietnamese Demilitarized Zone. His job during the war was running ammunition to Marines.

Sometimes, his unit was under fire while trying to deliver ammunition. During one incident, they were hauling ammo in a C123 cargo plane to a base in Khe Sanh. We rolled the ammo out of the cargo plane without the plane coming to a stop," he said. "We had to have the ammo out and the tailgate shut

while we had enough runway left to get airborne again. We had to avoid being hit by incoming artillery fire is why we had to do it without stopping."

Musick served in the Vietnam War for one year, leaving the battlefield in September 1967. He was assigned to Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks, Alaska. He left the service in 1968 and traveled back to Abingdon in his 1959 F100, which he bought and repaired himself. He has worked on automobiles as a hobby ever since.

He retired as a building contractor. Musick still lives in Abingdon and is the proud grandfather of six.

A few years ago, he made a trip to Washington, D.C., to visit the Vietnam War Memorial. It was something he wanted to do for a long time. His son, Michael, was living and working in D.C. at the time and went with his father.

He spent a long time there," Michael Musick said. "He read through the names and looked at the memorial. He was real quiet. You could tell it was affecting him by just how quiet and somber he was."

NICE STORY HOW MARINES FEEL ABOUT OUR BROTHER CORPSMAN

VETERANS' FAMILIES SHARE BOND AT THE WALL THAT HEALS

PADUCAH — A woman from Massachusetts traveled to The Wall That Heals at Carson Park to honor her brother and the Paducah veteran who tried to save him.



JAMES CRUISE & RICHARD MURPHY

Maureen Murphy-Payne says her brother, Richard "Dick" Murphy, of Norwood, Massachusetts, was killed by a sniper in Vietnam on June 15, 1968. The same sniper also killed two Navy hospital corpsmen who tried to provide aid to Richard — William Mercer, of Los Angeles, and James Dale Cruse, of Paducah. James posthumously received a Navy Cross for his valor.



JAMES CRUISE POSTUMOUSLY RECEIVED THE NAVY CROSS FOR HIS VALOR

James' brother, Fred Cruse, still lives in Paducah. Over the weekend, he and Maureen were able to talk and catch up while they were both volunteering at The Wall That Heals. Maureen says her family and the Cruse family have formed a strong bond after learning of James trying to save Richard. "The courage that they displayed, you know, we're all so appreciative of what they gave up, just to



MAUREEN MURPHY-PAYNE & FRED CRUISE CATCH UP AT THE WALL THAT HEALS

think what their lives would have been, you know? So we're so appreciative because we all live every day with our freedoms, and it's always said but



MAUREEN MURPHY-PAYNE PUTTING TRIBUTE AT THE PANEL WITH HER BROTHERS NAME

there's a huge cost to it," said Maureen. Maureen says she was just 13 years old when she learned about her brother's death from her father.

"One of my older brothers came in, and we all tried to console the three younger boys. I mean, we were in pain as well, obviously. But we were caring for our siblings," Maureen recalled.

And even 50 years later, Maureen still fondly remembers her brother's personality.

"He was very fun-loving. He was a good boy, never got into any trouble, and as I mentioned to you, he was a protector," said Maureen. "It's very sad when I think of everything that our family has missed not having Dickie here in our lives."

On Saturday, Maureen placed tributes at the panel with her brother's name. Just a few lines above Murphy's name is Cruse's.

"I know they're together in heaven and they're looking down on us, and they would want us to do what we're doing here — speaking their names so that they live on forever," said Maureen.
Maureen says her family first learned about their connection with the Cruse family during a police convention, when one of her brothers talked with James Cruse's nephew. The two families have been in touch ever since.

FROM THE WEB THUNDERING THIRD 3/4
John Alan Hudson Corporal USMC

Lima held the right, highest part of the hill while Kilo mostly held the lower, left portion of the hill.



3/4 CP and the LZ, 81s and S4 was on the flat between the two ends. I was there from 23 April to 10 June when we flew to Khe Sanh to start Operation Robin South. Lima arrived two days before I did (returning from my 30 day leave when I extended) and Colonel Bendell and I believe Kilo a day before that to relieve 1/9.

My research shows that the time 3/4 was in the Hill



689 TAOR to be the bloodiest period in 3/4's history! From 15 May onward combat was almost constant as the NVA moved fresh troops in from Laos to over run KSCB and all of the surrounding Marine hill positions. An example of the action, I was Right Guide 4 times, had two different rifle squads and was Platoon Sergeant twice and Platoon Commander during the Hill 758 fight on 15 May. Those of us that survived that period were blessed indeed. To this day I wonder how I survived when so many better Marines all around me did not.

KSV IN NTHE NEWS CONTINUES: CITY HOSTS NUMEROUS TRIBUTES

THE WARWICK BEACON

Schools and organizations throughout Warwick will pay homage to our nation's veterans with programs and ceremonies this week and next honoring those who have served and still serve. Veterans' Day, which is Sunday, Nov. 11, is being observed on Monday, Nov. 12.

Warwick Neck Elementary School students in grades 3-5 will once again visit the Warwick Neck Lighthouse this Wednesday at 10 a.m. to honor veterans from the community. Sponsored by the Warwick Neck Improvement Association and the U.S. Coast Guard, the event normally attracts a large crowd of veterans, parents and city officials alike.

Also on Wednesday, Bishop Hendricken High School will host keynote speaker Michael A. Montigny, a Vietnam veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and author of "A Few Good Angels," a book which details his deployment and how "a few good angels saved his life numerous times while he served there." Montigny served as a machine gunner at the Battle of Khe Sanh in 1967, a battle that turned into a five-month siege, according to an email from Joe Cichon, who organized the event.

As part of the event, the school will honor the memory of Army Sergeant Mikeal Miller, who was mortally wounded during a deployment in Afghanistan in 2006. Miller was only 22 years old when he died, "only four years older than some of our present students," said Cichon in his email. A Gold Star family, Don and Karen McKenzie, brother and sister-in-law of Richard McKenzie, BHHS '63, who died in Vietnam, will also be present.

On Thursday, veterans will meet with students at St. Rose of Lima School starting at 9 a.m. Also on Thursday, Holliman Elementary School will conduct their annual Veterans Day appreciation event, which normally draws members of the state's General Assembly to speak.

On Friday, Pilgrim High School will host its fourth annual "Patriots Honoring Patriots" event from 9:15 to 10:30 a.m. A formal ceremony will take place, and the annual "Jeans for Troops" campaign, sponsored by the GiGo Fund, will be working to help members of the armed forces get funding for housing, healthcare, education and employment. Those looking to support the cause are encouraged to wear blue jeans and a patriotic shirt to show their support for the cause.

Also on Friday, the All American Assisted Living facility on Tollgate Farm Road will be hosting an event for veterans with refreshments served from 2-4 p.m. Those interested are asked to RSVP by calling 889-5905.

On Monday, Hendricken will host a pancake breakfast for veterans from across the state starting at 7:30 a.m. There is no RSVP required for veterans, and the pancakes will be plentiful. Dunkin Donuts and Dave's Marketplace have agreed to sponsor the event, which is being organized by Bill Johnson, a Hendricken coach and teacher.

A laying of a wreath will be conducted at Warwick Veterans Middle School on Monday by the Warwick Veterans Council.

ED NOTE:

At the Khe Sanh Veterans reunion honoring the 50th Anniversary of the Siege of Khe Sanh, held in Washington DC, on August 12-19 2018,the Khe Sanh Veterans invited five members of the Poilane family from the country of France as our honored guest.

The Poilane family members included Jean-Marie Poilane & his sister Francoise Poilane–Bisiaux, the children of Felix Poilane the owner of the Coffee Plantation located near the KSV Combat Base. Felix was murdered by the North Vietnamese. Jean Marie was accompanied by his wife Christele Poilane, his sister Francoise Poilane Bisiaux by her husnad Alain Bisiaux and their daughter Marianne Bicorne Bisiaux

Jean-Marine Poilane and his sister Francqoise used to sit outside of their home at the plantation near the KSCB and greet American troops as they patrolled near the plantation. (See Photos)

NOTE: Here is a letter of thanks written ny Jean-Marie to Reverend Ray W. Stubbe thanking him for honoring he and his family.

Dear Reverend Stubbe,

I wanted to write you to thank you very much. Our presence at the 50th anniversary of Khe Sanh's siege in Washington is mainly because of you!

You founded the Khe Sanh veterans association and also made translations of my mother's written memories about her life in Vietnam. This helped Dennis Mannion a lot to retrieve us.

I thought of you very often during this week in Washington.

You may know that I did a short speech at the banquet in order to thank all of you.

When I prepared this speech, I wanted to mention you and talk more about my parents but when I practiced in my hotel room I could not



finish as I started to cry.

Therefore, I did not cite you but I regret.

I want you to know that my thoughts were with you. We missed you!!

During this week we had a lot emotions and feelings, but we really start to realize after-returning in France. This was so amazing and incredible this journey in Washington meeting all these people.

I said to myself: These men were so brave and most of them are so humble, we were amid heroes.

Washing the wall on Saturday early morning was also a very impressive experience for us. So symbolic but powerful. We could speak with some veterans who knew our house or our parents.

During the banquet on Saturday night, one veteran came to see us and gave us a photo of the plane where my father died and that he took (plane had problem at landing and we see it with some flames).

This was very emotional for us.

More touching, still during the banquet, after my short speech, another veteran came to see me, and he told me "I was there when your father went to heaven. He was a good man". And he gave me his tie after having said that. Then he left us very simply. Of course, tears went immediately in my eyes. I keep the tie pre-



ciously then.

US Marines mechanics repaired my father's tractor and at the reunion there was one photo showing that. The marine who took this photo went to see us and said:

"Your father was very happy for the reparation

and invited us in his house after. There he offered us some Pernod (a French aperitif) and proposed some magazines ».

The marine told us that at this moment he thought « What's happening, we are in the middle of nowhere - in the heart of the jungle - and a gentleman offers us Pernod and proposes us magazines, unbelievable

.

It remained a great souvenir for the marines!!!

Meeting Dennis Mannion and his family was an honor for us. Dennis is a real **gentleman** in the most pure and noble meaning of the word.

Glenn Prentice is also a very generous man and when he saw us, he cried because he remembered that he saw my sister and I 50 years before as little children.

And Ted Showalter who knew well my parents and took this magical photo (in color!!) in 1964 where my parents, my sister and I are all together!

Meeting Carrie Pepper on the last day (Sunday) where she talked about her brother (MIA)

and gave us her book (with a written dedication in French!) was also touching.

And all other people, Nick Romanetz, Larry Leclaire, Ron Shouse etc ...

All this will remain unforgotten in our memories.

RAY STUBBE'S RESPONSE:

Dear Crtstele and Jean-Marie:

Very unfortunately, my French is abysmal and I need to communicate in English. Please excuse my deficiency! There is an old joke: "What do you call a person who speaks several languages? Multilingual. What do you call a person who speaks two languages? Bilingual. What do you call a person who speaks only one language? American."

Your very thoughtful letter of 18 September, including the photographs of the Poilane family members brought me many blessings. After the experience of the devastation at Khe Sanh, which included not only many Marines I personally knew, but also the horrible im-pact on the local Bru tribespeople and even the land itself, to see photographs of the Poilane family was a statement of the survival of life itself. There were many times during those early weeks of 1968 when I assumed we were all going to die

Reading through your mother's (Madeleine) account of the family's movement from Khe Sanh and especially the situation in Hue after arrival there and your father's death, made me aware of the very difficult situation she, you, and your sister faced. She contacted me in an attempt to obtain war reparations for the use and the destruction of your home at Khe Sanh. Although I sent letters to a Senator as well as military officials, the response was always that nothing could be done. I'm sure that the financial burdens she faced were tremendous.

Thus to see the family now, emerging from those horrible devastations, reminded me of Spring following Winter, or Easter following Good Friday, and I saw the hand of our Lord working in this matter, who only wishes to give us life in its fullness.

Thank you also for your very kind words about me! I am now 80 and having various medical conditions which kept me from attending the reunion. I'm confident that your very presence blessed many of those who were there.

May our gracious Lord continue to bless you.
RAY

FRED SIX RECALLS HIS TIME UNDER FIRE IN VIETNAM

By Carter Giegerich carterg@themountaineer.com

"There were many times that a little bit of fear struck me. But that first time, I learned a lot from that."
Fred Six
Marine Corps Veteran

Fred Six was only 19 years old when he first came face-to-face with the horrors of the Vietnam War.

It was late at night in a foxhole in the Quang Tri province in central Vietnam.

" I'll never forget it — it was the first action I saw over there. We had a little high rise outside a village over there, a small hill, and we dug in for the night with our whole platoon," Six said. "We camped in for the night, not expecting anything. I was still brand new, not even a month in. It was 10 minutes



Maggie Valley resident Fred Six entered the Vietnam War in his late teens, surviving numerous live combat scenarios.

until one in the morning, it was foggy, and we started hearing explosions all around us."

Six was awake, taking his shift on watch in a foxhole with two other Marines in his platoon as they tried to sleep, when satchel charges started raining down around them from the bottom of the hill. Almost immediately, the Viet Cong soldiers attacking their position landed an explosive in another foxhole, critically wounding one of the men in his platoon.

" You could hear this one Marine, I had played poker with him the night before, who had both his legs blown off because a satchel charge had a direct hit on him," Six said. "The guy who threw it got lucky, and blew off both of his legs. The whole time all these explosions are going on all around us, he's screaming 'God, let me die.' That was how I broke into Vietnam."

Although the attack lasted about an hour, with the Viet Cong scattering when a medivac helicopter came to retrieve the wounded men, Six said the entire platoon stayed up through the night on alert in case they returned.

Firefights and ambushes were fairly commonplace in the parts of Vietnam Six toured during his service in 1967 and 1968. He spent much of his time patrolling areas near the DMZ, hunting for enemy supply caches and signs of either the Viet Cong or the North Vietnamese Army.

" All we did was stay out on patrol, going through these villages looking for supplies for the enemy," he said. "We'd go through their huts, looking for things. Sometimes they'd have little spider holes they would bury stuff in, and we'd look for food caches, or ammo caches or even gun caches. If you found it then you'd burn it — it was pretty common."

ON THE MOVE

Before long, Six's platoon left Quang Tri and made their way first to Con Thien and then to Khe Sanh, a Marine base that had been under heavy siege until his unit arrived with a wave of relief troops.

" Our entire outfit went in to relieve them, and then after some time they decided to shut the base down," Six said. "The whole time we were there we were taking artillery fire, which gave us some sense of what the siege was like."

The base had been essentially cut off by the prolonged fighting, with no running water coming in for the Marines the entire time he was there.

" We never had a bath that whole time — the only

thing we could use water for was drinking, because the pump that came in from below was cut off by the siege," he said. "The only water coming in had to be parachuted in."

While he was in Khe Sanh, his platoon started to do more patrol missions in the surrounding area despite the heightened risk of attack. The hills surrounding the base had been bombed so completely, he said it looked like the surface of the moon.

" We spent a couple nights up on this hill, and we didn't have any water for more than a night," Six said. "Whoever had camped before us left a skull by this fox hole full of water, but we drank from that sucker because we were so thirsty. We just used our iodine tablets and drank it anyway."

Meanwhile, Six said, his fellow servicemen in the Army were living in relative luxury not too far from where they were camped

" You could clearly see the Army from that hill, and they had choppers coming in, they had hot showers. We didn't have anything," he said with a laugh. "We always felt like we were behind the Army, I don't know why."

TOOLS OF WAR

It was also in Khe Sanh that Six saw his first encounter with the brutal force of napalm being dropped by friendly air support on dug-in enemy positions

" Another platoon got ambushed and we came back to support them. The NVA left when those Phantom jets came in and dropped the napalm — that was the first time I'd ever seen that," he said. "You felt a whoosh from it, the force from it, and there's nothing like it. That stops everything. Whoever was shooting at you isn't even there anymore

Six described incoming artillery fire as a fairly commonplace hazard of his tour of duty, including on a major operation in Khe Sanh that resulted in the worst loss of life he saw in his entire time in the warzone.

During a major operation out of the base, Six's platoon was dropped at a landing zone that had been heavily bombed prior to their landing to eradicate any ground resistance they might encounter as they left the helicopter. As his platoon set up a defensive perimeter, though, the second helicopter to land was completely destroyed by a direct hit from a mortar shell.

" The chopper went down and everybody onboard was dead," he said. "Our platoon was lucky — we came in first, but that could have been us."

As more helicopters landed, the artillery fire continued and Six was knocked unconscious by the concussive force of one of the rounds. A fellow Marine carried him to safety, most likely saving his life.

" I don't know if I stayed there whether I would have gotten a mortar shell or not," he said.

As the military prepared to shut down the base at Khe Sanh, Six's platoon remained at the base and assisted with sealing up all of the military installations to prevent the enemy troops from using them to their advantage.

" Imagine this — you have all these bunkers, all these trenches and you have to seal them all up," he said. "A lot of it was done with bulldozers and stuff, but as the trench lines and the bunkers are disappearing the artillery fire is still coming. So we're just laying out in the open, hoping to get through until it's done."

SQUAD LEADER

Once Khe Sanh was finally sealed up, Six's group moved to a place called Qua Viet. While Khe Sanh had been a fairly well-developed base, Six said Qua Viet was closer to the small villages he'd started out in when he first came to Vietnam.
They continued to do seek and destroy missions, hunting enemy supply caches and dodging ambushes along the way, until two men in his battalion were killed in a land mine explosion as they attempted to deliver food to Six's platoon using an amphibious troop transport vehicle.

" These were both guys that had just re-upped for another tour, so these guys had been there a while, and I looked up to both of them," Six said. "They were riding in an Amtrac, carrying food out to us,

and hit a land mine. Both of them burned up and died as a result of that land mine."

Only a few days later, Six's platoon struck back at the Viet Cong soldiers in the area. Six, who had just been promoted to be the leader of his squad, led a group of Marines through the forest adjacent to a nearby rice paddy in the dead of night, hoping to reach a nearby village under cover of darkness. They set up in the trees nearby, waiting for a sign of the enemy until early in the afternoon the next day. Then, after hours spent on alert, a group of five Viet Cong soldiers walked into view with their weapons slung over their shoulders.

" If they're carrying a weapon, you shoot. If they aren't carrying a weapon you don't, you just try to question them," Six said. "As soon as they walked past, the guy on the end fired. Once the guy on the far end hears him fire, he fires too. They went down so fast — we took them all out and collected their weapons. It was almost like a revenge thing, for the guys we lost a couple days earlier."

COMING HOME

Not long after that, Six's unit was moved to Danang for a period of time before returning home briefly, then serving on a tour of the Mediterranean. At that point, he said, the Marine Corps was at its peak involvement in the war and he was asked to re-enlist for another tour.

" I got back from the Med cruise, I was on leave and I'd just gotten married," he said. "I didn't re-up, and my options were either to re-up or leave the Marine Corps. So I was in just short of three years, instead of the four I'd signed up for."

He left the military and immediately started seeking employment, quickly finding work with a number of film labs for about 15 years before going to work for Raytheon in Virginia, where he retired in 2004.

Although he said his time in Vietnam didn't have much impact on what he pursued as a career when he returned home, there's no doubt he learned a great deal about himself and others during his time under fire near the DMZ. From that first combat experience in Quang Tri on, he said, he learned important lessons at every step of the way.

"It was adrenaline, it was fear, it was both," he said. "There were many times that a little bit of fear struck me. But that first time, I learned a lot from that."

NICE STORY FROM THE WEB

I have never let my time in Vietnam define me or who I am. When I came home in July of 71 my uniform was put away and I never saw it again. I don't even remember what happened to my DD214. I got a job working for an oil field service company and in the 40 years that I worked for them, the subject of my service in Vietnam never really came up with my fellow employees. I just didn't think about it. Example: I wanted an international position with the company so filled out and submitted an application. About a month later I was called in to the HR director for an interview. As he looked thru my resume



he asked me if I had ever been overseas before and I replied "no". He flipped a page and said "Well, it says here that you went to Vietnam ". I said "Oh, yes, I forgot about that". I got the job and ended up spending 20 years outside the US in various countries.

I first met my British born wife in Dubai in 1976, and we've been married now for 40 years. Her first husband had been a serious bad ass in the British special forces during the Aden Emergency (1963-1967), so she had no interest in hearing anything more to do with war. I can't say I blame her. My Vietnam service was never discussed as we raised our two daughters. In our list of life priorities, it was low on the list.

Other interesting things were happening anyway. I was arrested in Dubai during the hijacking of Lufthansa flight 181, and I was present in Iran when the Shah was overthrown in 1979. I was in Dubai and Saudi during the Iraq-Iran war from 80 to 83, met the current Syrian dictator in a private meeting at the Syrian Oil Ministry in the 80s and was in the Beirut airport when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982. I managed to be back in Dubai in time for Desert Storm and participated in the capping of Kuwaiti oil wells that had been blown up by the Iraqis.

So, back to my reconnecting with Vietnam. While working in Saudi Arabia in 2011, I decided to retire. I purchased a new car using the internet and decided that I wanted a Vietnam veteran license plate. A requirement was presenting your DD214 which would show your Vietnam service. Since I had no idea what happened to my original, I applied for a duplicate, using my sister's US address. A couple of months later I called her from Saudi to see if she had received it. She said she had, along with the medals that I had earned while in Vietnam. After 40 years, the government finally decided to send them to me. All this time I thought that if I wanted them, I was supposed to buy them myself. I was surprised to see that there were two Air Medals, both with "V" device, and the Army Commendation Medal.

You see, I was a Crew Chief on a UH-1C Charlie





model gunship with the 48th AHC. My Aircraft Commander and I participated in Lam Son 719 while operating out of Dong Ha. I lost good friends during that operation, including Cpt. Ed Bilbrey, who's wife and parents I visited with on my way back home, and Bob Acalotto, my door gunner, who was KIA a couple of weeks after this photo of us was taken at Khe Sanh. He is the one on the right. I heard later that my AC spent 6 months in a VA hospital suffering from PTSD, wearing nothing but a diaper. So yes, I finally received the medals (which I am proud of), as well as the license plates, but I refuse to let that experience play a major role in who I am. Yes, I am one of the lucky ones. I define my life by my family and accomplishments since that terrible time.

BROTHERS IN WAR AND IN PEACE: A STORY OF VIETNAM

BY STEVEN LANSFORD

On May 31, 1968, I was serving as a squad leader with the Third Platoon, "Mike Company," 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. We were conducting a company-size combat operation against a large force of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Hard Corps Viet Cong Army troops in Quang Tri Province, Northern I Corps. We were on Hill 512, north of Highway 9, which ran east-west from the Ca Lu Combat Base to Khe Sahn. My platoon moved away from the company command post on top of the hill, down the hillside through the bush. We reached the bottom and climbed a low draw. At the top of the draw, the bush ended and the area before us was entirely devoid of vegetation. It was obvious that a firefight had occurred here, because there were bits and pieces of equipment, armament, clothing, etc., strewn across the area. We traveled across this open area, where we encountered another draw and the jungle started again. The bush was so thick on the other side that we couldn't see anything. However, to my right we observed a pair of green sneakers and a pith helmet. Not a good sign — the NVA! There was something on the other side of the draw and it wasn't us. Regardless of the evidence of an enemy presence, the platoon commander gave the word to move into the draw. Cpl. Frank Lautner's squad moved forward.

I left the platoon commander and started back to my



SHAVING CREAM HIS BUDDIES HAVING FUN

squad. I hadn't gone far when the claymore mines "popped" and the screaming started. I was in the open by myself, with no cover at all! Immediately after the mines detonated, the mortars started coming in and the small arms fire began. A mortar round discharged in my face and shrapnel went through my right eye. I was shot and hit with more shrapnel. However, it was the head trauma that knocked me senseless. Not only could I not see out of my right eye, but I was stunned to the point of not being able to move. I wanted to take cover, but my brain and body would, or could not coordinate. I remember seeing what appeared to be another squad of Marines, from the Second Platoon as it turned out, move out of the draw to my left. They were running to where the body of my Third Platoon had taken cover. However, one Marine came toward me, across the open, through the intense mortar and small arms fire. He was a black Marine, who was so skinny that his steel pot wobbled on his head. Even though I was out of it, I can see his face as clearly today as if it happened yesterday. He put my rifle back in my hands, grabbed me and said "Don't worry, Sarge, I got you, we're going to be OK." Somehow, he managed to avoid us getting killed and back to where the rest of my platoon had taken cover.

That Marine stayed with me the rest of the day and that night. He never left my side. I remember that he was very quiet and watched over me like a hawk. That was a very long night. The next morning, other Marines joined us and I recall seeing Staff Sgt. Barnes from another platoon — I have no idea of his first name — bringing bodies out of the draw. My Marine brother — the man who saved me — helped me as we started the long walk back to the command post June 1.

We carried our dead, our wounded and our body parts, weapons and equipment back across the open area. We were in the draw, starting back up the hill, going back to the command post, when the North Vietnamese ambushed us with artillery. My Marine brother and I dived to the ground. Several rounds landed, and most of the Marines who had not been killed or wounded the day before were killed or wounded that morning. The platoon commander almost lost his leg. My Marine brother and I took some shrapnel, but were able to continue. We made it back to the command post and found that it had been pounded by heavy mortars and artillery. This resulted in most of Mike Company being killed or wounded. Everyone in Cpl. Lautner's squad was killed. We survivors subsequently evacu-



OTIS FELIX IN MAY 2012 IN ATLANTA

ated via helicopter to the Valley Forge, and ultimately sent to military hospitals in Japan.

I have been ashamed for almost 44 years, because I

never asked my Marine brother what his name was. I've thought about him every day, and I have told everyone who will listen the story of this brave Marine who risked his life to pull me from harms way. He was a real Marine who epitomized "Semper Fidelis." I don't deserve to tie his boots, and I didn't even know his name. Parenthetically, I gave a framed copy of the Charles Russell painting of the Negro York, who accompanied Lewis and Clark on their expedition to the Pacific Ocean in 1804, to the Palm Coast African American Society, in my Marine brother's honor. That man helped me to be a better person.

In 2009, a young "3/1" Marine from the Iraq War, Felix Garcia, introduced me to the website for the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment. In September 2011, we had a reunion in Beaufort, South Carolina. Low and behold, Sgt. John Potts, Second Platoon, stepped out of the darkness and back into my life. I had the presence of mind to give him the much abbreviated version of this story, including a detailed description of my Marine brother, and asked if he knew who he might be. John would not commit at that time, but made inquiries after we returned home.

In a subsequent email John said that based on contact with some of his Second Platoon brothers they were sure that my Marine brother could only be Otis Felix, who was from the U.S. Virgin Islands. Later, John and I were talking on the phone and he informed me that he had a photo of his squad, which included Otis Felix. I begged him to send it to me. I told him that I had my Marine brother's face burned into my brain and I was sure I could recognize him. I received an email from John, with an attached photo of his squad, including Otis Felix. I recognized his face the minute I looked at the photo. One of my Mike 3/1 Marines gave me the last known address for Otis. He was residing in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. I composed a heartfelt, two-page letter, and sent it to that address. I was skeptical that it would reach him and did a lot of praying that it would. Every day when I visited the Palm Coast Post Office I hoped that I'd hear from him. Ironically, Otis had not lived at that address for 15 years. However, as luck would have it, he works for the U.S. Postal Service. The letter carrier recognized Otis' name, realized he had not resided at that address for years and delivered the letter to him at the post office.

On May 7, 2012, I was contacted by Otis' daughter, Orise, who lives and works in Atlanta. She said her father had received the letter and was moved to tears. Otis and his wife Patricia pressed Orise into service to find me. We talked for a long time. I contacted Otis and we talked and I reiterated everything I wrote in the letter and assured him it was from my heart. We talked for a long time. He told me his granddaughter was scheduled to graduate from high school in Atlanta on May 23. Coincidentally, I was going to be on my way to Rolling Thunder in Washington, D.C., on the motorcycle, that same day. On May 24, 2012, almost 44 years to the day, Otis and I reunited in Atlanta. Needless to say, it was one of the best days of my life.

I subsequently learned from John Potts that he had listed Otis as missing in action. They were concerned that he had been killed. John subsequently was informed that Otis was alive with the Third Platoon, had been wounded, and was being "medevaced." John had commented "what's Otis doing with the Third Platoon?" Well, he was busy saving my life! By the way, Otis hadn't gained one dang pound! Lunsford lives in Palm Coast.

IGET PICTURES



This is Christmas of 1967 at Khe Sanh Viet Nam just a few of the guys of W/1/13 they gave us two Black Lable beers. This was made in 1967 at Khe Sanh some of the guys of W/1/13 the 4.2 mortars. Tall guy on left is Rutledge, next to him on right is Billy Hill then the other tall guy on right we call Slim. Bottom row left is Art Caudillo and I think the next one kneeling is Ballock in back far right is Walter Brown From Billy Hill from the other website

OBIT

LT COL DAVID C. "BULLDOG" SMITH, USA USSF COMMANDING OFFICER FOB-3 KHE SANH VIETNAM PAST PRESIDENT KHE SANH VETERANS

Trinity - David Cameron "Bulldog" Smith, New Englander by birth; North Carolinian in death, was born May 10, 1933 in Stoughton, Massachusetts and passed away November 12, 2018 at the Hospice House in High Point. He was a son of George and Madeline Smith. His parents, brother, and two sisters preceded him in death.

He leaves a wife, Shirley H. Smith, son David Cameron Smith II, daughter Cheryl S. Conley, and sister Nancy Smith. He also leaves five grandchildren who gave him so much pride and joy : Major D. Cameron Smith III (Rachel) , Craig H. Smith (Charelette), Rachel S. Jolly (Lee), Richard D. Conley, and Kendall S. Stafford (Heath). He leaves seven great-grandchildren carrying on his family happiness.

With his family, Bulldog settled in High Point, NC in 1973. Entering the Army at an early age, he served in many units and retired as a Special Forces Lt. Col. He received the Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart as a Vietnam veteran in addition to other awards and citations.

For many years, until his death, he trained Special Forces in the Robin Sage program. He returned to Vietnam seven times with his humanitarian group.

He helped establish a local STMP project sponsoring many Montagnards settling in the US. He was a devoted member of Special Forces Association, Special Operation Association, many other military organizations, as well as Masonic Lodge 699. He regularly attended at First Baptist Church of High Point.

Visitation was held from 6-8 p.m. Tuesday at Cumby Family Funeral Service in Archdale. Funeral service were held at the First Baptist Church of High Point at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday. Interment held in Fayetteville's LaFayette Cemetery at 2 p.m. Wednesday with full military rites.

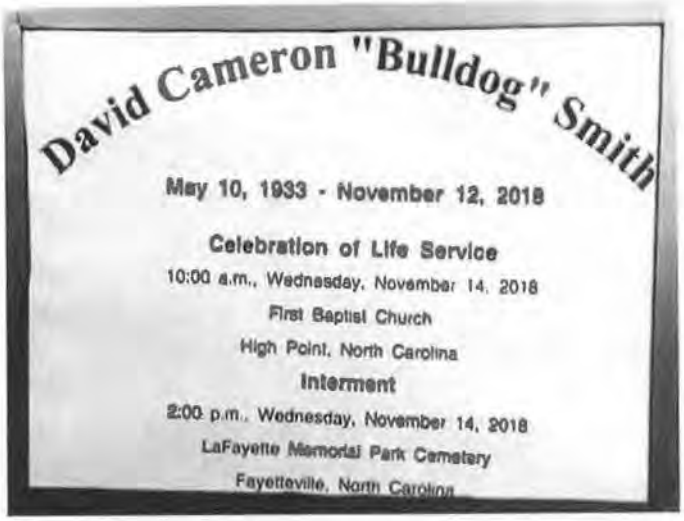



"BULLDOG" SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS WHO LOVED HIM



BULLDOG HAD A VERY LARGE EXTENDED FAMILY WHO ALSO LOVED HIM VERY MUCH



KHE SANH VETERANS AND A FRIEND ATTENDED THE WAKE & FUNERAL FOR BULLDOG SMITH L-R -BOB PENN (3rd MED DONG HA), CLIFF TREESE B BTRY 1/13,. RON SHOUSE B BTRY 1/13 , TOM KEATON B BTRY 1/13 & LARRY MCCARTNEY E CO 2/26.



UNITED STATES SPECIAL FORCES PROVIDED THE HONOR GUARD FOR COLONEL SMITH AT THE HONORED MILITARY FUNERAL







THE 2019 KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION WILL BE HELD ON MAY 26 THRU JUNE 2 AT THE SEATTLE AIRPORT MARRIOTT, 3201 S. 176TH ST., SEATTLE WASHINGTON 98188 ROOM RATES 119.00 A DAY, TEL. (206) 241-2000. REUNION ROOM PRICES ARE GOOD FOR 3 DAYS PRIOR TO AND 3 DAYS AFTER THE REUNION. PARKING $ 18.00



Property Location

When you stay at Seattle Airport Marriott in SeaTac, you'll be near the airport and 10 minutes by car from Family Fun Center. This hotel is 12.1 mi (19.4 km) from Emerald Downs and 14.3 mi (23 km) from Nordstrom.

Rooms

Stay in one of 459 guestrooms featuring flat-screen televisions. Your pillowtop bed comes with premium bedding. Cable programming provides entertainment, and wired and wireless Internet access is available for a surcharge. Private bathrooms with shower/tub combinations feature complimentary toiletries and hair dryers.

Amenities

Take advantage of recreation opportunities such as a fitness center, or other amenities including complimentary wireless Internet access and gift shops/newsstands. This hotel also features wedding services and a fireplace in the lobby.

Dining

Enjoy American cuisine at Aqua Terra, a restaurant which features a bar, or stay in and take advantage of the room service (during limited hours). Buffet breakfasts are available daily from 7 AM to 10 AM for a fee.

Business, Other Amenities

Featured amenities include a business center, express check-in, and express check-out. Event facilities at this hotel consist of conference space and meeting rooms. A roundtrip airport shuttle is provided for a surcharge (available 24 hours), and self parking (subject to charges) is available onsite.

















THE KSV WASHINGTON REUNION BEGINS



You just could not keep Kathy & Russell Turner down. Russell abandoned his sick bed and he and Kathy joined us by Face Time to help with the large amount of walk in members we had experienced.



REGISTRATION OPENS



BIG JOHN'S PX OPENS FOR BUSINESS







HOSPITALITY ROOM OPENS

VISIT TO MARINE CORPS MUSEUM













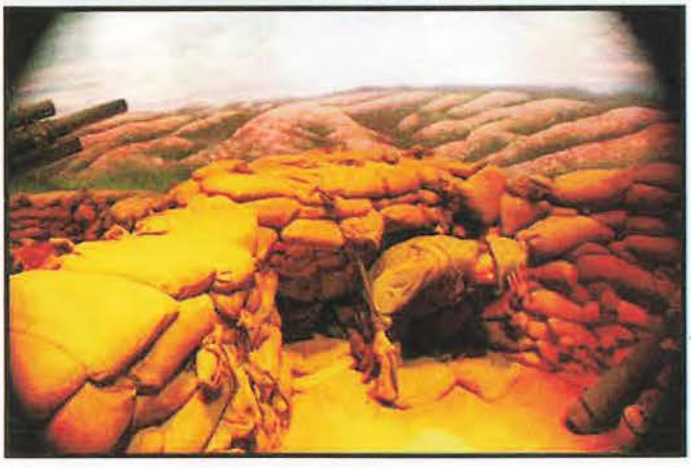

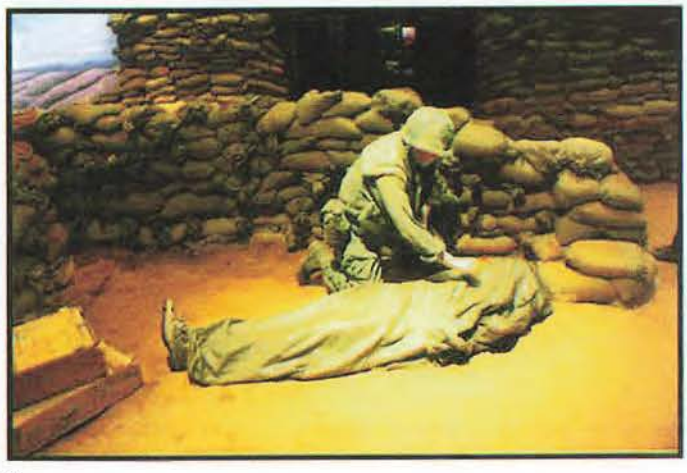

KSV WASHING & VISITING THE VIETNAM MEMORIAL WALL




















KHE SANH VETERANS VISITING VIETNAM MEMORIAL WALL










THE KHE SANH VETERANS GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

While serving with B Co 1/26 at the KSCB, Ken Korkow, made a personal vow that he would kiss the ass of anyone from the USAF, for their efforts which were the direct reason so many of us survived the battle of Khe Sanh. Ken thought the 50th anniversary of the Siege reunion would be the perfect place to fulfil his vow.

He solicited Colonel "Toby" Rushforth, 20th TASS to aid him with his mission. The both of them, during the general membership meeting surprised everyone as shown in the below photos.















Our Beautiful Khe Sanh Veterans ladies held their luncheon while the membership attended the General Membership meeting. These wonderful ladies, besides getting to know each other , held their own silent auction which raised thousands of dollars for the KSV Scholarship Fund







































KHE SANH VETERANS BANQUET



LINDA EASTER, WIFE OF HAROLD EASTER A CO 1/26 SANG BEAUTIFUL RENDITION OF NATIONAL ANTHEM



BILLY MARTIN & TOM HARVEY ESCORT THE POILANES TO LIGHT MIA CANDLE



COLOR GUARD FROM HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS











KHE SANH VETERANS CHAPLAIN RONALD RAYNER OPENING PRAYER

MARCH



COLORS



TOM HARVEY & BILLY MARTIN ESCORT THE CMC TO PODIUM



CMC GENERAL ROBERT B. NELLER ADDRESSES THE KHE SANH VETERANS BANQUET



HONORED GUEST JEAN-MARIE-POILANE ADDRESSES THE KHE SANH VETERANS THANKING THEM FOR INVITING HE AND HIS FAMILY TO THIS HISTORICAL EVENT



HONORED GUEST AT KHE SANH VETERANS BANQUET



NICK ROMANETZ & DENNIS MANNION AT BANQUET DINING WITH POILANE FAMILY



BILL MAVES E CO 2/26 GREETS COMMANDANT


























MARINES
MARINES

















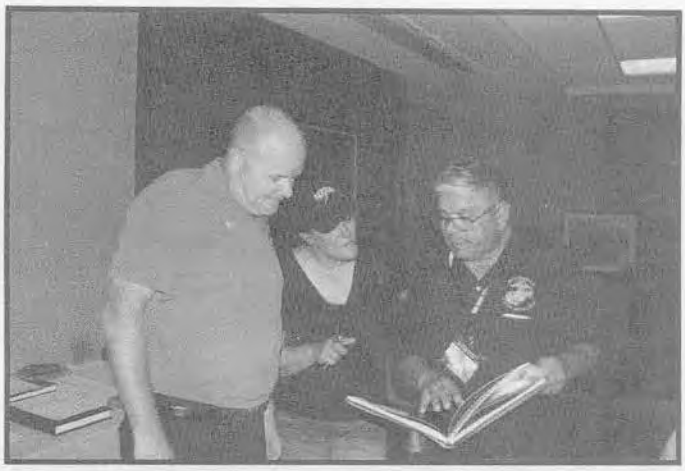






























Thank You
for
Your Service
Khe Sanh
50th Anniversary


ROBERT & LINDA
SEIBERT
GOLF CO 2/26


CLINT "MIKE" & JULIE
LEWIS
H&S 1/26 FLAMES -106s



TOM & MARIE KELLY
1ST RADIO BATTALION


JACK & DONNA HOWE
H&S CO 3/26


CURTIS & LINDA FRYER
HQ BTRY 1/13


JAMES & LINDA BEALL
BRAVO CO 1/26


HENRY & DONNA GAGNE
DELTA CO 1/26

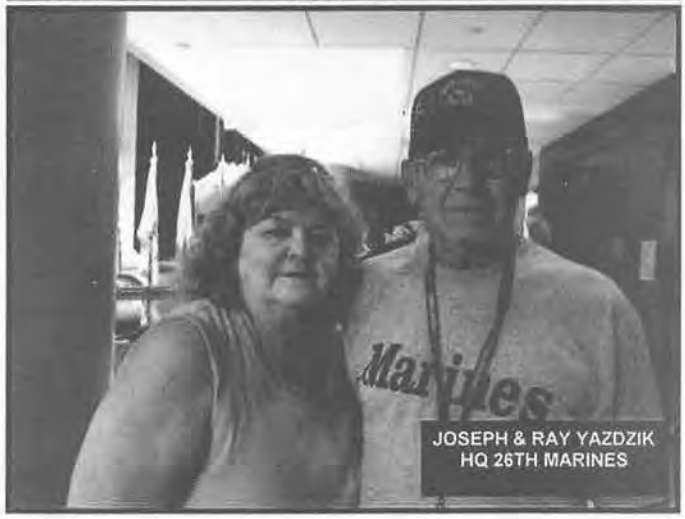

JOSEPH & RAY YAZDZIK
HQ 26TH MARINES


LEROY & REBECCA
MATLOCK
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A


RAY & ANGELA
UPDIKE
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
ONTOS


JAMES VELCHECK
DELTA CO 1/1
2ND PLT WPNS


JOSEPH & RAY YAZDZIK
HQ 26TH MARINES

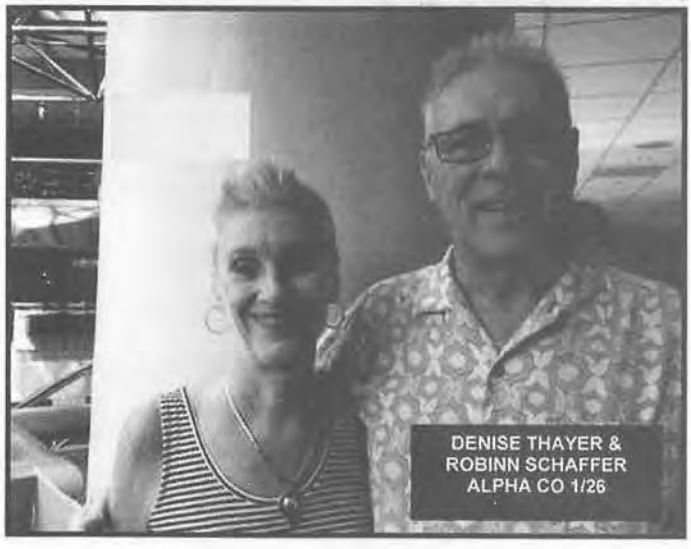
DENISE THAYER &
ROBINN SCHAFFER
ALPHA CO 1/26


KEN & LISA KORKOW
BRAVO CO 1/26


DANIEL & JOYCE
FERGUSON
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13


BILL & WILMA RING
DELTA CO 1/1


PATRICK & CHARLIE SULLIVAN
A CO 3RD COMBAT ENGRS

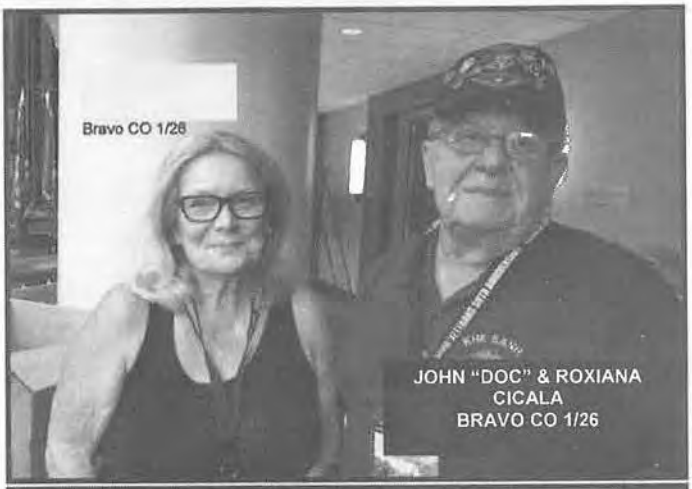
Bravo CO 1/26
JOHN "DOC" & ROXIANA CICALA
BRAVO CO 1/26


ROBERT & MARIANNE D'ELIA
HQ BTRY 1/13


ALBERT & NINFA MUELLER
1ST SHORE PARTY
HDT BN ALPHA CO


WILLIAM & BARBARA FOSTER
HQ CO 26TH MARINES


BEN & JOYCE LONG
BRAVO CO 1/26


EDWARD &CATHERINE PRENDERGAST
BRAVO CO 1/26

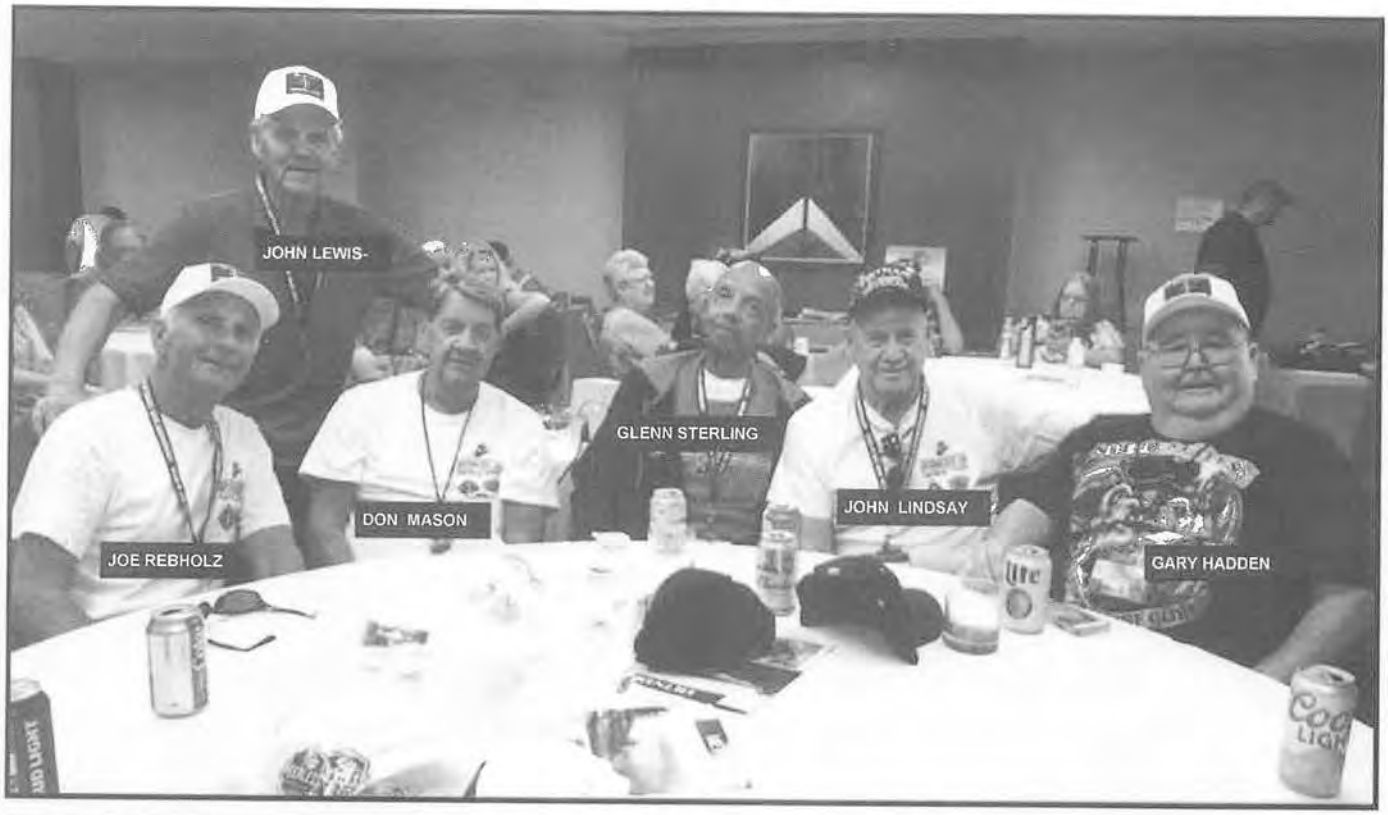







THE B 1/1 GANG FROM THE 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN OKINAWA 1959


DONNA MARTIN
JAN & BETH MASON


JOHN LEWIS & FAMILY

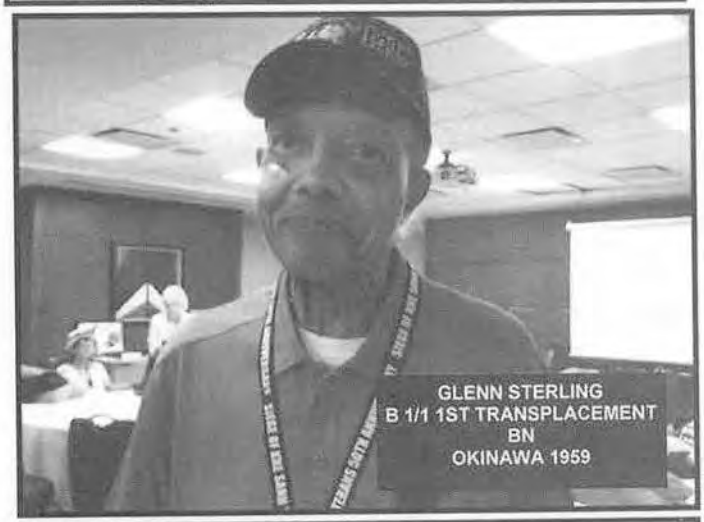
GLENN STERLING
B 1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN
OKINAWA 1959

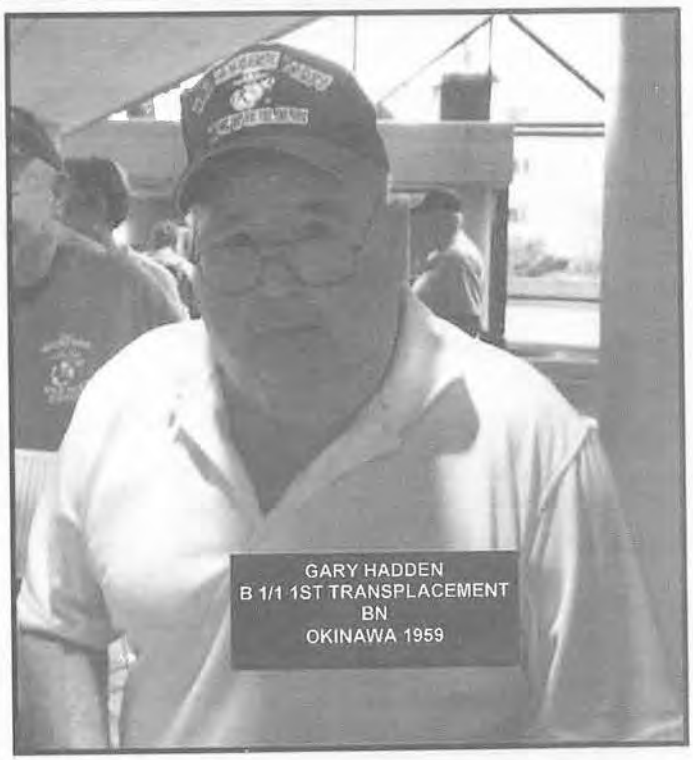
GARY HADDEN
B 1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN
OKINAWA 1959


GARY HADDEN & DON MASON
B 1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN
OKINAWA 1959


ERNIE HAMNER
B 1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN
OKINAWA 1959



CAPTAIN JOHN LINDSAY
B 1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BN
OKINAWA 1959


USMC
1/1
GLENN & SANDRA
GRIFFIN
DELTA CO 1/1


FMF
HILTON & ELLAN
MCCRACKEN
HOTEL CO 2/26


DANIEL & GERI
FISHER
DELTA CO 1/26
SCHOLARSHIP
CHAIRMAN


JERRY & JAN LEWIS
GOLF CO 2/26

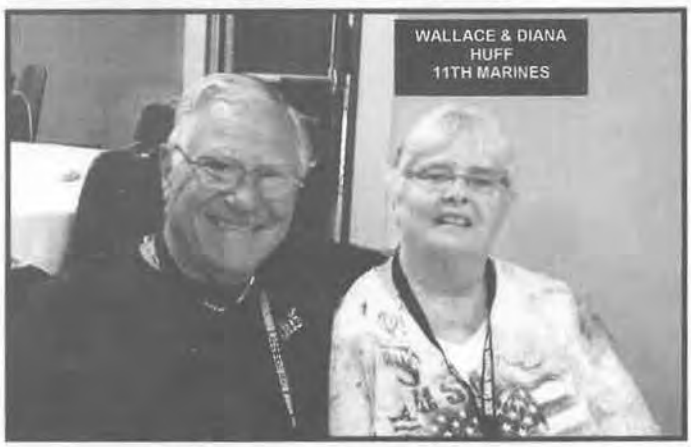
WALLACE & DIANA
HUFF
11TH MARINES


ROBERT SHIPPEN
USA USSF
FOB-3
CHARLES BERG
USA USSF
FOB-3


HAROLD & LINDA
EASTER
ALPHA CO 1/26

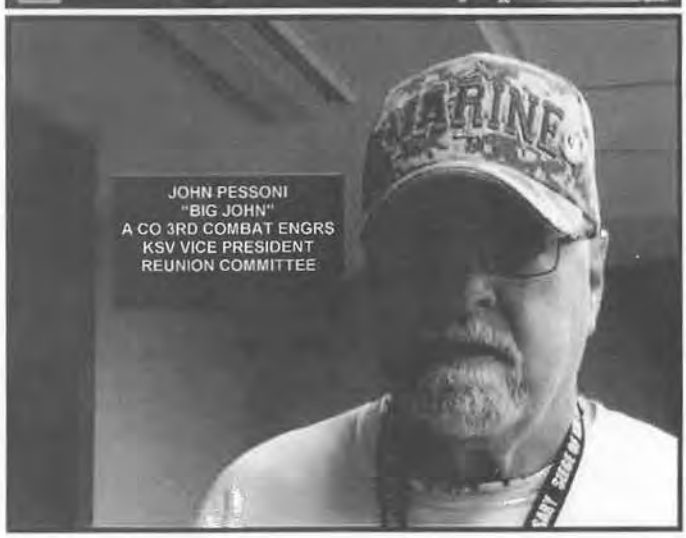
MARINE
JOHN PESSONI
"BIG JOHN"
A CO 3RD COMBAT ENGRS
KSV VICE PRESIDENT
REUNION COMMITTEE


SAMUEL ROACH
A BTRY 1/13 &
BRAVO CO 1/26


PETE & MARIE
MORSE
KILO CO 3/26


TED GOLAB
BRAVO CO 1/26


SID PATRICIO
"FISH"
DELTA CO 1/26


JERRY & JULIE
MILLICAN
HQ CO 26TH
MARINES


JOHN & JANE
VOSNICK
GOLF CO 2/26


CRAIG & JEANNE
TOURTE
HQ BTRY 1/13
KSV SECRETARY


FRANK PORTELLO &
ROSE BECERRA
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
"ONTOS"


FRED & SYDNEY
STICKEL
HQ BTRY M/T

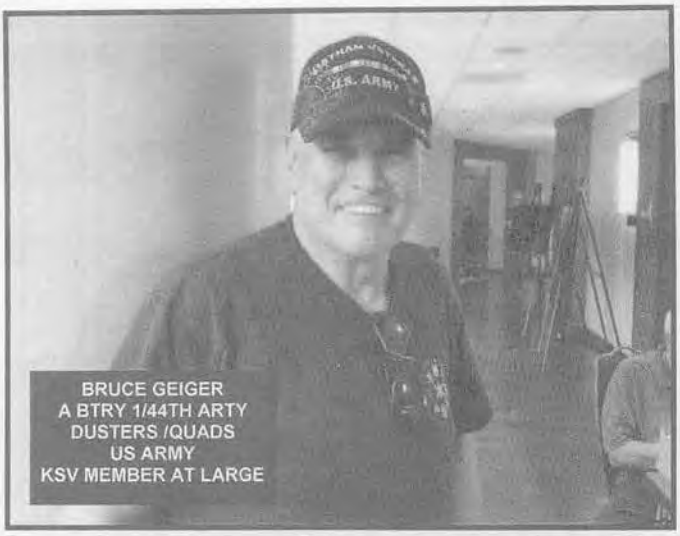
BRUCE GEIGER
A BTRY 1/44TH ARTY
DUSTERS /QUADS
US ARMY
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE


BRUCE & FRANCINE
JONES
"T-BONE"
REUNION COMMITTEE
SCHOLARSHIP
COMMITTEE

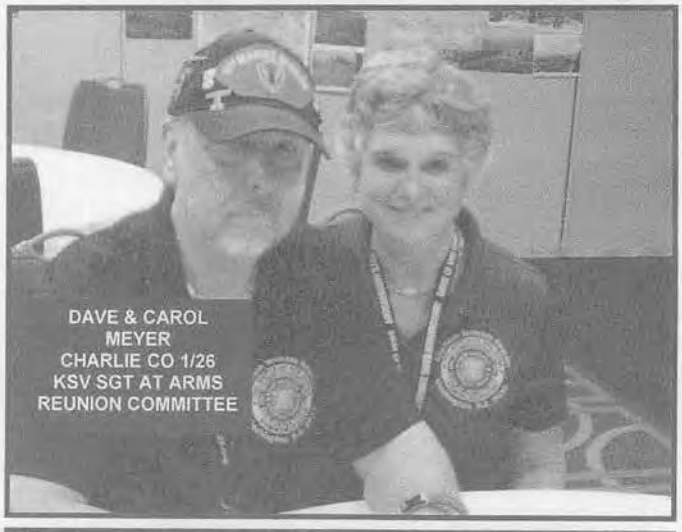
DAVE & CAROL
MEYER
CHARLIE CO 1/26
KSV SGT AT ARMS
REUNION COMMITTEE


VINCENT & VERITA
RICHARDSON
FOX CO 2/3


BILL & JOANNE
EICHLER
USN CPO
BROTHER OF TOM
EICHLER E CO 2/26


CHARLES & AUDREY
RUSHFORTH
"TOBY"
20TH TASS USAF



Richard Scott


EUGENE & BARBARA
WERESOW
BRAVO CO 1/26
MIKE CO 3/26


PAT & TANYA
WILLIAMS
20TH TASS MACV



JOE & TERRI
BUENROSTRO
BRAVO BTRY 1/13


RALPH & ORISE
SARGENT
HQ BTRY 1/13


LARRY LUTZ
& DAUGHTER ARRA
1ST BN 13TH MARINES



MICHAEL FISHBAUGH
FLSG-B1-FLC
KSV MEMBER AT
LARGE
REUNION COMMITTEE


JAMES & VICKI
THORTON
DELTA CO 1/26


BUTCH & SHERRY
STRASNER
FOX CO 2/26



R/ADMIRAL
ROBERT & PATRICIA
BIRTCIL
H&S CO 26TH MARINES



LAWRENCE & LOU
LECLAIRE
KILO CO 3/26

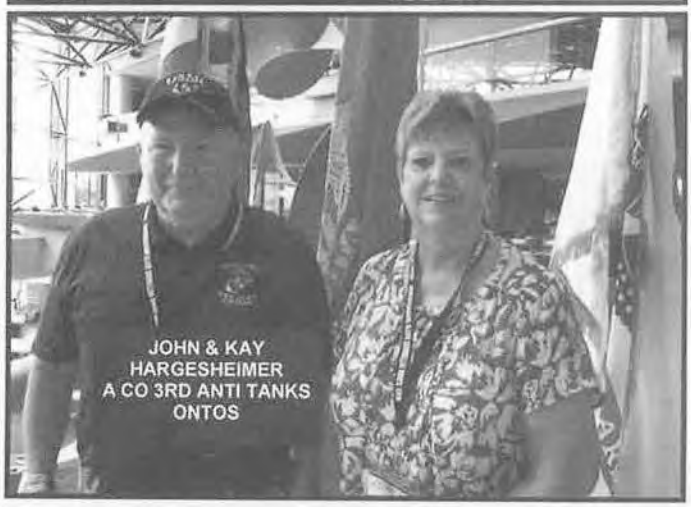

JOHN & KAY
HARGESHEIMER
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
ONTOS



VINCENT BEGLEY
ALPHA CO 1/26
WITH DAUGHTER
MENA & WILLIAM
PECHART



DAVID & SUSAN LORD
CHARLIE CO 1/26



DOUGLAS CORBETT
DELTA CO 1/26
WITH DAUGHTER KERRY



THOMAS & MARY
KEATON
BRAVO BTRY 1/13

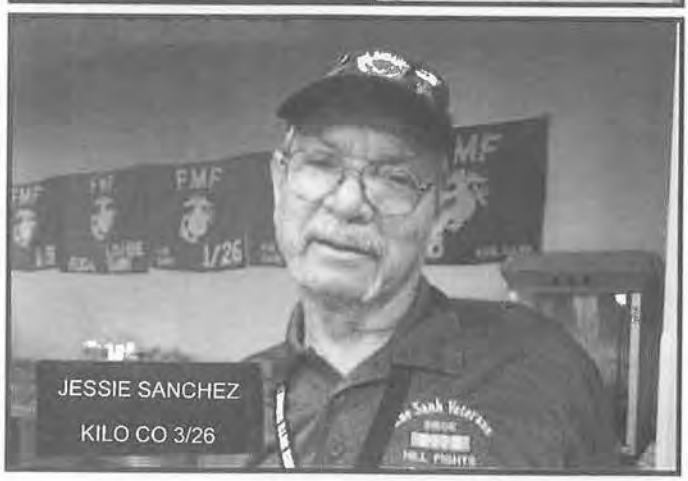

JESSIE SANCHEZ
KILO CO 3/26


FLOYD & JANICE
GRAHAM
HQ 26TH MARINES


JOSEPH "JIM" & KAREN
POPTIC
H&S CO 1/26 81MM &
ALPHA CO 1/26

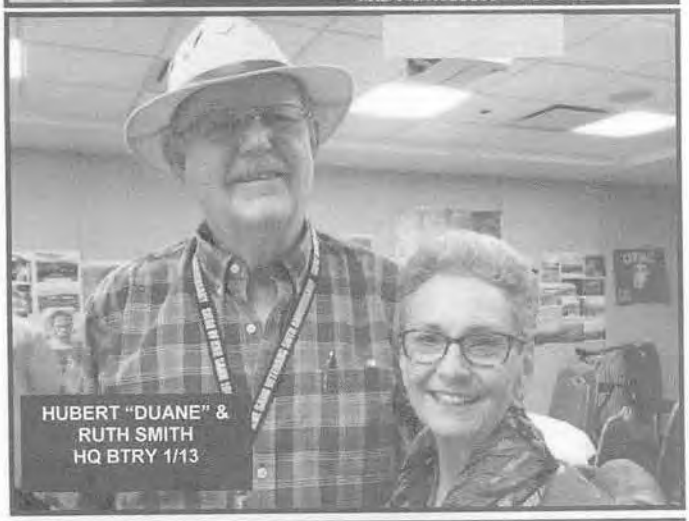
HUBERT "DUANE" &
RUTH SMITH
HQ BTRY 1/13


ROBERT & ANN
HANNA
BRAVO CO 1/26

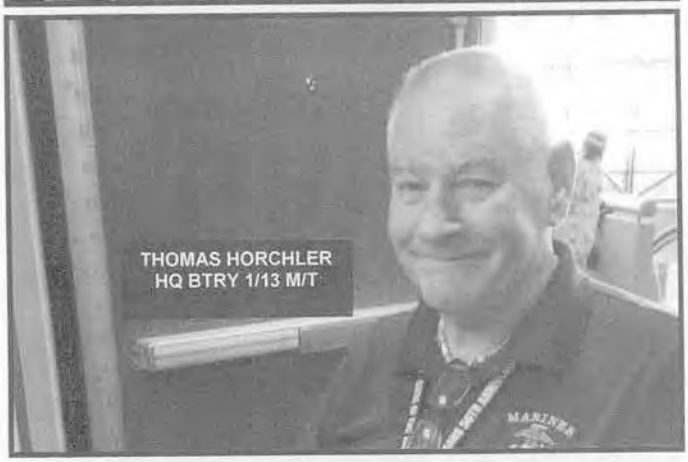
THOMAS HORCHLER
HQ BTRY 1/13 M/T


ALEXANDER & BARBARA
SADOWSKI
H&S CO 1/26

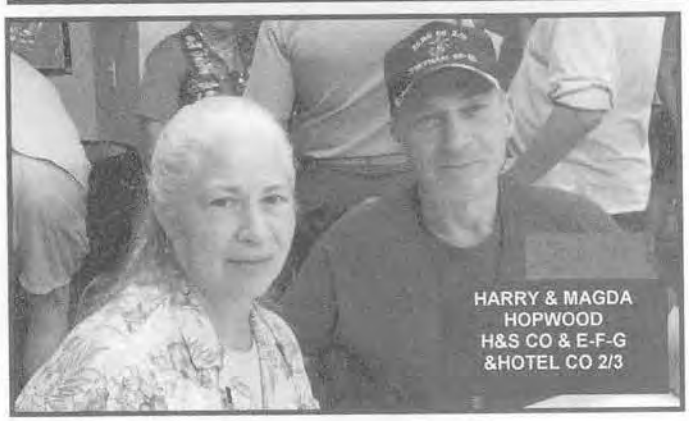
HARRY & MAGDA
HOPWOOD
H&S CO & E-F-G
&HOTEL CO 2/3


MICHAEL & DIANNE
RODRIQUEZ
USA KSV SUPPORTER


MARTIN "BLOOD" &
ETHEL BRONSTON
LIMA CO 3/26


THEODORE RUTKOWSKI
BRAVO CO 3RD RECON


FRED & MAYREEN SWETS
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
ONTOS

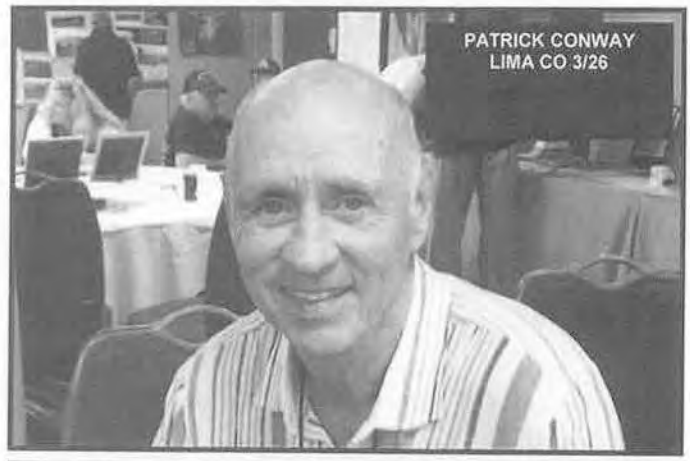
PATRICK CONWAY
LIMA CO 3/26


DON SPROWL
H&S CO FLAMES


TOM RYAN
BRAVO CO 1/9

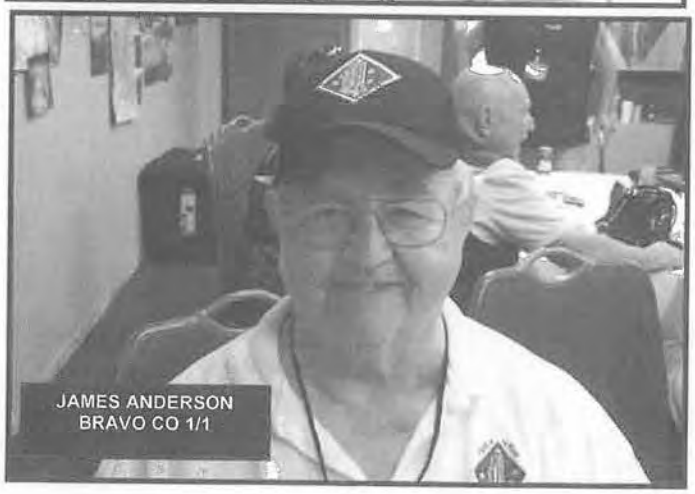
JAMES ANDERSON
BRAVO CO 1/1



JOHN "DOC ROBBIE"
&MARIA ROBINSON
DELTA CO 1/1


AGENT ORANGE
FORD KILGALLON
3RD TANKS
1ST AMTRACS


DON & SHANNON KING
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13

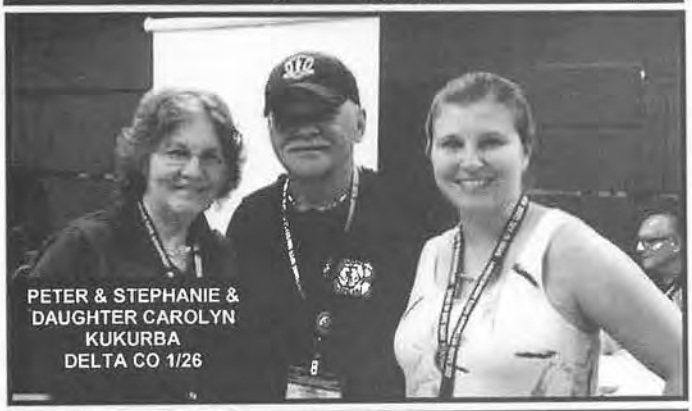
PETER & STEPHANIE &
DAUGHTER CAROLYN
KUKURBA
DELTA CO 1/26

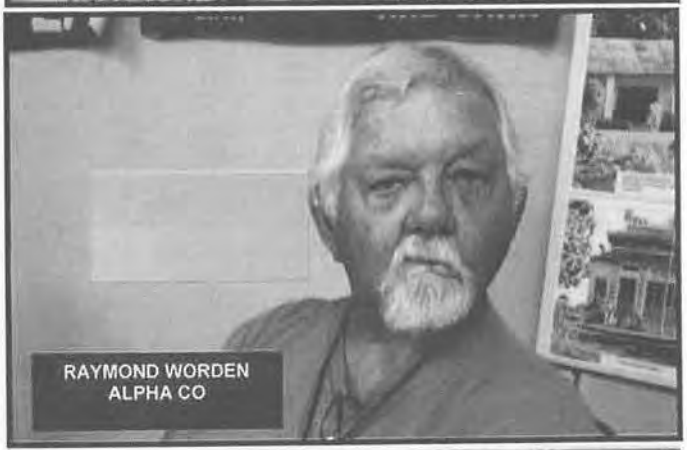
RAYMOND WORDEN
ALPHA CO


KHE SANH
JAMES "OLLIE" & JULIE
COLLINS
ALPHA CO 1/26


MICHAEL PIERSON
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13
4.2 MORTARS


STEVE DUNKLE &
MIKE CO 3/26
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS


EDGAR MICKELSON &
FAMILY
KILO CO 3/26

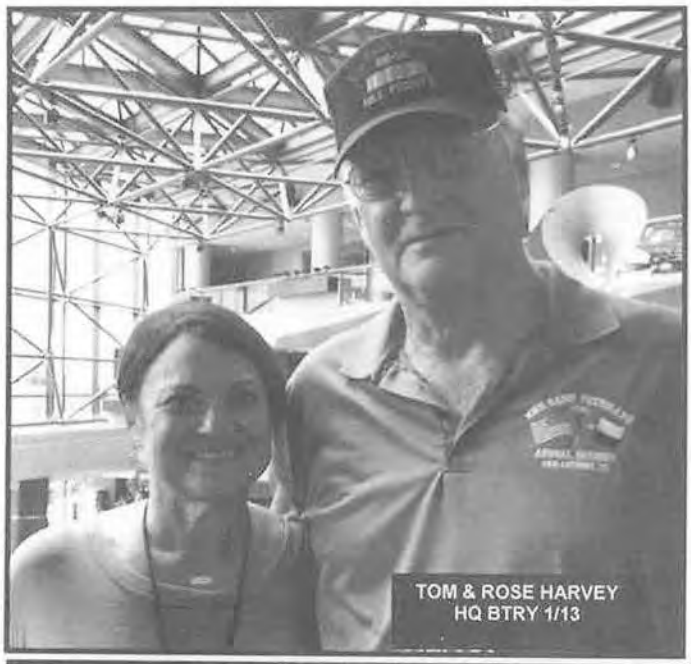
TOM & ROSE HARVEY
HQ BTRY 1/13


WILLIAM & SUSAN
TAQUINOD
DELTA CO 1/26


ROBERT KUBILUS &
CONNIE
CHARLIE CO 1/26

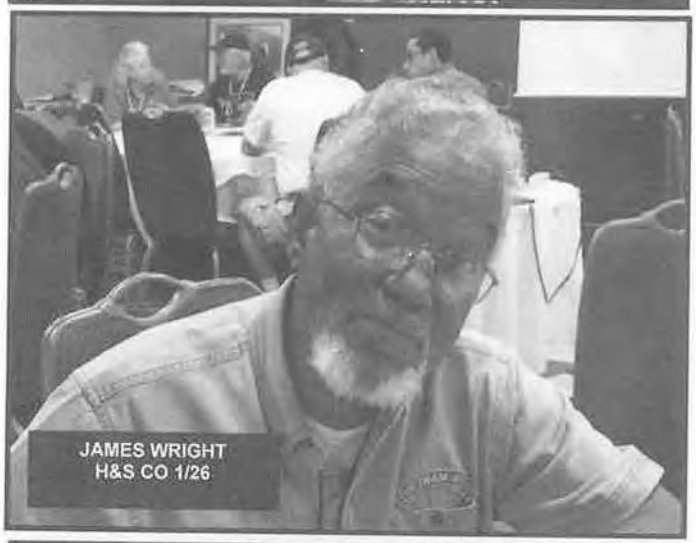
JAMES WRIGHT
H&S CO 1/26


ROBERT & MARIE THING
H&S CO 3/26

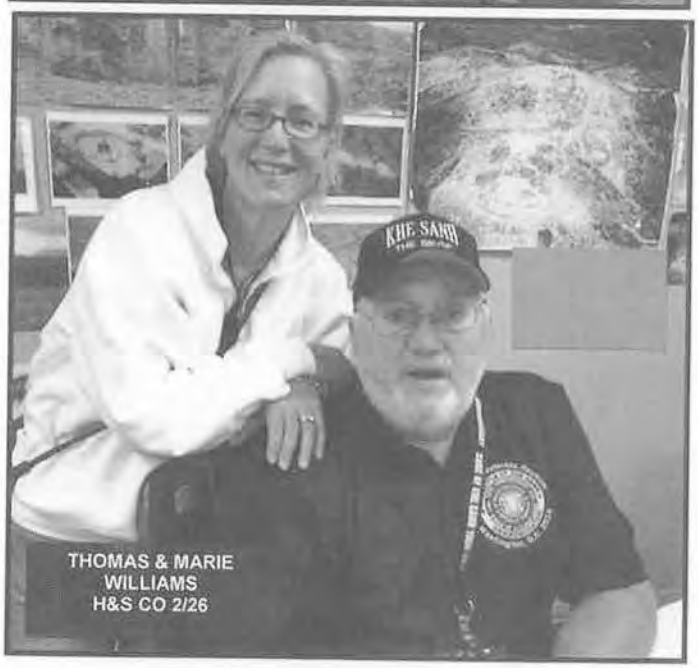
THOMAS & MARIE
WILLIAMS
H&S CO 2/26


JIM "SPARKY" & ELAINE
NAGLE
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A

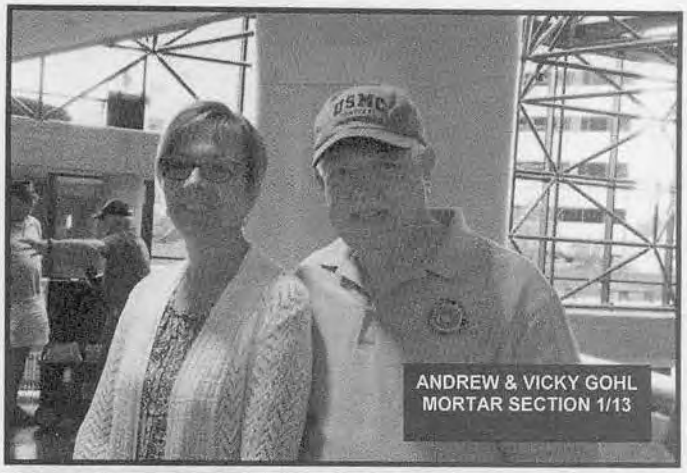
ANDREW & VICKY GOHL
MORTAR SECTION 1/13


RAY BRESLER & GERI ARNOLD
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
ONTOS

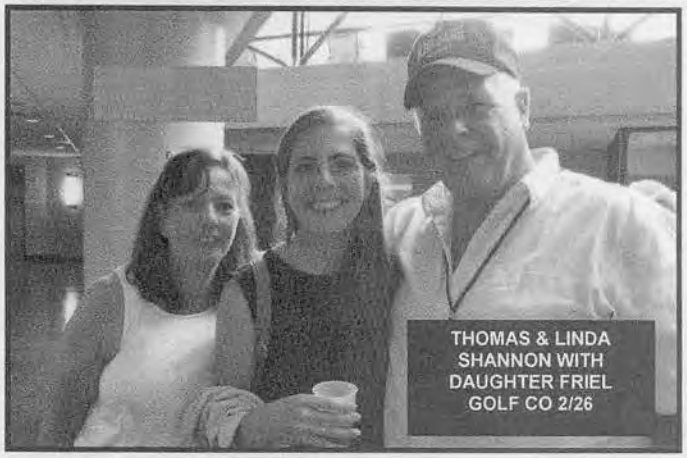
THOMAS & LINDA SHANNON WITH DAUGHTER FRIEL
GOLF CO 2/26

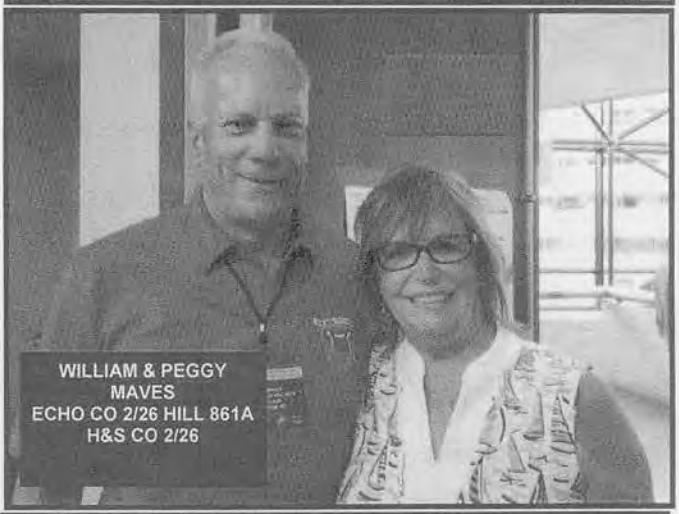
WILLIAM & PEGGY MAVES
ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A
H&S CO 2/26

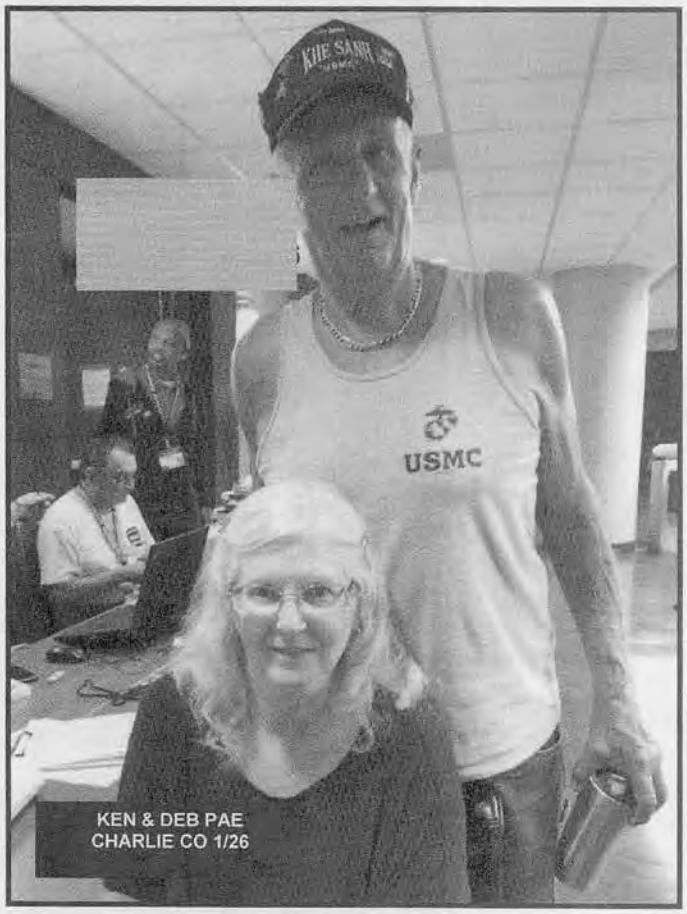
KEN & DEB PAE
CHARLIE CO 1/26

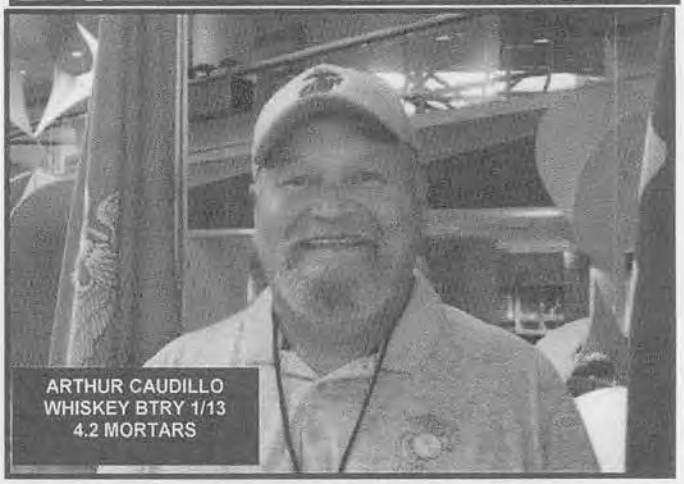
ARTHUR CAUDILLO
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13
4.2 MORTARS


TOM & LINDA STEINHARD
BRAVO CO 1/26

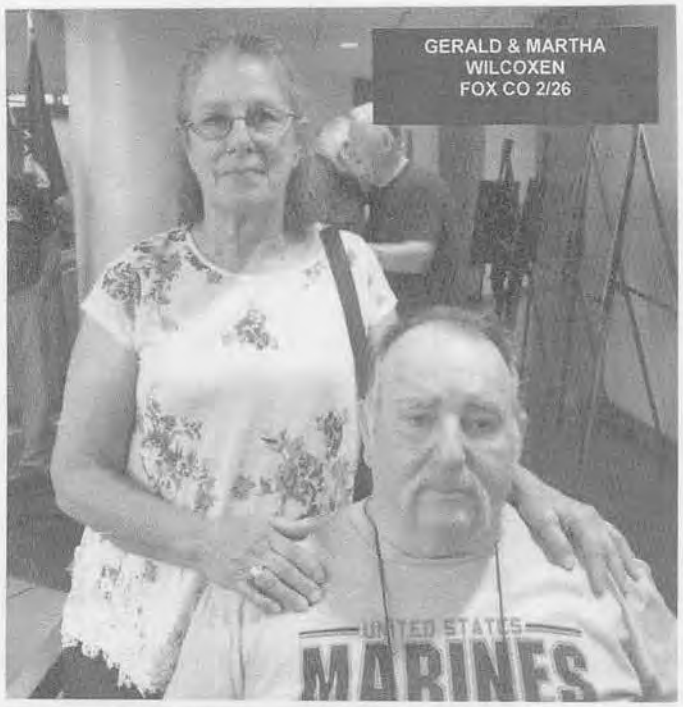
GERALD & MARTHA
WILCOXEN
FOX CO 2/26
MARINES

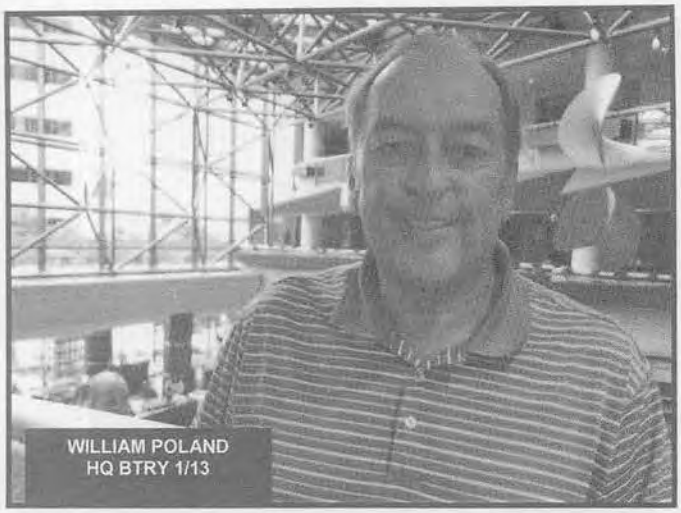
WILLIAM POLAND
HQ BTRY 1/13



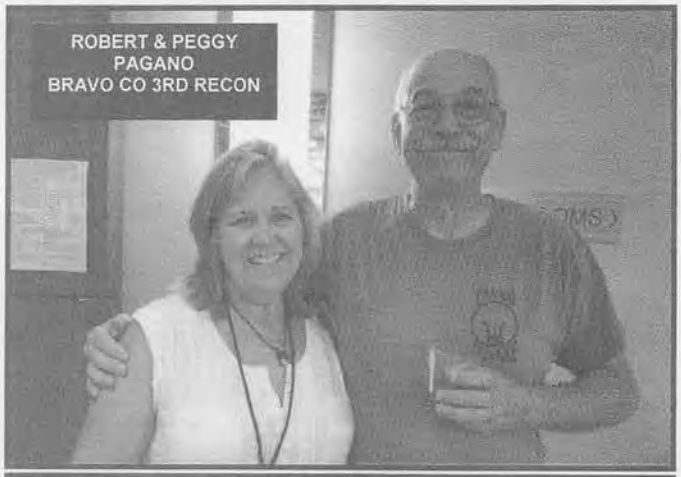
ROBERT & PEGGY
PAGANO
BRAVO CO 3RD RECON

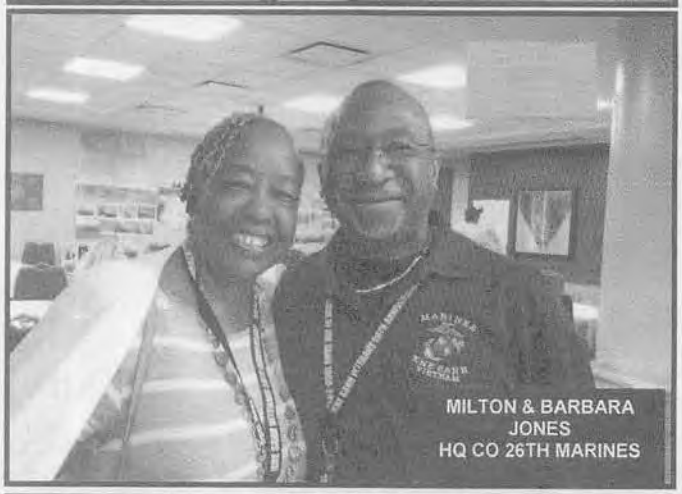
MILTON & BARBARA
JONES
HQ CO 26TH MARINES

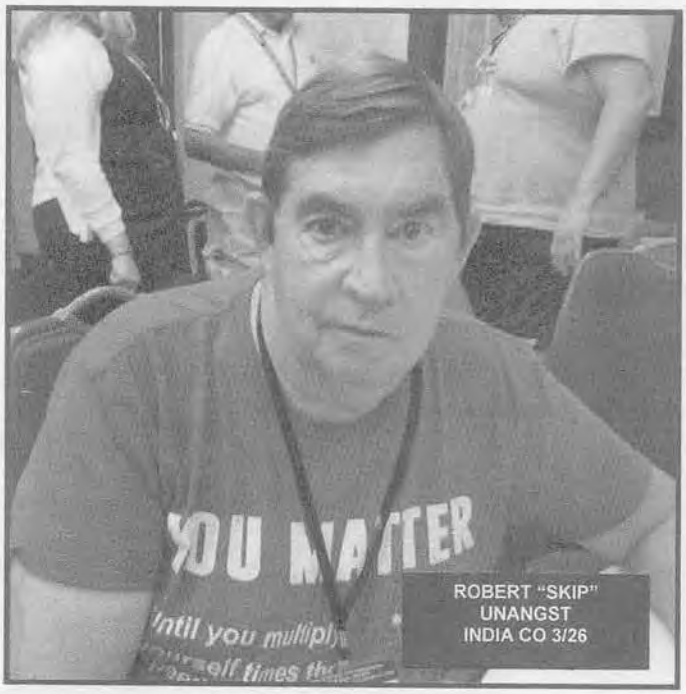
ROBERT "SKIP"
UNANGST
INDIA CO 3/26


BENJAMIN & JACKIE
LEITH
GOLF CO 2/26

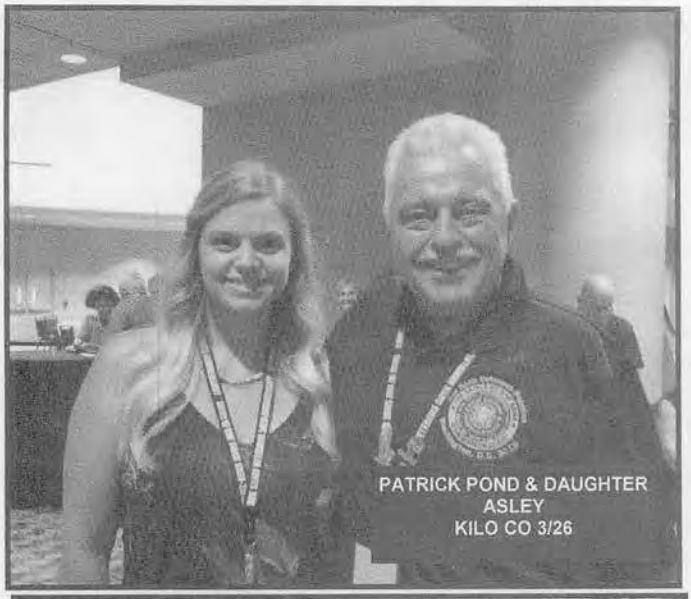

PATRICK POND & DAUGHTER
ASLEY
KILO CO 3/26



PHIL & LYNNE
NUCHERENO
H&S & HOTEL 2/26



RANDY & MIKE HERRINGTON
WITH FAMILY

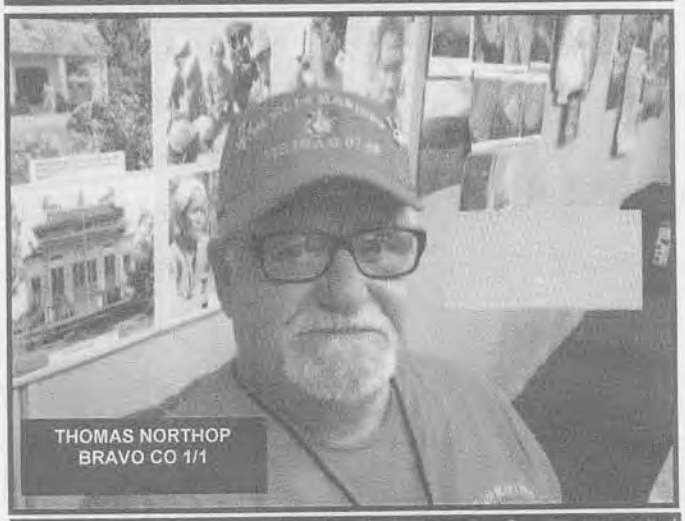

THOMAS NORTHOP
BRAVO CO 1/1

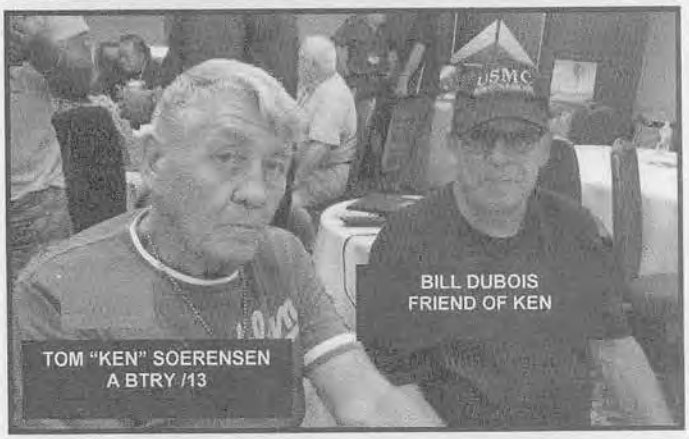

BILL DUBOIS
FRIEND OF KEN

TOM "KEN" SOERENSEN
A BTRY /13

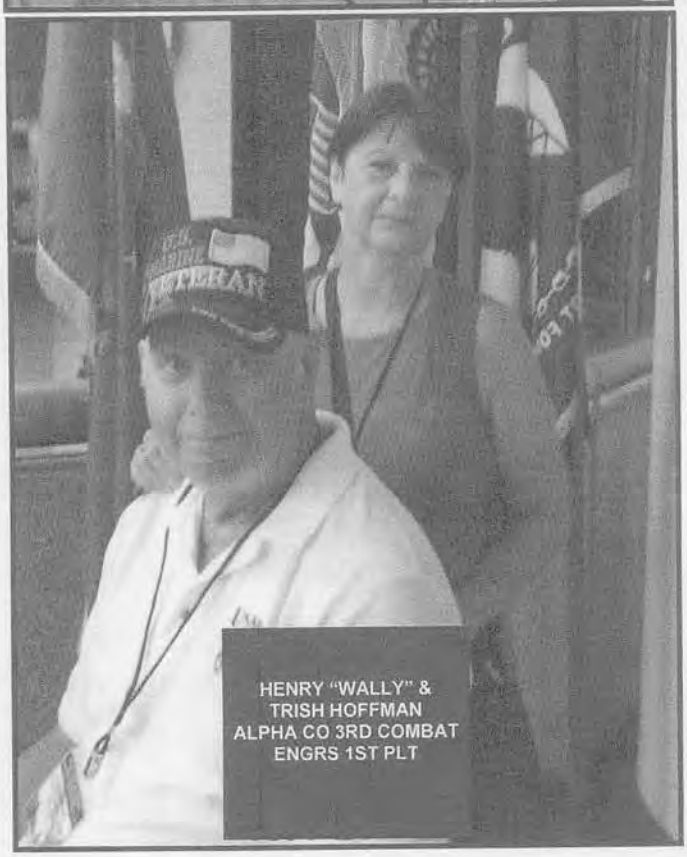

HENRY "WALLY" &
TRISH HOFFMAN
ALPHA CO 3RD COMBAT
ENGRS 1ST PLT



ALBERT & JUARENNE
OWENS
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
ONTOS



NEIL & ALICE KENNY
LIMA CO 3/26


KENNETH & LINDA
SAWYER
HQ BTRY 1/13



JAY CHAAPEL
BRAVO CO 1/1


RICHARD & SALLY
DWORSKY
INDIA CO 3/26


BRUCE SAFFEL & LINDA
MONTPETIT
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
ONTOS



JIM & SHIRLEY SWEET
HQ 26TH MARINES


RUSSELL & FAYE EVANS
H&S CO 3/26



MARK & ELAINE KRAMER
CHARLIE CO 1/26

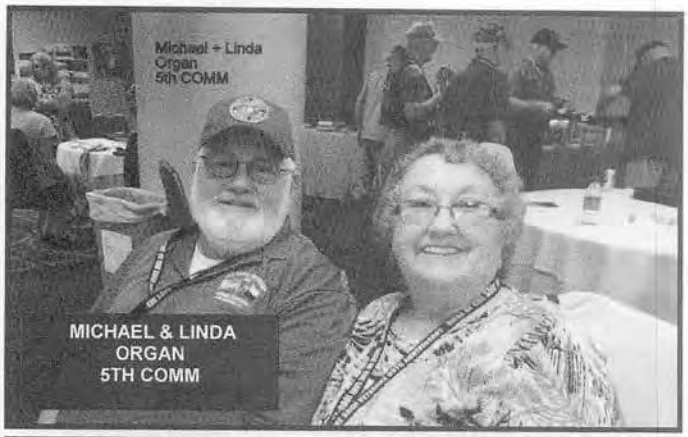

MICHAEL & LINDA
ORGAN
5TH COMM



RICHARD SCOTT

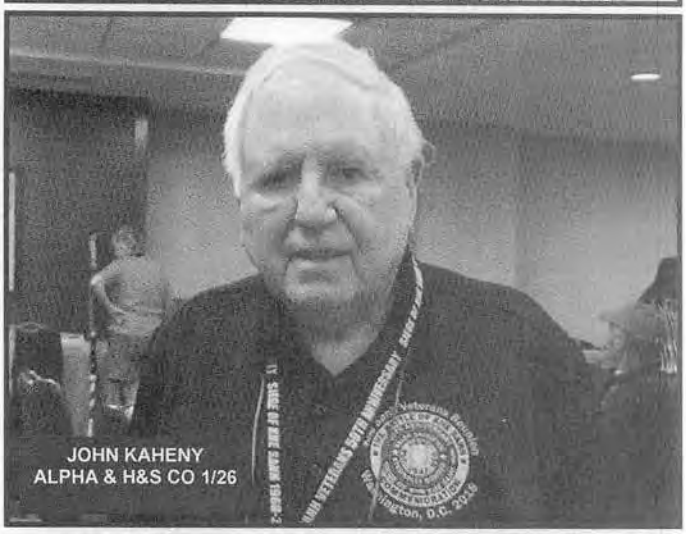
JOHN KAHENY
ALPHA & H&S CO 1/26


RALPH & JEAN BECK
MAG-36 FIRE RESCUE

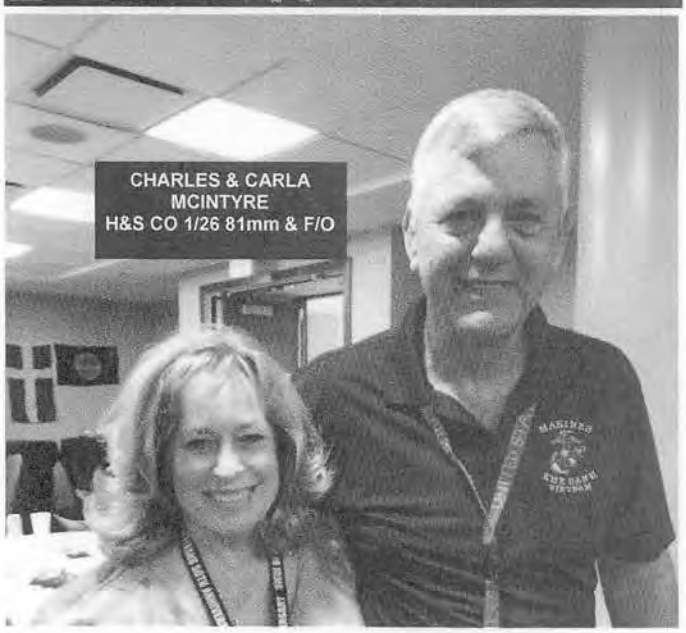
CHARLES & CARLA
MCINTYRE
H&S CO 1/26 81mm & F/O

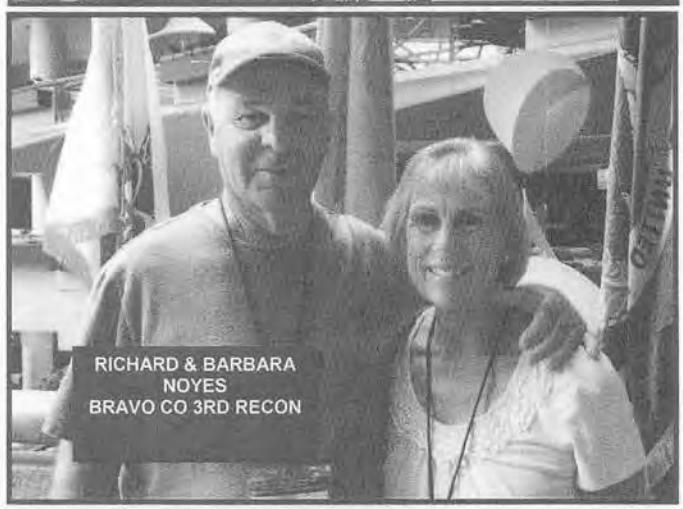
RICHARD & BARBARA
NOYES
BRAVO CO 3RD RECON

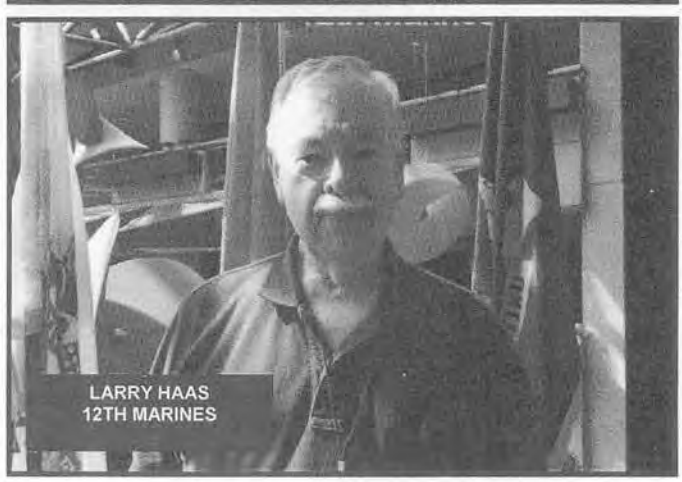
LARRY HAAS
12TH MARINES


JOHN HOLDEN
A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
ONTOS


ARTHUR & KAREN
ALSTON
LIMA CO 3/26


HANS & GALINA
GRANQVIST
1ST BATTALION 13TH


RUSSELL & CATHY
WAGNER
CHARLIE CO 1/26

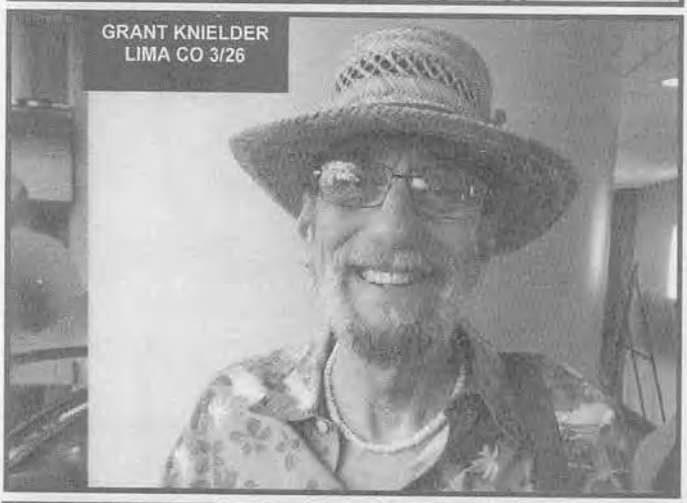
GRANT KNIELDER
LIMA CO 3/26


JOE & PAULINE BISPO
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13

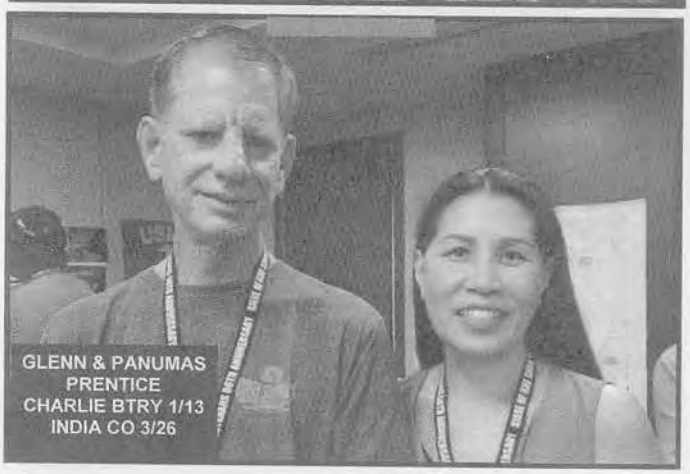
GLENN & PANUMAS
PRENTICE
CHARLIE BTRY 1/13
INDIA CO 3/26

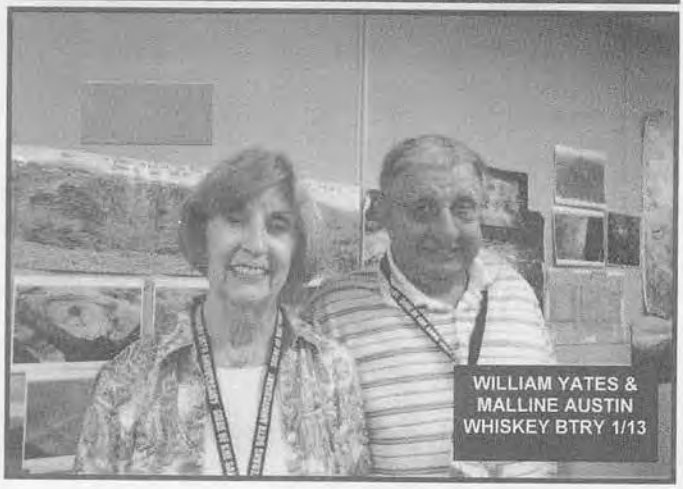
WILLIAM YATES &
MALLINE AUSTIN
WHISKEY BTRY 1/13


FRANCO CAMBRIA & DEB JONES
H&S CO 1/26


RON & LYNN SHOUSE
BRAVO BTRY 1/13

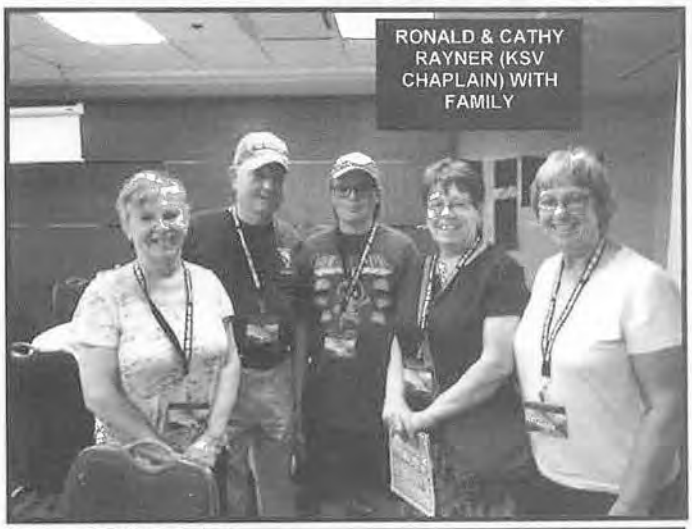
RONALD & CATHY RAYNER (KSV CHAPLAIN) WITH FAMILY


STEVE & JOAN STARKOVICH
BRAVO BTRY 1/13


BERNARD DUFNER
11TH ENGINEERS


RICHARD & BRENDA VAUGHN
H&S 26TH MARINES


WAYNE "BUTCH" & DEVERNEY
KSV MEMBER AT LARGE
H&S CO 2/26

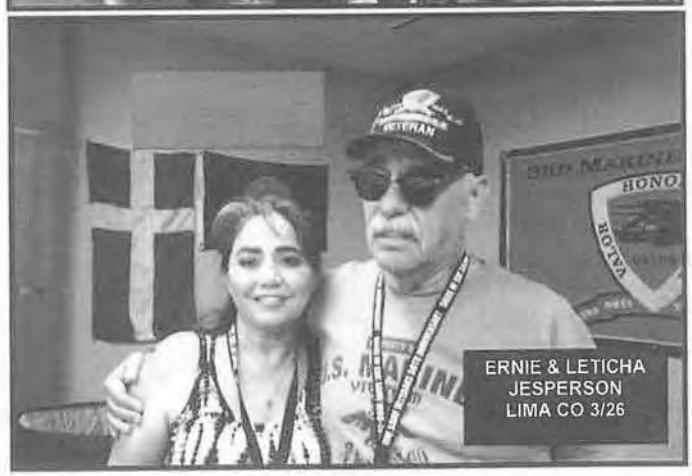
ERNIE & LETICHA JESPERSON
LIMA CO 3/26



THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
Capt Walter Egger USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
GSGT John J Grohman USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
It Paul W. Bush USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
LCpl Stephen C Shannon USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Cpl Fergus J. Carroll USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 18 Jun 68	William Hotz Mike CO 3/4
Lt Col Ken Pipes USMC B Co 2/26 Passed Away	Dermott Barry Golf Co 2/26
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC A HQ/13 KIA 09 MAR 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Remembering All "Bastard Bravo" Marines and their families	William E. Carpenter Bravo Btry 1/13
Captain Bill Person USAF 553 3RD Recon Wing	Alex & Barbara Sadowski H&S CO 1/26
PFC Donald Saunders USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM KIA 04 March 1968	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
Sgt Donald Ray Chamblin USMC HQ BTRY COMM KIA 08 March 1968	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
William "Doc" Miller Sr USN Lima Co 3/26 Passed Away 11/6/17	S/Sgt Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C Btry 1/13
GYSGT Charles Perkins USMC DOW 17 May 1968	Barbara Eddowes Fiance
SSgt Karl E. Taylor USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 12/98/68	Stephen Jenkins C Co 1/26
PFC Roland T. Marshall USMC M CO 3/4 KIA 5/17/68	Will Griggs India Co 3/26
L/Cpl Philip Van Deusen USMC A/1/13 KIA 06/07/67	Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
Lt Marion Norman USMC A 1/13 KIA 30 Mar 68	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
PFC Gale E Gotti USMC A/1/13 KIA 06/07 67	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
2Lt John Bobo USMC I Co 3/9 KIA 30 Mar 67	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
All Members of Detachment A-101 Lang Vei & All who served at FOB-3	Thomas Soerensen A Btry 1/13
Major Earle Breeding USMC C/O ECHO CO 2/26 Hill 861A	Lawrence Cooper CO C 5TH Special Forces
All the men of HQ Btry 1/13 Who Gave Their Lives So We can Enjoy The freedom we have today	The Men Of ECHO CO 2/26
LTCOL Ken Pipes USMC C/O B CO 2/26 Passed Away 26 April 2018	James Baker HQ Btry 1/13 26Th Marines
Cpl William E. Wyrosdic USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 10/08/68	Lawrence Luther India Co 3/26
Always remembering all those KIA HILL 689 27 June 1967	John Laibinis SR. H CO 2/26 2ND PLT
L/Cpl Adrian Brittle USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 9/21/68	Clarence T. Anthony India CO 3/26
2LT Donald Jacques USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Chester W. Nelson JR. India CO 3/26
CPL John Greene USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 04 July 1968	Pietro Osimanti Bravo CO 1/26
SW-5 Edward Cody Adams USN CBMU-301 KIA 16 APR 68	Johnny Moon Charlie CO 1/26 3RD SQD
LCPL Frederick B. Link USMC C CO 1/9 KIA 3/1/68	Larry Kubley USN CBMU-301 (Seabee)
All Marines & Corpsman who served on Hill 861A in Jan/Feb & Mar of 1968	Eric Bergland C CO 1/9
All Marines KIA of Delta CO 1/26	Lt Don Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A
All Marines 1/1 & 2/1 Hotel CO	John Finn Delta Co 1/26
DR John Magilligan, d. 29 Jan 3013,DR Ed Feldman d. 03 Oct 2017& DR James Finnegan d. 13 Sep 2013 From Charlie Med	Peter Hoban Hotel CO 2/1
All who served at Khe Sanh	Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN
HN William A. Beyer "Willie" USN H&S Co 3/26 KIA 2/1/67	Ron Shuff LSU MTM Co. Maintenance Bn.
	Pat B. Buckley Charlie CO 1/26

DONATION TO KHE SANH VETERANS

ENDING 01 JANUARY 2019

AMDORFER, R.W.	50.00	Check# 615
AMERICAN LEGION POST	100.00	Check# 4374
BARBER, Michael F.	500.00	Check# 1132
BECK, Ralph	100.00	Check# 4539
BENNETT, Charles A.	50.00	Check# 5384
BOAN, William S	40.00	Check# 5649
BRONSTON, Martin D.	100.00	Check# 2361
BRONZIE, Douglas L.	500.00	Check# 8959
CAM P AN IE, Albert L.	60.00	Check# 3523
CASEY, Maurice	10.00	Check# 3211
COMPTON, Steven & Karen	1,000.00	Check# 10907
DELCASTILLO, Charles	50.00	Check# 240
DES ETA, Louis J.	300.00	Check# 5909
DESET A, Louis J.	116.00	Check# 5918
DOSS, Kenneth W.	200.00	Check# 2026
DOWNES, Stephen Stock	1,000.00	Check# 46207
EAKI ,Randall W.	100.00	Check# 1540
FARRELL, William	500.00	Check# 255
FAUVER, Jerry	50.00	Check# 6217
FOSTER, Bill	100.00	Check# 1390
GAJEWSKI, Kay	50.00	Check# 2960
GERRJOR, Charles	300.00	Check# 7931
GILLESPIE, Donald J.	60.00	Check# 4000
HAMNER, Ernie	150.00	Check# 2170
HAMNER, Ernie	150.00	Check# 2235
HAMNER, Ernie	1,000.00	Check# 2169
HAMNER, Ernie	150.00	Check# 2338
HAMNER, Ernie	150.00	Check# 2282
HOTZ, William J	60.00	Check# 7516
JACKSON, Dianne	100.00	Check# 2032
JACKSON, Dianne	250.00	Check# 2050
KJLIAN, Richard J.	100.00	Check# 5522
KORN, William J.	100.00	Check# 7345
LINDSAY, John	320.00	Check# 1562
MARSHALL, Edward N.	60.00	Check# 2329
MATTHEWS, Owen	500.00	Check# 10016
MAZZELLA, Donna	200.00	
MCDANIEL, Jerry L.	100.00	Check# 1270
MCCROSSEN, John P.	200.00	Checks 2189,90
MCMINN, William P.	200.00	Check# 1633
MERCADO, Saturno	60.00	Check# 8260
MEYER, Dave & Carol	500.00	Check# 1359,60
MULLIGAN, Michael J.	300.00	Check# 4882

NANGLE, James T.	300.00	Check# 206
NELSON, George	100.00	Check#
PAULSON, Marjorie S.	50.00	Check# 1065
PA YNE, Larry	25.00	Check# 9095
RAIT, Donald M.	500.00	Check# 1253
RA YNER, Ronald H.	500.00	Check# 318
RJVES, Wayne R	50.00	Check# 1141
ROBERTSON, Isidor	100.00	Check# 8086
RUSHFORTH, Toby	625.00	Check# 799
SARGENT, Ralph F.	100.00	Check3 1117
SEPULVEDA, Charles	100.00	Check# 4077
SEMKOW, Raymond	50.00	Check# 1376
SPIVEY, B. Larkin	60.00	Check# 1820
ST ACK, Nancy & Geoffrey	1,000.00	Check# 2693
STERLING, Glenn	150.00	Check# 4054
SWETS, Fred	60.00	Credit Card
THOMAS, James E.	25.00	Check# 4198
TIVNAN, Barbara	100.00	Check# 1067
TOURTE, Craig	300.00	Check# 954
TOURTE, Craig	500.00	Check# 952
TROUP, Ed	100.00	Check# 5996
TURNER, Russell	250.00	Check# 5763
WAKEMAN, Marcia M.	50.00	Check# 2121
WOLF & EVANS	300.00	Check# 972
YATES, William R.	100.00	Check# 7714
YATES, William R.	100.00	Check# 7862
ZEIHER, Mary E	50.00	Check# 615

CRAIG TOURTE FROM THE WEB

There is something about Christmas; perhaps it is just the commercialization of this otherwise religious holiday recognition that disturbs me. It is certainly a wonderful time for so many, the celebration of the birth of our religious and cultural foundation no matter one's religious preference, a time to remember family, children, friends and those who have passed. I know it is a difficult time for our troops who are away from home. I think most remember where they were at Christmas and what they were doing, perhaps participating in a religious ceremony of some sort, maybe even an exchange of gifts and it is certainly a time for great meals and for a few, even a libation or two amongst friends. I wish I had some fond memories of the 1967 Christmas at Khe Sanh, I mean the Siege had not yet started, but it was cold, wet and foggy and just plain downright miserable.

few days ago I was sitting around with 3 other men my age, all veterans of the Vietnam War. Two had been in the Army and one in the Navy. The subject of Christmas and USO shows came up and the question was asked if anyone had seen Bob Hope. There were some funny stories; one guy said it was strongly suggested that he attend the Bob Hope Christmas show although he just wanted to sleep. Another mentioned a USO show he saw and how much he enjoyed it. My vague recall now is that a small contingent of the Marine Corps Band showed up on the Khe Sanh base and a couple of them found there way over to the South West corner where we were located. I'm thinking it must have been around Christmas, for I can't imagine why they would have been there if it was not for that reason. I think that was around the time we were all offered one coke or one beer (both warm of course) but I can't be sure, I was pretty excited about receiving that beer.

For the past several years I have offered my "Christmas at Khe Sanh" story, kind of a little parody on the Bob Hope and Ann Margaret USO Vietnam Christmas Shows. I enjoyed writing the story, a ridiculously impossible event that some actually believed occurred and a few wondered why they did not attend or just could not remember the event. Surprisingly, no one said they had actually seen the show. I'll remember Christmas again this year, not for the commercialization, unneeded gifts or unwanted guests. Not for the un USO show that did not occur at Khe Sanh in 1967. Not for my disappointment of never having seen Bob or Ann, but rather for the memory of those who did not return with us, for those who have passed and those of us who have reached the shadow of our years and are now ill or otherwise confined, lonely, in pain or are just plain miserable along with those who are in good spirits and health. God bless us all for our perseverance, our pride, courage, and patriotism.







TOUGH GUYS
(A REUNION STORY)

BY CRAIG TOURTE
HQ BTRY 1/13

I met a lot of tough guys at the reunion. Men who I had only met on two occasions (reunions), but who I have known for 38 years. I was kind of a tough guy too. I had a long career dealing with people who had problems and tragedy in their lives. I often had to be the cool, calm and collected one to make sure certain events turned out successfully. I comforted victims of assault and violence. I have had guns and knives pointed at me, cut down the suicide victim from the rafters of their garage while their families stood and watched, removed the gun from the hand of the dead after they had shot themselves. I have dealt with a wide range of troubled individuals in our society. I tried to show compassion certainly, but that compassion was not necessarily coupled with emotion. As the years progressed, I found it a little more difficult to express emotion, even when dealing with my own family issues. The word coldness comes to mind, and there were times when I wondered if I even had the ability to feel any emotion at all, an issue I'll admit, that concerned me.

There were a lot of tough guys at the reunion, perhaps not so much in the body anymore, but certainly in spirit and character. Combat Marines, veterans of brutal fights and various battles. Men whose toughness was honed by years of hard living and conflict. Men who could easily describe the brutality of war and the witnessing of sometimes-indescribable death of their friends and comrades. Men who had committed the necessary acts of war on other individuals and to coin a phrase didn't blink an eye. Men who had gone through several marriages, because they were now unable to express emotion to another human being. Men whose families and friends still cannot understand their coldness. Yep, there certainly were a lot of tough guys at the reunion.

I have made an observation about myself at these reunions and it is that it usually takes me about twelve hours or twenty minutes talking with Neil before this tough guy is reduced to pretty much a blubbering, sobbing idiot. Of course I'm overstating this, but certainly, I get overwhelmed with emotion, the tears uncontrollably run down my cheeks, and I certainly feel like a blubbering idiot. I have tried to be circumspect about this unusual occurrence in me, this uncontrolled emotional feeling. It is not depression, sadness, nor is its sensitivity to anything that is said or discussed. I think it is just a feeling of humanity and humility and respect for those I am around. I think of these men who 38 years ago shared the most personal and intimate moments of their lives together and although it was a long time ago, it seems like yesterday. I think of my friend Chuck, who was one of the few who survived the rocket attack on the CP (in fact he survived two attacks) and Bruce, who was the one who pulled him out. Chuck credits Bruce with saving his life 38 years ago. Chuck said, "I hope Bruce is here, I would like to meet." I was not present when Chuck and Bruce got together that evening at the reunion, but just the thought of that moment chokes me up.

There were a lot of tough guys at the reunion, you could tell who they were, they were the ones hugging each other with tears running down their faces. I didn't want the reunion to end, I didn't want to leave, and I wanted this moment to always be. I didn't want to leave these fine men who I had met twice before, but who I had known for 38 years. I was humbled to be in their presents and even though I was a REFM, I was so proud to be accepted by them.

If you're a tough guy and a Khe Sanh Veteran and you have never been to a reunion, you should think about going, there will be a lot of tough guys there, and you'll never be the same.



\KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATIONS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION:

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited institution as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post-secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarships will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent, legal guardian, or grandparent who is a paid member in good standing of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., a 501(c)(19) charitable organization.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2019 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW;

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman 52ND
6050 52ND St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128-1317

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the **legal child or grandchild** of a paid up member of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (See member definition in the KSV Association bylaws.) This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if family members are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children or grandchildren of KSV associate members are not eligible.

Information provided by each candidate on the attached application forms will focus on the following qualities considered for selection to KSVSF financial aid: good grades, character, citizenship, leadership experience and personal essay. A point selection system is included in the application forms. Examples of these above mentioned qualities could be in the classroom, in extracurricular activities or in service to the community, church or nation.

A Scholarship Foundation Review Committee will serve the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., and will accept, review and grade each correctly completed application. This committee will provide a scholarship financial report and short summaries of the selected candidates at the annual KSV reunion for publication in the Red Clay" Newsletter.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The amount of financial award per applicant will be determined by the Review Committee's scoring results. The awards will be granted for a maximum of 4 years per student. A new application will be required for each continuous year applied

Achievement Award Levels are:

The Col. David E. Lownds Award - for top achievement in Application Review (one award or tie)
The Sgt. Major James T. Gaynor Award - for high achievement in Application Review (5 awards)
The Col. William H. Dabney Award - for honorable achievement in Application Review (6 awards)

The KSV Scholarship money will be awarded upon presentation of proof of registration for the appropriate term. Proof of registration should be sent to the chairman's address on page one of this application.

Scholarship Guidelines and Purpose

1. The financial award is to be used to help defray costs of tuition, fees and books at an accredited Institution of the applicant's choice as a full time student.

2. If a recipient of the KSVSF scholarship does not enter a post high school institution during the next school year, the award for his/her benefit shall be cancelled and the money awarded to an alternate applicant. An alternate of each scholarship award is to be chosen at the time of selection of recipients.

3. The KSVSF Committee Chair and the Treasurer of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., will send a check for the full years' award amount to the selected students upon final approval by the KSV President.

4. The recipient of a scholarship shall be notified no later than the end of the month of August of the coming school year.

5. **Scholarship Applications must be received by the Committee Chair on or before *MAY* 1 of the school year applied for. *** (This is an important, NEW change to previous** years)***

6. KSV, Inc. Scholarship recipients must agree to maintain a standard of personal performance both in and out of school that conforms to the moral standards set down by Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc., members.

7. Criteria: Point Selection System !Maximum of 110 regular points or 125 with bonus points

a. Scholastic achievement / grade point average. Max =40 points max. (Please attach last school GPA transcript) example below:

A GPA of 4.0 x 10 =40 points or a GPA of 3.0 x 10 =30 points

b. Extracurricular activities. Max =30 points total

Description of personal experience in the following type of activities (Be specific!);

Extra Curricular =10 points max.
Volunteer services =10 points max.
Leadership positions = 10 points max.
Employment = 10 points max

C. KSV SCHOLARHIP ESSAY (250 words min. to 400 words max) on educational goals, career goals = 30 points max. Please type, single spaced lines on ONE sheet only

Essay suggestions;

Over decades countless adjectives have tried to describe Khe Sanh Veterans and their historic accomplishments. Please review the six suggested adjectives below, select one or more that might relate to you in some manner to explain how this is evident in your life's experiences and will help you in meeting your educational and career goals.

b Bonus Points= 10 bonus points for being a military veteran
5 bonus points for an accredited college GPA (Grade Point Average) transcript

Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation

Application Form

Date of Application _____

1. Applicant Information: (PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: Last _____ **First** _____ **MI** _____

Address: Street _____ **City** _____ **State** ___ **Zip** _____

Home phone: _____ **E-mail address:** _____

Applicant Birthdate: _____

2. KSV Sponsor Information : (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran Inc. Regular or Life Member)
Name: Last, _____ **First** _____

Relationship to Applicant; _____

Branch of Service _____

Unit served at Khe Sanh _____ **Dates served there** _____

____ Regular Paid KSV Member ____ Life KSV Member ____ Deceased KSV Life Member

____ KIA or MIA KSV Family Associate Member (Check One)

3. School Information: (School to be attending)

School Name: _____

School Address: Street, _____ **City** _____

State _____ **Zip Code** _____

School Phone number: _____

Curriculum/intended course of study _____

School Year To be Funded __ Freshman ___ Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior (Check One)

4. Applicant Personal History (Be Specific!)

a EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Athletics, Publishing, Music, Art, Scouting, Communications, academic honors & prizes, student government participation,etc)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b. VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES:: (community, church, government, environmental, health, etc._____

LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HELD IN A&B (Capacity, Class Officer, Committee Chairperson, etc)

d. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY– FULL & PART TIME Include Military Service If Applicable)

e FINAL MAILING PACKET: (Due May 1ST)

Enclose THESE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORMS

***A COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT,**
***A SMALL PICTURE OF YOURSELF,**
***A PERSONAL ESSAY (250 WORDS min. to 400 WORDS max. one page) TELLING OF YOUR ACADEMIC, COMMUNITY, VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PLANS.**

!! BE SURE TO RETAIN A COPY OF ALL YOUR FORMS AND DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS BEFORE MAILING !!

I SWEAR, THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE;

_____ _____

Signature Of Applicant **Actual Signature of Khe Sanh Veteran Parent or Grandparent**

Note* IMPORTANT!! APPLICATION DEADLINE *MAY* 1ST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR TO BE APPLIED FOR

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO KHE SANH VETERANS,INC.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Approved:

_____

Dan Fisher, Chairman, Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc Scholarship Committee

_____

Tom Eichler, President, Khe Sanh Veterans

TED SHOWALTER WITH THE ENTIRE POILANE FAMILY





TED SHOWALTER
IN TOP PHOTO WITH POILANE FAMILY
TOOK ORIGINAL PHOTO OF POILANE FAMILY



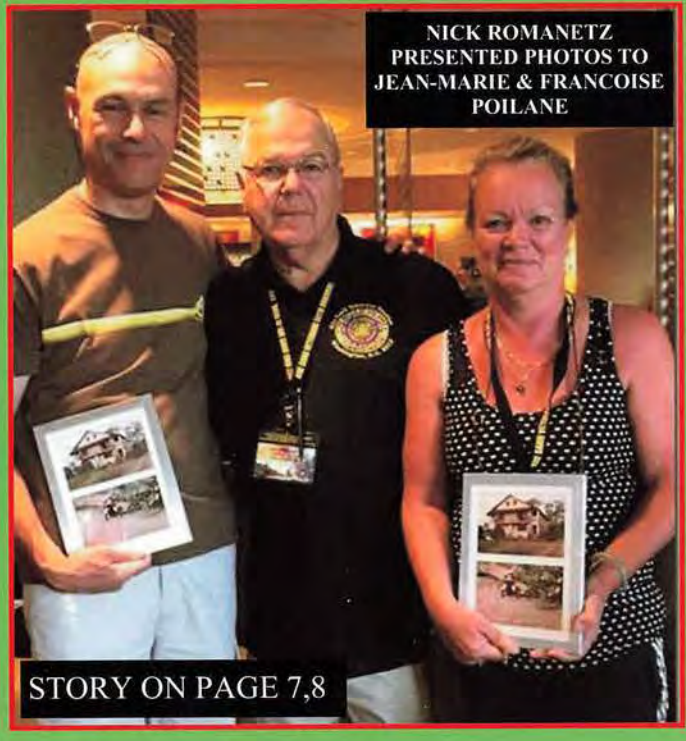

NICK ROMANETZ PRESENTED PHOTOS TO JEAN-MARIE & FRANCOISE POILANE

STORY ON PAGE 7,8



USMC MOTOR POOL MECHANICS
REPAIRED FELIX's TRACTOR
KHE SANH FALL OF 1967

MEMORIAL BUILT BY SAMMY L. MORRISON OF H&S 1/26 SCOUTS IN HIS BACKYARD IN GARDEN CITY MICHIGAN

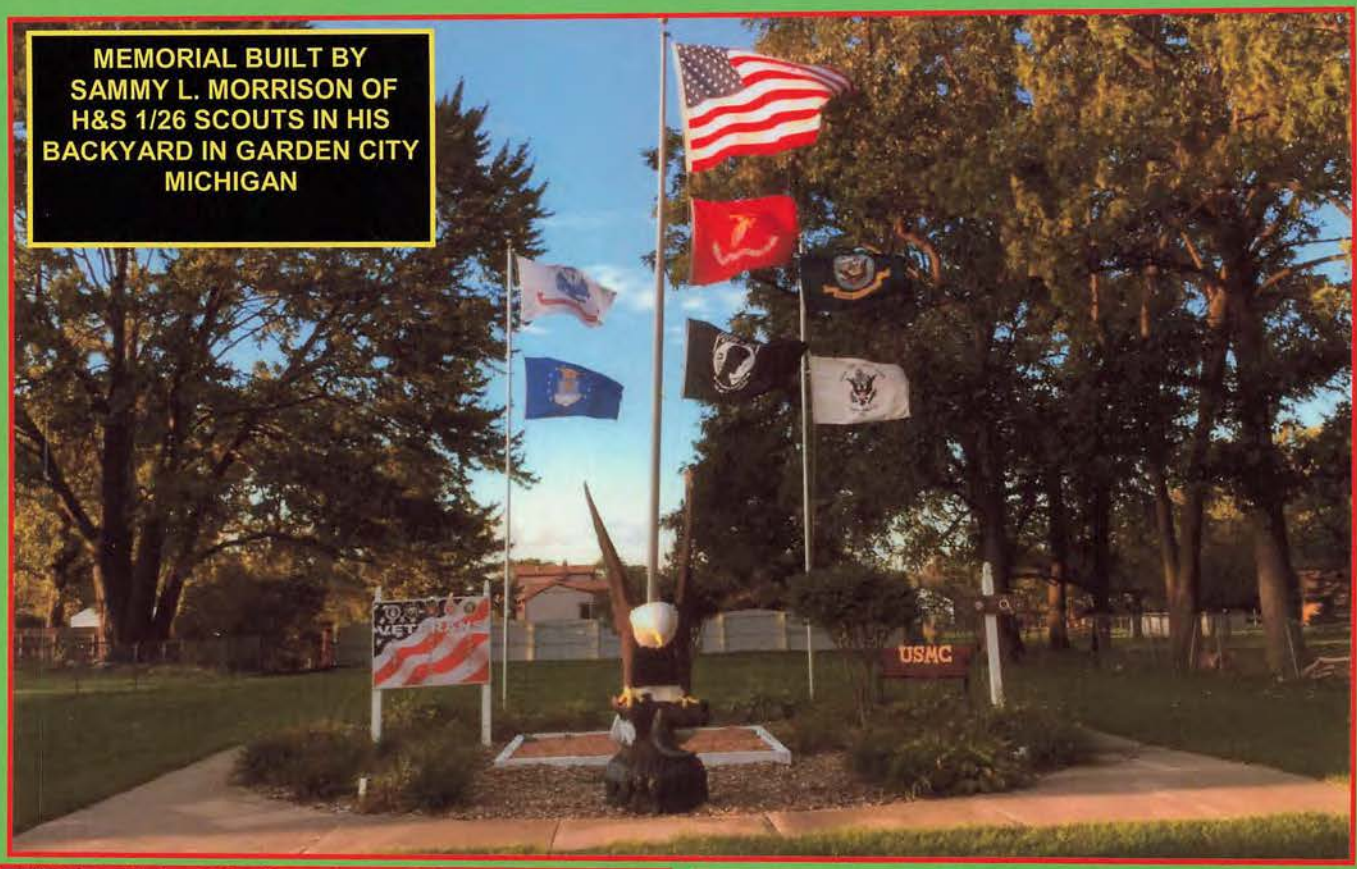









ISSUE 98

RED CLAY

SPRING 2020

THIS ISSUE FEATURES "THE RANCH" THIS RANCH IS OWNED AND OPERATED BY KEN KORKOW. BRAVO CO 1/26. IT IS A CHRISTIAN MINISTRY AIMED TO HELP OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS. THE ARTICLE APPEARS ON PAGES 51 TO 54, WITH PHOTOS ON INSIDE OF FRONT COVER AND INSIDE OF AND ON BACK COVER.



THE RANCH IS A VENUE FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING, GROWTH, AND HEALING. HUNDREDS OF MEN AND WOMEN STRUGGLING WITH PTSD, BOTH YOUNG AND OLD, HAVE FOUND REFUGE AND HELP AT THE RANCH. THE RANCH SITS ON 540 ACRES OF SOUTH DAKOTA PRAIRIE, ABOUT 20 MILES SOUTHEAST OF PIERRE, SD, RIGHT IN THE HEART OF PHEASANT HUNTING COUNTRY. IN FACT, OUR LOCATION IS SITUATED IN AN AREA KNOWN AS THE BEST IN THE WORLD FOR PHEASANT HUNTING. OUR MINISTRY USES PHEASANT HUNTING AS A KEYSTONE FOR HELPING VETERANS. DURING THE PHEASANT SEASON, WE HOST PHEASANT HUNTS FOR VETERANS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE WHEELCHAIR-BOUND OR HAVE SUFFERED OTHER SEVERE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL INJURY.

BUT OUR MINISTRIES INVOLVE MORE THAN HUNTING. THE RANCH RELIES ON A VARIETY OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES THAT VETERANS AND OTHERS ENJOY. OUR MINISTRIES ALSO FOCUS ON WORSHIP, PRAYER, FELLOWSHIP, AND MEDITATING ON GOD'S WORD. ALL THESE THINGS WORK TO BRING HEALING THROUGH CHRIST CLOSER FOR EACH VISITOR.



CONNECTING WITH GOD



HORSE BACK RIDING



GOOD PHEASANT HUNTING



HUNTING



SPECIAL HUNTING FOR DISABLED

WHERE BOMBS ONCE FELL, KHE SANH GROWS

50 years after the war, the devastated battlefield of Khe Sanh has become an economic hub of the poor central province of Quảng Trị, with average annual income per capita of US $1,400.



A farmer harvests coffee at a plantation in Khe Sanh. Greenery has returned to the former battlefield thanks to the efforts of local veteran soldiers. Photo courtesy of Yên Mã Sơn

According to the People's Committee of Khe Sanh Town, the town's living standards have transformed completely since the post-war era.

"The town is growing into a developed urban zone and we hope to reach annual income per capita of $1,900 in 2020, thanks to the focus on the development of trade and tourism," says Hoàng Văn Quynh, the committee's chairman.

A report by the committee said the local residents' education has increased year after year, while the health care system works effectively, with a doctor present in every commune in the town.

Greenery covers all land areas and vestiges of wartime bombing are rarely seen in the town. The return of the green trees, along with the mild weather and the plenty of red basalt soil in the town, have sparked hopes that it could become a tourism destination and clean agriculture.

Hoàng Hữu Cảm, a local who runs a hotel business in the town, says a tourism boom seems in the cards, thanks to the town's location on the East West Economic Corridor, which runs through five Southeast Asian countries of Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Việt Nam.

"Khe Sanh is the ideal stop for visitors from the countries who go through the nearby Lao Bảo and La Lay border checkpoints," Cảm says. The border gates sit between the town and Savannakhet Province of Laos. They also facilitate trade to and from the town.

Hồ Xuân Hiếu, a businessman who owns a cassava starch brand, says the fertile soil in the town yields a pure flour. Cassava grown in the town produces 70 tons of starch each year, which is supplied to Japan and South Korea.

The return of greenery to the town cost the blood and tears of local soldiers who fought in the battle of Khe Sanh for five months from January 14 to July 9, 1968.

Hồ Mơ left his soldier's life to return the town in 1980, when the remnants of the war were everywhere and the town was in disarray. Mơ started to clear a valley five kilometres from the centre to take soil for cultivation.

Thanks to his efforts, rice began to grow well in the soil within a month. By 2005, Mơ became one of the top farmers in the town. He had rice paddies, a plantation of rubber trees and a big herd of cows and water buffalos.

Since 2005, Mơ has earned around US $13,000 a year. Besides cultivating his seven hectares of farm land and his husbandry work feeding 50 cows and buffalos, the 80-year-old man has volunteered to protect 53 hectares of community forest from illegal hunters and loggers.

"At my 18, I joined the North Việt Nam military volunteer and worked as a porter carrying necessities and weapons to assist the battles in Làng Vây and Tà Cơn airport," says Mơ.

Hồ Ta Chê, another veteran, says joining the liberation force in the past and working for the greenery of the town today are all part of his responsibility to his hometown.

Younger than Mơ, Chê worked as a liaison boy for the troops and later dug secret tunnels that led army tanks into Làng Vây battlefield.

Chê lost his right hand in 1967 after a bombardment by American airforce. However, losing one hand

did not mean losing all his power. After the war, Chê fertilized the soil for rice cultivation and became one of the biggest rice producers in the town.

The veterans have determined that once their hometown grows to be a tourism hub of the province, they will be the best tour guides for itineraries related to the famed Battle of Khe Sanh, where over 100,000 tons of bombs were dropped by US aircraft and over 158,000 artillery rounds were fired in defence of the base.

OBIT



Daniel P. Sullivan, 71, a longtime resident of Brockton, died peacefully at home on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 surrounded by his loving family. He was the husband of Katharine M. (Shea) Sullivan for 49 years. Son of the late Paul and Florence (McAfee) Sullivan, he was born in Boston and raised in Dorchester. Danny was a graduate of Dorchester High School. He was a Lance Corporal with the U.S. Marine Corps and a Veteran of the Vietnam War, earning both a Bronze Star and Purple Heart. He was a resident of Brockton for the past 45 years. Danny was a communications technician at Verizon in Boston for 30 years before retiring in 2002. He was a member of the Marine Corps League of Easton. He published a novel, Teen Marine, about his experiences in the Vietnam War.

In addition to his wife, Danny was the father of Christine M. Russo and her husband Dean of Stoughton and the late Kathaleen Spann. He was the grandfather of Marina, Greg, Brad, Bryce, D.J., Joey, Donald and Scott. He was the brother of the late Billy Morgan and is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Funeral Prayers were offered from the Farley Funeral Home, 358 Park St., (Rte. 27) Stoughton on Sunday, September 15 at 4 PM. Visiting Hours prior from 2-4 PM. Interment was private. In lieu of flowers, donations in Danny's memory may be made to the VA Boston Healthcare System, Brockton VAMC Campus, Attn: Voluntary Service (135), 940 Belmont St., Brockton, MA 023

RAY PALMER & TRADITIONAL APACHE SUNRISE CEREMONY

By Craig W. Tourte

Ray Palmer (D/1/26) invited me to attend the "Traditional Apache Sunrise Ceremony' in honor of his granddaughter Kieran Grace Palmer, to be held on the "Fort Apache Indian Reservation, White Mountain Apache Tribe" Fort Apache/Big Springs, Arizona. I was stunned at the invitation and knew it was both an honor and privilege to have been invited. There was nothing that was going to keep me from attending this most memorable event. I had few expectations other than knowing it was going to be a once in a lifetime experience.

Information regarding the "The Sunrise Ceremony" also known as a "Coming of Age Ceremony" within the Apache culture, is available online. Ray was kind enough to provide the following, "The ceremony is a three-day event. There are stages leading to the final day. The first day... is the dressing of the young lady, my granddaughter. This is where the ceremonial outerwear is blessed by the Medicine Man and the God Mother attaches the Eagle feathers and other ceremonial items to her outfit. The second-day ceremony starts at dawn, at noon there is a rest period. As the sun goes down there is the start of the evening ceremony. The Crown Dancers and the young lady are highlighted, this ends at about 10 PM. Sunday is the last and final day which starts at first light and concludes at noon."

From the Web, "For over 70 years...the Sunrise Ceremony was not permitted to be practiced as it was banned by the US government...as were most of the native spiritual practices and rituals...With the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the Sunrise Ceremony would openly be practiced on reservations again."

Besides my wife Jeanne and I, Ray invited former Delta Company brothers (and wives) which included, amongst others, Daniel Fisher, Colonel (Ret) Ross Brown, Henry Pope, and Tom Howard. At the "Camp" on the first day, attended by members of his family - including Rays son who had served in the U.S.M.C. as a Captain - and other tribal members, Ray introduced each Delta member individual and was kind enough to include me in his introduction. He spoke of how each was an important part of his life, how they were all his brothers and that he had fought alongside them and knew each would have unselfishly sacrificed their lives for him and



that he would have given his life for them, that they were the reason he survived the war and was standing with us today. The Medicine Man spoke of the importance of the tribe and tradition, the goodness of the individual, the remembrance of ancestors, having a good and loving character and forgiving heart, working together for the betterment and benefit of all, and the importance of treating others with respect. He then explained the tradition of the Sunrise Ceremony, the God Mother's responsibilities and the significance of each individual item



placed on the garment worn by the girl.

The ceremony involves months of preparation and teaching beforehand. The ceremony itself is physically arduous for the young girl and takes strength, endurance and above all commitment. During the ceremony which includes much running and dancing, chanting and praying, the girl is guided by the Medicine Man and God Mother. All done to "mold her" into "Changing Woman" or "White Painted Woman," an Apache tradition explaining the origin of the ceremony.

It was a fabulous and unforgettable ceremony. Ray's granddaughter Kieran was absolutely stunning in her handmade Native Apache Dress. More than 300 members of the White Mountain Apache Tribe attended which was held deep in the forest of



the Reservation. This was not a ceremony to be viewed by tourists or outsiders for their entertainment. "It is a ceremony of giving and receiving for both the girl and the community. It brings people, families and tribal members together, providing a



sense of unity." It was profoundly religious with many spiritual rituals, blessings and the girl experiencing for the first time, her own capacity to heal.

I was spiritually moved and profoundly grateful and appreciative for the opportunity to attend this wonderful ceremony.

RED CLAY ISSUE 97, SUMMER 2019

By Craig W. Tourte

My Red Clay magazine was waiting for me upon my return from a month-long journey to Europe. Another fantastic job by our President Tom Eichler. I just don't know where he finds the creative inspiration and energy to produce and mail out the magazine. It's unfortunate there are so many obituaries, but it is a reminder to us all that our time is short, tomorrow may never come (Garth Brooks), and we should make the most of what little time we have left. A few years ago, I had a new roof put on my house. The roofer asked if I wanted the lifetime roof, I responded, "how about something that will last five to ten years." I'm not sure he understood the sarcasm. I read all the stories and still find the individual heroics and memories fascinating. What fine men we had the honor to serve with during those difficult years. On page 89 there is a page noting "Those Remembered" and "Remembered By." I read the name of "PFC Donald Saunders USMC HQ Btry 1/13, KIA 04 March 1968" I knew Don and served with him at Khe Sanh, I clearly remember the day he was killed, a reoccurring haunting memory. Don is remembered on this page by "James Baker HQ Btry 13th Marines." I don't know if I ever had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Baker and don't know if he even knew Don Saunders, but just the same, it was a thoughtful remembrance on his part.

Leafing through the magazine several more times I came across page 29 with the title "Obit" and "James A. Baker, USMC, Khe Sanh Veteran, HQ Btry 1/13." The article provides he passed away on March 19, 2019. I think there is a lesson here, Mr. Baker may not have known at the time he made the remembrance of Donald Saunders that his never tomorrow would come so soon. I'll honor and remember Mr. Baker in the next edition of Red Clay while I still can, because I don't know when my tomorrow will never come.

NATIONAL SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF AMERICAN REVOLUTION HONORS KHE SANH VETERAN SGT VINCENT RIOS ALPHA CO 1/1 FOR HIS MERITORIOUS SERVICE

VINCENT HAS WORKED TIRELESSLY IN SERVICE TO HIS FELLOW VETERANS

He was appointed in 1969 as the Assistant Regional Administrator, Department of Labor's Employment and training Service, Regions 1X and X, till his retirement in July 2001. In his capacity he helped track regional veterans programs and how Federal monies are spent by the states for veterans programs. He then was recruited by the Association for Service Disabled Veterans to serve as the Director of Development, and the Western Regions Representative for the Washington based POW Disabled Veterans owned Business advocacy group.

On February 6, 1969, six days before the end of his second tour in Vietnam, Acting Platoon Commander, Marine SGT Vince Rios, was on patrol over a mile-long rice paddy. He was to advance his company's position in an area he knew was heavily mined due to previous experiences. SGT Rios stopped the platoon and advanced to speak with his point man.

He set off an enemy explosive device which immediately vaporized both his legs, left his right arm dangling from his shoulder, and partially amputated his left index and ring fingers.

Vincent spent ten months in military hospitals recovering from his injuries. His treatment was three-pronged, consisting of physical therapy, surgeries to close and later graft wounds, and occupational therapy. Interestingly Vincent was told by the military doctors that he would never walk again because of the grievous nature of his injuries.

He did not accept that he would never walk again and, using his considerable initiative and tremendous persistence, he devised a new concept for his prosthetic right arm and crutch that allowed him to stand and walk within ten months of the loss of both his legs and right arm. He daily utilizes his self-designed prostheses and crutch to stand from his wheelchair and walk.

In the effort to rebuild his life Vincent dedicated himself to obtain an education and work to serve veterans. He earned four college degrees. He has an

A.A. degree in Behavioral Sciences, a B.A. in Psychology, a M.A. in interdisciplinary Social Science, and a M.A.in Public Administration.

Sgt. Vince Rios has received the following awards for his service:

Bronze Star with "V" and star devices
(two awards)
Purple Heart with star devices
(three awards)
Presidential Unit Citation with star device
(two awards)
Meritorious Unit Commendations with star device
(two awards)
Navy Unit Commendation
National Defense Service Medal
Combat Action Ribbon
Good Conduct Medal
Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm
Vietnam Service Ribbon with star devices
(four awards)



Vince Rios and his wife Cheryl. Vince and his wife Cheryl met at Diamond Hill Junior High School in Fort Worth, Texas. Years later they connected again and were married in 1993. They have 5 children and six grandchildren between them. Vince and Cheryl make their home in Haslet , Texas



April 1969 at Oak Knoll Naval Hospital Sgt Vincent Rios receiving his 2nd Bronze Star W/V and 3rd Purple Heart.

FROM THE WEB

DREAM FINALLY UNDERSTOOD

Have long had several bad dreams I could not understand (perhaps did not want to) but thanks to Red Clay I finally made sense of one of them. "I am running with no where to go and mortar rounds are hitting all over the place throwing rocks in the air. The whole place is nothing but rock." Thanks to the article on LZ Margo, found out I was there with Echo, 2/26. Does not help the dreams, but at least I now know why I was running in my dream with no where to go. The articles help my wife understand why I sometimes act the way I do, since I do not talk with her about almost all of it.
Semper Fi
Jim, Echo Co



Vince and Cheryl in October 1960



Sergeant Vincent Rios US Marine Corps

OBIT

BRADLEY J. BORRELL, USMC , KHE SANH VETERAN, H&S CO 2/1

Borrell, Bradley James, age 69, of Prior Lake, lost his brief but mighty battle with "Cancer of Unknown Primary" at the VA Hospital in Minneapolis on May 22, 2018.

Brad was born January 16, 1949 in Minneapolis and graduated high school in Watertown, MN, where he continued many great friendships through his life.

Brad was a proud United States Marine and was awarded the Purple Heart for his service in Khe Sanh, Vietnam where he lost his right leg to mortar fire. He went on to work as a ready-mix truck driver for Model Stone. (later Aggregate Industries) for over 20 years, and even after retiring would continue to show up in the mornings to bring his former co-workers donuts and shoot the breeze. Brad was also proud to be a private pilot and loved flying many adventures out of Winsted. After a devastating accident where an airplane wheel exploded while he was working on it, he experienced an extremely serious head injury, losing his right eye and requiring multiple surgeries to reconstruct his skull and face. Most mortals would not have survived, but Brad came through and fought to regain medical approval to fly again; he was probably one of the safest pilots in the sky. He also enjoyed target shooting with his buddies, garage sale shopping and good food. He was a very generous, caring and faithful friend to many, and the best brother anyone could hope for.

Brad was preceded in death by his parents, Bob & June Borrell and his "brothers from other mothers", Tom Burns and David Steffenson. He is survived and deeply missed by his siblings, Robert Barry and Becky, nephew Nicolas and great-nephew Wesley Borrell, along with many very close friends, including Jan Taylor.

Memorial Mass of Christian Burial was held at 11 :00 AM on Friday, June 29, 2018 at the Immaculate Conception Church in Watertown with visitation from 9:30-10:50 AM prior to the Mass at the church. Brief military honors and luncheon following the service. Casual attire including Hawaiian shirts-in Brad's memory were encouraged.

Inurnment at Ft. Snelling Cemetery with full military honors were held Monday July 2 at]0:15 a.m.

Many thanks to Dr. Thomas Downs and the dedicated staff of the palliative care unit of the VA Medical Center.

MEMORIAL CARD FROM HIS SERVICE AND THIS EXCERPT FROM THE EULOGY OF THE SERVICE

EULOGY

"We had two squads of seven guys each; everyone was interchangeable in our 81milimeter mortar squads. I was a squad leader. One day we were asked for one volunteer from each unit to retract some dead Marines left on a mountain top after heavy combat. Marines never leave their dead. Brad said "I will go! It s what marines do". He never returned to our unit. You know the rest of the story from there.

Brad Borrell was a mountain of a Marine. He never complained or questioned a command. He would be the first to go.

I understood that while on the mountain they suffered heavy artillery incoming and that is what took his foot. Semper Fidelis Brad! God is your new Commander - OORAH!"

BILL LETOUR, NISSWA, MINNESOTA

HOLY SPIRIT COME
Rebecca E. Rehfeld, 1944

Holy Spirit, come!
On the wing of mystic flight
Give my heart your truth to hold
And I will speak it, clear and bold
When at dawn the angels gather
All I've left undone won't matter
I shall close my eyes in sleep
And dwell in his eternal peace
My earthly spirit, spun;
Holy Spirit, come!

In Memory Of
Bradley James Borrell
January 16,1949 - *May 22,2018*
Services At
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church
201 Territorial Street West
Watertown, Minnesota
Friday, June 29,2018 at 11:00 a.m.
Officiating
Rev. Jeff Huard
Military Honors By
Watertown American Legion
Eugene Earley Post #121
and Ft. Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad
Urn Bearer
Nicolas Borrell, nephew
Inurnment
Monday, July 2,2018 at 10:15 a.m.
Ft. Snelling National Cemetery
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Iten Funeral Homes
Watertown and Delano, MN



" TO OBSERVE A MARINE IS INSPIRATIONAL; TO BE A MARINE IS EXCEPTIONAL"



"It's wonderful to climb the liquid mountains of the sky; Behind me and before me is God and I have no fears."
Helen Keller, at age 74, on flight around the world

OBIT

MAX JORDAN, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN

Max was born on February 28, 1949, in Manchester IA. The son of Robert D. and Donna J (McGuire) Jordan. He attended Center Point Schools in Center Point, IA; and after high school he joined the US Marine corps in 1967. He served proudly during the Vietnam war, most notably at the battle of Khe Sanh. In 1968 while on military leave, he married Martha Gregory with whom he had two children. He later moved to Lynchburg, Virginia to attend Liberty Baptist college. Upon graduating in 1976 he made his home in Little Rock, AR. Max lived many places across the United States throughout his life, finally making his permanent home in Iowa during 2010.

Max enjoyed playing video games, socializing with other Veterans on Facebook, and fishing. He spent many years helping family members and friends raise many children throughout his life.

He is survived by two children; Gregory (Blayne) Jordan, Independence, IA, and Jessica (Albert) Jordan Meyer, Oelwein, IA, a step daughter; Layla Clark, in Oklahoma, two grandchildren, a sister; Kimberly Jordan, Little Rock, AR, three brothers; John Jordan, Davenport, IA, Dale Jordan, Jesup, IA, and Rick (Kathy) Jordan, Jefferson City, MO, and several nieces and nephews.

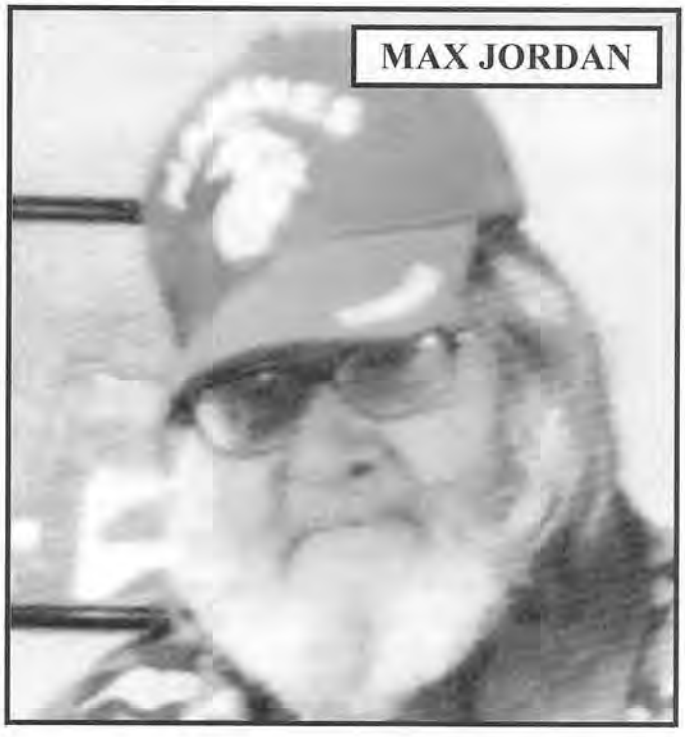

MAX JORDAN

I GET PICTURES



KHE SANH VETERANS HONORING ONE OF THEIR CORPSMAN, " DOC" JAMES C. DELAPLANE, ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A



LARRY LARSEN SUB UNIT 5 COMM PLT, ENJOYING GRANDCHILDREN JOCELYN & ZACHERY IN ARVADA

KHE SANH VETERAN IN THE NEWS MICHAEL ARCHER AWARD WINNING AUTHOR

I'm pleased to announce that I'll be travelling next month to the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York to receive the Military Order of St. Louis medal for the Khe Sanh trilogy (A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered, The Long Goodbye: Khe Sanh Revisited and The Gunpowder Prince: How Marine Corps Captain Mirza Munir Baig Saved Khe Sanh) "in recognition of its important contribution to military literature" from the Knights Templar Hudson Valley Priory of Saint Patrick.

Past recipients include bestselling writers Thomas Fleming, James Bradley (Flags of Our Fathers) and Philip Caputo (A Rumor of War). This year's candidates included several best-selling writers and historians and a Pulitzer prize-winning journalist. As such, I am deeply honored by the selection and looking forward to the award dinner at the West Point Club on October 17, 2019.

The event is not open to the walk-in public; however, if you wish to attend as my guest, preregistration is required. For information about cost of the dinner, attire, time and directions, etc., please contact LtCol (Ret) Robert Black at RBlack.RBC@Carroll.com. Those of you who have read A Patch of Ground and/or The Long Goodbye may recall then-Captain Black was Tom Mahoney's company commander with the First Battalion, First Marines during those final harrowing days of Khe Sanh. Signed copies of The Gunpowder Prince will be available via preorder through LtCol Black.

I will also be speaking about the battle of Khe Sanh on October 16, 2019, 2-4 pm, at American Legion #25 hall, 4 JFK Drive, Milltown, NJ (near the Rutgers University campus). Signed copies of all my Khe Sanh books will be available. This event is open to the public.

Between this Military Order of St. Louis and The Gunpowder Prince having been recipient, last April, of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's 2019 Colonel Joseph Alexander Award for distinguished biography, it's been a very good year for recognition of the gravity of what Americans and their adversaries on the Khe Sanh battlefield endured, accomplished, lost and now continue to live with, over fifty years after that longest and costliest pitched battle of the Vietnam War.

In addition to the book award dinner at West Point on October 17, 2019 (described in my previous blog of September 14, 2019), I will have two other speaking engagements. Attached is a flyer provided by my host for these events, the John Basilone Detachment #190, Marine Corps League--New Jersey.

While the West Point event is not open to the walk-in public, but requires preregistration (please co ntact LtCol (Ret) Robert Black for information about cost of the dinner, attire, time and directions, etc.), these two New Jersey events are open to the public.

If you know anyone in the area who might be interested, please pass this along. THANKS!

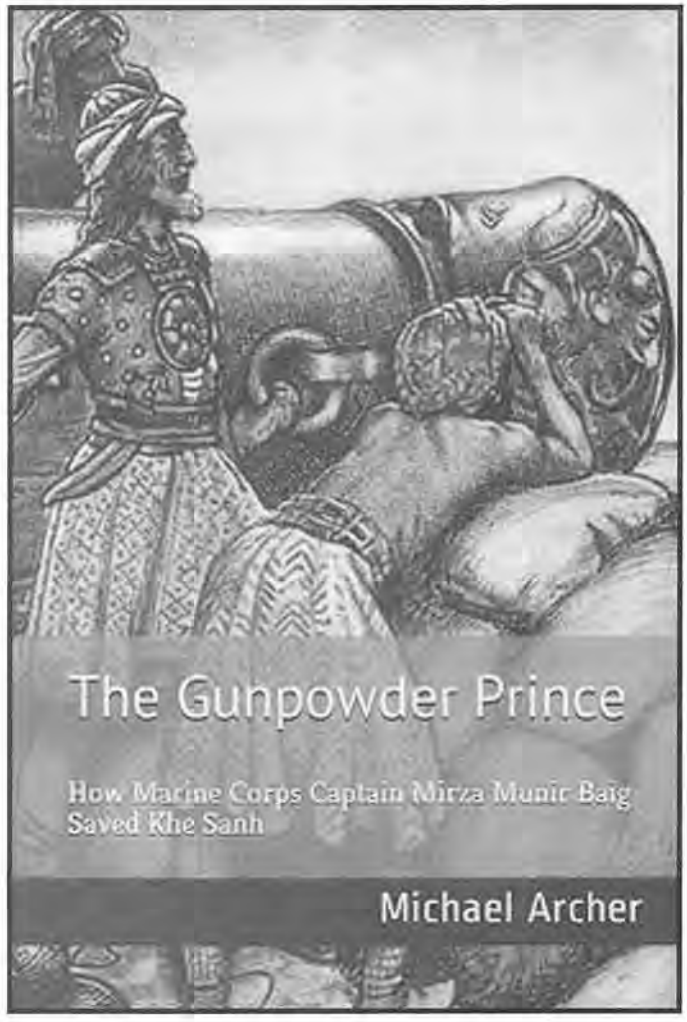

Award-winning author and Khe Sanh Siege veteran Michael Archer

Friday,
October 18, 2019, 4:00-6:00 pm
American Legion Hall
4 JFK Drive, Milltown, NJ

Friday,
October 18, 2019, 4:00-6:00 pm
American Legion Hall
17C Alvin Pl, Metuchen, NJ
732-321-9594



Michael Archer will Be speaking about what Americans, their allies and their adversaries on the Khe Sanh battlefield endured, accomplished , lost and now continue to live with, over fifty years after that longest and costliest pitched battle of the Vietnam War,

Sets of books will be available for purchase at discounted prices



Free admission For All



His books include **A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered, and The Long Goodbye: Khe Sanh Revisited. The Long Goodbye** received FOREWORD Reviews INDIES Book of the Year Award for 2016 (War & Military), chosen from among independent publishers and university presses across the country.

Michael's third book in the trilogy, **The Gunpowder Prince: How Marine Corps Captain Mirza Baig Saved Khe Sanh**, won the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's 2019 Colonel Joseph Alexander Award for "distinguished book of Bioraphical literature."

On October 17, 2019, Michael received the Military Order of St Louis medal for the Khe Sanh Trilogy "in recognition of its important contribution to military literature" from the Knights Templar Hudson Valley Piory of Saint Patrick, during the award dinner at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York.

Call for Directions



Come learn About the Battle of Khe Sanh from one who was there

THE AWARD CEREMONY



GREATEST PAPAW EVER

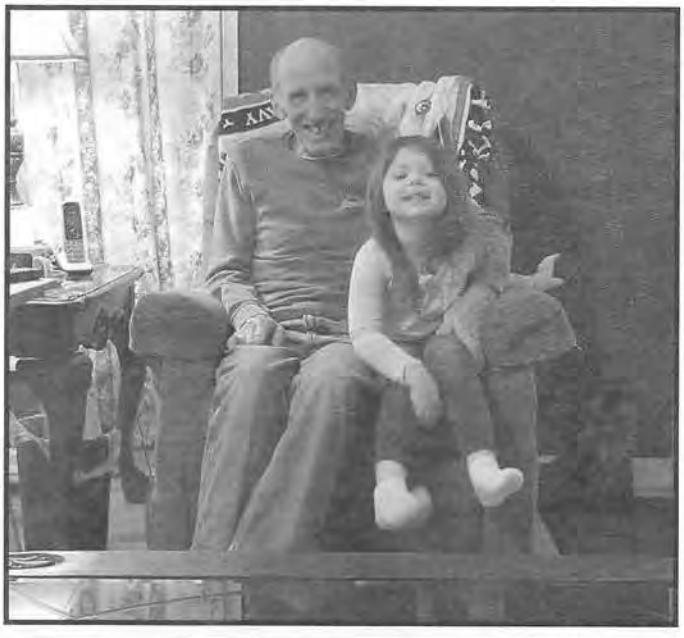

FROM THE WEB
KSV IN THE NEWS



Maas Detachment 1279 presents disabled veteran Ted Hartung, I CO 3/26, a shadow box commemorating his service in Vietnam with the 3rd Battalion 26th Marines. The box contains his awards and patches from his time in Khe Sanh. The flag is the one he carried with him during the Siege of Khe Sanh. Ted Hartung, on left and Detachment Chaplain Scott Pipenhagen, right



DETACHMENT 1279 CHAPLAIN SCOTT PIPENHAGEN

MEMORIES

RECON TEAM KANSAS- KHE SANH 7 AUGUST 1971
THE LAST STAND OF RECON TEAM KANSAS: OUTNUMBERED WORSE THAN THE ALAMO DEFENDERS, HERE'S THE STORY OF A SOG TEAM'S DESPERATE LAST STAND.

By Maj. John L. Plaster, USAR (Ret.)

The once bustling Khe Sanh Marine Base in South Vietnam's extreme northwest had been a ghost town more than three years by the summer of 1971. Though used briefly that February to support the South Vietnamese Army's invasion of Laos, after that bloody debacle the South Vietnamese abandoned not just Khe Sanh but the entire region, yielding immense areas to the NVA, who almost overnight began extending their Ho Chi Minh Trail highways into South Vietnam.

In late July 1971, U.S. intelligence began tracking a large enemy force shifting across the DMZ a dozen miles east of Khe Sanh, threatening the coastal cities of Hue, Danang and Phu Bai where the last sizeable American ground units were based.

It was essential to learn what was happening near Khe Sanh, a mission assigned to a shadowy organization called "SOG." Created to conduct covert missions deep behind enemy lines in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam, the top secret Studies and Observations Group had shifted most of its operations in-country by 1971 to cover the continuing U.S. withdrawal.

From among its clandestine assembly of Army Green Berets, Navy SEALs and USAF Air Commandos, the Khe Sanh mission eventually became a prisoner snatch assigned to Recon Team Kansas, an 11-man, Special Forces-led element, which included eight Montagnard tribesmen.

But how do you grab a prisoner in the midst of 10,000 or more NVA?

Headed by an easygoing, lanky Midwesterner, First Lieutenant Loren Hagen, along with Sergeants Tony Andersen and Bruce Berg, the RT Kansas men had brainstormed through several scenarios until settling upon the best option: They would land conspicuously on an abandoned firebase -- which obviously would draw some sort of NVA reaction -- put up a short fight, then extract by helicopter. Except half of Hagen's men would stay hidden on the hill.

When the NVA sent a squad up to see if the Americans had left behind sensors or bombing beacons -- as SOG teams often did -- the hidden men would ambush the NVA, seize a prisoner and come out.

In case a serious fight developed, Lt. Hagen reinforced his team with three more Green Beret volunteers, Staff Sergeant Oran Bingham and Sergeants Bill Queen and William Rimondi, for eight Montagnard tribesmen and six U.S. Special Forces, a total of 14 men.

Landing at last light on 6 August 1971, Lt. Hagen surveyed the scrub brush and bomb craters below them and split his defense into three elements to cover the hilltop's three slopes. Immediately they went to work restoring the old firebase's two dilapidated bunkers and shallow trenches. The enemy must have seen them land, and Hagen reckoned to be ready.

A FOREBODING NIGHT

It was well after dark when the SOG men noticed campfires on two facing ridgelines, unusual because the NVA normally masked itself. By midnight enemy probers were at the base of the hill, firing provocatively from the north, south, east and west.

At 1 a.m. a USAF AC-130 Spectre gunship arrived, walking 40mm and 20mm fire around the hill nearly all night. Never once did the team fire their weapons, staying blanketed in darkness. Then at 3 a.m. the SOG men heard trucks and tailgates dropping. This was odd, very odd.

Beneath the hill, dismounting NVA soldiers formed up into platoons and companies, which their leaders marched through the darkness to their assigned attack positions, to wait for dawn.

Just before sunrise it became forebodingly quiet. Then Lt. Hagen heard more trucks arriving.

Fifty miles away at a coastal airbase, a USAF Forward Air Controller (FAC) and a flight of helicopters was lifting away for the false extraction; they would be above RT Kansas in 30 minutes.

As darkness gave way to light, Lt. Hagen detected glimpses of NVA on one slope; then on another slope pithe helmets appeared, bobbing in the fog. When his men reported NVA on the third slope, too, Hagen realized the hill was completely encircled by NVA -- but that would require a whole regiment, at least a thousand men!

"The NVA were laying a Soviet-made tactical fuel pipeline, like this one, near RT Kansas' hilltop, the first ever extended into South Vietnam. It would be of strategic value a few months later during the Easter 1972 Offensive." (Def. Intell. Agency) The NVA regimental commander understood he had to dispatch the Americans quickly. They'd inadvertently landed almost within sight of the Hanoi High Command's most critical new venture, the first six-inch fuel pipeline laid across the DMZ, absolutely essential in a few months when entire tank battalions rolled through here for the war's largest offensive.

Already the 304th NVA Division was massing here, plus a regiment of the 308th Division, preparing for the 1972 Easter Offensive.

A fourth battalion moved into place; then, concealed in the ground fog, a fifth battalion arrived. Later, SOG's commander, Colonel John Sadler, would learn an entire regiment had stormed the hill, supported by a second regiment, a mass assault by approximately 2000 enemy infantry.

A HUMAN WAVE

As the clearing ground fog disclosed that terrible truth, Lt. Hagen had no time for inspiring words, just serious soldier work; in those final moments he repositioned weapons while his men readied grenades and stacked magazines. The Catholic Montagnards made the Sign of the Cross. Then they came. A well-aimed RPG rocket smashed into Bruce Berg's bunker, collapsing it and signaling the attack -- fire went from nothing to ten thousand rounds per second! Andersen could see dozens of NVA rushing in lines up his slope, meeting them with his M-60 machinegun. Hagen hollered that he was going to check Berg, and ran directly into a ferocious maelstrom, with bullets ricocheting and slamming the earth in front of, behind, and beneath his dashing feet. He made it a dozen yards when fire from the other slope cut him down, killing him.

Then Klaus Bingham left a bunker to reposition a claymore and a bullet struck him in the head, apparently killing him. One Montagnard in a trench below Tony Andersen fired several bursts then jumped up to pull back and fell into Andersen's lap, dead. Four men had died in less than four minutes. It was up to Andersen now, the senior man.

THE LAST STAND

Small arms fire rattled closer on all sides and grenades lobbed up from below the hillcrest where waves of NVA were scurrying behind small rises and rolling from bomb crater to bomb crater. Andersen dashed over the hill to look for Hagen but couldn't see him anywhere just 100 khaki-clad NVA almost at the top! He fired one M-60 belt at NVA advancing up his own slope, then sped to the other approach and ran belt after belt on the 100 assaulting enemy. By then grenades started coming from behind him as NVA closed in from his rear. Just a dozen yards away, beyond the curvature of the hill, enemy heads popped up, cracked a few shots, then dropped back down.

Still a dozen minutes away, the approaching Cobra gunships went to full throttle, leaving the slower Hueys behind.

Meanwhile RT Kansas had just run out of hand grenades when a North Vietnamese grenade exploded beside Andersen's M-60, rendering it useless; he spun his CAR-15 off his back and kept shooting, then he tossed back another grenade but it went off in front of him, nearly blinding him, yet he kept shooting. More shrapnel tore into him, then an AK round slammed through his webgear and lodged in his elbow, knocking him down. He stumbled back to his knees and kept firing.

The perimeter was pinched almost in half when Andersen grabbed his last two living Montagnards, circled below the nearest NVA and somehow managed to reach the survivors on the opposite side. He found Bingham, started to lift him, and saw he, too, was dead from a head wound. All around him he heard, "zzzsss, zzssss, zzssss," as bullets flashed past his ears.

"To save your world you asked this man to die;
Would this man, could he see you now, ask why?"
Wystan H. Auden, Epitaph for an unknown soldier

He dragged Bingham back to where Bill Queen lay, wounded. Only Rimondi wasn't yet hit and still fired furiously. Andersen put them in a back-to-back circle just off the hilltop where they would make their last stand. AK bullets had destroyed their team radio, another slug had shot Andersen's little

survival radio out of his hand so Rimondi tossed him another survival radio, their last.

Now the NVA were streaming, rolling over the crest like a tidal wave, their rattling AKs blending together into one never-ending burst.

Andersen's men were firing not at NVA but at hands wielding AKs over parapets and around bunkers. There was no place left to fall back. Andersen was shooting NVA little further than the length of his CAR-15 muzzle, and the time it took to speed-change a magazine meant life or death.

From the air it looked like an ant mound, with moving figures everywhere. Cobra lead rolled in and sparkled 20mm cannon shells around the surviving SOG men, and at last fighters arrived, adding napalm and Vulcan cannons to the melee. Then at last the assault ebbed, turned, and the NVA fled for cover, just as the Hueys arrived.

Though wounded repeatedly, Andersen crawled out to fire his CAR-15 to cover the landing Hueys. With Rimondi's help, Andersen dragged as many teammates' bodies as he could to the first Huey, then helped the wounded Queen and others aboard the second. "3 months before RT Kansas fought the most one-sided fight in American history, the USAF already had plotted three enemy pipelines running out of North Vietnam but these extended into Laos. The most critical pipeline was secretly being laid across the DMZ into South Vietnam." (USAF)

"Lt. Loren Hagen (right, rear) and Bruce Berg pose with five indigenous teammates. Both Hagen and Berg would die on the small hilltop, along with six of their Montagnard soldiers." (Photo by Tony Andersen) A Terrible Toll In one hellacious half-hour, nine of Recon Team Kansas' fourteen men had been lost.

Lt. Hagen had died, along with Bingham, Berg was presumed dead, six Montagnards had died, Rimondi and Queen both suffered multiple frag wounds, Andersen had been struck by both small arms fire and shrapnel, and their other two Montagnards, too, all had been wounded "It's amazing that any of us came through it with the amount of incoming that we were getting," Tony Andersen says today, 25 years later. He attributes their survival to his deceased team leader, Lt. Loren Hagen. "He epitomized what a Special Forces officer should be -- attentive to detail, a lot of rehearsals, followed through on things," he explains.

"We were ready. I think that was probably the only thing that kept us from being totally overrun. Everybody was alert and knew what was happening and was waiting."

As for Hagen's bravery, dashing into a wall of AK fire to try to save Bruce Berg, that didn't surprise Andersen, either. "Lt. Hagen was that kind of officer. He was a good man."

Against the lost of most of his teammates, Andersen learned, the USAF counted 185 NVA dead on that hill. Little RT Kansas had killed half a battalion and probably wounded twice that many NVA, but that gives Andersen sparse satisfaction compared to the loss of most of his team.

Perhaps Andersen's most difficult duty was carrying the bodies of his six Montagnard teammates -- his "family" he called them -- to their home village. "As soon as they saw us driving up in the truck, they knew. Wailing and moaning started, and all the grieving." The villagers gathered in a circle around the headman's stilted longhouse.

"Through one of the interpreters I tried to explain how proud we were of them, what good fighters they were, that they had died for a good cause."

That would be borne out a few months later when the intelligence generated by RT Kansas' spirited defense helped U.S. analysts read enemy intentions, enabling American airpower to counter the NVA's Easter Offensive.

And though details of this incredible fight would remain classified for decades, enough was disclosed that First Lieutenant Loren Hagen's family was presented the U.S. Army's final Vietnam War Medal of Honor; Tony Andersen, who held together what remained of RT Kansas through those final mass assaults, received the Distinguished Service Cross, while Queen, Rimondi, Berg and Bingham were awarded Silver Stars.

And now, today, with full disclosure, we can appreciate the significance of their fight:

At the Alamo, 188 Americans had stood against 3000 Mexicans, a ratio of 16-to-1; at Custer's Last Stand, 211 cavalrymen succumbed to 3,500 Sioux warriors, or 16.5-to-1; at the 1877 Battle of Rorke's Drift, the most heralded action in British military history resulting in -- 11 Victoria Crosses -- 140 British troops withstood assaults by 4000 Zulus, or 28-to-1.

warriors, or 16.5-to-1; at the 1877 Battle of Rorke's Drift, the most heralded action in British military history resulting in -- 11 Victoria Crosses -- 140 British troops withstood assaults by 4000 Zulus, or 28-to-1.

Lt. Hagen's 14 men had held on despite being outnumbered 107-to-one, four times as disadvantagious as Rorke's Drift and seven times worse than the Alamo, one of the most remarkable feats of arms in American history

OBIT

CHARLES S. CATRON, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, DELTA CO 1/26 WEAPONS PLATOON SERGEANT

Let the memory of Charles be with us forever.

77 years old Born on June 17, 1942 in Belfry, Kentucky, United States. Passed away on October 2, 2019 in Norfolk, Virginia, United State

This memorial website was created in memory of our loved one, Charles Catron 77 years old , born on June 17, 1942 and passed away on October 2, 2019. We will remember him forever.

Charles was born in Belfry, Kentucky to Thomas Lee Catron and Ardith Taylor on June 17,1942. He is the beloved Father of April Marie Haines, Grandfather of Nicholas James Radford, and brother of George Thomas Catron, Robert McKinley Catron, and William "Red" Catron.

He joined the United States Marine Corps in November 1961 until September 1971 when he was honorably discharged after two tours of duty in Vietnam. He received the Purple Heart Medal along with a Navy Commendation Medal and earned numerous other awards while serving in the Marines. One of his proudest moments was when he was promoted to Gunnery Sgt.

After being at the Naval Hospital in Philadelphia he chose to make Delaware County his permanent residence and was a skilled bricklayer and eventually went on to work for Gulf Oil, Chevron, and retired from Sunoco Refinery in Philadelphia in 2004. My father was amazing in every way and I am so thankful to have had him in my life for so long and am proud to have had such a strong man guide me through my life. I will always remember his boisterous personality and laugh, his mischievous sense of humor and his way of always making people feel at ease. My dad would talk to anyone and I'm proud to have inherited that from him as well. He was truly my best friend and will be deeply missed.



His last wishes were not to have a viewing or a service, but to have a memorial online created and then be cremated and I will keep him here with me in Virginia. I invite anyone who knew Dad to please leave any kind of comment or fond memory of him on this page and also feel free to make a donation in his name to the Marine Corps Association Fund or to The Wounded Warrior Project if you so wish to do so.



THE MARINE'S PRAYER

Almighty Father, whose command is over all and whose love never fails, make me aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will. Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and deed and helping me to live so that I can face my fellow Marines, my loved ones and Thee without shame or fear. Protect my family. Give me the will to do the work of a Marine and to accept my share of responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. Grant me the courage to be proficient in my daily performance. Keep me loyal and faithful to my superiors and to the duties my country and the Marine Corps have entrusted to me. Make me considerate of those committed to my leadership. Help me to wear my uniform with dignity, and let it remind me daily of the traditions which I must uphold. If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith; if I am tempted, make me strong to resist; if I should miss the mark, give me courage to try again. Guide me with the light of truth and grant me wisdom by which I may understand the answer to my prayer.

I love you my sweet Daddy and you will forever be in my heart and greatly missed



TRIBUTES

You will be greatly missed, it was always a pleasure spending time and stories with you at the Delta reunions. Rest easy and guard those gates of Heaven, Semper Fi.

Albert Marzano Delta CO 1/26



Rest In Peace Gunny

Bill Purdy Delta CO 1/26

Was an honor to have met you at several Delta reunions

John Rowland Delta CO 1/26



Although I got to Delta Company after he left, we became good friends at our reunions. He was fun to be with and always had a good story to tell. Miss you, Cat. Semper Fi.

Al Knight, Delta CO 1/26

A DECADE OF MEMORIES WHITESIDE COUNTY HONOR FLIGHT VETERANS GATHER FOR PICNIC

MORRISON – Healing was on Ray Torres' mind when he put together the keynote speech for Sunday's Whiteside County Honor Flight Picnic at Morrison-Rockwood State Park.



This type of healing was more mental than physical. The Vietnam Marine was only a few months into duty when he was seriously injured during the Siege of Khe Sanh. He made it back home, but several of those he knew were not as fortunate.

Given the opportunity to visit the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. during an Honor Flight on April 21, 2016, he carried with him a list of names: corpsmen from corps school, field medical school, Marines from his Echo Company, and a high school classmate.

"For many years I had a difficult time dealing with the fact that 58,320 names of men and women whose names were on the wall through their acts of heroism, courage and valor, made the ultimate sacrifice for their country," Torres said. "Our country could not give these mostly young men and women the honor and respect that they should have truly deserved."

Torres began his speech by explaining how the phrase "welcome home" was a rare sound when Vietnam veterans returned from overseas. Nearly 50 years later, he and his fellow solders were given a much more positive and gratifying reaction when they came to Washington to visit several monuments, including the Wall.

"We were met by school children and boy scouts who lined the terminal the entire way," he said. "It was so unexpected and very emotional for me.

Just some of the good works my good friend Ken Korkow has dedicated his life too. He was a hero on the battlefield and a hero remains a hero among men.

I GET PICTURES



RIVERBOAT



JON ROBERTS IS WITH RON DE VASTO AND DICK KLEYNENBERG

FROM THE KSV WEB

KEITH ERDMAN ON LANDING ZONE LOON







My squad was facing the arrows coming up the hill. No NVA there all day until about 6:00 pm. That is when we were nearly all out of ammunition and I requested an air strike with napalm. The NVA were so thick that all you could see were helmets and flak jacket. We would be in hand to hand in less than 10 minutes. Some of the men fixed bayonets. The jets came in from the North east. We had orange placards out in front of our holes. Everyone got down in there holes as instructed. I asked that one bomb be used to hit the hole in the mountain to our south. They dropped their ordinance and a direct hit on the NVA big gun placement. Within minutes after the jets we were on the radio requesting evac. VCB refused our request stating Charlie Co was already evacuated.

I said everyone from the other hill. We are on a different hill and we are first platoon Charlie Co. The radio operator then asked that I identify myself. I told him that was not proper procedure. He stated they would not send choppers out without Identification. I told him to hide because when I get to VCB I was going to beat him to within an inch of his life. He signed off and I switch numbers on the radio until LZ Cameo answered from Khe Sanh. Told them we had 28 men and needed two 46s for immediate evacuation as we had just dropped napalm on over 200 NVA. We were mostly out of ammo. Within 10 minutes the birds came in. One loaded mostly mortars and gun teams and some of our guys. The second bird was loading with Sgt Jenkins being the first one on board as well as willie then I directed the rest of the guys on.

We had one KIA we could not get off the hill as a WIA. Lived for 3 hrs with a chest wound. Corpsman was killed right in front of me while I tended to him when someone on the other side of the hill hollered commander up. Anyway we were just getting ready to lift off when the first chopper went down. I asked the crew chief to wait a few second to see if anyone came out. One guy did and made it to our chopper. We lifted off and went to Khe Sanh. Three days later we found out the skipper and some more of our guys were alive at VCB. I wish someone would call me. 231-742-1106. I could explain better I think.



A FEW QUESTIONS ANSWERED IN REGARD TO NEW RULES GOVERNING SHOPPING AT MILITARY FACILITIES

More questions answered as installations get ready for the potential 3 million extra shoppers



An extra 3 million people will be eligible to shop at commissaries and exchanges, and have certain MWR benefits. (Defense Commissary)

A little more than two months before a new shopping benefit takes effect for about 3 million newly eligible shoppers, defense officials have tested and rolled out the system that will allow these shoppers through the gates. The technology is in place at the installations' gate scanning systems at all Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps installations, and at about 40 Army installations, according to Defense Department spokeswoman Jessica Maxwell. Starting Jan. 1, all Department of Veterans Affairs service-connected disabled veterans, Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war and primary veteran caregivers will be eligible to shop at commissaries and exchanges on base, and to use certain morale, welfare and recreation facilities. All veterans with VA service-connected disability ratings of 0 to 90 percent are newly eligible.

Service-connected disabled and other veterans who are newly eligible will use their veterans health ID card, or VHIC to gain access to the installation, and to shop.

Defense officials have added the capability of scanning the VHIC card at most installations' front gate scanning systems. The balance of the Army installations will have the capability by the end of September, 2020, Maxwell said, but most of the remaining installations don't have facilities that offer the benefits, she said, such as commissaries and exchanges.

The fiscal 2019 National Defense Authorization Act expanded the pool of eligible shoppers. The expansion also applies to Coast Guard facilities. The law also included Medal of Honor recipients, but they already had shopping privileges. Previously, veterans with 100 percent service-connected disabilities were able to shop; now all with service-connected disabilities can shop.

The benefit extends to MWR programs that are "revenue-generating facilities," according to the law. One example is golf courses.

This is the largest expansion of eligible customers in more than 60 years, and officials at the departments of defense, Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security have been planning for the rollout for more than nine months.

DON'T HAVE A VHIC CARD, BUT YOU'RE ELIGIBLE?

Officials have also come up with a system that will allow access for about 37,000 veterans who qualify for the new benefits, but aren't eligible for the VHIC. The only eligible veterans who aren't currently eligible for a VHIC are those veterans with a zero percent service-connected disability rating whose income exceeds the Housing and Urban Development indices, Maxwell said.

The VA will provide a letter to these disabled veterans indicating they are eligible for these privileges, even if not eligible for the VHIC," she said.

That letter, along with a driver's license, passport or other authorized form of ID, will allow these newly eligible shoppers access to the installation, and allow them to use the privilege at commissaries, exchanges and designated MWR facilities.

CAN MY SPOUSE SHOP, TOO?

Theoretically, no. However, your spouse and family members can come into the stores with you, but they just can't buy anything.

That said, it might take longer to get on base if they're with you.

The procedures for access to the installation require people without a DoD-issued credential to stop at the visitor control center to undergo a check for

criminal history and terrorism indicators, Maxwell said. If the check is successful; if the person's credential presented can be enrolled; and the installation has installation access control system enrollment capabilities, guests may be able to enroll for recurring access for later visits with their sponsor.

DOES THIS NEW BENEFIT APPLY TO ME IF I LIVE OVERSEAS?

It does, unless you are living in an area where international agreements or host-nation laws limit access to commissaries and exchanges.

WHEN YOU CAN'T BE A WARRIOR ANYMORE...IS THERE A REASON TO GO ON?

Russ Kinion

Every day there are Veteran suicides and may are due to their PTSD but many also commit suicide because they feel they no longer have a purpose in life.

It's that hollow numbness, the sense that you are already dead, the complete lack of desire to go on, the craving to be gone, to be done here. The feeling that you are nothing more than an empty husk blown about by gusts of wind. There's nothing left of you.

You're not who you used to be. You look in the mirror and don't even recognize the vacant soul staring back at you. Nothing — and everything — gets to you.

Your body is here; but you're not here.

You lost the one thing that meant everything. The ability to be who you are. Because being a warrior who misses it like your heart has been torn from you, being that person wasn't just a job. It was — it is — who you are.

And to not be able to be who you really can be so extremely hard.

It can actually be soul crushing.

It's the reason death feels like a viable option.

Why were you put on this earth to find the one thing that makes you feel like your truest self, your deepest purpose, your reason for being here....and have that taken away from you?

That's what your life is now, right?

There's a reason warriors prefer to die in battle.

Because of this. The "what comes after" service ends. When your body gives out and you're not allowed to be who you know you were born to be. That void feels like you've already died.

No one talks about this part of it. We mourn those who take their lives, we cry out against their decision, we bleed inside at their loss.....and, we envy them.

Hard words. But true. There's a part of you that feels it every time a brother goes home early. You just can't tell anyone that.

The reality is part of you has died

A warrior's life after military service ends isn't like civilian retirement. When what you do is who you are — and anyone called into a service field, who is "born" to be what they do knows this — the end of it feels like death.

It is a type of death. The you that you knew yourself to be dies. The pain of it and the silence that shrouds it keeps it hidden.

Warriors who can't go back to war sometimes die inside. Quiet, aching, pervasive deaths. The longer you go on without a renewed purpose, the more of you dies. The emptiness, the sense that your soul has been cut out of you....it's real. You're not alone.

And you're not messed up for feeling it.

Civilians are elated when your service ends because it means you're out of harms' way. It means you survived. It means they can exhale. Finally. They expect you to find something else now to fill your time. Some of the perceptive ones will understand that this isn't about finding a new job – this is about mourning the loss of your identity and... finding a new one. (A new job doesn't give you a new identity — this is why it can be so hard to stick with a job after you get out.)

A warrior's purpose is to serve the life-death-life cycle

Identity comes from purpose. It comes from your sense of who you are and why you are here — in the bigger picture of lifetimes on earth.

A soul is born into a lifetime with a purpose. Being a warrior feels like it was your purpose. But being a warrior is the package for your purpose. The purpose lies deeper inside.

What was your purpose?

To defend? To protect? To destroy evil? To rescue? To save? To keep your brothers safe? To liberate?
Service itself?

You feel empty because you've lost your known purpose and meaning. It was all very clear for you before and now it's not.

The question is: can you take who you are and do something new with it? Can you identity what your soul purpose is and hold onto THAT, and find a way to live that now?

I can tell you this: a warrior will ONLY re-find purpose by finding a way to continue to be of service to life on earth. You're not made to be self-only-serving. It's not in your soul DNA to be on this earth without carrying out a mission that matters to humanity, to history.

You were born into this world to make a difference, to take risks, to change the status quo, to expose and eradicate evil, to uproot and open life to new possibilities, new change.

Yes, war destroys; absolutely. But it also creates. With the destruction of what was, comes the opportunity for newness. We follow a life-death-life cycle. It's natural law.

Being of service to this life-death-life cycle is who you are and you need to honor that.

It's true that you're never going to stop missing being a warrior. You're never going to feel as whole as you felt you were then. Some things cannot be replaced or replicated. You know that in your soul.

But you survived combat. God didn't take you.

You were saved and your purpose on this earth is NOT done.

I know this is hard. I know this tears at your heart. I know you are so close to choosing death because you can't feel anything right now. But that's an illusion. Feelings can be changed.

Make the hardest choice you will ever make
You are still here.

Your soul is still on this earth. So is your body. Ending your life now may seem like the only option, but is it?

You were called to service. Service is still your purpose.

Who can you serve? Who can you impact today? How can you take the strength that has been built into you and help someone else find theirs?
Can you lead someone to find their own courage?
Can you see that if you help one, it's the same as helping a thousand?

No, it's not combat. But you survived combat so you would have the wisdom you need to serve in a new way. What if THIS time in your life is what it was all for??

You are a warrior. You have to fight this one. You have to choose life. We need you.

It's the hardest choice you're going to make. Only you can make it.

Your heart was made to expand into newness. You were created to be able to adapt and overcome. Emptiness can be filled. Numbness can thaw. Pain can ease. Sadness can soften. Purpose can be rediscovered. What seems impossible to you right now, is possible.

You are needed here. By those in your life now, and by those destined to meet you.

Be here to show up for them.

Choose life. For me, for the rest of your brothers, for that one soul out there who is going to interact with you and because of your wisdom, your insight, your encouragement, your example of courage is going to change their story.....history takes a different turn when someone changes their story.
Change yours, Brother.

I GET PICTURES



AUNT DEBBIE (ROGERSON) AND I (LYNN SHOUSE) SPENT A COUPLE OF HOURS VISITING WITH DAYGAN SHOUSE. ALWAYS LOVE SPENDING TIME WITH HER.

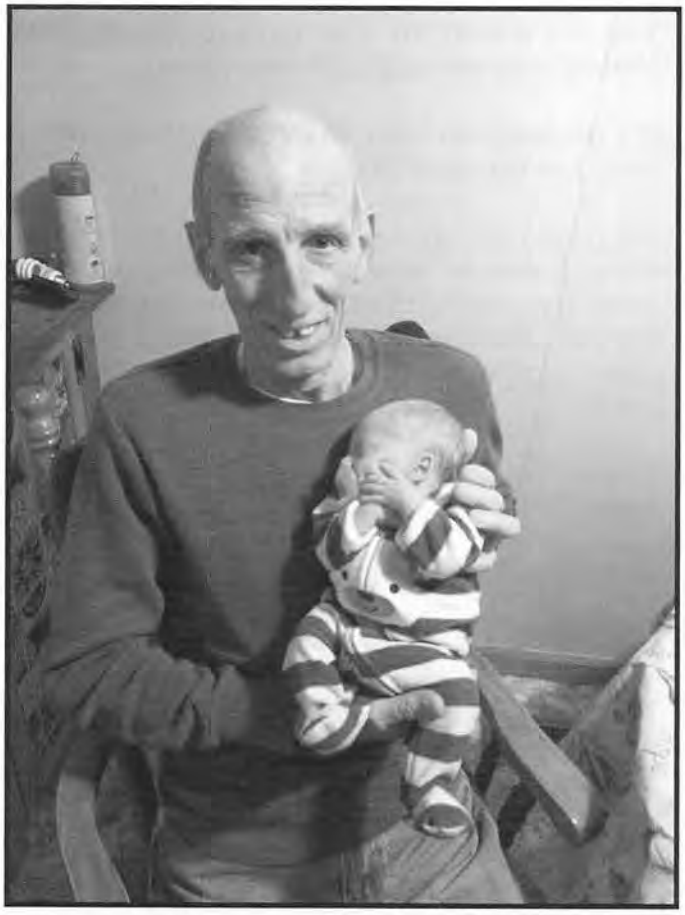

MIKE FISHBAUGH "POPPY" WITH "WEE WADE"



BILL SPENCER " GRANDKIDS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME"



THE QUIGLEY CLAN

SOLDIERS WITHOUT A COUNTRY: WE'RE FINALLY HONORING SOUTH VIETNAMESE WHO FOUGHT WITH US

***Jim Webb*, Opinion contributor** Sept. 13, 2019

These unknown soldiers were shot down in a U.S. military C-123 during the Vietnam War. We should never forget those who stand beside us in hard times.



How do we as a society remember our dead, including those who lost their lives alongside us in our nation's wars? William Gladstone, a British prime minister during the 19th century, offered a timeless formula: "Show me the manner in which a nation or community cares for its dead, and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender sympathies of its people, their respect for the law of the land and their loyalty to high ideals."

On Friday, a U.S. Air Force aircraft will carry the commingled remains of 81 airborne soldiers of the former South Vietnamese Army from Hawaii, where they have been stored in a military facility for more than 33 years, to California. On Oct. 26, there will be a full military ceremony honoring their service in Westminster, often known as Little Saigon, where tens of thousands of Vietnamese Americans now live.

This will be a unique occurrence because their names might never be known and because they were soldiers of an allied army. Following the ceremony, these forgotten soldiers will be laid to rest under a commemorative marker in the largest Vietnamese-American cemetery in our country.

This final resting place will mark a complicated, 54-year journey that began on a long-forgotten battlefield during a vicious war that tore apart our country and resulted in the deaths of 58,000 Americans and millions of Vietnamese.

In late 1965 an American C-123 was shot down, killing all four American crew members and 81 South Vietnamese Airborne soldiers. The crash site was located in a contested area and was not visited until 1974. Bone fragments and some personal paraphernalia were gathered, but all of the recovered remains were commingled and could fit into one large casket. The remains were shipped to Bangkok. The American crew members were later identified through DNA testing and were given a proper interment. But there was no flight manifest for the South Vietnamese soldiers. In 1986, their remains were sent to the U.S. military's POW/MIA lab in Hawaii, which is responsible for identifying those lost or missing from our nation's wars.

And there the remains of the South Vietnamese soldiers have been sitting for the past 33years. Because there was no flight manifest for such a combat mission, we will probably never know the names of those who were lost. They are identified only as members of an elite airborne battalion of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

The Hanoi government twice declined to accept them for a proper burial in Vietnam. And because these were not American citizens or soldiers, there was no clear way for them to be buried and properly honored in the United States. They are unknown soldiers, and have indeed become "Men Without a Country," after having given their lives on behalf of a country that no longer exists.

LAYING TO REST THE 81 IN FREEDOM PARK

I learned about this situation two years ago. For me, Gladstone's timeless message was a guidepost. If we are who we say we are as a nation and as a people, we should care not only for our own dead but also for those who served alongside us under great peril. These lost soldiers deserved to be remembered with honor and dignity.

After many months of intricate negotiations on both the diplomatic and legal front, this is now going to happen. On Oct. 26, after the memorial service in Westminster's Freedom Park, the soldiers will be interred near a memorial that remembers the courage and contributions of the hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese refugees who took to the sea during

perilous times, risking everything to come to our country.

The ceremony will do far more than merely remembering the sacrifices and the five decades odyssey of those young soldiers who so long ago lost their lives for the ideals of democracy on behalf of a country that no longer exists. It will also serve as a reminder of the hundreds of thousands of other soldiers who lost their lives and the thousands of others whose remains might never be found.

The sad but epic journey of these lost soldiers from the battlefields of Vietnam to the largest Vietnamese-American cemetery in our country will provide closure for many others who paid their own price and made their way to America. It will allow our nation to remember and appreciate the contributions of the 2 million Americans of Vietnamese descent who have helped make us a stronger and more vibrant society.

And it will help us to remember who we are as Americans, and who we should always aspire to be: a people who treasure human life, and who will never forget those who stood beside us during extraordinarily difficult times.

Former Navy Secretary and Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., served as a Marine infantry officer in Vietnam.

I GET MAIL
Larry Kipp

After I arrived in Nam I asked my parents to send me a Delaware flag. After 8 months I transferred over to Dustoff and flew with them as a medic for 15 months, mostly in III Corps area out of Lai Khe. I carried the flag in my chopper. On the evening of October 31st, 1968, FSB Rita, next to the Cambodian border, came under sustained NVA attacks and we carried out many of the wounded over the course of the night. Around 4 AM the NVA were inside the wire and within the compound. On one landing we were told we had landed "in enemy held territory" within the camp, so we moved closer to the CP. By dawn the NVA were in full retreat. That night my flag got a bullet hole and was stained with blood (the whole chopper floor was covered with blood). Over the past 51 years I have had many Dustoff crews sign my flag, and last year at a 1st Infantry Div. "RITA" reunion it was signed by some of the guys there, including one of my patients I had dusted off. Two of the people who signed the flag have the MOH. The 1ID Museum has asked that I donate the flag to their FSB Rita collection. I probably will.





KSV IN THE NEWS

CLINTON — By any measure, Ray Gustafson served the military with valor. As a Marine in Vietnam from 1966 to 1968, he flew a helicopter carrier in the Tet Offensive and in the bloody Battle of Khe Sanh. Hit by a piece of bomb, he was told there



MY GOOD FRIEND VIETNAM VETERAN BILL BROWN IS THE GUY HOLDING THE FLAG ON YOUR LEFT, AND I'M ON THE RIGHT.

was a 50-50 chance he would walk again. He taught himself to walk.

But Gustafson, who was among the 11 veterans honored at a Quilts of Valor ceremony last Saturday at the American Legion Post 66 in Clinton, now suffers from Parkinson's disease, Type 2 diabetes, and chloracne, a debilitating skin rash, all of which are directly linked to exposure to Agent Orange, the herbicide used as a defoliant in Southeast Asia during the war.

In meeting the Quilts of Valor Foundation mission to recognize "those service members and veterans touched by war," as its website states, the presentation was marked at once by a celebratory spirit, as well as an air of solemn gratitude — both for those who never came home and those still feeling its effects.

Before blessing the quilts, Rev. Ellen Kennedy asked the packed room to pause for a moment of silence in memory of Raymond Guarino, who was killed by sniper fire in Vietnam in 1966.

"He's the reason I'm here," said Ronald Manware, a veteran in the Army National Guard, who grew up with Guarino in West Haven, and was among those honored.

Sanford Sears, who served the Coast Guard stateside and in South Korea from 1973 to 2000, accepted his quilt on behalf of his late father, a Pearl Harbor survivor.

And Stephen McGuirk — one of six Marine Corps veterans being recognized — thanked the quilters for carrying on a long tradition.

"During our American Civil War," he said, "our government didn't supply very much for our soldiers. It was the women who made quilts and blankets that kept them warm."

In a powerful testimonial, Marine Corps veteran John Callahan, who served in Vietnam from 1965 to 1967, remembered "a hero who fell on a hand grenade, survived the blast, and gave aid to his wounded comrades before he died" and another who "flew his helicopter carrying wounded with enemy all around, tried to fly away, and was shot to the ground."

Then there was Gustafson, who was accompanied by his friend Gerry Wright, an Army veteran who served two tours of duty as a combat engineer in



Standing, from left: Albert Motta, Stephen McGuirk, Ron Gibson, Marc Gibson, Lisa Distasio, John R. Tubb; seated, from left, Ray Gustafson, Richard Silocka, Sanford Sears, John Callahan, Ronald Manware

Lisa Reisman /For Hearst Connecticut Media

Vietnam from 1968 to 1971, and who's also afflicted with the effects of exposure to Agent Orange, including ischemic heart disease (hardening of the arteries), atrial fibrillation, a skin rash and neuropathy in his feet.

He's disqualified from disability benefits for the skin rash and the neuropathy because of a rule requiring soldiers to have reported symptoms within a year of being exposed.

"I didn't recognize the symptoms until it was too late," he said. "And I'm not alone. There are literally

millions of us suffering from the effects. And we're dying at a rate of 390 a year."

Last year, Wright motorcycled more than 10,000 miles through 32 states, towing a trailer painted "sprayed and betrayed," and collecting more than 6,000 signatures in support of the Agent Orange Exposure Fairness Act to remove the one-year requirement.

"Why weren't we given protective gear?" Wright asked. "How could we request treatment when we didn't hear about Agent Orange until 1978, when most of us had been discharged? How can the government put an end date on all illness?"

It's not just his generation that's impacted, according to Gustafson, who's written a book titled "The Silent Enemy: The Insidious Legacy of Agent Orange," a reference to dioxin, a noxious element in

Agent Orange, which resides in the fatty tissue and, studies have shown, can be passed on to multiple generations.

Gustafson's older son was born with a latent abnormality in his brain that manifested in his 30s. His younger son was born with a cleft palate. And his granddaughter has left ventricle hypoplasia and pulmonary stenosis.

"None of these are in our DNA," he said.

On Saturday, Gustafson, his quilt wrapped around his shoulders, struggled to accept congratulations, the result of lingering wounds from his heroic service almost five decades earlier.

"It's like the words I have stenciled on my trailer," Wright said, standing beside his friend. "I was killed in Vietnam but I just haven't died yet."

If you know a veteran you'd like to honor, visit www.qovf.org, find the "take action" tab, and click "request a quilt," or email jane.dougherty@qovf.org.

To support the Agent Orange Exposure Fairness Act, HR-566 & S-332, call your House and Senate representatives. For more information on the bill, visit congress.gov and type in S332 and HR-566 or "Sprayed and Betrayed AO" on Facebook.

TOWN OF SPRAGUE UNVEILS FIRST STATUE HONORING FEMALE MILITARY MEMBERS IN THE STATE

SPRAGUE, Conn. (WTNH)– Underneath a red, white, and blue blanket with an image of an American Eagle on it, a statue waited to be unveiled.

"The detail of her uniform is amazing," said State Senator Cathy Osten, (D) Sprague who is a veteran herself.

Dozens gathered at the Town of Sprague War Memorial Park for the unveiling of a statue which is believed to be the first in the state.

"Women have been in combat all the way back to the revolutionary war," said Sen. Osten. "They just haven't been identified. Some of them pretended to be men."

It was in the 1990s that more job classes were opened up to women.

"The fastest growing demographic of veterans in America are women," said Rep. Joe Courtney, (D) Connecticut.

The statue which honors women in the military was seven years in the making. American Legion Post 85 in Baltic raised $50,000 to make this day a reality. "We are proud to be the first to recognize women in the military. Let's give yourself another round of applause," Sen. Osten told the crowd.

The bronze statue depicts a female soldier paying homage to a fallen comrade. Her helmet and weapon are by her side.

"It's really nice to see the women being acknowledged," said veteran Lois Cole of Hebron who fought back tears.





"To finally see women are being recognized in my state in a tangible way that I can come visit and look at and see myself represented in that young lady is powerful," said veteran Carlita Cotton of Mansfield. Cotton who served in the Air Force for twenty years

as a Russian Linguist says all too often she was mistaken for the spouse or dependent of a serviceman.

"Sometimes the first question is why are you parking there? That's the veterans parking," said Cotton.

"I'm the veteran."

Surrounding the adjacent Fallen Soldier monument are the names of Sprague residents who were either were killed in action or died while prisoners of war.

"There are Civil War, from WWI, WWII, Korea," said Tom Coletti, Adjutant of American Legion Post 85.

The Fallen Soldier monument was installed a few years ago and is joined now by the first female soldier monument.

"We are hoping that this will start a trend," said Sen. Osten.



I GET PICTURES



DELTA CO AT COOKIES MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY PARTY



ROD FINK SENIOR CORPSMAN A CO 1/9 BEING SWORN IN TO MARINE CORPS LEAGUE



JOHN KAHENY & FRIEND
AT THE "RANCH MINISTRIES"



QUILTS OF VALOR



MEMORIES



KSV HONORING VETERANS



MY GOOD FRIEND VIETNAM VETERAN BILL BROWN IS THE GUY HOLDING THE FLAG ON YOUR LEFT, AND I'M ON THE RIGHT.

OBIT

ALBERT OWEN, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS, KHE SANH VETERAN XO A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS "ONTOS"

Albert (Art) A. Owen Albert (Art) A. Owen born in Maysville, MO on December 12, 1932 passed away surrounded by family and friends on October 14, 2019. Art was the 5th child of Albert C. and Cora Owen of Maysville, MO. He graduated from Maysville High School in 1951. After high school, Art joined the United States Marines. He served in the Korean War. After Korea, Art was stationed in Seattle, WA., where he met and married Janice Beverly Holien.



Art and Janice traveled both the U.S. And foreign lands during his military career while raising four children. Art retired as a Captain from the Corp in 1971. His second career was in refrigeration. Art and Janice were married for 46 years until her death in 2000. In 2001, Art attended his 50th high school reunion where he met Juarenne Hester.

In 2004, he and Juarenne were married at Father Barraga's Cross on the North Shore of Lake Superior. Art was a member of Liberty Rotary, attended First Presbyterian Church of Liberty, and supported the Corbin Theater. Art and Juarenne celebrated their 15th Anniversary this past July. Art was preceded in death by his first wife, Janice, his brother Donald, brother John Howard, and his sister Ruth Alberta. Art is survived by his wife Juarenne Hester, his four children Stephanie, Arthur, Matthew, and Samantha, sons-in-law Glenn and Scott, daughter-in-law Jodi, 6 incredible grandchildren Jamie, Cody, PFC Andrew, Henry, Lauren, and Philip. He is also survived by his older brother Joe Owen of Cameron, MO. And several nieces and nephews, all of whom he loved and adored very much. In lieu of flowers, please send memorials to either First Presbyterian Church of Liberty or the Marine Corp Heritage Foundation. A memorial service was held in Art's honor at First Presbyterian Church of Liberty on Saturday, October 19th at 11am.



I HAD TO ADD THIS PHOTO OF SEAN H. MILES & HIS FAMILY. THIS 28 YEAR OLD MARINE KILLED IN IRAQ. IN 2006. HE WAS FROM MIDLOTHIAN, VA AND SERVED WITH THE 2ND BATTALION, 2ND MARINE DIVISION

NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS RALLY AROUND LARGO VETERAN WHO RECEIVED QUILT OF VALOR

LARGO, Fla. — A Largo veteran and widower was in for a special surprise on Thursday.

Neighbors gave Bruce Bird a very special gift. He served in Vietnam in the late 60s. Bird was also a purple heart recipient along with many other awards and honors.

On Thursday, Bird received a Quilt of Valor. It's given to wounded service members and veterans all over the nations. "Just so honored to have it presented to me," Bird said.

Bird's family up north nominated him for the quilt, but they could not be there for the event. "I'm very proud of him and I had at one point four brothers in service, so I know what it would mean to them," Sharp said Bird said it meant the world to have his friends and neighbors there to support those who served and continue to serve .Glad that people appreciate other service men that served their country to give you something like this," Bird said.



BRUCE BIRD

ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR SOUTH ORANGE RESIDENT ON VETERANS DAY

NEWARK, NJ — The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders recently honored a South Orange Village Trustee among other veterans at its 2019 Veterans Celebration at the Hall of Records; while honoring the patriotism and sacrifice of the men and women who have served our country, the board recognized specific veterans of Essex County for their service. The Freeholders presented the honorees with framed commendations, plaques, and service medals.

Freeholder President Brendan Gill began the program with welcoming remarks, celebrating each of the Board's honorees for their bravery and selflessness. Freeholders Robert Mercado, Carlos Pomares, and Patricia Sebold also participated in the event by offering greetings to the guests in attendance, and summarizing the highlights of the honorees prior to presenting them with their medals and commendations. This year's honorees were West Orange Police Lieutenant Charles E. Bryant of the United States Navy, Victor M. Mandio, Jr. of the United States Army, the Honorable Edwin R. Matthews of the United States Marine Corps, Jorge E. Ortiz of the United States Navy, and the Honorable Juan M. Rivera, Jr. of the United States Marine Corps.



EDWIN R. MATTHEWS

The Honorable Edwin R. Matthews is a lifelong resident of South Orange and has served his community in many capacities including: Municipal Court Judge, Municipal Attorney, member of the Village Council, as well as a member of the Juvenile Conference Committee and a number of other committees for the Village of South Orange. After graduating from the College of Holy Cross, he served in the United States Marine Corps where he attained the rank of Captain. His service included a thirteen-month tour of duty in Vietnam with the Second Battalion 26th Marine Regiment, including eight months as an Infantry Platoon Leader. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, a Navy Commendation Medal, two Purple Heart medals, and the Vietnam Service Medal, with two stars. His unit was twice awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, including one for the defense of Khe Sanh. After active duty, he attended Seton Hall Law School and became an Assistant United States Attorney, where the Attorney General twice recognized him for Sustained Superior Performance. He is now in private practice and his office focuses on litigation and municipal law.

OBIT

DONALD J. GILLESPIE USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, C CO 1/26

Donald James Gillespie passed away on February 1, 2020, surrounded by family and friends. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather and friend.
Don grew up in Olney and attended St. Helena grade school and Cardinal Dougherty high school. Upon graduation from high school in 1967, Don entered the US Marine Corps — in what would become a defining moment in his life.

Don arrived in Vietnam in February 1968 near the start of the epic Battle of Khe Sanh. Two regiments of marines were badly outnumbered by soldiers from the North Vietnamese People's Army of Vietnam. The Marines, with the help of America's air support, maintained the base at Khe Sanh for 5 months. Over 1,500 Americans perished in the siege and another 7,600 were injured.

Don was wounded during the battle and spent many months recovering in the hospital. He returned to danger in Vietnam upon completion of his initial 12 -month deployment to rejoin his Marine comrades there. He was the recipient of two Purple Hearts and remained a proud Marine his entire life.

After returning from the war, Don spent his career in law enforcement. He joined the Philadelphia Police Department in 1974. He worked for the Philadelphia Police Department for 25 years, initially in West Philadelphia's 16th District and then in police transit. He was a K-9 officer and also worked in plainclothes. Later, he became a detective and worked in the sex crimes unit. He was a dedicated champion for abused women and children and received many awards and commendations.

After retiring from the Philadelphia Police Department, Don went to work for the state of Pennsylvania where he continued his detective work investigating sex offenders. He was the first detective hired by the state to enforce Megan's Law. He retired in May 2015 after 16 years with the state.

Don had a lifelong love of baseball and coached for over 20 years for the Chestnut Hill Fathers Club. He enjoyed traveling and riding his Harley once the weather warmed up.

Don was a strong man with a kind, gentle spirit. He was known for his generosity and quick wit. He adored his grandchildren. He will continue to be cherished by those who loved him.

He is survived by his loving wife Judy Feighery, his four children Donald Gillespie (Lori), Jennifer Vogel (Adam), Matthew Gillespie and Benjamin Gillespie, five grandchildren and five step children. He is also survived by his brother George Gillespie and sister Patricia Gillespie.

Services were held at St. Genevieve Catholic Church, 1225 Bethlehem Pike in Flourtown, Pa., on Saturday, February 8, 2020.

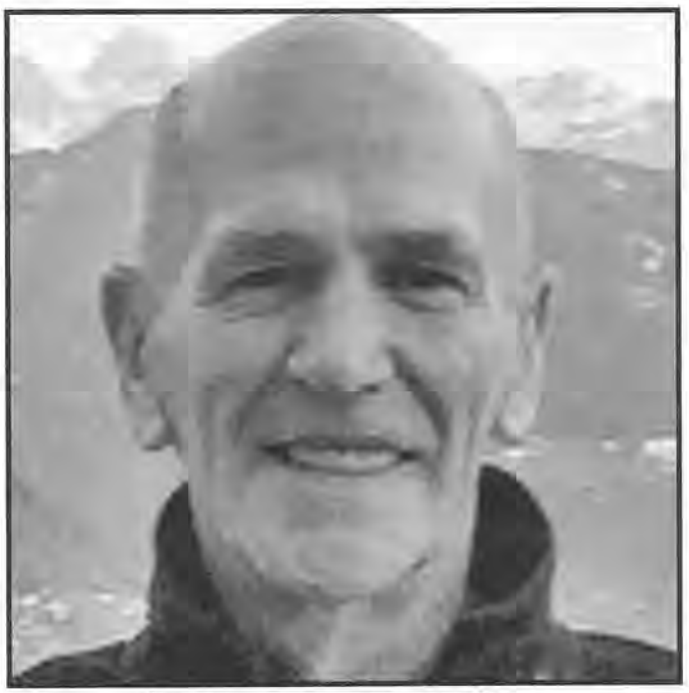



OBIT

PUEBLO — Richard Allen (Rick) Campbell passed away Oct. 17, 2019 in Pueblo, CO after a lengthy illness. He was born Nov. 27, 1942 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He graduated high school there and enlisted in the Navy, where he became a corpsman and served eight years.

Richard was a veteran of the Vietnam conflict, serving with honor and distinction with the 1st Battalion, Fourth Marines, Third Marine Division, Charlie Company, as part of Operation Robin near Khe Sanh in Quan Tri Province. Rick was wounded there on June 6, 1968. He received the Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medal. The discipline and patriotism he earned in the Navy and Marines never left him, as friends and family will attest

After recovering from his injuries, he attended Oklahoma University for a time, then Oklahoma Baptist University graduating in 1978 with a Health Sciences degree. He worked at several hospitals in Oklahoma before becoming Administrator of Frederick Memorial Hospital Nursing Center, Director of Radiology, Lab, and Risk Management until retiring from there in June 2004. He then moved to Del Norte, Colorado and spent four years working in radiology at Rio Grande Hospital until 2008. Rick loved riding his Harley Davidson trike, he loved camping and hiking in the mountains, he loved his cats and dog, he loved watching OU football, and he loved all his family very much. He lived a full and amazing life and will be greatly missed.

Rick is survived by his loving wife Angelia, his sons Robert Allen (Deann) Campbell, Eric Lee (Ninet) Campbell, stepchildren Nick (Sara) Treadwell and Lauren Treadwell, his brother Earl Lee (Paula) Webb, sisters Wanda May Lewallen, Billie Joyce (Ron) Dodson, and Marilou (Mike) Myrick, grandchildren Kayla Campbell and Eric Nathaniel Campbell, numerous nephews and nieces and countless family and friends.





RICHARD ALLEN CAMPBELL

I GET PICTURES



ONLY THE DEAD HAVE SEEN THE END OF THE WAR

ARTICLE FROM "MICHAEL'S BLOG"

COLONEL JOHN HENNELLY, USMC
JANUARY 27, 2020
MICHAEL ARCHER

The attached link is to a brief January 17, 2020, New York Times article describing a minor, but interesting, connection between the siege of Khe Sanh and Operation Desert Storm; and brought to my mind some fine memories of Lieutenant Colonel John Hennelly, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, our main artillery unit at Khe Sanh during the siege. Hennelly is the unnamed officer mentioned in this article, who was ordered directly by the Pentagon to use highly secretive COFRAM artillery shells (dispersing anti-personnel cluster bomblets) in defense of the U.S. Army Special Forces camp at Lang Vei during the night of February 6-7 1968, which was being overrun by hundreds of NVA infantry troops supported by Soviet-made tanks.

A seasoned artillery officer, and a man of great character, Hennelly "doubted very much their effectiveness" against what was transpiring at Lang Vei that night, with many U.S. Army and indigenous allies still desperately fighting within the camp, and so countermanded his instructions from higher-ups and returned to using regular high-explosive shells—all the while keeping some Pentagon egos unbent by leading them to believe he was still firing COFRAM. There were some career officers then in Vietnam who might not have risked advancement opportunities by potentially alienating superiors at the Pentagon. Lieutenant Colonel Hennelly was not one of them. He knew the right thing to do, and he did it.

I had been in a similar situation two weeks earlier, a couple miles up Highway 9 from Lang Vei, when the Combined Action Platoon I was with in Khe Sanh village was assaulted by hundreds of NVA (but luckily no tanks). There, we quickly employed the prearranged defensive artillery fire that Hennelly had devised for us in anticipation of such an attack. He had correctly predicted the directions from which the enemy would approach, and his variable-timed (VT) artillery airbursts decimated them—saving my life (Unfortunately, Lang Vei was unable to withstand the armored vehicle assault---and fell). After leaving the village, I returned to the tiny, underground regimental Fire Support Control Center (FSCC), where I had the opportunity to work alongside Hennelly each night for the next ten weeks, as he sat with quiet confidence on a stool by a map in the corner, expertly directing his batteries in successfully keeping our thousands of nearby attackers at bay.

I recently came across some emails I'd exchanged with his son, Tom, a dozen years ago. Regrettably, I had overlooked these messages at the time I was writing The Gunpowder Prince, and so missed an opportunity to include a little more information about the subject of that book, the enigmatic Captain Mirza Munir "Harry" Baig.

Tom was too young to remember that period, but had consulted his older brother, Tim, for his recollections. Tim recalled that his parents had been very upset upon learning of Baig's unusual death in 1971. As a lieutenant in the early 1960's, Baig had been assigned to Hennelly's artillery unit at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina and was invited to dinner at the Hennelly's home on several occasions.

Mrs. Hennelly later spoke about how fond she was of him, and the clandestine nature of his time in the Corps, saying "he [Baig] was involved in some very secret things." She said that her husband was one of the very few friends that Baig had in the Marine Corps because, "he apparently was looked upon with some suspicion by his fellow officers." She did not elaborate, so we don't know whether it was due to the secretive nature of his work; or because he was a recently naturalized U.S. citizen who had immigrated from South Asia; or his eccentricities and occasional haughtiness; or perhaps some of each.

According to Mrs. Hennelly, as the siege began at Khe Sanh, her husband, who now knew first-hand of Baig's intellectual gifts and dual expertise in both artillery and counterintelligence, specifically requested that the captain be assigned to work with him in the FSCC. Together, with Baig's uncanny ability to locate the hidden enemy, and Hennelly's talent for destroying them with his guns, the base was spared, and many thousands of American lives were saved. Baig was effusive in his praise for Hennelly's actions during the siege, later writing the Marine Corps Historical Branch:

Lieutenant Colonel Hennelly kept us all together and judiciously prevented us from running amok in the FSCC with outrageous propositions. In emergencies his intellect enabled to him to maintain control of nine batteries firing continuously on shifting targets and one radar-controlled air strike every ten

minutes. No one else in the FSCC could have done so."

After the war, Hennelly served as the liaison between the House Armed Services Committee and the Pentagon. As a child, Tom recalled their home contained much memorabilia that Congress had presented to his dad, but almost nothing from the war, a subject the colonel spoke little about. Colonel Hennelly soon became frustrated with the political climate in the period following U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, especially how it was negatively affecting his beloved Corps, and decided to retire and take a job as the senior military instructor at the all-boys, Catholic High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. It was a job, Tom later said, that gave his father the most satisfaction of any in his life, and he spent the next twenty-three years positively influencing the lives of thousands of young men.

I could see that side of him even as a 19-year-old at Khe Sanh. Hennelly was a true gentleman who treated everyone, from the lowliest PFC (like me) through his subordinate officer ranks, with the same level of dignity. He had a fine sense of humor and never had to raise his voice or threaten, yet fully commanded everyone's respect. In April 1968, as the siege of Khe Sanh finally lifted, Hennelly left Vietnam. Many months later, he was back as part of an Inspector General contingent from Okinawa. My regiment was then positioned just northwest of Da Nang, and one day he visited. Upon spotting me at my radio, he called out my name, strode over and shook my hand while slapping me several times on the back. We talked about the bad old days at Khe Sanh and updated each other with info on others we had worked with there. To this day, I don't think I've ever had a greater feeling of personal gratification than on that afternoon, to be remembered so kindly by someone who I respected immensely and whose role in my continuing existence on this planet cannot be overstated.

Colonel Hennelly died in 1995. Over two thousand mourners attended his funeral—a graphic example of the constructive impact he had on so many lives, over so many years. How fortunate I have been to be associated with extraordinary men like this, who were at their very best in the very worst of circumstances.



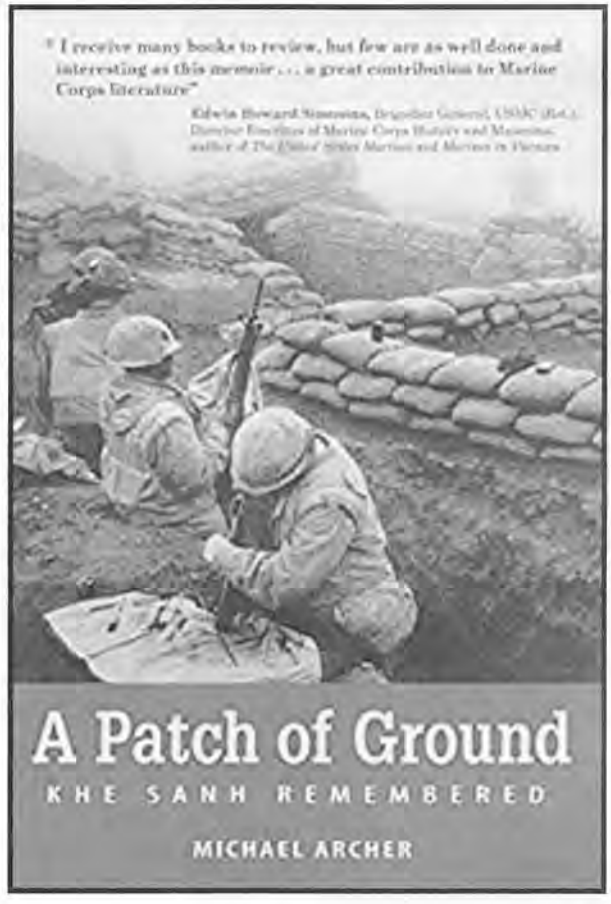

OBIT

MARINE CORPORAL ROBERT R. SPURGEON PASSED AWAY FROM LUNG AND BRAIN CANCER , NOVEMBER 13, 2019. HE WAS IN A/1/26 AT KHE SANH 1967-68 IN 1LT WILLIAMS' PLATOON.

Rick, was a wonderful and gracious individual. We attended several Khe Sanh reunions together! he was a class act!! A great and unimaginable loss. A gentleman for sure. A prolific Leatherneck without a doubt. A man with unquestionable loyalty. A courageous individual. He will be missed by many, to include his Brother Marines affiliated with the "Khe Sanh Veterans Association." With deepest sympathy, may Ricks family, friends and those who have had the privilege to know him, be comforted by all the great memories he leaves behind. May he "Rest In Peace."



WASHINGTON, D.C. REUNION 2006 L-R SMITTY, OLLIE, GREG, DAVE & RICK



Arlington National Cemetery, Washington DC, 2006 Khe Sanh Reunion (L-R) Robert "Rick" Spurgeon, Cpt., Gregory "Greg" Williams, - brother of 1st Lt., Maxie Williams KIA KSCB April 10, 1968, A/1/26, Maj., Dave Aday, Martin "Smitty" Smith & Jim "Ollie" Collins - A/1/26. Khe Sanh Veteran's All!!!

I GET PICTURES



ROD FINK WITH GRANDCHILD

Jim "Ollie" Collins and Family
A/1/26 "THE PROFESSIONALS"

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Single Bullet Passes Through 2 Helmets

By GySgt. John Conick

VANDEGRIFT COMBAT BASE — Two infantrymen from "D" Co., 1st Bn., 9th Marines, consider themselves to be the luckiest Marines alive.

A single enemy bullet penetrated, then bounced off, both their helmets during an assault on enemy positions during Operation Dewey Canyon. Neither Marine was hurt.

First striking the helmet of Pfc. Robert M. Moxley (11065 S.W. 79th St., Tigard, Ore.), the bullet ricocheted through the helmet of the second Leatherneck, Pfc. Ronnie J. Tucker (1903 Ridge Ave., Rockford, Ill.).

Moxley suffered a slight scratch on the head, while Tucker received no wounds, only a punctured helmet.

"I guess the good Lord was looking after us," said Moxley.

Moxley had lettered earlier on his helmet, "Put Your Trust in God," and "The Lord Be With Us."



Tucker (left) and Moxley

A FEW EXCERPTS FROM REVEREND RAY W. STUBBE'S DIARIES ON HIS TWO CHRISTMAS VISITS IN VIETNAM, AT KHE SANH & DANANG.

MONDAY 25 DECEMBER 1967 CHRISTMAS DAY

I walked back to the combat base early to ensure I'd be able to get to the hills. It was a beautiful day. At 0800, the battalion One Four called saying resupply was beginning. I immediately walked to the LSA, arriving about 0910. The choppers were indeed flying, but didn't stop at the LSA. Minutes ticked away

At 1000, I departed the LSA since I couldn't get to a hill, wait while the people gathered, lead worship, and then return by 1100 to hold services on the base. Just as I walked away, the choppers began resupply! I walked to the regimental One Four and battalion One Four to inform them I wouldn't be able to go to the three hills until 1140.

When I stopped by H&S Co, I discovered we just received a new group of men. I asked if they could have off in order to attend worship, but LT Fitzgerald the S-1 said they wouldn't be available until 1500 after checking in; they couldn't have off the hour to attend services on Christmas Day.

The day started off badly, but the remainder of the day was glorious. I feared there'd be no one coming to the 1100 service, but we had 31 in attendance. I grabbed a piece of fruit cake at my hooch and proceded by foot to the 3/26 CP just outside the main gate. A few men gathered here and there. The Father was still saying Mass in the large tent; over 100 communed. He departed and the Protestant group entered.

By the time they all sat down, it was fortunate the walls were lashed up, for the men were overflowing outside the tent, seated all over the ground. I asked one of the men in the rear to take a count. He counted 168! This is the largest worship service I've had in the Nam. I then had the driver take me to the LSA.

They were still resupplying, just finishing Hill 950. It is always hazardous going up there since the clouds start coming in at any time and there are, of course, fewer there than on 861 or 881. Also, the unit on the hill had just rotated about half an hour earlier. I still wanted to get up there. All was confusion as the men were getting their gear stowed. There was also a special hot chow which had arrived and there was the small size of the hill. I was anxious to get started so I could go to the other hills; also the clouds were beginning to roll in, and from past experience, I could very well be stuck up there a whole week or more! So we held our service, attended by 11 out of the platoon-almost all available men.

I had to wait about half an hour to depart. A thick cloud had engulfed the hill, but miraculously passed by. Returned to the LSA, resupply had terminated, and they weren't going to 881 or 861. I walked to the regimental One Four. Learned there were no Huey's or anything else going up. Walked back, just in time to meet the pilots. I was somewhat distressed over it all. If necessary, I would remain over night) on a hill. They said, "Do you want to go to one of the hills? Well, we'll take you up." What could I say? All my anger dissipated-and the pilots were Roman Catholic. They did it for the Protestant chaplain!

(The Father today kept to the same regular Sunday schedule, visiting the same places on the base and at the same times as he had yesterday). So we had a superb supper at regiment-sliced turkey, cranberries, and even ice cream! and then went to the 34s and I got a flight to 881. I could only remain there 50 minutes, so I held services as soon as I could. There wasn't much time to get the people gathered, but we did get 40 from the general area of the LZ. Christmas was celebrated in the most remote U.S. base in Vietnam this year, and I could say to the men, "Unto YQ.Y is born this day a Savior!"

Captain PIPES, the new CO of "B" Co, remarked they would be leaving the hill tomorrow with a unit of 3/26 temporarily taking it over. Hill 861 would also be relieved, and 1/26 is going into the field on Wednesday. Although 3/26 made no contact with the enemy during their five-day operation.

I returned and counted all the offerings. The offering from the 3/26 service alone was $62.30! I unpacked all the goodie Christmas packages. Some of the unexpected items received today and recently included: a revolving Swiss music-box small Christmas tree from the Sandeens in North St. Paul [parents of the wife of one of my very good seminary student friends, Bob Wurtz], various items including a fruit cake from Orphanellas (Peter Orphanella was a student who attended my home church and invited by my parents to their home for supper and relaxation], two boxes of candies and nuts from Mr.& Mrs. Ed. Anderson. (Ed Anderson was our parish secretary), a large box of nuts from

the Bohnsacks ("Bud" and Lazette Bohnsack were very good friends of my parents for over 50 years], a package of goodies from the Blessingtons (Dorothy Blessington was a good friend of my mom). I received a huge, expensive-looking card from LT Inskeep of VAW-13 at Alameda, California, the only pilot from that good group of men I had known from the summer last year. A collapsible aluminum Christmas tree which I received from mom and dad was given to the Top to give to the line companies. I saw it on top of Hill 950 when I visited.

This Christmas away from home has been very hard. With Glenn gone *(NOTE; Glenn WALLER was* my *enlisted clerk who rotated* home), I felt even more alone. When emerging from the 1100 service, an Air Force plane hovered overhead, blaring out "Joy to the World." I almost cried, gulped so fast so my Adam's apple seemed hard and sore, but I held in my emotions.

I saw LTCOL Wilkinson and asked if I couldn't go along on the battalion operation. He said OK. Took down a large carton of some of the goodies I'd personally received as Christmas packages to the men; they truly need it more than I!

Colonel Lownds, upon suggestion of a PFC volunteer, went into Khe Sanh village today. The PC dressed up as Santa Claus and distributed candy. Colonel Lownds later told me, "It makes me sick when I see all the protest and here is a young man risking his life for bringing life to others."

From today, 25 December, to 31 March, battalion 3/26 was disposed as follows: Company "I" on 881-South; company "K" on 861; Company "L" manning the RED (western) sector of the combat base perimeter; Company "M" (minus) on the western finger of 881S; the remainder of Company "M" as the regimental reactionary force, in the RED Sector.

WEDNESDAY 25 DECEMBER 1968

Went to Camp Carter early, arriving 0745 in order to be there in time for the vehicle to arrive 0800 to take me to the Marble Mt. Security Force service scheduled for 0830.

There had been a near riot situation caused by a couple of Black Army Soldiers who were UA from their unit, who began beating up on another black who was sitting with a group of whites. The message of peace on earth "to men with whom He is pleased" seemed very revealing.

Had they been at Christmas Eve services to focus on Christ and not on themselves and their situation, this sort of thing would not have occurred. One could well say to the Command, "Well, what did you expect when you promote drinking and give absolutely no support to the religious, moral program of the Command?" (LCDR Graff was also disturbed at the 10 or so officers at Carter, none of whom were sober). The argument that they have it so bad is hardly applicable! They have it too good!

It got to be 0830, but no vehicle. I telephoned. It's on its way, I was told. 0800, still no vehicle. At this point, I had to leave since my next service was at 1000 at the White Elephant. I couldn't get down there, hold a 15-minute service, and return, in time. It especially caused me some degree of anguish (1) because had I not depended on the vehicle, I would have walked there as I did yesterday, and (2) I know there were men there who wanted the Christmas services.

(Example of the demonic - seeds snatched before germinating!)

I was, by now, filled with so much disappointment and discouragement, but not really anger, that any possible feelings of nostalgia, homesickness, or depression for being over here at this season, was not possible!

It was a beautiful day. Sunday had been rain from afternoon on. Monday was rain in morning and threatening in afternoon. Tuesday was cloudy in morning and sunny in the afternoon. Today was sunny all day.

The White Elephant service numbered only twelve-that number including **Axtel** from Carter, that had been there last night; **Straubel**, and **Kibbey**, **1/Lt Heller**, the Air Force man at Camp Horn (III MAF) DASC who attends my Lutheran services at the Old Air Force chapel, and four who don't normally come. Captain Childs, Commanders **Rose & Hayes**, none of these were present.

Kibbey felt this was so small. I normally would have also, except I was overjoyed to at least have one service! Dropped Axtel at Carter and went to Tien Sha; grabbed a few chocolate chip cookies for "lunch" and then picked up the PH1, Rus Elder, a LDS man, the photo journalist.

He wasn't too happy about this assignment and was talking on a phone while I was anxious to get go-

ing since we had a very tight schedule to meet. But we finally got going.

Our first stop was the POW camp adjacent to Fifth Special Forces. A platoon (Second) from G/2/1 is here to augment the ARVN security. A small group was off playing a guitar to entertain the Chieu Hoi while others were inside the barracks. We all assembled outside the barracks, all inside a barbed wire enclosure and my back was to a sandbagged bunker. On top was an upside-down helmet on which I had placed the cross-the same one I had used at Khe Sanh during the siege where I went from bunker to bunker and trench to trench.

All the men present attended. I know there were some Roman Catholics there. One man said, "I'm Catholic." Another man said, "So am I, but let's go anyway." When we said the Lord's Prayer, only a few continued with "For Thine is the Kingdom .. " The hymns were sung loudly I couldn't hear myself sing! There were 25 men present at that service! As I left, I removed the cross. put it back in the metal ammo box, and told Straubel, "That's how we hold services with Marines," referring to the informality or altar, etc., the calling together, the enthusiasm, and the many thanks for remembering them which the men expressed.

We went next to the CAP compound. The Christmas tree I had given them was on a stake in the center held fast by engineering stakes. The Sergeant was standing naked in the compound shower. "I thought you were coming yesterday," he said. Evidently the COC of 3rd LVTs told everyone I was coming that very day.

We got Everybody together, gathering around the tree; two sand bags formed my altar. The men all sat down, including a visiting Captain. The beautiful Marble Mountains were in the background. The worship was again spirited. I could really preach God's glory as a glory involving His concern for all men, announcing to the small band of shepherds the angel's message:

(1) Like these shepherds, these men were ordinary, simple, uneducated, dirty, and a small group, and
not in the temple at worship, and God came to them.

(2) Like the shepherds braving the dangerous say to Jerusalem to worship, I could feel I was braving the booby-trapped ways of uncertain country to worship God by serving them. (In a sense Christ was present me as the brother in need).

(3) Like the shepherds had to go back to their daily tasks, so also do these men-right away, in fact, sin work is 7 days a week.

The LTCOL in charge of CACS sent small bottles of whisky as a Christmas gift to all the men, attached; label reading: "This is one 'shot' you won't have to duck!"

Talking of gifts, at all these worship services, I passed out the new Testament in Today's English Version given by the American Bible Society, to each man present and practically every man took one. Their Christmas present was the Word! They really like those pocket-sized New Testaments that are easily understandable.

We then left for CROW'S NEST. We drove all the way into NUl KIM SON village. A Gunny in the new camouflaged utility uniform stopped us, cautioning us not to proceed any further since there have been four vehicles lost in the past week in this village from booby-traps and mines. When he discovered we were going to climb the hill, he was surprised and overjoyed that we would climb the hill for these men. He said he himself has on occasion gone up there and slept overnight.

Straubel returned with File since File had a watch. Elder and I walked toward the hill. We heard loud rifle fire ahead of us and didn't know if we should go up. Elder was very apprehensive and I recalled the Sergeant of 3rd LVTs yesterday saying there were two suspected VC-NVA companies in these hills. But I was sure the shots weren't hostile file, so we continued. These men were practice firing



Christmas Services Marines of security detail POW compound, Danang Vietnam

into an old abandoned pagoda on the hill just south of Crow's nest. Elder, looking up the hill, said, "You've got to be kidding; it's all a bad dream, isn't it?"

We started up, while shots of rifles and pistols reverberated loudly between the two hills. It is a very dangerous climb. ELDER had two cameras dangling in front of him, but we finally got up. Breathless, panting, and very, very thirsty, we made it to the top. (Here, again, they thought I was coming yesterday). On this hill are about 18 men, not all, however were on the hill right now. Included are some Army personnel, Marines, and naval Gunfire liaison people

I had forgotten my cross, but had brought the New Testaments and Christmas bulletins with some booklets (from the Salvation Army) stuffed in my trouser pockets. We all assembled around the 106mm recoilless rifle. Didn't stay around too long as the sun was beginning to set. God had visited his people-me, too, of course, in all this experience. I had had 100% attendance at the POW camp, CAP unit 2-5-1, A-6, Hospital, and Crow's Nest. Perhaps I felt no fear during all of these visits because I was so absolutely assured of the Lord's Presence with me. It was palpable. The Marines offered me sodas at the CAP unit and A-6 and offered me water on Crow's Nest. When we care for each other, the Lord's Presence, which is always present, is somehow activated and we are all blessed.



CHAPLAIN RAY CLIMBING CROW'S NEST
(With a Little Help)

We parked at the sentry gate and walked over sand dunes, through cans and debris, up a long and sandy trail, past a clump of beautiful flowers, towards Hill



ALFA SIX, watching for booby-traps all the way. It was very exhausting and I was beginning to have great doubts about being good enough shape to scale CROW'S NEST Hill!

ON CROW'S NEST
CHRISTMAS DAY 1968

A Marine met us up at the hill. Several Vietnamese boys were there in helmets and flak vests that went down to their knees, a very "different" sight! The Marines said there really was not such a great danger of booby-traps.

One man recognized me from the picture that had been in *Stars and Stripes*. Everyone who was on that hill was present. (Weishun, the Lutheran who had been on this position was no longer there.) This place also had expected me yesterday.

Following the service, I walked about the different peaks of ALFA-SIX and took a few pictures here and there.

We then went to the NSA Station Hospital. Chris Young was conducting an Episcopalian service. **Ted Clark**, the yeoman, went about getting the names of all the Lutherans. There was a patient in the chaplain's office with a shaved skull resembling a friar! Upon closer observation, however, a long cut with stich marks on either side was visible on top of his head. He was on AFP duty, going through the skivvy house and got knocked on the head by an engineering stake. He recalled me from Khe Sanh; he was there 10 Oct 67 - 20 March 1968: John B. Mahar, 454 Main Street, Hingham, Massachusetts.

A Jewish man at the chaplain's office told me that

his mezuzah had stopped a piece of shrapnel-a small thing like that! (like stories of how a small pocket Bible in a flak vest stopped a bullet)

Walked through the wards to talk with Lutheran patients. One ward had hundreds of large paper snow flakes suspended from the ceiling. One man said "It sure isn't like being at home." One ward had half a dozen children with deformed faces. A serviceman was lying on his back on a bed holding one, sitting on his chest.

All the Lutheran patients who I contacted came, including File, the Seabee from Camp Carter, who had come last night. (Straubel picked him up after we left A-6). It was dark in the chapel. A small manger scene was next to the altar in place of the lectern.

Chaplain Bohula had told Ted Clark I could use the golden chasuble the DaNang archbishop had lent, if I wanted, but I didn't use any vestments.

I felt no fear during all of these visits because I was so absolutely assured of the Lord's Presence with me. It was palpable. The Marines offered me sodas at the CAP unit and A-6 and offered me water on Crow's Nest. When we care for each other, the Lord's Presence, which is always present, is somehow activated and we are all blessed.



FROM THE WEB
By Craig W. Tourte
HQ BTRY 1/13

I was sitting around my favorite watering hole a few years ago after playing a game of golf, shooting the stuff with a few old guys my age. The discussion got around to serving in Vietnam and "where were you and what did you do." One of the guys talked about his time in the Air Force and how he saw the world and the various bases and countries he had been in. Another talked about his time in the Navy and the food on the ships and how his bunk was right under the flight deck and the noise it made. Another said that he was in the Corps but never made it to Vietnam but had spent time at Twenty-Nine Palms and Okinawa. Then one of the guys smiled and asked me where I was, while I was in the Marine Corps. Of course, everyone knew I have served during the Siege at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh. I didn't want to disappoint anyone. I tried not to make my story into a whine, but I knew what they all wanted to hear. I started out with "I Never…"

I figure I spent ten months on the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The other times in Quang Tri after the Siege, guarding something way off away from everything. Anyway, my story started off, "I never sat on a flush toilet, I never spoke to a Vietnamese, I never was in a town or large village, I never went into a bar, I never took a bath or shower from a forced water pipe, I never walked on cement or asphalt, I never saw an American women, I never slept in a bed, I never had a pillow, I never slept in sheets, I never saw a television, I never listened to a radio, I never sat in a chair, I never wore any under clothing, I never had my cloths washed except when I washed them in a bucket, I never ate a hamburger or had french-fries, I never had any shaving crème, I never walked on a rug, I never had more than one pair of boots, I never stood near a heater, I never had more than one pair of socks, except for two occasions of warm beer I never had an adult beverage, I never went to a USO show, I never went anywhere without a weapon, I never had nor wore civilian clothes, I never saw nor did I talk to any civilians, I never rode in a car…"

I think I stopped at that and looked around, I was kind of shocked to see the look on all of their faces, mouths were open and eyes were wide and strangest of all, no one said anything. I said, "I think it's time for me to go home" and I stood up and walked out. When I got home, I thought a great deal about what I had said and oddly the list got longer. I looked around my house and the list of "I never" just seemed to continue on forever. I hate the "my time was tougher than your time" because each has their own individual crosses to bear and after all, I knew that my deprivation was much less than many and certainly less than those up in the hills of Khe Sanh.

But for bar speak, it turned out to be a rather interesting topic, not a boast, perhaps more of a whine.

THIS IS MAJOR BILL WHITE (RETIRED), THE OLDEST LIVING MARINE AT 104 YEARS OLD.

HERE'S A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE MAJOR:

In 1934, enlisted with the Marine Corps and crossed the equator on board the USS Colorado in 1936 as a "shellback." He was stationed at Pearl Harbor from 1936 to 1937 before being transferred to the 4th Marine Regiment in Shanghai.

When WWII started in 1942, Bill was assigned to Parachute School and was transferred to the 4th Parachute Battalion in Bougainville. When the paratroopers were recalled from the Pacific in 1943, he went to the Parker Ranch in Hawaii to prep for the invasion of Iwo Jima. Something big happened to Bill at the time while the invasion occurred.

Bill arrived at Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945. On the morning of February 28th, he was heading to the front lines. He was told to relieve another Marine in a foxhole. Tapping him on the shoulder, Bill said, "I'm here to relieve you." When the man turned around, Bill realized that the Marine was his brother -in-law, the only brother of his wife. They only had the opportunity to say hello and then goodbye as they switched positions.

On March 3rd, Bill led his men to the direction of the Japanese front line. Under a salvo of rocket fire and grenades, he made his way closer to the line. After throwing two grenades, one of the Japanese grenades hit close to Bill, picking him up and slamming him against the wall. After staggering back to the First Aid Station and getting patched up, they listed him as a GSW or Gun Shot Wound. Nothing Bill could say changed their minds, and he was sent back to the U.S.



I GET PICTURES



WHAT A WONDERFUL MARINE FAMILY

ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY LEWIS "SAM" MESSER, USN SEABEES CBMU-301 DET-B KHE SANH VIETNAM



Time frame late Feb early March, 1968, Khe Sanh Combat Base, During the "Siege", the Runway a 3900 ft of aluminum MA l planks was the daily target of the NVA's Artillery, Rocket and Mortar Gunners. The Seabees of Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301 Detachment Bravo, or CBMU 301, Det. B. maintained that Runway every day for the entire "Siege'

The runway was the lifeline for supplies, medical evacuation and when possible replacements The men of 301 would muster sometimes 3 teams to repair the damage, this was a daily task, On this one day our Team leader, P.O. Leblanc or Frenchy, Jim Post and myself (Raymond Cruz) are given order to investigate a sighting of a large crater on the eastern end of the runway. Now this runway was 3900 feet long but, a little less then 1/4 of the eastern end was in no mans land, that is outside of the perimeter

Frenchy had already scoped out the area, and requested we take the Pettibone a "cherry picker" or Silent hoist and one of our Deuce and 1/2, the one with no brakes. Most of our equipment was in pretty bad shape from all of the shrapnel hits, being that our yard was next to the runway.

Now am sure that somewhere, there exist a manual written by a MIT graduate on how to safely stop a 2 1/2 ton dump truck on a aluminum surface with bald tires and no brakes. A quickie on how its done, you time your speed & distance so as you approach the desired location, you accelerate, turn, actually yank the steering in one direction as you start your 360 (donut) pull on the emergency brake, those of us that had enough hours using this method could got real close and we don't count the more then a 360 revolution as errors as long as we stopped.

I drove the Pettibone with Jim as shotgun, Frenchy was a performer with that 2-1/2, he was there waiting for us at the end of the runway. We approach this crater and I mean real crater and deep. I begin to understand why the Pettibone was requisitioned.

This hole is over 6' feet wide closer to 8, and about 25' or better deep. We are looking around for the cause, no burn marks shrapnel or evidence existed. The decision was made to send Jim on the end of the cable to investigate, I should mention that Jim was not thrilled about this, a small debate about why and who would do this resulted in Jim volunteering, what dedication and espirit de corps or something like that

Just as we ready Jim on the cable and hook, we hear the distinct sound of a mortar leaving its tube so we run for the trenches near the side of the runway. Frenchy yells I saw a flash, Further Geographic description of KSCB, the Base is at a elevation of about 4900 ft and quickly descend into a valley, the eastern end of the runway is also the end of this plateau, Standing at the end of the runway, you can see the valley, several thousand feet below. We make love to Mother Earth, that is we grab as much dirt as we can and get real close ,for anything above the horizon of the lowest point and you get nominated for a Purple Heart, Frenchy had one and Jim two.

I never claimed one, having lived a good life and blessed with speed. We wait the mandatory time and get back to work. Again we hear that familiar sound and again the dash for cover, Frenchy is not running but standing there looking into the valley, and yells I KNOW WERE THAT SON OF A B%# IS .. He is on the radio to the Tower. A short time later a small group of Grunts appear, one of them with a Long Rifle and scope, a real sniper. They begin jawing with Frenchy. This one Grunt and Frenchy come over instruct Jim and I to go ahead and start working again. Jim and I are a bit confused, we know what gonna happen and this NVA mortar keeps getting closer. They assure us that its ok, (to be used as Bait) Being good Sea bees and follow orders, I fire up the Pettibone. Here is the kicker, when it would turn over it smoked something awful, which was a turn on for this NVA gunner, again we hear the Mortar as it leaves the tube. Jim and I are on the go again, Jim was never a good match for my speed and agility.

A few minutes pass and this one Grunt and Frenchy are pulling us from the bosom of Mother Earth. Explaining that they have a good fix on this NVA and we should try this again. With dedication in our hearts we accept, this time Jim gets a jump on me, he must have a sixth sense about this one, but we

also hear the crack of a rifle shot and a few cheers. The group of Grunts are picking up there gear and walking back to the comfort of their Bunkers. Frenchy came over and described how the Sniper took out the NVA Mortar Gunner on the one shot. Pretty cool but we still had to send Jim down into the Crater. Another debate on the merits of the job.

Jim did go down, not for long as the base begins to take heavy artillery and rockets, big time so we made it back to the Alamo, the biggest and safest Bunker at Khe Sanh, built by who else Seabees of CBMU 301 Det. B.

This event was originally told in the jargon typical for that period for Grunts and Seabees during the "Siege" of Khe Sanh . A moment forever burned into my memory, I laugh and cry, miss those guys.



GOING TO GET MORE ROCKS CLOSE TO LAOS BORDER



BOSSES CHECKING PROGRESS OF THE ALAMO BUNKER



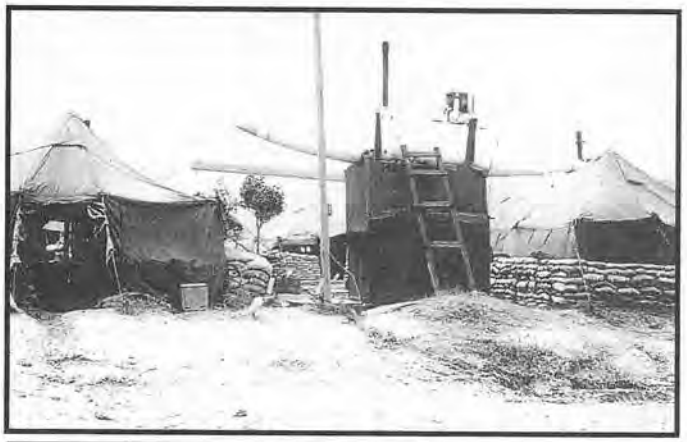

SEABEE SHOWER BEFORE SIEGE



GETTING ROCKS FOR RUNWAY

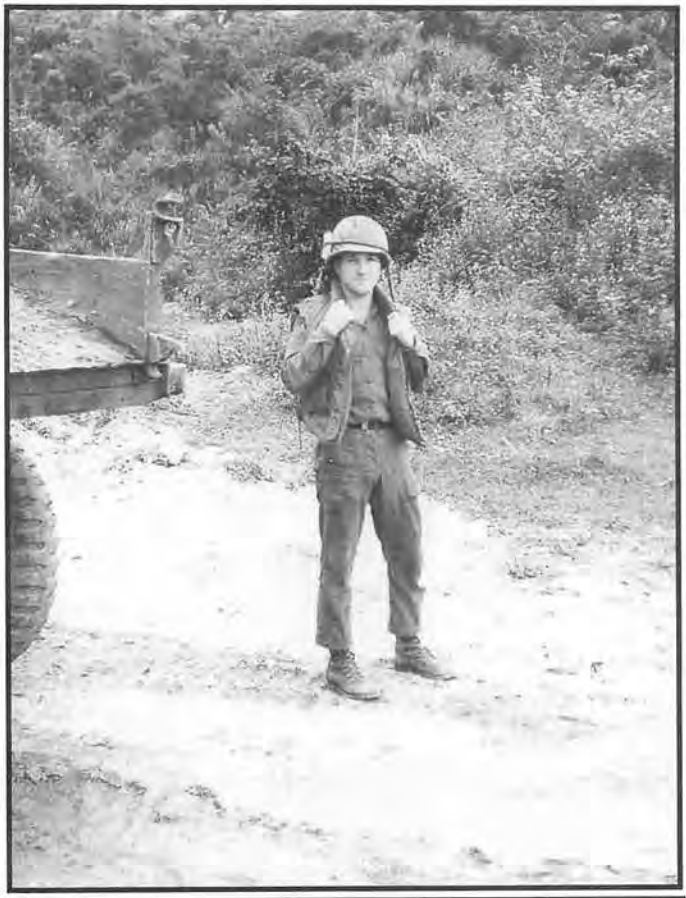

GEORGE OWSLEY SENT ME THESE PICTURES



HILL 1015 RADIO RELAY, TOP OF SEABEE BUNKER BY AIRSTRIP



SANDBAG DETAIL



PICTURE OF DEAD 6.2 NVA SOLDIER



INSIDE THE ALAMO BUNKER

CONSTRUCTION BATTALION MAINTENANCE UNIT 301 VETERAN

The CBMU 301 "Beep" coin has been made possible by a donation from the family of a fellow CBMU 301 Veteran, as one of his wishes, upon passing

Leslie Cherry CM2, served with CBMU 301, Alpha Co. 1967-1968. He was stationed at the Dong Ha RVN, compound and assisted at other Detachment bases outside of Dong Ha. I actually, remember "Cherry" as one of the more pleasant guys in the Motor Pool area, Leslie Cherry passed away Feb 14,2004 in Dickenson, Tx, his generous donation has made it possible for members of his Seabee family in CBMU 301 to have this coin.

These "BEEP" coins are limited and all known living CBMU 301 Veterans will get one, if you know of any fellow Brothers contact Ray at for those who would like additional coins please contact Bill at the Seabee Museum Store *Seabeemusuemstore@live.com.* when Bill has received sufficient request he will place a reorder. at what cost is set by the Store, otherwise when these are all distributed that is it

Welcome Home







SEABEES OF CONSTRUCTION BATTALION CBMU-301 DET B

KHE SANH VETERANS FOUNDER RAY W. STUBBE IN THE NEWS

REMARKS AT VETERANS DAY BANQUET: VETERAN OF THE YEAR PLAQUE

REVEREND RAY WILLIAM STUBBE
11 NOVEMBER 2019

First, please excuse me for not having been as active as the Veteran of the Year as you would have desired.

This year has been a most difficult one for me personally, with complicated eye surgeries in both eyes and 42 radiation treatments which left me completely exhausted. The lesson learned which I pass on to you is to do what is helpful and a blessing to others while you still can, for the day will come when it is not possible.

Circumstances of life change: I'm not going to hump the hills of Vietnam anymore!

Tonight, it may be of some comfort to realize we have one month and ten days before the beginning of winter, December 21st, and it becomes cold and we get Wisconsin snow. [NOTE: ***We had, by this time, received one snowfall*** **of** ***wet, heavy snow and another one*** **of** ***3".*** **So** ***the reference evoked*** **some** ***laughter!]***

We've have had some early warnings of snow and cold, of course, and I was motivated to do some grocery shopping last Wednesday. While in the check-out lane, a lady behind me noticed my jacket which indicates I'm a Vietnam veteran.[NOTE: ***Tom, I was wearing the black Khe Sanh jacket with Earle Breeding's Khe Sanh symbol*** **on** ***the back]*** **She said, "Thank you for your service."**

I always wonder at the sincerity since it's become so common and so different from when we returned from Vietnam. But I said, "Thank you." Then she said, "Let me pay for your groceries." I said, "That's OK, I have a large amount." She said, "I still want to pay for them." The bill was about $62.00. Her name was Jennifer. Her "thank you for your service" wasn't just words; it was real. It was costly! A deep gratitude filled me. Here was another human being who cared. Suddenly, I remembered being in a trench at Khe Sanh, in Vietnam, one day **[Monday, 26 Feb 1968].** We started receiving yet another barrage of incoming artillery and rockets. (We received about 300 a day, every day for some three months, sometimes over a thousand.) I was alone in a rather shallow trench flat on my stomach. Suddenly there was an immense explosion-which I later learned were eight pallets of land mines couple dozen yards from me. I recalled trying to pray and only meaningless sounds came out as I bounced up and down in the trench. I was desperately aware of being alone. The explosion destroyed our battalion's medical aid station's shitter.

During another barrage of incoming, I happened to be with Walt Driscoll, the Catholic chaplain. He desperately hugged me. It was like the hug of God. In the presence of a caring person, we are in the presence of God. Back in the 80s, Mr. Donald Turek, the Director of this War Memorial-we called him "Pops" Turek, frequently said in his public talks, "The nearest we can get to God is to see Him in the face of a friend." He perhaps was referring to the words of Jacob to Esau, "I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God" [Gen 33.120].

All of you sitting here this evening have that gift-the gift of being a caring human being to another, sharing and caring, aware of really living as we care for each other, blessing others with life, and experiencing being blessed. When we hug each other, God hugs us both. When doing something good for others. my good friend, Joe Campbell, says, **"I enjoy doing what I don't have to do" [Joe** ***Campbell is*** **a** ***very*** **good** ***local Vietnam vet who always pays the bill when*** **a** ***group*** **of** ***us eat out, and refuses to permit anyone else to pay.*** **He** ***says, "I*** **enjoy** ***doing what I don't have to do. n*** **Joe** ***had been owner and President*** **of a** ***local welding supply company].***

That, of course, is what freedom is all about-the opportunity to do what is right, what is helpful to others. It is something that comes from deep inside rather than something that is forced or commanded, legislated or required. Freedom is certainly not doing whatever we want to do! Freedom is the difference between having to run (like in boot camp) and enjoying running for the pleasure of running. Maybe in boot camp we learn the pleasure of running-as the Psalm writer says, "rejoicing as a strong man to run a race" [Ps 19.5], and later running comes from a desire deep inside of us rather than some sergeant or officer ordering us. I remember being with a SEAL team when an officer [LT Cadden] asked me one day, "Do you want to run?" I was in

combat boots and said, "I don't have my running shoes on." He replied, "You either want to run or you don't." I ran.

In these days of fractured society, you and I have the freedom to bless others with what we've learned. I'm always amazed at meetings of our Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans, Chapter 1: so many with completely different backgrounds, values, and goals, coming together-and in increasing numbers. Apparently, everyone just enjoys being with each other.

The same amazement always came to mind when in Vietnam with a squad of infantry or a recon team or some other unit. Everyone was so different and yet there was such a unity that there wasn't anything one wouldn't do to help another. While on Khe Sanh Combat Base we were surrounded by 40,000 and couldn't move to nearby rivers. When we were down to one canteen cup of water a day and one C-ration a day, I frequently saw men give away their last drop of water, or share a C-ration meal with another Marine. I frequently saw Marines dash out in the middle of incoming to pull a wounded man to safety.

Here again, we experienced the presence of God- although not everyone, of course, regarded it that way. Just because we're unaware of something doesn't mean it isn't there or isn't happening! The Good Book tells us that if we give a cup of water to someone who's thirsty, food to someone who's hungry, and are with the lonely; we are doing it to God. When we are with the needy, poor, hungry, thirsty, lonely and imprisoned- when we are with those hungry for meaning in life, imprisoned. in the fear of walking the streets of the inner city or fear of wondering where life is taking them, when a friend like Joe Campbell or Father Walt Driscoll, the Catholic chaplain, hugs us, we are in the presence of God [Matt 25.34-40]. God draws out our humanity, a humanity we might not even know we had; we become enriched and blessed, blessed with life abundant [John 10.10].

May our Lord continue to bless all of you.

FROM THE WEB
BY BRUCE 'T-BONE" JONES

Today I've been thinking of all of the men we "Khe Sanh Veterans" served with; those who died at Khe Sanh and those who were fortunate to return home. My thoughts return to a bunker that took a direct hit from a 152 NVA round collapsing that frail roof of logs and sand bags then crushing/suffocating the Marines inside.

A hastily built machine gun bunker near the ammo dump with it's roof peeled off from all of our exploding ordnance.

A Marine laying in a trench moaning and cursing at his broken arm caused by a huge clump of dirt that landed on him caused by the explosions from "danger close" B52 bombing run outside our lines

A buddy of mine shot by an NVA sniper and the round entering his right cheek and exiting his left cheek miraculously leaving his jaw and all teeth intact! Dozens more like this will plague my thoughts for the remaining 77 days.

Francine knows these annoying anniversary days too. The "going inside" myself, withdrawal and silence. Over our 52 years she has learned better how to cope and how to give me my space. She too pays for those painful days at Khe Sanh. We survivors also continue to pay for our days in that valley of death. Drug and alcohol addiction; cancers of all sorts; severe depression; psychological shells so hard nothing is allowed inside; incarceration; multiple divorces and estrangement from children; the list is endless!

But I am a survivor, just like my Khe Sanh Brothers. I evolve in my survival finding peace more and more each day. Through a greater power I a m glad to be alive!



Love and Respect! Semper Fi! "T-Bone"

2020 REUNION; CROWNE PLAZA ALBUQUERQUE, NM 1901 UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD NE, NEW MEXICO | 87102 | UNITED STATES | 1-505-884-2500 ROOM RATE $84.00, SINGLE OCCUPANCY,$ 89.00 DOUBLE OCCUPANCY, FREE PARKING, FREE BREAKFAST, PET FRIENDLY, FREE WI-FI. 11 JULY TO 19 JULY, 2020 , RATE IS GOOD FOR 3 DAYS BEFORE & AFTER REGULAR SCHEDULED DATES FREE SHUTTLE.

























NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Old Town Historic District
Balloon Fiesta Park
Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway
Albuquerque Museum
National Museum of Nuclear History
Hispanic Cultural Center
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
ABQ Uptown Outdoor Mall
Coronado Shopping Mall
Nearby Convention Center
Outdoor Tennis: 5 MI/ 8.05 KM

North Golf Course - UNM : 2 MI/ 3.22 KM South East

Championship Golf Course : 7 MI/ 11.27 KM South

Arroyo Del Oso Golf Course : 4.3 MI/ 6.92 KM North East

Paa-Ko Ridge Golf Course : 28 MI/ 45.06 KM North

INDOOR ICE SKATING RECREATION NEARBY

- **Indoor Roller Skating**
- **Indoor Tennis Courts**
- **Jogging Track**
  Miniature Golf
- **Mountain or Rock Wall Climbing**
- **Snow Skiing**
- **Swimming**
- **Bicycling**
- **Billiards**
- **Bowling**
- **Hiking**

RESTAURANTS

STONESTREET

- **Breakfast, Lunch, Dessert**
- **Hours: 6:00 AM-2:00 PM**
- **Phone: 1-505-884-2500(3611)**

RANCHERS CLUB OF NEW MEXICO

- **Dinner, Dessert**
- **Hours: 5:30 PM-9:30 PM**
- **Phone: 1-505-889-8071**

CANTINA LOUNGE

- **Lunch, Dinner, Dessert**
- **Hours: 2:00 PM-11:00 PM**
- **Phone: 1-505-884-2500(3614)**

AN ARTICLE LONG OVERDUE

"THE RANCH MINISTRIES"

The Ranch is a venue for spiritual awakening, growth, and healing. Hundreds of men and women struggling with PTSD, both young and old, have found refuge and help at The Ranch. The Ranch sits on 540 acres of South Dakota prairie, about 20 miles southeast of Pierre, SD, right in the heart of pheasant hunting country.

In fact, our location is situated in an area known as the best in the world for pheasant hunting. Our ministry uses pheasant hunting as a keystone for helping veterans and for our fundraising. During the pheasant season, we host pheasant hunts for veterans, including those who are wheelchair-bound or have suffered other severe physical and mental injury.

The Ranch's location melds raw prairie with rough-hewn yet comfortable accommodations. Our meeting places and bunk house feature interior design that takes hunting and the West as inspiration. Guests will find art and sculptures made using these motifs, along with real saddles, spread throughout all areas. The Ranch offers nine private bedrooms that can accommodate up to 22 guests. A converted two-story grain bin provides an additional bunking area. Other areas include a great hall for meetings as well as a kitchen. A 25-ft tall steel observation tower features a large hot tub raised above the ground.

But pheasant hunting isn't all that can be enjoyed at The Ranch. Other activities and projects can be done at our facility. The Ranch offers visitors access to well-equipped carpentry and metal shop, plus a motor pool of ATVs, utility vehicles and excavation/construction equipment. Plus, there is a quiet, secluded area among large boulders and trees set aside for prayer, mediation, and group worship services that reinforce the spiritual mission of The Ranch

Marksmanship is another activity that challenges visitors and creates community. Guests can also enjoy a 300-yard sniper range that can accommodate 50-caliber weapons, a 100-yard high-power rifle range, a 50-foot pistol range, and a skeet range offering eight positions with opposing electric clay pigeon throwers. These ranges are especially popular with veterans who are well-trained marksmen and gun owners but who may not have access to a safe, controlled area for shooting. Our facilities are used by firearm and archery safety courses conducted by the South Dakota Department of Conservation and hunter safety instructors.

Guests have their choice of multiple shotguns and long rifles, maintained in our safe. Our gun room also features a gun cleaning bench. A wide range of ammunition is provided for both firearms owned by The Ranch and for guns that guests bring with them. The summer of 2016 saw completion of a challenging cross-country race track for ATVs and large Go Karts that can reach over 40 mph. With it, a mechanical and storage facility complete with a large observation deck is in operation. Further developments include stables and full tack for horseback riding, staying true the heritage of our territory and providing guests with additional experiences.

For more information please go to the internet for "The Ranch Ministries South Dakota" or call Ken on his cell phone: 402-677-7082.

Our schedule of events and activities keep us and our guests involved year-round with both indoor and outdoor programs. Groups, large and small, can enjoy all of The Ranch's offerings, plus meals, for an overnight stay, for a weekend, or over an entire week.

THE FOUNDER

KENNETH KORKOW, BRAVO CO 1/26 , KHE SANH VETERAN

Picture in your mind the farms and ranches near Pierre, South Dakota – a landscape similar to what's shown in the movie "Dances With Wolves" (the film was shot right in this area-using many of the Korkow family horses-which continue to be used in professional rodeos across the country) The entire ranch is 20,000 acres+ with 400+bucking horses and 200+ bucking bulls and cattle-so many of our guest like to spend time watching & learning about rodeo and the "cowboy way of life". This land produces feed corn, wheat, soybeans, and seed grains. It also produces people of the land who've inherited a profound sense of tenacity and pride in a job well done at the end of a day filled with hard work. One of those is Ken Korkow.

Ken found college "boring," and like many of his

buddies back home, enlisted in the military. Ken, specifically, entered the Marine Corps. After basic training, Corporal Ken Korkow was transferred directly into combat in Vietnam as a mortar section leader in Company B, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, at the notorious Khe Sanh Combat Base. This base suffered relentless daily attack by the North Vietnamese Army for 77 days. During this time, Ken received citations for The Navy Cross and the Purple Heart. On March 30, 1968, Ken's men came under intense attack. He single-handedly destroyed the hostile mortar placement, and made repeated trips under fire to carry his wounded men to an aid station. Ken was seriously wounded in this attack, and contributed to the defeat of the numerically superior enemy, while saving the lives of many of his brothers in arms.



After his medical discharge, Ken earned undergraduate and MBA degrees and became a successful land broker. During this time, Ken threw himself into work, becoming a work addict as a way to deal with war-torn memories. But it wasn't keeping away the nightmares, anguish, and "survivor's guilt." He was suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) before there was a name for it..

But before Ken succumbed completely, he vowed to do something about – and help others suffering. Ken abandoned his lucrative business and returned to his spiritual roots, becoming the regional director of a Christian business organization helping other workaholics to find new hope. During this time, as he overcame his own PTSD, he developed a successful, spiritual approach that is helping thousands of other service members and veterans find peace in their lives.

As time passed on, Ken inherited his portion of his family's acreage. While he still grows crops on the land, he's repurposed a large portion into the home operations of The Ranch Ministries. The Ranch serves as a retreat center that helps restore minds, marriages, and lives of veterans affected by PTSD. Additionally, The Ranch serves hundreds of men, women, and youth in and around the Pierre, SD community through safety courses in firearms and archery.



Ken has developed The Ranch into a relaxing place for PTSD-troubled minds by building fun and adventurous attractions such as an ATV course, horseback riding, fishing, and of course pheasant hunting. Guests also enjoy several safe and monitored marksman activities. The Ranch offers comfortable (and if guests choose, not so comfortable) sleeping accommodations, dining, and fellowship areas. While at The Ranch visitors have access to spiritual counseling, and they can contact any one of a dozen counselors across North America at any time. The Pierre community and thousands of our nation's servicemen and veterans have been positively influence by The Ranch and by Ken's care and concern.

Today we simply want to share what we have found WORKS. Our motto is 'GOD DOESN'T WASTE PAIN' and now - the things we have experienced / learned - are the insight / credibility we have to share with this next generation of combat vets. Sadly - prior to combat - NOBODY ever told me what it was like to kill your first man / what it was like to hold you buddy as he died and you couldn't do a thing to stop it / what it was like to make that decision to never-again have friends or feelings / what it was like to be filled with hate / what it was like to medicate the pain with isolation and self-destructive actions what it was like to wish you had been killed in combat / what it was like to be mad at God and believe He doesn't care - or doesn't exist.

I'd had 2 years of college / Air Force ROTC before I joined the Corps at 18. Thought combat was a passage into manhood. The Corps had me in Hawaii for a year with a Charlie 1/27 being trained to come off a submarine at night - then they scrapped that mission and sent everyone over as replacements. I was in Vietnamese Language School at the time and not allowed to go as I was now a short-timer - so I called my US Senator who 'made arrangements' contingent on me extending my tour of duty - which I gladly did - and the rest is Khe Sanh history.

I'd met Liz when we were both 15 / engaged before I went to Vietnam / married while I was still at Great Lakes Naval Hospital. She had no clue how much I'd changed. Nor did I. And if anybody would have caused her 1/10th of the pain I caused her - I would have killed them. But you don't know what you don't know- and as the old song goes - "You always hurt the ones you love ... ". I walked away from religion / God for 10 years and medicated my pain in ways that hurt me and everybody close to me. Finally got a belly-full of my junk / surrendered to a personal relationship with Christ / began to make pretty amazing changes in me, our marriage, raising our kids, doing business, stopped using people and began to actually care for others. There was a time when I though combat was the ultimate adventure. Now I know the Life's Highest Adventure is knowing Christ more intimately and living Him more intentionally. Having had my share of this 'world's success and pleasure' - I'm now a 'satisfied customer' of Jesus - and nothing else comes remotely close. Consequently - everything we do through the ranch is free - because Jesus never charged people. He just changed them. And I'm humbled that He is changing a sinner like me.

If you –or any of your combat friends would like to know about the ranch-please contact Ken at 402-677-7082.



HAVING FUN AT THE RANCH MINISTRIES











Bravo CO 1/26 Warriors. Pictured left to right; Lloyd (Short Round) Scudder, Cal (Point Man) Bright, Ken (The Producer) Rodgers, Jim (Doc) Beale, Steve (Lucky Man) Wiese, Ben (The EXO) Long, Ken (Skipper) Pipes, Ken (The Gunner) Korkow and Mike, (Bunker Buster) McCauley, AKA-The Flag Man!









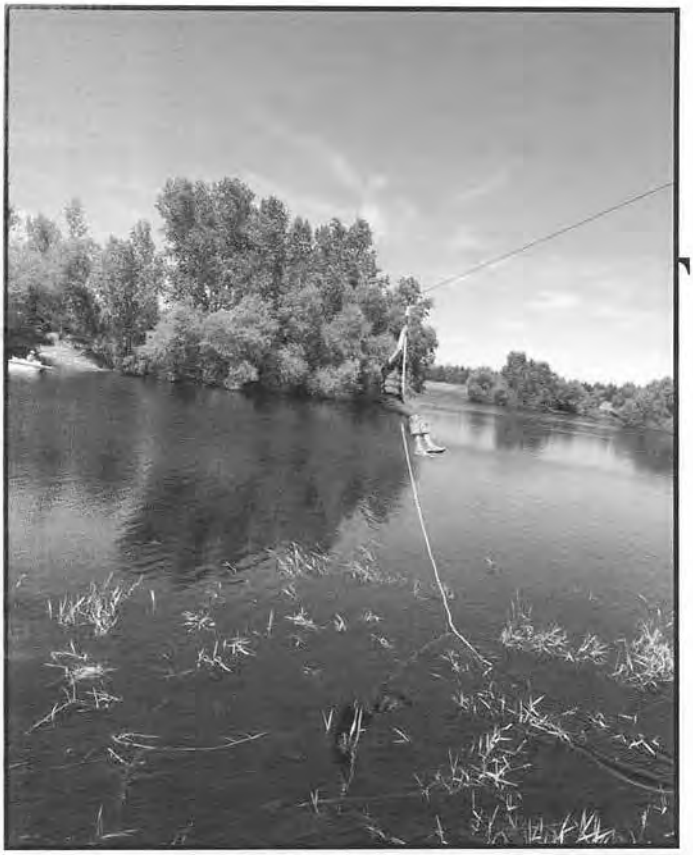

FAMILY FUN AT
"THE RANCH MINISTRIES"





THE GRIFFIN CLAN



RANDY HERRINGTON WITH GRANDDAUGHTER



MY MARINE GOOD BUDDY JOE REBOLTZ FROM BRAVO CO 1/1 , 1959 – 1961 & USNOTS CALIFORNIA IN 1962 WITH HIS LOVELY WIFE MARY

FOR ALL THE DELTA 1/26 COMPANY MEMBERS WHO DID NOT RECEIVE A REGISTRATION FORM FROM THEIR REUNION COMMITTEE SEE PAGE 58

DELTA CO 1/26 WE'LL BE JOINING THE KHE SANH 2020 REUNION IN ALBUQUERQUE. AS ALWAYS LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING AS MANY BROTHERS AS POSSIBLE.
SEMPER FI

1966 DELTA 1/26 VIETNAM 1970

2020 Reunion: Crown Plaza Albuquerque, NM 1901 University Boulevard NE, NM 87102 Phone: 1-505-884-2500. Please try to call on days, not at night when 800 operators work. Code Khe Sanh Veterans. Room Rate $84.00 Single occupancy, $ 89.00 Double occupancy Free Parking, Free Breakfast (Full Not Continental) Pet Friendly, Free WI-FI 11 July to 19 July 2020, Rate good for 3 Days Before & After Regular Scheduled Dates.

EVENTS TO BE HELD DURING REUNION WEEK

EVENT	COST	NO. OF PEOPLE	TOTAL COST OF EVENT
REGISTRATION	50.00		
LADIES LUNCH	10.00		
KSV BANQUET	50.00		

DAILY EVENTS

SUN: 12 July 2020	FREE DAY	ENJOY ALBUQUERQUE
MON: 13 July 2020	FREE DAY	ENJOY ALBUQUERQUE
TUES: 14 July 2020	10:00 A.M.	Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Room Opens.
WED: 15 July 2020	10:00 A.M.	Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Room Opens.
THUR: 16 July 2020	10:00 A.M.	Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Room Opens. No Group off site trips. planned, 15 Passenger Vans will provided for those groups who would like to enjoy the many wonderful sites of Albuquerque. Plan your own off site group activities
FRI: 17 July 2020		Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Room Opens.

SAT: 18 July 2020
9:00 to 10:00am Memorial Service
10:00am to 12:00 Membership Meeting
10:00am to 12:00 Ladies Luncheon
ANNUAL KSV BANQUET: Cocktails 1800 Dinner 1900

SUNDAY 19 July 2020 HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: KSV ASSOCIATION

OFFICE USE ONLY Check#_____Date Received_____ Name Tag Completed_____	Send Check, Money Order or Credit Card Information To: The Khe Sanh Veterans/ Russell Turner 3168 Meadowfield Dr Arnold, MO 63010

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

NAME ON CARD:	VISA	MASTER CARD	DISCOVER
CARD NUMBER:	OTHER	Note: Our Bank Does Not Accept AM/XPress	
EXPIRATION DATE:			
3 DIGIT CODE ON BACK OF CARD		Note: Address Must Be The One Card Issued To	
ADDRESS FOR CREDIT CARD:			
CITY:	STATE	ZIP	



MARINE, CORPSMAN, FRIENDS AND FAMILY
DELTA CO 1/26 WE'LL BE JOINING THE KHE SANH 2020 REUNION
IN ALBUQUERQUE.
SEMPER FI



MONK

JACK KLEIN
414-303-3534
ONEMONK1950@GMAIL.COM

AARON MATT WALT
574-377-4227
SNAPPERSR@HOTMAIL.COM

NAME TAG INFORMATION PLEASE PRINT		
NAME:		
UNIT SERVED WITH:		
SPOUSE OR COMPANIONS NAME:		
OTHER GUEST (1)		
OTHER GUEST (2)		
OTHER GUEST (3)		
OTHER GUEST (4)		
OTHER GUEST (5)		
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	ST:	ZIP:
PHONE:	CELL PHONE:	
EMERGENCY CONTACT:		
EMAIL:		
SPECIAL NEEDS:		
EMAIL:		
ARRIVAL DATE:	DEPARTURE DATE:	
ARE YOU STAYING AT HOTEL:	YES — NO CIRCLE ONE	

COMMENTS:

Just a quick note: Due to the large number of Scholarship applications last year and the 50th Anniversary Reunion in Washington the Khe Sanh Veterans funds fell below the range where we like to keep it. We have never asked the membership directly for donations, but in this case until we catch up we would appreciate any donations that you can afford. Those donations also help with the expense of publishing Red Clay.

Thanks

Tommy Eichler

Treasurer KSV

FROM THE WEB SITE
By Dennis Mannion
21 Jan 2020

Photo 1) Hill 861 taken by Ray Stubbe in July 1967. The view is looking from south to north and the fairly flat bump of a hill in the nw corner (outside the trench line) is where the NVA came through our lines on that forever-night 52 years ago. It is **the only portion of the hill where they attacked from...despite what some authors and even USMC records tell.** Not one NVA trooper made it beyond the top of the hill and they certainly were never down around the LZ (visible) on the south end of the hill.

2) My photo of the NW corner of the trench line taken a few days later. If you have good eyesight you can see some Marines (helmets and flak jackets) in the trench line. The NVA chose this section to attack from because it was the flattest terrain around the entire hill and it was also the only place where 105 arty from the base could not directly hit just outside the wire.

3) John Sabo's (HMM-364 Purple Foxes) photo from the side window of a CH-46 on the way into the LZ on 861 during the siege. The western side of the trench line is clearly shown -- flat at the LZ and then climbing rather steeply until it disappears around the top and continues -- unseen here -- towards the northwest corner (pic #2).

Just before midnight my RTO and I were sent to the south end of the hill because of reports of two NVA visible in the fog outside the wire. When Dave Krom and I arrived, the fog had lifted a bit and there was no one to be seen. As we left to head back up the hill to our bunker, a green flare went up in the west and the attack started. We moved up the hill but nearing the top, machine gun & rifle fire, RPG's, were so intense, we knew we could not back to our bunker. Instead, we headed back down to the LZ and began to work our way up the western trench line.

Look at photo #3, and 3/4's of the way up you can see a large bunker built on the outer wall of the trench. This was a machine gun bunker and I knew the gunner pretty well. He told me that the other two assistant gunners had left him (?) and that there was a wounded NVA soldier in the trench line up past his bunker. He said that he thought that the guy had been wounded by one of his own grenades. In the dark I was real concerned because I had no way of knowing how badly he was hurt and we had to get by him. I crawled out of the bunker with Dave's .45 in one hand and felt ahead of me in the dark with the other. When I touched his head, he moved a bit, and I pointed the pistol, removed my hand and fired three times. Dave and I stepped on and over him as we moved to a point about where the trench line is no longer visible in #3 and settled in to call in arty now that we could see out beyond the outer wire.

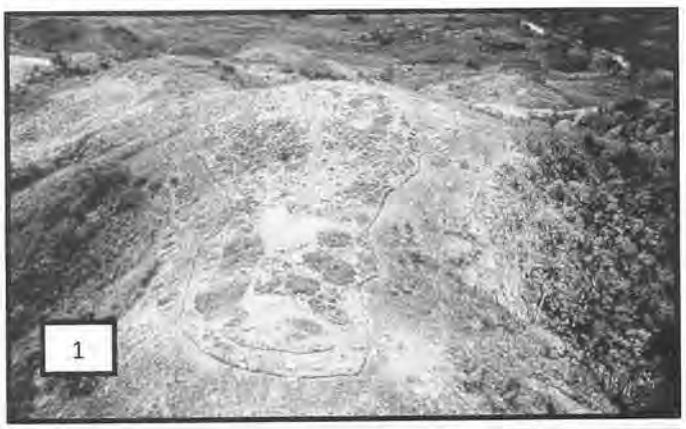





No Marines or NVA passed us in that western trench line all night. Not heading north or south. We were there till the sun came up and the NVA withdrew (and the base began to get

shelled), We retraced our steps back down the trench line to the LZ so we could safely climb up to the top and to our bunker.

When Captain Moyers Shore wrote the official USMC account of the siege entitled *The Battle for Khe Sanh* (1969), he used lots of sources. One of the Marines who is quoted in the pages about the attack on 861 that night was (then) Major Matt Caulfield who reported NVA attacking the south west corner of the hill, overrunning the LZ, and vicious hand to hand fighting as the Kilo 3/26 Marines counterattacked back down the hill. None of that ever happened, and yet it gets repeated in other publications. He wasn't even on 861 and so for the life of me I have no idea where he got his "facts" from, but that revisionist 861 history keeps getting repeated. It still angers me...especially on 20Jan and 21 Jan every year.
Dennis Mannion K CO 3/26 FO

I GET PICTURES



JOE BUENROSTRO FAMILY

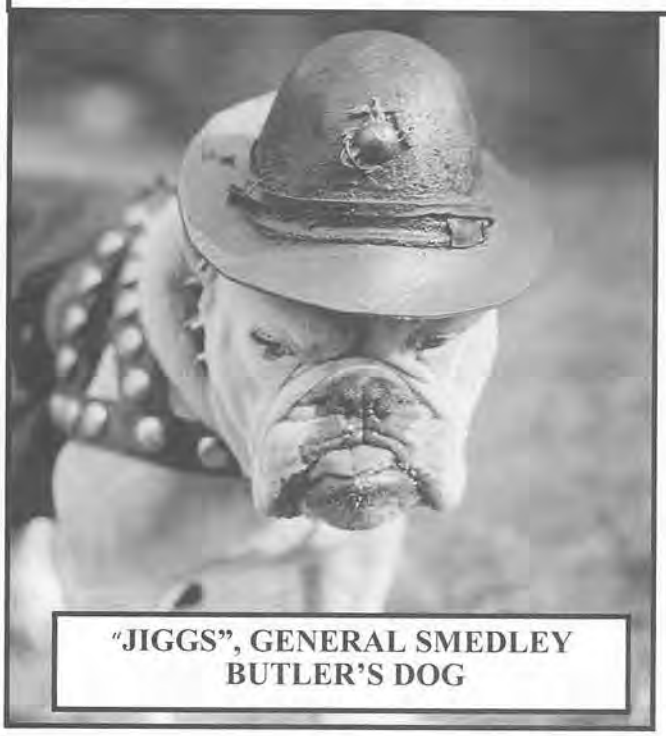

"JIGGS", GENERAL SMEDLEY BUTLER'S DOG



SERGEANT STUBBY WW1 MARINE MASCOT

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER SPRING 2020
CHAPLAIN RON RAYNER

It is my prayer that this magazine finds you all preparing to be in Albuquerque, New Mexico the week of July 12. I think of the Khe Sanh wife who stated: "Two days at this Khe Sanh reunion has done more to help my husband than 20 years of seeing VA psychiatrists." The one hundred and some regular attendees will welcome you at the reunion

Memorial Day will be here shortly and it is a day to remember those who have served our country and passed on. It is also a time to pray for those who are serving today. I do pray daily for our troops, everyone in my ministry, and our country but it is not as formal as this prayer.

"Almighty God, with reverence and love we pause to pay tribute to those who have served our nation and now rest from their labor.

We also pay tribute to our honored and valiant United States Armed Forces. Please grant that we may be ever mindful of their service to our nation, and that we may be ever aware of our fellowship with all who have served our nation. Please guard our homes, churches and schools, our entire land and all therein from harm and destruction. Please preserve the integrity of this Nation founded on religious principles by protecting it from all enemies within and without. We beseech You, O God to shield and protect our armed forces, in the air, on and under the sea, and on land. Please bless them with victory. May it be Your will that the dominion of tyranny and cruelty be brought to an end and the kingdom of righteousness be established on earth with liberty and freedom for all mankind. Please grant us the strength, courage, and wisdom to fulfill your wishes. We thank you for the freedom and abundance that we enjoy this day. Amen" (Taken in part from VVA Ritual Book)

It is so easy to get caught up in the busyness of our daily lives and forget the sacrifices of the people that ensure our safety. The United States Military, police officers, and firefighters lead the way by risking their lives in a dangerous world. I believe daily prayer for those who serve is the greatest gift that we can give. It also is good to provide encouragement by saying thank you when the opportunity presents itself. And of course, cards, letters and packages sent overseas are always appreciated.

We have a lady in Oakland County, Michigan that the troops have named the Desert Angel. You can find out her story at thedesertangel.org. She has given me the opportunity to help send boxes of gifts and food to the troops overseas every month. It is a very rewarding ministry. She has been doing this since October, 2001.

I have been in PTSD group and individual counseling since August. The Vet Center in Pontiac, Michigan is providing both. My individual councilor happens to be an enlisted combat veteran, who is now an Army major chaplain in a reserve unit that could be deployed again at any time. I believe he is doing a great job. He uses scripture as well as psychological methods to help me cope with my PTSD. He even answers my questions which the VA psychiatrists that I have seen have refused to do.

The following scripture helps me to focus on my role as a chaplain and family man.

Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV) "...But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Jeremiah 31:33-34 (NIV) "...I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people... **For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."**

"War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things: the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks nothing worth a war, is worse...A man who has nothing which he is willing to fight for, nothing which he cares more than he does about his personal safety, is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free, unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself."
John Stuart Mill
19th century philosopher

We live in the greatest country in the history of the world. I am proud to be a part of a group that stood firm when the United States of America called.



Gracious God, you are nearer than hands and feet, closer than breathing. Please sustain with your presence our brothers and sisters of the Khe Sanh Veterans. Please help them now to trust in your goodness and claim your promise of life everlasting. Cleanse them of all sin and remove all burdens. Please grant them the sure joy of your salvation.
Amen

I GET PICTURES



REVEREND RAY W. STUBBE LEADING CHICAGO WELCOME HOME PARADE FOR VIETNAM VETERANS



JOHN DI GAETANO RECOVERING FROM WOUNDS RECEIVED ON 30 MAR 68 AT KHE SANH. IN HOSPITAL IN JAPAN



It was such a bunker that Dr Feldman received PFC Mussari who was brought in with a live 81mm shell embedded in his abdomen. Assisted by a medic and an explosives engineer holding a flashlight, Dr. Feldman proceeded to treat the Marine who was still conscious. Touching the bomb with a metal instrument could have caused detonation so Dr. Feldman used his bare hands to move muscle and tissue away from the bomb and lift it out. He handed it to the engineer to be taken away and detonated while he closed the patient up. For this and other actions he performed in Vietnam, Dr. Feldman won a Silver Star and has been nominated for the Congressional Medal of Honor. Patient and doctor would meet again after the war. Dr. Feldman delivered Robert Mussari's first child



DAUGHTER OF PHIL NUCHERENO H&S CO 2/26 HILL 558 WITH HER DAUGHTER XOXO

SEVEN THINGS EVERY VETERAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT AGENT ORANGE

1. WHAT AGENT ORANGE IS AND HOW IT WAS USED

Agent Orange is an herbicide that was used by the United States during the Vietnam War. Specifically, Agent Orange is a 50/50 mixture of two kinds of herbicide agents: 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T. As a byproduct of its production, Agent Orange also contained the dioxin contaminant 2,3,7,8-TCDD, which is the most toxic of all the numerous dioxins. Agent Orange is just one of the "rainbow herbicides" that the United States used during the Vietnam War including Agent Blue and Agent White, among others.

Agent Orange and other herbicides were used in the Vietnam War for two main purposes: (1) to destroy the enemy's crops to interrupt their food supply; and (2) to destroy foliage in the jungle and increase visibility to prevent ambush attacks. During the Vietnam War, herbicides including Agent Orange were sprayed mainly in four ways:

- C-123 aircraft were used to spray herbicides over the jungles of Vietnam during Operation Ranch Hand. These C-123 aircraft were modified with tanks to carry the herbicides
- Helicopters were used to spray smaller areas
- Buffalo turbines (i.e. truck-mounted decontamination sprayers) were used to spray roadsides and perimeters

Hand-held sprayers were also used as a method of spraying herbicides

2. VA'S PRESUMPTION OF EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE AND WHO QUALIFIES FOR IT

The Agent Orange Act of 1991 required VA to create a presumption of exposure in which VA will presume that veterans who served in specific locations during defined timeframes were exposed to Agent Orange. A presumption of exposure replaces the element of service connection that requires veterans to provide proof of an in-service event or symptoms that caused their current disability. In these instances, VA presumes veterans were exposed to herbicides during service, and this counts as the in-service event. VA presumes that veterans who served in the following locations during the specified timeframes were exposed to Agent Orange:

- Boots-on-the-ground in **Vietnam**, veterans with service aboard a ship that operated in the inland waterways of Vietnam (i.e. Brown Water veterans), or veterans with service aboard a ship in Vietnam's territorial seas (i.e. Blue Water Navy veterans) between **January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975**
- On or near the **Korean demilitarized zone (DMZ)** between **April 1, 1968 and August 31, 1971**

Active duty and reservist personnel who had regular contact with **C-123 aircraft** between **1969 and 1986**

3. VA'S LIST OF PRESUMPTIVE CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE

In addition to the presumption of exposure to herbicide agents, VA affords a presumption of service connection for certain conditions it associates with Agent Orange exposure. The presumption of service connection removes the element of service connection that requires veterans to provide a medical nexus linking their condition to their military service. Instead, if a veteran served in a qualifying time period and location and has one of the following conditions, VA will presume service connection:

- AL Amyloidosis
- Chronic B-Cell Leukemia

Chloracne (if it presents within one year of exposure to a degree of 10 percent disabling)
Diabetes Mellitus Type 2

- Hodgkin's Disease
- Ischemic Heart Disease (including Coronary Artery Disease, stable and unstable angina, myocardial infarction, and sudden cardiac death)
- Multiple Myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma

- Parkinson's Disease
- Peripheral Neuropathy, Early Onset (if it presents within one year of exposure to a degree of 10 percent disabling)
- Porphyria Cutanea Tarda (if it presents within one year of exposure to a degree of 10 percent disabling)

Prostate Cancer

- Respiratory Cancers, including Lung Cancer
- Soft Tissue Sarcomas (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, and mesothelioma)

It is important to note that if additional disabilities develop as a result of one of the above-mentioned presumptive conditions, veterans can file a service connection claim for the additional disability, as secondary to the herbicide-related disability.

4. DEPENDENTS' BENEFITS FOR EFFECTS OF AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE

The effects of Agent Orange have been shown to cause a variety of serious health conditions, and have also been associated with certain birth defects in the children of veterans who were exposed. Children with birth defects acknowledged by VA as associated with herbicide exposure may be eligible for compensation, healthcare benefits, and vocational training. The child must be a biological child of a veteran who served in Vietnam or the Korean DMZ during the presumptive time period, and conceived after the dates during which the veteran served. VA presumes that when male veterans have children with spina bifida (except spina bifida occulta), the condition is due to the veteran's exposure to herbicides during service. VA presumes certain other birth defects (below) are connected to a veteran's military service, but only if the veteran is the *biological mother* who served in Vietnam and the birth defect resulted in permanent physical or mental disability:

- Achondroplasia
- Cleft lip and cleft palate
- Congenital heart disease
- Congenital talipes equinovarus (i.e. clubfoot)
- Esophageal and intestinal atresia
- Hallerman-Streiff syndrome
- Hip dysplasia
- Hirschprung's disease
- Hydrocephalus due to aqueductal stenosis
- Hypospadias
- Imperforate anus
- Neural tube defects
- Poland syndrome
- Pyloric stenosis
- Syndactyl (i.e. fused digits)
- Tracheaesophageal fistula
- Undescended testicle

Williams syndrome

5. AGENT ORANGE IN THAILAND

Veterans who served in Thailand during the Vietnam War are not included in VA's presumption of exposure. However, VA recognizes that herbicides were used along the perimeter of certain Royal Thai Air Force Bases to increase visibility and prevent guerilla attacks between **February 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975.** These bases include U-Tapao, Udorn, Ubon, NKP, and Takhli among others. VA contends that only those who worked *on or near* the perimeter may have been exposed to herbicides. If a veteran's military occupational specialty was a security guard or patrol dog handler, VA will concede that they were on the perimeter of the base and exposed to herbicides. VA also says that it will concede exposure if veterans can show that they were on or near the perimeter through *other credible evidence* (e.g. official records or lay evidence). Ultimately, to receive service-connected compensation, veterans must show on a factual basis that they were exposed to herbicides during their service as indicated above, and have a current diagnosis of a presumptive condition associated with herbicide exposure.

6. *NEHMER* CLASS MEMBERS

Nehmer v. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is a 1986 class action lawsuit brought against VA by the National Veterans Legal Services Program. As a result of this case, VA must take certain actions when it recognizes a new condition as scientifically linked to Agent Orange exposure. Specifically, when VA adds a new condition to the presumptive list, it must:

- Identify all claims for the recognized condition that were previously filed and/or denied
- Pay retroactive disability and death benefits to the veterans or their survivors back to the date of the veteran's initial claim

Importantly, these claims must have been filed or denied between September 25, 1985 and August 31, 2010.

7. BLUE WATER NAVY VETERANS ADDED TO PRESUMPTION OF EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE

Blue Water Navy veterans are those who served aboard ships in the open waters off the coast of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Blue Water Navy veterans include those who did not set foot on the landmass of Vietnam or who never went into the inland waterways of Vietnam, often referred to as "Brown Water" veterans. Historically, VA has excluded Blue Water Navy veterans from its presumption of herbicide agent exposure based on a decision issued in the case *Haas v. Peake*. However, on January 29, 2019, the Federal Circuit issued a decision in *Procopio v. Wilkie*, overruling *Haas* to include Blue Water Navy veterans under the presumption of exposure. Specifically, the Federal Circuit found that "Republic of Vietnam" includes both the country's landmass *and its territorial seas* in which Blue Water Navy veterans served. This decision impacts thousands of Blue Water Navy veterans who will now be afforded the same presumption of exposure to herbicides as veterans who served boots-on-the-ground in Vietnam.



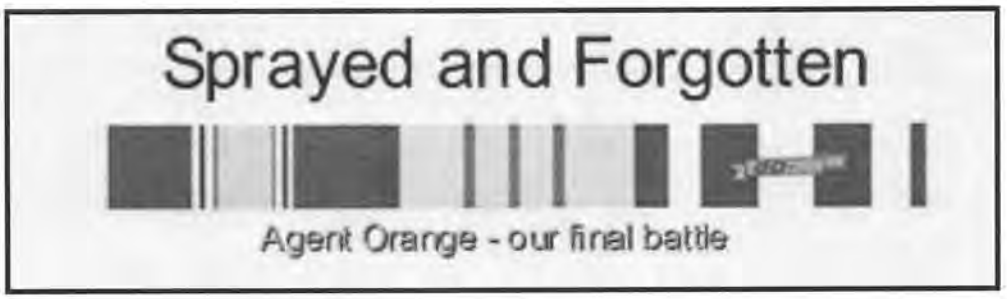

TROUBLE IN THE CORPS?

CRACKDOWN AT LEJEUNE: INSIDE THE 2ND MARINE DIVISION COMMANDER'S CONTROVERSIAL CALL FOR DISCIPLINE

When the commanding general of the 2nd Marine Division sent out a letter to his Marines citing the "significant decline in the basic discipline of our warriors," opinions flew.

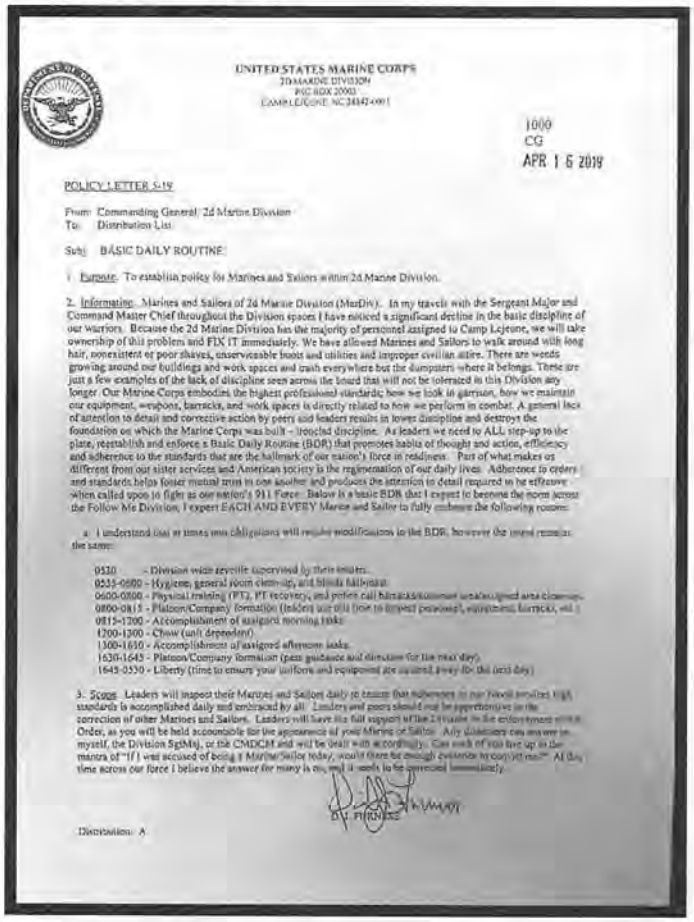

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
2D MARINE DIVISION
PSC BOX 20003
CAMP LEJEUNE NC 28542-0003

1000
CG
APR 16 2019

POLICY LETTER 5-19

From: Commanding General, 2d Marine Division
To: Distribution List

Subj: BASIC DAILY ROUTINE

1. Purpose. To establish policy for Marines and Sailors within 2d Marine Division.

2. Information. Marines and Sailors of 2d Marine Division (MarDiv). In my travels with the Sergeant Major and Command Master Chief throughout the Division spaces I have noticed a significant decline in the basic discipline of our warriors. Because the 2d Marine Division has the majority of personnel assigned to Camp Lejeune, we will take ownership of this problem and FIX IT immediately. We have allowed Marines and Sailors to walk around with long hair, nonexistent or poor shaves, unserviceable boots and utilities and improper civilian attire. There are weeds growing around our buildings and work spaces and trash everywhere but the dumpsters where it belongs. These are just a few examples of the lack of discipline seen across the board that will not be tolerated in this Division any longer. Our Marine Corps embodies the highest professional standards; how we look in garrison, how we maintain our equipment, weapons, barracks, and work spaces is directly related to how we perform in combat. A general lack of attention to detail and corrective action by peers and leaders results in lower discipline and destroys the foundation on which the Marine Corps was built – ironclad discipline. As leaders we need to ALL step-up to the plate, reestablish and enforce a Basic Daily Routine (BDR) that promotes habits of thought and action, efficiency and adherence to the standards that are the hallmark of our nation's force in readiness. Part of what makes us different from our sister services and American society is the regimentation of our daily lives. Adherence to orders and standards helps foster mutual trust in one another and produces the attention to detail required to be effective when called upon to fight as our nation's 911 Force. Below is a basic BDR that I expect to become the norm across the Follow Me Division. I expect EACH AND EVERY Marine and Sailor to fully embrace the following routine:

a. I understand that at times our obligations will require modifications to the BDR, however the intent remains the same:

0520 – Division wide reveille (supervised by their leaders).
0535-0600 - Hygiene, general room clean-up, and blinds fully open.
0600-0800 - Physical training (PT), PT recovery, and police call barracks/common areas/assigned area cleanup.
0800-0815 - Platoon/Company formation (leaders use this time to inspect personnel, equipment, barracks, etc.)
0815-1200 - Accomplishment of assigned morning tasks.
1200-1300 - Chow (unit dependent).
1300-1630 - Accomplishment of assigned afternoon tasks.
1630-1645 - Platoon/Company formation (pass guidance and direction for the next day).
1645-0330 - Liberty (time to ensure your uniform and equipment are squared away for the next day).

3. Scope. Leaders will inspect their Marines and Sailors daily to ensure that adherence to our Naval smallest high standards is accomplished daily and embraced by all. Leaders and peers should not be apprehensive in the correction of other Marines and Sailors. Leaders will have the full support of the Division in the enforcement of this Order, as you will be held accountable for the appearance of your Marine or Sailor. Any discovery can and will be on myself, the Division SgtMaj, or the CMDCM and will be dealt with accordingly. Can each of you live up to the mantra of "if I was accused of being a Marine/Sailor today, would there be enough evidence to convict me?" At this time across our force I believe the answer for many is no, and it needs to be corrected immediately.

D.J. FURNESS

Distribution: A

It did happen in a Camp Lejeune chow hall a few weeks ago that the commandant of the Marine Corps ran into a division Marine who was "in pajamas."

But it wasn't that one unfortunate instance that caused the commanding general of 2nd Marine Division to put in motion plans to refocus the division, as insisted on by the excitable rumor. There are "a hundred different" examples he could share, Maj. Gen. David Furness told Marine Corps Times in an exclusive interview.

But it wasn't that one unfortunate instance that caused the commanding general of 2nd Marine Division to put in motion plans to refocus the division, as insisted on by the excitable rumor. There are "a hundred different" examples he could share, Maj. Gen. David Furness told Marine Corps Times in an exclusive interview.

But for Furness, who had been traveling at the time of the chow hall blunder, receiving a letter from the commandant's office about the incident didn't help. Neither did the time the major general, who started his career as a rifle platoon commander and 81mm mortar platoon commander in the 2nd Marine Division, approached his two-star parking space with two lance corporals sitting on a bench in front of it. The general walked by them, he recounted. And when the junior Marines didn't acknowledge him, he greeted them.

One Marine totally blew him off — didn't get up or acknowledge him, he said.

"The other one looks up, and, while sitting, salutes with an iPhone in his ear."

The general asked them: Were you ever taught to do that in boot camp?
"No sir."

"Why did you try to do it?"
"I was on the phone."
"Why are you on the phone here?"

"I don't know."

Spot correcting was his first tactic when he took over the division in August, Furness says. But it hasn't been effective.

And the correction shouldn't be coming just from him, but from all his Marine leaders. Which is not something he says he has always been seeing.

On April 16, Furness fired off a policy letter to the entire 2nd Marine Division detailing a new "basic daily routine" for North Carolina division Marines.

"We have allowed Marines and Sailors to walk around with long hair, nonexistent or poor shaves, unserviceable boots and utilities and improper civilian attire," the letter reads. "There are weeds growing around our building and work spaces and trash everywhere but the dumpsters where it belongs."

"A general lack of attention to detail and corrective action by peers and leaders results in lower disci-

pline and destroys the foundation on which the Marine Corps was built — ironclad discipline."

The letter, and its accompanying "basic daily routine" hourly schedule, went viral among Marines.

The "old Corps" came forward, asking what happened to their beloved Marine Corps and lamenting that "ironclad discipline" they remember.

Many other Marines responded the opposite way, sending accusations of micromanagement at the highest levels: angrily alleging that this is an antithesis to the Marine Corps motto of "centralized command, decentralized control," and asking why should killers really care about haircuts?

Fingers came back to point at Furness.

As one retired gunner said on Facebook: It was a "vitriolic social media dog-pile."

Furness says he regrets how the initial rollout went. The Luddite commanding general who doesn't use social media sheepishly said he didn't realize the letter would get out of the unit.
He wouldn't do it like that again, he says, but he's not backing down.

From June 3–7 there will be an entire division stand down. It's more of an educational stand down, he says, to teach Marines what the right way looks like and show how to best and most effectively enforce Marine Corps standards.
Basically, to teach what they already learned in boot camp.

It's not coming from just him. In September 2018 he formed a "sergeants council" of about 12 Marines pulled from across the division to bring to the table issues they see on the ground.

Right now the council, which meets monthly, is focusing on planning the June stand down. After that, there will be quarterly division stand downs.

The commanding general says it's a time to pause and get it right — a luxury the Marine Corps hasn't had until recently due to a high deployment tempo.

"I will tell you I went to a chow hall today and from the car to the door I picked up a straw, five cigarette butts, a top of some drink beverage and some indescribable piece of trash," Furness told Marine Corps Times April 26, comparing the distance to the short hallway leaving his Camp Lejeune office.

"Now, in the Marine Corps I grew up with people would be asking why is a CG picking up trash?"
"Well, I'm part of the team, No. 1 — I want to set the example."

But he also wants Marines to "have pride" in their surroundings. And pay attention to detail.

It's about more than just haircuts, Furness says. He believes lack of discipline in garrison will carry over to training and eventually combat.

It's already being seen in training, he says. The after-action reviews he has been receiving from California service-level exercises at 29 Palms and the Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport are uniformly marking Marine performance as "woefully inadequate," Furness said.

But it is still pretty unique for a commanding general to take such hold from up high. And, it begs the question: What is going on in 2nd Marine Division?
The CG didn't say exactly what happened to the pajamaed Marine in the chow hall: But he knows that Marine got a call from the sergeant major of the Corps.

Furness' big regret is that he didn't get a letter and contingency plan out sooner.

"I'm upset with myself for not doing this quicker, giving more specific guidance to my junior leaders and my leaders sooner so that they could have gone after this."

"But, again, this is a Marine Corps problem, not just a 2nd Marine Division problem, but we're the 'follow me' division, and I'm stepping out."

BOOT BANDS DON'T MAKE KILLERS

The issues in 2nd Marine Division right now are not unique to East Coast Marines, Furness says.

He insists that he and his peers have been lamenting about a lack of discipline crawling across the Corps for the past 10-15 years.

And it is at the small unit leader level that he's looking to the most.

"I absolutely believe it's incumbent on the leadership of those units to make them adhere to the Marine Corps standards, because part of the pride of being a Marine is being better than everybody else," he said. "I'm not asking anyone to do anything

that's not Marine Corps order ... or part of the Marine Corps culture."

Several responses to the letter have been angry, calling Furness' tactic an out-of-line takeover.

A recent anonymous opinion article reportedly from an active-duty Marine in combat arms on the military website Task & Purpose was titled, "The 'micromanaging' Marine general should focus on strategy, not mustaches."

That junior Marine officer started the letter by telling Furness, "Your latest policy letter ... violates the core tenants of Marine Corps doctrine. You ought to repeal it immediately."

Proper shaves and poorly maintained facilities are noteworthy, "but these things are not essential," the Marine wrote. "You can kill enemies with long hair. You can win battles without boot bands or rolled sleeves. At the end of the day, grooming standards have only tangential relevance to victory in war."
"This petty stuff higher ups worry about is the - reason why good, effective Marines get out," a five-year enlisted Marine who got out of the Corps in the past year told Marine Corps Times.

FROM AN INITIAL READ, FURNESS' LETTER DOES LOOK LIKE A MANDATED SCHEDULE."

"I expect EACH AND EVERY Marine and Sailor to fully embrace the following routine," it stated.
But the general backtracked on that wording of his letter, telling Marine Corps Times there is no micromanaged schedule, it's a traditional schedule for small unit leaders to base their unit schedules off of.
"That plan is not a division-wide schedule," he said. "It's a schedule. So if they want to adopt it, you know, verbatim, that's their decision."

"It's not a mandated, by the hour schedule."

Several Marines at Camp Lejeune said they thought the division's response to the letter seems to be pretty split, maybe even 50/50.

A couple Marines mentioned there is now more traffic getting on base in the early morning hours. Earlier start times and mandatory PT each morning the cause.

Other 2nd Division Marines say "literally nothing" has changed in their units.

According to 1st Lt. Nathaniel Thompson, with Charlie -Company, 2d Combat Engineer Battalion, there had been notice of some units coming in late or -leaving early, or taking long lunches.

But, for a well-disciplined unit, there hasn't been much change, especially on the side of a daily schedule.

"The good units are already doing this, and they will continue to do this," Thompson said.
So why the fierce push-back?

Max Uriarte, the creator of Terminal Lance, was the first to post Furness' letter publicly, on his outlet's Facebook page.

"I think the fundamental problem that junior Marines have with things like this is that 99 percent of them are doing the right thing, but are being punished because of the 1 percent that are not," he said.
Punishing an entire division is odd, Uriarte said, noting that he personally never had seen that before.
"Had it not blown up on social media, it probably would have just been a few weeks of butt-hurt SNCOs passing down punishment and would have faded off eventually."

"Mass punishment events like this spring up all the time, and serve as a regular reminder to look forward to your DD-214," Uriarte said.

Though the Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Robert Neller did not respond to requests to comment on the chow hall incident, Furness did hear from him after his letter went out.

Neller had been Furness' division commander in combat: The commandant was calling to ask if the division commander was alright.

"He said he supported what I was doing and just wanted to make sure I was doing OK. He was just checking on one of his Marines."

Which is what Furness insists he is doing here: - leading from the front and coaching a team of - Marines to success.

When Furness was a child, he wanted to be an - outside linebacker for the Minnesota Vikings, he said.

"It just didn't work out that way."

But the father of four compares leadership a lot to coaching a sports team.

The consequences in the Marine Corps are a lot greater.

"I hate it when I hear analogies of the NFL or something, 'It's like war out there,'" he said. "No, it's not. Nobody out there is going to get their head blown off this morning."

But, like being a part of the New England Patriots, he said, or any other professional football team, there is a culture. And there are parts of thulture that help lead to being champions.

The Marine Corps is no different, he said.

"When you do that and you give of yourself and you embrace that culture and become a full member of it, there's a certain pride associated with that," he said.

"And then the biggest championship you can win is going to combat, accomplishing the mission and bringing everybody home."
Andrea Scott is editor of Marine Corps Times. On Twitter: _andreascott.

2020 BLUE WATER NAVY AGENT ORANGE UPDATE

January 13, 2020 | in Agent Orange, Blue Water | by Shannon Brewer, Senior Attorney

n the past year, a lot has changed for U.S. Navy veterans who served during the Vietnam War era and did not go ashore in Vietnam or into the inland waterways / rivers (brown waters) of Vietnam. These sailors, known as Blue Water sailors have been denied VA benefits due to Agent Orange exposure for many years by the Department of Veterans Affairs, but now the law has recognized that anyone who served within 12 nautical miles in the territorial sea of the Republic of Vietnam was likely exposed to Agent Orange and is, then, entitled to service connection for those diseases known to be caused by that exposure. This change in the law by Congress will lead to grants of service connection for many veterans, but it's important to know how to get those disability benefits. The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act says:

BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS MUST HAVE SERVED WITHIN 12 NAUTICAL MILES

Start this process by figuring out where you served. It's been many years, and not everyone remembers exactly where their Navy ship was if they even knew at the time. A little internet research, however, can tell you when your ship was in or near the waters of Vietnam. Unfortunately, the VA has not made a ship list available to the public. We reached out to Blue Water Navy expert Ed Ball, Director of Research of MVA & BWNA, who has and continues to work on compiling over 1,700 Blue Water ship deck logs since 2016 and he had an important observation " The *Navy and Coast Guard Ships Associated with Service in Vietnam and Exposure to Herbicide Agents*, aka 'the ship list,' previously used by all claims processors to concede qualifying service, is now **restricted** to the Records Research Team and designated legacy appeals personnel". Because of this, our team has been hard at work putting together an interactive map tool using research such as Mr. Ball's. You can request the deck logs for your ship and find out latitudes and longitudes and input them into our interactive map to find out if and when your ship was within the 12-mile limits. If your ship was in the right place while you were aboard, VA will concede that you were exposed to Agent Orange.

BLUE WATER NAVY VETERANS MUST HAVE A CURRENT AGENT ORANGE-RELATED DISABILITY

VA has also conceded that certain diseases are caused by Agent Orange exposure. Exposure alone



is not sufficient to qualify for benefits, but if you have been diagnosed with one of the presumptive conditions, such as diabetes mellitus, ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's disease, Prostate cancer, respiratory cancers, or one of a number of cancers, VA will concede that these disabilities were caused by Agent Orange. Of note, VA is currently considering a number of new disabilities to add to the list of presumptive diseases, such as bladder cancer and hypertension. If you have been diagnosed with one

of those conditions, go ahead and file now and get in line to preserve your effective dates. In addition, even if a condition is not listed as a presumptive condition, if your physician has told you that your disability is related to your exposure to Agent Orange, it is worth filing a claim. Service connection can be awarded for a condition if a veteran can provide a medical nexus between exposure to Agent Orange and the current disability, even if the condition is not presumptive.

HOW CAN BLUE WATERS GET VA DISABILITY BENEFITS?

Our understanding is that the VA is not going to seek out Vietnam-era Navy veterans and reevaluate their cases for veterans benefits unless a claim has been filed. If you served in the territorial sea and you have an Agent Orange-related disability, and you don't currently have a pending appeal for those conditions, you should file one as soon as possible. If you filed a claim years ago that was denied by VA, you still need to file a claim to reopen that previously-denied claim. Even if you have a pending appeal for one condition, you need to make sure that you have filed a claim for any other Agent Orange-related conditions as soon as possible. Sadly, many veterans who filed claims years ago have since passed away, but spouses may file to reopen these claims as well, so go ahead and file these claims in case you are entitled to any accrued benefits (those to which the veteran would have been entitled) or DIC benefits (if the veteran's Agent Orange-related disability contributed to his cause of death).

WHAT EVIDENCE CAN I USE TO PROVE AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE?

VA is supposed to be doing their own research into which Navy ships qualify for benefits due to herbicide exposure (Agent Orange) and for what time periods, but if you have already determined this information for yourself, submit evidence along with your claims. This could speed up your claim. In addition, make sure that you provide VA with the best medical records that you can obtain. You want to provide evidence as far back as you can, showing when you were diagnosed with the relevant conditions and, to the best of your ability, how severe your condition was over time. If you received health care at VA facilities, this kind of evidence is usually available. Gathering these records can be much more difficult if you received health care from private doctors who may have destroyed records after 7 years. These records can be the key to maximizing your rating.

CAREFULLY REVIEW ANY BLUE WATER DECISION YOU RECEIVE

Once VA decides your claim, it is important to review carefully to make sure that you have received the earliest effective date possible and the highest rating possible for your disability compensation. Check to see if the effective date matches the date when you first filed your claim or when you first developed the Agent-Orange related disability. If not, you may need to appeal the decision. Similarly, check to see if the rating reflects the severity of your condition across time. For instance, if your Parkinson's disease is rated at a flat 30%, VA probably didn't consider how this condition affects each individual body part. Similarly, if your heart condition is rated 10% for a 20 year period during which you suffered heart attacks or congestive heart failure, or if your cancer is rated less than 100% for a period of time while you were receiving chemotherapy, you may need to appeal that decision. If you don't know what the correct effective date or rating should be, or if you don't know how to prove your case, then consult an expert to help you with your appeal for disability benefits due to Agent Orange herbicide exposure.



IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THE CORRECT EFFECTIVE DATE OR RATING SHOULD BE, OR IF YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO PROVE YOUR CASE, THEN CONSULT AN EXPERT TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR APPEAL FOR DISABILITY BENEFITS DUE TO AGENT ORANGE HERBICIDE EXPOSURE.

BOOK REVIEW
DIRT SAILORS:
NAVY SEABEES IN VIETNAM

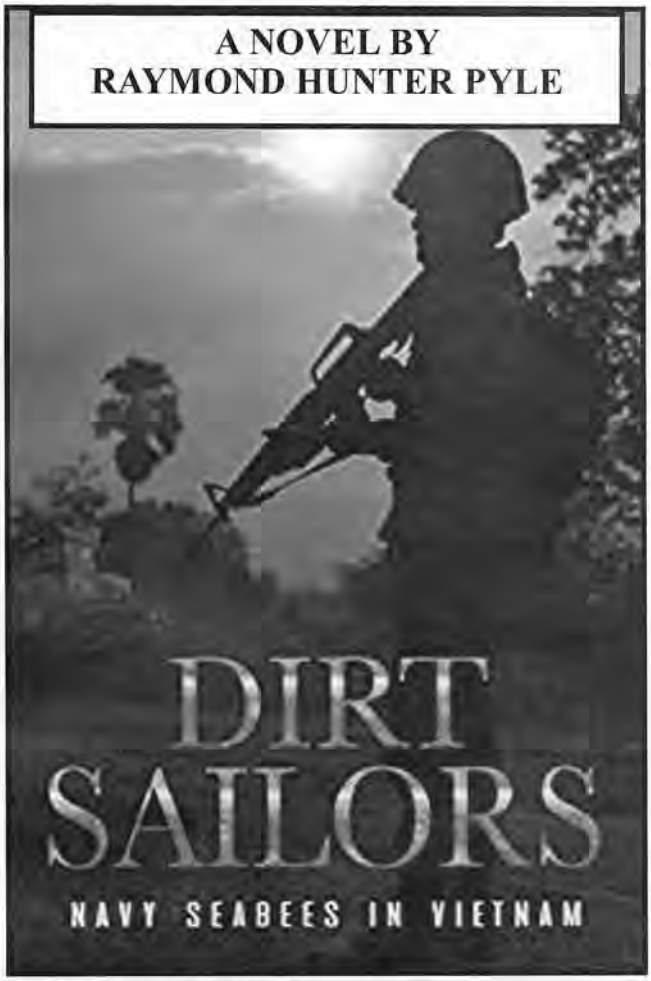

In 1965, Hank Tucker and his Brother Toby were out of draft deferments when they discovered an AFL/CIO poster in the union hiring hall advertising a Navy enlistment program offering advanced enlisted paygrades to construction men with extensive experience in the trades and heavy equipment. Just sign up for a thirty month enlistment and they could enter the Navy Seabees as instant petty officers. At that point, joining one of the services was the only way they could avoid getting drafted and joining the Navy sounded like the best deal in town. No guns. No foxholes. No battles. It didn't quite work out that way.

REVIEWS

I was a Chief Builder at Gia Kai Combat Base, plus Tamay fuel tank area. Danang, during the Ammo dump explosion, rebuilding of all damaged metal buildings, plus the construction of all metal arch buildings at Danang Air strip. Many IPO's worked for me during that time. They and the others formed a great force with the Can do spirt did a wonderful job. I was proud to have been their Leading Chief Petty Officer. For all of these past years I have pushed this time in my life to the rear. Trying to forget, it worked but I will say that your story woke me up. I really needed this story to Get in with my life. I am 86 years old this year, and for the past 63 Years I am proud to say I am a Seabee!

I Served 22 years in the Seabees — 11 years in MCB-1. I did two tours on detachments in I Corps but thankfully not along the DMZ. I have read dozens of books about personal experiences of fellow Vietnam Vets but seldom read novels on the subject. However, Dirt Sailors is as factual and realistic as you can get.

I am a Plank owner of CBMU 301 and also one of the 35 that served with Detachment Bravo at Khe Sanh before, during and after the Siege. I am only halfway through this most very surprising book. Understanding that this with fictional characters, but the detail of the location and mechanics of the operations is pretty right on. I give the author Raymond Pyle a Bravo Zulu I as many of the surviving members of Det Bravo, continue to have vivid memories of those days, and so far the book Dirt Sailors is accurate, I look forward to finishing the Book with some hesitation. I will finish I would like to have this in a hard copy for myself and family, friends I have never completely told anyone about Khe Sanh, this would be a good avenue to share. FYI I also was TAD to MCB 11 Security Platoon in Dong Ha for 4 1/2 months Perimeter Security, Patrols , and , I experienced the Ammo Dump explosion and knew the EO who drove in and rescued those Marines, he was awarded a Bronze Star, there were many acts of heroism that day, many not recorded Seabees were tasked with a job in Vietnam, and I believe it was done without much fanfare or recognition. The Siege of Khe Sanh survivability was due to Marines, holding the Hills, Air Force pounding of the NVA, the Seabees of Det Bravo that kept the Runway open,again thank you Ray CBMU 301 Det Bravo MCB 11 Security Platoon

LUNCHEON TO COMMEMORATE THOSE WHO SERVED & THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH

BY CRAIG W. TOURTE
HQ BTRY 1/13

January 21st, 2020, Khe Sanh Veterans of Northern California – Another wonderful turn out of over 50 Veterans and Community Members held at the Table Mountain Golf Course in Oroville, Ca to commemorate the 52ed Anniversary of the Siege of the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh. It was my honor once again to address the Veterans and Community Supporters.

"Thank you for joining us to honor those who fought in the Tet offensive and on and around the Khe Sanh Combat Base. Unfortunately, there are many who are not able to join us. Lee Adams, William Bacon, David Brown and Michael Daley are just a few of the over 2,000 killed and countless wounded and injured in the various battles at and near Khe Sanh. Even today, many still carry the physical and emotional scars of those battles. Donald Saunders couldn't come; he was killed in March 4th of 1968. Tom Horchler lifted his lifeless body up into his arms and gently placed Donald into the bed of his truck and then drove him to Graves Registration. Unfortunately, it was not Toms only sad journey during those horrific 77 days."

"We survivors of the Siege will never forget the ones we stood shoulder-to-shoulder with in the trench lines, those who faced incredible hardships on the surrounding hills, those who flew above in a desperate attempt to extract our wounded and dead and supply us with the critical material necessary for us to persevere. We will never forget the fallen and how they sacrificed their lives for their fellow Marines and for our wonderful country, they will always be part of who we are."

"As Lindon Johnson personally sent off Marine Reinforcements to I Corps from El Toro Marine Air Station, California on February 17, 1968, he told them, this is a decisive time in Vietnam. The eyes of the nation and the eyes of the entire world, the eyes of all of history itself, are on that little brave band of defenders who hold the pass at Khe Sanh. President



Obama acknowledge our sacrifices, gallantry and perseverance when he mentioned Khe Sanh along with the great battles of Concord, Gettysburg and Normandy during his first inaugural address."

"Today we remember those who fought during the long and horrific Siege of Khe Sanh that began on January 21, 1968, those who fought during the Hill Fights along with earlier and later battles in that Area of Operation. We also remember those who fought throughout Vietnam during the Tet Offensive. 58,220 brave Americans lost their lives during that war however, we suspect it was many more who later succumbed to their wounds, injuries and the poison of Agent Orange."

"Today we remember, not only those who fought at Khe Sanh and during the Tet Offensive, but also those who continue to sacrifice for the freedom of all Americans."

"We thank you for taking the time today to join us and to honor all of those who answered the call to serve and to honor those who continue to serve around the world. May God Bless America and thank you all for coming."






















DONT TREA


Khe Sanh
HOME
Eternally
Bonded
VETERANS


POW MIA
YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN



INTERESTING ARTICLE
WHAT HAPPENED AT CAMP LEJEUNE

I grew up drinking and bathing in the toxic waters around a military base in North Carolina. Thirty years later, I went back to investigate.

Lori Lou Freshwater
Aug 21, 2018

In the autumn of 1980, a contractor showed up to grade a parking lot. He had no idea he was about to start digging up the radioactive bodies of dead beagles. But the forked bucket on his bulldozer started pulling up more than soil, and it turned out he was digging in a pit of strontium-90 and dog carcasses that had been buried in an ash-gray tomb: a nest of dead dogs and laboratory waste labeled Radioactive Poison."

The new parking lot was on the site of the former Naval Research Laboratory dump and its associated incinerator in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina—and it was just one of many areas contaminated by an assortment of hazardous waste and chemicals on the base.

About half a mile away from the dump, soon to be known as Site 19, my friends and I were living in our neighborhood, called Paradise Point. We spent our time putting other girls' bras into freezers at slumber parties, playing the Telephone Game, riding our bikes all over the place: to the golf course to steal a cart, to swim at the pool, to play soccer on Saturdays.

During the same autumn the dead beagles were found, I was sitting in front of a fake backdrop of rusty colored leaves, a slight 11-year-old girl with spaces between my teeth and freckles spritzed across my nose and cheeks, to take my school photo.

Under normal circumstances, this entirely unremarkable fifth-grade photo, in a plaid shirt and fragile gold necklace, would have likely ended up where most school photos do, in an old album or a drawer or simply lost to time. Instead, the photo would become a marker in the medical history of my family and my community, a reminder of the crime that was being committed on the day the photo was taken—and also for decades before, and for years after. **The place was Camp Lejeune, a United States Marine Corps base wrapped around the New River in Onslow County that served as an amphibious training base where Marines learned to be "the world's best war fighters," picking up skills that would allow them (for example) to make surprise landings on the shores of far away countries. From the 1950s until at least 1985, the drinking water was contaminated with toxic chemicals at levels 240 to 3400 times higher than what is permitted by safety standards.**



AUTHOR 5TH GRADE PHOTO
LORI LOU FRESHWATER

There may never be a true accounting of the suffering caused at Lejeune. As with many other hometown environmental disasters, the Marines and family members poisoned on this military base were not born here, nor did they settle here to make a permanent life and raise their children. Instead, they were often here just for a short time, literally stationed at Lejeune for weeks, months, or, at most, a few years. From the 1950s through at least 1985, an undetermined number of of residents, including infants, children, and civilian workers and personnel, were exposed to trichloroethylene (TCE), tetrachloroethylene (PCE), vinyl chloride, and other contaminants in the drinking water at the Camp Lejeune. These exposures likely increased their risk of cancers, including renal cancer, multiple myelo-

ma, leukemias, and more. It also likely increased their risk of adverse birth outcomes, along with other negative health effects. Now the sick and the dying are all over the world, and an untold number will never be notified about what happened. Instead, we are left to rely on scientific models and data trickling out of public-health agencies and the slow process of adding one story at a time, person-by-person, to the cold data representing an environmental and public-health disaster.

In 1989, the Environmental Protection Agency placed 236 square miles of North Carolina's coastal soil and water on the list of toxic areas known as Superfund sites. The agency cited "contaminated groundwater, sediment, soil and surface water resulting from base operations and waste handling practices" as reasons for including it on the **National Priorities List**.

Camp Lejeune remains a sprawling Superfund site, and it is also the place where my mom and I spent years drinking a terrible mix of chemicals from our faucet. In the book ***A Trust Betrayed: The Untold Story of Camp Lejeune***, author Mike Magner gives special attention to my mother's story: "A woman with the ironic name of Mary Freshwater may have had the most ghastly experiences at Camp Lejeune." Of course, I share her ironic name, which can still seem like more of a curse. Nearly my entire childhood was consumed by tragedy. The chemical contamination can be linked to the deaths of my two baby brothers, Rusty and Charlie, and to my mom's own difficult final years, when she was dying from two types of acute leukemia. My mother also suffered from mental illness, which was intensified—understandably—by our family's brutal losses. Sometimes it seems that, behind me, there is nothing but inescapable grief.

My middle school was called Tarawa Terrace II, named for the famous World War II Battle of Tarawa. I rode a Marine-green bus every day instead of a yellow one, on a base that had expanded during World War II to claim rivers, creeks, swamps, and mile after mile of Atlantic oceanfront.

Early in the unfolding tragedy, the Army sent a note to Marine leadership about water-testing results. It was sent the same month that my mother wrote on the back of my fifth-grade photo: **October, 1980**. Army Laboratory Service Chief William Neal scrawled on the bottom of the lab results: "Water is highly contaminated with low molecular weight halogenated hydrocarbons."

It was an early warning about the drinking water on the base. But the Marines didn't take any action that month or the next, and even after several warnings—including another handwritten note that exclaimed merely "**Solvents!**"—the Marine Corps waited five years to start shutting down contaminated wells. After that first memo, issued only days before the radioactive beagles were found, the poisoned drinking water kept flowing for several more years.

Camp Lejeune has been **characterized** as a candidate for the worst water contamination case in U.S. history—and I am one of up to a million people who were poisoned. The tragedy, though, is hardly all in the past.

According to the Project on Government Oversight (POGO), the military's failures are continuing today; **mistakes are being repeated at our bases overseas, and, in foreign cases, it took a whistleblower to prompt action on contaminated water**. A 2013 investigative report produced by the Navy inspector general, obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, reveals "shortfalls in the oversight and management of drinking water for Navy personnel stationed overseas—even in wealthy, developed countries." The report concludes that "not a single Navy overseas drinking water system meets U.S. compliance standards" or the Navy's own governing standards," according to POGO.

HOW THE WATER BECAME TOXIC

An important part of Marine culture is always being squared away—a code of personal cleanliness and etiquette that requires a pressed and starched uniform and a lot of shoe polishing. One of the dry cleaners that the Marines frequented to service their uniforms was ABC Cleaners, which operated out of a small, red- and white-painted building just across the highway from the base. Word traveled fast that they had the lowest prices, but the business produced more than money. Like any dry-cleaning outfit, it also produced tons of waste from the solvent used to clean the uniforms. According to a court deposition, ABC Cleaners used two to three 55-gallon drums of the solvent a month. That's about three gallons of muck a day.

This dry-cleaning business is across the street from the entrance to my school. The owner used the toxic muck to fill potholes in his parking lot, and threw the rest into the drains.

In other areas on the base, waste was generated and discarded into empty lots, forests, roads, waterways, and makeshift dumps. That toxic waste was then taken by the Carolina rains and summer thunderstorms down toward sea level, into water wells, and into the barracks, houses, trailers, offices, and schools—and finally into the bodies of thousands of Marines and their families: into our cells, into our bones.

In 2014, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), issued **a position on the water at Camp Lejeune**. The ATSDR found that "past exposures from the 1950s through February 1985 to trichloroethylene (TCE), tetrachloroethylene (PCE), vinyl chloride, and other contaminants in the drinking water at the Camp Lejeune likely increased the risk of cancers."

In addition to those toxins, there was also benzene, a clear, colorless, and highly flammable chemical. When you put gas in your car, that smell you notice is benzene—an important petroleum byproduct that is also used in industrial solvents.

In the universe of environmental contamination, language can be complex, murky, and often confusing. When it comes to benzene, though, the language is like the chemical itself, perfectly clear: Benzene is a carcinogen. Benzene is a well-established cause of cancer in humans, and benzene causes acute myeloid leukemia.

The **EPA has established a maximum contaminant level goal of zero parts per billion** for benzene in public drinking water systems. In 1980, **Naval Facilities Engineering Command** testing showed that one of the wells at Camp Lejeune measured **380 parts per billion.**

In 2010, the **Associated Press** found that a contractor "dramatically underreported" the level of benzene found in Lejeune's tap water. Per the AP's reporting, in 1992, when ATSDR visited Camp Lejeune to start its public health assessment, they found that a contractor had erroneously documented the 1984 level of benzene in one well was 38 parts per billion—when the actual measurement had been 380 parts per billion. The same contractor's final report, issued in 1994, conveniently omitted the benzene altogether.

"The Marine Corps had been warned nearly a decade earlier about the dangerously high levels of benzene, which was traced to massive leaks from fuel tanks at the base on the North Carolina coast, according to recently disclosed studies," the AP reported.

The chemical stew found at Lejeune is made of volatile organic compounds. They are able to vaporize, and, with ultimate stealth, to enter soil and air as gases, which then become your invisible companions. Finally, they come for the ones you love.

WHEN THE WATER BECOMES VAPOR

A friend of mine describes the humid days in North Carolina as feeling like you are in a dog's mouth. It can be brutal. Take a shower and walk outside and you need another shower. The only thing to do is drink lots of water and search for shade. Our school had an open plan, no enclosed hallways or air-conditioning, so on hot days teachers marched us to the old metal water fountains after recess. Then there were the "black flag days," which meant that it was too hot for recess. In the cafeteria, we lined up for strange-tasting meat patties on plastic trays that were still warm and damp from the wash cycle. I can still smell all that dirty steam coming from the industrial dishwashers. We were breathing it, the toxic vapors, but the cafeteria ladies serving us were right there in a fog of it all day long, wearing hairnets and gloves out of what is, in retrospect, a heartbreaking concern for the students' health and safety.
In homes across the country, vaporized poisons from underground can also be stealth killers. The dry-cleaning business down the road might be accidentally responsible for polluting the air in someone's home. This is because of something called soil vapor intrusion, the process by which chemicals migrate from contaminated soil and groundwater into the air of indoor structures where it then sits, essentially trapped. The EPA issued its first guidance on vapor intrusion in 2002. In 2003, the George W. Bush administration ended that guidance. President Barack Obama then made it a priority—and the EPA released its final Vapor Intrusion Technical Guide in 2015.

Mike Magner, author of *A Trust Betrayed*, says that he thinks vapor intrusion is "the next big firestorm for the Pentagon, not just at Camp Lejeune but at military bases and former bases around the country."

"There is plenty of evidence that the air is or has been toxic inside some of Lejeune's buildings—there are test results being covered up but that will eventually come out—and there is a good possibility that either legislation or litigation will force the

government to address this problem," Magner says. "If the Marines are worried about their liabilities for the water contamination at Camp Lejeune, they ain't seen nothin' yet."

Some years ago, I became a member of the **Community Assistance Panel**, a group mandated by congress to represent the Lejeune community working with the scientists at the CDC and with bureaucrats at the Veterans Administration. Through this work, I've learned more about the military's cover-up of the water contamination, and how the culture that says "Stay Marine" also ensures that some problems remain entombed in secrecy.

The Community Assistance Panel has obtained more than 22,000 documents from an in-progress vapor intrusion study on the buildings at Camp Lejeune up to the present time. The study documents a clear and ongoing risk of exposure, as the groundwater plumes and utility lines—the pathways of exposure—are still located under the buildings.

This summer, a report to the CDC said that a recent test, at a building used as a barracks, had revealed the "highest recorded on-base indoor air TCE [trichloroethylene] detection due to vapor intrusion" since the EPA issued its guidance. This measurement exceeds both state and federal screening levels, which can cause health problems for those exposed, especially women who are in the first trimester of pregnancy. Which brings me back to my mother.

THE DAMAGE IS DONE

My mother grew up poor on a farm, traumatized (she said) from having to break chicken's necks, and dropped out of high school mid-way through. But Mary Freshwater knew her powers, and they were a force when she conjured them.

In 2007, the National Academy of Sciences convened a panel to talk about the water at Lejeune. It took place at the Jacksonville **USO**, the oldest USO building in the country, which sits on banks of New River under old Carolina shade trees. My mother was sitting in the audience while experts went on about statistics until it was time to hear from the people affected by the poisoned water at Camp Lejeune. Mom was there to tell them about Rusty and Charlie, the two babies she'd lost: one born with an open spine, the other with no cranium. Behind my mom, the Marines and family members were there to listen and tell their own stories.

Wearing a light pink turtleneck, her hair an uncharacteristic mess, she stepped up to the microphone and placed a small cardboard box on the podium in front of her. In black marker in small letters on the top of the box was the word *Baby*. This was all my mom had left of Rusty, my brother who had lived a month and died on New Year's Eve in 1978.

As she spoke, she opened the baby box and unpacked it, eventually holding up a dingy bottle with the nipple still on it and liquid still inside, and a blue onesie, with a yellow stain which she would explain was her son's vomit that she had not been able to wash.

"We are not numbers in a study. We are human beings that have had great tragedies," she said.

After my mom died, this same baby box was one of the things I knew I had to find and keep. She had it with her all the time, even as we moved all over the place. It was my family history, but it was also now something public—a part of the country's history too.

My mom's leukemia, and her unwillingness to give up the fight, made her extended illness one of terrible suffering. After her death, my mother's much younger husband fell apart and fell into the bottle again. One night I got a call saying that he hadn't paid the rent and that the landlady was putting all my mom's stuff in the old barn out back. Some cousins had already shown up and taken things. I was living in Rhode Island and had to drive down to rural North Carolina overnight. By the time I could get there the place was a mess.

After a few minutes of walking around the house, I was able to find the baby box.

It was sitting with junk, looking like the next candidate for the trash. I went into the kitchen to get some water; it was hot already and I was thirsty. On the counter there was another box, and this one stood out because it was new and had no name.

I opened it. Inside was a clear bag of ash and small fragments of bone. It was what was left of my mama. It was the first time I had seen someone's ashes like that. It was not what I expected, not elegant ash like the kind the Kennedys would puff into the air from their boat and watch settle into the sea. Instead, it was undeniably the remnants of a human being, heavy with bits of stubborn bone.

I went and got my little brother's box and sat it on

the counter too. Right next to her. And then, after packing up as much as I could, I took them both home.

The New River is not one of the most beautiful rivers. The banks are scrappy, with wild bushes crouched and waiting to sting your legs. It starts and finishes in Onslow County. It is our river, and it seems to say it is majestic until it makes believers out of us all. Sometimes it looks like the banks are falling into the water, like a claw came along and took root and dirt, rot and leaves. This kind of thing can look spooky. Maybe because we want to wonder, but never actually know, what is buried. We don't want a storm to come along and dig up the things that have been covered, forgotten.

TTHM SURVEILLANCE REPORT FORM

Installation MCB - LA JEUNE - HADNOT POINT

Date Collected 21 OCT 80 PM

AVE 34 APPROX.

Source	Sample Number	$CHCl_3$	$CHCl_2Br$	$CHClBr_2$	$CHBr_3$	TTHM
WTP	086	18.6	138 (8)	5.1	0.3	32
HOSP NH-1	087	20.6	138 (9)	6.3	0.6	36
1202	088	19.3	138 (8)	5.4	0.3	33
65	089	18.8	137 (8)	5.5	0.4	33
FC-530	090	18.7	136 (8)	5.7	0.4	33
Reference CRS						
True						

Date Received 30 OCT 80

Date Analyzed 31 OCT 80

Remarks: WATER IS HIGHLY CONTAMINATED WITH LOW MOLECULAR WEIGHT HALOGENATED HYDROCARBONS. STRONG INTERFERENCE IN THE REGION OF $CHCl_2Br$. CANNOT DETERMINE TRUE VALUE OF THAT COMPOUND. EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT THE TRUE CONCENTRATION IS LOW, SINCE THE

William C. Neal

WILLIAM C. NEAL, JR.
Chief, Laboratory Services



RT 20 IN FREMONT, OH DEDICATED TO FALLEN VIETNAM VETERANS

MEMORIES OF NAM







MARINES KILLED IN ACTION RETURN HOME TO A SOMBER CEREMONY AT ARLINGTON

A very special funeral was held at the Arlington National Cemetery for five Vietnam War Marines who were killed in action together in the same incident. Their bodies were recovered and identified over a span of five years by the Defense Department POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA).



All of these Marines were killed in action while being inserted behind enemy lines in Thien-Hue Province on June 30, 1967.

On that day in June, Capt. John A. House was piloting a Marine Corps, CH-46A Sea Knight helicopter with three crew members on a mission to insert an 8-man Reconnaissance team, from Alpha Co. 3rd Recon Bn, 3rd Marine Division into enemy territory.

They were there to do what they do best, that is, stealthy reconnaissance to seek out enemy movement, positions, and numbers, etc.



When the CH-46 was coming into the landing zone, it suddenly received very heavy fire from the treelines all around the landing site. The helicopter caught on fire and went down quickly. Three of the helicopter crew and four of the recon team from Alpha Co. 3rd Recon survived the crash and were later rescued, but the remains of those who were killed could not be recovered at that time. Those KIAs were subsequently placed on the list of MIAs and remained there until recently.



With the help and full cooperation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and local villagers, the DPAA were able to recover the remains of five of the KIA in this incident. They also were able to recover material evidence, life support equipment and helicopter wreckage from the CH-46 helicopter. They were able to identify the remains of LCpl. Merlin R. Allen, of Madison, WI, and Navy Hospital Corpsman, Michael B. Judd, 21, of Cleveland, Ohio, in 2013. The remains of Capt. John A. House, the pilot of the CH-46A helicopter, and Cpl. Glyn L. Reynolds, 21, of Birmingham, AL, and LCpl., John D. Killen, 18, of Davenport, Iowa, were not identified until December 22, 2015.

These Marines were buried together at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors and with family members present. Since they were all Marines, the Marine Honor Guard and the Marine Body Bearers from the Marine Barracks at 8th and I Streets in Washington, D.C. provided the full color and dignity of a Marine Corps burial to the funeral proceedings.

The Veterans Site sends its condolences to the families of these five Marines killed in action. They are interred together just as they died together. We honor their sacrifice, deeply respect their service to the country, and say to them with all our hearts, "Welcome Home, good Marines!"



Semper Fidelis! We remain your Fratres Aeterni!

ED NOTE:
INTERESTING ARTICLE MAYBE SOME OF OUR MARINES ENLISTED AFTER THAT CAMPAIGN

SGT. CHARLES TALIANO: THE FACE OF A 'MARINE'S MARINE' MAY 9, 1945-JUNE 4, 2010

JUST HOW DID CHARLES "CHUCK" TALIANO JR. END UP BECOMING THE ONE MARINE CHOSEN FOR A RECRUITING CAMPAIGN THAT WOULD MAKE HIS FACE RECOGNIZABLE WORLDWIDE?
JOSH MITELMAN/STAFF VIDEO

On a warm April day in 1968, a new platoon was organizing in the squad bay at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island. Sgt. Charles Taliano, a drill instructor charged with molding men into Marines, stood inches from a recruit's face -- snarling. His jaw clenched and jutted forward.

His neck vein bulged and his blue eyes bore into the young man, whom Taliano for some reason had found wanting. Maybe he was "eyeballing the area or needed to stand up straight, something like that," Taliano later said. "I was just having a conversation with him."

A reservist writing a book about boot camp happened to be on the depot that day and snapped a picture of the "conversation."

The Marine Corps chose the photo for its upcoming recruitment campaign. For much of the '70s and '80s, thousands of posters of Taliano's unsmiling mug circulated around the country with the headline, "We don't promise you a rose garden," a reference to a 1970 country/pop chart-topper.

Photo stills from the conversation were incorporated into a 1973 TV commercial promoting the Marines -- an attempt to bolster recruitment amid flagging public support for the Vietnam War.

Suddenly, Sgt. "Chuck" Taliano was one of the most recognizable faces in the Marine Corps, earning him the nickname the Rose Garden D.I.

"People would tell him, 'If it wasn't for that poster, I would not have joined the Marines,'" said Sgt. Major David Robles, a Beaufort resident and friend of Taliano's.



CHARLES TALIANO, FORMER DRILL INSTRUCTOR, HELD A SMALLER VERSION OF THE POSTER THAT MADE HIM THE FACE OF MARINE CORPS RECRUITING IN THIS 2006 PHOTO. TALIANO DIED JUNE 4, 2010

Taliano never profited from the campaign financially. As far as he was concerned, the photo was a fluke -- something that could have happened to any drill instructor in the squad bay that day.
One thing he was never able to do was to locate the recruit at whom he was yelling.

In a 2007 book about drill instructors called "The Few and The Proud" by Larry Smith, Taliano said it might be better not knowing.

"I'm married to that man for life, and I don't want to know that he's dead, wounded or maimed," he said.

Taliano became a drill instructor two years after enlisting in 1964. It was a stressful job for someone barely of college age. Taliano was only 21 years old with recruits older than he was. But he did his job well, turning boys into fighting machines.

Former recruits send him letters, confessing they never would have survived combat if it hadn't been for his training.

"He could be hard core and bark at them, but he still took them into consideration and treated them as human beings," his sister Michaelene Taliano

said. She found stacks of letters from recruits in Taliano's

home after he died in 2010 from multiple myeloma, a cancer of plasma cells. He was 65.

And Taliano loved the Marines he helped create.

"Being a D.I., other than being a father, was the most rewarding thing in my life," Taliano said in "The Few and The Proud."

After finishing active duty, Taliano worked in book publishing for 30 years, mostly in New York.

When he retired, he returned to Beaufort.



A YOUNG SGT. TALIANO AS MEMORIALIZED ON KEVIN JANDREAU'S 'IN MEMORIAM' FACEBOOK PAGE

Looking for something to do, Taliano was persuaded by his friend David Robles to run the gift shop at Parris Island. He made $10,000 his first day running the shop, Robles said.

Taliano himself was the big draw since the gift shop sold copies of the "Rose Garden" poster that Taliano autographed for anyone who asked. He kept sales strong for years to come.

While his fame may have gotten people in the door, Taliano kept the store so well stocked with Marine tchotchkes that customers usually left with armfuls of other merchandise, too.

Over the years, Taliano traveled to other Marine bases and attended Marine functions. He would inevitably get wrangled into signing posters.

Once, at a Marine Corps Ball in Philadelphia, the event's speaker pointed Taliano out from on stage. Almost instantly, a line formed out the door for his autograph, recalled his son, Michael Taliano.

"He was signing posters until after 11 p.m.," Michael Taliano said.

Autograph seekers were mostly old-school military guys who saw the poster when they were coming up in the '70s and '80s.

But time has taken some of the shine off Taliano's brand.

"It's sad now because a lot of these kids don't know who he was because they haven't seen the poster," Robles said. Even during Taliano's lifetime, some recruits would buy the poster at the gift shop without realizing the man in it was the one counting their change.

Kevin Jandreau of Springfield, Mass. has made it his mission to keep Taliano's memory alive. Jandreau befriended Taliano during years of escorting young Marines to boot camp and making a point to stop in the gift shop.

He created an "In Memoriam" Facebook page for Taliano.

Jandreau also requires the Young Westover Marines, a youth group he works with, to buy the poster whenever they're at Parris Island.

Jandreau has his own autographed poster framed and hanging in his living room.

"Sgt. T", as he was affectionately called, may have looked menacing on the poster, Jandreau said, but "he was a man with a great heart."

Even if you didn't know he was a former drill instructor, it showed, said son Michael, who described his dad as a polite yet strict man who demanded direct eye contact and firm handshakes.

The saying "Once a Marine, always a Marine" was definitely true of Sgt. T, Michael Taliano said. "He was a Marine's Marine."

And in the end, Taliano actually got a rose garden. The wives of 2nd Recruit Training Battalion at Parris Island, the battalion for which Taliano had been a drill instructor, built a brick garden in front of the battalion headquarters and planted yellow roses for him.

The Rose Garden D.I. saw them bloom before he died.



DELAYNA EARLEY/STAFF PHOTO THE GRAVE MARKER OF SGT. CHARLES TALIANO AT BEAUFORT

NOTE:

The Marine Corps chose the photo for its upcoming recruitment campaign. For much of the '70s and '80s, thousands of posters of Taliano's unsmiling mug circulated around the country with the headline, "We don't promise you a rose garden," a reference to a 1970 country/pop chart-topper.

Photo stills from the conversation were incorporated into a 1973 TV commercial promoting the Marines -- an attempt to bolster recruitment amid flagging public support for the Vietnam War.

HELL ON A HILLTOP IN VIETNAM

Date: January 19, 2020
Author: pdoggbiker
PUBLISHED DEC 2018 VIETNAM MAGAZINE

AN AIR CAVALRY UNIT STRUGGLED TO PROTECT A REMOTE LANDING ZONE FROM WAVE AFTER WAVE OF NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACKS



PICTURES TAKEN BY DOUG MCPHEE AND COMBINED BY BRENT CROSSLEY. FROM CHARLIE BROWN: THATS LAOS IN THE FAR RIGHT. LANG VEI SF CAMP BEYOND THE CENTER DIP IN THE HILL. 1/5 CAV TOC (RIGHT WITH ANTENNA) AND A/1/77 FA ALONG THE RIDGE. MORNING MIST BEFORE WE WERE ATTACKED.

In May 1968, two small American outposts deep in enemy territory were all that remained of a massive force from the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) that had just been in one of the biggest battles of the war. The division arrived during Operation Pegasus in early April to break the North Vietnamese Army's siege of the Khe Sanh Marine base, which had been under attack since Jan. 21. After the relief force reached the Marine base on April 8, most of the 1st Cavalry Division troops moved south to the A Shau Valley. But two battalions and associated artillery units in the division's 2nd Brigade stayed at landing zones Snapper and Peanuts to support Marine regiments that had re-established control of the Khe Sanh base and were going on the offensive against the NVA in the surrounding hills. Before long, wounded and dead from both sides would be scattered around Landing Zone Peanuts in some of the toughest fighting that many of the air cavalry troops would ever see.

In mid-April, troops of the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, had been helicoptered to a T-shaped hill, LZ Peanuts, to protect the westward approaches to Khe Sanh. To the east of the hill were a few thou-

sand yards of open plain. To the south were Route 9 and the Lang Vei Special Forces camp that had been overrun about 2½ months before. To the west were Laos and the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Communist forces there wanted to attack Khe Sanh again, but they would first have to wipe out LZ Peanuts.

The 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, troops constructed defensive positions around the entire perimeter of the landing zone and fortified their widely spaced hootches. They laid coiled barbed wire in some areas of the perimeter and cut down elephant grass around bunkers to provide clear fields of fire.



DAYS BEFORE THE BATTLE, A MARINE CH-46 SEA KNIGHT DELIVERS AMMUNITION TO THE ARTILLERY RIDGE. (MIKE KERN)

Stretching out from the main area of LZ Peanuts was a narrow finger of land dotted with 105 mm howitzers and the bunkers of artillerymen in Battery A, 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division.

Around 4:30 p.m. on May 4, 1968—about two weeks after the troops arrived on LZ Peanuts—three enemy artillery rounds landed in the perimeter.

One shell hit the ammunition dump containing more than 2,000 rounds of howitzer ammo. The explosions sent the Americans scrambling for cover. By the end of the day, LZ Peanuts had been hit with 21 artillery rounds, killing two soldiers and taking 10 others out of the fight, including Battery A's Capt. Ron Weiss. With the battery's commanding officer sidelined and a burning ammo dump still exploding, the diminished ranks of artillerymen left their positions on the narrow ridge and shifted to foxholes on the main hilltop, temporarily abandoning the battery's six 105 mm howitzers.

As night approached, Lt. Col. Zeke Jordan, in the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry's operations center on LZ Peanuts, realized that his hill had the full attention of NVA soldiers based 3-1/2 miles southwest in Laos. Worse, Jordan now had no manned howitzers on the hilltop and only one understrength infantry company, Alpha Company, providing perimeter security.

Only about 150 defenders were still manning LZ Peanuts, while 300 or more North Vietnamese from the 304 NVA Division's 66th Regiment—two companies of NVA infantrymen and a company of sappers (an elite commando force)—were spread out and hidden on the sides of the hilltop landing zone and at staging areas in the valley below.

Sometime after midnight on May 5, the sappers began to quietly crawl uphill from multiple sides. Their mission was to blast wide gaps in LZ Peanuts' perimeter so regular NVA troops, running up behind them, could rush through for a close-quarters attack. Wearing only small drab loin cloths and smeared with black soot, the sappers inched through thick elephant grass that sliced at their skin. They hauled satchels filled with explosives and carried folding-stock AK-47 assault rifles. Though some brought medical supplies, most knew their climb would likely be a one-way trip.

Just before 2 a.m., Spcs. David Hosu and Thomas Mullins of Alpha Company's 1st Squad, 1st Platoon, sat in their underground bunker down the hill, about 200 yards outside LZ Peanuts' perimeter, where they were on listening-post duty, along with Pvts. Britton Kaur, Terry Misener, Jackie Lee Riley and Don Collier. Kaur and Misener had been perched atop the hootch as lookouts, and it was time for them to be relieved by Hosu and Mullins. Kaur poked his head in an opening in the sandbagged wall to make sure they were awake. "All right, damn it, I'm up," an aggravated Hosu hissed. Suddenly two trip flares were set off just beyond the perimeter, illuminating Kaur and Misener's figures outside the bunker. Both men immediately grabbed grenades off their flak jackets, pulled the pins and tossed the explosives in the direction of the flares. The blasts were accompanied by the screams of enemy troops. Another blast went off 10 feet in front of Kaur and Misner.

"Who the hell threw that grenade?" Kaur yelled. "What grenade?" replied someone inside the bunker.

Realizing now how close the invaders were, Kaur

grabbed the PRC-25 radio in the bunker to contact Capt. George Kish at Alpha Company's hootch, about 350 yards away at the landing zone. "We have definite movement out here," Kaur said. "They're trying to get inside our perimeter."

While Kaur talked into the headset, Hosu picked up an M79 grenade launcher and exited the bunker, followed by Mullins with an M16 rifle. Meanwhile, Riley and Collier, still inside the bunker, began tearing down sections of the walls to create better observation points. For several minutes, the two sides exchanged grenades and satchel charges. Then, as abruptly as it had started, the action subsided at the listening post. But small-arms fire and explosions intensified on the higher ridge behind them—LZ Peanuts was under attack.

Battalion commander Jordan relayed an urgent message to the 2nd Brigade headquarters at LZ Snapper, just across the valley: "LZ Peanuts is sitrep red. I say again, LZ Peanuts is sitrep red," code for Situation Report Red, used to indicate that a base was under direct attack. Jordan said the enemy was inside the wire, attacking with satchel charges and small arms on the east, northeast and southwest perimeters. Over the next few hours, waves of sappers and NVA soldiers continued to assault the perimeter.

Meanwhile, 1st Lt. Mike Maynard, who took over for Weiss and became acting commander of LZ Peanuts' artillery, stood outside his bunker and radioed LZ Snapper. Maynard asked the artillery unit there—Battery A, 1st Battalion, 30th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division—to shoot illumination flares over the besieged landing zone so the base's defenders could see the attacking enemy.

On the southern perimeter, Pvt. Scott Thompson of Alpha Company's 1st Platoon was in his bunker when the illumination flares fired from LZ Snapper exploded in the sky above Peanuts and lit up NVA locations below. To his left, the sound of gunfire near the howitzers intensified. To his right, Staff Sgt. Carlyle Guenther ordered an M60 machine gun to fire bullets with red tracer tails over the hill.

As Thompson peered out the slit of his bunker into complete blackness, a burst of light from an illumination flare revealed a nearly naked man moving in a crouched run up the hill, bypassing his position. Incredulous, Thompson wondered how the enemy got into his perimeter. He sprawled out of his bunker and aimed his M16 at the passing sapper. Before he could fire, a small sizzling explosive charge landed at his feet.

Instinctively, Thompson leaped head-first into a slit trench filled with human excrement, and the charge's blast blew above him. He rolled over, and another charge landed on his chest. Thompson hurriedly jumped out of the trench and slid face-first across the ground as the second explosive went off, blowing dirt and human waste everywhere. After pressing himself up, he began checking his M16. Then something hard hit him between the shoulders. A third charge had just been thrown at him. Thompson rolled back into the relative safety of the stinking slit trench he had just exited.

Pvt. Michael Huff of Alpha's 3rd Platoon worked his way to the perimeter near Thompson as explosives went off all around. The concussion from one charge temporarily paralyzed Huff and knocked him out. He woke up in a foxhole with a baseball-sized chunk of meat missing from his neck. NVA soldiers were standing and talking over the foxhole, unaware that he was still alive. After the feeling in his extremities returned, Huff grabbed his M79 grenade launcher, leveled it between the shoulder blades of a retreating NVA soldier and squeezed the trigger.

Artillery commander Maynard, holding a 25-pound radio, was making his way toward 1st Sgt. Charles Marshall at LZ Peanut's fire direction center, which had controlled the artillery battery's firing before the ammo dump explosion ended the action there. As Maynard ran, small-arms fire was snapping through the air, and one round struck the radio, nearly forcing the lieutenant to drop it as he reeled backward. "Damn it, there goes the radio!" he thought, not realizing that the hunk of metal he carried had just saved him from a gruesome wound. When Maynard found Marshall, he asked if the sergeant had another radio that could be used to adjust the incoming illumination if necessary. "No, sir," Marshall replied, but added that 1st Lt. Ed Cattron, down the hill, might have one. Maynard decided to make a dash for Cattron's position. Crouching anxiously by the now-defunct fire direction center, Maynard waited for the next illumination round from LZ Snapper. After the flash of light, he sprinted 50 yards to Cattron's bunker, yelling "friendly, friendly." As he slid into the bunker, a winded Maynard could only say, "I hear you have an extra radio."

Instead of answering, Cattron motioned toward Maynard's abandoned howitzer positions. "I think there are [NVA] regulars out there," he blurted. Both officers watched dozens of uniformed NVA

soldiers swarming through the empty artillery gun pits. "They don't know we have contracted our perimeter," Cattron said. "Open that box and start rolling those grenades out there."

Up on the hill, Jordan was outside the battalion operations center being treated for a leg wound when 1st Lt. Charles Brown approached him. "Col. Jordan, our perimeter near the battery is breaking apart," Brown said, frantically. "I'm going to grab some men and try to fill in the gap." Receiving a nod of approval, Brown spun around and headed toward the fire direction center.

Rushing down the slope, Brown passed several soldiers, nearly lifting them up with one arm, and threw them in the direction of the encroaching NVA troops. "They're busting through down there," he shouted. "Plug up the hole!" Brown climbed on top of the fire direction center's roof, overlooking the abandoned battery position, and saw the enemy moving quickly up the hill. As he directed his men into firing positions, a piece of jagged metal struck his extended arm. Brown dropped to one knee but quickly grabbed his wound, steadied himself and continued to command his men, sending them to various positions to protect and tighten the base's collapsing perimeter.

All across LZ Peanuts, others were taking similarly frenzied actions to stop the NVA advance. Guenther was coordinating the adjustment of the western perimeter when a bullet ripped through the staff sergeant's chest. He slumped to his knees, lowered his head and died.

Meanwhile, Brown continued to run between the battalion operations center and the perimeter overlooking the abandoned battery. On one of his trips to the perimeter, he collided with an NVA sapper. The two foes wrestled to the ground, scratching and clawing at each other as they rolled downhill. Brown, a former high school wrestler, managed to work his hand up to the sapper's face and plunge his thumb into the man's eye. The sapper screamed in pain and pushed himself loose of the American's grip, escaping into the darkness.

Brown continued on to Cattron's bunker overlooking the battery and asked for a situation report. Cattron said North Vietnamese regulars and sappers were moving freely through the battery, trying to destroy the howitzers. "There are no friendlies between us and them," he added. It was roughly 4 a.m., just one hour before sunrise. Suddenly the already-heavy small-arms fire intensified. "They are making another push" Brown yelled.

Cattron pointed out enemy soldiers hiding behind jeeps about 50 yards away. Realizing the need for immediate action, Brown and Cattron charged the jeeps. Screaming, firing their M16s and throwing grenades, while satchel charges were thrown at them, they covered the 50 yards in a few seconds.

After several minutes of intense close-quarters fighting, Cattron shouted at Brown to pull back to the bunker. "I'm calling in Blue Max support," he said, a reference to the nickname for the rocket-armed helicopters of the 20th Field Artillery Regiment (Aerial Rocket), 1st Cavalry Division.

Cattron grabbed the remaining PRC-25 and radioed LZ Peanuts fire support liaison officer, Capt. Duke Wheeler of the 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery. "I need immediate Blue Max support on this east finger with the battery on it," Cattron said. "As you come in from the north, you will see a line of jeeps and trailers. Use the jeeps as your bearing and hose down the hill to the southeast. Bad guys all over that ridge."

With daylight still 30 minutes away, artillery officer 1st Lt. Jim Harris at LZ Snapper radioed battery commander Maynard on Peanuts with distressing news: "We are running low on illumination rounds. Do you copy?" Around 4:30 a.m., the Snapper crews fired their last illumination round and watched it drift across the valley until fizzling out. Harris exhaled audibly and hung his head in despair. Then he heard the distant hum of aircraft engines.

Over the radio came the call: "Peanuts Control, Peanuts Control, this is Spooky. We are coming on station. Where do you need us?" The twin engine Air Force Douglas AC-47 Spooky arrived overhead. The aircraft could drop powerful MK-24 flares—each able to produce brilliant illumination for up to three minutes—and was equipped with three 7.62 mm miniguns, each capable of firing 6,000 rounds minute.

While the AC-47's flares illuminated the attacking North Vietnamese hordes, the plane's deadly miniguns shredded the invaders. At a 2005 reunion, Harris recalled the dramatic moment Spooky arrived: "No Hollywood script could have been more dramatically written," he said. "At that instant... Spooky lit up the sky! The roar that erupted from LZ Snapper was like Lambeau Field [home of the Green Bay Packers] on a Sunday afternoon in October."

As sunlight reached LZ Peanuts, the sounds of war diminished and curious heads began to pop up from behind blast walls and foxholes to survey the wreckage of war strewn across the hill. The six men on the dangerously exposed listening post outside LZ Peanuts inspected their position and solemnly hiked back up the hill. Seven of their 11 trip flares had been triggered, and only one grenade was left between them.

The rest of Alpha Company began the grisly task of searching dead bodies and gathering weapons. Sleep -deprived and skittish from a night of intense fighting, most of the troops were on edge.

By 7 a.m., they had discovered 30 North Vietnamese bodies in and around the base, many blood trails in all directions and a substantial cache of weapons, including 15 AK-47 rifles, three B-40 rocket launchers, a radio and numerous satchel charges and grenades. It was clear the attack on LZ Peanuts had been a well-coordinated assault that had likely taken weeks to prepare.

As ground troops continued mop-up operations around the perimeter, a stream of medevac helicopters made several flights to evacuate the two dozen wounded. The injuries included burns, burst eardrums, shoulder wounds, broken legs, gunshot wounds and bayonet wounds. Numerous infantrymen with "relatively minor" wounds choose to remain alongside their comrades at the base.

The wounded soldiers were lifted off the hill by 6:30 a.m., and the task of moving the dead followed. As Wheeler, the fire support liaison officer, was helicoptered out, he looked down through the chopper's open doorway and saw a line of 11 poncho-covered American bodies near the helipad. Two hours later, the remaining infantrymen of the 1st Battalion learned that they would be flown off the landing zone, followed by the destroyed howitzers.

On May 6, the Americans destroyed their bunkers and left LZ Peanuts to the jungle. Two days later, most of the grunts in the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division were helicoptered to a location about 30 miles northeast of Peanuts and 5 miles south of the Demilitarized Zone to participate in a joint operation with the Marines. Although the fight for LZ Peanuts had been won, combat for the 1st Cavalry Division continued.

BY *JOHN MCGUIRE FROM FACEBOOK BLUE MAX GROUP PAGE*



THE BATTALION HEADQUARTERS ON LZ PEANUT INCLUDED AN OCTAGONAL TENT THAT WAS THE QUARTERS OF LT COL ZEKE JORDAN (BENNIE KOON)







THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
Capt Walter Egger USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
GSGT John J Grohman USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
1t Paul W. Bush USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
LCpl Stephen C Shannon USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger 1/44th Arty Dusters
Cpl Fergus J. Carroll USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 18 Jun 68	William Hotz Mike CO 3/4
Lt Col Ken Pipes USMC B Co 2/26 Passed Away	Dermott Barry Golf Co 2/26
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC A HQ 1/13 KIA 09 MAR 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Remembering All "Bastard Bravo" Marines and their families	William E. Carpenter Bravo Btry 1/13
Captain Bill Person USAF 553 3RD Recon Wing	Alex & Barbara Sadowski H&S CO 1/26
PFC Donald Saunders USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM KIA 04 March 1968	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
Sgt Donald Ray Chamblin USMC HQ BTRY COMM KIA 08 March 1968	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
William "Doc" Miller Sr USN Lima Co 3/26 Passed Away 11/6/17	S/Sgt Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C Btry 1/13
GYSGT Charles Perkins USMC DOW 17 May 1968	Barbara Eddowes Fiance
SSgt Karl E. Taylor USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 12/98/68	Stephen Jenkins C Co 1/26
PFC Roland T. Marshall USMC M CO 3/4 KIA 5/17/68	Will Griggs India Co 3/26
L/Cpl Philip Van Deusen USMC A/1/13 KIA 06/07/67	Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
Capt Daniel Coonan USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 10/08/68	Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG -11 1ST M AW
1Lt Thomas Reich USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 11/17 68	Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG -11 1ST M AW
Doug Ipson USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 9/15/68 LZ Margo	Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Steve Rienhart USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 09/16/68 LZ Margo	Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Nate White USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 05/06/68 Cam Lo	Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
All Members of Detachment A-101 Lang Vei & All who served at FOB-3	Lawrence Cooper CO C 5TH Special Forces
Major Earle Breeding USMC C/O ECHO CO 2/26 Hill 861A	The Men Of ECHO CO 2/26
All the men of HQ Btry 1/13 Who Gave Their Lives So We can Enjoy The freedom we have today	James Baker HQ Btry 1/13 26Th Marines
Cpl William E. Wyrosdic USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 10/08/68	John Laibinis SR. H CO 2/26 2ND PLT
Always remembering all those KIA HILL 689 27 June 1967	Clarence T. Anthony India CO 3/26
L/Cpl Adrian Brittle USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 9/21/68	Chester W. Nelson JR. India CO 3/26
2LT Donald Jacques USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Pietro Osimanti Bravo CO 1/26
CPL John Greene USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 04 July 1968	Johnny Moon Charlie CO 1/26 3RD SQD
SW-5 Edward Cody Adams USN CBMU-301 KIA 16 APR 68	Larry Kubley USN CBMU-301 (Seabee)
LCPL Frederick B. Link USMC C CO 1/9 KIA 3/1/68	Eric Bergland C CO 1/9
All Marines & Corpsman who served on Hill 861A in Jan/Feb & Mar of 1968	Lt Don Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A
All Marines KIA of Delta CO 1/26	John Finn Delta Co 1/26
All Marines 1/1 & 2/1 Hotel CO	Peter Hoban Hotel CO 2/1
DR John Magilligan, d. 29 Jan 3013,DR Ed Feldman d. 03 Oct 2017& DR James Finnegan . 13 Sep 2013 From Charlie Med	Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN
All who served at Khe Sanh	Ron Shuff LSU MTM Co. Maintenance Bn.
HN William A. Beyer "Willie" USN H&S Co 3/26 KIA 2/1/67	Pat B. Buckley Charlie CO 1/26
1LT John Ellis USMC Crash-Rescue Crew OIC KIA	Richard Takacs MABS-36-MAG-36 Crash-Rescue Unit
PFC David A. Cramer, USMC KIA 22 Feb 68	Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
PFC Leslie G. Aputen USMC KIA 15 May 68	Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
PFC Francis W. Lamon USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 17 Apr 68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1 REST IN PEACE
PFC William W. Lawrence USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 4/17 68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
PFC Charles T. Johnson USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
L/Cpl Darrel W. Cottrell USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Thomas Jack Pennington KIA 27 Jan 68 at "Mikes" Hill Mike CO 3/4	Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4

DONATION TO KHE SANH VETERANS STARTING IN AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2019

ADAMS, Harry J.	23 Jan 20	50.00	Check# 4003
ARCHER, Michael J.	01 Aug19	40.00	Check# 2040
BARBER, Michael F.	01 Dec19	500.00	Check# 1165
BATES, Roger G..	01 Nov19	50.00	Check# 5656
BAUSMAN, Edward B.	28 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 9352
BECK, Ralph A.	20 Oct 19	60.00	Check# 4659
BIOLSI, William P.	24 Jan 20	40.00	Check# 4198
BISSELL, Anthony	25 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 1659
BOAN, William S.	27 Jan 20	50.00	Check# 1426
BOWMAN, David J.	29 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 5832
BRONSTON, Martin D	16 Dec19	100.00	Check# 2456
CASEY, Maurice	16 Aug19	10.00	Check# 3311
CAUGHRON, Virgil S.	29 Dec 19	100.00	Check# 1350
CAVANAUGH, Carmelita	19 Sep19	50.00	Check# 2273
CHICOINE, M.A.	16 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 3887
CHIM, Alan	19 Sep19	50.00	Check# 2273
COOK, Michael H.	29 Oct 19	100.00	Check# 13349
COSNER, Leonard G.	04 Sep19	100.00	Check# 7267
DAKIN, William	29 Jan 20	50.00	Check# 1492
DESETA, Louis J.	09 Sep19	260.00	Check# 6018
DIGAETANO, John C.	01 Aug19	10.00	Check# 677
DUNCAN, Ken	15 Sep19	100.00	Check# 3992
EASTER, Harold	04 Sep19	100.00	Check# 6821
ESTES, Leo L.	15 Sep19	50.00	Check# 3406
FARRELL, Brian	01 Aug19	20.00	Check# 1377
FETTER, Charles H.	01 Aug19	10.00	Check# 727
FORD, Thomas	06 Sep19	250.00	Check3 5334
FOSMO, Harold D. Jr.	22 Sep19	200.00	Check# 2667
FOURNIER, Terry R.	06 Sep19	60.00	Check# 7663
GILLESPIE, Donald J.	01 Aug19	60.00	Check# 4062
GRAHAM, Floyd Jr.	01 Aug19	500.00	Check# 1575
GRIFFIN, Glenn T.	27 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 3166
HESTER, Larry	27 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 2071
HALL, Robert A.	06 Sep19	25.00	Check# 6034
HARBISON, James W	06 Sep 19	50.00	Check# 2481
HOLSCHER, Robert J.	26 Jan 20	50.00	Check# 17915
HOPWOOD, Harry E. III	10 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 2593
HUNTER, Dwight C.	12 Sep19	60.00	Check# 1173
HUNTER, Dwight C	25 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 1187
KEATING, Michael	01 Aug19	40.00	Check# 2441
KOLLMAN, Albert L.	01 Oct 19	40.00	Check# 4861
KORKOW, ken	28 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 10807
KORN, William J.	09 Sep19	200.00	Check# 7479
LEITH, Benjamin L.	09 Sep19	50.00	Check# 2888
LINDSAY, John R.	03 Sep19	400.00	Check# 1610
LUTHER, Lawrence A.	04 Sep19	100.00	Check# 1262
MAPEL, Randall D.	08 Jan 20	35.00	Check# 6533
MCCORMACK, John F	05 Sep19	200.00	Check# 1092
MCDANIEL, Terry L.	04 Sep19	100.00	Check# 1315
MCELROY, John W.	06 Sep19	200.00	Check# 3564
MERCADO, Saturno	01 Aug19	85.00	Check# 8462

MILLER, William S.	05 Feb 19	200.00	Check# 6696
MILLOCK, Carl P.	01Nov 19	10.00	Check# 4767
MORRISON, Sammy	12 Sep19	25.00	Check# 3407
MORRISON, Sammy	25 Jan 20	50.00	Check# 3465
NAZZARIO, Anthony	02 Sep19	50.00	Check$ 3362
NELSON, George J.	30 Nov19	250.00	Check# 6305
NEWSHAM, Robert G.	31Aug 19	50.00	Check# 1994
NUNN, John B .	01Nov 19	35.00	Check# 284
PEARSON, Scott G.	01 Aug19	55.00	Check# 6258
PETERSON, Roger M/GEN	28 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 2053
PROVENCIO, Ramon Jr.	06 Sep19	200.00	Check# 262
RAIT, Donald M	04 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 1276
RAIT, Donald M.	28 Jan 19	1,000.00	Check# 1286
RAYNER, Ronald	01 Oct 19	500.00	Check# 337
RIORDAN, Robert W.	06 Sep19	250.00	Check# 5266
ROBERTSON, William A.	10 Sep19	50.00	Check# 2099
ROSSON, Harold .	19 Sep19	250.00	Check# 8657
ROSSON, Harold	04 Feb 20	1,000.00	Check# 40118
ROWE, John F. JR	03 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 0984
RUSHFORTH, Toby	03 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 1417
SARGENT, Ralph F.	01 Aug19	50.00	Check#
SHUFF, Ronald	06 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 6658
SHUFF, Ronald	25 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 6695
B. LARKIN SPIVEY	16 Sep19	200.00	Check# 7840
SWETS, Fred	01 Aug19	60.00	Check# 1173
TORRES, Andres	27 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 8388
TOURTE, Craig W.	04 Jan 20	500.00	Check# 974
TROUP, Ed	01 Nov19	100.00	Check# 6245
TURNER, Russell D.	17 Sep19	250.00	Check# 5919
WELLS, Marshall R.	01 Oct 19	35.00	Check# 1076
WILLIAMS, Francis W.	29 Jan 20	200.00	Check# 9010
WILLIAMS, Thomas J.	03 Sep 19	290.00	Check# 7279
WITTLER, Dale E.	12 Sep19	25.00	Check# 5487
YOUMAN, Elwood W.	07 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 1584
ZEAL, Kenneth W.	06 Sep19	250.00	Check# 5003



THANKS A BUNCH



KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATION OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

1. The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited educational institutional as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post secondary curriculum.

2. Scholarship funds will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent , legal guardian or grandparent who is a paid-up member in good standing of KHE SANH VETERANS, INC., a 501 C (19) charitable organization.

3. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT APPLICANT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2020 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid up member (sponsor) of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (see member definition in the KSV by-laws). This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if the family member are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children and grandchildren of associate members are not eligible for this scholarship.

Information provided by each applicant on the attached forums will focus on the following qualities; proof of enrollment at an accredited educational institution, good grades, scholastic character, citizenship, school activities and a personal essay on educational and career goals.

A scholarship review committee will serve at the pleasure of the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. to review the application forms for completion and correctness. The KSVSF Chairman will provide scholarship financial report, a list of applicants and their KSV member sponsors and a summary to be presented to the membership at the annual reunion and for publication in RED CLAY newsletter.

NEW!! SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS (school year 2020 onward). NEW!!

APPLICANTS FOR SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS WILL RECEIVE A ONE-TIME-ONLY AWARD, REGARDLESS OF THEIR PRESENT YEAR IN SCHOOL. SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS AMOUNTS ARE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY DONATIONS TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION FROM KSV MEMBERS AND THE REUNION SILENT AUCTION. WE CAN NO LONGER SUPPORT MULTIPLE YEAR AWARDS. THIS IS THE DECISION OF A VOTE BY THE KSV BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT THE 2019 REUNION.

ALL AWARDS WILL BE EQUAL FOR EACH CERTIFIED APPLICANT AND WILL BE AWARDED UPON PROOF OF REGISTRATION FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL TERM AND SENT TO THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS ABOVE.

SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES AND PURPOSE

1. **The financial award should be used to defray cost of tuition, fees, books at the educational institution of the applicants choice.**

2. **The KSVSF Chairman and KSV Treasurer will send a check for the award amount to the selected applicants upon final approval of the KSV President.**

3. **Scholarship recipients will be notified of their award no later than the end of August of the upcoming school year applied for.**

4. **!!Scholarship applications sent to the KSVSF Chair MUST be post marked not later than MAY 1 of the school year applied for!!**

5. **KSV Scholarship recipients must maintain a standard of personal performance while at school that reflects positively upon the Khe Sanh Veterans' Association membership.**

6. **Scholastic Criteria for Award Consideration: 1). Attached "Official" Grade Point Transcript form the last school attended, 2). Completed Application Form, 3). Summaries of Scholastic Participation, Volunteer and Work Experiences, 4). A small photo of the applicant and, 5). Completed final page with applicant's signature and the KHE SANH VETERAN sponsor's signature.**

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. APPLICATION FORM

Date of Application_____

APPLICANT'S INFORMATION:(PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: Last_____ First_____ MI_____

Address: Street_____City_____State____ Zip_____

Home Phone: _____Cell_____Date of Birth _____

E-mail adress_____

KSV SPONSOR INFORMATION: (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member)

Name: Last_____First:_____

Relationship to Applicant:_____ Branch of Serice_____

Unit Served at Khe Sanh_____Dates Served There_____

Regular paid KSV member _____ Life KSV Member____Deceased KSV Life Member_____

KIA or MIA KSV Family Associate Member _____

SCHOOL INFORMATION: (School to be Attending)

School Name:_____

School Address: Street_____
City_____

State_____ Zip_____Phone Number_____

Intended Field of Study

_____

School Year to Be Funded: Freshman_____ Sophmore____Junior_____Senior_____

APPLICANT PERSONAL HISTORY

A). Applicant Volunteer Activities (Example: community, church, governmental, environmental, health, etc

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

School Extracurricular Activities: (examples) Athletics, Music, School Government, School Publications, Academic Honors & Achievements, Scouting, Counselor, etc..

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

C). Employment Experience: (examples) part/full time jobs during school year, military service, etc.

_____

_____

_____

_____

D). Final Mailing Packet Check List: (ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED FORMS)!!

***COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM (ABOVE)**

***COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT (FROM THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR)**

***SMALL PHOTO OF YOURSELF**

***PERSONAL ESSAY (250 -400 WORDS) TELLING YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS AND CAREER PLANS.**

***SIGNATURE PAGE FOR APPLICANT AND SPONSOR (BELOW)**

SIGNATURE PAGE: (TO BE INCLUDED IN PACKET)

I SWEAR THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE:

APPLICANT SIGNATURE:_____

ACTUAL SIGNATURE OF KHE SANH VETERAN PARENT OR GRANDPARENT SPONSOR:

_____

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO THE KHE SANH VETERANS SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

APPROVED: _____ **DAN FISHER COMMITTEE CHAIR**

APPROVED: _____ **RUSSELL TURNER KSV PRESIDENT**



FISHING



STAYING HEALTHY



KARTING



TEAM BUILDING



SHOOTING



MORE ACTIVITIES



FIREARMS SAFETY



CHILLIN






FARMALL










KHE SANH
77 DAYS - WE REMEMBER

ISSUE 99

RED CLAY

WINTER ISSUE 2020

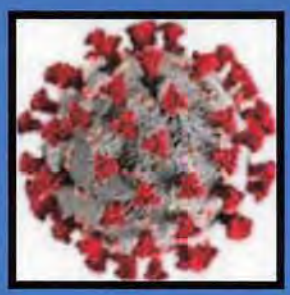



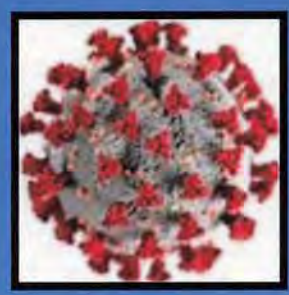

AS WE EXPERIENCED DURING THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH, WE WERE SURROUNDED ONCE AGAIN, THIS TIME BY AN INVISIBLE ENEMY, A VIRUS THAT IS NOT EASILY DEFEATED. A SILENT ADVERSARY THAT HAS REQUIRED US TO RELINQUISH MANY OF THOSE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES FOR WHICH WE HAVE ARDENTLY FOUGHT. I AM CONFIDENT WE WILL RECOVER FROM THIS PLAGUE AND GATHER AS WE DO EACH YEAR, ENABLING US TO VISIT WITH OUR "ETERNALLY BOUNDED" KHE SANH FAMILY, GOD BLESS AMERICA

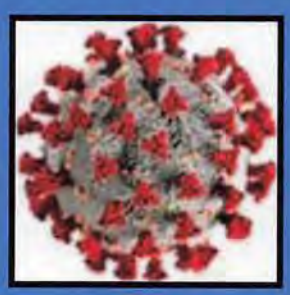



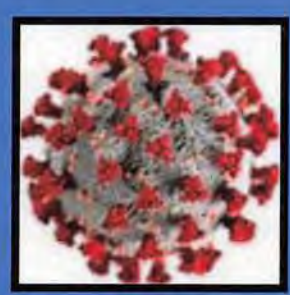

EVER HATED SO MUCH YOU WANTED TO KILL?
EVER BEEN SO HOPELESS YOU'VE WANTED TO DIE?
EVER HAD A CLOSE CALL AND YOU PROBABLY SHOULD BE DEAD?
IF SO, THESE LESSONS MIGHT BE FOR YOU.
"LESSONS LEARNED THE HARD WAY ABOUT COMBAT"
ARTICLE ON PAGES 89-92
BY KEN KORKOW BRAVO CO 1/26

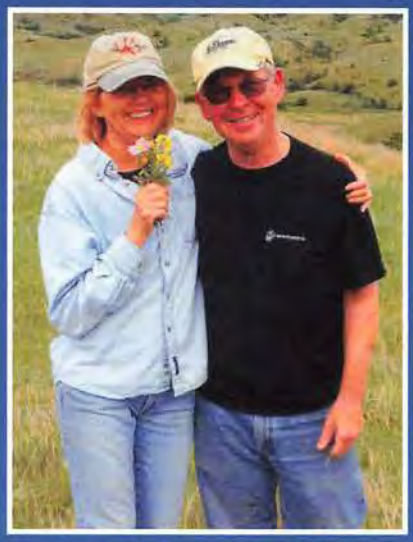

KEN & LIZ KORKOW





LESSONS LEARNED
THROUGH PAIN & REDEMPTION
HATRED * HOPELESSNESS* DEATH



GOD DOESN'T WASTE PAIN

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ken Korkow was raised in a ranching and rodeo family and entered the Marine Corps when he was 18. He lived through the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh which was the longest and most deadly battle of the Vietnam War. When blown up, the two fellow Marines that pulled him out both thought he wouldn't live. Later, a doctor said, You may as well accept this, you're never going to walk or use your hands again!" Ken married Liz while he was still in the military hospital and neither of them knew how much Ken had changed. After his medical discharge from the military the governor of his home state named a day in Ken's honor as the state's most highly decorated Vietnam Veteran. NAVY CROSS & PURPLE HEART



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40 YEARS AFTER SNIPER MARK ESSEX, MARINE PILOT IS PROUD HE HELPED STOP THE CARNAGE

MARINE PILOT WHO 'BORROWED' HELICOPTER TO END SNIPER SITUATION HAS DIED

Ramon Antonio Vargas, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune
Jan 6, 2013

Like most other residents of New Orleans, Marine helicopter pilot Charles H. "Chuck" Pitman watched the television in horror on Jan. 7, 1973, as authorities tried to stop a sniper or snipers who had invaded the Downtown Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge that morning and fatally shot seven people, including three police officers. Shots rang out from various spots in the 17-story hotel, making police think there was more than one gunman, but the cops eventually contained the killer or killers to the roof. Though cornered, whoever was on the hotel roof was out of the NOPD's reach. Disturbed, Pitman -- at the time a 37-year-old lieutenant colonel in charge of a Marine air unit stationed in Belle Chasse -- thought, "We've got to do something. Those people need help out there."

So Pitman did do something. He flew a Marine helicopter to the hotel on Loyola Avenue and helped police officers, some of them on board the chopper, kill 23-year-old Mark Essex, who investigators determined was the sole sniper. In doing so, however, Pitman placed his career with the Marines in jeopardy.



Four decades later, many New Orleanians are still thankful for Pitman's actions on the day Essex terrorized the city. "Without that helicopter and without his piloting, it would've been a lot worse," Moon Landrieu, New Orleans' mayor at the time, said recently. "The city owes him a debt of gratitude."

Antoine Saacks, a former police officer who boarded Pitman's copter that Sunday, said, "I always say the true heroes were Chuck and his crew, undoubtedly. I have a tremendous amount of respect for the man that's unwavering."

On the day he resolved to help the cops end the sniper's grip of terror on the city, Pitman ordered one of his subordinates to contact the New Orleans Police Department and offer the Marine air unit's help. An NOPD sergeant called back about 4 p.m. and accepted, asking for a helicopter with a searchlight.

Pitman, his co-pilot and two crew members immediately prepared to fly to the scene. However, in the rush to get there, Pitman had not gotten the high-level authorization necessary to undertake such a mission.

Though Pitman, along with the Coast Guard, did have standing permission to send helicopters to assist local responders' rescue efforts in case of a high-rise fire, such as the deadly one at the Rault Center on Nov. 29, 1972, six weeks earlier, there were no air rescues required at the hotel. Pitman recalled that on the day of the sniper, the Coast Guard didn't want to dispatch a helicopter to the Howard Johnson's because foggy weather and low visibility made flying dangerous.

So when Pitman flew his helicopter to the hotel with his crew, he exposed himself to a court-martial: He had deployed military personnel and resources to quell a civil matter, and he did not have permission to do so before taking off.

'I CAN'T DUKE IT OUT WITH HEAVY WEAPONS OR ANYTHING'

Entering the fight on that windy, frigid, rainy Sun-

day did not frighten Pitman. The combat veteran -- who was born in Chicago, grew up in an orphanage, moved to Wisconsin after being adopted and learned to fly by age 14 -- had joined the Marines in 1952.

He flew some 1,200 missions in the Vietnam War. His helicopters were shot down seven times, and he suffered a .50-caliber bullet wound to one of his legs.

"I enjoyed the excitement -- being in dangerous situations," Pitman said when asked why he volunteered to fly to the Howard Johnson's. "I didn't necessarily like killing anybody, but I liked being a part of the action. ... I was used to the sounds of battle, the fog of war."

Because of the poor flying conditions, Pitman could hover only slightly above the ground after departing



from Belle Chasse in a CH-46 Sea Knight, a twin rotor transport helicopter. He headed to the Mississippi River, tracked its course to the Crescent City Connection and then turned toward downtown, following the expressway. He landed the helicopter in a parking lot near City Hall and an under-construction stadium now known as the Mercedes-Benz Superdome.

To meet with NOPD Superintendent Clarence Giarrusso and get his instructions, Pitman had to walk into the Howard Johnson's lobby, where the command post had been set up. Pitman, stunned that the command post was in such a dangerous location, said the only reason he walked toward the hotel entrance was that he figured running might draw sniper fire.

Giarrusso asked Pitman if he had brought an armored helicopter. Pitman replied, "I'm not armored. I can't duke it out with heavy weapons or anything." Giarrusso then requested that Pitman use his helicopter to lift a 16,000-pound armored car to the top of the roof. Pitman, whose Sea Knight was unable to carry half that load, said, "I couldn't take that up on the best day of the year."

But Pitman agreed to fly a group of well-armed officers -- including Saacks, 26 at the time -- over the hotel to better see where the sniper was hiding. They would try to force the sniper out of his lair.

CONFRONTING THE SNIPER

During events chronicled by writer Chuck Hustmyre in an essay titled, "Under Attack: The New Orleans Police Department and the Howard Johnson's Hotel Sniper," Pitman approached the motor lodge by navigating between downtown high-rise buildings and sweeping in over the roof. Saacks remembers being impressed by Pitman's piloting skills.

"His maneuvering of that helicopter was unbelievable," Saacks, a former Marine, said almost 40 years later. "When you have someone like Chuck in the driver's seat, you feel confident in what you're doing. You know he's got your ass -- you're protected."

Pitman shone his searchlight on a roof cubicle where it had been reported that the gunman was lurking, but no one could see anything. Saacks and the other officers on board fired volley after volley, figuring that the gunman was hiding just inside the cubicle's metal door, leading to a stairway, or in either of two adjacent alcoves, which had cinderblock walls on three sides.

Pitman passed over the roof several times. Each time, Saacks blew holes in the cinderblock with his M-16 rifle. The sniper wasn't hurt, but whenever Pitman pulled the helicopter away to circle back, cops positioned in neighboring buildings said the sniper would run out of the cubicle and shoot at it. From time to time, bullets smacked the exterior of the copter.

The cops aboard the Sea Knight ran out of ammunition a couple of times, and Pitman had to land so they could reload. After one of those pit stops, the sniper hit the Sea Knight with gunfire but vanished when the helicopter began to pass over the hotel.

Pitman lingered over the roof and focused his searchlight on the cubicle as the cops blasted away. Saacks then realized how the sniper was able to hide so well: Whenever the helicopter approached, the sniper would apparently shimmy up a fire standpipe inside one of the alcoves, leaving him hidden from the officers' view.

The police on the helicopter then shot the pipe and split it open. Pitman began pulling away for another pass, taking the searchlight off the cubicle.

The gunman scrambled out to the roof to squeeze off a few more rounds at the helicopter. Pitman suddenly reversed course, reappearing over the hotel and scanning the roof with the searchlight. Suddenly, the light illuminated the gunman. He was several yards from the cover of the cubicle.

The sniper fired once at the helicopter. Pitman observed a flash and a red streak speeding toward him. "When he fired ... at me, the helicopter jumped," Pitman joked, explaining that he instinctively jerked back on his controls. The bullet struck a little bit above the cockpit, hitting the transmission casing.

Pitman steadied the helicopter and kept the searchlight on the sniper. Saacks, his colleagues in the helicopter and the officers in surrounding buildings emptied their weapons at the figure on the roof. The sniper collapsed and died. He was struck more than 200 times.

It was 9 p.m., about 10 hours after the hotel had come under attack, but it wasn't until the next day that police finally recovered the sniper's body and decided there were no other gunmen in the hotel or on the roof. Though officials concluded that Essex was a lone killer, even today many of those who worked to stop him believe that he had at least one accomplice.

COPS, HOTEL EMPLOYEES, GUESTS WERE AMONG VICTIMS

A native of Emporia, Kan., Essex had been discharged from the Navy because of unsuitability of character and behavior disorders. An African-American man, he was enraged about racism he experienced in the Navy. He sympathized with radical Black Panther politics, loathed cops and came to New Orleans to meet up with a like-minded friend.

Essex actually committed his first slayings on Dec. 31, 1972, when he shot police cadet Alfred Harrell Jr. at Central Lockup with a .44-caliber Magnum carbine, and later officer Edwin Hosli Sr., who was investigating a warehouse burglary alarm tripped by Essex at the corner of South Gayoso and Euphrosine streets. Harrell, Essex's only black victim, died immediately. Hosli, who was white, died two months later.

Essex eluded authorities for a week. Then, on the morning of Jan. 7, wielding his .44 carbine, he shot and wounded a grocer he surmised was helping the police, stole a car at gunpoint and drove to Howard Johnson's. He killed the hotel's general manager, W. Sherwood Collins; the assistant manager, Frank Schneider; and two guests, Dr. Robert Steagall and Betty Steagall, a Virginia couple who had been married just seven months.

Essex also killed a pair of NOPD officers, Phil Coleman and Paul Persigo, and the department's deputy superintendent, Louis Sirgo. In all, Essex had killed nine people and wounded 13 others on Dec.31, 1972, and Jan. 7, 1973.

There could have been many more victims had Pitman not gotten involved when he did, according to Moon Landrieu. "The fact that we had a helicopter gave us a tremendous advantage because we didn't know where (Essex) was on the roof. We suspected we would get the upper hand (with the helicopter), and we did," the former mayor said.

'Chuck put everything on the line'

Pitman soon learned that his actions could lead to a court-martial. But he said the issue was dropped after his commander sought out longtime U.S. Rep. F. Edward Hebert, a New Orleans Democrat and at the time the powerful chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. It also worked in Pitman's favor that he didn't cause more casualties by, for example, being shot down or crashing the Sea Knight into a building.

Saacks -- who later became the NOPD's deputy chief but was fired in 1994 because of allegations involving a private security enterprise he ran on the side -- said he will always admire Pitman for what he did to help the NOPD foil Essex. "Chuck put everything on the line -- not only his life, but his career," Saacks said.

Pitman was transferred out of New Orleans in June 1973. Seven years later, he was in charge of the helicopter crews that participated in Operation Eagle Claw, an attempt ordered by President Jimmy Carter to rescue 52 Americans being held hostage in Iran. The mission ended in disaster when a helicopter collided with a transport plane, killing eight American servicemen.

Pitman considers Eagle Claw one of the most difficult moments of his career. But better days were ahead for him. He became the Marine Corps' deputy chief of staff for aviation in 1987, and attained the rank of lieutenant general in 1988.

Pitman, who has two sons and two daughters, retired from the Marine Corps in 1990. Now 77, he lives in Pensacola Beach, Fla., with his wife. Among other things, he is a consultant for an aircraft maintenance company and advises a special weapons and tactics training group based in Weatherford, Texas.

During his nearly four decades in the Marines, he earned numerous honors, among them a Silver Star for valor, four Distinguished Flying Crosses, a Bronze Star with Combat "V," a Purple Heart and 65 air medals. Nonetheless, he says he is perhaps most proud of having served alongside the New Orleans police during their clash with Essex on one of the darkest days in the city's history, for which he was made an honorary NOPD captain on Nov. 8, 1991.

"I'm glad I was able to do it," Pitman, who has visited New Orleans countless times to celebrate Mardi Gras, said in Pensacola Beach this month. "It makes you feel good doing something good for the country, good for the city of New Orleans."

KSV IN THE NEWS

SPARTA VIETNAM VETS SPEAK TO PJ PLAYERS "MISS SAIGON" CAST

By TERESA SELLINGER
February 17, 2020 at 8:53 PM

Sparta Vietnam War Veterans Mayor Jerry Murphy, VFW Commander Peter Litchfield, and Doug Nobile shared their Vietnam War experiences Friday, February 7 with the Pope John Players, who will be portraying U.S. Marines and Vietnamese military members and civilians in their February production of "Miss Saigon " at Pope John XXIII Regional High School.

"We were very honored to have these brave men take the time to truly bring to life the experience of fighting for our country during the Vietnam War," says Social Studies Teacher and Theatre Director Jacquelyn Burt, whose own daughter is a U.S. Army Captain. "It's hard for teenagers today to imagine what it would have been like to be living life as a high school student one day, then enlist or be drafted and find themselves suddenly stationed in the jungles in Vietnam surrounded by enemy fire."

Sparta Mayor Jerry Murphy served in the U.S Marine Corps as a helicopter pilot and spoke of the difficulty of experiencing the deaths of fellow Marines: "Our helicopter and another took off on a flight through terrible fog and mist. They had trouble navigating and went down. Never returned. You expect to lose friends in war, but you can never truly be prepared for when it actually happens."

VFW Commander Peter Litchfield, U.S. Marine Corps, fought in the famous battle of Khe Sanh in which 6,000 US Marines held off 30,000 North Vietnamese Army fighters. Litchfield recounted, "We got off the plane and asked the guys leaving if they'd seen any action and they said, 'No, nothing.' I thought, 'Great, this is the place to be.' We were attacked and lost 150 Marines within the first 24 hours."

Doug Nobile a U.S. Army Purple Heart recipient, talked about getting shot while trying to save his best friend who'd been shot in the chest: "He didn't make it. I should have known he wouldn't. They had to medevac me out. The next day, my entire platoon was wiped out. In a way, my best friend saved my life."

In addition to speaking of the horrors they experienced during the Vietnam War and the hostile environment to which they returned in the United States, the Veterans spoke to the career and travel benefits of military service, the friendships formed, and the humor shared. Following speeches, the veterans and the Pope John Players "Miss Saigon" cast participated in a question-and-answer session. Select cast members then performed an a cappella rendition of



THE POPE JOHN PLAYERS "MISS SAIGON" CAST GATHERS AROUND VIETNAM VETERAN SPARTA MAYOR JERRY MURPHY, VFW COMMANDER PETER LITCHFIELD, AND DOUG NOBILE

"Miss Saigon" song "Bui Doi" at the request of Litchfield.

The Pope John Players are honored to perform the area regional high school premiere of "Miss Saigon," the challenging, Tony award-winning production by the "Les Miserables" team of Boublil and Schonberg that follows the lives and love stories of a Vietnamese orphan, two American GI's, an American girl and the sleazy club owner who manipulates them during the Vietnam War as Saigon falls. Based on the Puccini opera "Madame Butterfly," "Miss Saigon" comes from the production powerhouse of Cameron Mackintosh ("Phantom of the Opera," "Les Miserables" and "Cats.") "Miss Saigon" garnered 31 theatrical awards, has been performed in 25 countries and viewed by over 35 million people worldwide. Tickets cost $12. and are available at the door only. Show dates/times are as follows: Wednesday, Feb. 26: Senior citizen show: 3:30 p.m. (Complimentary Senior Dinner to follow. Senior citizens admitted free of charge on this date only); Thursday, Feb. 27: Opening night: 7 p.m.; Friday, Feb. 28: 7 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 29: Matinee: 2 p.m., closing night performance: 7 p.m. (Sunday, March 1: Snow date: Time TBD) For more information, visit www.popejohn.org/apps/pages/pjplayers.

Located at 28 Andover Road in Sparta, New Jersey, Pope John XXIII Regional High School is an 8th grade - 12th grade institution committed to the Catholic tradition of education. Guided by the belief that each child has unique gifts and is entitled to an excellent education, the Pope John community fosters its students' intellectual, spiritual and physical growth, and champions the importance of social responsibility. For additional information regarding Pope John XXIII Regional High School, visit www.popejohn.org or call the main office at (973) 729-6125.



THE POPE JOHN PLAYERS EXECUTIVE-COMMITTEE POSES WITH THEATRE DIRECTOR JACQUELYN BURT & VIETNAM VETERANS SPARTA MAYOR JERRY MURPHY, VFW COMMANDER PETER LITCHFIELD & DOUG NOBILE.

REMEMBERING



Remembering Navy HM2 Donald L. Rudd, 23, of Tecumseh, Michigan; assigned to H&S Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines; KIA on this day in 1969, Vietnam. You are Not Forgotten Brother.

FROM THE WEB SITE



This is Christmas of 1967 at Khe Sanh Viet Nam just a few of the guys of W/1/13 they gave us two Black Lable beers. This was made in 1967 at Khe Sanh some of the guys of W/1/13 the 4.2 mortars. Tall guy on left is Rutledge, next to him on right is Billy Hill then the other tall guy on right we call Slim. Bottom row left is Art Caudillo and I think the next one kneeling is Ballock in back far right is Walter Brown From Billy Hill from the other website.

I GET PICTURES



OUR FIGHTING SEABEES



PHOTO OF VIETNAM MARINE VETERANS & POLICE OFFICERS PHIL NUCHERENO WORKED WITH



PHOTO OF PHIL NUCHERENO WHEN HE SERVED THREE YEARS AS A UN COMMANDER IN CHARGE OF 155 POLICE OFFICERS FROM THE UNITED STATES & CANADA IN KOSOVO. THE VEHICLE SHOWN HAD ALL THE WINDOWS KNOCKED OUT AFTER A RIOT. (PHIL SHOWN ON LEFT)



PHIL & LYNN LOVING COUPLE



PHIL & LYNN'S GRADDAUGHTER





PHIL & LYNN'S SON
& GRAND KIDS



PHOTO OF PHIL & MARINE GUNNERY SERGEANT LEE ERMY FROM TV SERIES LOCK & LOAD AND MOTION PICTURE FULL METAL JACKET.

HE AND LEE COMPLETED IN THE NATIONAL M1 GARAND COMPETITION IN PHOENIX ABOUT SEVEN YEARS AGO. PHIL TOOK TWO BRONZE MEDALS IN THE 100 YARD OFF-HAND POSITION & THE 300 YARD PRONE POSITION.

LEE ERMY PRESENTED THE MEDALS TO PHIL AT THE AWARDS CEREMONY BECAUSE PHIL WAS A VETERAN OF THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH

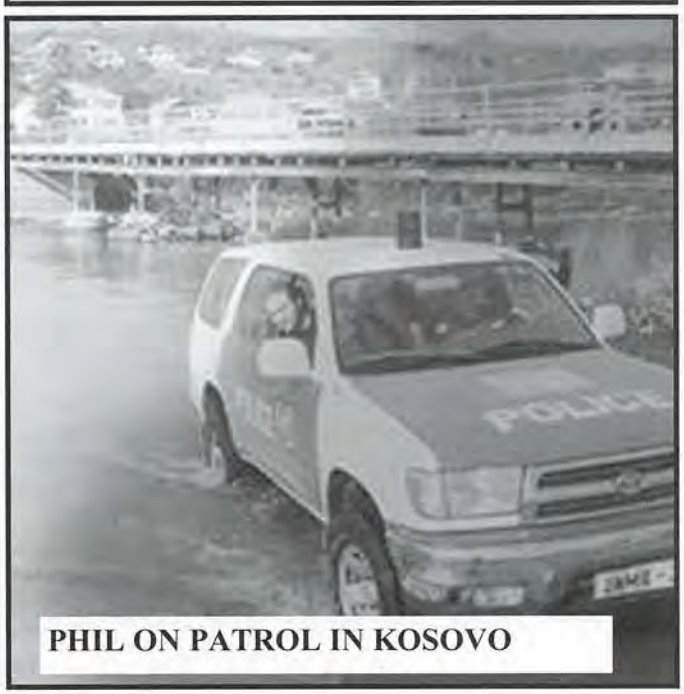

PHIL ON PATROL IN KOSOVO



LYNN & PHIL VISITING A VETERANS CEMETARY ON MEMORIAL DAY



PHIL & LYNN WITH THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS ROBERT NELLER, AT THE KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION IN WASHINGTON DC CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY BATTLE OF KHE SANH VIETNAM

SENTENCED TO LIFE FOR MURDER, HE HAS HELPED 1,500 FELLOW INMATES EARN DEGREES

By Alix Wall | March 22, 2018



JAMES A. WHITE AKA "SNEAKY," A LIFE -SENTENCE PRISONER WORKING TO GET EDUCATION FOR FELLOW INMATES

Prisoner C27182 walks toward me in his blue prison uniform at the California Medical Facility in Vacaville. James A. White Jr. is easy to spot, with his distinctive long white beard and hair — he recently cut off his ponytail to donate to Locks of Love — and is something of a legend in the state penal system, where he has been locked up for 37 years serving life without parole for murder.
It has not been time wasted.

White is nearly 80, a highly decorated Jewish Vietnam vet, and the person credited with establishing a college education program at Ironwood State Prison, allowing inmates to work toward an associate's degree while behind bars. Some 1,500 Ironwood prisoners have graduated from the program since its start in 2001, a personal achievement that many of them never thought possible.

"In my 22 years in the Department of Corrections, I've never seen such a beneficial program as this one," said Bill Hobbs, a correctional counselor who worked closely with White in launching the college program and other initiatives benefiting the incarcerated at the Riverside County facility. Hobbs recalled happy parents and grandparents of the inmates attending graduation ceremonies, thrilled about their son or grandson being the first in the family to get a college degree.

White, who did not finish college himself, grew up in a mostly kosher Jewish home and still orders kosher meals in prison, wears a kippah and takes advantage of whatever Jewish life is available. He was one of the few Jewish prisoners during his 20 years at Ironwood, and both Jewish chaplains, Rabbi Yonoson Denebeim and his successor, Rabbi Mendel Kessler, got to know him very well.

Denebeim said White made contact with him as soon as he was transferred to Ironwood and they remained close until Denebeim retired four years ago. White calls him "my rabbi."
"Jim was rough around the edges," said Denebeim. "Almost his entire adult life was either in the mili-



JAMES A. WHITE IN SUMMER 1968 ON LEAVE FROM VIETNAM, WITH HIS SON FROM A PREVIOUS MARRIAGE

tary or in prison, and yet he possessed a depth of character and a level of integrity, maturity and vision that other prisoners I met don't necessarily exhibit.

"He has a genuine concern about other inmates, and his desire to assist those who were willing to put in the effort to improve the quality of their lives went far beyond the prison system," he said. "That they could then go out into the world and make something of themselves was very important to him."

The Ironwood program was groundbreaking when it was created. Educational options for inmates began to expand with the 2014 passage of state Senate bill 1391, which cleared the way for face-to-face

college instruction in prisons, and the 2015 decision by the federal government to offer Pell grants to eligible inmates. Today nearly two dozen community colleges are providing instruction to 7,000 inmates in 34 prisons, according to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, which noted that education is key to preparing inmates for life outside the walls.

It also helps prevent recidivism. A 2013 study by the Rand Corp. found that inmates who participated in educational programs were 43 percent less likely to return to prison within three years than those who did not participate. The study also found that every dollar invested in prison education programs saved nearly $5 on later incarceration costs.

In a 2014 TEDx talk, White spoke to the Ironwood program's early success, reporting that of the 53 inmates enrolled the first year, all but one had graduated and very few had returned to prison a decade later. Statewide, the overall recidivism rate is as high as 65 percent, according to a study by Princeton University.

"We have a lot of people who are doing really important work in our prisons; he's just been doing it for a very long time," said Krissi Khokhobashvili, a spokeswoman at the California Department of Corrections in Sacramento. "Our prison system was very different 17 years ago, so to be doing that work at that time, there were a lot of challenges. He definitely helped pave the way for the work that's still being done today."

White has launched several other programs to help inmates use their time in prison more productively. He's started veterans organizations open to both inmates and staff and has raised $350,000 over the years for various charities, all while serving his sentence. It is an incredible sum considering that the fundraising events have been limited to walkathons around the prison yard and pizza sales.

He's also put effort into improving himself. He keeps up with politics, has taken many college courses over the years, and says he is a voracious reader and subscribes to several magazines, including Smithsonian and Mother Earth News. On the day we met he was reading a book about King Henry VIII.

He has written a memoir, self-published and available on Amazon, called "Laotian Highway Patrol," which some guards have bought and asked him to autograph.

With all the good White has done, the two rabbis and others who know him believe that he has paid for his crime — one they argue was unfairly prosecuted and deserved a more lenient sentence — and should be allowed to live out the rest of his life in freedom.

"For me, the question is not *should* he be released, it's how can it be justified that he's still inside?" asked Kessler, a Chabad rabbi and former prison chaplain who got to know White at Ironwood.

"I've been on this case for almost 40 years and I am still holding out hope," said Floyd "Shad" Meshad, a fellow Vietnam vet and founder of the Los Angeles-based National Veterans Foundation, who met White when he spoke to a group of veterans in prison and has been advocating for his release ever since. "This one baffles me more than any other. Here's a guy who has put education in the largest prison system in the country and raised $350,000 for charity from prison, but [he is] locked up for life."

On a Sunday in January, I drove the 50 miles to Vacaville, where White was recently transferred. Visiting hours are from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, but he attends Shabbat services Saturday mornings, so we agreed I would come on a Sunday.

White's prison record permits him to sit outside in the courtyard during visits, with minimal supervision, but visitors can bring in almost nothing — no phones or recording devices, no pen or paper. All I could do was listen as White spent four hours telling his life story. Later, in the parking lot, I scribbled everything I could remember on a pad of paper, and then verified the facts and quotes in a series of 15-minute phone calls (the maximum time allowed) over the next few weeks.

James White was born in London in 1939 or 1940, which makes him 77 or 78 now. The details about his early life are vague. He doesn't know his birth name, or anything about his birth parents. He was adopted by James and Margaret White, a wealthy Jewish couple in Connecticut who later moved to Texas. They sent him to Wales for boarding school for much of his education.

Though his parents kept a "relatively kosher home," White said, their Judaism consisted mostly of "writing checks." He believes his father, who was born in Europe, chose to have nothing to do with his religion because of the anti-Semitism he had experi-



FLOYD "SHAD" MESHAD (CENTER) AND GERONIMO PRATT AT SAN QUENTIN PRISON IN 1988, WHERE WHITE CO-FOUNDED A VETERANS GROUP

enced. But young White always showed an interest and would have his parents drop him off at synagogue.

After three years of college at Texas A&M, White joined the military. He served 10 years in the Army and the Marines, earning the rank of sergeant, with four tours in Vietnam. He was awarded numerous medals but would not elaborate on how he earned them. His friend and fellow vet John "Crusty" Garrison, who served with him in Vietnam, said he got the Distinguished Flying Cross for saving the lives of crew members on the aircraft he was flying. The citation noted his "uncommon courage, bold initiative and selfless devotion to duty at great personal risk." He was later awarded three silver stars.

Vietnam was where White earned his nickname, Sneaky, for sneaking across a field filled with landmines unharmed. The nickname sticks to this day.

By 1972, White was out of the military. Without a college degree, and in the middle of a recession and widespread anti-war sentiment, he said, "not a lot of people wanted to hire a Vietnam vet." He supported himself doing odd jobs, and in 1975 went to Southern California for construction work. It was there that he spotted a woman watering her lawn and said it was "love at first sight." He and Nancy Napoli married in 1978 and settled in Sunnymead, near Riverside.

She had been married twice before. According to White, Napoli's second husband had been abusive and violent toward her. Now he began threatening White and Napoli, ignored a restraining order and then molested one of his former stepdaughters. That was the last straw for White, who went to the man's office soon after, shooting and killing him.

White turned himself in as soon as he heard the police were looking for him. "I didn't think about the consequences at all. I was angry and fed up and wasn't looking at the ramifications. I had to stop the problem as I saw it."

Although White admits to his crime, it occurred at a time when post-traumatic stress disorder had just been introduced into the DSM, or Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, and it was still highly controversial. He was later diagnosed with PTSD, he said, but he has always felt it was a sign of weakness, and the issue never came up at his trial.

"Since I've been in prison I've gone through a PTSD class," White said. "I haven't gotten over it,



SHAD MESHAD DISPLAYS WHITE'S MILITARY MEDALS IN HIS OFFICE AS A REMINDER OF HIS HEROISM. (PHOTO/ COURTESY SHAD MESHAD)

but I understand some of why I feel the way I do.

I'm not going to say I've whipped it because you don't get over it, but it's impossible to forget all the Vietnam stuff that I carry."

"With what we now know about PTSD, he never would have gotten this kind of sentence today," said Meshad, who has served as an expert witness in numerous trials for vets with PTSD. "When it came to my peers in Vietnam, we became trained killers taught to search out and destroy the enemy, and they didn't de-tune us when we came back."

In 1981 White was sentenced to life without parole. He spent several years at Folsom State Prison, six years at San Quentin, seven years at Solano State Prison, and then was incarcerated at Ironwood for nearly 20 years before being transferred to Vacaville in the summer of 2017.

By all accounts, White has been a model prisoner. In Folsom, he said, he saved the lives of two prisoners who badly maimed themselves in the license plate pressing machine, administering tourniquets until medical assistance arrived.

In San Quentin, after hearing rumors of a pending attack by inmates, he intervened and put himself between a guard and the inmates who were planning to stab him. The guard later said that White had saved his life.

"I took a life and it's affected me ever since, so I'm not going to watch someone else lose their life if I can help it," White said.

Also in San Quentin, he teamed up with Black Panther Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt and started his first veterans organization for staff and inmates in the late '80s.

The vets "asked me to approve baseball hats with a veteran's insignia, and they proudly wore them to the mess hall," said Steve Cambra, who was chief deputy warden at the time and a vet himself. "San Quentin had always had a history of racial segregation, but all races joined the vets' group, and they'd have their hats on and eat together. As an administrator, I found it very healthy that for the first time ever, different races were eating together in the mess hall. It broke that barrier for a bit."

Soon after his arrival at Ironwood, White first started thinking about setting up a college degree program. He had read about a study from McGill University showing a significantly lower recidivism rate for those who leave prison with an education.



JAN. 2016 WAS THE LAST TIME WHITE SAW HIS WIFE, NANCY, BEFORE SHE DIED IN MAY, 2017.

He had already started a veterans group in the prison, as well as chapters of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. "Over 90 percent of inmates enter with some sort of drug or alcohol problem," he said, though he was not among them. "I got to be pretty good with paperwork and understood what needed to happen to get these groups started, and I knew they'd be useful to people."

I'M NOT GOING TO WATCH SOMEONE ELSE LOSE THEIR LIFE IF I CAN HELP IT.

After he got the go-ahead on the college program, he started evaluating applicants. "I wouldn't let them in if they were screwing up on the yard," White said. "I had to see the lightbulb come on, for them to say: 'I want to change my life and I need the tools to do it.' I'd then say 'I'll give you the tools, but then it's up to you.'" He used skills he'd learned in Breaking Barriers, a program that helps inmates understand "why you screwed up, and … change your motivational input to make good choices."

Hobbs worked closely with White. "We were very selective as to who we put in the program as we wanted to be sure that they succeeded and that the program succeeded," said Hobbs. "We took the

cream of the crop. When the head of the Playboy gang wanted in, [White] convinced me we should let him in. I wasn't sure, I thought it was a radical move, but he convinced me. For those two years, we had not one incident with a Playboy gang member in the yard."

The college program also created tutoring opportunities for graduates, like Julio Acosta, who tutored his fellow Ironwood inmates in math for five years before his release in 2013. Acosta is now obtaining his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at CSU Northridge.

Acosta was 18 when he was convicted of two second-degree murders and received a 30-years-to-life sentence. He said he signed up for the college program when it was brand new, mostly to please his mother. He had already earned his GED in prison.
"At first I thought it was a joke," he said, and when he first met White, "the old guy with the white beard that started it," he thought of him as Gandalf from "Lord of the Rings."

But now he sees just how much the college degree was worth. "If not for that degree, I don't know what I'd be doing," he said. "I'm sure I'd be working, but would be very unhappy as there's not much open to you straight out of prison. But this college degree opened up doors right when I got to Northridge. They said 'Your degree is good, we'll transfer your credits; you can start as a junior.'"

He said the strict ethnic segregation in prisons would have prevented him from ever socializing with White, but he got to know him in the veterans group, and over time White became not only a mentor but a grandfatherly figure to him.

"He gave me a sense of community and taught me about what it means to have community," said Acosta. "In prison, it's every man for himself, and everyone thinks so selfishly, but he taught me to start thinking beyond myself, and to think about helping others. He said to me, 'If you ever get out someday, you'll want to be a good citizen, and that starts today.'"

White's influence has reached way beyond the prison walls, in part because of his exposure on television and the internet. Danielle Walker of Sacramento came across White in the National Geographic program "Prison Fight: Ironwood State Prison California Lockdown" when she was taking a sociology course at a community college. She had come from a very unstable home and had been convicted of a DUI.

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"I was watching all kinds of documentaries as part of learning about the sociology of criminology and addiction when I came across the documentary with Mr. White in it," she said. "I was in my mid-to-late 20s and had already been through so much. My self-confidence was so low. I wondered who will hire me with a criminal record, but when I saw what he was doing in prison, I realized here was someone in a way worse position and was still finding hope in helping others get an education."

Walker wrote to White at Ironwood and shared her story, and he began counseling her through letters and phone calls. They continued communicating for several years until he got transferred to Vacaville, which is when they finally met in person.

Walker recently graduated from CSU Sacramento and is considering a master's program in social work. She says White's guidance was invaluable to her at a time when her family and friends weren't able to be of any support.

"I could rely on him to tell me what I needed to do and guide me in the right direction," she said. "He was a friend when I didn't have those kinds of friends. He was a mentor who taught me that no matter what your circumstances are, you can make it a priority in your life to give back."

Despite this kind of testimony from all corners, and a wide circle of supporters advocating for his release, White has been unsuccessful in his appeals. He even petitioned Gov. Jerry Brown for a pardon (and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger before him), to no avail.

Rabbis Denebeim and Kessler, Meshad of the veterans foundation, prison counselor Hobbs and White's friend Garrison all expressed their frustration at the fact that someone who in their eyes has not only paid for his crime but so clearly poses no danger may well spend the rest of his life behind bars. All have been active on his behalf, in some way or other, trying to bring attention to his story.

Denebeim said every day White lives with the pain of committing a murder, a kind of self-reflection the rabbi didn't often see in prison.

"He's chosen to live with that pain day in and day out, which is not something you find every day. To live with it is very painful, but to say 'I'm going to hold onto it so I hold on to my humanity' is quite exceptional. I met a few exceptional people in prison but not on that level."

White said that at one time he held out more hope that he would be released. His wife, who stayed with him to the end, had dementia in her final years and he expressed great sorrow about not being able to care for her. Napoli died last August, and White got teary every time her name came up.

"When I can't sleep at night, that's what I think about," he said. "I think about how much I failed her when she needed me most."

If he were to be released early, he said, he would work for Meshad for $1 a year (for insurance purposes) and then eventually live off the grid (he's been reading up on solar energy) in eastern Washington, near his friend Garrison, and plant a garden, maybe have some chickens and other animals.

"My hand is not out," White said. "I'm not looking for anything. I just want people to know that even in prison we can do mitzvahs and do something good for society. Just because a person commits a crime, it doesn't mean that he or she is no longer a worthy person."

Adds Denebeim, "According to authentic Jewish thought, a prisoner is only a prisoner in his mind. I truly believe that the Creator puts us where we need to be where we can affect others and it's not by accident, but there's a divine purpose for him being in prison, to be able to affect a quality of life for those he encounters.



Two fans: Danielle Walker, who reached out to White for life advice, and Julio Acosta, who got a college degree in prison and is now enrolled at CSU, Northridge

"As depressing as the walls and barbed wire can be, Jim embraced every day as a way to make a difference."



Alix Wall is a contributing editor to J. She is also the founder of the Illuminoshi: The Not-So-Secret Society of Bay Area Jewish Food Professionals and is writer/producer of a documentary-in-progress called "The Lonely Child."



TAKEN IN THE ARVN TRENCHES IN FRONT OF BRAVO CO



BILL LATOUR WITH JUDY EISCHENS LATOUR & FRIENDS AT THE ORIGINAL OYSTER HOUSE JOAN SPELMANN SCHMIT

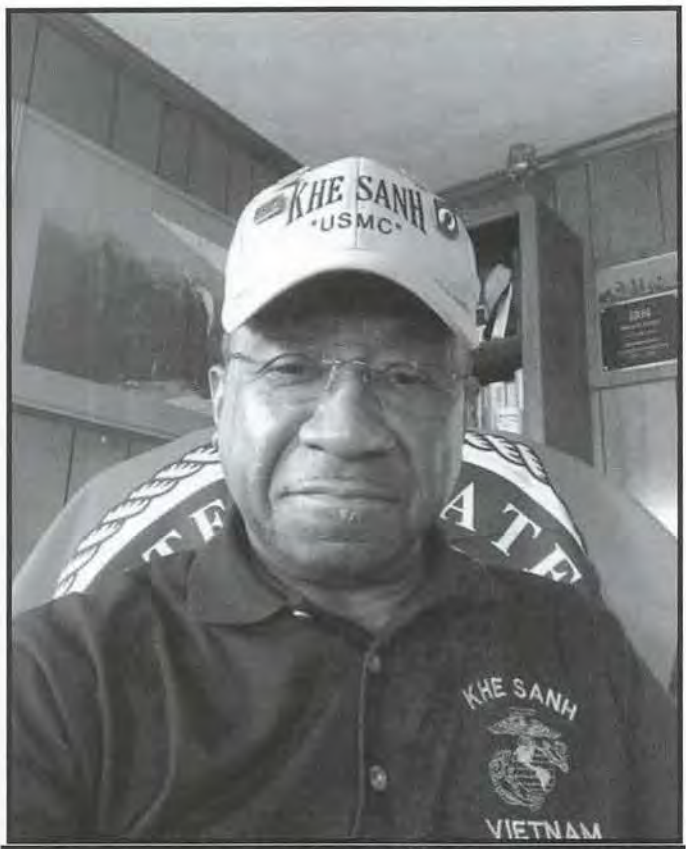

ONE OF THE REASONS I DO NOT MISS THE KSV ANNUAL REUNIONS, MY FRIEND MILTON JONES WHO ALWAYS HAS A SMILE ON HIS FACE AND WILL ALWAYS BRING JOY NO MATTER WHAT STATE OF MIND YOU ARE IN.



B BTRY 1/13

As



Louis & Sandi Reyes Visited with the President, Vice president & Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps



Thursday night we had dinner at the home of Master gunnery sergeant John Lewis, USMC ret. His brother Eddie, a former USMC SSgt, was there too,. Great night.

History of Oscar Company

Combined Action Company Oscar
III CAG, III MAF
Khe Sanh, RVN
1967 - 1968

noted in the introduction, this history is only an outline. It is told mainly from my own memories, and those of a handful of other Oscar company men, as well as official records. Unfortunately, my memory is not what it used to be, and I was not present for all



A rare photo (perhaps the only one extant) of an entire Combined Action Company all together. (You can help by identifying yourself and your friends1) I am on the front row, extreme right, kneeling with M-16, helmet, and flak jacket. Doc Roberts is top row, second from the right, minus helmet, with glasses.) This photo was taken by a Bru with Doc Roberts camera just before the big sweep made in October 1967 . Photo Courtesy of DOC John Roberts

the events recounted here Therefore there is much more to be written that I cannot write alone. I hope that all of you who were there will help fill in the details .

There will be a more complete version available to members in the near future. I will also be putting personal recollections in the section entitled "In their own words" Beneath this heading on the left sidebar menu). You may E-mail these to me, write, call or send a tape cassette or CD with your stories, or add them to the comments page on this site. I will edit them for you if desired. My personal first choice would be either Email or submitted as comments via this site, that way they are already digitalized. However, I will accept calls, tapes, letters (if legible) etc, if necessary.

NOTE: Since some of the events in this narrative occurred before or after my tour while I was hospitalized, I can only vouch for the verity of those events I actually witnessed and participated in. Even then, one's own subjective experience and perception of events can vary greatly from another person's. Also some of the things were written at or near the time they occurred, others years later - and memory can be deceitful!

Events I did not participate in directly are compiled from a number of sources - official records where available, and oral or written accounts from participants, both contemporary and later.

The official records are often subject to the usual errata an / or "official" point of view, and the personal statements were, like mine, sometimes made years later, and in any case, are colored by the individual's experience, perception, and memory.

However, despite these caveats, this is as truthful and accurate an account as I am able to present, and one that has rarely been presented. In truth, it is long overdue, because except for Ray Stubbe and a few others, this chapter of history has been almost completely ignored.

FOUNDATION

In February 1967, the Narrative Summary of the HQ 3rd Mar Div (Rein) notes the establishment of Sub Unit # 5 at Khe Sanh. This date corresponds to the establishment of Oscar Company.

The company eventually consisted of the HQ unit and 3 CAPs. HQ was combined with CAP Oscar 1 in "downtown" Khe Sanh village. HQ and 0-1 formed a "double CAP" - 2 CAP plts + 2 Plts of the 915th Regional Force Co. (RVN). There were also,4 US Army advisors for a total of approx. 178 men.

Outlying units were Oscar 2, on the north side of Hwy. 9 at the western end of the village, and CAP Oscar 3, assigned to Ta Cong Village in Khe Sanh Valley. (This CAP was originally located on the South side of QL-9 appx 800 meters south of the west end of the main Khe Sanh Airfield.)

Originally, the unit seems to have been commanded by a sergeant, whose name have been unable to find. 1st LT (later CPT) William T. Sermeus arrived to take command sometime in February 1967. He was in command when the late Raymond Gray arrived in February 1967. 1st LT Sermeus picked him up, along with two men whom Ray described as "CIA" at KSCB. They rode in a Mighty Mite, (M422/Al, a field utility vehicle somewhat like a jeep). They visited CAP 0-3, en route to CAP 0-1.

EARLY TRAGEDY

LT Sermeus and Ray later traveled back to 0-3, where the LT issued orders to clear a "friendly" mine field. The NCOIC complied, though with serious reservations, as there was no map of the field.

On June 14th, CPL Albers (see in memoriam) lost both legs removing mines. Ray said that the word came while LT Sermeus was out on patrol with them. LT Sermeus was described as being "terribly shaken" by the news. Ray described the sergeant at 0-3 as extremely distraught as he had been close to the man. (According to the official reports, there was another man injured as well, but I cannot find a record of him, or his name. Does anyone have that Information?)

CAP 0-3 LOSES A PATROL

There was an NVA rocket and mortar attack on the base just after midnight on June 27th, 1967. A patrol from 0-3 was sent to investigate suspected rocket and mortar launch sites spotted by observers. The patrol members included LCPL Francisco Alberto Mazariegos, CPL Dennis Alfred O'Connor, CPL James Merrill

Shepard, Jr., and LCPL Charles Aaron Lynch of Oscar-1, who was along because he had been visiting his friends at 0-3.

They launched at 0830, and about 1230 had reached the top of Hill 689, where they were ambushed, receiving heavy enemy fire, including rockets and automatic weapons. They Immediately sustained casualties, some hit trying to reach comrades. An artillery mission was called in, but was nearly on top of their position. The survivors were unable to reach the KIA and wounded, except for one WIA who died enroute to the camp. After the artillery fire, two men attempted to sweep the hill for friendly WIA and KIA, but were driven back. The remains of the patrol were forced to retreat, leaving two Marines and one Bru PF on the hill, status MIA. The survivors fell back to their compound, where elements of the other CAPs were mustering.

A rescue force was almost immediately mounted by the remainder of CAP-3 and the other CAPs, who had just completed a grueling patrol, but was repulsed by the NVA, who were apparently well dug in and in force. India and Lima company 3/26 came to relieve CAP and try to dislodge the enemy. They assaulted the hill, and lost a number of officers, NCOs and enlisted men including. Lima CO CAPT Bynum and LT Allen of India's First Platoon, all KIA, and a substantial number of WIA. Although they eventually gained the hill, It took several days and a ferocious air and artillery barrage to shift the determined enemy.

LT Sermeus was replaced by (I believe) CPT Haines (does anyone know his full name and the time frame? I am working on getting the chronology right), who was in turn replaced by lST LT Ernest Elmore. (Again, does anyone know the time frame?)

During this period, things were relatively quiet after the ambush, despite the build-up that was going on in the area. Patrols, LPs (listening posts) and ambushes were being run, and some contact was made.

I arrived at 0-2 in late September of 1967, and found things were rather calmer than I had expected them to be. I was new to scouting and patrolling, having been assigned as an admin man and later to FDC with HQ 3/12, but I remembered the basic infantry concepts and the men who had been there were quick to teach me the ropes. In our unit, CPL Joe Potter and others gave me valuable training on how to operate in the bush.

WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

Of course, as the FNG, I got to hump the radio. As I recall, these were mostly the older PRC-10s, which were fairly useless unless you were in line of sight of a tower or relay, or on top of a hill. They were old, cranky, heavy, and much of the time they were malfunctioning.

We were originally armed with the M-14, but we soon received the M-16. I had a very worn XM16El. (I have since been told that the X stands for "experimental - this would have been a prototype model. How and why it was in the field in combat Is beyond my comprehension.)

I was very sorry to lose my M-14, because despite the weight, it always functioned. The M-16 was very subject to jamming, especially the old pieces of junk we were issued. Most of us were in the habit of taping an assembled bore punch (cleaning) rod to the side of the stock to facilitate clearing the jams.

I have had this discussion with many troops, Marine and Army, and although some tolerated or even liked the weapon, the bulk of the men I knew who used them in combat didn't. The ones who did were usually armed with the newer "improved" versions, which had addressed at least some of the malfunction Issues the weapon had.

I soon came to cordially and deeply hate mine, and "acquired" a .45 (with 4 magazines) and a sack of grenades. At least [knew these would sustain me when the inevitable jam occurred.

I think that I can say without fear of contradiction that the "pucker factor" • ever present in combat - is at an all-time peak when your weapons fail to function. (Of course, as one of Murphy's Laws of Combat remind us; "Never forget that your weapons were made by the lowest bidder.")

I think the incident depicted below is a fairly typical example of a night combat encounter· often, both sides would come upon one another totally unaware which could lead to disastrous results. I recently spoke to a former CAP com-

mander in another group who recounted an ambush that resulted in four US Army troops being killed - because the Army operational commander had earlier refused the CAP's request for well-defined operational areas and joint planning. Fortunately for us, there were no US patrols operating in our AOR the night of this encounter.)

FIREFIGHT NEAR 0-2

I was on point, and heard the enemy before they detected us. (I couldn't see anything - It was in part of the Poilane plantation to the southwest of our compound and as black as pitch. Fortunately, my hearing was much better in those days.) As I recall, LCPL Gullickson (aka "Gully") was leading the patrol, and he came quietly up as I halted the patrol. I indicated the apparent direction of the enemy. He nodded and prepared his favorite trick - an air burst with a grenade. Pulling the pin, he popped the spoon and held the thing for what seemed an interminable time - then he let fly. It burst in the area we believed them to be in, and we all opened up with everything we had. The enemy was apparently as surprised as we were, and may have been stunned and perhaps wounded by the airburst and heavy volume of fire.

They returned sporadic fire at first, but got their act together and soon were putting out a moderate volume of fire In a matter of minutes, ALL the M-16s had jammed - if the Bru hadn't been armed with M-ls and a BAR and I hadn't had my .45 and grenades, the enemy might have waxed us. However, the Bru quickly went through their meagre supply of ammo. (They were issued 90 rounds a month, as I recall, supplemented by us as possible.)

The BAR man was a small but sturdy man we called 'Popeye" because (as I recall), his Bru name sounded similar to that of the cartoon sailor, he had a bit of a squint, and he smoked a small pipe.

(The Browning Automatic Rifle, a .30 caliber fully automatic weapon of WW II and Korean vintage that, as the name implies, was something of a cross between a machine gun and a rifle. It is large and heavy, with a heavy recoil, but he still managed to control it and keep putting out rounds!)

Finally, "Popeye" and I were the only ones still firing, though some of the others were still throwing grenades.

As it was, we beat a fighting retreat to the road, in reverse order of our entry, with Popeye and me in the rear, popping rounds off in the general direction of the foe. Once on the , we hadn't gotten very far from camp when the action occurred, and they came running!

However, the enemy, whether from their own losses, orders, or just prudence had already decamped. We found little evidence of their presence the next day when we "swept" the area - they typically left a very tidy battle-ground, both because they could ill spare the equipment, and because they wanted to prevent us from gathering information on them.

(Does anyone remember this incident, and who else was on this patrol and the reaction force?)

(Just for the record, I have had many proad, we regrouped, and started moving back towards camp, awaiting the reactionary force that soon came pounding out in support - fortunately people tell me the same sort of story. As for those who have said; "They just have to be cleaned properly.' - I was raised around guns. My dad was a WW II Marine and hunter, as were most of my family. I know how to shoot and clean weapons - I have been doing it since age 8. Any combat weapon that is that finicky is, IMO, crap. Others are entitled to their own opinion.)

We often used the weapons meant to be issued to the PFs - these were WW II and Korean War surplus weapons and ammo sent to Vietnam as part of the military aid program. They included small arms like the M-l rifles and carbines (as well as the M-2 fully automatic carbine), the Browning Automatic Rifle, .30 Caliber machine guns, 60 MM mortars (aka "the company commander's personal artillery"), M -3Al "grease gun" and other such implements of destruction. For some good pictures and tech descriptions of many of these weapons, go to the Korean War Weapons Web-Site a well-illustrated site dedicated to the Korean War.

We would often carry these weapons on patrol in lieu of the despised M-16s. (I personally favored the Browning pump riot shotgun with 00 buckshot at night.) Here is a picture of Rick Valdes ready for a patrol as point man. Note he is wear-

ing (then unauthorized) jungle camouflage, bush hat, and shotgun, with ammo waist belt. We often wore what we wished, as uniform regulations were very loosely enforced.

When I was at Cam Rahn Bay, trying to get back to KSCB after the Tet Offensive started, I was wearing what I had been med-evaced in - a worn set of "jungle" trousers, a green wool Marine issue cold weather shirt over a Navy issue (but not to me' black sweater, and a Scottish Balmoral cap that a girlfriend had sent me.

A beefy Army MP NCO (an obvious REMF in spit-shined jungle boots and starched jungle fatigues) looked me over with a jaundiced eye and asked; "Who in the hell are YOU with? Is that uniform authorized?" Since I didn't want to be bothered with a Charge sheet for being out of uniform, and/or telling an NCO to do something unnatural and impossible to himself, I just Bullshitted him and told him I was with a covert ops unit at Khe Sanh, which I was now headed back to.

Something told him not to press the issue, but he had to have the last word, so he said; "Well, OK, but if you're still here tomorrow, you'd better be in issue gear!" Since I had no intention of being there the next day (I had finally gotten a flight out!), I just smiled and said, "OK, Sarge" I later had a run-in with a Marine SGT/MAJ in Danang on the way home, but that is another story!

THE BIG SWEEP

In October, shortly after my arrival, we formed part of a major sweep of the surrounding hills. All the CAPs participated, as did Marines from the combat base and I believe some of the Army Special Forces were also involved. The idea was that we would comb the hills and (ostensibly) "flush" the enemy, or locate him (and / or act as a "blocking force") and then the line units would converge to engage them more heavily.

The picture of the entire Combined Action Company was taken before that patrol. It was taken by Doc John Roberts' camera, wielded ably by a Bru PF. It is a very rare picture - perhaps one of a kind - it is the only picture I have ever seen or heard of with an entire Combined Action Company all together 'in one place at the same time.

The patrol itself was fruitless and arduous· like



RICK VALDES, O-2, NOVEMBER 1967 (Courtesy of HN "DOC" JOHN ROBERTS, O-2)



ANOTHER PICTURE OF "GUNGY" "DOC" JOHN ROBERTS WITH A GREASE GUN (COURTESY OF HN "DOC" JOHN ROBERTS, O-2)



PHOTO COURTESY "DOC" JOHN ROBERTS



PHOTO COURTESY "DOC" JOHN ROBERTS

many military "events". I don't believe that we even had a peep of the enemy. Someone once said that war is 90% boredom and 10% sheer terror. To that I would add that it is often hot, exhausting, and uncomfortable. The noted seventeenth century philosopher Thomas Hobbs once, "Life in an unregulated state of nature is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." I would say that we although we were highly regulated, this would sum up the nature of warfare nicely.

Starting very early in the morning, we went up one steep hill and down another, the mud, wait-a -minute weeds, and other obstacles and hazards causing us much trouble as we slid back two steps or more for every three gained. In a short time we were hot, wet, sweaty, filthy, and exhausted (If you saw the patrol scene in "Platoon" you have a good picture of what such a patrol is like .) Many of us bore extra ammo for the machine guns and mortar rounds. However, as the day wore on and the sun grew even hotter, some of this extra weight was surreptitiously regulated to the debts of the jungle by some of the unwilling bearers. Thankfully, we didn't meet Mr. Charles that day, which might have caused us to regret "losing" the ammo.

W crossed a stream. As we waded through the water, most of us took the opportunity to fill our helmets with water and pour it over our heads, soaking us even more, but cooling us briefly. Since we were already soaked, it hardly mattered!

The leeches, ever present and ever ready, began swimming out to meet and attach themselves to us if possible. Some of them found home on exposed skin and as they hit the other bank, some of amused themselves by applying a lit cigarette or some alcohol from the "Docs" med kit to make them back out. I remember some of the guys would make bets on the leeches swimming abilities, and other characteristics and attributes. Marines and servicemen in general will bet on anything!

At the end of an exhausting day, we finally came down to the road where trucks were ready to meet us and ferry us back to our compounds. We were more than ready. This picture shoes Rick Valdes, Doc Roberts, and others and the Bru PFs at the end of that grueling day. (BTW, Rick's uniform was not black, that's sweat)

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Things went on In the same way for some time - patrols, ambushes, LPs and OP's, civic action work including med caps, etc. Sometimes, we'd make contact - most times we saw or heard nothing, but It seemed that the activity and numbers of the enemy were increasing

.

On at least one occasion one of our patrols pursued a small enemy unit west, and crossed the border in Laos, before they were aware of their position. As this was not within the scope of our duties. The patrol broke of pursuit and returned. This was probably a good thing, as by this time, large numbers of the enemy were in or entering our area.

we were aware from at least October on that the enemy was ramping up his operations in the area and the patrols and other activities became even more important. This didn't stop us from making the best of our situation.

When things were quiet most of the time then, the

men would engage in activities and games when not upgrading or repairing the defenses. Here is a picture of the men engaged in pitching horse shoes at O-2

The Marines in O-2 attended a feast at one of the Bru villes. As civic action personnel, we had to "do as the Romans do." This meant eating the choice delicacies they very generously offered to us, including rat, par-boiled pig, and rice, rolled into a ball from the communal bowl by the village chief, whose hands it seemed were seldom washed except by accident or in the rainy season. This resulted in a greyish rice ball of less than savory appearance, and probably crawling with bacteria of all sorts. However, as their guest, we were expected to eat what was offered, as it would have been a serious insult to turn it down.

We off–set the germs with a very unsavory alcoholic beverage that was called "drang" if I recall. I believe it was some sort of potent rice wine or whiskey, similar to sake, but with a vial taste and color. I seem to remember that it was urine yellow. However, I reckoned that the alcohol would of set the germs, and after a few servings I no longer cared about them, the taste, etc. In fact I remember very little of that evening other than the beginning.

We also prepared .for the upcoming Christmas holidays by getting a small local tree (rubber I believe), and "decorating" it with grenades and ammo belts. We also popped a couple of red and green smoke grenades to give things a appearance. It was about this time that we took "gungy" photos, taking turns posing with various weapons. We also did a group photo, but I do not have a copy of this. (Any body have one)? Doc John Roberts gave me the photos in this article.

Since one of the film companies (Kodak)?, was offering a deal on photo Christmas cards, some of us sent of our "hero" photos in to be processed, and when they returned, we mailed them to families, friends, and others including the Secretary of Defense McNamara and President and First Lady LBJ. We actually received a polite thank you from the Johnsons though it was only a printed signature, we thought it was nice that someone responded (I do not recall if McNamara did).

"BIG TET" THE ASSAULT ON KHE SANH CAPS

Sometime in mid-December, I contracted a case malaria and pneumonia, and was eventually medevaced to NSA Danang. I remained there during the rest of the month and was therefore not in the village for the initial assault of the 1968 Tet Offensive, which preceded the Siege of Khe Sanh.

(However, I was able to evade a further month in recuperation and return to my unit a few days after the initial assaults, after the company was pulled back to KSCB. For any who may be interested to know how I accomplished this when the only thing going in to KSCB was, in the words of the air travel clerk; "Beans, bullets, and bandages" my story will eventually appear after 1 have gotten the other stories posted.)

Since I was not there I, will rely on official and eye witness accounts for that eventful period I. also refer the interested reader to the sub-section under this history " In their Own Words," which as the name implies, give the story in the words of the participants themselves.

Currently, the accounts of John Balanco of 0-1 and "Doc" John Roberts of 0-2 are posted, as well as a pre-Siege article by Bob Hall (a radio relay man attached to CAP Oscar In 1967). This section will be expanded as I get more information.

Like the rest of Oscar's story, this has never been adequately treated, despite the fact that it constituted an almost phenomenal feat of arms, and almost incredible bravery and tenacity (on both Sides).

(NOTE: The following account is in the process of being re-drafted in deference to the request of COL Bruce Clarke, one of the participants, who has written what is without a doubt the most complete, detailed. and authoritative account of this action and other lesser-known actions that occurred at Khe San h. I am pleased to say that my conversations and correspondence with COL Clarke in the mid-1990s asking him for his account of the action for my history of Oscar company were the motivating factor that spurred him to write what became the draft for his book). At such time as he publishes his book, this article will re- appear with more detail and quotes I believe that every man who was there at this time, and any military scholars or buffs, will want a copy of this account. It is my understanding that he will soon publish this in a popular version with the workinq title of "Expendable Warriors: The Untold Story of Khe Sanh" {as well as his current scholarly ver-

sion}, and that he is arranging publication, and possible film treatment. When he informs me of the publisher and publication date, I will promulgate it on this site.)

THE ASSUALT ON KHE SANH VILLAGE

There were many warning signs prior to the assault. Despite these, it seemed that little notice was being taken of the information we and other outlying and reconnaissance elements were providing.

For example, little was done to reinforce the combat base, or to deepen and harden its fighting positions, or provide secure magazines for the ammunition. The ammo dump for the artillery remained uncovered until the offensive began, and was blown up shortly after the fighting commenced, destroying a large portion of the on-hand ammunition needed to resist. (This was given as one of the reasons that the outlying units, such as Oscar, were pulled in.)

One of the more astounding events was on Jan. 2, 1968, a Marine listening post at Khe Sanh called in that they had movement. A patrol was sent out to reinforce the LP. They encountered the enemy, and there was an exchange of gunfire.

In the sweep of the area, the bodies of five Nort Vietnamese officers, apparently a regimental commander and his staff were found. They were believed to be reconnoitering the position. On Jan. 20, a day before the assault on Khe Sanh began, a patrol from India 3/26 was sent to 881 N. They were ambushed by a large NVA force, and after a ferocious full day action, India withdrew to 881 S.

On the same day, LT La Thanh Tone, officer of the 14th Anti-Aircraft Company, PAVN (NVA) defected. He said he was upset that another officer in his company had been promoted over him (after 14 years service). He just walked up to the perimeter and gave himself up. He also told his captors of the plans for the planned NVA attacks, and that the campaign was to be an important one for the North Vietnamese. However, the intelligence section was not entirely convinced of is truthfulness, some arguing that he was a "dis-Intel" plant, and as this was being discussed, the enemy commenced their operations.

Just after midnight, an outpost on hill 861 was assaulted. Though the Marines beat back the NVA, they suffered many casualties.

There is a divergence of opinion on when the initial assault on Khe Sanh village began. The attack on Khe Sanh Combat Base is generally given as 0530, and the 26th Marines' Command Chronology for January 1968 states that the attack on the District village occurred at 0610 on the morning of the 21st of January, 1968.

However, CPT (later COL) Bruce B. G. Clarke, who was the senior U.S. Army District advisor for Huong Hoa, wrote in April 1968 that the attack began at 0500 If so, that would make the village the first unit attacked.

It is possible that both assaults were meant to be coordinated, but due to the fortunes of war and the difficulty of coordinating separate major actions, one "went off" too soon (or too late).

(A Marine infantry officer who served in a region that had several Combined Action units once told me; "Oh, we loved the CAPs! They made great trip flares!"

The US forces at the HQ and surrounding area included a double CAP of Combine Action Company "Oscar" (HQ and O-1), two platoons of the 915th Regional Force Company, and the four-mart U.S. Army advisory group led by Army Captain Bruce B.G. Clarke, whose team medic, SFC Jim Perry, also figured prominently in the defense, by leading the medical effort to care for the wounded.

The CAP HQ element was commanded by USMC 1st LT Tom Stamper and acting CO, GYSGT, SSGT Robert Boyda, and CAP O-1 was led by SGT John J. Balanco. There were perhaps 22 Marines and two Navy Corpsmen, as well as their Bru.

The total strength of the defense force at the HQ compound consisted of approximately 178, the bulk of whom were Viet and Bru indigenous forces, four US Army advisory personnel, and the CAP Marines.

CAP O-2, led by Sergeant Roy Harper, had a squad of Marines and one Navy Corpsman, but was separated from the HQ and CAP 1, lying about 200 yards to the West on Hwy. 9 at the

edge of the village of Khe Sanh.

On the morning of Jan. 21st, 1968, under cover of one of the dense fogs that often blanketed Khe Sanh at that time of year, elements of the crack 66th Regiment, 304th Division of the PAVN (NVA) attacked the Huong Hoa District HQ and the Oscar CAPs in and around Khe Sanh Village under cover of fire from their artillery (located on Co Roc Mountain in Laos), mortars, and rockets.

CPT Clarke had just completed checking the fields of fire and artillery coordinates It is almost certain that he was at times under the guns of the NVA, who, however, probably held their fire to maintain surprise. (Had they known who he was, and what great damage he would soon inflict on them, they might have reconsidered!)

When the attack started, CPT Clarke ably coordinated the supporting arms, delivering the fire so close as to be almost on top of the US positions. In addition to the Marine artillery, he was on a different radio and frequency, which he used to keep in radio contact with an Air Force FAC (forward air controller) who called in air strikes against the North Vietnamese. CPT Clarke also maintained contact with Robert Brewer, the Senior Quang Tri Province Advisor (CIA) in Quang Tri City

It is almost certain that without this supporting fire, the compounds would have been over-run by the well-planned and ferocious attacks of the enemy, despite the indubitable valor of their defenders.

Meanwhile, the CAP HQ and O-1 troops, Army advisory unit, and the RF troops manned all trenches and fortified points, ably led by SGT John J. Balanco, stood off the initial attacks in intense and ferocious fighting. He was nominated for a Navy Cross, though he eventually received a Silver Star.

PFC Jim Perry of the Anny advisory team bravely and competently led the medical response under intense fire. (He was also nominated for a medal, and eventually received a Bronze Star, but in the opinion of the men who served with him, this should have been at least a Silver Star.)

Though I was absent from that fight (see above), stories about John Balanco's surperb leadership and bravery were already circulating. John seldom talks about is own role, instead concentrating on that shown by his men. However, the following story will serve to show why the men of Oscar respect John to this day.

Sgt Balanco was making his rounds of the lines, carrying ammo and supplies to his men. He jumped into one fighting position and reversed his weapon so the butt was facing the enemy, he said to the young Marine; "Don't worry, kid! I've got 'em covered!" The Marine smiled, relieving the fear of the situation.

For a riveting first-hand account of the action, see John Balanco's story.

Meanwhile, the men of CAP O-2 were also being heavily assaulted. O-2 lay west of O-1 on the end of Khe Sanh village on Hwy 9. The unit consisted of one squad of Marines, one Navy Corpsman, and ten Bru PFs.

They were led by SGT Roy Harper; and included: CPL AL Terry Sullivan, CPL Ronald Harper, LCPL George ("Doc") Sargent, LCPL Frank Batchman, LCPL Jimmy Tyson, FC Donald Gullickson, PFC Biddle, PFC Dana Matonas, Navy Hospital Corpsman HN John Roberts and some of the Bru.

Although they lacked the numbers of O-1, their courage and determination was great. (CPT Clarke's fields of fire also included their position as he ably covered their ferocious defense.) For a first-hand account of this action, see John Robert's story

The Marines' job was to take lives - the Corpsman's job was to save them - often under fire. Doc Roberts would treat the Bru or Vietnamese as well as a Marine. On this day, he would have to both take and save lives.

'Doc" was always there for all of us and the Bru. Before and during the assault and Siege, he was always among the first on hand when help was needed, no matter if the rounds were coming in - which they often were. He risked his life selflessly on numerous occasions to help his Marines. He was (and is) a real hero, in our opinion.)

About midday on the 21st, the fog lifted and the intensity of the assaults were reduced. However, the NVA continued to place pressure upon the

defenders with mortar and RPG bombardments, they limited their infantry action to small arms fire and probes.

Helicopters attempted to resupply the compound, but could not land because of the enemy fire. However, the crews managed to hover low enough to kick out some sorely needed ammunition.

Two relief expeditions were then dispatched from the Combat Base, one Marine force and one air assault mixed Army and Vietnamese force. They also failed In their attempts to relieve the beleaguered garrisons in the village. The Marine force consisted of a platoon from D Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines. When the platoon reached the hill overlooking the village, they could clearly see North Vietnamese troops deploying. COL Lownds, decided that the relief mission was too dangerous and ordered the platoon to return.

The second expedition was an airborne operation mounted by the Army, and unfortunately, due to a series of misunderstandings, ended in one of the worst disasters of the entire Siege, and indeed the war.

According to Ray Stubbe (in his book, "The Final Formation") Robert Brewer, the senior CIA representative in Quang Tri Province and Senior Provincial Advisor, called a council of war to decide upon a relief effort.

Although the units in the village or the village itself were not of great strategic or tactical concern {other than its position astride Hwy. 9} the District HQ was of great propaganda value. Both sides recognized that, which is why so much energy and so many troops were expended in a drive to seize the village, and why Brewer and the political operatives were determined to keep it if possible. They decided to send an aerial relief force, and launched LTCOL Seymoe of MACV Det. #19.

LTCOL Seymoe, instead of landing in the Khe Sanh village HQ, landed in the "French Fort" (by then an NVA position). sevmoe and most of his relief force wet- slaughtered. CPT. Stiner, a pilot, (who had been celebrating his 30th birthday before the launch), was one of the few who somehow managed to escape, getting help from the French planter, Felix Poilane, but was unfortunately captured by Marines of CAP 0-3 who initially thought he was a Russian advisor. Stiner was held until the next morning when he finally convinced the CAP members that he was an American.

NOTE: While some might see this as excessive caution or even stupidity on the art of the CAP, we had often been told that various European nationals, including Russians, East Germans, and others were operating with the enemy, sometimes Pulling "Trojan Horse" routines on isolated units. Whatever the truth of this, the Russians and other Soviet Bloc countries including East Germany certainly had advisors and observers in country.)

Overall, the relief effort, though gallantly intended, was an unmitigated disaster. 3 pilots and 14 enlisted crewmen, as well as Lt Col Seymoe were lost, and the South Vietnamese RFs were all killed or missing.

Seymoe's remains, and a number of the others, were only recovered following the Siege by the 1st Air Cavalry. At least one is still MIA.)

Ray Stubbe wrote, (in "Valley of Decision"), that LTCOL Seymoe's relief attempt 'as; "in terms of proportionate casualties and equipment losses ..... the worst military debacle of the entire campaign at Khe Sanh."

Oddly enough, this action and others that were disastrous (such as Lang Vei have received far more attention (and more medals) than the defense of Khe Sanh ville.)

During the night (21 to 22 January 1967), the situation in the compound in Khe Sanh Ville was fairly quiet, although they received NVA sniper fire. The Marines at both compounds had sustained several wounded but amazingly, no dead, given the great numbers of the enemy and the ferocity of their attacks. Unfortunately, the ARVNs and Bru had suffered a number of casualties KIA, as well as their wounded. (This fact points up the ability and bravery of the indigenous troops when ably led.)

In the morning of 22 January 1967, the men of O -2 had broken out of their compound in an "all or nothing" dash, shooting as they went. Thankfully, they met no resistance and made their way to HQ, where they joined the defenders.

SGT Balanco led a patrol towards the "Old French Fort", hoping to find survivors of the aborted relief mission, but turned back at the bottom of the hill upon seeing some Vietnamese in what he called "strange uniforms." He gestured for them to come down, and they in turn gestured for him to come up - he very correctly declined. These were almost certainly NVA seeking to lure him into an ambush.

Upon his return, SGT Balanco's patrol recovered at least 150 weapons from the enemy KIA, including RPGs and assault rifles, many of them brand new. SGT Balanco described seeing; "hundreds of mutilated and mangled NVA." He believes there were at least 300 and possibly 500 bodies there. He once informed me that they used ponchos to slide the gear in, because there was too much to carry.

(When I returned, I was envious, because I had missed the fight, and all of the men who had been there now had NVA belts, knives, and enameled Red Stars, among other souvenirs. My lobotomy has since more or less healed.)

Many years later when visiting John at his home in Oregon, I saw among his other trophies a rare Fairbairn-Sykes British Commando knife. He had taken it from one of the NVA they had killed. It had markings on the blade that, when traced, told an interesting story.

It was one issued during WW II to the Free French Forces (mostly Foreign Legion I am told) under De Gaulle before Normandy. How it got to Khe Sanh in 1968 is unknown but I can hazard a guess - the main forces defending Dien Bien Phu were Foreign Legionnaires. It seems possible that one was a WW 11 vet, and that he had been one of those the knives were issued to. Captured after the surrender his knife had been "liberated- by an Viet Minh, who in turn had wound up at Khe Sanh. We'll never know, but, as often when I handle old weapons, I wish that they could tell their tale.

The Oscar 2 Marines also reported many bodies (300-plus) and much equipment, though they brought little out with them. One of the CAP 0-2 Marines (it may have been Tyson) brought out my Scottish Royal Standard which had been above my bunk. He later told me that as he was grabbing the little gear they were allowed to take out, he thought; "Taylor will want this!~ and stuck it in his pack. He later gave it to me when I returned from the hospital, and I flew it over my bunker on FOB-3 for the first part of the Siege - many flew state flags and the like - however, it was the last individual flag {other than the US flag} to come down.

Unfortunately, as they were severely limited to



SCOTTISH STANDARD THAT FLEW AT KHE SANH

what they could take, he didn't recover my bagpipes, which remain combat losses to this day, along with most of my personal gear from that time and place. or have often wondered if they survived, and if so, whether they are gracing some Vietnamese mantle piece (or its equivalent)! 1STLT Grenville Sutcliffe (of whom more anon) later volunteered to retrieve them for me when he went on a mission to reconnoitre Khe Sanh Ville after the evacuation. (He told me that he liked bagpipes.) As it happened, he and the patrol he was with found a very warm reception from Khe Sanh's new occupants that didn't lend itself well to recovering musical instruments.

Late on the morning of January 22nd, a Marine helicopter took Lt Stamper to Khe Sanh to report to Colonel Lownds the base and area commander, about continuing ie defense of the Ville

COL Lownds later stated; "... after long consideration and proper evaluation of the facts I decided to evacuate the units."

His was the only logical decision. Despite the propaganda value of the village, and the demonstrated ability of the defenders. it had little tactical value. In addition, the village was too remote, and too difficult to continue to defend without tasking the artillery and other

support elements at KSCB too greatly. COL Lownds was of the opinion that he would soon need all his rounds for the main command, but even he didn't know how correct this would prove - the artillery ammunition dump would soon be a blazing inferno. In addition, the weather at that time of year would often preclude the use of the air support which had proved so useful in the defense, as we later came to see.

SGT Balanco said; "We received an agonizing radio message from LT Stemper telling us to pack up." LT Stamper also told him that "No R.F.'s or Bru with their weapons would be allowed on the helicopters to return to the combat base." (Indeed, to the Marines' disgust, no Bru or ARVN were allowed on the flights at all! They were inclined not to leave their brave counterparts, but they were ordered to do so, and, being Marines, complied. (It would not be the last order they would obey against their will at Khe Sanh.)

The evacuation was, as such things often are, chaotic, and included justifiably panicked Vietnamese and VA shelling. Six evacuation missions flew out. As the choppers took off, frightened Vietnamese. civilians rushed to try to board. SGT Balanco, knowing that they would overload the aircraft and cause them and their crews and the wounded to be lost as well, fired "a few M-70 rounds" in the opposite direction, to hold them back. (The WIA:. were Americans, including two U.S. Army NCOs from the Advisory Group).

SGT Balanco departed on the last helicopter out. Before he boarded, two Bru approached him carrying a badly burned man and asked the Marines to take him on board. The pilot reportedly shouted: "No one except Americans can go." and that he was departing immediately.

Balanco took out his pistol, thinking to put the man out of his misery, but change his mind. Instead, he "got him on that last chopper out."

Meantime, CPT Clarke also had received orders (from Robert Brewer), to evacuate. According to CPT Clarke, Brewer had wanted to try to hold the village, but without Marine artillery support, agreed that was not possible.
However, CPT Clarke and SFC Perry declined to board the choppers. They had no intention of leaving their loyal Vietnamese counterparts to whatever mercy they could gain from the NVA. Instead, they organized the remaining men of the 195th RF Company and a number of the Bru PFs, and marched back to the FOB-3 compound along a secret trail.

In my personal opinion, this was one of the bravest and boldest feats of this or any war, and CPT Clarke and SFC Perry should have been awarded at least an Army Cross for their exploits in defending the ville and leading this latter-day "Anabasis. "

Ap-3 had not been attacked, but they also were ordered to evacuate their Bru hamlet of Ta Con (north of Khe Sanh) and returned to the combat base, here, the CAC Oscar Marines regrouped, and rejoined the RF troops and the popular Force Bru at the southern edge of the FOB-3 compound. However. Here they found another unpleasant surprise - the Marines refused to allow the Bru and Vietnamese troops on their portion of the combat base, supposedly because they feared they harbored spies among them. The CAP Marines, already distraught at having been ordered to retreat without their Bru, were truly in a quandary.

However, the Special Forces commander at FOB -3 {which was separate from and not subject to the orders of the Marine CO}, already had many Bru among his IDG teams. He happily accepted our counterparts - in fact, he was so glad to get them, he even accepted the Marines - though much less happily I have been told!

Visualize the scene in "Blazing Saddles where the towns people are debating accepting the Black, Chinese, and Irish railroad workers - but don't want the Irish.

There has been some debate as to who actually gave the orders to abandon the Bru and Viet troops. COL Lownds (in a Marine Oral History interview), said he had ordered the aerial evacuation of the Bru CAPs and RFs, but that they and CPT Clarke chose to walk out. However. the accounts of CPT Clarke and SGT Balanco make it clear that the orders came from the Marine command post, relayed by LT Stamper.

Of course, COL Lownds' orders may have been misunderstood by LT Stamper.
It has also been speculated that it could also have been a decision of the pilots due to the situation in the LZ. However, it again seems clear

from CPT Clarke's and SGT Balanco's accounts that the command was generated earlier at a higher level.

Whatever its origins, it was a bad order, and only redeemed by the bravery of CPT Clarke and SFC Perry.

Later that afternoon, CPT Clarke led a Special Forces unit in by chopper from OB-3. They salvaged what they could, and destroyed everything of value to the enemy in the headquarters.

Despite the great valor of the defenders and their repulse of superior numbers of NVA, inflicting heavy losses upon them, this unit has never gotten more than a footnote or a paragraph or two at most in any histories I have read. (Ray Stubbe' being one of the rare exceptions.) This valiant defense, defeat of the NVA forces, and marching out of the indigenous defenders under CPT Clarke were one of the most impressive stories of that campaign. A small unit, less than 200 men. Fought off with few losses one of the finest regiments the NVA could throw at them, then marched back through the midst of their enemies.

"THOSE REMEMBERED" 27 JUNE 1967
BY JIM "OLLIE" COLLINS
A CO 1/26

2 Lt Dale Charles Allen
I/3/26 CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

SSGT William Ivor Tenney Bacon
06/29/67 H&S 3/26 * Died USS Sanctuary

2Lt Lawrence Joseph Bolger
A/1/26

PFC Frederick Joseph Brenke
L/3/26 CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

L/Cpl Victor Lee Burns
A/1/26

Cpt Franklin Delano Bynum
L/3/26 CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

L/Cpl., Allan James Damian
A/1/26

L/Cpl Jeffrey Jay David
I/3/26 CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

Cpl Anthony DI Cesare Jr
I/3/26 CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

HM-3 Carl Douglas Dudley Jr
H&S 3/26 CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

L/Cpl Charles Manley Gattis Jr 07/05/1967
I/3/26 * Died Navy Hospital, Danang

L/Cpl Alejandro Ray Godinez
I/3/26 CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

SSgt Donald Paul Hamilton
I/3/26 CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

HM-3 Curtis Darrell Jackson
H&S 3/26

L/Cpl Freddie Lee Johnson
I/3/26 CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

Sgt Paul Eddie Kincaid
A/1/26

L/Cpl Charles Aaron Lynch
Sub Unit 5 HQ CO/HQ BN CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

L/Cpl., Francisco Mazariegos
Sub Unit 5 HQ CO/HQ BN CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

L/Cpl Kenneth Arthur Millard
I/3/26 CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

Cpl Dennis Alfred O'Connor
Sub Unit 5 HQ CO/HQ BN CAC - OSCAR Hill 689

PFC Paul Maldonado Rodriguez Jr
A/1/26

L/Cpl Glenn Edward Sanders 06/29/1967
A/1/26 * Died USS Sanctuary

Cpl James Merrill Shepard Jr
Sub Unit 5 - HQ CO/HQ BN CAC-OSCAR Hill 689

PFC Rick James Stewart
A 1/13

Cpl Edmund Burke Travis
I/3/26 A BTRY /1/13

Cpl Richard Lee Walker
I 3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689

Cpl Stephen George Wassenich

I /3/26 CAC-OSCAR Hill 689

L/Cpl Jonathan Charles Whitticom

H&S 1/26

L/Cpl Ira Winard Williams

A/1/26

PFC William Jack Williams

I/3/26

OBIT

CECIL BUXTON,USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN 2/9

Cecil "Buck" Buxton, 75, of Unionville, beloved husband of Donna Morocco, died unexpectedly Sunday March 8th. Born February 22nd, 1945 in Waterbury, son of the late Cecil A. and Dorothea (Burns) Buxton, he was a graduate of Lewis S. Mills High School in Burlington, Class of 1963 and the school of hard knocks. He served proudly as a U.S. Marine in the 2nd battalion 9th Marines in Vietnam and participated in two of the bloodiest battles of this War. The 1968 Battle of Khe Sanh was the longest, deadliest and most controversial of the Vietnam War, pitting the U.S. Marines and their allies against the North Vietnamese Army. Buck spent a total of 54 days in this battle.

And the battle at Dong Ha, which for 3 days in April and May of 1968, a beleaguered battalion of 652 Marines fought what was arguably the most tenacious and significant battle of the Vietnam War. Buck spent many years with his wife Donna taking many memorable trips to places like Puerto Rico, Las Vegas, California, Pennsylvania, Texas, Aruba and of course many delightful trips to Maine to visit his daughter and her family. He immensely enjoyed many winters in Myrtle Beach, SC and was even more delighted when his daughter and her children could join him for some extremely lively visits.

His grandchildren loved him deeply and even deeper than their love for "Grampa Buck" was their love for teasing Grampa Buck. His grandson Gage found great pleasure often hiding Grampa Bucks remote control which would always send Buck into quite an animated tizzy. He enjoyed great friends at his clubs The American Legion and VFW in Plainville and the Knights of Columbus in Unionville. He was named bartender of the year in 1996 at the Knights of Columbus in Unionville and he had a strong affinity for a cold Coors Light. Besides his wife, Buck is survived by his beloved daughter, Sarah B. Berry and her husband Jason of Newry, ME, his three grandchildren, Gage Buxton Berry, Jordan Berry and Payton Berry, his two sisters, Cathy Buxton of Collinsville and Mary-Ann Schwarzmann of Farmington, his beloved Neicey WeeSees, Katie Garcia and Debbie Norton and Nephews Curt MacDonald . Burial with full Marine Corps Honors were held in Calvary Cemetery, Collinsville. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

I GET MAIL
By Jim Zechman



Just joined this FB group. This picture was taken on Hill 861 in late June of 1967. I was with Bravo 1/26. I'm the one without the shirt and to my left is Ron Norris of rockets. I was wounded about 3 weeks later on patrol out on Route 9. I was section leader of 60mm mortars at the time. I've been a life member of KSV for a long time but have yet to attend reunions. I do enjoy the Red Clay magazine and read it cover to cover. A special thanks to Craig Tourte, I enjoy your articles. Semper Fi all.

TYPHOON HITS THE DUC REFUGEE RICE FARMING VILLAGE
(A TRUE STORY)

Morning. A steady rain douses a line of Vietnamese villagers as they wait to reach the first aid station set up by the Combined Action Program. Inside, 24-year-old U.S. Navy Corpsman Steve Blakemore uses antiseptic to clean a minor wound of one Vietnamese child, then applies a Band Aid to it. Another child with a thermometer in her mouth is seated next to him. The parents of the children thank Blakemore. One gives him food as a gift. The Corpsman returns the favor by handing each person

a bar of soap. There is obvious trust between this corpsman and the villagers.

In a South Vietnamese family's hut, two very tired Marines talk about the ceaseless rain of the monsoon season, now in full swing. The Marines are obviously living with the family, since a few family members are moving around the hut, as well. "I kept waking up last night hoping it has stopped raining," George Dros says. "It hasn't been more than two days, and it's already getting to me."

"I never thought it could rain this much—anywhere," Jack Cunningham says. "When I was a kid growing up in Rosedale, I thought it rained a lot, but that was a joke compared to this. I'm figuring today's patrol will have to be cancelled. There won't be rice patty dikes to walk on. They're flooded out. Under water, already."

The two Marines decide to cook up some C-rations. It's slim pickings. Jack looks through George's pack. "Hey, George, what are you going to eat—the ham and lima beans, pork slices or spaghetti?"
"You take you want," George says. "I don't care which I get."

"You know what? Let's make a stew out of all of it," Jack says.

"Done deal. Sounds good," George says. "And I'll get some hot chocolate started."

The Marines walk around the hut trying not to get in the way of the Papasan, the village carpenter, whose workshop is part of the hut, and the Mamasan living there. Their two children follow the Papasan everywhere he goes as he tends to his carpentry.

"You know, George," Jack says, "I feel more comfortable in this hootch [hut] than any other one in the village. Papasan Bay is always trying to make us feel at home. I don't know how I know that, exactly, because he can't speak a word of English, but I know it."

"Yeah, me, too," George says. "He's a friend. It sounds corny as shit, but you can tell that without any words, right?"
Jack nods.

As Jack starts to dish out the stew he has prepared, Papasan Bay walks over to the two men with a large bowl of rise, lays it in front of them and nods his head.

"Thanks," Jack says.
"Thank you," George says.
Papasan leaves.

"Listen," Jack says, "Before we leave to go home we have to give this family something really nice. What would that be? They sort of have everything they need, right?"

"We'll figure something out, Jack," George says. "We've still got 136 days here. Hey, mix some of this rice in with your stew. It's great."

The two Marines finish breakfast, then clean their rusted weapons. "Somehow," Jack says, "sitting out in the rain for hours on patrol, waiting for Vietcong to attack, then getting the rust off my weapon, wasn't something I saw in any John Wayne flick," he says.

"Not that you're complaining," George laughs.

Marine Sergeant Phillip Assante walks into the hootch. "Dros, Cunningham, get up. The jeep from the Ca Co is on its way here. It's your turn to pick up the supplies. Try to make sure you keep the rain off the mail. The last time you guys went, all the writing in my letters had smudged off."

The two men grab their weapons and ponchos and start to walk down the water-covered path to the road. "I just don't know how it doesn't ever fricking stop raining," Jack says. "How are we going to walk back with all the supplies."

"Very carefully," George says. "I don't want Assante pissed at us like last week."

The two men reach the road, but only after almost falling into the swollen rice patties a few times.
"Where's the jeep. Should have been here by now," George says.

Two other Marines are coming up the path. "Hey," the shorter of them, named Neal, yells. "The jeep is stuck up the road. Sarge wants us to go up there and get the supplies."

"Sure," George says, "but that mud is a foot-and-a-half deep. How are we going to get the supplies back to the hootches?"
"No idea," the other newcomer Marine named Benny says. "But we better do it."
The four men start up the muddy road. Their feet slip and slid through the mud, as if it is ice and

slush.

"Why don't we just forget about supplies for the day?" Neal asks. He falls into the mud and is just starting to pick himself up when the Ca Co jeep shoots around a curve in the road.

"Jump on everybody! I can't stop or I'll get stuck again!" the driver yells.

The jeep slows down as the men try to get on. Three of them do.

"It's like trying to grab a greased pig," Benny, the last of them, laughs, as he's dragged across the muddy road.



"Grab him before he falls off," yells the driver.

The three marines stretch over the side and back of the jeep to try holding onto their friend. Mud files into their faces and into their mouths as they laugh.
"I wish we had a movie camera to film this," Jack says.

The jeep comes to a full stop. Everyone lets go of Benny, sending his head crashing into the mud-caked truck. The laughter literally erupts now, with passing villagers joining in the fun.

"Hurry up and get your shit off the jeep," the driver yells. "I have another stop to make up at Hill 65. I don't have all day."

"Go f**k yourself," Benny says. "We're having a little fun." He picks himself up out of the mud.

"You compound bums always have it easy," Jack yells to the driver. "Sorry to inconvenience you."

As the rain starts to come down even harder, the four men unload the supplies. Within a minute, the road has little lakes in between the huge mud tire tracks left by the jeep.

"Come on," the driver says. "If you don't hurry up, I'll never get back to Ca Co."

"Don't worry about it," laughs George. "You can always sleep out here in the village."

The marines finish unloading and start walking up the path.

"I think in just the last 45 minutes this water got a lot deeper."

"Agreed," says Neal.

"Watch it, Jack," George yells. "There's a snake right next to your left foot. Don't move."
"It's only a Buddha snake," Jack says.
"What the hell is that?" Neal asks.

"A snake that hangs around Buddhist shrines a lot. They like it cool and damp. They're not poisonous," Jack says. "But if this rain doesn't stop, there are going to be lots of snakes floating around, so thanks for the heads up."

They walk into the hootch. "Where do you want everything, Sarge?" George yells.
"I don't care what you do with the C rations, I just want my mail," Assante answers.

"Hate to tell you this, but there is none," George says.

"That makes four f**king days without mail!" Assante says.

"In my last CAP unit, we didn't get any for two weeks, one time," Jack says.

Assante lays himself back on his wooden bed, obviously laid low by not receiving mail. Mail was the lifeline to home. Without it, home seemed too far away.

"Who gets the peaches and pound cake from the C rations today?" Neal yells.

No one answers. Everyone is busy drying their socks and boots.

All of a sudden, a voice on the radio blares: "Charlie House 2, this is Charlie House. Come in."
"This is Charlie House 2. Come in Charlie House,"

answers Assante.

"You better move your unit to the highest point of the village," the Ca Co radio man warns. "This rain is not supposed to let up. There's a typhoon heading this way from the Phillipines.

The men jump to their feet.

"What the hell is a typhoon?" Neal asks.

"It's like a hurricane, but with stronger winds and more rain," Jack says.

"Thanks for warning us," Assante tells the Ca Co radio man.

The radio goes silent. The men look into one another's eyes. No one has ever told them what to do when a typhoon hits. Most of the village is only five feet above sea level. Even the highest point was only a few feet higher."

"Don't panic," Assante says. "I think the school house is the highest point. We'll stay there. Get your gear. We move out in 10 minutes."

The worried Marines run out of the hootch to get their gear from the other hootches.

"Do you think the typhoon will actually hit us?" George asks Jack.

"No," Jack says, "Knowing the weathermen in New York, I don't think the Vietnamese are any better."

"Yeah, but there are American weathermen working here, too," George says.

"Then we definitely aren't getting hit," Jack jokes.

Jack and George try to explain to Papasan how the wind and rain are going to surge. It takes a few minutes, but Papasan eventually gets it and points to the rafters of the house.

"He's telling us not to worry," George says. "The family will go up there."

The two Marines pick up their gear and wave goodbye to their Vietnamese friends.

"I'm just hoping they'll be okay," George says, on the way out.

"He's got a good head on his shoulders," Jack says.

"Hurry up!" Assante yells at the two of them. "You two are always late."

The look on Jack's face says, "I'd love to put my foot in that guy's mouth."

The unit walks up the path and onto the muddy road. Man after man gets his boots and legs stuck in mud holes and can't get out without help from other Marines. A man slips into a road side river patty and is searching for his rifle.

They finally make it to the school house after what seems an eternity. Up ahead by 100 yards, the men see that the road is completely covered by the overflowing river.

"Thank God the V.C. aren't out today," Jack says. "I don't think I could handle the V.C. and the water."

"They could have wiped us out if they ambushed us on the road coming up here," George says.

"Don't stop worrying about them because of the higher water," Assante says, "They'll probably come looking for us tonight."

"With this much rain?" Jack says. "They'll have to attack us by boat." He laughs.

The school was comprised of three small concrete buildings and a tiny thatched hootch used by the school teacher.

"This place was built by CAP. They finished about a year-and-a-half ago," Jack says.

"And they don't appreciate it," Neal says. "They never do."

"Some of them do," Jack says. They invite us into their homes every day. Gotta be a reason."
"I guess," Neal says. "You're right, I guess."
The winds start to pick up as the day goes on. Rain pours into the school house from every open window. Even when the Marines try to cover the windows with their ponchos, the strong gusts of wind just tear them away.

The view of the mountains is all grey shadows. And the Marines know that rain falling on the mountains means water flowing down and into their alley.

"We can forget about trying for a night ambush tonight," Assante says. "We won't be able to go anywhere. If this keeps up, the school's gonna be gone, too, soon."

Darkness descends on the village. The winds only get stronger. The men walk around the school house trying to find good spots to lay out.
Five P.F.s arrive at the school house.

"How deep is the water," Jack tries to ask them.
One of them lays his M16 on the cement floor and a few ounces of water rushes out of the barrel.
The other P.F.s laugh as they joke with one another in Vietnamese.

"How deep?" Jack asks, again.
One of the P.F.s named Tiu smiles and raises his hand to his chest.
"Um, that would be about four to four-and-a-half feet," George says.

"These guys risked their lives coming up here to be with us," Jack tells George.

"Make sure you let thse P.F.s rest tonight," yells Assante. "They had to go through hell to get here. Everyone else takes turns on watch tonight. Two men at all times."

"But, Sarge, the place is completely surrounded by water. How can we be attacked?"
"I don't care," Assante says.

The Marines argue about what time slots each of them will get. Those who can start to try to sleep. The next day is certain to be a tough one.

The howling winds and rains continue all through the night and, by the next to last watch, the water reaches the school house floor, slowly stretching its way across the concrete foundation. The men who were sleeping start to wake up from the dampness.

"Hey, Sarge, when are you going to call the Ca Co to get us out of here?" George asks, stepping off the concrete slab into the cold water.

"Scared already?" Assanted says. "Wait until the water is at your waist, and I'll start thinking about getting us helicoptered out."

"Charlie House 2 . . . Charlie House 2, this is Charlie House," the radio man blares.

Assante grabs the radio. "Charlie House, this is Charlie House 2."

"Weather looks like the typhoon will pass to the north of us," the radio man says. "But expect winds at 40 miles per hour and gusts to 70 miles per hour. The rain should continue all day. Tell us when you want out."

"Roger," Assante says.

Before long, the water is a foot deep in the school house, and climbing. The men's eyes keep returning to the radio, hoping that someone will make an independent decision to send a helicopter.

Jack and George sit on top of some of the desks, listening to a tape of the Beatles Abbey Road album.
The water starts rising faster.

Assante is obviously losing his cool. "Alright," he says a minute later, "Get everyone into this building. I'm calling the Ca Co to get us out of here." He starts using the radio to do just that.

Everyone seems relieved. Help will be on the way.
The trouble is that Assante has waited too long. There's a waiting list for a helicopter, and Ca Co tells Assante it will be at least an hour to get the men out.

Assante looks at the short P.F.s, with the water already up to their knees. "Start piling desks on top of one another," he orders the marines go around to the other buildings and collect desks, in case all of them need to be used. Even after an hour, there's no helicopter approaching—only the sounds of some in the distance.

The water rises to the P.F.s' waists.

The Marines start to lift the P.F.s out of the water and onto the desks.

"Don't move!" a Marine named Bill shouts. "There's a snake right by you George." The other Marines slowly climb onto desks to get away from a greenish snake that then dives under water. They all know this isn't a Buddha snake. It's a bamboo viper, one of the deadliest snakes in the world. It can kill a human in less than a minute.

When the snake reappears near George, ten M16 rifles fire, tearing it apart and sending it into the air outside the school building.

"You could have killed me!" George yells.
The Marines laugh.

Then, all grow silent again, listening for the helicopter. And . . . then . . . they hear it.

By now, the water is six feet deep outside the school house and coming out the side of the building is impossible. So the Marines get up near the roof and pull it back. They succeed enough so that one person at a time can fit through.
Neal goes first. "Pass me up P.F.s!" he yells as he lowers his arms through the hole in the roof. The P.F.s are passed through the hole, one by one.

The helicopter pilot keeps trying to hover over the roof, but can't stay closer than 10 feet. There's too much wind and rain, and the heavy machine could easily crash down into the school and kill everyone.
George pulls himself onto the roof just as one P.F. slips and starts falling off. Neal and George grab his legs and pull him to a safer position. The P.F. looks into their eyes with profound gratitude.

With the P.F.s and the two Marines on the school roof, a side door on the CH-46 copter lowers, exposing three Marines. "Jump up and grab my arms!" one of them yells. He lowers himself down from the doorway, with the two other Marines holding his feet to keep him from plummeting.

George and Neal forget about their own safety as they lift the short P.F.s to the outstretched arms of the hanging Marine.

The Marines in the school house are still waiting, as snakes swim below the desks they are perched upon . . .

When it's finally time for the Marines to be taken out of the school house, Jack remembers they have to collect all their weapons and make sure none are left behind. Some of their gear just has to be sacrificed to the waters.

The men lift two M.60 machine guns through the hole in the roof. As Neal tries to lift one of the guns up towards the helicopter, he feels his foot start to slip. He has to let go of the weapon. It falls into the rushing water. Filled with guilt, he looks at George and says, "F**k me. That weapon will be killing Marines."
"You would have fallen in with it," George assures him.

One at a time the Marines climb through the hole in the roof. They are slowly rescued, despite harrowing odds.

George will be the next-to-last to be lifted into the helicopter.

Sergeant Assante will be the last to go.
"I wonder if all the villagers got out okay," George says.

"God willing," Assante says. "They have boats. They know floods."

Just as George jumps, a gust of wind pushes the helicopter away. Miraculously, George catches one of the arms of the hanging Marine. The helicopter has to keep swinging side to side in order for George to grab the Marine's other arm and be lifted into the copter. Assante comes aboard next.
The men look at one another. They're all Marines—willing to risk everything for one another, again and again.

"A man good enough to shed his blood for his country, is good enough to receive a square deal afterwards . . ."
-- Theodore Roosevelt

United States Marine Corps' Combined Action Program CAP TV Series CA Productions I served in CAP from about Jan. 1970 to Jan. 1971 This is a true story... Please email your comments to: ProudCapMarine@earthlink.net

WILL NEVER FORGET FROM THE WEB

The stench of dead bodies, the look on the face of a dying Marine, the wounded children, the sound of incoming, the red dirt of Khe Sanh, night ambush, elephant grass, malaria pills, rice paddies, napalm, the impact of being hit by an enemy round, the calling in med-a-vacs, the silence before a firefight, the prayers to God, leeches, the size of the rats, landing in a "hot" LZ, sweeping through a ville, graffiti on helmets, willy peter, piling up dead gooks 6 foot high, bug juice, the 23rd Psalm, the ace of spades, homesickness, the taste of C-rats, calling in arty, round eyed girls, when one bandage was never enough, being pinned down, memories of home, the Tet Offensive, humping the bush, short timer's calendar, the motto of the 3rd Battalion 26th Marines, calling in choppers, removing the bandages, the smell of Charlie, photos from home, walking point, the monsoons, pungi pits, the sound of shrapnel fly-

ing through the air, R&R, watching a buddy get blown away, pulling the trigger, burning shitters, booby traps, crossing in the open, digging in, mosquitoes, combat, bagging sand, the wall, jungle heat, Danang, zippo raids crawling inside a flak jacket, being afraid for 13 months, he welcome home, gook haircuts, the faces, counting the days, being short, entering a hooch, beetle nut, fire missions, picking up what's left, the taste of canteen water, tunnel rats, sit-reps, trip wires , salt pills, mine sweeps, thousand pounders, Phu Bai, the meaning of "Hard Corps", body bags, Christmas 1967, what not to write in letters sent home, the shots, interrogating enemy prisoners Ham & Limas, standing watch, bumming smokes, our last night in country, Malayan whips, building bunkers, Hanoi Hanna, the flight home and… American ignorance.

FROM THE WEB



PHOTOS OF OUR FOUNDER CHAPLAIN RAY W. STUBBE, WHO IS HOME FROM A VISIT TO THE VA. WISH HIM WELL. RAY W. STUBBE, 8766 PARKVIEW CT, WAUWATOSA, WI 53228, 414-771-2729



RAY, AUTOGRAPHING SOME OF HIS PUBLICATIONS



I used this photo in my book, Missing on Hill 700. My brother, Tony Pepper, took this while in Vietnam, but I have no idea who these two are... might ANYONE know?? I would so love to have their names Carrie Pepper



JOHN "LUM" LOMBARDO, MIKE CO 3/26 1ST PLATOON



SUPPER TIME





Hoang Phc, Commander of the 37th ARVN Ranger Battalion. In the Tet Offensive 1968, his 37th Ranger Battalion and the US Marines fought and defended Khe Sanh base, against the North Vietnamese Army. After the battle, Captain Hoang Pho was promoted to Major. Later in the war, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and became the Deputy Commander of the 12th Ranger Group in the I Corp.





They were known as the Black Panthers (note his patch). They had recently come from Hue City where their relatives were murdered along with all priests while the Black Panthers were south of Phu Bai helping the CAP Marines in the villages fight off attacking VC during Tet. When the young Captain linked into the Khe Sanh lines, he chose the only approach suitable for NVA tanks. He told Col. Lownds that his brother commanded an NVA tank unit, and when he came, his brother would not get by his Black Panthers. Stand gentlemen, he served at Khe Sanh.



A very Happy Birthday to my Brother...Bill Aiello...Served with the Marines in VN & retired as a MP in the Army...He is a proud Husband, Dad, and Grand-Pa...His wife Jo is a Marine and his son William was also a Marine...I am proud Brother











I GET PICTURES



PHIL NUCHERENO & LOVELY WIFE LYNN WITH A BUNCH OF GOOD FRIENDS

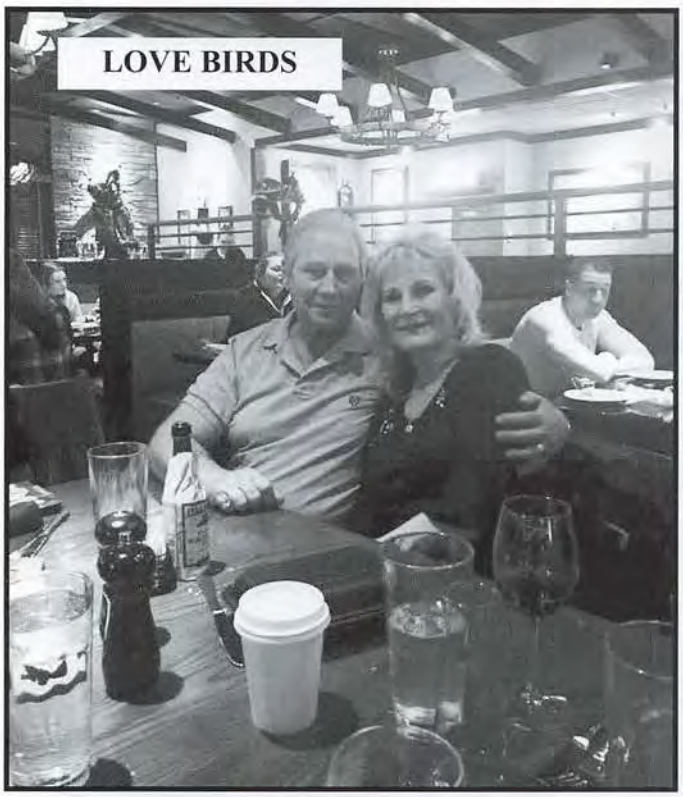

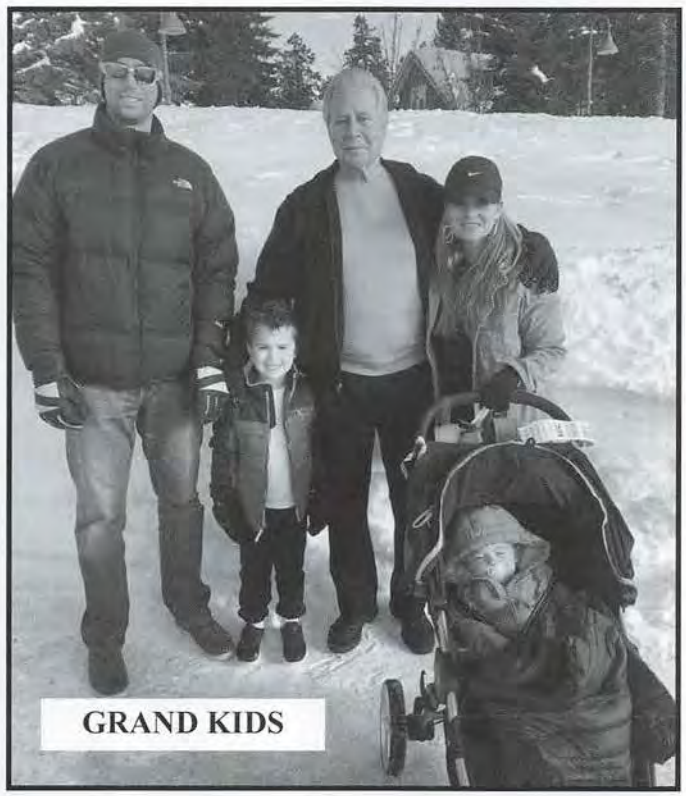

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

A FRIENDSHIP FORGED IN WAR REKINDLED 50 YEARS LATER, AND A HEARTFELT GIFT

By Bill Lohmann, Richmond Times Dispatch



During a luncheon last week, Vietnam War Veteran Mike Bonacci (Right) shows a watch given to him by Ron Echols. The watch is a replacement for one lost during the war.



In December 1967, Ron Echols, a Marine platoon Sergeant, had been in Vietnam less than a year and had never quite hit it off with his platoon commanders - one had rotated home, one had been wounded, one had been relieved of his duties. Then Mike Bonacci arrived.

As lieutenants went, Echols said with a laugh, Bonacci was on the ball." We worked together for about three months,' Echols, who was 21 and from Ohio, said of Bonacci, who was 24 and from Pennsylvania. "we became buddies ."

Out on patrol. one, day, terrible sound of someone stepping on a booby trap. It was Bonacci, Echols raced to the front to help.

"I thought his foot was blown off." Echols said, "His leg was " shredded from the shrapnel. "

A corpsman bandaged him up. Echols helped lift Bonacci's stretcher onto a helicopter for transport to a ho spital.

Bonacci asked: Echols to take the watch off his arm. Echols had taken a liking to Bonacci's distinctive Zodiac Sea Wolf, a diving watch, over the months they'd gotten to know each other, often joking that Bonacci should sell it to him for $10.00 or some other ridiculous price.

Echols thought Bonacci wanted him to put the watch in the lieutenant's pocket so he wouldn't lose it. No, Bonacci said, "Put it on. I want you to have it.

Echols replied, Ok, I will keep it until next time 1 see you."

That turned out to be a very long time. Before we get to the rest of the story, however, I should tell you that a lot happened in the ensuing years.

Echols was later wounded during an ambush as he was maneuvering troops against the enemy. Losing the watch in the confusion. He returned to the States, after four years in the Marines, having received a Purple Heart and Bronze Star and retiring as a second Lieutenant. He settled in Richmond because his wife, Sue, is from here. He's been here since 1968.

Over the years, he searched for Bonacci from time to time - wondering if he'd made it home and how he was doing with out luck.

A few years ago, he attended a reunion and saw Bonacci's name on a platoon roster. He hadn't had the correct spelling of Bonacci's last name. The search was on again, and this time in 2017 there was success. Or as Echols tells it, he was from Northeast Pennsylvania. I was from Ohio, and I found him in Fredericksburg.

Echols placed a call and Bonacci couldn't believe it was his old friend. They met the next day, talking for three

hours. Ron filled in a lot of the blanks I had, "Bonacci said."

One of the blanks that Bonacci filled in was that he been told, while recuperating at a hospital in Japan. that Echols had been killed Hence, he never searched for Echols once he was back stateside.

Bonacci, who operated an insurance agency in Fredericksburg. spent most of a year in and out of hospitals as doctors- saved his leg and foot. He still walks with a bit of a limp. and he needs to stop every couple of hours on car trips to get out and stretch. But he's dealt with it. knowing the alternative.

"I'm glad I'm here.' he says.

The men see each other regularly now, volunteering as docents at the National Museum of the Marine Corps along Interstate state 95 in Triangle .

"He and I are the only two docents at the museum who served in combat together" Echols said.
Echols teaches a class on combat leadership for sergeants at Marine Corps Base Quantico talking about his experience in Vietnam, including the time he captured about 50 Viet Cong soldiers without firing a shot.

He had been leading a small patrol, when the area became overrun with Viet Cong. Badly out numbered. Ech-



ols had his men hide in a ditch next to a road until the Viet Cong passed except they didn't pass by. They came to a standstill on the dirt road, a few yards from where Echols and his men were hiding. Echols still isn't sure why he did this, but he leaped from the ditch, yelled the Vietnamese word for "stop" and they did. Help arrived soon, and the Viet Cong were taken prisoner.

He also tells the story about Bonacci. When Bonacci is available, he introduces him at the end. which is always a nice moment.

He did that last week when he was asked to speak at the monthly Houston-Holicky-Sitter Veterans Group lunch in the upstairs meeting room at the Publix on John Rolfe Parkway.

When Echols introduced Bonacci, the audience, mostly Marines stood up and applauded in an extended standing ovation. But that wasn't all

.

Echols, now 73, invited Bonacci 76 to the front of the room and pulled out a small box

"Mike", I lost that watch," said Echols handing Bonacci a watch with the Marine Corps emblem on its face. "but I got you a replacement.

"Love you, man.' Bonacci said after lunch that he was surprised by the watch and gratified by the friendship with Echols they have rekindled, "I'm glad I made the trip." he said of the drive from Fredericksburg, "and I am glad we reconnected "

I GET PICTURES



Had another really great trip this year with Dave (Doc) Leverton and Barb. Dave was one of our 2nd PLT Corpsman who was wounded Feb 7th 1968 on hill 861. Proud to call him brother...

WELCOME HOME 26TH MARINES
Old Article Brings back Memories



The Marine regiment that defended Khe Sanh has returned home.

More than 300 Marines of the 26th Regiment landed at the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, carrying their colors, command element and a record of almost three years of steady combat.

They were greeted by five Marine Generals, including General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr. Commandant of the Marine Corps, as well as several hundred mothers, wives and sweethearts.

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The return of the 26th Marines the regiment that turned a siege into defeat for two NVA divisions in early 1968, as part of the President's Phase III redeployment of troops from Vietnam.

In formation, commanded by Col James E. Harrell the returnees heard the Commandant say "You have earned your rest and these colors have earned their rest, too. Thank you for your service, Marines, and welcome home ."

The 26th Marines became a unit of the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, commanded by BGen Ross T. Dwyer, The regiment was deactivated at Camp Pendleton. The unit won the Presidential Unit Citation for its defense of Khe Sanh, and prior to leaving Vietnam, it was presented the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry,

KSV IN THE NEWS

LATE DOCTOR, ADVOCATES FOR DISABLED TO RECEIVE GREENSBURG ALUMNI HONORS
BY Jeff Himier
DANIEL PULTZ, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN

A Vietnam veteran who assists today's wounded warriors, a consultant for nonprofits who advocates for people with physical challenges and a late Greensburg pediatrician who cared for young patients for more than 60 years will be honored at April's annual Greensburg Salem Distinguished Alumni banquet.

Presented by the nonprofit Greensburg Salem Education Foundation at Ferrante's Lakeview in Hempfield, the latest alumni awards will recognize, respectively, Daniel Pultz of Pittsburgh's North Side (Class of 1961), Linda Dickerson of Pittsburgh (1978) and the late Dr. Pascal Spino (1941).

The event has been held since 2014. It honors graduates of Greensburg High School and Greensburg Salem High School who are "dedicated to public service professionally and personally" and serve as role models for today's youth.

Pultz, who grew up in Southwest Greensburg, served two tours as a Marine Corps officer in the Vietnam War, surviving the siege of Khe Sanh. He was awarded the South Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star.

In a varied civilian career, Pultz worked as a counselor and cottage supervisor at the Warrendale Youth Development Center for adjudicated delinquent boys, founded the Chariot Group of Companies, which specialized in leasing cars, and developed Applied Business Computers, a technology firm that sold and serviced hardware and software networks for regional companies.

Most recently, he assisted at Semper Fi Odyssey, a transition program for wounded service members. He has been a team leader at 47 of the program's weeklong events, accumulating more than 10,000 volunteer hours.

Dickerson operates 501(c)(3) Squared, a Pittsburgh firm that provides management consulting services to clients including nonprofit organizations, and is a principal in Lynch and Dickerson Resource Development. She serves on the boards of the River City Brass Band, Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium and Carnegie Mellon University and is an ex officio member of the Point Park University board. She has chaired the boards of Pittsburgh Ballet Theater and Visit Pittsburgh and served for two years as CEO of the National Aviary in Pittsburgh.

Dickerson, who uses a wheelchair, is a longtime advocate for disability rights. As noted by the non-

profit Disability Rights Pennsylvania, Dickerson founded and served on the board of Accessibility Development Associates, an organization that performs accessibility audits around the country.

She worked with entertainment venues to ensure they have wheelchair-accessible seating and created a business plan for Bender Consulting, a company that operates nationally to locate jobs for people with disabilities. She also is credited with working toward passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990.



Spino earned the Citizens Service Before Self Honor from the Medal of Honor Association, in 2011, "for a lifetime commitment to treating children, often not charging those who could not afford health care." He received the Westmoreland County Community College Humanitarian Award in 2001.

A World War II Navy veteran, he served as a lieutenant on the medical ship the USS Hope. In a 2008 Tribune-Review story, he noted that his desire to become a doctor was reinforced after he contracted tuberculosis as a teenager and spent time in a sanatorium.

Spino retired from medical practice in 2008 and was 91 when he died on July 27, 2013. His son, Domenic Spino, is expected to accept the alumni award on his behalf.

MORE KSV IN THE NEWS

JERRY WILCOXEN RECALLS THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH
BY JERRY MAY

KEATCHIE, La. - It was a busy 13 months for Jerry Wilcoxen in the Vietnam War. The Marine fought in 22 campaigns, including what he calls "the big one."

He was among about 5,500 Marines who were cut off and surrounded by three North Vietnamese Army divisions. That meant they were outnumbered nearly 4 to 1 and under siege. Jerry was just out of Woodlawn High School. It was now January of 1968, when he and his fellow Marines were attacked at their garrison. So began The Battle of Khe Sanh.

"The longest 77 days," Jerry says. "Some days you might take 12, 13-hundred incoming rounds. People don't understand what that's like. It's very unnerving.

"You just lay there and take it. That's all you can do and hope it stops at some point before it gets you," Jerry added. "They'd just shell, bomb. Shell, bomb. Everybody around me either got hit or got killed.

"There were times I thought my number was up, but it just didn't work out that way. I had a little something to say about it," he went on to say.

The North Vietnamese would fire, then hide their big guns in caves. But with improving weather, the U.S. brought in their big weapons from above.



Jerry Wilcoxen holds a group photo with fellow survivors of the Battle of Khe Sanh, as they gathered at the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

"I really think what broke their backs was the B-52 strikes," Jerry says.

He described watching the bombers make drop on long lines of NVA targets.

"A mile across there, one plane would just blow it up. Boom boom boom boom boom," Jerry rattled off.

The U.S. inflicted thousands of casualties on the NVA and Viet Cong, while losing an estimated 1,500 of our own before withdrawing from Khe Sanh.

Jerry wasn't wounded there. But he was a few months later at another battle. He was hit by shrapnel in three places. Some of it's still in his left arm.

"They asked me if I wanted a Purple Heart," Jerry recalled. "I said, 'Purple Heart and ten cents would get me a cup of coffee.' And I just kept on going."

Jerry shrugs off the effects of the war, like PTSD and some ailments from Agent Orange, just like he did not getting that Purple Heart. After his stint in the Marines, Jerry built an air conditioning service business.

NAVAL CHAPLAINCY SCHOOL AND CENTER RETURNS TO NEWPORT

The Naval Chaplains School, as NCSC was once known as, resided in a building at Naval Station Newport, dedicated and named for Lt. Robert Raymond Brett, a Navy chaplain killed in action while serving with Marines in Vietnam in 1968. In 2009, NCSC moved from Naval Station Newport's Brett Hall to Fort Jackson, South Carolina as part of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission. Bringing chaplain and religious program specialists (RP) training together, the combined training location was renamed the Naval Chaplaincy School and Center.

In March 2019, the NCSC returned to Newport, Rhode Island and to its historic home in Brett Hall. Throughout a year of renovations and updates, the NCSC continued to train chaplains and RPs and to develop and deliver ready, relevant religious ministry training to achieve fleet readiness. Initial training for chaplains occurs at NCSC in Newport and initial RP training in Meridian, Mississippi. Throughout their careers, chaplains and RPs return to NCSC for further rank-based training.

"I'm very excited about NCSC's return to Newport," said Lt. Cmdr. Justin Hayes, an instructor at NCSC. "By moving back here we're reconnecting with our roots as Sailors. Those who leave here go to their commands ready to help strengthen the warfighter's spirit. A lot of the different weights we carry on our shoulders can degrade mission readiness, and it's the chaplain's role to be someone who breathes fresh life into the fighting spirit of the warrior."

Brett Hall's namesake felt called to become a Catholic priest from a young age and was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Navy in June 1967. On Feb. 22, 1968, five months after arriving in Vietnam and six months after graduating from Naval Chaplains School, Brett and his Marine chaplain assistant, Cpl.

Alexander Chin, were in the midst of the 77-day siege of Khe Sanh. A helicopter arrived at their po sition, which Brett and Chin intended to board but they waived off and returned to the trench, aware that the Marines were continuing to take fire and that care would need to be offered. Moments later, the area was attacked with a barrage of 122mm rockets, with at least one hitting their trench. Brett



Photo By Petty Officer 2nd Class Derien Luce | 200313-N -EL867-0028 NEWPORT, R.I. (March 13, 2020) Capt. Steven R. Moses, commanding officer of Naval Chaplaincy School and Center (NCSC), right, and Rear Adm. Brent W. Scott, Navy Chief of Chaplains, left, cut the ribbon to formally commemorate the relocation of NCSC to Naval Station Newport and Brett Hall. NCSC develops and delivers religious ministry training to achieve fleet readiness. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Derien C. Luce)

and Chin were killed, along with six other Marines. All NCSC students are encouraged to uphold Brett's example through his ministry of presence, continued care, and selfless devotion to duty with Brett embodying the Chaplain Corps motto, Vocati ad Servitium, "Called to Serve." Brett and Chin's legacies continue to reverberate in the halls of NCSC where chaplains and RPs prepare to be with Sailors, Marines, and Coastguardsmen when the next fight comes.



WE MISS OUR FRIENDS



OBIT

SGT/MAJ RALPH F. SARGENT, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, C BTRY, HQ BTRY & WHISKEY BTRY 1/13.

AUGUSTA – Ralph F. Sargent, 84, of Augusta died Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at VA Hospice Unit Togus Springs. He was born in Gardiner on the 28th of March 1935, the son of Grandville M. "George" Sargent and Georgia I. Halloway Sargent. He attended schools in South China and Gardiner. He was a member of the class of 1954. He furthered and completed his education in the military and completed some accounting courses at Mid-State



College in Augusta.

He entered the Marine Corps Reserve at the age of 17 with his long-time friend, Arthur J. Baker. They went on active duty in 1954 and integrated into the regulars the same year. He completed over 24 years of service and obtained the rank of Sergeant/Major, E-9.His service awards were the Bronze Star and Marine Commendation with the combat V for Vietnam during his first tour. Other awards consist of the Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnam Service 6th award, Presidential Unit Citation 3rd award, Marine Good Conduct 7th award, and National Defense 2nd award. And other awards include The Cuban Blockade and Vietnam Cross of Gallantry w/Palm, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal Device.

He fought in the Battle of Khe Sanh, where his unit was surrounded for 77 days. It was the fourth biggest battle in the history of the Marine Corps. Tours of duty included five different times at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Parris Island, S.C. as a drill instructor, recruiting duty in Woonsocket, R.I., two Mediterranean cruises, Quantico, Va., two tours at Guantanamo Bay Cuba after the blockade in 1962, four tours in the far east at 13 months each, at NROTC Unit in Auburn, Ala., and retired from the instructor and inspector staff at Lawrence, Mass. on Sept. 30, 1976.

He also served or traveled on 23 different ships during his career. He married his high school sweetheart, Orise M. Bean, on Jan. 14, 1955. They lived in several states on the eastern seaboard. Both of his children were born while he was in the military. After retirement, he worked for Capital Security Police for four years and 11 years at Digital Equipment Corporation retiring as a senior supervisor. He and his wife traveled to Alaska and Hawaii. They spent their summers in northern Maine at their camp on Lake St. Froid, Winterville. They also took many trips to Las Vegas, using their time share. He was a member of American Legion Post 4, Gardiner, ME, VFW Post 9, Gardiner, and he was the Commandant of the Marine Corps League Detachment 599.He was an avid hunter, fisherman, and gardener, canning and freezing many of his own vegetables.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Orise; daughters Deborah L. Berner and her husband Thomas of Augusta and Cynthia A. and husband Patrick Woodside of Sidney; grandchildren Eric L. Proctor and his wife Megan of Richmond, Allen M. Proctor and his wife Shannon of Plymouth, Mass., Shawn Irish of Augusta, Nicholas and Lauren Woodside of Sidney; and great-grandchildren Sophie and Ethan Proctor of Richmond, Charlotte Proctor of Plymouth, Mass. and Bryson Irish of Augusta. Services will be held at a later date



OBIT

COLONEL ROY BAHR, USSF US ARMY, C/O FOB-3 KHE SANH VIETNAM

He was born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida and swam competitively at the University of Florida. He spent summer as the sole lifeguard along the Jacksonville beaches.

He joined the Naval Air Reserves on his 17th birthday and served as an aviation ordinance man until 1950. He joined the Army and attended Infantry Officer Candidate School at Ft. Benning in 1951. He



volunteered for Special Forces and earned his Green Beret in 1962. His first assignment was at the Special Warfare School as an instructor in the Unconventional Warfare Dept.

He attended the Command and General Staff College in 1963 and the Defense language Institute studying Spanish. He was then assigned to the Irregular Warfare Committee at the School of the Americas in Panama.

He also served as a Training Advisor to the Chilean Army earning Chilean Jump Wings. In 1968 he volunteered for Vietnam and served with MACV SOG as the Commanding Officer of FOB-3 in Khe Sanh which was under siege when he arrived.

He commanded FOB-l in Phu Bai and FOB-2 in Kontum. He then became the Commanding Officer of Command and Control Central. In 1969 he was the Deputy Commanding Officer of the 10th Special Forces Group at Ft. Devens, MA. In 1971 he was promoted to Colonel and assigned to the joint US-Spanish Permanent Secretariat. In 1973 he was assigned to the US Readiness Command at MacDili AFB. Col. Bahr retired in 1974. He had served during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

Among his many awards and decorations are the Bronze Star, legion of Merit, Soldiers Medal, Air Medal w/OLCs, Combat Infantryman's Badge and Master Parachutist Badge. He also earned numerous Service and Campaign Medals.

After his retirement he built homes in Montauk, NY and restored Victorian and Colonial homes in Newport, Rio He was active in real estate in Florida, Rhode Island and North Carolina. He was a diehard Gators fan and enjoyed watching football games. He enjoyed Golf and was an avid reader.

Roy remained involved in many veteran's activities and was especially fulfilled by his MACV SOG friendships. He was inducted into the Infantry OCS Hall of Fame in 1972. He was a member of the Special Forces Association Chapter 21, Special Operations Association, Khe Sanh Veterans, DAV, VFW, OCS Alumni Assn. and the Military Officers Association of America.

Roy is survived by his wife, Maxine; step-son, Mark [Kristin]: granddaughter, Anna; sister, Audrey, many nieces, nephews, their children, and his many friends and comrades. Roy was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



THE RAINBOW HERBICIDES OF THE VIETNAM WAR ERA
IT WASN'T JUST AGENT ORANGE







2,4,5-T AGENT GREEN	2,4,5-T AGENT PINK	2,4-D,2,4,,5-T AGENT PURPLE
USED: 1962 **PURPOSE:** DEFOLIATION OF JUNGLE VEGETATION **IN VIETNAM:** 365 DRUMS (20,056 GALLONS)	**USED:** 1961-1963 **PURPOSE:** DEFOLIATION OF JUNGLE VEGETATION **IN VIETNAM:** 1,315 DRUMS (72,256 GALLONS)	**USED:** 1962-1963 **PURPOSE:** DEFOLIATION OF JUNGLE VEGETATION **IN VIETNAM:**12,475 DRUMS (685,474 GALLONS)

THEY SENT YOUNG MEN TO VIETNAM TO DIE AND SOME OF THEM DID. THE REST OF THEM HAVE BEEN DYING IN BITS AND PIECES SINCE THE FIRST DAY THEY SENT THEM HOME

THE RAINBOW HERBICIDES OF THE VIETNAM WAR ERA



CACODYLIC ACID
AGENT BLUE

USED: 1966-1972
PURPOSE: CROP DESTRUCTION
IN VIETNAM: 29,330 DRUMS (1,611,619 GALLONS)



2,4 D,PICLORAM
AGENT WHITE

USED: 1966-1972
PURPOSE: DEFOLIATION OF JUNGLE VEGETATION
IN VIETNAM: 104,800 DRUMS (5,758,328 GALLONS)



2,4-D,2,4,,5-T
AGENT ORANGE

USED: 1965-1970
PURPOSE: DEFOLIATION OF JUNGLE VEGETATION
IN VIETNAM : 208,330 DRUMS (11,447,272 . GALLONS) (685,474 GALLONS)









KSV IN THE NEWS

TOM QUIGLEY BRAVO CO 1/26 KHE SANH VETERAN

Here is BRAVO! Marine Tom Quigley who was guest speaker today for Illinois' annual Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day, always held the last Saturday of March. In one of those coincidences that



Skipper Kenneth Pipes believed were not coincidences at all, this year's event was on March 30, the precise 51st anniversary of the Payback Patrol. Today's event was held at the Mt. Zion Civic Center. We salute you, Tom! Semper Fi.

SPEAKER'S BIOGRAPHY

Tom Quigley was born on August 11, 1948, in Springfield ,IL He enlisted in the Marine Corps in March of 1966, and served a tour in Vietnam from June 1967 to March 30 1968. He was wounded March 30 during the Siege of Khe Sanh and was awarded the Purple Heart on April 1, 1968 while on the hospital ship the USS Repose.

As a result of his wounds, he spent 10 days on the Repose and 2 months in a Naval Hospital in Japan. He was honorably discharged in June 1969, with the rank of Sergeant. In 2010 he had the opportunity to participate in a documentary, "Bravo: Common Men, Uncommon Valor", in which he was interviewed about his experiences in Vietnam and the Siege of Khe Sanh.

A life long resident of Springfield, he spent almost 35 years in the automotive business, as sales manager and then as a wholesale representative. He retired in 2015

Tom lives in Springfield with his wife Nancy who he married in 1980. They have 2 children, a son Shane (companion Nixon) and daughter Erin (husband Jacob), 2 granddaughters, Julia and Autumn, a grandson, Carlin, plus a bonus grandson, Arlo.

OBIT

M/SGT DAVID MAGEE USMC KHE SANH VETERAN HMM-364 PURPLE FOXES

Dave was born April 22, 1943 in Salt Lake City, Utah to Agnes Greer and Harry Dewey Magee Sr. He was raised by his mother Agnes and his stepfather Benjamin Edwin Anderson.

At seventeen year's old, Dave enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He was a Vietnam Veteran and retired as a Master Sergeant after twenty years of service. During his time in the Marine Corps he made many lifelong friends. One of the highlights of his Marine Corps service was to be a member of the helicopter squadron HMM-364 Purple Foxes. In his retirement years he enjoyed acting as webmaster for the squadron alumni as well as organizing multiple reunions to help bring these brothers back together.

He married Geneil Paget in Jacksonville, North Carolina on September 9, 1967. Geneil would say their



relationship was adventurous and loving. Dave always said that even though he grew up in a big family he came to understand what family really was after he married Geneil. His children and grandchildren often teased them about spending so much time together.

Dave recently celebrated thirty-five years of sobriety. He was actively involved in Alcoholics Anonymous.
It was rare to see Dave sitting still until later in his retirement. He was always on the go and working on a project. Dave enjoyed spending the day on his favorite trout stream. He loved woodworking and always had a project in progress. His favorite past time was spending time with his grandchildren and great grandchildren.





He is survived by his wife, Geneil; daughter Vicky Cook (Roger); son Benjamin Roy Magee (Lisa); 4 grandchildren, Kari Horner (Michael), Jordan Cook, Alexandra Marie Pentecost (Jordon), Nathanial Tims Barrow, and 6 great-grandchildren, Gracie Horner and A.J. Horner; Averett Pentecost, Charlotte Pentecost, Yvaine Barrow, Arietta Barrow and sister, Ruth Carlston.

He was preceded in death by 9 brothers and sisters. In lieu of flowers the family request donations be made to the Semper Fi Fund. https://semperfifund.org/



KHE SANH VETERAN IN THE NEWS

ALTOONA VETERAN TO BE INDUCTED INTO PITTSBURGH HALL OF VALOR

FRED MONAHAN ECHO CO 2/3

ALTOONA, Pa. (WTAJ) — Altoona native Fred Monahan will soon be inducted into the Joseph A. Dugan Hall of Valor at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum in Pittsburgh.

He is one of the most highly decorated marines from Pennsylvania that served in the Vietnam War. His story will be honored with that of other veterans who were awarded the Medal of Honor and other medals of distinction, like the Navy Cross.

Monahan was awarded the Navy Cross March 24th, 1968 for what happened to him and his men in Vietnam about 15 months earlier.

On May 3rd, 1967 Monahan was a rifleman, and an intelligence scout in a position on a hill that was of great interest to both sides.

In a battle for the position near Khe Sanh, Monahan's company came under intense mortar, automatic weapons fire and hand grenade attack. While others pulled back, Monahan put himself in between hundreds of attackers and the command post and was injured by a grenade.

He stopped repeated enemy assaults while commanding 4 other men. "It was certain death, so we're going to go down swinging. And it was an enemy position they vacated on a hilltop and we took without a fight. They came back 3 nights later to take it back off of us. I knew when I heard enemy sergeants and lieutenants screaming to their men, 'go get 'em, kill those Americans.' I knew I better, people better put up a fight"

FRED MONAHAN, VIETNAM WAR VETERAN

They kept the enemy pinned down until reinforcements arrived. Then Monahan guided the American troops in a counter-attack.

Monahan said that he fired rifles and threw grenades for 5 hours. Monahan doesn't consider himself a hero. "I am not a hero. The solders, sailors, airmen and Marines who lost their lives are the heroes." Fred lives in Greystone Court Villas in Altoona and has a son in Punxsutawney.



I GET PICTURES



Steve Starkovich met With Terry Reed this morning in Alamogordo NM.. Terry is with a large group of Religious Bikers on their way to Cloudcroft NM to Eat Lunch and enjoy the high country. Terry and I were in Vietnam Together.



DAN & FRANCESCA DIFLORIO

JOYCE L. DeVERNEY (1949 - 2020)
WIFE OF WAYNE "BUTCH" DeVERNEY
USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, HQ CO 2/26

Joyce Lloydette (Brancroft) DeVerney passed away Sunday, April 19, 2020 at her home after a courageous battle against ALS "Lou Gehrig's Disease". She was born on September 13, 1949 at Munson



Hospital. Joyce grew up on a farm in Kingsley, Michigan and graduated from Kingsley High School class of 1967.She moved to Marquette to attend Northern Michigan University where she met Wayne "Butch" DeVerney. The two were married in St. Christopher church in Marquette on May 11, 1974.

Joyce was devoted to her family, husband Butch, daughters Jessica (Jeff) McLaughlin and Emily (Kriss) Hahn all of Midland. Her pride and joy was her 7-year-old grandson Easton Hahn. Joyce also cherished her sister Beth (Fred) Bynum and her nieces and nephews.

She was a member of the Midland VFW Ladies Auxiliary Post 3130 and spent countless hours volunteering her time there. She was also a member of Sanford American Legion and was very proud to be the wife of a military serviceman. Joyce was a strong advocate for Title 7, which encourages all schools to teach Native American culture. Private family service took place at the Ware Smith Woolever Funeral Chapel with Khe Sanh Veterans Chaplin Ron Rayner officiating. Those planning an expression of sympathy are asked to consider the donor's wishes.

In loving memory of Joyce DeVerney, a most caring, giving and wonderful woman, one of our Khe



Sahn Veteran wives. I will miss sharing treasured moments with you at reunions. We will all miss you. Rest In Peace, my dear, dear friend. Prayers and condolences to Butch and your family.

ALICE KENNY (MEMORIES)










FMF

OBIT

HENRY J. DUVAL SR., USMC KHE SANH VETERAN H&S CO 2/26

BENNINGTON, VT- Henry Joseph Duval, 70, of Rutland, VT died Tuesday morning April 7, 2020 at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington.

He was born on June 19, 1949 in Proctor, VT the son of Charles and Germaine (Knapp) Duval.

He attended Castleton Elementary School and Fair Haven Union High School before enlisting in the United States Marine Corp in June of 1967.
Henry graduated from Marine Corps boot camp at Parris island South Carolina on September 1,



1967. His tour of duty in Vietnam took place between 1968 and 1969 as an artilleryman where he took part in the famous battle of Khe Sanh among others. He was honorably discharged from the United States Marine Corps on June 27, 1973 at the rank of corporal.

After his service, he was employed as a welder and was a member of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers Union. He also did carpentry work with several contractors in the Rutland area.

His hobbies included fishing and hunting, especially with his nephew Neil Cunningham and niece Michele Clark, and he even had a crossbow license. He also enjoyed shooting guns, playing cards, and antiquing. He was a collector at heart. He loved to dance and play the guitar with his brothers and had an affection for real country music. Two of his favorite song were "The Old Man and His Horn" by Gene Watson and "A Daisy a Day" by Jud Strunk.

He was known for speaking his mind regardless of what anyone would think and his grandchildren inherited that spitfire for sure.

Survivors include a son Henry J. Duval Jr of RI and his fiancé Amber Holden, 3 sisters Carolyn and George W. (deceased) Aitken of Poultney, VT, Barbara and Thomas Ettori of Castleton, VT, and Joanne and Bruce Williams of Poultney, VT, brothers John and Bobbi Duval of New Bern NC and James and Sandy Duval of Granville, NY, 2 granddaughters Ashley and Kyle King and Bailee Cameron, a grandson Hunter Cameron, a great-granddaughter Grace King, and nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his daughter Melissa "Missy" Cameron on January 17, 2008, mother in 2013, father in 1981, a sister Charlene Weyrach in 2008 and 3 brothers Bill Duval in 2015 Charles Duval Jr. in 2000 and Michael A. Duval Sr in 2018

Graveside services with state Honor Guard were held in the Hillside Cemetery in Castleton, VT.



PRIVATE REFLECTIONS AND STEVE WIESE BY CRAIG W. TOURTE

Ken Rogers did a wonderful job sharing with us his article, "Steve Wiese was an American Hero" I am confident Steve would have respectively appreciated the article and kind words, he loved the Marine Corps, those he served with and in particular those in Bravo Company. His ending salutations on the Khe Sanh Board and other articles he had written always ended with "Bravo Lives." His way of showing the men he served with and so loved were never far from his thoughts. I wanted to take a few minutes here to say a few words about my friend Steve.

This is not an obituary, but rather just some personal reflections I have on the Steve Wiese I knew as a friend. I first met Steve at one of our Khe Sanh Reunions and we discovered that we lived but a few miles from each other. I introduced Steve to the little bar group I play golf with, Steve didn't play golf but bought a set of clubs and started swinging away, he was a natural athlete and within a year was playing much better than I. He attended our January 21st Khe Sanh luncheon in Chico/Oroville each year hosted by Tom Horchler. Steve never assumed anything, and I always had to personally invite him, when he felt comfortable, he enjoyed himself as much as others enjoyed his presents.

Unbeknownst to many, the camera and microphone loved Steve, he was one of the most elegant impromptu speakers I have ever heard. When Steve and I attended Jim Kaylors memorial, he shared a few memories of his association with Jim. Steve's moving and inspirational parting words from the podium were, "Be sad that Jim is gone, but happy that he was here." In 2012, the Military Channel under the title "Combat Tech" aired a segment that was filmed at my home. Steve did a wonderful interview. I was rather stunned during the interview, which was included in the broadcast when he said, "…the whistling of the bombs falling before they hit the ground was like an angel's voice." It was just a wonderful and profound statement that left little doubt in the mind of the viewer the impact the B 52 bombings had on the morale and spirit of those who had endured that horrific event.

I could get verbose here, but it would just be redundant, we spent many hours together and shared many thoughts and opinions, too many to recount and most just left to my wonderful memories of one of my good friends and true heroes. In closing we had several conversations about religions, sometimes when you see great tragedy you ask yourself "Why" as in why me, why did I survive? the answer is, we will never know, "That's why we call it faith." When speaking about organized religion and its complexity and beliefs Steve told me something his grandmother said, "The Lord knows what's in my heart." A personal statement so simple and easy to understand, we agreed it described our beliefs. So, this sad chapter closes for all of us, knowing the book of departure waits for us all, but we find solace in the words Steve spoke, "Be sad that he is gone, but happy that he was here."

FROM HIS LOVING DAUGHTER

Today you would have been 72. It's been 60 days now and it still doesn't feel real. You told me I was your rock and God knows I'm holding it down as best I can. But I would trade it all if I could get time back. I know you are looking down on us and smiling.....laughing, at times probably angry as well



(stubbornness runs strong in this family). Today we will try to keep the tears back and just remember the good times. The fun times. The jokes and laughter. The good memories that over power the bad. And I will end this with something from you. Happy birthday old man




11/13/2014


BRAVO CO


FORGOTTEN
KHE SANH
VIETNAM





VETERAN OF VIETNAM WAR RECOUNTS BATTLES NEAR KHE SANH COMBAT BASE

By PAUL J. CHOCLIS
MARINE CORPS STAFF SGT.

This account was written by Khe Sanh Veteran USMC, Staff Sergeant Paul Choclis, of Marion Heights.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the battles and Siege of Khe Sanh Combat Base in the Vietnam War: The valley mountain base was located in the northwest corner of South Vietnam, a few miles below the (demilitarized zone) separating north from south, close to the Laotian border to the west.

In 1968, Khe Sanh gained Worldwide attention When an estimated 40,000 to 60,000 North Vietnamese Army enemy forces laid Siege to a garrison of about 6,000 US servicemen Called to arms to defend Khe Sanh were legendary units of the Marine Corps 5th (Spearhead Division), consisting of three battalions, of the 26th Regiment, along with their main artillery support, the 1st , 13th Marines.

In addition, joining the fight was a group of South Vietnamese Rangers and the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, also known as the Walking Dead .

In 1967, as a result of actions in and around the surrounding hills and at the Khe Sanh Combat Base, hundreds of US. forces were killed in action and thousands wounded.

I remember when my special landing team of the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines and C Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines received orders to move north and engage the enemy at Khe Sanh.

Our units had arrived "in country" in the Republic of South Vietnam in December 1966. At Christmas, we received a baptism of fire in the Valley of Shadows/ Death at Cobithanhtan northwest of the imperial capital at Hue.

Military intelligence . reported an estimated 4,000 retcong/NVA forces in and around the valley sector. Immediate contact was made upon entering the valley, and we engaged the enemy in a weeklong battle.

Our first KIA was Paul Evans, of Lima Co., 2nd platoon, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines. The battle site at Cobithanhtan Valley was named in his honor: Camp Evans.

After our first battle, we were ordered to conduct combat operations of the entire valley and jungle areas near the base of the Ho Chi Minh Trail We spent nearly three months in the torrential, punishing monsoon rains of 1967 before returning to the base at Phu Bai, near Hue, for refitting.

Near the end of April 1967, while still recovering from valley operations at Cobithanhtan, our positions at Phu Bai were hit with some 200 plus rounds of 82mm mortars. Several aircraft, vehicles and structures were damaged or destroyed. Sixty-eight Marines were wounded.

It was at Phu Bai in June 1967 that we received word of a large enemy buildup in the north DMZ areas. Orders were cut for us to engage the enemy at Khe Sanh.

On or about June 13, 1967, our units headed north . In a convoy to the base at Khe Sanh. Along the way, we took sniper fire from a rice paddy near a Quang Tri Village and, before we reached Khe Sanh base. the NVA blew out a bridge in front of us. The convoy was halted and choppers were called in to fly us into Khe Sanh.

The NVA/Vietcong were well aware of our every movement Khe Sanh's vulnerable position in a valley surrounded by rolling hills and higher elevation made a virtual shooting gallery for the enemy.

On June 27, 1967, about a half hour after midnight, the Khe Sanh Combat Base and nearby positions were hit with some 5O-plusrounds of 82mm mortars. Then, just before dawn on the same day, the enemy hit again with 50 rounds of 122mm rockets.

Our C Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines (105 howitzer parapet area) took a direct rocket hit, missing the guns and the command bunker but hitting our supply tents just several feet away.

This deadly attack would take the lives of 24 U.S. servicemen and wound well over 100. Many actions, encounters and battles would take place in the First Corps region below the DMZ before 1967 ended.

Then, in January 1968, a 77-day siege of. Khe Sanh Combat Base took place, remembered now and forever in American history as one of the deadliest actions in the Vietnam War.

In 1983, the Khe Sanh Veterans Association was formed and dedicated to preserving the memories of the gallant warriors who served, fought and died as a result of the Khe Sanh combat experience. The founder of Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. is Navy Chaplain Commander Ray W. Stubbe. He is a survivor of the siege in 1968 and a leading authority on Khe Sanh. Stubbe also authored or co-authored many articles, papers and books.

I am an original member of the Special Landing-Force, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines in the Western Pacific (Wespac) operations of 1966-67. I served as a scout/forward observer for C Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, attached to infantry companies Lima and Mike, 3/26 Marines, at the Khe Sanh Combat Base in 1967.

A true experience and actions of my units in the Vietnam War is featured in the book "to Hear Silence," By Author Ron W. Hoffman".

I also am a life member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Inc. and of the Disabled American Veterans.

Note: For extraordinary heroism in action against the NVA and Vietcong enemy forces in the Republic of Vietnam, the 26th Marines and 13th Marines received America's highest unit combat award, the Presidential Unit Citation.





Shown here are some of the original Marines from the Special Landing Force, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines (1966-67): Standing on right, Earl Rupp and Garry Wilkerson; standing from left, Randal Cok, Jim Jasmund, Larry Smith and Skip Fisher; below from, Bob Zink, V.J. Beadling, Paul Choclis and Conrad Reslock. Choclis, who lives in Marion Heights, submitted the photo

"FREEDOM IS NOT FREE"

BY CRAIG W. TOURTE
HQ BTRY 1/13

Everyone who knew William Denman called him Buddy and that nickname appropriately described who he was. Buddy grew up in the town of Maxwell, located in Northern California. Maxwell is the quintessential example of a rural small-town America where everyone knows your name, family, and most of your relatives if they had lived around those parts for a few generations. There would be no reason for the road traveler to take the exit off Interstate 5 and drive into the little farm community of 500 where most folks live in quiet obscurity. Some have come and stayed and raised their families while many others have moved along and are now mostly forgotten.

From the Virtual Wall - "Dau Tieng, Tay Ninh Provence, 03 Nov 1966 - elements of the 196th Infantry Brigade and the 25th Infantry Division got into a heated fight with entrenched and bunkered VC troops, a fight that grew into a full-fledged battle fought over a three-day period. Landing Zone Lima Zulu, slightly north of where 1st Bn, 27th Infantry fought on 03/04 Nov, drew some of the heaviest fighting beginning after C Company, 2/27 Inf, was inserted at about 1400 on 04 Nov."- "

"Dau Tieng, Tay Ninh Provence, 03 Nov 1966 - elements of the 196th Infantry Brigade and the 25th Infantry Division got into a heated fight with entrenched and bunkered VC troops, a fight that grew into a full-fledged battle fought over a three-day period. Landing Zone Lima Zulu, slightly north of where 1st Bn, 27th Infantry fought on 03/04 Nov, drew some of the heaviest fighting beginning after C Company, 2/27 Inf, was inserted at about 1400 on 04 Nov."

Buddy was a popular kid, handsome and athletic with blond hair and light blue eyes and he possessed an independent and adventuresome spirit many admired. Buddy had a difficult and tragic family life; there were many challenges and hardships including a grievous personal experience between his parents that he witnessed at a very young age. After he graduated from high school Buddy volunteered for the Army and attended boot camp at Fort Ord located in Monterey California. He thrived in the Army life with direction, discipline, and a sense of belonging. He found a new beginning, writing to many friends about the respect and admiration he had for the warriors he had met, respected, and hoped one day to emulate.

In the summer of 1966, I was living with my aunt and uncle in Maxwell and looking forward to going off to Marine Corps boot camp. Going into the Marine Corps was an adventure I was looking forward to even though I knew I would be deployed to Vietnam shortly after my training was completed. Buddy had completed his Army training and was home visiting his mother and sister and preparing for his deployment to Vietnam. I went over to his house with my cousin Larry Bowen (1947-1968) and walked into his bedroom where a few of his friends were visiting with him. It was mid-morning and he was still in bed, stating that he wanted to rest as much as he could after all the training and before his deployment. He was in high spirits and looking forward to serving his country and all of what that entailed. We talked about his military training and what he expected while in Vietnam. I sensed that he too was in pursuit of action and eager for a new experience. I told him that he would be returning from Vietnam before me and when I returned home, we would share and compare experiences. I wished him luck and was a little envious that he would get to the war before me. I left knowing he was doing what he wanted to do and I was looking forward to becoming a United States Marine. I entered Marine Corps Boot Camp (Platoon 1145) on October 29, 1966.

When Buddy arrived in Vietnam his Sergeant asked him what he wanted to be called, William or Bill. His response was "My friends call me Buddy." His Sergeant said, "Then Buddy it is." He was assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry (Wolfhounds), 25 Infantry Division. Within a short period of time, he went into combat against the experienced, prepared, and determined Viet Cong forces. Tragically only three and a half months after arriving in Vietnam he was killed in action.

C/2/27 moved south from LZ Lima Zulu, intending to link with 1/27, but could go only a few hundred meters before being stopped by VC dug into a tree line. Unable to move forward, with enemy troops infiltrating to their rear, the battalion and company commanders dead, and under fire from three sides, C/2/27 pulled together after nightfall, using a left flank displacement to get out of the "horseshoe" and avoid encirclement. The maneuver worked, and C/2/27 held out through the night amidst sporadic hand-to-hand fighting. By 1030 on 05 Nov, Alpha 1/27 fought through and relieved C/2/27." At the

same time, HHC and A Company, 2/27, was coming into LZ Lima Zulu, intending to take the VC from the rear, pounding them against the anvil formed by A/1/27 and C/2/27."

05 November 1966 - While the engagements cost the VC dearly, with several hundred known dead, the US infantrymen paid a high price with 50 men killed in action over the three-day period. William (Buddy) Denman was one of the twenty Americans who was killed at LZ Lima Zulu on the 3rd day of the fight."

The community cemetery of Maxwell is located a mile west of town. William Luther Denman (August 25, 1946 - November 5, 1966) is buried near the flagpole; his final resting place is identified with a brass United States Military Headstone. He was the first to be killed from the small town of Maxwell and County of Colusa during the Vietnam War. He had the largest funeral ever attended with vehicles stretching for a couple of miles leading to the cemetery.

Several years ago I placed a small note on the A Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhound website regarding Buddy, just so others would know he had someone who continued to remember him and his sacrifice for this wonderful country.

Similar to the Khe Sanh Veterans websites (Where I served during the Vietnam War) - Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc & Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page - which have contributed to bringing together those who fought in the battles on the hills and the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh, the Wolfhounds website is followed by those with comparable experiences.

Several months ago I received an email in response to that little notation I had written on the Wolfhound web site. A former Vietnam and Wolfhound Veteran Robert Park contacted me and said that he was with Buddy during that particular battle and continues to remember Buddy's death with great sadness. Robert said he was the one who asked Buddy what name he wanted to be called. Having been in the country longer and with more experience, Robert felt an obligation to watch out for Buddy and has carried with him all these years a feeling of responsibility for Buddy's death during the battle. A few years ago, Robert had come to Maxwell to visit Buddy's grave and say goodbye but was unable to locate his grave at the cemetery. He asked around town, but no one seemed to recall who Buddy was nor were they familiar with the location of his grave. Robert has vowed to return someday to say his final farewell.

A few of weeks after my email communication with Robert I received an email from Chuck Dean, another Vietnam and Wolfhound Veteran who told me he had been in communication with Robert and that he had been with Buddy when he fell and was planning on driving to California and visit Buddy's grave. I shared both emails with people I knew were close to Buddy while he was growing up.

Email from Chuck Dean - "I plan on visiting Buddy's grave in May of this year (2012), something I have tried to face for 45 years. Buddy and I were very close friends in Vietnam. We were both Grenadiers in A Co 2/27 Wolfhounds. I was with Buddy when he fell. I only wish I could have done this years ago, but have only been able to come to grips with Vietnam in the last couple of years. I have hooked up with some of the other "Hounds" such as Robert within the last year and have been steadily working my way out of the shadows. I will be in the Maxwell area to visit Buddy's gravesite in May. Buddy will always be part of the band of brothers called the Wolfhounds and will never be forgotten. His memory will live on as long as there is one Wolfhound alive."

Freedom Is Not Free" Reads the program pamphlet provided at the Memorial Day Service held at the Maxwell Cemetery, May 28, 2012 - I attended the Memorial Day Service with 100 or more people from the community sponsored by American Legion Post 218 (Maxwell) - Ronald Azevedo, Commander. The Maxwell High School Band played the Star-Spangled Banner and one of the high school girls sang the National Anthem. The service included a bugler playing taps and a rifle volley "Salute to Deceased Veterans." I didn't notice any politicians or back-slapping significant officials, just local folks with moist eyes and heavy hearts who attended out of respect and honor for those who served and for those who had fallen.

Chuck Dean arrived for the service and was shown the location of Buddy's grave by Paul Richter (1st Lt. U.S. Army) and my cousin Gary Bowen (1949-2013) (U.S. Navy) who were childhood friends of Buddy's,. There was a large floral wreath standing at the headstone sent by Robert Park in the name of all the Wolfhounds Buddy served with. Chuck said that he had driven out from Alabama to finally say goodbye. We had a long conversation where he reflected on the battle and Buddy's loss. Chuck said that Buddy was just a few steps behind him when he

was shot and killed. He walked over to Buddy, turned him over, and saw that he was deceased. Chuck said that he had the canvas helmet cover Buddy had worn that day. I held the now faded green camouflage helmet cover and observed written in black ink Buddy's blood type, unit, and the words "Pat" for his high school girlfriend Patricia. Chuck said that he had kept the cover locked away for 45 years and now it was time the cover should be with Buddy's hometown, family, and friends.

Chuck handed the helmet cover to Buddy's friend Paul Richter for safekeeping until it could display properly in a place of care and honor. I recognized that Chuck's act of presenting Buddy's helmet cover to Paul and the town of Maxwell was more than just transferring some possession of property. It was a spiritual release, a dedication, shared memory, and memorial of an item of hallowed significance to be forever treasured. It was part of Buddy's spirit and represented his life and sacrifice in battle and that significance had been tucked away for 45 years in a corner of Chuck's heart and soul.

Paul told me there were efforts under development to build an appropriate incased memorial with memorabilia dedicated to Buddy which would include the now gifted helmet cover along with his military Bronze Star, Purple Heart, military photograph, and additional items relating to Buddy already on display at the American Legion. The new display would not only be a tribute to Buddy but also to the many who have served in the Armed Forces and a reminder to all that, "Freedom Is Not Free."

OBIT

MAJOR GENERAL VICTOR HUGO JR. USA KHE SANH VETERAN , C/O 1ST BATTALION 44th ARTILLERY

Major General Victor J. Hugo, Jr., United States Army (Retired), a 1954 graduate of the U. S. Military Academy @ West Point and great-grandson of the renowned French author Victor-Marie Hugo—Les Misérables, The Hunchback of Notre-Dame, etc.—recently passed away. General Hugo played an under recognized role in the 1968 battle @ Khe Sanh since he commanded the U. S. Army's 1st Battalion, 44th Artillery and as such he provided a battery, with supporting units, for badly needed fire support in defending the Combat Base.

It was my good fortune to meet General Hugo a few years ago. He was a most gracious gentleman. We had a pleasant conversation, which included discussing the battle—he was most interested in my views even though I emphasized that, as an eighteen (18) year old PFC on a nearby hilltop, I had a most insignificant part and limited direct knowledge.

Mostly my knowledge was based on my exposure to the men with whom I served. The General assured me that all of us were heroes; that what we accomplished with the assets we had was absolutely remarkable. General Hugo was a remarkable man. Rest in eternal peace Sir.



KSV IN THE NEWS

MIDLAND REMEMBERS SERGEANT ALLAN ARCHER, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN VIETNAM VET

VIRGINIA FLOREY

Sometimes a single moment defines our entire life. Such a moment came for Allan Archer on Hill 55 in Vietnam in March of 1967. This is the story of that moment and the men who shared that moment with him.

The Vietnam Conflict was unlike any other war that young American men were called upon to fight. Guerrilla warfare was the enemy's strong point. The mountains and vine-tangled jungles of Vietnam enabled the communist forces to hide. To shoot. And to slip back into the jungle leaving young Americans dead or wounded from bullets coming from an unseen enemy. Some of the enemy wore black clothing to blend in with the darkness of the jungle. They wore tennis shoes or handmade sandals so the sound of footsteps wouldn't alert the Americans that they were coming. Some wore uniforms.

The Vietnam conflict proved to be a hard lesson to learn by men accustomed to knowing where the enemy was. The enemy in other wars had faces. But not this time. The enemy was bullets chattering through the trees with no faces and no names. A

man named Colonel Ba was the man in charge of the communist snipers. His team was both ruthless and successful until the appearance of an American Marine they called White Feather.

In October 1966, two young Marines named Carlos Hathcock and John Burke were trained to be snipers. It wasn't long before Carlos Hathcock began his tour of duty in Vietnam. A young Marine who stuck a white feather in his camouflage cap for good luck. And it was on Hill 55 that Carlos Hathcock would meet another young Marne named Allan Archer, the man who pledged his life to keep snipers like Carlos Hathcock alive.



Allan Archer was only 19 years old at the time when one officer gave high praise to Allan Archer, describing him as a fearless leader, bold with an inner strength and iron determination. Faithful, loyal, true to his word. A sniper team could trust Lance Corporal Archer with his life.

Pelting rain, a steamy fog, endless waiting for the enemy to appear, Carlos Hathcock and John Burke were enduring it all as they waited for relief. Their relief was coming in the form of Lance Corporal Allan Archer and the 18 men in his Platoon. Archer would never tell his men to do something that he wouldn't do.

Bullets chopped through the tree line as Hathcock and Burke lay concealed in a small gully and then they heard a thrashing sound behind them. It was Allan Archer and his platoon and Hathcock called out, "Archer?" And Archer answered back, "Are you two alive?"

Hathcock said to Archer, "Hope this little bit of what we have lasts. I think all your boys have are M -16 rounds and M-60 belts. And I don't want to be trying to yank rounds out of those machine gun belts with this bunch coming at us."

Sliding over to Hathcock's side, Archer told him he had radioed operations when the shooting started and told them that he and his platoon would consolidate and set up a defense with Hathcock and Burke. Hathcock asked to see the map Archer had used and said to him, "Are these the numbers you gave?" Archer said they were, and Hathcock replied, "That red dot is us," and pointed to Archer's map. Archer had unerringly located Hathcock and Burke.

Settling back with the map in front of them, Archer told Hathcock that a little close air support and a couple of choppers with about 70 or 80 reinforcements were coming. It was a definitive moment in the life of two young Marines on Hill 55 in Vietnam.

Allan Archer, Rank E-5, 1/26th Marine Battalion, Company Bravo, enlisted Feb. 1, 1966, and served until Jan. 31, 1968. He moved through the ranks rapidly beginning as PFC, Lance Corporal, Corporal and then Sergeant at Khe Sanh. He participated at battles at the DMZ, the three gates of hell, the Mekong Delta, Operations Prairie and Hastings and spent most of 1967 in Khe Sanh. Allan participated in 17 major operations while in Vietnam.

After Allan Archer left Khe Sanh, his replacement and 34 Marines in Allan's platoon died in an ambush. By Feb. 27, 1968, Allan's platoon was wiped out and it took 45 days to remove all the bodies. It was called the Ghost Patrol.

Allan received a note he treasures to this day from Sept. 11, 2014, by Lt. Col. USMC (retired) Guy A. Peete Jr. to Allan.

"Archer, you are one of Marines greatest and effective combat leaders of Marines that I have ever had the pleasure of serving with in my career of 24 years in the Corps. The third herd will always be with us," the note reads. "Lest we forget – Semper Fi."

When Allan returned to Bay City, he went back to his home at 1111 Madison St. where his 1959 Oldsmobile was still sitting in the yard. To his amazement, it started up immediately. Today Allan and his wife, Elizabeth, live in Midland. The Vietnam Conflict has been over for decades. Still, veterans of that time in our history carry the memories of a part of their life they will never forget.
Semper Fidelis is the motto of the Marine Corps.

It's Latin for Always Faithful and Sergeant. Allan Archer treasures those words a half century after returning home from the Vietnam Conflict. He served with dignity, faithfully fulfilling his part in a war that lasted 19 years. His duty? To protect. To help. To lend aid wherever it was needed. Allan Archer personifies the proud record of the Marine Corps.

Editor's note: This is the final installment of the May 2020 Midland Remembers, which has featured veterans with local ties all month long. Midland Remembers will return to its regular publishing schedule in June, which is the first and third Thursday of each month.

REPLY
JIM COOPER

I transferred in to Archer's squad in April of 1967, almost a broken man from 86 days in the bush with Lima 2 3/26 on Operation Chinook I and II. Straight out of the bush many of us were transferred from the men we had grown to trust with our very lives. Men who had become closer than family. Fear of not having that kind of support with the new Marines I was assigned to Bravo3 1/26 was overwhelming me.

Archer took me into the squad with a calm but firm demeanor. I personally credit him with getting my head back on straight. His leadership inspired me to become the Marine I had been and gradually learn to trust the men in this new to me platoon as I hope I earned theirs. I ended up spending more time in country with this platoon and am proud of everyone of them. Have had the chance to meet our old Lt Guy Pete a few years ago and talk to Archer on the phone. Guy Pete has been extremely good at keeping me and others informed of those he is in contact with. Can't say more than he did in the above article except to say I found Archer to be everything that was said in this outstanding article. Semper Fi, Brothers.

AN OLD COBRA RETURNS TO ITS ARTILLERY ROOTS AND FINDS A NEW HOME IN OKLAHOMA

Posted on May 28, 2020 by Dan Parsons

U.S. Army Cobra 15654 began its career with three years of combat during the Vietnam War, and almost ended its days in Minnesota with birds nesting in its engine compartment.

Now it has been fully restored to its original configuration as an aerial rocket artillery helicopter and found a new home with the folks who will care for it at the U.S. Army Field Artillery Museum at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Known as attack helicopters and the precursor to the AH-64 Apache, the AH-1 initially served the Army in aerial rocket artillery units providing close air support to troops on the ground in Vietnam, said Jon Bernstein, a Cobra historian and director of the Air Defense Artillery Museum at Fort Sill.

"Aerial rocket artillery was a very specific role and there were actually only three units that performed that mission through the entirety of the war," said Bernstein. "Their main mission was support of troops on the ground. They weren't like Cavalry where they use Cobras to seek and destroy the enemy and they weren't like assault helicopter company Cobras, which were designed primarily to escort Hueys in and out of hot landing

zones, although Cobras in ARA units did all that, as well. They were supposed to be on-call fire-support units for ground troops in contact."

It was for this reason that Bernstein decided the artillery museum should have its own Cobra, so he went hunting for one in the collection of old vehicles and other artifacts the Army keeps from past conflicts. Artifacts on the so-called "de-accession" list typically end up at museums outside the government system or are reused by the Army for other purposes.

"I looked through the entire collection to see what Cobras were there and to see if any of them had aerial rocket artillery provenance and I came across this one, which was due to be de-accessioned," Bernstein said. "I said, let's grab this one while we can."

Before arriving at Fort Sill, the helicopter lived outdoors at the Minnesota Air National Guard Museum in St. Paul, which was hoping to "get rid of it," Bernstein said.

The 50-foot-long AH-1S Cobra attack helicopter arrived at the museum in March 2019 and has undergone extensive restoration by Bernstein and exhibits specialist Zane Mohler since. During the recent shutdown, Mohler had time to finish painting the entire fuselage in preparation for it being installed in the museum.



THE COBRA, NOW RESTORED TO AH-1G CONFIGURATION, OUTSIDE THE ARTILLERY MUSEUM IN FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA. JON BERNSTEIN PHOTO

Entering service in 1966, the Bell AH-1 was a production model gunship for the U.S. Army, with one 1,400 shaft horsepower (1,000 kW) Avco Lycoming T53-13 turboshaft engine and shared fuselage commonalities with the UH-1 Huey.

This particular Cobra was flown by A Battery, 4th Battalion, 77th Aerial Rocket Artillery (ARA) in Vietnam and Laos from December 1970 to March 1971, when it was blown up during a sapper attack on the Marine Corps fire base at Khe Sanh.



A STILL FROM A VIETNAM WAR-ERA FILM SHOWS COBRA 67-15654 AT KHE SANH. JON BERNSTEIN PHOT

"I started digging a little deeper and we actually were able to find video of it at Khe Sanh on the morning after the sapper attack," Bernstein said. "You can clearly see all the damage to the tail boom and other things."

The helicopter then went back to manufacturer Bell for a rebuild, after which its operational history becomes "a little fuzzy," Bernstein said. It might have been rebuilt as a G-model at that point or as an AH-1Q, which introduced the M65 tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided (TOW)/Cobra missile subsystem, M65 telescopic sight unit (TSU), and M73 reflex sight. It was those sighting systems that sat in the nose turret the aircraft sported when it arrived in Oklahoma.

In any case, by the late 1970s the helicopter was sporting new 1,800 shp (1,300 kW) T53-L-703 turboshaft engine that classified it as a baseline AH-1S, Bernstein said. It flew with the Minnesota National Guard for an unspecified amount of time before being demilitarized and placed on static display outside the museum in St. Paul.

"It was in rough shape," Bernstein said. "It had been outside for years. There were 18-inch deep bird nests in the engine compartment."

It went into the museum workshop in December 2019 to emerge during the Covid-19 lockdown and will be installed atop its piling in the coming weeks as the museum prepares to reopen.

Pretty much from December through [May 27] we've been working on it, of course with the quarantine and everything, Zane [Mohler] has been the only person in the exhibit shop and he was able to get the entire thing painted and stenciled during those two months."

Before that, the pair had to remove all the anachronistic add-ons of its later service, including wire-strike protection devices, and replace the tail rotor and tail rotor gearbox. They also had to replace the AH-1S nose housing, which features the later addition of a swivelling turret.

Bernstein was able to track down an older, smoother AH-1J nose to backdate the helicopter to its aerial artillery days in Vietnam. But when the helicopter had its nose job in the 1970s, one of the forward fuselage bulkhead was widened to accept the new turret. Those had to be narrowed by about 1.5 inches in order to accept the older nose.

"It was more involved than I thought it was going to

be, but definitely a challenging and rewarding experience," Bernstein said.



THE COBRA, NOW OUTFITTED AS AN AH-1S, ARRIVES AT THE ARTILLERY MUSEUM IN FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA. JON BERNSTEIN PHOTO

Much of the credit goes to Mohler, Berstein said. As the lone person with access to the museum shop during the shutdown, Mohler continued the work. He was able to hand-build four "impossible to come by" M200 rocket pods by borrowing the real deal from the Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker, Alabama, and copying it using PVC pipe, plexiglass and sheet metal.

Mohler also had to build proper pylon fairing from scratch by molding fiberglass using original technical drawings and Vietnam-era photos.

For Bernstien, a former Apache pilot, returning this Cobra to its aerial artillery roots is a complete circle. After the battle of An Loc in 1972, the Army realized that helicopters could kill tanks, Bernstein said. For the past two decades, the Apaches he flew as tank killers have been performing air support for troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. "The Army shifted focus from a fire-support platform to a tank killer and that's how the Apache evolved," Berstein said. "And now, the Apache now has been doing a very similar role to what the ARA Cobras did in Vietnam."

PATRICK GAVIN TADINA, VIETNAM WAR'S LONGEST CONTINUOUSLY SERVING RANGER, DIES AT 77

By CHAD GARLAND | STARS AND STRIPES
Published: June 1, 2020

A 30-year Army veteran who was the longest continuously serving Ranger in Vietnam and one of the war's most decorated enlisted soldiers has died

.

Patrick Gavin Tadina served in Vietnam for over five years straight between 1965 and 1970, leading long range reconnaissance patrols deep into enemy territory — often dressed in black pajamas and sandals, and carrying an AK-47.

The retired command sergeant major died Friday morning in North Carolina. He was 77.

"Early this morning my Dad ... took his last breaths and went to be with all the Rangers before him," his daughter Catherine Poeschl said on Facebook. "I know they are all there waiting for him."

He is survived by his wife, two sisters, two daughters, four sons, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, the family said in a brief online obituary. A funeral had not yet been scheduled.

A native of Hawaii, Tadina earned two Silver Stars, 10 Bronze Stars — seven with valor — three Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry, four Army Commendation Medals, including two for valor, and three Purple Hearts.

After the release of the second Rambo movie, he was profiled in Stars and Stripes, where he was contrasted with Sylvester Stallone's beefy — often shirtless — portrayal of a Vietnam combat veteran. "The real thing comes in a smaller, less glossy package," wrote reporter Don Tate in December 1985. "Tadina stands just over 5-feet-5, and swells all the way up to 130 pounds after a big meal."

His small stature and dark complexion helped him pass for a Viet Cong soldier on patrols deep into the Central Highlands, during which he preferred to be in the point position. His citations describe him walking to within feet of enemies he knew to be lying in wait for him and leading a pursuing enemy patrol into an ambush set by his team.

In Vietnam he served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol, 74th Infantry Detachment Long Range Patrol and Compa-

ny N (Ranger), 75th Infantry.

Tadina joined the Army in 1962 and served in the Dominican Republic before going to Southeast Asia. He also served with the 82nd Airborne Division in Grenada during Operation Urgent Fury in 1983 and with the 1st Infantry Division during Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

A 1995 inductee into the Ranger Hall of Fame, he served with "extreme valor," never losing a man during his years as a team leader in Vietnam, a hall of fame profile at Fort Benning said.

Some 200 men had served under him without "so much as a scratch," said a newspaper clipping his daughter shared, published while Tadina was serving at Landing Zone English in Vietnam's Binh Dinh province, likely in 1969.

Tadina himself was shot three times and his only brother was also killed in combat in Vietnam, Stars and Stripes later reported.

The last time he was shot was during an enemy ambush in which he earned his second Silver Star, and the wounds nearly forced him to be evacuated from the country, the LZ English story said.

As the point man, Tadina was already inside the kill zone when he sensed something was wrong, but the enemy did not fire on him, apparently confused about who he was, the article stated. After spotting the enemy, Tadina opened fire and called out the



Patrick Gavin Tadina is pictured here in an undated photo wearing North Vietnamese Army fatigues and carrying an AK-47, as he often did as a long range reconnaissance patrol team leader over five years straight serving in Vietnam during the war. One of the most-decorated enlisted soldiers of the Vietnam War, Tadina retired as a command sergeant major in 1992. He died Friday, May 29, 2020, at age 77.

CATHERINE POESCHL



This undated family photo shows Patrick Gavin Tadina, far right, during his time as a drill sergeant at Fort Jackson, S.C., in the late 1970s. Tadina, a retired command sergeant major and one of the most-decorated enlisted soldiers of the Vietnam War, died Friday, May 29, 2020.

ambush to his teammates before falling to the ground and being shot in both calves.



He refused medical aid and continued to command until the enemy retreated, stated another clipping, quoting from his Silver Star citation.

"When you're out there in the deep stuff, there's an unspoken understanding," he told Tate in 1985. "It's caring about troops."

He was not one to boast of his experiences, his daughter said in a phone interview Monday.

After retiring from the Army in 1992, he continued working security jobs until 2013, Poeschl said, including stints in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In recent years, he'd been struggling with dementia and other ailments, she said, and he often believed he was back in the Army with his buddies.

He always seemed most at home with his "Ranger family," his daughter said. She was trying to get word of his death to as many as she could.

"He was my dad, but he belonged to so many other people," she said.

VETERANS SAY THEY FEEL 'SAD' AND 'TERRIBLE' WITHOUT TRADITIONAL MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS

Updated May 24, 2020; Posted May 24, 2020

During Operation Lam Son 719, Tony Goodson defended the tactical operations center — all day and night — from attacks in every corner during the Vietnam War. But one explosion struck near him, shooting him into the air.

When he landed, he looked down and saw his legs covered in bloods and scars.

Goodson was winded, but after medical officers picked the shrapnel out of his legs, he was sent back into the field to defend the Khe Sanh Combat Base, supporting South Vietnamese troops.

"I felt very lucky the next morning," Goodson said.

Lam Son 719 left over 200 Americans killed or missing in action while 1,149 were wounded, according to History Net.

Goodson, now 70 years old, told The Jersey Journal on Sunday that he can never forget about those he lost during the war. Memorial Day is a "bittersweet time," he added, but not being able to get together for the traditional annual events — due to coronavirus virus concerns — makes him sad.

Goodson, a commander at VFW Shelton Post 2294, said they will instead have a small gathering for a flagpole raising and prayer service outside, spaced out from one another, on Monday at 10 a.m. Members of the post will also visit monuments individually.

All Jersey City-run events are canceled until further notice.

On Friday, Gov. Murphy loosened state restrictions allowing groups of 25 outside. Though Monday will have a smaller crowd, Goodson said it's the right move to follow guidelines and avoid hosting large gatherings because it's not worth the risk.

The Jersey City native was a U.S. Army sergeant and served in Vietnam from June 1970 to May 1971. He was also part of the 101st Airborne Division during Lam Son 719 where 19 U.S. Army aviators died, 59 were wounded and 11 went missing, according to the Air Force History and Museums Program.

"Birthdays, holidays, it's all the same to me," Goodson said. "... I always think about those who couldn't be here."
For Stephen Holinka, 72, he said he feels "terrible" without the traditional Memorial Day events, which are a way for him to commemorate his former comrades — people who he thinks about often.

Holinka has marched with Jersey City's Lafayette Amvets Post 33 in its annual Memorial Day parade for the last 40 years. Afterwards, there would also be a mass, memorial services and a luncheon for members, family and friends at Broadway Diner in Bayonne. But those are other events that won't be happening Monday due to COVID-19.

"Just a shame we couldn't have it...," Holinka said. "... It's been a very disappointing year."

Holinka said that on Monday he'll be thinking about all the people he knew during his three years of service. He was a former sergeant and spent a tour in 1966 to 1967 in Korea before volunteering in 1968 for the Vietnam War.



The commander of Amvets Post 33 also said he'll been commemorating the former World War II veterans of the post, many of whom have died.

"I knew many of them very well and we had some great times at the post," Holinka said. "I just think about them so much and what they've done for this country."

"I constantly think about them. They're part of me." Though there'll be no parades, some places like Weehawken have decided to move their festivities online.

Weehawken Mayor Richard Turner told The Jersey Journal Saturday that there will be a virtual Memorial Day Ceremony on Monday. It will include a dedication of wreaths, veterans ritual, naming of deceased Weehawken Elks Lodge members and more.

The broadcast will be available through the township's government Facebook page and website.

"I think we're all disappointed," said Elks Exalted Ruler Lorraine Wuillamey. "But of course, everybody understands."

JIMMY TAYLOR SHARED A POST

Lt. Col. Fred Headley. Col. Headley was the Army Airfield Commander at Khe Sanh during Lam Son 719. One of the finest men I ever met. We became friends during my time at Khe Sanh (his tent was next to mine) and I found out he had married a girl from Ft. Valley, Ga, just up the road from where I was from. A few years ago I set out to find him. Sadly, he had passed away some three years before but I found his family and his widow reaches out to me on certain days like today. One of the photos was taken behind Col. Headley as we watch a C-130 taking off from Khe Sanh. This was early March, 1971 before the base itself had started taking incoming. The other photo shows Col. Headley on the far right in a steel pot with sleeves rolled up as he and some of the air traffic controllers and one of the Air Force weathermen, which was my job, enjoy a lukewarm Pabst. This pic was taken after the incoming started.

VETERANS SPOTLIGHT

JOHN FERGUSON SR./US AIR FORCE
By WAYNE SOARES May 15, 2020

While interviewing this week's Veterans Spotlight feature, two words kept coming to mind—class and humility. John Ferguson Sr. served his country in the US Air Force from 1958 to 1969, ending his career as a captain.

He grew up in Westerly, Rhode Island, and graduated from the University of Rhode Island. He entered military service as a second lieutenant via an ROTC program in college.

During the Vietnam War his unit, originally stationed in the Philippines, was sent to Dong Ha because the US government wanted a radar site as close to the DMZ as possible. He was promoted to captain during this period.

We had no idea what we were getting into…my first impression was to stay alive…didn't know one Vietnamese from the other," Captain Ferguson remembered.

He shared this story: "We had a Vietnamese man that received a security clearance to work in our kitchen…we didn't know it at the time but he was actually a VC (Viet Cong) soldier…they shot him while he was lobbing grenades towards an area with Marines…place we never should have been…only thing war does is kill people."

When I asked Captain Ferguson about the closeness of his unit in the everyday threat of danger he responded with this: "We were mortared a few times under full moons…we had no casualties except equipment…that's because everyone worked together…we were close."

Captain Ferguson brushed aside a question about the holidays. "It just became one day…would like to have been home with my wife and four kids but I wasn't…looked at it as another day," he said.

Did he ever have the chance to see Bob Hope? "He didn't dare come that close to the DMZ…had a two-star general come in…I liked seeing him because he could get us equipment," Captain Ferguson said seriously

I asked Captain Ferguson if any one particular memory stands out during his time in Vietnam. He shared this: "We had four fighter aircraft on standby under my command…I was talking to Khe Sanh…they were under heavy mortar fire…you had to go through three to four different channels of communication all the way back to the Pentagon to get approval to send out the fighters…I wasn't getting the go-ahead but radioed Khe Sanh…they said they'd send up colored smoke where the fighters should bomb…I gave my two lieutenants permission to send the fighters…we squashed the mortar fire and saved everyone in the unit from capture or death…next day a lieutenant colonel comes in and ripped me…wanted to know who gave permission to send the fighters…told him I did…never said I did the right thing."

Captain Ferguson explained the qualities of a good leader, especially one involved in heavy day-to-day combat. "Understand your job…make sure your troops are taken care of and make sure the mail comes," he said

He was asked what he thought about when coming home from Vietnam. He said, "Wanted to see my family, badly…we got mortared a few times…and fortunately, we didn't lose any men."

Now 86, he has had prostate cancer and suffers from Parkinson's disease caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

Captain John Ferguson, thank you for your service to our great country.

MEMORIES

On 02 June 1969 Recon Team "Flight Time" from D Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, was



inserted on Hill 471 about a kilometer south of Khe Sanh in the Quảng Trị Province, Vietnam, On the

night of 03/04 June 1969 the team was attacked by an enemy force and requested both emergency extraction and immediate reinforcement. Communications with the team were lost at 0320. When the reactionary force arrived a little after 0400 they were too late ... the six members of "Flight Time" were dead. Five members of the team were in a small trench; the sixth, Cpl Buck, was approximately 10 meters further down the hillside. It was apparent from the state of the battle area that "Flight Time" had been overwhelmed in fierce Hand to hand combat.

OBIT

Warren Titcomb, 74, died on Saturday, June 13, 2020 after a long illness. Born in Portland, Maine,



he was the son of Virginia and the late Warren Titcomb. Warren was the beloved husband of TJ (Teri) Titcomb. They married after a 7-week courtship and celebrated 50 years of marriage on April 21. It was the only impulsive thing Warren ever did but he said he never regretted it.

Warren graduated with a B.A. in Psychology from Miami University of Ohio in 1967 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. He served in Vietnam, including time at Khe Sanh during the 1968 Tet offensive. After his honorable discharge as a USMC Captain in 1971, Warren and TJ moved to Arizona. He completed his master's degree in Counseling Psychology at Arizona State University. In their fifteen years in the Phoenix area, Warren worked as a mental health therapist and clinic director. He was a long-distance runner, braving the heat and sun to compete in 10K runs and marathons. Warren also began playing classical guitar and enjoyed his lessons with Miguel who regaled him with stories of his study under Segovia. Warren continued his love of making music throughout his life, although he rarely performed for any audience other than the family cat.

The Titcombs moved to Lancaster in 1986 after a two-year search for a new home. They chose Lancaster County for its quality of life, beautiful countryside, and relatively balanced four seasons. For the next thirty years, Warren helped thousands of individuals, couples and families as a therapist with Catholic Charities, the Lancaster Guidance Center, Family Service, and Wellspan Behavioral Health. He was widely known for his caring and innovative work, using cognitive behavioral approaches to help those with a dual diagnosis of major mental illness and substance abuse. Warren never met a "sick" person – he always looked for and found the goodness and potential of each individual.

Warren was an active member of First United Methodist Church in Lancaster, singing tenor in the Chancel Choir. He served on the Board of Allegro Orchestra Lancaster for twenty years and was a friendly presence, welcoming concert goers at the door.

Warren is survived by his wife TJ, mother, brothers Joel and Jason in Maine, and extended *family. The* family is deeply grateful for the loving and respectful care he received

WHAT I NEVER HAD

By Craig Tourte
HQ BTRY 1/13

II was sitting around my favorite watering hole a few years ago after playing a game of golf, shooting the stuff with a few old guys my age. The discussion got around to serving in Vietnam and "where were you and what did you do." One of the guys talked about his time in the Air Force and how he saw the world and the various bases and countries he had been in. Another talked about his time in the Navy and the food on the ships and how his bunk was right under the flight deck and the noise it

made. Another said that he was in the Corps but never made it to Vietnam but had spent time at Twenty-Nine Palms and Okinawa. Then one of the guys smiled and asked me where I was, while I was in the Marine Corps. Of course, everyone knew I had served during the Siege at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh. I didn't want to disappoint anyone. I tried not to make my story into a whine, but I knew what they all wanted to hear. I started out with "I Never…"

I figure I spent ten months on the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The other times in Quang Tri after the Siege, guarding something way off away from everything. Anyway, my story started off, "I never sat on a flush toilet, I never spoke to a Vietnamese, I never was in a town or large village, I never went into a bar, I never took a bath or shower from a forced water pipe, I never walked on cement or asphalt, I never saw an American woman, I never slept ion a bed, I never had a pillow, I never slept in sheets, I never saw a television, I never listened to a radio, I never sat in a chair, I never wore any under clothing, I never had my cloths washed except when I washed them in a bucket, I never ate a hamburger or had french-fries, I never had any shaving crème, I never walked on a rug, I never had more than one pair of boots, I never stood near a heater, I never had more than one pair of socks, except for two occasions of warm beer I never had an adult beverage, I never went to a USO show, I never went anywhere without a weapon, I never had nor wore civilian clothes, I never saw nor did I talk to any civilians, I never rode in a car…"

I think I stopped at that and looked around, I was kind of shocked to see the look on all of their faces, mouths were open, and eyes were wide and strangest of all, no one said anything. I said, "I think it's time for me to go home" and I stood up and walked out.

When I got home, I thought a great deal about what I had said and oddly the list got longer. I looked around my house and the list of "I never" just seemed to continue on forever. I hate the "my time was tougher than your time" because each has their own individual cross to bear and after all, I knew that my deprivation was much less than many and certainly less than those up in the hills of Khe Sanh.

OBIT

FERNANDO R. CORBACHO, USMC,
KHE SANH VETERAN H&S CO 1/26

It is with the deepest sympathy that I am reporting the loss of a Warrior ~ Fernando R Corbacho ~ on Saturday July 4, 2020.Fernando served with Honor, courage and commitment, the core values of the Marines. He was Honorably Discharged Medically after Earning a Purple Heart in 1968 during the Bat-



FERNANDO R. CORBACHO, USMC

tle of Khe Sanh while attached to 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, 3rd Marines Division. Fernando & Roberts mother brought them to the United States from Cuba in 1963 with the hopes of their having better lives...Rest Easy and Peacefully as we who remain will cover your post. Semper Fi Marine ~ Until Valhalla

OBIT

MICHAEL P. MATEY USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

Michael P. "Skip" Matey, Jr. passed away on March 3, 2020. He was 71 years old. Skip was born in Ridley Park, PA to Maryanna (nee Hipple) and Mike

Matey Sr. He is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Marlene; children, Michael III (Leslie), Nicole Matey-Reynolds, and Carrie Matey; grandchildren, Rebecca Reynolds, Daniel Reynolds, Matthew Reynolds, Christopher Fallis, Willow Matey, Holly Pattison, Michael Paul Matey, IV; siblings, Brad Matey (Charis), Janet Barsky, and John Moyer (Joan); sister-in-laws, Colleen Schantz (Joe), Christine Cubano, and Helene Ryan. Skip is preceded in death by his sister, Mary Beth Green and his brother in law, Michael Ryan.

Skip grew up in Abington, PA where he attended Abington High School. After graduating, Skip enlisted in the United States Marine Corp. Skip served as a radio operator in Vietnam for the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division from 1966-1970. He was awarded many medals and badges during his service including the Combat Action Ribbon for his combat service and his units were awarded 5 Presidential Unit Citations. He married Marlene at Camp Lejune in NC in 1970. After Skip was honorably discharged, he and Marlene moved to Willow Grove, PA where he worked for Bell Telephone and later Verizon until his retirement. Skip loved the mountains and found solitude there. He frequented the Poconos, Renovo, and Colton Point.

OBIT



JAMES T, CONNACHER, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

June 8th, 1940 - June 21st, 2020 James Trafford Connacher, a long time resident of Corona, CA, passed away at Kindred Hospital, Rancho Cucamonga, CA after a lengthy illness. James was born in Indiana, PA to Lisle and Mary Connacher, and grew up in Clymer, PA. He was their only son; he had three sisters. During his senior high school year, James met the love of his life, Sondra Sunday, while she was working as a cashier at a grocery store. James often joked that Sondra's father begged him to marry her, or she would "throw herself from the town bridge in grief". They were married shortly after he joined the Marines. James joined the United States Marine Corps shortly after graduating high school in what would become his first career. James was a patriot who spent 20 years in the Marines. He found himself in aviation as a helicopter mechanic, which led him to being a crew chief on various helicopters. He served four tours in Vietnam, being shot down on one occasion. But luckily after evading the enemy for one night, he was rescued the following day.

During the course of his service he traveled the world, and was stationed in many countries, and for a while was assigned to the USS Boxer as a Fleet Marine with his aviation unit. While in the Marines James was recognized for his exceptional service and devotion to duty, and was selected as one of the first recipients of the Marine Corps Air Crewman Award (now an annual award recognizing exceptional Marine Corps Air Crewmen). James participated in numerous rescue operations (both military and civilian), and he received several life-saving awards, which were personally presented to him by Igor Sikorsky (the developer of the Sikorsky Helicopter). One of James' proudest moments was when General Krulak pinned his Combat Air Crew "Wings" on him after the siege at Khe Sanh. James' last duty station was Marine Corps Air Station Tustin (known as LTA for the Lighter Than Air ships that were once stationed there).

While flying over Southern California, he noticed the then small town of Corona, CA, and thought it would be a nice place for his family to settle down at the end of his final enlistment.

He retired in 1978 as a Second Lieutenant having risen through the ranks from Private. After retiring from the Marines, James began his second career working for Alcoa Aluminum at the Corona Foundry. He started on the Foundry floor, and ultimately

worked his way up to the position of Foundry supervisor, where he was responsible for supervising the molding casts for various military projects including the cruise missile. After retiring from Alcoa, James, who was a licensed pilot, returned to his love of aviation keeping his hand in by working as an air frame and power mechanic for several local flight schools. He often said he did this so he could continue to fly on the cheap.

James was a long time member of the American Legion Post #0742, Corona CA. His hobbies included shooting and reloading his own ammunition (he was a lifetime member of the NRA), wood working and wood carving (he was a member of the Norco Chip Chuckers), fishing, and traveling with Sondra in their travel trailer. James had an appetite for knowledge, and loved to learn "what made things tick". For example, when he got into the sport of shooting, he wanted to know how firearms worked, so he took a gunsmith course, which led to his building several of his own firearms. He took up SCUBA diving. Not content to just learn to dive, he fashioned his own air tanks, built his own air regulator, melted and molded his own lead weight belt, and constructed his own wetsuit.

James is survived by his wife of 59 years, Sondra; his son Timothy (Pam); his daughter Tammi Meeks (Bruce); grandchildren Nikole Sanchez (Daniel), Rebecca Meeks (Jake), Christina Sesepasara (Lepe), Patrick Meeks all of Riverside, CA, and Stephanie Rust (Joseph) of Omaha, NE; and eight great grandchildren. Of all the titles James held, the ones that meant most to him were "Papa" to his grandchildren and "G-Paw" to his great grandchildren.

James was loved by his family, and will be truly missed. Graveside Services were held Wednesday, July 1st, 2020, 11:30 am Riverside National Cemetery 22495 Van Buren Blvd. Riverside, CA 92518

OBIT

CAPTAIN ALPHONSO NOSAL, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, BRAVO CO 3RD RECON

Mystic - Alphonso "Alphy" William Nosal, formerly of Somers and Mystic and most recently Scituate, Mass. died Oct. 17, 2020, after spending his last days with his family. Alphy succumbed to pneumonia after years fighting back from cancer that stole many physical things but not his love for his family and desire to live. Hard work, a great sense of humor and integrity were the hallmarks of his remarkable life. Alphy was born Dec. 13, 1943, in Enfield to Mary Maniscalci and John S. Nosal. He was the second of four boys, graduating from Enfield High School, where he was a standout athlete and later American International College in Springfield, Mass. In 1966, Alphy enlisted in the United States Marines Corps and attended Officer Candidate School at Quantico where he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and deployed to Vietnam in 1967. Just before shipping out to Vietnam, Alphy married his wife of almost 50 years, Ann Marie Olschafskie "Babe" also of Enfield. In Vietnam, Lt. Nosal served in combat as a platoon leader and, after being promoted to First Lieutenant, a company commander where he led his units in the battle of Khe Sanh. Alphy was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps at the rank of Captain.

Alphy had a 40-year career as a financial advisor working for the same company, known today as Morgan Stanley, in the Springfield and Harford Offices and as vice president and branch manager in Mystic. Throughout his career, Alphy was known literally as an "honest broker" and helped countless clients achieve their dreams through his financial advice and guidance. Before his battle with cancer, Alphy was an avid golfer and he remained a skilled fly fisherman and avid boater throughout his life. He and Babe traveled the world and enjoyed the company of some great friends and their extended family. Alphy was also known to be quite a "shooter" at the "Sun".

In addition to being a hero and enjoying success in life, Alphy was first and foremost a great dad instilling his sense of hard work, humor and integrity in his son and daughter. His humor, love and candid advice on all things life will be missed greatly by all those who were fortunate enough to have experienced it, especially Jed and Sarah. Nothing however compared to his love of his grandchildren who meant everything to him and kept him fighting after the toll cancer took on his body to be around to watch them grow, laugh with them and be an influence in their lives (mostly appropriate) – they are lucky to have had such a great "Pop". Finally, Alphy was also devoted to his dog, Happy, a larger than life golden doodle and faithful companion that never left his side.

Alphy is predeceased by his wife, Babe and survived by his children and their spouses, Jed M. Nosal and his wife Elaine of Milton, Mass. and Sarah E. Smith and her husband Jason of Scituate, Mass.; grandchildren, Andrew and Hannah Smith and Kiera and Oliver Nosal; three brothers, Michael

Nosal and his wife Barbara of Enfield, John Stanley and Joseph Nosal, both of Briny Breezes, Fla.; his beloved in-laws, Elinor McGilvery of New London, Jeanne Young and her husband, Richard, of Longmeadow, Mass., Marylee Telford and her husband, Peter Anastas of Waterford, Francis Olschafskie and his wife, Anna Poor of Jamaica Plain, Mass.; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A graveside service with military honors was be held at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 23, at the Elm Grove Cemetery on Route 27 in Mystic. There are no calling hours. Arrangements are handled through the Mystic Funeral Home in Mystic.





MEMORIES: THE GOLDEN BRIGADE 82ND AIRBORNE IN VIETNAM & BEYOND

1968 The 3rd Brigade 82nd Airborne deployed to Vietnam from Ft. Bragg N.C.282 Paratroopers gave the ultimate sacrifice for their fellow troopers and the Country they fought for1200 plus were wounded in a very short time. 22 Months in combat. Not to mention the 1000's of sociological scars. Photo below is 82nd ABN troopers honoring those who fell on the battle field . Forever young..

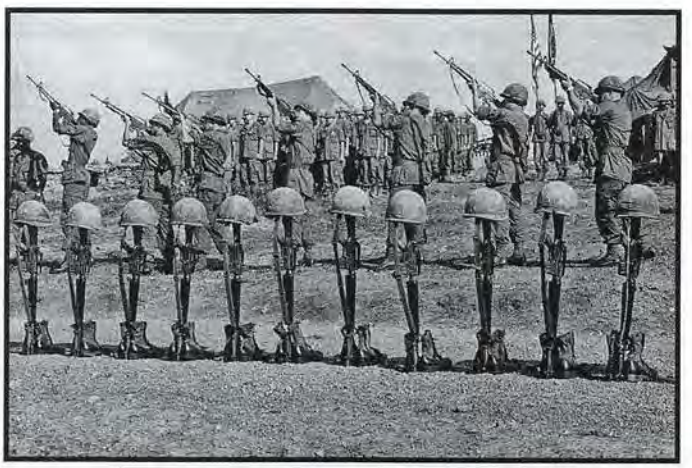



2021 Reunion: Crown Plaza Albuquerque, NM 1901 University Boulevard NE, NM 87102 Phone: 1-505-884-2500. Please try to call on days, not at night when 800 operators work. Code Khe Sanh Veterans. Room Rate $84.00 Single occupancy, $ 89.00 Double occupancy Free Parking, Free Breakfast (Full Not Continental) Pet Friendly, Free WI-FI (Sunday) 11 April thru (Sunday) 18 April 2021 . Rate good for 3 Days Before & After Regular Scheduled Dates. These are the new dates if you made registrations thru the KSV Block, the Hotel cancelled your old reservations. If you made them other than with the block you have to cancel yourself. Every one has to re register with the Hotel. If you registered with the KSV you are okay and do not have to register with Us. New Hotel Registrations Start after 01 Nov 2020

























NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Old Town Historic District
Balloon Fiesta Park
Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway
Albuquerque Museum
National Museum of Nuclear History
Hispanic Cultural Center
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
ABQ Uptown Outdoor Mall
Coronado Shopping Mall
Nearby Convention Center

North Golf Course - UNM : 2 MI/ 3.22 KM South East
Championship Golf Course : 7 MI/ 11.27 KM South
Arroyo Del Oso Golf Course : 4.3 MI/ 6.92 KM North East
Paa-Ko Ridge Golf Course : 28 MI/ 45.06 KM North East
Outdoor Tennis: 5 MI/ 8.05 KM

INDOOR ICE SKATING RECREATION NEARBY

- **Indoor Roller Skating**
- **Indoor Tennis Courts**
- **Jogging Track**
  Miniature Golf
- **Mountain or Rock Wall Climbing**
- **Snow Skiing**
- **Swimming**
- **Bicycling**
- **Billiards**
- **Bowling**
- **Hiking**

RESTAURANTS

STONESTREET

- **Breakfast, Lunch, Dessert**
- **Hours: 6:00 AM-2:00 PM**
- **Phone: 1-505-884-2500(3611**
-

RANCHERS CLUB OF NEW MEXICO

- **Dinner, Dessert**
- **Hours: 5:30 PM-9:30 PM**
- **Phone: 1-505-889-8071**
- **CANTINA LOUNGE**
- **Lunch, Dinner, Dessert**
- **Hours: 2:00 PM-11:00 PM**
- **Phone: 1-505-884-2500(3614)**

OBIT

DONALD S. BROWN USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, 81 MORTARS 1/26

BERLIN CENTER, Ohio (MyValleyTributes) – Donald S. Brown, 74, of Berlin Center, passed away unexpectedly Thursday, May 28, 2020 at his residence.

Born March 26, 1946 in Wadsworth, he was the late son of Donald I. and Elizabeth (Beres) Brown. Don grew up in Sharon Center and was a 1964 graduate of Highland High School.
He proudly served in the United States Marine



Corps during Vietnam. Prior to retirement, Don was a self-employed carpenter.

Don was a member of St. James Church. He also was a long-time member of the Berlin Township Fire Department, VFW Post 9571, the Men's Garden Club of Youngstown and a charter member of Berlin Center Historical Society. And a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans.

Don is survived by his wife of 51 years, the former Shirley Balogh; his sisters, Jolan (Henry) Silberhorn and Patricia (Robert) Witschey; many nieces and nephews and great-nieces and nephews.

Services were held and interment with military honors took place at Western Reserve National Cemetery.

BOOK REVIEW
Sometimes it takes years for a combat vet to understand what his war did to him when he was nineteen. And even longer to explain the cadence he has marched to since then to the people he loves.

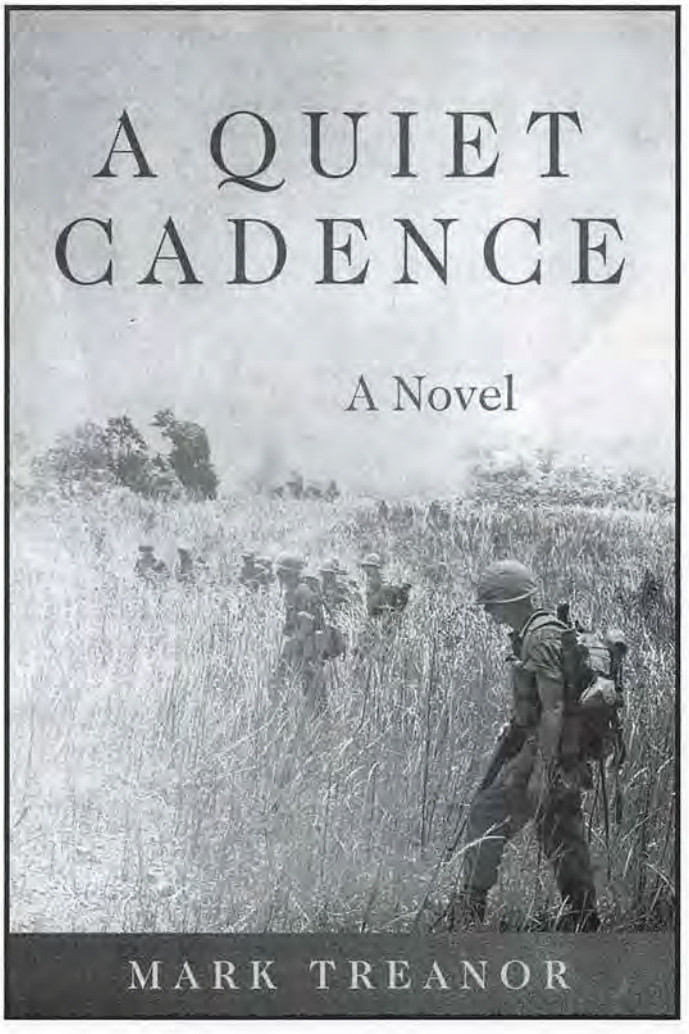

Family and friends know Marty McClure as a kind, peaceful man. They aren't aware that when he was young, he plumbed the depths of terror, hatred and despair with no assurance he'd ever surface again. Now he needs to reveal what happened in Vietnam and how, with the help of Patti, his wife, Corrie Corrigan, a disabled vet, and Doc Matheson, a corpsman turned trauma surgeon, he made peace with the ghosts that have visited his dreams all these

years.

With the perception and reflection of a man on the cusp of retirement from a career teaching high school kids, Marty recalls the relentless intensity of prolonged combat as a teenage Marine machine gunner facing booby traps and battles in a war with few boundaries. Arriving in Vietnam, he is appalled by the savagery of his fellow Marines as they hunt an enemy indistinguishable from the villagers he believes they are there to protect. But as friends are crippled or killed over the ensuing months, Marty has to fight not only the enemy but the vicious darkness growing in him. Wounded and sent back to the U.S., he struggles to make sense of all he has lost in a war his country abandoned. He works to become a good husband, father and teacher while he fights to bury the war and rails against friends' enthusiasm for the Memorial and the Welcome Home for Vietnam Veterans planned in D.C. Only if he accepts help from his wife and his friends will he find real peace.

DALE DYE (COMMENT)

Like a lot of other Vietnam Veterans, I've read a ton of books about our war, even written a couple myself, They generally run from mundane to gut-wrenching with most somewhere in the middle. That's why I exult when another Veteran writes a book that is such a credit to the genre like the one penned by Mark Treanor titled "A Quiet Cadence." Beyond the title, there's nothing quiet in Mark's epic work which follows one young Marine machinegunner from his first day in the Nam, through harrowing action in the mine-riddled Arizona Territory of I Corps and through his difficult adjustment at home. That's too bland a description for this wonderful book. If you're a Vietnam combat vet, you NEED to read this one. If you're a veteran of our other military operations since then, you also NEED to read this book. Treanor gets it all right and so very familiar, including the action, the characters, the conversation and the emotional toll. This author is the real deal, a platoon leader with 5th Marines circa 1969. And his book goes on top of a short stack of war novels that I will read again, and again, and again. S/F - D

BILL JAYNE (COMMENT)

I urge you to share this message on your groups and pages as appropriate and to get a copy of the book and read it when you get the chance. Thanks. As Dale Dye notes, Mark Treanor is a Naval Academy graduate who served as a Marine platoon commander in Vietnam. I've known Mark for nearly 40 years. We worked together on a nationwide volunteer program called the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program in the early '80s. He was one of our most outstanding leaders in that program. Semper Fidelis.

OBIT

DANNY R. COKER, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN BRAVO BTRY 1/13
May 22, 1947 - July 19, 2020

Danny R. Coker passed away July 19th, 202 at 73 years of age in his home in Roby Texas. He was born on May 22, 1947 in Rotan Texas to Denziel L Coker and Lucille Myrle Parsons. Danny attended Monterey High School and achieved his GED while in the military. He served in the Marine Corps from 1965-1969. While serving in Vietnam, his unit established the Khe Sanh Military Base. Danny completed the Border Patrol Academy in 1971. During his career, he served as a Border Patrol Agent and advanced to Senior Special Agent with the Federal Drug Enforcement Task Force. He retired from the



Department of Justice in March 1999.

Danny was very athletic and was active in organized softball, the Law Enforcement Rodeo Association, and loved to play golf. He was a member and officer of the American Legion Post 227 in Roscoe

Texas and a lifetime member of the VFW. He was predeceased by both of his parents. Survivors include his children Wendi Fleer, Ryan Coker, and Scott Coker, his grandsons Blake and Tyler Fleer, and Cash James Coker, his brothers and sisters Donald Coker, Darlene Moore, Debbie Trotter, Davey Coker, and Della Jane Tolbert son in law Rob Fleer and daughter in law Jacqueline Coker. He is also survived by multiple nieces and nephews, Great nieces and nephews, and many friends who loved him all dearly. The family would like to thank all who helped in his care, especially Todd Coker, Amy Trotter Wilson, Crystal Coker, and Dave Coker. A memorial service will be held at a later date. McCoy Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Online condolences may be expressed at www.mccoyfh.com"

OBIT

ROBERT J. PUSKAR "BOB" C/O MACTU-62 USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

Paradise Valley - Bob Puskar, 77, of Paradise Valley, AZ passed away peacefully on August 25, 2020, with his loving wife of 48 years, Dottie, at his side as they held hands for hours. He was born in Palmerton, PA on December 17,1942, as one of three children. Bob is survived by his sister, Diane Tackas (Bernie); mother-in-law, Velma Peskuric; brother-in-law, Michael Peskuric (Timmie); and sister-in-law, Diane Brewer (Ned). He has five nieces/nephews and several grandnieces/nephews.



Bob graduated from Lansford High School as Valedictorian. He earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering from Penn State University where he also participated in ROTC (Reserved Officers Training Course). Years later, before they met, Dottie earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh. After graduating from Penn State in June 1964, Patriot Puskar was commissioned as an Officer in the United States Marine Corps. He served in Viet Nam in 1967-68 as Captain, commanding MATCU-62, First Marine Air Wing, 3rd Marine Division. He fought gallantry during the Siege of Khe Sanh and Dong Ha. He is the recipient of the Silver Star, Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal. Bob was wounded on March 25, 1968 during a Rocket Attack at Dong Ha. Patriot Puskar was awarded the Purple Heart Medal by the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Following his military service, Bob joined the IBM Corporation, where he held many sales, marketing, and general management positions over the course of a very successful 30-year career. His Leadership positions include: Marketing Manager; Branch Manager; Western Region Manager; North America Sales & Mktg. Vice-President for IBM Printing Systems Company; and Vice-President of New Markets, IBM Global Technology Group, an $8 Billion business unit. While at IBM, he participated in extensive IBM general management, finance, sales, and product education conducted by the Harvard Business School.

After retiring from IBM, Patriot Puskar became CEO of two startup software companies: Rule Base in Scottsdale, AZ; and Beta Sphere in Palo Alto, CA. Bob is currently the founder, owner, and CEO of R&D Ventures, Inc, focused on asset management, equities, options, and commodities trading activities.

His involvement in the MOPH, Dept. of Arizona was extraordinary as an Officer: Adjutant 2004-8; AZ State Cmdr. 2008-11; Patriot Puskar was elected to four National Officer positions: Region VI Cmdr. 2011-13; National Jr. Vice Cmdr. 2013-14; Sr. Vice Cmdr. 2014-15. Bob was unanimously elected as MOPH National Commander 2015-16. Since then he has been serving as Past National Cmdr. The organization known as the "Military Order of the Purple Heart of the USA" was formed in 1932 for the protection and mutual interest of all combat wounded veterans and active duty men and women who

have received the decoration. The MOPH is unique among Veteran Service Organizations in that all its members - from all branches of the Military - were wounded in combat, fighting in all Wars from the present going back to 1932. For this sacrifice, they were awarded the Purple Heart Medal. This Organization promotes Patriotism, Fraternalism, and Preservation of America's Military history. Most importantly, they provide comfort and assistance to all Veterans and their families, those who are homeless, disabled, and those requiring employment assistance. Other programs include: JROTC Leadership Award, Scholarships, Welfare, and numerous community service programs.

Memorial Visitation Was held at Messenger Indian School Mortuary on Wednesday, 9/9 from 2-6 PM. On Thursday, 9/10, at 10 AM, a Funeral Mass will be held by Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 11300 N. 64th Street, Scottsdale. Interment at National Memorial Cemetery followed..

OBIT

VINCENT BEGAY, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN A CO 1/26

Vincent W. Begay passing. A 1/26. "My friend and comrade Vincent W. Begay has passed on to meet his maker. Vince was in my squad on the North side of the east end of the runway during the siege of Khe Sanh. After the siege, we were in 2nd platoon "A" company 1stBn. 26th Marines together.



It was an honor to be able to talk to Vince two weeks ago. He showed great courage and told me he was thankful for his family and wonderful life. He said he did not fear dying and meeting his God. As chaplain of the Khe Sanh Veterans, I offer the following prayer and scripture for US Marine Vincent W. Begay and those who love him;

O Loving God, please be with us as we honor the life of one who served our nation, for Vince has been taken from our midst and is now in your care. We are pained by the gap in our lives. Yet love is stronger than death; (Song of Songs 8:6) the bonds love creates are eternal. And ours is the blessing of memory, through which the lives of our departed continue to be with us.

Please accept our prayers on behalf of Vince. May he rest in peace, and may light perpetual shine upon him. Please look with mercy upon those among us, family, friends, and comrades, who are bereaved by this passing. Please comfort and console us all with your presence and tenderness. In Christ Jesus' name we pray Amen" Ron Ronald Howard Rayner

I GET PICTURES

From Thomas O'Grady

This brave woman came to Khe Sanh. She was a freelance reporter from Europe. She is pictured interviewing some Marines who were only too glad to be interviewed. Not only was she the only woman ever to be there, she was quite beautiful and courageous as well. She sent a pallet of Easter eggs to us after she left with a shrapnel wound in her rear end. They were all dyed olive drab. She saw first hand how we lived there , and had love and compassion for us. We will always remember her and her contribution to our morale! God Bless Her.
May 1967, Khe Sanh, Vietnam



MEMORIES.



A wounded United States Marine is held in the arms of fellow Marines while awaiting medical attention during fighting of the Vietnam War on Hill 881 on May 11, 1967.

WRITINGS FROM THE KSV BOARD FROM A NEW MEMBER

Board: Thomas O'Grady

The Khe Sanh Message Board and now this Facebook site that Mike Fishbaugh has developed has brought many of us together. It gives us the opportunity to connect with others, meet people with similar experiences, bitch, argue, vent and most of all realize that we are not alone in this journey. You won't be judged about your writing ability, errors, mistakes or misstatements. Write and share your thoughts and feelings, welcome to the brotherhood, we are all "Eternally Bounded"

I just want to thank all of you who have kicked in on my posts. I appreciate all of you and your input. It means a lot to me. I have not really spoken at any length about my time with you at Khe Sanh or the times after out in the field on our seemingly endless search and destroy missions. I'm finding memories that I had stashed away in the depths of my mind. I spent a lot of time putting them there. Now I'm finding that I need to relate those things somehow and get some kind of release from some of the depression that comes with the kind of experiences that we shared over there. I've not been on the net very long so I'm still muddling around. If I make any errors that are questionable to any of you I apologize in advance if I have done so already I apologize here and now. I value my status among you and would not intentionally jeopardize it.
Thanks Marines. Very much.

I just would like to say that this site is a great asset to me personally. I assume it it's the same for a great number of us. I've been a member of the Association for awhile now and have never until now had any real Contact with others from the Battle. It is a pleasure and a privilege to be able to do so. I have all the same demons hounding me as the rest of us who endured and survived. I'm trying to put them in their place and tame them.

I have many memories that are as clear as crystal and some that are dim and hard to put a time and place on. This is an issue with me and causes much frustration and anxiety. I'm retired and disabled and find myself with an inordinate amount of time on my hands and I'm trying to stay ahead of the game surviving 'Retirement'. This site has given me a way to reach out and actually touch bases with guys that actually shared that space of time and real estate with me. I find it very helpful in many ways. So if I sound Gung Ho about stuff its because I am. Those words have meaning, both literally and figuratively. I'm interested in all and any input that you guys have to offer. I offer mine spontaneously and candidly. If any of you have recommendations for sources or books I might be interested in I would like to hear about them. I have read a lot of books but not nearly all that are available. I do not use a stockpile of Info as I'm not good at that kind of thing. So having specifics in front if me is not in play. I'm just trying to put it together in my head. I throw out a question about something that has come into my mind and hope that it has value. Not just to me but to my Brothers as well. SF

REPLY:

From: LINDA LESOWSKI MARTIN

My late husband Ken found being a member of the KSV group was extremely helpful, comforting, and one of the best things for him to help deal with his memories of life during the time he spent being a Marine during Vietnam. I hope you find some of the same things for yourself. God bless you all.



FROM CRAIG TOURTE
HQ BTRY 1/13

ANOTHER GATHERING OF KHE SANH MARINES AT TOM HORCHLERS FARM ON SUNDAY AUGUST 09, 2020 IN CHEROKEE, CALIFORNIA



Tom is just one of those fine Marines to which others are drawn. When visiting I never know who is going to be present or will just show up. Tom looks forward to sharing 17 years of his food and beverage experience by always hosting and cooking gourmet meals for everyone. Besides being overserved, we sit around and watch sports on television, talk about our experiences from long years past, remember those who are no longer with us and work on solving the world's problems, if only others would listen to us and take our advice. Who would have thought 50 some years ago after serving at the Khe Sanh Combat Base, we would still be around this day to share stories about our adventures and mishaps, along with a very few mistakes in judgment?

L to R: Kenneth Soerensen (A/1/13, FO 1/26), David Tonick (A/1/26 Guns), Larry Brooks (I/3/3), Craig Tourte (HQ. 1/13), Tom Horchler (HQ. 1/13), Borlaug (I/3/3).



BARBARA GREGG FOSTER & BILL FOSTER BABYSITTING GRANDKIDS



Mission is complete. Jim's Soldiers Cross has finally made it to his family's home with his brother Bob Delaplane.



A South Vietnamese Ranger, wounded during a North Vietnamese rocket barrage on the Marine base at Khe Sanh, is carried through a sandbagged trench to an underground aid station. In recent weeks, the base has been subject to increasingly heavy enemy shelling.

BRUCE "T BONE" JONES WITH HIS GRANDSONS



I had a wonderful day with these two Grandsons and their parents. Both of these guys have done two Spartan races to date and they love the challenge! I love them both very much.



01 Mar 68, Khe Sanh Combat Base A young Marine radio Operator listens to his radio during a lull in the shelling

LEARNED LESSON # 1

SHIT HAPPENS ... AND RELIGION DOESN'T HELP.

My mother tried to raise me "right." She made me go to church. I served as local and district president of my high' school youth group. When I went to Vietnam, I was Protestant lay-leader for my company. At Khe Sanh, it was a target rich environment; I killed many of them and held some of ours as they died. Then came the day that I lost two friends. I have heard it said, "a thousand deaths can be a statistic. One death can be a tragedy". It all depends on the degree of relationship. Having a person die in your arms feels like a part of you goes with them. That night through tears, I made a vow to NEVER again have friends - or feelings.

LEARNED LESSON #2

IT'S EASY TO GIVE UP ON GOD.

After all, if God is supposed to be real, if God is supposed to be totally in control, if God is supposed to be love then:
*Why did He let good men die?
*why didn't He let me die with my friends? **WHY ?**
*Why weren't we allowed to fight to win?
*Why weren't we respected by our own families, our own friends, our own country?
*Why were we called "baby killers" (when our own nation sanctioned abortion the same year the war ended)?
*Why was it so hard to forgive and to forget?
* Why have I often done the very things I hated?

LEARNED LESSON # 3

THERE ARE MANY TIME WE COULD HAVE,SHOULD HAVE BEEN WIPED OUT.

You have your stories. I have mine.
Guys right next to me, killed, and I didn't have a scratch. Blown down three separate times from blasts - and never a scratch. Car wrecks, never a scratch. Financial wrecks, and I survive. Marriage wrecks, and still together.

Waaaay beyond statistical probability.
Waaaay beyond my control.

What about you?
How often should you have been wiped out? Why are you still alive?
Bet it's beyond your smarts and beyond your strength. But you know, despite all the wrecks and close calls, somebody has been covering you.
And WHO is that somebody?

LEARNED LESSON # 4

AT 18 YEARS OLD, YOU'RE FULL OF PISS & VINEGAR AND DESIGNED FOR ADVENTURE.

I was born into a rodeo and ranching family. With that background went lots of responsibility and independent experiences early in life. But I wanted more. I probably watched too many John Wayne movies and combat looked like the ultimate passage into manhood. So, at 18, I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, the ultimate fighting machine.

LEARNED LESSON # 5

IF SOMETHING BLOCKS OUR WAY, WE FIND A WAY AROUND IT.

It was 1966 and the war in Vietnam was heating up. I got 'stuck' in an intense training role for over a. year. I kept trying to get to combat - - but no luck. Finally, I called a United States Senator, he "encouraged" the Corps to let me deploy. I extended my enlistment because I was a short-timer.

LEARNED LESSON # 6

GAMES AND MOVIES CAN'T CONVEY VIDEO WHAT WAR REALLY IS.

Only when you've actually experienced the real thing can you know. And then, you can't find the words to convey to others that haven't been there what war really is like, so you isolate. It's also funny that ten guys in the same firefight can have 15 different perspectives on what happened. The noise, the smells, the blood, the adrenaline overwhelm the boundaries of normal experience

LEARNED LESSON # 7

WHEN YOU KILL PEOPLE AND WHEN CLOSE FRIENDS ARE KILLED, IT DESTROYS A PART OF YOUR SOUL.

In combat I started killing people and it was like hunting deer back on the ranch in South Dakota.



As our guys were killed, I'd go over to "Graves Registration" and "borrow" their now-surplus weapons for my men. But, when a number of men that reported directly to me were killed, killing the enemy became very personal and I started to kill with HATE and PASSION and JOY. And I became something I never before could have imagined

LEARNED LESSON # 8

WE FEEL GOD CAN'T FORGIVE US FOR WHAT WE HAVE DONE.

I did not FEEL guilty about killing the enemy. I de- humanized them. They were killing our guys. They were trying to kill me. I'd been raised on the ranch where hunting and killing was a normal part of life. In my mind, the enemy soldiers were just animals that needed to be killed. But, when I started losing friends and losing guys under my command, it became personal, and I transitioned from cold to cruel and started joyfully and systematically killing people we weren't supposed to kill.

LEARNED LESSON # 9

WE FEEL RESPONSIBLE WHEN OTHERS DIE.

I didn't know it was called, "SURVIVORS' GUILT". Guys better than me. They're dead. I'm alive.

LEARNED LESSON # 10
IT'S EASY TO BECOME ADDICTED TO RISK.

I Began taking crazy risks. And didn't care if I was killed

Because I was ashamed to still be alive, I started to do stupid and risky things. I passed up a chance to leave for R & R. When I was finally shot and told I was being sent back to the states, I begged the doctor to let me stay.

* The fight was MY fight.
* Those men were my men.
* And the enemy was MINE yet to be killed.

LEARNED LESSON # 11
LIFE AFTER COMBAT IS FRUSTRATING, CONFUSING & VERY DIFFICULT.

One-minute you're in a life-threatening, life-changing, adrenaline-rush action leading a high-performance team in a well-defined mission with the highest stakes ... and the next minute you're selling "crap" and mowing the grass in your spare time.

LEARNED LESSON # 12
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW.

I was engaged to Liz prior to deployment. And we were married while I was still in the hospital- but neither she nor I had a clue how much I had changed. It was years after combat before I finally began putting a name to life after combat, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I controlled things reasonably well. Yet on rare occasions I'd have a blowout - - and only by God's grace did I not kill anyone, including myself. (Though He knows I tried like hell several times.)

LEARNED LESSON # 13
YOU HAVE TO MOVE ON.

You aren't the king.

You're not in control of everything as much as you'd like to be. Especially when your time is up or you have a medical discharge, you have to move on.

LEARNED LESSON # 14
YOU WANT CONTROL. COMPLETE CONTROL OVER EVERYTHING.

Totally 'greased' by three incoming rounds. Immobile. Held together by wires.
Using a bed pan.
Unable to walk or use my hands.
Life looked HOPELESS. Especially when a doctor told me to accept the fact that I'd never be able to use my hands or walk again.
I was no longer in control.
Previously, I watched officers and politicians make stupid decisions that got good men killed.
And though I kept trying to have complete control over everything, I had to finally accept that control is merely an illusion.

LEARNED LESSON # 15
YOU STILL LOOK FOR RISK.

Is it the chemical fix of the adrenaline rush? Whatever it is, you're hyper-alert, living with a hair trigger, out there looking for meaningless sex, the fastest car, the biggest business deals, the stupidest fights.

LEARNED LESSON # 16
PEOPLE DON'T RUN TO PLEASURE. THEY RUN FROM PAIN.

No, the primary reason we overdose on booze, gambling, business, drugs, adultery isn't because those things are so great (especially when they each have a negative consequence). The main motivator is some pain in our past that we seem incapable of relieving, so we grab a cheap and fast pleasure to medicate to try and cover over the hurt.

LEARNED LESSON # 17
MY PLEASURE COMES AT OTHER'S EXPENSE

If anyone had caused my wife a tenth of the pain that I caused her, I would have killed them.
Hurt people, hurt people

LEARNED LESSON # 18
SOME BECAME "DOWN-AND-OUT".

After the military - some isolated.
Some became wild.
Some became reclusive.
Some became drunks.
Some had multiple divorces.
Some couldn't hold a job.
Some looked for bar fights.
Some did drugs.

LEARNED LESSON # 19
SOME BECAME "UP-AND-OUT".

And the world called them, "down and outers".
After the military - some apply their intensity to becoming socially successful. Business leaders, always on the go. Trying hard to be successful in certain areas because other areas of life are a total wreck. Whether "down-and-out" or "up-and-out" ... out is still out. A mess is still a mess! A gold-plated turd is still a turd!

LEARNED LESSON # 20
NOTHING COULD FILL THE 'EMPTY' INSIDE

So, moving up and out, this veteran got a master's degree in business and became a millionaire. Youngest president of different organizations by decades! Hoorah! Do I drive the Corvette or the Lincoln today? The governor just named a day for me as our highest decorated Vietnam Vet.



Whoever says sin isn't fun hasn't done some of the things I've done; hasn't had the toys and experiences I've had. But nothing gave any

lasting peace or contentment. Nothing filled up the hole inside.

LEARNED LESSON # 21
SO, YOU TRY HARDER AND TRY MORE

I lied to myself.
Yes, all the 'stuff' and experiences did make me happy. For two hours. Or two days. But then I was like an addict - and would need another 'hit' so I'd try something bigger, faster, riskier.

LEARNED LESSON # 22
COMBAT VETS DON'T TRUST OTHERS.

I could play the 'game' to get what I wanted --
but on the inside, I was critical, suspicious, a loner -- who, under pressure would attack.

LEARNED LESSON # 23
WHEN OTHERS LAUGH -I DON'T, AND WHEN THEY DON'T -I DO.

Combat changes your perspective.
Gotta be MACHO.
No tears.
Stuff your feelings.
Did that work? No.
Frankly, you gotta feel it to heal it!

LEARNED LESSON # 24
IF THEY HAVEN'T BEEN THERE- THEY CAN'T UNDERSTAND.

So, it's easy to isolate. And not feel.
Except when you are alone. And remember

LEARNED LESSON # 25
DEPRESSION IS REAL.
THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE ARE REAL.

I felt,
"Nobody cares". "Nobody understands".
"I've been abandoned". 'Nothing is going to change".
For a lie to work, it has to have an element of truth. Yes, my physical pain was real.
Two guys pulled me off the battlefield. Pumped full of drugs, I'm flown to a surgical facility and then it's months of pain, operations, therapy, neglect ... and none of my family ever visited once.

LEARNED LESSON # 26
MY PLEASURE COMES AT OTHER"S EXPENSE

It's easy to consider suicide, murder, adultery, stealing, lying. Try NOT to think of the word 'elephant' for five seconds. -It's impossible. Try NOT to ever think about the friends that have been killed. Try not to ever think about the people that have screwed you over. Try not to think about all the hurtful crap you've done to others. Depression can be a chemical imbalance but generally it is anger turned inward.

LEARNED LESSON # 27
THE SOUL IS SEPARATE FROM THE BODY

Navy surgeons began piecing my body back together. But nobody addressed the wounds to my mind, will, emotions..

LEARNED LESSON # 28
WE JUDGE PEOPLE BY WHAT THEY DO, NOT WHAT THEY SAY.

To medicate my pain and prove to the world I was "somebody", I decided to build a BIG house. One day I saw some excellent brick work on another house, so I hunted up the contractor.

LEARNED LESSON # 29
WE GET SURPRISES ALONG THE WAY

After we'd gone through the house plans, the brick man says, "Hey, I made a trip to the Holy Land and have some pictures. You want to see them"? He didn't know of my religious background, or that I'd gone to church, and learned Bible verses in Sunday School. I had actually read the Bible cover-to-cover at least twice.

LEARNED LESSON # 30
RELIGION ISN'T THREATENING-BUT A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS.

As we looked at his pictures, he asked me some easy questions:
"Do you believe in God"? To have a creation means you must have a Creator, so I said, " I do believe there is a God".
Next, he asked, "Do you believe in Jesus, born of a virgin, died on a cross, rose from the dead"?
I don't believe in the Easter Bunny or Santa Claus, but I told him I did believe those things about Jesus.
Then he asked, "Ken, if you were to die tonight, what would happen? Heaven? Or hell"? I told him I thought I'd probably go to heaven. After all, I wasn't killing people anymore and gave lots of money to various community projects. I figured if your good outweighed your bad, then you were "in".

LEARNED LESSON # 31
CONFRONTING TRUTH IS A SHOW-STOPPER

Then he asked, "Do you know that you can know whether it's heaven or hell"? And, when I had that deer-in-the-headlights look, the brick man pulled out a Bible and showed me I John 5:11-13 ..
"And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life. I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may KNOW you have eternal life".

WOW! *"... that you may know?"*
I didn't know. And, if I didn't know for sure, then this said I was going to hell!

LEARNED LESSION # 32
I'D BEEN TAUGHT BY MY DAD'S ACTIONS AND MARINE CORPS TRAINING TO RUN TO TROUBLE

If there was a problem, get there fast to get control quick. And, the bigger the risk, the bigger the reward. But now, here's a guy with mere words, and I want to get out of there!

THANK YOU &
GOODBYE

LEARNED LESSON # 33
NONE OF US WANTS TO BE PUSHED OR MANIPULATED

The brick man didn't try to push me. Instead, he asked, "Do you have a Bible at home?" I said, "yes". "If I write some verses down, will you look them up"? I said I would. I went home, pulled out a Bible and read those verses.

LEARNED LESSON # 34
YOU DON'T NEED SPARE TIRE,UNTIL YOU HAVE A BLOW OUT

* Romans 3:10 ... No one is righteous-not even one.
* Romans 3:23 Everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.
* Romans 5:8 ... God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.
* Romans 5:12 When one man, Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.
* Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our lord.

*Romans 10:9-11 If you openly declare that Jesus is lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved .... anyone who trusts in him will never be disappointed.

*Romans 10:13 Anyone who calls on the name of the lord will be saved. I'd seen them all before. But before I'd always felt "in Control," working my own agenda. Now I had to acknowledge my agenda wasn't working.

LEARNED LESSON# 35
ALL THE "STUFF" WE HAVE, CAN'T MAKE US HAPPY

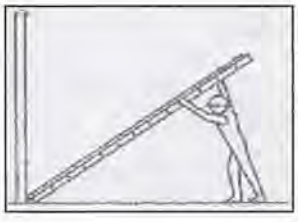

For the first time in my life, I stopped to realize I'd climbed my little "ladder of success" but the sucker was leaning against the wrong building! Others would have given their right gonad to have what I had but NOTHING I had was giving me lasting satisfaction ... No peace. No contentment.

LEARNED LESSON # 36
YOU SURRENDER WHEN YOU DON"T HAVE ANY OTHER OPTIONS.

And I finally gave up.
Got down on my knees and said, "God, I've really screwed up. I'm sorry for what I've done. Please forgive me and come in and take over my life".

LEARNED LESSON # 37
FEELINGS ARE LIARS

That was the sincerest prayer man can pray,
but I felt nothing.
And, I thought, God forgives sin, but I'm such a bad sinner, He won't forgive me. That night, I cried. I hadn't cried for over 10 years. I hadn't cried since those first two close friends were killed and I'd made that vow to never have close friends or feelings again.
Only later did a guy that I respected share with me, "Ken, **you can't put your faith in your feelings. You have to put your trust into God's Word".**

LEARNED LESSON # 38
GOD CAN'T FORGIVE ME.

If people knew what I've done - - if they knew what I'm thinking -- they'd lock me up.
But God knows. Always has. And He had His Son, Jesus, pay the penalty for my sin on the cross, that I might have forgiveness of my sin and be right with of God.
So, when I say, God can't forgive my sin", that is really quite prideful on my part. The creator of the universe, He hung the stars in the sky, raised the dead. He suffered on the cross and rose from the dead for you and me. Yet we say, "He can't forgive my sin"? That's exactly WHY He came" He knew ahead of time whatour sins would be. Jesus still paid our penalty on the cross for our sins that we would have forgiveness and be made right with God.

The New Testament book of Romans, chapter 8 verses 1-2 say, ***"Those who belong to Christ Jesus are no longer under God's judgment. Because of what Christ Jesus has done, you are free. You are now controlled by the law of the Holy Spirit who gives you life. The law of the Spirit frees you from the law of sin that brings death.***
Wow, stop and reread those verses again!

LEARNED LESSON # 39
I AM WHAT I PUT INTO MY MIND

This guy, the brick layer / mentor, that I respected began to show me things out of the Bible that I'd never thought of before.
I was a successful business guy, with a master's degree in business, but I had no clue the Bible talks more about money and business than it talks about heaven and hell!
Slowly, I began to learn and apply Biblical principles to my business, my marriage, to raising our kids, to working with other people.

LEARNED LESSON # 40
WE ALL WANT TO LIVE A LIFE OF PURPOSE AND IMPACT

The three classic questions of life are:

Where did I come from?

Why am I here?

Where am I going?

As I learned Biblical principles, through reading the Bible, I began to find those answers.

And, my life started to change BIG TIME.

LEARNED LESSON # 41
GOD DOESN'T WASTE PAIN.

I often don't understand or like what God is doing, but I need the faith of the little boy that walks into the room full of horse manure and starts to giggle cuz he knows there's a pony in there somewhere.

Bottom line: I've learned God is totally IN CONTROL & has my best long-term interests at heart. So, the issue never is what has happened or is happening or will happen. Instead the primary issue always is,

"How will I respond"?

And when I know the character of God and His love for me - - even when it's painful or doesn't make human sense - - I can STI LL give Him THAN KS and keep walking forward in faith.

LEARNED LESSON #42
MARINATE

Life is like two dogs fighting. There's a good dog and a bad dog - and they are really going at it.

Which dog wins?

It's the one you feed.

We are in the middle of a war between God's Holy Spirit and the Satan's unholy spirit. I MUST CONTINUE TO DAILY MARINATE - soak, in God's word, the Bible, to have the scriptural and responsive "flavor" of Christ. Every day I read my Bible plus I also use several other daily devotionals. This constant war, called life, feels like dying. And, it is. To the old "self".

LEARNED LESSON # 43
TO HAVE SOMETHING 'NEW' I NEED TO GIVE UP THE 'OLD.

You can drive trucks over a concrete highway and the road surface isn't hurt but if that same concrete is freshly poured and someone walks across it, those footprints are there forever.

Many of us were damaged before we went into the military. Then, when we were young and in combat, all those experiences were deeply impressed into our souls and some of those memories and consequences continue to be "speed bumps" many years later.

To avoid the pain, we try to deaden the feelings and fill our lives with experiences, relationships, things that make us forget. But nothing heals the deep scars. In fact - - like a pothole in a highway - - over time the damage just goes deeper and gets bigger and we (and those around us) continue to be impacted.

So, we try harder to forget. We try harder to medicate. But that only causes us to move further from our true self.

True Self? What's that?

Our true self is what we were designed to be but those potholes, ruts, pains have scarred and fractured that image.

And as we reflect, we realize some of that damage actually began before we ever joined the military. Back when we were really "fresh cement"' and very impressionable.

We know a mark of insanity is to continue doing what hasn't worked yet hoping for different results. So, what to do? How can we find and regain our "true self"?

Everybody has to make their own decisions and live with their own consequences but if you are not satisfied with how life is working, I'm glad you are taking time to consider my failures and how Christ is helping me heal and grow.

LEARNED LESSON # 44
IT'S OKAY TO BE MAD AT GOD

My dad was a hard ass. He made drill instructors look like high school cheerleaders. He's the first that I heard get mad at God when he said. "Look, if there was a God, He wouldn't have let us be so poor I'd have to watch my two brothers die because we couldn't afford medical help".

It took me a long time to realize my dad believed in God. After ail, you must believe He exists if you're going to be pissed at Him. And I became exactly like my dad when I didn't feel God lived up to my expectations.

So, I walked away from God and religion for ten years.

LEARNED LESSON # 45
WE ARE GREATLY INFLUENCED BY OUR PARENTS AND OUR ANCESTORS.

For over 70 years my family has been in the professional rodeo business. We breed horses to buck because we know those traits are passed on to the following generations. We humans know the same thing is true, so we say things like, "you're just like your old man," or "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree".

As a kid, I said to myself, "I will not be like my dad".

And I became exactly like him

You didn't choose your skin color or where you were born or your body type. Those physical details were chosen for you. Yes, you picked up some positive mental, emotional, relational, habitual propensities from your ancestors. And you picked up some negative ones too.

Did you know the Bible says the sins of the fathers are passed onto the third and fourth generations?

So how are you and I going to process and improve upon what we have inherited?

And, what kind of legacy are you and I leaving for our kids and the generations to come?

LEARNED LESSON # 46
YOU GOTTA FORGIVE

Unforgiveness causes bitterness and is like eating rat poison and waiting for the other person to die.

Hate is a cancer in the soul.

We can be very critical of certain people, but the person we are toughest on is ourselves. When I understand how Christ forgave all my sins at the cross, then I need to also forgive myself. And I can begin to give others that same grace that I've received.

LEARNED LESSON # 47
BEING 'BORN AGAIN' GETS YOU INTO HEAVEN-BUT YOU CAN STILL LIVE IN 'HELL' ON PLANET EARTH.

You don't have an "up" without a "down."
You don't have an "in" without an "out."
You don't have a "right" without a "left."
You don't have a "Holy" without an "unholy."
Yes, there really is an "unholy spirit", and he HATES those that God loves. The unholy is powerful and loves to deceive, divide and destroy.

LEARNED LESSON # 48
THE REAL ENEMY IS SATAN.

And when you know his strategies and limitations, you can KICK HIS BUTT.
Our battle is not against the deceived.
Our battle is against the deceiver.

LEARNED LESSON # 49
THE TEMPTATION TO SIN NEVER GOES AWAY.

Satan has an I.Q. of 20,000+ and he knows where we are vulnerable and when to attack.
Please consider the acronym HALT.
Because that is when we are most susceptible to' cave to our temptation.

HUNGRY, ANGRY
LONELY. TIRED.

Forewarned is forearmed. So, I must constantly watch my physical needs while marinating in Christ.

LEARNED LESSON # 50
IN COMBAT YOU HAVE TO WEAR YOUR ARMOR

My body was shredded. My VA disabilities total 260% but I'm alive and function because of my protective gear. My helmet was blown off and I still have shrapnel in my head. My arms were ripped, but my flak jacket protected my torso. My leg had a huge hole in it, but my gonads were protected because I had flak panties on. A boot was blown off. I was a mess. And I'm incredibly stupid because when I finally surrendered to Christ it was years before I finally understood that I need to daily put on my spiritual armor to prepare for the spiritual battle, led by Satan facing me each day. Now, daily AND audibly, I put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of His Holy Spirit. I don't leave home without getting dressed in my spiritual armor found in Ephesians chapter 6 in the Bible's New Testament. If you want more information on how to daily protect yourself against this war, email kkorkow@ptgi.us.com. to request the Spiritual Warfare card.

LEARNED LESSON # 51
THE VA AND MANY OTHER WELL-MEANING ORGANIZATIONS ARE OFTEN INEFFECTIVE.

They offer recreation. They offer job training. They offer group counseling. They offer medication. But these are the equivalent of putting a sugar pill on the tongue of a patient. Our military will try just about anything to deal with suicides, divorces, drug and alcohol abuse, etc. - - anything EXCEPT GOD.
If you're a "wounded warrior" you can take yoga, go on hunting and fishing trips, be in group counseling, get drugs - - all free. Recent articles indicate the military has spent money testing a nose spray using the illegal drug ecstasy and now the most recent article talks about using marijuana to help wounded warriors overcome combat stress.
Problem is - - IT'S NOT WORKING!
Only by surrendering to Christ can a person actually experience healing and growth beyond the challenges of military service. God has a monopoly on what truly heals and gives growth.

LEARNED LESSON # 52
THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF GUILT

False guilt.
And valid guilt.
False guilt comes from the unholy spirit.
Valid guilt comes from the Holy Spirit.

Problem is—they both feel the same

So, we have to back up, consider the facts, see where the guilt-feeling would take us and then over-ride our 'feelings' with God's Truth. I didn't feel guilty about those I killed in combat. But I did kill some we weren't supposed to kill. And I'm forever thankful my sin was covered at the cross.

LEARNED LESSON # 53
YOU GOTTA KNOW THE ENEMY"S STRATEGY

Satan's strategy is very simple:

deceive, divide, destroy.

So, the unholy spirit (Satan) desires that false guilt us to a sense of discouragement and isolation - - which is easily done when we feel we are alone without a bunch of "godly buddies" for mutual counsel and encouragement.
When it's valid guilt the Holy Spirit desires we stop, confess and clean up the mess to get back on track with Him.

Reality is that life can feel lonely and God can seem distant, but we are NEVER ALONE because the Lord will NEVER FORSAKE US. And the antidote is to audibly rebuke Satan and his followers in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, telling them to go where Christ tells them to go, and to stay there with their deceptions.
When I face problems and challenges, I need to commit the outcome to the Lord with the recognition that He sees around corners, over hills and into the future. He will divinely guide me to the Best Outcome. 50, I make the best "faith decisions" I know and then go forward trusting the results to Him.

LESSON LEARNED # 54
REALITY IS THE WAR CONTINUES.

We expended effort going down the wrong path. Now it will take effort to reverse course and gain ground going in the right direction.

1.Daily submit to God - simply talk to Him every day.
2 Daily read the Bible. A good place to start is in the book of John and then Acts, both found in the New Testament using a Bible version translated in today's modern language.

Online Apps: BibleGateway.org or Read5cripture.org
Once downloaded, search "Book of John."
Hardcopy Bible: please let me know, I'll send you one- free.

LEARNED LESSON # 55
OTHERS HAVE HELPED ME, SO, I'M AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU.

I'm no guru. I still make mistakes. But Christ doesn't. And while I'm available to answer questions, your best source while continuing to marinate in His words - the Bible, is to ask the Lord to help you to find someone that is willing to come along side you to help you understand God's words and to guide you in this new life with Christ.

VOLUNTEER VETERANS INSTALL HONOR BELL AT THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL IN ANGEL FIRE



the August 14-17 weekend, members of the Marines Motorcycle Club of Northern New Mexico volunteered their time to install a *Freedom Bell* at the DVS-managed Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire.

The group raised more than $5,000 to design the bell-with approval by DVS. The group then purchased the bell, prepared the ground, poured cement, laid surrounding bricks, installed the bell and commemorative plaque, and applied a "finish" coat. The group donated the bell for use at ceremon ies at the Memorial.
The plaque, which is surrounded by emblems representing our nation's five military service branches, reads *"This Honor Bell is presented to the New Mexico Department* of *Veterans Services Vietnam Veterans Memorial, with respect for the David Westphall Veterans Foundation, on behalf* of the Marines Motorcycle Club, 2020. Our comrades may be gone, but they shall never be forgotten, Semper Fidelis!



A TYPICAL ENDING TO A FRIENDLY MEETING AT KHE SANH



SWEET DREAMS OF OUR LOVELY HOME

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FUND - 2020-2021 AWARD RECIPIENTS

APPLICANT	SCHOOL YEAR	SCHOOL	SPONSOR
1. SHAKIRA G. CANNON	1	GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY	CARLTON CANNON E CO 2/26
2. LUKE D. CHIARELLA	1	HAMLINE UNIVERSITY	DANIEL FISHER D CO 1/26
3. NICHOLAS T. COPE	2	UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO	WILLIAM LEFEVRE SUB UNIT 5 RADIO
4. AVA K. DUNN	2	LOYOLA UNIVERSITY	NEIL KENNY L CO 3/26
5. DYLAN C. KILLIAN	1	RUSSELL SAGE COLLEGE	GLENN GRIFFIN D CO 1/1
6. ALISON C. LYNCH	1	WESTCHESTER UNIVERSITY	THOMAS LYNCH C CO 1/9
7. MASON C. MAEDER	1	FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY	MARSHALL MAEDER 1ST SEARCHLIGHTS
8. KYRA M. NADZADY	1	WEST VIRGINA	HENRY HOFFMAN 3RD ENGINEERS
9. EMMA N. PALS	2	MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY	FRED SWETS A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
10. EVAN J. PALS	1	MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY	FRED SWETS A CO 3RD ANTI TANKS
11. GIOVANNI P. STAGNARO	1	UN OF CA SAN DIEGO	KENNETH DUNCAN F CO 2/26
12. HAYDEN L. TEMPLE	1	MICHIGAN STATE	PATRICK MCFALDA H&S CO 1/26 -81MM





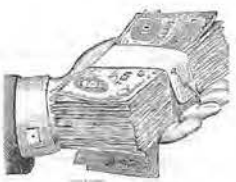



THANK YOU

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION - 2020-21

The Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation is now in its twelfth successful year of providing financial support for children and grandchildren of paid up members of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc.

In 2009 the KSV Scholarship Foundation started with 6 applicants and has risen to an average of 25 applicants each of the last three years. Many of the student scholars have finished 4 years of post secondary education to successfully achieve their selected bachelors degrees due in part to the support from Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc ..

In this, the 2020-21 school year, we have received 12 applicants for a grand tally of 184 young scholars in 11 years who have benefitted from the KSV Scholarship Fund. Over $110,000 in generous donations

from the Khe Sanh Veterans Brotherhood and proceeds from the reunion silent auctions have kept the Foundation healthy. However, the individual awards have trended lower due to the increased volume of applicants vs. reduced donation levels.

The Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation is committed to keeping the program healthy and going forward for all students who meet the eligibility guidelines printed in the **RED CLA Y** newsletter. We ask for your continued financial support.

Dan Fisher, Scholarship Chairman



THOSE REMEMBERED

1st Lt John Ellis USMC KIA 28 Feb 68 OIC Crash Crew
GY/Sgt Joe H. Kahee USMC Crash Crew Passed Away October 2019
S/Sgt Albert R. Taylor USMC I CO 3/26 Hill 881S KIA 18 Jun 68
All those KIA on The C-130 Crash Khe Sanh 06 Mar 1968
Cpl Fergus J. Carroll USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 18 Jun 68
All Those Who Died During Operation Buffalo 7-2-67
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC A HQ 1/13 KIA 09 MAR 68
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68
Remembering All "Bastard Bravo" Marines and their families
Captain Bill Person USAF 553 3RD Recon Wing
PFC Donald Saunders USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 COMM
KIA 04 March 1968
Sgt Donald Ray Chamblin USMC HQ BTRY COMM
KIA 08 March 1968
William "Doc" Miller Sr USN Lima Co 3/26 Passed Away
11/6/17
GYSGT Charles Perkins USMC DOW 17 May 1968
SSgt Karl E. Taylor USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 12/98/68
PFC Roland T. Marshall USMC M CO 3/4 KIA 5/17/68
L/Cpl Philip Van Deusen USMC A/1/13 KIA 06/07/67
Capt Daniel Coonan USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 10/08/68
1Lt Thomas Reich USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 11/17 68
Doug Ipson USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 9/15/68 LZ Margo
Steve Rienhart USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 09/16/68 LZ Margo
Nate White USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 05/06/68 Cam Lo
All Members of Detachment A-101 Lang Vei & All who served at FOB-3
All who served at Khe Sanh
All the men of HQ Btry 1/13 Who Gave Their Lives So We can Enjoy The freedom we have today
Chief Gilbert Wall USMC B CO 1/26
Lt Co Ken Pipes USMC C/O Bravo CO 1/26
Hans Runye USMC Delta CO 1/26
CPL Vic Pizarro USMC A 1/13 KIA 06 Mar 68 Khe Sanh
PFC George Elliot USMC A 1/13 KIA 06 Mar 68 Khe Sanh
CPL Larry S. Kennedy USMC A 1/13 KIA 06 Mar 68 Khe Sanh
SW-5 Edward Cody Adams USN CBMU-301 KIA 16 APR 68
LCPL Frederick B. Link USMC C CO 1/9 KIA 3/1/68
All Marines & Corpsman who served on Hill 861A in Jan/Feb & Mar of 1968
All Marines KIA of Delta CO 1/26
All Marines 1/1 & 2/1 Hotel CO
DR John Magilligan, d. 29 Jan 3013,DR Ed Feldman d. 03 Oct 2017& DR James Finnegan . 13 Sep 2013 From Charlie Med
All who served at Khe Sanh
HN William A. Beyer "Willie" USN H&S Co 3/26 KIA 2/1/67
1LT John Ellis USMC Crash-Rescue Crew OIC KIA
PFC David A. Cramer, USMC KIA 22 Feb 68
PFC Leslie G. Aputen USMC KIA 15 May 68
PFC Francis W. Lamon USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 17 Apr 68
PFC William W. Lawrence USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 4/17 68
PFC Charles T. Johnson USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68
L/Cpl Darrel W. Cottrell USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68
Thomas Jack Pennington KIA 27 Jan 68 at "Mikes" HillMike CO 3/4
Steve Caughron Passed Away COV-19
PFC Gale Gotti USMC A 1/13 KIA 07 June 67
CPL Philip Van Deusen USMC A 1/13 KIA 07 Jun 67
1st Lt Hank Norman USMC A 1/13 KIA 30 Mar 68
1st Lt John Bobo USMC KIA

REMEMBERED BY

Richard Takacs Matcu-62 Crash Crew Mag-16,36,39
Richard Takacs Matcu-62 Crash Crew Mag-16,26,39
Will E. Griggs INDIA CO 3/26 Hill 881S
Dennis Wimbish A Btry 1/13
William Hotz Mike CO 3/4
Frank Gimpel B CO 1/9 2ND Platoon
Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
William E. Carpenter Bravo Btry 1/13
Alex & Barbara Sadowski H&S CO 1/26
James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines

James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines

S/Sgt Paul J. Choclis Scout/FO C Btry 1/13

Barbara Eddowes Fiance
Stephen Jenkins C Co 1/26
Will Griggs India Co 3/26
Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Lawrence Cooper CO C 5TH Special Forces

Michael Barber C CO 3rd Engineers 1St Platoon
James Baker HQ Btry 1/13 26Th Marines

Peter Mudrinich Bravo CO 1/26 They Are In My Prayers
Peter Mudrinich Bravo CO 1/26
Peter Mudrinich Bravo CO 1/26
Dennis Wimbish A Btry 1/13
Dennis Wimbish A Btry 1/13
Dennis Wimbish A Btry 1/13
Larry Kubley USN CBMU-301 (Seabee)
Eric Bergland C CO 1/9
Lt Don Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

John Finn Delta Co 1/26
Peter Hoban Hotel CO 2/1
Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN

Ron Shuff LSU MTM Co. Maintenance Bn.
Pat B. Buckley Charlie CO 1/26
Richard Takacs MABS-36-MAG-36 Crash-Rescue Unit
Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1 REST IN PEACE
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
Jeffrey T. Loeb HQ BTRY 1/11
Thomas Soerensen A 1/3 F/O B CO 1/26, India CO 3/26
Thomas Soerensen A 1/3 F/O B CO 1/26, India CO 3/26
Thomas Soerensen A 1/3 F/O B CO 1/26, India CO 3/26
Thomas Soerensen A 1/3 F/O B CO 1/26, India CO 3/26

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ARE GENEROUS MEMBERS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS FOR THE CALENDER YEARS 2019 &2020

ADAMS, Harry J.	23 Jan 20	50.00	Check# 4003
ARCHER, Michael J.	01 Aug19	40.00	Check# 2040
BARBER, Michael F.	01 Dec19	500.00	Check# 1165
BARNETT, Daniel E.	10 Jun 20	50.00	Check# 6955
BATES, Roger G..	01 Nov19	50.00	Check# 5656
BAUSMAN, Edward B.	28 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 9352
BECK, Ralph A.	20 Oct 19	60.00	Check# 4659
BIOLSI, William P.	24 Jan 20	40.00	Check# 4198
BISSELL, Anthony	25 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 1659
BOAN, William S.	27 Jan 20	50.00	Check# 1426
BOWMAN, David J.	29 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 5832
BEATHEA, Lelia	03 May 20	50.00	Check3 229
BRAUSS, Kathleen	15 May 20	100.00	Check# 6151
BRONSTON, Martin D	16 Dec19	100.00	Check# 2456
BRONSTON, Martin D.	21 Aug 20	100.00	Check# 2519
CAMPBELL, Donald D.	31 May 20	100.00	Check# 1015
CASEY, Maurice	16 Aug19	10.00	Check# 3311
CAUGHRON, Virgil S.	29 Dec 19	420.00	Check# 1350,1351
CAVANAUGH, Carmelita	19 Sep19	50.00	Check# 2273
CAUGHRON, Edna J	25 May 20	25.00	Check# 1324
CAUGHRON, Edna J.	25 May 20	100.00	Check# 1323
CENTER FOR LIFE SOLUTIONS	11 Jun 20	1,000.00	Check# 10803
CHICOINE, M.A.	16 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 3887
CHICOINE, Roger D.	17 Feb 20	1,000.00	Check# 3891
CHIM, Alan	19 Sep19	50.00	Check# 2273
COLVIS, John P.	04Jun 20	100.00	Check# 2707
COOK, Michael H.	29 Oct 19	100.00	Check# 13349
COSNER, Leonard G.	04 Sep19	100.00	Check# 7267
DAKIN, William	29 Jan 20	50.00	Check# 1492
DELANEY, Michael B.	10 Jun 20	50.00	Check# 2805
DESETA, Louis J.	09 Sep19	260.00	Check# 6018
DESETA, Louis J.	04 Jun 20	200.00	Check# 6115
DIGAETANO, John C.	01 Aug19	10.00	Check# 677
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DUNCAN, Ken	15 Sep19	100.00	Check# 3992
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EIDEM, Ralph H. Jr.	06 Jun 20	300.00	Check# 3650
ESTES, Leo L.	15 Sep19	50.00	Check# 3406
EVANS, Russell	17 Feb 20	200.00	Check # 2281
FARRELL, Brian	01 Aug19	20.00	Check# 1377
FETTER, Charles H.	01 Aug19	10.00	Check# 727
FINN, John	17 Feb 20	26.00	Check# 2547
FITZGERALD, Kathleen R.	02 Jun 20	25.00	Check# 1099
FORD, Thomas	06 Sep19	250.00	Check3 5334
FORD, Thomas	22 Oct 20	300.00	Check# 5413
FOSMO, Harold D. Jr.	22 Sep19	200.00	Check# 2667
FOURNIER, Terry R.	06 Sep19	60.00	Check# 7663
FROVARP, Raymond M.	06 Sep 20	100.00	Check# 3131
FRICK, Tena M.	19 May 20	50.00	Check# 1067
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GOODIN, Douglas L.	02 Jun 20	200.00	Check# 1521
GRAHAM, Floyd Jr.	01 Aug19	500.00	Check# 1575
GRIFFIN, Glenn T.	27 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 3166
HARLAND, Thomas R.	08 May 20	50.00	Check # 5334
HESTER, Larry	27 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 2071
HALL, Robert A.	06 Sep19	25.00	Check# 6034
HANSEN, Edwin	30 Apr 20	25.00	Check# 3972
HARBISON, James W	06 Sep 19	50.00	Check# 2481
HARRINGTON, David S.	15 Jun 20	250.00	Check# 1513
HESTER, Larry	15 Jun 20	100.00	Check# 1014
HOLLIDAY, DAVID G.	06 May 20	75.00	Check# 0689
HOLSCHER, Robert J.	26 Jan 20	50.00	Check# 17915
HOPWOOD, Harry E. III	10 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 2593
HUELSENBECK, John F.	04Jjun 20	25.00	Check# 3429
HUNTER, Dwight C.	12 Sep19	60.00	Check# 1173
HUNTER, Dwight C	25 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 1187
HUNTER, Dwight C.	04 Jun 20	100.00	Check# 1197
HUNTER, Dwight C.	02 Jun 20	100.00	Check# 1194
JACHIMIAK, Daniel L.	04 May 20	250.00	Check# 5248
JACKSON, Dianne	24 Feb 20	100.00	Check# 2103
JACKSON, Judith A	22 May 20	100.00	Check# 6536
JONES, Bruce	17 Feb 20	126.00	Check# 11178
KAZIMIR, Linda S.	18 Jul 20	300.00	Check# 7859
KEATING, Michael	01 Aug19	40.00	Check# 2441
KENNY, Neil J.	07 Feb 20	100.00	Check# 4831
KOLLMAN, Albert L.	01 Oct 19	40.00	Check# 4861

KORKOW, ken	31 Aug 20	1,090.00	Check# 10807
KORKOW, Ken	15 Jun 20	150.00	Check# 10911
KORN, William J.	09 Sep19	200.00	Check# 7479
LEITH, Benjamin L.	09 Sep19	50.00	Check# 2888
LEWIS, Jerrold M.	30 Mar 20	50.00	Check# 4864
LINDSAY, John R.	03 Sep19	400.00	Check# 1610
LOEB, Jeffrey T.	30 Apr 20	100.00	Check# 188
LUTHER, Lawrence A.	04 Sep19	100.00	Check# 1262
MAEDER, Marshall	01 Mar 20	30.00	Check# 3097
MAEDER, Marshall	27 Apr 20	200.00	Chec# 4010
MAPEL, Randall D.	08 Jan 20	35.00	Check# 6533
MARCELLA, Ronald F.	05 Jun 20	300.00	Check# 863
MCCANN, Timothy	21 Mar 20	100.00	Check# 1949
MCCORMACK, John F	05 Sep19	200.00	Check# 1092
MCCROSSEN, john P	14 Feb 20	100.00	Check # 2360
MCDANIEL, Terry L.	04 Sep19	100.00	Check# 1315
MCELROY, John W.	06 Sep19	200.00	Check# 3564
MCKEE, John	09 Jul 20	100.00	Check# 3314
MERCADO, Saturno	01 Aug19	85.00	Check# 8462
MEYER, Dave & Carol	23 Mar 20	1,250.00	Check# 9346113
MIDYETT, Lovetta	08 May 20	20.00	CASH
MILLER, William S.	05 Feb 19	200.00	Check# 6696
MILLOCK, Carl P.	01Nov 19	10.00	Check# 4767
MOONEY, James	08 Feb 20	100.00	Check# 1150
MORRISON, Sammy	12 Sep19	25.00	Check# 3407
MORRISON, Sammy	25 Jan 20	50.00	Check# 3465
NACE, Reuben F.	21 Mar 20	150.00	Check# 334
NAZZARIO, Anthony	02 Sep19	50.00	Check$ 3362
NELSON, George J.	30 Nov19	250.00	Check# 6305
NEWSHAM, Robert G.	31 Aug 19	50.00	Check# 1994
NUNN, John B .	01Nov 19	35.00	Check# 284
PEARSON, Scott G.	01 Aug19	55.00	Check# 6258
PETERSON, Roger M/GEN	28 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 2053
PLISCO, Irwin S MD	01 May 20	100.00	Check# 295
PROVENCIO, Ramon Jr.	06 Sep19	200.00	Check# 262
PURO, Edward	23 Jun 20	25.00	Check# 9495
RAIT, Donald M	04 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 1276
RAIT, Donald M.	28 Jan 19	1,000.00	Check# 1286
RAIT, Donald M.	09 Jun 20	1,000.00	Check# 1298
RAYNER, Ronald	01 Oct 19	500.00	Check# 337
RIORDAN, Robert W.	06 Sep19	250.00	Check# 5266
ROBERTSON, William A.	10 Sep19	50.00	Check# 2099
ROBINSON, John	11 Apr 20	50.00	Check# 1125
ROSSON, Harold .	19 Sep19	250.00	Check# 8657
ROSSON, Harold	04 Feb 20	1,000.00	Check# 40118
ROSSON, Harold	02 Jun 20	100.00	Check# 9024
ROWE, John F. JR	03 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 0984
ROWE, John F. JR.	04 Jun 20	1,000.00	Check# 15579
RUSHFORTH, Toby	03 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 1417
RUSHFORTH, Toby	07 Jun 20	1,000.00	Check# 1480
SADOWSKI, Alexander	24 Apr 20	50.00	Check# 6566
SARGENT, Ralph F.	01 Aug19	50.00	Check#
SHUFF, Ronald	06 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 6658
SHUFF, Ronald	25 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 6695
SHUFF, Ronald	09 Mar 20	1,000.00	Check # 7184
L J SEAVY–CIOFFI	14 Oct 20	100.00	Check# 2043
SIEJUTT, Thomas	04 Jun 20	25.00	Check# 5326
SOERENSEN, Thomas K.	15 Feb 20	100.00	Check# 1792
SOERENSEN, Thomas K.	28 Apr 20	50.00	Check# 1816
SOERENSEN, Thomas K.	08 Oct 20	100.00	Check# 1864
STEINHARDT, Tom	15 Feb 20	200.00	Check# 1594
STUBBE, Ray W.	25 Jun 20	1,000.00	Check# 13392
B. LARKIN SPIVEY	16 Sep19	200.00	Check# 7840
B. LARKIN SPIVEY	02 Jun 20	500.00	Check# 1968
SWETS, Fred	01 Aug19	60.00	Check# 1173
THOMAS James E.	04 Jun 20	25.00	Check# 4466
TORRES, Andres	27 Jan 20	100.00	Check# 8388
TOURTE, Craig W.	04 Jan 20	500.00	Check# 974
TROUP, Ed	01 Nov19	100.00	Check# 6245
TURNER, Russell D.	17 Sep19	250.00	Check# 5919
ULINSKI, James E.	05 Jun 20	50.00	Check# 1758
VANWINKLE, H.E.	06 Jun 20	50.00	Check# 4159
WELLS, Marshall R.	01 Oct 19	35.00	Check# 1076
WELLS, Marshall R.	20 Mar 20	50.00	Check# 4487
WILLIAMS, Francis W.	29 Jan 20	200.00	Check# 9010
WILLIAMS, Thomas J.	03 Sep19	290.00	Check# 7279
WITTLER, Dale E.	12 Sep19	25.00	Check# 5487
YANG, Wei-Ping	01 May 20	200.00	Check# 153
YOUMAN, Elwood W.	07 Sep19	1,000.00	Check# 1584
YUEN, Sun John	05 May 20	50.00	Check# 9621
ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	06 Sep19	250.00	Check# 5003
ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	05 Jun 20	250.00	Check# 5094

A WHOLE PLATOON ON PATROL



TOM "CHILLIN"











On 13 SEPTEMBER 2020, EVERYONE IN CHICAGO DUE TO COIV-19, HAD BEEN FORCED TO HUNKER DOWN IN THEIR HOMES, AS WE HAD AT KHE SANH, THIS DROVE ME CRAZY. LUCKY FOR ME AND OTHERS, THE PROMOTERS OF THE LARGEST MILITARY VETERANS GET TOGETHER IN KOKOMO INDIANA VOTED TO GO AHEAD WITH THE EVENT THAT HAS BEEN PROMOTED FOR THE LAST 38 YEARS. KSV HENRY KARKOSZKA, CBMU-301 DET B SEABEES AND I, ATTENDED THE EVENT BRINGING MY 1942 RESTORED JEEP. WHILE THERE WE MET ANOTHER KSV GARY COX ,B CO 75TH SPT BN 1ST BDE 5TH DIV AND HIS GOOD BUDDY FROM CHU-LAI FRANK BALDWIN. HERE ARE A FEW PHOTOS FROM THE EVENT. I ALSO INCLUDED SEVERAL PHOTOS OF MY JEEP IN MANY PARADES IN CHICAGO, BACKING POLICE OFFICERS.

"BACK THE BLUE", "BLUE LIVES MATTER",

















ISSUE 100

RED CLAY

WINTER 2021

LEST WE FORGET





ED ZIMMERMAN F CO, 3RD PLT, AND HIS LOVELY BRIDE CATHY, CELEBRATING THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

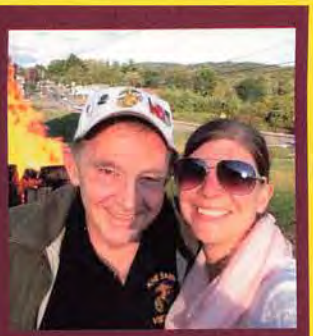









Journey Begins

55

ANNIVERSARY

Rod & Charlene Fink

1966 - 2016



Half Way Point



For Better or For Worse





In Sickness and In Health

Two are better than one.

Because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

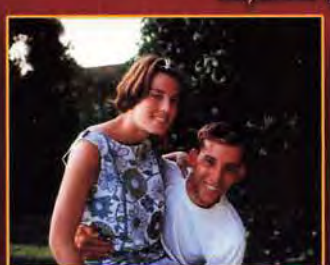





OBIT

William R. "Bill" Cron, 73, was born March 15, 1948, and returned to heaven April 16, 2021.



In the years between he lived a wonderful life. He had an idyllic childhood in rural Belleville, provided by his loving parents, the late William E (Bill) and Marjorie (nee Johnson) Cron.

He joined the United States Marine Corps, surviving Khe Sanh, Vietnam siege and the Tet Offensive. Becoming a Marine was one of the defining moments of his life.

Bill returned home to achieve status of Journeyman Carpenter and was a member of The Brotherhood of Carpenters. He also enjoyed truck driving, bus driving and being a greens keeper.

After retiring he enjoyed volunteering and traveling throughout the United states. Accompanying him on these journeys was his adoring wife of 40 years Jeri C. Cron (nee Wetmore.). Finally he settled in Hecker.

Bill was proud of his son by marriage Ronald "Ronnie" Reed (Susan) of Collinsville and loved seeing his grandchildren Chelsey Reed of Collinsville and Emily Dively (Cory) of Moro, along with the great-grandchildren Caleb and Cooper Dively of Moro.

Bill's little sister Gwen Flach (nee Cron) was his biggest fan. He so loved her and her children, his niece Jennifer Flach and nephew Matthew Flash (Alyssa) both of Belleville and their children Andrew Flach and Clara Flach.

Bill was born again Christian and tried to live his life by the teachings of Jesus. He was so grateful to be a member of the New Life Church in Waterloo – the prayers of friends and church family have sustained him though difficult times.

He was buried April 22 in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis.

OBIT

SOERENSEN,THOMAS K., USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, A BTRY 1/13, ALPHA 6 F/O TEAM, I CO 3/26

Thomas K. Soerensen
March 17, 1941 – May 3, 2021

Thomas K. Soerensen, longtime resident of Oroville, California, died at his home early on May 3, 2021 at age 80, after a more than 4 years-long battle with cancer.

Thomas was born in Poznan (German-occupied Poland), on March 17, 1941, to Edward and Anna Soerensen.

In January of 1945 Thomas and his mother, along with his older siblings Karin, Klaus and George, were forced to flee their home country from advancing Russian forces. His father was away at the time, serving in the German military, but he miraculously found them, and they fled to Bavaria where the American military forces had liberated Germany. Thereafter they lived in several displaced persons camps in Northern Germany. His youngest brother, George, was born in 1946. Eventually, the Soerensens were sponsored by a family friend in Long Island, New York and passage was arranged to the USA by Lutheran World Federation. They sailed from Bremerhaven, Germany on the naval transport ship, USS General W.C. Langfitt, which, over the war years, carried many immigrants to the USA. The family arrived in New York Harbor on January 9, 1956. Thomas was 14 years of age

Thomas thereafter graduated from Massapequa High School, Class of 1959-60 in New York. He then enlisted with the US Marine Corps in 1960 and served for 4 years. In 1966, when he was already discharged from the Marines, working and attending college, he re-enlisted.

Thomas K. Soerensen is a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, and was attached to "A Battery 1st



Battalion 13th Marines" as an artillery forward observer during the infamous battle of Khe Sanh (January 21-July 9, 1968). On September 5, 1966, he was wounded in action, but declined medical transport and despite his injuries, continued to direct a successful night-long mission. He was the recipient of numerous military awards for his years of service and sustained acts of heroism in combat, including The Bronze Star, The Purple Heart, and a Marine Corps Commendation. He received the "1968 Presidential Unit Citation" which was awarded to the 3d Marine Division (Reinforced) for extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty from March 8, 1965 to September 15, 1967. He proudly served our country for 6 years as an active duty Marine, achieving the rank of Sergeant. He was a member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association and several other related military organizations.

In 1982 Thomas and his family moved to Oroville, California, where he and his wife, Evva, owned and operated the historic Miner's Café restaurant on Oro Dam Blvd for more than 15 years.

Thomas loved the outdoors and was an avid hiker. A lover of music, he appreciated a wide range of musical genres from classic rock to classical music. He was an industrious person and when he wasn't working he spent much of his free time improving and maintaining his home Rose Hill, VA

OBIT

WINSTON, KELLY, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN

Winston Kelly, age 72, went home to be with his Lord on March 1, 2021 in Claiborne County Medical Center. He was a native of Harlan County, KY, the son of the late Millard and Ethel Mae Hall Kelly. He joined the United States Marine Corp in 1967 and was honorably discharged **in 1969. His tour of duty was in Vietnam where he served in the Battle of "Khe Sanh" on Hill #861 for the entire battle. Winston was the recipient of two Purple Hearts**. He was a retired coal miner spending twenty three and a half years with Arch of KY in the same mine #37, spending another three and a half years at another mine before his retirement. He moved from Harlan County and came to Virginia in 1995. Winston was of Baptist faith.

Survivors are his wife of 53 years Sandra Eldridge Kelly of Rose Hill, VA. Two sons; Winston Jr. Kelly and wife Tina of Jonesville, VA, Chris Kelly



and wife Michelle of Rose Hill, VA. Grandchildren; Winston Kelly III and wife Andrea, Alyssa Combs, Joshua Kelly and wife Emma and Grace Kelly.

Great-grandchildren; Colton Kelly and Samuel Combs. He was a wonderful father and a fantastic grandpa.

The family would like to thank Dr. John Michael Robertson and all the staff at Claiborne County Medical Center. He would want us to list all his close friends but there are far to many. The family will receive on Sunday, March 7, 2021 from noon until 2:00 pm at Sturgill Funeral Home in Pennington Gap with services following with Pastor Rick Phillips and Pastor Richard Long officiating. Interment will follow in Lee Memorial Park West in Rose Hill, VA. Pallbearers will be Bo Kelly, Danny Perkins, Ed Jennings, Wayne Marcum, John Douglas and Randy Eldridge. Social distancing and masks will be required due to the Corona Virus. To view obituary and sign guest book please visit www.sturgillfuneralhome.com. Mullins-Sturgill Funeral Home of Pennington Gap is in charge of the arrangements.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN
By Michael Archer

Fifty-three years ago today, on July 6, 1968, Marine Lance Corporal Thomas Patrick Mahoney III, weary from the endless combat that had decimated his company, distraught at the final abandonment to the enemy of nearby Khe Sanh Combat Base just hours before, and having just received bad news from home, walked unarmed away from his platoon's tenuous defensive perimeter on the western sector of infamous Hill 881 South into an inevitable death by enemy soldiers waiting just a few yards away.

Tom's despair that afternoon reverberated over the subsequent decades in the heartbreak felt by family and friends and the gnawing sorrow and guilt among his fellow Marines who, though they had survived, were now left with a lifetime of lingering regret that they had not been tuned-in enough to his emotional state to avert the loss of such a well-liked colleague. Others, like myself, who had left Khe Sanh three months earlier, would nonetheless carry the burden of survivor guilt for very long time after the war.

The events leading up to that day—and after—are detailed in my book *The Long Goodbye. S*ince my last update on this site in June 2020 (Government at its Best (khesanh-battle.com), I've made several attempts to gain information from the US Defense POW\MIA Accountability Agency about any re-



L/CPL TOM MAHONEY APRIL 1968

newed activity in the search for Tom's remains, but have gotten no new information.

As the years pass, and despite great advances in the science of identifying even minuscule remains, described in that June 2020 blog post, it is increasingly unlikely that an identifiable remnant will be found. In 2016, a DPAA field team, escorting Tom's platoon commander Frank Ahearn and another witness to the event, Tom Northrop, narrowed down the location of where Mahoney's body was last seen. What happens next, remains up to the DPAA command. Understandably, they have a responsibility to apply their resources to situations that will have a higher probability of success.

Had a search team been dispatched within a few years of his death, the chances would have been much greater, which brings us to an odd "what might have been" connection between Tom Mahoney and one of the Marine Corps' most revered heroes, Colonel John Ripley.

Then-Captain Ripley was involved in a number of daring incidents during his time in Vietnam serving with various reconnaissance organizations and, for about a year, when he led Lima Company, Third Battalion Third Marine Regiment, called "Ripley's

Raiders," during combat missions throughout the northern part of the country, including around Khe Sanh in 1967. During his tours in Vietnam, Ripley would be wounded several times, but only claiming one as a Purple Heart because he did not want to reach the magic number of three that would send him home. None of his exploits were more incredible—or legendary—than his destruction of a bridge over the Cua Viet River near the town of Dong Ha on April 1, 1972---singlehandedly stopping a vast North Vietnamese Army offensive consisting of nearly 30,000 troops and 200 battle tanks.

As advisor to group of well-disciplined South Vietnamese Marines, Ripley, and Major Jim Smock, immediately realized their M-48 tanks would be easily outgunned by the superior Soviet-made armor that the NVA were moving forward, and so had to determine how to stop this formidable tank column approaching the bridge. A successful crossing would lead them unhindered to their objective-- the old Imperial City of Hue.

The bridge was constructed of iron I-Beams, over-



CAPTAIN JOHN RIPLEY 1971

laid with steel decking, covered by two feet of timber, all sitting atop six-feet-thick concrete supports. The only way it could be brought down was with well-placed demolition. Ripley ordered explosives be brought forward. Once they arrived Captain Ripley, who could not use the roadway of the bridge due to withering enemy gunfire from the north side of the river, went to work underneath, sliding 75 pound cases of TNT between the edges of the I-Beams to a point over the middle of the river. Because there were six such I-beams, the job would take two hours. The shape of the I-beam allowed Ripley to use the protective channel to shield him from the enemy gunfire that was raking the area in an effort to stop him. However, at times he was forced to dangle precariously from the bottom of the bridge, advancing hand-over-hand.

After all the explosives were in place, Ripley lit the primer cord with a match, but crawled out once more to set a backup detonator with electrical caps. He then raced toward a protective bunker 90 yards away. The bridge exploded before he got there. All he later remembered of that moment was lying on his back "as huge pieces of the bridge were hurtling and cartwheeling across the sky above."

His heroic actions bought time for a South Vietnamese Army counteroffensive to be organized and eventually the North Vietnamese were driven back. Three years later they would return—and overrun the entire country ending the war. Ripley would receive the Navy Cross for his actions and in an interview published by the US Naval Institute years later would say: "The idea that I would be able to even finish the job before the enemy got me was ludicrous."

What fewer people know about Ripley is that six months earlier, in September 1971, he and his South Vietnamese Marines, set out on a perilous mission to the slopes of Hill 950, about two miles from the abandoned Khe Sanh Combat Base, hoping to recover the remains of several American Marines killed there in a helicopter crash earlier in the year. The first two attempts resulted in Ripley's helicopters being badly shot up by enemy antiaircraft fire and forced to glide down into hard landings on the nearby abandoned Khe Sanh airstrip. Each time the men were able to escape capture. After recovering from wounds received during the second attempt, Ripley, and his Vietnamese Marines, made a third try, this time landing on a nearby Hill 1015 and going overland, eluding the hundreds of North Vietnamese Army soldiers in the area, and successfully locating the American bodies.

As a chopper carrying them and the remains ascended from their make-shift landing zone on the slope

Hill 950 on September 20, 1971—in what would prove to be the final American military action at Khe Sanh—it passed directly over the deserted, shell-pocked, partially overgrown plateau where just over three year earlier the plight of thousands of besieged Americans had once captivated the world's attention.

Ripley's success in recovering those remains opened the possibility of other such missions to the Khe Sanh area. In a document I received years later (Joint POW-MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) Research and Investigation Team Research Report, Case 1224, 1993), I would learn that just two months after that mission, the accountability command considered the possibly of trying to recover Mahoney's remains just five miles southwest of Ripley's successful effort, However, they soon decided against it because "the continuing hostile threat in the area precluded any visits or ground inspections in his case."

The 1973 Paris Peace Accords would include provi-



IN THE DISTANCE, HILL 950 (LEFT) AND HILL 1015 (RIGHT) AS VIEWED FROM NEAR THE SPOT TOM MAHONEY WAS LOST ON HILL 881 SOUTH

sions for locating those still unaccounted for at the conclusion of hostilities, creating a joint military team with all signatories represented. The U.S. component, called the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC), was responsible for field searches, excavations, recovery and repatriation activities negotiated through these accords, but was often hampered by ongoing fighting in the south, and open and aggressive hostility from the North Vietnamese and VC soldiers in the potential search areas. With the fall of Saigon in April 1975, Americans lost all access to the old battlefields.

For a decade afterward, most Americans sought to forget Vietnam in an effort to pull the nation together after a period domestic unrest and violence that had bordered on civil war. While returned veterans were still considered pariahs by many, in the late-1980s President George H.W. Bush and Congress acted on growing public interest in locating missing Americans. This became the foundation for ending a nineteen-year trade embargo with Vietnam and establishing economic relations.

In 1994, American investigators returned to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, interviewing former NVA and VC soldiers, conducting field searches and excavations, and sifting through military archives in Hanoi. The mission of the JCRC was reassigned to the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF -FA) located in Honolulu and soon most U.S. government documents pertaining to MIAs in South East Asia were declassified and available through the Library of Congress.

From those records, I learned that on July 12, 1993, twenty-five years to the day after the battle of Khe Sanh ended with the departure of the last Marine unit from Hill 689, a four-person JTF-FA team traveled for the first time to Hill 881 South in search of Tom's remains. The investigators had no one to interview, because there were no local civilians in the region at the time of his death, and Hanoi's antiquated record-keeping system still prevented them from identifying the NVA unit involved in the incident. They performed a perfunctory surface survey of the area where Tom was last seen and "found no evidence of remains or burial."

Had the decision been made in 1971 to try and duplicate Ripley's recovery mission at Khe Sanh, this time looking for Tom, this story might have had a different ending. We will never know. But what we do know is that what Chaucer wrote 700 years ago still rings sorrowfully true today in our effort to finally bring Tom home: "Time and tide wait for no man."

NIGHTMARE NORTH OF CAM LO
28 FEBRUARY 1867
PREFACE

In late February 1967, a Recon team patrolling northwest of Cam Lo near the DMZ made contact with a sizable NVA force. They killed one enemy soldier in the initial firefight, but they had actually



engaged the point element of a regiment sized unit from the 324B Division. Outmanned and outgunned, the Recon Marines withdrew to the south and radioed for help. During the subsequent 48-hour period that followed, at least 4 Marine rifle companies were sent out to rescue the Recon team and exploit the enemy contact, but they would pay a heavy price. By the time the fighting was over, the Marines would suffer 20 KIA, and at least 135 wounded. My dad, 1st Lieutenant Jim Ambrose, was the Artillery Forward Observer assigned to Golf Company, 2/3, the unit which linked up with the Recon team and fought through a hellacious NVA ambush near the base of hill 124. This is his recollection of that rescue patrol and the grim battle that followed.

Jim Ambrose, Jr., former Captain, USMC

DEPARTURE INTERRUPTED

"Where's Lieutenant Ambrose at? We need him up at the CP A-S-A-P!" Oh shit. I can still remember that young Marine running from hooch to hooch searching for me. Vietnam was filled with nightmares and this was usually how they started. It was the morning of February 27, 1967, and I had been in country for 7 months. On that particular day, though, my seabag was packed, and I was listening to records by the Animals and Dusty Springfield on a battery powered record player in our primitive bunker at Camp Carroll. My unit, Bravo Battery 1/12, was scheduled to rotate out of Vietnam for a month of training on Okinawa, and the trucks that would take us to Dong Ha were due to arrive any minute. The thought of four weeks away from the blood, mud and combat up in I Corps sounded too good to be true, and when things sounded too good to be true in Vietnam, they usually were.

Premonition of Death

"Vietnam was filled with nightmares and this was usually how they started."

On that same morning, Captain Carl Bockewitz made his way over to the 2/3 OPS bunker at Camp Carroll to ask the S-3 a question. Bockewitz was the CO of Golf Co., and he had recently volunteered to extend his combat tour in Vietnam. The tall, lean, former cop from Bourbon, Missouri wanted to know if his company would be patrolling north of the Cam Lo River that day.



1ST LT JIM AMBROSE, ARTY F/O ON PATROL NORTHWEST OF DANANG.

The S-3, Major Robert Sheridan, dismissed his question and assured him that G Co. was not going anywhere. Like B/1/12, 2/3 was also scheduled for training on Okinawa, and more than half the battalion was already embarked on ships offshore. Bockewitz walked out of the bunker feeling quite relieved because the previous night he had dreamed that he would die if he went north of the Cam Lo River.

MY MISSION

My Mission Up at the CP, 1st Lt. Richard Brammer, the Battery Fire Direction Officer, briefed me

on the situation. He told me that our trip to Okinawa was on hold because a Marine Recon team had bumped into a large NVA force northwest of Cam Lo. After a short firefight, they broke contact but now they were surrounded and needed help. Lima Co 3/4 had been patrolling nearby with 5 M-48



CAPT. CARL BOCKEWITZ, CO OF GOLF 2/3, DREAMED HE WOULD DIE IF HE WENT NORTH OF THE CAM LO RIVER.

tanks, but thick vegetation in the area prevented them from reaching the Recon team. The only remaining unit available to help the Recon team was Captain Bockewtiz' Golf Company, and they needed an experienced Arty FO for the mission. Brammer chose me.

I gulped hard and tried to hide my disappointment, then hustled back to my hooch to grab my helmet and flak jacket. I threw some C rats and .45 ammo into my light marching pack and then made my way up toward the 2/3 position near the plateau atop Camp Carroll. I had a list of on call targets prepared by Brammer in my cargo pocket along with a single lens binocular I had created with a hacksaw following Operation Hastings in August 1966. During my time in Vietnam, I had learned that being as inconspicuous as possible while calling in fire missions prolonged one's life expectancy as an Arty FO.

THE GRUNTS

The 2/3 CP was abuzz with activity as sergeants and corporals organized Golf Co for the rescue patrol. Young infantrymen were loading up magazines for their M-14's, while in the background the outgoing artillery fire was frequent and intense. Like me, these Marines were probably trying to suppress their shock and disappointment over the Okinawa trip being cancelled, and it had become increasingly obvious to everyone that this hastily assigned rescue mission was certain to bring us in direct contact with the NVA.

I didn't know any of the Marines in 2/3, but I did my best to find someone in charge. From the midst of the chaos came Lt. Col Victor Ohanesian, the Battalion CO. He greeted me with a smile and a handshake, then "thanked" me for reporting in. I wasn't aware that this was an optional mission, but his affable demeanor helped calm my nerves. It was obvious that he was an experienced combat leader who inspired confidence amongst his Marines. He handed me a couple of loaded magazines for my.45, then brought me over to meet Capt. Bockewitz who gave me a brief handshake just before issuing the patrol order to his rifle company.

My best guess is that there were approximately 75 Marines in the reaction force, about half the size of a fully manned rifle company. As far as other officers, I saw a 1st Lt. FAC and two 2nd Lt. platoon commanders. When Bockewitz finished his order, we mounted up on 6x6 trucks which took us from Camp Carroll down to Route 9. It occurred to me that these were probably the same trucks which were supposed to take us to Dong Ha for our trip to Okinawa. We convoyed east about 5 clicks east then disembarked to begin our march north into the DMZ

At some point I was introduced to Corporal George Schieder, a wiry Marine rifleman who had volunteered to be the radio operator for arty FO teams attached to Golf Co. We made small talk during the short truck ride, and he let out a chuckle when I told him I was from Boston because he was from upstate NY. Schieder was a squared away Marine, and I would soon learn that he was a cool customer under fire.

THE PATROL

It was late in the afternoon as we set out, and a cool, steady rain was falling. We marched swiftly north along a thin, narrow footpath which took us through dense jungle underbrush six to eight feet high in



1ST LT. JIM AMBROSE

places. Each Marine in the column held onto the cartridge belt of the Marine to his front in order to avoid being separated in the dark. To the northeast we could hear the sounds of an intense firefight developing. After establishing a defensive position for



LT COL VICTOR OHANESIAN 2/3 BATTALION CO

the night, L/3/4 had come under attack from an NVA force who disabled one of their M-48 tanks with RPG's.

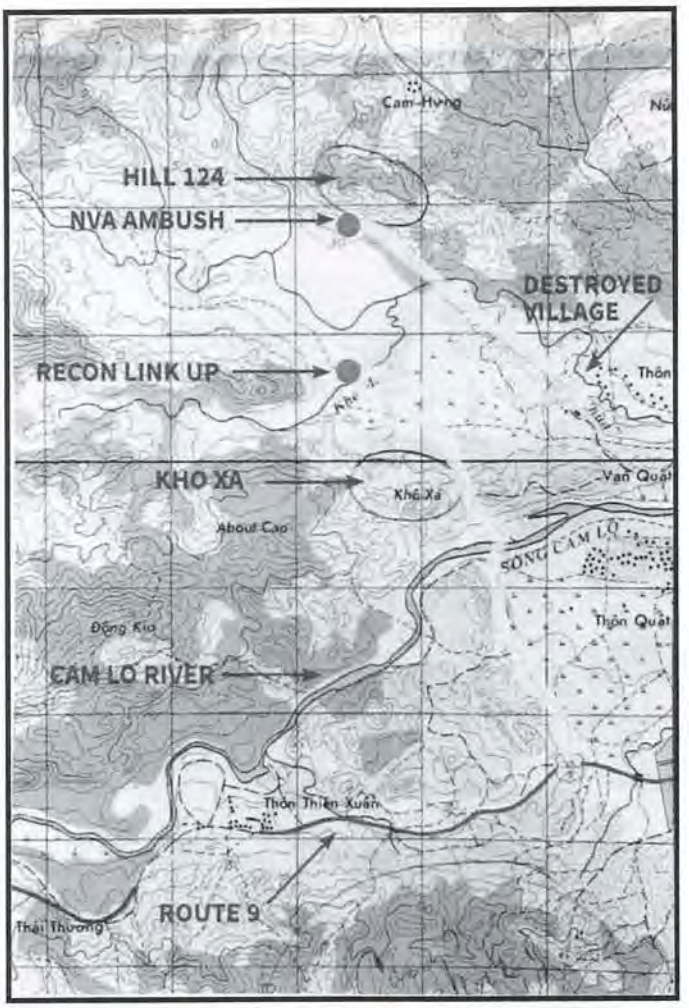

HIGHLIGHTED GOLF 2/3 PATROL ROUTE FEB 27-28, 1967

Soon the dense vegetation gave way to a clearing and we were on the bank of the Cam Lo river. It was swollen from monsoon rains, and I had to hold my .45 and maps over my head as we marched across. At that particular moment I didn't know an ything about Capt Bockewitz' ominous dream, but I can only wonder what ran through his mind as we marched across that river to where he told the S-3 he would die only hours earlier. The narrow trail we were following continued on the opposite bank of

" I HAD TO GET SOME ARTY IN QUICK, OR RISK BEING OVER-RUN OR ANNIHILATED..."

the river. In the distance and slightly west of our patrol route we could see the looming shadow of a large hill identified as "Kho Xa" on my map.



GOOGLE EARTH IMAGE, PRESENT DAY.

Bockewtiz may have suspected there were enemy scouts on top because he ordered the company to halt, and then had me request a fire mission. Kho Xa was one of the pre-plotted targets prepared by Lt. Brammer so I was able to obliterate the hill top with 105mm howitzer rounds that screamed in from Camp Carroll within minutes. After the fire mission, Bockewitz told me to stay near him at the front of the column and track the company position on my map.

We moved further north into the DMZ and soon began hearing sporadic gunfire from the Recon team as they zig zagged south with NVA troops in pursuit. Bockewitz attempted to make radio contact to better determine their location, but the Reconners would only respond with clicks of their handset because they were so close to the enemy. With the use of white parachute flares as reference points, though, we eventually linked up with them at approximately 2300. They emerged from the darkness wearing huge packs and soft bush covers.

We took up defensive positions in the cold, rain soaked elephant grass while Bockewitz radioed the higher ups back at Camp Carroll. Having accomplished our mission, I briefly hoped we would head back to route 9 with the Recon team, but the worst part of this patrol was yet to come.

One of the recon Marines had a Boston accent like mine, and he told me that they had been patrolling in the area north of Kho Xa for several days when they bumped into 4 unusually tall NVA soldiers with AK-47's on a narrow trail—they were wearing pith helmets and green utilities with red metal stars on their collars. They shot and killed one of them, but the others retreated back up the trail and into the jungle. Within minutes they were under attack and being pursued by what they estimated to be at least 100 NVA soldiers. That's when they called for help.

Bockewitz received orders to move a few thousand meters southeast and establish a defensive position in an abandoned village marked "destroyed" on my map. We arrived there sometime after midnight and set up a CP in an old church whose roof had been destroyed in a previous battle. I could make out some ornate sculptures depicting the stations of the cross which harkened back to my days as an altar boy at the Sacred Heart Church in Roslindale, MA.

"CAPT. BOCKEWTIZ'S PREMONITION OF DEATH HAD COME TRUE."

Corporal Schieder and I spent the night shivering underneath a single poncho making periodic radio checks with the battery at Camp Carroll. We were bone tired, but adrenalin and fear kept us from sleeping. The battle between the NVA and Lima 3/4 raged through the night just a few thousand klicks northeast of our position. A steady bombardment of artillery from Camp Carroll helped them stave off several determined NVA attacks.

At first light we were ordered to move north about 2 klicks to establish a blocking position on top of hill 124. The Recon Marines told us that they had found numerous fighting holes and freshly used trails in and around the base of that same hill, and they estimated that at least a battalion size NVA force was in the area. However, intelligence reports would later reveal that it was a regiment sized unit (1000-2000 troops) from the 324thB Division which had recently returned to the Song Ngan Valley after being bloodied there by the Marines in Operation Hastings six months earlier.

With Lima 3/4 pinned down in a defensive position to protect their disabled tanks, Golf 2/3's under-

manned rifle company of 75 Marines was the only intact fighting force capable of maneuvering and undertaking offensive operations in the Cam Lo area at that particular moment in time. We were cold, wet, and weary of the inevitable contact with an NVA unit which likely outnumbered us by 10 to 1. But on the morning of 28 February, we stepped off toward hill 124 where a battle hardened and fiercely determined enemy force was waiting for us because we were U.S. Marines and we had orders to do so.

We marched in a staggered column, NCO's forcefully reminding the riflemen to maintain their interval and stay alert. Their heads were on swivels, scanning left and right with M-14's in jungle slings. Although we could hear the battle with L/3/4 to the east, the approach to hill 124 seemed eerily quiet. The terrain was flat and devoid of the heavy vegetation we had traversed the previous night while searching for the Recon team. For a brief moment I thought that maybe all of the NVA troops in the area had left to join the fight against L/3/4, but they had not.

We were about 100 meters from the base of the hill 124 when I heard the firecracker sound of gunfire near the front of the column. It was light at first, but then it seemed to erupt from everywhere. We hit the deck and took cover in a shallow gully that was located alongside our route of march. The NVA were dug in amidst the vegetation at the foot of hill 124 and along our right flank no more than 30-40 meters away. The grunts shook off the shock of the ambush and returned fire with their M-14's. Within seconds the noise reached a hellacious cacophony.

I knew Bockewitz would want some arty to suppress the ambush, so with Corporal Schieder in tow, I scrambled over the grunts in a half crouch toward his position at the front of the column.

We arrived to find a Navy Corpsman working frantically to save several seriously wounded Marines. The bodies of two dead Marines lay nearby.

Bockewitz and one of his senior enlisted Marines were in a crouch behind the gully pointing and yelling something about the M-60 machine guns which lay idle in the kill zone 15-20 meters away. Their respective crew members had been cut down in the opening moments of the firefight, and some brave young Marines had crawled out in the face of withering enemy fire to recover their bodies. Some of them had been shot in the process, though, which added to the growing number of casualties.

I never got the chance to speak with Bockewitz. Much to my shock and to the shock of the Marines around me, he stood up, ripped off his flak jacket and threw his helmet to the ground. Then, with his .45 in hand, he leapt up over the berm and sprinted in a crouch toward his wounded Marines and the M-60s. He was shot full of holes instantly, his body falling lifeless near the other dead and wounded Golf Company Marines. Capt. Bockewtiz' premonition of death had come true.

Things were deteriorating rapidly for our beleaguered patrol. The skipper was dead, and we were pinned down by the massive volume of enemy gunfire. There were two other platoon commanders, but I had no idea where they were or what they were doing. It occurred to me that we should attempt some kind of envelopment around the NVA position, but any movement from the gulley would have been suicide at that point. We were a force of 75 Marines up against what was most likely an enemy battalion firing from well prepared defensive positions. I had to get some arty in quick, or Golf Company would risk being overrun or annihilated by the numerically superior NVA unit.

Schieder and I scrambled in a half crouch back to a position near the middle of the column. I popped up and wedged my chin into the lip of the berm to eyeball some targets, and 2 or 3 enemy rounds cracked just above and beside my head. I ducked down and crawled 3-4 meters to the right, and then back to the left, each time popping up to get a quick look at where the enemy might be located, and each time I w as greeted by purposely fully aimed gunfire.

We were near the base of hill 124 which was a prominent terrain feature on my map, but it was covered in the type of dense, Vietnam vegetation that made spotting and adjusting rounds difficult. I wanted to shift fire from the concentration I had plotted on top of hill 124 before we departed from the church earlier that day. After getting a ballpark reading with the mils scale on my single lens binocular, I grabbed the radio handset from Cpl. Schieder:

"MORTGAGE, MORTGAGE, THIS IS MONEY 62, FIRE MISSION, OVER…."

The Army battery at Camp Carroll responded immediately:

"MONEY 62, THIS IS ALPHA O'LEARY NINER, SEND YOUR MISSION OVER…"

"FROM CONCENTRATION TWO FOUR ZERO, RIGHT 100, DROP 200, ENENY TROOPS FIR-

ING AUTOMATIC WEAPONS, ADJUST FIRE, REQUEST SPLASH OVER…"

"WE DIDN'T FIND ANY DEAD NVA BLOOD LEADING OFF INTO THE JUNGLE."

In a few moments two rounds were on the way. The absolute worst thing that can happen to an Arty FO is for incoming rounds to fall short and cause death or injury to his fellow Marines. Regardless of who is at fault, the grunts will blame the FO.

Schieder and I passed the word to the Grunts and they in turn shouted up and down the column: "ARTY ON THE WAY!" A few moments later the call "SPLASH" came over the radio which meant 5 seconds until impact. The two rounds screamed overhead and landed about 50 meters directly in front of our position, exactly where I wanted them. This was a "danger close" fire mission, and dirt and debris from the impact rained down on our heads. The Army cannon cockers were true pros, so I immediately asked them to "FIRE FOR EFFECT."

The wind tearing roar of six shells came next, bearing down on us like an airborne freight train. Then six large explosions of black smoke and dirt erupted right where the first two rounds hit.

Success! With the enemy positions accurately bracketed, I was able to call in mission after mission, shifting to the left and right across what was about a 75-meter front, directly on top of the NVA positions. They were dug in deep, and I wanted to pulverize them so I requested delayed fuse rounds which would only explode 5 seconds after penetrating the soil, and variable timed (VT) rounds which would burst in the air about 5 meters above the target, inflicting maximum casualties on any exposed enemy soldiers.

The exact sequence of events which followed is somewhat of a blur, but Schieder and I brought in hundreds of rounds on the NVA positions over the course of the next few hours. Most of the arty strikes were so close (40-50 meters) that heaps of dirt and debris landed on us when the rounds impacted. It felt good to hit back at the enemy who had ambushed us, but these were battle hardened NVA regulars who did not quit easily.

Lieutenant Flaherty, the company FAC, who I would later become friends with aboard ship, made his way over toward Schieder and I. He tapped me on the shoulder and gave me a big thumbs up in admiration of our work, then he pointed his finger to the sky and shouted "I GOT AIR ON STATION." I looked up and saw two F-4 Phantoms circling our position and working their way down from about 5000 feet. In what was called the "Save A Plane" concept at the time, we checked fire to let the pilots go to work without fear of being hit by a 105 round.

Just when it seemed they had disappeared from sight, one of the Phantoms came roaring by at tree top level from right to left tearing up the NVA positions with machine gun pods which sounded like the world's biggest jackhammer tearing into cement. Napalm would have been nice, but Flaherty said we were too close to the enemy. With each pass, the F-4s hit full afterburner and pulled straight up with an awe-inspiring roar. The sight of "MARINES" painted in large black letters on the fuselage of each jet was a pretty good morale jolt for all of us.

The combination of airstrikes and artillery missions began to take its toll on the enemy, and the amount of gunfire directed at us began to taper off by late afternoon. The NVA had probably started pulling back into the mountains north of hill 124, but at least a few stayed behind. When an H-34 rumbled in toward our position from the West, the NVA opened up on it, hitting the tail and underside with disturbingly loud pinging noises. Dead and wounded Marines were loaded on board as the crew chief kicked out crates of ammunition. When the old piston-engined chopper lifted off, the door gunner ripped into the NVA positions with his M-60.

Among the wounded loaded onto the chopper was 2nd Lt. Larry Gerlach, one of the two platoon commanders with Golf Co on the patrol. An enemy bullet had smashed through his right hip, and a corpsman had given him a generous shot of morphine. In his delirium, he was mumbling something about "the lieutenant is prepared to receive his critique Sir…," just the way we were taught to speak to our tactics instructors at The Basic School. It was a brief moment of humor on a battlefield far, far away from Quantico. Larry recovered and made a career out of the Marine Corps, but he was badly wounded during the Beirut barracks bombing in 1983.

By the time the battle was over, we had suffered 7 Marines killed and 18 wounded. 2nd Lt. Richard Mellon, the senior platoon commander, received orders for us to withdraw back to a position near route 9 where we set up a defensive perimeter for the night. While our casualties were bad by any measure (roughly 1/3 of the company), Lima 3/4 suffered worse.

While we were battling at the base of Hill 124, Lt. Col Ohanesian was ordered to lead a relief force to the Lima 3/4 position with all the remaining Marines from 2/3 at Camp Carroll. They held off several enemy attacks with the help of heavy artillery fire and close air support, then received orders to move west and provide reinforcements for our battle against the NVA. They never made it. Immediately after departing the Lima Co. position they were ambushed by a large enemy force that employed mortars and rocket propelled grenades. By the time the battle was over they had sustained 13 KIA's and over 100 casualties. Among those killed were Lt. Col Ohanesian and his battalion Sgt. Major Wayne Hayes.

LT. COL. EARL "PAPPY" DELONG AND A RETURN TO THE SCENE OF BATTLE

We spent an otherwise quiet night in our defensive position near route 9. Rumors spread that we were going back to Camp Carroll because fresh reinforcements were being flown in. At dawn, though, there was frantic word that a G Co. Marine and a Corpsman were unaccounted for. Lt. Col Earl "Pappy" DeLong, the 3rd Marine Regiment's XO, was flown in to take charge of 2/3 and all of the units that had been attached during the previous 24 hours. DeLong ordered Lt. Mellon and I to brief him on the previous day's battle.



LT COL EARL "PAPPY" DeLONG, WHO TOOK COMMAND OF 2/3 AFTER COL VICTOR OHANESIAN WAS KILLED. HE WOULD LATER EARN A SILVER STAR FOR ACTIONS UNDER FIRE IN THE HILL FIGHTS NEAR KHE SANH MAKING HIM THE ONLY MARINE IN HISTORY TO EARN A SILVER STAR IN WWII, KOREAN WAR AND THE VIETNAM WAR,

DeLong was as salty as they come, and easily could have passed for one of Chesty Puller's close relatives. He wore his .45 in a shoulder holster and smoked a cigar while holding court with Mellon and I. Marines never leave comrades behind on the battlefield, so Pappy quickly issued an order for us to return to the site of the ambush near hill 124. This time we had fresh reinforcements from 2/9, and they made fun of our raggedy appearance. Nearly all of the Golf Co. Marines (myself included) had torn knees on our utility trousers as a result of crawling around in the gully for hours fighting the NVA.

This time we approached hill 124 from the west, and DeLong ordered one platoon to establish a base of fire position, while another platoon enveloped the terrain held by the NVA 24 hours earlier. As Pappy had expected, though, the NVA had fled. We found the bodies of missing Marine, PFC Richard Dewane from Buffalo, NY, and the Corpsman, Petty Officer 3rd Class John Agee from Lindsey, Ohio. I didn't see PFC Dewane's body, but I distinctly remember seeing Corpsman Agee. He was lying on his back, eyes still open, and his hand, stiff with rigor mortis, reaching up toward the sky

We didn't find any dead NVA bodies. Just trails of blood leading off into the jungle. There were impact craters from our fire missions everywhere. Amongst them were dozens of deeply dug enemy fighting holes, some filled with blood soaked rags and human remains, but very little else. Our fire missions had been right on target, but the NVA, ever phantom like, had withdrawn and taken all of their casualties with them.

The surviving members of 2/3 and I eventually made it out to Dong Ha where we rode in Mike boats from the Cua Viet river out to an amphibious transport ship that took us to Okinawa. Once aboard we enjoyed clean beds, hot showers and real chow.

Our time on Okinawa seemed like a dream compared to the hell we had just been through. But we returned to a war that had only worsened in its ferocity and intensity. In a few short weeks, I was at Khe Sanh with B/1/12 to once again provide artillery support for 2/3 as they battled to take Hills 881N and 881S under the leadership of Lt. Col Pappy Delong. Some of the same Marines from the 28 February patrol participated in those hill fights, including my radio operator, George Schieder.



1st LT JIM AMBROSE, ON OKINAWA A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE BATTLE WITH NVA FORCES NORTH OF CAM LO.



HM3 JOHN AGEE, KIA FEB 28, 1967. THE MARINES OF GOLF 2/3 RETURNED TO THE NVA AMBUSH SITE TO RECOVER HIS BODY

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES WERE WRITTEN BEFORE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH BY COLONEL BRUCE CLARKE, USA DISTRICT ADVISORY TEAM 4

WAS AMERICA DUPED AT KHE SANH?

As we approach the fiftieth anniversary the siege of the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) we can anticipate a plethora of articles about the battle that decided the Vietnam War. The first of these was in the New York Times on January 1st ("Was America Duped at Khe Sanh?") The article by John Mason Glen is spectacular in its attention grabbing title but weak on strategic analysis. Having lived through the battle and written about it in ***Expendable Warriors: the battle of Khe Sanh and the Vietnam War***, I feel uniquely qualified to rebut Glen's argument. The main theme of the article is that the attack on Khe Sanh was a diversion to draw American forces away from the populated areas in anticipation of the Tet Offensive which started 9 days after the beginning of the siege of the KSCB. This argument is inaccurate for many different reasons:

The attack on Khe Sanh had been anticipated for 3 months. Elements of 2 Army Divisions had been moved north in vicinity of Hue and Quang Tri. It was these forces that blunted part of the attacks on those two province headquarters.

Khe Sanh was reinforced by 4 battalions of Marines with most of the reinforcements arriving after the North Vietnamese Army launched its missile and artillery barrage on 21 January 1968. (More on the multiple implications of this attack in subsequent articles.) 4 battalions of Marines in the bigger scheme of things was not consequential to stopping the Tet attacks.

The diversion of air assets to support the defense of Khe Sanh was not as significant as Glen would have one believe. Mush of the air support used was B-52 carpet bombing not pin point close air support. Such bombing approaches were inappropriate for populated areas.

Glen mentions the internal opinion divisions within the North Vietnamese leadership. One faction was focused on the Tet offensive and the other on Khe Sanh. He correctly points out that one faction focused on the general uprising goal while General Giap was seeking to break the American public support for the war by the attack on Khe Sanh. He wanted to repeat his success at Dien Bien Phu where the French public support for the Indochinese war was destroyed. To people like Glen it was one or the other. Why couldn't they have been reinforcing? Glen does not examine this point.

The agony of Khe Sanh played out for 77 days on the screens and in the newspapers of main street America. This is where the war was lost! Certainly Tet contributed to the loss but it was Khe Sanh that was the deciding factor.

It should be noted that in the Burns PBS documentary which has been critiqued on these pages the siege of the KSCB is barely mentioned—another of

its fatal flaws as has been recounted on these pages. In fact both Khe Sanh and Tet were significant failures militarily for the North Vietnamese. They lost both battles. The war was there to be won, but the political will to do so had been lost. Giap had been right. (There is a unique event highlighted in my book that makes this point explicitly.)

But the bottom line is that the battle of Khe Sanh was won and the war lost at the same time.

In my next response to the Glen's article I will respond to his critique of General Westmoreland. Stay tuned!

Returning to John Mason Glen's opinion piece in the New York Times ("Was America Duped at Khe Sanh?") We must also set the record straight about General Westmoreland and the strategy in theVietnam War. Again Mr. Glen displays his lack of historical perspective by attributing the strategy of attrition in the Vietnam War to General Westmoreland's analysis of the battle of the Ira Drang Valley. (The basis of the book and movie ***We Were Soldiers Once, Young and Brave.)***

Glen correctly paints General Westmoreland as the perfect image of a soldier—World War II leader, Airborne Infantry leader, former Superintendent of West Point—with a very stiff soldierly look. Westy, as he was called by cadets at West Point and soldiers in the field in Vietnam was all that Glen describes. One must also remember at this point in history the Airborne Mafia, as it was called ruled the Army. There was admiration for the Airborne coming out of World War II. President Kennedy was enamored with the Special Forces (Green Berets) all of whom were airborne qualified. Glen attributes Westmoreland's strategy to this background and does not attribute the country's experience and successes to the strategy in Vietnam.

When Westy was superintendent at West Point I was a cadet there studying military tactics and history. Much of our studies revealed that the US military strategy grew out of Grant's defeat of Lee. The battles of the Wilderness in late 1864 and 1865 were battles of attrition. The North had the wherewithal in terms of men and equipment to fight a war of attrition against the South. This strategy succeeded. The lesson learned was that attrition warfare was a way to win.

The world wars in Europe and Asia were also wars of attrition where superior resources were able to win the day, over time. When one couples the US military experience of success through attrition warfare with Robert McNamara's "bean counting" revolution in the Pentagon one can understand how body count became the measure of success for the war in Vietnam. If more bad guys were killed in an engagement than good guys then the good guys "won". This became the approach in Vietnam.

Given this view that attrition / body count would cause the enemy to stop fighting one can clearly understand the desire of a set piece firepower intensive battle to crush the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). Khe Sanh offered this opportunity. The hope was that the NVA would go for the bait that was the Khe Sanh Combat Base and provide a large number of targets to be attacked by superior fire power and destroyed. For this strategy to succeed the bait could not be compromised by the NVA learning of the plan. The close-holding of the intelligence that the NVA was going to attack Khe Sanh lead to my advisory team in Khe Sanh village being "expendable". We were part of the bait and could not leak to our Vietnamese counterparts what was coming for fear that they in turn would leak it to the NVA. The solution was to just not tell us what was about to occur.

Many of the readers of ***Expendable Warriors*** have commented on how critical we deal with General Westmoreland. One former Chief of Staff of the Army refused to endorse the book because of this perspective. I must admit that the after taste of being "expendable" may have colored my perspective. However, I have learned the bigger lesson—strategic leaders must make strategic decisions based upon the bigger picture. In this regard the small advisory team and mixed force of Vietnamese, Bru Montagnards and Marines may have truly been expendable. Though we will probably never admit it.

The soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines did not lose the war in Vietnam the politicians and strategists did. In April/May of 1968 the strategy had succeeded. The NVA and Viet Cong had been defeated by all body count measures, but the political will to win was gone. The political will had not been considered by the strategists of the day. It was not until Colonel Harry Summers published his book ***On Strategy: a Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*** that Clausewitz's dictums on political will were brought again into consideration by strategic thinkers. Colonel Summers was part of the Vietnam negotiating team and his discussion with a North Vietnamese counterpart is often quoted. He told his counterpart: "we won every battle." To

which the North Vietnamese officer replied "But you lost the war."

If one reads my writings on conflict termination he will see Colonel Summers' views used as a basis for defining what it means to win. Body count is also dismissed as the failed measure of success that it is. A subject of another blog in our continuing discussion leading up to the 50th anniversary of the siege of the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

LIMITED WAR AND RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Some time ago one of my readers asked that I write about how the rules of engagement (ROE) severely restricted US forces freedom of action and thus played a significant role in the resultant "loss" in Vietnam. In this case ROE were linked to limited war. What is limited war you ask?

Limited war is where one side in a conflict decides to limit its application of military force for a whole series of reasons. The Vietnam War really had two phases:

- The pre-1 April 1968 phase where the US was fighting to win though with significant limits on the application of force, and
- The post 1 April 1968 date where the goal was to achieve a negotiated agreement. Initially this phase had even more restricted ROE, but after Nixon's perception of North Vietnamese intransigence there was a significant loosening of the ROE—decreasing the limits on the use of military force. But the goal was still a negotiated agreement.

The above raises several questions:

What were the initial limits and why were they imposed?
What is so significant about 31 March 1968?
What were the limits in the ROE?
What were Nixon's relaxation of limits?

When the US began its escalation of the use of force in Vietnam in 1964/5 there were significant limits placed upon the forces. Cambodia and Laos were off limits to conventional forces, as was North Vietnam. The bombing of North Vietnam was severely limited as to the targets that could be engaged. The whole theory of limited war was meeting a test. A test that it failed, but more about that later.

These limits were imposed on US forces because of a fear that any expansion of the war would cause the Chinese to intervene. The memory of Korea was still keen in strategists' minds. There was also fear of a confrontation with the Soviet Union. For these reasons there were severe limits placed upon US forces.

In late 1967 the North Vietnamese tested these limits with the extreme shelling and limited attacks across the DMZ in the vicinity of Cam Lo. Unbeknownst to the Americans this was a test—a test to see if it would abide by its limits and not invade North Vietnam. When the US did not invade the North Vietnamese were free to move several divisions west to come down the Ho Chi Minh trail and attack Khe Sanh. Which they did.

What is so significant about 31 March 1968? The evening of 31 March President Johnson announced his partial bombing halt as a means to entice the North Vietnamese into negotiations to end the war. It was at this point that the war was "lost." As recounted elsewhere (***Expendable Warriors***) a proposed offensive military action into Laos was deemed to be politically unacceptable. The war had been won on the ground in Vietnam but lost politically. The US was unwilling to lift its limits and win the war on the ground and North was not fighting with any limits. Instead increased limits were imposed on US forces.

North Vietnamese intransigence and an attempt to disengage US forces while not increasing the degree of loss lead the Nixon Administration strategy of Vietnamization. This was coupled with several expansions of the war—relaxation of the limits imposed on US forces. First was the invasion of Cambodia as an attempt to destroy North Vietnamese Army (NVA) sanctuaries and to buy time for Vietnamization to take hold.

The second expansion was Lam Son 719A—the invasion of Laos in 1971 to cut the Ho Chi Minh trail. For several reasons this Vietnamese attack with US support was a miserable failure. The main reason probably being the loss of surprise—the NVA were waiting and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) got mauled.

The final escalation was the use of B-52s over Hanoi and Haiphong. Previous bombing restraints/limits were relaxed and a massive bombing finally caused the North Vietnamese to agree to a settlement. In hiding the overall loss Nixon/Kissinger called it "Peace with Honor". The POWs came home.

In Vietnam we relearned the lessons of Korea. When one side is fighting a limited war—limited in ways and means and the other side is fighting an unlimited war—applying all of the ways and means at its disposable to win the outcome is at best a draw. Does or should the MacArthur dictum: "there is no substitute for victory" apply? In the Gulf War we saw the limits replaced by the Powell Doctrine of "Over-whelming Force." However there were limits in that conflict such that after several years the second Bush administration felt that it had to fight another war against Iraq—in short to do what the first Gulf War had prevented the over throw of Saddam Hussein.

To return to the original issue of ROEs and limited war it should be clear that at no time except a nuclear threat will the United States not fight a "limited war." But the extent of those limitations will clearly have a potential impact on the outcome of the conflict. Politicians and military strategists must decide before the conflict begins as to whether any limits being considered will prevent the achievement of the military objectives that have flowed from the political objectives of a conflict.

KHE SANH—THE INTELLIGENCE BUILD UP

Expendable Warriors was so named because General Westmoreland and Colonel Lownds at the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) knew that the North Vietnamese Army was going to attack Khe Sanh as much as 3 months before the attack began. However, the Advisory Team in Khe Sanh village in the District Headquarters were not told. We guess for fear that the intelligence would be leaked to our Vietnamese counterparts and then get back to the North Vietnamese. What was the intelligence?
The intelligence that the NVA were going to attack Khe Sanh got its first visibility in November 1967 when Colonel Lownds (Commander of the KSCB) told some Marines that: "you will soon be in the American history books."

Recently unclassified intelligence showed that in October 1967 an NVA Division began moving towards Khe Sanh. There was also information from signal intercepts that a new headquarters had been formed to control a multi-division attack on Khe Sanh.

General Westmoreland's intelligence brief of 12 January confirmed that the attack would begin on 21 January. During the entire month of January Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) began preparations for the battle of Khe Sanh.It began preparations for the upcoming battle by:

- Reinforcing the KSCB first on the 13 December with and additional Marie Infantry Battalion. The order sending the battalion to KSCB noted that reinforcements should not flow to KSCB too quickly so as to avoid the NVA knowing of General Westmoreland's intentions.
- An air campaign to target the NVA using B-52s as they approached Khe Sanh was begun on 5 January –Operation Niagara
- Approval to use what was then a classified controlled fragmentation artillery munition (COFRAM—also known as fire cracker) was sought
- An Air Support Radar Team was deployed to KSCB on 16 January to control radar guided air attacks.
- On 17 January an additional Marine infantry battalion arrived at Khe Sanh bringing the force up to 3 battalions.
- On 18 January sensors were diverted from the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos and deployed around the KSCB to monitor the movement of the NVA into the area.

During the period beginning in December 1967 the Marines at KSCB began improving their defensive positions by digging deeper and putting up more sand bag reinforced bunkers. Ammunition resupply by air began in earnest. This Marine effort was intelligence to those of us on the Advisory Team in the District Headquarters. We began to take similar actions by improving the defenses of our little compound.

Finally on 19 January an NVA officer was captured performing a reconnaissance of the wire surrounding the KSCB. This office had the entire plan for the attack from the northern Division (NVA Division 325 C) that was to attack KSCB beginning on 21 January.

The information on the pending attack was known to the leadership at Khe Sanh and throughout the relevant portions of MACV, BUT not in the District Headquarters. The scene was set for the events of the next almost 80 days.

COMMAND AND CONTROL IN THE KHE SANH AREA OF OPERATIONS

(AO)

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the Siege of the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) it will be useful for the reader to understand the very confused and dysfunctional command and control relationships that existed in the Khe Sanh AO. There were at least 5 different higher headquarters.

The advisory team of 5 soldiers responded to the Province advisory team in Quang Tri. The District Chief Captain Tinh-A-Nhi responded to Province Commander who was a full Colonel in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN).

The Special Forces (Special Forces Detachment A-101) at Lang Vei along the border with Laos reported to a C Team headquartered in Hue Phu Bai, which in return reported to the Special Forces Group in Danang.

In the village headquarters was the headquarters of a Combined Action Company (CAC-O) and one Combined Action Platoon (CAP O-1) of 10 Marines and about 25 Montagnards. The CAC reported to Colonel David Lownds the KSCB Commander but also had a battalion headquarters in Danang.

Located as an appendage on the western edge of the KSCB there was a special forces Forward Operating Base (FOB-3). The men of FOB-3 with their Montagnard soldiers conducted reconnaissance and raids in North Vietnam and Laos. They reported to a Battalion commander in Hue Phu Bai and Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observation Group (MACVSOG or SOG) in Saigon.

Finally there was a two man intelligence team located in the village headquarters that reported to a headquarters in Danang.

Colonel David Lownds as the senior American officer in the Khe Sanh AO exercised very loose operational control over the units in the area. All the units would go to the Marines at the combat base for support, but when that support was not forthcoming they would go to their parent units. This was especially true for the Special Forces and Advisory team.

The relations between the Army units—special forces and advisory team—and the Marines were so bad that they had developed their own code terms and frequencies to coordinate with each other so the Marines could not listen in.

Additionally each of the units mentioned had very different missions and therefore different objectives. So the lack of unity of command resulted in a loss of unity of effort, which is what the whole concept of unity of command is all about. Unity of effort is supposed to flow from unity of command. All of the units would be working towards a common goal. The Marines goal was to kill NVA. The Advisory Team and District Government's goal was to provide political leadership for the people of the area and to provide them security from small enemy forces. A-101's mission was border surveillance and to block the major avenue of approach into the area—route 9. The SOG team at FOB-3 only staged in Khe Sanh for out of area operations in Laos and North Vietnam. Thus no unity of effort.

This spaghetti bowl of relationships was the situation that existed when the battle of Khe Sanh began on 21 January 1968.

THE SIEGE OF THE KHE SANH COMBAT BASE— THE NOOSE TIGHTENS

Recently, when reading my VFW magazine I encountered an article entitled "Tanks in the Wire". It was a brief, but still not accurate, synopsis of the battle of Lang Vei Special Forces camp on 7 and 8 February 1968—50 years ago. (I would commend David Stockwell's two books on the battle. First came ***Tanks in the Wire*** and just recently ***The Route 9 Problem***) I was underground in my bunker at the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) but listened to much of the battle on the radio and the next morning was part of the planning for the relief effort for the beleaguered forces at Lang Vei.

To put the battle in perspective it actually started at the end of January when the 33rd Royal Laotian Battalion was overrun by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) in Laos using **tanks.** The Surveillance and Observation Group (SOG) Special Forces at Forward Operating Base 3, which was an appendage to the KSCB and where we had the local Vietnamese government in exile, had a close connection to the Laotians.

When the Laotians reported that they were overrun by tanks nobody believed them. The 33rd Battalion fled Laos and settled at Lang Vei in a camp near the Special Forces Camp. They were reinforced by Special Force elements from Hue Phu Bai lead by LTC Schungel. So now there were two Special Forces camps at Lang Vei—the old camp with Lao-

tians and Special Forces in it and the new camp with A 101 and its Vietnamese Civilian Irregular Defense Forces (CIDG). CPT Frank Willoughby, the commander of A 101 Special Forces detachment at Lang Vei requested anti-tank mines but his request was denied because the report of tanks being used was not believed by higher headquarters. The Special Forces did scrounge some Light Anti-Tank Weapons (LAWs).

The scene is now set with two camps near the Bru village of Lang Vei and track sound being heard on several evenings before the attacks. On the evening of 8 February the new camp was hit with artillery and mortar fire followed by an infantry attack led by PT 76 light amphibious tanks. The forces fought back and called artillery from the KSCB on the attacking NVA. Some of the LAWs failed to operate correctly and many of those that did were ineffective. Eventually, the defenders of the new camp either secluded themselves in the deep underground command bunker or fled to the old camp. The fight continued all night long. CPT Willoughby requested reinforcement by the Marines from KSCB, but was turned down twice!

Communications from the command bunker became difficult with the antennas knocked down but the single side band radio with its buried antennae continued to allow communications to the outside. At this point there was a PT 76 tank on top of the command bunker and the NVA were throwing tear gas down into the bunker. CPT Willoughby and his crew continued to communicate.

Forces from the old camp, supported by artillery and air strikes made up to five attempts to reach the bunker with no success. The 7 weak from wounds and dehydration survivors in the bunker made their plans to escape. CPT Willoughby told the aircraft overhead to make 3 hot strafing runs over the camp and then make runs without firing. During the "dry" runs the survivors would make a dash to the old camp. Actually it was to be more of a limp. The survivors met little opposition and with the help of a brave Vietnamese Lieutenant who drove a jeep to pick them up made it to the old camp.

The final saga of the battle was the evacuation. There are several versions of the fight for helicopters, but COL Ladd, the 5th Special Forces Commander in Danang was forced to go to General Westmoreland who was in a meeting with LTG Cushman (the Corps Commander) and could not be disturbed. COL Ladd turned to GEN Abrams who had established a MACV forward command in the northern part of the country. GEN Abrams ordered the Marines to release the helicopters to rescue the survivors of the battle. The relief operation was planned by the Special Forces at Lang Vei and lead by Major George Quomo. After reluctance of the Marine CH 46 helicopter pilots to land at the old camp the Americans and the wounded along with the Laotian Battalion leadership were evacuated by air to KSCB and then once medically treated were taken to Danang. The individual soldiers and the Bru civilians were left to fend for themselves. They walked the distance to the combat base where they were disarmed and turned away. (This was to create a political incident between the Laotian government and MACV.) I radioed Quang Tri thru may radio relay that the 1500 or so mixed group was on its way. The advisory team in Quang Tri prepared to house and care for these stragglers. The Laotians were evacuated through Saigon back to Laos.

Route 9 was now not impeded—the Lang Vei and District Headquarters impediments had now been removed. The route to the KSCB was now open and the noose had been tightened.

THE KHE SANH VILLAGE FIGHT

At 0500 the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) attacked the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) rockets and artillery. The sound of the barrage woke up the District Advisory Team and the defenders of the District Headquarters (a mixture of Bru Montagnards, Vietnamese Regional Forces, Marines from Combined Action Company O (CAC-O) and the small 4 man advisory team.

At 0530 the ground attack against the District Headquarters began. NVA after action reports suggest that the attack was 30 minutes late in being launched. The attacking force from the 66th NVA Regiment had been slowed down by the B-52 strike of the previous day—all of the downed trees etc. that it caused.
The weather on the morning of 21 January 1968 was extremely foggy with visibility down to no more than 5-10 yards. Fortunately some of the improvements made due to the observed activity at the KSCB included the emplacement of trip flares along the entire outer perimeter.

Another improvement that CPT Nhi had made was to place a 3 man element on the roof of the warehouse. These brave montagnards were equipped with a case of grenades to drop on any one trying to conceal themselves behind the warehouse. Both of these improvements were to prove critical to the

defense of the District Headquarters.

The District Headquarters to include the Regional Force Compound to the south bordering the Landing Zone

The attack with artillery and mortar rounds impacting throughout the area. One bunker was directly hit and collapsed on the occupants. SFC Perry dug the survivors out and treated them in a makeshift aid station. The enemy sought to penetrate the compound in the seam between the Regional Force Compound and the District Headquarters which was defended by Bru montagnards and Marines under the command of SGT Balanco.

The initial ground assault was announced by trip flares being set off. The Bru knew where to shoot when certain trip flares were set off. Thus they could engage the enemy that they could not see. The same was true for Regional Force (RFs) in their old French fort made of pierced steel planning with about 12-18 inches of Khe Sanh red clay filling the space in between. It stood up well to the enemy attack.

CPT Nhi and CPT Clarke were in the command bunker in the center of the compound. CPT Clarke was to request and adjust over 1100 rounds or artillery during the next 30 hours. The advisory team had 4 preplanned concentrations that were shaped like an L and located basically at each corner of the compound. By moving those concentrations East and West and North and South one could cover the whole compound with steel. The only rounds fired were fuse variable time (VT) a round that detonates in the air and throw shrapnel down to hit everyone who was not in a bunker with over- head cover.

The Marines in the compound became the fire brigade. SGT Balanco moved Marines around to meet the largest threats. The presence Of Marines bolstered the morale of the RFs who had born the brunt of the attack. The ground attacks came in several waves, each of which was stopped. The key spot was the two bunkers on each side of the seam between the two parts of the headquarters. The NVA seemed to be on something as an example when I shot an NVA sapper who was trying to take the north western bunker in the RF compound the two parts of his body, though separated continued to move towards the bunker with his pole charge. (A charge on the end of a pole to place the charge into an aperture of the bunker and detonate it so as to create a gap in the defense.) SFC Perry also thought that the NVA was on something.

In the late morning the fog burned off and the de-



KHE SANH VILLAGE WITH THE DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS JN THE BOTTOM CENTER

fenders were able to get some air support. This will be the discussion in our next article.

Air Support for Khe Sanh Village

In the last several articles we have discussed the bravery of the defenders on the ground in Khe Sanh

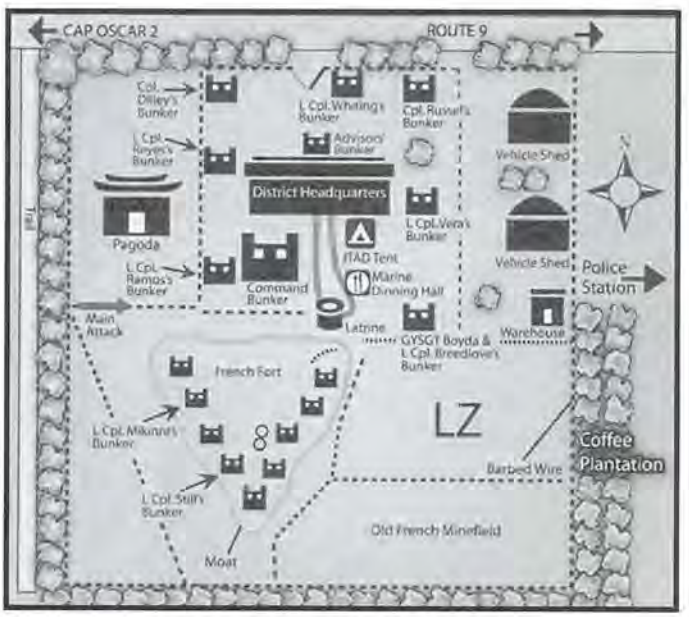

village. In this article we shall discuss the use of air support to provide a critical ingredient in the successful defense of the District Headquarters and the rendering combat ineffective a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regiment.

The dense fog finally burned off in late morning. A Marine Forward Air Controller (FAC) put in a flight

of 2 F-4s to attack targets to the south of the District Headquarters. One of the F-4s was shot down. Following this the FAC advised that: "That's all I can do!"

Fortunately, part of the preparations of the defense was to establish an alternate form of communication with the Province Advisory Team in Quang Tri. Radio contact with Quang Tri was always spotty at best, in spite of numerous efforts at antennae construction and acquisition of more powerful radios. The Special Forces had established a radio relay site on a high hill north (hill 950) of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The Special Forces were able to talk to Quang Tri and thus relay messages. CPT Clarke kept Quang Tri informed as to the status of the defense and when the Marine FAC could not provide additional air support he requested it form Quang Tri.

CPT Ward Britt (one of the advisory team's FACs) flew his light observation aircraft through the valleys to reach Khe Sanh and to coordinate for air support. He requested air support from air craft attacking targets along the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos. The pilots flew below the clouds to the village. Every time he coordinated for bombs on a target and he blew away the trees to the south he found more targets.

CPT Nhi was listening to one of the NVA tactical radio nets and heard a request for additional stretchers to carry off wounded soldiers. This was passed to CPT Britt who found the force of about 100 enemy and after another air strike he could not see any movement. This became the norm as CPT Nhi provided target locations to CPT Clarke who then vectored CPT Britt to the target.

In the middle of this CPT Britt landed at KSCB and refueled under fire. He remained on station until the approach of dusk. At that point he had to return to Quang Tri. For his bravery he was awarded the Silver Star.

CPT Clarke and CPT Nhi tried to guess where the enemy would go to regroup. Based upon their analysis a B-52 strike was requested. They provided a rectangle 3 kilometers long and 1 kilometer wide that was centered on the hilly area about 6-7 kilometers south of the District Headquarters. The Province Advisory team coordinated with the Air Force and the mission was flown. Several days later a NVA soldier deserted and was picked up by the Special Forces at Lang Vei. He told them that his unit had been hit by the B-52 strike.

Before the B-52 strike a gun ship (Spooky—a C-47 plane that carried flares and several mini-guns) patrolled the area and engaged every target that it saw. It was a quiet night except for some snipers.

The combination of artillery, air support and the bravery of the Bru, Vietnamese, Marine and army soldiers inside the headquarters combined to render a regiment combat ineffective

THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH VILLAGE IS OVER

The morning of 22 January 1968 dawned bright and quiet. The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) forces were gone. There was a sense of exhilaration in the District Headquarters—the attack had been stopped! Patrols were launched to determine the damage and collect information on the enemy. There were numerous blood trails and bodies found. Over 150 weapons and 3 Rocket Propelled Launcher 7s (the first seen in South Vietnam) were recovered. Many of the weapons still had cosmoline on them as they must have just been issued.

As the Marines and District Forces were conducting their limited patrols LT Stamper (Combined Action Company Commander) was boarding and flying by helicopter to the Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB). He was not to be seen again. He radioed back to the Marines to pack their stuff as they were being evacuated.

Colonel Lownds sent a radio message to the Advisory team that he could no longer provide artillery support to the District forces. Both CPTS Nhi and Clarke reported this to their superiors in Quang Tri. Bob Brewer, the Province Senior Advisor said that there was a long meeting. No one wanted to evacuate the District Headquarters as it would be the first governmental headquarters ever surrendered. In the end the order was given to evacuate.

SFC Perry with all of the wounded and SFC Kaspar were evacuated by helicopter. SFC King and CPT Clarke worked with CPT Nhi to organize the withdrawal from the village. The small force of about 140 men followed a little known trail to reach KSCB. Throughout the trek CPT Clarke was coordinating with the Special Forces in FOB-3 for mortar coverage along the route and a reception when they got to KSCB. (The Marines had told the advisors that armed Vietnamese and montagnard soldiers could not enter their compound.)
The small force reached FOB-3 and were assigned

defensive areas on the it's perimeter to prepare fighting positions. Little did they know that this was going to last over 77 days.

CPT Clarke reported all of the weapons that had been left behind. The Special Forces quickly organized a raid to get back into the District Headquarters to recover the NVA weapons and destroy anything else of worth that was there. CPT Clarke was the second in command of this raid and led the Special Forces into the compound after they were landed in the wrong spot.

The weapons were loaded and hauled off and then the helicopters returned for the raiding force. CPT Clarke remembers lying on the floor of the UH-1 helicopter and emptying his 30 round magazine at an NVA patrol that was approaching the village from the west as they were leaving.

Later the charges set in the food warehouse exploded as did the grenades that CPT Clarke had used to booby trap the food in the Advisor's store room.

The battle of Khe Sanh village had ended. Just over 50 years ago, but sometimes it seems like yesterday. Post Scripts: The Special Forces at Land Vei offered what was called a Mike Force to re-secure the village, but this request was never acted upon. When the 37th Army of Vietnam Ranger Battalion was sent to Khe Sanh the original intent was for it to be used to re-secure the village, but the Marines would not support such an attack.

BATTLE WON! WAR LOST

On the 1st of April 1968 the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) launched Operation Pegasus. Many newly interested authors focus on the battle for the old French fort. What they don't realize that just as the operation was beginning the war was being officially lost.

As the senior advisor in Khe Sanh before the beginning of the "agony of Khe Sanh" on 21 January 1968 I was seconded to the 1st Cavalry Division to assist in the planning for Operation Pegasus. (For a complete discussion of the siege of Khe Sanh see: www. Expendablewarriors.com or my recent postings here.)

It was strange to fly over what had once been the area along route 9 and see rice paddies where there had never been paddies before. In actuality what I was seeing was bomb craters that were filled with rain water. (I flew into Khe Sanh with Major General John Tolson (commander of the 1st Cavalry Division) several times, During the planning process units from the 1st Cav, the 101st Airborne Division and the 3rd Marines were conducting operations along the DMZ as a diversion to the relief operation. The engineers were busy building a short runway and underground bunkers for the command and control of Operation Pegasus near Calu. The new facility was to be named LZ Stud.

For Operation Pegasus the 1st Cav had an extensive set of capabilities

- The 1st Cavalry Division with its 400+ helicopters
- A Marine BDE with augmenting engineers and artillery
- An Army of Vietnam (ARVN) airborne brigade
- 26th Marine Regiment +--the whole force defending the Combat Base (5000 strong)
- Massive air support

This was the equivalent of a small Corps.

The attack began the morning of the April 1st with the Marine Brigade attacking along route 9. Its mission was to open Route 9 from LZ Stud to the combat base. This required the repair of numerous road by passes that had been destroyed by the NVA and neglect over more than a year. The air assault was delayed until 1 PM due to fog in the Khe Sanh area. The initial air assault was into areas where the vegetation had been flattened. or by use of a bomb called a Daisy Cutter (a 20,000 pound bomb that was dropped from a C130 aircraft and detonated when the long pipe that was its detonator struck the ground—thus creating standoff and blowing things down without creating a crater). The Infantry and engineers followed to secure the area and move the blow down so that howitzers, crews and ammunition could be lifted in. As a result a firebase was created.

With fire support for support of the infantry and to support the next hop forward closer to Khe Sanh the next unit could be inserted and the leap frog towards the combat base and the enemy could continue.

It was on this day 1 April 1968 when the war was lost. Major Paul Schwartz and I had to brief General Tolson on the proposed concept for the Division's next mission—clearing the NVA out of the A Shau Valley (about 40-50 kilometers south of Khe Sanh. There were 4 people present at the briefing—General Tolson, his Chief of Staff, Major Schwartz and myself. We proposed attacking through Khe Sanh to the Vietnam-Laos border. Going into Laos,

cleaning up the Ho Chi Minh Trail and then turning south to enter the A Shau Valley from the west—not the traditional route which was from the east. There were 90 days of supplies at Khe Sanh to draw upon and thus not have to back haul. Most importantly such an approach would have caught the NVA by surprise and had war winning effects.

After about 4 minutes of briefing General Tolson said" "Obviously you didn't hear the President last night! What you are proposing is politically impossible." Lyndon Johnson had just announced a partial bombing halt in an effort to enter negotiations with North Vietnam.

3 years later the US was to support ARVN in Lam Son 719A which was an attack into Laos where the ARVN got clobbered. The NVA had used the 3 years to recover. A year or so later President Nixon was to start the B-52 bombing missions over Hanoi and Haiphong. These would result in a peace agreement.

President Johnson's bombing halt decision was when the US decided to not try and win the war on the battlefield—just as the NVA were on the throes of collapse. There war was winnable after the eventual Khe Sanh and Tet victories, but the political climate in the US had so turned against the war there was no political will to try and win on the battlefield.

1968 ADVISORY TEAM 4 NEWSLETTER WRITTEN IN APRIL 1968

There *was* a battle fought in Khe Sanh on 21 and 22 January 1968 that very few people know about. Everyone knows of the artillery barrages and the trenches, but one of the big battles took place when at 0500 hours 21 January 1968 the 66th Regiment, 304th NVA Division launched an attack against the Huong Hoa District Headquarters in Khe Sanh Village (about 4km south of the Khe Sanh Combat Base). The District Headquarters was defended by an understrength Regional Force (RF) Company, elements of 2 (Popular Force) PF platoons and Combined Action Company O (CAC-O) Headquarters and one Combined Action Platoon (CAP) with 10 or more Marines.

The attack was from three directions with the main effort coming from the southwest against the RF Company. The weather was extremely poor with very heavy fog. The initial enemy assault was beaten off by the *courageous* efforts of the RF Company and by almost constant barrages of Variable Time fused artillery fire. After the initial assault was broken, the enemy simply backed off and using the positions he had already prepared, attempted to destroy the key bunkers by recoilless rifle and B-40 fire. Simultaneously they moved into Khe Sanh village and setup mortars with which they attempted to shell the compound. At this time the police station was still communicating with the District Headquarters and made it possible to put effective fire on the enemy moving into the village. For the next four hours there were constant attacks or probes against the compound which were beaten off by the valiant efforts of Bru (Montagnard) PFs and the Vietnamese RFs working with the Marines who SGT John Balanco moved to critical areas of the fight, as needed. These various types of soldiers fought as a coordinated team. The four advisors were constantly moving through the compound, reassuring, reorganizing and helping the compounds' defenders.

At about 1130 the fog burned off. During the next five hours there were three attempts to resupply the beleaguered garrison, which was in dire straights for ammunition. The third attempt included a 46 man RF reaction force that was badly mauled. LTC Joe Seymoe, the Deputy Senior Province Advisor, lost his life in this effort. All during the afternoon CPT Ward Britt, an Air Force FAC, working out of Quang Tri put in numerous air strikes on the massed NVA who were trying to reorganize. On one of these airstrikes he put in two fighters on 100 NVA in the open and after it was over he could not see any movement, just bodies.

The night of 21 January the NVA were unable to make an attack and only sniped throughout the night.

The next morning the evacuation of District Headquarters was ordered after Colonel Lownds, CO, 26th Marine Regiment, ordered the evacuation or the Marines from the garrison. The marines and the wounded were evacuated by air. CPT Clarke and SFC King, two of the advisors, accompanied the District Forces who, using an unknown route, successfully escaped from the District Headquarters.

MEMORIES

During the first 5 days of July the 3rd Bn, 26th Marines was conducting search and destroy operations in the western end of what was known as "Happy Valley". On 3 July, Lima 3/26 lost three men while engaging an NVA unit in the tiny village of Tung Heo Bac, 14 kilometers north-northeast of the Ha Tin airfield. The three men were

- Cpl Franklin D. Ratliff, Chattanooga, TN;
- LCpl Arnold A. Ades, St Paul, MN; and
- Pvt Thomas A. Strande, Chicago, IL.

My main Man Phineas and I always debated anyone about the date of that event. Both of us were convinced it was July 4th not the third. Years later I got copies of letters Bill Correia sent his folks talking about that day. The letters were dated July 3rd.I remember the events so clearly, as if they occurred this morning. Bill was close to Strande and his loss is something, I am sure, Bill carries to this day L/ Cpl Ades is not someone I knew and until I read the Virtual Wall info I never knew he was KIA or even who he was for that fact. My Bad!

'RAT' was quite the other story Struggling with the poncho used to carry him back into the perimeter his best friend Davis with tears running down his face said, "They shot him right through his heart". "He had the biggest heart of anyone." I was able to assist carrying 'Rat' to the chopper that carried him from the field of battle. It was 'Rat' who wasn't sure to stand and salute or sit and laugh when I strolled into the tent where they were playing Bid-Wiz while wearing a fatigue blouse that had a Captain's insignia sewn onto the collar. I demanded a proper salute but couldn't keep a straight face.

Perhaps it was the fact as Bill Correi said, "You looked like you were 12 years old."

Amid all that happened that day I received a bunch of 'Atta Boys' for getting confirmed kills. I know of one for sure but the letters Correi sent home said the guns got six confirmed.

I'm certain that we got six of them if not more. While I started the firing with the first NVA, I rolled left and Ronnie Marcella shouldered the 'gun' as I opened cans to feed him additional belts. Six confirmed was an easy count as once I opened up on the first one there was a flurry of NVA all charging the perimeter at one point. It was like turning the lights on in the kitchen and watching as the roaches scattered.

I always wonder how receiving positive reinforcement to such a negative action [taking a human life a 5th commandment thing] shaped my psychic outlook. Well, just some thoughts and memories of a time some 54 years ago.

Enjoy your Families and Loved ones this weekend.
Never Forget.
Semper Fidelis, Neil Joseph Kenny
Lima Co 3/26

3 years ago! Where did the time go! I remember this day like it was yesterday! The horror , the rage, and the sorrow of the day!! The tragic loss of life! The Magnificent Bravery shown that day by so any!! It sometime boggles my mind, with all of the different emotions that day brings up in my mind. These were Good men, magnificent Marines! They are truly missed! R.I.P. my Brave Bravo Brothers! **Posted on Feb-25**

MEMORIES FROM KSV WEBSITE

Remembering Jerry Ferren, Dave Divik, Gunny Dadamo, and all who lost their life onboard USMC VMGR 152 C-130 " 149813 Feb 10, 68.. Also, Pilot Budd Wildfang... who stayed at the controls hands-on fire... Thoughts of Danny Sullivan who got Jerry into his ambulance and to Charlie Med.

I'd spoken to Jerry Ferren three days before 813 went down. Jerry was regular crew on many 152 Khe Sanh flights, Dec, Jan Feb. He'd just received a letter from his wife informing him she'd just given birth to his daughter. He was thrilled. Jerry only had 17 days left in-country. We were friends. Jerry loved his Nikon camera. He told me to buy a pair of Nikon 8x35 binoculars for my 152 flare drop mapping job. He volunteered for 813, taking the crew spot for another navigator who was ill. The crew was an all-volunteer mission since the cargo was liquid oxygen for Charley Med, chopper fuel bladders, and flames ignition caps....

NVA guns on the approach. In the detailed after-action reports, Dave Divik came to the aid of Gunny Datamo, who fell to NVA 51 that raked the fuselage when he was trying to stop the escaping fuel flowing in toward the bladders that were igniting from taking the 51s, fire. Their bodies were found clinging together by KS Crash Crew. Dave was found laying on top of Gunny D. Jerry deliberately stood on the small platform at the forward hatch, blocking flames from the cabin with his body, protecting the

flight deck crew trying to land 813 off the flight line to keep it open to traffic.

Jerry Ferren passed in the Sam Antonio Burn Center on Mar 1. I didn't know until a buddy wrote Jerry a letter, that was returned stamped ' Deceased, ' in red. As Danny Sullivan, everyone thought Jerry survived. We had a small memorial for VMGR 152 Khe Sanh losses in May. Jerry's nephew contacted my April, 010... to tell me Jerry's daughter he never saw, born during the siege, was a Missouri school teacher... I asked him about Jerry's Nikon... He told me his family had received it. Sad indeed...
RON MAIN

MORE 149813 MEMORIES

My platoon CP bunker was just off of the runway, about 50 meters from the crash site. I just happened to be standing outside my bunker when this event unfolded. The plane was slowly coming to a stop and it veered off of the runway to the right. The aircraft seemed to be tilted to the right because of the slope of the elevated runway. Initially, for a very short time, there seemed to be no smoke or evidence of fire. Someone opened the escape hatch above the cockpit and exited. I assumed they were the pilot/ copilot. Then the aircraft started to show smoke and the subsequent fire. The crash crew was on site and attempted to extinguish the fire and enter the aircraft to rescue any passengers, but the flames quickly engulfed the aircraft. I happen to have a few pictures of the burning aircraft.

This accident drew quite a crowd. I began to tell Marines who were spectators to get back into their bunkers/trenchline. We had an active NVA 60mm mortar right outside the wire (the north perimeter facing hill 1015). "C" Company had already lost some Marines to the H&I fires. I was concerned that the NVA would drop in a few rounds, but thankfully that never happened. Also, I was concerned about what cargo the aircraft was carrying.

During the siege (can't recall if it was before or after the C-130 crash) an AF C-130 (painted cammie pattern) was hit on the landing approach, landing west to easy. At the end of the runway the turnaround apron was outside of the wire near the steep drop-off of the terrain. The bird turned around, shut down and sat on the apron outside of the wire. I thought we would have been ordered to go out and provide some type of security. Alpha Co had a platoon manning the trench near the aircraft.

We still had that 60mm mortar active and the NVA were digging assault trenches near the runway and it wasn't uncommon for NVA troops to shoot at aircraft landing and taking off. in An RPG could have easily destroyed the C-130. We finally found out about the death of the trapped Marines in their aircraft and the cargo of fuel bladders. Well after the war I read that the AF C-130 was carrying pallets of artillery rounds and the pilot decide it was too dangerous to come into the base. After determine that the bird was safe, he taxied to the terminal. I think that plane stayed there for a few days while a crew of mechanics were sent up to fix the plane and it eventually took off.

Sadly, in almost the same location as the Marine C-130, a CH-53 Sea Stallion had it's tail assembly hit by a mortar round (the 60 that I mentioned?) as it was lifting off and fell about 30' impacting to the right of the runway. The big floppy blades continued to turn and when the bird hit the ground, the blades kept going downward and sliced through the cockpit. The pilot and copilot were both decapitated.

Although my company (Charlie) was not in the thick of ground combat, we experience the unfortunate fate of our Company CP taking two direct hits resulting in the death of several Marines. The first was at the beginning of the siege and the second was when our brand new CP was hit on March 22. We also lost several Marines to sniper and incoming. In writing this, I can recall all of this as if it happened just yesterday.
Nick Romanetz
C CO 1/26





OBIT

RONALD MARCELLA, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, LIMA CO 3/26

With a heavy heart I am reporting the passing of my Brother Ronald F. Marcella. I first meet Ron at KheSanh on January 2, 1968 my second day in country Ronnie was later to be my team leader and squad leader, both duties which he eventually passed on to me. As fate would have it I reconnected with Ronnie in August of 2010.We stayed in constant touch these past eleven years and had many a memory and story to share. Along his journey Ronnie was able to attend several of our KSVA reunions, most recently the 50th anniversary in Washington DC.

Ronnie shall be laid to rest after a private service at St Marys Catholic Church and interred with his late wife Sarah. He is survived by his children Genevieve, Jessica, Mariah, and Christian. He is also survived by his grandchildren Isabella and Joseph, as well as many nieces, nephews, Sister-in-laws and cousins. While a deep void shall exist with Ronnies passing it should be said that we are all better off for having had the pleasure of his company along this journey. Rest Peacefully alongside your mate Sarah. K now that we'll see you in that morning when we shall all be together again.
Go with God my Brother.
Semper Fidelis, Neil and Alice



OBIT

MICHAEL E. O'HARA, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, BRAVO CO 1/26

Michael E. O'Hara in prayerful hope went to be with his Lord and Savior on April 16, 2021.

Michael was born in Indianapolis on 31 May 1948, the second of six children born to Wayne and Gladys O'Hara.

Michael spent his youth in Brown County, Indiana. He obtained his work permit at the age of 14 and immediately entered into the workforce. During his summer months, Michael worked under the employ of Mr. Dick Wetzel. It was in the burning hot hayfields of what was once Bakalar Air Base that Michael began to develop his strong personal ethic of hard work and determination.

Michael graduated from Brown County High School (BCHS) in 1966 with academic achievements. Soon, as Michael began to evolve as an adult citizen, he became convinced because of his compassionate spirit that the only thing he could do to contribute to a better world was to become a United States Marine. Michael served honorably, in 1968,



with Co "B" 1st Battalion 26th Marine Regiments during the infamous "Siege of Khe Sanh." Michael would be awarded three Purple Heart Medals for his courage during intense combat operations. Upon returning to the continental U.S. as a very young Sergeant, he would spend the next two years training over 200,000 Marine Recruits in the arts of weaponry. Michael would one day say it was the most important job he ever held, and he was just 20 years old. Michael has always cared deeply for all of his "Marines."

Upon returning to civilian life, Michael would eventually become a small business owner as proprietor of Michael E. O'Hara Custom Carpentry. His artistic skills can still be seen in many homes and businesses in the Brown County area.

However, in 1993, as Michael's children were leaving the nest, he knew in his deepest thoughts he had much to do. Michael never forgot all the suffering brought about because of the Vietnam War. He set out to honor his high school friend, Larry C. Banks, the only native son to fall during those tragic days. Michael successfully led a drive to name the new high school gymnasium after his friend while also establishing a scholarship fund which has helped numerous young people from the county further their education.

KHE SANH VETERAN, IN THE NEWS

STORIES OF HONOR: A FORTUNATE MAN DUNCAN ADAMS

PAUL J. BEAUSOLEIL, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, MIKE CO 3/3

Grief threw a catch into Paul Joseph Beausoleil's voice.

The Vietnam Veteran, now 74, had just opened a Veterans of Foreign Wars book titled "Brutal Battles of Vietnam." He had turned to a page about the Hill Fights, which occurred during the spring of 1967 near Khe Sanh.

Beausoleil and fellow U.S. Marines had endured the bloody battles there, fighting at Hill 881 South against soldiers from the North Vietnamese Army. He survived without major injury. But many of his fellow Marines were killed or suffered grievous wounds.

Beausoleil still carries visions of the carnage and sometimes wonders why he lived and so many others did not. Military historians have observed that the Hill Fights featured some of the Vietnam War's most vicious and bloody fighting.

That was my life-changing experience," he said during a recent interview at the home in Anaconda he shares with his wife, Michelle. I can still hear the screaming, the crying I guess you would say, of the wounded," Beausoleil said, shaking his head.



Just two years before the notorious Hill Fights, Beausoleil had graduated from Anaconda Central High School. He decided to follow in the footsteps of his father, World War II veteran Paul V. Beausoleil, and become a U.S. Marine — a decision he said kind of shocked his father but also made him proud. He entered the Marine Corps in January 1966 and left for boot camp in San Diego. He said U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War was escalating and he didn't want to miss the fight

For any young buck born after the World War II era, the mindset was you didn't want to miss a war," Beausoleil said. Boot camp was, he said, the most grueling 12 weeks of his life. He said his drill instructor, Sgt. C. Paine, was aptly named.

In March 1966, Beausoleil graduated from boot camp and joined forever the steadfast Semper Fi community.

"That's the proudest day of your life," he said.

All these decades later, hearing the "Marines' Hymn" elicits a predictable reaction. Even "today, I get the chills right up my spine," Beausoleil said.

In June 1966, he deployed to Vietnam. When he stepped unarmed off the military plane in Da Nang he was nearly overwhelmed by the heat and humidity.

"We didn't have any weapons at that point. I thought, 'Jesus, Mary and Joseph, there's something wrong with this picture," Beausoleil said. Ultimately, Beausoleil's service in Vietnam as a foot soldier, or "grunt," took him from Da Nang to the Demilitarized Zone, or DMZ. Ultimately, Beausoleil's service in Vietnam as a foot soldier, or "grunt," took him from Da Nang to the Demilitarized Zone, or DMZ.

He was first assigned to Headquarters Company, 3rd Marine Regiment, Security Section.

In January 1967, he was assigned to Mike Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, and to patrol duty near the DMZ in a strategically important area known as the Rockpile.

In late April 1967, Beausoleil and other Marines were trucked and then flown to Khe Sanh Combat Base. His company received orders to join an assault of Hill 881 South.

"Our main mission was to take these hills and clear them of the enemy," he said. "We were working toward that objective."

A history of the assault reported that that North Vietnamese Army "had expertly camouflaged themselves on Hill 881 South" and the Marines who started up the hill did not know that a large number of enemy soldiers awaited their ascent.

Beausoleil said the fighting was the most intense he'd experienced. "Everything you can imagine happened there," he said.

The M16s issued to the Marines were notorious for jamming.

"I'm no hero, by any means, but I served with a lot of them," Beausoleil said.

"During that period of time, I used about five rifles.



PAUL BEAUSOLEIL'S ENLISTMENT PHOTO

You had to take them off dead bodies," he said.



Paul Beausoleil is pictured at the bottom left with his squad that fought on Hill 881 South in the spring of 1967. All of the members of Beausoleil's squad survived the battle. Pictured from top left: Gene Davenport, Bill Paskins, Joe Rivera, Wayne Railey, and Jose Martinez and from bottom left is James Toy, Dennis Churchill, James Henry Taylor II and Paul Beausoleil. Provided Photo

"We were up against regular NVA. They were good. We were damn good, but so were they.

U.S. artillery and aircraft did what they could to kill or drive back the NVA. There were times when the artillery shells or bombs exploded very close to the Marines.

U.S. artillery and aircraft did what they could to kill or drive back the NVA. There were times when the artillery shells or bombs exploded very close to the Marines.

"We had to call in napalm," Beausoleil said. "He



Paul Beausoleil remembers his friend who passed away during the Vietnam War. "I wasn't with him when he died. I always wondered where he was and I tried to look him up," says Beausoleil. He said he made a strong connection with Robert Hice because they had similar backgrounds growing up in blue collar towns. Beausoleil found Robert Hice's name on the Wall when he visited Washington DC. "He was just a really good man. He should have survived."

put that napalm right down on us. It was so close I can still feel the heat to this day."

Ultimately, an intense air bombardment by Marine F-4 Phantom Jets allowed Marines on the ground to capture Hill 881 South. The Marines discovered more than 250 bunkers the NVA had built. The intense bombing runs had destroyed most of them.

One account of the Hill Fights quotes a Captain Rogers describing how moved he'd been by the valor of youthful Marines involved in the battles for Hill 881 North and Hill 881 South.

"I learned to respect the individual Marine — the 18



-year-old, 19-year-old, 20-year-old — more in this one particular battle than any other time that I've been in the Marine Corps. He was given a job; he went up in the face of danger, in the face of just being blown away, more or less, and he went up and did his job. To see the faces of the Marines dragging back their dead buddies, their wounded buddies, you could see how close the Marines really were with each other."

Beausoleil agreed with Capt. Rogers' assessment, but added, "By the time we came home, we were old men."

In July 1967, having served his 13 months in Vietnam, Beausoleil returned to the U.S. and to his family of origin in Anaconda. There had been no opportunity to decompress" There was no transition from the field to my mother's kitchen," he said. "That wasn't good." After a 30-day leave, Beausoleil's service with the Marines continued. Following Sea School training at San Diego he was assigned to the USS Bon Homme Richard, an aircraft carrier, thereby honoring the early roots of the Corps by be-



Row (L - R): CPL Humphrey, PFC Powell, CPL Thomas, CPL Cunningham, LCPL Jennings, PFC Smith; 2nd Row: PL Reynolds, LCPL Lindsey, LCPL Pederson, CPL Perez, CPL Crouse, CPL Whitaker, CPL Venter, LCPL Crews; Row: CPL Mellinger Jr., CPL Reed, CPL Broughton, PFC Hawkins, LCPL Johnson, CPL Bates, LCPL Baker, LCPL ut, PFC Kossow, PFC Essex, PFC Howell, LCPL Valencia, CPL Beausoleil, CPL Westover

coming a seagoing Marine.

Beausoleil was honorably discharged in May 1972 as a sergeant. He returned to Anaconda, where he worked through the years as a smelterman, drove a truck for the county and held other jobs.

He met and married Michelle. They have five children.

Beausoleil readily acknowledges that memories of combat in Vietnam surface from time to time in ways that can ambush his emotions. He said he believes veterans should reach out for help if they are struggling.

He considers himself lucky to have survived the war, to have married and raised a family and to be a U.S. Marine.

WHY THE ENEMY SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT A BATTALION TO KILL THIS SOLDIER



"I'm a fortunate man," he said.

Specialist Michael Fitzmaurice was stationed in the area near Khe Sanh on March 23, 1971. The base had just been re-activated to support Operation Lam Son 719, the South Vietnamese invasion of Laos. That night in March, the American base was attacked by North Vietnamese regular army sappers, who expected to overrun the Americans.

They just didn't count on a 21-year-old from the Dakotas being there. They should have – and they should have brought more sappers.

Operation Lam Son 719 was an effort by the South Vietnamese to invade Laos to be able to cut off the Ho Chi Minh Trail, North Vietnam's "secret" supply line into the South. It did not go well for the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces or the Americans who were there to evacuate the wounded and cover their retreat. By March 25, 1971, the ARVN were in full retreat. Two days before the end of Lam Son, however, the North Vietnamese tried to hit the Army's base at Khe Sanh with a force of sappers. Luckily the Army was able to repel the surprise attack and turn the NVA around.

Among those Army troops stationed at Khe Sanh that day was Michael J. Fitzmaurice, a soldier from the Dakotas who was about to take it to the Communists like a badass American from the Great North.

Fitzmaurice was manning a bunker that day with three other members of his unit, unaware that the base had been infiltrated by NVA sappers. What he did notice was three explosive charges tossed in the bunker from out of nowhere. He quickly tossed two of them out of the bunker and then threw his body, flak vest first, over the last explosive. The blast severely wounded Fitzmaurice and partially blinded him, but his fellow soldiers were still alive. But Fitzmaurice didn't stop there. He also didn't stay there.

He left the bunker and began taking down enemy troops with his rifle, one after another until *another grenade* hit him and disabled that rifle. Still undeterred, he stopped an enemy soldier with his bare hands, killed him, took his weapon, and began fighting on. With that weapon in hand, he went back to the bunker and started taking down the attackers one by one, refusing to be evacuated.

For saving his buddies and taking down the enemy in the most conspicuous manner possible, he
Was rightfully awarded the Medal Of Honor





OBIT

GLENN E. PRENTICE, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, I CO 3/26, C BTRY 1/13

10-years ago I did a little documentary called Khe Sanh: A Walk in the Clouds. Tonight I got the news that one of my Marines and friend from the doc, Sgt Glenn E. Prentice, has passed.

There we are below in 2001 on top of Hill 881 south in Khe Sanh, Vietnam. I'm kneeling between 2 heroes, Sgt Glenn Prentice to my right and Cpl Bob Arrotta to my left. Both of these heroes fought and survived through the 77-day Siege at Khe Sanh.



Arrotta was the forward air controller with India Company 3/26 up on 881 during the whole siege. Captain Bill Dabney was his CO, who happened to be married to Chesty Puller's daughter. Imagine that guy being your father in-law.

They dubbed Arrotta the Mightiest Corporal in the Marine Corps because of the amount of ordinance he brought down on the NVA during the siege. Undoubtedly he saved a lot of Marines lives and for his actions he was awarded the Silver Star.

Bob and Glenn remained the best of friends for years after the war until Bob passed unexpectedly in 2009. They shared a true Marine brotherhood and Glenn never seemed the same after Bob's passing. Now you're together again boys and that makes me smile no matter how sad the whole thing is.

Glenn... I will always cherish the memories from our trips to Vietnam, humping those hills, the leeches, and the red clay stuck to our boots. You supported me and everything I did and I don't think I ever got the chance to truly thank you and tell you how much it meant to me. You always took the time brother. You even flew to NY with me to be there when I met the Dunham's for the first time. I asked you why and you told me... "Because he's a Marine."

Today I drove to San Diego and it's weird how I thought about you as I passed through Oceanside... thinking to myself... I need to call you. 2 hours later I got the news. It saddens me to know that you're gone and that I didn't get a chance to talk to you one more time.

He was Buried at the Miramar National Cemetery. One of the most generous individuals I have ever known. I hope he rests with the rewards he so nobly earned in his time on earth.

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GLENN E. PRENTICE



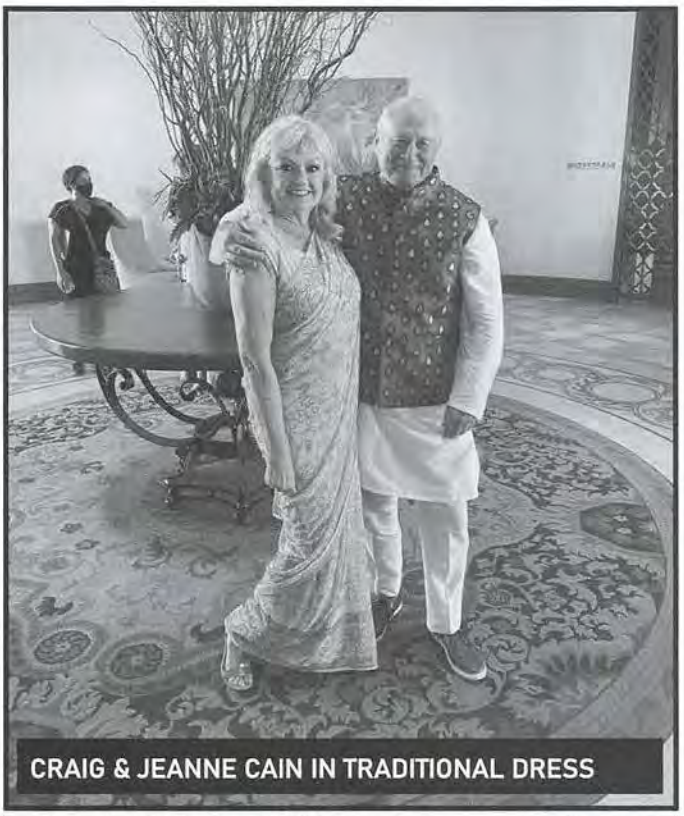

CRAIG & JEANNE CAIN IN TRADITIONAL DRESS



MOMMY & DADDY WITH NEWLY WED SON



GLENN & HIS LOVELY BRIDE SANDY

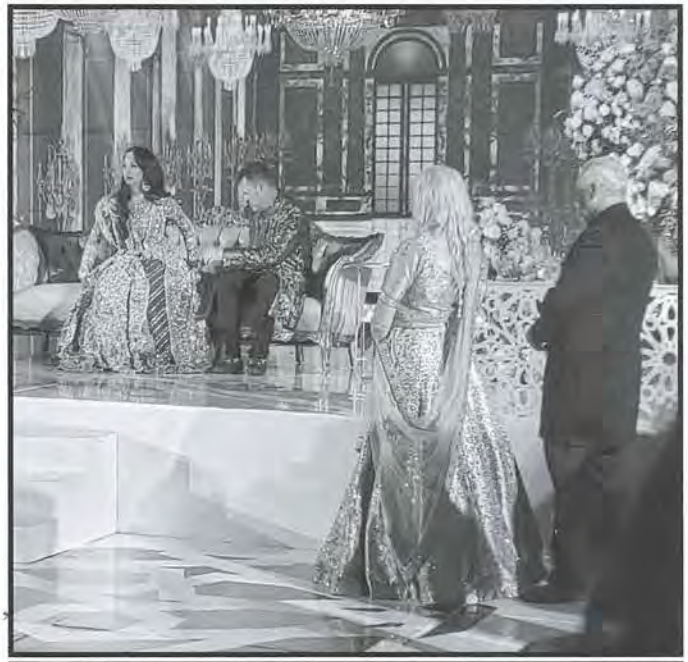



WEDDING PARTY



TOM

TOM FORD CELEBRATING A GREAT FISHING TRIP



THE GRIFFIN FAMILY



RUSS & KATHY WITH BILL & JOANNE EICHLER

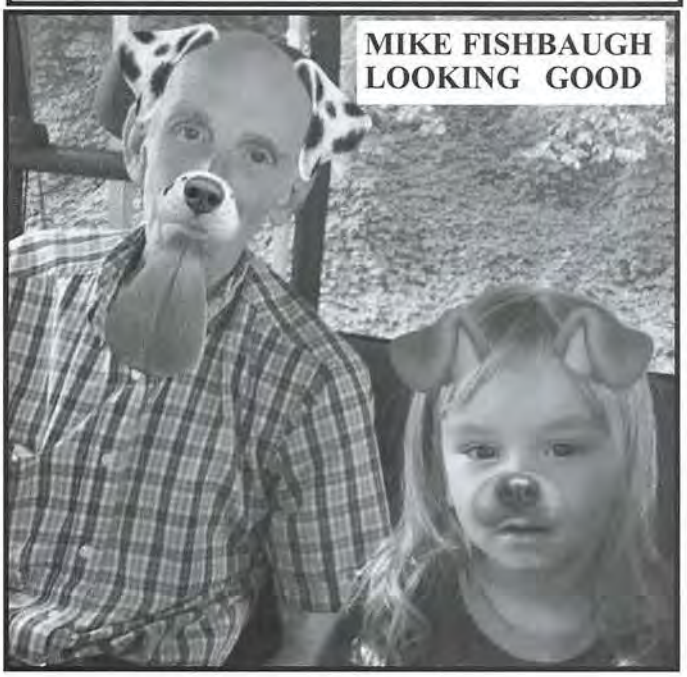

MIKE FISHBAUGH
LOOKING GOOD







I THINK TOM IS PHOTOSHOPPING HIS PICTURES LOL



TIM & JANET HALEY

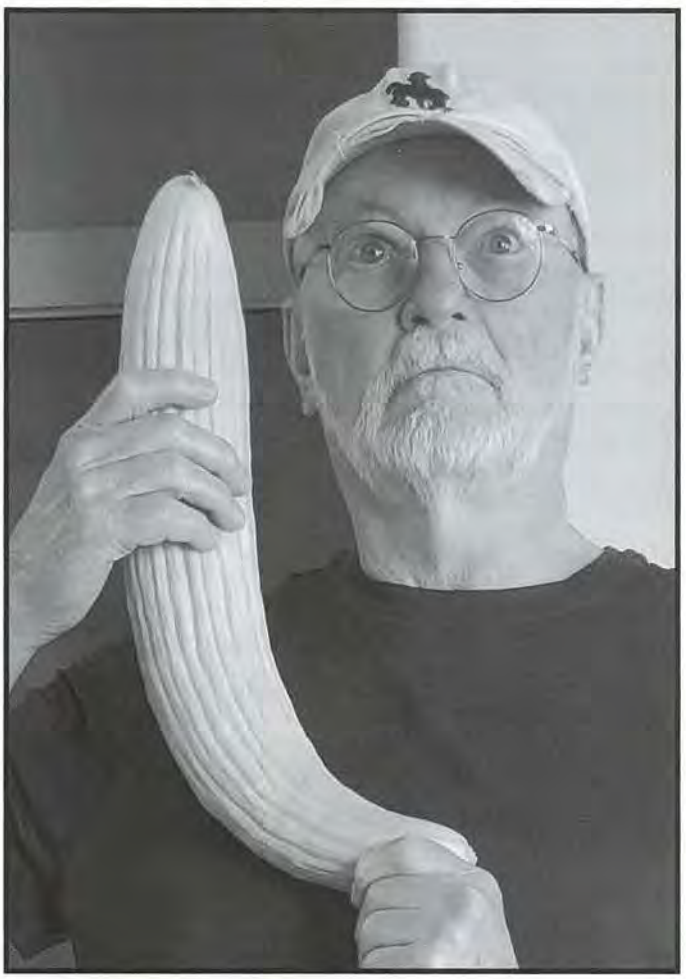

KENNY RODGERS



TERRY FOURNIER FAMILY



THE TURNER FAMILY



HEADS OF THE TURNER FAMILY:
RUSS & KATHY

AMERICAN HERO

American Hero: The most decorated Native American soldier in U.S. history - 4 Silver Stars, 5 Bronze Stars, 3 Purple Hearts. He earned a total of 42 medals and citations. - Pascal Cleatus Poolaw Sr Died on the battlefield in the Republic of Vietnam on 7 November 1967, while serving with Company C, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division. Posthumously awarded his 4th Silver Star on a "Search and Destroy mission" near Loc Ninh. Pascal Cleatus Poolaw Sr. is a full blooded Kiowa, was born on January 22, 1922 in Apache, Oklahoma. Poolaw served in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

In 1942, Poolaw, his father, and his two brothers joined the armed forces. While serving with the 8th Infantry Regiment's M Company near Recogne, Belgium on September 8, 1944, he earned his first Purple Heart and Silver Star. On that day, Poolaw's unit was engaging fire with the Germans. He pushed his company forward while facing heavy machine gun fire for give minutes as he hurled hand grenades, causing numerous enemy casualties. According to his Silver Star citation, " Due to Sergeant Poolaw's actions, many of his comrades' lives were saved and the company was able to continue the attack and capture strongly defended enemy positions. Sergeant Poolaw's display of courage, aggressive spirit and complete disregard for personal safety are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service. "

Poolaw's military career did not end in Belgium or with the Germans. During the Korean War, lPoolaw saw combat and was wounded again and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, a second Purple Heart and two more Silver Stars. His first Silver Star for that war was for his heroic actions on September 1950 when his company met still enemy resistance. Poolaw volunteered to lead his squad in an assault, charging up a slop to hit the perimeter of the North Korean's position. His squad engaged in fierce hand-to-hand combat and Poolaw's persistence encouraged his squad to keep going until they were able to seize their objective.

The second Silver Star during this war came on April 4, 1951 near Chongong-ni where Poolaw and his platoon was pinned down by a automatic weapons and mortar barrage. He exposed himself to the enemy and slowly advanced across the open terrain, firing his weapon as he went. By keeping the North Koreans' eyes on him, his platoon maneuvered to a better position and were able to carry on the mission at hand.

He returned to the U.S. in 1952 and retired from the Army ten years later. This is not where is story – or military career – ends.

During the Vietnam War, all four of the Poolaws sons were in the military. In February 1967, his son, Pascal Jr., was injured by a landmine in Vietnam. This injury resulted in amputation of his right leg below the knee. Poolaw's youngest son, Lindy, was drafted. Afraid of what could happen to his sons as the war progressed, Poolaw rejoined the Army at the age of 45. Giving up his rank as a 2nd Lieutenant (a promotion he earned in Korea), with the intentions of serving in direct combat, Poolaw hoped to keep his youngest son away from the front lines by taking his place. Regulations prohibited two members of the same family from serving in combat at the same time without their consent. Unfortunately, by the time he arrived on the West Coast, Lindy had left for Vietnam the day before.

Poolaw was deployed on May 31, 1967 as a first sergeant of the 26th Infantry Regiment's C Company. His last Silver Star was for an event that occurred a few months later. On November 7, 1967, Poolaw's unit were part of a search and destroy mission near the village of Loc Ninh. Their unit was ambushed by a Viet Cong force with intensive claymore mine, rocket, small arms, and automatic weapons fire. Through a hail of bullets, Poolaw raced to the lead squad position to lay down a base of fire – saving countless lives. While wounded, he continued moving among his squad making sure everyone was positioned properly while pulling casualties back.

As Poolaw was carrying a wounded soldier to safety, he was struck by a rocket propelled grenade and killed. For his heroic actions Poolaw was awarded a Silver Star and a third Purple Heart posthumously. "He has followed the trail of the great chiefs," his wife Irene said at Poolaw's funeral. "His people hold him in honor and highest esteem. He has given his life for the people and the country he loved so much."

The citation reads as follows; "The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Staff Sergeant Pascal Cleatus Poolaw (ASN: 18131087), United States Army, for gallantry in action against the enemy while serving with Company M, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infan-

try Division, near Recogne, Belgium, on 8 September 1944. While attacking in support of a rifle company, Sergeant Poolaw displaced his machine gun squad forward across an open field under heavy mortar and small arms fire in such a manner as to affect a minimum number of casualties among his squad. After reaching his new position, Sergeant Poolaw saw the enemy advance in a strong counterattack. Standing unflinchingly in the face of withering machine gun fire for five minutes, he hurled hand grenades until the enemy force sustained numerous casualties and was dispersed. Due to Sergeant Poolaw's actions, many of his comrades' lives were saved and the company was able to continue the attack and capture strongly defended enemy positions. Sergeant Poolaw's display of courage, aggressive spirit and complete disregard for personal safety are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service."

His 2nd Silver Star was awarded to him for his bravery under fire and his disregard for his own safety while assisting his brothers in arms. The citation for his second Silver Star, earned in Korea, is as follows;

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting a Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a Second Award of the Silver Star to Sergeant First Class Pascal Cleatus Poolaw (ASN: 18131087), United States Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving with Company C, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. On 19 September 1950 when the company attack on an enemy position was halted by stiff enemy resistance, Sergeant First Class Poolaw volunteered to lead his squad in an assault. Courageously leading his men in a charge up the slope to penetrate the enemy perimeter and engage the numerically superior enemy in fierce hand-to-hand combat, Sergeant First Class Poolaw inspired his men to hold their position until the remainder of the company was able to seize the objective. Sergeant First Class Poolaw's outstanding leadership reflects great credit upon himself and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the American Soldier."

On April 4, 1951, once again, Sergeant Poolaw honored his people and the warriors creed by serving the calling of America. For his actions on that day, Master Sergeant Poolaw received his 3rd Silver Star. The third citation reads as follows:

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting a Second Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a Third Award of the Silver Star to Master Sergeant Pascal Cleatus Poolaw (ASN: 18131087), United States Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action while serving with Company C, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. On 4 April 1951 near Chongong-ni, Korea, while attacking strong hostile positions, one squad of Master Sergeant Poolaw's platoon was immobilized by a devastating automatic weapons and mortar barrage. Exposing himself to the deadly fire, he slowly advanced across open terrain, firing his rifle as he progressed. By deliberately diverting the attention of the foe to himself, he enabled his men to maneuver to more advantageous positions. Master Sergeant Poolaw's valorous actions were instrumental in the fulfillment of the unit mission and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the American Soldier."

The citation for First Sergeant Poolaw's 4th Silver Star, awarded posthumously for action in Vietnam, reads as follows; "The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 8, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pride in presenting a Third Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a Fourth Award of the Silver Star (Posthumously) to First Sergeant Pascal Cleatus Poolaw (ASN: 18131087), United States Army, for gallantry in action against a hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam on 7 November 1967, while serving with Company C, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division. On this date, during Operation SHENANDOAH II, First Sergeant Poolaw was accompanying his unit on a two-company search and destroy mission near Loc Ninh. As the patrol was moving through a rubber plantation, they were subjected to sniper fire. Within minutes, the area was raked with intensive claymore mine, rocket, small arms, and automatic weapons fire from a numerically superior Viet Cong force.

First Sergeant Poolaw unhesitatingly ran to the lead squad which was receiving the brunt of the enemy fire. With complete disregard for his personal safety, he exposed himself to assist in deploying the men and establishing an effective base of fire. Although wounded, he continued to move about the area encouraging his men and pulling casualties to cover. He was assisting a wounded man to safety when he was mortally wounded by Viet Cong fire.

His dynamic leadership and exemplary courage contributed significantly to the successful deployment of the lead squad and undoubtedly saved the lives of many of his fellow soldiers. First Sergeant

Poolaw's unquestionable valor in close combat against numerically superior hostile forces is in keeping with the finest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, the 1st Infantry Division, and the United States Army. It should be noted that in the ferocious fighting at the Battle of Loc Ninh where he earned his 4th Silver Star and 3rd Purple Heart, it also resulted in the awards of Honor, 1 Distinguished Service Cross. . 14 other US Army soldiers also lost their lives in that engagement."







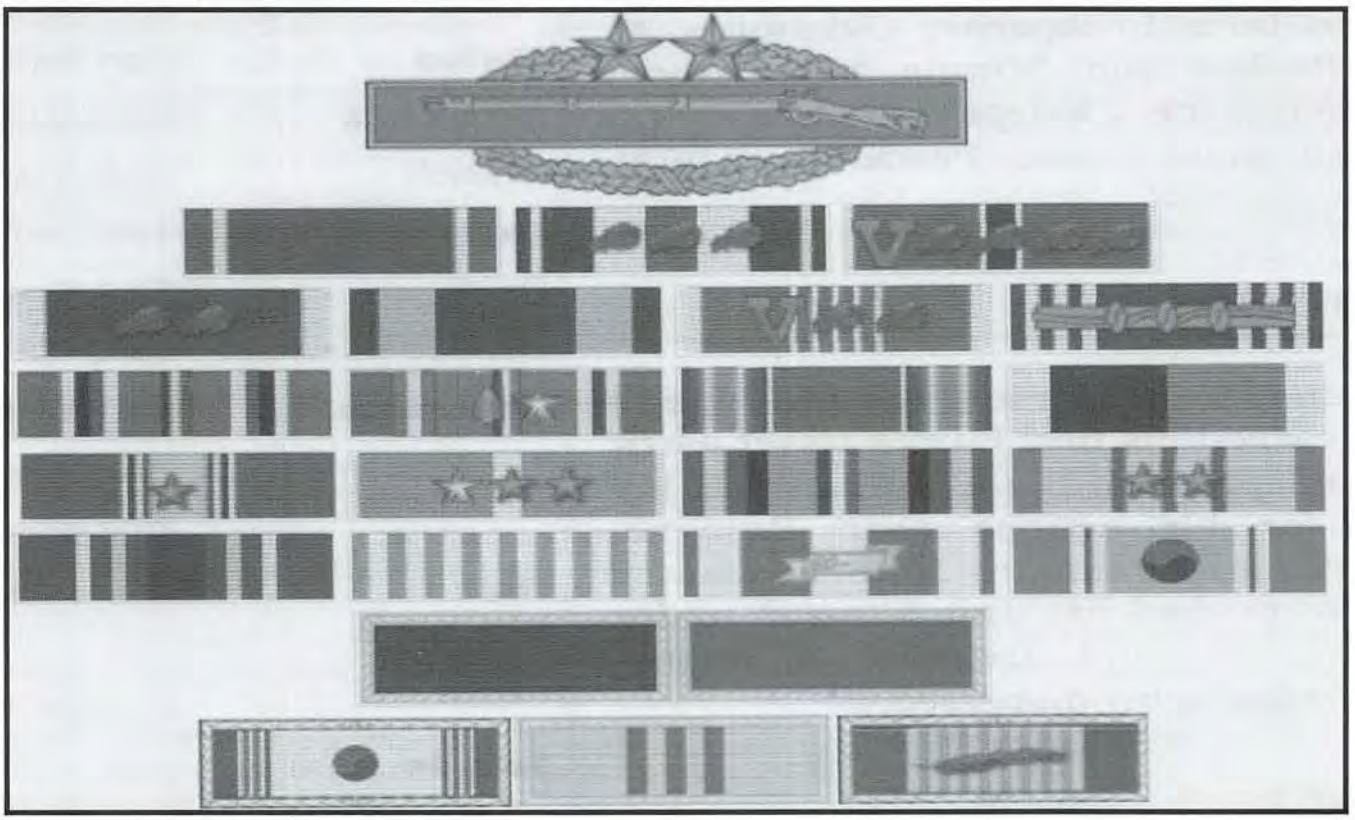

OBIT

JAMES E. WRIGHT, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, H&S CO 1/26 81MM

James Eric Wright, 73, of 2222 Fieldcrest Road, Wilson NC, passed away on Monday, May 3, 2021 at his home

James was preceded in death by: his parents, James Daniels and Sudie Mae Reid Wright and his sister Otealia Hobbs.

James leaves to cherish his memories: his loving wife of 35 years, Christine Wright of the home; daughters; Erica Wright of Durham, NC, Jamie Wright Harris (Garrison), Melanie Ward, Crystal Ward Precious Bynum (Dominic) all of Wilson,



NC; two brothers, Charles Wright (Anita) of Hephzibah, GA and Bobby Daniels (Tee) of Nashville, TN; sixteen grandchildren; Brandon, Brianna, Braxton, Abria, Christopher, MeKailya, Garritt, Kiersten, Kaitlyn, Kennedy, Kahleb, Gavin, Kaison, Grayson, Mayson, and Marlee; one uncle, Troy Reid of Wilson, NC; mother-in-law, Mary McNair of Macclesfield, NC; two sisters-in-law; Mary Thornhill of Raleigh, NC and Janice McNair of Macclesfield, NC; a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and a Special brotherhood affectionally known as "The Wednesday Club": Leroy Barnes, Sammie Dew, Vernon "Tap" Hardy, Lenwood Spells, David Fate, Donald Ham, and Arthur Gaskins, Condolences may be posted to www.stevensfamilyfuneralhome.com or faxed to 252-991-5849.

"Committed to Serve, Committed to Care."
God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

OBIT

JAMES UPDIKE "DOC", USN KHE SANH VETERAN HN F CO 2/26 HILL 558

James Everett Updike was born in Rapid City, South Dakota on May 8, 1947, and died unexpectedly on May 4, 2021. Jim lived in Laguna Woods, California with his wife Sharon.

Jim was a veteran of the Vietnam War, in which he served as a Hospital Corpsman in the U.S. Navy from 1966 to 1970, and was awarded a Purple Heart and Navy Commendation with Combat "V". He worked his entire career in the financial industry, retiring in 2015 as CEO of Honda Federal Credit Union. He was proud of his accomplishments as a leader during his career, and building great teams was what he loved best. He was a skilled speaker and enjoyed the motivational aspects that came with his role.



PHOTO FROM HILL 558, FROM TWS PROFILE

OBIT

STEPHEN R. STEGICH III, USMC
KHE SANH VETERAN, HMM-262

STEGICH--Stephen RICHARD Stegich, III was born on March 17, 1942 in Little Falls, New York. He passed away on August 19th at his home in East Hampton at age 79. He is survived by his daughter, Stephanie Stegich and son, Erich (Diana) Stegich, his grandchildren Joshua, Olivia, Lila, Sophie and Marin, his four siblings, Donna Kauffman, Sharon (Bob) Avery, Alan (Maria) Stegich and Jeffrey (Kay) Stegich and many loving nieces, nephews and cousins. He was predeceased by his niece, the Hon. Louise K Sira. **Steve was a proud veteran of the United States Marine Corps. He served as a combat helicopter pilot with squadron HMM 262 in the Vietnam War and received the Air Medal with 5 stars, a National Defense Medal, the Presidential Unit Citation for "extraordinary heroism in action against the enemy," and the Purple Heart. He survived two helicopter crashes, retiring as a Captain in 1969. after being seriously injured by gunfire while flying near Khe Sanh.**

Prior to his service, Steve attended the University of Notre Dame on a military scholarship and graduated in 1965 with a BS in Architecture. When he came home from Vietnam, Steve practiced architecture in Syracuse, New York for a year and then returned to South Bend, where he started a family and attended Notre Dame law school and was a member of the Law Review. After receiving his JD in 1972, he moved to New York and began a 49-year career as an aviation lawyer and partner at Condon & Forsyth. He was serving his clients in the aviation industry until the day that he died and was preparing for an October 2021 oral argument before the United States Supreme Court.

He was beloved by many clients, colleagues and friends and was known as a brilliant and passionate lawyer. He was a mentor to many young lawyers and inspired his son and four nieces and nephews to follow him into the profession. Steve had boundless curiosity. He consumed books, poetry, films, music and news with enthusiasm, and he took an interest in everyone who crossed his path. He loved history, art, opera and seeing the world. He found love again in the last decade of his life, and that brought him and his family great joy. Perhaps because he came from modest means, Steve genuinely appreciated all of the finer things in life and loved sharing them with others. He celebrated his seminal birthdays with his children and closest friends in locations like London, Cortina Italy, and Barcelona. He was a master gift- giver and expert chef at Thanksgiving and Christmas. For the last 20 years, he enjoyed entertaining his family and friends in his yard in Wainscott, where his expertise in landscaping and green thumb were always on full display. His children and grandchildren were his greatest joy. They were a constant presence in his life. He attended his daughter Stephanie's countless marathons and was so proud of her accomplishments in her career and as a mother raising three girls. He was awed watching his son Erich grow his company from one employee into one of the preeminent general contractors in New York City.

He loved hearing about Erich's construction projects, encouraged his adventures and passed along to him a love of skiing, boats, planes, and cars from Stuttgart. He watched his grandson Josh play football from the age of six and was looking forward to watching him play this fall at Denison University. Steve frequently lectured his four granddaughters that women can do anything men can do, only more efficiently, and he encouraged them to break any glass ceilings. He told them that there was no luck in life, only hard work, and he was the first to cheer on their accomplishments. Steve was a fiercely loyal friend, advocate and most of all father, grandfather, son, brother and uncle who was happiest when surrounded by his family. He was larger than life and will forever be missed. Semper Fi



KHE SANH FRIENDS



Grandma Turner With Grandson Sam Hughes

OBIT

LINDA M. EASTER, KHE SANH REUNION COMMITTEE, WIFE OF HAROLD EASTER , ALPHA CO 1/26

Linda Marie Easter (Gram), died Tuesday morning, August 10, 2021, at the Reading Hospital. She was the wife of Rev. Harold L. Easter. They had celebrated their 54th wedding anniversary on December 30th. Born on September 28, 1947, in Harrisburg, she was the daughter of Brenda (Hold) Cox Dowhower of Middletown and the late Gerald E. Cox. Linda was a Christian counselor, and was very active in church, teaching Sunday School and leading hymns. She loved her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren and had many hobbies including writing, reading, gardening, completing crossword puzzles, and cooking family dinners. In addition to her husband and mother, she is survived by her two daughters, son, and their respective families: daughter Tanya Brautigam and her two sons Seth and Ty Brautigam; daughter Trisha Dries and her three daughters and son: Adessa Trabosh, Kierra Taggart, Tiahna Trabosh, and Draken Dries; son Timothy, daughter-in-law Amy, and their two daughters Emma and Clara Easter; and eight great-grandchildren and four brothers: Wayne, Craig, and Bruce Cox, and Bradley Dowhower; Funeral services were held on Monday, August 16, 2021. A viewing occured at 10:30 a.m., followed by a memorial service at 12:45 p.m. at Bunker Hill Church. Interment at the Indiantown Gap National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, monetary donations may be made to Bunker Hill Church, at2208 SR 72 North Lebanon, PA 17046. Kreamer & Lum Funeral Home & Crematory, Jonestown, is honored to serve the family.




HAROLD & LINDA EASTER


WE REMEMBER THE BEAUTIFUL SONGS SHE SANG AT MANY OF OUR KSV EVENTS

OBIT

GEORGE O. GATES, USN SEABEE, KHE SANH VETERAN CBMU 301-DET B



ANDOVER, Vt. – George Osborne Gates died peacefully Sunday, Aug. 8, 2021 at the Cardinal Wing of the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington, Vt., at age 75, following a brief illness. George resided at the VA under their loving care for the past four years after developing a sudden onset of early dementia. George brought joy to the veterans' community.

George was born in Springfield, Vt., June 11, 1946 and was the son of Gordon Gates of Chester and Patricia Rowell of the Rowell's Inn in Andover. The Gates family owned and operated the lumber mill – until destroyed by fire – on Lowell Lake where they lived in Londonderry, Vt., later moving to Andover, Vt.

George was a man of many talents and interests. Graduating from Chester Union High School in 1965, he went on to serve his country as a U.S. Navy Seabee in the Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 301 where he was assigned to the Detail Bravo Khe Sanh where he served as EO3 (Third Class Petty Officer) and promoted to EO2 during his service. He was rated with Navy Union Commendation Ribbon for his time at Khe Sanh, National Defense Metal, Vietnam Service Ribbon, and two Campaign Stars. George was present during the Battle and Siege of Kha Sanh and family has been able to piece together his accounts through numerous letters written to parents Gordon and Patty while in Vietnam.

He was released from active duty in September of 1969.After returning from Vietnam, he was an accomplished woodworker and homebuilder with a career as a carpenter working for his dad's family-run business, Gordon O. Gates & Sons Construction. His craftsmanship was excellent and a great source of pride. He was an avid hunter and angler who enjoyed deer and raccoon hunting along with trout fishing in local streams all the way home from work daily during summer months. George could fix absolutely anything but preferred working on American-made hot rods, Jeeps, and pickup trucks that he owned over the years. Coming from a musical family, he played the banjo, fiddle, spoons, and juice harp. He loved to dance and often spoke of the square dances held in local barns.

George is survived by a daughter Juliette (Tim) Gates Britton of Peru, Vt. and Jessy (Jamie) Gates Richardson of Denmark, Maine, and sisters Susan (Robert) Turco and Sylvia (Robert) MacDonald. He was predeceased by brother Charles Gates, also of Andover, Vt. George was a loving grandfather of six grandchildren and uncle to several nieces and nephews that he also loved.

A graveside service with military honors was held Aug. 13, 2021 at Village Cemetery in Peru. A gathering followed services at the J.J. Hapgood Store owned by daughter Juliette Britton. Both the service and the celebration following included live music by Ida Specker.



MILITARY RETIREES INFORMATION

By Jim Absher

Military retirees and disabled veterans could see their monthly checks jump by hundreds of dollars each month in 2022, the largest increase since 1983. The annual inflation-based Cost of Living Adjustment, or COLA, soon will be determined by the government, and all the figures point to an increase of at least 6%, and maybe more, beginning in 2022.

That means that next year, military retirees will see their monthly retirement check increase, with the average monthly check going up by around $160. Veterans receiving disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs also will see their monthly disability payments increase, with the average monthly amount increasing by nearly $100. According to the Defense Department, there are around 1.87 million military retirees, with an annual average retirement payment of $30,265. The VA says nearly 5.1 million veterans receive disability compensation, with an annual benefit of $18,549.

The annual COLA increase is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is measured by the Department of Labor. That agency measures the costs of a select group of goods and services and compares those costs to the previous year. If there is an increase, retirees and many others receiving government benefits see an increase in their monthly payments for the upcoming year. If those costs go down, the government payments will remain the same in the upcoming year.

In 2021, costs for most goods and services have gone up much faster than they have in the past. The most recent data from the Department of Labor is showing a 5.4% increase from last year, and there are two more months left in the current fiscal year, which ends on Sept. 30.

So, unless there is a major turnaround of the economy, with prices dropping dramatically in the next month or so, next year's government payments should see a hefty increase.

The CPI also is used to determine federal employee retirement and social security COLA adjustments as well as other federal benefit programs, so the CPI increase will affect over 50 million Americans.

Next year's COLA is scheduled to be announced in early October. When it is, Military.com will have the latest information, including disability pay rates available to you.

WILLIAM EICHLER WITH HIS WIFE JOANNE'S BEAUTIFUL FAMILY. BILL AND HIS WIFE REGULARY ATTEND OUR KHE SANH VETERANS ANNUAL REUNIONS AND ARE GREAT SUPPORTERS.







TOM QUIGLY'S SON IN LAW JACOB







GARRISON PROPERTIES 1968 A FEW WENT TAD TO KHE SANH DURING THE SIEGE









BARRY FIXLER CELEBRATING HIS GRANDSON'S BIRTHDAY AT BULLY BOY BAR.



went to dinner with a couple absolute GIANTS Last night. Though they are both in their 70s now, don't let their grey hair and old bodies fool you.



BEAUTIFUL COUPLE

BOOK REVIEW

WAR IN THE VILLAGES BY TED N. EASTERLING

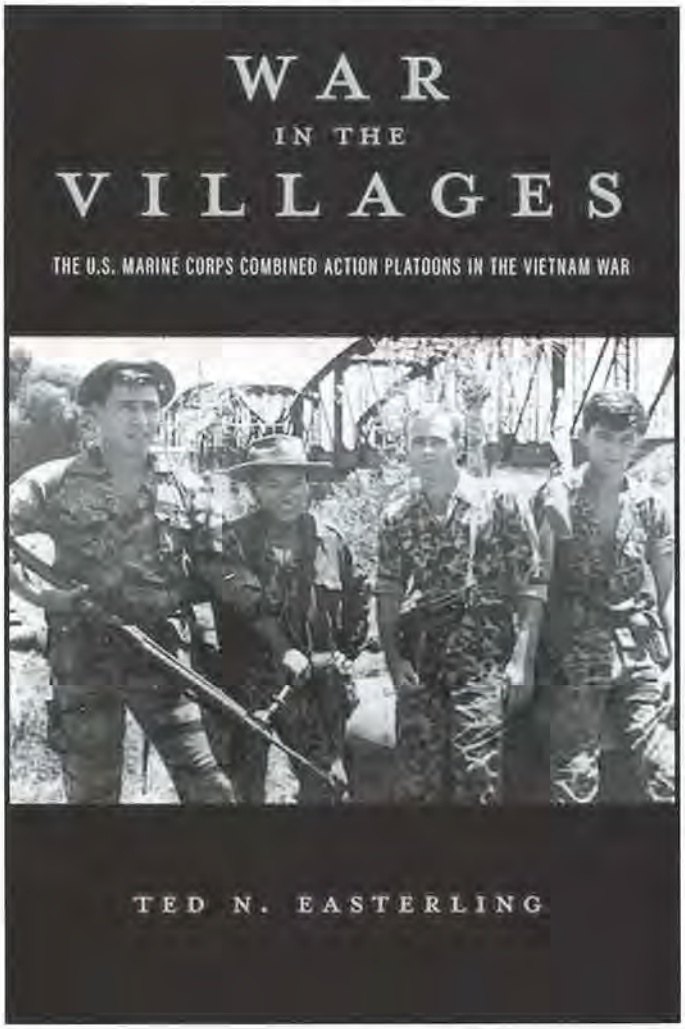

Men of the U.S Marine Corps Combined Action Platoons in the Vietnam volunteered to live with and protect South Vietnamese villagers in I Corps. Ideally a CAP was made up of fifty men—14 Marines, one Navy corpsman, and 35 South Vietnamese Popular Forces troops, although in reality the teams often fell below those numbers. The program, designed to fight guerrillas during the night and help villagers during the day, was in place in Vietnam from 1965-71, and was the subject of controversies between upper echelon Marine and U.S. Army commanders. In essence, the Army favored the search-and-destroy strategy, and the Marines wanted to emphasize hearts-and-minds counterinsurgency programs.

In War in the Villages: The U.S. Marine Corps Combined Action Platoons in the Vietnam War (University of North Texas Press, 247 pp. $29.95, hardcover; $23.95, Kindle) Marine Vietnam War veteran Ted Easterling tells the story of the effectiveness of CAPs against the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army. Easterling holds a doctorate from the University of Akron where he taught history. Relying primarily on secondary sources in his book, Easterling concludes that CAP never realized its potential.

The book's lengthy introduction details the principles of guerrilla warfare, communist ideology, and revolutionary warfare to show the formidable mili-



tary challenge posed by the communist forces in Vietnam. Easterling also explains a range of counterinsurgency tactics designed to meet the challenge, the core of which fostered disagreement between Marine Gen. Victor (Brute) Krulak and his boss, U.S. Army Gen. William Westmoreland.

Easterling conscientiously takes the reader through all the stages of CAP's existence, a struggle intensified by the program's limited size and insufficient support from the South Vietnamese government. Even when CAP became a separate command, a lack of supplies hampered progress.

Several recently released books about the CAP have reached conclusions similar to Easterling's. In *Spreading Ink Blots from Da Nang to the DMZ*, for example, the British military historian David Strachan-Morris rates CAP as successful—a minor success, perhaps, but nevertheless successful. For him, counterinsurgency is an effective way to achieve a specific objective, within a specific area, and (ideally) for a specific period of time. Beyond those parameters, he says, it is ineffective.

A more personalized view of CAP comes from *Tiger Papa Three* by Edward F. Palm, a former CAP Marine who lived with villagers between Cam Lo and Dong Ha, ten kilometers south of the DMZ in 1967. Palm reports that villagers acted indifferently to the Marines, did not buy into civic

action projects, "and never had any great call for our medical services."

What's more, he says that the South Vietnamese Popular Forces avoided taking risks, and the U.S. Army offered no help or encouragement. He labels CAP as the Marines' "enlightened gesture of dissent" against a strategy that was "proving to be self-defeating."

Regardless of the degree of CAP effectiveness, *War in the Villages* provides an in-depth study of a controversial program that once again shows the high degree of commitment by the U.S. Marine Corps.

LANCE CORPORAL BOB PARSONS
D/1/26
By Craig W. Tourte

It was time for a new Golf Club Driver, not because I'm any good, but my Cobra Driver was getting pretty beat up from all the miss-hits, pulls, and shanks. My wife told me she was surprised I'm not any better than I am; as much as I play, my response was, "So Am I." I tried all the major brands, Cobra, Titleist, Ping, etc. I wanted one that would drive straight and long and one I could afford. I had heard about the brand PXG but only knew they were one of the most expensive clubs on the market, costing as much as $255 to $375 per club.

A little research revealed the name brand "PXG" stood for "Parsons Extreme Golf," and the founder was Robert Ralph "Bob" Parsons." It has been stated; Parsons told his engineers he wanted to spare no expense in developing the best golf clubs made, and there was no budget or timeline.

He is an American entrepreneur, billionaire, and philanthropist. In 1997 he founded the GoDaddy group, which included numerous very successful companies. In June 2014, he stepped down from his position of Executive Chairman. He also founded YAM Worldwide, Inc, with power sports, golf, real estate, and marking. As of September 2020, Parsons is ranked No. 378 on the Forbes 400 list of The Richest People in America.

Lance Corporal Bob Parsons
United States Marine Corps

After nearly flunking out of high school, Parsons enlisted in the Marine Corps. In 1969 he served as a rifleman in Delta Company 1/26 and did a tour in Vietnam Quang Nam Province. He was wounded in action and medically evacuated, spending two months in a naval hospital recovering, he earned the Combat Action Ribbon, the Vietnam Gallantry Cross, and Purple Heart. He attributes his success in his various businesses to the few years he served in the United States Marine Corps. In 2018 he founded the "Lance Corporal Parsons Welcome Home Fund for Vietnam Veterans," "where care is provided to veterans of all US service branches wounded, injured, or suffering life-threatening illness based on their participation in combat operation in Vietnam."

And yes, I ordered a PXG Driver for their sale price of $299. I haven't hit the driver yet, but my expectations are high.





CRAIG INSTRUCTING TOM HORCHLER



BOOK REVIEW

THE LONG JOURNEY HOME BY CRAIG BLACKMAN

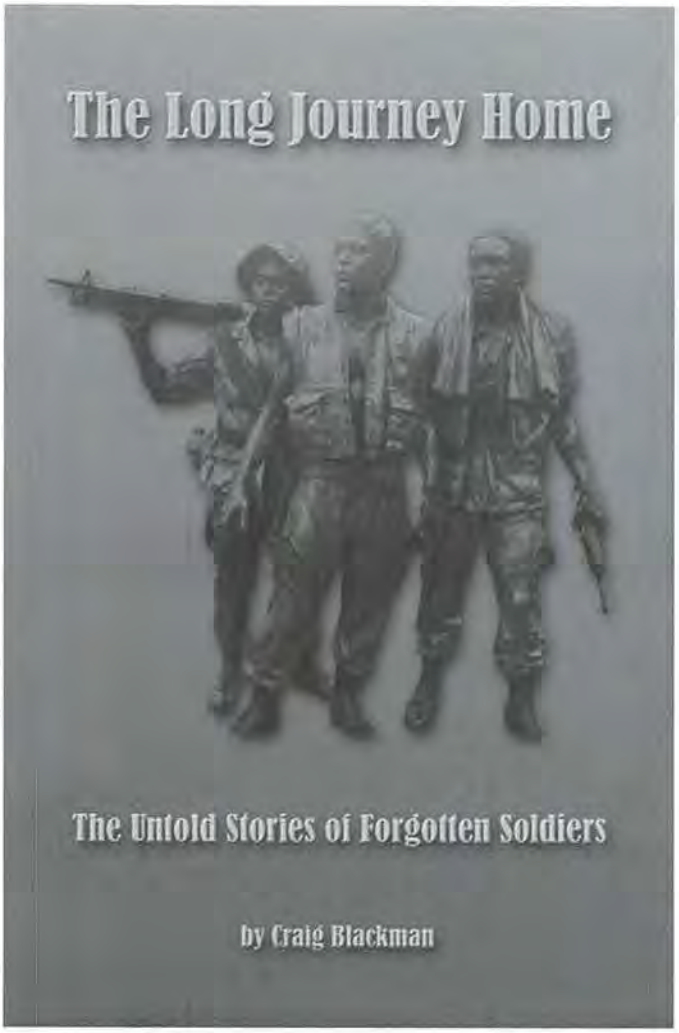

With the support of Chris Mulholland (VFW Post 2894) and many others, I completed a book entitled The Long Journey home: The Untold Story of Forgotten Soldiers. The book, which took me 6.5 years to write, was based on a 2014 AP class project that changed the lives of my students. It is the story of how a diverse group of post-millenials rediscovered their local history and had a better understanding of the cost of war. They went beyond the learning objectives and developed relationships with Gold Star families that changed their lives. In a time when patriotism is diminishing, reading these stories of teenagers honoring Vietnam veterans is uplifting. Louis Franklin Staples and Kermit Anthony Ray, two men featured in the book, fought at Khe Sanh.

I GET PICTURES



LOVELY LYNNE NUCHERENO WITH GRANDDAUGHTER



LYNNE WITH NICOLE & AVA



2021 Albuquerque Reunion
By Craig Tourte

It was another wonderful reunion with the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, which was held this year in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Considering the restrictive circumstances of the ongoing pandemic, the reunion was well attended with members, family, friends, associates, guests, visitors, and volunteers. As usual, Tom Eichler, Russ and Kathy Turner, David Meyer, Tom Ford, Rolland Kutzback, Merle Moritz, spouses, and those I have unintentionally left out made it all possible.

Even with the restrictive circumstances, all seemed to enjoy themselves. Many enjoyed their visit by taking the "Sandia Peak Tramway," ascending 10,378 feet in fifteen minutes for an 11,000 square mile panoramic view. The Tramway is considered the "most stunning urban peak" in America. Albuquerque's "Old Town' is another wonderful historic spot many attendees visited. Its narrow streets and century-old adobe houses, along with numerous places to eat and shop, and the 18th-century San Felipe de Neri Church made it a must-place to visit. The nearby Museum of Natural History and Science had dinosaur skeletons and western art. Bruce Geiger and I visited the "American International Rattlesnake Museum." Bruce was a walking encyclopedia when it came to rattlesnakes, having raised, and kept them as pets. I must admit he was making me a little nervous with all his rattlesnake talk, and I learned more about rattlesnakes than I needed to know, which was primarily avoidance when at all possible. While in Old Town, we stopped in at "Church's Café" for a light snack in an old adobe building off the beaten track and watched the many tourists walk by.

With Native Americans and Khe Sanh Veterans Robert "Chief" Longcrane and Wayne "Butch" DeVerney, we visited the "Indian Pueblo Culture Center." Admission for them was free with their Native American Tribal Card, and I paid the $10.00 entrance fee. The IPCC is owned and operated by the 19 Indian Pueblos of New Mexico and is dedicated to the "preservation and perpetuation of Pueblo Indian Culture." It is a 10,000 sq ft museum filled with authentic history and artifacts of Pueblo people from "Pre-Columbian" to current times. I found the section dedicated to Pueblo women particularly interesting, with the many exhibits highlighting their role in Indian culture. I observed a beautiful wall hanging titled with the words, "Our Cycle of Existence" It read, "In our traditional stories, we recognize and celebrate life cycles. We pray for those who have gone on, those here now, and those yet to come. In this way, we are connected to our ancestors, to each other, and to future generations." It was attributed to "Grandfather Storyteller, Pablita Velarde, Santa Clara Pueblo."

The Crowne Plaza Hotel chosen by the reunion committee was accommodating and affordable; the hotel certainly did its absolute best to make our reunion an enjoyable experience. Breakfast was included, and the Saturday evening meal and menu choices were appreciated and enjoyed by all.

In a discussion I had with Bruce Geiger, he said, and I'll paraphrase here, "the Association is not anything without the reunion." I thought that was correct and very poignant. Those of us who can and are able and who want to keep our Association alive and continue to prosper should make every effort to attend our reunions, or our Association will cease to survive. With that said, those who were unable to attend this reunion were sorely missed and we certainly look forward to seeing as many as possible next year.



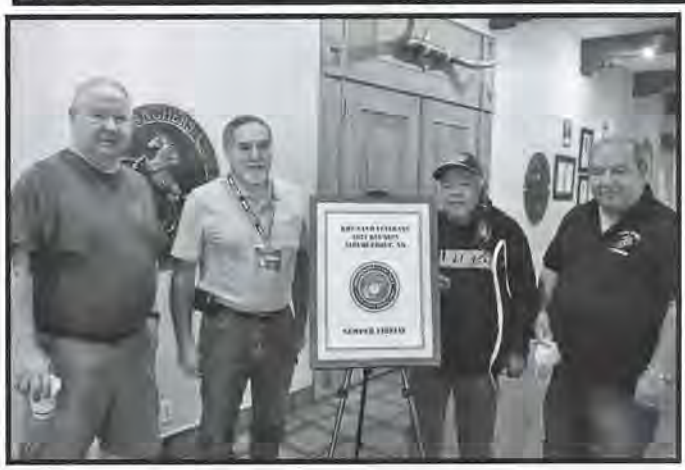

THE 2022 KHE SANH VETERANS ANNUAL REUNION WILL BE HELD IN RENO, NEVADA FROM 23 OCT TO 30 OCT 2022, AT THE NUGGET CASINO & RESORT LOCATED AT 1100 NUGGET AVENUE, SPARKS NV 89431 . ROOM RATES ARE $99.00 (Plus Local Tax) RATE IS GOOD FOR THREE DAYS BEFORE AND THREE DAYS AFER THE REUNION DATES. PARKING IS FREE. THERE ARE FREE SHUTTLES TO THE AIRPORT. If YOU CALL THE HOTEL DIRECT, 775-356-3300 YOU MUST MENTION THE CODE GKHE22. IF YOU CALL THE TOLL FREE NUMBER 800-648-1177, YOU MUST ALSO MENTION THE SAME CODE, GKHE22.









JOHN & GUINN
WOLFE
3/26 9TH MAB

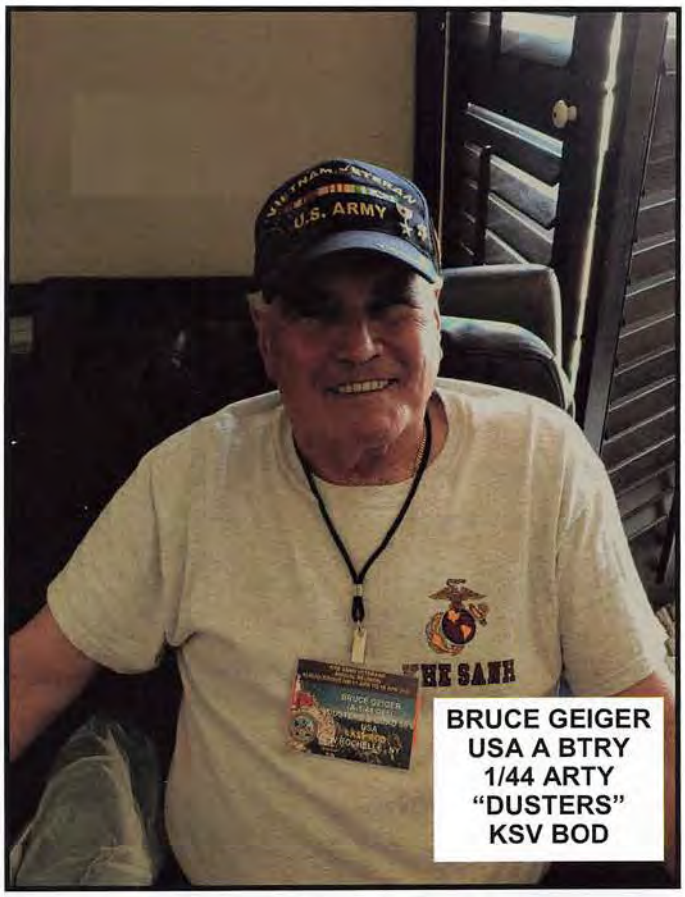

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ROLLAND
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ROBERT & LINDA
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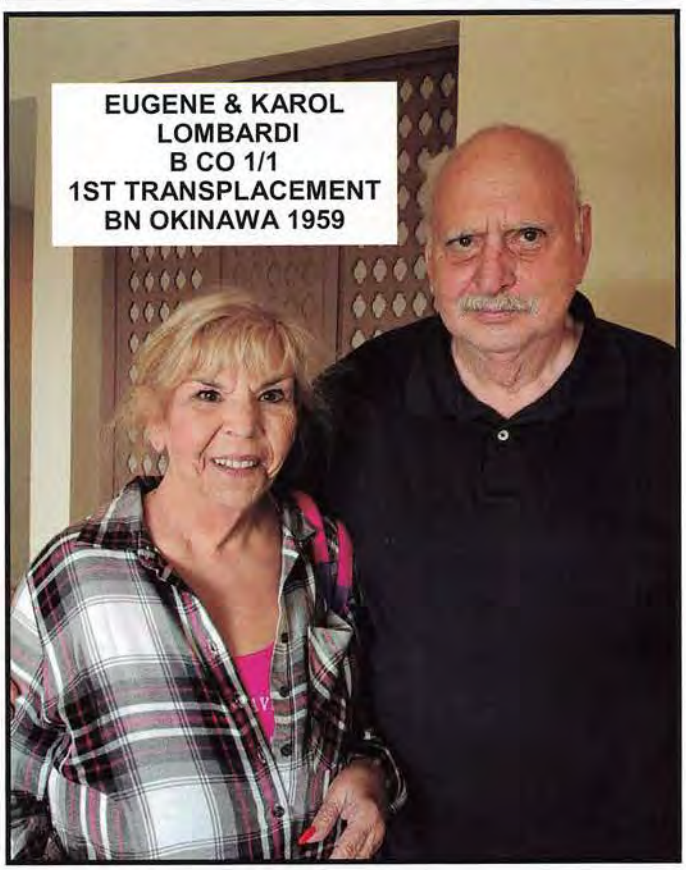

EUGENE & KAROL
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1ST TRANSPLACEMENT
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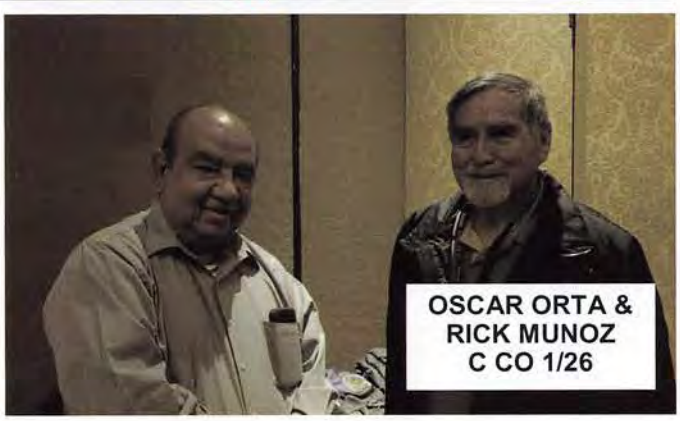

OSCAR ORTA &
RICK MUNOZ
C CO 1/26

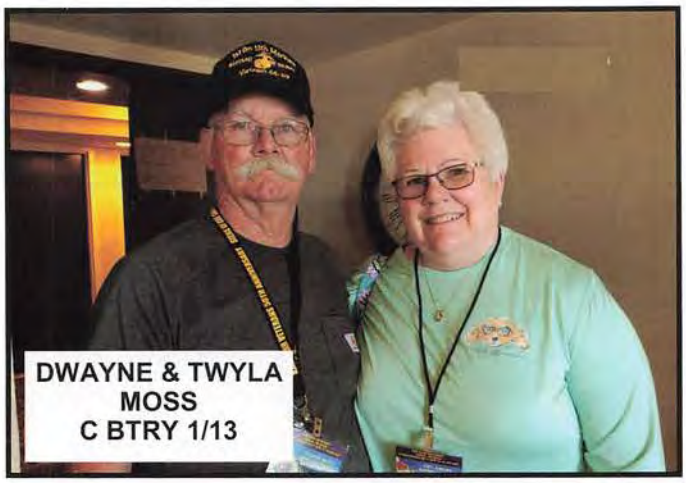

DWAYNE & TWYLA
MOSS
C BTRY 1/13



GLENN & SANDRA
GRIFFIN
D CO 1/1

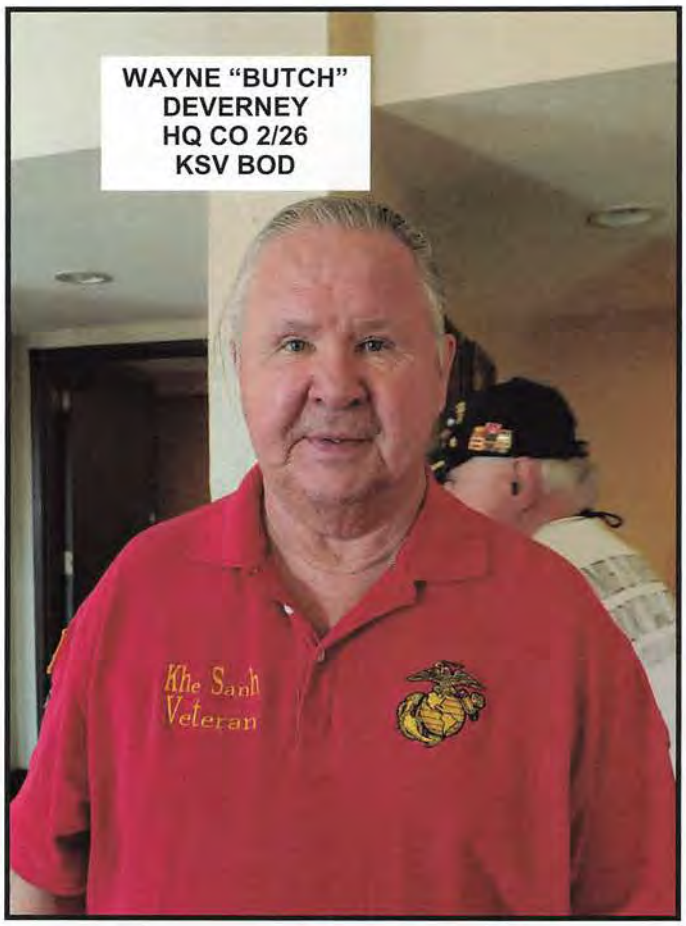

WAYNE "BUTCH"
DEVERNEY
HQ CO 2/26
KSV BOD



RON RAYNER & SON
AL
A CO 1/26
KSV CHAPLAIN

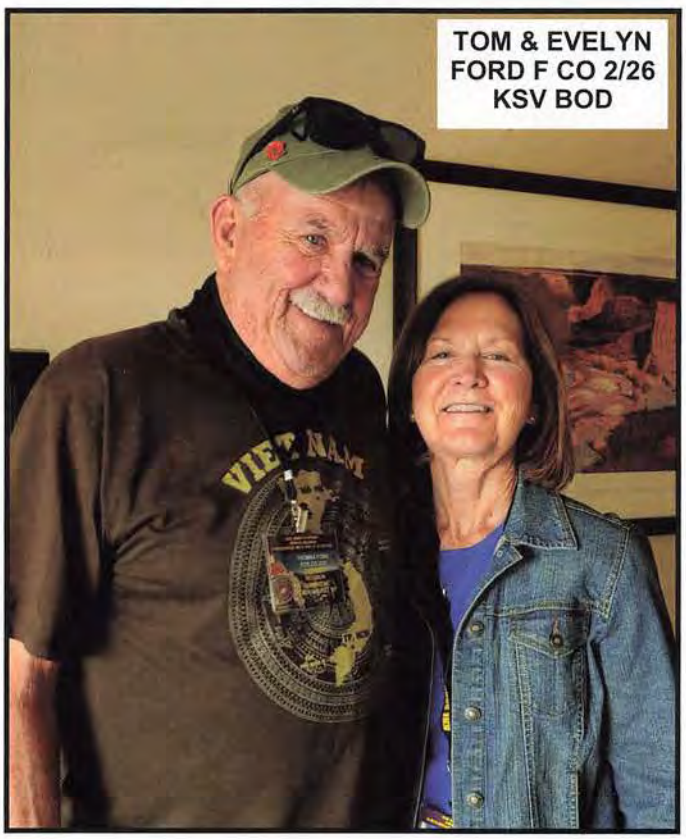

TOM & EVELYN
FORD F CO 2/26
KSV BOD



RON & CONNIE
BELLANTONE
D CO 1/26


HAROLD & LINDA EASTER A CO 1/26

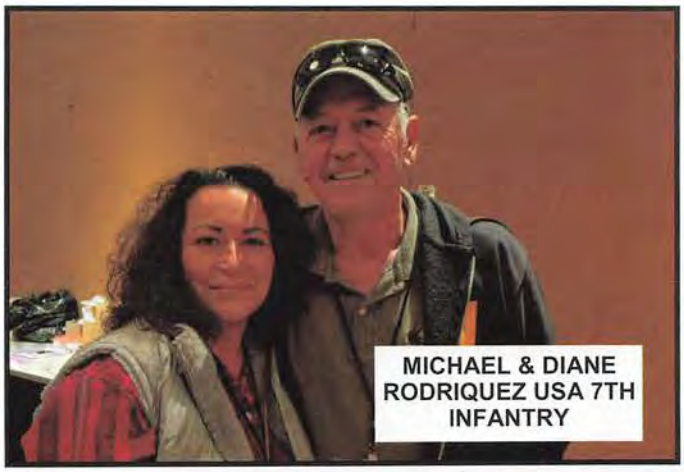
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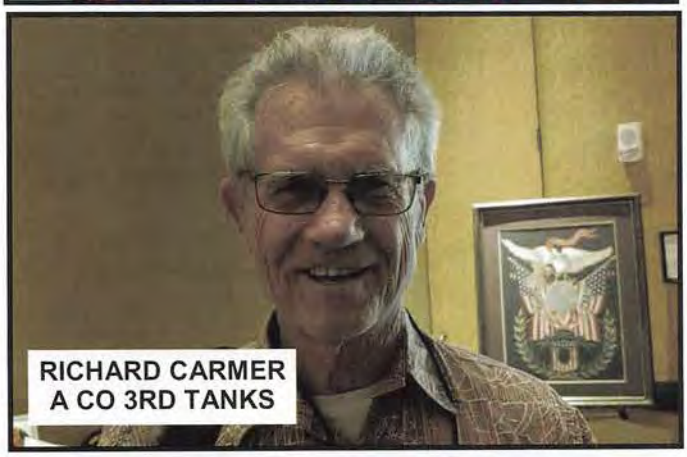
RICHARD CARMER A CO 3RD TANKS

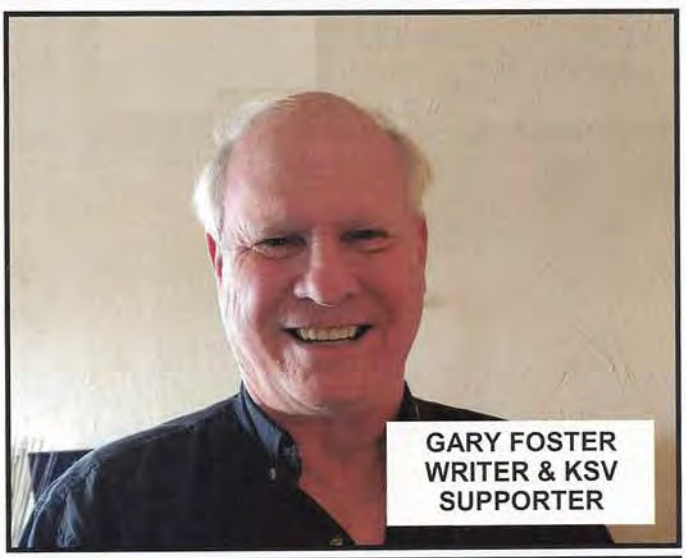
GARY FOSTER WRITER & KSV SUPPORTER


LINDA MARTIN

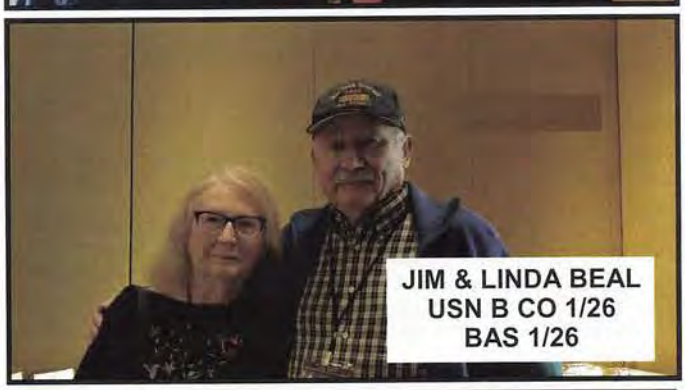
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STEPHEN WELDON & KATHY BUTLER B CO 1/9

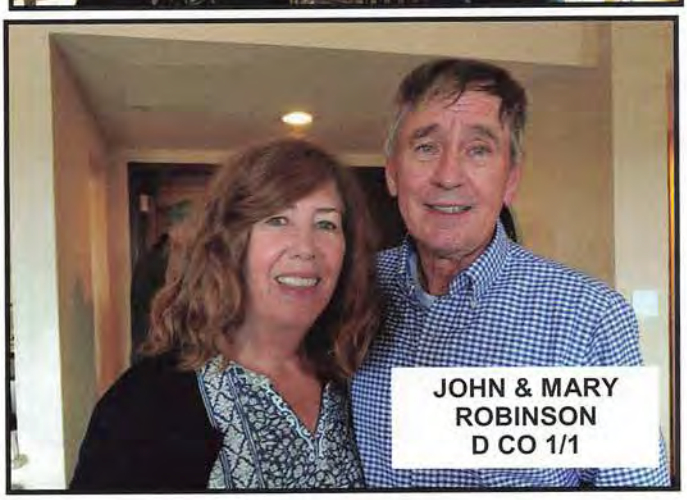
JOHN & MARY ROBINSON D CO 1/1



LOUIS & SANDI REYES
E CO 2/26 HILL 861A
KSV BOD



MODESTO & AMELIA
DE LOS SANTOS
B BTRY 1/13

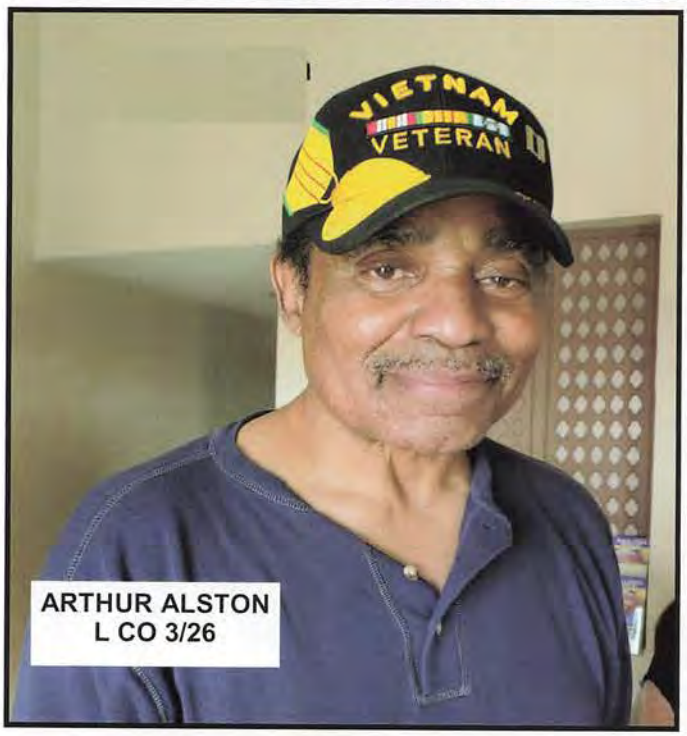

ARTHUR ALSTON
L CO 3/26



DAVID BUFFALO
H&S CO 1/26



KEN & LIZ KARKOW
B CO 1/26



RODOLFO HINOJO
& RUDY MACIAS
H&S 3/26


LARRY & NANCY SEESE
B BTRY 1/13


BEN & JACKIE LEITH
G CO 2/26



CRAIG TOURTE
HQ BTRY 1/13
KSV SECRETARY

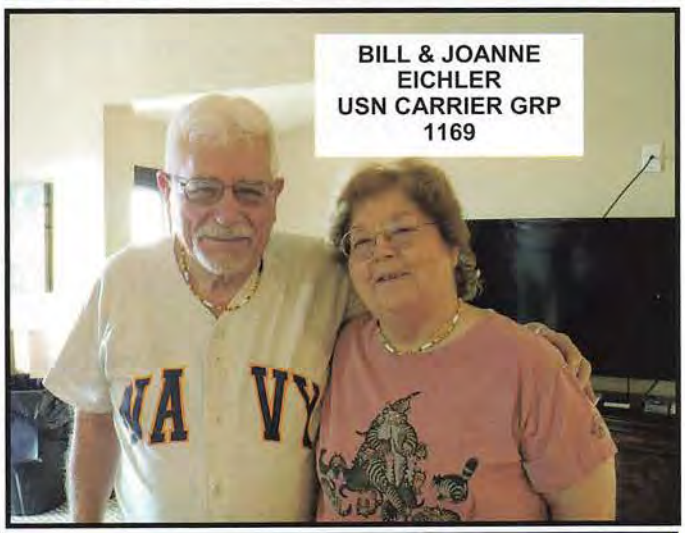
BILL & JOANNE EICHLER
USN CARRIER GRP 1169


RUSS & KATHY TURNER
A CO 1/26
PRESIDENT
KSV,CHAIRMAN REUNION COMMITTE



HANK KARKOSZKA
USN SEABEE
CBMU 301


DAVE & CAROL MEYER C CO 1/26
KSV
BOD,REUNION COMMITTEE


EDWARD & FLORENCE
MENCHACA
H&S CO COMM

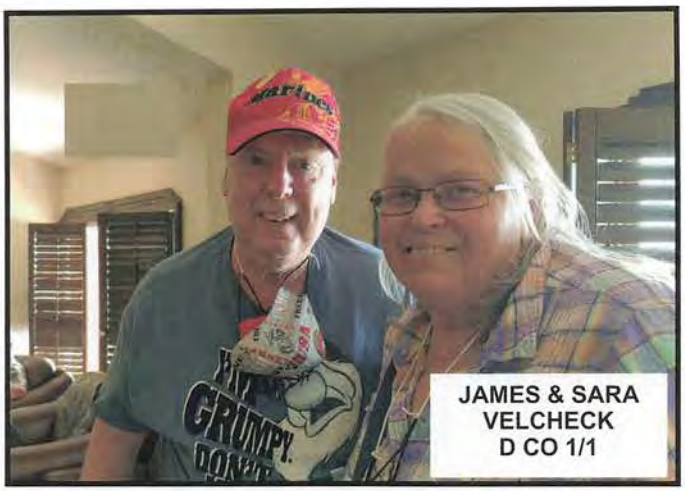
JAMES & SARA
VELCHECK
D CO 1/1


LARRY COEY
C CO 1/9


LARRY & LOU
LECLAIRE
K CO 3/26


NEIL & ALICE
KENNY
L CO 3/26


EDWARD & DANA
SANCHEZ
F CO 2/26


JOSEPH & TERRI
BUENROSTRO
B BTRY 1/13


BILL & BARBARA
FOSTER
HQ 26TH MARINES
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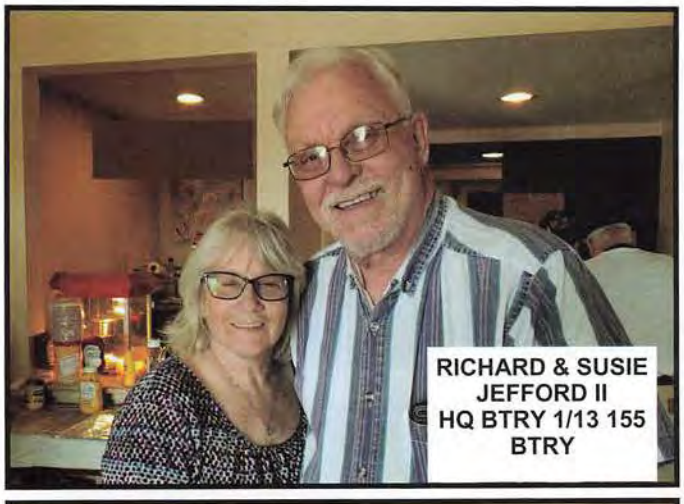

RICHARD & SUSIE JEFFORD II HQ BTRY 1/13 155 BTRY

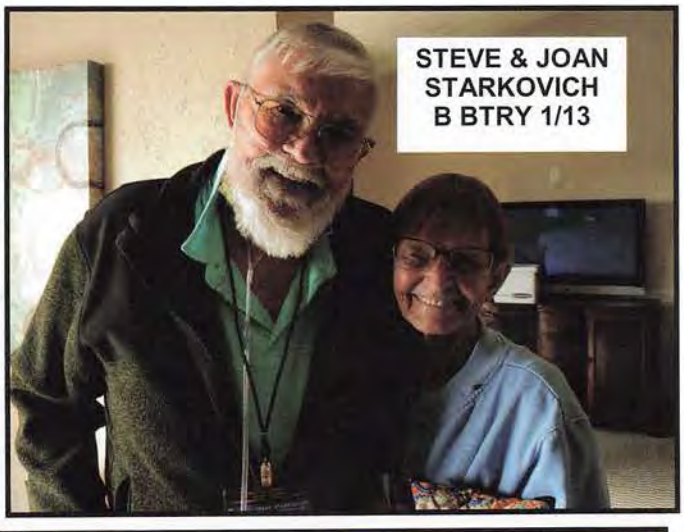

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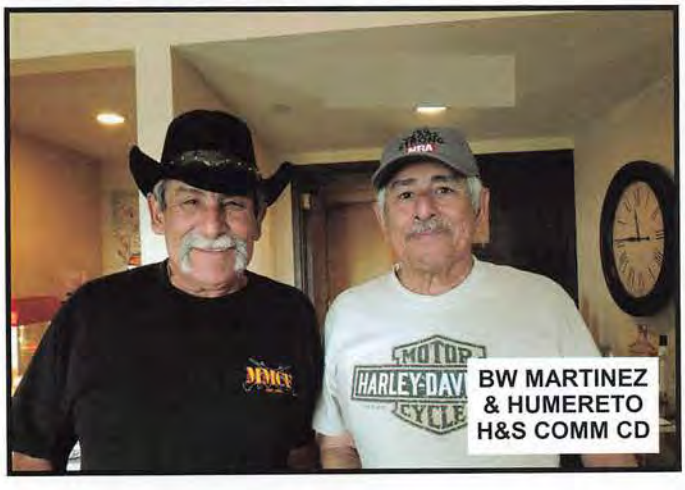

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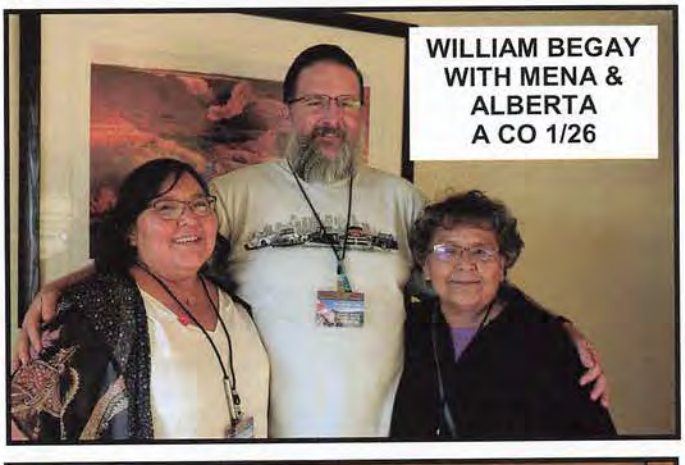

WILLIAM BEGAY WITH MENA & ALBERTA A CO 1/26

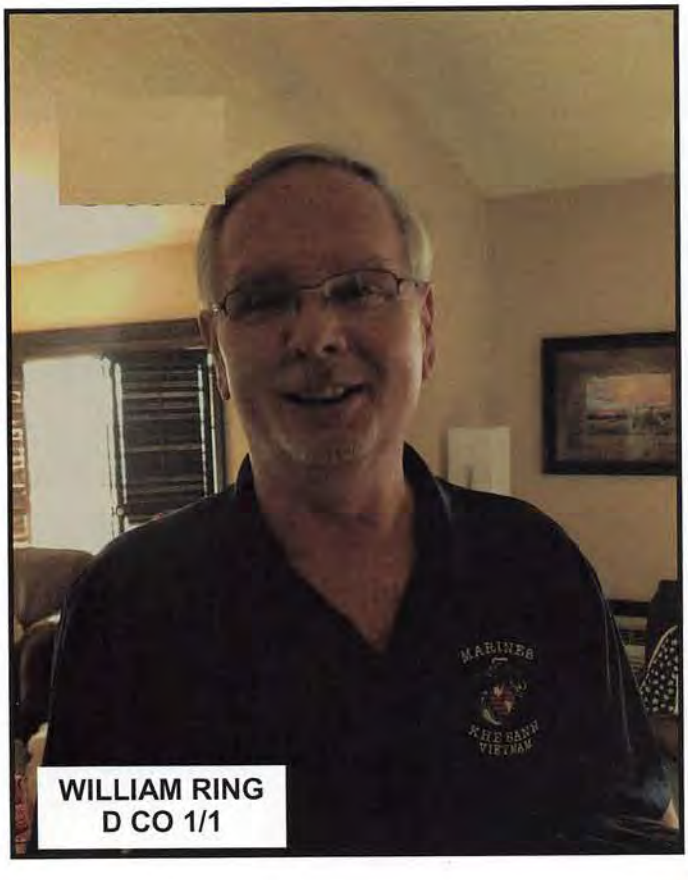

WILLIAM RING D CO 1/1

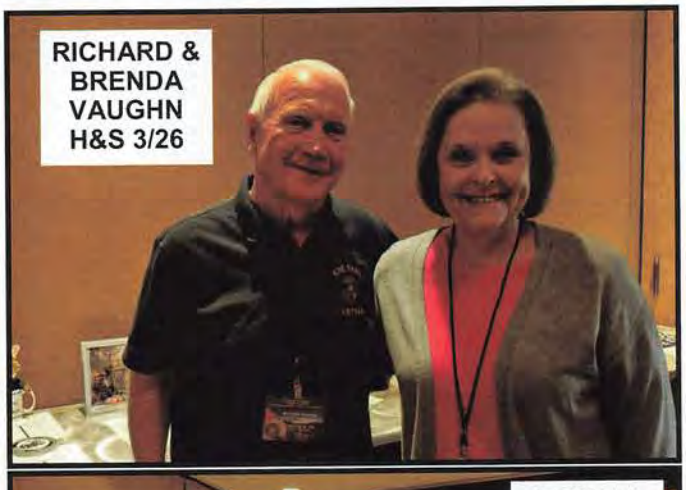

RICHARD & BRENDA VAUGHN H&S 3/26



MERLE & RITA MORITZ E CO 2/26 HILL 861A, REUNION COMMITEE











BEAUTIFUL KHE SANH LADIES ENJOYING LUNCH

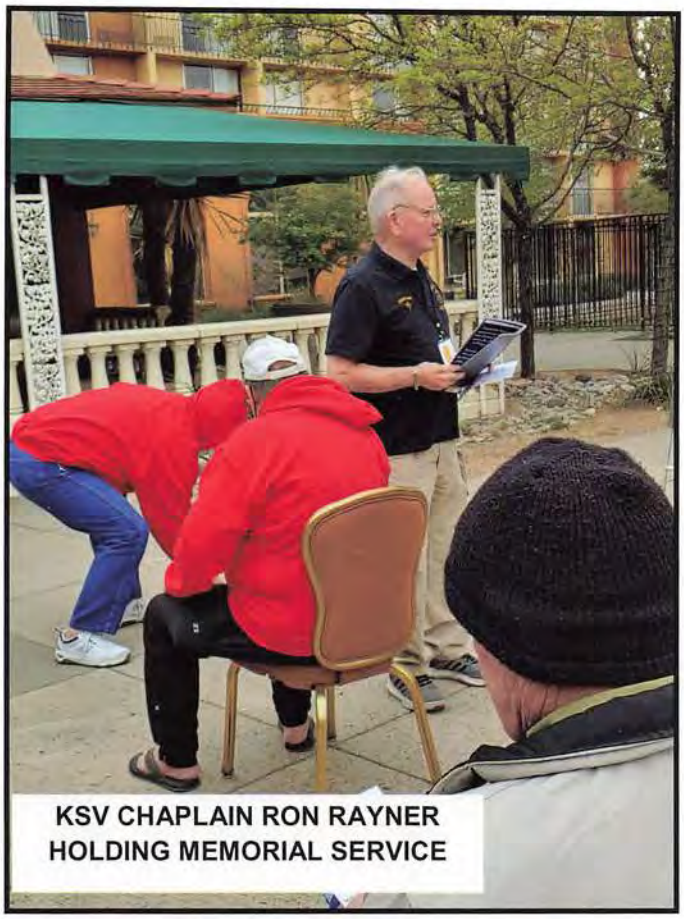

KSV CHAPLAIN RON RAYNER
HOLDING MEMORIAL SERVICE














NATIVE






REBUILD
RUN, RIDE, REBUILD









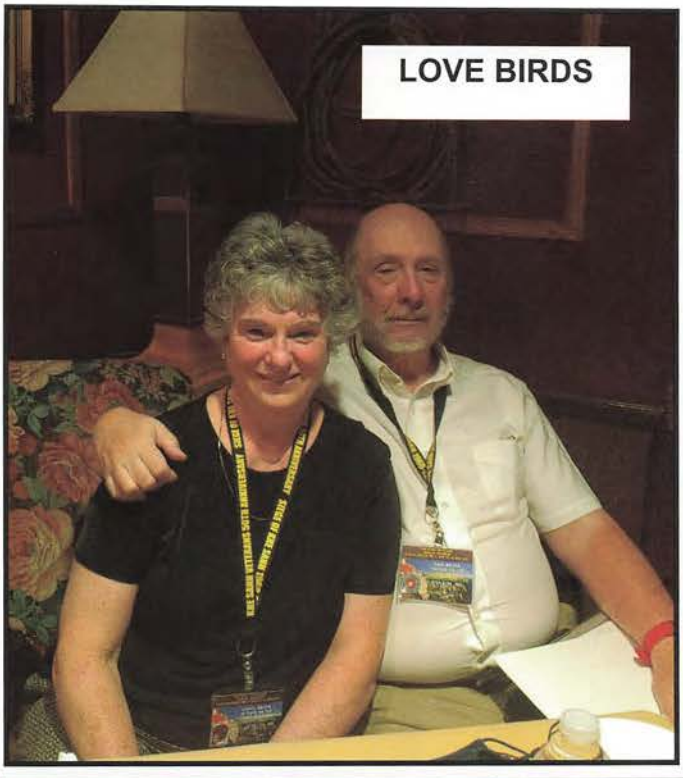

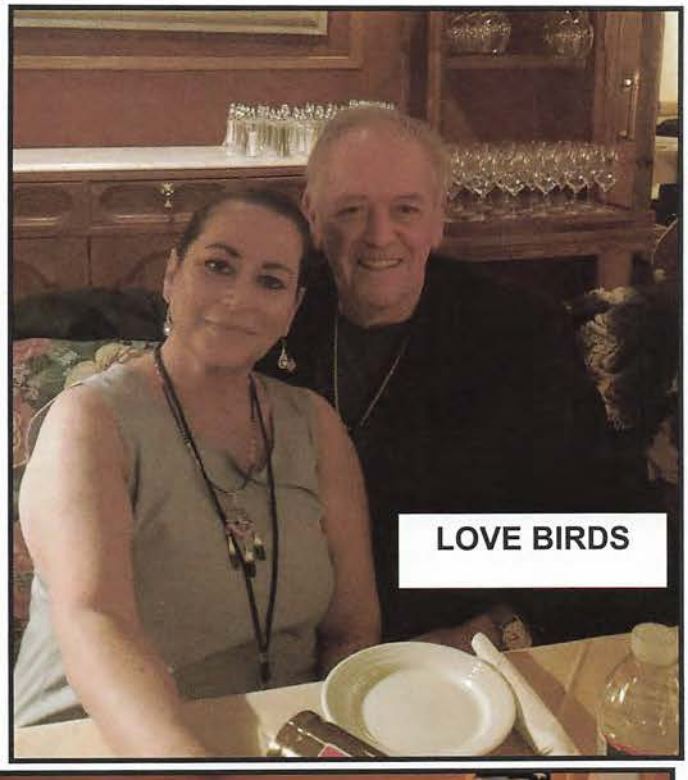



KHE SANH WIVES GONE WILD







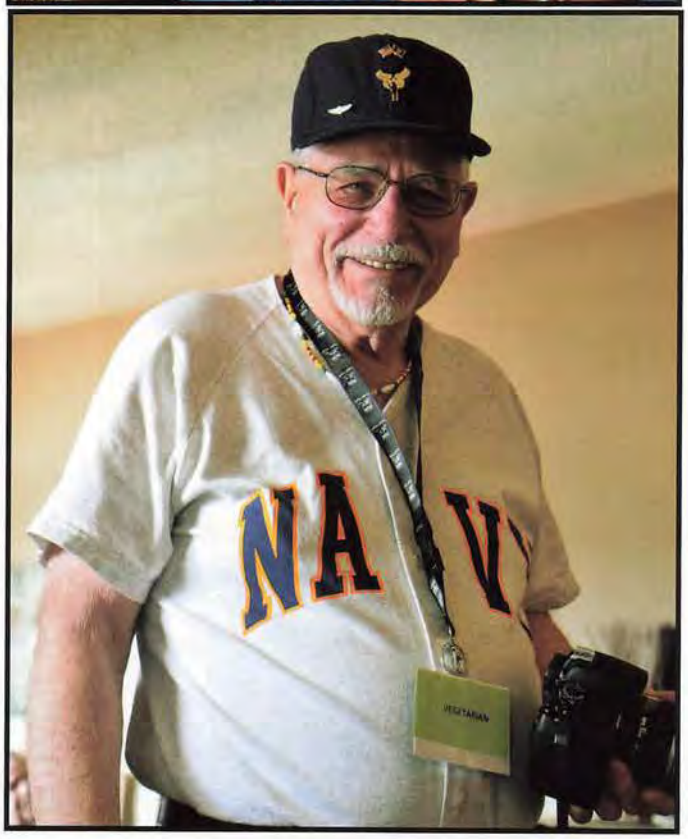

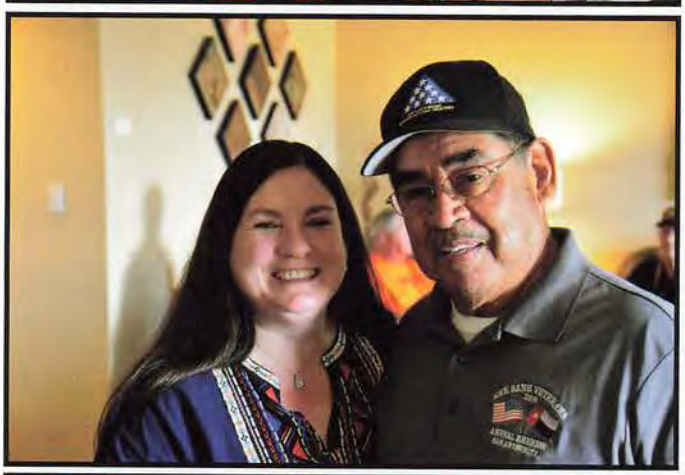





JUST CHILLIN

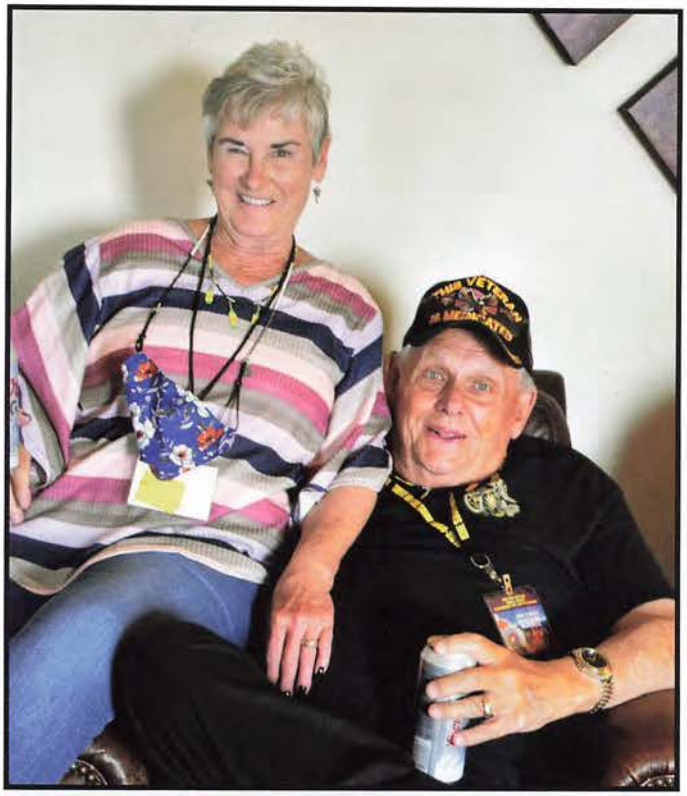

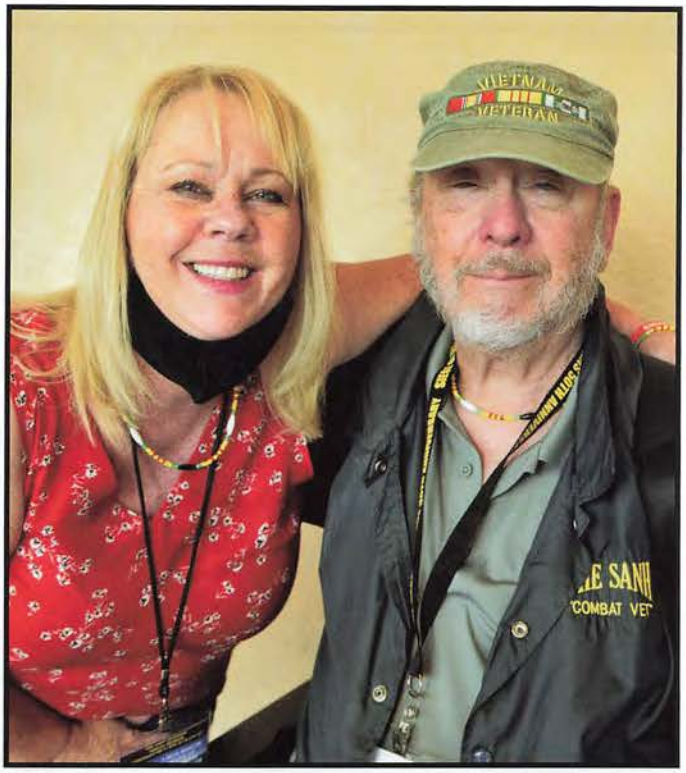









JUST CHILLIN



































Accessibility

Wheelchair accessible - may have limitations

- Wheelchair-accessible public washroom
- Wheelchair accessible parking
- Wheelchair-accessible concierge desk
- Braille or raised signage
- Wheelchair-accessible registration desk
- Wheelchair-accessible pool
- Wheelchair Accessible bathroom
  In room acc

Breakfast Services

- Breakfast available - Extra Charge
-

Business, Conference & Meetings

- Business center on site
- Conference Facilities
- Conference center & rooms
- Conference space & rooms
- Meeting Room Facilities
- Conference space size : feet -
- Ballroom on site
- Banquet hall on site
- Reception hall on site
- Wedding & banquet services
-

CASINO FACILITIES

Number of Slot Machines
Number of game tables -

- Casino floor size square feet -
  Casino floor size square meters

Entertainment & Activities

- Sportsbook
  pool table or Billiards

Concerts & live performances

Games & Sports

- Bingo
- Arcade - Game room

Fitness Services

GYM - Fitness facilities

Lobby Level Services

- Bellhop & Porter service
- Express check out
- Luggage storage facilities
- Concierge service
- Tours - ticket assistance

General Amenities

- Well-lit path to entrance
- Mountain biking nearby
- Hiking/biking trails nearby

- Elevator & lift on property
- Dry cleaning & laundry service
- ATM & banking on site
- Daily newspapers in lobby - Extra Charge
- Vending machine available
  Casino

Outdoor

- TV in common areas

Pool Facilities

Indoor pool

Lobby Level Services

- 24/7 front desk

Restaurants & Bars

- Number of bars & lounges -
- Number of coffee shops & cafes -
- Hotel Restaurant

Property Features

- Assigned smoking areas
- Number of VIP rooms -
- Roll in shower
- Multilingual staff

Shopping

- Gift shops or news stand
- Shopping on site
- Grocery - convenience store

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER FALL 2021
KSV CHAPLAIN RON RAYNER

Heaven and Winning Your Spiritual Battles to Get There

My younger sister passed away in June of 2020. Just prior to her passing I had ordered a large number of pamphlets -line from the Christian book store. The first book I reonad was Heaven by Randy Alcorn and the next was Winning Your Spiritual Battles by Tony Evans. These two books helped me to console my family and have clarified my beliefs on what the future holds for us in relation to Heaven. They gave us all the hope that we will be together again with my sister, parents and others we love in Heaven.

When I took my chaplain training in 2002, I was told my main role at a funeral service I was performing was to **provide comfort in the family's time of loss and hope for the resurrection.** My intention with this article is to give all who read it, comfort and hope for the resurrection as all Khe Sanh veterans are over age seventy and should be considering what comes next. The number of obits in each Red Clay tells a story.

First of all, I have always based my Christian belief in Heaven on the following Scripture:
"One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, 'So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself –and us, too, while you're at it!'
But the other criminal protested, 'Don't you fear God even when you are dying? We deserve to die for our evil deeds, but this man hasn't done anything wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.'
And Jesus replied, 'I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.'"

Luke 23:40-43 (NLT)

Bottom line, if you believe in Jesus Christ as your savior, through grace (undeserved favor), you will be in Heaven with him. My friend, Khe Sanh veteran Larkin Spivey, puts it quite eloquently:

"By definition, a Christian is a fallen human being whose only value comes from the **grace of God and trust in Jesus Christ.** There is no room for a "holier than thou" attitude toward any other human being."

Larkin Spivey
Battlefields & Blessings
Stories of Faith and Courage from World War II-page289

The apostle Paul explains the order of grace and works by saying **you cannot earn your way into Heaven, it is given through grace.**

"God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this: it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that **we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."**
Ephesians 2:8-10 (NLT)

That is the simple version to get you interested in seeking Jesus Christ as your savior. You do have to seek and search for the Lord.

"The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed,

a refuge in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you,

O Lord, have never abandoned anyone who searches for you."

Psalm 9:9-10 (NLT)

Hopefully, you are considering seeking Jesus as your savior. **Winning Your Spiritual Battles** takes some Bible study and prayer. I told a minister in about 1976 that "I wanted to believe in Jesus, but it was not working." He asked me to "Try praying at every meal." Praying at every meal became a habit and I became a believer. My life has changed and I now realize how a guardian Angel has been watching over me and blessing me my whole life.

"A final word: Be strong with the Lord's mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the devil. For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.

Use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy in time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the sturdy belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes put on the peace that comes from the Good News, so that you will be ful-

ly prepared. In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan. **Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit.** Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere."

Ephesians 6:10-18 (NLT)

The answers are out there. You have to look for them. Find a good Bible based church. Ask your Christian friends. Read a daily devotional such as "The Upper Room" or "Daily Bread." Checkout the Christian Book Store online. "Seek and you shall find."

Loving God, we thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ, whose love washed away our sins. We come before you, secure in the knowledge that we are accepted by grace. In Christ Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

OBIT

FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

A REALLY SALTY 102 OLD VIETNAM VETERAN WHO SERVED IN WWII, KOREA & VIETNAM



It is with great sadness; wea learn the passing of Colonel Carl Cooper, a veteran of WWII, Korea and Vietnam. He was 101-year-old.

Colonel Carl Cooper was born in Clanton on March 18, 1920, and was the seventh of ten children, Colonel Cooper was the only one of his siblings to go to college. He was studying biology and on his way to medical school when his life and the world changed.

He registered for the draft Sept. 3, 1941, according to military record. He enlisted in the Marines on April 1, 1942 and was a member of the 6th Marine Division.

He left Guadalcanal for Okinawa on April 1, 1945. Okinawa was the site of the greatest casualties in the Pacific during World War II.

When they landed, some of the amphibious, tractor-like vehicles hit underwater bombs. Cooper said he was close enough to shore to swim there, and most of his troops made it.

"On the northern part of the island, we were securing it, and I was the only outfit that went up to secure the remaining holdout," he said. "So, we got in some of the caves, and we eliminated a few Japanese along the line."

On the Fourth of July, Cooper left Okinawa aboard a ship headed for Guam.

"At Guam, we were getting ready to invade Japan. And of course, the big bomb was dropped, and that changed everybody's plans," he said.

After the war, he returned home to his wife and met his 1-year-old son. He and his wife later had a daughter, and Cooper said he was able to be present for her birth.

Cooper spent some time as a teacher and coach in Marion before serving in the Korean War. When he returned from that war, he became Mountain Brook Junior High School's first principal.

"Mountain Brook called me in, and I was the first principal they hired when they created the new school system," he said. "I enjoyed it. I'll tell you what, you have a good faculty and it makes the job

a whole lot easier."

Cooper's fellow staff members told him he was pretty strict in his role.

"And I was strict on the discipline," he said. "But still, we had a good school. And still today, sometimes I'll run across one of them, and they'll make some comment about, 'You were hard on us. You were strict.'"

He served as principal there for eight years until he was called to serve in the Vietnam War.

On April 1, 1980 – the same day of the year on which he had been sworn into the Marine Corps 38 years before – Cooper retired at 60 years old.

"You feel lonesome," he said about retiring. "You miss it. But I knew it was going to come. This happens to us all."

Continuing Service

Even though Cooper was finished serving his country in the Marine Corps, he found a new way to serve by working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He traveled all over the country in his new role.

"I enjoyed it," he said. "It wasn't a military operation, so to speak, but it employed all of the principles of setting up an operation like you were getting ready to attack the enemy. And we were getting ready to attack the enemy – by helping out to restore what the hurricanes and the weather had done to our country."

He made an impression in South Carolina after Hurricane Hugo hit in 1989. They needed Cooper to help find a place to set up 300 offices as close to the disaster as possible. Within three or four days, Cooper had converted every room at a former Holiday Inn and outfitted it as an office, right down to the paperclips.

"Well, when they give you a credit card and say there's no limit, you go for it," Cooper said, laughing.

He spent 30 years working for FEMA, refusing to quit until he hit 90 years old. He said he enjoyed serving his country in that capacity.

During the Gulf War, he even tried to get on Operation Desert Storm.

"I called and said, 'I'd like to come back on active duty if it's possible,'" he remembered. "They started laughing. They said, 'Colonel, you've had your fun. Let some of these other younger folks have theirs.' "I was in my mid-'70s or '80s. Of course I didn't think they would do it, but I said, 'I'm going to give it a chance,'" he said.

Cooper has outlived his wife and two children. He has four grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.



LYNNE NUCHERENO WITH YOUNG LADIES



STEVE DIGOR, SOME OF MY SQUAD



GRANDPA RUSS TURNER BABY SITTING

A STORY OF BRAVERY AND A PARTNERSHIP FORGED IN COMBAT

By Father Matthew Weber



Honor guard members stand watch over the urn and folded ensign of Father Francis Brett April 24, 2019, on Chaplains Hill at Arlington National Cemetery. The cremated remains of Father Brett, a priest of the Diocese of Knoxville and longtime Army chaplain, were buried in the same gravesite of his brother, Father Robert Brett, a Navy chaplain who was killed while serving in Vietnam in 1968. (CNS photo/Tyler Orsburn)

May 27 2021

In 2014, while stationed at Saint Bridget University Parish in Glassboro, I had come to know about Navy Chaplain Robert R. Brett who was killed in Khe Sanh, Vietnam, during the height of the Tet offensive in 1968.

At the time, a parishioner and I were changing the linings of the collection baskets when, behold, underneath one of the linings, was a yellowed, torn obituary, hidden for almost 50 years: "Navy Chaplain Killed in Vietnam: Collingdale Priest Was Saying Mass."

In addition to an obituary about a priest-chaplain killed in action, what struck me most was the town "Collingdale." Collingdale, a borough on the outskirts of Philadelphia in Delaware County, is the site of my home parish of Saint Joseph. It was where I was baptized and eventually ordained a priest.

Unfortunately, I had never heard of this local priest or of his Gold Star mother who lived across the street from the parish — that is, until 2014. Even though the article piqued my interest, I set it aside. Finally, almost under inspiration, I read the obituary again on Feb. 19, 2018, three days shy of Father Brett's 50th death anniversary. I decided then to research Father Brett's life. What unfolded was devotion and bravery, but also a story of a partnership forged in the heat of combat, united in death, and reunited after death.

Father Brett was the son of Margaret H. Brett of 1001 Bartram Ave., Collingdale, whose home, at the time of her son's death, was directly across the street from Saint Joseph's Parish grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes. Father Brett, however, grew up in the Grays Ferry section of South Philadelphia and attended Saint Edmond and Saint Gabriel schools.
He became a priest in the Society of Mary (Marists) in February 1962 and, in June 1967, he entered the Navy Chaplain Corps. The obituary states that Father Brett "told his family he wanted to go to Vietnam to give spiritual guidance to the men." A family member later recalled, in a 1987 newspaper article, that Father Brett "was neither a hawk or a dove, but he wanted to be where the men needed him most, so he requested combat duty in Viet Nam."

Lieutenant Brett was assigned to the 26th Marine Regiment, 2nd Battalion, at Khe Sanh and was assisted by Private First Class Alexander Scheleph Chin.

Pfc. Chin, 23, of Baltimore, was a seasoned combat veteran with three Purple Hearts when assigned as chaplain assistant to Father Brett. Together for three months they had forged a close partnership as they served frightened, wounded and dying Marines in combat.

A May 27, 1999, article from the Washington Post states: "Chin, family members say, was deeply religious and, after several months of combat, told his commanders in Vietnam that he could no longer kill the enemy. Instead of a court-martial, relatives said, Chin was given a job protecting and assisting Brett." Years later, Navy Rear Admiral Barry C. Black, deputy chief of chaplains, quoted Chin saying, "I won't take a life, but I'll put my life on the line for another."

The last time anyone saw the chaplain and his aide alive was on an airstrip in Khe Sanh where a rocket attack took their lives. It was Feb. 22, 1968. The Washington Post wrote, "Marines who witnessed the attack said the two were about to board a helicopter when they came under assault. Brett, they said, told the chopper to take off without them, allowing another man to go instead."

The mangled bodies of Brett and Chin were pulled from the shrapnel and shipped home for burial in Pennsylvania and in Maryland.

Father Brett was buried, at his mother's request, in the cemetery of the Penndel, Pennsylvania, seminary where he received his religious training. PFC Chin was buried in his family plot in the town of Princess Anne on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Years later, at the request of family, Father Brett's remains were reinterred at Arlington National Cemetery in 1998. The family also felt strongly that Chin should be there, too. Eventually Father Brett's nephew, Edward Rouse, had tracked down Chin's relatives in the Baltimore area. At the behest of Brett's family and with the permission of Chin's relatives, the remains of Pfc. Chin were removed from his family plot and reinterred on Chaplains' Hill on May 26,1999, next to the chaplain whom he served.

Larry Ballard, a former Marine who served in the 26th Marine Regiment at Khe Sanh, stated, "They were always on the battlefield giving last rites and dragging the wounded to safer positions. They were heroes. They placed themselves in mortal danger. Both of them."

Father Matthew R. Weber is pastor of Holy Cross Parish, Bridgeton.

OBIT

ALICIA RAYNER POTE, SISTER OF KSV CHAPLAIN RONALD RAYNER A CO 1/26



Alicia is remembered for her indomitable positivity. Throughout life and in her later illness, she brightened others' days with kind words, and embodied the phrase, "never knew a stranger." She was an accomplished baker, and the wedding cakes she baked for friends and family are happily remembered. A lover of animals since childhood, she rescued many cats and dogs throughout her life. Above all, she cherished her friends and family, and was a loving daughter, mother, sister, aunt, and most recently, grandmother.

She is survived by her children Kaitlyn Pote (Steven Silverstein) and James Pote, granddaughter Margaux, siblings Al Rayner (Mary), Ron Rayner (Cathy), Glenden Rayner, Marcia Green (Bill), Tom Rayner (Becky), and John Rayner (Beth), brother-in-law Jim Watt, and many loving nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, Albert H. and Emma Gene Rayner (nee Archer), and her sisters Elizabeth (1961) and Jeanne Watt.

A memorial service was held at Grace and Peace Church at 451 W. Kennett in Pontiac on October 23rd at noon. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Grace and Peace Church in her memory.



GRANDPA DEVAUGHN WITH GRAND KIDS



THE GIANT KILLER

Recon's Echo Platoon lead by the smallest soldier 4' 9" 97lb Lt. Richard Flaherty. Beginning in 1968, the infantry began experimenting with a new concept that would combine experienced combat personnel, stealth, firepower, and operating independence. The result came to be called, "Echo Recon," or battalion reconnaissance platoons.

The Echo Recon platoons were made up of veteran personnel that had at least six months in the field with a regular line infantry unit. They were not required to be Airborne, Ranger, Recondo, or Special Forces qualified, although many personnel were.

They operated much of the time as "Hunter-Killer" units, engaging the enemy whenever possible and then calling in the rest of the battalion instead of being assigned strictly reconnaissance missions.



Despite being the smallest soldier in the US military, Flaherty would go on to become a Green Beret Captain and earn the Silver Star, 2 Bronze Stars, & 2 Purple Hearts. His unbelievable & inspiring life story was captured in the book, The Giant Killer available on Amazon, Walmart, & Barnes & Nobles.









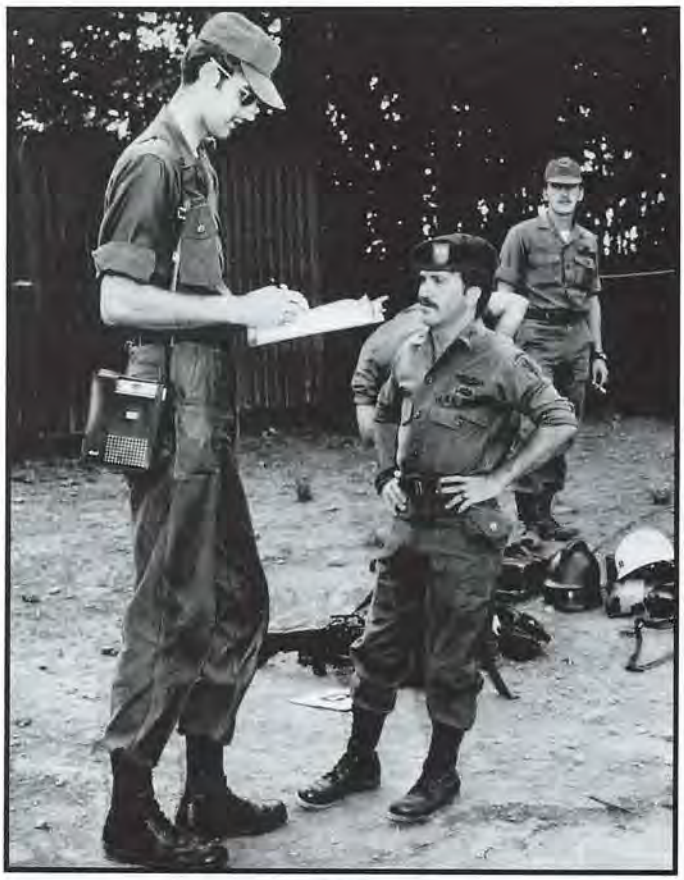



OBIT

MICHAEL T. SEGURA, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, D CO 1/26, 1ST PLT 1ST SQD

Michael Terry Segura, 76, of Fort Davis, went home to Heaven on Friday, May 21, 2021.

Terry was born on June 15, 1944, in Corpus Christi to Ovey & Margaret Segura. He was the eldest of 8 children and was raised in Port Arthur, Texas. In February of 1962, he married Sue Stokes and eventually became the proud father of 3 daughters, Karen, Betsy and Ellen.

Terry was a decorated military veteran of the Vietnam War. In 1968, he voluntarily signed up to join the Marines and was a Corporal in the Company D, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines (Khe Sanh) from March 2nd, 1968, to March 28th, 1969. He was awarded the Achievement Medal for Radio Operator in Combat Operations.

Upon returning from war, Terry worked as a professional butcher in Beaumont and Houston for over 35 years.

He enjoyed studying Karate for some time at House of the White Moon in Houston, cutting a rug to James Brown any chance he could get, watching movies, educating himself on the world, and spending time with his best friend, Willis. Terry also enjoyed visiting with his family and witnessing his grandchildren and great-grandchildren grow.

Funeral services werel held at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, May 26, 2021 at the Alpine Memorial Funeral Home in Alpine, Texas.

Terry's parents preceded him in death. He is survived by his daughters, Karen Busa and husband, Steve Busa of Cypress, Betsy Bates and husband, Steve Bates of Montgomery, Ellen Huskey and husband, Alan Huskey of Magnolia; Grandchildren, Brandon Djie and wife, Jackie Djie, Brittany Djie-Mills and husband, Nick Mills, Spencer Busa, Summer Walker and husband, Henry Walker, Ellie Noland and husband, Blake Noland, AJ Huskey and wife, Josselin Huskey, and Kodi Bell and husband, Travis Bell; Great-grandchildren, Lexi and Brysin Noland, Evelyn, Devon, Lincoln and Roslyn Djie, Arlo Mills, Arya Huskey, and Bowie Bell.

MEMORIES

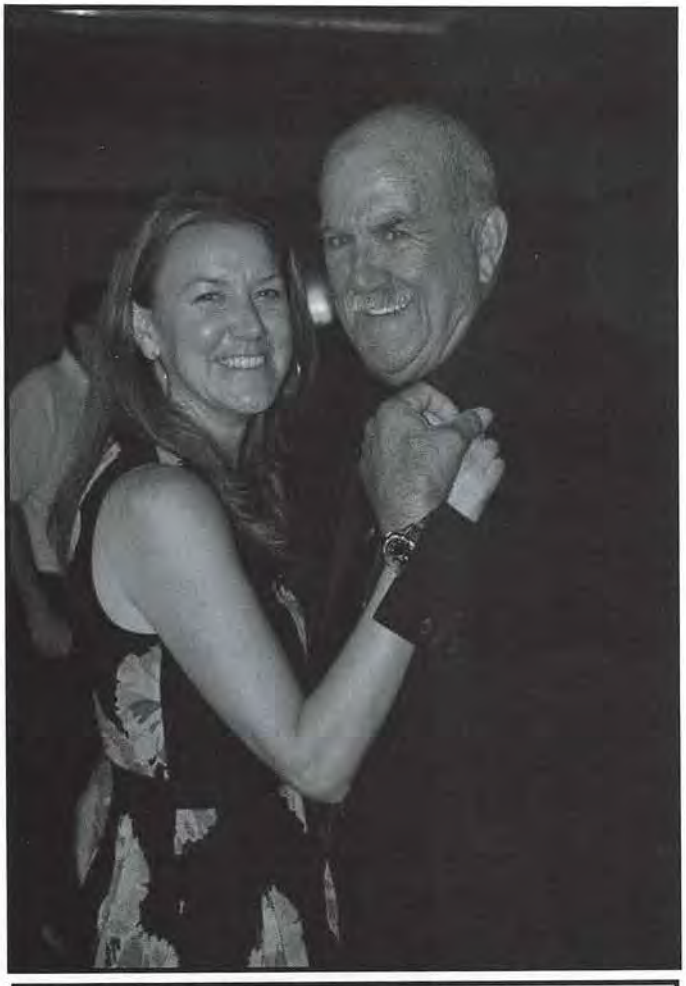

TOM FORD DANCING WITH LOVELY DAUGHTER TARA FORD AT 2015 KSV REUNION & THE OTHER FORD GIRLS









BARRY FIXLER, E CO 2/26 HILL 861A, OWNER OF BARRY;S ESTATE JEWELRY, BARDONIA, NY, REMERBERING 911









MEMBERS DONATIONS DECEMBER 2020 TO OCTOBER 2021

ARCHER, Michael	20.00	Check# 2846
BATES, Robert G.	20.00	Check# 5752
BELLANTONE,	100.00	Check# 2666
BIGLER, Donald	100.00	Check# 2874
BISPO, Jose A.	100.00	Check# 2565
BRONSTON, Martin	100.00	Check# 2537
BRONSTON, Martin D.	100.00	Check# 2611
COLLINS, James	1,000.00	Check# 1592
CRAWFORD, Daniel C.	40.00	Check# 216
DELOTTO, Richard	50.00	Check# 222
ESTES, Leo	10.00	Check# 3714
FARRELL, Brian	25.00	Check# 1440
FETTER, Charles	20.00	Check# 896
FOLEY, Richard M. Jr.	50.00	Check# 1775
FORD, Tara	250.00	Check# 1039
FRIEL, Thomas	500.00	Check# 0996
CHICOINE, M.A.	1,000.00	Check# 3905
GAROUTTE, Michael	60.00	Check#10199
GEIGER, Bruce	100.00	Check# 310
GEIGER, Bruce	500.00	Check# 1001
GERRIOR, Charles	1,000.00	Check# 106
HARTNET, Carol	100.00	Check# 4514
HOLSCHER, Robert	100.00	Check# 18166
HOFFMAN, Victor	500.00	Check# 4075
HOTZ, William	300.00	Check# 8001
JAYNE, Bill	100.00	Check# 430
JONES, Bruce	100.00	Check# 11230
KING, James	250.00	Check# 2664
KING, Daniel	10.00	Check# 4174
KORN, William	100.00	Check# 7797
NAZZARIO, Anthony	100.00	Check# 1041
MARTIN, Linda	100.00	Check# 3963
MCGUIRK, Steven	100.00	Check# 3786
MEYER, Dave & Carol	1,250.00	Check# M/O
MILLER, William	200.00	Check# 6756
MORRISON, Sammy	50.00	Check# 3597
NAZZARIO, Anthony	50.00	Check# 3433
NUCHERENO, Phil	200.00	Check# 130
ORTA, Oscar	50.00	Check# 165
RAYNER, Ronald	500.00	Check# 433
ROSSON, Harold	250.00	Check# 9319
SABOL, John	100.00	Check# 1166
SADOWSKI, Alexander	100.00	Check# 6676
SALLADE, Gary A.	10.00	Check# 09557
SANCHEZ, Jesse	250.00	Check# M/O
SEPULVEDA, Charles	100.00	Check# 401
SHERER, Larry	100.00	Check# 8780
SHUFF, Ronald	1,000.00	Check# M/O
SHUFF, Ronald	1,000.00	Check# M/O
TURNER, Russell	500.00	Check# 6197
WADAS, Kenneth	100.00	Check# 6815
WIEDRICH, Albert	100.00	Check# 2638

299TH ENGINEER BN: SIEGE OF DAK TO: MAY THRU JULY, 1969

Dak To is about 55 miles northwest of Camp Enari where I was stationed w/the 4th Infantry Division & right on the Cambodian border. I ETSed in August 1967 after my tour..



The buzz of the incoming rockets caught the men of the 299th Engineer Battalion (Combat) in their noon chow lines. One second they were standing around joking with one another, the next they were frantically scrambling for cover as panicked voices yelled "INCOMING! INCOMING!" For nearly thirty minutes the engineers huddled in bunkers as twelve 122mm rockets and eighteen 81mm mortar rounds ripped into their camp at Dak To. Then, as suddenly as it began, the barrage ended. Amazingly, no one was hurt by the blasts. The engineers pulled themselves from cover, dusted off their fatigues and looked around. What the hell was that all about? They wondered. They had no idea that their little corner of the war was about to heat up.

Dak To sits in the middle of one of the most hotly contested regions of South Vietnam. Deep in the rugged, jungle-clad mountains of the Central Highlands, the hamlet is a mere twenty kilometers from the border where Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam come together. A spur of the Ho Chi Minh Trail crossed the border here and paralleled Route 512 east through Ben Het, Dak To, and Tan Cahn. From there it was a straight shot south down Route 14 to Kontum, Pleiku, and then east to the coast. It was axiomatic to the Americans that if North Vietnamese forces controlled the Central Highlands, South Vietnam would fall.

To prevent that from happening, the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, beginning in 1964, had established a chain of Special Forces camps along the border, including one at Dak To. From Duc Co in the south to Kham Duc in the north, the Green Berets and their indigenous troops patrolled the unforgiving terrain in search of the enemy. And they frequently found the North Vietnamese Army forces. Bloody clashes were common. Sometimes it was more than the unconventional forces could handle and regular infantry units were called in. In the fall of 1965 the 1st Cavalry Division's 7th Cavalry was mauled at LZ X-Ray in the Ia Drang Valley. In the summer of 1966 the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division had its turn. After one of its companies was nearly overrun the paratroopers were pulled out. In the fall of that year two brigades of the newly arrived 4th Infantry Division were handed responsibility for the two major provinces of the Highlands: Kontum and Pleiku.

Fierce combat raged throughout those provinces over the next year. The action reached a climax with the Fall 1967 Border Battles that engulfed two brigades of the 4th Infantry Division and the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The fighting was so brutal a battalion of the 173rd was trapped on Hill 875 for two days before a relief force could get to them. In thirty days of fighting, the American units suffered nearly 1,800 casualties, of which 376 were killed in action. A relative calm descended on Dak To after the North Vietnamese suffered heavily in their January-March 1968 Tet Offensive. To secure the region, MACV placed the 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division at Dak To. Fifteen kilometers west a Special Forces team with a force of native soldiers held Ben Het. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam's 42d Infantry held Tan Canh.

Into this arena stepped the 299th Engineer Battalion (Combat). The 299th arrived in South Vietnam in October 1965. In the summer of 1966 it relocated from Tuy Hua to Pleiku. The battalion remained there, attached to the 4th Infantry Division, but assigned to the 18th Engineer Brigade, for two years before it moved to Dak To. The 299th's mission was to provide the infantry units with engineering support and to keep the roads to Ben Het and Tan Canh open. Mine sweep patrols headed out in each direction daily. As weather permitted, the engineers were paving Route 512 between Dak To and Ben Het. Not only would this ease the passage of the frequent truck convoys, but it would also hamper the NVA's mine-laying activities.

When Lieut. Col. Newman Howard took command of the battalion in January 1969 his companies were scattered throughout the hills surrounding Dak To. "The Fourth's infantrymen held the fire support base and air strip at Dak To," Howard recalled. "My men were spread all around the area." Shortly after Howard arrived, the United States implemented its new policy of "Vietnamization" which transferred increasingly greater combat responsibilities to the ARVN. Giving the ARVN responsibility for the much fought-over Dak To area would clearly demonstrate the confidence MACV's new commander, Gen. Creighton Abrams, had in them to fulfill their mission.

Unfortunately, about that same time, the NVA reassembled its forces in the region. In late January 1969, intelligence sources reported two NVA infantry and one artillery regiments operating south of Route 512. A prime target was Ben Het. In early February 1969 the NVA's 40th Artillery Regiment began blasting the camp. Specialist 4 Jay Gearhart, of the 299th's 15th Engineer Company (Light Equipment), had just arrived in Ben Het a few days earlier. "About twenty of us were detailed to go to Ben Het," Gearhart recalls. "The monsoons were coming and Route 512 was the only overland supply route to Ben Het. We were going to upgrade the road before the rains came."

All went well for the first week. Then the enemy shells came down. "There was only sporadic incoming for the first few days and we worked right through it," Gearhart said. "After about a week, though, they started pouring over a hundred rounds a day into that little camp. "We ended up being pinned down in a trench right near their little airstrip. We spent nearly two months like that. I counted over twenty-seven hundred rounds inside the wire in twenty-three days. And Ben Het was small!" The daily artillery barrages at Ben Het were but a preview of what Gearhart would experience at Dak To.

Meanwhile, Colonel Howard prepared his battalion for Vietnamization. After the 4th Infantry Division's troops were pulled out, two of Howard's companies, B and C, were relocated. Howard then brought his remaining three companies in from their outlying sites. "Our final mission was to prepare Dak To for the 42d ARVN," Howard said.

Specialist 4 David G. Swanson, a motor pool dispatcher in Headquarters Company, remembers the move. "We'd been on one of the hills overlooking the airstrip since I'd joined the battalion in October," Swanson said. "When the infantry left we were brought down and told to clean up the area. We were supposed to remove all the debris, empty ration cans, used artillery canisters, garbage--you name it. There was so much crap we had to use front-end loaders to dump it outside the wire.

When we'd finished with that we were supposed to load up all of our equipment and join our other two companies near Qui Nhon." That was what Colonel Howard understood, too. Once the base was squared away it would be turned over to the ARVN. The rest of the 299th would then be on its way. But things changed.



A platoon of U.S. Cavalrymen struggle on foot through the high elephant grass on their way towards the Khe Sanh Marine combat base on April 5, 1968 during the Vietnam War. They are taking part in Operation Pegasus, a joint marine and cavalry drive to relieve the base, which has been under North Vietnamese artillery fire for the last three months

INTERESTING STORY THOUGHT I WOULD HELP HER REMEMBER

FORT PIERCE MOTHER REMEMBERS SON WHO FOUGHT, DIED IN VIETNAM. JERRY DUFFEY

A month after Sgt. Jerry Norman Duffey was killed in Binh Dinh, South Vietnam; Life magazine dedicated its cover and a feature story to the Army trooper.

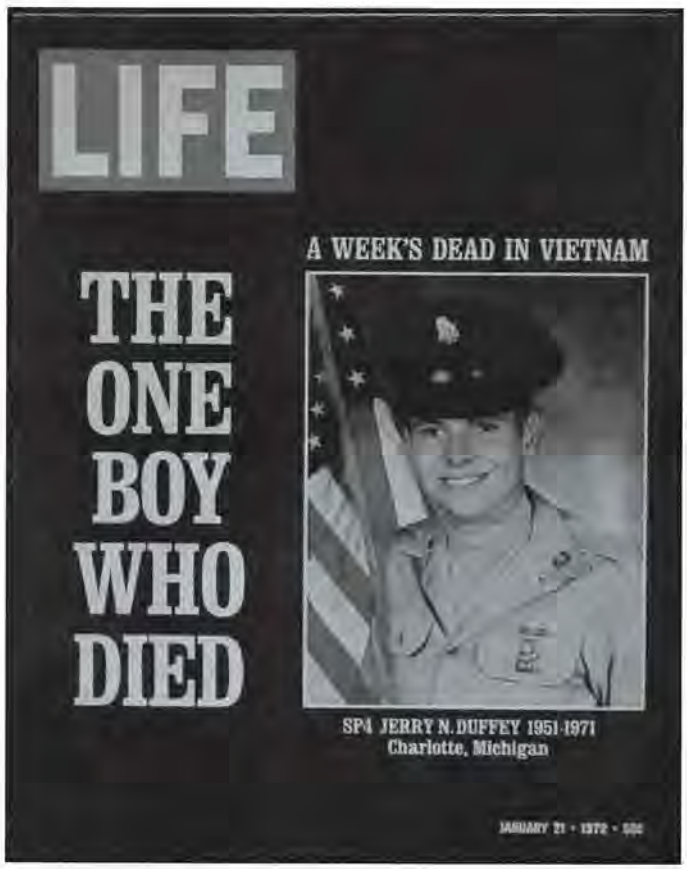

On the grand scale, the 20-year-old from Michigan wasn't more or less special than those with whom he served. His death wasn't on account of any over-the-top heroic action.

He was killed when Hill 131 — the hill was named for its height in meters — was mortared and attacked by Vietcong sappers with explosives. Duffey's position was undermanned and no longer lit well enough to see the enemy, according to the magazine.

His mother, Fort Pierce resident Joyce Cope, hangs tight to her memories of her eldest son, whose life, more than his death, was recounted in the pages of Life on Jan. 21, 1972.

It's something that happened in my life, but the hurt never goes away," said the Gold Star Mother who has lived on the Treasure Coast for 30 years. Gold Star Mothers is an organization of mothers who have lost a son or daughter in service of the United States.

Now 73, she wanted to share the story.

Duff, as his friends called him, died for his country 19 days before the hill was to be turned over to the South Vietnamese. At the time, he was one of 45,000 Americans killed in Vietnam. President Nixon commented on Duffey's death during a televised interview as an example of the on-going de-escalation of troops.

Duffey was highlighted because he was the only death announced in a weekly reporting period. At the time it was the lowest number of recorded deaths for a reporting period since a week in February 1965, when no one was killed.

"It was kind of a political thing. He wasn't really special, but he was special to me," said Cope. "They asked if they could write the story. We didn't get any money, but it was an honor to have it written. And I thought they did a really nice job on the story."

To Joyce Cope, he was more than just the oldest of her five children, who have given her seven grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. "He was a really nice boy and really well liked in the community." Jerry grew up on a farmhouse in a town called Sunfield, Mich., about 30 miles from Lansing. At 10 he began raising chickens and selling them. He sold enough that at age 11 he bought himself a horse he called Comanche. He later turned his interests to auto mechanics. But the war was always in the background. Buddies were being drafted or enlisted, so at 19 he decided to volunteer.

His first overseas assignment was Germany, to the ease of his father Stub Duffey, who questioned the war in the magazine. Three months after Jerry was born, Stub had been drafted and sent to Korea, returning when Jerry was 21 months.

However, it wasn't too long before Jerry Duffey was off to Vietnam. He even agreed to extend his tour by six months so he could get home leave for Christmas in 1971. But he never made it.

On Dec. 12, 1971, he was working the "graveyard watch" when Vietcong slipped through jagged wire

and blew up several buildings, leaving 17 GIs injured and Duffey dead.

It would be more than a week before his mother learned of his death.

It was a very tough Christmas, it was really hard on the other children," Cope said. "But we had many friends and we thanked the Lord for that."

MY FOND MEMORIES OF MY TIME IN VIET NAM WITH CWO RICHARD L. HOLYCROSS USMC H&S CO 1ST BN 3ND MARINES CLNC, KIA 10 SEPTEMBER 1967

EDDIE TEAS USMC

Today I will honor, remember and tell you about a Marine who was my first Platoon Commander that I met as a young 17-year-old Marine PFC 53 years ago when I reported to the 106mm Recoilless Rifle Platoon of H&S Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines CLNC in 1966. CWO-2 Richard L Holycross was a Marine Chief Warrant Officer with a Bursting Bomb on his collar. He was known as Gunner Holycross. He was KIA 52 years ago today in Viet Nam.



This Marine not only showed me what a Leader should be, but also taught me how to follow. That is something that too many forget as they move up the ranks.

The Battalion was sent to Guantanamo Bay Cuba sometime around September 1966 to provide security at the base for the next for four to five months. This is where it all started for me. As a young PFC, I tried to do most things by the Guidebook according to what we all had learned. One day on the FEBA (Forward Edge of the Battle Area), we were on one side of the barb wire/minefield and the Cubans were on the other side where we were looking at each other. Gunner Holycross was walking up to our position and I could clearly see it was him. I did what the Guidebook said and what I was trained to do. I Yelled out, "Halt Who Goes There?" He said, "Gunner Holycross". I responded, "Advance to be recognized". He responded, "Neas YOU ASSHOLE, you know it's me". I didn't laugh then, but I do now.



Another time on a Battalion Reaction Exercise to see how fast we could get out to the wire, he was in the Command Operations Center (COC) and I got on the Battalion Net (not a good thing to do as a PFC) after seeing flashes around the COC and asked him, "Sir what are those lights on the Hill?" Not a good move on my part and I could only imagine what they must have said to him at the COC. When we got back to our Platoon area, he held a formation and gave the platoon an After-Action Report on how we did. He then pulled me out of formation and told the platoon that PFC Neas was so worried about the COC, he was promoting me, to Colonel. Yes, everyone laughed, and I heard about this for months, but every time I ran into Gunner Holycross and he saw me first, he saluted first and said, "Good morning/afternoon Colonel."





He taught me that you can be Squared Away, Tough as Nails and still have a sense of Humor as a Leader. I never forgot that. He left for Viet Nam in early 1967 and a few months later I followed. I wrote him two letters while in Viet Nam and received one from him. The second letter I sent him, was marked RETURN TO SENDER and I got it in October of 1967 just as I was getting ready to board a Helicopter at Quang Tri for the start of Operation Medina. I did not know what it meant, so I ripped it up and buried it in the sand. A few weeks later I got word that Gunner Holycross was killed on 10 September 1967 near Con Thien as a member of H&S Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines, 52 years ago today.



I was devastated to say the least, but I went on. I not only honor him today, but I do every day and think where I would be without his Leadership and mentoring that he gave this young PFC 53 years ago. He was the Epitome of a Marine Officer and Leader.

I have attached a few pictures and the four-page letter he sent to me while in Viet Nam. Please feel free to read it. It's the only letter I have from my time in Viet Nam. He addressed the letter, Colonel and crossed it out and put L/Cpl. He talked about those two incidents and made mention of many members of our Platoon.

So today when someone calls me an ASSHOLE, I think back to that day when Gunner Holycross first said it and it brings a Smile to my face and yes, a tear in my eye.

Semper Fi and Thank You, Gunner Holycross "You Led the Way."



The last contingent of Khe Sanh-based United States Marines on board an M42 Duster self-propelled anti-aircraft gun during the evacuation of Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) in Khe Sanh, Vietnam, 4th July 1968. The Battle of Khe Sanh was conducted in the Khe Sanh area of northwestern Quang Tri Province, with US forces defending Khe Sanh Combat Base.

KHE SANH FAMILIES LOUIS & SANDI REYES & GLENN & GUINN WOLFE HAVING A FRIENDY VISIT.









CRAIG TOURTE IN TRADITIONAL DRESS AS THE FATHER OF THE GROOM FOR THE TRADITIONAL INDIA WEDDING OF HIS SON

1968 HUE, US MARINE AT THE BATTLE OF HUE.
Picture by Don McCullin.
God Bless our Vets!

The Marine was swallowed by the night. When he was found he was mute, though in his eyes lay a stare best unmet while dreaming: a gaze that was part trance, part fear, but mostly horror. The men who'd located him recall that he neither blinked nor uttered a single word.



His true name is lost and his fate has become a mystery. But you may know his face already, for a photograph of him remains his only known legacy. Taken by British war photographer Don McCullin during the battle for Hue in Vietnam 50 years ago, it is the portrait of the -frozen man who became known to the world by a clumsy caption: "Shell-shocked US Marine". Other than his photograph and those words, all that remains of the Marine at the centre of one of the most totemic war images of the 20th century are shards of memory, half a century old, smoke-edged and bullet-griddled, from the few men who encountered him in the ruins of Hue and managed to survive. It was to them I turned when I began to look for him. It took me nearly two years to track them down.

It was monsoon season, February 1968, when the Marine went missing. The night air was cold and heavy with mist, which mingled with the smoke from burning buildings set ablaze by shellfire, reducing visibility to a few yards. To the US Marines crouched there, the city of Hue was reduced to snapshots of rubble and fog, which shrouded their memories of the fight there even before time eroded them further. Long after the battle was over, the smell of smoke and fire and the bodies of the dead, the cold of the rain and the imprint of fear and grief came more readily to the minds of many of those left alive than any sense of orientation or time during the fighting.

Standing in the gloom of a ruined dwelling on the city's front line, exhausted from lack of sleep and already twice wounded, Staff Sergeant Robert "Cajun Bob" Thoms waited for a pair of his Marines to report back. He did not know their names. Thoms had been given command of a platoon from Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, a few days earlier, and many of his new command had been killed or wounded after his unit reached Hue and became embroiled in the battle inside the city's walled citadel. The turnover of casualties and replacements was so fast there was little time to get to know individuals.

That night, while consolidating a newly won block of houses near a street nicknamed "rocket alley" by the Marines, Thoms had sent the two men out into the darkened ruins to check that a house to their rear was clear of NVA (North Vietnamese Army). But only one Marine came back. "Where's the other guy?" Thoms asked. The Marine could not explain his absence. "F..k," said Thoms. He collected a couple more men to search for the missing man, suspecting he had somehow been overpowered and killed by the NVA.

Minutes later, as they moved though the darkness of the house in which the man had disappeared, Thoms saw something white in the corner of a room. "It was a face," he tells me. "I went over and this was the Marine. Just kinda sitting against the wall with his eyes open."

The missing Marine — described as a tall, well built man — was so still that at first Thoms assumed he was injured, and checked him for wounds. "I

thought someone had cut his throat, the way he looked," he recalls. "Because I've seen people with their throats cut and their eyes just wide open."

But there was not a mark on the man, who -neither moved nor spoke. Unnerved by this -petrified figure, the other Marines consolidated their positions around the house while Thoms laid him down on the floor. At dawn he had his men fetch a medic to examine him. The medic duly checked out the frozen figure, then turned to -Sergeant Thoms. "Sarge," he murmured, "his mind is not there. We need to get him out of here."

British photojournalist Don McCullin in Hue, February 1I started the search for the Marines in -McCullin's photographs in 2016 with just one name that the photographer recalled: Captain Myron Harrington. In February 1968 Harrington was a 29-year -old Marine officer, a commander of Delta Company; he'd already lost more than half of the 120 men under his command in the battle for Hue when he was told that one of his Marines — the one who had been found in the ruined house — was "not willing to participate in the action".

It was early morning on February 21 when -Harrington was called to see the shell-shocked Marine, who was being escorted away from the front by two of Thoms' men. "He was in a state of shock," -Harrington recalls. "He had the classic thousand-yard stare, and was kind of frozen. I ordered that he be evacuated. That's my last -sighting of him."

I hand him McCullin's picture to double-check we are talking about the same man. We are. -Harrington stares at the details I am so familiar with: the filthy flak vest and combat jacket; the stubble; the bitten fingernails; the pen in the top left breast pocket; the suggestion of tattoos on the man's left knuckles. This was no newly arrived grunt; no "FNG" – "f..king new guy". This was a -seasoned -veteran, broken by a moment of war we could only guess at. "The human mind can only take so much," concludes Harrington. "If we had taken him behind a building and slapped him around a little bit, would he have come out of it? I don't know. But it was imperative to get him out of the battle area as quickly as possible."

The shell-shocked Marine was escorted to the Delta Company command post. He was left there awaiting evacuation as Delta's most senior NCO, Gunnery Sergeant Odell Stobaugh, tried and failed to communicate with him. -McCullin appeared. The photographer, then 32 years old, had arrived in Hue a week earlier on assignment for The -Sunday Times. On seeing the frozen Marine he dropped to one knee to photograph him. "I noticed he was moving not one iota. Not one eyelash was moving," McCullin says. "He looked as though he had been carved out of bronze. I took five frames and I defy you to find any change or movement in those frames."

Then the photographer left the yard. Minutes later, at 7.45am, an NVA rocket hit the edge of the wall above the command post, showering shrapnel onto the Marines below. Seven were wounded, including Stobaugh.

Private Eric Henshall, a Marine sniper attached to Delta Company, was there when it happened; the explosion threw a lump of debris right between his eyes, which hurled him to the ground, semiconscious. For Henshall, then 24, it was the end of what had been an eventful battle. One week earlier he'd won the Bronze Star after sniping the NVA crew of a 126mm rocket launcher, then calling in tank fire that had wiped out the survivors. As part of a two-man sniper team he had crawled as close to the enemy position as he could, and spotted through his -binoculars as his partner shot one man before Henshall grabbed the Remington 700 rifle for himself. "I got seven of them." Twenty-four hours later he was wounded in the legs but returned to combat after two days, when McCullin took his image in one of the most haunting portraits of the battle: "The Sniper".

Though McCullin recalls speaking to Eric -Henshall for some time while taking his photograph, Henshall remembers nothing of the -photographer or the moment his picture was taken. And this highly decorated career Marine, whose own courage was so publicly acknowledged, draws no distinction between his own fixed stare in McCullin's photograph and that of the shell-shocked Marine. "I look like that," he adds, staring at the picture of the frozen man when we meet at his home in Arizona. "Something had to have happened to have me looking this way," he murmurs. "I don't know what it was, but it wasn't good."

Today, thanks to the internet, it would be -relatively easy to search for the identity of a -contemporary US Marine in a photograph from, say, Iraq or Afghanistan. Yet no internet existed for returning Vietnam veterans. Moreover, they completed their tours as individuals and returned home alone rather than as a unit.

None of the Marines I found from either Delta or Charlie Company had maintained contact after returning home. It was only the advent of mainstream internet use, and with it veterans' sites and Facebook pages, that allowed some of them to reconnect 30 years after they'd fought in Hue.

Having first contacted Captain Harrington, within a few months I had managed to trace three other Marines from Delta. These in turn introduced me to other men among the network of -surviving Hue veterans. I also secured a copy of the microfilm archives of Delta and Charlie companies' unit diary for the year 1968, as well as the 1st Battalion's after -action report. The unit diary was essential, because it contained the daily details of casualty reports, and night after night, month after month, I pored through thousands of documents for February 1968, looking for clues about the identities of the shell-shocked Marine and the other men photographed by McCullin.

A major breakthrough occurred last year, when McCullin mentioned that he had left the Marine in the company of Delta's gunnery sergeant, and recalled that the "gunny" had been wounded minutes later by a rocket attack on the command post. Knowing each Marine company only had one gunnery sergeant, I called Harrington, confirmed that his gunny was Odell Stobaugh, then cross--referenced that name with the microfilm entries to see when he was wounded, thereby confirming the date and time McCullin took the photograph. I was convinced that this was the eureka moment, and that by tracking down each man evacuated that morning I would identify the shell-shocked Marine. Yet I ran immediately into two problems. First, Odell Stobaugh, who might have remembered the name of the Marine, had died in 1999. Second, my faith in the documentation was misplaced. No record of a non-injury evacuation existed during the key week. I managed to track down the Delta Company clerk in California, and he pointed out that in the bureaucratic bedlam surrounding the battle, the details of a non-physical injury may never have been recorded. Still, I continued to hunt the shell-shocked Marine from the strangest places. During the nine-month battle for Mosul in Iraq, I sometimes returned from the front to scour microfilm details from Hue in my hotel at night, hoping that the weird link-up between the ruin of two cities would afford karmic aid. It didn't.

hen at one point last year, staying in a dirty guesthouse on the Iraqi side of the Syrian -border, waiting to cross over, I spoke with a go-between in the US who twice weekly met a severely -traumatised Delta Company veteran in a cafe. A fragmented entry of a document suggested this might be the man I was after. The go-between duly handed this veteran a carefully worded and extremely gentle letter I had written asking for his help in identifying Marines in photographs from Hue. The picture of the shell-shocked Marine was attached. Yet the moment the man saw the photograph, the effect was terrible. He became distraught and walked out of the cafe. The go-between told me the attempt could never be repeated.

Yet I searched on, aware as I did so that with each voice of another veteran I encountered, so the ghostly, shell-shocked Marine became more a guide than a quarry. He had begun in my mind as the distillation of every man's worst fear — frozen and reduced. Yet he changed. In his footsteps I met others, and learnt of time and war and grief and brotherhood, and how Marines grow old, but trauma never fades away.

There was never a pretender or claimant to be the shell-shocked Marine. No one was out there who years later said, "That's me." But many people wanted to be Richard Schlagel, the Marine with the octopus tucked into the band around his -helmet, or thought that they might be the bandaged Marine he cradled in his arms aboard a tank. I remember first noticing McCullin's photograph of these two Marines when I was a teenager. The -rubber octopus on Schlagel's helmet, irreverent and cartoon-like, had always stuck in my mind, riffing off the desperation of the moment. What had become of him and the Marine he held? Now Schlagel sits before me and I am about to find out.

He remembers every moment aboard the tank in Hue, though nothing of the minutes before. But as he held the dying, bare-chested Marine in the foreground of McCullin's image, memories of Fred Tate on Hill 110, in the Que Son Valley of South Vietnam in spring 1967, came back. Tate had been injured in a mortar attack and Schlagel had given him mouth-to-mouth in a vain bid to keep him alive. "There were no signs of life," he says of the wounded Marine on the tank. "I didn't see any breathing or movement or anything. It was like I felt guilty because I lost Tate on Hill 110, and I really didn't want to lose someone else that I was trying to help." There is no doubting Schlagel's identity. He still has at home the octopus that appears in the photo, minus a couple of tentacles lost in the jungle; it had been given to him by his brother in a Christmas package in December 1967. But the main point of

contention, exemplifying both the fog of war and the passage of time, concerns the dying young man in Schlagel's arms.

The dispute over this man's identity was most recently resurrected last year on the publication of Mark Bowden's outstanding study of the battle, Hue 1968, in which Bowden and photographer John Olson both identified the casualty as a man named Alvin Grantham, who survived his wounds and lives today. Grantham is a respected Marine veteran who was indeed shot through the chest — the wound exiting out of his shoulder blade.

Yet the testimony of the Marines present on the scene that day with whom I speak, combined with unique access to McCullin's -contact sheet of images taken at the scene in the minutes before his famous tank photograph, suggest beyond any reasonable doubt that there was no happy ending for the Marine -cradled in Schlagel's arms. His name was James Blaine, and he had received a terrible gunshot wound that entered his right upper torso, breaking his spine, before exiting his lower left back just below the belt line. Blaine died the same day. It was -February 15, 1968. The shell-shocked Marine may have always been one step ahead of me. But in his -footsteps other mysteries ended.

Myron Harrington says the shell-shocked Marine never came back to Delta. Thoms tells me that he later heard the Marine had been sent to a psychiatric ward in a catatonic state. The personal medical records are not accessible. The trail went cold. I had walked through the valley of the shadow of Marines' memories in search of him all the way from DC to Tennessee, from the Arizona sun to the snows of Michigan — and I lost him.

Yet there was one more Marine who I found while looking for the frozen man, and every detail of this man's story glowed with the wealth of a hard-fought internal peace. He was not alone in that. I found Marines who had made their own peace with -Vietnam. But his words held particular resonance, and if I wished for an -epitaph for the shell-shocked Marine, it would be written in "Frenchie's" final words to me.

His full name is Melvin "Frenchie" Bourgeois. He is from south Louisiana, and is the Marine in the centre of McCullin's own favoured photograph from Hue, captioned "Crucifixion", in which he is held, his arms over the shoulders of two comrades, his head leaning back in pain from a bullet wound. McCullin photographed Frenchie, 18 at the time, on February 17. He'd been shot in the groin by an NVA soldier, the bullet entering his upper thigh and exiting from his buttock. Dragged behind the cover of a wall, he was treated by two Marines and a medic. As they lifted Frenchie up, McCullin took his photo. But the connection did not end there. Every Marine was needed for the fight, so -McCullin offered to carry Frenchie away from the wall. Amid the crackle of gunfire he held the Marine over his back so that Frenchie's arms were over his shoulders, his body and legs draped down. At some point he stumbled and fell, a moment each recalls, as they negotiated the steps down from the wall.

It was the last time Frenchie ever saw McCullin. He recovered from his wounds and later returned to duty in Vietnam with Delta -Company. A few months later, out on patrol, the man in front of him triggered a booby trap. -Frenchie received a sucking chest wound. "Well, if Don called me the subject of a crucifixion in that first photograph," he tells me, laughing, "he should have seen me the second time I was hit: I looked like Christ being stabbed with a spear — I had blood and water -spurting out of my chest."

He recovered from that, too, and continued to serve in the Marine Corps until 1972. It was not until 2016 that he saw McCullin's photograph. "I have not shed the memories," he says as we sit discussing the war and day begins its fade. "But I have shed some of the weight, the burden that you pick up in war. The losing of friends — I haven't -forgotten them. I've just put it in a place where I can manage that, and live peacefully. I can still have those memories, but in such a way that I am at peace with that. I am OK with my past.

I GET PICTURES

Story



by Anthony Loyd Weekend Australain

BOOK REVIEW



"THERE IT IS... IT DON'T MEAN NOTHIN"

Charles Hensler's *There It Is...It Don't Mean Nothin': A Vietnam War Memoir* (289 pp. $9.95, paper; $3.99, Kindle) is a gripping account of Hensler's tour of duty in Vietnam from April 1968 to May 1969. This unique memoir is written as a long letter to Hensler's family. This creates an intimacy between the author and readers. In addition to his wartime experiences, Hensler provides a timeline of the war's key events and the changing political landscape at home.

Hensler's dual approach is compelling. With sober clarity he illustrates the growing number of American casualties and the dwindling support for the war. At the beginning of his tour nearly 14,000 American troops had died in Vietnam. One year later that number more than doubled.

After recounting his childhood in rural Pennsylvania, Hensler describes his decision to enlist in the U.S. Army in 1967, his training at Fort Polk, and arriving in Vietnam in the spring of 1968. He notes that during the Tet Offensive the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army had proved their resolve to win at any cost. Despite huge losses, they staged uprisings all over South Vietnam, shocking the American public.

Hensler served with the 199th Light Infantry Brigade northeast of Saigon. His descriptions of his first days, then months, in country are vivid. As a new mortarman, he carried heavy loads of equipment and ammunition on long patrols.

In addition to the risks of tripping mines and booby traps and being ambushed, there was the hostility of the environment itself. The triple canopy jungle was rife with leeches and red ants, forcing men to continually check for the first, and often strip naked to free themselves from the second. Staying dry was impossible in the heat, humidity, and constant rain. Because wet underwear caused chafing, men rarely wore any. Even writing letters home was challenging. Trying not to drip sweat on the pages, Hensler says that he wrote in pencil because ink would quickly wash away.

In addition to the constant tension and fatigue from the long patrols and nights on guard duty, he and his buddies felt that they were there in Vietnam for nothing–a point perfectly summarized by the often-said G.I. phrases in the book's title.

"Most GI's in Vietnam," Hensler writes, "felt they were getting screwed over by being there, at least in the post-Tet Offensive years when the country turned the corner on the war. It became apparent, even to the lowest private, that with the way things were run we were never going to win."

With his engaging, unsettling, often haunting style, Hensler imbues in readers a sharp sense of the conditions American infantrymen endured: Their exhaustion. Their loneliness. Their doubts, even despair. Their cautious anticipation of the end of their tours. Their dream of the Freedom Bird, the plane that would take them home.

OBIT

MORLEY R. SWEET, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, H&S CO 26TH MARINES,COMM MESSAGE CENTER

LOWELLVILLE — Morley R. Sweet IV, 71, passed away Tuesday, Sept. 21, 2021, at St. Elizabeth Boardman Hospital, following a brief illness.



Morley was born in New Castle, Pa., on Oct. 10, 1949. He was the son of the late Morley R. Sweet III and Elizabeth Jane McConahy Sweet, the oldest of four children. Mr. Sweet attended New Castle High School, Class of 1967.

Morley married the love of his life, Rebecca Jean Gray, on Sept. 6, 1969, and recently celebrated 52 years of holy matrimony. Together, they had six children, Rachel (Rich) Sieman, Sarah (James) Johnson, Esther (Ken) Snodgrass, Lydia (Steve) Minford, Morley (Barbara) R. Sweet V and Elizabeth (Jeffrey) Kiley. Morley was grandfather to 26, Robert, Alexander, Katherine, Gwendolyn, Lauren, Emily, Matthew, Andrew, Samuel, Abigail, Will, Elise, Nathaniel, Evan, Laura, Logan, Landon, Harrison, Morley R. Sweet VI, Collin, Nolan, Rowan, Gavin, Vincent, Genevieve and Oliver. In addition, Morley had eight great-grandchildren, Reagan, Natalie, Cooper, Tucker, Duke, Daniel, Brianna and Rose.

Morley leaves behind a legacy of love and of family. He maintained deep and individual relationships with each of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren … leaving each to believe that they were his favorite. Morley invested in the lives of those around him on a daily basis. He taught kids to drive and to spell and to excel and to push limits and boundaries. Morley built soapbox derby cars, entered kids into the spelling bee, taught games of strategy like chess, and created champions.

Morley was an active member of Venture Church in Boardman, and a staunch supporter of the Reformers Unanimous Program. He was generous with his worldly possessions and with his time. He will be remembered as a remarkable storyteller and a formidable Scrabble enthusiast. He despised blueberries and macaroni salad and had a terrible golf game that he thoroughly enjoyed. Morley was a world-class whistler and enjoyed Sousa marches and classical music.

Morley enlisted in the Marine Corps, on Oct. 14, 1966, four days after his 17th birthday. He completed basic training in Parris Island, S.C., where he was recognized on the Marine Corps birthday on Nov. 10 for being the youngest recruit. He completed secondary training at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Morley and his family continued to observe the Marine Corps birthday, including a birthday cake, every Nov. 10.

Sgt. Sweet served as a teletype operator in the 3rd Marine Division of the 26th Marines Regimental Status, Headquarters Company. Morley served during the battle of Khe Sanh, a 77-day siege during the Vietman War, that went on to be the longest in documented U.S. history. On Feb. 23, 1969, Sweet received a bullet wound to his chest and left shoulder by incoming enemy fire, and a wound to his left hand from shrapnel, rendering his left hand paralyzed. He received a Purple Heart for his wounds sustained in battle. He was featured in the book "A Patch of Ground, Khe Sanh Remembered," by Michael Archer. Morley was a lifelong member of the Disabled American Veterans.

After being given retirement status from the Marine Corps in November 1969, Sgt. Sweet went on to

earn his Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from Youngstown State University, where he was the president of the Delta Nu Alpha business fraternity 1974 / 1975. Sweet worked on the B&O Railroad as an operator and teletypist in a tower for 11 years, typing 40 words per minute with one hand. He also served as the division griever chairman and treasurer for the Baltimore and Ohio Credit Union. When the railroad towers were shut down, Mr. Sweet owned and operated Chris Glass Block window company in Youngstown, and New Castle, Pa., employing dozens of area youths before his retirement.

In addition to his wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Morley leaves behind his brothers, Jon and Jay Sweet; and his sister, Susan Sweet; as well as aunts, cousins, nieces, nephews; and many fellow Marines and lifelong friends.

He was preceded in death by his son-in-law, James Johnson.

Celebration of life services were held at the Davis-Becker Funeral Home, 8536 Market St., Boardman, OH 44512. The Rev. Roland Gray, brother-in-law of Morley, officiated. Interment immediately followed in Graceland Cemetery, New Castle, Pa. Pallbearers will be Morley's grandsons.

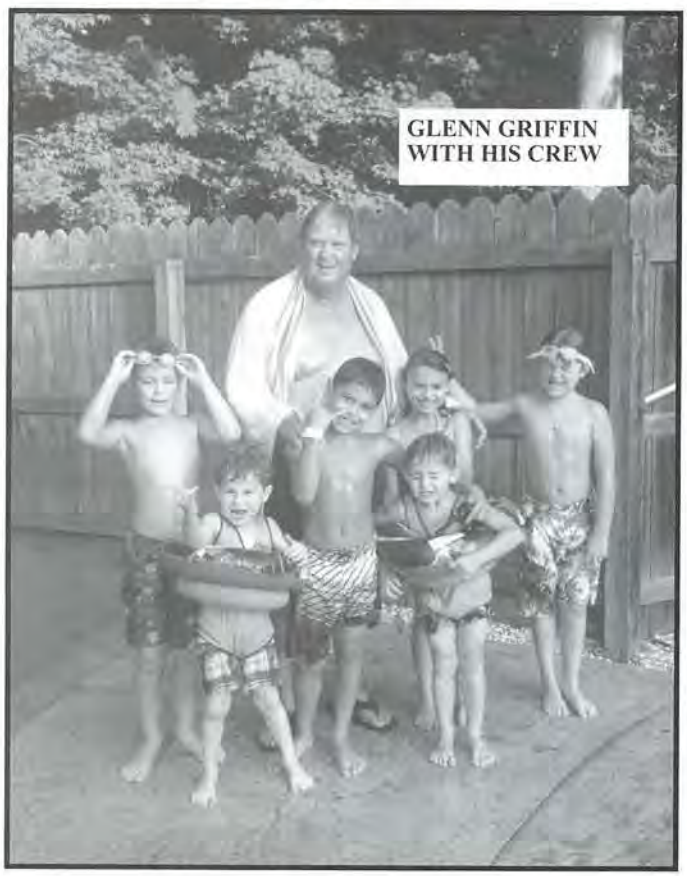

GLENN GRIFFIN WITH HIS CREW

I GET PICTURES

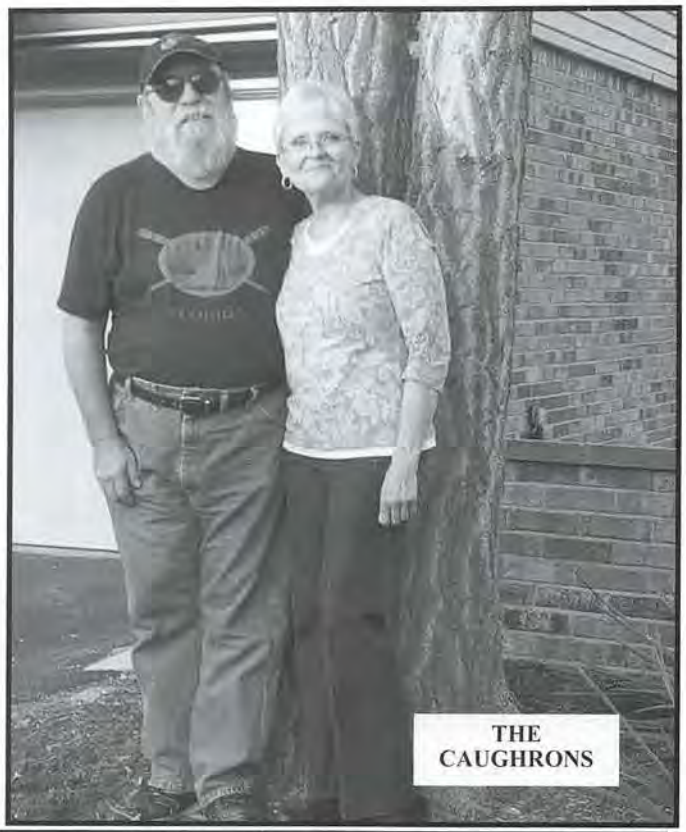

THE CAUGHRONS



MIKE FISHBAUGH WITH HIS GRAND DAUGHTER HANNHA AND HER TWO BROTHERS

MEMEMORIALS

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
Capt Walter Egger USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
GSGT John J Grohman USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
1t Paul W. Bush USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
LCpl Stephen C Shannon USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Sgt Manuel Floyd Martinez USA A-1/44 KIA 9 06 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Cpl Fergus J. Carroll USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 18 Jun 68	William Hotz Mike CO 3/4
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC A HQ Btry 1/13 KIA 09 MAR 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Remembering All "Bastard Bravo" Marines and their families	William E. Carpenter Bravo Btry 1/13
Captain Bill Person USAF 553 3RD Recon Wing	Alex & Barbara Sadowski H&S CO 1/26
James Wright	Alex & Barbars Sadowski H7S CO 1/26
PFC Donald Saunders USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 KIA 04 Mar 68	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
Sgt Donald Ray Chamblin USMC HQ BTRY KIA 08 Mar 68	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
GYSGT Charles Perkins USMC DOW 17 May 1968	Barbara Eddowes Fiance
SSgt Karl E. Taylor USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 12/98/68	Will Griggs India Co 3/26
PFC Roland T. Marshall USMC M CO 3/4 KIA 5/17/68	Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
Capt Daniel Coonan USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 10/08/68	Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
1Lt Thomas Reich USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 11/17 68	Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Sgt Major James Gaynor USMC KIA 25 Feb 68	Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Doug Ipson USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 9/15/68 LZ Margo	Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Steve Rienhart USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 09/16/68 LZ Margo	Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Nate White USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 05/06/68 Cam Lo	Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
All Members of Det A-101 Lang Vei & All who served at FOB-3	Lawrence Cooper CO C 5TH Special Forces
All the men of HQ Btry 1/13 Who Gave Their Lives So We can Enjoy The freedom we have today	James Baker HQ Btry 1/13 26Th Marines
Cpl William E. Wyrosdic USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 10/08/68	John Laibinis SR. H CO 2/26 2ND PLT
Always remembering all those KIA HILL 689 27 June 1967	Clarence T. Anthony India CO 3/26
L/Cpl Adrian Brittle USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 9/21/68	Chester W. Nelson JR. India CO 3/26
2LT Donald Jacques USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Pietro Osimanti Bravo CO 1/26
CPL John Greene USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 04 July 1968	Johnny Moon Charlie CO 1/26 3RD SQD
LCPL Frederick B. Link USMC C CO 1/9 KIA 3/1/68	Eric Bergland C CO 1/9
All Marines & Corpsman who served on Hill 861A in Jan/Feb & Mar of 1968	Lt Don Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A
All Marines KIA of Delta CO 1/26	John Finn Delta Co 1/26
All Marines 1/1 & 2/1 Hotel CO	Peter Hoban Hotel CO 2/1
DR John Magilligan, d. 29 Jan 2013,DR Ed Feldman d. 03 Oct 2017&	Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN
DR James Finnegan . 13 Sep 2013 From Charlie Med	Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN
All who served at Khe Sanh	Ron Shuff LSU MTM Co. Maintenance Bn.
HN William A. Beyer "Willie" USN H&S Co 3/26 KIA 2/1/67	Pat B. Buckley Charlie CO 1/26
1LT John Ellis USMC Crash-Rescue Crew OIC KIA	Richard Takacs MABS-36-MAG-36 Crash-Rescue Unit
Gy/Sgt Joe H. Kahee Crash Crew Passed Away October 2019	Richard Takacs MABS-36-MAG-36 Crash-Rescue Unit
PFC David A. Cramer, USMC KIA 22 Feb 68	Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
PFC Leslie G. Aputen USMC KIA 15 May 68	Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
PFC Francis W. Lamon USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 04/17/68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1 REST IN PEACE
PFC William W. Lawrence USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 04/17 68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
PFC Charles T. Johnson USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
L/Cpl Darrel W. Cottrell USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Thomas Jack Pennington KIA 27 Jan 68 at "Mikes" Hill Mike CO 3/4	Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
PFC Ricky Marson USMC F CO 2/26 KIA 4/7/68	Donald Kujawa F CO 2/26 F CO 2/5
Mike Bradbury , Mike "Pops" Salinas, James "Doc" Thomas	Randall Mapel Kilo CO 26TH Marines
Gilbert Wall B CO 1/26 & Lt COL Ken Pipes CO B CO 1/26	Peter Mudrinich B CO 1/26
Frank Addice USN KIA 04/11/68	Larry Sherer USN HMM-262 HM-2
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A Btry 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC HQ Btry 1/13 KIA 09 Mar 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Cpl Donald E. Whitaker USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Bill Jayne B CO 1/26
William Roland Prewitt MIA Phu Loc Hamlet Not Recovered	Lorne Lemieux M CO 3/26
Gold Star Parents Of L/Cpl USMC Jeremy Santiago L CO 3/26	Daniel J. Depagnier Helicopter Sqd 363
3rd Plt 12/14/73 -9/7/93 Operation Restore Hope	
Louis Lowe USMC, Kilo CO 3/4 , 3RD PLT KIA Hill 689 14 May 68	Daniel King K CO 3/4

MEMORIALS CONTINUED

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
2Lt Dale C. Allen I/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
SSGT William Ivor Tenney Bacon H&S CO 3/26 Died USS Sanctuary 29 June 67	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
2nd Lt Lawrence J. Bolger A Co 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
PFC Frederick J. Brenke L Co 3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Victor Lee Burns A Co 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Capt Franklin D. Bynum L C0 3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Allen James Damian A Co 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Jeffrey J. David L Co 3/26 CAC- Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl Anthony D Cesare Jr, I Co 3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
HM-3 Carl Douglas Dudley Jr H&S Co 3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Charles M. Gattis Jr. I/3/26 KIA 7/5/67 Died Navy Hospital Danang	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Alejandro R. Godinez I/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
S/Sgt Donald P. Hamilton 1/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
HM-3 Curtis D. Jackson H&S CO 3/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Freddie L. Johnson I/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Sgt Paul E. Kincaid A CO 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Charles A. Lynch Sub Unit 5 Hq CO , HQ Bn CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Francisco Mazariegos Sub Unit 5 HQ CO, HQ BN CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Kenneth A. Millard 1/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl Dennis A. O'Connor Sub Unit 5 HQ CO,HQ BN CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
PFC Paul M. Rodriquez Jr A CO 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Glenn E. Sanders Died USS Sanctuary 6/29/67 A Co 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl James M. Shepard Jr. Sub Unit 5 HQ CO, HQ BN CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
PFC Rick J. Stewart A Btry 1/13	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl Edmund B. Travis 1/3/26 A Btry 1/13	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl Richard L. Walker 1/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl Stephen G. Wasssenich I/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Jonathan C. Whitticom H&S CO 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Ira W. Williams A CO 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
PFC William J.Williams I CO 3/26	

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FUND - 2020-2021 AWARD RECIPIENTS

APPLICANT	SCHOOL YEAR	SCHOOL	SPONSOR
1. CPL ADAM J. CHIARELLA	1	UNIV OF MICHIGAN @DULUTH	DAN FISHER D CO 1/26
2. KAITLYN G. KING	1	ST/MARYS NOTRE DAME NURSING	JAMES KING M CO 3/26
3. ANDREW M. KESSLER	1	UNIV OF TOLEDO-IT	MERLE MORITZ E CO 2/26
4. CORRINE E. HILL	1	DAEMEN COLLEGE, AMHERST MED	DONALD PAYNE 3/26
5. CONNOR C. CIRROTTI	1	UNIV OF NOTRE DAME FINANCE	DON CAMPBELL HQ 26TH MAR
6. JESSICA D. VELCHECK	1	GOUCHER COLLEGE LITERATURE	JAMES VELCHECK D CO 1/1
7. VICTOR D. HOFFMAN	2	SHIPPENBURG UNIV UNDECLARED	VICTOR HOFFMAN H&S CO 1/26



In 2009 the KSV Scholarship Foundation started with 6 applicants and has risen to an average of 25 applicants each of the last three years. Many of the student scholars have finished 4 years of post secondary education to successfully achieve their selected bachelors degrees due in part to the support from Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc ..

In this, the 2020-21 school year, we have received 7 applicants for a grand tally of 179 young scholars in 11 years who have benefitted from the KSV Scholarship Fund. Over $110,000 in generous donations from the Khe Sanh Veterans Brotherhood and proceeds from the reunion silent auctions have kept the Foundation healthy. However, the individual awards have trended lower due to the increased volume of applicants vs. reduced donation levels.

The Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation is now in its twelfth successful year of providing financial support for children and grandchildren of paid up members of Khe Sanh Veter-

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATION OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited educational institutional as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post secondary curriculum.

Scholarship funds will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent , legal guardian or grandparent who is a paid-up member in good standing of KHE SANH VETERANS, INC., a 501 C (19) charitable organization.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT APPLICANT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2020 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid up member (sponsor) of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (see member definition in the KSV by-laws). This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if the family member are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children and grandchildren of associate members are not eligible for this scholarship.

Information provided by each applicant on the attached forums will focus on the following qualities; proof of enrollment at an accredited educational institution, good grades, scholastic character, citizenship, school activities and a personal essay on educational and career goals.

A scholarship review committee will serve at the pleasure of the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. to review the application forms for completion and correctness. The KSVSF Chairman will provide scholarship financial report, a list of applicants and their KSV member sponsors and a summary to be presented to the membership at the annual reunion and for publication in RED CLAY newsletter.

NEW!! SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS (school year 2021 onward). NEW!!

APPLICANTS FOR SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS WILL RECEIVE A ONE-TIME-ONLY AWARD, REGARDLESS OF THEIR PRESENT YEAR IN SCHOOL. SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS AMOUNTS ARE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY DONATIONS TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION FROM KSV MEMBERS AND THE REUNION SILENT AUCTION. WE CAN NO LONGER SUPPORT MULTIPLE YEAR AWARDS. THIS IS THE DECISION OF A VOTE BY THE KSV BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT THE 2019 REUNION.

ALL AWARDS WILL BE EQUAL FOR EACH CERTIFIED APPLICANT AND WILL BE AWARDED UPON PROOF OF REGISTRATION FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL TERM AND SENT TO THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS ABOVE

SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES AND PURPOSE

The financial award should be used to defray cost of tuition, fees, books at the educational institution of the applicants choice.

The KSVSF Chairman and KSV Treasurer will send a check for the award amount to the selected applicants upon final approval of the KSV President.

Scholarship recipients will be notified of their award no later than the end of August of the upcoming school year applied for.

!!Scholarship applications sent to the KSVSF Chair MUST be post marked not later than MAY 1 of the school year applied for!!

KSV Scholarship recipients must maintain a standard of personal performance while at school that reflects positively upon the Khe Sanh Veterans' Association membership.

Scholastic Criteria for Award Consideration: 1). Attached "Official" Grade Point Transcript form the last school attended, 2). Completed Application Form, 3). Summaries of Scholastic Participation, Volunteer and Work Experiences, 4). A small photo of the applicant and, 5). Completed final page with applicant's signature and the KHE SANH VETERAN sponsor's signature.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. APPLICATION FORM

Date of Application_____

APPLICANT'S INFORMATION:(PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLY!!)

Name: Last_____ **First**_____ **MI**_____

Address: Street_____ **City**_____**State**_____ **Zip**_____

Home Phone: _____ **Cell**_____

Date of Birth _____ **E-mail address**_____

KSV SPONSOR INFORMATION: (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member)

Name: Last_____**First:**_____

Relationship to Applicant:_____ **Branch of Service**_____

Unit Served at Khe Sanh_____**Dates Served There**_____

Regular paid KSV member _____ **Life KSV Member**_____**Deceased KSV Life Member**_____

KIA or MIA KSV Family Associate Member _____

SCHOOL INFORMATION: (School to be Attending)

School Name:_____

School Address: Street_____ **City**_____

State_____ **Zip**_____**Phone Number**_____

Intended Field of Study

_____

School Year to Be Funded: Freshman_____ **Sophmore**_____**Junior**_____**Senior**_____

APPLICANT PERSONAL HISTORY

A). Applicant Volunteer Activities (Example: community, church, governmental, environmental, health, etc

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

B). School Extracurricular Activities: (examples) Athletics, Music, School Government, School Publications, Academic Honors & Achievements, Scouting, Counselor, etc..

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

C). Employment Experience: (examples) part/full time jobs during school year, military service, etc.

_____

_____

_____

_____

D). Final Mailing Packet Check List: (ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED FORMS)!!

***COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM (ABOVE)**

***COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT (FROM THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR)**

***SMALL PHOTO OF YOURSELF**

***PERSONAL ESSAY (250 -400 WORDS) TELLING YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS AND CAREER PLANS.**

***SIGNATURE PAGE FOR APPLICANT AND SPONSOR (BELOW)**

SIGNATURE PAGE: (TO BE INCLUDED IN PACKET)

I SWEAR THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE:

APPLICANT SIGNATURE:_____

ACTUAL SIGNATURE OF KHE SANH VETERAN PARENT OR GRANDPARENT SPONSOR:

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO THE KHE SANH VETERANS SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

APPROVED: _____**DAN FISHER COMMITTEE CHAIR**

APPROVED: _____**RUSSELL TURNER KSV PRESIDENT**

SPENT A FEW DAYS AT THE VIETNAM REUNION IN KOKOMO INDIANA WITH A FEW MEMBERS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS WITH MY JEEP















a3_nm / Wikipedia / CC BY-SA 3.0

Remember their Names.

U.S. Marine, Sgt Johanny Rosario (25)
U.S. Marine, Cpl Hunter Lopez (22)
U.S. Marine, LCpl Kareem Nikoui (22)
U.S. Marine, LCpl Rylee McCollum (20)
U.S. Marine, LCpl Jared Schmitz (20)
U.S. Marine, LCpl David Lee Espinoza (20)
U.S. Navy, Maxton Soviak (20)
U.S. Marine, SSgt Taylor Hoover (31)
U.S. Marine, Cpl Daegan Page (23)
U.S. Army, Ryan Knauss (23)
U.S. Marine, Cpl Humberto Sanchez (22)
U.S. Marine, Sgt Nicole Gee (23)
U.S. Marine, Ricky Thompson (21)

ISSUE 101

RED CLAY

SPRING 2023



A FILM BY BETTY & KEN RODGERS PRODUCED
BY SYRINGA CINEMA LLC & WIDE EYE PRODUCTIONS

I Married The War

I Married the War is complete, but the work continues. Our job now is to be sure the film is seen by all the spouses and family members it can help, and for the general public to aid their understanding of the sacrifices made not only by combat veterans, but also by their families. Supporters giving $ 50 or more will receive a DVD of I Married the War.



WIVES OF COMBAT VETERANS TELL THEIR STORIES

REVIEW & STORY ON PAGES 17-20



I MARRIED THE WAR HAS THE POTENTIAL TO HELP THOUSANDS--IF NOT MILLIONS--OF SPOUSES WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED THE AFTER EFFECTS OF WAR WITH OUR RETURNING VETERANS. THE FILM OFFERS ENCOURAGEMENT TO THOSE SPOUSES AND FAMILIES, DEMONSTRATING THEY ARE NOT ALONE IN LEARNING TO ADAPT TO THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL INJURIES BROUGHT HOME FROM THE BATTLEFIELD. THE BROADER PUBLIC, WHICH MAY HAVE LITTLE DIRECT EXPERIENCE WITH WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH, WILL ALSO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING THAT WAR DOESN'T NECESSARILY END WHEN THE FIGHTING STOPS. YOUR SUPPORT NOW WILL BE A POWERFUL FORCE IN THIS IMPORTANT NARRATIVE. SUPPORTERS GIVING $50 OR MORE WILL RECEIVE THE I MARRIED THE WAR DVD.
THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT US.

1) THROUGH PAYPAL PLEASE MAKE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR MAILING ADDRESS TO RECEIVE ANY PRODUCTS DUE FROM YOUR SUPPORT CONTRIBUTION.

2) OR BY MAIL: PLEASE MAIL YOUR CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO SYRINGA CINEMA, LLC PO BOX 44 KUNA, ID 83634

ABOUT THE RANCH MINISTRIES

STORY ON PAGES 73 & 74

The Ranch is a venue for spiritual awakening, growth, and healing. Hundreds of men and women struggling with PTSD, both young and old, have found refuge and help at The Ranch. The Ranch sits on 540 acres of South Dakota prairie, about 20 miles southeast of Pierre, SD, right in the heart of pheasant hunting country. In fact, our location is situated in an area known as the best in the world for pheasant hunting. Our ministry uses pheasant hunting as a keystone for helping veterans and for our fundraising. During the pheasant season, we host pheasant hunts for veterans, including those who are wheelchair-bound or have suffered other severe physical and mental injury. But our ministries involve more than hunting. The Ranch relies on a variety of outdoor activities that veterans and others enjoy. Our ministries also focus on worship, prayer, fellowship, and meditating on God's Word. All these things work to bring healing through Christ closer for each visitor.

Picture in your mind the farms and ranches near Pierre, South Dakota – a landscape similar to what's shown in the movie "Dances With Wolves" (the film was shot right in this area). This land produces feed corn, wheat, soybeans, and seed grains. It also produces people of the land who've inherited a profound sense of tenacity and pride in a job well done at the end of a day filled with hard work. One of those is Ken Korkow.

Ken found college "boring," and like many of his buddies back home, enlisted in the military. Ken, specifically, entered the Marine Corps. After basic training, Corporal Ken Korkow was transferred directly into combat in Vietnam as a mortar section leader in Company B, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, at the notorious Khe Sanh Combat Base. This base suffered relentless daily attack by the North Vietnamese Army for 77 days. During this time, Ken received citations for The Navy Cross and the Purple Heart. On March 30, 1968, Ken's men came under intense attack. He single-handedly destroyed the hostile mortar placement, and made repeated trips under fire to carry his wounded men to an aid station. Ken was seriously wounded in this attack, and contributed to the defeat of the numerically superior enemy, while saving the lives of many of his brothers in arms.

After his medical discharge, Ken earned undergraduate and MBA degrees and became a successful land broker. During this time, Ken threw himself into work, becoming a work addict as a way to deal with war-torn memories. But it wasn't keeping away the nightmares, anguish, and "survivor's guilt." He was suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) before there was a name for it.

But before Ken succumbed completely, he vowed to do something about – and help others suffering. Ken abandoned his lucrative business and returned to his spiritual roots, becoming the regional director of a Christian business organization helping other workaholics to find new hope. During this time, as he overcame his own PTSD, he developed a successful, spiritual approach that is helping thousands of other service members and veterans find peace in their lives.

OBIT

JAMES F. ALEXANDER, USMC ,KHE SANH VETERAN,
H&S CO 2/26

James Francis Alexander, 75, passed away July 31, 2022. He was born on July 8, 1947 to Frank H. Alexander and Slyvia G. Alexander. James was preceded in death by both parents as well as his sister Nancy Livengood. He is survived by his wife Emily Rose Lisowski Alexander; children Larry Wright (Ginger), Julie Alexander, Kelly Ewing (Greg), Anne Roach (Anthony), Pamela Buchanan; 14 grandchildren; several great-grandchildren, as well as several nieces and cousins.

James served in the United States Marine Corps during Vietnam. He worked as an Air Traffic Control Supervisor. During James's younger years he was an avid go-kart racer. He later found a love for restoring old cars to their original condition. He once won the Bloomington Gold Award for his Corvette. James eventually got into sail boating and power boating. He and his wife lived on their boat for two years while traveling all over. Both James and his wife loved to boat and go on cruises. Per James's wishes cremation has been chosen and Samaritan Funeral Home will assist in the arrangements. A memorial service will be held at a later date for James.

OBIT

ELWOOD YOUMAN, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, BRAVO CO 1/26

Elwood "Skip" Youman, 75, passed away on Monday, July 18, 2022 after a battle with cancer. He passed away peacefully with family at bedside. Skip was born on May 1947 to Elwood and Marjorie Youman in Sacramento, CA. He was the oldest of four children. He is survived by his wife, Elsa of 54 years, two daughters (Yvonne and Veronica), four grandchildren and two sisters. **Skip was a proud member of the US Marine Corp and served in Viet Nam. He was a survivor of Khe Sanh.** He received his BS in Criminal Justice from CSUS and got a Master's Degree in Business Administration. After graduating from Sac State, Skip went to work for the State of California, then worked for the City of Sacramento and ended his career at the Sacramento Sheriff's Department. He retired from the Sacramento Sheriff's Department as the ID Bureau Manager. Skip was a very generous person. He contributed to many charities, including the Marine Corp Memorial, Toys for Tots, Solano Land Trust, The World Food Program, Boy's Town, and Team Rubicon. Skip also belonged to The Elks, A very generous Khe Sanh Veterans supporter. Masons, Native Sons



OBIT

RODNEY A. VULGAMORE, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

LUCASVILLE – Rodney Allen Vulgamore, 74 of Lucasville passed away Sunday, January 1, 2023 at Best Care Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Wheelersburg. He was born March 16, 1948 in Portsmouth, a son of the late Harold and Norma Jean Uhl Vulgamore, he was a 1966 Clay High School graduate, a Millwright and owner and operator of Vulgamore Towing. Rodney was a **Cpl in the United States Marine Corps where he served at Khe Sanh.** He then served in the United States Marine Corps Reserves as a mechanic.

He is survived by one son, Rodney (Shellby) Vulgamore and their daughter, Brylynn; one brother, Todd (Joy) Vulgamore; one sister, Taryn (Dave) Meyers, and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were conducted at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, January 7, 2023 at Erwin-Dodson-Allen Funeral Home in Minford with Pastor Brett.

"REMEMBERANCES LEAVING KHE SANH"

AN ARTICLE BY RICHARD M. FOLEY, JR. INDIA CO 3/26

I//3/26 had come down from the mountain. The Cav said the siege was over, and, I guess, it was for them. The three or four NVA rounds that came in every half hour suggested that not everything was finished.

I was the Exec of India Company and had been since the battalion left Camp Evans in December. We had left the combat base on December 26 for Hill 881S under the command of Bill Dabney. We hardly expected to remain there for four months, but that's another story.

Now we were back at the combat base, preparing to leave Khe Sanh for Quang Tri. Bill had picked up his gold leaves on April 1 and had been replaced by Captain Lawrence Luther. Luther had been injured during the evacuation of 881 and I was acting in his place. The plan for our departure from the combat base had India first on the airstrip. C-130's were to land and discharge ARVN Units and we were to board the planes for the trip to Quang Tri. I had moved India into position along the airstrip but was angered to find that the "trenchline" there was barely one foot deep. The base was still being shelled and shortly before the first C-130 was to land, a large explosion took place behind me. A round had landed next to the trenchline, killing Lt. Mike Ammons and wounding several others. As the first C-130 landed, more incoming. I made a decision to pull India off the airstrip. As we withdrew to the western side of the base, an order came from above to "evacuate the airstrip." This change in plans undoubtedly saved me a great deal of explaining.

We were now to be flown to Quang Tri by helicopters. However, the order of evacuation was reversed and India would be last. The battalion had been staged for this transfer in the southwest comer of the base. If I remember correctly, the helilift started in the early afternoon. I had set up India's plane teams, making sure to get our new company commander and the two marines assisting him on the first chopper. In the early evening, with most of the battalion off to Quang Tri, I was notified that there would be no more flights until the next morning. That left twenty-five of us to pass the next twelve to fourteen hours in a very tight perimeter, as far away from the ARVN confusion as possible.

It is quite likely that none of us slept. The base was still under NVA fire, but none of the rounds fell near us. I wondered what my marines were thinking. We had survived seventy-seven days under fire on a hill the size of a baseball field. I'm sure the cruel irony of being among the last Marines at Khe Sanh was not lost on them.

And then, at first light, I saw one of the most remarkable sights of the war. Scanning the terrain beyond the perimeter of the base, I noted a very large cloud of dust. Through my field glasses I found the dust cloud was generated by one of the largest masses of humanity I had ever seen Five, Ten, thousand people? They were not soldiers. Men, women, children all moving in a general northeast direction. There were hundreds of carts, some being pulled by animals. By now, all of my little band were staring in amazement at this scene. I got on the radio, wondering who I would be talking to. "This is Northtide India Five to anyone on this band." A voice responded and I think I was talking to someone from the 26" Marine HQ. "Hey", I said, "are you guys prepared for breakfast guests?" No response. "Well, if you look to the southwest you will see a very large group of people who are not enemy soldiers heading this way." Still no response.

I was about to suggest that whoever I was talking to pass this information along when the communication was broken off and our transportation appeared on the horizon. Shortly thereafter we were joining the rest of the battalion at Quang Tri, getting hot showers and steak dinners. Damn, it was almost like we were home that is until a rocket attack that was probably aimed at the airfield fell short and killed six Marines from Lima Company. We had survived the siege only to find that a different kind of war still raged.

What the hell, I was "short." Only one hundred and eighty-seven days to go.

BOOK REVIEW

WELCOME HOME, MACHO MAN: A PTSD LIFE

by Ernest Spencer D 1/26 (Author)

Jana Doyle Hollenbeck (Editor)

REVIEW:

Had Ernest Hemingway been a Marine, he might have penned "Welcome to Vietnam Macho Man," and this sequel "Welcome Home Macho Man." Ernie Spencer, the author of these two important contributions to Viet Nam literature, writes in the same straightforward, clear, and honest style. The first book details his experience as an infantry company commander. It's among the most authentic accounts of combat during the horrific 77-day siege of Khe Sanh.

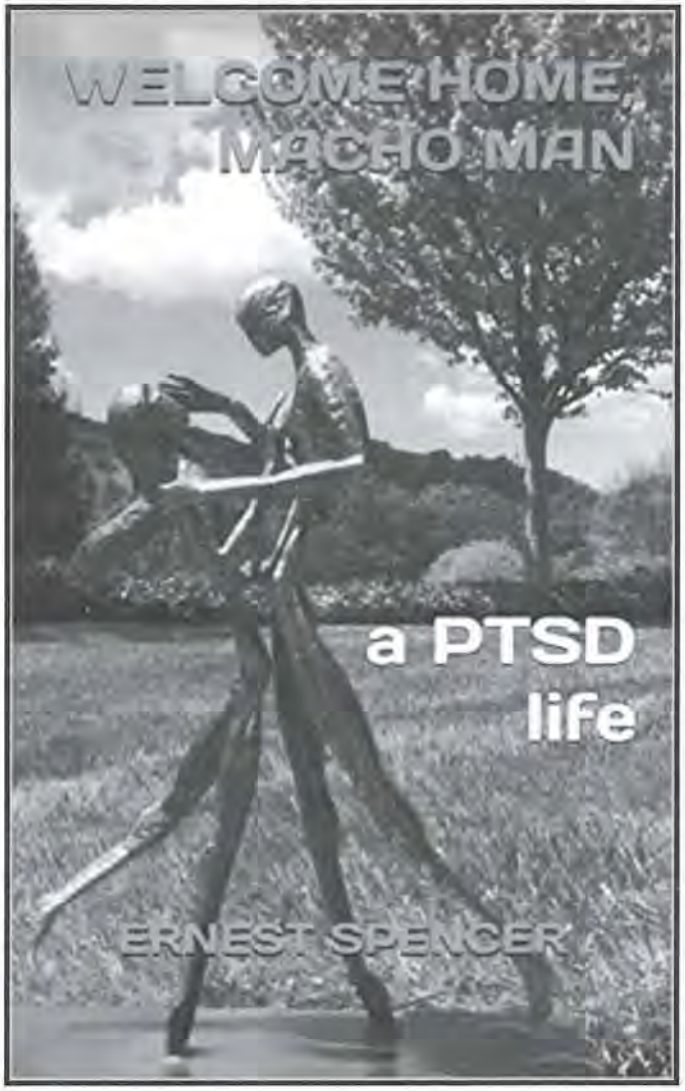

This second book about why he became a Marine and how his life turned upside down after the war is equally powerful. A real page-turner, I couldn't put it down. It's arguably more relevant today considering the tragic number of veteran suicides. Spencer reveals his struggles with suicidal depression and PTSD which wreaked havoc on his health, relationships, and career. In doing so, he gives voice to the countless number of veterans still suffering from physical, mental, and emotional trauma. This book should be read by anyone wishing to understand the invisible wounds of war through the lens of a warrior's lived experience.

I was privileged to serve under then 1st Lieutenant Spencer at Khe Sanh. I witnessed his superior leadership skills, and ability to stay cool under fire, earning the respect of everyone around him. He wasn't the puffed-up chest-thumping kind of leader. But the kind with enough strength of character to not only seek help but also to help others, including offering homeless vets a place to stay in his own home. Ernie Spencer was and still is Macho Man!

I'm posting the below book review on Amazon for Ernie Spencer's latest book.

HON LEE D CO 1/26

How does a Macho Man become a Macho Man? And what does he do with himself after getting to play "god" as a Vietnam War Commanding Officer of a Rifle Company in combat? This sequel to "Welcome to Vietnam, Macho Man" digs deep into the mind of a Khe Sanh vet. The author, Ernest Spencer, opens up and shares with the world his life experiences from both before and after surviving the longest battle in the Vietnamese War - 77 non-stop days of combat in Khe Sanh.

Ernie offers a historical recount of growing up in a bi-racial family in Hawaii, loving and learning from ever present parents, grandparents and extended family and being exposed to military exercises, and heroism from a very early age.

HOW DOES WARTIME SERVICE CHANGE A PERSON?

Ernest shares his struggles with finding a place to fit back into the American Dream. Some, like the author, transition back into society very well in the eyes of the world, yet the demons deep inside are grappled with daily. Ernest's undiagnosed PTSD creates havoc in his life. He feels ashamed of him-

self for surviving the battle of Khe Sanh while he observed so many around him perish. His silence and the sequestering of his feelings inside causes chaos and destruction in his life.

Some veterans cannot make the transition back into their former everyday life and spend a large part of their post-war lives suffering outwardly, struggling with drug addiction, and consequently being rejected/ignored by the community around them. Ernest discovers many of these veterans and retells his attempts to rehabilitate and empower them to be healthy and productive adults. Who really stands up and supports veterans with post-war mental illnesses and what are their methods? Enjoy this book, think deeply, and give praise to our brave young soldiers and all that they've endured for our country.



COL JOHN C STUDT
COMMANDING OFFICER
3D BN, 26TH MARINES, HILL 881S
KHE SANH VETERAN

REMEMBRANCE OF
COLONEL JOHN STUDT
BY FORMER CAPTAIN
CARLTON B CRENSHAW USMCR

A few weeks ago several members of Colonel Studt's former command in Vietnam learned from his son that the Colonel had died, Colonel Studt's wishes were to not have a formal funeral. Several of us prepared Remembrances of our time in Vietnam with him and sent them to the family. Meanwhile other members of Colonel Studt's family decided to have a funeral at a local Catholic Church in Hartland, Maine. One of his relatives came to the funeral from France and officiated the ceremony as he was a Catholic Priest.

Colonel Studt assumed command of the Third Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Regiment in March, 1968



about midway during the 77 - day Siege at Khe Sanh. His command was located on Hill 881 South (India Company and 2 platoons of Mike Company), Hill 861 (Kilo Company) and portions of the northwest perimeter of the main Khe Sanh Command Base (Lima Company and a platoon of Mike Company). At this time the Marines at Khe Sanh were under orders not to leave their defensive positions until reinforcements arrived. In early April elements of the First Marines who were coming down Route 9 and the Air Cavalry Division both arrived to help relieve the stalemate. This enabled each of the infantry units at Khe Sanh (1/26. 2/26. 3/26 and 1/9) to strike back at the NVA units that had been pummeling them during the preceding 3 - month period. All of 3/26 was flown UP to Hill 881 South. Preparations were made by 3/26 to attack Hill 881 North on Easter Day. During that day Colonel Studt accompanied the lead company of a 3 - company attack of Hill 881 North. The attack was successful and killed 300 NVA.

The Third Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines was in turn flown to Quang Tri and was involved in a series of major battles with NVA regiments that attempted to overrun the Quang Tri Combat Base. Colonel Studt's Marines, with the assistance of artillery and air, caused major casualties to the attacking

NVA formations. The NVA were unsuccessful in their efforts to overrun the base. At the end of this battle 3/26 patrolled the areas outside the combat base. During one of those patrols Major Joseph Laughran, 3/26's XO, stepped on a land mine and was killed. That same mine blast severely wounded Colonel Studt - who refused to be med-evacuated from his unit.

Subsequently, 3/26 was transferred from the operational control of the 3rd Marine Division to the 1st Marine Division. The objectives set for 3/26 were to move through a series of areas west of Da Nang all the way to the Laotian border over a period of nearly 2 months. Three Twenty-Six moved from Hill 55 through Happy Valley, along Charley Ridge, Go Noi Island, and the mountains all the way to the Laotian border. During this movement 3/26 was engaged nearly every day with NVA units attempting to impede their progress. A number of NVA base camps were overrun and destroyed including the headquarters for a NVA General officer. Enemy losses were very high. For a 3 - month timeframe 3/26 had the highest ratio of KIA's (enemy vs Marines) of the over 30 Marine infantry battalions that were in Vietnam. Colonel Studt ensured that his Marines were never caught by surprise. He constantly used massed artillery fire to destroy the enemy as his units moved west. Colonel Studt rotated home after being relieved by his XO, Major Dick Blair.

Colonel Studt always led from the front. Throughout the 3 months after he received his wounds at Quang Tri, he had to heal under some of the most grueling conditions possible. The battalion doctor was flown out to treat him almost daily while we were moving rapidly up and down mountains and fighting constantly. The weather was horrendous and exceeded 100 degrees nearly every day. Colonel Studt always looked out for the welfare of his Marines. His actions were appreciated by all of the members of his command. Many of us carry a few pieces of shrapnel from fighting in Vietnam. His son notified me that his dad had over 40 pieces of shrapnel all over his body.

Colonel Studt's remains were buried in a local VA cemetery next to his wife, who died a number of years ago. On Behalf of the Third Battalion, Twenty -Sixth Marines
Carlton B. Crenshaw
Former Captain USMCR

REMEMBERANCES

I was a junior officer under Lt Col Studt for a 3 month period beginning on April 10 ,1968. Prior to that time I was the Executive Officer and Officer in Charge of a half battery of 105mm howitzers on Hill881 South in the Khe Sanh Valley. Two days before the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment 3/26) was to attack the North Vietnamese on the adjacent hill, Hill 881 North, Major Matthew Caulfield, 3/26's Operations Officer, and Lt Col Studt approached me and asked if I would be Lt Col Studt's personal forward artillery officer for the planned attack. They said that they had cleared this with my artillery battalion commander, Lt Col Henley, down at the Khe Sanh Combat Base. I readily accepted this offer and wanted to participate in the planned attack. The forward artillery coordinator (FSC) for 3/26 planned 30 different targets from our hill to Hill 881 North. They were to be fired in sequence as we moved down our hill in the attack starting at 0300 in the morning of 12 April. Because we wouldn't have any light until daybreak around 0600, I memorized those fire missions. As we descended our hill, I called the first 5 targets. We had to wait perhaps 15 minutes while the FSC cleared those targets. That was not acceptable in the circumstances. On the spot I was promoted to be the artillery FSC for 3/26. The attack went well and 3/26 overran the NVA positions on Hill 881 North. There we're over 300 NVA killed in that attack.

Three Twenty- Six returned to Hill 881 South that evening and was flown out of Khe Sanh a few days later while I was evacuated to Da Nang with a severe rat bite that I encountered on Hill 881 South the night after our attack. After receiving 14 shots of rabies medicine, I returned to 3/26 two weeks later. That morning Major Joseph loughran, 3/26's XO, had stepped on a land mine and was killed and It Colonel Studt was severely wounded by the mine blast. Colonel Studt refused to be evacuated and stayed with the battalion during a grueling 2 plus months of movement west from Da Nang overrunning many NVA base camps in the process.

Lt Col Studt was a very impressive Marine leader. He was very bright and aggressive and expected excellence among his officers and non-commissioned officers. He was an officer who led by both example and was always close to the lead position in the battalion. During this timeframe It Col Studt was suffering from his wounds and was treated daily by our battalion physician. We kept a grueling pace going up and down tall hills and mountains while engaged with the NVA. I was al-

ways close to him and could see that he was suffering. Yet he never let that interfere with our operation. There was one situation that I will never forget. One day, a very hot day, we were under pressure from the heat. One of our Marines fell out and sat down. It colonel Studt walked over to him and told the Marine to "get his butt off the ground" and walk behind him. John carried the Marine's pack in addition to his own. I volunteered to carry it but he wouldn't listen to me. Word of this incident spread through the battalion and we never had anyone fall out again.

Colonel Studt told me that he wanted to use artillery a lot and to not commit infantry to an attack before we had neutralized the enemy with artillery fire. I wholeheartedly agreed with that same philosophy. The FO's from the four companies and I blew everything away whenever possible. After about 6 weeks we had an incident where fixed wing aircraft missed their target and killed an entire Marine squad with 500 - pound bombs. We had to have them picked up in a cargo sling through the thick canopy. Colonel Studt told our forward air controller that he would never use bombs again close to his infantry. He leaned on me even more. Fourty - years later Colonel Studt informed me that my artillery regimental commander from the 11th Marine regiment wanted me relieved for "excessive use of artillery" - ten times as much as other Marine battalions were using. Colonel Studt and his superior, Colonel Bruce Myers, Regimental commander from the 26t!' Marine Regiment, appealed this to the commanding General (CG) of the First Marine Division and told him that our battalion had the highest kill ratio of every Marine battalion in Vietnam. The CG responded to his artillery commander to double the amount of artillery rounds used. I never learned of this until about 10 years ago.

We were engaged by NVA almost constantly during our search and destroy mission and never once were we caught off-guard by the NVA. We were always on the offensive and running over NVA units nearly every day.

Colonel Studt also took care of his men. Somehow he got us hot food delivered in makeshift field kitchens 2 times and had us resupplied with new uniforms as the ones we were wearing were disintegrating after a month of fighting in exposed weather every day. He ensured that every enlisted Marine ate their meal before the officers were allowed to eat. The same thing applied to uniforms. He also had his doctor bring small cordial bottles of "medicinal" brandy with him every day and I believe brought 10-12 every day. I got one nearly every night and truly enjoyed this one small creature comfort. I stayed in contact with Colonel Studt over the past 53 years since we were together in Vietnam.

When it was discovered that our recommendations for a Navy Cross award for Captain Dabney were lost and never submitted, Colonel Studt got into action and got both Matt Caulfield and me to resubmit recommendations as well to organize a Steering Committee to bird-dog the recs through the labyrinth approval process as well as to coordinate a ceremony for the award at VMI, close to the Dabney residence. I met Colonel Studt at the award ceremony and his son John. That was a fantastic experience. Colonel Studt and I stayed in contact over the 10-12 years after the award ceremony through emails, phone calls and Christmas cards. I will truly miss him.

Sincerely,
Carlton B. Crenshaw
Former Captain USMCR
carltonandlindacrenshaw@earthlink.net
(434) 589 3477

REMEMBERANCES

LtCol John Studt was my battalion commander in Vietnam. I served slightly over a year in the 3rd Battalion 26th Marines as a radio operator in Comm Platoon H&S Company. I served under four different battalion commanders - two for very brief periods of time and two (to include LtCol Studt) for the full length of their tours. He was, by a marked difference, superior in all ways to the battalion commander he replaced.

When he first arrived at 3/26 we were at the Siege of Khe Sanh and I was attached to India Company on Hill 881S. I first met him when I returned to Khe Sanh Combat Base in early February. I began to serve on rotation within the Battalion CP as the TACP radio operator. He was instrumental, along with Majors Caulfield and Loughran, in getting me meritoriously promoted to Corporal. I didn't use the term "professionalism" in those days, but I was immediately impressed with his knowledge and discipline. He expected a lot from his troops, but he also never forgot that he was once a troop himself.

We left Khe Sanh in mid-April 1968 and operated out of the Quang Tri area for about a month. In May, we were all set to deploy to the DMZ area to

counter NVA troops in the Cua Viet area. Sometime during the night, our orders were changed and the battalion was transferred to the operational control of the 1st Marine Division. We were almost immediately deployed to support operations southwest of DaNang. We were to spend the remainder of my tour in the bush. With the exception of a couple of weeks when I filled in for the battalion radio operator in Kilo Company while he went to Hawaii on R&R, I spent the rest of my time in the battalion CP group. There I got to observe close up LtCol Studt and I admired him for his leadership. He was a big believer in the use of supporting arms in that an artillery barrage preceded the movement to a new hill as we chased the NVA westward through the mountains. Despite still suffering from wounds received in the Quang Tri area a month or so earlier, he was insistent upon carrying his own gear. Several times I personally heard him arguing with officers in the rear at 1st Marine Division, who from the safety of their position were insisting upon actions that he felt would be detrimental to the battalion. I would have followed him anywhere.

In May 1969, I got out of the Marine Corps and went to college. One day I was walking through the student union and heard my Vietnam nickname. It was my former platoon commander who was now an Officer Selection Officer. I shortly signed up to return to the Corps. While in OCS, we had an assignment to write about an individual whom we admired. I chose LtCol Studt.

My first tour after completing TBS and Communications School was in Comm Company Headquarters Battalion, 3rd Marine Division. Midway through my tour, sometime in 1975, we had a battalion change of command and now Colonel Studt was named the new commander. I scheduled a few minutes to say hello and was impressed that he remembered me from Vietnam. I had recently been approved for a two year extension as a Reserve Officer and he encouraged me to apply for augmentation. I later was surprised to find out that he was the Reviewing Officer on my next fitness report and on my augmentation package. Evidently he had asked our company commander to write my fitness report vice the OIC of the Communications Center (who was also my platoon commander) which was the normal practice. I attribute his enthusiastic review as greatly helping me augment into the Corps.

Several years later, I was stationed at Quantico and was being transferred to 1st Radio Battalion in Hawaii. If I remember correctly, Colonel Studt was the Chief of Staff at the Education Center. In any case, I stopped by before leaving to tell him that I was grateful for his support over the years. I never forgot the lessons he taught me through observation

MAJOR WALTER WHITESIDES
USMC(RETIRED)

MAJOR GENERAL MATTHEW P. CAULFIELD USMC(RET) LETTER TO STUDT FAMILY 2023 SOUTH PACIFIC STREET OCEANSIDE, CA 92054 OCTOBER 10, 2021

Dear Studt Family,

On hearing of your father's passing, I have thought non-stop about him. I thought the best thing I could do for him is to ensure all of you know him as I did. It's important to me because I believe he was the greatest Marine combat leader of our generation who never received, indeed refused, personal recognition. He insisted that recognition and praise for his accomplishments be passed-on to his Marines. He was honest to a fault and acted on his convictions without consideration for the effect it might have on his future success. We developed a close friendship, as close as a friendship can be between a senior and junior officer in the Marine Corps. By the way, every surviving officer who served with us in Vietnam feels the same as I do. We tried to dedicate the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines Remembrance in the National Museum to him but he refused to let us do so.

I served with your father on two occasions: Vietnam in 1968 and Okinawa in 1976. Our battalion in Khe Sanh was in very bad shape when he assumed command. We had been in Khe Sanh about a month. It was a hell hole. The enemy was one problem in that we were surrounded and lived in holes in the ground to escape incoming artillery and mortars. We were prohibited from patrolling outside of the base and physically were wasting away in holes in the ground. We didn't have showers and subsided totally on c-rations. The more serious problem was we were badly led. Our battalion commander was inept and should not have been in command of an infantry battalion under any circumstances, not to mention combat. The Regimental commander seldom left his headquarters, which was less than two hundred yards away from our CP and a short but harrowing ride to our combat outposts. He had no idea of our battalion's predicament. The bright spot was the sec-

ond in command of our battalion, Major Joe Loughran was highly competent. Although serving as the executive officer, he in fact commanded the battalion. As the S-3 operations officer, I fought the battalion under Joe's guidance.

Your father's arrival was a godsend. The first night of his arrival, I was on the radio, responding to an intense artillery bombardment when he reached over, took the radio handset from my hand, and directed the battalion. , felt as though a weight was lifted from my shoulders. In short order he visited every one of our positions in the combat base and despite the regiment's warnings, helicoptered to our isolated outposts on 881S and 861 S. He was the only commander to visit those units in the seventy-seven-day siege of Khe Sanh. He ordered the reinforcement of our command post and bunkers surrounding it. The reinforcements were based on his knowledge of proven lessons learned. That act saved my life, and several others, when an enemy 152mm artillery shell scored a direct hit on our command post. We soon learned that your father had an almost encyclopedic knowledge of military history, which he applied to everyday events. Within a few days he knew every detail of our situation and planned to attack the enemy positions surrounding the base. We discussed that plan almost every day and just about every day he pleaded with the regimental commander to let us go on the offensive.

That attack began on Easter Sunday. Your father decided on a night attack despite the physical condition of the Marines after months of inactivity. He was with the lead company. Supporting arms, including seven stacks of aircraft, every artillery piece within range, mortars, and direct overhead fire from 50 caliber machine guns simultaneously preceded and accompanied the lead elements on to the objective. I was with your father in a position with clear observation of the objective when an air observer reported, and with binoculars we could make out, enemy soldiers running from the objective. A few minutes later we sighted a Marine climbing a burned-out tree on the objective and attaching an American flag. At that time, we thought the attack was carried out without any friendly casualties. Our joy in the realization that we carried out a perfect battle, and had the enemy on the run, which is something the North Vietnamese Army never did, is impossible to describe. A few minutes later I received a radio call and had to report to him that three Marines had been killed earlier in the battle. I will never forget the agony on his face.

In early May we departed Khe Sanh. Your father insisted on being with the last of our battalion to depart the combat base. We arrived in lang Vei, in an Army operations area located in a relatively safe area. Our mission was to rebuild our battalion. All of our personal records and equipment, including vehicles had been destroyed in Khe Sanh. Nevertheless, it was as though we arrived in paradise. The first day of arrival, we showered, were provide new utility uniforms and a sumptuous hot meal- and best of all, cold beer. It was a wonderful to sleep off the ground on a cot - until about 0200 in the morning.

The impact from the rocket that impacted on the crossbeam of the tent next to ours literally threw me out of the cot. I got up confused, ran in the pitch dark, looking for a trench. I tripped into a culvert along a road. Other than the sounds from the stricken tent and a few shouts,

it was relatively quiet. I got up, ran to the stricken tent. It was a gruesome scene. I heard your father's distinct voice. I found him. He was leading a handful of Marines who helped him pick up and place bodies and body parts into canvas bags.

A few days later we began operating in the relatively secure lang Vei area. Our first operation was supposed to be a "walk in the sun", meaning no enemy contact expected. Joe loughran, decided to join us, although his executive officer job usually tied him to administrative and logistic chores at the base. The morning was uneventful. About noon time we were joined by an Army Cavalry Squadron. Your father suggested I patrol with the Squadron, so I climbed on to the Bradley vehicle and off we went in a cloud of dust.

It was a fun afternoon being with the Cav Squadron. Early afternoon the sound of an enormous explosion to our rear drew my attention to the vicinity of where the battalion was operating. There was a huge plume of smoke. I thought it was either mortar, artillery or a bomb. It turned out to be a mortar round attached to a pressure device. Joe Loughran was walking several meters behind your father when he stepped on it. I still can hear your father's distinct hoarse voice over the Bradley's radio screaming, "Matt get back here, Joe's hit." He never called me by my first name.

We raced back. The medevac helicopter was just taking off. Jumping down from the Bradley, I could have touched the helicopters underside. it was that close. The corpsman told me Joe kept

repeating that he wanted to see his newborn son. He added that Joe probably wouldn't make it. Corpsmen always know. He said that he was more worried about the Colonel. He said he was seriously wounded by the same explosion but refused to be evacuated.

Your father looked awful. His complexion was ashen. His trousers and shirt were bloodstained as were the dressings on his arms and legs. He said two things when I tried to convince him into being medevaced: "It was my fault." And "take charge of the battalion and get us back to camp" I replied, "yes, sir" and began the longest walk of my life.

Your father was immediately behind me and didn't utter a sound. All I heard was a sloshing sound every time he took a step from the blood which was running down his leg into his boots. I walked back to him several times to urge him to accept a medevac. On each occasion he told me, "They will take the battalion away from me." I argued that I had to report that he was wounded. His reply was that, " No, I will take care of the reporting". We kept trudging on with me thinking that any minute he would collapse, and I then I would call a medevac.

We finally got back to our camp and found out that Major Loughran did not survive. I was a close friend before joining the battalion and we became very close because of our otherwise leaderless situation in Khe Sanh. After settling in the battalion, I went to my tent, fell to the dirt floor and cried my eyes out. It was the worst night of my life. Your father shared my grief and in addition was suffering from very painful, serious wounds.
I found him the next morning, struggling with the assistance of the corpsman and sergeant major to get up from his cot. He was clearly in a great deal of pain, grimacing and grunting in agony with the slightest movement. The regimental commander was inbound, and he had to show him he was physically capable to command, which he clearly was not. How he was able to convince the colonel is still a mystery to me. I do know that the new regimental commander, Colonel Bruce Myers and your father had a relationship that went back to Korea. Then Captain Myers commanded the company in which then Private Studt served in and was wounded.

In any event, your father convinced him. At your father's direction we began operating at a high tempo. He continued his practice to lead the battalion from the front. The way he did so was having the sergeant major on one side, his runner on the other side, literally hold him up as he got in and out of helicopters. We continued to dig-in every night as was his standard procedure.

The next morning, as your father was preparing to report to a very agitated general, I tried coming up with an alibi for him to use, when he cut me off curtly and asked, Ipresume you guys won the fight with the Australians". As he strapped on a captured North Vietnamese pistol, a gift from the troops which he always wore, I reminded him that the general had a strict rule against using captured weapons. I pointed out that there was a sign on the Division CP to that effect. He replied, lithe troops gave it to me." He prized that pistol and could care less about what the general thought.

He came back beaming from the ass-chewing with the general. The general told him to take his "mob" and go on an operation that was being planned by the 7th Marines. He couldn't wait to get back to an operation in the field. We were delighted to get away from the general's wrath should he find out about our Australian altercation. We jumped-off on the right flank of a 7th Marines battalion, accompanied with an earth-shaking artillery preparation. The same general who referred to us a mob a few days prior observed our departure sent a message, stating that it was the most expert utilization of supporting arms he had observed in Vietnam. Your father believed that there was an inverse relationship between the use of supporting arms and Marine casualties. We never moved in unfamiliar terrain without supporting arms. On several occasions he refused to move out until his demands his were met.

The terrain was very difficult and moving through the thick vegetation was even worse. We often had to crawl up slippery slopes, hanging on to branches. We seldom saw the sky, leaches were an everyday event and we had to deal with snakes and on one occasion, a tiger. The effective use of supporting arms was always a challenge. The 7th Marine's battalion on our flank was evacuated after two weeks due to attrition caused by non-battle casualties. The casualties usually involved severe stomach upset and diarrhea caused by failure to purify water taken from streams, which involved treating canteens with a foul-tasting pill. Your father refused to evacuate non battle casualties, particularly when the cause was failure to purify water. On one occasion a Marine suffered horribly and almost died from diarrhea, but your father refused to relent.

He believed evacuations gave away our position to the enemy. One irresponsible Marine could endan-

ger the entire battalion. On the other hand, as hard-headed as he was with evacuation of what he suspected were self-induced non battle casualties, he showed unusual compassion and made extraordinary efforts to evacuate Marines for non-battle causes such as loss of a family member at home. The only word to use is "fanatic" in describing the way he demanded immediate medevac for battle casualties.

We trudged on for fifty-two days, which was a record by a factor of 3 for any Marine unit operating in that kind of terrain. We managed to continually reposition heavy mortars to a series of fire bases that we moved into. And by the way, we dug in every night. He dug half the hole, I dug the other half.
Air support was especially difficult. The vegetation made it impossible to mark targets and for the pilot to visibly confirm its location, in accordance with regulations. We instituted a system in which the pilot, in coordination with our forward air controller, flew a compass heading to the target. It deviated from regulations, but it was the only way to ensure air support. It worked as was evident day after day in the numerous successful sorties flown in support. Not once did the enemy initiate an engagement. One day, in one sortie, a pilot flew one degree off azimuth. It resulted in the most tragic day of your father's tour in Vietnam.

An entire squad, thirteen Marines were killed instantly. To make matters worse, we had to lift the bodies out of the jungle to our fire base in a cargo net slung from a helicopter. It was a sight none of us would ever forget. Your father stoically walked down to where the net had released its gruesome cargo to supervise the transfer of the bodies to a waiting helicopter. As the helicopters departed, he turned to me and said, "under no circumstances do I want that pilot held accountable."

As was inevitable, a few days later a Marine Air Wing investigating officer, a full colonel, arrived at the fire base. Before he said a word your father stated, "I am totally responsible. I insisted on the deviation from procedures." And then repeated what he had told me a few days before: "under no circumstances do I want the pilot held accountable." Your father personally wrote the mishap report and in writing accepted full responsibility for that tragic event. We never heard another word about the incident or the investigation.

As your father's rotation date home approached, he frequently talked about extending his tour to stay on with the battalion. We were close friends by then, having shared a fighting position throughout the operation. I was hoping he would stay on. We all know he was demanding but the very best. Survival in Vietnam improved being with the best. Your father was a tough man and set the highest standards of professional performance. He was a disciplinarian because lives depended on it. Under that uncompromising and rigid exterior lay a sincere compassion and deep love for the men he commanded. He also had a keen sense of humor and often made fun of situations that arose from the environment we were in. He could also laugh at himself. Working for him might be exhausting at times. Serving with him was always professionally rewarding. His repeated references to military history made every day a learning experience.

We knew each other's families well by sharing news from our letters. I know of no one who loved his family more than he did. I knew that leading from the front as he did had risks. I guess that's the reason I helped to convince him not to extend his tour in Vietnam. The day he departed was not a happy day.

On his return home among the first things he did was to visit my wife Pat. After my return to Quantico a few months later, we got to know each other' families, including spending time together in your mother's family house in Rehoboth Beach. By good fortune several other members of our battalion also were transferred to Quantico, including the regimental commanding officer. We had some of the best parties ever.

An event I have suspected had a profound effect on you father's career happened in Quantico. I don't have first-hand information as I was not present, and my conclusion is based on conjecture. I mention it because it says so much about your father's character. As a student in the Command and Staff College, he presented a case based on our experience in Vietnam that was not well accepted by Marine Corps leadership. He related several instances during classroom discussion from our experience in Vietnam in which Marine helicopter support was deficient. His presentation was based on factual instances in which Marine helicopters medevacs were prohibited from flying in certain weather and combat conditions whereas Army helicopter medevacs were not Similarly prohibited. We often called first for Army medevacs when available before tasking Marines. He believed it was not the issue of the individual pilots but the system. He reported the situa-

tion in several combat after action reports, but remedial action was never taken.

This time the situation got headquarters' attention. The three-star, deputy commandant for Aviation, an iconic Marine helicopter pilot, arranged to address his class. Your father was looking forward to the opportunity to finally remedy a situation that was unsatisfactory as well as a highly emotional one. Your father made his case and spoke up forcefully as was his custom, but it apparently fell on deaf ears. He told me later that the general just didn't believe him. I thought about this incident several times over the years, as I learned how higher levels in the Marine Corps sometimes react to criticism. There is no more sensitive issue than to criticize the superior support Marine air brings to the battlefield. And by the way, no one believed in Marine aviation more, or utilized it better than your father.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency to fault the messenger.

Well, I think I should end here. I had much more to say but I hope you understand why I and so many others believe he is the greatest combat leader of our generation, albeit unrecognized. He also has been an inspiration to me as an example of the highest standards of professional competence and personal character.





COLONEL STUDT'S 2Lt COLONEL SON's AND 3 OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS AT HIS FUNERAL

OBIT

COLONEL THOMAS L. JOHNSON, USAF, KHE SANH VETERAN, 3RD AD GUAM B-52, ARC-LIGHT

Dr. Thomas (Tom) LeRoy Johnson, 85, of Elberta, Alabama, died Thursday, May 17, 2018, at his home with his wife Judy, children, grandchildren, and great granddaughter at his side.

Tom was born on March 26, 1933 in Seattle, Washington. He attended the University of Washington and graduated with a B.S. in Business Administration in 1956. He served in the U.S. Air Force for twenty-seven years, including four tours in Vietnam. Tom was a radar navigator on B-52 combat missions over Vietnam including the battle of Khe Sanh. He was a special guest and keynote speaker at the November, 2014 Khe Sanh reunion. By the time of his retirement from the military, Tom achieved the rank of full colonel. Tom received his Doctor of Arts in Computer Science from Nova University in 1988 and taught for sixteen years as a college professor at the University of Maryland and University of Mobile. He and his wife Judy enjoyed traveling to many exotic destinations throughout the world. Early this year Tom published his first book, "Skid Row Kid," an autobiography and in-depth look at the life of a young boy trying to survive on the streets of Seattle during the World War II Era.

Tom is survived by his wife of 49 years, Judith A. Johnson, his sons Thomas L. Johnson Jr. and Eric A. Johnson, his daughters Karen L. Johnson and Laura Anna Jones, his grandchildren Sarah Valdes, Jason T. Paine, Daniel T. Pate, Benjamin C. Johnson, Andrew C. Johnson, and Emily A. Johnson, and his great granddaughter Senna L. Johnson.



Tom was laid to rest in Arlington Cemetery. The family urges readers to support the Wounded Warriors







OBIT

JAMES D. THORTON, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, DELTA CO 1/26

James Donald Thornton of Siler City, NC passed away on December 5,2020. Born October 18, 1946 in Asheville, NC to the late William Walter Thornton and Virginia Goldsmith Thornton Hyde. He graduated from TC Roberson High School and A-B Tech in Asheville.



He is survived by his sister, Anne Thornton Wood (James) of Boones Mill, VA, nephew Dale Wood (Sheri) and niece Pamela Brown (Dean). His ex-wife and still best friend, Vickey Utter and her sons, Everett and Bruce.

He proudly served with the 26th US Marines, 1st Battalion, Delta Co and was in Vietnam for 2 years. While there he was at the battle of Khe Sanh where many of his fellow Marines gave their lives and one of his last emails to his sister he said "they are rolling in their graves with what is going on in America today."

After moving to Siler City, he was "adopted" by Ronnie & Hilda White and their family, but it was Cody that changed his life after Vietnam. Cody who is a very special young person took away many of the awful memories that the horrors of war leave in our Veterans.

Don was a true patriot and conservative and was concerned about the future of America and our young people. There will be no service at this time because of Covid

Tribute From Anne T Wood (Sister)

Please accept this check(Donation Scholarship Fund) in the memory of my brother, James Donald Thornton (Spanky) ... I didn't know about the name Spanky for a long time. He, like so many others lived Khe Sanh ever day until the day they pass away and for him it was December,2020. He was part of the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines from 1967 to 1969.

I remember those years so well ... I remember watching every day for the mailman to come. We had a super nice mailman. Mr. Kinsey and after he made his mail run and went back to the post office, he would look and see if a letter had come in during the day and bring it back to my mom and I. I try to explain to my children and grandchildren that we did not have the communications back then and were totally dependent on the mail. When you all went off to war, your family didn't know where you were or if you got there until the letter got home. Don came home with all the evils that war leaves you with. He drank, smoked and was the most hateful person to people (especially his sister).

But then he left the states and moved to the Virgin Islands for about 3 years. When he came back, he moved to Siler City NC and became friends with a Navy Medic that had been in Vietnam, he understood and they were there for each other. His Navy friend, Ronnie White had a grandson (Cody) about 28 years ago that was born with Downs Syndrome and I will never be able to explain it but he changed Den's life. Even the nightmares stopped, he didn't tell me about that until about 2 years ago. Cody would not talk but the 2 of them bonded and understood each other. Cody remained his best friend until the day he died.

Don, like myself do not understand what is going on in our country and how people can feel the way they do about soldiers & police. Race relations are worse today than they were in the 60's. I will not get on the political bandwagon but God help this nation!

Thank you for your service.
Anne T. Wood
958 Taylors Rd
Boones Mill, VA 24065
Email: 4awood@gmail.com

I GET PICTURES













CONGRATULATIONS TO RAY & CAROLINE TORRES ON THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY



"DOC" RAYMOND TORRES HN ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

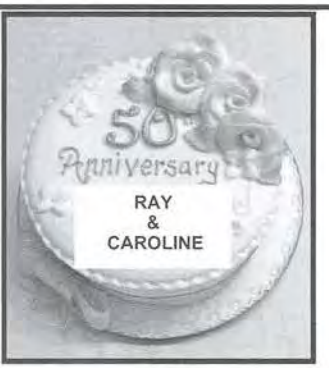

OBIT

JAMES LESLIE HAIR, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN. C BTRY, 1/13



James Leslie Hair Died on Nov. 11, 1947, in Riverside, to Eslie Everett Hair and Barbara Jean Bridges. He grew up on a family owned ranch in Sunny mead with two sisters, a brother, uncles, aunts, and eight cousins. After graduating from Riverside Poly Technic High School in 1965, James attended Chapman College for one year and toured Europe with the William Hall Corale.

Jim enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1966 where his MOS was as a heavy equipment operator. He miraculously survived the Siege of Khe Sanh where enemy fire blew up his bulldozer while he was operating it to put out burning and exploding ammunition dump. He was subsequently awarded a bronze star with combat V and a Navy Commendation Medal. Jim considered his time in the Marine Corps a valuable training ground for leadership and character building.

Jim was a gentle giant but still had the can do heart of a Marine. After an honorable discharge with the rank of Sergeant from the Marine Corps he met and married Carrol Yvonne Owen and began a 25 year career working for Southern California Edison's Hydro Generation Division. He first worked as a heavy equipment operator, then entered management. Jim was privileged to work in the beautiful mountain locations of Big Creek, Bishop, Three Rivers, Kern Rivr, Springville and at various local hydro generation stations in the foothills of the Inland Empire. While working for SCE he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. After retiring in 1996 he began a new career as an Associate Pastor at Yucaipa First Baptist Church, now called Grace Point Fellowship. Jim served as an administrator, counselor, teacher, did hospital visitation and officiated at many wed dings and memorial services. His greatest passion Was teaching, sharing, God's Word and encouraging people in their walk with the Lord.

Upon retiring from full-time Pastoral Ministry he worked as a project manager for SCE in Big Creek and served as an interim pastor for a small church there. After returning to Yucaipa permanently he continued to volunteer his time at Grace Point Fellowship as an elder, teacher and mentor. The most common comment in the many cards the family has received is "Jim was there for me when ... "

Jim is survived by his faithful wife of 49 years, Yvonne, his loving daughter and son-in-law, Erin and David Buchanan, "like a son" Bob Martin and wife Diana, three precious granddaughters, Emily, Rebekah and Abigail. He also leaves behind three siblings; Pam Reed and husband Jim, Patty Bearden and husband Fred and Dan Hair and wife Jeanne and four beloved nephews and their families.

Memorial services for Jim were private. Remembrances for Jim can be sent to Samaritan's Purse, P.O. Box 3000 Boone, NC 28607 marked "Operation Heal our Patriots."





Sally Jackson, widow of Art Jackson, WWII Medal of Honor Recipient, is one of the eleven wonderful spouses featured in I Married the War. Here's a nice the story from Lance Santiago: A month before I started working at the Idaho Division of Veterans Services/Office of Veterans Advocacy [in Boise}, Sally Jackson gave some [challenge] coins to the VSOs [Veteran Service Officers] in our office - her [late] husband, United States Marine Art Jackson's [personal] Medal of Honor coins for his heroic actions on the island of Peleliu in WWII! I have been bitching and complaining since July of 2017 that I came a month late. And then today I was presented a coin from Sally a month and a half before I retire! Miracles are live and in concert! I am very grateful!"



Stars and Stripes who visited our Facebook page for this photo with Bruce and Francine Maddox Jones when the four of us were in West Jefferson North Carolina for the North Carolina premiere. Francine is featured in I Married the War and was the Special Guest of Honor at the events there.

WINNER

AWARD OF MERIT

SPECIAL MENTION

IMPACT DOCS AWARDS FOR I MARRIED THE WAR

DOCUMENTRY REVIEW
"I MARRIED THE WAR"

Ken & Betty Rogers have spent the last 6 years writing their documentary "I Married The War'
This Documentary brings to life the ways in which families are impacted and forever changed by the unique personal struggles, victories, and defeats experienced by our country's veterans. Hear about sharing a marriage with a WWII Medal of Honor recipient, a Vietnam War corpsman, an Iraq War survivor.

The film giving voice to wives of combat veterans from World War II to the present-day Middle East wars. From every corner of our nation, women have waited and welcomed our warriors back from battle, only to discover that the conflict followed their husbands home.

Directed by Betty Rodgers and Ken Rodgers, The wives in ***I Married the War*** recognize hypervigilance, isolation, the quick temper, and the emotional escape that are manifestations of post traumatic stress. As a result of traumatic brain injury, they have dealt with their husband's memory loss and reduced ability to express themselves. They have battled their spouses' substance abuse and survivor's guilt. They have nursed their veterans' mangled bodies.

Wives feel isolated in their personal struggles until realizing they share experiences with women and families around the nation and the world. Hear how they have learned to adapt, how some have built on their husbands' strengths, and how some have discovered their own strengths and reestablished their identities in the process.

A few Short reviews from other Authors:

Siohban Fallon: *Author of "You Know When the Men Are Gone*" **"a nuanced, heart –breaking, and, most of all, magnificently inspiring film"**

Jean Hegland *" Author of Into The Forest".*
"A moving, fascinating, informative, haunting, inspiring film. It's utterly stunning.".

THE 11 WIVES INTERVIEW FOR DOCUMENTRY


TERRI TOPMILLER


STACIE VAUGHAN


GLORIA JABAUT


ANNE JACKSON


PRECIOUS R. GOODSON


LAURA D. NICKEL


ANNE OHKI


FRANCINE JONES


SALLY D. JACKSON


CARMEN HINSON


SALLY ZEPEDA







A PICTURE OF A COUPLE OF THE 11 WIVES THAT WERE INTERVIEWED FOR THE "I MARRIED THE WAR" DOCUMENTRY.



KEN AND BETTY RODGERS



TERRI TOPMILLER WIDOW OF BOB TOP-MILLER WAS PART OF PANEL DISCUSSION AFTER THE DOCUMENTRY FILM.

CASA GRANDE — When combat veterans return home, the war often returns with them. With their new documentary film, "I Married the War," Betty and Ken Rodgers share the stories of 11 combat veteran wives, highlighting how the trauma of war can linger, impacting families and communities for decades "Married the War" is the second documentary by the couple and they say, making it was personal. Ken, a former Casa Grande resident and 1965 Casa Grande Union High School graduate, is a Vietnam veteran. Betty, his longtime wife, understands the difficulties and struggles of living with a former combat veteran.

"We wanted this film to give women and families of veterans a voice," Betty said. "There are 5.5 million caregivers of combat veterans in America and they've been silent all these years."

The film focuses on the stories of wives whose combat veteran spouses fought in conflicts ranging from World War II to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

The film focuses on the stories of wives whose combat veteran spouses fought in conflicts ranging from World War II to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

In the film, "they share their common story of homecoming, loss and resilience. Their story of love," a description of the film says.

The Thursday evening premiere also included an art exhibit showcasing the work of area artist Palmer Miller III, an Army veteran whose work often focuses on military and patriotic themes.

Following the film, a panel discussion will be held, featuring the filmmakers, local veteran families and Terri Topmiller, one of the women featured in the film.

Topmiller, who is from Arizona, was married to a Vietnam veteran who died by suicide 40 years after his Vietnam experience.

She was among the first people interviewed for the film.

"Her husband never recovered from the trauma of the war," Betty said.

Making the film and hearing the stories of the women featured in the documentary impacted the filmmakers in many ways.

Betty said she understood their stories and saw the similarities in her own. Ken was a member of Bravo Company when it survived a 77-day siege of Khe Sanh by North Vietnamese troops in 1968.

"Fifty-four years later, that siege is still fresh in his mind," Betty said. "It was heart-wrenching listening to some of the stories."

For Ken, listening to the stories told for the documentary was an eye-opener.

"I heard them talk about PTSD and its symptoms of rage and anger and paranoia and I thought, 'this is me. I do those things,'" he said. "The message of the film is a good one. It's about the long-term consequences of combat. PTSD is a normal reaction to combat and the film makes us think about our relationships with our families."

The couple set about making the documentary about six years ago, soon after finishing their first film, "Bravo! Common Men, Uncommon Valor," which tells the stories of war veterans who survived the 77 -day siege in Vietnam.

The Rodgers travel to show their films and after one showing of "Bravo," Betty was approached by a member of the audience. "He said, 'as a wife of a veteran, you're impacted too.' It made me realize that that's an important part of the story," Betty said.

"I Married the War" received two Impact Docs awards in January, including a special mention in the Documentary Features category and an Award of Merit with special mention in the Contemporary Issues category.

Ken, a former business manager, has a master's degree in fine arts. He has also written poetry, personal essays and a book of short stories titled "The Gods of Angkor Wat."

Betty worked for years in an investment office but always had an interest in photography.

They combined Ken's interest in storytelling with Betty's knack for photography and together created "Bravo," initially released in 2011, enlisting the help of experts in the documentary film industry.
"We stumbled around a little but were lucky to find people to help," Ken said.
"Bravo" was re-released in 2014 and was shown several times in Casa Grande. It can be streamed on Amazon Prime Video.





ECHO COMPANY 2/26
WEAPONS PLATOON



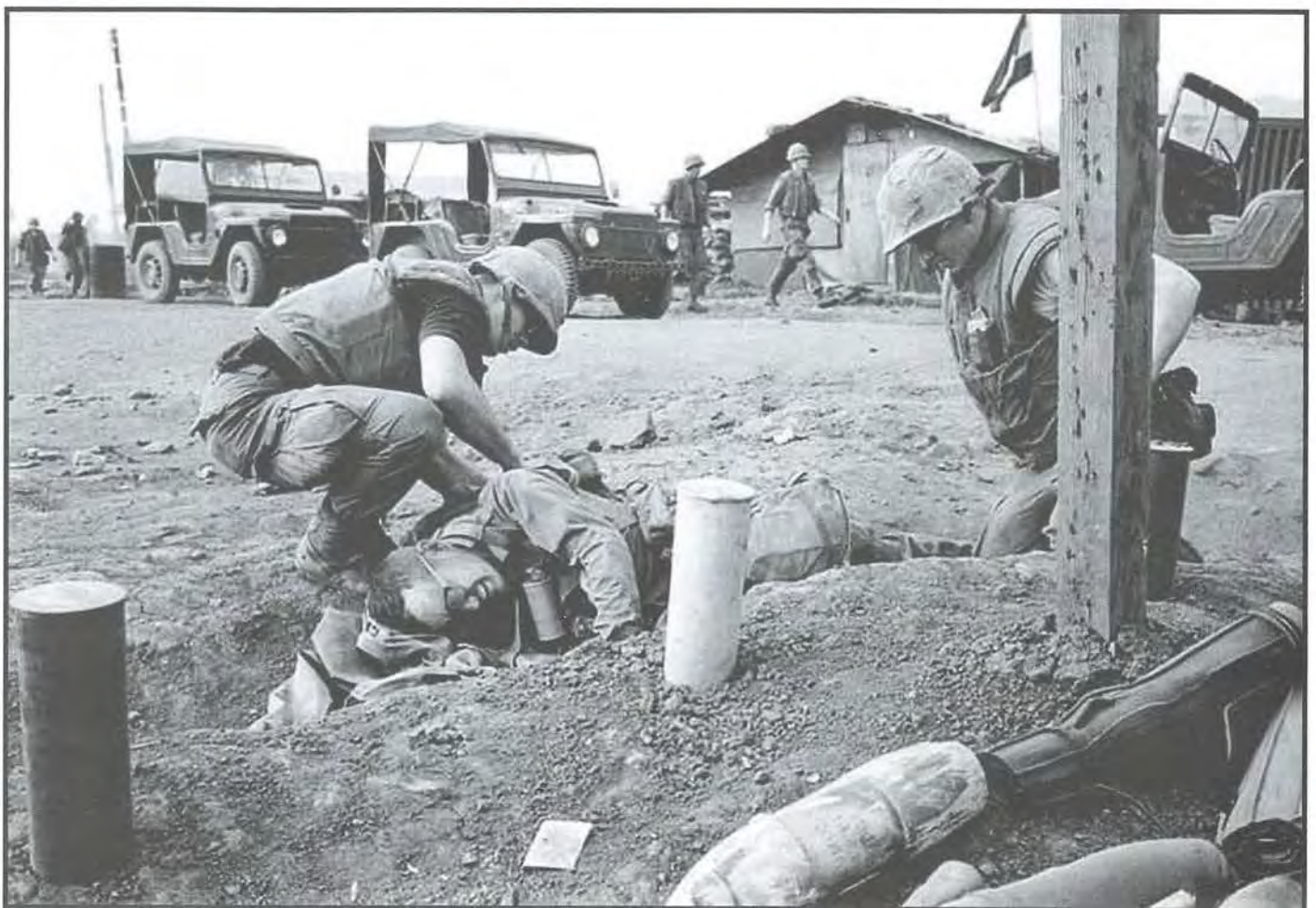







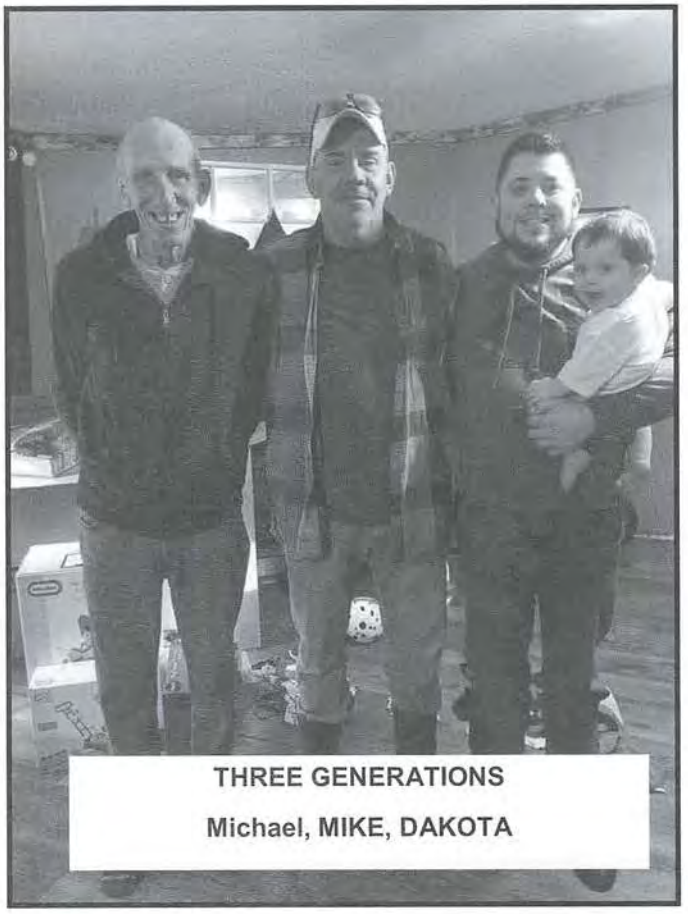

THREE GENERATIONS

Michael, MIKE, DAKOTA



KHE SANH BODY BUILDERS CLUB

CRAIG TOURTE & HIS TWO BEAUTIFL LADIES ENJOYING VACATION





PHIL & LYNNE NUCHERENO AFTER 21 YEARS STILL A LOVING COUPLE



GRANDMA LYNNE SIRIANNI NUCHERENO



OBIT

DAVID H, ESTENSON, USMC, DELTA CO 3RD RECON, & LIMA CO 3/4, 26TH MARINES KHE SANH VETERAN



Estenson, David H. 75 of Minneapolis, Alexandria and Ft. Myers, FL. passed away on December 21st. David graduated from Washburn HS in south Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota. He was a proud Marine serving in Lima Company 3rd Battalion, Fourth Marines and company D 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, and the 26th Marines 3rd Marine Division Reinforced). Lance Corporal Estenson became squad leader and eventually company operations chief. He received the Presidential Unit Citation and was awarded the Combat-V. David was fresh out the Marine Corps in 1968 after a brave and distinguished tour in Vietnam in the thick of the action at Con Thien, Khe Sanh and other reconnaissance missions throughout North Vietnam.

One day he strolled into the architecture and planning office where his future wife Mary Anne worked. While testing and awaiting an opening with the Minneapolis Police Department, David became an exceptional salesman selling high end furniture to architects for their clients. He always dressed like an Ivy Leaguer and he acquired a lifetime of extraordinary good taste for all things contemporary in the world of art and furnishings. Alas, he joined the police department and eventually took the light, Mary Anne, away from the architecture practice. David was extremely loyal and had a great store of empathy for those he touched and respected. He was always on top of the list to care for those who needed help of any kind. Always there for his friends, their parents and children. David was constantly reaching out to the elderly or ill to give comfort, play some cards or shoot the breeze. His skills of observance and listening, as well as his voracious reading, contributed to a vast intellect which allowed lively conversations with anyone, no matter their station in life.

There was never a fiercer or fairer opponent to square off against on the racquetball court, tennis court, ski hill or fishing on a beloved lake. David was a fine golfer and a student of the game to the very end. He was a member of both the Alexandria and Gateway Golf Clubs. David's abundant curiosity made him a world class traveler who was able to instantly bond with people from other cultures. David and Mary Anne often found time to visit friends stationed in faraway places, and were welcomed with delight. Whether traipsing through Russia alone at the end of the Cold War, cruising the Mekong River, Yangtze River or Seine River, he was a fabulous travel mate except when he would disappear up the road to talk to a local street cop.

Somehow he could always communicate after showing his ID's. While a recently planned trip or two were cancelled, those who knew David well will continue to travel the globe with him alongside in spirit. David was a Minneapolis Police Officer proudly serving for 25 years. Much of that time was with the Minneapolis Police Bomb Squad. Sgt. Estenson was the driving force behind the development of "ESTY", the 32 acre Explosive Storage and Training Yard in the south metro that over the years hosted critical training for bomb technicians from around the country. David is preceded in death by his Father Harold, Mother Clara and brother-in-law Jim Hibbard. He is survived by his wife of 49 years Mary Anne, brother Craig (Susan), brother-in-law John Hibbard (Cheryl), Sister-in-law Margaret Hernlem James), nieces, nephews and cousins from around Sunburg, MN. Goodbye for now, Semper Fi! In lieu of flowers donations may be sent to Hope Hospice,9470 Health Park Circle, Ft. Myers, FL 33908.





OBIT

JOHN R. BRICE, USMC,
KHE SANH VETERAN
INDIA CO 3/26 2ND PLT, 2ND SQD,
Hill 881S





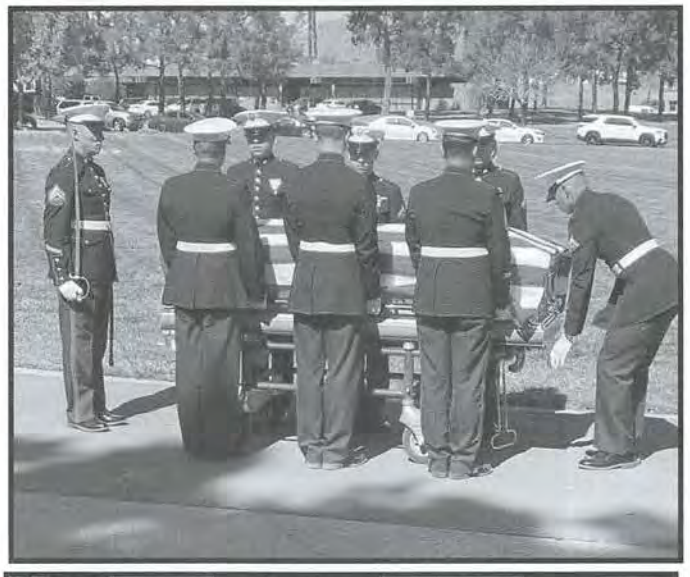







KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS SERGEANT VINCENT RIOS, USMC (RET)

Vince Rios is a veteran of the Vietnam War, recipient of two Bronze Stars and three Purplehearts. after losing both legs and his right arm to a concealed land-mine explosion, Sergeant Rios, known to friends as Sarge, returned home to a hostile anti-war, anti-military, anti veteran civilian world. With medical assistance from the US Department of Veterans Affairs, he recovered rom his severe wounds, underwent physical and occupational therapy, and was fitted with prosthetic devices. With grants from the VA, he purchased and modified an automobile, built a wheel-chair accessible home, and earned two Master's degrees. Over a lifetime career as a federal representative covering the Western United States, American Samoa, and Micronesia, Sarge was a tenacious advocate for the disabled in employment. He retired in 2001.

Sarge was most recently National President of the First Marine Division Association. Now, after completing his term, he is enjoying constant contact with his Marine friends who served with Able/ Alpha One Five of 1st Marine Division. A-1/5 Marines hold strong but diverse views, Sarge observes, but all agree that we are living in the most consequential period in US history. "We also agree, in a noblesse oblige ' sort of way, to voice our views: write, telephone, e-mail and lately, "Zoom' all who we think hold the most hope for salvation." He does so mostly with his grandchildren and enjoys encouraging them to gain as much education as possible; to read the classics, learn more than one language, and to find a wholesome role model He wants them also to be aware that "Grampy's" day, and that of others his age for leading our country, is slowing down and their parents will soon follow. He reminds them that whatever field they choose, make it one they love, and one where they can make their contribution to the fields that are most consequential in governance politics, media, and medicine-for a better world. He also hounds the various groups to which he belongs to set the example, starting with following the letter and spirit of their own by-laws with integrity.

Vince Rios was born in Houston at the end of WWII and joined the Marine Corps out of high school in 1964. When he was retired from the Corps, he chose to stay in California and lived in San Francisco until 2008.

Though he returned to Texas, were Sarge to choose a home anywhere, he says, it would be the Marines' Memorial Club. He joined the Club in 1984 at the encouragement of longtime friend and former Board member Don Reid. He had attended many business events and celebrations at the Club since moving to San Francisco in 1973 but hadn't known that membership a3 open to all Marines.

In 1998 Sarge began serving the first of several terms on our Board of Directors. The discussion at the· time, he recalls, was whether to elevate non-Marine members from associate to regular membership status., and then whether to have sitting members on the Board from the non-Marine branches. He stayed on until 2007.

In 2001, when Harry Reiter retired as General Manager of the Club and a search went out for a replacement, Sarge was a strong proponent of hiring Major General Mike Myatt "There were three candidates" he says, "all Marines. Two had extensive experience in the private sector. The third had virtually none; his career had been spent in the Marine Corps."

Sarge was adamant that Maj Gen Myatt knew things about the Corps and about Marines that the other candidates didn't have time to learn, and should therefore be our choice. Summed up, he says, Myatt knew the true meaning of Semper Fi and Esprit de Corps. He made every persuasive argument he could muster that these were our underpinnings and, in the end, won over unanimous support. Thus a new era for the Club was born.

Since he moved to Texas, Sarge has stayed at the Club maybe a half dozen times. He's joined friends at the Flying Leatherneck Lounge and Leatherneck Steakhouse, stayed over for Veterans Day, Memorial Day and Fleet Week. "Unfortunately" he laments, "time, distance and circumstance have lim-ited my visits and the true joy of being in the Club." Still, the friendships he values most are linked *to* the Marines' Memorial and always within reach.

OBIT

THOMAS N. QUIGLEY USMC
KHESANH VETERAN, B CO 1/26

Tomas "Tom" N. Quigley, 73, of Springfield, passed away on Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at Springfield Memorial Hospital. He was born August 11, 1948, in Springfield, the son of William and Besse Perrine Quigley. He married Nancy L. Lamb on April 12, 1980 and she survives.

Also surviving are his two children: son, Shane Quigley and daughter, Erin (Jacob) Parsons, both of Springfield; three grandchildren, Julia, Autumn and Carlin; and a "bonus" grandson, Arlo.

He was preceded in death by his parents and brother, Bill Quigley. Tom enlisted in the Marine Corps in March 1966 and served a tour in Vietnam from June, 1967 to March 30, 1968. He was honorably discharged in June, 1969, with the rank of Sergeant. In 2010, Tom had the opportunity to participate in a documentary, Bravo: Common Men, Uncommon Valor", in which he was interviewed about his experiences in Vietnam and the siege of Khe Sanh.

Tom was a lifelong resident of Springfield. He belonged to First United Methodist Church. He was a member of the Purple Heart Organization and DAV. He spent almost 35 years in the automotive business as a sales manager, then as a wholesale representative. He retired in 2015.

Tom enjoyed playing poker, video games and was a huge movie buff. He was an avid Chicago Cubs fan and enjoyed listening to Elvis. One of Tom's greatest joys was playing with his grand children.

Graveside Service: was held Friday, April 1, 2022 at Camp Butler National Cemetery, where military honors will be conducted.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society or Wounded Warrior Project.
Share stories & photos at StaabObituary.com









OBIT

DAVID L. HANSEN, USA KHE SANH VETERAN, 237TH MED DET (DUSTOFFS)

Dave died on Monday after a long fight with Prostate Cancer that had spread to his spine. Thank you very much, Agent Orange, from the war that keeps on hunting many of us down. It was Dave who first conceived of a universal Peace Garden at Khe Sanh. He raised funds, made numerous trips to KS, at his own expense, planted trees, and actually got permission from higher-ups in the government to proceed in this large endeavor. He, his wife Carol and Luke attended a number of our reunions and he was always grateful that Tom Eichler gave him time to speak at our membership meetings. Told me that in a phone call 3 weeks ago. Once he was first diagnosed it put an end to his travels there and to his dream. The trees he and many others planted are still there and per his request some of his cremated remains will be sent to Vietnam where the local Vietnamese man he dealt with numerous times has agreed to plant another tree at KS with Dave's cremains in the ground with it. A good man as many of you know. On one of his trips back he hired a local guide and the two of them climbed Hill 950! A monumental feat for someone who was in his late 60's.



OBIT

COLONEL DAVID L. ALTHOFF, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN HMM-262, MAG-36

The Marine Air wing lost a legend today, Col. Dave Althoff (center). I was honored to know the colonel from our MCL detachment in Phoenix. Col. Althoff was a triple Silver Star recipient, along with numerous other combat medals. Col. Althoff was the most humble and decent human being as well as the fiercest combat pilot. Some of the Marines on here may have served with him or crossed paths



Born in Effingham, Illinois, in 1932. Served in Arizona National Guard, U.S. Navy, and commissioned in U.S. Marine Corps in 1954. Served in Korea and flew 1,080 combat missions in Vietnam. Retired as Lieutenant Colonel in 1972 with decorations including three Silver Stars, four Distinguished Flying Crosses. Graduated from ASU with a Bachelor of Science in Business. Active in the East Valley in real estate serving as president of the Board of Realtors in 1975; Past President of Tri-City Multiple Listing Service. President, Chandler United Way, 1975. Served on various medical facility boards since 1973 including nine years as Chairman of Chandler Regional Hospital Board of Directors, and Chairman of Arizona Hospital Federation. Active with American Hospital Association. Inducted in to the Arizona Aviation Hall of Fame, Tucson Aerospace Museum, 2000. Member of Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans.



LTC David L. Althoff and his crew in the period 1967 through June 1968 flew more than 1000 combat missions in Vietnam. During that year in combat, their CH-46 was shot out of the sky four times. Althoff and his crew, in order to resupply forward area troops with ammunition, food and water and rescue wounded troops, placed themselves in harm's way many times Althoff is credited with saving hundreds of Marines who were critically wounded in battle, surrounded by the enemy and in need of immediate evacuation from the battlefield.

Althoff developed airmanship/helicopter combat flying tactics and techniques used throughout the USMC. In 1968, Althoff was selected by the USMC as the Marine Corps Aviator of the Year and awarded the Alfred A. Cunningham Trophy. He is the recipient of 3 Silver Stars, 3 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 1 Bronze Star, 1 Meritorious Service Medal and 55 Air Medals. Althoff has been an Arizona resident since 1948.



Dave Althoff

DAVE ALTHOFF





MAIL CALL



OBIT

COLONEL ROSS A. BROWN, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, CO H&S CO 1/26, XO D CO 1/26

Ross A. Brown was born in San Diego, California on July 25, 1944. He passed away peacefully at his San Juan Island home on Aug. 29, 2022 with his family at his side. As a young man, Ross earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Ross always wanted to be a Marine like his uncle, Ross Miner. He enlisted in 1962, graduated from San Diego State College, and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the USMC in June 1966. He served three tours in Vietnam, including at the Siege of Khe Sanh.



He returned to the US and married his college sweetheart, Kare, in June 1969. Together they lived in Japan, Korea, Okinawa, and many places in the US during his Marine Corps career. Ross commanded a regiment of 4000 Marines during Operation Desert Shield from 1990-1991.

After serving 30 years and earning the rank of Colonel, Ross retired in 1992. Ross and Kare then moved to San Juan Island. Ross spent many happy days on the water fishing for salmon. His most exciting catch was a 40 pound chinook. Ross joined the Einer Nielson-Becky Barr fishing tournament committee to bring the fun of salmon fishing to others. Ross and Kare traveled extensively during their retirement years. He loved being aboard a cruise ship with Kare (rather than with a regiment of Marines!).



Ross is survived by his beloved wife, Kare, of San Juan Island, daughter Care Maree Harper and grandson Odin Harper, of Sammamish, WA and cousins Trish Lehman of Friday Harbor, Broge Miner of Renton, WA, and Eric Miner of Sequim, WA. A memorial service was held at 2:00 PM on Saturday, 8 October at St. David's Episcopal Church in Friday Harbor. In lieu of flowers, Ross requested donations be made in his honor to Disabled American Veterans. Semper Fidelis.

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
VIETNAM



DELTA COMPANY 1ST BN 26TH MARINES
VIETNAM MARCH 1966 TO APRIL 1970

MORE KSV IN THE NEWS

Lake Charles, LA (KPLC) - David Grimm signed up for the Marine Corps in 1968, knowing full well that the Vietnam War was raging in Southeast Asia. Grimm still remembers what it was like the first time he shot at the enemy.

"The first man I shot, I cried," recalled Grimm. "I literally watched him fall and I cried. But then I looked over at the guy beside me and he was dead. The crying stopped. It stopped. It's something that clicks inside of you. You know, you're here to defend your country, but you're also here to defend yourself."



Grimm's 2 tours of duty in Vietnam included some bloody fighting. He remembers being on night patrol at Khe Sanh.

"Just as it was breaking daylight, I watched my point man get shot. I raised my arm up to let my men know to get down, and I got shot in the arm, the muscle came out, and it spun me around and I got shot in the back of the leg in the knee."

Grimm was awarded the Purple Heart for his injuries. He admits it was hard to return home to a nation that was divided over America's presence in Vietnam.

"Maybe I am a little bitter. But I'm not bitter to the point where I wouldn't do it again because if they came to me and said, 'Would you go back?' I know they won't take me. I'm 71 years old now. But I would."

Grimm is especially proud of his three sons, David, Mike and Scott, who followed their dad and joined the Marines, and served in Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan.

SCOTCH PLAINS BOY SCOUT'S EAGLE PROJECT HONORS 'LOST' FANWOOD MARINE MICHAEL MAHAFFEY KILLED IN VIETNAM

FANWOOD, NJ -- A Scotch Plains Boy Scout who discovered a lost soldier with ties to his hometown of Fanwood will unveil a sign above Paterson Rd. at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 28, to honor and remember to Robert Wood, who was killed in the Vietnam War.

For his Eagle Scout project, Michael Mahaffey heard news of lost solider Cpl. Wood, who died in April 1968 at 21-years-old, and decided he had to



do something to aid in the memory of him. Wood was assumed to be a native of Georgia before his birth records were found a few years ago.

"One of the prevailing factors in the interest of Robert Wood was that he was a corporal in the United States Marine Corps, having served in the Vietnam War. Instantly, I thought of my own grandfather

MOMENTOUS CHANGES IN THE MARINE CORPS DESERVE DEBATE. RETIRED GENERALS RAISE TELLING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CURRENT COMMANDANTS RADICAL NEW IDEAS. BY JIM WEBB USMC FORMER SECRETARY NAVY

Where is it written that a subordinate or former commander can set aside deference and demand a second look?

For more than two years many of the Marine Corps' finest former leaders have struggled with this dilemma as they quietly discussed a series of fundamental changes ordered, and in some cases already implemented, by Gen. David Berger, the current commandant. Among Marines there are serious questions about the wisdom and long-term risk of dramatic reductions in force structure, weapon systems and manpower levels in units that would take steady casualties in most combat scenarios. And it is unclear to just about everyone with experience in military planning ·what formal review and coordination was required before Gen. Berger unilaterally announced a policy that would alter so many time-honored contributions of the Marine corps

The unique and irreplaceable mission of the Marine Corps is to provide a homogeneous, all-encompassing "force in readiness" that can go anywhere and fight anyone on any level short of nuclear war. The corps has fought many Political battles to preserve that mission but never from within-until now.

Among other decisions, Gen. Berger's "Force Structure 2030" plan includes theses provisions:

• Elimination of three infantry battalions from the current 24, a 14% reduction in frontline combat strength.

• Reduction of each remaining battalion by 200 Marines, taking an additional 4,200 infantry Marines from the frontline combat capabilities.

• Elimination of two reserve-component infantry battalions of the present eight, a 25% reduction of combat strength.

• Elimination of 16 cannon artillery battalions, a 76% reduction, to be replaced by 14 rocket artillery battalions, for use in "successful naval campaigns."

• Elimination of all the tanks in the Marine Corps, even from the reserves.

• Elimination of three of the current 17 medium tilt-rotor squadrons, three of the eight heavy-lift helicopter squadrons, and "at least" two of the seven light attack helicopter squadrons, which were termed "unsuitable for maritime challenges.'

After several unsuccessful attempts by retired senior officers to engage in a quiet dialogue with Gen. Berger, the gloves have now come off. The traditional deference has been replaced by a sense of duty to the Marine Corps and its vital role in our national security. Recently, 22 retired four-star Marine generals signed a nonpublic letter of concern to Gen. Berger, and many others have stated their support of the letter.

A daily working group that includes 17 retired generals has been formed to communicate concerns to national leaders. One highly respected retired three-star general estimated to me that "the proportion of retired general officers who are gravely concerned about the direction of the Corps in the last two and a half years would be above 90 percent."

There is not much time to stop the potential damage to our national security. Questions should be raised. The law does not give the commandant of the Marine Corps carte blanche to make significant changes in force structure. Title 10 provides that the commandant perform his duties "subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of the Navy," and that the Navy secretary "has the authority necessary to conduct all affairs of the Department of the Navy including ... . organizing,," but "subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense." And the president retains, ultimate authority as commander in chief.

The risk involved in a restructuring of this scale should have required full consideration and debate in such Pentagon offices as the Defense Resources Board, then a formal approval by the defense secretary before being sent to the White House for further review, and then extensive overt-site hearings in Congress. Few of our most serious members of Congress would have simply nodded and funded a program.

who served himself as a captain in the United States Marine Corps, also in the Vietnam War," said Mahaffey, a student at Union Catholic. "Finding a story so similar to my own family is what sparked such a great interest in learning more about this inspiring man." The story of Robert Wood struck an emotional chord for the Boy Scout.
"This is so important to me as I couldn't even imagine what it must be like to have a family member or yourself forgotten by the town that you grew up in," Mahaffey said. "More importantly, I saw this story, thought of my own grandfather, and felt a moral duty to show the respect I have for this great man. Finally, I spent the first ten years of my life as a resident of Fanwood before moving to Scotch Plains. Anyone from this great town is a proud Fanwoodian, and we should honor Mr. Wood as such."

According to the New Jersey Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, Robert Helm Wood was born on Oct. 22, 1946, and was the youngest of six sons born to John and Amelia McLean Wood. The family lived in Fanwood, where Robert attended public school before the family moved to Point Pleasant, where he graduated from junior and senior high school. Military records list his home of record as Fort Benning, GA, but in 1963, at the time of his dad's death (his mother died in 1959), Robert moved to Georgia to live with his older brother, Richard, an Army Major stationed at Fort Benning.

OBIT

WILLIAM P. STILO, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN 1ST BATTALION, 9TH MARINES

William P. Stilo, 74, of East Pennsboro Township, passed away Wednesday December 28, 2022. Born August 1, 1948, in Harrisburg, he was a son of the late Dominick S. and Betty I. (Hissner) **Stilo. Motivated by duty and honor, Bill enlisted in the U. S. Marine Corps from high school and faithfully served his country during the Vietnam War. A survivor of the Battle of Khe Sanh, in 1968, he proudly served as part of the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, known as "The Walking Dead". He was awarded the Vietnamese Service Medal with 3 Stars and a Combat Action Ribbon for his meritorious service.**

Over the years, he was employed in various endeavors from Railroad Conductor to Security Guard. With a naturally outgoing personality, Bill made friends easily and abundantly. He was a member of Lower Allen VFW Post 7530, Bill is survived by his sister, Judith A. Zeiders and her husband, Richard of Pinehurst, NC as well as several nieces, nephews, and cousins. Bill was preceded in death by his brother, Richard A. Stilo.

Relatives and friends were invited to join the family for his viewing on Tuesday January 10, 2023, from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 PM at the Jesse H. Geigle Funeral Home, Inc., 2100 Linglestown Road, Harrisburg followed by his funeral service at 12:00 P.M. with Rev. Dr. Keith A. Blank, officiating. Interment with military honors rendered by the Dauphin County Veterans Honor Guard will be in East Harrisburg Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Marine Corps Scholarship Fund at www.mcsf.org or the Folds of Honor Foundation at www.foldsofhonor.org. Those wishing to share memories or condolences with the family may visit www.JesseGeigleFuneralHome.com.

FROM THE WEB

PETER W. BRUSH , WHISKEY BTRY 1/13 4.2 MORTARS

On this date 55 years ago, I was at Khe Sanh. Samey same many of you. 30 years ago on this date, I was at Khe Sanh. Back in 1993 not many American vets had returned to Vietnam. Fewer had gone back to Khe Sanh, as it was very difficult to visit the former combat base. The only sign it had been a battlefield was this monument celebrating the victory of the Liberation Army over the US and puppet troops. The monument was defaced with graffiti and was taken down by the government -- I don't recall it being mentioned by other visiting veterans. A Vietnamese friend translated the words on the monument for me. Her grandfather, who fought the French and the Americans, passed through the area in 1968 and said "it was a sea of bodies" and he was surprised he made it out alive. I felt that way too on a couple of occasions, back in 1968. Best to all of you.



NEWS FROM THE WEB

"DOC"

The FMF Corpsmen Memorial was finally be dedicated on **October 12, 2022, at Lejeune Memorial Gardens** on Montford Landing Road in Jacksonville, North Carolina. The ceremony will occur at 1000 hours (10:00 AM).

The time is now. A long-awaited dream is at last being realized. The FMF Corpsmen Memorial, nearly fifteen years in the making, will finally be dedicated on **October 12, 2022, at Lejeune Memorial Gardens** on Montford Landing Road in Jacksonville, North Carolina. The ceremony, complete with the 2nd Marine Division Band Brass Quintet, Military Color Guard and much more will occur **at 1000 hours (10:00 AM)** directly behind the Vietnam Memorial. Limited seating is available.

The members of the Corpsmen Memorial Foundation, formed in January 2008, fought an uphill battle to obtain the private funding for this project through many fund-raising projects and grant appeals. They are now happy to reap the rewards of their efforts and present to the public an emotional statue created by renown sculptor, Abbe Godwin, who also created 'The Guardian' statue for the Beirut Memorial.

The statue **(which is loving referred to as 'Doc')** depicts a wounded Marine being treated by a Corpsman who is also shielding him from incoming fire. It is a tribute of the lasting bond between Marine and Corpsman both on and off the battlefield. We welcome the public to join in this celebration and witness firsthand the emotion displayed by both figures in this sculpture. There will be no photography prior to the unveiling of the statue at the conclusion of the ceremony.







MARION , NC 9/11/ 22 HAROLD WILSON'S 1/4 USMC REUNION
Rick Everington, Thomas Gourneau, Jack McLean,
John Arsenault & JP Young









I GET PICTURES

SEABEE : SOMETHING GOOD AT KHE SANH

NMCB 121 Delta CO. I left my weapon and gear behind at Camp. I was packed and ready to go on R&R in Malaysia I had my camera and hoped I haven't forgotten anything. I caught a ride to the airfield at Phu Bai in a Jeep that was going on a mail run. I got dropped off behind a little office about 50 yards from the runway. I stood with a small group of men waiting on the plane. Most of them were going on R&R . Some were talking about the fun to be had in the next five days. We stood and smoked as we waited. I saw the C130 circle and make an approach to the runway.

I heard someone give a cheer as we watched the plane settle toward the runway. As the wheels touched mortars started hitting and exploding around it. The pilot touched and go , we heard the engines roar as the pilot desperately tried to yank it back into the air. As it lifted a mortar hit directly in front of it. The plane seemed to fly right through the explosion as it roared up into the sky. I lay on the ground and watched it fly south , it seemed a miracle that it escaped. The Mortars stopped as the plane flew away. A moan went up , now we have to wait for another plane. I stood up out of the sand and brushed myself off . Sirens were wailing and the runway was damaged .

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OBIT

PETER B. RIEDY USA, KHE SANH VETERAN, 1ST 44TH ARTILLERY

Peter B. Peter B. Riedy passed away peacefully on Sunday, February 5th at the age of 76. Peter was born on February 26th, 1946, to Dick and Ruthie Riedy of West Seneca, New York. He was one of 12 siblings. **Peter was a decorated Disabled US Combat Veteran of the Vietnam War, serving with the 1st of the 44th Artillery Division at Khe Sanh.**

Peter worked as a supervisor in the construction industry with Local 210. Some of his larger projects included the Rapid Transit System, Canisius College athletic field and the Buffalo Bills practice field. Peter worked in the 90's for the Buffalo Bills as the Stadium Operations Supervisor. One of his fondest moments was receiving a "Game Ball" from Marv Levy for successfully preparing the stadium for the '93 AFC championship game by inventing chutes to remove snow. Peter is survived by his best friend and wife of 52 years Peggy Riedy (Edwards) of Orchard Park, NY. His daughter, Shannon Content of St. Augustine, FL, her husband Stephen and their children Fiona (20) and Reid (18). His son, Peter B. Riedy Jr. of Amherst, NY, his wife Marsha Riedy and their two Children, Daniel Morrissey (32) and Natalie Riedy (18). Upon retirement Peter and Peggy lived in Locust, North Carolina, St. Augustine and Lake Wales, Florida. They enjoyed playing golf together and cruising. Peter had a passion for cars and motor racing, having restored several antique cars over the years. Peter adored his grandchildren and loved watching them play sports. He was an honest man with a big heart and a tremendous work ethic The family is planning a military honor funeral and mass to be held in Buffalo, NY, June 2023. In lieu of flowers, donations to Good Shepard Hospice of Lake Wales, Florida can be made in Pete's honor.



VIETNAM STILL WITH DAVE SITZMANN

By LESLIE MIELKE For the Bingham News Chronicle
Nov 10, 2022 Updated Nov 10, 2022

BLACKFOOT – Dave Sitzmann from Blackfoot volunteered for the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He entered the Army on Jan. 6, 1970, and was discharged on Feb. 22, 1972.Sitzmann went to Vietnam on his birthday, July 19, 1970, and returned home, landing in San Francisco on his birthday, July 19, 1971.

"My dad picked me up at the airport in San Francisco; I was greeted by a lot of hecklers. My dad, who was a WWII vet, said of the hecklers: 'This is just ludicrous.'"



After Vietnam and during the war in Iraq, the country realized vets had done a service for them," Sitzmann said. "Since Vietnam vets got out, vets from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are shown respect and honored. It's heart-warming.

When I meet vets from Iraq and Afghanistan wars, they thank me and tell me they are being honored and respected because of what the Vietnam vets went through." In Vietnam, I was a Huey helicopter door gunner and crew chief," Sitzmann said. "The basic work of the crew chief was to have daily and weekly inspections of the helicopter and its guns to make sure they were operable. The crew chief determined if the helicopter flew that day or didn't fly."

Sitzmann was part of Charlie Troop 7/17 Cavalry (Cav).If a helicopter needed major repairs, maintenance handled it. The standard configuration of a four-man helicopter crew were pilot, co-pilot, crew chief, who was the gunner on the left side of the helicopter, and the door gunner on the right side. The helicopter could carry eight infantry men.

The crew chief (and left gunner) was on the left side of the helicopter because the tail rotor is on the left side of the helicopter. The left gunner watched to ensure the helicopter stays clear of trees and branches because it spins much faster than the main rotor. The main rotor is heavier and slower. We were a very slow, lazy target," he said. "Our men could hear us coming; so could the enemy. We would fly whenever or wherever needed, five to seven days a week, often multiple times each day. We would fly a mission, return to base, refuel and go back out."

Normally the helicopter formation was made up of two Cobra helicopters that carried mini-guns (motorized Gatling guns) and rockets; one Huey helicopter that was command control (CC) and one Loach helicopter that was the scout helicopter. The Loach crew was looking for the enemy as well as our soldiers

The Cav unit's job was search and destroy," Sitzmann said. "We were looking for tunnels, stashes, smoke and/or personnel on the ground." War correspondent Joe Galloway, who was the only civilian awarded a Medal of Valor by the Army for combat action in Vietnam, called the pilots and gunners on Huey helicopters "God's own lunatics." "Vietnam is a beautiful country with its white sand beaches and thick jungle canopy — right up to the time the enemy is firing on you." In December 1970, Sitzmann's unit was instructed to "pack everything up and turn it into supply — be on ready to go." In February 1971, the unit was going to Khe Sanh on a top secret mission. They were heading into Laos.

This was a South Vietnamese mission with the objective of closing off the Ho Chi Minh trail," he said. "We were told if we got shot down, American troops could not be put on the ground to find us."The mission did not go well. The name of the operation was Lam Son 719. The South Vietnamese troops were overrun by North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong during the Lam Son 719 operation.

When helicopters came in to help withdraw during Lam Son 719, "the South Vietnamese were hanging off the skids, wanting to be the first ones out." There were drugs over there but not as rampant as reported," Sitzmann said. "The seven crew chiefs and seven gunners on the Huey helicopters formed a pact that came to be known as the 'Slick Platoon.' We could drink beer but no drugs were allowed." All of the members of the Slick Platoon lived to return to the States but one, Sitzmann's door gunner, who died on Feb. 25, 1971. "It was not a good day," he said.

Sometimes I don't have good nights and I have a hard time sleeping. It helps to talk about it." He has attended a number of PTSD clinics sponsored by the Veterans Administration. "They help." "The Vietnam War has never ended for many. There were snakes, booby traps, and people shooting at you. Still now, when I hear a diesel backfire or hear a bang, I'm going down to the pavement. "War sucks" I'm glad I went and served. I think everyone should go into the military; it made me grow up and totally helped me."

Sitzmann was in the Army two years and two months. After returning from Vietnam, he was assigned to Fort Hood, Texas, for six or seven months. The policy for length of service had changed. If the soldier had been in Vietnam one year, he/she could get out early. Sitzmann qualified. He was then assigned to active reserve which required he participate in wargames for one week end a month and two weeks in the summer.

Returning to the States, Sitzmann rejoined his uncle who was an electrician. I've been an electrician my whole life," he said. He and his family moved from California to Blackfoot in 1974In 2008, Sitzmann joined the Elks Lodge because "it has a nice quiet atmosphere." He also serves on the Elks Veterans Board. On Saturday, Nov. 12, the Elks Lodge is hosting its annual Veterans Appreciation Dinner. It's a free dinner for vets; the vet pays for his or her spouse to attend the dinner.



HAS TO BE A MACHINE GUNNER



KATIE AIELLO SCHWEIGARD

"THOSE REMEMBERED" 27 JUNE 1967
By JAMES M. COLLINS A/1/26
"EYE WITNESS"

2Lt Dale C. Allen	I/3/26		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
SSGT William Ivor Tenney Bacon	H&S CO 3/26		Died USS Sanctuary 29 June 67
2nd Lt Lawrence J. Bolger	A CO 1/26		
PFC Frederick J. Brenke	L CO 3/26		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
L/Cpl Victor Lee Burns	A CO 1/26		
Capt Franklin D. Bynum	L CO 3/26		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
L/Cpl Allen James Damian	A CO 1/26		
L/Cpl Jeffrey J. David	L CO 3/26		CAC- Oscar Hill 689
Cpl Anthony D Cesare Jr,	I CO 3/26		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
HM-3 Carl Douglas Dudley Jr	H&S CO 3/26		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
L/Cpl Charles M. Gattis Jr.	I/3/26	KIA 7/5/67	Died Navy Hospital Danang
L/Cpl Alejandro R. Godinez	I/3/26		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
S/Sgt Donald P. Hamilton	1/3/26		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
HM-3 Curtis D. Jackson	H&S CO 3/26		
L/Cpl Freddie L. Johnson	I/3/26		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
Sgt Paul E. Kincaid	A CO 1/26		
L/Cpl Charles A. Lynch	Sub Unit 5 HQ CO , HQ BN		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
L/Cpl Francisco Mazariegos	Sub Unit 5 HQ CO, HQ BN		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
L/Cpl Kenneth A. Millard	I/3/26		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
Cpl Dennis A. O'Connor	Sub Unit 5 HQ CO,HQ BN		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
PFC Paul M. Rodriquez Jr	A CO 1/26		
L/Cpl Glenn E. Sanders	A CO 1/26		Died USS Sanctuary 6/29/67
Cpl James M. Shepard Jr.	Sub Unit 5 HQ CO, HQ BN		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
PFC Rick J. Stewart	A Btry 1/13		
Cpl Edmund B. Travis	1/3/26 A Btry 1/13		
Cpl Richard L. Walker	I/3/26		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
Cpl Stephen G. Wasssenich	I/3/26		CAC-Oscar Hill 689
L/Cpl Jonathan C. Whitticom	H&S CO 1/26		
L/Cpl Ira W. Williams	A CO 1/26		
PFC William J.Williams	L / 3/26		

OBIT

AUTHOR AND MARINE KHE SANH VETERAN MICHAEL LEE DIES AT 76

By Tom Recchio

After joining the Marines, training as a clerk (and an infantryman, as all Marines are), and then being retained on Okinawa for some months to teach scuba diving to fellow Marines, the idea of war seemed unreal to him. When he finally arrived in the country and saw the lushness of the mountain landscape, he thought he was "lucking out."

But he soon learned he wasn't when he was wounded on the day after Christmas. His subsequent exposure to Agent Orange made his initial sense of luck doubly ironic.



Michael Lee died on May 16, 2022, in Brewster after a long, complex illness. He was 76.

The jarring juxtaposition of beauty with sudden brutal reality characterized much of Lee's published writing. In the opening story of his critically praised collection *Paradise Dance,* the narrator describes the fate of his brother, Jake: "It all ended for him in a sudden jungle when his patrol was ambushed just outside Khe Sanh on a January day in 1968."

Jake had been leading an eight-man squad on patrol when he "was hit with a hot knurl of metal that bored into his left arm pit, tumbling and slashing a frightful path to his young heart." For the narrator, and for Lee, "Things seemed much less important since that day."

Lee, an only child, was born in Reading, Pa. to James and Jean Lee on Feb. 23, 1946. The Lees moved to Framingham where Michael finished high school. His parents had a summer cottage in Dennis.

Lee attended college intermittently over many years, earning an associate's degree in journalism from Miami-Dade Junior College, a B.A. from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, and, in the 1980s, an M.F.A in writing from Emerson College.

As he explained in "Witness to War," after high school he was given a football scholarship to attend Oklahoma State University. When he lost the scholarship and became eligible for the draft, he decided to join the Marines.

He had two reasons. His father had survived the battle of Guadalcanal in World War II, and, Lee said, "I knew they trained you well."

Once in Vietnam, Lee was assigned to Khe Sanh, where, he said, "I had to turn my typewriter in for a machine gun," as the base was under siege for 78 days. Lee was engaged in nearly continuous combat. "I remember," he said, "five days before I came back from Vietnam, I was on a night ambush. Then, six or seven days later, I was cruising the bars in San Francisco."

He brought back from the war both a sense of community and solidarity and invisible wounds that would work against any notion of comfort in community.

"I was angry about everything," he told his high school interviewers, "and lived the typical PTSD lifestyle, you know, drinking, drugs, and outbursts of anger, not answering the phone, having nightmares."He lived for a few years in Key West, then in 1978 settled in Wellfleet, which he considered his hometown. Over the years, he worked as a shell fisherman, a chef, a teacher, and a writer. He "made great ribs" when he was running Bahama Mama's with his wife, Kathy Selleck, in the early 1980s, said Ira Wood. But it was in his engagements as writer, reviewer, and teacher that he found a vocation and sustaining community.

Lee hosted a series of readings called "Night of New Works" at the Academy of Performing Arts in Orleans for many years. All writers were welcome,

from published authors to high school students. Beth Seiser, a regular participant, said there was one basic rule: the piece had to be current, a work in progress. Seiser met Lee when she took his adult education course in fiction writing at the elementary school in Wellfleet; she was the youngest in a group of mostly senior citizens. "I handed in embarrassing manuscript after embarrassing manuscript," she said, "but he would find a nugget in each one, even if that nugget was only three words." After that course, Lee invited Seiser to join his weekly kitchen -table writing workshop. Over the decade that she participated, "No one ever left discouraged," she



said, partly because "he was an absolutely hysterical guy." The one piece of Lee's wisdom that remains most powerful in Seiser's memory: "You just have to make friends with the fact that you're a good writer."

That's what Lee himself was, a good writer, but whether he managed to make friends with that fact is anyone's guess. As a Marine, he contributed to *Stars and Stripes* from Khe Sanh; he also wrote for the *Framingham News, Cape Cod Times,* and *Cape Codder*. He was a senior editor for the *Cape Cod Voice,* and his short stories appeared in *Yale Review, Potpourri, Writer's Digest, Northeast Magazine,* the *Boston Herald,* and *Fantasy & Science Fiction* magazine.

Lee published three books, a poetry chapbook, *Low Tide,* writen with Eric Linder of Chatham's Yellow Umbrella Books; the short story collection *Paradise Dance,* published by Ira Wood's Leap Frog Press in Wellfleet; and *In an Elevator with Brigitte Bardot*, a collection of his best columns from the *Cape Cod Voice,* supplemented by eight longer essays.

Library Journal's review of *Paradise Dance* called Lee "New England's best kept literary secret" who "should have been recognized long ago." His work calls to mind that of Andre Dubus and Raymond Carver, observed *Publisher's Weekly*. Norman Mailer thought highly enough of it to provide this blurb for the cover: "Michael Lee's short stories have a rare quality. They are tough, hard-bitten, and surprisingly sensitive to the nuances that motivate behavior in people we assume too quickly are without nuance."

In 2011, it was reported that Lee had finished the first draft of a novel, *Dancing Man*.

Lee is survived by his wife, Julia Cataldo Lee of Orleans; his ex-wife, Kathleen Selleck; and two cousins, Rob Lee of Virginia and Katherine Lee Muir of Florida.

A funeral service with full military honors is planned at a yet to be determined date at the National Cemetery in Bourne.





TRIBUNE CHRONICLE
BY BOB COUPLAND

MCDONALD, WEATHERSFIELD HONOR KHE SANH VETERAN DENNIS JOHNSON STREET TO BE NAMED AFTER VIETNAM WAR CASUALTY

Weathersfield Trustee Steve Gerberry said plans are to name a portion of McDonald Avenue from Ohltown McDonald Road at West Second Street south to Watson Marshall Road as the *"Dennis Johnston Memorial Boulevard." The area of McDonald Avenue is near McDonald High School.*

"Because the road travels through both the village of McDonald and Weathersfield, officials from both communities want to honor Dennis Johnston by naming a section of the road in his memory," Gerberry said.

Seaman Dennis Neil Johnston, a 1966 graduate of McDonald High School, enlisted in the Navy, serving with the 3rd Marine Division, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, HS Company with a specialty as a hospitalman.

Gerberry said **Johnston gave his life while in active service to the United States in the Vietnam War. He said Johnston was killed in action on April 16, 1968, while engaging hostile forces during the battle of Khe Sanh on the south slope of Hill 689 in Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam.**

"He was just 20 years old and was the only graduate of McDonald High School to fall in Vietnam," Gerberry said.

Gerberry said Johnston also is honored at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.
For his bravery, Johnston was awarded the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Navy Presidential Unit Citation, the Vietnam Gallantry Cross, the Navy Good Conduct Medal and the Navy Expeditionary Medal.

Gerberry said the township will install a donated sign along the road reflecting the memorial designation. McDonald Mayor Glenn Puckett said village council, like Weathersfield trustees, also has approved a motion to honor Johnston. Puckett said plans are being discussed to have the official dedication of the sign on Memorial Day or sometime that weekend.

Puckett said he has spoken to Weathersfield administrator David Rouan about plans for the event. He said the area is behind the high school with one side of McDonald Avenue in Weathersfield and the other side in McDonald.

Rouan said Johnston lived in the township on Watson Marshall Road, but attended McDonald school district.

"We were approached by veterans who felt that Dennis Johnston should be recognized in some way for his service and sacrifice," Rouan said.

Raymond Bishop, a retired command sergeant major with the Army, sent a letter to trustees asking them to consider dedicating the section of McDonald Avenue to honor Johnston. He said Johnston was among the 40 Marines and Navy corpsmen killed April 16, 1968.

"I am not requesting to have the road name changed but to have your approval, along with the village council of McDonald, to have the roadway designated Dennis Neil Johnston Memorial Boulevard," Bishop wrote.

Bishop said the request will not cost the township. The signs will be paid for by a fund that has been established to honor those who have died in service to the country and are recipients of the Purple Heart

Rouan said talks have been held to have a sign with Johnston's name and the name of the street at both entrances to that section of McDonald Avenue so motorists can see the sign from both directions.

"It will be large signs that can be seen by anyone traveling by. This will let us show our appreciation for the sacrifice he made," Rouan said.

Dennis Neil Johnston
Born: Dec. 27, 1947, and lived in McDonald
Died: April 16, 1968, in South Vietnam Quang Tri province

Buried: Niles Union Cemetery

War: Vietnam War
Rank: Enlisted E-3
Specialty: Hospitalman
Branch: Navy.

OBIT

LT COL WILLIAM DINWIDDLE USAF, KHE SANH VETERAN

LT. Col. William Dinwiddie "Bill" Tucker USAF (Ret.), 94, of Arlington, Virginia, passed away peacefully on January 18, 2023. Bill, son of the late Hubert Quinton Tucker, Sr. and Mary Elizabeth Carpenter Tucker, was born in Washington, DC, on October 5, 1928.

Bill was raised in Washington, DC, and graduated from Central High School in 1948. He attended the University of Maryland – College Park, where he was a Track & Field athlete competing in middle distance and hurdles, a football player, a wrestler and a member of Kappa Alpha Order fraternity. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree (Dean's List) in Physical Education in 1953.

In 1950, Bill went to Missoula, Montana, to train as a smokejumper, an elite group of fewer than 6,000 members. He was active for three seasons in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and had ten practice jumps and jumped into and fought nine forest fires. One such fire was immortalized in the article "I Jump into Hell," published in the October 1955 issue of Cavalier magazine, where he was part of a team struggling to get their wounded colleague out of the forest. Bill can also be seen in the 1952 film "Red Skies of Montana," working alongside Richard Widmark and Jeffrey Hunter. Until recently, Bill returned periodically to Montana for smokejumper reunions where he would work on clearing trails and reminisce over cold bottles of Moose Drool beer with his friends.

In 1953, Bill joined the USAF Reserves, transitioning to active duty in 1961. He served as a USAF Military Pilot and Aircraft Commander with the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron (Hurricane Hunters) at Ramey AFB in Puerto Rico. In Vietnam, Bill served as a Pilot and Instructor flying C-123s and C-130s on transport and defoliation missions. After the war ended, Bill went back into the USAF Reserves, working at Andrews AFB with the 459th Congressional Wing until he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1979.

His military decorations were many and include the Air Force Commendation, an Air Medal with ten Oak Leaf Clusters (one for Hurricane Hunting and nine for his service in Vietnam, with each Cluster for Vietnam representing five combat missions) and the Distinguished Flying Cross. The citation for the Distinguished Flying Cross notes how Bill successfully completed a high priority mission despite his aircraft sustaining significant damage. He also flew a number of transport missions during the Battle of Khe Sanh.

While stationed at Ramey AFB, Bill met the love of his life, Jeanne McCoy, who was teaching on the base. Bill and Jeanne married on August 31, 1968, in Elyria, OH. The couple eventually settled in Arlington, VA, where they lived in Bill's family home. They remained happily married for 53 years until Jeanne's death in 2021.

His love of horses began in his youth, leading him to be a trainer, to play polo and to ride in the Rappahannock Hunt. He was a member of the Blacksmith



Guild of the Potomac, and an avid collector of U.S. Calvary memorabilia, with many of these artifacts being featured in the U.S. Calvary Museum in Fort Riley, Kansas. One of Bill's greatest joys was spending time down at "the cabin," his family property in Culpeper, Virginia.

Bill will be greatly missed and remembered fondly. Bill was preceded in death by his wife Jeanne McCoy Tucker, and his brothers Dr. Hubert Quinton Tucker, Jr. and Joseph Travis "Joe" Tucker, Sr. He is survived by his sister, Mary Frances Tucker

Fannon, as well as many loving nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews and a great-great niece. Bill will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, with the interment and a memorial service to be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the National Smokejumper Association, https://smokejumpers.com.

OBIT

TOM GUTZKE, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN DECEMBER 6, 1944 - JANUARY 15, 2023

Tom Gutzke, 78, of Lincoln, was born on St. Nicholas Day, Dec. 6, 1944 in Wisconsin and died on Jan. 15, 2023 in Lincoln. After a government sponsored trip to Vietnam with the Third Marines at Khe Sanh, Tom wanted to see America, so became a traveling church photographer and then a professional driver.

He volunteered with Jack Russell Terrier Rescue and also as a gun club range officer. He belonged to four car clubs, Nebraska Rescue Council, NRA and two gun clubs.

Preceded by his parents, Blanche G. & George J. Gutzke, and many beloved animals. Survived by Elisa; his pups - Buddy & Burt; and numerous friends.





FROM THE WEB

THOMAS S BUONO HQ 26TH MARINES

FOR MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, WHO SERVE, HAVE SERVED, AND HAVE GIVEN MORE THAN CAN BE IMAGINED,

With every passing year, some memories fade for some of us, and for others they are as relentless as always, no matter what conflict the trauma of war is never ending, how we cope is a skill we were taught in Boot Camp, in my opinion it is the mental toughness and confidence built into our very being as they tore all the old parts of us away, the words I heard the most were to NEVER BE AFRAID OF SUCCESS, NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL, NOT EVERY DAY IS A GOOD DAY BUT THERE IS GOOD IN EVERYDAY, sounds like cliches, but those words and God brought me back, broken, scared, and feeling beat to hell, but unlike many of our other Brothers and Sisters we came home, A SUCCESS, everyday is a blessing. May each and every one of you Have a Good New Year filled with hope and Success





FROM THE WEB

HEADSTONE DEDICATION CEREMONY
HM-3 MALCOLM GEOFFREY "DOC" MOLE

Finally, a burial service today for Doc Mole who was killed in the opening minutes of the attack on 861. He was returned to Florida; a funeral service was held; but it seems that the paperwork was never filed by the family for a marker. In the decades that followed that went uncorrected. Thanks to some dedicated people in the Orlando area, he finally gets his moment.






KHE SANH VETERANS ATTENDING


VVA VETERANS ATTENDING

Location: Daytona Memorial Park, North (Cedar Hill)
Garden of Devotion Section
1428 Bellevue Ave, Daytona Beach, Fl 32114
Ceremony: 14:00 Hours
Dismissed: 14:30 Hours
Ceremony Duty Sequence:

1. Opening Statement
2. Honor Guard-Fall in
3. Call for wreath presenters
4. Call for presentation of Colors
5. Colors Presented
6. Pledge of Allegiance
7. Prayer– VVA 1048 Chaplain Terry Mone
8. Rifle Volley-21
9. Taps
10. Bagpipes-Amazing Grace
11 Retire Colors
12. Closing Statement
13. Dismissed

Duty assignments

Captain:	**Jerry Gomes**	**Rifle 1:**	**Rich Sawcki**
American Flag:	**Jim Drake**	**Rifle 2:**	**Bob Bedlin**
POW Flag:	**Gabe Sanchez**	**Rifle 3:**	**Bob Adkins**
VVA Flag:	**Giles Bias**		

HOTEL LOCATION & NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Located in Rapid City, Best Western Ramkota Hotel is in the business district, a 1-minute drive from Rushmore Mall and 5 minutes from Main Street Square. This family-friendly hotel is 2.8 mi (4.6 km) from Art Alley and 4 mi (6.4 km) from Dinosaur Park.

POPULAR HOTEL AMENITIES AND FEATURES

Dip into one of the 2 indoor swimming pools or enjoy other recreational amenities including a complimentary water park and a fitness center. This hotel also features complimentary wireless Internet access, tour/ticket assistance, and a ballroom. Getting to nearby attractions is a breeze with the complimentary area shuttle that operates within 10 mi.

BUSINESS, OTHER AMENITIES

Featured amenities include complimentary wired Internet access, a business center, and express check-out. Planning an event in Rapid City? This hotel has facilities measuring 36000 square feet (3240 square meters), including a conference center. A roundtrip airport shuttle is complimentary (available 24 hours).

RESTAURANTS, BARS, LOUNGE & DINING OPTIONS

Satisfy your appetite for lunch or dinner at Minervas, a restaurant which specializes in American cuisine, or stay in and take advantage of the room service (during limited hours). Relax with a refreshing drink at one of the 2 bars/lounges. Full breakfasts are available daily from 6:30 AM to 10 AM for a fee.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS AND GUEST ROOMS

Make yourself at home in one of the 267 air-conditioned rooms featuring refrigerators and microwaves. Cable television is provided for your entertainment. Private bathrooms with shower/tub combinations feature complimentary toiletries and hair dryers. Conveniences include phones, as well as desks and coffee/tea makers.

PET POLICY FOR BEST WESTERN RAMKOTA HOTEL

If you are thinking of bringing your pet and want to know if pets are allowed at Best Western Ramkota Hotel, please read the hotel pet policy. Sometimes the hotel may charge pet fees or have weight limit on pets. The pet policies of Best Western Ramkota Hotel are listed below.

PETS ALLOWED

Service animals are exempt from fees/restrictions
Service animals are allowed
Pet maximum weight in kg is 36
Maximum number of pets per room 2
Pet maximum weight in lb is 80

ADDITIONAL HOTEL DETAILS

Property follows a brand or regulatory agency's sanitization guidelines We Care Clean (Best Western)
Professional property host/manager
Property confirms they are implementing guest safety measures
Social distancing measures are in place
Property follows sanitization practices of Safe Stay (AHLA - USA)
Property is cleaned with disinfectant
Guests are provided with free hand sanitizer



RENO REUNION

2022 KHE SANH ASSOCIATION REUNION
OCTOBER 23RD – 30TH
NUGGET CASINO RESORT
SPARKS, NEVADA
BY CRAIG W. TOURTE

The annual Khe Sanh Association Reunion has come and gone, another year under our belt so to speak. The Reunion was well attended, given the worries about the pandemic, various travel restrictions, and at times, limited staff on hand to handle the ever-increasing traveling clientele. As usual Tom Eichler, Sara (Kathy) and Russell Turner, David Meyer, Tom Ford, Rolland, Dennis Mannion, (Mike Fishbaugh was sorely missed this year), spouses, and those I have unintentionally left out, made it a great success.

The Nugget Casino Resort was a most interesting and historic venue. First opening in 1955 it was known as "John Ascuga Nugget." "The Celebrity Showroom, first known as the Circus Room, played host to Liberace, Peggy Lee, Sergio Franchi, The Osmond Brothers, Robert Goulet, and many other popular entertainers of the day. It has over 1,600 guest rooms and is now famous for the annual "Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-off held annually in September and is considered one of the largest in the country, as well as the largest fireworks show in Northern Nevada after New Year's Eve in Downtown Reno."

Several of our attendees took advantage of the van the Association rented and rode up to Virginia City, besides visiting the "Bucket of Blood" Saloon they took a rather famous train ride. I'm not identifying this individual but while visiting the "Bucket of Blood" for a beer, the train left without him. I thought that was a great story to share.

"The Virginia and Truckee Railroad's northern terminus is located at Virginia City. A project was started in 1972 to begin rebuilding one of the nation's "crookedest railroads". The portion of the line that has been rebuilt so far stretches south to Carson City and through Gold Hill. The project ran the first steam engine from Carson City on September 5, 2009, and continues to provide tourist excursions between Carson City and Virginia City on weekends. Other trains are pulled by historic locomotives on weekdays between Virginia City and Gold Hill on 35-minute round trips."

The buffet dinner was wonderful, and I particularly was partial to the Peach Cobbler, some of the best I have ever eaten. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and it was great to visit with old friends and make new ones. As Bruce Geiger once told me, and I'll paraphrase here, "The Association is not anything without the reunion." I thought that was correct and very poignant. Those of us who can and are still able should make an effort to attend these reunions or our Association will cease to survive. Those who were unable to attend this year were most certainly missed and we all look forward to seeing as many as possible.



RUSS TURNER PRESIDENT & REUNION CHAIRMAN OPENS THE KSV ANNUAL REUNION IN RENO, NV

The 2023 Khe Sanh Annual Reunion will be held in Rapid City SD from 08 Oct to 15 Oct 2023 at the Best Western Ramkota located at 2111 N Lacrosse St, Rapid City, SD 57701. Room rates are $84.00 (plus local tax) rate is good for three days before and three days after the reunion dates. Parking is free. There is a free courtesy shuttle from the airport. (Please sign in at airport concierge for shuttle when you arrive) Please contact the hotel directly at 605-343-8550 to make your reservation. Tell them with you are with the Khe Sanh Veterans to get the room rates. Any questions please contact Russ Turner (314-368-5853) or Kathy Turner (314-368-5016).

























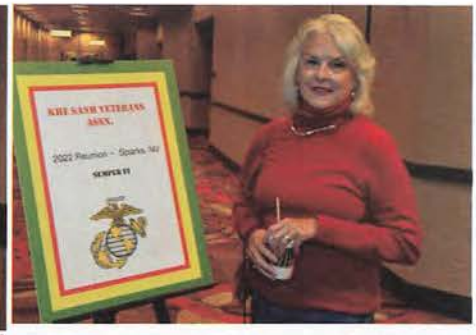
KHE SANH VETERANS
ASSN.
2022 Reunion - Sparks, NV
SEMPER FI




USMC





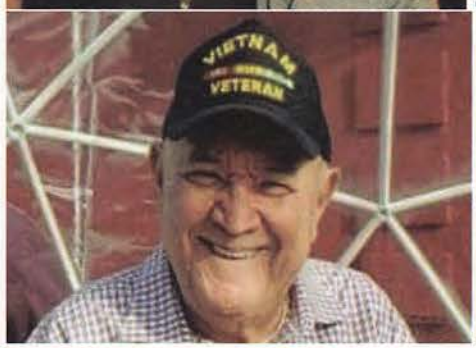
VIETNAM
VETERAN








947







FROM THE WEB
WHERE DID EVERYONE GO?
By Craig W. Tourte

I have heard and read all of the stories, as I am sure you have. How there were so many of us on Khe Sanh Combat Base during the Siege that they just could not put any more boots on the ground in that very small space. How we were stepping all over each other. They could just supply so many people with so much food; ammo and we had reached our limit. I guess that was true, I have read there were from five to six thousand of us. Seems like a huge number for a place measuring about one half mile by about a mile. Made it sound like us troops were standing shoulder to shoulder in the trench line with no room to spare. I guess the numbers were correct, but my question is, where in the heck were you?

When that big old rocket screamed in on me I laid down in a communication trench dug just a few inches below the ground, as it smashed into the ground just inches from me, I was alone. When the 152's went off and were roaring my way, I dived into a bunker on the line and I was all alone as the ground shook from the impact beside me, you must have left. As I got up from my fighting bunker which was just one sheet of runway matting I placed over the trench line and put a couple of layers of sandbags on top and that rocket entered right where I had been standing just seconds before, I was alone again, where did you go. When I stood guard all night long at the main gate and that snake crawled over my feet and the rats onto my lap, you were not around. I could not see you on either side of me. I was alone as usual, what happened to you. As I looked out into the foggy night, looking for movement and the shadows I knew were the enemy, only I could see them, you were not to be seen. As I ran to Charlie med to repair the shrapnel wound to the back of my neck, I ran alone and you were not beside me.

When I prayed to God every morning to let me live another day, you did not pray with me. When I thanked God at night for letting me live another day, you were not there to thank him with me. Sometimes at Khe Sanh I just felt so alone, but you were there weren't you? Standing right beside me, because if you hadn't been there with me, I wouldn't be here today. Thanks for sticking around.

RESPONSE:
I was a United States Navy Seabee and I was NEVER alone even when I was. I always knew my brother Seabees and Marines were with me at Khe Sanh and those that are surviving are with me today. One of the things that I am proudest of when it comes to my military awards is that they are all unit commendations. We worked as a unit, brothers. We were never alone.
DENNIS WALER CBMU-301 DET B SEABEES

FROM THE WEB
THOMAS S. BUONO
HQ 26TH MARINES

55 years ago, today, it started at the Main Base. We lived, laughed, bled, cried for our fallen, and somehow God spared us to tell the story of our Brave who can no longer speak of those 77 days of the largest battle in Marine Corps History. It is said more ordnance was used in defense of Khe Sanh than the landing of Normandy, I have no doubt it is true, we had multiple artillery bases, Air power 24/7, support troops from the Army at the end, clearing Hwy 9, and every ambulatory Marine of the 26th Marines ready for some payback. Gen. Giap who orchestrated the Siege had failed, even though he had beaten the French at Dien Ben Phu 15 years earlier, but we were not the French, we prevailed at a terrible cost, but that's what Marines do, we live, laugh, bleed, cry, and stand tall for God and Country! We honor all our fallen, from all branches who gave us support, and the leadership of our beloved Col. David Lownds, Rev Ray Stubbe Thomas Eichler, and so many more too numerous to mention, but most of all, I honor God for putting me with my Brothers of the 26th Marines, men of Honor, Distinction, and Brothers Forever.

God Bless and keep all safe for the time we have left, as we honor our HEROS each and everyday, through Red Clay Magazine and the KHE SANH VETS page we are blessed to have






















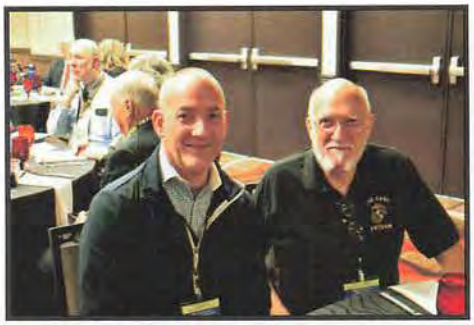











VIETNAM
VETERAN


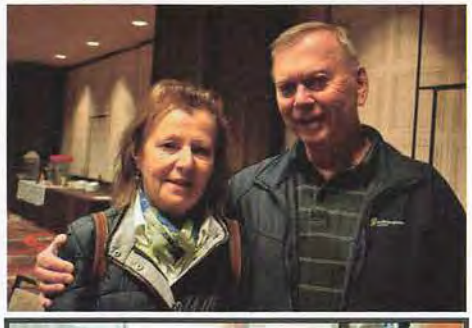






Tim Haley

U.S. Marine Corps 1966-1969
The Vietnam War - *The Walking Dead*; Khe Sanh

Tim served in the Vietnam War on 1st battalion 9th Marines 3rd Marine Division as a rifleman. His Specialty was 81 mm mortars, but they put you where they needed you. Eventually he got into 60mm mortars in Charlie Company and remained with them for 13 months where he attained the rank of Corporal. His battalion was known as "THE WALKING DEAD', due to the highest number of casualties sustained by any other battalion in the history of the Marine Corps while in country.

Tim held numerous jobs throughout his service, including, rifleman, ammo carrier, 60 MM mortar gunner, squad leader, section leader, and weapons platoon sergeant. His combat operations were in and around the De-militarized Zone and numerous locations throughout Vietnam. Most notably was Tim's service during the now famous battle known as, "The Siege of Khe Sanh."

Tim's medals and ribbons include the Purple Heart, Navy Achievement with Combat "V," Good Conduct, Combat Action Ribbon, two Presidential Unit Citations, National Defense, Vietnamese Gallantry Cross Color with Palm Unit Citation, Vietnam Service with three Bronze Stars, Vietnam Campaign, Rifle Sharpshooter Badge, and Pistol Marksman Badge.

After his service, Tim completed college on the GI bill and has been happily wed to the love of his life, Janet Campbell, for 54 great years with whom he has two daughters and three grandsons. He has retired from the pool and spa industry, and stays busy between, spending his time with family, especially his wife Janet, hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, travel, gardening, horseback riding, boating, and his volunteer commitments with veterans' organizations.

Tim's commitment to remembering the fallen and honoring those who continue to serve and sacrifice for our freedoms is noteworthy. Tim's an active member of the Central Coast Leatherneck Honor Guard, providing color guards at special events and military honors at funerals for veterans. In 2002, he was a Founder of our museum, CCVMM, Museum Director, and Board Member, developing the mission to 'honor all veterans from past and present'. He went on to spearhead a Hwy 101 Purple Heart sign project, as part of the nationally recognized Purple Heart Trail, securing 10 signs along the Hwy. In 2010, Tim was awarded "Veteran of the Year" for California Assembly District.

Tim's lifelong dedication to his fellow veterans and the veterans' community at large are reflected in his many activities with the following: 1/9 network, 3rd Marine Division Association, Khe Sanh Veterans, DAV, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Los Osos Valley Memorial Park Veterans Events Committee, past Board Member of Atascadero Faces of Freedom Veterans Memorial, Junior and Senior Vice Commandant of Central Coast Marine Corps League Detachment #680, past Commandant. Toys for Tots, member of Veterans Recognition Day Luncheon Committee and American Heritage Monument committee, to name just a few.

God Bless and keep all safe for the time we have left, as we honor our HEROS each and everyday, through Red Clay Magazine and the KHE SANH VETS page we are blessed to have.



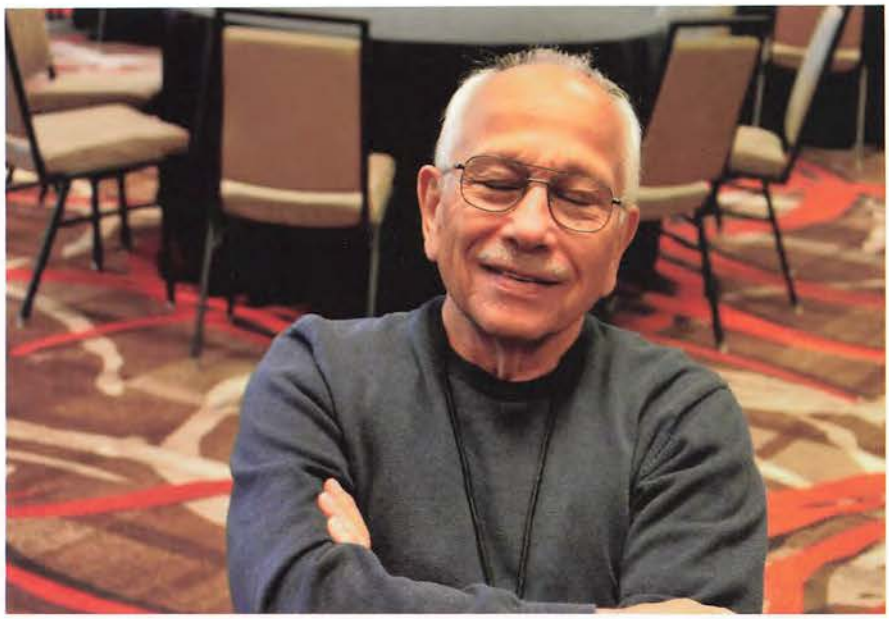













OBIT

JOHN E. MCRAE, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

John E. McRae passed away suddenly on Saturday, Jan. 7, at the age of 75 in a no-fault single car accident on the Ohio Turnpike south of Cleveland. He was returning home from a trip to New Jersey.

John was born in Lumber City, Ga., on March 11,



1947, and lived in his home state of Georgia until his teens, when he moved to Newark, N.J. **After high school graduation, John joined the US Marine Corps. He was deployed to Vietnam, where he was one of the few to survive The Hill Fights, the first battle at Khe Sanh.**

Upon returning home from the military, John looked for a job, enrolled in college, met and eventually married his wife Joy. It was a soul connection. John and Joy enjoyed 52 years of hard work and fun, with adventures together to the mountains of Jamaica. the coast of southern California, the deserts of New Mexico and the fall foliage of New York State.

In his young adult life, John built a successful career driving charter bus tours to hundreds of sites in the U.S. and Canada. His competent professional driving skills and his courteous charm and lively sense of humor won the hearts of passengers, young and old. He had a special place in his heart for his senior citizen passengers and went out of his way to handle everything needed for a safe, memorable trip.

John's greatest loves were animals, food, fixing things, planting trees, jazz and Jeeps. Like his mother Nealie, he loved to cook and listen to exclamations of delight as people tasted his blueberry pancakes or his jerk chicken, black-eyed peas and collard greens while listening to the jazz of Wes Montgomery or Miles Davis.

In John's lifetime he restored an 1890's Victorian house, a 1950's lake cottage and more old Jeeps than we can count! At his last house he rekindled his childhood joys of living closer to the land, planting trees and growing okra and tomatoes. All kinds of animals found John and looked to him for healing or company everywhere he went: trapped birds, lost dogs, stray cats, deer, raccoons, squirrels, possums, even groundhogs and moths! Hawks mystically appeared and kept him company in times of need.

John is survived by his wife Joy, his daughter Mashanda Winfrey (Sharon Bivens), his grandchildren Genavee Winfrey (Nathaniel Barnes III) and Jae Atunbi-Winfrey, his great-grandchildren Zaire and Cairo Barnes and many dear relatives and friends in Georgia, New Jersey, Ohio and Jamaica. Walker Funeral Home in Port Clinton handled John's cremation. At his request, there will be no funeral, and his ashes were scattered in water at three locations. Online condolences may be shared at www.walkerfuneralhomes.com. Memorial contributions in memory of John can be made to Friends of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge friendsofottawanwr.org).





FOR ALL THOSE INQUIRING ABOUT OUR FOUNDER REVERAND RAY W. STUBBE. HE IS LOOKING WELL IN THIS PHOTO SENT TO DENNIS MANNION BY A WOMEN HE MET AT THE WASHING OF THE WALL IN DC.



RAYS CURRENT ADDRESS
Lutheran Home
Ray Stubbe Room 3141
7500 West North Avenue
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin 53213



Comments:

HIEN NGO

I read the book Valley of Decision: The Siege of Khe Sanh that Ray Stubbe and John Prados (who passed away a few months ago) co-authored. I really enjoyed the book and learned a lot from it, particularly since I spent two years teaching English at Khe Sanh High School. On Jan 8, 2023, I met Chuck Theusch, a US Army veteran who founded Children's Library International, in Dong Ha and Chuck informed me that Ray Stubbe made donations to his War Legacies Project which provides sponsors to the victims of unexploded ordnance accidents in Quang Tri Province. On the next day, Chuck traveled up to Khe Sanh to hand Ray's donation to the Bru family of 15-year-old Ho Van Sy who was injured when a bomb fuze he found while looking for honey in his village near the former airstrip exploded (he had tampered with it). Ho Van Sy now has fully recovered from his injuries and is enrolling in a high school for the Bru in Quang Binh Province. Please convey our appreciation to Rev. Stubbe. God Bless Him!



In the photo: Chuck Theusch gave Ho Van Sy who was seriously injured in a post-war unexploded ordnance accident in June 2022 the War Legacy Grant contributed by Chaplain Ray Stubbe.

There were to so many comments concerning love for Ray that I would have had to use this whole Red Clay Magazine. So please do not be offended if your comment was not included

Tom Eichler
Editor Red Clay



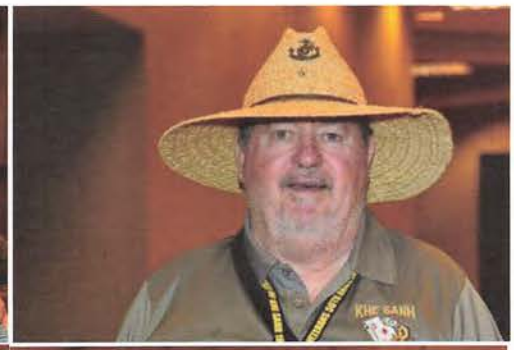
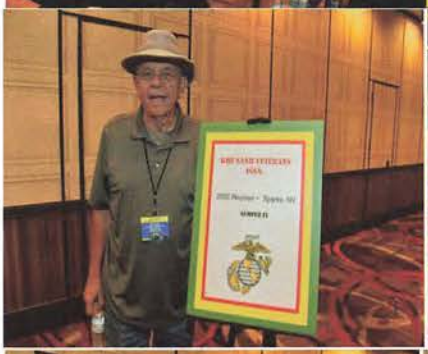




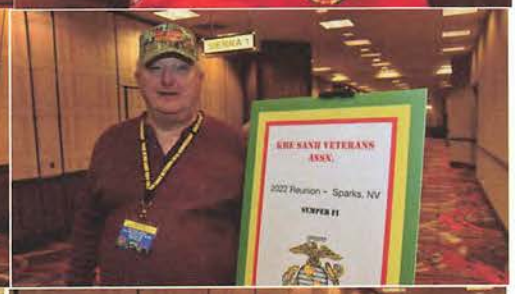
KHE SANH VETERANS ASSN.
2022 Reunion - Sparks, NV
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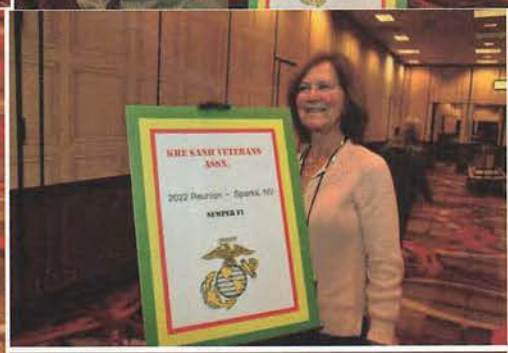
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2022 Reunion - Sparks, NV
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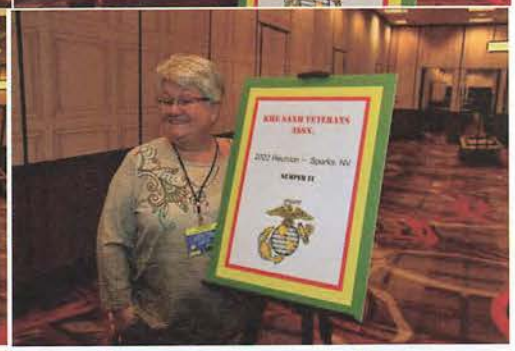
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2022 Reunion - Sparks, NV
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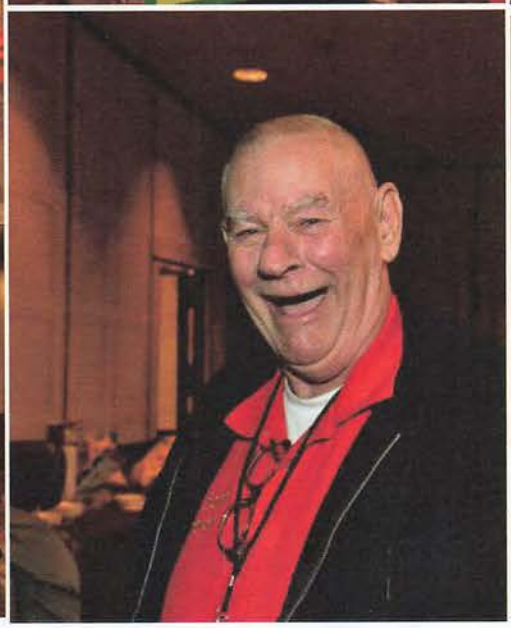
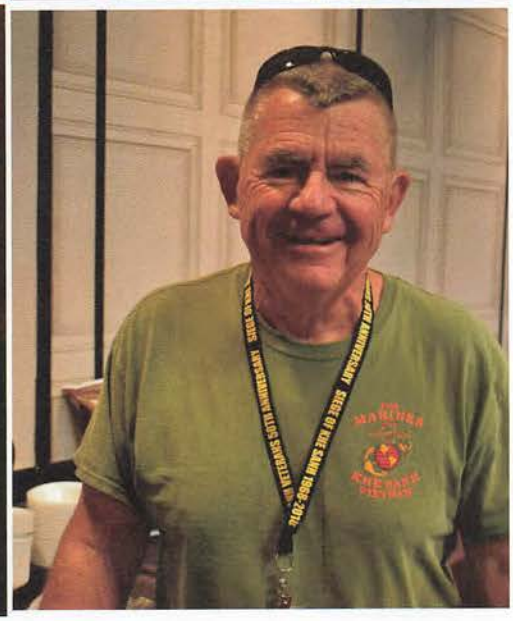
KHE SANH VETERANS ASSN.
MARINES
KHE SANH


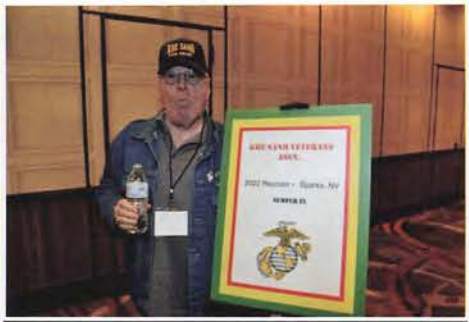



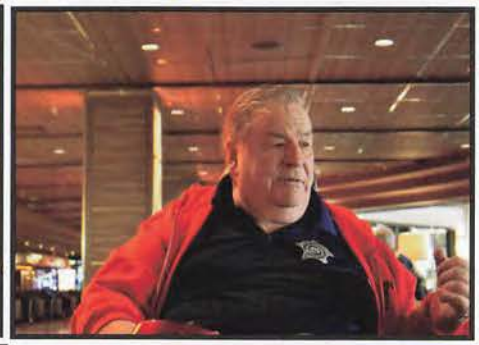




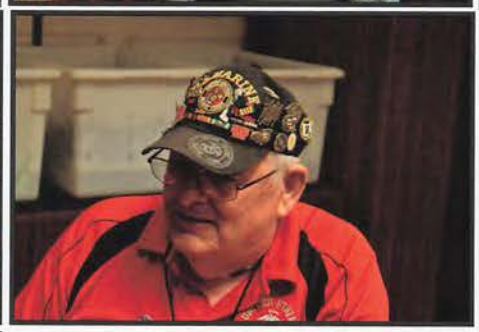

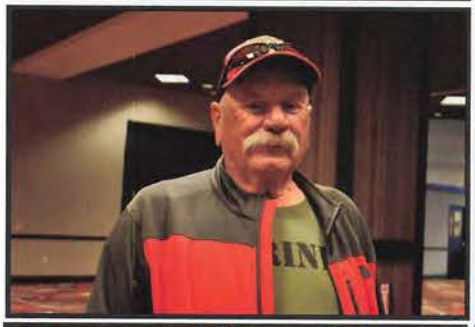

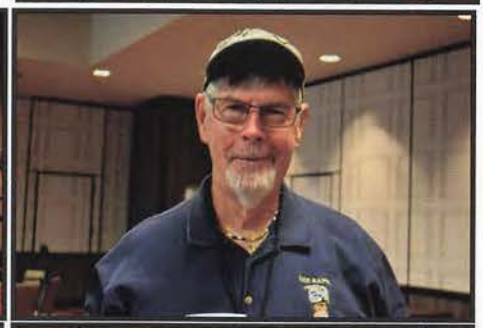


CORPSMAN



KHE SANH VETERANS ASSN.
2022 Reunion ~ Sparks, NV
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3RD MARINE DIVISION
HONOR
WELCOME
W/1/13th Marines
HE SANH VETS



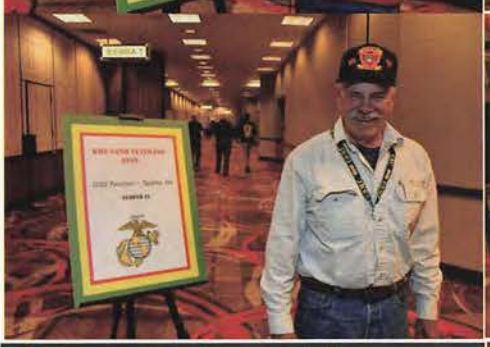
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KHE SANH VETERANS ASSN.
2022 Reunion ~ Sparks, NV
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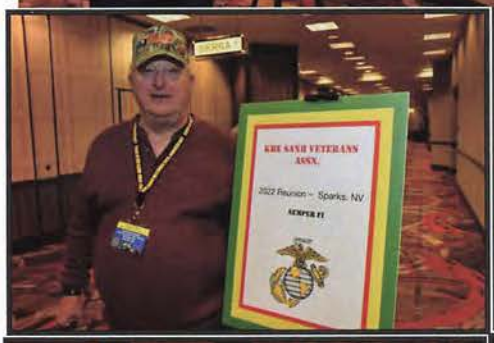
KHE SANH VETERANS ASSN.
2022 Reunion ~ Sparks, NV
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USMC












VIETNAM
VETERAN


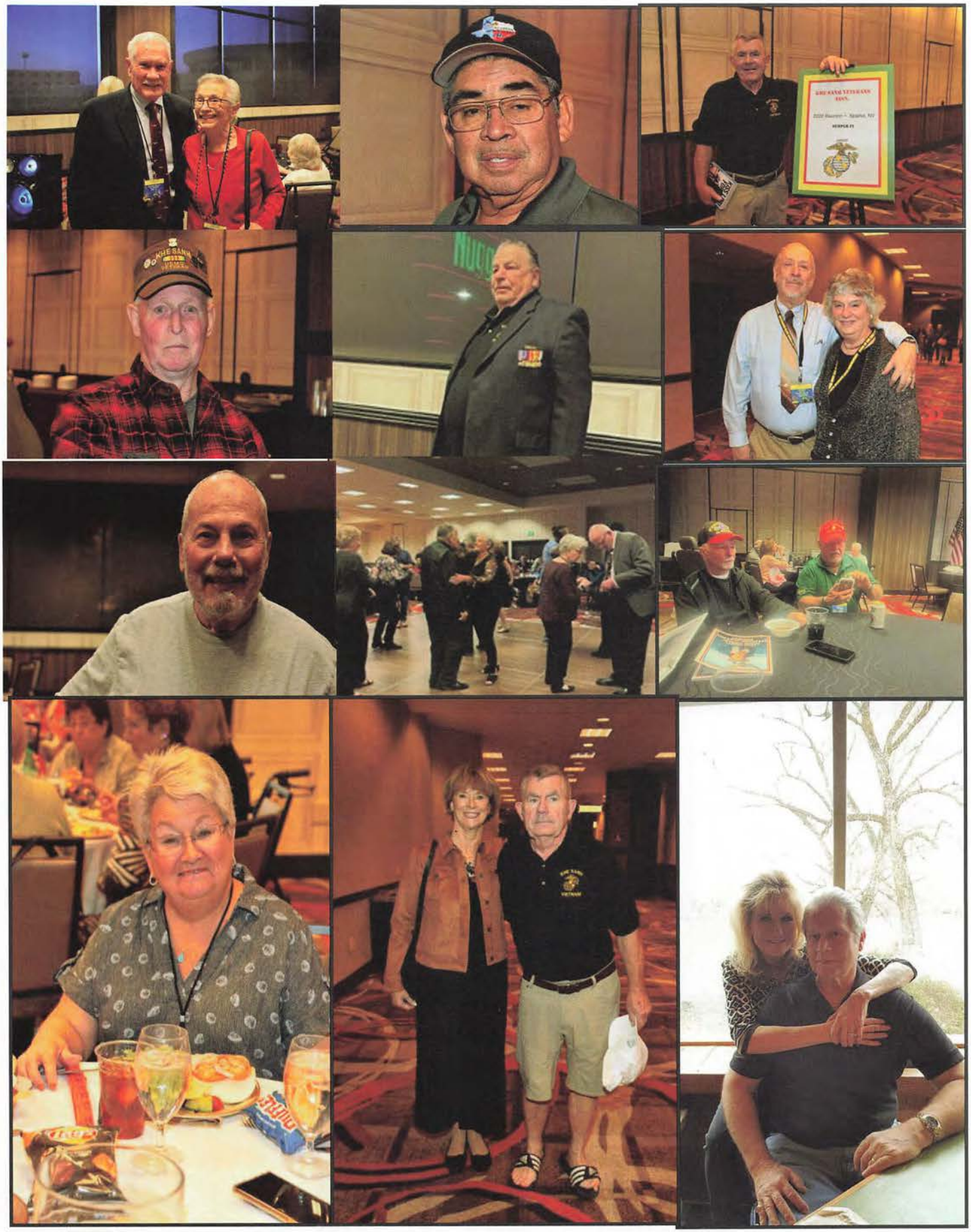

JUST CHILLIN

VETERAN DENNIS MANNION RECOUNTS PERSONAL CONNECTION TO VIETNAM MEMORIAL

BY JOHN ROOK, CHESIRE HERALD STAFF

When Cheshire native Dennis Mannion heard that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall was set to be revealed in Washington, D.C. in November of 1982, he knew he had to go.

Then an English teacher at Sheehan High School in Wallingford, as well as a coach of the Choate Academy football team, Mannion informed his bosses that he would need to take some time off. Jumping into his car, the Vietnam War veteran who served in the Marines for three years, drove all the way down to Alexandria, Virginia, where he checked into a hotel for the night.

"I called my wife (Joan) and told her that I'd arrived safe and sound," recalls Mannion, "and it was (in the evening). She said to me, 'I don't want you going back into D.C. at night,' and I said, 'Oh, no. I'm just going to stay here and order a pizza.'"



Cheshire's Dennis Mannion, a Marine who served for three years in Vietnam and fought in the Battle of Khe Sanh, has been making regular trips to the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C. since it opened in 1982 and will be a part of the Traveling Vietnam War Memorial ceremonies when it arrives in Cheshire on June 1.

That's exactly what Mannion did. However, after finishing a few slices for dinner, the thought occurred to him: He hadn't driven all the way down from Connecticut to stay in a hotel room for the night. He needed to see the wall.
So, Mannion jumped back into the car and went directly to the memorial.

There was no pavement in front of the wall. No lights had been installed. It was dark, and Mannion admits that, at first, he had a hard time figuring out exactly how to navigate the long, black marble wall that contained more than 57,000 names at the time (there are now more than 58,000 listed).

He knew he was looking for one name in particular — Lt. Benjamin Fordham.

"There were a few people there," Mannion remembers. "One guy saw me and asked if I needed help. I told him I was looking for a name and knew it had to be (listed on a certain section of the wall)."

The man had a flashlight and, directed by Mannion, pointed the light to where Fordham's name was believed to be, and … there it was.

"The man said he'd be around if I needed any more help, and I said thanks," said Mannion. "As soon as he left me, I fell to my knees. I just cried and cried."
"I didn't go back to the hotel for two days," he continued.

Mannion volunteered for the Marines in 1966, just after turning 20 years of age. His father, who worked for the FBI at the time, was distraught, but Mannion believed it was something he had to do. Years later, when father and son discussed that time in Mannion's life, his father would admit that his frustration and fear was partly born out of believing, because of information available to him through his job, that the war could not be won.

In 1967, Mannion found himself at Khe Sanh, a mountainous area of South Vietnam near the Laos border. Though not an officer, Mannion was made a forward observer, the only enlisted man in K-Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines to hold such a designation.

"It meant I had a map," said Mannion. "You hear (veterans) say sometimes, 'I didn't know where the hell I was.' I always knew where we were. That really helped me."

A forward observer's job is to be the eyes of the artillery, accurately plotting coordinates so as to quickly and effectively engage the enemy. At Khe Sanh in the fall of 1967, it meant Mannion was at the top of Hill 861, overlooking what would become

one of the most famous battlefields in the entire Vietnam War.

As Mannion explains, in December of 1967, he and his fellow Marines took a shower — a quick dash of water, a little use of soap, and then rinse off — and did not take another one until April of 1968.

"I was on hill from that point forward," he explains- For those reading about the Battle of Khe Sanh in the history books, it is described as one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the war. The attack by the North Vietnamese came at midnight on January 21, 1968, with a massive artillery strike, one that led to the American main store of ammunition being destroyed, along with 90% of the U.S. artillery and mortar rounds.

It was determined by American military leaders that Khe Sanh should be defended at all costs, which resulted in 77 torturous days of fighting.

Mannion lived it ... and lived through it, despite being injured twice. In recounting his experiences during the intense battle, he recalls one evening before the major attack, when he was sent down into the trenches. There, he and his fellow Marines could hear the enemy troops cutting the wires to make their forward surge possible, talking as they did so. The impact on the Marines, who did not fire so as not to divulge their location, was chilling.
"I thought, 'Oh, my God, they are coming here,'" Mannion stated.

He also remembers the grizzly sight of North Vietnamese troops who had been killed during fighting while trying to get through the wire defenses, and how their bodies were left there by the enemy to rot.

"Within (a few weeks) they were just skeletons," he said. "Between the rats and the maggots ... they were just skeletons there, with their helmets, their backpacks still on."

Life-and-death experiences became an everyday occurrence at Khe Sanh. One time, during an artillery attack, when a mortar landed right in between his foxhole and a friend's, Mannion just barely escaped unscathed, though he didn't initially realize it. When the two Marines emerged, Mannion noticed a portion of the artillery round still stuck in the ground. As he inspected it, his friend pointed Mannion towards a towel hanging outside his foxhole, and the "hundreds of holes" that were in it.

"That's how most of the (soldiers) in Vietnam died ... not from bullets, but from shrapnel," said Mannion. He kept the towel.

Through it all was Fordham, with whom Mannion spent much of his time.

While. normally a forward observer would be invited to stay with the officers, Mannion's superior did not like the idea of an enlisted man serving in that capacity. That meant that he and Fordham were together "kind of freelancing."

"We were just kids," he recalls. "We used to exchange books. We would talk about all kinds of things. We'd talk Texas football, Notre Dame football."

U.S. officials had expected that the North Vietnamese would mount a major offensive against the base at Khe Sanh but it never materialized, so by mid-April a joint operation Army, Marines, and South Vietnamese soldiers — was conducted to relieve the Marines at Khe Sanh.

On Mannion's final day on Hill 861, he and Fordham were waiting to be evacuated by helicopter. Mannion was set to go first, with Fordham right behind. "We were in the dirt together. His group had LZ (landing zone) security, so they were going to be the last group out," recalled Mannion. "As I start to get up, he squeezes my hand and says, 'Good luck — I'll see you at the base."

Approximately five minutes later, Mannion had landed at his destination, waiting for the last group of Marines, including his friend to arrive. "Who comes in but a bunch of Marines, carrying five dead," he said, "and one of them was Lt. Fordham." Fordham had been killed by an artillery shell that exploded at the ramp of the helicopter as he was boarding.

As Mannion sat on the ground in front of the wall in D.C. that November night in 1982, names began to flood back to him. Mannion vowed that, over the years, he would make it a point to visit the memorial at least once every five years, a schedule he has stayed true to.

On one such visit, with family and a few friends from Cheshire, Mannion woke his group early to arrive at the wall before the crowds began to emerge. As he found names of the men he'd known listed on the wall, he began to tell the stories that accompanied those names. At first, it was just his group that gathered around. Then, he noticed a few

other people standing close by, listening. By the end, a whole audience had formed.

"There were (dozens) of people there, just listening," he said. "I think it's just a really powerful experience for so many people."

Mannion was a part of the proceedings when the replica wall arrived in Cheshire back in 2007. He spoke on the first night it was displayed, sharing with an audience of young and old, not just his experiences during the war, but also his belief that all veterans need to be honored for their service.

In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, the country was divided, and while Mannion insists he was never mistreated for being a veteran upon arriving home, he did feel the impact of those divisions.

On his flight back from Vietnam, he was seated next to another man who asked him where he was headed and where he was coming from. When Mannion explained that he was on route to Connecticut after having served in Vietnam, the man asked if he'd seen "any combat."

"I said, 'Yeah, a little,'" remembered Mannion. After the flight lifted off, the man hit the call button for the flight attendant, who immediately responded and asked how she could help. "He said, 'I need a seat as far away from this man as possible,'" recalls Mannion, "and he moved his seat."

Similar instances arose when Mannion began attending the University of Connecticut, on his way to pursuing a career as a teacher. When fellow students would learn of his service in Vietnam, some would pick up their items and move. "That happened quite a number of times," Mannion stated.

Now, the mood has changed. Mannion proudly displays a license plate that has "Khe Sanh" on it, and he will routinely wear a shirt that announces that he is a Vietnam veteran. Many will now stop and thank him for his service.

It's one of the things he most enjoyed about the wall when it came to Cheshire the first time, and what he hopes a younger generation will appreciate now. Mannion compares the wall to a high school yearbook, where "time stops." "There is no future in a yearbook," he said. "The wall is the same way. Time stopped for the names (listed on it). Every one of them has a story. Some were (high school) educated, some were college grads … all were different."

"When I speak to the students (in lead-up to the arrival of the wall in June), I want to make the point of just how much has happened just in the time since 2007, when the wall was last here," he continued. "The world keeps on moving, but for those men, it all stopped."









VETERANS, ORGANIZERS LOOKING FORWARD TO MEMORIAL WALL VISIT

MEMORIALS

THOSE REMEMBERED

Capt Walter Egger USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
GSGT John J Grohman USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
1t Paul W. Bush USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
LCpl Stephen C Shannon USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
Sgt Manuel Floyd Martinez USA A-1/44 KIA 9 06 68
Cpl Fergus J. Carroll USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 18 Jun 68
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC A HQ Btry 1/13 KIA 09 Mar 68
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68
Remembering All "Bastard Bravo" Marines and their families
Captain Bill Person USAF 553 3RD Recon Wing
James Wright
PFC Donald Saunders USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 KIA 04 Mar 68
Sgt Donald Ray Chamblin USMC HQ BTRY KIA 08 Mar 68
GYSGT Charles Perkins USMC DOW 17 May 1968
SSgt Karl E. Taylor USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 12/98/68
PFC Roland T. Marshall USMC M CO 3/4 KIA 5/17/68
Capt Daniel Coonan USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 10/08/68
1Lt Thomas Reich USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 11/17 68
Sgt Major James Gaynor USMC KIA 25 Feb 68
Doug Ipson USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 09/15/68 LZ Margo
Steve Rienhart USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 09/16/68 LZ Margo
Nate White USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 05/06/68 Cam Lo
All Members of Det A-101 Lang Vei & All who served at FOB-3
All the men of HQ Btry 1/13 Who Gave Their Lives So We can Enjoy THE FREEDOM WE HAVE TODAY
Cpl William E. Wyrosdic USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 10/08/68
Always remembering all those KIA HILL 689 27 June 1967
L/Cpl Adrian Brittle USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 9/21/68
2LT Donald Jacques USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68
CPL John Greene USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 04 July 1968
LCPL Frederick B. Link USMC C CO 1/9 KIA 3/1/68
All Marines & Corpsman who served on Hill 861A in Jan/Feb & Mar of 1968
All Marines KIA of Delta CO 1/26
All Marines 1/1 & 2/1 Hotel CO
DR John Magilligan, d. 29 Jan 2013,DR Ed Feldman d. 03 Oct 2017&
DR James Finnegan . 13 Sep 2013 From Charlie Med
All who served at Khe Sanh
HN William A. Beyer "Willie" USN H&S Co 3/26 KIA 2/1/67
1LT John Ellis USMC Crash-Rescue Crew OIC KIA
Gy/Sgt Joe H. Kahee Crash Crew Passed Away October 2019
PFC David A. Cramer, USMC KIA 22 Feb 68
PFC Leslie G. Aputen USMC KIA 15 May 68
PFC Francis W. Lamon USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 04/17/68
PFC William W. Lawrence USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 04/17 68
PFC Charles T. Johnson USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68
L/Cpl Darrel W. Cottrell USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68
Thomas Jack Pennington KIA 27 Jan 68 at "Mikes" Hill Mike CO 3/4
PFC Ricky Marson USMC F CO 2/26 KIA 4/7/68
Mike Bradbury , Mike "Pops" Salinas, James "Doc" Thomas
Gilbert Wall B CO 1/26 & Lt COL Ken Pipes CO B CO 1/26
Frank Addice USN KIA 04/11/68
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A Btry 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC HQ Btry 1/13 KIA 09 Mar 68
Cpl Donald E. Whitaker USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68
William Roland Prewitt MIA Phu Loc Hamlet Not Recovered
Gold Star Parents Of L/Cpl USMC Jeremy Santiago L CO 3/26
3rd Plt 12/14/73 -9/7/93 Operation Restore Hope
Louis Lowe USMC, Kilo CO 3/4 , 3RD PLT KIA Hill 689 14 May 68

REMEMBERED BY

Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
William Hotz Mike CO 3/4
Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
William E. Carpenter Bravo Btry 1/13
Alex & Barbara Sadowski H&S CO 1/26
Alex & Barbars Sadowski H7S CO 1/26
James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
Barbara Eddowes Fiance
Will Griggs India Co 3/26
Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Lawrence Cooper CO C 5TH Special Forces
James Baker HQ Btry 1/13 26Th Marines

John Laibinis SR. H CO 2/26 2ND PLT
Clarence T. Anthony India CO 3/26
Chester W. Nelson JR. India CO 3/26
Pietro Osimanti Bravo CO 1/26
Johnny Moon Charlie CO 1/26 3RD SQD
Eric Bergland C CO 1/9
Lt Don Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

John Finn Delta Co 1/26
Peter Hoban Hotel CO 2/1
Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN
Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN
Ron Shuff LSU MTM Co. Maintenance Bn.
Pat B. Buckley Charlie CO 1/26
Richard Takacs MABS-36-MAG-36 Crash-Rescue Unit
Richard Takacs MABS-36-MAG-36 Crash-Rescue Unit
Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1 REST IN PEACE
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
Donald Kujawa F CO 2/26 F CO 2/5
Randall Mapel Kilo CO 26TH Marines
Peter Mudrinich B CO 1/26
Larry Sherer USN HMM-262 HM-2
Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Bill Jayne B CO 1/26
Lorne Lemieux M CO 3/26
Daniel J. Depagnier Helicopter Sqd 363

Daniel King K CO 3/4

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS
ALBERT MIRANDA
SCOUT/SNIPERS 26TH MARINES

Tonight I had the honor to address our Brothers of the VFW as the guest speaker for the 50th Aniversity of the Vietnam war. I shared a little bit of history as to what transpired at the battle of Khe Sanh during the Tet offensive in 1968. Thank you Lord for sparing me and afforded the opportunity to share the experience. It was also the time to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. Semper Fidelis.





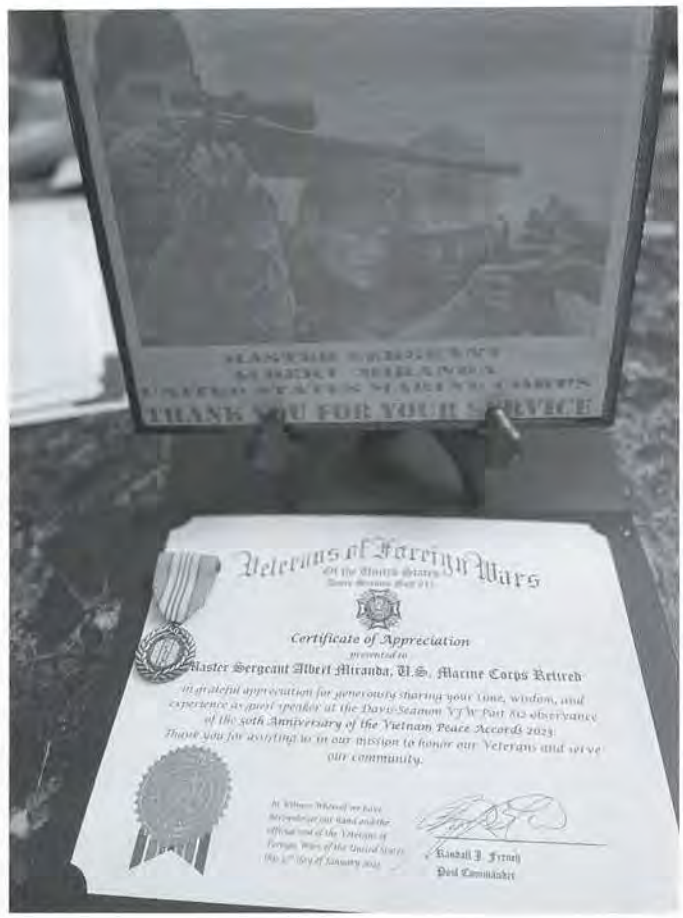






SEABEES
DO


U.S. NAVY
SEABEES
Đại Nội Huế 2015


VINTAGE
Built in 1942
Happy 80th Birthday!




U.S. NAVY
SEABEES

WHAT IS A SEABEE
AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Between the awkwardness of a soldier and the dignity of a Marine there is a questionable character called a SEABEE.

SEABEES come in assorted sizes, shapes, and weights, but at ha the same code: to enjoy every second of every hour of every day, whether at work or at play, and to protest *by* griping (their most beloved privilege) when issued an order. SEABEES are found everywhere: on top of, inside of, climbing on, swinging from, running around, or more likely than not, turning to. Mothers and sweethearts love them, Fathers are proud of them, Brothers look up lo them, Sisters admire them, Airdales hate them, Company Commanders tolerate them, and Chief Petty Officers drive them.

A SEABEE is a composite; he has the appetite of a horse, the digestion of a sword swallower, the energy of a pocket-sized atomic bomb, the curiosity of a cat, the lungs of a dictator, the imagination of a Paul Bunyon, the slyness of a violin, the enthusiasm of a firecracker, and the spirit of a fighting cock. He likes: liberty, leave, holidays, weekends, 9iris, chow, beer, movies, gedonks, swimming, pin-ups, sleep, and Comic books.

He isn't too hot for: duty nights, watches, taps, reveille, routine discipline, officers, drills, or secured heads.

Nobody else is so early to rise without actually wanting to get up.

No other person gets so much fun out *of* liberty or Shore Patrol. No one can *have* so much fun on so little money.

A SEABEE is a magical creature; you can chew him out, but you can't get the work done Without him; he is dirty, unpolished, unkempt, often overbearing, and sometimes reluctant.

A SEABEE is a man of magical abilities; he can weld, build, drive, repair and fight, he can wreck or he can beautify, he can make something out of nothing, work never tires him nor does he seem to tire of it.
His motto is "CAN DO", to which has added "HAS DONE" and "DID" this frequently miraculous occurrence is recognized In the form of a "WELL DONE" by everyone from the Commanding officer on down

The average SEABEE is a thick-headed individual of a varieties of nationalities. He won't admit it to anyone or anywhere except in the defense of his Corps that his is the best job in the Navy. Without him, the Fleet would have nothing to gripe about; Marines would have nothing to talk about, and history would have nothing to Write about.







OBIT

HAROLD E. LOCKWOOD USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, HMH-CH-43, SEA STALLIONS DOOR GUNNER

Harold Lockwood was instrumental in getting the state of New Mexico to install and dedicate a bridge across IH-40 in Laguna, New Mexico. It is dedicated to ALL fallen Marines and servicemen (Army, Navy & Air Force) that were lost during the 77 day siege at the Khe Sanh combat base. He also got the state to place a road side marker honoring that battle. The pics below show this accomplishment. Harold is to be applauded. I go under the bridge twice, going and coming from the Heavy Haulers Gathering held in Laughlin, NV every two years. We will do it again in October of 2019. It is about 40 miles west of Albuquerque on I40 and can't be missed. Harold lives in the red house on the NW side of the bridge, just above it. How many of us can wake up every morning and look out a window over our coffee cup and see something we've accomplished in life. Ooh-Rah! Harold! New Mexico as a state has some very attractive overpasses. Some of them quite special.



My sincere condolences, I met Mr Lockwood at the dedication of the historic Khe Sanh Road Marker and again at the dedication of the Khe Sanh Bridge. He was a wonderful man, proud of his service in the Marine Corps and as a representative of his Native American heritage. May he never be forgotten and rest in eternal peace.
Craig W Tourte
Secretary/Board of Director
Khe Sanh Veterans Association















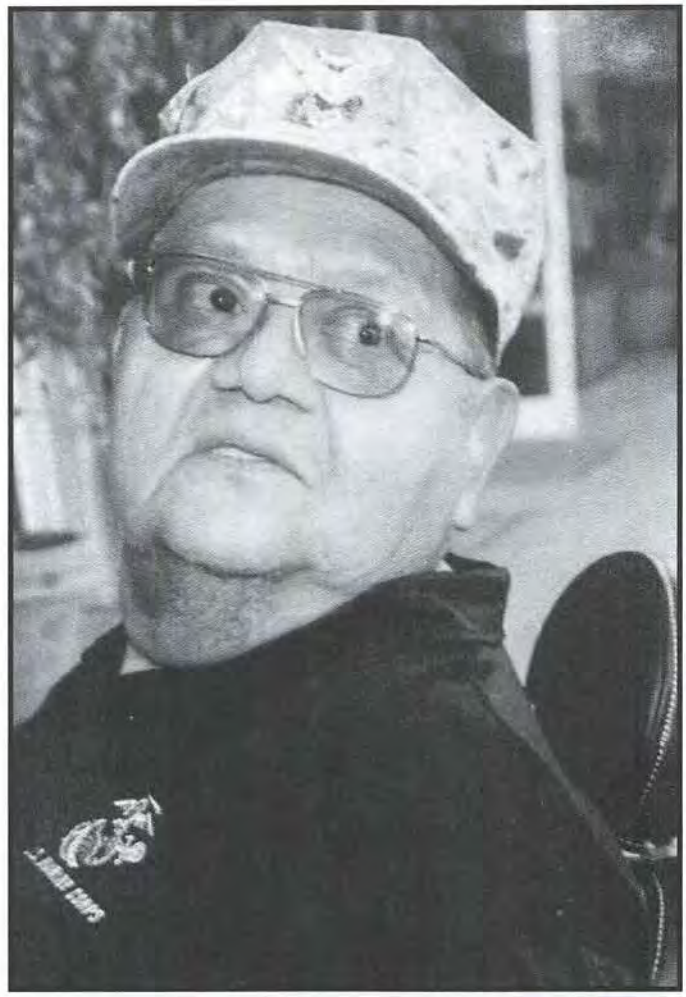





A letter from an atheist.

You are really convinced that you've got all the answers. You've really got yourself tricked into believing that you 're 100% right. Well, let me tell you just one thing. Do you consider yourself to be compassionate of other humans? If you' re right, as you say you are, and believe that, then how can you sleep at night? When you speak with me you are speaking with someone who you believe is walking directly into eternal damnation into an endless onslaught of horrendous pain which your 'loving' god created, yet you stand by and do nothing.

If you believe one bit that thousands every day were falling into an eternal and unreachable fate, you should be running the streets mad with rage at their blindness. That's equivalent to standing on a street corner and watching every person that passes you walk blindly directly into the path of a bus and die, yet you stand idly by and do nothing. You're just twiddling your thumbs, happy in the knowledge that one day that 'walk' signal will shine your way across the road.

Think about it. Imagine the horrors Hell must have in store if the bible is true. You're just going to allow that to happen and not care about saving anyone but yourself? If you're right then you're an uncaring, unemotional and purely selfish [expletive] that has no right to talk about subjects such as love and caring.

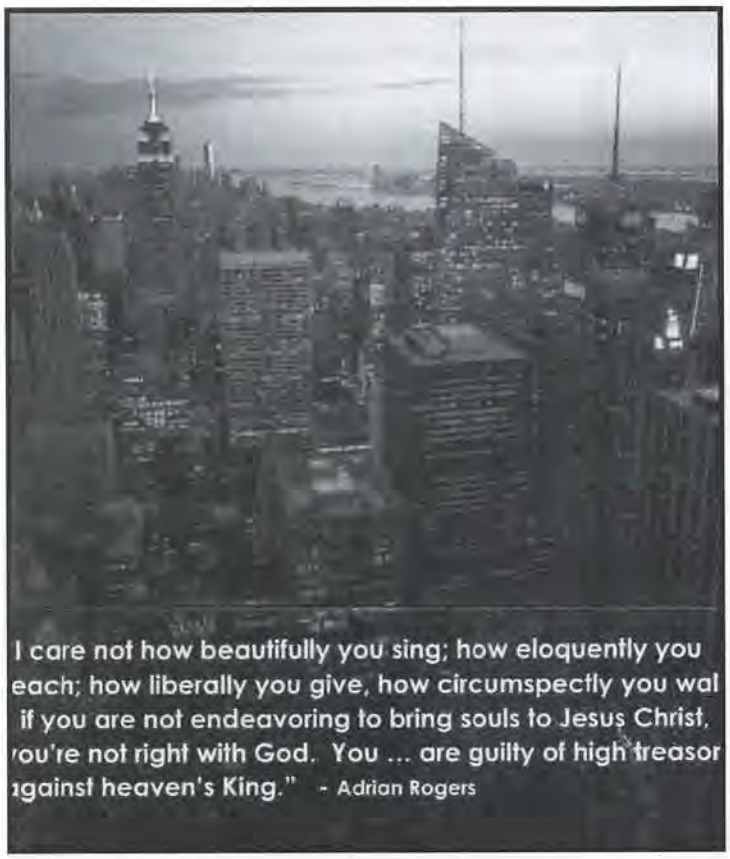

JESUS PAID IT ALL

	PAID
SIN	PAID
SHAME	PAID
PAIN	PAID
PAST MISTAKES	PAID
REJECTION & LONELINESS	PAID
SLAVERY TO SIN	PAID
SPIRITUAL DEATH	PAID
AMOUNT DUE	0.00
CHANGE-	0.00

Subtotal
GRAND TOTAL

.... 0000 XX/XX

FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, BUT THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.
ROMANS 6.23



WISHING YOU A SEASON FILLED AT THE WONDER OF HIS LOVE! Ken & Liz Korkow

Our father, Erv Korkow, started into the rodeo business in 1947 with an incredible insight into horses. Over the years my brother Jim has continued to build that breeding program and the Anchor K brand is well-recognized as "THE BREED THAT BUCKS." Now Onion Ring has been named BEST SADDLE BRONC OF THE YEAR in professional rodeo. A ten-year-old sorrel, the 1,300-pound gelding has twice been voted one of the top three broncs in the Pro Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA). World champion cowboy Kaycee Feild won $50,000 riding him at Rodeo Houston last year, and he's had multiple ninety plus point rides. But he's got a unique personality, says Jim's son TJ Korkow. "He's a gentle giant.". "You can walk up to him in the pen and pet him all over. But when he gets in the chute, it trips his trigger and he knows his job." Most bucking horses aren't as calm as Onion Ring. Even in the pasture, Korkow said, he can be petted. "He'll come up to you, you can take pictures of him, and he'll stand right there and want to know what's going on." Onion Ring has been selected to buck at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo five times. He started as a bareback horse; Korkow switched him to a bronc saddle horse last winter. When combat veterans come to the ranch - they enjoy seeing up-close-and-personal the bucking mares and their colts+ all the other rodeo horses - but we advise them to keep distant from the rodeo bulls!





DOES ANYONE KNOW WHICH PAGE OF THE BIBLE EXPLAINS HOW TO TURN WATER INTO WINE?

ASKING FOR A FRIEND.



ONE OF OUR GUEST AT THE RANCH, COMBAT VETERAN BLOWN UP ON THE LAST DAY OF HIS 13 MONTH TOUR IN VIETNAM. PUT SOMETHING INTO AN OVEN AND ONE OF TWO THINGS HAPPEN THE ITEM EITHER GETS HARD, OR IT GETS SOFT. SAME WITH PEOPLE. AND THIS MARINE **ALWAYS**'S HAS AN OVERCOMERS ATTITUDE WHEN HIS WHEELCHAIR GOES UP THE RAMP TO HUNT PHEASANTS.

LEG GONE, TOTALLY BLIND. BURNED 60 PER CENT OF HIS BODY. ALL FINGERS GONE FROM LEFT HAND. FINGERS ON RIGHT LOOK LIKE THEY WERE CAUGHT IN A MEAT GRINDER. ALL HIS OTHER BUDDIES IN THE VEHICLE KILLED.

THINK YOU HAVE PROBLEMS? MAY WE ALL HAVE AN OVERCOMNERS HEART LIKE THIS ARMY VET.



19 WEST POINT FEMALE ARMY OFFICERS HAD A BLAST SHOOTING PHEASANT AND CONSIDERING A BELIEVER'S NEW IDENTITY WHEN CHRIST WAS RISEN FROM THE CROSS.

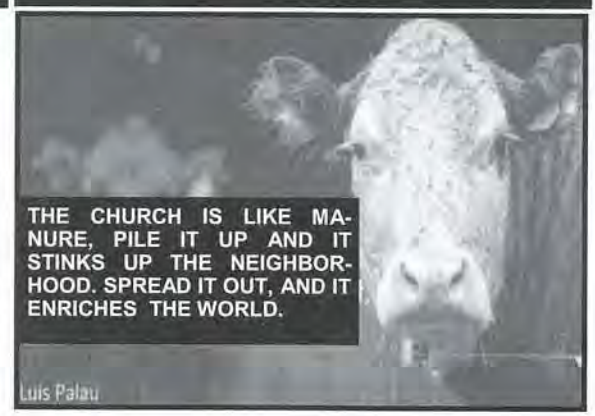

THE CHURCH IS LIKE MANURE, PILE IT UP AND IT STINKS UP THE NEIGHBORHOOD. SPREAD IT OUT, AND IT ENRICHES THE WORLD.

"REMEMBERANCES"
CAPT HARRISON LEROY HALEY
KIA 861A MAY 26, 1968

"WE HARDLY KNEW HIM"
BY ROBERT KOURY DELTA CO 1/1

During the month of March, 1968, Capt. Harrison Leroy Haley assumed command of D/1/1. The exact date is unknown (as far as I can tell, because I have not found the 1/1 command chronologies for that month). It is not surprising that there could be this lapse. It was just following the Tet offensive, the battle of Hue and many changes in 1/1.

I was not present when Capt Haley assumed command of the company. Most of Delta had Route 1 bridge protection duty during Tet and ancillary assignments during the battle for Hue. I was a, new in country, 1st Lt assigned to D/1/1, but sent directly to Hue on the third day of the battle and my fifth day in country- before they blew the canal bridge. There was no one else from Delta in Hue as far as I knew. So I did not report to Capt Haley while I was in Hue and never saw him until after.



The remainder of this article is based on my personal memories and so, necessarily but unfortunately, includes a lot about me. I welcome any edits and additions to produce a fitting tribute to Capt Haley (rckoury@earthlink.net).

As I came to know of Capt Haley, he was revealed to be the right kind of guy. I can find no records of his service before commanding D/1/1. But recall that he was a senior 03 Capt that had been working somewhere in the Division historical branch. Killer assignment for a hard charging senior infantry Captain of Marines during the height of the Vietnam war. He died just short of becoming 32 years old, pretty senior, and as best I know, he had no prior combat experience. He was a "by the books" type of leader. To his credit, he apparently had to fight to get into the fight with an infantry unit.

After Hue, I recall that Delta regrouped at Phu Bai. Then we went on Operation Ford, a nasty little affair, with Capt Haley as the Delta CO. Capt Haley's other D/1/1 platoon commanders at that time were 1Lt Danny Anderson (later KIA) and 1Lt Roger Rowe. Ford ran roughly March 15-21, 1968. The operation used parts of 1/1 (D & C companies at least) and 2/3 to sweep north on the sand flats east of Hue, chasing the NVA who had fled Hue.

In the opening air assault, I recall witnessing the results of our initial artillery shelling from out the window of our CH-46. Round were impacting and a village actively burning next to our landing zone. That shelling pretty much wiped out a local village. The only problem was that it turned out to have been a village occupied primarily by our ARVN allies and their families. So much for Marine "intelligence".

After overcoming light resistance at the landing site, we started the assault north in pretty heavy woods. Capt Haley had his hands full keeping track of his Delta troops which were on the left flank of the main attack. Especially my platoon 1/D/1/1 which had been tasked with dragging around a mechanical mule. As fate would have it, the battle moved due north, pursuing the NVA in the wooded area. But the wood line's western edge, which bordered on sand flats, aligned slightly northwest. With the mechanical mule in our charge, 1/D/1/1 could only move NNW on the left flank, out on the sand flats. As the main attack moved due north in the woods, we continued to get further separated out on the sand to the left of the main assault.

The 1/1 battalion CO, Lt Col Gravel, of Hue City notoriety, was continually on Capt Haley's ass dur-

ing the operation. Gravel was trying to keep the battalion attack on a straight line front with no gaps moving north in the woods. Delta was being continuously stretched from side to side on the widening left flank trying to maintain contact. And we represented one third of the bodies available to Capt Haley to cover an expanding attack frontage. We could hear Capt Haley being chewed out on the open battalion radio net. Of course, Capt Haley then had to chew my ass. But there was nothing anyone could do to keep all in visual contact and on line as the front got wider.

In retrospect, I think LtCol Gravel beat on Capt Haley excessively and publicly in part because of his



lack of combat experience. Anyone who had not passed the Hue City test was suspect in Gravel's book. That was unfortunate. Capt Haley was as good as they came, but lacked combat experience through no fault of his own.

One generally undocumented event on Ford was extraordinary. And because I was on the left flank of the advance in the open sand flats, not the woods, I had a perfect view of it. 1/1 had been pinned down by dug in NVA while advancing north in the wood line, and the advance was halted. My friend, Lt Mike Casey in C Company was shot in the forehead and KIA during that contact.

That evening, 200 meters to my front, E/2/3 assaulted across the open sand flats from west to east (left to right in my perspective) and into the dug in NVA position in the woods. It was a motion picture style event with a whole Marine company in the assault, firing from the hip, at dusk. Uncountable thousands of green and orange tracers trading places- spectacular and deadly. I did not know it at the time, but a TBS platoon mate, Bill Tehan, was leading his platoon in that assault. Years later, he sent me this description:

"That on line assault you saw was Echo 2/3. My platoon was on the south flank of the assault, closest to you . One hundred yards out from the tree line, the NVA opened up. We had four killed and over a dozen wounded covering that hundred yards. When we hit the tree line the NVA had their backs to the river about 50 meters into the tree line and tried to pull out to the North. Then it was payback time. We killed more than a dozen and my platoon over ran and captured two machine guns, a 7.62 Gorunov on a 2 wheel trolley and a 12.7 (DShK) machine gun on a tripod. Never saw a machine gun before that big. And never saw such a big muzzle flash when it fired at us. But it only got off a few rounds when the Ontos attached to my platoon started firing beehive into the tree line. One 12.7 round went into the Ontos just to the right of the driver's hatch, passed through the vehicle and exited the left back door. Moral of the story, don't piss off an Ontos!"

That night, a couple of Amtracs came south from that fight on the sand flats, and opened their hatches at our position in a cemetery, looking for friendly medical aid I guess. The floors of both were lined full with dead and wounded Marines. Ford was a damn serious, but little known operation. Pretty sure Capt Haley and the rest of 1/1 had no idea what 2/3 had accomplished in the woods just ahead of them.

As the Ford sweep north continued, I was able to get rid of the mechanical mule and get the platoon into the main part of the assault. We had experienced some fighting while on the open sand left flank, but mostly at 200-300 meter ranges. It was also memorable that our "rocket man", LCPL Layfetta Wardlow shot a sniper out of a tree with a LAAW at 300+ meters on the first try. Thereafter being known as "Wardlow The Magnificent" until KIA on 689.

Capt Haley seemed to do well as we drove the NVA ahead of us. At one point of resistance, my platoon was prone and on line assaulting the NVA position and had called for air support. I looked up to see an approaching Marine Corps attack helicopter on our left. Then, we were strafed by it with its machine guns, all on the wrong side of the orange panels we had out. Absolutely amazingly, I watched the rounds come right down our line of 20+ Marines and hit the sand between us, without touching a single Marine- a miracle. Capt Haley got the air support called off immediately.

We all had other "near death" experiences on the Ford sweep. Mine included: -A 60mm mortar round that landed while we were in a rice paddy and



exploded in the 8' between me and Cpl Kelly- no injuries; and- A box mine that was tripped by the Marine 10' in front of me- just he was WIA and evacuated, but his privates were OK- I checked for him; and- A booby trapped gate that I kicked open in frustration, hearing the distinct click of the explosive detonator that failed to trigger an explosion; and- While standing in the open sand flat, near Capt Haley, a loud whirring sound came from above and then a loud thunk in the sand, just 6" from my right boot. Reached down and picked up (and immediately dropped) a 6" x 3" x 3" chunk of burning hot metal from a bombing run 300m to our front.

I share my close calls in this article only to illustrate what Capt Haley, the rest of Delta and others endured on Ford. It was not a Hue City, but it was not a walk in the park for anyone there.

Ford wrapped up, little known and unappreciated in the larger scheme of things. We finished hot and thirsty on the sand flats. Believe we were trucked back to Phu Bai.

Delta Company's next adventure commanded by Capt Haley was Pegasus, which started in April, 1968. We were trucked to Ca Lu (LZ Stud) and ran small patrols out of there in all directions. We had been assigned as base security. It was all platoon level activities, with Capt Haley and the Company HQ only doing the necessary support admin.

On April 16, 1968 our collective D/1/1 Company experiences abruptly entered the big time. At mid day, we boarded helicopters with little idea of what was awaiting us. We had been chosen to relieve the 26th Marines on 881S. That was one of the most chaotic movements of our collective Vietnam experience. I don't think Capt Haley had been well briefed, or briefed at all, and we certainly were not. As the back door of our helicopter opened to the hill, we were rushed out past another group of Marines going in the other direction. Their welcoming words were "get the f--- down" and "get the f--- out of my way".

I think we were supposed to have a briefing and a proper exchange of positions on arrival at 881S. But it was nothing like that. In the space of two or three minutes, the old guys, who looked like zombies, were gone and we were under attack from the neighborhood mortars to our south. As well as machine gun fire trying to shoot down the helicopters coming and going.

When the dust from the helicopters and mortars settled, there we were. Hiding in absolutely unfamiliar positions on the top of 881S. To his credit, Capt Haley got us spread out to cover the existing trench line and tried to figure out what we were going to do from there and how we were gong to do it.

We apparently had been ordered to not to patrol at any significant distance outside our wire. We learned MUCH later that earlier Marine experiences

trying to secure additional ground in this area were pretty much not worth it. We were there as a plug in the gap to keep larger forces from attacking Khe Sanh. Not sure exactly how we were supposed to do that because all the larger forces had to do was walk around the base of the hill and we never would have known. For all we knew, everything out there was all bad guy land- and it was. Except for that, we were pretty clueless. But Capt Haley sorted out what had to be done and how to do it.

Our days consisted of taking incoming during the day and hand grenades at night. A typical daily situation report went like this: "Company D received 60/75 rounds incoming grenades and 60 mm motors. Returned fire with M79, M26, 60mm and 81mm motors which ceased enemy fire. D Company later received 182 rounds of rifle grenades and mortar fire resulting in seven WIA. Plans for 20 April 1968- Continue assigned mission". And "From D- Spot Rep #7; Received 1 82mm resulting in 1 KIA". " During this Period (one day) 395 rounds fell within the various (1/1) perimeters. The ordinance ranged from grenades to 122 rockets. Company "D" reported the greatest majority of fire received." And on it went- every day.

We also spend our days trying to spot enemy movement from the heights of our position. When we did so, we would will call in artillery or air support. In later years, I had the opportunity to look back down on 881S from 881N. The bad guys knew every single thing we were doing and exactly what our lines look like. All it took was a high powered set of binoculars. But, in retrospect, it was better that we were on that hill than they. That was pretty much the mission.

During this time, Capt Haley continued the tradition of having a morning flag raising. A couple of our guys would jump out of their holes, and raise the flag and get back underground. If they did this within less than 45 seconds or so, they could just escape the inevitable incoming 120mm mortar rounds which became an unwanted part of the ceremony. It went much better for us if there was a heavy morning fog- a blessing.

Capt Haley did all the right things during this chapter. We had regular Company briefings, assigned tasks and patrols, and he moved around the trench lines as expected day and night. But, there just wasn't much that we were able to do as a fighting Marine force.

We suffered a steady attrition of wounded and dead. And that meant that we had to have more than the regular number of helicopters for resupply. Every helicopter landing was a major event with inevitable additional casualties as the NVA mortars and machine gun fire took their toll. Reading later about the exploits of our predecessors on the hill, I learned about the "super gaggle" assembly of artillery, fighter planes, attack helicopters, smoke accompanying the transport helicopters. We never heard of or saw such a thing.

I think I knew as much about what was going on in the big picture as any Marine on that hill. And I was absolutely clueless about what had preceded our arrival there. The hill fights, the lost patrols, the assaults on 881N, the attack on 861 or any of it. We were simply ignorant about what had happened before we got there. Capt Haley was in a tough leadership position because I am certain that he knew about as much tactically about the area as I knew, which was damned little. If some of the local Khe Sanh hills knowledge and history had passed his way while he was working at Division, that would've been the only possibility. But he never shared any of that with us, and I doubt he knew of it.

On May 16, 1968 the battalion had a couple of the companies exchange hill top positions. I think the only reason for this was to appear that we were doing something productive besides just sitting on the hills in our bunkers. Included in the first swap was D Company which displaced from 881S to Hill 558 while Company B would do the reverse. Except, we walked /attacked (mostly down hill) arriving at 558 on 18 May, and they were choppered up to 881S. For us, that was a company sized patrol on the south slopes of 881S and 861. The move went without contact.

So Capt Haley had to organize our defensive positions, now on 558, set up patrol schedules, defensive fires and all the usual preparation for a Marine Company in defense.

During this time Company D was tasked with sending a platoon to the small radio relay position on Hill 950 north of Khe Sanh. Capt Haley chose my platoon. The mission was to reinforce the 950 position, I guess as result of some enemy intelligence. But we were also tasked with running a patrol east from 950 along the ridge spine to ominous Hill 1015 overlooking Khe Sanh. Now, this was super bad guy country and rarely entered. My platoon had never been quieter and more perfect in patrol technique. Our butts were puckered. I can report

now, that the whole reverse slope of that 950-1015 ridge was full on NVA bunkers. We saw them, but I did not report them to anyone for fear we would have to "check them out". On the reverse slope there was no artillery support available and there were no reinforcements to call. If we had lost a man in that complex, recovery would have been impossible.

Back at 558, life was temporarily a bit of a skate for Capt Haley and Delta. Significant was that: "A fire caused by an illumination round spread to Company D lines, detonating an unknown explosive device resulting in two WIA evacuations". And also significant was an outbreak of Dysentery. Days spent sitting on the cut-in-half 55 gal drums filled with diesel (used for toilets) while vomiting.

On 26 May, the battalion executed another rotation of companies between its hilltop positions. Again styled as company sized combat patrols. Delta was to move from 558 to 861 around the north side of the hill masses. Capt Haley organized the company movement as a patrol. We had never been on this side of those hill masses before, but did not anticipate heavy enemy contact.

As we advanced to the west in a company in-line formation, I recall that there was some sort of enemy artillery incoming on our left (south) flank as we got to the back (north) side of the 861 hill mass. This area was pretty much blown away landscape, but with a few remaining hulks of giant trees. Against all odds, I noticed that one of these hulking dead trees was very slowly falling toward us. Shaken loose from its dying hold to the earth by the enemy artillery vibrations. In very slow motion, it got closer and closer falling toward us. Then I realized I was on the tree-target line! Because we were were 10' or more separated, I seemed to be the only target. I started to run, but like Wile Coyote, I chose the long axis to escape. The massive dead tree hit (smooshed) me literally flat and unconscious. Had a branch been at the right angle, it would have gone right through me.

When I came to, I was on my back looking up at Capt Haley's angry face. With groggy but quick thinking, I started murmuring about needing a "med evac." He would have none of it. I had held up the company movement long enough and we were behind schedule. And, likely as punishment for whining, he put me and my platoon on point for the final climb up the north side of 861A.

All that I was briefed was that we were to be met by guides from the departing company. They would take us through the 861A abandoned position and into the 861 main position which word be our destination. And this had to be, tragically, all that Capt Haley was told.

So up the back of the 861A hill mass I stormed, with just one man in front of me, leading the whole company. Although the after action reports say it was mid day, we were a lot later than that. And we still had to get into the undefended position and set in, all before the bad guys snuck in, and definitely before dark.

And the unnecessary tragedy started to unfold. No one had told me that there was a friendly minefield in our path. Or had provided a safe route to enter the position from this direction. All depended on a simple reliance on guides from the departing company.

But the guides were no where to be seen. And there was nothing specific about where or when we would need to meet them.

I climbed the 861A hill, head down, in a pissed off and pissed on huff. I think, generally following a faint trail up, but maybe not. All I knew was that we were late and in a hurry. Capt Haley was on my ass to get there before dark. And it was my fault for not escaping the killer attack tree.

I got to a line of barbed wire maybe 150 meters from what looked like might be the 861A hill top. I stopped. The whole company stopped when I did. There were no guides to be seen!! I radioed to Capt Haley for instructions. He told me to stand by, that he would be up there as soon as he could to sort it out. This was no easy climb.

So there we were, D/1/1, stopped and strung out in a single file. Displayed on the north side of Hill 861A. Not a blade of grass for cover. An entire Marine infantry company standing in the open. In plain view of every NVA artillery observer north of 861 and 881. And easily from their 881N positions. The stuff of artillery dreams, just after targeting the "lone pine" in every artillery training syllabus.

Sometime after I called Capt Haley, while he was climbing up to me, we saw in the distance, a couple of tiny individuals waiving their arms at us from the main 861 hill top to our right (west). They had to be 500 meters or more distant. I do not recall if I had time to report this to Capt Haley before it happened.

Looking back down the hill behind me, I could see the helmet tops of the Company command group climbing up to us. Maybe 7 meters below me, there was an explosion in the command group. And the "ching" of metal pellets zinging past me on both sides. No idea why I wasn't hit, there were plenty of pellets that were were less than inches close. A bouncing mine had been triggered.

We were standing in an unmarked minefield that was below the barbed wire where I had stopped. All we knew at that moment was that where I had walked was miraculously safe. Except for the command group, everyone in the whole company had followed in my footsteps. The command group, led by Capt Haley, had veered off that path to get around the stalled Marines and up to me.

Capt Haley took the brunt of the explosion. One other Marine was KIA and three more WIA.

The hero of the moment was SSgt Herbert Kahrer who was serving as our company Gunny. He figured out what was going on and somehow kept everyone on the safe path while sorting out how to help the wounded. And accomplished all of this without setting off more mines. He brought Capt Haley's 45 pistol up the hill to show me- it had a hole from the mine pellet that had passed all the way through the heavy metal barrel area.

Then from "Gunny" Kahrer, the staggering report: "Capt Haley is dead. You are senior. What do we do now Lt?".

So I assumed Capt Haley's command, in a minefield, almost dark, strung out on a hillside, with two KIA and three WIA Marines, and the vacant position to be defended that night still well above us. What great fortune that the NVA observers did not make it much, much worse.

So, we needlessly lost a fine Captain of Marines with others killed and maimed. It never had to happen. Apparently just about everyone knew there was an old minefield on our route of march except Capt Haley and us. The guides should have been instructed to be near our entrance point, not napping a hilltop away. As best I knew, the guides did not even have a radio to communicate with us. So many failures at so many levels. No lessons learned to pass on. And no one to accept blame or to be held accountable.

I found out years later that Capt Haley had been awarded the Silver Star. Two weeks after Capt Haley was KIA, the battalion CO and XO, were shot down while in the same helicopter. I witnessed the crash from the next hilltop south of Route 9. The Bn CO was seriously injured and evacuated out of country; the Bn S-3 was KIA in that same crash. As Capt Haley's immediate reporting superiors, neither of them could have witnessed or sponsored the Silver Star award. I do not know who did. I was never asked to be a witness or be a sponsor in the award process.

The award reads in part: "On 26 May 1968, during Operation SCOTLAND II, Captain Haley's company was assigned a search and destroy mission in the vicinity of Hill 861 in Quang Tri Province, to be followed by an assault against a battalion objective. In the initial phase of the operation, Captain Haley repeatedly disregarded his own safety to engage and destroy the enemy. Fearlessly exposing himself to heavy enemy fire, he maneuvered his units with great skill and effectiveness, forcing enemy units to flee in panic from their well entrenched positions. While aggressively leading his men toward the objective, Captain Haley was killed by an exploding enemy land mine."

Not the way I remembered it. But, I was still loopy, suffering from the brutal attack of the Killer Tree, and likely not a reliable witness. If it happened as the citation recounts, I am damned proud of Capt Haley, SSgt Kahrer and everyone in Delta. The award is a lasting tribute to them. Despite his needless death, Capt Haley would be proud to share this tribute.

We hardly knew him, but he was a fine Captain of Marines. Godspeed.



MEMORIES:
THE WARRIORS OF HILL 881S
By Gary Parker
H&S CO SP

Christmas day 1967I arrived on Hill 881S which was about a mile or so from the Khe Sanh base to replace another radio operator who was killed the night before. I also found out that I was also going to be doing landing zone duties as a HST Marine along with radio duties as I was a 2531. My job was with helicopters coming and going that included calling down the hill for supplies and replacements and guiding the CH-46's and at that time 34's in to land.

The worst part of my duties were when I had to call in choppers to get our seriously wounded off the hill because those who were killed could wait. There were priorities first. I remember looking out if the helicopter window and I remember the crew chief telling me we would have to circle for awhile because the hill was taking incoming and it wasn't safe to land. When we did the crew chief was screaming to get the hell off and fast because the mortar and snipper fire was all coming in. Didn't have to ask twice. The first thing I saw while running out of the helicopter was about 6 dead Marines covered up with their ponchos waiting to be taken off the hill. Little did I know that would become a daily routine. I knew It was going to be a bad place.

I asked someone as to who was in charge. And that someone was Lt. Dabney. Later after the firing stopped he told me that he wanted me to work off of 2 landing zones on the hill and to check in with him every night to relay down the hill what they needed such as food, water and ammunition. He also wanted me to get whatever I needed off the Marine I replaced before he was taken off the hill. He was one of the dead Marines next to where I got off the chopper. I took the radio off his back and a few radio batteries and that was the first time I saw a dead Marine and knew I was in for a long hell on earth. I set up in a hole next to 2 Marines manning a .50.

Every morning before I set out to get in contact with the Lt. I had to decide which landing zone I would be using and both were zeroed in by the North Vietnamese army. No matter which I chose both were zero'd in. When the choppers came in, the dead and wounded had to be loaded on board before the bullets and mortar rounds came in and that was nerve racking to say the least. It didn't always work that way and sometimes I would loose. I can remember being the only Marine out in the open guiding the helo in to land. It was so risky landing. I also remember many, many times standing under the cooper hooking up cargo nets and looking at the crew chief looking out of the chicken hole while others took cover while the mortars came in. It was funny but being there you couldn't hear the bullets or explosions because of the noise of the chopper blades. It was better that way because you just didn't know and I didn't have time to think about getting killed till the job was done. There was no other choice other than to stand there and prey that today wouldn't be the day. I not only had to worry about my butt , but the lives of so many seriously wounded Marines. It was my responsibility to get them out as soon as I could. Something that I think about almost daily.

There were times When I had very badly injured and when I say badly injured I mean clinging to life lying right next to me at times asking for their mothers or wives waiting to get off the hill so that they might have a chance to live another day. I also remember at times the incoming was so bad that the helicopters just couldn't risk landing but those pilots had balls. There were times I even felt God like because I was the only one that could guide them down as safe as I could. If things went wrong sometimes they died waiting and something died in me also. I felt like I failed them. I believe I carry every dead Marine inside me to this day. I remember everything they said to me as they took their last breath. Something over whelming for a 19 year old. There was nothing more I could do for them. I just wanted to crawl under a rock and die. I also thought that if I could I would have given my own life to save there's I would have in a heartbeat



SEMPER FI: FROM SILVER STARS TO STOLEN VALOR

One Marine's Determination to Set the Record Straight

When Mike Fishbaugh graduated high school in 1967, America was embroiled in the Viet Nam War. So, like any other young man seeking to avoid being drafted, he did the only thing that he could: He joined the United States Marine Corps.

In December of 1967, Mike found himself in San Diego, at the United States Marine Corps Recruit Training Center located there for "boot camp". Upon completion of boot camp, Mike was sent to Ad-



vanced Individual Training, then Cook/Baker School. By August of 1968, Mike Fishbaugh was in Viet Nam as part of the Force Logistics Command. When I asked him what, exactly, a baker did in Viet Nam, he shrugged and said that he made big loaves of bread to feed the hungry Marines. Then, after a slight pause, he added, "And we'd pull perimeter duty two or three times a week." When I commented that it seemed odd to me that a baker would be pulling perimeter duty at night in a war zone, he smiled and recounted the following story to me:
"We had a cook arrive at the base, but the problem was, there were already too many cooks on the base. So, they made him a door gunner on an aircraft. His second mission out, he was killed by enemy fire." When I protested that the man had been a cook, not a gunner, Mike smiled at me and said, "Every Marine is a Rifleman, no matter what your job may have been."

I let that sink in. At first, it seemed somewhat unfair, but then I remembered I was talking about the United States Marine Corps. Devil Dogs. Leathernecks. Jarheads. And suddenly, just like that, it made perfect sense. Mike continued to tell me about his time in the Corps. He had joined for four years, and after his seventeen month deployment to Viet Nam, he rotated back home, where he finished his enlistment at the Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma, Arizona, until he mustered out in 1971.



Mike returned home to Indiana and became a very busy man. He married his wife in 1974, became a factory worker, a First Responder, a volunteer firefighter, and joined the American Legion. In 1978, he added being a night dispatcher for the Kosciusko County Sheriff's Office in Warsaw to that list, a job he kept until 1981, when he became a Town Marshall. He remained a Town Marshall until 1985, when he attended the police academy and returned to work for the Kosciusko County Sheriff's Office until one fateful night in 1996, when Mike quit his

The Stolen Valor Act of 2013, making it illegal to make false claims of military service in return for monetary gain, property, or other tangible benefits. As the number of men and women without honor spiraled at a horrifying rate, claiming awards and citations that they had not earned, it soon fell to men like Doug Sterner, Billy Myers, Mike Fishbaugh, and women like Mary Schantag to find these individuals that shame our country with their selfish deceit, and expose them for what they were. Again, these diverse individuals work together without personal gain to ensure that the men and



women that serve our country so proudly will not have their honor besmirched by those that live under the very umbrella of freedom that our military personnel fight and die to protect.

I have said several times throughout this two-part article that Mike Fishbaugh is a busy man. And no truer words have ever been spoken. Mike is the Historical Researcher for the Khe Sanh Veterans Associations, he is on the staff of the magazine put out by that organization, Red Clay" (So named for the thick red clay that makes up the soil at Khe Sanh, Viet Nam, he is the Secretary for the United States Marine Corps Food Service Association, and he maintains his own website, "Force Logistics Command" t www.mikefishbaugh.homestead.com.

But more than all of these things, Mike Fishbaugh is humble. "I'm no hero", he says, "I was just a baker at Dong Ha. My job was to make sure that Marines didn't go hungry." This is true, Mike was a baker, and he did make sure his Marines were fed. But as I have pointed out before, every Marine is a rifleman. And while being a baker may seem to be a less than heroic job, I would like to see anyone, this writer included, do it while under siege by an enemy force of 20,000 surrounding you and the six thousand Marines with you for 77 days.

I refer back to that Cook I mentioned in Part One of this story: He arrived at Dong Ha expecting to do his job, and that's just what he did. They had enough cooks. What they needed were door gunners on aircraft. So that Cook said goodbye to all the Advanced Individual Training he had received to feed hungry men, and fell back on his real job; being a U.S. Marine. And just like that Marine, Mike Fishbaugh, Baker by trade, put down his kitchen instruments two or three times a week and picked his rife to pull guard duty on the perimeter. Mike was guarding that perimeter against anything that might hurt his brothers-in-arms inside in 1968. Nothing much has changed…

Mike Fishbaugh is still guarding his brothers-in-arms in 2015. He has just changed weapons. Instead of a rifle, Mike stands guard now armed with a computer, a loyal group of like-minded individuals, and the never-surrender zeal that is the hallmark of that most striking of creatures, a United StatesMarine.
SemperFidelis. www.aroundpaintsville.com





At the Sheriff's Office. He said, One of the reasons I quit was because one of the detectives told everyone he would see them tomorrow and left for the night. He was killed fifteen minutes later. The call came in of



'shots fired, officer down'. After that, I just lost interest in it, just didn't want to do it anymore."

Mike moved to Johnson County, his wife's home, and in 1996, twenty-five years after leaving the humid jungles of Viet Nam, he was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. While Mike was hesitant to believe the diagnosis, what he was told by the psychiatrist that saw him made it even harder to believe. While many veterans returning from the Viet Nam War had suppressed their war-time trauma in drugs or alcohol, Mike was told he had become a" workaholic" , burying all his personal demons stemming from the war under an enormous workload. Declared one hundred percent disabled by the Veteran's Administration in 2000, Mike stayed home and spent time with his wife, children and grandchildren, until his wife's passing.

And then, in 2004, something happened that would change the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of people. Mike bought a home computer and taught himself how to use it.

He was contacted by a member of his old unit and asked to come to a reunion. Mike went, and as he and his brothers-in-arms passed tales of the war back and forth, they began asking questions about who had received what awards and citations, and when and where they had received them. Finally, after much debate, it was decided that, using the Freedom of Information Act, Mike and his buddies would compile a database for that very purpose.

Many people would assume that such a database would have already existed, run by the military or the government, but there was, in fact, no such database in existence at that time. Many men, having been told by their Commanding Officer that they were putting them up for the Bronze Star with Valor, the Navy Cross, or any of the multitude of awards, ribbons, and citations awarded to military personnel, left the service after their enlistment was up and went back to their lives, thinking they had won such an award. It was only after several men discovered that the medals they believed they had



won had never been passed on by the chain of command that the full size and shape of the problem became apparent.

While the U.S. military keeps records of every service member of every branch, the fact remains that many of those service members either left the service thinking they had received an award they had not, or worse, had actually received an award that didn't go into their file until after they had separated from the military. There simply was no way to verify these things without a protracted paper battle with one of the many different places these records were kept, St. Louis, Missouri being the largest. And, as incredible as it seems, no one in the government had created a searchable database where these service members, or their families, could find out.

It was at this time that Mike Fishbaugh, former Sergeant of the United States Marine Corps decided to help change all that. Mike Fishbaugh knew he had a daunting task before him. At first, he determined to simply find all the Valor Awards received at Khe Sanh, where his unit was stationed. To many, the name Khe Sanh evokes the memory of the 77-day siege in which 6,000 U.S. Marines were surrounded by two divisions (20,000 men) of North Vietnamese Army troops. From January 21st until July 9th, 1968, the Marines at Khe Sanh suffered constant attack by artillery, mortar, rocket, and small arms fire. The base was in constant fear of being overrun, and without the aid of the air power of the Navy, Air Force, and Marine Aviation units, it might well have been. "Operation Niagara", the code name for the aerial bombardment, saw the dropping of over 100,000 tons of bombs in support of the Marines. Mike is one of the first to lay praise on those men above the clouds. Without them, he might never have returned home to tell his story.

Although most Americans that remember Khe Sanh, it is only the siege they remember. What they don't understand is that the base there was in operation from 1964 until 1973, almost a decade. Chaplain Ray William Stubbe was at the siege of Khe Sanh, and kept day-to-day diaries and records that assisted Mike in his search. Soon, Mike began to expand his search of Valor Awards recipients to include everyone that had served at Khe Sanh. It soon became apparent that he was not alone in trying to honor those that had earned them. Doug Sterner, Viet Nam Khe Sanh Veteran and, like Mike, on a quest for the truth, runs a website called "Home of Heroes". Mr. Sterner researched not only every single person to ever receive the Medal of Honor, going all the way back to the Civil War, but began an online database that intends to list every single citation and award every received by U.S. military personnel. Mr. Sterner's work is so comprehensive that the F.B.I. has used his insight to investigate cases of Stolen Valor. Another man working along the same lines was Billy Myers, author of "Medals, Marines, and Viet Nam" and "Honor the Warrior". These men, working both alone and together, set about creating a public, searchable database. For Mike, it was the Silver Stars, and then requesting records for every Valor Award given at Khe Sanh during its existence. Then, moving outward, working on finding the Silver Stars that have been awarded to all branches of the military. To date, Mike has verified over 2,500 Silver Stars for Marines and Navy Corpsmen.

The manner in which this is done is a tedious, time-consuming process that boggles the mind. First, Mike needs names, branches of service, unit numbers, the officers that put in the request for the citation, or any possible combination of the information listed above. Then, he sends a Freedom of Information Act request to St. Louis, Missouri, or one of the many other depositories of military personnel records. Then, he waits. There is most often a great deal of back-and-forth between Mike and these government entities, and Mike has the paperwork to prove it. Without showing me any names or personal information, Mike showed me binder after binder full of military personnel and the awards they are listed as having received. These binders cover bookcases in his office. In addition to these binders, he focused my attention on large plastic tubs, all full to bursting with envelopes full of this same information. Thousands upon thousands of names, and Mike is constantly getting requests from family members about their loved ones, and what medals and citations they may have received. As I have stated before, Mike Fishbaugh is a busy man. Mind-blowingly busy.

Mike isn't greedy with his information, either. Every record he locates, he forwards on to Doug Sterner for his database, http://valor.militarytimes.com/. In 2013, MSG James T. Born wrote a book entitled "The Bronze Star Medal, Viet Nam War". Mike sent MSG Born all the information he requested, and Born wound up using between 250-280 of Mike's records for his book. Mike is credited in the acknowledgments page of that publication. Mike also works with Mary Schantag, who keeps the official POW-/MIA listing. Regardless of branch of service, these tireless unsung heroes go the distance to shed light on any and all questions asked, and do so free of charge. It is amazing to see these individuals from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or civilians, putting aside all petty inter-service rivalries and work together with such grace and determination. Amazing and inspiring. Forget all the stories you've heard about the Army and the Air Force insulting each other, or the Marines and the Navy brawling in bars, the vast amount of respect and love of country and their fellow service members dwarfs all considerations with these individuals.

Doug Sterner's wife, Pam, worked with the members of the House of Representatives and the Senate in helping to pass the original "Stolen Valor Act" in 2005. And while Stolen Valor was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in The United States vs. Alverez on August 17th, 2010, because they felt it violated the Fourth Amendment, it was revised as The Stolen Valor Act of 2013, making it illegal to fraudulently claim having received a valor award specified in the Act, with the intention of obtaining money, property, or other tangible benefit by convincing another that he or she received the award.

VETERAN REMEMBERS BATTLE OF KHE SANH

Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, an isolated United States Marine Corps out post during the Vietnam War became too dangerous to land due to hostile ground fire and shelling. To accommodate, C-130s used the Low Altitude Extraction System and kept the Marines resupplied with rations, fuel, ammunition and medical supplies. (Courtesy photo)

This year the U.S. Marine Corps commemorates 55 years since the Battle of Khe Sanh, which lasted from Jan. 21 to March 31, 1968.



Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, an isolated United States Marine Corps out post during the Vietnam War became too dangerous to land due to hostile ground fire and shelling. To accommodate, C-130s used the Low Altitude Extraction System and kept the Marines resupplied with rations, fuel, ammunition and medical supplies. (Courtesy photo)

In early 1968, Khe Sanh Combat Base gained world-wide attention as the roughly 6,000 Marines defending the base were encircled and besieged by three North Vietnamese Army regiments of about 20,000 troops. For 77 days, the Marines and their South Vietnamese counterparts, with support from an element of U.S. Army soldiers and U.S. Air Force bombers, would endure one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War.

Among the Marines defending the base was U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Ronald Echols, who was serving with Company M, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines, 3rd Marine Division on Hill 881 South.

"We had Marines at Hill 861, and we had Marines at a radio relay tower, which was on Hill 950, and my company was on 881S," said Echols. "There was two 881s, one 881 South and 881 North, we maintained those hills because we wanted to keep the high ground away from the North Vietnamese that overlooked Khe Sanh."

North Vietnamese forces conducted a massive artillery bombardments on Khe Sanh, located just 10 miles from the Sepon River, which marked the border between Laos and South Vietnam.

"I remember that during dawn it would still be foggy and as soon as the fog burned up, they would start hitting us with mortars and artillery. If there was daylight, we would get hit," Echols said.

Due to the constant attacks from the PAVN, Marines at Khe Sanh faced significant supply challenges, but their training helped them find ways to capture water and overcome the lack of supplies.

"For the first 30 days they couldn't get us resupplied; seven helicopters got shot down bringing supplies into us," said Echols. "We went nine days one time without anything to eat. Fortunately, with the thick fog, we were able to spread plastic down the hill and catch condensation. We needed to have about two 12 oz. cans of water to last until the next morning, but guys were still dehydrated, they weren't getting enough to drink."

During the siege, Marines created an air delivery method called a "super gaggle" to provide supplies to areas cut off from land supply routes after several aircraft were lost during resupply missions. The super gaggle method coordinated air and artillery strikes to occur simultaneously during resupply missions, providing a shield for aircraft delivering much needed ammunition, food, water and evacuating the wounded.

"The airwing came up with the idea they could come in and bring jets in and bomb, then come around the hill, put up a smoke screen, and then the helicopters would come in five-at-a-time with the resupplies; they looked like geese coming through there, so they called it the super gaggle, and that's how they started getting us resupplied," said Echols

Echols added that helicopters often had just 20 seconds to land, and evacuate the wounded and get airborne before the mortar attacks resumed. Echols also remembers the air support provided by American bombers and how close they were to his positions on Hill 881S.

"We had a couple of North Vietnamese soldiers surrender. We asked them why they surrendered, and they just pointed up to the sky," said Echols. "You

can't just imagine what these B-52s do. They called it an Arc Light, and they would just drop hundreds of bombs out of one plane, and there was three or four planes at one time. It was just devastating."
By the end of the battle, U.S. Air Force assets had flown more than 9,000 sorties and dropped 14,223 tons of bombs on targets within the Khe Sanh area.
It would not be until April 14, 1968, that Marines from 3rd Marine Division, soldiers from the US Army 1st Cavalry Division and South Vietnamese soldiers would be able to break through and push back NVA forces from the area. Khe Sanh would continue to see combat until the end of July 1968, after which the base was destroyed and abandoned by American forces.

"On April 14 my company moved off of the hill, and they had showers set up outside for us," said Echols. "You get a bond with your fellow Marines that's indescribable. I've got two brothers, but I've never had with them the bond I had with the guys I was in combat with. They were my brothers."

Echols received a battlefield commission and a Bronze Star for his actions during the Battle of Khe Sanh. According to his Bronze Star Medal citation, "on numerous occasions, Staff Sgt. Echols served as a platoon commander, a billet normally assigned to a commissioned officer, and repeatedly disregarded his own safety to maneuver his unit against the enemy. While his company was three deployed on Hill 881 South during the siege of Khe Sanh, he worked tirelessly to ensure the safety and welfare of his men despite constant North Vietnamese mortar and artillery fire."
(1st Lt. Isaac Lamberth and MC1 Pedro Rodriguez contributed to this story)

OBIT

GORDON A. GILLENS, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, HQ BTRY 1/13

Plainfield Police Chief and longtime Plainfield Resident died unexpectedly, Tuesday afternoon, January 17, 2023. He was born July 16, 1945 at the Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital in Hanover, NH. He attended schools and grew up in Canaan, NH and was in the first class from Canaan to attend and graduated from the new Mascoma High School. He joined the US Marine Corp right after high school and served our country for four years including a year at Khe Sanh, in the Vietnam War. When he returned home, he held a few different jobs before he took a position with the Windsor Police De-



partment. Upon his completion of training at the police academy he returned to Windsor and worked as a patrolman for the next fourteen years. Gordon liked his work and built a good reputation throughout the area law enforcement community. In 1985 he was hired as the Plainfield Police Chief, a position he held for the next twenty-five years. Gordon was married to Sarah Jean (Tuck) Longacre on June 8, 1996. They made their home in Plainfield on Route 12A. He retired in 2010. He received may accolades during his long career including two awards that had him traveling to Washington DC to receive The Law Enforcement Officer of the Year and also the U. S. Department of Justice Distinguished Service Award.

As Police Chief, Gordon had many experiences. He worked to keep people safe and would often be seen corralling a stray animal. He presented the department budget each year and made sure that his officers were well trained. Gordon enjoyed traveling around the local area with Sarah. He loved being home and working on their property, using his tractor for multiple purposes and tending to horses, chickens, ducks, cats and dogs. Gordon had a special love for animals and they for him a characteristic that served him well during his law enforcement days and beyond. He was a member of the Grafton County Rod and Gun Club and the Plainfield Community Church.

He was predeceased by a son Jason Gillens and a brother Michael Gillens. Gordon is survived by his wife, Sarah, her sons, Timothy Longacre and his wife Nicole, Joshua Longacre and his wife, Meghan and her daughter, Melinda Taber and her husband Breck, all of Plainfield, NH, son Scott Gillens, daughter, Diane Gillens, six grandchildren, one great grandchild, a Sister, Viola Wilson of Canaan, NH, as well as several nieces and nephews.

KHE SANH VETERANS	RED CLAY	SPRING 2023
AIELLO, William P.	10.00	Check# 2916
ADAMS, Harry	60.00	Credit Card
ADAMS, Robert M.	200.00	Check# 1643
ARCHER, Michael	20.00	Check# 2846
ARCHER, Michael	60.00	Check# 2082
BARBER, Michael F.	1,000.00	Check# 1850
BARBER, Michael F.	1,000.00	Check# 6562709
BATES, Robert G.	20.00	Check# 5752
BELLANTONE,	100.00	Check# 2666
BERG, Charles L.	200.00	Credit Card
BIGLER, Donald	100.00	Check# 2874
BIRTCIL, Robert	250.00	Check# 6902
BISPO, Jose A.	100.00	Check# 2565
BRONSTON, Martin D.	100.00	Check# 2537
BRONSTON, Martin D.	100.00	Check# 2611
BRONSTON, Martin D.	100.00	Check # 2701
BUTTON, Robert K	50.00	Credit Card
CALDWELL, Micki L.	100.00	Check # 3777
CHICOINE, M.A.	1,000.00	Check# 3905
CHICOINE, M.A.	2,000.00	Check# 3915
CHIM, Alan	500.00	Check #8207738
CHOCLIS, Paul J.	100.00	M/O
COLVIS, John P.	100.00	Check# 2999
COLVIS, John P.	100.00	Check# 3193
COLLINS, James	1,000.00	Check# 1592
COLLINS, James	1,000.00	Check# 1814
COTTER, Kevin	300.00	Check#5311
COX, Gary	20.00	Check# 5108
CRAWFORD, Daniel C.	25.00	Check# 265
CRAWFORD, Daniel C.	50.00	Check# 275
CRAWFORD, Daniel C.	40.00	Check# 216
DAKIN, William	100.00	Check# 1535
DELAO, John E.	100.00	Check# 1754
DELOTTO, Richard	50.00	Check# 222
DEVERNEY, Wayne L.	500.00	Check# 474
DEWOLF, Timothy	30.00	Check# 3566
DUNLAP, J. M.	50.00	Check# 2502
EICHLER, Thomas J.	250.00	Credit Card
ESTENDON, Mary Anne	100.00	Check# 5035
ESTES, Leo	10.00	Check# 3714
ESTES, Leo	50.00	Check# 3760
EVANS, Ed	200.00	Check# 190
FARRELL, Brian	25.00	Check# 1440
FERGUSON, Daniel R.	100.00	Check# 03888
FETTER, Charles	20.00	Check# 896
FOLEY, Richard M. Jr	50.00	Check# 1775
FORD, Tara	250.00	Check# 1039
FORD, Thomas C.	250.00	Check# 5548
FOSTER, WILLIAM	100.00	Credit Card
FOWLER, William R.	50.00	Check# 101
FRIEDSAM, Don A.	25.00	Check# 2172
FRIEL, Thomas	500.00	Check# 0996
GAROUTTE, Michael	10.00	Check# 10344
GEORGEHEAD, Chris	100.00	Check# 720
GERNDT, Gerald L.	50.00	Check# 1102

KHE SANH VETERANS	RED CLAY	SPRING 2023
MCCANN, Timothy N.	200.00	Check# 1983
MCDANIEL, Jerry L.	100.00	Check# 1432
MCELROY, John W.	200.00	Check# 2522
MCCROSSEN, John P.	100.00	Check# 2318
MCGUIRK, Steven	100.00	Check# 3786
MENZEL, Robert	50.00	Check# 3601
MEYER, Dave & Carol	1,250.00	Check# M/O
MEYER, Dave & Carol	1,250.00	Check 977943
GAROUTTE, Michael	60.00	Check#10199
GEIGER, Bruce	100.00	Check# 310
GEIGER, Bruce	1,000.00	Check# 1001-2
GEIGER, Bruce	500.00	Check# 1006
GERRIOR, Charles	1,000.00	Check# 106
GLISSON, Wade R.	50.00	Check# 7751
GOODMAN, James A	50.00	Check# 2754
GRAY, Alan	1,000.00	Check# 6454
GRIFFIN, James W.	250.00	Check# 2134
GRIFFIN, James W.	250.00	Check# 2160
HARTNETT, Carol	100.00	Check# 4514
HARTNETT, Carol	50.00	Check# 4593
HAY, William C	200.00	Check# 1438
HENNES, James A.	50.00	Check M/O
HOLSCHER, Robert	100.00	Check# 18166
HOLSCHER, Thomas	100.00	Check#311
HOFFMAN, Victor	500.00	Check# 4075
HOFFMAN, Victor	500.00	Check# 4129
HOTZ, William	100.00	Check# 8084
HOTZ, William	300.00	Check# 8001
HUGHES, Mick	20.00	Check# 2130
HUNTER, Dwight	100.00	Check# 1256
JACHIMIAK, Daniel L.	250.00	Check# 5591
JACHIMIAK, Daniel L.	250.00	Check#5466
JENKINS, Steve	50.00	Check# 2788
JORDAN, William H.	150.00	Check#1013
JAYNE, Bill	100.00	Check# 430
JONES, Bruce	100.00	Check# 11230
JONES, Bruce	100.00	Check# 11296
KAHENY, John M	200.00	Check# 1781
KEATON, Thomas	50.00	Check# 5178
KING, James	250.00	Check# 2664
KING, Daniel	10.00	Check# 4
KILIAN, Richard J.	100.00	Check# 5797
KOLLMON, Albert L.	50.00	Check# 5028
KORKOW, Ken	100.00	Check# 7737
KORKOW, Ken	100.00	Check# 2579
KORN, William	100.00	Check# 7797
KORN, William J.	100.00	Check# 7908
KOURY, Robert & Danielle	N/A	Check# 8008
LEMIEUX, Lorne A.	100.00	Check# 1251
LEWIS, Mike Clint	210.00	Credit Card
LOCKE, John F.	50.00	Check# 9164
LOERSCH, Phillip E.	50.00	Check# 1827
LUTHER, Lawrence A.	50.00	Check# 1323
LYNCH, Thomas J.	50.00	Check# 7398
MAQUIRE, Danny	40.00	Credit Card
MAPEL, Randall	10.00	Check# 6852
MARTIN, Linda	100.00	Check# 3963
MATUSIC, Joseph H.	100.00	Check# 716
MACAULEY, Frank	200.00	Check# 506
MILLER, Barbara A.	100.00	Check# 3067
MILLER, William	200.00	Check# 6756
MORRISON, Sammy	50.00	Check# 3597
MORRISON, Sammy	50.00	Check# 3699

NANGLE, James T	300.00	Check# 314
NAZZARIO, Anthony	100.00	Check# 1041
NAZZARIO, Anthony	50.00	Check# 3433
NAZZARIO, Anthony	25.00	Check# 229
NAZZARIO, Anthony	50.00	Check# 247
NELSON, George J.	250.00	Check# 6387
NUCHERENO, Phil	200.00	Check# 130
OLIVER, Joseph	100.00	Check3 1215
ORR, Steven W.	250.00	Check# 1608
ORTA, Oscar	50.00	Check# 165
OWENS, Mike	100.00	Check# 1758
PALMER, Raymond	200.00	Check# 9308
PEARSON, Scott G.	100.00	Check# 6635
PESTINGER, Daniel	60.00	Check# 2613
PROVENCIO, Ramon Jr.	200.00	Check# 101
PROVENCIO, Ramon Jr.	200.00	Check# 102
RAIT, Donald M.	2,000.00	Check# 1318
RAYNER, Ronald	500.00	Check# 433
RAYNER, Ronald	500.00	Check# 464
RAYNER, Ronald	1,000.00	Check# 514
REYES, Jose	100.00	Check# 412581
RIDDLE, Steven A	250.00	Check# 6023
RIORDAN, Robert W.	250.00	Check# 7283
RIORDAN, Robert	250.00	Check# 8091
ROBERTSON, Isidor	100.00	Check# 8544
ROBERTSON, A. William	40.00	Check# 2202
ROSSON, Harold E. JR.	250.00	Check# 9319
ROSSON, Harold E JR.	250.00	Check# 9707
ROUSE, Edward M.	100.00	Check#1069
ROWE, John F.	1,000.00	Check# 1060
SABOL, John	100.00	Check# 1166
SADOWSKI, Alexander	100.00	Check# 6676
SADOWSKI, Alexander	50.00	Check# 6839
SALLADE, Gary A.	10.00	Check# 09557
SANCHEZ, Jesse	250.00	Check# M/O
SEMKOW, Raymond	50.00	Check# 1679
SEMKOW, Raymond	50.00	Check3 1876
SEPULVEDA, Charles	100.00	Check# 401
SIEJUTT, THOMAS	50.00	Check# 5836
SHAFER, Dennis	100.00	Check# 1976
SHERER, Larry	100.00	Check# 8780
SHOUSE, Ronald	1,000.00	Check# 8244
SHOUSE, Ronald	200.00	Check# 1165
SHUFF, Ronald T.	2,500.00	Check# 4684520759
SHUFF, Ronald T.	1,000.00	Check# M/O
SHUFF, Ronald T.	1,000.00	Check# M/O
SHUFF, Ronald T.	2,000.00	Check# 1018523855
SPIVEY, Larkin B. JR.	50.00	Check# 7961
STACHYRA, Sallie	50.00	Check# 560
STEINHARDT, Thomas	100.00	Check# 1666
TORRES, Andres	100.00	Check# 8627
TOURTE, Craig	200.00	Check# 1012
TROUP, Ed & Diana	200.00	Checks 6707,6697
TROUP, Ed & Diana	200.00	Check# 6848
TURNER, Russell	500.00	Check# 6197
UNANGT, Robert JR	250.00	Check#1246
WADAS, Kenneth	100.00	Check# 6815
WIEDRICH, Albert	100.00	Check# 2638
WIEDRICH, Albert	100.00	Check# 2776
WITTLER, Dale E.	150.00	Check# 6248
WOOD, Anne T.	500.00	Check# 1045
YATES, William R	100.00	Check# 8240
YOUMAN, Elwood	1,500.00	Check# 1686
ZEBAL, Kenneth	250.00	Check# 5162
ZEBAL. Kenneth	250.00	Check# 5298

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FUND - 2020-2021 AWARD RECIPIENTS

1. CPL ADAM J. CHIARELLA	1	UNIV OF MICHIGAN @DULUTH	DAN FISHER D CO 1/26
2. KAITLYN G. KING	1	ST/MARYS NOTRE DAME NURSING	JAMES KING M CO 3/26
3. ANDREW M. KESSLER	1	UNIV OF TOLEDO-IT	MERLE MORITZ E CO 2/26
4. CORRINE E. HILL	1	DAEMEN COLLEGE, AMHERST MED	DONALD PAYNE 3/26
5. CONNOR C. CIRROTTI	1	UNIV OF NOTRE DAME FINANCE	DON CAMPBELL HQ 26TH MAR
6. JESSICA D. VELCHECK	1	GOUCHER COLLEGE LITERATURE	JAMES VELCHECK D CO 1/1
7. VICTOR D. HOFFMAN	2	SHIPPENBURG UNIV UNDECLARED	VICTOR HOFFMAN H&S CO 1/26





2009 the KSV Scholarship Foundation started with 6 applicants and has risen to an average of 25 applicants each of the last three years. Many of the student scholars have finished 4 years of post secondary education to successfully achieve their selected bachelors degrees due in part to the support from Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc ..

In this, the 2020-21 school year, we have received 7 applicants for a grand tally of 179 young scholars in 11 years who have benefitted from the KSV Scholarship Fund. Over $110,000 in generous donations from the Khe Sanh Veterans Brotherhood and proceeds from the reunion silent auctions have kept the Foundation healthy. However, the individual awards have trended lower due to the increased volume of applicants vs. reduced donation levels.

The Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation is now in its twelfth successful year of providing financial support for children and grandchildren of paid up members of Khe SanhVeterans, Inc.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATION OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited educational institutional as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post secondary curriculum.

Scholarship funds will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent , legal guardian or grandparent who is a paid-up member in good standing of KHE SANH VETERANS, INC., a 501 C (19) charitable organization.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT APPLICANT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2022 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid up member (sponsor) of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (see member definition in the KSV by-laws). This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if the family member are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children and grandchildren of associate members are not eligible for this scholarship.

Information provided by each applicant on the attached forums will focus on the following qualities; proof of enrollment at an accredited educational institution, good grades, scholastic character, citizenship, school activities and a personal essay on educational and career goals.

A scholarship review committee will serve at the pleasure of the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. to review the application forms for completion and correctness. The KSVSF Chairman will provide scholarship financial report, a list of applicants and their KSV member sponsors and a summary to be presented to the membership at the annual reunion and for publication in RED CLAY newsletter.

NEW!! SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS (school year 2023 onward). NEW!!

APPLICANTS FOR SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS WILL RECEIVE A ONE-TIME-ONLY AWARD, REGARDLESS OF THEIR PRESENT YEAR IN SCHOOL. SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS AMOUNTS ARE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY DONATIONS TO DONATIONS TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION FROM KSV MEMBERS AND THE REUNION SILENT AUCTION. WE CAN NO LONGER SUPPORT MULTIPLE YEAR AWARDS. THIS IS THE DECISION OF A VOTE BY THE KSV BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT THE 2019 REUNION.

ALL AWARDS WILL BE EQUAL FOR EACH CERTIFIED APPLICANT AND WILL BE AWARDED UPON PROOF OF REGISTRATION FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL TERM AND SENT TO THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS ABOVE

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. APPLICATION FORM

Date of Application_____

APPLICANT'S INFORMATION:(PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLE!)

Name: Last_____ First_____MI_____

Address: Street_____ City_____State_____ Zip_____

Home Phone: _____ Cell_____

Date of Birth _____ E-mail address_____

KSV SPONSOR INFORMATION: (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member)

Name: Last_____First:_____

Relationship to Applicant:_____ Branch of Service_____

Unit Served at Khe Sanh_____Dates Served There_____

Regular paid KSV member _____ Life KSV Member_____Deceased KSV Life Member_____

KIA or MIA KSV Family Associate Member _____

SCHOOL INFORMATION: (School to be Attending)

School Name:_____

School Address: Street_____ City_____

State_____ Zip_____Phone Number_____

Intended Field of Study

_____

School Year to Be Funded: Freshman_____ Sophomore_____Junior_____Senior_____

SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES AND PURPOSE

The financial award should be used to defray cost of tuition, fees, books at the educational institution of the applicants choice.

The KSVSF Chairman and KSV Treasurer will send a check for the award amount to the selected applicants upon final approval of the KSV President.

Scholarship recipients will be notified of their award no later than the end of August of the upcoming school year applied for.

!!Scholarship applications sent to the KSVSF Chair MUST be post marked not later than MAY 1 of the school year applied for!!

KSV Scholarship recipients must maintain a standard of personal performance while at school that reflects positively upon the Khe Sanh Veterans' Association membership.

Scholastic Criteria for Award Consideration: 1). Attached "Official" Grade Point Transcript from the last school attended, 2). Completed Application Form, 3). Summaries of Scholastic Participation, Volunteer and Work Experiences, 4). A small photo of the applicant and, 5). Completed final page with applicant's signature and the KHE SANH VETERAN sponsor's signature.

B). School Extracurricular Activities: (examples) Athletics, Music, School Government, School Publications, Academic Honors & Achievements, Scouting, Counselor, etc..

C). Employment Experience: (examples) part/full time jobs during school year, military service, etc.

D). Final Mailing Packet Check List: (ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED FORMS)!!

***COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM (ABOVE)**

***COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT (FROM THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR)**

***SMALL PHOTO OF YOURSELF**

***PERSONAL ESSAY (250 -400 WORDS) TELLING YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS AND CAREER PLANS.**

***SIGNATURE PAGE FOR APPLICANT AND SPONSOR (BELOW)**

SIGNATURE PAGE: (TO BE INCLUDED IN PACKET)

I SWEAR THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE:

APPLICANT SIGNATURE:_____

ACTUAL SIGNATURE OF KHE SANH VETERAN PARENT OR GRANDPARENT SPONSOR:

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO THE KHE SANH VETERANS SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

APPROVED: _____**DAN FISHER COMMITTEE CHAIRMAIN**

APPROVED: _____**RUSSELL TURNER KSV PRESIDENT**

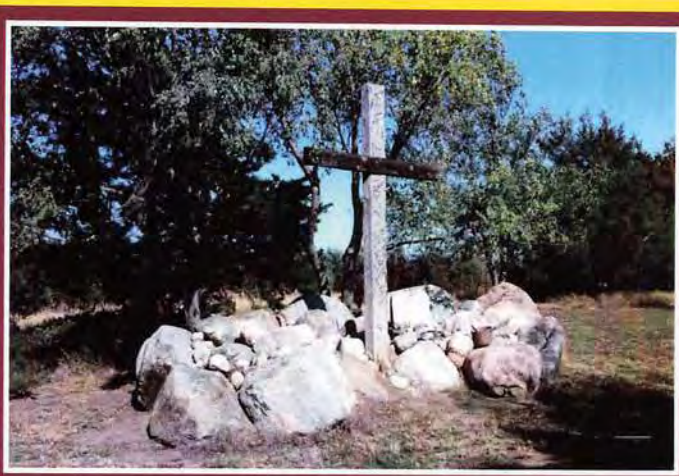





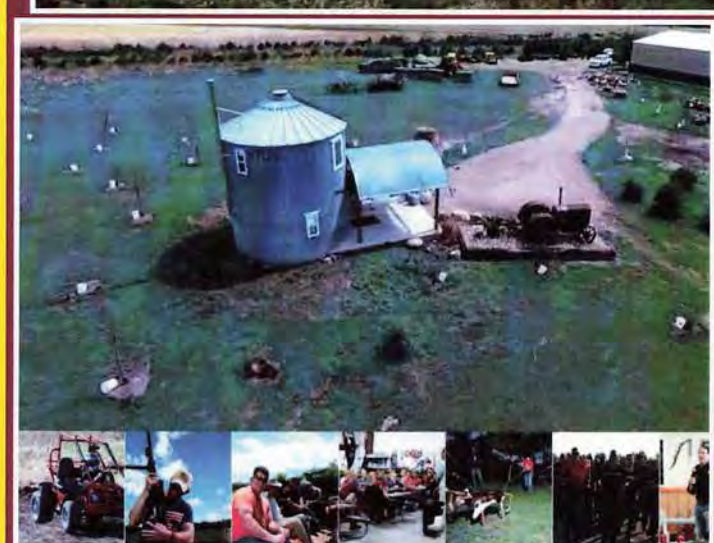

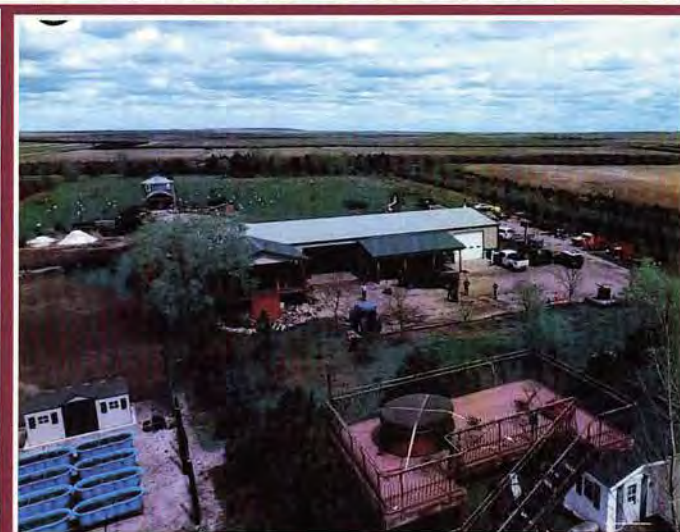

Picture in your mind the farms and ranches near Pierre, South Dakota – a landscape similar to what's shown in the movie "Dances With Wolves" (the film was shot right in this area). This land produces feed corn, wheat, soybeans, and seed grains. It also produces people of the land who've inherited a profound sense of tenacity and pride in a job well done at the end of a day filled with hard work. One of those is Ken Korkow, BRAVO CO 1/26 KHE SANH VETERAN.

JUST A FEW OF THE ACTIVITIES AVAILBLE ON THE RANCH







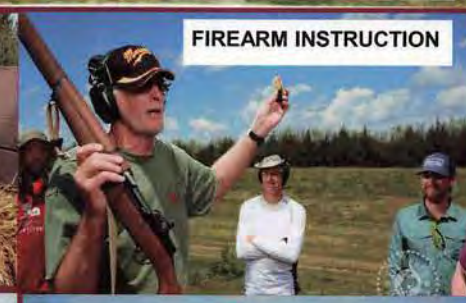



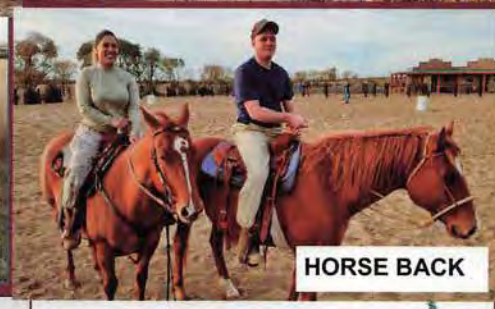





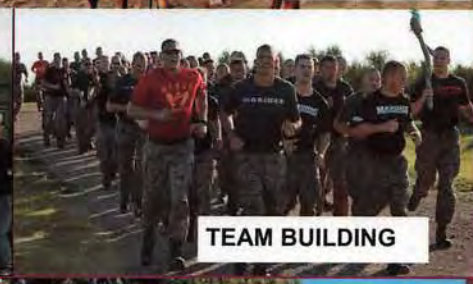









WE ARE A MINISTRY THAT LOVES GOD AND PEOPLE, AND FOCUSES ON SERVING MILITARY VETERANS.

ISSUE 102

RED CLAY

SUMMER 2023

A FEW OF THE RED CLAY COVERS OVER PAST YEARS



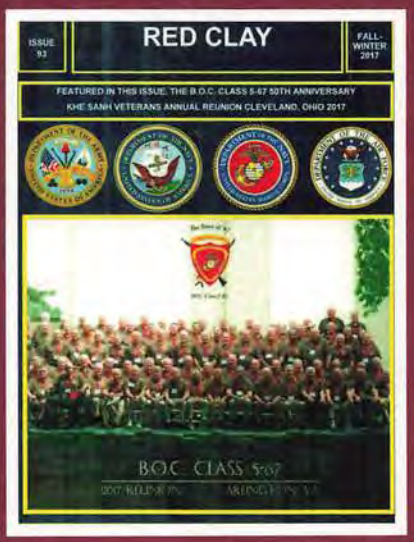



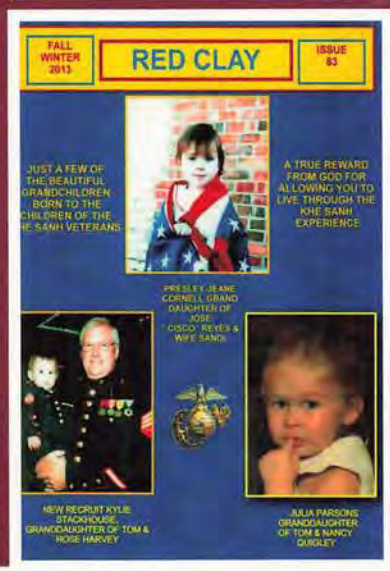

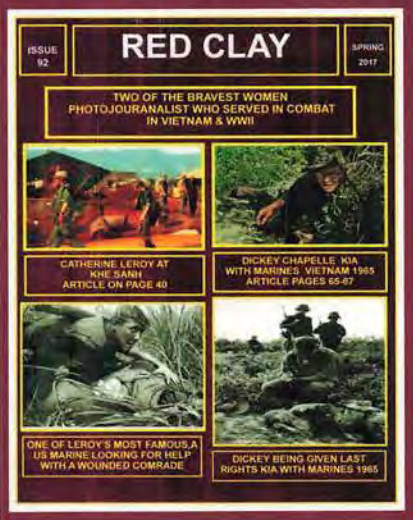

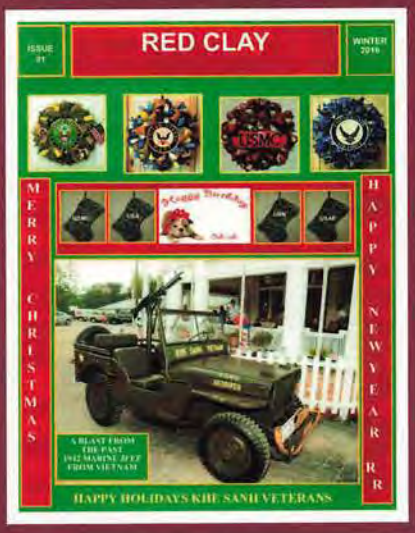



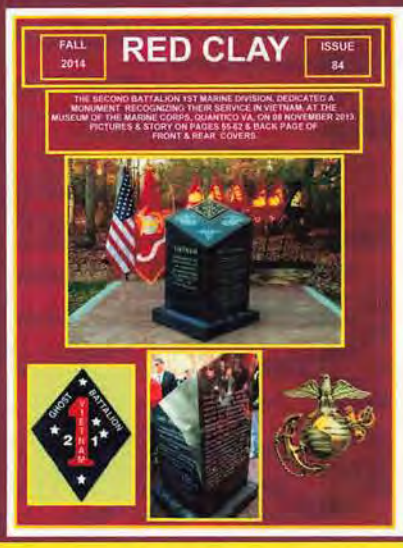



OUR NEWEST AUTHOR, TARA FORD, DAUGHTER OF TOM FORD F CO 2/26

WRITING: " I AM NOT THE ONLY ONE KHE SANH KIDS SPEAK"



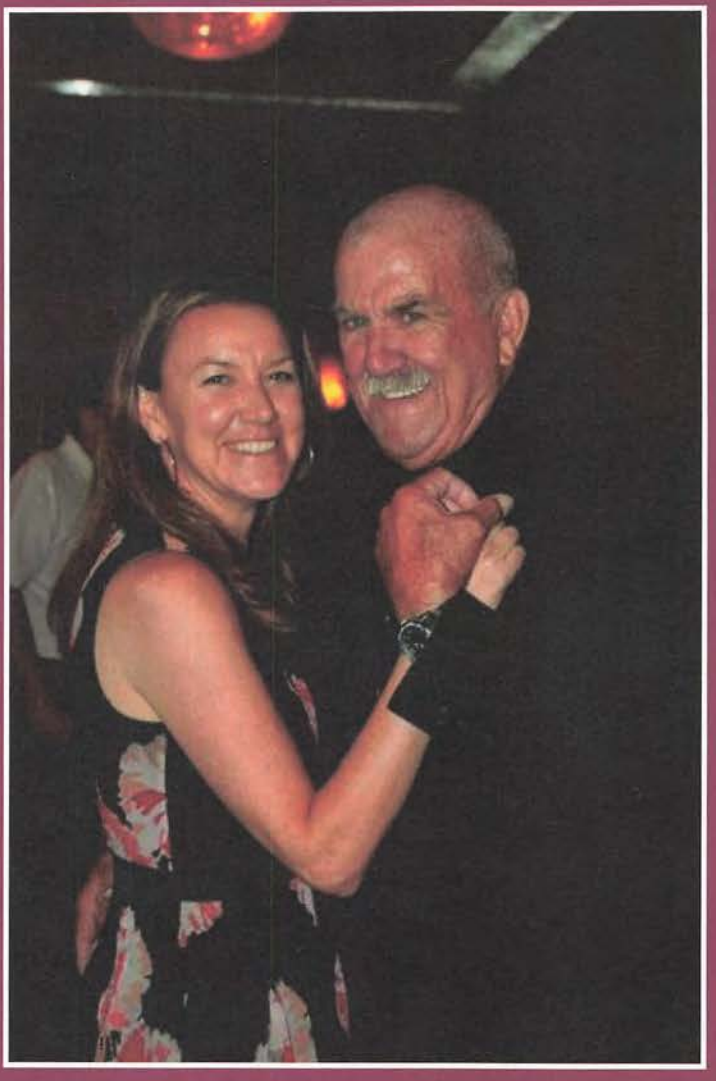







KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

'IT TOOK 50 YEARS': JOHNSTOWN MAN RECEIVES VIETNAM SERVICE MEDALS

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. – David "Dee Dee" Osborne initially had little interest in pursuing the medals he had earned during his service in the United States Marine Corps in Vietnam.

Osborne didn't speak much about his time in Southeast Asia. In fact, the less he thought about his being among those U.S. forces cut off and isolated while defending the Khe Sanh Combat Base during a brutal 77-day siege, the better for the Johnstown resident.

"I was 19 years old, a sergeant, back then and I turned 70 on Sept. 4," Osborne said. "It took 50 years."

Osborne is well-known throughout the region as a former baseball coach who spent25 years at Greater Johnstown High School and was a manager of the successful Pepsi-Cola teams that played in the All American Amateur Baseball Association Tournament. He currently is a Cleveland Indians scout.



Osborne also is a member of the Greater Johnstown School District Board of Directors.

His father Harold encouraged him to inquire about the medals decades ago, putting into motion a sometimes frustrating process that finally had a successful ending 50 years after his service in Vietnam. "My dad said, 'Pursue it. You earned them. Get them,'" said Osborne, who joined the Marines as a 17-year-old with his parents signing off. He served in Vietnam from early 1967 through 1968, when he was injured in combat.

Osborne's father died in 1999, about a decade into a process that involved attempts to locate and verify military records and accounts of men who served with Osborne.

SERVICE TO OUR NATION'

U.S. Rep. Keith Rothfus, R-Sewickley, helped complete the effort as Osborne recently received:

- Presidential Unit Citation ribbon bar with one bronze star.
- Meritorious Unit Commendation ribbon bar with one bronze star.
- National Defense Service Medal.
- Vietnam Service Medal with four bronze campaign stars.
- Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Gallantry Cross Color with palm and frame) ribbon bar.
- Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with 1960 Device.

"I am proud to congratulate Sergeant David 'Dee Dee' Osborne on finally receiving his medals in recognition for his dedicated service to our nation as a Marine during the Vietnam War," Rothfus said in a statement. "Helping our district's veterans and constituents is one the most important duties I have as a member of Congress. It was an honor to assist in the efforts to secure the recognition that Dee Dee deserves, and I thank him for his years of service to Johnstown and our nation."

Osborne had letters from late U.S. Rep. John P. Murtha, whose office began the process in November 1988. Correspondence from Murtha in July 2000 documented efforts to reach a chaplain who served with Osborne.

After Murtha's death in 2010, Congressman Mark Critz briefly took up the cause. Representative Bryan Barbin's office also played a role in collecting documentation.

Finally, Rothfus, with contributions from staffer Brian Subich of Johnstown, put the final pieces in order.

"Helping constituents like Mr. Osborne is one of the most rewarding parts of my job ," said Subich, a field representative on Rothfus' staff. "I am glad to have been a part of getting Dee Dee the recognition he deserves."

BADLY INJURED' SAVING A LIFE

Osborne said he appreciated the efforts by all of those involved since 1988, and especially thanked Rothfus and Subich.

"All the records were destroyed when we got overrun in Khe Sanh," Osborne said. "The NVA (North Vietnamese Army) got inside the wire."

Once the medals arrived, Osborne said he thought of his parents as well as his brother Ray, who also served in Vietnam.

Of course, he remembered his comrades, many of whom didn't make it back to the states.

A hand-written letter signed by Phillip J. Wright, USMC, was dated Oct. 18, 1999. The correspondence originally had been submitted as testimony for a Purple Heart, which Osborne has not been awarded. Records in files on Osborne assembled by Murtha and Barbin's offices indicate that one eyewitness, Wright, provided documentation of the event, but another eyewitness account is necessary to award a Purple Heart

"Sergeant Osborne was almost killed, but badly injured saving the life of an already wounded Marine," Wright wrote.

"On or about 3-15-68, Sergeant Osborne was placing another wounded Marine on a MedEvac helicopter. As always, the enemy tried shelling the helicopter and got far too close.

"Abruptly, the pilot shot straight up to clear the area. Sergeant Osborne realized the stretcher would fall out if he let go before the crew chief could get hold of the other end of it, so he held it as the helicopter climbed. Once the crew chief had the stretcher secured, Sergeant Osborne had no choice but letting go of it and falling to the ground, landing on his side from a height of two or three stories. He badly injured an arm and a foot and was himself on the next MedEvac to Dong Ha."

'BLOOD STAINED YOUR UNIFORM'

Osborne said he was fortunate to survive the incident.

"A sniper had his sights on me," Osborne said. "There were tracer rounds and everybody was yelling for me to drop the stretcher. I couldn't do it. The poor kid was yelling, 'Help me. Help me.' I saw the tracer rounds going over my head.

"Everybody was on the ground yelling, 'Ozzy, Ozzy, get down.' A sniper had three shots on me and missed all three times."

Osborne became somber when looking at a Stars & Stripes publication photograph of two Marines evacuating two wounded men from a field near Con Thien Combat Base in South Vietnam.

"I was standing right here," Osborne said, pointing at the photo. "The NVA let us go down that road, down that field. When we came out, they wouldn't let us out. They ambushed us – 200 casualties."

The photograph caption confirmed the casualty count, stating the unit returned from the Vietnamese Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and the Marines were "caught on an open road."

"I saved seven guys that day. I didn't give a shit anymore," Osborne said. "I just went out and heard the yelling and screaming, 'Help, help.' I just went and grabbed them, put them on my shoulder, ran them up there and they got a stretcher and put them on. Blood stained your uniform ..."

Osborne's eyes teared up. He glanced away from the newspaper clip and looked at the medals neatly arranged on a table in his kitchen.

"I was just a young kid," he said. "Fifty years I waited for this. I wish my dad could see this."



STILL A LOVING COUPLE: MERLE & RITA MORITZ
E CO 2/26 HILL 861A BOTH KSV REUNION COMMITTEE





THE NUCHERENO CLAN





GRANDMA LYNNE NUCHERENO WITH ERIC


ORCHESTRA CENTER








USMC
FMF
1/26
D





TOM FORD F CO 2/26 WITH WIFE & DAUGHTER





THIS PICTURE SAYS IT ALL





MIKE RODRIQUEZ US ARMY

OUR FOUNDER REVERAND RAY W. STUBBE















warm food. Returned to the Barracks and spent the next 2 hours in the hot showers. We each must have lost 5 lbs of layered red laterite that had accumulated on our skin. I washed my socks and skivies, while in the shower. then slept a full night on a mattress, with no rude awakenings

The next morning after a early breakfast, we picked up our equipment, supplies and managed to catch a direct flight back to Khe Sanh, not that we were in any rush, just our luck, as it was.

sidebar: when you subsist on C-ration for months on end, a meal of greasy eggs, bacon, sausage, buttered toast, milk and coffee, is not a good choice

So for years after leaving the Navy, I would always support that Bob Hope was a myth. I believe the Brass made him up, for the sake of moral. Let me add, I was also denied admission again to the Bob Hope Christmas Show 1968 Naha, Okinawa, while stationed at White Beach, Okinawa. .....thats another true event, being a Seabee is an Adventure, I would hate as I age to be placed in a Retirement Home for Old Seabee,.....could not stand all those bullshit stories

Raymond Cruz "Ray" EOHCN
CBMU 301 "A" Co, Bravo Detachment
MCB 11 Security Platoon
White Beach Okinawa, Port Facilities



TERRY FOURNIER CLAN







TIM & JANET HALEY ON A TRIP TO LAS VEGAS

MORE HONORS FOR OSBORNE

I'M REALLY HUMBLED'

Soon, Osborne's name will be attached to one of the fields where he coached, managed or mentored players of all ages who competed in youth baseball, high school and college-level leagues, as well as the annual AAABA Tournament.

Johnstown City Council passed a resolution 7-0 on Wednesday to name the Roxbury Park AAABA field in honor of Osborne, 74, of Hornerstown.



"I'm really humbled. I'm really lost for words," Osborne said, choking back tears during a phone interview. "I got a lot of years up there. A lot of championships. I'll be darned. This is a great honor."

In 2008, the AAABA Hall of Fame inducted Osborne, a successful manager and general manager who is credited with changing how teams recruited players in the mid-1980s and building powerhouse franchises in the Johnstown Junior League/ AAABA League into the early 2000s.

At Greater Johnstown High School, Osborne coached Trojans baseball for 25 seasons. He amassed 239 wins, including a District 6 Class 3A championship in 1998, when Greater Johnstown stunned a highly regarded State College squad. His AAABA teams collected a combined 541 regular-season victories and made nine national tournament appearances with Osborne serving as either a manager or GM in the local league. As a manager, Osborne had 267 regular-season wins and four trips to the tournament. He guided the local powerhouse Pepsi-Cola team that produced future major leaguers such as Keith Williams, Mike Holtz and Joe Vitko.

Later, he managed Moxham Bank and Principle Development and was a GM with the wildly successful Delweld franchise.



A list of former Osborne players reads like a who's who of area baseball performers who went on to success at the college and pro levels. A longtime Cleveland Guardians scout, Osborne also started the Dee Dee Osborne Showcase, a summer event that has been held for more than 20 years with Greater Johnstown graduate and AAABA Hall of Famer Tom Walter directing the action for his former coach.

The showcase annually was held at Roxbury for years before it moved to Mount Aloysius College. Currently the head coach at Wake Forest University, Walter is among those who pushed for the Roxbury Park field to be named after Osborne.

'DEE DEE IS BASEBALL'

"Dee Dee is baseball in Johnstown," said Walter, an MVP on Osborne's Pepsi-Cola team in the Junior League. "He is the guy that brought baseball to life for me and so many others. He's impacted my life in so many ways and certainly is one of the reasons I got into coaching.



"He is a guy who cared so much about his players, not only as baseball players, but on a personal level. To this day, I talk to Dee Dee at least once a week. He's somebody who's been like a second father to me."

Another Johnstown product joined Walter in the cause. Ross Kott, a AAABA Hall of Famer who was an MVP on Sani-Dairy's tourney runner-up team in 1995, coached with Osborne at Greater Johnstown after playing for the Trojans.

Now a resident of New Orleans, Kott will join Walter in Johnstown for a planned dedication ceremony in April, when Wake Forest is to play at the University of Pittsburgh.

Hopes are that a game between Greater Johnstown, coached by former Osborne assistant Kerry Pfeil, and Westmont Hilltop, led by former Osborne assistant Chris DelSignore, can be arranged for the gathering. DelSignore is a AAABA Hall of Famer who managed Delweld to AAABA Tournament title game appearances with Osborne as general manager.

"I think this is the crowning achievement for Dee for his commitment to Johnstown High School and the local baseball community," Kott said. "Dee Dee bleeds Columbia blue and black. He put the baseball program on the map and helped countless players gain opportunities they may have never had before his arrival.

"Dee Dee gave his life to local baseball and I'm just one of the many who were fortunate to have him help me not only in baseball, but in life," Kott said. "He deserves this honor and I'm happy I could help."

'GENERATIONAL IMPACT'

City of Johnstown Public Works Director Jared Campagna teamed with Walter and Kott as well as city officials throughout the months-long process. "Tom and Ross brought the idea together, and collectively, we kind of breathed it to life and brought it to fruition," Campagna said. "The whole community can benefit from it. Dee Dee's impact has been a generational impact on young people's lives."

Johnstown Councilman Rick Britt, a Greater Johnstown High School graduate, thought the resolution is appropriate.

"It's a great idea. He definitely earned it," Britt said. "His record, his teams' performances, the leadership that he gave his ballplayers. I think he's earned it."

Councilman Chuck Arnone, like Osborne, served in the United States Marine Corps. Arnone appreciated Osborne's service to his country.

In 2018, Osborne received Vietnam War medals he had earned 50 years earlier during the siege of Khe Sanh. He was wounded in combat.

"Dee Dee is a former Marine, and there is a brotherhood that stands longer than the history of the United States," said Arnone, commander of Johnstown American Legion Post 294. "Dee Dee was a hard-working guy and he gave himself to the city 100 different ways as far as baseball.

"A lot of times, we don't honor somebody until it's posthumous. I think it's a great to honor someone while they're still alive."

Arnone said efforts are underway to install a 30-foot flagpole adjacent to the field, noting that many are surprised to learn no pole currently exists in the park to display the American flag.

A NCAA Division I baseball coach with more than 800 career wins – nearly 400 at Wake Forest University – Walter said plans call for future fundraising efforts to improve the field.

"They've talked about eventually putting turf in there and doing some other things," Walter said. "Giving back to baseball in Johnstown is something that always has been important to me, something instilled by Dee Dee. We'd like to upgrade that facility and try to make it a second version of the Point."

OBIT

MAJOR STANLEY C. GROMALA USAF B-52 AVIATOR , KHE SANH VETERAN



Stanley C. Gromala, 78, of Enfield, passed away peacefully on March 9, 2023. Stas' as he was called by those who knew him, was born in Meriden on April 4, 1944 and was the son of Stanley J. Gromala and Harriet (Laskarzewski) Gromala. He graduated from Platt High School and went on to obtain degrees from Drexel University, and later Central Connecticut State University. After Drexel he was commissioned and proudly served as an aviator in **United States Air Force where he flew the C-130 Hercules. While in Vietnam he was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses for going above and beyond the call of duty, one for his actions during the Siege of Khe Sanh.**

He later served in the Panama conflict and retired with the rank of Major out of Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, MA. He would often say that he "absolutely loved flying and being in the Air Force" but because he was a single dad, he chose to give it up to raise his two children. After the Airforce he worked at Aetna as a computer programmer until retirement. After retiring he traveled around New England working with his cousin Gerry and would later go on to drive school buses for the public school system.

He was an avid reader and loved to read about science, history, military history, and financial strategies. He liked to garden and was well known by those close to him for his love of tomato plants and his wonderfully dry sense of humor. In his later years he enjoyed spending most of his time with son Stanley, his sister Rita and his beloved grandchildren Valentina and Ignacio. Stanley is survived by his son, Stanley and his partner Daisy; his daughter, Susan Gromala; his sister, Rita Gromala-Schoenborn and her husband Michael his grandchildren, Gabriel, Valentina (who adored her Dziadziu), and Ignacio; his nephews, Steven and Joseph Schoenborn and many cousins. Relatives and friends may join the family on Thursday, March 16, 2023, from 4 – 7 pm at Leete-Stevens Enfield Chapels, 61 South Rd, Enfield, CT. A Mass of Christian Burial took place at 11:00 am on Friday, March 17, 2023 at St. Stanislaus Church, 82 Akron St, Meriden, CT 06450







CRAIG TOURTE KSV SECRETARY AT A POW WOW WITH TWO NATIVE AMERICAN KSV



CRAIG TOURTE TRYING TI GET FREE TRIP TO SWEDEN FROM HANS GRANQVIST



EUGENE

KAROL



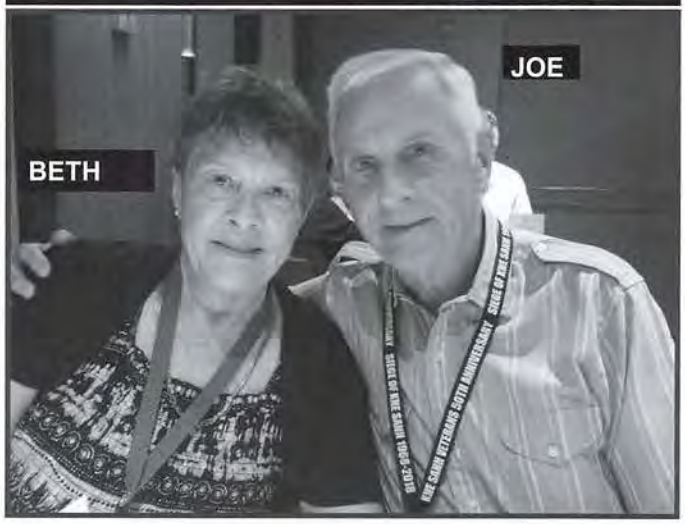

JOE

BETH

EUGENE LOMBARDI & JOE REBOLTZ, TWO MARINES FROM BRAVO 1/1 WHO WENT OVER TO OKINAWA WITH THE 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BATTALION 1959 WITH THEIR LOVELY WIVES.

FROM THE WEB BY JACK HAIGWOOD

This is a lengthy story but well written and a very true story. The Jim in the story is now deceased, but the Jack & Ray (author) continue to live.

There is no Bob Hope In a land far, far away, in a time long ago, there lived. Wait, this is the way, fictitious stories begin. This is a true account, I am going to present you with facts , just the facts.

Time is Dec, 1967, exact day is uncertain, but close to Christmas. Location is Southeast Asia. Republic of South Vietnam, I Corp, Khe Sanh Combat Base to be exact.

This forward Combat base is located the North East region of I Corp near the DMZ and the infamous Ho Chi Min trail. A once lush and green Jungle/Forest, with a abundance of wildlife. The French had Tea and other crops plantations here. They also used this area as a resort for , hunting, trekking and other leisure activity for those that could, during French Colonial days.

Today it's usage is for military , by the United States Armed Forces to defend the world from Communist aggression, I digress into politics and that is Fiction also, back to the facts

The Khe Sanh Combat Base at this time is inhabited by US Marines I will not try to separate the individual units since all Marines are indoctrinated to believe they are all Rifleman first, and whatever else they do is secondary. Twenty five hundred plus Marines plus some Air Force personnel, with a compliment of Special Forces and other Army personnel.

Complimenting and in support of the entire Base was a Detachment of the finest and best, US Navy Seabees. This unit is important to the story so the facts are, Bravo Detachment from Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 301, Approximately 32 men, from the various rates that Seabees hold. Unlike Marines each Seabee has a distinct rate, a specialty or trade to speak.

The Seabees hold rates as Heavy Equipment Operators, Construction Mechanics, Electricians, Builders, Steelworkers, Utility (plumbing/AC), Engineering Aids, specialties that do not allow any Seabee to perform each other's trade. (Union contract)

On or about the week of Christmas, orders were given to pick up some equipment and parts in Danang. The assignment fell to Third class Construction Mechanic Jack Haigwood and Construction Mechanic Jim Lange. A Equipment operator also was directed to travel with the Mechanics in the event the equipment had to be moved, this task fell to EO Raymond Cruz

Due to the conditions on the base of constantly being harassed by NVA Gunners and the possibility of a ground attack, they each are fully dressed in the uniform of the day. That being Jungle Fatigues, Jungle boots, Flak jacket, Helmet, M-16, and full ammo belt, with gas mask.

If anyone has flown in and out of, example JFK, O'Hara, LAX, all you have to do is look at the reader board to locate your flight, gate and destination. The Khe Sanh Combat Base had none of these. You would walk out to the parking apron with gear in hand and waited for whatever landed and was able to get off the ground. Oh, the base also lacked Red Cap service, so you travel light.

I remember we three jumping aboard a CH-46 "Chinook", hoping it was going to Dong Ha, where our main unit was located. This would be a bonus flight since we could visit with friends, get some good food and maybe get a shower. (Marines were always in the mood for a fight, I believe due too the chow being served at Khe Sanh). Oh no such luck, the Chinook lands in Quang Tri, south of Dong Ha. Quang Tri another base full of pissed off Marines, must be something in the Kool Aide.

The process is started all over again, wait and we wait, all planes landing and leaving are going elsewhere. Late that afternoon finally a C-123 s heading for Danang and with some luck there is room in the coach section, we must be truly blessed. Lets give this some perspective.

In today's modern air travel, this would take 1+ hour for the distance we were traveling. it has taken us a complete day. Arriving in Danang late in the afternoon we still have to acquire transportation to Naval Support Activity Danang. Taxis must be on some union break we could not hale one down. An Air Force Tech Sergeant in pressed starched greens, noticed our desperate look and allowed us to sit in the back of his shiny green pickup and dropped us off at the NSA Danang gate. The Gate that this wonderful Air Force personnel, who kindly gave us a lift is at the farthest point from the Supply Depot. This we find out after the Tech Sergeant leaves us in the hands of a Fleet Sailor playing Mall Cop at this gate. The Sailor in Garrison belt and 45 strapped to

his side, checks our orders, waves us in, cool. We turned towards this marvelous image of Security and ask "where do we go", very efficiently he points, without facing us .

Arriving on foot with twilight now at our backs. We know nothing is going to happen but we pressed on, since orders are orders and they must be carried out. NSA supply depot personnel are all gone with the exception of a lone First Class. who was kind enough to tell us we could come back in the morning. After much stammering, he advised us we could spend some time in the EM Club and that the Bob Hope Christmas show was happening this day, Truly we are blessed, someone in the group must have kissed the Blarney stone, I dismiss myself since, I have kissed a few Irish girls but no Blarney or Barnie. We have managed to stay in shape the last couple of months so the walk across the base in full uniform of the day, has not hampered our jog to the Bob Hope Christmas show.

Having been at Khe Sanh for almost 4 months, it takes a lot to get me excited, as well as the two traveling companions Jim and Jack, who have yet to miss a step, we walk in cadence almost automatically, nothing has yet broken our temper. Had we known then what we had ventured into,

We approach the outdoor theatre, we can clearly hear loud laughter, something we could only imagine ever happening at Khe Sanh, (it did happened once, the Chow hall posted a menu describing the evening meal, Soup de Jour, a green salad, choice of Prime Beef, or Chicken in a light cream sauce with mixed greens and wild rice) those cooks are real comedians. again I digress

We follow the throngs of well pressed Greens toward the sounds of laughter and the signature of humans with no stress, you can actually smell the relaxation in the air. This was like a pheromone too us Finally three resident from Khe Sanh are going to share in something other than C-rations, dust, mud and rats. We approach another Mall Cop who without hesitation and with the authority of Superman stopping a speeding train, puts his hand up flat up to our faces. With all of the education he received at some Ivy League school bellows out," Where the fuck do you three fucks think you are going" such language took us by surprise.

We are going to the Bob Hope Christmas show, again the Ivy league trained linguist, opens his mouth "NO! the fuck your not". This sets off a switch in every Seabees cerebral cortex and the three, step forward closer to the subject to cut down on swinging wildly and missing

A second MP approaches and begins to flex something of a muscle under those starched Greens and Helmet. The two Mall Police in Chorus say, NO! you are not getting in. We three Seabees move closer That gives us the appearance of looking bigger, a method used in the wild.

The two MP's take a step back, and each reach up, grab and pinch their noses, "You guys Smell" With complete astonished look, we fell silent and searched each others faces for an explanation for why such a comment. We leaned into each other and took a whiff of each other and could not detect any strange odor

Fact, we had just spent the last 3+ months working 12 to 16 hour shifts rebuilding the Runway at Khe Sanh. Round the clock work schedule, in that Red laterite and mud that makes up that region. Sleeping in tents or Bunkers, eating C-rations and constantly diving, crawling, and dodging the daily and increasing frequency of Artillery shells. We all had that well worn out look, there was no laundry service and why? So to us, every one there at Khe Sanh, looked and smelled the same, nothing to write home about.

The two MP's then and may I mention very eloquently pointed out that we not only smelled, our uniforms were filthy, and we had weapons, I had a M-16,16 magazines loaded, 2 grenades and a bandolier of 5.56ball ammo plus a Gas mask, pretty standard walking around outfit at Khe Sanh. Jim and Jack pretty much the same, except for the sidearm they carried.

We informed the two MP's that we could not surrender the weapons, they informed us again, we were not going in. We started to press the issue when a handful of cloned MP's arrived (shiny helmets, starched greens, MP armbands) they all look alike.
We could have shot our way in, since I doubt those sidearms they had, were probably empty and just for show. After much deliberating we decided to return to NSA and get a bunk for the night.

The MA on duty was very kind, think he took one look at us and felt it his Christian duty to help those in real need. We worked out an arrangement to have our weapons and gear in a separate locked storage unit. He pointed us to a gedunk that was still open, and had real food. We rushed over, inhaled some

Some warm food. Returned to the Barracks and spent the next 2 hours in the hot showers. We each must have lost 5 lbs of layered red laterite that had accumulated on our skin. I washed my socks and skivies, while in the shower. then slept a full night on a mattress, with no rude awakenings

The next morning after a early breakfast, we picked up our equipment, supplies and managed to catch a direct flight back to Khe Sanh, not that we were in any rush, just our luck, as it was sidebar: when you subsist on C-ration for months on end, a meal of greasy eggs, bacon, sausage, buttered toast, milk and coffee, is not a good choice .So for years after leaving the Navy, I would always support that Bob Hope was a myth. I believe the Brass made him up, for the sake of moral. Let me add, I was also denied admission again to the Bob Hope Christmas Show 1968 Naha, Okinawa, while stationed at White Beach, Okinawa. .....thats another true event, being a Seabee is an Adventure, I would hate as I age to be placed in a Retirement Home for Old Seabee,.....could not stand all those bullshit stories

Raymond Cruz "Ray" EOHCN
CBMU 301 "A" Co, Bravo Detachment
MCB 11 Security Platoon
White Beach Okinawa, Port Facilities

OBIT

William "Billy" Waugh, a famed Army Special Forces soldier and later CIA operative, passed away today, at the age of 93.

BILLY WAUGH – SPECIAL FORCES LEGEND

From hitchhiking at age 15 in order to join the WWII effort to hunting Bin Laden in his 70s in the mountains of Tora Bora the story of Billy Waugh is straight out of a Hollywood movie; but it is entirely true.

Billy Waugh had two long careers, one in Special Forces and the other in the CIA as a paramilitary operations officer. In total, he served for more than 50 years as a special operator.

A HITCHHKERS ATTEMPT TO JOIN THE MILITARY

Waugh was born in Bastrop, Texas on December 1, 1929. He was bitten by the bug to join the military during World War II. In 1945, he met a pair of Marines who had just returned to Texas from fighting in the South Pacific. So, at the age of 15, he decided



to enlist. Somehow, he got the idea that you could enlist at the age of 16 in California, so he set off hitchhiking for Los Angeles.

He got only as far as Las Cruces, New Mexico when he was stopped by a police officer. He was put in jail for having no identification and refusing to give his name. Eventually, he was released and returned to Bastrop.

Waugh decided to throw himself into high school until he was old enough to enlist. He graduated with a grade point average (GPA) of 4.0 from Bastrop High School.

Waugh eventually joined the military in 1948, but he enlisted with the Army, not the Marines. After going through basic training at Ft. Ord, California, Waugh went through jump school in December 1948.

He re-enlisted in 1951 to get an assignment with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (Rakkasans), which was then fighting in Korea.

After the Armistice ended the Korean War, Billy Waugh was assigned to Germany. There, while riding on a train, he met a couple of NCOs from the 10th Special Forces Group. They explained the opportunities that existed for NCOs in the unit and what Special Forces (SF) were all about. Waugh volunteered and entered the training pipeline, earning his Green Beret and joining the 10th Special Forces Group.

The men hunted for the notorious terrorist in the Afghan mountains outside of Tora Bora. At 71 years of age, when any thoughts of being an operator are long past for warriors, Waugh was on the hunt one final time. Waugh on horseback in the mountains around Tora Bora in 2001. (Hunting the Jackal/Avon Press)

"If the mind is good and the body is able, you keep on going if you enjoy it," Waugh said in the interview with Stubbs. "Once you get used to that, you're not about to quit. How could you want to do anything else?"

Because of security restrictions, no one (other than Waugh) knows in how many classified operations he participated. He Billy Waugh is rightly a legend in the special operations and paramilitary community.

His awards and decorations consist of :

Silver Star
Legion of Merit
Bronze Star Medal with three bronze oak leaf clusters
Purple Heart with seven oak leaf clusters
Army Commendation Medal with Valor device and three oak leaf clusters
Army Presidential Unit Citation with oak leaf cluster (one award in 2001, SOG)
Good Conduct Medal (7 awards)
Army of Occupation Medal
Nation Defense Service Medal W/one Bronze Star
Korean Service Medal With three Campaign Stars
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal
Vietnam Service Medal with Arrowhead device and six service stars
Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation
Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation
Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation
Republic of Vietnam Civil Actions Medal Unit Citation
United Nations Korea Medal
Vietnam Campaign Medal
Republic of Korea War Service Medal
Combat Infantryman Badge (two awards)
Special Forces Tab
Vietnam Parachutist Badge
Master Parachutist Badge
Military Freefall Jumpmaster Badge with gold combat jump star (5 combat jumps)
Air Medal
Korean Service Medal with three Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation
campaign stars







Forces Group (10th SFG) in Bad Tölz, West Germany.

During the early 1960s, Special Forces A-Teams were being sent to Southeast Asia to train indigenous tribesmen for the joint SF/CIA Civilian Irregular Defense Program (CIDG).
In Waugh's first tour in 1961, he trained tribesmen in both South Vietnam and Laos. In the same year, he began his first tour with the CIA's Special Activities Division, being on loan from the Special Forces. It wouldn't be his last.

BILLY WAUGH IN VIETNAM:

Waugh conducted five combat HALO jumps during the war in Vietnam. (Hunting the Jackal/Avon Press)

In 1965, his A-Team (A-331) and his CIDG unit conducted a raid on a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) unit compound in Bong Son, in Binh Dinh Province. Intelligence gave the Special Forces troops an estimate of a few hundred NVA troops in the area. This was a gross miscalculation, In reality, there were more than 4,000 troops in the area, including Chinese regular troops bolstering the NVA and Viet Cong.

During the raid, Billy Waugh found himself out of grenades and nearly out of ammunition. On the way to the predetermined exfil point, he was hit in the knee by a Soviet-made RPK.

Crawling along a levee, he was hit again in the foot and ankle. Reaching his medical aid bag, he gave himself a shot of morphine but this did little for the pain.

The CIDG and SF troops were soon in danger of being overrun. At that point, Waugh was shot in the head and knocked unconscious.

In an excerpt from his book, Hunting the Jackal, Waugh described what transpired, "I took another bullet, this time across the right side of my forehead. I don't know for sure, but I believe the bullet ricocheted off the bamboo before striking me. It sliced in and out of a two-inch section of my forehead, and it immediately started to bleed like an open faucet. It sounds like the punch line to a bad joke, but you know it's a bad day when the best thing about it is getting shot in the head."\

The NVA overran the position. They believed Waugh was dead and helped themselves to his gear, Rolex watch, and clothes, stripping him naked before leaving him there and moving on. His teammates found him and got him to safety. For his conduct, Billy Waugh was awarded a Silver Star and a Purple Heart — his sixth, for that operation.

He spent the remainder of 1965 and part of 1966 recovering from his wounds at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington DC. However, as soon as he was released from the hospital, Waugh was right back in Vietnam.

Waugh joined the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam Studies and Observations Group (MACV-SOG). This was a unit composed of special operators from all the services, but mostly Green Berets. It conducted dangerous missions deep in enemy-occupied territory.

While working for SOG, Waugh helped train Vietnamese and Cambodian forces in unconventional warfare tactics to fight against Communist forces in the region.

Waugh was the senior NCO of MACV-SOG's Command & Control North (CCN) based at Marble Mountain on the South China Sea, outside of Da Nang. Waugh held the command sergeant major position during the covert unit's transition and name -change to Task Force One Advisory Element (TF1AE). He spent the remainder of the war working for the unit.

The price for conducting these "over the fence" operations was high. The casualty rate for SOG forces was over 100 percent. In an interview about SOG with a Miami newspaper, Waugh said, "If you were going up there, you were either going to die or get shot all to hell. Everyone in the outfit was wounded once, twice, three times."

SGM Billy Waugh conducted the first combat High Altitude, Low Opening (HALO) jump, into enemy territory in October 1970. Waugh also led the last combat Special Reconnaissance parachute insertion by American Army Special Forces HALO parachutists into denied territory on June 22, 1971.

After the U.S. troops were withdrawn from Vietnam, Waugh, a veteran of 7.5 years of combat deployments, was to be reassigned to the 10th Special Forces Group. Nevertheless, he told the Army to change his orders or he would retire.

The Army had no need for Special Forces — and never liked the unit, to begin with — so they told

Waugh to retire. And thus he did. Waugh retired from active military duty at the rank of sergeant major (E-9) on February 1, 1972.

BILLY WAUGH RETURNS TO THE CIA

Waugh went back to Texas and worked for the U.S. Postal Service. But for someone who was used to the adrenaline rush of combat with SOG, a postman's job wasn't for him.

But in 1977 his career would refocus. He and three other retired Special Forces operators were recruited to train Libyan Special Forces troops. The men believed that this was a CIA operation, but the more they learned, they realized that it was not. Instead, it was a private operation run by an ex-CIA operative named Edwin Wilson.

Wilson would later be convicted of attempted murder, illegally selling arms, explosives, and ammunition to a foreign country, and was sentenced to 53 years in prison.

However, just prior to deployment, Waugh was approached by an active CIA agent who asked him to take photos of people, places, and anything else of value. This was a needed bit of insurance for Waugh in case things went wrong.
He took pictures of the men he was training with and of SAM (surface to air missile) sites. He then passed them on to the CIA.

Waugh was in Libya in 1979 when the U.S. Embassy in Tehran was overrun. Libya was no longer safe for him and he escaped to Frankfurt, Germany.

The new heads of the CIA under the Carter administration outwardly didn't want anyone like Waugh in the fold any longer. So, Waugh took a job as the deputy chief of police at the U.S. Army Kwajalein Missile Range in the Marshall Islands. The force was tasked with stopping the Soviets from stealing classified information on the U.S.'s missile technology.

TRACKING BIN LADEN AND HUNTING THE JACKAL:

But in the late 1980s, the agency came calling again. So, Billy Waugh ended up in Khartoum, Sudan, hunting a then-unknown terrorist and terror organization. The man was Osama bin Laden and the group was al-Qaeda. At that time, bin Laden was not a major target, so Waugh was told to watch and report on his activities. He got within a few feet of him several times.

I was within 30 meters of him," Waugh said to Air Force journalist Nick Stubbs during an interview in 2011. "I could have killed him with a rock."

In 1993, Waugh and a team of CIA operatives set up a surveillance mission to try and locate the wanted terrorist, Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, aka the infamous "Carlos the Jackal."

No one had photographed the Jackal for 10 years. But Waugh's team tracked him down and set up a surveillance point across the street from his house. They monitored Carlos's routine and eventually, the French came in, raided the house, and captured the Jackal.

After 9/11, Waugh had one last fight in him. Having so much knowledge about bin Laden, he convinced the agency to deploy him to the mountains of Afghanistan. Waugh deployed with ODA-594 of the 5th SFG.







This Navajo Code Talkers monument is located in Window Rock, Ariz. The monument pays tribute to the Navajo Code Talkers, a small band of warriors who created an unbreakable code from their Native language and changed the course of modern history.


















EUGENE & KAROL LOMBARDI

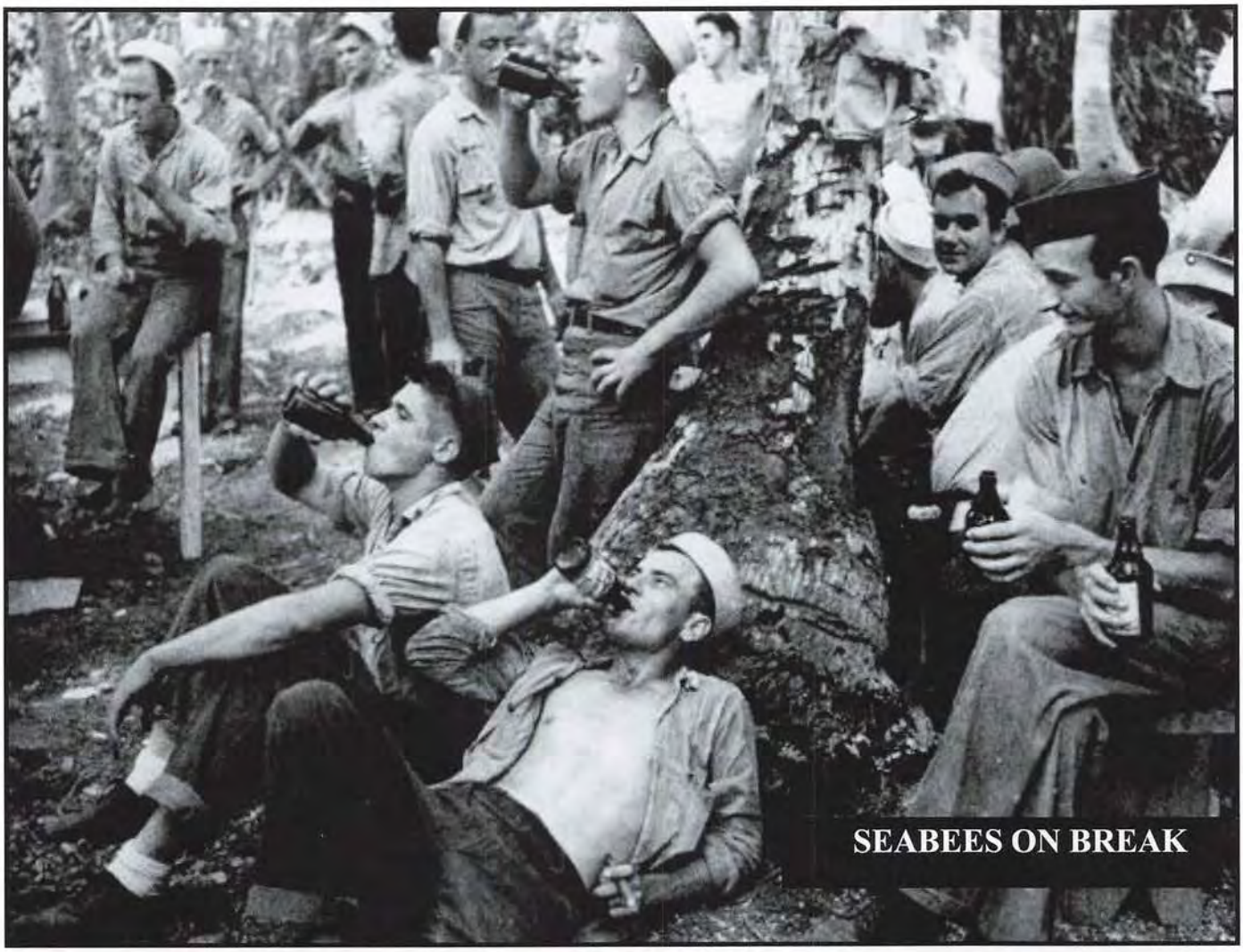

SEABEES ON BREAK



MARINES ON BREAK

OBIT

MICHAEL R. EIBEN, USN, KHE SANH VETERAN

Michael R. Eiben, Age 79, U.S. Navy Veteran of Vietnam War, Born into Eternal Life on March 23, 2023. Beloved husband of Suzanne "Suzy" Eiben (nee Scanlan) for 53 years. Loving father of Jennifer (Michael) Gervasio, Larry (Ann) Eiben, Gretchen (Sean) Lyons, and Emily (Luke) Lyons. Proud "Papa" of George, Suzanne, Charlie, and James Gervasio; Michael, Leo, Genevieve, and Loretta Eiben; Elise, Emily, Julia, and Thomas Lyons; Olivia, Luke, and Quinn Lyons. Beloved son of the late Lawrence and Rita (Bloomfield) Eiben. Loving brother of Mary Ellen Hoyt, Therese, and Peter Eiben, and the late Judith Hall. Cherished uncle to the Eiben, Batdorf, Hoyt, Brown, Doran and Scanlan families. Michael was born in Cleveland, Ohio, attended St. Edward's High School and graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a degree in Architecture.



At Notre Dame he was a member of the Naval ROTC and a monogram winning member of the wrestling team. **He went on to serve as a Naval officer in Vietnam from 1966-68 and was a highly decorated Officer-in-Charge of Beach Jumper Unit 1, a naval special warfare team. He was awarded the Naval Achievement Medal with combat "V" for his service during the Battle of Khe Sanh, during the Tet Offensive.** After the war he married the love of his life Suzy Scanlan and settled in the Beverly neighborhood in Chicago. Together they raised four children in Christ the King Parish. Michael worked at Chicago-based Bertrand Goldberg & Associates before launching his own successful architectural and computer engineering firm. In 1979 he was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to serve on the Special White House Task Force on Small Business representing military veterans' interests. He also served as Commissioner of the Urban Renewal Board and the Commercial District

Development Board helping to establish the Theatre District and Block 37. In his spare time, he was an avid outdoorsman, who loved hunting, fishing and traveling with his family, especially throughout the American West. Family and friends will meet at Christ the King Church, 9235 S. Hamilton Ave., Chicago, IL 60643 on Saturday, April 1, 2023 for visitation 9:30am-1:00pm. Mass of Christian Burial at 1:00pm. Livestream of the funeral mass will be available beginning at 1:00pm using the link:





OBIT

CHARLES E. DORAN, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN H CO 2/26

Charles Edward Doran, Sr., Proud U.S. Marine, age 74; Beloved husband of JoAnn, nee LaMantia; Loving father of Charles Edward (Margie) Doran, Jr., Gregory R (Bonnie) Doran, CPD, and Michael S. Doran; Cherished grandpa of 10; Proud great grandpa of 1; Dear brother of the late Gregory (the late Cheryl) Doran, late Geraldine Lynch and late Sharon Krasowski; Brother in law of Rose Morrissey and late Sheila Lambrecht; Fond uncle of many nieces and nephews; Cousin and dear friend of many who will miss him deeply; Charlie was a member Canaryville Veterans Association, VFW and DAV, Purple Heart recipient and was a Corporal in the Marine Corp and a Vietnam veteran. **Proud Marine at the Siege of Khe Sanh.** Interment Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.



MARCH 29, 2023
2023 NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS DAY CEREMONY AND PARADE, HONOLULU, OAHU
BY CRAIG W. TOURTE

What an honor it was to attend the 2ed Annual National Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony and Parade in Honolulu held on Kuroda Field at Fort DeRussy, to honor and thank Vietnam Veterans for their service and sacrifice. The ceremony consisted of numerous speakers and dignitaries "On an invitation from the Historic Programs in Hawaii, 117 representatives of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation on the Fort Berthold Reservation traveled to Hawaii from North Dakota" to take part in the Annual Vietnam Veterans Ceremony and Parade. Dressed in traditional Native American clothing including beautiful full feathered headdresses (Warbonnets) they performed traditional Chants and Native American tribal and cultural dances. Their performance was emotional and spellbinding.

Kuroda Field was packed with numerous bands and marching groups from local schools, youth organizations, VFW Organization, the Marine Corps Band, Vietnam Veterans Organizations. The parade down Kalakaua Ave and Saratoga Street lasted at least an hour and was a mile long.

I sat in a chair in front of the ceremony stage and listened as a Marine Corps Brigadier General gave a wonderful presentation of his experiences and appreciation of those who had gone before him. He included those who fought at Khe Sanh, Con Thien and Fallujah and many other signific sacrifices.

I was wearing my Khe Sanh Veterans shirt and after the ceremony, I walked to the stage and thanked him for including Khe Sanh in his presentation. He invited me onto the stage where I had the privilege of shaking his hand.

It was a wonderful experience, I was moved by the many who showed such great patriotism and noted the very stern expressions on the faces of the young people present and standing along the parade route and on the faces of those who marched in the long parade, it was obviously a proud moment for many. I am looking forward to going back to Hawaii and hopefully once again attending the National Vietnam Veterans Day Parade and Ceremony.





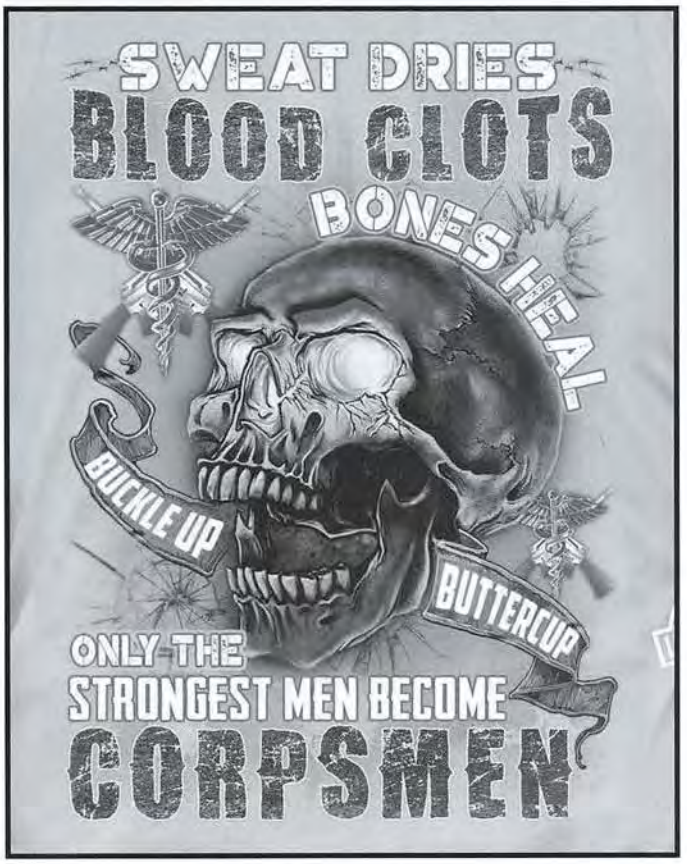





HAPPY BIRTHDAY TERRY FOURNIER



MIKE FISHBAUGH WITH HIS SISTER AND HER TWO BROTHERS

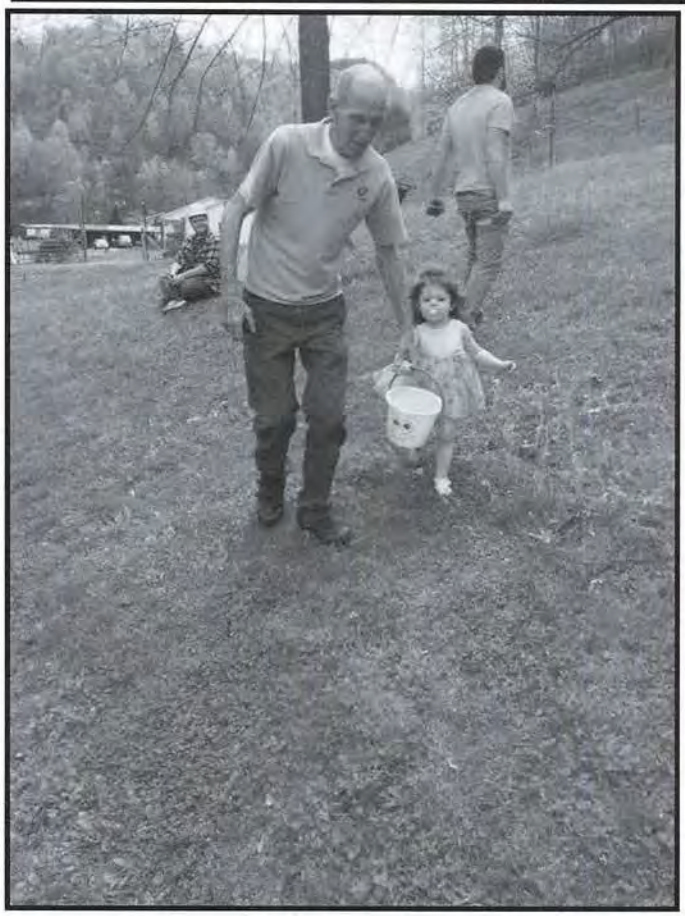





MEMORIES
FROM THE WEB BY KEVIN SELDON

Remembering these brave warriors on this 55th anniversary of one of the worst days in Vietnam for the Marine Corps. God bless them and Semper Fidelis.

55 Years ago today their world went dark. This is the story of the most fateful day the Marine Corps endured in the entire Vietnam War. On that day, 87 Marines from 1st Battalion, 9th Marines gave their lives in a brutal and vicious struggle against a dramatically numerically superior enemy force. This is their story and these are the faces of the men who lost their lives in a region northeast of Con Thien in an encounter known as 'The Marketplace' ambush.

Those who gave their lives at the Marketplace July 2, 1967:

LCpl. Roger Adams
PFC. John M. Ainsworth
LCpl. John P. Anderson
Cpl. Thomas E. Bailey
LCpl. Gary M. Barnard
PFC. Gilberto Barrera
PFC. Michael L. Beasley
CPl. Leon E. Bell
LCpl. Charles W. Bowersox Jr.
Cpl. Ronald Boston
LCpl. David M. Bradley
LCpl. Daniel W. Brady
LCpl. Walter H. Brooks Jr.
LCpl. Cesar E. Carvallo
LCpl. Ronald Charles
Capt. Sterling Coates
Pfc. Medford A. Chrysler
Sgt. Kenneth Clopton
HN Philip H. Converse
Pfc. George Coutrak
Cpl. Frank Davila
LCpl. Arthur E. Demers Jr.
Cpl. Alan L. Diedricksen
2nd Lt. John W. Doherty
HM3 Michael R. Dotson
Pfc. Paul G. Forbes
HN Hector Fuentes
Cpl. Margarito Garza
Pfc. Paul J. Golembski
Pfc. Warren Grant
LCpl. Michael L. Graves
Cpl. Robert L. Haines
LCpl. Stephen W. Harshman
Lcpl. Jeffery S. Hatison
Sgt. William E. Hilliard
Pfc. Terri L. Hines
LCpl. Gary A. Holsclaw
LCpl. Stephen J. Honnold
Cpl. Charles E. Humphrey
LCpl. James D. Imerese
Sgt. General F. James Jr.
LCpl. Robert Jamro
LCpl Dee R. Jarvis
LCpl. Charles E. Johnson
LCpl. Darryl R. Juel
Capt. Warren O. Keneipp Jr.
2nd Lt. Thomas G. King
Pfc. Carl J. Leutenegger
Pfc. Harry J. Lockhart
LCpl. Frank Lopinto
HN Edward R. Lozano
LCpl. Gary D. Lyons
HM2 Christopher J. Maguire III
Pfc. Anthony Maraczi
LCpl. Steven F. Mathias
LCpl. James L. McBride
Pfc. James G. McCoy
LCpl. Edward J. McCune
LCpl. John McGarry
LCpl.. Thomas W. McMahon Jr.
SSgt. Jerry L. Miller
Pfc. Maurice K. Mock
2nd Lt. Stephen Muller
Pfc. Richard A. Nichols
Cpl. Benny Nimox
SSgt. Tex D. Patrick
Maj. Ray D. Pendegraft
Pvt. Steven J. Powers
LCpl. Terry Quigley
HM2 Alex Quiroga
Cpl. Delma L. Reed
Ssgt. Alfredo V. Reyes
LCpl. Phillip W. Roe
LCpl. Jack R. Rush
Sgt. Stanley Sanders
HN Johnathan A. Sawyer
LCpl. Michael D. Smith
Capt. David G. Spearman
Pvt. George M. Steffans
Pfc. William L. Stevenson
LCpl. William J. Sutton
LCpl. Peter G. Talmon III
Cpl. Thomas M. Thompson
LCpl. William H. Toombs
LCpl. Steven R. Wagstaff
Pfc. Sherman R. Waites
Pfc. Tommie V. White
LCpl Wayne V. Wilson
LCpl. Herbert Wright
Pfc. Bruce Yoder
Cpl. Robert E. Zimberlin



HERE IS THEIR STORY:

The following information was obtained from several sources. Most notable "Operation Buffalo" by the late Keith W. Nolan and "Con Thien, The Hill of Angels," by James P. Coan. More information was also obtained from the July 1967 Command Chronology of 1st Battalion 9th Marines as well as the casualty files of those involved.

Operations in and around the Con Thien Marine outpost located just below the Demilitarized Zone had put 1st Battalion, 9th Marines into a very intense period of contact with seasoned elements of the North Vietnamese Army. For months, the Marines had conducted a series of operations in and around Con Thien including Operations Hickory, Prairie I, II, III and IV as well as Operation Cimarron. Hundreds of Marine casualties had been endured as the engaged in bitter fighting with the NVA, most notably elements of the 324B Division of the North Vietnamese Army. Despite the high casualties, the Marines had inflicted horrendous losses on the North Vietnamese. Con Thien was a small outpost within mortar range of the DMZ.

Sitting on two adjacent hills amid the flat grass and brush covered ground along the DMZ, the region was dotted with small villages, coffee plantations and in the summer was scorched by the sun where temperatures climbed well above triple-digit before noon. The Marine outpost at Con Thien was about as isolated as any American position in South Vietnam. The Marines there were completely reliant on air supply and the few routes that offered resupply of ammo, food and water. Con Thien, for all the miseries it offered its occupants, was a key point that offered those in possession of it observation of NVA movements just north of the DMZ. Throughout the spring of 1967, the Marines had engaged the North Vietnamese along the DMZ area in very close -quarters and brutal firefights. By the spring of 1967, Con Thien was the epicenter of the most intense, prolonged action in Vietnam. In mid-April Charlie Company, 11th Engineer Battalion was tasked with clearing a 200-meter-wide strip from Con Thien to Gio Linh, a distance of 6 ½ miles of trees and vegetation. This strip simply became known as 'The Trace.' The engineers were protected by a task force consisting of the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, an AMTRAC platoon, a platoon of M42 Dusters and some Army of the Republic of Vietnam units. By 19 April, despite harassment from North Vietnamese mines, small arms, recoilless rifle, mortar and artillery fire the strip was half-completed

On May 8, 1967, at 3:00 AM, a Special Forces position near the Con Thien outpost was attacked by the North Vietnamese army following a heavy mortar barrage which dropped 250-300 rounds of 82mm mortars on the outpost. Holding this position was a Special Forces Detachment of the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN), Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) of the South Vietnamese and U.S. Navy Seabees.

The North Vietnamese managed to overrun the outpost. A small command element with A and D Companies, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines and several Marine tanks from the 3rd Tank Battalion were providing security for engineers that were clearing a 200-meter-wide fire zone known as 'The Trace.' The well-organized communist attack fell primarily on Company D's northern perimeter with fierce hand-to-hand combat. The outnumbered defenders eventually repelled the attacking forces. According to reports the NVA were dressed in camouflage jackets and shorts and used bamboo-made Bangalore torpedoes. The Marines eventually counted 197 NVA bodies around their position. They recovered 3 Chinese-made flamethrowers, several Chinese Grenades, SKS rifles and noted that many of the dead had freshly bandaged wounds suggesting they had suffered wounds early in the fight, were treated and returned to keep fighting. The enemy had also used small pennant-shaped flags on sticks that were stuck in the ground to mark lanes of advance through the breeched barbwire. The final assessment from the attack was that the enemy in this area was well-trained, well versed, experienced and highly committed.

Following this May 8th attack, MACV (U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) realized that the NVA were using the DMZ as a sanctuary for attacks into I Corps, the department of defense under Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara then lifted the prohibition on US forces entering the DMZ and MACV authorized the III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF) to now start conducting combat operations into the southern half of the DMZ. Immediately, MACV authorized Operation Hickory—the first authorized incursion into the previously prohibited DMZ. Despite the unusually and comparatively absent enemy, Hickory was successful in discovering and clearing a massive network of NVA fighting positions and operational resources in and around the DMZ. In conjunction with Hickory, Operations Lam Son 54, Belt Tight and Beau Charger also resulted in the removal of the entire civilian population from the area with the result that it was all now a free fire zone. The 200-meter-wide,

6 ½-mile-long cleared 'Trace' or strip stretching from Con Thien to approximately the village and Marine firebase of Gio Linh which would dramatically disrupt the concealment and cove

Route 561 was a mere 10-foot wide dirt cart path that connected the DMZ area to Cam Lo. Elements of the NVA 324B Division, now denied concealment and assets due to Operation Hickory pulled back north of the DMZ area to refit and regroup. No one had any illusions over whether they would be back, the Marines knew the resolve of their adversaries very well. Together with the large Marine presence at nearby Dong Ha, and Cam Lo, the anchor of the Marine presence here became known as Leatherneck square—setting the stage for what would become some of the most intense combat in Vietnam.

By June 1967, operation Cimarron which did not result in any major gains lasted throughout the month. The operation with involved elements of the 4th and 9th Marines lasted throughout the month, net little in the way of a huge enemy body count and contact was comparatively infrequent compared to previous operations in the area. Also in the month of June, the 200-meter-wide 'Trace' stretching 6 ½ miles from Con Thien to Gio Linh was further widened to 600-meters.

In the area northwest of Con Thien, Marine patrols throughout late June had stretched further into the DMZ area reaching an area just off the west side of Route 561 known as the Marketplace on the map. The Marketplace as it was identified on maps was an area dotted with abandoned hollowed-out buildings that were mere crumbling structures. On either side of route 561 near the Marketplace were shallow rice paddies gridded by shrub-covered dikes dotted with older abandoned fighting holes and craters from mortar impacts. There had been frequent contact there. On June 29, 1967, Delta Company 1st Battalion, 9th Marines were engaged in a quick heated firefight with the NVA. On July 1, 1967, both Alpha and Bravo Companies were to go into the Marketplace as part of a plan by Colonel George E. Jerue, the regimental commander who wanted to use the next operation—Operation Buffalo, to disrupt what appeared the enemy's uncontested use of the area around the Marketplace knowing full well that the Marines would frequent the area. The enemy would clearly observe Marine patrols in the area and use the habits and routes used to set up an ambush of the next unit that would enter the Marketplace. The plan for Buffalo called for Alpha and Bravo Companies to move into the area north of the Trace and establish a small patrol post north of this area and spend the next few weeks sweeping back and forth between Con Thien and the DMZ to deny the enemy access to this area. By doing so, the Marines could get a better grasp of the enemy's intentions and determine how best to use the limited and understrength 3rd Marine Division and its limited resources in this overwhelmingly massive area they had to cover. Operation Buffalo was set to begin July 2, 1967.

On July 1st, the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines pushing north from the trace reached the first of two road junctions situated south of the Marketplace and north of the trace. Once there, the Marines soon attracted sporadic NVA mortar fire. This mortar fire, however was unusually inaccurate and it was clear the NVA had not been using a forward observer to adjust the rounds. Nonetheless, the encounter re-em phasied Marketplace almost guaranteed contact.

On the night of July 1st, elements of Bravo Company bedded down just off the main route of 561 in preparation for an early morning where they, along with the other companies of the battalion would launch into Operation Buffalo, a sweep north into the DMZ area near the Marketplace. During the night, elements of Bravo Company pushed nightly ambushes out north and south of the company's position near the road junction. Throughout the night, Marines on ambush could hear noises. To the south of the company's position, the sounds of rattling cans quickly drew their attention. To the north, voices speaking Vietnamese could be heard off in the distance near the second road junction by elements of 2nd Platoon.

The following morning, the ambush from 2nd Platoon reported the commotion to the platoon commander who informed the men that the company was going to push north and that 2nd Platoon was to be point for Bravo Company. Approximately ¾ of a mile to the west of Bravo Company's nightly position, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, also prepared to move out from the hamlet of Thon An Nha in conjunction with Bravo Company's push north along Route 561. Shortly after they got underway, the point for Alpha Company tripped a series of tripwire booby traps which wounded several members of the lead platoon which delayed the advance. To the east of Alpha Company just after 9:00 AM, Bravo Company, strung out in column along Route 561, reached its first objective which was the first road intersection along Route 561 north of the Trace. 23-year-old 2nd Lieutenant George Thomas King's 2nd Platoon, the point for Bravo, radioed

that they had reached the intersection and no contact had been made. The narrow path of Route 561 that ran through shallow paddies was dotted with brown shrubs that the oppressive sun had burned to a crisp. Signs of previous contact with the enemy were everywhere. 1st aid bandage wrappers and gauze, discarded helmets, mortar craters and even a burnout Ontos vehicle was within view of the road.

From the first objective—the first road junction along 561, 3rd Platoon of Bravo Company passed through 2nd Platoon to take point. The platoon was led by Staff Sergeant Alfredo Reyes a former drill instructor and career Marine. Following 3rd Platoon was the company command group or command post led by 29-year-old Captain Sterling Kitchener Coates, a Naval Academy graduate who took command of the company a few weeks earlier. Behind Coates' company command group, King's 2nd Platoon accompanied by 1st Lieutenant William Delaney's mortar section followed by 1st Platoon commanded by Staff Sergeant Leon Burns who made up the tail end of the company and had the responsibility of securing a landing zone for resupply.

Beyond the first road junction, the patrol continued with Staff Sergeant Reyes' 3rd Platoon. As they approached the second road junction where Route 561 intersected with Route 605, a series of gunshots rang out from the west. 3rd Platoon quickly veered to the west and got online to return fire. Two of the platoons squads laid down suppressive fire as a third squad rushed to sweep through the suspected enemy position believing they had run into a small enemy outpost. As the squad of Marines rushed in, enemy fire erupted all around them. The crackle of enemy rifle fire exploding into a cauldron of automatic arms. The assaulting squad was torn apart and pinned down. As the two other squads from 3rd Platoon tried to gain fire superiority, they spotted several men wearing Marine helmets and flak jackets maneuvering on the pinned-down squad. Mistaking them for friendlies they screamed for them to cease firing on their men and tried to identify themselves as Marines. As the melee continued, more and more NVA dressed in Marine helmets and flak jackets swarmed the area and quickly surrounded 3rd Platoon. Pockets of surviving Marines tried desperately to hold off the onslaught firing wildly whenever their M-16s did not jam which tragically occurred with regularity. When their M-16s jammed, Marines were forced to break them down shotgun style and use a section of cleaning rod to clear the jam.

As the ambush intensified and enveloped 3rd Platoon, Captain Coates moved his command group up and directed King's platoon to veer off the road to the east and move up to flank the NVA swarming in on 3rd Platoon. King's 2nd Platoon moved along the ground just off the road through the shallow brush. Suddenly, the area north and east of 2nd Platoon became a wall of automatic fire. Men screaming to try and push their fire teams forward were drowned out by the crescendo of battle. Elements of 2nd Platoon tried desperately to move but with each movement forward the casualties mounted. Soon the survivors of 2nd Platoon were forced to try and move back to the roadway.

With two of his platoons now engaged and pinned down, Coates ordered the mortar sections up to try and lay a base of fire on the suspected enemy positions that seemed to have the company enveloped to the east and west. Coates ran up and down the road among scattered survivors of the 2nd Platoon firing his .45 as he tried to direct the assault. Coates also reached 1st Platoon by radio and ordered them to move to the east to help plug the shattered flank of 2nd Platoon. As Staff Sergeant Leon Burns' 1st Platoon moved through the paddies along the eastern bank of route 561, they spotted movement along the high ground dubbed Hill 70 to the east of the pinned down platoon. The Marines of 1st Platoon also noticed what looked like Marines as they were wearing American helmets and M1955 flak jackets, they were however not fooled and quickly took the figures along Hill 70 under fire. Despite their efforts 1st Platoon could not move much further and they too became fully embroiled in the firefight.

Coates realizing 3rd Platoon was completely cut off, ordered squads from both 1st Platoon and 2nd Platoon to try and advance on the tree line to the northwest. Amid the chaos, the squads tried to rush forward and quickly drew withering fire. Pinned down, they could not advance any further and as corporals and sergeants tried to raise up to try and gain some semblance of command and control they were shot by NVA snipers strategically position in the trees ahead. Only a few of the assaulting squad were able to pull back to the roadway. After only a few minutes, the enemy had so effectively cut off 3rd Platoon that NVA soldiers freely ran across route 561 in the area between the 3rd Platoon and the rest of Bravo Company. Staff Sergeant Reyes' 3rd Platoon was completely overrun. Small pockets of those who survived the initial onslaught tried to hold off the hordes but to no avail. Some ran out of ammunition, many were too wounded to effectively fight and others were still hampered by their M-16s which experienced a critical malfunction. Several of

enemy artillery rounds slammed into the landing zone inflicting several casualties among Alpha Company.

Within minutes of their arrival, Slater's command group along with 2nd Platoon found themselves being probed by NVA who were trying to envelope their position which meant almost all of Bravo Company had to have been enveloped. Just ahead of Slater and his company command group, Alpha Company's 3rd Platoon got hit by an NVA assault. On cue and well-orchestrated, the NVA had infiltrated along the flanks of pockets of the platoon's survivors and through their own artillery fire and sprang a rush on 3rd Platoon. The enemy who had tied stalks of tall grass to their helmets and wore clumps of grass on their back to conceal themselves swept over 3rd Platoon in mass.

A handful of 3rd Platoon's survivors were able to pull back before the enemy swarmed in behind them and got back to the landing zone where 2nd Platoon were also fighting enemy on their flanks. For the 3rd Platoon, the problem of jamming rifles once again cost Marines their lives. The numerically superior NVA now had free range to move across 3rd Platoon's position. Several NVA moved among the dead Marines rifling through their packs and pockets taking cigarettes, personal effects, canteens and even ammunition. Several of 3rd Platoons wounded were executed by the NVA. Among the platoon's dead was their commander 2nd Lieutenant Muller. The NVA onslaught continued and even swept across the hastily-established landing zone where 2nd Platoon was dug in. Several survivors of 3rd Platoon were able to make it out and joined with 2nd Platoon who were prepared to make their last stand.

While Alpha Company was swallowed up by the enveloping NVA, the scattered survivors of Bravo Company near the road junction on route 561 were holding out expecting to be overrun at any minute. Captain Keneipp, who was on the verge of heat exhaustion radioed back to battalion, "I don't think I'll be talking to you again, we are being overrun." Within moments Keneipp's position was overrun and he was killed.

To the east of the road junction, survivors of Bravo Company's 2nd Platoon still led by Staff Sergeant Burns were holding on for dear life. They were still engaging NVA reinforcements pouring over Hill 70 and eventually, Burns was able to get on the radio and direct air support on the hill. Burns also brought a napalm strike in near the road junction about forty yards ahead of his position. When Burns finally linked up with other surviving elements of Bravo Company's 2nd Platoon, they were able to fight their way south.

As Burns and his men fought their way south along the banks of route 561, NVA troops who had used the hedges along the road as cover were using flamethrowers against the pinned down survivors of Alpha Company several Marines were caught in the open and burned to death. Among them PFC Paul Glen Forbes. As the surrounding brush and bone-dry grass began to burn several Marines were flushed out trying to escape the flames and were systematically cut down by roving NVA.

As survivors of Bravo's 2nd Platoon, mortar section and those of Alpha Company's tattered platoons moved south, they were met by a rescue force consisting of Delta Company's 3rd Platoon and tanks from 3rd Tank Battalion who managed to carry wounded and several dead off the field. The other platoons of Delta Company moved up to help in the withdraw of Alpha and Bravo Company. Scores of wounded were pulled out, some walking others being carried. From Con Thien, every available vehicle was dispatched to reach the Trace where the wounded could be caravanned back. Even elements of 3rd Battalion, 9th Marine were brought in to assist.

By the day's end, the casualty totals for all engaged were 53 killed in action, 109 wounded and 34 non-recovered missing in action. Bravo Company had only 27 Marines who survived to walk out of the devil's lair. July 2, 1967 became the single costliest day for the Marine Corps during the entire Vietnam war. The remaining 34 non-recovered missing in action were unable to be recovered for days. Back at Con Thien, the battalion aid station was overrun with scores of gravely wounded men. The handful of Bravo and Alpha Company survivors were in shock at what had just unfolded. The absence of comrades whose fate was unknown spoke volumes about how bad Bravo and Alpha Companies had been hit.

The next day, an Air Force observer plane spotted an estimated 100 enemy moving from the DMZ area and closing toward the Con Thien outpost. The guns of Echo Battery 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines were alerted, and coordinates relayed. For the next several minutes, the 105mm guns of Echo Battery created a deadly chorus of cannonade that sent HE rounds splashing into the enemy ranks. Rounds were observed by the aerial spotters to be right on

target scattering the sun-scorched earth with parts of NVA soldiers—a small vindication over the slaughter that Bravo and Alpha Companies had endured 24 hours earlier.

Also on July 3, 1967, a plan to recover the dead from 1st Battalion, 9th Marines which could not be brought back the day before kicked off with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines, and 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines. As planned the two battalions were scheduled to be airlifted into the area just south of the Trace along route 561 and link up. Contrary to the initial plan, 1/3 and 3/9 were inserted way south of the trace forcing the Marines to hump several kilometers through dense brush knowing the abundance of enemy presence in the area. The scheduled recovery of Bravo Company's dead would be delayed a day. During the night, the two battalions took up positions north of the trace along route 561 south of the first crossroads. Dug in behind them were the survivors of 1st Battalion, 9th Marines acting as reserves.

Pushing out parallel to route 561, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines moving west of the road departed around 7:00 AM. The battalion moved with three companies on line knowing contact was imminent. East of route 561, elements of 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines advanced on a three-company front as well. Both battalions knew they were going to recover their own dead. Just after 9:00 AM, Kilo Company 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines triggered the ambush just south of where Bravo Company was decimated two days before. The NVA dug into camouflaged fighting holes. The encounter, like that that greeted Bravo Company two days before quickly developed into a brutal crescendo of fire pinning Kilo Company down. NVA snipers in the fronting tree line killed several Kilo Company Marines who would only return fire and bring in air. For nearly two hours, the engagement ensued before Kilo Company pulled back a few hundred meters to let air and artillery saturate the area. Twelve Kilo Company Marines had been killed.

Shortly after Kilo Company became entangled with the NVA west of route 561, Alpha Company 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines ran into a wall of entrenched NVA about 100 meters south of the Marketplace. Immediately Alpha Company put their air panels out and let Marine air support play hell upon the NVA lines. A-4 Skyhawks screaming from the sky made bombing runs on NVA positions in the tree line. During the ensuing fire support, one A4 dropped two 250-lb bombs short and they fell into 1st Platoon's lines. One of the bombs was a dud but the explosion of the second inflicted several casualties including the platoon commander and one man who was mortally wounded after losing his leg.

Once air had laid waste to NVA positions north of Kilo Company's front west of route 561, several tanks from 3rd Tanks as well as India Company regrouped and pushed back into the ambush site to recover their dead—fifteen men in all. The mission to recover the dead from Bravo Company had turned into a recovery of the recovery team. Once the dead were secured, Kilo and India Companies pulled back for the night delaying the recovery of the dead from Bravo and Alpha Companies of 1st Battalion for another day.

July 5th was ushered in by a pre-dawn NVA mortar barrage directed at 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines. In response, Marine guns at Con Thien responded with massive counterbattery fire. Air support was brought on line and hammered the area to clear it of the NVA who were undoubtedly waiting again. By 7:15 AM, the advance resumed again over the same ground in another effort to recover the dead from 1st Battalion. As the battalions advanced, the morning remained eerily quiet. It was clear that the enemy had withdrawn and left the Marines alone to recover their fallen comrades. The enemy did however spend the night emplacing booby traps and land mines. One stretch of ground was reported to have twenty various types of mines including one rigged to a 250-pound bomb and the other to a 500-pound bomb. As they approached the ambush site near the Marketplace, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines provided perimeter security. 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines moved into the area to recover the dead. The sun was blazing hot and the task was made much more cumbersome by the heat which had taken a ghastly toll on the dead who had laid out in the heat for 72 hours.

Donning gas masks, the grizzly task was slow and painstaking. The extent of the horror experienced by Bravo and Alpha Companies was too obvious. Several of the dead had been mutilated and disfigured by the NVA with body parts removed. It was evident that several of the wounded had been executed. One dead Marine was found mutilated and the photo of his girlfriend found on him by the enemy had been pinned to his chest with a knife. In all, the remains of 33 of the 34 missing had been recovered. The 34th Marine, 21-year-old Lance Corporal Wayne Vaster Wilson was never found. He was carried as missing in action and by 1974, with his whereabouts unknown and remains unrecoverable, Wilson was officially declared killed in action. The

the wounded Marines were executed as were those who were at the mercy of trying to clear their jammed rifles in time.

As Coates tried to gain control of the situation, NVA mortars and artillery began to land among the columns of Bravo Company. The fire was so effective that it further cut Coates and his command group off from 2nd and 1st Platoons. As the rounds fell in rapid succession further pinning the already-pinned down elements of Bravo Company, NVA troops now known to number an estimated full battalion-size force were able to move south along the banks of route 561 and begin enveloping the rest of the company. With the situation quickly getting out of control for Bravo Company, battalion headquarters at Con Thien was monitoring the situation and immediately directed Alpha Company approximately ¾ of a mile to the northwest to redirect their course, head south and then turn east just north of the Trace to come to Bravo Company's assistance by moving up to the beleaguered company from the south. Battalion also summoned Charlie Company's assistance. Charlie had been at Dong Ha to rest and refit. They were directed to be choppered into an LZ that was to be established south of Bravo Company's besieged position.

As Alpha Company was redirecting and racing to reach their brothers, the point of Alpha Company encountered a well-orchestrate claymore booby trap that wounded 4 members of the point platoon. Captain Slater, realizing the perilousness of Bravo Company's situation ordered the platoon to carry their casualties and continue in route to aid Bravo Company.

As Alpha Company closed the distance toward Bravo Company, Captain Coates and his Forward Air Controller 25-year-old Captain Warren Keneipp managed to bring air support online. Two Huey Gunships peppered the suspected enemy-held tree line. Two F-4 Phantoms were also directed to come to the aid of the embattled Marines. O1-E spotter planes flew ahead and fired white phosphorus markers for the Phantoms. Within minutes the Phantoms dropped several 250 and 500lb bombs on the suspected enemy position. The proximity to Bravo Company's survivors was so danger close they were showered with debris.

As one F4 flown by Major Ray D. Pendergraft of VMFA-524 swooped down, enemy machine gun fire ripped into the belly of the Phantom causing a smoke trail. One F-8 Crusader pilot coming in to help from the airbase at Da Nang saw Pendergraft's F4 barrelling downward and nose-dive into the South China Sea just off the coast. No sign of Pendergraft ejecting nor his rear seater Captain David Spearman. Neither were ever recovered. The F-8 Cursader pilot was also struck, his fire warning signal necessitating him bailing out and descending safely into the ocean to be rescued.

As the air support faced the gauntlet of fire on the ground, the situation for Bravo Company grew increasingly desperate as NVA began to move in on both flanks and try and envelope them from the south. Shortly after the first run of air cover, Captain Keneipp, the FAC with Bravo Company radioed battalion and informed them that Captain Coates was down. Coates had been shot through the head. Keneipp was now in command and trying to keep Bravo Company alive. Only weeks earlier, Keneipp had been a F-8 Crusader pilot and was now working as a Forward air controller. Keneipp, delirious and near dehydration realized he could not hold the company together and turned command over to 1st Lieutenant William Delaney who commanded the company's mortars. Delaney tried to encourage Keneipp to hold on and reassured him that Alpha Company was double timing it over to them. All the while NVA soldiers were scurrying along the flanks drawing fire from Bravo Company's survivors.

s Slater's Alpha Company raced to help, they quickly came under well-directed heavy mortar fire from NVA gunners who almost expected the route of advance. Alpha Company suffered approximately 30 casualties before ever reaching the southern elements of Bravo Company. Slater pushed his 3rd Platoon commanded by 25-year-old 2nd Lieutenant Stephen Peter Muller to move up and help secure a landing zone on the south of Bravo Company's position. Slater, not realizing how little remained of Bravo Company, sent 1st Platoon ahead to make contact with the lead elements of Bravo Company.

As Slater's 1st Platoon moved forward they encountered scores of Bravo Company casualties scattered along and to the side of the road. They too began receiving blistering enemy fire and only a squad from Alpha Company was able to reach the surviving center of what remained of Bravo Company.

As elements of Alpha Company's 1st Platoon reached Bravo Company, 2nd Platoon had established a landing zone and within minutes several CH-34 Sikorsky helicopters were on scene to evacuate Alpha Company's wounded under heavy fire. NVA mortars and artillery were stretching further south and within moments of the evacuation, and

tanks of Alpha Company 3rd Tanks were loaded with the body bags of the 33 Alpha and Bravo Company Marines. The helmets of the dead were used to recover personal items and sort them accordingly. Several Marines from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines tasked with the recovery removed their gas masks to vomit, several were overwhelmed with uncontrollable emotion at what they saw.

For those who survived it, that summer at Con Thien epitomized the brutality of the war in Vietnam. None of them will ever forget it and here 55 years later, their story and that of their comrades who never came home deserves to be known. Those brave Marines are remembered and honored here. Remember their story and remember their faces and they will never be forgotten. God bless them all. Semper Fidelis.







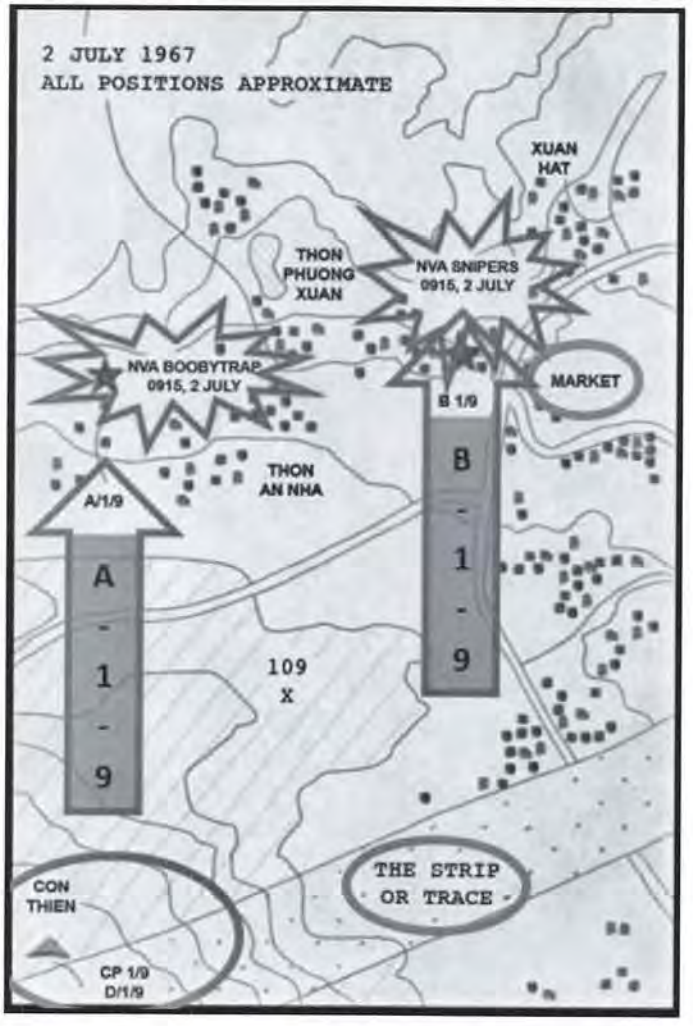







OBIT

EDWARD M. LANDRY, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, 1ST MARINE DIVISION

Lynn - Edward M. Landry, 75, of Lynn, died Friday April 14, 2023 after a brief illness. Born in Lynn to the late Phelecia Horgan, Edward graduated from Lynn Classical High School and then attended Suffolk University. He was married for 50 years to Bette (Stackhouse) Landry.

Edward served the US Marine Corps in Vietnam. He was a member of the 1st Marine Division who fought in the battles of Khe Sanh and Hue City as well as many others.



Edward worked as a personnel clerk for the United States Postal Service, at the Western Ave, Willow St. and Maple St. Lynn Post Offices. He also served as the President of the APWU Union Lynn Branch. He was a member of AOH Hibernian Hall in Lynn, the American Legion, VFW Post 1240 Swampscott, Vietnam Veteran's Association, as well as a lifetime member of the 1st Marine Division.

Edward is survived by his wife Bette of Lynn, son Brian Landry and his wife Ana of Ipswich, son Daniel Landry of Lynn, daughter Ellen Landry of Lynn, his grandchildren; Moira Landry of Salem, Eamonn and Colm Landry of Ipswich, Elza and Daniella Landry of Lynn, his brother Thomas Horgan of Acton, ME, brother Brian "Skippy" Landry and his wife Trish of Swannanoa, NC, as well as several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his mother, his son Brendon Landry, and his sister-in-law Dawn Horgan

Service Information: Edward's funeral was held on Friday April 21, 2023 at 9AM from SOLIMINE FUNERAL HOME, 426 Broadway (Rt129) Lynn, followed by funeral mass at 10AM at Sacred Heart Church, Lynn, and burial at Pine Grove Cemetery, Lynn. .

OBIT

LT/COL CHARLES E. DAVIS III USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, C CO 1/26

The country, the Hilton Head community and his numerous family and friends lost a truly dedicated man when Charles E. Davis III passed away suddenly on April 8th at home.

Charles was born in Kershaw, SC, on February 15th, 1936, to the late Charles E. Davis, Jr., and the late Geneva Dabney Davis. He grew up in Kershaw, SC, Shelby, NC, and Greensboro, NC with his father, stepmother, Elizabeth Frost Davis and his brother, Bob. He graduated from Greensboro High School, where he met the love of his life, Claire Jacoby Davis, who predeceased him.

Charles developed his love of football while playing in junior high and high school in Greensboro. While attending the University of South Carolina in Columbia, he was active in his fraternity, Kappa Alpha, serving as its' president in his senior year. During the summers, he participated in military training as part of his NROTC scholarship. He graduated in 1958 with a BS in Civil Engineering and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps.

After marrying Claire and graduating from Marine Officer Basic School in Quantico, VA, they moved to Camp Lejeune, NC, where he began a career of leadership in the USMC. The couple moved to Long Beach, California, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, and Woodbridge, VA as Charles continued his training as well as serving as an instructor in several infantry and aviation schools.

In 1967, Charles was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 26 Marines, 3rd Marine Division, Khe Sanh, Vietnam. There he commanded Charlie Company, first Battalion, 26th Marines until he was promoted to Major and was reassigned and served at the Battalion Operations Officer during the siege of Khe Sanh and other offensive battles throughout the northern portion of South Vietnam.

After returning from Vietnam, Charles was assigned to the Marine Corps Recruiting Depot at Parris Island, SC. It was during this time that Charles and Claire first visited Hilton Head and fell in love with the island. They decided to purchase a lot in Palmetto Dunes, looking forward to the time that they could retire to the island paradise.

The family next moved to Columbia, SC where the USMC invested in his further education and Charles attended the University of South Carolina's Master of Business Administration program. He graduated with an MBA with areas of concentration in management, operations research, and finance.

After completing his degree, Charles and the family moved to Woodbridge, VA, where Charles was assigned to the Manpower Department, Headquarters Marine Corps in Washington, DC. He also completed a tour in Okinawa, Japan as the Assistant G-3 of the 3rd Marine Division. His final assignment with the Marine Corps was completed at the Headquarters Marine Corps in the Manpower department. He retired in 1978 as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Charles was very proud of his time in the military serving his country. He talked about this time to family and friends often, sharing the lessons that he had learned about leadership and how he passed them on throughout his lifetime.

Charles and the family moved home to South Carolina in 1978 where he started a second career in banking at South Carolina National Bank (SCN) as an Assistant Vice President in charge of an Operations Research group. During over 11 years of employment by SCN, Charles was assigned additional responsibilities including statewide bank physical and cyber security, building renovation and construction, property management, purchasing and supply for the entire bank as well as disaster recovery and business continuity planning. He was promoted commensurate with the assignment of additional responsibilities to Senior Vice President, Administrator, and was a member of the bank Management Committee.

During his time at SCN, he was responsible for the construction of the bank's flagship branch on Hilton Head at 1 Sea Pines Circle. His dedication to ensuring that the building did not disturb the large live oak tree on the property was his first act of service on the island.

Charles supported the Columbia community in leadership roles as the Chairman of Columbia Area Mental Health, the Adam Walsh Child Resource Center, and the Rotary Club of Five Points. He was also a member of Forest Lake Club, where he enjoyed playing golf as often as possible.

After retiring from SCN, Charles worked for a national disaster recovery planning company, traveling around the country sharing the successful recovery of the state's largest bank from Hurricane Hugo. He was then hired by Parke Industries to create and manage their Southeast Division. Projects overseen by the Division included all SC state-owned office buildings in Columbia, SC. While living part-time in Atlanta, Charles served as the President of his condominium home owner's association.

After his fourth retirement in 1999, Charles and Claire's involvement on Hilton Head Island increased. They decided that the construction of a second single-family residence was not something that they wanted to take on and selected a condominium unit in the Captain's Quarters community in Shelter Cove as their second home. During this time, they also sold their long-time home in Richland County, and briefly resided at the Still Hopes retirement community in West Columbia.

Charles and Claire made a permanent move to Hilton Head Island in 2005. During the subsequent years, Charles continued to lead a life of volunteer leadership in community management by serving on the board of Shelter Cove Harbour Company, including five years as President, and additional years as Vice President. He was instrumental in the rede-

velopment of the Shelter Cove community including Shelter Cove Towne Centre, the Veterans Memorial Park and Pond, the Shelter Cove Community Park, and the Shelter Cove Marina. He also served as the President of the Captain's Quarters HOA, where he oversaw several major renovation projects. He was also a member of St Luke's Church of Hilton Head Island.

Charles enjoyed an active life with many friends who relished the stories of his life and the lessons that he learned. His sense of humor was well-known and loved by many. He loved his country, his family, and his community with all his heart and was always searching for opportunities to give back.

In addition to his three children, Beth (Claire Elizabeth), Chuck (Charles Edward IV, wife Diane) and Andy (James Andrew), he is survived by his beloved grandchildren: Chip Davis (Charles Edward V), Kyle Davis (Kyle Richard), Sophie Davis (Sophie Geneva), Stuart Davis (James Stuart), and Emily Davis (Emily Claire), his brother, Robert Dabney Davis (wife Leslie) and many cousins. He will also be missed by the many friends that he made throughout his lifetime as he traveled near and far.

Memorial Service were held at St. Luke's Church 11am, May 13th followed by a reception with family and friends. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to St Joseph's Candler Foundation with a designation of Advancements in Cancer Care in Charles' name.in addition to his three children, Beth (Claire Elizabeth), Chuck (Charles Edward IV, wife Diane) and Andy (James Andrew), he is survived by his beloved grandchildren: Chip Davis (Charles Edward V), Kyle Davis (Kyle Richard), Sophie Davis (Sophie Geneva), Stuart Davis (James Stuart), and Emily Davis (Emily Claire), his brother, Robert Dabney Davis (wife Leslie) and many cousins. He will also be missed by the many friends that he made throughout his lifetime as he traveled near and far.





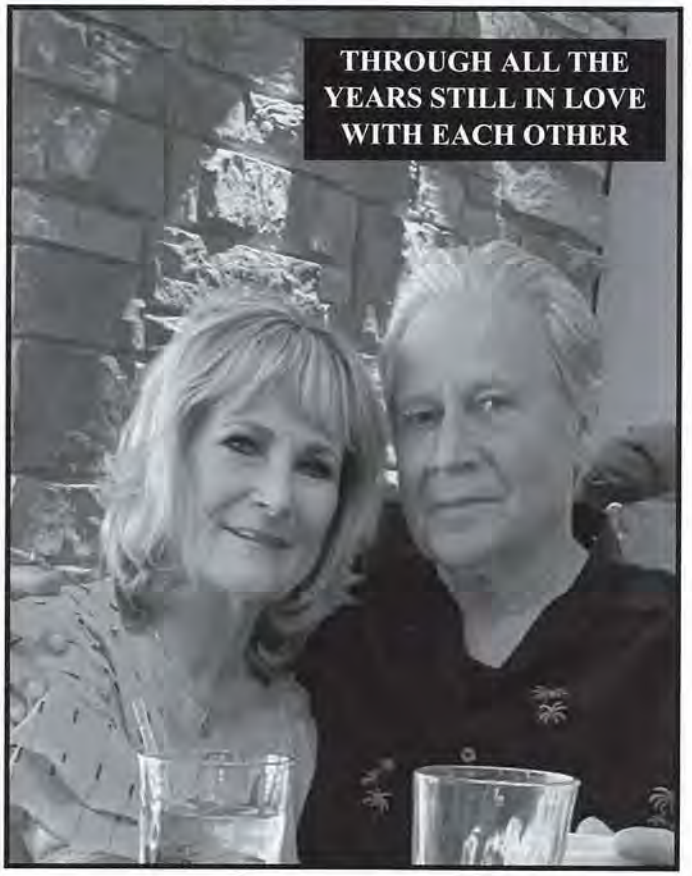

FROM THE KSV WEBSITE

April 14, 1968
Easter Sunday
Hill 881-N

A REGULAR SHIT SHOW

From my first day in country when the LP waxed the five gooks, which caused me to go outside the wire with the reaction team - along with the perennial rain of incoming explosive matter -- everything was sort of not personal. All of that changed Easter Sunday.

I watched helplessly as Phil Sheridan was cut down trying to get to a better position to call in artillery. Shortly after that I watched again as another Marine -- unknown to me to this very day -- was cut down from an entrenched NVA.

Shortly after that I was standing next to that Marine. The Corpsman kept plugging up holes whilst punching his chest and endlessly screaming, "Stay with me men! Stay with me." I stopped. Looked at his face. His clear blue eyes were looking off into the distance, said, "What's he looking at Skip?'

Skip replied, "He's dying Kenny, keep moving."

glanced again as his life ebbed away and I felt the calm that overcame him as his face relaxed into a soft smile and his eyes gazed into eternity. I knew then that he was looking into the face of God. It is as clear to me today as if it happened only this morning.

Fifty-Five years later.

As we all approach that final glide path to eternity, keep alive the memory of those who've gone before us. Keep the memory alive by sharing your life with your Children & Grandchildren. Let them know of your time spent in hell. Keep God Alive in your Heart & Soul.

Peace & Semper Fidelis,
Neil Kenny, L CO 3/26



RAY BARRY, HQ CO 1/26, FOUND THIS WHILE TRAVELLING TO VEGAS FOR HIS SONS WEDDING, HAD TO STOP AND PAY TRIBUTE TO MY FALLEN BROTHERS



BETTY RODGERS, BABY SITTING

MIKE & SHIRLIE FISHBAUGH'S FAMILY AT PLAY





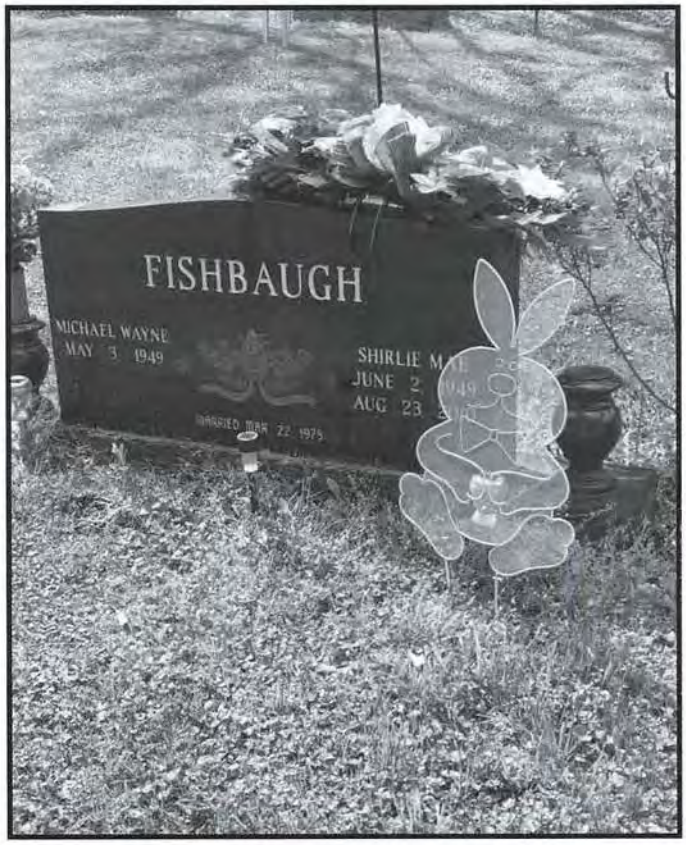





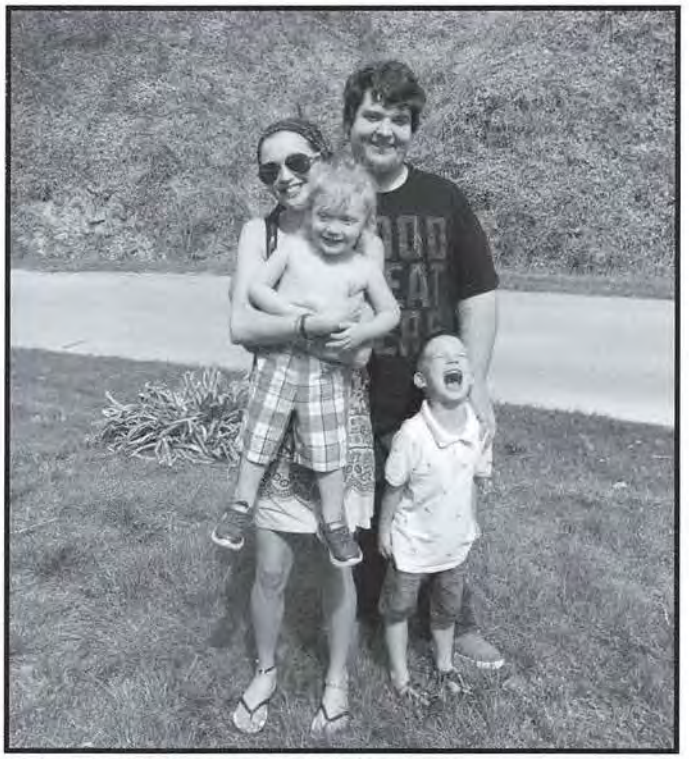

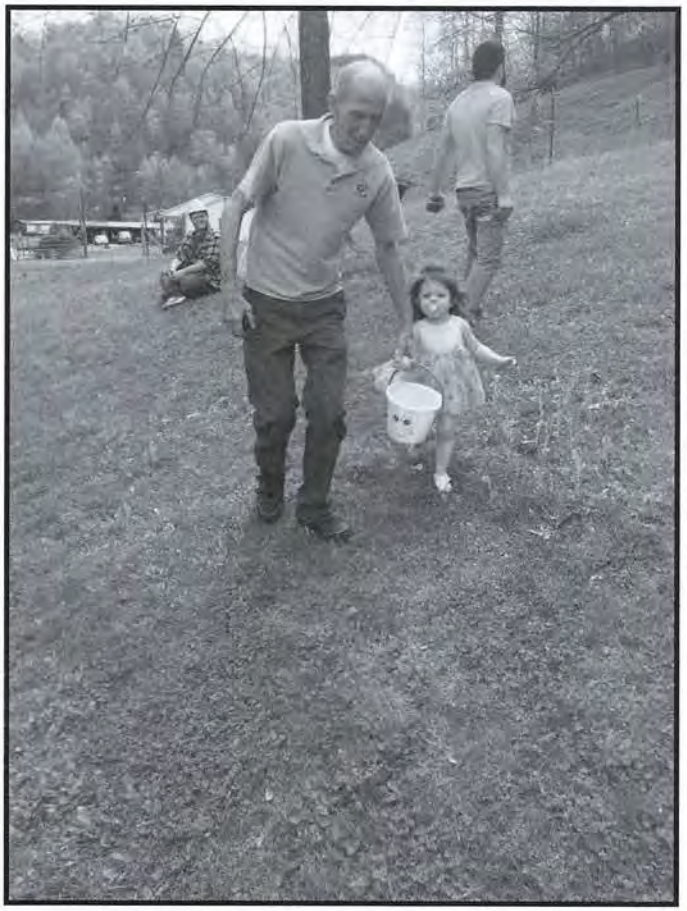





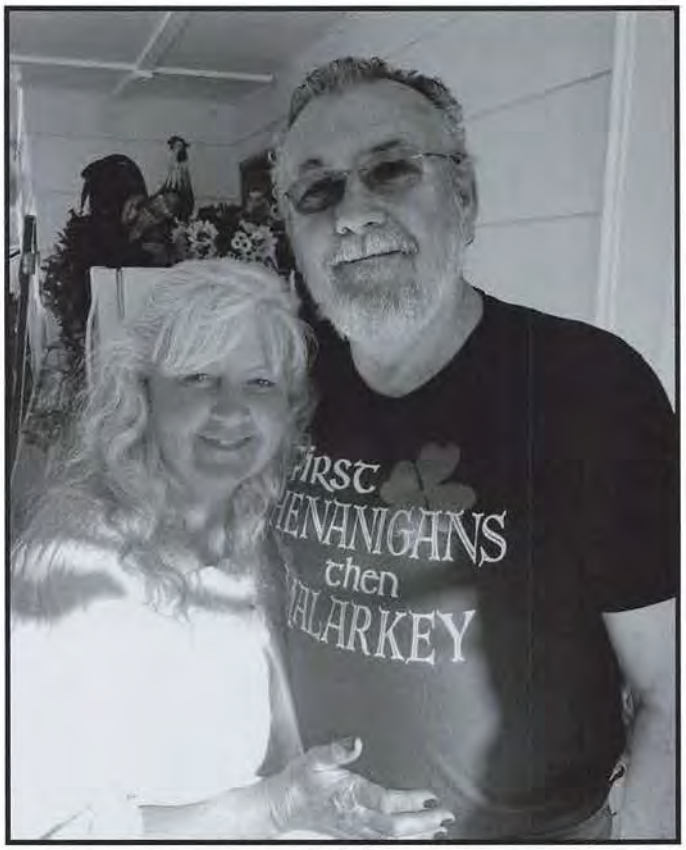
IRST
ENANIGANS
then
ALARKEY











FROM THE WEB

THOUGHTS
By Owen Matthews
I Co 3/26 Hill 881S

It is beautiful that I am haunted by God. He permeates my soul, spirit and all aspects of my life. Everywhere I go, I feel His presence and His love leading and guiding my steps. I feel His love overflowing from me onto everyone I come in contact with. All fear is gone. All doubt is gone. I am a new creature in God. I long for the day when I will see Him face to face, yet I am committed to remaining here on this earth as long as He wills. I will not abandon my post but will serve Him with all of the zeal and love of which I am capable.

OBIT

PETER J. MUDRINICH, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, BRAVO CO 1/26, 81 MORTARS

Peter J. Mudrinich, devoted husband, cherished father, and beloved friend, who passed away unexpectedly on June 4, 2023 at the age of 76. Peter's life was a testament to love, service, and unwavering loyalty. His compassionate nature touched the lives of those fortunate enough to know him.

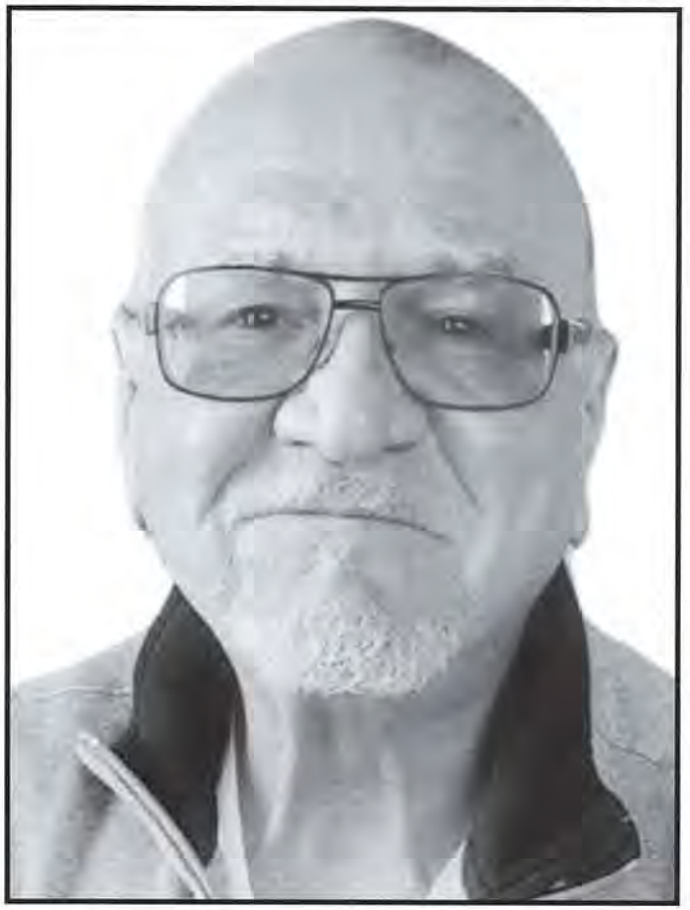

Peter was a devoted and loving husband to his spouse Ursula, the love of his life, and was by her side for 52 years.

As a dedicated father, Peter was the epitome of strength and courage. He embraced his role with unwavering dedication and love. He nurtured his sons' dreams, encouraged their aspirations, and celebrated their every achievement. Peter's wisdom, patience, and guidance will forever shape the lives of his children and leave an indelible mark on their hearts and families.

Outside his role as a father, Peter was a beacon of selfless service. Peter served as a U.S. Marine (Vietnam Veteran - Khe Sanh), a High School Teacher (Herr Moo), and a dedicated patriot. He was always ready to lend a helping hand to those in need.

Peter's passing leaves a void that can never be filled, but his legacy will continue to inspire those who know him. May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may his memory be a guiding light in the lives of those he loved and left behind.

Peter is survived by his spouse Ursula, his two sons, Erik (wife Mary) and Mark (wife Kirsten), and his three lovely grandchildren, Cole, Ava, and Evora.
"To do the useful things, to say the courageous things, to contemplate the beautiful things: that is enough for one man's life." T.S. Elliot





OBIT

JOHN W. O'NEILL, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, MIKE CO 3/26

John "Johnny Bill" W. O'Neill 75, of Duluth passed away peacefully with family by his side on April 15, 2023.

The first of six children, Johnny was born on March 15, 1948, to John and Joan O'Neill. He was a 1966 graduate of Duluth Cathedral High School.



Johnny grew up on Park Point and loved every aspect of it. From playing and coaching, hockey, and baseball, to rowing in Lake Superior. He spent many years at The Duluth Rowing Club under coach Henning Peterson. Becoming a quarter mile-dash champion. Among the many things that Johnny excelled at, he was the most phenomenal on water skis, a real treat to watch. Besides his love for sports and the outdoors, Johnny also had a love for fast cars, and pretty girls.

Shortly after graduation in 1966, Johnny started his studies at UMD. Although he enjoyed his studies, he wanted to fulfill a lifelong dream of becoming a Marine. Johnny enlisted in the USMC and followed his Uncle Jerome's footsteps. Before his selfless service to our country began, Johnny married his love, Ruth Ann Saker, and together they had 2 sons, Patrick, and Ryan.

In 1968, Johnny was sent to Vietnam as a Marine. Part of the mission he served is known as The Battle of Khe Sanh. While in Vietnam, Johnny was injured twice, and received 2 Purple Hearts. Upon his return home to the US, Johnny continued his service in the USMC, serving out of Coronado Military Base in San Diego California. Johnny would learn later he would face many challenges in life because of getting sprayed with agent orange while serving. After his Honorable Discharge from service, Johnny and Ruth returned home to Duluth.

Johnny worked at UPS as a driver, and spent his time fishing, camping, and hunting with his boys. The love he had for his sons was unmatched.

Over the course of many years, he tried to fight the signs and symptoms of MS. Despite any of the challenges he faced, he continued to say that if he had a chance to do it all over again, he would, in a heartbeat.

Over the past 10 years, Johnny was so lucky to live at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Silver Bay MN. He made countless friendships, touched the lives of all the staff, and shared in the memories of all who lived there. He is most famous for his sense of humor and quick wit.

Johnny is proceeded in death by, his loving parents, John and Joan

O'Neill, his wife Ruth, son Ryan and brothers, Tommy, and Kevin.

Johnny is survived by his son Patrick. His faithfully supportive and loving siblings, Danny (Julie) O'Neill and Margie (Billy) Maloney. Nieces and nephews, Shawn (Krista) O'Neill and their sons, William, Matthew and Brandon, Erin Boit and her children, Ian and Mya, Lindsey (Olie) Hedge, and their sons Oak and Maverick, Britney (Michael) Boyum and Madilyn Maloney.

Burial at the Minnesota Veterans Cemetery, 4777 Hwy 53, Saginaw, MN

PICO RIVERA COUNCILMAN AND EL RANCHO HIGH TEACHER GREGORY SALCIDO CAUGHT ON VIDEO DEGRADING MILITARY



EDITOR NOTE : BEARS REPEATING ,TO MUCH THAT IS STILL HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOLS

RESPONSE FROM KSV LOUIS " CISCO" REYES E CO 2/26

Many Marines, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Coast Guard served and died for you to have the right of Freedom of Speech and this is how you use it? I don't know why you think you're so high and mighty, what is you're claim to fame? What have you done in service of your country? Nothing. You let us defend her and run with your tail between your legs. I know plenty of "educated" people who are great at taking tests to get their degrees, but end up on the news because they have no common sense...like you. I was born in Guadalajara, Mexico came to this country and made it mine. I served in the Marine Corps for 20 years. I served in Vietnam and am a veteran of the battle of Khe Sanh.

I have a Navy Marine Corps Medal and 3 Purple Hearts. I was a police officer for 27 years & I am also Uncle Louie. You sit there in the class and say I am a "stupid idiot". Please feel free to come to Texas and say this to my face. You not only disrespected my Marine Corps and my fellow veterans you were disrespecting my great nephew. You are a coward who gets off on controlling your students. When really your that guy that couldn't cut it and choose to be an ass to our impressionable youth. Khe Sanh Vets Light Him Up! — with Guinn Wolfe and

.

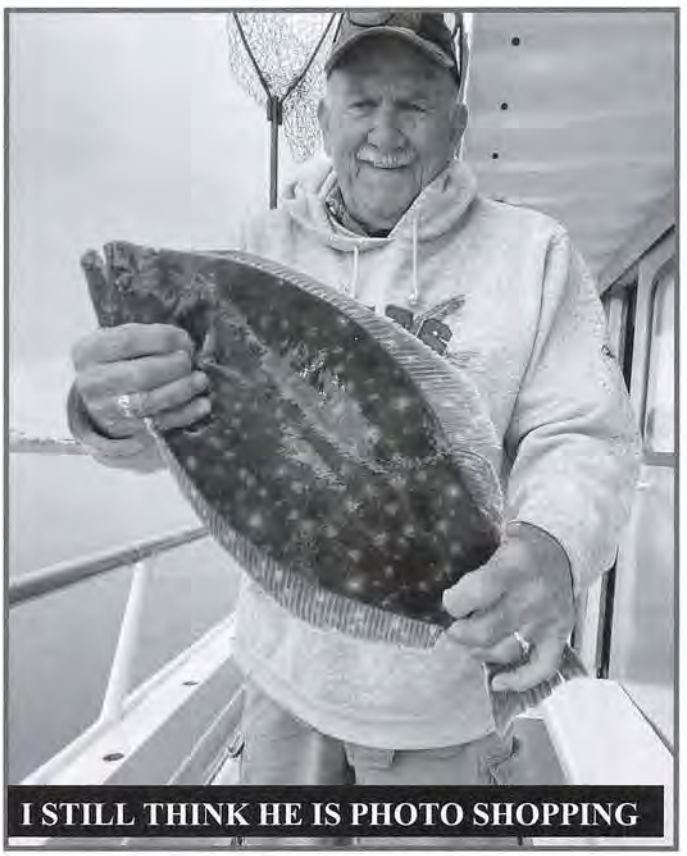

MEMORIES FROM THE WEB: SENT BY RAY CALHOUN

From Ray Calhoun. 56 years ago this Sunday I was with my Marine buddies that had been with me in Vietnam for some 9 months. We were flown in on an emergency basis to take part in the first of the hill fights above and around the fire base Khe Sanh. Just located inside the borders of Laos and North Vietnam. A force recon patrol had been obliterated my a major NVA force. We landed and set out to find anything left of the patrol and found nothing but dead marines, some had been decapitated. We set up for the night at the the base of Hill 881 South. During the night we could hear screaming from Marines being tortured.

On 100% all night long we prepped for assaulting the hills. We were TAD to another battalion 3/9. We were Mike company of 3/3. Our experienced company CO was on R&R and we had a temporary captain fly in from a sea going operation. Early in the morning we found out our company was point for the operation. We all looked at each other in a bit of shock as this was a mission we were in support and now leading? An hour before dawn we were then told our platoon would be the point platoon and then our squad being the most experienced would be point. The 10 of us just looked at each other in disbelief. Point for a battalion, almost a thousand Marines. Randy our best point man looked at me and said if I go up there I'm dead. Randy was on his second tour and the best we had, little, agile and smart. We filled our canteens in the creek in total silence. During that time another squad member claimed he was sick and couldn't possibly make the climb. He was dropped and I told Randy it was okay as he was slow and a lousy shot. I told Randy I'd be right behind him.

We started the climb and stopped after an hour to get some water and listen up. The water tasted funny and we realized it was pink because the NVA had thrown the guys they tortured and killed into our creek. We were very pissed and maybe a little possessed. On we went in single file. As we neared the summit we noticed some logs in our path just as the NVA opened their ambush. We didn't understand that we were dialed into a killing zone. We ducked for cover behind the logs and their mortars started dropping on us with deadly accuracy. A perfect ambush.

I was the fourth man back. Randy was killed immediately with 2 rounds to the chest. Tommy was number 2 and took a round in the stomach and crawled off in the grass. Milt was number 3 killed by rounds in the neck and head. The platoon commander Buzz was right behind me and killed with a mortar round that also hit me and the radio man Don number 6. The next fire team rushed up but we're butchered. The gun team tried to come up with the M-60 but they all were shot. Some lived and I recall doing a tracheotomy on the gunner with a round lodged in his throat. Corpsman came forward and did all they could but a couple of them were KIAs as well. Everyone was hit at least once, Don the radio operator was hit with the mortar that killed the lieutenant and then protected me by rolling near a grenade taking the blast in his side. We were then trying to do a tourniquet on a marine that lost a leg and he turns to me and says what are they going to do next, shoot me? Bang he gets shot, I take a bullet to the helmet that spins around in the liner and lodges in the back of the head. We come around to see our man who lost his leg had bled out.

The rental company commander radios and ordered us to withdraw. Don and I look at each other and respond "how in the fuck could we possibly do that Captain? Get your ass us here."

We're shooting snipers, throwing grenades in machine gun bunkers, jumping in and out of the bunkers as we realized they were being replaced by men from tunnels, were shooting enemy running past us looking for bigger targets on and on. Lasted several hours but seemed like seconds. The most brutal experience I have ever experienced.

We were saved by our brothers from below fighting their way up. We screamed at them to get down and we saw 14 of them die trying to help us. We lost 41 KIA and almost 100 WIA.

I write this because I'm now 75. I've never put it into writing and thought maybe I should. If you recall the 3 of us who survived were each awarded the Silver Star as our story became known. This is just my version and memory. Like a traffic accident every one has a different perspective.

Remember the Marines from April 30, 1967. Ray Calhoun



KSV ENJOYING THEIR FRIENDSHIP



TERRY FOURNIER & JOSEPH BUEN-ROSTRO FROM B BTRY 1/13 VISITING



DENNIS WALER & ANITA STILL IN LOVE





JOHN & GUINN WOLFE

HAPPY 53 YEARS & MANY MORE



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY






Torres Family
Dee
Mary
Sam
Felipa
Ray
Tony
Josie
Robert
Isabel
Emilio
Amada


Thomas
Michelle
Blake
Brayden
Sophie
Elly


2020
Thomas
Ray Jr.
Tanya
Ray Sr.
Caroline



L-R HENRY CASTANEDA, TIM HALEY, BILL RIDER, 1/9 KSV



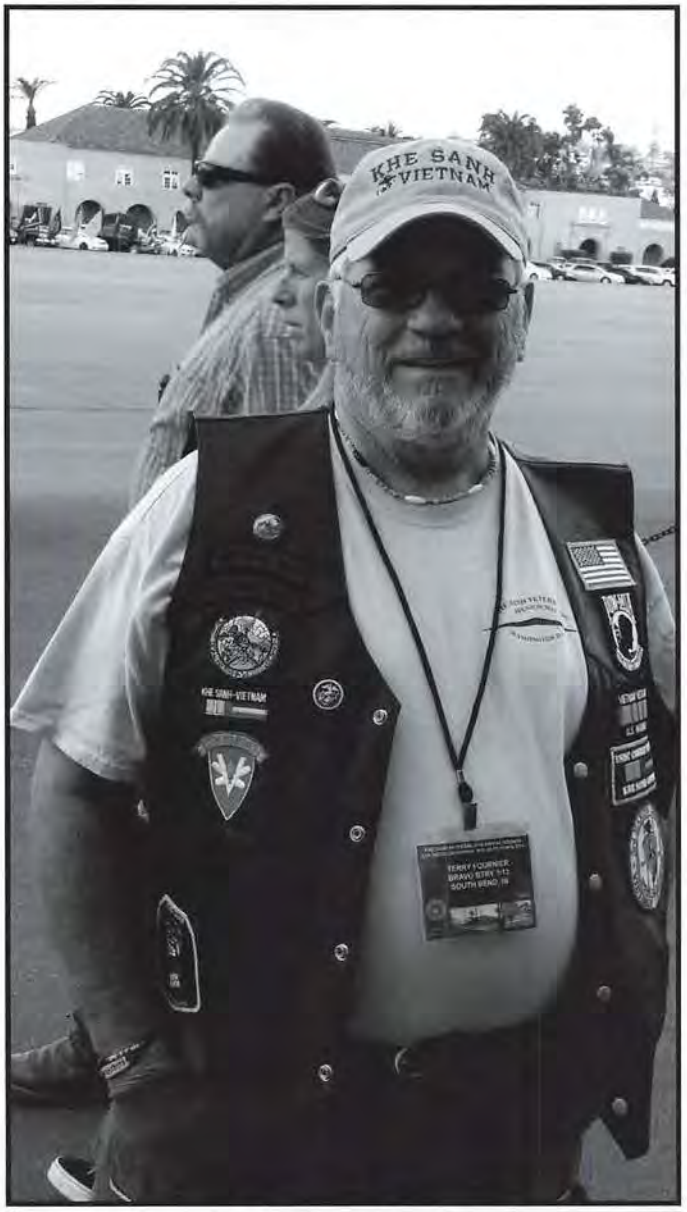

TERRY A FOURNIER B BTRY 1/13





MEMORIALS

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
Capt Walter Egger USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
GSGT John J Grohman USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
1t Paul W. Bush USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
LCpl Stephen C Shannon USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Sgt Manuel Floyd Martinez USA A-1/44 KIA 9 06 68	Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Cpl Fergus J. Carroll USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 18 Jun 68	William Hotz Mike CO 3/4
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC A HQ Btry 1/13 KIA 09 Mar 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Remembering All "Bastard Bravo" Marines and their families	William E. Carpenter Bravo Btry 1/13
Captain Bill Person USAF 553 3RD Recon Wing	Alex & Barbara Sadowski H&S CO 1/26
James Wright	Alex & Barbars Sadowski H7S CO 1/26
PFC Donald Saunders USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 KIA 04 Mar 68	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
Sgt Donald Ray Chamblin USMC HQ BTRY KIA 08 Mar 68	James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
GYSGT Charles Perkins USMC DOW 17 May 1968	Barbara Eddowes Fiance
SSgt Karl E. Taylor USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 12/98/68	Will Griggs India Co 3/26
PFC Roland T. Marshall USMC M CO 3/4 KIA 5/17/68	Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
Capt Daniel Coonan USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 10/08/68	Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
1Lt Thomas Reich USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 11/17 68	Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Sgt Major James Gaynor USMC KIA 25 Feb 68	Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Doug Ipson USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 09/15/68 LZ Margo	Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Steve Rienhart USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 09/16/68 LZ Margo	Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Nate White USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 05/06/68 Cam Lo	Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
All Members of Det A-101 Lang Vei & All who served at FOB-3	Lawrence Cooper CO C 5TH Special Forces
All the men of HQ Btry 1/13 Who Gave Their Lives So We can Enjoy THE FREEDOM WE HAVE TODAY	James Baker HQ Btry 1/13 26Th Marines
Cpl William E. Wyrosdic USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 10/08/68	John Laibinis SR. H CO 2/26 2ND PLT
Always remembering all those KIA HILL 689 27 June 1967	Clarence T. Anthony India CO 3/26
L/Cpl Adrian Brittle USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 9/21/68	Chester W. Nelson JR. India CO 3/26
2LT Donald Jacques USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Pietro Osimanti Bravo CO 1/26
CPL John Greene USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 04 July 1968	Johnny Moon Charlie CO 1/26 3RD SQD
LCPL Frederick B. Link USMC C CO 1/9 KIA 3/1/68	Eric Bergland C CO 1/9
All Marines & Corpsman who served on Hill 861A in Jan/Feb & Mar of 1968	Lt Don Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A
All Marines KIA of Delta CO 1/26	John Finn Delta Co 1/26
All Marines 1/1 & 2/1 Hotel CO	Peter Hoban Hotel CO 2/1
DR John Magilligan, d. 29 Jan 2013,DR Ed Feldman d. 03 Oct 2017&	Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN
DR James Finnegan . 13 Sep 2013 From Charlie Med	Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN
All who served at Khe Sanh	Ron Shuff LSU MTM Co. Maintenance Bn.
HN William A. Beyer "Willie" USN H&S Co 3/26 KIA 2/1/67	Pat B. Buckley Charlie CO 1/26
1LT John Ellis USMC Crash-Rescue Crew OIC KIA	Richard Takacs MABS-36-MAG-36 Crash-Rescue Unit
Gy/Sgt Joe H. Kahee Crash Crew Passed Away October 2019	Richard Takacs MABS-36-MAG-36 Crash-Rescue Unit
PFC David A. Cramer, USMC KIA 22 Feb 68	Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
PFC Leslie G. Aputen USMC KIA 15 May 68	Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
PFC Francis W. Lamon USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 04/17/68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1 REST IN PEACE
PFC William W. Lawrence USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 04/17 68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
PFC Charles T. Johnson USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
L/Cpl Darrel W. Cottrell USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68	Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Thomas Jack Pennington KIA 27 Jan 68 at "Mikes" Hill Mike CO 3/4	Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
PFC Ricky Marson USMC F CO 2/26 KIA 4/7/68	Donald Kujawa F CO 2/26 F CO 2/5
Mike Bradbury , Mike "Pops" Salinas, James "Doc" Thomas	Randall Mapel Kilo CO 26TH Marines
Gilbert Wall B CO 1/26 & Lt COL Ken Pipes CO B CO 1/26	Peter Mudrinich B CO 1/26
Frank Addice USN KIA 04/11/68	Larry Sherer USN HMM-262 HM-2
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A Btry 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC HQ Btry 1/13 KIA 09 Mar 68	Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Cpl Donald E. Whitaker USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68	Bill Jayne B CO 1/26
William Roland Prewitt MIA Phu Loc Hamlet Not Recovered	Lorne Lemieux M CO 3/26
Gold Star Parents Of L/Cpl USMC Jeremy Santiago L CO 3/26	Daniel J. Depagnier Helicopter Sqd 363
3rd Plt 12/14/73 -9/7/93 Operation Restore Hope	
Louis Lowe USMC, Kilo CO 3/4 , 3RD PLT KIA Hill 689 14 May 68	Daniel King K CO 3/4
Captain Daniel Coonan USMC VMF (AW) 115 KIA 08 Oct 1968	Charles H. Fetter VMF –314 MAG-11 H&MS-11
CPL Arthur J. Klabundi USMC M CO 3/4 KIA 25 Jan 68	Hugh Liverman M CO 3/4
PFC Francis Foiles USMC M CO 3/4 KIA 27 May 68	Hugh Liverman M CO 3/4
Edward McGoodwin USMC D CO 1/26 NAVY CROSS	Don Friedsam Delta CO 1/26
Passed away	
L/Cpl Roger M. Hurd USMC A Co 1/26 3RD PLT KIA 21 May 67	Joe Oliver

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FUND - 2023-2024 AWARD RECIPIENTS

KATHRYN L. ARTZ, FRESHMAN @ ONONDAGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE , SYRACUSE , NY
KSV: ALEXANDER SADOWSKI H&S CO 1/26 81S USMC

MORGAN R. MAEDER, FRESHMAN @ WARNER UNIV, LAKE WALES, FL
KSV: MARSHALL MAEDER 12TH MARINES 1ST SEARCHLIGHTS BATTERY USMC

AIDEN W. MAVES, FRESHMAN @ UW WHITEWATER, ROCK COUNTY, WI
KSV: WILLIAM MAVES E CO 2/26 USMC

JOSEPH C. MELIN, FRESHMAN @ UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MINNEAPOLIS, MN
KSV: RICHARD Killian 1ST BN 40TH ARTY US ARMY

JORDAN M. MORIN, FRESHMAN @ UNIVERSITY OF BUFFALO, BUFFALO, NY
KSV: DANIEL JACHIMIAK E CO 2/26 USMC

EMILY B. NELSON, FRESHMAN @ STAMFORD UNIVERSITY, BIRMINGHAM, AL
KSV: GEORGE NELSON 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION, US ARMY



2009 the KSV Scholarship Foundation started with 6 applicants and has risen to an average of 25 applicants each of the last three years. Many of the student scholars have finished 4 years of post secondary education to successfully achieve their selected bachelors degrees due in part to the support from Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc ..

In this, the 2023-24 school year, we have received 6 applicants for a grand tally of 179 young scholars in 11 years who have benefitted from the KSV Scholarship Fund. Over $110,000 in generous donations from the Khe Sanh Veterans Brotherhood and proceeds from the reunion silent auctions have kept the Foundation healthy. However, the individual awards have trended lower due to the increased volume of applicants vs. reduced donation levels.

The Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation is now in its twelfth successful year of providing financial support for children and grandchildren of paid up members of Khe SanhVeterans, Inc.



L CO MARINE SUPPORT BATTALION
PHU BAI VIETNAM 1969



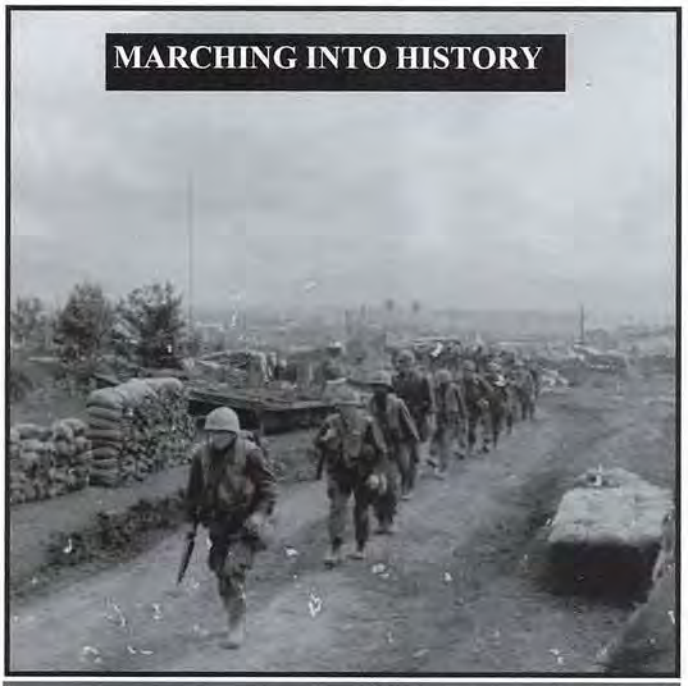



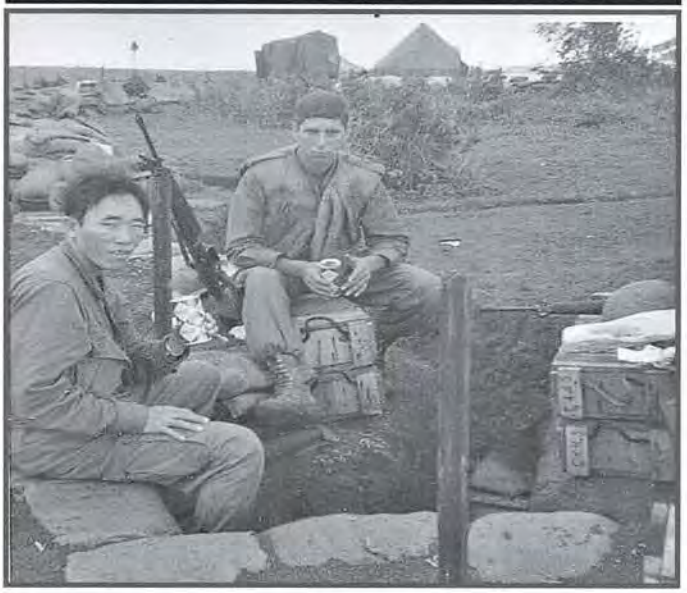

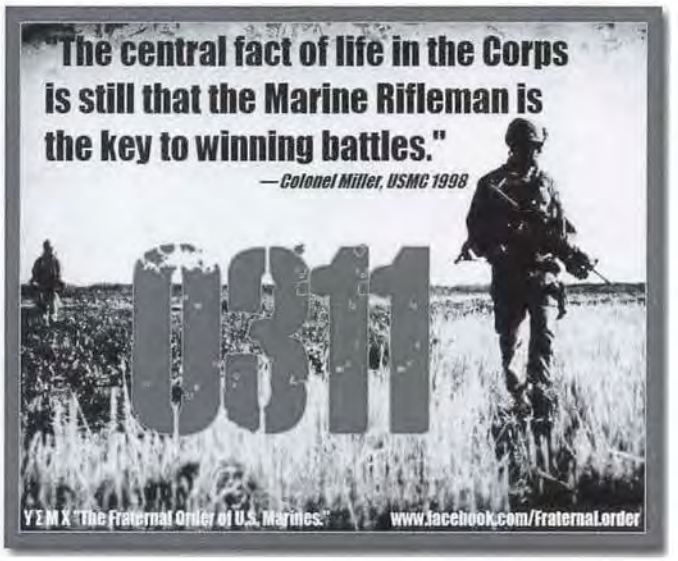

ROD FINK A CO 1/9 DESIGNED THIS FOR HIS MANCAVE



Pacific Stars & Stripes 23
Friday, Oct. 20, 1967

Con Thien 'Street Scene'

Life goes on at Con Thien, despite the whirl of incoming artillery shells. Marines live, and often die, in a small community where sand-bagged bunkers are houses and winding trenches are the streets. While communist fire has decreased because of shattering American firepower and aerial bombardment, Con Thien is as it always was—muddy, miserable, dangerous. (UPI)





Doc Rod Fink

USNR Fleet Marine Force

Alpha Company
Senior Corpsman
1st Battalion 9th Marines
"The Walking Dead"
Vietnam 1967 - 1968
Con Thien, Khe Sanh,
Street Without Joy, I Corps





47 days at Con Thien, the "Hill of Angels"

The photo above was taken by a UPI reporter while we were taking incoming at Con Thien. I am the one on the left with the helmet. Sgt. Tom Manconi, who was leader of the weapons squad, is the one in the middle (his back to the camera) with his flak jacket on. The Marine ducking into our bunker was "Truck" Dishong. Later that month I replaced the Senior Corpsman, Doc Smith, who was killed when the command bunker took a direct hit. Con Thien was subjected to some of the worst incoming barrages of the war. Our next assignment was at Khe Sanh for a 77 day siege which was one of the bloodiest battles of the war. 28 men of this Platoon were killed in that battle.

Bruce Jones:

You have just put in writing what many of us went through at Khe Sanh. As you stated it is important to document our battles there. I hope this writing brings you peace from the terrible loss of your buddies and your intense combat. Thank You! Love and Respect Semper Fidelis Brother. "T-Bone". 81's FORO B/1/26 Khe Sanh 5/67 - 4/68

RAY RECEIVING HIS SILVER STAR







CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Lance Corporal Lester R. Calhoun, Jr. (MCSN: 2197670), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving as a M-79 Grenadier with Company M, Third Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on 30 April 1967. Lance Corporal Calhoun's company (-) was advancing to secure Hill 881 South in the first Battle of Khe Sanh when a numerically superior enemy force attacked and inflicted heavy casualties on his platoon. Advancing with the Platoon Headquarters, Lance Corporal Calhoun was rendered temporarily unconscious from an enemy mortar barrage that killed the Platoon Leader and severely wounded the Radio Operator.

When he regained consciousness he assisted in medevacing casualties to a bomb crater and providing effective counter-fire. Repeated enemy attacks inflicted heavy casualties and created a gap in the Marine defensive line. Recognizing the danger of possible enemy penetration, he attacked an enemy bunker complex and destroyed four positions with accurate M-79 fire. He then advanced to a position too close to fire his M-79, but delivered M-16 suppression fire and threw grenades into more enemy bunkers, thus preserving the line. As Marine artillery strikes temporarily prevented an enemy counterattack, Lance Corporal Calhoun again exposed himself to danger by moving throughout the battlefield to assist the wounded, collect and redistribute weapons and ammunition, and secure battle dressings from the dead to treat the wounded. Lance Corporal Calhoun persevered despite grenade and mortar explosions until receiving a severe head wound that rendered him unconscious for a second time. Amazingly, he recovered yet again and continued to fight the enemy. Lance Corporal Calhoun's courageous actions in disregarding his own safety and collecting and redistributing critical resources enabled his platoon to continue to fight and directly led to the Marine line holding. By his resolute determination, selfless sacrifice, and unwavering dedication to duty, Lance Corporal Calhoun reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps the United States Naval Service.



CRAIG TOURTE RELAXING AT LULU'S IN WAUKIKI WITH LOVELY WIFE AND FRIENDS



MEGAN LEAVEY & BARRY FIXLER -E CO 2/26, HONORING SGT EDDIE RYAN



KSV ENJOYING FRIENDSHIP

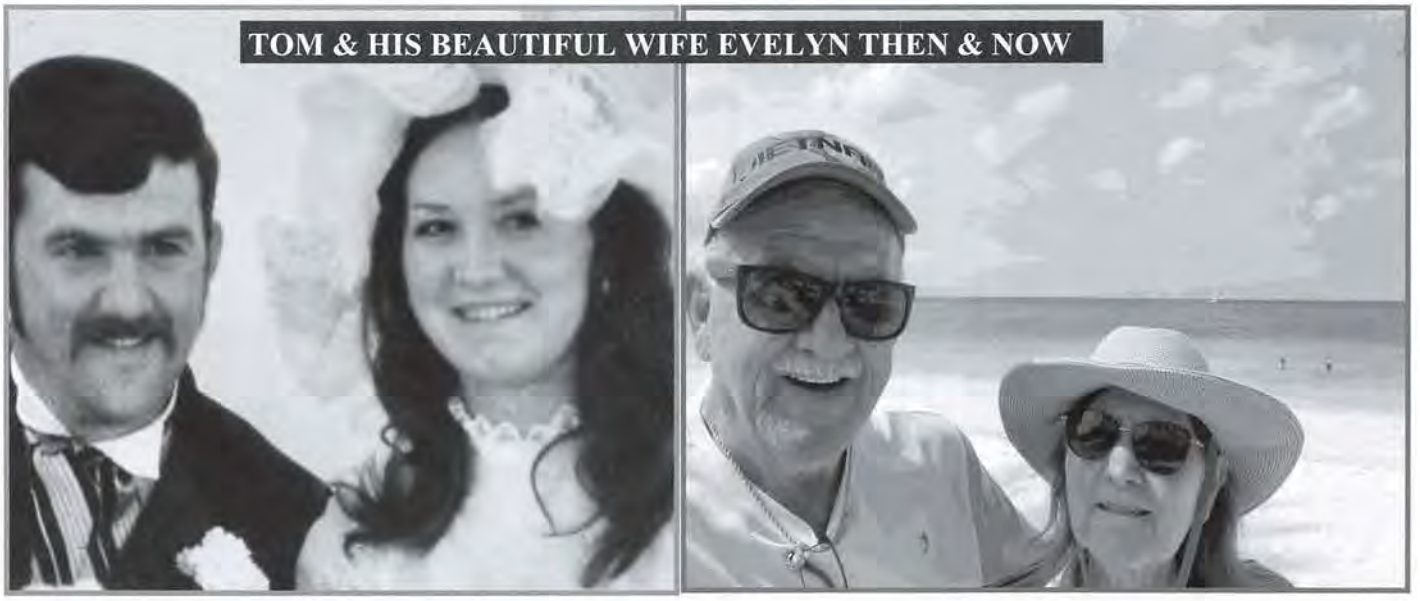

TOM & HIS BEAUTIFUL WIFE EVELYN THEN & NOW

LOOKS LIKE THEY WERE TAKEN YESTERDAY

OUR HEROES





DAVID KNIESS VISITING WITH 96 YEAR OLD MARINE MAJOR RICK SPOONER, WHO SERVED IN WW2, KOREA & VIETNAM. OWNER OF THE GLOBE & LAUREL RESTAURANT THAT USED TO BE LOCATED IN QUANTICO, VA

ED NOTE: WHILE ATTENDING THE FBI ACADEMY WHILE SERVING WITH THE CHICAGO PD, I WROTE A SONG FOR THE MAJOR WHICH IS STILL ON THE WALL IN HIS RESTAURANT IN STAFFORD, VA.

THE GLOBE & LAUREL IS A MILITARY & LAW ENFORCEMENT THEMED RESTAURANT, PROUDLY SERVING CLIENTELE FOR 50 YEARS AND COUNTING. TRY THEIR PRIME RIBS, STEAKS & CIGARS.





David Kniess spent a morning at Arlington visiting an old friend… Bob Arrotta. He traveled to Vietnam with Bobby in 2000 and 2001 and hiked up to Hills 861 and 881 south at Khe Sanh. Bobby was dubbed the mightiest Cpl in the Marine Corps because of the amount of fire power he brought down on the NVA during the Siege at Khe Sanh in 1968. Miss you Bobby.

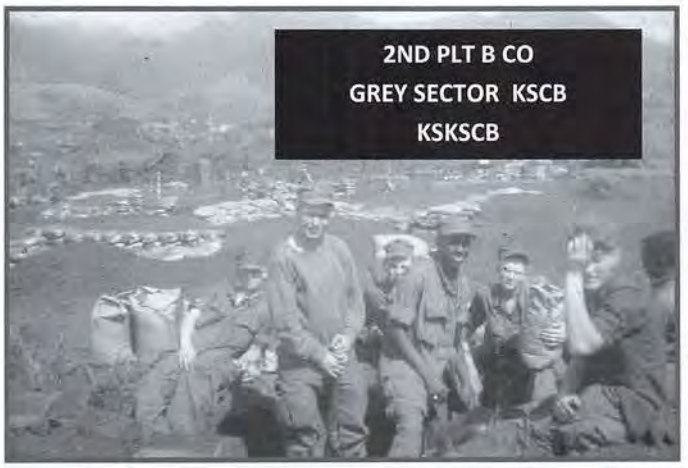







OUR GALLANT NURSES



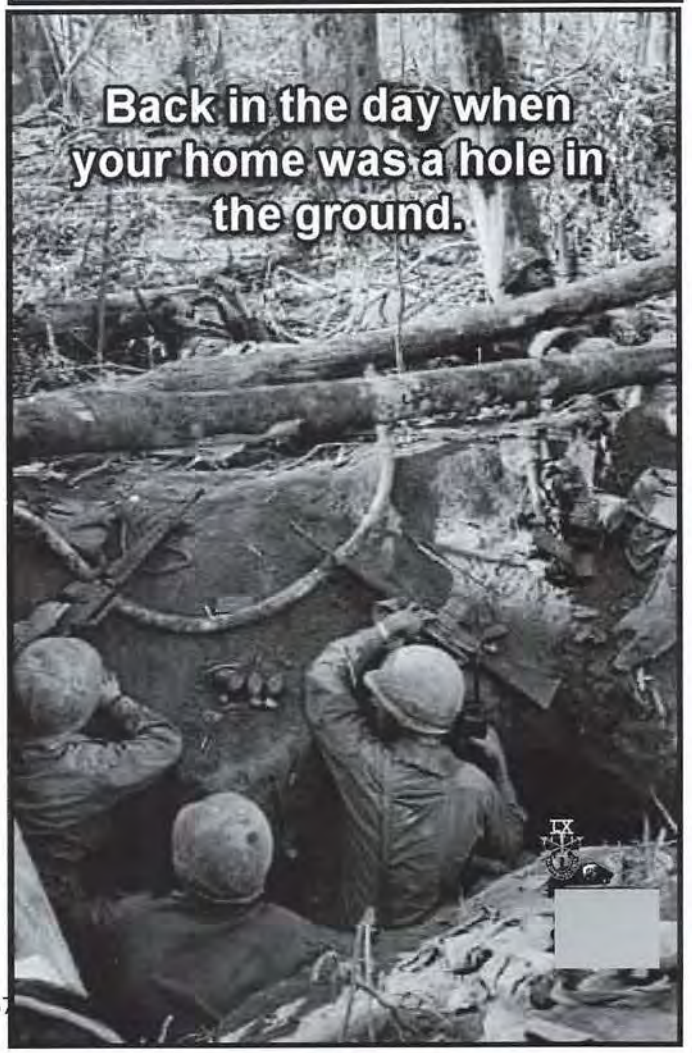

THE BILL WEBER CLAN
MCB4 SEABEES HAVING FUN















OBIT

MAURICE L. COLLIN, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

It is with profound sadness but many wonderful memories that we share the passing of Moe Collin. Born in Frenchville, ME on March 22, 1948, he was the son of Lucien Collin and Therese (Pelletier) Collin. He spent most of his childhood making mischief in Lewiston, ME, New Britain, CT and Frog Hollow in Hartford. At 17 he joined the Marine Corps, a decision that would profoundly change the course of his life.

He had many adventures in Iceland and Cuba before being wounded in 1968 at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam, for which he received a Purple Heart. After a year in the hospital and disability retirement from the military,

He was employed as an auto body mechanic and postman to support his family before making the service of disabled veterans his life's work. Through the Disabled American Veterans and the CT Dept. of Veterans Affairs he devoted his life to making sure other veterans received the benefits they deserved. He retired from the position of Acting Commissioner of Veterans Affairs for the State of CT and was inducted into the CT Veterans Hall of Fame, an honor of which he was most proud. He continued helping vets through the DAV of CT, the Rocky Hill vet's Center, the Newington VA Veteran's Clothing Room, Veterans Base Camp and The Eastern CT Veterans Community Center.



He was a life member of the Disabled American Veterans and the Vietnam Veterans of America, and a member of the American Legion and Marine Corp League. Moe enjoyed traveling to new places, especially those of natural beauty, and loved going to all types of live performances with his wife and friends. He loved his family dearly and tried to be the best father, brother, Pepere and husband possible.

He lived his life with the philosophy of "every day is a gift" and said it often. He loved classic cars and listening to the Oldies, especially his beloved Beatles. He enjoyed a big bowl of chocolate anything. Most of all, he loved just sitting by the lake with a beer, chatting with his family and friends and enjoying the peace it brought to him. He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Leila (Beman) Collin, his brother Ronald Collin and his wife Kathryn of Manchester, CT, his son Marc Collin of Vernon, CT and his partner Karen Rock, his son Bryan Collin of Colchester, CT, grandchildren Alex Collin, Renee Collin, Francis Collin, and Gabriel Collin. He leaves his sister-in-law Janet Beman, his close friend Lula Oakley and many other dear friends and relatives whom he loved and cherished.

Graveside service were held Monday, May 15, 2023 at 1PM with full military honors in the State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown, CT. Moe's family would like to thank Dr. Timothy Hong, Dr. Oscar Serrano and the incredible staff of Hartford Healthcare for their wise and compassionate care. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Disabled American Veterans or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital are gratefully appreciated. And please, the next time you see a vet, take the time to tell them "thank you". It means much more than you know.



OBIT

MICHAEL D. FLEMING, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A

It is always difficult saying goodbye to someone we love and cherish. Family and friends must say goodbye to their beloved Michael D. Fleming (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), who passed away at the age of 84, on April 7, 2023. Leave a sympathy message to the family in the guestbook on this memorial page of Michael D. Fleming to show support.

He was predeceased by : his son Michael Fleming; his parents, Drew Fleming and Josephine Fleming; and his brother-in-law Gary Koehl. He is survived by : his wife Angela Marrone; his son Drew Fleming; his step-children, Augustino Marrone (Karen), John Marrone Jr. (Natalia) and Tracy Cholminski (Eric); his child-in-law Flavia Fleming; and his siblings, Joseph Novelli (Mary) and Gina Koehl.

Viewing was held on Thursday, April 13th 2023 from 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM at the Koller Funeral Home (6835 Ridge Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19128). A funeral service was held on , April 13th 2023 at 9:00 AM at the same location. A burial was held on Thursday, April 13th 2023 at the Washington Crossing National Cemetery (830 Highland Rd, Newtown, PA 18940).





Craig W.Tourte
Khe Sanh Veterans Assoc
BOD Secretary

Sanh Combat Base, no showers, no racks, little food, lots of rats, minimal bunkers and material, lots of flies, rotting cloths with no replacement, no radio, no adult beverages, no USO shown, dig all day with a small entrenching tool. Sleeping in the trench line hoping for tomorrow. The deprivation alone was something few who served in Vietnam





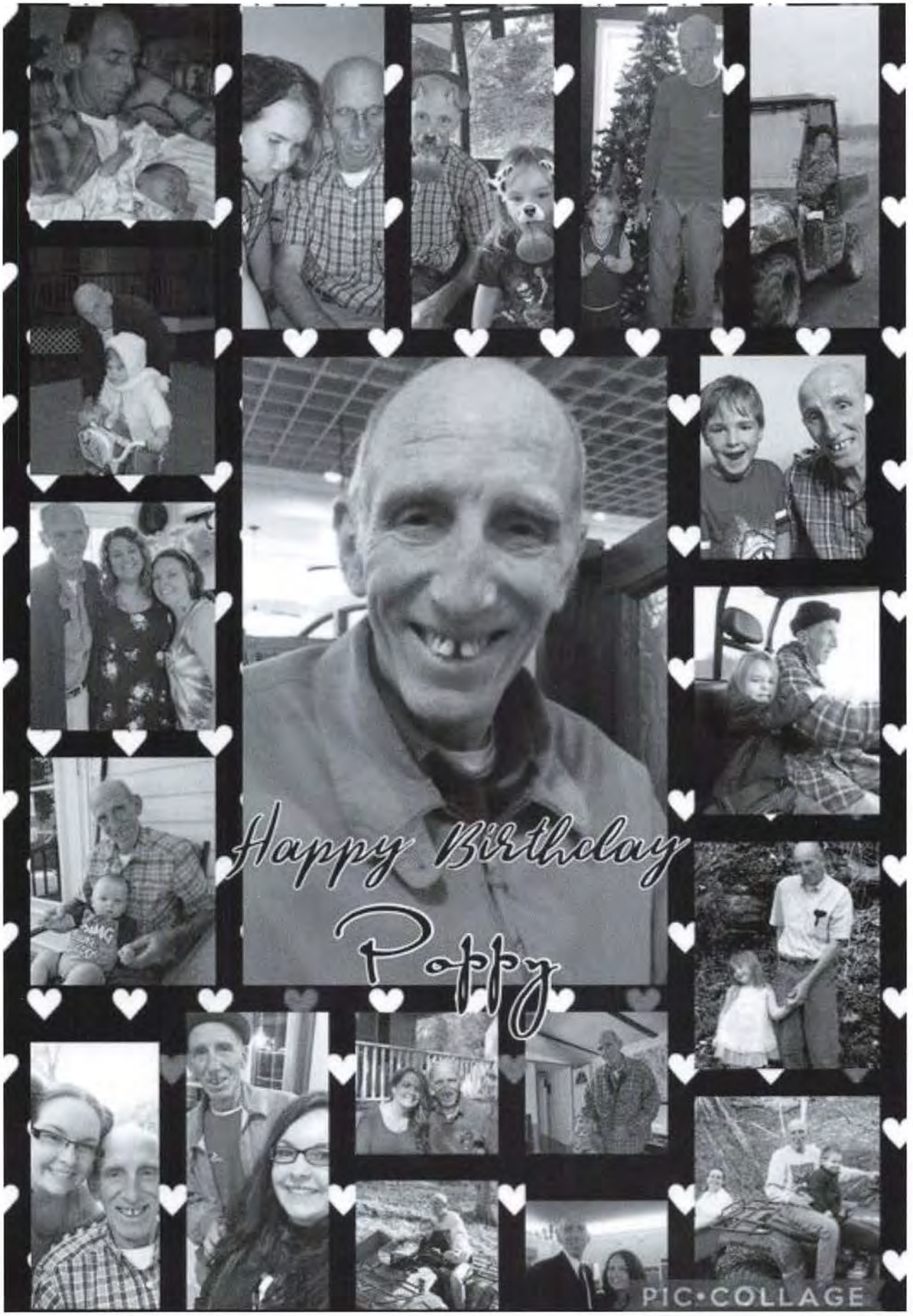
Happy Birthday
Patty
PIC•COLLAGE

BARBARA FOSTER WRITES

Our family's Hero, Bill Foster, joined several other Veterans for Coastal Georgia Honor Flight, Inc 2023 - to Washington DC Yesterday. our son Gregg went along as his Guardian. It was a very long day of visiting several memorials together —- as they were honored with police escorts for their buses! and their 'Welcome Home' at Brunswick/Golden Isles Airport at 10:30PM last Night! Many in our community came out to welcome them!



I AM ONE PROUD WIFE & MOTHER





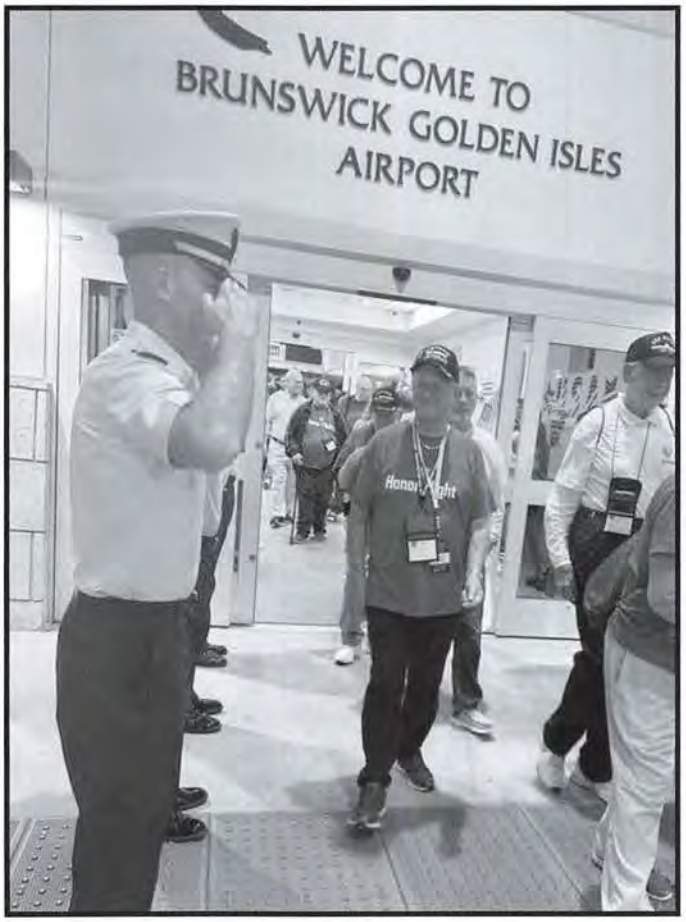







Last night in Miami it's been a great seven day adventure with two games of golf, visit with Hunter and Noor along with expensive dinners, that I wont miss, but we'll be back, easy to love Miami



Here I am in the Ft Lauderdale airport when who do I come across but my old friend Randy Owens lead singer of the musical group Alabama, haven't seen him in years. Craig Tourte KSV Secretary, BOD Member



GRANDMA KATHY TURNER ENJOYING THE KIDS









CRAIG TOURTE KSV SECRETARY & REUNION COMMITTEE MEMBER ENJOYING LUNCH AT SALUMERIA 104 IN FLORIDA, WITH HIS BEAUTIFUL WIFE JEANNE









THE FIGHTING TROOPS FROM E CO 2/26 HILL 861A



OUR GALLANT VETERAN NURSES, LOVE THEM



BROTHERLY LOVE "THE FISHBAUGH's"

TIM HALEY C CO 1/9: HAVING A GOOD TIME IN KONA, DAUGHTER SHANNA ON A LAYOVER STOPPED BY FOR A VISIT

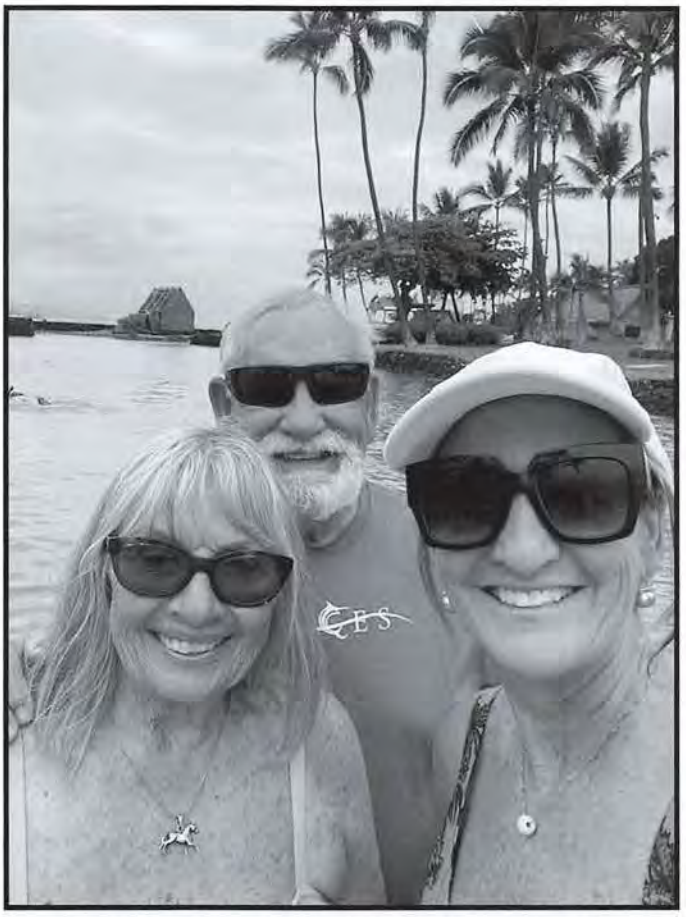

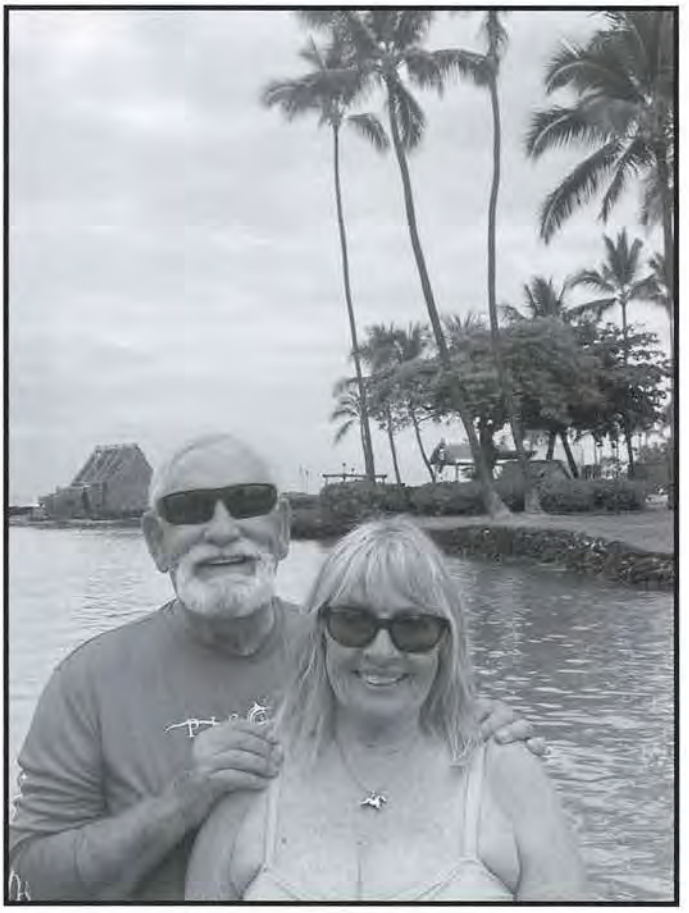













HAPPY BIRTHDAY LARRY SEESE
B BTRY 1/13

OBIT

THOMAS O'GRADY, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

Tom O'Grady, a decorated combat veteran of the Vietnam War, passed away on April 3, 2023, at the age of 73. He was born on July 22, 1949, and spent his formative years between Broadus, MT and Western Washington.

Tom attended High School in Broadus from 1966 to 1967. Only leaving his family ranch (Earley) when he was called to the Vietnam War.



Tom was a Marine and served his country with bravery and distinction in the Vietnam War. As a forward observer, Tom called in a Ring of Steel around his fellow marines during a retrograde after being nearly overrun by the enemies far superior numbers. This swift and skillful act of bravery saved many lives and earned Tom meritorious corporal.

He survived the Battle of Khe Sanh, where 6000 marines held off an assault by 30000 enemy forces. Tom designed and built a bunker that was designed by combat engineers, Tom's bunker was confiscated by the offices and staff so Tom had to build another one similar to shelter in, and built it twice as fast. Tom loved the Marine Corps and was very proud of his accomplishments as a Marine.

He was a true hero, receiving three Purple Heart medals and a Silver Star.

After his military service, Tom returned home and devoted himself to his family. He was first married to Linda Sterling, and they had a child together named Missy. However, their marriage ended in divorce. In 1996, Tom met the love of his life, Grace, and they were married. Together, they had a daughter named Tommy O'Grady, and Tom cherished his role as a father. Together he, Grace, and Tommy lived together in Northwest Washington until his death.

Tom Loved to return to Powder River County regularly. He loved visiting his brother Ben in Savage, MT and his brother Lester in Powderville on the homestead. He disliked interstate highways, but this never stopped him from finding small two lane roads to drive his 1950 Ford from his home in Western Washington all the way to Eastern Montana.

Tom is survived by his loving wife, Grace, their daughter Tommy, his daughter Missy, and his brothers Ed, Lester, Benjamin, and sisters, Connie, Colleen, Marilyn, Barbie, and numerous nephews and nieces. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all who knew him. He is welcomed home by his sister Jane, mother Norma and father.

No formal service is planned currently. There will be a celebration of his life planned at a later date.





JOE BUENESTRO B 1/13 AT TACO TUESDAY WITH ALL THE LOVELY LADIES

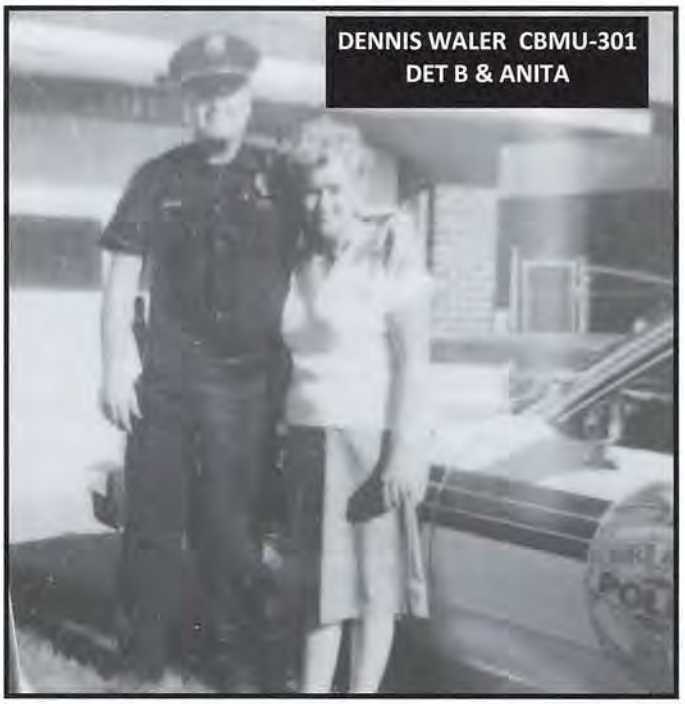

DENNIS WALER CBMU-301 DET B & ANITA

43 years ago this beautiful woman said "I do". She had no idea how crazy life would become. Being married to a Law Enforcement Officer is not easy. Having two sons that are Law Enforcement Officers is even more difficult. She's a wonderful Wife, a great Mother, and a fantastic Grandmother I thank God that she stuck with me. Happy Anniversary Anita.



KHE SANH VETERANS ENJOYING A LITTLE DINNER TOGETHER



DIANNE JACKSON's BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER JAMIE

DENNIS WALER CBMU-301 DET B & ANITA HARLOW WALER STOPPED BY FREEDOM ROCK IN IOWA. ANITA SAID IT REMINDED HER OF REVERAND RAY W. STUBBE.

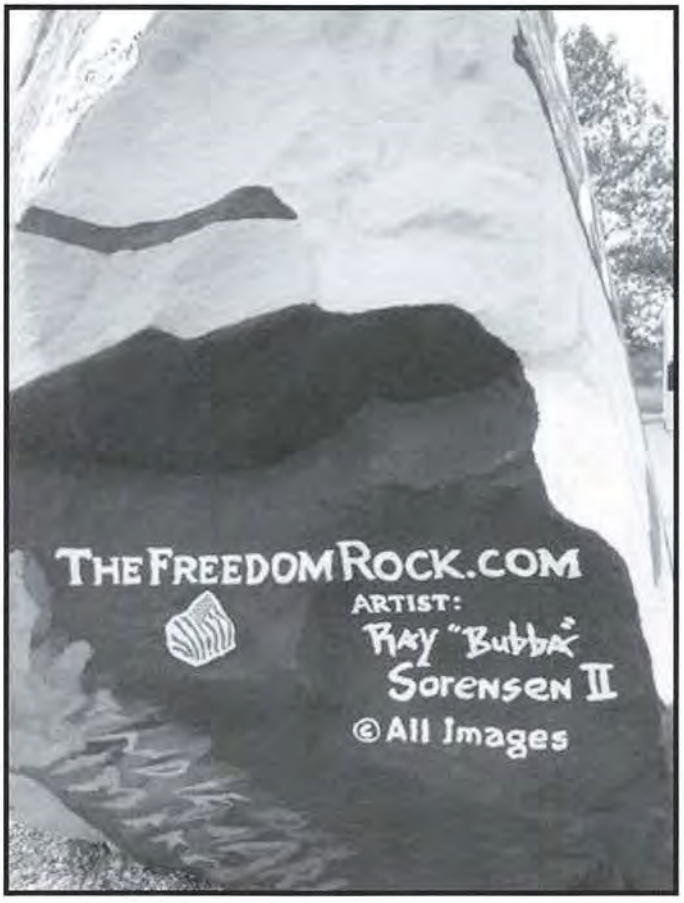





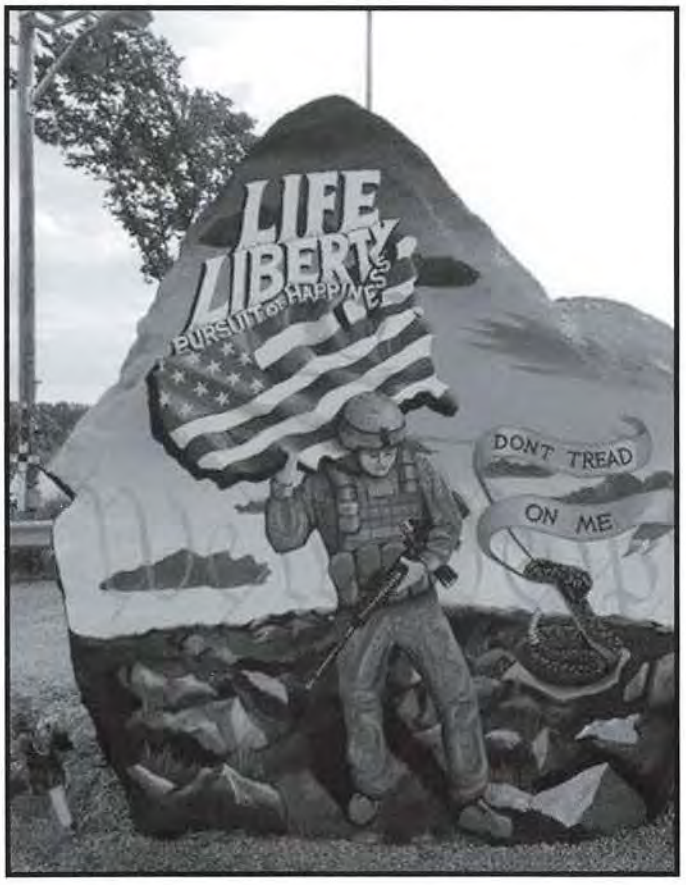

ed green camouflage helmet cover and observed written in black ink Buddy's blood type, unit, and the words "Pat" for his high school girlfriend Patricia. Chuck said that he had kept the cover locked away for 45 years and now it was time the cover should be with Buddy 's hometown, family, and friends.

Chuck handed the helmet cover to Buddy's friend Paul Richter for safekeeping until it could be displayed properly in a place of care and honor. I recognized that Chuck's act of presenting Buddy's helmet cover to Paul and the town of Maxwell was more than just transferring some possession of the property. It was a spiritual release, a dedication, a shared memory and memorial of an item of hallowed significance to be forever treasured. It was part of Buddy 's spirit and represented his life and sacrifice in battle and that significance had been tucked away for 45 years in a corner of Chuck's heart and soul.

Paul told me there were efforts under development to build an appropriate incased memorial with memorabilia dedicated to Buddy which would include the now gifted helmet cover along with his military Bronze Star, Purple Heart, military photograph, and additional items relating to Buddy already on display at the American Legion. The new display would not only be a tribute to Buddy but also to the many who have served in the Armed Forces and a reminder to all that, "Freedom Is Not Free."

MEMORIES
BY CRAIG TOURTE

Each year I spend a little time watching the Indianapolis 500 Race, I've always enjoyed watching the powerful vehicles race to the finish and the skill of the drivers, something I would love to have the opportunity to enjoy in person. When I was in Vietnam and serving at Khe Sanh I served with Fred Louis Thomas, Jr. Fred was from Indianapolis and one great Marine. Never complaining, brave and disciplined always willing to help, someone I knew I could and did trust with my life.

Fred and I talked about the Indianapolis Race, and he told me that when we got home, I should come out from California and visit him. His house was so close to the racetrack he could hear the cars going around the track and the roar of the crowd. I thought that was a great idea and thanked him for the invitation but at the time I was unsure if either of us would survive long enough to realize that possibility. Tragically, Fred was Killed in Vietnam on February 23, 1969, but I never forgot him and to this day I am thankful I had the opportunity to spend a few months getting to know this most generous and proud Marine.



Photo Fred Thomas on left standing next to William Poland on the right.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY
DENNIS & ANITA WALER

43 years ago this beautiful woman said "I do". She had no idea how crazy life would become. Being married to a Law Enforcement Officer is not easy. Having two sons that are Law Enforcement Officers is even more difficult. She's a wonderful Wife, a great Mother, and a fantastic Grandmother I thank God that she stuck with me. Happy Anniversary Anita.



FREEDOM IS NOT FREE
By Craig W. Tourte
HQ BTRY 1/13

Everyone who knew William Denman called him Buddy and that nickname appropriately described who he was. Buddy grew up in the town of Maxwell, located in Northern California. Maxwell is the quintessential example of rural small-town America where everyone knows your name, family and most of your relatives if they have lived around those parts for a few generations. There would be no reason for the road traveler to take the exit off Interstate 5 and drive into the little farm community of 500 where most folks live in quiet obscurity. Some have come and stayed and raised their families while many others have moved along and are now mostly forgotten.



From the Virtual Wall - "Dau Tieng, Tay Ninh Provence, 03 Nov 1966 - elements of the 196th Infantry Brigade and the 25th Infantry Division got into a heated fight with entrenched and bunkered VC troops, a fight that grew into a full-fledged battle fought over a three-day period. Landing Zone Lima Zulu, slightly north of where 1st Bn, 27th Infantry fought on 03/04 Nov, drew some of the heaviest fighting beginning after C Company, 2/27 Inf, was inserted at about 1400 on 04 Nov."

Buddy was a popular kid, handsome and athletic with blond hair and light blue eyes and he possessed an independent and adventuresome spirit many admired. Buddy had a difficult and tragic family life; there were many challenges and hardships including a grievous personal experience between his parents that he witnessed at a very young age. After he graduated from high school Buddy volunteered for the Army and attended boot camp at Fort Ord located in Monterey California. He thrived in the Army life with direction, discipline and a sense of belonging. He found a new beginning, writing to many friends about the respect and admiration he had for the warriors he had met, respected and hoped one day to emulate.

In the summer of 1966, I was living with my aunt and uncle in Maxwell and looking forward to going off to Marine Corps boot camp. Going into the Marine Corps was an adventure I was looking forward to even though I knew I would be deployed to Vietnam shortly after my training was completed. Buddy had completed his Army training and was home visiting his mother and sister and preparing for his deployment to Vietnam. I went over to his house with my cousin and walked into his bedroom where a few of his friends were visiting with him. It was mid-morning and he was still in bed, stating that he wanted to rest as much as he could after all the training and before his deployment. He was in high spirits and looking forward to serving his country and all of what that entailed. We talked about his military training and what he expected while in Vietnam. I sensed that he too was in pursuit of action and eager for a new experience. I told him that he would be returning from Vietnam before me and when I returned home we would share and compare experiences. I wished him luck and was a little envious that he would get to the war before me. I left knowing he was doing what he wanted to do, and I was looking forward to becoming a United States Marine. I entered Marine Corps Boot Camp (Platoon 1145) on October 29, 1966.

When Buddy arrived in Vietnam his Sergeant asked him what he wanted to be called, William or Bill. His response was "My friends call me Buddy." His Sergeant said, "Then Buddy it is." He was assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry (Wolfhounds), 25 Infantry Division. Within a short period of time, he went into combat against the experienced, prepared and determined Viet Cong forces. Tragically only three and a half months after arriving in Vietnam he was killed in action.

"C/2/27 moved south from LZ Lima Zulu, intending to link with 1/27, but could go only a few hundred meters before being stopped by VC dug into a tree line. Unable to move forward, with enemy troops infiltrating to their rear, the battalion and company commanders dead, and under fire from three sides, C/2/27 pulled together after nightfall, using a left flank displacement to get out of the "horseshoe" and avoid encirclement. The maneuver worked, and C/2/27 held out through the night amidst the sporadic hand-to-hand fighting. By 1030 on 05 Nov, Alpha 1/27 fought through and relieved C/2/27." At the same time, HHC and A Company, 2/27, was coming into LZ Lima Zulu, intending to take the VC from the rear, pounding them against the anvil

formed by A/1/27 and C/2/27."

"05 November 1966 - While the engagements cost the VC dearly, with several hundred known dead, the US infantrymen paid a high price with 50 men killed in action over the three-day period. William (Buddy) Denman was one of the twenty Americans who was killed at LZ Lima Zulu on the 3rd day of the fight."

The community cemetery of Maxwell is located a mile west of town. William Luther Denman (August 25, 1946 - November 5, 1966) is buried near the flagpole; his final resting place is identified with a brass United States Military Headstone. He was the first to be killed from the small town of Maxwell and County of Colusa during the Vietnam War. He had the largest funeral ever attended with vehicles stretching for a couple of miles leading to the cemetery.

A few years ago, I placed a small note on the A Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhound website regarding Buddy, just so others would know he had someone who continued to remember him and his sacrifice for this wonderful country.

Like the Khe Sanh Veterans websites - Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc & Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page - which have contributed to bringing together those who fought in the battles on the hills and the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh, the Wolfhounds website is followed by those with comparable experiences.

Several months ago, I received an email in response to that little notation I had written on the Wolfhound web site. A former Vietnam and Wolfhound Veteran Robert Park contacted me and said that he was with Buddy during that battle and continues to remember Buddy 's death with great sadness. Robert said he was the one who asked Buddy what name he wanted to be called. Having been in the country longer and with more experience, Robert felt an obligation to watch out for Buddy and has carried with him all these years a feeling of responsibility for Buddy's death during the battle. A few years ago, Robert had come to Maxwell to visit Buddy's grave and say goodbye but was unable to locate his grave at the cemetery. He asked around town, but no one seemed to recall who Buddy was nor were they familiar with the location of his grave. Robert has vowed to return someday to say his final farewell.

A few of weeks after my email communication with Robert I received an email from Chuck Dean, another Vietnam and Wolfhound Veteran who told me he had been in communication with Robert and that he had been with Buddy when he fell and was planning on driving to California and visit Buddy's grave. I shared both emails with people I knew were close to Buddy while he was growing up.

Email from Chuck Dean - "I plan on visiting Buddy's grave in May of this year (2012), something I have tried to face for 45 years. Buddy and I were very close friends in Vietnam. We were both Grenadiers in A Co 2/27 Wolfhounds. I was with Buddy when he fell. I only wish I could have done these years ago but have only been able to come to grips with Vietnam the last couple of years. I have hooked up with some of the other "Hounds" such as Robert within the last year and have been steadily working my way out of the shadows. I will be in the Maxwell area to visit Buddy's gravesite in May. Buddy will always be part of the band of brothers called the Wolfhounds and will never be forgotten. His memory will live on as long as there is one Wolfhound alive."

"Freedom Is Not Free" Reads the program pamphlet provided at the Memorial Day Service held at the Maxwell Cemetery, May 28, 2012 - I attended the Memorial Day Service with 100 or more people from the community sponsored by American Legion Post 218 (Maxwell) - Ronald Azevedo, Commander. The Maxwell High School Band played the Star-Spangled Banner and one of the high school girls sang the National Anthem. The service included a bugler playing taps and a rifle volley "Salute to Deceased Veterans." I didn't notice any politicians or back slapping significant officials, just local folks with moist eyes and heavy hearts who attended out of respect and honor for those who served and for those who had fallen.

Chuck Dean arrived for the service and was shown the location of Buddy 's grave by Paul Richter (1st Lt. U.S. Army) and Gary Bowen (1949-2013), a veteran of the U.S. Navy, who were childhood friends of Buddy 's, there was a large floral wreath standing at the headstone sent by Robert Park in the name of all the Wolfhounds Buddy served with. Chuck said that he had driven out from Alabama to finally say goodbye. We had a long conversation where he reflected on the battle and Buddy's loss. Chuck said that Buddy was just a few steps behind him when he was shot and killed. He walked over to Buddy, turned him over and saw that he was deceased. Chuck said that he had the canvas helmet cover Buddy had worn that day. I held the now fad-

I held the now faded green camouflage helmet cover and observed written in black ink Buddy's blood type, unit, and the words "Pat" for his high school girlfriend Patricia. Chuck said that he had kept the cover locked away for 45 years and now it was time the cover should be with Buddy 's hometown, family, and friends.

Chuck handed the helmet cover to Buddy's friend Paul Richter for safekeeping until it could be displayed properly in a place of care and honor. I recognized that Chuck's act of presenting Buddy's helmet cover to Paul and the town of Maxwell was more than just transferring some possession of the property. It was a spiritual release, a dedication, a shared memory and memorial of an item of hallowed significance to be forever treasured. It was part of Buddy 's spirit and represented his life and sacrifice in battle and that significance had been tucked away for 45 years in a corner of Chuck's heart and soul.

Paul told me there were efforts under development to build an appropriate incased memorial with memorabilia dedicated to Buddy which would include the now gifted helmet cover along with his military Bronze Star, Purple Heart, military photograph, and additional items relating to Buddy already on display at the American Legion. The new display would not only be a tribute to Buddy but also to the many who have served in the Armed Forces and a reminder to all that, "Freedom Is Not Free."

Get mail:
Michael moore
My friends from Hawaii: Vietnam kia's
GEORGE Castillow & DON Doornbos were killed at the Khe sanh combat basE



MEMORIES

ROD FINK ALPHA CO 1/9 SENIOR CORPSMAN

This photo near the DMZ, was of the men of 1st Platoon of Alpha Company that I was assigned to as Corpsman. I was moved up to Senior Corpsman of the company shortly after this. 28 of them were killed in a battle at Khe Sanh less than 6 months later. I could have been with them. In that battle, their hill just 500 meters from the main base was mostly overrun during the night. When it was light enough we went up with a reinforced platoon to retake the hill. It was the worst day of the war for me. Also the saddest.





ROD & CHARLENE FINK
A CO 1/9



ROD FINK, A CO 1/9 HN, CARRIED BY MOTHER IN CENTRAL PARK 1945

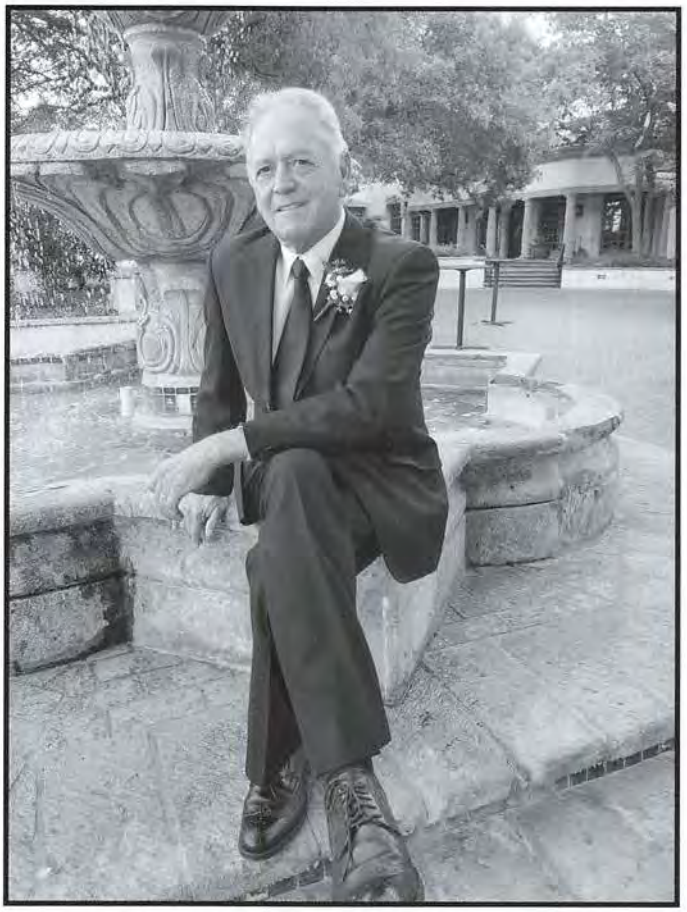



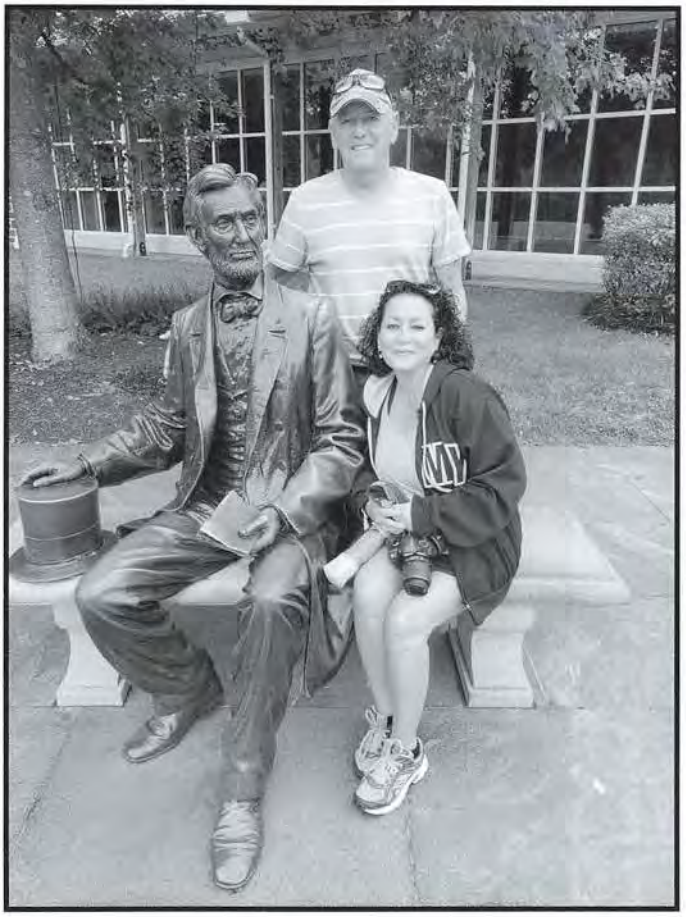

MICHAEL & DIANE



LARRY FOURNIER FAMILY



CARRIE PEPPER WINDOW OF ANTHONY PEPPER MIA APR 6 68 VISITNG JOHN WITH KSV FRIENDS









TOM HARVEY HQ BTRY 1/13 WITH LOVELY WIFE ROSE EATING WITH FRIENDS JOHN & ELAINE SOMMERS AT JOANIE'S BLUE CRAB CAFÉ





BEAVERDAM BEAVERS TEAMMATES FOR EVER, STEVE, RAY & TOM



BRANDIE BOGART, GRANDDAUGHTER OF TOM & ROSE HARVEY GETTING READY FOR NIGHT OUT ON TOWN.





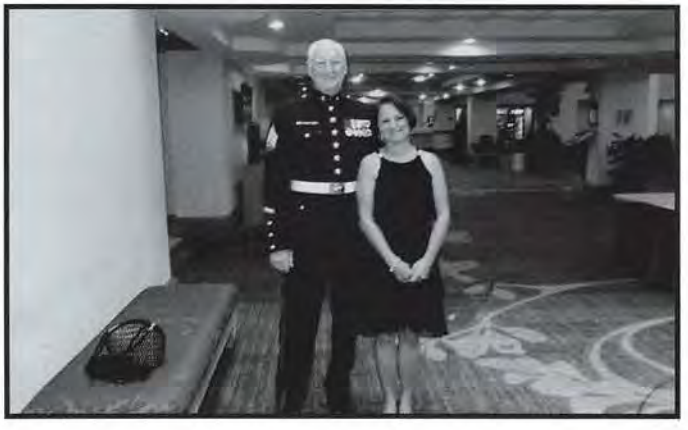



BILL AIELLO'S BEAUTIFUL OLDEST GRANDDAUGHTER SARAH'S BIRTHDAY. BESIDES BEING BEAUTIFUL, SMART, TALENTED AND OVERALL A GREAT PERSON...SHE'S A BLESSING TO THEIR FAMILY. WE LOVE YOU SARAH. POP, MEMA AND UNCLE BOBBY









BILL AIELLO, L CO 3/26 WITH FAMILY













JOHN CICALA "DOC" B 1/26 WITH FAMILY & OTHER B CO HEROES



KENNY & BETTY RODGERS LOOKING LIKE THEY ARE PLANNING ANOTHER PRODUCTION, LIKE THEIR HIT "I MARRIED THE WAR"



OBIT

PETER REIDY, USA, KHE SANH VETERAN, 1ST OF THE 44TH ARTILLERY

February 5, 2023. Husband of Peg (Edwards)



Riedy; Father of Shannon (Stephen) Content and Peter B. (Marsha) Riedy, Jr. Grandfather of Fiona and Reid Content, Daniel Morrissey and Natalie Riedy. Also survived by 11 loving brothers and sisters and many nieces and nephews. A Memorial Mass will be held Friday morning at 10:00 at St. Michael's Church, 651 Washington St., Buffalo. Pete was a decorated Disabled US Combat Veteran of the Vietnam War, 1st of the 44th Artillery Division at Khe Sanh, was a Supervisor with Laborers' Union Local 210 and Stadium Operations Supervisor for the Buffalo Bills in the 90's.



DONATIONS CONTINUED FROM RED CLAY 101

AIELLO, William P.	10.00	Check# 3289
BATES, Robert	10.00	Check# 5876
BIGLER, Don	100.00	Check# 2977
BIRTCIL, Robert F	250.00	Check# 6962
BOHR, Harper L. Jr	150.00	Check# 434
CAVANAUGH, Carmelita	100.00	Check# 2713
CHOCLIS, Paul J.	100.00	M/O
COEY, Larry	125.00	Check# 2119
COLLINS, James	1,000.00	Check# 1814
DEVERNEY, Wayne	500.00	Check# 410
EAKIN, Randall	100.00	Check# 2400
ESTES, Leo L.	10.00	Check# 325
FARRELL, Brian	10.00	Check# 1540
FETTER, Charles H.	10.00	Check# 1035
FORD, Thomas	400.00	Check# 5740
GHOLSON, Fred	100.00	Check# 5556
HAY, William	200.00	Check# 1490
HOLSCHER, Robert J.	100.00	Check# 18773
HOPWOOD, Harry	160.00	Check# 3140,3160
JACHIMIAK, Daniel	250.00	Check# 5795
JAMES, Raymond	1,250.00	Check# 396638
JENKINS, Stephen	50.00	Check# 2854
JESPERSEN, Marshall	200.00	Check# 8312
KORKOW, Ken	250.00	Check# 8082
KORKOW, Ken	165.00	Check# 11656
KORN, William	250.00	Check# 8177
LINDSAY, John R.	200.00	Check# 2071
MAEDER, Marshall	280.00	Check# 4101
MANNING, Gerald E. II	150.00	Check# 1068
MCCANN, Timothy	200.00	Check# 3015
MILLER, Barbara	50.00	Check# 399
MONAHAN, Frederick	50.00	Check# 102
NANGLE, James	1,000.00	Check# 340
MORRISON, Sammy	75.00	Check# 3877
OLIVER, Joseph	50.00	Check# 401
OWENS, Mike	100.00	Check# 1455
PESTINGER,Daniel	100.00	Check#
RAYNER, Ron	945.00	Check# 570
RIORDAN, Robert	250.00	Check# 8612
ROBERTSON, Isidor	200.00	Check# 8759
RUSHFORTH, Toby	1,000.00	Check# 174
SADOWSKI, Alexander	100.00	Check# 6950
SEMKOW, Raymond	100.00	Check# 1915
SIEJUTT, Thomas	50.00	Check# 6312
SHOUSE, Ron	500.00	Check# 1175
SHUFF, Ronald	2,500.00	Check# 4684520759
SMITH, Larry	200.00	Check# 5498
STEINHARDT, Thomas B.	50.00	Check# 1676
SVIHEL, Ronald	40.00	Check# 3250
TORRES, Andres	100.00	Check# 8717
TOURTE, Craig	500.00	Check# 1066
WASHINGTON, Walter	75.00	Check# 201
WIEDRICH, Albert	200.00	Check# 2985
WIEDRICH, Albert	20.00	Check# 3970
WITTLER, Dale E.	250.00	Check# 6559
YATES, William	100.00	Check # 8360
ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	250.00	Check# 5360

ED NOTE:
One of my best friend's Barry Fixler, who served on Hill 861a as a mortar man in my E Co weapons platoon. Also the author of a best selling book " Semper Fi." He has made a career of promoting the battle of Khe Sanh, through his book and public appearances. Also the owner of "Barry's Estate Jewelry" in Bardonia New York





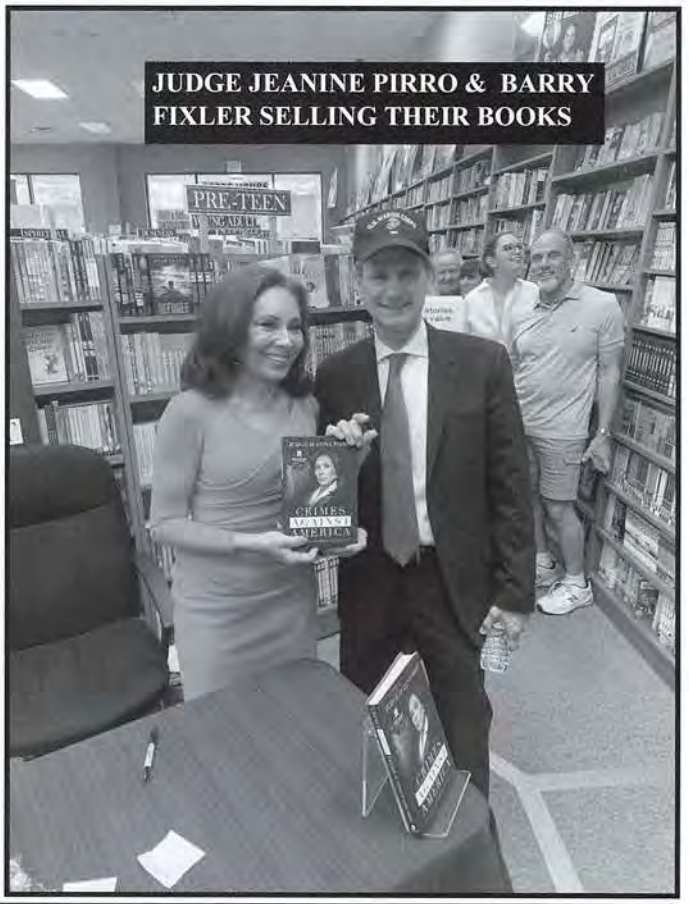

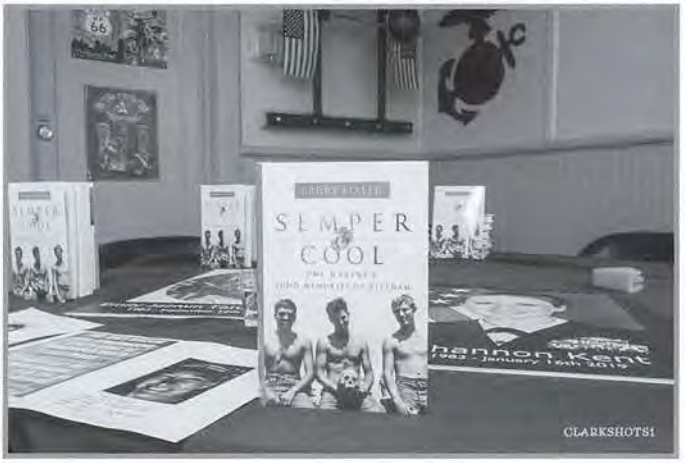
















BARRY'S MOM



BARRY'S DAD

MEMORIAL DAY



Surviving Marines from Charlie Battery 1st Battalion Marines, the main artillery support unit for the 3rd Battalion 26th Marines in the Vietnam War, presented their wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia on Sept. 17. Staff Sgt. Paul Choclis, right front, of Marion Heights, was honored to be one of the four presenters of the unit's wreath, along with Ron Hoffman of Wisconsin, who Is standing next to Choclis; Jack Poeske, second row on right, and Jim Jasmund, of Michigan, next to Poeske. Ron. Hoffman is the author of the book "To Hear Silence," a true, almost day-by-day account of combat experiences In Vietnam from,1966 to 1967.

MARINE STAFF SERGEANT PAUL CHOCLIS, OF MARION HEIGHTS, WAS REUNITED RECENTLY WITH COMRADES FROM LIMA COMPANY 3RD BATTALION 26TH MARINES WHO SERVED IN THE U.S. MARINES DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. .

The reunion was held at corpsman William "Doc" Miller's cabin deep in the mountain forests of Potter County, known as "God's Country" where, as Choclis said, bear and deer outnumber the residents and cell phones are useless.

Better known in Marine circles as "The Filthy Few" because of their contact with the enemy and length of time spent in jungles and on battlefields, these Marines endured and survived a real life "Dirty Dozen" experience in the Vietnam. war.

In the spring/summer of 1966, due to the escalation of the Vietnam War, a specially trained regiment of Marine Corps (Spearhead 5th Division) was activated at camp Pendleton, Calif. 'The 26th Marines special landing force was one of the legendary units to fight and die at the bloody battle for Iwo Jima in 1945.

In 1946,the 26th Marines were disbanded and remained dormant for 20 years before rising from the ashes like a mythological Phoenix to answer the nation's call in the Vietnam war.

Before entering the Pacific Theatre of Operations the Marines and "C" Battery1st Battalion 13th Marines encountered a violent typhoon off the coast of Okinawa in 1966. The storm contained wind speeds between 100 and 200 miles per hour: The USS Lemawee weathered the storm for hours while dealing with 20 to 30-degree rolls to port and starboard. 'Typhoon Ida then hit the coast of Japan and claimed 800 lives.

The Marines endured a baptism under fire in an ancient battlefield, called Co Bi Thanh Tan Valley After a five-day battle engaging Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army Soldiers estimated at 4,000 men by Marine intelligence , the area was named Camp Evans after the first member of Lima Company killed in action. The Marines went on to endure the harsh punishing monsoon season of 1966-1967 and survived the mortar/rocket attacks and fire fights at places known as Dongha Hue/ Phu Bai and battles at Hill 689, Con Tien and Khe Sanh.

Several of the Marines also served with units of the 9th Marines such as 2/9 Marines or "Hell in a Helmet" and l/9 Marines known as the "Walking Dead"

For extraordinary action against enemy forces in the Republic of South Vietnam, the Marines of Lima Company 3/26 and its main artillery support unit

"C" Battery 1/13 received Vietnam's · Cross of Gallantry and the nation's highest combat unit award-:: the Presidential Unit Citation.

Happy to be alive and having survived a multitude of traumatic events in the Viet-nam War; Choclis said these sons ot World War II heroes remain Semper Fidelis to our nation, the Marine Corps and each other.



LIMA COMPANY 3/26 MARINES 2ND PLATOON

L-R KNEELING : JIM STRANGE, KEITH TEEGARDIN, KEN SATTERFIELD

STANDING L-R RUSS HELTON, CAPT JAAK AULIK, DOC TEDFORD,GARY TOLER, DOC MILLER, TOM WILLEY, TOM ELLIOT, AL DROTAR, TOM CARLEY, PAUL CHOCLIS C 1/13 FO.

SOUTH DAKOTA BRIDGE TO BE DEDICATED IN HONOR OF U.S. NAVY HOSPITAL CORPSMAN SECOND CLASS CHARLES T. LANGENFELD, KILLED IN ACTION DURING THE SIEGE OF KHE SANH, DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, 1968.



PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be hosting a State Bridge Dedication Ceremony to honor U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman Second Class Charles T. Langenfeld.

The ceremony will be Saturday, July 1, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. (CT) at the Redlin Art Center in Watertown (1200 33rd Street NE #310).

The Willow Creek Bridge on East US HWY 212, near Watertown, will be dedicated to HM2 Langenfeld.

Known to family and friends as Charlie or Chuck, Langenfeld was known to those serving with him in Vietnam as "Doc". On April 17, 1968, after a 77-day siege, described as some of the worst fighting in the Vietnam conflict, a standdown was called. Having spent 77 days without a bath, Langenfeld and his troops left Hill 861a to bathe in a stream nearby. On their way back to their base camp, eight hours before Langenfeld was to leave for home, he was killed by enemy aerial mortar rounds.

Naming bridges in honor of our combat veterans who died while serving their country is an initiative of Governor Kristi Noem and the South Dakota Departments of Military, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs. So far 21 Bridges have been named to honor fallen heroes.

"Whenever and wherever this nation has called, in times of darkness and danger, as well as in times of peace and prosperity, veterans have been there and have proudly carried the torch of liberty for all to see," said Greg Whitlock, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.



WILLIAM MAVES, MARINE VETERAN OF THE BATTLE OF KHE SANH ON HILL 861A DURING THE SIEGE, REPRESENTED THE KHE SANH VETERANS

"Our fallen heroes are no longer with us, but their memories live on in the hearts of their loved ones and our state," said Whitlock. "Naming our South Dakota bridges in honor of our fallen gives us the opportunity for remembrance, reflection, and respect — for honoring the men and women who gave their lives in service to this nation. They cherished liberty and loved freedom enough to lay down their lives to preserve our way of life."







MY TWO BEST MARINE BUDDIES FROM OKINAWA 1959 B 1/1 1ST TRANSPLACEMENT BATTALION.





"F TROOP"

RONALD RAYNER
A CO 1/26
KSV CHAPLAIN

I am 75 years old today. 55 years since I did not expect to see my 20th birthday after the regimental exec officer told me to expect 20,000 NVA to be charging right at me on the north side of the east end of the Khe Sanh runway. I was part of a reaction unit from A Co. 1/26 to fill in for ARVN Rangers. About two weeks in country and I was a squad leader for 6 guys. I also, already had my own M-60 machine gun.

I arrived in Khe Sanh about February 4, 1968 after



having spent a few days on the airstrip in Phu Bi waiting for a flight to Khe Sanh. I was assigned to 2nd platoon, Alpha Company, 1stBattalion, 26th Marines. I just had to catch a ride up to Hill 861 to be with them. I spent about two weeks in the company rear burning poop, digging trenches, filling sand bags and burying artillery shells from the exploded ammo dump (pages 228 & 229, War Without Heroes).

On about February 23, about a dozen Marines from "A" company rear who were waiting to catch rides to our platoons were formed into a reaction unit and replaced an ARVN unit that had been hit the night before. So with a little over two weeks in-country, I was made squad leader and a M-60 machine gunner in a reaction force assigned to the north side of the east end of the airstrip at Khe Sanh. I only had the runway and ARVNs to my right. To my front was barbed wire, claymores and NVA soldiers. We were armed with our issued M-16s and with Army equipment salvaged from a communications bunker that had taken a direct hit from a rocket. The Army equipment consisted of an M-60 machine gun, rocket launcher and grenade launcher.

I believe the Regimental Executive officer, a Major anyway, escorted us to our section of the trench. He explained that it was expected that 20,000 NVA soldiers would be coming down the runway right at us. Then he something like "we were being backed up by a bunch of Ontos on the other end of the runway. When the NVA attacked we were supposed to watch for a single 50 caliber tracer round which would signal the Ontos were going to shoot bee hive rounds from their 105 recoilless rifles to clear the runway. We should duck when we saw the tracer.

PFC. Mitchel from Tennessee as the other squad leader. John L. Lewis was in Mitchel's squad and he is pictured in War Without Heroes on page 240 with a Heart royal flush in his helmet band. Melvin McCoy, Terry Hughes, Johnny Vaught, Elaterio "Chico" Gonzales, Jim Wilkins, Vincent Begay, and Okie (Oklahoma truck driver) were among the many Marines that spent time with "F Troop".

A French camera crew did visit us and members of "F Troop" show up in some of the Khe Sanh videos. One of the Time-Life videos showed that the big attack on the end of the runway was forming one night when the ground sensors detected them and arty and air power pretty much wiped them out.
Thank you to Captain Baig for saving my life and to Michael Archer for the information.

In 2017 I read Michael Archer's book, *The Gunpowder Prince*. It explained how Marine Captain Mirza Munir Baig had saved my life by pretty much wiping out the 20,000 NVA I had been told about. It had been 49 years before I learned who saved me.

OBIT

JOE OLIVER, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN
I CO 3/26, RADIOS, FO



CORPORAL JOE R. TAYLOR

Corporal, Joe R. Taylor, served during the Vietnam War at Khe Sanh in 1968, for which he earned the Bronze Star. He was born during a snowstorm on February 7, 1948 to Eli Taylor and Martha Coffee and left on the wind in the afternoon of March 31, 2023, to walk up the road to *see* the Creator Of All Things. He was a writer, a joker, a pain in the butt, a husband, and father. He left behind two daughters, three grandchildren, and one great grandson.





whom do I count among the dead?

Only those I have killed with intention? Or, the accidental as well?

like the children of my childhood and I helped place on buses to vanish in cold morning's light;

among whom were best friends and who never came back from summer vacation and Christmas holidays;

deserting me to find my own way through summer's heat and cold winter's night.

were they victims by accident, or by design? Creatures sent to hurt and cripple my soul.

among their luggage were pieces of my heart and I kept giving because I was too young to know.

whom do I count among the dead?

only those I have killed with intention? Or, the accidental as well?

like all the relationships I entered and abandoned as though visiting an empty house;

people seeking to lessen the suffering by taking refuge in a man who had been through hell.

If only our wounds were festers easily noted and lanced of poison, then bandaged to heal

We are all the walking wounded, limping along as we try to ease the pain of others.

When all the dead are buried, I will sing the death song and cry in their honor.

by J. R. Taylor

DIANNE JACKSON CLAN













KHE SANH BEAUTIFUL LADIES



HAPPY 55



"YEP" I WAS HERE

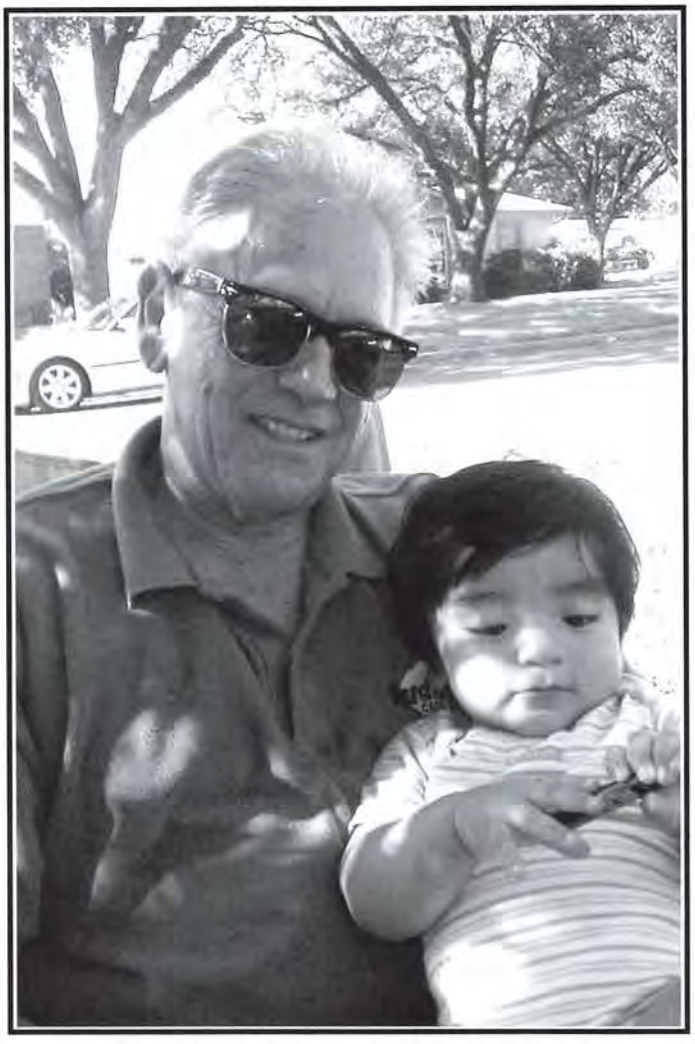

MIKE RODRIQUEZ BABYSITTING



OLD FOLKS

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATION OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited educational institutional as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post secondary curriculum.

Scholarship funds will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent , legal guardian or grandparent who is a paid-up member in good standing of KHE SANH VETERANS, INC., a 501 C (19) charitable organization.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT APPLICANT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2022 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:

Mr. Dan Fisher

KSVSF Committee Chairman

6050 52nd St. North

Oakdale, MN 55128

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid up member (sponsor) of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (see member definition in the KSV by-laws). This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if the family member are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children and grandchildren of associate members are not eligible for this scholarship.

Information provided by each applicant on the attached forums will focus on the following qualities; proof of enrollment at an accredited educational institution, good grades, scholastic character, citizenship, school activities and a personal essay on educational and career goals.

A scholarship review committee will serve at the pleasure of the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. to review the application forms for completion and correctness. The KSVSF Chairman will provide scholarship financial report, a list of applicants and their KSV member sponsors and a summary to be presented to the membership at the annual reunion and for publication in RED CLAY newsletter.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. APPLICATION FORM

Date of Application_____

APPLICANT'S INFORMATION:(PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLE!)

Name: Last_____ First_____MI_____

Address: Street_____ City_____State_____ Zip_____

Home Phone: _____ Cell_____

Date of Birth _____ E-mail address_____

KSV SPONSOR INFORMATION: (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member)

Name: Last_____First:_____

Relationship to Applicant:_____ Branch of Service_____

Unit Served at Khe Sanh_____Dates Served There_____

Regular paid KSV member _____ Life KSV Member_____Deceased KSV Life Member_____

KIA or MIA KSV Family Associate Member _____

SCHOOL INFORMATION: (School to be Attending)

School Name:_____

School Address: Street_____ City_____

State_____ Zip_____Phone Number_____

Intended Field of Study

_____

School Year to Be Funded: Freshman_____ Sophomore_____Junior_____Senior_____

SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES AND PURPOSE

The financial award should be used to defray cost of tuition, fees, books at the educational institution of the applicants choice.

The KSVSF Chairman and KSV Treasurer will send a check for the award amount to the selected applicants upon final approval of the KSV President.

Scholarship recipients will be notified of their award no later than the end of August of the upcoming school year applied for.

!!Scholarship applications sent to the KSVSF Chair MUST be post marked not later than MAY 1 of the school year applied for!!

KSV Scholarship recipients must maintain a standard of personal performance while at school that reflects positively upon the Khe Sanh Veterans' Association membership.

Scholastic Criteria for Award Consideration: 1). Attached "Official" Grade Point Transcript from the last school attended, 2). Completed Application Form, 3). Summaries of Scholastic Participation, Volunteer and Work Experiences, 4). A small photo of the applicant and, 5). Completed final page with applicant's signature and the KHE SANH VETERAN sponsor's signature.

). School Extracurricular Activities: (examples) Athletics, Music, School Government, School Publications, Academic Honors & Achievements, Scouting, Counselor, etc..

C). Employment Experience: (examples) part/full time jobs during school year, military service, etc.

D). Final Mailing Packet Check List: (ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED FORMS)!!

*COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM (ABOVE)

*COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT (FROM THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR)

*SMALL PHOTO OF YOURSELF

*PERSONAL ESSAY (250 -400 WORDS) TELLING YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS AND CAREER PLANS.

*SIGNATURE PAGE FOR APPLICANT AND SPONSOR (BELOW)

SIGNATURE PAGE: (TO BE INCLUDED IN PACKET)

I SWEAR THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE:

APPLICANT SIGNATURE:_____

ACTUAL SIGNATURE OF KHE SANH VETERAN PARENT OR GRANDPARENT SPONSOR:

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO THE KHE SANH VETERANS SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

APPROVED: _____**DAN FISHER COMMITTEE CHAIRMAIN**

APPROVED: _____**RUSSELL TURNER KSV PRESIDENT**

MAGNOLIA MARINE NAMED PURPLE HEART PATRIOT

MAGNOLIA — The 2023 Purple Heart Patriot Project, part of the National Purple Heart Honor Mission, has named the Rev. Carlton Cannon its honoree representing Delaware.

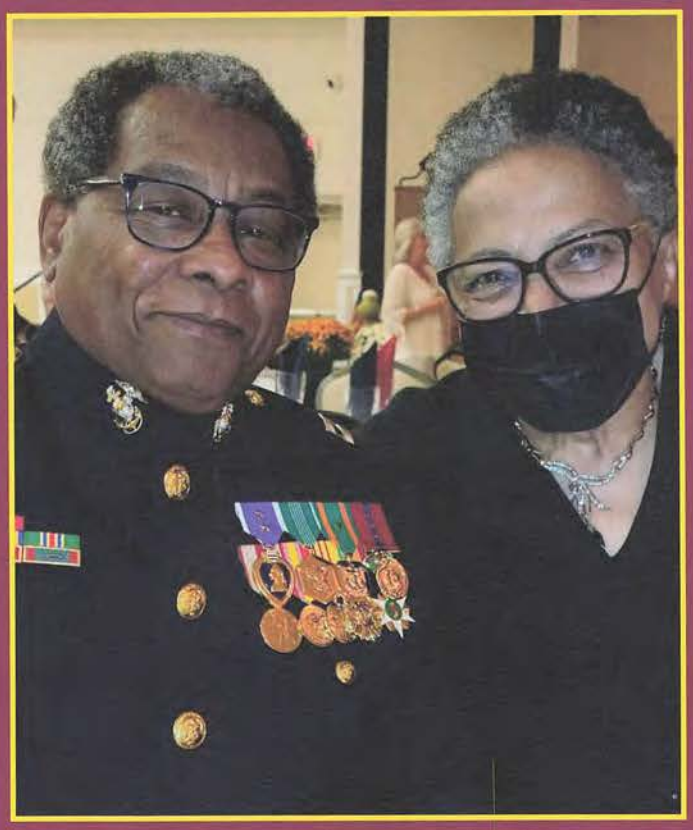

A Vietnam veteran and former Marine Corps captain, the Rev. Cannon will join the other awardees for a weeklong tribute tour of New York City, in honor of their service and sacrifice.

He served during the siege at Khe Sanh and "TET 1968" before being wounded in combat. Presently, he is a deputation representative for the Church of God's Ministry to the Military.

The Rev. Cannon also is a member of the Dover chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, the Marine Corps League, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion.

"God has blessed me to stand with other Purple Heart recipients who represent the very best of our nation, having put their lives on the line for America and the freedoms we all cherish," he said.

Eugenia Thornton, president of the Dover branch of MOAA, praised the Rev. Cannon's dedication.

"Capt. Cannon's unassuming demeanor belies his amazing accomplishments, both in uniform and out," she said. "We are so proud Carlton was selected for special recognition by a national veterans organization. He is extremely deserving."

In addition to seeing combat during the Vietnam War, the Marine served at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; in the Navy barracks in Philadelphia; at Twentynine Palms, California; and in Iwakuni and Okinawa, Japan.

Delaware Veterans Commissioner Doug Hudson, another member of the Military Officers Association of America, also applauded the accomplishment.

"Congratulations to Rev. Carlton Cannon on his well-deserved recognition and service to our great nation," he said.



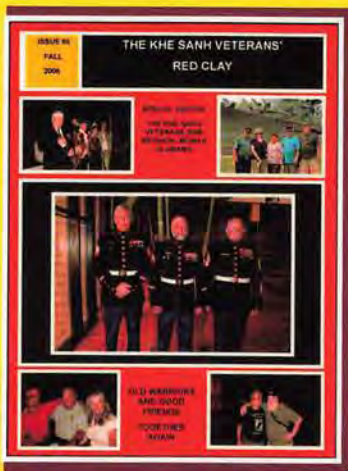

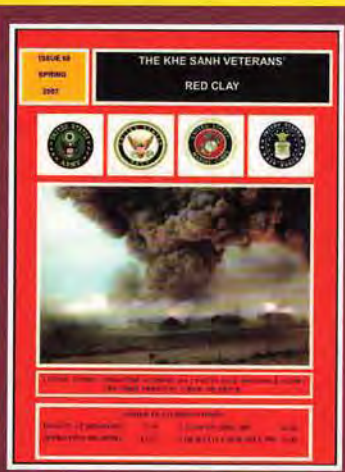





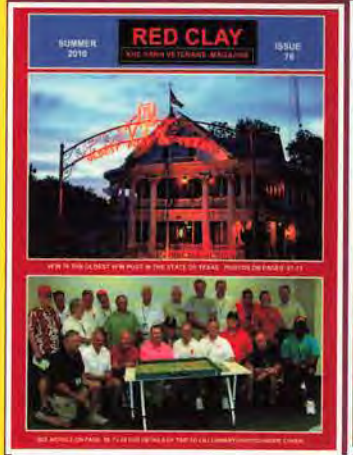

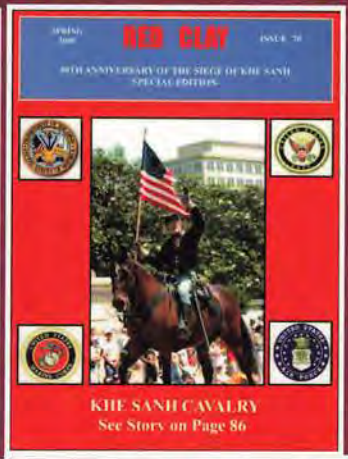





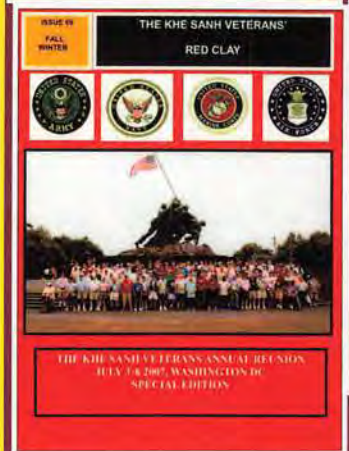















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ISSUE 103

RED CLAY

SPRING 2024

KHE SANH
FIRMLY STOOD
THE FEW
COUREAGEOUS SHARING LIFE IN SERVING
SERVING LIFE IN SHARING
VICTORIOUS



FROM THE WEB BY LISA GODDARD

I Just wanted to say Happy Birthday to my Dad. Today is his 88th birthday He started sharing his experience in Vietnam with me when he was invited to a MASS 3 50yr Vietnam reunion in 2018. If any of you ever met him or worked with he or his team, I would love to hear a story to share with him. Dad worked for MASS-3,1st MAW and started his service in Vietnam as the S-3 in April 67. He volunteered just to recon Khe Sanh in early Jan 68 to see if an ASRT could be set on site to run close air support.

He was welcomed and was assisted by the Asst S-4 of the 26 Marines (name unknown). He found the terrain acceptable for emplacement and sent his ASRT team and equipment in on 16 Jan 68. On 19 Jan he was asked to take a DASC into Khe Sanh and arrived the afternoon of 21 Jan, with the base just leveled and still smoldering.

He, his team and new wireman crew set up the DASC above ground in the med C, abandoned, destroyed hut near the Grey sector. They operated at that location for a day and a half when the AirForce, Maj Hartenbower, invited his operation into their old club/ready room bunker, underground. The DASC was located next to the AF bunker which was next to the MedC bunker...we have found a few photos we believe were his bunker. His ASRT and TPQ10 were located near the area of 1/13 and had a view of FOB3.

He tells stories of working closely with Capt Pho of the 37th ARVN, meeting Lownds, the AO, and Baig (with the FSCC), attending morning briefings and recognizing the 26Marine S-3 (upper classman from the Naval Academy), working in a trenchline in front of some loud, rhythmic (possibly) 105s~grey sector~, being swept off his feet and thrown in a ditch the day the PX was blown up (it rained cigars on him!).

He met and pissed off General Moymeyer (amongst many others), General Krulak dropping into his bunker to get a 'pass' (minus his aide?), chasing the press out of his bunker- destroying a camera, trips to get over to the ASRT in heavy fog (using communication lines to follow), his LangVei ops and searching for NVA tanks, communications with MoonGlow and Spooky, his men and his defense coordinator, the ASRT bad drop investigation, being intrigued with an unusual, fortified Seabee bunker, and his exit on or about 1Mar68 (his men~both ASRT/DASC, wouldn't leave due to take off dangers), but he took one 26 Marine out of Khe Sanh with him, who he and the S-4 assigned as exit security during aircraft loading (you needed a signed pass)~this man worked with an injured foot/ankle and his identity is still unknown.

I would not be celebrating with Dad today if it weren't for every single one of you. You did your job, you tackled my Dad and shielded him from harm, as you did for many and you held the base. I am one daughter/child of thousands of yours who recognizes your work and your sacrifice. You are in my thoughts as I raise a glass today in our birthday celebration. Thank you

If any of you ever met him or worked with he or his team, I would love to hear a story to share with him.

OBIT

HN TONY MILAZZO US NAVY, KHE SANH VETERAN, KILO CO 3/4

Anthony "Tony" Milazzo, lovingly known as "Doc", died Wednesday, September 13, 2023 following a brief illness. He was 76. Born in Paterson, Tony was raised there, and graduated from East Side High School in 1964. He attended South Florida University on scholarship for one year before enlisting in the Navy. Recognizing his intelligence, the military sent him for training at medic school, and



he became a Marine, serving with Kilo CO 3/4 in at Danang, Cam Lo and Khe Sanh from November of 1967 through November of 1968.

For heroic actions in battle, he was awarded a Purple Heart. He only completed his time with the Marines serving as a medic at Camp LeJeune in North Carolina. After being honorably discharged, he finished his education at William Paterson University in Wayne, and soon secured a career as a shipping manager for a biomedical firm. While at a mutual friend's party in Paterson, Tony met Mary Mitro. The couple quickly fell in love, and on September 20, 1975, were married.

Moving to Pompton Plains in 1977, they welcomed the birth of a daughter, Kristen, a few years later. Tony and Mary had a long and loving marriage, though they both had struggles with their health. In 2014, Mary passed away after her own battle with cancer. She has been dearly missed by Tony and Kristen ever since. Following her passing, Tony changed careers, and has since worked for Stryker Orthopedics in Mahwah as their Security Director. He also left Pompton Plains, and moved to West Milford to be closer to his daughter. A proud Marine, Tony was a longtime member of the Marine Corps League in Oakland. Tony is lovingly survived by his daughter, Kristen Milazzo; his cousins, Ellen, Lorraine, Mariellen, Juliann, and Wes (and their children); his best friend, John Cina; his brother and sister in law; many beloved nieces, and nephews; as well as a lot of really great friends. Memorial visitation was held September 23 from 2-5 pm.

FROM DENNIS MANNION

Just got this special photo. Larry McCartney and Rev. Ray Stubbe. Rev. Stubbe was a Navy Chaplain, serving in Vietnam and is remembered by oh, so many. My big brother, Larry, stopped in to visit today. He's that kind of guy - he just shows up wherever he's needed. One of a kind with a heart of gold.



OBIT

CPL JOSE M. PADILLA, USMC DELTA CO 1/26

It is a difficult moment that I message you about the passing of CPL Jose Martin "Marty" Padilla today, Sept. 20 at 1200 in San Antonio, Texas. You will remember Marty as one of the "Original" 1/26 ers that activated & trained at MCB Camp Pendleton (Camp Las Pulgas) before shipping out on the USS Iwo Jima, LPH-2 in August1966.

Marty was probably one of the best squad leaders you could hope for. Wounded twice at the DMZ and Hill 55 he returned home in 1967 to Barstow, CA. I met him there while I worked the Barstow Brig in late 1967-1968 for his grandma's home-made Mexican commida. If I get more info I will forward to you all the arrangements. Semper Fidelis and please pass to other Delta Co. 1/26 Marines of that era.

MARTY PADILLA WAS SIMPLY A HEROIC LEADER OF MARINES.

Marty died from complications of liver cancer from Agent Orange after a valiant 7 month struggle. We had the good grace to talk and remember the Marines of Delta Company 1/26 - First Platoon under the commands of First Lt. Charles Reid Dennis and SSGT Hank "Pineapple" Fernandez, both gravely wounded and evacuated in 1966-67 This comes upon the recent passing of MSGT Henry Pope (August. 16, 2023) in San Jose, CA who is to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Colonel Ross Brown.

OBIT

M/SGT HENRY POPE, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, DELTA CO 1/26, MORTARS

M/SGT Henry Parks Pope, a proud veteran of the Marine Corps called home on August 18, 2023.

He was born on August 21 1945, in Franklin, Ten-

nessee where he grew up and attended the Franklin school system and Lane College where he played football.

Henry enlisted with pride in the United States Marine Corps in 1966 where he served honorably until 1969. Henry joined the Marine Corps Reserve Corps in 1974 and retired in 1998, after 30 Years of service. He received an honorable discharge as a Master Sergeant.



Henry was very active in the community where he served as Commander of VFW Post 3982, Master of Arms of fleet reserve Branch 101, member of American Legion Post 564, little league football coach and dedicated San Francisco 49ers fan.

AS WE LOOK BACK
FROM: HIS CHILDREN

AS WE LOOK BACK OVER TIME WE FIND OURSELVES WONDERING.....
DID WE REMEMBER TO THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE FOR US?

FOR ALL THE TIMES YOU WERE BY OUR SIDES TO HELP AND SUPPORT US....

TO-CELEBRATE OUR SUCESSES TO UNDERSTAND OUR PROBLEMS AND ACCEPT OUR DEFEATS? .

OR FOR TEACHING US BY YOUR EXAMPLE, THE VALUE OF HARD WORK. GOOD JUDGMENT, COURAGE AND INTEGRITY?

WE WONDER IF WE EVER THANKED YOU FOR THE SACRIFICES YOU MADE. TO LET US HAVE THE VERY BEST?

AND FOR THE SIMPLE THINGS LIKE LAUGHTER, SMILES AND TIMES WE SHARED? IF WE HAVE FORGOTTEN TO SHOW OUR GRATITUDE ENOUGH FOR ALL THE THINGS YOU DID, WE'RE THANKING YOU NOW.

AND WE ARE HOPING YOU KNEW ALL ALONG.HOW MUCH YOU MEANT TO US

FROM HIS GRANDKIDS

SPECIAL KIND OF LOVE FOR GRANDPA

THERE'S A SPECIAL KIND OF LOVE THAT GRANDCHILDREN HAVE FOR THEIR GRANDPA.

IT's FILLED WITH RESPECT FOR HIS WISDOM AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS...

WITH GRATITUDE FOR THE VALUES HE HAS GIVEN US.....

WITH DELIGHT IN THE STORIES OF OUR FAMILY THAT HE REMEMBERS AND SHARES.

IT"S A SPCIAL KIND OF LOVE THAT'S BUILT ON A LIFETIME OF CARING AND GIVING. IT'S THE KIND OF LOVE THAT"S FOR YOU GRANDPA....TODAY AND ALWAYS

WE THANK YOU FOR THE UNCONDTIONAL LOVE.

LOVE ALWAYS AND FOREVER,

RASHAWYN, CARMELLA, OBAH II, ARMANI, TYANA, KERIAN, JALYN, DE'ANDRE, MARCELLO, JULIANA,TRINITY, JOVAN, SONALI, ARMELLE, DIER, AESON, AND KERTEZ.




HENRY POPE


THOMAS WILLIAMS

OBIT

THOMAS J. WILLIAMS, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN, HQ CO 2/26

Thomas J. Williams, 75, of Girard, passed away suddenly at his home on Wednesday, May 24, 2023. Tom was born January 21, 1948, in Erie, a son of the late Thomas J. and Marguerite A. (Clark) Williams.

He grew up in Erie and graduated from Erie's Cathedral Prep School in 1966.

America at this time was heavily involved in the war in Vietnam and Tom enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1967. Following recruit and infantry training, he deployed to Vietnam with HQ Co. 2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division. He began his duty assignment at Phu -Bai and was later stationed at Khe Sanh, where he and his fellow Marines were under siege from the Viet Cong from January to April of 1968, eventually beating back the North Vietnamese Army. He continued his deployment following that siege at Dong-Ha, AKA "Rocket City", returning to Camp Lejeune in the fall of 1968.

Tom was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal with Combat "V" Device, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Presidential Unit Citation, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnamese Service Medal with 5 Stars and the Vietnam Campaign Medal w/device.

Upon his honorable discharge from the Marine Corps, Tom returned home to Erie, where he attended and graduated from Mercyhurst College (now University), receiving a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Biology. Later receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree from SUNY at Stony Brook in Cardio -Respiratory Science. In the year 2003, he also received a master's degree from Mercyhurst

University in Organizational Leadership.

Tom began his employment as soon as he returned home from the Marine Corps. While studying, he worked at St. Vincent Health Center as an orderly. He began his professional career at Hamot Medical Center as a Respiratory Therapist and later Supervisor of Respiratory Therapy and later was promoted to Assistant Director of Cardiopulmonary Services and eventually Director of Cardiopulmonary Services. He was Service Line Leader and Operations Director at the Hamot Heart Institute, where he retired from in 2012.



Tom was a member of St. Jude the Apostle Catholic Church in Erie, where he was a Eucharistic Minister; a life member of the Girard American Legion Post #494 and served as Adjutant for many years. A Life Member of the Billie Simpson VFW Post #470; life member of the Khe Sanh Veterans Organization; The Lake Erie Detachment #293 of the Marine Corps league; was credentialed with the Project Management Institute as a Project Manager Professional in 2010. Tom volunteered at the Christian Cupboard and the PA Medical Reserve Corps. He participated with CERT, Community Response Team, through Erie County's 911 dispatch center.

In addition to his parents, Tom was preceded in death by two brothers, Michael W., and Leo J. "Joey" Williams.

His family includes his wife, Maria C. (Kloecker) Williams, whom he married, April 28, 2001 in Erie; a daughter, Carrie L. Williams (Dan Vogelman)); a son, LTC (R) Sean P. Williams (Nicole Mersch); four sisters, Sheila O'Brien, Julia Himmell (Martin), Maryanne Parsons (Bill Schneider) and Marguerite "Bridget" Williams; a brother, Matthew Williams (Michelle) Chief (FE) USN (R); three grandchildren, Aiden, Noah, and Eva Williams; also many nieces and nephews.

OBIT

RICHARD A. LAIHO, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, K CO 3/9

He enlisted in the Marine Corps and left for basic training at Parris Island a few weeks after graduation. In February 1967, Ric deployed to Viet Nam as part of the 3rd Battalion, 9th Regiment, Kilo Company, 3rd Division.



During his deployment, the 3rd Division was stationed a few miles south of the Demilitarized Zone ("DMZ") in Quang Tri Province near the border of North Viet Nam. Throughout 1967, Ric's unit participated in intense combat, including action on Hills 861, and 881 North & South in the run up to the 1968 siege of Khe Sanh. In May 1967, Ric was awarded the Purple Heart after sustaining significant wounds during Operation Hickory. Ric was treated in a field hospital for approximately four weeks and then returned to combat. He was awarded his second and third Purple Hearts on September 20th, and September 25th, 1967 after suffering wounds at Con Thien ("The Hill of Angels").

KSV IN THE NEWS

'EVERY NIGHT, IT'S THERE:' VETERAN CREDITS FAITH FOR SURVIVAL IN VIETNAM

Greg Larry glarry@times-news.com

CUMBERLAND — On a warm summer day in 1967, Cpl. Ron Gulbronson found himself on his back and badly injured with dead comrades all around during a mortar attack on his unit in Vietnam.



Gulbronson recounted that dreadful day when he lay on the ground screaming for God's help as his company was being decimated outside the Khe Sanh Combat Base, a Marine Corps outpost used during the Vietnam War.

Gulbronson was the featured speaker Friday at a Veterans Day breakfast sponsored by Calvary Christian Academy in Cresaptown.

Dan Thompson, CCA administrator, said students were asked to invite family or friends that served in the military. Nearly 40 veterans from all branches, ranging from ages 32 to 93, attended.

Lola McGann sang the national anthem and three students — Anna Westrom, Jacob Green and Reagan Getz — gave short speeches extolling democracy and patriotism.

"War is terrible," said Gulbronson, a Purple Heart medal recipient and Mineral County, West Virginia, resident. Purple Hearts honor service members wounded or killed in combat.

After enlisting in the Marine Corps in 1966, Gulbronson found himself stationed in central Vietnam at Khe Sanh near the border with Laos.

"It was 55 years ago is when it hit me," he said. "It was called Khe Sanh, but we called it the butcher shop."

Gulbronson had been elevated to squad leader and for a couple of months his unit did patrols, fighting to take hills around the Khe Sanh air field.

"The first couple months we took three hills and lost 198 (men) and 400 wounded. I didn't get a scratch," he said.

Then toward the end of June 1967 things changed. His unit had just lost 25 men after spending a month on hill 881.

"We had just come off patrol," he said. "A sergeant says to me, 'I hate to tell you this but we're surrounded.' I said, 'Shut up sarge. I got a bunch of new kids with me; they're scared to death now.

"We were surrounded up there by thousands and thousands of NVA (North Vietnamese Army) and there were 600 of us," Gulbronson said, adding that he held up a pocket size version of the New Testament and said, "Thank God I had one of these with me in Vietnam."

Two days later — 1 a.m. on June 27, 1967 — the NVA attack began.

"There was no concertina wire and no mines. It was the east side of the air strip is where it all came from," Gulbronson said. "Somebody started screaming, 'incoming.'"

He said the attack began with mortar rounds, landing in groups of three consecutive rounds. At first they weren't close, but the NVA gunners were dialing in his squad's foxholes, he said.

"Then they put one right in the bomb crater five feet from me," said Gulbronson. His knees were injured in the blast.

"A Marine was screaming his hand was gone. The mortars kept coming. Another of the men had his face blown off," said Gulbronson. "He grabbed my arms and I fell straight back in the hole with him laying on top of me. He was a big boy. We are face to face and I'm trying not to drink his blood.

"I looked up and there was Lt. Larry Bolger ... his head was split open. Then I hear boom, they put another one in ... the exact same place. I couldn't believe I was alive after that second mortar."

Although he didn't know it at the time, Gulbronson had badly damaged knees, a lacerated leg, shrapnel in his head, obscured vision and perforations to his lungs and pericardium.

"I pulled my New Testament out. I was in and out of consciousness," he said. "I started screaming out, 'God help me.' ... The best explanation I could think of was my spirit was out of my body. I was real close to death."

Gulbronson gained consciousness as he was being carried away on a four-wheeler bed. They were suppose to be taking me to medical but mortars are still landing," he said. "Something hit me in the shoulder and knocked me off the thing I was on. My foot was hooked on the four-wheeler and it was dragging me. I hollered from them to stop. That was the last thing I remembered."

Gulbronson was ultimately taken by helicopter to a field medical facility with an operating room.

"A chopper came in and they said there was room for one more. They threw me in there. I thought I was going to die right there," he said.

In fact, a Catholic priest came in to administer his last rights.

"I said I was Protestant. The doctor said shut up every little bit helps," Gulbronson said.

Medical personnel stopped his leg from bleeding.

"Then the doctor looked at me and said, 'Your having trouble breathing.' He said turn on your side. No anesthesia, they stuck a tube in back but they missed. He said turn on your side again and take a breath. He pushed the tube between my ribs and the blood started draining out."

Gulbronson subsequently underwent several surgeries. He has recovered but has lingering medical issues.

"Some don't get shot or blown up but they are injured inside," he said. "You don't have to get wounded to develop a disability. Just going though it people come back with PTSD.

"It was 50 years ago but it was like it was today," he said. "Every night, it's there.

"I give all the glory and thanks to God," Gulbronson said. "Get yourself a New Testament. It takes everybody working together or I wouldn't be here. I love you all. I do."

A LITTLE HELP NEEDED FROM WEBSITE

I was a Hospital Corpsman with "The Walking Dead" beginning in November 1967 at Con Thien; then at Camp Evans; then at Khe Sanh from late January until I was wounded on April 16th. I returned to 1-9 at Cam Lo, and I was there until I was assigned to 3rd Medical Battalion in June 1968. This is a long shot, but I thought I would ask if anyone had pictures of Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines that they would share -- either at Khe Sanh or any other period as indicated above.



OBIT

SSGT MERLE W. MORITZ, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, ECHO CO 2/26 HILL 861A

Merle William Moritz, 83, of Leesburg, Florida and formerly of Oregon, Ohio and Clay Center, Ohio, passed away Monday, October 2, 2023, in Tavares, FL surrounded by his family.



Merle was born in Martin, Ohio on July 14, 1940, to Clarence and Marie (Baker) Moritz. On January 7, 1967, he married Linda Martin and she preceded him in death on January 12, 2003. He later married Rita O'Neil on July 28, 2007, and she survives. From 1958 to 1968, Merle served his country in the US Marine Corps, where he served as a staff sergeant. Merle was a longtime member of the American Legion, VFW, Lou Diamond Marine League, and the Khe Sanh Veterans Reunion. Merle worked as a truck driver for Duff Trucking as a driver for 28 years, retiring in 1982. He was later employed with Goulet Lawnmower Repair of Oregon for over 20 years. He was a longtime member of St. John Lutheran Church, Williston, where he was active in the Christian Community Life committee. For 12 years, he was a member of Clay Center Village Council and served on the Ottawa County Senior Fair Board from 1984-1989.

Merle found his true passion in working with the young men of Boy Scout Troop 160 in Millbury, where he has served as Scoutmaster since 1979. He has been a part of many committees at the local and district level, including, Round Table, Camping Chairman, and as a Cubmaster. Merle received numerous awards, including, the Silver Beaver, District Merritt Award, and the Lutheran Lamb Award. Merle is proud to have helped over fifty young men earn the rank of Eagle Scout.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife of 16 years, Rita; children, Lisa (Daniel) Kessler, Christopher (Nikki) Moritz; grandchildren Andrew and Evan Kessler, and Madisyn Moritz: step-children, Michael (Cindy) LaChance, Susan McKnight, and Debra (Mike) Beczynski; 21 bonus grandchildren; 17 bonus great-grandchildren; and siblings, Marilyn Opfer and Bruce Moritz. He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Linda; and siblings, Wayne Moritz and Rosalyn Novotney.

Funeral Services were held on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. at St. John Lutheran Church, 21140 W Toledo St, Williston, OH 43468 Interment followed at Allen Township Cemetery, Williston.

OBIT

JAMES HENRY WILLIAMS, USMC KHE SANH VETERAN

James Henry Williams passed away peacefully at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Maryland on Saturday, September 2, 2023. He was born at home in Snow Hill, NC, on Friday, December 9, 1947, to the late Roosevelt Williams, Sr, and Annie Mae Forbes Williams. He was baptized at an early age at the Washington Branch Free Will Baptist Church. James attended Greene County Public Schools, graduating from South Greene High School in 1966. He was a member of the Greene County Training School-South Greene High School National Alumni Association for more than 50 years.

In January of 1967, James enlisted in the United States Marine Corps (USMC). He received basic training at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, NC. As a Field Radio Operator, he served the United States (US) during the Vietnam War where he engaged in the Battle of Khe Sanh. James was awarded many decorations, medals, badges, commendations, citations, and campaign ribbons for his gallantry and

fortitude.

He received an Honorable Discharge from the USMC in November 1972.

James made his home in Washington, DC. He was employed by the DC Transit bus system which later folded in the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). He was a bus operator until completing studies at TESST School in Hyattsville, MD in October 1980. Upon receipt of his degree in Solid State Engineering, James was promoted to the subway system where he was responsible for upgrading and maintaining the system's components. James was a 50+ year Member of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689. He retired from WMATA in June 2003, after 31 years of service. Post retirement, he then returned to school, becoming a real estate agent, working in real estate sales and as a general contractor.



In October 1978, James met Janie Roberts who became his closest and dearest friend. They were united in holy matrimony at Union Baptist Church in Vienna, VA on August 8, 1986. This year (2023) marked James and Janie's 37th Anniversary.

James was predeceased by his parents, Annie Mae Forbes Williams, and Roosevelt Williams Sr, 4 brothers, John Bridges, David Williams, Roosevelt "Billy" Williams, Jr, Robert Williams, and a sister Doris Williams-Hatten.

Along with his loving wife Janie, James leaves to cherish his memories: 3 daughters, Michelle Robinson (Todd), Dallas, GA, Lavonne Davis and Denise Jackson, Washington DC; 3 sons, Muhammad Abdul-Saboor (Nakeshia), Oxon Hill, MD, Malik Abdul-Sabur (Michelle), Suitland, MD and Jamar Davis, Washington, DC. He also leaves 3 sisters, Beatrice Tyson, Newark, NJ; Patricia Williams, Forestville, MD; and Erline Harvin (Harry) Durham, NC, 2 brothers, Alvin Williams, Englewood, NJ, Donald Williams (Brenda), Grifton, NC, 5 grandchildren and a host of other family and friends.

Services for James were held at Alexander Pope Funeral Home, 5538 Marlboro Pike, Forestville MD on Saturday, September 16, 2023.

OBIT

MICHAEL O. WANZER, USMC,
KHE SANH VETERAN

Passed away peacefully on Friday, October 6, after a short and brave battle with lung cancer. Mike was born on February 19, 1947, to Ollie and Ethel Wanzer in Enid, OK. He graduated from Enid High School in 1965. In 1967, he joined the Marines, earned Corporal rank, and served in the infantry during the Vietnam War. He participated in the



battle of Khe Sanh and was later wounded in combat and commended with 2 Purple Hearts.

help someone in need.

Mike was preceded in death by his parents, Ollie and Ethel Wanzer of Enid, OK, and sister, Linda Ogletree of Enid, OK. Mike is survived by his wife of 46 years, Debi Wanzer; daughter, Carly Moguin and son-in-law Dan Moguin, and grandsons Ian, Drew, and Grant Moguin of Edmond, OK; son, Beau Wanzer of Chicago, IL; brother, Don Wanzer and sister-in-law Debby of Enid, OK; brother, Chris and sister-in-law Debbie of Enid, OK; sister, Patty Clift of Watonga, OK; and many nieces, nephews, high school friends, and former coworkers whom he cherished.

A memorial service honoring Mike was held on Saturday, October 21st, at 10:00 a.m. at First United Methodist Church of Edmond. A graveside service was held on Sunday, October 22, at 2:00 p.m. at Memorial Park Cemetery in Enid, OK, and included Marine Corps Honors.

OBIT

ROGER IRONS, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN MATCU-62

Roger passed away September 2, 2023 at Hilltop Healthcare & Rehabilitation Center. Born August 25, 1947 in Johnstown, son of the late William and Esther (Wissinger) Irons. Preceded in death by sister, Janice "Jan" Hershiser; nephew, William "Billy" Hershiser; great-nephew, Robert "Bo" Moschgat Jr. Survived by loving son, Broderick Irons and girlfriend Amy; daughter Rebecca "Becky" (Albright) and husband Robert "Rob" Madison; niece, Kristin Clemens; great nephews, Paul and Trey; great niece, Madelyn; and best friend, Dana Sklinar.

Roger was a proud U.S. Marine veteran. Roger was raised in the Belmont neighborhood of Johnstown, PA. he placed 4th in Plymouth's National Troubleshooting Contest in 1964 while attending Johnstown High School, showcasing his mechanical ingenuity from a young age. He enlisted in the USMC at 17 and trained as an air traffic controller, the duties of which he performed with MATCU-62 in Vietnam during the siege of Khe Sanh and at MCAS Yuma, AZ.

Roger developed a passion for gourmet cooking and entered the industry in San Diego, CA after serving the Marines at Yuma, AZ. There, he worked in and managed fine dining establishments including The



Hotel InterContinental, Ten Downing Evening Fare, Bali Hai, and El Torito. His love for nature and skiing took him to the mountain towns of June Lake and Big Bear California, before Treasure Lake, PA. His ceaseless entrepreneurial spirit led him to found businesses such as The Sundance Saloon, One For All Promotions, and Precise Marketing Concepts. He created his own patch of heaven atop a mountain near Windber which he dubbed "Blue Sky Ranch", where he raised his son and the two of them enjoyed the summer crickets, tree frogs, and sunsets. An avid handyman and pursuer of projects, he built his dream home there as a monument to the peaceful solitude he enjoyed with the trees, deer, turkeys, and his cat, Smokey. Roger explored the world, becoming familiar with the people and natural beauty of Singapore, Japan, California's national parks, Washington's Puget Sound, British Columbia, Banff National Park and the Canadian Rockies, the Swiss Alps, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, China, Las Vegas, the Alaskan coast, Idaho, Arizona, Niagara Falls, Puerto Rico, Colorado, and the southeastern U.S.

He collected maps, friends, and stories at each bend in the road. He loved skiing, sailing, hiking, cooking gourmet meals and confections, French Bordeaux, good Scotch, rare steak, barbecue, listening to the Blues, western movies, the Pittsburgh Steelers, and a good cigar. He loved riding motorcycles, driving sports cars, and weekend trips for business and pleasure. But, his favorite place was in the company of those he loved. His favorite activity was that which brought him closer to those friends and relatives. And his favorite meal was the one he was cooking with you.

His sense of humor was enduring; at times good, at times dark, at times sarcastic, but his smile and laugh were contagious. Never one to judge, he chose his words truthfully to suit the situation. He lived his life with fierce integrity, and with unyielding loyalty to his friends and family. He will be missed dearly. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial donations be sent to Vietnam Vets of America at https://vva.org/donate.

OBIT

JAMES E. PAYNE, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

UTICA – James Edward Payne, aged 80, departed this life on Thursday, October 5, 2023.

James was born in Utica on October 26, 1942. James attended Utica Free Academy, and was a member of the UFA track team. Dealing with the many challenges that marked his early life, he displayed an inner fortitude that allowed him to succeed. After high school James became an upholsterer by trade and was employed for many years at Steats and Miller

In 1966, James was drafted into the Army but chose to volunteer the draft and enlist in the United States Marine Corps. He started recruit training at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, where his shooting skills earned him the title of rifle expert and was placed on the regimental rifle team where the team competed against other military teams. After being stationed at Treasure Island in California, James was deployed to Vietnam as an artillery specialist with the 26th Marines under command of Captain William H. Dabney. James part of the 1968 Tet Offensive's Battle of Khe Sanh on Hill 881S always saying they were the ones who started it. James earned the following medals and decorations: The Purple Heart, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Presidential Unit Citation, and the Good Conduct Medal. James was one of the few survivors of the 77-day battle, which later became the subject of historical books like "Khe Sanh: Siege in the Clouds" and "Valley of Decision: The Siege of Khe Sanh." James took pride in the knowledge that he and his fellow 881 marines would be remembered for generations to come.

James was an avid outdoorsman and would find solace in being alone. James was also a regular competitor at Utica Rome Speedway drag races and al-



ways prided himself on knowing how to"shave the lights" It was there he met his wife Candace "Candy" Cariglio. They were blessed with two children. Throughout their marriage Candace was always there for James. James was also a competitive muzzleloader competing across New York State and won many first place medals using his flintlock rifles named "Stonewall"and "Death Wind." He was truly a good father, protector and provider. To James his family was most important and the values he taught his children and grandchildren will always be remembered.

James was very knowledgeable and held a deep interest in American History. His favorite subjects were the Civil War and Word War II, particularly marines in the Pacific. His knowledge and passion for the subjects were evident to all who knew him. James loved trout fishing on the Lansing Kill and partridge and duck hunting at Chepatchet and the Mohawk. When his daughter Jamie was young, she always told her dad before he left to only "shoot the boy ducks." James did his best.

Left to cherish his memory are his devoted wife, Candace; his son, Jeremy Payne and his wife, Kimberly Wilson; his daughter, Jamie, for whom he had a special bond and her husband, Christopher Wilczek; and his beloved grandchildren, Dahlia Ann, and Daniel James Wilczek. He is additionally survived by several siblings. James was predeceased by his older brother, Stephen D. Payne, who passed away in March 10, 2022, with whom he shared a special bond since childhood.

OBIT

"JOHNNY BILL" W. O'NEILL, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

John "Johnny Bill" W. O'Neill 75, of Duluth passed away peacefully with family by his side on April 15, 2023.

The first of six children, Johnny was born on March 15, 1948, to John and Joan O'Neill. He was a 1966 graduate of Duluth Cathedral High School.

Johnny grew up on Park Point and loved every aspect of it. He would take his speedboat to church every Sunday, and the rest of the family would take the car. From playing and coaching, hockey, and baseball, to rowing in Lake Superior. He spent many years at The Duluth Rowing Club under coach Henning Peterson. Becoming a quarter mile-



dash champion. Among the many things that Johnny excelled at, he was the most phenomenal on water skis, a real treat to watch. Besides his love for sports and the outdoors, Johnny also had a love for fast cars, and pretty girls.

Shortly after graduation in 1966, Johnny started his studies at UMD. Although he enjoyed his studies, he wanted to fulfill a lifelong dream of becoming a Marine. Johnny enlisted in the USMC and followed his Uncle Jerome's footsteps. Before his selfless service to our country began, Johnny married his love, Ruth Ann Saker, and together they had 2 sons, Patrick, and Ryan.

In 1968, Johnny was sent to Vietnam as a Marine. Part of the mission he served is known as The Battle of Khe Sanh, when they were surrounded for 77 days with solid gunfire 24/7. While in Vietnam, Johnny was injured twice, and received 2 Purple Hearts. Upon his return home to the US, Johnny continued his service in the USMC, serving out of Coronado Military Base in San Diego California. Johnny would learn later he would face many challenges in life because of getting sprayed with agent orange while serving. After his Honorable Discharge from service, Johnny and Ruth returned home to Duluth.

Johnny worked at UPS as a driver, and spent his time fishing, camping, and hunting with his boys. The love he had for his sons was unmatched.
Over the course of many years, he tried to fight the signs and symptoms of MS. Despite any of the challenges he faced, he continued to say that if he had a chance to do it all over again, he would, in a heartbeat.

Over the past 10 years, Johnny was so lucky to live at the Minnesota Veterans Home in Silver Bay MN. He made countless friendships, touched the lives of all the staff, and shared in the memories of all who lived there. He is most famous for his sense of humor and quick wit.

Johnny is proceeded in death by, his loving parents, John and Joan O'Neill, his wife Ruth, son Ryan and brothers, Tommy, and Kevin.

Johnny is survived by his son Patrick. His faithfully supportive and loving siblings, Danny (Julie) O'Neill and Margie (Billy) Maloney. Nieces and nephews, Shawn (Krista) O'Neill and their sons, William, Matthew and Brandon, Erin Boit and her children, Ian and Mya, Lindsey (Olie) Hedge, and their sons Oak and Maverick, Britney (Michael) Boyum and Madilyn Maloney.

Visitation was held on Wednesday May 3, 2023, at Dougherty Funeral Home 600 E 2nd St, Duluth MN 55805 from 5pm to 7pm. Funeral service were held at St. Mary's Star of the Sea Church 325 E 3rd St, Duluth, Thursday, May 4, 2023, at 10am. Burial at the Minnesota Veterans Cemetery, 4777 Hwy 53, Saginaw, MN to follow at 2pm, with full Military Honors.

OBIT

PAUL R. ASHBURN, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

Paul Richard Ashburn, 75, passed away peacefully in the arms of his loving wife and in the presence of his children and eldest grandson in Kingwood, WV on October 15, 2023. He was born on November 11, 1947 in Morgantown, WV, the only son of the late Frank and Pauline (Funk) Ashburn. He was a member of the Methodist Church. He spent his childhood in the Wiles Hill neighborhood of Morgantown, graduating from Morgantown High School in 1966. Upon graduation, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, where he was assigned to Company A, Third Shore Party Battalion, Third Marine Division. During his time in the Marines, Paul served in the Vietnam War, fighting in the



Siege at Khe Sanh. While at Khe Sanh, he earned the Navy Achievement Medal due to his exemplary dedication in the battlefield and achieved the rank of Sergeant. Paul was also the recipient of the Purple Heart.

After being honorably discharged, he became a proprietor and entrepreneur, embarking in a 42 year business partnership with Ed Cogar by opening Ashco-A-Corporation. Together they hold a patent for the design of a recirculating sand wastewater treatment system. Paul also served on the West Virginia Sewage Advisory Board. Paul was an avid outdoorsman with an appreciation for the scenic landscapes of the American West. This appreciation led him on many deer, elk and antelope hunting expeditions with his friends, hunting buddies and Marine Corps comrades.

Paul was survived by his wife of 45 years Barbara Goff Ashburn of Morgantown, WV; son Aaron Ashburn (Bev), of Harrisonburg, VA and daughter April Cochran (Don), of Saint Peters, MO; grandchildren Cheyenne Rivera (Johnny) of Shenandoah, VA, Cody Ashburn of Harrisonburg, VA and Benjamin Cochran of Saint Peters, MO; great-grandson Asher Rivera of Shenandoah, VA; sisters Linda Pocock of Mathews, VA and Brenda Cogar (Ed) of Fort Martin, WV; sister-in-law Patty Bucklew (Steve) of Morgantown, WV, as well as many nieces, nephews and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his sister Alice Ann Ashburn Cogar of Morgantown, WV, brother-in-law George Pocock of Mathews, VA and in-laws Walter and Josie Goff of Lake Charles, LA.

Visitation was held at Fred L. Jenkins Funeral Home, 10 S. High St, Morgantown, WV on Wednesday, October 18, 2023 from 10am-12pm until the time of service at 12pm with Pastor Steve Finn officiating. Cremation will follow the service

OBIT

S/SGT MAX H. FRIEDLANDER USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN , 17TH ITT

Staff Sergeant Max H. Friedlander (RET). 1933-2023. 23 years in USMC. One Tour in Korea. Two Tours in Viet Nam. He was a POW Interrogator and also worked some Special Operations assignments under Colonel Lownds and General Westmoreland. He survived a helicopter crash and was present at Khe Sanh for the entire 77-day siege. He is survived by his son David Friedlander in Las Vegas, NV. Thank you. David







TOM WOLF, STILL A LOVING COUPLE



THE FINK CLAN

OBIT

HARRY J. LA VAN, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

LaVan, Harry J. Age 73, of Richfield, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loved ones, on April 8, 2022. Harry was a 0311 infantryman in the Marine Corps, served two tours in the Vietnam War, and fought in the Battle of Khe Sanh. He is preceded in death by wives, Donna and Diane LaVan; and daughter, Kimberly. He will be deeply missed by his granddaughter, Alaya Sadek and her fiancé Tommy Arcand; many family members, friends, and beloved dogs, Maggie and Nipsey. A visitation was held on Saturday, April 23, 2022 at Washburn-McReavy Edina Chapel (5000 W. 50th St.) at 10AM with memorial service to follow at 11AM.



OBIT

MICHAEL L. MCKITRICK, USA, USSF KHE SANH VETERAN

Michael L Mckitrick, born July 15, 1943, to William and Louise Mckitrick died September 24, 2023, at home following an illness.

Mick served 4 tours in Vietnam as a member of the 1st, 5th and 7th Special Forces (Green Berets) Mac V-Sog and a member of the Decade Club. Medals include the Soldiers Medal (for heroism), Bronze Star with V device (for Valor) Army Commendation Medal with V Device (for Valor), Navy Marine Corp Presidential Unit (for Khe Sanh), Good Conduct Medal, Master Parachutist Wings, Combat Infantry Badge, Vietnamese Parachutist Wings and Chinese Parachutist Wings.

Survived by his wife Pam, daughter Michele, siblings Jan, Steve, Scott, Pat, and Brian, and grandchildren Christopher, Phillip, Andrew, Elissa, Alex, and Justice. Preceded in death by daughter Andrea. As per his wishes, cremation has taken place and there will be no services.

What is a Veteran? A "Veteran" - whether active duty, discharged, retired, or reserve - is someone who, at one point in his/her life, wrote a blank check made payable to "The United States of America," for an amount of "up to, and including his life." That is honor. And there are way too many people in this country today, who no longer understand that fact. - Author Unknown







TOM BUONO & LOVELY YOUNG WIFE



Brother, Ernie Husted, has and always will be my Hero. He was Recon at Khe Sanh when I was a senior in high school (1968). Was blessed that we got to spend this Christmas with him in Ohio. Thinking of all that were there and wishing you all peace and fond wishes for the upcoming year.



ROD FINK

SEVEN REASONS TO STAY ALIVE





KHE SANH VETERAN IN THE NEWS: RUSSELL TURNER A CO 1/26

Marching on

Arnold Veterans Day Parade set for Nov. 10

By Tony Krausz
For the Leader

About 150 people will march in the Arnold Veterans Day Parade with most of those expected to attend a luncheon the Fox High School Student Council will hold after the procession, said Larry Boyce, Veterans Commission member.

"We have a pretty good turnout lined up for it," Boyce said. "It is shaping up pretty well."

The parade is scheduled to start at 11 a.m. Friday, Nov. 10. The parade is organized by the Parks and Recreation Department and Veterans Commission.

"We always look forward to this," said Reese Mullins, 18, a Fox High senior and Student Council president. "Veterans Day is such an important day, and we feel good being able to celebrate the people who have helped us."

Paradegoers are asked to gather at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2211 Tenbrook Road, where the parade will start. Church members will serve coffee and doughnuts starting at 10 a.m.

The parade will travel from the church's parking lot down Tenbrook Road, across Jeffco Boulevard to the Fox C-6 School District schools campus, 751 Jeffco Blvd.

The veterans will then circle the campus, which is home to the Fox elementary, middle and high schools, as well as Rickman Auditorium, the Central Office and the Bridges Alternative School.

The procession will end near the flagpole outside Bridges, where a wreath ceremony will be held.

"We will have horses leading the parade," said Boyce, who served two years in the Army after being drafted in 1967 during the Vietnam War. "There is an antique firetruck and an antique Jeep expected to be in the parade. There also will be trollies available for veterans to ride in.

"The school really appreciates the parade, with the kids always out there, and we really appreciate what they do for us too."

Following the ceremony at the flagpole, veterans are invited to the Fox C-6 Service Center, 849 Jeffco Blvd., where the Student Council will serve lunch and dessert and will show a video that senior Ryker Bahr created to honor veterans.

Mullins, who is Boyce's granddaughter, said the school's band and choir members will perform for the veterans.

"It is moving to have (the veterans) go through our whole campus," Mullins said. "It is so much fun watching the elementary students going nuts bouncing around, and the veterans are throwing out candy. Everyone has signs and are dressed in red, white and blue."

Mullins said she drove a vehicle in the parade last year, and she is looking forward to this year's event, even though it will be a bittersweet moment.

"With my grandpa being a veteran, I have always enjoyed him coming to the campus, meeting my friends and telling them his story," she said. "With this being my senior year, it may be the last time I get to be with him for this, but I'm sure he will continue to be in future parades."

For more information about the parade, call the Arnold Parks and Recreation Department at 636-282-2380.



Ron Rigdon photos

Arla Tweety served as grand marshal of the 2022 Arnold Veterans Day Parade.



Horses will lead this year's parade.



Like last year, Fox band and choir students will perform.

Veterans Memorial

A Veterans Memorial has been constructed near the gazebo outside the Arnold Recreation Center, 1695 Missouri State Road.

The memorial is a large star made out of paving bricks in the center of a circle with one of the star points made of colored bricks that give the appearance of a waving American flag. Five benches are placed around the circle with the insignia of each military branch on one of the benches.

The memorial also features a flagpole that had been in the center of a police memorial outside Arnold City Hall. The flagpole was removed from the City Hall display when Arnold replaced it with three poles in November 2022.

"It is good to see that completed," Boyce said.

City officials said the memorial cost about $40,000 to construct. The Veterans Commission has held various fundraising events to cover the construction cost.

The latest event was a trivia night on Oct. 21, which raised about $8,000, bringing the total amount of donations for the memorial to about $26,000, Parks and Recreation Department Director Dave Crutchley said.

"We had about 190 (people) at the trivia night," Boyce said. "We had a full house. It was a big turnout."



KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS CONTINUED

ARNOLD IMPERIAL LEADER



McNabb

Tim McNabb of Arnold sent in a portrait college he created for his grandfather. Arthur Thompson of Virginia. Arthur Served on a submarine tender ship in World War II and was involved in atomic testing, eventually earning the rank of chief petty officer.

HERRIN





Charlene Herrin, 63, of Arnold sent in a 1994 picture of herself in Thailand for a training exercise from last month Originally from Onalaska, Wis., Herrin enlisted as a battalion journalist in 1978 during her last year of high school.

She worked as a public affairs officer in the Wisconsin National Guard while in college, then joined he Army. She served for 20 years **and retired as a major, mostly working** in personnel management.

Her time in the military took her across the United States, and she spent three years in Germany and three in the Netherlands.

"I'm a proud wife of another vet-**eran, Shawn Herrin, who also served in the Amy Reserves," Herrin said.** "Together, we raised four children."

Now, she is a member of the American Legion and the Arnold Veterans Commission.

" SALUTE TO VETERANS"

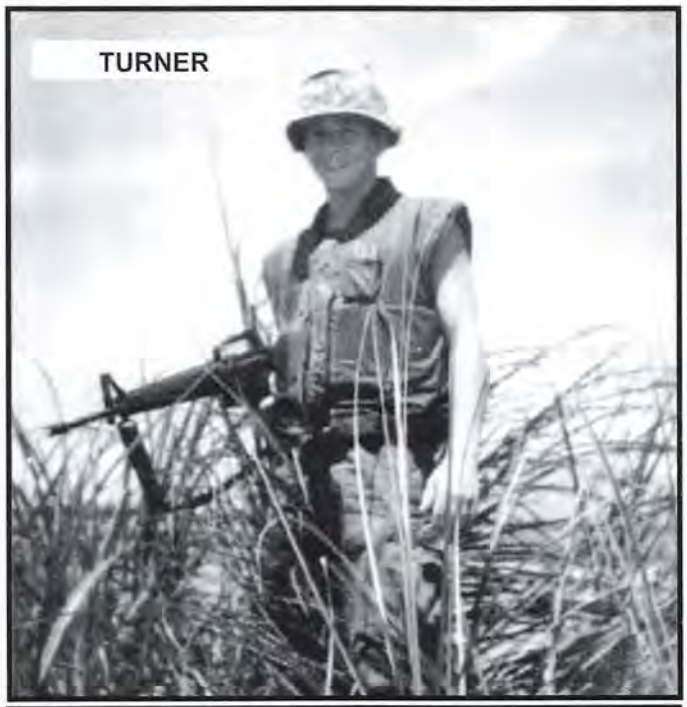

Russell Turner, 76 of Arnold, seen in this April 1967 in Photo at Khe Sanh Combat Base in Vietnam , was a Corporal and served in the Marine Corps from 1966 to 1968. Turner is a survivor of the Siege of Khe Sanh and Hill Fights and is currently the President of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association



"RUN BABY RUN"... THE UNTOLD STORY & HN WILLIAM O. BALLEW, USN

By Craig W. Tourte
HQ Btry 1/13

It was quite a few years ago and in response to one of the little. stories I had written on the board that I first received an email from HN William 0. Ballew (Doc Ballew). I apparently had written something about having served with H.Q. 1/13 which caught Doc's attention. He was one of the Corpsman who served in the 1st Battalion / 13th Marine Artillery Regiment Battalion Aid Station (BAS) during the siege at Khe Sanh Combat Base, south of the DMZ. Through the years we emailed back and forth and spoke a number of times on the telephone. He recalled the time I arrived at the BAS, sick to my stomach after sharing a meal with a few of the local Montagnard people while guarding the drop zone located on the West side of Khe Sanh outside of the perimeter wire. I was prescribed Compazine to settle my stomach and sent on my way. A few hours later I was carried back to the BAS on a stretcher curled up in a fetal position, unable to speak or walk due to an allergic reaction. Doc Ballew recalled that he and Doctor Lasker gave me a shot to counter-act the Compazine as they discussed my rather odd condition.

Through various emails and telephone conversations we had a great time recalling those we knew during our time at Khe Sanh. He was instrumental in my locating Sergeant Michael Secli who he had spoken with sometime after returning home. We recalled Gunnery Sergeant Emory Newman, the rather well nourished Sergeant of Cooks and Sergeant Richard (Fitz) Fitzpatrick who always seemed to find a cigar to chew on as he ran in a slightly crouched posture from bunker to bunker ... come to think of it, we all ran in that position.

As I recall there were four who staffed the Battalion Aid Station, Doctor Harold Lasker, Hospital Corpsmen William Ballew, Jeffry Campbell and Walter (Wally) Schlech. After returning from Vietnam, Hospital Corpsman Wally Schlech became Dr Walter F. Schlech III, MD, Professor of Medicine, Microbiology and Immunology at Dalhousie University, in Halifax, Nova Scotia (Red Clay Magazine, Fall-Winter 2008, Issue 71,"Khe Sanh Corpsman to Physician").

Dr. Harold Lasker served in the United States Navy from 1966 to 1968, and was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, a Bronze Start with "V", National Defense Medal, two Presidential Unit Citations and a Purple Heart. Dr. Lasker spent twenty years as Medical Director of Brunswick Hospital in Amityville, New York, eleven years as Staff Psychiatrist at South Oaks Hospital and was a member of the staff of New Island Hospital in the Department of Medicine in Rockville Center for fourteen years. He died suddenly on February 20, 2005.

Navy Corpsman Jeffrey Campbell has not been seen nor heard from by anyone who he served with since the Siege at Khe Sanh. His survival and /or whereabouts are currently unknown. "HN William 0. Ballew USN"

It was with shock and great sadness I read in the obituary section of Red Clay Magazine the following: "HN William 0. Ballew USN, H.Q. BTRY, 1/13 BAS, KHE SANH VETERAN, passed away 11 June, 2009.

We all walk down a broken road ... our twists and turns in life distract us. I had not heard from Doc Ballew for some time and had recently thought about emailing him to see how he was doing. In 2006 we had a discussion regarding a tape recording that was made by someone in the Regimental Headquarters area which contained the sounds of incoming. On this tape were the once again distressing and familiar sounds of rounds leaving the large enemy artillery emplacements at Co Roe, Laos, screaming towards the combat base. Just prior to impact a voice is heard to yell "Run Baby, Run!" Doc Ballew told me - and now I don't recall who he said that was - that someone had put that tape on CD and he asked me if I would like a copy. He said I could make copies and give them away at the reunion if I wanted.

I reviewed this email from him on July 25, 2006, 1605 Hrs:

"Hi Craig, We must have done everything right because I received your email OK. I had to call you about this damned old cassette that I had forgotten about. The original tape was an old reel-to-reel recorder that some of the guys used in place of writing letters. My wife and I even considered buying a tape recorder at one time, but nixed it after R&R in Hawaii. Our senses were numbed to anything except matters at hand for a fast five days. If I recall the recording was made during that bitch of a day that we took over one thousand rounds of incoming.

If you remember the Battalion Aid Station was a short distance from the communication hooch, and one of the guys gave it to one of the other Corpsman, either Doc Schlech or Doc Campbell. I discovered it when I received my foot locker from Camp Hansen where it had been stored in the WIA storage area. I forgot all about it until I mentioned it to a G.E. engineer who was working on my x-ray unit at the NIH. He said he had an old reel-to-reel recorder and would play it and put it on a regular cassette. He added the bit of music by 'Cogborn' just as filler. I realized when I found the cassette this past weekend during clean-up; it may have some historical importance to the Khe Sanh Veterans group. I will keep the original reel-to-reel tape until I hear from you after you receive the cassette. I know that it would be a miracle if the original is in good condition. Some guy with knowledge of such things could play it and record it on a CD."

Same date - email - 1700 Hrs.

"The tape is on the way. Let me know if any of the guys want to do anything with the original.'

In late July 2006 I received the tape recording on CD from Doc Ballew. It was housed in the typical clear plastic case; on the cover was the photograph of a destroyed bunker and the words, "Sounds of the Siege at Khe Sanh Viet Nam - Feb 23, 1968." I put the CD in my player and pushed "Play". I listened intently for six minutes until I got to the part where a voice is heard to say 'Run Baby, Run!' and then I turned it off I cannot express the feeling I had when I listened to it. What can I say, what words can I use to describe original. "the sounds of the rounds leaving the enemy artillery and the very distinctive and still all too familiar sound of rockets and artillery rounds screaming over head and impacting the base? I shut off the player and placed the CD on a shelf in my office. I have moved three times since I received that CD from Doc Ballew sometime in late July 2006, each time placing it in clear sight. Always meaning to listen again and write a story, a story that I knew I would someday have to write, but for reasons that are clear only to a few, I had been unable to listen to it again or reference it in any of the hundreds of stories I have written about this episode in our lives.

Until today. After I read the obituary of Doc Ballew I thought I owed him that much. I had to listen, to hear it all the way through - I had to listen to it for him, for you and for this story. It was time - before it got to be too late for me, for us or for history. So here I am, four years after receiving the CD from Doc Ballew and forty two years after the event. I won't describe it again, I'll say that the CD lasted for ten minutes and that seven minutes into the tape a voice is heard to say "Michael here comes some more!" In those ten minutes I counted one hundred and eighty seven sounds of rounds leaving the barrels of the guns of the enemy and artillery rounds and rockets impacting onto the base. When I was writing the "Khe Sanh Corpsman to Physician" story, I corresponded with Dr. Schlech about the CD. He responded that he also had a copy of the tape and that it had been recorded near a bunker towards Headquarters (First Battalion, Thirteen Marines) by two Marines on one of the days during a lot of incoming by rocket and artillery. The "Run Baby, Run!" voice was directed at someone heading down a bunker but Dr. Schlech was not sure who that person was. Dr. Schlech did say that he thought that February 23rd could have been the date it was recorded.

It is too late for me to call my old friend William Ballew. It is too late to share this story with him, and it is too late to say goodbye... to say thank you for being there for so many of us. But it is not too late to say that we who served at Khe Sanh during that terrible time will never forget those who risked their own lives to save so many of ours. I am going to put that CD back on the shelf in my office, I am not sure I'll play it again, but now every time I look over on the shelf at the little plastic CD case, I'll think of Doc Ballew - and that is a good thing.



L/R Craig Tourte, Edward Lawida, William Poland, Friends at Khe Sanh

OBIT

EDWARD C. SCHENCK JR. USA, KHE SANH VETERAN, AMERICAL GOER TRANS

Edward C. Schenck, Jr., 76, passed away on November 16, 2023 with family at his side. Ed was born on September 16, 1947, in Galesburg, IL, the first son of Edward C. Schenck and Bernidette Carlson Schenck. Ed met the love of his life, Bonnie (Stoneking) Schenck, while attending Abingdon High School where they were voted homecoming King and Queen their senior year prior to graduation in1965. They were wedded in marriage on April 3, 1966. Ed was drafted into the US Army in 1966 where he served our country in Germany and later volunteered for Vietnam where he was a Combat Engineer .



Ed Received several awards serving our country including National Defense Service Medal Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Member, Sharpshooter, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Leaf and three overseas bars. Ed was a member of several organizations which include being a life member (50+ continuous years) of the Abingdon, IL, American Legion Post 381, a lifetime member of the WA, member of the Galesburg VFW, and KHE SANH Veterans Association, Inc.

Ed was a past member of thr Abingdon Fire Prevention District where he served as Captain, EMT for the Abingdon community, Abingdon Fall Festival Association, Charter member of the Abingdon School Foundation, and member of the Monmouth, IL, Sky Dive Club. Ed drove fuel trucks and tankers until he was hired by Southern Pacific Railroad as a conductor/brakeman.

Southern Pacific was later bought by Union Pacific Railroad under which Ed enjoyed retirement. Ed most loved being with Bonnie and his family while boating or simply watching the Mississippi River at their cabin in Oquawka, IL. He also loved hunting and fishing with his kids and grandchildren at the river or local farms. Ed was also known to enjoy his afternoon "errands" at the Pool Hall with his buddies. Ed is survived by his wife, Bonnie, and his Mother Bernie. Ed's siblings include Dan (Cindy) Schenck and Jeanie (Rick) Hanna as well as his sister-in-law, Paula Brackett. Ed's pride and joy will forever remain his kids, Michelle (Shelly and Tom) Jaros, Barbara (Barbie and Jason) Landers, Edward Ill (Eddie and Carrie) Schenck as well as his beloved grandkids, Lorana (Laura and Matt) Lundeen, Heather (HD and Brad) Fletcher, Samuel, Erin, Audrey, and Margaret (Maggie) Jaros, John (Jack) Landers, Jacob and Dylan Schenck. Ed was blessed with great grandchildren as well, Camdyn Scott Fletcher and Lorraine (Rainey Mae) Lundeen. Ed is preceded in death by his dad, Edward C. Schenck Sr., his brother Rudolph (Rudie) Schenck and his great granddaughter, Scarlet Rain Lundeen. Visitation will be Monday, November 20, 2023 at Hinchliff-Pearson-West in Abingdon from 5-7 p.m. A Graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. the following day November 21, at the Abingdon Cemetery with full military honors. Hinchliff-Pearson-West is honored to serve to family. Memorials may be made to the Abingdon Fire Prevention District or the Abingdon American Legion Post 381 color guard uniform foundation. Online condolences mat be made at www.h-p-w.com

Visitation was held on 20 November, 2023 At Hinchliff-Pearson West Abigdon Chapel, Abingdon, Illinois

OBIT

ALLAN E. ARCHER, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN,
BRAVO CO 1/26, 3RD PLATOON

Allan Edward Archer, 77, of Midland, passed away at Colonial Villa June 24, 2023,Saturday, June 24, 2023. He was born May 30, 1946, in Bay City, son of the late George, Archer and Daisy Davis. Allan grew up in Bay City Michigan and attended Bay City Central High School and Delta College. Allan proudly served his country in the United States Marine Corps in Vietnam from I966 1968. He earned several medals from many operations. He was part of. the 26th Battalion' Bravo Co, 3rd Platoon ,and loved all his brothers



Allan worked for GM Powerrain in Bay · City in Management until his retirement. He belonged to the American Legion and the Vietnam Veterans of America. On February 14, 2002, he married the former Elizabeth Ann Sequin in Midland. She survives him. He was active in many sports activities including roller skating, running marathons, skiing, tennis, and riding bicycles with his wife Elizabeth. He was also a member of the Ski Patrol at Apple Mountain and past member of the Historic Second Baptist Church of Bay

City. He loved all people and will be greatly missed by all that knew him.

In addition to his wife Elizabeth, he will be missed· by his children, TracyAllan Archer, Lily Skinner, and Kimberly (Brian) Shy; grandchildren, Penelope Shy, Mabel Shy, Raven Archer, Dante Archer, Jada Archer, Adonis Archer. And Jaleeah Archer; siblings, Burnell (Namon)Smith Russell (Margaret) Davis, Laura Lynn Frankel, and Alinda Toy Davis.

In addition to his parents, George Archer, and Daisy Davis, Allan was precede in death by his sister, Betty Frost, and brothers, George Archer Sr, and Leroy Davis

Services were held June 30 , 2023 at Ware Smith Woolever Funeral Home, Midland Michigan Buried with full honors Elm Lawn Cemetery





CRAIG TOURTE HQ BTRY 1/13
KSV SECRETARY

I attended the funeral of a relative yesterday at the Maxwell Cemetery (12/7/2018), and once again spent a few minutes visiting the grave of my old friend "Buddy" Denman. I stood before his headstone and thought of years now long passed, and the many other graves with headstones of our fallen heroes now seldom visited and too often forgotten. It



is only right that we remember those who gave so much. I present this article in honor of all those who now lay in hallow ground.

Everyone who knew William Denman called him Buddy and that nickname appropriately described who he was. Buddy grew up in the town of Maxwell, located in Northern California. Maxwell is the quintessential example of a rural small-town America where everyone knows your name, family and most of your relatives if they had lived around those parts for a few generations. There would be no reason for the road traveler to take the exit off Interstate 5 and drive into the little farm community of 500 where most folks live in quiet obscurity. Some have come and stayed and raised their families while many others have moved along and are now mostly forgotten.

From the Virtual Wall - "Dau Tieng, Tay Ninh Provence, 03 Nov 1966 - elements of the 196th Infantry Brigade and the 25th Infantry Division got into a heated fight with entrenched and bunkered VC troops, a fight that grew into a full-fledged battle fought over a three-day period. Landing Zone Lima Zulu, slightly north of where 1st Bn, 27th Infantry fought on 03/04 Nov, drew some of the heaviest fighting beginning after C Company, 2/27 Inf, was inserted at about 1400 on 04 Nov. "Buddy was a popular kid, handsome and athletic with blond hair and light blue eyes and he possessed an independent and adventuresome spirit many admired. Buddy had a difficult and tragic family life; there were many challenges and hardships including a grievous personal experience between his parents that he witnessed at a very young age. After he graduated from high school Buddy volunteered for the Army and attended boot camp at Fort Ord located in Monterey California. He thrived in the Army life with direction, discipline and a sense of belonging. He found a new beginning, writing to many friends about the respect and admiration he had for the warriors he had met, respected and hoped some day to emulate.

In the summer of 1966, I was living with my aunt and uncle in Maxwell and looking forward to going off to Marine Corps boot camp. Going into the Marine Corps was an adventure I was looking forward to even though I knew I would be deployed to Vietnam shortly after my training was completed. Buddy had completed his Army training and was home visiting his mother and sister and preparing for his deployment to Vietnam. I went over to his house with my cousin Larry Bowen (1947-1968) and walked into his bedroom where a few of his friends were visiting with him. It was mid-morning and he was still in bed, stating that he wanted to rest as much as he could after all the training and before his deployment. He was in high spirits and looking forward to serving his country and all of what that entailed. We talked about his military training and what he expected while in Vietnam. I sensed that he too was in pursuit of action and eager for a new experience. I told him that he would be returning from Vietnam before me and when I returned home, we would share and compare experiences. I wished him luck and was a little envious that he would get to the war before me. I left knowing he was doing what he wanted to do and I was looking forward to becoming a United States Marine. I entered Marine Corps Boot Camp (Platoon 1145) on October 29, 1966.

When Buddy arrived in Vietnam his Sergeant asked him what he wanted to be called, William or Bill. His response was "My friends call me Buddy." His Sergeant said, "Then Buddy it is." He was assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry (Wolfhounds), 25 Infantry Division. Within a short period of time, he went into combat against the experienced, prepared and determined Viet Cong forces. Tragically only three and a half months after arriving in Vietnam he was killed in action.

C/2/27 moved south from LZ Lima Zulu, intending to link with 1/27, but could go only a few hundred meters before being stopped by VC dug into a tree line. Unable to move forward, with enemy troops infiltrating to their rear, the battalion and company

commanders dead, and under fire from three sides, C/2/27 pulled together after nightfall, using a left flank displacement to get out of the "horseshoe" and avoid encirclement. The maneuver worked, and C/2/27 held out through the night amidst sporadic hand-to-hand fighting. By 1030 on 05 Nov, Alpha 1/27 fought through and relieved C/2/27." At the same time, HHC and A Company, 2/27, was coming into LZ Lima Zulu, intending to take the VC from the rear, pounding them against the anvil formed by A/1/27 and C/2/27.

05 November 1966 - While the engagements cost the VC dearly, with several hundred known dead, the US infantrymen paid a high price with 50 men killed in action over the three-day period. William (Buddy) Denman was one of the twenty Americans who was killed at LZ Lima Zulu on the 3rd day of the fight."

The community cemetery of Maxwell is located a mile west of town. William Luther Denman (August 25, 1946 - November 5, 1966) is buried near the flagpole; his final resting place is identified with a brass United States Military Headstone. He was the first to be killed from the small town of Maxwell and County of Colusa during the Vietnam War. He had the largest funeral ever attended with vehicles stretching for a couple of miles leading to the cemetery.

Several years ago I placed a small note on the A Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhound website regarding Buddy, just so others would know he had someone who continued to remember him and his sacrifice for this wonderful country.

Similar to the Khe Sanh Veterans websites (Where I served during the Vietnam War) - Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc & Khe Sanh Veterans Home Page - which have contributed to bringing together those who fought in the battles on the hills and the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh, the Wolfhounds website is followed by those with comparable experiences.

Several months ago I received an email in response to that little notation I had written on the Wolfhound web site. A former Vietnam and Wolfhound Veteran Robert Park contacted me and said that he was with Buddy during that particular battle and continues to remember Buddy's death with great sadness. Robert said he was the one who asked Buddy what name he wanted to be called. Having been in the country longer and with more experience, Robert felt an obligation to watch out for Buddy and has carried with him all these years a feeling of responsibility for Buddy's death during the battle. A few years ago, Robert had come to Maxwell to visit Buddy's grave and say goodbye but was unable to locate his grave at the cemetery. He asked around town, but no one seemed to recall who Buddy was nor were they familiar with the location of his grave. Robert has vowed to return someday to say his final farewell.

A few of weeks after my email communication with Robert I received an email from Chuck Dean, another Vietnam and Wolfhound Veteran who told me he had been in communication with Robert and that he had been with Buddy when he fell and was planning on driving to California and visit Buddy's grave. I shared both emails with people I knew were close to Buddy while he was growing up.

Email from Chuck Dean - "I plan on visiting Buddy's grave in May of this year (2012), something I have tried to face for 45 years. Buddy and I were very close friends in Vietnam. We were both Grenadiers in A Co 2/27 Wolfhounds. I was with Buddy when he fell. I only wish I could have done this years ago, but have only been able to come to grips with Vietnam in the last couple of years. I have hooked up with some of the other "Hounds" such as Robert within the last year and have been steadily working my way out of the shadows. I will be in the Maxwell area to visit Buddy's gravesite in May. Buddy will always be part of the band of brothers called the Wolfhounds and will never be forgotten. His memory will live on as long as there is one Wolfhound alive."

"Freedom Is Not Free" Reads the program pamphlet provided at the Memorial Day Service held at the Maxwell Cemetery, May 28, 2012 - I attended the Memorial Day Service with 100 or more people from the community sponsored by American Legion Post 218 (Maxwell) - Ronald Azevedo, Commander. The Maxwell High School Band played the Star-Spangled Banner and one of the high school girls sang the National Anthem. The service included a bugler playing taps and a rifle volley "Salute to Deceased Veterans." I didn't notice any politicians or back slapping significant officials, just local folks with moist eyes and heavy hearts who attended out of respect and honor for those who served and for those who had fallen.

Chuck Dean arrived for the service and was shown the location of Buddy's grave by Paul Richter (1st

Lt U.S. Army) and my cousin Gary Bowen (1949-2013) (U.S. Navy) who were childhood friends of Buddy's,. There was a large floral wreath standing at the headstone sent by Robert Park in the name of all the Wolfhounds Buddy served with. Chuck said that he had driven out from Alabama to finally say goodbye. We had a long conversation where he reflected on the battle and Buddy's loss. Chuck said that Buddy was just a few steps behind him when he was shot and killed. He walked over to Buddy, turned him over and saw that he was deceased.

Chuck said that he had the canvas helmet cover Buddy had worn that day. I held the now faded green camouflage helmet cover and observed written in black ink Buddy's blood type, unit and the words "Pat" for his high school girlfriend Patricia. Chuck said that he had kept the cover locked away for 45 years and now it was time the cover should be with Buddy's hometown, family and friends.

Chuck handed the helmet cover to Buddy's friend Paul Richter for safekeeping until it could display properly in a place of care and honor. I recognized that Chuck's act of presenting Buddy's helmet cover to Paul and the town of Maxwell was more than just transferring some possession of property. It was a spiritual release, a dedication, a shared memory and memorial of an item of hallowed significance to be forever treasured. It was part of Buddy's spirit and represented his life and sacrifice in battle and that significance had been tucked away for 45 years in a corner of Chuck's heart and soul.

Paul told me there were efforts under development to build an appropriate incased memorial with memorabilia dedicated to Buddy which would include the now gifted helmet cover along with his military Bronze Star, Purple Heart, military photograph and additional items relating to Buddy already on display at the American Legion. The new display would not only be a tribute to Buddy but also to the many who have served in the Armed Forces and a reminder to all that, "Freedom Is Not Free."



TIM & JANET HALEY









CHRISTMAS AT THE WOLFE HOUSE





FROM HIEN NGO: TRANSLATOR- GUIDE

Last Saturday, I and two younger friends of mine climbed up to Hill 881 South, also known as Cu Vo. We started cycling from Dong Ha City at four o'clock in the morning along Route 9. Arriving at



FOR THOSE WHO SERVED ON THE HILL 881-S

Khe Sanh around 7:30, we spent one hour and a half having breakfast and the best coffee in Khe Sanh. Hill 881-S is about 13 clicks from the junction at Route 9. Nothing related to the bloody fighting dating back to 1967 remains to be seen. On top of Hill 881-S are a dozen wind turbine towers with giant blades rotating in the clouds, making a sound like Huey helicopters. Wind power investors have widened a three-kilometer paved road that allows big trucks to reach the top. The road is too steep to pedal your bike. I had to walk dragging my mountain bike for half of the road. Such a great feeling to reach the peak. Looking down to the east you can see a big lake which is a reservoir of the Rao Quan Hydropower Plant.





THIS PHOTO IS TAKEN AT THE HEIGHT OF 720 METERS. THE SLOPE IS TOO STEEP TO PEDAL. I HAD TO DRAG MY MTB FROM HERE TO THE TOP.







OBIT

LARRY S. LAIRD, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN VMO-3

A Vietnam veteran and retired Sacramento County Deputy Sheriff, Larry Laird passed away October 16, 2023 at age 76. Born in Sacramento, CA on February 5, 1947 to Lester and Patricia Laird, he was the oldest of 5 brothers (Larry, Jerry, Gary, Barry and Terry). After graduating Mira Loma HS in 1965, Larry enlisted with the United States Marines Corps, serving nearly 2 years in Vietnam before returning to Sacramento and joining the Sheriff's Aero Detail Department as a helicopter pilot. He raised 4 sons, Jason, Sean, Brandon and Kevin.



He is survived by each son, his daughter-in-law's Sarah and Lorrie Tyler, his 9 grandchildren (Hannah, Sydney, Hunter, Addison, Emma, Olivia, Molly, Kamden & Nixon) to whom he was known as "Papa"; as well as his brothers Gary and Terry. Larry proudly and courageously served his Country from March 1967 – June 1968 in the Vietnam War. As a USMC V-MO3 crew chief on Huey helicopter gunships, Larry was deployed to Hue' (just south of the Vietnamese Demilitarized Zone) and jumped into action with 13 missions on his first day of combat. During his 15 months of service, which included the Tet offensive, Larry flew in over 450 missions and was awarded 24 Air Medals for his valor. Among the Air Medals was a Gold Star for "heroic achievement in connection with operations on August 22, 1967 when he assisted in extracting a reconnaissance team that was surrounded and heavily engaged with North Vietnam troops."

Always one to run to the fight in service to others, it was only natural for Larry to join the Sacramento Sherriff's Department upon his return home. Larry completed the Academy in 1973 and was a patrol officer for 5 years before moving to the Air Detail in July 1978. Over 17.5 years, Larry logged 10,000 flight hours before medically retiring in September 1995. Among his many achievements, Larry received a Silver Star in 1986 for piloting Star II "in disregard for his personal safety, in extremely hazardous conditions, maneuvered the helicopter between trees, powerlines, and TV antennas to make multiple rooftop rescue landings" to prevent residents in the Yuba County area from being trapped due to extreme flooding and rapidly rising waters. While Larry loved flying helicopters and enjoyed the camaraderie of his USMC & Sheriff friends, nothing could replace the love he had for his family… especially his 4 boys & 9 grandchildren. His presence was felt at every game, graduation and big moment of their lives. There was never a time where Papa said "no" or was too busy to be available. The ultimate big brother, the world's best son and a protector to those in need, Larry lived out his retirement by cruising around town, sometimes too fast, in his convertible Corvette (one of many he owned in his lifetime) and gardening in his immaculate yard. The world doesn't make men like him anymore. He will be greatly missed and loved forever.





RONALD RAYNER
A CO 1/26 KSV CHAPLAIN,

DOC JIM WILKENS

Jim Wilkins and Vince Begay were part of F troop on the end of the runway at Khe Sanh. I sent the previous article I wrote for Facebook to Doc Rick Zunino (corpsman for A 1/26 Marines) and he remembered Jim and Vince. I sent him this update on the two of them. Jim's parents lived about 30 miles from my hometown of Pontiac, MI. After six months of the worst combat in the Vietnam War, Jim got bit by a mosquito and died of malaria. Jim was one of three Marines not killed or medivaced on June 3. We were best friends and he had been writing letters to my younger sister. She, my future wife, Cathy and my parents went to his funeral. I met his parents when I got home and we became good friends. They were an older couple who had been married Dec. 1, 1941. Joe the father was 36 years old and Vivian the mother was 26. Joe got drafted into the Army shortly after Pearl Harbor and served as an engineer building airstrips in the South Pacific. Vivian was ½ Lakota Sioux Indian. I met her mother, who traveled the country between her children. Viven's mother had been in the Battle of Wounded Knee at the age of three. It has always fascinated me that I had met someone who had participated in a historic event from the previous century. About eight years after I got out of the Marines the Wilkins moved to Oklahoma. When Joe and Vivian moved to Oklahoma, Joe had asked me to put a United States flag on Jim's grave on Memorial Day and Veteran's Day. I still do that for both graves and keep the grass from growing over their markers.

When I retired from the Pontiac Fire Department I had a job driving truck back and forth to Las Vegas. Joe Wilkins had died by this time and I would call Vivian and stop and see her in Oklahoma. On a trip right after Thanksgiving about 1998 she didn't answer the phone when I was headed out to Las Vegas. On the return trip I did not get ahold of her on the phone until evening. I was about 100 miles away and she said she wanted me to get there and go out for breakfast. When I got there, she thought it was morning. She had flown in from her sister's in Minnesota and taken a nap and thought it was morning. She was making up a bed for me when I noticed sweat on her forehead. I asked her if she was diabetic and had she taken her insulin after her nap? She had. She passed out shortly thereafter and I got the fire Department there to take her the hospital. We spent the next 5 or 6 hours in the hospital until she got straightened out. I had known her son for 6 months 30 some years before and I lived a thousand miles away and I showed up at her door the night she overdoses on her insulin. I thought that was a miracle. Vivian passed away in 2005 and her other two children brought their ashes to Clinton Township, Michigan to be buried about 50 feet from Jim. They both died at age 92, 10 years apart.

Vincent Begay lived in Flagstaff, AZ. My daughter moved to Las Vegas, NV about 2001. Going through Flagstaff I would sometimes stop and visit Vince. He and his wife came to some of the Khe Sanh Vet reunions. Even though he had a picture of himself getting his Purple heart, I had to send a notarized letter stating I saw him get wounded for him to get some benefits. Vince passed away from cancer two years ago. His cousin, Elmer, had been in Vietnam the same time as us. I wrote a committal service and Elmer used it at the new Navaho National Cemetery in Flagstaff. Vince's grave is close to a number of World War II code talkers.

Jim's parents lived about 30 miles from my hometown of Pontiac, MI. After six months of the worst combat in the Vietnam War, Jim got bit by a mosquito and died of malaria. We were best friends and he had been writing letters to my younger sister. She, my future wife, Cathy and my parents went to his funeral. I met his parents when I got home and we became good friends. They were an older couple who had been married Dec. 1, 1941. Joe the father was 36 years old and Vivian the mother was 26. Joe got drafted into the Army shortly after Pearl Harbor and served as an engineer building airstrips in the South Pacific. Vivian was ½ Lakota Sioux Indian. I met her mother, who traveled the country between her children. Viven's mother had been in the Battle of Wounded Knee at the age of three. It has always fascinated me that I had met someone who had participated in a historic event from the previous century. About eight years after I got out of the Marines the Wilkins moved to Oklahoma. When Joe and Vivian moved to Oklahoma, Joe had asked me to put a United States flag on Jim's grave on Memorial Day and Veteran's Day. I still do that for both graves and keep the grass from growing over their markers. When I retired from the Pontiac Fire Department I had a job driving truck back and forth to Las Vegas. Joe Wilkins had died by this time and I would call Vivian and stop and see her in Oklahoma. On a trip right after Thanksgiving about 1998 she didn't answer

the phone when I was headed out to Las Vegas. On the return trip I did not get ahold of her on the phone until evening. I was about 100 miles away and she said she wanted me to get there and go out for breakfast. When I got there, she thought it was morning. She had flown in from her sister's in Minnesota and taken a nap and thought it was morning. She was making up a bed for me when I noticed sweat on her forehead. I asked her if she was diabetic and had she taken her insulin after her nap? She had. She passed out shortly thereafter and I got the fire Department there to take her the hospital. We spent the next 5 or 6 hours in the hospital until she got straightened out. I had known her son for 6 months 30 some years before and I lived a thousand miles away and I showed up at her door the night she overdoses on her insulin. I thought that was a miracle. Vivian passed away in 2005 and her other two children brought their ashes to Clinton Township, Michigan to be buried about 50 feet from Jim. They both died at age 92, 10 years apart.

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Sorry about the duplication of some of the info. Jim Wilkins was one of three survivors of 3rd platoon A 1/26 on June 7. 3rd Platoon A 1/26 took another big hit on August 18th. Just about three weeks after they were reformed. I now remember why I do not do much writing on the net!



OBIT

GARY WYCKO SR, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

Gary Robert Wycko Sr., 74, of Bristol, beloved soulmate of Deborah Spooner passed away peacefully Tuesday, November 7, 2023, at Bristol Hospital surrounded by his family. Gary was born June 7, 1949 in Bridgeport, CT the son of Mary (Hall) and Joseph Wycko. Gary served as a Marine Infantryman in Khe Sanh during the Vietnam War. After his service he was employed by SNET where he remained for 44 years before retiring as manager from AT&T. While at SNET Gary was the feature star of a televised commercial. Gary also served as a Supernumerary Police Officer in Ansonia, CT. During his time living in Ansonia, Gary served as the President of the Board of Alderman and then as acting Mayor. Gary was known for his hardworking, dedicated, generous, and caring personality from all that met him. Gary is survived in loving memory by his son, Gary Jr., Theresa Pieri, and Jessica Pieri Holdsworth (Jeffrey). A graveside service with military honors will be held at St. Joseph Cemetery in Bristol.





MIKE FISHBAUGH
COUNTRY FUZZ









I GET PICTURES





OBIT

CORPORAL PERLEY H. MORSE, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, KILO CO 3/26 2ND PLT, 3rd SQUAD HILL 861

Cpl. Perley H Morse Jr. passed away peacefully at home September 24th 2023 in Longmont Colorado after a long battle with cancer. He was born in Staten Island, New York on August 27th, 1946 to Perley Morse Senior and Helen Morse. He entered the Marine Corps at the age of 18 and served in

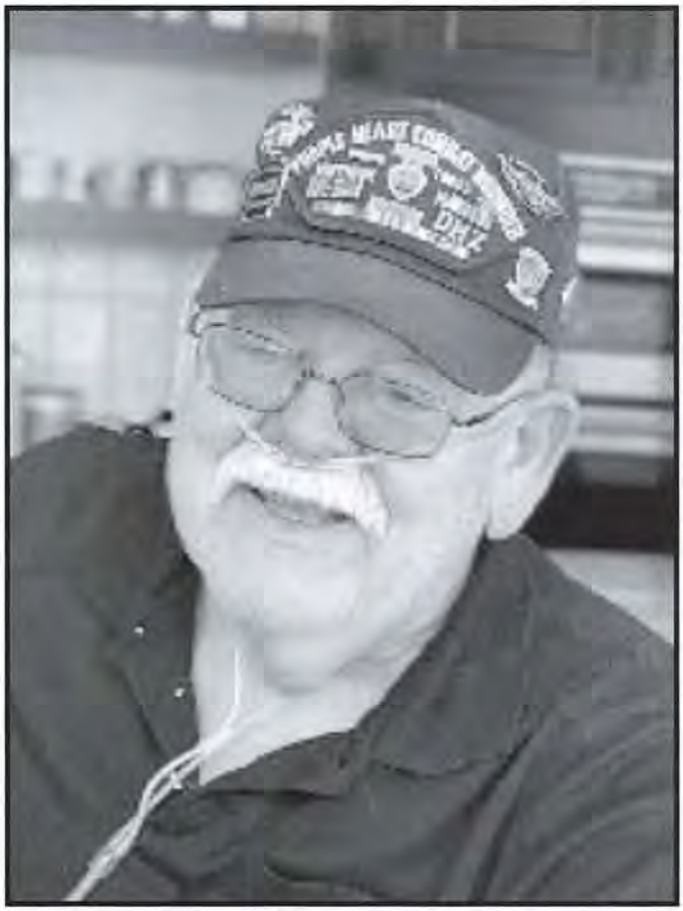

Vietnam, surviving the Battle of Khe Sanh, until being wounded in June 1968 by an 82 mortar. He received the purple heart and was medically retired from the Marines. He worked for the State of NH Corrections Department, reaching the rank of Lieutenant, and retired after 30 years of service.

He is survived by his wife Marie, daughters Marissa and Lea, son Kamal and his grandsons, Ronin and Quintin, who he loved very much. He also leaves his sister Helen, nieces and a nephew.

He was a wonderful storyteller, wood carver and friend to so many. There was nothing he loved more than to make others laugh. He will be missed by so many more than can be named here. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to Rocky Mountain Cancer Center (https://rayofhopecolorado.org/rmcc/) for the care and extra years of joy we all got to enjoy with him. Services will be held in Bow, New Hampshire in the spring.



KHE SANH LUXURY APARTMENTS



MACV-SOG'S TOP-SECRET BEGINNINGS
PHOTO CREDIT: MACV-SOG SOLDIER / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS / PUBLIC DOMAIN

On January 24, 1964, MACV-SOG, officially known as the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam - Studies and Observations Group, came into existence. Comprised of operators from the most elite branches of the US military, including Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Air Force Commandos, CIA operatives and veterans of the Marine Corps' reconnaissance units, the group was an assembly of specialized talent.

Initially, MACV-SOG's operations in Vietnam were overseen by the Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities within the US Department of Defense. This arrangement granted the authority to conduct missions beyond the borders of South Vietnam. Eventually, control of the group was transferred to the military.

A significant portion of MACV-SOG's missions occurred within North Vietnam, and the utmost secrecy was imperative. This discretion was necessitated by the official American stance that the US forces were confined to operations within South Vietnam. Additionally, the group dedicated efforts to missions in Laos and Cambodia, due to the strategic significance of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, which played a crucial role in supporting the North Vietnamese Army (NVA).

Given the exceptionally perilous nature of their tasks, MACV-SOG was exclusively composed of volunteers. The hazardous conditions were so pronounced that the casualty rate for operatives stood at a staggering 100 percent; they understood their service would likely culminate in either receiving a Purple Heart for their valor or returning home in a flag-draped casket.











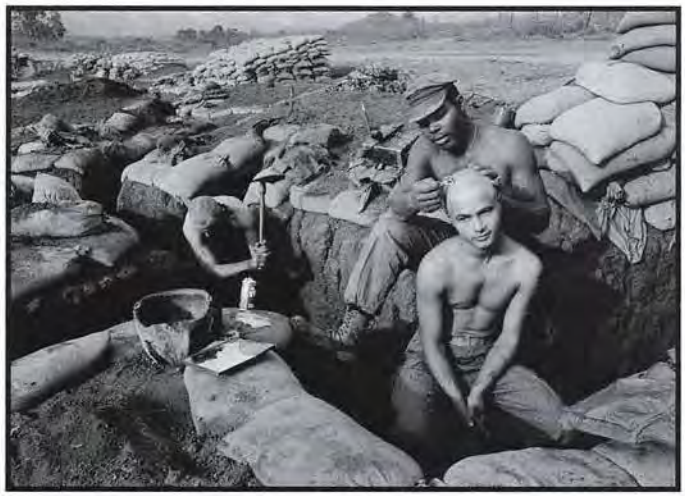

Hair stylist service was a rarity at the embattled Marine bastion of Khe Sanh, so Marine PFC Robert DuBois of Brooklyn, New York, did the honors for a buddy and shaved the head of Cpl. Efrain Torres of New York outside their bunker. Scores of Communist troops moving toward the Marines' fortress were killed in napalm and bombing attacks by Allied aircraft.











I GET PICTURES











OBIT

ROBERT BATES, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, WHISKEY BTRY 1/13- 4.2 MORTARS

A proud Marine who was honored to serve has passed away. Robert "Bob" George Bates, age 75, of Kentwood, Michigan passed away on Monday, December 25, 2023. Bob was born in Lansing, the son of Irwin and Laura Bates. He graduated from Lansing Eastern High School, class of 1966. Following graduation, Bob enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He served as a Sergeant in Vietnam during the Battle of Khe Sanh and was twice awarded the Purple Heart as well as other commendations. Following his military service, he returned to Lansing where he worked as a supervisor at General Motors for over 35 years. Bob enjoyed model trains, golfing, fishing, and hunting. He enjoyed attending



the annual family reunion in Reed City and spending time with his three Australian Shepherds. He was a member of the American Legion Post 12, 40 et 8 Voiture 946, and the Military Order of the Purple Heart. He was a member of the Marine Corps League and the Khe Sanh Veterans and enjoyed attending the annual reunions.

Surviving are his wife, Lynn; children, Jennifer (Chad) Finney, Jason (Tammy) Bates, step-daughter, Carrie (Jude) Pereira; grandchildren, Zachary and Nicholas Finney, Jason Bates, Jr and Sierra (Nathan) Bates-Wils, Avery, Asher, and Quinton Pereira; numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family. He was preceded in death by his parents; siblings, Beverly, Lee, Jerry, Tony, Duane, Ward, and Joe.

Visitation was held from 2:00-4:00 pm on Sunday, January 7, 2024 at Gorsline Runciman Funeral Homes Lansing Chapel, 900 E. Michigan Ave. The funeral will be held at 1:00 pm on Monday, January 8 at the funeral home, with visitation one hour prior. A reception to follow the service.





KSV WIVES LUNCH



CRAIG TOURTE KSV SECRETARY HQ BTRY 1/13

This Article was originally written in 2007 but things haven't changed much, I have aged 77 years, and my good friend Bob is in his middle 80s. The positive is we are both hanging in there to face life's little ups and downs. Ernie's Interlude is still operating, and a few long-time regular customers have gone on to their reward, that said many new younger folks have taken their place, and that's a good thing.

"GO HOME"

So once again I found myself sitting in the little neighborhood pub around the corner from my house. The last time I looked, it was around 1700hrs, now through the stare of one eye open and one closed so I can focus, I find its 2230hrs, where the heck did the time go. I have grown to enjoy this little piece of heaven. The bar is kind of a U shaped affair with about 20 stools and a few tables against the walls. The dusty perennial photographs in cheap frames hanging kind of crooked from the old faded nicotine stained walls hold the memoires of customers now long since gone. Small, cozy and quite, with libations that are reasonable priced and country music that plays on the jukebox reminds me of days gone by. I drove down to Beverly Hills last week, at the Four Seasons the drink I usually order cost me $17.32, that's right for just one drink. The same drink here cost me $3.00.

I'll be 60 years old in a couple of weeks and I'll admit that many of my rather rough years are behind me. Now I'm just another old guy sitting at the end of the bar with a few other old guys. You know the ones that most people ignore now, same stories, some old complaints.

My friend Bob is 67 years old, he was my roommate in the early 70's and the first man I met when I moved to this town. He has had kind of a difficult life, a couple of marriages and divorces and other issues. Bob was in Vietnam during the early 60's, flew troops around in those old helicopters but he doesn't talk about it much. When we get together we mostly talk about the girls we have known and the mischief we got into. The stories are always the same but we can't remember what we said most of the time anyway so it always sounds kind of new and is just as funny to us. Funny how you always sound fine to the guys your talking to at the bar but as soon as you talk to someone else you sound… well, you know.

We both talk about going home but know in our hearts we really don't have much to go home to, so what the heck, one more sounds good. The female bartender comes over to us and looks at us a few seconds and says "Craig you and Bob need to go home." What, I haven't been kicked out of a bar since I can remember. But we both laugh and get up and stumble home (I walked the few blocks home). The point of this, is that I realize time has come and gone and what a lot of us have left now are stories about old times and our old memories of events that are getting harder to recall, but most importantly the realization that we're not alone and there are so many just like us. And the realization that way too soon, we're all going home. Darn, I think I had better have one more; I've got another story to tell, I'm just wondering if I have told it before.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEYS OFFICE



Retired Investigator Christmas Lunch. A good time was had by all. Many thanks to Mike Sullivan and Tiffany King for a "State of the Office" update and presenting each of us with a Bureau Challenge Coin.

First Row. Left to right: Sam Gault, Brian Maloney, Susie Jang, Monica Dillon Czajkowski, Craig Tourte, Al Chidester, Dave Howard, Dean Cannon.

Second Row: John Dacre, Dave Lambros David Kidd, Steven McKinney, Mike Sullivan, Debra Cattuzzo, Tiffany King, Dave Hayes.





RUSS TURNER PINNING SERGEANT STRIPES ON HIS GRANDSON SAM





ALL OUR BRAVE CORPSMAN



FOSTER CLAN



HQ CO COMM 26TH MARINES, 40TH YEAR REUNION 2007



BILL & BARBARA FOSTER COUPLE KIDS STILL IN LOVE



LOVING GRANDPARENTS



ADORABLE




TURNER CLAN



DAVID TURNER



KATHY TURNER WITH
GRANDSON SAM GEERS



HERE IS THE TWO WHO STARTED ALL THIS





"HOLY COW"
MORE TURNERS
ON THE WAY"

AUTHOR'S NAME:
TOBY RUSHFORTH
(CHARLES P. RUSHFORTH III)
UNIT AND YEAR:
20TH TASS, 1967-1968
SUBMITTAL DATE:
22 JUNE, 2003
AUTHOR'S TITLE OF SUBMITTAL:
FAC SUPPORT 1968: BATTLE FOR LANG VEI - KHE SANH HILL 64!

My first KSV Reunion
My FAC perspective of the Battle for Lang Vei
7 February, 1968: Lang Vei
8 February, 1968: Hill 64, Alpha 1 Firefight and day after Lang Vei
POSTLOG: At the KSV Reunion in San Diego - September, 2000

It was late last Century, in fact, late in 1999, that I first became aware of the Khe Sanh Veterans' Association. I couldn't imagine how I missed it over all those years. I had been a Forward Air Controller, flying O-2 aircraft out of Hue Citadel and Danang AB in 1967-68. That was a very vital time in my life, as it certainly was for all of us.

I looked forward to my first Khe Sanh Veterans Association Reunion in San Diego, during September, 2000. In preparation, I had a baseball cap embroidered with a FAC badge and my radio call signs. The idea was to help anyone who might have something in common, come up and talk. That way I wouldn't have to go around tapping everyone on the shoulder to introduce myself and explain how an AF FAC ended up at a mainly Marine and Army/ Special Ops type Reunion. I was somewhat prepared, because I had traded some correspondence with Ray Stubbe about the Association and about combat operations in and around Khe Sanh. I had also read his book, "Valley of Decision," and recognized a number of operations in which I had taken part. So, the idea of maybe getting to talk to guys that were on the ground during the Siege, while I was overhead, was curious and exciting.

After I had checked into the Hotel in San Diego, I prepared for the cocktail hour around the pool in the courtyard. As I passed a profusion of guys, with lots of red on hats and shirts, bearing unit designations, it was a very comfortable feeling (for a guy who was virtually a total stranger to all). As I strode out by the pool, I hadn't gone more than 25 steps before I heard someone yell "Covey!" Geez! Did that feel good. I turned to be greeted by Jim Speer who had been on the USAF Combat Control Team there at KS. He was well acquainted with a number of FACs that we knew mutually, who had been in and out of KS early in the Siege. It was a neat way to start out the Reunion, as I noted with some satisfaction, that my "hat trick" had worked. Jim had apparently been to previous Reunions and quickly began to fill me in.

As the conversation moved between people, places and events, I mentioned that I had been at Lang Vei the morning it was overrun. Jim quickly pointed out a fellow a couple of tables away and said he was there during the battle. I thanked Jim and quickly moved over to stand next to this fellow who was engaged in conversation with a couple others. There was a certain intensity, yet off-handedness about him. I must have moved in such a way that he got a hint I was waiting to talk with him. He briefly paused and looked up at me. I asked if he had been at Lang Vei when it was overrun. He looked at me with both surprise and curiosity and said, "Why yes I was." I explained that I was an AF Forward Air Controller who had been there that morning after the North Vietnamese had overrun the camp. As we ran through a quick Battle chronology of that fateful morning of 7 February, 1968, he talked about how he had evaded during the battle, and showed up later in the PM after much of the process of evacuating survivors was about concluded. At that point, I blurted out: "Wait a minute, you aren't 'Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo' are you?" He looked startled and said "yes I am." I paused, then said "we had assumed you were killed by the North Vietnamese!" It's hard to explain, but this turned into quite an emotional moment. Who knows how and where that wells up from? Let's go back to recount events long past.

MY FAC PERSPECTIVE OF THE BATTLE FOR LANG VEI:

I had been in country and at Danang AB for a few months and by that time, was feeling pretty confident about myself as a Forward Air Controller. By that I mean I had not only survived getting shot at pretty regularly, but managed to live through some episodes of "the stupids" in which I was lucky not to have killed myself. Early in the tour, I sometimes even wondered if I wasn't as much a threat to friend as to foe. In any event, at this point, Captain Rushforth was more of a steely-eyed predator (in his own mind).

In January '68, along with other FACs, I was shifted from the "Tally Ho" mission, above the DMZ to "Operation Niagra" over Khe Sanh and its approaches. As we became better acquainted with our

new mission area, it was clear that something unusual was in the offing. Signs of enemy activity on the approaches from the North and West were particularly revealing.

On the night of 25 January, the Laotian community at Ban Houaysan (otherwise called "Elephant") was overrun [several miles West of Lang Vei, along Route 9]. Among the intelligence reported by us FACs was that there were tracked vehicle impressions all along Route 9, both East and West of "Elephant." In fact, it was later reported by a FAC that we had killed a tank during that battle (however, the tank quickly disappeared). After the battle, the Laotians and their Vietnamese (ARVN) Ranger liaison retreated to the Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei.

7 FEBRUARY, 1968: LANG VEI:

This account of happenings on 7 and 8 February, 1968 is from my diary and reflects the facts as I knew them and my feelings at the moment.

Well! Gerry Harrington and John Buckles had their work cut out for them last night. Lang Vei was being overrun by a large enemy force supported by at least 9 tanks. They said it was an unbelievable sight, walls of tracers, explosions, what looked like flame throwers, yelling on the radios and tanks rolling right over the tops of friendly bunkers. They had difficulty sorting out targets on the ground, but said they did have a B-57 drop some what we called "funny bombs" (a frag and hot chemical explosive pattern) on tanks breaching the Camp's Southwestern perimeter. They thought the tanks were disabled by that strike?

I got up about 0500. After a fairly inclusive Intelligence briefing on what little was known about the battle, I moved quickly for the flight line and finished the preflight. Aircraft # 396 was in good shape. It had a standard wing load, two pods of 2.75" white phosphorous rockets, a total of 14. The sense of urgency began to grow as I made the radio calls and taxied for takeoff at Danang. The weather was not that good. I'd have to climb on instruments to get on top and cruise to the Khe Sanh area, then figure out how to get under the clouds and over to Lang Vei. I took off at 0710. After about 40 anxious minutes enroute I used heading time and distance to get down through the clouds West of Lang Vei. Cloud bases were ragged at about 1000 feet above the terrain. Following Route 9 back to the East, I approached the Camp, and checked in with "Covey 688," a FAC from Ubon, Thailand who was currently in charge of air operations over the battle area. I could see his O-2 ahead, between cloud layers (forming a sort of fishbowl), circling over patches of occasional trees and brush, which were intermittently visible. Columns of smoke drifted up through the low clouds that were virtually settled on the Camp and the rolling terrain around it. It was about 0800 as I fell into loose trail formation with 688 to listen and try to figure out what was happening. I would be taking over shortly.

Our Special Ops personnel, call sign "Spunky Hanson," were holed up in their Tactical Operations Center (TOC). They were talking to 688 via FM radio. The NVA were swarming all over the TOC, throwing satchel charges, plus smoke and frag grenades down the ventilation shafts and any place they could find access. Spunky Hanson 15A and some CIDG, who had stormed the Camp to rescue the troops, were pinned down by machine gun fire. 688 told them to withdraw so he could bring in some A-1, Skyraiders (Canasta Flight) with lots of guns and ordnance to get the NVA off the TOC. He had the A-1s hold while he dove his O-2 through a "sucker hole" to see if the A-1s could work under these conditions. The terrain was actually in and out of the clouds, an extremely treacherous operation to attempt. I virtually held my breath waiting for him to pop up through the clouds, all the while fearing a flash and column of black smoke would appear instead.

After what seemed like forever, his O-2 popped up through the clouds and he began to talk with the A-1s. It was very risky. They would be in and out of the clouds and in the tree-tops. All the Canasta pilots (4) agreed to give it a try. They formed a "daisy chain" behind 688 and one after the other, dove through the hole in the clouds to see if 688 could lead them close enough to engage the NVA on the TOC. After a short time 688 came back up through the cloud deck. Now we had four A-1s in a tree-top free for all, ripping up the landscape, mainly with their guns, strafing the TOC and area around it. I again held my breath, while from an altitude of about 800 feet, except for the drone of my engines things seemed ghostly quiet. Time was suspended. Again, the tell-tale smoke of an air ground disaster was almost an expectation. When the A-1s came back above the clouds, time started again.

Spunky Hanson, in a quiet tone, said they were ap-

prently successful, as the enemy activity on the TOC had ceased, at least temporarily. I was greatly relieved that the Canasta flight got the job done and were all still flying. It was an amazing feat of airmanship. The A-1 guys were all balls. It was not hard to envision those four A-1s ripping through the treetops, in and out of the cloud bases, high-G turns at treetop level, firing away at the TOC and somehow not hitting each other.

By now, the inside of my cockpit windows was getting pretty well covered with my grease pencil notes about what was going on and who all the players were. That was a pretty standard practice for FACs, trying to keep track of what is happening on the ground while managing all aspects of the air support.

The clouds were beginning to break up, revealing much of the Camp. The TOC had a tank on its side adjacent to it, and the trail/road coming up from the river, down by Route 9 (at the Laos border) had two tanks knocked out at about the Camp perimeter. I took pictures of the Camp and the tanks with my Intel Nikon Telephoto. At about this point, 688 had an engine acting up and had to depart for home. I took over the air operation. The A-1s, bless 'em, were still able to loiter and had napalm and 250/500 lb. bombs remaining.

Meanwhile, we had been trying to coordinate a rescue effort from Khe Sanh. First word was that a ground team would not be sent, because the NVA had certainly set up ambushes at advantageous points along the way. It was also stated that a Helo-Assault Evacuation would not be attempted for awhile due to weather conditions. As disappointing as this was to us, it made our course of action clear. We had to conduct a holding action to keep the NVA away from the TOC until help arrived. Perhaps Spunky Hanson 15A and the local troops could fight their way in?

It wasn't long before Spunky Hanson (SH) came up on "Fox Mike" (FM) again, relating that the NVA were back. "They're all over us out there. Give 'em everything you've got," SH said. At this point, he seemed calm and almost resigned to his fate. Initially the fighters were pressing so hard to be effective that after release, the bombs didn't even have time to arm and hit the ground as duds. In one case that may have saved us an A-1. I had aligned myself, coming right "down the chute" behind him on his bomb run. His bomb release was very close to the ground, a dud, which kicked up the dirt. The dirt then briefly swirled behind as the A-1 flew through the dirt plume. If it had gone off, it might have nailed him. The A-1 pilots quickly adjusted and managed to keep the NVA occupied with their remaining ordnance.

I asked SH if they could come out and make a run for it. "We've got badly wounded people down here that can't move, some may even be dead. We're not coming out until you come and get us." We periodically continued our calls for reinforcements and hoped for a helo evacuation task force. It wasn't happening and we were hearing words like it wasn't going to happen for awhile. I couldn't understand what the problem was? It was frustrating!

Meanwhile, Spunky Hanson 15A was having a hell of a time getting the CIDG and Elephant people to move against that machine gun and mortar fire. SH15A, a Sgt Ashley, went back to get a 37MM Recoiless Rifle to bring fires upon the NVA positions. He subsequently knocked out at least two of the NVA gun positions with the weapon. Even then, he and the Bru / Elephant troops were again driven back. At about this time, I noted a green smoke on the Northeast perimeter of the Camp. Even from 500 ft., I couldn't determine its origin. Was it a friendly trying to let me know he was there? Was it the NVA trying to spoof me so I wouldn't bomb him/them? I never did figure that one out, but elected not to bomb that area unless I determined it to be the enemy, or absolutely had to.

Hobo 01 and 02 then arrived to replace the Canasta Flight. I had them work on the West side of the compound, around the TOC with CBU (cluster bombs), napalm and strafe. They did a terrific job, but the NVA were still not ready to back off.

At this point, my own front engine overheated, coughing and sputtering from being run at full throttle for hours. That really caught me in the gut. I could just see a forced landing among the NVA down there, after beating them up all morning. Not good!

Major John Seats, another Covey FAC (Bruce Goodhue I believe) took over for me and continued the holding action, while waiting for the reinforcements we assumed would be coming sometime soon. The engine continued to shudder and sputter, but held together well enough to climb out of the area enroute to Danang.

The landing was uneventful, and I proceeded direct ly to the Intelligence debriefing room where I was

told to call directly to Headquarters 7th Air Force in Saigon. A Colonel answered the phone and began the debriefing. When I mentioned tanks, he fired off and as much as called Captain Rushforth a liar or maybe just mistaken? After all we had been reporting that day and for weeks prior, I thought it incredible that he was questioning me like this. He was so adamant I became adversarial in tone, if not in words, and described the vehicles as "ya know, they have tracks on both sides, this thing that looked just like a turret on top, with a big long thing sticking out of it (like maybe a big gun)!?" Not only that, I was only 500ft. above them. To my amazement, he still wasn't buying it? I played my Ace of Spades -- "I have pictures!" "Pictures," he shouted! You get them right over to the photo lab and we'll divert a plane to pick them up immediately! I did, and he did, like within the hour. I'm sure the pictures were great on the briefing circuit (they came out well), but we never heard about them again.

Note: So far, the most comprehensive account I have read, of what happened on the ground during this battle is "The Night of the Silver Stars," by William R. Phillips, published in 1997 as part of the Naval Institute Special Warfare Series. It was indeed a night of heroism and gallantry. Among decorations the defenders received: a Medal of Honor, a Distinguished Service Cross, 19 Silver Stars and 3 Bronze Stars with "V" for valor as well as numerous other awards and decorations.

A 1 FIREFIGHT AND DAY AFTER LANG V8
February, 1968: Hill 64, Alph EI:

These are the thoughts and experiences recorded on 8 February, the day after the Lang Vei Battle. Back in my quarters at 2200, after a full day at Khe Sanh, then debriefings and planning.

0550: It was hard getting up. The bed (eat your heart out guys) really felt good. Got mission briefing for the KS area and things had apparently gotten quiet. The expectation was that the NVA were repositioning for another direct assault in strength, on Khe Sanh. The weather at Danang, enroute and on the Khe Sanh plateau was poor. At Personal Equipment, Scottie, was in rough shape, really bleary eyed. He'd been up for about 24 hours. I had some maintenance problems, but pressed on. Aircraft #331 was really in pretty good shape. (Note: this is the O-2 currently on display at the USAF Air Museum at Wright Patterson AFB.)

0645: Take off and climb enroute was all weather until on top at 10,000 feet. Using the same procedure as yesterday, I went out into the flatlands in Laos so I could let down through the clouds without hitting anything. I broke out of the clouds at about 1000 feet above the terrain, found Route 9, and followed it back toward Lang Vei. Joe Johnson, Covey 251, was in the area ahead of me and we began to coordinate areas to Recce so we wouldn't be hitting each other in the low clouds.

Lang Vei appeared to be abandoned. There were several hundred refugees on Route 9 between Khe Sanh City and Lang Vei, headed West? Guess they know where the action will be. The Marines didn't know who they were and were seriously thinking of putting artillery on them. I had to make sure - low pass on the tree tops - ooops! Damn trees all around me, zipping by the wings. The tops were defoliated and I hadn't seen them - very tall. The refugees were mainly women & children carrying belongings, etc. - old men, some younger. That sure tore at me. Those poor people just don't know where to go - getting it from both sides, one way or another. So - so sad! I felt as though I could actually see it on their faces.

Garden Valley 14 Actual at Khe Sanh called - need air to hit mortar and rocket positions just WSW, off the runway, on the ridgeline. Joe Johnson, Covey 251, went out to the West, along Route 9 at about the border to escort some fighters into the area through the cloud layers. We got Canasta 403, a flight of 4 A-1Hs (Navy). They were loaded with bombs (250lb & 500lb) and 20MM strafe. After pre-briefing the fighters, and discussing tactics, I marked the ridgeline targets with one of my 2.75" "Willie Pete" (white phosphorous) rockets and cleared them in "hot." We quickly got two secondary explosions indicating that the bombs had indeed found worthy targets. However, at this point, Garden Valley 14 Actual asked us to hold off on the airstrike and to my amazement, briefed me on a firefight on a nearby hill last night.

HILL 64: GARDEN VALLEY 14 ACTUAL DESCRIBED THE HILL AND EVENTS AS THEY KNEW THEM.

The hill wasn't apparent on my map, but there was no doubt that there was still a firefight of some sort going on just to my South. The NVA assaulted the hill in force during the night (mortars, rockets and ground assault) and there was ferocious hand to hand combat as the night wore on. The main base supported the marines in the hilltop defensive positions with direct fire on the East face of the hill (toward the main base) from heavy weapons. How-

ever, the NVA simply moved to the back side of the hill to continue the assault.

Garden Valley 14 Actual had not talked to the defenders for some time. Apparently their radios were destroyed or lost in the battle. GV14A said " We don't know what is going on up there. We don't know if our guys are still defending in the trenches, or whether they were driven out of the trenches and are trying to get back in?" My immediate reaction was "How come you didn't tell me this sooner? Here we were dropping bombs on a ridgeline, when we had nearby troops in contact?" Couldn't dwell on that. Had to get busy.

I decided that the only way to sort out who was where, was to make a low pass and look in the trenches. From about 1500 feet, I could see explosions and tracers on the hill, but not much more. I planned to get that little sucker going as fast as I could, in a dive from the base side of the Hill where there were fewer NVA. I dove, at full power, on the Eastern base of the hill, then snapped it up over the defensive trench lines in about 90 degrees of bank at about 150-200 feet. As I flashed over the trenches at about 230 knots I saw troops in hand to hand combat, grenades going off in the trenches, and about a grand total of 60 troops. The NVA were caught off guard by the pass, but hosed me down real good anyway. As I dove down the opposite side of the hill I thought, "how do I get back to altitude with this little thing without giving the bad guys a great tail shot at me hanging on a sky hook? I flew away for a while, dodging trees, then began my climb while I tried to digest what I had seen.

The predominance of the guys in the trenches were wearing flak vests, and a number had on US style helmets. "That's it!" The good guys are still dukeing it out in the trenches with the bad guys. I notified GV14A of my conclusions and told them we were going to start putting the fighters on the exterior of the hill and its North and West approaches. I briefed the A-1s on the situation and what we were going to do about it. I had them come in from the North to strafe the bases of the hill and work the strafe up the hill toward the trenchlines. These guys really got down in the weeds for this one, so they could see the whites of their eyes. The A-1s looked beautiful, terrific, skimming through the treetops, blazing away. Sure wish I had one of them. Next it was the bombs in the trees and brush along the Western base of the hill. Seemed like this suppressed the NVA for awhile, but they were soon up and at it again. I know we got a mess of 'em, but they were still ready to join the fight.

We had put in an emergency request for prop aircraft that could operate in these mountains, ridges, valleys in this weather. The A-1s were always preferred, because they could carry so much ordnance and loiter for 4 hours or so (depending upon how far they had to travel). Joe Johnson, again went West to rendezvous and escort them back to the battle area. However, we were getting short on fuel.

Bruce Goodhue, Covey 226, arrived and took over air support for the Hill. He had some A-26s enroute (twin engine, WWII, Korea vintage). They are also great for close air support, working close in bad weather, and being able to hang around for awhile.

As Joe Johnson and I were preparing to leave, we spotted some troops in the open on the backside of the hill headed for the adjacent ridge to the West. With great satisfaction we both unloaded 27, 2.75" white phosphorous rockets on them. We were on target, but had to RTB (Return to Base) due to lack of fuel, and did not get a good assessment of the situation after our attack.

Enroute Danang: I get a crazy feeling flying around watching those poor guys in the trenches getting blown up. How would I feel if I was down there. Hard to think about. Got a touch of that invincibility complex again too - I was awful low and they were shooting like hell. I'd have given anything for a mini-gun. I was about fired up enough to strafe with my M-16 out the cockpit window. Maybe we shoulda gone to Dong Ha for a load of HE rockets from the Army guys? Hell! For awhile there we were about the only ones that could fly in that weather (500'-1000' overcast, scattered to broken scud from 500' to 1700').

Had trouble letting down into Danang for landing. The base was shrouded in a thick overcast. Their radar was overloaded, so I had "Panama" GCI Radar vector me down over the South China Sea. Broke out of the clouds at about 500' above the water. Hmmm! An aircraft Carrier right over there! If I had come through the clouds a little further to the left, I might have made a real mess. Really had to piss bad - went right there on the O-2 maintenance ramp.

Called the Tac Air Control Center to debrief, got something to eat and went back to Intel for a detailed debrief for the rest of the troops. My pictures of the tanks at Lang Vei yesterday came out very well and are a great hit on the briefing circuit. Blah!

Yesterday, Spunky Hanson 15A, a Sgt Ashley, was

killed on the 5th assault to rescue the troops in the TOC at Lang Vei. There were more than 9 guys rescued, not sure exactly. Tony Sazanovich was the FAC in charge for the chopper evac, yesterday afternoon. He did a hell of a job. They got the crap shot out of them, but got all but one of the troops out? They also got some CIDG and Elephant people out, though I understand it was ugly. Initially the Helos couldn't take off because they were overweight with people hanging on the skids. Had to knock (shoot?) some off or lose the whole mission and get everyone killed.

During all this Tony Sazanovich was contacted by a Special Ops troop who had apparently been evading after the Camp was overrun. His call sign was "Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo." SH28B came out of the trees at the old Lang Vei Camp to where Tony could see him. The Helo Evac force was already fully (over) loaded and pulling out to head for Khe Sanh. It became apparent that the Helos were out of the picture and Tony was preparing to land on the torn up, bombed out, airstrip at the old Camp. However, a large number of NVA arrived first and chased SH28B back into the trees and brush. Tony related that it looked like a lot of shooting during the chase. Last transmission from SH28B was "They're coming up from the other side of the strip." No way SH28B will come out of that alive. If Tony had tried to land for SH28B, it would have been nothing short of a miracle if they made it off the ground. The front prop had only 10" clearance and the ground was too irregular. It would have caught in the dirt and debris.

Meanwhile, today on the hill West of Khe Sanh, Bruce Goodhue worked some more A-1s (Canasta flight), A-26s (Nimrods) and T-28s (Zorro) on the NVA around the hill. They did a great job. When it was over, the good guys were able to get up, clear the outpost, and walk off the hill. After discussions with the relief force from the main base, they went up and reoccupied the hill. After the battle, first glance showed about 50 NVA bodies, plus plenty of captured weapons. [Understand that later a total of 150 NVA bodies were found, along with a number of machine guns, etc.]

Fingerpaint 50 (Marine FAC) did trap 2 tanks in the river Southwest of Lang Vei, and Covey 672 had some "tracked vehicles" pinned down near "Elephant." Hope this weather breaks soon. If it does, we could really clean their clock.

POSTLOG: AT THE KSV REUNION IN SAN DIEGO - SEPTEMBER, 2000

So here I am, with a lump in my throat and a tear in my eye, shaking hands with Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo - after all these years. His name is Dennis Thompson. I have since found out that he was captured and escaped several times during the next few days. He was a rather belligerent cuss and not amenable to being a prisoner. For this, he got lots of broken bones and worse. After a nightmarish 6 month trek to Hanoi, he was incarcerated with the other POWs, until the end of the war.

Dennis is a retired Command Sergeant Major of the Special Operations Command and, wouldn't ya' know, he was the featured speaker at our KSV Reunion Banquet. We've gotten a lot better acquainted since then. Dennis has a line on all the survivors of the Lang Vei Battle and some of us who supported in one way or another. We plan to meet this September in Las Vegas.

On the other hand, we have been trying very hard to find Tony Sazanovich, the FAC who was flying over Dennis when he was captured. No luck yet. We'd also like to find that "Covey 688," from Ubon, who was there at Lang Vei that morning. So why do I like Reunions? Gee, hard to figger out! This is only one story.



Note: For those that haven't read it, the best account I've found of the Battle for Hill 64, on 8 February 1968, is in Chapter 16 of Eric Hammel's book, "KHE SANH, Siege in the Clouds." It was only during the reading of this book that I began to realize that the 8 February, 1968 entry in my diary was about "Alpha-1" in this Battle.

Toby Rushforth
Covey 252
Danang AB '67-'68

THE 2024 KHE SANH ANNUAL REUNION WILL BE HELD IN LOUISVILLE KY AT THE HOLIDAY INN LOUISVILLE EAST - 1325 S HURSTBOURNE PKWY. ROOM RATE. $115.00/NIGHT. 3 DAY POST AND PRIOR - FREE PARKING - PET FRIENDLY DATES: AUGUST 25 - SEPTEMBER 01 2024.PLEASE CONTACT THE HOTEL DIRECTLY TO RESERVE YOUR ROOM @ 502-426-2600 AND REFER TO KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT RUSS TURNER @314-368-5853 OR KATHY TURNER @ 314-368-5016 (CUT OFF DATE IS AUGUST 1 2024)



- AMENITIES
- Room Service
- 24 hour front desk
- Fitness Center
- Property is cleaned with disinfectant
- Restaurant
- Concierge
- Swimming Pool - Indoor
- Masks are available to guests
- Swimming Pool - Outdoor
- Contactless check-in and check-out are available
- Guests are provided with free hand sanitizer
- Social distancing measures are in place
- Internet Access - Free Public Access
- ATM Machine
- Acrylic shield between guests and staff in main contact areas
- Laundry
- Non-Smoking Facility
- Business Center
- Pet Friendly
  Lounge/Bar

















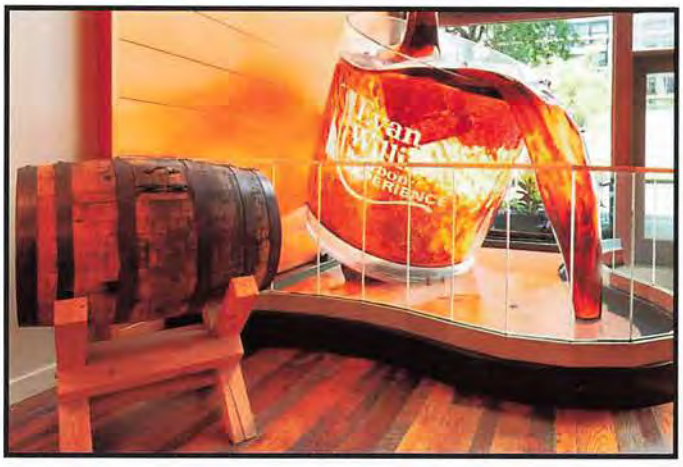



LAYING WREATH AT BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETARY SD DURING ANNUAL REUNION, HONORING FALLEN SERVICE MEMBERS
















BLACK HILLS
NATIONAL CEMETERY
AVENUE OF FLAGS
DONORS






SITE OF CAPTURE
OF THE ASSASSIN
JACK McCALL
WHO SHOT
"WILD BILL" HICKOK
AUG 2, 1876

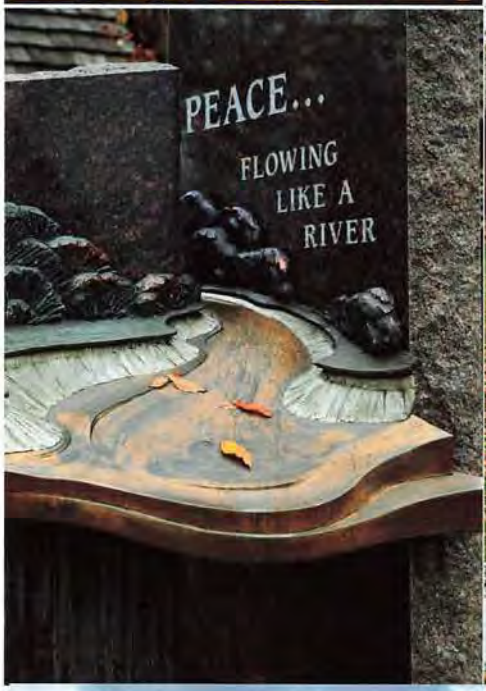
PEACE...
FLOWING
LIKE A
RIVER

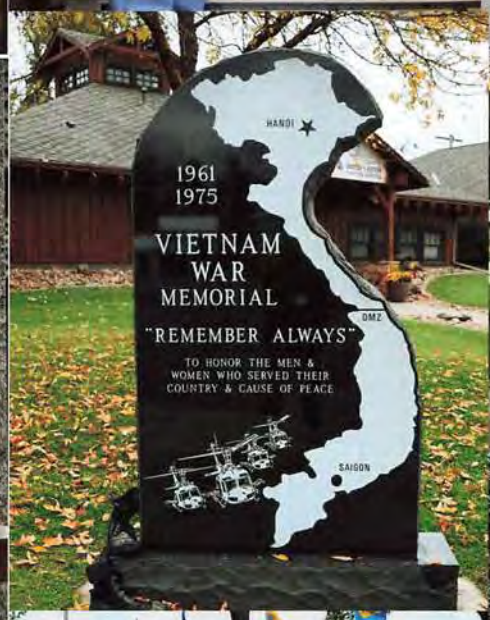
HANOI
1961
1975
VIETNAM
WAR
MEMORIAL
"REMEMBER ALWAYS"
TO HONOR THE MEN &
WOMEN WHO SERVED THEIR
COUNTRY & CAUSE OF PEACE
DMZ
SAIGON





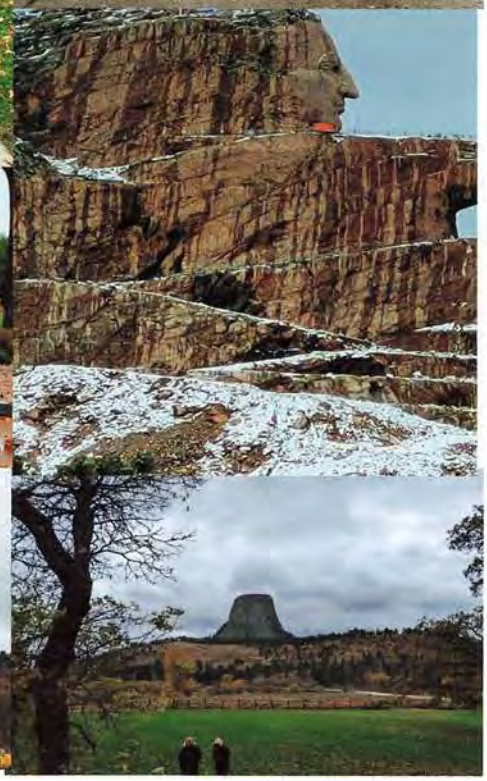




DEVILS TOWER TRADING POST


THE NUCHERENO CLAN


TIM HALEY GOING TO MARINE BIRTHDAY BALL



CRAIG TOURTE ALWAYS MAKING FRIENDS

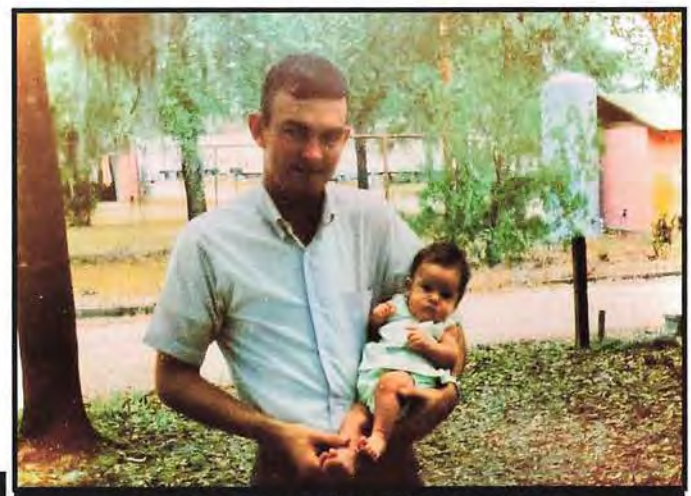
LEONARD JOHNSON MY GOOD FRIEND FROM E CO 2/26

OUR BEAUTIFUL KHE SANH LADIES AT REUNION LUNCHEON




KHESANH

VISIT TO MT RUSHMORE























KSV PRESIDENT RUSS TURNER OPENS MEMORIAL BANQUET

























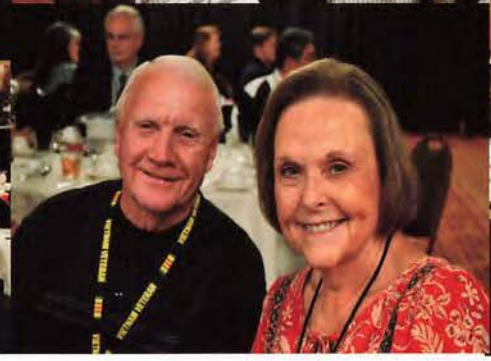





KHE SANH MEMBERS ENJOYING COWBOY LUNCHEON & SHOW AT FORT HAYS OLD WESTERN TOWN , HILL CITY SD.

































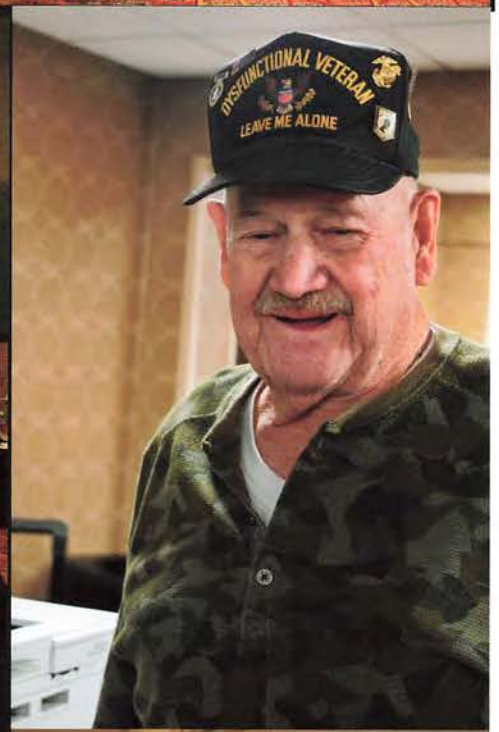
DYSFUNCTIONAL VETERAN
LEAVE ME ALONE



SEABEES
SANH


KHE SANH
VIETNAM

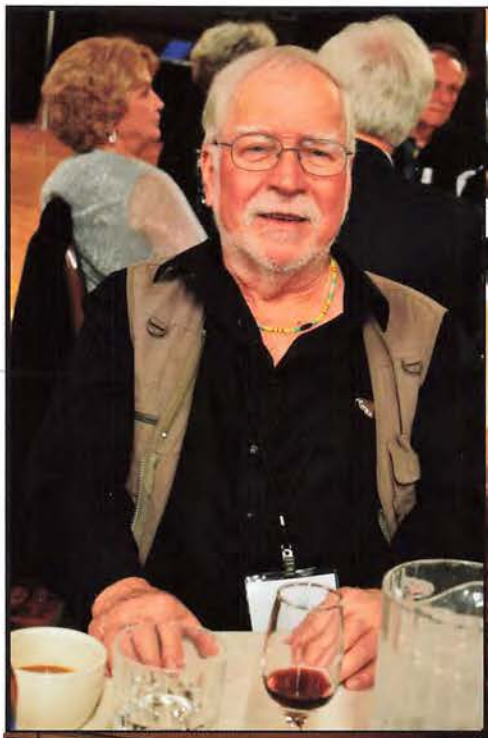









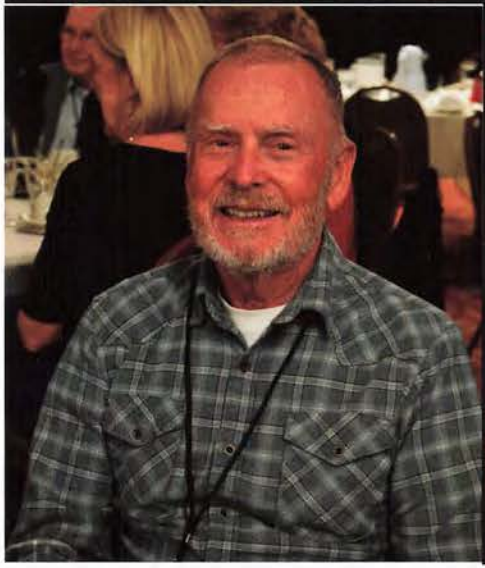





ENJOYING KSV BANQUET

A LONG TIME BETWEEN VIETNAM REUNION

Khe Sanh Annual Reunion unites two friends from different countries, whom never physically met. Below photo is of Hans Granqvist Sweden Army who was serving with the 13th marine artillery unit. And George Owsley who served with the Seabee unit Det-B 301 with the Marines at Khe Sanh.

During an artillery attack at Khe Sanh George found a photo container on the ground. Since he did not time to look for its owner, he just put it away and kept it all these past years.

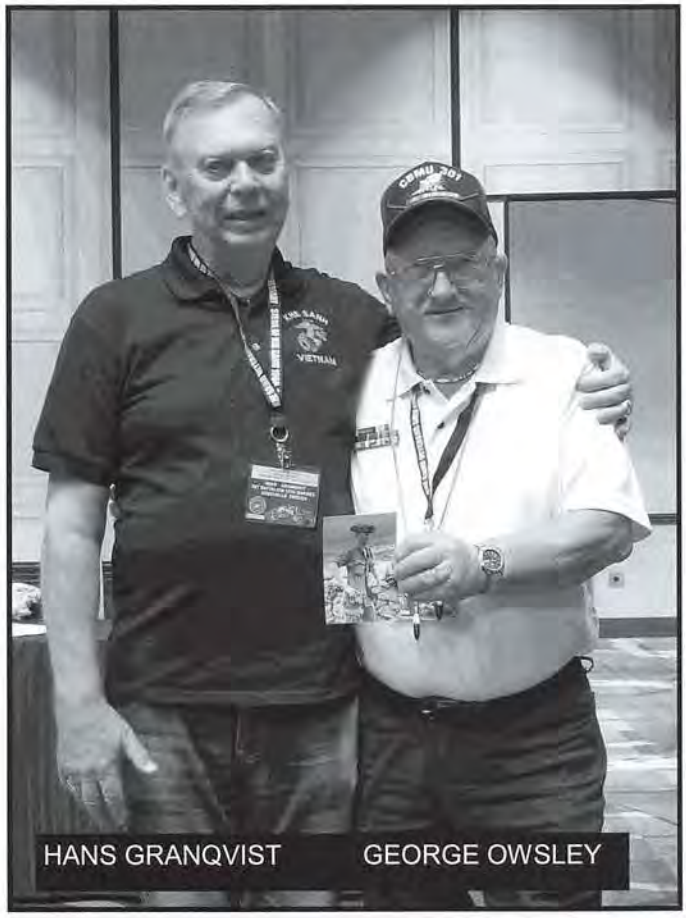

GEORGE OWSLEY PRESENTED THE PHOTO OF HANS GRANQVIST HE HAD FOUND YEARS AGO AT THE KSCB.

Hans Granqvist was in attendance at the reunion and George recognized him from one of the pictures he had saved all these years from the photo case. George presented the photo he had saved all theses years and another great friendship developed.





MODESTO DE LOS SANTOS WITH HIS LOVELY YOUNG BRIDE

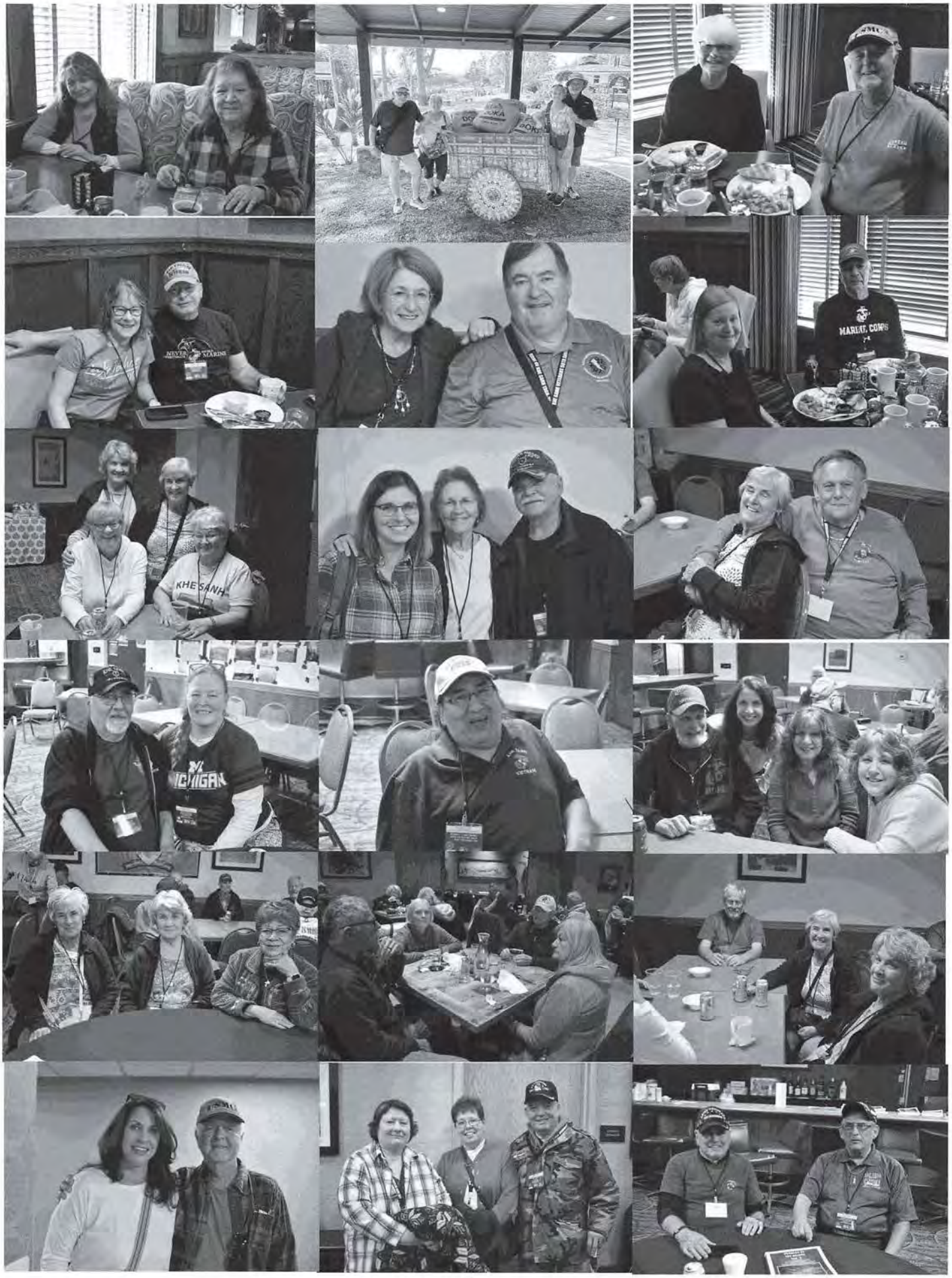
KHE SANH
MARINE CORPS

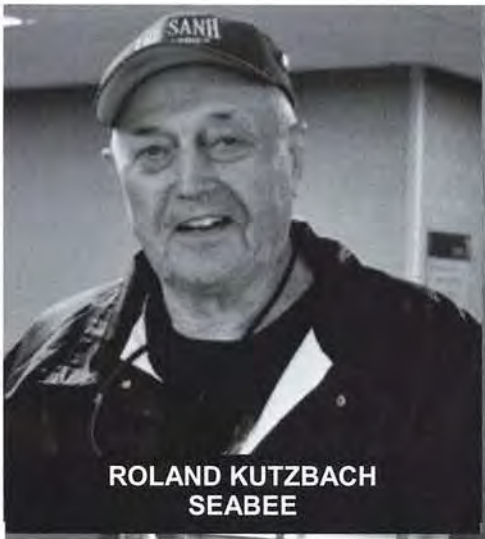

ROLAND KUTZBACH
SEABEE



TOM FORD F CO 2/26
KSV BOD



TOM EICHLER E CO 2/26
KSV TREASURER
CO CHAIRMAN

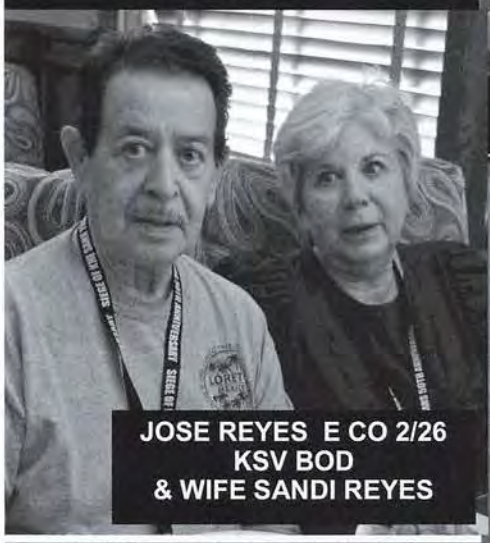

JOSE REYES E CO 2/26
KSV BOD
& WIFE SANDI REYES

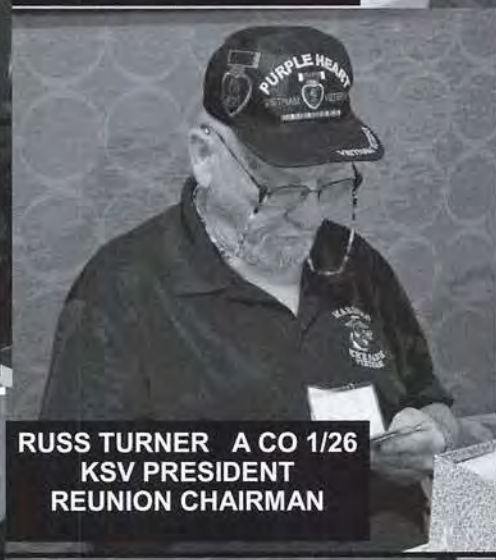

RUSS TURNER A CO 1/26
KSV PRESIDENT
REUNION CHAIRMAN



FRANK PORTELLO A CO 3RD ANTI
TANKS "ONTOS"

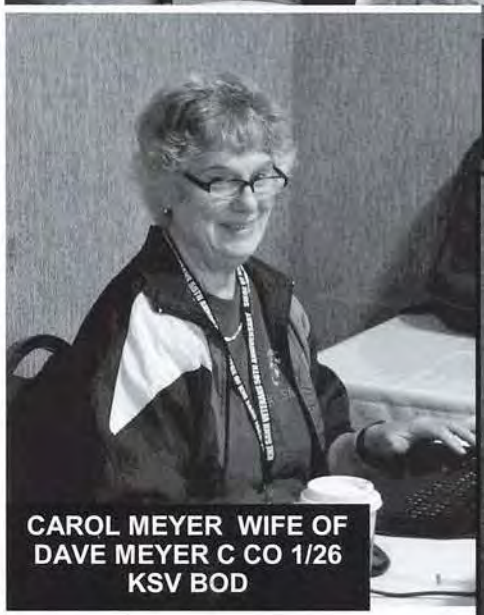

CAROL MEYER WIFE OF
DAVE MEYER C CO 1/26
KSV BOD



KATHY TURNER WIFE OF
RUSS TURNER A CO 1/26
KSV COMMITTEE CHAIRWOMAN

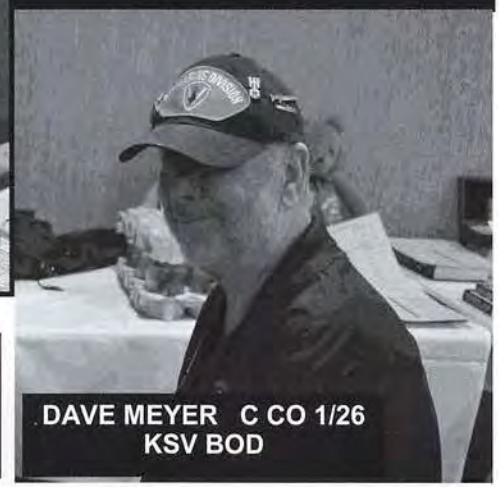

DAVE MEYER C CO 1/26
KSV BOD

A FEW OF RUSS & KATHY TURNER'S ELVES THAT HELP PUT THE REUNION TOGETHER








AKENHEATH


NEXT HOME GAME
Spectrum
UNDER ARMOUR



FROM THE KHE SANH VETERANS WEB SITE
BY DENNIS MANNION

I'm a map person. Always have been even as a kid. That said the most significant map in my life sits quietly in a desk drawer next to me as I type this. It's creased in many places and in those creases is a patina of reddish brown. Even though it's paper and rests in the dark most of the time it is aging just like I am. On the occasions when it 's out and unfolded, I often look at those 1000 meter grid squares and see many of **you** on them. I think, has it really been that long ago

The Water Point; helicopter revetments; The 105mm guns of C/13; The Ghost Patrol; Route 9; Dusters; C-Med; the runway; FOB; KS ville; The Poilane house; W/13, The rock quarry; the entire length of the runway; and the looming hills: 881s, 881n, 558, 950, 689, 700, Co Roc, 861a and 861. And so much more. We only have that in our memories now and on those ubiquitous Kodak 126 Instamatic photos (which are aging too).

On my only return in 2000 there was no dam on the Rao Quan River. When Tom Ford was there in 2008 there was, and the vast area north of 558, 861, 861a, and 881n is a lake. I learned some years ago that there are numerous wind turbines north of Hills 950 and 1015 stretching in formation to the east.

Yesterday, I used Google Maps and traveled to Khe Sanh. Our Khe Sanh isn't there. The access road from Route 9 to the combat base is named the Ho Chi Minh Road. (Their country, they get to decide.) The road extends for miles, passes what used to be the combat base and continues between 558 and 861 where it curves to the left and extends way beyond 881n.

Amazingly, there is a paved road on the left just before 558 that extends up the eastern slope towards hills 700. Where that road ends there is the Rose Farm. You can drive up, have lunch and a beverage at an outside bar and take in the views. You can stay overnight as there are some rooms and tents. If you want to continue up to 700 you can walk over to the wind turbines and make a right.

Drive past 558 on the HCM Road and go a few miles more and there's another road on the left (it's paved) and you can drive up to 881s. **Drive up to 881s!!!!**

My purpose in this that what we experienced is decades in the rear view mirror. The present for us is this message board, Facebook -- which I am not on and won't be -- and our reunions and gatherings like the one out in California every Jan 21st.

If you have the health and the means to come to the reunion in Louisville, consider doing so. Please don't wait for a "closer one" or one in a city that's more preferable to you, because that may never happen. In that case your next KS Vet's reunion will be in **the *great beyond where you can reconnect with everyone. S/F and Dennis***





"GHOST OF THE BATTLEFIELD"

THE DONUT DOLLIES OF VIETNAM, THE SAGA OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS GIRLS IN COUNTRY

The Donut Dollies of Vietnam left a lasting legacy, and their stories continue to be remembered as part of the broader narrative of the Vietnam War. Their dedication to providing a sense of normalcy, entertainment, and comfort to soldiers in the midst of the backdrop of conflict, where the harsh realities of war paint the landscape with uncertainty, a poignant scene unfolds—a meeting of the humanitarian spirit and the efficiency of military transport. Against this tumultuous canvas, a Red Cross Donut Dolly, clad in the iconic Red Cross uniform, finds herself hitching a ride in a helicopter, embarking on a mission that blends compassion with the swift mobility of military operations.



The helicopter, a mechanical bird of war, awaits with whirring blades ready to create a symphony of sound as it hovers, poised to lift off. Assisted by military personnel, the Donut Dolly, carrying the emblem of compassion and aid, ascends into the sleek and purposeful design of the aircraft. In this moment, the helicopter becomes a symbol of rapid response, an instrument of both conflict and relief.



Inside the helicopter, amidst the hum of the engine, the Donut Dolly takes her seat. The Red Cross insignia she wears becomes a beacon of hope against the military backdrop. The chopper rises into the sky, offering a bird's-eye view of the complex tapestry below – a mosaic where military infrastructure converges with diverse landscapes.

The journey unfolds with a mix of anticipation and purpose. The Donut Dolly, dedicated to providing comfort and support to military personnel, gazes out, observing the ever-changing scenery. The rhythmic thump of rotor blades and the rush of wind through open doors add a dynamic element to the experience, a constant reminder of the fluidity of the mission.

As the helicopter approaches its destination, the military base sprawls before them—a complex network of tents, vehicles, and dedicated personnel. The Red Cross Donut Dolly, embodying the humanitarian mission, readies herself to disembark. Her presence becomes a symbol of warmth and care in the midst of the military environment.

The helicopter gently descends, and the Donut Dolly steps onto the base, a figure of compassion in the heart of the military operation. Ready to offer refreshments, engage in conversation, and bring a touch of normalcy, she becomes a beacon of humanity in a world often defined by conflict.

Her unique journey, hitching a ride in the helicopter, becomes a distinctive chapter in the broader narrative—a story of compassion soaring through the skies to reach those in need, a reminder that even in the face of war, humanity prevails.

The Donut Dollies of Vietnam were young American women who volunteered with the American Red Cross to provide recreational and morale-boosting services to U.S. military personnel during the Vietnam War. The term "Donut Dolly" originated from the Red Cross practice of offering coffee and donuts to soldiers as a means of boosting their spirits and providing a taste of home.
These women were often college-educated, adventurous, and driven by a sense of duty to contribute to the war effort. They were deployed to Vietnam, where they worked in military support units, hospitals, and recreation centers. The Donut Dollies became a vital part of the U.S. military's efforts to boost the morale and well-being of soldiers stationed in a challenging and hostile environment.



The roles of the Donut Dollies were diverse and multifaceted. They organized recreational activities, such as games, contests, and entertainment shows, to provide soldiers with a break from the stresses of war. They also facilitated communication between soldiers and their families back home, offering a link to the world beyond the war zone.

One of the most iconic contributions of the Donut Dollies was their mobile recreation units, which often involved traveling to remote or front-line areas in helicopters. These units brought a touch of home to soldiers by providing games, entertainment, and, yes, donuts and coffee. The sight of the Donut Dollies arriving in their Red Cross uniforms and offering a moment of respite from the harsh realities of war became a symbol of comfort for many troops.

The experiences of the Donut Dollies were unique, as they navigated the challenges of working in a war zone while trying to maintain a positive and supportive presence for the military personnel. Their contributions were not only appreciated by the soldiers but also acknowledged by the military as an essential component of the overall well-being of the troops during a difficult time.

The Donut Dollies of Vietnam left a lasting legacy, and their stories continue to be remembered as part of the broader narrative of the Vietnam War. Their dedication to providing a sense of normalcy, entertainment, and comfort to soldiers in the midst of conflict highlighted the resilience of the human spirit in challenging circumstances.





























One of the two brave Donut Dollies who flew out to visit our team and enjoy the sights and smells at Forward Operating Base Aloui, Ashau Valley, November 1965.





OBIT

ROBERT F. JACKSON, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

Robert Frederick Jackson, 76, husband of Susan C. Jackson and father of Robert H. Jackson and Aubrey W. Jackson, of Loveland, Colorado, departed this life on December 28th, 2023 surrounded by family and friends. Bob was born January 31st, 1947, to Catherine and Robert Jackson in Buffalo, NY. He was raised in Tonawanda, NY, then in Tacoma Park, Wheaton, and Burtonsville, Maryland.

His siblings were Linda Jackson, William Jackson and Sadi "Sonny" Pekerol, Jr. Bob attended Sherwood High School in Sandy Spring, Maryland, where he was active in football and performed in theater productions.

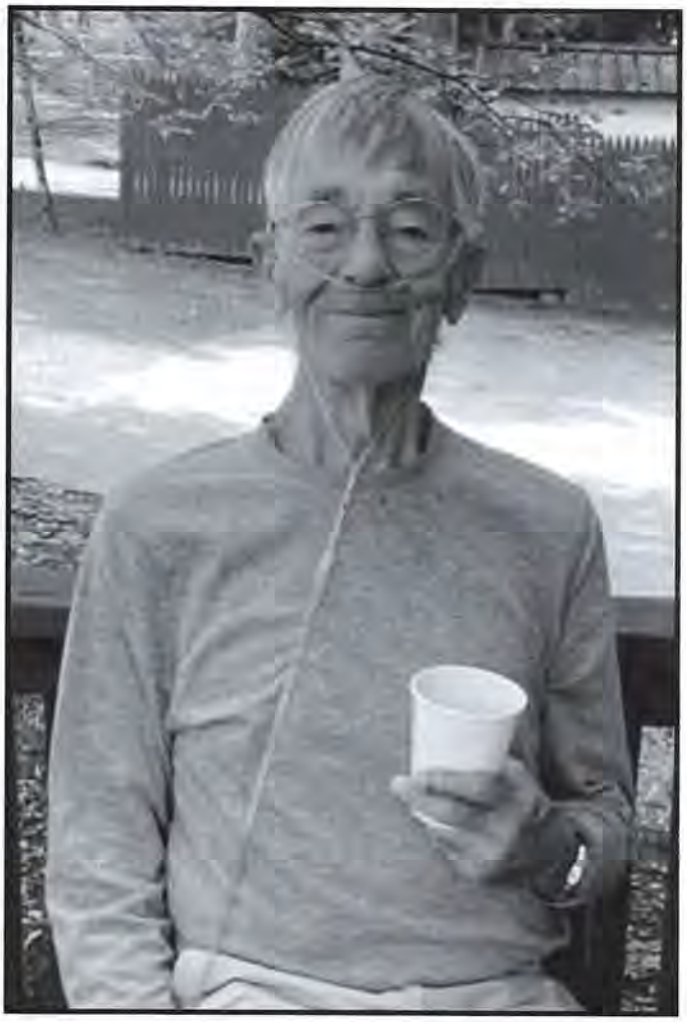

After graduating, he served honorably in the United States Marine Corps from 1966-1968. He served in a combat artillery unit in Vietnam along the DMZ, notably fighting in battles at Khe Sanh (hills 861 and 881) and Con Thien, some of the worst fighting of the war. After the war, Bob returned to Maryland, married his high school sweetheart, Susan, and settled in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where they had two children.

There he worked for the Army War College for several years. In 1979, Bob and Sue took their two boys on an RV trip around the United States for one year, living on the road and taking in the beauty of our nation. Afterward, they returned to Carlisle briefly before relocating to Frederick, Maryland. There, Bob worked for a construction firm for several years before moving on to Green Thumb, a federal employment agency. After receiving his Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Hood College, he began working for the National Archives at our nation's capital. He worked with national records and later in the film department, administering footage from throughout American history.

For their 30th wedding anniversary, Bob and Sue traveled to Rome, Italy and London, UK, a gift from their son Bob. After retiring from the National Archives, Bob and Susan spent several years living in Frederick, Maryland, before relocating to Loveland, Colorado to be close to his son, Robert, his daughter-in-law, and his granddaughter. There he and Sue spent many wonderful years enjoying all Colorado has to offer, while still traveling back to the East Coast for visits. Bob's favorite thing was to spend time sitting and chatting with his friends and family with a up of coffee and a smile on his face. He loved discussing history, science, art, film, literature, nature, and the fabric of our country. He had a passion for all kinds of music and played bluegrass and folk guitar. He enjoyed drawing, fly fishing, swimming, motorcycling, camping, reading a good book, and just spending time with family. Bob could tell you volumes about any topic you might want to bring up and share with him. Bob is survived by his wife, two sons, and his grandchildren, Catie, William, and Theodore Jackson.



LESS WE FORGET

2nd Platoon - Charlie Company
1st Battalion 9th Marines.



Photo taken after Khe Sahn battle for Hill 689, April 16, 1968

Front Row: Cpl. Henry Castaneda, T.K. Allen, Cpl. Ross Kasminoff, Don Meyers
Second Row: Cpl. Chapmen, Cpl. Curry, George King, Sgt. Bill Rider,
Cpl. Bill Parr, Lt. Bill Connelly
Third Row: Pvt. Barrert, Griffin Top Row: Sgt. Thomas

DONATIONS FOR KSV 2024

ARCHER, Michael	60.00	Check# 2093
AIELLO, William P.	10.00	Check # 3289
BARBER, Michael	1,000.00	Check# 3409561
BATES, Robert	10.00	Check# 5876
BELLANTONE, Ronald	100.00	Check#4022
BIGLER, Don	100.00	Check# 2977
BIRTCIL, Robert F	250.00	Check# 6962
BOAN, William S.	100.00	Check# 113
BOBEIK, Ronald	20.00	Check# 3938
BOHR, Harper L. Jr	150.00	Check# 434
BORLAUG, Ned	100.00	Check# 5658
CAVANAUGH, Carmelita	100.00	Check# 2713
CHOCLIS, Paul J.	100.00	M/O
CHOCLIS, Paul J	100.00	M/O
COEY, Larry	125.00	Check# 2119
COLE, Bernard D.	100.00	Check#
COLLINS, James	1,000.00	Check# 1814
COLLINS, James	1,000.00	Check# 1935
COOK, Michael H.	50.00	Check# 14426
CRAWFORD, Daniel C.	10.00	Check# 417
CRENSHAW, Carlton B.	200.00	Check# 9861
DEVERNEY, Wayne	500.00	Check# 410
DEWOLF, Timothy	20.00	Check# 3594
DOROSKI, Walter	100.00	Check# 1146
DOUGLAS, Edgar	60.00	Credit Card
EAKIN, Randall	100.00	Check# 2400
ESTES, Leo L.	10.00	Check# 325
FARRELL, Brian A.	10.00	Check# 1540
FETTER, Charles H.	10.00	Check# 1035
FOLEY, Richard	100.00	Check# 1892
FORD, Thomas	400.00	Check# 5740
FOSTER, William	200.00	Check# 1713
FOWLER, William	100.00	Check# 140
GAROUTTE, Michael	10.00	Check# 10459
GHOLSON, Fred	100.00	Check# 5556
GEIGER, Bruce	500.00	Credit Card
HARMON, Steve	50.00	Check# 2225
HAY, William	200.00	Check# 1490
HAY, William	500.00	Check# 1532
HOLSCHER, Robert J.	100.00	Check# 18773
HOLSCHER, Robert J.	200.00	Check# 18871
HOPWOOD, Harry	100.00	Check# 3140
HOWE John F.	1,000.00	Check#b15624
JACHIMIAK, Daniel	250.00	Check# 5795
JAMES, Raymond	1,250.00	Check# 396638
JACKSON, Dianne	100.00	Check# 2127
JENKINS, Stephen	50.00	Check# 2854
JESPERSEN, Marshall	200.00	Check# 8312
JUAREZ, Pedro	200.00	Check# 746
KNEPPER, David	25.00	Check# 242
KORKOW, Ken	250.00	Check# 8082

KORKOW, Ken	165.00	Check# 11656
KORN, William	250.00	Check# 8177
LEMIEUX, Lorne	60.00	Check# 1385
LINDSAY, John R.	200.00	Check# 2071
MAEDER, Marshall	280.00	Check# 4101
MANNING, Gerald E. II	150.00	Check# 1068
MAPEL, Randall	35.00	Check#
MCCANN, Timothy	200.00	Check# 3015
MCEWAN, Frederick II	200.00	CASH
MERCADO, Saturno	60.00	Check# 9564
MEYER, Dave & Carol	1,250.00	Check# 875276
MILLER, Barbara	50.00	Check# 399
MILLOCK, Carl	10.00	Check# 5123
MONAHAN, Frederick	50.00	Check# 102
NANGLE, James	1,000.00	Check# 340
NAZZARIO, Anthony	5,000.00	Check# 540
MORRISON, Sammy	75.00	Check# 3877
MULLER, Albert	5.00	Check# 702
OLIVER, Joseph	50.00	Check# 401
OWENS, Mike	100.00	Check# 1455
OWENS, Mike	100.00	Check# 1704
PEARSON, Scott	100.00	Check# 6753
RAYNER, Ron	945.00	Check# 570
RIORDAN, Robert	250.00	Check# 8612
ROBERTSON, Isidor	200.00	Check# 8759
RUSHFORTH, Toby	1,000.00	Check# 174
RUSHFORTH, Toby	665.00	Check# 209
SADOWSKI, Alexander	100.00	Check# 6950
SEMKOW, Raymond	100.00	Check# 1915
SEMKOW, Raymond	100.00	Check# 1795
SIEJUTT, Thomas	50.00	Check# 6312
SIEJUTT, Thomas	50.00	Check# 6453
SHOUSE, Ron	500.00	Check# 1175
SHUFF, Ronald	2,500.00	Check# 4684520759
SMITH, Larry	200.00	Check# 5498
SVIHEL, Ronald	40.00	Check# 3250
TROUP, Ed & Diana	200.00	Checks 6982 & 83
TORRES, Andres	100.00	Check# 8717
TOURTE, Craig	500.00	Check# 1066
TURNER, Russell	500.00	Check # 6638
UNANGST, Robert	500.00	Check# 1474
WASHINGTON, Walter	75.00	Check# 201
WIEDRICH, Albert	20.00	Check# 2985
WITTLER, Dale E.	250.00	Check# 6559
YATES, William	100.00	Check # 8360
ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	250.00	Check# 5360
ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	250.00	Check# 5438
ZEBAL, Kenneth W.	250.00	Check# 5162
ZEBAL, Kenneth W,	250.00	Check# 5298









MEMORIALS CONTINUED

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
2Lt Dale C. Allen I/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
SSGT William Ivor Tenney Bacon H&S CO 3/26 Died USS Sanctuary 29 June 67	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
2nd Lt Lawrence J. Bolger A Co 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
PFC Frederick J. Brenke L Co 3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Victor Lee Burns A Co 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Capt Franklin D. Bynum L C0 3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Allen James Damian A Co 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Jeffrey J. David L Co 3/26 CAC- Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl Anthony D Cesare Jr, I Co 3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
HM-3 Carl Douglas Dudley Jr H&S Co 3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Charles M. Gattis Jr. I/3/26 KIA 7/5/67 Died Navy Hospital Danang	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Alejandro R. Godinez I/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
S/Sgt Donald P. Hamilton 1/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
HM-3 Curtis D. Jackson H&S CO 3/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Freddie L. Johnson I/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Sgt Paul E. Kincaid A CO 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Charles A. Lynch Sub Unit 5 Hq CO , HQ Bn CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Francisco Mazariegos Sub Unit 5 HQ CO, HQ BN CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Kenneth A. Millard 1/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl Dennis A. O'Connor Sub Unit 5 HQ CO,HQ BN CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
PFC Paul M. Rodriquez Jr A CO 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Glenn E. Sanders Died USS Sanctuary 6/29/67 A Co 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl James M. Shepard Jr. Sub Unit 5 HQ CO, HQ BN CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
PFC Rick J. Stewart A Btry 1/13	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl Edmund B. Travis 1/3/26 A Btry 1/13	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl Richard L. Walker 1/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
Cpl Stephen G. Wasssenich I/3/26 CAC-Oscar Hill 689	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Jonathan C. Whitticom H&S CO 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
L/Cpl Ira W. Williams A CO 1/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26
PFC William J.Williams I CO 3/26	Jim "Ollie" Collins A CO 1/26

MEMORIALS

THOSE REMEMBERED

Capt Walter Egger USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
GSGT John J Grohman USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
1t Paul W. Bush USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
LCpl Stephen C Shannon USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
PFC Bennie J. Sisson USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 3 22 68
Sgt Manuel Floyd Martinez USA A-1/44 KIA 9 06 68
Cpl Fergus J. Carroll USMC K CO 3/4 KIA 18 Jun 68
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC A HQ Btry 1/13 KIA 09 MAR 68
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68
Remembering All "Bastard Bravo" Marines and their families
Captain Bill Person USAF 553 3RD Recon Wing
James Wright
PFC Donald Saunders USMC HQ BTRY 1/13 KIA 04 Mar 68
Sgt Donald Ray Chamblin USMC HQ BTRY KIA 08 Mar 68
GYSGT Charles Perkins USMC DOW 17 May 1968
SSgt Karl E. Taylor USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 12/98/68
PFC Roland T. Marshall USMC M CO 3/4 KIA 5/17/68
Capt Daniel Coonan USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 10/08/68
1Lt Thomas Reich USMC VMF-AW-115 KIA 11/17 68
Sgt Major James Gaynor USMC KIA 25 Feb 68
Doug Ipson USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 9/15/68 LZ Margo
Steve Reichardt USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 09/16/68 LZ Margo
Nate White USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 05/06/68 Cam Lo
All Members of Det A-101 Lang Vei & All who served at FOB-3
All the men of HQ Btry 1/13 Who Gave Their Lives So We can Enjoy The freedom we have today
Cpl William E. Wyrosdic USMC H CO 2/26 KIA 10/08/68
Always remembering all those KIA HILL 689 27 June 1967
L/Cpl Adrian Brittle USMC India CO 3/26 KIA 9/21/68
2LT Donald Jacques USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68
CPL John Greene USMC C CO 1/26 KIA 04 July 1968
LCPL Frederick B. Link USMC C CO 1/9 KIA 3/1/68
All Marines & Corpsman who served on Hill 861A in Jan/Feb & Mar of 1968
All Marines KIA of Delta CO 1/26
All Marines 1/1 & 2/1 Hotel CO
DR John Magilligan, d. 29 Jan 2013,DR Ed Feldman d. 03 Oct 2017& DR James Finnegan . 13 Sep 2013 From Charlie Med
All who served at Khe Sanh
HN William A. Beyer "Willie" USN H&S Co 3/26 KIA 2/1/67
1LT John Ellis USMC Crash-Rescue Crew OIC KIA
Gy/Sgt Joe H. Kahee Crash Crew Passed Away October 2019
PFC David A. Cramer, USMC KIA 22 Feb 68
PFC Leslie G. Aputen USMC KIA 15 May 68
PFC Francis W. Lamon USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 04/17/68
PFC William W. Lawrence USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 04/17 68
PFC Charles T. Johnson USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68
L/Cpl Darrel W. Cottrell USMC G CO 2/1 KIA 05/04/68
Thomas Jack Pennington KIA 27 Jan 68 at "Mikes" Hill Mike CO 3/4
PFC Ricky Marson USMC F CO 2/26 KIA 4/7/68
Mike Bradbury , Mike "Pops" Salinas, James "Doc" Thomas
Gilbert Wall B CO 1/26 & Lt COL Ken Pipes CO B CO 1/26
Frank Addice USN KIA 04/11/68
Sgt Tommy Antrim USMC A Btry 1/13 KIA 08 Feb 68
L/Cpl Wilbur Stovall USMC HQ Btry 1/13 KIA 09 Mar 68
Cpl Donald E. Whitaker USMC B CO 1/26 KIA 25 Feb 68
William Roland Prewitt MIA Phu Loc Hamlet Not Recovered
Gold Star Parents Of L/Cpl USMC Jeremy Santiago L CO 3/26 3rd Plt 12/14/73 -9/7/93 Operation Restore Hope
Louis Lowe USMC, Kilo CO 3/4 , 3RD PLT KIA Hill 689 14 May 68
Dennis L. Lobbezoo USMC KIA 06 June 68 E CO 2/26 Hill 861A

REMEMBERED BY

Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
Bruce Geiger USA 1/44th Arty Dusters
William Hotz Mike CO 3/4
Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
William E. Carpenter Bravo Btry 1/13
Alex & Barbara Sadowski H&S CO 1/26
Alex & Barbars Sadowski H7S CO 1/26
James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
James Baker HQ BTRY 13TH Marines
Barbara Eddowes Fiance
Will Griggs India Co 3/26
Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Charles H. Fetter H&MS-11,MAG –11 1ST M AW
Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Joe Derian Hotel CO 2/26
Lawrence Cooper CO C 5TH Special Forces
James Baker HQ Btry 1/13 26Th Marines

John Laibinis SR. H CO 2/26 2ND PLT
Clarence T. Anthony India CO 3/26
Chester W. Nelson JR. India CO 3/26
Pietro Osimanti Bravo CO 1/26
Johnny Moon Charlie CO 1/26 3RD SQD
Eric Bergland C CO 1/9
Lt Don Shanley 1st Plt E Co 2/26 Hill 861A

John Finn Delta Co 1/26
Peter Hoban Hotel CO 2/1
Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN
Rear Admiral Robert F. Birtcil USN
Ron Shuff LSU MTM Co. Maintenance Bn.
Pat B. Buckley Charlie CO 1/26
Richard Takacs MABS-36-MAG-36 Crash-Rescue Unit
Richard Takacs MABS-36-MAG-36 Crash-Rescue Unit
Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
Fred Gholson G BTRY 3/12
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1 REST IN PEACE
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Thomas C. Manson Golf Co 2/1
Hugh Liverman Mike CO 3/4
Donald Kujawa F CO 2/26 F CO 2/5
Randall Mapel Kilo CO 26TH Marines
Peter Mudrinich B CO 1/26
Larry Sherer USN HMM-262 HM-2
Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Bob Holscher HQ Btry 1/13 S-4
Bill Jayne B CO 1/26
Lorne Lemieux M CO 3/26
Daniel J. Depagnier Helicopter Sqd 363

David Kloote HQ CO 26TH Marines

MICHAEL'S BLOG

Michael Archer
USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN,
26TH Marines COMM

This blog is intended to share information related to the topics of my books on the battle of Khe Sanh, which include *A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered* and *The Long Goodbye: Khe Sanh Revisited. A third book, The Gunpowder Prince: How Marine Corps Captain Mirza Munir Baig Saved Khe San*h, was awarded the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's prestigious Colonel Joseph Alexander Award for a distinguished book of biographical literature in 2019.

FOR YOUR TOMORROW

December 20, 2023

Last Thursday evening, I attended an extraordinary dinner with about twenty others at the venerable Italian American Club in Las Vegas at the invitation of my friend Tom McGrath. Tom is a whirlwind of service to the Las Vegas area and a champion of recognizing all military branches. As a former Marine, he has a particular fondness for helping organize the annual Marine Corps Ball at the Orleans Hotel each year and brightens the lives of countless children by heading up the Marine Corps' annual Toys for Tots. Never seeming to waste a moment, Tom's car was full of toys he'd picked up on his way to the restaurant that night.

Our host, retired Lieutenant Colonel George Rivers, served three tours in Vietnam as an advisor to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and with the Third Reconnaissance Battalion. Other guests included a former corpsman, a retired army officer, and retired Lieutenant Colonel Scott McKenzie, who once served as a White House aide to President Gerald Ford. Retired Lieutenant Colonel Rob Warfield and his wife Leah, whom I knew from a previous visit, shared some fascinating stories of their time traveling the world together.

Our guest of honor that evening was retired Major General James Livingston, who was in Las Vegas with his charming wife, Sarah, to be guest of honor at the National Finals Rodeo. As a Marine captain in Vietnam, Livingston earned the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest military award, for his heroic efforts in leading his men against a vastly superior enemy force at Dai Do during the first week of May 1968.

In the months preceding that action, American and South Vietnamese forces had weathered the nationwide Tet Offensive, gaining back all the territory the North Vietnamese Army and Vietcong had taken and had hung onto the Khe Sanh Combat Base after a grueling 77-day siege. In a military sense, the Offensive appeared to be a defeat for the invaders. Still, it turned into a diplomatic opportunity at the end of March when President Lyndon Johnson announced that he would not run for reelection, curtailed the US bombing of North Vietnam, and proposed peace talks with the North to begin on May 10. Johnson's beleaguered Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, had resigned a month earlier. The administration promised Americans that they were winning the war in Vietnam and there was "light at the end of the tunnel," but the extent of the Tet Offensive now indicated otherwise.

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in early April touched off enormous domestic upheaval, including rioting in many cities, coupled with nationwide protests and student boycotts against the war. Leaders in Hanoi saw these events in late March and April as an opportunity to gain bargaining leverage in the upcoming peace talks, and so decided to strengthen their hand by going on the offensive again in South Vietnam.

Their primary objective this time seems to have been to capture the sprawling supply base at Dong Ha, a few miles below the demilitarized zone at the confluence of two major highways, believing this would paralyze US military forces in I Corps. As the invading force of 10,000 seasoned, well-equipped soldiers with artillery support moved toward Dong Ha, a mere 600 Marines from the Second Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment stood in their way.

During the desperate fighting that ensued, Echo Company commander Captain James Livingston was wounded multiple times while exposing himself to enemy fire in leading his men forward. An enemy machine gun bullet eventually shattered his leg, immobilizing him, although he refused to leave the battlefield until his last Marine was safe. Survivors weathered the night within a makeshift perimeter and repelled repeated attacks by the enemy to overrun them.

Four days of vicious combat included waves of at-

tack and counterattack, often close enough to use pistols and knives. Despite their high casualties, the men of the Second Battalion held on long enough for reinforcements to finally arrive in the form of the U.S. Army's Third Battalion, Twenty-First Infantry Regiment. The Second Battalion lost 81 Marines and sailors and suffered 400 wounded out of the initial 600. Another company commander, Major Jay Vargas, would also be awarded the Medal of Honor for his efforts at Dai Do.

The NVA withdrew north back to their sanctuaries. Some military historians say the NVA had no idea how relatively small the force they were fighting at Dai Do was. Had they known, they likely would have committed more of their troops, finished off the Marines, and "changed the course of the war."



L-R MICHAEL ARCHER, BRIG/GEN JAMES LIVINGSTON & TOM MCGRATH

Conversely, the Third Marine Division commander, Major General Rathvon Tompkins, was criticized for not committing reinforcements sooner and for a lack of adequate air and artillery support. Tomkins, however, also suffered from inadequate information about the enemy's true intent and worried that their advance on Dong Ha was a feint to deflect attention from another target, perhaps the air base at Quang Tri.

Surprisingly, few people outside of those involved would learn about this epic battle. The war-weary American public was too busy dealing with unprecedented domestic unrest, and there were few members of the press in the Dai Do area. In fact, so little news was available about what occurred there that, despite being stationed at the time only about seven miles from there, on the southwest perimeter of the Quang Tri airbase, I never heard a thing about the battle until many years later.

Even the U.S. military did not seem to recognize the Second Battalion's valiant effort against such enormous odds. Over half a century after the battle, U.S. Senator Jon Tester of Montana requested the White House and Department of Defense honor them with a Presidential Unit Citation. According to the Defense Department, it is an unusual request because no PUC has ever been awarded so long after an event. As of May 2022, there has been no movement on this.

Meeting the legendary General James Livingston last week was indeed an honor. When I later read the citation for his medal, I noticed that some of the most desperate fighting involved aiding Marines who had been surrounded and trapped by the enemy. This reminded me of a blog piece I wrote not



MARINES AT DAK DO, MAY 1968

long ago about the Chosin Reservoir in Korea and how Medal of Honor winners Captain Ray Davis and Staff Sergeant Archie Van Winkle risked their lives to save Marines who were also trapped. I've been fortunate to have served with, or come to know, so many who risked it all in displaying such selfless, unhesitating loyalty and love for one another. Sadly, I will never meet countless others who gave their full measure of devotion in helping a brother-in-arms go home.

While the Marines at Dak Do did not fight to the last man, there is the hint of an American Thermopylae in the circumstances of that event, using sheer tenacity to stop a vastly superior army. Perhaps a more appropriate example is found in an equally obscure situation that took place on another Asian battlefield in 1944 at Kohima and Imphal, India, where 1,500 British, Indian, and Nepalese troops turned back an invading army of 15,000 Japanese soldiers. Military historian Robert Lyman later wrote that their stand "changed the course of the Second World War in Asia."

The turning point in that battle occurred on the tennis court of the British District Commissioner's bungalow, later becoming a cemetery containing over 1,400 who died there. An inscription on the cemetery's memorial was inspired by the epitaph Simonides wrote to honor the Spartans who fell at the Battle of Thermopylae:

When you go home , tell them of us and say, For your tomorrow, we gave our today.

OBIT

CAPTAIN DONALD CAMERON, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, 3RD FORCE RECON

Captain Donald Cameron USMC, Retired age 86 of New Carlisle passed away on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at Springfield Regional Medical Center. Donald was born the son of Lester Ken & Clara Louise (Copple) Cameron on June 11, 1937, in Chi-



cago, Illinois. He is preceded in death by his parents. Donald is survived by his loving wife Jeannie Cameron of 54 years; 6 children Dawn (Robert Burkhalter) Cameron of California, Margie (Wayne Cawthorn) Cameron of California, Jessica (Joel) Miller of Springboro, Joyce (Michael) Lobenstein of Greenville, Jason Cameron of Springfield, & Julie (Rob) Rishel of Westerville; 14 grandchildren; 3 great-grandchildren. Donald was a loving husband, father, grandfather, & friend. He will be missed by all of those who love him. Donald proudly served his country as a member of the United States Marine Corps. **He was a member of the 3rd Force Recon Company during the Vietnam War &** climbed the ranks to Captain before retiring after 20 years of faithful service.

Donald had a love for music & enjoyed taking his wife to the symphony. He played the French horn, was a member of the Marine Corps Band, & was proud to have played in several Rose Bowl Parades. Donald had a love for his community and served on the New Carlisle City Council & while serving became Mayor. He was a lifetime member of the American Legion Post 286 & a member of Heart of Ohio Scroll Saw Club. In his spare time, he taught teens to play chess at the local middle school; most of all he enjoyed spending quality time with his family. Friends & family may call on Saturday, January 27, 2024, from 11AM – 12PM at First United Methodist Church 220 S. Main St. New Carlisle, Ohio where a funeral service was held at 12PM with military honors. Memorial contributions may be made in Donald's name to The Gideons International apps.gideons.org. Expressions of sympathy may be left at www.trostelchapman.com











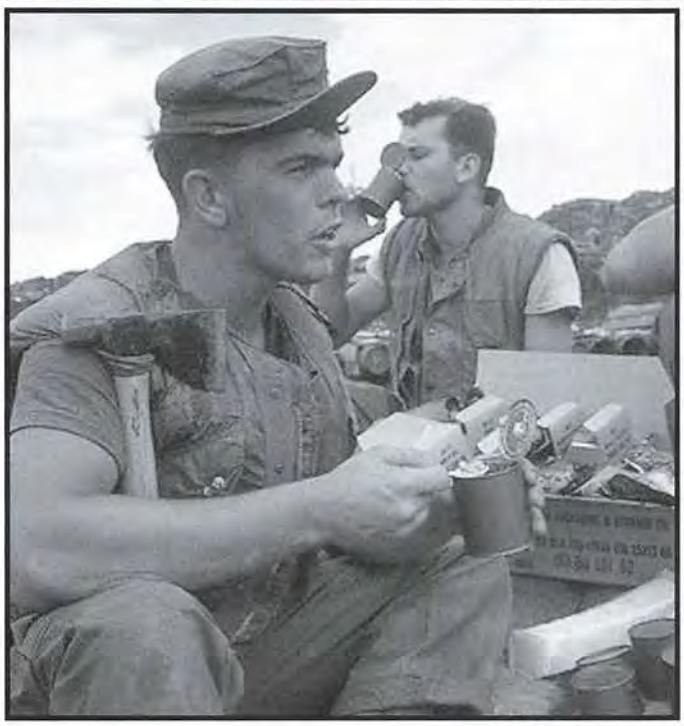

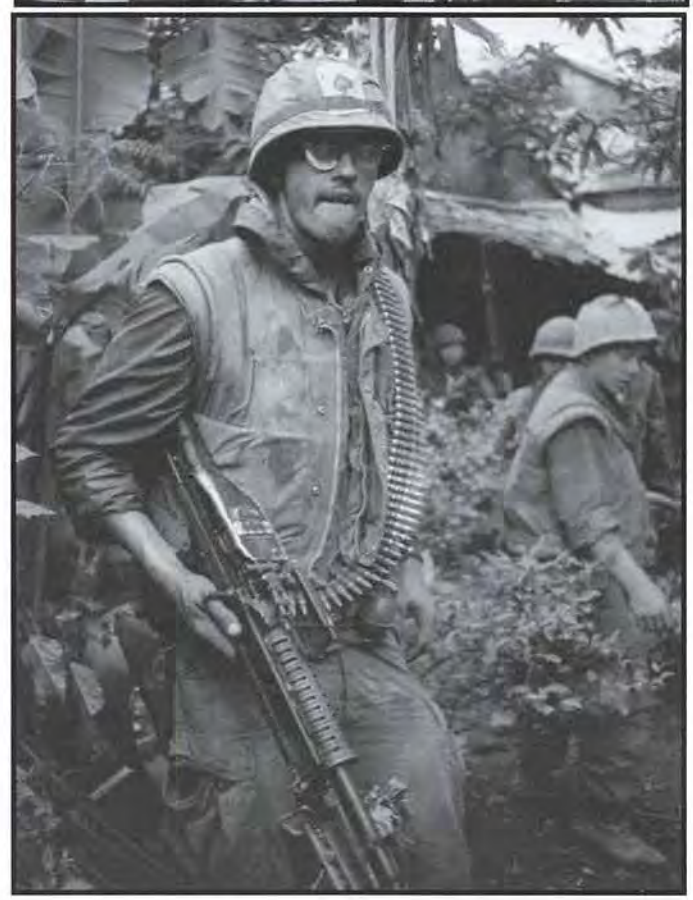

OBIT

MILTON "MAC" MCNEELY, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, BRAVO CO 1/26

Milton "Mac" McNeely, 75, of Amarillo, TX, went home to his Lord and Savior on Tuesday, February 13, 2024. A celebration of life will be held at Coulter Road Baptist Church on March 2, 2024 at 11 a.m.

Milton was born on July 8, 1948, in Lubbock, Texas. Some of his most cherished childhood memories were of times spent with his Grandaddy and



Granny. Even as a mischievous young boy, Milton had an entrepreneurial spirit. When he wasn't working in his father's candy shop or loan office, he attempted many business ventures. He developed a love for learning, reading and chess.

Milton frequently joked that he dodged the draft by joining the United States Marine Corps. He was a very proud American who was honored to have served his country in Vietnam from 1966 to 1970. Milton served with the Bravo Company (B-1-26) during the seventy-seven day Siege at Khe Sanh. During his service, Milton earned the rank of sergeant and received several medals including a Purple Heart.

After his discharge, Milton further pursued his passion for business. He later started his own finance company and furniture store, with the guidance and encouragement of his stepfather. Milton was a patriot who strongly believed in and pursued active political involvement. In 2017, he was recognized by his industry with a Distinguished Service Award for lobbying legislators on behalf of their professional organization.

Later in life, Milton committed his life to following Jesus Christ and became very involved in the ministry of the local church. He found a new passion in studying God's word, sharing the gospel with children and youth, and would offer to pray with anyone who would express a need.

Milton will be remembered for his impeccable dress, dry sense of humor, witty banter, growing curiosity that kept Siri busy, and love for deep intellectual conversations about faith, politics, or the next "big idea" or business venture. Most importantly, he will be missed for his integrity, kindness, generosity, love, support and advice by those who loved him.

Milton was preceded in death by his loving wife of almost 25 years, Charlotte McNeely, his father Edmund McNeely and his stepfather and mother, Ed and Willaphene Fletcher. Survivors include his son Gene McNeely; his daughter Kara Green and her husband Todd; his three grandchildren Landon Green, Cason Green and McKenna Green, to whom he was affectionately known as "Grandaddy Grinch"; his "sunshine" Pam Reed, who stayed by his side until his passing; his siblings Velvet McCurry, Kathy Fletcher and Greg Lopez, Carlton and Pam Fletcher and Lenny Monson; nieces and nephews; and many others who looked to him as a father or mentor.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that memorials be made to Prairie View Baptist Chapel, Coulter Road Baptist Church, Child Evangelism Fellowship or any Christian organization of your choosing.



JANUARY 21, 2024
NORTHERN KHE SANH VETERANS LUNCH
BY CRAIG W. TOURTE
TABLE MOUNTAIN GOLF COURSE
OROVILLE, CALIFORNIA

Our January 21, annual Siege Luncheon to Commemorate those who fought at the Marine Corps Combat Base of Khe Sanh (1968) was once again held at the Table Mountain Golf Course in Oroville, Calif. Over 50 members of the community, Khe Sanh Veterans, fellow Veterans, post-Vietnam Veterans from other conflicts, and friends, expressed their appreciation for that unselfish service. My introduction' "We who experienced that event come together often, not to celebrate but rather to remember and commemorate those who not only served on the Combat Base but also to honor all of those who fought in the War in Vietnam, regardless of what branch, in what capacity or the location."

I would like to quote our dear departed friend Steven Wiese who said it best, "I've had people say to me that the war in Vietnam was many years ago, why don't you just get over it? You know, I wish I could get over it but on the other hand it's like I don't want to forget these guys I fought alongside. I don't want to forget what I've seen and what I have witnessed, I don't want to forget those memories."

Steve's wonderful quote line is the reason we continue to hold this luncheon each year while we are able. A special thank you to Tom Horchler who organizes the luncheon each year. Besides Tom and me, the other Khe Sanh Veterans who attended are, David Tonick, Robert Singleton, Marco Soto, Kenneth (Buzz) Sawyer, Andres (Pete) Torres, Daniel Ferguson and Robert (Bob) Feeney. I know there were a few others and I apologize to those whose names I missed.







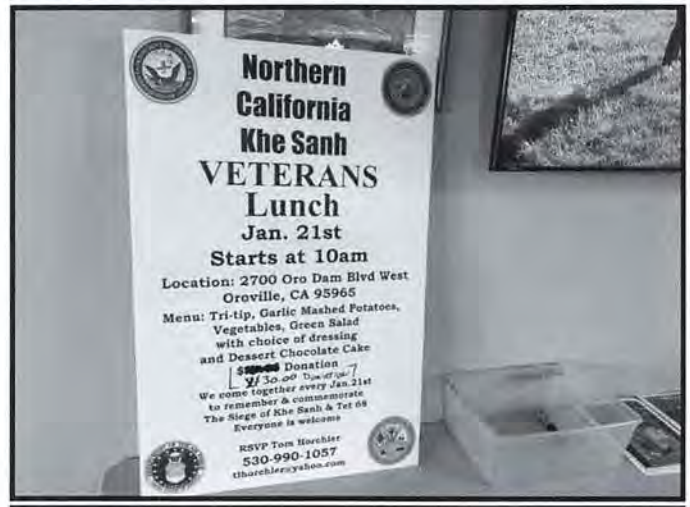





"MY DRILL INSTRUCTOR"
BY JOHN PESSONI, 3RD COMBAT ENGINEERS
A CO 1ST PLATOON

OBIT

1ST SERGEANT BEN L. LEITH, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, G CO 2/26

1ST Sergeant Ben Leith USMC, passed away in September 2023 at the age of 87. He was my drill instructor for 2nd Battalion Platoon 2085 in 1966. He was called away in the middle of our training when he received orders to serve in Vietnam. He was a very tough but fair Marine greatly respected by his fellow instructors and the recruits he had the privilege of training.



BEN AS DI

One day, Bill Simons also a member of our platoon, contacted me. He had made contact with Ben and another 21 members of platoon 2085, and they wanted a Reunion. I informed Bill that the Khe Sanh Veterans were having A union in Washington DC and we could join them. Everyone Bill contacted showed up at the Washington Reunion, included our former Drill instructor Ben Leith and his wife Jacqueline.(Jackie).

Tom Eichler from the Khe Sanh Veterans made a plague for Ben which he loved. Jackie Leith was also given gifts from the Khe Sanh veterans and members of platoon 2085. We had a great time remembering our experiences in 1966.

Ben and Jackie after this reunion became regular attendees at our annual Khe Sanh Reunions. Ben liked to hang around with Tom Ford (F CO 2/26) & I who were in charge of the Khe Sanh Veterans PX. Ben was one hell of a Marine Drill Instructor and expected his marines to be squared away at all times. If you failed to do so he would come down on you like a ton of bricks,

I spoke with him and related that times I hated his tactics and how hard he was at times with me. I later realized that his hard methods had prepared me for my survival in Vietnam.

THANK YOU BEN, you will always be remembered by all those who were gifted to have known you.

BEN LEITH MARINE SERVICE HISTORY

- Korean War 1950-1953
- Vietnam War 1961-1975
- Unit of Service: 1st Marine Division; 3rd Marine Division; 4th Marine Division; 5th Marine Division
- Location of Service: San Diego, California; Camp Pendleton, California; Korea; Okinawa Island (Ryukyu Islands); Parris Island, South Carolina; Subic Bay, Philippine; New River, North Carolina
- Highest Rank: First Sergeant
- Service History Note: The veteran served as a drill instructor.



BEN BEING INTERVIEWED BY THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



BEN & JACKIE AT KHE SANH REUNION

OBIT

VERNON "DOC" WIKE, USN CORPSMAN, KHE SANH VETERAN

Born in El Dorado, Kansas on June 5, 1947, Vernon Ralph Wike was the son of Virgil and Marjorie (Markee) Wike. He passed away at the Colorado State Veterans Home at Fitzsimons on January 26, 2023. He was preceded in death by both parents and both of his sons, Sean and Jedediah. He leaves his two sisters, Helen (Hull) Parker of Hays, Kansas; Virginia (Hull) Stricker of Lone Tree, Colorado; and three grandchildren, Jackson and Charlotte Wike of Rockland, MA and Joplin Wike of Connecticut.

Vern was raised in a difficult and sometimes abusive family but upon his eighteenth birthday joined the U.S. Navy and served as a Navy Corpsman with distinction in Vietnam. During the late 1960's he was pictured in Life magazine, Time magazine and People magazine treating wounded Marines during the battle for Khe Sanh.



To those he served with and those whose lives he saved, he was a hero. As a result of the action that he saw in Vietnam, he developed an arthritic hip problem and eventually returned to the United States where he received his discharge and eventual 100% disability for his hip condition and PTSD. While flashbacks and PTSD remained with him for many years, Vern had a "heart of gold" and would go to extremes to assist others that needed his assistance. He worked for some years as a respiratory therapist prior to receiving his disability determination, and continued to display the kind of care to his patients that he had to his Marine comrades in Vietnam. He lived for many years in Prescott, Arizona before his home burned down shortly before he had a severe stroke.

Following recovery from his stoke, he lived with his sister, Virginia (Hull) Stricker and her husband, first in Ankeny, Iowa before moving to Parker, Colorado in 2010. He entered the Veterans Home at Fitzsimons in 2015 where he lived until his death.

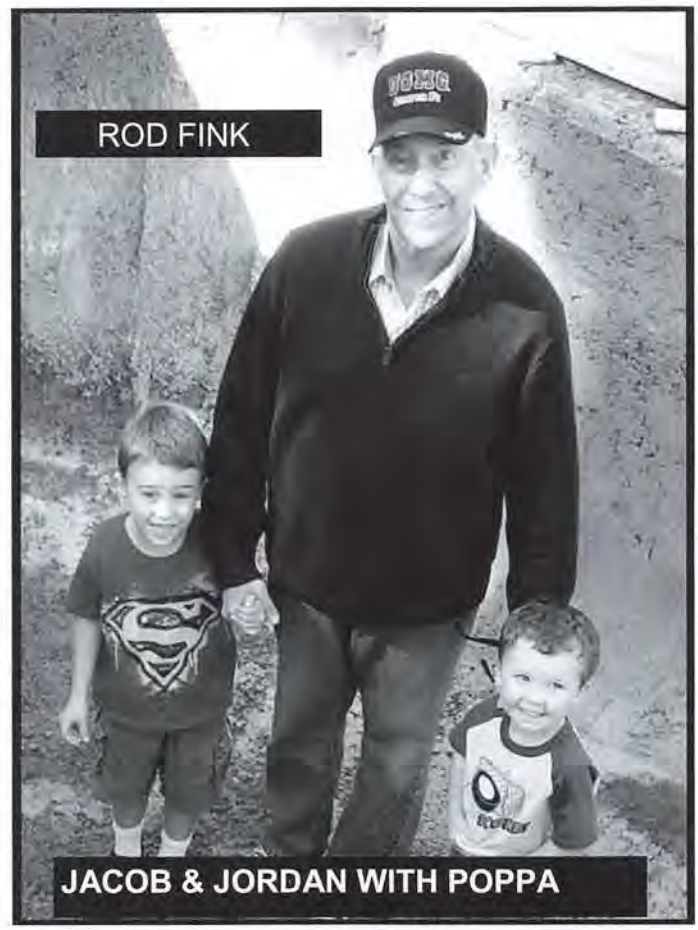



DENNIS WALER WITH LOVELY WIFE

KHE SANH MEMORIES FROM WALTER SCHLECH "TO KHE SANH AND BACK - MY JOURNEY"

I, Received the latest Red Clay in the mail today and it promoted me to write this remembrance which might be of interest to some of our Khe Sanh Brothers. I penned it for my kids too before old age carries it all away!

I joined the USNR at 18 in the summer of 1964 along with some friends living on the US Naval Base in Charleston (my dad was COMSUBFLOT 6 at the time and swore me in.).

Instead of Great Lakes boot camp I did 2 weeks of pre-Sub School in New London before heading to Williams College as a freshman. I attended Wednesday night USNR training each week at the Pittsfield USNRTC while in school and was a radioman striker. The summer of'65 I did the full 8-week Sub School and became eligible for submarine duty.

With too much partying and too little studying, I flunked out of school the following spring and lost my deferment for the 2 years of active duty required by my enlistment. My father said that 2 fairly independent jobs in the enlisted Navy were "cooks and corpsmen"; I couldn't cook so decided to go to Corps school. My grandfather had also been a career Navy doc (a flight surgeon, he received a Purple Heart when he survived the sinking of the USS Wasp) so why not?

I did well at the Corpsman "A" School in San Diego (#1 in the class) but hadn't realized before going that medical services in the USMC were provided by the USN. I knew what was coming when my entire "A" School class was sent on graduation to Camp Pendleton for FMF training. interestingly my future wife's great uncle was Joe Pendleton and her father was a USMC CAPT with the 7" Marines at Chosin Reservoir - but that's another story!

With my newly minted 8404, I was assigned to Chelsea Naval Hospital, Boston where I spent 6 months on the pediatric ward before receiving orders to the 5"" Med Battalion at Camp Schwab in Okinawa. This was a skeleton group with a doc, a Chief, and I the only members as I recall. I went to jungle warfare school but was mostly bored. In October '67 I was sent to Bravo Med at Phu Bai on TDY to do casualty assessments for 2 weeks but then sent back. I remember watching helos come in to the pad outside and the frantic triage but little else.

Christmas was quiet but then the "shit hit the fan" in January '68 and I received orders to ,HQ BTRY, 1/13 at Khe Sanh. I flew into DaNang (not sure of the aircraft) and waited a few days there to get my gear and a hop to Khe Sanh on a C-130. We flew high to avoid the .51 cal. NVA machineguns and I recall a young Marine SGT continually crossing himself while we sat on our flak jackets on the short trip. As we approached the airstrip, the pilot pulled the flaps, cut the engines, and we dropped like a stone to the end of the strip. The back door opened as we moved down the strip and the loadmaster kept yelling "Out, out!" as we ran out and into shallow trenches on the side of the strip. Mortars were coming in and the C-130 turned around and roared off without stopping. Some of those C-130's are still flying and I'm proud to say my oldest son, a USAFR MAJ, is in charge of US and foreign C-130 pilot training at Little Rock AFB today!

I then walked up the road to the 1/13 compound as casualties were coming down to the Charlie Med bunker. The BAS was 30 yds down from the CP tent and 20 yds from the FADAC bunker. The 1/12 155mm battery was across the road and the 4-deuce mortar pit 20 yds the other way. We had a good view of the airstrip as we were on the high side of the KSCB. My brothers in the BAS tent were Dr. Hal Lasker, BN surgeon and HN Jeff Campbell, both who had been there for a month or two. HMC Bill Ballew arrived later that month. (RVN tour but just barely. After we had moved later in the year to Hill 55 outside Da Nang, he got a ride on a 6-by to the airstrip on his last day in-country and was wounded by an IED on the way in. He refused to stay one more day to be treated and got on the bird home with bloody field dressings in place! Hal had had enough of war and wounds and went into psychiatry with a practice at his home on Long Island. I saw him several years later when I was in NYC studying and kept in some touch later but he died suddenly in 2005 in his 60s. I was in contact with Chief Bill Ballew after he found me on Facebook just a few years ago - he had retired from the Navy, worked as a lab in the DC area, and died of emphysema a few years back. I tried over the years to find Jeff Campbell who was from Florida originally but have been unsuccessful so far.

Life at the BAS at Khe Sanh was mostly moments of terror. We did sick call and took care of minor ailments. Filled sandbags for our little backdoor bunker, ate C-rations, read and played cards. Incoming was different and scary-we huddled in the makeshift bunker until we heard "Corpsman up!". The one day I remember most was when the CP tent was hit- I ran up but the clerk was dead I think. On the way up someone passed me running back down to the BAS and when I got back he was there with an open head wound with his frontal lobe showing and scared to death! He was med-evac'ed through C Med and got a plate in his head in Yokosuka. Gunny Klidonas was also wounded that day with a big chunk of his deltoid muscle taken out by shrapnel. He was patched up and went home as well. I found him in Florida many years later and had a nice phone chat.

Another round hit near the comm shack one day and I remember putting tourniquets on SGT Smith, who I found leaning over the stumps of both legs, blown off high in the thighs. We started an IV and sent him down to C Med but he died there I think. I remember Don Saunders and Will Stovall being killed. I think it was Saunders who was filling sandbags, cut himself and while walking the 10 yds to our tent door took a mortar fragment under his armpit over the top of his flak jacket. We put a chest tube through the wound and he bled out there calling for his mother.

On another day, the tent just below the CP which was used as a bunkhouse for transients to other units was hit. I ran up and through the smoke and dust with that sickly sweet explosive smell saw one poor new guy, black-framed glasses askew, with his abdomen opened up and intestines showing in the wound. I never knew his name but was upset as he was only at Khe Sanh to report in to the parent unit before being sent elsewhere in I Corps. If he had just been told to report in to his own local unit he might be alive today. There were other casualties in the tent but I can't remember them.

Mail call was intermittent but my mother sent me a quart of Jack Daniel's in an empty plastic Darvon bottle that I shared around. She was a volunteer at a USAF hospital in Ankara where my dad (now a RADM) was the US Naval Attaché, and could get the empty med bottles for the trip to Vietnam.

Other memories include the ammo dump explosion Chief Ballew saw the "mushroom cloud", grabbed his gas mask and was convinced, albeit briefly, that the NVA had "nukes"! There were nights on the trench line above the CP where we would report in hourly by radio (call sign "Jacksonville") and wait on the Arklight notifications ("Arklight 2100 hrs"). They were spectacular as the B-52s dropped their bombs from 30,000ft to within a few hundred yards of our position. The ground would shake and we could hear the whine of shrapnel going over our heads in the trench. Watching the Skyraiders, **A-4** Skyhawks, and F-4 Phantoms do their thing outside the wire was always heartening during the siege. The Skyraiders with their slow flight and the "tat-tat -tat" of their .50s was like watching a WW2 movie. The napalm runs of the Phantoms were impressive and we would yell "Get some!" from our bunkers as they dropped their canisters.

On the other side, incoming was always scary and one day, when there was heavy shelling, a couple of the brothers recorded a 8-track(Which I eventually digitalized. I think I may have been the source for "Run, baby Run" which many Khe Sanh vets have now heard but I'm not certain. When I listen to the tape now that soft, faint "boom-boom-boom• that presaged the "ssssssh CRACK" of the rounds landing still gives me chills. These wen, mostly 152mm rounds from the NVA arty buried in the Co Roe caves over the border, in Laos where they couldn't be Mt. Other scares included the time where we became convinced the NVA were digging tunnels unde, the wire to infiltrate the base. I expect In the end these were the ubiquitous rats in the partially filled ammo boxes we used for tent walls

Much else is a blur but we eventually convoyed out of the KSCB after the NVA faded away and the Army arrived. I think there was a fair amount of bitterness when the base was subsequently abandoned I got to perch up on a 6-by manning a .50cal MG as we went down Rte 9 past Lang Vei, the Rockpile short time in Dong Ha, then setting up in Quang Tri. I pulled some night guard duty in the tower on the perimeter, the only time I used a night scope on an M-16 to fire at a possible VC or NVA soldier outside the wire - not sure I hit him but it was the only time Ifired a weapon in-country. One night in the tent used to, movies at Quang Tri, Chief Ballew yelled "I'm hit" and crawled out to the BAS, where we found that a spent AK-47 round from somewhere outside the wire had entered the skin of his elbow. We pushed it out, put on a Band-Aid and he got a Purple Heart!

After Quang Tri we moved down towards Phu Bai where we stayed for a while in the countryside. I did MEDCAPS to civilians once by boat passing out soap and drugs, mostly Tylenol and ant-malarials and had a roadside beer in a small dive -- the label on the beer said bottled in French Indo-China so must have been old! At night I was occasionally on watch in a .50 cal pit on our perimeter fighting off mosquitos. One prank we pulled was lining up our Marines for inoculations in the BAS tent. At the end of the table we had filled a 50cc syringe with iodine and watched as the nervous Marines lined up thinking that it was the last of their shots before sending them out the tent relieved!

From that area we were sent to Hill 7 near Da Nang in support of the 7th Marines. It was the only position that I went out on perimeter patrol as a "grunt" but we had no contact. However, one day we took some AK-47 fire (it had a distinctly different sound from our M-16s) from the vill next door to our' camp that sent us diving for cover. We also lost our battalion exec, MAJ Green there when his jeep ran over a mine killing him and wounding the driver.

From Hill 7 we moved to Hill 55, surrounded by rice paddies, where I got to deliver a baby for one of the locals who was right back in the paddies the next day. Chief Ballew and I hitched a ride into DaNang to the PX one day and made a stop at pt Graves Co. where his brother (or an HMC friend?) was stationed -not a happy place with masks required. They were taking care of some casualties from a helicopter crash and I saw whom the Marines working there with their macabre sense of humor (needed to stay sane at Graves) called "crispy critters" ... Hill 55 was generally pretty quiet for us with no casualties over the next few weeks. Doc Lasker left us rather dramatically (see above) and I went CON US in August, replaced by another HM3 (name unknown). My tour was over.

P.S I stayed in the reserves and went back to Williams College to rekindle my academic failings in Jan 1969. I kept up with the war with the Navy Times and on the casualty list in Feb, 1969 was the name LCPL William Yaskanich. I had known him as "Tater", a wireman with 1/13 and wondered what had happened with our unit. Later that year, or early '70, I went to a campus party one night and met Jim Munroe, a fellow student (now Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral in Springfield MA). Jim said he'd also come back from Vietnam. "What unit?" I asked. "I was a FADAC guy in HQ BTRY 1/13"I Wow! I asked him what had happened to "Tater". He said the battery position outside Da Nang had been overrun by VC and that he had jumped in a hole with "Tater" when a Chi Com grenade was thrown in killing "Tater" and wounding him badly enough that he was sent home, winding up next year in the same small (1,200) student college I attended! - what are the odds? ... But I'm glad I found out about "Tater" R.I.P. I also heard my replacement had been killed although I can't recall his name.

My time in Vietnam did lead me to my career so I'm thankful both for surviving and for my vocation. I attended Cornell Med School, became an internist and infectious diseases specialist (also thanks to my tropical sojourn) and wound up as Professor of Medicine at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I'm happily married with 5 kids and 5 grandchildren (so far). Two of my boys are in the USAF, the oldest flying the C-130 and the younger the KC-10 re-fueler out of McGuire AFB so the family military tradition lives on.

Semper fidelis! ... and a Happy New Year to my surviving Red Clay brethren.
Wally Schlech, MD, MACP, FRCPC



WALLY SCHLECH INSPECTIING ROCKET HOLE










BN. SURGEON
LT. Lazier
MC
DENTAL



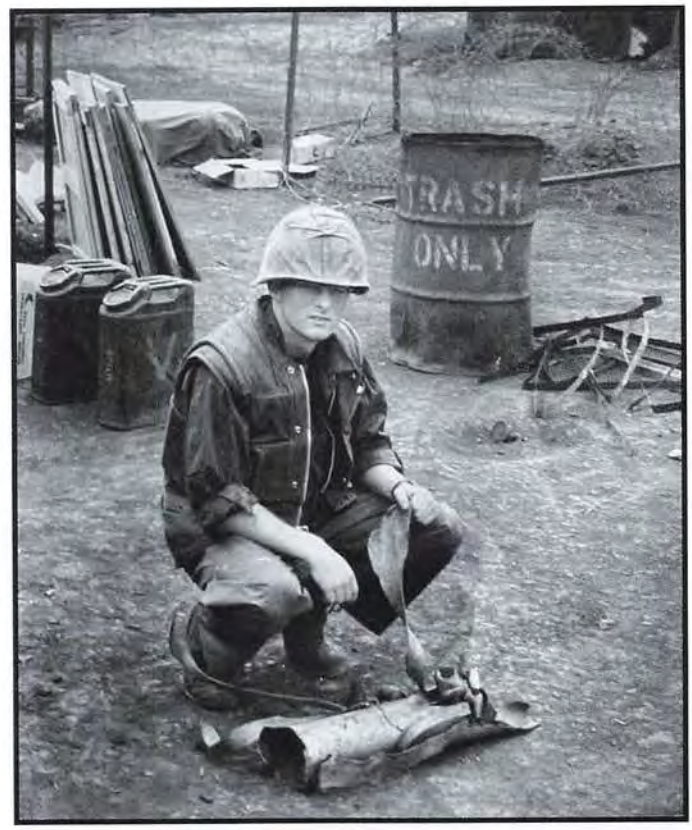
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THE SCHLECH CLAN



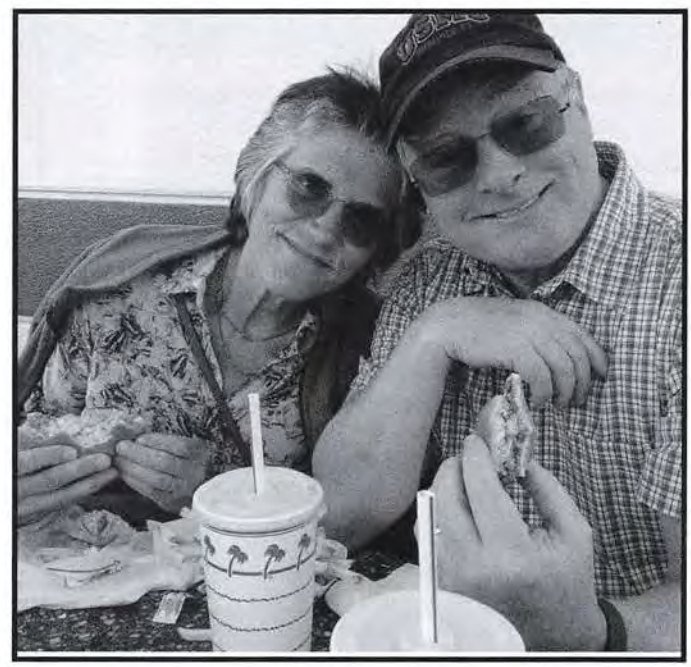

A PLACE THAT ALWAYS WAS

By Craig W. Tourte
HDQR 1/13 Khe Sanh 67-68

On Tuesday, November 10, 2009, the state of New Mexico dedicated and unveiled an Official Scenic Historic Road Marker honoring those who died at "The Battle of Khe Sanh, Vietnam 1968." The beautiful wooden marker is inscribed: "The Battle of Khe Sanh claimed the lives of 2,097 United States servicemen. This historic marker is dedicated to honor and preserve the memory of New Mexico servicemen who were killed in action or later died of their wounds. The Khe Sanh Vietnam veterans will forever live in each other's hearts." In addition, the marker is inscribed with the names of nine of those who were killed from the State of New Mexico. I am sure more names will eventually be included, as that information becomes available.

"The location of the "Official Scenic Historic Marker" is identified as being at New Mexico 124, Mile



Marker 16.5. In actuality, it sits along the old Historic Route 66 Highway, North of Interstate 40 at the 104 Exit in an area identified as Acoma, New Mexico. It was an approximate 50-mile drive along Interstate 40 from the City of Albuquerque to reach an area known as "The Sky City." The Sky City is actually an area where the Acoma people lived centuries ago atop a mesa to protect themselves from enemy attacks by neighboring bands. The Native American's who live in the area are identified as the "Acoma" which means "Place of readiness." According to a little research, "Native American legend" describes Acoma as a "place that always was." Native history says "...it was first inhabited about 700 A.D." "Archaeologists agree that it has been continuously occupied from at least 1150 A.D. to the present." Acoma, New Mexico is generally considered "America's oldest continually inhabited city."

The drive from Albuquerque to "The Sky City" where the Historic Marker is located is not unlike any other drive I have taken along a desolated high desert highway. Long, straight and lonely for the bored and weary traveler who too often focuses attention on what's over the next rise. One could pass Acoma in the blink of an eye and never know anything was there except sand, sagebrush and red dirt. I wondered why a monument honoring these heroes would be erected in such a desolate location and not in a more densely populated area.

It was early evening when I drove out to the site of the Historic Road Marker where I met Harold E. Lockwood (HMH-CH-53 Sea Stallions) for the first time. Harold is a tall, proud Native American, former Marine and Vietnam Veteran who is the Sergeant at Arms of the National American Indian Veterans. We stood together as darkness approached, surrounded by red sky with a few wispy clouds off in the distance and tall red table top mountains rising up from the desert floor. Harold identified his house a quarter mile or so away from where we were standing. With the swing of his arm in a wide arc he told me about his cousins, friends, other relatives and Native Americans who lived nearby and identified those who had served and those who had made the ultimate sacrifice, all from the Reservations. We talked about the arrival of the early Missionaries, the Native American children who had been taken from their parents and even to this day, the hardships his people face.

We spent a few minutes talking about his service in the United States Marine Corps and the three years he served in Vietnam. The tragically brutal injuries and death he had observed as a helicopter machine gunner, too often recovering the dead and wounded. The missions off of ships made by young boys who eagerly entered combat for the first time, all dressed in new green uniforms and combat gear and his painful recovery of their remains after the battles. Harold remembered all of these events clearly and with great sadness as he looked up into that red evening sky, silently remembering the pain that is often overwhelming, as he searched for the words that would somehow explain to the outsider, the horrors he had witnessed. Remembrances I knew were still prevalent

The following day during the dedication ceremony

there were a group of young children from one of the local Native American schools who performed a dance. Adorned in Native American costume, I observed they all had very intense looks on their faces. I realized that the dance these children performed was a serious cultural interpretation of events and beliefs that had been handed down from one generation to the next. The dance was significant to the Native People and fitting in that it was performed in memory of those who had sacrificed for their people and our country.

As I stood alone looking out across the Acoma, viewing the red earth color of the valley and hills, not so dissimilar in color to the red clay of Khe Sanh, I glanced up into the very wide-open sky and understood why fate had brought "The Battle of Khe Sanh" marker here. Somehow fate had brought this remembrance marker to this spot, because this place is a "Place That Always Was," A "Place of Readiness" and in a way, a place of safety for those who we will never forget.







KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

GOVERNING RULES FOR OPERATION OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION
The purpose of the Khe Sanh Veterans Scholarship Foundation (KSVSF) is to provide financial aid to high school graduates who plan to attend an accredited educational institutional as a full time student OR who are currently enrolled full time in an accredited post secondary curriculum.
Scholarship funds will be awarded to applicant students who have at least one parent , legal guardian or grandparent who is a paid-up member in good standing of KHE SANH VETERANS, INC., a 501 C (19) charitable organization.
IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT APPLICANT TO SEE THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS ARE FULLY COMPLETED AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR BEFORE 5/1/2024 AT THE ADDRESS BELOW:

Mr. Dan Fisher
KSVSF Committee Chairman
6050 52nd St. North
Oakdale, MN 55128

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Applicants must be the legal child or grandchild of a paid up member (sponsor) of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. (see member definition in the KSV by-laws). This includes deceased, life members of KSV and those Khe Sanh Veterans listed as KIA/MIA in Vietnam if the family member are paid up, associate members of KSV, Inc. Children and grandchildren of associate members are not eligible for this scholarship.

Information provided by each applicant on the attached forums will focus on the following qualities; proof of enrollment at an accredited educational institution, good grades, scholastic character, citizenship, school activities and a personal essay on educational and career goals.

A scholarship review committee will serve at the pleasure of the President of Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. to review the application forms for completion and correctness. The KSVSF Chairman will provide scholarship financial report, a list of applicants and their KSV member sponsors and a summary to be presented to the membership at the annual reunion and for publication in RED CLAY newsletter.

NEW!! SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS (school year 2023 onward). NEW!!

APPLICANTS FOR SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS WILL RECEIVE A ONE-TIME-ONLY AWARD, REGARDLESS OF THEIR PRESENT YEAR IN SCHOOL. SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS AMOUNTS ARE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY DONATIONS TO DONATIONS TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION FROM KSV MEMBERS AND THE REUNION SILENT AUCTION. WE CAN NO LONGER SUPPORT MULTIPLE YEAR AWARDS. THIS IS THE DECISION OF A VOTE BY THE KSV BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT THE 2019 REUNION.

ALL AWARDS WILL BE EQUAL FOR EACH CERTIFIED APPLICANT AND WILL BE AWARDED UPON PROOF OF REGISTRATION FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL TERM AND SENT TO THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS ABOVE

B) School Extracurricular Activities: (examples) Athletics, Music, School Government, School Publications, Academic Honors & Achievements, Scouting, Counselor, etc..

C). Employment Experience: (examples) part/full time jobs during school year, military service, etc.

D). Final Mailing Packet Check List: (ENCLOSE THESE COMPLETED FORMS)!!

*COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM (ABOVE)

*COPY OF YOUR LAST OFFICIAL GPA TRANSCRIPT (FROM THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR)

*SMALL PHOTO OF YOURSELF

*PERSONAL ESSAY (250 -400 WORDS) TELLING YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS AND CAREER PLANS.

*SIGNATURE PAGE FOR APPLICANT AND SPONSOR (BELOW

SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES AND PURPOSE

The financial award should be used to defray cost of tuition, fees, books at the educational institution of the applicants choice.

The KSVSF Chairman and KSV Treasurer will send a check for the award amount to the selected applicants upon final approval of the KSV President.

Scholarship recipients will be notified of their award no later than the end of August of the upcoming school year applied for.

!!Scholarship applications sent to the KSVSF Chair MUST be post marked not later than MAY 1 of the school year applied for!!

KSV Scholarship recipients must maintain a standard of personal performance while at school that reflects positively upon the Khe Sanh Veterans' Association membership.

Scholastic Criteria for Award Consideration: 1). Attached "Official" Grade Point Transcript from the last school attended, 2). Completed Application Form, 3). Summaries of Scholastic Participation, Volunteer and Work Experiences, 4). A small photo of the applicant and, 5). Completed final page with applicant's signature and the KHE SANH VETERAN sponsor's signature.

KHE SANH VETERANS, INC. APPLICATION FORM

Date of Application_____

APPLICANT'S INFORMATION:(PRINT CAREFULLY AND LEGIBLE!)

Name: Last_____ First_____MI_____

Address: Street_____ City_____State_____ Zip_____

Home Phone: _____ Cell_____

Date of Birth _____ E-mail address_____

KSV SPONSOR INFORMATION: (Name of Khe Sanh Veteran, Inc. Regular or Life Member)

Name: Last_____First:_____

Relationship to Applicant:_____ Branch of Service_____

Unit Served at Khe Sanh_____Dates Served There_____

Regular paid KSV member _____ Life KSV Member_____Deceased KSV Life Member_____

KIA or MIA KSV Family Associate Member _____

SCHOOL INFORMATION: (School to be Attending)

School Name:_____

School Address: Street_____ City_____

State_____ Zip_____Phone Number_____

Intended Field of Study

_____

School Year to Be Funded: Freshman_____ Sophomore_____Junior_____Senior_____

APPLICANT PERSONAL HISTORY

A) Applicant Volunteer Activities (Example: Community, church, Governmental, health, etc

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SIGNATURE PAGE: (TO BE INCLUDED IN PACKET)

I SWEAR THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENTS ARE CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE:

APPLICANT SIGNATURE:_____

ACTUAL SIGNATURE OF KHE SANH VETERAN PARENT OR GRANDPARENT SPONSOR:

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PRIVACY ACT, PRIVATE INFORMATION GATHERED HEREIN WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL TO THE KHE SANH VETERANS SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

APPROVED: _____**DAN FISHER COMMITTEE CHAIRMAIN**

APPROVED: _____**RUSSELL TURNER KSV PRESIDENT**







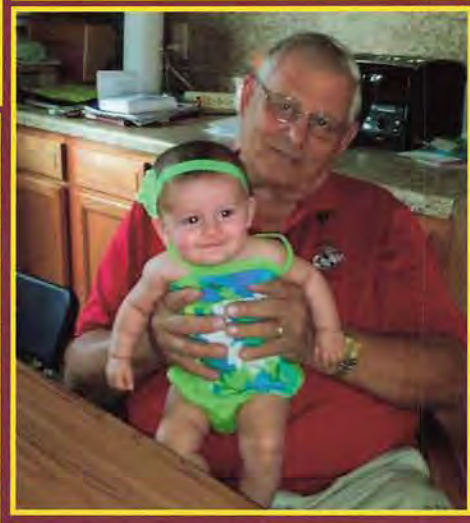


HAPPY 80




ONE VERY SPECIAL KHE SANH
VETERAN HE WILL BE MISSED











ISSUE 104

RED CLAY

SPRING 2025

THOMAS EICHLER 1940 — 2024



November 2024

KSV NEWSLETTER

UPDATED CORRESPONDENCE AND CONTRIBUTIONS ADDRESS

To ensure smooth communication and handling of contributions, please direct all dues, correspondence, and contributions to our new address:

Khe Sanh Veterans Inc
C/O Russell Turner
3168 Meadowfield Dr
Arnold, MO 63010

Kindly update your records and ensure that all future communications are sent to this address.

Scholarship Program Suspension

Due to recent developments, we have decided to freeze and suspend the Scholarship program temporarily. This decision has been made to allow us (KSV) to thoroughly assess our financial situation. We appreciate your understanding during this period of transition.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please direct your inquiries to Russ Turner.
rkt88@prodigy.net 314-368-5853

IN MEMORIAM: THOMAS "TOMMY" EICHLER



Tom Eichler (1940 - 2024) KSV Treasurer.

We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of Thomas Eichler, the treasurer of the Khe Sanh Veterans, U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran, and Retired Chicago Police Sergeant. Tom was a proud Marine who fiercely fought for his country in Vietnam. His bravery and service were recognized with the prestigious Bronze Star, Silver Star, and Purple Heart.

Tom's spirit of service, both in his professional and personal life, will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and the Khe Sanh Veterans community.

FROM THE DESK OF RUSS TURNER— PRESIDENT

Well friends, it's been an eventful couple of months since the reunion in Louisville KY. As most of you know Tommy Eichler has passed away and has left a void in the organization felt by many He was a huge contributing factor in keeping this organization moving forward. And with the heart of so many members—it will continue on.

This will be the last Publication of the RED CLAY until a new Editor steps up to take over. If interested, please contact me or someone on the Board of Directors.

With the passing of Tom I have taken on the duties of Treasurer (with the Boards approval) until we can get a permanent treasurer.

We had some issues with the bank as well as the IRS regarding our 501c . The bank issues are taken care of, however we are still pending with the IRS. We hope to have things cleared up with them soon, but as we all know, working with the Government can take some time. We will IMPROVISE, ADAPT AND OVERCOME!

S/F Russ Turner 3147-368-5853

RE— RED CLAY PAST ISSUES

FROM BILL RING

As many are aware the **Red Clay** was entirely composed, and distributed by Tom Eichler. With his passing the future of Red Clay is questionable as no one has volunteered to take up the task.

In the interim a few of us are in the process of collecting copies of the magazine to have them put into a digital format that is searchable by various means. This will preserve all the articles for not only our own use but for future generations and historians to study. We have a number of copies from Tom Eichler's home as well as copies from my collection as well from Jim Velcheck's basement!!! The complete list of on hand copies will send out under a separate email. What I am asking if there are anyone out there who has squirreled away copies to let me know the edition numbers and or date of publication so we can fill in the blanks.

S/F Bill Ring 513 607 5045.
(wjring@aol.com)

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OBIT

James Alan Thorsen, 76, of Duluth MN, passed away peacefully on Sunday February 11th, 2024. He was born on August 16th, 1947 in Duluth, MN to Lloyd and Eleanor Thorsen. Jim married Doris

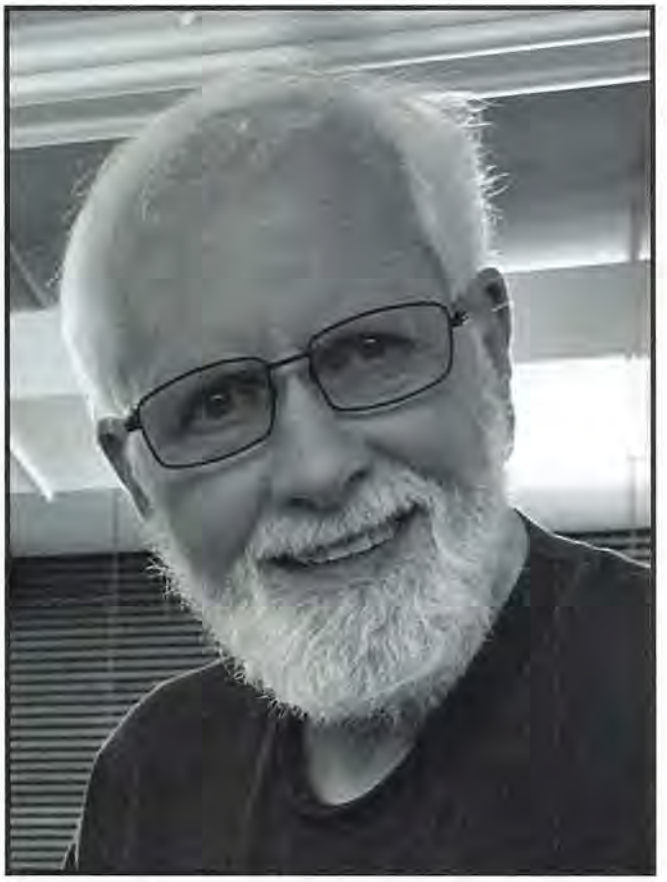

Watten on August 18th, 1973 in Duluth, MN. Jim served in the US Marine Corp from 1966 until 1972, including serving in Vietnam at the Battle of Khe Sanh. He was awarded many honors including, a Presidential Unit Citation and a Purple Heart for his service in the US Marine Corps. Jim also served as a Sergeant Troop Leader at Camp Pendleton. He returned to Duluth and pursued an education in engineering and architecture. He worked for MN Power in Facilities Management for 27 years. He volunteered for the VA DAV driving veterans to and from MPLS. He enjoyed being with friends and family, especially his granddaughter, Milly. He is preceded in death by his parents, and brother, Roger. He is survived by his wife Doris, daughter Sara (Ben) Schoenbauer, and granddaughter Milly.

OBIT

Jim Hall's military career commenced shortly after his graduation in 1966, when he enlisted in the Marines, embarking on a path that would test his fortitude and resilience. Basic training in San Diego and advanced preparation at Camp Pendleton prepared him for the challenges ahead. Deployed to Vietnam, Hall faced the realities of war, participating in significant operations near the DMZ. His first encounter with adversity came during the battle for Cam

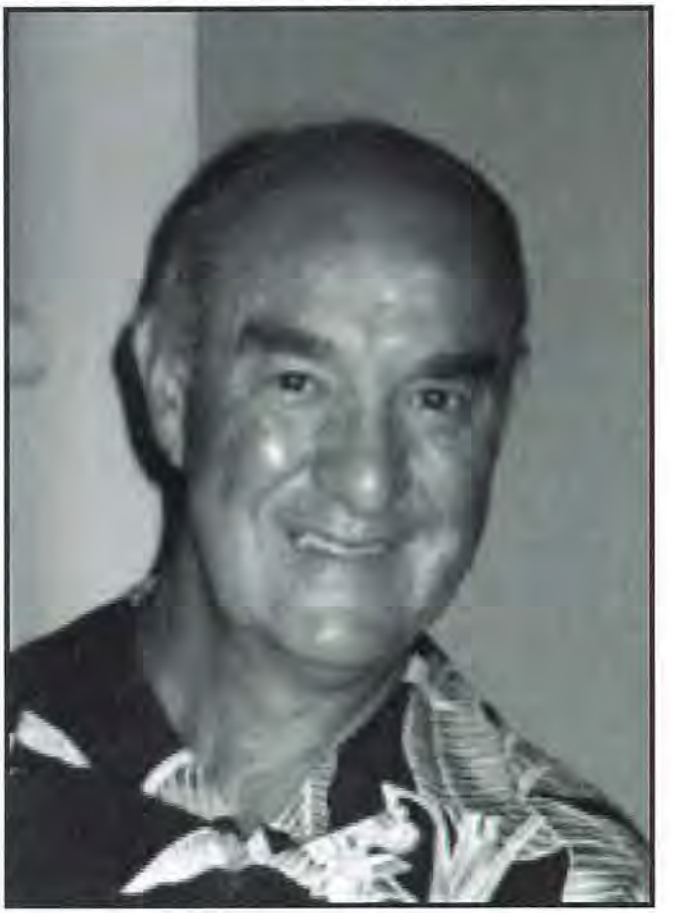

Lo Hill, where he sustained injuries that earned him his first Purple Heart.

Continued Service and Second Purple Heart
Legacy of a Marine

Returning to Augusta, Hall's life took a new direction as he joined the Army Guard, served with the 184th Air National Guard, and built a family, yet his Marine Corps ethos remained a guiding force. His story, a testament to the enduring spirit of those who serve, continues to inspire pride and respect within his community and beyond. Jim Hall's narrative is not just one of military engagement but of unwavering dedication to country, a sentiment that resonates with fellow veterans and civilians alike.

Jim Hall's journey from Augusta to the battlefields of Vietnam and back is a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by military personnel. His story,

marked by courage, resilience, and dedication, offers a window into the personal cost of conflict and the enduring spirit of those who serve. As Hall reflects on his service, his pride in being a Marine shines through, underscoring the deep bonds and commitment that define the military experience. Through his eyes, we gain insight into the complexities of war and the indomitable will of those who face its challenges head-on.

OBIT

DONALD FOX, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

Private family services for Donald Fox, 87 year old Buffalo and Sheridan resident who passed away Saturday, February 10th at the Greenhouse Living Center in Sheridan will be held by his family at a later date. Donations in Don's memory may be made to the St. Francis Animal Shelter at 109 Flatiron Drive in Buffalo, Wyoming 82834. Online condolences may be made at ness funeral home.com

Donald O'Neal Fox was born on June 8, 1936 in Sheridan, Wyoming to John and Ruth Fox. He started his education in Sheridan and later moved to Casper where he graduated from Natrona County High School with the class of 1954. He joined the U.S. Airforce in June of 1954. During his military service he was married to Aletha Dillingham in Oklahoma. He received an honorable discharge in December of 1957 and went to work in construction and help to build Pathfinder Dam. He later moved to Sheridan and worked at Dan's Western Wear. In 1958 they moved to Jeffrey City, Wyoming where Don went to work for Western Nuclear Corporation and was a maintenance supervisor. He retired from Western Nuclear in 1980 and started his own construction reclamation business. In 1990 he moved to Buffalo, Wyoming where he owned and operated the Buffalo Bar on Mainstreet until it closed. Don continued living in Buffalo until his death.

Don was a member of the Elk's Club and was an avid outdoorsman enjoying hunting, fishing and spending time in the mountains. He was very active as a volunteer fire fighter in Jeffrey City and Fremont County, Wyoming.

He is survived by one son Wayne Fox and his wife Ellen of Muddy Gap, Wyoming; one daughter Sheila Lopez and her husband Marcel of Lander, Wyoming; one granddaughter, Abra D. Rusher; one grandson Bryce E. Lopez and one great-grandson Merrik A. Moore. He was preceded in death by his parents and one brother.

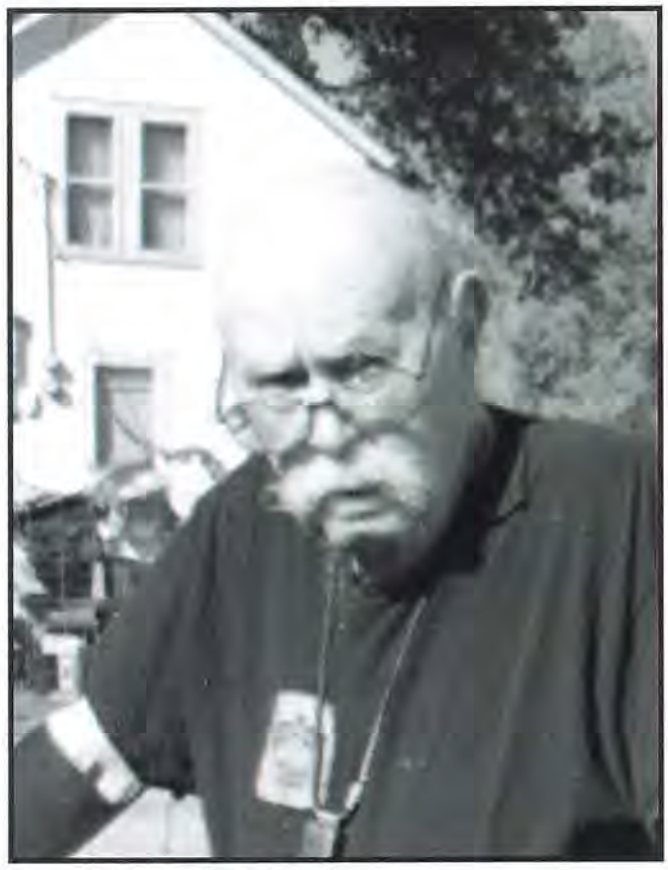



OBIT

RAYMOND BOLTON OBITUARY

Raymond Paul Bolton, age 75, passed away on Monday, April 29, 2024 in Elk Grove, California due to kidney failure.

Ray was born on June 5, 1948 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to parents Dorothea Emma Gusovius Bolton and Joseph Daniel Bolton, both from Philadelphia.

Ray proudly served in the United States Marine Corps during the Vietnam War engaging in combat patrols as part of the 1st Searchlight Battery. In this assignment, he would travel alone in a jeep at night using infrared and white light to identify enemy positions. He received several military medals for his service including a Navy Commendation Medal for defending the Cam Lo Bridge after detecting enemy soldiers attempting to place demolition charges, the Presidential Unit Citation for his part protecting the Khe Sanh combat base during active combat, and a Purple Heart due to being injured in battle.

His service in the Marine Corps shaped much of his life and values. He forged a bond of brotherhood with every veteran he encountered, often addressing each other as "brother" before parting ways. He frequently treated young veterans to meals whenever he spotted them in restaurants. Following his military service, he had a 30-year career as a U.S. postal worker.

Ray cherished traveling alongside his wife, exploring his family's ancestral homes in Ireland and Great Britain. He also loved to be near the ocean with Hawaii ranking as his top destination. He would also make frequent trips to Monterey and Carmel, California. In addition, he enjoyed shopping for hats, watches, and collecting memorabilia related to the U.S. Marine Corps Ray was always generous to those he saw in need. Often, he would buy lunch for an individual he felt needed some help. He was known to offer money to nieces and nephews for French fries, a new suit, or anything he felt they needed. He also loved and cared for a group of cats in his neighborhood (much to the chagrin of his neighbors and brother-in-law who had to feed them when Ray traveled).

He is survived by his wife, Donna Scott Bolton of Elk Grove, California, his sister, Doris Jean Bolton Walsh of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and his nieces and nephews: Robert Walsh, Barbara Walsh Martina, Donna Bolton Wingood, Michael Bolton, Marybeth Bolton Mahadas, Jacqui Bolton Gilpin, and Karen Bolton White.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Dorothea and Joseph Bolton, and his brothers, Joseph Daniel (Sonny) and John Robert (Jackie) Bolton.

Funeral services were held on Monday, May 13, 2024 from 9:30 am to 10:30 am at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints chapel located at 8679 Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove, CA 95624. Interment was held the same day at 12:30 pm at the Sacramento Valley National Cemetery in Dixon, California.

OBIT

JOEL P. MCCOY, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

Joel Patrick McCoy, aged 75, passed away on August 6, 2024 after a battle with COPD and lung cancer. He was born September 6, 1948 in Mt Kisco, NY to Joel Edgar and Kathryn Thompson McCoy. He was the youngest of four siblings.

After Joel graduated from Lakeland High School in 1967, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, and served from 1967-1969. Joel valued this service highly and attained the rank of Private First Class and received a Rifle Marksmanship Badge, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with 1 star, and Vietnam Campaign Medal
w/device.

Joel did one tour in Vietnam and survived the Battle of Khe Sanh. After his military service, Joel started as a draftsman with Peabody Engineering, and built a successful career in Industrial product development and software sales which brought him all over the world. Joel settled in Cascade, Colorado after retirement, embracing a private life enjoying the scenery of the Rockies with his beloved Border Collie, Gracie, until relocating to Kennesaw, GA in 2023,closer to his first son, Morgan, and grand daughters.Joel was predeceased by his parents, Joel Edgar McCoy and Kathryn Thompson McCoy, and his sister Dorris Kay "Deke" Anunson.

He is survived by sisters, Michelle Hamilton and Toni Ann Sampson; two sons, Morgan McCoy and Colby McCoy, two granddaughters, Charlotte McCoy and Natalie McCoy, and former wives, Marsha McCoy, Bonnie Summers, and Kerri Holton. Joel was known for his charm, private nature, and pride in his service to his country. He will be deeply missed by his family. A visitation and memorial service will be held at Georgia Funeral Care on August 19 th, 2024. Visitation begins at 10:00 am with a service at 11:30 am. Joel will be laid to rest at the Georgia National Cemetery in Canton, GA.

OBIT

Donald "Don" Gene Bigler, 76, of Cypress, Texas, passed away June 1, 2024, after succumbing to a short battle with brain cancer. Don was born in Littlefield, Texas, to Emil and Margaret Bigler on September 7, 1947. He attended schools in both Floyd



and Portales, New Mexico, and graduated from Floyd High School in 1965. **He voluntarily entered military service with the United States Marine Corps and deployed to Vietnam with rifle company Kilo, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines (Kilo 3/3). He left South Vietnam in July 1967 after being wounded in The Hill Fights (also known as the First Battle of Khe Sanh).** Don was honorably discharged with the rank of sergeant in January 1969. Upon returning home to Portales, he married Janice Kaye Webb on February 16, 1969 (later divorced in 2009). He worked the family farm in Floyd while attending Eastern New Mexico University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science.

During the same period, sons Tyson and Cade were born. He then worked as an adjuster for Farm Bureau Insurance in Espanola, New Mexico, before moving to Artesia where he earned his Commercial Driver License (CDL) with Halliburton. Upon the birth of son Josh in 1977, the family moved to Carlsbad where Don started driving 18-wheelers for Furr's Supermarkets. In 1983, the family moved to Fort Sumner where Don started driving for Walmart. Over the next few years, the family split time between Fort Sumner and Portales, eventually leaving New Mexico in 1987 for Brady, Texas. A final job transfer to New Braunfels occurred in 1990, with early retirement beginning in 1994 after sustaining a debilitating lower-back injury. Walmart honored him with a safety award for driving one million miles without an accident.

Early retirement was not something Don had envisioned, but he met the challenge head-on. Eventually the open road beckoned to him, and he set about travelling the country with a fifth wheel trailer for about ten years. He made new friends along the way, met up with old friends and family too, and routinely came back to Texas to be near his sons and their growing families. He spent his final years in the Cypress/Tomball area. Don's strong faith in the Lord helped him through many challenges. He was a long-standing member of the Church of Christ, most recently with the Waller congregation. Earlier in life he served as a deacon. He was always curious and liked to learn new things. He loved working with his hands and was an avid sports fan.

Don was preceded in death by his mother and father, along with his sister Gayle Herron of Albuquerque.

He is survived by his sons and their families, Tyson and Kathy Bigler (Tomball, Texas), Cade Bigler (Cypress, Texas), and Josh and Shomika Bigler (Cedar Park, Texas); a sister, Kay Heflin (Abilene, Texas), a sister and her husband, Faye and Travis Mitchell (Yuma, Arizona), and ex-wife Jan Bigler (Tomball, Texas). Other survivors include thirteen grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews. Don's final resting place is at Hill Country Memorial Gardens cemetery, 11700 State Highway 46 West, New Braunfels, Texas 78132. .

OBIT

CHARLES M. MCINTYRE, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, H&S CO 1/26 81 MORTARS

Charles Michael McIntyre, Mike, Mac, or Charlie to most, 76, of Edmond, Oklahoma, went to be with our Lord on July 9, 2024.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at 10:00 am July 17, 2024, at St. Monica Catholic Church, 2001 N. Western, Edmond, Oklahoma, with Father Balireddy Ponnapati presiding. Burial l followed the funeral at Resurrection Memorial Cemetery at 12:00 noon.

Mike was born in Oklahoma City, OK on May 21, 1948, but spent most of his youth in Chickasha, OK where he attended St. Joseph Catholic School. After his further education had been interrupted by the Vietnam Nam War, he received a GED and earned a BA Degree from the University of Central Oklahoma. However, for the majority of his college years, he attended and became an avid, life time fan of the University of Oklahoma



Mike served his country with honors from 1965-1969 in the US Marine Corps. As a highly decorated veteran, he earned these awards: National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, The Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with a Bronze Star, 2 Good Combat Medals, The Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation and multiple other commendations, citations, and awards. He served three tours of duty in Vietnam and survived the seventy-seven day Siege of Khe Sanh. In 2020, he completed and published a book, Shining in Infinity, which was inspired by his experiences while in the Marine Corps.

Mike began a law enforcement career as an officer of the OU Campus Police before joining the Oklahoma City Police Department in 1973. After graduating from the academy, he was assigned to the Patrol Division where he excelled and was soon transferred to other specialty units within the department that included Special Projects, F.A.S.T Unit, and the Criminal Intelligence unit.

While assigned to the Criminal Intelligence unit, he investigated or assisted in the investigation of several high-profile criminal cases. His dedication to his work resulted in receiving the Medal for Meritorious Service in 2001. He also received exemplary recognition by the Vietnamese for crimes committed against their community and numerous other awards and citations. Mike retired from the Oklahoma City Police Department in 2003. Soon after, he worked at Chesapeake and played an integral role in their security department. Though most will remember his continued law enforcement service throughout his later years while enjoying and providing security at the Municipal Employees Credit Union.

Mike married Patty O'Dea in 1969. They were married for 27 years and shared three amazing children. He stood faithfully by her side until she lost her battle with cancer. In 1998, Mike married Jan Cooper who also had three wonderful children, and they lived 26 beautiful years together.

Mike is survived by his loving wife: Jan, children: Shoana Gann, Mary Smith & husband Mike, Danny McIntyre & wife Amber, Bill Cooper & wife Jennifer, Jeff Cooper, and Shane Cooper & wife Kelsea, grandchildren: Ben Cooper, Braxton Smith, Jake Cooper, Macklin Smith, Ruby McIntyre, Kade Cooper, Kole Cooper, Leo McIntyre, Ian Rambo, and Kate McIntyre, and siblings: Mary Harris and Pat McIntyre.

KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

Post 290 named Ronald Shouse : B BTRY 1/13, the "Legionnaire of the Year" at their July meeting.



King American Legion Post 290 convenes for their July meeting, during which the post awarded Ron Shouse with Legionnaire of the Year. submitted



King American Legion Post 290 Commander Ed Ballard presents Ron Shouse with the Legionnaire of the Year award in July.

Shouse, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran who served in Vietnam, was indeed not expecting any award don't think he expected it," said Post Commander Ed Ballard. "He acted kind of surprised, and it's hard to get one over on him." Everybody's usually picking at me to start with; I I figured it was another 'joke on Shouse' type thing," he said with a laugh. It's flattering, to be quite honest," Shouse said. "I couldn't quite get over the fact that they thought enough of me to do something like that. I never thought of myself as anything great." The award may have been a surprise — it had been years since the post honored their top volunteer with the title — but it was no joke.

He is quite a guy," Ballard said. "I nominated him for 'Legionnaire of the Year' because all the work he does around the post. He does it, no questions...painting, repairing, fixing, building. Whatever we need on the post, he just does it. For lack of a better word, he just works his butt off."

Shouse also calls bingo every Friday night at the Legion and is a leader on the post's honor guard. The detail serves at more than 40 funerals annually. Everybody loves him at bingo," Ballard said, adding that Shouse had recently traveled to Mount Airy to pick up the fair books for the upcoming Stokes County Agricultural Fair, the post's largest fundraiser.



Legionnaire of the Year Ron Shouse pauses for a quick photo after changing the battery on a Legion tractor.

Clifton Kilby, finance officer for Post 290 and vice-commander of the North Carolina American Legion, said Shouse tackles an ongoing list of odd jobs I would say, just about every day if you go by the post, around 8:30, 9'oclock [a.m.] that Ron's up there doing something," said Kilby, noting that as he spoke, Shouse was at the Legion painting the flagpole. He's put in a lot of hours," Kilby said, "a lot more hours than anybody else." That fact was not lost on the post membership, and they wanted to show their appreciation.

"I said, 'well, we haven't had a Legionnaire of the

Year in a while, and it sounds like that's what you all are talking about,'" Kilby said. In addition to acknowledging the efforts of a dedicated volunteer, reinstating the award is part of a successful effort to build engagement. The local Legionnaire of the Year is eligible to win at the state and national levels

"We're trying to make the post a little bit bigger now and better than what it has been in the past," Shouse said. "We're trying to dress it up and make it appealing to the younger generation."

Shouse doesn't seek out the attention brought by the award, but if it helps the post it's another job he's willing to do. He also downplays his military service. Shouse joined the Marines in 1966 as a senior at North Forsyth High School. Six months after I went in, I was walking the swamps in Vietnam," Shouse said. He was 18.

"I got shot at a couple of times over there, so that and 50 cents will buy you a cup of coffee somewhere," he said. "I didn't feel like it was anything fantastic then; I don't feel like what I've done is anything great now. I was just lucky enough to do it." It turns out being "shot at a couple of times" included fighting in the Battle of Khe Sanh The official U.S. Marine Corps website provides a refresher on that battle's significance:

In early 1968, Khe Sanh Combat Base gained world -wide attention as the roughly 6,000 Marines defending the base were encircled and besieged by three North Vietnamese Army regiments of about 20,000 troops. For 77 days, the Marines and their South Vietnamese counterparts, with support from an element of U.S. Army soldiers and U.S. Air Force bombers, would endure one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War."

Shouse was an artilleryman supporting infantry companies. "That was my job, and I did what I had to do. And that's what I'm doing over here right now," he said of his volunteer work at the Legion, which at the time of the interview, consisted of changing a battery in a tractor, moving vehicles and generally helping prepare the barn for a youth event the following day.

"I see some things that need to be done, and I'm just dumb enough to tell people that I know how to do it. So here I am," he said with a smile.

Shouse's Marine service ended in 1970. After retiring from Stroh's Brewing Co. in 2000, he dedicated his life to volunteering, helping spearhead the construction of the Veterans Memorial in Tobaccoville and eventually becoming active in Post 290. "I feel better for it," said Shouse. "Maybe that's the reason the good Lord saw fit to let me walk out of some places in Vietnam that I shouldn't have.

The veteran lives in unincorporated Forsyth County near Tobaccoville. His wife, Lynn Shouse, is active with the Legion Auxiliary and serves as assistant fair manager. ("She works her butt off," Ballard said.) Shouse is proud of his daughters and grandkids and, while genuinely appreciative of the award, is not much for the acclaim. "I just enjoy helping people as much as I can, and I don't need any kind of accolade for doing something like that." King American Legion Post 290 convenes for their July meeting, during which the post awarded Ron Shouse with Legionnaire of the Year.



Brothers-in-funny-hats: U.S. Marine Corps veterans Ron Shouse, left, and Post 290 Chaplain John Winfrey, are photographed together. "He is the reason I joined the Legion (but don't tell him)," Winfrey said of Shouse.

OBITCECIL FRANLIN ROGERS, USMC,



KHE SANH VETERAN,

Cecil Franklin Rogers, 81 of the Green Creek Community of Robbinsville, NC passed away, Sunday, September 15, 2024, at his residence. He was a native of Graham County and the son of the late Robert Howard and Clara Orr Rogers. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brothers, David Rogers and Roy Rogers.

Cecil was a Veteran of the United States Marines having served his country during the Vietnam War. He was the recipient of a Purple Heart having been wounded at the Battle of Khe Sanh. He was a member of the Carringer-Webster VFW post #8635 and Eller-Rogers American Legion Post #192. He was also a member of the Robbinsville Masonic Lodge # 672, Andrews Lodge # 529 and a member of the Robbinsville Order of the Eastern Star #224. He was also a butcher by trade and was Co-Lead of Cecil and June Rogers Gospel Group for 54 years and a Member of Long Creek Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife, June Buchanan Rogers; his children and their spouses; Johnny and Angela Rogers of Robbinsville, NC, Randall and Kanya Rogers of the US Embassy in Chad, Jennifer and Rev. Noah Crowe of Robbinsville, NC, Holly and Kevin Brady of San Diego, CA; 9 grandchildren, Alex Crowe, Rachael Meier, Lydia Crowe, Randall Rogers Jr., Vanora Rogers, Justin Brady, Chase Brady, Autumn Brady, and Alicia Roberts; great grandchildren, Ellis Crowe, Theo Meier, and Caleb Meier. He is also survived by his sister, Anita Seay of Robbinsville, NC

Brothers, Bobby Rogers of Beaver Dam, KY, Tommy Rogers of Center, AL, Jerry Rogers, Ronnie Rogers, and Mark Rogers all of Robbinsville, NC. Funeral Services will be held at 11:00 am Friday, September 20, 2024, at Mountain Creek Baptist Church. Reverends Tom Buchanan, Noah Crowe, and Roger Orr will officiate. Masonic Rites will be given by Robbinsville Masonic Lodge # 672. Burial will follow the Service at Mountain Creek Baptist Church Cemetery where Military Rites and Flag Presentation will be conducted by the US Marine Corp Honor Guard. The family will receive riends from 6:00 till 8:00 pm Thursday, September 19, 2024, at the Townson-Smith Chapel.



OBIT RICHARD M FOLEY, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

Richard Martin Foley, Jr. died on November 1st. A decorated veteran of the Marines, he was the Executive Officer of India Company on Hill 881S during the Siege of Khe Sanh.

He leaves behind the love of his life Carol, daughter Joi, and granddaughter Samantha, along with countless other family, friends, fellow bridge players, veterans, and the many others who had the chance to experience his generosity and humor. Visit richard-foley.com to share memories.

OBIT



BILL MARTIN, USMC,

Billy Dean Martin (Bill) was born July 8, 1932, in Dallas to Lorene and Henry Newton Martin and died October 28, 2024.

Bill graduated from Sunset High School in 1950. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in November 1950, and retired in November 1970. He was a Vietnam veteran. Bill retired from Sears Roebuck in 1987, at which time he became self-employed in financial services and tax preparation.

Bill was dedicated to a 12-Step fellowship, the Marine Corps League, and the DFW Honor Guard, participating in over 1,200 funerals for veterans of all services. Bill helped many and will be well remembered.

Bill was preceded in death by his son Mark and his daughter Pamela Judith Lau.

OBIT



OBIT

Ret. Col. Robert Foerster , USAF

It is with profound sadness that we announce that Ret. Col. Robert (Bob) Yates Foerster, of Niceville, FL, passed away on November 24, 2024. Bob was born on August 16, 1942, in Baltimore, Maryland.

Bob graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1965 alongside his close friends from the 24th Squadron with whom he had lived for all four years of his cadet career. In 1966, Bob graduated from undergraduate pilot training at Reese Air Force Base in Lubbock, TX. Bob then went onto fly a C-130 aircraft in Vietnam in support of the defense of Khe Sanh. His Air Force career was heavily linked to the Academy-he served as First Group Air Officer Commanding, 1977-1979, as Chief of Staff to the Academy Superintendent, 1979-1983, and then as Registrar and Director of Admissions until his retirement from the Air Force in 1996.

In addition to his time at the Academy, the highlights of Bob's career included serving as the Director of Operations at Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina and Wing Commander at Clark Air Base in the Philippines

(then the largest airlift wing in the Pacific). Bob was a pillar of strength for our family and his absence will forever leave a void in our hearts. Bob was an avid golfer, greatly enjoyed sailing, and had a deep connection to nature and the outdoors. He is predeceased by his parents, Ellen Yates Foerster and Frederick Henry Foerster Jr. (USMA '39), second wife Sheila D. Foerster, and stepson Mark Larkin.

He is survived by his wife Theresa Ann Guay Foerster, first wife Linda Bishop, brothers Schuyler Foerster (Col USAF-Ret '71) and Frederick Henry Foerster III, children Katrina Varela, Leslie Presby, and Janet Sickle, as well numerous grandchildren, great grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

OBIT



Harold Rosson, Jr. Obituary

Harold Elvin Rosson, Jr., 76, of Hamilton, passed away at his home Sunday morning, December 8, 2024.

Harold was born April 9, 1948, the son of Harold Elvin and Barbara Jean (Brown) Rosson, Sr., in Normandy, Missouri. After graduating from high school, he went to work as a design engineer for McDonnell Douglas. Mr. Rosson served in the Marine Corps from May of 1967 until he retired in April of 1971 after receiving the Purple Heart award. He served with the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines (The Walking Dead.) He served at Con Thien in '67, A Shau Valley in both '67 and '68 and was wounded at Khe Sanh on February 23, 1968. He farmed upon his return home and then owned and operated Supreme Swine in Elvaston for 44 years. Harold remained active in the Keokuk American Legion Post 41, the V.F.W. and Hancock County Honor Guard. He enjoyed hunting and fishing and enjoyed tournaments for 20 years. In 2007 he was united in marriage to Andrea Pierson in Miami, Oklahoma.

Harold is survived by his wife, Andrea, of Hamilton; sons, Scott (Amie) Rosson of Nauvoo and Randy (Kim) Rosson of Weldon Spring, Missouri; daughters, Melia (Jesse) Moore and Stephanie (Kerry) Bitner, both of Ottumwa; nine grandchildren; two great grandchildren; two brothers, Stephen A. (Michelle) Rosson of Highland City, IL and Mike (Nicholle) Rosson of Wentzville, MO; and a sister, Cindie Johnson of St. Louis.

He was preceded death by his parents; and his grandparents, Calloway Elvin and Isabel (Cashion)



OBIT

GAYLEN B. DOANE, USAF, KHE SANH VETERAN

Gaylen Bruce Doane was born on August 30, 1936, in Gilman, Iowa. He was the son of Bruce and Eva Doane, deceased. His only sibling, LaVonne, is also deceased. He is survived by his wife, Pauline Doane of Meredith, N.H, nephew, Ron Clay, of Las Vegas, NV, daughter, Shelly Brewer and her husband Kevin of Laconia, NH, granddaughter, Jillian Dreyer and husband Matthew of Tampa, FL along with extended family members in NH. Gaylen (aka "GB") enjoyed golf, traveling, going to the movies, and most of all a nice dinner out with family and friends. He was known to be very smart, quick with math, kind and pleasant. GB was loved by all who were lucky enough to have known him. Gaylen

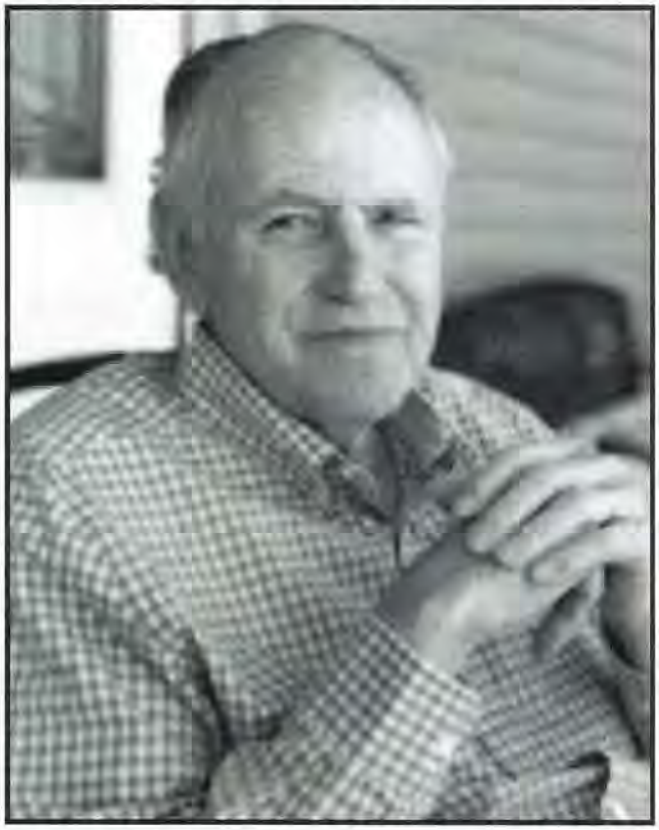

graduated from Gilman High School in 1954 whereupon he began exam preparations for the Naval Academy.

The following year, 1955, he received a very coveted Congressional Appointment to the US Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD. Four (4) years later in 1959, Gaylen graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Engineering and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. He was selected for Flight School which he completed in early 1961 and proceeded to his first flying assignment in Evreux, France flying C-130(s). His missions there varied and included extensive travel to all of Europe, Africa, and he Middle East, the most significant of which included an extended deployment of several months in Kano, Nigeria. The next phase of Gaylen's military career represented a dramatic change to the more technical side of the Air Force consisting of a tour at Cape Canaveral (now The Kennedy Space Center) in support of the then newly launched U.S. Space Effort to place a man in space. This somewhat short tour culminated in his enrollment in Graduate School at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute where he graduated in 1967 with a Master of Science Degree. By this time the War in Vietnam was raging and required the services of all. Due to his previous and extensive foreign flying experience, he was assigned to a Tactical Combat Squadron stationed in CCK, Taichung, Taiwan. **From here he flew his weekly combat missions into Vietnam; he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross during the battle of Khe Sanh.**

This was to be Gaylen's last flying assignment for any other than fulfillment of his flying proficiency requirements which were accomplished in twin-engine executive jets (Saberliners) used to facilitate travel for this last and final military assignment, Space and Missile Systems Command, located in Los Angeles. He spent the last ten (10) years of his military career at this location. He retired after 20 years in late 1979. Prior to this date he began to study law and accounting and worked part-time accordingly. Upon retirement, Gaylen formed the company, East-West Coast Mgt., Inc., a Florida Real Estate Corporation which served as an all-encompassing real estate entity, brokering, constructing, and managing commercial property consisting mostly of shopping centers and medically related facilities.



OBIT

On Tuesday, July 2nd at 7:21 pm, we said goodbye to a husband, father, brother, grandfather, and friend. Joseph Paul Abrams was born on October 13, 1947, and was relieved of duty on July 2, 2024. He was the son of the late Joseph and Frances Abrams.

Joseph was a United States Marine in Vietnam from 1966-1968 and one of the surviving Marines from the Battle of Khe-Sanh; he came home and became a Long Island Railroad Police officer in NYC for 27 years.



He lived a remarkable life marrying his Sweet pea, Sandy Abrams, whom he met while working as she walked through Jamaica station. After searching for her in Guatemala, he found her, and they were married 1 year later. They have been married for 49 years. He is survived by his wife, Sandy; his brother Steven (wife, Sharon), his children, Joey (wife, Liz), Paul (wife, Julie); Charles (wife, Danielle); Daughter, Krystal. He is also survived by his grandchildren Isabella (her mother, Melissa) Gianna, Gabriella, Rocco, Joey, Sofia, Nicolas, Ava, Lorenzo, Luke, Olivia, Josephine, and Franco.

OBIT

October 11, 1945 – July 8, 2024 - Steve Crittenden, 78, passed away on July 8, 2024 due to complications from a stroke at the Select specialty hospital in Richmond Virginia.

Steve was born at Naval Hospital, Camp Lejeune, Jacksonville, North Carolina on October 11, 1945 to Chuck and Marellen Crittenden. His dad, a Ma-



rine, served in WWII and the Korean War. He moved the family to Camp Pendleton toward the end of WWII and eventually moved to Lake Oswego, Oregon where Steve grew up and graduated from Lake Oswego High, class of 63. Steve attended the University of Oregon and later joined the

Marine Corps through the Platoon Leaders Class (PLC). He was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in July 1967 and served as an infantry officer.

He served a tour in Vietnam where he participated in the Battle of Khe Sanh. He left active duty in the Marine Corps in 1971 and served as a reservist only to come back into the Corps in February 1975. He met his wife, Ann, while on a tour as a Public Affairs Officer in New York City where he ultimately convinced Ann that joining the Marine Corps would be the only occupation she should choose! Their long careers took them to Cherry Point NC, Los Angeles, California where Steve served as the Commanding Officer of Recruiting Station Los Angeles and Okinawa Japan where he again served as the Commanding Officer of Headquarters and Service Battalion, 3d Force Service Support Group (renamed later as Marine Logistics Group (MLG). He served honorably until April 1991 and retired. Upon retirement from the Marine Corps, he and his wife Ann and their three children, Zeph, Michael and Maddie, made Stafford, Virginia their home.

Luck, Destiny, or Devine Intervention?

55 years ago in March of 1969, I came home from Vietnam after serving with Echo Co. 2/26th Marines, starting with the Siege of Khe Sanh (I had just turned 18 four months earlier). I had written to a young lady (Linda) for several months and we shared stories. Me about Vietnam and her about her dog Charlie, her family, etc. My younger brother Tom had asked her to write to me and she said she would if I wrote first. I did, and that started a fairly regular letter exchange (me when I could).

While in Vietnam, I tried to extend for 6 months more, but was turned down due to my top security clearance and a new destination of NSA, Ft. Meade, Maryland. This becomes important because had I stayed for 6 months all that came after changes dramatically. Would I have survived, would I ever had met Linda, etc.

When I came home, I called Linda and asked her if she wanted to go on a date. She said she would, but I had to meet her family first. I hung up the phone, I figured, damn, I don't want to marry this lady, just go on a date. Then, I came to my senses, and called her back to say I would be glad to meet her family.

We went on our date to see what I thought was a cowboy movie, but turned out to be a war movie "Where Eagles Dare" and then dated for the next 17 days of my leave before I had to be at NSA, Ft. Meade, MD. On one of my weekend visits home, I asked Linda to go to Ambridge (her hometown).

We went to a local jeweler and he asked me what I was looking for. He showed me engagement rings and I turned to Linda and said "Pick the one you want". She was stunned for a few minutes, believing I had taken her there to pick out a ring for someone else. I said it is yours. Now, I have never been bright in the woman department, but I made up for this proposal snafu over the years since.

We were married on August 2nd,1969, about 4 months after we met. Linda later told me she told her sister, when I drove over to pick her up for our first date that I was the one she was going to marry. She had another suitor who had wanted to marry her.

Some time after we were married my mom was talking to Linda and the conversation came up about her being in the hospital and a kind woman gave her a doll (she was about 7). In those days you were placed on wards. My mom told her that she was the woman who gave her the doll, because I was also in the hospital (I was about 8) on the same ward.

Despite a terrible war, nightmares, PTSD, AO, numerous medications, meeting and falling in love with my wife and our life together has made it all worth it.

Coincidence, luck, destiny, divine intervention, you decide. We will be married 55 years on August 2nd, 2024!

James Ulinski
Echo, 2/26 Marines
Vietnam 1968-1969

Physicians of 3rd Medical Battalion "Charlie Med" gather during a lull in the shelling at Khe Sanh.

L-R: Lt. Joseph Wolf, Lt. ames Finnigan, Lt. Edward Feldman and Lt. Don-



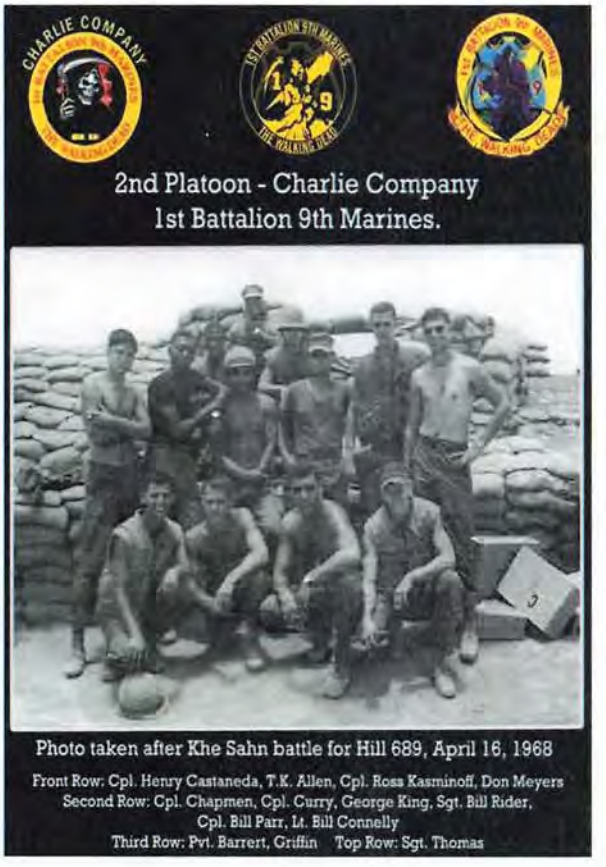

BOOK REVIEW

I Walked with Heroes, Jerry Guzzetta's new biography, chronicles the stories of the US military's most patriotic and brave figures.

The book serves as a historical collection of the events that these courageous souls went through in order to serve and protect their country. Guzzetta's book is an eye-opener to the kind of life that people in the military live, the dangers they face, and the high stakes they work in.

The author describes a number of the covert operations he and his group carried out, in which their presence in enemy territory was a threat to their lives. The people of America owe their safety to these heroes, who showed us to be tenacious and bold in the face of adversity rather than giving up.

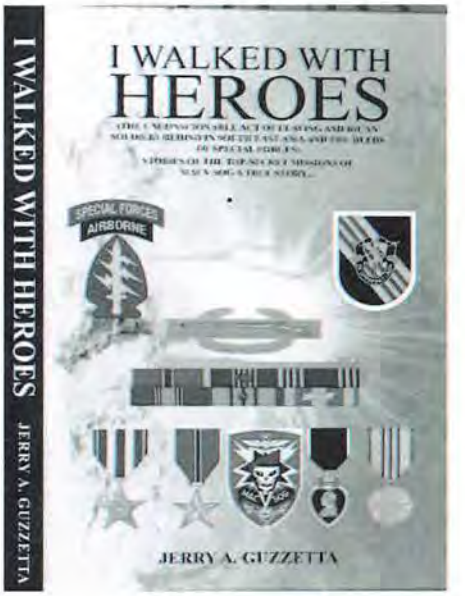

OBIT

NORMAN JASPER

A great citizen of the United States of America was lost when Norman Joshua Jasper died on April 18th, 2024.

His life started humbly, born in the town of Shipman, Illinois with a population of only 250 people. Norman grew up during the Great Depression, and lived his life on the honesty of a handshake and a smile being sufficient for all professional dealings. His favorite saying:" Good people are like cream. They always rise to the top."

Norman was successful with all sports available to him. After graduating high school, he earned his four-year degree from Illinois State University. His major in physical fitness with a minor in history



made him a valuable selection for Officer Candidate School (OCS) with the United States Marine Corps. His photo as 2nd lieutenant with the USMC is pictured above.

Norman Jasper excelled in military training with both the Army and the Marines. His Army training included Ranger school, 2nd Division Recon. battalion, and 82nd Airborne Division, among others. He was proud of making 300 free falls and made 365 parachute jumps in 8 years. His deep regret he did not have the talent to learn a second language. That obstacle kept him from becoming a full Army Green Beret.

With his thorough military training, Norman volunteered for active duty in the Vietnam War. His fondest memory was as Kilo Company Commander, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines on hill 861, Khe Sanh, Vietnam. His less than 400 men were up against a North Vietnamese Regiment of 1000 soldiers. This time is called "The Siege" of Vietnam, where boots on the ground Marines were hit by heavy bombing and machine gun artillery fire. Norman Jasper was wounded in combat on January 21,1968; along with 25 of his fellow Marines. On that date in spite of the irreconcilable odds, there were only 10 casualties of Kilo company, 26th Marines. His combat wounds earned Norman Jasper a Purple Heart medal with 2 stars, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Gold star, and later was awarded The Bronze Star with Combat V.

His leadership and skill to lead the Marines and "Hold the Hill 861" are recorded in "The Battle for Khe Sanh" by Captain Moyers S. Shore II, USMC, Historical Branch, G-3 Division 1969, page 40. Norman Jasper is featured in the book "Last Stand at Khe Sanh" the U.S. Marines' finest hour in Vietnam by Gregg Jones. He submitted materials to the author and was interviewed on January 27, 2012.

Other periodicals and materials the family did not have access to include. Norman's reading scripture in the Vietnam War and in life is the 91st Psalm of the King James Bible.

Within a year of Honorable Discharge from the USMC, Norman Jasper was hired in pharmaceutical sales then retired after 25 years. He never stopped working to improve Veterans treatment and causes. In 1987 Norman was able to push for the Military Order of the Purple Heart license plates for the State of Virginia with political a assistance. He was active in membership of over 21 different Veteran groups. The Vietnam Veterans of America, Military Order of the World Wars, Blue Ridge All Airborne Division, and the Military Order of the Purple Heart are to name a few. His last year of activity before his infirmity caught up with him was 2018.



Obit

LLOYD T STRASNER JR. USMC

Lloyd T. Strasner, Jr. (Butch), age 76, of Katy, Texas, passed away September 3, 2024. Born August 25, 1948, in Little Rock, Arkansas. He was preceded in death by his parents, Lloyd T. Strasner, Sr. and Christine Lampkin; nephew, Dennis Davis. Butch is survived by his children, Shannon Ethridge (Lee); Sean Strasner (Loretta); grandchildren Chase Ethridge (Jessica); Mackenzie Strasner; Lindsay Ethridge; Zoe Naraghi; Jaden Naraghi; great grandchild Clara Ethridge; sisters Betty Davis (Jim); Linda Beard (Lee) and numerous nieces and nephews plus his loyal dog, Pepper, who was by his side when he died.

Butch, a Vietnam Veteran, served honorably in the United States Marine Corps from 1967-1970. During his time in Vietnam, he fought in the Battle of Khe Sanh, one of the bloodiest and longest battles of the war. He remained close friends with his fellow comrades from the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines (2/26) Foxtrot Company, with whom he reunites annually through the Khe Sanh Veterans Association, having just returned from one on Sunday.

Butch graduated from North Little Rock High School in 1967 prior to joining the Marine Corps. He worked in the Gas Control Unit for El Paso Corporation in Houston, Texas and had to retire early in 1995 due to health issues. Butch enjoyed hunting and fishing in his earlier years and was an avid football fan with Notre Dame being his favorite team. He also loved playing golf with the Silver Eagles at Meadowbrook Farm in Katy, Texas for many years. Butch loved to travel both domestically and internationally, having visited approximately 50 countries.



OBIT

Larry H. Weaver, of Evening Shade, Arkansas, passed away peacefully on June 6, 2024, at the age of 75. Born on July 18, 1948, in Batesville, Arkansas, Larry lived a life marked by dedication, service, and unwavering faith.

Larry enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps on August 9, 1965, at just seventeen years old. He trained rigorously for over a year before becoming eligible for combat duty. Larry served two tours of duty in Vietnam, demonstrating extraordinary bravery and leadership. His first tour began in February 1967, where he served as an infantry fire team leader and later as an infantry squad leader with F Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Regiment, 3rd Marine Division. Larry saw action in significant battles at Khe Sanh, Hill 881, and Hill 861. Despite being wounded three times, he returned to the battlefield, earning three Purple Hearts, a Silver Star, and a Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V".



An article from March 2, 1968, highlighted Larry's gallantry and bravery during his service. It detailed his heroic actions on May 3, 1967, when his squad was pinned down by enemy machine gun fire. Despite being seriously wounded, Larry moved forward, throwing grenades into enemy positions and preserving the lives of his comrades. His actions on this day earned him the Silver Star Medal. The article also mentioned his continued bravery, including leaping into an enemy bunker to kill the remaining defenders and later helping a wounded Marine under heavy enemy fire, despite his own injuries. His unwavering courage and dedication were widely recognized and honored.

In May 1970, Larry returned to Vietnam for a second tour, this time serving as a sergeant with a Combined Action Platoon with H Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Regiment, 1st Marine Division. His squad worked closely with South Vietnamese soldiers and civilians, teaching defense techniques and serving as humanitarians.

After his distinguished military service, Larry pursued his passion for ministry, graduating from Liberty Home Bible Institute with a degree in General Bible Studies. For over 27 years, he served as a volunteer jail minister, offering spiritual guidance and support to inmates from 1996 until 2023. Larry was preceded in death by his parents, Lewis and Lorene Weaver; his first wife, Bobbye Weaver; and his brothers, Price and Jerry Rush. He is survived by his loving wife, Nancy Weaver; his children, Bobby Rush, Virginia Rush Smith, Gavin Franke, Nathan Marlin, and Natalie Marlin; and his cherished grandchildren, Brandon Manley, Danielle Manley, Matthew Smith, Alli Polston, Abri Franke, Oliver Marlin, Laura Lamme, Charlie Lamme, and Wendy Hardy. Larry's legacy continues through his great-grandchildren, Lucero, Trentin, Julianna, Neveah, Jada, and Kaitlyn.

A memorial service to celebrate Larry's life was held on June 14, 2024, at 2 PM at the First Baptist Church of Evening Shade.

"To those who have fought for it, freedom has a flavor that the protected will never know."

— P. McCree Thornton, The Star Spangled Son

FROM THE PODIUM OF JIM "OLLIE" COLLINS USMC - -KEY SPEAKER MARINE CORP BALL NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

" " GOOD EVENING EVERYONE" "

AS A MEMBER OF THE "KHE SANH VETERANS ASSOCIATION" I WAS ASKED BY LEADERSHIP MEMBERS OF THE "MARINE CORPS DETACHMENT, NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND TO BE THE "KEY NOTE SPEAKER" AT THE 249TH MARINE CORPS "BIRTHDAY BALL."

I WAS CERTAINLY HONORED AND EXCITED TO BE HERE THIS EVENING, IN CELEBRATION! AS WE RECOGNIZE "WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY" OUR 249TH MARINE CORPS "BIRTHDAY BALL."

YOU, MIGHT HAVE HEARD THIS BEFORE!! ALTHOUGH IT DOES JUSTIFY REPEATING! NO OTHER BRANCH OF THE MILITARY GATHERS ALL OVER THE WORLD ON THE SAME DAY EVERY YEAR TO COMMEMORATE THE FOUNDING OF THEIR ORGANIZATION, BUT MARINES DO! MARINES EVERYWHERE CELEBRATE AT FORMAL SOCIAL MILITARY BALLS, YOUR LOCAL MARINE CORPS LEAGUE OR WITH FRIENDS. EVERY NOVEMBER, MARINES FIND ONE WAY OR ANOTHER AND GATHER TOGETHER TO SHOW THAT OUR MOTTO "SEMPER FIDELIS" IS JUST AS STRONG IN VETERANS AS IT IS WITH ACTIVE MARINES. WITH THAT IN MIND! LET ME BEGIN WITH A LITTLE "VERBAL COLLAGE" AND EXPRESSION THAT "MARINES" ARE FAMILIAR WITH!! HOW CAN ANYONE REALLY KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE STOOD TALL AT BELLEAU WOOD, TO HAVE CRAWLED AT GUADAL CANAL, CLIMED AT IWO JIMA, HELD FAST AT KHE SANH, PUSHED THROUGH FALLUJAH OR HELMAN, AFGHANISTAN, ALL TACTICAL AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITIES. HOW CAN ANYONE REALLY KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO STAND ON A SET OF YELLOW FOOTPRINTS ON AN ISLAND IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND WRITE A BLANK CHECK TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FOR THEIR LIFE. MARINES KNOW, WE KNOW. MOST OF YOU HAVE STOOD ON THOSE FOOTPRINTS. I WILL SAY TO YOU NOW! ALTHOUGH I CAN REASSURE YOU! THAT THOSE "YELLOW FOOT PRINTS" WERE NOT AROUND WHEN I ENLISTED IN APRIL OF 1965. WE HAVE CHARGED THOSE LINES, WE HAVE BEEN VICTORIOUS!

FOR 249 YEARS MARINES HAVE LED THE WAY. AS WE MARINES GATHER HERE ON THE 249TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR BIRTH, WE ALSO CELEBRATE THOSE WHO HAVE COME BEFORE, THOSE WHO HAVE YET TO TAKE THE OATH AND MOST IMPORTANTLY WE COME TOGETHER FROM DIFFERENT GENERATIONS, WALKS OF LIFE, RELIGIONS AND WARS FOUGHT. WE GATHER AS STRANGERS TURNED BROTHERS, MEN AND WOMEN TURNED WARRIORS, AMERICANS TURNED MARINES WHILE WE ALSO NEVER FORGET BY HONORING THOSE GONE BEFORE US!!

I ENLISTED IN THE US MARINE CORPS ON APRIL 22, 1965. WHAT A WAKEUP CALL!! PARRIS ISLAND LITERALLY CHANGED MY ENTIRE LIFE FOREVER. I WAS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON AFTER GRADUATION. THAT'S ALL I NEEDED!!!! SOMEONE OR SOMETHING TO GIVE ME "HOPE," AND A CHANCE IN LIFE'S PURSUIT OF GUIDANCE, HAPPINESS & SUCCESS. THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS DID THAT FOR ME!!!

I NOW HAD THE ABILITY TO SHAPE MY LIFE AND BE WHO I DESIRED TO BE!! AND PURSUE MY EDUCATION WITH PURPOSE, DETERMINATION AND EXCITEMENT. AFTER GRADUATING FROM PARRIS ISLAND, AND SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING THE ITR PROGRAM AT CAMP GEIGER I RECEIVED MY OFFICIAL MILITARY

ASSIGNMENT ORDERS. I WAS TO BE TRANSFERRED TO 1ST BATTALION 8TH MARINES AND PARTICIPATED ON A MED - CRUISE ASSIGNED TO A BATTALION LANDING TEAM IN MARCH THRU AUGUST 1966. ALSO IN 1966 THE VIETNAM WAR WAS ESCALATING. I RECEIVED ORDERS FOR VIETNAM, IN SEPTEMBER 1966.

I WAS DEPLOYED AND TRANSFERRED TO ALPHA COMPANY, 1ST BATTALION 26TH MARINE REGIMENT! THE REGIMENT HAD A (2) FOLD MISSION TO OCCUPY AND DEFEND KEY TERRAIN!

SEEKING OUT THE OPPOSING FORCE WHILE ATTEMPTING TO ENGAGE IN A VIGOROUS INTENSIVE PACIFICATION PROGRAM.

ALREADY COMPLETING 6 MONTHS OF THE UNIT'S OCCUPATION AND COUNTLESS KIA,S AND WOUNDED FROM BULLETS, BOOBYTRAPS AND OTHER EXPLOSIVE MINES, THEN WORD CAME DOWN FROM THE CHAIN OF COMMAND TO SADDLE-UP! DESTINATION! A PLACE CALLED KHE SANH! DEMILITARIZED ZONE! I CORPS WHICH WAS NOW THE UNIT'S TACTICAL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY, A PLACE NONE OF THE YOUNG MARINES HAD EVER HEARD OF. THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT IS CITED BY MY PLT., COMMANDER, LT., JOHN M. KAHENY! I WAS ASSIGNED AS "PLATOON GUIDE." WE WERE A SOMBER BUNCH! WHEN WE ARRIVED ON C130'S THE "KHE SANH COMBAT BASE" WAS A VERY EERIE AND TERRIFYING COMBAT LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

AS THE RAMP OF THE AIRCRAFT CAME DOWN WE LOOKED OUT ONTO THE AIRSTRIP! WINDING DOWN THIS LONG DIRT ROAD TOWARD THE MOUNTAINS, WERE ALL THE WALKING WOUNDED FROM THE HILL FIGHTS. THERE WERE COUNTLESS MARINES SCATTERED ALL OVER, STANDING IN LINE ALL BANDAGED UP ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, COVERED WITH BLOOD AND KHE SANH "RED CLAY" MUD. MARINES FROM A/1/26, 2/26 AND 3/26 & ELEMENTS OF THE 3RD MARINE DIVISION BEGAN DAILY LONG RANGE (ROTATING) COMBAT

PATROLS IN AND AROUND "KHE SANH COMBAT BASE" CONSTANTLY ENCOUNTERING CONTACT

WITH ELITE 325TH NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY FORCES AND NVA SNIPERS.

21 MAY 1967

LT., KAHENY 3RD PLT LEADER, LED HIS 43-MAN PATROL INTO A VALLEY JUST WEST OF HILL 881-SOUTH TO EXAMINE A HEAVY TRAIL REPORTED BY AN "AIR TRAFFIC OBSERVER" THE PATROL WAS SUDDENLY ATTACKED BY A LARGE VOLUME OF FIRE FROM FOUR DIFFERENT LOCATIONS. TWO YOUNG MARINES EACH 18 YEARS OLD, PFC THOMAS HENDERSHOTT & L/CPL ROGER HEARD, STOOD UP, STOOD FAST AND FIRED INTO A CHARGING NVA FORCE, TAKING THE FULL FORCE AND DYING SO THE REST OF THE PATROL COULD ESCAPE & LIVE. EVENTUALLY FORTY-ONE MAKE IT BACK TO SAFETY, SOME BLEEDING, NONE BROKEN, BUT THE TWO GO ON HOME, TO REST FOREVER BENEATH MARBLE CROSSES. THEIR NAMES ARE NOW ETCHED IN STONE ON THAT WALL BENEATH LINCOLN'S WATCHFUL EYE! THE YEARS HAVE PASSED BUT EVERY DAY I SEE THEIR SACRIFICE REFLECTED IN THE SMILING FACES ON MY CHILDREN. FOR HAD NOT THOSE TWO BRAVE MARINES HELD THEIR GROUND WITH EVERYTHING THEY HAD, COLEEN, MEGHAN AND JOHN PETER SIMPLY WOULD NOT BE, BECAUSE ONE OF THOSE THEY SAVED THAT DAY WAS ME.

** I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE THE BOND BETWEEN MARINES AND HOSPITAL CORPSMAN.. PARTICULARLY BECAUSE I HAVE OVER AND OVER AGAIN..OBSERVED THEM IN COMBAT ACTION SITUATIONS. A MARINE WILL PRESS FORWARD IN COMBAT THROUGH MORTAL PERIL, BUTTRESSED BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IF THEY SHOULD FALL, A HOSPITAL CORPSMAN WILL BE ONLY STEPS BEHIND TO AID THEM, WHILE THE FIGHT CONTINUES!

A CORPSMAN WILL RUN ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE UNDER FIRE WITH THE SOLE PURPOSE OF REACHING AND AIDING A FALLEN MARINE, EVEN IF IT MEANS SACRIFICING HIS OWN LIFE TO DO SO. THEY WILL DO THIS BECAUSE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM KNOW THAT THEIR MARINES WILL PROTECT THEM WITH THEIR VERY LIVES AS WELL!! I KNOW "I AM THEIR WITNESS."

THE HOSPITAL CORPS IS THE ONLY ENLISTED CORPS AND THE LARGEST CORPS IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY WITH WELL OVER 28,000 CURRENTLY AROUND THE WORLD ON THE SEA, UNDER THE SEA, ON LAND AND IN THE AIR. "ARE THERE ANY "HOSPITAL CORPSMAN" HERE? IF THERE IS "PLEASE

"STAND & BE RECOGNIZED." IF NOT! THEIR STORY "HAS BEEN" TOLD AND SHARED THIS EVENING

27 JUNE 1967 -

JUST PAST MIDNIGHT @ 0035, KHE SANH COMBAT BASE RECEIVED MORE THAN 50 ROUNDS OF 82MM MORTARS, KILLING 4 AND WOUNDING 76, AND KILLING ONE VIETNAMESE ARVN LIAISON OFFICER. THE NVA MORTARS WALKED UP AND DOWN THE TENT AREAS OF A BATTERY, ⅓, KILLING 2 AND WOUNDING 30 MARINES, INCLUDING THE FIRE DIRECTION AND CO OF THE BATTERY CPT., BRENNAN, ESPECIALLY THE 3/26 BATTALION AID STATION. I STAND BEFORE YOU TODAY AS A SURVIVOR OF THIS EVENT AS WELL.. BUT ONLY BY THE GRACE OF GOD ALMIGHTY, I WAS SPARED AGAIN, FROM THE BEES NEST, BUT STILL HAUNTED BY THE SCREAMS OF THOSE AND THE SMELL OF LINGERING SULFUR FROM THE MANY DETONATED MORTAR AND ROCKET ROUNDS THAT POURED DOWN ON US.

AT THIS TIME!! PLEASE RISE AS WE MEMORIALIZE THOSE MARINE'S & NAVY CORPSMEN WHO GAVE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE 27 JUNE, 1967 BY CITING THEIR NAMES, HERE AT THE 249TH MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY BALL, NEWPORT RHODE ISLAND!! 7 NOVEMBER, 2024.

"KILLED IN ACTION"

27 JUNE 1967

"KHE SANH COMBAT BASE & VICINITY"

> I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE!!!!

CORPORAL, CHRISTINA WIGGINS USMC, MARINE CORPS

DETACHMENT; NEWPORT R.I..

> CORPORAL WIGGINS, WILL "RING A SINGLE BELL! IN REMEMBRANCE" AFTER HONORING EACH NAME!!

1. 2 LT., DALE CHARLES ALLEN I/3/26

2. SSGT., WILLIAM IVOR TENNEY BACON H&S/3/26 DIED USS SANCTUARY, RESULTS OF WOUNDS 6/27/67

3. LT., LAWRENCE JOSEPH BOLGER A/1/26

4. PFC FREDERICK BRENKE L/3/26

5. L/CPL VICTOR BURNS A/1/26

6. CPT FRANKLIN BYNUM L/3/26

7. L/CPL ALLEN DAMIAN A/1/26

8. L/CPL JEFFREY DAVID I/3/26

9. CPL ANTHONY DI CESARE JR 1/3/26

10. HM3 HOSPITALMAN 3RD CLASS, CARL DOUGLAS DUDLEY JR H&S/3/26

11. L/CPL CHARLES MANLEY GATTIS JR., I/3/26 DIED NAVY HOSPITAL, DANANG,

12. L/CPL ALEJANDRO GODINEZ I/3/26

13. SSGT DONALD PAUL HAMILTON I/3/26

14. HM3 CURTIS DARRELL JACKSON H&S/3/26

15. L/CPL FREDDIE LEE JOHNSON I/3/26

16. SGT PAUL KINCAID A/1/26

17. L/CPL CHARLES LYNCH SUB UNIT 5

18. L/CPL FRANCISCO MAZARIEGOS SUB/UNIT 5

19. L/CPL KENNETH MILLARD I/3/26

20. CPL DENNIS O'CONNOR SUBUNIT 5

21. PFC PAUL RODRIGUEZ JR A/1/26

22. L/CPL GLENN EDWARD SANDERS A/1/26 - 6/29/67- DIED USS SANCTUARY, RESULT OF WOUNDS 06/27/1967.

23. CPL JAMES SHEPARD-SUB UNIT5

24. PFC RICK STEWART A/1/13

25. CPL EDWARD TRAVIS A/1/13

26. CPL RICHARD LEE WALKER I/3/26

27. CPL STEPHEN WASSENICH I/3/26

28. L/CPL JONATHAN WHITTICOM H&S/1/26

29. L/CPL IRA WILLIAMS A/1/26

30. PFC JACK WILLIAMS L/3/26

"MAY THESE "WARRIORS" CONTINUE TO REST IN PEACE"

THANK YOU, CORPORAL WIGGINS!

PUC RECOGNITION:

"NAVY PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION"

SIGNED BY PRESIDENT LYNDON B. JOHNSON!! AWARDED TO NAVY/MARINE UNITS OF THE 26TH MARINE REGIMENT, 3RD MARINE DIVISION 1965 THRU 1968. THE "NAVY PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION" WAS INSTITUTED IN 1942. AWARDED TO NAVY/MARINE CORPS UNITS FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM IN ACTION AGAINST AN ARMED ENEMY.

"ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS;"

AWARDED IN THE NAME OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO UNITS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES AND CO BELLIGERENT NATIONS. THE UNIT MUST HAVE DISPLAYED SUCH

GALLANTRY, DETERMINATION, AND SPIRIT DE CORPS IN ACCOMPLISHING IT'S MISSION UNDER EXTREMELY DIFFICULT AND HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS TO HAVE SET IT APART AND ABOVE OTHER UNITS PARTICIPATING IN THE SAME CAMPAIGN. THE DEGREE OF HEROISM REQUIRED IS THE SAME AS THAT WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR THE AWARD OF THE "NAVY CROSS" TO AN INDIVIDUAL.

THE EXPERIENCE "RETURNING HOME" FROM VIETNAM!!

AFTER SPENDING 6 MONTHS @ KHE SANH MY ROTATION DATE WAS UP. I DEPARTED KHE SANH COMBAT BASE ON A C-130. LOOKING DOWN FROM THE AIRCRAFT WAS CHILLING, FIRST WONDERING IF WE WERE GOING TO BE TARGETED BY THE NVA AND SHOT OUT OF THE SKY. GOD IS GOOD! WE LANDED AT DANANG AIR BASE. AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF PROCESSING, WE WERE IN THE AIR AGAIN! DESTINATION, KADENA AIR FORCE BASE, OKINAWA. UPON ARRIVAL WE WERE TOLD BY THE S-1 ADMIN OFFICER THAT THERE WERE NO FLIGHTS GOING TO CONUS.....

!!!!"CONTINENTAL OF THE UNITED STATES" AT LEAST FOR A WEEK OR SO. THIS WAS VERY UNFORTUNATE NEWS. A MARINE 1ST SGT ADDRESSED THE GROUP AND PROVIDED SOME ADVICE. RECOMMENDATION! GET TO THE OFFICER'S CLUB, ASK ANY-ONE THERE, IF THEY COULD GET US ON A FLIGHT TO THE STATES. "IT HAPPENED."

TWO PILOTS APPROACHED US AND STATED "WE CAN TAKE YOU TO THE STATES, BUT IT HAS TO BE BY C-130 CARGO PLAN! AND BUCKLED TO THE INTERIOR OF THE AIRCRAFT FOR THE FLIGHT DURATION. THE 14 MARINES TOOK THE OFFER. NEXT MORNING AT 0600 HRS WE WERE LOADED AND IN THE AIR, DESTINATION; SANTIAGO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

WE LANDED AT THE AIRPORT SAFELY IN THE EARLY EVENING. STILL ON THE TARMAC, SUDDENLY ONE OF THE PILOTS ADDRESSED US. "HERE THIS! WE CANNOT DISEMBARK, WE HAVE VIOLENT-VIETNAM DEMONSTRATIONS ALL OVER THE AIRPORT. NOT SAFE. WHAT A DISAPPOINTMENT!! IN THE AIR AGAIN. DESTINATION; ADAK, ALASKA, NAVAL AIR FACILITY/ IN THE ALEUTIANS ISLANDS. STILL IN DISBELIEF!! WE SPENT SEVERAL DAYS AT THE NAVAL FACILITY! THEN BACK IN THE AIR AGAIN!!DESTINATION, DOVER AIR FORCE BASE, DOVER DELAWARE. FINALLY BACK IN THE STATES. WE WERE SUPPLIED TRANSPORTATION TO THE BUS STATION. ONE OF THE MARINES GRABBED A NEWSPAPER AND WAS SOMEWHAT VISIBLY UPSET. FRONT PAGE, ANOTHER SERVICEMAN STRUCK BY HIT & RUN DRIVER. WE WERE IN OUR TROPICAL UNIFORM. THAT WAS ENOUGH SAID, WE GRABBED OUR DUFFLE BAGS HEADED FOR THE BATHROOM IN THE BUS STATION. AS WE TOOK TURNS CHANGING INTO OUR CIVILIAN CLOTHES...ALL THE WHILE THINKING WE WERE GOING TO BE TARGETED, BECAUSE WE REPRESENTED THE MILITARY SERVICE. WE THREW THE DUFFLE BAGS IN THE BELLY OF THE BUS AND WE WERE ON OUR WAY HOME ALTHOUGH STAYING VIGILANT AND CAUTIOUS, WE FELT THAT WE WERE OUTCASTS...AGAIN FRIGHTENING WAS A LIGHT TERM. SADLY, THERE WERE NO "TICKER TAPE" OR CONFETTI :

PARADES OR WELCOME HOME ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FOR THE RETURNING "VIETNAM VETERANS." WE WERE CAST AS "BABY KILLERS & WAR MONGERS. AT THE VERY LEAST, RETURNING SERVICEMEN, IF NOT VILIFIED, WERE CERTAINLY NOT WELL RECEIVED. MOST TRIED TO SLIP QUIETLY INTO A NORMAL PATTERN AND ATTEMPTED TO HIDE THE FACT THEY SERVED IN VIETNAM TO AVOID THE ANGER AND DISDAIN OF MANY.

IN CLOSING!!UNDENIABLY, WITHOUT QUESTION, INFLUENCING THE ENTIRE MARINE CORP CONCEPT, IS A THING CALLED "VALUES"

WE PERPETUATE THEM, WE PROTECT THEM, AND WE PROMOTE THEM!! SO I URGE AND ENCOURAGE YOU....TO CONTINUE TO PROMOTE YOUR "MARINE CORPS" VALUES, FOR IT MATTERS NOT HOW A MARINE DIES, BUT IT DOES MATTER HOW THEY LIVE. ALL THE THINGS WE CALL VALUES PREPARE US AS MARINES FOR THE VERY CHOICES THAT WILL ULTIMATELY DEFINE OUR CHARACTER!! WHAT A MARINE IS, IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT A MARINE HAS....AND OUR BOTTOM LINE..OUR TRUE WORTH IS WHAT WE ARE! I WANT TO THANK YOU! FOR THIS HONOR.. HAVING HAD THE DISTINCT OPPORTUNITY, BOTH PROFESSIONALLY AND EARNESTLY TO SHARE IN SOME OF MY MOST GUARDED PERSONAL CHRONICLES AND ACCOUNTS OF MANY YEARS PAST.



GOD BLESS AMERICA & THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS!!

SEMPER FIDELIS





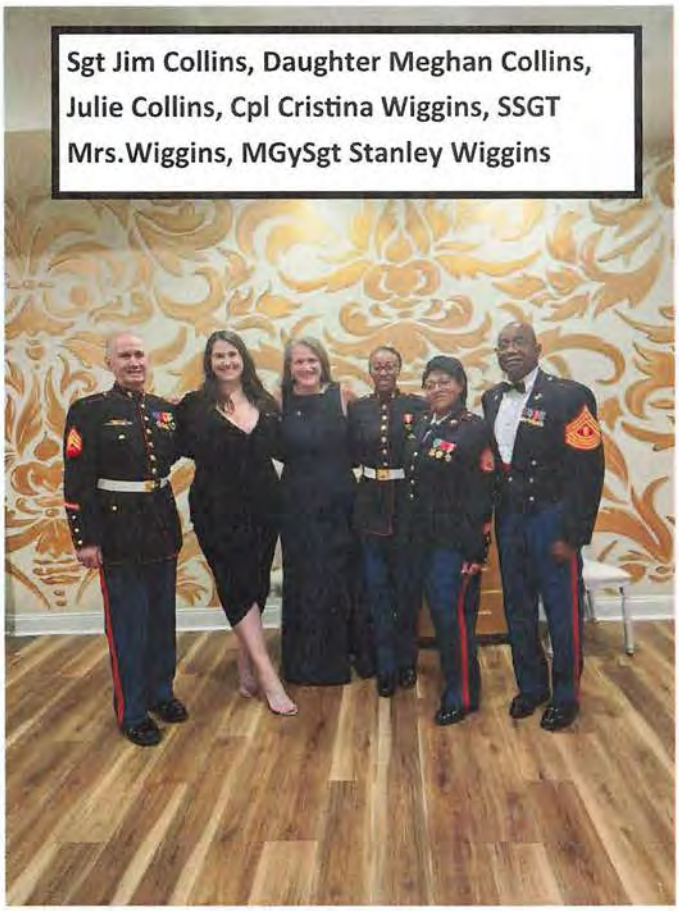
Sgt Jim Collins, Daughter Meghan Collins, Julie Collins, Cpl Cristina Wiggins, SSGT Mrs.Wiggins, MGySgt Stanley Wiggins


CPL CRISTINA WIGGINS


SGT JIM COLLINS , MGySgt STANLEY WIGGINS


SGT HJIM COLLINS AND WIFE JULIE COLOLINS

OBIT

KENNETH GASCH , USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN

Kenneth Alden Gasch, Sr. passed away on June 8, 2024, in Palestine, TX at the age of 82 after battling esophageal cancer for over two years. Born September 30, 1941, in Victoria, TX, Kenneth grew up the youngest (and tallest!) of seven children in a close-knit family in Bay City, TX. **He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps at age 17 and began what would be a distinguished 20-year military career. Kenneth fought in the war in Vietnam for three years, where he participated in the Battles of Khe Sanh and Hue City and earned the Combat Action Ribbon**.

Throughout his early military career Kenneth was stationed at Cherry Point NC, Camp Pendleton, CA, Twenty-nine Palms, CA, Iwakuni and Okinawa, Japan, and Beaufort, SC. His military accolades also included the Joint Service Commendation Medal, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross, Navy Presidential Unit Citation, Rifle Expert Badge, and four Marine Corps Good Conduct Medals. In 1970 he met Dallas native Betty (whom he affectionately called "Poo") and they married in 1971.

They went on to be stationed in Seattle, St. Louis, and San Diego. Kenneth retired from active duty in 1979 at the rank of Gunnery Sergeant and they moved to Betty's family home in Dallas (Lakewood) to raise their three sons. Kenneth bbegan his civilian career at Continental Electronics, where his mastery of RF (radio frequency), can-do-it attitude, and keen mind were highly valued. Always up for going someplace new, Kenneth frequently folded his 6'7" frame into an airplane to tackle projects around the globe, including two several-month stints in India, and projects in North Dakota, Afghanistan, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Cyprus, and Australia and on the Superconducting Supercollider in Waxahachie, TX.

In 1996 Kenneth left Continental and began roles with a series of companies that took the family to Woodbridge, VA, Phoenix, AZ, Santa Cruz, CA, and Edmond, OK, eventually returning to Dallas. Kenneth settled into retirement in the late 2010s and plunged his boundless energy into various hobbies, including restoring vintage tractors, boats, and cars; taking community college welding classes; lake and ocean fishing; tumbling gemstones; and offering consultation to anyone and everyone who had anything that needed fixing. Kenneth was a natural storyteller, a lover of bawdy jokes, and a spontaneous adventure-seeker who didn't sit still for long. His mechanical mind knew no bounds, and he never encountered something he couldn't repair or figure out how to get fixed. Kenneth loved genealogy, dogs, western movies, photography, spy novels, history, classic country music, and soul food. He held a strong faith in God throughout his life. Most of all Kenneth loved his family and took great joy in spending time with them whenever possible.

Kenneth was preceded in death by his parents, George Alden Gasch and Denal Marie Black Gasch; his beloved wife of 52 years Betty Florence Houston Gasch; and siblings Mary Tompkins, Virgil Gasch, and Billy Gasch. Kenneth is survived by his sisters Helen Freeman, Rachael Weems, and Yvonne Dodson; sister in-law Jane Gasch; brothers in-law Ben and Bob Houston; sons Ken, Jr., Bill, and John Gasch; daughters in-law Erin and Rachel Gasch; grandchildren Zoie, Winston, Tate, Benjamin, Cooper, and Emily Gasch; great-grandchildren Finley, Rayne, and Zander; and a multitude of nieces, nephews, and cousins. A memorial service celebrating Kenneth's life was held on Sunday, September 29, 2024 at 2:00 pm at Bethany Christian Church, 6282 Oram Street Dallas, TX 75214.



OBIT

Paul Weitz, 77, of Falmouth, formerly of Canton, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, March 3, 2024.

He was born in Dorchester on December 14, 1946, and spent his younger years in Canton. He attended Boston College High School, where he was proud to be an alumnus and would go on to send his two sons.

After two years of college Paul decided to enlist in the Marines in 1967 to serve his country during the Vietnam War. He served honorably as a First Lieutenant Infantry Officer in the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, India Company until he was wounded in battle in March 1969. Upon returning to the United States, Paul received a Purple Heart award for his valor and bravery during combat. Paul was a Marine with every fibre of his being, and he wore it proudly.

Upon returning from the war and recovering from his injuries Paul completed his undergraduate degree in Business from Boston College. After graduation Paul began working at Liberty Mutual Insurance and enjoyed a successful career as a corporate insurance broker. Along the way, Paul earned an MBA from Babson College and retired as a Managing Director from Marsh McLennan in 2012.

He was married for 24 years to his wife, Susan, whom he adored. They enjoyed a comfortable retirement splitting their time between Miromar Lakes, Fl and Falmouth. Whenever Susan would walk into a room Paul would light up and often commented how beautiful she was in front of family and friends. What made Paul the happiest was time spent with his family. From his siblings to his wife and children, his grandchildren, his nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews, extended family members, that time spent was always his happiest.



Paul relished his role as "Grandfather" and shared a special relationship with his first and only girl, Gwendolyn. He would proudly shower praise, encouragement, advice and a helping hand with all his grandchildren. He took such pride taking his family on a trips to Disney World and Turks and Caicos.

Paul was a voracious reader, enjoying books by John Grisham, and has over 4,000 titles saved in his Kindle. He also enjoyed watching old Western and war movies.

Paul was a kind and generous person who enjoyed a warm conversation over a cold drink. Being around Paul you felt a sense of safety and protection and regardless of the circumstance would constantly assure people not to worry and everything will work out. And if not, you always knew he would be there for you.

Paul is survived by his wife Susan (Peffer) Weitz, his children Jerry Weitz (Canton), Jonathan & Erin Weitz (Canton), grandchildren Gwendolyn, Christian & Harrison (Canton), his sisters Susan Sellon and her husband Raymond (Stoughton) and Sheryl Hopper (Virginia). Paul leaves many nieces and nephews and great-niece and nephews.

Paul was pre-deceased by his brother Jerry Weitz and his parents Wally & Gloria Weitz.

"To those who have fought for it, freedom has a flavor that the protected will never know."

— P. McCree Thornton,
The Star Spangled Son

OBIT



LIEUTENANT COLONET ROBERT THOMAS BRUNER USMC (RET)

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Lieutenant Colonel Robert Thomas Bruner, United States Marine Corps (Ret.), on January 14, 2025, at the age of 86. A proud Marine and dedicated patriot, Bob's life was marked by his steadfast service to his country, his love for his family, and his passion for the outdoors.

Born on January 21, 1938, Bob was a man of principle and purpose. He served with distinction in the U.S. Marine Corps for 26 years, achieving the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His service included participation in the Battle of Khe Sanh as part of First Battalion, Ninth Marines, "The Walking Dead," where he displayed extraordinary courage and leadership. His military awards and decorations include the Bronze Star with combat "V," Purple Heart with two stars, Vietnam Service Medal with one star, Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon and numerous other commendations for his service in both combat and humanitarian missions.

After retiring from the military, Bob continued to serve his community in various leadership roles, including positions with the City of Corpus Christi, where he was the Superintendent of the Marina, the Director of Parks & Recreation, and the Director of Solid Waste Services (honored with Department of the Year in 1991). He later co-founded Bruner and Associates, an environmental and management consulting firm, and founded ZipFly, a company specializing in fly-fishing supplies. Bob was also a mud engineer with Magabar-Dresser.

Bob was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed fishing, shooting, golfing, tying flies and leather crafts. He was also a dedicated teacher, imparting his knowledge and skills to others with patience and humor. A proud Marine, Bob's commitment to God, country and family were always paramount. His quick wit, engaging storytelling and boundless energy will be missed by all who knew him.

He is survived by his wife, Gail Bruner, of Georgetown, Texas; his daughters, Blyth Swartsfager of Odem, Texas, and Tracy Yeary of Aransas Pass, Texas; his granddaughters, Ambra Sherrod of Jackson, Michigan, and Rachel Tysdal of New Braunfels, Texas; and his great-grandson, Kyler Tysdal.

In honor of his legacy, the family requests that donations be made to his charity of choice, St. Jude's or Shriner's, in lieu of flowers.

A celebration of Bob's life will be held at a later date at Memory Gardens in Corpus Christi followed by the inurnment with Military Honors rendered by the United States Marine Corps. His family takes great comfort in knowing that his memory will live on in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Rest in peace, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Thomas Bruner—an American hero, a devoted husband, father and grandfather, and a true friend.



TOM BUNO

From The Web:

56 Years ago today, along with another NCO, we left Khe Sanh by chinook to pick up two jeeps from Dong Ha that had been equipped with sound sensitive electronics, after arriving at Dong Ha our pilots told us we would be spending the night as weather had stopped us from returning to Khe Sanh. Although it was imperative to get this equipment back to the perimeter we were stuck overnight, so the question came up what to do?

Well after hot showers, really good chow, I found my closest friend stationed there and we proceeded to kill off a pint of Seagrams seven crown, and slept on a real mattress for the first time in forever in brick barracks, the honeymoon did not last long and at dawn we hit the officers mess again and chowed down before returning to Khe Sanh, upon our return the Seabees were waiting to install the sounding sticks for this essential equipment that could detect tunnels being dug towards our perimeter.

Once detected the B-52s took care of that problem and eliminated the tunnels just several days later, we arrived back in time for the start of the siege on Khe Sanh Main base, and along with our brothers endured that horrific pounding, the loss of our ammo dump, and the precious Marines that fell to the rockets, artillery, and mortar onset of the first day of the 77 day siege. I was one of the fortunate, to have served and survived that historic battle with my Brothers of the 26th Marines, we did not falter, we did not fall, we were battered, bloodied, and dealt death as we lost numerous Brothers in Arms, unlike the French at Dien Ben Phu, North Vietnamese General Giap would not succeed with his plan to overrun with his Divisions of hardcore soldiers and take Khe Sanh, as he had done 15 years before in indo China, this time the North Vietnamese would fall, and tired Marines would prevail,

SEMPER FI BROTHERS, Tom Buno

OBIT

JOHN "BUTCH" RAY LEWIS
USMC, 1ST TRANSPLACEMWN BN
OKINAWA 1959 , B/1/1
July 10, 1941 — March 17, 2024

On March 17, 2024, we bid farewell to John "Butch" Lewis, a beacon of strength, kindness, and service. His departure leaves behind a legacy marked by unwavering generosity, steadfast commitment to justice, and boundless courage.

Born on July 10, 1941, in Abbeyville, Louisiana, to Reba Vandaberg and John Lewis, Butch's family relocated to Wyoming shortly after his birth, where he attended Casper schools and later Natrona County High School. Butch left school, one month after

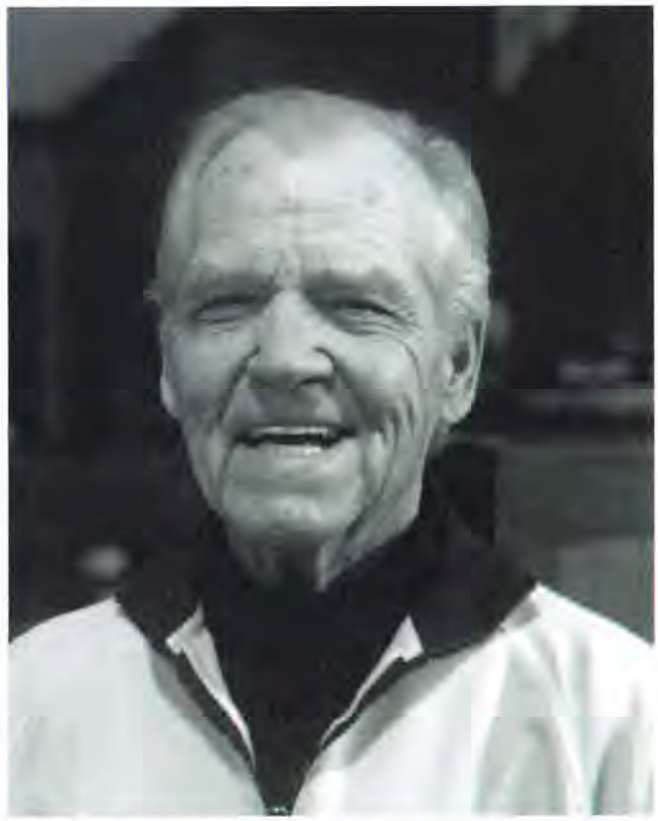

his 17th birthday to join the United States Marine Corps, embarking on a global voyage that included service in Japan and Korea. It was during his tenure in the Marines that he imbibed the values of discipline, integrity, and loyalty, shaping his future endeavors.

Following an honorable discharge, Butch returned to Casper and enrolled in the police academy, commencing a distinguished career in law enforcement. Renowned for his tenure as one of the first motorcycle officers, Butch epitomized honor and protection, earning universal respect. His dedication to justice and compassion for the vulnerable marked him not only as an exemplary officer but also as a cherished colleague.

It was during his patrol duties at the Central Wyoming Fair and Rodeo that Butch encountered the love of his life, Judie Murphy. Their courtship culminated in marriage in late 1964, where they began their married life together in the basement apartment of the Casper Bandshell in Washington Park. Together they built a family, welcoming their son Johnny in 1967 and daughter Ashlie in 1969. Alongside family responsibilities, Butch pursued further education at Casper College, transitioning careers to join the Natrona County Sheriff's Office.

In 1977, Butch took a leap of faith, left law enforcement and purchased the Sage Club in Evansville, Wyoming. In 1988 he rebranded the Sage into Happy Days Liquor, then Butch's Happy Days in 2005. Thriving as an entrepreneur, he fostered camaraderie and warmth at his establishment, bringing his customers together, to form their own large and extended family. He extended his generosity beyond the doors of his bar, and opened his home to a wide and varying array of characters and kids alike. Butch and Judie never closed their doors to those in need, and were renowned for the kindness, grace and respect with which they treated all they encountered.

Butch is survived by his wife of 60 years Judie, his son, Johnny Lewis, daughter Ashlie (John) Schmidt, grandchildren Tim (Ashley) Lewis, Gage Williams, Sharayah Lewis, Challen Schmidt, and Hannah (Matt) Loucks, along with great grandchildren Scarlett and Quincy Loucks and a vast network of chosen family, friends, and individuals whose lives were touched by his selflessness and grace.

In honoring Butch's memory, let us emulate his spirit of generosity, courage, and compassion. May he rest in peace, secure in the knowledge that his legacy will forever endure in the hearts of those fortunate enough to have known him. Services were held at the Oregon Trail Veterans Cemetery on Monday, March 25th, at 1:00 pm, followed by a reception at The Eagle's Club, 306 N. Durbin, at 2:00 pm.

"Surviving the Siege: Lessons in Resilience" "....the battle for our lives morphed into an even more intimate battle for our hearts and minds, and that connection fueled our resilience..." from the A.I. assistant book by Craig W. Tourte.

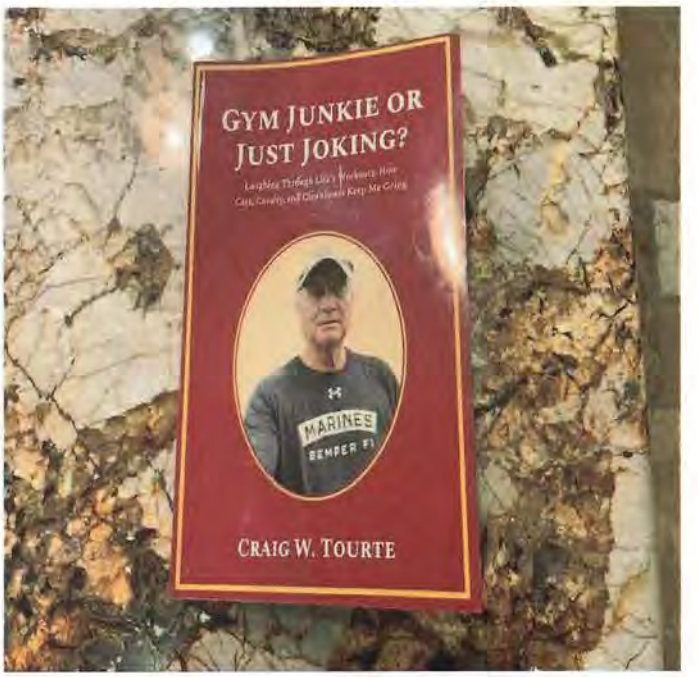





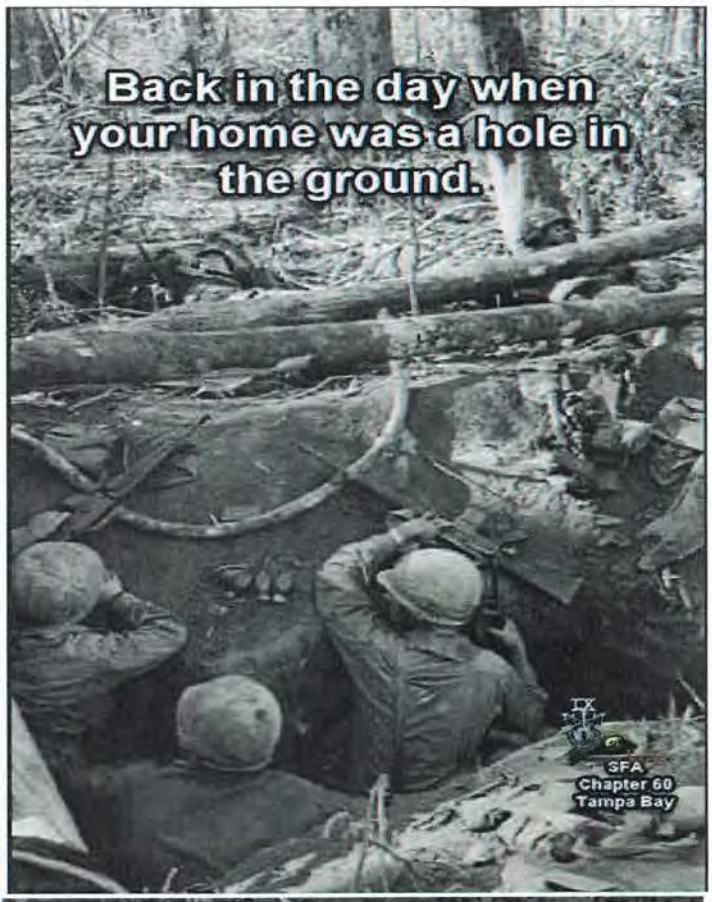
Back in the day when your home was a hole in the ground.
SFA
Chapter 60
Tampa Bay

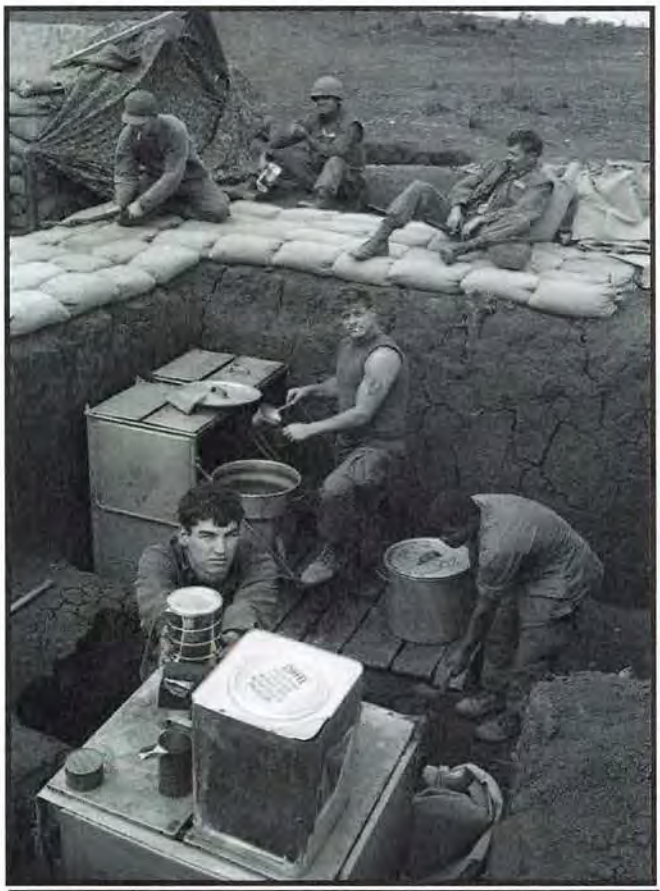



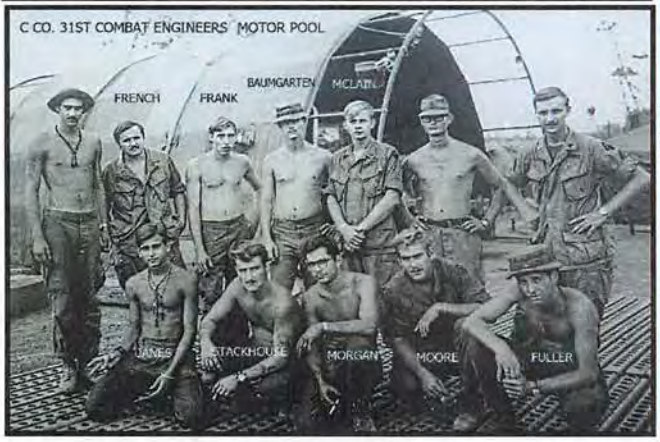
C CO. 31ST COMBAT ENGINEERS MOTOR POOL
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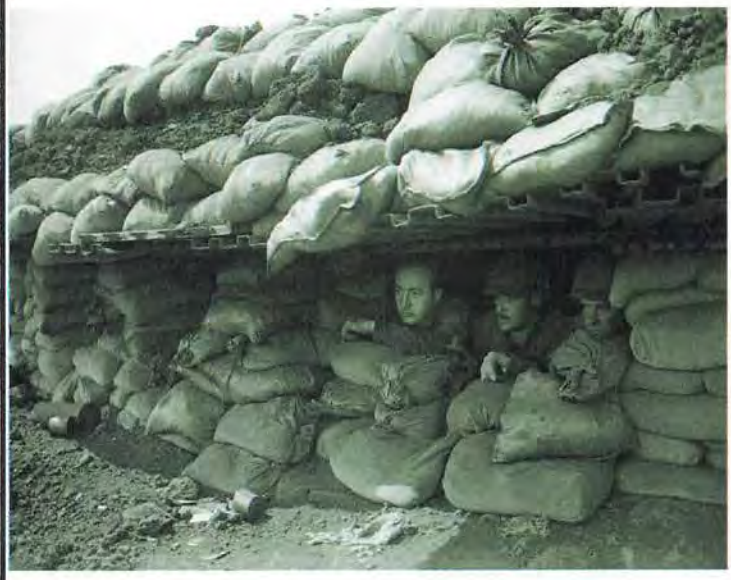

FROM THE WEB

"A TERRIBLE FEBRUARY"

BY KEN ROGERS

I suspect that everyone who sees combat has terrible times, terrible days, or years. For me, at the Siege of Khe Sanh, the month of February stands out. Not only did the heavy incoming arrive on an almost daily basis, but combat on the ground, and in the air, took on a furious character.

When we weren't in the middle of it, we had ringside seats, and the evil stink of rumor crept among us, a whisper that added angst to every bite of the spare supply of C-rations we crammed into our mouths.

Some of my salient memories follow.

On the early morning of the fifth, the enemy assaulted Hill 861-A, manned by Echo Company, Second Battalion, 26th Marines. The NVA came through the perimeter wire and were on the hill. A vicious fight ensued, and the enemy finally withdrew. While this was going on, NVA mortars and artillery pounded the combat base below, to silence our guns that would help defend 861-A.

On the night of February 7, the NVA assaulted the Special Forces camp at Lang Vei, not far from Khe Sanh Combat Base. Using tanks, they broke through the defenses and the camp fell after a nasty fight. During the middle of the night, we got word that enemy tanks were in the area. Tanks. I remember thinking I heard the squeak and crank of tank tracks out in the night. Mostly my imagination, I suspect. We were taking heavy incoming fire to create more chaos, so all the noise added to our anticipation. Dark, and death, and fear, and a horrendous racket.

In our area, our squad leaders told us to saddle up in anticipation of relieving Lang Vei, but we never left the combat base. I think there is still, after fifty-seven years, some residual anger from the men who survived the fight at Lang Vei, as well as some residual guilt among the Marines who didn't come out to save them. I recall, about ten years ago, hearing an audio clip from the commanding officer of the Third Marine Division, explaining in graphic and direct terms why he refused to go out and save the camp and the men who didn't get out.

Continuing salvos of incoming killed men on the surrounding hills and men in the trenches and men in their bunkers. A plane was lost south of Lang Vei while bombing enemy tanks.

Alpha Company, First Battalion, Ninth Marines, had a platoon stationed on a location known as Hill 64. On February 8, the NVA, led by a bugle call, assaulted Hill 64 and an hours-long firefight went on. With the enemy in their trenches, the Marines of Alpha fought. Eventually a relief column from the company managed to fight its way onto Hill 64 as the enemy was driven off. To those

Marines who fought on the hill, the subsequent call to abandon must have been a bitter pill.

On February 10, an incoming C-130, callsign Basketball 813, approached Khe Sanh, but at the last moment veered off the runway approach and flew low around the south side of the base and came in from the west. It was obvious to us, standing there on the ground watching, that something was wrong, maybe mechanical, maybe a wounded bird from the NVA flak constantly flying into the air. The plane came in hard and fast and veered off the runway and wrecked close to our lines. It ignited and men came dropping from the windows of the cockpit as the plane burned.

On 23 February, 1968, the NVA sent at least 1,307 rounds of incoming into the base. Mortars, rockets, artillery. Some of them big guns—152mm howitzers—and you learned to recognize the sound of the round leaving the tube—*thump*—and then you knew it was already in the air and on its way. They sounded like freight trains. If you survived long enough, you knew the fear they threw at you along with the hot metal and shrapnel that tore flesh and cut off legs and arms, and you learned the details of the thump and if the thump spoke in a very particular vernacular, you knew that where you lay in the trench would soon erupt. Despite the hell and mayhem and death, you got up and moved.

We received lots of new guys during the month of February. When the 152s fired, I would yell, "Move, a round is on its way," and many times the men gawked, mouths open, their fear refusing to let them crawl to a different place in the trench.

On 25 February, besides a debacle I will write about soon, NVA trenches were detected within 25 meters of our perimeter. If we didn't feel surrounded before, we did then. Marines with stethoscopes listened to the sounds of the enemy digging their trenches. We imagined tunnels beneath us, mined with tons of explosives to erupt and kill us all.

On February 28, The NVA launched a massive assault on the ARVN troops sharing the line with us. The din of combat sailed over the ground into our ears. Our bombers and artillery units pounded the attackers and the ARVNs bravely fought them off more than once, their courage under fire in stark contrast to so many of the disparaging rumors we had heard concerning ARVN troops. In this case, they didn't disappoint us.



OBIT

LT. COL. RONALD PARSONS, USAF, USA KHE SANH VETERAN 15TH AERIAL SQUADRON

Ronald Parsons 77, a retired Lt. Col., USAF, USA died unexpectedly on Monday, July 8, 2024, at his home in Middleboro. He was the husband of 44 years to Darlene (Thompson) Parsons. Born in Chelsea, he was raised in Chelsea, Dorchester and Stoughton and was a graduate of Stoughton High School, Class of 1965. He later graduated from UMass Boston with a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing and was a certified psychiatric nurse. Ron led the life of service, and it was never as evident as with his service to his country. He was a proud Veteran of the US Air Force, serving in Vietnam. He served most of career as a member of the US Army and the Army Reserves for many years. While in the Reserves, he was activated for several humanitarian missions, notably in El Salvador and Haiti. While activated, he also served in Iraq for over 2 years, and was the Manager of the Mental Health Clinic in Baghdad during that time. Back at home.



Ron worked for the VA Hospitals in Brockton and West Roxbury for many years and retired as a Transitional Case Manager at the VA in Brockton, assisting Veterans returning to civilian life, retiring in 2010. In 2012, he was the recipient of a double lung transplant at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, and was appreciative of the care and professionalism extended to him during his transplant and his recovery at BWH.

Ron and his wife Darlene loved to travel and spent the past years traveling the world, taking cruises and making many new friends. Ron also enjoyed golfing, particularly at Pine Oaks in Easton. Above all, he loved being surrounded by his beloved family and his friends. He was loved by all who met him with his contagious smile, sense of humor and his generous, kind heart.

In addition to his wife, Ron is survived by his two daughters, Heather M. Parsons and her partner John Vento of Medway and Ashley L. Correia and her husband Eddie of Berkley. He was the brother of Thomas, William and James Parsons, all of AZ, George Parsons of Bridgewater, Susan Parsons Worden of Lakeville, and the late Marie Brown and Robert Parsons. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews. He was buried

with Military Honors at the Massachusetts National Cemetery,

OBIT

DAVID T. LIND, USMC, KHE SANH VETERAN, H&S CO 2/4

The passing of David T. Lind Member of 2/4 and Khe Sanh Veterans Association

"Near the end of April 1968, one of the most fiercely fought but little-known battles of the Vietnam War pitted Marines of Battalion Landing Team 2/4 against the North Vietnamese 320th Division. It took place on a little piece of terrain approximately 1½ miles northeast of the headquarters of the 3rd Marine Division in the Dong Ha combat base. The fighting extended over a 3-day period."

This is the only engagement of the entire Vietnam conflict where a single reinforced battalion-sized Marine unit, with less than 1,000 fighting men, supported by intense naval gunfire, fought head-to-head with a division-sized unit of between 6,000 to 10,000 regular NVA soldiers who were augmented with 600 guerillas and who were supported by artillery on the demilitarized zone."...



OBIT

PAUL GERALD BOULEY

Bouley, Paul Gerald age 76, of Elk River, died on Dec. 31, 2024 at Guardian Angels Care Center while under the care of hospice. He was born in Minneapolis on August 8, 1948, and was joined minutes later by a twin sister. Paul graduated from Golden Valley High School in 1966. In July of 1967, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. He left for Viet Nam in January of 1968. Paul saw some of the worst action of the Vietnam War, and on June 10, 1968, he was injured at Khe Sanh. The experience had a lasting impact on his life. He spent months in a hospital in Japan, and a couple more at the Great Lakes Naval Hospital. He was awarded a Purple Heart for his sacrifice, and he was a life member of the Disabled American Veterans. Paul was honorably discharged in February 1970. Paul overcame a lot in his life. He had multiple eye surgeries for his war injuries, and a significant hearing loss due to the blast when he was injured. For over a decade he dealt with shrapnel that would migrate in his body, and at times, find its' way out. A brief marriage ended amicably. He resolved an alcohol problem at age 27. He built himself an earth-sheltered home in Zimmerman where he lived modestly almost all of his adult life. It was the perfect home for a returning soldier. Earth sheltered on three sides, but full of sun and views of nature on the south side. Twenty five acres of land gave him the peace and privacy he craved. Paul had a successful career as a proud member of Pipefitters Local 539. He was preceded in death by parents, Emmett and Mabel O. Bouley. He is survived by sister, Janet (Denny) Miller; brother, Dean (Sandi) Bouley; and twin sister, Paulette (John) Cervenka. A private interment will be held in the Spring.

OBIT

Robert "Bob" Warren Scruggs, 77, passed away on June 29, 2024, in Marietta, GA. Born on August 5, 1946 (to the late Warren and Mary Katherine Scruggs), Bob grew up in Del Rio, TN. After graduating from Cocke County High School, he joined the Marine Corps and honorably served during the Vietnam War where he bravely participated in the Battle of Khe Sanh. He was a member of the Marine Corps Silent Drill Team, getting to perform on the Ed Sullivan Show, and was part of the Presidential Guard for President Lyndon Johnson.

Sullivan Show, and was part of the Presidential Guard for President Lyndon Johnson.Corps Silent Drill Team, getting to perform on the Ed Sullivan Show, and was part of the Presidential Guard for President Lyndon Johnson.

After his military service, Bob met the love of his life, Nanci Heinzer, in Washington, DC. Within six weeks, they knew they were soulmates and married. They lovingly shared 43 years of marriage. Together, they lived in many places due to his career in medical sales, eventually retiring to Hilton Head. Following Nanci's passing, Bob moved to Marietta to be close to his children and grandchildren.

Bob was deeply devoted to his family, cherishing his role as a father and Pappy. He is survived by his children, Robert W. Scruggs II (Mary), Kimberly Bradigan (Greg), Amy M. Raminger (Chris) and Michael Scruggs (Tonya); grandchildren, Madison and Tripp Scruggs, Savannah Bradigan, and Cody Scruggs and Austin Scruggs. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Nanci; grandson, Nicholas Bradigan; and sister, Polly Willard.

OBIT

ROBERT PAUL BURDETTE 1947-2025

Robert Paul Burdette passed away on January 1, 2025, in Atlanta, GA. He lived a magical life of 77 years. He grew up as an outgoing young man on a farm in Delaware, Ohio. Bob displayed charisma and leadership from an early age. In high school, he played bass for the area's first and only rock and roll band. His popularity from that led him to become class president.

After graduating, Bob served as a Navy Corpsman dental technician embedded with the Marines during the Vietnam War. He experienced the harrowing events of Khe Sanh and took immense pride in serving alongside his military brothers. That experience led him to become a fearless warrior for peace. For his acts of valor and meritorious service in combat, he was awarded the Marine Corps Bronze Star Medal, one of the military's highest honors, recognizing exceptional bravery and performance under challenging conditions.

Following his military service, he found knowledge of inner peace through a Prem Rawat community that taught him the power of meditation. He pursued his passion by attending Life University's chiropractic school. As a chiropractor, Bob dedicated himself to healing the lives of those around him.

Dr. Bob, as he was known to all, left a written legacy of three books chronicling his lifelong journey toward inner peace and sharing "Clean Sweep" technologies-tools designed to free himself and universes from darkness to serve The Creator most appropriately. Link to the Clean Sweep: www.keystoascension.com/clean-sweep His writings reflected his deep commitment to achieving spiritual enlightenment.

He would marry and divorce twice while bringing three boys into the world. Despite facing health and financial challenges later in life, Dr. Bob maintained an enduring optimism exemplifying his resilient outlook. He was a very charismatic and unique individual loved by all who got to know him. His favorite catchphrase to say to anyone who ever asked him how he was doing is a lesson for us all to live by.
"Worst day I ever had was wonderful"

He is survived by his sons William Blayne Burdette, Travis Ryan Burdette, Derek Ian Burdette, and his sister Kathryn Ann Stults.

Dr. Bob's remarkable life touched many through courage, wisdom, and compassion. May his memory bring comfort to all who knew him.



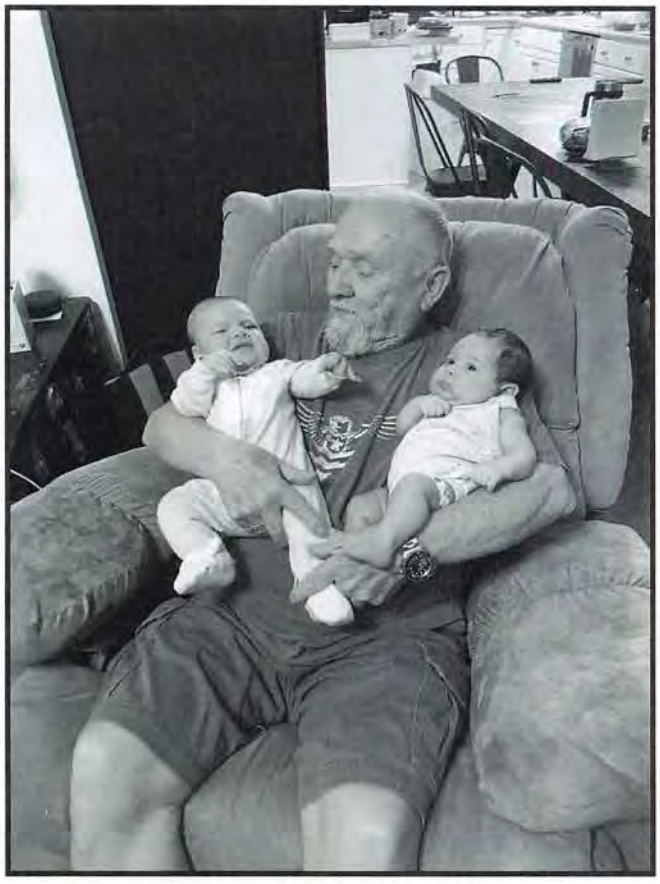

GRANDPAW TURNER





JOHN KAHENY CLAN





ONE OF OUR NEWEST MARINES.
GRANDPA CRAIG TOURTE—
ARLO CRAIG TOURTE



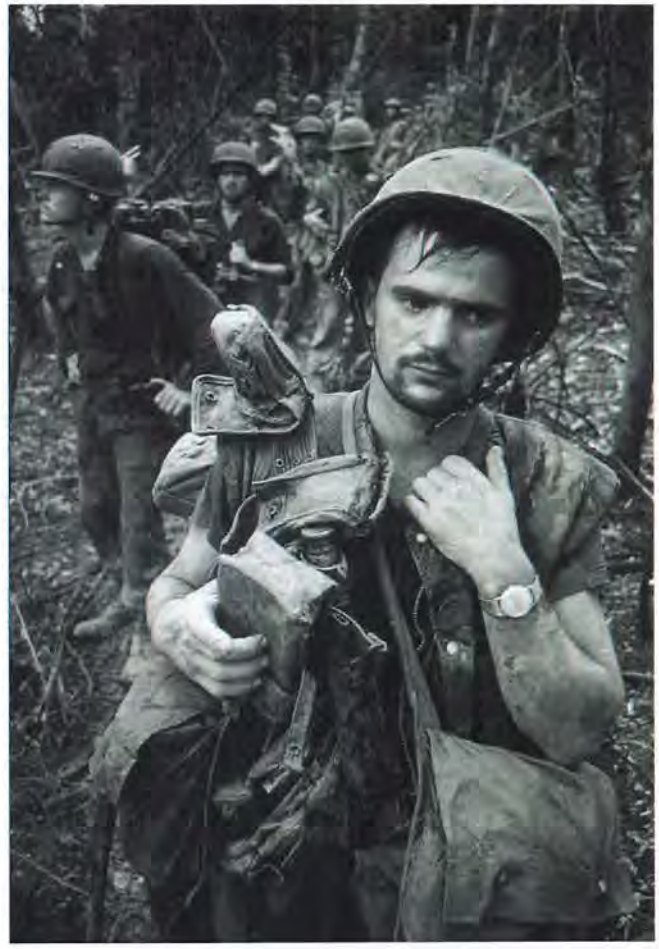




Khe Sanh Combat Base
Hill 861
Hill 861A
Laotian border
8 Miles
DMZ 12 Miles







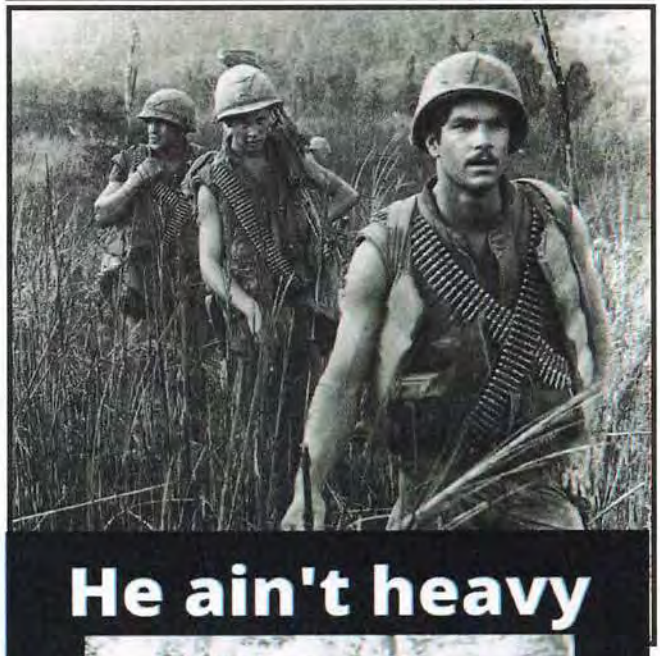



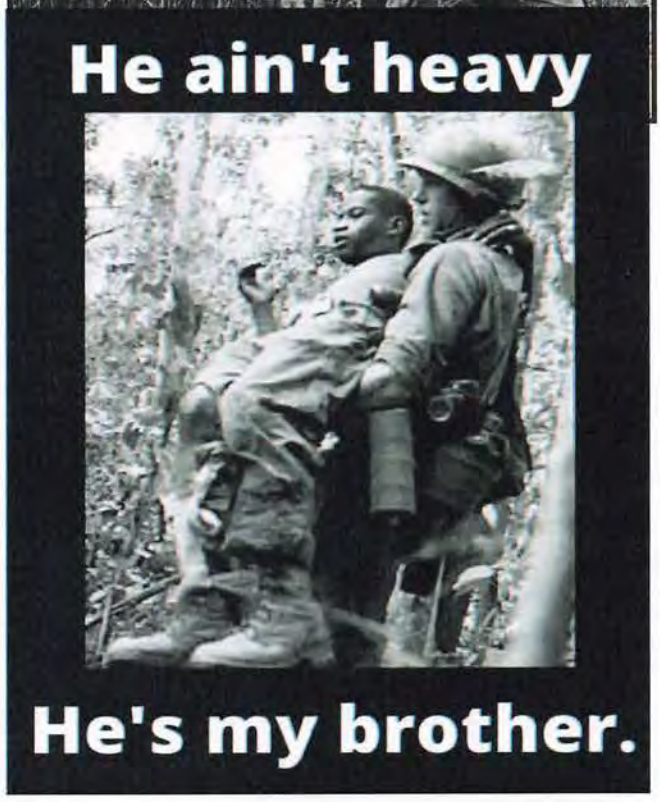
He ain't heavy
He's my brother.











INSIGHTS FROM

"BUTCH" DEVERNE



BARBARA FOSTER AMD HER "BEAUTIES"







STEVE STAOVICH



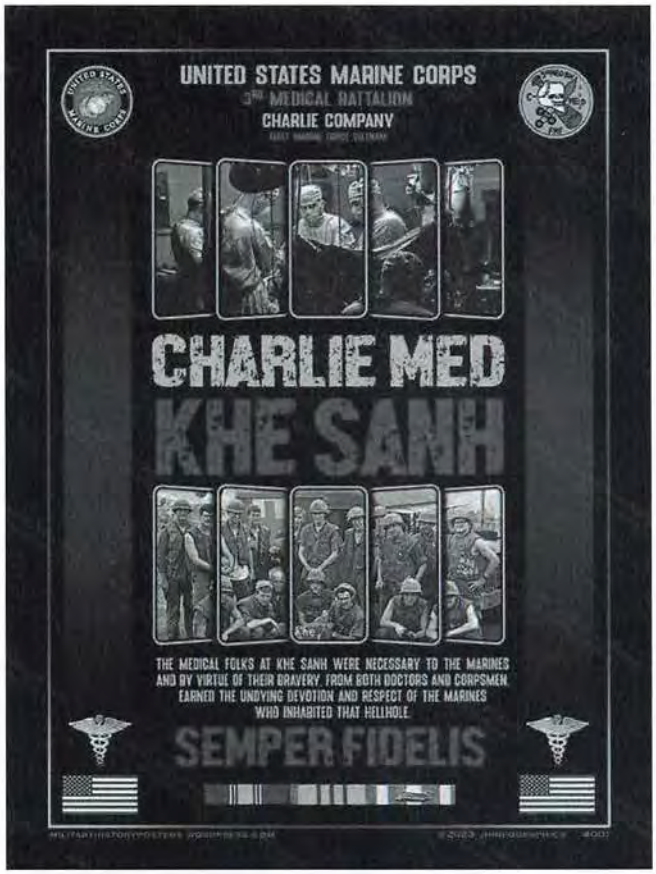
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
3RD MEDICAL BATTALION
CHARLIE COMPANY
CHARLIE MED
KHE SANH
THE MEDICAL FOLKS AT KHE SANH WERE NECESSARY TO THE MARINES
AND BY VIRTUE OF THEIR BRAVERY FROM BOTH DOCTORS AND CORPSMEN
EARNED THE UNDYING DEVOTION AND RESPECT OF THE MARINES
WHO INHABITED THAT HELLHOLE
SEMPER FIDELIS





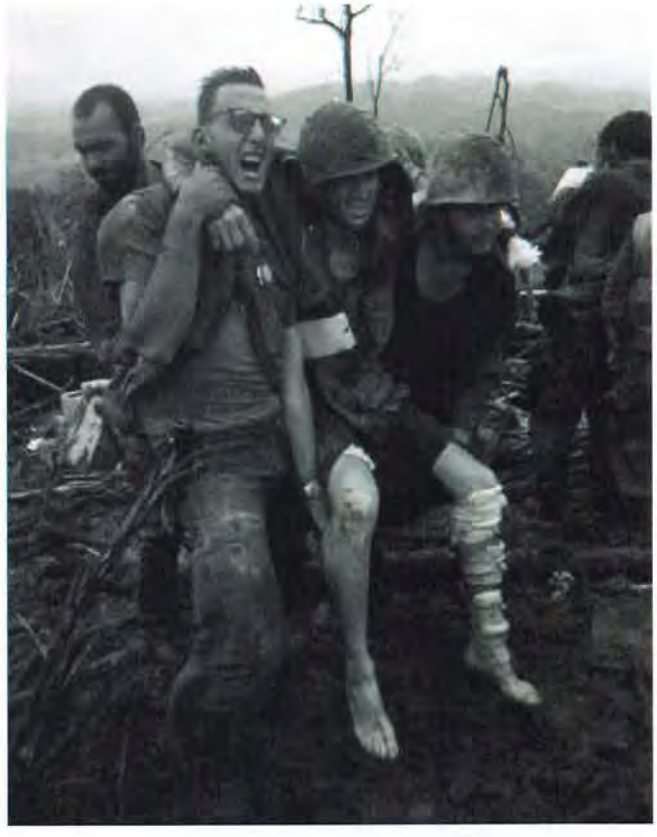





OBIT

LT. JAAK AULIK , WEAPONS PLATOON LIMA CO 3/26

Memorial service for Jaak Aulik will be 8-15-24 in Southbury, CT at 11:00. Reception afterward. Interment in Arlington National Cemetery at a later date to be determined.



OBIT

BENJAMIN H. FRYE JR.

He was in 81s platoon during the siege. Rest in Peace Ben. Benjamin H. Frye Jr. (Ben), Age 76, passed away on January 12th, 2025, in Vero Beach, Florida.

Ben was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania to Benjamin H. Frye Sr. and Dolores Diehl.

Ben served in the United States Marines from 1966-1970 where his last rank was Sergeant. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War. After the war Ben attended Penn State University in 1982 and graduated with an associate's degree in electrical engineering. He worked for and retired from the Buckeye Pipeline Company in 1999. Ben moved from Hollidaysburg, PA to Vero Beach, FL in 2003. He enjoyed riding motorcycles and spending time with loving family and friends. He also had a love for his country.

Survivors include son John Nebelski (Stephenie) of Duncansville, PA; daughters Lori Miller (Rob) and Jessica Ulery (Douglas) of Duncansville, PA; brothers Dennis Diehl and Bob Frye; sisters Karen Brown and Kayann Painter; grandchildren Erica Kennedy, Amanda Fleischer, Abbey Nebelski, Nathan Nebelski, Wyatt Ulery and Mara Ulery; great grandchildren Calle, Teagan, Braxton, Johnny, Bristol, Jake, Baylee, and Blair; and previous life partner Patricia Madden. He is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews.

Ben was predeceased by his father Benjamin H. Frye Sr., mother Dolores Diehl, son Benjamin H. Frye III, and grandson Benjamin Miller.

A burial will take place at Blair Memorial Park in Bellwood, PA at a later date.

Arrangements are by Thomas S. Lowther Funeral Home & Crematory, Vero Beach.









KHE SANH VETERANS IN THE NEWS

Charlton Blanks is affectionately known to Chester County veterans as "The Major." When you say 'I'm going to go talk to the Major,' everyone knows just who you mean.

Any Marine would count himself lucky to have survived during the Battle of Khe Sanh, a significant battle during the Vietnam War. Any Marine would have counted themselves fortunate to have survived the Tet Offensive, one of the largest military campaigns of the war. Any Marine would have thanked his lucky stars to have come through the evac before the Fall of Saigon.

CHARLTON BLANKS WENT THROUGH ALL THREE.



The N&R had a chance to sit down with Blanks almost a year ago as he told his story as part of the Veterans History Project, a partner project with the Louise Pettus Archives at Winthrop University for the Library of Congress national project. When some additional information was discovered about his tours of duty, The N&R went back recently for a follow up. Blanks was also recently named the Veteran of the Week by the S.C. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Blanks got his first taste of military life when he joined the ROTC battalion at Clemson University, which was still an Agricultural and Mechanical College. He was a member of the Pershing Rifles honorary military society while at Clemson. He later transferred to USC before graduating in 1961.

HE WORKED ON HIS FAMILY FARM BEFORE BEGINNING HIS MILITARY CAREER.

My twin brother, Carlton and my older brother Robert, neither one of them cared much for farming, but I did. I was a member of the FFA, the Future Farmers of America, while I was in school. I bought some cows and other livestock. I really got into it," he said. Blanks started out as a PFC in the U.S. Marine Corps until he graduated OCS, Officer Candidate School. "I had a friend who was in the Marine Corps, Donald Boulware, he was my brother in law; I was married to his sister. He went into the Marine Corps and then his father died and he got out on a hardship discharge, because he was the only male in the family. "He talked about the Marine Corps and I don't know, I just took to it. All services are good, patriotic and everything, but we all have our preferences," he said. Blanks tells the story that after he graduated from USC, he was in the student lounge contemplating his next move when a Marine recruiter challenged his and Blanks decided to join the USMC. Also, Blanks said he joined the Marine Corps because he thought he was "macho".

Blanks attended USMC officer candidate school at Quantico Marine Base in Virginia.

After graduating he was assigned to Camp Pendleton as an infantry officer with the 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, where he went through "Lock On" jungle training. "We spent a lot of time in the boonies," he said.

"The idea was back then, you trained as one unit – we were the 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, and when you went over to Vietnam, you know everybody in the regiment, because you had trained with them. I had a weapons platoon, and I knew every one of them.

"That was one thing that screwed us up during the war – they started drafting kids and they started putting soldiers and Marine in individually, and they didn't know each other in their units, didn't know what they were capable of. They started piecemealing the units," he said.

Blanks attended Intelligence Officer School at Fort Holabird, in Maryland. His MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) was intelligence.

When I was at Camp Pendleton, they cut orders for me and I got a trailer behind my car, because they were going to send me across the country to Fort Holabird. That as a mess: I had already sent my wife back to Chester earlier," he said. After intelligence training, Blanks' unit was sent to Vietnam

"The Army had more ships than the Navy. We headed overseas, stopping at Okinawa first. While we were heading there, John Kennedy was assassinated. This was 1964. We went to Japan first and then to Okinawa. That's where our unit debarked, and they put us in trucks and we went to the northern part of Okinawa," he said.

"There was training again on Okinawa, and the told us what to expect in the jungle, including about the different types of traps," Blanks said. On a brief stop in Japan, Blanks was introduced to sake, rice wine. "I didn't quite like it," he related.

Then the unit got orders to go into Vietnam. They loaded onto a ship and waited for two months for the order to disembark; the ship was occasionally served by tender ships while they steamed a zigzag course near land.

"Things were getting hot, and they had to make sure the area was secure. We were the landing team, the spearhead, you might say, if anything started getting bad.

"During that time the North Vietnamese shot at some of our ships in the Gulf of Tonkin – President Johnson used that as an excuse to escalate things," Blanks said. While they were in the Philippines on exercises, Blanks' unit backloaded their artillery, 105 and 155 mm cannons, got back on the ship and headed to the northern portion of Okinawa.

"My first job over there was as an aide to a South Vietnamese unit – I didn't even have any weapon with me. I came off that assignment and went back to the ship," he said.

When the unit landed on the beach and were met not by the enemy, but by a bunch of Vietnamese girls anxious to see the Marines.

"It was sort of like Hawaii," Blanks remembered." We thought we were going to make a landing sort of like the soldiers and Marines did during WWII at Omaha Beach, and then there they were – the girls with leis around their necks. It wasn't quite the same thing."

Blanks practiced his infantry officer skills and intelligence training from the DMZ (De-Militarized Zone) down along the northern part of Vietnam.
He came under fire at Khe Sanh Combat Base. It was while stationed here that the Marine learned an appreciation for the U.S. Air Force. "If it hadn't been for the Air Force, I would be dead right now. Up at Khe Sanh, B-52 bombers dropping those 250 and 500 lb. bombs.

"Khe Sanh was sort of an enclave, like Dien Bien Phu, they say President Johnson told the leadership 'I don't want any more Dien Bien Phus – y'all make sure you don't get overrun,' so the enemy dug these trenches and then they kept coming up closer (to the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base) and they would dig another trench, so they could get close enough to rush the compound. Those Air Force B-52s they saved us; they would carry out carpet-bombing on the enemy. We'd sit on the sandbags and watch them," Blanks said.

His first combat experience he said, "was nerve-wracking, because you'd be sitting there (at the base) and every 10 or 15 minutes, here comes an exploding artillery round," he said. Blanks made numerous trips in the jungle, setting up places to broadcast with his radio unit, often having to hack his way through the brush.

He remembers looking up one time and seeing a formation of three C-123 airplanes dropping the Agent Orange defoliant and being thankful they were clearing away some of the jungle along his path.

"We thought, 'Oh, thank God,' not knowing at the time the danger of the chemical. What we did know is if they took away the vegetation, the enemy couldn't sneak up on us," Blanks said Blanks completed his first tour in Vietnam as an advisor, went home and came back for his second tour in 1968.

Blanks completed his first tour in Vietnam as an advisor, went home and came back for his second tour in 1968."I got over there just in time for Tet (the Tet Offensive)," he said.

"It was supposed to be a holiday like our New Year holiday, and they broke it. That's when they started overrunning all of the bases. (The Tet Offensive was a series of surprise attacks against military bases throughout South Vietnam, during the Lunar New Year, when many of the Republic of Vietnam – ARVN soldiers were on leave). "But we beat that attack back," Blanks said. After that tour, Blanks was attached to the Pentagon, working in intelligence.

"I had all of these high level clearances, which is one reason why when I was in Germany later, they wouldn't let me go to Berlin," he said.

During his third tour of duty, Blanks was involved in the evacuation of the villages around Saigon (formally known as Operation Frequent Wind) when the capitol fell in 1975 near the end of the war. More than 7,000 people were evacuated by helicopter from various points in Saigon

Blanks' unit, the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, was stationed aboard USS Blue Ridge as part of Task Force 76, whose mission was the evacuation efforts.

"The ARVN and the NVA started coming further and further south, and they would take over this town and that town. They finally got down south as far as Saigon. I was there when the NVA tank came through the wall of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon," he said.

Those South Vietnamese who had fought along side and aided the Americans became worried, because they didn't know what their fate would be if the capitol fell. They began to make plans to evacuate the country and leave the Embassy by helicopter." They climbed up to the highest point in the Embassy they could and the helicopters would pick them up and fly them to different ships. I was on the Blue Ridge.

"As the helicopters came back, especially the ones flown by the South Vietnamese Air Force, they would drop the refugees off. So what were they going to do with the helicopters, because more were coming up right behind them? They had to have a place to land, so the Captain of the ship told them to pitch the helicopters over the side. They pushed several over the side, and as they did that, the rotors were still turning. The crews were told to fly the helicopter out over the sea and ditch when it was low to the water. After the crew got out of one, the aircraft came back towards the ship on its own.

"I was below deck at the time, and I heard a huge crash. What had happened was the helicopter, a Huey, had come forward and hit the side of the ship! I thought we were under attack. I was waiting for them to call General Quarters, but they never did. Good thing was not a soul was hurt," he said.

Following his military service, Blanks' civilian work included teaching high school in Chester County, where his classes included 8th grade science and 12th grade physics.

He continued to be interested and helped organize veterans events in Chester County until he recently had to retire from actively doing that. He is still a frequent honored guest at Chester County veterans events.

Charlton Blanks' medals and honors include the following:

- Humanitarian Service Medal
- Letter of Appreciation
- National Defense Service Medal
- Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal
- Vietnam Service Medal
- Presidential Unit Citation
- Navy Commendation Medal
- Combat Action Ribbon
- Navy Unit Commendation
- Republic of Vietnam National Gallantry Cross Unit Citation
- Armed Forces Expeditionary Service Medal Defense Meritorious Service Medal



Khe Sanh Veterans, Inc. Scholarship Foundation
2024-2025 Applicants:

Application Review Rating :

1. Connor C. Corrotti, Senior @ Univ. Of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IND.
Dabney Award
SPONSOR— DONALD CAMPBELL , HQ Co. 26th Marine Regt.

2. Cristin G. Coppes, Freshman @ Central Michigan Univ., Mt. Pleasant, MI
Gaynor Award
SPONSOR—CHARLES COPPES - SOG Tigerhound, 20th TASF, USAF

3. Lucia A. Fisher, Freshman @ Univ. Of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
Dabney Award
SPONSOR—DANIEL FISHER – D Co. 1st Bn 26th Marines

4. Delana R. Ortiz, Freshman @ Kansas State Univ., Manhattan, KS
Lownds Award
SPONSOR—JOHN ORTIZ – H&S Comm 3rd Bn 26th Marines

5. Marek E. Ortiz, Sophomore @ University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS
Dabney Award
SPONSOR — JOHN ORTIZ – H&S Comm 3rd Bn 26th Marines

6. Kylin R. Starkovich, Freshman @ New Mexico State Univ., Las Cruces, NM
Dabney Award
SPONSOR –STEVE STARKOVICH – Bravo Bty, 1st Bn 13th Marines







ROLLING DOWN THE RIVER - LOUISVILLE KY














































KHE SANH















MORE FUN TIMES AROUND LOUISVILLE







GENERAL GEORGE PATTON MUSEUM

LOUISVILLE KY



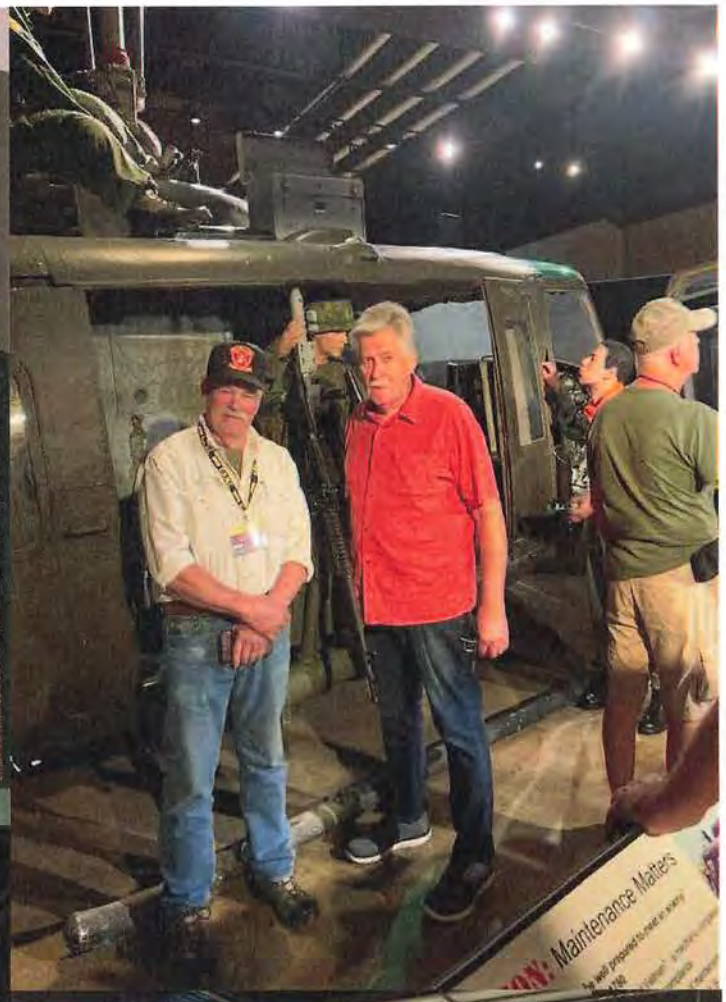













CATCHING UP WITH OLD AND "NEW" FRIENDS







KSV
LADIES
LUNCHEON



















"ANOTHER SATURDAY NIGHT"





























































A FEW MEMBERS OF THE KSV AT THE REUNION, UTILIZED THE RENTED VANS TO MAKE A TRIP TO THE KENTUCY DERBY FACILITY





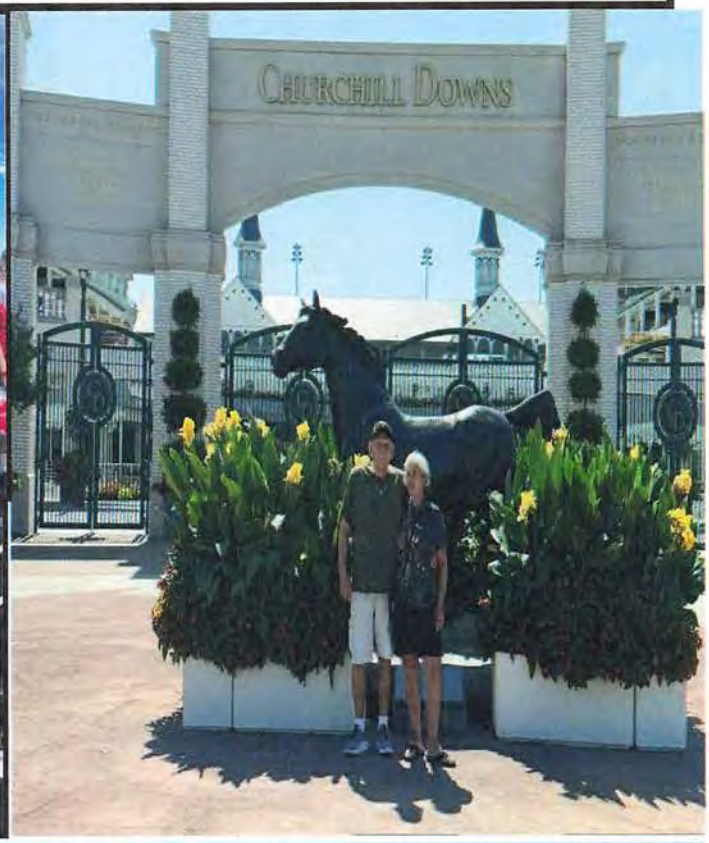



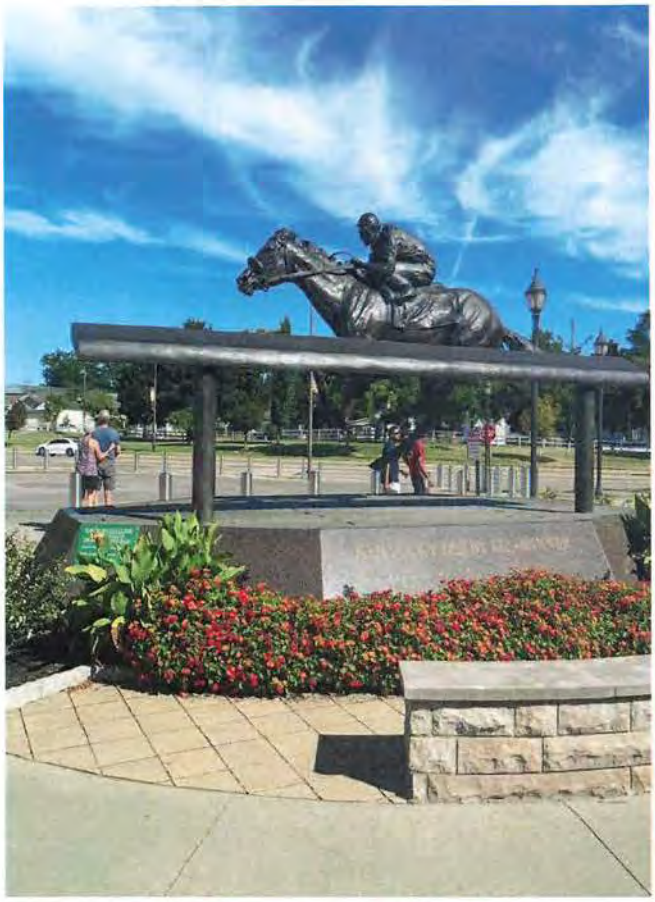






THE PERPETUAL TRIPLE CROWN TROPHY


3
MYSTIK DAN





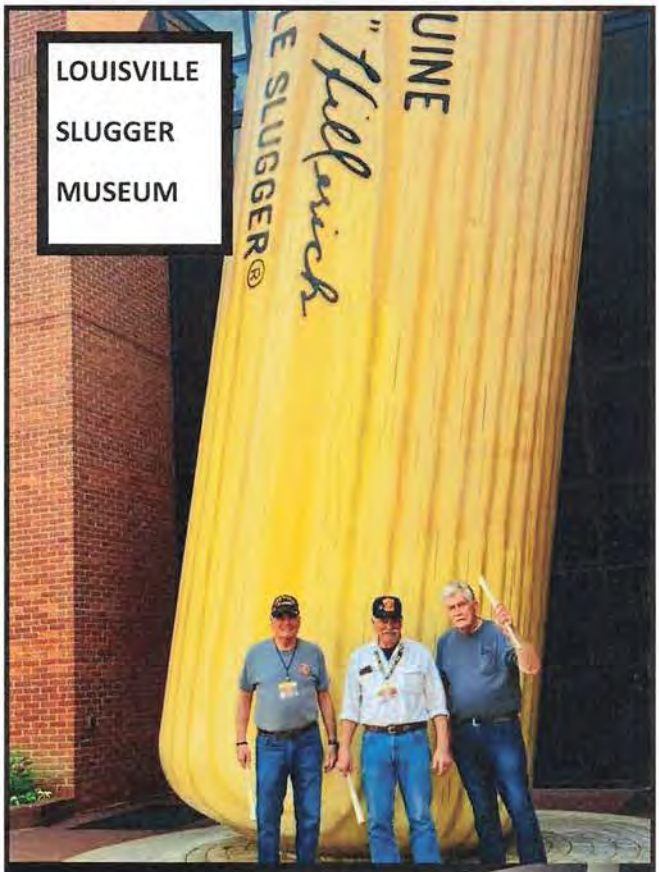
LOUISVILLE
SLUGGER
MUSEUM


HILLERICH
&BRADSBYco.
EST. 1856


3
BABE RUTH


H&B CUSTOM SHOP





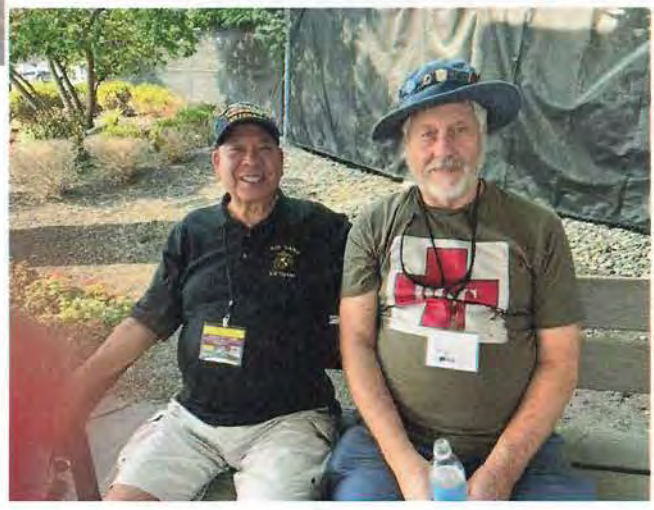







LOU LECLAIRE GUINN WOLFE JANE VOSNICK DENNIS MANNION

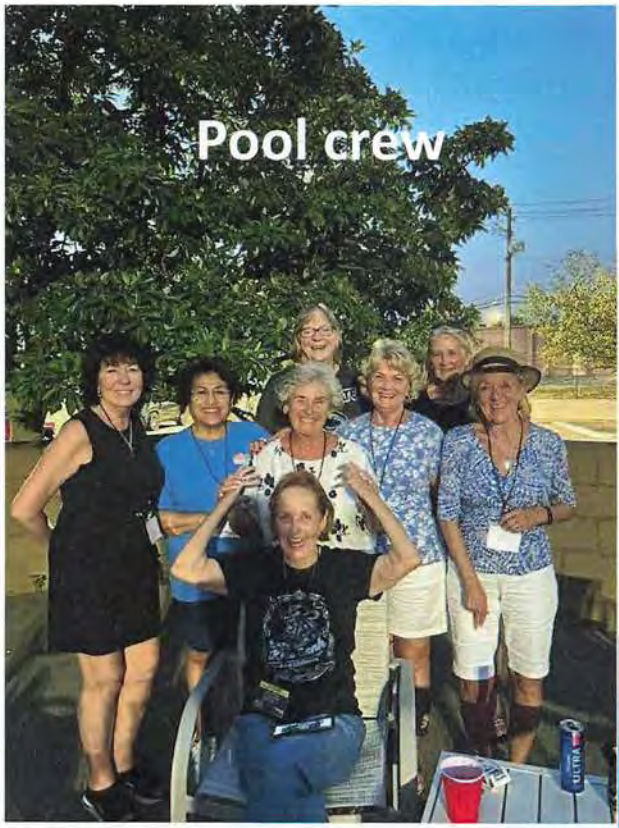





LADIES GET TOGETHER AT THE OUTSIDE POOL AREA

KATE MEYER CAROLINE TORRES, GUINN WOLFE, LOU LECLARE, CONNIE BELLANTONE, JANE VOSNICK ,

JULIA LEWIS AND MARY GREEN

THE 2025 REUNION WILL BE HELD IN PENSACOLA, FLORIDA, ACCOMMODATIONS AT THE HOLIDAY INN RESORT, 14 VIA DE LUNA DR., PENSACOLA BEACH, FL 32561 OCTOBER 12 - 18, WITH A RATE OF $139/NT STREET VIEW AND $159/NT GULF VIEW. PLEASE CALL @ 850-932-5331 FOR RESERVATIONS














Riptides













THE 2025 KHE SANH ANNUAL REUNION WILL BE HELD IN PENSACOLA BEACH FL AT THE HOLIDAY INN RESORT PENSACOLA BEACH — 14 VIA DELUNA DRIVE, PENSACOLA BEACH, FL RATES = $139.00/NIGHT SOUND SIDE ////$159.00 PER NIGHT OCEAN SIDE. 3 DAY POST AND PRIOR - FREE PARKING - HOTEL NOT PET FRIENDLY DATES: OCTOBER 12-20 2025.PLEASE CONTACT THE HOTEL DIRECTLY @ 850-932-5331 TO RESERVE YOUR ROOM - PLEASE REFER TO KHE SANH VETERANS REUNION—CODE KSV ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT RUSS TURNER @314-368-5853 OR KATHY TURNER @ 314-368-5016 (CUT OFF DATE FOR RESERVED ROOMS 12 SEPTEMBER 2025)

EVENTS TO BE HELD DURING REUNION WEEK

EVENT	COST	NO. OF PEOPLE	TOTAL EVENT
REGISTRATION	$50.00		
TRIP NAVAL AVIATION MUSEUM/BLUE ANGELS	$65.00		
Ladies lunch	$20.00		
KSV banquet	$75.00		

Daily events

SUN: 12 OCT 2025	FREE DAY	ENJOY PENSACOLA BEACH
MON: 13 OCT 2025	FREE DAY	ENJOY PENSACOLA BEACH
TUES: 14 OCT 2025	10:00 A.M.	Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Room Opens.
WED: 15 OCT 2025	8;30 A.M.	Trip to Naval Aviation Museum & Blue Angels
THU: 16 OCT 2025	10:00 A.M.	Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Room Opens.
FRI: 17 OCT 2025	10:00 A.M.	Registration Opens. PX & Hospitality Room Opens.

SAT: 18 OCT 2025

9:00 to 10:00am Memorial Service

10:00am to 12:00 Membership Meeting

12:00am to 2:00 pm Ladies Luncheon

ANNUAL KSV BANQUET:

Cocktails 1800 Dinner 1900

0845 Board Trolley for National Nava Aviation Museum

1030 Blue Angels fly

1130 Buffet lunch at the Cubi Bar FIRST GROUP

12:00 Buffet lunch at the Cubi Bar SECOND GROUP

1300 Docent led hour of the Naval Aviation Museum

1500 Free time to tour the museum on your own

1530 First trolley boards for the Holiday Inn Resort

1600 Last trolley boards for the Holiday Inn Resort



SUNDAY 19 OCT 2025 HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: KSV ASSOCIATION

OFFICE USE ONLY

Check#_____Date Received_____

Name Tag Completed_____

Send Check, Money Order or Credit Card Information To:

The Khe Sanh Veterans/ Russell Turner

3168 Meadowfield Dr

Arnold, MO 63010

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

NAME ON CARD: VISA MASTER CARD DISCOVER

CARD NUMBER: OTHER Note: Our Bank Does Not Accept AM/XPress

EXPIRATION DATE:

3 DIGIT CODE ON BACK OF CARD Note: Address Must Be The One Card Issued To

ADDRESS FOR CREDIT CARD:

NAME TAG INFORMATION PLEASE PRINT		
NAME:		
UNIT SERVED WITH:		
SPOUSE OR COMPANIONS NAME:		
OTHER GUEST (1)		
OTHER GUEST (2)		
OTHER GUEST (3)		
OTHER GUEST (4)		
OTHER GUEST (5)		
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	ST:	ZIP:
PHONE:	CELL PHONE:	
EMERGENCY CONTACT:		
EMAIL:		
SPECIAL NEEDS:		
EMAIL:		
ARRIVAL DATE:	DEPARTURE DATE:	
ARE YOU STAYING AT HOTEL:	YES — NO CIRCLE ONE	

2025 Dues

01 AUG 24	ARCHER, MICHAEL	40.00	Dues		CHECK#2098
01 AUG 24	ANTOINE, GARY	40.00	Dues		CHECK#463
01 AUG 24	BARRA, WILLIAM	40.00	Dues		CHECK#1056
01 AUG 24	BARRY, DERMOTT	40.00	Dues		CHECK#218
01 AUG 24	BATES, ROBERT	40.00	Dues		CHECK#5956
01 AUG 24	BAUMANN, DAVID	40.00	Dues		CHECK#6371
01 AUG 24	BAUMANN, WILLIAM	40.00	Dues		C/C
01 Aug 24	BEADLING, VEE	40.00	Dues		CHECK#810
01 AUG 24	BEAUREGARD, MICHAEL	40.00	Dues		CHECK#9076
01 AUG 24	BEAUREGARED, STEPHEN	40.00	Dues		CHECK#383
01 AUG 24	BECK, RALPH	40.00	Dues	100.00 D	CHECK#5316
01 AUG 24	BEDRAVA, GEORGE	40.00	Dues		CHECK#4483
01 AUG 24	BERG, DENNIS	40.00	Dues		CHECK#3073
01 AUG 24	BISSELL, ANTHONY	40.00	Dues		CHECK#1707
01 AUG 24	BLUMBERG, ROGER	40.00	Dues		CHECK#5195
01 AUG 24	BOBRIK, RONALD	40.00	Dues		CHECK#208
01 AUG 24	BRAUN, FRANCIS	40.00	Dues		CHECK#4971
01 AUG 24	BROWN, MARGARET	40.00	Dues		CHECK#5221
01 AUG 24	BROWN, PAUL	40.00	Dues		CHECK#5221
01 AUG 24	CARWILE, MICHAEL	40.00	Dues		CHECK#4102
01 AUG 24	CASEY, MAURICE	40.00	Dues		CHECK#4164
01 AUG 24	CHASE, JONATHAN	40.00	Dues		CHECK#5682
01 AUG 24	CHOC, CHARLES	40.00	Dues		CHECK#6164
01 AUG 24	CLARKE, BRUCE	40.00	Dues		CHECK#6859
01 AUG 24	COOK, FORREST	40.00	Dues		CHECK#6125
01 AUG 24	COX, GARY	40.00	Dues	20.00 D	CHECK#1031
01 AUG 24	CRAWFORD, DANIEL	40.00	Dues	10.00 D	CHECK#516
01 AUG 24	CROWLEY, MICHAEL	40.00	Dues		CHECK#173
01 AUG 24	CZECH, THOMAS	40.00	Dues		CHECK#225
01 AUG 24	CZYSZ, KENNETH	40.00	Dues		CHECK#7366
01 AUG 24	DAVIS, TED	40.00	Dues		CHECK#4445
01 AUG 24	D'ELIA, ROBERT	40.00	Dues		CHECK#1394
01 AUG 24	DELOTTO, RICHARD	40.00	Dues		CHECK#221
01 AUG 24	DERIAN, JOSEPH	40.00	Dues		CHECK#4563
01 AUG 24	DIAMOND, DONALD	40.00	Dues		CHECK# 4868
01 AUG 24	DIFLFORIO, DANIEL	40.00	Dues		CHECK#1718
01 AUG 24	DOUGHERTY, ROBERT	40.00	Dues		CHECK#1733
01 AUG 24	DOUGLAS, EDGAR	40.00	Dues		CHECK#5628
01 AUG 24	EAKIN, RANDALL	40.00	Dues		CHECK#2781
01 AUG 24	EAST, DAVID	40.00	Dues		CHECK#4170

01 AUG 24	ERICKSON, DAVID	40.00	Dues	CHECK#2781
01 AUG 24	ERNFIELD, HARRY	40.00	Dues	CHECK#678
01 AUG 24	ERWIN, DANIEL	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1687
01 AUG 24	FARRELL, BRIAN	40.00	Dues 35.00 D	CHECK#1609
01 AUG 24	FETTER CHARLES	40.00	Dues 10.00 D	CHECK#1104
01 AUG 24	FISHER, ST4EVEN	40.00	Dues	C/C
01 AUG 24	FOWLER, WILLIAM	40.00	Dues	CHECK#180
01 AUG 24	FOURNIER, TERRY	40.00	Dues	CHECK#8719
01 AUG 24	FUNK, HARRY	40.00	Dues	C/C
01 AUG 24	GAROUTTE, MICHAEL	40.00	Dues 25.00 D	CHECK#10622
01 AUG 24	GIACCHETTA,PETER	40.00	Dues	CHECK#264
01 AUG 24	GOULD, DAVID	40.00	Dyes	CHECK#2529
01 AUG 24	GULLEY, JOHN	40.00	Dues	CHECK#7095
01 AUG 24	GUTHRIE, TIM	40.00	Dues	CHECK#9175
01 AUG 24	HALEY, TIMOTHY	40.00	Dues	CHECK#224
01 AUG 24	HARBISON, JAMES	40.00	Dues	CHECK# 2859
01 AUG 24	HARMON, STEVEN	250.00	Dues/Life	C/C
01 AUG 24	HERCHER, STEPHEN	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1845
01 AUG 24	HOPWOOD, HARRY	40.00	Dues 60.00 D	CHECK#3307
01 AUG 24	HUGHES, MICK	40.00	Dues	CHECK#2561
01 AUG 24	HUNTER, DWIGHT	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1342
01 AUG 24	JASMUND, RUSSELL	40.00	Dues	CHECK#2865
01 AUG 24	JONES, MILTON	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1162
01 AUG 24	KEATING, MICHAEL	40.00	Dues	CHECK#3047
01 AUG 24	KERRINGAN, PATRICK	40.00	Dues	CHECK#9928
01 AUG 24	KESEK, RONALD	40.00	Dues 10.00 D	CHECK#5554
01 AUG24	KILGALLON, FORD	40.00	Dues	C/C
01 AUG 24	KILROY, JOSEPH	40.00	Dues	CHECK#2122
01 AUG 24	KING, DANIEL	40.00	Dues	CHECK#5015
01 AUG 24	KLOOTE, DAVID	40.00	Dues	CHECK#5048
01 AUG 24	KLOPCHIN, MICHAEL	40.00	Dues 10.00 D	CHECK#7835
01 AUG 24	KOLLMON, ALBERT	40.00	Dues 25.00 D	CHECK#1124
01 AUG 24	KRAMARCZYK,DAVID	40.00	Dues	CHECK#6052
01 AUG 24	LARSON, LARRY	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1201
01 AUG 24	LEONARDI, MICHAEL	40.00	Dues	CHECK#4043
01 AUG 24	LEMIEUX, LORNE	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1450
01 AUG 24	LEMKE, CHARLES	40.00	Dues 10.00 D	CHECK#458
01 AUF 24	LEWIEN, JERRY	40.00	Dues	CHECK#5838
01 AUG 24	LEWIS, WILLIAM	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1519
01 AUG 24	LIVERMAN, HUGH	40.00	Dues	CHECK#790
01 AUG 24	LOOKER, JOSEPH	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1121

01 AUG 24	MAGUIRE DANNY	40.00	Dues		CHECK#6242
01 AUG 24	MAPEL, RANALL	40.00	Dues	35.00 D	CHECK#7049
01 AUG 24	MARSHALL, EDWARD	40.00	Dues		CHECK#2641
01 AUG 2	MARTIN, LARRY	40.00	Dues		CHECK#5359
01 AUG 24	MAURI, JIM	40.00	Dues		CHECK#49958
01 AUG 24	MCCALL, DAVID	40.00	Dues		C/C
01 AUG 24	MCEVER, DOUG	40.00	Dues		CHECK#9482
01 AUG 24	MCQUIRK, STEPHEN	40.00	Dues		CHECK#4262
01 AUG 24	MCKEON, PAUL	40.00	Dues		CHECK#11687
01 AUG 24	MEAD, TED	40.00	Dues		CHECK#3558
01 AUG 24	MEADE, WILLIAM	40.00	Dues		CHECK#8077
01 AUG 24	MERCADO, SATURNO	40.00	Dues	60.00 D	CHECK#9810
01 AUG 24	MERCIER, GERALD	40.00	Dues		CHECK#7491
01 AUG 24	MEYER,LAWRENCE	40.00	Dues		CHECK#1134
01 AUG 24	MILLOCK, CARL	40.00	Dues	60.00	CHECK#2383
01 AUG 24	MOORE, FULTON	40.00	Dues		CHECK#4282
01 AUG 24	MORRISO, SAMMY	40.00	Dues		CHECK#4070
01 AUG 24	MUELLER, ALBERT	40.00	Dues		CHECK# 728
01 AUG 24	NESTOR, DAVID	40.00	Dues		CHECK#1111
01 AUG 24	NOWACKI, IRVIN	40.00	Dues		CHECK#5966
01 AUG 24	ODONNELL, CHARLES	40.00	Dues		CHECK#2856
01 AUG 24	OKSNEE, CARL	40.00	Dues		CHECK#3107
01 AUG 24	OTOOLE, DAVID	40.00	Dues		CHECK#995840
01 AUG 24	PAGANO, ROBERT	40.00	Dues		CHECK#2016
01 AUG 24	PARZANESE, JR, DONALD	40.00	Dues		CHECK#4362
01 AUG 24	PEARSON, SCOTT	40.00	Dues	100.00 D	CHECK#6898
01 AUG 24	PESTINGER, DANIEL	40.00	Dues	60.00 D	CHECK#2693
01 AUG 24	PIEDRA, ABRAHAM	40.00	Dues		CHECK# 1275
01 AUG 24	PLOURDE, EVAN	40.00	Dues		CHECK#2082
01 AUG 24	POLAND, WILLIAM	40.00	Dues		CHECK#2889
01 AUG 24	PURDY, WILLIAM	40.00	Dues		CHECK #1239
01 AUG 24	RAGSDALE, HOMER	40.00	Dues		CHECK#1366
01 AUG 24	RALSTON JR, ROGER	40.00	Dues		CHECK#5958
01 AUG 24	RAY, BERNARD	40.00	Dues		CHECK#2521
01 AUG 24	REES, RONALD	40.00	Dues	40.00 D	CHECK# 9943
01 AUG 24	REILLY, PHILLIP	40.00	Dues		CHECK#8764
01 AUG 24	RIEDMAN, GARY	40.00	Dues		CHECK#13280
01 AUG 24	ROBINSON, JOHN	40.00	Dues		CHECK#1481
01 AUG 2	SANDER, RICHARD	40.00	Dues		C/C
01 AUG 24	SCHWARTZ, RICHARD	40.00	Dues		CHECK#1243
01AUG 24	SHOWALTER, TED	40.00	Dues		CHECK#2428
01 AUG 24	SINCLAIR, GLENN	40.00	Dues		CHECK#2867
01 AUG 24	SIRCHIA, PAUL	40.00	Dues		CHECK#24322

01 AUG 24	SNIEGOWSKI, RONALD	40.00	Dues	CHECK#6236
01 AUG 24	SOMMERS, MICHAEL	40.00	Dues	CHECK#4544
01 AUG 24	SPUNAR, GEORGE	40.00	Dues	CHECK#2621
01 AUG 24	SPRAGUE, HERERT	40.00	Dues	CHECK#5370
01 AUG 24	STEWART, RICHARD	40.00	Dues	CHECK#3350
01 AUG 24	STICKEL, FRED	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1154
01 AUG 24	STODDARD, DENNIS	40.00	Dues	CHECK#6007
01 AUG 24	SULLIVAN, DANIEL	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1742
01 AUG 24	SWTS FRED	40.00	Dues	C/C
01 AUG 24	TAYLOR, RONALD	40.00	Dues	C/C
01 AUG 24	THOMPSON, DAVID	40.00	Dues	CHECK#440
01 AUG 24	TORRES, RAY	40.00	Dues	CHECK#8852
01 AUG 24	UPDIKE, RAYMOND	40.00	Dues	CHECK#5691
01 AUG 24	VALDES, ENRIQUE	40.00	Dues	CHECK#7047
01 AUG 24	VANKUIKEN, ROBERT	40.00	Dues	C/C
01 AUG 24	WASSON, RONALD	40.00	Dues	CHECK#3614
01 AUG 24	WELLS, MARSHALL	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1778
01 AUG 24	WIHREN, THOMAS	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1400
01 AUG 24	WILKERSON, RICHARD	40.00	Dues	CHECK#8056
01 AUG 24	WIMBISH, DENNIS	40.00	Dues	CHECK#2176
01 AUG 24	WORLEY, JOHN	40.00	Dues	CHECK#4080
01 AUG 24	YOUNG, DAVID	40.00	Dues	CHECK#2683
01 AUG 24	YOUNG, GARY	40.00	Dues	CHECK#1649

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM OUR GENEROUS MEMBERS OF THE KHE SANH VETERANS

JIMMY COLLINS	$1000.00 MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTION	CHECK#2061
WILLIAM EICHLER	$ 300.00 (in memory of TOMMY EICHLER)	CHECK #4012
ROBERT HOLSCHER	$ 200.00 (IN MEMORY)	CHECK#18631
DWIGHT HUNTER	$ 200.00 SCHOLARSHIP	CHECK# 1343
DAVE& CAROL MEYER	$ 1250.00 CONTRIBUTION	CHECK# 619992
PETER POST	$ 50.00 "BEAD FLAG"	CHECK# 3404
ROBERT RIORDAN	$ 250.00	CHECK# 775
ED TROUP	$ 200.00	CHECK# 7117

FROM THE WEB

Veterans recall difficult days
Saturday, July 01, 2006
By GEORGE WERNETH
Staff Reporter—Leatherneck

Two former Marines and a retired Army colonel nicknamed "Bulldog" sat around a table Thursday in the Riverview Plaza Hotel in Mobile, reminiscing about their service at Khe Sanh in the Vietnam War.

Khe Sanh was a strategic Marine Corps base close to the border separating South Vietnam and North Vietnam when it was battered in a 77-day siege by enemy forces, starting on Jan. 21, 1968.

The base, manned by some 6,000 Marines and assorted other American forces, was surrounded by more than 20,000 North Vietnamese Army troops, according to official military estimates.

"It was an unbelievable experience," said David C. **"Bulldog"** Smith 74, a retired Army colonel who underwent the entire siege while a major at Khe Sanh. "We were attacked by rockets, mortars, howitzers -- by everything. Day and night, night and day. Seventy-seven days of it."

Smith, who now lives in Trinity, N.C., shared his memories of Khe Sanh with Dan Fisher, 59, of St. Paul, Minn., and Russell Turner, 59, of St. Louis, who had served as enlisted men in the Marine Corps at Khe Sanh.

The three were in the downtown hotel taking part in the annual convention of the Khe Sanh Veterans Association which will conclude Sunday. About 250 Khe Sanh veterans are in town for the convention.

Fisher and Turner served at the base for a period of some five or six months, just prior to the official start of the siege. But they noted the base often came under fire from the enemy while they were there. Both men spent much of that time rotating service in combat patrols on nearby hills, and at the base, where they were lucky if they got a shower once in a month. Smith said their association considers Khe Sanh veterans to be anyone who served at Khe Sanh before, during or after the siege.

All three veterans said they were wounded in Vietnam and Smith received three Purple Hearts in that war.

The NVA failed to take Khe Sanh and the siege officially ended April 8, 1968. Several months later, U.S. forces abandoned Khe Sanh because of a change in U.S. strategy, officials report. The base had originally been used as a point from which to disrupt the flow of supplies from North Vietnam down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

According to Wikipedia, an Internet encyclopedia, the NVA sustained more than 9,000 casualties at Khe Sanh. Many of them were killed by American B-52 bombers.

Smith said he believes the B-52s were responsible for bringing the siege to an end and said he feels the NVA death total was substantially higher than official estimates.

Wikipedia reports there were 205 U.S. casualties at Khe Sanh, along with 443 wounded. The three veterans said they believe the U.S. casualties were higher, also.



There were 205 Marines killed between Nov. 1, 1967, the beginning of a Marine operation against North Vietnamese Army forces in the Khe Sanh area, and March 31, 1968, as the siege of the base was ending, according to general Marine Corps records. However, Navy chaplain Ray Stubbe, after extensively researching losses during the same period, put the number of Marines killed at 274. There are an array of tallies for the NVA deaths, ranging from 10,000 to 15,000, according to official public estimates. A once-classified report from Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, estimated 8,550, with 2,000 due to ground action and 6,550 from air and artillery forces. —Dick Camp

Khe Sanh Casualties

FROM THE WEB

VETERAN REMEMBERS BATTLE OF KHE SANH

27 JAN 2023

PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS PREDRO RODRIGUEZ

ARLINGTON, VA --

This year the U.S. Marine Corps commemorates 55 years since the Battle of Khe Sanh, which lasted from January 21 to March 31, 1968.

In early 1968, Khe Sanh Combat Base gained world-wide attention as the roughly 6,000 Marines defending the base were encircled and besieged by three North Vietnamese Army regiments of about 20,000 troops. For 77 days, the Marines and their South Vietnamese counterparts, with support from an element of U.S. Army soldiers and U.S. Air Force bombers, would endure one of the longest and bloodiest battles of the Vietnam War.

Among the Marines defending the base was U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Ronald Echols, who was serving with Company M, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines, 3rd Marine Division on Hill 881 South.

"We had Marines at Hill 661, and we had Marines at a radio relay tower, which was on Hill 950, and my company was on 881S," said Echols. "There was two 881s, one 881 South and 881 North, we maintained those hills because we wanted to keep the high ground away from the North Vietnamese that overlooked Khe Sanh."

North Vietnamese forces conducted a massive artillery bombardments on Khe Sanh, located just 10 miles from the Sepon River, which marked the border between Laos and South Vietnam.

"I remember that during dawn it would still be foggy and as soon as the fog burned up, they would start hitting us with mortars and artillery. If there was daylight, we would get hit," Echols said.

Due to the constant attacks from the PAVN, Marines at Khe Sanh faced significant supply challenges, but their training helped them find ways to capture water and overcome the lack of supplies.

"For the first 30 days they couldn't get us resupplied; seven helicopters got shot down bringing supplies into us," said Echols. "We went nine days one time without anything to eat. Fortunately, with the thick fog, we were able to spread plastic down the hill and catch condensation. We needed to have about two 12 oz. cans of water to last until the next morning, but guys were still dehydrated, they weren't getting enough to drink."

You get a bond with your fellow Marines that's indescribable. I've got two brothers, but I've never had with them the bond I had with the guys I was in combat with. They were my brothers." *U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Ronald Echols, who was serving with Company M, 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines, 3rd Marine Division*

During the siege, Marines created an air delivery method called a "super gaggle" to provide supplies to areas cut off from land supply routes after several aircraft were lost during resupply missions. The super gaggle method coordinated air and artillery strikes to occur simultaneously during resupply missions, providing a shield for aircraft delivering much needed ammunition, food, water and evacuating the wounded.

"The airwing came up with the idea they could come in and bring jets in and bomb, then come around the hill, put up a smoke screen, and then the helicopters would come in five-at-a-time with the resupplies; they looked like geese coming through there, so they called it the super gaggle, and that's how they started getting us resupplied," said Echols.

Echols added that helicopters often had just 20 seconds to land, and evacuate the wounded and get airborne before the mortar attacks resumed. Echols also remembers the air support provided by American bombers and how close they were to his positions on Hill 881S.

We had a couple of North Vietnamese soldiers surrender. We asked them why they surrendered, and they just pointed up to the sky," said Echols. "You can't just imagine what these B-52s do. They called it an Arc Light, and they would just drop hundreds of bombs out of one plane, and there was three or four planes at one time. It was just devastating."

By the end of the battle, U.S. Air Force assets had flown more than 9,000 sorties and dropped 14,223 tons of bombs on targets within the Khe Sanh area.

It would not be until April 14, 1968, that Marines from 3rd Marine Division, soldiers from the US Army 1st Cavalry Division and South Vietnamese soldiers would be able to break through and push back NVA forces from the area. Khe Sanh would continue to see combat until the end of July 1968, after which the base was destroyed and abandoned by American forces.

"On April 14 my company moved off of the hill, and they had showers set up outside for us," said Echols. "You get a bond with your fellow Marines that's indescribable. I've got two brothers, but I've never had with them the bond I had with the guys I was in combat with. They were my brothers."

Echols received a battlefield commission and a Bronze Star for his actions during the Battle of Khe Sanh. According to his Bronze Star Medal citation, "on numerous occasions, Staff Sgt. Echols served as a platoon commander, a billet normally assigned to a commissioned officer, and repeatedly disregarded his own safety to maneuver his unit against the enemy. While his company was three deployed on Hill 881 South during the siege of Khe Sanh, he worked tirelessly to ensure the safety and welfare of his men despite constant North Vietnamese mortar and artillery fire."

(1st Lt. Isaac Lamberth and MC1 Pedro Rodriguez contributed to this story



VETERANS DAY 11/11/24

—WASHINGTON DC

KHE SANH VETERANS WREATH PLACED AT THE WALL DURING THE VETERANS DAY CEREMONIES.

JOE BELARDO (C-1/44), BRUCE GEIGER (A-1/44) & VIN TEDESCO (C-1/44).





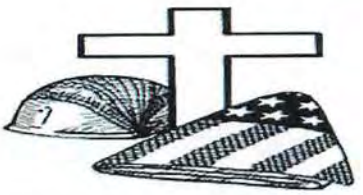

THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
S SGT PAUL J CHOCLIS USMC C BTRY 1/13	VEE BEADLING F.O. FOR LIMA CO 3/26
CPL VIC M PIZARRO "PIZZA" KIA 3/6/68 A 1/13	DENNIS WIMBISH A 1/13
CAPT DANIEL J COONON KIA 10/8/68 VMF115 MAG=-13 CHU-LAI AB	" "
PFC ROLAND T MARSHALL USMC KIA 5/17/68 M 3/4	" "
PFC FRANCIS FOILES USMC KIA 5/27/68 M 3/4	" "
L/CPL LEE EDWARD HIMEBAUGH USMC KIA 5/27/68 M 3/4	WILLIAM & JOANN EICHLER
SGT THOMAS EICHLER USMC E 2/26	RUSSELL & KATHY TURNER
SGT THOMAS EICHLER USMC E 2/26	ROBERT HOLSCHER
L/CPL WILBUR STOVAL USMC HQS BTRY 1/13 KIA 09/03/68	ROBERT HOLSCHER
SGT TOMMY ANTRIN A BTRY 1/13 KIA 08/02/68	



Khe Sanh Veterans at the
Chicago Vietnam Veterans Parade
June 1986



THOSE REMEMBERED	REMEMBERED BY
"THOSE REMEMBERED" 27 JUNE 1967 2 LT DALE CHARLES ALLEN 1/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 SSGT WILLIAM IVOR TENNEY BACON H&S/3/26 *DIED USS SANTUARY 2 LT LAWRENCE JOSEPH BOLGER A/1/26 PFC FREDERICK JOSEPH BRENKE L/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 L/CPL VICTOR LEE BURNS A/1/26 CPT FRANKLIN DELANO BYNUM L/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HYILL 689 L/CPL ALLAN JAMES DAMIAN A/1/26 L/CPKL JEFFREY JAY DAVID I/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 CPL ANTHONY DI CESARE JR I/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 HM3 HOSPITALMAN 3RD CLASS, CARL DOUGLAS DUDLEY JR H&S/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 L/CPL CHARLES MANLEY GATTIS JR 7/5/1967 I/3/26* DIED NAVY HOSPITAL, DANANG L/CPL ALEJANDRO RAY GODINEZ I/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 SSGT DONALD PAUL HAILTON I/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 HM3 HOSPITALCORPSMAN 3RD CLASS CURTIS DARRELL J ACKSON H&S/3/26L/CPL FREDDIE LEE JOHNSON I/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 SGT PAUL EDDIE KINCAID A/1/26 L/CPL CHARLES AARON LYNCH SUB UNIT-5 HQ CO/HQ BN CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 L/CPL FRANCISCO MAZARIEGOS SUB UNIT-5 HQ CO/HQ BN CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 L/CPL KENNENTH ARTHUR MILLARD I/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 COPL DENNIS ALFRED O'CONNOR SUB UNIT-5 HQ CO/HQ BN CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 PFC PAUL MALDONADO RODRIGUEZ JR A/1/26 L/CPL GLENN EDWARD SANDERS 6/29/67 A/1/26 *DIED USS SANCTUARY CPL JAMES MERRILL SHEPARD JR SUB UNIT-5 HQ2 CO/HQ BN CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 PFC RICK JAMES STEWART A BTRY 1/13 CPL EDMUND BURKE TRAVIS I/3/26 A BTRY 1/13 CPL RICHARD LEE WALKER I/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 CPL STEPHEN GEORGE WASSENICH I/3/26 CAC-OSCAR HILL 689 L/CPL JONATHAN CHARLES WHITTICOM H&S/1/26 L/CPL IRA WINARD WILLIAMS A/1/26 PFC WILLIAM JACK WILLIAMS L/3/26	JIMMY COLLINS & FAMILY A/1/26

KHE SANH UNDER SIEGE: A VIEW FROM THE 3RD BATTALION, 26TH MARINES

BY DICK CAMP 4/5/21

At approximately 4 a.m. on Jan. 21, 1968, I stood watch as assistant operations officer in the 3rd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment's combat operations center at the Khe Sanh Combat Base shooting the breeze with Maj. Matt Caulfield, the battalion's operations officer. I remember handing him a C-ration cup of coffee when we heard heart-stopping words come over the radio speaker from a lieutenant on a nearby hill: "We're being overrun!"

Caulfield grabbed the radio handset and demanded, "What the hell's going on?"

The Khe Sanh base was on a plateau in the northwest corner of South Vietnam just south of the Demilitarized Zone dividing it from North Vietnam and about 6 miles from the Laotian border. The base was intended to block enemy infiltration from Laos and serve as the western anchor of a linear barrier containing manned fortifications, minefields and sensors stretching from the South China Sea to Laos, a line known as "McNamara's Wall," a reference to Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, the barrier's chief proponent.

The base's perimeter consisted of bunkers and trench lines that stretched roughly in an oblong circle surrounding a 3,500-foot runway large enough to land C-130 Hercules cargo planes. Several thousand yards from the perimeter, hills 881 South, 861, 861A and 558 figured prominently in the defense of the base. Approximately 6,000 Americans defended the base perimeter and the hill positions.

In January 1968, the North Vietnamese Army cut the overland supply route to Khe Sanh, leaving the base totally dependent on aerial resupply. At the same time, the NVA surrounded the base with upward of 20,000 battle-hardened soldiers, supported by heavy artillery, rockets and mortars.

The 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines, had been airlifted to Khe Sanh in mid-December 1967 and assigned an approximately 3,000-yard-long slice of the northwest defense perimeter, known as the Red Sector.

"They [the regiment] didn't have any room for us," recalled 1st Lt. John T. Esslinger, executive officer of the 3rd Battalion's Company M. "So they sent us outside the wire to the west a little bit...we build sort of an add on, an annex to the base. We extended the wire and dug our holes and that's where we lived."

The 3rd Battalion's combat operations center was in the only grove of trees in that portion of the base. The battalion logistics officer had been able to bribe a Navy Seabee into digging a rectangular pit with his front-end loader. The pit, some 12-feet deep, 8-feet wide and 20-feet long, was just large enough to accommodate the battalion commander, his staff and radio operators, together with about 15 to 20 men.

The operations center was "roofed" with 2-inch-thick perforated aluminum planks (intended to be runway matting), reinforced with crushed rock, expended artillery shells and layers of sandbags, making the overhead cover at least 5 feet thick. This would easily protect us from NVA mortar fire. Unfortunately, as the siege progressed the NVA brought in heavy artillery—122 mm and 152 mm guns, as well as 122 mm rockets—along with 120 mm and 82 mm mortars. A final layer of 2-inch plywood sheets was placed 6 feet over the entire roof area.

Once a 152 mm shell landed on the hardened crushed rock main road running through the base. I was told to survey the resulting hole to determine what the battalion should do to protect itself. I stared at the huge crater, 6 feet deep and 8 feet in diameter, compared it to our small entrenching tools and reported jokingly to the battalion executive officer that we should surrender!

As a further protective measure our battalion instituted a policy that no vehicles were allowed into the grove of trees—only foot traffic was permitted. We were concerned that NVA observers on the high ground might spot vehicular traffic and identify the area as a command post. Finally, a general purpose tent and camouflage netting were erected over the operations center.

From this underground bunker, the command group and staff—battalion commander, executive officer, operations officer, intelligence officer—directed the widely dispersed rifle companies. Company I and two platoons of Company M occupied Hill 881 South; 2 miles east Company K and two platoons of Company A, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, held Hill 861; and 500 yards to the east Company E, 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines held Hill 861A.

Those three hills, along with the 3,000-foot-high Dong Tri Mountain, Hill 881 North and Hill 558, dominated the Khe Sanh Plateau and would enable the regiment to control the high ground overlooking the base. Company L of the 3rd Battalion defended the combat base's Red Sector, tying in with the 1st Battalion of the 26th Marines on the right flank and the U.S. Army's forward operating base on the left.

The battalion combat operations center maintained radio communications with the hill positions, as well as the 26th Marines regimental command post and supporting arms radio networks.

A hand-lettered sign was placed above the radio operators' bench. During the day, its wording was turned toward the dirt wall of the bunker and not visible, but at night the sign was turned over and revealed a tongue-in-cheek response to the imminent threat of an NVA ground assault: "Tonight's the Night."

Sometime around 1 a.m., Jan. 2, a Company L listening post reported six NVA had just crept by. A reaction force was sent out and, together with the listening post men, swept the area. They discovered five NVA and killed them. The five were officers and may have been performing a reconnaissance for a ground assault. An enemy captive later reported that an NVA lieutenant colonel was one of the dead.

The night of Jan. 21 several NVA "sappers," an elite assault force, attempted to breach the wire in front of Company L. They came under fire, and 14 bodies were observed being dragged away.

On Hill 861, as sounds of small arms and machine gun fire, explosions and muffled shouts filled the air in the pre-dawn hours of Jan. 21, K Company's executive officer, 1st Lt. Jerry N. Saulsberry (call sign Kilo 5), responed "What the hell's going on?" question Caulfield had asked from the combat operations center.

"We're being overrun!" Saulsberry shouted.

The regimental fire support coordinator, Lt. Col. John A. "Band of Steel" Hennelly, directed radar-guided planes to drop ordnance on suspected NVA assembly areas around Company K's hill position. Just before dawn two A-6 Intruder planes dropped.

56 500-pound bombs on a likely assembly area, which not only dampened the enemy forces' assault but also forced them to break contact.

At 5:30 a.m., on Jan. 21, just after the enemy had been driven from Hill 861, the NVA unleashed a terrifying artillery and rocket bombardment on the Khe Sanh base, beginning a 77-day siege. Enemy shells hit all around the operations center. Others hit the 1,500-ton ammunition dump on the eastern end of the runway, setting it off with a thunderous roar and sending unexploded ordnance hurtling through the battalion area.



The solid thud of a 30-pound shell striking the ground in the darkness was unnerving. Making matters worse, the regiment's supply of tear gas was blown up and the chemical saturated the air, forcing everyone to wear gas masks...at least those who still carried them.

In the following weeks, the entire combat base and the hill positions were hit all hours of the day and night by various combinations of mortar, artillery, rocket and recoilless rifle fire.

The NVA attacked Company E of the 2nd Battalion on Hill 861A at 4 a.m. on Feb. 5. A sapper unit armed with Chicom grenades (long-handled grenades modeled after those made by Chinese communists) and bangalore torpedoes (metal tubing filled with explosives) preceded an infantry attack by approximately 200 troops. Companies I and K of the 3rd Battalion supported Company E with 81 mm and 60 mm mortar fire, which helped disperse the enemy. By 6:30 a.m., Company E had beaten back the attack using small arms and aggressive hand-to-hand combat. Seven Marines were killed and 24 wounded, while the NVA lost 109 killed.

The major spoke to Saulsberry in an unbelievably soothing voice to calm him. However, things went wrong when Caulfield decided to finish his instructions with some football team rah-rah, saying, "OK, Kilo 5, take the ball and run with it!"

The lieutenant must have been still too anxious to comprehend Caulfield's use of the cliche or had trouble hearing amid the gunfire and explosions.

"Did I hear you say 'run,' sir?" Saulsberry asked.

Caulfield shouted into the handset: "Hell no! I was just trying to encourage you to hold on."

Saulsberry was in charge of Company K because the company's commander, Capt. Norman Jasper, had been seriously wounded by a rocket-propelled grenade in the first minutes of the attack and was out of action. The company first sergeant was also wounded by the same rocket. The company gunnery sergeant had been killed.

The artillery and air officers in the combat operations center requested assistance from the 26th Marines' Fire Support Coordination Center, in the middle of the combat base, which we called "downtown ground zero." Within minutes the regiment's direct-support artillery battalion, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, was in contact with Company K's Cpl. Dennis M. Mannion, an artilleryman attached to the company to direct the support fire. "I started calling in target numbers [preplanned artillery targets] on the ridgeline 500 yards to the west...I pulled the rounds as close as I could get them...I fired as many rounds as the 105s [howitzers] at the combat base could give us."

Company I on Hill 881 South also began firing in support. "Our two 81 mm mortars fired several hundred rounds on that slope," Capt. Bill Dabney, the company commander, reported. "The mortar tubes became so hot that the gunners cooled them with water, then fruit juice, and finally by urinating on them. It smelled a bit rank in the gun pits!"

On Feb. 15, between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., the NVA struck the base with 1,307 artillery and rocket rounds. A seemingly unending succession of casualties had to be evacuated to Company C, 3rd Medical Battalion, at downtown ground zero. For most of us, the only protection was to burrow deeper into the plateau's red clay.

Intelligence reported the North Vietnamese had placed heavy artillery, Soviet-made 130 mm and 152 mm guns and 122 mm rockets, across the border in the Co Roc Mountains of Laos.

Our operations center was on a straight line from the NVA fire, and the rounds came right overhead before exploding somewhere in the middle of the base. Occasionally a "short" round impacted the battalion area.

On one memorable occasion, the battalion tactical network came alive with the warning from Company I on Hill 881 South: "Arty, arty, arty, Co Roc Mountain, 220 degrees." Company I, some 4 miles west of the base, was first to hear the round and broadcast a warning over the radio network, which many units monitored.

Sirens and horns sounded all over the base, giving everyone several precious seconds to find cover—often the margin between life and death. The warning got to be Pavlovian. At the first note all hands scrambled for cover.

I wondered where that SOB was going to hit. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion, the generator lights went out, and thick dust filled the operations center. Everything went deathly quiet. The heavy stench of the shell's cordite explosive material permeated the air. Someone shouted, "Is everybody OK?"

After verifying there were no casualties, Caulfield and I went outside and saw a gaping hole in the operations center's tent covering, which was also perforated by shrapnel. About 4 feet of the center's roof was gouged out.

The bunker had taken a direct hit from a heavy-caliber round, which hit the plywood and exploded, then took out part of the roof. If the plywood had not

detonated the shell, the round would have penetrated the bunker's roof—and everyone in the close confines of the space in the operations center would have been killed from shrapnel or concussion.

Two unconscious Marines lay just outside the entrance of the tent. Later we learned that they were about to enter when the shell exploded. Fortunately, the angle of the blast was away from them. Neither was hurt except for minor burns, scratches and headaches. Upon coming to, one looked up and remarked, "Don't mean nuthin," which was a standard sarcastic response to truly frightening combat experiences.

Others weren't so lucky. One day a radio operator had to make a "head call." Another man took his place. After a long interval, someone took notice and asked about the man who went to the latrine. It turned out the Marine had stepped out of the bunker just as an incoming round hit close to the operations center. He was wounded and evacuated before we even knew

mortar round clipped several Marines close to the entrance of the operations center.

Everyone adopted what we called the "Khe Sanh Shuffle" or "Khe Sanh Two-Step." Just about anyone who was walking above ground held his helmet under an arm so it would be easier for him hear an arriving shell. All of us kept an ear cocked toward Laos in the west, where most of the NVA artillery was positioned.

Our senses were finely tuned. We would stand around talking with our helmets tucked under our arms until someone said, "Shhh" or "Stop talking." If nothing more was heard after a few seconds, the conversation resumed. If there was "something" in the air, everyone suddenly dashed for cover. It was automatic. If someone started running, everyone joined in.

As a result of the close calls, the battalion executive officer and I established a second combat operations center in an old above-ground bunker some distance away. We remodeled it, adding more sandbags and digging it deeper—much deeper! We occupied the bunker

at night, but during the day maintained watches in the primary operations center.

As the siege developed, the NVA blockaded the road into the base. Supplies could be delivered only by cargo aircraft. Initially, the supply planes were primarily C-130 Hercules and C-123 Provider transports. However, in mid-February the runway closed after a Marine KC-130 was struck by anti-aircraft fire and crashed, killing six Marines onboard.

Using an alternative delivery method, the Air Force air-dropped containers into a zone in front of the battalion lines. Every morning, a team from the 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, swept the drop zone to ensure the NVA hadn't moved in during the night. We could see the drop zone from the operations center.

Supplying the outlying hill positions required an innovative approach because the NVA ringed them with anti-aircraft weapons. After several helicopters were shot down, the 1st Marine Air Wing instituted "Super Gaggle," an air task force consisting of eight to 16 resupply CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters, accompanied by about a dozen A-4 Skyhawk attack aircraft and four Huey gunships flying cover, a Marine KC-130 to refuel the aircraft and a TA-4F Skyhawk with a "tactical air coordinator" in the back seat to orchestrate the entire affair.



In a typical "Super Gaggle" mission, a TA-4 flew first to Khe Sanh on weather reconnaissance. When it reported favorable conditions, the other aircraft launched from various bases in northern South Vietnam. The A-4s took off from Chu Lai en route to Khe Sanh. The helicopters departed Quang Tri, en route to Dong Ha, where supplies waited.

After picking up their loads and carrying them underneath in especially designed cargo slings, the helicopters began the short trip to Khe Sanh flying on instruments and then letting down through a hole in the cloud cover.

Just before the helicopters arrived, four A-4s struck enemy positions with napalm and two others saturated anti-aircraft positions with tear gas from spray tanks. About 30 seconds before the helicopters' final approach to the designated hills, two A-4s laid a smoke screen on both sides of the planned flight path. As the helicopters flew in behind the smoke, four more Skyhawks carrying bombs, rockets and 20 mm cannons suppressed known and suspected North Vietnamese gun positions.

As soon as smoke was laid, helicopters from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron HMM-364, the "Purple Foxes," would appear with the sling loads brought from Dong Ha—10 birds in two strings of five just above the smoke. They flew parallel to the hill, usually to the south since wind was usually from the north. They came into five zones on the hill, released their loads and beat feet. One bird in the second echelon was designated to land in a zone that we would have ready, drop off mail and replacement Marines, and pick up casualties. Only two CH-46s fell to enemy fire during the "Super Gaggle" missions. In both cases, the Hueys picked up the crews immediately.

On April 8, Operation Pegasus, an overland and air assault mission involving the Marines, U.S. Army and South Vietnamese troops, broke through the North Vietnamese encirclement and lifted the siege.

The 3rd Battalion, 26th Marines, had some unfinished business, however. On April 7-8 the command group and Company L were airlifted to Hill 881 South to prepare an attack on Hill 881 North. Shortly after midnight on April 14, all four of the battalion's companies advanced against the hill under a massive 2,000-round artillery barrage. At 2:28 p.m., the Marines raised the Stars and Stripes over the smoking hilltop. The capture of Hill 881 North was the 3rd Battalion's last battle in the Khe Sanh area. **V**

Dick Camp retired from the Marine Corps in 1988 as a colonel after serving 26 years. He served in Vietnam 1967-68 as an infantry company commander and aide de camp to Maj. Gen. Raymond G. Davis. Camp, who lives in Fredericksburg, Virginia, has written 15 books and more than 100 articles in military magazines.

TRIBUTE TO A HERO













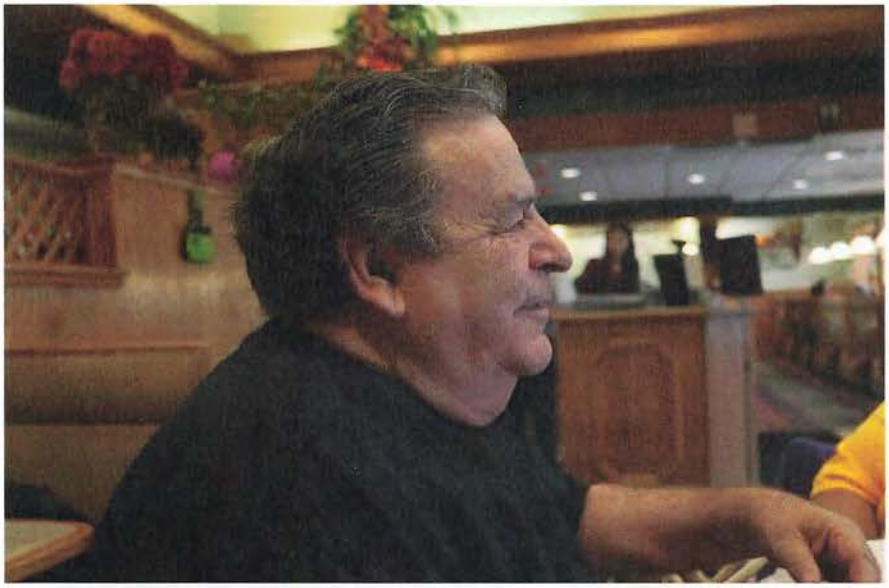



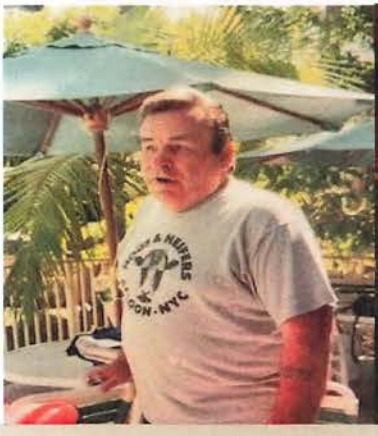


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Tom Eicle
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ECO 2/26
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SPEED ZONE
WINNER'S CIRCLE
SECOND PLACE
FIRST PLACE
THIRD PLACE







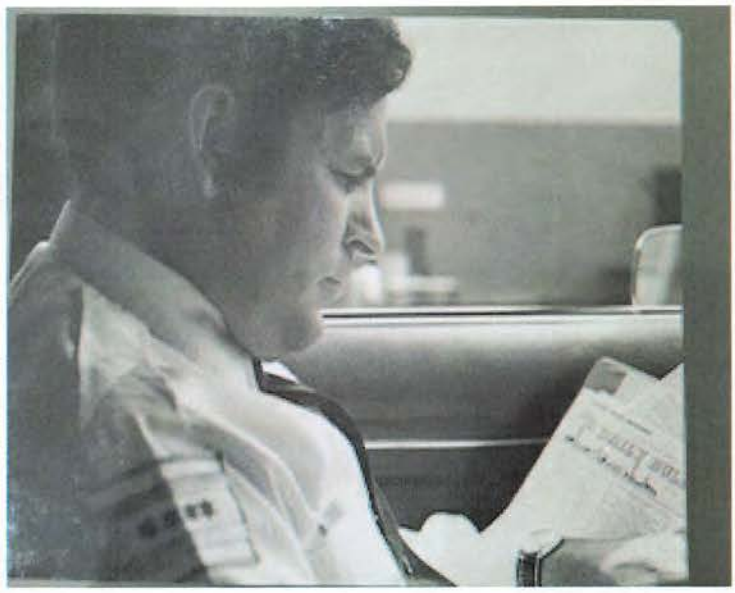












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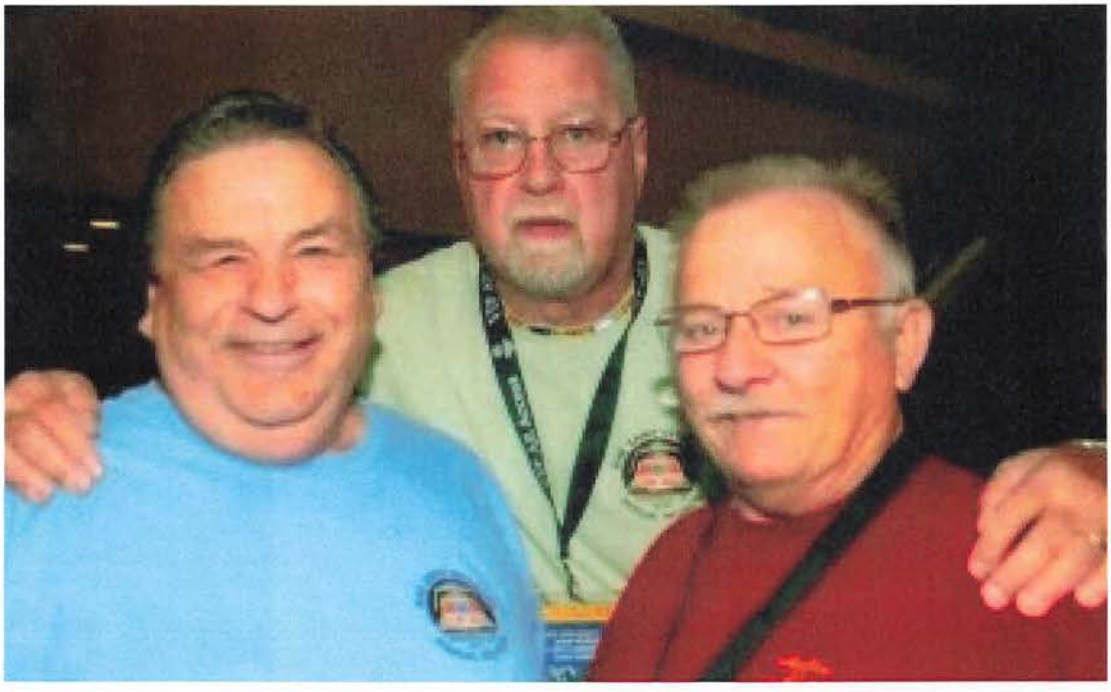

HOME OF RECORD:
Chicago, Illinois

AWARDS BY DATE OF ACTION:

1 of 1

Silver Star



AWARDED FOR ACTIONS
DURING Vietnam War
Service: Marine Corps
Battalion: 2d Battalion
Division: 3d Marine Division (Rein.), FMF

GENERAL ORDERS:

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Corporal Thomas J. Eichler (MCSN: 1838959), United States Marine Corps, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in connection with operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving as Weapons Platoon Sergeant with Company E, Second Battalion, Twenty-Sixth Marines, THIRD Marine Division. During the early morning hours of 5 February 1968, two companies of North Vietnamese regulars attacked Company E's defensive position on Hill 861A near Khe Sanh with grenades, mortars, automatic weapons, and small arms fire. Realizing one of his gun emplacements had gone silent, Corporal Eichler moved through the heavy enemy fire first to bring up and emplace another machine gun team, and then assisted in moving the casualties out of harm's way. With complete disregard for his own safety, he made several sprints to the forward edges of the perimeter to evacuate critically wounded Marines and reposition his teams into more effective firing positions. When the enemy breached Company E's perimeter, Corporal Eichler played a vital role in the successful counterattack. He brought ammunition to Marines in the front line positions, engaged the enemy in close quarters combat, and repeatedly exposed himself above the trench line to direct the actions of his fellow Marines and personally hurl grenades on the enemy with devastating effect. By his undaunted courage, bold initiative, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of intense enemy fire were an inspiration to all who observed him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.